

2024 DUBLIN CITY COUNCIL RETREAT (PART II)
NOVEMBER 14, 2025 – 8:30 AM
OHIO UNIVERSITY DUBLIN INTEGRATED EDUCATION CENTER
6805 BOBCAT WAY

Mayor Amorose Groomes called the Friday, November 14, 2025 Council Retreat – Part II to order at 8:37 a.m.

Members Present: Vice Mayor Alutto, Mayor Amorose Groomes, Ms. De Rosa, Ms. Fox, Mr. Keeler, Ms. Kramb and Mr. Reiner.

Staff Present: Ms. O'Callaghan, Mr. Shamp, Mr. Barker, Mr. Rubino, Mr. Gracia, Ms. Rauch, Mr. Earman, Mr. Will, Ms. Willis, Ms. Weisenauer, Mr. Hounshell, Mr. Hendershot, Mr. Hammersmith, Ms. Blake.

Others Present: Mr. Lam, Council Member Elect; Ms. Johnson, Council Member Elect; Mr. Way, Chair of Planning and Zoning Commission; Jamie Greene and Emily Hays, Planning NEXT; Larry Creed, Marci Bland, Amanda Brandon and Justin Holder, EMH&T; Martin Zogran and Trey Sasser, Sasaki; Jim Arnold, SFC; Megha Singha, NBBJ and Jared Love, WSP

Debt/Financial Overview

Ms. O'Callaghan introduced the financial overview. She thanked Council for placing these topics on their retreat agenda and staff for their work in preparing materials.

Mr. Rubino presented the financial overview focusing on three basic concepts: stability, viability, and resiliency. He explained the City's financial model powers the operating and capital budgets.

The operating budget for the year totaled \$119.5 million, with the general fund operating budget at just over \$75 million. The City relies heavily on local taxes, particularly income tax, which comprises 72% of general fund revenues. A 5.1% revenue increase was projected compared to the previous year.

Mr. Rubino detailed that 90% of income tax collections come from employers based in the City, with payroll withholding representing 75% of total income tax collections. The long-term trend shows consistent 3-4% annual growth in income tax collections.

Operating budgets are people-driven, with over half of costs related to personnel and contracted services. These costs continue to grow at 3-4% annually. The City has adopted a policy of structurally balanced budgets where anticipated revenues meet or exceed approved operating funding.

Regarding capital investments, the City maintains a continued need for growth in both maintenance of existing amenities and infrastructure, as well as deploying capital dollars to support future economic development. The current 5-year Capital Improvement Program totals \$320 million, with much of the planned capital supporting economic development.

The City uses debt financing to support capital needs, issuing bonds backed primarily by income tax collections. With four AAA ratings, the City obtains low-cost funding for these needs. Mr. Rubino noted the City must balance debt capacity with operating capacity constraints.

The City uses Tax Increment Financing (TIF) service payments to fund infrastructure improvements within economic development areas. These have generated significant revenue over the past 10 years. Economic incentive agreements with employers show returns of 12-13 dollars for every dollar invested.

Ms. De Rosa requested adding debt roll-off projections to better understand capacity for future borrowing. She emphasized this information would be helpful in determining how much additional debt makes logical sense.

Ms. Fox asked about incorporating land costs and debt service when calculating return on investment for incentives, suggesting this analysis could inform future policies on land incentives.

Review of Council 2025 Goals (1-3)

Ms. O'Callaghan provided updates on three of Council's 2025 visionary goals before diving deeper into the West Innovation District goals.

1. Become the Most Connected Community in the U.S.

This goal evolved to include more than the technology perspective. The fiber-to-every-home project is ahead of schedule, with all addresses to be fiber-passed by year's end. Altafiber opened a retail store in Dublin on September 2nd as required by the agreement.

Regional transportation collaboration has expanded through LinkUS involvement. The City continues installing multimodal paths, including along Riverside Drive. Transit service planning continues with an intersection safety pilot underway.

The Community Health Needs Assessment was adopted, identifying four focus areas: healthcare navigation, transportation, behavioral health, and community connection. The initiative was rebranded as the Dublin Wellness Alliance with a new logo and website. The advisory committee is being reformed with Council and School Board participation invited.

2. Revitalize Metro Center

The award-winning vision has been validated through multiple Council work sessions. Sasaki is creating design guidelines and zoning framework. A December 1st work session will focus on guidelines and zoning strategy for Metro Center, with draft code and guidelines targeted for completion by the end of Q1 2026. Staff continues working with the Metro Center Business Association and property owners on transferring common area lands to the City.

3. Reimagine and Launch Dublin's Community Events Program

The Community Events Roadmap was adopted in June following Council's support and guidance. Implementation of recommendations has begun, including increased bench sponsorship revenue. A request for proposals (RFP) will be issued for comprehensive citywide sponsorship strategy development, particularly relevant with SportsOhio opportunities. The permitting system launched with food truck policies under Committee discussion. An RFP is out for Riverside Crossing Park operators, and contract negotiations for the Dublin, Ohio Christkindlmarkt Market have concluded with the agreement coming to Council on Monday.

Review of Council 2025 Goal Areas (4-5)

4. Accelerate Economic Development in the West Innovation District

Mr. Greene from Planning NEXT presented the West Innovation District Integrated Implementation Strategy (WIDIIS). He emphasized the work supports 2.5 of Council's goals within the 2,200+ acre area. The purpose is to confirm the vision from the Comprehensive Plan,

provide updates on the integration work, affirm the infrastructure analysis approach, and establish program and design frameworks. The discussion focused heavily on stormwater management and infrastructure needs. Council members asked detailed questions about how stormwater would be handled across the district. The team explained that they were looking at creating a district-wide stormwater strategy that would include both traditional infrastructure and green infrastructure solutions. They noted that the topography of the area, with its flow towards the Scioto River, presented both challenges and opportunities for innovative stormwater solutions.

Ms. Brandon and Mr. Holder from EMH&T presented the infrastructure analysis organizing the district into five opportunity areas based on development readiness from a water and sewer perspective:

Area 1 (Green): Most development-ready parcels with utilities already in place or in close proximity. No off-site utility extensions required. Transportation improvements include completing University Boulevard, constructing New Street 4, and modernizing Cosgray Road.

Area 2 (Yellow): Within existing jurisdictional boundaries requiring water and sewer extensions Dublin can complete without agreement changes. Split into 2a (Cosgray sewer shed) and 2b (Hayden Run sewer shed). Transportation includes constructing Street 31, New Street 4 over the railroad, and the Signature Trail.

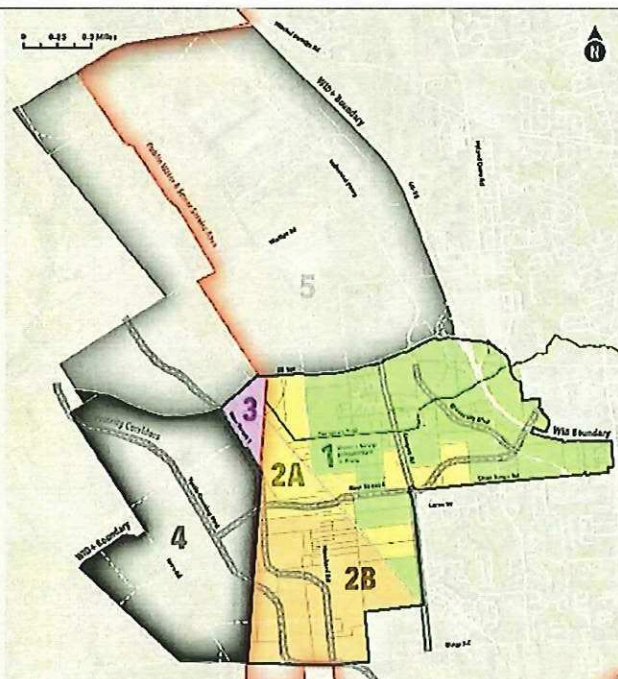
Area 3 (Purple): Requires similar extensions to Area 2 but sits just outside the existing service area agreement with Columbus. Coordination needed with Columbus and Madison County.

Areas 4 & 5 (Orange/Red): Most complex, located in the WID-plus area. Development would require addressing regional utility capacity and extensive jurisdictional coordination with multiple entities including Madison County, Mid-Ohio Water & Sewer District, Union County, and Marysville.

Opportunity Areas

Infrastructure was evaluated districtwide, and conditions were categorized into five levels of development readiness ("**Opportunity Areas**") based on utility availability and sewer jurisdictional considerations

Water, sewer, and transportation investments needed will be summarized for each Opportunity Area to form the technical foundation for understanding development potential across the WID



The team discussed the complexity of overlapping jurisdictions, with Ms. O'Callaghan noting Marysville's strategic interest in water expansion, though current agreements restrict them from entering Madison County without Union County approval. Mid-Ohio Water & Sewer District is five years out from having capacity to serve the area.

Council expressed concern about Madison County's zoning allowing buildings up to 110 feet, driving Dublin's interest in planning beyond city boundaries to prevent incompatible development. Discussion revealed Madison County and Darby Township have conflicting visions, with the Township wanting to remain rural while the County has zoned for intense development.

Mayor Amorose Groomes emphasized Dublin is uniquely positioned to develop this area thoughtfully given the complexity other entities face. Council expressed support for continued collaboration within the S.R. 161 corridor. She stressed the importance of making commitments on grade-separated rail crossings, noting all new crossings must be grade-separated per railroad requirements. Ms. Willis confirmed studies are underway for Tuttle Crossing and all crossings will include pedestrian and bike facilities.

Energy infrastructure was another major topic of discussion. Council members were interested in exploring district-wide energy solutions, including the possibility of geothermal systems, solar installations, and other renewable energy options. Council identified additional infrastructure considerations including fiber network extension, stormwater management innovation, and sustainable power options. Ms. Fox emphasized incorporating rain gardens and sustainable design elements as opportunities to demonstrate Dublin's values. The team acknowledged that while they had not initially focused heavily on energy systems, they would incorporate this into their planning based on the Council's clear interest.

5. Create a Premier Athletic Complex

Mr. Zogran from Sasaki presented the Premier Athletic Complex planning work, joined by Mr. Sasser (Sasaki) and Mr. Arnold from Sports Facilities Companies. The team has been working since July conducting stakeholder interviews and developing conceptual alternatives.

The vision focuses on creating a premier athletic destination that connects community, drives economic development, and delivers something unique to Dublin through thoughtful, functional design embracing sustainability and catering to both local and visiting audiences.

The complex would integrate the existing Darree Fields (286 acres including recent acquisitions) and Sports Ohio sites, currently separated by several parcels. Key existing facilities include 12 grass soccer fields, wooded areas with wetlands, the Miracle League field, various diamonds, indoor facilities, golf center, and other uses. Current challenges include convoluted circulation, scattered parking, dated amenities, limited shade, and no clear arrival center. The team reviewed previous studies showing varying field recommendations and emphasized finding the right balance and improving wayfinding.

Through case study analysis, Mr. Sasser and Mr. Arnold explained the industry shift from "biggest is best" (exemplified by Grand Park's 400 acres) to more focused complexes with better amenities. He emphasized the Paradise Coast Sports Complex model with its "Cove" activation space that serves both locals and visitors through constant programming.

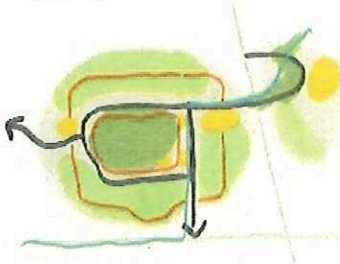
Mr. Zogran presented three conceptual options for the athletic complex, explaining that the team had worked through many alternatives with City staff to arrive at these three schemes. All three options maintained consistent program elements but varied in their layout and circulation patterns.

- Option 1, called "Grow from Existing Framework," was the most conservative approach, utilizing most of the existing roadway network and keeping fields largely in their current locations.

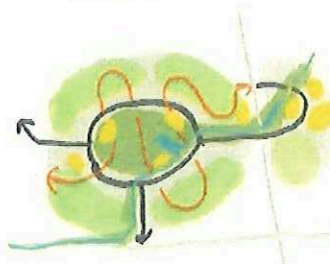
- Option 2, "Central Park," introduced a central loop road concept that would improve wayfinding and create a clear distinction between community amenities inside the loop and tournament facilities outside.
- Option 3, "Green Corridors" offered a different field configuration with soccer fields consolidated in one area rather than spread linearly.

Concept Alternatives

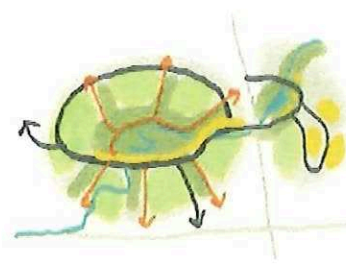
1 Grow from Existing Framework



2 Central Park



3 Green Corridors



Council participated in a poll that illustrated five of the seven Council members preferred Option 2 – "Central Park" when exploring the outdoor athletic facilities. The proposed program includes:

- Full-size outdoor soccer fields (enabling national tournament capacity)
- 90' hybrid baseball/softball diamonds (convertible to soccer fields)
- Renovated indoor soccer fields, and new basketball/volleyball courts
- Potential anchors including aquatic center, performing arts, fitness facilities
- Active recreation including golf center evolution, pickleball
- Passive recreation with public art, dog park, nature trails
- Supporting facilities for parking, circulation, concessions, maintenance

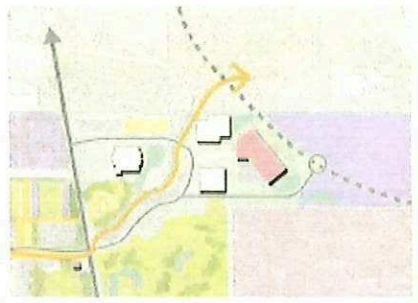


The presentation emphasized design principles of functionality first, creating exciting spaces for game day and everyday use, smart layout with seamless flow, building with nature, revenue generation potential, and community connections.

Council members engaged in extensive discussion about the central woodland areas that exist on the site. Mayor Amorose Groomes raised concerns about designing around these green spaces. She questioned whether preserving the entire center of the site as green space was the best approach. She argued that by the time paths and trails were added through the woods, much of it would be compromised.

Council members discussed what percentage of the site should remain as green space and whether the current 35% was appropriate. Vice Mayor Alutto and Ms. Fox both expressed concerns about the central location of amenities making them less accessible to the public during tournament events.

Ms. De Rosa stressed prioritizing community use, with Mr. Arnold confirming synthetic turf enables year-round use without rest periods and lighting extends hours. This approach will free capacity at other parks like Avery Park for local leagues.

A second poll of indoor athletic facilities showed a preference for the green corridors option.

		
1 Grow from Existing Framework	2 Central Park	3 Green Corridors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps and renovates existing Sports Ohio indoor facilities • Adds one new indoor facility to accommodate basketball/volleyball courts and/or hockey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a new "campus" of indoor facilities on SportsOhio side, expanding towards University Blvd extension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovates existing Sports Ohio indoor facilities while adding new facilities within the existing Sports Ohio site boundaries

The discussion of indoor facilities centered around the SportsOhio site on the east side of Cosgray Road. Council members expressed interest in having facilities that would face University Boulevard to create a welcoming entrance. There was also significant discussion about the golf facilities, with questions about whether to pursue a TopGolf-style concept or maintain traditional driving range operations. Staff noted that the driving range is currently the largest revenue generator for the complex.

Council discussion highlighted several priorities:

- The need for a gateway entrance from University Boulevard
- Incorporating fitness facilities for parents during children's activities (per resident feedback)
- Balancing amenities on both sides of Cosgray Road
- Exploring convention/meeting space opportunities during non-tournament times
- Planning for future technologies and amenities including non-traditional sports like archery and disc golf
- Strategically locating social activities like pickleball near gathering spaces
- Incorporating safety and accessibility as primary design principles

Passenger Rail Station Area

Ms. Singha from NBBJ presented the passenger rail station framework, beginning with context about MORPC's intercity passenger rail study for the Midwest Connect route. She explained that Dublin had been successful in establishing itself as a viable station location and that the team was now developing a vision plan for the area.

The site under consideration is approximately 240 acres located south of Route 161 and west of Darree Fields, with CSX freight rail tracks running through it. Currently, about nine freight trains run through daily, mostly at night. The team emphasized that the site's location straddling Madison and Franklin counties made it strategically valuable for serving multiple jurisdictions.

Three land use scenarios were presented, all maintaining a consistent framework including space for the passenger rail station, a multimodal hub, implementation of the thoroughfare plan and signature trail, mixed-use development, and industrial/flex innovation space. The key differences between the options were:

Three Land Use Possibilities



Option A placed mixed-use development and the station west of the tracks, with flex innovation and industrial uses to the east. Option B flipped this arrangement, putting mixed-use and the station on the east side. Option C distributed mixed-use development on both sides of the tracks with the station on one side. This option dedicated about 50% of developable land to mixed-use compared to only 8-9% in the first two options.

Council consensus was to treat this as a transit hub rather than just a train station. Mayor Amorose Groomes noted that successful transit hubs need residential development so people can live there and travel to other places, rather than everyone driving to the station.

Mayor Amorose Groomes advocated for planning for dual tracks, explaining that even if only one track exists now, showing the capability for two tracks on plans would help prioritize Dublin when agencies are assigning resources.

Council members supported including residential uses in the mixed-use areas, with Mayor Amorose Groomes noting the importance of having people live near transit to make it truly function as a hub.

Mr. Reiner raised the possibility of incorporating air mobility, suggesting the site could accommodate helicopter or future electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft for connections to corporate headquarters. The team confirmed this was feasible within the site's layout.

For the station design vision, Council conducted a dot voting exercise on various architectural styles. The image receiving the most votes showed a contemporary canopy structure over a traditional building. Council members expressed wanting something that would be innovative to

match the West Innovation District setting while still creating a building people would want to preserve. Vice Mayor Alutto particularly liked the juxtaposition of old and new elements, while Mr. Reiner emphasized the importance of creating a warm, inviting structure that would make travelers want to return to Dublin.

The team confirmed they would create a rendering incorporating Council's feedback about balancing innovation with timeless design that creates a memorable gateway to Dublin.

Establish Goals for 2026

Council discussed refining their goals for 2026, working from the 2025 goals as a starting point.

- Goal 1 - Become the Most Connected Community in the U.S., Council recognized that with fiber and other infrastructure nearing completion, the goal needed evolution. After considerable discussion about whether to keep references to the Dublin Wellness Alliance prominent, they settled on language focused on fostering a community where all residents can thrive physically, mentally, and socially through various programs and expanded access to social, digital, and mobility networks.
- Goal 2 was updated from "Revitalize Metro Center" to "Advance Metro Center Revitalization," acknowledging progress made. The focus for 2026 would be on executing strategies within the adopted plan, particularly securing critical land and completing zoning code and design guidelines.
- Goal 3 evolved to "Create a Premier Athletic and Recreation Campus," with Council appreciating the shift from "complex" to "campus" and the addition of "recreation" to better reflect the facility's community-serving purpose. The 2026 language focused on developing a preferred concept and translating it into an implementation plan.
- Goal 4 maintained its focus on catalyzing economic development in the West Innovation District, with language updated to reference advancing strategic infrastructure and initiatives within the forthcoming integrated implementation strategy.

Passenger Rail Station Area and the Signature Trail as a thoughtfully integrated component will be incorporated within the WIDIIS goal work. Council agreed to keep the goals to four main areas, feeling this was an appropriate and achievable number. They decided the goals would be formally adopted at the organizational meeting on January 5, 2026, with a robust communication effort to follow to ensure the community understands the City's priorities for the year.

Board and Commission Member Update

Ms. De Rosa announced that due to a vacancy on the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Administrative Committee sought direction from Council regarding conducting interviews and bringing a recommendation to Council. Council consensus was to ask the Administrative Committee to conduct initial interviews and bring a recommendation to Council within the required timeframe.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.



Presiding Officer – Mayor


Clerk of Council