



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

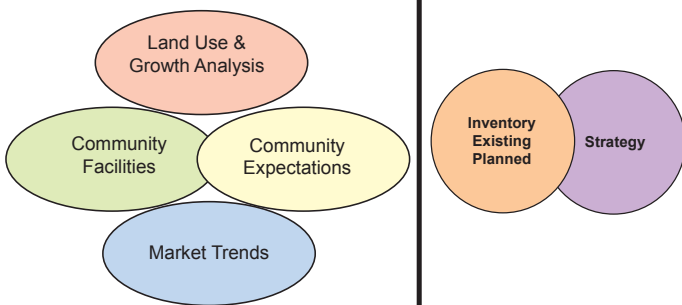
Process and Participation

The plan was conceived due to the belief that the current Master Plan that was adopted in 1987 and subsequently updated in a limited fashion in 1996 was no longer a viable tool that could effectively guide policy decisions. There was growing concern that the City's fiscal capacity and service levels could not be maintained in light of the rapid residential growth that was experienced throughout the 1990's.

A pre-planning process was launched in the spring of 2000. A consulting team was hired to work with a 24-member coordinating committee. The committee was charged with developing a work program that would guide the undertaking of a Comprehensive Economic Development Master Plan. The committee included representatives from a host of community stakeholders. A kick-off meeting was held on April 25, 2000 to outline the steps of the pre-planning project and to identify issues.

To gain a better perspective on the issues, the consulting team interviewed a set of community stakeholders that represented the Administration, Council, Planning Commission, the business community and community groups. The team also conducted a survey of 50 stakeholder organizations. The survey asked recipients to identify the critical issues that should be addressed by the Plan. The results of these interviews may be found in the Appendix.

A two-evening workshop was held May 31 and June 1 with the Coordinating Committee and administration. A draft work program was prepared as a result of the workshops. The recommended work program was forwarded to Council and approved on September 11, 2000.



Planning for Economic Development

In November and December the Master Planning Consultant Team was retained to work with the Hilliard Planning Commission and Citizens Advisory Committee to prepare the plan.

A preliminary schedule was prepared and plans were made for a series of community workshops to be held early in the process.

The directive to prepare a Comprehensive Economic Development Master Plan meant that the process from the very beginning had to focus on identifying the means by which the community could maximize revenues while maintaining and enhancing its quality of life.

The Plan was prepared over a two (2) year period. The first part of the process focused on identifying the preferred quality of life within the community and what must be done to maintain that quality.

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The first step in that determination was to ask residents and property owners what they believed would make Hilliard the best community it could be. Many opinions and ideas were gathered and prioritized over two Saturdays in February 2001. The results were made available at an open house in early March. On the whole, the ideas that came from these sessions appear to indicate that residents are generally satisfied with their community but see the need to preserve, strengthen and enhance the quality of life amenities that already exist in various forms. Some of the more pertinent ideas include:

- A balance between commercial and residential land uses

Hilliard

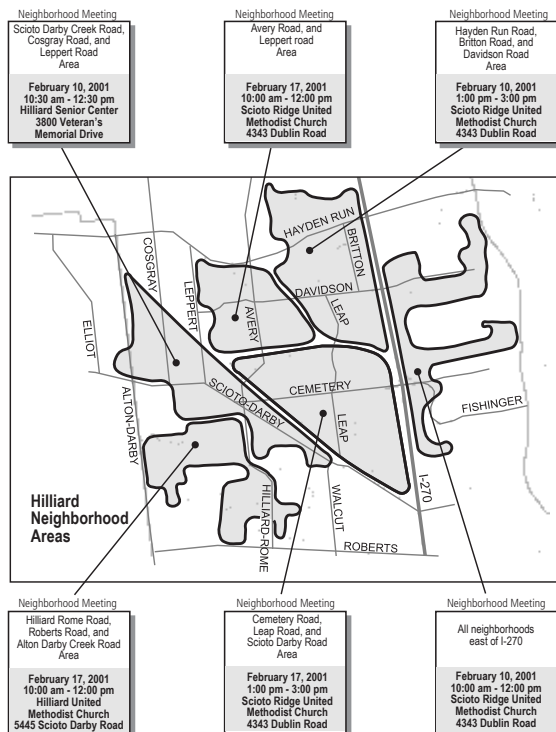
COMMUNITY PLAN
INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

"Please invest your time, energy, and spirit"

Neighborhood Idea Gathering Sessions

WE NEED YOUR IDEAS FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY !

- Participate in small group sessions to generate ideas on schools, development, visual quality, parks, and streets !
- Open to all who live and work in the Hilliard area !
- Attend the meeting for your neighborhood ! (or any other convenient time and location)



Sponsored by the Hilliard Planning and Zoning Commission
For more information please contact Shellie Springer at (614)876-7361 ext.785 or visit www.cityofhilliard.com

"Effectively managing this growth will require the City to adopt a very aggressive planning posture that controls the type and look of new development that will occur to the west of the current city limits."

- Transitional land uses between commercial and residential development
- A strong vibrant Old Hilliard District
- Development that increases the tax base
- Increased code enforcement and new maintenance codes
- Cutting edge development
- More opportunity for indoor recreation
- Usable parks within neighborhoods
- Connected neighborhoods and parks
- Visually enhanced roadway corridors
- Attractive entries into the community
- Timely capital improvements

The Planning Commission and Advisory Committee analyzed and discussed the various planning elements that comprised the growth, land use and community service aspects of the Plan. Each element concluded with primary goals, objectives and a listing of implementation measures

Growth and Annexation

It was clear the Hilliard community is part of a growing region within the State of Ohio and part of a very rapidly developing growth corridor within central Ohio. The recommendations that come out of the Plan must recognize this growth potential and effectively deal with the ongoing development pressure that will exist into the foreseeable future. Ongoing development will cause the population to reach 36,000 to 40,000 in the next 20 years.

Effectively managing this growth will require the City to adopt a very aggressive planning posture that controls the type and look of new development that will occur to the west of the current city limits. Visually and functionally it will be desirable to maintain a substantial open space surrounding compact development. Conservation development will be more

environmentally sensitive as well as more efficient to maintain. This development must be as fiscally balanced as possible. The municipality should also seek increased developer participation to lessen the growth impacts upon the community.

Land Use Framework

The once sprawling city is slowly becoming more compact and efficient in its developed form as bypassed lands are developed. This form will be even more apparent when new roadway corridors are built and connect disparate parts of the community. The form of the future community will be more defined with the preservation of an open space edge to the west and to the north. The City must attempt to maintain a reasonably compact and efficient urban form to minimize long term maintenance costs. The development of passed over land should be encouraged before lands outside the current City boundaries are developed. Pedestrian, open space and roadway connections and infill development must serve to connect older and new development within the community and also on a larger scale to connect the community to the region.

“The core of the community must be recognized and enhanced by being visually and physically connected to all surrounding neighborhoods.”

Hilliard Core

The core of the Hilliard community covers an area that is larger than the historic center but nonetheless contains most of the key facilities that are used by the community. This core must be recognized and enhanced by being visually and physically connected to all surrounding neighborhoods. This will increase accessibility to the library, the municipal building, a number of schools, Municipal Park, the fairgrounds and especially Old Hilliard. The edges of

the core should be marked by gateways and streetscape treatments.

Socially the core area may become the center of civic life which may be enhanced and enriched with social themes and traditions.

Residential Life and Housing

The range and diversity of housing within the community may be used as a strong economic development marketing tool. Housing is available to meet the needs of employees across the whole range of employment opportunity. The strongest move-up market for new housing is in the range of \$200,000 to \$250,000.

Houses in this price range will keep many of the younger families in the community as they seek new housing. There is also a good demand for condominiums within the Hilliard area.

Condominium development may keep Hilliard's senior residents in the community as they seek new housing. The success of all new residential development will hinge on amenities, location, and reputation of the developer.

"The range and diversity of housing within the community may be used as a strong economic development marketing tool."

Hilliard's older subdivisions are now over forty years old. There is increasing evidence that some of these homes are being converted to rental units. The City must seek to maintain and enhance the safety and visual quality of these neighborhoods. Like many communities facing new but ongoing development issues, the City of Hilliard must adopt a housing maintenance code and develop a systematic housing code enforcement program.

The future improvement of Leap and Scioto Darby Roads with curbs and gutters and decorative street lighting will also serve to provide a much more positive impression of these neighborhoods.

Community Facilities

A citizens' survey consisting of a mailed questionnaire and cover letter was sent by the City to all households within Hilliard. A total of 2,425 citizens completed and returned the survey to City staff.

Hilliard citizens are generally satisfied with the services they receive from the City. Using a 1-to-5 scale, where 1 is "very poor" and 5 is "excellent", Hilliard citizens rated the vast majority of city services between good (4) and fair (3). Of all 11 non-recreational services rated, only five of them were rated above good: police services, solid waste removal, recycling, fire service, and emergency medical service. The highest rating was given to emergency medical services, averaging 4.4.

Schools

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The Hilliard City School District encompasses an area far greater than the Hilliard city limits, extending into Dublin on the north and portions of the City of Columbus on the south. Currently nearly all of the schools of the district are located in the Hilliard Municipal boundaries. Additional schools will be needed as the City expands to the west. The Land Use Plan identifies a site for a third high school on the west side of the community. In this location the high school may be accessed along the edges of the community without sending additional traffic through the middle. A new high school may also provide a visible and attractive community icon that serves as a west side gateway.

"The long term outdoor recreational needs of the community may best be satisfied by adding more land to Municipal Park as the planned Cosgray Road to Alton Darby Road connection is made."

Parkland

Hilliard has collaborated with the central Ohio YMCA to build a community facility on Cosgray Road. This facility will help serve to meet the identified indoor recreational needs of the community. The long term outdoor recreational needs of the community may best be satisfied by adding more land to Municipal Park as the planned Cosgray Road to Alton Darby Road connection is made. Additional baseball fields may be planned in this location.

If the conservation development model is implemented to the west of Alton Darby Road, public parks may be planned within the required open space or within community gathering spaces within the developments.

Transportation

Increasing vehicular traffic levels generally represent the greatest concern of Hilliard residents. The Hilliard Thoroughfare Plan and the Hilliard Land Use Plan work together to specify land arrangements and roadway improvements that will result in acceptable levels of service. The community must continue to acquire additional right of way with each new development. All future road projects must serve to improve the transportation needs and also be planned and designed to enhance the visual quality of the community.

The community has the opportunity for mass transit, either light rail or bus, at Britton Parkway and Cemetery Road.

Bikeways

Bike and pedestrian ways have increasingly become important community amenities to the

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point where these facilities are expected to be part of all new developments. The bridge over I-270 at Davidson Road has been identified as the most likely location to connect the east and west sides of the community. A bike/walkway must be made part of the plans to rehab the Davidson Bridge as part of normal interstate maintenance. Bikeways along Britton Parkway and Trueman Boulevard must connect to paths and sidewalks of the adjacent neighborhoods to provide greater community mobility. The City must insure that bikeways are included in all roadway improvement plans.

“Demand for office space will primarily grow out of the internal mobility of existing tenants.”

The existing Heritage Rail to Trail may be expanded south and east to Scioto Darby Road. This improvement will be a major amenity within the community that will take local and regional significance.

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Once the quality of life preferences were identified, the planning process concentrated on developing an economic and physical development strategy to seek the means the community could use to maximize its revenue producing capability. The strategy also identifies how much revenue producing property the Hilliard community may need and how the City may facilitate the most desirable commercial development.

Major findings of the initial demographic and economic profile analysis include:

Total 2001 city employment of 14,970
Total 2001 number of companies at 1,076

Largest Employment types - 2001

	Hilliard	Region
Retail	17.7 %	(19.8%)
Public Sector	17.3%	(15.4%)
Manufacturing	12.6%	(10.7%)
Business and Repair	10.2 %	(8.5%)
Whole sale trade	12.1%	(5.2%)

Current Employment space

Office warehouse 1,874,887 sq. ft.
(12.8% vacancy)

50 % vacancy in building built prior to 1970

Retail 1,541,519 sq. ft.
(3.6% vacancy)
Multi tenant office 608,2645 sq. ft.
(26% total office vacancy)

Single tenant office 83,054 sq. ft.
(26% total office vacancy)

"The Hilliard community is currently well positioned for ongoing economic development."

Office Demand Factors:

Demand for office space will primarily grow out of the internal mobility of existing tenants. The mobility pattern is similar to residential mobility with established businesses seeking new high quality space. The majority of these businesses are seeking 10,000 sq. ft. or less.

Demand for office space will come secondarily from new firms to the area that are seeking large tracts of land, good access and areas with ongoing household growth.

Office space demand from new start-up businesses is generally so small and sporadic that it is not a factor in developing an economic development strategy.

The fiscal impacts of the Land Use Plan were analyzed to provide insight into the preparation of the economic development strategy. The analysis utilized the existing cost of municipal services and the long term costs of capital improvements to provide a snapshot of the impacts of ongoing growth on the current budget.

Major findings included:

The Hilliard community is currently well positioned for ongoing economic development.

The commercial (revenue producing) land identified on the Land Use Plan is sufficient to meet the future revenue needs caused by new development that may occur within current boundaries (approximately seven to ten years of development).

The City's economic development potential will permit it to not just maintain but to enhance the quality of life within the community.

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There is the opportunity to plan and design future capital improvements to fulfill multiple goals related to visually, functionally and symbolically enhancing the value of the community.

Hilliard must set an annual revenue increase target of approximately \$600,000 to maintain quality of existing services. This target translates into the need to seek approximately one \$43,000 (32,250) job per new resident or based on current residential growth rates an annual increase of \$22.6 to \$30 million in the citywide employment payroll. Another related target measure includes the annual development

of approximately 175,000 sq. ft. of office space. (Over the last few years approximately 600,000 sq. ft. of office/office warehouse/warehouse industrial was absorbed in the effective market area.)

Hilliard Economic Development Strategy Recommendations

Promote and market the full range of economic development inventory throughout the City. The economic development strategy dovetails with the physical development strategy to provide potential locations and development opportunities for all types of businesses from industrial concerns to corporate offices.

The economic develop strategy emphasizes office development as this land use typically yields higher income tax revenue. As Britton Parkway organizes and provides more identity to Hilliard's existing employment areas, there will be an opportunity to attract large businesses that combine corporate office, light manufacturing and/or some warehouse space into one facility or in a campus setting.

Once the regional road network is in place, Hilliard's greenfield commercial sites will have sufficient regional identity to be well known to commercial realtors and real estate consulting firms. The greater challenges before the Hilliard economic developer will be to focus on business retention, expansion, and enhancement.

The abundance of existing office/warehouse space provides the City with the opportunity to attract and/or retain growing businesses that could use this existing space over a short term period before the company builds its own facility on one of the greenfield sites in the developing area.

"Promote and market the full range of economic development inventory throughout the City."

Hilliard may also develop a niche economic development market in its vacant office and warehouse space. Many of these buildings are adjacent to residential areas and cannot compete with newer sites. These buildings and sites may now be very viable locations for call centers and collection agencies. The businesses will be located in a safe neighborhood setting and may draw many employees right from the neighborhood.

The economic development program must also serve to keep the existing retail spaces occupied. This is especially true of the smaller neighborhood centers where the vitality of the center will have a direct reflection on the vitality of the adjacent residential neighborhood. A vital Old Hilliard will also be important to the identity of the community. In addition to implementing the physical development recommendations of the Old Hilliard Plan, the community should also continue to develop marketing themes and a brand that in turn will spawn activities to bring people into the district. The Fair Grounds and the Heritage Rail to Trail may be instrumental in developing these activities.

“In the quest to position the community for ongoing economic development, City officials must continually focus on quality of life issues and concerns.”

In the quest to position the community for ongoing economic development, City officials must continually focus on quality of life issues and concerns. A community that is viewed positively by its residents will be one that is viewed positively by prospective businesses.

In this regard it is recommended that the City use the Comprehensive Economic Development Master Plan as an expression of the community will to be the best that it can be. It must be demonstrated that

economic development will serve to better the community and in turn make it more marketable over the long run. The comprehensive plan also demonstrates that the community is prepared to manage its fiscal responsibility that will protect both public and private investment into the community.

Not all aspects of the strategy are related to physical development. The community must initiate and participate in social activities for the business community that convey friendliness and sophistication. Promoting civic involvement will also serve to strengthen the entire community.

With respect to its physical form and appearance, the community must preserve and enhance its quiet residential neighborhoods and vibrant commercial areas. A compact form of development organized around a strong center will serve to make the employment areas a very active and vital part of the community. Constant attendance to traffic management will also make the City very attractive.

“With respect to its physical form and appearance, the community must preserve and enhance its quiet residential neighborhoods and vibrant commercial areas.”

Maintenance of quality services while growing will also be a hallmark of the community.

The Economic Development Program

To be most effective the City should develop a point source for economic development. The City’s Economic Development Director must be provided specific directives from the Mayor and Council to demonstrate his or her authority to be the point of contact for economic development prospects.

In turn the Economic Development Director must prepare an Economic Development Plan.

This plan will contain the prospect data base, market material and data as well as pre-established policies with respect to infrastructure development, potential incentive, the development process and permits.

It is also recommended that the City formalize an incentive policy that will ensure that the community is always on the short list of companies seeking to relocate. Tax Increment Finance Funds (TIFF) are absolutely necessary to cover initial capital costs of the roadways that connect Hilliard's employment areas to the region.

The development packages that are negotiated with commercial developers and businesses must serve to maximize and guide public investment. To be most successful the deals must be sufficient to be competitive with surrounding communities but still provide for a clear return on community investment.

The strategy includes naming the areas so they are more readily described and identified. The marketing strategy for each of the districts is based on the existing strengths or positive perceptions of the area as a place to conduct certain types of businesses. This will result in critical mass that will provide stronger market identity. The overall strategy is to ensure that the community has places that can accommodate many types of businesses.

"Hilliard has the opportunity to better position its existing commercial areas to be more vital and competitive in the face of new competition."

Commercial Area Strategies

Hilliard has the opportunity to better position its existing commercial areas to be more vital and competitive in the face of new competition. Plans for each of these areas attempt to provide physical development as well as marketing and branding direction to make these existing commercial districts more identifiable and competitive for economic development.

The physical development recommendations incorporated "place-making" concepts that serve to make the districts more identifiable, unified and connected to the greater community.