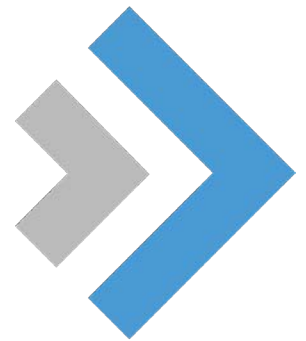


FAIRFIELD FORWARD



ADOPTED DECEMBER 2019

City of Fairfield Comprehensive Plan | Prepared by Jacobs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This plan is a result of the city's collaborative efforts to move Fairfield forward, including input from community members, a Steering Committee, four Small Area Committees, elected officials, city staff, and the planning team:

Mayor & City Council

Steve Miller, Mayor
Tim Abbott
Leslie Besl
Ron D'Epifanio
Craig Keller
Chad Oberson
Debbie Pennington
Bill Woeste

Planning Commission

Scott Lepsky, Chair
Brian Begley
Don Hassler
Dean Langevin
Dale Paullus
Terry Senger
Bill Woeste

City Staff

Mark Wendling, City Manager
Dan Wendt, Assistant City Manager
Greg Kathman, Development Services Director
Erin Donovan Lynn, Planning Manager

Lynda McGuire, Development Services Secretary
Ben Mann, City Engineer
Nick Dill, Engineer
Adam Sackenheim, Public Utilities Director
Tiphonie Howard, Parks and Recreation Director
Jenny Dexter, Communications Manager

Steering Committee

Sally Braun
Betsy Ertel
Scott Lepsky
Missy O'Brien
Gwen Ritchie
Tracy Roblero
Kari Russo
Mark Scharringhausen
David Sheehan
Brad Vanoss
Linda Yarger
Bill Woeste
Mayor - ex officio

Small Area Planning Committees

Route 4

Tim Boellner
Jim Bonaminio
Joani Bonaminio
Dan Goebel
Don Hassler
Melissa Hays
Jason Jones
Mark Morris
Mindy Muller
Chad Oberson
Dale Paullus
Joe Penney
Mike Stokes

Town Center

Marilyn Aardema
Tim Abbott
Matthew Beckman
Angie Gray
Tom Hasselbeck
Dave Houser
Craig Keller
Zach Ketring
Dean Langevin
Heidi Schiller
Valerie Simmons

John Gray/Pleasant

Ron D'Epifanio
Regina Diersing
Jim Mitchell
Debbie Pennington
Lee Sanders
Terry Senger
Mary Stier
Terry White

South Gilmore/Mack

Chris Anderson
Kendall Bales
Brian Begley
Leslie Besl
Steve DeSalvo
Angie Kenworthy
Shane Knisley
Tracy Roblero

Jacobs Team

Paul Culter, AICP, Project Manager - Jacobs
Meghan McMullen, Planner - Jacobs
Wendy Moeller, FAICP, Senior Planner - Compass Point Planning



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FAIRFIELD FORWARD

CITY OF FAIRFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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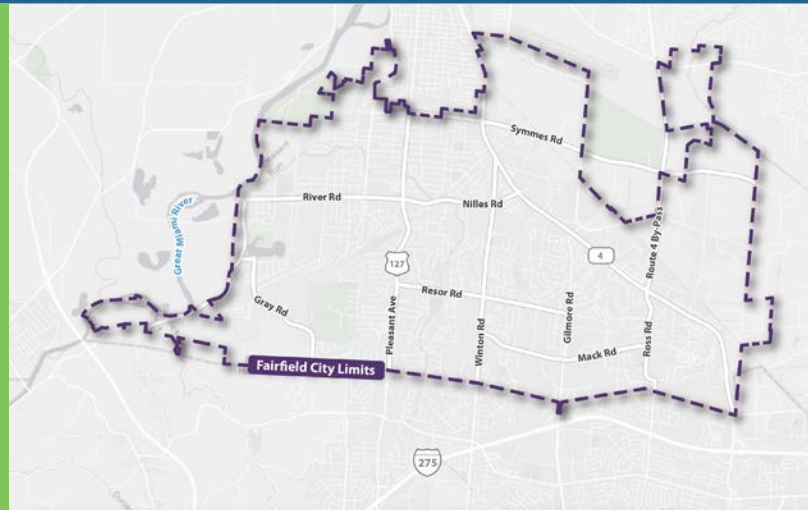
FAIRFIELD FORWARD

CITY OF FAIRFIELD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Executive Summary

The City of Fairfield has long enjoyed its position as a quality, well-balanced community located just north of I-275, about 20 miles from Cincinnati. With its regional convenience and small-town charm, Fairfield continues to attract residents, visitors, and businesses to the area. As a result of this growth, 87.3 percent of the approximately 20-square-mile total area has been developed, leaving minimal land remaining for new development. **Fairfield Forward provides a critical, strategic framework for future growth and community resources** to ensure a high quality of life can be sustained for years to come.

This dynamic, policy level document establishes a collective vision, goals, policies, and strategies to make future land use, zoning, and capital investment decisions in a reasonable and fiscally responsible manner. It should be used by city staff, elected and appointed officials to guide day-to-day decision making and to offer insight to community members, businesses, and developers on the direction of the city moving forward. For more information on how to use this plan, see page 9.



City of Fairfield

VISION STATEMENT

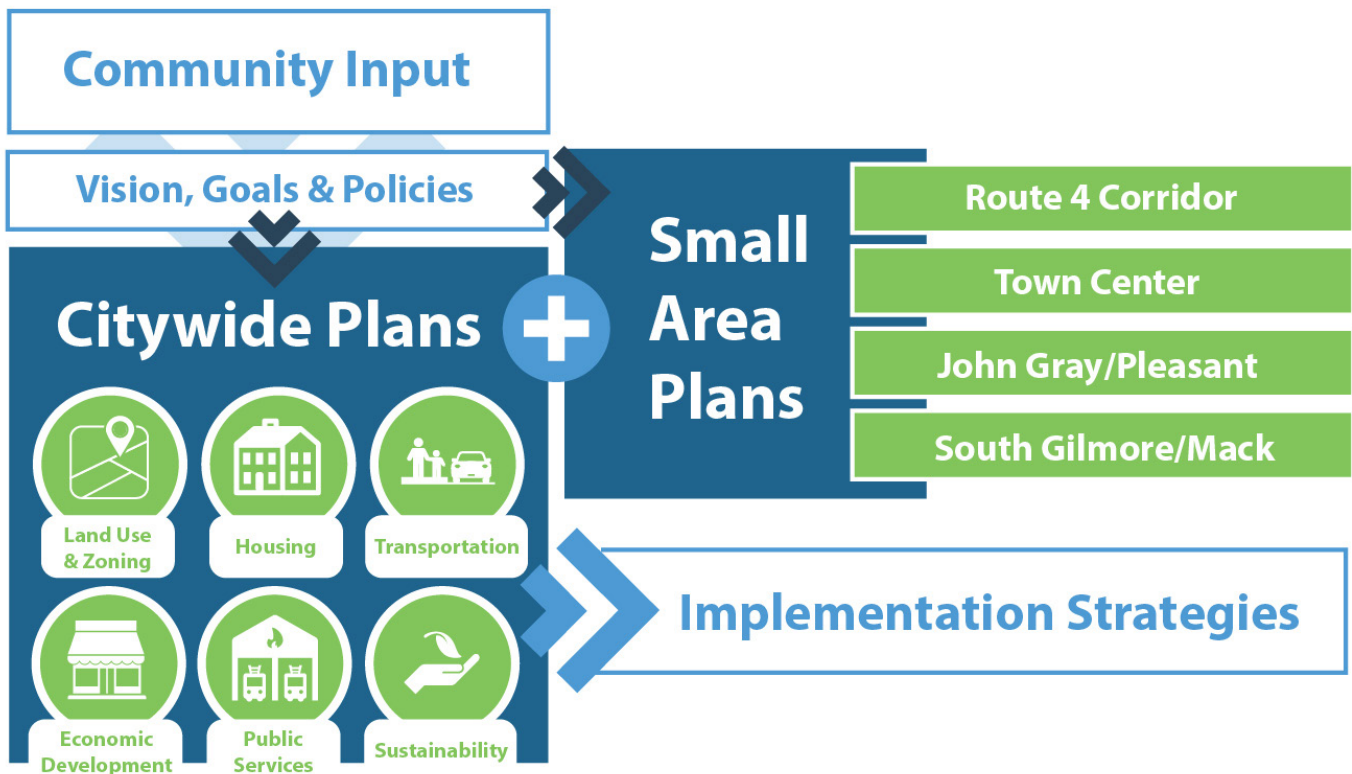
Fairfield is a vibrant and diverse city that values safe neighborhoods and a strong sense of community for all residents and businesses. Our public services are known for fostering a high quality of life, making Fairfield stand out as a desirable place in which to live, work, visit, and do business.

The vision of Fairfield Forward is to carry forward these key characteristics while embracing the diversity of the city and the versatility needed to adapt so that the city can welcome new investment and redevelopment that only strengthens these qualities.

The plan addresses elements controlled directly by the City of Fairfield, such as public services and regulations, as well as policy initiatives that encourage individual community members and private property owners to help realize the overall vision. It is organized by topic area:

- Land Use and Zoning (page 15)
- Small Area Plans (page 39)
- Housing and Neighborhoods (page 81)
- Transportation (page 93)
- Economic Development (page 109)
- Public Services (page 125)
- Sustainability (page 141)

Each chapter provides an overview of existing conditions, a set of goals and policies, future plans, and implementation strategies for that topic area. This executive summary provides an overview of key information and initiatives from the plan.



HOW WAS THIS PLAN CREATED?

This plan was developed from August 2018 to September 2019 with input from city staff, elected officials and community members. A steering committee and four small area plan committees met regularly to guide the development of the citywide and small area plans. Comments from community members are highlighted throughout this report in the “What We Heard” boxes like the one below. More information on the planning process can be found on page 6 and documentation of all public comments is available in the appendix.

Popular comments received during the planning process include:



- 1 Continue to provide excellent public services
- 2 More sidewalks, trails, and paths are needed for better overall connectivity throughout the city
- 3 Better property maintenance is needed
- 4 Design guidelines are welcomed in certain areas to provide for a more visually appealing, cohesive environment
- 5 More sit down dining options
- 6 Limit used car lots
- 7 Encourage single-family residential development over multi-family residential
- 8 Provide additional recreational opportunities
- 9 Target “blighted” areas for redevelopment, including northern Route 4 and the former Forest Fair Mall
- 10 Safer pedestrian routes to schools





Land Use and Zoning

The Future Land Use Map on the following page, and in the Land Use and Zoning chapter, depicts an ideal future land use pattern for Fairfield. It should be used by staff, city officials, and leaders as a policy level guide for future decisions on proposed zoning, development and redevelopment applications, as well as to update standards and regulations. While it informs rezoning decisions, it is not a zoning map. There are 12 categories of future land uses, each illustrated on the Future Land Use Map and described in the Future Land Use Plan.

There are few remaining parcels of undeveloped land zoned for commercial, planned unit development, or residential. Most remaining undeveloped acres are zoned for industrial or agricultural uses. This limitation will likely constrain future development and require more compact, sustainable building patterns to accommodate new residents within this available land, as well as the redevelopment of existing built areas. Based on the population growth trends of the city over the last 20 years, approximately up to 30 to 40 years of growth can be accommodated on existing undeveloped residentially zoned land.

According to the plan, the city should continue to be a residential community with a mix of suburban single-family neighborhoods and higher density housing closer to mixed-use and commercial centers. Three areas have been identified as appropriate locations for walkable, higher density, mixed-use development: Town Center, the John Gray/Pleasant area, and the South Gilmore/Mack area. Detailed small area plans have been developed for each of these areas beginning on page 39. General commercial uses, such as shopping centers and auto-oriented

uses, should be limited to the Route 4 corridor. This corridor also serves as a buffer between the residential and industrial activity, which should be limited to the northeast side of Route 4. Public facilities, parks and recreation, and open spaces should be distributed across the city so all residents have equitable access to community resources.

Key Future Land Use Changes

- 1 Assigning agricultural areas to the appropriate land use for future growth
- 2 Implementing a mixed-use category to permit a mix of residential, office and commercial uses
- 3 Establishing a mixed-use industrial category to permit a mix of low intensity industrial, office, and commercial uses
- 4 Eliminating the heavy industrial land use category to prevent potentially noxious and incompatible uses
- 5 Identifying four small area plans that provide more detail on development and redevelopment activities

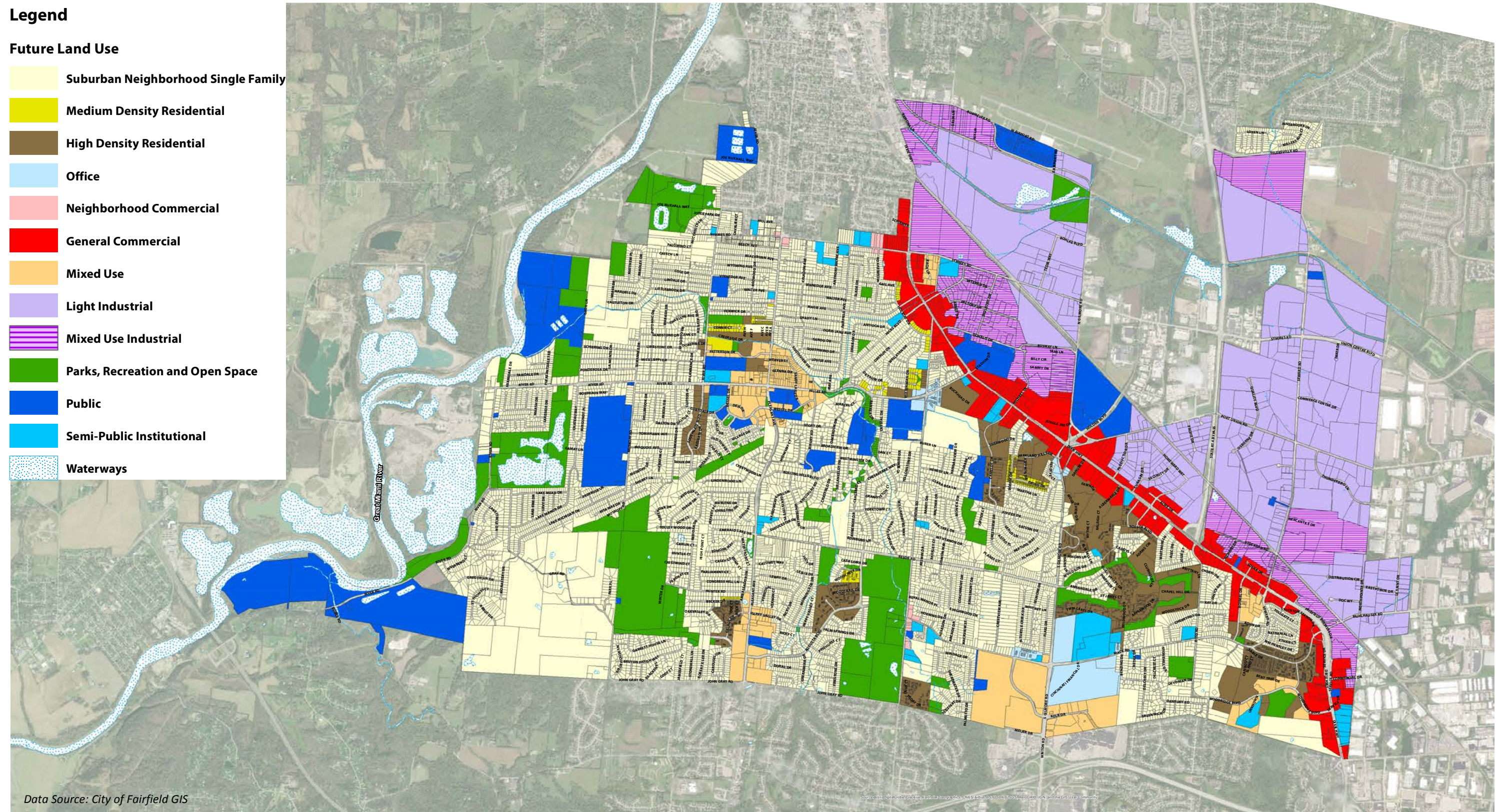
For more information on land use and zoning, refer to page 25.

Figure ES-1. Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

- Suburban Neighborhood Single Family
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Office
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Mixed Use Industrial
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Public
- Semi-Public Institutional
- Waterways

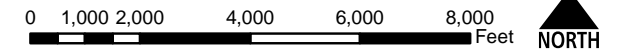


Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS



City of Fairfield, Ohio

August 28, 2019



Future Land Use - Citywide

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Small Area Plans

Four areas of the city were identified as needing special, detailed attention due to ongoing issues and/or the potential for change and investment. These areas include:

Route 4 Corridor

Route 4 will continue to be the main commercial corridor in the city with a wide variety of businesses. It also serves as a major north/south roadway connector that is envisioned to have a more aesthetically appealing development style, enhanced landscaping and streetscaping, and improved and safer connections for vehicles and pedestrians. Key implementation strategies include reevaluating the sidewalk policy to permit and encourage sidewalks south of Nilles Road; enhancing parking lot landscaping and screening requirements; promoting redevelopment opportunities; and working with businesses to consolidate curb cuts, and use access management techniques to improve traffic flow and safety. (For more information, refer to page 42.)

Town Center

The Town Center is the heart of the city and will continue to be the central gathering area for the community, providing living, retail, service and social opportunities. There is a desire to expand the well-designed, compact, walkable characteristics of the Village Green to the entire Town Center area. Key implementation strategies include promoting available development and redevelopment sites; developing a

pedestrian and bicycle connectivity plan to establish access to and within the Town Center; and encouraging businesses that attract communal gathering opportunities. (For more information, refer to page 52.)

John Gray/Pleasant

The John Gray/Pleasant area is a main gateway into Fairfield, providing access to many of the city's residential neighborhoods, Harbin Park, and the Town Center. It will be a well-designed, small-scale, mixed-use area supported by low intensity retail and services that support the surrounding neighborhoods and low-to-medium-density residential uses. Key implementation strategies include developing design guidelines; creating a gateway feature at the corporation line; and encouraging the application of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) on key parcels. (For more information, refer to page 62.)

South Gilmore/Mack

The South Gilmore/Mack area is a primary gateway entrance into Fairfield with close proximity to the interstate, contains high traffic volume generating businesses, and is a regional draw. It will have strong design standards for development, but also have flexibility to accommodate a range and intensity of uses that are compatible with, and support the current office and medical land use patterns. Two of the largest undeveloped properties in the city—the Heine Property (110 acres) and the Benzing Property (27 acres)—are located in this area and have the potential to accommodate significant growth. Key implementation strategies include collaborating with Forest Park on the redevelopment of the former Forest Fair Mall; enhancing the existing gateway; and reducing roadway congestion. (For more information, refer to page 70.)



Small Area Plan Locations

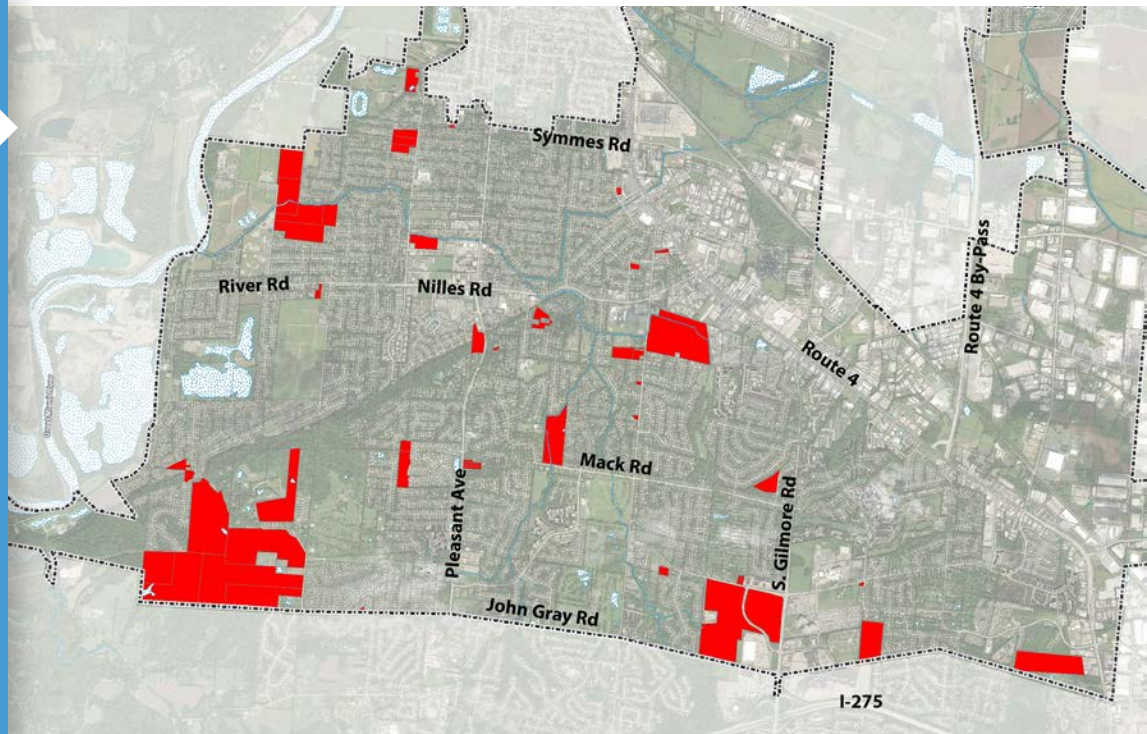
Housing

The right mix of housing types will ensure that a wide variety of people can live, work, and play in the Fairfield community. Most residences in the city today are single-family homes and most units are owner-occupied (62 percent). Home values and rents are fairly affordable but are on the rise, with the median home value increasing 13 percent and median rent increasing 16 percent between 2016 and 2018. Many housing units, including both single-family homes and apartment buildings, are older and are showing signs of aging and wear. Maintaining and enhancing the condition of existing residences through proactive code compliance, inspection programs, and rehabilitation incentive programs are key implementation strategies.

Limited land is available for new traditional subdivision-style residential development. As a result, new residential development will shift toward 1) infill on undeveloped lots within existing neighborhoods, 2) tearing down and rebuilding existing housing, and 3) cluster type housing in mixed-use developments. Infill housing within existing neighborhoods should be compatible with the setback, scale, and materials of the neighborhood. Future housing is encouraged to be sustainably designed. Incorporating housing into mixed-use developments in the Town Center, John Gray/Pleasant, and South Gilmore/Mack areas will create new opportunities for Fairfield residents to live in walkable neighborhoods near jobs and activities and reduce their dependence on cars.

For more information on housing, refer to page 81.

This map shows undeveloped tracts of land that have the potential for new residential developments.





Transportation

A transportation system should be well balanced and include motor vehicle access, public transportation, sidewalks, and bike paths. During the planning process, community members emphasized improving pedestrian access and vehicular access management as primary goals for the city’s transportation network.

Walking

The City of Fairfield continues to build a connected sidewalk system, which will reduce the need to drive to most locations within the city. A pedestrian connectivity plan should be developed to identify gaps in the sidewalk network and create a program to install sidewalks and trails throughout Fairfield. In addition, the City of Fairfield will collaborate with the Fairfield City School District to prioritize sidewalk connections and paths to increase available safe routes for students, particularly on Route 4.

Biking

The Great Miami River Trail offers recreational cycling opportunities on the west side of the city; however, there are no marked bike lanes on roads or off-road paths in other areas of the city. More than 13 miles of trails and connections have been identified in the city’s *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (2014).

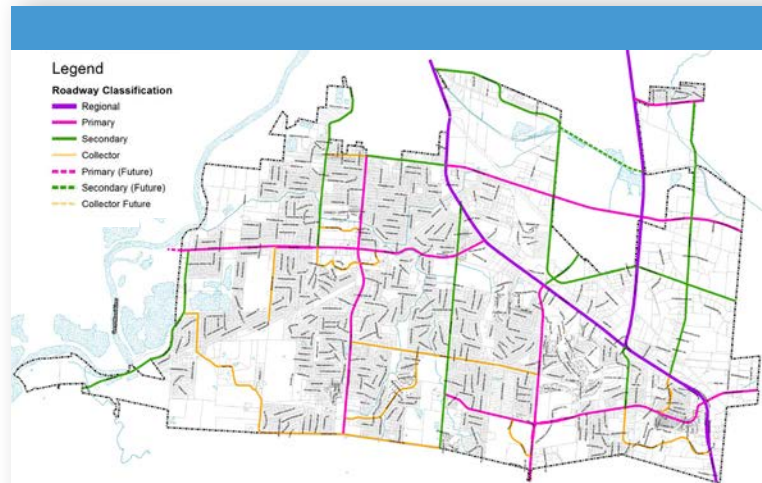
Driving

Fairfield has direct access to I-275 and is minutes from I-75, providing quick and convenient regional access to and from the city by car. Within the city, a comprehensive roadway network moves vehicles effectively. The Thoroughfare Plan establishes the locations and minimum standards for the future street network within the city, helping to establish rights-of-way and guide the construction of new roads and intersections such as the new roundabout at River and Gray Roads. Access management principles such as curb cut consolidation, frontage roads and service drives should be incorporated by the city along regional and primary thoroughfares.

Transit

The Butler County Regional Transit Authority (BCRTA) operates three bus routes along major roads within the city. The City of Fairfield will continue ongoing coordination with BCRTA to increase transit service in the area.

For more detailed information on transportation, refer to page 93.



The Thoroughfare Plan establishes future road locations and typologies

(See page 101 for an enlarged map.)



Economic Development

Business in the City of Fairfield is strong, growing, and diversified. Over the past 10 years, 200 new businesses were established, resulting in 8,500 additional employees working in Fairfield. The industries employing the greatest number of people in the city are finance and insurance (16.6 percent), manufacturing (13.2 percent), health care and social assistance (12.9 percent), retail trade (11.7 percent), and wholesale trade (10.1 percent).

The city uses a variety of economic development tools to encourage business growth, to create and retain jobs, and to assist in capital development, such as property tax abatements, small business loan programs, a redevelopment fund, workforce development partners, and other state and federal programs.

The primary business and employment areas in the city are the Route 4 corridor business district, the industrial area northeast of Route 4, the Mack and South Gilmore area, and the Town Center. Compared to the 12 surrounding communities, Fairfield has a slightly higher average commercial vacancy rate (10.8 percent vs. an average of 8.1 percent) and slightly lower asking rates per square foot for commercial rents (\$10.89/sf vs. \$13.86/sf). There has been strong investment in commercial properties over the past 10 years, including more than \$49 million in commercial building investment in 2018. There are 923 acres of remaining undeveloped land zoned for industrial uses and another 166 acres of undeveloped land zoned for commercial uses. The efficient use of this limited remaining land and the redevelopment of existing built properties will be critical to ensuring that land is available for future business activities.

Key economic development implementation strategies include promoting available sites for new development and redevelopment; investigating incentives and public assistance programs to be used in areas with high commercial vacancy rates; revising zoning regulations to allow higher densities near centers of activity; establishing design guidelines for major commercial areas; investigating the formation of Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD) with neighboring communities; and continuing a dialogue and partnership with the city's major employers and educational institutions.

For more detailed information on economic development, refer to page 109.



More than 25,000 people travel to Fairfield for work each day and only about 3,000 people both live and work in the city



Public Services

The resources the city provides and maintains greatly contribute to the quality of life for residents and businesses, and lend to the economic success of the city. The City of Fairfield offers a full range of municipal services, such as public works, public utilities, fire, police, municipal court, and parks and recreation. Public education is provided by the Fairfield City School District, which serves both the city and Fairfield Township. As new development and redevelopment occur in Fairfield, city services must be reviewed to ensure Fairfield continues to offer a high quality level of service.

Public Facilities and Services

The city is focused on maintaining high-quality water and wastewater systems through maintenance and proactive replacement of the aging infrastructure. To maximize the use of existing community services and facilities, the city will promote redevelopment opportunities in areas where public services and facilities currently exist. New development will be required to provide infrastructure upgrades as needed to maintain current levels of service. In addition, maintaining the transportation network will continue to be a priority. Fairfield is a diverse community and will strive towards inclusiveness by providing exceptional activities, services, and infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and businesses.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

The city's 850-acre portfolio of active and passive recreation facilities provide many places for Fairfield residents to play. The latest addition to the portfolio is a 6.5-acre dog park and future trailhead along the river, which will connect to the Great Miami River Trail. *The Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2014)* guides decisions and funding for parks, recreation, and open space and is supplemental to *Fairfield Forward*. The redevelopment of Marsh Park as a water-based recreation site with access to the Great Miami River has been identified as a new project to be included in the plan. New private developments will also be encouraged to incorporate gathering spaces and pocket parks to add to the collection of recreation facilities in the city.

Intergovernmental Coordination

The City of Fairfield will continue to work closely with its partners in neighboring communities, Butler County, Fairfield City School District, and the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), as well as collaborate with regional agencies and non-profit organizations to further achieve shared goals.

For more detailed information on public services, refer to page 125.



Dog park and trailhead concept plan on River Road



Sustainability

Sustainable actions support, maintain, conserve, and enhance the environmental, economic, and social systems on which communities depend to ensure these critical resources continue to be available for future generations. The City of Fairfield will be a leader in responsible stewardship, healthy environments, and reduced energy consumption on both public and private property. Fairfield has implemented sustainable initiatives such as curbside recycling, urban forestry, an environmental commission, a farmer's market, and groundwater resource protection. In order to reduce the carbon footprint at city-owned facilities, efficient lighting and mechanical systems are being installed, street lights are being replaced with energy efficient LEDs, and the city is investigating applying for a grant to install electric vehicle charging stations.

Key sustainable implementation strategies include exploring alternative energy technology to power city-owned properties; revising the zoning code to require landscaping on private property when it develops or redevelops; encouraging the preservation of mature trees and planting of new trees; exploring incentives for sustainable site and building design; increasing pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; pursuing Greenroads certification status for eligible transportation projects; and creating a sustainability plan to detail and guide these efforts.

For more detailed information on sustainability, refer to page 3.



Top to Bottom: 1) Local vendor at the Village Green Farmer's Market; 2) The OKI's Solar Ready website informs property owners of their home's solar energy potential; and 3) Earth Day in Fairfield with Mayor Steve Miller, Council Member Tim Abbott, and Duke Energy employees.



Introduction



Introduction

The City of Fairfield has long enjoyed its position as a quality, well-balanced community located just north of I-275, about 20 miles from Cincinnati. With its regional convenience and small-town charm, Fairfield continues to attract residents, visitors, and businesses to the area. As a result of this growth, 87.3 percent of the approximately 20-square-mile total area has been developed, leaving minimal land remaining for new development. *Fairfield Forward* provides a critical, strategic framework for future growth and community resources to ensure a high quality of life can be sustained for years to come.

History

In 1787, Judge John Cleves Symmes, a colonel in the Revolutionary War and congressman from New Jersey, received word from Major Benjamin Stites that he had located “the garden spot of any place that he had seen.” After a visit to this area, Judge Symmes purchased all the lands between the mouth and the source of the two Miami Rivers, approximately 330,000 acres for about 67 cents per acre. President George Washington signed the land patent that became known as the Symmes, or Miami, Purchase in 1794.

Pioneers gave this area the name of Fairfield for the natural beauty of the surrounding

fields. Predominately an agricultural area, hamlets known as Symmes Corner, Jones Station (later Stockton Station), Furmandale (also called Snaptown), Fairplay (also called Black Bottom) and Flenner’s Corner grew into thriving communities. What is now the City of Fairfield was originally a part of Fairfield Township, one of 13 townships in Butler County, Ohio.

In October 1953, the City of Hamilton Chamber of Commerce published a map showing the areas under consideration for annexation. The map indicated that the Hamilton border would extend south

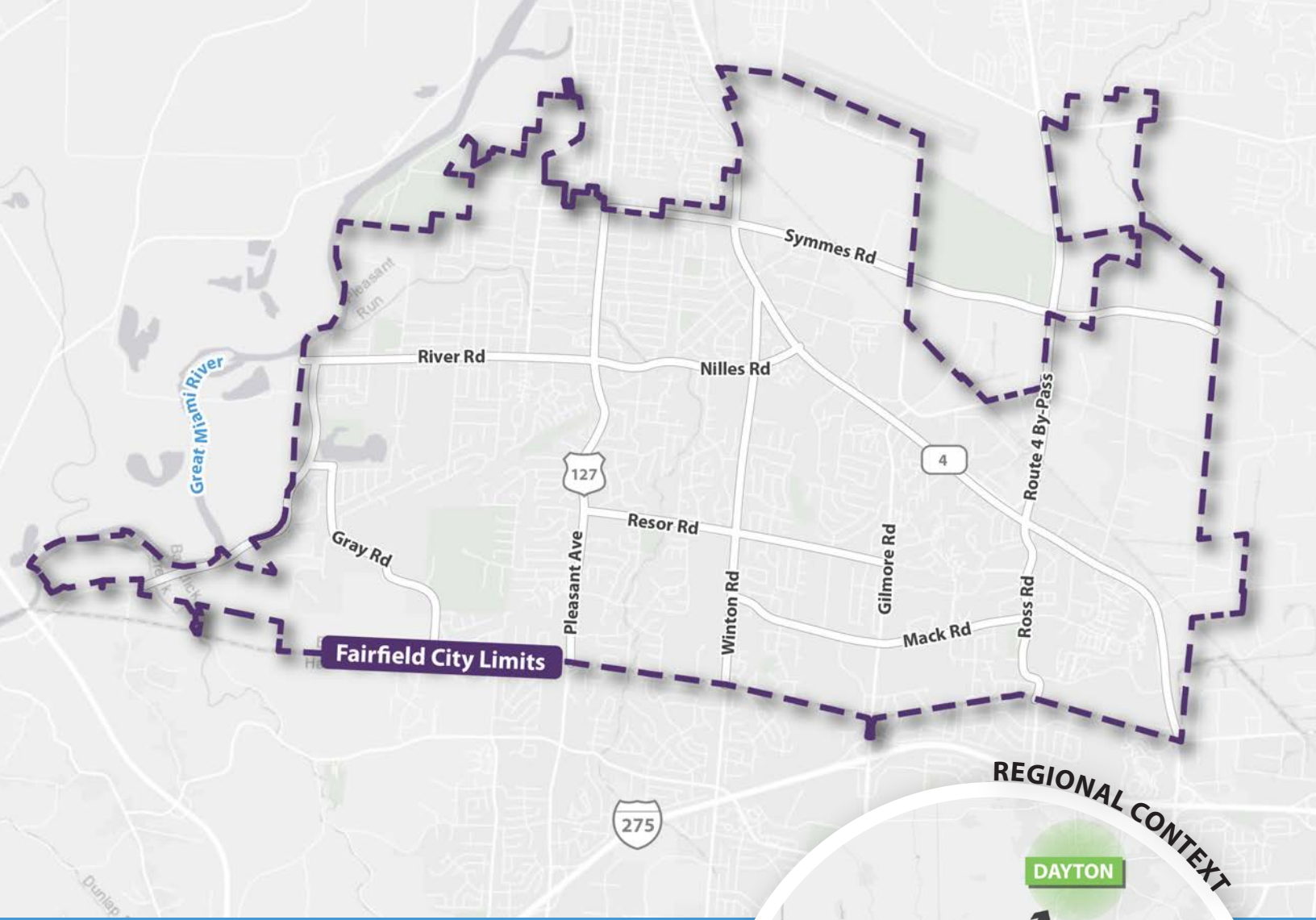
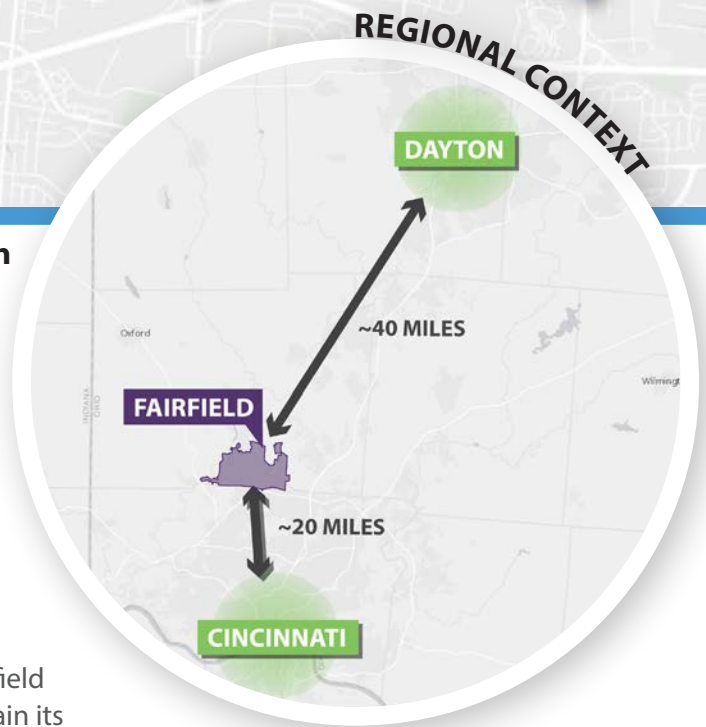


Figure 1-1. City of Fairfield Location

beyond Nilles Road, and west beyond Gilmore Road. Fairfield Township residents saw the annexation as a loss of industrial revenues, the loss of their school system, and the loss of the opportunity for self-government. Concerned residents joined together to form a village on July 10, 1954 and then by way of special census became a city on October 20, 1955. Eleven years later, the city adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1966.

With a population of approximately 42,600 persons, today's Fairfield is strategically positioned to build on its strong foundation, sustain its neighborhoods and business community, and offer quality of life facilities, services and programs. As a maturing city, the residential areas are approaching full development. Attracting high paying jobs to the commercial, office, and industrial zones, and building on the respect earned from the surrounding metropolitan area and region, will continue to be priorities so that the region continues to see Fairfield as an economic generator with a high quality of life for its residents and businesses.





Citywide Steering Committee

Plan Overview

What's Inside

The chapters in this document include:

- 1. BASELINE CONDITIONS SUMMARY.** Provides a brief background on where the city has been and where it currently is with respect to demographics, land use, economic development, housing, transportation and infrastructure, and community facilities and resources.
- 2. VISION, GOALS AND POLICIES.** Establishes the overarching vision for the city and supporting goals, and policies to achieve that collective vision.
- 3. FUTURE PLAN.** Establishes a citywide future plan for Fairfield and for four small areas of focus that includes: the Route 4 Corridor, the Town Center, John Gray/Pleasant and South Gilmore/Mack.
- 4. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES.** Provides an implementation program and strategic steps to instruct the city on how to accomplish executing the policies of this plan and implementing the future land use concept.
- 5. APPENDICES.** Provides supplemental information used to support the development of this plan including items from previous planning efforts relevant to this update. A separate Supplemental Appendix document provides additional information and supporting documentation including summaries of public outreach events, the results of the online survey, city briefing presentations, news articles and stakeholder interviews.

Purpose

The City of Fairfield has long enjoyed its position as a quality, well balanced community – strategically situated in Butler County, just north of I-275 (Figure 1-1). With an approximate population of 42,600 residents, the city is reaching build out capacity within the jurisdictional boundaries.

Fairfield Forward is the process and resulting documentation that engaged the citizenry and businesses of the City of Fairfield in the development of this Comprehensive Plan. Beginning in August 2018 and continuing through September 2019, the structured comprehensive planning process established a guide for future development and redevelopment in the city. Fairfield Forward is a dynamic, policy level document that establishes a collective vision, goals, policies and strategies to make future land use, zoning and capital investment decisions in a reasonable and fiscally responsible manner.

Prior to this document, the city relied on a Comprehensive Plan adopted by City Council in 2009. This update reassesses where Fairfield stands today and how it intends to develop, redevelop, or preserve lands within the jurisdictional boundaries of the city.

Why A Comprehensive Land Use Plan?

Fairfield Forward is a comprehensive land use plan. This plan is the primary document that focuses on defining the desired characteristics and strengths of the city and identifies growth and redevelopment strategies. This plan informs the decisions of City Council, the Boards and Commissions, and staff and when considering investments and actions related to the fiscal well-being and high quality of life that Fairfield residents and businesses have come to expect and enjoy.

Fairfield Forward sets forth recommendations on issues such as connectivity and economic development, that can lead to investments in the community either through business development from new companies looking to move to the area or matching grants for infrastructure improvements from agencies such as the State of Ohio or the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI). As such, this document should be revisited approximately every five years to ensure that the document remains relevant and current. A comprehensive assessment of this document should occur every 10 years.

“Visions describe what best should be, could be- if and when mankind has the will to make them real.”

*James Rouse, The Rouse Company
Urban Planner, Real Estate Developer, Philanthropist*



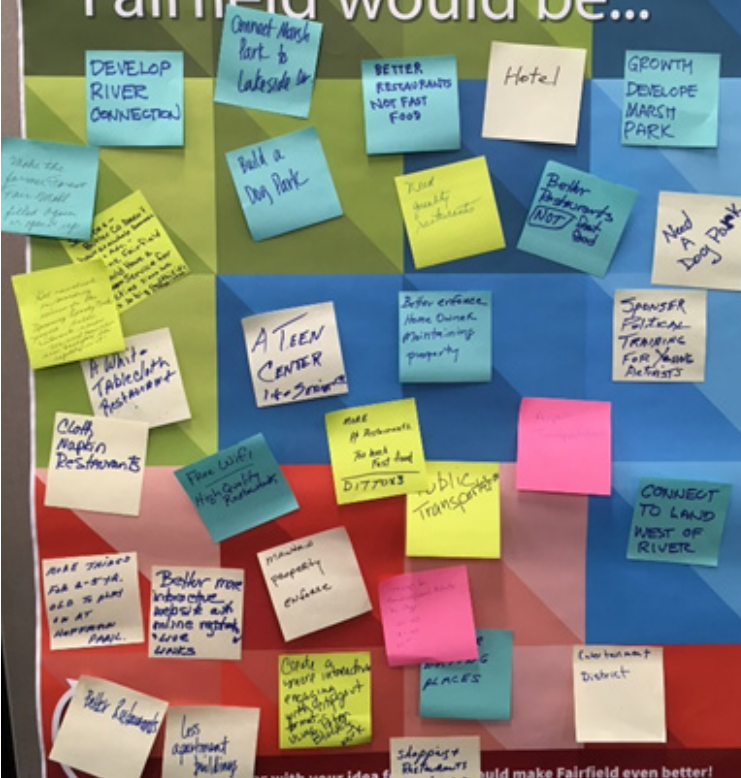
This document should be considered the primary policy level instrument for:

- The administration of zoning and subdivision regulations and standards
- Infrastructure planning and improvement including streets and utilities
- Promoting economic development
- Locating parks, open space and recreation uses
- The development of more detailed plans that lead to quality development, redevelopment and preservation of unique areas in the city



Citizen involvement at a public open house event

A game changer for Fairfield would be...



Planning Process

This Fairfield Forward Comprehensive Plan was developed over a 12-month process for adoption by City Council in December, 2019. The planning process included meeting with city staff to collect existing planning documents for analysis, and updating and validating that information through the Fairfield Forward Steering Committee and Small Area Committees appointed by the city. The goals of each of the committees were to:

- Seek agreement on key issues
- Establish a common vision for the future
- Decide goals and policies needed to achieve that vision
- Set priorities for implementation and continued planning efforts

This information was supplemented by:

- Targeted public input at community events, such as National Night Out and the Farmer's Market
- Two public open house events where residents were invited to provide input on a wide variety of topics
- A public workshop where residents participated in multiple mapping exercises and a visual preference survey
- Key stakeholder interviews
- An online survey that collected invaluable information on the perceptions, thoughts and desires of residents who live and work in Fairfield

These activities ultimately led to the vision, goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan. Documentation of these public outreach events can be found in the separate Supplemental Appendix document.



Fairfield neighbors, elected officials, and staff collaborated to create a plan that illustrates the collective vision for the future and sets out a clear strategy to bring it to life over the next 20 years.

sidewalks



We Heard...



Once a plan draft was complete and vetted by the Steering Committee and Small Area Committees, it was presented to the public in an open house forum for comment and feedback. Those comments and feedback were integrated into the plan, as applicable, and the plan was presented to the Planning Commission and City Council. City Council adopted this Comprehensive Plan in December, 2019.

The graphic above depicts the common, recurring themes heard from the public throughout this planning process with respect to key issues regarding Fairfield. The larger the text, the more times that particular issue was mentioned by residents. The vision, policies, goals and implementation strategies in this plan were, in part, based on these key issues.



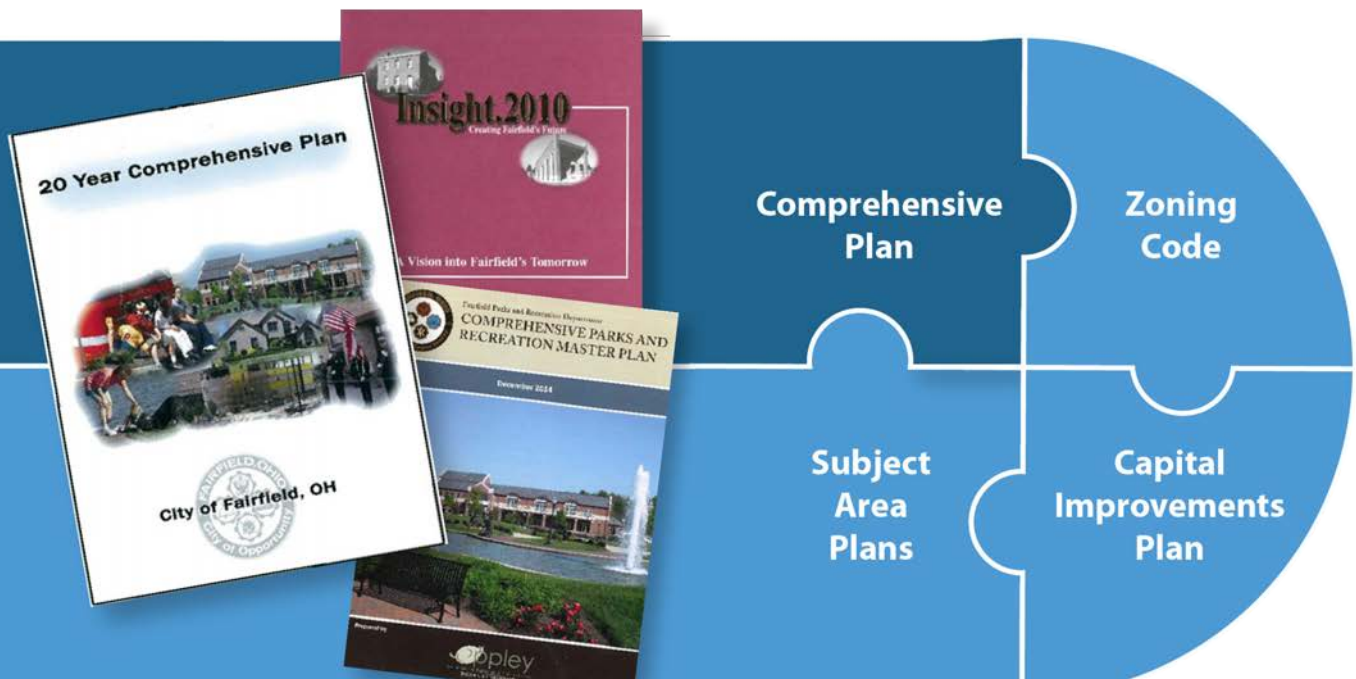
Public Open House Event



Relationship to Other Plans

The development of Fairfield Forward took into consideration several other previous planning efforts including:

1. *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan, 2014*
2. *20 Year Comprehensive Plan, 2009*
3. *Route 4 Committee Final Report, 2006*
4. *Route 4 Corridor Design Plan, 2003* (document completed, but never adopted by the city)
5. *Insight 2010 – Creating Fairfield’s Future, A vision into Fairfield’s Tomorrow, 2002*
6. *The Route 4 Plan, 1999*
7. *Town Center Development Plan, 1993*
8. *Route 4 Service Drive Plan, updated 1990*



How to Use this Plan

This plan, based on extensive public input, should be utilized when decisions are being considered regarding development and redevelopment, parks and recreation, and capital and transportation improvements. The elements listed below are examples of how reviews, processes and decisions should consider this document for alignment with the vision and goals of Fairfield Forward.

Lastly, flexibility is the key to this document. Economic conditions change. Great ideas are generated which may provide a better option to a parcel of land that were not considered during the development of this plan. The city should consider being flexible in the implementation of this planning document if that change is in alignment with the overall vision or vision of the four small planning areas. When flexibility is considered and agreed upon, the plan should be updated to reflect that change.

1 Development and Redevelopment

Administrative and legislative approvals (plan review, rezonings, etc.) are the front line means for the implementation of the vision and goals of this plan. Decisions made by staff and elected officials should reference the relevant policies in this document.

2 Plan and Code Updates

As other plans, codes and regulations are being updated, the city should utilize the vision, policies, and goals of this plan to support the changes required in such documents to implement this plan.

3 Capital Improvements and Funding

The city should review and use this plan as a reference when preparing updates to the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) for the city. The CIP should be in concurrence with the policies of this plan. Likewise, this plan can be used as a policy level foundation when seeking grants for funding public infrastructure projects such as sidewalks, trails, street widening or other improvements. Entities such as the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) give credence to communities seeking competitive funds that have comprehensive plans that involve the public.

4 City Budgets and Work Programs

City departments should be familiar with Fairfield Forward, in particular the vision and goals, when preparing annual budgets and work programs.

5 Private Developers

Fairfield Forward should not be solely utilized internally by the city. Developers, real estate agents, and private property owners should be proactively made aware of this planning document and take into consideration the vision and goals in their decisions to invest, develop and redevelop in Fairfield.



Vision, Goals, Policies & Implementation Strategies

Vision, Goals, Policies & Implementation Strategies

The City of Fairfield is an increasingly diverse and thriving community. City staff and leaders are committed to establishing and meeting a realistic agenda that reflects the needs, desires, passions, and endeavors that the community has stated they want for the future.



City staff seeking input from the community at the National Night Out event at the Justice Center

A vibrant town center, competitive and stable business environment, quality schools, desirable residential neighborhoods, ample parks and recreation areas, and top-notch public services are just some of the components that make Fairfield a desirable place to live and work.

This chapter identifies the overarching vision for the city, which sets the direction for the plan and defines the vision, goals, policies, and implementation strategies that are established throughout this document.

VISION

An **inspirational** statement of what Fairfield is striving to maintain and become.

GOALS

Statements **based on an analysis** of existing conditions, trends and priorities, based on community input, established to achieve the vision.

POLICIES

Statements providing **direction** on how specific goals can be achieved.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Statements identifying **specific actions** to achieve the stated goals and policies.

VISION

“ Fairfield is a vibrant and diverse city that values safe neighborhoods and a strong sense of community for all residents and businesses. Our public services are known for fostering a high quality of life, making Fairfield stand out as a desirable place in which to live, work, visit and do business.

The vision of Fairfield Forward is to carry forward these key characteristics while embracing the diversity of the city and the versatility needed to adapt so that the city can welcome new investment and redevelopment that only strengthens these qualities.

”



Top to Bottom: 1) Residents working together to provide recommendations at a planning workshop and 2) An example of the results of the Visual Preference Survey conducted at the public workshop



From this community engagement and review of the 2009 Plan, the vision, goals, policies and implementation strategies were developed for the following categories that are to be applicable to the entire city:

- Appearance and Visual Character (VC)
- Housing and Neighborhoods (HN)
- Transportation (T)
- Economic Development (ED)
- Public Facilities and Services (PFS)
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PRO)
- Intergovernmental Coordination (IC)
- Sustainability (S)

CITYWIDE

A vision, goals, policies and implementation strategies were also developed for each of the four small area plans, which include:

- Route 4 Corridor
- Town Center
- John Gray/Pleasant
- South Gilmore/Mack

SMALL AREAS

The vision, goals, policies and implementation strategies were carefully developed through two efforts. The first effort was public engagement. Comments were solicited and received at public events, such as weekly concerts in the park, National Night Out, a public workshop, two public open houses, numerous stakeholder interviews, discussions with City Council and city staff, and an online survey. The public input was collected, vetted and reviewed with the Steering Committee and four Small Area Plan Committees.

The second element was the review of the goals and objectives of the current *Comprehensive Plan 2020* (adopted in 2009). This review was conducted to identify any goals and objectives that were still valid with this planning process.



Land Use and Zoning

Land Use and Zoning



The aerial images above show the increase in development in the southern portion of the Town Center over the past 25 years

Current Land Use and Zoning

The City of Fairfield is a community featuring a rich diversity of viable land uses comprised of residential, commercial, office, public, parks and recreation, and industrial uses. This diversity provides for a variety of locations to live, work and play. It also provides an important foundation for the economic well-being and stability of the city. Understanding the existing conditions on how land is currently used (existing land use) and is legislated to be used (zoning) allows the city to identify patterns and deficiencies in future land use needs that can be addressed through policies and implementation strategies in this plan.

Current Land Use Profile

- ✓ Fairfield is approximately 20 square miles in size.
- ✓ Approximately 13% of the land within the city is not built upon and is available for new development based on current zoning, city policies (e.g. parkland is not counted towards “developable”) and areas where environmental conditions (e.g. steep topography, wetlands) are not present. Land has been progressively developed, moving towards a full buildout of the city as indicated in the graph below.
- ✓ The largest land use category, in terms of acreage, is residential comprising 43% of the city.
- ✓ The city has a strong employment base with commercial, office and industrial comprising approximately 21% of the land within the city.
- ✓ Generally, existing land uses are established as shown in Table 3-1. Figure 3-1 identifies the existing land use pattern of the city.

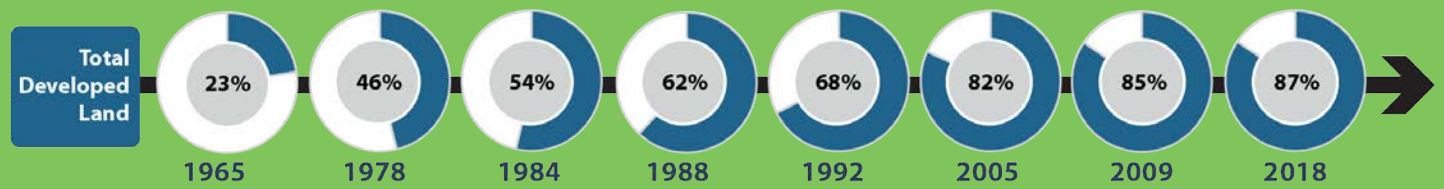
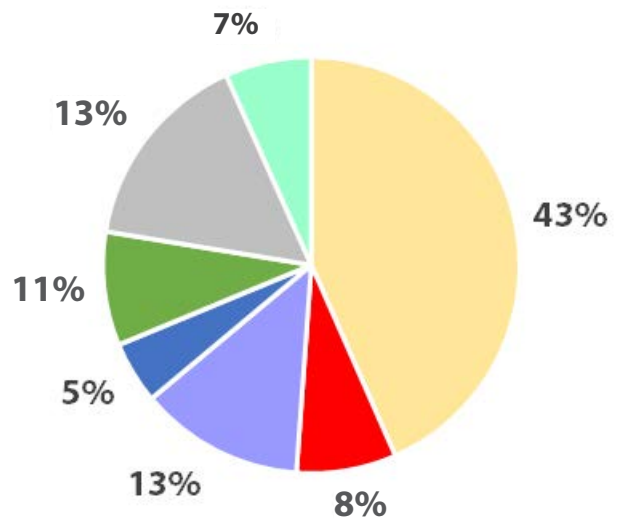


Table 3-1. Existing Land Use

General Land Use Category	Acreage	% of Total
Residential	5,349	43%
Commercial/Office	998	8%
Industrial	1,574	13%
Public/Semi Public	595	5%
Parks, Recreation and Open Space	1,378	11%
Undeveloped*	1,602	13%
Utility/Right Of Way	827	7%
Total	12,323	100%

*Undeveloped land includes all property not built upon. This type of property is located in many different zoning districts. See Figure 3-3 on page 25 for a breakdown of undeveloped land by zoning district.

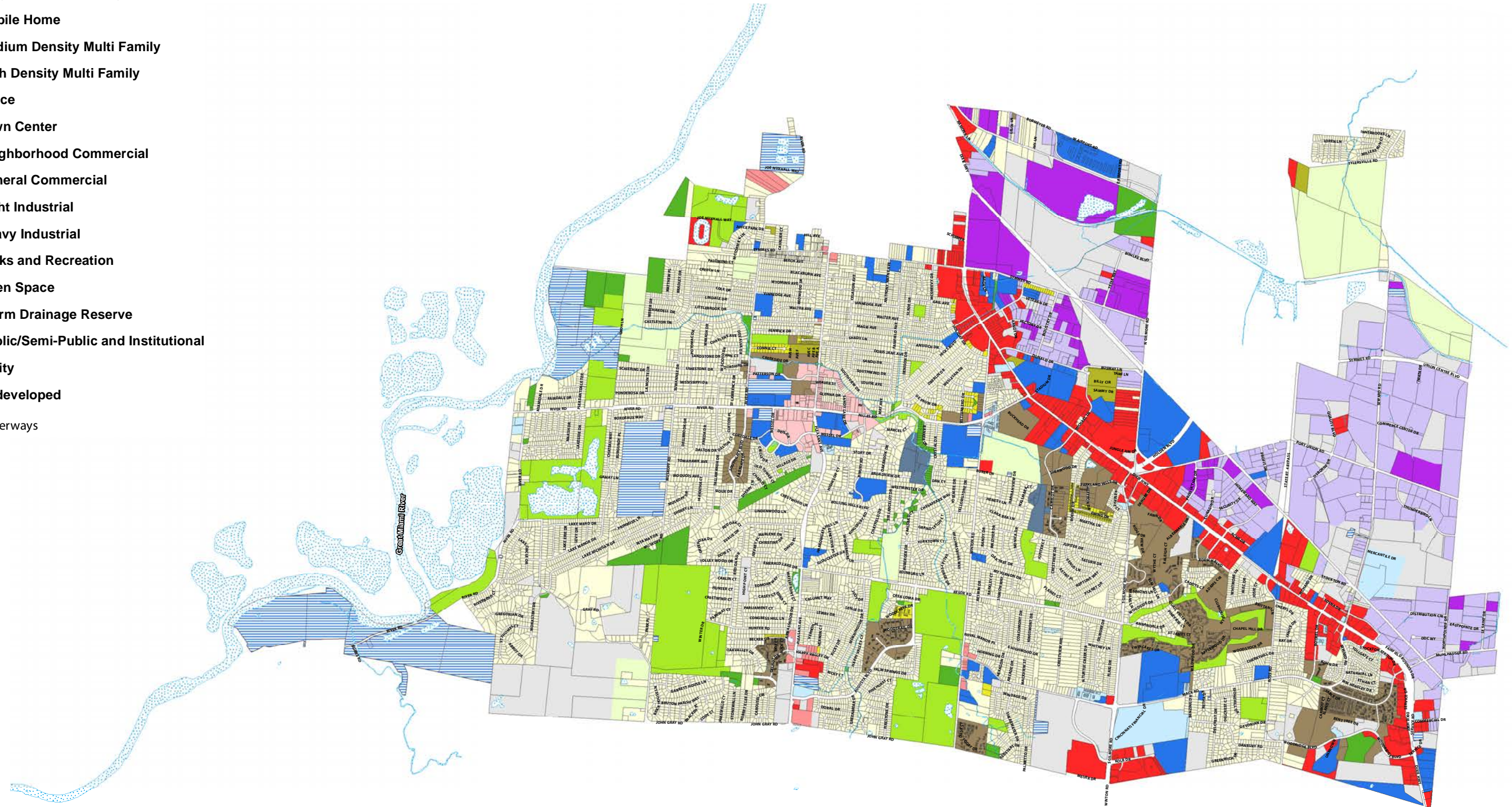


For a more detailed breakdown of land uses, including a comparison to the previous Comprehensive Plan, refer to Appendix A - Land Use.

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Figure 3-1. Existing Land Use Map

- Agricultural
- Single Family Dwelling
- Mobile Home
- Medium Density Multi Family
- High Density Multi Family
- Office
- Town Center
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Parks and Recreation
- Open Space
- Storm Drainage Reserve
- Public/Semi-Public and Institutional
- Utility
- Undeveloped
- Waterways

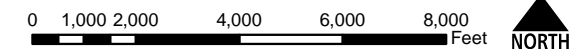


Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS



City of Fairfield, Ohio

August 28, 2019



Existing Land Use

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Current Zoning Profile

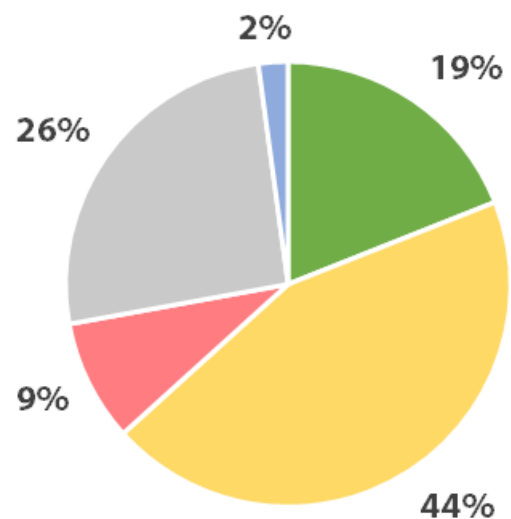
Zoning is a regulatory tool used by the city that establishes regulations for private property development. It is a tool that can be used to implement the land use elements of this plan. The zoning code includes standards and regulations including, but not limited to: permitted land uses; lot development standards including minimum lot sizes, minimum setbacks and building heights; design standards; sign standards; parking requirements; and landscaping and buffering standards. All property within the city is zoned in one of 24 unique districts ranging from a low intensity agricultural and large lot single-family residential district (A-1) to a more intensive general industrial district (M-2).

- ✓ 63% of the city is zoned for some type of residential use, under eight different types of residential zoning districts, located mainly west of Route 4. This includes the large lot Agricultural and Estate Residential District (A-1). Of note, approximately 85% of the residentially zoned land is reserved for single-family detached dwellings and 15% is zoned for higher intensity multi-family dwellings.
- ✓ 26% of the city is zoned for industrial uses under two types of zoning districts permitting a wide variety of manufacturing and warehousing uses. These districts are primarily located on the eastern side of the city and provide a solid, reliable tax base for the city now and in the future based on the flexibility of the districts.
- ✓ 11% of the city is zoned for commercial and service type uses primarily located along the Route 4 corridor and in the Town Center.
- ✓ Generally, the city's zoning districts can be categorized as shown in Table 3-2. Figure 3-2 identifies the existing zoning pattern of the city.

Table 3-2. Existing Zoning

General Zoning Category	Acreage	% of Total
Agricultural/Large Lot Residential	2,340	19%
Residential	5,460	44%
Commercial/Office	1,091	9%
Industrial	3,168	26%
Downtown (Town Center)	264	2%
Total*	12,323	100%



























* Note: The difference in total land area between zoning and land use is due, in part, to unzoned areas of the city including rights-of-way and bodies of water within the city boundaries.

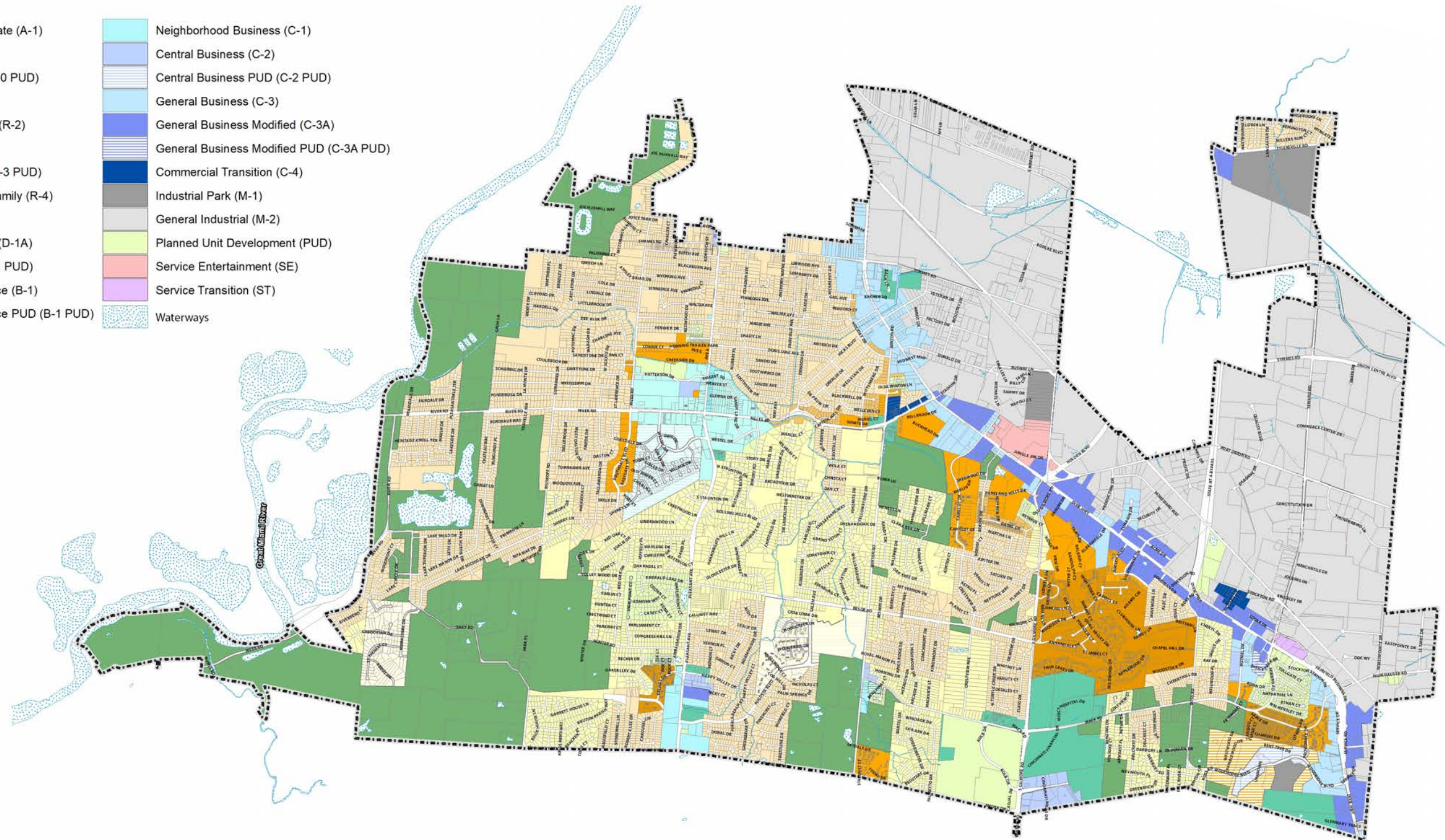


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Figure 3-2. Existing Zoning Map

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
|  | Agricultural and Estate (A-1) |  | Neighborhood Business (C-1) |
|  | One-Family (R-0) |  | Central Business (C-2) |
|  | One-Family PUD (R-0 PUD) |  | Central Business PUD (C-2 PUD) |
|  | One -Family (R-1) |  | General Business (C-3) |
|  | One to Four Family (R-2) |  | General Business Modified (C-3A) |
|  | Multi-Family (R-3) |  | General Business Modified PUD (C-3A PUD) |
|  | Multi-Family PUD (R-3 PUD) |  | Commercial Transition (C-4) |
|  | Low Density Multi-Family (R-4) |  | Industrial Park (M-1) |
|  | Downtown (D-1) |  | General Industrial (M-2) |
|  | Downtown Modified (D-1A) |  | Planned Unit Development (PUD) |
|  | Downtown PUD (D-1 PUD) |  | Service Entertainment (SE) |
|  | Institutions and Office (B-1) |  | Service Transition (ST) |
|  | Institutions and Office PUD (B-1 PUD) |  | Waterways |



Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS



City of Fairfield, Ohio

August 28, 2019



Existing Zoning

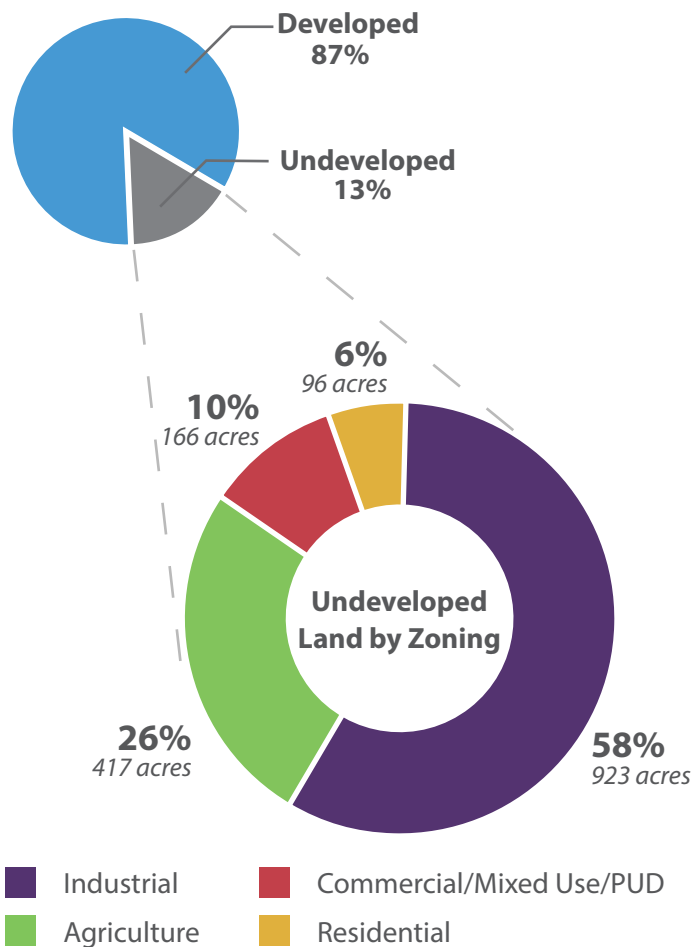
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Current Agricultural/Undeveloped Property

There are currently 1,602 acres of undeveloped land in Fairfield comprising approximately 13% of the city. Of this land:

- ✓ 58% is zoned for industrial uses (923 acres).
- ✓ 26% zoned agricultural (417 acres). This category also currently allows for large lot single-family dwellings.
- ✓ 6% is zoned for residential (96 acres).
- ✓ The remaining 10% is commercial, mixed use or Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoned property.

Figure 3-3. Undeveloped Land by Zoning



For a more detailed breakdown of undeveloped land by zoning, refer to Appendix A - Land Use.

WHAT THIS MEANS

LAND USE ANALYSIS

An analysis of the existing land use pattern of Fairfield shows that the city is reaching full buildout, with 13% of land within the city limits considered undeveloped. As the city continues to grow, eventually there will be no more available greenfield land (undeveloped) for new construction. Currently, there is a significant amount of undeveloped land zoned for industrial and agricultural uses. Industrial land is key to the economic health of the city providing tax dollars and employment. This land should be protected as such.

It is anticipated that most of the land currently zoned for agricultural purposes will be rezoned for single-family residential in the future, under a single-family residential zoning district category, based on the location of the land and the need for additional areas for housing. Based on the population growth trends of the city, there is a potential for approximately 30-40 years' of growth that can be accommodated on undeveloped, residentially zoned land. See Housing chapter for more information.

Appearance and Visual Character (VC) Goals and Policies

Appearance and visual character go hand in hand with the future land use decisions of the city. As properties develop and redevelop in the future, new development should be well designed, properly sited and cohesive with surrounding development, where applicable. The visual character of new and redeveloped properties should be of high quality, and in line with the high public standards that the public desires. Public input has led to establishing the following goals regarding the appearance and visual character of the city.

GOAL VC 1 Enhance the city's appearance and visual character through effective urban design improvements.

- **Policy 1.1** Require utility lines be located underground when new development or large-scale redevelopment occurs.
- **Policy 1.2** Review new telecommunication and information technology systems for compatibility and appropriateness of location (e.g. 5G networks).
- **Policy 1.3** Establish and promote a uniform streetscape program to include plantings, sidewalk treatment, lighting and coordinated public signage.
- **Policy 1.4** Encourage uniform signage for all new development and redevelopment to promote visual compatibility for future signs on private property.
- **Policy 1.5** Expand the locations of visual gateways into the city.
- **Policy 1.6** Promote high visual quality by requiring quality standards in urban design, construction, public infrastructure and appearance.

GOAL VC 2 Enhance the city's appearance and visual character through the reduction of improved off-street parking areas and supporting interior landscaping requirements.

- **Policy 2.1** Explore revising the off-street parking standards in the zoning code to identify the appropriate number of spaces for uses to prevent excessive and unnecessary parking spaces and, as a result, excessive lot coverage.
- **Policy 2.2** Explore enhancing the requirements for interior and exterior landscaping and screening for off-street parking areas.

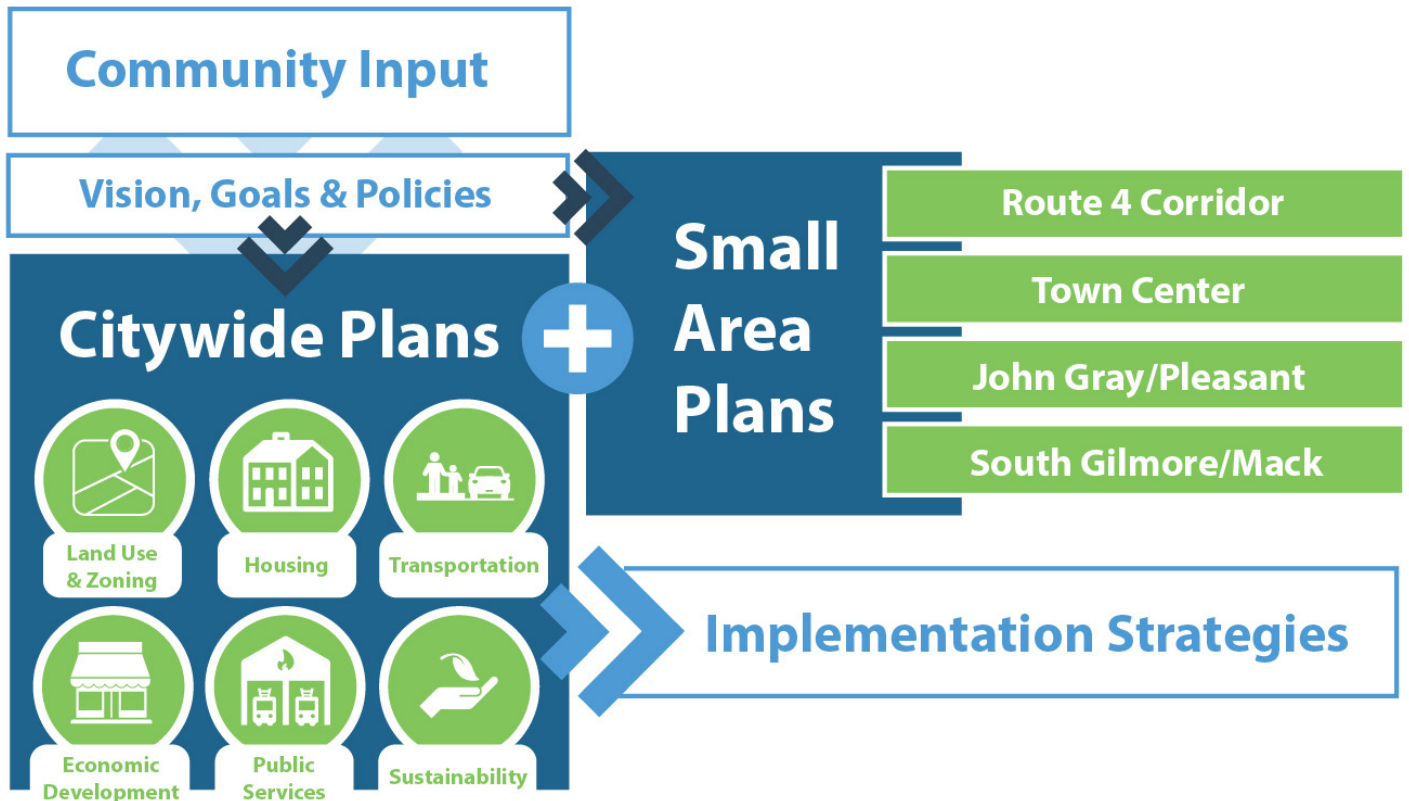


Future Land Use Plan

The future land use plan for Fairfield Forward, comprised of a land use map and supporting text, is based on extensive meetings with the public, the Fairfield Forward Steering Committee, the Small Area Plan Committees, City Council, Planning Commission and city staff. The future land use plan and related map is not a zoning code or a zoning map. It does not, by itself, directly affect the regulation of private property in the city. The future land use plan and map are a depiction of the ideal future land use pattern for Fairfield and should be used by staff, city officials and leaders as a policy level guide for future decisions on

proposed zoning, development and redevelopment applications. It should be used to update the standards and regulations used by the city to enforce land use patterns, connectivity, and design standards.

The vision, goals, policies and implementation strategies in the various chapters of this plan were used in the development of this future land use plan for the city. As such, the entire comprehensive plan should be reviewed often by the city, with changes made as needed to ensure the applicability of the plan.





Land use types located in Fairfield

The following uses represent the various categories of land use proposed in the city. Use types also include the general characteristics expected by residents and city leaders as properties are maintained, develop and redevelop. The future land use map is applicable to the entire city and is a result of the vision, goals and policies in this plan. The four small area plans establish a more detailed land use plan with unique visions, goals and policies. These small area plans are areas that have been identified as special areas based on gateway location, opportunity for development/redevelopment, or are central gathering places for the community.

The future land use plan establishes a diverse and responsibly balanced land use pattern as follows:

Table 3-5. Future Land Use Pattern

Use	Acres	% of Total
Suburban Neighborhood Single Family	4,884	40%
Medium Density Residential	62	1%
High Density Residential	683	6%
Office	140	1%
Neighborhood Commercial	17	0%
General Commercial	544	4%
Mixed Use	468	4%
Light Industrial	2,073	17%
Mixed Use Industrial	774	6%
Parks, Recreation and Open Space	1,112	9%
Public	1,112	9%
Right-of-way	270	2%
Semi-Public and Institutional	184	1%
Total	12,323	100%

Suburban Neighborhood Single Family

The Suburban Neighborhood Single Family land use will continue to be the dominant residential type in Fairfield, supporting multiple generations and lifestyles with quality, detached residential dwellings of varying types of design. This land use type is generally designed as a subdivision with residential densities ranging from 2 to 4 dwelling units per acre. Quality design and maintenance of property are paramount to the quality of life. Neighborhoods should be walkable and within a half mile walk to a park or public space.



Examples of typical single-family housing styles found in Fairfield

Medium Density Residential

The Medium Density Residential land use will provide higher density attached residential dwelling options for residents in Fairfield with quality and varying types of design. This land use type should only be considered in areas where this type of use currently exists, as infill, or where a transition is needed between a more intensive land use and the Suburban Neighborhood Single Family land use. This land use type is generally designed at a density ranging from 4 to 6 dwelling units per acre. Medium Density Residential developments should be within a half mile of a park or other public space.



Examples of medium density housing styles that may be suitable in Fairfield

High Density Residential

This Multi-Family Residential land use will provide the highest density attached residential dwelling options for residents in Fairfield, with high quality, multi-story buildings and integrated open spaces. This land use type should only be considered in areas where this type of use currently exists, as infill, or where a transition is needed between a more intensive land use and the other lower density residential type land uses. In transitional applications, this use shall only be permitted as part of a comprehensive mixed-use development. This land use type is generally designed at a density up to 8 dwelling units per acre. High Density Residential developments should be walkable and connected to an overall pedestrian sidewalk system.



Examples of upscale multi-family housing that may be suitable in Fairfield

Office

The Office land use will continue to provide a major employment and tax base for Fairfield in the professional, administrative, research and development, and medical fields. Office uses will range from large regional employers to smaller professional buildings. Office uses will primarily be located along major roadway corridors with smaller office locations being situated as a transition between more intensive commercial uses and non-commercial uses. Office buildings should include open space, well landscaped parking areas, and be well integrated with surrounding development and amenities that are within a walkable distance.



Examples of office developments found in Fairfield

Neighborhood Commercial

The Neighborhood Commercial land use represents areas serving the everyday convenience retail and personal service needs of residents of adjacent neighborhoods. Neighborhood Commercial uses will be small scale, low impact and will limit the use of drive through facilities which may generate higher volumes of traffic. Neighborhood Commercial uses are best located at intersections or along primary and secondary thoroughfares and should be connected to surrounding residential neighborhoods with sidewalks or bike trails. Finished architectural styles should be high quality on all sides visible from a right-of-way or as seen from a residential neighborhood.



Examples of neighborhood commercial businesses located in Fairfield

General Commercial

General Commercial land uses are more intense retail uses, characterized by mixed-use single or multi-tenant commercial buildings (including strip commercial), and typically located along regional and primary thoroughfares. They contribute to a strong tax base while also providing a variety of places for the everyday retail, dining, lodging, entertainment, professional and service needs of a local and regional population. Drive-through and drive in establishments are supported in these locations. General Commercial properties should be well maintained and contain well landscaped parking areas.



Examples of general commercial businesses located in Fairfield

Mixed Use

Mixed Use land uses are areas that encourage multiple, different types of uses in a single building or development. They can include multi-story buildings that incorporate retail and services uses on a ground floor and office and residential uses on upper stories. Mixed Use land uses are preferred in areas of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) where a concept plan is developed describing the interrelated nature of the different land uses established. Mixed Use buildings and developments should provide a sustainable mix of uses that provide a wide variety of retail, service, employment and housing needs.



Examples of mixed-use developments that may be suitable in Fairfield. Bottom left: Village Green located in Fairfield

Light Industrial

Light Industrial uses will provide places of employment and a strong, diverse tax base through a wide range of manufacturing and assembly uses, research and development, technology, and warehouse facilities serving the region and beyond. These types of development will be relatively clean in nature and will not create off-site impacts that affect surrounding properties. They will be in appropriate areas where the heavy truck traffic that may be generated can be accommodated on appropriate roadways that does not impact other non-industrial uses.



Examples of industrial businesses located in Fairfield

Mixed Use Industrial

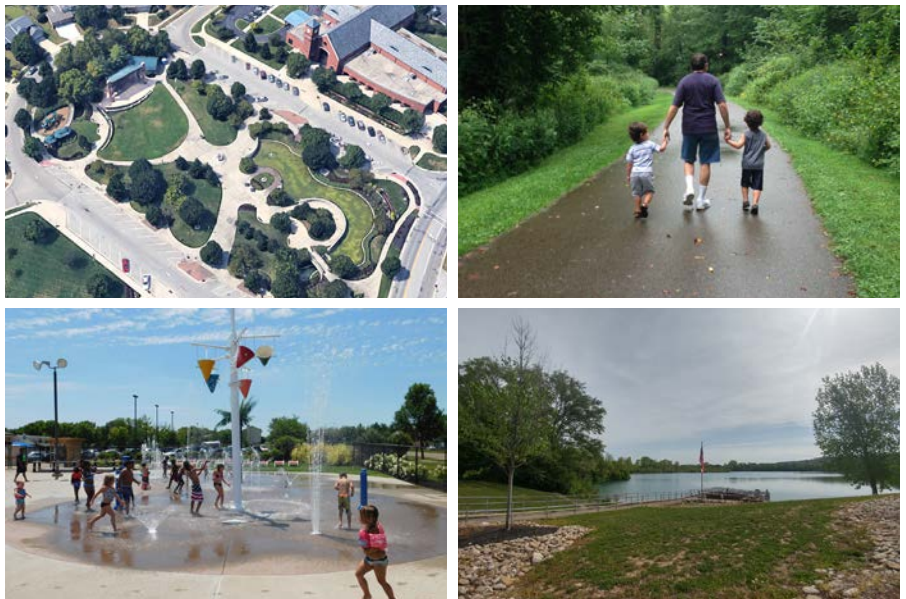
Mixed Use Industrial uses are properties or buildings that are primarily light industrial in nature but may include an ancillary or secondary use such as a retail, service or other similar non-industrial use that provides flexibility in operations. Retail and service operations may be appropriate as the primary use, if the use fronts on a regional or primary roadway. These types of uses are typically located in transitional areas between industrial and commercial areas where flexibility is compatible with the surrounding land use patterns and where such flexibility would help maintain building occupancy.



Examples of businesses that may be appropriate in mixed-use industrial areas in Fairfield

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Parks, Recreation and Open Space land uses will provide public and semi-public locations for a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities. Uses may include, but not be limited to, sports fields, golf courses, swimming pools, playgrounds, trails, community recreation centers, passive open spaces, picnic areas, amphitheaters, dog parks, splash pads and fishing/boating lakes. Open spaces include public and private undeveloped lands such as woodlands, preserves, stream corridors, lakes, environmentally sensitive areas and lands dedicated to open space preservation. Such spaces shall be easily accessible and located within a convenient distance to neighborhoods and places of employment.



Examples of parks, recreation and open space in Fairfield

Public

Public uses are locations providing necessary governmental, civic, educational, utility or similar type services to Fairfield and the region. Such uses are essential to the function and well-being of the city. Pedestrian access is key to most government and educational buildings and should be easily accessible by street or sidewalk.



Examples of public facilities in Fairfield

Semi-Public and Institutional

Semi-Public and Institutional uses are uses generally operated as an open or publicly accessible use but maintained by a private or non-profit organization. Such uses include hospitals, religious places of worship, retirement communities, nursing homes and libraries. Buildings and sites should be well-designed, maintained and accessible by street or sidewalk.



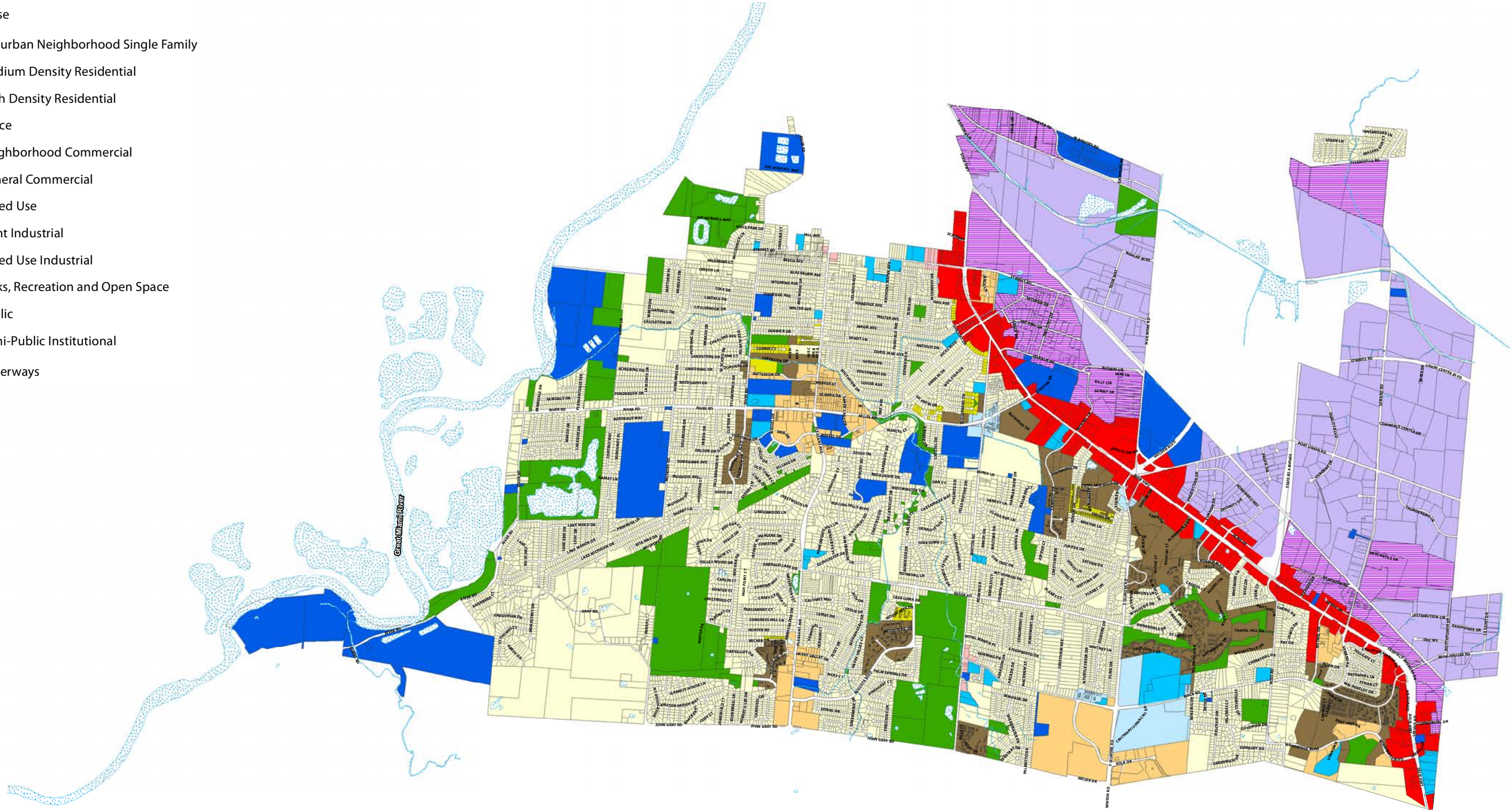
Examples of semi-public and institutional uses in Fairfield

Figure 3-4. Future Land Use Map

Legend

Future Land Use

- Suburban Neighborhood Single Family
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Office
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Mixed Use Industrial
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Public
- Semi-Public Institutional
- Waterways

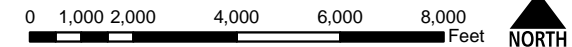


Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS



City of Fairfield, Ohio

August 28, 2019



Future Land Use

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Implementation Strategies - Land Use and Zoning



STRATEGY LUZ-1

Conduct a comprehensive overhaul of the city zoning code to implement the future land use plan and other policies of this plan.

STRATEGY LUZ-2

Encourage the use of Planned Unit Developments (PUDs), particularly for new, mixed-use developments.

STRATEGY LUZ-3

Evaluate trends in real estate development and revise the zoning code appropriately over time.

STRATEGY LUZ-4

Refer to this Comprehensive Plan document whenever new development, substantial redevelopment, or rezonings are proposed.

Implementation Strategies - Appearance and Visual Character



STRATEGY VC-1

Develop a design guidelines manual or establish requirements in the city's zoning code that requires specific design regulations for private property structures and signage.

STRATEGY VC-2

Develop a design manual for uniform streetscapes in the city by thoroughfare type, allowing for appropriate scale based on the type of roadway. This should include plantings, signage in the public right-of-way and pedestrian amenities such as benches, trash cans and bus stops.

STRATEGY VC-3

Revise the parking and loading section of the zoning code to "right size" the required off-street parking spaces to prevent excessive parking and lot coverage.

STRATEGY VC-4

Revise the zoning code to provide comprehensive standards for enhanced landscaping and screening for off-street parking lots. As a minimum, this should include type, number and sizes of plantings required.



Small Area Plans

Small Area Plans

The Fairfield Forward planning process identified four areas within the city that needed special focus due to ongoing issues and/or potential for change and investment. These four areas include the Route 4 Corridor, the Town Center, John Gray/Pleasant, and South Gilmore/Mack. Figure 4-1 identifies the location of the four small areas.



Route 4
Corridor



John Gray/
Pleasant



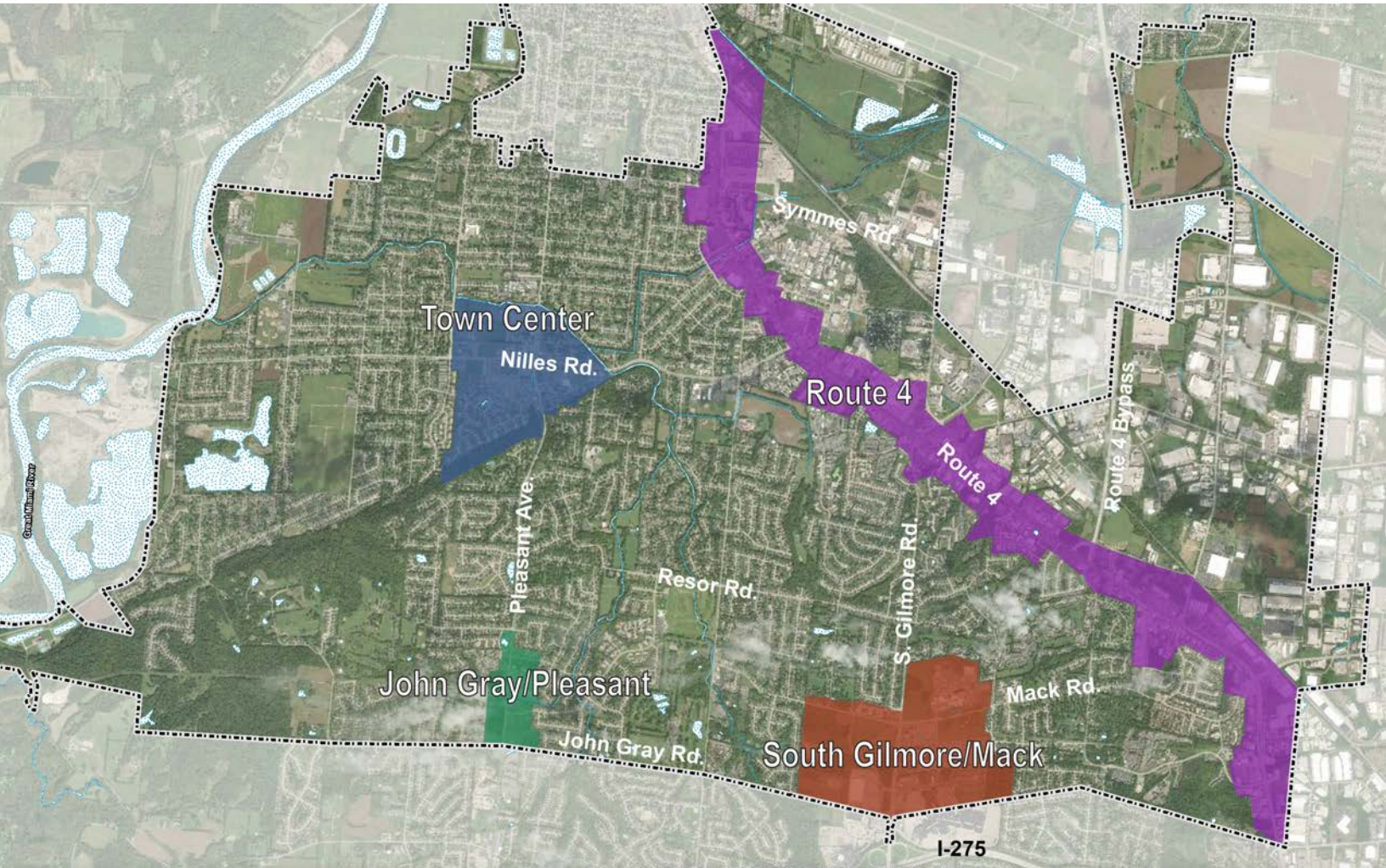
Town Center



South Gilmore/
Mack

SMALL AREA PLANS

Figure 4-1. Small Area Plan Locations



1. Route 4 Corridor

Route 4 has been a major commercial corridor throughout the history of the City of Fairfield and is one that has been continuously evolving. Spanning from I-275 at the city's southern border with the City of Springdale, north to the border with the City of Hamilton, this corridor is primarily populated by suburban commercial development including large-scale, multi-tenant commercial spaces, fast food chain restaurants, new and used car lots, and other auto-related businesses. Many areas of Route 4 are experiencing areas of investment or reinvestment with businesses upgrading their properties with new facades or constructing new buildings.

For the most part, Route 4 has evolved through a laissez-faire approach to development with basic, minimal regulations that have led to uncoordinated architecture, expanses of asphalt parking lots, and a lack of landscaping. Route 4 has also experienced recent pockets of disinvestment, primarily in the northern areas of the corridor, which is populated with mostly class B and C properties that are over 20 years in age, have lower quality tenants, and are in need of renovation or redevelopment. The original Jungle Jim's International Market has served as a major

anchor since the 1970s and continues to serve as a catalyst for new development and redevelopment, particularly in the surrounding area.

Due to the nature of Route 4 being a state route and the large number of viable businesses located along the corridor, traffic has been, and continues to be, one of the biggest issues. In the last few years, the average daily traffic counts for the southern half of Route 4 have exceeded 40,000 vehicles per day, with the northern portion experiencing counts over 25,000 vehicles per day.

This high level of traffic and many curb cuts (i.e., driveways and street intersections) with few crosswalks has resulted in a corridor not supportive of pedestrians who want or need to walk. This is especially a concern for students attending schools along or near Route 4 who are not able to safely walk or bike to and from school. Currently, the city has a policy in place that does not require sidewalk installation south of Nilles Road because of the large parcel, auto-oriented land use pattern of this area.

What We Heard



- Promote redevelopment of blighted and underutilized properties
- Create service drives or frontage roads to help bypass congested intersections
- Improve pedestrian environment on Route 4. Sidewalks, lighted crossings, better signage, pedestrian bridges are options, especially near schools
- More/better options for sit-down restaurants and local businesses
- Better property maintenance is needed, especially for vacant structures and older, run-down locations
- Establish a consistent sign design to promote a uniform appearance

The City of Fairfield continues to engage the Cities of Hamilton and Springdale to coordinate land use, economic development, and transportation projects where boundaries are shared.

Previous Studies

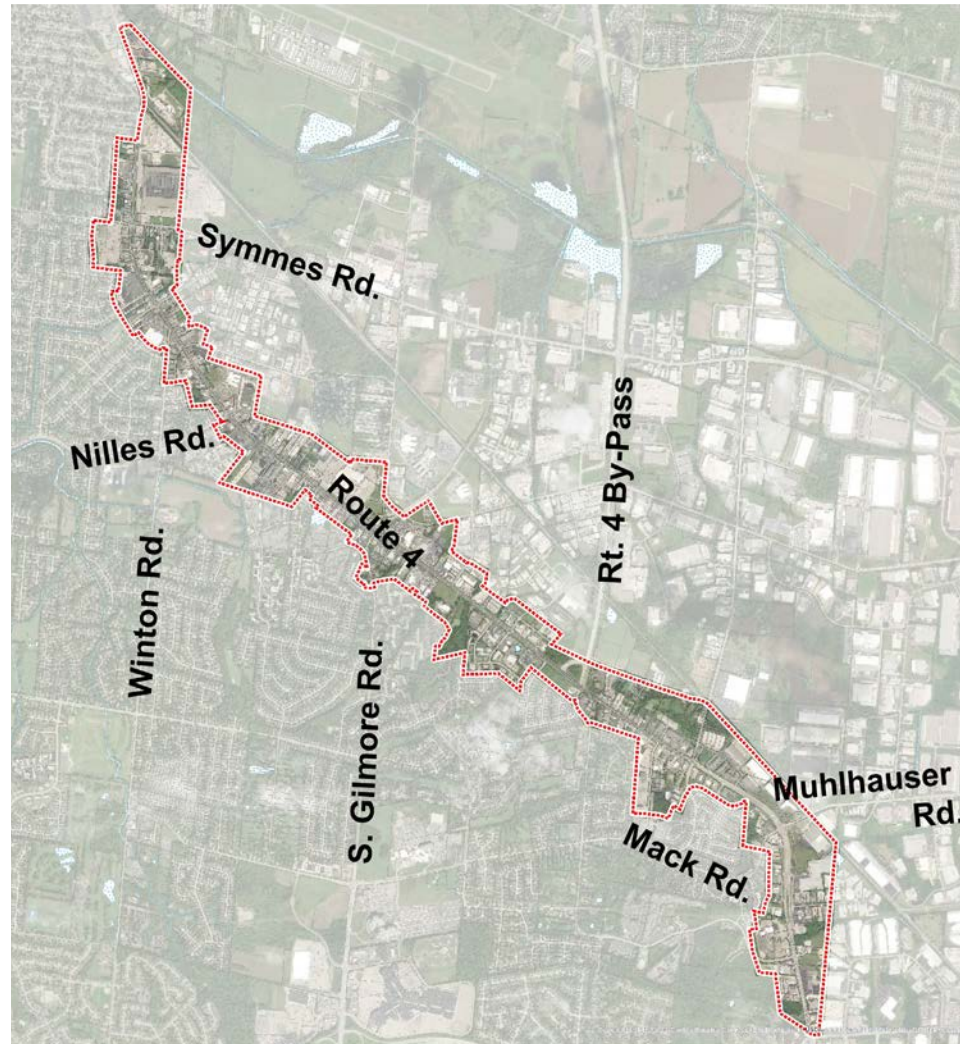
Two detailed studies were developed 20 years ago for the Route 4 Corridor. These two planning studies are summarized below.

The 1999 Route 4 Plan took a detailed view of the Route 4 Corridor and identified the following conditions which are still valid today, 20 years later:

- Route 4 is a major north-south corridor
- Route 4 is in transition as it relates to land use and function
- Route 4 is a destination for auto dealerships

- Require more landscaping on private property and along the street
- Reduce the number of used car dealerships
- Develop design standards to promote high quality development and redevelopment

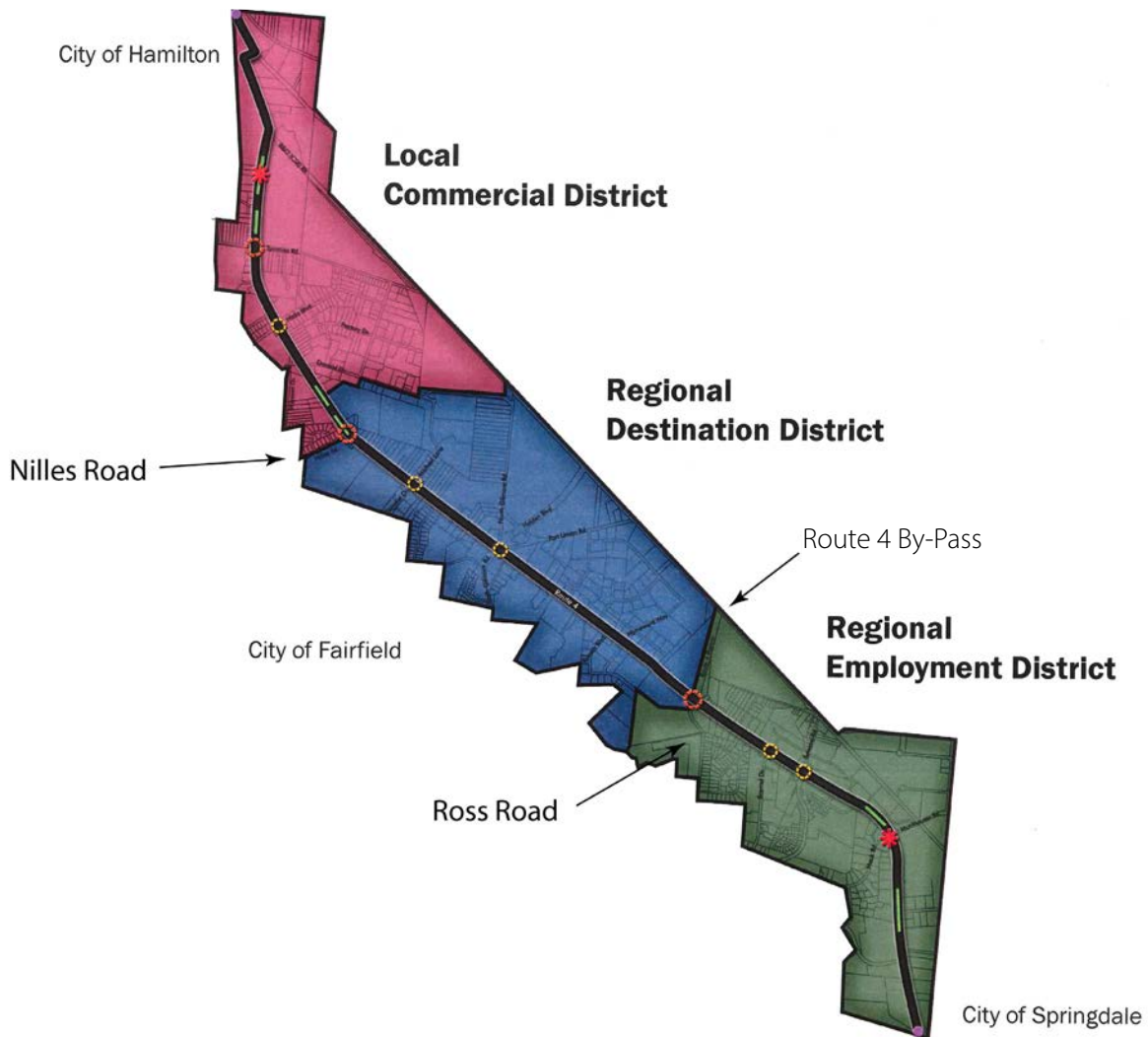
Figure 4-2. Route 4 Corridor Study Area



Route 4 Vision

Route 4 will continue to be the main commercial corridor in the city with a wide variety of businesses, and a major north/south roadway connector that will have a more aesthetically appealing development style, enhanced landscaping and streetscaping, and improved/safer connections for vehicles and pedestrians.

Figure 4-3. Business Districts from the 1999 Route 4 Plan



- The corridor is a competitive marketplace for service and convenience retail
- Jungle Jim’s International Market is a regional retail generator
- Visual clutter exists along the length of the corridor
- Traffic circulation is a concern on Route 4

The 1999 Route 4 Plan established three distinct business overlay districts that encompassed different building forms and activities to capitalize on existing assets in each location. These included:

- 1 Regional Employment District**
This district focuses on attracting regional employment uses such as office and light industrial or “flex” commercial buildings.

Regional Destination District

- 2 This district is intended to focus on assembling a critical mass of regional destinations for recreation, entertainment, and large-purchase discretionary spending, while offering activities geared toward the local market as well.

Local Commercial District

- 3 This district focuses on retaining the existing mix of commercial and industrial uses, while attracting additional users to underutilized properties. These employers will provide support for other community-scale retail and services.

Each of these areas included in the 1999 Route 4 Plan targeted strategies to: stabilize the existing market, maintain and retain existing businesses, implement public improvements, promote reuse and redevelopment of existing vacant property, and encourage investment and renovation in existing properties and buildings in this corridor. Many of these strategies were also voiced by the public during public input meetings throughout this planning process. This reinforces the need to revisit this plan and its strategies for implementation. The city should revisit the 1999 Route 4 Plan to determine its applicability and revise as necessary to implement the study.

Four years later, the city undertook the development of the 2003 Route 4 Corridor Design Plan, which developed physical design strategies for the three business districts identified in the 1999 Route 4 Plan. While it remains unadopted by the city, many of the findings of the plan are still valid today including:

- The need for a Streetscape Enhancement Plan to "...improve the physical, functional setting of the corridor to create a more visual, aesthetically pleasing environment."
- The need for an access management plan to improve access and efficiency along the corridor.

Route 4 Corridor Goals and Policies

GOAL R4-1 Promote the continued revitalization of this vital commercial corridor.

- **Policy 1.1** Continue to be proactive in code compliance and inspection programs to mitigate and eliminate maintenance issues, zoning and building code violations.
- **Policy 1.2** Continue to implement the zoning code requirements for "Motor Vehicle Sales Areas" to ensure that such uses locate on parcels with adequate areas for sales and display that avoids visual clutter and excessive storage of inventory on the lot.
- **Policy 1.3** Create public-private partnership opportunities for redevelopment projects and identify and promote adaptive reuse opportunities for existing and underutilized properties.
- **Policy 1.4** Develop criteria for and identify blighted properties on Route 4 and engage in conversations with those property owners about future investment and continued maintenance to bring their properties up to standard.
- **Policy 1.5** Consider acquiring underperforming or blighted properties and landbank them for future development that meets the vision and goals of this Comprehensive Plan.



Blighted structure and lot located in the northern section of the Route 4 Corridor

GOAL R4-2 Provide comprehensive, safe, convenient, well balanced and fiscally responsible transportation infrastructure for the city that recognizes the need to move high volumes of traffic while also providing access to the businesses located in the corridor.

- **Policy 2.1** Implement roadway projects along Route 4 to reduce congestion and increase safety when practical.
- **Policy 2.2** Continue traffic signal monitoring and synchronization, and access management implementation, such as by encouraging service drives and curb cut consolidation, where practical.

GOAL R4-3 Require that development and redevelopment along Route 4 meet the high standards of design expected by the community from a visual and quality perspective.

- **Policy 3.1** Establish design guidelines that focus on enhancing landscaping along the corridor, both on private property and in the public right-of-way.
- **Policy 3.2** Establish design guidelines for new development and redevelopment and explore incentivizing opportunities for existing building renovations.



New Raising Cane's Restaurant redevelopment on Route 4 near Nilles Road

- **Policy 3.3** Ensure that standards for signs on private property are appropriate in height, scale, and location to promote visual quality and decrease visual clutter in the corridor.
- **Policy 3.4** Explore modifying the parking ratio requirements to identify the appropriate number of spaces for uses to prevent excessive parking and lot coverage.

GOAL R4-4 Develop safe pedestrian routes, especially in locations where neighborhoods and schools connect to Route 4.

- **Policy 4.1** Expand the development of sidewalks to all locations along Route 4, including streets that intersect Route 4.
- **Policy 4.2** Engage with Fairfield City Schools to determine safe crossing routes and determine design methods that are best to identify safer student pedestrian crossings.

GOAL R4-5 Continue to promote Route 4 as both a regional destination and local attraction by attracting and retaining a diverse economy of businesses to provide goods, services, employment, and entertainment opportunities for residents and to maintain a continued stable and healthy tax base.

- **Policy 5.1** Target uses and services that fill a gap in existing goods, services and entertainment opportunities for all ages.
- **Policy 5.2** Consider encouraging a greater mix of business uses at the north end of Route 4, including light industrial, to provide for a more economically sustainable environment.

Route 4 Corridor Future Land Use Plan

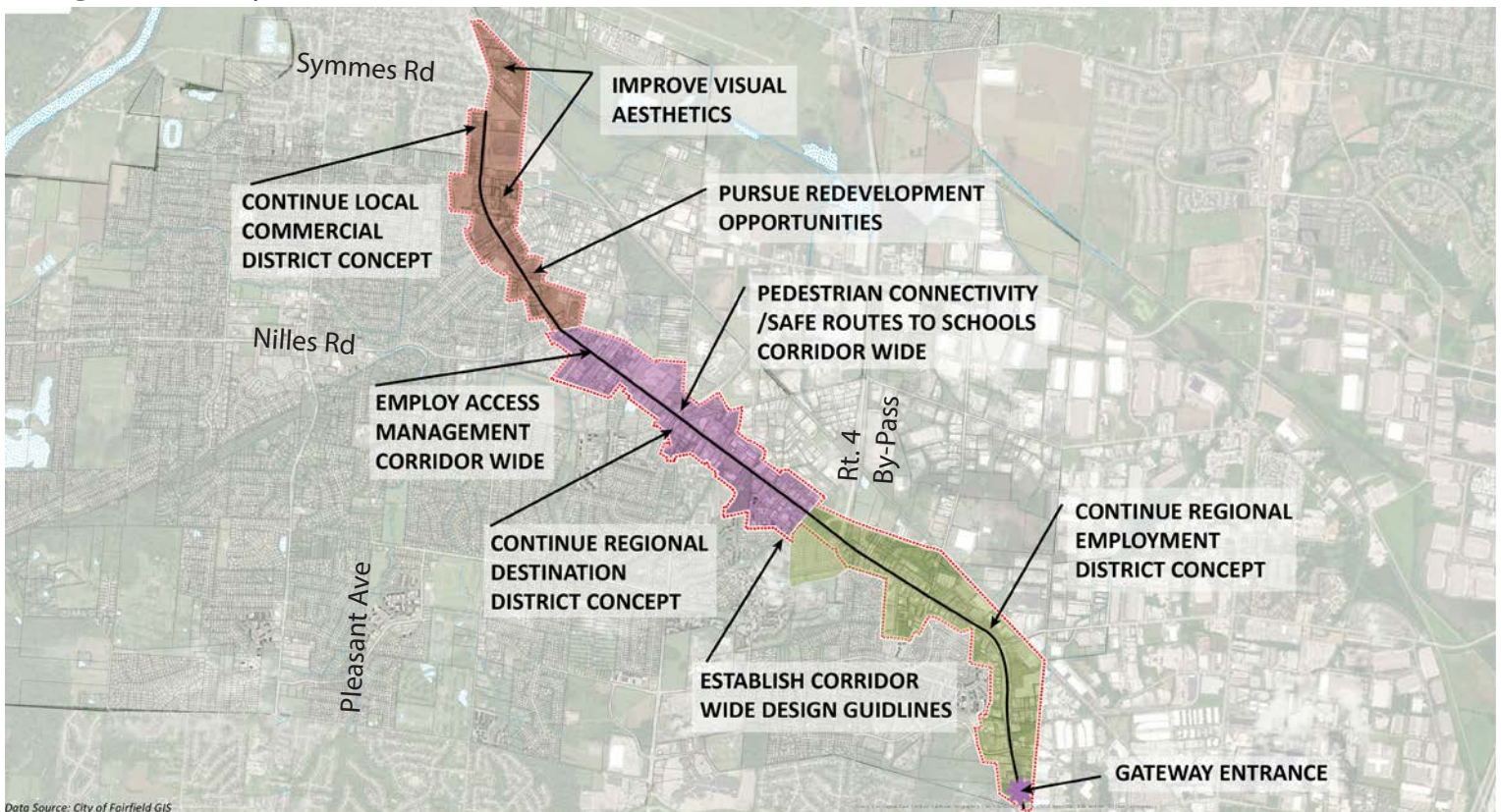
The following page represents the future land use pattern for the Route 4 Corridor area. Residents voiced concern regarding traffic conditions on Route 4 at every public planning event associated with Fairfield Forward. However, while traffic is considered to be a concern by the public for the future of Route 4, others also noted that development along the corridor is essentially a hodge-podge of buildings that vary in development style, type of design, state of repair and disrepair, vacancy, and use.

There is a growing desire to move the corridor forward and make it a destination for Fairfield, one that will attract more sit-down style restaurants and local businesses for the city and the region while shifting away from used car lots and discount stores. Many of the land uses along Route 4, including most of the used car lots, have been in operation since the 1970s

and 1980s and have been slow to redevelop. A major goal of this plan is to establish requirements for new development and redevelopment to gradually enhance the aesthetic quality of the Route 4 Corridor. This includes increasing the amount of landscaping along the street, buffering parking lots, and establishing design guidelines for new buildings. In order for this to be successful in getting private property owners to buy in and invest in upgrades, the city should continue public improvements, including investing in sidewalks and crosswalks along the entirety of the corridor, and expanding beautification efforts within the right-of-way.

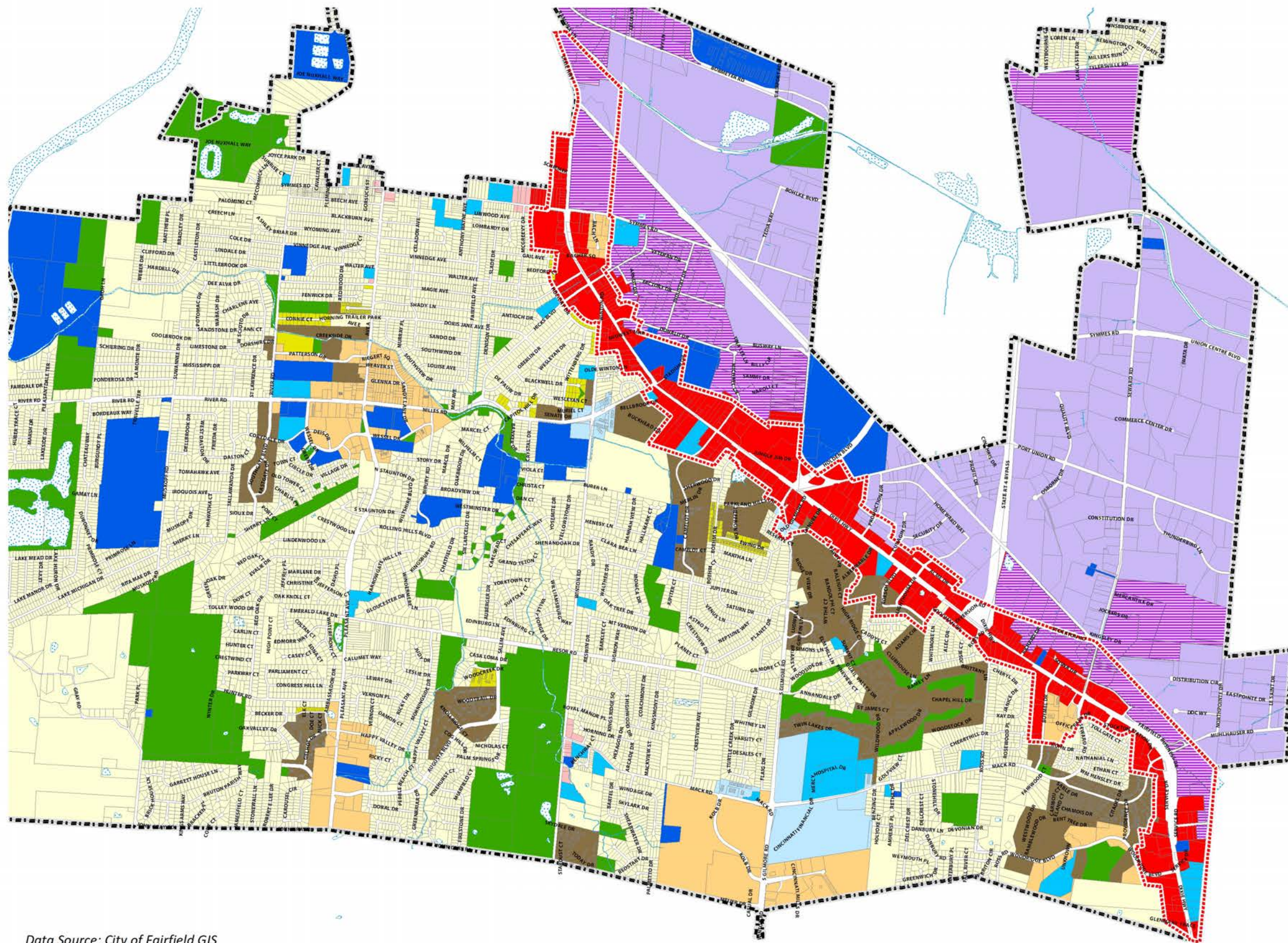
Figure 4-4 identifies key recommendations for this corridor. Figure 4-5 identifies the proposed future land use for the Route 4 Corridor. Existing zoning, for reference, is located in the Land Use and Zoning chapter in Figure 3-5.

Figure 4-4. Key Recommendations — Route 4 Corridor



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Figure 4-5. Future Land Use Map — Route 4 Corridor



Legend

Future Land Use

- Suburban Neighborhood Single Family
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Office
- Neighborhood Commercial
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Light Industrial
- Mixed Use Industrial
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Public
- Semi-Public Institutional
- Waterways

Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS



City of Fairfield, Ohio

August 28, 2019



Future Land Use - Route 4 Corridor

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The CSX Railroad overpass (left) at the city's northern gateway on Route 4 has not been maintained by the railroad. As a result, the City of Fairfield erected a gateway sign (right) to screen the overpass from view.

Route 4 Corridor Implementation Strategies

Strategy R4-1 Revisit the 1999 Route 4 Plan to determine current applicability and revise, as necessary.

Strategy R4-2 Revisit the Route 4 Service Drive Plan and the draft 2003 Route 4 Corridor Design Plan to determine current applicability, functionality and update the documents as necessary to ensure safe and efficient traffic movement.

Strategy R4-3 Enter into dialogue with business owners to discuss the benefits of curb cut consolidation and access management to improve traffic flow and safety.

Strategy R4-4 Revise the zoning code to modify the required number of off-street parking spaces to prevent over parking and excessive expanses of paved areas.

Strategy R4-5 Revise the zoning code to provide comprehensive standards for enhanced landscaping and screening for off-street parking lots.

Strategy R4-6 Proactively identify and promote available sites for development and redevelopment.

Strategy R4-7 Establish a landbank program to purchase available properties that are blighted, underutilized or are in key locations as a catalyst for growth.

Strategy R4-8 Revise or establish standards, codes, regulations or design guidelines for architectural design and signage specific to the Route 4 Corridor.

Strategy R4-9 Reevaluate the city's sidewalk policy for Route 4, south of Nilles Road, and revise the policy and related regulations to reflect such changes.

Strategy R4-10 Collaborate with the City of Hamilton and CSX Railroad to repaint the railroad overpass to improve the visual aesthetics at the northern end of the corridor.

2. Town Center

The Fairfield Town Center is the heart of the community serving as “downtown Fairfield”. Comprising of approximately 270 acres, the Town Center is located at the intersection of Pleasant Avenue and Nilles Road, the historic crossroads of the community.

The concept of the Town Center originated in the early 1980s with a desire to create a sense of place, as Fairfield did not have a historic downtown.

The main zoning for the Town Center is D-1, Downtown District, which allows for a broad mixture of non-residential uses. The only residential areas in the Town Center were either constructed before zoning was adopted or as part of a broader planned development. The zoning was intended to make it easier to develop a community core comprised of destination uses.

Pedestrian plaza, sidewalk, and crosswalk at Wessel Drive in Village Green



Town Center Vision

The Town Center will continue to be the central gathering area for the community providing living, retail, service (including government-provided) and social opportunities with a desire toward expanding the well-designed, compact, walkable characteristics of the Village Green development to the entire Town Center area.

What We Heard



- Encourage new, small businesses
- Replace pole signage with ground signage
- Create a bike trail connection between Town Center and the Great Miami River Trail
- Increase pedestrian connectivity to the Town Center
- Encourage redevelopment of older buildings in a style compatible with Village Green
- Enforce property maintenance requirements to keep property owners accountable

Figure 4-6. Town Center Study Area



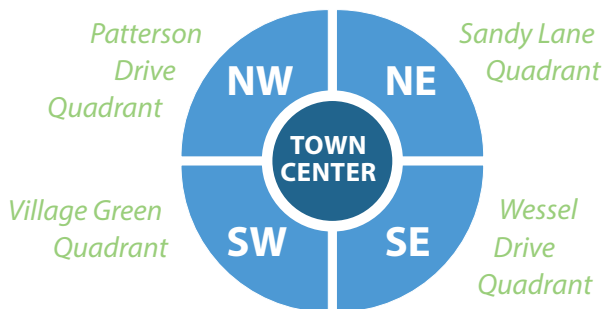
The 1993 Town Center Development Plan divided this small area into four quadrants along Pleasant Avenue and Nilles Road, in order to address the unique challenges located in each distinct area. The quadrants are as follows:



NW - Patterson Drive Quadrant

While this quadrant consists of existing institutional, commercial and multi-family uses, the main focus for redevelopment in recent years has been along Patterson Drive.

This area is characterized by large parcels anchored by the former Fair Plaza shopping center. The shopping center has since been torn down and redeveloped as a senior apartment complex and an Aldi's grocery store. Fourteen acres remain for redevelopment opportunities.





Village Green in the Town Center



NE - Sandy Lane Quadrant

This area is dominated by older single-family houses located behind dated strip centers that front on both Pleasant Avenue and Nilles Road. The Plan recommended that the houses be converted to office and service uses. This occurred to some extent on Sandy Lane, but for the most part, the houses have remained occupied as residences.



SE - Wessel Drive Quadrant

This area is characterized by multiple office and government buildings, and other professional and commercial uses on smaller lots. At the time, Kroger was located in this quadrant before relocating to Village Green in the early 2000s. The city purchased the former Kroger site to construct a new Justice Center to house the Police Department and Municipal Court.



SW - Village Green Quadrant

At the time, this area was dominated by the large McCormick farm bordered to the east and north by small-scale retail and restaurants. The city recognized that the 120 acre farm, the last remaining large undeveloped tract of land in the Town Center, had tremendous potential for development. In the 1990s, a local developer sought a partnership with the city to develop the farm into a mixed-use development called Village Green.

This planned development consists of retail, office, residential, and key community uses such as the two acre Village Green Park bookended by the Fairfield Lane Library and the Community Arts Center. The park is a public gathering place for community-wide events such as concerts, kid's activities and a farmer's market.

This area is one of the first areas in the city where design guidelines were developed and implemented successfully to create a cohesive, high quality development pattern.

Town Center Goals (TC)

GOAL TC-1 Ensure safe and efficient walkability, and connectivity to and within the Town Center area.

- **Policy 1.1** All new development and redevelopment will contain connected sidewalks and pathways to ensure that the entire Town Center continues to be a compact, walkable neighborhood.
- **Policy 1.2** Expand the development of sidewalks to all locations of the Town Center, as needed, especially in the northeast quadrant of this area.
- **Policy 1.3** Prioritize the development of sidewalk or path connectivity from external neighborhoods and parks to the Town Center area.

GOAL TC-2 Require that development and redevelopment meet the high standards of design expected by the community from a visual and quality perspective in the entire Town Center.

- **Policy 2.1** Continue to implement the design guidelines for the Town Center in all quadrants of the area.
- **Policy 2.2** Require utilities to be located underground for any major new development or redevelopment, and for all other development, encourage relocating utilities underground or consolidating and relocating to one side of the street to minimize visual clutter, wherever financially feasible.
- **Policy 2.3** Expand streetscape design elements throughout the entire Town Center area.

GOAL TC-3 Any new housing should reflect compact housing type development.

- **Policy 3.1** When proposed, new housing developments are encouraged to be developed as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) to ensure creativity and compatibility with the Town Center area.

GOAL TC-4 Encourage market stability and flexibility in the northeast quadrant of the Town Center area.

- **Policy 4.1** Permit existing dwelling units to convert to small office/business uses or back to single family dwelling units under an administrative review.
- **Policy 4.2** Conversion of residential units shall be done in a responsible manner to prevent front yard paving, excessive signage and outdoor storage, or other improvements that detract from a single-family residential neighborhood. Encourage parking to be sited in the rear of the property.



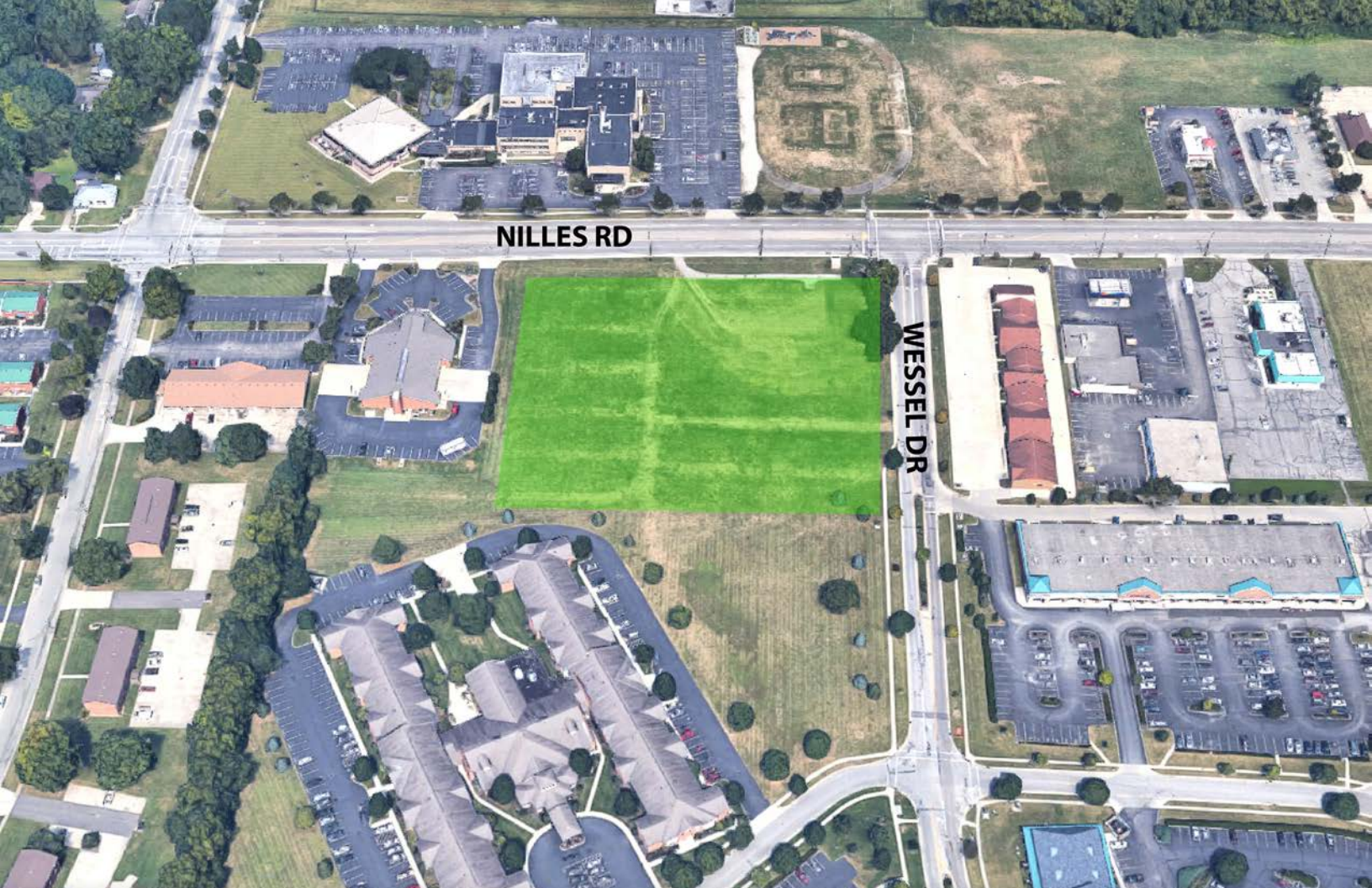
Multiple curb cuts located at an aging commercial strip center on Pleasant Avenue

GOAL TC-5 Promote the continued revitalization of the aging commercial areas within the Town Center.

- **Policy 5.1** Continue to maintain and enforce a comprehensive set of standards for maintenance of property and buildings.
- **Policy 5.2** Renew efforts to reduce curb cuts through permitting multiple parcel connectivity.
- **Policy 5.3** Renew efforts to encourage property owners to replace pole signs with ground signs or shared shopping center signs.
- **Policy 5.4** Use public-private partnerships to advance projects that have a positive impact in the community.

GOAL TC-6 Attract and retain a diverse economy of businesses to provide goods, services and entertainment opportunities.

- **Policy 6.1** Target uses and services that are of the appropriate size and context, fill a gap in existing goods and services, and provide entertainment opportunities for all ages.
- **Policy 6.2** Work with existing businesses in the Town Center area to ensure that they have the resources and space available to expand, as necessary, in the area.
- **Policy 6.3** Continue to encourage a mixed-use, walkable environment to maintain a sustainable Town Center.



City of Hamilton wellfield at Nilles Road and Wessel Drive

GOAL TC-7 Utilize the City of Hamilton's wellfield for passive open space opportunities without compromising groundwater production wells.

- **Policy 7.1** Investigate the possibility of installing walking trails, public art and landscaping to beautify and use the site.

Town Center Future Land Use

The following page represents the future land use pattern for the Town Center area. Mixed-use development is encouraged throughout most of the Town Center that includes retail, service, office and residential uses in a well designed and coordinated manner. In some cases, this mixed-use pattern exists, such as Village Green. In other areas, it is to be applied in the form of redevelopment.

As identified through public comments, residents appreciate the continued investment in the area and would like the vision of Village Green to expand to all quadrants of the Town Center area creating a stronger sense of place. Furthermore, residents also want to be able to access the Town Center from neighborhoods through better pedestrian connectivity.

Future development in this area should encourage activity and walkable streets that are connected to surrounding neighborhoods. The Town Center should incorporate an area wide cohesive design strategy creating a sense of place throughout all four quadrants of this area. Locations such as Riegert Square, as they redevelop, should incorporate design guidelines in line with elements (building massing, scale, design, materials, etc.) used in the Village Green area. Access management should also be considered in the form of reducing/consolidating curb cuts for strip centers and larger properties undergoing redevelopment.

Figure 4-7 identifies key recommendations for this corridor. Figure 4-8 identifies the proposed future land use for the Town Center. Existing zoning, for reference, is located in the Land Use and Zoning chapter in Figure 3-5.

Figure 4-7. Key Recommendations — Town Center



Figure 4-8. Future Land Use Map — Town Center

Legend

Future Land Use

- Suburban Neighborhood Single Family
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Office
- General Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Public
- Semi-Public Institutional
- Waterways



Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar



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Town Center Implementation Strategies

Strategy TC-1 Revise or establish standards, codes, regulations or design guidelines that address the high visual quality for all quadrants of the Town Center area.

Strategy TC-2 Revisit the Town Center Development Plan to determine what aspects of the plan remain viable and update as needed.

Strategy TC-3 Proactively identify and promote available sites and opportunities for new development and redevelopment.

Strategy TC-4 Undertake a connectivity plan to ensure pedestrian and bicycle access in all areas of the Town Center.

Strategy TC-5 Open discussions with the City of Hamilton on the possibility of passive open space in its wellfield site at Nilles Road and Wessel Drive.



Top: Town Center wayfinding sign located on Pleasant Avenue

Bottom: Fairfield Community Arts Center constructed in 2005 following the design guidelines established for the Town Center

3. John Gray/Pleasant

What We Heard



- There is a need for more sidewalks and bike trail connections through the area
- Avoid fast-food restaurants, auto-related uses, and large-scale buildings
- Maintain a residential buffer for any development along the west side of Pleasant Avenue
- Create stronger design standards to make sure new buildings have a quality design
- Establish a physical gateway presence in this location

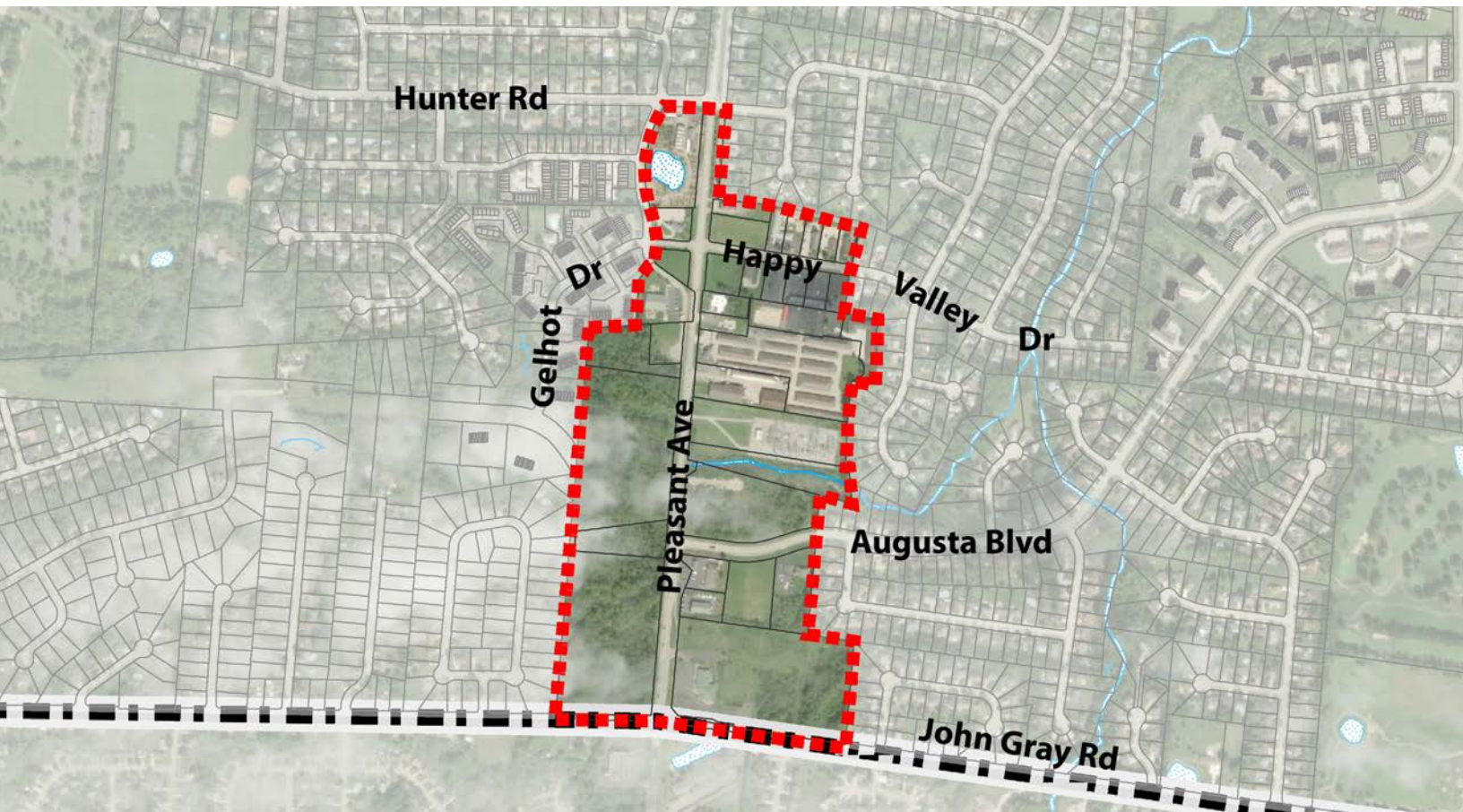
The John Gray/Pleasant area is a small-scale gateway into Fairfield that directly links Interstate 275, 1.5 miles to the south, with the Town Center via Pleasant Avenue. This entrance also provides more direct access to residential neighborhoods without the heavier commercial traffic found on Route 4 and South Gilmore Road, with many residents using Pleasant Avenue as their primary access road to the city. Residents noted during public input that the intersection of Pleasant Avenue and John Gray Road is highly congested with lengthy back-ups on Pleasant Avenue during peak hours.

This small area is currently defined by 24 acres of undeveloped land, mainly on multiple contiguous properties on the west side of Pleasant Avenue and several small commercial and office uses are located on the eastern and northern properties of this area. The primary zoning in this area is C-1 (Neighborhood Business) and B-1 (Institutions and Office), allowing for the continuation of these small-scale uses.

John Gray/Pleasant Vision

The John Gray Road/Pleasant area is a main gateway into Fairfield, providing access to many of the city's residential neighborhoods, parks, and the Town Center, that will be a well-designed, small-scale mixed-use area supported by low intensity retail and services that support the surrounding neighborhoods, and low to medium density residential uses.

Figure 4-9. John Gray/Pleasant Study Area



John Gray/Pleasant Goals

GOAL JGP 1 Provide a comprehensive, safe, convenient, well-balanced and financially feasible transportation system.

- **Policy 1.1** Require developers to participate in infrastructure improvements as new development occurs.
- **Policy 1.2** Require all new development that generates 100 or more peak hour trips to submit a traffic impact study for city review and require the developer to participate in improvements to help reduce congestion at AM and PM peak hours that may be further worsened by new development.
- **Policy 1.3.** Coordinate roadway improvement projects within the Pleasant/Hamilton Avenues corridor with Hamilton County and the Ohio Department of Transportation.



Top to Bottom: 1) Mountain bike trail at Harbin Park; 2) Hunter Road, leading to Harbin Park, has a narrow sidewalk and no bicycle lanes; 3) Current gateway heading north on Pleasant Avenue at John Gray Road.

GOAL JGP 2 Undertake a comprehensive approach to the design of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic flow through this area.

- **Policy 2.1** Provide pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to, within, and through this area with sidewalk and pathway systems.
- **Policy 2.2** Provide pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to Harbin Park through this area.
- **Policy 2.3** Encourage the use of service streets that provide access to and from land uses off John Gray Road to keep the number of curb cuts at a minimum.

GOAL JGP 3 Require that new development and redevelopment meet the high standards of design expected by the community from a visual and quality perspective for this primary gateway into the city.

- **Policy 3.1** Establish new design standards for the area that focus on high-quality building and site design, landscaping, lighting, and signage.
- **Policy 3.2** Balance design requirements for private developments with public investment in streetscape improvements for a comprehensive approach on both public and private property.
- **Policy 3.3** Develop a gateway feature at the corporation line welcoming both residents and visitors to the city.
- **Policy 3.4** Require utilities to be located underground for new development, and for all other development, encourage utilities to be relocated underground or consolidated and relocated to one side of the street to minimize the visual clutter, whenever financially feasible.
- **Policy 3.5** Encourage the coordinated planning of the parcels on the west side of Pleasant Avenue that avoids a piecemeal approach to development.

GOAL JGP 4 Encourage small-scale land uses that provide a wide variety of goods, services, and opportunities for all ages, with a focus on local businesses.

- **Policy 4.1** Focus on attracting non-fast food restaurants, neighborhood retail and service type establishments.
- **Policy 4.2** When proposed, permit only drive-through establishments that do not create a demand for long vehicle stacking lines or generate traffic that degrades the level of service on the road network in the area or negatively affect surrounding residential neighborhoods.

GOAL JGP 5 Establish strong buffering requirements between nonresidential uses and any existing residential neighborhoods to protect residential property values and their quality of life.

- **Policy 5.1** Review zoning code regulations and revise as necessary to ensure that the appropriate standards are in place for buffering and screening between incompatible uses.
- **Policy 5.2** Require the preservation of mature trees when properties are developed or redeveloped, to the fullest extent possible.
- **Policy 5.3** Encourage screening for utility substations to create an aesthetically pleasing appearance.

GOAL JGP 6 If residential uses are proposed, encourage housing in this area that includes patio homes and cottage homes as a transition between Pleasant Avenue and surrounding single-family detached residential neighborhoods.

GOAL JGP 7 Discourage automobile-related businesses (e.g. gas stations, car washes, auto repair, etc.) and self-service storage facilities from locating in this area.



Self-storage warehouse on Pleasant Avenue, north of John Gray Road

John Gray/Pleasant Future Land Use

The following page represents the future land use pattern for the John Gray/Pleasant area. This location is the smallest of the four small areas, representing approximately 88 acres. It is also surrounded by well-established residential development on all four sides. Because of this, and because it is a gateway into Fairfield, well designed, mixed-use development is encouraged for this area that includes neighborhood retail, service, office and residential uses in a coordinated manner with limited curb cuts. This will ensure the most efficient and economical use of this area upon development and redevelopment.

Residents stated during the public input process that they would like to see the low intensity scale

maintained in the long-term, with a focus on local businesses over those uses that generate high volumes of traffic, such as fast food restaurants, in a bid to minimize traffic congestion. Ideally, enhancements to the traffic circulation will include the use of service drives behind businesses that access John Gray Road supplemented with more sidewalk and bike trail connections that link the adjacent neighborhoods to new business development.

Figure 4-10 identifies key recommendations for this corridor. Figure 4-11 identifies the proposed future land use for the John Gray/Pleasant area. Existing zoning, for reference, is located in the Land Use and Zoning chapter in Figure 3-5.

Figure 4-10. Key Recommendations — John Gray/Pleasant

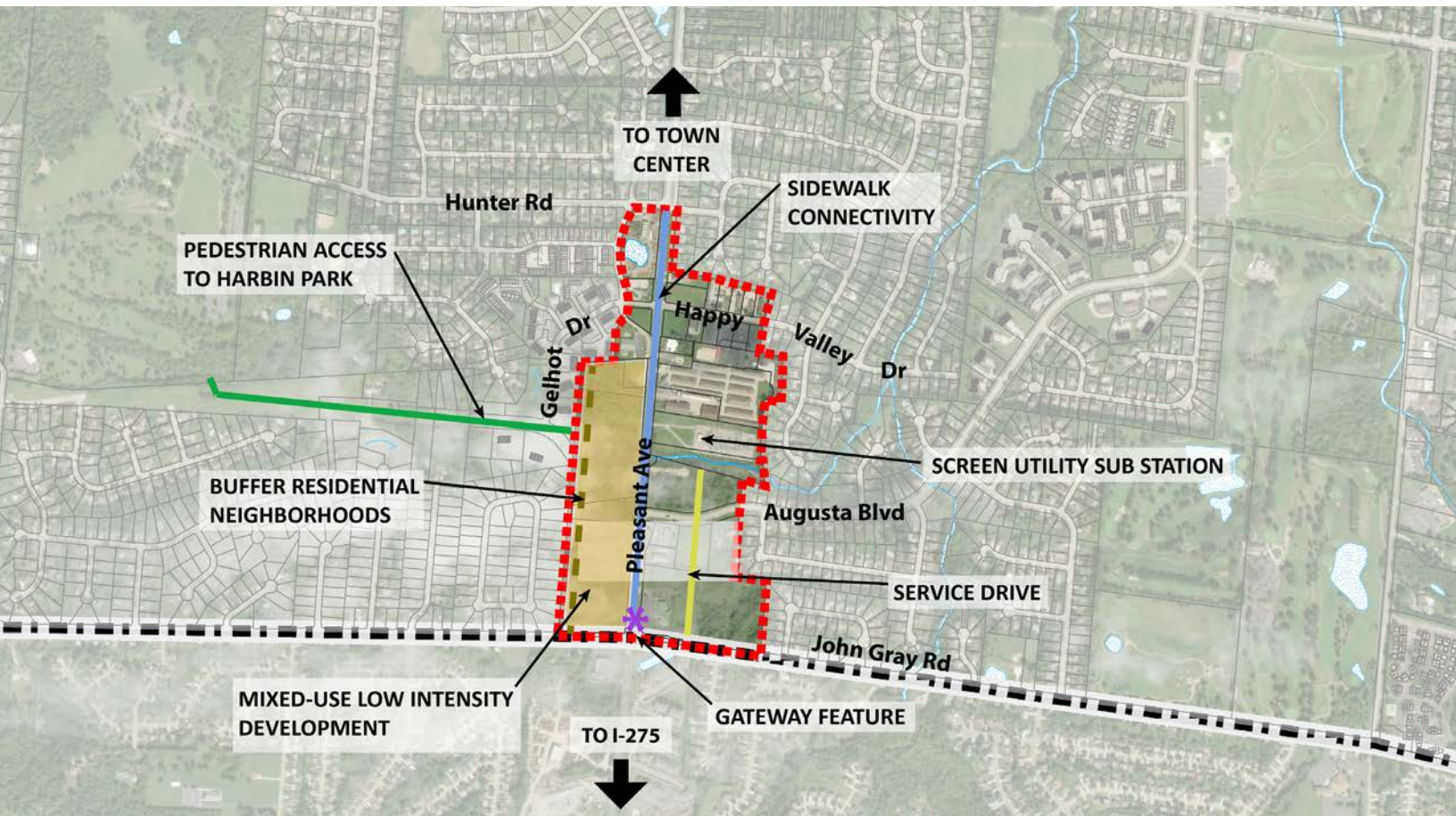


Figure 4-11. Future Land Use Map — John Gray/Pleasant



Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS

August 28, 2019



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During the public input process, the community stated that any residential development should be single-family, such as patio homes, that is integrated in a mixed-use development. It was also noted that any development along Pleasant Avenue in this area must protect existing adjacent residential neighborhoods through the use of appropriate buffering implemented by the new development or redevelopment activities.

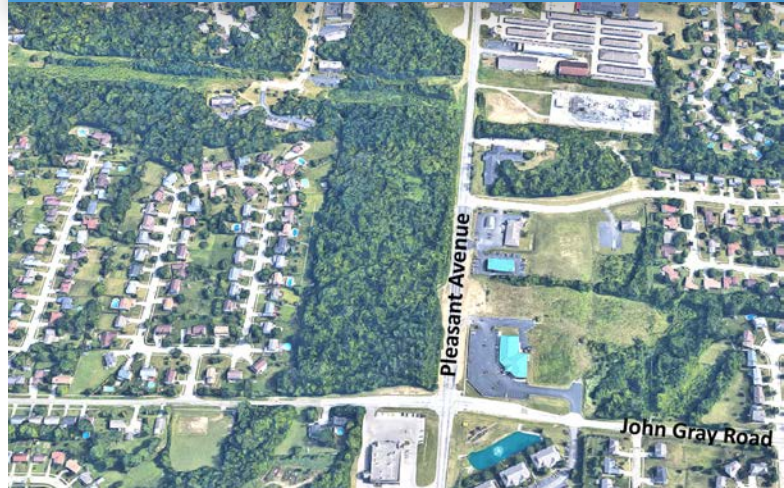
John Gray/Pleasant Implementation Strategies

Strategy JGP-1 Revise or establish standards, codes, regulations or design guidelines that address the high visual quality for all development and redevelopment in the John Gray/Pleasant area, including phasing out billboards, buffering, preserving trees, and reducing automobile-oriented uses and self-service storage facilities.

Strategy JGP-2 Encourage the application of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) on key parcels of land in the John Gray/Pleasant area to establish a comprehensive approach to mixed land use, pedestrian connectivity, open space preservation and access management. The city should investigate the creation of a concept plan for the undeveloped parcels west of Pleasant Avenue south of Gelhot Lane to the city boundary.

Strategy JGP-3 Engage in discussion with Duke Energy to provide adequate screening of the utility substation visible from Pleasant Avenue.

Strategy JGP-4 Develop a gateway plan for this primary entrance into the city.



Top: Undeveloped land on the west side of Pleasant Avenue
Bottom: Unscreened Duke Energy substation located on Pleasant Avenue

4. South Gilmore/Mack

The South Gilmore/Mack area is both a gateway into Fairfield and a major regional business activity area. It shares a common boundary with the City of Forest Park to the south, near I-275. While many identify the area with the former Forest Fair Mall, only one third of this largely vacant mall is located within the City of Fairfield.

In addition to the mall and surrounding commercial businesses and restaurants, the area contains three of Fairfield's top 10 largest employers in 2019 with over 5,200 combined employees (Cincinnati Financial, Veritiv, and Mercy Health Fairfield Hospital). These businesses serve as positive examples of economic development and community growth in the city with high-paying professional office and medical jobs. These businesses are also heavy traffic generators, producing congestion on the roadways both in and outside this small area during peak travel times. Several major roadway improvements have been completed near the I-275 interchange to alleviate this congestion.

This area is also the location of two of the largest undeveloped properties of land in the city - the Heine Property and the Benzing Property. Located at the southwest corner of Mack and South Gilmore Roads, the Heine property is comprised of approximately 110 acres of undeveloped prime, relatively flat land with singular ownership and easy interstate access. Another significant undeveloped property, known as the Benzing Property, is located at the northeast corner of Mack and South Gilmore Roads, directly west of Mercy Health Fairfield Hospital. This 27 acres of gently rolling topography is highly visible from both Mack and South Gilmore Roads. It is also easily accessible by I-275 to the south.

Given the history of development within this study area, there are three major questions that need to be addressed: 1) What is the future of two of the city's largest pieces of highly visible, undeveloped land (the Heine and Benzing Properties); 2) How should the mall redevelop; and 3) How can the city continue to mitigate ongoing traffic issues in this area that will result from the development of these properties?

South Gilmore/Mack Vision

The South Gilmore/Mack area is a primary gateway entrance into Fairfield with close proximity to the interstate, contains high traffic volume generating businesses, and is a regional draw. It will have strong design standards for development, but also have flexibility to accommodate a range and intensity of uses that are compatible with, and support the current office and medical land use patterns.



Figure 4-12. South Gilmore/ Mack Study Area



What We Heard



- This is an area with many future development and redevelopment opportunities
- Address ongoing traffic issues throughout the area, including evaluation of traffic signal monitoring and street design
- Work with the property owner and the City of Forest Park on redevelopment opportunities for the former Forest Fair Mall
- Integrate green space in the area
- Encourage the controlled development of large parcels of land through a planned unit development process

Heine Property PUD

A Planned Unit Development (PUD) is a zoning tool used by cities to promote large-scale development that is coordinated in design and usage. PUDs typically take on a variety of forms including mixed-use development, cluster housing combined with permanent open space, or larger scale commercial and office developments, requiring detailed review with respect to design and infrastructure.

The Heine property currently has a PUD designation approved in 1995. Because of the amount of time that has passed since the approval of this PUD, the city should conduct a thorough review of this plan to determine whether the proposed uses are still relevant in today's marketplace. The currently approved PUD divides the property into five areas, with a variety of conditions, which promote a mix of uses as follows:



1995 Heine Property PUD

AREA A – Elderly housing, single-family homes or other uses permitted in a B-1 District.

AREA B – Office, research, office campus or other uses permitted within the B-1 District.

AREA C – Corporate office or corporate office park or other uses permitted in the B-1 District.

AREA D – Sit-down restaurants or other uses approved by the city except fast food, drive-through/drive-in restaurants.

AREA E – Hotel or hotel and conference center, office complex or office campus, sports medicine center, elderly housing or other uses permitted within the B-1 District.



Former Forest Fair Mall Site

In 1989, a 1.5 million square foot shopping mall was built on the border of the Cities of Fairfield and Forest Park, directly north of I-275 on South Gilmore Road. It was the second largest mall in Ohio at the time of construction and opened to great fanfare despite only a 33 percent occupancy, ultimately reaching a peak of 65 percent occupancy. Most commonly known as Forest Fair Mall, this shopping mall has continued to see decline in occupancy, changes of ownership, and changes in name (Forest Fair Village, Cincinnati Mall, Cincinnati Mills) after the original owner filed bankruptcy a year after opening. Upon opening, there were five anchors; today two anchors remain, Kohls department store (opened in 1994) located in Fairfield and Bass Pro Shops (opened in 2000) located in Forest Park. Neither of these two existing anchors were part of the original occupancy. The remaining portions of the mall are largely vacant.

The property benefits from:

- High visibility from I-275 and South Gilmore Road and exceptional access.
- Infrastructure is in place to fully support new development or redevelopment, including utilities and roads.
- This segment of I-275 at South Gilmore and Winton Road has an average daily traffic count of almost 100,000 vehicles per day.
- Three of Fairfield's largest employers are located directly north of this property.



This is a large, high profile site with redevelopment opportunity which, in its current state, is a blighting factor at a primary gateway into the City of Fairfield. As such, the city must make it a priority to partner with the City of Forest Park, Butler County, Hamilton County, REDI Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Port Authority, affected school districts and other stakeholders to develop a vision and plan for this blighted property. Reuse, repurposing, or a comprehensive redevelopment of the site should all be considered.

South Gilmore Road/Mack Road Goals

GOAL SGM 1 Encourage a mixed-use environment that includes non-retail alternatives such as high-tech businesses, medical, office space, and small-scale flex office-industrial space. Limited areas of support retail and services are also appropriate. Upscale, higher density housing may be considered as a transitional land use between the more intensive corridor uses and single-family residential neighborhoods.

- **Policy 1.1** Revisit the Heine Property Planned Unit Development (PUD), located at the southwest corner of South Gilmore and Mack Roads, and consider updates, as needed, to reflect the vision, goals and policies of this plan and to account for any changes in the economic market.
- **Policy 1.2** Develop a reuse plan for the former Forest Fair Mall property that includes a sustainable mixed-use development that does not rely solely on one major land use.
- **Policy 1.3** Consider limited flex office-industrial space only at appropriate locations where not directly visible from Mack and South Gilmore Roads.
- **Policy 1.4** Encourage alternative type restaurants, such as higher end dining, as opposed to the traditional quick service restaurants to provide a better variety of dining options.
- **Policy 1.5** Require new larger scale developments to plan for and incorporate public gathering spaces or pocket parks.
- **Policy 1.6** Discourage automobile focused businesses (e.g. gas stations, service stations, etc.) and self-service storage facilities from locating in this area.

GOAL SGM 2 Require that new development and redevelopment meet the high standards of design expected by the community from a visual and quality perspective for this primary gateway into the city and encourage planned coordination as opposed to uncoordinated and piecemeal type development.

- **Policy 2.1** Establish new design standards for the area that focus on high-quality building and site design, landscaping, and signage.
- **Policy 2.2** Require utilities to be located underground for new development and for all other development, encourage utilities to be relocated underground or consolidated and relocated to one side of the street to minimize visual clutter, wherever financially feasible.
- **Policy 2.3** Enhance the existing gateway at I-275 and South Gilmore through hardscape and landscaping and establish streetscape design elements in this area.



Gateway landscaping and underground utilities on South Gilmore Road



Traffic control and monitoring at Mack and South Gilmore Roads

GOAL SGM 3 Ensure walkability and connectivity to and within this area to allow residents and the local workforce an alternative mode of travel.

- **Policy 3.1** All new development and redevelopment will contain connected sidewalks and pathways to ensure that the South Gilmore/Mack area is walkable.

GOAL SGM 4 Undertake a comprehensive approach to the design of pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic flow through this area with an emphasis on the use of service streets that provide access to and from land uses off Mack and Gilmore Roads, where feasible.

GOAL SGM 5 Continue to ensure roadway efficiency as properties develop and redevelop in this area.

- **Policy 5.1** Continue traffic signal monitoring and synchronization, access management implementation through service drives on primary thoroughfares, and curb cut regulation.
- **Policy 5.2** Require developers to participate in infrastructure improvements as new development and redevelopment occurs.
- **Policy 5.3** Require all new large-scale development and redevelopment (e.g. those developments creating 100 or more peak hour trips) in this area to submit a traffic impact study for city review and require the developer to participate in improvements to help reduce congestion at AM and PM peak hours that may be further worsened by new development.

South Gilmore/Mack Future Land Use

The following pages represent the future land use recommendations for the South Gilmore/Mack area. Well-designed, mixed-use environments are encouraged for this area, that include regional offices, support retail and services, restaurants and medical related facilities uses. Lodging and higher density housing may be appropriate in this area as a transition between the more intensive land use patterns along South Gilmore Road and the residential subdivisions to the west. Controlled access is important to this area to help mitigate the development and redevelopment that is expected for this area.

During the public input process residents expressed a desire to see retail or mixed-use focused redevelopment of the mall; however, the market realities of the overall region identify an alternative approach. This approach would complement the existing employers in the area with additional office, light industrial (research and development, or medical), service, ancillary medical and flex space developments

supplemented with high-end attached housing and smaller scale retail that can serve the local businesses and residents.

Future land use patterns would require a reevaluation of the zoning for this study area, which is currently focused on allowing large scale retail, office, and institutional uses. A full-scale redevelopment of the mall would allow for a comprehensive review of the traffic scenarios in this area to better address traffic issues, and a mixed-use land use pattern would allow for multiple, viable uses at different levels of intensity to be developed. A full-scale redevelopment will require coordination with the City of Forest Park, where a majority of the mall property resides.

Figure 4-13 identifies key recommendations for this corridor. Figure 4-14 identifies the proposed future land use for the South Gilmore/Mack area. Existing zoning, for reference, is located in the Land Use and Zoning chapter in Figure 3-5.

Figure 4-13. Key Recommendations — South Gilmore/Mack

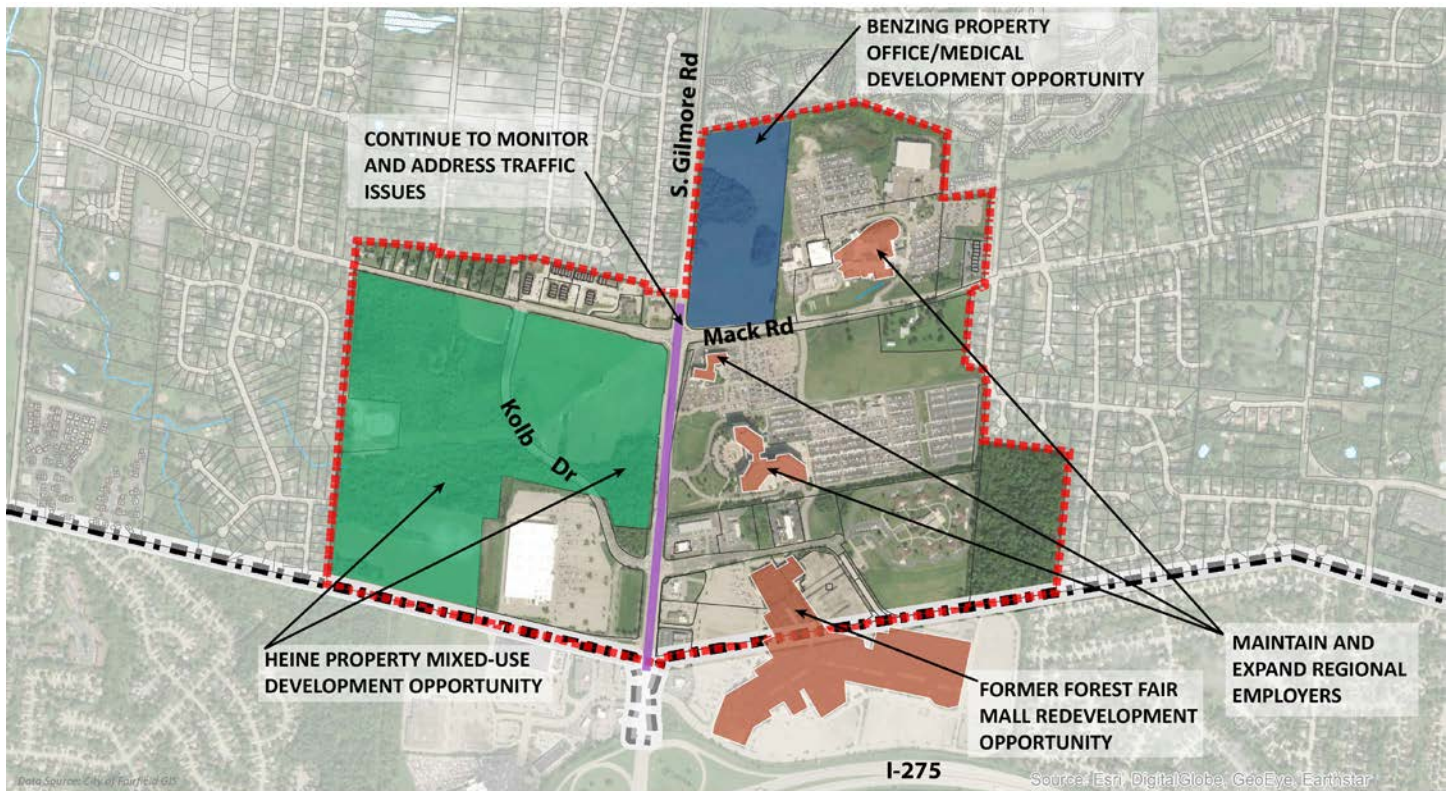
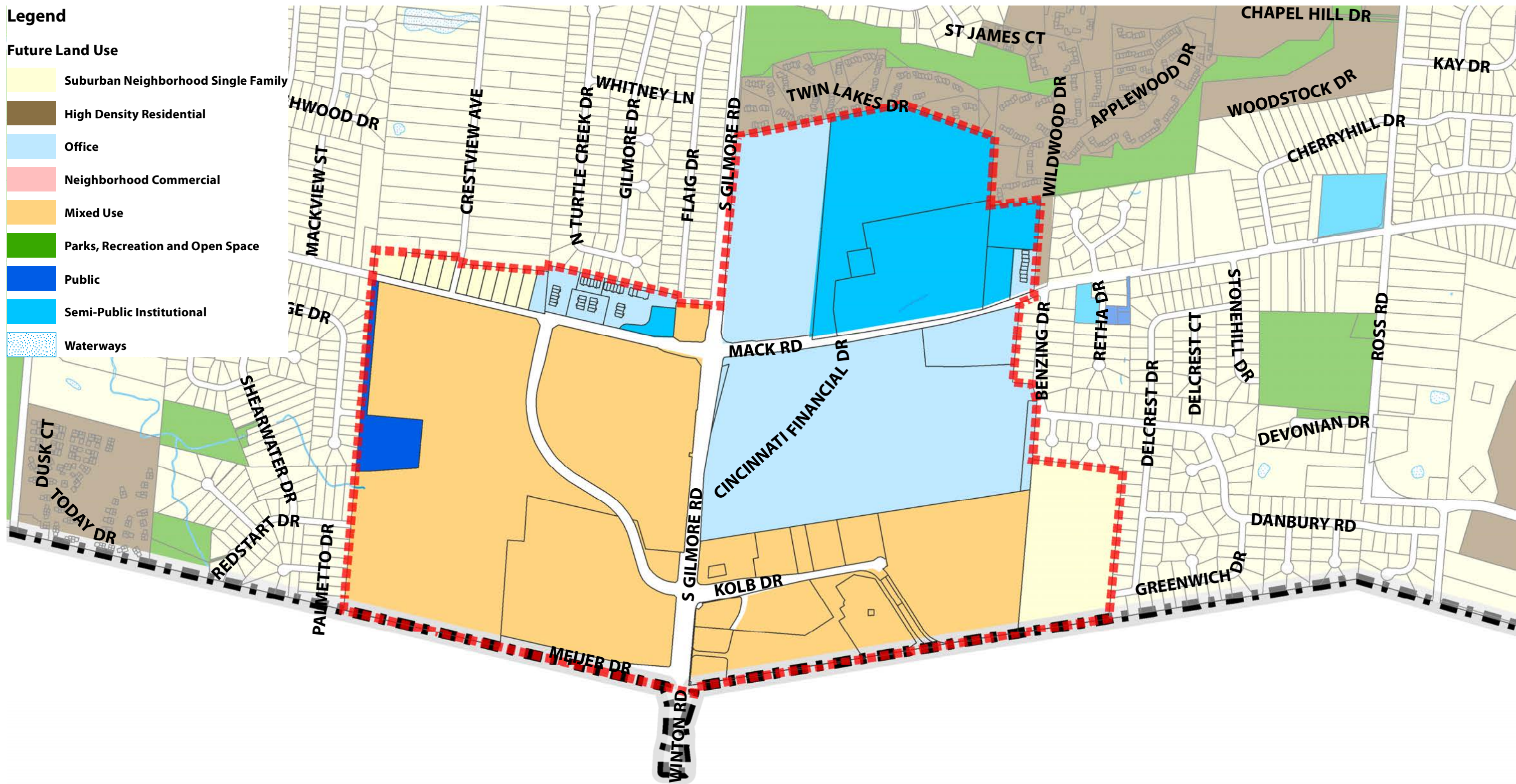


Figure 4-14. Future Land Use Map — South Gilmore/Mack

Legend

Future Land Use

- Suburban Neighborhood Single Family
- High Density Residential
- Office
- Neighborhood Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Public
- Semi-Public Institutional
- Waterways



Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS



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South Gilmore/Mack Roads Implementation Strategies

Strategy SGM-1 Collaborate with the owners of the Heine Property PUD to consider updates, as needed, to reflect the vision, goals and policies of this Plan and to account for any changes in the economic market.

Strategy SGM-2 Revise or establish standards, codes, regulations or design guidelines that address the desired high visual quality for all development and redevelopment in the South Gilmore/Mack area.

Strategy SGM-3 Explore partnering with appropriate agencies to fund roadway projects and transportation alternative projects in this area.

Strategy SGM-4 Continue to engage with the major employers in this location to identify and understand their needs regarding services, development and redevelopment efforts.

Strategy SGM-5 Encourage the application of a PUD on other key parcels of land in the South Gilmore/Mack area to establish a comprehensive approach to mixed land use, pedestrian connectivity, open space preservation and access management.

Strategy SGM-6 Continue to collaborate with the City of Forest Park, Butler County, Hamilton County, affected school districts, REDI Cincinnati, and the Cincinnati Port Authority to coordinate development and redevelopment opportunities on the former Forest Fair Mall site.

Strategy SGM-7 Enhance the existing gateway and create a streetscape plan for this small area to create a visually appealing entrance into the city.

Strategy SGM-8 Encourage the comprehensive development and redevelopment of this area through planned coordination of land use, infrastructure and site layout.



Top 10 City of Fairfield employer, Veritiv, located at the southeast corner of Mack and South Gilmore Roads



Housing



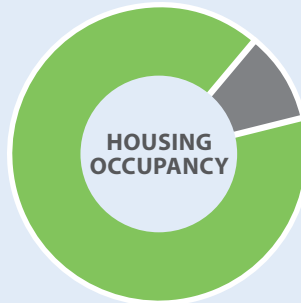
Housing

The mix of housing types in a city is important in order to provide acceptable options for a variety of incomes, household sizes and dwelling preferences. The age and condition of the housing stock are also important to a city for attracting and maintaining a viable residential base. The appropriate mix of housing types will ensure that people can live, work and play in the community.

Housing Profile

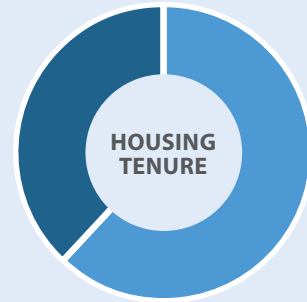
- ✓ There are approximately 18,560 housing units in the city.
- ✓ There are 116 individual phases of single-family residential subdivisions in the city. Single-family residential development began in the 1940s to 1950s in the northern areas of the city due to the close proximity to the City of Hamilton. By the 1960s and 1970s, this type of development was primarily occurring across the middle and southern areas of the city due to the completion of the I-275 expressway.
- ✓ Beginning in 1980 and until today, single-family residential development has been built throughout the city. See the Fairfield Subdivision Map in Appendix B - Housing, for a geographic representation of the city's subdivisions and their decade of development.
- ✓ The peak decade for housing units occurred during the 1970s, when more than 6,000 housing units were constructed to accommodate a large increase in population. The number of new housing units has slowly declined since 1979 in response to a slowing increase in population. Figure 5-1 on page 84 shows the correlation between housing unit construction and population growth.

- ✓ Since 2008, Fairfield has seen an increase of rental property in single-family subdivisions. This trend has a potential to negatively impact the stability of neighborhoods— in particular where landlords do not live in the city. The city should continue to monitor this trend to ensure property maintenance and upkeep.
- ✓ Over 90% of all housing units were occupied as of 2016, consistent with numbers across the state. Of that 90% of occupied units, 66% were owner-occupied. These percentages are similar to national and regional occupancy trends of 87% and 92% respectively. In the city, approximately 34% of housing units were renter-occupied. This rental-occupied percentage is also similar to that of the region (30%).
- ✓ The median housing value of owner-occupied units in Fairfield is \$149,300, while the median gross rent for renter-occupied units is \$863. This is a dramatic increase from 2016 when the values were \$131,900 and \$743, respectively, and is due in part to the continued housing recovery of the Great Recession, which began in 2008. In Butler County, the median value is \$159,800 and the median gross rent is \$823.
- ✓ In 2016, 59.0% of structures were single-family dwellings, which is a slight decrease from 2000, when 60.9% of structures were single-family. Looking back even further, the 1990 Census showed that 59.7% of housing was single-family; so the division between single-family and multi-family dwellings has remained relatively stable since 1990.



10% Vacant
90% Occupied

66% Owner-Occupied
34% Renter-Occupied

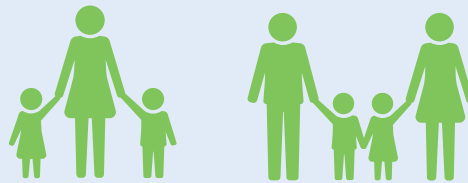


The median

housing value

(\$149,300) and rents (\$863/month) continue to

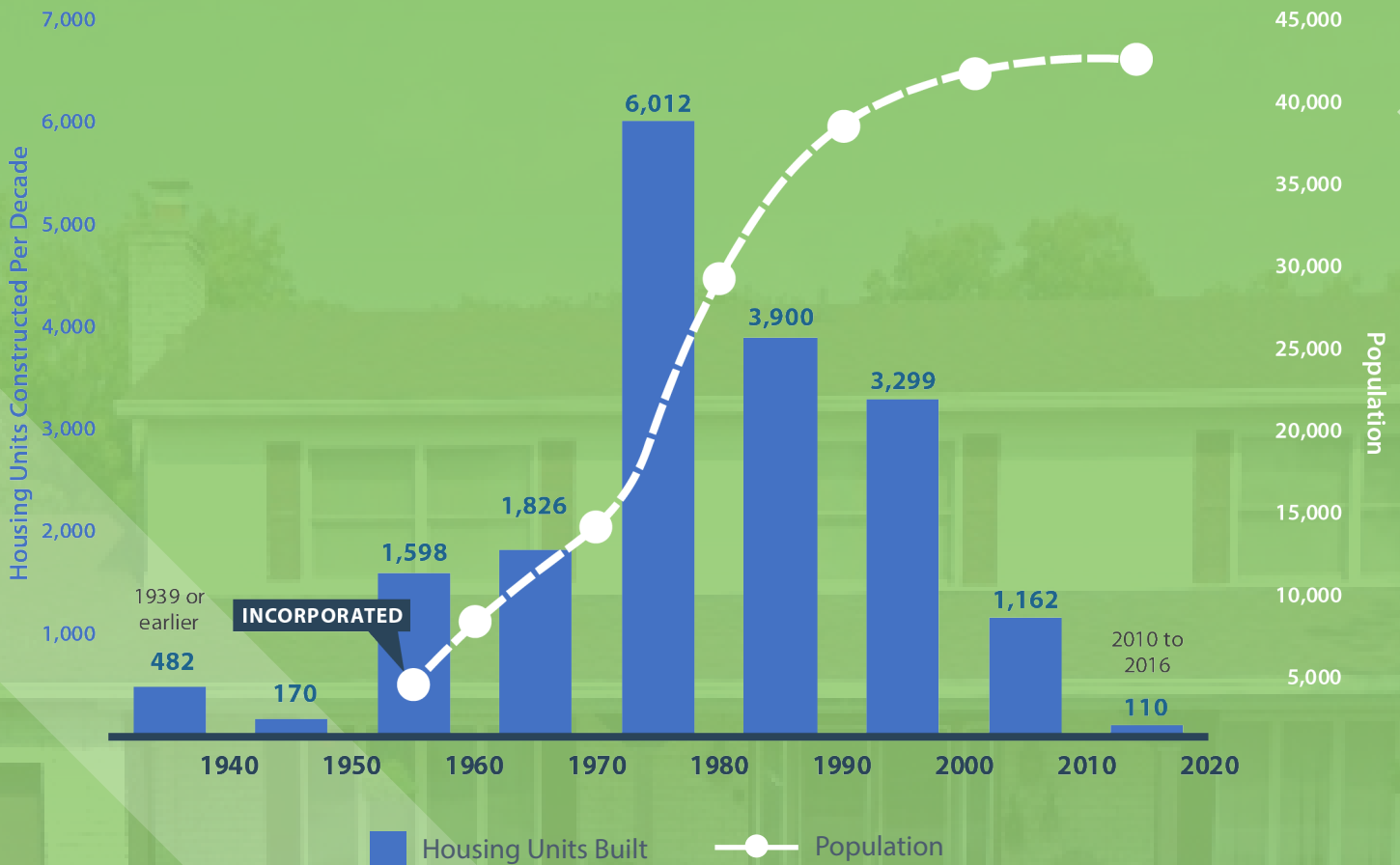
increase.



Most households in Fairfield (66 percent) are

families.

Figure 5-1. Population and Housing Units Built by Decade



- ✓ In Fairfield, 66% of households are comprised of families, either with a married couple or with single householders with children. The city's percentage is similar to what is seen across the county and state.
- ✓ In 2000, 13% of households were single householders with children while in 2016, that number has increased to almost 17% of households.

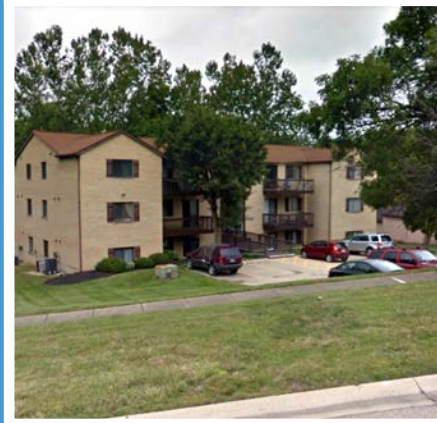
- ✓ Unlike the national trend of a shrinking household size, the average household size in Fairfield has slightly increased. Understanding trends in household size is important, as it correlates to an existing and future need for certain types of housing. Larger household trends, if they continue, often require larger dwellings.

WHAT THIS MEANS *HOUSING ANALYSIS*

An aging housing stock may present multiple issues with respect to maintenance and upkeep, and a lack of diversity of housing types for new residents as newer housing types (patio homes, cottage homes, townhomes, etc.) may not be available in the current housing stock. This could unexpectedly lead to a lack of age and occupation diversity. However, compared to the other large cities in Butler County (Hamilton, Middletown), Fairfield's housing is somewhat newer, on average.

The fact that Fairfield has a higher number of apartment buildings and rental properties could potentially be an issue, as some public feedback has pushed back against new multi-family buildings. With an older population, there will likely be more of a demand for some type of housing that falls between single-family detached housing on a quarter acre lot and larger apartment complexes.

The composition of households in Fairfield has remained stable, even with some slight changes in the number of single-parent households and household sizes. Changes in the types of new housing the city supports will be one of the factors that could affect household composition in the future. If there is a push for smaller homes or more attached housing, it is likely that there will be a decrease in household sizes and potential shift in the division between family and non-family households.



Housing and Neighborhood Goals and Policies

GOAL HN 1 Protect and preserve existing residential neighborhoods.

Policy 1.1 Require that infill housing is compatible with the surrounding housing and with the general characteristics of the neighborhood, including setback, scale, and materials.

Policy 1.2 Ensure that adequate buffering is established to protect neighborhoods from incompatible land uses and development.

Policy 1.3 Continue to maintain a comprehensive set of standards for maintenance of property and buildings.

Policy 1.4 Continue to be proactive in code compliance and inspection programs to mitigate and eliminate maintenance issues, zoning and building code violations.

Policy 1.5 Create incentive programs for the rehabilitation of existing single-family homes to maintain and sustain a viable housing stock now and in the future, and include programs encouraging green principles in both the housing structure and on the parcel.

Policy 1.6 Promote strong residential neighborhoods through public investments in physical improvements (e.g. streetscapes) and through public policy decisions intended to protect and preserve existing neighborhoods.

GOAL HN 2 Encourage a range of housing choices and types that satisfy market demand and let residents continue to live in Fairfield across different life cycle stages for current and future residents.

Policy 2.1 Support an adequate supply of housing to meet the needs, preferences, stages of life and financial capabilities of Fairfield's households now and in the future.

Policy 2.2 Allow opportunities for residents to live and work within close proximity.

Policy 2.3 Encourage walkable neighborhoods, with appropriate levels of sustainable density, close to centers of activity (schools, retail and service, etc.) in appropriate areas.

Policy 2.4 Target single-family detached, patio homes, townhomes and similarly low-intensity residential uses for new residential developments.

Policy 2.5 Promote a higher level of owner-occupied housing compared to renter-occupied housing units.



Patio home example which may be suitable for Fairfield

GOAL HN 3 Strive toward a housing mix ratio of 70% single-family residential and 30% multi-family residential.

GOAL HN 4 Encourage housing and site development that supports sustainable development patterns by promoting the efficient use of environmentally responsible and sustainable building materials and technology.

Policy 4.1 Encourage and promote resource efficient technologies and materials in housing construction that increase the useful life of new and existing housing and reduce costs for energy usage.

Policy 4.2 Encourage sustainable site development through the introduction of smart growth, new urbanism, and green building principles.

GOAL HN 5 Identify viable land suitable for residential development given the limited amount of developable land left in the city.

Policy 5.1 Revisit the Gray Road study to ensure that it is still applicable regarding future development of the southwest portion of the city.

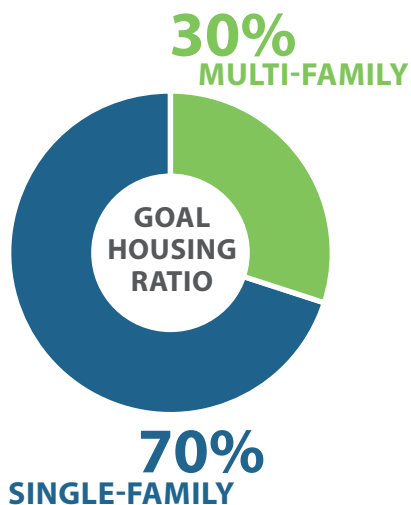


Top: Example of a bioswale to reduce surface water runoff into stormwater system.
Bottom: Example of a residential solar panel

What We Heard



- No more multi-family apartment complexes
- Continue to enforce building and property maintenance codes
- Provide/update existing condo and townhouse complexes to appeal to all ages
- Higher end single-family detached houses and patio homes are needed
- More senior housing is needed
- Affordable housing for all
- Encourage green and sustainable building materials



The City of Fairfield adopted a ratio policy for housing in 1993 in response to over-saturation of apartment and condominium developments that were leading to a strain on city services, becoming increasingly burdensome and fiscally difficult to maintain.



Housing Plan

Housing is the most basic building block of neighborhoods. The type, value, age, condition, availability, and tenure of housing units establishes the character of the neighborhood and greatly influences Fairfield's ability to attract and retain residents and businesses. A well-maintained and preserved single-family housing stock will ensure long-term stability in the city. The city needs to be proactive to achieve the goal of a 70% single-family/30% multi-family ratio. This can be accomplished, in part, through the rezoning of undeveloped residential property that is conducive to single-family detached dwellings.

Housing resources should be closely tied to existing and future land use patterns and located in areas where the quality of residential life is not adversely impacted by businesses and industry. Housing policies should be considered with respect to changing demographics so that the types and costs of housing desired by individuals of all ages and lifestyles can be adequately accommodated. Housing should also be considered in areas where residents can live near their places of employment, minimizing travel times and congestion on local roadways.

Housing in Fairfield is fairly affordable, with a median housing value of \$149,300 and is primarily single-family residential, with 59% of all housing being single-family detached. The housing stock in Fairfield is also aging with only 25% of the housing stock being newer than 30 years. New housing types and options (e.g. a variety of sizes, styles, stories, and price points) must be considered in order to provide a comprehensive housing stock for all who desire to live in Fairfield.

Providing a variety of housing choices will offer opportunities to a wide variety of socioeconomic groups. These types can range from housing for Fairfield's service employment base to housing for professional and management employees. It will provide housing opportunities for new residents and provide opportunities for those living in Fairfield who, through a lifestyle change, need a different housing type and desire to remain in the city.

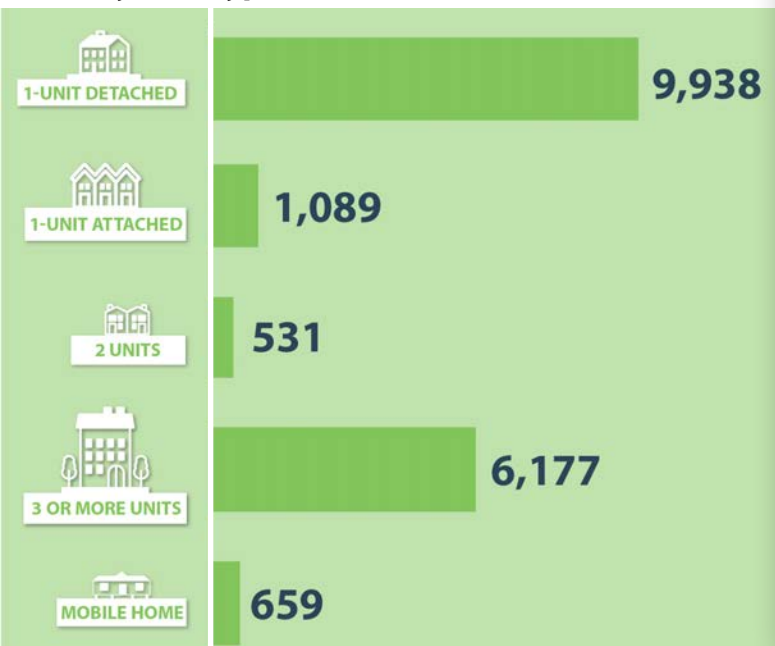
Types of Units

Public input throughout this planning process has identified that single-family dwellings continue to be the preferred housing type for the city in the future. This type of housing can be of varying densities:

traditional detached single-family dwellings, patio homes, cottage homes, and townhomes were all mentioned as acceptable types by the public, depending on location. Denser land use patterns for single-family residential units, such as townhomes or patio homes, should be located closer to higher intensity land use patterns such as office or commercial land uses. The quality of durable and sustainable building materials, design of housing, and continued maintenance are of paramount importance.

With respect to multi-family dwelling units (38% of the housing stock), the city currently has many developments ranging from duplexes to buildings of 20 or more units. Public input during this planning process has identified that the city has enough multi-family options and that additional units are not needed. It was stressed, however, that these multi-family developments must continue to be maintained and modernized as many were constructed in the 1970s and 1980s and are showing signs of age and wear.

Figure 5-2. 2018 Housing Breakdown by Unit Type



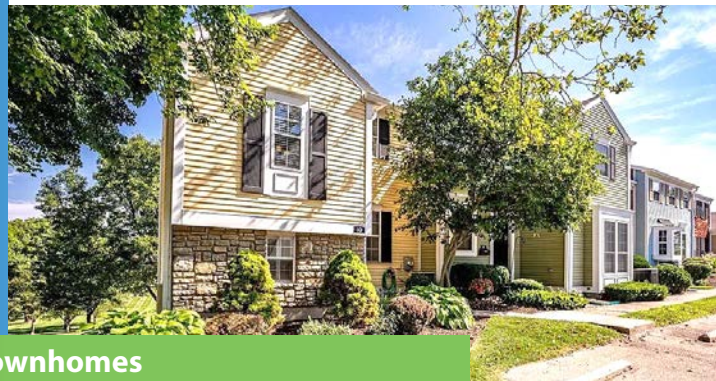
REPRESENTATIVE TYPES OF HOUSING



Single-family detached dwellings



Duplex dwellings



Townhomes



Older multi-family developments





Example of a newer single-family housing in Fairfield

New and Infill Housing

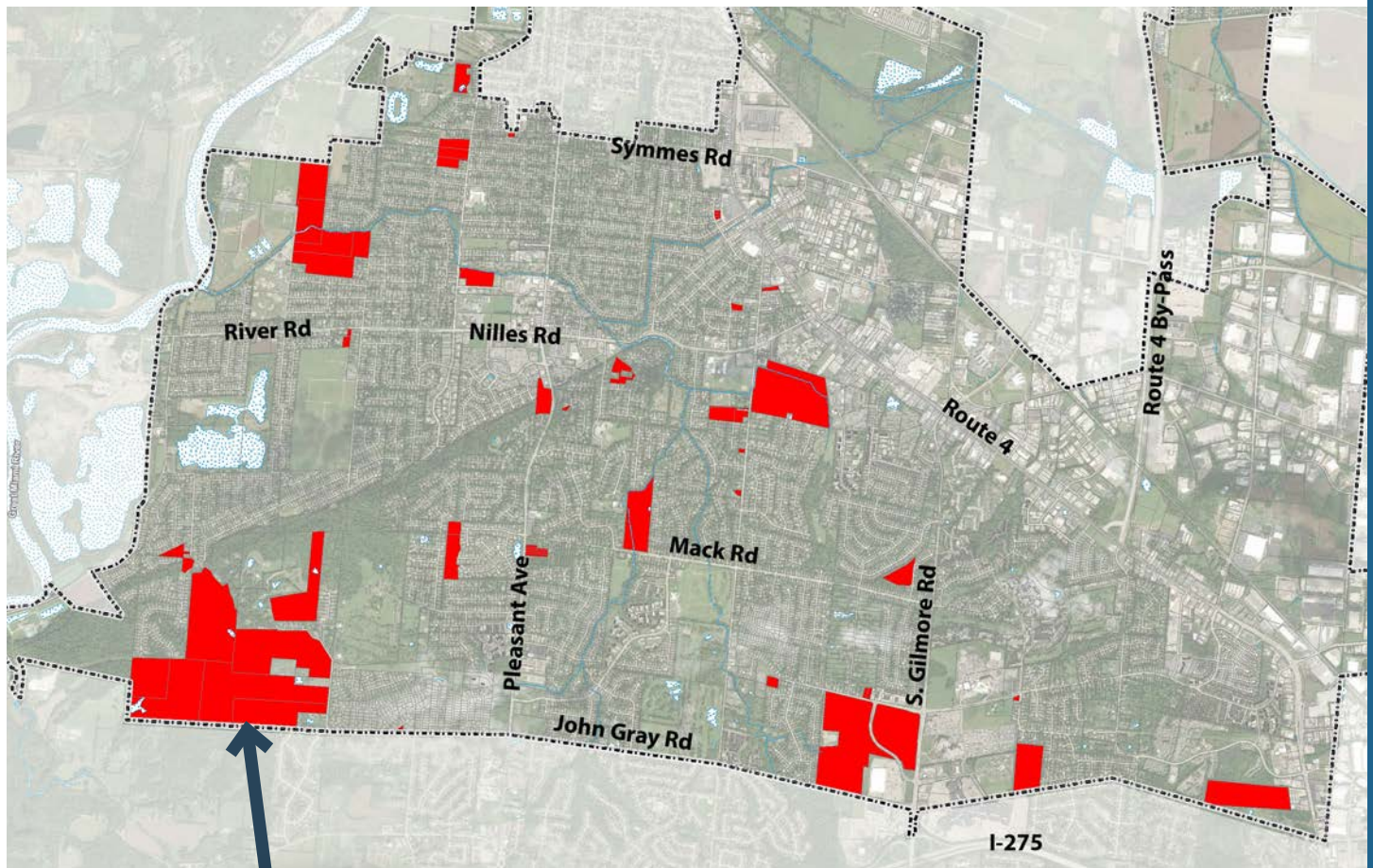
Fairfield is a maturing city that is slowly reaching full build-out. As a result, limited land exists for new greenfield development, much less residential development. While there is still land available for the development of traditional subdivisions, it is limited. The city will need to focus on other options for new residential development, such as infill on a lot-by-lot basis on vacant parcels, tear down and rebuild of existing houses, and cluster type housing in mixed-use developments. Infill housing should be respectful of the existing surrounding residential dwelling units and are expected to be compatible in size, materials, and character with surrounding housing units.

An analysis of areas suitable for new and infill residential development based on land availability, current zoning, and land use patterns, has identified approximately 700 acres appropriate for residential development and approximately 1,800 new residential

units can be accommodated within the City of Fairfield. These new units can range in number from a single infill lot in an established subdivision to approximately 800 units in a grouping of parcels in the southwest corner of the city off of Gray Road. This location, identified in the photo on the right, presents a challenge with steep terrain and woodland, and no existing public sewer or water mains, resulting in some unbuildable areas or areas worthy of preserving. A study was conducted in 2012 that included this Gray Road area to determine future sewer infrastructure potential given steep slopes. The Gray Road Sewer Service Study identified that approximately 230 acres of the 302 acres are buildable, based on sanitary sewer infrastructure restrictions.

The analysis identified a possible population increase of approximately 4,500 individuals based on minimum lot sizes ranging from 12,000 – 15,000 square feet and current household population trends.

Figure 5-3. New and Infill Housing Locations



New housing should be targeted to those areas identified in Figure 5-3, as these areas are best suited for new residential development based on current zoning, location of property, and available infrastructure. Some of the larger parcels remain as available land, as they are zoned for agricultural use and are still actively farmed. Other areas are currently zoned for larger estate housing options, or have topographical constraints, flood plains, wetlands, or other natural limitations, that have presented physical and economic difficulties, making them less desirable for development in the past.

Implementation Strategies - Housing and Neighborhoods



STRATEGY HN-1

Utilize available federal, state and local programs to assist in improving or maintaining existing housing stock.

STRATEGY HN-2

Revise or establish standards, codes, regulations or design guidelines that address the quality of housing, continued stabilization of neighborhoods, maintenance and protection of neighborhood, and community character, including neighborhood compatibility regulations for infill housing.

STRATEGY HN-3

Consider adopting Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Neighborhood Development (LEED-ND) standards for residential developments.

STRATEGY HN-4

Develop an inventory of infill housing sites/undeveloped land remaining that is viable for single-family residential development.

STRATEGY HN-5

Work with developers and real estate agents to determine and encourage the appropriate types of market rate housing for the city.



Transportation

Transportation

Fairfield's transportation infrastructure features a well-maintained roadway system with a 22.8-minute average commute to work. The City of Fairfield has direct access to I-275 and is minutes from I-75, providing quick and convenient access to and from the city.

A transportation system should be well balanced and include motor vehicle access, public transportation, sidewalks, and bike paths. Public input throughout the planning process has identified that while it is relatively easy to get to and around the city, there are some transportation issues that need to be addressed.

Better and more comprehensive pedestrian connectivity and access management are two of the issues that had the highest amount of feedback during the planning process. True connectivity encompasses all modes of transportation to link people to housing, employment, goods,

services and recreational opportunities. The future design of the transportation system for Fairfield should be right-sized for the traffic and environment it is serving and transport people where they need to be whether walking, bicycling, driving or using public transportation.



Elements of a well planned transportation system

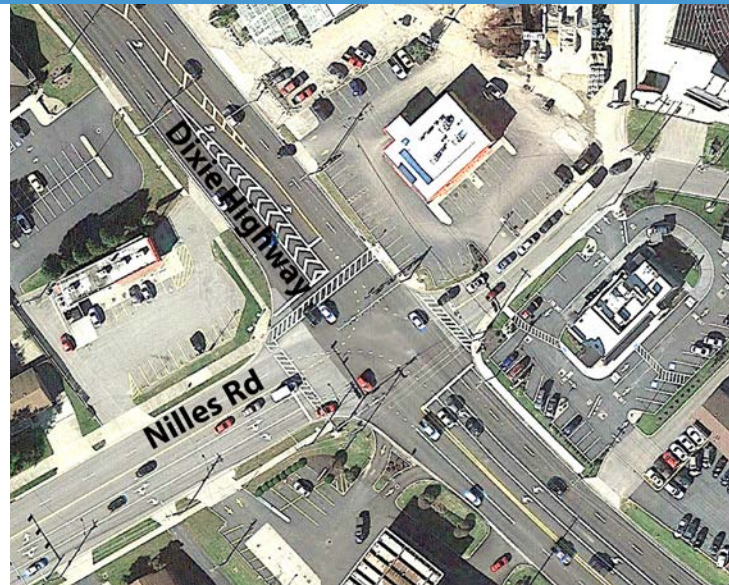
Transportation Profile

- ✓ Fairfield is served by a comprehensive hierarchy of roadway networks including:
 - Regional Thoroughfares - major connectors that link Fairfield with other population centers in the southwest portion of the state. The movement of traffic is the primary function of a Regional Thoroughfare and is generally the highest traffic volume corridor. Route 4 and the Route 4 By-Pass are two examples of this type of thoroughfare.
 - Primary Thoroughfares – roads designed to serve through traffic in a similar manner to regional thoroughfares, but at lower traffic volumes and fewer travel lanes. Pleasant Avenue, Nilles Road, Mack Road, and South Gilmore Road are examples of primary thoroughfares.
 - Secondary Thoroughfares – typically city streets designed to connect neighborhoods to thoroughfares. River Road, North Gilmore Road and Winton Road are examples of this type of roadway.
 - Collectors – city roads intended to serve the properties that directly abut them or that are used for short distance trips. Resor Road, Woodridge Boulevard, John Gray Road and Gray Road are examples of collectors.
 - Local Streets – city roads intended to serve the properties that directly abut them. Residential subdivision streets are an example of this type of street.
- ✓ Sidewalks
 - Sidewalks are prevalent in most residential subdivisions, however, pedestrian connectivity between subdivisions and from a subdivision to non-residential areas is not comprehensive.
 - Regional and Primary Thoroughfares in Fairfield do not typically provide sidewalks. When they are available, they are often on one side of the street or are intermittently installed as properties redevelop. Dixie Highway is a good example of this.

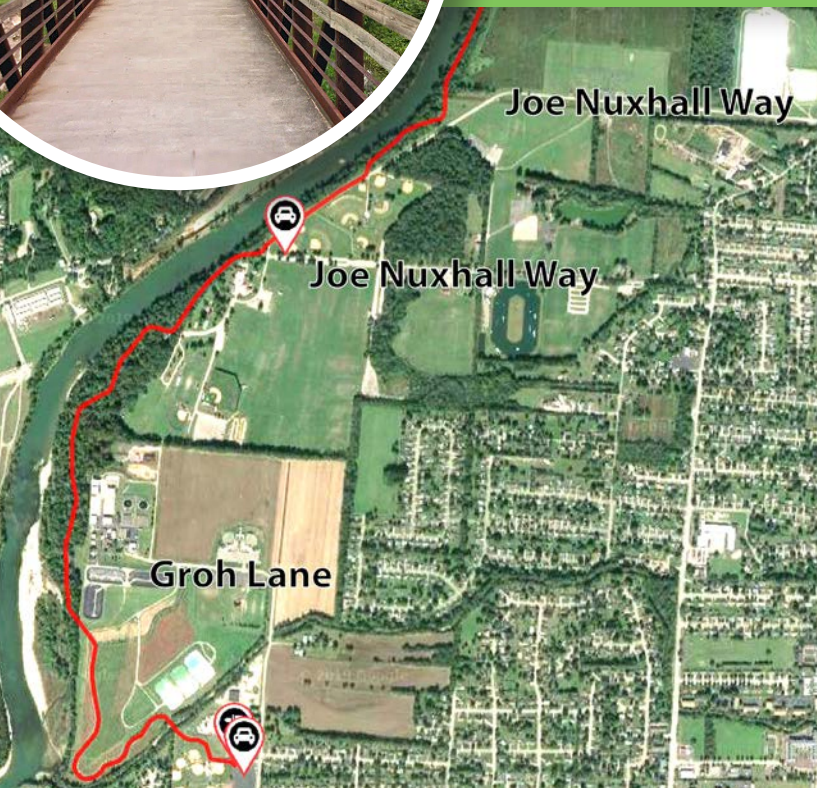
What We Heard



- Continued maintenance of roads is important
- Consolidate curb cuts on major roads to improve safety
- Create service drives or frontage roads to help bypass congested intersections
- Build an overpass/underpass at Symmes Road rail road crossing to reduce congestion and traffic stoppage



Sidewalks have been intermittently installed throughout the city as properties develop and redevelop as seen here along Dixie Highway.



A 2.25-mile segment of the Great Miami River Trail is located in Fairfield, shown in the map and images above.

✓ Bike Paths and Trails

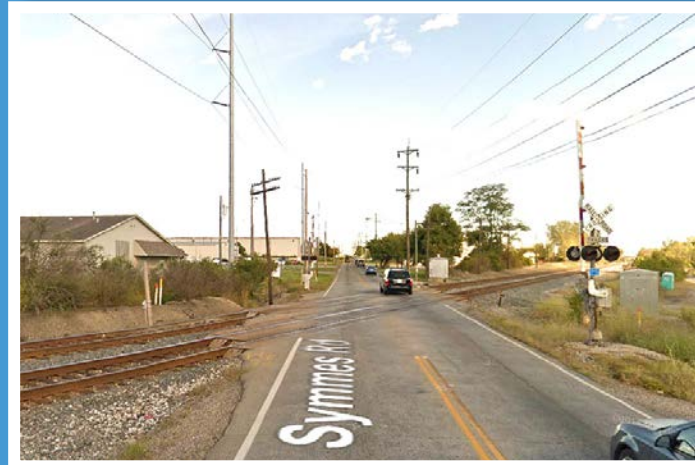
- Currently, bicycle paths and trails are primarily used for recreational purposes. This is due, in part, to the current system being inadequate for commuter bicyclists. However, the public expressed a desire for a more comprehensive bicycle system that can be used for transportation and commuter purposes.
- Bicycle trails are limited in Fairfield, apart from the Great Miami River Trail located on the west side of the city, which begins at Waterworks Park in Fairfield and travels north 82 miles to Sidney, Ohio, with occasional gaps in the trail system. There is approximately 2.25 miles of the Great Miami River Trail in Fairfield including the southernmost trail head (Waterworks Park) and two areas for vehicle parking. Plans are currently in the works to extend the trail south to Hamilton County.
- There are no marked bike lanes on roads within the city, although the *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (2014) identifies over 13 miles of “trails and connections” within the city. These include: Pleasant Run Creek Path, Harbin Park Bike Path, Huffman Park Bike/Hike Path, Miami-Erie Canal Bike Path and Marsh Park Bike Trail.

✓ Transit

- Public transportation is provided by the Butler County Regional Transit Authority (BCRTA).
- Three routes connect Fairfield riders to points south to Tri-County Mall in the City of Springdale and to points north to the Cities of Hamilton, Oxford, and Middletown, as well as an express service to the Greater Dayton Area.
- Transit routes provide multiple stops along major roads and within portions of the industrial areas in the city.

✓ Rail/Freight

- Rail and most motor freight activity, other than local deliveries, are primarily located and accommodated for on the east and northeast side of the city serving the industrial areas.
- Because of the concentrated location of the industrial base in the city, limited conflict exists between motor vehicle, rail and freight traffic. However, where railroad crossings are at grade, there are frequent instances of stopped traffic on the roadways. Symmes Road and Seward Road are examples of conflicts between rail and motor vehicles.



WHAT THIS MEANS TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

The city has a comprehensive system of roadway networks for motor vehicles and public transit. The pedestrian and bicycle system lacks complete connectivity, making it difficult in some instances to walk or safely ride a bike between neighborhoods or to destination points such as parks or places of employment.

Transportation Goals and Policies

GOAL T-1 Provide a comprehensive, safe, convenient, well-balanced, and financially feasible transportation system.

- **Policy 1.1** Concentrate development in appropriate locations where the existing infrastructure has available traffic capacity to minimize congestion.
- **Policy 1.2** Utilize a “complete streets” policy that considers shared rights-of-way for motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists in a safe manner.
- **Policy 1.3** Identify a method to slow traffic on local streets to make for safer roads.
- **Policy 1.4** Require a traffic impact study in compliance with Butler County’s requirements for any development that is anticipated to generate more than 100 vehicles during peak hour trips as a condition of plan review to ensure that transportation improvements, including non-motorized travel, if needed, are included as a condition for approval.
- **Policy 1.5** Look for opportunities to create service roads behind new developments to create multiple connection options for motor vehicles, especially when near congested intersections.
- **Policy 1.6** Plan for and acknowledge advances in transportation and travel technology systems (e.g. autonomous vehicles).

GOAL T-2 Attain greater pedestrian and bicycle mobility for day-to-day and commuter activity.

- **Policy 2.1** Establish multi-modal networks that link neighborhoods, recreational areas, and commercial areas to reduce motor vehicle traffic and points of pedestrian/motor vehicle conflict.

GOAL T-3 Increase roadway efficiency.

- **Policy 3.1** Continue traffic signal monitoring and synchronization, access management implementation through service drives on regional and primary thoroughfares, and reducing curb cuts.
- **Policy 3.2** Establish a policy to require the continuation of stub streets when adjacent land is developed or redeveloped for future access and connectivity.

GOAL T-4 Provide for safe non-motorized routes to schools and other activity centers.

- **Policy 4.1** Establish a pedestrian system that reduces conflicts between students walking and bicycling, and motor vehicles.

GOAL T-5 Develop a favorable environment for greater connectivity to public transit systems that provides additional transit options to all populations.

- **Policy 5.1** Coordinate with public transit agencies for expanded public transportation access and connectivity.



Thoroughfare Plan

Purpose

The purpose of the Thoroughfare Plan is to establish locations and minimum standards for the future street network within the city. It is a planning tool used to establish future rights-of-way and plan the construction of new roads through the development process. It will also serve to guide public and elected officials in the development of future road improvement projects.

Past Thoroughfare Plans

The 1966 Plan was the first officially adopted thoroughfare plan for the city and created the roadway layout for many of the streets that exist today. The two major issues addressed in the plan were constructing additional north-south roads for inter-city traffic and diverting through east-west traffic around residential neighborhoods.

The 1977 Plan promoted the Loop Traffic Flow concept, to allow easy traffic flow inside the city boundaries. The 1992 Plan continued to promote the Loop Traffic Flow concept with the inception of the Town Center Loop Road. It also proposed frontage roads on Route 4 with the updated 1990 Service Drive Plan and the extension of Symmes Road east through West Chester Township to I-275.

The 2006 Plan was a major overhaul from past plans in that it upgraded and downgraded various roadway classifications to more accurately represent existing conditions and addressed the impact of future widening of Route 4 on adjacent businesses.

THOROUGHFARE OBJECTIVES

The thoroughfare system in Fairfield is classified and maintained by the City of Fairfield through the official Thoroughfare Plan. There are **five primary objectives** for the Thoroughfare Plan for the city:

- 1 The Thoroughfare Plan shall be an integral part of the development of the City of Fairfield.
- 2 The Thoroughfare Plan is a guide for the orderly development of thoroughfares through undeveloped areas and assures the proper extension and connection of existing thoroughfares. The plan is meant to be a plan only and may be adjusted to meet prevailing conditions.
- 3 The Thoroughfare Plan shall provide direct connection to major regional highways surrounding the city.
- 4 The Thoroughfare Plan shall be enacted when development occurs on vacant parcels, major expansions, and when parcels get redeveloped. For the purposes of this plan, redevelopment is defined as substantial demolition (greater than 50%) of existing structures and rebuilding for a new use.
- 5 The Thoroughfare Plan should be reviewed approximately every five years so that transportation and market condition impacts can be evaluated upon the various thoroughfares in the city.



The Thoroughfare Plan can be found in its entirety in **Appendix C - Transportation**, including detailed information about street classifications and street standards.

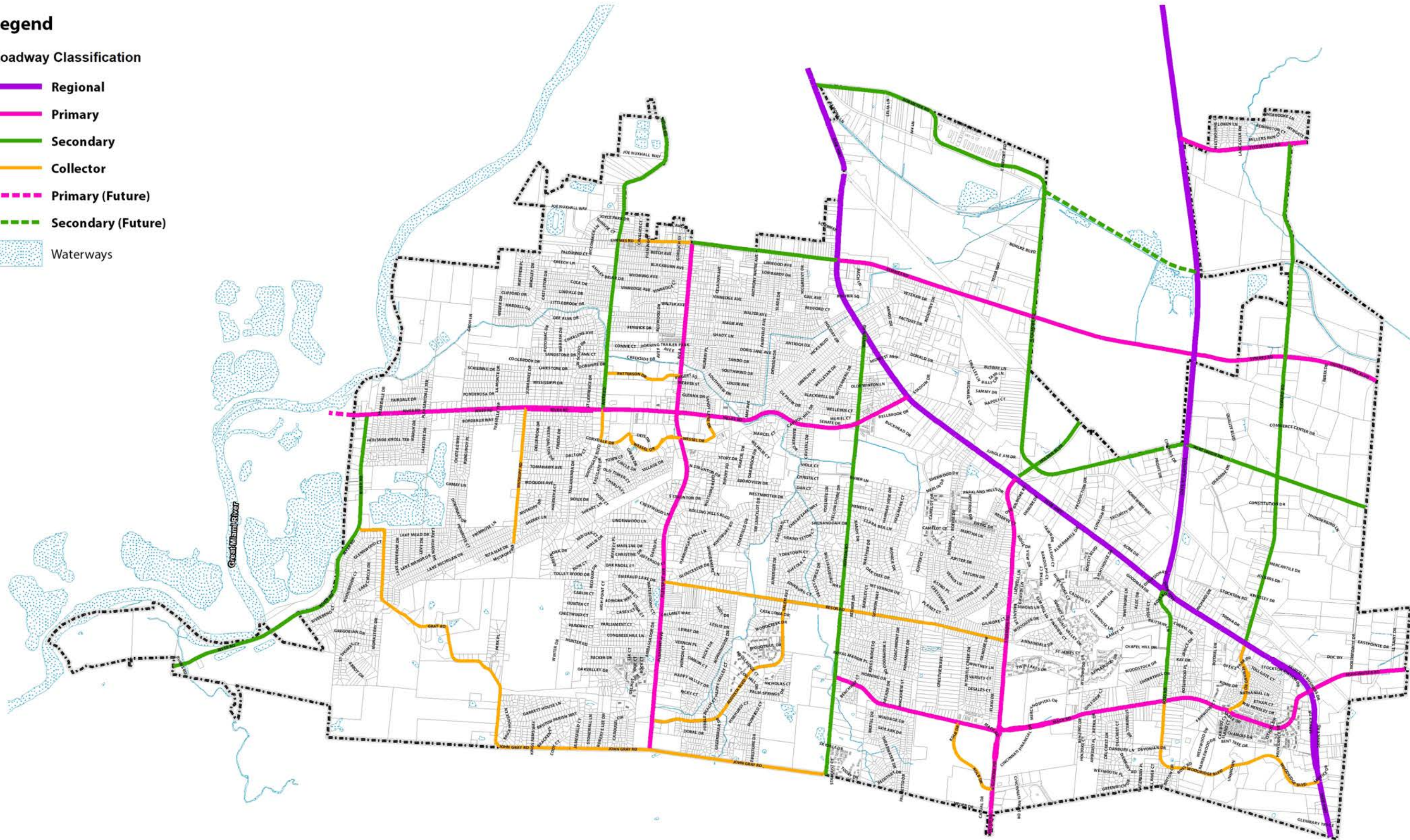
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Figure 6-1. Thoroughfare Plan

Legend

Roadway Classification

- Regional
- Primary
- Secondary
- Collector
- Primary (Future)
- Secondary (Future)
- Waterways

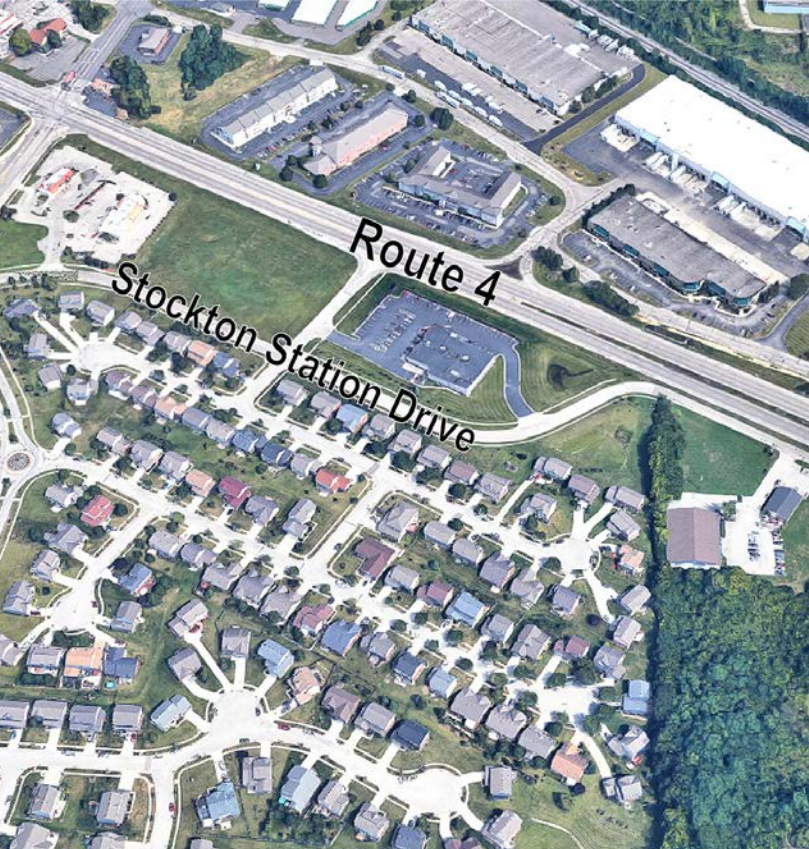


Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS



August 28, 2019





Left: Access management - Stockton Station service drive adjacent to Route 4
 Right: Recently constructed roundabout at River Road and Gray Road

Access Management

Access management is the control of access to property from city roadways in a coordinated manner, that provides for safer and more efficient driving conditions through the implementation of frontage roads, service drives and curb cut consolidation. Access management principles should be developed by the city for implementation along regional, primary and secondary thoroughfares. The principles should include best practices and standards for when curb cut consolidation, frontage road and service drives are recommended and who is responsible for installation and maintenance. These principles should be developed in conjunction with businesses and property owners to support their access needs. All new mixed-use and multi-parcel development and redevelopment should be designed to the standards of the access management principles, once developed.

Roundabouts

Roundabouts are circular intersections in which traffic is permitted to flow in one direction around a central island. Priority is given to traffic already in the roundabout. These types of circular intersections have proven to be safe and efficient without the need for approaching vehicles to make a complete stop. According to the Butler County Engineer's Office, roundabouts provide a 30% efficiency over typical intersections, reduce fatal crashes at intersections by 90%, provide a 75% reduction in injury crashes, and reduce pedestrian crashes by 30-40% due to fewer conflict points, slower speeds and easier decision making. The city recently installed a roundabout at River Road and Gray Road (see above). Roundabouts, gaining tremendous popularity in the United States and in the Midwest for their efficiency, should be considered in lieu of adding turn lanes, traffic signals, or creating 4-way stop conditions.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity

The City of Fairfield continues to develop a comprehensive and connected sidewalk system. Public input during the planning process has identified sidewalk and bike trail connectivity as a top issue to study and implement. A connected sidewalk and trail system will provide safer routes from homes to schools, parks, services and places of employment. It will help to reduce motor vehicle traffic on city roads. It will promote health, wellness and safety, and increase the quality of life of neighborhoods and the city as a whole.

Currently, some students face unsafe conditions in areas on their route from home to school; walking along the side of busy roads, across parking lots, and crossing at locations not meant to be crossed by pedestrians. A good pedestrian connectivity plan will assist the city in obtaining Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) funding through the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) for sidewalk installation. Since 2015, OKI has awarded federal funding for over 200 sidewalk projects in the 8-county region in which they serve. The city should engage in an active partnership with the school district to establish safe and efficient routes to schools.

A good pedestrian connectivity plan should:

1. Establish a sidewalk and trail connectivity plan and program and dedicate annual funding to installation and improvements. This plan should identify gaps where sidewalks and trails are needed and prioritize those routes. Many national organizations provide toolkits to help communities assess current conditions and develop a plan to move forward, including the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC), the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO), and AARP Livability programming.
2. Design sidewalks for pedestrian comfort and safety depending on the roadway condition they are providing access along (e.g. wider sidewalks or greater separation between sidewalk and street depending on traffic speeds). Planter strips, trees, wider sidewalks, and on-street parking can increase pedestrian comfort.

What We Heard

- More sidewalks are needed throughout the city for better pedestrian connectivity
- Expand the bike trail and multi-use trail systems
- Improve pedestrian crossings on major roads, including Route 4. Lighted crossings, better signage, and pedestrian bridges are options



3. Pursue greenway/trail opportunities (dedicated pedestrian and/or bicycle paths separate from road rights-of-way) and sidewalk improvements that connect neighborhoods to the Town Center and other destinations to be determined by a pedestrian connectivity plan. The plan should prioritize high use areas such as a quarter mile radius around parks, schools and key retail destinations.



HOW IT WORKS

Design guidelines recommend a minimum sidewalk cross section of five feet, exclusive of other amenities and large enough for at least two people to walk side by side. Below is a guide to potential spaces alongside a property:

- 1 FRONTAGE ZONE:** An extension of the building
- 2 PEDESTRIAN THROUGH ZONE:** Safe and adequate place for walking, five to seven feet wide in residential areas, eight to twelve feet in downtown or commercial settings
- 3 STREET FURNITURE/CURB ZONE:** Plants, trees, benches, lighting, and bike parking to provide a protective barrier from motorized traffic
- 4 ENHANCEMENT/BUFFER ZONE:** Curb extensions, parklets, parking, bike riding, bike e-racks, and bike stations

According to American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), sidewalks and pedestrian connectivity provide the following benefits:

- People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are 47% more likely to be active at least 39 minutes a day.
- A well-constructed walkway for a typical 50-foot wide residential property might cost a builder \$2,000, but it can return 15 times that investment in resale value.
- In a scenario where two houses are nearly identical, the one with a five-foot wide sidewalk and two street trees not only sells for \$4,000 to \$34,000 more but it also sells in less time.
- Retail properties with a Walk Score ranking of 80 out of 100 were valued 54% higher than properties with a Walk Score of 20 and had an increase in net operating income of 42% for more walkable properties.



The Future of Transportation

The transportation network is an essential element of the infrastructure system that helps drive the economic well-being of the city, region and the nation. The dynamics of transportation are changing quickly to include alternative methods of travel such as zero emission electric vehicles, hyperloop systems, Uber and Lyft ridesharing, bicycle sharing and driverless vehicles.

Smart road technology, also in its infancy stages, uses sensors and data to talk to traffic signs, signals and vehicles.

These growing changes in transportation technology and user preferences will have an impact on the transportation system, where fewer lanes of travel on a roadway may be needed, and new or alternative ways of maintaining transportation system elements may be required, such as providing electric charging stations in parking lots. The city must stay abreast of and consider changes in transportation modes in order to anticipate both physical and fiscal impacts, and provide the most affordable and comprehensive transportation options as possible.

Clockwise from top:

- 1) Electric recharging lane
- 2) Designated rideshare pick-up zone
- 3) Red Bike bikeshare station in Cincinnati
- 4) Autonomous vehicle

Implementation Strategies - Transportation



STRATEGY T-1

Utilize a level of service standard, methodology and submission requirements consistent with Butler County's traffic impact study requirements for new and substantially expanded existing development to be used to identify impacts and needed improvements required by the developer.

STRATEGY T-2

Develop a multi-modal transportation strategy for the city that establishes criteria and guidelines for citywide connectivity for sidewalks, trails, and complete streets. Require the construction of sidewalks or any non-sidewalk trails or paths identified on that plan by the developer.

STRATEGY T-3

Establish an access management policy that develops a plan for service drives and the reduction of curb cuts on regional and primary thoroughfares.

STRATEGY T-4

Work with the Fairfield City School District to identify student walking routes to school and to school related activities, and prioritize the establishment of sidewalks and paths to reduce pedestrian/motor vehicle conflicts. Consider incorporating the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools, "Advancing Transportation and Health: Approaches from the Federal Safe Routes to School Program" that offer broad application.

STRATEGY T-5

Engage public transit agencies to provide expanded service to and within Fairfield.

STRATEGY T-6

Revisit and reevaluate the city's sidewalk policy, that currently does not require the installation of sidewalks south of Nilles on Route 4 and in the industrial areas, based on need and location and determine if sidewalks are necessary along existing and future service drives.

Implementation Strategies - Transportation



STRATEGY T-7

Implement multi-modal networks within major transportation projects when possible.

STRATEGY T-8

Revise plans and ordinances as new transportation technology is developed and trends are established.



Economic Development



Economic Development

A community's economic base, development resources, and development practices have an important impact on economic growth and should continue to be reviewed on a regular basis. Local opportunities to expand or attract businesses and grow jobs for the labor force are often a function of local and regional resources and policies, such as labor supply, land use policy, and infrastructure.

Although most economic activity is in the private sector, local government's role is to establish parameters for private markets, provide necessary services, and participate in economic development in certain circumstances.

As such, a community's economic development goals and targets should be considered in strategic decisions related to land use policies, services and facility offerings, and infrastructure. Taxes and

fees are what provide the much needed revenue for the services that the city provides to its residents and businesses.

Emerging economic development challenges for Fairfield include: 1) the scarcity of land immediately available in the city to accommodate new commercial, service, and industrial uses; 2) an aging building stock that requires new investment or redevelopment to retain marketability; 3) the increasing competition of online purchasing,

reducing reliance on brick and mortar retail; and 4) competition between cities to attract and retain businesses. Each of these factors can decrease much needed investment in the city.

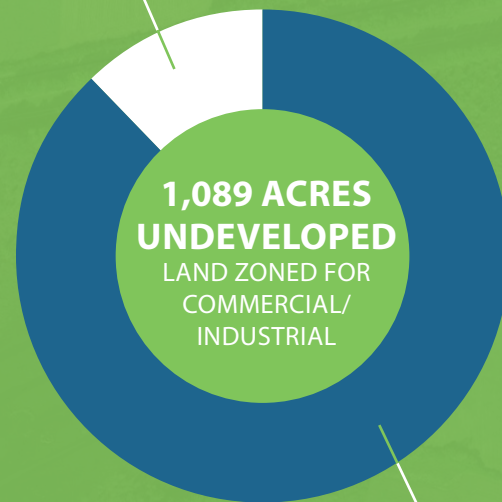
Land Resources

Business retention and expansion is of paramount importance to the economic well-being of the City of Fairfield. It is expected that much of the city's growth in coming years will be from existing companies. The city should focus additional resources on developing a robust Business Retention and Expansion program to enhance relationships with existing companies and encourage growth and investment from those already here.

The city will continue to face increased competition from surrounding jurisdictions in the Greater Cincinnati region for employment, retail, service and industrial opportunities. Fairfield's foremost economic challenge over the next 20 years will be to continue to diversify its employment base and provide opportunities for the well-planned development of all business sectors to maintain a healthy, balanced community from both a market and financial position.

Fairfield Forward advocates that the city continue to seek out and promote opportunities for expansion and diversification of the local economy that may present itself in the future. This diversification will help Fairfield maintain economic viability during fluctuating economic cycles and allow the city the luxury of being selective as to the type and quality of future development opportunities. A balance of office, retail, industrial and service employment will help to ensure that if one sector is down, the others will be in place to help weather any economic downturn. The Future Land Use Plan establishes a viable land use pattern that will help drive this balance.

Commercial Zoning
166 Acres (15%)



Industrial Zoning
923 Acres (85%)

Fairfield currently has approximately 4,300 acres of land zoned for commercial and industrial uses.

A majority of this, 3,100 acres (72%), is zoned for industrial uses.

Of the total land zoned for commercial and industrial uses, approximately 2,600 acres (60%) of this is developed.

A majority of the undeveloped land is zoned industrial, approximately 1,089 acres. Not all of the undeveloped land is immediately available for new development, as many areas contain site hindrances (floodplain, wetlands, topography, etc.). Large portions, particularly in the Seward Road area, are being actively farmed and are not currently available. However, these sites are expected to develop.

What We Heard



- More/better options for sit-down restaurants
- Better property maintenance is needed, especially for vacant structures and older, run-down locations
- Provide landscaping along major commercial corridors and at entrances into the city
- Develop design standards for better development and redevelopment
- Encourage green and sustainable materials in buildings and in site design
- Reduce the number of used car lots along the Route 4 Corridor
- Provide for more entertainment options for all age groups
- Acquire and tear down older, vacant and dilapidated buildings
- Partner with the City of Forest Park to redevelop former Forest Fair Mall area
- Municipal Broadband/Wi-Fi internet access in key public spaces
- More upscale stores – no more bargain, thrift or dollar stores

The types of environments typically required to attract highly skilled, high-income workers and jobs include:

- The beautification and efficiency of major transportation corridors
- Connected walkability through the provision of sidewalks, bicycle trails, open space, and public gathering spaces
- The use of quality architecture, building materials, and site design
- Appropriate housing options
- The availability of alternative transportation choices

Finally, by offering a broad array of retail, service, entertainment, and dining activities within the community, the need for residents, employees, and visitors to leave Fairfield will be reduced, and the city's revenue base will be enhanced.

Economic Profile¹

- ✓ There are currently 1,694 businesses employing 28,745 people in the city. These figures increased over the last 10 years by approximately 200 businesses and 8,500 employees, respectively.
- ✓ The largest classification of jobs is the Service Sector with 632 companies employing 17,181 people.
- ✓ The 10 largest employers in city collectively employ approximately 11,000 people – almost 1/3 of the city workforce.
- ✓ The city imposes an income tax of 1.5%. This is the same as some of the surrounding communities in the region, including the Cities of Forest Park and Sharonville. The Cities of Hamilton, Springdale, and Oxford impose a higher 2.0% income tax. Townships, such as Ross and Springfield, by nature of Ohio Law, do not impose income taxes, but they do have higher property taxes, in general, than cities. Fairfield does offer reciprocity on income tax.

¹ Sources: Esri Business Analyst 2018 and the City of Fairfield Economic Development Department

TOP EMPLOYERS 2018

- 1 **Cincinnati Financial Corporation**
3,250 Employees (2,900 in 2009)
- 2 **Mercy Health- Fairfield Hospital**
1,400 Employees (1,200 in 2009)
- 3 **Liberty Mutual (Formerly Ohio Casualty)**
1,400 Employees (975 in 2009)
- 4 **Koch Foods**
1,250 Employees (450 in 2009)
- 5 **Fairfield City School District**
1,153 Employees (1,140 in 2009)
- 6 **Express Scripts (Formerly Medco Health)**
750 Employees (800 in 2009)
- 7 **Pacific Manufacturing**
700 Employees (500 in 2009)
- 8 **Veritiv Corporation**
475 Employees (Not in Fairfield in 2009)
- 9 **Martin Brower**
450 Employees (Not in Fairfield in 2009)
- 10 **Takumi Stamping**
425 Employees (Not in Fairfield in 2009)

- ✓ The largest source of revenue for the city is the Income Tax, which generated \$30,112,500 in 2018. This is an increase of 40% from 2008 when collections were at \$17,956,300.
- ✓ The city has one Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) with West Chester Township. This JEDD includes two buildings on Aviation Way, comprising of 43 acres. The JEDD requires employees working within the district to pay municipal income tax.
- ✓ Building investment in the city has been strong and relatively consistent over the last 10 years with over \$57 million in residential and commercial projects in 2018. Table 7-1 identifies building investment between 2009 and 2018. The strong investment trends are the result of both new business attraction and expansion by existing businesses.

For additional information on economic development, refer to Appendix D - Economic Development.

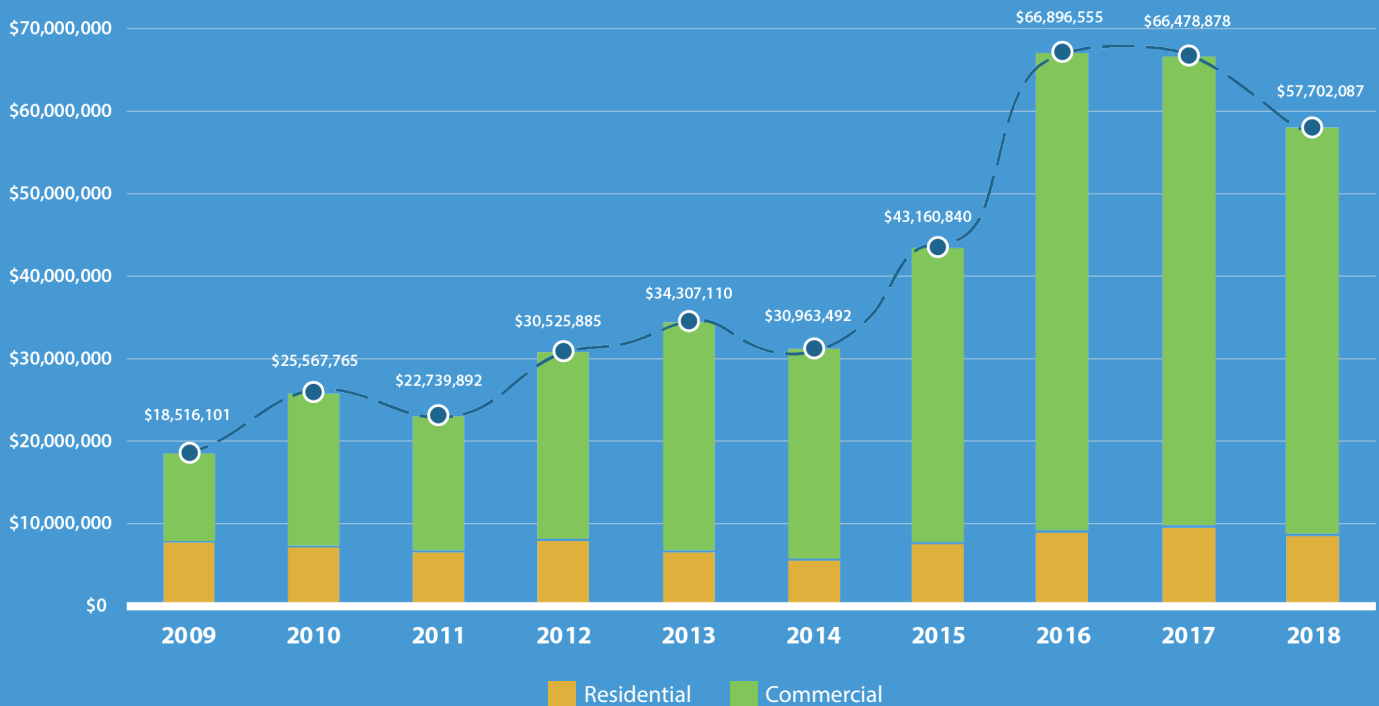


Three of the Top 10 Employers in the City
From top to bottom:

- Mercy Health - Fairfield Hospital
- Veritiv Corporation
- Cincinnati Financial Corporation

Table 7-1. Building Investment (2009-2018)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Residential	\$7,878,345	\$7,131,659	\$6,581,580	\$8,020,432	\$6,689,302	\$5,589,157	\$7,516,667	\$9,058,653	\$9,667,134	\$8,551,521
Commercial	\$10,637,756	\$18,436,106	\$16,158,312	\$22,505,453	\$27,617,808	\$25,374,335	\$35,644,173	\$57,837,902	\$56,811,744	\$49,150,566
Total	\$18,516,101	\$25,567,765	\$22,739,892	\$30,525,885	\$34,307,110	\$30,963,492	\$43,160,840	\$66,896,555	\$66,478,878	\$57,702,087



Existing City Programs

Through the Economic Development Division, the City of Fairfield uses several incentive programs to encourage business growth, job creation and retention, and capital investment. These programs include:

- 1. Fast Track Permitting:** Certain projects may be eligible for expedited zoning and building review, and permitting on a project by project basis.
- 2. Infrastructure Improvements:** The city may elect to construct or share in the cost of infrastructure improvements that may be required as a condition for development or redevelopment.
- 3. Property Tax Abatement:** Businesses that make significant real property improvements and create new jobs can receive a temporary reduction in property taxes.
- 4. Small Business Loan Program:** The City

of Fairfield can assist with the Small Business Administration 504 Loan Program, which provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets (real estate, machinery, and equipment).

5. Opportunity Zones: Fairfield has two federally-approved zones that enable investors to receive reductions to capital gains tax liabilities. (See Opportunity Zone Map in Appendix D - Economic Development for more information.)

6. Landbank Program: The city is a member of the Butler County Land Bank. The Land Bank can purchase strategic properties that are distressed, blighted, or key to the development/redevelopment of an area.

7. Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit: The Job Creation Tax Credit Program provides corporate franchise or state income tax credit for businesses that expand or locate in Fairfield. Eligible businesses must create at least 25 new full-time jobs (10 jobs under special circumstances) within 3 years.

8. Redevelopment Fund: The city has an

annual appropriation that can be used to assist businesses with redevelopment of aging real estate.

9. Workforce Development Programs: The city is in partnership with OhioMeansJobs and Butler Tech to provide programs that provide an educated and qualified workforce that meets the current and future needs of employers.

10. Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE): A program by which commercial and industrial building owners finance energy efficiency and renewable energy building improvements as part of an Energy Special Improvement District.



Redevelopment on Dixie Highway - Caruso's Ristorante & Bar Opening at Former Spinning Fork Location



Market Analysis

Fairfield households spend slightly less than the national average in all expenditure segments (goods, services, and entertainment). As compared to 12 surrounding communities, Fairfield has a slightly higher commercial vacancy rate (10.8% as compared to the average of 8.1%) and a slightly below average commercial rent rate (\$10.89 per square foot compared to the average of \$13.86 per square foot).

Primary Business and Employment Areas

As identified in the previous Comprehensive Plan in 2009, there continue to be four primary business areas within the city:

- Route 4 Corridor
- Industrial areas east of Route 4
- Mack/South Gilmore area
- Town Center area

Route 4 Corridor Area

The Route 4 Corridor, an automobile-oriented corridor, continues to be the dominant commercial corridor in Fairfield. The corridor represents a large amount of the city's income tax revenue with respect to service and retail activity. Vacancy rates continue to compare favorably to other similar commercial thoroughfares in the region. The corridor is, however, experiencing disinvestment and, in some cases, blighting conditions, particularly in the northern areas of the corridor. Recent closures of restaurants, downgraded hotel properties, and reuse of properties as thrift stores and used car lots have taken a toll on the northern end of this district.

The Route 4 Corridor is the most frequently visited area for visitors in the city, which helps establish Fairfield's regional reputation through unique retail anchors such as Jungle Jim's International Market and automobile dealerships. Overall, there are few remaining undeveloped sites along the corridor, representing less than 40 acres total. As a result, incoming businesses are forced to consider existing building inventory or redevelopment rather than building to suit.

Public infrastructure improvements include both transportation roadway projects (widening, turn lanes, and signal coordination) and streetscape-type projects (landscaping, signage). Additional public improvements are recommended in this plan that include gateway enhancements and sidewalk installation and connections, where warranted.



Land use examples of the 4 primary business areas in Fairfield

Industrial Area

The City of Fairfield is also known regionally for the strength of its manufacturing sector. Fairfield is part of the Tri-County industrial sub-market, which is generally recognized as the strongest industrial sub-market in the Greater Cincinnati region in terms of occupancy rates, rents, and diversity of uses. This is due to the infrastructure and utilities in place, the strong and plentiful workforce, available industrial land sites, synergies with existing industrial uses, and easy access to both the Cincinnati and Dayton markets via I-75 and I-275.

Fairfield has continued to make strategic investments in the industrial area, including roadway improvements and utility expansions, to be able to continue to attract and retain industrial businesses. Several hundred acres, particularly in the northern Seward Road area, remain available for development. Some of these areas, due to the lack of direct interstate access, may be best suited for small and mid-sized build-to-suits, and not for large floor plan speculative warehouse projects.

As was identified in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, the older industrial areas off of Route 4 (Hicks Boulevard, Factory Drive, Industry Drive, Donald Drive, Production Drive, Homeward Way, and others) continue to present different opportunities and challenges for the city. These areas are characterized by older and smaller industrial lots and buildings, which are not typically conducive to today's need for manufacturing, warehousing or distribution space. However, this area provides a niche market; inexpensive spaces for smaller manufacturers or start-ups that are home to hundreds of jobs in the aggregate. The lack of owner investment in these properties may lead to chronic vacancies, under-utilization, or maintenance issues.



Koch Foods (top) and Cincinnati Financial Corporation (bottom)

Mack/South Gilmore Area

Located off exit 39 on I-275, the Mack/South Gilmore area continues to represent Fairfield's best opportunity for large-scale, high-quality economic development. The area is home to three of Fairfield's largest employers— Cincinnati Financial Corporation, Veritiv, and Mercy Health Fairfield Hospital. Veritiv is new to the area since the last Comprehensive Plan and has brought 475 high paying jobs to the city. Cincinnati Financial Corporation and Mercy Health Fairfield Hospital continue to expand, adding more than 500 high-skilled and high-wage professional jobs over the last 10 years. The Cincinnati Financial Corporation campus is home to three Class A office towers that house in excess of 3,000 workers. The company's master site plan was designed to accommodate additional office towers, so there is room for more growth. Likewise, Mercy Health Fairfield Hospital has invested millions of dollars in building expansions and upgrades over the past 10 years.



Heine Property and Benzing Property

The area, both in Fairfield and in neighboring Forest Park (to the south), is home to several local and national retailers including department stores, grocers and restaurants. The mall, formerly known as Forest Fair Mall, represents a major redevelopment opportunity in the area. Approximately one fourth of the 1.5 million square foot mall is in Fairfield, with the rest in Forest Park. The mall is mostly vacant at this time, with only the Kohl's anchor located in Fairfield and the Bass Pro Shops anchor located in Forest Park being viable. The mall site contains approximately 80 acres with interstate frontage and is controlled by one owner. Between the mall property and other undeveloped or under-utilized properties, there are numerous locations for new retail development in the corridor. A recent analysis by Colliers International has concluded that this area may be best suited and marketed for larger-scale offices, medical related uses, and ancillary support services, including limited retail and services to support the office and medical development, and some limited types of housing.

Two large tracts of undeveloped land are available for professional office, medical, high technology, and research & development uses in the area. The larger property located at the southwest corner of Mack Road and South Gilmore Road, known as the Heine Property, is approximately 110 acres and is zoned Planned Unit Development (PUD). The smaller property at the northeast corner, known as the Benzing Property, is approximately 27 acres and is zoned B-1, Institutions and Office District. Both properties have remained undeveloped. The vision of high-end professional uses is appropriate for these sites, due to the existing comparable businesses in the area and the ease of interstate access. The Heine Property may also be best suited for mixed-use development, incorporating residential to the west, and more intensive larger scale office, research & development, retail, and medical uses to the north and east.

Town Center

A strategic focus of city investment over the past two decades has been the investment in new public buildings and amenities in the Town Center area. Fairfield has invested approximately \$30 million in recent years for a new Lane Library, Community Arts Center, Village Green Park and Justice Center. This public investment has leveraged significant private investment in the surrounding area, including new office, retail, and housing construction. Most of this investment has been in the southern quadrants of the Town Center, south of Nilles Road. This area is a central gathering point for festivals, concerts, and farmers markets throughout the year, making it a heavily used and active space. This area has also successfully incorporated design guidelines which have proved successful in their application. Public workshop events and surveys conducted during this planning process have identified that residents overwhelmingly believe that because of the success of these design standards, that the concept should be applied in other key areas of the city.

It is anticipated that more investment will occur in the northern quadrants of the Town Center. In 2008, the city created the North Town Center Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District to help fund new public infrastructure projects in the areas north of Nilles Road. It is expected that these public infrastructure projects will leverage significant private mixed-use development, particularly in the Patterson Drive area.



Farm R Treat in Village Green Park

Fairfield Workforce

According to the most recent Census data, the number of Fairfield residents in the workforce is 21,511 people. This is approximately half of the residents of the city, ages 16 and older, who are reported to be employed either in or outside of Fairfield. The typical Fairfield resident who is employed:

- Travels less than 10 miles to work
- Is between 30-54 years of age
- Makes more than \$3,333 a month in salary

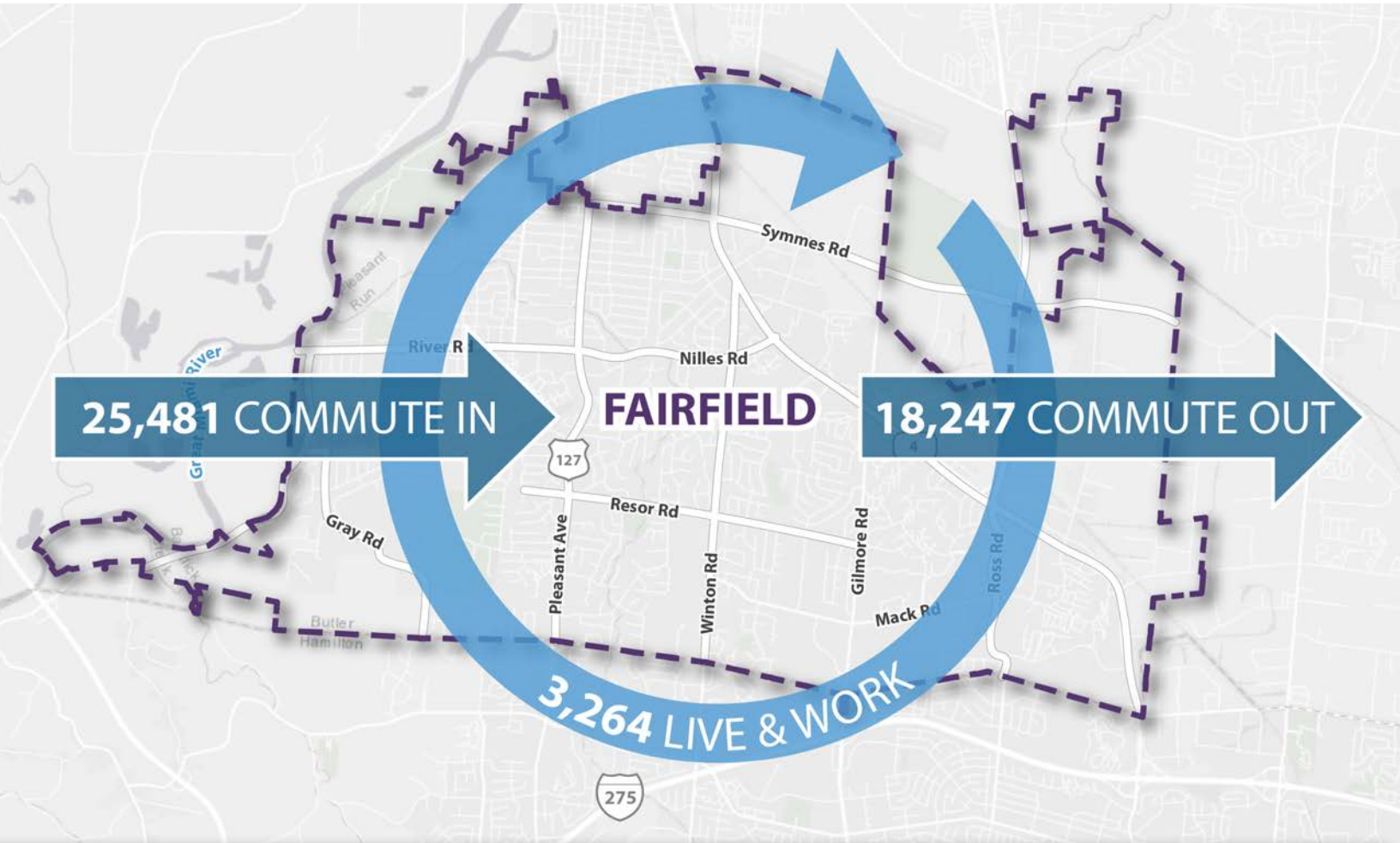
These figures are generally in line with those who commute into Fairfield to work.

According to the same Census report, the City of Fairfield is home to approximately 28,700 employees at 1,700 employers within the city limits. Figure 7-1 identifies the number of residents who live and work in Fairfield (3,264), live in Fairfield but work outside Fairfield (18,247), and those who do not live in Fairfield but commute to Fairfield for their place of employment (25,481). When compared to surrounding jurisdictions regarding the number of nonresidents commuting in for work, Fairfield, at 88.7%, is slightly lower than Forest Park (96.6%), Springdale (97.9%), and West Chester Township (91.4%). Fairfield is slightly higher than the City of Hamilton (77.2%).

There is a very diverse mix of small and large businesses, including a strong mix of employment types and sectors in Fairfield. This helps the city weather financial recessions and provides for a strong tax base. Of interesting note is the Management of Companies and Enterprises and the Finance and Insurance categories. According to these statistics, those who manage companies are not living in Fairfield.* While it may not be the case here, this trend is typically attributed to the lack of certain types of desired housing for CEO's and those who manage and lead large companies.

*Source: Esri Business Analyst

Figure 7-1. Commute Pattern



Economic Development Goals and Policies

GOAL ED-1 Attract and retain a diverse economy of businesses and services to provide goods, services, and employment opportunities for residents, and to maintain a continued stable and healthy tax base.

- **Policy 1.1** Continue to ensure a streamlined regulatory process for the review and permitting of new uses.
- **Policy 1.2** Target uses and services that fill a gap in existing goods, services and entertainment opportunities for all ages.
- **Policy 1.3** Encourage safe and convenient pedestrian access to businesses and services to and from residential areas.
- **Policy 1.4** Support industrial and office development in strategic areas which retain and expand opportunities for employment and an increase in the tax base.

GOAL ED-2 Promote the revitalization of aging and deteriorating commercial areas.

- **Policy 2.1** Continue to ensure a streamlined regulatory process for the review and permitting of existing and expanding uses.
- **Policy 2.2** Identify and promote adaptive reuse opportunities for existing uses and underutilized sites.
- **Policy 2.3** Explore opportunities and mechanisms that allow the city to purchase and landbank strategic properties.

GOAL ED-3 Encourage investment and development in existing areas of the city through the promotion of mixed-uses, increased densities, infill development, and adaptive reuse of existing buildings that promote walkable developments, including residential and non-residential uses, that will create vibrant centers of activity.

- **Policy 3.1** Promote mixed-use development in the small area plans for Mack/South Gilmore, John Gray/Pleasant, Route 4 Corridor and the Town Center.
- **Policy 3.2** Create places where people want to be through “experience” type development including restaurants, studio spaces, small gathering spaces, and entertainment venues.
- **Policy 3.3** Promote cluster and compact development as opposed to strip commercial development that provides for walkability and open spaces.



Mixed-use retail at Jungle Jim's International Market

GOAL ED-4 Require that development meets the high standards of design expected by the community from a visual and a quality perspective.

- **Policy 4.1** Establish design guidelines for new development and redevelopment, especially in key areas of the city (Route 4 Corridor, Mack/South Gilmore, John Gray/Pleasant area and the Town Center area) and along major corridors and at gateway entries, commensurate with what the public desires, to foster higher quality development and a better visual environment.
- **Policy 4.2** Consider the goals and policies of this comprehensive plan during project review to ensure that development and redevelopment is consistent with the vision of this plan.
- **Policy 4.3** Discourage heavy industrial uses that will detract from the city. If such uses are permitted to locate in the city, all activity should be required to be in a wholly enclosed building and any outside storage to be screened.

GOAL ED-5 Encourage a land use pattern that promotes the fiscal stability of the city.

- **Policy 5.1** Support a proper mix of net taxpayers and net tax receivers to keep property tax rates low, while continuing to provide adequate funding for public services.

GOAL ED-6 Work with surrounding jurisdictions, including Butler County and the City of Hamilton, to attract businesses that are compatible and complement Fairfield businesses.

- **Policy 6.1** Support development within the Airport Zoning District that is complementary to the Butler County Regional Airport and does not detract from aviation operations.
- **Policy 6.2** Identify opportunities to capitalize on development projects in adjacent jurisdictions (e.g. the City of Hamilton Spooky Nook complex).

New Taco Bell and Older Strip Center



New (left) and old (right) retail design on Nilles Road

Economic Development Plan

The City of Fairfield has many positives regarding economic development, including accessibility, areas for new development, redevelopment and adaptive reuse, and established areas for a variety of business types and sizes. However, many challenges also exist. First, is the aging building stock throughout the city. Continued reinvestment and/or redevelopment of these older structures, particularly in the Route 4 Corridor and the older industrial areas, continues to be critical to long-term success.

Second, is the decreasing available acreage for new build-to-suit development, both commercial and industrial. Maximum utilization of the available land is critical, as is the creation of new land options via selective demolition and redevelopment. Permitting developers to maximize density will also allow a better return on investment on smaller parcels in the city.

Finally, Fairfield's demographics are continuing to become more diverse, particularly in terms of age, ethnicity, and income levels. On the private side, the business community is expected to evolve in response to this increased diversity with more and different offerings in restaurants, retail, and services to accommodate all ages, ethnicities and incomes. The city can assist in this effort by keeping business owners and prospective new businesses aware of the comprehensive demographics of the city to ensure that all demographics are accommodated. As the city demographics change, new businesses are likely to be formed to serve these new and diverse populations.

Implementation Strategies - Economic Development

STRATEGY ED-1

Proactively identify and promote available sites and opportunities for new development.

STRATEGY ED-2

Prioritize key parcels for development and redevelopment opportunities.

STRATEGY ED-3

Develop incentives and public assistance programs to facilitate development and redevelopment efforts in targeted areas where vacancies exist to prevent blighting conditions.

STRATEGY ED-4

Require the private sector, as development and redevelopment occur, to provide the appropriate infrastructure upgrades to prevent deterioration of public facilities and public services.

STRATEGY ED-5

Continue to engage in active and frequent discussion with the city's major employers to identify and understand their needs regarding workforce, services and quality of life assets needed for retention in the city.

STRATEGY ED-6

Revise existing zoning regulations for areas close to centers of activity to permit higher densities, allow for a mixture of uses, and establish design guidelines for all major commercial areas in the city.

STRATEGY ED-7

Investigate the formation of Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDDs) with neighboring communities to coordinate redevelopment and development efforts that benefit the city and the region.

STRATEGY ED-8

Promote workforce development efforts to ensure a sustainable pipeline of employees for the commercial, office, and industrial workers in the city.



Public Services

Public Services

The responsive and well-funded services the city provides and maintains contribute greatly to the quality of life for residents and businesses and lend to the economic success of Fairfield.



Public Works fall leaf pick up program

This section outlines existing services provided by the City of Fairfield and establishes goals, policies and implementation strategies to continue these exceptional services.

Public services provide important functions to residents and businesses of the city, such as processing development applications, repairing roads, programming parks and recreation facilities, fighting fires, providing emergency medical services, and patrolling the community to keep residents safe. As new development and redevelopment occur in Fairfield, city services must be reviewed to maintain the quality and level of service that residents and businesses enjoy and appreciate.

Public Services Profile

The City of Fairfield provides services through more than 340 full- and part-time employees. Continuing to provide a complete array of services makes the City of Fairfield competitive as a place to live, work, and shop.



What We Heard



- Reasonable taxes
- Well run public services (snow removal, brush pick up). Must continue exceptional services
- Safe community to live in
- Continued enforcement of property maintenance code
- Great parks and recreation, but consider additional amenities such as splash pads
- Provide municipal broadband/ Wi-Fi Internet access in public spaces
- Bury or consolidate utility lines on Route 4



Development Services

The Development Services Department incorporates building, zoning, code enforcement, economic development, flood zone administration, and planning. This department is responsible for long-range planning, new business attraction, plan review and permitting, and building and zoning code enforcement. The department is also responsible for the development of this planning document, *Fairfield Forward*, to be used as a framework for development and redevelopment in the city.

In 2018, the Development Services Department was responsible for reviewing and issuing permits for more than \$60 million in new building investment, including new industrial projects, downtown development, and redevelopment on Route 4.



Public Works

The City of Fairfield Public Works Department is accredited by the American Public Works Association (APWA). This department is responsible for the public infrastructure of the city, including the planning,

design, maintenance and repair of streets, sidewalks, and the storm water system as well as seasonal programs such as brush collection, snow removal and street sweeping. The Public Works Department maintains more than 400 lane miles of roadway, and in 2018 resurfaced 26 miles of streets, replaced 16,197 lineal feet of curb, and picked up 7,855 cubic yards of brush. Upcoming infrastructure projects are identified in the Transportation Chapter of this plan.



Stormwater Management and Drainage

Fairfield requires on-site detention/retention facilities for all new development and redevelopment projects that increase the amount of impervious surface. City ordinances require that the construction of these facilities reduce a 100-year post-development peak flow rate from new development to a two-year pre-developed level.

The storm water quality benefits of the detention/retention facilities include the reduction of peak flows, which can erode stream channels, and the ability to remove pollutants from retention ponds. The city maintains two regional detention basins and 42 residential basins for non-routine maintenance and repair. As new development occurs, these drainage systems must continually be monitored for function and capacity.



Public Works repairing city road



Public Utilities

A strong and reliable network of utilities is essential for a high quality of life for residents and businesses. Maintenance and ownership of these utilities allows the city to directly control the water and wastewater services it provides to the community.

The city provides sanitary sewer and potable drinking water in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations. Due to the aging infrastructure, the City of Fairfield faces the continuing challenge of comprehensively rehabilitating and repairing the existing systems.

2018 UTILITY SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS



2 billion gallons of drinking water treated

2 billion gallons of wastewater treated

350 miles of water and sanitary sewer lines maintained



Public Water Facilities and Service

The City of Fairfield's water system serves city residents and businesses as well as limited areas in adjoining West Chester Township and the City of Hamilton. The city has reciprocity with both the City of Hamilton and Butler County, separately, via long-term, intergovernmental cooperation agreements. The city does not have any plans to expand service into these areas due to the financial impacts associated with installing the water lines.

The City of Fairfield draws its water supply from the Great Miami Buried Valley Aquifer. To ensure water quality and protection, the aquifer is monitored by the Hamilton to New Baltimore Ground Water Consortium, a multi-jurisdictional body that ensures the quality of the groundwater in the regional aquifer.

The city maintains a comprehensive water modeling program for the water distribution system to evaluate its performance. The city's distribution system sends water through a network of mains and service lines, including nearly 175 miles of water main, 2,288 fire hydrants, and 2,394 main valves. Three booster stations are used to help move water at adequate pressure through the city to consumers. The city's water storage capacity is seven million gallons of water located in five water tanks located at high points throughout the community.

The city's water treatment plant is designed to pump raw water from wells and to produce a consistently high quality of finished water. The average daily production is 5.2 million gallons. The plant has a design capacity of nine million gallons per day, which means it should not be necessary to perform any major expansions.

The focus of Fairfield's water system is and will continue to be high quality water through maintenance and replacement of existing aging water lines. The city is taking a proactive approach to this replacement via a critical needs assessment. This is evident with the city planning to spend over \$3 million to improve the system in 2019.



City water tower on Winton Road



Fairfield Wastewater Treatment Plant on Groh Lane

Public Wastewater Facilities and Service

Fairfield's wastewater system serves city residents and businesses as well as limited areas in surrounding jurisdictions, including the City of Hamilton and West Chester Township. Businesses located east of State Route Bypass 4 in the industrial section of Fairfield receive wastewater treatment service from Butler County, but the responsibility of the repair, maintenance, and replacement of the collection system is the responsibility of Fairfield. Many of the more than 170 miles of sanitary sewer lines in the city are approaching 50 years in age. Because of this, there is a continued need for ongoing maintenance, repair, or replacement.

The city maintains a comprehensive sewer modeling program for the wastewater collection system, which allows the city to evaluate the performance of the collection system and identify potential problem areas. This also allows the city to determine the potential impact of new connections and additional sources of wastewater discharge. Because of this, the city is able to carefully evaluate the investment of capital resources to ensure that funding is directed in an effective and efficient manner.

In 2012, the city undertook an engineering study to evaluate sewer infrastructure options for the Gray Road area that contains approximately 500 undeveloped and unsewered acres. This study evaluated the impact of potential sewage flows from this area generated by new residential development of 1/2-acre sized lots. It determined that the existing wastewater system and plant had enough capacity to serve the area with only minor upgrades as necessary.

In order to maintain the city's aging sanitary sewer infrastructure and provide quality and reliable service, the city has invested more than \$1.2 million in major upgrades in 2019.



Fire Department

The Fire Department is responsible for fire prevention and education, investigation and responding to fire and emergency medical needs for businesses and residences throughout the city. The department is staffed 24 hours a day by more than 80 full- and part-time firefighters, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics located in three stations throughout the city. The department employs state of the art equipment including quint and pumper trucks, rescue and advance life support units, and a mobile command center to ensure the safety and welfare of the city. The Fire Department uses a Fire Training Complex on Groh Lane for year round safety exercises. The department is funded through property tax millage and the city's Capital Improvement Fund. Federal grants, such as the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (S.A.F.E.R.) have also allowed the department to fund a number of full-time firefighter/paramedic positions.



Police Department

The City of Fairfield Police Department is a fully accredited law enforcement agency, receiving the award of Advanced Accreditation with Excellence from the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). Aside from 24 hour a day enforcement and the investigation of criminal activity, the Police Department offers a variety of services that inform, educate and protect the residents and businesses of the city through more than 60 officers and approximately 30 support staff. These services include: Citizen Police Academy, CodeRed Emergency Network, crime prevention education, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E), Juvenile Diversion Program, Neighborhood Watch Program, and animal control.

2018 FIRE DEPARTMENT BY THE NUMBERS



INSPECTIONS: 1,752



FIRE CALLS: 1,002

Structure fires, vehicle fires, grass fires, alarm activations, CO runs, smoke detector activations, roadway flushes, etc.



EMS CALLS: 5,453

4,254 resulted in transport to a hospital

TOTAL CALLS: 6,455

2018 POLICE CALLS BY THE NUMBERS



911 Calls - 25,568

Arrests - 3,738

Business Checks - 932

Calls for Service - 29,940

Incident Reports - 49,761

Neighborhood Patrols - 2,771

Non-Emergency Calls - 52,073

OVI Arrests - 235

School Checks - 1,002

Traffic Crashes - 2,248

Traffic Stops - 6,981

Vacation Home Checks - 2,144



Municipal Court

Fairfield Municipal Court is governed by Chapter 1901 of the Ohio Revised Code. The territorial jurisdiction encompasses the Fairfield city limits. The Court hears all traffic and misdemeanor criminal cases, as well as initial appearances, and preliminary hearings for felony cases. Civil cases in which the amount in controversy does not exceed \$15,000, and small claims cases with claims of \$6,000 or less are also heard by the Court. Persons convicted and sentenced to jail are incarcerated in the Butler County Jail in Hamilton, Ohio. The Court also continues to explore alternatives to incarceration, such as community service, community control, Treatment Alternative Court and a Sobriety, Treatment, Accountability and Recovery (STAR) Program.



Public Schools

A strong public school system is important to the stability and well being of any community. As such, a strong relationship between the city and school district is imperative.

The city is served by the Fairfield City School District, which also serves Fairfield Township. The district provides primary and secondary education to more than

10,000 students in 11 schools in both the city and township. Sixty seven percent of students in the district reside in the city, but that trend is changing as enrollment is increasing from Fairfield Township,



New Fairfield Freshman School constructed in 2018



Fairfield Municipal Court processed 9,203 criminal, traffic, civil, and small claims cases in 2018.

3,700 traffic

4,065 criminal

1,438 civil and small claims

as new housing continues to be built. The district has already accounted for this growth by restructuring the school buildings and constructing three new schools. It is anticipated that any future construction will likely occur in the township.

Stakeholder interviews with the school district identified sidewalks and better connectivity for their students as a high priority. Lighting along routes to schools and around the schools is another important priority for the district.

Public Services Goals and Policies

GOAL PS 1 Continue to provide comprehensive, efficient, high-quality, cost effective public services and facilities.

- **Policy 1.1** Maximize the use of existing community services and facilities by promoting redevelopment, and infill in areas where public services and facilities currently exist, thereby reducing costs.
- **Policy 1.2** Ensure that levels of service are maintained for new and existing development by correcting existing deficiencies, and/or by requiring new development to provide infrastructure upgrades, as necessary.
- **Policy 1.3** Reduce stormwater run-off by requiring “green” on-site stormwater retention/detention for new development (e.g. bio swale, rain garden).
- **Policy 1.4** Consider the application of a variety of financing mechanisms to generate funds to pay for public facilities, services and infrastructure.
- **Policy 1.5** Continue to maintain and reinvest in the city’s infrastructure systems to provide exceptional services to both current and future users.

GOAL PS 2 Ensure that facilities and services provided by the city are adapting to meet the changing needs of the resident population of the city.

- **Policy 2.1** Ensure that all city buildings and rights-of-way facilities comply with the Americans With Disabilities Acts (ADA).
- **Policy 2.2** Continue advancement of multi-cultural and inclusive arts and entertainment activities to match the demographic diversity of the city.
- **Policy 2.3** Continue to provide avenues of communication with all residents, and offer opportunities for engagement.

GOAL PS 3 Use public-private partnerships and community organizations to advance projects that have a positive community impact and enhance quality of life.



National Night Out with Fairfield Police, an annual community-building campaign promoting police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie

Implementation Strategies - Public Services



STRATEGY PS-1

Review all city codes and standards regarding public facilities and services to ensure they are adequate and representative of the desired future development for the city. This includes the application of green infrastructure (e.g. pervious pavement, pavers, or bioswales), and identifying requirements that require developers to assist financially for the cost of improvements to ensure that public services are not degraded because of new development.

STRATEGY PS-2

Establish a Transition Plan to ensure compliance with the ADA. Monitor the implementation of the Transition Plan and update periodically as needed.

STRATEGY PS-3

Conduct periodic water and sewer rate studies to ensure that the maintenance of adequate system capacities for future developments is achievable.



Parks, Recreation and Open Space

The Parks and Recreation Department has continued to earn accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

The Parks and Recreation Department provides a variety of services and programming through a system of parks, facilities, trails, and special events. The city has a *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* that is used to guide decisions and funding for the department. The plan is a supplement to *Fairfield Forward* and is proposed to be updated in the near future. Refer to the *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* for detailed information.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently maintains and operates a portfolio of more than 850 acres of active and passive land in the city, including mini-parks, neighborhood and community parks,

regional parks and nature preserves. Facilities include an aquatic center, Community Arts Center, golf courses, ball fields, a skate park, and tennis courts.

The department partners with many local and regional agencies and organizations, including public, private and non-profit, to provide a comprehensive parks and recreation programs for all. Partner organizations include the Fairfield City School District, the Great Miami Valley YMCA, Joe Nuxhall Miracle League Fields, and Metroparks of Butler County. In 2019, the city constructed a 6.5-acre dog park adjacent to the Great Miami River. A future trailhead for the Great Miami River Trail is also a part of this project. This is just one component of the newly expanded Marsh Park.



Figure 8-1. Dog Park/Trailhead Concept Plan



Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PRO) Goals and Policies

GOAL PRO 1 Provide a variety of community open spaces, parks and recreational opportunities for programming, including active and passive recreation for all ages and abilities.

- **Policy 1.1** Identify deficiencies and continue the development of the city's park and recreation system, including maintenance, expansion and enhancements as needed.
- **Policy 1.2** Ensure convenient access to parks, open spaces and recreation opportunities through multiple modes of access (motor vehicle, bicycle path/trail, and sidewalk) and connectivity between parks.
- **Policy 1.3** Coordinate public and private resources to understand and meet the programming, open space and recreational needs of the city, and to avoid duplication of services.
- **Policy 1.4** Encourage new development to plan for and incorporate public gathering spaces and pocket parks in connection with the *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan*.
- **Policy 1.5** Study the feasibility of developing Marsh Park as a water-based recreational venue, including access along the Great Miami River.
- **Policy 1.6** Identify locations within the park system for new and expanded trails for bicycling, hiking and walking and partner with key agencies to assist in funding opportunities.

GOAL PRO 2 Protect existing natural areas, environmentally sensitive lands and watersheds.

- **Policy 2.1** Identify and inventory lands suitable for conservation and protection, and establish mechanisms to restrict or prevent development on those lands (purchase of land, conservation easements).



Top: Summer Concert Series Groovin' on the Green
Bottom: Fairfield Cyclocross at Harbin Park

Implementation Strategies - Parks, Recreation and Open Space



STRATEGY PRO-1

Update the Parks and Recreation Department's 5-year Strategic Plan (2016) to align it with the *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (2014).

STRATEGY PRO-2

Revisit and update the city's 10-year *Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan* (2014) to ensure that the needs and recommendations continue to be valid; that natural and environmentally sensitive lands are protected; and that trails and paths that provide recreation and connectivity are adequately planned.

STRATEGY PRO-3

Establish requirements for new residential, commercial or mixed-use development to dedicate land for useable public open spaces, pocket parks or gathering spaces.

STRATEGY PRO-4

Review and ensure that the proper zoning regulations are in place, or will be developed, to properly protect significant natural features.



Intergovernmental Coordination

Municipal governments work best when efforts are coordinated with surrounding jurisdictions. The coordination and sharing of land use, transportation, and public infrastructure information creates relationships that are mutual and beneficial.

Benefits of intergovernmental coordination include:

Interlocal agreements and regional partnerships for expanded service capacity and capability;

Improved planning and growth management of new development and redevelopment projects;

Adequate public facilities and services that ensure transportation, public utilities, and public services are able to meeting existing and increased service demands;

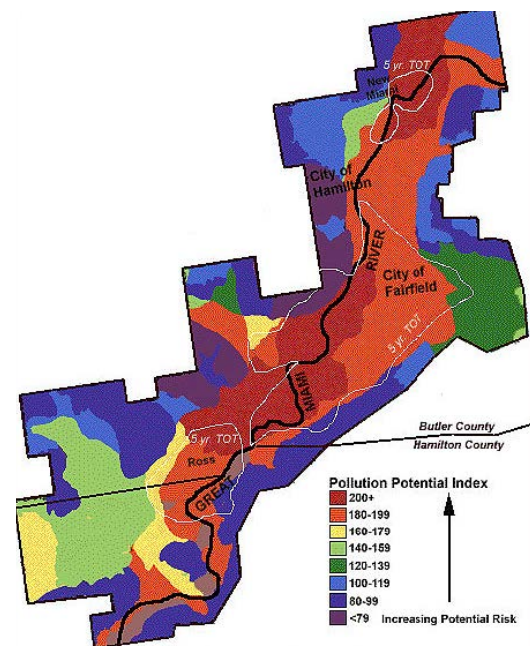
Coordinating land use to provide adequate buffers between potentially incompatible land uses; and

Balancing natural habitats, passive open spaces, and active recreation areas.

Intergovernmental Coordination (IC) Goals and Policies

GOAL IC 1 Coordinate this comprehensive plan with the plans of adjacent communities, Butler County, Fairfield City School District and the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) as well as collaborate with regional agencies and non-profit organizations to further achieve shared goals.

- **Policy 1.1** Coordinate local planning activities with regional planning activities for land use, transportation, utilities and recreation for the purposes of shared services, connectivity and economic prosperity.
- **Policy 1.2** Continue the city's commitment to source water protection and preservation of the Great Miami Buried Valley Aquifer through membership in the Hamilton to New Baltimore Groundwater Consortium.



Map of the region identifying potential for groundwater pollution



Sustainability



Sustainability

Sustainability links the issues of environment, economy and social equity together. An action or decision in any one of these areas will have consequences on the others, whether anticipated or not. Sustainable actions are those that support, maintain, conserve, and enhance the environmental, economic, and social systems on which we depend.

This chapter is a brief overview of ways to approach sustainability in the City of Fairfield. The city will continue to develop a more comprehensive sustainability plan that provides policies and strategies for going green and long-term fiscal health, among other topics important to the city.

Sustainability is defined as the use, development and protection of all our resources in a manner that does not deplete them. A good sustainability plan enables the residents of Fairfield to meet their current needs and maintain a fulfilling quality of life without compromising or foregoing the ability of the opportunity for future residents to do the same.

What We Heard



- Continue to implement the green sustainability efforts as outlined in the *2009 Comprehensive Plan*
- Permit green energy (solar, aggregated electricity)
- Provide informational materials to residents for guidance on sustainability
- Make sure the city is environmentally sustainable
- Provide more opportunities for community gardens

Fairfield's quality of life depends on the preservation and enhancement of its environment. As such, the city continues to recognize the sensitive interface between the natural and built environments. Fairfield should become a leader in creating a healthy environment for all and reducing energy consumption on public and private property.

Achieving sustainability may demand substantial departure from past and present actions as well as a fundamental commitment to conserving finite resources.

City Initiatives

Fairfield actively supports sustainability and produces cleaner air by reducing its carbon footprint:

- ✓ Curbside Residential Recycling Program
- ✓ Tree City USA
- ✓ Environmental Commission
- ✓ Street lights replaced with LED lighting systems
- ✓ Greenroad Rating System
Attained Bronze Level for Route 4, Holden Boulevard, and South Gilmore Road Improvement Project
- ✓ Hamilton to New Baltimore Ground Water Consortium Member
- ✓ Installation of efficient lighting and mechanical systems in city buildings
- ✓ Wind turbine used to power pond aeration system at Huffman Park
- ✓ Solar powered trash compactors at city parks
- ✓ Community gardens at Huffman Park



The following topics are briefly discussed in this chapter and recommended for further detailed study in a comprehensive Sustainability Plan for the city.

1 Air Quality and Climate Change

2 Community Health and Safety

3 Energy Conservation and Efficiency

4 Going Green

5 Water Quality



Sustainability Goals and Policies

GOAL S-1 Reduce the city's consumption of energy and fossil fuels.

- **Policy 1.1** Promote energy efficient systems and explore innovative energy technologies to reduce dependency on non-renewable energy at city-owned properties.
- **Policy 1.2** Encourage the preservation of existing mature trees and the planting of new diverse and native tree species on both public and private property.
- **Policy 1.3** Encourage sustainable practices in the design, construction and maintenance of both public and private buildings and infrastructure.
- **Policy 1.4** Apply sustainable initiatives for transportation infrastructure projects that support the Greenroads Rating System, where applicable.



Greenroads Award presented to city



Air Quality and Climate Change

Air quality can impact the health, economy and environment of any community.

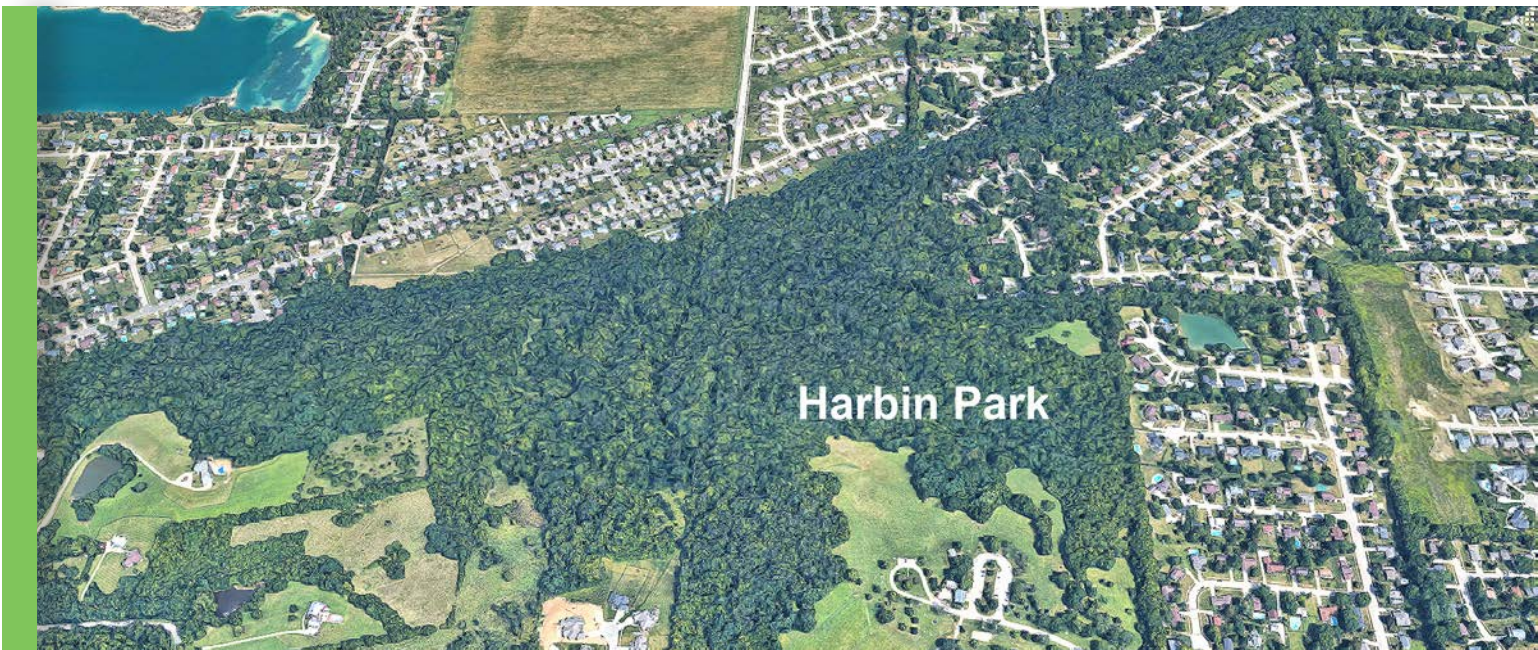
Air pollution is composed of a vast assortment of gases and particulates that can be grouped into three major categories: particulate matter, carbon monoxide and ozone. When these levels exceed thresholds set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the area is classified as a non-attainment area and must enact measures to lower the levels. The greater Cincinnati area, in which Fairfield is located, has been designated as a marginal non-attainment area for ozone.

As a member of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), Fairfield continues to support and promote efforts to improve air quality in the region through programs such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program, which provides funding for projects that demonstrate measurable reductions in vehicle emissions.

By providing alternative, non-motorized modes of transportation, including a system of connected sidewalks, trails and bike paths, motor vehicle trips can be reduced, thereby reducing vehicle pollution.

The temperature of the micro-climate can be reduced by requiring that more trees and landscaping be preserved or planted on both public and private property during development and redevelopment. Destroying mature trees absorbs large quantities of greenhouse gases, providing for cleaner air. The destruction of mature trees and replacing them with smaller trees provides lower carbon dioxide absorption, leading to less clean air and, as a result, potential respiratory health issues for residents.

The City of Fairfield continues to support the Fairfield Environmental Commission, whose main purpose is to promote environmental stewardship. The commission is responsible for educating the public about the ecological, economic, and aesthetic benefits of forests.



Woodland preservation in Harbin Park



Community Health and Safety



Top and Bottom: Farmer's market booths at Village Green

Community health covers many aspects of a city, including active living and access to healthy foods. These two elements lead to a higher quality of life for both residents and those employed in the city. They are also key components to sustainable living.

Better community health can be accomplished by providing safe accessibility to all residents and encouraging less reliance on motorized transportation. Two mechanisms for encouraging active lifestyles in any city are: 1) requiring pedestrian and bicycle connectivity between developments, especially schools, that is safe and convenient; and 2) providing recreational facilities that are easily accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Better community health can also be fostered through ensuring that residents have access to a variety of healthy food options. Community gardens allow residents to come together to grow fresh fruits and vegetables in close proximity to their homes while also providing social and healthy food benefits. The city operates a year-round farmer's market at Village Green, providing an excellent opportunity for residents to purchase fresh, locally grown produce.

The city is also encouraging community health by expanding the trails and sidewalk system throughout Fairfield to provide an alternative to motor vehicles. By connecting parks, schools, and other nonresidential uses to neighborhoods, the number of motor vehicle trips can be reduced and better health can be achieved through biking and walking.



Energy Conservation and Efficiency

The rising cost of energy production, together with diminishing fossil fuel sources (non-renewable resources) requires cities to consider conserving and searching for alternative energy resources. Alternative energy sources, including solar energy, geothermal, and biomass technology, should be encouraged in new development and redevelopment projects. Figure 9-1 is an example of a tool that both the city and residents can use to determine optimal locations for capturing solar energy on their rooftops.

Wind power, while on the rise across the country with better technology, is still not a viable option for Fairfield residents as the city is not located in a region suitable for wind energy. Considering this, the city should continue to take a proactive approach to energy conservation through other various methods, such as:

- Replacing inefficient public street lighting with energy-efficient LED bulbs
- Acquiring hybrid, electric, and other energy-efficient vehicles for city use
- Investigating the use of solar panels at public facilities
- Expanding sidewalk and bicycle path opportunities to reduce reliance on motor vehicles
- Investigating electric vehicle charging stations



Electric vehicle charging stations



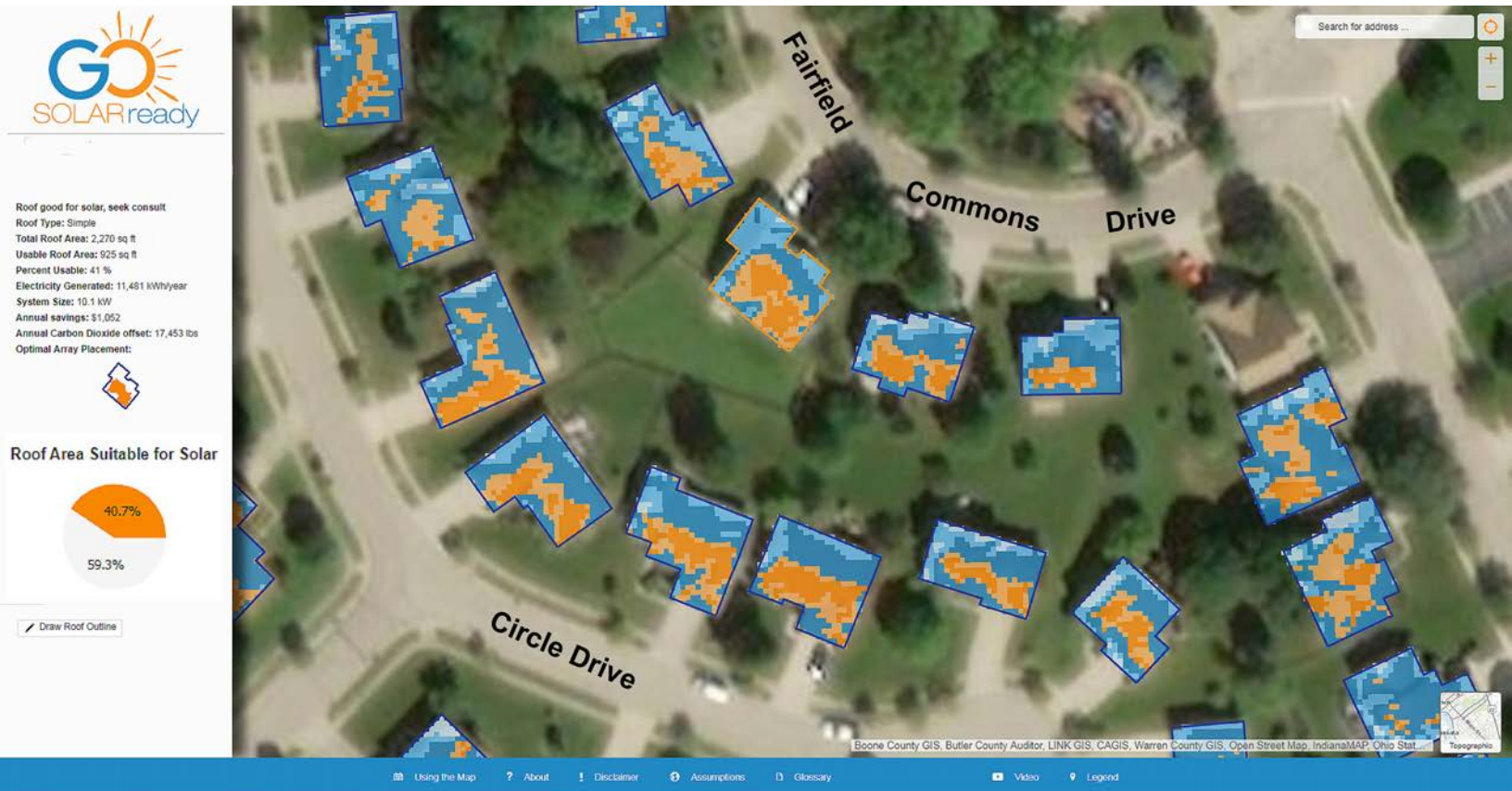
Going Green Through LEED

The planning, construction and maintenance of sites and buildings have an extraordinary effect on environmental resources. Facility construction requires significant quantities of water, wood and energy. In addition, buildings can be a significant source of interior and exterior urban air quality problems and can generate large quantities of waste. A green building is one that is designed, constructed, renovated and maintained in an ecological and resource efficient manner. They provide opportunities, not only for conservation and efficient use of resources, but also create healthier structures and long-term cost savings. Organizations such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED), developed by the U.S. Green Building Council, include rating systems for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of environmentally responsible buildings and developments through site design. In addition, it provides building owners and operators with the tools needed to have an immediate and measurable impact on their building's performance.

LEED promotes a whole-building approach to sustainability by recognizing performance in five key areas of human and environmental health:

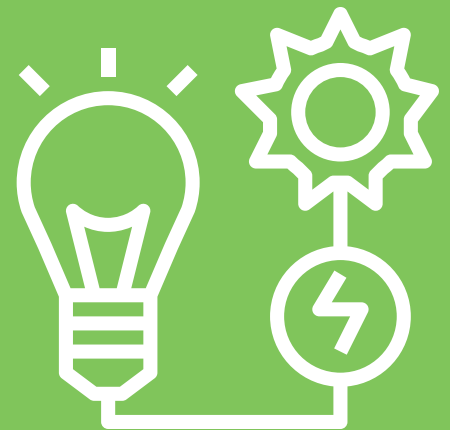
- 1 Sustainable site development
- 2 Water savings
- 3 Energy efficiency
- 4 Material selection
- 5 Indoor environmental quality

Figure 9-1. Solar Positioning for Energy Sustainability



SOLAR ENERGY READINESS

The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) has developed a solar energy readiness program to assist businesses and homeowners on the installation of rooftop solar systems. The graphic above is an interactive online solar readiness map that shows the solar potential of homes in Fairfield (www.solar.oki.org).



Some examples of LEED practices and energy efficiency are: green roofs, captured rain water for landscape irrigation, solar energy to offset building energy costs, recycled building materials and building design that maximizes interior day lighting. The city should review codes and regulations to encourage LEED design and investigate incentives for developers who use LEED in their design.

Other policies promoting the use of green building principles and practices include the preservation of existing structures, the reuse and recycling of materials from deconstructed buildings, water and energy conservation, and the use of sustainable materials. Each of these efforts can reduce overall consumption of resources and should be encouraged in city codes and regulations.

Going green also includes encouraging green site improvements. The city should investigate incentives for developers who use green site principles in their design including the use of rain barrels, rain gardens, bioswales, xeriscape installation, and permeable pavement and pavers.



Earth Day in Fairfield with Mayor Steve Miller, Council Member Tim Abbott, and Duke Energy employees at Huffman Park



Water Quality

Public Drinking Water

As mentioned in the Public Services chapter, Fairfield receives its drinking water from an aquifer system that spans the southwest and central portions of the state. The aquifer is designated as a sole source under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act signifying a protection status as a valued natural resource. To ensure water quality and protection, the aquifer is monitored by the Hamilton to New Baltimore Ground Water Consortium.

In addition, the city, in partnership with the Consortium, has developed a Source Water Protection Program to help safeguard the aquifer from contaminants. The program designates protection zones around public wells to prevent, detect and

remediate groundwater contamination. Development in these zones is regulated and restrictions are placed on new businesses that have a high pollution risk potential. If contaminated, groundwater can remain unusable for many years.

Stormwater Pollution

When it rains, thousands of gallons of water enter Fairfield's storm sewer system. As runoff flows across lawns, driveways, parking lots and streets, it collects pollutants such as motor oil, pesticides, fertilizers, litter and other wastes. Since stormwater is naturally channeled to local waterways, and eventually into the groundwater, there is no opportunity for treatment to remove pollution. If left unmanaged, this runoff can change water quality.

Fairfield's Storm Water Quality Management Plan is designed to reduce the pollution created by stormwater runoff. It follows and meets the guidelines of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program. The program requires local communities to institute control measures and implement "best management practices" to reduce stormwater pollution in order to improve the water quality of streams, lakes and other surface waters.

Efforts by the city to help manage stormwater quality include sweeping streets, controlling erosion at construction sites, and inspecting the storm sewer system to eliminate potential pollution sources.



Implementation Strategies - Sustainability

STRATEGY S-1

Develop a green initiative and sustainability plan to reduce the impact of the built environment.

STRATEGY S-2

Revise the zoning code, as applicable, to allow alternative energy technology and to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.

STRATEGY S-3

Revise the zoning code, as applicable, to require landscaping and trees on private property as part of development/redevelopment approval.

STRATEGY S-4

Work with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Arbor Day Foundation to establish standards and guidelines for tree planting in the city.

STRATEGY S-5

Seek to achieve Greenroads certification status for eligible transportation projects. For all other projects, use Greenroads methodology as much as practical for producing sustainable and maintainable improvements.

Fairfield Recycling Program

The city offers a residential curbside recycling program through Rumpke. Large recycling carts are available through the city's website or Utility Billing Office to reduce the amount of materials entering the waste stream and landfills and to conserve more natural resources.





Appendix



A - Land Use

The following pages serve to identify secondary information related to land use as referenced in the plan.

Land Use Analysis – 2010 & 2018¹

Land Use Category	2010		2018		Change
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres
Residential					
One Family	4,197	37.33%	4,567	37.06%	+370
Two Family	54	0.48%	48	0.38%	-6
Multi-Family	695	6.18%	692	5.62%	-3
Mobile Home	38	0.33%	41	0.33%	+3
Total Residential	4,984	44%	5,348	43%	+364
Commercial					
Town Center	125	1.10%	122	0.99%	-3
Neighborhood	55	0.48%	62	0.50%	+7
Highway	610	5.42%	664	5.40%	+54
Office	202	1.79%	150	1.22%	-52
Total Commercial	992	9%	998	8%	+6
Industrial					
Light	1,195	10.63%	1,252	10.16%	+57
Heavy	348	3.09%	322	2.61%	-26
Total Industrial	1,543	14%	1,574	13%	+31
Public					
Semi-Public	511	4.55%	467	3.79%	-44
Storm Drainage Reserve	45	0.40%	45	0.37%	0
Utilities	105	0.94%	468	3.80%	363
Right-of-Way	1,824	16.22%	442	3.59%	-1,382
Total Public	2,485	22%	1,422	12%	-1,063
Recreation					
Parks	654	5.81%	795	6.45%	+141
Open Space	587	5.21%	583	4.73%	-4
Total Recreation	1,241	11%	1,378	11%	+137
Undeveloped Total²	-	-	1,602	13%	
Total Acreage	11,244	100%	12,323	100%	+1,079
Undeveloped Land	2,069	16%			

¹ Numbers may differ based on different ways of classification of uses or more precise GIS calculations.

² Undeveloped in 2018 includes developable open space not reserved for parks and agricultural lands.

Undeveloped Land by Zoning – 2010 & 2018¹

Land Use Category	Zone	2010		2018		Change 2010- 2018
		Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent	Acres
Agriculture	A-1	545.83	26.38%	417	26%	-128.83
Total Agriculture		545.83	26.38%	417	26%	-128.83
Residential						
	R-0	38.78	1.87%	32.61	2.04%	-6.17
	R-0 PUD	3.24	<1%	3.06	0.19%	-0.18
	R-1	59.81	2.89%	39.58	2.47%	-20.23
	R-2	0.85	<1%	3.67	0.23%	2.82
	R-3	6.12	<1%	5.97	0.37%	-0.15
	R-3 PUD	1	<1%	11.2	0.70%	10.20
	R-4	0.97	<1%	0	0.00%	-0.97
Total Residential		110.77	5.35%	96	6%	-14.68
Commercial						
	C-1	26.58	1.28%	10.98	0.69%	-15.60
	C-2	3.57	<1%	1.71	0.11%	-1.86
	C-2 PUD	8.01	<1%	5.28	0.33%	-2.73
	C-3	37.94	1.83%	14.51	0.91%	-23.43
	C-3A	16.26	<1%	8.87	0.55%	-7.39
	C-4	5.53	<1%	0.00	0.00%	-5.53
	B-1	60.71	2.93%	20.55	1.28%	-40.16
	D-1	25.20	1.22%	3.82	0.24%	-21.38
	D-1 PUD	1.63	<1%	0	0.00%	-1.63
	ST	4.31	<1%	0	0.00%	-4.31
	SE	0	0%	0	0.00%	0
Total Commercial		189.74	9.30%	66	10%	-124.02
Industrial						
	M-1	98.61	4.76%	0	0.00%	-98.61
	M-2	959.53	46.37%	922.54	57.59%	-36.99
Total Industrial		1,058.14	51.13%	923	58%	-135.60
PUD						
	PUD	162.20	7.84%	100.44	6%	-61.76
Total PUD		162.20	7.84%	100	6%	-61.76
Total Undeveloped						
		2,066	100%	1602	100%	-464

¹ Numbers may differ based on different ways of classification of uses or more precise GIS calculations and changes in zoning.





B - Housing

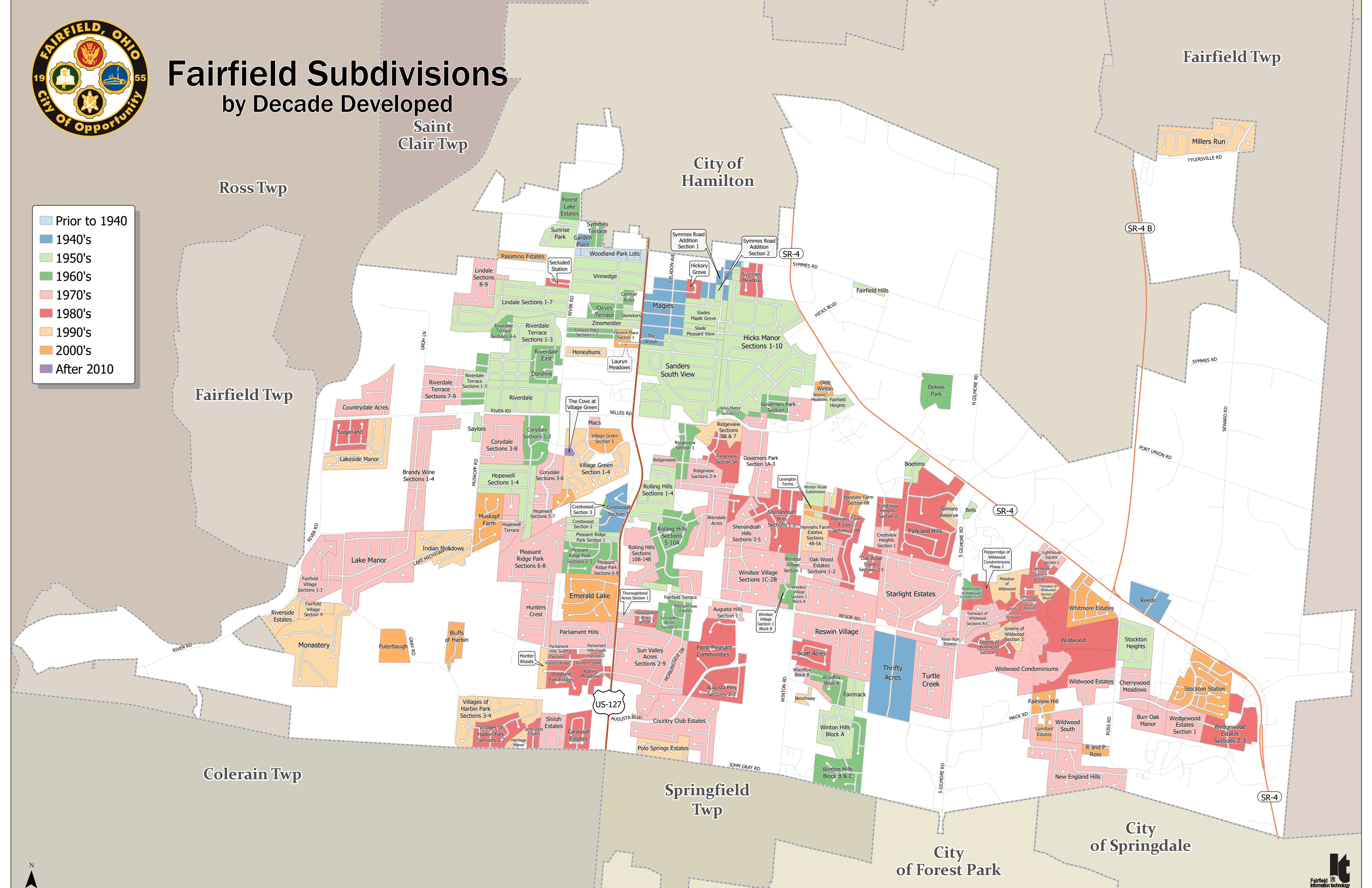
The following pages serve to identify secondary information related to housing as referenced in the plan.

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Fairfield Subdivisions by Decade Developed

- Prior to 1940
- 1940's
- 1950's
- 1960's
- 1970's
- 1980's
- 1990's
- 2000's
- After 2010



Fairfield Twp

Saint Clair Twp

City of Hamilton

Ross Twp

Fairfield Twp

Colerain Twp

Springfield Twp

City of Forest Park

City of Springdale



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C- Transportation Plan

The following pages serve to identify secondary information related to transportation as referenced in the plan.



Thoroughfare Plan

Purpose

The purpose of the Thoroughfare Plan is to establish locations and minimum standards for the future street network within the city. It is a planning tool used to establish future rights-of-way and plan the construction of new roads through the development process. It will also serve to guide public and elected officials in the development of future road improvement projects.

Past Thoroughfare Plans

The 1966 Plan was the first officially adopted thoroughfare plan for the city and created the roadway layout for many of the streets that exist today. The two major issues addressed in the plan were constructing additional north-south roads for inter-city traffic and diverting through east-west traffic around residential neighborhoods.

The 1977 Plan promoted the Loop Traffic Flow concept, to allow easy traffic flow inside the city boundaries. The 1992 Plan continued to promote the Loop Traffic Flow concept with the inception of the Town Center Loop Road. It also proposed frontage roads on Route 4 with the 1990 Service Drive Plan and the extension of Symmes Road east through West Chester Township to I-275.

The 2006 Plan was a major overhaul from past plans in that it upgraded and downgraded various roadway classifications to more accurately represent existing conditions and addressed the impact of future widening of Route 4 on adjacent businesses.

This current plan is validation of the 2006 Plan and moving forward the best practices of that planning effort to ensure safety and efficiency of all thoroughfares in Fairfield.

THOROUGHFARE OBJECTIVES

The thoroughfare system in Fairfield is classified and maintained by the City of Fairfield through the official Thoroughfare Plan. There are **five primary objectives** for the Thoroughfare Plan for the city:

- 1 The Thoroughfare Plan shall be an integral part of the development of the City of Fairfield.
- 2 The Thoroughfare Plan is a guide for the orderly development of thoroughfares through undeveloped areas and assures the proper extension and connection of existing thoroughfares. The plan is meant to be a plan only and may be adjusted to meet prevailing conditions.
- 3 The Thoroughfare Plan shall provide direct connection to major regional highways surrounding the city.
- 4 The Thoroughfare Plan shall be enacted when development occurs on vacant parcels, major expansions and when parcels get redeveloped. For the purposes of this plan, redevelopment is defined as substantial demolition (greater than 50%) of existing structures and rebuilding for a new use.
- 5 Thoroughfare Plan should be reviewed approximately every five years so that transportation and market condition impacts can be evaluated upon the various thoroughfares in the city.

Street Classifications

Thoroughfares in the city have been divided into five primary categories of functional classification: Regional Thoroughfares, Primary Thoroughfares, Secondary Thoroughfares, Collector Streets and Local Streets. Configuration of local streets and their connections to the thoroughfare system will continue to be decided by the Planning Commission at the time of improvement. Refer to the Fairfield Subdivision Regulations for the definitions and standards of local streets.

1. Regional Thoroughfares

Regional Thoroughfares are major connectors that link Fairfield with other population centers in the southwest portion of the state. The movement of traffic is the primary function of a Regional Thoroughfare and is generally the highest traffic volume corridor. The standards for these thoroughfares shall generally conform to Types D or E (Refer to Table 7-1 on page C-9).

A. State Route 4

1. State Route 4 shall be maintained along its present alignment from the north corporation line to the south corporation line. It shall maintain its existing right-of-way in accordance with the Type E standard (See Table 7.1). The road will receive increased use as a traffic collector for fronting business developments and intersecting thoroughfares, and will continue to act as a connector to the City of Hamilton and 1-275.
2. State Route 4 should continue to be monitored to evaluate traffic flow, accidents and points of congestion. If the various analyses present conditions of significant increases in accidents, traffic volumes or traffic congestion, that particular segment of the roadway should be evaluated for improvement options including, but not limited to, speed limit, traffic signal timing, right turn lanes, and access control measures.

3. The city operates a Central Traffic Signal System which encompasses all traffic signals throughout the city. This system operates via high-speed internet service using fiber optic cable to provide faster and more reliable communications as well as the ability to obtain live video fees for more than 40 intersections.
4. The city has developed the Route 4 Service Drive Plan which is a graphic representation of State Route 4 identifying the locations of existing and proposed service drives. A service drive is a minor street which runs parallel and adjacent to a thoroughfare providing access to abutting properties and restricts access to the thoroughfare. The goal of the Plan is to develop and connect sections of the service drives as parcels of land develop or redevelop.

B. State Route 4 Bypass

The State Route 4 Bypass shall be maintained along its present alignment from its intersection with State Route 4 to the north corporation line. This road provides access from Fairfield to the northern portions of Butler County. The road was built by the State as a two-lane roadway with sufficient right-of-way to allow for construction of a four-lane highway which occurred in 2010 from Route 4 to Symmes Road. The Butler County Transportation Improvement District (TID) completed the widening from Symmes Road to Hamilton-Mason Road. This widening was a multi-jurisdictional project that included the Cities of Fairfield and Hamilton, Fairfield Township and Butler County.

2. Primary Thoroughfares

Primary thoroughfares are major traffic carriers within the city which carry traffic from collector and secondary thoroughfares to the regional thoroughfares. The primary function of this system of roadways is the movement of traffic, while land access is the secondary function. The standards for these thoroughfares shall generally conform to either Type C-1 or C-2 (Refer to Table 7-1 on page C-9).

A. Pleasant Avenue (US 127)

1. Pleasant Avenue serves as a major connector to I-275, City of Hamilton and Fairfield's Town Center. Strict curb cut control is necessary between Wessel Drive and John Gray Road to prevent dangerous curb cut configurations. Due to traffic congestion at AM and PM peak rush hour, it is recommended that access management be implemented in the form of service drives, where possible, to provide for better traffic flow at controlled points.
2. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) maintains US 127 south of John Gray Road. ODOT upgraded US 127 to five lanes from I-275 to Crest Road to relieve interstate access congestion and installed a center turn lane from Crest Road to Kemper Road. Coordination between Fairfield and ODOT will be necessary should ODOT plan to extend this third lane north to the corporation line at John Gray Road.
3. Better access management is desired between Wessel Drive and Patterson Drive including the potential addition of more lanes and/or reconfiguring existing lanes of traffic for better efficiency, access and safety.



Pleasant Avenue (US 127) north of Hunter Road, looking south

B. River Road (West of Nilles Road)

River Road shall be maintained along its present alignment from the western corporate boundary to Southgate Boulevard. This thoroughfare serves as a traffic collector for the western portion of the city and should be upgraded to Type C-2 Standard should the road extend to Ross Township.

C. River Road Connector (West of River Road, near Lakeside Manor subdivision)

1. River Road has the potential to serve as a connector for residential traffic to western Butler County. The River Road Connector is proposed to extend west over the Great Miami River to State Route 128, providing an east-west connection between Ross Township and the City of Fairfield as well as a connection to US 27.

2. Revisit the June 2003 “Environmental Inventory and Preliminary Transportation Options” study prepared for the Butler County TID that determined the best “east-west” route over the Great Miami River to western Butler County. Based on three options, River Road was determined to be the best option for crossing the river at that time. Revisiting this study should be undertaken to determine if this option continues to be the best option.

D. South Gilmore Road

South Gilmore Road is a main access for residential neighborhoods and commercial businesses in the city. In addition, it provides direct access to the interstate system and the central portion of Fairfield. Large businesses and commercial development exist along the corridor and contains over 140 acres of undeveloped land within the vicinity of Mack Road south to I-275. Many improvements have been made since 2006 to the corridor from Mack Road to I-275. Plans are being developed to add an additional lane on to westbound I-275 from southbound South Gilmore Road.

E. Tylersville Road

Tylersville Road shall be maintained along its present alignment. It is a major east-west connector in Butler County that receives high traffic volumes, which will continue to increase as the surrounding land develops. Any improvements made to Tylersville Road will be coordinated with the Butler County Engineer’s Office.



Top to Bottom:
1) River Road at bend
2) South Gilmore Road at Mack Road

F. Symmes Road

Symmes Road between Route 4 and North Gilmore Road is a two-lane road that serves many industrial businesses. An active CSX Rail line bisects the road near Industry Drive causing approximately 40 interruptions a day in traffic flow. An overpass at the CSX Rail line as well as widening Symmes Road to five lanes is a consideration for the future of this section of roadway.

3. Secondary Thoroughfares

Secondary Thoroughfares collect traffic from collector and local streets and direct it to primary and regional thoroughfares. These roads are similar in function to primary thoroughfares, though usually carry less traffic. The standards for these thoroughfares shall conform to Type B (Refer to Table 7-1 on page C-9).

A. Seward Road (North of Port Union Road)

Seward Road shall be improved with alignment modifications from Union Centre Boulevard to Tylersville Road and shall serve as a collector for traffic generated by existing and future industrial development having close proximity to the road. Seward Road has been upgraded to three lanes (center turn lane) from Port Union Road to just south of the Norfolk Southern Railroad line. The section of Seward Road from the Norfolk Southern Railroad line to Tylersville Road will be upgraded to three lanes contingent on future development in the area. Coordination with Fairfield Township will be required for this improvement.

B. Bobmeyer Road Extension

Bobmeyer Road shall be extended from the eastern terminus at North Gilmore Road to Route 4 By-Pass via the City of Hamilton. The extension will provide better access from the airport to the expressway. The Butler County Thoroughfare Plan continues to propose this to be a three-lane road. Since the extension is not located in Fairfield, it will not be the city's responsibility to construct it, but rather the City of Hamilton, Butler County, or a private developer. A roundabout at North Gilmore Road and Bobmeyer Road should be considered for this improvement.

4. Collector Streets

Collector streets are two-lane thoroughfares which collect traffic from residential subdivisions and direct it to larger thoroughfares. The standard for collector level streets shall conform to the Type A (Refer to Table 7-1 on page C-9).

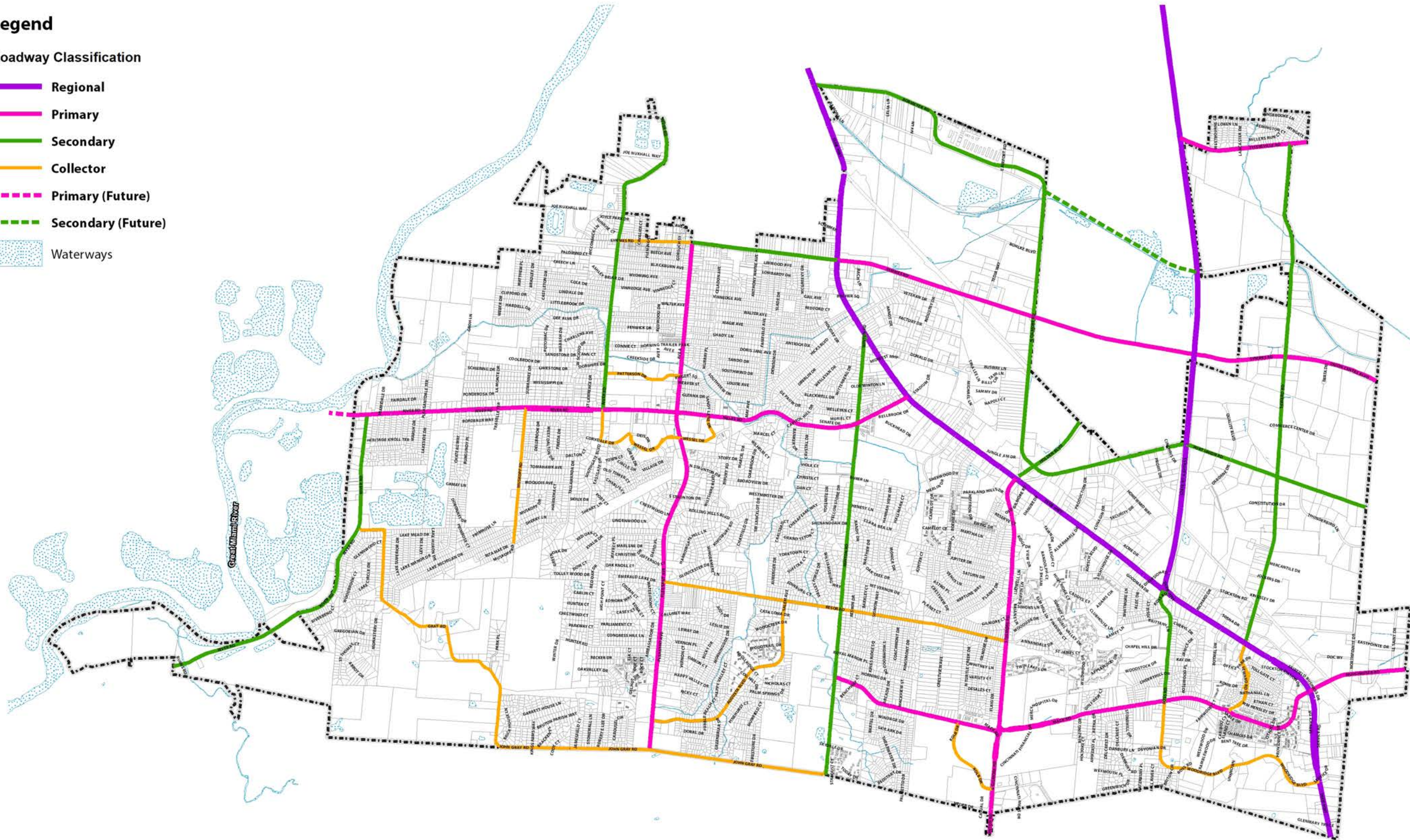


Symmes Road at CSX Rail crossing

Legend

Roadway Classification

- Regional
- Primary
- Secondary
- Collector
- - - Primary (Future)
- - - Secondary (Future)
- Waterways



Data Source: City of Fairfield GIS



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Street Standards

The street standards shown in Table 7-1 are recommended for the various types of thoroughfares in the city. These standards are meant to be a guide in the design and construction of the various roads. At the time of construction these standards may be adjusted to prevailing conditions and altered where necessary. All pavement measurements are from back-to-back of curb based on two (2) foot wide curbs.

Table 7-1. Street Standards

Type	Name	ROW	Pavement Width (ft)	Number of Lanes	Notes
A	Collector	60	38	2	
B	Secondary Thoroughfare	80	38	2	
C-1	Primary Thoroughfare	100	38	2	
C-2	Primary Thoroughfare	100	52	2-4	
D	Regional Thoroughfare	200	-	-	Applies only to State Route 4 Bypass
E	Regional Thoroughfare	Varies	Varies	4+	Applies only to State Route 4

- 1. Type A.** The Type A Standard shall be constructed for collector thoroughfares. This standard requires a sixty (60) foot right-of-way, thirty-eight (38) foot pavement and minimum four (4) foot sidewalks on both sides of the road. The pavement is sufficiently wide to allow two (2) parking lanes of seven (7) feet each and two (2) moving lanes of ten (10) feet each. In undeveloped areas, the developer shall provide grading, curbs, pavement, sidewalks and all utilities for the entire street.
- 2. Type B.** The Type B Standard shall be constructed for secondary thoroughfares. This standard requires an eighty (80) foot right-of-way, thirty-eight (38) feet of pavement and minimum

four (4) foot sidewalks on both sides of the road. The pavement is sufficiently wide to allow two (2) parking lanes of seven (7) feet each and two (2) moving lanes of ten (10) feet each. The extra right-of-way is reserved to allow future widening of the road. In undeveloped areas, the developer shall provide grading, curbs, pavement, sidewalks and all utilities for the entire street.

- 3. Type C-1.** The Type C-1 Standard shall be constructed for primary thoroughfares. This standard requires a one hundred (100) foot right-of-way, thirty-eight (38) feet of pavement and minimum four (4) foot sidewalks on both sides of the road. The pavement is sufficiently wide to allow two (2) parking lanes of seven (7) feet

each and two (2) moving lanes of ten (10) feet each. The extra right-of-way is reserved to allow future widening of the road. In undeveloped areas, the developer shall provide grading, curbs, pavement, sidewalks and all utilities for the entire street.

- 4. Type C-2.** The Type C-2 Standard shall be constructed for primary thoroughfares. This standard requires a one hundred (100) foot right-of-way, fifty-two (52) feet of pavement and minimum four (4) foot sidewalks on both sides of the road. The pavement is sufficiently wide to allow two (2) parking lanes of seven (7) feet each and two (2) moving lanes of approximately seventeen (17) feet each. An alternative is to provide two (2) ten (10) foot wide moving lanes in each direction. In undeveloped areas, the developer shall provide grading, curbs, pavement, sidewalks and all utilities for the entire street.
- 5. Type D.** The Type D Standard applies to the State Route 4 Bypass. This standard requires a two hundred (200) foot wide right-of-way dedicated to the city. When a subdivider develops a lot containing right-of-way for a regional highway, he/she will not be required to build any part of the thoroughfare but will be required to dedicate the right-of-way for future use.
- 6. Type E.** The Type E Standard applies to the entire length of State Route 4 within the city corporate limits. The existing right-of-way, acquired in 1962 by the Ohio Department of Transportation, shall suffice, except for intersection upgrades and/or deceleration lanes.

7. Frontage Roads/Service Drives. The Planning Commission shall have the authority to grant a waiver from frontage roads and accept an alternate proposal requested by the landowner. As a condition of waiver from frontage roads, an agreement must be executed which will insure that the alternate proposal will be executed regardless of later lot splits or changes of ownership.

8. Intersections

At each intersection sufficient right-of-way shall be reserved for the inclusion of turn lanes. This right-of-way shall be the right-of-way lines for each intersecting road rounded by an arc having a minimum radius of seventy-five (75) feet. Additional right-of-way may be needed when considering roundabouts. Roundabouts should be considered in lieu of adding turn lanes, traffic signals or creating 4-way stop conditions.



Example of a roadway network serviced with roundabouts

Current Restrictions on Roadways

The city has implemented the following restrictions on city roadways that should be continued to maintain efficiency and travel safety:

- 1.** Lots shall be discouraged from direct frontage on primary or secondary thoroughfares unless frontage roads or another access control method is provided and approved by the Planning Commission.
- 2.** All thoroughfare and associated frontage road / service drive right-of-way shall be dedicated to the city.
- 3.** When the Staff Technical Review Committee (STR) discusses future development or redevelopment, the Committee must require sufficient building setback to protect the right-of-way required by the Thoroughfare Plan.
- 4.** No building permit will be granted that would prevent construction of the Thoroughfare Plan.
- 5.** At the time a lot(s) is rezoned, the rezoning ordinance will require the developer to make provisions for the installation and/or upgrade of affected thoroughfares.
- 6.** When development occurs along the right-of-way of an existing street, which is designated as a thoroughfare, the developer shall dedicate the required right-of-way and may be required to make improvements.
- 7.** Pavement design in non-residential areas shall be determined on an individual basis. The design shall be in accordance with the procedures outlined in the most recent addition of the Ohio Department of Transportation "Pavement Design Manual".





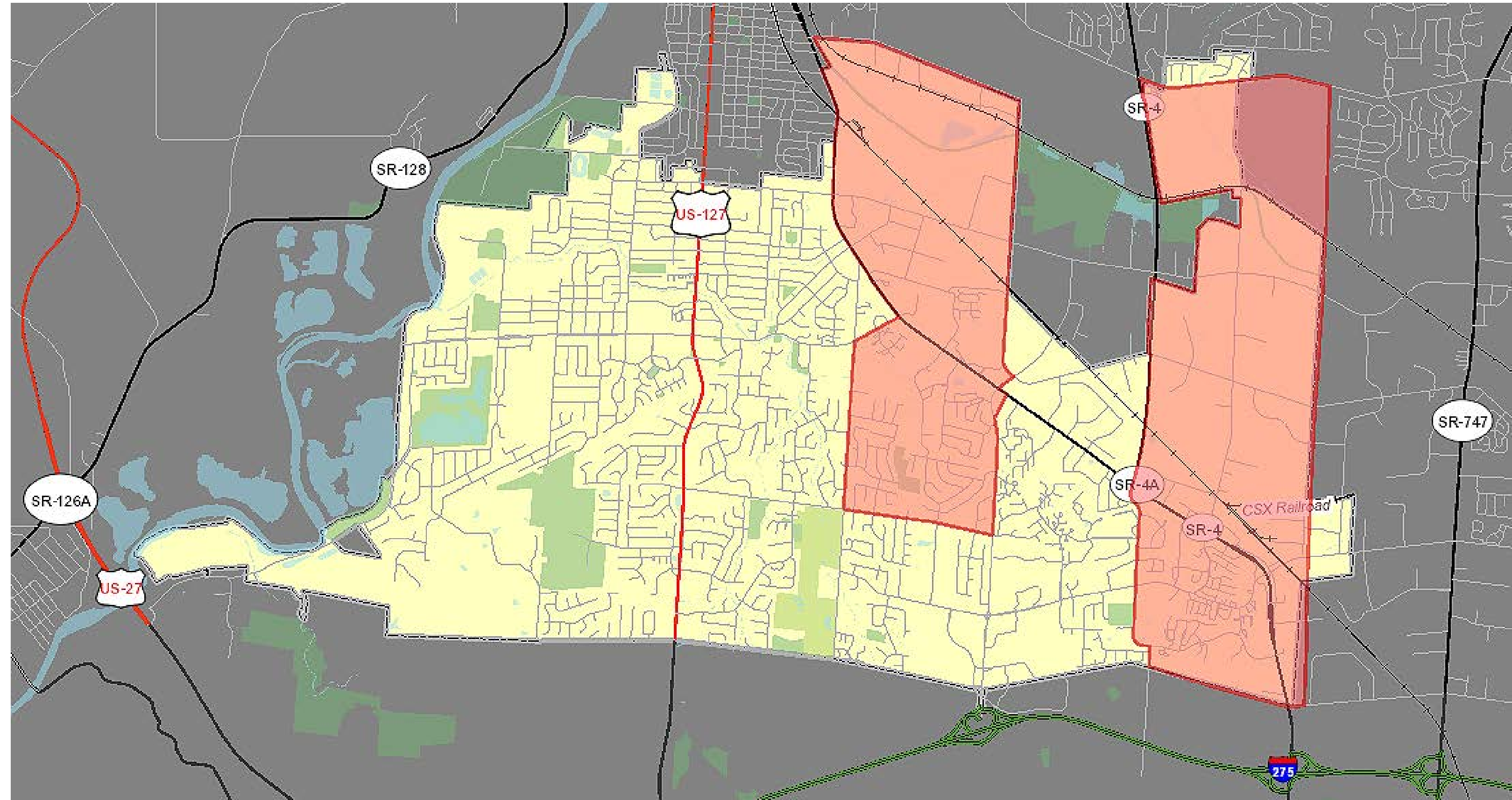
D - Economic Development

The following pages serve to identify secondary information related to economic development as referenced in the plan.

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Fairfield Opportunity Zones

Opportunity zones are identified in the areas highlighted in red on the map below.



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Workforce

The tables on the following pages represent information regarding the workforce. This information is from the US Census Bureau American Community Survey database, 2017.

Commute Distance

	Fairfield Residents (Who Work)		Workers in Fairfield	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	21,511	100.0%	28,745	100.0%
Less than 10 Miles	11,168	51.9%	14,993	52.2%
10 to 24 Miles	7,600	35.3%	9,048	31.5%
25 to 50 Miles	807	3.8%	1,993	6.9%
Greater than 50 Miles	1,936	9.0%	2,711	9.4%

Age of Workers

	Fairfield Residents (Who Work)		Workers in Fairfield	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	21,511	100.0%	28,745	100.0%
Age 29 or Younger	5,214	24.2%	6,433	22.4%
30 to 54	11,353	52.8%	16,045	55.8%
Age 55 or Older	4,944	23.0%	6,267	21.8%

Income

	Fairfield Residents (Who Work)		Workers in Fairfield	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	21,511	100.0%	28,745	100.0%
\$1,250 per Month or Less	4,162	19.3%	5,100	17.7%
\$1,251 to \$3,333	8,253	38.4%	10,735	37.3%
\$3,333 or More	9,096	42.3%	12,910	44.9%

**Where Residents Work
(Top 10 Places)**

	Fairfield Residents (Who Work)	
	Number	%
Total	21,511	100.0%
City of Fairfield	3,264	15.2%
City of Cincinnati	2,891	13.4%
West Chester Township	1,913	8.9%
City of Hamilton	1,268	5.9%
City of Springdale	798	3.7%
City of Sharonville	738	3.4%
City of Blue Ash	698	3.3%
Sycamore Township	483	2.3%
Colerain Township	457	2.1%
City of Forest Park	457	2.1%
All Other Locations	8,544	39.7%

**Where Employees Live
(Top 10 Places)**

	Fairfield Employees	
	Number	%
Total	28,745	100.0%
City of Fairfield	3,264	11.4%
City of Hamilton	3,117	10.8%
City of Cincinnati	1,745	6.1%
West Chester Township	1,368	4.8%
Colerain Township	1,211	4.2%
Fairfield Township	1,198	4.1%
Liberty Township	839	2.9%
Green Township	738	2.6%
Springfield Township	686	2.4%
City of Middletown	609	2.1%
All Other Locations	13,970	48.6%

Industry Classification

	Fairfield Residents (Who Work)		Workers in Fairfield	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	21,511	100.0%	28,745	100.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6	0.0%	1	0.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	13	0.1%	33	0.1%
Utilities	78	0.4%	127	0.4%
Construction	811	3.8%	1,108	3.9%
Manufacturing	2,672	12.4%	3,798	13.2%
Wholesale Trade	1,520	7.1%	2,890	10.1%
Retail Trade	2,346	10.9%	3,351	11.7%
Transportation and Warehousing	835	3.9%	1,248	4.3%
Information	342	1.6%	131	0.5%
Finance and Insurance	1,345	6.3%	4,768	16.6%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	241	1.1%	324	1.1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	1,136	5.3%	879	3.1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	736	3.4%	122	0.4%
Administration & Support, Waste Management and Remediation	1,485	6.9%	1,927	6.7%
Educational Services	1,596	7.4%	1,223	4.3%
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,055	14.2%	3,714	12.9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	384	1.8%	291	1.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,843	8.6%	1,881	6.5%
Other Services (excluding Public Administration)	576	2.7%	666	2.3%
Public Administration	491	2.3%	263	0.9%

