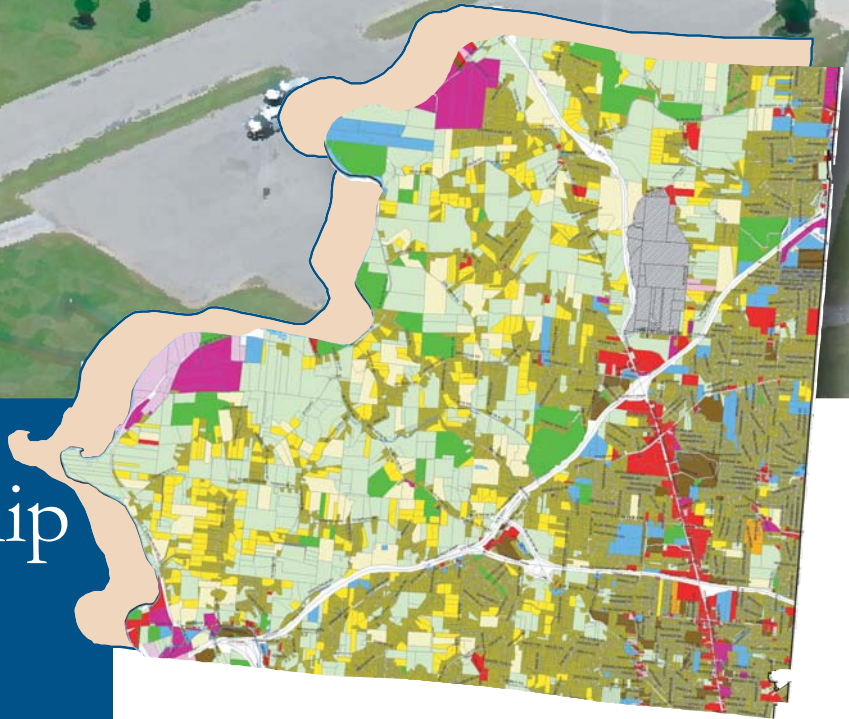




Colerain Township

Comprehensive Plan



McBride DALE
CLARION

ADOPTED - APRIL 12, 2005

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Acknowledgements

This Plan is the product of several months of dedication and hard work. The Plan would not have been possible without the involvement from the following groups and people.

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We also want to thank all of the residents, business owners, property owners, and community agencies that participated in this planning process by sharing their information, concerns, and most importantly ideas for the future of Colerain Township.

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Introduction

Colerain Township is a unique community. Within the confines of the Township borders is a diverse range of uses, with rural, wooded hillsides west of Interstate 275 and older, urban neighborhoods in the east, influenced by development moving outward from the City of Cincinnati. The Township has also witnessed continued growth of typical subdivisions that capitalize on the easy access to the regional transportation system. Each of these prominent characteristics plays a key role in the identity of the Township, which treasures the diversity of choices that can be found in this one community.

In the past decade, the Township has taken zoning control and has adopted a land use plan that designates appropriate land uses based on current infrastructure and development constraints. As part of a continued evolution of planning, the Township decided to look beyond the four- or five-year time frame of the land use plan and address protection of the unique characteristics that define the Township as well as the prospect of continued growth, a changing population base and an aging housing stock. The first step in this process was the adoption of a Vision Statement that prioritized the top issues facing the future of the Township and the direction in which the community should be heading over the next 20 years. After adoption of this Vision Statement in June 2003, the Township embarked on a more in depth comprehensive planning effort. This document summarizes the results and recommendations of that effort.

A Public Planning Process

From the beginning of this process, the Township's intent was to develop a comprehensive plan that is based on the vision of the public. To that end, any process would require a significant effort to involve the public. The Township has a Comprehensive Plan Committee that had been working on creating long-term goals and objectives for Colerain Township that, in itself, involved significant input from the public. The members of this committee continued their work within the newly formed Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee, which includes representatives of other Township groups and representation from the Board of Trustees. The Township Trustees gave the Executive Committee a charge to work with staff and the consultants in the drafting of the plan to provide feedback as representatives of the larger community. In addition to the Committee work, the staff and consultants met with a broad range of community groups including the schools, infrastructure providers, developers, neighboring communities, Township departments, county agencies, environmental groups, and representatives for and against the landfill. These group interviews provide specific background on the Township and future issues that the Plan should address. The final component of the public participation process was a series of public meetings. In August and September of 2004, Colerain Township sent notification to every household in the community to inform residents of a series of public meetings centered on the Character Areas described in later sections of this Plan. The attendance at these meetings showed strong support by the community and is the basis for many of the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan.

Existing Conditions and Trends

The end result of a comprehensive plan is the answer to the question of “Where do we want to be in 20 years?” To answer this question, it is first necessary to evaluate where the community has been and how current trends and policies, if they remain unchanged, may affect the community in the future. The following is a brief description of the existing conditions and trends that have made Colerain Township what it is today.

Population and Housing

Colerain Township is currently the most populous township in Ohio with just under 59,000 residents. However, overall growth is slowing as the Township witnessed its largest surge in growth over during the 1960s, when the Township population almost doubled from 28,600 to almost 51,000. Unlike the City of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, the Township has continued to grow, albeit at a much slower pace (Table 1).

Table 1: Colerain Township Population Change by Decade 1960-2000

	Hamilton County	City of Cincinnati	Colerain Township
1960	864,121	502,550	28,632
1970	925,944	453,514	50,971
% Change 60-70	7.15%	-9.76%	78.02%
1980	873,224	385,457	56,583
% Change 70-80	-5.69%	-15.01%	11.01%
1990	866,228	364,040	56,781
% Change 80-90	-0.80%	-5.56%	0.35%
2000	845,303	330,662	60,144
% Change 90-00	-2.42%	-9.17%	5.92%

Source: U.S. Census

Growth continues in the Township even though it is not at the level experienced decades ago. The Township currently issues an average of 150 permits per year for new homes, which would typically translate to 250 to 300 new residents. However, local and national trends show a population that is living longer and an overall decline in the average household size. The declining household size is a result of an increase in older adult households without children and a trend toward smaller families. Colerain Township is witnessing this trend by a decreasing population (smaller households) even during a time when new housing is under construction. This trend is important because many would assume that new construction will automatically increase the enrollment in schools and the demand for services when in fact, enrollment has declined and the school districts are not anticipating a great surge in enrollment.

Table 2: Colerain Township Population Change by Year 2000-2003

	Population Estimate	% Growth
2000	60,144	+0.57%
2001	60,089	-0.09%
2002	59,511	-0.96%
2003	58,844	-1.12%

Source: U.S. Census

Existing Land Use

Colerain Township, like many suburban communities, grew in a somewhat predictable manner. During the 1960s, people and families were more mobile with most households having access to at least one car. With the completion of the interstate system, there was easy access to the core employment centers with the ability to live outside of the City of Cincinnati. The Existing Land Use Map (Map 1) illustrates the results of this trend with the highest concentration of residential housing located to the southeast of Interstate 275. As residential development increased in the Township, commercial uses followed and formed naturally along the Colerain Avenue corridor, which once served as the primary roadway to Cincinnati for residents of northern Hamilton County. Figure 1 illustrates the general breakdown of existing land uses in Colerain Township.

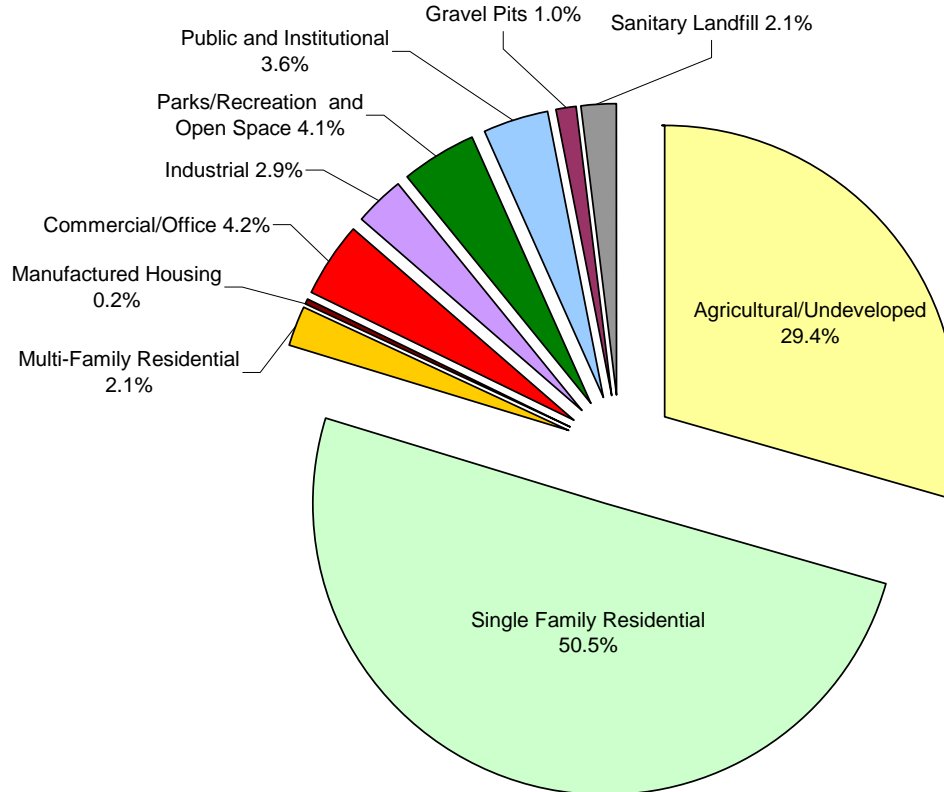













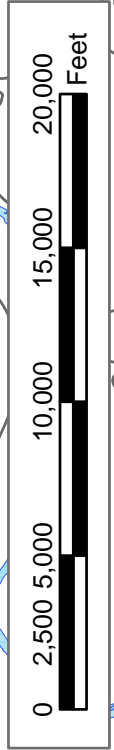
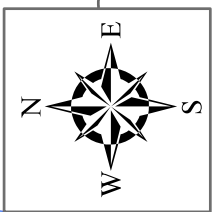
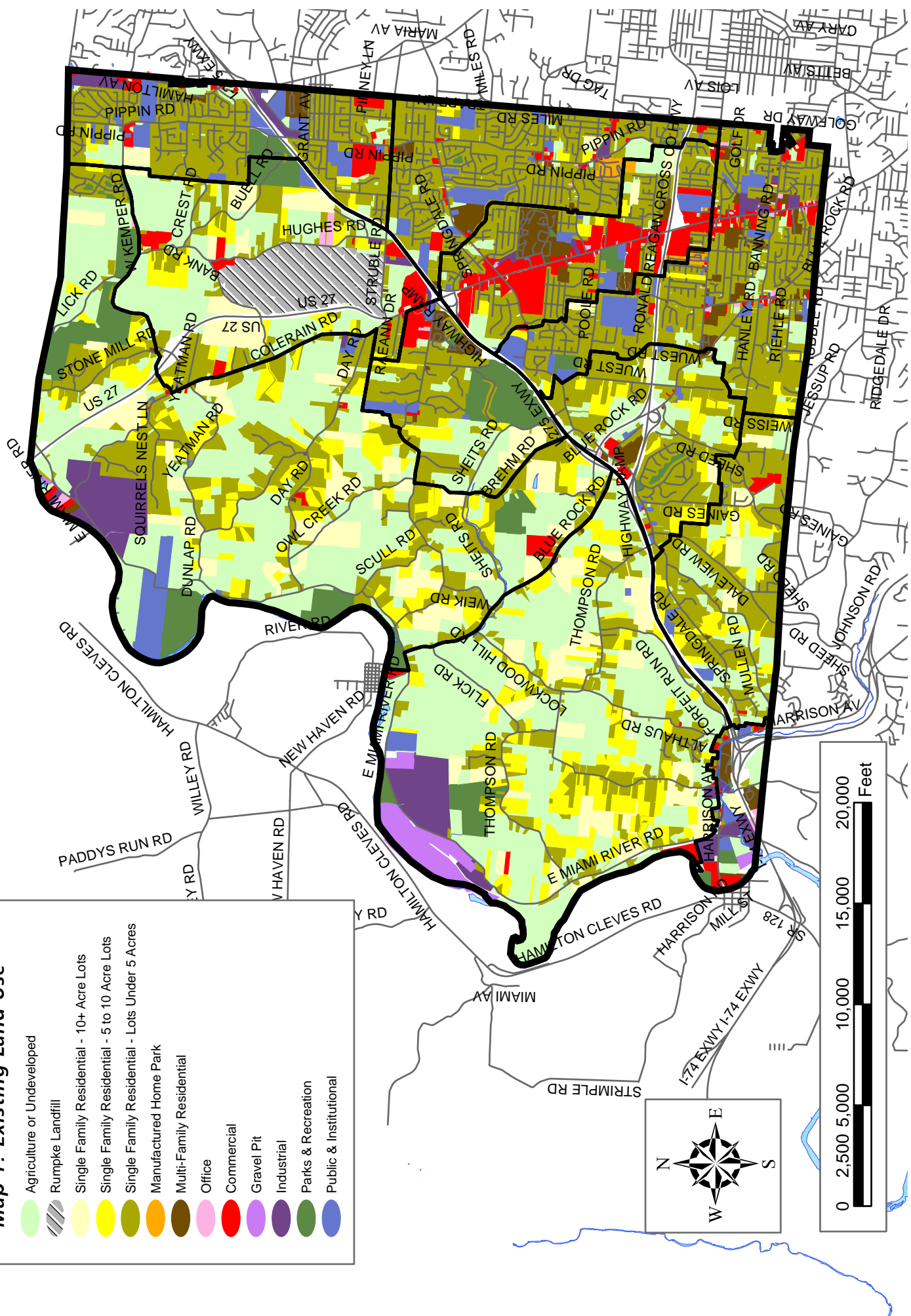


Figure 1: Colerain Township Existing Land Use

Map 1: Existing Land Use

	Agriculture or Undeveloped
	Rumpke Landfill
	Single Family Residential - 10+ Acre Lots
	Single Family Residential - 5 to 10 Acre Lots
	Single Family Residential - Lots Under 5 Acres
	Manufactured Home Park
	Multi-Family Residential
	Office
	Commercial
	Gravel Pit
	Industrial
	Parks & Recreation
	Public & Institutional



Significant development constraints also influenced the growth pattern of the Township. These constraints include the floodplains along the Great Miami River and steep slopes on the northwest side of the Township (see Map 2: Development Constraints). Historically, this area of the Township was difficult to develop with minimal access to water or sewer, the potential for increased engineering costs and overall poor access to the remainder of the community. More recently, developers are beginning to make improvements to some of the rural, western areas of the Township to allow for increased development. This push toward developing in the western area of the Township is causing an increasing number of conflicts between residents wanting to preserve the rural character and developers who are extending infrastructure, as necessary, to capitalize on some of the same rural qualities.

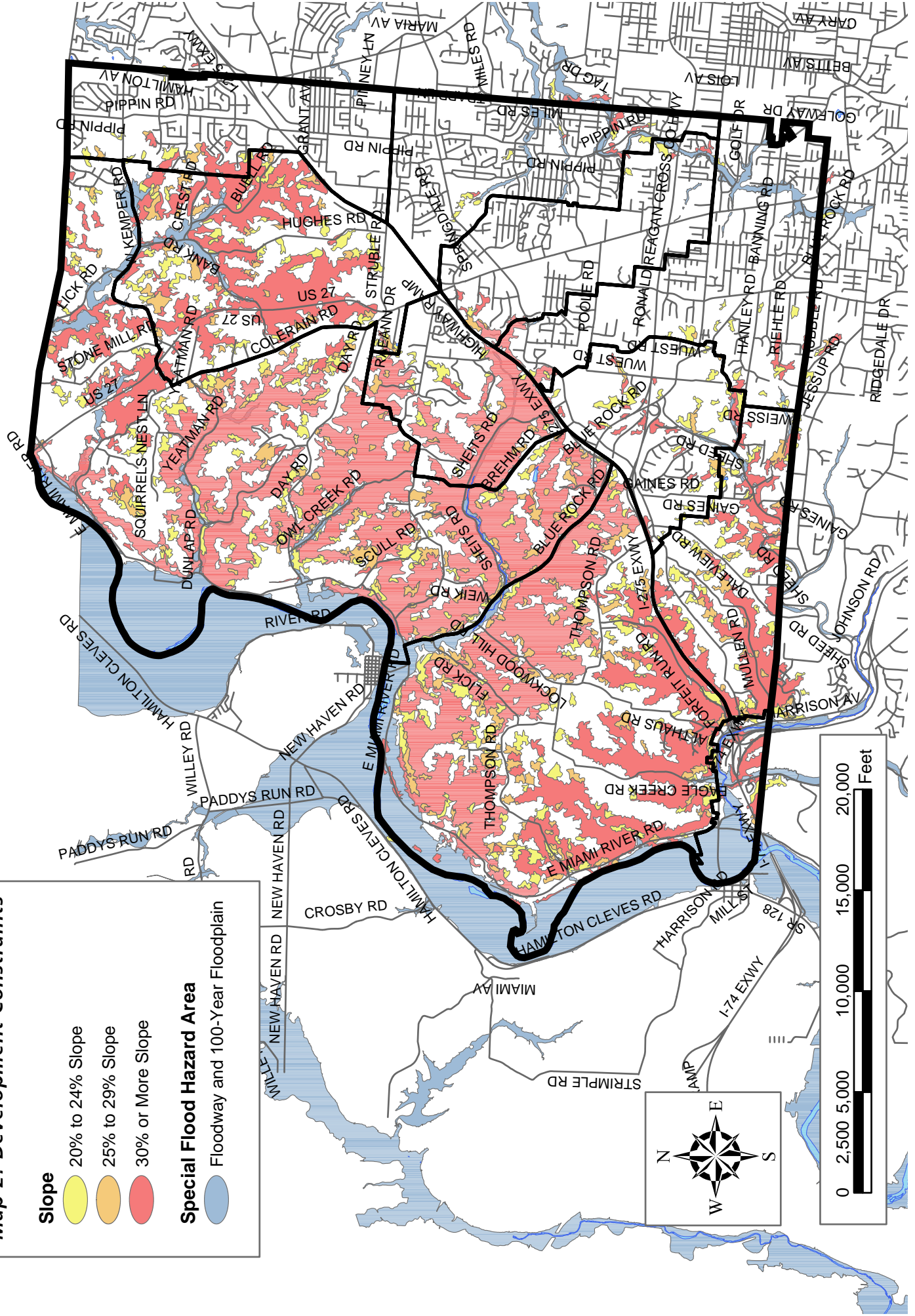
Map 2: Development Constraints

Slope

- 20% to 24% Slope
- 25% to 29% Slope
- 30% or More Slope

Special Flood Hazard Area

- Floodway and 100-Year Floodplain



Infrastructure

The infrastructure or lack thereof, impacts the Township as much as the mobility of residents. One of the inherent difficulties of managing growth is that Colerain Township does not have authority over most of the infrastructure systems. As provided in the Ohio Revised Code, Colerain Township has authority over the maintenance of subdivision roadways, but Hamilton County or the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has authority over the remaining roads as well as the design standards set for all roads. Regional agencies also manage the non-transportation infrastructure systems including the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), which controls the sewer system; Greater Cincinnati Water Works, which controls the water system; the Hamilton County Board of Public Works, which addresses stormwater and hillside cuts and fills; and Cinergy, which manages the electrical and natural gas systems.

Sanitary Sewer

In Colerain Township, the sewer system is a major driver in development trends, with the availability of water playing a somewhat smaller role. For the most part, sanitary sewer lines are available inside the Interstate 275 loop and along the Harrison Avenue and Hamilton Avenue corridors. MSD does not currently have any plans for major sewer extensions beyond filling gaps in developed areas of the Township. However, some developers are beginning to pay for extensions north of Harrison Avenue where the sewers will gravity feed into the Taylor Creek Treatment Plan. These extensions, paid by developers could continue and allow for service to the areas along the hillsides facing Harrison Avenue. While MSD does not install sewer lines for developers, they are willing to accept the systems upon construction by the developer.

Another sewer development project that could create a significant impact on the Township is development of the Fort Scott site along River Road in Crosby Township. In this case, a developer is considering building a wastewater treatment plant and would eventually transfer the plant to MSD which will have the authority to expand the plant. Under this scenario, a developer could theoretically extend sewer lines along Blue Rock Road or other roadways that would feed into the new plant and open up the western side of the Township to development. Beyond this situation, MSD feels that is unlikely that sewer will be available in the rural areas of the Township because of the need for expensive force mains and pump stations that require increased costs for maintenance.

Potable Water

Water, while an important infrastructure system, plays a lesser role in defining where development can occur. The Greater Cincinnati Waterworks is planning to extend major water trunk lines into the western area of the Township over the next 10 to 15 years in order to create loop systems, which improve the overall water system and help with fire protection. While such extensions may be necessary and can be costly to private property owners, it is not anticipated that such extensions will significantly affect the character of the area through future developments.

Transportation

As described earlier, there are several agencies responsible for the transportation network. While the Township is not involved in building new roads, it is an active participant in planning for transportation improvements in the community. Colerain Township worked with ODOT for several years on plans for Colerain Avenue and it continues to collaborate on plans for improved access and traffic flow. The Hamilton County Engineer is working on several small improvements such as bridge repair and hillside stabilization as well as larger plans for the longer-term improvement of Harrison Road, Cheviot Road and Blue Rock Road. The plans for Blue Rock Road are long-term and would help create a better connection from Cross County Highway to State Route 128 in Crosby Township.

With a decreasing amount of land for development in the Township, planning for continued maintenance and improvements of the existing infrastructure systems will need to be the priority.

Existing Programs and Policies

There are several notable Township characteristics that residents point toward as opportunities for the Township's future. These characteristics include the rural hillsides of the west, the parks and recreational opportunities and the ability of the Township to promote economic development to help support Township services. In recent years, the Township has continued to work on many of these opportunities and has created programs and policies to focus these efforts.

Parks and Recreation

Both the Township and the County are improving parks and recreational facilities in the Township to serve the community and the region. The Township has a Parks and Recreation Department, which is charged with managing and maintaining the eight Township parks while the Hamilton County Park District manages the two larger County parks and four nature preserves located throughout the Township. The Township is currently involved in planning for the improvements to Heritage Park, a 128-acre Township park on East Miami River Road as well as acquiring property from the Groesbeck Community Association, near Galbraith and Colerain, for another local park. The Parks and Services Department is working to acquire properties in the Great Miami River and Mill Creek floodplains as part of the federal government's flood buy-out program in an effort to protect properties from flood damage.

While the Township works at the smaller community scale, the County Park District is working at a larger regional scale. The Park District continues to plan for regional parks and established the ForEverGreen program where the Park District and a community can work cooperatively to fund parks projects. While many of the Park District's priorities are on the eastern side of the County because of the higher concentration of residents, the Township is looking at the future of the Great Miami River Corridor and ways of protecting the Corridor as parks and greenspace.

Greenspace Committee Conservationists Program

In 2000, the Township established a Greenspace Committee to work on preserving greenspace land within the Township that will benefit the entire community. The Committee's first program, known as the Conservationist Program, allows property owners pledge to preserve their property from development, over the next five years. For property owners who own over ten acres of land, the property is marked with a Conservationist Award sign. While property owners are not legally bound to their pledge, more than 1,500 acres of land dedicated to this program show a concern for the growing amount of development and its impact on the natural characteristics of the Township.



Economic Development

The Township continues to encourage economic development in all areas of the Township using multiple tools and programs. The Township established a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district in parts of the Northbrook neighborhoods to encourage redevelopment through this tax incentive program (see Implementation Section). The Township also continues to work cooperatively with Hamilton County, the Hamilton County Development Corporation and the local Chamber of Commerce to spark investment opportunities such as occurred in the Civic Center Commerce Park. Investments in infrastructure along Colerain Avenue have helped retailers while promoting traffic, necessary for good sales, but also easing congestion to benefit residents. These partnerships and pro-economic development policies are helping to increase investment throughout the Township.



Future Trends

The analysis of historic trends allows us to understand where we have been and how we arrived at the present situation. That leads to the question, “Where are we headed?” There are really two ways to answer to this question. The first answer is based on projecting current trends into the future and determining where the Township may be headed if current trends and policies continue. The second and more important answer is based on public input regarding where Township residents *want* to head with their community’s future. That is the essence of a plan: allowing a community to achieve its vision of the future rather than allow current trends to dictate the future. Current trends and policies cannot be ignored, because some of them may result in a desired outcome, and some may not be possible to change. It is important to look at these types of forecasts to help make decisions on what needs to change in the short and long-term.

Land Demand

From the information discussed in the previous section, it is possible to make an estimate of how much the Township might grow if current trends continue. The forecasts for this plan assume that the Township will continue to issue an average of 150 permits for housing units per year. The forecasts also assume a slightly decreasing household size to account for the recent trends realized in the last few years, resulting in a declining population size. At 150 new units per year, the Township could anticipate approximately 3,300 new housing units by 2025 in addition to the existing 23,000 housing units. This number divided into types of housing by assuming that the Township will maintain its existing 25% ratio of multi-family housing (825 new units). Because new housing requires land for development, the population and housing forecast can then be translated into the amount of land the Township will need to accommodate the projected new growth. This result is known as the “land demand.” For the purposes of this plan, assumptions were based on the typical lot sizes of recent developments, which average about 14,000 square feet for a single-family home (1/3 acre) and 6,000 square feet for each multi-family unit. Using all of these assumptions, Colerain Township would see approximately 900 new acres of residential development over the next 20 years.

Land demand can also be projected for nonresidential uses such as the need for new commercial or industrial space. In order to maintain the current ratio of nonresidential acreage per 1,000 residents, forecasts show that Colerain Township would have to provide over 130 acres of commercial or office land, almost 100 acres of industrial land and approximately 120 acres of parks and recreational uses over the next 20 years. It is important to note that these forecasts are all based on historic trends and may not reflect what the community desires for nonresidential growth.

Table 3 on page 12 summarizes the land demand results.

Land Capacity

The counterpart of land “demand” is the land “capacity” or, in other words, how much new development could occur within the Township. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the initial land capacity was based on the existing zoning. For example, a 100 acre property zoned for homes on one acre lots will have a land capacity of approximately 85 units given that roughly 15% of the property will be used for streets and public dedications. Because much of the land that is still available in Colerain is constrained by steep slopes or floodplains, there are three different capacity scenarios as described below which provide a potential range of land capacity:

- ✚ **Full Capacity** assumes that all land that has some potential for development will develop to the fullest extent possible regardless of slopes or floodplains.
- ✚ **50% Net Capacity** assumes that half of the land that is constrained by slopes greater than 30% or by floodplain will not develop and the remainder will develop according to zoning.
- ✚ **Low Net Capacity** assumes that no land constrained by steep slopes or floodplain will develop.

It is evident that there is sufficient residentially zoned land in the Township to accommodate the projected number of new housing units for the next 20 years (Table 3). Even if the Township assumes that development will not occur on steep slopes or in the floodplain (Low Net Capacity), there is still enough land to accommodate at least two times the projected land demand. On the other and, there is a potential shortage of nonresidential land. The nonresidential forecasts described in the previous section show a demand for commercial and office space that is three times higher than the amount of land available. The demand for industrial acreage also exceeds the industrial land capacity by a small margin.

In addition to the existing zoning, Colerain Township adopted a Land Use Plan on May 24, 2001, which identifies appropriate land uses for properties based on accessibility to transportation, infrastructure availability, development constraints and guidance from the community. In order to ascertain if the Land Use Plan will help balance the difference between land demand and capacity, a second land demand analysis evaluates the potential land capacity of the adopted Land Use Plan based on assumed densities of one unit per three acres for the agricultural and rural residential areas; two units per acre for the single-family residential areas; and eight units per acre for multi-family residential. Using the assumed densities, the residential capacity in this plan is approximately one-half of the capacity of the existing zoning but still it provides a sufficient for the anticipated demand. At the same time, the capacity for industrial land is tripled and even at the lowest capacity numbers would provide slightly more land capacity than demand. The capacity of commercial and office land is still below the anticipated demand but some of the commercial and office demand may be accommodated within the industrial capacity through accessory commercial uses and office uses. Additionally, as with the zoning capacity, neither capacity analysis includes land for redevelopment. This means that there may be land available for new commercial, office or industrial uses on land that is currently developed but underutilized.

Table 3: Land Capacity and Demand for Colerain Township

	Land Capacity Scenario Existing Zoning			Land Capacity Scenario Land Use Plan ¹	Land Demand (20 Years)
	Full	50% Net	Low Net		
New Housing Units	13,834	10,335	6,836	7,592	3,300
New Population	35,969	26,871	17,733	19,735	6,964
Residential Acreage	10,459	7,328	4,197	10,144	900
Commercial/Office Acreage	46	41	35	97	133
Industrial Acreage	88	80	73	332	98
Parks/Recreation	<i>See Note #2 Below</i>				120

NOTES:


1 – Assumes the densities and policies recommended within this Comprehensive Plan.


2 – While there is a demand for land to accommodate parks and recreation, no land evaluated for the capacity analysis is planned or zoned specifically for parks or recreational uses so there is no estimate for this land capacity.


Plan Structure

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the overarching guide and visioning document for both the Land Use Plan and Zoning Resolution by developing the broad policies that guide land use and zoning decisions. The figure to the right generally defines the different aspects of each document and how one document relates to the other.

There are three core components to this Comprehensive Plan to help guide the future direction of the Township. These components include:

 **Vision** – Based on the adopted Colerain Township Vision Statement and the comprehensive planning process, the visioning statements give broad, township-wide policy statements that the Township can refer to when making decisions.

 **Land Use Framework** – The Land Use Framework connects the Comprehensive Plan to the site-specific Land Use Plan that the Township has already adopted. The Land Use Framework provides a long-term vision of the Township based on the Land Use Concepts such as “Rural Areas,” “Suburban Neighborhoods,” “Mixed Use Employment Centers,” “Commercial Corridors” and “Conservation Areas.”

 **Character Areas** – The Character Areas define neighborhoods and districts with distinct characteristics, and identify policies and guidelines to help preserve, protect and improve these areas.

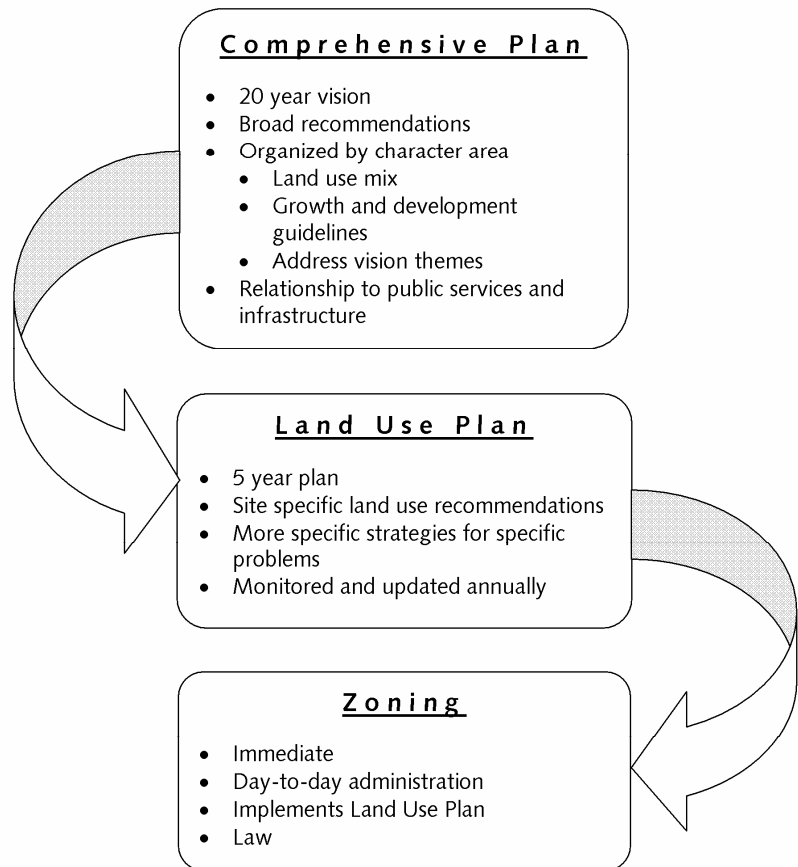


Figure 2: Planning and Zoning in Colerain Township

As the officials, staff and committee members from the Township consider future development; they should consider all of these plan components together to help identify appropriate guidelines for making decisions.

Colerain Township Vision

Over the last few years, Colerain Township worked on several levels to establish its vision of the future. The most recent effort in early 2003 led to the adoption of a series of vision statements based on input from Township representatives. Simultaneously, the Comprehensive Plan Committee and the Land Use Advisory Board, both formed by the Township, have also been working on visioning projects that helped identify specific goals and objectives for the future of the Township. Building primarily on the adopted vision statement, the following are the guiding principles for the Colerain Township Comprehensive Plan.

Neighborhoods

The creation and preservation of neighborhoods should be a central community value and organizing principle for Colerain Township. People identify more with the neighborhoods and the character area where they live rather than the larger Township.

1. Colerain Township will strive to maintain and improve the quality of the current housing stock, capable of supporting acceptable retail.
2. Parks and recreational uses should be provided in proximity to neighborhoods.
3. Adequate and desirable public services, such as quality schools, should be provided in support of neighborhoods.
4. Colerain Township will encourage owner-occupied housing as the dominant type of housing in the Township.

Types of Housing

Housing is the essence of a neighborhood, and is one of the essential services provided by a community. The quality of a community's housing stock helps to establish community image and quality of life. The challenge for Colerain Township is to continue to provide quality housing to serve a diverse and changing population. Specifically:

1. The Township will promote housing that can withstand the test of time. Quality standards should be implemented and enforced, particularly for multi-family housing. These standards should address a range of quality issues, including appropriate setbacks and lot sizes. The Township should discourage overly dense developments, such as stacked apartments and or stacked condominiums, while not excluding single tenant occupied units.
2. The Township will encourage the use of lot clustering in single-family developments as a way to preserve open space, without increasing the underlying gross densities permitted by zoning.
3. Neighborhood character and quality will be emphasized and reinforced (see Neighborhood Vision above). The Township will encourage neighborhood amenities for both new and redeveloping areas, such as parks, walking trails, sidewalks, lighting features, fountains, ponds, and other water features.

4. Owner-occupied housing will continue to be encouraged as the dominant housing form in the Township.
5. The quality of the existing housing stock in established neighborhoods is particularly critical to the Township long-term sustainability.

Quality of Development

One way to improve and maintain a community is through holding new development and redevelopment to high, yet reasonable standards related to quality. “Quality” can mean a number of things: it can refer to eliminating or utilizing sound planning principles to mitigate the negative impacts related to items such as traffic, parking, noise, light, odor and storm water runoff and it can refer to visual quality related to items such as landscaping, signage, building materials, and site design.

The continued improvement and enforcement of fair, reasonable, and predictable development standards is one way that the Township will manage its future growth and change. Specifically:

1. The Township will strive for a reasonable mix of light industrial, residential, and commercial development supported by appropriate infrastructure, built to the highest standards of quality, consistent with protection of the land, support of the population, economic flexibility, and quality of life.
2. These standards will be applied to general redevelopment of declining commercial and residential areas.
3. Standards will address the protection and preservation of green space and rural character of Colerain Township.
4. The Township will work cooperatively with developers who share the same vision of the community. The Township will work with developers to create the best, most attractive development that would benefit Colerain Township.
5. The Township will encourage and support economic diversity.
6. The Township will work in conjunction with the school system to create one of the best systems in the region.

Parks and Open Space

As Colerain Township continues to develop and mature, the Township will have to develop for parks and/or open space. However, parks and open space are almost universal in their importance to any community; therefore, the Township must be prepared to act to insure that land is set aside to serve future parks and open space needs for the future.

1. The Township will work to develop a comprehensive park and open space system that promotes connection between parks and open spaces, neighborhoods, civic uses, and business areas.
2. Available financial resources should be prioritized and targeted relative to existing and new parks, with maintenance needs addressed.

3. The parks and open space system should be designed to serve a range of community needs and desires, and should provide a mix of large and small parks, active and passive uses, and specialty parks needs.
4. The Township should partner with other agencies, such as Hamilton County Park District, that can provide planning and funding assistance.
5. Colerain Township should consider alternative sources for funding park and open space, such as a grants, etc.

Rural Preservation

Colerain Township is blessed with extensive areas of rural or semi-rural land. While active farming is becoming increasingly rare, the preservation of the rural character of the Township is important as a balance to the urbanizing areas. Rural character contributes to a peaceful quality of life. Specifically:

1. The Township will encourage the protection of farmlands, woodlands, rivers, open space, vegetation, streams, etc. through zoning regulations and utilizing other forms of regulation that accommodate agricultural and rural characteristics of Colerain Township developments. The Township recognizes the historical and scenic significance of the rural areas, and the important roles that natural features play in Township quality of life.
2. The continuation of current farming activities is encouraged. However, as pressures to convert farm land to more developed uses occur, education should be promoted on the value of land conservation, scenic easements, trusts and similar techniques.
3. The Township should use zoning to encourage rural density and development standards to protect natural resources of the area where appropriate.
4. The Township encourages the preservation of historic farmsteads, buildings, and scenic roads when farms are developed.
5. Creative zoning techniques such as planned unit developments and community unit plans should be used to preserve rural character.

The above guiding principles were all part of the Vision Statement adopted by the Township Trustees in June 24, 2003. In addition to these statements, it was clear from public input in this comprehensive planning process that there is also need for guiding principles to address economic health and infrastructure, which are also in the forefront of residents' concerns. For this reason, the following guiding principles are included to help address the vision of the community.

Economic Health

Colerain Township benefits from having one of the highest ratios of nonresidential to residential land valuation for a township in Hamilton County. This favorable evaluation along with continual efforts to promote the overall economic health of the community helps provide a diverse tax base that is not completely dependent on the residents. The Township recognizes the importance of economic development in helping to pay for necessary services as well as creating jobs.

1. Improve the quality of existing and new economic development projects.
2. Direct additional economic growth onto land that is best suited for industrial, commercial, retail, and business development.
3. Support the redevelopment of greyfield sites and the reuse of vacant or underutilized industrial and commercial properties.
4. Continue to identify tools and strategies, such as tax-increment financing, that will help attract new businesses to the community.
5. Promote job-producing facilities that have low environmental impact.
6. Support infill development on properties within the urban areas that are appropriate for commercial and industrial uses.

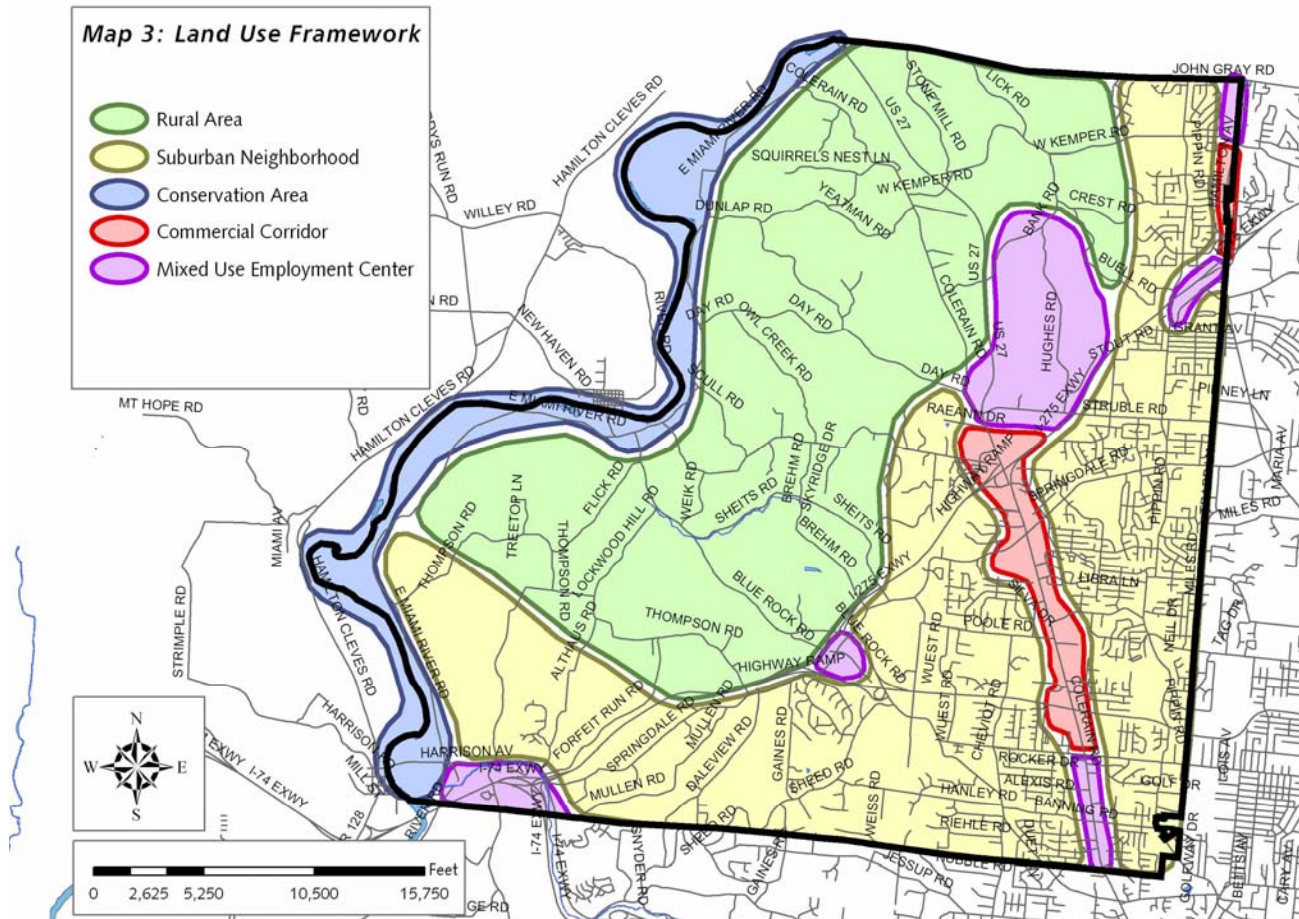
Transportation & Infrastructure

Everyone in the Township relies on the transportation and infrastructure systems: using electricity, walking to school, driving to work, and other activities of daily life. The Township must strive to focus new growth in areas where appropriate public services are available with a capacity suitable for the new development or redevelopment.

1. Promote a safe and efficient transportation system including the promotion of public transit and ride-sharing.
2. Improve traffic flow along Colerain Avenue using access management strategies.
3. Encourage cooperation of Metro Moves to create aesthetically pleasing transit stops and a pedestrian-friendly small business center at the proposed transit hub.
4. Encourage interconnectivity of new and existing neighborhoods by minimizing cul-de-sacs (where possible) and encouraging the development of sidewalks and bike paths as an integral part of the development.
5. Work with regional agencies such as the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) to identify and develop appropriate bike trails that connect with a regional trail system.
6. Work with the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) and residents to extend sewers in urban and suburban neighborhoods where desired by the residents. Discourage the extension of sewers into the rural areas of Colerain Township as identified in this Plan.

Land Use Framework

The Land Use Framework establishes a series of policies in relation to the general land use characteristics of certain areas in the Township. The framework serves as a link between the Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Plan. The Land Use Framework Map establishes a “form” to the Township. Because the Framework is the foundation for the more specific the Land Use Plan, the boundaries are intentionally not site-specific. The following pages define the policies for each of the framework categories.



Rural Areas

Wooded hillsides and large lot residential uses are the main characteristic of Colerain Township's rural areas. The wooded hillsides dominate the landscape and have historically discouraged development in the past, preserving this character until recent years when engineering improvements have led to the clearing and stripping of hillsides to allow for large-scale development. In addition to the natural constraints of hillsides and floodplains, the current roadway network in this area consists of rural roads with narrow widths in some areas, steep slopes and winding courses that were not designed nor maintained to accommodate suburban-density development. The constraints to development have also discouraged the extension of sewers into this area. Because of the special nature of these areas, the following policies apply when considering growth in the rural area.

- ✚ The Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) does not anticipate extending sewers into these areas because of the difficulty in moving the discharge to a treatment plant. Additionally, during this planning process, the public responded strongly against the extension of sewer because of the impact on property owners and the character of the area. For this reason, sewers are discouraged in this area unless necessary as dictated by the Hamilton County General Health District or where it will provide service to an area surrounded by existing sewers and a majority of the property owners request the sewer extension.
- ✚ With a prevalence of steep slopes, the lack of sanitary sewer, and poor soil types for on-site septic systems, lot sizes should continue to be large. Additionally, homes on large tracts of land help preserve the rural character of the area. The residents continue to voice a desire to maintain rural characteristics as part of the long-term vision of the Rural Areas.
- ✚ Subdivisions that cluster homes together on shallower slopes or on portions of a property better suited for development are an appropriate form of development. The Township will establish clear guidelines for such developments to maintain the rural character. Figure 3 in the Implementation Section provides an illustration of clustered subdivisions.
- ✚ Improved open spaces are a priority over the preservation of areas in a natural state. Residents have demonstrated a frustration with developments that receive incentives for development in return for the preservation of open space when the open space is land that, because of development constraints, could not be developed for any use in the first place. Improvements could include walking or biking paths, playgrounds or other uses that will create an amenity for nearby residents.
- ✚ Neighborhood commercial uses and other nonresidential uses that generate a significant amount of traffic are inappropriate because of the minimal number of roads and the narrowness of the roads along with the overall lack of infrastructure.
- ✚ With rural areas come rural services, and residents moving into the area should not have expectations that there will be support for the extension of sewer or significant expansion of the water system. While this lack of additional infrastructure may minimize the urban development potential of a property, it will improve the quality of the area over the long-term and thus help maintain strong property values.
- ✚ New development should be responsive to the natural characteristics of the area including the hillsides and vegetation.

Suburban Neighborhoods

The suburban neighborhood areas of Colerain Township are almost fully developed into subdivisions and neighborhoods or are envisioned to develop over the next 20 years. While the primary land use in these neighborhoods is residential, this could include a mix of residential types ranging from single-family detached dwellings to multi-family apartment complexes, under certain circumstances. These areas could also include neighborhood commercial or activity nodes designed to serve nearby residents. The following policies apply when considering growth in these suburban neighborhoods.

- ✚ These areas are distinguished from the rural areas by access to infrastructure and minimal development constraints. The Township should guide new development into areas with sufficient infrastructure services. This will help promote infill development in areas that are already best suited for development.

- ✚ MSD anticipates that the sewers are a possibility within the Suburban Neighborhoods over the next 20 years in areas that do not currently have sewer. The extension of sewer lines should be encouraged where it will complete the sewer system and where a majority of property owners support the connection.
- ✚ Connectivity of the transportation system is vital to the effective development of these neighborhoods. While some people desire cul-de-sacs, the dead end streets minimize connections to the larger transportation network and decrease the efficiency of vehicular movement. The use of cul-de-sacs should be minimized in new developments unless they are necessary because of steep topography or other constraints.
- ✚ Developments within the Suburban Neighborhoods should include sidewalks and bike paths wherever possible to increase the non-motorized transit opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ✚ New development should be responsive to the natural characteristics of the area including the hillsides and vegetation.
- ✚ Improved open spaces are a priority over the preservation of areas in a natural state. Residents have demonstrated a frustration with developments that receive incentives for development in return for the preservation of open space when the open space is land that, because of development constraints, could not be developed for any use in the first place. Improvements could include walking or biking paths, playgrounds or other uses that will create an amenity for nearby residents.
- ✚ While residential uses are the primary use in suburban neighborhoods, other uses including parks, institutions, and small-scale neighborhood shopping nodes or office uses may be appropriate per the guidelines defined in the Character Areas section of this Plan. These uses help serve the community on a neighborhood scale and provide services within a short distance instead of forcing residents to drive to Colerain Avenue or other nonresidential areas.
- ✚ Density for new development should be compatible with the density of existing development surrounding the area. However, requirements need to be flexible depending upon the location of a development. Infill development should be responsive to the uses and style of development surrounding the proposed site.

Conservation Area

The Great Miami River Corridor is the designated conservation area in Colerain Township because of the importance of the corridor to the Township and the region. Not only is the Great Miami River a valuable natural resource but it is subject to flooding that may directly affect uses in this area. Additionally, this area lies over a sole-source aquifer, which serves as the potable water source for many residents in Colerain Township and the surrounding region. The following policies apply when considering growth in the conservation area.

- ✚ Conservation does not mean no growth or no development. Agricultural, recreational and residential uses are the least intrusive uses in this area and should be strongly encouraged over commercial and industrial uses. This preference is partly because of the impact such nonresidential uses can have on the river and aquifer as well as the poor access to the area along the winding and narrow East Miami River Road. Agricultural uses need to address potential pollution sources that could infiltrate the ground water or the Great Miami River.

- ✚ The Conservation Area has infrastructure characteristics similar to those of the Rural Areas and as such, the extension of sewer should be discouraged in the area unless mandated by the Hamilton County General Health District.
- ✚ The Township should encourage developers, as part of a planned development process, to acquire properties in this area to retain its natural state or to dedicate to the Township for permanent conservation. The Township should consider incentives with the planned development process that will encourage conservation.
- ✚ Encourage the clustering of homes (illustrated in the Implementation Section) when the floodplain area will be retained in their natural state. However, land that is currently in the *floodway* should not be considered when calculating density because developers and builders are unable to build in the floodway because of frequent flooding regardless of zoning requirements.
- ✚ New development should be responsive to the natural characteristics of the area including the hillsides and vegetation.

Activity Centers

There are several diverse activity centers in the Township that serve as economic nodes for the community. While the central portion of Colerain Avenue is primarily a commercial corridor, the southern portion consists of light industrial and small-scale offices; Harrison Avenue with a mixture of uses ranging from recreational to heavy industrial; the area around Struble and Hughes Roads includes the Rumpke landfill and land appropriate for nonresidential, non-retail uses. These activity centers are important components to the community because they provide goods and services, places of employment and a tax base for the community. The following policies apply when considering growth in these activity centers depending on the type and location of the center.

Commercial Corridor

- ✚ Colerain Avenue and the area surrounding the Hamilton Avenue interchange are the primary commercial corridors in Colerain Township with retail and office uses located along major arterial roadways. These corridors provide necessary shopping areas for the community and should be maintained as the primary commercial nodes of the Township.
- ✚ New development and redevelopment should meet the highest standards of quality and aesthetics because of the high visibility of the area and the impact such uses have on surrounding properties. Such standards should include a high level of buffering between residential and nonresidential uses.
- ✚ The Township encourages new concepts in commercial development including the creation of mixed-use centers that are developed with the pedestrian in mind while recognizing the dependence on the automobile. The development of such a mixed-use center should be designed to help create a township center for the community along Colerain Avenue. Such a mixed use center would also be an appropriate area for higher density housing that will create a support base for the commercial as well as provide alternative housing opportunities for residents.
- ✚ While the State has addressed some access management along Colerain Avenue, property owners and the Township should continue with the long-term incremental improvement of access and traffic flow along these corridors.

- ✚ The Township should set appropriate standards for development in these areas but recognize that they are addressing corridors that have almost fully developed and significant improvement may take a long-term approach. Such standards should address appropriate building size, setback and scale related to the specific commercial area and the proximity to residential uses.

Mixed Use Employment Centers

- ✚ Mixed use employment centers are characterized by a mixture of commercial, office and industrial uses with a focus on the creation of jobs and services in the Township. However, commercial uses should be limited to those providing services to the surrounding uses, and the Township should discourage the development of large-scale, freestanding retail developments in these areas as they are more appropriate in the commercial corridors.
- ✚ These activity centers should be subject to high-quality development standards but the Township also should recognize the need for accessory uses such as truck parking, loading docks and outdoor storage. Such standards should address appropriate building size, setback and scale related to the specific activity center and the proximity to residential uses.
- ✚ Increasing the buffering requirements is key to minimizing the impact of these nonresidential uses on any surrounding residential uses. A special focus should be placed on screening outdoor uses areas such as loading docks and outdoor storage.
- ✚ New development should have sufficient access for trucks and employee traffic. Access from secondary roads should be encouraged for the purposes of access management, but not when these access roads will create a maintenance burden.
- ✚ Mixed-use employment centers should have adequate access to water and sewer.
- ✚ An emphasis should be placed on “clean” businesses and industries that will help minimize the environmental impact on the surrounding uses and on the natural environment.

Character Areas

Colerain Township is a large community with diverse neighborhoods ranging from rural hillsides to high intensity commercial corridors. With this diversity, it is possible to look at the Township not only as a whole but at a slightly narrower scale of character areas where neighborhoods and developed areas share similar characteristics and issues. Colerain Township's Land Use Advisory Board originally divided the Township into review areas that were slightly modified to create the eleven character areas as illustrated in Map 3. Each of these areas is described in further detail, along with area specific guidelines and recommendations, in the following sections.

Area 1: Rural North/Dunlap

Area 2: Banklick Creek

Area 3: Bevis/ Pleasant Run

Area 4: Pebble Creek/ Dry Ridge

Area 5: Colerain Avenue

Area 6: Northbrook/ Groesbeck

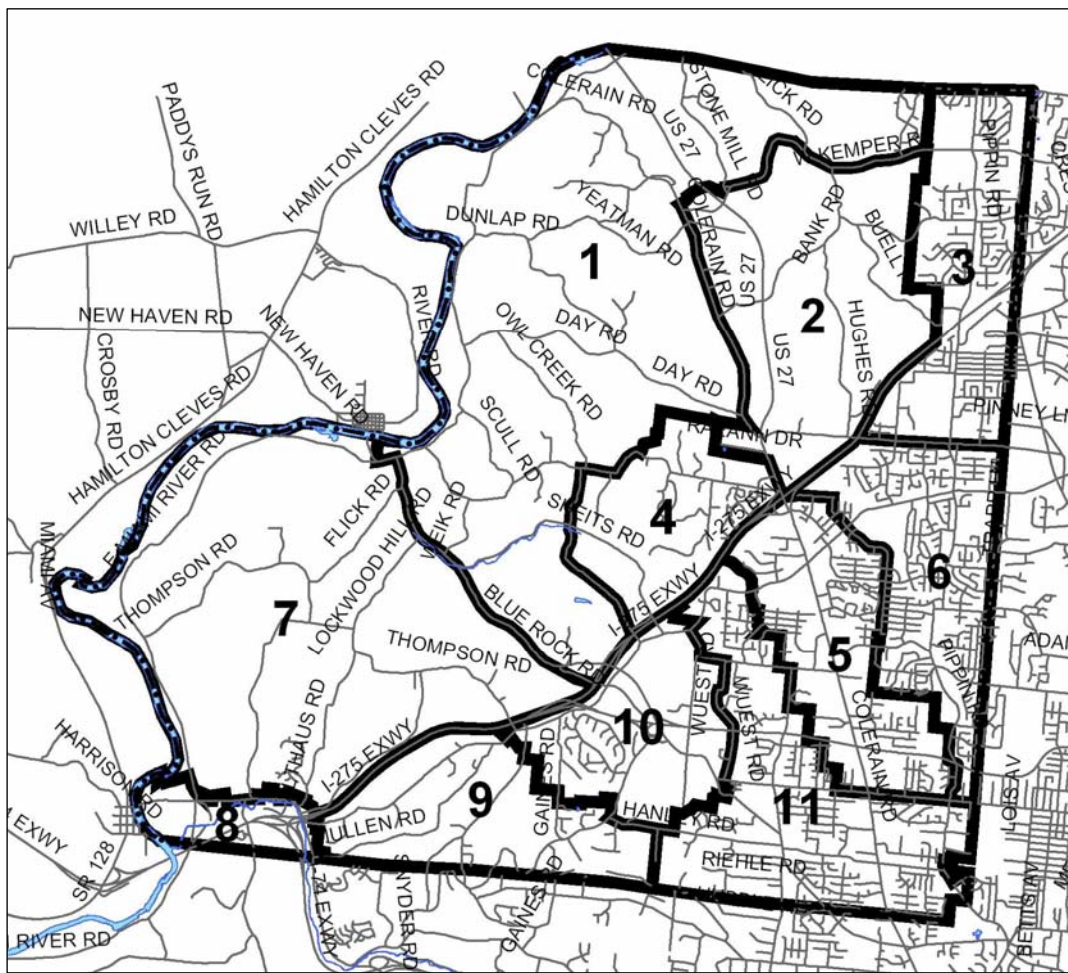
Area 7: Miami River South

Area 8: Harrison Avenue

Area 9: Daleview/ Peach Grove

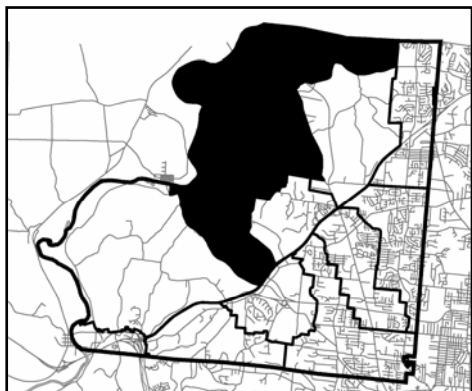
Area 10: Springdale/ Blue Rock

Area 11: White Oak



Map 4: Colerain Township Character Areas

Area 1: Rural North/Dunlap



The Rural North/Dunlap area is one of the more diverse character areas in Colerain Township. Encompassing most of the northwestern portion of the community, this area includes rural hillsides and properties, suburban residential subdivisions, the Proctor and Gamble complex, the Southern Ohio Dog and Game Protective Association, ballfields, Heritage Park and other distinct uses. Some development has occurred in this area, yet the hillsides, floodplains and the lack of centralized sewer have minimized development pressures.

The issues in this character area include environmental concerns such as preservation of hillsides and vegetation as well as the conservation of the Great Miami River corridor. These elements contribute to the character of this area and are an important component of the overall Township. There are also concerns over the expansion of industrial uses in the northern area, new gravel mining operations and the development of stacked apartments and stacked condominiums. Because of the rural nature of the area and the growing number of residential homes in the area, these types of uses pose significant impacts to the Township through traffic, noise, dust and the lack of buffering between incompatible uses.

The extension of water and sewer are also major considerations and concerns in this area, both for the potential financial impact on the property owner and on overall impact on the character of the area. The most pressing concern is the possibility of sewer, which could bring a wave of higher density development to an area with few roads and steep terrain. As discussed in the Existing Conditions and Trends Section (page 2), MSD does not plan to extend sewer into this area and there is little-to-no public support for sewer. However, if the Fort Scott treatment plant is constructed and turned over to MSD, a developer could pay for the extension of sewers into this area. In theory, even though the Township may oppose sewers, if a developer wishes to fund an infrastructure project, the Township would not have a say in the project. Although such a scenario is unlikely, it is important for this Plan to address the possibility of sewers.

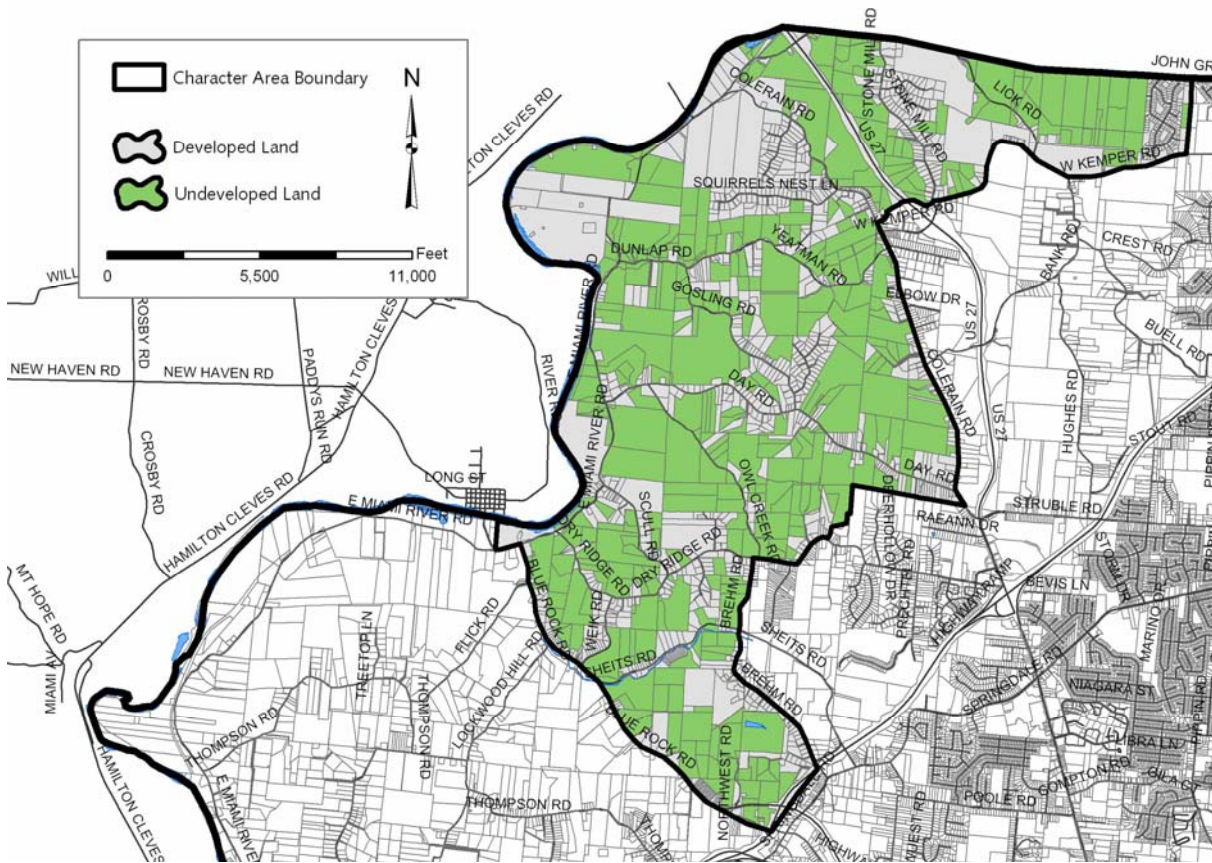
The Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) is planning to extend water lines into this area of the Township over the next five years but the plans are to install major transmission lines that will increase fire protection and to loop the system to improve the overall water system. These major lines will only run along a few major roads in this character area.

Public Comments

- ✚ No sewers or water – 93% of those surveyed were against sewers
- ✚ Larger lots – 67% of those surveyed were for a minimum of three or five acre lots
- ✚ Keep the rural character
- ✚ Preserve greenspace
- ✚ Keep the topography
- ✚ No more multi-unit developments

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Rural North/Dunlap Profile



Total Area: 7,231 Acres

% of Township: 26.2%

Undeveloped Area: 4,138 Acres

Unconstrained: 1,485 Acres

Constrained: 2,653 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)

Housing Units: 2,585 Units

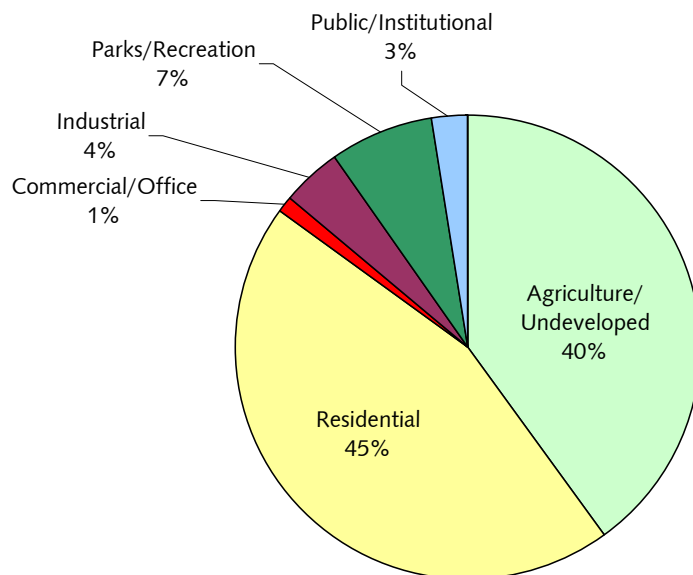
Population: 6,722 People

Land Capacity Acreage

Residential: 4,030 Acres

Commercial/Office: 1 Acre

Industrial: 108 Acres

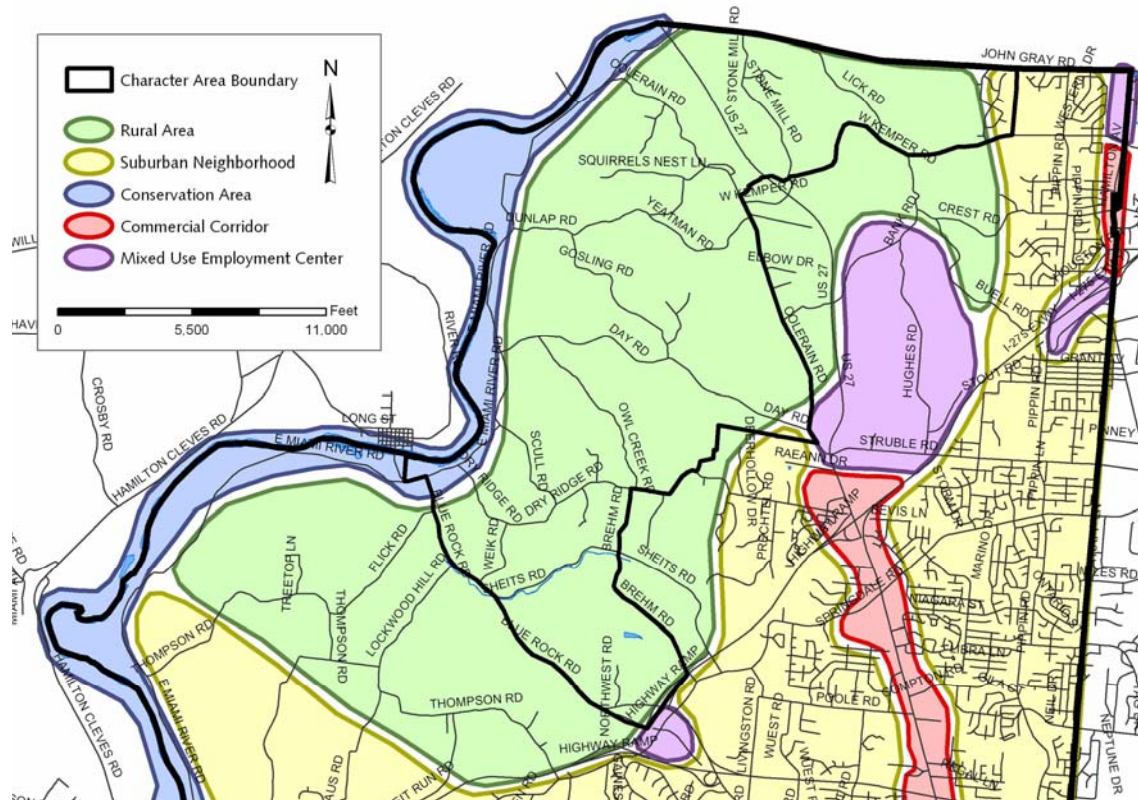


Rural North/Dunlap Existing Land Use*

* There are some existing properties used for gravel excavation but the total acreage is less than 0.1% of the total character area and as such is not reflected in the existing land use pie chart.

Vision

This area will continue to have a rural character with wooded hillsides, minimal development and the preservation of the natural elements found within Colerain Township. This area will provide opportunity for large-lot residential uses and rural living. Hillsides will be preserved in as natural a state as possible to prevent the potential for landslides and stormwater runoff problems. The Great Miami River will also be preserved in as natural a state as possible.







Development Policies

1. Discourage sewers in this area unless necessary as dictated by the Hamilton County General Health District or where it will provide service to an area surrounded by existing sewer lines and a majority of property owners request the sewer extension.
2. Coordinate planning efforts with the Hamilton County Engineer on any potential project involving Blue Rock Road to ensure that there will be minimal impact on the character of this area.
3. Acquire properties along the Great Miami River for conservation and flood protection.
4. Develop regulations to protect the hillsides and floodplains.
5. Work with the GCWW to coordinate any activity on their part when extending water lines to minimize the impact of the construction period and to provide residents with an avenue for discussion of questions. *Note: Because of Homeland Security regulations, specific information on the size and location of new water lines cannot be provided in this plan.*





Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of residential uses should not exceed one unit per three acres.
2. In instances where access to a centralized sewer system is available, the residential density should not exceed two units per acre. However, this density shall only apply to land not constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or more as calculated PRIOR to any clearing or cut and fill operations (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
3. The maximum density of land constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or by floodplains should be one unit per three acres without sewer and one unit per acre with sewer (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
4. Clustering of lots may be considered under the following guidelines (see Figure 3 in the Implementation Section):
 - There is no increase in the density or number of units permitted as described above.
 - No lot should be smaller than one acre in size in areas without sewer and ¼ acre in areas with sewer. The Health District may require larger lots for on-site sewage disposal upon their review of any proposed development.
 - Buildings should be located so the development will disturb only land and vegetation along the ridgetops or on the flattest area of the property. Slopes greater than 30% should not be disturbed.
 - Clustering in appropriate locations will minimize safety hazards and the potential for structural damage due to the soil types and slopes in the Township that pose a limitation of development.
5. The expansion of mining and excavation operations is not an appropriate use in this character area because of the growing number of residential uses and subdivisions along the East Miami River Road corridor.
6. New commercial and industrial uses as well as apartment buildings, stacked condominiums and other attached dwellings are not appropriate for this area because of development constraints and a lack of infrastructure such as sewer, water and roadways designed for such uses. Such high-density developments or developments with a potential for pollution could have a detrimental impact on the underlying sole-source aquifer.
7. A sanitary landfill and associated uses is appropriate within the confines of the current landfill boundaries. Expansion of such uses into this character area is not appropriate because of the potential proximity to a large number of residential uses.

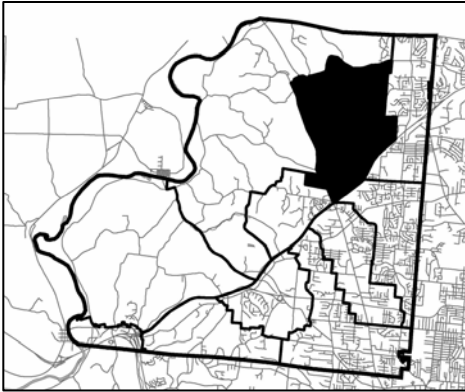
Appropriate Land Uses

-  Agriculture
-  Large Lot Residential
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Suburban or High Density Residential
 -  New Commercial or Industrial Uses
 -  New or Expanded Mining and Excavation Operations
 -  Expansion of the Landfill
-

Area 2: Banklick Creek



The Banklick Creek Character Area is currently the Township's largest planned area for new mixed-use employment development. This, along with the fact that this is also the area of the Township with the largest block of industrial zoned land opens up a great potential for economic development in northern Hamilton County. This character area is also the location of the Rumpke landfill and lower density residential housing situated on the frontage of major roads rather than in typical subdivisions.

While many people raise concerns over the landfill, there are other issues that people have identified in this area including problems with traffic along Colerain Avenue, especially around the interstate interchange, and stopping the continued expansion of commercial uses along the Colerain corridor. This is one of the few character areas where there is a mix of urbanized development in the south and a more rural character to the north along U.S. Route 27/Colerain Avenue.

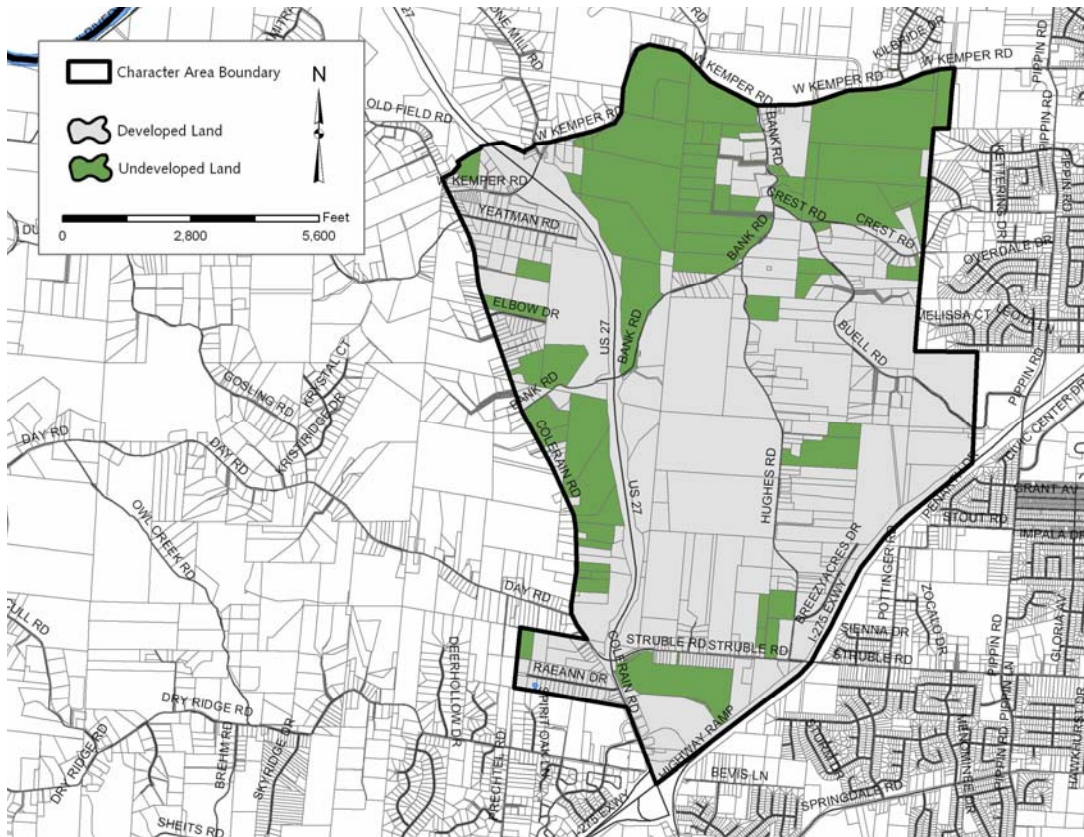
The prominent issue in this area of the Township is the presence of the Rumpke landfill. Residents acknowledge that the landfill is here, and that even if it was to close tomorrow, the landfill will continue to be a presence long into the future. Additionally, it is understood that the landfill operators have acquired the permits to allow for continued operation for approximately 17 to 20 years with the current boundaries of the existing landfill. The major problem is that while the landfill has been in the Township for more than 50 years, development in the last two decades has brought high-density residential development within close proximity to the site. In addition, up until recent years, it was the understanding of Township officials and residents that the land around the landfill was acquired for the purpose of buffering landfill operations. Now it is known that the land acquisition was part of an effort to further expand the landfill to Buell Road and to double the size of the current landfill. During these efforts, the residential zoning of these properties was declared unconstitutional because of their location adjacent to the landfill. From all of this information, it is clear that the current regulations are not effective for protecting residential properties from the impacts of a nearby sanitary landfill. It is also clear that there are groups strongly opposed to the continued expansion of the landfill and that there is a need for an improved buffer between nearby residential subdivisions and the landfill. The buffer should include open space or landscaping as well as the development of a transitional land use such as light industrial uses. The Township is currently planning to develop a strategic plan specific to this general area and the landfill to determine the appropriateness of the planned uses, legal strategies to address the potential expansion of the landfill and to identify the need for, and cost of extending any necessary infrastructure to the area.

Public Comments

- ✚ Concern over the impact of the landfill on surrounding properties (odor, property values, environmental and landslides)
- ✚ More light industrial uses; no heavy industrial uses.
- ✚ No expansion of landfill
- ✚ No further expansion of commercial uses north along Colerain Avenue
- ✚ Stormwater runoff problems
- ✚ Improved traffic management

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Banklick Creek Profile



Total Area: 2,695 Acres

% of Township: 9.8%

Undeveloped Area: 836 Acres

Unconstrained: 432 Acres

Constrained: 404 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)

Housing Units: 541 Units

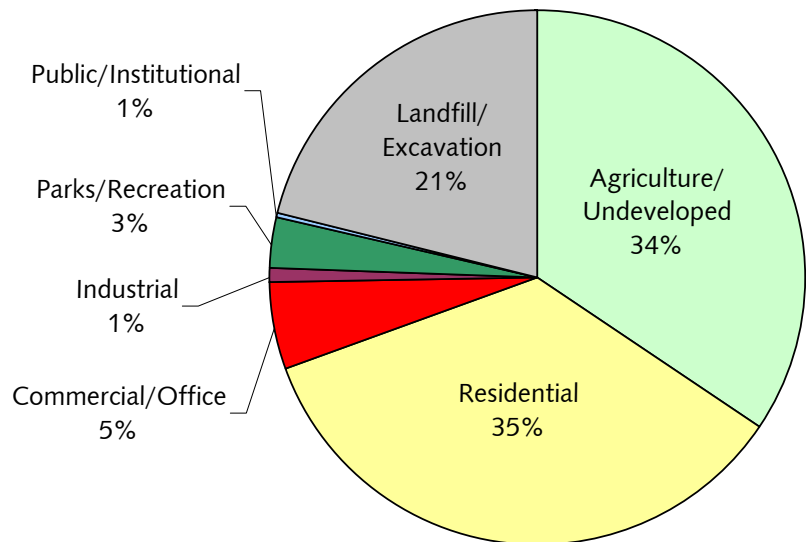
Population: 1,406 People

Land Capacity Acreage

Residential: 703 Acres

Commercial/Office: 0 Acres

Industrial: 133 Acres

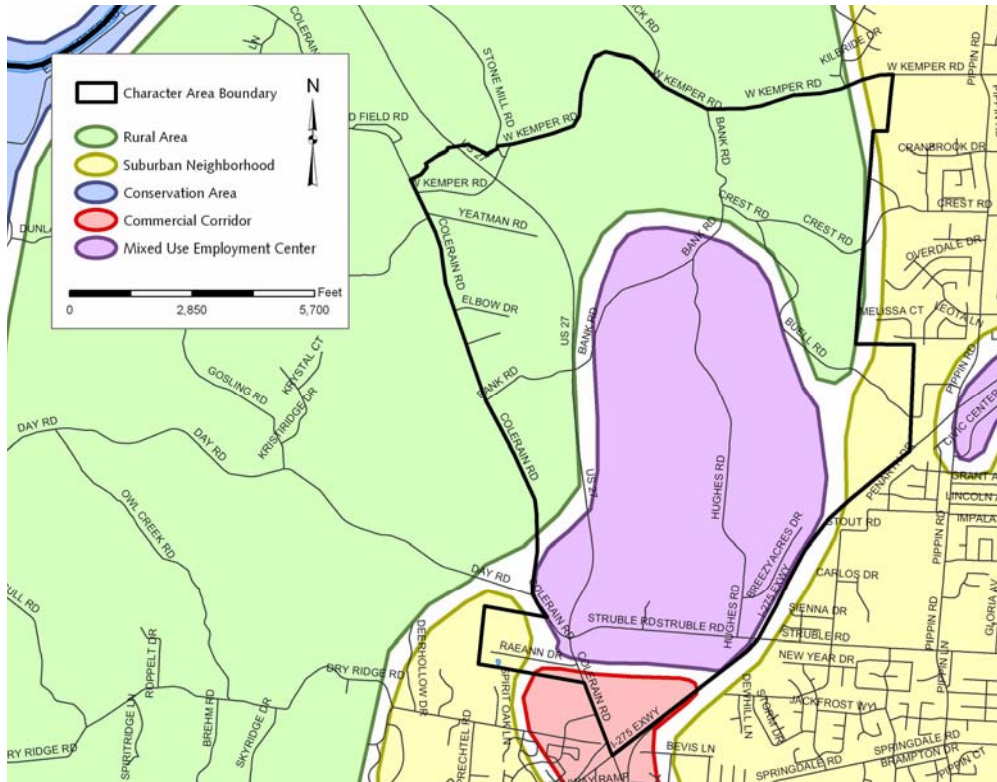


Banklick Creek Existing Land Use

Note: Land located around the landfill and currently owned by Rumpke is considered developed for the purpose of this summary.

Vision

This area will continue to be one that reflects both the urban and rural characters of Colerain Township. While most of the northern portion of this area will remain unsewered in the long-term, sewer and the expansion of infrastructure in the southern portion will help open opportunities for industrial expansion in the Township and thus increase the tax revenue generated by nonresidential uses. The Township accepts that the landfill is a part of the current community but desires that the landfill operations should continue only within the confines of the current landfill boundary which is roughly the area bounded by Colerain Avenue and Struble, Bank and Hughes Roads.



Development Policies

1. Work with appropriate agencies to encourage the extension of sewers and water in this area to promote economic development efforts in one of the few areas of the Township available for new nonresidential uses.
2. Develop a strategic plan for the landfill to determine appropriate legal strategies, constitutionally defensible land uses and zoning, and the potential expansion of necessary infrastructure. The purpose of this plan is to allow Colerain Township to complete detailed research into land use, zoning, legal, and other development issues related to the existing landfill, potential expansion of the landfill, and the impacts on surrounding properties. The results of the strategic plan could result in future changes in the recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan, the adopted Colerain Township Land Use Plan, and/or the Colerain Township Zoning Resolution.
3. Work with the Hamilton County Solid Waste District to identify effective alternatives to expanding the existing landfill such as transfer stations, recycling incentives, etc.




Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of residential uses should not exceed one unit per three acres in areas where access to sewer is not available.
2. Because of the proximity to the landfill, the density of residential development with access to sewer should not exceed one unit per acre.
3. Clustering of lots may be considered under the following guidelines (see Figure 3 in the Implementation Section):
 - There is no increase in the density or number of units permitted as described above.
 - No lot should be smaller than one acre in size in areas without sewer and ¼ acre in areas with sewer. The Health District may require larger lots for on-site sewage disposal upon their review of any proposed development.
 - Buildings should be located so the development will disturb only land and vegetation along the ridgetops or on the flattest area of the property. Slopes greater than 30% should not be disturbed.
 - Clustering in appropriate locations will minimize safety hazards and the potential for structural damage due to the soil types and slopes in the Township that pose a limitation of development.
4. A sanitary landfill and associated uses are appropriate within the confines of the current landfill boundaries. Expansion of such uses is not appropriate because of the potential proximity to a large number of residential uses in this area and the surrounding Character Areas.
5. Retail commercial uses are appropriate provided they are located along Colerain Avenue south of the Struble Road intersection.
6. Light industrial, office and employment centers are appropriate along Struble, Bank and Hughes Roads to create additional land for economic development and a land use transition between the landfill and nearby residential properties in an effort to address unconstitutional residential zoning.

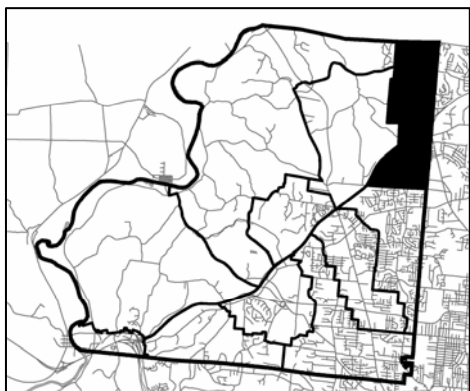
Appropriate Land Uses

-  Agriculture
-  Large Lot Residential
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace
-  Light Industrial, Office and Employment Centers

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Suburban or High Density Residential
 -  Retail Commercial
 -  Expansion of the Landfill
-

Area 3: Bevis/Pleasant Run



The Bevis/Pleasant Run area is a mixture of old and new with a range in the age of housing, older commercial uses along Hamilton Avenue and a new industrial area along Civic Center Drive. There also is a high concentration of public uses with three elementary schools and Northwest High School, the new Township fire station at Kemper and Pippin Roads, and Triple Creek Park.

Many of the residents who participated in the planning process felt that while the landfill is in a different area, they experience the negative effects of the landfill including noise and odors as well as a dislike for the general appearance of the landfill. There

is also a growing concern about the impact of development from neighboring communities including a sense of increasing criminal activity from outside the Township.

Beyond impacts from nearby development, the major issues that stem from development within this character area are the need for more property maintenance to ensure the stability of neighborhoods and a concern about the deteriorating appearance and uses along Hamilton Avenue. With increasing office and industrial uses on the north and southern portion of this corridor, there appears to be less of a demand for large-scale retail and more of a demand for office and industrial uses. Residents would like to see an improvement in the overall appearance of Hamilton Avenue before it negatively influences surrounding residential uses.

Public Comments

- ✚ Bad odors from the landfill
- ✚ Need for better property maintenance
- ✚ Increasing crime
- ✚ Tearing down abandoned or deteriorated buildings
- ✚ Stormwater runoff problems
- ✚ Improved traffic management
- ✚ Redevelopment of Hamilton Avenue

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Bevis/Pleasant Run Profile



Total Area: 1,768 Acres
 % of Township: 6.4%

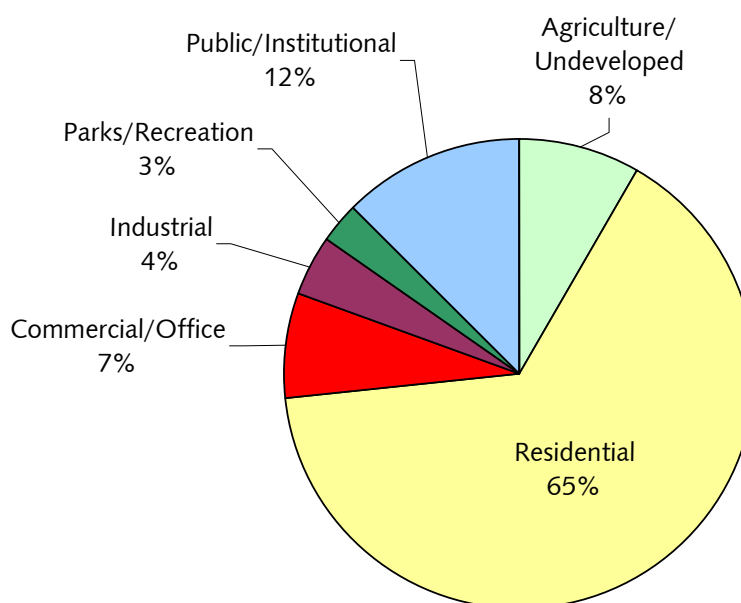
Undeveloped Area: 153 Acres
 Unconstrained: 142 Acres
 Constrained: 12 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)

Housing Units: 319 Units
 Population: 829 People

Land Capacity Acreage

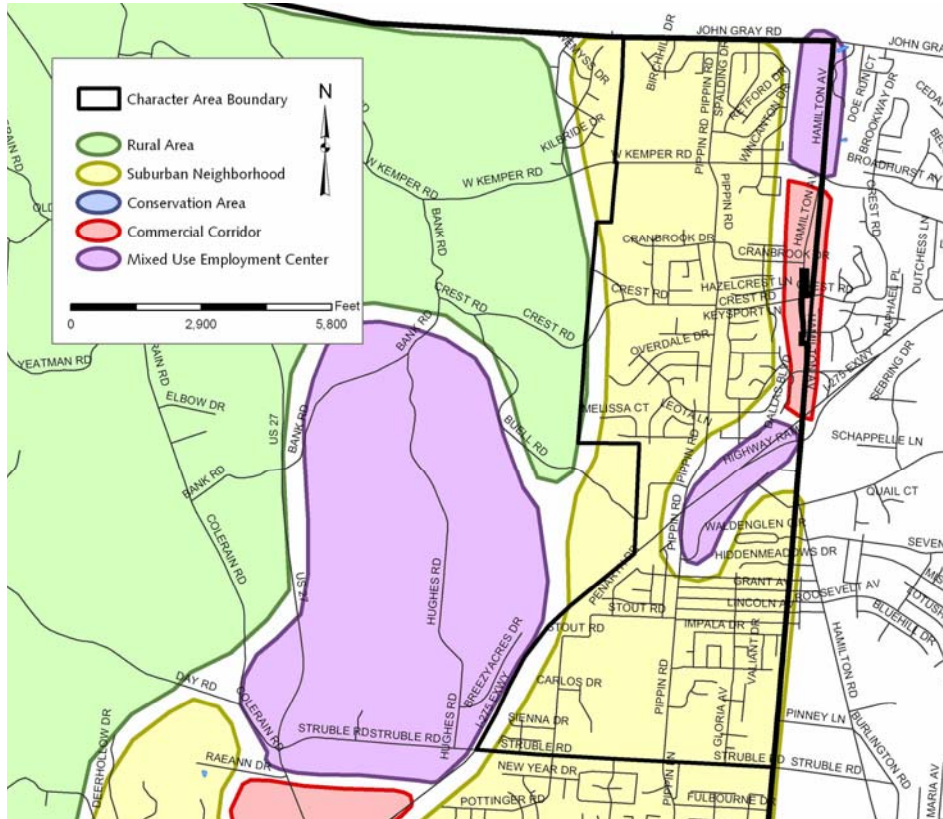
Residential: 139 Acre
 Commercial/Office: 14 Acre
 Industrial: 0 Acres



Bevis/Pleasant Run Existing Land Use

Vision

This area will be a mixed-use area of the Township with a commercial and industrial corridor along Hamilton Avenue and Civic Center Drive. Residential uses may also expand within this area, but this expansion will involve the infill of several large lots that still exist in this character area. New homes will be single-family detached housing in subdivisions that fit in with surrounding developments.









Development Policies

1. Encourage additional connections to the sewer system when they are requested by a majority of property owners or are mandated by the Hamilton County General Health District.
2. Prepare a redevelopment plan for the Hamilton Avenue corridor that evaluates opportunities for redevelopment and provides specific recommendations for land use and design guidelines for individual properties and assemblages of properties.
3. Continue to coordinate planning efforts with Springfield Township and the City of Forest Park for projects located within this area (e.g., Hamilton Avenue).
4. Develop a property maintenance program either at the Township level or through cooperation with a countywide enforcement program.
5. In new developments, include roadway connections to the maximum extent possible (no cul-de-sacs) and elements of pedestrian connectivity including sidewalks and trails.

Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of any new residential use should reflect development of similar uses within the character area.
2. Neighborhood commercial or small-scale office uses are appropriate at the intersection of Struble and Pippin Roads. Such uses should be limited to a building area of no more than 4,000 square feet each.
3. Minimize overall lot coverage by buildings and pavement in commercial and industrial areas to help prevent increasing stormwater problems. Balance the lot coverage with the need to capitalize on the minimal amount of nonresidential land available in the Township.
4. Development and redevelopment along the Hamilton Avenue corridor needs to include adequate landscaping and buffering between residential and nonresidential uses.
5. Restrict attached housing to existing developments with no expansion of such uses within this area.
6. Allow general commercial uses along Hamilton Avenue provided they do not exceed 40,000 square feet in building area. "Big-box" retail uses are not suitable for this area.
7. Light industrial, office and employment center uses should be located along Civic Center Drive and Hamilton Avenue.

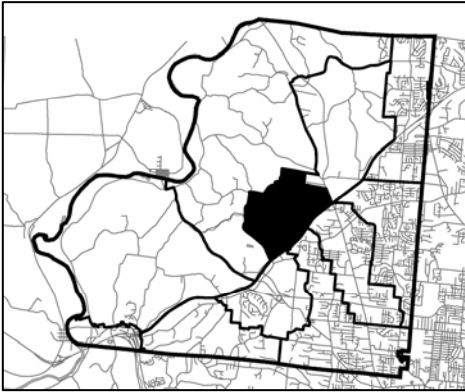
Appropriate Land Uses

-  Suburban Residential
-  Attached Residential
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace
-  Neighborhood Commercial and Small-Scale Offices
-  General Commercial Uses
-  Light Industrial, Office and Employment Centers

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Large-Scale Retail Commercial
-

Area 4: Pebble Creek/Dry Ridge



The area of Pebble Creek and Dry Ridge is one of the newer areas of the Township with the relatively new Lowe's development and the large, mixed-use development known as the Yacht Club. Two of the largest uses in the area are the Pebble Creek Golf Course/Country Club and the Clarence Newberry Wildlife Sanctuary, which together occupy the southern half of the character area. Other well-known uses in this area include the Donauschwaben Club, St. John's Catholic Church and School.

While considered one of the nicest neighborhoods in Colerain Township, some of the biggest traffic problems plague the area.

This area has direct access to Interstate 275 at the Colerain Avenue interchange, but because of the concentration of commercial uses and the proximity to the Rumpke landfill, this area along Colerain Avenue is often congested. Additionally, this character area is generally isolated from the major transportation network with the only direct access to the interstate or Colerain Avenue being from Dry Ridge Road.

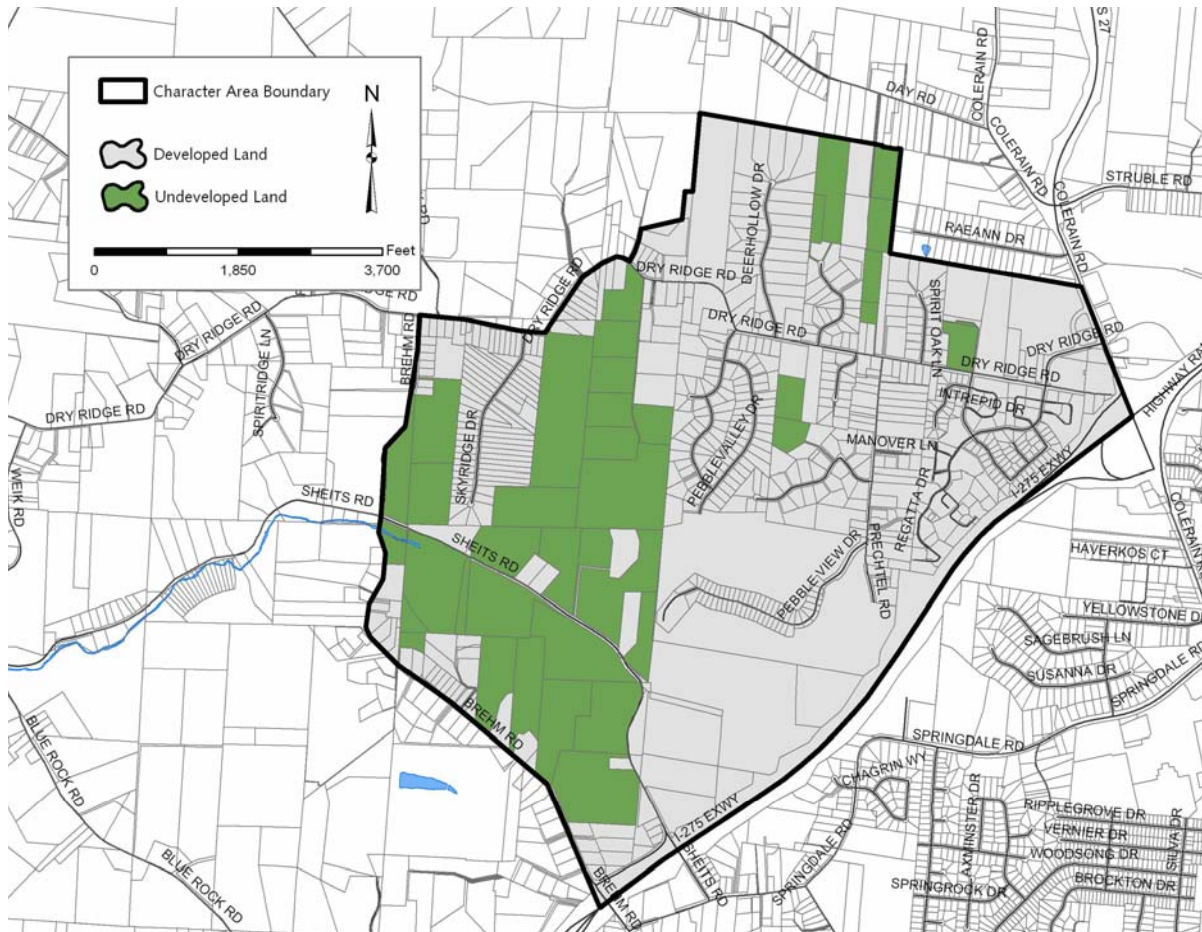
Sanitary sewer service is available to parts of this character area; however, service to this area requires the use of a pump station to either pump wastewater over the ridge to the southeastern side of Interstate 275 or to nearby package treatment plants. While MSD generally discourages the use of pump stations and package plants, some developers may choose to run lines to the current station to serve new development. This is a costly scenario because the majority of land that is still available for development is constrained by severe slopes, prevalent on the west side of this character area.

Public Comments

- ✚ No sewers or water – 73% of those surveyed were against sewers in this area. Eliminate pump stations
- ✚ Moderate lots – 48% of those surveyed were for a minimum of one acre lots and another 16% were for smaller lots
- ✚ Preserve greenspace
- ✚ Keep the topography
- ✚ No more multi-unit developments
- ✚ Do not allow the nonresidential uses to "creep" further north or west.

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Pebble Creek/Dry Ridge Profile



Total Area: 1,264 Acres
 % of Township: 4.6%

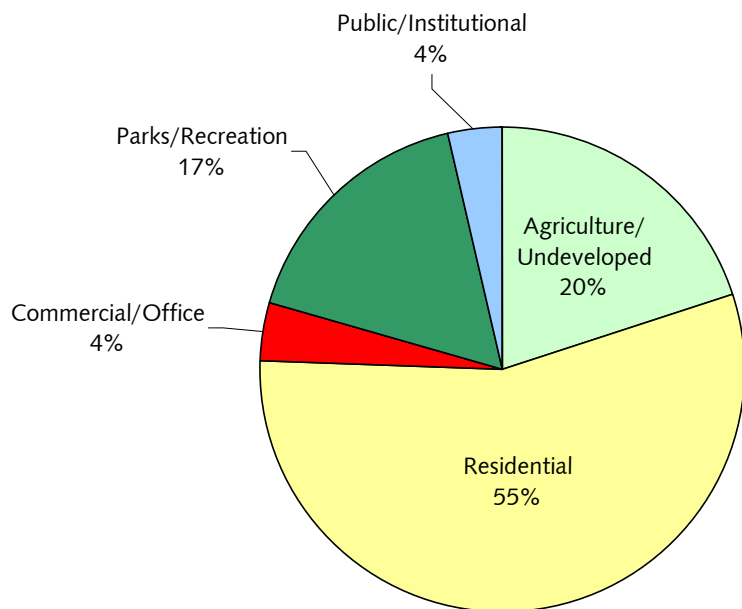
Undeveloped Area: 355 Acres
 Unconstrained: 108 Acres
 Constrained: 247 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)

Housing Units: 209 Units
 Population: 543 People

Land Capacity Acreage

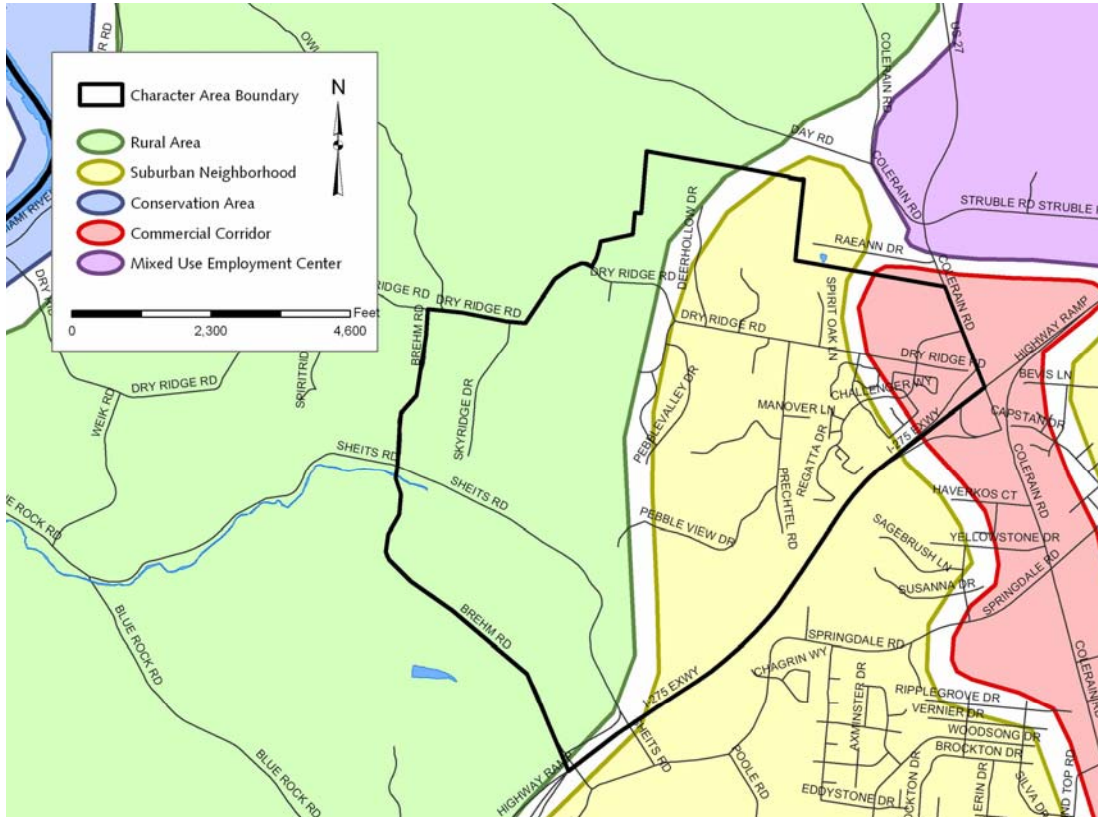
Residential: 355 Acres
 Commercial/Office: 0 Acres
 Industrial: 0 Acres



Pebble Creek/Dry Ridge Existing Land Use

Vision

Pebble Creek/Dry Ridge will be the terminus for much of the nonresidential growth along Colerain Avenue. Expansion of new high-density residential development will also be limited because of the prevalence of steep slopes on the western side of this area and the overall lack of access to major roadways. The focus of new development will be single-family detached housing on large lots or clustered development that will preserve an extensive amount of greenspace.








Development Policies

1. Discourage sewers in this area unless necessary as dictated by the Hamilton County General Health District or where it will provide service to an area surrounded by existing sewer lines and a majority of property owners request the sewer extension.
2. Strongly encourage additional roadway connections within all new developments.




Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of residential uses should not exceed one unit per three acres.
2. In instances where access to a centralized sewer system is available, the residential density should reflect surrounding developments. However, this density shall only apply to land not constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or more as calculated PRIOR to any clearing or cut and fill operations (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
3. The maximum density of land constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or by floodplains should be one unit per three acres without sewer and one unit per acre with sewer (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
4. Clustering of lots may be considered under the following guidelines (see Figure 3 in the Implementation Section):
 - There is no increase in the density or number of units permitted as described above.
 - No lot should be smaller than one acre in size in areas without sewer and ¼ acre in areas with sewer. The Health District may require larger lots for on-site sewage disposal upon their review of any proposed development.
 - Buildings should be located so the development will only disturb land and vegetation along the ridgetops or on the flattest area of the property. Slopes greater than 30% should not be disturbed.
 - Clustering in appropriate locations will minimize safety hazards and the potential for structural damage due to the soil types and slopes in the Township that pose a limitation of development.
5. Restrict attached housing to existing developments with no expansion of such uses within this area.
6. Commercial uses should be limited to Colerain Avenue south of the Struble Road intersection.
7. Office growth should be limited from expanding west of the Donauschwaben Club.

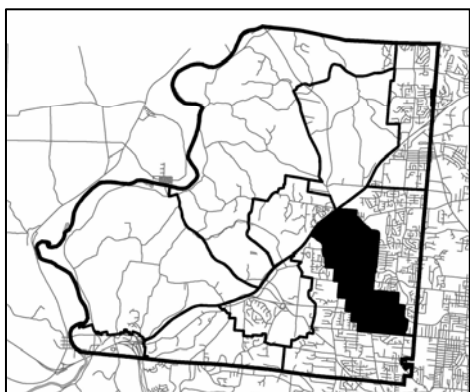
Appropriate Land Uses

-  Agriculture
-  Large Lot Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  New Attached Housing
 -  New Commercial and Office Uses
 -  Industrial
-

Area 5: Colerain Avenue



Colerain Avenue is the major commercial corridor for the Township with significant commercial nodes located at Colerain Avenue and the intersections of Interstate 275, Springdale Road, and Cross County Highway. In between these major intersections is a mix of smaller office and commercial uses. In addition to the commercial areas, this character area includes some of the residential developments influenced by the Colerain Avenue corridor. While some of this residential housing stock consists of older single-family homes behind the commercial uses, this area is also the location of a large percentage of the Township's multi-family housing developments.

In general, residents of the Township appreciate the availability of commercial shopping near their homes but many take issue with the general appearance of Colerain Avenue. Many residents identified the new medians along the northern half of the corridor as a negative issue for this area and would like to see, at a minimum, some reflectors and landscaping to 1), help soften the appearance and 2), improve visibility at night. Curb appeal continues to be an issue for many who would like to see new, lower signage, more greenspace and landscaping and improved appearances in older buildings. Part of the problem is that it has taken many years for the corridor to develop as it has and the Township has only had control of zoning since 1994. Because of state law, the Township cannot mandate zoning compliance for signage, landscaping or other requirements on existing buildings unless they have been vacant for over two years. This is solely because of the fact that existing buildings that are not in compliance with new zoning standards are considered legally nonconforming and state law mandates that the building or property must be vacant for two years prior to mandating full compliance. A key element in the future of Colerain Township will be encouraging the full redevelopment of underutilized sites and working with property owners to improve the appearance of their sites.

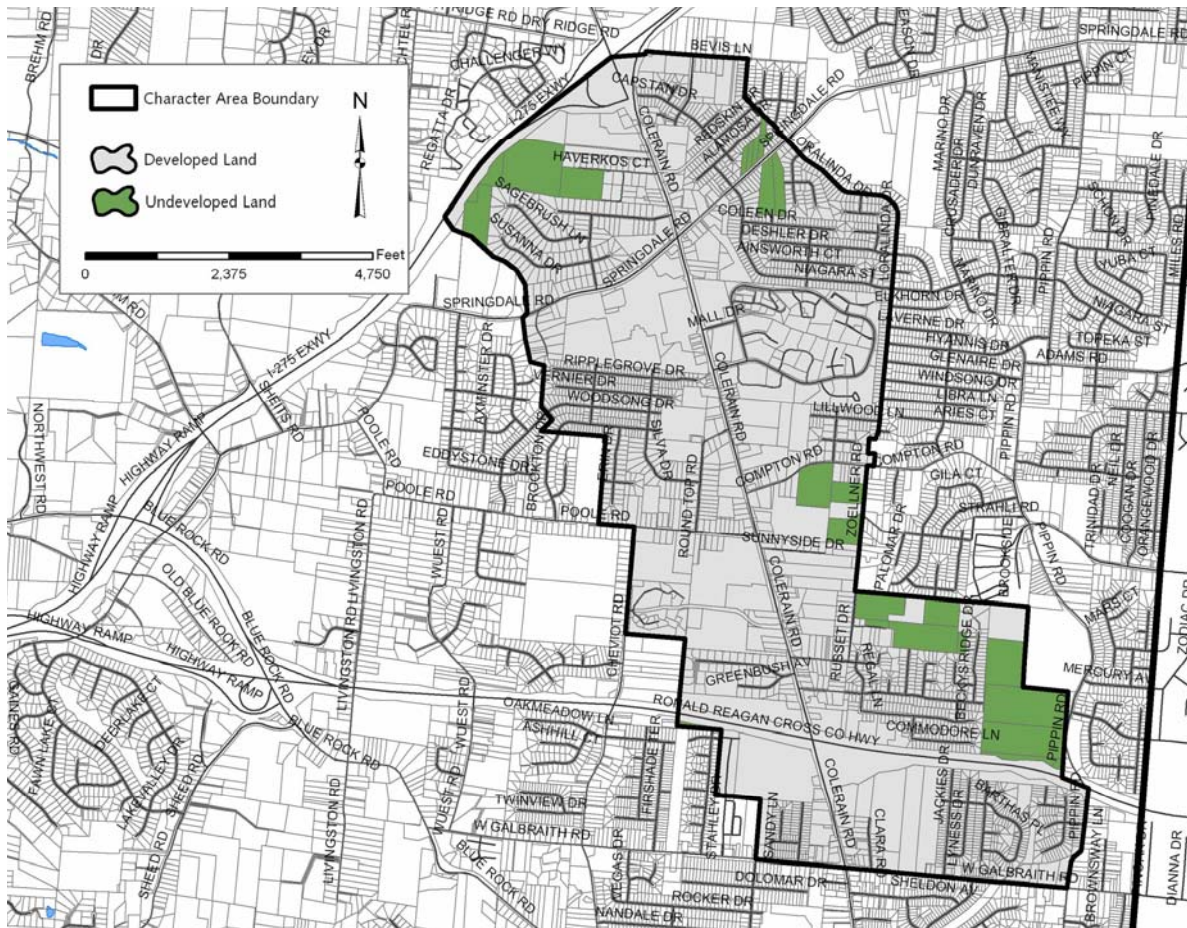
During the planning process, one of the recurring opportunities that people identify for this area is the possibility of developing a town center for the community that would include a well planned site with a small, village like character that might have small scale commercial and office uses along with some unique housing opportunities to help support the development. This type of concept was also envisioned by the Township Land Use Advisory Board in 2001 when they presented a Town Center Concept plan for the area west of Colerain Avenue and north of Springdale Road. The town center would serve as both a showpiece for the Township and as a central focal point that many residents feel the Township currently lacks.

Public Comments

- ✚ Higher percentage of greenspace for existing and new businesses
- ✚ Marketing for quality development (hotel and restaurants)
- ✚ Dislike the barriers/medians – hard to see
- ✚ Better economic development
- ✚ Architectural standards for buildings
- ✚ Town center or mixed use development
- ✚ Better landscaping and signage

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Colerain Avenue Profile



Total Area: 1,660 Acres
 % of Township: 6.0%

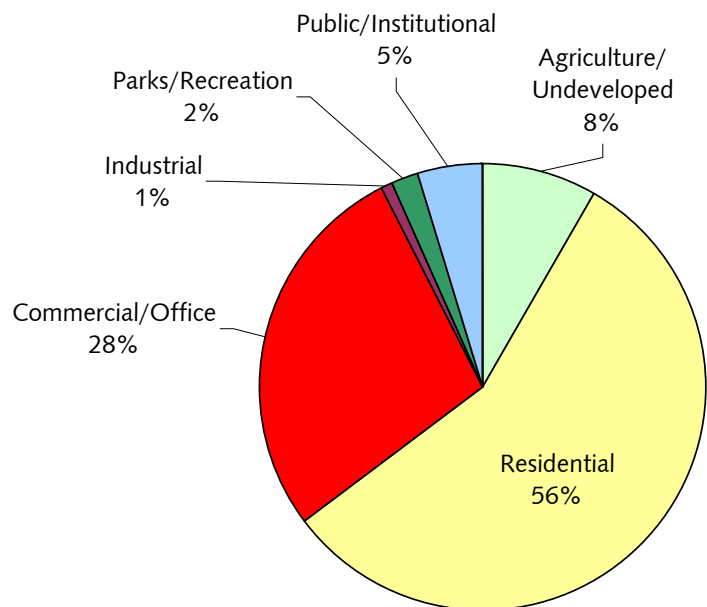
Undeveloped Area: 147 Acres
 Unconstrained: 109 Acres
 Constrained: 38 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)

Housing Units: 222 Units
 Population: 578 People

Land Capacity Acreage

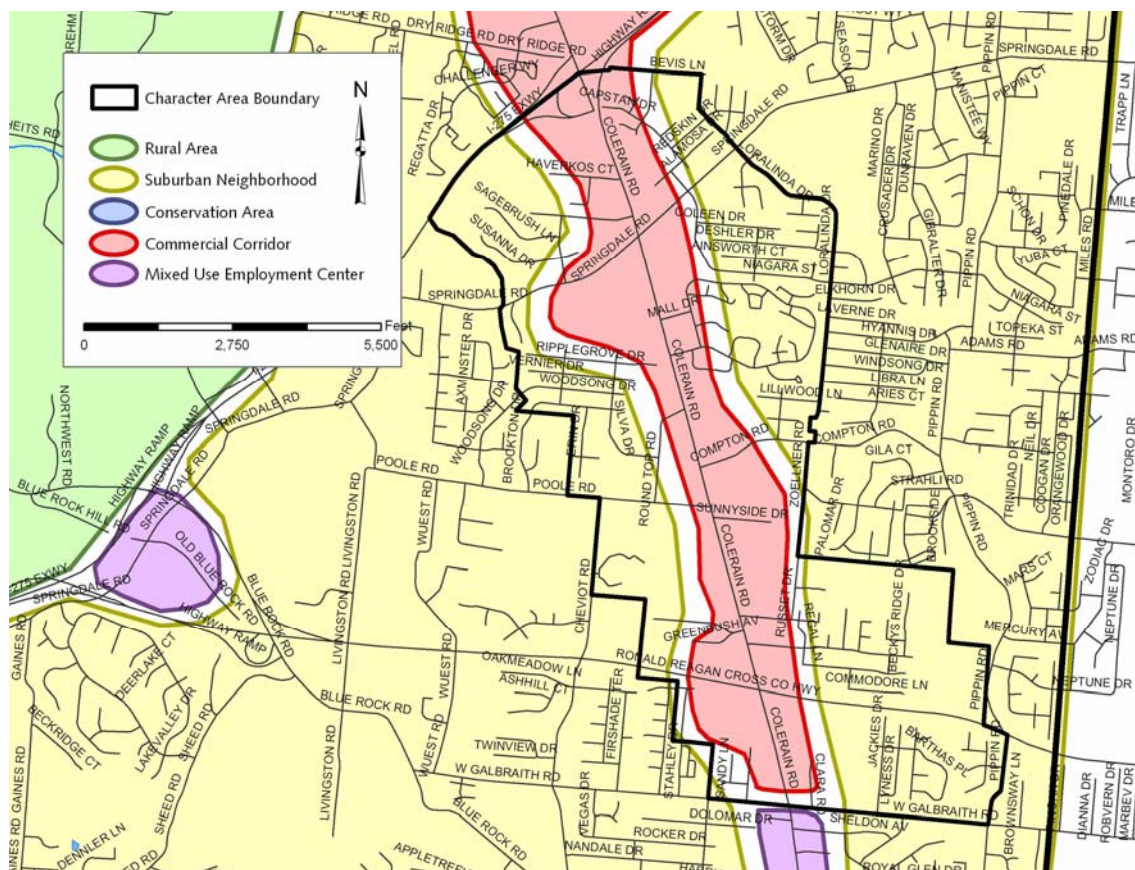
Residential: 95 Acres
 Commercial/Office: 5 Acres
 Industrial: 24 Acres



Colerain Avenue Existing Land Use

Vision

Colerain Avenue will continue to see signs of reinvestment and redevelopment and will be a quality commercial corridor for the region. Investments from the Township, such as tax-increment financing, and property owners along this corridor will, in the long-term, help stabilize and improve this important commercial center. The Township will take steps to work with property owners to help improve the curb appeal that will benefit both the value of property and the Township overall. Colerain Avenue will encompass a mixture of large scale and small-scale retail and office space with the creation of a town center that will create a positive identity for Colerain Township.



Development Policies

1. Encourage sewers in this area where the improvements will complete the development of the overall sewer system.
2. Strengthen development standards for the entire corridor to include appropriate levels of buffering between land uses and increase the overall standards of appearance. Such standards should include thresholds for when redevelopment needs comply with the new standards.
3. Develop special zoning standards for large scale or big-box commercial and office uses through distinct commercial districts.
4. Implement a property maintenance program for the nonresidential uses along this corridor.

5. Strongly encourage the use of access roads and driveways between adjacent uses to improve traffic flow along Colerain Avenue.
6. Create methods of dealing with stormwater management through use of greenspaces, minimal lot coverage and landscaping to absorb the runoff. Also, continue buying out flood prone properties along the West Fork Mill Creek.
7. Continue the Township's efforts to coordinate with the Ohio Department of Development to improve the appearance and visibility of the center medians and to improve traffic flow along the entire corridor.

Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of any new residential uses should reflect developments of similar uses within the character area.
2. Single-family subdivisions should gain access from streets other than Colerain Avenue.
3. General commercial and office uses are appropriate provided they do not extend further to the east and west along the arterials feeding off Colerain Avenue.
4. Industrial uses are not appropriate in this area of Colerain Avenue but are appropriate in other areas along Colerain Avenue, south of West Galbraith Road.
5. Encourage the development of a mixed-use development or town center along the Colerain Avenue corridor that will incorporate a pedestrian scale environment with a mixture of commercial, office and high-density residential uses. Such a development should be designed to create a focal point for the Township.

Appropriate Land Uses

-  Suburban Residential
-  Attached Housing
-  General Commercial and Office Uses
-  Mixed Use Development including Residential, Office and Commercial Uses
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Industrial Uses
-







Area 6: Northbrook/Groesbeck



The areas of Northbrook and Groesbeck have the highest concentration of the oldest neighborhoods in Colerain Township. Over the years, commercial and industrial areas have popped up along Pippin Road and many of these areas are showing their age with a lack of investment and deteriorating appearances. While most of the housing is very old, the housing stock is generally considered to be in solid shape and affordable to many households. Additionally, because of the high level of roadway connectivity, residents feel that there are few problems with traffic congestion.

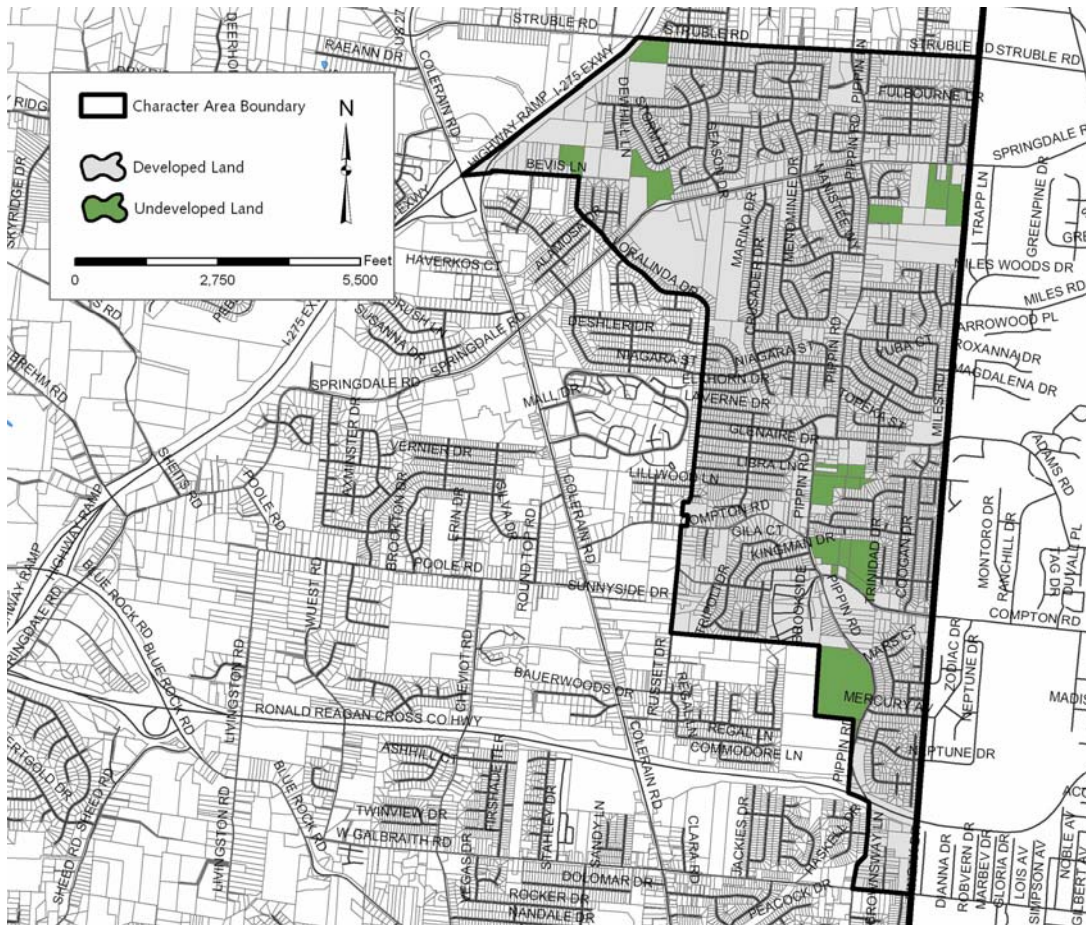
Many residents have strong ties to these neighborhoods and would like to see them maintained as high quality, stable neighborhoods. However, these same residents have noted that one of the biggest problems in this area revolves around property maintenance. Others have noted that there seems to be an increasing number of vacant properties and properties that appear abandoned with no continual maintenance. The Township has attempted to spark some redevelopment in the area through the establishment of a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) in parts of these neighborhoods but to date, no developer has shown interest in tearing down older homes and rebuilding in large numbers. This is not to say that no new development is occurring in the area and in fact, many property owners are reinvesting in their properties through rebuilds or large rehabilitation projects.

Public Comments

-  Need for better property maintenance
-  Increasing crime
-  Tearing down abandoned or deteriorated buildings
-  Stormwater runoff problems
-  Improved traffic management, especially along Pippin Road
-  Redevelopment of commercial and industrial nodes along Pippin Road

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Northbrook/Groesbeck Profile



Total Area: 1,748 Acres
 % of Township: 6.3%

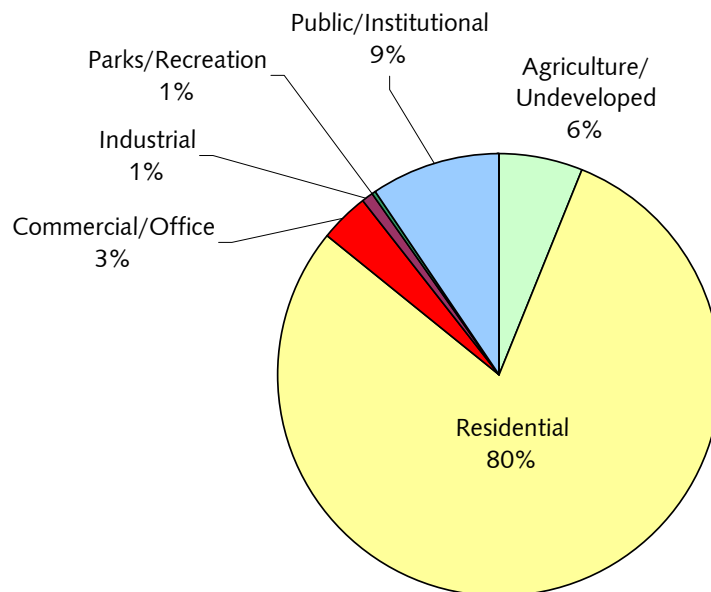
Undeveloped Area: 112 Acres
 Unconstrained: 97 Acres
 Constrained: 15 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)

Housing Units: 198 Units
 Population: 511 People

Land Capacity Acreage

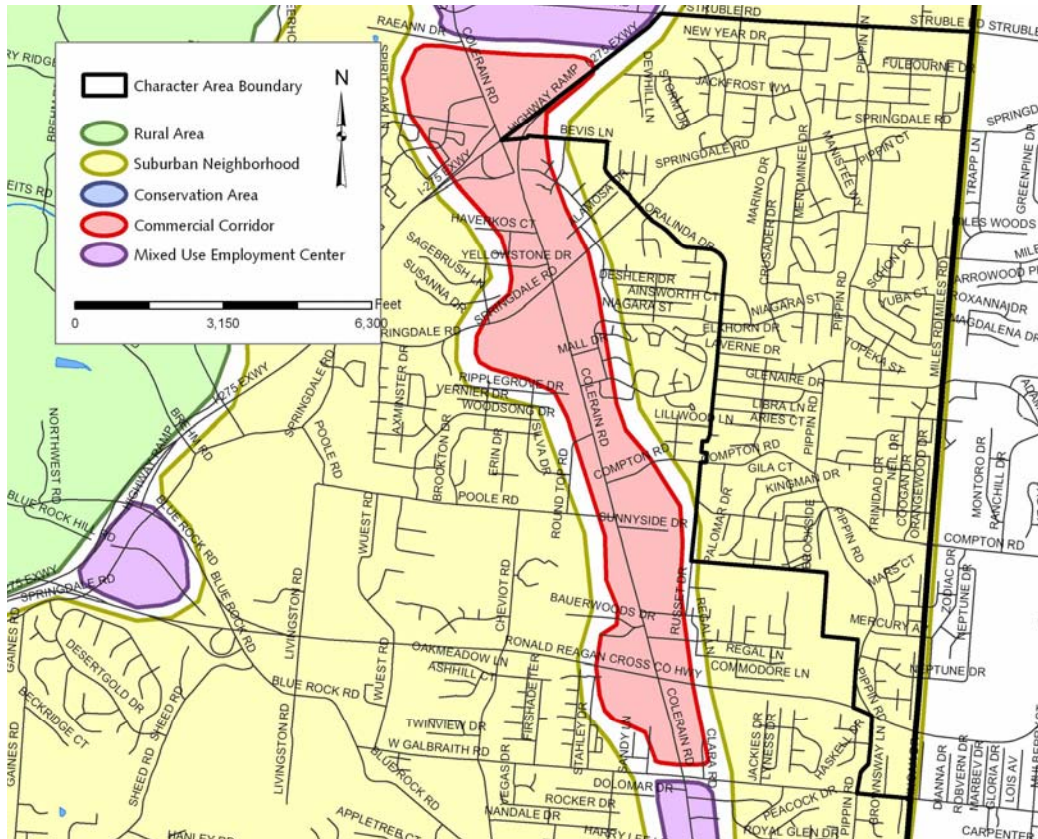
Residential: 88 Acres
 Commercial/Office: 11 Acres
 Industrial: 13 Acres



Northbrook/Groesbeck Existing Land Use

Vision

The Northbrook/Groesbeck area will be a strong residential area of the Township providing housing opportunities to a wide range of households. Existing development in this area is at a much higher density than the remainder of the Township, which will positively add to the range of housing types and options available to residents. In addition to residential areas, reinvestment in the commercial nodes of this character area will help support nearby housing without requiring nearby residents to travel to Colerain Avenue or other larger commercial areas for day-to-day necessities.



Development Policies

1. Encourage sewers in this area where the improvements will complete the development of the overall sewer system.
2. Develop a property maintenance program either at the Township level or through cooperation with a countywide enforcement program.
3. In new developments, include roadway connections to the maximum extent possible (no cul-de-sacs) and elements of pedestrian connectivity including sidewalks and trails.
4. Consider developing a parks and recreation plan that can address the lack of park and recreational facilities in some areas of the Township including this character area.
5. Create methods of dealing with stormwater management through use of greenspaces, minimal lot coverage and landscaping to absorb the runoff. Also, continue buying out flood prone properties along the West Fork Mill Creek.


Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of any new residential use should reflect development of similar uses within the character area.
2. Attached housing is appropriate in this area. Minor expansions of such uses should be permitted in this area.
3. Neighborhood commercial or small-scale office uses are appropriate at the intersection of Adams and Pippin Roads as well as Compton and Pippin Roads. Such uses should be limited to a building area of no more than 4,000 square feet each and these areas should not expand beyond the current property boundaries.
4. In the long-term, light industrial uses are not appropriate at the intersection of Compton and Pippin Roads and should move to a more appropriate industrial location. This area can then be used for appropriate neighborhood commercial or office uses.

Appropriate Land Uses

-  Suburban Residential
-  Attached Housing
-  General Commercial and Office Uses
-  Mixed Use Development including Residential, Office and Commercial Uses
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Industrial Uses
-

Area 7: Miami River South



Like the Rural North/Dunlap character area, the Miami River South area makes up the other, largely rural part of the Township. This area is rural in large part because of the prevalence of steep slopes and floodplains that have thus far posed constraints to development. This area is also the location of several industrial uses, a gravel pit and a composting center, which will soon close after the operation moves to Struble Road, that are all located along East Miami River Road.

This area shares similar characteristics to the northern area and residents of this area share similar concerns regarding the potential for sewer or the clearing of hillsides. Residents have voiced concerns over the industrial and excavation uses and the potential development of multi-family apartment buildings near Harrison Avenue. Because of the rural nature of the area and the growing number of residential homes in the area, these types of uses pose significant impacts to the Township through traffic, noise, dust and the lack of buffering between non-compatible uses. In almost all cases, the residents have come together to state their desire to maintain this area as a rural area with large lots and the preservation of the wooded hillsides. At the same time, there is the prospect of the Fort Scott sewer plant and improvements to Blue Rock Road that could open some of the area to development. Residents would discourage these things because of the financial impact on property owners and the impacts development would have on the character of the area.

Unlike the Rural North area, part of this area does have access to sewer lines, brought on largely by developers who have paid to extend the lines up Althaus Road and a part of Forfeit Run. Because of the topography of the southern portion of this area, sewer could serve some of this character area over the next 20 years opening the possibility of additional development. This includes the area shown as Suburban Neighborhoods in the Land Use Framework Map and is based on the ability to gravity feed sewer to the Taylor Creek Treatment Plant on Harrison Avenue. This plan addresses such possibility of sewer service.

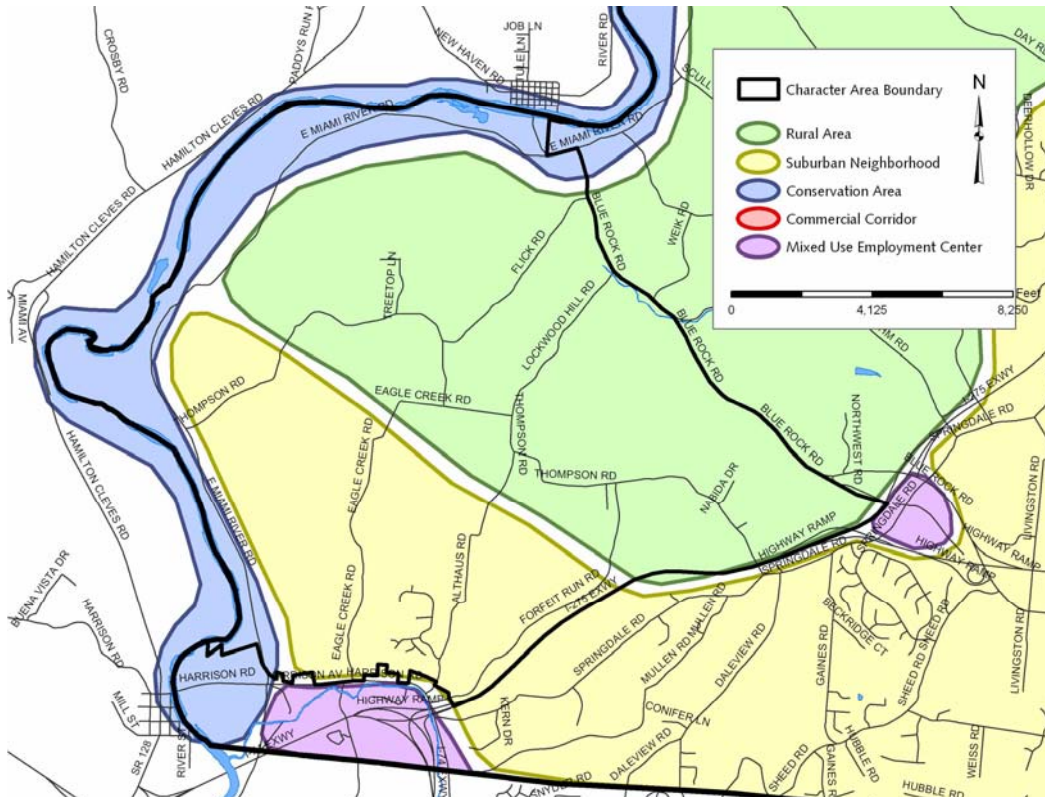
Public Comments

- ✚ No sewers or water – 89% of those surveyed were against sewers
- ✚ Larger lots – 65% of those surveyed were for a minimum of three or five acre lots
- ✚ Keep the rural character
- ✚ Preserve greenspace
- ✚ Keep the topography
- ✚ No more multi-unit developments

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Vision

The Miami River South Area will include both an area for new growth and an area for the protection of the Township rural community. With sewer somewhat readily available, the land surrounding the Harrison Avenue corridor will see more pressure for development and will be better suited for such development. The Township should work with emphasis on development in this southern portion while protecting the rural characteristics of the remaining character area by discouraging large subdivisions and the extension of sewer.







Development Policies

1. Discourage sewers in this area unless necessary as dictated by the Hamilton County General Health District or where it will provide service to an area surrounded by existing sewer lines and a majority of property owners request the sewer extension.
2. Coordinate planning efforts with the Hamilton County Engineer on any potential project with Blue Rock Road to ensure that there will be minimal impact on the character of this area.
3. Acquire properties along the Great Miami River for conservation and flood protection.
4. Develop regulations to protect the hillsides and floodplains.
5. Work with the GCWW to coordinate any activity on their part when extending water lines to minimize the impact of the construction period and to provide residents with an avenue for discussion of questions. *Note: Because of Homeland Security regulations, specific information on the size and location of new water lines cannot be provided in this plan.*




Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of residential uses should not exceed one unit per three acres.
2. In instances where access to a centralized sewer system is available, the residential density should not exceed two units per acre. However, this density shall only apply to land not constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or more as calculated PRIOR to any clearing or cut and fill operations (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
3. The maximum density of land constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or by floodplains should be one unit per three acres without sewer and one unit per acre with sewer (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
4. Clustering of lots may be considered under the following guidelines (see Figure 3 in the Implementation Section):
 - There is no increase in the density or number of units permitted as described above.
 - No lot should be smaller than one acre in size in areas without sewer and ¼ acre in areas with sewer. The Health District may require larger lots for on-site sewage disposal upon their review of any proposed development.
 - Buildings should be located so the development will only disturb land and vegetation along the ridgetops or on the flattest area of the property. Slopes greater than 30% should not be disturbed.
 - Clustering in appropriate locations will minimize safety hazards and the potential for structural damage due to the soil types and slopes in the Township that pose a limitation of development.
5. The expansion of mining and excavation operations is not an appropriate use in this character area because of the growing number of residential uses and subdivisions along the East Miami River Road corridor.
6. New commercial and industrial uses as well as apartment buildings, stacked condominiums and other attached dwellings are not appropriate for this area because of development constraints and a lack of infrastructure such as sewer, water and roadways designed for such uses. Such high-density developments or developments with a potential for pollution could have a detrimental impact on the underlying sole-source aquifer.

Appropriate Land Uses

-  Agriculture
-  Large Lot Residential
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Suburban or High Density Residential
-  New Commercial or Industrial Uses
-  New or Expanded Mining and Excavation Operations

Area 8: Harrison Avenue



Harrison Avenue is a major gateway into the community but it currently does not provide a very attractive view of the community with a hodge podge of land uses and significant problems with traffic congestion. Within this area is a mix of old commercial and industrial sites, many with poor outdoor storage, along with large recreational uses such as the Westside Soccer Complex and the Miamitown Sports Complex.

In addition to the land use issues, this is one of the areas of the Township affected greatly by the periodic flooding of the Great Miami River. In a major storm event, floodwaters can block traffic along Harrison Avenue and East Miami River Road, which

cuts off some of the businesses. Because the area is very low-lying, flooding will also push a lot of debris from the river up into the area posing issues with continual clean up.

While residents identified many negative aspects of this area, there are also numerous positive opportunities for the area. As stated earlier, this is one of the major gateways into Colerain Township and into the Cincinnati region itself. Harrison Avenue provides direct access to both Interstates 275 and 74, which could be a major attraction to new business looking for easy access to the transportation network.

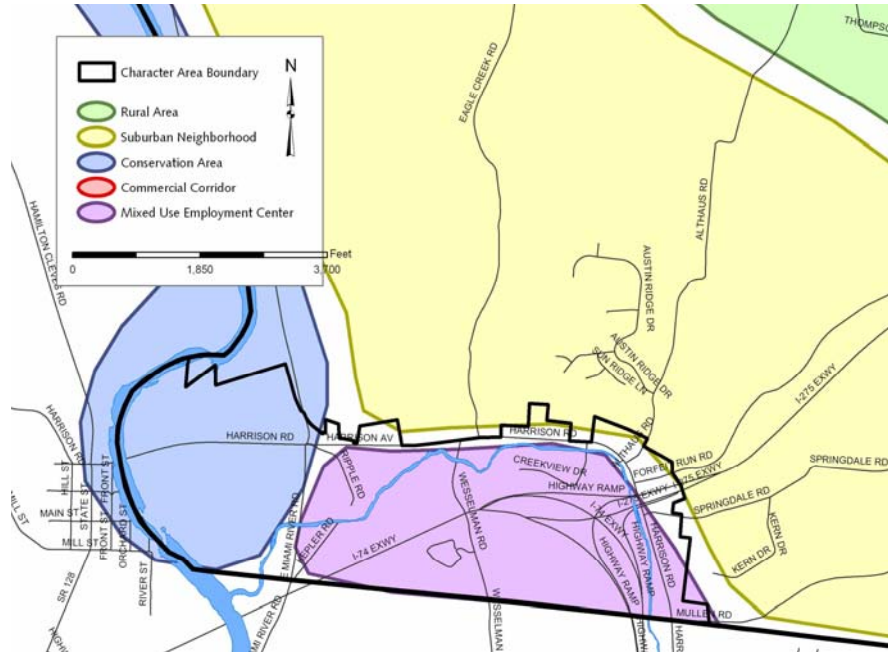
Public Comments

- ✚ Sewers and water may be appropriate – 54% of those surveyed were for sewers
- ✚ Moderate lots – 32% of those surveyed were for a minimum of one unit per acre and 42% were for higher densities of 2 to 3 units per acre
- ✚ This area is hit hard by flooding from the Great Miami River
- ✚ Avoid new retail uses
- ✚ There is a need for a lot of clean-up in this area.
- ✚ Poor outdoor storage and a need for more buffering

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Vision

Harrison Avenue will be a major gateway into the community that will show all of the best aspects of Colerain Township within a very small area. This area will be an employment center with new businesses and industries that will benefit from direct access to the interstate. Improved development standards and the redevelopment of underutilized sites will help to improve the overall appearance of the area while preserving the low-lying areas in as natural state as possible.



Development Policies

1. Encourage sewers in this area where the improvements will complete the development of the overall sewer system.
2. Strengthen development standards for the entire corridor to include appropriate levels of buffering between land uses and increase the overall standards of appearance. Such standards should include thresholds for when redevelopment needs comply with the new standards.
3. Develop special standards that will allow outdoor storage but eliminate, or utilize sound planning principles to mitigate, the visual impact of such storage on this area and surrounding areas.
4. Implement a property maintenance program for the nonresidential uses along this corridor.
5. Strongly encourage the use of access roads and driveways between adjacent uses to improve traffic flow along Harrison Avenue.
6. Acquire properties along the Great Miami River and Taylor Creek for conservation and flood protection.
7. Develop regulations to protect the hillsides and floodplains.
8. Work with neighboring Green Township to identify any activities that the communities can coordinate toward the improvement of the Harrison Avenue corridor including potential traffic improvements.



Land Use Guidelines

1. In cases where access to a centralized sewer system is available, the residential density should not exceed two units per acre for detached housing and three units per acre for attached housing. However, this density shall only apply to land not constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or more as calculated PRIOR to any clearing or cut and fill operations (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
2. Attached housing developments should be used as a transitional land use between nonresidential uses and lower density residential uses.
3. The maximum density of land constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or by floodplains should be one unit per three acres without sewer and one unit per acre with sewer (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
4. Clustering of lots may be considered under the following guidelines (see Figure 3 in the Implementation Section):
 - There is no increase in the density or number of units permitted as described above.
 - No lot should be smaller than one acre in size in areas without sewer and ¼ acre in areas with sewer. The Health District may require larger lots for on-site sewage disposal upon their review of any proposed development.
 - Buildings should be located so the development will only disturb land and vegetation along the ridgetops or on the flattest area of the property. Slopes greater than 30% should not be disturbed.
 - Clustering in appropriate locations will minimize safety hazards and the potential for structural damage due to the soil types and slopes in the Township that pose a limitation of development.
5. The flood prone areas should be preserved as public, natural or recreation uses to the fullest extent possible.
6. General commercial are appropriate in this area but should be limited to buildings of less than 40,000 square feet because larger-scale commercial uses are more appropriate along the commercial corridors in other areas of the Township.
7. Light industrial and office uses are appropriate uses provided they are outside of the floodplain or are protected from periodic flooding.

Appropriate Land Uses

-  Suburban Residential
-  Attached Housing
-  General Commercial Uses
-  Offices
-  Light Industrial Uses
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Heavy Industrial Uses
-  Mining and Excavation

Area 9: Daleview/Peach Grove



An area with decent access to the transportation network and some access to sewer has led this to be one of the hottest areas for new development in recent years. At the same time, this is an area with older, established homes and areas without sewer, which lends itself to differing styles of development.

While new development is occurring in this area, the character of this area remains largely that of single-family residential homes with minimal multi-family developments, which is the direction that several residents advocated during the public input process. Another concern regarding the type of development in this area is the apparent conflict between zoning in Green Township and

zoning in Colerain Township. This issue is especially difficult when there is a push by residents to protect the natural character of the area without seeing hillsides stripped of vegetation.

Infrastructure in this area is already in place or regional agencies are in the process of extending them into this area as MSD is with a sewer extension along Sheed Road. With the location of this area in relationship to the sewer treatment plant, it is likely that this area will see sewer over the next 20 years and water is already essentially in place. This will be one area where the plan must provide a decisive vision for new development to accommodate property rights without sacrificing the character of the area.

Public Comments

- ✚ Maintain the semi-rural character with larger lots and setbacks. Increase lot sizes to one unit per one or two acres.
- ✚ Restrict higher density developments
- ✚ Encourage water service but limit sewer expansion
- ✚ Keep the topography
- ✚ Property maintenance issues
- ✚ Concerns for the different zoning in Green Township versus Colerain Township

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Daleview/Peach Grove Profile



Total Area: 1,562 Acres
 % of Township: 5.7%

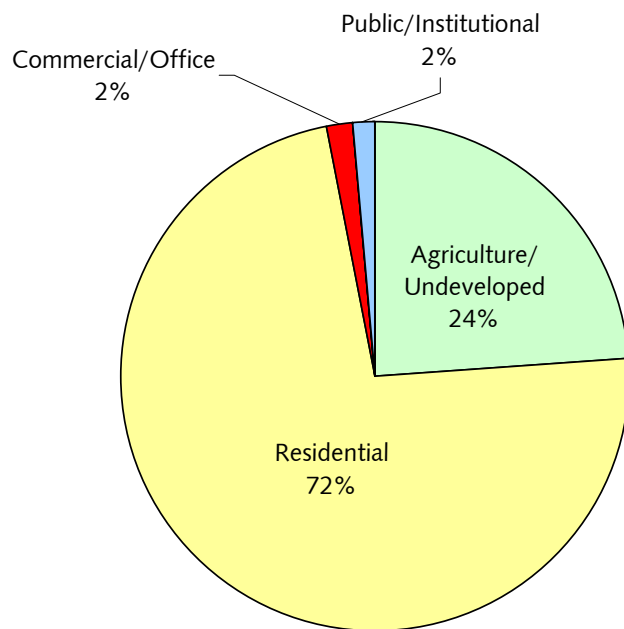
Undeveloped Area: 585 Acres
 Unconstrained: 297 Acres
 Constrained: 288 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)

Housing Units: 964 Units
 Population: 2,507 People

Land Capacity Acreage

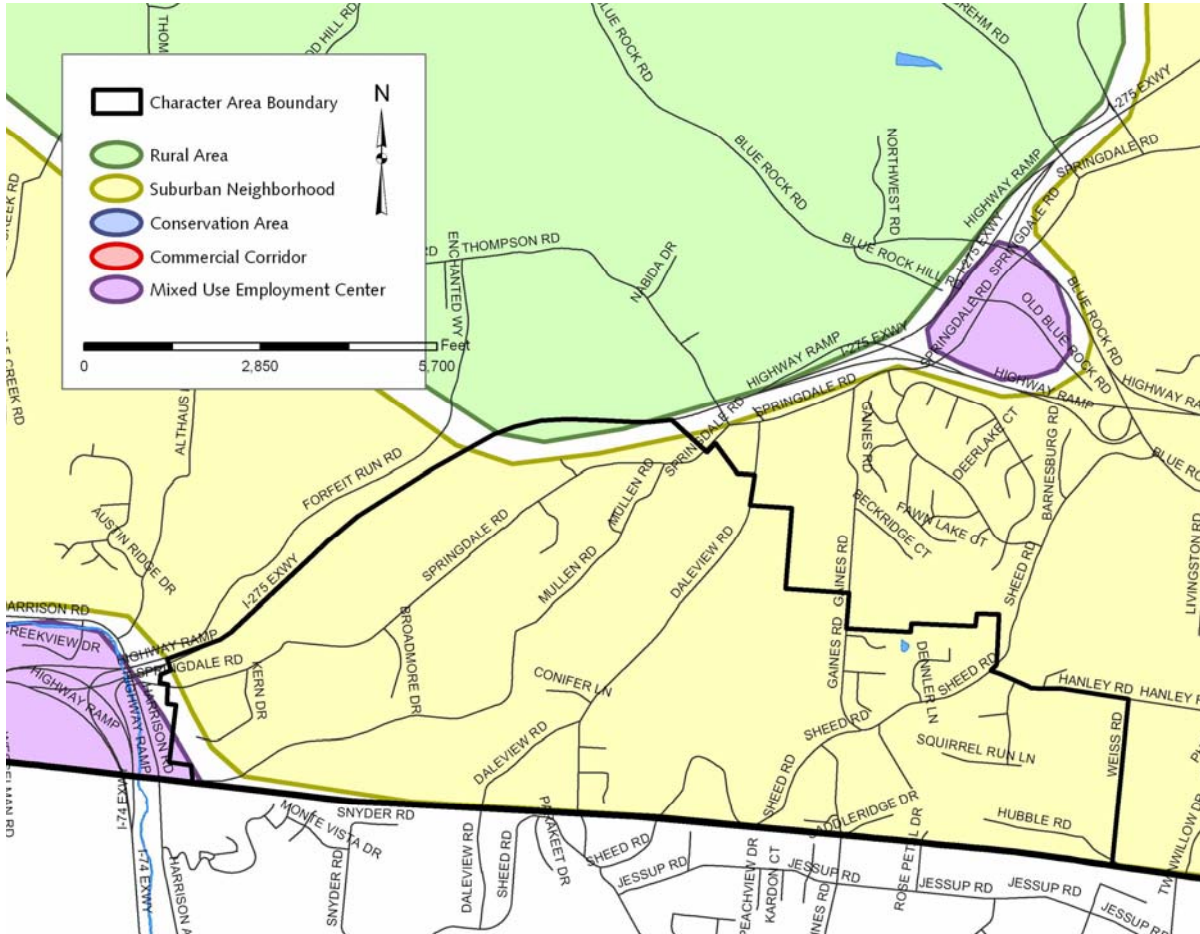
Residential: 585 Acres
 Commercial/Office: 0 Acres
 Industrial: 0 Acres



Daleview/Peach Grove Existing Land Use

Vision

Daleview/Peach Grove will be another area of the Township that will continue to experience growth as regional agencies continue to improve the infrastructure system. This area will be a location of stable residential neighborhoods that provide opportunities to live in an attractive community while having easy access to the region through the interstate system. New development should strive to serve a mix of housing values within a primarily single-family setting.







Development Policies

1. Discourage sewers in this area unless necessary as dictated by the Hamilton County General Health District or where it will provide service to an area surrounded by existing sewer lines and a majority of property owners request the sewer extension.
2. Coordinate planning efforts and zoning efforts with Green Township so development in either community does not negatively affect the other community.
3. Develop regulations to protect the hillsides.
4. Consider developing a parks and recreation plan that can address the lack of park and recreational facilities in some areas of the Township including this character area.



Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of residential uses should not exceed one unit per one acre. The Hamilton County General Health District may dictate larger lots for on-site septic systems.
2. In instances where access to a centralized sewer system is available, the residential density should not exceed two units per acre. However, this density shall only apply to land not constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or more as calculated PRIOR to any clearing or cut and fill operations (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
3. The maximum density of land constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or by floodplains should be one unit per two acres without sewer and one unit per acre with sewer (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
4. Clustering of lots may be considered under the following guidelines (see Figure 3 in the Implementation Section):
 - There is no increase in the density or number of units permitted as described above.
 - No lot should be smaller than one acre in size in areas without sewer and ¼ acre in areas with sewer. The Health District may require larger lots for on-site sewage disposal upon their review of any proposed development.
 - Buildings should be located so the development will only disturb land and vegetation along the ridgetops or on the flattest area of the property. Slopes greater than 30% should not be disturbed.
 - Clustering in appropriate locations will minimize safety hazards and the potential for structural damage due to the soil types and slopes in the Township that pose a limitation of development.
5. New apartment buildings, stacked condominiums and other attached dwellings are not appropriate for this area because of development constraints and a lack of infrastructure such as sewer, water and roadways designed for such uses.
6. New nonresidential, non-public uses are not appropriate for this area.

Appropriate Land Uses

-  Large Lot Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Attached Housing
 -  New Commercial, Office and Industrial Uses
-

Area 10: Springdale/Blue Rock



The Springdale/Blue Rock area is another gateway into the community as it is the entry point from Cross County Highway. However, it was the constriction of this highway that split this area into two sections with a primarily residential area to the south and a mixed-use area to the north. The mixed-use area is a combination of industry, small businesses, apartments and single-family residential uses.

It was originally thought that the construction of this interchange with Interstate 275 would create an opportunity for another retail area in the Township. Over time, this concept has fallen to the side in consideration of a mixed-use center focused on more non-retail type businesses. Such development would require the redevelopment of some properties that are considered underutilized but would also create an opportunity for economic development because of the lack of appropriate land for nonresidential uses in Colerain Township.

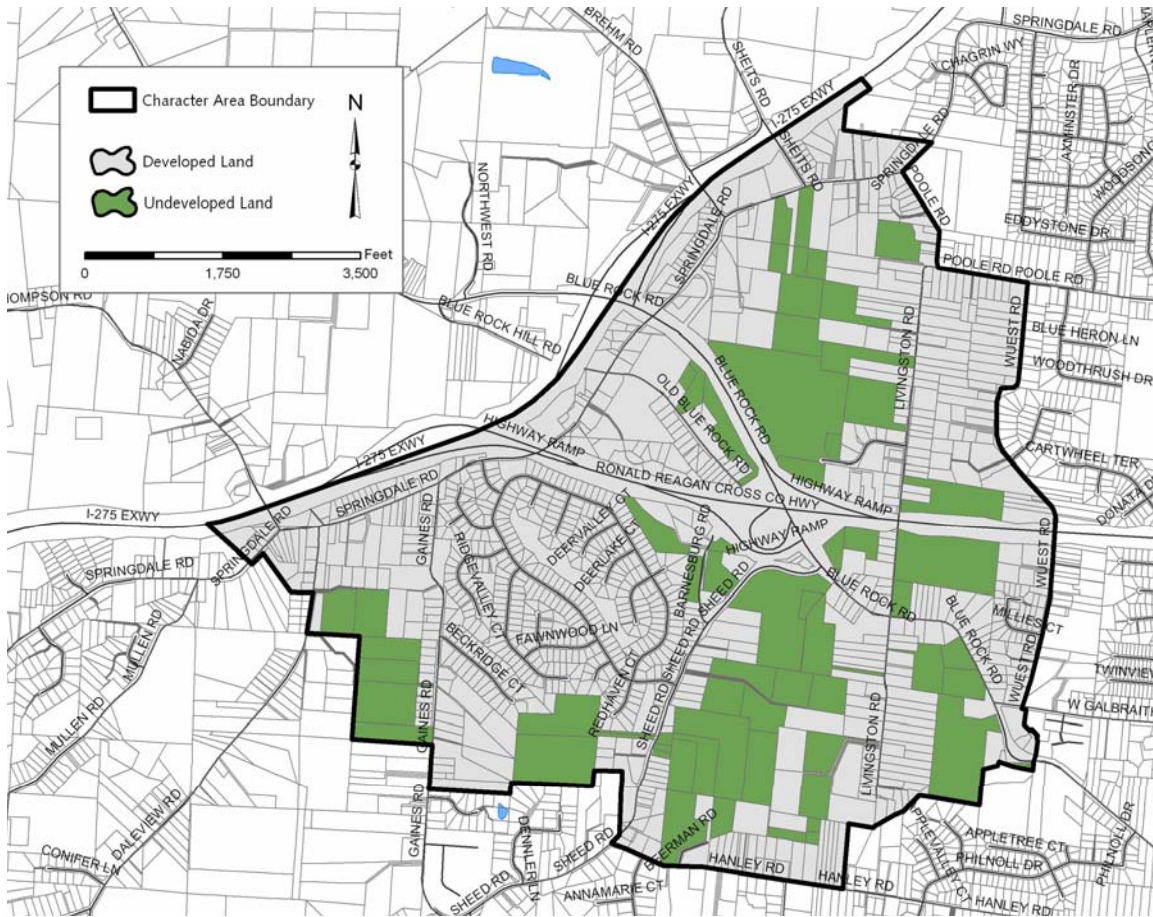
In addition to the thoughts on the future of this area, the residents have identified many of the same issues facing the older neighborhoods to the east. While this character area has experience new development, much of the area consists of older homes and older businesses in a range of conditions. Property maintenance is a growing issue as this is a highly visible area of the Township.

Public Comments

- ✚ No more retail uses along Springdale Road
- ✚ Maintain the semi-rural character with larger lots and setbacks. Increase lot sizes to one unit per one or two acres.
- ✚ Restrict higher density developments
- ✚ Encourage water service but limit sewer expansion
- ✚ Keep the topography
- ✚ Possible areas of office space
- ✚ Property maintenance issues

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

Springdale/Blue Rock Profile

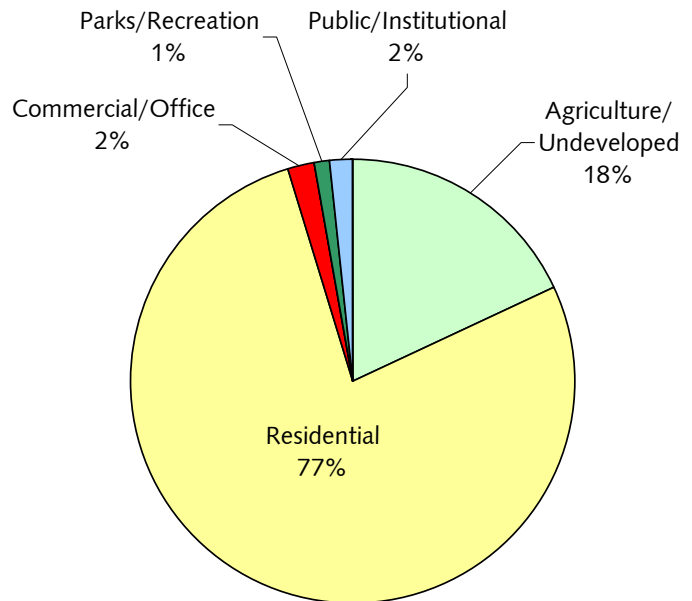


Total Area: 1,389 Acres
 % of Township: 5.0%

Undeveloped Area: 359 Acres
 Unconstrained: 295 Acres
 Constrained: 63 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)
 Housing Units: 647 Units
 Population: 1,682 People

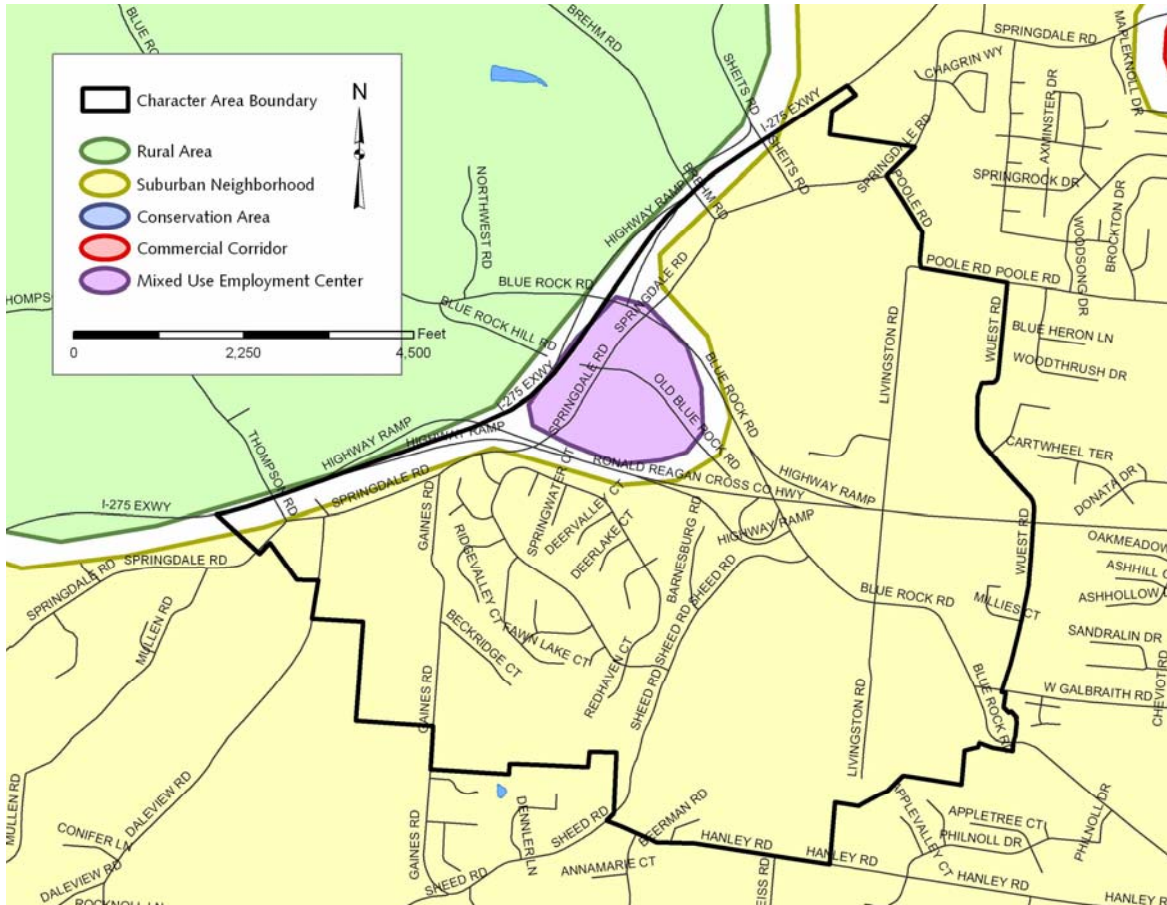
Land Capacity Acreage
 Residential: 296 Acres
 Commercial/Office: 53 Acres
 Industrial: 10 Acres



Springdale/Blue Rock Existing Land Use

Vision

The area south of Cross County Highway will be an extension of the residential development surrounding the area that will consist of strong and stable neighborhoods. The northern portion of this area will be an attractive employment center for the Township that will be designed in a fashion as to capitalize on the visibility of the area as well as create an entryway into the more developed areas of the Township.



Development Policies

1. Sewer extensions should generally be discouraged in this area. Support sewer extensions when they will serve nonresidential development or where a majority of property owners would like to see the service.
2. Develop special regulations for new nonresidential development in this area.
3. Consider developing a parks and recreation plan that can address the lack of park and recreational facilities in some areas of the Township including this character area.
4. Develop a property maintenance program, for residential and nonresidential properties, either at the Township level or through cooperation with a countywide enforcement program.



Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of residential uses should not exceed one unit per one acre. The Hamilton County General Health District may dictate larger lots for on-site septic systems.
2. In instances where access to a centralized sewer system is available, the residential density should not exceed two units per acre. However, this density shall only apply to land not constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or more as calculated PRIOR to any clearing or cut and fill operations (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
3. The maximum density of land constrained by the floodplain or slopes greater than 30% or by floodplains should be one unit per two acres without sewer and one unit per acre with sewer (see Figure 4 in the Implementation Section).
4. Clustering of lots may be considered under the following guidelines (see Figure 3 in the Implementation Section):
 - There is no increase in the density or number of units permitted as described above.
 - No lot should be smaller than one acre in size in areas without sewer and ¼ acre in areas with sewer. The Health District may require larger lots for on-site sewage disposal upon their review of any proposed development.
 - Buildings should be located so the development will only disturb land and vegetation along the ridgetops or on the flattest area of the property. Slopes greater than 30% should not be disturbed.
 - Clustering in appropriate locations will minimize safety hazards and the potential for structural damage due to the soil types and slopes in the Township that pose a limitation of development.
5. All nonresidential uses should be located in the area between Cross County Highway, Interstate 275 and Blue Rock Road and should all be within enclosed buildings. This is an appropriate area for larger office buildings or attractive industrial structures as seen along Civic Center Drive in the Bevis/Pleasant Run character area.
6. General commercial uses should be limited to those serving businesses or residents in the area and should not be targeted to the larger community or region. Such uses should not have buildings larger than 4,000 square feet each.

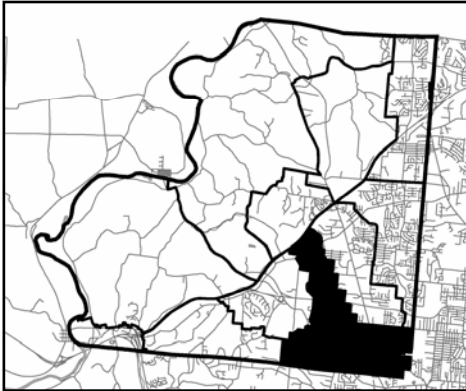
Appropriate Land Uses

-  Large Lot Residential
-  Suburban Residential
-  Small-Scale Commercial
-  Office Uses
-  Light Industrial Uses
-  Mixed Use Employment Center
-  Public and Institutional
-  Parks, Recreation and Greenspace

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  Attached Housing
 -  Large Scale Retail Uses
-

Area 11: White Oak



White Oak is one of the oldest neighborhoods in Colerain Township and it is also seen as one of viable neighborhoods as it seems to have withstood the tests of time. The housing stock, though old, has been well maintained and provides a range of housing options. There has been some recent investment in the area, especially in office uses along Cheviot and Blue Rock Roads and there are some infill developments that have been beneficial to the area.

While most look upon this area positively, there are issues that residents have identified during this process. The completion of Cross County Highway changed traffic patterns along Colerain

Avenue and this area of the corridor has suffered because of a declining use of Colerain Avenue to go to downtown Cincinnati. The lots along this corridor and along Cheviot Road are not very large and the depths can create problems with redevelopment. People would also like to see the intersections of Cheviot and Blue Rock Roads reworked to help move traffic through the area more freely. The Hamilton County Engineer's Office is currently working to correct these traffic problems.

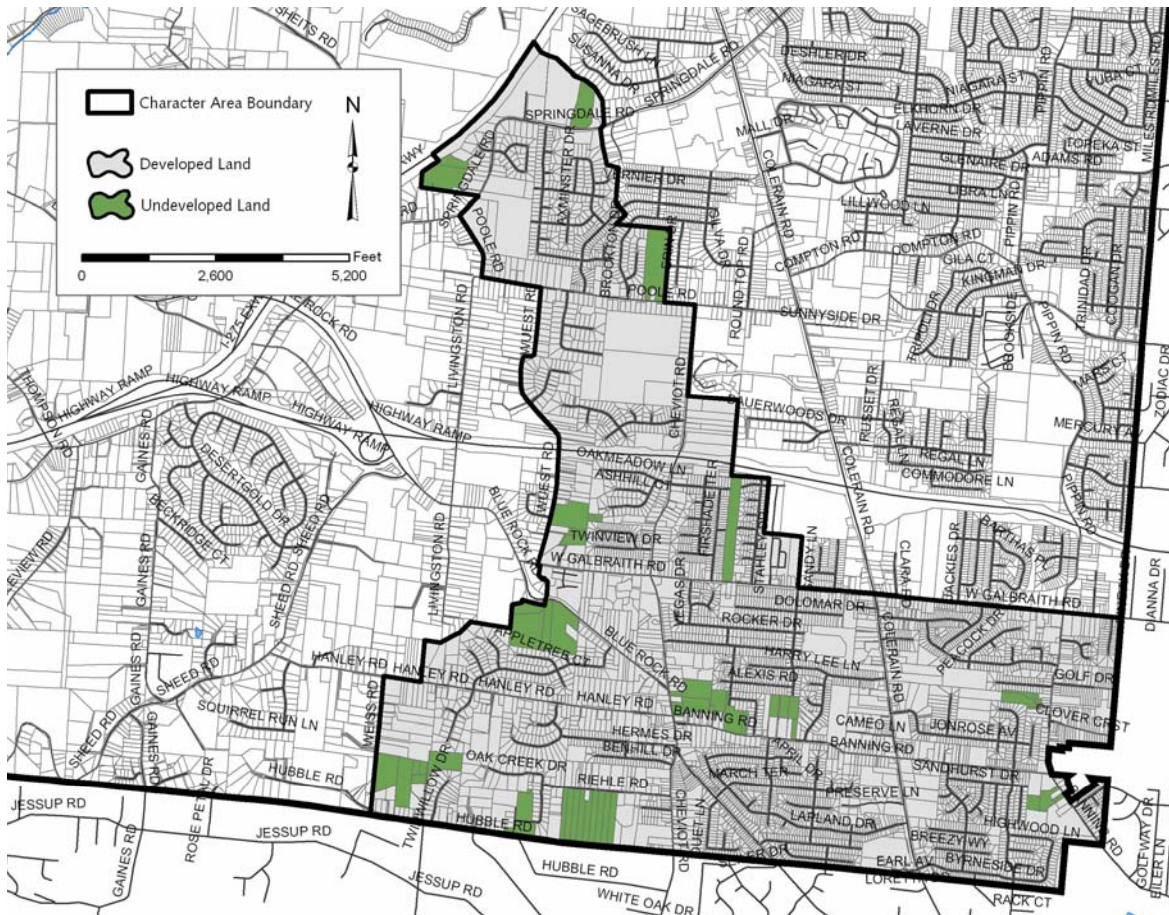
The future of this neighborhood will depend greatly on the continued maintenance of the housing stock. There are also opportunities to identify this area as an employment activity center to focus more on office and service commercial uses rather than the historical use of the corridors as a retail center. This office and service development will take place only with some assistance by the Township to allow flexibility in the zoning regarding the reuse and redevelopment of properties. Such redevelopment still needs to respect the close proximity of residential uses.

Public Comments

- ✚ Need for better property maintenance
- ✚ Tearing down abandoned or deteriorated buildings
- ✚ Flooding problems along the Mill Creek
- ✚ Traffic issues along Blue Rock and Cheviot Roads
- ✚ Too many curb cuts along major roads
- ✚ Colerain Avenue in this area is transitioning to office and light industrial uses

Public comments are from the Comprehensive Plan Executive Committee and the August/September 2004 public meetings.

White Oak Profile



Total Area: 2,383 Acres
 % of Township: 8.6%

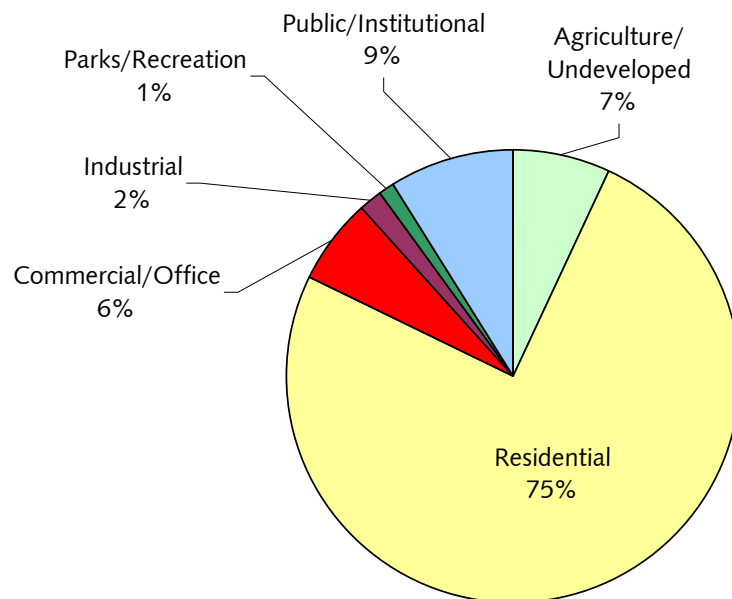
Undeveloped Area: 170 Acres
 Unconstrained: 145 Acres
 Constrained: 25 Acres

Land Capacity (2004 Land Use Plan)

Housing Units: 380 Units
 Population: 988 People

Land Capacity Acreage

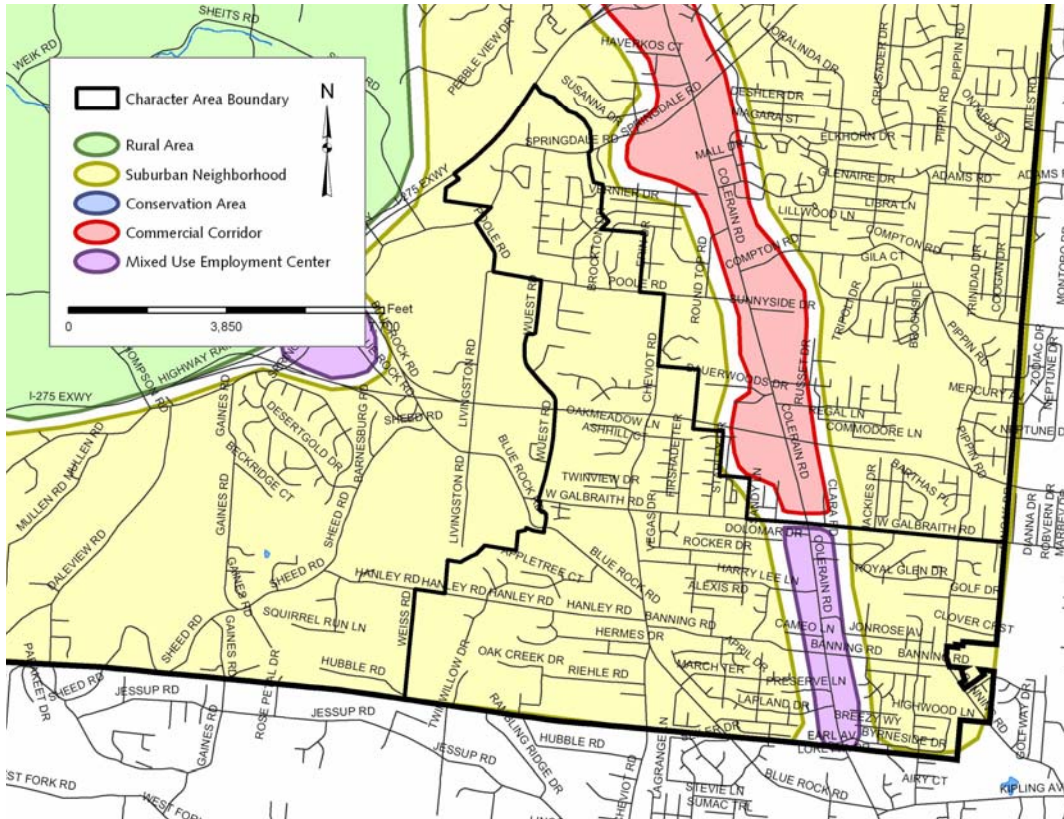
Residential: 157 Acres
 Commercial/Office: 6 Acres
 Industrial: 0 Acres



White Oak Existing Land Use

Vision

White Oak will continue to be the location of strong and stable neighborhoods, affordable to all ranges of households. The mixture of residential housing types and small-scale commercial services should be maintained as an integral part of this community. This area will be a model for reinvestment as new businesses will find methods of adaptive reuse of older properties no longer viable for their original intended use.








Development Policies

1. Encourage sewers in this area where the improvements will complete the development of the overall sewer system.
2. Develop a property maintenance program, for both residential and nonresidential properties, either at the Township level or through cooperation with a countywide enforcement program.
3. Develop special standards that will allow outdoor storage but eliminate, or utilize sound planning principles to mitigate, the visual impact of such storage on this area and surrounding areas.
4. Continue with purchasing flood prone properties along the West Fork Mill Creek.
5. In new developments, include roadway connections to the maximum extent possible (no cul-de-sacs) and elements of pedestrian connectivity including sidewalks and trails.
6. Consider developing a parks and recreation plan that can address the lack of park and recreational facilities in some areas of the Township including this character area.



Land Use Guidelines

1. The density of any new residential use should reflect development of similar uses within the character area.
2. Attached housing is appropriate in this area but is restricted to existing developments and some minimal expansion of such uses within this area.
3. Neighborhood commercial or small-scale office uses are appropriate around the Cheviot and Blue Rock Road intersections. Such uses should be limited to a building area of no more than 4,000 square feet each.
4. Encourage the continued development of light industrial and office uses along Colerain Avenue, south of West Galbraith Road. Such uses should be fully enclosed because of the high visibility of the area.
5. Development and redevelopment in this area needs to include adequate landscaping and buffering between residential and nonresidential uses.

Appropriate Land Uses

-  Suburban Residential
-  Attached Housing
-  Neighborhood Commercial Uses
-  Office Uses
-  Light Industrial Uses

Unsuitable Land Uses

-  General Commercial Uses
 -  Heavy Industrial Uses
-




Implementation Strategies

As Colerain Township continues to look toward the future, there is a continued need to look at capitalizing on land serviced by sufficient infrastructure systems and managing the natural resources that are part of the community's identity. In the long-term, the Township will also have to address more redevelopment and reinvestment opportunities to ensure that Colerain Township will continue to be a viable and well-rounded community. Focusing on those strategies where the Township has the most authority will also increase the ability of the Township to plan for and incorporate the recommendations of this Plan.

The purpose of this section of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a description of potentially suitable techniques for implementing this Comprehensive Plan.




Planning

A plan is the basic tool available to a community to solidify a vision for its future. It is impossible to list every type of plan that a community may develop because every plan is different in the issues and geographic areas that they cover. In general, there are three types of plans:

-  **Comprehensive Plan**
A comprehensive plan is general in nature and looks at numerous issues (growth, housing, transportation, etc.) across the entire geographic boundary of the community and sometimes beyond.
-  **Issue-Oriented Plans**
Issue-oriented plans look closely at one particular issue (transportation plan, landfills, housing plan, wastewater plan, etc.) and may look at the entire Township or focus on smaller geographic areas.
-  **Focus Area Plans**
Focus area plans look at a specific property or a small area of the community that has common characteristics (Hamilton Avenue, Colerain Avenue, etc.). The issues addressed in a focus area plan differ depending upon what needs to be evaluated and planned for in the future.






Recommended Planning Efforts

The following is a list of planning efforts the Township should undertake in the near future:

-  A strategic plan that will address the future of the Rumpke Landfill, or its successors, and the related impacts on the Township pursuant to development policy recommendation on page 30.
 -  A Parks and Recreation Plan to identify specific needs and methods of adding to the park system.
 -  Corridor studies for Colerain, Hamilton and Harrison Avenues that address transportation, redevelopment and land use.
-




Zoning

Along with plans themselves, zoning is the most basic of all planning tools used by Colerain Township. Zoning can be used to accomplish the following:

-  Promote economic development by concentrating commercial and industrial properties in particular areas of the Township. This concentration can help to prevent the overburdening of the market that can then work towards lowering vacancy rates and promoting the commercial or industrial core of the community. By concentrating uses such as commercial business together, zoning can help guide these developments into areas of the Township best suited for the use because of adequate public facilities and infrastructure.
-  Protect existing residential neighborhoods by controlling densities and restricting the conversion of single-family homes into multi-family units or nonresidential businesses where such conversions are not desired.
-  Separate incompatible uses with transitional zoning. An example of transitional zoning would be zoning land located between large commercial uses and residential homes for small-scale office space or multi-family residential uses.
-  Require landscaping, signage, lighting, and adequate parking that will help improve the visual appearance of an area.
-  Create various levels of regulations from general to specific based on what the Township and public wants for the community. General regulations may include standard requirements for lot area, lot width, or building height requirements. Other requirements for parking, landscaping, lighting and signage may address the impact a use has on the community.

Communities are also using zoning as a method of encouraging appropriate development and redevelopment by moving more toward incentive-based zoning. In cases such as a planned unit development or in parking standards, the Township could provide clear standards for increased densities or a waiver of certain standards if an applicant meets certain criteria. For example, the Township could provide a certain percentage increase in housing density if a developer dedicates a neighborhood park within a housing development. Another example is if a developer places some of the required parking in the side or rear yards of a commercial development, the landscaping requirements may be reduced because the parking is less visible and it will force the building closer to the street. These are just a few examples of how incentives can work as a positive for both the Township and future developers or redevelopers of future uses.

Things to Consider with Zoning

-  Zoning will not change things that have already happened unless a property is redeveloped.
-  If the zoning code does not provide some flexibility or is too restrictive, some developers may build elsewhere.
-  A requirement in the code means nothing unless it is enforced.

Limited Home Rule Township

Because of Colerain Township's population and size, the community has the option of changing to a Limited Home Rule Township (LHRT) based on the regulations in Chapter 504 of the Ohio Revised Code. This type of government provides the Township with more authority while remaining a Township. The following are some general advantages to becoming a LHRT:

- ✚ The Township may exercise all powers of local self-government as long as they do not conflict with general laws or are specifically prohibited (see below). Many LHRTs are evaluating to what extent they can expand their zoning powers based on this provisions. Some feel that such provisions could open up the possibility of architectural review and similar standards that most feel are not available as a statutory township.
- ✚ The overall limit on indebtedness is increased from five percent (5%) to ten percent (10%) of the overall assessed value. This increase allows the Township more flexibility to funding improvements and services.
- ✚ The Township can establish building codes, housing codes provided they do not conflict with any county or state codes.
- ✚ The Township can provide sanitary sewer or water services. This advantage does not appear to be used by other limited home rule townships because of the costs of providing such services and the availability of regional services at a lower cost.

If the Township chooses to move forward as a LHRT, it must hire a law director and provide for a police department, which is already a standard practice in Colerain Township.

In addition to the increase in authority for LHRTs, there are certain prohibitions. However, these prohibitions also apply to the standard form of township government. A LHRT cannot:

- ✚ Enact taxes;
- ✚ Create a criminal offense code or impose criminal penalties;
- ✚ Establish subdivision regulations;
- ✚ Establish road construction standards;
- ✚ Create urban sediment rules;
- ✚ Establish stormwater and drainage regulations;
- ✚ Establish regulations for hunting, trapping, fishing, or possession and use of firearms;
- ✚ Adopt building codes that differ from State and county codes; and
- ✚ Increase, decrease or alter township authority in powers and duties of townships pertaining to agriculture and conservation of natural resources.

Improved Commercial and Industrial Development Standards

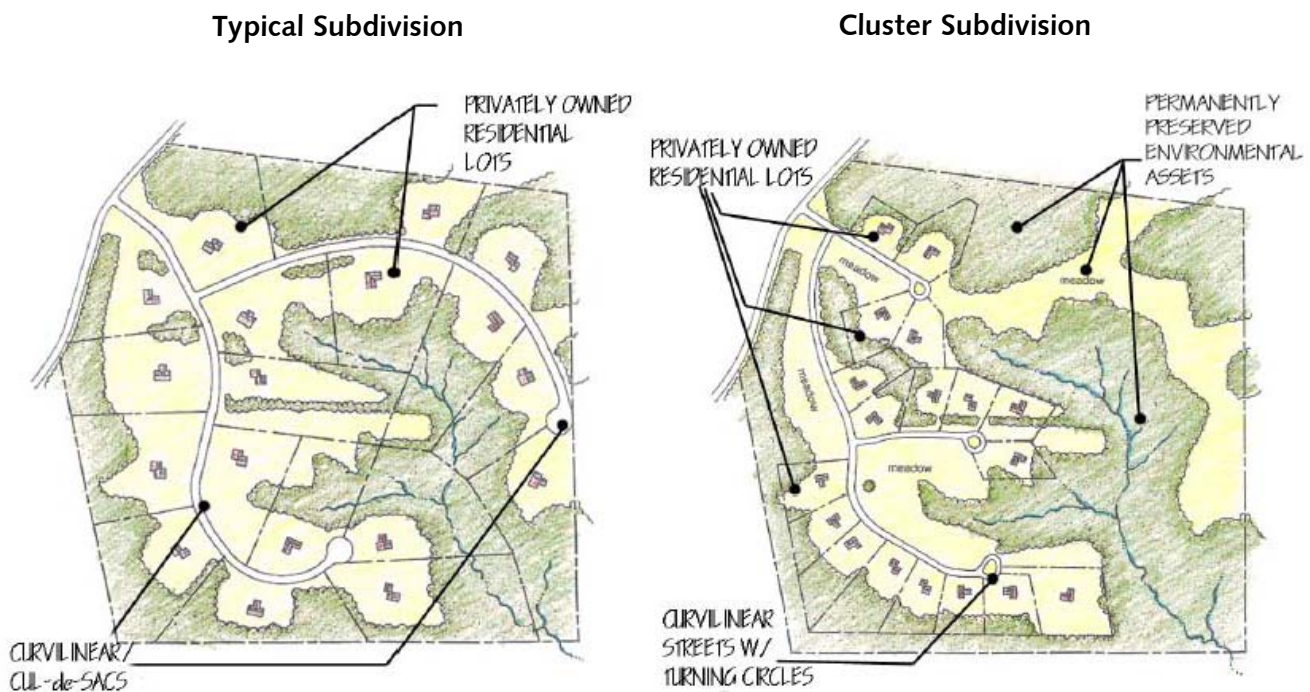
It is imperative that Colerain Township improves the quality of development standards for commercial and industrial development. These standards are particularly important given that much of the commercial and industrial development occurs along Colerain, Hamilton and Harrison Avenues, which all serve as “front doors” into the community. The community can develop and improve site-planning standards that address items such as site configuration and layout, landscaping, signage, access management, pedestrian connections, lighting and other development standards.

Improving upon site plan standards and review procedures will further the implementation of the policies related to community quality and character in this Plan.

Cluster Subdivisions

Unlike typical residential subdivisions, which will typically consume the entire development parcel, cluster subdivisions (a.k.a. conservation subdivisions) rearrange and cluster housing lots and roadways to set aside a substantial amount of the otherwise buildable property as permanently protected, quality greenspace. Typically, this approach trades a pattern of large suburban lawns with little or no usable neighborhood open space for more compact yards supplemented by extensive open space flowing through the development. This open space is retained in perpetuity as greenways, trails, woodlands, pastures, or other uses that maintain scenic character, protect habitat value, and contribute to the quality of life for residents. When properly planned, greenspace in conservation developments can become part of an interconnected, township or region-wide greenspace network.

Figure 3: Cluster Subdivision Example



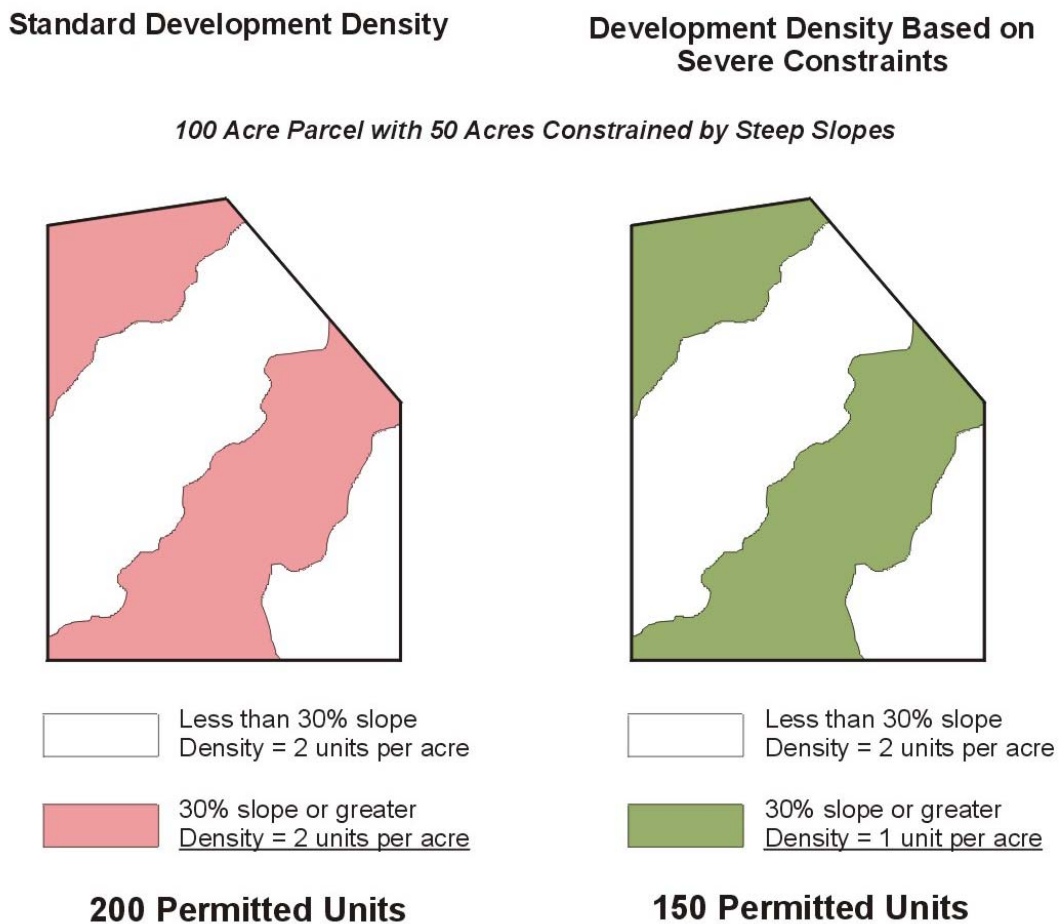
Source: *Growing Greener*, Randall Arendt

Density Determination – Development Constraints

With a significant amount of steep hillsides in Colerain Township, it is important to make a distinction between buildable property and property where development is constrained by natural elements such as slopes and floodplains. Historically, developers have used the portion of the lot area on steep hillsides or in a floodplain to increase the number of units they can build even though, under typical development standards, one could not build units at such a density on these areas. The land was then “preserved” as open space even though it would have been open space to begin with because of physical restrictions. Recognizing that certain physical constraints naturally prevent high-density development, this Plan requires that density should not be calculated “across the board” regardless of constraints but should recognize the constraints first and then calculate density.




Figure 4 illustrates a 100-acre property, with access to the sewer system, with 50% of the parcel constrained by steep slopes. With a general permitted density is two units per acre, a developer would be allowed to build roughly 200 housing units. Under the recommendations of this plan, the permitted density would be two units per acre for all land that is not constrained by steep slopes and one unit per acre for that area of the land constrained by steep slopes. This calculation would allow for the development of only 150 housing units.

Figure 4: Density Determination



Committee Work

The Township is already effectively using several committees to help research and present ideas for improvements to the Township. While boards such as the Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals are appointed by the Township Trustees in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, the committees are not dictated by legislation and the Township determines membership and their purpose. Current committees include:

-  The Comprehensive Plan Committee and Executive Committee
-  The Land Use Advisory Board
-  The Greenspace Committee; and
-  The Landscape Advisory Board

This type of committee work has proved useful in guiding future land use decisions that allow for the thorough review of landscape plans and the development of programs such as the Conservationist Program. The Township should consider creating additional committees as needed, including a committee for parks and recreation and one for transportation. The purpose of all of the committees should have basis in this Comprehensive Plan and all other Township planning efforts.

Coordination and Communication

This plan recognizes that agencies outside of the Township regulate many elements of the community including sewers, water, transportation, and stormwater. In fact, the Township is restricted in its participation in the subdivision review (not zoning) process, which is under the purview of the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission. With so many agencies working in Colerain Township, the Township has the ability to serve as a coordinator and identify ways to make improvements in the community that will be more efficient and benefit the entire region. One of the simplest strategies for implementing many of the recommendations is to communicate with the appropriate agencies, inside and outside of the Township, and inform them of Township policy and the needs of the community.

Property Maintenance

It is clear that it is time for the Township approach the concerns residents have over property maintenance. While in previous years the Township's only option was to look to the County for enforcement of building codes, which focused on structural issues rather than the general appearance, the Township now has several options. The first option is for the Township to establish and enforce a local property maintenance code. This would allow for local control based more in the Township's vision of a maintenance code, however, it will require additional resources in enforcement personnel. The second option is to participate in a countywide program, which Hamilton County is currently considering. While there would be limited local control, the cost may be lower because of the combined effort of numerous communities. The Township needs to consider the pros and cons of each method and move forward with some level of property maintenance regulations to ensure the long-term sustainability of the housing stock and neighborhoods.

Property Acquisition

The Township always has the ability to purchase a property for parks, greenspace or public use. Because of the large amount of natural resources in the Township, the community may want to consider methods of funding property acquisition, such as grants, to purchase properties on prominent hillsides or along the Great Miami River or its tributaries. The Township should also continue to consider methods of expanding the park and recreational opportunities for Township residents.

In addition to the outright purchase of properties, where the Township would own the property, there is also the concept of purchasing development rights. The Township could pay a property owner the difference between the value of land as an agricultural use or undeveloped piece of land and the value of the land as if it was fully developed. The original property owner would retain ownership but because the Township purchased the development rights, the property cannot be developed. Such arrangements are recorded as easements or restrictions on the deed.

Financial Incentive Programs

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is becoming a popular way to fund public improvements in areas where new development and redevelopment is occurring. The real estate taxes created by the new tax "increment" (the increase in real estate value made by the improvements) generated by new development in a defined area can be "captured" for reinvestment (i.e. sidewalks, roads, etc.) in a designated area around the development.

As much as 100% of the new real estate taxes for a period of up to 30 years can be captured for the improvements. However, permission is required from the affected school district if the tax exemption is greater than 75% or the time period exceeds 10 years.

The developer is required to pay an annual service payment in an amount of up to 100% of the tax savings that is then placed into a Township Tax Increment Equivalent Fund. These funds can be used to make necessary public improvements such as repairing and expanding roads, extending public utilities, streetscaping, and other improvements associated with the development.

Commercial and industrial projects are the only type of project that can benefit from TIF by right. Residential projects are exempt from the benefits of TIF unless the project is within a blighted area of an impacted city. However, if the Township establishes, by resolution, that housing renovations are a necessary public improvement in a TIF district, then money from the TIF fund can be applied to housing renovations.

Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)

Hamilton County, and not the Township itself, could establish a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) over certain areas of the Township. A CRA allows for a tax abatement on real estate taxes incurred from new construction or the rehabilitation of existing structures for a specified amount of time. This means that a property owner would be exempt from paying the additional real estate taxes that are required because of the improvements made to the property (anything from rehabilitation to new construction).

To establish a CRA, a community must survey the conditions of all the structures within the proposed CRA boundaries. The survey must establish that due to blight or other influences, the construction and rehabilitation of structures is being discouraged. The Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) reviews the survey, the findings, and a map of the CRA boundary and decides whether to formalize the CRA. As part of that approval, ODOD must find that any new construction or rehabilitation of existing structures complies with existing zoning.

Once approved, a property owner may apply for tax exemptions. The tax abatements may occur from 10 to 15 years depending on the type and cost of rehabilitation or construction.

A CRA can be an issue for school districts and agencies that are dependent on real estate taxes. Another issue is that property owners must pay a one-time application fee (\$750 in 2004) that does not always outweigh the tax exemption, so some property owners may not participate. However, this might help to discourage those property owners from only making minor improvements. Theoretically, with increasing improvements in the area, the property values will increase and in turn, this will increase the eventual tax base for the Township and County.

Enterprise Zones

Hamilton County, with the consent of the Township, has established an Enterprise Zone over Colerain Township. The intent of such zones is to provide tax incentives for businesses that create jobs for the community. Businesses, or enterprises, who participate in the program are evaluated on an annual basis to ensure that they have established or occupy a facility within the zone and that it has hired at least 25% of its employees from the unemployed within the County, those receiving certain types of public assistance, the handicapped, etc. If they meet the requirements, a business can receive a tax exemption of up to 60% of their tangible personal and real estate property taxes.

Joint Economic Development Zones (JEDZ)

Colerain Township is located adjacent to several municipalities, which opens up the possibility of cooperation for improved economic development. In order to promote economic development within the State of Ohio, the Ohio Revised Code provides for the creation of Joint Economic Development Zones that may be set up between municipalities and townships provided that at least one, in this case a township, does not levy an income tax. Within a JEDZ, the involved jurisdictions agree, by contract, to share the costs of improvements in the designated area and at the same time, they share the benefits of any development. Ohio Revised Code Section 715.691 sets forth the exact requirements to establish the a JEDZ but the purpose is to minimize or eliminate competition between jurisdictions and provide for better cooperation that can result in an improved economy for the State.

Conclusion

The long-term success of the Colerain Township Comprehensive Plan rests largely on the techniques and programs selected by the community to implement the Plan. A plan without a strategy for implementation or action by the Township provides little direction for improving community needs. However, another vital element of a Comprehensive Plan and its development is the people: the residents, businesses and property owners of Colerain Township who choose to be here and who elect officials to represent them. These people attend the meetings and volunteer their time so that a plan such as this is representative of the greater community and not just a single interest. It is important for the future of this plan that such community involvement is included in all levels of planning and the implementation of these recommendations.