

DRAFT

Memorandum

To: Bath Township Steering Committee

Date: April 26, 2010

From: Wendy E. Moeller, AICP
McBride Dale Clarion

File Loc: 2507

Re: Land Use Recommendations

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the land use discussions the steering committee had during the last committee meeting in February. As we discussed, given the limited types of land uses existing or planned for in Bath Township, and given continued discussions with the township's legal counsel, we recommended altering how the township illustrates desired future land uses by prepared a draft land use plan map (See attached.) that simply shows the proposed land uses on a map rather than focusing in on the character areas. After much discussion, the following is a preliminary draft of text that could be included in the comprehensive plan to outline proposed uses on the land use plan map. All land use category names and descriptions are subject to further discussion with the steering committee during our next work session on April 27, 2010. Note, we have included images for the purposes of establishing examples of envisioned development types. For many of the existing use types, we will add these images in the next draft of the plan.

Park and Conservation Use

The majority of the area designated for park and conservation uses are part of the Cuyahoga National Recreation Area, the O'Neil Woods Metropark, and the Riding Sun Metropark. The remaining properties are largely residential with some public and institutional uses in the form of the Old Trail School and Hale Farm. The future land uses for this area should continue to be primarily parks and recreation with allowances for the residential use of any remaining private properties at a maximum density of one unit per five acres.

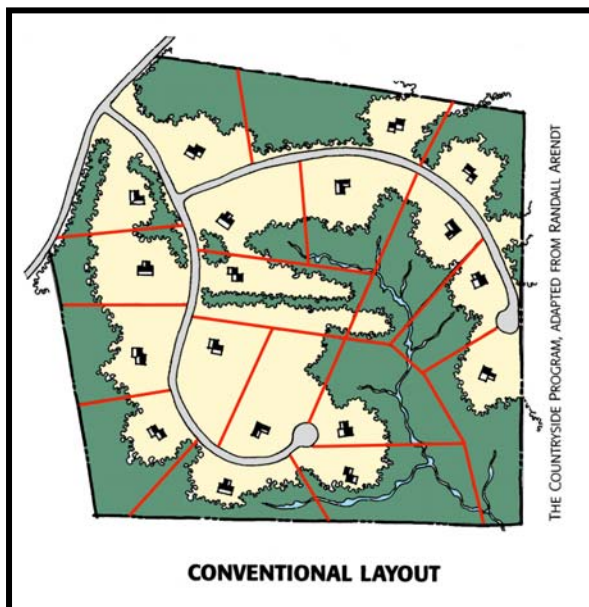
Rural Estate Residential Use

The rural estate residential areas of the township reflect the predominant use of Bath Township, which is agriculture and single-family detached residential uses on large lots. Currently, the only exception to the large lot development example is the residential development on the Firestone estate that was developed under the concept of a conservation development, which allows for the clustering of homes on smaller lots with the remaining land maintained in as open space by the homeowners association. The vision of the rural estate residential use areas continues to be for agricultural uses, single-family detached uses on large lots, and conservation developments, all at a maximum density of one unit per 2.5 acres. Parks and recreational uses, as well as public or institutional uses, are also appropriate for these areas of the township.¹

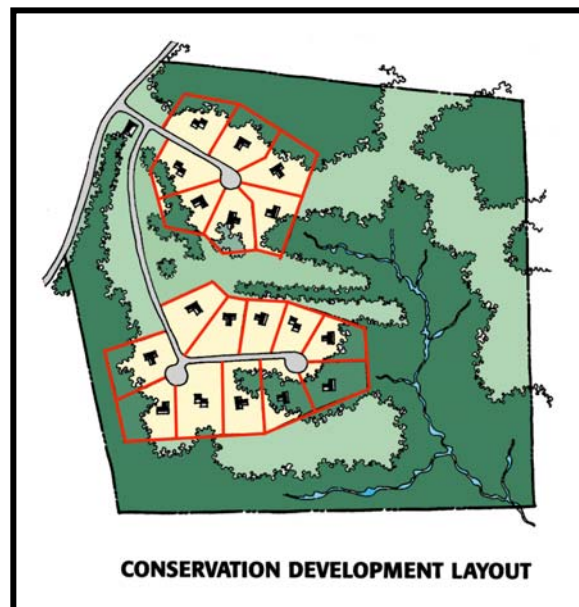
¹ I would like to facilitate a discussion about public and institutional uses in the predominately residential areas of the township. Many communities are concerned about the development of large-scale public or institutional uses (e.g., schools and churches) in low-density residential areas due to noise, lighting, and particularly traffic. If the township wants to develop a policy for public and institutional uses in residential areas, we should attempt to work it in to the appropriate land use categories.

Conservation developments² continue to be encouraged as an effective development method for allowing residential development while protecting key natural and environmental resources. Any new conservation development should maintain a maximum density of one unit per 2.5 acres³ while, to the maximum extent feasible, also incorporating the following principles into the subdivision layout:

- Locate lots to the rear of the development site, away from any designated Heritage Corridor, to protect the rural roadway corridors and maintain large areas of woodlands and open spaces along these roads;
- Locate lots in areas that are least likely to block any scenic views of hills, valleys, roadway corridors, waterway natural areas, wetlands, woodlands, or historic sites;
- Use the natural resources to buffer the visibility of homes by maintaining the tree canopy between the proposed development area and any roads; and
- Group lots into several clusters of homes within a single development to break up the concentration of housing into any one single area of the development.



Area	36 acres
Lots	18 lots
Open Space	none
Road Length	3,808 feet



Area	36 acres
Lots	18 lots
Open Space	53%
Road Length	2,072 feet

² Is there any desire by the township to allow for attached housing types if developed as part of a conservation subdivision? What if the attached housing types required a higher percentage of open space dedication?

³ Is there any desire by the township to provide a density incentive for developing a conservation development?

Suburban Residential Use

The suburban residential use area represents a compact area of moderate density residential development in Bath Township. The land, currently zoned as R-3 and R-4 residential, includes the Crystal Lake Village area and similar developments that, unlike the traditional neighborhood areas, is focused around open spaces and waterways with development along largely cul-de-sac roads. The future vision of this area is the continuation and maintenance of single-family residential uses at similar densities and layouts as the existing development.

Traditional Neighborhood Use⁴

Traditional neighborhood uses represent the highest density residential neighborhoods in Bath Township. The majority of the neighborhoods are comprised of single-family detached homes located in close proximity to Akron and Fairlawn. The future vision for these areas is the continuation and maintenance of single-family residential uses at similar densities and layouts as the existing development.

General Office Use

The general office use area in Bath Township is located along S.R. 18, east of Hametown Road, through the Montrose area where it comprises the predominant use along Springside Drive. The future vision for these areas is the continuation of non-retail, non-industrial commerce activities including, but not limited to, professional offices, health and medical offices, research and development, and financial institutions.

General Commercial Use

The general commercial use area in Bath Township is concentrated along State Route 18 around the intersection of S.R. 18 and Cleveland-Massillon Road. This area continues to be an appropriate location for commercial retail, office, and service uses that cater to both the local and regional market. This area will continue to be predominately oriented to auto-oriented uses but should encourage safe pedestrian access, particularly between adjacent residential areas and the commercial areas.

In addition to the traditional nonresidential uses commonly found in general commercial areas, this plan envisions the potential for mixed-use development in and around general commercial areas that would incorporate a residential component to the area.⁵ Allowing for residential uses in close proximity to commercial uses provides an increased number of “rooftops” within the market area of the businesses, thus supporting the viability of township businesses. The residential uses also typically provide different types of housing options beyond single-family detached homes (e.g., townhomes, low-density apartments, etc.) which in turn can provide attractive housing alternatives for young professionals and empty-nesters.

Within the concept of mixed-use developments are a number of variations including a general mixture of uses (e.g., retail, office, and residential) on a single site or an alternative that is often referred to as vertical mixed-use (e.g., office or residential uses over retail or office uses on the first floor). The following are general descriptions and illustrations of these variations of mixed-use development.

⁴ Does the township want to establish a maximum density or minimum lot area for this development in case there are future attempts at redevelopment?

⁵ This text was pulled from some draft language we proposed in Springfield Township that has a similar commercial area as the Montrose retail area. The proposal for mixed uses in the Montrose area still needs to be discussed but I wanted to include the text for the purposes of such discussions.

General Mixed-Use

General mixed-use developments incorporate multiple uses on a single site. What separates these types of developments from the construction of individual (separated) uses is that they are typically designed with a unified theme, integrated connections between the uses, and often include uses that build off of one another (e.g., residential uses that provide homes for office and retail workers). Important considerations for any mixed-use site are:



- Scale, to ensure that one use does not overpower the other uses;
- Unified theme to tie the development together;
- Connectivity at both the pedestrian and vehicular levels;
- Strong architectural and landscaping standards both to create a unified theme but also to provide for high-quality design; and
- Flexibility to address issues such as parking and circulation that are different from typical suburban style development.

Vertical Mixed-Use

Similar in nature to general mixed-use developments, vertical mixed-use emphasizes walkability, pedestrian scale, connectivity for pedestrians and vehicles, and a cohesive design. While common in downtown areas, vertical mixed-use developments are also showing up as redevelopment alternatives on suburban commercial corridors.



Hamlet Mixed Use

Along the Cleveland-Massillon Corridor are two very distinct hamlets, or crossroad centers, that are comprised of a mixture of residential, commercial, and office uses. Both Hammonds Corners and Ghent Village stand out from similar uses in other areas of the township based on the historic character of the development (e.g., built closer to the road in a more compact development form). The future vision of both of these areas is the continuation of this historic, hamlet style development with an emphasis on protecting the overall form of the hamlet including the:

- Scale and massing of buildings;
- Height of buildings;
- Setback of buildings from the road;
- Location of parking to the rear of the site; and
- To the maximum extent feasible, the architectural character of buildings.

Transitional Mixed Use⁶

The two main gateways into Bath Township along Cleveland-Massillon Road have seen a significant amount of transition over time. The vision for the future of the two areas designated as transitional mixed use continues to be to serve as a gateway entrance, with high-quality design, but may incorporate a mixture of small-scale uses including the following:

Attached Housing

Attached housing is a needed housing type in Bath Township to allow for options in both housing types and housing values that might attract young professionals or empty nesters. Attached housing may include rowhouses, townhomes, and attached patio homes where the units may share common walls but each unit has a separate exterior entrance. The maximum density of attached housing shall be eight units per acre with a maximum of eight attached units per a single structure. The maximum finished floor area in each unit shall not exceed 2,000 square feet in order to encourage smaller scale housing and to reduce the overall costs of this housing type.⁷



⁶ Note that we did not have a lot of discussion about the gateway area into Ghent Village, except related to the properties right at Ghent Road and Cleveland-Massillon. For the purposes of this draft, we have included it in the transitional mixed use category, similar to that of the northern area of Cleveland-Massillon Road where a number of uses may be appropriate under certain circumstances. This should be subject to further discussion.

⁷ We briefly discussed placing a cap on floor area as to encourage more affordable housing options.

Live/Work Units

Live/work units are a mixed-use type development that essentially allows for a commercial or office type use with a residential component for the business owner or employee. These units can be two-stories in nature (similar to a rowhouse) where the commercial or office use is on the first floor and the residential dwelling is on the upper floor(s) or may have the residential unit located to the rear of the nonresidential use. Live/work units should be designed similar to attached housing with no more than eight units per acre and all units shall have separate exterior entrances.⁸



Small-Scale Commercial and Office Uses

Both commercial and office uses are appropriate in this transitional area but should be small in scale with no strip centers that have multiple uses. Any new commercial or office use in these areas should be single tenant spaces (i.e., designed for only one user) with a maximum square footage of 15,000 square feet.⁹ The buildings should be oriented toward the street with only one row of parking between the building and the road to encourage development closer to the streets and to help create more of a gateway entrance.

Small-Scale Flexible Space (Northern Cleveland-Massillon Road)

The northern area of Bath Township along Cleveland-Massillon Road is comprised of a mix of commercial, office, and even some industrial uses due to close proximity to larger trucking related activities to the north. The Transitional Mixed Use area in the northern area of the township may include some future small-scale flexible space that has a building frontage that appears to be retail or office in nature but has some small warehouse space in the rear for a number of uses ranging from commercial to light industrial. In no case shall there be any industrial uses that require outdoor storage or operations. As with the commercial and office uses in this area, all new buildings shall be designed for a single tenant with a maximum square footage of 15,000 square feet. The warehouse portion of the building shall not occupy more than 50% of the total building space. Additionally, the buildings should be oriented toward the street with only one row of parking between the building and the road to encourage development closer to the streets and to help create more of a gateway entrance.

⁸ I am trying to locate an alternative image that illustrates a less modern architectural style to include here as an illustration.

⁹ This would allow a building similar to many Walgreen's or similar uses.

Four Corners Area

While not designated on the legend, the four corners area of the township (circled in red) will continue to be a topic of conversation. We have evaluated various residential development scenarios that minimize direct access to S.R. 18 and that are summarized as follows:

- 1) Maintain the existing land use and zoning recommendations for rural estate residential uses (one unit per 2.5 acres).
- 2) Allow for a slightly higher density of one unit per acre (as is allowed in the R-3 district) in a conservation subdivision style development that will have access off of Medina Line Road.
- 3) A third option that was briefly discussed, and that remains a possibility, is to designate this area as a possible location for attached housing.

We will present some maps and general sketches/concepts of the area to the steering committee during our meeting to solicit additional feedback.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss these land use recommendations further with the steering committee.