
The West Gahanna Development Study

Prepared for:
The City of Gahanna
James McGregor, Mayor

Department of Development
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February, 1997

Introduction

Overview of the West Gahanna Planning Process

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

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

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

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

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

How the plan was developed:

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

- ▶ **Key Stakeholder Interviews:** Interviews were conducted with "key stakeholders" on the study area's development and redevelopment. The stakeholders were identified by the City and included local residents, land owners, business owners, developers and realtors. The purpose of the interviews was to generate concerns, ideas and possibilities for the West Gahanna study area, and to set the stage for the WGDC to begin to discuss and debate these ideas. A complete list of questions and responses is included in Appendix A of this document.
- ▶ **Existing Conditions Survey:** Information was gathered on existing land uses and zoning, parcel configuration and ownership patterns, and infrastructure issues in the study area. This information was compiled into a report and presented to the WGDC at a public meeting.
- ▶ **West Gahanna Design Workshop:** The WGDC met with BBH and architects from Michael Schuster Associates for a design workshop. The Committee went through a "Visioning process" and generated ideas of what the area should look like in the year 2010. They then identified the most important steps the City should take to reach this "vision." These ideas were developed graphically into three potential development plans for West Gahanna.
- ▶ **Market Study:** The market study was presented to the WGDC for discussion at a public meeting. The committee was given an opportunity to add their recommendations to the document, which is included as Part III of the Plan.
- ▶ In a series of meetings, the WGDC developed a fourth development plan, the West Gahanna Development Plan, which built on and revised the best components of the other three proposals. The Plan was displayed at City Hall for two weeks for public review and comment. A citizen survey was included as part of the display, giving citizens the opportunity to express their ideas, reactions, and concerns.
- ▶ The WGDC met to approve the final plan in January, 1996. They discussed the citizen survey responses as well as phasing of plan implementation and public and private implementation responsibilities.
- ▶ The final plan was presented to City Council for consideration and adoption.

Part I: Existing Conditions

Development Trends

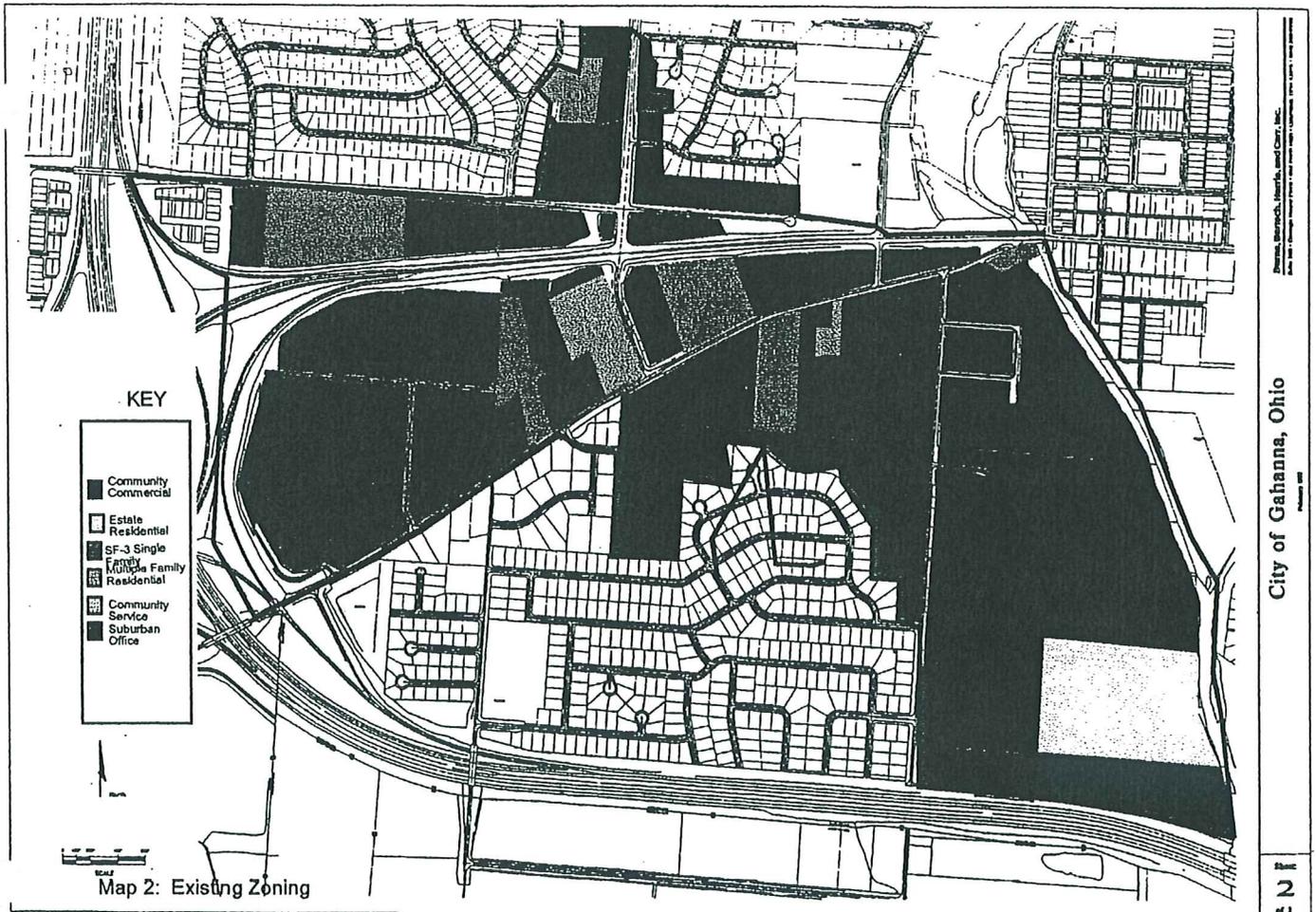
The WGDC reported that the West Gahanna study area is simultaneously experiencing redevelopment and decline. The new McDonald's and Woods of Gahanna apartments are seen by some as positive development trends, while others note the decline of the shopping centers, conversion of single-family homes to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

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

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

Zoning

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





Map 3: Existing Ownership

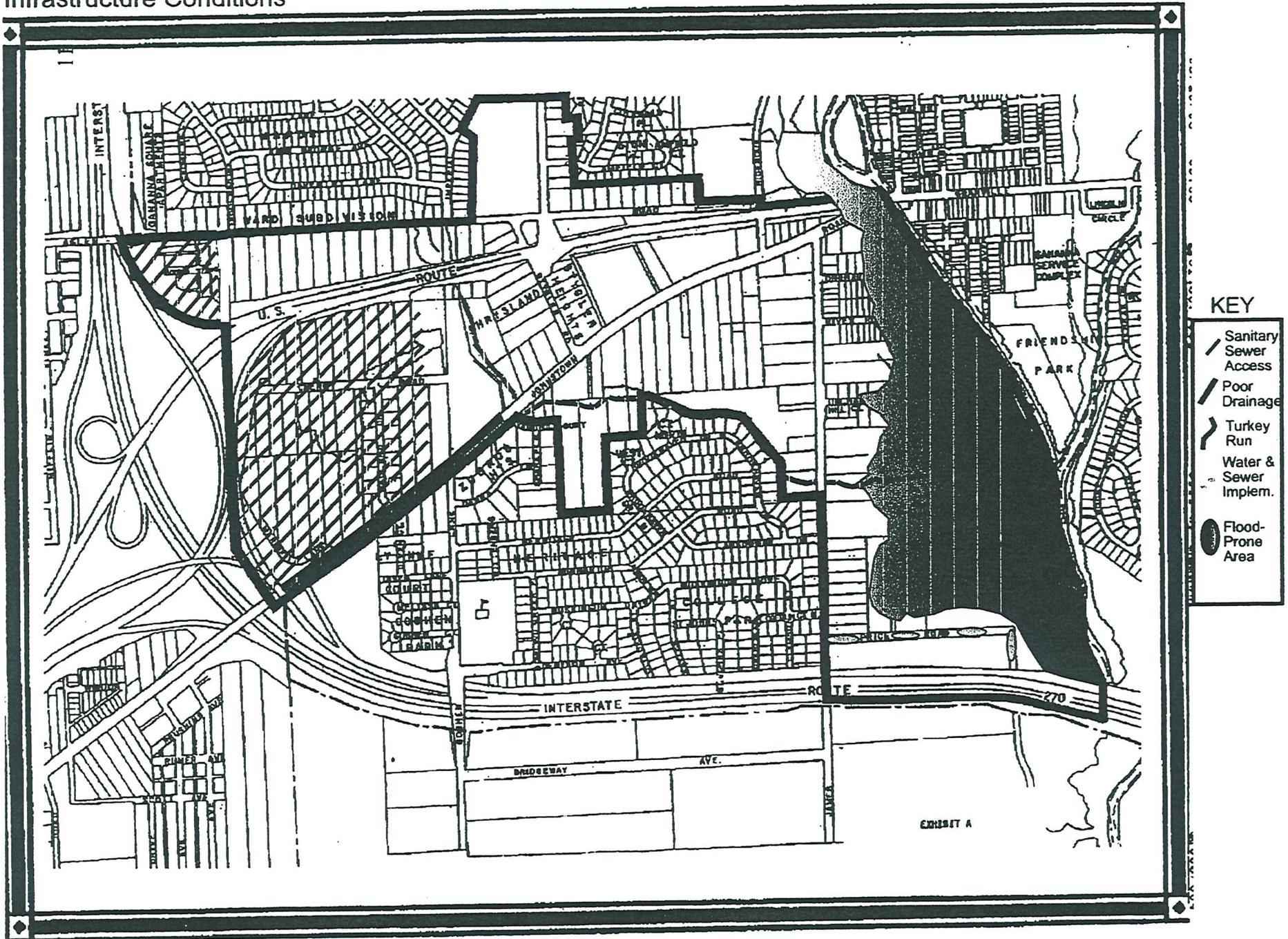
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City of Gahanna, Ohio

February 2002

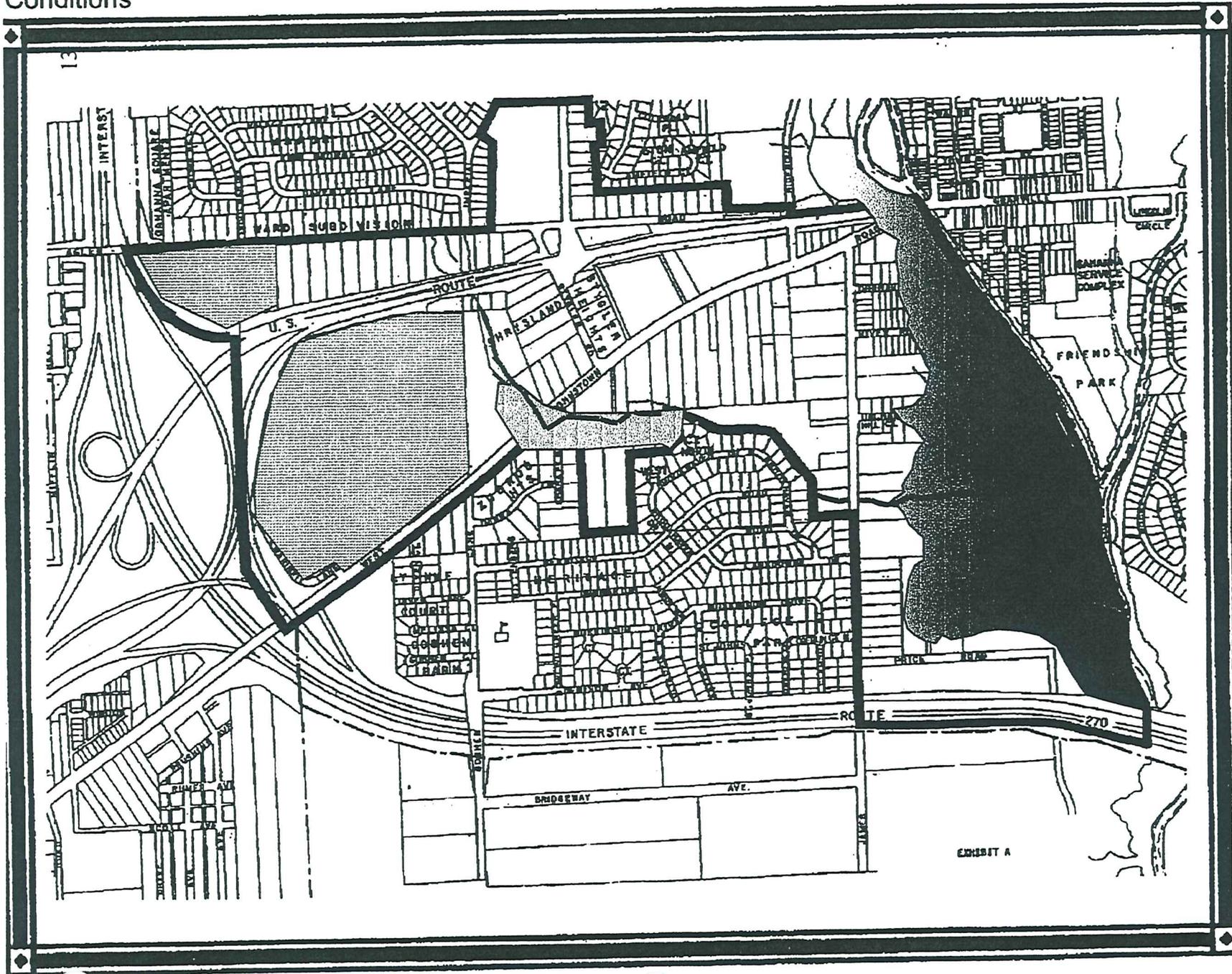
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Map 4: Current Infrastructure Conditions



- KEY**
- Sanitary Sewer Access
 - Poor Drainage
 - Turkey Run Water & Sewer Implem.
 - Flood-Prone Area

Map 5: Environmental Conditions



KEY

-  Wooded Areas
-  Turkey Run
-  Soil generally suitable
-  Soils Suitable with Additional Engineering
-  Floodplain (soils not suitable)

Recreation/Open Space

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

Zoning and Code Enforcement Principles

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

Part III. Market and Development Study

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

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

TABLE I

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

TABLE 2

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

Source: Claritas, Inc.

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

II. Demographics

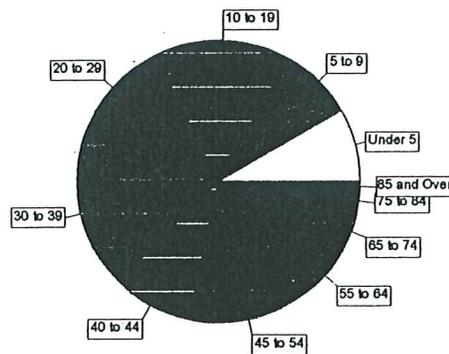
Gahanna's current population is estimated to be 34,272, an increase of 23.3% since 1990 when the population was 27,791 (Claritas, Inc.). There was a substantial 54.4% increase in population during the 1980s from 18,001 to 27,791. Gahanna's population is projected to continue to grow at a very healthy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

TABLE 3

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

Age Breakdown of Population

1995



Source: Claritas, Inc.

III. Development Trends and Public Policy Issues

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

TABLE 4

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

Source: City of Gahanna

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

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

IV. The Residential Market

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

Single-Family Homes

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

TABLE 5

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

Source: City of Gahanna

Rental Housing

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

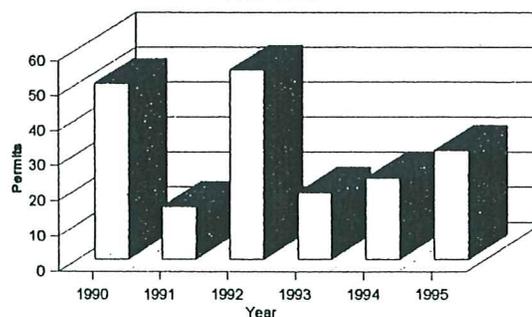
TABLE 6

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

Source: City of Gahanna

Multi-Family Permits

1990-1995



V. Commercial and Office Markets

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

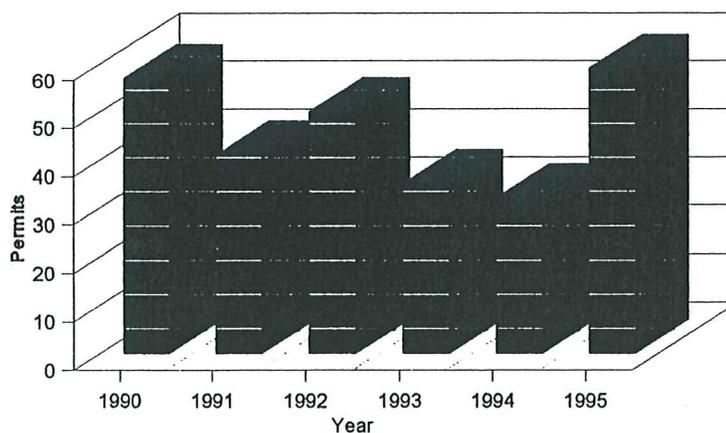
TABLE 8

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

Source: City of Gahanna

Commercial Building Permits

1990-1995



VI. Industrial Market

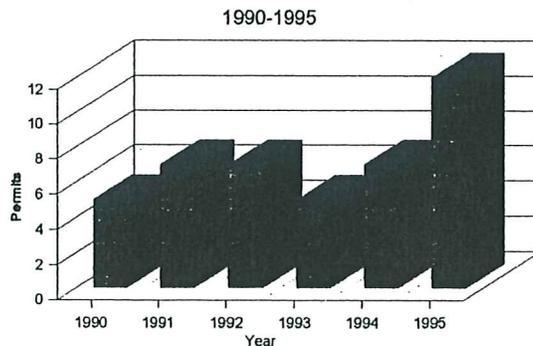
While Gahanna has seen some industrial development in recent years, it has not been as significant as commercial development in the City. Recently, several light industries have located in the City, including distribution centers, food service and food processing equipment, metal stamping, and plastics.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

TABLE 9

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

Source: City of Gahanna

Industrial Building Permits



VII. Consumer Expenditure Patterns

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

TABLE 10

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

Source: Claritas, Inc.

Part IV: The West Gahanna Development Plan

Introduction

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

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

Plan Overview and Phasing Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

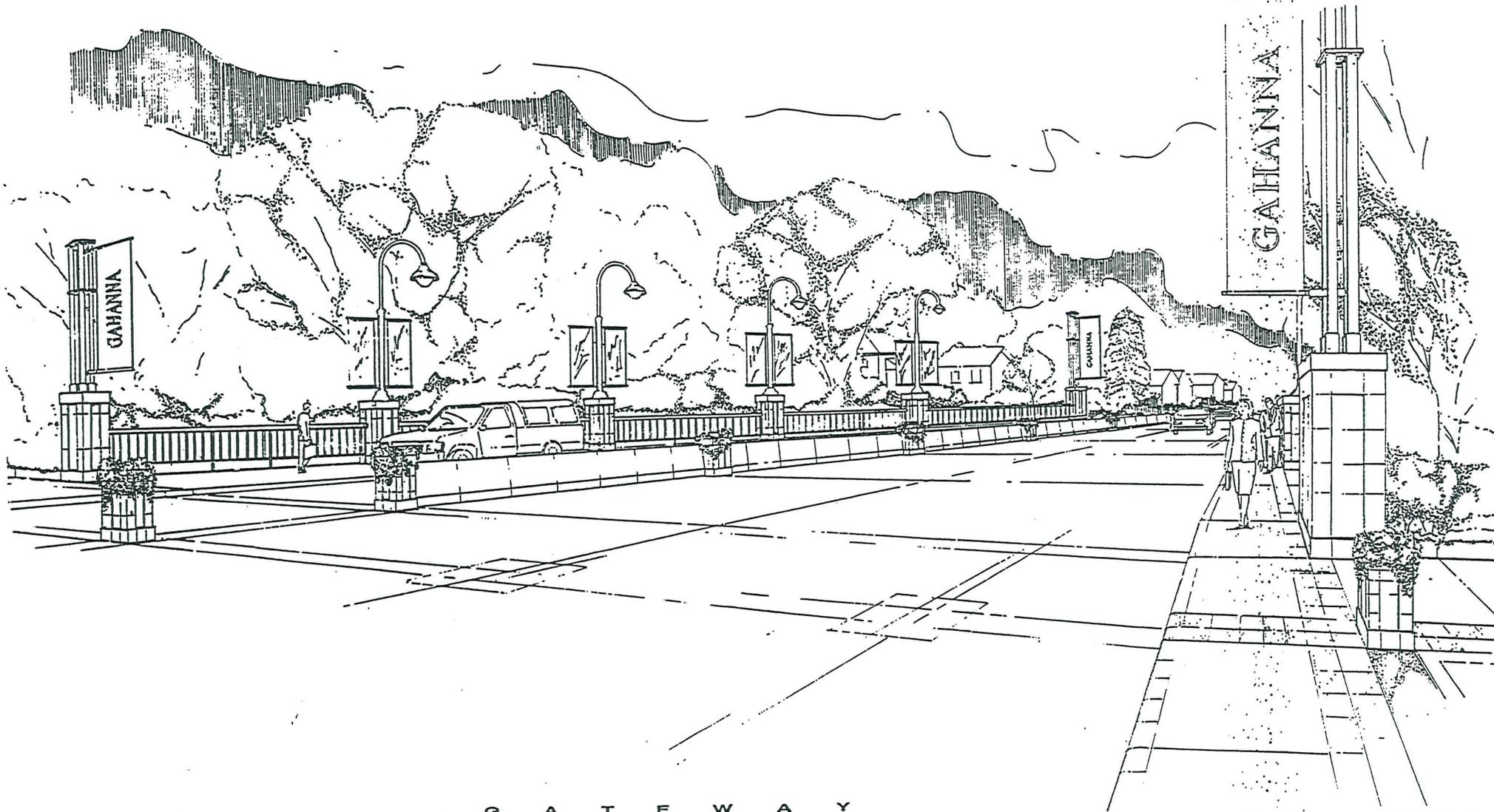
Phasing

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

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

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

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



G A T E W A Y



Metropolitan Services Association
100 West Main Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215
614-266-7800

City of Gahanna, Ohio

DECEMBER 1995

Burns, Bertsch, Harris, and Carr, Inc.

Suite 205 • Carriage House Place • 692 North High • Columbus, OH 43215 • (614) 365-0205

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

Timeframe: One Year

Responsible Parties: City of Gahanna, Mifflin Township

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

Achieving Land Aggregation Outside of a Zoning Regulation:

Form a Not-for-Profit Development Corporation

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

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

A. Corporation Structure:

IRS Status

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

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

in the commercial district.

**CHAPTER 1724:
Community Improvement Corporation (non-profit)**

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

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

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

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

C. Recommended Structure:

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

Landscaping Standards

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

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

Signage Standards

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

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

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

1165.08: Prohibitions

The existing list of prohibited signs might be expanded from the existing list to include pennants, streamers, spinners, reader boards (manually or electronically operated), search lights, projected images, gas-inflatable signs, and neon or neon look-alike signs. All signs on vending machines and trash receptacles should be screened from view of the public right-of-way and adjacent property.

The list of prohibited sign locations might be expanded from the existing list to include trees, natural objects, parks, and public property (except for public signs identifying the park or property).

1165.09: Determining Permitted Display Surface

These regulations should be applied as is except that applicants should be limited to one sign type per establishment as opposed to two.

1165.10: On-Premises Wall Signs

Wall signs should not extend above the second story window sill, and should not exceed 15 feet in height. A second wall sign should be permitted only when the establishment has more than 100 feet of frontage on each of two public rights-of-way.

1165.11: On-Premises Projecting Signs

Projecting signs, displayed in accordance with the regulations of this section, should be encouraged in pedestrian-scale, street-oriented commercial, office, and residential development.

1165.12: On-Premises Ground Signs

Low-profile ground signs are encouraged but not required in Gahanna. Ground signs in the study area should be restricted to this type, and the maximum height of such signs should be limited to eight feet. A second ground sign should be permitted only when an establishment has more than 100 feet of frontage on each of two public rights-of-way. Landscaping requirements pertaining to ground signs should be strictly enforced.

All Sign Types: Design (continued)

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

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

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

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

Timeframe: 5-10 years

Responsible Party: City of Gahanna, private developers

Source of funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Tax Increment Financing, developer contributions

Route 62 Landscaped Median:

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

Timeframe: 3-5 years

Responsible Party: City of Gahanna

Source of Funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Tax Increment Financing, ODOT

Route 62 Bridge Improvements:

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

Timeframe: 3-5 years

Responsible Party: City of Gahanna

Source of Funds: Capital Improvement Funds, Tax Increment Financing

Thoroughfare:

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

Timeframe: 1-5 years, as the area develops

Responsible Party: Developer(s), City of Gahanna

Source of Funds: Developer contributions, Tax Increment Financing

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

Timeframe: 1-5 years, as the area develops

Responsible Party: Developer(s)

Source of Funds: Developer contributions

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

Timeframe: Continuous

Responsible Party: City of Gahanna

Financing Recommendations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Abstract

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

Complete List of Responses

Positive Development Trends

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

Strong Points

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

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

Abstract

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

Complete List of Responses

Least Positive Development Trends

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

Infrastructure

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

Land Ownership

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

Lack of Visibility and Access

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

Other Issues

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

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

City Responsibilities

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

Other Issues

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

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

Development Standards

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

Other Issues

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

Specific Locations for New Development

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

New Land Uses

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

Zoning/Code Enforcement Strategies

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

Others

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

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

Infrastructure Strategies

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

Planning Policy Strategies

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

Development Code Strategies

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

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

Abstract

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

Complete List of Responses

COMMERCIAL

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

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

Session I - Question I

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

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

Session 1 - Question 2

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

1. Planned landscaped area, freeway to bridge.
 2. Increase in pride and interest (residents and City).
 3. Redevelopment theme (aesthetically, architecturally).
 4. Massing of parcels for redevelopment.
 5. Development corridors.
 6. Organized development.
 7. Traffic on bridge will be very heavy [related to #10].
 8. Upscale living area.
 9. City involvement to control type of commercial/residential development.
 10. Another bridge (North of present bridge).
 11. Unique landscaped entryway illustrating Gahanna's unique and diverse attributes, well-kept. [related to #1]
 12. Less crime, more law enforcement involvement.
 13. Bedroom community.
 14. Residential compatibility with any development/redevelopment (protecting residential neighborhoods).
 15. Preserved natural elements (i.e. trees, creek).
 16. Road widening.
 17. Negative stigma/attitude about West Gahanna is reversed.
 18. More upscale businesses.
 19. Shopping centers upgraded.
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17. More family events sponsored by City to bring families together - This is also a family responsibility.
 18. The WGDC plan was adopted.
 19. Less mass transit and road widening to preserve trees (maintain a smaller, "human oriented" community). {1}
 20. Require landscaping for new development as well as upgrading landscaping in public areas.
 21. Add sidewalks - people should feel comfortable walking. {1}
 22. Community groups and public sector participated. Diverse groups were involved. [related to #7] {4} **3rd Priority (Tie)**
 23. Did not settle for less than the vision. {1}
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Priority: Good City development direction and contribution

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

West Gahanna Development Plan: Citizen Survey Summary

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

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

- ▶ The landscaped Boulevard and Gateway. (4)
 - ▶ Lighting and foot traffic improvements. (2)
 - ▶ Green space. (2)
 - ▶ Landscaping. (1)
 - ▶ Bike/pedestrian walk. (1)
 - ▶ It should attract more business. (1)
 - ▶ Improves aesthetics-appearance. (1)
 - ▶ Stygler Road extension.
 - ▶ Street enhancements.
 - ▶ Street configuration.
 - ▶ Enhancing the look along Route 62.
 - ▶ Use of patterned paving if it coordinates with Olde Gahanna.
 - ▶ Olde Gahanna's character developed into the west side.
 - ▶ More commercial and multi-family zoning.
 - ▶ Single-housing development.
 - ▶ Balance of green space, multiple family, single family, and office space.
 - ▶ Growth potential for the whole area.
 - ▶ Opportunity for C. McKeag to develop his property.
 - ▶ Opportunity for Leichleiters to develop their property.
 - ▶ Chance for other residents to develop their properties.
 - ▶ Investing in the community.
 - ▶ Improves City's image.
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Question 3: Do you feel that the plan will meet the needs of Gahanna residents? Why or why not?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- ▶ Yes. (1)
 - ▶ Yes, to enhance the City's appearance.
 - ▶ Yes, this is important or else costs will be cut along with quality.
 - ▶ Yes, it would be great to have attractive landscaping in the plan because it adds so much to a town's atmosphere and beauty.
 - ▶ Yes, but make sure the state will allow the proposed Boulevard landscaping improvements.
 - ▶ Yes, this is very important because without uniformity, landscaping will be poor to non-existent.
 - ▶ Yes, strict requirements as codified. If new or enhanced restrictions are needed, amend the ordinances.
 - ▶ I would like to see strict landscaping requirements established by qualified people.
 - ▶ It is very important to maintain and enhance trees and greenery in the area.
 - ▶ It seems that most of the trees indicated on the plan are existing--the only extra landscaping seems to be along the Boulevard.
 - ▶ Yes, I would like to see larger plantings in the square dividers on the gateway, or strong color in them.
 - ▶ Yes, requirements should not be strict, but within the guidelines.
 - ▶ Yes, but the current City landscaping requirements do not need to be changed.
 - ▶ Landscaping is a very minor issue as compared to the inappropriate, large-scale proposed land uses changes.
 - ▶ I Don't know--there is not enough detail on the plan.
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Question 9: Which components of the West Gahanna Development Plan would be most difficult to achieve and why?

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

- ▶ Conversion of single family to office along James Road--it will be difficult to combine parcels.
 - ▶ Homeowners will oppose any deviation from single family residential.
 - ▶ Fighting with residents who will not accept a bike/walking path through the middle of their backyards or large commercial and office areas in a residential area.
 - ▶ Residents' desires may be contradictory and fragmented.
 - ▶ Changing the streets.
 - ▶ Extension of Stygler Road and Shara Park Place due to funding and construction.
 - ▶ Putting a road through where my home sets.
 - ▶ The extension of Sandra Court through my house and overriding my plans for the use of my property.
 - ▶ Bike/walking path.
 - ▶ Paving and landscaping improvements.
 - ▶ Don't know--expert opinion is necessary.
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Question 11: If you could make any changes to the West Gahanna Development Plan, what would they be (please describe)?

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

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