

HOT SPOTS

INTRODUCTION

Hot spots can be thought of in several ways. Typically hot spots are areas where development / redevelopment is occurring that affects the whole community, such as the Wyse / Benchwood area where land uses will be altered as a result of the new interchange. Hot spots can also be areas that are affected by decisions of a neighboring jurisdiction, such as Dayton's proposed airport expansion area. In the case of the airport expansion area, the decisions of the Dayton International Airport may drastically affect the direction of the future land use plan and the National Road corridor.

Hot spots can also be concepts that need further exploration and action. At the initial steering committee meeting, members generated several concepts that they felt deserved attention. Hot spot concepts included identification / entry features, access control / management, definition of "family" in single-family housing, and character. Throughout the plan, many of these concepts have been defined and potential solutions outlined.

A litany of "hot spots" has been developed as a part of this planning process. Several interchanges have been identified. These include the Airport Access Road and Route 40, National Road and I-75, National Road and Dixie Drive, and Northwoods Boulevard and I-75. Zoning issues at the interstate interchanges were also developed as a "hot spot." Other sites that have been targeted as "hot spots" include Brown School Road / Industrial Park Drive / Brown School Woods, the airport expansion area, Grand American, Mulberry annexation area, and the new portion of Webster Street.

In addition to the session held with the steering committee, interviewees were also given the opportunity to list "hot spots." The respondents identified locations along Brown School Road, Northwoods, the downtown, and the Poe Avenue-Little York area. Other suggestions included Bohanan Drive, the Airport Corporate Center area, and Miller Lane.

STRATEGIC PLANS

As a part of the planning process, specific plans were developed for three of the hot spots listed above: Wyse / Benchwood interchange / Miller Lane area, downtown (National and Dixie) and the airport expansion area. All three of these areas have an impact on the economic "health" of the City of Vandalia. First, the predominate land use in the new interchange area is residential. However, the zoning has been changed to interstate business to allow for development once the new interchange is complete. Much of this new urban corridor is in Butler Township and will require joint planning to ensure a high quality of development. This area has a potential for high growth yet this growth must be managed.

Second, the National Road corridor is considered Vandalia's "downtown" and the intersection of National and Dixie is the traditional "Crossroads of America." This is also the area where the majority commercial / retail development is located. Yet, this

corridor caters more to highway traffic than to the City resident. Throughout the planning process, citizens, city officials, and business representatives have discussed the need to develop an identity in the downtown, creating focal point for the City.

The airport expansion area is one of the last remaining greenfields within the City limits. It has huge potential for future development. However, if the airport expands the runway and National Road is relocated, much of this land will be consumed. The City opposes the extension of runway 6R-24L.

WYSE / BENCHWOOD / MILLER LANE AREA

This area has several strengths. First, this will be the location of the new interchange, making the area ripe for development / redevelopment. Second, the area also has the infrastructure in place to support more intensive land uses. Third, the area still has vacant land available for development. Fourth, during the interview process, there was a consensus that the proposed interchange is needed to alleviate problems with traffic flow.

It is clear that the City of Vandalia wants to promote economic development and redevelopment of the area. The City has already rezoned the parcels in this area to IB (interstate business). This will make it easier for businesses wishing to locate here. The interchange will also make the area more accessible to businesses and residents of the City. The Transportation Thoroughfare Plan identifies streets that need upgrading to ensure continued accessibility. By undertaking the recommendations of the Transportation Thoroughfare Plan and also implementing an access management plan of the area, traffic in the area can be managed and congestion curbed, making this desirable location for future business growth and development.

Even though the area has several strengths, the area also has several weaknesses. Currently this area is predominately residential with a scattered mix of commercial uses along North Dixie Drive. The current lot configuration in the area reflects this initial development pattern. This lot configuration is inadequate for commercial uses as designated in the Interstate Business zoning currently in place. Redevelopment will require the re-aggregation of parcels. To protect residential lots buffering and landscaping standards will be required. In addition, no design standards currently exist in the zoning code. There is nothing in place in the existing regulations to ensure that quality development will occur. Creating an overlay zone or incorporating standards into the existing IB classification would solve this problem. As an alternative solution, a planned office/commercial district should be created that incorporates design and buffering standards. The above sketch illustrates what a McDonalds or any other fast-food establishment could look like with proper design standards in place. The façade of the McDonalds pictured here is brick with a wood shingled roof.



During interviews with businesses along Poe Avenue, representatives stated that they were concerned about the potential disruption that could occur during the construction phase of the new interchange. The City should appoint an administrative or council representative to work with Poe Avenue businesses to ensure continued viability of this section of the City.

Many possibilities exist for this corridor as Vandalia has the opportunity to create an area of high quality commercial development. At this time, Butler Township is in the process of preparing design standards for the land in their jurisdiction. Vandalia should work with the Township on joint planning efforts as well as economic development agreements that would benefit both jurisdictions. Since the township cannot collect an income tax or bed tax, the formation of a joint economic development district (JEDD) would benefit both parties.



The main threat to the area is a lack of planning. A master plan should be created for the entire area south of I-70. Also, the current zoning code is a threat. The IB classification has too much overlap in what uses are allowed. This corridor could mirror the National Road corridor unless the zoning code is enhanced.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create and implement an access management plan for the area.
2. Create a policy that requires the re-aggregation of parcels when residential land is redeveloped into higher uses.
3. Develop and implement buffering and landscaping standards for the area.
4. Create a planned office/commercial district that can be used to control the aesthetics of the area while protecting existing residential development
5. Appoint an administrative or Council representative to work with Poe Avenue businesses to ensure continued viability of this section of the City.
6. Form economic development partnerships with Butler Township in strategic areas. Investigate the feasibility of entering into a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD).
7. Create a master plan for the area.

DOWNTOWN (NATIONAL ROAD AND DIXIE DRIVE)

During the first public meeting, one set of questions focused on the downtown area. In focus groups, Vandalia citizens discussed if the downtown was adequately defined. Some respondents indicated that the downtown was not well defined or is characterized by unplanned development. They felt that the downtown, especially small businesses, could benefit from a downtown theme. A few mentioned that the brick sidewalks and lighting are a good start, but more needs to be planned. Some would like to see improvements to the downtown such as good restaurants. Others do not think the downtown is a problem. They enjoy that the downtown has less traffic than in other

neighboring communities and believe the downtown developed as it did because that is what the residents wanted.

In many communities, the historic downtown is the “center.” When focus group participants were asked to identify the center of Vandalia, responses were mixed. Respondents cited the government complex around Maple and Bohanan Road, the intersection of Dixie and National Road, and National Road itself as the City’s center. Others stated that a City center will be determined in the future and that the center needs to continue to develop to the west.

Focus group respondents were also asked to comment on the land uses along National Road and whether they should be changed. In response, they indicated the desire for different “mom and pop” businesses and a less scattered downtown. Others believe that the establishments on National Road are doing business but the buildings could be cleaned up. Respondents did not like the amount of traffic on National Road and businesses such as the check-cashing establishment that “lowers the image of the City.” Others said that Vandalia’s codes do not encourage businesses, especially in comparison with neighboring municipalities.



Even though the corridor is considered the “downtown,” it is not pedestrian-friendly. Traffic volume and speed are not conducive to pedestrian uses. Access management is also a problem in the corridor. Suggestions for improving access are provided in the Transportation Thoroughfare Plan. In addition to traffic issues, the area also is aesthetically unpleasing due to its large expanses of asphalt with little landscaping or greenspace.

Despite these problems, this corridor and the intersection of National and Dixie have several strengths. The area is considered the “downtown” and center of the community, and its high traffic volume makes it appealing to businesses. The City has already made significant improvements in the aesthetics of the corridor through the use of decorative pavers and street lighting.

The 1984 Vandalia Downtown Development Plan offered several viable strategies for improving the downtown. Many of these strategies have not yet been implemented. This plan should be reexamined as it both outlined implementation procedures and included funding alternatives for physical infrastructure improvements.

In addition to the Downtown Development Plan recommendations, the City should continue its efforts to improve the downtown corridor through the use of pavers and distinctive lighting. This “theme” should be continued in extending the downtown streetscape. The streetscape should be extended along National Road to Helke Road. Also, extend the streetscape north on North Dixie Drive to Inverness Avenue. Extend the

streetscape south on South Dixie Drive to the High School / East Alkaline Springs Road area.

The area is ripe for redevelopment, and the City has the opportunity to spur it along and create a focal point or “theme.” First, the City should create an overlay district with specific design guidelines and standards for the corridor. These design standards should also apply to the structures on Kenbrook and Bohanan Drives. Second, the City should provide incentives for redevelopment. Third, the City should explore the feasibility of purchasing property at the southeast corner of National and Dixie to create a city plaza. The plaza will provide a destination point for citizens in the downtown. The City can display public art, hold concerts, or sponsor other public events at this location to encourage people to come downtown.

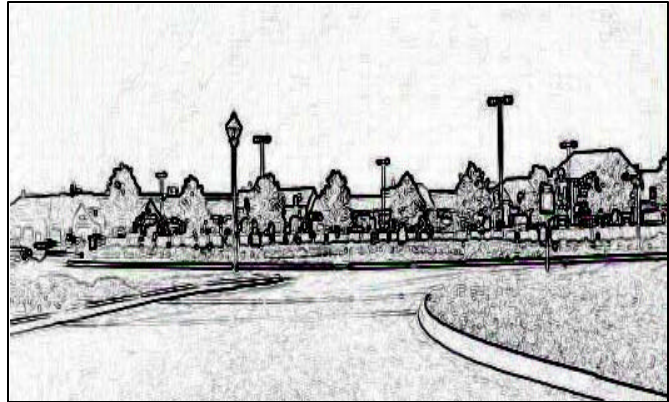
Citizens agree that the area needs to be enhanced and that a “theme” should be developed. However, the biggest threat to the area is the lack of consensus about how to accomplish such visionary changes. City Council and Administration must work together to develop a plan for this area. Time is of the essence as development continues in the corridor. The City needs to develop a Downtown Task Force to begin implementing many of the downtown recommendations while also building public support and consensus about the future of the district.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Combine existing parking facilities and develop new internal circulation patterns.
2. Add landscaping and physical improvements to parking facilities.
3. Combine and reduce curb cuts along National Road.
4. Encourage the renovation of facades within the downtown district through the development of incentives including grant programs and low interest rehabilitation loans.
5. Revise zoning code to reflect proposed land use patterns and permitted uses in the downtown.
6. Extend the streetscape along National Road to Helke Road. Also, extend the streetscape north on North Dixie Drive to Inverness Avenue. Extend the streetscape south on South Dixie Drive to the high school / East Alkaline Springs Road area.
7. Create a corridor overlay with specific design guidelines and standards.
8. Provide incentives for redevelopment.
9. Create a city plaza or public space in the downtown area.
10. Develop a Downtown Task Force to implement the recommendations and build public and private support.

AIRPORT EXPANSION AREA

At the time this Comprehensive Plan was completed, the future and direction of the expansion of the Dayton International Airport was still undecided. The City is opposed to the extension of runway 6R-24L. According to the Dayton International Airport, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Study will be completed in approximately two years. The EIS will review the potential impacts and a multitude of alternatives in an effort to



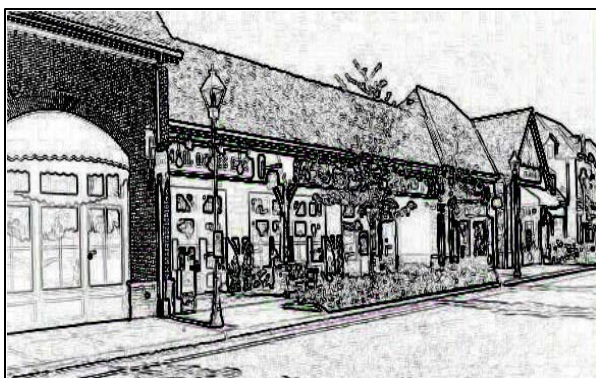
prove or disprove the present Draft Dayton International Airport Master Plan. The City of Vandalia will continue to closely monitor the preparation of the formulation of runway alternatives and recommendations to modify the airport master plan. As a part of this



process, alternative recommendations will be evaluated and the Draft Airport Master Plan may be modified. One of the alternatives currently discussed in the Draft Airport Master Plan calls for the realignment of National Road. If the realignment were to occur as outlined in the Draft Airport Master Plan, traffic patterns along National Road and other collectors in the City of Vandalia will be dramatically affected. This is further discussed in the

Transportation Thoroughfare Plan.

The area around Airport Access Road is one of the last remaining greenfields within the City limits. This area has the most potential for the development of the uses discussed by focus group participants such as more entertainment, upscale restaurants, a dinner theater, a banquet hall, a market, retail / specialty shops, industrial buildings, telecommunications, and research / high tech parks. They would like less fast food, hotels, gas stations, and heavy industry. The utilities are in place to facilitate



development. However, the City would need to make significant investment in the transportation network, mainly the construction of an interchange.

The uncertainty of the airport expansion is one of the biggest threats to this concept. A great deal of land in this area will be needed to realign National Road. This will decrease the viability of the site as a town center. Also, the noise level will dramatically

increase in this area, decreasing the overall appeal of the area. Finally, Butler Township is currently promoting the development of a town center that would contain a mix of commercial and retail establishments. The Township has the zoning in place and is in the process of developing design guidelines. It is likely that the land in the Township will develop first. However, the City could work with the Township to link the two developments in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Monitor the development of the Airport Master Plan and the Environmental Impact Statement.
2. Pursue a cooperative working relationship with Airport staff and the City of Dayton to enhance future planning efforts and pursue joint economic development opportunities.
3. Continue to oppose expansion of runway 6R-24L.
4. Construct the Airport Access Road interchange as proposed on the Transportation Thoroughfare Plan.
5. Change the zoning in the area to conform with the Future Land Use Plan.
6. Create a planned office / commercial / industrial zoning category for the area
7. Using the new zoning category and working with property owners and developers, market the land as a mixed-use center ready for development.
8. Add the new interchange and water/sewer improvements to the Capital Improvement Program.
9. Work to create public / private partnerships to spur development of the site.
10. Extend water and sewer service to the site.
11. Develop design guidelines for the area.
12. Work with Butler Township to link the development to the Township's major commercial center.
13. Invest in high tech infrastructure for the area in order to create an office niche and spur along the construction of Class A office space.

GATEWAYS

Random House defines a gateway as any passage by or point at which a region may be entered. In this case, the region is the City of Vandalia and because of its location, several passages or points exist that are crucial to defining the City of Vandalia. A map of the gateways is located in Appendix 3.

An effort should be made to install attractive City markers or signs that identify the beginning of the City of Vandalia. Once a City "theme" is developed, this "theme" can be incorporated into the signs. In addition to the signage, the gateways should be attractively landscaped. Visitors to the City will have a greater sense of where the community begins and the quality of the community itself. This type of small



improvement can set Vandalia apart from other surrounding communities. These gateways and their features add to the identity of the community.

The photo above illustrates an existing gateway or 'welcome' sign located on National Road. The photo at the right is a gateway sign located in the City of St. Clairsville, Ohio.



