

Media Release

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2012 Bicentennial Commission Presents its Findings: "Blueprint for the Bicentennial" presented to Mayor Coleman and City Council by Co-Chairs

(Columbus) After a year of public input from thousands of residents, the 2012 Bicentennial Commission co-chairs presented the "Blueprint for the Bicentennial" to Mayor Michael B. Coleman and members of City Council. In transmitting its summary report, the Commission Co-Chairs called their findings "a roadmap towards a new legacy for our healthy and growing city."

The Blueprint for the Bicentennial outlines seven major planning themes and provides some specific recommendations for major projects and initiatives leading up to the community's celebration of Columbus' 200th birthday. The Commission timed the release of its findings in the hope it will help guide parts of the Bicentennial Bond Package that the City plans to put before voters on November 2, 2008.

"Now that our Bicentennial Commission has worked through thousands of ideas from residents, it's time for the real work to begin – turning this vision in to reality," said Mayor Coleman. "These recommendations are just the seeds, and now we need to nurture them and watch them grow as we build towards 2012. The City will do its part, but we are also counting on local businesses, families and neighborhood groups to step up and help make the City great for our 200th Birthday."

In July 2007, Mayor Coleman and City Council created the 2012 Bicentennial Commission of local residents and community leaders. The commission was co-chaired by Bishop Timothy J. Clarke, of the First Church of God, Ohio State University Present Gordon Gee and Abigail S. Wexner, founder and Chair of the Columbus Coalition Against Family Violence and KidsOhio.org

"The remarkable work of the 2012 Bicentennial Commission illustrates the power of bringing together creative minds and people of good intent. The findings reflect broad community input and an exciting vision for the future of Columbus," said Dr. Gee. "I am especially grateful to Mayor Coleman for his leadership and to my fellow co-chairs for their wisdom and hands-on involvement."

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The 2012 Bicentennial Commission was led by a 31-member steering group with 13 committees and more than 250 volunteer commissioners, charged with creating and implementing a community engagement process, processing and reviewing ideas from citizens and organizations with a wide and diverse array of interests and priorities and create a cohesive and meaningful agenda that was broad based, financially viable and attainable. The Commission's was charged to collect and organize citizens' ideas in three key areas: building America's best quality of life; celebrating our history, people and future; and setting 21st Century goals and innovations.

“Realizing our vision for 2012 means unified planning, collaboration, clarity of priorities, and smart action,” said Ms. Wexner. “This Blueprint emphasizes several central themes that all of us in the community can organize around and create meaningful results for the health of our region.”

Over the past year the commission engaged thousands of Columbus residents through the use of a 2012 festival “think tank,” neighborhood meetings, online and neighborhood surveys, youth and college forums, and a citywide citizens' summit with more than 1,500 participants. Over 10,000 citizen comments were gathered.

“I am proud of our Mayor for his visionary leadership and for the thousands of citizens of our great city who let their voices be heard in this single largest public input process in the history of Columbus,” stated Bishop Clarke.

Public input provided the Commission's 13 areas of focus committees the beginning foundation that eventually led to the seven broad themes that formulate the report and its recommendations

- Enhance our great neighborhoods
- Create a strong and active Downtown
- Increase our economic prosperity by engaging our talent rich workforce
- Provide a 21st century transportation system
- Commit to a green, sustainable region
- Create a vibrant, culturally rich city
- Embrace our history while defining our new legacy

The “Blueprint for the Bicentennial” is available online at www.Columbus2012.org.