

early Now?

The Vision
'was a plan
that was based
on community
input. It's a
high standard
to shoot for,
but if you don't
set a high
standard to
shoot at,
you're never
going to get
there.'

— MARK MCKILLIP
city development officer

- October 10, DCI released a detailed schedule of goals — and the committee members working on them — in the areas of retail, arts and entertainment, environment, sports and hospitality, housing, office space, marketing, finance and leadership.
- Last month, DCI announced a holiday promotion plan aimed at increasing downtown retail sales 5 percent.
- DCI has established a \$9 million market-rate housing loan fund to encourage the development of residential housing.

Greive explains that the public can soon expect DCI's committees to release benchmarks setting goals for percentage increases in all target areas such as housing. That way, DCI's progress can be measured year after year.

"DCI is going to be accountable for the results," he says.

Sounds like a serious commitment. But it also sounds a little like Cincinnati history, Strauss suggests.

Looking back vs. looking ahead

In 1989, on a motion by then-Councilmember Strauss, City Council authorized the appointment of a committee to determine whether the city was on target with downtown development as outlined in the Cincinnati 2000 Plan.

That plan, "a design for a pleasing city," had been approved by council in 1982 to guide development through the year 2000. It contained specific goals for retail, housing, office buildings, parking and transportation, entertainment, hotels and convention center development.

The review committee found that the city had made "remarkable progress" on elements of the plan but concluded in its report that "the balance of the plan is substantially behind target and well behind its potential achievement." Among examples cited were retail space losses. While the plan called for an increase of about 400,000 square feet in retail space, the committee found that 230,000 square feet had been developed while 870,000 had been lost, leaving a net loss of 640,000 square feet.

In its recommendations, the committee called for the selection of a board of trustees — to consist of 15 members with strong business or personal interest in the success of downtown — for a "proactive Cincinnati Downtown Progress Committee."

That committee set about the task of investigating revitalization efforts in other downtowns and developing long-term strategies for downtown as well as the attainment of 2000 Plan goals, recalls Strauss, who was on the progress committee. But, he says, consensus among business and government leaders was difficult to find, partly because times were changing.

Historically, he says, businessmen had taken their ideas and needs about downtown to the city manager. Now, council members and mayors were wanting, and taking, more of a stake in decisions. Business people had begun backing council members of their choice.

Also becoming apparent were the needs of diversifying businesses and the need for the city to

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