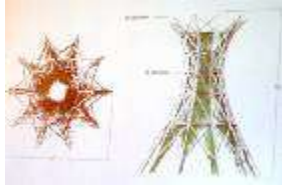


## Sculpture would polish off Scioto Mile



By [Robert Vitale](#)



Brian Tolle Studios

An artist's rendering of the new sculpture for the Scioto riverfront

It appears the finishing touch on Columbus' riverfront facelift will be six stories tall and shiny.

Holiday gifts and cards sent out this week by the Pizzuti Companies to government officials, business leaders and others around town included details about a massive sculpture planned for Downtown's Scioto Mile.

People involved say the design is still in flux — and private funding still is being solicited — but plans presented to the Columbus Art Commission earlier this year show a six-story structure of mirrored glass that would reflect the city skyline.

The design is called a hyperboloid structure, which is the shape used for power-plant cooling towers.

Artist Brian Tolle said this morning that his father's first job was designing cooling towers for American Electric Power, which held the first patent on the technology. It's a modern combination of architecture and sculpture, he said, and it would rest on piers that would leave room for people to walk inside.

The drawing presented to the city was an early version of the concept, he said, but current plans still use the same shape.

Tolle said his hope is to create a signature piece that identifies Columbus the way the Gateway

Arch defines St. Louis or the Space Needle identifies Seattle.

“I’m not trying to create a replica of a cooling tower,” he said.

Tolle also created a portrait of Benjamin Franklin portrait that Pizzuti Companies founder Ron Pizzuti donated in July to Franklin County for its new courts building.

The new work — tentatively titled The Columbiad — would be erected on an outcropping along the Scioto River at Town Street. Pizzuti’s mailing says it would “reflect the strength, optimism and progressiveness of the community.”

Pizzuti sent out coffee mugs that included an upside-down Columbus skyline, which an accompanying card said is how it would appear reflected in Tolle’s sculpture.

Ron Pizzuti is an art collector and advocate for art in public spaces.

“Public art plays an important role in defining a community’s image, energizes our public spaces, engages the community and enhances our quality of life,” he said in July.

Tolle is scheduled to speak about the value of public art at a Columbus Metropolitan Club luncheon on Dec. 14. He didn’t return a phone call yesterday to his New York studio.

Since plans for the Scioto Mile were developed in 2007, city officials have talked about what’s called the “Town Street prow” as an ideal spot for a major work of art. The site is located where the former Town Street bridge once connected Franklinton and Downtown.

The bridge closed in 2008 and is being rebuilt with Rich Street as its eastern terminus.