

LAND USE & ZONING ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The land use plan portrays a vision of future land use patterns within the City of Vandalia. A variety of factors were considered when preparing the future land use plan. The first consideration was the existing land use pattern. A current land use map was prepared and can be found in this section. The second consideration was the environmental capacity of the vacant parcels. An environmental overview has been provided below that illustrates the environmentally sensitive areas of the City. Continued financial “health” was also a consideration in the preparation of the plan. Commercial and industrial land generates higher revenue than residential development. By continuing to provide commercial and industrial sites, the City’s financial stream can be enhanced and the high level of services offered can continue.

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

There are several environmentally sensitive areas within Vandalia’s city limits. These include wetlands, floodplains, rangeland and forestland, and rivers/streams. The majority of these areas are located east of I-75, in the Miami River Valley. A map illustrating these areas can be found in the Appendix 3.

The Taylorsville Reserve protects much of the floodplain and wetlands from development. However, development pressures continue on the east side, near these environmentally sensitive areas. As the amount of open space/greenspace is decreased and the amount of impervious surface is increased, the floodplain also increases. Groundwater recharge is also affected since there is less open area for groundwater recharge to occur.

Federal law requires no net loss of wetlands. As illustrated in the *Natural Areas* map, several wetlands exist. As development occurs in these areas, these wetlands should be monitored to ensure that they are not destroyed in the development process.

Stream corridors and wetlands exist in the Northwoods Industrial area. Since the park has not been fully developed, efforts should be made to assist CSX Railroad to comply with the State and Federal wetland requirements.

The future land use plan designates the area near the Miami River Valley as residential. Development should be large lot and intense development should be discouraged. The future land use plan designates the area around Airport Access Road as a mix of commercial, office, and industrial. When development occurs in this area, ensure that the wetlands and stream corridors are protected. These areas would complement the existing network of open space and can easily be part of the open space system.

CITIZEN INPUT

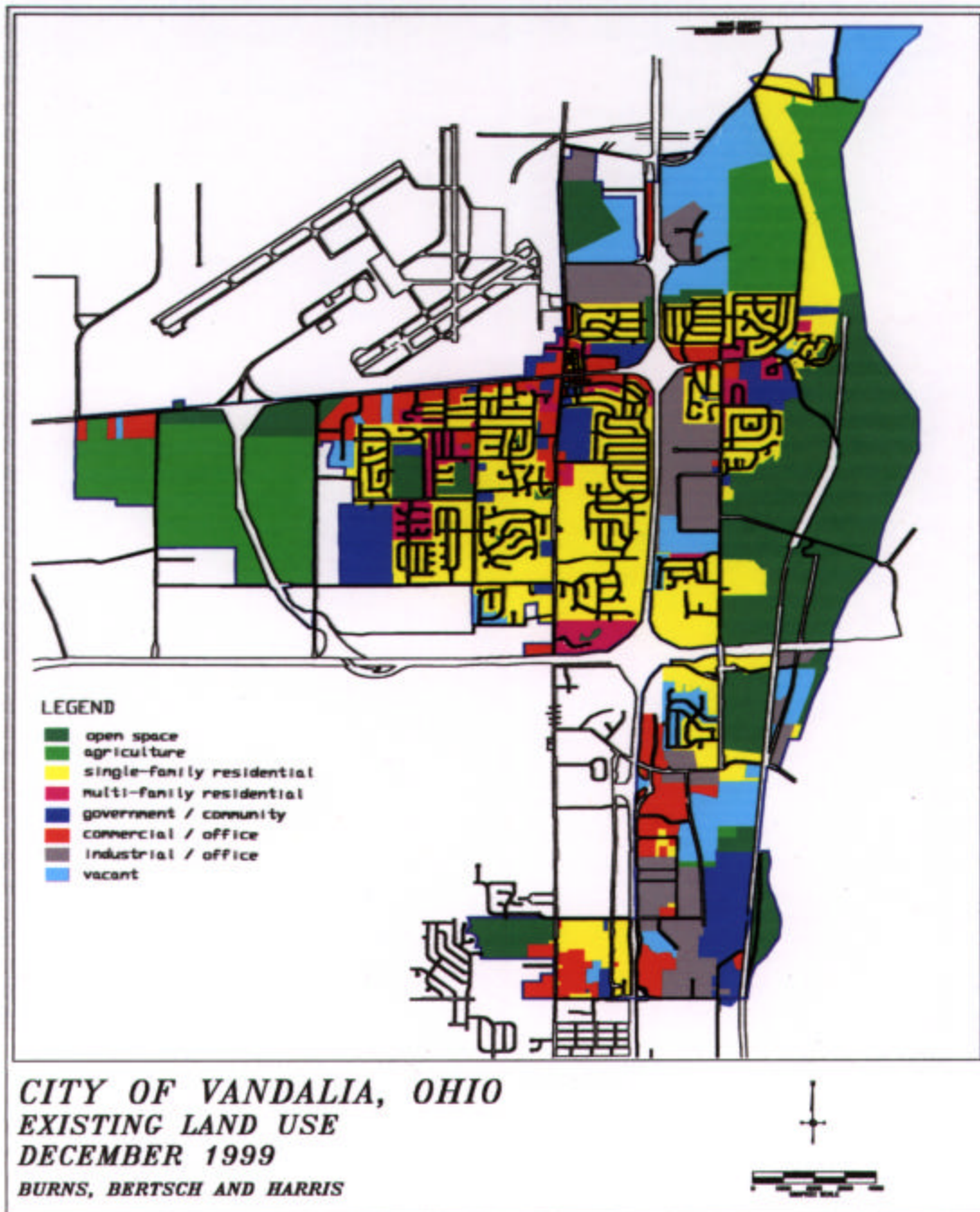
In interviews with City officials, Chamber of Commerce, and Vandalia's business community, respondents were asked several questions regarding land use. Interview respondents were asked where there were areas of conflicting land uses. Several individuals saw a conflict between industrial and residential areas on Brown School Road. Respondents also commented on the impact of the airport along western neighborhoods, land uses along National Road, B-2 zoning, and the Store N' Lock on National Road.

Similarly, interviewees were asked if there were any areas in need of special attention. Respondents indicated that the City's 1950's era housing and businesses are in need of repair and / or retrofitting. Other areas in need of attention include National Road (too many curb cuts / lack of downtown) and the area around the American Legion on Helke.

Finally, interview respondents were asked if there were areas or borders where collaborative land use should occur. Participants indicated collaboration between Vandalia and Butler Township on services. Also, Stonequarry Road and Miller Lane were given as locations where collaboration should occur.

EXISTING LAND USE

No single land use dominates the City of Vandalia. Instead, Vandalia has developed a balance between residential, industrial, and commercial / office uses. The *Existing Land Use* map located in Appendix 3 illustrates this mix. In interviews conducted as a part of this plan, respondents were asked if the current mix of land uses in the City was appropriate. If not, they were asked to identify what uses were in excess and what uses were in shortage. Most respondents believed that the current mix of land uses was appropriate for the City. However, some respondents felt that the ratio of multi-family housing to single-family housing was too high and that Vandalia needed more retail/commercial.



FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use plan is comprised of several elements including annexation recommendations, land use objectives and supporting principles, and a future land use map. The *Future Land Use* map found on the following page shows the type and location of land development desired in the future. It was developed by applying the General Plan Goals and Objectives as well as the recommendations from other sections

of the Comprehensive Plan. It is not the intent of the Plan to force uses other than those presently existing within the area. Rather, the Plan provides a basis for a public policy dialog and the framework for the orderly development of the area. The existing land use pattern has occurred over time and the parcel patterns and uses are appropriate for those times and uses. However, as private owners explore redevelopment opportunities, and seek new zoning opportunities from the City reflecting those opportunities, it is imperative that land use patterns, configurations, and arrangements reflecting the public interest be considered. This plan provides a guide for those discussions.

The *Future Land Use* map is not the same as the zoning map, either in the legal sense or in its effect. The future land use plan is very general in nature. The map is an official description of where and to what level future zoning should be permitted. However, the Planning Commission and Council should consider the map to be only one of several tools available to assist them in making land use recommendations and decisions. The information contained on the map should be supplemented by impact studies and other site-specific information as deemed necessary by the City Engineer.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES AND SUPPORTING PRINCIPLES

The following areas are considered vital to maintain the community's well-being and the positive image that has contributed to the City's growth. Their protection will receive continuing consideration. These principles should supplement the goals and objectives and not be viewed as alternatives.

RESIDENTIAL

A. Objectives:

Homes for the residents of the City should be set within a physical environment that offers quiet and privacy; which is healthy, safe, convenient, and attractive; which is consistent with the quality of life in the City of Vandalia; which ensures stable property values and affords open opportunities for all citizens.

B. Principles:

1. Permit a rate of residential growth that does not exceed the ability of the City to provide adequate services, so as to avoid undue congestion or undesirable conditions brought on by high-density, overcrowding, and / or rapid development.
2. Assure adequate living space for all by taking into account existing development patterns and demands for public services.
3. Provide a variety of dwelling unit types throughout the community.
4. Provide a sound framework for neighborhoods by preventing them from being bisected by major trafficways or isolated from necessary community services.
5. Ensure thoroughfares and utilities (water, sewage, storm drainage) that are adequate for the proposed development. Development will not be permitted until assurances are given that such facilities will be provided.

6. Assure traffic safety through the design of street systems that discourage through-traffic in residential neighborhoods and by severely limiting uses that generate non-residential traffic.
7. Encourage development of neighborhoods that are attractive through the careful preservation of existing topography, trees, and other natural attributes, and the promotion of other measures aimed at maintaining an aesthetically desirable environment.
8. Prevent residential development in areas with unsuitable environmental conditions.

INDUSTRIAL

A. Objectives:

Industrial uses should be developed on land that is appropriate in location, character, and extent for industrial use. Any industrial site shall be developed in a safe manner with enhanced site design and architectural compatibility with surrounding development.

B. Principles:

1. Permit those types of industries that will stabilize and diversify the economic base.
2. Create separations between industrial and residential neighborhood development by locating industrial district so that they will be buffered.
3. Reduce traffic congestion by locating major industrial uses near major thoroughfares and interchanges and on the edge of the City where they are more accessible.
4. Prohibit air and noise pollution and / or other pollution by requiring industries with such potential to be developed so as to incorporate special buffering requirements aimed at mitigating negative impacts and also by locating them a reasonable distance from major residential areas.

COMMERCIAL / OFFICE

A. Objectives:

Commercial uses should be developed on land that is appropriate in location, character, and size to serve the residents and those persons who work in the area in a clean, attractive, architecturally compatible, safe, and convenient manner with the goods and services they require.

B. Principles:

1. Assure logical access to goods and services by encouraging planned, integrated commercial areas of compatible size with surrounding uses and in proper locations to serve the residents.
2. Encourage desirable, productive commercial land development by creating sites with street access that can be developed in harmony with surrounding land uses in the area.

3. Encourage attractiveness by incorporating standards within the development process that will result in well-designed commercial areas, integrating parking, shops, landscaping, and adequate buffering.
4. Assure compatibility of style and scale of commercial and office development with adjacent development through such means as the establishment and retention of adequate buffer areas and control of access to the site.
5. Preserve privacy for abutting and nearby properties by requiring appropriate setbacks and screening from streets and internal property lines in keeping with adjacent development.
6. Ensure harmonious relationships of commercial and office development with trafficways and other land uses by locating commercial and office areas on improved major thoroughfares, and requiring adherence to sound traffic principles.

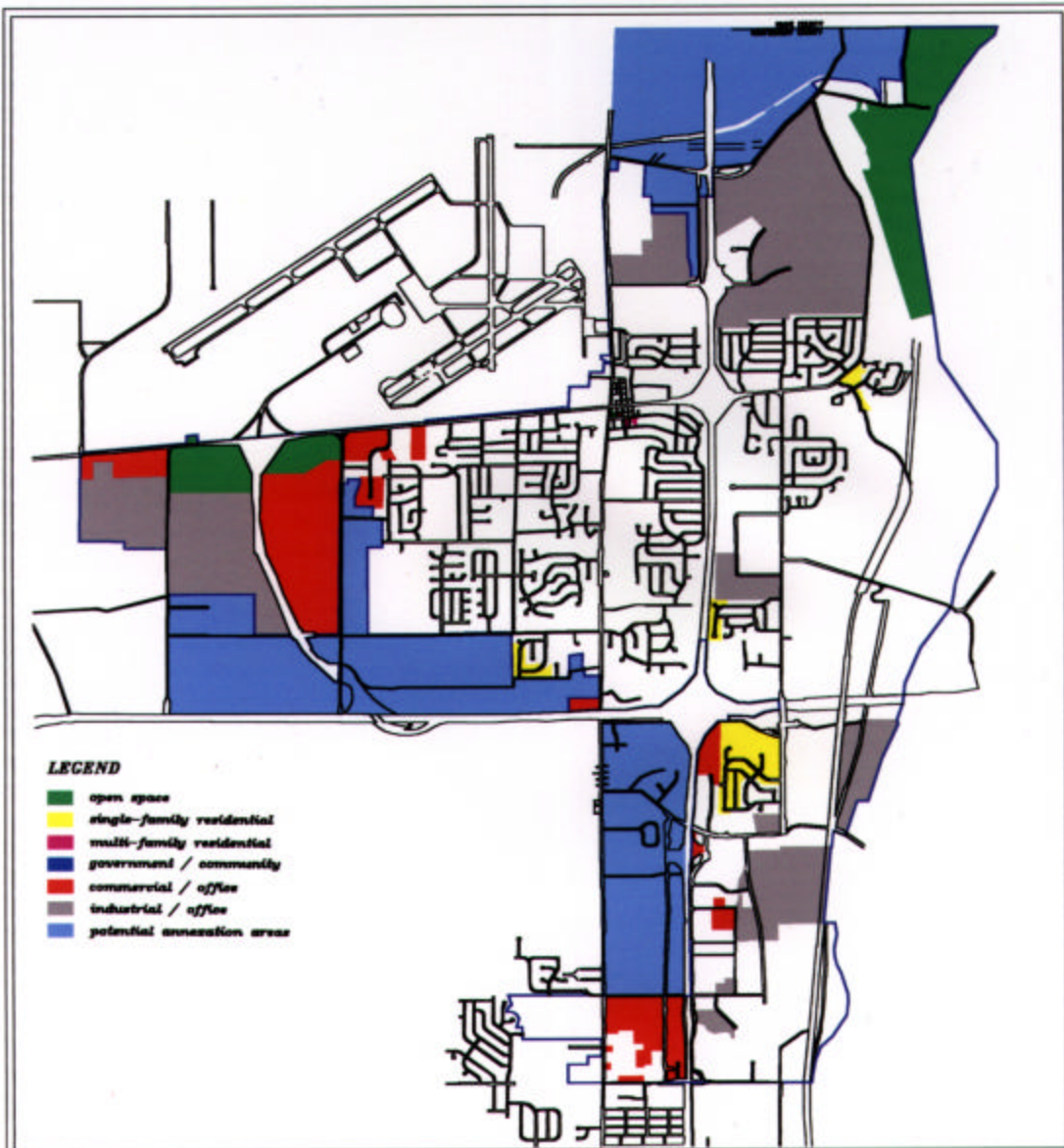
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Annex the Engle Road and Old Springfield Road area.
2. Annex the Peters Pike area north of Stonequarry Road.
3. Annex the Stonequarry Road to Dog Leg Road to I-70 area.
4. Annex the area bounded by North Dixie, I-70, I-75, and Benchwood.
5. Create a mixed-use center with commercial, office and industrial as illustrated on the future land use plan.
6. Develop an area plan for the area south of I-70.
7. Discourage the development of new strip commercial areas and focus future activity in such areas to create a more clustered pattern of commercial development.
8. Create a community focal point in the downtown area.
9. Continue development of industrial and residential areas.

ANNEXATION POLICY

Annexation plays an important role in continuing the economic “health” of an area. Annexation was an important element of the 1985 Comprehensive Plan and its importance continues in the 2000 update. By adopting this plan, the City adopts the policy of phasing the annexation program in order to provide a smooth transition in urban services, establish logical city boundaries and promote coordinated capital improvement programming. Steering Committee members felt that a cost/benefit analysis should be conducted by city staff and presented to Council for all annexation requests. This was also a recommendation of the 1985 Plan. The analysis would detail the proposed use of the parcel, potential density, estimated potential revenue (by type), estimated service costs, and a timetable for service. A public comment stage would be provided as a part of the analysis.

The 1985 Plan recommended that an annexation priority listing be developed and updated yearly. This listing should include information on each parcel, ownership, development, and estimated costs of service. Currently this is done informally by administration. This process should be formalized.



CITY OF VANDALIA, OHIO
FUTURE LAND USE
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE (2000)
 BURNS, BERTSCH AND HARRIS



ZONING

Zoning serves as one of the vehicles available for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. According to Black's Law Dictionary, zoning is the legislative division of a region, into separate districts with different regulations within the districts for land use, building size, and the like. The United States Supreme Court has determined that zoning can be used to regulate several other things, such as aesthetics and density. The power to zone comes from a municipalities "police power" which is the power to pass regulations to protect a community's health, safety, morals and welfare.

Zoning has been in place in the City of Vandalia since 1961. However, a major revision of the code was undertaken in 1986 to reflect many of the recommendations of the 1985 Plan. At the time that the 1985 Comprehensive Plan was completed, the zoning reflected the predominant single-family residential land uses of the City. Since that time, a large amount of land has been zoned for office and industrial development. Also, the code revision created several new districts including Highway Business, Downtown Business, Office-Residential, and Office Service. In 1999 the Planning Commission created the Interstate Business District.

In interviews conducted with City Council representatives, business representatives, and Planning Commission representatives, a strong sentiment was expressed that there is an overlay of uses between districts and that the existing B-2 (Highway Business) District is creating problems.

Upon review, it is clear that overlap exists between districts. Uses in the Downtown Business District should be limited. The B-2 District allows all of the uses currently found in the Downtown Business District plus a host of others. First, the list of uses permitted in the B-2 District should be modified. Second, the Interstate Business District should be re-evaluated. It may be possible to combine the B-2 District with the Interstate Business District. As stated in the zoning code, the purpose of the Interstate Business District is to provide for the development of commercial uses that would provide for an orderly flow of traffic to other adjacent higher traffic volume business districts. However, all uses listed in this district are high generators of traffic. Therefore, an access management plan becomes crucial in the areas zoned Interstate Business.

Another category that should be modified is the OR-1, Office-Residential District. Many of the permitted uses should be discouraged in residential districts. If it is the desire of the City to permit low intensity uses as listed, the uses should be conditional and not permitted. If the uses are listed as conditional, the City will have more control over buffering, access management, parking, signs, and lighting since conditional use permits will be required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Undertake a process to re-evaluate the existing zoning and subdivision regulations. Remove “undesirable” overlapping uses and at a minimum complete the following: create an Open Space category, create a Community Facilities category, create a Planned Office / Commercial category, create an overlay district for the National Road corridor, possibly extending one block N/S on Dixie Drive, modify the B-2 zone, modify the Interstate Business district, modify the sign ordinance.
2. Evaluate existing zoning categories and initiate rezoning of property to conform to the future land use plan.
3. Consider office zoning within the well field protection area.
4. Develop compatible land use guidelines to discourage residential development in areas currently and projected to be impacted by aircraft noise and overflights.
5. Adopt overlay zoning prohibiting residential developments in areas projected to have 75 or more decibels, a weighted day-night level. It is Vandalia’s intent to fully comply with FAA requirements pertaining to the weighted DNL and, in fact, would prefer to include 65 DNL in the overlay zoning should the Airport adopt these standards for existing neighborhoods.
6. Adopt overlay zoning requiring special noise insulation building standards in areas projected to have 65 to 75 decibels, a weighted day-night level. It is Vandalia’s intent to fully comply with FAA requirements pertaining to the weighted DNL and, in fact, would prefer to include 55 DNL in the overlay zoning should the Airport adopt these standards for existing neighborhoods.
7. Amend zoning code to allow zero lot line doubles.
8. Modify corner lot setback requirements to allow more flexibility.
9. Modify zoning code to discourage flag lots.
10. Develop specific commercial maintenance standards relating to big box uses, exterior maintenance, parking lots, and signature buildings.
11. Create special church related zoning including frontage, landscaping, setbacks, and screening.
12. Include as permitted uses in selected districts service organizations such as plumbers, electricians, HVAC contractors, tree trimming services, etc. Create specs for enclosure of equipment, materials, fleet vehicles, etc.