The West Gahanna Development Study

Prepared for:
The City of Gahanna
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Introduction

Overview of the West Gahanna Planning Process

The City of Gahanna is a growing part of the Columbus metropolitan area. In 1970, Gahanna was a rural community of only 12,400 residents. Since that time, Gahanna has emerged as a major suburb of Columbus. Gahanna's current estimated population of 34,272 represents a 23.3 percent increase over its 1990 population (27,791 persons). The City has experienced widespread housing development over the past two decades. In response to this residential growth, the commercial and office sectors, especially service industries, have boomed as well.

Gahanna will continue to experience growth in the coming decades, although most of the City's existing land is developed. Annexation is becoming more and more difficult for municipalities. Gahanna is part of Mifflin Township and any new annexations to the City will become part of Mifflin Township. Because of the current emphasis on the New Albany area to the north of Gahanna, much of Gahanna's new growth has shifted to the north and east. One of the challenges that Gahanna will face is how to best accommodate the increased population within the existing available space. The West Gahanna study area is already beginning to face this challenge. West Gahanna is an older, developed section of the City. Recently, this area has begun to experience pressure for further development and redevelopment.

The West Gahanna study area consists of approximately 400 acres in the southwest quadrant of the City. The study area is roughly bounded by I-270 to the west and south, Agler Road to the north and Big Walnut Creek to the east. The area does not include the Lynne Court, Goshen Park, Zubrod Heights, Heritage Park, or College Park neighborhoods. Olde Gahanna is located to the east, across Big Walnut Creek. Turkey Run transgresses the study area from northwest to southeast. Areas along the Run are heavily wooded. The Ballard/Cherry subdivision is also heavily wooded. Along Big Walnut Creek there is a mixture of recreational uses and vacant open space.

The developed portion of the study area contains a mixture of land uses, including single-family homes, condominiums, apartments, offices, and various commercial uses. The majority of the housing in the area was built in the 1960s and 1970s, although some is older. Most of this housing has been well-maintained while only a few units have major structural defects. The study area contains two shopping centers, both of which are older and in need of rehabilitation. The commercial and office uses are located primarily along Route 62, Stygler Road (north of 62) and Agler Road. Residential areas include the Ballard/Cherry subdivision and James Road. Recent development includes the Woods of Gahanna apartments, Timbers Condominiums, Stygler Village Retirement Center, several office buildings, and a new McDonalds at Stygler and Rt. 62.

The City of Gahanna has developed a plan for the West Gahanna study area, in anticipation of future development. The goal of this plan is to ensure that any proposed development is orderly,

aesthetically appealing, and beneficial to the residents and businesses of West Gahanna. The cornerstone of the West Gahanna Development Plan has been citizen participation. Widespread, ongoing and substantive participation ensures community "ownership" of the plan. At the start of the process, the West Gahanna Development Committee (WGDC) was appointed by the City to guide development of the plan. The WGDC includes area residents, City officials, business owners and developers, representing a broad spectrum of interests. The Committee participated in a series of design workshops and meetings to develop the final plan. Interested citizens of the target area and throughout the City of Gahanna were invited to review and comment on the proposed plan before it was adopted. The Plan consists of five major sections:

- **Existing Conditions:** This section describes current trends and conditions in the West Gahanna study area, including land use and zoning, existing parcel configuration and ownership patterns, the thoroughfare system, infrastructure conditions, environmental conditions and development trends. Several maps are included which illustrate current conditions. The analysis of current conditions lays the groundwork for the planning process and recommendations.

- **Planning Policy Statement:** This section includes a series of community planning principles to guide development in the West Gahanna study area. The list was largely developed by the WGDC and the community, utilizing stakeholder interview, design workshop and survey responses. Principles are included for the following Plan components: Land use, zoning, infrastructure/thoroughfare and redevelopment. These principles reflect the consensus of the WGDC and establishes a guide for using the policy statement in community planning decisions. The section also includes a summary of responses to a citizen survey about the proposed plan.

- **Market and Development Study:** The goal of the market study is to determine the types of development and land uses which will be most beneficial to the West Gahanna study area. The study examines current trends in the residential, commercial, office , and industrial markets in Gahanna, as well as Gahanna's context in the larger Columbus metropolitan area economy. The West Gahanna study area's role in each of these larger markets is examined.

- **The West Gahanna Development Plan:** This section includes the West Gahanna Development Plan map and an overview and description of the Plan. Implementation phases are also addressed.

- **Implementation Strategies and Recommendations:** This section includes strategies and recommendations necessary to implement the West Gahanna Development Plan. Recommendations are provided for marketing and development strategies, overlay zoning and parcel aggregation, landscaping and signage requirements, necessary public improvements, and financing strategies. These recommendations were developed by the WGDC, the City, and BBH.

How the plan was developed:

BBH, the City of Gahanna and the WGDC worked together to develop the Plan which reflects community needs and interests. The WGDC had final authority to approve or disapprove components of the plan before it went to City Council for formal adoption. The Committee was heavily involved in formulating the planning and policy goals and objectives which were incorporated into the planning document. The following describes the *major* components involved in developing the Plan:

- **Key Stakeholder Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with "key stakeholders" on the study area's development and redevelopment. The stakeholders were identified by the City and included local residents, land owners, business owners, developers and realtors. The purpose of the interviews was to generate concerns, ideas and possibilities for the West Gahanna study area, and to set the stage for the WGDC to begin to discuss and debate these ideas. A complete list of questions and responses is included in Appendix A of this document.

- **Existing Conditions Survey:** Information was gathered on existing land uses and zoning, parcel configuration and ownership patterns, and infrastructure issues in the study area. This information was compiled into a report and presented to the WGDC at a public meeting.

- **West Gahanna Design Workshop:** The WGDC met with BBH and architects from Michael Schuster Associates for a design workshop. The Committee went through a "Visioning process" and generated ideas of what the area should look like in the year 2010. They then identified the most important steps the City should take to reach this "vision." These ideas were developed graphically into three potential development plans for West Gahanna.

- **Market Study:** The market study was presented to the WGDC for discussion at a public meeting. The committee was given an opportunity to add their recommendations to the document, which is included as Part III of the Plan.

- In a series of meetings, the WGDC developed a fourth development plan, the West Gahanna Development Plan, which built on and revised the best components of the other three proposals. The Plan was displayed at City Hall for two weeks for public review and comment. A citizen survey was included as part of the display, giving citizens the opportunity to express their ideas, reactions, and concerns.

- The WGDC met to approve the final plan in January, 1996. They discussed the citizen survey responses as well as phasing of plan implementation and public and private implementation responsibilities.

- The final plan was presented to City Council for consideration and adoption.

The West Gahanna Development Committee

	Name	Organization
1.	Ms. Karen Angelou	City Council Representative, Area Resident
2.	Mr. Robert Fischer	Board of Zoning Appeals
3.	Ms. Susan Fortner	Landscape Commission
4.	Mr. Robert Keyes	Area Resident
5.	Mr. Tom Kneeland	Gahanna City Council
6.	Mr. Sam Luft	Luft's Service Center
7.	Mr. Butch Manring	Area Resident-Royal Manor
8.	Mr. Jon Martin	Roger Pharmacy
9.	Mrs. LaRoux Mentz	Olde Gahanna
10.	Ms. Inez Sanders	Stygler Village
11.	Mr. Phil Smith	Planning Commission
12.	Mr. Frank Treadway	Design Review Board
13.	Mr. Reginald Wheeler	Parks and Recreation Commission
14.	Dr. John Worman	Gahanna Animal Hospital
15.	Ms. Karen Zemnickas	Fifth Third Bank

Part I: Existing Conditions

Development Trends

The WGDC reported that the West Gahanna study area is simultaneously experiencing redevelopment and decline. The new McDonald's and Woods of Gahanna apartments are seen by some as positive development trends, while others note the decline of the shopping centers, conversion of single-family homes to businesses, and other perceived negative development trends. The Committee feels that the study area has great potential for both redevelopment and new development because of its proximity to downtown Columbus and the Columbus Airport and transportation improvements such as I-670 and Route 62. As the City of Gahanna continues to experience growth, it is inevitable that development pressures on the study area will increase. However, the Committee agrees that without proper planning and clear direction from the City, the study area will experience uncontrolled commercialization and continued residential, infrastructure and thoroughfare decline to the detriment of the surrounding neighborhoods. West Gahanna has been stigmatized as a "run-down, forgotten" section of the City and appears to be politically as well as physically divided from East Gahanna. The Committee is confident that this stigma will be erased through a redevelopment scheme that is both attractive and beneficial to current and future residents. The following paragraphs describe recent development trends in the City of Gahanna as well as the study area.

Residential development in Gahanna is beginning to slow down considerably after several years of rapid growth. Most residentially-zoned land in the City has been developed or platted. Development of planned subdivisions should be largely complete in the next one to two years, at which time the City expects a drop in the rate of development. There is very little infill housing construction occurring in developed areas at this time. Although the City hopes to annex land for further residential development, annexation is becoming increasingly difficult as cities' powers become further limited and township opposition builds. Recent residential development in the West Gahanna study area includes the Woods of Gahanna apartments, Stygler Village elderly housing complex and the Timbers condominium development. The majority of the existing housing stock in the study area was built in the 1960s and 1970s.

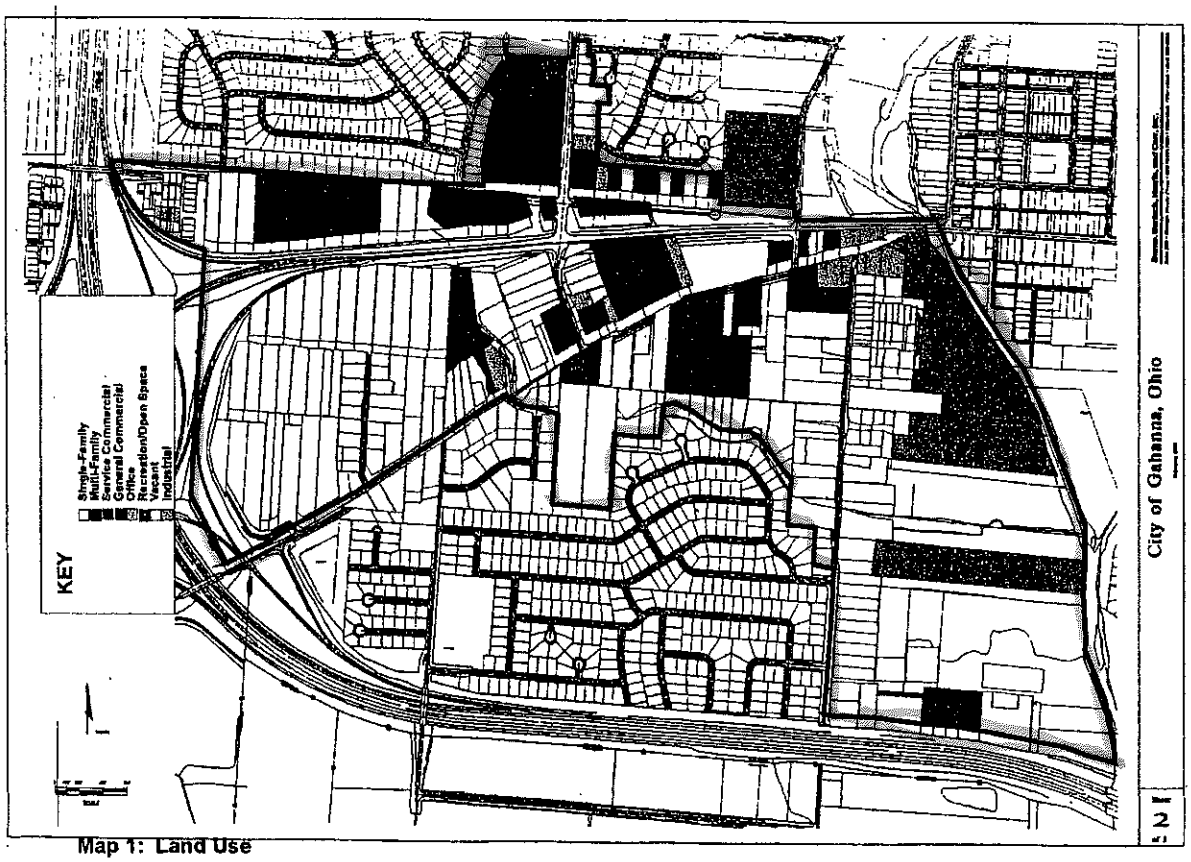
Commercial and office development continues to flourish in Gahanna. Most commercial development has consisted of service industries which cater to the growing residential population. The City also expects a large demand for office space over the next three to five years. Although industrial development has occurred as well, it has been less pronounced than commercial development. There has been an influx of light manufacturing industries recently, such as distribution centers, food service and food processing equipment industries, metal stamping and plastics. The City currently has approximately 400 to 500 acres of vacant industrially-zoned land ready for development. While commercial and office development has occurred throughout the City, industrial development has occurred in the industrially-zoned land south of Taylor Road along Interstate 270. New commercial and office development has begun to affect the study area, including the new McDonalds at Stygler and Rt. 62, the Dalicandro Office complex,

and the Gahanna Animal Hospital. Further office development is planned for Johnstown Road at this time. Please refer to Section III. of the Market and development study for a further description of development trends in Gahanna and the West Gahanna study area.

Land Use

The study area contains a mixture of land uses, including single-family homes, condominiums, apartments, offices, general and service commercial uses, and open space. The predominant use in terms of acreage is single-family, including the Ballard/Cherry subdivision, James Road and much of Stygler Road (south of 62) and Johnstown Road. There is some scattered single-family along Agler Road, although several of these units have been converted to commercial uses. The Timbers Condominium development contains the only attached single-family homes in the area. A nursing home is located in the northeast corner of the area. Six multi-family developments are scattered throughout and immediately adjacent to the study area.

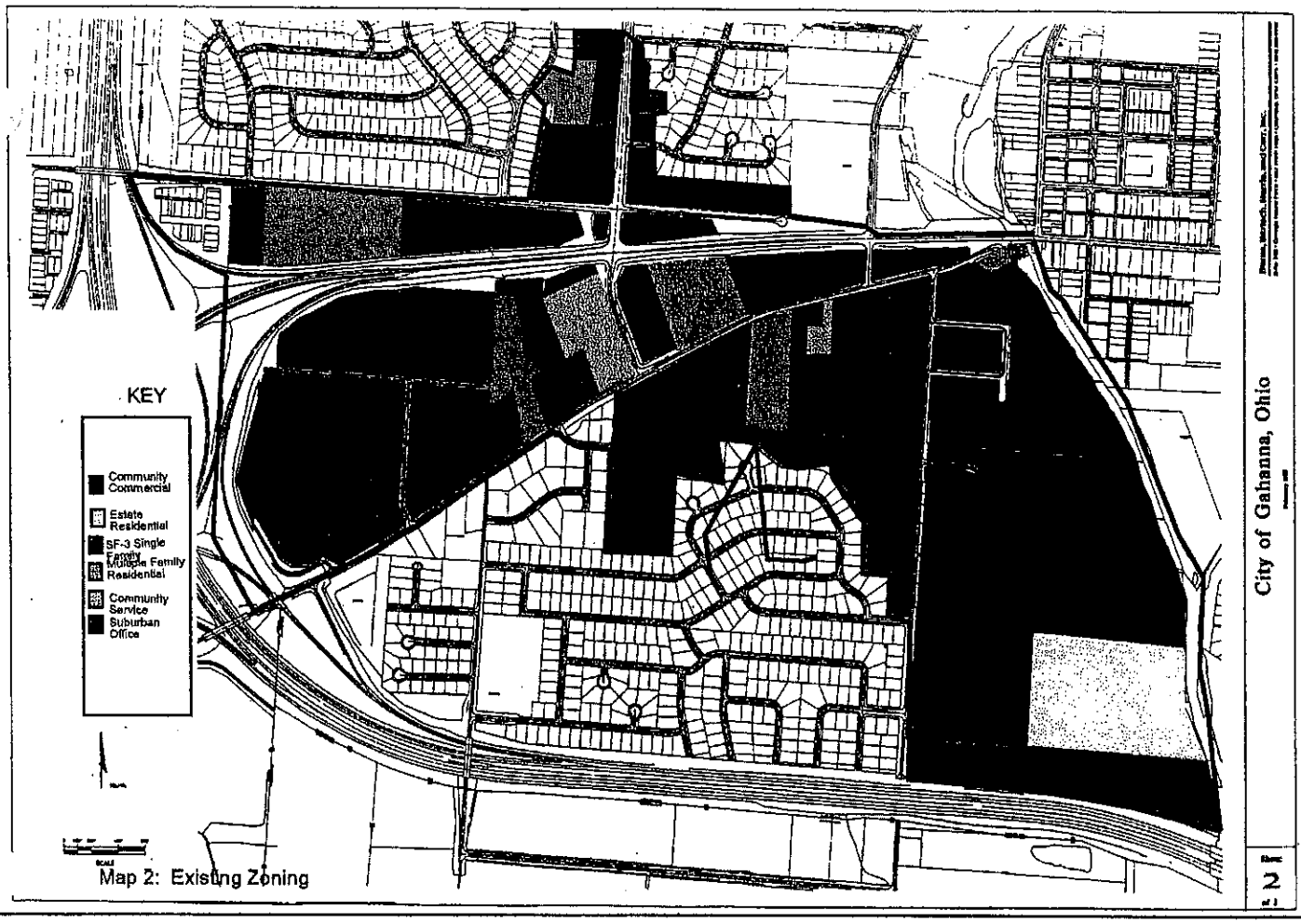
The commercial and office uses are located primarily along Route 62, Stygler Road (north of 62) and Agler Road. There are two shopping centers located at the intersection of Rt. 62/Stygler/Agler Roads. Remaining commercial development includes a McDonalds, a tavern, a bakery, auto service center and others. A medical office and animal hospital are located near the intersection of Johnstown and James Roads. The parcels along Big Walnut Creek are used primarily as open space. A pool and soccer fields are located in this area. There are over 30 vacant parcels remaining in the area. Map 1: Land Use, illustrates land use for each parcel.



Map 1: Land Use

Zoning

The predominant zoning classification in the West Gahanna study area is residential. The single-family areas are zoned SF-3, which permits single-family homes on 11,000 ft. minimum lots with a minimum of 80 feet frontage on a public right-of-way. The apartment and condominium complexes are zoned AR, Multiple Family Residential. The remainder of the study area is zoned Community Commercial, Suburban Office and Community Service. Community Commercial allows a variety of retail establishments, administrative and professional offices and consumer services, while Suburban Office permits a variety of administrative and professional offices. The Community Service zone permits only automobile and home-supply related retail, building materials retail, restaurants and a variety of consumer service establishments. Map 2: Existing Zoning, shows the classification of each parcel.

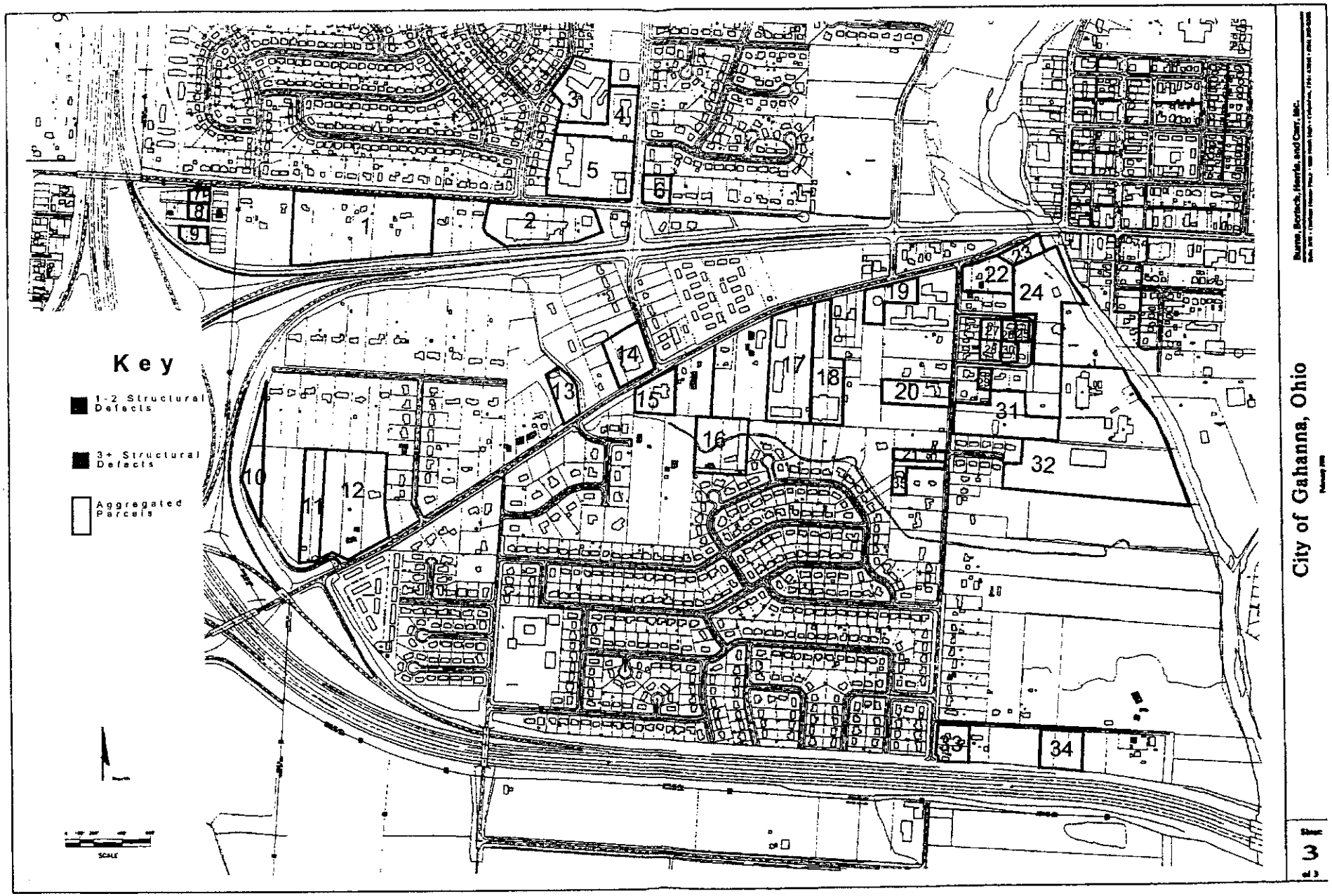


Map 2: Existing Zoning

Parcel Configuration

The study area consists mainly of smaller parcels which were designed for single-family homes. Small parcels can be an impediment to redevelopment and reuse of a site if strategies are not designed to encourage or require parcel aggregation of specified minimum sizes. A few parcels have no direct access to a right-of-way, which should be discouraged and corrected when possible. Larger parcels can be found along Big Walnut Creek as well as in existing multi-family, office and commercially-developed areas. A considerable amount of parcel aggregation has occurred recently in the study area. Many of these are single-family homes on two lots, while others include redeveloped land and vacant land awaiting redevelopment. Map 3: Existing Ownership (pg. 8), shows the location of these aggregated parcels. The key below describes the current land use of each aggregation and the date of aggregation.

	Land Use/Structures	Date of Aggregation
1.	Woods of Gahanna Apts.	combined 6/7/94
2.	Snyder Development Co.	5-14-86
3.	National Church residences of Gahanna	combined 2/28/85
4.	Neigh. Commercial	4-3-80
5.	Highway Commercial	4-3-80
	and General Commercial	12-9-92
6.	Highway Commercial	3-6-91
7-9.	Single-Family	9/7/93
10.	Vacant	8/16/89,9/7/89
11.	Single-Family (2 separate structures)	5-4-92
12.	Victory in Pentecost Ministries	9-23-94
13.	Highway Commercial &	5-6-47
	Vacant	10-2-47
14.	ITT Continental Baking Co.	10-25-68
15.	Srvc. and Vacant	3-17-86
16.	Single-Family (2 separate structures)	10-20-82
17.	Villa Nova South Apartments	1-24-78
18.	General Commercial	2-5-93
19.	Office and Service	3-17-92
20-21	Both single-family homes on two lots	
22.	Dalicandro Office	8-9-93
23.	City of Gahanna Recreation	7-9-90
24.	Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 4719	11-14-50
25-31.	All single-family homes on two lots	
32.	Recreation	1957 and 1970
33.	Single-Family (2 separate structures)	10-4-85
34.	Church	combined 6-7-94
35.	Single-family home on two lots	



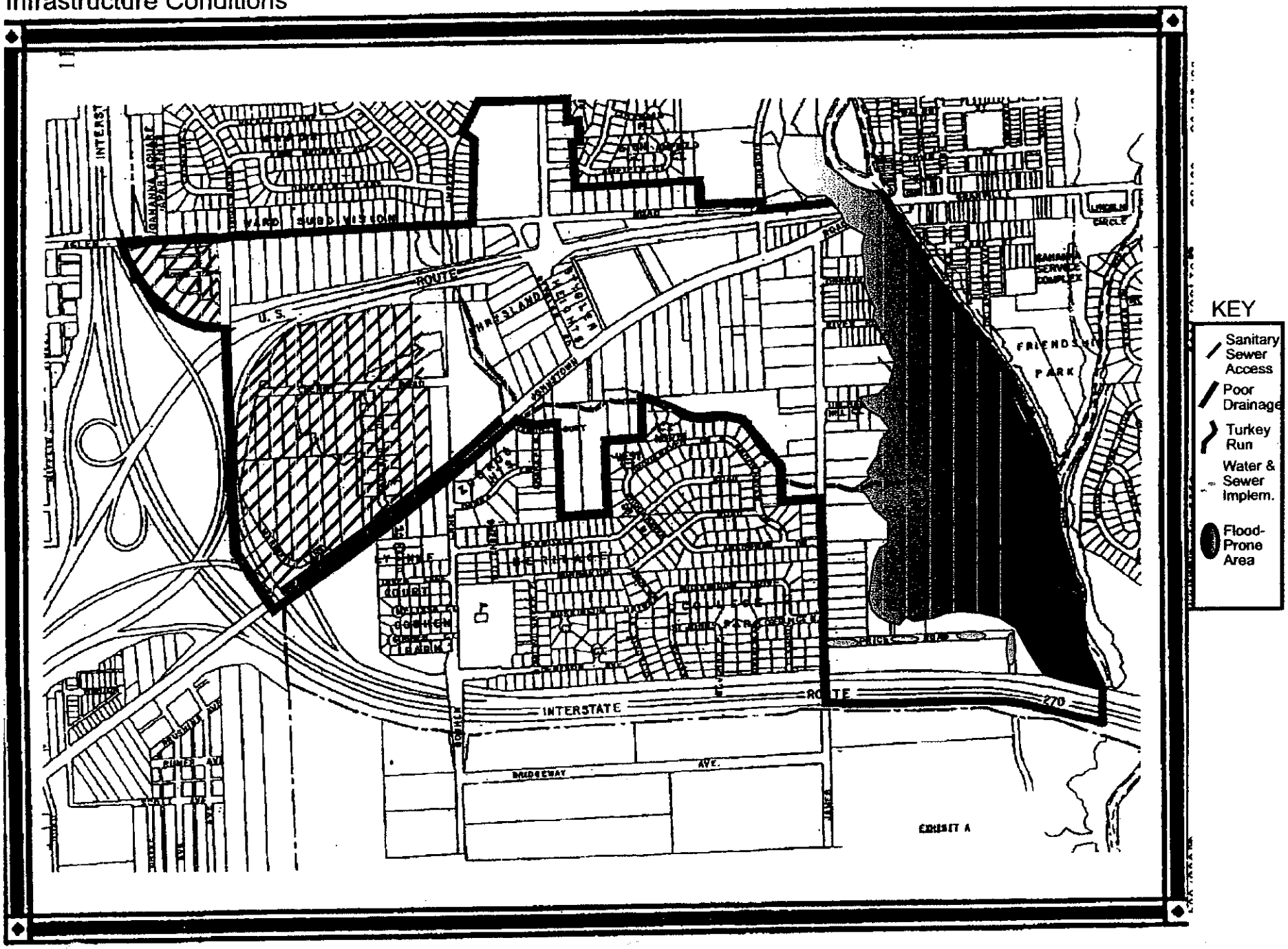
Map 3: Existing Ownership

Infrastructure and Thoroughfare:

The following concerns about the study area infrastructure and thoroughfare system were identified by WGDC members, residents and City Officials during the planning process (See Map 4, Page 11):

- The Ballard/Cherry subdivision has no sanitary sewer access.
- Price Road has no public water or sanitary sewer access.
- Johnstown Road drains poorly west of Turkey Run.
- Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters are needed along Johnstown Road from Marinell Lane to Ridenour Road.
- Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters are needed along both sides of James Road.
- Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters are needed along Stygler Road south of Route 62.
- Sidewalks are needed along the length of Route 62 in the study area.
  A left-hand turning lane will be needed at the Johnstown Road/Stygler Road intersection as heavy access points are created.
- A one-way exit ramp to Agler Road from westbound Route 62 may be necessary for access to businesses along the Agler Road cul-de-sac. This would prevent traffic from backtracking through the Route 62/Stygler/Agler Road intersections to access these sites.

Map 4: Current
Infrastructure Conditions



Environmental Conditions:

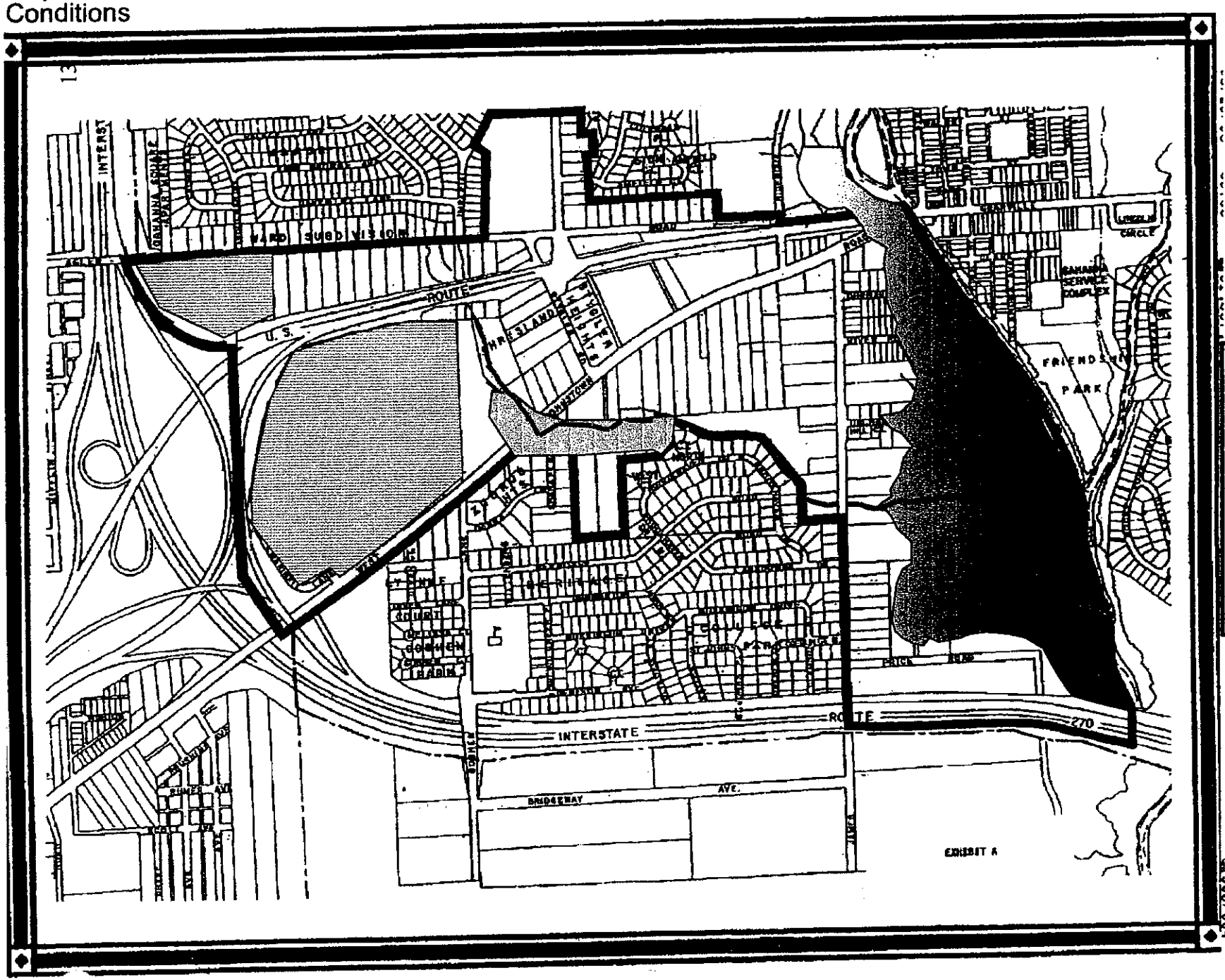
Soils:
The Soil Survey for Franklin County shows that the majority of the West Gahanna study area contains soils suitable for development with additional engineering (see Map 5). Soils found in this area include Bennington (BeA, BeB, BfA, BfB), Crane (CpA), Ockley (OcB, OcC2), Eldean (EiD2, EiC2, EmA), Warsaw (WdA), and Udothents (Ut). The area is buildable, but additional engineering, landscaping, and special construction techniques may be necessary. A small portion of the study area contains soils suitable for development, including Alexandria (AdB, AdD2, AdE2), Cardington (CaB, CaC2, CaB2, CbB), Kendalville (KeB), Thackery (ThA), and Wea (WeB). The soils in the floodplain area are not suitable for development because of wetness and slow permeability. These soils include Eel (Ee), Medway (Mh), Shoals (Sh), and Sloan (SO). Open space, nature preserves, and passive parkland are the most suitable uses for floodplain.

Floodplain and Drainage:
The Big Walnut Creek floodplain comprises the eastern boundary of the study area. Map 5 shows the 100-year floodplain as designated by the Federal Emergency management Agency (FEMA). Most of this area is undeveloped. The Big Walnut Creek feeds the Hoover Reservoir and is a tributary to the Scioto River at the boundary of Franklin and Pickaway Counties. The Creek drains a 557 square-mile watershed. The Turkey Run tributary, which traverses the study area from northwest to southeast, drains into Big Walnut Creek. The WGDC identified the need to protect the stream bed along Turkey Run as the area develops.

Topography:
The study area is generally flat, dominated by slopes of less than two percent. Along Big Walnut Creek there are slopes in excess of 12 percent (See Map 5- Source: Gahanna Planning Guide). Because of the building and engineering constraints of developing on slopes in excess of 10 percent, this area should be preserved as open space. Concerns include tree preservation, erosion due to high water flows, siltation due to development, and bridges/culverts crossed by roads or development. The Committee has recommended that a bike/ walking path be extended along Turkey Run, which should prevent many potential problems caused by more intensive development.

Wooded Areas:
Portions of the study area contain significant expanses of mature trees (See Map 5). Special precautions should be taken to preserve these trees as the area experiences further development. Specifically, all trees of six inches caliper or greater should be preserved unless the Landscape Commission determines that preservation is not feasible. Preservation may not be feasible due to the tree's location within a public right-of-way, easement, or ground coverage of a proposed structure, or if the tree is diseased or damaged beyond salvageability. Wooded areas are located along both sides of Route 62, the Ballard/Cherry subdivision, along Johnstown Road and along portions of Turkey Run.

Map 5: Environmental Conditions



Part II: Planning Policy Statements

This section includes a series of community planning principles designed to guide development in the West Gahanna study area. The list was developed by the WGDC and the community, utilizing stakeholder interviews, a design workshop, and survey responses. Principles are included for the following Plan components: Land use, zoning, infrastructure/thoroughfare and redevelopment. These principles reflect the consensus of the WGDC and establish a guide for community planning decisions. This section is not an exhaustive list of planning principles, but rather a compilation of the community's direct input. The principles reflect the consensus of the WGDC and community in terms of their vision for the study area.

Land Use Principles

Residential

- Single-family, condominium, and upscale multiple family residential development are all desirable for the study area. Condominiums should be developed for empty-nesters and first-time homebuyers. Differing price ranges can be offered within the same development.
- Existing and new residential development should be adequately buffered from more intense adjacent uses through the use of landscape buffers and screening.
- Existing residential neighborhoods in and around the study area, such as Ballard/Cherry, Royal Manor, College Park, and Heritage, must be protected from the potential undesirable effects of new development and redevelopment (e.g. noise, increased traffic).
- Involvement by the City is necessary to control the type of residential development that occurs in the study area.

Commercial

- The City should make use of vacant, commercially-zoned land along Johnstown Road
- The intersection of Stygler Road and Route 62 needs to be redeveloped with attractive commercial uses.
- The two existing shopping centers need to be rehabilitated or demolished.
- More consumer service and retail uses are needed in the study area.
- Sit-down restaurants are needed in the study area.
- Involvement by the City is necessary to control the type of commercial development that occurs in the study area.

Office

- More professional office space is needed in the study area.
- There is a high demand for office space in the City of Gahanna.
- Office uses should be "destination-oriented," not requiring visibility (i.e. medical, banks)
- Office development should be accessible to Stygler, Agler, and Johnstown Roads

Recreation/Open Space

- Friendship Park should be extended to the west side of Big Walnut Creek.
- The "natural elements" of the study area (trees, creek bed) should be preserved.
- Bike/walking paths should be extended through the study area.
- Development should be restricted in the Big Walnut Creek floodplain. The area should be used for parkland or nature preserves.

Zoning and Code Enforcement Principles

- Additional code enforcement effort should be allocated to the study area and surrounding subdivisions to clean up vacant lots and poorly maintained buildings, and enhance the overall appearance of the area.
- Vacant lots and dilapidated structures need to be maintained or eliminated.
- More stringent landscaping and signage standards are needed for development and redevelopment in the study area. Additional landscaping should be required for all new development and redevelopment.
- It will be necessary to aggregate smaller parcels of land as a condition of rezoning and redevelopment.
- A redevelopment theme should be developed for the study area.

Redevelopment Principles

- There should be a logical and visually pleasing transition from the study area into Olde Gahanna.
- The City should set the tone for redevelopment by creating some "early start areas."
- New development should be both aesthetically pleasing and beneficial to existing residents.
- The City should make known its priorities for the study area. It is necessary for the City to provide "good development direction and contribution."
- The City should create a unique, landscaped entryway along Route 62 to define the entrance and create a favorable impression of the study area.
- Extensive landscaping (both new and preservation of existing materials) is needed in the study area.
- The entire community should be involved in the redevelopment of the study area and supportive of the City's efforts.
- Inducements for parcel aggregation should be provided. The existing platting pattern will not support commercial and office development.

Infrastructure and Thoroughfare Principles

- The study area should be pedestrian-oriented, containing bike/walking paths along Turkey Run and Big Walnut Creek and sidewalks throughout. Pedestrian-scale development should be encouraged.
- Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters are needed in parts of the study area.
- An additional footbridge is needed across big Walnut Creek to link West and East Gahanna. The new footbridge should be located south of the existing bridge.
- The City needs to assist developers with needed utility and infrastructure improvements.
- City Council needs to allocate funds for public improvements in the study area.
- Storm drainage improvements are needed along Johnstown Road from Ballard Road to Stygler Road.
- Public water and sanitary sewer access is needed in some areas.

Part III. Market and Development Study

The goal of the Market and Development Study is to determine what types of development and land uses will be most beneficial to the West Gahanna study area. The study examines current trends in the residential, commercial, office and industrial markets in Gahanna, as well as Gahanna's context in the larger Columbus metropolitan area economy. The West Gahanna study area's role in each of these larger markets is then examined.

The Economy: Gahanna has a healthy and diverse economy which is both a function of and responsible for the City's growth. Nearly three-quarters (72.7%, 14,764 persons) of the population aged 16 or older participate in the labor force. The 1990 unemployment rate for the City was 3.8% (556 persons), lower than that of Franklin County (5.1%). This rate is considered by economists to be in the range of "full employment." More recent figures were not available for the City. However, the Columbus metropolitan area's unemployment rate has remained relatively stable over the past five years (Columbus Chamber of Commerce), and it is likely that Gahanna's has also. The 1990 breakdown of employment by industry was as follows:

TABLE 1

INDUSTRY	NUMBER	PERCENT
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing	95	0.7
Mining	0	0.0
Construction	729	5.1
Manufacturing	2054	14.5
Transportation	589	4.2
Communications/Public Utilities	507	3.6
Wholesale Trade	729	5.1

TABLE 1 (cont) INDUSTRY	NUMBER	PERCENT
Retail Trade	2724	19.2
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	1447	10.2
Business and Repair Services	657	4.6
Personal Services	205	1.4
Entertainment/Recreation Services	182	1.3
Professional and Related Services	3331	23.5
Public Administration	918	6.5
Total	14,167	100.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The largest employment sector is professional and related services, followed by retail trade and manufacturing. Finance/Insurance/Real Estate (FIRE) is also a significant source of employment. While retail trade usually offers lower pay and fewer benefits, professional services, manufacturing, and FIRE tend to offer the best-paying jobs. In 1990, over one-third (34.6%) of Gahanna's labor force held a professional or managerial position. Gahanna's employment breakdown is similar to that of Franklin County.

Gahanna's population is relatively well-educated, making the labor force more competitive. In 1990, 28.6% of the population over age 25 held a bachelor's degree or higher, while an additional 26.9% had an associate degree or some college education. An additional 28.8% were high school graduates, leaving only 15.7% without a high school diploma.

Incomes in Gahanna are generally higher than those of Franklin County. The 1995 per capita income in Gahanna is $20,505, while that of Franklin County is $19,263. Since 1989, Gahanna's per capita income has increased 30.5%, from $15,711. Gahanna's current median household income is $51,810, up 23.3% from $42,003 in 1989. The median household income in Franklin County is only $36,190. Gahanna's median family income is even higher, at $58,138. Incomes in Gahanna are also increasing faster than those of Franklin County. The median household income in Franklin County increased only 19% from 1989 to 1995. Gahanna's 1995 household income breakdown is as follows:

TABLE 2

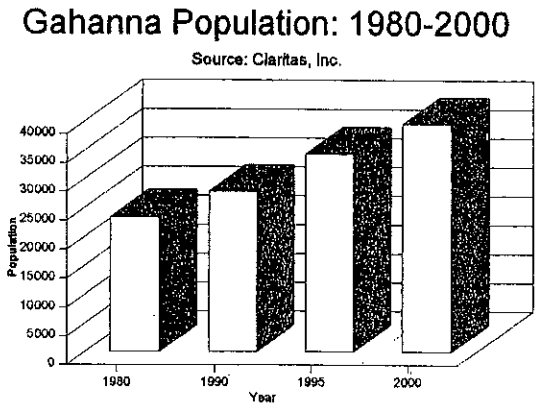
Income Level	Gahanna	Percent	Franklin County	Percent
Under $10,000	834	7.2	45,998	11.5
$10,000-$19,999	969	8.3	55,254	13.8
$20,000-$24,999	471	4.0	30,856	7.7
$25,000-$29,999	741	6.4	31,835	7.9
$30,000-$34,999	624	5.4	30,026	7.5
$35,000-$49,999	1,876	16.1	72,629	18.1
$50,000-$74,999	3,337	28.6	77,649	19.4
$75,000-$99,999	1,728	14.8	31,074	7.8
$100,000-$149,999	836	7.2	18,060	4.5
$150,000 and Over	244	2.1	7,084	1.8

Source: Claritas, Inc.

The table shows that Gahanna has a higher proportion of its population in the higher income brackets than Franklin County. Therefore, Gahanna residents on average are likely to spend more for housing and have more disposable income than Franklin County residents. Incomes in the study area tend to be below the city-wide household median. In Census Tract 74.24, Block Group 6, which includes the western portion of the study area, the 1989 median household income was $11,935. In Census Tract 74.25, Block Group 2, covering the eastern portion of the study area, the household median in 1989 was $30,536. The city-wide household median was $42,015 in 1989. These lower median incomes may be partially attributed to the high proportion of elderly in these block groups. In the surrounding subdivisions of College Park and Heritage, the 1989 median was slightly above average for the City. In Royal Manor, the 1989 block group median was $29,500.

II. Demographics

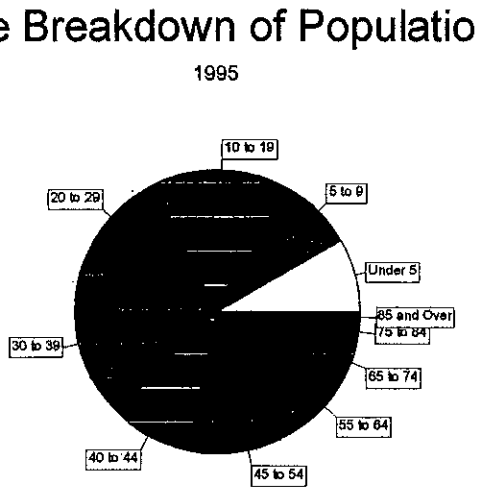
Gahanna's current population is estimated to be 34,272, an increase of 23.3% since 1990 when the population was 27,791 (Claritas, Inc.). There was a substantial 54.4% increase in population during the 1980s from 18,001 to 27,791. Gahanna's population is projected to continue to grow at a very healthy rate of 15.2% over the next five years, reaching 39,495 by 2000 (Claritas, Inc.). If this projection is accurate, Gahanna's 1990-2000 growth rate would be 42.1%. Gahanna's growth rate has far outpaced that of Franklin County, where the population increased 10.6% during the 1980s and 5.3% from 1990 to 1995. Unlike Gahanna, Franklin County's growth rate in the 1990s has remained consistent with that of the 1980s. Gahanna's population boom has been accompanied by a substantial amount of residential and commercial development.



The number of households provides a better indicator of demand for goods and services. In Gahanna, there are currently estimated to be 11,660 households, a 23.3% increase since 1990 when there were 9,453 households. Again, the growth in households during this decade outpaces that of Franklin County (5.7%) or unincorporated Jefferson Township (7.4%). By 2000, the number of households is projected to be 13,487, a 15.7% increase from 1995. The average household size in Gahanna has remained stable since 1990 (2.89) and is projected to remain the same in 2000. Franklin County's average household size is 2.46 and is projected to decrease to 2.44 by 2000. On the national level, average household size has decreased in recent years. This suggests that Gahanna may be more attractive to families with children. Indeed, a higher proportion of Gahanna's population is under age 20 (24.8%) than that of Franklin County (21.4%). In 1995, the age breakdown of Gahanna's population was estimated as follows.

TABLE 3

Age	Number of Persons	Percent
Under 5 Years	2,928	8.5
5 to 9 Years	2,784	8.1
10 to 19 Years	5,384	15.7
20 to 29 Years	4,302	12.6
30 to 39 Years	6,115	17.8
40 to 44 Years	3,137	9.2
45 to 54 Years	4,510	13.2
55 to 64 Years	2,402	7.0
65 to 74 Years	1,637	4.8
75 to 84 Years	820	2.4
85 Years and Over	253	0.7
Median Age	33.1	N/A



Source: Claritas, Inc.

On average, the West Gahanna study area population is older than the city-wide population (1990 Census data). In Census Tract 74.24, Block Group 6, which includes the western half of the study area, 42.6% of the population is 60 or over. In Tract 74.25, Block Group 2, containing the eastern portion of the study area, nearly a third (29.2%) of the population is 60 or over. There is a smaller percentage of children age 0 to 19 in each block group (13.9% of Tract 74.24, Block Group 6 population and 24.1% of Tract 74.25, Block group 2 population) than in the City as a whole (32.2%). This area appears to be less attractive to young families and more attractive to older persons. The proportion of elderly persons in the study area has probably increased since 1990, with the addition of the new National Church Residences senior housing development.

III. Development Trends and Public Policy Issues

Gahanna has enjoyed widespread residential, commercial, and industrial development in recent years, typical of many suburban areas surrounding Columbus. The City has played an active role in this development, using a variety of strategies to encourage development and make projects more financially feasible. The Development Department has used infrastructure improvements as a tool to bring development to specific areas of the City. The most common projects include road widening and signalization, to make sure the circulation system can handle increased traffic flows resulting from development. Approximately one third of the current Capital Improvement Plan is designated for road improvements. Other infrastructure projects include: water and sewer line extensions/repairs, and stormwater system improvements. Recently, the City has focused improvements in older areas of the City, including West Gahanna, where repairs and improvements are most needed. Several road projects were in progress at the time of this study:

TABLE 4

Road	Type of Improvement
Cherrybottom Road	Resurfacing
Granville Street	Widening to Five Lanes
Hamilton Road and Morrison Road	Intersection Improvements
Imperial Drive and Daventry Lane	Reconstruction
McCutcheon Road	Widening to Three Lanes
Morrison Road and Taylor Road	Intersection Improvements
Taylor Station Road	Resurfacing

Source: City of Gahanna

Gahanna has also provided tax abatement to relocating and expanding industries. Under tax abatement, the City waives the tax on all or a portion of improvements to buildings for up to 15 years. Most abatements have been targeted to industrial park development, although Olde Gahanna has been designated as a mixed-use tax abatement district. The City also created a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district for industrial development. Under TIF, additional taxes collected on improvements to land and buildings are placed in escrow. The funds are then used to make public improvements to the surrounding area (i.e. infrastructure and transportation improvements). The City hopes to use this technique more in the future.

At the present time, there are no active public-private partnerships in existence to promote development. Such partnerships can be very beneficial to development efforts. The City hopes to create an Economic Development Advisory Committee by the end of this year. This committee would bring public officials and community business representatives together to discuss needs and opportunities, work creatively to maximize resources, market the City to

developers and develop strategies to attract business and industry. One of the City's goals is to improve communication between the public and private sectors so that each is aware of the other's needs and goals.

The City Administration has found no current policies or processes that negatively affect development or discourage development in the City of Gahanna. However, pending annexation laws may make it more difficult for the City to annex land for additional development. The City is making an effort to be more understanding of business needs through the use of public-private partnerships and financial support when feasible. Strategies like Tax Increment Financing are likely to be used to this end. The City should explore the use of these strategies to encourage development in the West Gahanna study area.

Current Development Trends

Residential development in Gahanna is beginning to slow down considerably after several years of rapid growth. Most residentially-zoned land in the City has been developed or platted. Development of planned subdivisions should be largely complete in the next one or two years, at which time the City expects a drop in the rate of development. There is very little infill housing construction occurring in developed areas at this time. Although the City hopes to annex land for further residential development, annexation is becoming increasingly difficult as cities' powers become further limited and township opposition builds. Jefferson Township is opposed to any further annexation at this time.

Commercial and office development continues to flourish in Gahanna. Most commercial development has consisted of service industries which cater to the growing residential population. The City also expects a large demand for office space over the next three to five years. Although industrial development has occurred as well, it has been less pronounced than commercial development. There has been an influx of light manufacturing industries recently, such as distribution centers, food service and food processing equipment industries, metal stamping, and plastics. The City currently has approximately 400 to 500 acres of vacant industrially-zoned land ready for development. While commercial and office development has occurred throughout the City, industrial development has occurred in the industrially-zoned land south of Taylor Road along Interstate 270.

The following sections examine the residential, commercial, office, and industrial markets in detail to provide a picture of current trends and possibilities for future development.

IV. The Residential Market

The majority of Gahanna's housing stock has been built since 1970. The most recent development has occurred in the north and east sides of the City, towards Jefferson Township, while only a very limited amount has occurred in the West Gahanna study area. New residential development in the study area has consisted of condominiums and rental housing. The high proportion of elderly residents and single-person households in the study area does indicate a market for these types of housing, as well as assisted-living facilities for seniors. The current "hot spots" for new housing continue to be in the northeast side, including subdivisions such as Harrison Pond, Hunters Ridge, Farm Creek, and Rathburn Woods.

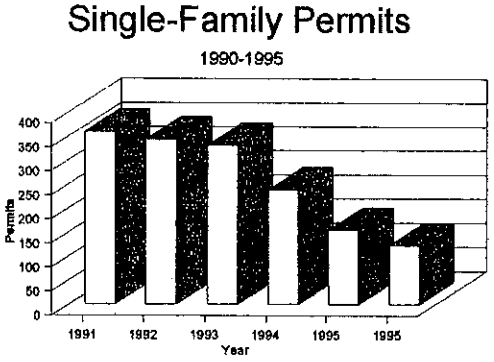
Single-Family Homes

In 1990, 79.4% of Gahanna's housing stock was comprised of detached single-family homes. Since the beginning of this decade, over $265,000,000 in single-family housing development has occurred. Since 1991, 1,396 single-family homes have been built in the City of Gahanna, increasing the City's total single-family housing stock by 17.7%. Residential development began to decrease somewhat in 1994, and this decrease is expected to continue as remaining residentially-zoned land is developed. The average value of new single-family homes, however, has generally increased. The current average value of a new single-family home is $163,908. This average is for the structure only and does not include the lot price. According to local realtors, single-family lot prices range from $40,000 to $75,000 per acre and beyond.

TABLE 5

Year	Total Permits Granted	Average Valuation (Structure Only)	Total Valuation (Structure Only)
1990	359	$129,435	$46,467,228
1991	359	$143,081	$51,366,067
1992	344	$157,827	$54,292,569
1993	331	$150,871	$49,938,218
1994	239	$178,993	$42,779,224
1995	155	$173,525	$26,896,434
Total	1,787	$155,622	$271,739,740

Source: City of Gahanna



Among existing single-family homes, average prices are somewhat lower. According to the Columbus Board of Realtors, the average existing single-family home in Gahanna sold for $132,840 in 1994. Existing homes have continued to show appreciation as the 1994 average is 17.4% higher than the 1991 average of $113,147. The Board of Realtors found that only one market in the Columbus area showed a decrease in average value over the past year. They report that Gahanna's level of appreciation is about average for Central Ohio. However, Gahanna's averages are above those of the Columbus metropolitan area.

Selling prices in and around the West Gahanna study area are below average for the City, as these units are older and generally smaller. Prices in the Royal Manor subdivision range from $65,000 to $90,000. Homes in the College and Heritage Park subdivisions range from the upper $80s to the low $100s. The Ballard and Cherry Road area contains the highest-priced homes in the West Gahanna study area, ranging from the $80s to the low $120s. There is not a lot of sales activity in the area at this time. However, when houses go on the market, they tend to sell fairly quickly, according to local realtors.

Condominiums

Condominiums have represented only a small segment of Gahanna's housing market. However, there is evidence to suggest that the demand for condominiums will increase, especially in West Gahanna. Condominium development has increased around Central Ohio in the wake of successful development projects such as those built by Qualstan Homes. Most condominiums are targeted at first-time homebuyers or empty-nesters. There are currently 452 condominium units completed or under construction in eight developments around the City. At the time of the 1990 Census, there were only 121 such units recorded. One recent development, The Timbers, is located in the study area. According to local realtors, the resale value of these condos ranges from the high $80s to the $90s. The average sale price throughout Gahanna ranges from the low $80s to the low $100s. Census data shows that many of Gahanna's condos are renter-occupied, suggesting that people have purchased them as investment properties.

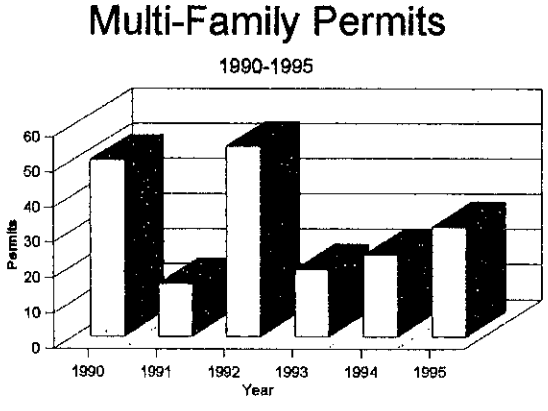
Rental Housing

In 1990, 22.9% (2,274 units) of Gahanna's housing stock was renter-occupied. This is significantly lower than that of the Columbus metropolitan area, which has remained steady at about 40% (Urban Land Institute). The amount of new multi-family development in Gahanna has varied since that time, with 1990 and 1992 being peak years. In total, 190 multi-family permits have been granted since 1990, representing over $44,000,000 in development. There are more than 1,774 apartment units in Gahanna. Figures are not available for Olde Gahanna. There are some additional condominiums and single-family homes which are renter-occupied.

TABLE 6

Year	Total Permits Granted	Average Valuation	Total Valuation
1990	50	$350,510	$17,525,478
1991	15	$148,133	$2,222,000
1992	54	$208,602	$11,264,500
1993	19	$48,684	$925,000
1994	23	$272,348	$6,264,000
1995	31	$229,792	$7,123,544
Total	192	$209,678	$45,324,522

Source: City of Gahanna



In the first quarter of 1995, the overall rental vacancy rate in the Columbus metropolitan area was 5.4% (The Danter Company). This rate is relatively low and indicates a competitive rental market. The vacancy rate dropped slightly (0.3%) since the fourth quarter of 1994. Over the past seven years, the vacancy rate has remained quite steady, ranging from 4.3 to 6.7%. In the Northeast region of the metropolitan area, which includes Gahanna, first quarter 1995 vacancy rates were 6.9%, the second highest in the metro area. However, the City reports that most apartment complexes in Gahanna are 100 percent occupied. Central City Columbus, was the highest, at 9.9%; while North was the lowest, at 4.0% (The Danter Company). The first quarter 1995 median rents for apartments by bedroom size in the Columbus metropolitan area and northeast Columbus are as follows:

TABLE 7

Type of Units	Columbus Metro. Area	Northeast	Percent Difference
Studio	$315	N/A	--
One-Bedroom	$392	$380	-3.1%
Two-Bedroom	$495	$450	-9.1%
Three-Bedroom	$550	N/A	--

Source: The Danter Company

Rental rates in the Northeast area are slightly lower than those of the Columbus metropolitan area. This is not surprising, given the higher vacancy rate in the Northeast. Landlords will be likely to lower their rents in a "buyer's market" to create demand for their units.

The West Gahanna study area contains six apartment complexes. The newest, The Woods of Gahanna, is nearing completion along Route 62. The Woods of Gahanna contains upscale two and three- bedroom units with many amenities, such as attached garages, full basements, and dishwashers. Rental rates range from $695 to $795 per month. The complex opened in May 1995, and is nearly full. A waiting list was established before the complex opened. Demand for these type of units appears to be strong. More developments of this type are likely to be successful in the area.

The other five complexes are older, smaller and rent at lower rates. Rents range from $355 for a one-bedroom and $425 for a two-bedroom in the Villa Nova complexes to $525 in the Olde Towne apartments. The Gahanna Meadows and Village Green complexes contain two-bedroom units renting in the $400s. Vacancy rates in these complexes are lower than average for the Northeast area. The Villa Nova West and South complexes contain a combined total of 160 units, and only four were available at the time of this study. Gahanna Meadows and Village Green each had only one unit available at the time of this study. Only Olde Towne reported a higher than usual vacancy rate. There clearly is a demand for rental units in the study area.

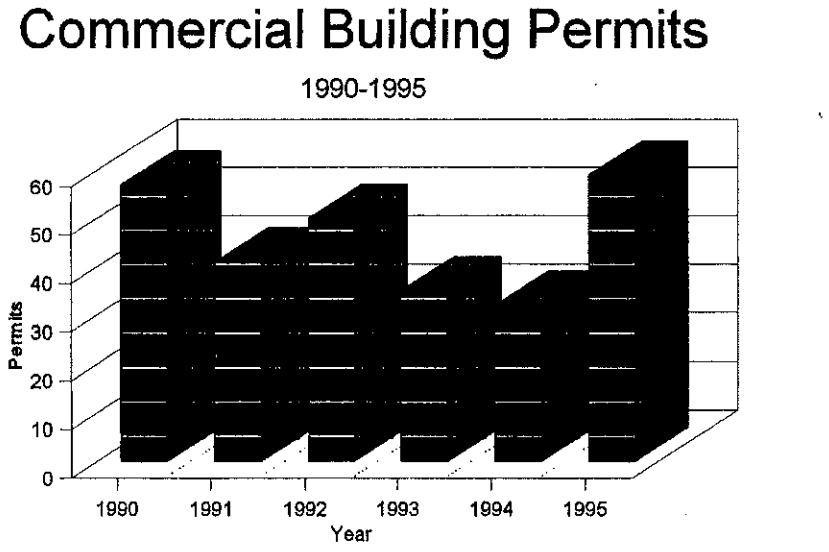
V. Commercial and Office Markets

Gahanna continues to experience widespread commercial and office development in response to the growing residential population. The City has "attempted to put the needs of the residents first," in promoting these types of development. Indeed, most current development projects are geared towards providing needed and desired services to Gahanna residents. The explosive growth of New Albany also affects the commercial market in Gahanna, as Gahanna businesses are likely to draw New Albany residents. Much of the commercial development in Gahanna relies on this larger market. Development trends during this decade are as follows:

TABLE 8

Year	Permits	Average Valuation	Total Valuation
1990	57	$149,173	$8,502,888
1991	41	$133,126	$5,458,185
1992	50	$68,998	$3,449,883
1993	35	$74,718	$2,615,145
1994	32	$406,163	$12,997,211
1995	59	$189,660	$11,189,920
Total	274	$170,306	$44,213,232

Source: City of Gahanna



After a decrease in the number of permits granted annually between 1992 and 1994, 1995 is showing a significant increase. In addition, the total valuation of commercial development has increased dramatically since 1993. 1994 saw over $12,000,000 in new commercial development, the highest figure of this decade. If 1995 development continues at its current pace, the total valuation is likely to be even higher. By the end of this year, the City expects to have gained well over 30 new commercial establishments.

There are many projects under construction in the City, including several restaurants, a 16-screen movie theater, and several office complexes. One of the largest projects is the Solove shopping center, Stoneridge Plaza, planned at Morse and Hamilton Roads, which will contain close to 250,000 square feet. Phase I of Stoneridge Plaza is complete at this time. A 65,000 square-foot speculative office building recently completed by The Daimler Group is already 100 percent leased, and a second building is planned.

In the West Gahanna study area, several commercial and office projects have been completed recently or are in progress. The new McDonald's was seen by many residents as an attractive addition to the neighborhood. Gahanna Professional Plaza, an office development, will contain five 9,000 square-foot buildings on five acres. The Dalicandro office complex was also completed recently, and a second development is planned in the area. There has been some conversion of older single-family homes to commercial and office uses, which should be discouraged.

The study area is strategically located close to downtown Columbus, the Columbus Airport and the Wexner development to the north, enhancing the area's development and market potential. Participants in the planning process have commented on the lack of restaurants and shopping in the study area. Participants have also vocalized the need for a new grocery store, emergency medical center, and professional offices. New commercial development should also attempt to serve the needs of the large elderly population. Further commercial and office development is anticipated, although the existing lot configurations, i.e. size, width, and depth, were intended for residential uses. In order to meet today's demands, land should be aggregated and replatted.

At the end of the third quarter of 1995, there was approximately 225,000 square feet of office or office/industrial space available for lease in Gahanna. The second-quarter vacancy rate for Class A and B office space was 3.3%, down from 25.75% the previous year. Lease rates ranged from $8.50 to $12.95 per square foot triple net (Reprinted with permission of Business First, © Business First of Columbus, Inc). According to a local realtor, most retail and office space in Gahanna leases for approximately $11-$12 per square foot, triple net. The triple net rate does not include maintenance and utility costs. There was 5.04 acres of vacant commercial land available at $100,000 to $179,000 per acre (Reprinted with permission of Business First, © Business First of Columbus, Inc.). According to local realtors, commercially-zoned land in Gahanna is generally valued between $80,000 to $100,000 per acre.

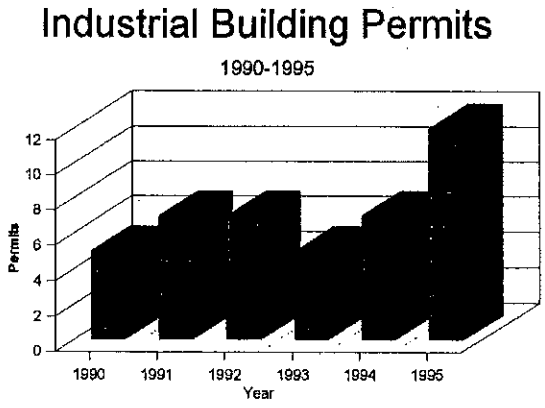
VI. Industrial Market

While Gahanna has seen some industrial development in recent years, it has not been as significant as commercial development in the City. Recently, several light industries have located in the City, including distribution centers, food service and food processing equipment, metal stamping, and plastics. The industrially-zoned land is located in the southeast section of the City, south of Taylor Road. There is still 400 to 500 acres of vacant industrial space available. The City is making a commitment to attract further industrial development through the use of innovative public financing techniques. However, industrial development is not appropriate for the West Gahanna study area, due to its size and residential character.

TABLE 9

Year	Permits	Average Valuation	Total Valuation
1990	5	$74,496	$372,480
1991	7	$537,114	$3,759,800
1992	7	$914,960	$6,404,717
1993	5	$436,300	$2,181,500
1994	7	$404,429	$2,831,000
1995	12	$773,583	$9,283,000
Total	43	$523,480	$24,832,497

Source: City of Gahanna



The number of permits granted annually remained steady between 1990 and 1994. However, more permits have been granted in the first three quarters of 1995 than in any other year this decade. The total value of industrial development has increased dramatically as well. Total value is a better indicator of the amount of development and benefits to the City. Three recently-completed projects include a Petsmart (pet products) expansion on Taylor Road, a 200,000 square-foot speculative warehouse building from the Daimler Group, and Wolfking, a commercial food processing equipment manufacturer.

At the end of the second quarter of 1995, there was approximately 600,000 square feet of industrial space available for lease in Gahanna. Lease rates ranged from $2.95 per square foot triple net at Gahanna Distribution Center II and Gahanna Warehouse to $7.50 net for Gahanna Commerce Center (Reprinted with permission of Business First, © Business First of Columbus, Inc.). The industrial vacancy rate in Columbus suburbs is reported to be approximately 4% (Urban Land Institute). There was 442 acres of vacant industrial land available at approximately $30,000 to $65,000 and up per acre for Taylor Road sites (Reprinted with permission of Business First, © Business First of Columbus, Inc.).

VII. Consumer Expenditure Patterns

The following tables indicate 1995 consumer expenditure patterns in the City of Gahanna:
TABLE 10

Selected Product	Expenditures (in $000s)	Percent of Total
Food at Home	48,469	18.1
Food Away from Home	34,758	13.0
Alcoholic Beverages at Home	2,943	1.1
Alcoholic Beverages away from Home	2,756	1.0
Personal Care Products	4,534	1.7
Personal Care Services	3,994	1.5
Nonprescription Drugs	1,542	0.6
Women's Apparel	10,731	4.0
Men's Apparel	6,225	2.3
Girl's Apparel	1,186	0.4
Boy's Apparel	1,704	0.6
Infant's Apparel	1,178	0.4
Footwear (Excluding Infants)	4,958	1.9
Housekeeping Supplies	6,200	2.3
Lawn/Garden Services	954	0.4
Domestic Services	7,829	2.9
Household Textiles	2,218	0.8
Furniture	7,688	2.9
Floor Coverings	2,442	0.9
Major Appliances	2,818	1.1
Small Appliance and Housewares	1,396	0.5
TV, Radio and Sound Equipment	9,493	3.6
Other Entertainment Equipment/Services	10,679	4.0
Transportation	90,579	33.9

Source: Claritas, Inc.

TABLE 11

Selected Store	Expenditures (in $000s)	Percent of Total
Building Materials and Supply Store	5,054	2.7
Hardware Store	1,346	0.7
Retail Nursery/Lawn/Garden Supply Store	1,121	0.6
Auto Supply Store	4,417	2.3
Gasoline/Service Station	23,456	12.4
Grocery Stores	53,874	28.4
Drug and Proprietary Stores	9,522	5.0
Eating Places	29,713	15.7
Drinking Places	1,823	1.0
Department Stores (Excludes Leased)	28,332	14.9
Apparel Stores	10,835	5.7
Shoe Stores	3,113	1.6
Furniture Stores	6,870	3.6
Home Furnishing Stores	3,734	2.0
Household Appliance Stores	1,823	1.0
Radio/TV/Computer/Music Stores	4,637	2.4

Source: Claritas, Inc.

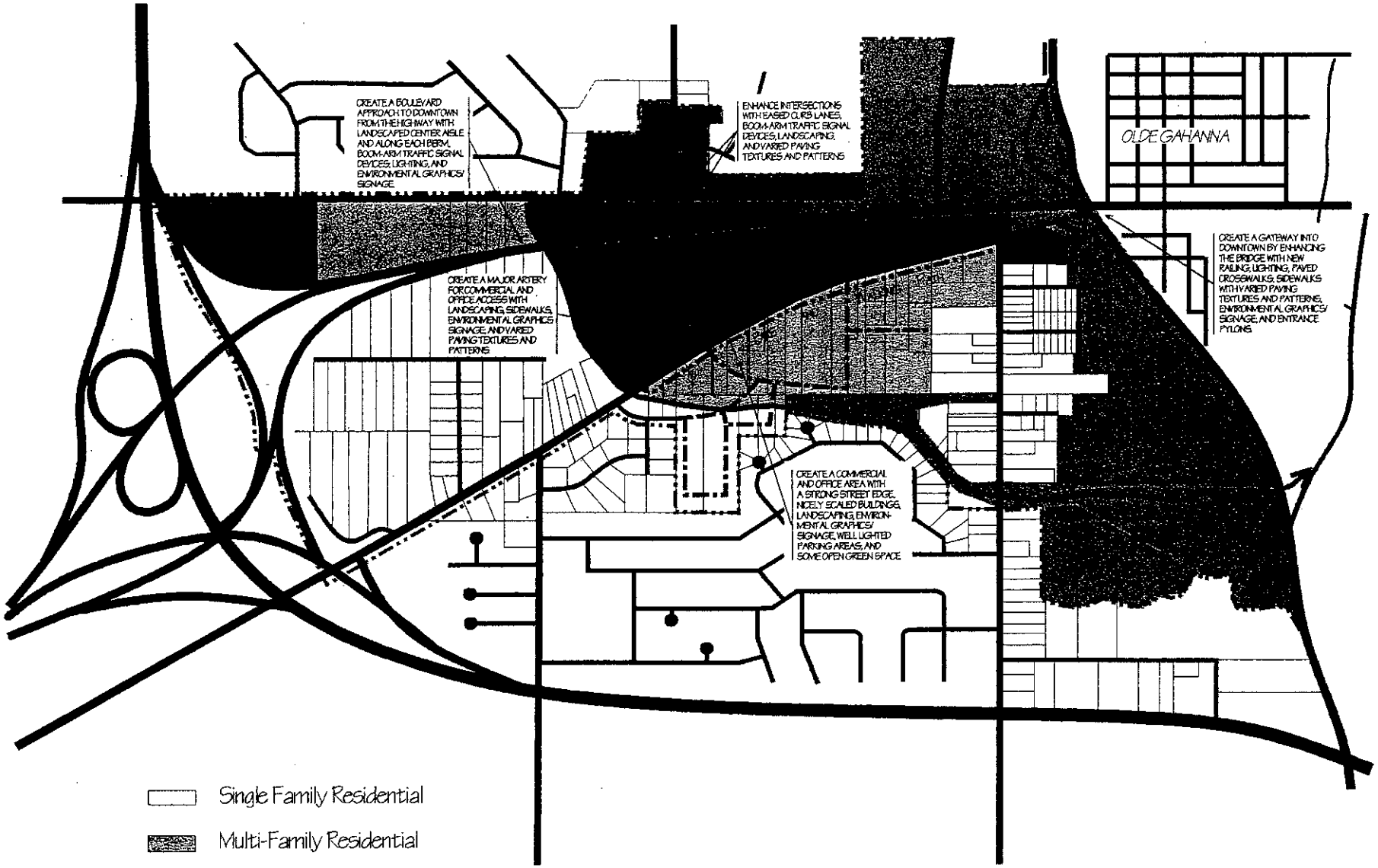
Part IV: The West Gahanna Development Plan

Introduction

The West Gahanna Development Plan map is general in nature. The purpose of the map is to show recommended land uses and appropriate replatting of parcels for redevelopment. The map also illustrates several public improvements that the committee feels are vital to the success of the plan, such as the new Stygler-James connector road, landscaped entryway along Route 62 and the extension of bike/walking paths throughout the study area. The overlay zone should specify the minimum size aggregation necessary for redevelopment. The building footprints shown on the map are newer commercial and office developments which should be incorporated into the plan.

The West Gahanna Development Plan Map is on the following page. The Plan Overview describes in detail each subarea and component of the plan. Phasing requirements for implementation are addressed, as well as public and private responsibilities for implementation.

WEST GAHANNA DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Plan Overview and Phasing Requirements

The focal point of the West Gahanna Development Plan is the creation of a landscaped "Boulevard" concept along the Route 62 corridor from the western boundary of the study area to just west of the Ridenour Road intersection, where the right-of-way becomes too narrow. Route 62 should serve as a major artery for commercial and office development and contain attractive median and streetside landscaping, sidewalks, environmental graphics (e.g. attractive street lighting, banners on light posts), and varied paving textures and patterns. Developing an attractive landscaping scheme for the Route 62 corridor will provide a positive first impression of the study area as well as show the City's commitment to attracting quality development and improving the appearance of the area. The Boulevard concept will bring the Route 62 corridor down to a pedestrian scale, slowing the flow of vehicular traffic and encouraging pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

The redevelopment of the Stygler Road /Route 62 intersection is also extremely important to the success of the plan. As a key point of the study area, the development and appearance of this intersection can set the tone for the entire study area. The intersection can be enhanced with eased curb lanes, boom arm traffic control devices, landscaping, and varied paving textures and patterns. Again, the goal is to bring this intersection down to a pedestrian scale.

The Boulevard theme should be continued along the Route 62 bridge. Attractive streetlights and banners should be placed along both sides of the bridge. This will create an attractive Gateway into the City as well as a logical transition from the study area into Olde Gahanna.

The Plan calls for the development of a new commercial and office area along Route 62 and Johnstown Road. This would require Stygler Road to be extended to the east approximately 1,500 feet and connect with a new road extending south from Johnstown Road. Ridenour Road is shown extended to the south, terminating at the Stygler Road extension. An additional north-south connector is shown west of the extended Ridenour Road and an east-west connector connects the three north-south routes. The new road would create five-eight acre parcels for redevelopment. An overlay zone would stipulate that existing parcels be aggregated as shown on the plan as a condition of redevelopment.

The area north of Johnstown Road and east of Stygler Road is also recommended as commercial and office. The parcel designated as office is the site of a proposed office development which has already received City approval. The five parcels east of Ridenour Road should be aggregated and redeveloped commercially. Existing residential property east of James Road should remain single-family. In the future this area may be suitable for low-density office. Extensive parcel aggregation would be required before any rezoning could be considered.

The area along the south side of Agler Road from I-270 to Stygler Road is recommended for a mix of uses. The parcels forming the triangular piece are recommended to be annexed from Mifflin Township and combined with three City of Gahanna parcels to create an office development. This development would have excellent visibility from the interstate and would

be compatible with the Woods of Gahanna Apartments to the east. The multiple family area extends from the existing development to Turkey Run, allowing for a smaller new development or expansion of Woods of Gahanna. The parcels east of Turkey Run, site of the existing Royal Manor Plaza, should be aggregated and redeveloped with new commercial uses.

Commercial uses are recommended for the Stygler Road/Route 62 intersection. A new McDonald's has already been developed at the northeast corner. Environmental remediation is in progress at the site of the abandoned auto service station on the northwest corner. This parcel should be combined with the abandoned right-of-way and parcel(s) to the west to create a new larger parcel for redevelopment. A sit-down restaurant would be a good use for this site. The City might consider acquiring some of these parcels to ensure that appropriate development occurs.

A bike/walking path is shown along the length of Turkey Run through the study area. The path takes advantage of the natural feature of the Run and ties the residential neighborhoods to the greenway. It also provides pedestrian access to the commercial and office areas. The bike and walking path south of Johnstown Road should follow the public right-of-ways. An important goal of the plan is to increase transportation options in the study area and make it more accessible to pedestrians.

The floodplain area along Big Walnut Creek is recommended to remain as a greenway. Greenways can provide social and economic as well as recreational benefits. They can be used to link neighborhoods and enhance the appearance and quality of life of a neighborhood, making it more attractive for potential commercial, office, and residential development. The existing bike/walking path should be extended south along the creek through the study area. The Turkey Run path would connect to this path at the southern boundary of the study area. A pedestrian bridge across the creek connecting East and West Gahanna is shown to the south of the existing bridge. This bridge would also serve as a means to extend Friendship Park into the study area from the east. Further development of this area should be prohibited as part of the overlay zone. The City might consider acquiring some of these parcels for passive recreational use. The remaining areas should be designated as preserves for the natural habitat.

The area west of the greenway along both sides of James Road should remain single-family. It is important that this area be adequately screened from the commercial/office uses to the north. New single-family development is recommended to the west of this area. Additional roads would loop through two deep parcels and connect back to the Stygler Road extension. A condominium development would be ideal for this site.

The Ballard/Cherry subdivision is shown to remain as single-family. In the future, this site may be suitable for an office park. Extensive parcel aggregation and infrastructure improvements would be required. The site currently has no sanitary sewer access and needs storm drainage improvements. Ideally, the site should be developed in its entirety by one developer. However, this may not be economically feasible. The site might be broken into three smaller pieces incorporating the existing street pattern (see map). If a developer wanted to develop one of the

three smaller pieces, s/he would be required to develop a site plan for the entire area to be approved by the City. In addition, the full trunk sewer line should be in place as the first piece develops, opening up the rest of the area for development. The City may assist the developer with required infrastructure improvements. An opaque landscape screen(as defined in Section V. Landscaping requirements) would be required along the eastern and southern boundaries of the area. A 50-foot minimum landscape buffer screen shall be required along Route 62.

Landscaping/Public Improvements: The plan calls for extensive landscaping throughout the study area. This landscaping is meant to provide an attractive gateway into the study area and to provide screening and buffering between uses of unequal intensity. In addition to the Boulevard concept, the Plan calls for landscaped buffer zones whenever a less intense use abuts a more intense use. For more recommendations pertaining to landscaping, please refer to Section V. Landscaping Recommendations.

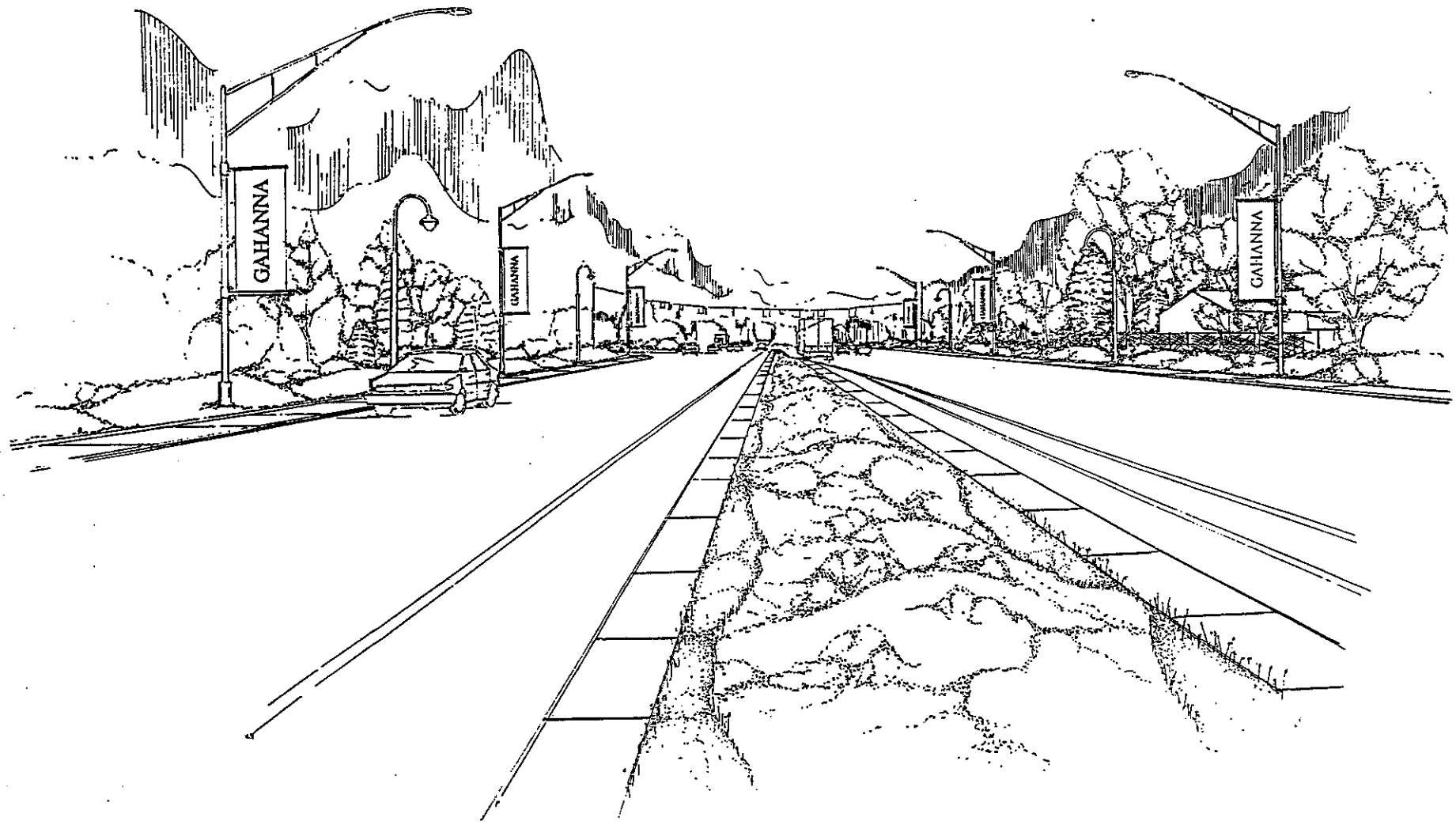
Phasing

The Committee agreed that the first phases of implementation should be largely City-led. They feel it is important that the City show a strong commitment to the area by creating some "early start areas." These early start areas should include the Boulevard landscaping and related improvements along Route 62 and the bridge, development of the overlay zoning requirements, and needed infrastructure improvements. The City should begin proceedings for rezoning of any parcel(s) at risk of developing contrary to the recommendations of the Plan before the overlay requirements are in place. The City should also begin proceedings to annex the Mifflin Township piece at the northwest boundary of the study area.

The Committee stated that the City needed to maintain its commitment to improving infrastructure in the study area. Responsibility for necessary improvements will be shared with developers. Large-scale improvements such as the proposed Johnstown-James Road connector will likely occur in phases, as the surrounding area develops.

The WGDC also stated that it is very important for the City of Gahanna to effectively market and promote the West Gahanna Development Plan and the proposed improvements to the area. They suggested that the City publicize their efforts, taking advantage of media both in and outside of Gahanna. They might also consider working with the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Advisory Committee to develop marketing materials promoting the development potential of the study area. This should begin immediately. Utilization of the City's Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CURC) or the formation of a new CURC for the study area should also begin as soon as possible upon adoption of the Plan.

Phasing of development and associated public improvements in the study area depends largely on market demand and financing. Part V, Implementation Strategies and Recommendations, provides a timetable for completion of the various recommendations. This information can also be found in the Executive Summary.



City of Gahanna, Ohio

DECEMBER 1995

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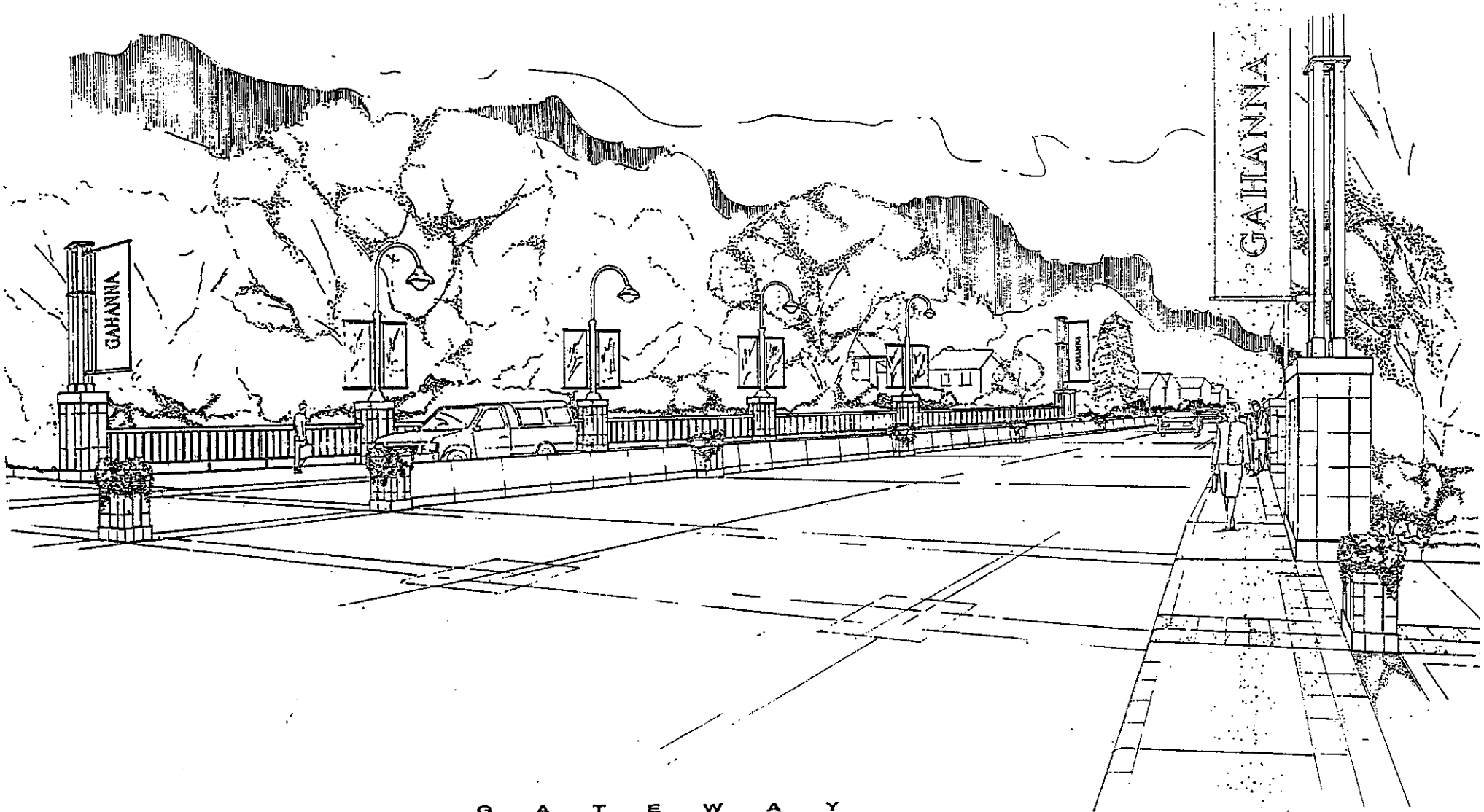

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Part V: Implementation Strategies and Recommendations

Overlay Zoning and Land Aggregation Recommendations

It is comparatively easy to study an area and its history and then to devise a set of design and redevelopment recommendations. The hardest part by far is to develop a structure for insuring the actualization of those recommendations. This is especially true for a large area which includes numerous property owners and businesses who have individual concerns, plans, and property rights.

With this in mind, the following strategies and tools are recommended to help steer future private development and redevelopment of the study area to be consistent with the West Gahanna Development Plan.

Develop an Overlay Zone: The City should develop and codify an overlay zone for the West Gahanna study area. This zone would incorporate the various recommendations of the West Gahanna Development Plan, including land use, parcel aggregation, landscaping and signage. Public improvements should be incorporated into the zone. Minimum parcel sizes for redevelopment will vary according to the different portions of the study area.

In determining the recommended lot sizes, the City should incorporate a policy that minimum lot size does not equate with zoning allowable density, or square footage of commercial and industrial space. For example, in a zone allowing four units per acre, the lot size would be far less than 1/4 acre allowing developable space and open space to be aggregated into a mass with significance in use and visual impact.

Timeframe: One Year
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna

The City should also consider initiating the rezoning process key as parcels are aggregated. It is not necessary for the City to wait for developers to start the process. City-led rezoning is especially useful for parcels at-risk of developing contrary to the recommendations of the Development Plan. City-lead rezoning will encourage the aggregation of lots by private developers by removing the need to seek rezoning of a number of parcels as well as the associated additional costs. It also speeds the development process by reducing possible public protest that can occur with each new development. Advance rezoning or overlay zoning of the entire area is an expression of the Plan which has been developed, and public support or protest has thus been received and accounted for prior to the development proposal phase. When the City rezones properties at risk of inconsistent development, it should stipulate that lots be large enough for the planned commercial and office uses.

Annexation: The City should begin annexation proceedings to annex the Mifflin Township piece as soon as possible. This piece forms the northeast corner of the study area and is recommended for office development. Negotiations with property owners in this piece are underway.

Timeframe: One Year
Responsible Parties: City of Gahanna, Mifflin Township

Did not occur

There are other strategies for achieving land aggregation. These are described below:

Achieving Land Aggregation Outside of a Zoning Regulation:

Form a Not-for-Profit Development Corporation

The City can take a more direct action in achieving land aggregation by forming a Private or Public Not-for-Profit Development Corporation. Many communities have taken advantage of existing Ohio Law, which allows private corporations, both for-profit and not-for-profit, to participate in community development activities. Such corporations work in partnership with the local community to accomplish tasks that the local government is not able to undertake due to whatever constraints it is faced with. The various types of organizations and financing options available to them are very well detailed in a document published by the Ohio Department of Development in 1981, *Main Street, Ohio. Opportunities for Bringing People Back Downtown.*

The structure of the corporation can vary somewhat based on its primary goals and the degree of power the City wishes it to hold. The following is a short discussion of possible corporate structures under the IRS Code and the Ohio Revised Code. The recommended action is for the City to utilize the existing Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CURC) in the study area, or establish a new CURC exclusively for the study area. The CURC should be a not-for-profit corporation. The advantages of this types of organization are summarized at the end of this section.

A. Corporation Structure:

IRS Status

Under Internal Revenue Code, a Section 501 (c)(3) classification allows the new corporation to be exempted from federal income taxes, and allows the corporation to receive tax-deductible donations of money, services and materials. The 501 (c)(4) does not have this advantage. Under a 501 (c)(3) exemption, the corporation is also eligible for a special third-class bulk mailing permit, for reduced postal rates for mass mailing.

The Section 501 (c)(3) exemption is given to "*corporations, and any community chest, fund, or foundation, organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary or educational purposes...*" . The definition of charitable activity includes; relief for the poor, advancement of education, elimination of prejudice and discrimination, and reduction of

community deterioration or juvenile delinquency. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) does prohibit the corporation from devoting a "substantial part" of its activities to influencing legislation, and from participating in political candidates' campaigns.

Section 501(c)(4)
"Civic leagues" or 501(c)(4) organizations, operate to "further the common good & general welfare". They do not pay income tax on their revenues. Contributions to civic leagues are not tax deductible. They may engage in legislative or lobbying activities if those activities relate to the group's basic purposes. They may not participate in political campaigns. They are eligible for special third-class mailing permits at reduced rates, by paying an annual fee.

B. Corporate Structure:

Type of Corporation under *Ohio Revised Code*

The corporation must also incorporate under Chapter 17 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). Under Chapter 17 of ORC, there are three corporate structures, described below, that are potentially appropriate for the purposes of this group. The Chapter 1728, Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CURC) simultaneously incorporating under Chapter 1702 (Non-Profit Corporation) model appears to have special powers that may be useful for the redevelopment of this area. It is also conceivable that more than one corporation might need to be developed ultimately, to achieve a full complement of objectives in the study area.

The group is advised to seek professional legal counsel when actually beginning incorporation. The following discussion highlights special features and requirements of the three most probable corporate types, but is not intended to be a complete analysis of every aspect of applicable law.

CHAPTER 1702:
Non-Profit Corporation

Chapter 1702 is very broad. Non-profit corporations may be created for almost every purpose. As a non-profit, no part of corporate income or profit (beyond salaries or payments for services) is distributed to corporate members, directors or officers. Rules of incorporation require a minimum dollar value of assets, a board of directors, filing of corporation papers with the Ohio Secretary of State, statement of avowed purpose, and adoption of rules and regulations for self government, including a statement of limitations of the organization's activities.

Other cities have 1702 non-profits that engage in activities ranging from promotional and public improvements to commercial rehabilitation and new development. An example from *Main Street, Ohio*, is the 1702 non-profit Community Development Corporation of Lakewood, Ohio, which developed and administers a Storefront Renovation Program using the City's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. This program provides design consultations, low interest loans, and streetscape improvements for business owners to stimulate quality restorations

in the commercial district.

CHAPTER 1724:
Community Improvement Corporation (non-profit)

Community Improvement Corporations (CICs) are organized for the sole purpose of advancing, encouraging and promoting the industrial, economic, commercial, and civic development of an area. A particular advantage of a CIC for downtown development is that it is allowed to provide tax-free economic development revenue bonds to a developer once the municipality or county has approved them (however, these bonds are NOT a financial liability to the local governmental unit). These bonds will be described briefly in Appendix A. Again, in an example given in *Main Street, Ohio*, a CIC in Mount Vernon, Ohio, issued low-interest economic development revenue bonds that allowed the First Knox National Bank to remodel an old vacant downtown building for reuse as a computer center.

CHAPTER 1728:
Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (for-profit)

A Chapter 1728 for-profit corporation will have as its purpose the acquisition, construction, operation and maintenance of a redevelopment project. This corporate structure has the desirable powers of eminent domain, with local legislative approval. A Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CURC) is the only corporation type that may be designated by the municipal legislature to administer an Impacted Cities Program, discussed in Appendix B. However, the requirements of the Impacted Cities Program upon the municipality make this an unlikely program to be pursued in Gahanna at this time.

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, a CURC may convert to non-profit status, by simultaneously incorporating under Chapter 1702. As such, the corporation is then empowered to receive grant funds from the city or county (e.g. CDBG) for the delivery of improvements at the neighborhood level. Such activities might include the creation of parking lots or loans for the purchase and demolition of blighted structures in a business district. The non-profit CURC might also raise funds from dues paying members.

C. Recommended Structure:

The City should establish a non-profit CURC by incorporating simultaneously under Chapters 1728 and 1702. This recommendation is made with the following scenario in mind. First of all, as outlined above, the private corporation may act according to its own plans and vision without increasing the burden on the local government's resources, and Gahanna may direct the mission of its subsidiary. However, it is highly recommended that the City expend great effort in building community support for the objectives of the corporation for maximum results. With the philosophic support of the local community, the non-profit corporation has access to donations, grants (including CDBG), and foundation support as well as the other funds it will generate from its activities.

The non-profit corporation can develop and promote incentive programs such as facade improvements, steetscape improvements, design consultations that implement historic preservation and community improvement goals. It can also sponsor promotional events, market development potential of special properties, organize cooperative advertising, and street maintenance among study area businesses.

A Community Improvement Corporation (Chapter 1724) could issue tax-free economic development revenue bonds to make a prospective redevelopment project more economically feasible.

A Non-Profit Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (Chapter 1728 & 1702) can acquire properties, aggregating parcels into larger tracts, even exercise eminent domain to acquire key properties to insure that they are developed and used in a manner consistent with the overall redevelopment effort. This is a powerful tool for controlling, without regulation, properties vital to the goals of redevelopment or for emergency action if proposed changes to a property are in conflict with and threaten the impact of the goals of the development corporation.

The CURC can construct and operate projects such as parking garages, office buildings, business incubators, etc. in redevelopment efforts. This will generate income for operating costs. Again, both use and design are then controlled by the corporation as owner with preservation and quality redevelopment as key considerations.

Landscaping Standards

The following landscape standards should be incorporated into the overlay zoning requirements for the West Gahanna study area. These standards are not intended to replace the existing landscaping requirements of the Codified Ordinances of Gahanna, but rather to supplement these requirements and encourage more abundant and attractive landscaping in the study area. All landscaping in the study area must meet the requirements of the Chapters 913 and 1163, as well as these standards. When the standards of Chapters 913 and 1163 are in conflict or different from these standards, these standards shall apply.

- Street trees should be required for all zoning classifications and land uses in the study area. They should be required as part of any new development, or alteration to an existing development.
- Interior landscaping should be required for all new development and any alterations to existing development in the study area. Such landscaping may consist of new plantings or the preservation of existing plantings on a site. The amount of landscaping required should be based on land use. For multi-family developments, one shade tree should be required per 1,600 square feet or fraction thereof of green space. For commercial uses, at least 20 square feet of interior landscaped area should be required per 1,000 square feet of building coverage. For office developments, total tree plantings equivalent to one-half inch in tree trunk size per 1,500 square feet or fraction thereof of building coverage should be required. These requirements are in addition to any required perimeter or vehicular use area landscaping. Existing trees and plantings may be used to fulfill these requirements.
- All residential areas should be buffered from collector, arterial and interstate roadways. A minimum width of landscaped area should be required based on the type of street, e.g. 35 feet on collector streets, 50 feet on arterials, and 75 feet on interstates and expressways. Existing trees and plantings may be used to fulfill these requirements.
- A flexible method of perimeter screening should be introduced to allow the Landscape Commission some discretion in selecting the most appropriate buffer zone based on the relationship between the uses involved. There are three basic types of screens. The opaque screen achieves 100 percent opacity to a height of at least six feet with intermittent visual obstructions from the opaque portion to a height of 20 feet. This type of screen will suggest strong spacial separation and eliminate all visual contact between uses. The opaque screen should be required when office or commercial development abuts a residential development. The semi-opaque screen achieves 100 percent opacity to a height of three feet, with intermittent visual obstructions from the opaque portion of a height of 20 feet. This screen will partially block views between uses and will suggest strong spatial separation. The broken screen contains intermittent visual obstruction from the ground to a height of 20 feet. This screen will create a separation of uses without eliminating views between uses.

- Existing trees of six inches caliper or greater should be preserved on site unless one or more of the following conditions is present:
  - The tree is within a public right-of-way or utility easement.
  - The tree is within the ground coverage of a proposed structure or within 12 feet of the perimeter of the ground coverage.
  - The tree is within the driveway access to parking or service areas.
  - The tree, in the opinion of the Landscape Commission, is diseased, damaged, or inappropriate for its specific location.
- The existing vehicular use area landscaped requirements of Chapter 1163 should be met. The only additional requirement is that corridors and islands should be dispersed throughout the vehicular use area and not concentrated in one or a few locations. The maximum size of any landscaped island or corridor should be limited to 350 square feet or smaller based on the total size of the vehicular use area.
- All proposed developments and redevelopments should submit a landscaping plan including the plant legend, planting plan, trees, and landscaping to remain or be removed, tree preservation information, hardscape features, irrigation plans (if required), and screening plan for accessory structures.
- The following list of trees are recommended for the proposed Johnstown Road landscaped corridor. These trees are able to withstand insects and disease, pollution, and varying soil conditions. Theses species do not produce fruit or flowers.

Large Trees	Height (ft.)	Spread (ft.)
▸ Shingle Oak (Quercus imbricaria)	50-60	50-70
▸ Red Oak (Quercus rubra)	60-75	40-50
▸ Shumard Oak (Quercus shumardii)	70-75	40-50
▸ Bald Cypress (Taxodium distichum)	50-70	20-30
▸ Urban Elm (Ulmus X)	50-70	25-40
Medium Trees		
▸ Lacebark Elm (Ulmus parvifolia)	40-50	30-40
▸ Goldenraintree (Koelreuteria paniculata)	30-40	30-50
Small Trees		
▸ Amur Maple (Acer ginnala)	15-20	10-20

- The city should incorporate a variety of the above-recommended species into the design of the landscaped corridor.
- In no case should any of the "Injurious Plants" as defined in 913.04 (3) be used in the landscaped corridor. The following plants have been deemed injurious:
  - Box Elder
  - Dogwood
  - Buckeye
  - Mulberry
  - Black Locust
  - Siberian Elm
  - Fruit Trees
  - Evergreens
  - Hawthorns (nor thornless species)
  - Silver Maple
  - Redbud
  - Catalpa
  - Willow Species
  - Honey Locust
  - Tree-of Heaven
  - Cottonwood
  - Ginko (Female)
  - Poplar species

Signage Standards

The following signage standards should be incorporated as part of the overlay zoning requirements for the West Gahanna Study Area. In general, these standards are more stringent than the Gahanna Sign Code, and will have the effect of encouraging fewer signs and less obtrusive signage. The purpose of these heightened standards is to protect the physical appearance of the study area and encourage high-quality, safe, and effective outdoor graphics. Signage and graphics have a very significant influence on the appearance and character of a neighborhood, and thus should be carefully regulated. These standards are not intended to replace the Gahanna Sign Code, but rather to supplement the code and provide for more stringent regulations when necessary. All signage in the study area must meet the requirements of the Gahanna Sign Code as well as these standards. When the standards of the Gahanna Sign Code are in conflict with these standards, these standards shall apply.

It is recommended that these standards be adopted within a year of adoption of the Plan, in accordance with the recommendation for adoption of the overlay zoning requirements. All new development or redevelopment should be required to follow these standards. Signs deemed nonconforming by the passage of these standards would be subject to the requirements of 1165.17, Nonconforming Signs. Normal maintenance is permitted as long as the exact design and copy is maintained. However, proposed design or copy changes, or any proposed structural changes, would require the sign to be brought into compliance with these standards. If any nonconforming sign is enlarged, moved, discontinued for more than 30 days, or damaged or destroyed by fire or other causes, it must be brought into compliance with these standards.

The standards recommended below cover a variety of sign types and regulations, including use of commercial banners and reader boards, window display signs for businesses, pennants and streamers, building directory signs, etc. The list of prohibited sign types and locations has been expanded, while total permitted signage per business has been reduced. A comprehensive signage plan is recommended for all new development and redevelopment in the study area, for which a Certificate of Appropriateness would be required from the Design Review Board. Signage design guidelines have also been made more restrictive.

Relevant Section of Chapter 1165: Signs

1165.07: Modified Standards

1165.07: Modified Standards (continued)

Recommended Standard/Regulation

"For-profit banner" regulations might be made more stringent by reducing the number of times per year they may be displayed from 12 to five or less, or permitting them only for grand openings of businesses (a grand opening is defined as a change of tenant or owner which brings a new business to a site). Banners should be permitted only on site, should be limited to three colors, and should not be illuminated.

Reader Boards should be prohibited outright, except for gasoline price displays at service stations.

Window display signs in businesses should be restricted to one per window, with the total area of each sign not exceeding 10 percent of the area of the window in which it is placed or six square feet, whichever is less. Window signs should only be placed in ground level windows, and the aggregate maximum per establishment should be limited. Interior neon signs which can be viewed from the public right-of-way should also be prohibited.

Pennants, ribbons, streamers, etc. should be prohibited.

Corporate flags should be regulated according to the following conditions: only one shall be permissible per parcel, the flag shall be flown below any government flag and the size of the corporate flag should not exceed any government flag flown and in no case should exceed 15 square feet.

Government signs, e.g. traffic or similar regulatory devices, legal notices, warnings at railroad crossings, etc. should be consolidated and jointly displayed whenever possible.

1165.13: Building Directory Signs	Building directory signs should be allowed in addition to permitted signage for multi-tenant developments. However, such signs should be limited to three colors.
1165.14: Comprehensive On-Site Graphics	The requirements of this section should be applied to all types of commercial and office development and redevelopment in the study area. An overall signage plan and Certificate of Appropriateness from the Design Review Board would be required. The contractual signage agreement would only be necessary for a commercial or office development that houses separate tenants.
1165.15: Subdivision and Multi-Family Signs	Such signs should be limited to one per development and should be restricted to 20 square feet in area and six feet in height.
1165.16 (a): Supplemental Standards-Awning Signs	Awning signs and canopy signs, displayed in accordance with this section, should be encouraged in pedestrian-scale, street-oriented commercial, office, and residential development.
All Sign Types: Design	The appearance and design of signage should be carefully regulated. All signs should be limited to three colors, including black and white.

1165.08: Prohibitions	The existing list of prohibited signs might be expanded from the existing list to include pennants, streamers, spinners, reader boards (manually or electronically operated), search lights, projected images, gas-inflatable signs, and neon or neon look-alike signs. All signs on vending machines and trash receptacles should be screened from view of the public right-of-way and adjacent property. The list of prohibited sign locations might be expanded from the existing list to include trees, natural objects, parks, and public property (except for public signs identifying the park or property).
1165.09: Determining Permitted Display Surface	These regulations should be applied as is except that applicants should be limited to one sign type per establishment as opposed to two.
1165.10: On-Premises Wall Signs	Wall signs should not extend above the second story window sill, and should not exceed 15 feet in height. A second wall sign should be permitted only when the establishment has more than 100 feet of frontage on each of two public rights-of-way.
1165.11: On-Premises Projecting Signs	Projecting signs, displayed in accordance with the regulations of this section, should be encouraged in pedestrian-scale, street-oriented commercial, office, and residential development.
1165.12: On-Premises Ground Signs	Low-profile ground signs are encouraged but not required in Gahanna. Ground signs in the study area should be restricted to this type, and the maximum height of such signs should be limited to eight feet. A second ground sign should be permitted only when an establishment has more than 100 feet of frontage on each of two public rights-of-way. Landscaping requirements pertaining to ground signs should be strictly enforced.

All Sign Types: Design (continued)

The "primary image" on the sign should consist only of the name of the business or establishment. Any other images, logos, slogans, etc. are "secondary images" and should be limited to 20 percent of the area of the sign face.

All sign faces should be of a regular rectangular shape, unless channel letters are used.

Multi-faced signs should consistently display the same images on all sign faces.

Reverse sides of signs should be fully enclosed, unobtrusive, and blend with the surroundings.

Public Improvement Recommendations

The City of Gahanna has made a serious commitment to improving the West Gahanna Study Area. As part of this commitment, the City will need to invest a significant amount of capital improvement dollars for utility upgrades and other improvements over the next five to ten years. The responsibility for completing these improvements should be shared with the developer to the extent feasible. A variety of improvements and recommendations have been identified by planning participants:

Recreation/Open Space: The Big Walnut Creek Floodplain should be restricted from any further development as part of the overlay zone for the study area. The Gahanna Land Use Plan called for "specialty parks" for unique landmarks and environmentally sensitive areas. Friendship Park should be extended to the west side of the creek. A pedestrian/bicycle bridge should be used to connect the two. The existing bike/walking path along the creek should be extended south through the study area and connected to the proposed path along Turkey Run.

Timeframe: Five Years
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna
Source of funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Nature Works grant funds*, In-Lieu Fees for parkland

*Under the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's Nature Works program, cities may apply for 75 percent of project costs for acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of park and recreation areas. The balance of the project funding must be provided by the applicant. All projects must be completed within two years. Funds may be used for acquisition of lands for facilities, construction, site planning and preparation, demolition, architectural/engineering fees, and rebuilding, improvement, or expansion of existing facilities. Funds may not be used for routine maintenance and upkeep.

Water and Sewer Improvements: The Ballard/Cherry subdivision does not have sanitary sewer access and will need significant water line improvements and drainage improvements if redeveloped. The City should be prepared to back a significant portion of these needed infrastructure improvements. Currently, Price Road does not have public water and sanitary sewer access. However, this is not an immediate priority as this area is recommended to remain as open space.

Sidewalks, Curbs and Gutters: Sidewalks, curbs, and gutters are needed along both sides of James Road; Johnstown Road from Ridenour Road to Marinell Lane and Stygler Road south of Route 62. On Stygler Road, the west side of James Road, and portions of Johnstown Road, these improvements should be supplied by developers as properties are redeveloped. Along the east side of James Road, these improvements will need to be supplied by the City.

Timeframe: 5-10 years
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna, private developers
Source of funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Tax Increment Financing, developer contributions

Route 62 Landscaped Median:

The Plan calls for a landscaped median along the Route 62 corridor from the western boundary of the study area to just west of the Ridenour Road intersection. Improvements should include landscaping, sidewalks, environmental graphics (e.g. attractive street lighting, banners), and varied paving textures and patterns.

Timeframe: 3-5 years
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna
Source of Funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Tax Increment Financing, ODOT

Route 62 Bridge Improvements:

The corridor theme should be continued along the Route 62 bridge. The uniform streetscape pattern (streetlights and banners) should be placed along both sides of the bridge to create an attractive transition from the study area into Olde Gahanna.

Timeframe: 3-5 years
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna
Source of Funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Tax Increment Financing

Thoroughfare:

- Create a new east-west connector from Johnstown Road to James Road and extend Ridenour Road south to the new connector. Create additional north-south and east-west connectors in the triangular area bounded by James Road, Johnstown Road, and the Johnstown-James connector.

Timeframe: 1-5 years, as the area develops
Responsible Party: Developer(s), City of Gahanna
Source of Funds: Developer contributions, Tax Increment Financing

- Create roadways for proposed single-family development at the southern boundary of the study area.

Timeframe: 1-5 years, as the area develops
Responsible Party: Developer(s)
Source of Funds: Developer contributions

- Create left-hand turning lanes at Stygler Road and Johnstown Road.

Timeframe: 1-5 years, as the area develops
Responsible Party: Developer(s), City of Gahanna
Source of Funds: Developer contributions, Tax Increment Financing

- Construct a one-way ramp exit from westbound Route 62 onto Agler Road.

Timeframe: 5-10 years
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna
Source of Funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Tax Increment Financing

- Construct bike/walking paths along Turkey Run and Big Walnut Creek through the study area. Construct a pedestrian/bicycle bridge across Big Walnut Creek to link Friendship Park to the Greenway (See also recreation/Open Space).

Timeframe: Five Years
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna
Source of funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Nature Works grant funds*, Park Fees, In-Lieu Fees for parkland dedication

Marketing Recommendations

- Use local and outside media sources to promote the West Gahanna Development Plan and potential for redevelopment and new development in the area.

Timeframe: Immediately
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna

- Continue efforts to develop public-private economic development partnerships (such as a non-profit CURC as described earlier) to market the West Gahanna study area to potential developers and develop strategies for business retention and expansion.

Timeframe: Immediately
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna, Chamber of Commerce, Local Businesses

- Work with the Chamber of Commerce and non-profit to develop marketing materials for the study area.

Timeframe: Immediately
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna, Chamber of Commerce, Non-Profit

- Create and maintain a database to provide needed information to developers about available parcels in the study area (size, purchase price, zoning requirements, recommended land use, needed improvements, etc.)

Timeframe: Continuous
Responsible Party: City of Gahanna

Financing Recommendations

Tax Abatement: Under tax abatement, property tax increases resulting from site improvements may be partially or completely abated for up to fifteen years. Tax abatements can be provided through Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA) and Enterprise Zones (EZ). While a CRA designation allows communities to abate taxes on buildings, an EZ designation allows abatement on both buildings and personal property. Only "distressed communities" meeting specific economic criteria are eligible for the EZ designation. The City of Gahanna is not considered "distressed. " The City might consider creating a mixed-use CRA tax abatement district for the study area, similar to that used in Olde Gahanna. If this mechanism is used, the City will need to work closely with the Gahanna-Jefferson School system. Tax abatement should be used only for businesses that will generate a significant amount of income tax to benefit the schools. Some of this income tax can be directly transferred to the school system. The City should negotiate deals with businesses receiving abatement to make sure they do not relocate after the abatement period. Businesses that do relocate should be required to provide a rebate of all taxes abated. Tax abatement is usually more appropriate for large industries with many employees. There is also the issue of fairness to businesses recently locating in the study area that did not receive assistance.

Tax Increment Financing: under a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district, a community can fund infrastructure improvements related to new development and use property taxes from the development to repay its costs. Property taxes are directed for a special fund used to repay the community. The property owner still pays the full tax amount, no portion is abated, but receives the added benefit of public improvements to the site. TIFs can be used to provide water and sewer improvements, road improvements, and related infrastructure improvements. The City of Gahanna has already used the TIFs for attracting industrial development, and would like to expand use of the strategy in the future. The West Gahanna study area would be a good location for a TIF district because substantial infrastructure improvements will be needed for new development. The City can make West Gahanna more attractive to potential developers by helping them defray some of their required public improvement costs through a TIF district. The TIF could be used as an incentive for parcel aggregation for redevelopment. For example, the City might agree to include certain property in the TIF district if the owners and developer(s) were willing to aggregate the parcels involved.

Establish a Non-Profit CURC (ORC Chapter 1702, 1728): As discussed in "Overlay Zoning and Land Aggregation Recommendations," the City should consider establishing a non-profit Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (CURC). As a private corporation, the CURC may act according to its own plans and vision without increasing the burden on the local government's resources. The non-profit corporation has access to donations, grants (including CDBG), and foundation support as well as the other funds it will generate from its activities.

The corporation can develop and promote incentive programs such as facade improvements, steetscape improvements, design consultations that implement historic preservation and community improvement goals. It can also sponsor promotional events, market development potential of special properties, organize cooperative advertising and street maintenance among historic district businesses.

A Non-Profit Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation (Chapter 1728 & 1702) can acquire properties, aggregating parcels into larger tracts, even exercise eminent domain to acquire key properties to insure that they are developed and used in a manner consistent with the overall preservation and redevelopment effort. This is a powerful tool for controlling, without regulation, properties vital to the goals of redevelopment or for emergency action if proposed changes to a property are in conflict with and threaten the impact of the goals of the development corporation.

State of Ohio Microenterprise Business Development Program: Cities may apply for funding from the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) to provide loans for the development of local microenterprise businesses that create and retain jobs in the community. The maximum award is $50,000. Jobs must be made available to low and moderate income persons. Microenterprise businesses are defined as though having five or fewer employees, one of whom owns the business. These businesses are not usually able to obtain commercial bank loans. Funds can be used to provide loans to support self-employment and job creation. Training and working capital loans are also available. Repayment of loans to businesses can be used to provide additional assistance if the grantee establishes a Revolving Loan Fund and funds are expended in the same manner as that which generated the repayments.

State of Ohio Economic Development Grants (Community Development Block Grant):
The goal of the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) Economic Development Program is to create and retain jobs for low and moderate-income persons through business development and expansion. The State will provide up to $500,000 for direct loans and $400,000 for off-site infrastructure improvements necessary for business development. Cities receiving funds may make loans to private, for-profit entities for business creation, expansion and retention. Funds may not be used to finance existing debt, working capital, non-capital equipment, training costs, or inventory. Funds also may not be used to assist businesses relocating from one part of the State of Ohio to another, or for speculative projects or buildings. Off-site infrastructure improvements are eligible if the City can demonstrate that no other funding source is available. ODOD will provide up to 50 percent of infrastructure costs. At least 51 percent of the jobs created or retained must be made available to low and moderate income persons as defined by the CDBG program. The job creation/retention must take place within 24 months of grant

award. Repayment of loans to businesses can be used to provide additional assistance if the grantee establishes a Revolving Loan Fund and funds are expended in the same manner as that which generated the repayments.

Revolving Loan Fund: The City might consider establishing a revolving loan fund to assist businesses with facade and property improvements. Loans should be provided at discounted interest rates, e.g. three percent. Repayments would be used to provide additional loans in the study area. A non-profit CURC, if established, can also administer a revolving loan fund.

Developer Contributions: Chapter 1107 of the Gahanna Planning and Zoning Code states that a property owner wanting to subdivide must pay the entire cost of the following improvements: street improvements (grading, curbing, paving and drainage structures and appurtenances), sanitary sewer (manholes, services and all appurtenances), water distribution system (mains, services, valves, fire hydrants and all appurtenances, sidewalks on both sides of streets, (and curbs and sidewalks on existing street if feasible), storm sewers (including manholes, inlets and all appurtenances), paved driveways, and street lights. Much of the infrastructure cost associated with new development will be borne by the property owner/developer. However, to make the study area more attractive to developers, the City can negotiate agreements for tax abatement or TIF assistance in exchange for parcel aggregation and redevelopment in accordance with the Development Plan.

Acquisition/Resale: The City should consider acquisition of key parcels in the study area through eminent domain, including parcels at the Stygler Road/Route 62 intersection. The City can then resell these parcels to developers willing to develop according to the dictates of the West Gahanna Development Plan. Parcels should be appraised prior to acquisition to ensure that the City will recoup its costs upon resale. By making landscape, infrastructure, and other related improvements to such parcels, the City will enhance the value of parcels it already owns and should guarantee recoup of costs.

Appendix A: West Gahanna Stakeholder Interview Results

Question 1. What are the most positive development trends within the West Gahanna target area? (strong points)

Abstract

When asked about positive development trends in West Gahanna, respondents spoke about recent developments which they considered beneficial, as well as the potential for future development. Respondents cited the new McDonald's, Woods of Gahanna apartments, and the new medical office building as positive examples of recent development. Many also think that West Gahanna has strong development potential because it serves as an entryway to the City and because of its proximity to the Columbus Airport, Downtown Columbus, and the new Limited development to the north. Recent road improvements and overall ease of access was another recurring theme. Others mentioned that residents and businesses are committed to the area and would like to see positive change occur.

Complete List of Responses

Positive Development Trends

* New McDonald's; well landscaped; a little inspiration for that side of town.
* New Apartments (Woods of Gahanna).
* Medical Office - good for Stygler Commons/Village.
* Morse Road may become too busy; therefore people may be encouraged to go south instead of north.
* Upgraded Stygler Road makes it easier to travel; therefore north neighborhoods would be more encouraged to shop in Gahanna instead of Columbus.
* "Limited" development will rub off, but need to apply pressure.
* Redevelopment in Old Gahanna is good for this area.

Strong Points

* Cost is reasonable.
* Access to transportation - excellent location (Proximity to Downtown & Airport, I-270, I-670, Route 62).
* Several ways in and out of area.
* Route 62 traffic not just Gahanna, but other communities as well; I-670 has opened up Gahanna to more patronage from Columbus.
* Traffic through Gahanna is good for business.
* High profile along Route 62.
* Could be a great entry.
* Close to residential (Well-kept homes that are more affordable than other areas of Gahanna).
* Stygler Village.
* Close to pool.

* Well-established area; long term resident loyalty.
* Long-time residents without mortgages; but people have no place to spend money on West side.
* Long term businesses who want to see a change to make area look better.

Potential Development

* Potential for many uses; has areas that can be utilized for commercial growth, but would involve demolition.
* Entry way to Gahanna - lends itself well to commercial development that should service all of Gahanna and Columbus.
* Potential for service/retail (but not upscale).
* Old Route 62 (Johnstown Road) is good office space area.
* Extend Friendship Park West.
* Can use flood plain as recreational/passive use.

Question 2. What are the least positive trends? (chief concerns, weak points)

Abstract

The interview respondents indicated several negative development trends and obstacles to high-quality future development in West Gahanna. Several respondents thought that the area was developing without any guidance or plan. They spoke of uncontrolled commercialization, such as the conversion of single-family homes to businesses. Others spoke of the "poor visual quality" of the area, citing unkept lots, run-down homes and businesses, and an overall lack of development standards. The respondents mentioned several problems with existing infrastructure, such as poor drainage, lack of access to sanitary sewer systems and traffic problems. The "chopped up" ownership pattern and the need to aggregate and replat parcels is also an obstacle to redevelopment. Many respondents indicated that "East Gahanna" and "West Gahanna" appear to be politically as well as physically divided. There is a perception among some that West Gahanna has been ignored by the City and developers and is not seen as a viable area for new development.

Complete List of Responses

Least Positive Development Trends

* The area is going into decline.
* Lack of new development; no indication of growth -- can't wait for private sector.
* Single family houses are converting to commercial and home occupations.
* Not utilizing prime land at Stygler Road/Route 62 intersection; area seems neglected.
* Available land is not that commercially viable.
* Uncontrolled commercialization; no plan in place.
* Too many car shops.

Infrastructure

* Sanitary sewer is not adequate or not available - may need lift station.
* Storm drainage problems; potentially very large, therefore will need help from City.
* Area needs a utility study.
* Traffic problems - mornings and evenings (backed up from Big Walnut Creek bridge to Stygler Road); another bridge would help.

Land Ownership

* Chopped up ownership pattern.
* Need to get larger lots/sites; need replating.

Poor Visual Quality

* Vacant lots not maintained.
* Lack of standards.
* Royal Manor Plaza needs a face lift (i.e., landscaping, painting, outside/facade remodeling) badly; it looks run down and gives a negative impression of City.
* Old buildings - need to be upgraded/remodeled.
* Some homes run down.
* Not pretty along Johnstown Road; area along Johnstown Road (Stygler Road to Big Walnut Creek) is blighted.
* Not an upscale appearance; i.e., apartments that back up to Route 62 often have clothes out drying.

Negative Reputation, Divided City

* Earnings stream is seen as flat by developers.
* People don't see the area as viable.
* West side is forgotten area -- the "bastard step-child."
* Lack of restaurants and shopping.
* Lack of access east/west (division by Big Walnut Creek) splits community apart.
* Division by Big Walnut Creek hinders business to settle in West; need to get by stigma/perception.
* No direct link between Olde Gahanna, causing competition.
* Council/planning commission seen as difficult to work with (in past 10-15 years) - people avoid Gahanna because seen as difficult - too many commissions to go through - need simplified review process.

Lack of Visibility and Access

* Much of area lacks visibility from freeway; have to open up area to make it visible.
* Area is somewhat land-locked; access needs to be improved (i.e., to Ballard/Cherry area and Southeast James Road area).

Other Issues

* Need better street lighting (especially along Johnstown Road).
* Need road maintenance.
* Variables in permitted signage and zoning (i.e., old businesses don't need to meet rigid restrictions for signage/parking, etc.); there needs to be uniformity.
* Not enough office space to satisfy needs that are there; there will be competition with New Albany for office space within five years if nothing is developed.
* Average incomes lower in area so they have less expendable income; therefore should try to draw others into area as well.
* There is a limit to what can be changed (i.e., established residential areas).

Question 3. What are the best opportunities you see that the City should take advantage of in guiding growth?

Abstract

Interview respondents feel that the growth and development of West Gahanna should be guided by comprehensive planning principles. The City should play an active role in this development by clearly stating what its priorities are and by encouraging high-quality development standards. A development and redevelopment "theme" should be identified. Several potential themes were suggested, but the overall feeling is that the area should be commercially viable, aesthetically pleasing, and beneficial to the existing residents. A variety of commercial and office-oriented land uses were suggested for new development. There is some conflict as to whether "destination-oriented" or "visibility-oriented" uses would be best suited to the area. Respondents also feel that the City should encourage renovation and upkeep of existing businesses as a means to protect these areas and attract further growth.

Complete List of Responses

New Development

* Aid in getting new grocery store (more upscale); current Big Bear is old and a real distraction.
* Medical Center (emergency services); put in area where shopping center is now
* Professional Offices (i.e., doctors, banks); there is a market for offices.
* Develop area with an arts focus.
* Retail, for tax purposes.
* The area will be best suited to auto-oriented service.
* Fee-simple townhomes (15-20 units/year) for empty nesters and young singles -- Gahanna lacks this kind of housing and market is there.

Redevelopment

* Start by encouraging renovation.
* Take care of what we have (i.e., shopping center) through landscaping and facade renovations to make more pleasing to the eye.
* Capitalize on current business and try to attract more commercial growth.

Overall Planning Principles

* Need to set a new tone for the area; identify a theme for the area.
* Gateway to Gahanna - tastefully landscaped.
* Aggregate lots - create larger sites.
* Mixed-use / neo-traditional planning -- need support for zoning that would permit such development (i.e., overlay district).

* Try to develop a pattern like Olde Gahanna; have area "flow" into Olde Gahanna.
* More pedestrian oriented -- would really benefit those without cars (i.e., elderly).
* Development should be aesthetically pleasing and beneficial to residents.
* New development should tie into the existing community.

City Responsibilities

* Offer incentives, for example aid with needed utilities improvements.
* City should make its priorities for the area clear.
* Promote high quality standards; do not take just anything that's proposed.
* Don't give abatement unless there is high labor involved (i.e., income tax benefit).
* Be aggressive, City needs to be pro-active.
* Process would have to be City encouraged, because mostly residential and mon-and-pop commercial.

Other Issues

* Schools are very important; need to keep schools competitive.
* Easy access to airport, but very few businesses to serve the airport.
* New business will need to be destination use versus service use that requires high visibility.

Question 4. What are the key barriers that have to be dealt with?

Abstract

There are several barriers that must be dealt with before widespread development can occur in West Gahanna. These barriers largely echo the negative development trends discussed in Question 2. The existing platting pattern is a hindrance because many parcels are too small to be developed and ownership is divided, making aggregation difficult. The "Not In My BackYard" (NIMBY) attitude was also cited. Respondents feel that some area residents are opposed to any change in their neighborhoods. They argued that the City needs to be active in pursuing consensus among the residents. Everyone needs to "buy in" to the plan to make it successful. Other barriers include problems with existing infrastructure and the costs of expanding infrastructure for new development. Some respondents mentioned problems with development standards and codes, ranging from the need for more building code enforcement to the need for more flexibility in the development review process.

Complete List of Responses

Existing Platting

* Existing platting pattern; need to provide inducements for land aggregation.
* Existing homes in areas that are zoned commercial; will be very costly to acquire lots and replat.
* Existing parcels are too small and ownership is divided.

NIMBY ("Not In My BackYard!")

* Work with neighbors in encouraging rezoning - they are against "any change."
* Gahanna's "mindset."
* Nobody wants to make the decision.
* Getting everyone to agree on what they want - each has their own agenda.
* Need government to try to keep people together; stronger leadership at City Hall; aggressively pursue consensus.
* Neighborhood/area meetings.
* Property owners.
* Content property owners along James Road who don't want any new development.

Infrastructure Problems

* Storm drainage needs improvement (especially along Johnstown Road).
* Cost of utilities and roads improvements.
* Need more right of way.
* Access.

* Floodplain (of creek)?
* Drainage problems (likely not in "triangle").
* Potential environmental problems (i.e.,- Old Standard Oil station leaking tanks) - how far has it spread?
  - Phase I environmental assessment needed.
* Only 2 points of access to new Route 62 - limits ingress/egress.

Development Standards

* Compromising "established standards for development," settling for marginal development.
* Property owner/landholder (commercial property owners)-maintenance and updates - lack of force - City and tenants need to encourage.
* Need to allow sign review, zoning, etc. boards some flexibility - business lost because of review board process.

Other Issues

* Buy in by the key players - School Board, business, land owners.
* The time it takes to develop.
* Need planning for the whole community, make Gahanna a whole.
* Residents should be involved; business owners too.
* Visibility - not as much of an issue for office vs. retail.
* Area must be marketed.
* Emotional attachment to Olde Gahanna - why not spend more time/energy/funds in Olde Gahanna.
* Difficult to get a coalition of business; Mom and Pop organizations- might feel more comfortable with plan if City Hall is behind it.

Question 5. If you could suggest one change in land use/development within the target area what would it be?

Abstract

Suggestions for changes in development and land uses fell into several categories. Concerning new development trends and strategies, respondents think that a plan is needed to guide development, and some "early start areas" should be encouraged to "set the tone" for future developments. The need for quality development which would not adversely impact West Gahanna residents was stressed. Many land use changes were suggested, including sit-down restaurants, office and retail facilities, apartments and condominiums, and recreational facilities, among others. Other respondents offered preferred locations for new development. There seems to be a consensus that Johnstown Road needs to be marketed for commercial development. Many also argued that the Stygler Road/Route 62 intersection and surrounding areas need to be upgraded, especially the Royal Plaza shopping center. There appears to be some conflict as to whether the Ballard/Cherry Road area should continue to be a single-family neighborhood, or should be aggregated and redeveloped for office and commercial uses. Zoning and code enforcement efforts were suggested as a means to reverse the decline of certain areas and to set standards for the quality of new development.

Complete List of Responses

New Development Trends/Strategies

* More development - retail, "new rooftops."
* Anything new.
* Need to landscape the area.
* Need a plan.
* Need quality development.
* Need to create some early start areas.
* Set tone for redevelopment; remove existing houses--plan with a clean slate.
* The right-turn area needs to be widened - made more attractive.
* City needs to give better boundaries to the Flood Plain recreation area.
* Extension of Friendship Park!
* New development should tie into the community and not adversely impact residents.

Specific Locations for New Development

* Upgrade shopping center--it is not aesthetically pleasing and needs a new owner.
* City needs to positively market Johnstown Road area; develop scheme to increase traffic along Johnstown Road.
* Make use of vacant commercially zoned land in area (especially Stygler Road/Johnstown Road).
* Commercial along Johnstown Road.
* Make a statement on the south end - low density multi-family.
* 2 key places to encourage development:
  - Ridenour Road/Route 62/Johnstown Road
  -corner west of McDonald's (old Bonded Station)
* Commercial upgrade at Route 62/Stygler Road; not attractive; vacant buildings; each corner needs to be developed.

New Land Uses

* More service (McDonald's, Midas, etc.).
* Sit-down restaurants.
* Office buildings/commercial/retail to generate income tax base.
* Low impact office facilities.
* "Executive" style condos: 2 car garage, 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, basement - problem because of location.
  1. stigma
  2. access
* More condos and apartments along Ballard/Cherry.
* Mini-mall with sit-down restaurant (Friendly's).
* Recreation along creek--ball fields, bridge across Friendship Park.

Zoning/Code Enforcement Strategies

* Code enforcement!
* Architectural standards.
* Rezone both sides of Johnstown Road to Steltzer Road (NOT residential) .
* Private residences along Johnstown Road (Stygler - east) bring area down; not well-maintained.
* Clean up Johnstown Road, mow/maintain vacant lots, fix up buildings.

Others

* Past - start as poor farming community, didn't become desirable until 25 years ago.

Question 6. What should the City be doing to encourage "good development in the target area"? (incentives/protection of existing development, etc)

Abstract

The interviews respondents think that the City of Gahanna needs to play an active and ongoing role in West Gahanna's development. There are four areas where the City should continue to take action: Marketing the area and assisting with financing, upgrading infrastructure, developing a set of planning policies, and utilizing development codes. A variety of financial and marketing strategies for economic development were proposed, including tax abatement, grants, low interest loans, long-term leasing, creating a merchants association, etc. There is concern about the inadequacy of current infrastructure for new development. Some respondents argued that a utility study should be completed before any utility lines were extended, to determine which areas could and could not be serviced.

The need for a development plan which could be fully implemented was once again stressed. Respondents think that the City should take the lead by maintaining a "pro-growth" attitude and acquiring sites for new development. Others mentioned that the City needs to protect existing homeowners from adverse impacts of new land uses. Other suggestions included: landscaping the area and improving the floodplain recreation area and other open space. There is some conflict as to how development codes should be used. While many feel that the City should strengthen code enforcement and develop new landscaping and architectural codes, others caution that these types of regulations and restrictions make it difficult to attract and retain businesses.

Complete List of Responses

Financial/Marketing Strategies

* Grants and/or low interest loans.
* Tax abatement or tax increment financing (like what was used in Olde Gahanna).
* Provide long term leasing - "as long as the loan."
* Create a West Gahanna Merchants Association.
* Create Gahanna Trust.
* Promote proximity to Downtown Columbus - the airport - ease of access.

* Promoting positives of West side, i.e. New McDonald's, Stygler Commons/Village, Civic Sam (promote city events - inform people of issues, etc.).
* Look at Olde Gahanna "success story" and possibly use similar strategy (Olde Gahanna was successful because the City and other people were "interested").

Infrastructure Strategies

* Extend utilities.
* Do the utilities study to demonstrate that properties can be served.
* Fees are high (tap ins).
* Roads in good shape.
* The right-turn area needs to be widened and made more attractive.
* Alternative route besides 62 to connect west commercial area to east commercial area (Hamilton Road).
* Concern about new Route 62 entrance.
* Ballard to Stygler ditches filled with water (eyesore).

Planning Policy Strategies

* Make a statement of "what the City will support."
* Stay pro-growth - name this area "one of Gahanna's priorities."
* Develop a plan and stick to it! (If developer follows plan then process will be easier).
* City should solve problem at Stygler Road and Route 62.
* Acquire sites - the City needs to lead the way.
* Need to create early start areas-- People will take pride if someone starts it
* Protect homeowners (i.e., Heritage and College Park).
* City needs to give better boundaries to the Floodplain recreation area.
* Need to landscape the area.
* Use small "park" areas wisely- add park benches and picnic tables; mow frequently and upkeep areas (day care children use them).

Development Code Strategies

* Landscape ordinance.
* Architectural review standards.
* Set standards, but be careful of incentives! (too often that means that the City backs off the standards).
* Code enforcement!

* Ease up some regulations, restrictions, review process to make it easier for businesses to start in Gahanna.
* Upgrade without putting people out of business.
* Painting/awnings program - could City help?

Question 7. Should the City attempt to guide particular land uses into the target area? What uses? Do you feel there is an existing market for those uses?

Abstract

Nearly all of the respondents think that the City of Gahanna should promote specific types of land uses for the study area. However, a wide and sometimes conflicting variety of uses were proposed. These included commercial, office, residential, and recreational uses. Industrial uses were not suggested. Types of commercial and office uses varied between neighborhood-oriented office and retail, and community/regional uses such as hotels and restaurants which would complement a high-rise office/convention center development. Some respondents argued that more multi-family residential development such as the Woods of Gahanna would be desirable. Other respondents think that the City should develop more parkland and recreational space along the Walnut Creek floodplain. Many think that Friendship Park should be extended into the study area.

Complete List of Responses

COMMERCIAL

* Shopping area.
* Retail.
* Grocery Store.
* Hotel/Motel - corporate center.
* Services i.e., photo store - identify what is not there.
* Boutiques.
* Service stations should serve both sides of town.
* Banks (only 1 bank on West side now).
* No self-storage.
* No discount department stores.
* Equipment rental.
* Lawn-service.
* More commercial along James Road toward Johnstown Road - houses have been for sale.
* Commercial use to attract development expansion and keep money in Gahanna.
  - West Johnstown Road
  - Stygler Road
  - Route 62
* Expand visible commercial presence to be mainly around Route 62 off I-270/I-670 (strip centers, offices, medical).

RESTAURANTS

* Restaurants - any type of "food."
* Need nice restaurants (family-type) - hate to see east as up-scale, west as low-end.
* Market is there for fast food.

OFFICES

* Offices ("Offices are first step - other uses will follow!")
* Market the area for office uses (doctors, private enterprise, etc.) - uses that don't rely upon visibility.
* Multi-story office space.
* Health facility.

RESIDENTIAL

* Executive condos along Ballard/Cherry area (maintain woods).
* Make sure that the plan preserves the residential character to the south of the study area.

PARKS AND RECREATION

* Parks/Recreation along Walnut Creek floodplain (look to purchase as much property along creek as possible).
* Nursery in floodplain.
* River walk/shops along creek, footbridges into Olde Gahanna to tie the City together.

Recommended Strategies

* "Pick out the corners" - open game for retail.
* Determine what is needed.
* Create some density, i.e. office space (high rise) with a landscape center.
* Need to think Big: What would you do with it if it was vacant?
* The City should set the pattern for "good quality", "good image", "high standards", and "better architectural review" - that's where the fees should go!
* Determine the best use(s) for the floodplain.
* Northwest corner of Agler Road and Stygler Road - condemn the site, add Right of Way, give the site away "for the right use."
* Work with Bob White, Freidl Bohm, The Daimler Group.

* Improving Route 62 corridor-- internally focused to Johnstown Road area; how to deal with signage; attracting people into area.
* Create linkages along creek floodplain.
* Purchase single family homes (north) as rental investment properties.
* Add signage (i.e. welcome signs from I-270).

Appendix B: West Gahanna Development Committee Design Workshop Results

Session 1 - Question 1

What will West Gahanna look like over the next 15 years if there is no planning or intervention?

1. Continued "hodge-podge" development.
2. Good commercial locations not utilized.
3. The City did not intervene to upgrade area (i.e. land purchase). [related to #20]
4. West Side would decline, in appearance and commercial uses.
5. The Agler Road -Stygler Road "entrance" will not be maintained. [related to #14]
6. Residential development will increase.
7. A place where people simply pass through - remain isolated.
8. Residential property values will decline.
9. Very little change would occur.
10. Difficulty drawing "big players".
11. Business development will be "spotty" - unplanned.
12. Different economic class will move into area (i.e. renters).
13. More multi-family development and retirement facilities.
14. Continued lack of aesthetic appeal.
15. Not a "showplace entrance" to City. [related to #14]
16. Increased traffic and infrastructure decline (water, sewer, roads, etc.).
17. More crime.
18. Incompatible land uses.
19. Lack of amenities (i.e. parks, commerce).
20. A lack of City involvement in the area.

21. Frustration among landowners, developers and City officials (i.e. indecisiveness).

22. West Side schools will be "stigmatized" (the entire West Side) "elitism."

23. Entrance way to West Gahanna needs improvement with the exception of McDonald's.

24. Grass has not been cut in a long time at the old Bonded station - this makes a bad impression.

25. Apartments that back up to Route 62 should have a privacy fence.

26. The new Chinese restaurant needs to have their windows checked - their curtains are hung up with a string - bad appearance.

27. The vacant house on West Johnstown Road with the yellow tape around it is an eye sore (left hand side going toward I-670 or Stelzer Road).

28. Need to look at another bridge across the creek.

29. Something needs to be done with the two shopping centers.

Session 1 - Question 2

What is the ideal "vision" for West Gahanna 15 years with planning and intervention?

1. Planned landscaped area, freeway to bridge.
2. Increase in pride and interest (residents and City).
3. Redevelopment theme (aesthetically, architecturally).
4. Massing of parcels for redevelopment.
5. Development corridors.
6. Organized development.
7. Traffic on bridge will be very heavy [related to #10].
8. Upscale living area.
9. City involvement to control type of commercial/residential development.
10. Another bridge (North of present bridge).
11. Unique landscaped entryway illustrating Gahanna's unique and diverse attributes, well-kept. [related to #1]
12. Less crime, more law enforcement involvement.
13. Bedroom community.
14. Residential compatibility with any development/redevelopment (protecting residential neighborhoods).
15. Preserved natural elements (i.e. trees, creek).
16. Road widening.
17. Negative stigma/attitude about West Gahanna is reversed.
18. More upscale businesses.
19. Shopping centers upgraded.

20. Mass transit improvements.

Session I - Question 3

What are the most important things that need to happen if the West Gahanna target area is going to attain this "vision?"

1. Good City development direction and contribution. {5} **2nd Priority (Tie)**

2. Pride and dedication of West Gahanna citizens.

3. Better traffic/road system (i.e. extra bridge). {1}

4. A good, solid plan which determined whether area was primarily residential or commercial. {3}

5. Dollars allocated by City Council. {7} **1st Priority**

6. The entire City of Gahanna is involved and supportive. {5} **2nd Priority (Tie)**

7. Civic groups and other volunteers contributed to effort.

8. The landscaped entryway was completed. {3}

9. Law enforcement/community policing was involved (more enforcement i.e. speeding)- Also more City code enforcement. [related to #11] {3}

10. More fire protection (a new station is planned). {1}

11. Tough, enforced restrictions on property maintenance (by City). {1}

12. There was a specific focus (ongoing - outside political process).

13. The community believed in the process and made their vision known to private sector. **{4} 3rd Priority (Tie)**

14. Incentives offered to private sector. {2}

15. There was a timetable.

16. Maintained a compatible appearance and theme (architectural/landscape codes). {3}

17. More family events sponsored by City to bring families together - This is also a family responsibility.

18 The WGDC plan was adopted.

19. Less mass transit and road widening to preserve trees (maintain a smaller, "human oriented" community). {1}

20. Require landscaping for new development as well as upgrading landscaping in public areas.

21. Add sidewalks - people should feel comfortable walking. {1}

22. Community groups and public sector participated. Diverse groups were involved. [related to #7] **{4} 3rd Priority (Tie)**

23. Did not settle for less than the vision. {1}

Priority: Dollars Allocated by City Council

1. Council will continue to commit to funding the plan's development.
2. Grants (set aside a local match) - both the public and private sectors can be sources.
3. Tax abatement - change policy to include West Gahanna OR Tax Increment Financing.
4. The Landscape Commission should allocate "project money" to West Gahanna.
5. Route 62 entrance as a "linear park"? Possibly use development fees for park land?
6. Strategies to "capture" tax dollars generated from the area.
7. Use of eminent domain.

Priority: The entire City of Gahanna is involved and supportive

1. A good plan citizens can buy into.
   - unique (exciting vision)
   - saleable
   - realistic
2. Plan process is inclusive (i.e. Civic groups).
3. Create a sense of urgency . . . what will happen if we don't take action?
4. Market the plan - Public relations.
   - maintain communication
   - go to media outside of Gahanna
5. Show how an improved West Gahanna will benefit all of Gahanna.
   - entryway
6. Create cohesion.

Priority: Good City development direction and contribution

1. Be proactive - make more priorities known.
2. City purchases lot(s) and resells to developer who is willing to do what City wants.
3. Get developers to buy into process (Development Director should be involved).
4. A commitment to improve infrastructure (streets, drainage, water, sewers, sidewalks).

Appendix C: West Gahanna Citizen Survey Results

West Gahanna Development Plan: Citizen Survey Summary

Question 1: Please list three things you like most about the West Gahanna Development Plan

When asked what they liked most about the West Gahanna Development Plan, several respondents noted the landscaped Route 62 and Gateway bridge concepts, and the related improvements associated with them. Others mentioned the greenway and the potential for attracting both commercial and residential development. Some respondents mentioned the opportunity to develop their own properties. Others noted the potential improvement in the appearance and image of the area.

- The landscaped Boulevard and Gateway. (4)
- Lighting and foot traffic improvements. (2)
- Green space. (2)
- Landscaping. (1)
- Bike/pedestrian walk. (1)
- It should attract more business. (1)
- Improves aesthetics-appearance. (1)
- Stygler Road extension.
- Street enhancements.
- Street configuration.
- Enhancing the look along Route 62.
- Use of patterned paving if it coordinates with Olde Gahanna.
- Olde Gahanna's character developed into the west side.
- More commercial and multi-family zoning.
- Single-housing development.
- Balance of green space, multiple family, single family, and office space.
- Growth potential for the whole area.
- Opportunity for C. McKeag to develop his property.
- Opportunity for Leichleiters to develop their property.
- Chance for other residents to develop their properties.
- Investing in the community.
- Improves City's image.

Question 2: Please list the three things you like least about the West Gahanna Development Plan

When asked what they liked least about the West Gahanna Development Plan, some respondents indicated a concern about commercial and office uses in a predominantly residential area. Others were concerned about potential traffic problems and limited access to the east side of Gahanna. A couple respondents were worried about the location of the proposed bike/walking path along Turkey Run. Still others had concerns about the specific design elements of the proposed Boulevard and Gateway.

- Commercial uses north of Amfield on east side of Stygler. (1)
- Far too much commercial and office use in residential neighborhoods. (1)
- Bike/walking path going through the middle of resident's property/backyards/along the Creek. (1)
- Offices on Agler Road.
- Too much office zoning along James Road.
- Office space in northwest corner of the plan--residential would be a better use.
- Risk of uncontrolled, undesirable development.
- The new street from Johnstown Road to James Road.
- The street and roadway which totally eliminates the Hamm's property.
- The way the Hamm's property is chopped up.
- See no bridge to connect Friendship Park across Big Walnut Creek.
- Limited access to the east side of Gahanna.
- The bike/walking path should run along the creek bank clear to Price Road.
- Potential traffic slowdown on bridge.
- Increased traffic circulation problems.
- Increase in Johnstown Road traffic.
- The Boulevard might jam incoming traffic.
- Map was difficult to read.
- A lot is left to the imagination because drawings are only for the Boulevard and the Gateway.
- Costs?
- Should be more specific about the types of businesses and commercial uses desired.
- Tall streetlights are ugly and Gahanna signage calls more attention to them.
- Stronger signage at the Gateway and less on the Boulevard.
- There should be more specialized paving or brick on the Route 62 median--should not lolike greyoncrete dividers on freeways.

Question 3: Do you feel that the plan will meet the needs of Gahanna residents? Why or why not?

Most respondents felt that the West Gahanna Development Plan would meet the needs and improve the quality of life of study area residents. Others were concerned that proposed development would negatively impact residential neighborhoods.

- Not the Hamms at 329 W. Johnstown Road. They lose their home, garage, etc. and they already have development plans. (1)
- They will essentially be met. However, increased traffic flow will create more rush hour traffic delays. An additional bridge would be beneficial.
- Yes, because it looks like positive progress.
- Yes.
- Yes, adding commercial development to the west side will help to diversify the City's base and will mean fewer cross town trips, helping alleviate traffic on the bridge.
- Any help for the west side is better than being ignored.
- In general, yes, it shows planning. Hope it doesn't involve transient residents.
- Yes, I thought Gahanna lacked interest and the Gateway will add so much to the look of Gahanna!
- If it attracts more business to West Gahanna, that would be a plus.
- Yes, but there seems to be a lot of commercially-zoned areas.
- I did not see where another assisted living/nursing facility might be located.
- My needs, yes, because my home is protected, but not those whose homes are in a commercial or office zoned area.
- The plan will meet the needs of commercial and business groups and residents of other parts of Gahanna, but it does nothing to meet the needs or respect the rights of privacy of the current residents of West Gahanna.
- Disturbing a residential neighborhood is not meeting needs. I live behind the proposed changes and I am concerned about traffic, noise and more people in the area.

Question 4: What types of development and land uses would you like to see in the West Gahanna study area (please describe)?

Respondents indicated that they would like to see more restaurants, retail, offices and commercial development in the study area. Others mentioned a recreation center, assisted living facility, residential development, and a bike/walking path.

- Restaurants. (2)
- More retail. (1)
- Business/offices. (1)
- Large retail shopping center.
- Service (automobile, insurance, hair salon, health spa).
- Strong commercial development.
- Minimal commercial.
- Light industrial.
- A recreation center.
- More assisted living facilities for senior citizens.
- Compatible residential properties.
- More residential.
- A bike/walking path.
- Bike/walking path from Royal Manor to Hamilton Road.
- More planned and aesthetically pleasing development of current commercially-zoned areas, but not converting large areas now in residential use to commercial/office use.
- It should remain as it is.

Question 5: Does the development plan provide for a safe, attractive and efficient environment for pedestrians? Do you think it is important that West Gahanna become more "pedestrian-friendly?" Why or why not?

The majority of the respondents felt that the West Gahanna Development Plan will provide a more "pedestrian-friendly" environment in the study area. Most everyone agreed that providing a safe and attractive pedestrian environment is very important. Others noted that pedestrian traffic should not be impeded by vehicular traffic, and one respondent was concerned that proposed commercial and office development would not be pedestrian-friendly.

- A walkway is needed along Johnstown Road. (2)
- Yes. (1)
- Yes, this is very important.
- Yes, pedestrians are needed to buy items from commercial enterprises.
- Yes, not just as a place for recreation but for people to maintain their health.
- Yes, the bike/walking path could provide a "circle" from the path to James Road and under the bridge.
- Yes, it will enhance the character of the area and attract desirable tenants and businesses and create a safe environment.
- Cleaning up the area will make it feel more safe to walk around.
- Yes, as the area becomes more commercial there will be a need for better pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
- Let's build for people, not the automobile.
- I would like a more pedestrian-friendly approach but I can't determine from the map whether that will happen.
- Pedestrian traffic in residential areas should not be impeded by vehicular traffic.
- How can it be pedestrian-friendly when so much land is designated for office?
- There is very little concern for making West Gahanna more pedestrian-friendly.

Question 6: Does the West Gahanna Development Plan provide for adequate traffic circulation in the study area? Why or why not?

Most respondents felt that the West Gahanna Development Plan would improve traffic circulation in the area. While some were concerned about adequate parking and dead-end streets, other felt that traffic would still back up at the bridge. One respondent felt that traffic flow would worsen if the Plan is implemented.

- Yes, don't forget adequate parking.
- Yes, the extension of Stygler Road and Shara Park Place is essential to traffic flow and safety.
- Yes, by improving the looks of the area, people will probably drive slower because more people will be walking around.
- The plan looks adequate, but Gahanna planners are famous for creating dead-end streets and looping and winding streets that go nowhere.
- Yes, it does a better job, but a traffic engineer really needs to make this decision after careful study.
- A traffic plan should be presented to the citizens.
- Yes, it will help move traffic around the west side but it will still cause bottlenecks on the bridge and backups to the west.
- Concerned about incoming traffic backing up on the bridge.
- Yes, with the exception of the continuation of Sandra Court which will not happen as drawn.
- Traffic circulation is fine now, but it will become a problem with so much commercial and office being proposed.

Question 7: Does the West Gahanna Development Plan provide for adequate landscaping and screening? Do you think it is important that strict landscaping requirements be built into the plan? Why or why not?

Almost all the respondents felt that proper landscaping is very important to the success of the West Gahanna Development Plan. They noted the importance of attractive landscaping to "set the tone" for the area and encourage quality development. One respondent noted the importance of maintaining existing landscaping as well as adding new plantings. There was some questions as to whether or not existing codes would be adequate or if they needed to be revised.

- Yes. (1)
- Yes, to enhance the City's appearance.
- Yes, this is important or else costs will be cut along with quality.
- Yes, it would be great to have attractive landscaping in the plan because it adds so much to a town's atmosphere and beauty.
- Yes, but make sure the state will allow the proposed Boulevard landscaping improvements.
- Yes, this is very important because without uniformity, landscaping will be poor to non-existent.
- Yes, strict requirements as codified. If new or enhanced restrictions are needed, amend the ordinances.
- I would like to see strict landscaping requirements established by qualified people.
- It is very important to maintain and enhance trees and greenery in the area.
- It seems that most of the trees indicated on the plan are existing--the only extra landscaping seems to be along the Boulevard.
- Yes, I would like to see larger plantings in the square dividers on the gateway, or strong color in them.
- Yes, requirements should not be strict, but within the guidelines.
- Yes, but the current City landscaping requirements do not need to be changed.
- Landscaping is a very minor issue as compared to the inappropriate, large-scale proposed land uses changes.
- I Don't know--there is not enough detail on the plan.

Question 8: Which components of the West Gahanna Development Plan would be easiest to achieve and why?

Respondents felt that public improvements such as traffic and pedestrian improvements, landscaping, the bike/walking path, Boulevard and Gateway improvements and street improvements would be easiest to achieve. Others mentioned rezoning and development of the area beyond the Schoedinger Funeral home.

- Traffic and pedestrian development and landscaping (this will attract developers). (3)
- The landscaping and bike/walking path will require less funding.
- The plants in the Boulevard (color flowers) and interesting signage at the Gateway.
- Street improvements--the City owns the easements and can get state and federal grants to assist in financing.
- Zoning--it's the City's decision--they can initiate the process and business will follow. (2)
- Development of the area beyond Schoedinger.
- I Don't know--expert opinion is necessary.

Question 9: Which components of the West Gahanna Development Plan would be most difficult to achieve and why?

Several respondents felt that residents would oppose any land use change from residential, or that resident desires might be conflicting. Others were concerned about proposed street changes, especially those that affected their own property. Others noted the bike/walking path and paving and landscaping improvements, in contrast to the previous question.

- Conversion of single family to office along James Road--it will be difficult to combine parcels.
- Homeowners will oppose any deviation from single family residential.
- Fighting with residents who will not accept a bike/walking path through the middle of their backyards or large commercial and office areas in a residential area.
- Residents' desires may be contradictory and fragmented.
- Changing the streets.
- Extension of Stygler Road and Shara Park Place due to funding and construction.
- Putting a road through where my home sets.
- The extension of Sandra Court through my house and overriding my plans for the use of my property.
- Bike/walking path.
- Paving and landscaping improvements.
- Don't know--expert opinion is necessary.

Question 10: What does Gahanna need to do to ensure that positive change occurs in the West Gahanna study area?

In order to ensure that the West Gahanna Development Plan is carried out, respondents felt that the City needed to continue to solicit input from residents and citizens. They want strong oversight of developers, yet enough flexibility to ensure that development and change can occur. Others indicated the need for strong support from the City administration and elected officials. A few respondents did not feel that change was necessary and spoke of the need to separate politics from decision-making.

- Solicit comments from the residents on the west side--keep up the good communication you have started. (1)
- Strong resident/citizen/homeowner input into the zoning and development process--hold many public hearings. (1)
- Listen to long-time residents who pay taxes and own homes, not to big business and corporate outsiders trying to change residential areas into prime commercial use.
- Strict oversight of developers, yet a cooperative attitude making the area a friendly place to do business.
- Ensure flexibility in development and improvements to allow interest to develop.
- Help with combination of parcels to attain planned growth as opposed to piecemeal.
- Commit to whatever plan is adopted.
- Spend the money to implement the plan now!
- Need push from the Mayor, administration and Council.
- Let the Planning Commission do their job and keep politics out of decision-making.
- Leave the area alone and let it develop according to current planning and zoning procedures. It ain't broke--don't try to fix it.
- Revise part of the plan.

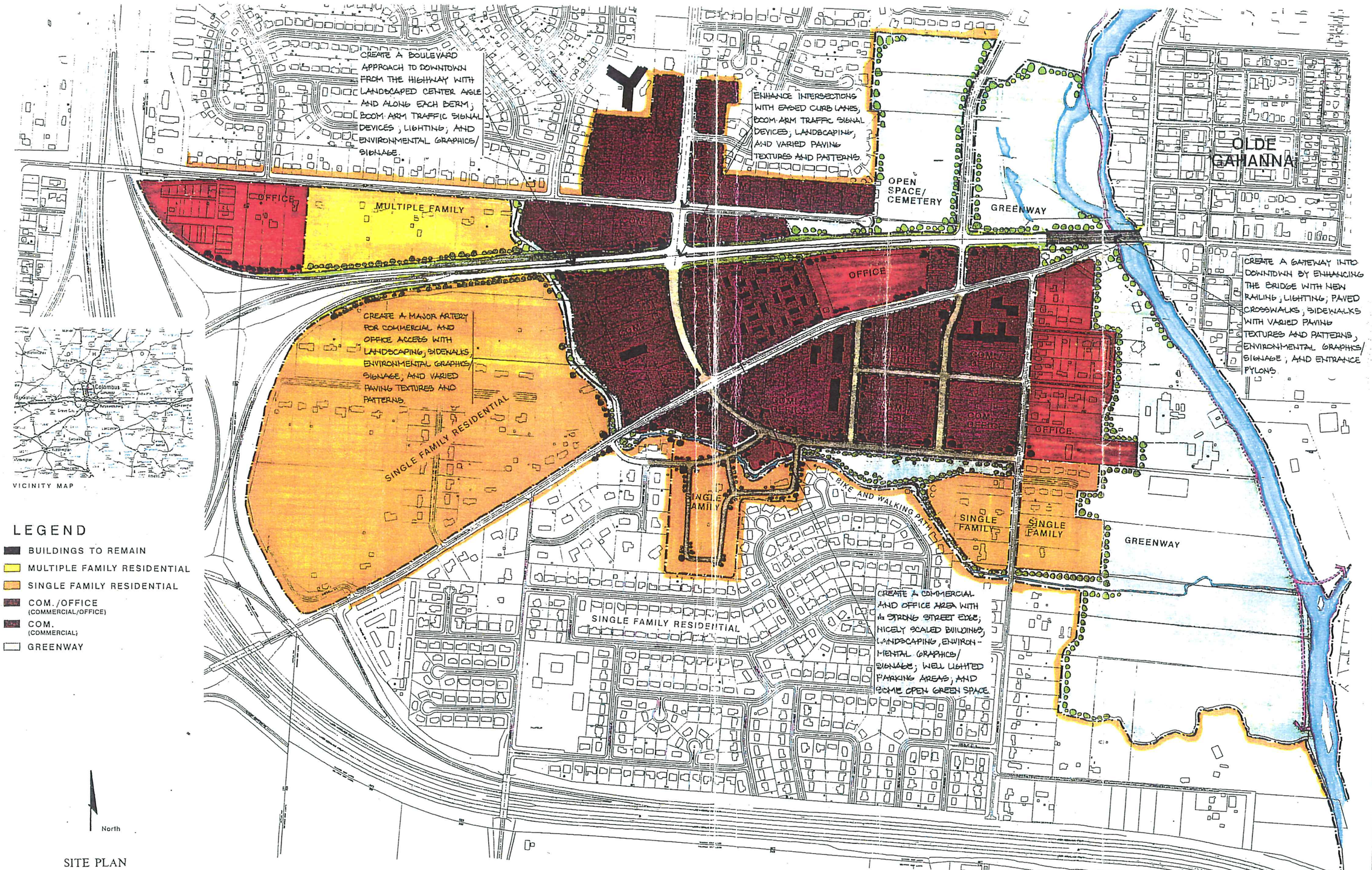
Question 11: If you could make any changes to the West Gahanna Development Plan, what would they be (please describe)?

When asked what changes they could make to the West Gahanna Development Plan, respondents offered a variety of suggestions. While a few felt the proposed bike/walking path should be eliminated, others felt it should be retained but made suggestions for changing the design/location. Others proposed land use and/or zoning changes. Others suggested modifications to the Boulevard and Gateway designs. A couple respondents were against the proposed use of the Hamm property and against the development of new roadways in the area.

- Eliminate the bike/walking path. (1)
- Don't disturb the Hamm's property. (1)
- Larger planters in the Gateway with more color.
- More specialized or brick pavement (less concrete).
- "Older" look to signage and lights at gateway.
- The Gateway may not provide enough flexibility to widen the bridge at a later date.
- Design work is needed at the Route 62/Granville/Mill Street area.
- Bike/walking path should follow the creek bank all the way to Price Road.
- Make the bike/walking path longer.
- More single family and less commercial/office.
- The parcel immediately west of Big Bear on Agler Road should be zoned community commercial so the store can be expanded, a bridge can be built over the creek and the lot used for parking. The next two parcels should be zoned for office--a natural progression from retail to multiple family.
- Drastically reduce the amount and level of commercial/office uses proposed for south of Johnstown Road.
- Eliminate proposed streets off James Road to Johnstown Road, Ridenour Road extension and those south of Johnstown Road.
- Connect Shara Park Place to Hamm's property.
- Would require further study to properly comment.

Additional Comments

- This effort is being driven by the need to attract big business and commercial development in Gahanna by sacrificing relatively quiet single family and multiple family areas that our Gahanna leaders think do not have the political or financial power to object. It is a wrong move.
- I don't feel that we have enough information to answer these questions on the survey--have to guess from drawing what is where.
- It would be easier to study if street names were legible. I am not sure I understand what is happening.
- Existing shopping centers should be better maintained, starting with snow and ice removal.
- Legend shows commercial/office but some areas are just marked as office?
- The City and citizens are to be congratulated for setting high goals for Gahanna.
- Thank you for inviting citizen input.
- If the City government truly desired our participation we would have been contacted and advised on where the requested information could be obtained.
- The City has an obligation to ensure safety and the rights of all citizens. They should adhere to the theory that each portion of the City Government has a job to do and that politics have no place in administering zoning or building codes within the City.
- Please allow for further information regarding specific plans and developments.
- How will the improvements be funded? A community I used to live in allowed residents to round their tax bills up to the nearest dollar to maintain bike paths.
- How is the plan to be paid for?
- I think the City spent way too much money on this plan. Volunteers or other City departments could have developed something similar at a much reduced taxpayer-financed rate.
- Traffic is a concern now on Johnstown Road, but I would hope improvements could be made without changing the existing neighborhood. I don't want to see more traffic in the area, which is what the plan would promote.
- I would like anything done in the area of the Gateway and Boulevard, and feel the City should act on this as soon as possible. It would create a new excitement for Gahanna. There is nothing special about the look of Gahanna now.
- I highly recommend that intensive study be given to an additional bridge to provide access to the east Gahanna area and to provide a smoother flow of traffic for Route 62.



WEST GAHANNA DEVELOPMENT PLAN

DRAFT

City of Gahanna, Ohio

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