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The Fairfield Village Green: Development of a New Downtown

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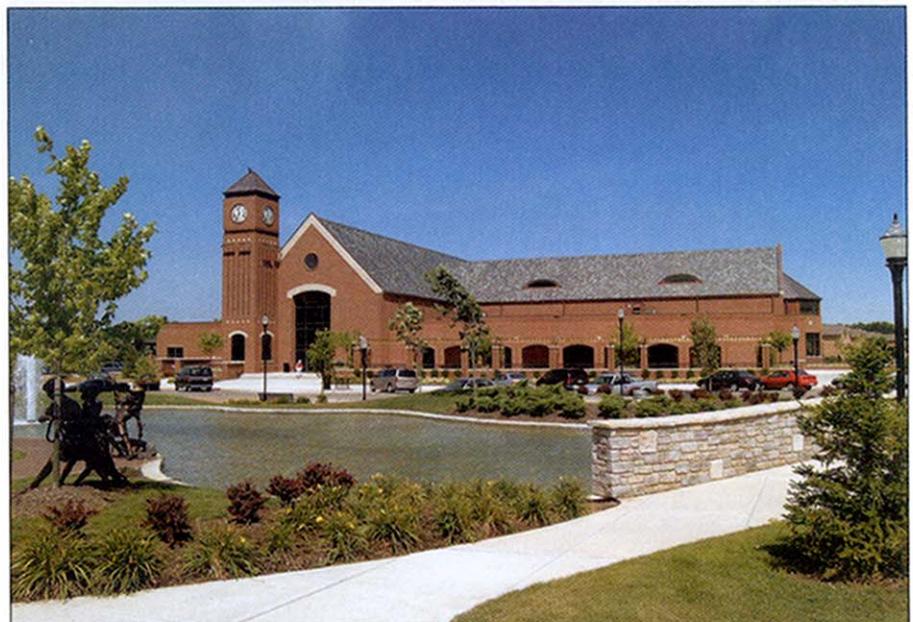
“Quality of Life” evidences itself in a variety of ways from one jurisdiction to the next. In Fairfield, a community approaching 45,000 residents, this intrinsic value is best manifested in the City’s newly emerging downtown. Planning for the Fairfield Village Green area commenced almost a decade ago and development began in earnest over the last five years. The Village Green is envisioned as the first of four quadrants, all in the geographic center of the City, that will ultimately comprise Fairfield’s downtown. The commitment to public and private coordination, targeted investment and quality has created a unique destination which has emerged as a true community gathering place. The Village Green is also a source of intense civic pride and provides a much needed Citywide focus and “sense of place.”

Initial public funding occurred when City Council authorized the creation of a contoured and heavily landscaped central park or “Green.” The Green contains a lake, creeks, an assortment of water features and fountains, walking paths, an outdoor amphitheater, and a tots play area. It lies in the center of two parcels of land purchased by the City to showcase two new “signature” public facilities.

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Village Green Park



New Fairfield Lane Public Library

The 25,000 square foot Fairfield Lane Library opened in September 2001. It is technologically advanced and features a prominent clock tower, a Vermont slate roof, and interior vaulted ceilings. Circulation has increased 83% since the new facility opened and library patron usage is up 132%. The Library site is juxtaposed with that of the

40,000 square. ft. Fairfield Community Arts Center, scheduled for completion in March 2005. The Center will feature a 250 seat performing arts theater, a senior citizens lounge complete with double-sided fireplace, a childcare area, an art gallery, spaces for dry and wet crafts, dance, aerobics and other individual and group activities. The facility will also provide lease-

able space for larger gatherings utilizing a multipurpose room. There, groups will have access to an adjacent, outdoor second story deck from which to overlook events being held at the park and amphitheater.

The private activity resulting from this strategic use of public capital has created significant and positive economic effects for the community. Residential development within the former 120-acre farm, on which the project sits, has been hugely successful and caters to an impressive mix of lifestyles (including young families, empty nesters and seniors). Aesthetically designed commercial development has provided desired character and balance to the downtown area as well. A new 72,000 square foot Kroger prototype store and 195,000 square foot of adjacent retail and office activity has become fully occupied in just two short years. Uses include the 400 seat Symmes Tavern on the Green restaurant, the Village Green Coffee Shop, the Pottery Place, and a variety of legal, medical and financial institutions.



"Summer Showers" also known as "Water Fight"



Village Green Park Fountain and "Summer Showers" Sculpture

Most significant has been the community spirit and activity that is evident within the Village Green. Annual 4th of July activities have drawn thousands to the area. Arts festivals have been regionally promoted. The Thursday night "Groovin on the Green" concert series at the outdoor amphitheater has been supplemented with community theater events as well as by Friday night "Movies in the Park", sponsored by the Fairfield Fire Department. An award winning sculpture acquisition program now includes nine life-size

bronze pieces within the downtown area, thus providing a comfortable, yet urbane, hands-on exposure to the arts. Plans for a major, annual fall event that is uniquely Fairfield are in the works. It is likely that the venues will include international food (Fairfield is also home to Jungle Jim's International Market), art, crafts, and a variety of music and performing groups.

The City favorably competes for market share in the burgeoning Cincinnati/Dayton corridor as a part of booming Butler County. Fairfield's diverse tax base comprises 43,000 jobs and includes the home offices of Cincinnati Financial Insurance Corporation, Ohio Casualty and Skyline Chili. Additionally, Pella Windows, Medco Health Solutions (formerly Merck Medco Pharmaceuticals) and DNA Diagnostics Center are also members of the City's corporate family. The combination of a growing and stable financial base and a record of responsive and responsible service delivery, has enabled the City to enhance its offerings beyond the provision of basic services. The City's nationally accredited Police Department, competitive utility rates and an aggressive street maintenance program are a few of the municipal offerings that particularly stand out.

As Fairfield readies for the 50th anniversary of its incorporation in 2005, the City has positioned itself to strategically build on its strong foundation and "reinvent" itself to help sustain its neighborhoods, business community and tax base. Fairfield's ability to fund new quality of life facilities and programs has enabled



An Interactive Moment



"Puppy Love"

this mature suburb to offer its residents and businesses a unique environment and lifestyle that is not readily available elsewhere in the region.

Importantly, the City's residents also sense an enhanced level of respect from the surrounding metropolitan area. Fairfield is rightfully enthusiastic about its evolving reputation as a progressive and visionary City. The synergistic energy that exists among a highly focused Mayor

and City Council leadership team, a supportive public and a dedicated staff, is evident. It is for good reason that the City's Economic Development literature carries the moniker "Fairfield Works."

For additional information visit the City's website at:
www.fairfield-city.org

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