

CHAPTER 1: **LAND USE PLAN**

I. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the City's official policy with regard to the form and pattern of future development and redevelopment. It will be used to direct growth by serving as a reference guide when considering rezonings, annexations, subdivisions and other items that pertain to the use of land within the City of Fairfield. It will also be used to direct planning for public infrastructure and aid decisions for private sector investment.

The existing land use pattern and land characteristics in a community will suggest the best uses for undeveloped and underdeveloped land. Local government typically provides land in its Plan for open space, parks, industrial, commercial, office and residential uses. These decisions can be guided by unique siting opportunities, needs or constraints that make each section of a community uniquely suitable for a specific land use. The following discussion, tables, graphs and maps will help with evaluating future land use needs of the community and allocating the limited land area in a way that promotes efficient development and a high quality of life for residents and businesses.

1.0 *Perspective*

Land is a limited resource. Undisturbed by people, it is distinguishable by its natural features: topography, vegetation, soils, drainage patterns, etc. Land, in the context of the City of Fairfield, takes on new distinguishing characteristics; i.e. man-made features. Man-made features include roads, housing, industrial buildings, water and sewer systems, parks, schools, airports, commercial centers, etc. It is the combination of man-made and natural features that shape our living environment and, to a large extent, our quality of life. Therefore, decisions of how to use our limited land resources (land use decisions) are crucial to the future well-being of the community.

2.0 *Purpose of Land Use Planning*

The undertaking of land use planning has three (3) main purposes:

1. Aid City Council and Planning Commission in protecting the public health, safety and welfare with regard to the growth and development of the community.
2. Provide a framework for evaluating land use questions that is responsive to pertinent issues and gives direction to the land use decision making process.
3. Develop a land use mix that will ensure appropriate balanced growth for the City.

3.0 *Intent of Land Use Planning*

The intent of land use planning includes the following statements:

1. Promote continued economic development for the City and the region.
2. Maintain and enhance property values.
3. Encourage the redevelopment of outdated or incompatible land uses.
4. Mitigate existing land use conflicts and avoid future land use conflicts.

5. Preserve sensitive environmental areas.
6. Meet the needs of residents for services and recreation near their places of residence.

4.0 Methodology

The Land Use Plan for Fairfield has continued to evolve using the following methodology:

1. The Evolution of Fairfield's Land Use Pattern is examined through past land use plans (1966 – 2005). The major issues and concerns that were addressed and the methods for handling those concerns and issues are analyzed to determine their current relevance and actual impacts. Fairfield's changing regional role is discussed in an attempt to understand the impacts and demands the region has placed on the City.
2. Existing Land Use Analysis provides an inventory for each land use including the remaining undeveloped land resource (quantity and location). Existing inventories are compared to past inventories to show changes in land use.
3. Existing Development Pattern Analysis examines the functional characteristics of the City's development pattern and sets objectives that guide future land use planning decisions.
4. Natural Features Constraints are identified to increase sensitivity and awareness of those areas of the City where limitations or specific requirements should be imposed on any development. Some areas have constraints severe enough that prohibit development altogether.
5. A Land Use Plan is the end product. It represents the combination and interrelationships of all facets of this study. It consists of a set of 1) Community Land Use Goals derived from perceived community needs and standards, and legislative and statutory provisions; 2) a set of specific recommendations designed to positively address previously identified land use and development problems and issues. These specific recommendations are consistent with the Community Land Use Goals; and 3) The Land Use Plan Map graphically represents the most desirable development pattern by designating each parcel of land in the City as a general land use type. This map is the major land use policy statement and reference source in making day to day development and planning decisions. Most importantly, all procedures for the Implementation of the Land use Plan (goals, recommendations and the land use map) are reviewed and changes are recommended as needed.

II. BACKGROUND: FAIRFIELD'S LAND USE EVOLUTION

1.0 Fairfield and the Region

The City of Fairfield is considered a suburban, full service city that provides the vast majority of its resident and business service needs such as water, sewer, police and fire. The City shares its school district with Fairfield Township. Fairfield has evolved to be a major player in the metropolitan region. The City's business and residential base has grown to a point where it is now twice as large as any city in neighboring Hamilton

County (other than the City of Cincinnati itself.) The City has convenient access to two major expressways (I-75 and I-275), has substantial utility capacity and strategically located land available to develop. All are vital elements to the continued growth of the City.

Over the last fifty-five years the City's population has increased substantially. The U.S. Census report shows that the City of Fairfield's 2000 population of 42,097 has grown from 14,691 in 1970; 200% growth rate over thirty years. (See Figure 1.1 below)

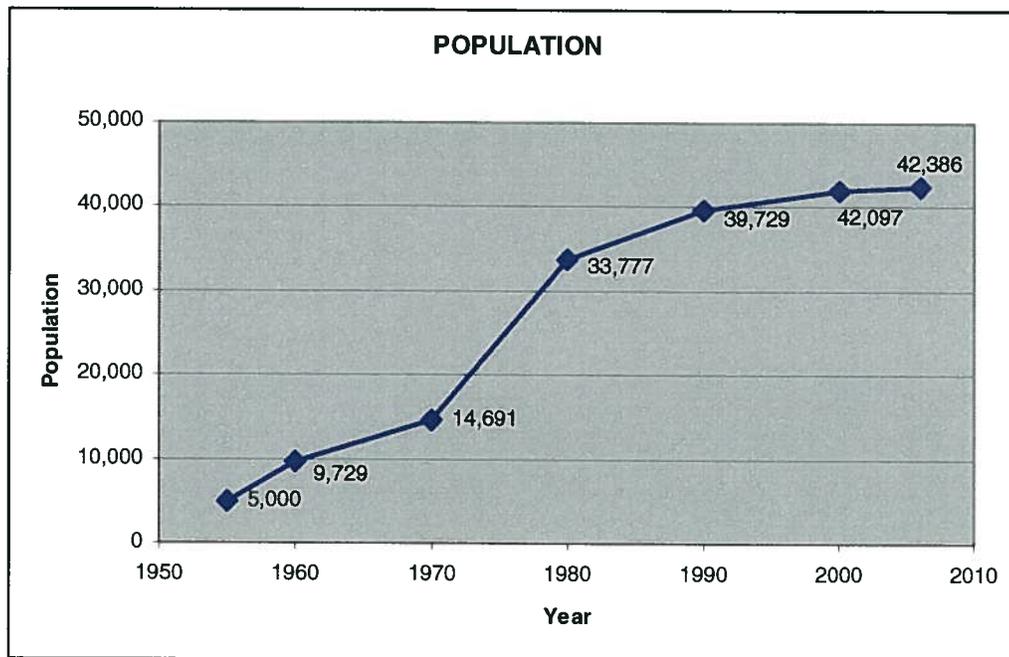


Figure 1.1

The City itself grew at a rapid pace. Several of the forces that caused that growth were external: 1) location of the City; 2) suburban migration patterns; 3) transportation systems; and 4) availability of skilled labor. The development of improved transportation facilities, combined with growth movement from the urban centers (i.e. Cincinnati and Hamilton) facilitated the outward movement of residential, industrial and commercial activities into areas with readily accessible and available land.

Fairfield began to substantially suburbanize in the 1970s and 1980s with an increase in residential developments, auto oriented commercial nodes (strip centers), wholesale/ distribution centers and emerging interstate office and light industrial parks. All features of the typical suburban city. No development plans for a city center emerged in Fairfield until the mid-1990s with construction beginning in 2000 on the Lane Library.

As the City began to mature during the 1990's and to the present, redevelopment of older underutilized facilities has become an important component of city growth. As

the market continues to grow and available raw land resources diminish, redevelopment provides great potential for future economic and visual impact within the City. Examples of successful redevelopment within the City include: Jungle Jim's expansion on Route 4; Medco-Health on Route 4; and the Justice Center on Pleasant Avenue, which had been a retail shopping center.

2.0 *Past Land Use Plans*

Past Land Use Plans predicted the strains of rapid growth on the City and recommended steps to control growth.

2.1 The 1966 Plan

The 1966 Plan was completed prior to the development explosion of the late 1960s and 1970s. However, the beginning of expansive sprawl was evident. The 1966 Plan greatly underestimated the speed at which this development would occur, predicting a 1970 population of 11,280 and a 1980 population of 13,220. Despite the expected modest growth rate, the need to control growth was strongly recommended.

2.2 The 1979 Plan

The 1979 Plan was prepared after the biggest growth period of the City. The struggle to provide adequate city services had become a reality as the City grew and the land use pattern moved in several directions at the same time. Again, the need to control growth was expressed.

The 1966 Plan recognized that a potential for problems existed because of growth pressure that would utilize the City's vast supply of undeveloped land. By 1979, it was clear that the potential problems had been underestimated. In 1988, the effects of development were a reality: 1) traffic congestion, 2) strained city services and 3) a financial crisis for the City. Development of the remaining vacant areas could either contribute to the economic/ financial security of the community or further complicate existing problems, depending on what path the City leaders chose to follow.

2.3 The 1989 Plan

The 1989 Plan incorporated the 1986 housing mix objective of 70% single-family detached housing and 30% multi-family housing. 1987 was the first time commercial and industrial activity outpaced residential development. It has continued to do so ever since, thus diversifying the tax base.

2.4 The 1992 Plan

A major focus of the 1992 Plan was the development of a Town Center. The Town Center is a district within the City that encompasses 268 acres consisting of vacant land and existing buildings on developed lots. Much of the Town Center had been a 120 acre farm owned by the McCormick family. The farm was developed as a mixed use development, referred to as Village Green. It now consists of residential uses, offices, retail, parks, open space and several large public uses, which comprises many of the City's governmental functions.

The 1992 Plan had recommended that civic uses be located in the Town Center. With that goal in mind a new Library, Community Arts Center and Justice Center were built. In addition, several other government and quasi-government functions are also located in the area, including a U.S. Post Office.

III. EXISTING LAND USE

1.0 Purpose

Existing land use studies are undertaken in an effort to provide the basic information necessary for the development and implementation of future land use development plans. The present land use patterns, if properly analyzed, provide insight into the solutions of a wide variety of community planning issues ranging from future zoning patterns to the adequacy of present community facilities. Land use studies also reveal the amount and location of vacant land areas and their potential for future development. Through careful analysis, the existing land uses help identify present deficiencies and provide hints as to where future problems can be anticipated if adjustments are not made.

2.0 Survey and Inventory

Information concerning the existing land use in the City of Fairfield was gathered on a parcel by parcel survey in 2004 and updated in 2009. Table 1.1 is a summary of the current land use make-up for Fairfield. After a period of new construction and modest population growth, almost 85% of the total land in the City has been developed. Nearly 2070 acres are still available for development. However, potential use for the remaining 15% must include consideration for open space, recreation, right-of-way and unsuitable areas as well as residential, commercial and industrial uses.

Fairfield has an unusually strong mix of residential, commercial and industrial land uses. Close to 5,000 acres have been developed for residential use, constituting 44.32% of land developed to date. Public uses for streets, utilities and recreation account for 23% of developed land. Industrial development has been highly visible in recent years and accounts for 13.7% of developed land. 1,058 acres of industrial suited land remains available for future development, which will increase the tax base allowing the City to continue to provide the high quality of City services it currently enjoys.

Table 1.2 illustrates the undeveloped land by zoning classification. The largest category of undeveloped land is zoned industrial. The area north of Route 4 and east of By-Pass 4 has always been earmarked for industrial; much of the land currently remains in use for agriculture purposes (large farms). These large farms constitute almost 300 acres of prime industrial land and due to their favorable location, proximity to major highways and to City utilities, are expected to develop over time.

As previously mentioned, there are almost 2,070 acres of undeveloped land remaining in Fairfield. Just over 46% or 960 acres of undeveloped land is zoned M-2, General Industrial. Agricultural zoning, is the second largest category of undeveloped

TABLE 1.1

DEVELOPED LAND USE ANALYSIS (2010)

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>ACRES</u>	<u>%</u>
RESIDENTIAL		
1 Family	4,197.38	37.33
2 Family	53.63	0.48
Multi-Family	694.85	6.18
Mobile Home	<u>37.7</u>	0.33
TOTAL RESIDENTIAL	4,983.56	44.32
COMMERCIAL		
Town Center	125.03	1.1
Neighborhood	54.57	0.48
Highway	610.28	5.42
Office	<u>201.53</u>	1.79
TOTAL COMMERCIAL	991.41	8.79
INDUSTRIAL		
Light	1,195.46	10.63
Heavy	<u>347.62</u>	3.09
TOTAL INDUSTRIAL	1,543.08	13.72
PUBLIC		
Semi-Public	511.39	4.55
SDR	45.4	0.4
Utilities	<u>105.45</u>	0.94
TOTAL PUBLIC	662.24	5.89
RECREATION		
Parks	653.68	5.81
Open Space	<u>586.54</u>	5.21
TOTAL RECREATION	1,240.22	11.02
ROW*	1,823.60	16.22
UNDEVELOPED	2,069.49	15.54

* Includes public roads, railroad & canal

TABLE 1.2

UNDEVELOPED ACREAGE ACCORDING TO ZONING CLASSIFICATION (2010)

<u>CATEGORY</u>	<u>ZONE</u>	<u>ACREAGE</u>	<u>% TOTAL</u>
AGRICULTURE	A-1	545.83	26.38
COMMERCIAL	C-1	26.58	1.28
	C-2	3.57	<1
	C-2 PUD	8.01	<1
	C-3	37.94	1.83
	C-3A	16.26	<1
	C-3A PUD	2.81	<1
	C-4	5.53	<1
	B-1	60.71	2.93
	D-1	25.204	1.22
	D-1 PUD	1.63	<1
	ST	4.31	<1
	SE	0	0
	Total Commercial		192.554
INDUSTRIAL	M-1	98.61	4.76
	M-2	959.53	46.37
Total Industrial		1,058.14	51.13
RESIDENTIAL	R-0	38.78	1.87
	R-0 PUD	3.24	<1
	R-1	59.81	2.89
	R-2	0.85	<1
	R-3	6.12	<1
	R-3 PUD	1	<1
	R-4	0.97	<1
Total Residential		110.77	5.35
PUD	PUD	162.2	7.84
TOTAL UNDEVELOPED ACRES		2,069.49	

land with 545 acres. Figure 1.2 shows the vacant land within the City and the associated planned land use designation. The map recommends industrial type uses to be located east of Route 4 and the residential uses to be located west of it, both of which conform to the past and existing development patterns.

A comparison of general trends during the time period from 1965 to present may be helpful to understand what has occurred in the past. Table 1.3 shows the amount of both developed and undeveloped land based upon field inventories beginning in 1965 and the most recent inventory in 2009. As shown in the table, 1984 was the pivotal year in which more land had developed within the City than remained undeveloped. Development has continued on a steady path ever since, but has since slowed due to current economic conditions.

	1965	1978	1984	1988	1992	2005	2009
Total Developed Land	22.56%	46.30%	53.70%	62.11%	67.60%	81.96%	84.46%
Total Undeveloped Land	77.44%	53.70%	46.30%	37.89%	32.40%	18.04%	15.54%

Table 1.3

Single family construction is typically very cyclical in nature. Single family construction peaked in the late 1970s only to decline in the early 1980s, but crested upward again in the mid to late 1980s. Due to the state of the national economy and high interest rates in the 1980s, multi-family construction skyrocketed with large scale apartment complexes being constructed in several areas of the City. Since then, there has been a severe decline in multi-family construction due to two factors: 1) few remaining parcels zoned for multi-family housing and 2) desire to reach the 70% single-family/ 30% multi-family housing mix established in the 1989 Land Use Plan. The late 1990s and early 2000s saw smaller lot size developments such as Benchway, Village Green and Stockton Station.

IV. EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PATTERN ANALYSIS

This section identifies changes in land use patterns that have occurred since the adoption of the 1992 and 2005 Land Use Plans. Figure 1.3 shows existing land uses within the City of Fairfield.

1.0 Town Center

Since its inception, the City of Fairfield had several disparate commercial areas, but had no identifiable downtown district. In the 1990s, City officials initiated the designation of a “Town Center” in hopes of stimulating a downtown type development. During this time the Town Center Development Plan was adopted in order to help guide development and redevelopment within the downtown area.



**PROPOSED LAND USE
FOR EXISTING
UNDEVELOPED LAND
(2010)**

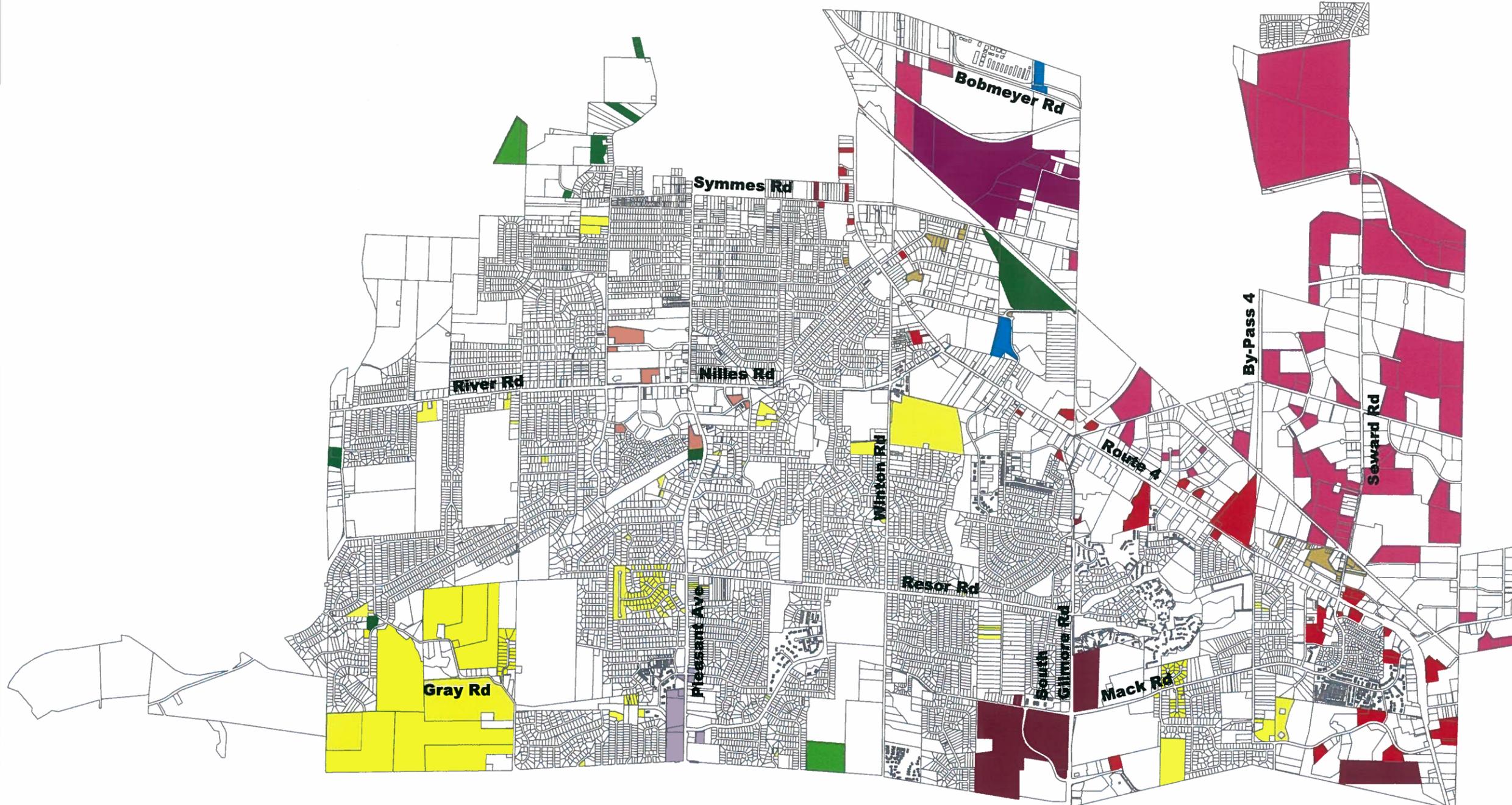
Legend

- SINGLE FAMILY
- MEDIUM DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY
- SEMI-PUBLIC
- OFFICE
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- TOWN CENTER
- HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
- COMMERCIAL-INDUSTRIAL
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- PARKS AND RECREATION
- OPEN SPACE



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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

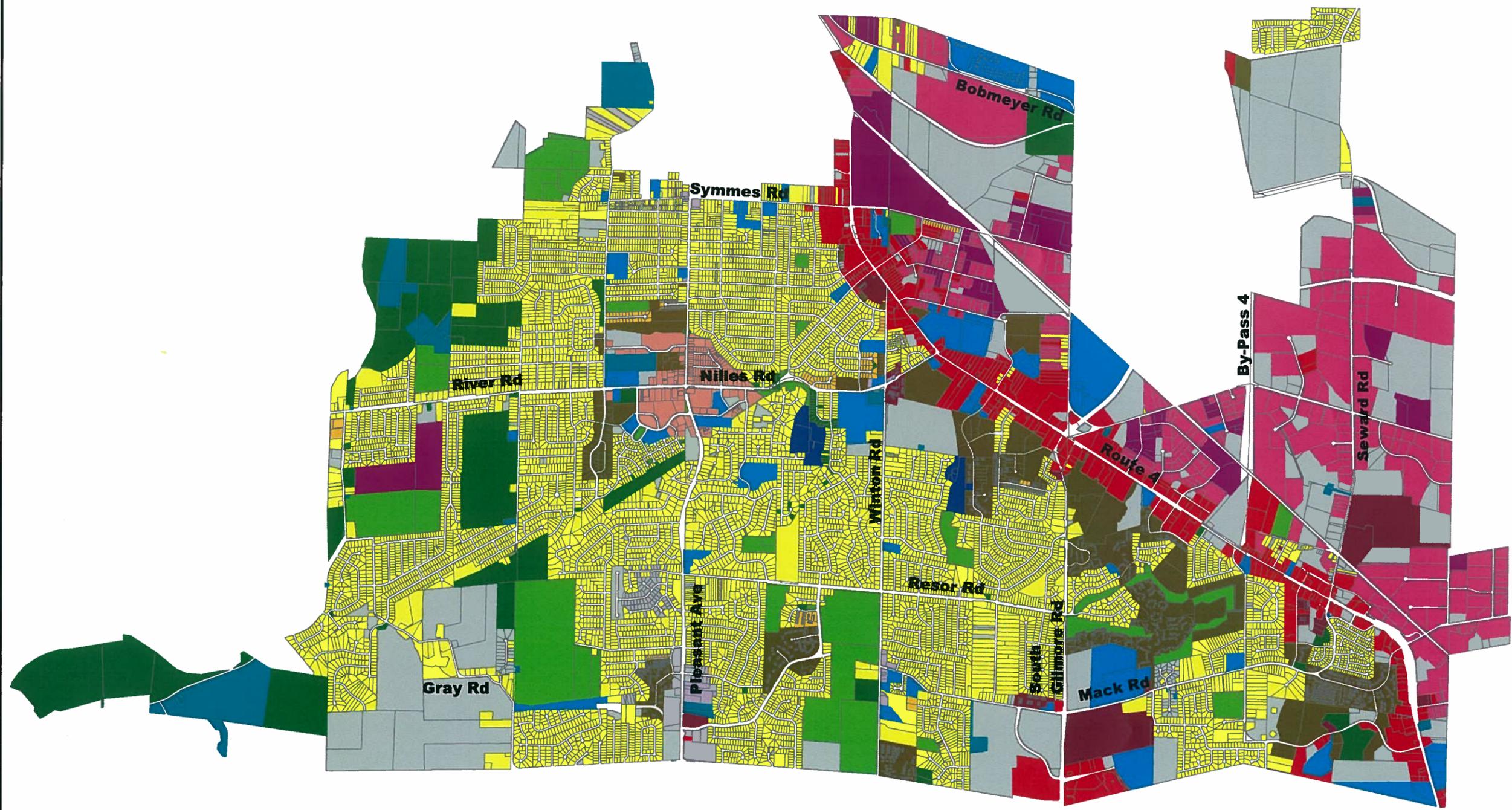




**EXISTING
LAND USE
(2010)**

Legend

- SINGLE FAMILY
- MEDIUM DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY
- HIGH DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY
- OFFICE
- SEMI-PUBLIC
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- TOWN CENTER
- HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- PARKS AND RECREATION
- OPEN SPACE
- STORM DRAINAGE RESERVE
- UTILITIES
- UNDEVELOPED



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The Town Center is a 268 acre area that is divided into four quadrants at the intersection of Pleasant Avenue and Nilles Road; a historical crossroads location. The Center is a mixture of uses that include commercial, professional offices, residential and government uses.

The entire Town Center area was rezoned to D-1, Downtown District, to provide consistency in land use and appearance. This was done in the 1990s along with the creation of a design review committee, which reviews architectural designs for all development within the Town Center. The D-1 zoning district limited the types of land uses permitted to those typically found in downtown districts.

1.1 Village Green Quadrant

Located at the southwest corner of Nilles Road and Pleasant Avenue behind existing commercial establishments along Nilles Road was a 120 acre tract of land known as the McCormick Farm. It had withstood development pressures and remained a working farm while the rest of the area had developed. Today it is the focal point of the Town Center and is known as Village Green. It is a mixed use development consisting of a 160 single-family lot subdivision, retail, offices, mixed use buildings, a two acre city park with an amphitheater and other civic uses that include the Library and Community Arts Center. In addition, a twenty acre wooded hillside was donated to the City as permanent open space.

1.2 Municipal Court/ Police Services Quadrant

Consistent with the 1992 Land Use Plan, which stated that civic uses should be located in the downtown area, the former Kroger store (which relocated and became the anchor store in Village Green) and Fairfield Center Mall were purchased by the City and demolished to make way for a new Municipal Court and Police Services facility (Justice Center). The dual service facility is 49,900 square feet and is the focal point of the southeast quadrant. The building has separate entrances for both the Police Department and Municipal Court. The master plan provides for expansion capabilities as future need requires.

1.3 Reigert Square/ Sandy Lane Quadrant

Reigert Square, an older retail/office complex, characterizes the northeast quadrant. Reigert Square is a series of three buildings built in the 1960s. The complex was never part of a master plan, which is evident by the multiple curb-cuts, lack of efficient internal circulation, inconsistent and non-conforming signage and various façade colors. The center can be redesigned to reduce the number of curb-cuts, which would provide safer internal circulation and connections to Pleasant Avenue, and work toward consistent signage and upgrade façade and roof design.

One of the recommendations from the Downtown Development Plan was an internal access road, known as the Town Center Loop Road. Sandy Lane is the final segment yet to be completed. This road's location in this quadrant begins at Nilles Road and ends at a private lot at the rear of Reigert Square. From that lot a driveway extends

the roadway access and curves around a building to Pleasant Avenue. In 2008, this area was designated as a tax increment financing district, which may allow future infrastructure improvements via a public/private relationship.

1.4 Patterson Boulevard/ Fair Plaza Quadrant

Fair Plaza Shopping Center represents the largest structure in the northwest quadrant. The main anchor tenant to this store vacated the building in the early 1980s. Efforts are now underway to redevelop the site by way of altering much of its land use pattern to fit the needs of today's market realities. It is also located within the tax increment financing district.

2.0 *Residential*

During the late 1990s the demand for upscale housing was very prevalent. The Wildwood, Hannah Farms and Monastery subdivisions were developed as upscale single-family neighborhoods. In 2004 there was again pressure for more upscale housing. One of the few remaining prime parcels of undeveloped land in Fairfield, the Morris Farm, is now developing into the Emerald Lake subdivision.

While Fairfield has a wide array of housing types, including one-story ranches with small, low maintenance yards. During the late 1990s and early 2000s a few developments were constructed. Benchway, located near the corner of Mack and Winton Roads, contains single-family patio homes with small yards that are maintained by the homeowners association. Lauryn Meadows, located on Pleasant Avenue just north of the Town Center, consists of ranch style duplexes with small yards that are also maintained by a homeowners association. As the City's population matures, there will be an increased need for more developments of this type.

3.0 *Pleasant Avenue Corridor (at John Gray Road)*

The 1992 Land Use Plan designated this area for office and neighborhood commercial uses from John Gray Road to Hunter Road. Office uses were recommended south of Augusta Boulevard and neighborhood commercial uses were recommended to the north. The corridor is surrounded by low-density single-family and condominium development.

During the late 1990s and early 2000s several neighborhood commercial uses were established. Neighborhood commercial designations are described as small clusters of retail and service establishments that serve the residents in the immediate vicinity. Uses on Pleasant Avenue include daycare centers, convenience store/gas station, video store, garden center and other small scale businesses. In 2003, a former nursing home was renovated for offices.

Over the years the development pattern for this corridor has moved towards neighborhood commercial uses. It is predicted that this corridor will continue to be developed this way until the all of the usable land is developed. The 2005 Land Use Plan

proposed that the entire corridor be developed for neighborhood commercial and to avoid any projects that do not meet the intent of this land use classification.

4.0 Route 4

Route 4 is characterized by strip commercial development and is anchored by retail uses with a regional draw (i.e. car sales, boat sales and Jungle Jim's International Food Market). Development has occurred without benefit of a unified plan and is distinguished by sign clutter, architectural inconsistencies, lack of landscaping and multiple curb-cuts. Plans have been put forth to improve the appearance of the corridor and to improve traffic circulation. Improvements completed within the corridor include landscaping at the southern end, lane additions south of Seward Road and a gateway sign at the northern end, which screens a visually unappealing railroad overpass. The City has received a grant to landscape the northern end of Route 4, which is scheduled to occur in the summer of 2010.

Route 4 has had several very positive redevelopments occur since the 1992 Plan. Examples of major redevelopments are Merck-Medco (which rehabilitated the former Central Hardware building), Fairfield Pavilion (which modified a former auto dealership), Tom Raper RV (which moved into the former Furrows Lumberyard), and Power Net Global (which redeveloped the former Bureau of Worker Compensation office building near Commerce Drive.)

Since 2005 three large scale redevelopment projects have occurred within the corridor. They are Fischer Park (which rehabilitated the former Fischer Body Plant for industrial uses), Cobblestone Plaza (which redeveloped the façade and parking lot of the former Hicks Manor Shopping Center) and Jungle Jim's (which redeveloped its campus to include an events center, specialty stores, restaurants, retail stores and even a monorail.)

There will continue to be opportunities and challenges as the corridor matures and meets similar challenges to thoroughfares such as Colerain Avenue and Beechmont Avenue, elsewhere in the Greater Cincinnati market.

The future of Route 4 will focus around joint marketing, transportation improvements, redevelopment of underutilized shopping centers, improvement of property appearance and reduction in sign clutter.

5.0 South Gilmore Road Corridor

The South Gilmore Road area has benefited greatly from the I-275 expressway interchange, which provides direct access to Fairfield. This area is characterized by large scale regional shopping, office, institutional and prime vacant land.

In the mid-1980s a large up-scale regional shopping mall (formerly Forest Fair Mall; currently named Cincinnati Mall) was constructed on land that straddles both the Cities of Fairfield and Forest Park. Unable to compete with the existing shopping centers

in the region, the mall lost many of its tenants. During the 1990s and 2000s the mall went through several owners and renovations in hopes of revitalizing it. In 2003 a national chain purchased the mall and renamed it Cincinnati Mills creating a new concept to the region – an entertainment and lifestyle center. However, this approach was unsuccessful and a new owner purchased it in 2008. Since the creation of the mall, off-site commercial development has occurred in both Cities.

Located near the mall, Cincinnati Financial Insurance Company constructed a second office tower to its headquarters in 2000 and a third tower in 2009. As Fairfield's largest employer, they have created over 2,900 jobs and added a substantial tax base to the City. Across from the office complex on Mack Road, Mercy Hospital constructed over 100,000 square of new medical space that included expanded emergency, surgical and diagnostic services as well as a "heart hospital" within the hospital. Starting out in 1978 Mercy was a general, acute care hospital. Since then the hospital has grown along with the community by adding services and enhancing the facility.

As a response to the rapid growth in this area, the property owner of 150 acres at the southwest corner of Mack and South Gilmore Roads decided that the last remaining prime piece of property in the corridor should be developed in an organized planned manner. A planned unit development was approved in 1994 showing the layout of the site and proposed land uses. Although only a discount department store (Meijer) currently occupies the site, the remaining land is zoned for office and institutional uses.

6.0 Industrial Areas

The area north of Route 4 and east of By-Pass 4 has been developing as light industrial. This area is characterized by large buildings containing light manufacturing, warehousing, distribution and technical uses that are well designed and landscaped. This type of development is very desirable to the City for two reasons: 1) high quality construction and site design fosters a positive image for the City that helps attract additional development of similar quality; and 2) the type of facilities that are developing in the area is primarily high growth businesses that give the City an advantageous tax and employment base. The current challenge in this area is the capacity of the sewer service. Upgrades to the infrastructure should be studied.

The area north of Route 4 and west of North Gilmore Road is characterized by a combination of various types of industrial uses, both light and heavy. Also mixed in are commercial and semi-public uses. Some sites, such as the former Fisher Body plant at the northeast corner of Route 4 and Symmes Road, have laid vacant for many years, but have since been reused for other industrial type uses. Site design and landscaping in this area is a major concern. The general appearance is marked by outdoor storage and poor architectural and structural quality of buildings. Given that this is an older industrial area, some of these cosmetic problems are to be expected, however, it is important for this areas to remain viable in the market place and for there to be reinvestment by the private and public sectors.

7.0 Other

7.1 Airport Expansion

The Butler County Regional Airport/Hogan Field is located in the Cities of Fairfield and Hamilton. The major access road serving the airport, Bobmeyer Road, was relocated in the early 1990s to create space for a future expansion of the airport facility, which occurred in the early 2000s. It included a new general aviation terminal, hangars and taxi ways. In addition to new construction, the airport has been purchasing land to the east for runway safety.

7.2 Golf Course/ Regional Detention Basin

Recognizing the necessity to collect run-off and control drainage, the City took efforts to build a large scale regional detention basin to serve portions of southern Fairfield and northern parts of Hamilton County and the City of Forest Park. Completed in 2002, the City developed a nine-hole executive golf course within the basin to provide area residents with a second public golf course within the community.

7.3 Marsh Lake

This 55 acre fishing lake was once mined for gravel. Owned by Martin Marietta Materials, Inc., it was leased to the City in 1996 when mining reclamation was completed. The area directly to the north is still being mined, but once completed, it will be donated to the City to be used for expanded recreational uses.

7.4 Black Bottom

This 31 acre parcel, located along the Great Miami River, was purchased from Martin Marietta Materials, Inc. to serve two needs: wellhead protection and recreation. The park may be used for future recreation such as canoe livery and walking trails. The land is located in both Fairfield and Ross Townships, but is owned and maintained by the City of Fairfield.

7.5 Gilmore Ponds Preserve

Gilmore Ponds Preserve, located in the City of Fairfield west of North Gilmore Road, is owned and maintained by Butler County Metro Parks. The Preserve is the western edge of a conservation corridor that extends east to West Chester Township. The

Preserves consists of two large parcels of land that contain wet soils due to frequent flooding. In addition to acquiring the land for conservation, it is also used for storm water management.

V. NATURAL FEATURE CONSTRAINTS

1.0 *Natural Features*

Natural features include soils, slopes, aquifers, floodplains, vegetation (woodlands) and drainage sheds. Fairfield has many natural features that put constraints

on development that range from requiring special construction methods or development restrictions to prohibiting development altogether. This section identifies the natural features that have an impact on Fairfield's development.

1.1 Soils

Soil impacts all types of development, however, seldom prohibit development altogether. Soil information is readily available through existing studies (i.e. U.S. Soil and Conservation Service) and soil boring tests.

1.2 Slopes

Parcels that are greater than 20% slope should be prohibited from development. The Bluffs, the hillside that spans from Pleasant Avenue westward overlooking the Great Miami River, is a particular valuable amenity that must be preserved. Not only does the Bluffs have slopes greater than 20%, it also contain a large supply of Fairfield's woodlands. Over the past several years private property along the Bluffs has been donated to the City for permanent preservation. Those developments included Village Green, Muskopf Farms and Indian Meadows subdivisions. This practice should continue as other properties along the Bluffs develop. Other slopes greater than 20% within the City should be preserved as well.

1.3 Aquifers

An aquifer is an underground bed of earth, gravel or porous stone that yields water. Aquifers are extremely prevalent in the region with Fairfield located over the Great Miami Buried Valley Aquifer of which the City draws its drinking water. The aquifers provide water for residential, industrial and agricultural uses. Contamination of the aquifer through illegal and careless waste disposal can have disastrous consequences to the community.

In 1998 the City adopted a wellhead protection program to protect the City's drinking water. The program was derived from the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, which was designed to minimize the potential for contamination of groundwater being used as a source of public drinking water. As a result of this program, specific areas of the City have been delineated into concentric districts for groundwater protection. Within these districts, wells are protected and land uses are limited to those that do not pose a threat to ground water contamination.

1.4 Floodplains

Floodplains are identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). Future development in floodplains should be restricted in order to prevent development that could be threatened by flooding conditions. Many of these areas are shown on the Land Use Map as either Open Space or Storm Drainage Reserve.

However, there are several areas throughout the City that contain development in a designated floodplain. As a result some structures, especially homes, have experienced flooding during long and heavy rain storms. In the mid-2000s the City received two

grants from FEMA to purchases houses along the east side of Pleasant Run Creek that received repetitive losses from flooding. A condition of the grant was to demolish the structures leaving the area in a permanent natural environment.

1.5 Natural Features Summary

Maps identifying the location of all these natural features are on file in the City’s Development Services Department. The City Council and Planning Commission make policy decisions to protect natural features. The Staff Technical Review Committee and City staff are responsible for compliance with City codes and ordinances that regulate them. The Land Use Plan identifies those natural features that are pertinent to land use planning as open space and storm drainage reserve.

VI. LAND USE MAP

The Land Use Map identifies the desired land use pattern for the City at complete development. The locations and amounts of the major land use types (residential and industrial) are based on the Community Land Use Goals, Objectives and Policies. The Map should serve as the primary policy statement and decision making guideline for City Council and Planning Commission regarding land use matters. See Figure 1.4.

1.0 *Definitions of Land Use Legend Elements*

The following definitions are intended to describe the characteristics of each land use element:

1.1 Residential:

Residential uses are divided into three (3) categories based on density, which provides for a variety of housing types.

Single-Family includes both low and high density detached dwellings.

Medium Density Multi-Family are multi-family units that are less than eight (8) units to an acre.

High Density Multi-Family are multi-family units that are eight (8) units to an acre or greater. This Plan locates higher density residential areas in suitable locations. Suitable is defined as: 1) good access to thoroughfares, 2) market values and 3) a step down in intensity between commercial or light industrial and single family residential.

1.2 Commercial:

The four commercial categories are designed to accommodate commercial areas that serve different needs.

Highway Commercial is designed to accommodate the Route 4 corridor and the regional commercial node on South Gilmore Road near I-275. Highway Commercial includes restaurants, retail and other commercial uses.

Town Center is designed to include all of the land located in the D-1, Downtown Zoning District. It is an outgrowth of the Town Center Development Plan adopted in 1993 and updated in 1996. The Plan describes the Town Center area as a multi-use community center. Uses that are desirable in making the Town Center area the City's focal point include retail and service, office, event centers (civic center, town square), government functions and related uses.

Neighborhood Commercial is designed to provide for the shopping needs of nearby residents. These are small in scale and should be limited to uses that similarly are small in scale. Most of the uses that are acceptable in this land use are permitted in the C-1 Zoning District. Traffic generation and conflicts with surrounding residential areas must be kept to a minimum.

Office is designated to provide highly visible and accessible land for office park type development. Sign control and landscaping are needed to provide an aesthetically pleasing "park" type environment.

1.3 Commercial-Industrial:

Commercial-Industrial are those areas which are suitable for either low intensity light industrial uses or commercial uses. These areas will provide appropriate buffering between incompatible land uses such as Highway Commercial and Heavy Industrial.

1.4 Industrial:

Light Industrial areas are generally located east of Route 4 and expand to the east and north corporation lines. Their purpose is to attract developments that include high density growth, technological, research, office and light industrial uses. This type of development is the key to the City's economic and tax base since heavy industrial uses are generally on the decline. Landscaping is recommended in these areas to promote a visually attractive environment. These areas will also be used to serve as a buffer between intense commercial and heavy industrial zones.

Heavy Industrial areas are located west of North Gilmore Road and north of Route 4. Since heavy industrial uses are on the decline, there should be a reduction in the amount of land designated as heavy industrial over past land use plans.

1.5 Other:

Parks and Recreation are areas consisting of both passive and active recreation as well as public and private facilities.



LAND USE PLAN (2010)

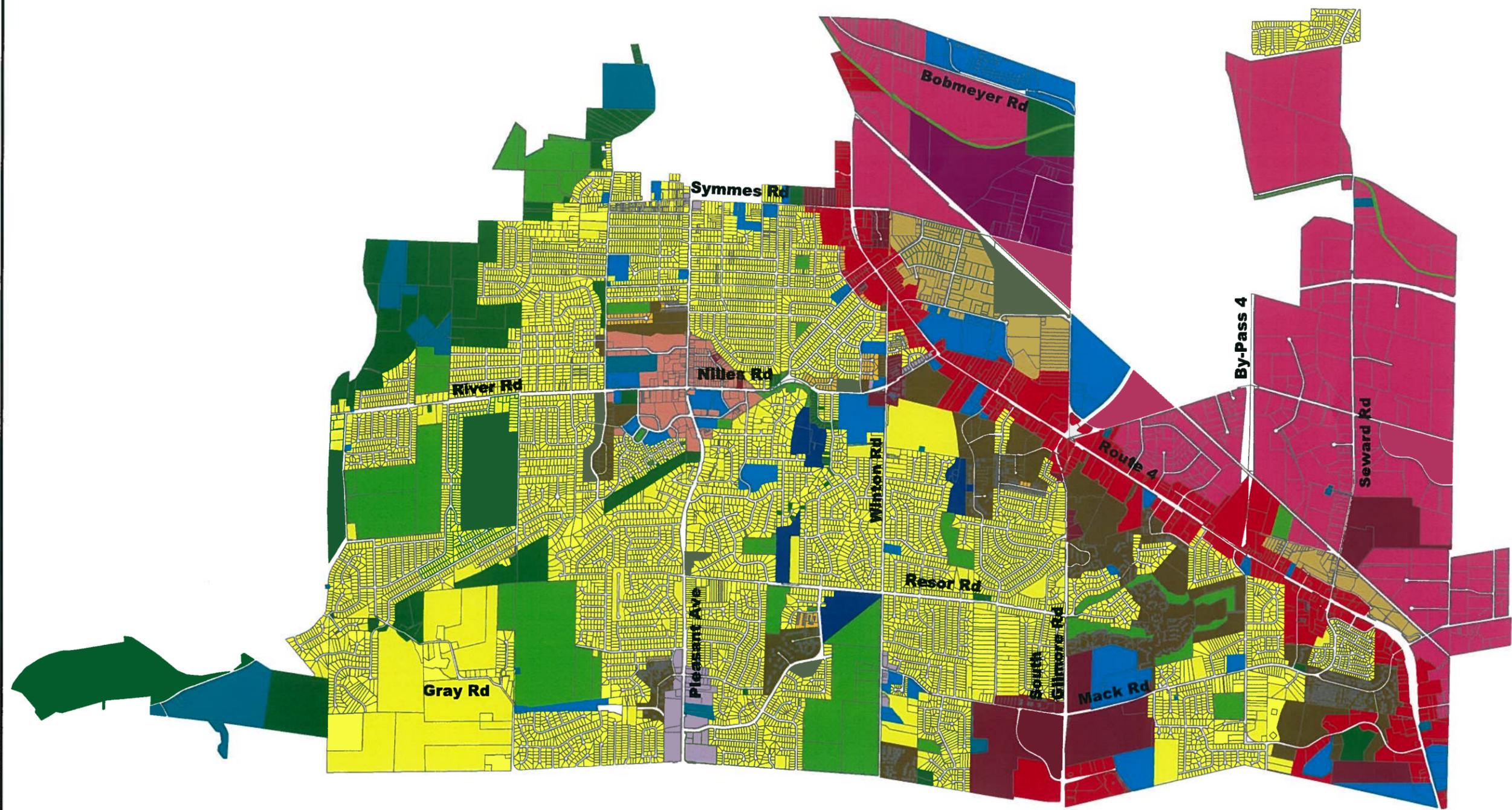
Legend

- SINGLE FAMILY
- MEDIUM DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY
- HIGH DENSITY MULTI-FAMILY
- SEMI-PUBLIC
- OFFICE
- NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL
- TOWN CENTER
- HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL
- COMMERCIAL-INDUSTRIAL
- LIGHT INDUSTRIAL
- HEAVY INDUSTRIAL
- PARKS AND RECREATION
- OPEN SPACE
- STORM DRAINAGE RESERVE
- UTILITY



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COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Open Space includes slope areas of greater than twenty percent (20%) and floodplains along the Great Miami River and Pleasant Run Creek. These areas are basically undevelopable and can be better used to preserve the City's natural heritage. In addition, Open Space includes undeveloped land owned by the City of Fairfield and other jurisdictions and unbuildable and small lots located along creeks.

Storm Drainage Reserves are shown in accordance with U.S. Army Corp of Engineer's flood control project. These areas require special protection to insure the future implementation of flood control. Regional detention basins also act as open space.

Semi-Public are facilities that are generally public or semi-public. Examples of this classification include, but not limited to, churches, schools, government offices, nursing homes and hospitals.

Utility is designed to include all existing public utilities such as the water plant, waste water plant, water towers and power substations.

Undeveloped Land is land that has the potential to be developed. This does not include park land, open space or storm drainage reserve. Large farms are considered as undeveloped for land use planning purposes.

VII. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of any land use plan is an ongoing day to day job. The zoning code is the primary tool to accomplish land use goals. The main stakeholders in land use implementation are: 1) development demands, 2) Planning Commission, 3) Planning Commission staff and City administration, 4) City Council and 5) citizens. This is a complex combination of political, professional, lay, market, legal persons and forces that will spawn many divergent opinions. A land use plan becomes more valuable as all of the stakeholders become more educated as to the Plan's merit and purpose. Educating

the stakeholders can be aided through using the Plan at all meetings involving zoning, development and other planning issues.

Implementation of the Plan will require serious evaluation of development proposals that go against the plan's original design. Thus, a land use plan is an evolving plan needing constant re-evaluation and adjustment.

The actual implementation of the Plan goals may involve amendments to the existing zoning code. Other Plan implementation actions may not necessitate zone changes, but will require collaboration, investigation and follow-up. Since the Plan is constantly evolving, it is important that the City review and makes changes to the Plan on a regular basis.

VIII. GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following goals, objectives and policies provide a basic framework for all land use decisions.

1.0 Community Land Use Goals

Goal 1: Have a land use pattern that promotes the fiscal stability of the City.

Policy 1: Require proper phasing and management of growth.

Policy 2: Require a proper mix of net tax payers and net tax receivers (commercial/ industrial vs. residential).

Goal 2: Have a land use pattern that promotes community and neighborhood pride, identity and enjoyment.

Policy 1: Ensure aesthetic quality in all areas of the City.

Policy 2: Provide for community and neighborhood activities and events.

Goal 3: Have a land use pattern that eliminates the close proximity of incompatible uses.

Policy 1: Ensure the adequate separation of incompatible uses.

Policy 2: Locate more intense uses close to major thoroughfares.

Policy 3: Develop a landscape plan to screen incompatible uses that cannot be separated.

Goal 4: Have a land use pattern that is sensitive to environmental factors.

Policy 1: Ensure the preservation of significant natural features.

Policy 2: Ensure the proper use of areas with fragile or special environmental constraints (i.e. floodplains, aquifers, steep slopes).

Goal 5: Have a land use pattern that is consistent with changes in trends and surrounding cities (Regionalism).

Policy 1: Revise plans and ordinances as new technology is developed and trends are set by surrounding cities.

Policy 2: Create new districts as indicated by the creation of new types of land uses.

2.0 Objectives

2.1 General

Objective 1: Coordinate development with thoroughfare and utility improvements.

Objective 2: Develop a comprehensive plan for the City that includes sections for community facilities, parks and recreation and thoroughfares.

Objective 3: Amend the City's zoning map and district regulations to be in accordance with the land use plan as much as possible.

2.2 Residential

Objective 1: The objective of the housing mix ratio of this plan shall be 70% housing units from R-0 and R-1 single-family zones and 30% housing units from R-2, R-3 and R-4 multi-family zones.

Objective 2: Locate multi-family uses in areas having good access to arterial streets and shopping areas.

Objective 3: Ensure that infill projects are of the same density as surrounding properties and/or underlying zoning.

Objective 4: When developing land for infill housing, special attention should be given to make sure adequate open space is provided.

Objective 5: Ensure the stability of existing residential neighborhoods via infrastructure improvements.

Objective 6: Explore the opportunity to develop large lot estate housing with close proximity to the interstate in order to attract the executive homeowners.

Objective 7: Provide for a variety of housing opportunities while maintaining stable property values.

Objective 8: Provide single family housing that meet the needs of empty-nesters and senior citizens such as ranch-style homes for easy access and a home owners association for property maintenance.

2.3 Commercial

Objective 1: Ensure cluster commercial development as opposed to strip commercial development.

Objective 2: Provide for neighborhood convenience shopping areas.

Objective 3: Encourage the location of community facilities in the Town Center (i.e. civic center, library, government offices, etc.).

Objective 4: Provide areas for office park type development with good access and visibility.

Objective 5: Implement the Route 4 Service Drive Plan at every opportunity.

Objective 6: Implement the Town Center Development Plan where possible.

Objective 7: Maintain strict control of commercial signage.

2.4 Industrial

Objective 1: Confine all heavy industrial development (Currently M-2 zoning) to areas north of Route 4 and west of North Gilmore Road.

Objective 2: Discourage heavy industrial uses that will detract from the area. If they do locate in the City, it is recommended that all activity be located in a wholly enclosed building and any outside storage to be screened.

Objective 3: Expand wastewater capacity to allow the City to provide sewer service to all areas, especially land zoned for industrial development.

2.5 Airport

Objective 1: Ensure that development within the airport zone is complimentary to the airport and does not restrict flight operations.

Objective 2: Promote uses that can safely interact with the airport.

Objective 3: Work with other jurisdictions such as Butler County and the City of Hamilton in promoting the use of the airport as a means of attracting new businesses to the region.

2.6 Open Space

Objective 1: Preserve undevelopable areas as community open space (i.e. floodplains, hillsides).

Objective 2: Preserve land for open space.

Objective 3: Preserve and acquire land for storm water detention.

Objective 4: Make provisions for appropriate re-use of storm water detention areas.

2.7 Other

Objective 1: Set aside land for parks and recreation activities per the needs of the City.

Objective 2: Create a bike/ pedestrian trail along the entire length of the Miami-Erie Canal that can be used by all residents in the City.

Objective 3: Create a buffer around future school sites to protect them from undesirable uses. Also, where possible, create buffers around existing school sites to protect them from existing and possible future undesirable uses.