

When a Plan Comes Together

by Bobbie S. Bryant, KLC Community Development Advisor

For many years, the City of Carrollton has remained a charming riverfront community, offering its residents the benefits of classic “small-town America.” Today, Carrollton has a renewed enthusiasm for its location along two rivers and its local history.

In the past year, the city has undertaken a two-pronged approach to economic development and is working on implementing its plans. One strategy focuses on development along the riverfront, and the other is the ongoing efforts of improving the downtown commercial district. The overall plan is for the two strategies to converge through intentional and focused efforts of tourism, private entrepreneurship and property development.

City leaders undertook an extensive planning process in 2010-11 to develop the Point Park master plan, complete with riverfront design plans. Working with Lose & Associates, the city invited residents to give their input into how the riverfront should be developed. During this planning process, the city also purchased land for the Two Rivers RV Campground and set about developing the park. In May of this year, the park opened.

The campground has 33 level, concrete pads, each with enough space for an RV and two vehicles. The campground provides full water, electric and sewer hookups and free Wi-Fi. It also has a new bathhouse, a pavilion and playground equipment for children.

Mayor Gene McMurry was proud to cut the ribbon, saying, “This project has taken



us a while to complete, but we’re so proud of the response by both the tourists and our local folks. The city is working really hard to connect the river to our community, and our plans are coming together.”

Earlier this year, the mayor and the city council worked with the Carrollton Main Street Program and, with assistance from the Kentucky League of Cities Community Consulting Services, again invited the citizens to speak up about what they’d like to see in terms of downtown economic development. Local residents expressed particular interest in connecting the riverfront to the neighborhoods in and around downtown.

Because of the public’s input, the city is developing a walking trail from the RV Campground connecting it to the downtown. Future plans include a splashpark located between the RV Campground and downtown.

Having water-related activities for local children as well as visitors coming to the region is a significant way for people to learn more about their environment and

river heritage. Carrollton’s leadership has made a significant planning effort and financial commitment to the residents to provide economic development strategies built upon the local economy while attracting tourism dollars from those that are drawn to the area.

City leaders and volunteers of the Main Street Program are proud to discuss the considerable amount of effort they’ve already put into improving their community.

“We recently completed a pretty comprehensive downtown market analysis, with the help of Northern Kentucky Area Development District. Now, with the opening of the RV Campground and the walking trail underway, we’re watching the pieces begin to come together,” said Sam Burgess, manager of the Carrollton Main Street Program.

As these developments continue, the city is partnering with others in the community to raise more funds in order to build out the remainder of the master plan. Local grant writer and executive director of the Carroll County



Mayor McMurray with Councilmember Kevin Craig



Community Development Corporation Joan Moore had this to share: “For years, our residents have talked about the potential along the river. Now we’re seeing it happen. We secured a \$100,000 Recreational Trails Program grant to help construct the River Walk, and now we’re working on a grant for the splashpark. It’s probably the most popular concept of the entire master plan.”

The City of Carrollton has taken the planning process another step and is now the new owner of a building located across from the courthouse. After purchasing the property from the master commissioner, the city’s plan is to implement more of the recommendations that came from residents during the planning process.

“Our idea is to clean up the property, get it renovated and open it as an incubator for

Facts About Carrollton

- The City of Carrollton is located off exit 44 of Interstate 71 with a population of 3,938.
- Carrollton lies at the confluence of the Ohio and Kentucky rivers in north central Kentucky, approximately halfway between Louisville and Cincinnati, Ohio.
- The city is only 14 miles from the Kentucky Speedway and 20 miles from Belterra Casino in Indiana.
- Founded in 1794, Carrollton, the county seat of Carroll County (population 10,811), was once the third-largest burley tobacco market in the nation.
- Carrollton is home to one of Kentucky’s finest state parks, General Butler State Resort Park.

small business startups. We want local folks to know that we’re committed to the downtown, and we believe our investment shows that we want these strategies to work. Now we need local people to start investing in their hometown,” McMurry said.

Other activities in and around Carrollton include a river sweep and downtown cleanup, the summer concert series and the popular farmers market.

When asked about inviting the public to weigh in during the planning process,

Mayor McMurry smiled and said, “We wanted and needed everyone to be involved — to take part in the conversation. We were lucky; they told us what they thought and helped us make the right choices for our citizens.” **KYC**

For more information, please visit www.carrolltontourism.com.

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