

# NEWARK

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VISION PLAN 2028

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Thank you to the many stakeholders who invested their time and expertise in the creation of this plan for the future of Newark.*

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PREPARED BY:



PREPARED FOR:





October 31, 2017

To the Citizens and Stakeholders of Newark,

Several months ago the Board of Newark Development Partners (NDP) recognized the need to more formally identify future priorities. We engaged OHM Advisors and Yaromir Steiner of Steiner + Associates to lead us through a comprehensive planning process. We owe them a great deal of gratitude for the professional direction provided.

The resulting Newark Vision Plan 2028 represents the aspirations of the community and local leadership. Numerous meetings occurred over 8 months, and included property owners, business owners, citizens, and elected and appointed officials from our Newark and Licking County governments.

Working together, a path has been identified that should help sustain our momentum and extend the progress we've experienced. Importantly, we should be able to build upon Newark's treasured historic charm already in place.

Seven important major areas of focus have been identified, which we have come to call our "7-Pillars":

*Image and Brand*

*Mobility and Transportation*

*Vibrant Downtown*

*Quality Education*

*Public Safety*

*Neighborhood Revitalization*

*Arts & Recreation*

Each of the Pillars is significant, and in pages that follow, objectives for each Pillar are captured. Only a few can be pursued at any point in time. The NDP Board will soon be asked to endorse the completed exercise and use the results to formalize the future agenda, subject of course, to change over time.

In creating Newark Vision Plan 2028, we demonstrate pride, commitment, and responsibility to our community. We are delighted with the serious efforts of those who participated in this meaningful exercise. We look forward to the upcoming weeks, months and years as this document comes to life.

Considerable opportunities exist for continued volunteer involvement as we pursue the objectives. With your help, we will continue the tradition of being one of Ohio's most forward-thinking and progressive communities. We hope you will join us for the journey!

Sincerely,

**Dan DeLawder**

Chairman of Board

**Fred Ernest**

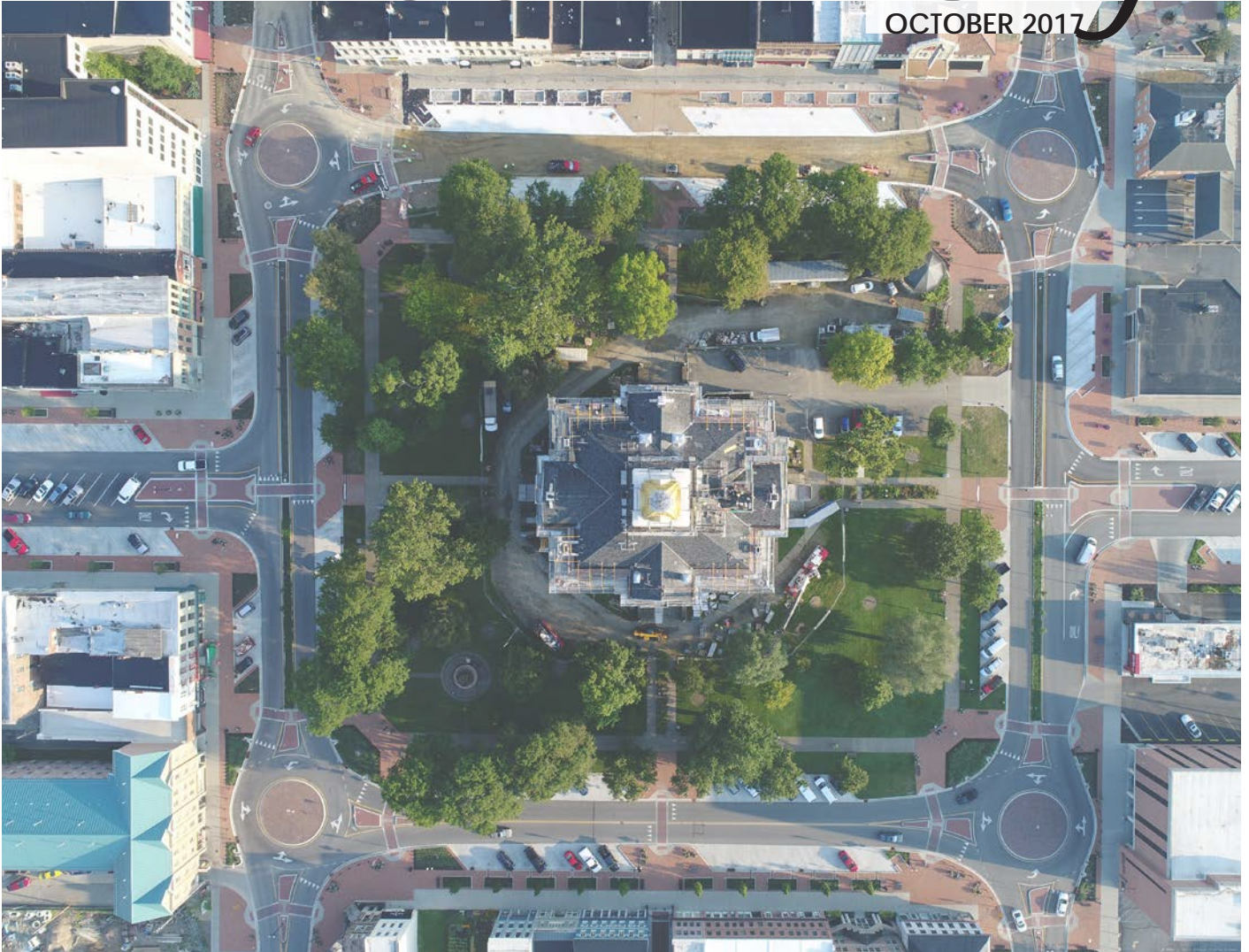
Executive Director





# Executive Summary

OCTOBER 2017



## OVERVIEW

The Newark Vision Plan 2028 is a partnership between Newark Development Partners (NDP), local stakeholders, and the City of Newark. This plan has been holistically informed by the intuitive knowledge of the community, and technically informed by an examination of physical, economic, and social trends of the city and region. The end result is a plan that is calibrated to the pulse of Newark. It is designed to be used as a tool to guide and inform the community and local leaders in making collective decisions that work toward a common future over the next ten years.

## CREATING A VISION

There are many benefits to creating a vision. First and foremost, it provides a comprehensive guide to help drive future policies, practices, and investments in the community. Additionally a vision:

- Breaks people out of current perspectives to consider new alternatives
- Promotes engagement of local organizations and community members
- Alerts stakeholders to needed change in the community and its policies
- Builds continuity between multiple initiatives and partnerships
- Provides direction for where and how local investments should be made
- Encourages openness to creative solutions from a variety of sources
- Creates ownership through involvement in the creation of the plan

# What is a Vision Plan?

Ours is the culmination of a community-wide and community-driven effort to plan for the future, creating new partnerships, identifying important and potentially transformative projects, and aligning resources to create change.

## Creating the Vision

Visioning involves the examination of the potential of a community, place, region, or district. It is an engaging process that brings people from various walks of life together to discuss their ideas and aspirations for the future. These aspirations can focus on anything from the environment, economy, infrastructure, education, recreation, culture, or any other issue that is important to those who live, work, and play in the community.

The visioning process uses a variety of tools to build consensus around a desired outcome, future, or image. The process is built extensively on public and stakeholder involvement. It engages residents and stakeholders in fun and dynamic ways to share their visions for the future, and strategize how they would like to see that future become reality. The results of these exercises become the foundation of the vision.

## Why Have a Vision?

The visioning process helps communities, organizations, and individuals identify what is important to them, their ideas and plans for the future, and more importantly, how to make those ideas a reality. Visioning helps communities identify and reach goals that are otherwise not discussed and ensure they are built on a foundation of collaboration.

It is critical to have a vision to achieve the following:

- » **Creating** shared goals for the future;
- » **Identifying** ways to implement shared goals;
- » **Building** goodwill and understanding between groups that rely on each other;
- » **Giving** people ownership in their community; and,
- » **Developing** new leaders in the community.

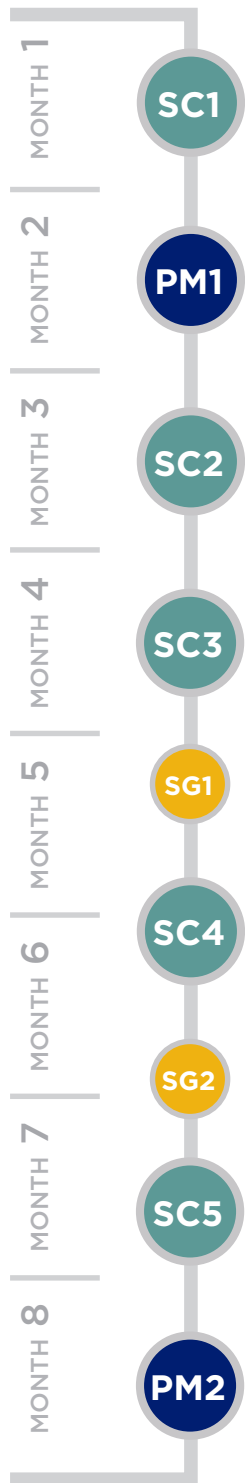


Community members engaged in visioning activities during the planning process.



# The Planning Process

An inclusive and transparent planning process was used to gather ideas and feedback from the public over the course of eight months.



## Who Was Involved?

### Local Leadership

Newark Development Partners (NDP) identified a need in the community for a long term vision for the future and have championed the creation of this plan to fulfill that need. Along with assistance from the City of Newark, NDP was key in gathering many of the community's best and brightest stakeholders to convene and strategize together to create a ten year blueprint for the future of Newark.

### Steering Committee

A group of Newark community members, residents, and business people were assembled to guide and inform the planning process. They served as developers, champions, and ultimately long-term stewards of the plan. Midway through the planning process, the group was encouraged to identify areas of the plan they would be most interested in developing further. They were asked to meet outside of the larger group in subgroups to discuss those key areas in more detail and create vision statements, pointed objectives and actions for implementation.

### General Public

Input from the community drives the plan's vision and initiatives. The public was invited to two community meetings, one to gather ideas and insight into the needs and wants of the community, and a second to test the outcome of the planning process and create excitement for the next steps in implementation of the plan.

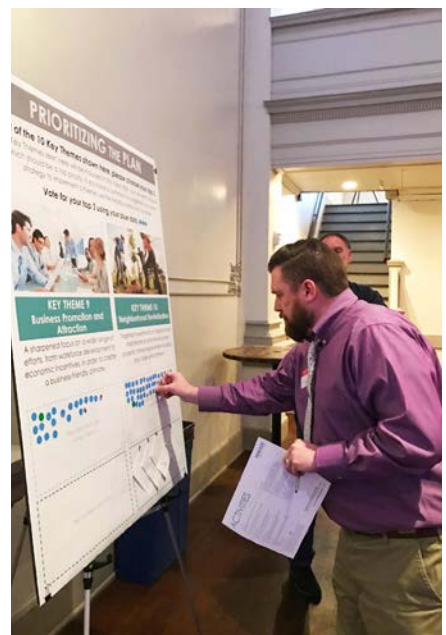
If unable to attend these public gatherings, people were encouraged to visit the project website, which was used to host a community survey, a virtual version of the public meeting activities, and disseminate information throughout the planning process.

### Consultant Team

OHM Advisors and Steiner + Associates were retained to guide the planning process. Steiner + Associates is a renown real estate development firm that has been creating innovative mixed-use developments since 1993. OHM Advisors is an integrated engineering, architecture, and planning firm specializing in community involvement and urban design.

- TASKS FOCUSED ON ENGAGING THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY (PM)
- TASKS FOCUSED ON ENGAGING THE STEERING COMMITTEE (SC)
- TASKS FOCUSED ON ENGAGING THE SUBGROUPS (SG)

*This graphic illustrates the planning process showing the general timeline and how the community and steering committee were engaged.*



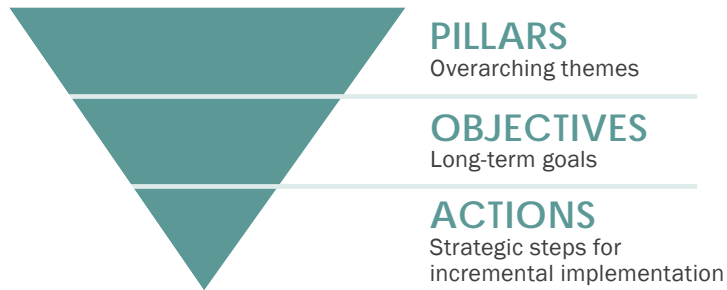
# Plan Framework

The Plan has been designed to be concise and actionable, with much of the supporting materials located in the Appendix. The Plan has been organized around seven key themes, or pillars, shown right. Each of these key themes has survey results, research, and existing conditions data associated with it and available in the Appendix for further review.

Throughout the planning process, the steering committee and subgroups met and discussed the various themes, strategizing the long-term goals as well as the immediate next steps needed to achieve measurable success. The work of these groups was then augmented with further recommendations, examples, and case studies by the planning team to create this Plan.

As a key part of the planning process, each of the groups crafted a vision statement to encapsulate the long-term goals of the pillar. Participants were then asked to sign a pledge indicating their commitment to this vision statement and the success of the group.

The vision statement was used to guide the development of various objectives, or long-term goals, and the incremental action steps needed for implementation. Supporting material was provided in the form of background history of an initiative, regional case studies and examples from which to model implementation, and recommendations based on present and future trends in planning and urban development.



## PLAN PILLARS

1. IMAGE AND BRAND
2. PUBLIC SAFETY
3. MOBILITY AND TRANSPORTATION
4. NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION
5. VIBRANT DOWNTOWN
6. ARTS & RECREATION
7. QUALITY EDUCATION

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# Putting the Plan into Action

This plan is meant to serve as a working document to guide community stakeholders in actionable next steps to create local change. The implementation of the plan should be guided by an action committee: a committee of local leaders and community members committed to improving the quality of life in Newark.

The action committee may be made up of members from the project steering committee, and associated subgroups, but is encouraged to include additional stakeholders from the community as needed. It is recommended that the individual committees begin working on the priority objective promptly and meet quarterly to discuss implementation tactics. The larger action plan committee of seven subgroups is recommended to meet as a whole annually or semi-annually to report on progress, challenges, setbacks, and potential

shifts in the implementation process. As noted, each priority objective is to be completed first. As tasks are completed, the groups are encouraged to continue their work and begin implementing the subsequent objectives and actions, as found in the Appendix.

It is intended that the action plan committee act as representatives and stewards of the plan, creating connections to interested parties and achieving success through their day-to-day work. NDP should continue to serve as the overall conductor of the process, organizing the action plan committee, and the annual or semi-annual meetings.

**A member of the NDP Board of Directors will be responsible for monitoring each of the subgroups as the chair of the action plan committee.**



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# IMAGE & BRAND

*The Vision: A defined character that promotes business opportunities, tourism, creativity and a high quality of life, while fostering a balanced economy grounded in a business-friendly climate and a stable and educated workforce.*



## OVERVIEW

The overall impression that residents and visitors have of the City of Newark is influenced in part by their first impression and by the marketing and branding of the City- both the physical and digital messaging experience. The City of Newark must have a collaborative, comprehensive internal and external “front door” promoting tourism, business opportunities, and a positive image. A written, graphic, and physical image and brand campaign will help guide and shape Newark’s sense of place, image, and civic pride for residents and work to instill a positive and cohesive first and lasting impression for visitors.

## KEY FINDINGS

These findings helped create the framework for the Image and Brand Pillar, and were generated from the community survey, best practices, and technical research.

- There are assets and amenities in Newark that need to be highlighted such as: The Works, The Midland Theatre, The Licking County Library, The Historic Jail, The Louis Sullivan Building, Canal Market District, and the Licking County Courthouse.
- The City is in need of a coordinated image and brand.
- Specific components of the city need to be re-branded such as the “Nerk” tag-line, Downtown, commercial areas, and the Main Street corridor.
- The strengths of Newark are seen as its sense of community, local organizations, and vicinity to Columbus while still maintaining a ‘small town feel.’
- Residents have a generally positive view of Newark, but assume that outsiders view the city negatively.