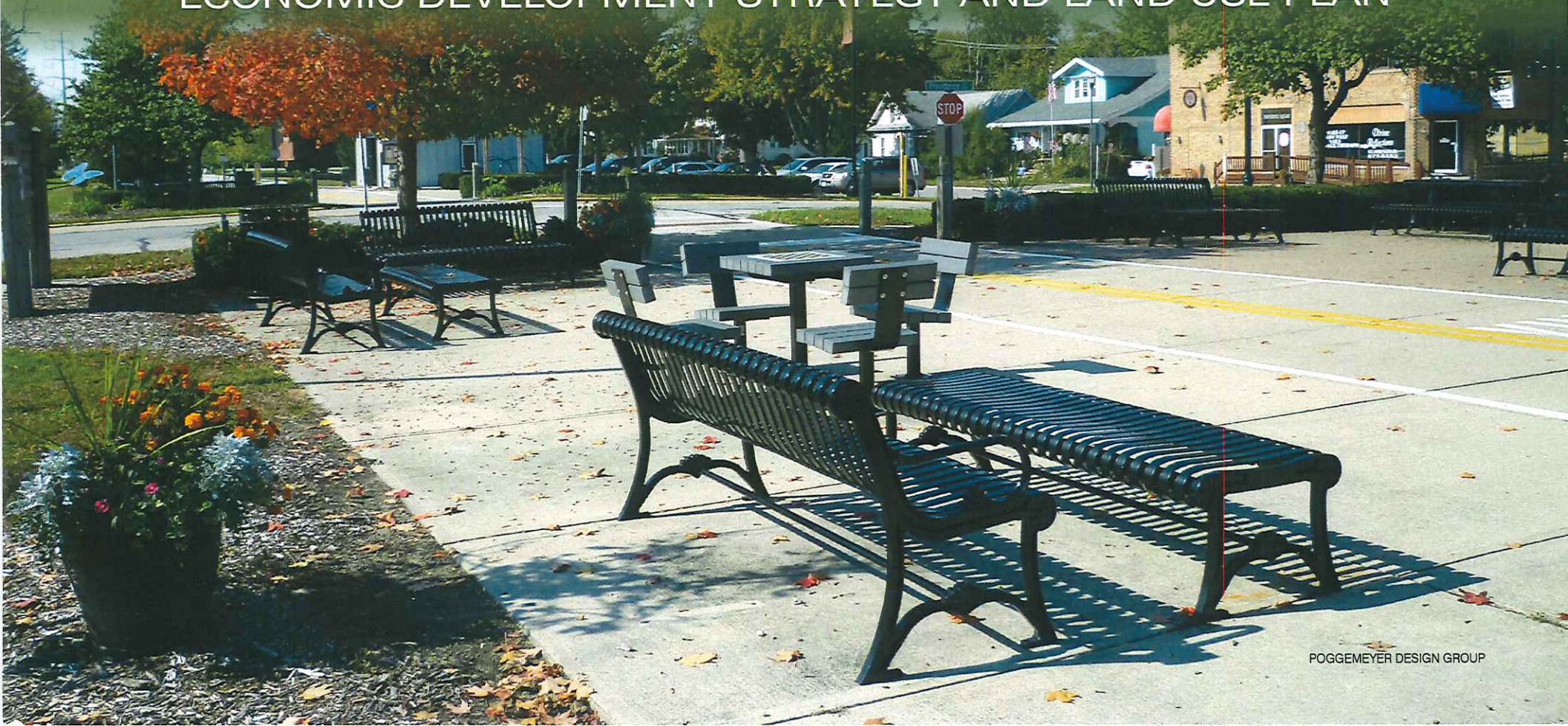
DECEMBER 2015

The VILLAGE OF Whitehouse 1864

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND LAND USE PLAN



POGGEMEYER DESIGN GROUP

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A special thank you is extended to all Steering Committee Members and members of the public who gave freely of their time to attend meetings, visioning sessions and workshops. This input was critical to the development of this plan update and is deeply appreciated.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This document updates the Village's Economic Development/Strategic Land Use Plan that was prepared about 10 years ago (2005). Much has happened locally and nationally since that time, and new conditions warrant a fresh look at where the Village of Whitehouse is, and more importantly, where it is going.

Ten years ago may not seem that long ago, but significant events have occurred and the region is much different today. A quick look back in time toward local and national conditions during the middle of last decade reveals the following:

- In the early and mid-2000's there was rapid growth in residential development. Generally housing values peaked in 2006. Toward the end of the 2000's residential development slowed dramatically, home values began to stabilize and then fall. The housing bubble set stage for the Great Recession that began in 2008.
- Since the 1960's, there were efforts to improve or relocate US 24. In 2005 (when the last plan was done), there was still some uncertainty regarding when, if and how improvements would be made. Construction on the relocation of US 24 around Waterville did not start until 2008 and was not finished until 2012. Once completed, the new highway has helped make Whitehouse and Waterville much more easily accessible within the greater Toledo area Considerable commercial development has occurred at the SR 64 interchange after annexations by the City of Waterville.
- In 2005, the Shops at Fallen Timbers did not exist yet. Although it had been commonly discussed since the mid 1990's – it was not built until 2007.
- More regionally, 2005 was the year during which Owens-Illinois Inc., announced that it would leave its 32-story downtown Toledo riverfront tower and build a new $20 million headquarters in Perrysburg. Also in 2005, a $117 million wing at Westfield Franklin Park Mall opened. This expansion added 27 stores and restaurants.

These general observations in both the national and local market highlight the fact that a fresh look at community development issues in the Village of Whitehouse is warranted and led to the decision to prepare this update.

PROCESS

The process to update the Whitehouse Master Plan began in late 2014. It generally included a kick-off meeting, followed by some steps to gather and review descriptive data about the Village of Whitehouse. This information was used to compare and contrast Whitehouse with the larger region and with state and national trends. This information was shared and then plans were made for an initial public engagement activity.

The first public event was more of a "visioning session" during which participants were free to identify a wide range of planning issues and top concerns facing the Village of Whitehouse. This approach was deliberately chosen so that residents would have the opportunity to "set the agenda" and drive the conversation toward important topics during the planning process. Much was learned at this event (conducted in November 2014) and the findings directed the planning agenda towards an updated Plan. It was learned that the success of downtown was very important to participants – so much so – that it was decided that a dedicated and substantial effort to downtown was needed to fully explore the issues. To this end, an all-day planning workshop focused on downtown. Much was also learned about local attitudes toward development of major corridors and the need to promote economic development within the Village.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The Village of Whitehouse stands at the threshold of becoming a City under Ohio law by 2020. This is most certainly an exciting time in local history. However, as this advancement in municipal stature approaches, local leaders will be pushed and pulled in new directions to meet new challenges. Without a doubt, many of these future challenges will be rooted in planning and community development issues.

Development trends have become somewhat predictable in recent years. Demand for suburban homes in Western Lucas County has been historically strong (despite negative pressures from more recent recessionary forces), and the highly desirable Anthony Wayne School District has provided many reasons for families to choose Whitehouse as a place to raise a family. As a result, new subdivisions were platted and quickly filled up. While there is every reason to think the Anthony Wayne School District will remain strong and appealing, the demographic trends that drove past suburban growth will likely subside as fuel for the local suburban growth engine. While there can always be unanticipated events that can bend the local growth curve one way or the other, it is far more likely that pressure for growth will come from new directions. The challenge is found in recognition of this change and adaptation to it.

The wants and needs of baby boomers that have shaped Whitehouse in the past 20 to 30 years are expected to give way to new forces and demands generated by young singles, young families, childless couples, empty nesters, retirees and older residents. These trends are not the product of complicated demographic projections, but rather the result of simply witnessing the natural aging of existing residents. Ten years from now, we will see many of the same residents – only older and with changes in attitudes, expectations and plans for the future. We will also see existing school-aged residents moving on to early stages of adulthood. Some efforts were made to more fully describe these changes in Chapter 3.

The bottom line is that, while the last 20 to 30 years have been shaped by the preferences, desires and lifestyles of baby boomers, the future of communities such as Whitehouse will be shaped by new generations of residents who want different things from the places they call home. Continued demand for suburban homes and lifestyles is expected, but more importantly, the expanding and growing market will be related to the needs of a different kind of resident with different expectations and wants. These different wants and expectations relate to housing choices, local shopping preferences, greater mobility choices, and desires for different opportunities for social interaction.

Whitehouse has changed rapidly in the past few decades. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that larger planning challenges lie ahead. Adapting to the wants and desires of a growing population of young singles, young families, childless couples, empty nesters, retirees and older residents will be much more challenging than maintaining a steady trajectory of common suburban-style residential and commercial growth. This Master Plan Update is one important step forward and adapting to these anticipated changes is a key theme.

This Master Plan Update places considerable attention on downtown and key corridors. These are places that demand the most attention and represent key areas where there is a perceived need to "get it right." While this Master Plan Update is one step toward meeting those challenges – it is far from the last step. The last Chapter of this document provides specific implementation steps that must be executed if meaningful progress is to be made. These recommended actions require immediate and diligent attention. It is also highly recommended that Master Plan updates occur with much more regularity to help anticipate issues and prepare for opportunities to build an outstanding community.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

"History doesn't repeat itself - at best it sometimes rhymes."

Mark Twain

Much of the following material originates from "Early Whitehouse History" by A.J. Bradley

The area known as the Village of Whitehouse was occupied by various Native American tribes, including the Miamis, Ottawas, Shawnees, Wyandots, and Delawares. During the settlement of the Village, many Native Americans traveled along what is now Weckerly Road from Fort Malden, which is now Detroit, to the "Dark and Bloody Ground" in Kentucky. Settlers began to travel west to the Northwestern Territory after "Mad" Anthony Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794. Many of these settlers were of Dutch or German descent and were looking for good farm land, which the area had a significant amount to offer. Canal access also attracted many settlers to the area.

The land known as Whitehouse changed owners three times after its first owner sold it in 1842. In 1853, the land was sold to persons associated with the Toledo-Illinois Railroad.

Construction of this railroad started in 1853 to connect Toledo to Danville, Illinois through the Maumee Valley to the Great Western Railroad. In 1856, the Toledo-Illinois Railroad was consolidated with the Lake Erie-Wabash and St. Louis Railroad.

It was not until July 5, 1864 that the town plat of the Village was officially recorded. The Village was laid out by John Osborn, a Director of the railroad-owned property in the area. Edward Whitehouse, Treasurer of the Wabash Railroad, and his wife, along with John Osborn, donated the land for the Village Green. This area is now called Whitehouse Village Park.

The Whitehouse Park Statue was dedicated on July 4, 1900 and commemorates those who fought for the Union between 1861-1865. The Statue underwent major renovation in 1979. The Park was also a place where circuses, "medicine men," and vaudeville shows took place in the early 1900's.

The Quarry was another cornerstone of development in early Whitehouse when it was opened in 1860. It was later filled with water, and served as a swimming area for residents. The first church in Whitehouse was built in 1864, with donations from the first settlers in the amount of $606.60. It was called the "First Church," and it was here that residents of all denominations worshiped.

Early roads in Whitehouse and the surrounding area were made of sand, clay, or planks, which obviously made travel by horse very difficult. The early stone roads were SR 2, Monclova Road, and Weckerly Road. With the invention of automobiles, improvements to the types of road construction began.

The first school in Whitehouse was known as Kent School; it was located on the south side of Waterville Street, near Cemetery Road. The Kent School building was replaced twice, once around 1867 by the Whitehouse School, and again around 1875 by the Burnett School. The schools went through many significant changes during the next century. The Anthony Wayne School District, formed in 1950 through the consolidation of Whitehouse, Monclova and Waterville Schools, still exists today and is considered to be an excellent school district within the State of Ohio.

The Anthony Wayne Community Improvement Corporation (AWCIC) was established in 1961 as a result of activities within the industrial development committee of the Whitehouse Business Association. This group was resolved to address the financing of the local school system, which continually struggled with rising local residential property taxes due, at least in part, to the lack of an industrial or commercial tax base. The problem was area-wide (as was the school district) and the AWCIC requested assistance from the Village of Whitehouse, and area townships within the school district, to solve this problem.

The AWCIC purchased its first piece of land to promote economic development in the 1960's. It continued to attract new businesses to the area and assist existing businesses with their expansion plans for many decades. The AWCIC is much less active today, as the communities, Lucas County, and regional agencies now provide regional economic development services.

It is important to note that the establishment of the Anthony Wayne Community Improvement Corporation (AWCIC) more than 50 years ago has modern day implications. As described later, there are still important community development needs to be addressed by a proactive organization that can facilitate and stimulate specific projects and desired forms of community development.

"The Wabash railroad came through about 1854 and it was from the treasurer of that railroad, Mr. Edward Whitehouse, that our little town got its name."

Source: Early Whitehouse History by A.J. Bradley

During demolition of a structure by the Standard Oil Company in 1969, an early Whitehouse log house was discovered at the intersection of SR 64 and Shepler Street. The log house was likely built between 1840 and 1850, and was moved to this site around 1930. It was covered with siding and was being used as a garage when it was uncovered in 1969. The loghouse was then moved across the street to Village property. T he Whitehouse Historical Society was established shortly thereafter, and was charged with the restoration of this historic home. Currently, the log house is used by local schools to teach students about the history of Whitehouse, and as a meeting location for the Historical Society. The second floor of the house is used as a museum containing Maumee Valley historic memorabilia.

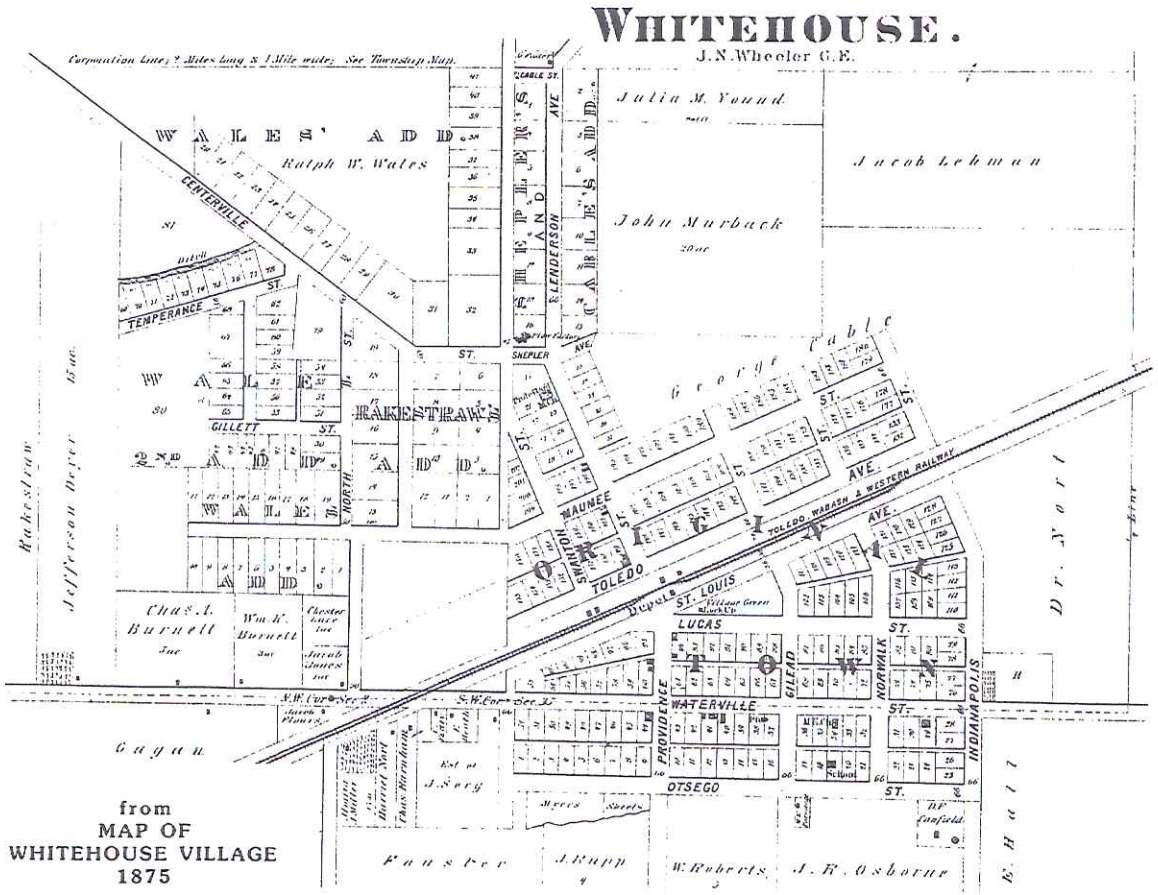
The Norfolk & Western Railway, which was a critical element in the early development of the area, abandoned six miles of track between Maumee and Whitehouse in 1989. At that time, the line had no customers, so there were no protests filed against this abandonment. Earlier that year, the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) approved the abandonment of twelve miles of the same track between Whitehouse and Liberty Center. This rail abandonment did not seriously inhibit the Village's development, since industry had already made a transfer to trucking as its preferred mode of delivery. The American Can Company plant, currently owned and operated by RexAm, Inc., had located in Whitehouse in 1974 because of the railroad, but the company had not used the railroad since 1979. The last passenger train ran on this line in 1959.

In July, 2014, the Village of Whitehouse turned 150 years old. There was a sesquicentennial celebration in Village Park featuring entertainment, food, kids activities and fireworks.

By 1875 (almost 150 years ago), the Village of Whitehouse supported about 500 residents and several stores. Like many area communities, Whitehouse was laid out in a grid pattern which was bisected by the railroad line. This work to layout the Village of Whitehouse was some of the original community planning efforts.

Small residential lots, typically 66 feet wide and 130 feet deep, were grouped into blocks ranging from 300 to 600 feet in length. At this point in time, reliance on automobile transportation was still many years off so residents often walked to local destinations. The result was a more compact form of development that stands in contrast to larger lots and longer blocks evident today.

It is interesting to see that the original map showed a large un-subdivided rectangular parcel between Waterville Street, South Street and West Street. The rail line intersects its southeast corner. This large parcel may have been originally intended to be used as a public square and perhaps a site for public buildings. Today however, this parcel is privately owned and developed with large residential lots.



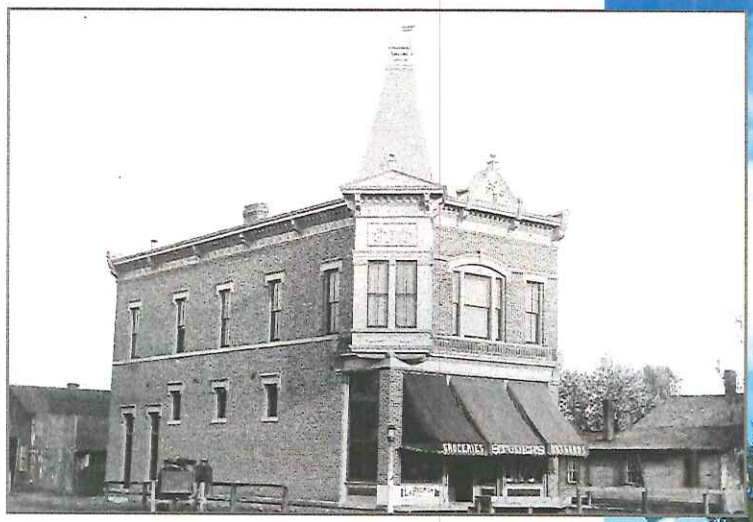
from
MAP OF
WHITEHOUSE VILLAGE
1875

Map Source: 125th Anniversary Update of Whitehouse Local History (Whitehouse Historical Society).

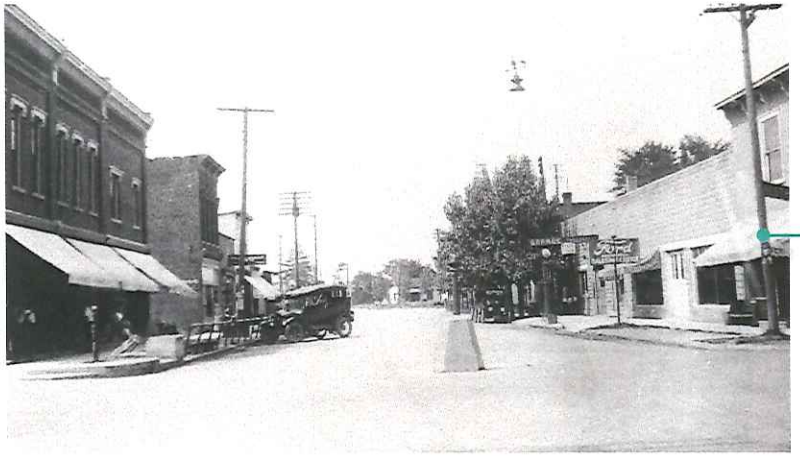
A PRESERVED PAST

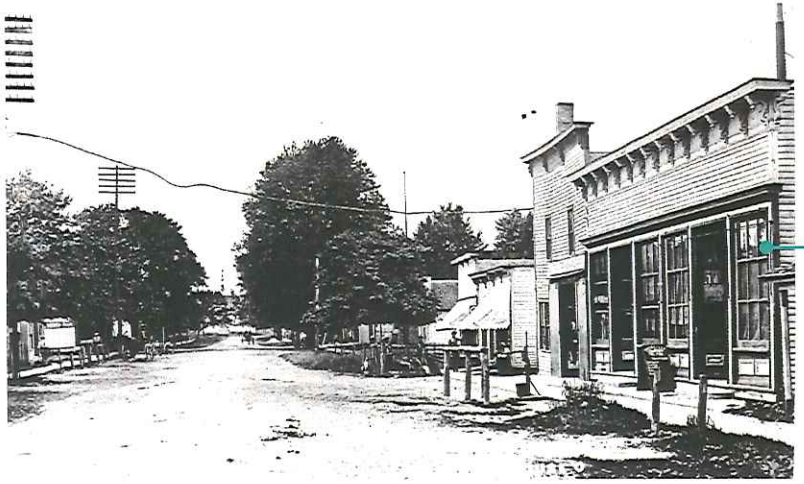
Although the Village of Whitehouse has changed in many ways in past decades, the Village has been able to retain important historical features over the years. Many important buildings we see today were significant buildings in Whitehouse several generations ago. Most are in downtown Whitehouse. To help illustrate this, the following images are presented to help illustrate how local efforts to preserve historical anchors have been successful.

A PRESERVED PAST



a preserved past





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DIVERSIFIED IN

TRENDS AND PLANNING ISSUES

REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

(THE VILLAGE AND SURROUNDING AREA)

Before taking a close look at the Village of Whitehouse itself, it is interesting to consider regional characteristics. The Village is part of a larger region which is a diverse mix of rural and more urban areas. One descriptive picture of Whitehouse can be gained by considering household characteristics in a less technical way. ESRI is a private company that provides geographic information and geographic information systems (GIS) software to support public and private decision-making. One product offered by ESRI is Tapestry Segmentation which describes lifestyles and population characteristics. Some of this data is organized by zip codes. Recognizing that the 43571 zip code covers a much larger area than just the Village of Whitehouse (as shown to the right), the following information is provided as one perspective of the larger region surrounding Whitehouse.

The Whitehouse Zip Code (43571)

74% GREEN ACRES

Household Type: Married Couples
Housing: Single Family

We're older, self-reliant, married couples who are still working, but edging toward retirement. Most of us have no children living at home. We earn income from wages and salaries, investments, and increasingly, Social Security benefits. Country life is for us, so you'll find us in the rural pockets of urban areas, living in older single-family homes with acreage. Because our homes are older, we handle maintenance and remodeling projects ourselves, and own the proper tools to accomplish the tasks. Vegetable gardening is a priority. We're active in the community and are members of fraternal organizations and veterans' clubs. Even though we're pessimistic about the economy, we're not afraid of carrying some debt, such as home and car loans. We spend cautiously, focusing on quality and durability. Technology isn't important; even though we shop and bank online, the Internet is primarily for entertainment.

"You can design and create, and build the most wonderful place in the world. But it takes people to make the dream a reality."

Walt Disney

18% HOME IMPROVEMENT

Household Type: Married Couples
Housing: Single Family

Our neighborhoods are filled with busy, married couple families who are working and paying down student loans and second mortgages. Because we're frequently on the go, we eat out regularly at fast-food and family restaurants such as Chili's, Panera Bread, and Chick-fil-A. Weekends are crammed with home improvement projects and trips to warehouse clubs and home improvement stores. The DIY Network provides inspiration and instructions for our projects. Our giant-screen TV's with fiber optic connections are perfect for viewing premium channels and movies rented from Netflix and Redbox. The convenience of our mobile devices saves precious time in our busy schedules.

8% SAVVY SUBURBANITES

Household Type: Married Couples
Housing: Single Family

We're empty nesters or empty-nester wannabes who still have adult children living at home in established, owner occupied suburban neighborhoods. We're well-educated, well-read, and well-capitalized. We research products prior to purchase, and seek quality instead of price. Technology is used for everything including communicating, shopping, banking, and staying current on the news. Even though we're financially secure, we use a variety of resources for informed investing. We're not afraid of debt and may carry first and second mortgages and a line of credit. Late-model SUVs, station wagons, and minivans may be in our driveways. We're foodies and enjoy cooking; natural or organic products are preferred. We exercise, and buy top-of-the-line gear for golf and skiing. Good food, wine and cultural events are also not to be missed.

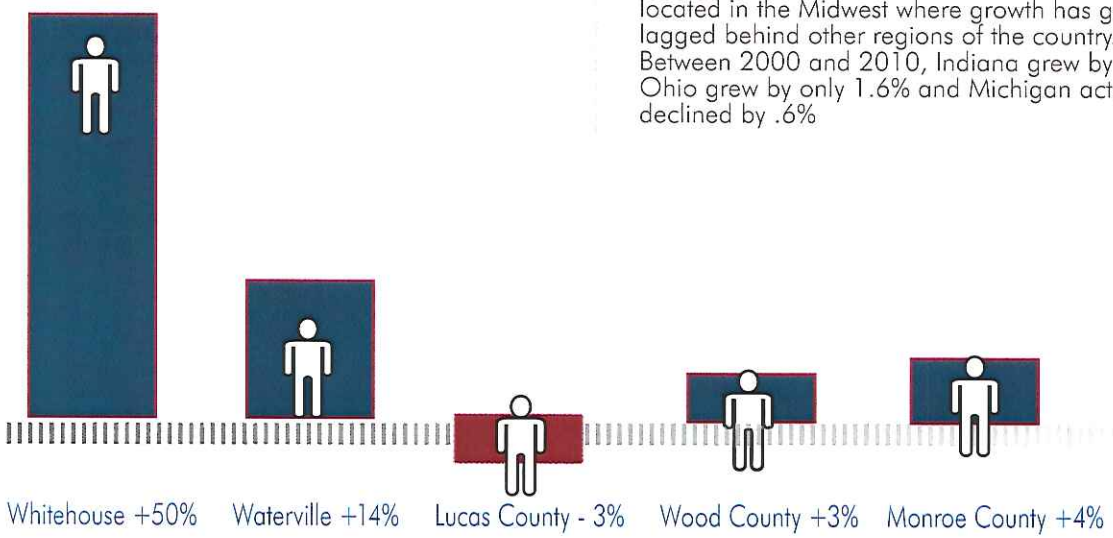
VILLAGE CHARACTERISTICS

GROWTH – LOTS OF GROWTH IN WHITEHOUSE, BUT NOT IN THE LARGER REGION

Recent population change in Whitehouse has been dramatic. Between 2000 and 2010, the village added 1,400 residents and its official 2010 population reached 4,149 (nearly a 50% increase during the past decade - or about 4-5% per year). This amount of growth stands in sharp contrast to neighboring communities and surrounding areas.

Lucas County as a whole actually lost more than 13,230 people between 2000 and 2010 and nearby Waterville grew by less than 700 people (half as much percentage-wise as Whitehouse). For many decades, Wood County to the south has been the growth area of northwest Ohio, but its growth rate has slowed in recent decades (Wood County grew by less than 4,500 people between 2000 and 2010). Similarly, Monroe County to the north is growing but at a much slower pace than it did in past decades.

More regionally, the Village of Whitehouse is located in the Midwest where growth has generally lagged behind other regions of the country. Between 2000 and 2010, Indiana grew by 6.6%, Ohio grew by only 1.6% and Michigan actually declined by .6%



HOUSEHOLDS/FAMILIES – MOM, DAD AND THE KIDS

Raw population figures are important, but the building blocks of any community are households and families. The characteristics of households and families are drivers of the housing market and they provide insight into dimensions of community character. Families are two or more related people who live together. The term "households" is more broad and includes families and persons living alone, or other living arrangements.

Whitehouse has about 1,435 households and 1,331 families (2008-2012 census est). Almost 41% of the families in Whitehouse are married couples with children. State-wide, less than 29% of families are married couples with children and in Lucas County, less than 26% of families are married couples with children. This validates the impression that Whitehouse is more of a family-oriented community.

Given the larger number of families in Whitehouse, it also follows that households as a whole are larger in the community. The average household in Whitehouse includes 2.78 persons, while comparable statistics for Lucas County and the State of Ohio were 2.42 and 2.46 respectively (2008-2012 census est).

AGES OF RESIDENTS – YOUNGER THAN MOST

Corresponding to the fact that households and families in Whitehouse are more likely to have children, Whitehouse residents are, on average, younger than most. Nearly 30 percent of residents in Whitehouse are under 18. State-wide, less than 24 percent of residents are under 18. At the same time, aging residents (65 or older) make up less than 11 percent of the population in Whitehouse, compared with more than 14 percent state-wide (2008–2012 census est.)

These age characteristics are thought to be highly related to area growth as younger families have moved to Whitehouse from elsewhere for the school system and other community attributes.

INCOME – WELL OFF FAMILIES AND FEW POOR PEOPLE

Whitehouse residents generally earn nearly 25 percent more than the families state-wide. According to census estimates, the median income for a family in 2012 was $75,720. This compares with a state-wide median family income of $61,163. Poverty rates are low in Whitehouse with less than 8 percent of residents in poverty (2010 census). The poverty rate for Lucas County was more than 20 percent (2010 census).

HOUSING – LARGER SUBURBAN-STYLE HOMES

Whitehouse residents live in predominantly larger detached single family housing units. More than 82 percent of all housing units in Whitehouse are detached single family housing units (2008-2012 census est.). State-wide, and in Lucas County, detached single family housing units are 68.5% and 67.6% percent of the housing stock respectively. Housing units in Whitehouse are also generally larger than most. State-wide the median number of rooms per housing unit is 5.9, while it is 6.7 in Whitehouse (2008-2012 census est.).

HOUSING PRICES – HIT HARD, BUT REBOUNDING

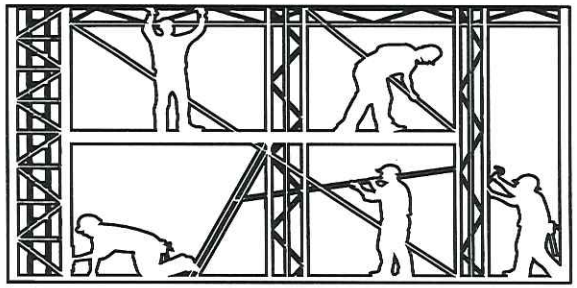
Local housing values have declined since the more turbulent housing market times that began in 2008. Although there is some recent evidence of rebuilding home values, the trend between 2007 and 2012 was a decline of more than 26 percent (about equal to the declines county-wide).

RENTAL HOUSING – FEWER RENTERS PAYING LESS

About 24 % of households in Whitehouse rent the homes they live in and the median rent was $605 (2008-2012 census est.). State-wide, about 32% of households rent where they live and pay a median rent of $710 (2008-2012 census est.).

AGE OF HOMES – NEW UNITS AND NEW NEIGHBORS

Obviously, given the recent population growth, there are many new housing units in Whitehouse. In fact, about one out of three housing units we see today did not exist before the year 2000.
The Village has a total of 1,494 housing units and 492 of these units were built between 2000 and 2009. The 1970's was also a noticeable period of growth for the village when 265 housing units were constructed. Older housing stock is also evident in the form of 192 units built in 1939 or before. These historic units represent some of the earliest construction activity in the Village and follow more traditional settlement patterns.



RECENT SUBDIVISION AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

The Village of Whitehouse maintains very good records of building/zoning permits issued and subdivision approvals. In terms of platted subdivisions, there are currently 16 projects that are considered to be "in progress." Combined, they involve 462 lots/homes. Of these, 235 are already developed and 227 are yet to be developed. Beyond existing developments that are underway, three other developments are proposed. Combined, they represent another 127 lots. In other words, the combined total of buildable lots in subdivisions that are either proposed or existing stands is estimated to be 354.

Residential construction has remained steady in the past few years. Nearly 200 housing units have been built between 2010 and July, 2015 (161 single-family units and 32 units in a multi-family development). Based on these statistics, the current estimated population of Whitehouse is about 4,600 residents.

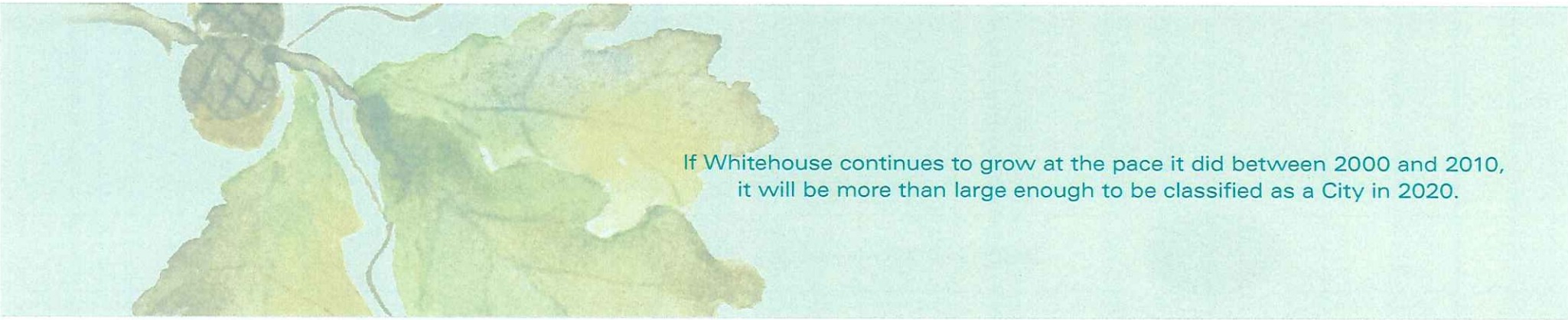
RECENT HOUSING CONSTRUCTION			
	Single Family	Multi-Family	
2010 New Construction	12	32	0
2011 New Construction	27	0	1
2012 New Construction	32	0	0
2013 New Construction	31	0	0
2014 New Construction	36	0	0
2015 as of July 1, 2015	34	0	0
Totals	**172**	**32**	**1**

Source: Barbara Knisely, Community Development Coordinator

SUBDIVISIONS FINISHED SINCE 2010			
SUBDIVISION	**TOTAL LOTS**	**DEVELOPED**	**UN-DEVELOPED**
Savanna Lake Plat One	28	28	0
Steeplechase PUD	25	25	0
Wesley Farms Plat III	2	2	0
Whitehouse Valley Plat I	25	25	0
Steeplechase Plat One	39	39	0
Blue Prairie Plat Two	23	23	0
Subtotal	**142**	**142**	**0**
SUBDIVISIONS IN PROGRESS			
Estates of Blue Creek	8	7	1
Blue Creek Gardens (PUD)	34	31	3
Blue Grass Plat Two	13	12	1
Blue Grass Plat Three (PUD)	36	22	14
Finzel Farms Plat I (PUD)	14	11	3
Finzel Farms Plat II	12	6	6
Lone Oak Cross. - Plat I	3	1	2
Lone Oak Cross. - Plat II	18	14	4
Oak Pointe	24	23	1

SUBDIVISIONS IN PROGRESS (CONT.)			
SUBDIVISION	**TOTAL LOTS**	**DEVELOPED**	**UN-DEVELOPED**
Steeplechase Plat Two	19	17	2
Steeplechase Plat Three	14	0	14
Wesley Farms (PUD) Plat I	43	32	11
Wesley Farms (PUD) Plat II	34	19	15
Whitehouse Valley Plat II	26	25	1
Whitehouse Valley Plat III	20	15	5
Whitehouse Valley Plat IV	24	0	24
The Preserve	65	0	65
Whitehouse Square Townhomes	55	0	55
Subtotal	**462**	**235**	**227**
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS			
Lone Oak Crossings	33	0	33
Savanna Lake Plat Two	31	0	31
Steeplechase Plat Four/Five	63	0	63
Subtotal	**127**	**0**	**127**
GRAND TOTALS	**589**	**235**	**354**

Source: Barbara Knisely, Community Development Coordinator

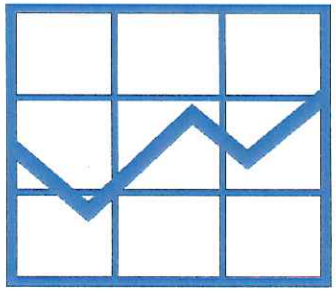


TRENDS AND IDEAS SHAPING THE FUTURE

Any realistic look toward the future of Whitehouse should begin with considering major local, regional and national trends and ideas. The following material provides insights into several important trends and newer perspectives about communities. These are driven by changing demographics and attitudes toward what people want from the places they call home.

FUTURE GROWTH

Whitehouse has seen substantial growth, and a logical question to ask is whether this trend is likely to continue. As noted, Northwest Ohio is simply not growing as a region, and strong arguments can be made to support the view that historical village growth has been mostly about attracting families from the larger region who are drawn to quality schools, perceptions of lower crime rates and a more rural community atmosphere. The State of Ohio does not prepare population projections for individual communities, but it does prepare county-level projections, which suggest that this region will remain stable at best. Projections from Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Research published in April 2013, show Lucas County as having 420,080 residents in 2030 (down from 441,815 in 2010).



Whitehouse can certainly continue to attract families from the region, but there is another consideration worth noting. This is the fact that traditional married families as a slice of the population is shrinking nationally. Married couples represented just 48 percent of American households in 2010. This was slightly less than in 2000, but far below the 78 percent of households of married couples in 1950. There are many reasons for this and they range from delayed marriages and higher divorce rates to an aging population where a spouse may be deceased.

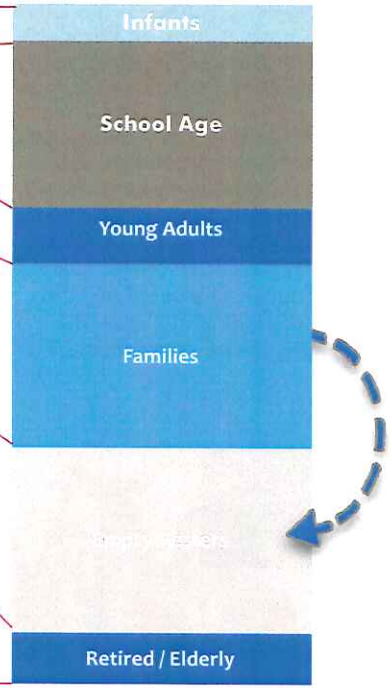
These considerations suggest that while continued growth in Whitehouse is expected, the Village may not maintain such a steep growth trajectory. If Whitehouse continues to grow at the pace it did between 2000 and 2010, it will be more than large enough to be classified as a City in 2020. Notably, this growth trend has actually occurred within a shrinking region and has been fueled by a shrinking slice of American society (married households with children).

In the future, other elements of growth will likely grow in importance and include the need to retain and attract younger people, while also retaining older existing residents who become "empty nesters." Both of these groups can be more mobile and are less anchored to the desire to live in a quality school district.

AGING RESIDENTS

While the Village of Whitehouse will likely continue to be attractive to younger families with children (which will help maintain a lower average age) it is also expected that the average age of a Whitehouse resident will generally rise. As shown below, apart from large numbers of school-aged residents, the largest block of individuals in Whitehouse are people approaching retirement and "empty nester" circumstances. This data is from 2010 and therefore we can already add 5 years to each group for a present-day picture of how old residents generally are. In the next 10-15 years, many of these individuals may begin to revaluate housing options, and perhaps even the communities in which they live.

Total population	4,149	Percent	Age Group
Under 5 years	247	6%	Infants
5 to 9 years	359	24%	School Age
10 to 14 years	347		
15 to 19 years	299		
20 to 24 years	155	8%	Young Adults
25 to 29 years	183		
30 to 34 years	245	27%	Families
35 to 39 years	314		
40 to 44 years	276		
45 to 49 years	293		
50 to 54 years	353	27%	Empty Nesters
55 to 59 years	317		
60 to 64 years	265		
65 to 69 years	167		
70 to 74 years	111	8%	Retired / Elderly
75 to 79 years	92		
80 to 84 years	68		
85 years and over	58		



The relationship between aging residents and the physical characteristics of a community may not be immediately apparent; but the connection is very strong. In recent years, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has funded a number of studies (with other organizations) to address how American communities meet the needs of a growing senior population. This issue grows in importance in light of projections that indicate that during the next 20 years, the number of adults age 65 and older will nearly double in the United States.

Studies, and research from AARP strongly suggest that a community's capacity to provide affordable and accessible housing, transportation, and other services for older residents rests largely on local planning and zoning policies.

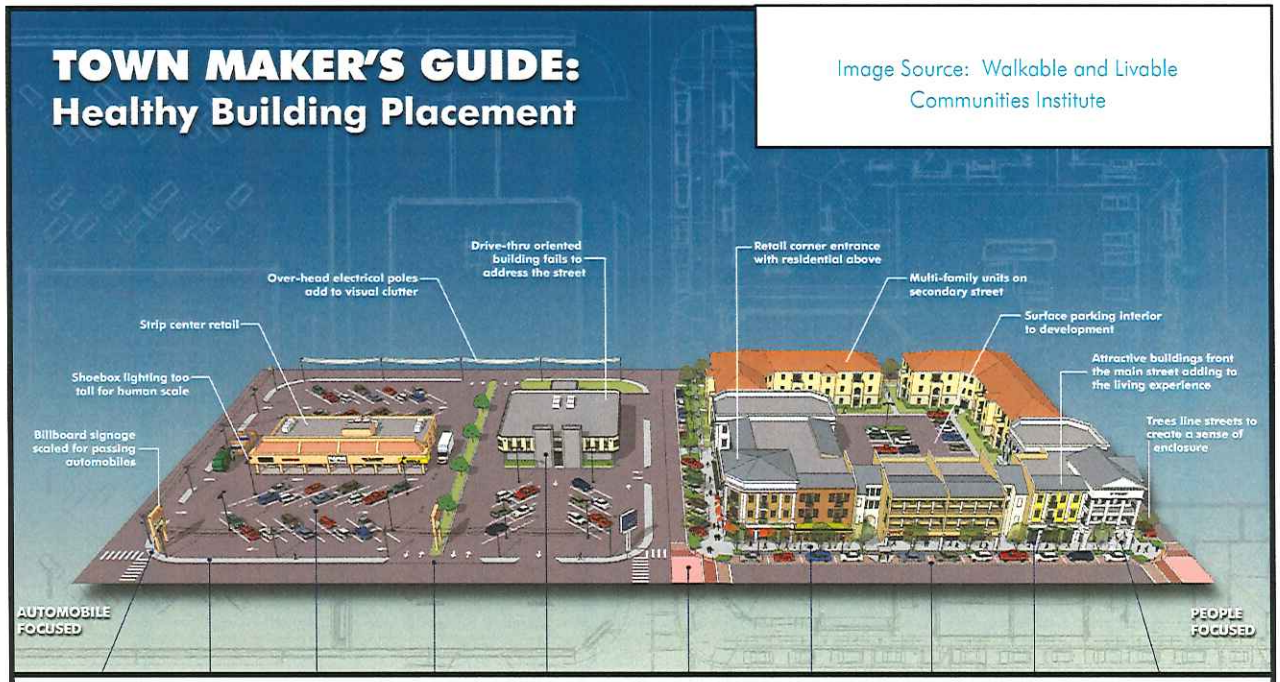
Generally, many older adults have a strong desire to "age-in-place" and stay connected to the communities they live in. Many baby boomers plan to stay in their current homes as they age. Those who do move are often interested in smaller units with less maintenance, convenient access to goods and services and transportation options. While a growing elderly population touches on many health care and related social issues, it also raises community planning issues, since perceptions about how livable a community is can vary by a person's age. Older residents have unique needs related to housing choice, transportation options and social interaction. While middle-aged families are often drawn to low-density, auto-dependant suburban-style homes and neighborhoods, older, retired and empty-nester households often desire low-maintenance housing options near social amenities and transportation alternatives.

It is also important to consider older residents as a valuable resource in a community. Seniors are often very engaged and connected to a community, and they often have more time for volunteer efforts and have considerable insight and wisdom to share. Many are inclined to want to "give back" to their communities in terms of time and resources. Many seniors are also homeowners with strong community ties and are very likely to be voters.

QUALITY PLACES THAT ATTRACT/ RETAIN TALENTED PEOPLE

Communities are increasingly recognizing the value of "place." In contrast with auto-oriented suburban strips that exhibit many forms of franchise architecture (and offer little local character), more unique places draw people and economic opportunity in a more sustainable way. According to a growing body of research, most college-educated young people report that they will make the decision of where they live first, and then look for a job within that area. The attributes of a city or area that are most important to college educated young people are basic quality of life issues – a clean, safe and green place to live. After basic quality of life needs are met, college-educated young people look for places that allow for professional and personal growth and a place to raise a family. The third tier of needs is about connections and lifestyle. Young adults want an interesting and diverse place to live with space for social interactions and proximity to family.

Quality places are generally more people-focused and designed to be experienced from the perspective of a pedestrian. People-focused development patterns focus less on accommodating cars and pay more attention to



One very good illustration of the contrast between placemaking and common forms of development is shown above. In this illustration (produced by the Walkable and Livable Communities Institute) it is evident that the people-focused development pattern focuses less attention on accommodating cars and much more on attention on human scale environments, quality spaces and social interaction.

Demand for parking is reduced with mixed land uses and the pedestrian environment becomes much more important for residents and businesses. Such people-focused places are far more likely to enjoy economic stability over the long term, whereas auto-oriented strip commercial development often carries with it a greater likelihood of obsolescence in 20 years or less.

human scale environments, quality spaces and opportunities for social interaction. Such places are far more likely to enjoy economic stability over the long term, whereas auto-oriented strip commercial development often carries with it a greater likelihood of obsolescence in 20 years or less.

HOUSING DEMAND AND CHOICE

Nationally and in Ohio, housing trends in recent decades have meant bigger and bigger houses farther out from urban centers to satisfy the tastes of growing numbers of baby boomers willing to commute and live suburban lifestyles. Now, boomers are retiring and young adults (children of baby boomers or "echo boomers") are now entering prime home buying years. An important question is whether these echo boomers will desire the types of homes they grew up in, or search for other options. The reason this becomes an important question is because echo boomers have seen home values hit hard and often do not value the same kind of things as their parents. For example, many young adults do not hold car ownership in the same high regard as their parents and prefer to live close to cultural/urban amenities.

More broadly speaking, surveys from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) reveal that Americans prefer walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods and shorter commutes. The most recent NAR survey in 2013, found that 60 percent of respondents favor a neighborhood with a mix of houses and stores and other businesses that are easy to walk to, rather than neighborhoods that require more driving between home, work and recreation. Further, when asked to identify their ideal community, the most popular choice was a suburban neighborhood with a mix of houses, shops and businesses. The least popular was a suburban neighborhood with houses alone.

A growing number of communities are beginning to recognize increasing demand for denser, mixed use housing options. Dublin Ohio, for example (once the epitome of suburban-style development patterns) recently completed the Bridge Street District Plan which envisions a vibrant and walkable city center with a dynamic mix of land uses and housing that is integrated with the natural environment. In effect, the City of Dublin is positioning itself to attract and retain the next generation of residents, workforce and businesses to Dublin through planning.

TRANSPORTATION CHOICE

In recent years, increased criticism of transportation planning has centered on the fact that the public right-of-way in urban areas has been largely designed to be the domain of motorized vehicles. Traffic engineers typically consider the safe and efficient movement of vehicles as the principal goal of roadways, and the opportunity to bike or walk in the public right-of-way has sometimes been a secondary concern (if at all). This perspective has been changing with the growing recognition that the public right-of-way should more fully accommodate both motorized and non-motorized transportation. This perspective is called "Complete Streets," and an organization called the National Complete Streets Coalition is an associated advocacy group spearheading this national movement.

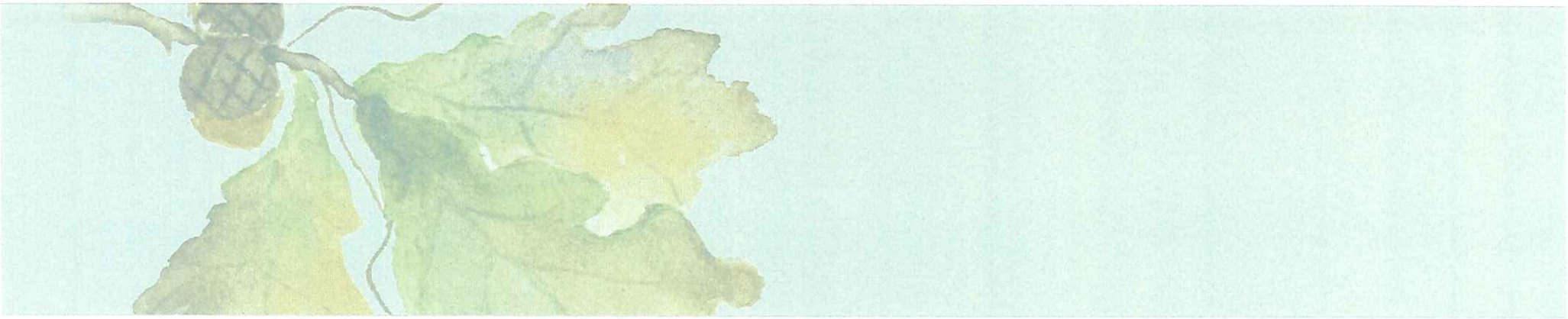
It was founded in 2005 by a coalition of groups, including AARP, the American Planning Association and the American Society of Landscape Architects.

The object of Complete Streets is to make roads accessible to all legal users—autos, bicycles, and pedestrians. The concept applies to road projects where all types of roadway users are considered during the planning and design phases to determine if any relevant accommodations are necessary or appropriate.

HEALTH

There is a growing recognition of the connection between the health of residents in a community and how it is physically designed. Auto-oriented physical design of communities, sprawling development patterns and an absence of pedestrian or bike amenities means that people are more sedentary and motorized vehicle travel is the only viable means to travel for most adults. Public health experts report that obesity rates have increased dramatically over the last 30 years, and obesity is now considered to be an epidemic in the United States. Diabetes is also responsible for huge health-care costs and the incidence of diabetes is expected to continue increasing.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), fully one-third of American children born after 2000 will become diabetics. This is due partly to diet, but partly because children are now part of the least active generation in American history. Alarming facts about health are particularly troublesome since community planning decisions (or lack thereof) is sometimes to blame.



Recently, the Surgeon General of the United States began to call attention to this issue. Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities recognizes the importance of physical activity for people of all ages and abilities. It calls on Americans to be more physically active and to support walking and walkability in communities.

Because Whitehouse has a significant population of both school-aged residents, and aging residents, issues related to childhood obesity and general community health take on added weight and meaning.

SMART GROWTH

The Smart Growth Network (SGN) is a partnership of government, business and civic organizations that support smart growth. Since 1996, the network has facilitated the sharing of best practices. It is led by a core group of partner organizations. US EPA is one of the founding partners of the Smart Growth Network. Ten smart growth principles are defined as follows and echo some of the previous points:

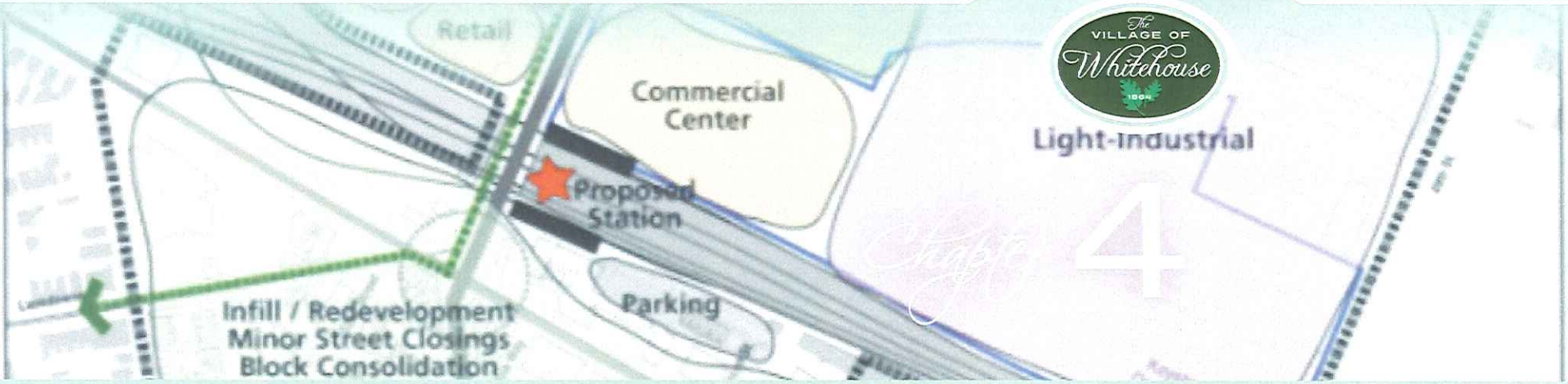
- Mix Land Uses
- Take Advantage of Compact Building Design
- Create a Range of Housing Opportunities and Choices
- Create Walkable Neighborhoods
- Foster Distinctive, Attractive Communities with a Strong Sense of Place
- Preserve Open Space, Farmland, Natural Beauty and Critical Environmental Areas
- Strengthen and Direct Development toward Existing Communities
- Provide a Variety of Transportation Choices
- Make Development Decisions Predictable, Fair and Cost Effective
- Encourage Community and Stakeholder Collaboration in Development Decisions

Considerably more information is available directly from the Smart Growth Network, and each principle is explained in much more detail.

Smart Growth America
Making Neighborhoods Great Together

http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org

RELEVENT PLANNING EFFORTS



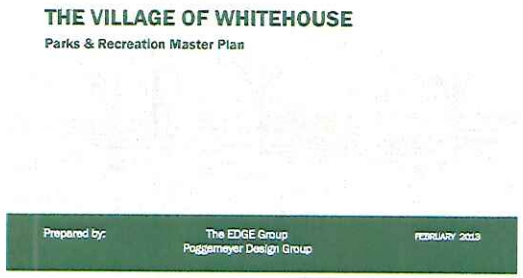
RELEVANT PLANNING

Planning is an ongoing process, and the development of this new Community Plan takes place in recognition of related and recent efforts to shape the future of the Whitehouse area. Some recent planning efforts have been conducted by the Village itself, while others are part of a larger regional process. To help frame these past efforts, the following description of current and recent planning activity is described.

PARKS AND RECREATION

EDGE Group, working with Poggemeyer Design Group, helped the Village of Whitehouse prepare a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan (P&RP). This document was completed in early 2013 and is intended to establish an overall framework for parks and open spaces throughout the Village. The planning process that led to the creation of this document encouraged comments and participation from stakeholders ranging from local residents and businesses, community organizations, Anthony Wayne Schools, Anthony Wayne Youth Foundation, Toledo MetroParks, and civic leaders. A stakeholder group provided on-going review and input for all elements of the Master Plan, with a focus on setting a vision for existing park enhancements, future park development, and preservation of natural resources. Four primary goals are established in the P&RP:

- Create an interconnected open space system that distributes easily accessible parks and recreation opportunities throughout all areas of the Village, present and future.
- Develop a plan for future programming elements and their integration into future park development.
- Design the downtown park spaces to compliment elements of the downtown revitalization plan.
- Develop a common identifiable aesthetic for open space development that becomes part of the brand image for the Village.



"It's not the plan that is important, it's the planning"

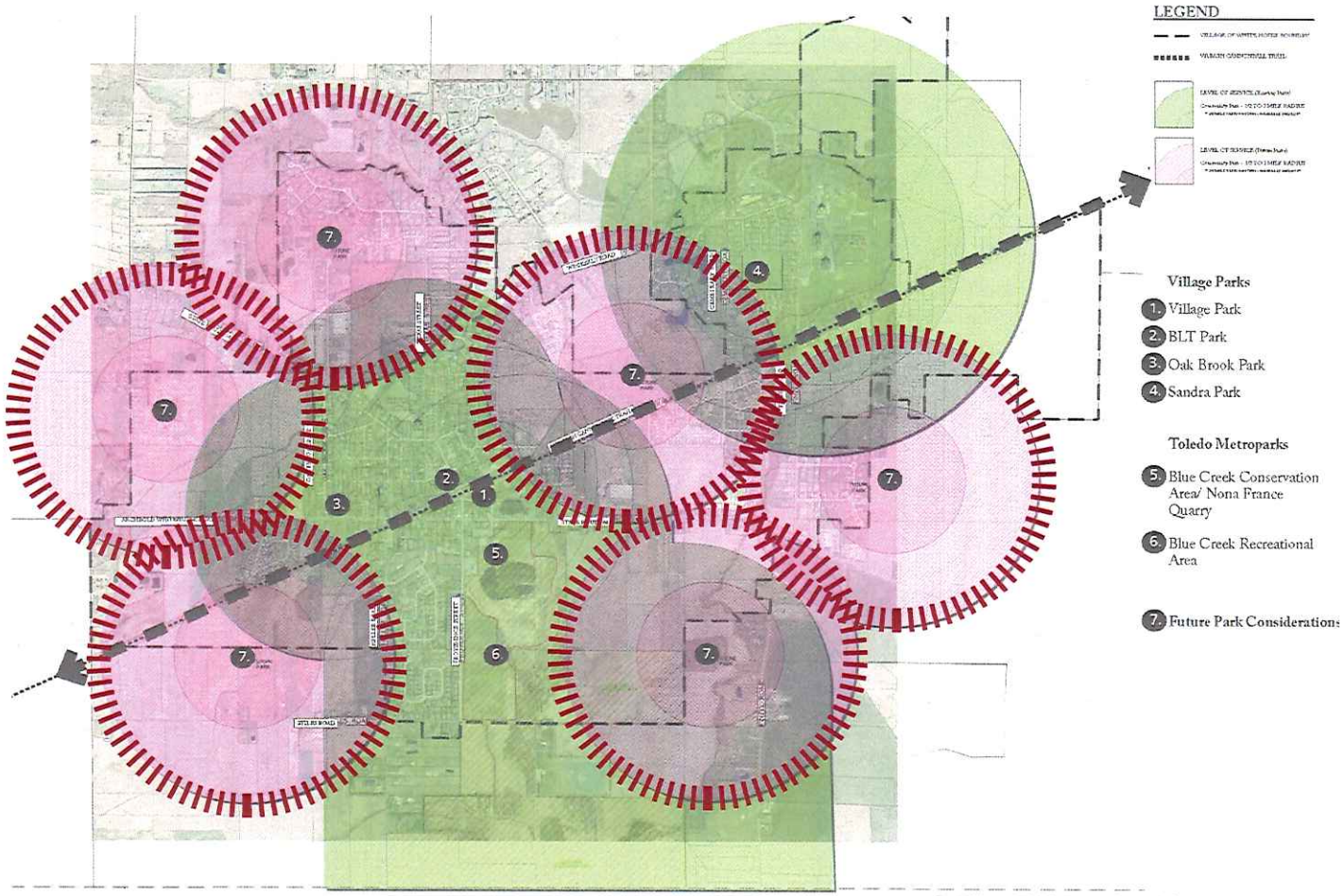
Graeme Edwards

FUTURE NEW PARKS

Along with existing parks in the Village, the P&RP identifies the need for six future parks and open spaces to maintain an adequate level of service for residents as the Village continues to grow. While specific parcels are not identified, general areas are shown and they generally surround the existing Village. Recommended specific parcel selections should consider the following:

- Site size (5-10 acres for a Neighborhood Park)
- Natural resources available at a site
- Accessibility to the site
- Connectivity via Greenways and other natural corridors

Parcels could be obtained as park land in several ways. These include Village purchase of properties, negotiating with landowners for property donations, or the potential inclusion of a zoning requirement for park land dedication as part of land development.



The Village Of Whitehouse Parks & Recreation Master Plan

EXISTING PARK DEVELOPMENT

Plans for existing parks in Whitehouse are described and summarized in the following material. Detailed illustrations of proposed improvements in each park area are provided in the P&RP.

VILLAGE PARK

Located in the heart of downtown Whitehouse, Village Park is a source of community pride prominently located along the Wabash Cannonball Trail. Village Park is poised to serve as a destination for numerous community events. Village Park is contiguous to the Blue Creek Conservation area - 155 acre MetroPark that offers a diverse active and passive recreational opportunities. Together, these parks can serve as a "Central Park" with future growth of the community. Development of Village Park is discussed in much more detail in Chapter 6 in the context of downtown development.

BLUE CREEK CONSERVATION AND RECREATION AREA

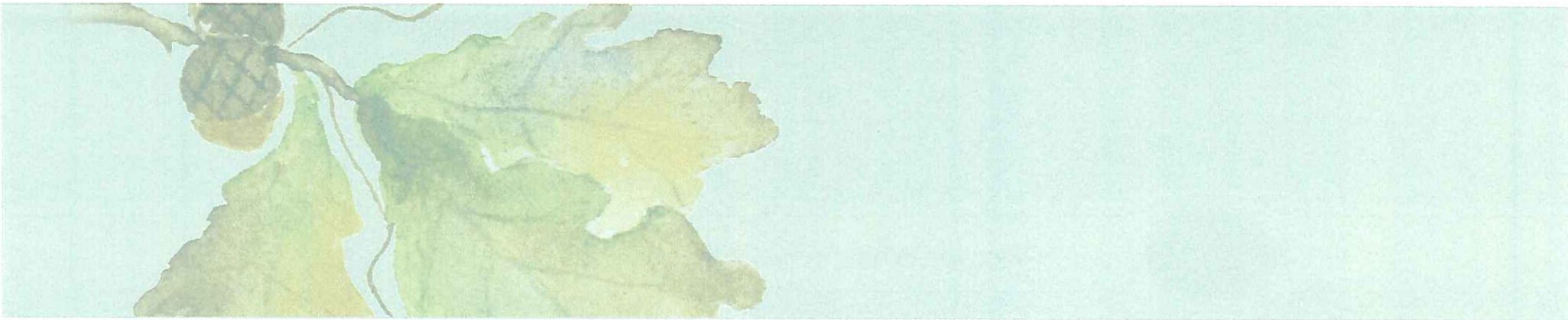
The Blue Creek Conservation and Recreation Area offers a wide variety of passive recreation opportunities with large stands of wooded areas, native grasses and wildlife habitat, a stone quarry featuring fossils and glacial grooves, walking trails, and shelters, as well as an athletic complex that offers tournament level baseball and softball facilities, soccer, football, and lacrosse fields, as well as a small playground space. Long-term plans for the Blue Creek Conservation and Recreation Area include many active and passive recreational improvements.

SANDRA PARK

The P&RP points out that with consideration of utilizing the Anthony Wayne High School, Middle School and Elementary Campus as a neighborhood and other community recreation space, the need for an additional neighborhood park is drastically diminished. It recommends that the Village should consider reviewing alternatives for developing this site for single-family or multi-family housing, while maintaining some greenspace for connectivity and neighborhood activity. Mixed use development options are provided to show development scenarios and their impact on the neighborhood development.

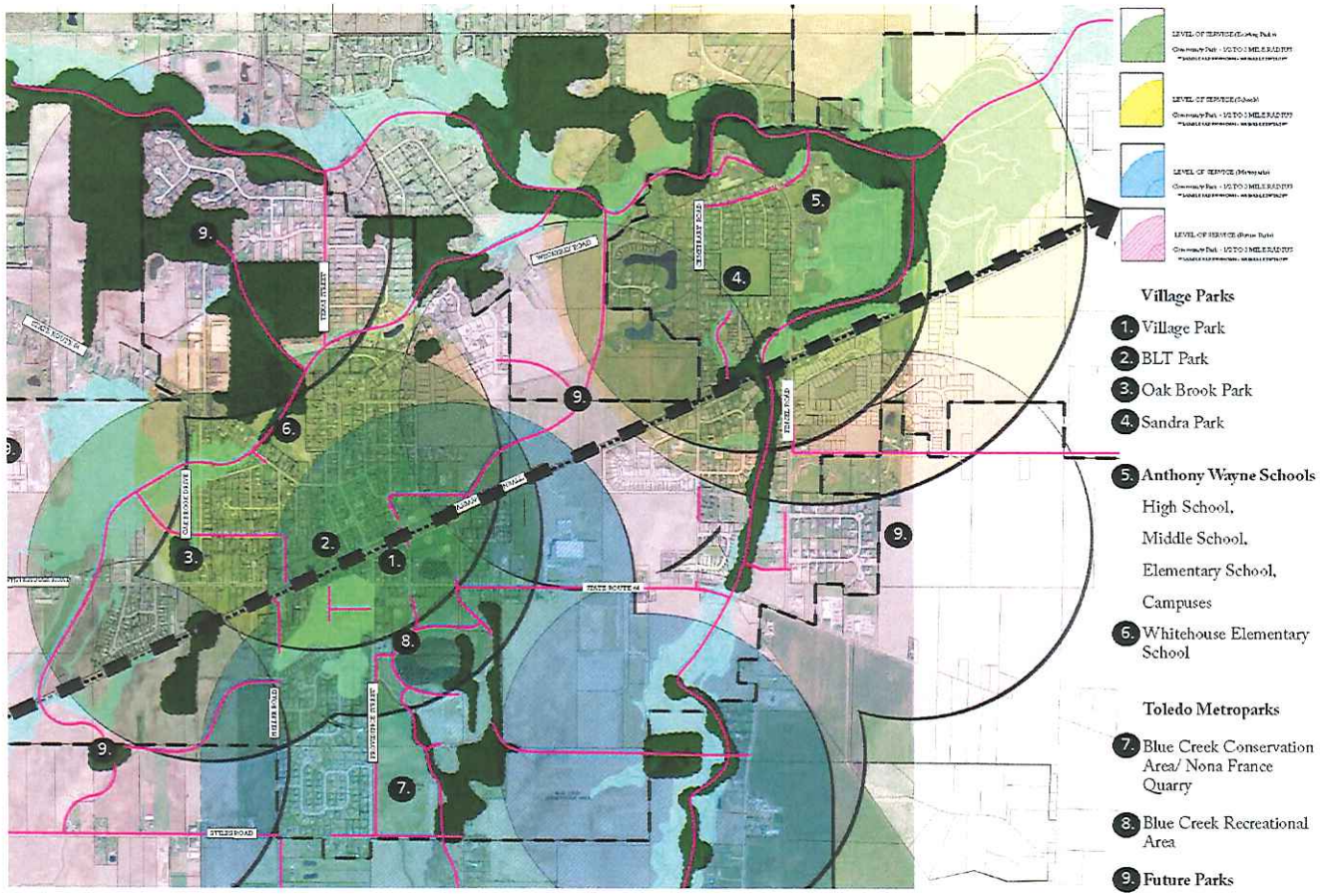
VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK (FORMERLY BLT PARK)

With a prominent location along Providence Street in the heart of the Village, Veterans Memorial Park plays a key role in the future development of the downtown area. A new design plan has been developed in recent months and future improvements are expected to help enhance this downtown space.



GREENWAYS & RIPARIAN CORRIDORS

The P&RP recommends that the Village develop a network and series of open spaces using Riparian Zones and Greenways to help serve as the connective tissue between public parks, open spaces, waterways and community facilities. A riparian zone or area is the ecologically significant interface between land and a river or stream. Greenways are long, narrow piece of land, where vegetation is encouraged, which is managed for public recreation and pedestrian and bike travel. Greenways are vegetated, linear, and multi-purpose, incorporating footpaths and bikeways within a linear park, and are used to connect multiple parks and open spaces in a network of paths to promote walkability and connectivity throughout a community.
A potential network of greenways are proposed and illustrated to the right.



The Village Of Whitehouse Parks & Recreation Master Plan

ANTHONY WAYNE SCHOOLS

The P&RP recommends that the Village of Whitehouse should work in cooperation with the Anthony Wayne School District to enter into a cooperative agreement for the joint use of parks and open spaces throughout the Village. Whitehouse Elementary School, and the High School/Middle School/Elementary School Campus are located within the Village of Whitehouse. The School District provides almost 100 acres of greenspace and open areas. In addition to contributing significant greenspace and open areas, these properties are located to serve adjacent neighborhoods as a convenient and easily accessible parking space during non-school hours. The Village and School District should review existing play equipment, design, configuration, and amenities to determine future playground improvements and needs.

BRANDING & PARKS CHARACTER

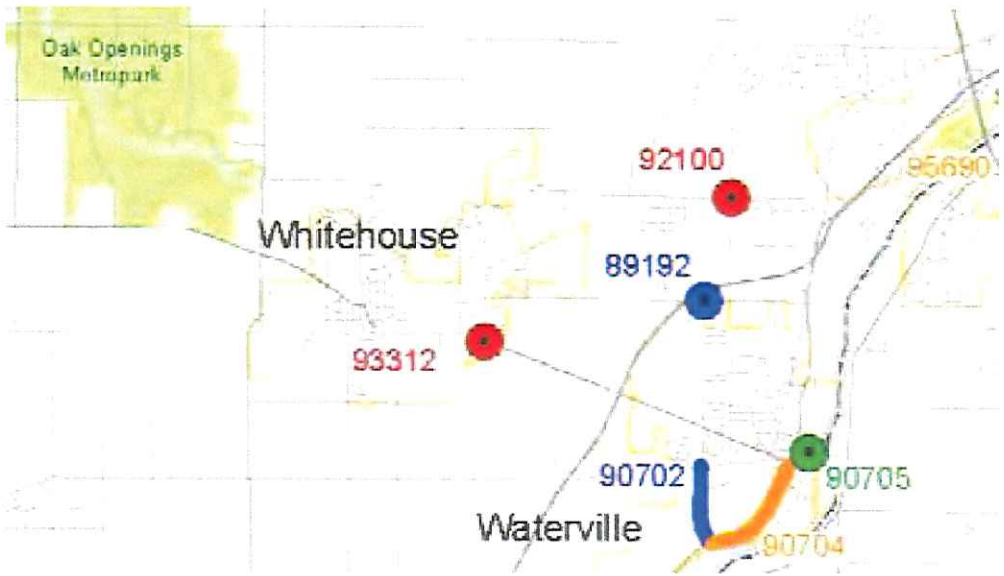
The P&RP recommends the development of a park system with unified character expressed in materials, furnishings, colors, etc. The character of the existing shelter located at the intersection of State Route 64 and Gilead Street (adjacent to the small quarry) is the recommended basis for design and construction of future architectural elements. Further, stone materials native to the Nona France Quarry are a logical and prevalent material that can be used for walls, seats, piers and signs throughout the park system. Careful attention should be made to mimic this detail in color, texture, style, quality and craftsmanship. Wood structures and wood trim are to be common elements of future structures. Colors should be predominantly earth tone that are native and naturally occurring. Dark brown, as is provided on the existing shelter, provides a nice contrast to the stone, and should be utilized as a standard color of future designs. Where fencing is required, split rail fencing is preferred, and should be allowed to weather to a natural grey color. When necessary to act as a barrier to contain balls or other equipment, split rail fencing can be supplemented with a woven wire fence attached to the back side of the split rail. Where appropriate, split rail fencing can be incorporated into entrance features and signage to enhance and extend the overall entrance feature experience.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Regional transportation planning is provided by the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG). The TMACOG region includes Lucas and Wood counties in Ohio, and southern Monroe County in Michigan. Presently, TMACOG is working on a new 30-year plan, called - On the Move 2015-2045. This new Transportation Plan provides a prioritized list of projects, initiatives, and policies that will guide transportation investment in the Toledo metropolitan area. The characteristics of the transportation system through the year 2045 will depend largely on the priorities set by this new 30-year transportation plan.

Apart from the development of the long-range regional transportation plan, The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (also developed by TMACOG) is a more near-term coordination and funding document. The TIP lists all specific transportation projects and improvements that will use federal and state transportation funding over the next four fiscal years (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2017). The TIP is designed to provide one comprehensive year-by-year listing of all spending on significant transportation projects. The "2014-2017 TIP" includes 195 projects with total construction cost of over $1,466,000,000.

The project listed and illustrated on the TIP that is most relevant to Whitehouse is #93312. This project is the SR 64/Finzel Roundabout that was completed late in 2015. This project will cost approximately $1,750,000. Similarly, to the east and outside the Village, another roundabout was built at the intersection of Stitt and Waterville-Monclova in FY 2015 at a cost of approximately $800,000 (#92100).



Source: Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), 2014 - 2017, May 2013, Final Version, Prepared By: Toledo Metropolitan Area Council Of Governments

WATER SYSTEM PLANNING

In November of 2002, the Village of Whitehouse abandoned the well system and connected to the Lucas County Water System, which in turn, contracts with the City of Toledo for water. In the Village, use of a private well or point for consumption, watering, or other use is prohibited providing there is a public water line available within two hundred feet (200') of the property line.

In 2014, the Toledo area experienced a major water-related event associated with the algae bloom in Lake Erie. Toxins in the algae blooms, can cause illness and in 2014, Toledo briefly shut down its water when algae entered the city's Lake Erie drinking water crib off the Maumee River. The bloom left 400,000 people in Michigan and Ohio without drinking water for two days. Since then, while some steps have been taken to prevent future events, there is a growing recognition of the need for major steps to avert a water crisis in the future. These steps are being weighed and examined and include efforts to consider other water sources in the region. A regional water authority is one concept under consideration.

SEWER SYSTEM PLANNING

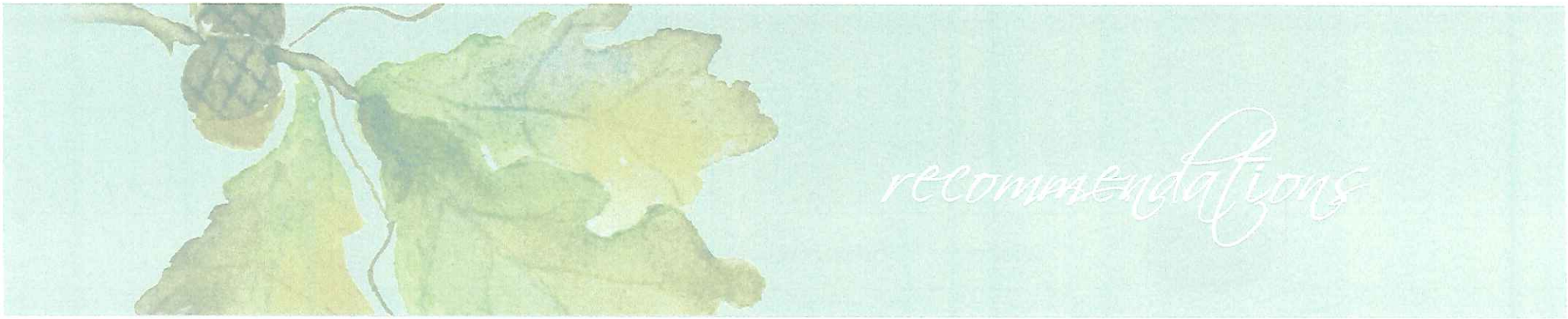
The Village of Whitehouse operates its own sanitary sewer system by pumping the sewage through several lift stations to the Regional Pump Station located on Finzel Road where it is then pumped to the Lucas County Wastewater Treatment Plant on Jerome Road. At one time, Whitehouse had its own wastewater plant which discharged to Dish This plant was abandoned in 198 the village tapped into the Lucas County

According to the Are ide Water Quality Management Plan (208 Plan completed in June 2014), and the Whitehouse Facilities Plan (Poggemeyer Design Group 1981), there are several areas near Whitehouse that need sanitary sewers and should be connected.

RECENT CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

In 2009, the Village of Whitehouse completed a survey of local residents to better understand community attitudes in light of the significant amount of changes occurring in recent years. Village council members actually went door to door with the survey and all 1,600 households were visited. The survey response rate was 43 percent and results pointed to the desire to preserve the Village's small-town atmosphere and small-town flavor. Not surprisingly, it also helped document the fact that Whitehouse is a blended community of newcomers and long-time residents. Noteworthy findings from this survey included:

- There was little support for bringing manufacturing (52% opposed) and "big box" (e.g. Wal-Mart, Lowes, Meijer) stores (67% opposed) to the Village.
- The strongest area of support shown in the survey was for planned and controlled growth necessary to preserve the current small town atmosphere (87%).
- There is a strong desire to take advantage of Nona France Park "large quarry" (70%) and some type of senior (52%), recreational (59%), and/or community center (64%).
- It is important to residents of the Village (71%) that the downtown has a cohesive look throughout the district.
- Overall, residents are very pleased with the quality of life in the Village (83%).



THE TOP TEN RECOMMENDATIONS GENERATED FROM THE 2009 CITIZENS SURVEY RESULTS INCLUDED:

1. Make every effort to maintain the small town atmosphere.
2. The downtown area needs attention. The desire for a "cute little downtown with boutiques, restaurants, and specialty shops" summarizes the opinion of those surveyed.
3. The Nona France Park "large quarry" is seen as a very positive asset of the Village. Residents want to see swimming opportunities explored.
4. Village residents want to see the development and utilization of the parks as a whole. Residents overwhelmingly expressed a desire to see increased usage of our parks by way of including organized entertainment.
5. There are strong indications that Village residents want the ratio of residential expansion to commercial expansion to decrease (decrease residential expansion, increase commercial expansion).
6. Respondents to the survey believe that "communication and accessibility with the Village" are improving.
7. There is strong opposition to any type of tax increase.
8. Residents are fundamentally interested in the Village focusing on energy efficiency and other "green" pursuits, both in operations and by partnering with other entities.
9. The Anthony Wayne School District was mentioned consistently as a local strength.
10. Overall, the Village services and staff were seen as very positive. However, some issues where improvements can be made relate to zoning enforcement, sidewalk conditions and police/community relationships.

RECENT VILLAGE PLANNING

The Village of Whitehouse has strong planning traditions and has launched many recent efforts to grow in sustainable and economically viable ways. Rural/suburban communities such as Whitehouse are often challenged to balance the development of a local tax base with the residential growth. This helps maintain higher levels of municipal services without higher tax rates. Over the years, Village leadership has worked on many economic and downtown development issues. Steps taken have included strategic planning efforts and the creation of specific local development incentives to encourage investment. The Village has also been agressive in applying for various grants and loans to complete projects that develop local infrastructure and help stimulate private development.

More specific information is provided below:

2005 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND LAND USE PLAN

In May of 2005, the Village completed an Economic Development Strategy and Land Use Plan Update. Key issues regarding development within and near the Village were identified and discussed during monthly planning meetings with an Economic Development Steering Committee. These key issues included: industrial development, commercial development, downtown, transportation, quality of life issues, infrastructure, development scenarios, and code/regulations. These key issues were examined and evaluated relative to recommendations from the 1997 Plan.

Final recommendations were broken down by Steering Committee Members and included:

Council

- Adopt Plan
- Determine next steps with AWARD to pursue financing for Blue Creek Conservation Area Implementation Plan
- Meet with Waterville Township to develop a revenue sharing and annexation agreement regarding future development of SR 64 Corridor
- Work aggressively to enhance gateway entrances
- Pursue continued Downtown initiatives

Planning Commission

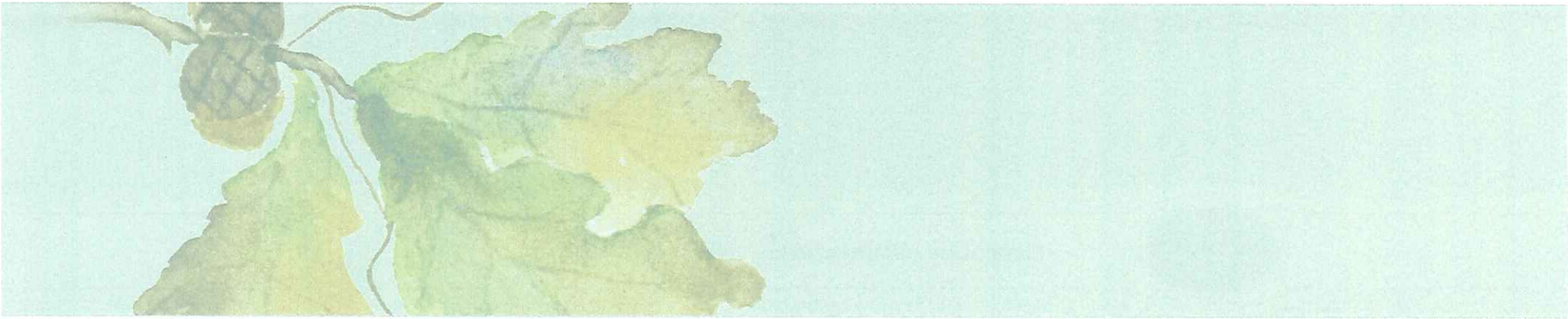
- Update and strengthen SR 64 Corridor Overlay Zone
- Update Zoning Code with specific recommendations
- Review and update SOB and Dish Antenna sections to comply with State law
- Develop more specific design standards for Downtown
- Consider "nuisance abatement" ordinance
- Consolidate definitions in glossary
- Review and strengthen SR 64 Overlay Zone and coordinate with other sections of Zoning Code and Subdivision Regs
- Develop and adopt standards for "big box" retail developments
- Include provisions for landscaping and screening
- Consider new special district, such as Open Space District for Blue Creek Conservation Area
- Add provisions for Traditional Neighborhood Development or New Urbanism concepts
- Add Conservation Subdivision District to encourage more innovated subdivision design
- Consider Open Space District designation for floodplains to prevent development within them
- Establish new mixed use districts to accommodate recommendations from the Plan (e.g. mixed use commercial and office/ mixed use commercial and residential)
- Review and enhance Signage Code to include gateway signage and uniform wayfinding signage system.

Economic Development Committee of Council

- Prioritize economic development projects, specifically as they relate to the various Development Scenarios presented in the Plan and begin implementation steps
- Pursue expansion of Industrial Park
- Initiate meetings between Whitehouse Square and Wise property owners
- Develop strategy for extending Logan Street
- Begin discussions with western townships to coordinate future developments along SR 295, including realignment of SR 295 at Waterville Street

Chamber/ Village

- Pursue recreational tourism initiative
- Explore opportunities with Ohio Tourism Programs and Heritage Ohio



DOWNTOWN PLANNING

Downtown Revitalization is not a new term in Whitehouse, as for many years, community leaders and concerned residents have partnered with the Chamber of Commerce and the Village to work towards preservation and maintenance of the historic Downtown. As far back as the late 1990's, the Village began an initial planning effort by adopting Design Review Guidelines to protect the buildings and encourage appropriate revitalization and development. The first Downtown Plan was also undertaken during this time frame. A second Downtown Revitalization Plan, based on the Four Point Main Street Approach, was completed in 2008 with the help of a Village-appointed Steering Committee. The Four Point Main Street Approach provides a balanced approach to downtown redevelopment with an emphasis on ***Organization, Design, Economic Restructuring and Promotions.*** This document is summarized below.

2008 Downtown Revitalization Plan

Organizational Goals

- Build volunteer corp to implement the projects articulated in the initial work plan
- Develop volunteer management system to track in-kind donations of time, materials, and services
- Apply for another CDBG DT Grant
- Package/market existing financial incentives available to Downtown property owners/merchants.

Streetscaping & Design

- Develop and implement a comprehensive wayfinding signage system, including business identification and gateway signage
- Focus on marking improvements to the "hardscape" that makes pedestrian circulation easier and safer and promotes better drainage
- Consider introducing different pavement treatments to better define right-of-way in spaces shared by pedestrians and vehicles
- Carry pedestrian-scale lighting fixtures and install street furniture throughout the Downtown
- Encourage all property owners to address code improvements in their buildings, improve upper floors, and make historically sensitive improvements to the exterior

Economic Restructuring

- Distribute relevant survey data to Downtown merchants and help them develop plans to respond to consumer opinions and preferences
- Develop programs and services for existing merchants with a goal of retaining and expanding Downtown businesses
- Focus recruitment efforts to build retail and service clusters that correspond to locally determined needs

Promotional Strategy & Branding Campaign

- Improve the general image local residents have of their Downtown
- Use existing media partners to barrage readers and listeners with positive events happening in the Downtown
- Promote use of the newly revamped website and Chamber website
- Balance the calendar with a variety of activities that bring different consumer groups Downtown throughout the year

The Village has recognized the importance that its Downtown is the "living room" of their community. A third place (a gathering area) away from home and work for both residents and visitors is the goal. In order to keep this area clean, updated and inviting, after the Downtown Plan (s) were and are still being implemented, grant funding was secured and continues to be secured to complete the improvements listed in the Downtown Plan.

The Village has been successful with an unprecedented four Community Development Block Grant Downtown Revitalization grants in the amount of $1,500,000. The grants were awarded in fiscal years 2000, 2008, 2010 and 2013. It is estimated that these grants will have leveraged over $4.4 million in other private and public funds. Projects over the past fourteen years have included:

- Private Rehabilitation: approximately 75 buildings renovated for code and façade improvements.

- Street Improvements: street resurfacing, drainage (Weckerly Drive, Providence); street lighting (Providence).
- Curbs & Sidewalks: sidewalk improvements along Maumee/Toledo Streets and on Providence Street/ Gilead Street; street furniture (flower pots, trash receptacles, benches), decorative sidewalks, trees in Downtown.
- Water & Sewer Facilities: new waterlines on Shepler Street, water tower painted, water and storm sewer lines in Downtown;
- Parking Improvements: paving improvements with curbs and gutters (St. Louis Street, Gilead Street and Toledo Avenue, Quarry Parking);
- Parks & Recreation: new multi-purpose trail, soccer fields, new restroom facility, trees, benches, street lights and planters in Village Park and Blue Creek Recreation Area
- General Administration: The Village, Chamber and Poggemeyer Design Group, Inc. worked to complete grant administration with private property owners and contractors.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Existing economic development programs in the Village include tax abatement through the Village's three Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs) and one Enterprise Zone (EZ), as well as low-interest loans through the County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The Village created the following CRA's to spur investment in the community: CRA #1 (#095-84770-02) in 1993; CRA Downtown #09 (#095-04690) in 1999; and CRA Industrial Park (#095-84770-01) in 2001. The Village is also included in a County-designated Enterprise Zone, Zone #297, City of Sylvania, et. al (1995).

The Village can offer up to 100% abatement for up to 10 years on real property investment (new construction or renovation) for companies locating or expanding in the designated CRAs. Units with more than two dwellings are classified as commercial and are eligible for abatement. The exemption and term are negotiated on a project by project basis by the Village's CRA Negotiation Team and Council must approve the negotiated recommendation. No portion of the project may begin until Council approves the project and the necessary documents are signed. Revenue sharing agreements with the schools are required.

Under the County's EZ, the Village and County can offer real and personal property abatement, up to 75% for up to 10 years, on companies locating and/or expanding in the designated EZ. Again, all projects must include Village and County approval, necessary documents signed and revenue sharing agreements in place prior to project start.

Lucas County has a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) based RLF that can offer low-interest loan funds to companies creating or retaining jobs. This program is a 50% matching loan program and offers up to $25,000 per each new job created/retained. Since these funds originated at the Federal level, certain requirements apply such as: jobs must be made available to persons from low-and moderate-income households; Davis Bacon Federal Prevailing Wages must be paid on labor over $2,000; and an Environmental Review Record must be completed prior to construction starting.

In large part, economic development programs help to augment and support a community's "product line" of development opportunities. Generally, local and state programs provide incentives of some type to encourage investment in new buildings or renovation of existing property. Incentives may be tax breaks or even direct financing with attractive terms to help close the gap between what can happen privately and what is needed to help a project move forward.

VISION UPDATE

Chapter 5

PUBLIC VISIONING

To invite the public into the planning process early, a public visioning session was scheduled and conducted. The goal of this event was to begin the planning process with steps to engage the public in conversations that help identify key community issues. Typically, community planning meetings of this type begin with welcoming comments and a very brief presentation about community trends and best practices. The bulk of the evening is spent in group discussions, but near the end of the evening, groups report what they discussed and efforts are made to identify consistent themes.

Steering Committee Members selected Monday, November 10, 2014 as the date for this session. Press releases and flyers were distributed and notifications were provided to each resident in a utility bill.

This event was held at the Municipal Building and the evening began with brief welcoming comments and introductions of elected officials, community leaders and Steering Committee members. Representatives from Poggemeyer Design Group briefly discussed the Master Plan process and the topics to be discussed. Participants broke into groups for about an hour to talk about three key issue areas (20 minutes for each topic). Materials were developed to help these conversations. More specifically, the three planning topics were discussed.

You are invited to share your thoughts and ideas on what Whitehouse should look like ten years from now. If you have ever thought, why doesn't the Village do something about specific opportunities or challenges, now is the time to share those thoughts. For example, do you think that Whitehouse needs...

- To create a more attractive and appealing downtown (and, if so, how?)
- To create attractive and appealing corridors (SR 64 and 295) that lead into town (and, if so, what specifically would you like to see?).
- To strategically help create economic opportunities by encouraging specific business types, better capitalizing on existing assets, or otherwise creating an appealing identity that draws people and investment.

It's "OUR VILLAGE"–So Come Out and Help DESIGN OUR FUTURE!!

WHAT TO EXPECT

The Village's Master Plan Steering Committee, other municipal leaders and the Village's consultant, Poggemeyer Design Group, will facilitate structured group conversations to help make sure your evening is both meaningful and enjoyable. Groups will be provided with materials to help stimulate conversation and focus on the unique needs of Whitehouse in terms of downtown, major corridors and economic development.

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Information from this workshop will be used to direct future steps in the update of the Village's Master Plan. Your input will help identify priorities and important principles to be expressed in a new Village Master Plan.

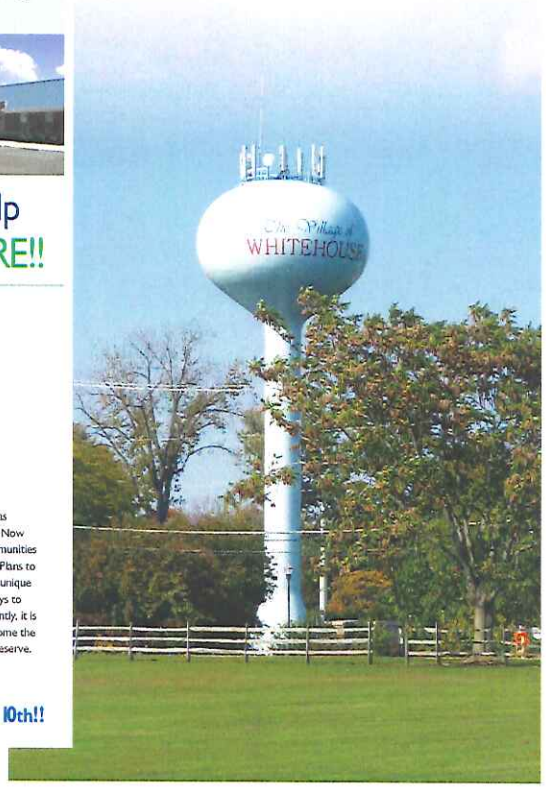
Angela Kuhn, Mayor
Rob Casaletta, Master Plan Steering Committee Chairman
Whitehouse Master Plan Update

When Monday, November 10th
7:00 p.m.

Where Whitehouse Village Hall
6925 Providence Street
Whitehouse, Ohio 43571

What The Whitehouse we know and love today was created by the decisions of past generations. Now it's your turn to help create the future! Communities like Whitehouse prepare and update Master Plans to define long-term goals and aspirations. It is a unique time to consider challenges, and discover ways to build on community strengths. Most importantly, it is a time to consider how Whitehouse can become the community our children and grandchildren deserve.

We Hope To See You On November 10th!!



"Coming Together is a Beginning, Keeping Together is Progress, Working Together is Success."

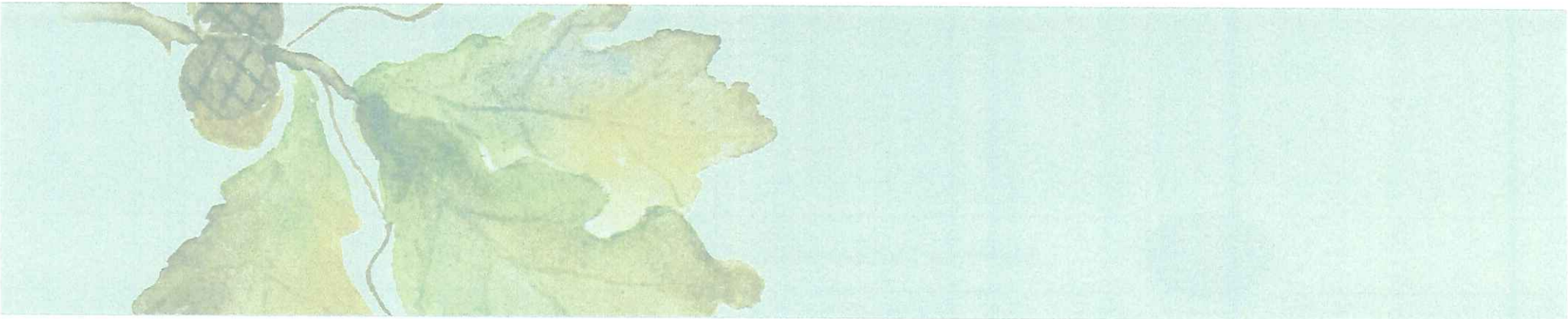
Henry Ford

PLANNING TOPIC: DOWNTOWN WHITEHOUSE

Specific discussion topics centered on the top 5 attributes people would like to see downtown Whitehouse have in the next 10 years. Attributes considered included more retail, including destination stores, events, public spaces, upper floor utilization for housing/offices, new construction of mixed use buildings, extended business hours, sidewalk cafes, downtown housing (second story), more pedestrian amenities/ walkability, lighting, greenspace, more parking and where, signage/wayfinding, "downtown punch/pop."

PLANNING TOPIC: CORRIDORS

SR 64 (Waterville Swanton) and SR 295 (Berkley Southern) are two important corridors in Whitehouse. Discussion took place about how these corridors should look and feel in the future as people enter Whitehouse. Specifically, desired building characteristics (size, placement, appearance) and how people access property and drive through the corridor (vehicles, parking lot locations, access points, bikes, and pedestrians) was discussed. Sample images from elsewhere were considered to help stimulate ideas and discussion.



SR 64 CORRIDOR - PLANNING ISSUES

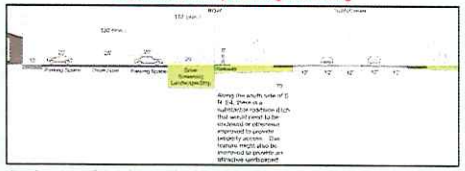
Whitehouse Master Plan Visioning Workshop

POGGEMEYER DESIGN GROUP

Non-Motorized Transportation

TMACOG's 2035 Regional Transportation Plan includes a bike path or bike lane along SR 64. Presently it is shown to extend from Finzel Road to Waterville (along the north side of the road). The design of the roundabout at Finzel Road accommodates this trail and the Village of Waterville recently completed a segment that connects the Kroger Store with Waterville-Monclova Road.

Waterville Township Planning and Zoning



According to Waterville Twp. Planning and Zoning Documents, new buildings along SR 64 will be set back at least 170 feet from the centerline of SR 64. This design accomodates a a future 3 lane road, a 25 foot landscape strip and new buildings located at least 100 feet from the edge of the right-of-way.

Future Roundabout– *Coming 2015*

Heath Ditch

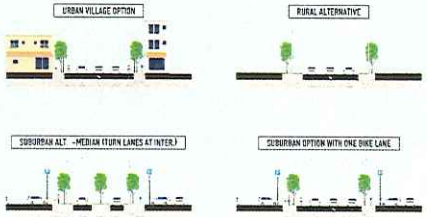
The large ditch along the south side of SR 64 (Heath Ditch) is more than just a roadside ditch. It falls under the jurisdiction of the Ohio EPA and US Army Corp of Engineers. Enclosing or relocating this feature would likely be difficult.

Four Key Issues To Consider:

- **Land Use:** Should the corridor be primarily a commercial retail strip with single uses– or should it be more of a mixed use (commercial, office and housing) corridor?
- **Building Form:** Should the buildings be large one-story single use buildings - or should they be multi-story mixed use buildings? Should the buildings be setback far from the road and surrounded by parking – or should they be pulled closer to the road with parking in the rear?
- **Building Design:** Should the buildings along SR 64 have some common design elements (roof pitches, colors, landscaping themes, exterior materials, etc.)?
- **Transportation Options:** How important is it to make SR 64 walkable and bikeable?

Potential Road Configurations

SR 64 will undoubtedly change in the future. How it changes will depend on future traffic volumes, adjacent land use and access management (or lack thereof). There are several development scenarios that are possible and they range from developing more compact urban form to a suburban-style or rural commercial corridor. Planning and zoning polices defined by the Village of Whitehouse will play a major role in defining the form and character of SR 64. The options shown to the right are just a few of many possible growth scenarios.



PLANNING TOPIC: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Village has grown rapidly with residential development. To help keep taxes low, business activity is also needed, and steps to bring business to Whitehouse can be enhanced with a clear strategy. Elements of such a strategy discussed included – capitalizing on recreational assets to draw business (sports tournaments), new business park development, making Village more business/ user friendly with additional improvements to website, economic development incentives, etc., more focus on downtown development with restaurants, retail, hotel, and services, efforts to brand and market Whitehouse in an attractive/authentic way. Branding elements included local history, railroad themes, natural features, Oak Openings/glacial grooves/ stone quarry or support for suburban-style commercial development along SR 64.

POTENTIAL COMPONENTS OF WHITEHOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Whitehouse Master Plan Visioning Workshop

POGGEMEYER DESIGN GROUP

Locate your company here...

- Offer sites and greater development incentives (tax abatement) to attract business from outside the area.
- More agressively market Whitehouse to economic development prospects.

Start and grow your company here...

- Focus on attracting talent and educated people to Whitehouse who are more inclined to start local businesses.
- Work with local schools to support and encourage local entrepreneurial endeavors.

Develop a strong Whitehouse "brand" that appeals to people and draws investment.

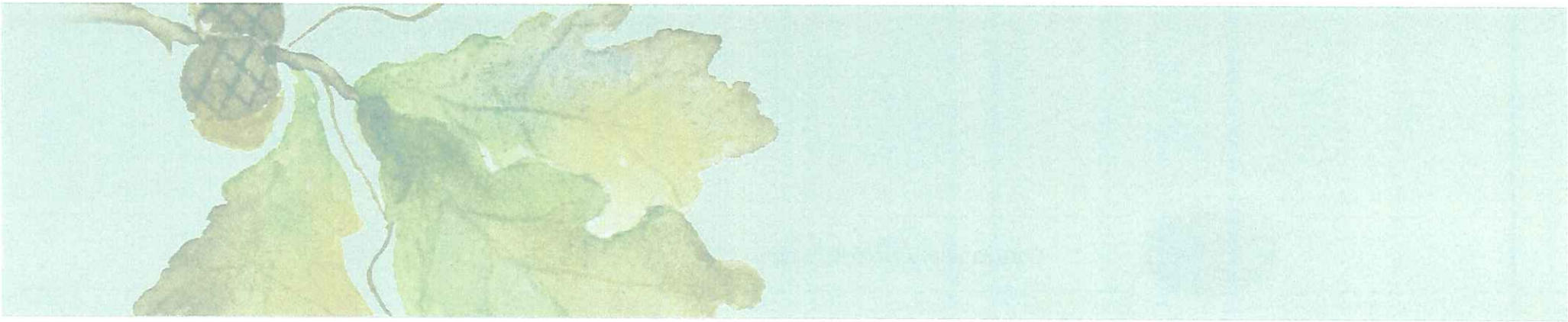
- Strong schools
- Village scale
- Common building design themes
- Natural elements (oak openings, farmland)
- Recreational Opportunities (rec. facilities, bike trail, etc.)
- Enhance or recreate logo/ tagline

Focus on creating Downtown Whitehouse as an employment center and destination with unique local businesses, shops, restaurants, public event space, etc.

Reject or embrace common suburban models for development (big box retail, strip centers, office parks, etc.)

Others ??

Vision Update 5:6



After one hour of group conversation, participants reconvened as one large group and each group provided a brief report on the results of their conversations.

RESULTS

Approximately 35 to 40 people attended this event. Attendees included Village Officials, Village Employees, Planning Commission members, Steering Committee members, business owners, consultants and the general public. The meeting began with brief welcoming remarks and a general overview of efforts to update the Village Master Plan. The bulk of the evening was spent in group discussions centered on three key topics. These group conversations took about one hour and the evening closed with each group reporting its findings and major conclusions and discussion points.

CORRIDORS – SR 64 AND SR 295

All groups agreed that the development of the SR 64 corridor was very important to the Village of Whitehouse. This corridor serves as a primary community gateway and the future roundabout at Finzel Road and will add character and a sense of place. All groups indicated support for the idea that the Village should take steps to avoid a development scenario wherein SR 64 becomes a typical suburban commercial strip. Groups rejected a development pattern that would include "big box retail," large parking lots in front of buildings, 24/7 hours of operation, and "franchise-type" architecture. There was support for including non-motorized transportation options and a greater emphasis on landscaping to soften hard surfaces (parking lots, drives, building walls, etc.), along with existing features (such as Heath Ditch). Ultimately, Whitehouse and Waterville should be connected with a multi-use path on the north side of SR 64.

Traffic congestion was a concern and there was an agreement that steps should be taken to limit curb cuts and include access roads where possible. A preferred land use pattern includes mixed land uses to the extent that they might include retail, office and residential uses. There was little or no support for more industrial uses along SR 64. The design of future buildings along SR 64 should be as consistent as possible and compliment community identity. Groups wanted to see an "upscale" look. Professional offices with a "campus" feel to the corridor were also suggested. Buildings should be set back from SR 64 in a manner that potentially accommodates front access roads, but parking lots should wrap around buildings where possible to avoid deep fields of parking areas in front of buildings. Some resistance to the idea of widening SR 64 to four lanes was mentioned, but a future center turn lane was considered to be acceptable to help reduce accidents.

SR 295 was also discussed and its regional importance was recognized since it connects US 24 with the Ohio Turnpike and the Airport to the north. Some groups discussed the fact that this may have some industrial development potential in the long term, since it is so well connected to key regional transportation infrastructure in northwest Ohio. Distribution centers could also be drawn to the area. The proximity of Oak Openings also pointed toward the need to incorporate non-motorized pathways to better connect the Village with Oak Openings.

DOWNTOWN

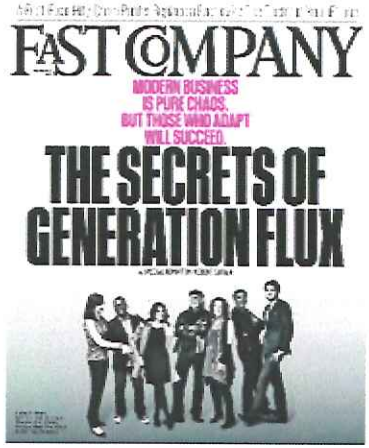
Groups generally agreed that downtown can be an even greater asset in the future. Improving signage was consistently mentioned among the groups. More specifically, signage needs to point visitors toward public parking and other community features and the signs themselves need to help reinforce a community brand and image through the use of colors and graphic design. Downtown needs to be a safer destination for pedestrians and bicyclists. This means better cross-walks (encourage pedestrians to cross in central location and not wherever they chose) and traffic control. Traffic calming is needed along with more landscaping and informational kiosks. Potential locations for informational kiosks include by AWYF Fields and in the center of the downtown.

There is a need for more art downtown to create visual interest. Group members generally agreed with the concept that downtown should be "people space" and space for cars (auto movement and parking) should be secondary. People arriving to downtown by car should park in areas behind buildings (or at the edge of downtown) and experience downtown Whitehouse as a pedestrian. More housing downtown would be welcome, along with more restaurants and specialty shops. Collectively, Whitehouse should be a tourist attraction and destination for those on bike trips. There was preference for locally-owned shops and restaurants to help add to a unique sense of place, while adding to the business mix and potential synergy.

A community center of some type was also noted as a need in the community. Groups also mentioned the need for more appealing architectural elements in the form of awnings, private signage, landscaping and façade treatments. Design review requirements and signage code were mentioned as being inadequate and should be updated to give more guidance on appropriate building renovations and signage options.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Groups offered many opinions regarding future economic development efforts. Notably, the need for more medical facilities (urgent care center, satellite medical facility, etc.) in the area was mentioned. This thought was associated with the idea that Whitehouse should strive to develop a community image and brand that is linked to healthy living, exercise, recreation, nature and the metropark system. Such a brand and image would be supported by development of non-motorized transportation options (such as the shared multi-use path on the north side of SR 64), various connections to metropark activities and facilities.



Group conversations were also drawn to the idea that Whitehouse should try to attract offices, higher education, research and development and perhaps an indoor sports center to help promote more year-round recreational activity. Strategic use of tax incentives were also mentioned as one means to accomplish this. It was discussed that the website could be updated to include additional economic development information, specifically related to attracting additional businesses and offering incentives.

More industrial development should be oriented toward the west side of Whitehouse to take advantage of SR 295. However, it is recognized that this area could be developed with more very low density development in the future and this could diminish the likelihood of industrial development in this area. It was also

noted that Whitehouse should be supportive of local entrepreneurial endeavors and look for opportunities to grow local businesses. Some such business could be downtown (craft, art, design studios, etc.), while others may be offices with shared facilities (common meeting rooms, secretarial services, etc.).

It was also observed that the Village of Whitehouse should be supportive of efforts to develop local senior housing options and more local housing choice. Whitehouse residents are becoming older and growing numbers may want lower maintenance housing options. If such options are not locally available, older established residents may leave despite preferences to stay.

Collectively, ideas expressed were supportive of the notion of Whitehouse consciously developing a brand and image to be consistently promoted.

DOWNTOWN

DOWNTOWN PLANNING

Because the downtown area drew considerable attention at the public visioning session in November of 2014, a separate downtown planning workshop was conducted to more fully explore downtown planning issues. This workshop sought to seek answers to three important questions:

1. WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL VISION ELEMENTS FOR DOWNTOWN?

Some key questions included where should downtown start and stop and what is the preferred building form downtown? Traditional downtowns are primarily 3 or 4 story buildings pulled forward toward the street. Downtown Whitehouse has some building forms that are consistent with this, along with many one story buildings pushed back from the right-of-way. Another key issue is whether downtown should be primarily a place of mixed uses (first floor retail & upper floors office/housing) or something else. Finally, a key issue relates to the balance of pedestrian experience compared with vehicular convenience.

2. GIVEN THESE VISION ELEMENTS, WHAT REGULATORY STEPS ARE NEEDED?

Regulatory steps can help prevent development from occurring that is contrary to the vision elements. For example, the Village can change the boundaries of the downtown district and create new zoning requirements to address key issues (build to line, minimum window glazing and door spaces, wall articulation, etc.). The Village can also review and update permitted uses and even create regulatory incentives.

3. GIVEN THESE VISION ELEMENTS, WHAT PUBLIC INITIATIVES ARE NEEDED?

Public and semi-public organizations can take steps to support vision elements. Specifically, the public sector controls public spaces downtown (sidewalks, roads, parks, etc.) and public improvements can be made to support vision elements (pedestrian crossings, signage, banners, lighting, street furniture, etc.). A semi-public organization can be created to acquire downtown property so that land can then be assembled and developed consistently with vision elements.

IN BASIC TERMS THE THREE QUESTIONS BOIL DOWN TO:

What do we want downtown?

What do we need to do to discourage what we don't want?

What do we need to do encourage what we do want?

DOWNTOWN PLANNING WORKSHOP

The downtown planning workshop was held on May 13, 2015 at the Village Hall. The first part of the workshop (afternoon between 2 and 4) included a presentation of best practices in successful downtowns. This conversation concluded with a discussion of possible vision elements for downtown Whitehouse in the future.

The evening session included a group discussion of preferred vision elements for downtown Whitehouse and implementation steps.

The Village of Whitehouse

You are invited to share your thoughts and ideas on what Whitehouse should look like ten years from now. If you have ever thought, why doesn't the Village do something about specific opportunities or challenges, now is the time to share those thoughts. For example, do you think that Whitehouse needs…

- To create a more attractive and appealing downtown (and, if so, how?)
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WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

Information from this workshop will be used to direct future steps in the update of the Village's Master Plan. Your input will help identify priorities and important principles to be expressed in a new Village Master Plan.

Angela Kuhn, Mayor
Rob Casaletta, Master Plan Steering Committee Chairman
Whitehouse Master Plan Update

When: Monday, November 10th, 7:00 p.m.

Where: Whitehouse Village Hall, 6925 Providence Street, Whitehouse, Ohio 43571

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We Hope To See You On November 10th!!

WORKSHOP RESULTS

This workshop began with a presentation that described many best practices in downtowns throughout the Midwest. More than 100 images of downtown buildings, infrastructure, signage, activities, events, landscaping, businesses and civic spaces were viewed and collectively discussed. Using this information as a foundation, workshop participants then discussed specific measures that could be taken to move downtown Whitehouse forward toward more downtown synergy and a greater sense of place.

Ten aspects of Downtown Whitehouse were considered.

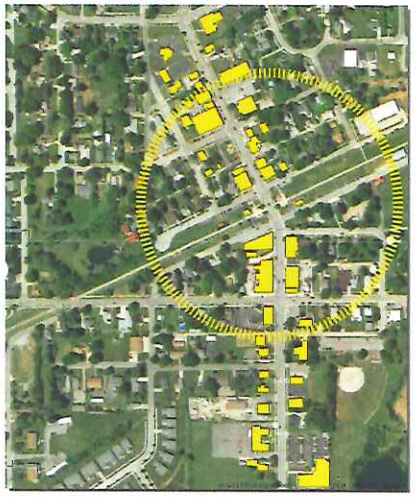
DOWNTOWN BOUNDARIES

The first and somewhat introductory element discussed related to the size of downtown. A downtown is perhaps like no other place in a community with different urban form, architectural design and mobility considerations. Defining the limits of downtown was considered to be an important first step because many attributes of downtown (building design, infrastructure, signage, etc.) have an important geographic framework and reference point. Although downtowns can expand over time, it is fundamentally important to know where downtown is and where it is not. Perhaps most importantly, downtown geography also relates to local zoning in a critical way. Zoning and associated development standards relate to zoning districts with definitive boundaries. In Whitehouse, the downtown area is zoned "C-2" Village Center Commercial District. This zoning district includes a list of permitted uses and development standards unique to a downtown environment. Having a correct downtown boundary was considered to be important and foundational step forward.

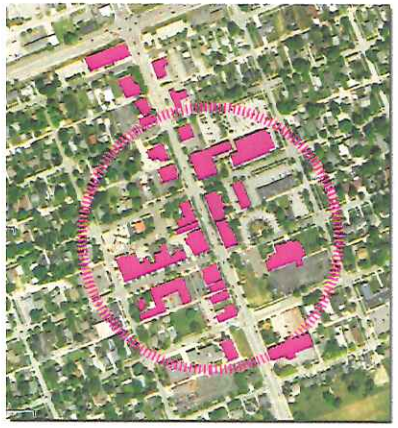
A review and discussion about the current limits of downtown Whitehouse led to the conclusion that the present boundaries of the C-2 Zoning District may be much too large. Comparisons between downtown Whitehouse and other area communities illustrated the fact that downtown Whitehouse (as defined by the C-2 boundaries) is far larger than others (Perrysburg, Maumee, Waterville). It was therefore suggested that pulling the boundaries of the C-2 inward may be desirable in order to create more critical mass and downtown synergy.

COMPARISONS WITH OTHER DOWNTOWN AREAS SHOWS THAT THE ZONING CODE DEFINES DOWNTOWN WHITEHOUSE AS BEING FAR LARGER THAN MOST

WHITEHOUSE

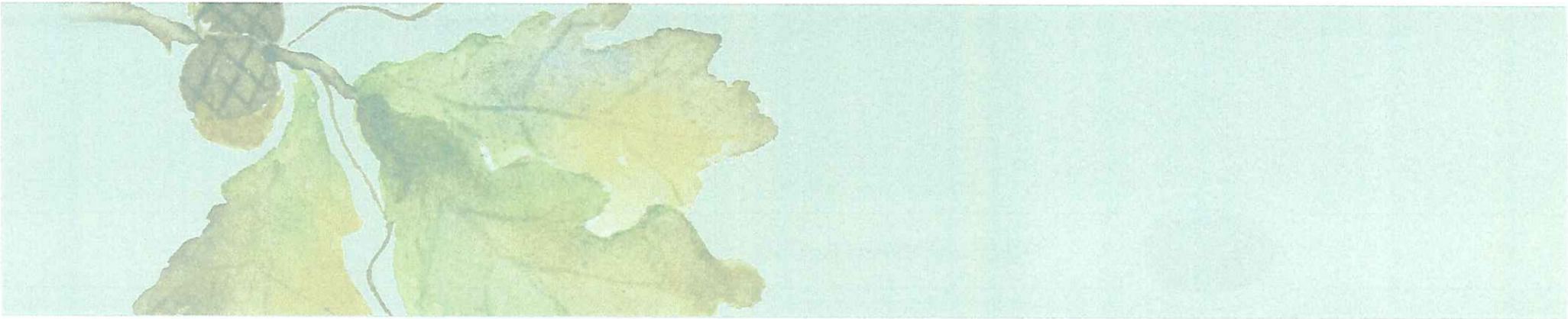


MAUMEE



WATERVILLE

PERRYSBURG



Some specific thoughts about how to pull in downtown boundaries were discussed, with the focus on Providence Street between Shepler to the north and a point somewhere south of Waterville Street at or near the municipal building. To the east, downtown boundaries generally continue along Waterville Street toward the park. To the west, downtown boundaries seem to extend only a short distance. While it was understood that more conversation would likely be needed to fully determine a final boundary, the general limits described above would serve to help frame downtown more appropriately.

EXISTING C-2 ZONING (RED LINE)

With some consensus about the need to "right-size" downtown Whitehouse, the question remaining was how to address areas removed from a downtown designation. Generally, it was assumed that such areas could be assigned zoning categories consistent with adjacent districts.
It is also possible that a new "transitional" zoning district may be needed to formally define areas that serve as a transitional area between the downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.

One alternative to better align C-2 Downtown Zoning District Boundaries to a stronger downtown core is shown to the right. Subsequent analysis may lead to adjustments to these boundaries. A future zoning update should include steps to pull C-2 Zoning District boundaries in tighter to the downtown core so that development requirements (setbacks, parking requirements, window glazing, etc.) and permitted uses better align to the desired downtown environment and work to shape desirable downtown spaces.

As discussed later, a better definition of downtown boundaries also helps to determine locations for entry features, signgage and lighting to help provide a sense of arrival.

WITH UPDATED DOWNTOWN BOUNDARIES, THE VILLAGE CAN MOVE FORWARD TOWARD USING VISUAL ELEMENTS TO HELP CREATE A SENSE OF ARRIVAL TO THE DOWNTOWN. AS DESCRIBED LATER, VISUAL ELEMENTS INCLUDE PAVEMENT MARKINGS, BANNERS, STREETLIGHTS, GATEWAY SIGNAGE, ETC.

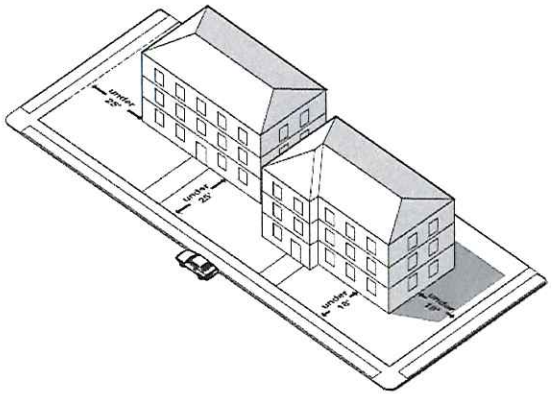
As shown above, the view looking west toward downtown along Waterville Road provides few visual indications to suggest an approach to downtown Whitehouse.

BUILDING MASS AND FORM

Given a more suitable definition of the boundaries of downtown Whitehouse, the first of several issues addressed was that of building mass and form. The zoning code contains many development standards and requirements that are unique to downtown urban areas. Building mass and form is one important consideration as it relates to the size of the building and its placement on a lot (not necessarily architectural style or treatment).

Strong downtowns typically exhibit building mass and form that create a direct connection between the pedestrian on the street and the adjacent buildings. Buildings are pulled forward toward the right of way (ROW) - except in some instances where there might be a small recess to allow for outdoor dining / or outdoor sales. To help create this condition going forward when new construction occurs, a "build to" line is proposed in downtown Whitehouse. This requirement is in place in other communities and it essentially requires that new buildings and renovation of existing buildings be brought forward toward the street. The Village may also take the step of encouraging (or possibly requiring) building mass consistent with a multiple story building. The preferred ratio of building height to street width is one to three. This means that the building height should be at least one foot tall for each three feet of ROW width. This translates into building heights of at least 25 feet in downtown Whitehouse.

DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS SHOULD BE PLACED CLOSE TO THE STREET TO HELP CREATE A RICH PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE.



Graphic Source: LEED 2009 for Neighborhood Development - U.S. Green Building Council

Build-to line: The line at which construction of a building façade is to occur on a lot. A build-to line runs parallel to, and is measured from, the front property line and is established to create an even (or more or less even) building façade line on a street.

Apart from taking regulatory steps to help ensure that buildings are moved forward toward the road to help create a better pedestrian experience, future building construction and renovation should create more building mass where possible. Ideally, the ratio of building height to street width is 3 to 1 (meaning that the building height is at least one-third the width of the public right-of-way in downtown). This helps to create a feeling of enclosure and place.

MAUMEE (DOWNTOWN PROVIDES AN "OUTDOOR ROOM" AND A SENSE OF ENCLOSURE AND PLACE)

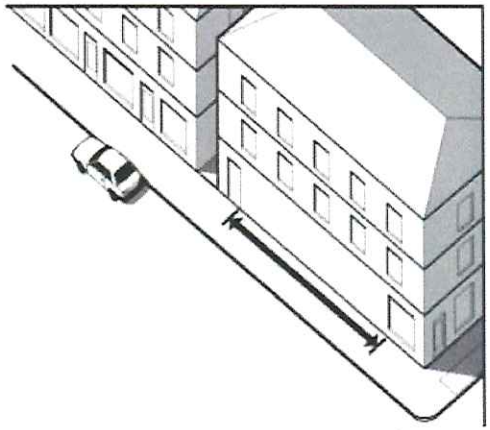
WHITEHOUSE NEEDS MORE "BUILDING MASS" TO HELP CREATE "PLACE"

AN "OUTDOOR ROOM" AND A SENSE OF ENCLOSURE AND PLACE IS COMMON IN TRADITIONAL DOWNTOWNS

NEW CONSTRUCTION IN DOWNTOWN HELPS CREATE THE "OUTDOOR ROOM" AND SENSE OF PLACE

BUILDING FACADES AND DESIGN

Building on correct decisions regarding mass and form, building facades and architectural design is also very important toward creating a strong downtown. Communities often include design criteria for special areas. The criteria can be incorporated into existing zoning text, or can be provided within a separate document that is referenced in the Zoning Code. The Village has existing design requirements in the Zoning Code in several places. The TND (Traditional Neighborhood Development District) has many design requirements aimed at achieving specific urban design criteria. Similarly, the Waterville Street (State Route 64) Overlay District includes architectural controls designed to encourage consistent site development and architectural themes. In the Downtown area, the Village has adopted Historic Preservation Design Review Requirements based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation. However, the downtown area does not currently have requirements that address new construction, or requirements that address modification of non-historic structures. Some key requirements that are also absent include the need for minimum amounts of window area at the first floor, minimum spacing of entryways, wall articulation and building material and complexity. Workshop participants largely agreed with the perspective that such design requirements should not be onerous or burdensome on property owners or developers making improvements. Rather, they should provide minimum thresholds necessary to ensure that new investments in property contribute to a stronger built environment.



DISCOURAGE BUILDING ENTRANCES MORE THAN 50 FEET APART

ENCOURAGE BUILDING COMPLEXITY - COLOR, MATERIAL & WALL OFFSETS

ENCOURAGE 60 % WINDOWS AT PEDESTRIAN LEVEL

MIXED USES

There was an agreement that the preferred land use pattern in Downtown Whitehouse is to have first floor occupancy associated with retail, commercial services and restaurants. These uses generate the most street-level activity. Upper floors are best utilized for office uses and residential purposes. Office uses generally require less street-level exposure (compared with retail, services and restaurants) and residential uses require no street-level exposure. Residential occupancy in a downtown also helps to drive demand for retail offerings (especially for consumer goods and restaurants).

Accepting this land use model as the preferred development pattern in a downtown leads to the need to intentionally review and evaluate the list of permitted uses in the downtown zoning district (C-2 as changed to reflect an appropriate boundary as discussed previously). A full list of appropriate retail, commercial service and related uses should be allowed in downtown, along with a full range of appropriate housing and office uses. Permitted housing should include options such as lofts, efficiency apartments and more typical one- or two- bedroom units. Additionally, permitted housing should include live-work units wherein an artist may live and work in an upper floor and sell and display paintings, pottery, sculpture, etc., in a first floor retail space.

PARKING

Parking is universally regarded as a major challenge in all downtowns. Parking structures can help meet parking demand, but because they are so costly, surface parking lots and on-street parking is the common answer to this challenge in nearly all medium-sized and smaller downtowns. Downtown environments force communities and property owners to confront the inherent conflicts between a pedestrian-oriented and human-scale urban environment and the need to accommodate motor vehicle movement and the space needs associated with parking. Parking lots are clearly necessary, but they do little to activate downtown space and draw people. Successful downtowns seem to be able to honor the pedestrian and bicyclist, calm traffic flow and push an adequate amount of off-street parking to less visible places. Communities such as Bowling Green and Maumee have been especially successful at this and have located parking lots behind downtown buildings. On street parking is valuable in the sense that it is convenient and it serves to separate the pedestrian on a sidewalk from vehicular movement, which adds a measure of safety.

The topic of parking consumed the most amount of time for discussion as people had strong opinions about the need to improve parking options in the downtown. There is general agreement that downtown needs both more parking, and perhaps better utilization of existing parking. In Whitehouse, parking demand generally peaks in the late afternoon and early evening as restaurants fill up. The Village recently added a new parking lot with 55 spaces in the downtown, on the north side of the bike trail, east of Providence Street. This new parking is centrally located, and within a short walking distance to most downtown businesses. Other potential steps being discussed include the need to consider enforcement of a 2-hour limit for on-street parking and better signage. Some parking areas, such as the large lot near the Whitehouse Inn and north of the Baseball field are not well used, which could be addressed through better signage and a parking education program.

Going forward, there is consensus that the best place for more parking in downtown Whitehouse is behind buildings. This suggests the need for rear building entrances, including enhancements to the rear of buildings so that these entrances are attractive as well as functional. This emulates the successful approaches taken in Bowling Green and Maumee. Along with the locations of parking, the routes between parking areas behind buildings and front entrances should be appealing, well lit and safe – especially when they involve an alley or enclosed space. Improved signage is also desirable so that visitors and other patrons can easily find available parking that is not immediately visible from the street. If parking behind buildings is not feasible, parking lots on Providence and Waterville Streets should be improved with screening along the sidewalks with landscaping, knee walls, or decorative elements such as fences and masonry pillars.

Parking lots are necessary – but not the focus of downtown.

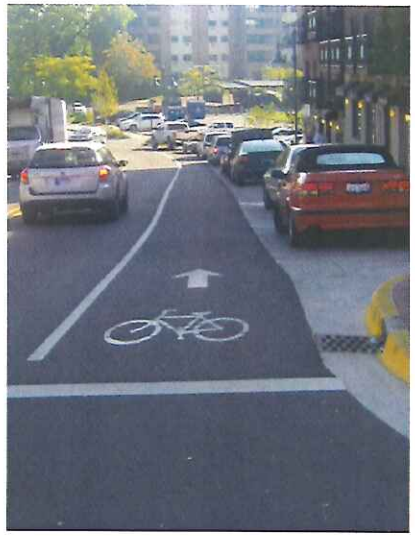
Successful downtowns create parking demand – but downtown design does not revolve around convenient parking.

Parking lots should be located behind downtown buildings where possible, as shown above in Maumee, Ohio.

PEDESTRIAN & BIKE ACCESS

Downtown Whitehouse is well positioned to draw additional recreational tourists as a stopping point along the Wabash Cannonball Bike Trail and with long-term plans to enhance Village Park. Village Park itself is actually part of a much larger regional green space network that includes Toledo Area Metroparks property. All of these regional open space systems are pedestrian and bike-oriented and downtown Whitehouse is positioned as a hub within this system.

Workshop participants generally agreed that while parking and vehicular access is important, going forward greater accommodations for bike and pedestrian travel is needed downtown. These include the need for better defining pedestrian crossings across Waterville and Providence Streets. Bump-outs are one way to accomplish this, along with pavement markings to clearly define areas for pedestrian movement.



Where possible, the creation of future events should link to the fact that Whitehouse is considered to be the "Gateway to the Oak Openings Region" and is working to become a community with a brand and image associated with a healthy, natural, and active lifestyle.

UNIQUE BUSINESS/PLACES/EVENTS

While there are several existing unique local businesses in Whitehouse, there is likely room for more such businesses to help create more critical mass and synergy. One way to define this more clearly is to conduct a market study to help objectively and factually define voids in the mix of local commercial offerings. Market research firms access data on household expenditures for categories of goods and services. They then translate this data to provide insight into new local establishments that could serve those needs. Presently, it is very likely that some Whitehouse residents often leave the area to purchase goods and services outside the area. In some cases, the local demand may be enough to support a local establishment. Some such local establishments could be a good fit for downtown Whitehouse. A simple, but useful market study could likely be completed for $10-$15,000. This information could then be used to help recruit new businesses and/or help convince existing businesses to expand.

Whitehouse conducts a wide range of events that help bring people to downtown. However, the most successful downtowns are those that have events as often as possible. Often, the number of events held is generally equal to the number of volunteers willing to donate time to organize and plan. This can be challenging in a small- to medium-sized community where the pool of people willing to volunteer is smaller. Nonetheless, it is important to grow and expand the schedule of events that help people associate downtown with fun and engaging activity. Ideas for more events generated during the workshop included more bike-related tours and events, activities associated with "birders" who come from all over to see rare birds in the area and pet-related events ("mut-struts", particular dog breed get-togethers, etc.). Where possible, the creation of future events should link to the fact that Whitehouse is considered to be the "Gateway to the Oak Openings Region" and is working to become a community with a brand and image associated with a healthy, natural, and active lifestyle. Future downtown events that celebrate nature, physical exercise and health would serve the dual purpose of bringing people downtown and helping to solidify a community brand and image.

SIGNAGE

Whitehouse currently does not have a consistent signage system downtown. What is needed is the development of a "family of signs" with a consistent look and feel. Signs are not only functional, but they also help to express (and reinforce) community identity and a sense of place. Generally, a community logo is evident, along with complimentary materials, colors and graphics. These steps forward toward the development of community-wide signage system can sound simple, but in reality it can be challenging to navigate multiple issues related to, not only the design of types of signs (directional, gateway, identification, trailblazer, information kiosks, etc.), but also strategic placement. There is a general agreement that a comprehensive signage system is needed in Whitehouse, beginning with downtown. This will help market the downtown and assist with parking issues.

For example, a stronger kiosk along the Bike Trial would help to tell bikers & joggers "you have arrived" and would help to express community identity.

There should be a signage "system" in Downtown that includes: Trailblazer Signage, Directional Signage, Identification Signage. Signage should be designed as a "family of signs" with consistent design elements (fonts, colors, shapes, and logos). Signage is an opportunity to express the community brand.

FURNISHINGS

More steps are needed to create and maintain a consistent pattern of design choices associated with street furnishings. Street furnishings include benches, trash receptacles, street lights, bike racks, water fountains, etc. Recent additions of street furnishings downtown do show a consistent design, but more items need to be replaced to help reinforce downtown identity. There are still cobra head street lights in downtown, which should be replaced with the newer styles that exist along both Providence and Waterville Streets. Ultimately, the Village should arrive at a "pallet" of downtown furnishings that provide a more consistent look and feel to the downtown environment. Details such as these provide subtle but important visual indications that downtown is a unique and welcoming place in the community.

THE FOLLOWING IMAGES HELP TO ILLUSTRATE HOW DOWNTOWN WHITEHOUSE CAN BE TRANSFORMED WITH THE PROPOSED PLANNING POLICIES AND ACTION STEPS.

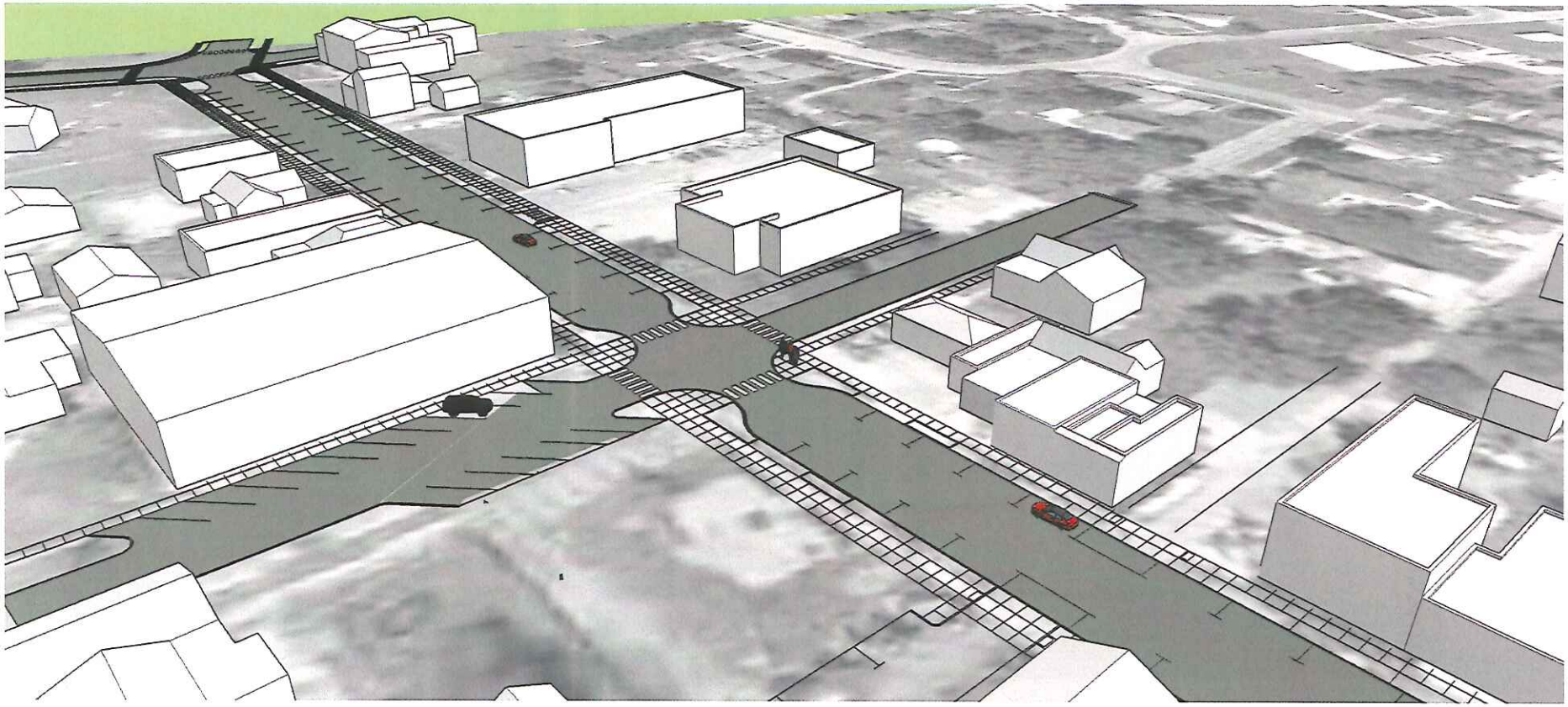
Future steps to create parking behind downtown buildings can result in what is illustrated below. This design is similar to circumstances in Maumee. Along with efforts to create parking behind buildings, store owners can enhance (or create) rear entrances.

Bike Trial

Waterville Rd.

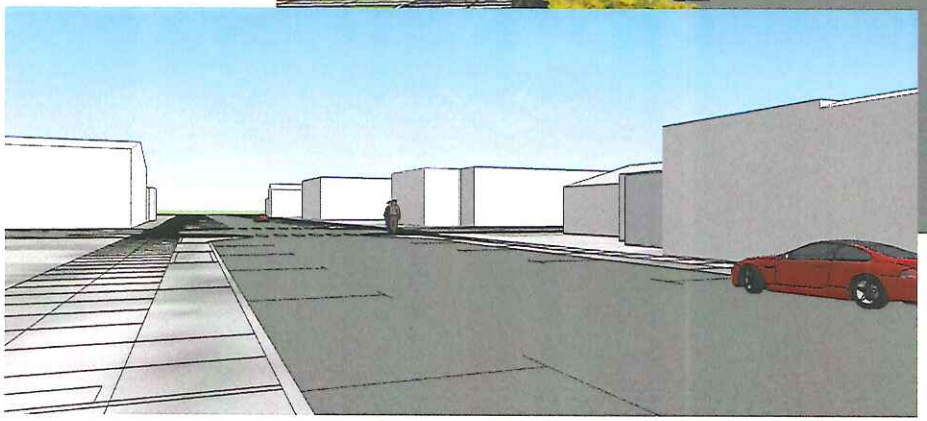
With more parking, and a general enhancement of the area, some infill and new construction can occur to help create more critical mass, business synergy and general activity.

On the north side of downtown, the lack of building mass is apparent below. Buildings are spread-out to the extent that vehicular access is the most appealing mode of travel. Not all buildings are close to the road, so pedestrian spaces seem less safe.



Future infill helps to create a more defined sense of place. In cases where buildings are not brought forward toward the street, outdoor activities such as outdoor dining and plazas can help connect public spaces with private spaces and enrich the public realm.

These graphics help illustrate a pedestrian view of the streetscape after more building mass is created and the streetscape becomes richer with more building mass, street trees and other plant material.



Property south of Village Park along Lucas Street could be transformed into a more intensive level of development. The illustrated concept below provides much needed downtown housing that is well positioned to take advantage of the open space across the street.

SUMMARY OF ACTION STEPS FOR DOWNTOWN

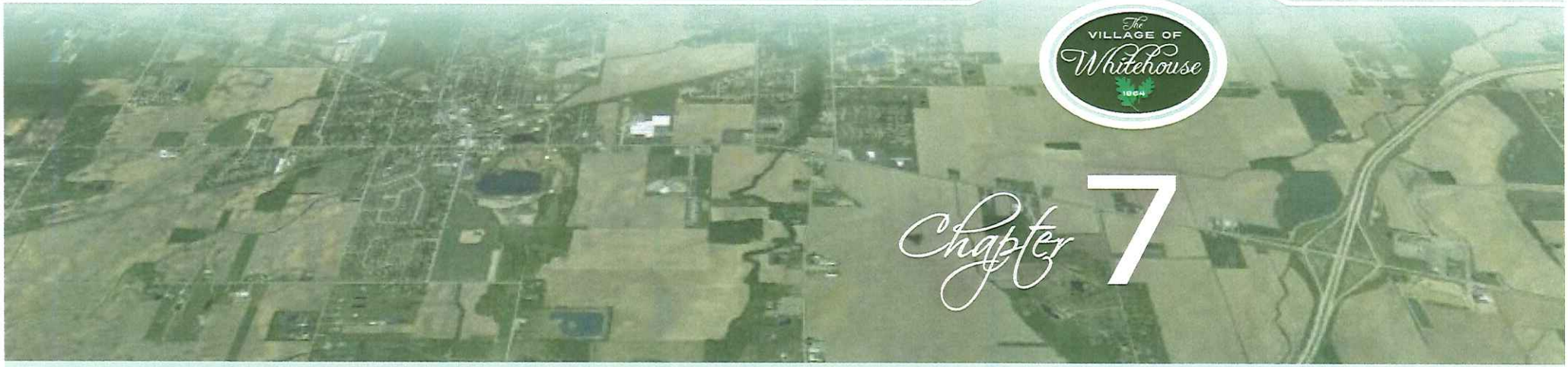
ZONING

- Shrink the boundaries of C-2.
- Add a "build to line" in C-2.
- Consider ways to encourage or require greater building mass (2-3 stories at the front ROW)
- Carefully review permitted uses in C-2 to allow for a full range of retail and service businesses. Also consider unique upper floor housing types (lofts, live-work units, efficiency units, etc.).
- Review zoning requirements for off-street parking. Specifically, create incentives for placement of parking behind buildings. Discourage off-street parking along the street ROW, and require significant landscaping to screen vehicles from view.

PUBLIC INITIATIVES

- Install "bump-outs" and more pedestrian pavement markings to delineate pedestrian/ bike use areas. Remind residents (with signage or educational campaign) about Ohio law for stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks on Village website and in newsletters.
- Complete education campaign for parking program, where to park for residents, visitors and employees.
- Offer incentives to businesses and / or employees to park in designated lots so as to leave on-street parking spaces open for patrons.
- Complete a market study to identify unmet retail needs in downtown. Use the results to encourage business expansion and to recruit new business activity.
- Encourage volunteers to create more downtown events, use partnerships with other local and regional entities for additional volunteers.
- Utilize a "master calendar" to highlight all annual events downtown.
- Create a family of signs for use in a Village-wide wayfinding system (including parking, directional, informational, etc.). Signs should all have a similar look and image regardless of where it is placed and its function.
- Officially define a pallet of street furnishings (lights, bollards, trash receptacles, benches), that will represent Downtown Whitehouse for years to come. Use this pallet of furnishings (particularly street lights) to identify arrival points downtown.
- Identify an existing organization (or create a new organization) equipped and chartered to acquire and assemble property as it becomes available for economic development purposes. A Community Improvement Corporation organized under the provisions of the Ohio Revised Code is one appealing option.
- Continue to offer incentives to private property owners to upgrade their buildings.
- Investigate a Business Improvement District (BID) or Special Improvement District (SID) to deliver more services to downtown businesses and patrons.
- Consider the creation of a new non-profit organization to coordinate all things related to downtown development and redevelopment.
- Set up a visitor's center in downtown to make the area more user-friendly. Distribute a map including business list, parking, and recreational areas and events calendar.

CORRIDORS



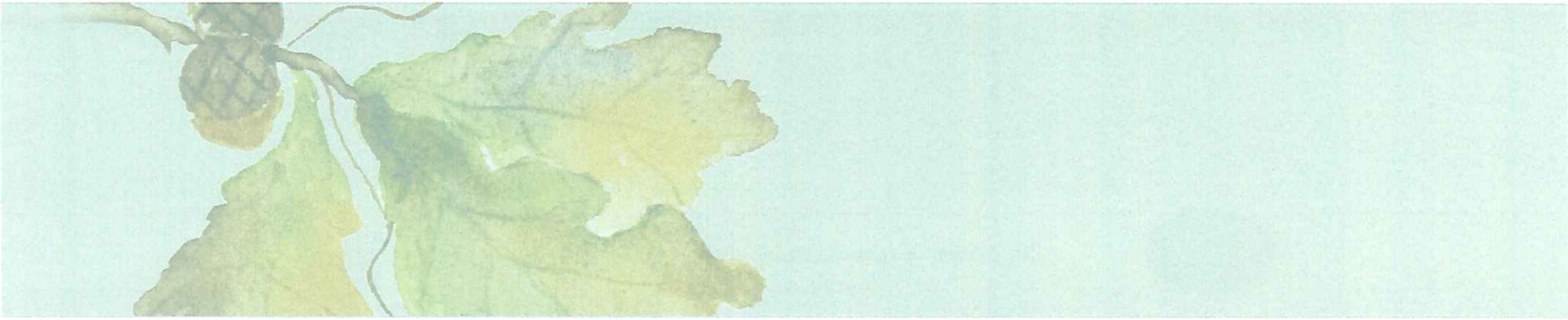
Chapter 7

MAJOR CORRIDORS

There are two major corridors in Whitehouse that demand attention – SR 64 and SR 295. Each have substantially different characteristics and attributes that will impact Whitehouse in the future. With the new alignment and upgrade of US 24, Whitehouse has become a more accessible community in Northwest Ohio. SR 64 (Waterville-Swanton Rd.) has grown in importance as the principal community gateway. In the years following the completion of US 24, a considerable amount of commercial development has occurred near the new US 24 / SR 64 interchange, following annexation activity and utility extensions from the City of Waterville.

SR 295 (S. Berkey Southern Rd.) on the other hand has grown in regional significance as a north/south link between US 24 and the Turnpike/Toledo Express Airport to the north. Future development of this corridor is likely to be different than what will be seen along SR 64, but characteristics of SR 295 are likely to present unique opportunities.

Along both corridors, today's decisions regarding permitted land uses and development standards in local zoning and decisions regarding public improvements to the road and utility systems will carry major weight in the years to come. Each of these corridors are described more fully below:



SR 64 – OVERARCHING VISION

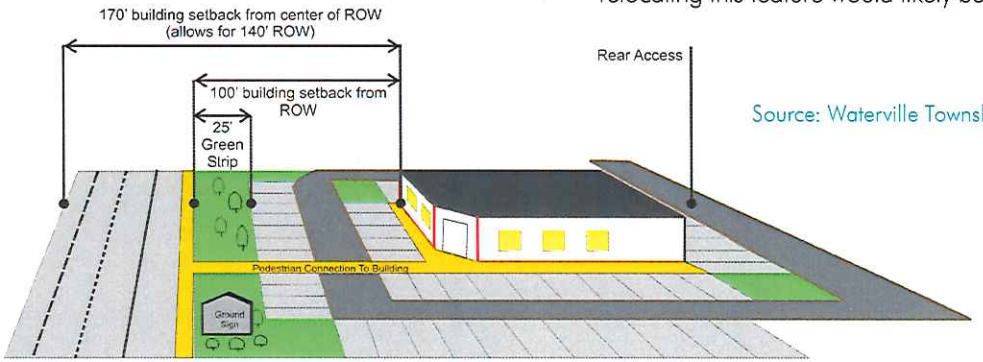
SR 64 corridor is the primary community gateway and the roundabout constructed in 2015 at Finzel Road that has added character and a sense of arrival and place. Based on the results from the visioning session, there is support for the planning concept that steps should be taken to avoid a development scenario wherein SR 64 becomes a typical suburban commercial strip. There is limited support for "big box retail" that includes large parking lots in front of buildings, 24/7 hours of operation and "franchise-type" architecture. There is support for including a non-motorized transportation option and a greater emphasis on landscaping to soften hard surfaces (parking lots, drives, building walls, etc.), along with existing natural features (such as Heath Ditch). Ultimately, Whitehouse and Waterville should be connected with a multi-use path on the north side of SR 64. Congestion is a concern as development occurs and therefore steps to control curb cuts are very important. There is little support for widening SR 64 beyond the need to potentially include a center turn lane.

Residents desire that future buildings along SR 64 have an upscale look. Quality materials are desired on exterior building surfaces, along with architectural detail that provide building complexity and visual interest. Mixed use buildings are encouraged to the extent that they could include retail, office and multi-family residential uses. Stand alone multi-family development can also serve as a transitional use toward future single family neighborhoods some distance from SR 64. A "campus" look and feel is also encouraged – especially if larger complexes of offices or facilities are proposed as a single development. Parking lots should wrap around buildings where possible to avoid deep fields of parking areas in front of buildings.

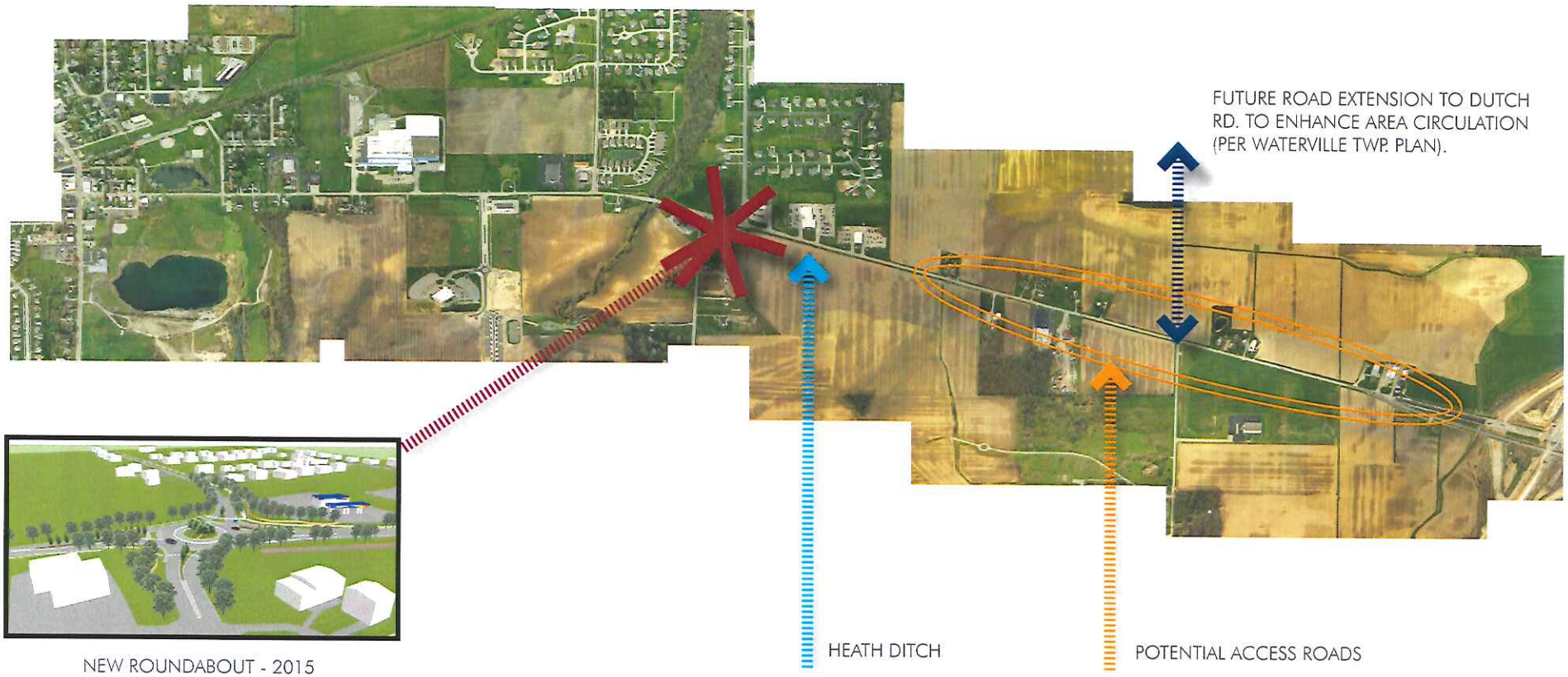
EXISTING CONDITIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Four existing considerations are worthy of note before taking into account the development of new perspectives for the SR 64 Corridor. These include:

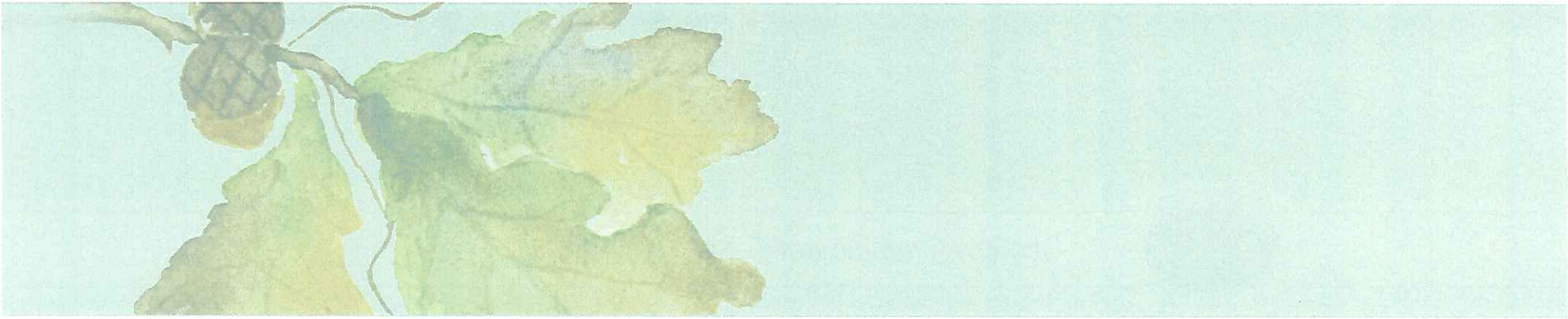
- Much of the undeveloped portions of SR 64 east of town are not in the Village. On the north side of SR 64, the corporation line splits the existing car dealerships. On the south side, the corporation line is east of Finzel Road. Consequently, Waterville Township Zoning Regulations establish development standards and requirements (unless annexation occurs).
- The 2009 Waterville Township Land Use Plan identifies the need for access roads where possible and identifies the possibility of extending Noward Road northward to Dutch Road. This would create a more significant intersection at SR 64 (perhaps even signalized in the distant future). Existing Noward Road and the northward extension of Noward Rd. could provide a location for access roads to connect and accommodate a rear access road concept on both sides of SR 64 in the future.
- Existing Waterville Township Zoning establishes an Overlay Zoning District over SR 64. Requirements in this Overlay Zone are focused on access control, signage requirements, landscaping and buffering and outdoor lighting. Notably, this Overlay Zone requires substantial setbacks that include either 100 feet from the right-of-way line or 170 feet from the centerline of Route 64 (whichever is greater) as shown below. These regulations are designed to accommodate a 5 lane road, wide berm, landscape strip and two rows of parking in front of a building (as shown below). Also, retail establishments 50,000 square feet or greater are excluded from areas within the Overlay Zone.
- Heath Ditch is a large ditch along the south side of SR 64. It is more than just a common roadside ditch and it falls under the jurisdiction of the Ohio EPA and US Army Corp of Engineers. Enclosing or relocating this feature would likely be difficult.



Source: Waterville Township Zoning



NEW ROUNDABOUT - 2015



PLANNING ISSUES

Going forward, a number of planning issues have surfaced that require attention in this planning update. Nearly ten years have passed since the Whitehouse Overlay Zoning District was put in place and a fresh look seems in order to make sure that local zoning requirements align with expectations and hopes for how SR 64 will develop (and redevelop) in the future. This assumes annexation takes place as utilities are extended and that an Overlay Zoning District is also extended along SR 64. Key planning issues fall into four categories and are described below:

1. Land Use: A foundational issue to consider for the SR 64 corridor is whether this corridor should be a commercial retail strip with single uses, or if it should be more of a mixed use (commercial, office and housing) corridor. Public input early in the planning process pointed toward the preference for mixed land uses that include commercial retail, commercial service, office space and housing. Mixed uses could be both horizontal (mixed uses in single buildings or separate buildings) and vertical (multi-story with one land use type on a ground floor and another land use type in upper floors).

2. Building Form: Related to how the building is used, is the issue of building form. Building form only relates to the size, height and placement of a building on a lot (not architectural detail). Options and alternatives run the gamut from large one-story buildings that extend horizontally across a site to multi-story buildings that add building mass vertically. Public input during the planning process pointed to an aversion toward large "suburban style big box" development models that include placement of a large building some distance from the road and surrounding it with parking. Greater preference was expressed for building forms that included single, two or even three story structures located close to the road with limited parking between a building and the road.

3. Building Design: Building design can be thought of as the "skin" of the building that wraps the building form. Building design includes the use of specific materials, colors, wall articulation, window and door placement and roof lines. Preferences expressed during the planning process include a strong desire to achieve quality design and a strong aversion to "franchise architecture" that does not communicate a sense of local context and place. One important design element for the SR 64 corridor related to connections that can be made between features being installed in the new roundabout at Finzel Road. with proposed knee walls along the corridor (as described more fully later).

4. Transportation: Residents support the notion that SR 64 should be both walkable and bikeable. One very important non-motorized connection is the extension of the shared use path in Waterville with Whitehouse on the north side of SR 64. This project is identified among the proposed projects in the TMACOG 2045 Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. The Waterville path currently ends near the US 24 interchange. The new Finzel Road. roundabout was designed to accommodate non-motorized travel. Ultimately, local plans include connecting downtown Whitehouse and the Bike Trail with the SR 64 corridor and the City of Waterville.

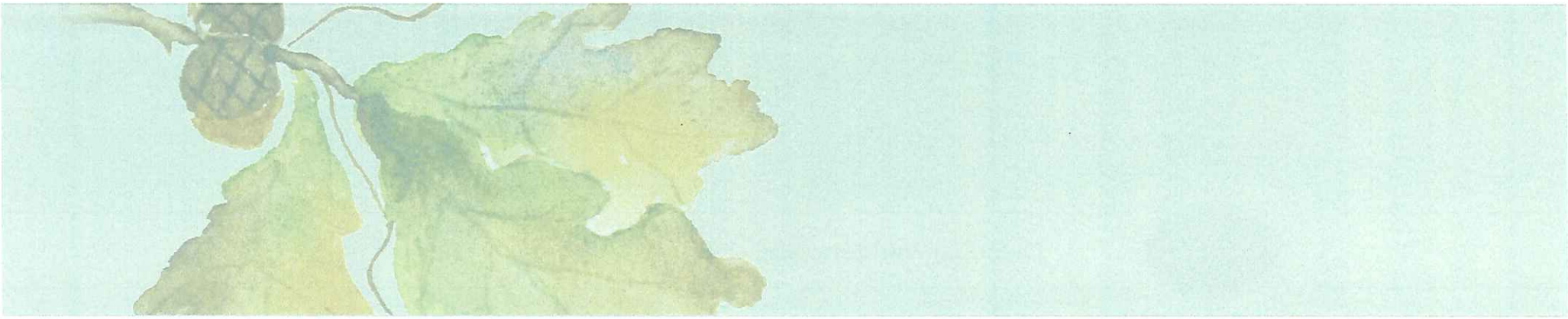
Apart from non-motorized transportation options, it is expected that ultimately SR 64 will become a three lane road east of the existing corporation limit (two travel lanes and one center turn lane). The pace of development activity will likely drive the timetable for the need for this improvement. As commercial development occurs toward the US 24 interchange, there will be more traffic generation and a greater need for a center turn lane to accommodate left turns. Presently, the SR 64 ROW is 80 feet wide, but the existing road pavement is not in the center of the ROW (it is skewed to the south). This leaves more space to accommodate a future non-motorized path on the north side of the road pavement. On the south, Heath Ditch is largely in the ROW, but this waterway is partially accommodated by an additional easement that is 20 feet wide.

UPDATED CORRIDOR VISION

Based on public input and steps taken during the planning process, the following graphics and illustrations express an updated vision for the SR 64 Corridor.

DESIRED ARCHITECTURAL STYLES FOR COMMERCIAL AND RETAIL USES ALONG SR 64.

The Village will promote an upscale look for future commercial development along SR 64. Complex wall and roof lines with multiple high quality exterior materials are desired. Design requirements in zoning will support this.



KNEE WALLS AS AN ORGANIZING DESIGN ELEMENT TO CONNECT SR 64 WITH COMMUNITY IDENTITY.

Knee walls along SR 64 would be a required improvement associated with future private development. Material used to construct these knee walls would be specified in the zoning code and consistent with material used in the gateway signage within the new roundabout. Specifications would also detail requirements for landscaping on both sides of the knee wall. Examples below illustrate a knee wall on a busy commercial thoroughfare with landscaping on both sides.

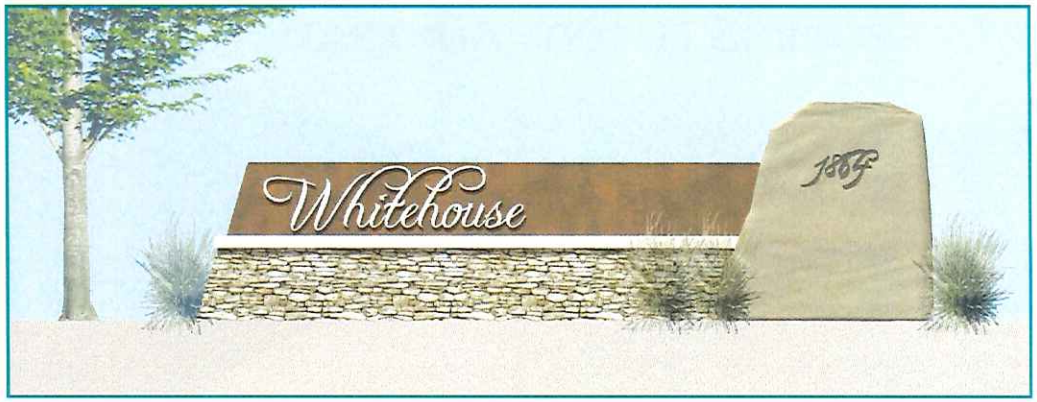


Illustration of Gateway Sign in Roundabout.

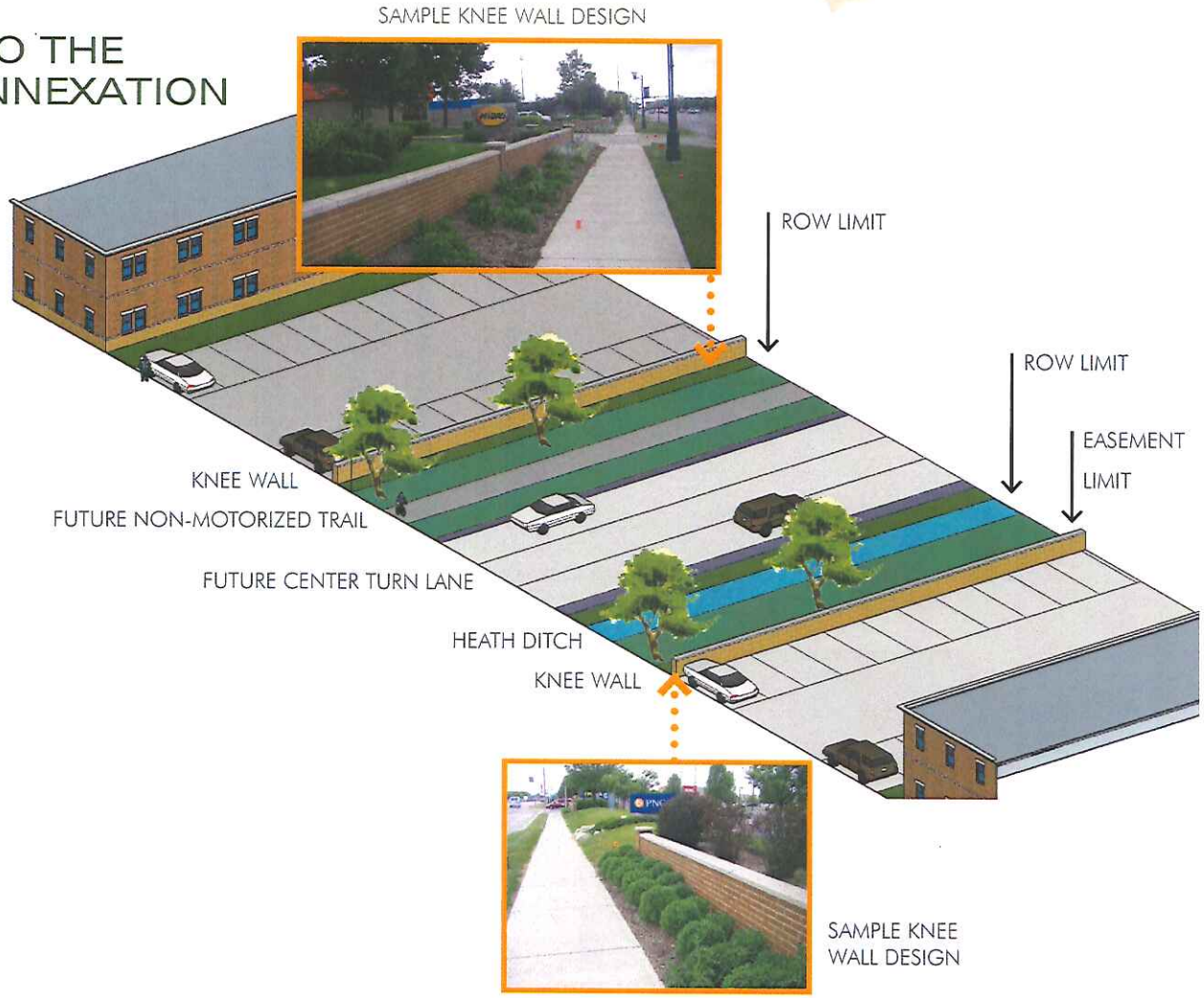
KNEE WALLS CAN BE USED TO SEPARATE PARKING AREAS FROM SIDEWALKS AND CREATE A UNIFYING DESIGN ELEMENT ALONG COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS. ALONG SR 64, KNEE WALLS WOULD BE BUILT USING STONE MATERIAL THAT MATCHES THE MATERIAL ON THE GATEWAY SIGN SHOWN ABOVE.

CONFIGURATION OF SR 64 TO THE EAST ASSUMING FUTURE ANNEXATION

SOME KEY POINTS

- Non-motorized trail connects Whitehouse to Waterville.
- Center turn lane added as needed with growing traffic demand.
- Materials on knee wall match stone material on gateway sign in roundabout and on exterior of Village Hall. Knee walls are about 24- 36" high.
- Landscaping required on both sides of knee wall.
- Commercial signage is placed on inside of knee wall no more than six feet high.
- Strongly encourage rear access drives and shared access to SR 64.

Existing Non-Motorized Trail just EAST of New Roundabout - Continues east along north side of SR 64



ACHIEVING THE UPDATED SR 64 VISION

Three areas should be addressed with respect to the SR 64 Overlay District so that zoning requirements better align with an updated vision for the SR 64 Corridor. These include:

1. Architectural and Site Design Elements
2. Corridor Setbacks Site Design Elements
3. Permitted Uses

ARCHITECTURAL AND SITE DESIGN ELEMENTS

Presently, the extent of required architectural and site design requirements only includes general statements that certain building elements should be considered. These include - scale and proportion; suitability of building materials; design in relation to surrounding buildings; design in relation to proposed landscaping; and aesthetics of the proposed building. What is needed is a more intentional and focused list of design elements to specifically address rooflines, colors, materials, window placement and entrances. The previous images (page 7-6) express the targeted architectural elements desired for the\ SR 64 Corridor.

CORRIDOR SETBACKS & SITE DESIGN ELEMENTS

Existing corridor setbacks and site design elements defined in the SR 64 Corridor should be re-evaluated to help achieve the following urban design plan. A key element of the development concept going forward is the inclusion of knee walls to help separate parking areas from the road right-of-way and help define a sense of place. The construction of knee walls also provides the opportunity to include stone materials that are similar to those on the Village Hall and similar to what is evident on the gateway signage in the center of the new roundabout.

PERMITTED USES

The SR 64 Corridor Overlay District established development standards that are intended to supplement those in an underlying Zoning District. Potentially, the underlying Zoning Districts include: "C-1" Neighborhood Commercial District, "C-3" General Commercial District and "C-4" Highway Shopping Center Business District. A careful review of these zoning districts is warranted from the standpoint of their applicability to the SR 64 Corridor. It might be that a new Zoning District should be considered for the SR 64 corridor – potentially replacing the existing Overlay District. This approach could potentially be more straight-forward and clear and more intentionally align with the desired land use pattern along this developing corridor.

SR 295

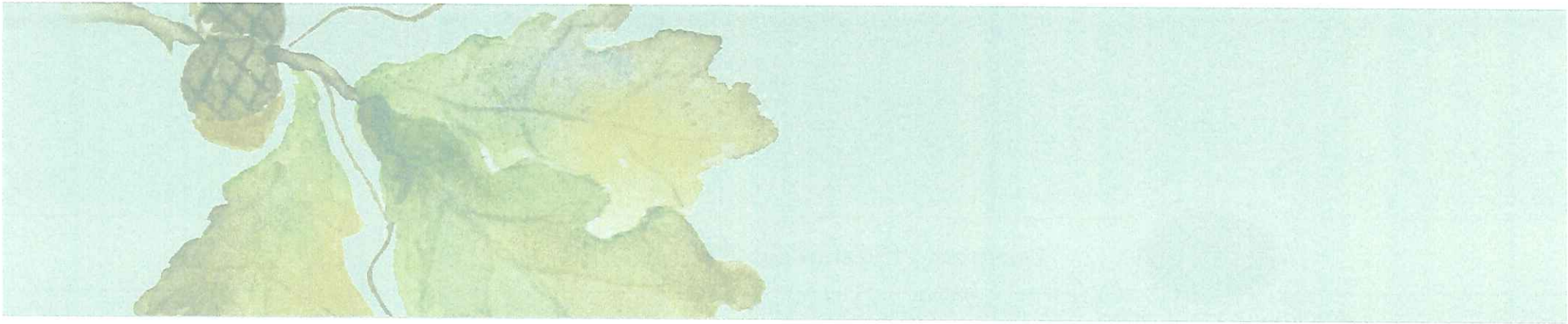
The 2005 Plan recognized SR 295 as a corridor of growing significance for Whitehouse. At that time, construction of the US 24 bypass was only anticipated, but the 2005 plan recognized the importance of SR 295 as a more significant north-south roadway in Western Lucas County. It also noted the need for sensitivity to the Oak Openings Preserve and Maumee State Forest. Now that US 24 is built, SR 295 provides a direct north-south route that connects US 24 and the Toledo Express Airport and the Ohio Turnpike (I-80).

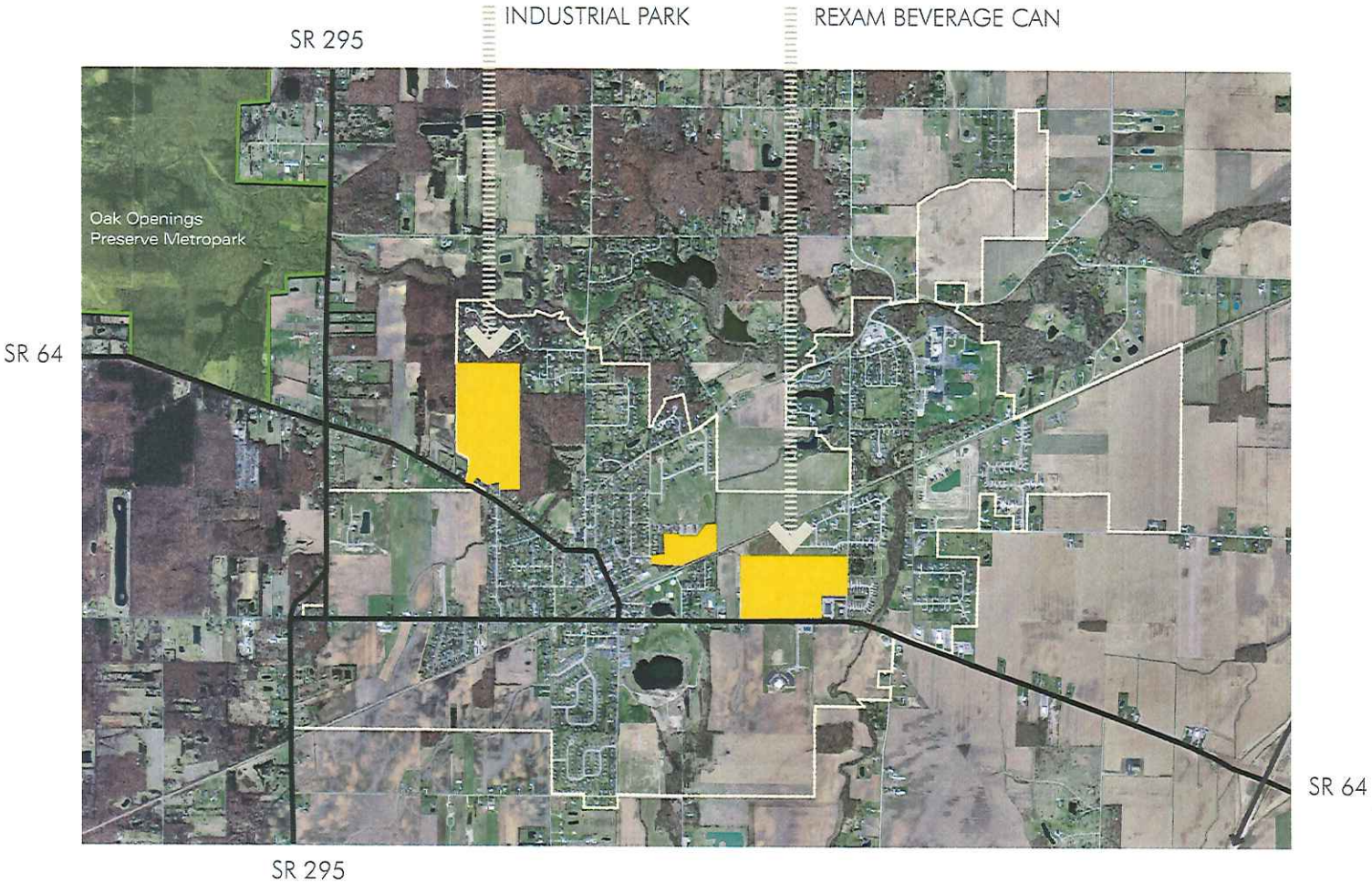
North of Whitehouse, SR 295 cuts through largely rural residential areas with considerable tree canopy related to both private property and property associated with the Oak Openings Preserve and Maumee State Forest. To the South, SR 295 connects to the US 24 interchange that is south and west of the US 64 interchange. Much of the land to the south is in Waterville Township.

In recognition of the growing importance of SR 295, Waterville Township recently adopted an Overlay Zoning District for the SR 295 Corridor early in 2015. This step was similar to steps taken by Providence Township. Waterville Township's Overlay Zoning District over SR 295 includes all land within 1,000 feet of the centerline of SR 295 and it was established in recognition of expected commercial development pressure. This Overlay Zone provides a list of excluded uses (such as adult-oriented uses, boat storage, flea markets, manufactured home parks, self-storage facilities, landfills and truck terminals). New buildings must be setback 50 feet from the ROW line,or 125 feet from the centerline of the ROW (whichever is greater). A landscaped area 25 feet in width is required next to the right-of-way. The Overlay Zoning District also includes some architectural controls over building massing, wall planes, primary building entrances, exterior materials, and it includes some access management requirements.

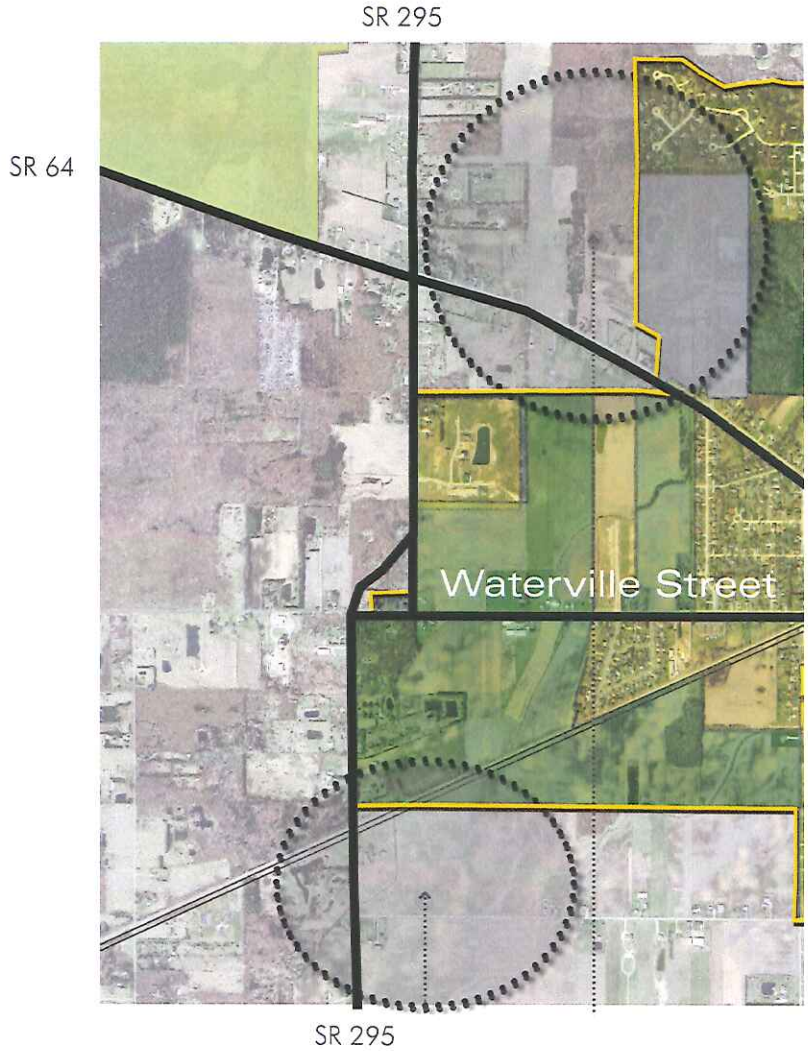
In Whitehouse, the growing importance of SR 295 is viewed primarily in terms of potential support for various forms of industrial development that would benefit from convenient access to the Airport and the highway network. As shown on the map on the following page, there are three industrial areas in Whitehouse (areas zoned M-1). Apart from Rexam Beverage Can located east of downtown and off SR 64, the largest concentration of industrial development is found along Industrial Parkway about ¾ of a mile east of SR 295. This Industrial Park is home to several existing industries and this area is at or near full build-out. Expansion of industrial development in this general area is appealing given the fact that SR 295 affords easy access to the SR 295 corridor and the Airport, Turnpike, and US 24. In this way, associated truck traffic would have minimal impact on the Village. Areas west of Industrial Parkway are not in the Village. A large area South of Waterville-Swanton Road. (SR 64) and north of Waterville Street is in the Village, but much of this land is zoned residential and is being developed residentially.

Two general areas that should be considered for employment center-type development are illustrated on page 7-12. Future steps to determine possible development concepts with specific property owner involvement is needed to help bring economic development possibilities into sharper focus.




INDUSTRIAL PARK
REXAM BEVERAGE CAN
SR 295
Oak Openings
Preserve Metropark
SR 64
SR 64
SR 295

The two general areas that should be considered for employment center-type development are within the large circles to the right. Future steps to determine possible development concepts with specific property owner involvement is needed to help bring economic development possibilities into sharper focus.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development is a required element in most comprehensive planning efforts. Communities are constantly trying to figure out how to retain and attract businesses to increase tax base to help fund services and programs demanded by residents the goods/services they need and want to maintain their quality of life. Some states feel so strongly about economic development, it is a required element in a comprehensive plan.

What is economic development? The Business Dictionary defines it as progressing an economy, or the qualitative measure of this, usually referring to the adoption of new technologies, transition from agriculture-based to industry –based standards, and general improvement in living standards. More simply put, economic development helps to pay the bills.

According to the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), a comprehensive economic development framework "is fundamentally about enhancing the factors of productive capacity- land, labor, capital, and technology- of a national, state or local economy." This term is used more than ever today, especially as we see the economy rebound from the Great Recession.

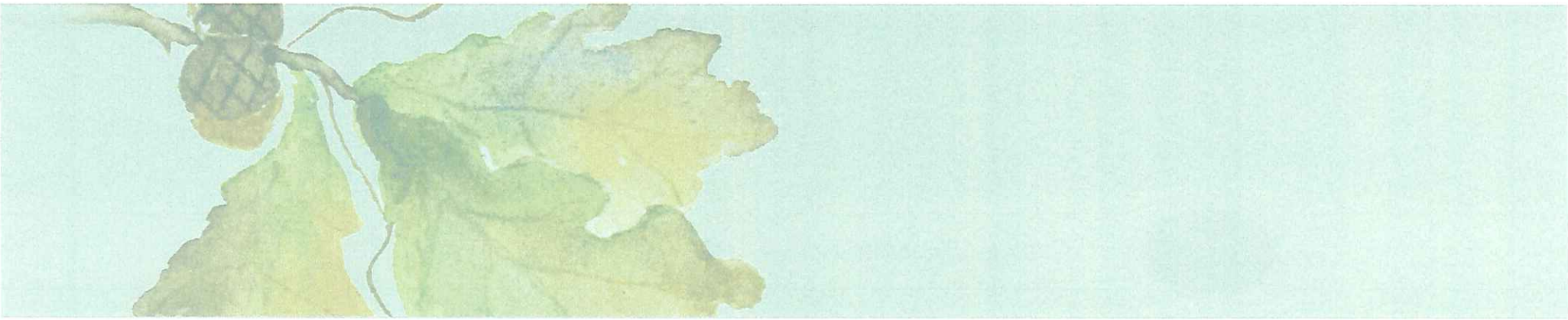
The Village has always been committed to planning and economic development. In 1997, the Village completed an Economic Development Strategy/ Land Use Plan. This document was updated in 2004-05 due to the considerable amount of growth and development the Village was experiencing. Key issues addressed in the Economic Development Strategy and Land Use Plan were identified and discussed during planning meetings with an Economic Development Steering Committee. These key issues included: industrial development, commercial development, downtown, transportation, quality of life issues, infrastructure, development scenarios, and code/regulations. These key issues were examined and evaluated relative to recommendations from the 1997 Plan. The Economic Development Committee of Council was charged with prioritizing economic development projects, specifically as they related to the various development scenarios presented

in the Plan and began implementation steps including: pursuing expansion of Industrial Park; initiating meetings between Whitehouse Square and Wise property owners; developing a strategy for extending Logan Street; and beginning discussions with western townships to coordinate future developments along SR 295, including realignment of SR 295 at Waterville Street.

Since the last planning initiative, the Village of Whitehouse has grown rapidly with rapid residential development. Along with this, the community has seen new commercial development on the east side of town and the completion of US 24, which now links metro Fort Wayne, Indiana to the metro Toledo area. In the Village itself, recent and current transportation construction activity includes the SR 64/Finzel Road Roundabout which is a major public improvement.

Going forward, many voices were heard during the Village's Visioning Session regarding the subject of needed steps to support economic development. Issues discussed included recreational/natural assets, new business park development, business friendly improvements, incentives, improved downtown, addition of restaurants, retail, hotel and services, and branding/marketing/tourism. As described in Chapter 6, participants broke into three smaller groups to discuss three key issue areas.

What flowed from this effort (and subsequent efforts), was the identification of both vision elements and proposed implementation steps. Essentially this boils down to "what to do" and "how to do it." Both are described as follows:



VISION ELEMENTS (WHAT TO DO)

1. MARKETING NEW COMPANIES TO LOCATE IN THE VILLAGE WITH INCENTIVES

The key to good economic development in any community is to create a plan for where various types of development should be located and then have a "tool box" ready to offer various tax incentives, grants/low-interest loan funds and technical assistance based on the development (commercial, office, industrial) type of business. All departments of the Village should be "user-friendly" when discussing new and existing business expansion. From the first phone call to the last meeting, a business should have the impression that they are important to the Village's current and future growth. Many counties in Ohio, and states across the Country, are adopting the "one-stop shopping" mentality related to economic development. An existing and/or new company should be able to find much if not all that they need to know about expanding or starting a new business in Whitehouse on-line (including available sites, spaces, demographics, cost, incentives, zoning, fees, permits, etc).

Economic development programs in the Village include tax abatement through the Village's three Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs) and one Enterprise Zone (EZ), as well as low-interest loans through the County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). The Village created the following CRA's to spur investment in the community: CRA #1 (#095-84770-02) in 1993; CRA Downtown #09 (#095-04690) in 1999; and CRA Industrial Park (#095-84770-01) in 2001. The Village is also included in a County-designated Enterprise Zone, Zone #297, City of Sylvania, ET. Al (1995).

Under the Village's CRA, the Village can offer up to 100% abatement for up to 10 years on real property investment (new construction or renovation) for companies locating or expanding in the designated CRAs. Multi-family units (with over two units) are classified as commercial and are eligible for abatement. The exemption and term are negotiated on a project-by-project basis by the Village's CRA Negotiation Team and Council must approve the negotiated recommendation. No portion of the project may begin until Council approves the project and the necessary documents are signed. Revenue sharing agreements with the schools are required.

Under the County's EZ, the Village and County can offer real and personal property abatement, up to 75% for up to 10 years, on companies locating and/or expanding in the designated EZ. Again, all projects must include Village and County approval, necessary documents signed and revenue sharing agreements in place prior to project start.

In the past, the Village has approved tax abatement projects for BASF and Heller, but these have since expired. There are currently 29 active EZ Agreements within Lucas County, only 4 within the Zone that Whitehouse is included in, but no active agreements in Whitehouse. The Village currently has 3 existing CRAs with no active agreements. In fact, the village has not completed a tax abatement project in many years, which suggests that better marketing of the programs offered may be needed. There are currently 19 active CRAs within Lucas County.

These local incentive programs are married with state incentives such as the JobsOhio Workforce Grant Program. The JobsOhio Workforce Grant was created to promote economic development, business expansion, and job creation by providing funding for the improvement of worker skills and abilities in the State of Ohio.

2. ATTRACT A TALENTED WORK FORCE FROM SURROUNDING AREAS AND GROW THIS WORK FORCE THROUGH CURRENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM (BOTH ANTHONY WAYNE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT AND PENTA CAREER CENTER)

In the economic development circles, one of the chief complaints of business/ industry owners is the availability of a trained and motivated workforce. One of the best things a community can do is cultivate its work force and make it business-friendly. Working with local school districts is one of the best ways to start this process. On the other hand, people strive to live and work in the same community. This arrangement is beneficial for smaller commute times, income tax payment benefits and an overall time saver for busy people and families. Whitehouse has the residential development and potentially the workforce who would like to live and work in the same community.

One important consideration that helps Whitehouse develop and maintain a talented workforce is the fact that Northwest State Community College has a presence in Whitehouse (located in the Anthony Wayne High School). A variety of 8-week and semester long courses are offered at this site.

3. CONTINUE DEVELOPING A STRONG WHITEHOUSE "BRAND" THAT APPEALS TO PEOPLE AND DRAWS INVESTMENT

Branding is so important in economic development planning. Communities must stand out to the consumer (business or resident) and be able to grab their attention and pull them in. In fact, branding has been directly tied to improving a community's image, contributing to increase in tourism, economic development and citizen pride. If a community does a good job of identifying and understanding its brand, this understanding will yield benefits far beyond just simple marketing, it can help guide decision making and support a community-wide mission.

The Village of Whitehouse evokes many things to many people. Some of the ideas from the visioning session include local history, railroad, natural features, recreational features, Oak Openings/ glacial grooves/ stone quarry, just to name a few. The brand image must be used universally on all print (paper, signage, marketing pieces, etc.) and electronic media (website, eblasts/newsletters, etc.).

The Village has made some key decisions with regard to its brand image with the design of the gateway sign in the new roundabout at SR 64 and Finzel Road. Further, knee walls proposed along SR 64 support this image connecting to the quarry heritage of the area. Similar steps to find ways to express community identity through branding and signage are highly encouraged.

Some Strong Examples of Community Branding

PETERSBURG
ALASKA
Little Norway. Big Adventure.

St!Louis
Perfectly Centered.
Remarkably Connected.

FARMINGTON HILLS
Michigan

ZEELAND

4. GROW DOWNTOWN WHITEHOUSE INTO EMPLOYMENT AND DESTINATION CENTER, LOOKING TO EXPANSION OF EXISTING BUSINESSES AND ATTRACTION OF NEW BUSINESSES.

Information on Downtown Whitehouse is covered more extensively in Chapter 6. However, the importance of Downtown as an economic development hub should not be overlooked. Many communities focus their attention on their industrial or business parks as sole income tax generators, but the power of small businesses should never be underestimated, especially with the shop local mentality that many people have and is currently growing across the State and Country. A strong, mixed-use downtown (residential/office on second floor and retail, restaurants and commercial on first floor) will not only become the living room of the community, but also a very powerful driver of the local economy.

5. REJECT COMMON SUBURBAN MODELS (BIG BOX, STRIP CENTERS) FOR DEVELOPMENT, FOCUS MORE ON UNIQUE BUSINESSES, SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS

Everyone is familiar with the common "strip development" that most suburbs have in their communities. These were once considered to be the best type of development for auto-oriented suburban markets. Cookie cutter strip development with chain stores, typically anchored by a "big box" development. Many communities in Ohio and around the country have been rejecting these types of developments outright or planning to locate/keep them at the outskirts of town on major transportation routes. These communities are in favor of offering goods/services in smaller scale developments, including reinvesting in central core (downtown) or life style centers.

Market studies have shown a trend toward smaller scale stores and movements to shop local (3/50 Project, Small Business Saturday). Consumers are asked to think of three businesses they would miss if they closed and then make a concentrated effort to spend $50 in each business every month, helping to "save the economy three stores at a time." Small Business Saturday is sponsored by American Express and was modeled on 3/50 Project and it occurs annually after Black Friday, encouraging consumers to support local businesses. The consensus at the Visioning session was that locally-owned, unique restaurants and shops were needed and wanted in Whitehouse. Big box development should not be encouraged, in fact they are fine where it was located, in neighboring Waterville.

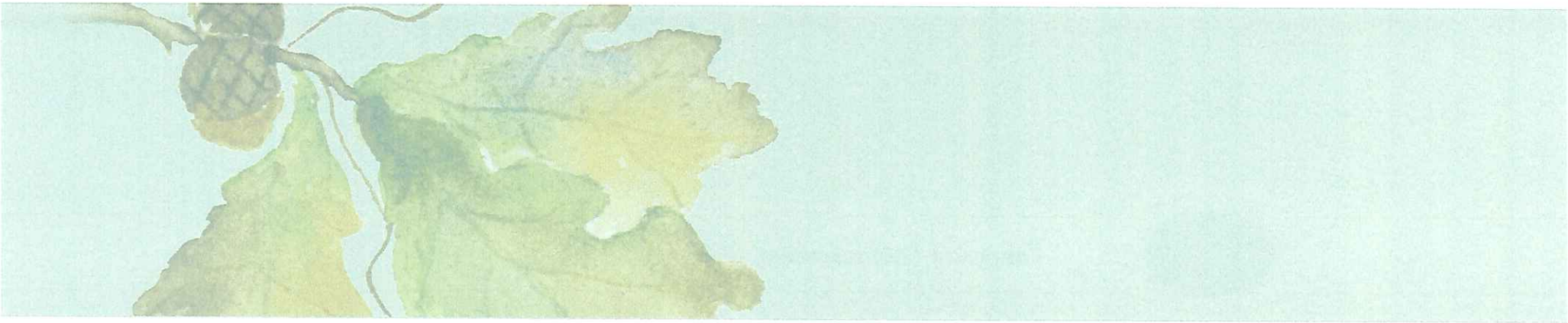
6. SPUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM, MARKETING THE AREA AS A RECREATIONAL/ NATURALIST NICHE

Tourism is now one of the world's largest industries and one of the fastest growing economic sectors. As the Steering Committee Members and Visioning Session Attendees were reviewing all of the recreational and natural features of the Village, many were surprised to see such a lengthy list. The Blue Creek Conservation Area, Gateway to Oak Openings, Whitehouse Village Park, Wabash Cannonball Trail, Anthony Wayne Youth Foundation Complex, Nona France Quarry, parks/areas planned from the Parks & Recreation Master Plan offers so much for the tourist (a day or weekend retreat). These resources could be complimented with shops and restaurants in the historic Downtown providing needed goods and services for these tourists. Visioning Committee members wanted to see Whitehouse maintain its "green atmosphere" and link any new businesses with bike paths, Quarry and recreational facilities.

OAK OPENINGS

REGIONAL BIKE TRAIL

VILLAGE PARKS



ACTION STEPS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (HOW TO DO IT).

ATTRACTING NEW COMPANIES

Strengthen existing and create new economic development programs for retention/attraction of businesses (in downtown, business parks, and existing strip development) as described below:

GRANTS/ LOANS

- Existing Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Economic Development (ED)/ Discretionary Programs, County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) and pending State RLF- low-interest loan funds (2-3%). Neighboring communities have taken advantage of these programs and funds can range from $25,000 to $500,000 depending on project size, job creation, project costs and available funds at time of application.

- Existing CDBG ED/ County RLF/ Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA)/ Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) - grant funds for necessary off-site infrastructure improvements. Grant funds through these sources can range from $25,000 up to $400,000 depending on project size, job creation, infrastructure costs and available funds at time of application. Lucas County and Whitehouse have utilized these funds in the past.

- New Job Creation and Retention Program- provide grant funds to businesses who are creating or retaining jobs, based on the company's gross payroll and the amount of municipal income tax such payroll will generate in the community. Maumee has had this program in place for over 20 years. Annual payments typically range from $1,200 to $20,000.

TAX INCENTIVES

- Existing Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)/ Enterprise Zone (EZ) Programs- real and personal property tax abatement- up to 100% for up to 15 years in the CRA for real property only and up to 75% for up to 10 years in the EZ for real and personal property.

- New Tax Increment Financing (TIF) - available o local governments to finance public infrastructure improvements and in certain circumstances, residential rehabilitation. Payments derived from the increased assessed value of any improvement to real property are directed towards a separate fund to finance the construction of public infrastructure defined within the TIF legislation. In Lucas County, Oregon, Sylvania and Toledo have open TIF agreements. In the past, Maumee has had success with this economic development tool.

Other

- New crowdsourcing funding is an option for business start-ups and other community-based projects. Crowdfunding is a practice of raising funds for a project by soliciting monetary public contributions. Using a web site such as kickstarter.com, those interested can view the particulars and pledge money. In return, they usually get something tangible, such as the product, a service, or admission to an event.

- Marketing packet for expanding businesses and new businesses to include step- by step- instructions on "how to" expand or locate in the Village. This would include community logo/tagline, all necessary zoning/building permitting information, all incentive programs, amenities, etc.

- All available land should be inventoried and mapped in the Village, including zoning, acreage/ square footage, seller/owner contact information, price per acre/ square foot, etc. This information should be housed at the Village and readily available for brokers and developers. Prior to publication, Village should ensure locations that are available and ready with proper zoning.

- As described previously, future industrial development should be oriented towards the west side of the Village to take advantage of SR 295. More work is needed to identify specific industrial development locations. It is also recognized that very low density residential development in the future in this area may diminish the industrial development potential of this area. Therefore, efforts to identify how the Village can capitalize on the high level of accessibility afforded by SR 295 should take place in the near term.

- Further examine the likelihood of the following types of businesses in the Village based on visioning session comments - professional offices; company headquarters; health care offices/facilities (medical offices, urgent care center, satellite medical facility); research and development; green energy; higher education; recreational facility (community center, indoor sports complex); technology centers for online businesses and/or call centers; and office condos ("rent a space").

- The Village should be supportive of local entrepreneurial efforts and look for opportunities to grow local businesses, whether this means taking home-based businesses into the Downtown or Industrial/Business Park or utilizing office condos, with shared facilities. A business friendly community also supports the "entrepreneurial spirit" which sometimes does not conform to existing business molds and/or zoning.Ensuring land/building space is available and th existing zoning code supports the various uses will be important.

- Housing as economic development should be considered. Ensuring that there are housing choices for the older and younger residents is very important. Housing options can be an economic development tool in itself. Examining different types of housing options (e.g. zero lot line, cluster homes, apartments, condos and even adaptive re-use of second floor downtown buildings) will only benefit the overall economic development strategy of the Village.

- The Village should continue to take steps to make sure it has a semi-public entity in place that can work to purchase key property when they become available and assemble land for development purposes. As noted in Chapter 2, some of the early development successes in Whitehouse are attributable to the creation of the Anthony Wayne CIC. Continued steps from an organization such as this are strongly needed to help create catalytic projects and key development activity (especially in downtown).

TALENTED WORKFORCE

- With such a focus today on college-educated graduates, it is projected that there will be a strong demand in the near future for those who have studied skilled trades. The Village can partner with Penta Career Center and Northwest State Community College and look for linkages between these educational programs and businesses needs in the Industrial Park (or elsewhere). Penta is currently celebrating its 50th Anniversary with the slogan "Shaping Careers for 50 Years."

- Anthony Wayne Local School District has an excellent reputation both locally and in the State of Ohio. Working with children as they age through the system by providing career speakers, mentoring programs and shadowing programs with local businesses will not only show the students that they can stay in Whitehouse after graduation, but also gives them ideas for course selection that will help them be more employable.

- Whitehouse could put open positions from area businesses on their website, linking an available workforce with area businesses. Networking between the residents and existing business could provide further economic development synergies. Quarterly "meet and greets" or after hours can accomplish this in a relaxed setting and could utilize a local restaurant.

BRANDING

- The Village should continue to develop a brand identity and take steps to refine and develop community identity. Major steps forward have been taken with recent decisions related to the gateway signage in the SR 64 /roundabout. Development of the community brand should build on this work with steps that continue themes with colors, materials, fonts and textures. If desired, the Village may convene focus groups and/or key person interviews to develop variations on the themes that can be used elsewhere.

- Ultimately, a new brand, tagline and logo should be on all printed and electronic Village mail (especially business cards, letterhead, billings). It should also be expressed in signage (e.g. entrances, industrial/business park, downtown, parking, etc.)

- Identify all things about the Village that relay the agreed upon brand and highlight them through additional marketing (printed and electronic) pieces, community calendar, Village Flickr account, etc.

- Update the Village's existing website to incorporate brand, tagline and logo. Ensure that site is user-friendly, especially for those who

are not familiar with the area (e.g. potential new employees, residents, and tourists.) Add contact information (office phone, mobile phone, physical address and email) for all elected and appointed officials and employees. Identify point person at Village Hall for all economic development issues. Add links to Chamber, County Planning & Development Department, and the State of Ohio.

FOCUS ON UNIQUE BUSINESSES, SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS

- Identify existing and new areas for unique businesses, shops and restaurants. Ensure existing zoning is conducive to allow these businesses to expand or locate here.

- Develop list of niche businesses, shops and restaurants in the Village. Include them in the branding/marketing campaign. List should be on Village, Chamber and tourist websites.

- Start a local 3/50 Project, using the Chamber as the contact point. The Village already has a number of strong, locally-owned restaurants and stores. Marketing the program at these places will help to continue the flow of dollars into other local restaurants and stores.

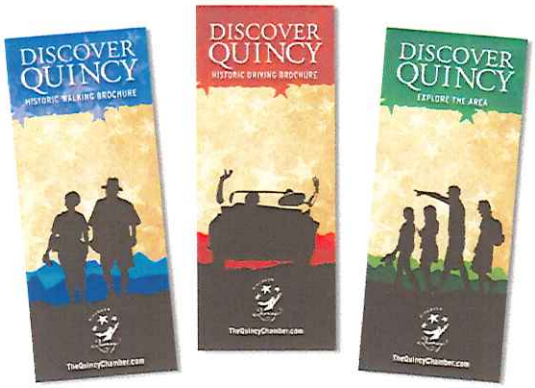
TOURISM

- Review list of all things recreational and natural to do in Whitehouse. Turn into 101 Things to Do For the Nature Nut in Whitehouse, Ohio. Publish on Village website, Chamber website and other Ohio and Michigan Tourism websites. Printed materials could also be provided as a second stage of marketing with a tri-fold brochure.

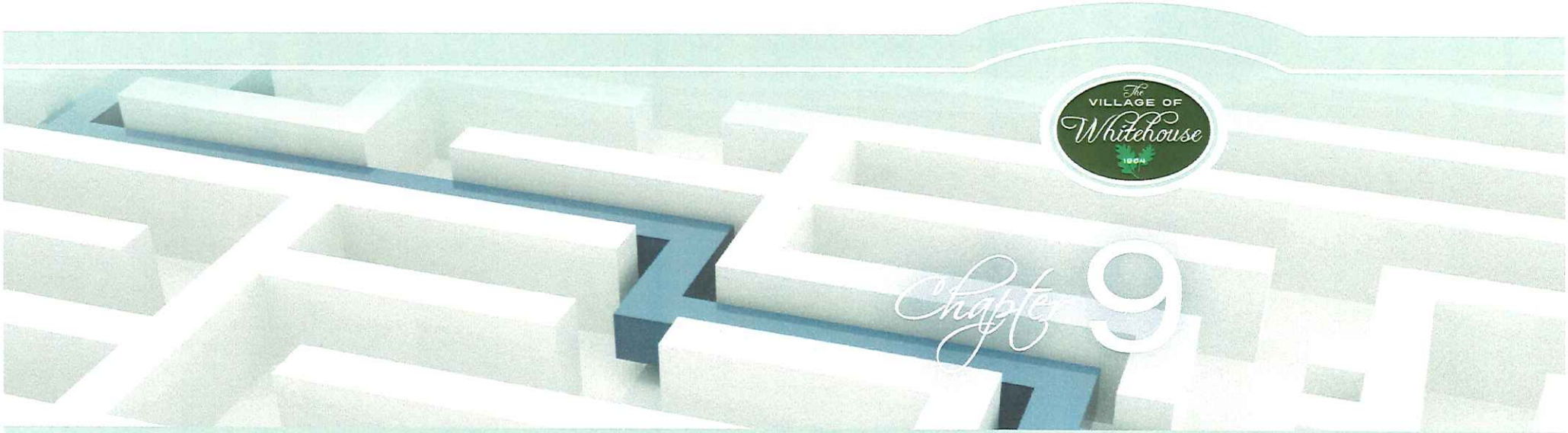
- Enlist businesses, specifically restaurants, in the Village to buy ad space and/or print up coupons to offer during larger recreational/ nature events in the Village (e.g. soccer tournaments, Cherry Fest, Founders Day, Birding in the Spring and Cross Country Skiing in the Winter at Oak Openings). Businesses should also do a zip code survey during these events to track where tourists are coming from to better market in those areas.

- Making the Village easy to navigate through a comprehensive signage system (further discussed in Chapter 6, Downtown) will help tourist traffic as well as local traffic.

Example of Community Brochures to Engage Tourists



IMPLEMENTATION



IMPLEMENTATION

Building a highly livable and desirable community is hard work. It takes vision, commitment and civic leadership. Community-building efforts must be sustained over the long-term. Without exception, all highly desirable and successful communities share the common trait of making conscious choices about community development, and then executing steps toward goals, bridging planning with results.

FUTURE ZONING UPDATES & ENHANCEMENTS

The municipal zoning code is perhaps the single most important tool available to shape the form and character of future development. Concurrent with the process followed to update this Master Plan, the Village Council (meeting as a committee of the whole) reviewed the existing zoning code in detail during a period of several months. The goal of this effort was to address long-standing shortcomings of the code and to consider how best to address new and emerging challenges.

Many of the changes discussed related to making refinements to existing language, removal of ambiguities, clarification of processes and procedures and general updates to code requirements. Issues raised and discussed during this Master Plan development process were more broad and include attention toward the Waterville Street Overlay District, the Traditional Neighborhood Development District (TND) and Downtown Zoning.

WATERVILLE STREET OVERLAY DISTRICT

Issues surfacing during the review of the zoning code with respect to the Waterville Street Overlay District center on two primary issues – boundaries and architectural design. The boundaries of the Waterville Street Overlay Zone extend 1,200 feet from the center of the ROW from the east corporation line to Indianapolis Street. Indianapolis Street is located close to downtown and several residences are included. Further, because the Overlay Zone extends 1,200 feet in either direction from the center of the ROW it actually covers a huge area (for example, 1,200 feet back from the centerline of the ROW covers most of the area zoned TND and extends nearly to the Cedar Creek Church Building). In essence therefore, much of the area zoned TND is also covered by the Waterville Street Overlay Zone. In terms of architectural standards, it was previously noted (Chapter 7) that the existing standards could be less vague and ambiguous. This consideration was also recognized during Village Council's review efforts and there are obvious connections that can be made with architectural standards provided in the TND District. Finally, it should also be noted that as an "overlay district" the Waterville Street Overlay District contains development standards that only supplement requirements established in the underlying zoning. Permitted land uses and many other development standards exist and are unaffected by the overlay zone.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT (TND)

Unlike the Waterville Street Overlay District, the Traditional Neighborhood Development District is an actual zoning district with permitted uses and development requirements. This Zoning District was created to encourage a mix of land uses with various housing types. This area is intended to provide an interconnecting street network, a town center, formal civic spaces and squares and pedestrian-oriented design. This district also intends to encourage longstanding architectural traditions of Whitehouse and the surrounding area. Some shortcomings are apparent in architectural standards and certain enhancements and clarifications have been identified.

DOWNTOWN AREA ZONING CODE UPDATE NEEDS

As described in the Downtown Chapter, there are many regulatory needs that must be met to help achieve goals for the downtown. These needs include the following:

- Shrink the boundaries of C-2. Fundamentally, there is a need to align the boundaries of C-2 to better reflect the actual downtown area – then based on this there is a need to update development standards accordingly.
- Create a "build-to" line in C-2. Future building construction should be pulled forward toward the street.
- Incentivize or otherwise encourage greater building mass in C-2. Three story buildings are preferred

Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.

Peter Drucker

in the downtown. Zoning regulations should encourage this amount of building mass (especially at the ROW line).

- Create Design Guidelines for Downtown (C-2 Zoning District as amended). This relates to creating design guidelines for downtown in much the same way as they exist for the Waterville Street Overlay District and within the TND District. Many years ago, the Village adopted standards to address the rehabilitation of historic properties in conjunction with efforts to secure funding from the State of Ohio through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Downtown Revitalization program and based on the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. This measure was certainly a step in the right direction, but these regulations should be embodied in the Zoning Code itself and they should be supplemented with architectural standards to address new construction. Typically, such requirements perform best when highly illustrated with photographic examples, graphics and illustrations (as opposed to verbal text that can be subject to interpretation).
- Review permitted uses in C-2. A careful review of permitted uses is needed to make sure that C-2 zoning allows for a full range of retail and service businesses. This includes ensuring that unique upper floor housing types (lofts, live-work units, efficiency units, etc.) are allowed so that opportunities to more fully develop upper floors are not hampered by unintended limitation in zoning.
- Review requirements for parking lots in C-2. Parking areas that border Waterville Street and Providence Street should be well landscaped. This includes fences and other landscape treatments that help to soften the transition between pedestrian space and vehicular space. Parking lot locations behind buildings should be incentivized and encouraged.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS TO UPDATE ZONING

- The Waterville Street Overlay District should be reconsidered in four ways. First, it is likely that it is too large at present and thus it applies to surrounding property inappropriately. Second, development standards should be amended to better align with the material in Chapter 7. This includes the need to provide building setbacks (and build-to lines) that correspond to a public road with three lanes in the future, a future non-motorized trail, knee walls and other landscape treatments. Fourth, if mixed uses are to be encouraged and promoted, the zoning district should allow them. Presently the Waterville Street Overlay District relies on permitted uses in an underlying district. There are more intentional approaches that can be taken to encourage mixed land uses.
- The Traditional Neighborhood Development District (TND) is also in need of improvements to address both building form, architectural design and mixed uses. These updates should align with requirements in the Waterville Street Overlay District since the two areas overlap.
- The C-2 Zoning District should be adjusted in terms of boundaries and then substantially rewritten to address new development standards and expanded permitted uses. Such adjustments may create the need for a new Transitional Zoning District for areas near downtown. Alternatively, existing zoning districts may be used to apply to areas removed from the C-2 designation.
- Prepare new design guidelines to better articulate desired urban form and architectural detail. New Design Guidelines are needed for three areas in Whitehouse – downtown, TND and Waterville Street/SR 64. These guidelines should be well illustrated to help convey desired building form and architectural elements. In the downtown areas, they should be merged with existing requirements adopted to address historic renovations (and required to remain eligible for downtown CDBG dollars).
- Update Definitions, key terms and add new uses; Definitions are an important part of any zoning code. Vague and ambiguous terms often cause enforcement problems and can create legal issues. Moreover, land use types are constantly evolving and uses of buildings that exist today sometimes did not exist a few years ago. For example microbreweries, artist live-work units, solar panels and wine bars are newer types of land uses which may or may not be clearly allowed or disallowed in zoning districts. This is problematic in cases where desired land use types are not clearly allowed in zoning districts.

OTHER PUBLIC INITIATIVES (NON-REGULATORY MEASURES)

DOWNTOWN

- Install "bump-outs" and more pedestrian pavement markings to delineate pedestrian/bike use areas. Remind residents (with signage or educational campaign) about Ohio law for stopping for pedestrians in crosswalks on Village website and in newsletters.
- Complete education campaign for parking program, where to park for residents, visitors and employees.
- Offer incentives to businesses and / or employees to park in designated lots so as to leave on-street parking spaces open for patrons.
- Complete a market study to identify un-met retail needs in downtown. Use the results to encourage business expansion and to recruit new business activity.
- Encourage volunteers to create more downtown events, use partnerships with other local and regional entities for additional volunteers.
- Continue to utilize, enhance and maintain a "master calendar" to highlight all annual events downtown.
- Continue to create and define a family of signs for use in a Village-wide wayfinding system (including parking, directional, informational, etc.). Signs should all have a similar look and image regardless of where it is placed and its function.
- Continue to define and develop a pallet of street furnishings (street lights, banners, bollards, trash receptacles, benches, planters, bike racks, water fountains, etc.), that will represent Downtown Whitehouse for years to come. Use this pallet of furnishings (particularly street lights and banners) to identify arrival points downtown.
- Identify an existing organization (or create a new organization) equipped and chartered to acquire and assemble property as it becomes available for economic development purposes. A Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) organized under the provisions of the Ohio Revised Code is one appealing option.
- Continue to offer incentives to private property owners to upgrade their buildings.
- Investigate a Business Improvement District (BID) or Special Improvement District (SID) to deliver more services to downtown businesses and patrons.
- Consider the creation of a new non-profit organization, based on the Ohio Main Street Program, to coordinate all things related to downtown development and redevelopment.
- Set up a visitor's center in the downtown to make area more user-friendly. Distribute maps including business list, parking, and recreational areas and events calendar.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Continue to utilize economic development programs to support the retention/expansion/attraction of businesses in downtown, business parks and elsewhere.
- Develop a marketing packet for expanding businesses and new businesses to include step- by step- instructions on "how to" expand or locate in the Village. This would include a community logo/tagline, all necessary zoning/ building permitting information, all incentive programs, and amenities.
- Inventory land and buildings available for economic development.
- Identify specific parcels for economic development that can leverage the accessibility afforded by SR 295.
- Continue taking steps to identify specific businesses that might be drawn to the Whitehouse area based on visioning session comments. These include - professional offices; company headquarters; health care offices/ facilities; research and development; green energy; higher education; recreational facility; and technology centers.
- Continue and expand support for local entrepreneurial efforts and look for opportunities to grow local businesses.
- The Village should partner with Penta Career Center and Northwest State Community College to help provide local educational opportunity and facilitate worker training programs with local businesses in the Industrial Park and elsewhere.
- The Village should continue to develop a brand identity and take steps to refine and develop community identity. Major steps forward have been taken with recent decisions related to the gateway signage in the SR 64 /roundabout. Development of the community brand should build on this work with steps that continue themes with colors, materials, fonts and textures.
- The Village should explore a shop local 3/50 Project. The Village already has a number of strong, locally-owned restaurants and stores. Marketing the program at these places will help to continue the flow of dollars into other local restaurants and stores.
- Promoting Whitehouse can include the development of a list of all things recreational and natural to do in Whitehouse to be published on the Village website, Chamber website and other Ohio and Michigan Tourism websites.
- Businesses, and specifically restaurants, should be encouraged to buy ad space and/or print up coupons to offer during larger recreational/ nature events in the Village (e.g. soccer tournaments, Cherry Fest, Founders Day, Birding in the Spring and Cross Country Skiing in the Winter at Oak Openings). Businesses should also do a zip code survey during these events to track where tourists are coming from to better market in those areas.