Diversify and modernize our local economy
Turn our current liabilities into future assets
Improve our community image

CHAPTER 8
FUTURE LAND USE

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CHAPTER 8
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INTRODUCTION

The Future Land Use Plan and Map (Map 8) is the culmination of the comprehensive planning process and serves as the City’s official land use policy. Together, the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map provide a flexible guide to promote informed public and private decision-making for the betterment of the community. Accordingly, it provides a framework to direct zoning and land use decisions. This chapter sets forth recommendations for continued use, new development, and reuse of land in the City over the next five to ten years. The Future Land Use Map is a link between what exists and what is desired.

The land use designations on the map are generalized; they are not intended to be site specific or follow specific property lines. Although the Master Plan and Future Land Use Map should form the basis for the Zoning Ordinance and other legal controls, the Plan and Map are intended to be flexible policy documents and decision-making guides. This does not imply that Master Plan policies should be ignored when land use decisions are being made. Deviations from the plan should be made only when findings support such deviation and after careful examination of the facts.

Map 8 Future Land Use graphically represents the vision for future land use and development within Middletown. Several factors were taken into consideration when developing the Future Land Use Plan including:

- Plan Goals and Objectives to diversify the local economy, modernize the housing stock, stabilize neighborhoods and revitalize downtown;
- A thorough review of existing conditions such as development patterns, land use, natural features, transportation systems, and development opportunities and constraints;
- Costs of Services study results (summarized in the following section);
- Real Estate Market Analysis results;
- Consensus items originating from interviews, public forums, steering committee and focus group meetings; and
- Sound land use planning principals and techniques.

LAND USE COST/BENEFIT ANALYSIS

In an effort to help develop a sustainable economic base, this section evaluates the cost/benefit of various land uses by comparing expenditures (cost assignments) spent on public services with revenues (revenue assignments) received by land use (i.e., residential, retail, office, and industrial). Cost/benefit results vary widely between cities dependent upon their revenue source, development regulatory practices, and general operating procedures. The results for Middletown are summarized in Table 17 Current Land Use Cost/Benefit Analysis, and discussed in the following the paragraphs.
The results of the Cost of Service analysis show that for the average existing single family home value ($91,600), the City is spending $473 more per year to provide services than it is receiving in local and state share revenue. This figure is not unusual and is, in fact, at the low end of the scale for older Ohio communities. New single family with an assumed value of $260,000 actually produces a positive cash flow of $234 per unit. The current break-even point for the City is a home value of $235,000. The City has limited land available for new residential development. Attempts should be made to ensure that new housing developed on one of the few remaining suitable greenfields is constructed at the cost of services break even value point.

It is worth noting that if the income tax credit were completely eliminated, a large percentage of existing single-family households would represent a cost/revenue break even point.

Multi-family housing represents a heavy cash flow loss for the City due to the low assessed value of units and the higher service demand requirements related to police response. The City has a relatively high concentration of rental properties (41%), and current data suggests that an increasing number of homes in Middletown will shift from owner occupied to rental property in

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**Table 17**

Current Land Use Cost/Benefit Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Existing Single Family</th>
<th>New Single Family</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
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<td>General Government **</td>
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<td>$639</td>
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<td>Fire/EMS</td>
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<td>Recreation/Open Space *</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Deficit</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MultiFamily</th>
<th>Newer Office/acre</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Government</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Road Maintenance</td>
<td>$62</td>
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<td><strong>Net Deficit/unit</strong></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Big Box Retail/acre</th>
<th>Industrial/acre</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>Revenue</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Revenue/acre</strong></td>
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<td>$8,318</td>
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**Includes Income tax
* Excludes Golf Course Revenue/Expense
the future. Over 30% of current homeowners in Middletown are above 65 years of age. This indicates that an increasing number of owner occupied structures will be coming on the market in the next ten to fifteen years. Elderly owner occupied homes tend to be older and not as desirable from a market standpoint. Some of these properties will likely be converted into rental units. High percentages of rental properties tend to reduce public participation and civic involvement particularly when they represent a high subsidized housing component.

The Cost of Service results highlight the benefits of residential redevelopment. If one acre of obsolete multi-family housing (estimated at 10 units) was replaced by four units of new housing, the resulting cost of service would shift from a deficit of $7,340 to a positive cash flow of $936, a net improvement of $8,276 per acre. The GEM market study indicates a demand for approximately 160 new owner-occupied units per year through 2007. If this were achieved in currently undeveloped areas it would represent an increased revenue source of $149,760 per year in 2007. If half of that number were achieved through redevelopment of older, obsolete housing, the net increase in operating revenue would be $927,640 per year. Clearly this indicates the long-term benefits of a defined redevelopment program.

- **Subsidized Housing.** The City has a substantial amount of publicly subsidized housing units living in the City. As the City is heavily dependent upon income tax revenues to meet operational cost demands, the high concentration of units with incomes of under $10,000 has significant effect. It is understood that programs such as Section 8 are a necessity and that they also create opportunities for owners of rental properties that are exhibiting vacancy rates of over 8%. However, large concentrations within Middletown result in reduced local revenue.

- **Office/Commercial.** Modern office complexes represent a positive cash flow of $6,703 per acre per year. This high level of net revenue per acre is attributed to higher wages paid to professionals working in office environments. The Cost of Service study supports the Master Plan goal to diversify the local economy (Goal A) and attract high-tech, high paying jobs. High-tech jobs are highly sought after by all communities in the region and nation for the same reasons cited here. Middletown’s absence of modern office park land availability must change before “new economy” jobs can be realized.

- **Big Box Retail.** Big box retail represents more of a break-even scenario due to increased usage of emergency services, lower salary scales, and higher road maintenance costs. This analysis suggests that the use of tax abatements, tax increment financing approaches or public participation in infrastructure costs is inappropriate for large-scale retail development on undeveloped land. The financial benefits derived by TIF and abatements do not compensate for the lost property tax revenues. This is particularly true due to the transient nature of retail in today’s retail market. The one exception to this would be the use of TIF for a mixed-use redevelopment project in the downtown or at Towne Mall.

- **Industrial.** The industrial development in Middletown is currently contributing to relatively modest revenue per acre cash flows on a per acre basis. However, this is due to the overwhelming spatial requirements of AK Steel. Using the parameters of a new office/industrial park as suggested in the GEM Market Study, an acre of new office/industrial could produce a positive cash flow of over $11,000/acre for the City even with full property tax abatement. However, GEM study assumes 24 employees per acre. Studies conducted by SPP for new industrial parks suggest that the employment rate would be closer to 10 employees per acre which would reduce the positive cash flow to $3,402 per acre with full tax abatements. If the City offered sites which included road improvements to be paid off over 10 years, a 50 acre new
industrial office park would be reflecting a $30,000 deficit cash flow for the first 10 years. After the road costs were paid, a 50-acre site would represent a $170,000 positive cash flow per year.

**Future Land Use Plan**

The Future Land Use Plan and Map concentrate primarily on defined development opportunity areas. Development opportunities in Middletown include a relatively small number of vacant greenfield sites and existing commercial properties with redevelopment potential. Development opportunities are described in more detail in Chapter 2 Community Description. Areas with concentrations of development opportunities were selected as Development Opportunity Areas for additional analysis in Chapter 9.

Map 8 Future Land Use provides a general overview for desired land use in Middletown. A more detailed account and specific development strategies for Development Opportunity Area follow in Chapter 9. Descriptions of planned land use designations shown on Map 8 follow:

- **Residential Preserve and Enhance.** The Residential Preserve and Enhance designation, shown as a pale yellow on Map 8, calls for the continued use and improvement of established residential neighborhoods including parks and existing neighborhood orientated businesses. Numerous housing infill opportunities exist within established neighborhoods. Infill development must be constructed in a manner that is contextually sensitive to surrounding properties and the greater neighborhood. Neighborhood scale convenience oriented retail and office development that serves the needs of the surrounding neighborhood is encouraged. However, such development should be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis to determine the need and neighborhood impacts. Commercial uses should be located on primary or secondary thoroughfares at the edges of defined neighborhoods. Existing residential properties must be protected from commercial development through the judicious use of landscape buffering and screening.

- **Low Density Residential.** Low Density Residential, designated as yellow on Map 8, is planned on vacant land that is suitably located to accommodate suburban style single family detached residential units. Density should not exceed four units per gross acre. Low Density Residential is limited to two locations: (1) at the south side of SR 122, east of I-75 and (2) in northeast section of the city, east of Breiel Boulevard. Master planned open space communities are desired in Low Density Residential designated areas to help market higher end developments and to provide residents with private recreation opportunities. Developer and homeowner association provided open space and recreation facilities will reduce City burden to provide new park facilities at these locations.

- **Medium Density Residential.** The Medium Density Residential use designation is shown as orange on Map 8 and is limited to one small area east of I-75 and another located on the east side
of Cincinnati Dayton Road and north of Hendrickson Road. A maximum gross density of 8 units per acre is planned in this area. The intent of this designation is to promote modern, higher quality multi-family development or attached single family development adjacent to employment and commerce centers. On-site amenities such as fitness rooms and common areas for socialization and recreation are encouraged. No other Medium Density developments are supported except when proposed in conjunction with a mixed use brownfield or greyfield redevelopment project. Redevelopment of existing, older multiple family structures are also supported.

- **Health Care.** Health Care is designed to accommodate Middletown Regional Hospital’s planned campus adjacent to I-75 and SR 122. This land use designation, seen as light green on Map 8, supports health care and allied professions including professional medical offices, medical administrative offices, dentist offices, optometrist offices, outpatient clinics, and ambulatory care facilities etc. Continuing care living facilities for elderly and special needs populations, education and hospitably uses are also appropriate.

- **Industrial.** Industrial, shown as purple on Map 8, is planned extensively in the southern third of the city and by Hook Field in the northwest. This future land use designation preserves the City’s existing industrial land base and provides ongoing support for existing industries located in those areas. However, the planned Industrial area located northeast of Hook Field is new. Implementation in this area will require a wholesale change in land use from existing conditions. General industrial uses are appropriate including manufacturing, fabrication, warehousing, and distribution. Heavy commercial uses such as contractor yards and equipment rentals are also appropriate. New industrial uses that generate excessive truck traffic, noise, and vibration etc., should be considered only if the existing roadway system can safely accommodate projected truck traffic and the potential nuisances can be mitigated.
**Business Park.** Business Park reserves vacant interstate visible and/or accessible land for modern, high-tech business parks. Parcels planned as Business Park are located east of I-75 and adjacent to the planned Middletown Regional Hospital campus. The purpose of the Business Park designation is to:

- Attract a synergistic mix of uses concentrated in healthcare, Information Technology and other “new economy”-related industries;
- Encourage a compatible mixture of clean industry and professional office uses within the same development parcel in a master planned, business park setting;
- Permit a flexible range of land uses to be responsive to the market;
- Allow a limited amount of ancillary service support uses and amenities for the businesses, employees, and residents in and adjacent to planned business park locations; and
- Create a high-tech employment base to diversify the economy and increase city revenues.

Planned processional office uses include medical, engineering, architectural, managerial, corporate and regional headquarters. Research, prototypical development, data storage, and computer centers are also appropriate uses. Suitable clean industry includes manufacturing using advanced or leading technology and industrial research and development. Clean industry uses must harmoniously co-exist with office development and meet similar performance standards for noise, fumes and vibrations, etc. Clean industry building design and materials must be high quality and be indistinguishable from office structures.

Up to fifteen percent (15%) of the land area designated as Business Park may be used for service support uses including dine-in restaurants without drive throughs, convenience orientated retail (less than 15,000 square per free standing store or shopping center), dry cleaning pick up and drop off, child day care, travel agencies, hotels, conference centers, banquet halls, and other similar amenity related uses. Such uses are planned for the preferential use of area employers, employees, and guests.

**Airport.** This designation supports Hook Field’s continued operation and enhancement as an economic development generator. However, the airport boundaries are not planned to expand. New development shall comply with all Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations that apply at this location. The development of an aero-industrial park is highly desirable on airport grounds and/or adjacent property planned as Industrial. This strategy should be used to attract companies that need corporate jet service or air based logistical supply lines.

**Retail/Office.** The Retail/Office designation is indicated as red on Map 8 and is concentrated at the I-75/SR 122 interchange. The Retail/Office designation envisions a wide range of retail, retail service, and general office uses at convenient locations adjacent to primary thoroughfares. Future development in these areas should consist of convenience orientated commercial uses to provide needed goods and services of residents located in proximate neighborhoods and the community, depending on market context. Big box retail uses, fast food restaurants, carry-outs, shopping centers are appropriate along with smaller retail operations such as cleaners, laundry mats, and beauty salons. Office uses can be placed in stand alone structures or be integrated in shopping center space.
**Institutional/Office.** Institutional uses include, but are not limited to: colleges, public and private schools; museums, cultural and public facilities; foster care facilities; and religious institutions. Miami University at Middletown and property located adjacent to University and Breiel Boulevards is the largest area planned as Intuitional/Office in recognition of the established intuitional and office uses located in that area. Likewise, a few smaller areas located throughout the City are planned as Institutional/Office due to the existing land use pattern. Institutional/Office is shown as light blue on Map 8.

**Mixed Use Commercial.** The Mixed Use Commercial designation, seen as light red with diagonal strips on Map 8, calls for greater flexibility by moving away from prescriptive single use districts. Residential, office, civic, and retail are appropriate in Mixed Use commercial developments. Mixed use can be arranged horizontally, where different uses are provided side by side or vertically, where different uses are located in the same structure but generally on different floors. Retail or office is preferred on the first and office and/or residential is preferred on upper stories in multi-story structures.

The Mixed Use Commercial designation is planned to enhance existing neighborhoods by reintroducing residential, employment, shopping and recreation opportunities in areas that have not seen recent investment or are lacking similar amenity clusters. Mixed Use Commercial is planned extensively in the downtown corridors of Central and Verity Avenues and at brownfield and greyfield development opportunity sites. A few key intersections are also planned as Mixed Use Commercial “activity centers” as a means to promote more neighborhood orientated retail and office amenities for surrounding neighborhoods. Intersections planned as Mixed Used Commercial activity centers include:

- University Boulevard and Nelbar Road,
- Verity Boulevard and Germantown Road,
- Oxford State and Yankee Road,
- Central Avenue and Cincinnati Dayton Road, and
- The northern half of Manchester and Cincinnati Dayton Road

Good urban design is paramount to the success of any mixed use development. Particular attention must be paid to the architecture, scale and placement of buildings in mixed use environments. The Mixed Use
Commercial designation intends to create neighborhood defining landmarks and encourage greater pedestrian activity and socialization at the neighborhood level. Mixed Use Commercial developments must incorporate the design principles articulated in Chapter 4 Redevelopment and Chapter 5 Housing and Neighborhoods

- **Mixed Use Residential.** Mixed Use Residential indicates a preference for stronger residential component in a mixed use environment. In this sense, residential should be the most dominate land use but can have supporting retail and office uses along with desirable open space amenities that accommodate higher densities. An example would include a row of townhomes that is anchored with a corner store or doctors office.

Mixed use is planned at several locations and is designated as orange with a diagonal stripe on Map 8. Mixed Use Residential is planned most extensively in the downtown area to serve as a transition between more intense retail and office operations in the Central Avenue and Verity Avenue corridors and predominately single family residential neighborhoods that surround the downtown.

Mixed Use Residential is planned at scattered redevelopment sites such as the current, but soon to be vacated, Middletown Regional Hospital campus and the former Roosevelt School site both located near Central Avenue. A Mixed Use Residential area is also planned north of Middletown Regional Hospital’s future location located on the north side of SR 122 and east of Union Road. It is anticipated that this area will be developed as a master planned residential community with on-site institutional and commercial amenities.