



Columbus Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC) 2017 IDA Award Nomination – Public Space

Rarely do you get a chance to completely change the way people view a city. But the Scioto Greenways project did just that...both literally and figuratively.

The revitalized Downtown Riverfront project, which was led by the Columbus Downtown Development Corporation (CDDC), not only provided a new view of the city by creating greenspace and pathways where water once flowed, it also created a renewed sense of civic pride and excitement about the possibilities of our riverfront.

The Scioto River used to be an artificially wide sedimentation pond that was both an underutilized and an overlooked area of our city. Instead of an active river, we had a mud flat. Instead of people strolling along the banks, we had walls and barriers preventing access.

But that's all changed! Now, the Downtown Columbus Riverfront is the signature amenity for the community and a gleaming example of what public-private partnerships can accomplish.

The concept of the Scioto Greenways, as with most great ideas, came directly from our community. The genesis of the concept came out of the 2010 Downtown Strategic Planning process, which ultimately resulted in 12 catalytic projects designed to make Downtown Columbus a hotbed of activity for residents and visitors alike. Out of all the ideas presented to the community in the Strategic Plan, Idea #12 (the Scioto Greenways) became priority #1. CDDC was tasked with taking this concept, which was embraced by the community, and making it a reality. While technical and complex, this idea wouldn't sit on a shelf as part of a plan. CDDC's mantra is to think big and act bigger.

Following a feasibility study, CDDC secured \$36 million in funding from generous public and private partners and began the hard work of restoring the riverfront.

Scioto Greenways consisted of three primary components:

- 1) Removal of the low-head Main Street Dam
- 2) Restoration of the Scioto River channel to its natural width
- 3) Creation of 33 acres of new urban greenspace complete with 1.5 miles of multi-use pathways, nearly 800 trees and more than 75,000 plant features

In November 2013, the project began. After working against an aggressive 24-month schedule during a period of record-low temperatures and record rainfalls, the Scioto Greenways made its public debut, right on time and on budget, in November 2015.



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CDDC didn't just support this concept; it led the way. This idea accomplished what other plans had struggled to achieve over the past 100 years – a connected, active and healthy river system that serves as a community asset. The Greenways is the final piece in the transformation of the riverfront that has led to more than \$400 million in private sector activity that's been built, under construction or in the pipeline. The Downtown Columbus Riverfront is a jewel in the revitalization efforts, building upon the existing success of The Scioto Mile, another public-private partnership led by CDDC that opened in 2011.

But beyond facts and figures, the Scioto Greenways has succeeded in the most important way. Our community has embraced it; and runners, joggers, walkers and cyclists can be seen using it in all weather conditions. Canoes and kayaks are now a regular site on the downtown riverfront. Visitors not only have a beautiful means to traverse our community, but they can be inspired by awe-inspiring architecture and amazing cityscape vistas as they walk through the core connector of our Downtown.

It is often said that it should be about the journey, not simply the destination. The Scioto Greenways project has provided a beautiful path, whether by walkway or waterway, to travel through the heart of Downtown Columbus. It's connected the core of our community with successful neighborhoods to the north, from Ohio State University to Clintonville.

Thanks to the leadership of CDDC, this idea became a reality. The Scioto Greenways has become one of the most used and beloved green spaces – in fact, over 1.5 million people visit and enjoy the riverfront annually. From kayakers or paddle boarders on the river to people enjoying picnics on the banks, to serving as the host to our premier events, like the Columbus Arts Festival, Jazz and Ribs Fest or Red, White and Boom, the new Scioto Greenways has already become a treasured community asset.

The achievements of the Scioto Greenways can be measured in concrete terms:

- The project has brought over 1.5 million annual visitors to the riverfront.
- The enhanced riverfront has created \$400 million of investment in office, residential, retail and entertainment in the surrounding RiverSouth neighborhood to date.
- The Scioto Greenways has served as a front yard and catalyst for the new Scioto Peninsula Neighborhood, leveraging an additional \$130 million of on the west site of the River.
- Downtown Columbus residential population is poised to hit 8,000 by the end of 2017.