## University District Special Improvement District of Columbus

# Plan for Public Services & Improvements

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### Summary

The petitioners propose this Initial Plan for Public Services and Public Improvements (the "Plan") to be carried out by University District Special Improvement District of Columbus (the "District"). This Plan will provide physical improvements and provide services for cleanliness and environmental maintenance, public safety, infrastructure improvements, beautification, marketing and advocacy.

The Plan will be funded by an annual assessment to be levied on real property located within the District of approximately \$270,000 for tax years 2015 through 2019. An anticipated annual contribution in the amount of \$50,000 by The Ohio State University ("OSU") for those properties that are exempt and within the District will be made to support the Plan. The annual cost of the plan will be approximately \$320,000. Assessments will be levied for tax years 2015 through 2019.

Services and improvements provided by the Plan will commence on or before July 1, 2016. (Services and improvements may commence as early as January 1, 2016, depending upon when the District begins receiving contributions.) The last assessment payments will be due in June of 2020. Services and improvements provided by the Plan will terminate on June 30, 2021.

#### **Background**

## Special Improvement Districts Generally

Under Chapter 1710 of the Ohio Revised Code ("ORC 1710"), owners of real property located within a self-defined geographic area may petition to establish a special improvement district ("SID") for purposes of assessing real property located within the geographic area for the cost of providing area-wide supplemental public services and improvements. The petition must be signed by persons owning either (1) at least 60 percent of the front footage of all real property (with the general exception of church and government owned property) located within the proposed SID or (2) at least 75 percent of the area of all real property (with the general exception of church and government owned property) located within the proposed SID.

If the required signatures are obtained and the petition receives required governmental approval, then the SID is created, the operations of the SID commence, and assessments for the cost of SID provided services and improvements are levied.

A SID is governed by a board of directors consisting of at least five directors. Except for director positions required by ORC 1710 to be filled by government appointment, the directors are elected by the property owners. (The District's board would include two government appointed directors.)

### The District

The University District of Columbus is one of the nation's largest collegiate markets. However, it has yet to achieve its inherent market potential to a wider audience. Several factors contribute to this under-performance, but those most often cited by property owners, business owners, market consultants, and recent customer surveys are cleanliness and safety. At the same time, University District businesses face competition from an ever-increasing number of retail, entertainment and housing options in other urban locations, which generally are located in highly managed environments and are perceived as cleaner and safer.

In response, the University Community Business Association in February of 2014 recommended that property owners be surveyed for potential interest in establishing a special improvement district. Individual interviews with property owners were conducted from March until June. In addition, a survey was sent to businesses in May to determine the breadth of service needs for the District. A report of the findings from the interviews and survey was delivered to all property owners within the targeted area of the District in July of 2014. Shortly after, an Advisory Group was established consisting of interested property owners to review the report's findings. The Advisory Group made recommendations for selected services that would fulfill the needs of the District. Those recommendations serve as the basis for this Plan.

### Services and Improvements

The petitioners intend that the District will deliver the following services and improvements, as determined and overseen by the District's board of directors:

#### Environmental Maintenance Services

Services to improve the appearance of public areas. These services may include:

- Removal of litter from sidewalks, public areas, and alleys
- Mechanical sweeping to collect grit, glass, and cigarette butts
- Removal of illegal handbill postings and maintenance of information kiosks
- Removal of graffiti and stickers from public streetscape furnishings, fixtures, and signs
- Removal of pedestrian level graffiti from building facades fronting public rights-of-way
- Remedy over-flowing waste receptacles
- Power wash sidewalks to remove stains and organic matter
- Power wash litter and recycling containers
- Limited snow and ice removal to maintain adequate paths of travel
- A system to report and correct the failure of public and private entities to deliver services or maintain property, including the City of Columbus, private property owners, private trash collectors, and other service providers
- Coordination of City of Columbus and other services
- · Removal of a safety or health hazard

#### Supplemental Security Services

Services to improve public safety and the perception of safety. These services may include:

- Supplemental radio-equipped and uniformed security patrols
- Surveillance to assist in the intervention and prevention of crime

- Efforts to reduce panhandling, public consumption of alcohol, inebriated individuals, and intimidating behavior
- Outreach services to connect street people to services and help move them off the streets
- Coordination of security functions, including the Columbus Division of Police, the OSU-CPD Joint Patrol, Community Crime Patrol, private security operated by members, and District ambassadors
- Linked communications, including web sites and radio networks
- Provide and coordinate security escorts as requested
- Crime advisories
- Crime prevention advice, literature, and programs
- Community "ambassador" services for the general public, including directions, assistance, general information, and hospitality

### Infrastructure

District dollars will maintain or improve the following:

- Maintain appearance of light poles, benches, waste receptacles, bicycle hitches, traffic light posts and info kiosks
- Monitor and report conditions of newspaper and ad boxes
- A system to report and monitor the condition of public infrastructure including streets, alleys, lighting, signage
- Repair and replace brick streetscape materials for safe pedestrian travel

### **Beautification**

Services to improve the appearance of the district as a place that is well cared. These services may include:

- Weed removal
- Maintain new street trees and tree pits
- Seasonal plants/flowers in selected locations
- University District branded flags and banners and seasonal event flags

#### Member Services & Communication

Services that add value to membership in the SID, strengthen the cohesiveness of the District, and improve communication among members of the District and governmental or quasi-governmental agencies. These services may include:

- Newsletters and special announcements
- Annual report
- Public relations and earned media
- Data collection and information management
- Electronic and printed materials
- Interface with City of Columbus departments to solve issues affecting the business environment such as city service delivery, parking, and code enforcement
- Advocacy of property owner interests to governmental and quasi-public entities

#### **Budget**

The annual cost of the plan will be approximately \$320,000 from July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2021. The District's board of directors will have discretion on how to allocate District funds among the services and improvements to be provided; provided, however, that the expected annual contribution of \$53,600 from OSU and OSU Hillel will support the Plan's services. The directors will produce an annual report for members of the District which describes how funds are allocated. Through the annual membership meeting, the directors' committee structure, and surveys of members, the District's board of directors will solicit advice on services and improvements and the allocation of funds.

## **District Territory**

Unless otherwise directed by the District's board of trustees, services for properties that are exempt from District assessments under Chapter 1710 of the Ohio Revised Code will be provided only if such properties have requested inclusion in the District or have committed to voluntary payments, in lieu of being included in the District, for each service to be provided. Properties outside the District may contract with the District to provide services, provided that the contract price covers no less than the full cost of providing such services.

A detailed listing of all property included in the District, as identified by current tax parcel numbers assigned by the franklin county Auditor's office is attached hereto as Exhibit 1. A map showing the boundaries of the District is attached hereto as Exhibit 2.

#### Method of Assessment

In accordance with ORC 1710, assessments will be levied in proportion to the benefits which may result from the Plan. The determination of the special assessments for each calendar year of the Plan shall be made as of May 1 of the preceding calendar year. The special assessment amount for each parcel shall be based upon the values then shown on the records of the Franklin County Auditor. The land area of each tax parcel shown on the records of the Franklin County Auditor shall be presumed to be accurate, unless and until rebutted by more accurate information.

The total annual assessment shall be \$270,000 per year, to be assessed against the benefited parcels in proportion to the land area of the parcels as reflected on the records of the Franklin County Auditor. Condominium properties shall be treated as a single parcel.

## Term of Assessments and of Services and Improvements

Assessments will be levied for tax years 2015 through 2019 and begin to accrue on January 1, 2016. Services and improvements provided by the Plan will commence on or before July 1, 2016. The last assessment payments will be due June 30, 2020.

Services and improvements provided by the Plan will terminate on June 30, 2021. Directors for the District will have the option of terminating the Plan prior to June 30, 2021 if one or more exempt, government property owners do not make their annual, voluntary contribution.

## **EXHIBIT 1**

## DETAILED LISTING OF ALL PARCELS INCLUDED IN THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, INDENTIFIED BY CURRENT TAX PARCEL NUMBER

010-000336	010-013955	010-027106	010-038086	010-051950
010-000616	010-014256	010-027913	010-038101	010-052030
010-001214	010-015100	010-028213	010-038695	010-052317
010-001496	010-015339	010-028386	010-038732	010-052595
010-001744	010-015589	010-028606	010-038826	010-052840
010-002311	010-015689	010-028622	010-039302	010-053080
010-003235	010-015690	010-029138	010-039358	010-053320
010-003435	010-017190	010-029660	010-040493	010-053682
010-004030	010-018235	010-029746	010-040615	010-053683
010-004154	010-018622	010-029747	010-040616	010-053701
010-004608	010-018623	010-029763	010-041287	010-053768
010-004757	010-018758	010-029788	010-041424	010-054861
010-004926	010-018978	010-029804	010-041787	010-055391
010-005252	010-019044	010-029871	010-042265	010-055865
010-005389	010-019082	010-030184	010-042300	010-056112
010-005605	010-019166	010-030238	010-042355	010-056471
010-006079	010-019350	010-030630	010-042399	010-056808
010-006175	010-020371	010-030639	010-043181	010-056995
010-006291	010-020372	010-031006	010-043301	010-057199
010-006292	010-021568	010-031460	010-043419	010-057344
010-006741	010-021885	010-031483	010-043455	010-057354
010-007257	010-021983	010-031932	010-043482	010-057735
010-007512	010-022010	010-032042	010-043738	010-062668
010-007581	010-022250	010-032052	010-044623	010-063229
010-007593	010-022793	010-032085	010-044636	010-063814
010-007801	010-023522	010-032086	010-044811	010-064241
010-007979	010-023524	010-032149	010-044887	010-065029
010-008105	010-023526	010-032903	010-045214	010-069995
010-008390	010-023557	010-034533	010-046501	010-080090
010-008869	010-023862	010-034880	010-046623	010-088526
010-010077	010-024124	010-034930	010-046665	010-094900
010-010375	010-024793	010-035174	010-046672	010-198878
010-010623	010-024880	010-035281	010-047106	010-269251
010-010850	010-024881	010-035433	010-047617	010-269252
010-010874	010-024884	010-035979	010-047779	010-269253
010-010894	010-024887	010-036054	010-047837	010-269254
010-011229	010-024921	010-036280	010-047913	
010-011247	010-025165	010-036385	010-048078	
010-011934	010-025559	010-037011	010-048956	
010-012021	010-025565	010-037250	010-049478	
010-012756	010-025566	010-037287	010-049540	
010-012829	010-025584	010-037288	010-049660	
010-013403	010-026541	010-038084	010-050948	
010-013711	010-026573	010-038085	010-051766	

## **EXHIBIT 2**

## BOUNDARIES FOR THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

