



MIDDLETOWN

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN for
MIDDLETOWN, OHIO

APPROVED April 19, 2022
EFFECTIVE May 20, 2022



DESTINATION MIDDLETOWN

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This Comprehensive Plan was prepared over the course of three years. The process involved participation and review by city leaders and a steering committee made of city stakeholders. We thank city residents and business owners who participated and reviewed this Comprehensive Plan. We appreciate your time and support.

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Executive summary

How can Middletown continue to grow and improve?

Middletown is a fast expanding and happening city. As the city faces transformational changes, it is vital to assess the current context and discuss with the community to determine how the future is shaped. To this end, the city initiated the Destination Middletown process. Destination Middletown is the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Middletown. It is intended as a guiding document that exemplifies the community's vision and goals for the city in the coming decade. The plan presents this vision with strategic guidelines and recommendations for improvement that incorporates and builds upon existing conditions and emerging trends in key areas, such as land use, economic development, parks and open space, transportation and infrastructure management, and housing. The plan is meant to aid Middletown with improving its standing as a premier community through improving quality of life and opportunities for residents, workers, and visitors.

From the community's vision, the plan identifies five aspirational goals/themes to focus Middletown's growth around: creating and fostering Resilient Neighborhoods, a Thriving Economy, Strong Infrastructure, Health and Safe Living, and Pride in Community. These umbrella themes resonate throughout the Comprehensive Plan and are supplemented by focused objectives and an Implementation Guide. The Guide provides a series of recommended action items categorized by the five major goals. The Comprehensive Plan and Implementation Guide will serve as policy framework documents that will help direct the city in prioritizing developmental growth and regulating policy changes to best achieve Middletown's vision for the future

PLAN OVERVIEW

The City of Middletown Comprehensive Plan represents an aspirational vision for the community as a whole that is grounded in reality and framed by past planning efforts. It is a statement of goals and intent. It should be used as a guide for making development decisions and as a basis for establishing priorities and yearly work plans.

The comprehensive plan will provide a road map for enhancing the cultural and economic vitality of our community through strong public-private partnerships and community leadership. Middletown prides itself on having a diverse community and rich history. It is important that as Middletown continues to evolve and develop that there is a focus on the health and safety of our community.

The City of Middletown is committed to hands-on economic development policies that promote the city's locational benefits, amenities, and resources along with business-friendly policies such as creating a one-stop-shop in order to streamline the development approval process. Maintaining the focus on the plan is a promise made to the residents, property owners, business, and everyone who participated in developing this plan.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan (also known as a "master plan" or "community plan") is a policy document for a community. Comprehensive plans can address a wide variety of topics in a city, such as land use, economic development, transportation, infrastructure, housing, parks, natural resources, city character, governance, sustainability, community desires, and quality of life. The most effective comprehensive plans provide a compelling and aspirational vision of what the community wants to be in the future, aspects it would like to improve, areas that need attention and focus, how it should guide growth and attract investment, and what it would like to preserve and strengthen for future generations. Achieving this requires the input and guidance of the community, for no plan is effective without community support and city adoption.





The Destination Middletown Process

The City of Middletown Comprehensive Plan Committee, which consisted of a variety of community stakeholders, appointed by City Council, played a large role in creating the foundation for the comprehensive plan. The first action taken in the creation of the comprehensive plan was to review the community vision and feedback that was provided by the 2017 Community Visioning Process "What If Middletown". That process served as the initial step for the comprehensive plan process as it included an extensive public outreach process to hear what topics and issues are important to the residents and stakeholders of the City of Middletown.

The plan's vision, goals, objectives, and implementation strategies were developed based on the feedback provided by the visioning process and confirmed by the Comprehensive Plan Committee. From there, the future land use map, special interest area plans, and additional plan recommendations were shaped and tested with city staff, the committee, and the public.

The complete draft plan was reviewed and approved by the city's Planning Commission and City Council. It was officially approved on April 19, 2022 to be effective on May 20, 2022 by Resolution #R2022-14.

In summary, the process for the comprehensive plan was as follows:



Planning History

The first City of Middletown Master Plan was adopted in 1965, substantially updated in 1977, and partially updated in 1997 to plan for new growth on the city's east side. Many of the recommendations found in the 1965 Master Plan and the 1997 update have been implemented. This fact coupled with new community conditions, expectations, and challenges underscored the need to prepare the 2005 Master Plan for the city.

The 2005 Master Plan established a single, community-wide plan that considered many of the recommendations set forth in previous planning efforts. The 2005 plan has served the city well and has been used to guide planning, fiscal, and other governmental decisions. Numerous departments have used the master plan as groundwork for submitting and receiving grants and other funding sources that have contributed to the implementation of the plan.

The 2021 Comprehensive Plan provides a road map for the city as it continues to grow and evolve. The comprehensive plan used different forms of public engagement and reflects the ideas, values, and desires of the community, aligning these with a range of plans, policies, and initiatives in place or underway in both Middletown and the wider region.

Moving forward, the comprehensive plan will help guide both day-to-day decision-making,



Image - Balloon Fest, Journal News

short-term actions, and longer-term initiatives and strategies to achieve the community's vision. The comprehensive plan will serve as a tool to help guide the community toward its desired outcomes. However, it is intended to be a living document, meaning it will be updated and amended as needed to reflect progress made, changing conditions in Middletown and the region, and the evolving needs of the community.

This updated plan serves as a reinvigorated foundation for the city, establishing a comprehensive vision for the future, refreshed land use recommendations, and both general and specific implementation recommendations to guide the city moving forward.

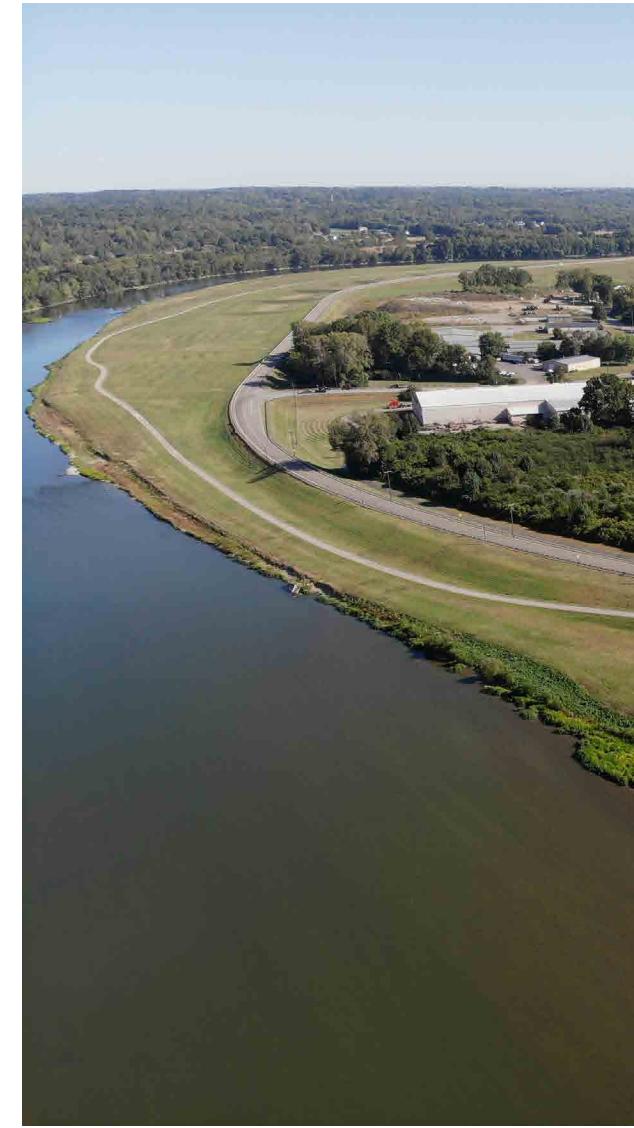


Image - Aerial view of the Great Miami River banks

Associated Planning Efforts

This comprehensive plan was informed by numerous other planning efforts that have occurred over the past few years. These efforts are summarized below and incorporated into this plan by reference. This plan aims to incorporate the various findings, recommendations, and strategies identified in these plans and studies, knitting them together into one cohesive message.

What If Middletown - Community Visioning Process - 2017

Throughout 2015 and 2016, numerous community engagement opportunities were held throughout the city with the purpose of bringing together various sectors of the community to identify problems, evaluate potential development, and build collaborative approaches to improve the quality of life in Middletown. Common themes that arose across all topic areas as priorities for what stakeholders want to see in Middletown include:

- *Cultivation of civic pride with a clear brand for Middletown and community assets; promotion of the exciting events available in the city; and strategies to attract and retain residents.*
- *A talented workforce, strong businesses, and a thriving economy fueled by better connections between education, business, and community organizations.*
- *A small town feel with access to world-class opportunities and inclusive services so that all residents feel like a part of the community.*

The visioning effort was championed by various community organizations including Middletown Moving Forward, the Middletown Community Foundation, the Community Building Institute at Xavier University, the Chamber of Commerce, and Eyman Creative.



Images - Middletown Community



Image - Downtown Middletown

Downtown Middletown Strategic Plan - 2017

The Downtown Middletown Strategic Plan was completed in 2017 to define the vision for Downtown Middletown as a place where our past, present, and future come together to represent the best of who we are and the best of what we can do. The purpose of the strategic plan is to:

- *Guide the community in evaluating proposed public, private, or public/private projects in downtown;*
- *Inform current and prospective property owners as well as developers on desirable growth patterns; and*
- *Measure progress and effectiveness of projects in Downtown Middletown to ensure they strengthen the community as a whole.*

The plan was a coordinated effort between Downtown Middletown Inc., The City of Middletown, the Middletown Community Foundation, and the Middletown Visitors Bureau.



Image - Park facilities

Parks Master Plan - 2021

The city developed a Parks Master Plan that was approved in December of 2021 to guide the community's parks and recreation vision over the next 10 years. This action-oriented plan identifies immediate needs that address safety and security; basic improvements like enhanced accessibility, restrooms, and upgraded playgrounds and sports courts that focus incremental investment in new and improved facilities throughout the park system; and aspirations such as multi-modal connectivity across the system and celebrating the community's connection to the Great Miami River. The plan also addresses the operational needs required to support these improvements. The 2020-2030 Parks Master Plan aims to provide direction and vision for quality-of-life initiatives that will attract and retain a vital workforce, support a vibrant and diverse community, and allow for a healthy and active lifestyle in Middletown.

Community Strategic Energy Plan - 2020

The OKI Regional Council of Governments in association with the Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance completed a citywide energy plan in March of 2020. The plan identifies energy burdens in the community and provides recommendations for cost-effective energy solutions, identifies urban heat islands, current energy usage, and other similar factors. This plan can be located at www.energy.oki.org/middletown.



Image - Middletown Aircraft

Airport Master Plan - In Progress

Middletown is currently working on an Airport Master Plan to address the future development and operations of the Middletown Regional Airport/Hook Field. The plan will include a 10-year Capital Improvement Plan and a layout plan for future development.



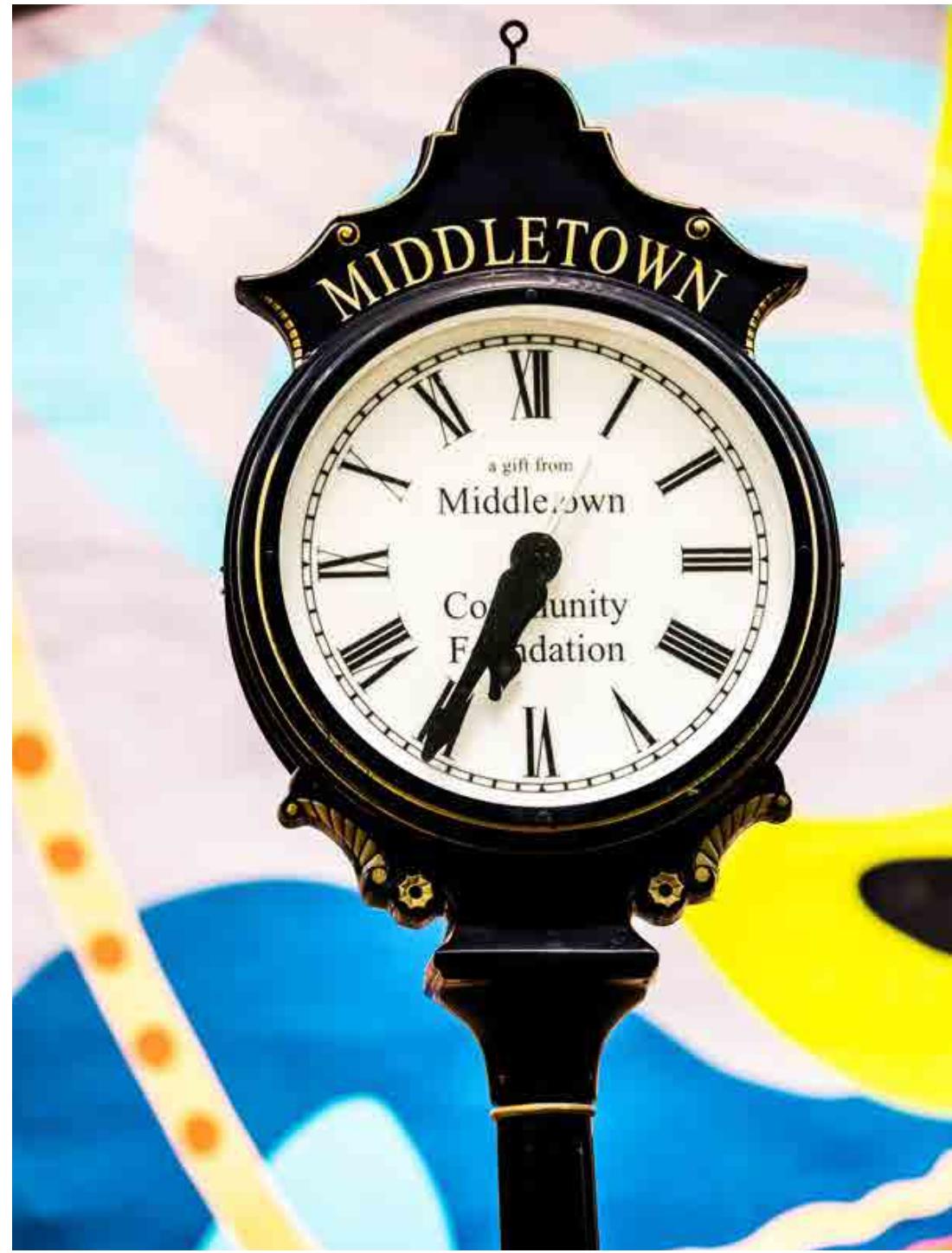
Image - Oakland Residential Neighborhood

Housing Study and Policy - 2016-2019

A citywide residential analysis of Middletown was conducted in 2016 by the Danter Company. This study analyzed the current state of the residential market in the city and addressed current market trends and their impact on future development.

In 2017, the city began an in-depth look at the city's housing stock with the goal to develop 21st century solutions to problems that have existed for more than 50 years. The process included various members of the community representing realtors, business owners, developers, landlords, and residents. The policy identifies best practices and recommends strategies to address a variety of housing topics including tax delinquencies, vacancies, home ownership, code compliance, housing stock, infrastructure, and neighborhood revitalization. The housing policy was completed in 2019.

GOING FORWARD



OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Middletown has identified the following five elements as keys for success in the future. A summary of each of the five elements is provided on this page, followed by the specific goals, objectives, and implementation strategies for each element that highlight specific actions that the city should take in order to further the element's established goal.

RESILIENT NEIGHBORHOODS

Resilient Neighborhoods. Strong, successful neighborhoods are ones that provide a healthy mix of apartments, duplexes, townhomes, and houses, for both ownership and rental. They can accommodate a range of household income levels and preferences. The housing and neighborhoods in Middletown should reflect the values of the community and should serve a diverse population.

THRIVING ECONOMY

Thriving Economy. Middletown should continue to invest and promote a wide variety of businesses and industries that encourage growth and innovation within existing companies and potential endeavors. To support Middletown's workers, the city should connect education, business, and community organizations in order to support and nurture a diverse and inclusive workforce. People of all backgrounds should be able to successfully start and lead business in Middletown.

STRONG INFRASTRUCTURE

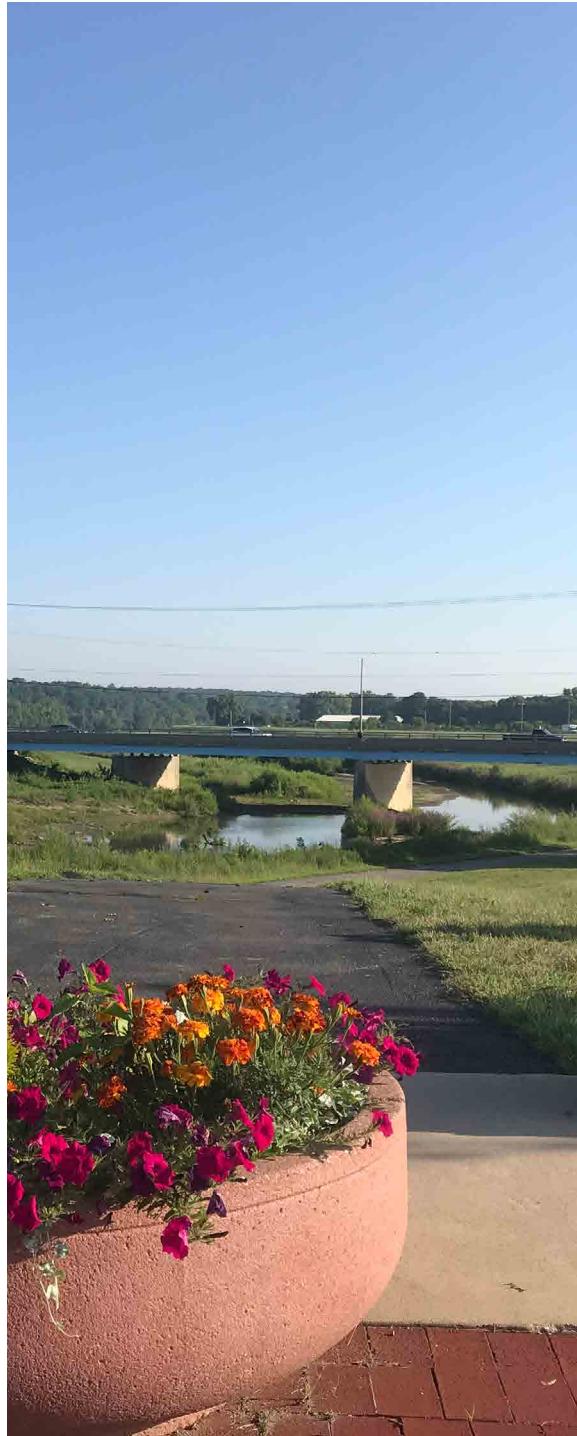
Strong Infrastructure. The maintenance and upkeep of the city's pedestrian and vehicular network is crucial for people to get to and from their destinations. A lot of the city's infrastructure is aging, though, and prioritization needs to be placed on modernizing it in order to foster a well-connected community. This is needed to accommodate quality housing, successful industry, and valued commercial development.

HEALTHY AND SAFE LIVING

Health and Public Safety. Ensuring Middletown's residents are safe and cared for in their own homes should be on the top of the city's priority list. This should include confirming that residents have access to the goods and services that they need and want, including access to healthy foods, responsive emergency services, and comprehensive school and health networks.

PRIDE IN COMMUNITY

Pride in Community. Middletown has a lot of great amenities, including arts, entertainment, local businesses, and recreational opportunities, but the city needs better promotion to increase awareness and visibility to Middletown residents and throughout the region. The city should continue to expand and improve these amenities to provide for its residents and to attract new visitors into the city.

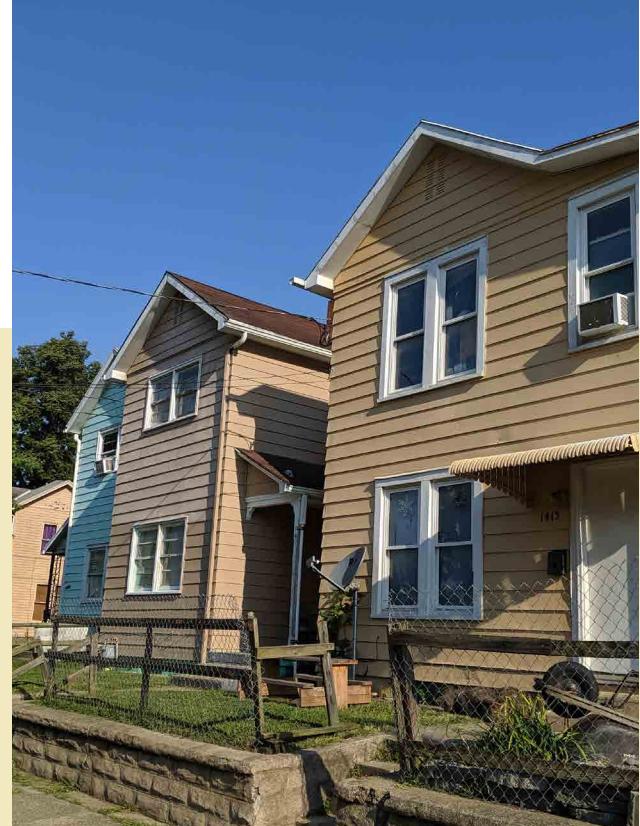


Resilient Neighborhoods

Goal: Middletown needs a range of housing to accommodate a diverse population.

Objectives:

1. Establish buffers around existing neighborhoods that are adjacent to heavy industrial areas.
2. Increase property values over time through housing investment.
3. Implement city housing policies that improve housing conditions and reduce vacancies through further demolition, renovation of existing homes, and infill construction in strategic areas.
4. Attract housing stock that meets a variety of needs and amenities.
5. Support a full spectrum of existing and new housing that provides opportunities for a demographically diverse range of people at all income levels.
6. Target rehabilitation in neighborhoods that need assistance to mend and enhance the existing housing stock.
7. Increase code enforcement efforts through a range of city and community-based programs.
8. Create a balanced housing stock that provides the best possible choices in housing types, size, and affordability.
9. Implement the City of Middletown Housing Policy focusing on the least intrusive to the most intrusive interventions by concentrating on vacant land first, vacant residential second, landlords with vacant properties third, and finally to homeowners and other occupied housing units.



Thriving Economy

Goal: Middletown has a thriving local economy of growing businesses with a strong workforce that creates opportunities for our residents to prosper.

Objectives:

1. Connect education, business, and community organizations to prepare a local workforce for the modern economy.
2. Partner with local and regional economic development, business, and education entities to leverage economic opportunities and assist the school district with implementing their strategic plan as appropriate.
3. Continue to implement the 2017 Downtown Strategic Plan to increase and sustain economic growth of the downtown business sector.
4. Continue to emphasize the East End for employment intensive uses.
5. Maximize the economic development potential around the Middletown Regional Airport related to tourism and manufacturing opportunities.
6. Diversify and strengthen the tax base to ensure fiscal health of the city.
7. Re-balance the number of subsidized housing units and increase the workforce population in Middletown to align with regional averages more closely.
8. Aid in the retention and recruitment of business and allow businesses to expand while staying in Middletown.
9. Support a full spectrum of businesses that provides opportunities for a diverse range of jobs for people at all skill and income levels.



Strong Infrastructure

Goal: Middletown has public infrastructure capacity to support neighborhoods and the economy, and a safe and efficient transportation system.

Objectives:

1. Provide safe and efficient streets that accommodate all modes of transportation in a safe and comfortable environment, including vehicular, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit.
2. Maintain parks as safe places for people to enjoy.
3. Provide sanitary sewer and water services that meet the needs of the population in a reliable and environmentally sensitive way.
4. Address the city's aging infrastructure system and commit to continued maintenance of the city's streets and public infrastructure.



Healthy and Safe Living

Goal: Middletown is a healthy and safe place to live and work.

Objectives:

1. Provide exemplary first responder services that meet accepted level of service standards.
2. Continue to implement the Fire Department's Strategic Plan to ensure that the city's fire facilities and staffing requirements meet the needs of the community.
3. Provide community-based public safety services to proactively connect first responders to the community and reduce the need for emergency responses.
4. Support efforts to address food deserts and provide access to healthy eating choices in all areas of the city.
5. Promote a physically active environment that encourages and supports healthy and safe physical activity through pedestrian, bicycle, and recreation facilities

Pride in Community

Goal: Middletown is a great place to live, work, and play.

Objectives:

1. Promote and encourage civic pride.
2. Encourage connectivity, grassroots organizing, and neighborhood groups to allow all residents to be a part of a community network.
3. Support the retention and expansion of arts, entertainment, and recreation opportunities throughout the city.
4. Promote Downtown and the riverfront as regional destination locations.
5. Advertise and promote Middletown's assets to attract new visitors and residents.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

An Implementation Guide is included as a supplement to this Comprehensive Plan. The guide includes recommended action items based on the Comprehensive Plan's themes. These action items will be used to help guide City Council and the city's administration to prioritize finite financial and human resources.

It is recommended that the guide be reviewed on a yearly basis to reflect on what items have been completed, what are no longer applicable, and what actions have not yet been started. Reviewing and updating this work plan on a yearly basis will require the city to continuously be working to implement the vision and goals of this plan.

To assist with framing the city's priorities and immediate action steps, the top priority implementation actions are highlighted on the following pages. This should serve as the framework for the next three to five years following the adoption of the plan. It is not intended to be an inclusive list, rather a highlight of the city's priorities.



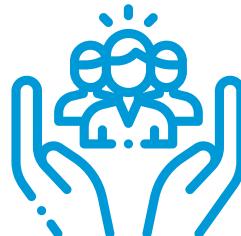
Resilient Neighborhoods Implementation Strategies

- Increase home ownership by utilizing best practice strategies such as filling vacant homes with homeowners, targeted assistance, housing incentives to professionals and recent graduates, lease to own programs, renovation programs, and reduction of low-quality rental units from the overall housing stock.
- Begin tax foreclosure processes on tax delinquent property in the Oakland Neighborhood and in industrial residential buffer areas.
- Utilize the vacant residential land flow chart in the city's Housing Policy to guide decisions and policies for vacant residential lots.
- Establish a strategy for removing homes in select areas within the industrial buffer area and installing additional screening in areas where residential uses will remain within the industrial buffer area.
- Demolish homes and relocate tenants and/or homeowners when internal and external repair costs, to bring the property in compliance with city maintenance codes both interior and exterior requirements, become more than 50% of the appraised value of the property.



Thriving Economy Implementation Strategies

- Provide materials on the city's website and the school district's website that educate residents on the relationship between education attainment and jobs and salaries.
- Facilitate networks to identify companies who could benefit from resources and partners in our community.
- Assist entrepreneurs in connecting to resources to help their businesses thrive, including state and federal small business resources.
- Demonstrate clear education-career pathways for adults through job training programs, social support organizations, and community education.
- Work with Middletown schools and local employers to expose students to various careers and bolster technical skills through activities such as classroom projects guided by industry professionals, career fairs, job shadows, and internships.



Pride in Community/ Healthy and Safe Living Implementation Strategies

- Continue or expand the regular programming of special events and concerts throughout the city that attract a variety of audiences with different music, art genres, and event formats.
- Work with the Middletown Chamber of Commerce and the Middletown Main Street Program to establish incentives in order to attract more shops and restaurants to downtown.
- Increase adult nightlife downtown by leveraging the designated outdoor refreshment area while continuing to maintain public safety.
- Further evaluate the feasibility of adding splash pads or other outdoor water activities to local parks and recreation areas.
- Provide recreational activities that will bring individuals and families to the waterfront and offer more entertainment programming on the riverfront.



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BACKGROUND



Middletown is a vibrant, creative, and diverse city.

Middletown is a friendly midwestern city that has embraced an active outdoor lifestyle, the arts, and creativity. The community has undergone a renaissance that has transformed Middletown's Downtown into a vibrant neighborhood that is host to many block parties, festivals, events, galleries, restaurants, bars, and boutiques. Downtown is the heart of Middletown and draws both residents and visitors from throughout Ohio. With an easy connection to the riverfront and community walking and biking trails, it is easy to go for a bike ride, grab a bite to eat, and listen to live music with friends.

Middletown is located on the banks of the Great Miami River, so there are always options to enjoy the outdoors. Thanks to the city's abundant park network, arboretum, and plentiful attractions, there is always something to do in Middletown. The city has a strong sense of community, and with so much to do, our community is the perfect place for kids, people looking for adventure, art enthusiasts, food lovers, and anyone looking for a place to call home.

Middletown is an inclusive place to live, work, and play.

It is the goal of the City of Middletown that its streets, alleys, and sidewalks are lighted and safe to walk down; that all residents have convenient access to healthy foods within walking distance; that residents have access to the medical care that they need; and they can receive a good education from the public-school system. By investing in these items, the city will work together to improve the high school graduation rate; reduce the number of families receiving federal assistance; reduce crime rates; lower the number of individuals claiming disability status; and decrease the current unemployment rate

WHAT MAKES US MIDDLETOWN?



City History

Founded in 1802, Middletown was most likely named after its midway location between Dayton and Cincinnati, and was incorporated in 1833 as a village along the east bank of the Great Miami River. Initial development and population growth were relatively modest through the 19th Century, though Middletown enjoyed rapid growth during the 20th Century as a result of expanded industrial activity. The city saw continuous and steady growth through the 1960s.

As a result, Middletown residents and businesses prospered and enjoyed a high quality of life throughout most of the 20th Century. As with most mid-western industrial cities, Middletown experienced job loss starting in the 1970s as industrial corporations merged, closed, or relocated to regions with more affordable production systems. This trend continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s, leaving the city in need of new business recruitment strategies.

Ground was broken on the Miami-Erie Canal on July 21, 1825. The canal became the major transportation line between Cincinnati and Toledo. The water power it created generated the city's numerous paper mills along the river. Construction of railroads soon followed the canal and further improved Middletown's accessibility. Steel and paper industries flourished in Middletown. The American Rolling Mill Company (Armco) was founded in 1899, and ground was broken for the steel plant the following year. The first steel was produced in Middletown in 1902. In 1948 it adopted the Armco name and soon thereafter changed its name to Armco Steel Corp. In 1993, the company moved its headquarters to Pittsburgh and renamed itself AK Steel Holdings reflecting its Armco roots and sizable investment by Kawasaki. The company was later acquired by the Cleveland Cliffs in late 2019.

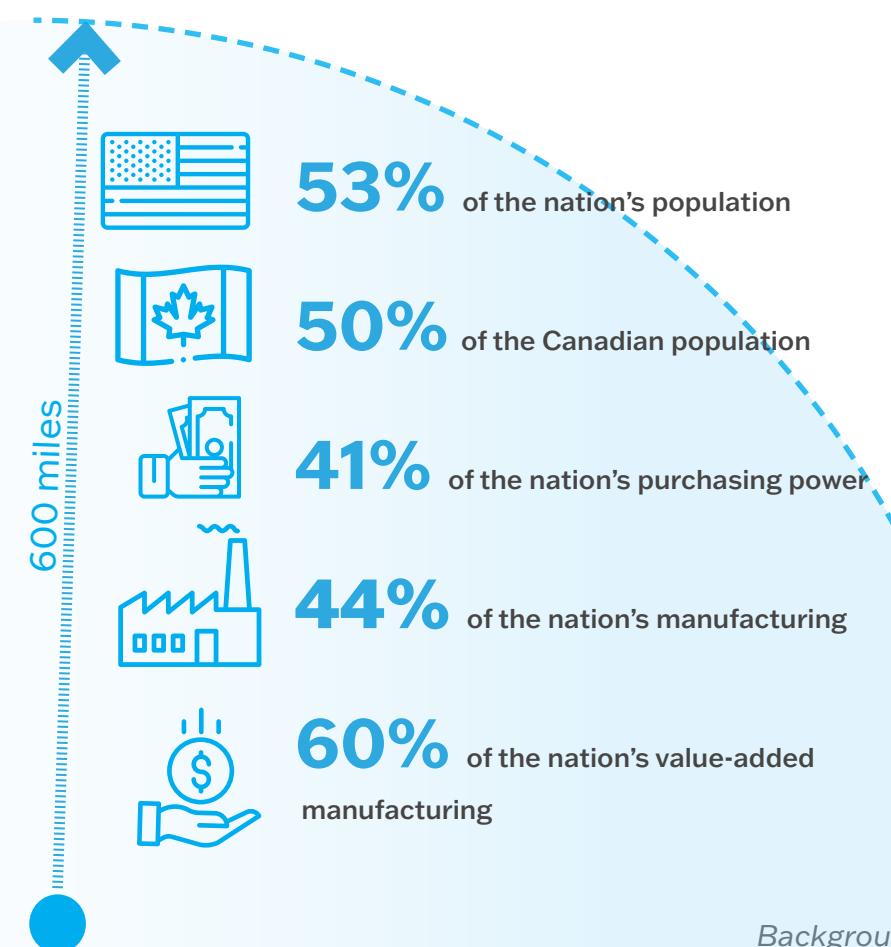
Initial development in Middletown occurred in nuclear fashion with a strong and vibrant downtown commerce center located adjacent to the Great Miami River and along routes now known as State Route (SR) 4, SR 73, Main Street, and Central Avenue. Streets radiated out from Downtown providing access to adjacent neighborhoods, industries, and agricultural land located at the urban fringe. Neighborhoods grew steadily outward as the city's population grew over time in response to increased industrialization.

The advent of post WW II housing and the opening of Interstate 75 (I-75) in the 1950s created a gradual but steady shift in development patterns from the west side to the east. Effects of this shift are still present today; many industrial and commercial buildings stand as vestiges of the area's history.

Community Profile

The City of Middletown is located in northeast Butler County and northwest Warren County in Southwest Ohio. Middletown is centrally located between Cincinnati and Dayton along the I-75 corridor. Neighboring communities include: The City of Franklin, Franklin Township, Warren County to the north; Franklin Township, Warren County to the east; City of Monroe to the south; and Lemon and Madison Townships, Butler County to the west. The Great Miami River is conterminous with a portion of the Middletown's western and northern municipal boundaries.

Middletown's strategic location makes it ideal for business investment. Middletown is in a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) with over 3 million people and within 600 miles of:



COMMUNITY ASSETS

Economic Opportunity

INDUSTRY

The region is one of the largest industrial, distribution and manufacturing areas in the U.S. and is easily accessible to national and international customers and suppliers. The region supports a strong supply chain across numerous key industries.

ACCESS TO MARKETS

Middletown is located at Interstate 75 (I-75) between two major metropolitan markets, Cincinnati and the Dayton area, that is merging into one metropolitan region with a population of three million.

APPEALING TO BUSINESSES

With nearly a quarter of Ohio's Fortune 500 companies in our backyard, it is great for attracting economic development and new talent.



Image - Opera House

Rich History and Culture

THE PENDLETON ARTS CENTER

The Pendleton Arts Center has an on-site studio where local artists can discover, create, and collaborate. They are home to the "largest collection of artists under one roof" and have a mission of supporting local artists through resources, education, and promotion. Their gallery features the creations of artists working out of the studio and serves as a celebration of the talent found in Middletown and Butler County. The Pendleton Arts Center hosts artist space and galleries open on First Friday weekends.

THE SORG OPERA HOUSE

The Sorg Opera House, an 1880's opera house in downtown Middletown, has recently undergone extensive renovations and hosted their first concert in the newly renovated theater in September, 2017.

ARTS FESTIVAL

The Middletown Arts Festival aims to bring some of the best visual and performing artists from Southwest Ohio and beyond to Middletown, Ohio to celebrate talented individuals and groups. This fantastic event is held every September.

ARTS CENTRAL FOUNDATION

The vision of the Arts Central Foundation is to advance regional engagement in the arts through nurturing creative experiences for our students and the community at large. The mission of the Arts Central Foundation is to serve regional residents and students with opportunities to grow in the visual arts.

PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY

The Performing Arts Academy is a faith based organization providing music education, performance opportunities, and appreciation for the performing arts.

MIDDLETOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Middletown Historical Society is committed to preserving and documenting the history of Middletown, and to promoting knowledge and interest in the history of Middletown and its people.

MIDDLETOWN ARTS CENTER

The Middletown Arts Center offers 160 - 175 art classes annually for students of all ages and experience levels. They also have a gallery in the front lobby and feature eight large exhibits annually in their Exhibit Hall.



Image - Midfest, 2009



Image - Airpark



Image - Smith Park, Hot air balloon festival

LYRIC THEATRE

The mission of the Middletown Lyric Theatre is to inspire, nurture, challenge, educate, and empower its artists and audiences while continuing a long-standing tradition of producing affordable, accessible theatre for the community.

HAUTE FUSION

Haute Fusion Glass Studio provides new kiln-form glass technique classes, for all levels from beginner to advanced. They also provide the opportunity to commission a custom glass piece for your home or office, or allow patrons to come in and make something beautiful in fused glass to give as a gift for any occasion.

Accessible Connectivity Networks

TRANSPORTATION

Middletown has readily available transportation, including interstate, air, and rail - making for easy and efficient business connections. A dedicated city bus system provides ease of connectivity within the city.

AIRPORTS

The region offers easy access to two international airports with more daily operations than many larger metropolitan areas, in addition to the well established Middletown Regional Airport.

Abundant Resources

RESOURCES AND LIVABILITY

We have access to as many, or more, resources than many larger U.S. cities, and with a significantly lower cost of living.

PLENTIFUL WATER

Middletown is situated over one of the largest natural aquifers in the U.S. Middletown's proximity to the Great Miami River also allows water-intensive industries to tap this vital and abundant regional resource.

Valued Recreation

Middletown is known for outdoor recreation, in part because of our many public parks, walking trails, and beautiful river bike path. Situated on the scenic Great Miami River, Middletown has beautiful views, riverfront amenities, and water recreation.

TRAILS

The Great Miami River Trail is ideal for running, walking, and cycling. The trail follows the Great Miami River way which is a part of the Great Miami, Mad, and Stillwater River system. The system was designated as a National Water Trail in 2016, making it one of only 22 National Water Trails in the United States and the only one in Ohio.

PARKS

Middletown also boasts an extensive parks network and an arboretum. The Park system currently includes 32 developed and undeveloped city parks, preserves, and natural areas, totaling 321 acres that are owned and operated by Middletown's Public Works Department.

Smith Park is a popular destination for those seeking outdoor recreation. Smith Park features picturesque nature settings, fishing opportunities, soccer and baseball fields,

picnic areas and trails. Teens enjoy spending time at the Baker Bowl Skate Park and younger children enjoy the playground and places like Douglass Park.

GOLF, SHOOTING, AND PICKLEBALL

In addition, golf lovers will enjoy playing a round at Forest Hills Country Club and those who enjoy shooting can visit the Middletown Sportsmen's Club. Enthusiasts can join the Middletown Pickleball Association and play in Lefferson park.

RIVER RECREATION

For water recreation, get out on the Great Miami River! Middletown offers easy access to the waterfront and plenty of opportunity for fishing, boating, kayaking, canoeing, bird watching, and more.

OUTDOOR COMMUNITY EVENTS

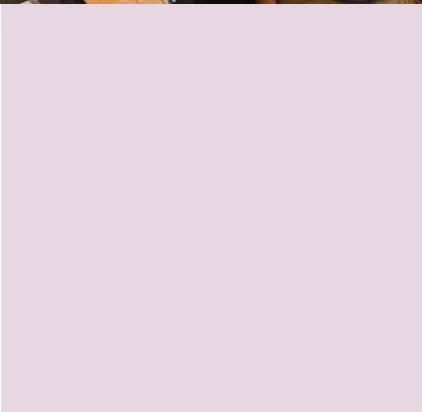
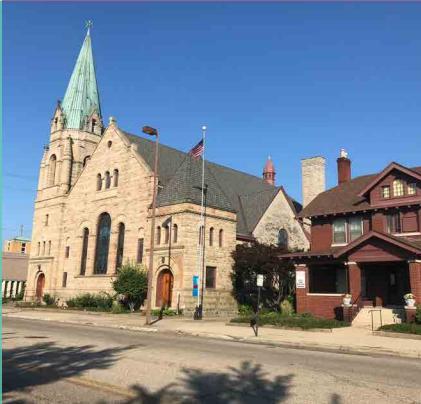
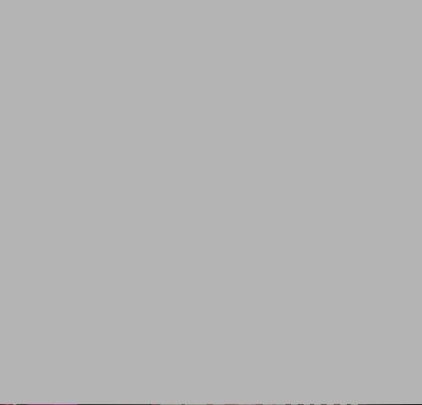
Middletown is host to several outdoor events that include the Ohio Challenge and Warrior Weekend to Remember, which typically take place in July and August. These events feature everything from hot air balloon launches, a balloon glow, skydiving and the county's largest fireworks show.



Image - Baker Bowl skate park



Image - Hiking trail



FUTURE LAND USE





Introduction

The plan's land use recommendations are the city's official land use policy. They serve as a guide for the city when making decisions related to future development projects and map amendments (zone changes). The land use recommendations are comprised of the future land use map and three area plans.

The Future Land Use Map graphically represents the vision for land and development within the City of Middletown boundaries. The designations on the Future Land Use map follow property lines, but the district boundaries are intended to be flexible to allow for changes in economic, social, or cultural policies. Updates to the Future Land Use plan should be made only when findings support such deviation and after careful examination of how those changes affect future development within the city.

The land use categories are described by the primary and secondary uses that are suitable in that area. The primary land uses should make up the majority of the land area within that category, while the secondary land uses should be supportive uses that aid to complement the primary land uses.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Legend

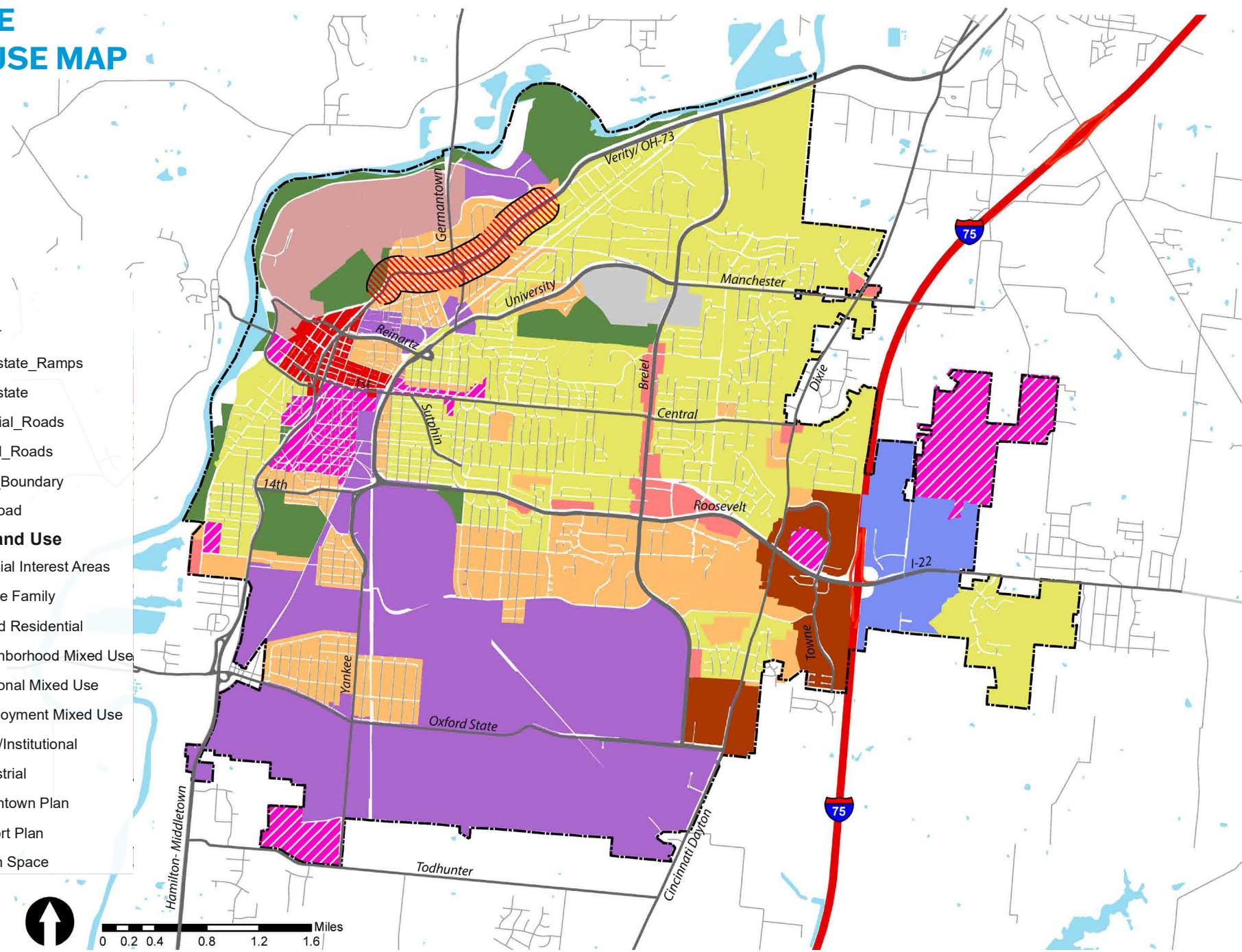
- River
- Interstate_Ramps
- Interstate
- Arterial_Roads
- Local_Roads
- City_Boundary
- Railroad

Future Land Use

- Special Interest Areas
- Single Family
- Mixed Residential
- Neighborhood Mixed Use
- Regional Mixed Use
- Employment Mixed Use
- Civic/Institutional
- Industrial
- Downtown Plan
- Airport Plan
- Open Space



0 0.2 0.4 0.8 1.2 1.6 Miles



Future Land Use Categories

Employment Mixed Use – Primarily office, high-tech industrial, medical, and other similar uses with secondary uses that include commercial, service, and residential.

Regional Mixed Use – Primarily commercial uses that cater to the I-75 traffic and the regional market with secondary uses that include office, medical, service, and residential.

Neighborhood Mixed Use – Primarily small-scale commercial, office, medical, and service uses that cater to the surrounding residential neighborhoods with secondary uses that include residential.

Industrial – Primarily a mix of light, heavy, and high-tech industrial uses with secondary uses that include office, warehousing, and storage.

Civic/Institutional – Primarily large-scale civic and institutional uses that cater to the region including universities, city facilities, and secondary schools. This land use category does not include neighborhood-serving churches and schools.

Open Space – Regional open spaces and parks that cater to the greater area. This land use category does not include neighborhood-serving parks and recreational uses.

Single Family – Primarily single family detached residential uses with secondary uses that include parks, recreational uses, and neighborhood churches and schools.

Mixed Residential – Primarily a mix of residential housing types and styles. It supports a range of housing styles and price points that cater to a variety of lifestyles and preferences, with a focus on promoting the development of new detached single family homes. Secondary uses include parks, recreational uses, and neighborhood churches and schools.

Special Interest Areas – There are eight special interest areas that require more in-depth land use recommendations. These areas are addressed individually in the Development Opportunities Chapter of this plan.

Airport – The Airport Plan Special Area represents that area that is addressed by the city's Airport Plan. The land use recommendations for this area is contained within that plan and the Hook Field Development Opportunity Area.

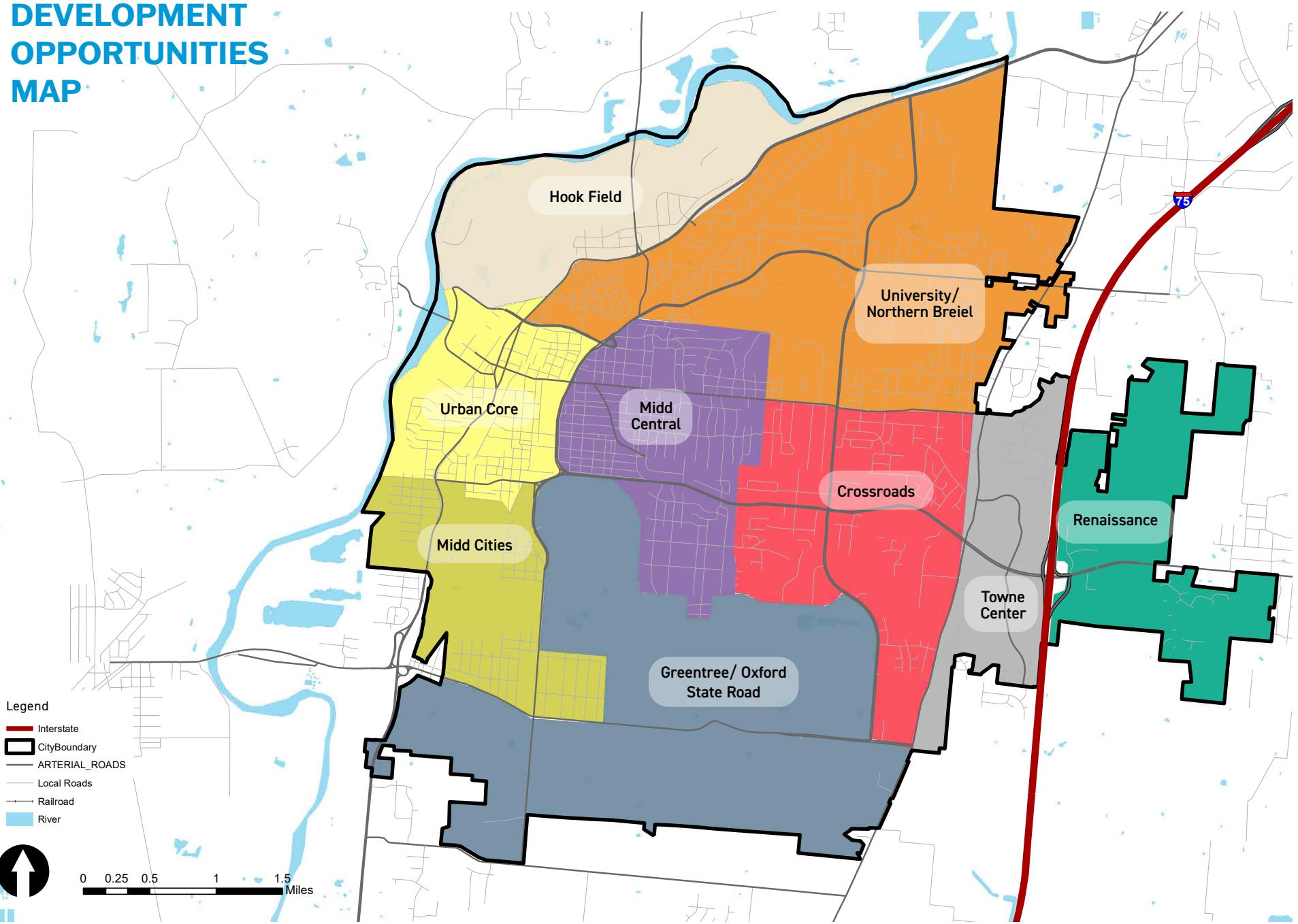
Downtown – The Downtown Special Area represents the area that is addressed by the Downtown Master Plan. The land use recommendations for this area are contained within that plan and the Urban Core Development Opportunity Area.

Study Area – These areas are identified as parts of the city that need a more in-depth study and analysis that will occur during a future planning process.



Images - Land Use typologies

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES MAP



DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of planned future land use and development strategies for nine strategic subareas located within Middletown. These subareas are hereafter called “Development Opportunity Areas”. A closer examination of each Development Opportunity Area serves as a summary of the development vision and strategy for that area.

Within the Development Opportunity Areas, eight special interest areas are identified. These special interest areas each require unique and specific recommendations and planning efforts. Each includes development guidelines, and inspiration photos that represent the size, scale, and type of development envisioned in that area.

Since much of the land are in Middletown is “built out” and very few opportunities exist for future expansion, much of the focus for future development opportunities needs to focus on the optimization of the use of land which is already developed. The 2005 Master Plan noted Development Opportunity Areas in four basic categories as follows:

- **Brownfield.** *A vacant or underutilized industrial property that has environmental contamination preventing reuse or redevelopment.*
- **Short Term Greyfield.** *A vacant or underutilized commercial property that is generally free from environmental constraints but lacks market support for reuse.*
- **Long Term Greyfield.** *A generally occupied commercial property that is showing signs of deterioration and obsolescence that could result in future vacancy or abandonment unless major upgrades are made to the property.*
- **Greenfield.** *A vacant property that is suitable located for new development and is unencumbered with existing site improvements or other site constraints that preclude market supported development.*

EAST END/RENAISSANCE

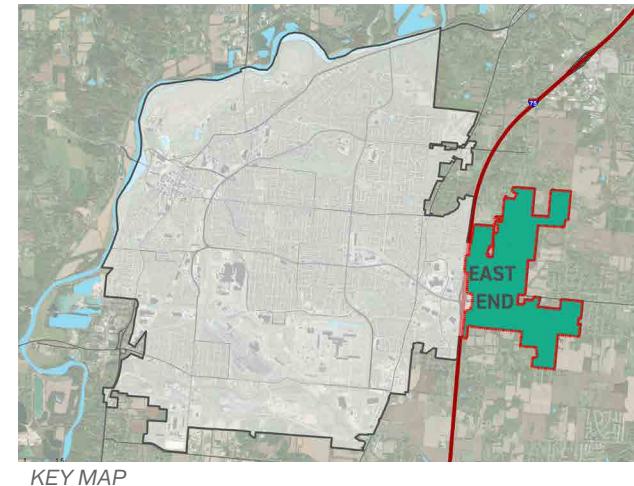
Development Opportunity Area

VISION

The East End/Renaissance Development Opportunity Area is a regional business and living center that is an economically and environmentally sustainable mixed-use balance of office, medical office, service, general retail, residences, and hospitality. It should be developed as a landscaped, master-planned business park with unique amenities such as common open space, trails, and business support uses. The available jobs in this area shall provide diverse employment opportunities, attracting new visitors and residents to the city.

FUTURE LAND USE

Employment mixed use and single family residential are the land use designations that cover the East End/Renaissance Development Opportunity Area in recognition of the existing and planned land use pattern. This land use serves as the foundation for regional economic growth and development opportunities, while also encouraging ancillary and support uses that serve the region. The Undeveloped East End area is also designated as a special interest area.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Utilities** – Sanitary, sewer, water, and high-speed telecommunications infrastructure are accessible in sufficient capacity to accommodate planned new development. The most pressing need is to extend these elements into area identified as the Undeveloped East End Special Area.
- **Local Streets** – Local streets need to be extended into the undeveloped area in addition to utility lines to create market-ready sites. Street spacing should be constructed per ODOT's access management standards.
- **Union Road** – Widen Union Road to a five-lane arterial to provide sufficient capacity to accommodate office, medical, and regional vehicular traffic demand parallel to I-75. This improvement will be required before a new interchange is constructed north or south of SR 122.



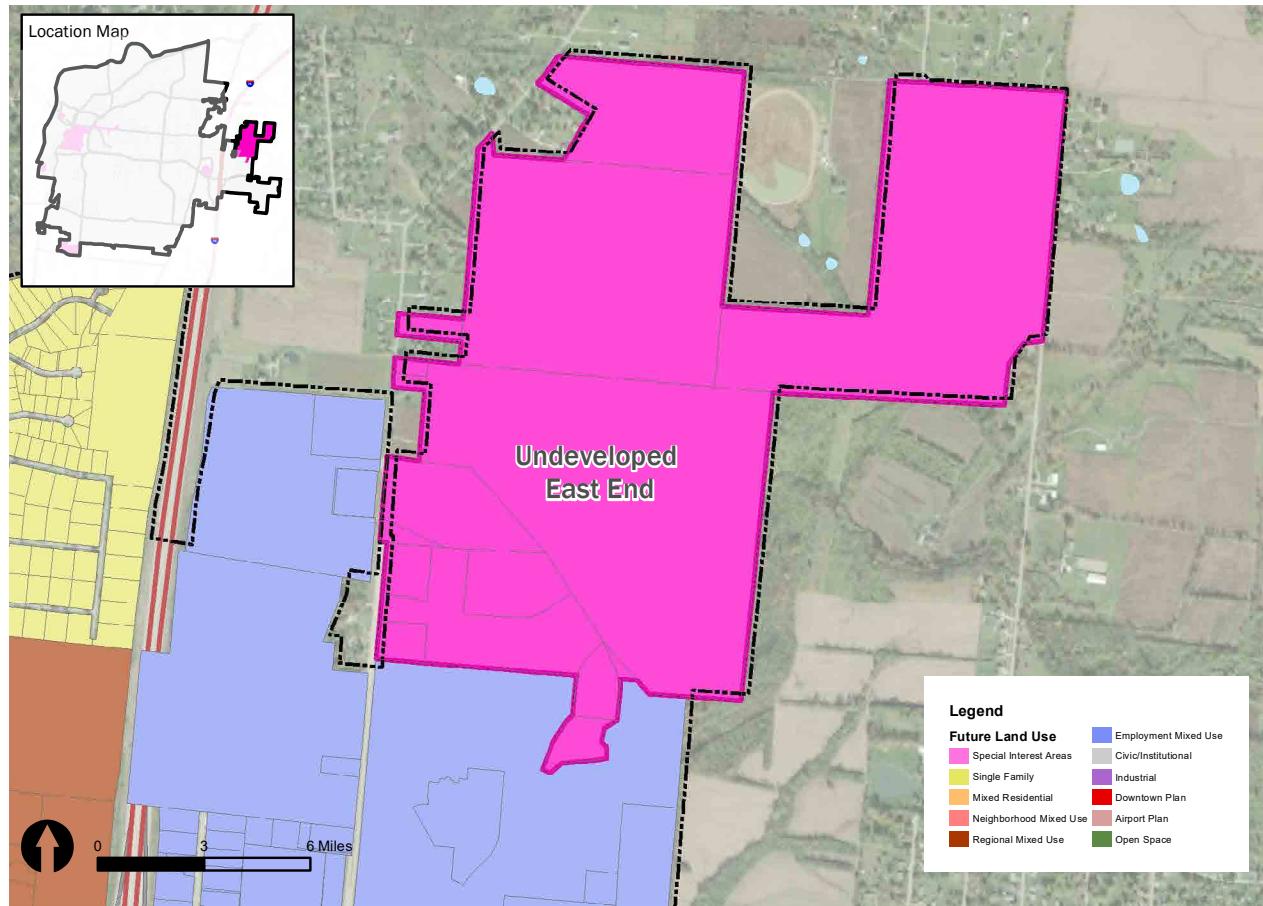
VISION

The vision for the Undeveloped East End is an emerging employment district with attractive office, high-tech industrial, and medical uses that also includes amenities for the employees of the district such as residential and commercial uses

BACKGROUND

The East End of Middletown has approximately 500 acres of undeveloped land available for professional office, industrial, and commercial development. In order to accommodate this development, the district will need significant infrastructure improvements.

The area is currently served by Union Road, a two-lane rural-style road. The road is fronted by numerous single-family homes and will need to be widened and upgraded in order to handle the increased traffic that would be generated by future employment uses. Additionally, the district is not currently served by utilities. Utilities are available at the southern portion of the district along Innovation Drive, therefore the southern portion of the site will need to develop first in order to incrementally extend the utilities to the remaining developable land.



DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines are suggested to guide the development of the East End.

Uses :

- *Uses within the undeveloped east end may include a mix of high-tech industrial and manufacturing, office, medical, commercial, and residential uses.*
- *Residential uses should be limited and concentrated in the southeast and eastern portions of the area where there are steeper slopes that would better accommodate residential development with smaller footprints than large-scale industrial or office uses.*
- *Warehousing uses are prohibited as a principal use within the area and may only be permitted as a secondary use to a high-tech industrial, manufacturing, or office use.*

Site :

- *Development within this district will be automobile oriented due to its location and site conditions. Despite this, pedestrian connections should be established between developments and along roadways to improve the connectivity of the area.*
- *Strategic open spaces should be provided throughout the district that provide both passive and active recreational opportunities which could include parks, common gathering spaces, and gardens.*

- *New development within the district should include appropriate landscaping and buffering elements including street trees, parking lot landscaping and perimeter screening, and building perimeter landscaping. Screening should be provided between non-residential and residential uses.*
- *Parking and service areas should be minimized where possible by locating the building prominently on the site with parking and service areas to the rear or side of the building.*

Building :

- *Buildings may be of varying heights to accommodate a variety of employers and building designs.*
- *Industrial uses and large footprint buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of restrained high-quality building materials and colors. Traditional industrial building materials such as tilt-up concrete and metal panels may be utilized as part of the building but should not be the primary material on the front facade of the building.*
- *Modern and innovative architecture and a creative use of building materials, design, and site layout is encouraged.*



Images - Development typologies

TOWNE CENTER

Development Opportunity Area

VISION

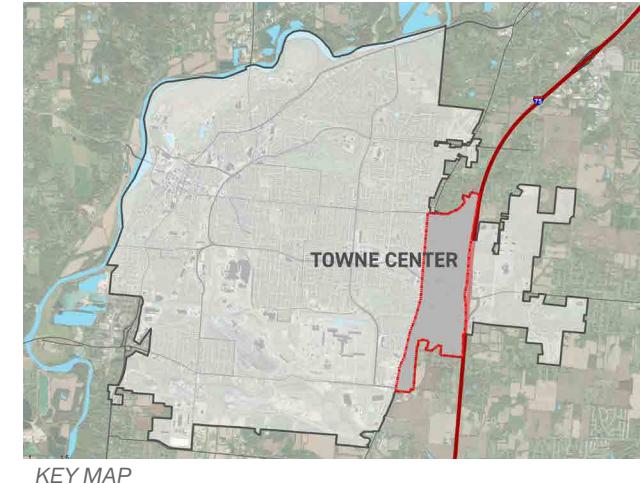
The Towne Center Development Opportunity Area, with immediate interstate access, will continue to be the dominant retail location in Middletown. Redevelopment is anticipated at sites with obsolescent retail structures. Towne Mall, for instance, is envisioned as a vibrant, open air, mixed use development, characteristic of a "Lifestyle Center." As such, the Towne Center will emerge as a diverse neighborhood and business node with office, retail, restaurant, and entertainment uses. Clustering mixed uses with higher density residential will realign the Towne Center as a complete neighborhood and attractive community asset. The envisioned mixed use configuration will provide further support and complement the planned business park development at the East End/Renaissance district.

FUTURE LAND USE

Regional mixed use and mixed residential are the land use designations that cover the Towne Center Development Opportunity Area in recognition of the existing retail land use pattern. Though intense retail is supported at this location, new office, residential, and recreation/entertainment land uses are also appropriate. The Towne Mall site is also designated as a special interest area.

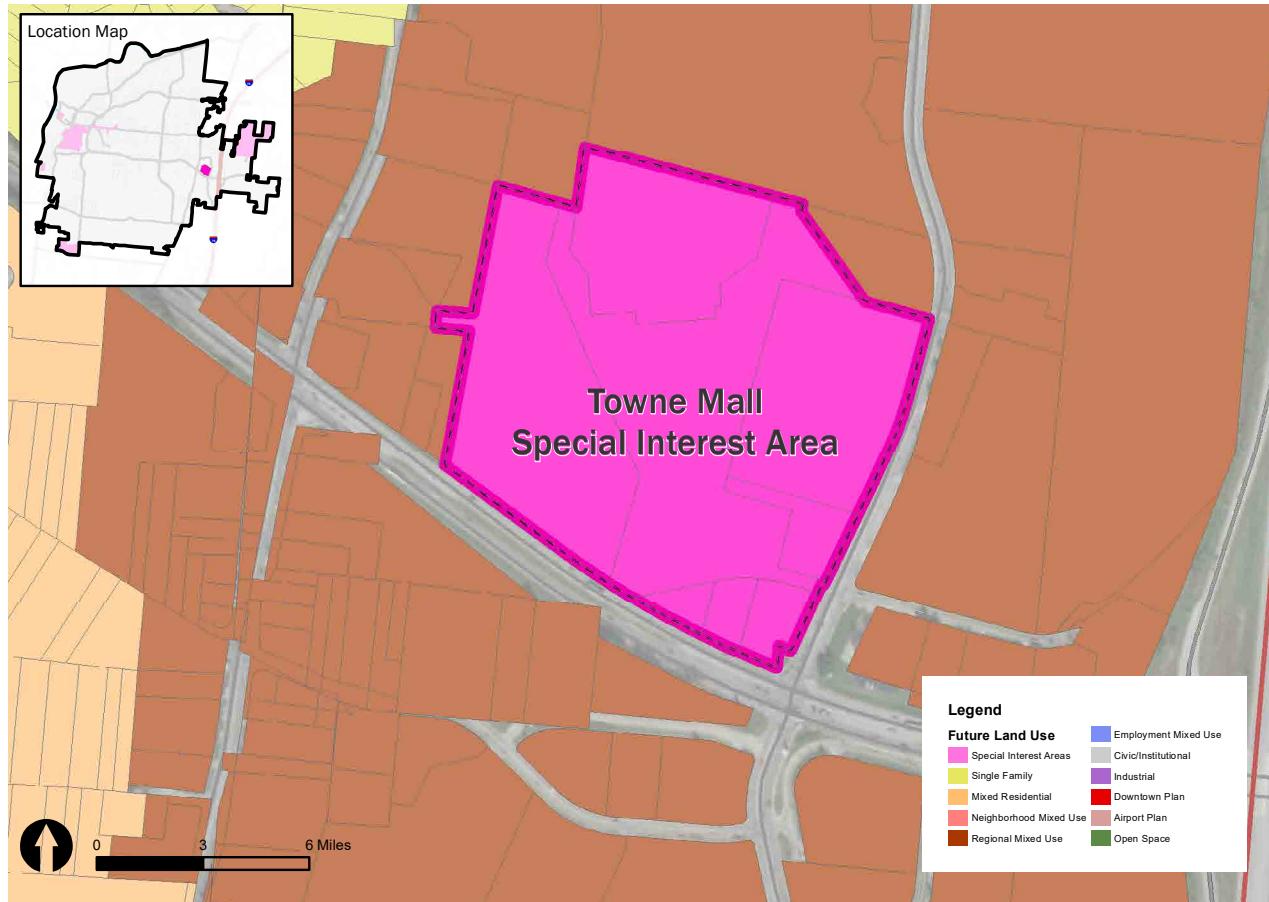
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Bike Path** – a bike path is envisioned along SR 122 as part of the I-75/SR 122 interchange improvements to provide bicycle/pedestrian access to the retail amenities at Towne Mall from renaissance employment centers and residences.





TOWNE MALL Special Interest Area



VISION

The vision for the Towne Mall Site is a revitalized mixed-use development that serves as an entertainment destination within the city and includes a variety of modern residential housing options, retail, commercial, and recreation/entertainment uses.

BACKGROUND

The Towne Mall Site is a 44-acre site located in eastern Middletown on the northwest intersection of Roosevelt Boulevard and Towne Boulevard. The site has an existing commercial indoor mall that has seen an increase in vacancies over the years - a common trend for indoor malls across the nation.

This site is expansive and a key gateway site as it sits right off of the I-75 and OH-122 interchange. Reinvestment in this area should also focus on gateway improvements of the area such as improved streetscaping and design to enhance the overall look and feel of the gateway.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines are suggested to guide the revitalization and redevelopment of the Towne Mall Site.

Uses :

- *Uses within the Town Mall Site may include a mix of commercial, retail, office, live/work, co-working space, entertainment, service, mixed use, public facilities, and residential uses.*
- *Residential uses should include a mix of mixed-use and multi-family developments*

Site :

- *Streets within the area should be designed to engage pedestrian traffic including crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented lighting, and other outdoor seating amenities.*
- *Pedestrian, multi-modal, and vehicular connectivity should be provided throughout the site with clear and safe connections to the surrounding neighborhood.*
- *Strategic open spaces should be provided throughout the site that provide both passive and active recreational opportunities which could include parks, common gathering spaces, and gardens.*
- *New development within the site should include appropriate landscaping and buffering elements including street trees, parking lot landscaping and perimeter screening, and building perimeter landscaping. Screening should be provided between non-residential uses and the surrounding residential neighborhoods as appropriate.*

- *Buildings should be located adjacent to the street, locating parking and service areas to the rear or the interior of the site when possible.*

Building :

- *Non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family buildings should have clearly designed pedestrian entrances and pedestrian-oriented design elements such as storefront windows, outdoor dining patios, stoops, and landscaping.*
- *Non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of restrained high-quality building materials and colors.*
- *Modern and innovative architecture and a creative use of building materials, design, and site layout is encouraged on this site including the use of public art, murals, and other features to engage and inspire the public.*



Images - Development typologies

CROSSROADS

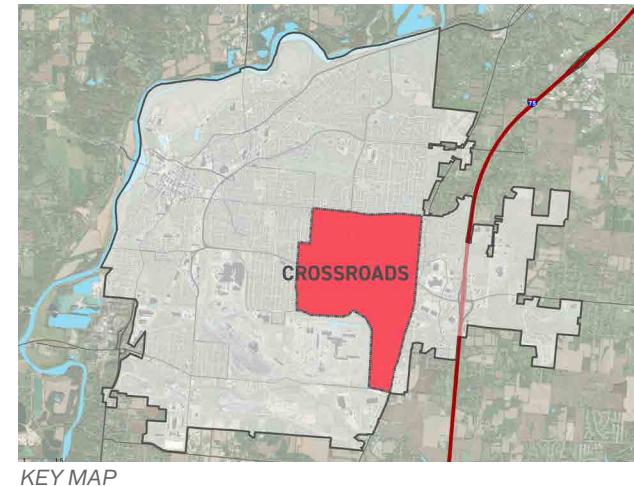
Development Opportunity Area

VISION

The Crossroads Development Opportunity Area contains a mixture of shopping centers of varying size, age, and condition with a mix of residential at the northeast and southeast corner of Roosevelt and Breiel Boulevard. Due to its strategic location, proactive steps will be taken to recruit complementary development within this area. The development will result in rehabilitated shopping centers and new mixed use, pedestrian friendly developments located next to major thoroughfares.

FUTURE LAND USE

Neighborhood mixed use is encouraged in the Crossroads Development Opportunity Area to blend the existing and planned land use patterns of residential and commercial.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Intersection** – An improved intersection is planned for the Breiel/Roosevelt intersection. Construction on this project is currently ongoing to improve the horizontal alignment on eastbound Roosevelt Boulevard at the intersection with Breiel Boulevard while also providing an eastbound right-turn lane.

NORTHERN BREIEL

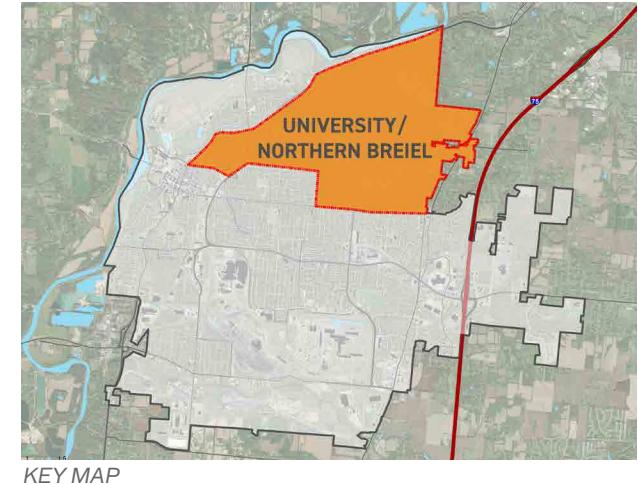
Development Opportunity Area

VISION

Breiel and University will continue to contain a desirable mix of office, educational, and institutional uses. Nearby neighborhoods offer a wide range of housing options at various price points including new, higher quality homes built in lower density suburban-style subdivisions. Neighborhoods are strengthened by the presence of Miami University at Middletown's campus and access to medical offices and public and private schools located in the Breiel Boulevard corridor.

FUTURE LAND USE

Civic/Institutional land uses are planned adjacent to Breiel and University Boulevards to provide continued support for Miami University of Middletown, schools, and small professional offices that are established in this area. Single family residential neighborhoods comprise the vast majority of the remaining land area within this development opportunity area.



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- *No current proposed improvements*

GREENTREE/OXFORD STATE ROAD

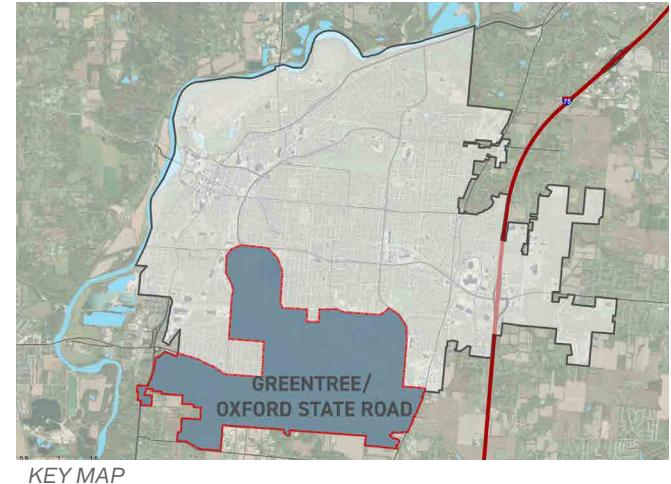
Development Opportunity Area

VISION

Greentree/Oxford State Road will retain and attract new industrial development. New development will fill existing industrial parks, creating the need to provide additional land supply.

FUTURE LAND USE

The vast majority of this area is planned as industrial. This designation supports the existing industrial operations including Cleveland CLIFFS. The regional mixed-use designation located at Oxford State Road and Cincinnati Dayton Road supports the existing and potential commercial uses. A residential neighborhood exists in the northwestern portion of the area. The residential uses on the periphery of the neighborhood are located too close to existing industrial uses. A greenbelt or open space buffer would be preferably located between all industrial uses and residential uses for aesthetic and environmental reasons. The Todhunter/Midd Cities special interest area is also located at the southwestern corner of the area.

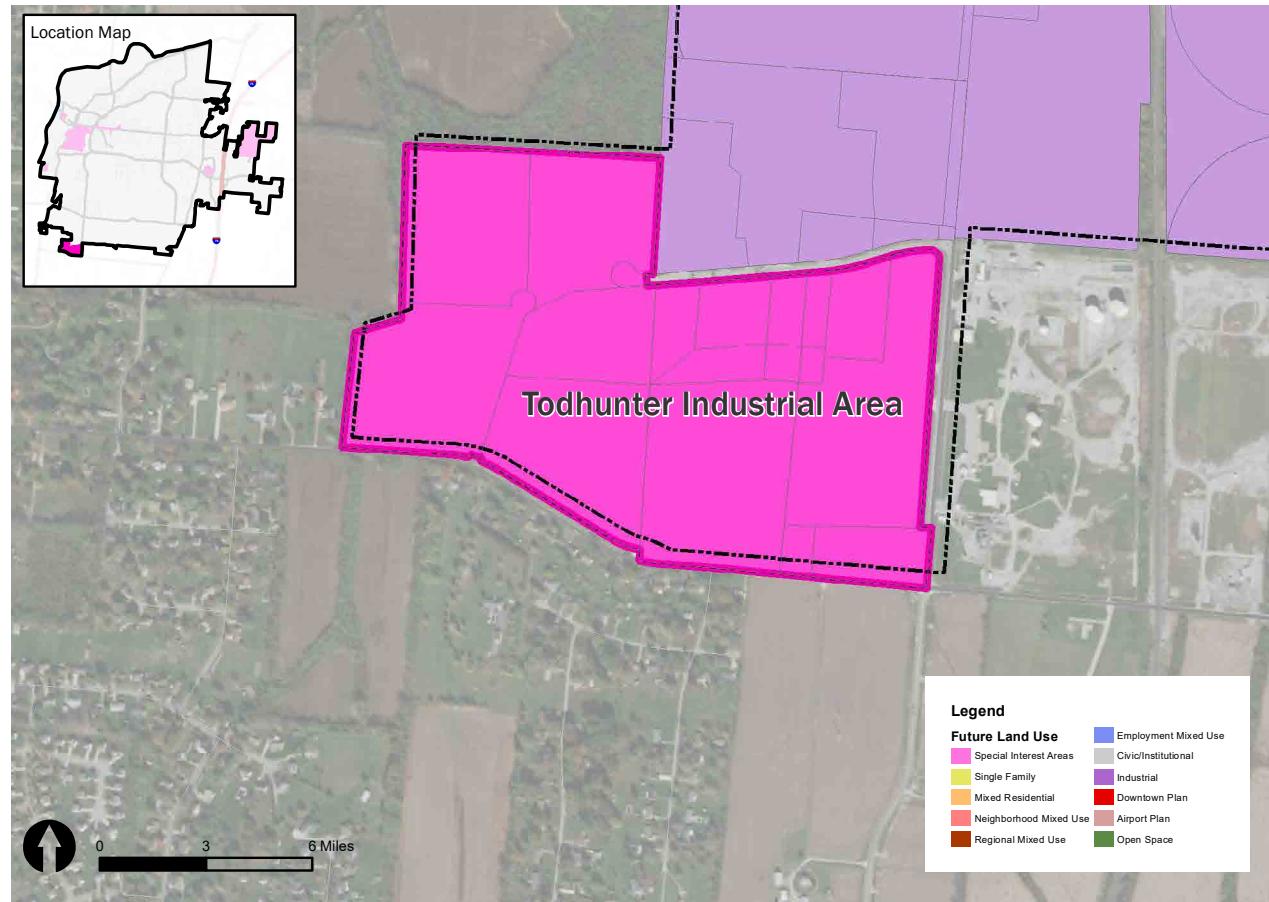


CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Interchange** – A key element for the implementation of the vision for this area is the construction of a new interchange at I-75 and Greentree Road. This interchange is needed to alleviate pressure on SR 122, provide direct access to Middletown's industrial base, enhance economic development, and create a modern multi-lane industrial corridor from I-75 to Miller Brewing Plant.
- **Roads** - Extending Marshall Road south to intersect with Lefferson/ Breiel Boulevard, and upgrading Lefferson Road from Breiel Boulevard east to Cincinnati-Dayton Road are other proposed roadway gradation projects to improve local traffic flow in the area.



TODHUNTER **Special Interest Area**



VISION

The vision for the Todhunter Special Interest Area is an emerging employment district with attractive office, high-tech industrial, large scale commercial and medical uses that support current industrial uses already in the area.

BACKGROUND

The Todhunter Industrial Site access point is currently located at Made Industrial Drive off of Yankee Road. The site is bordered by Yankee Road to the east and Todhunter Road to the south. Todhunter Road is fronted by numerous single-family homes and will need to be widened and upgraded in order to handle the increased traffic that would be generated by future employment uses in this area.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines are suggested to guide the development of the Todhunter/Midd-Cities Industrial Site.

Uses :

- *Uses within the Todhunter/Midd-Cities Industrial Site may include a mix of high-tech industrial and manufacturing, office, medical, warehousing, and large-scale commercial.*

Site :

- *Development within this district will be automobile oriented due to its location and site conditions. Despite this, pedestrian connections should be established between developments and along roadways to improve the connectivity of the area.*
- *Strategic open spaces should be provided throughout the district that provide both passive and active recreational opportunities which could include parks, common gathering spaces, and gardens.*
- *New development within the district should include appropriate landscaping and buffering elements including street trees, parking lot landscaping and perimeter screening, and building perimeter landscaping. Screening should be provided between non-residential and residential uses.*
- *Parking and service areas should be minimized where possible by locating the building prominently on the site with parking and service areas to the rear or side of the building.*

Building :

- *Industrial uses and large footprint buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of high-quality building materials and colors. Traditional industrial building materials such as tilt-up concrete and metal panels may be utilized as part of the building but should not be the primary material on the front facade of the building.*
- *Modern and innovative architecture and a creative use of building materials, design, and site layout is encouraged.*



Images - Development typologies

MIDD CITIES

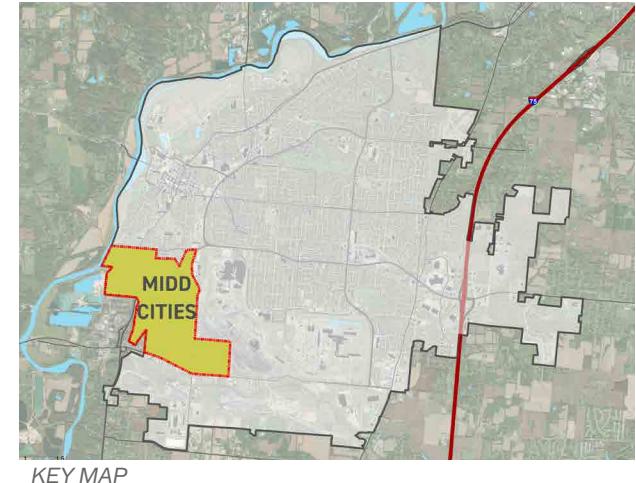
Development Opportunity Area

VISION

The Midd Cities Development Opportunity Area is anchored by the Midd Cities Industrial Park. While vacant lots are available, redevelopment of three adjacent brownfields will stabilize the area for a new generation of industrial users. Adjacent neighborhoods will be protected from industrial encroachment by landscaping screening and buffering.

FUTURE LAND USE

This area is made up of a mixture of future land uses that includes industrial, mixed residential, single family residential, neighborhood mixed use, and open space. This area also includes brownfield properties that are key redevelopment opportunities. Brownfield redevelopment will require the direction of the Brownfield Resource Team and will be implemented in a phased and prioritized manner based on the future land use, availability, and funding. The South Main Street special interest area is also located at the southwestern portion of the area.

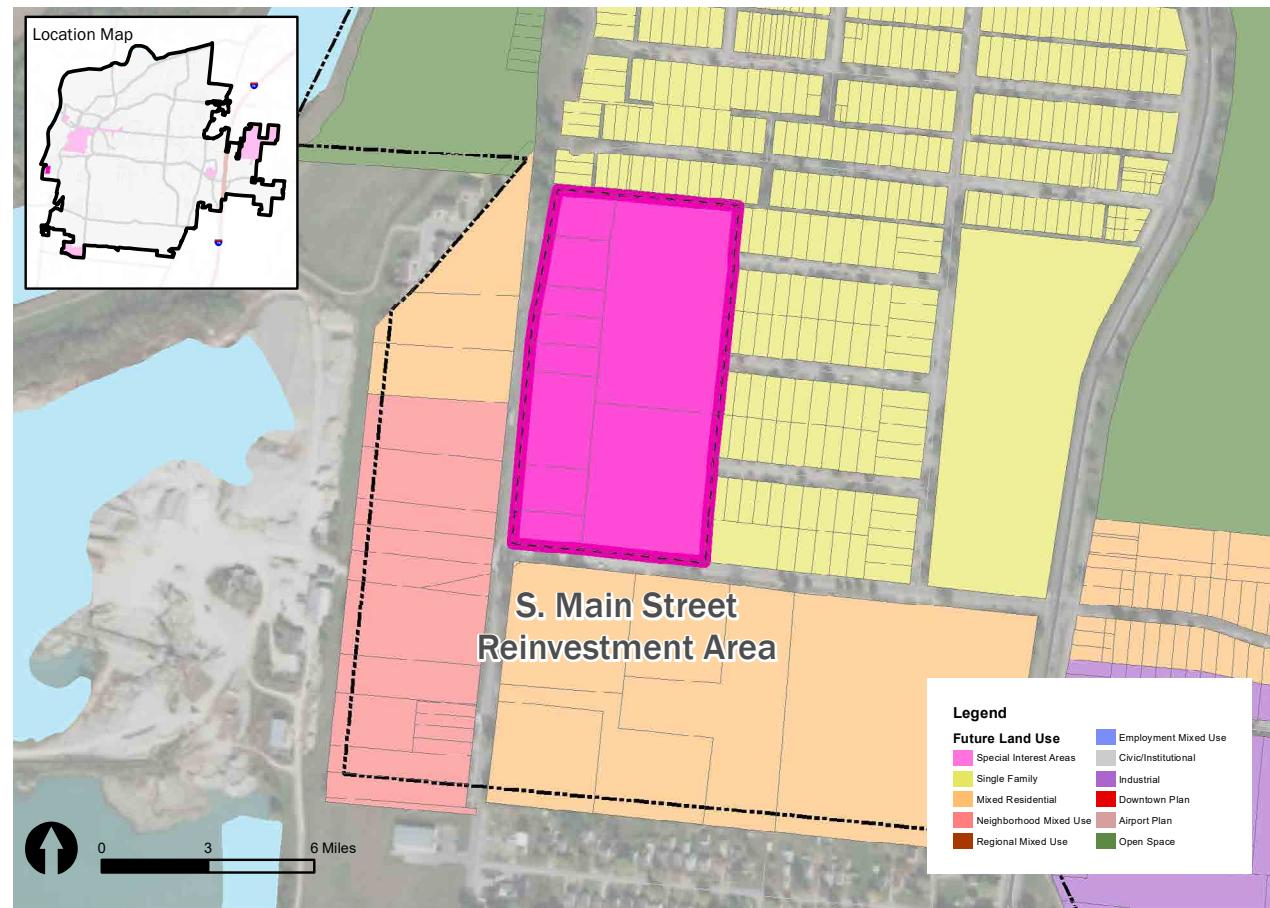


CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- No current proposed improvements



SOUTH MAIN STREET **Special Interest Area**



VISION

The vision for the South Main Redevelopment Project is a residential area with a variety of housing types that accommodate the city's housing needs. The redevelopment plan also includes limited small-scale commercial uses to service residents in the area.

BACKGROUND

The South Main Development Redevelopment Project is 18-acres and is primarily vacant. 3 acres of the site belonging to an existing religious institution. The area is largely bordered by residential development that includes single-family to the north and east, and mixed-use and mixed residential development to the south and west.

The South Main Redevelopment Project area is undeserved due to its location off OH-4. It is known to be a food desert and lacks in amenities important for community development to maintain a high quality of life. A priority of this area should be to encourage investing in small-scale commercial options, such as a local convenience store and personal service establishments to fulfill the basic needs and services of this area.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines are suggested to guide the revitalization and redevelopment of the South Main Development.

Uses :

- The South Main Development Site should focus primarily on residential development including single-family options that include some two- and three-family style homes with limited small-scale multi-family developments.
- Residential developments should cater to Middletown's workforce, providing attractive and affordable options.
- Complementary uses such as public facilities, parks, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses that will service and enhance the surrounding area are supported.

Site :

- Streets within the area should be designed for and be engaging for the pedestrian, which may include clearly identified crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented lighting, and street furniture.
- Pedestrian, multi-modal, and vehicular connectivity should be provided throughout the redevelopment site with clear and safe connections to the surrounding neighborhood.
- Strategic open spaces should be provided throughout the site that provide both passive and active recreational opportunities which could include parks, common gathering spaces, and gardens.

- New development within the site should include appropriate landscaping and buffering elements including street trees, parking lot landscaping and perimeter screening, and building perimeter landscaping.

Building :

- Non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family buildings should have clearly designed pedestrian entrances and pedestrian-oriented design elements such as storefront windows, outdoor dining patios, stoops, and landscaping.
- Non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of high-quality building materials and colors.



Images - Development typologies

URBAN CORE

Development Opportunity Area

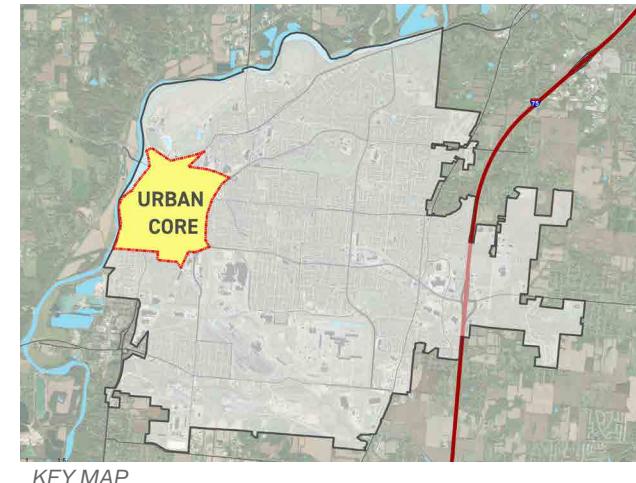
VISION

The Urban Core Development Opportunity Area is an important focal point of the city. This area includes the Nationally Registered Downtown Central Avenue and South Main Historic Districts. Revitalization is planned to increase opportunities for residential and commercial development that includes retail and recreational/entertainment uses. Redevelopment will encourage community pride, enhance appreciation for the city's history, and contribute to the overall health of the community.

In 2017, the City of Middletown adopted a Downtown Strategic Plan to guide development in the downtown area. The vision established in that plan is: "Downtown Middletown: The place where our past, present, and future come together to represent the best of who we are and the best of what we can do".

FUTURE LAND USE

The majority of the Urban Core area is comprised of buildings that are historically designated on the National Register. Development in this area is to be guided by the Downtown Strategic Plan. The Urban Core area also includes Mixed Residential, Single Family Residential, Open Space, and a portion of the Airport Plan area. Four special interest areas are also located in this area: Oakland Neighborhood, Paperboard, Riverfront, and the Central Avenue corridor.

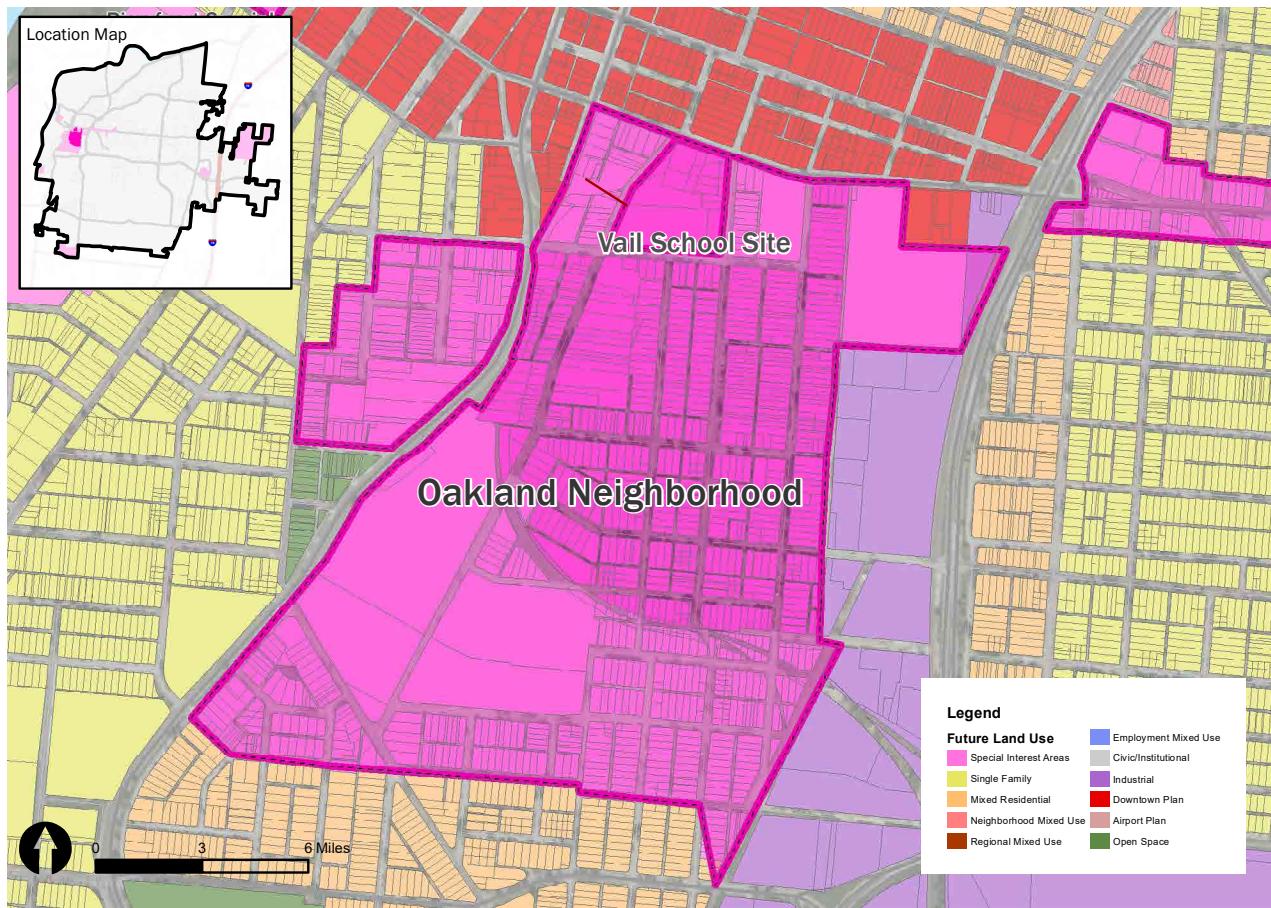


CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- *Utilities – The downtown area has the oldest, and some cases undersized, water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. These utilities may need to be improved in order to accommodate new development in and around Downtown Middletown.*
- *Bike Path – A cross-town bike path is planned to connect the Renaissance/East End Development Area to downtown via SR 122 and Central Avenue. Though the exact path alignment is not known, a logical routing through downtown needs to be identified and should ultimately end at the bike path located along the river.*
- *Streetscape – Through many positive improvements have been made to the streetscape in downtown, continued improvement to the downtown streetscape is needed to strengthen downtown's sense of place and attractiveness.*



OAKLAND NEIGHBORHOOD **Special Interest Area**



VISION

The vision for the Oakland Neighborhood is a thriving revitalized residential area that is in close proximity to downtown. The goal for this neighborhood is to expand its pedestrian amenities and offer premiere residential and mixed uses on the old Vail School Site. The neighborhood will also be anchored by a re-imagined Oakland Park that will act as a community gathering space.

This neighborhood prides itself on the culture of its residents and rich historical background.

BACKGROUND

The Oakland Neighborhood was originally created to support the new American Rolling Mill Company (ARMCO) manufacturing facility, to provide employee housing in a walkable distance to work. However, ARMCO built a new facility and relocated in the 1960's which created a decline in the viability of the neighborhood.

This neighborhood was primarily single-family housing. It has a traditional development pattern with homes that are located close to the street, that feature front porches, and alley-loaded garages. The neighborhood

currently has issues with crime, low property values, and tax delinquencies. It also directly abuts industrial uses and major thoroughfares, which isolates the neighborhood.

The Oakland Neighborhood was historically designated in April 2020. As of November 2020, this neighborhood became the city's first Conservation District. The Oakland Neighborhood is a target area for revitalization in the city's Housing Policy. The city is investing resources to create a successful marketable neighborhood that will attract first time home buyers, empty nesters, and those who want to support downtown local businesses, restaurants, the arts, and other quality of life amenities.

This revitalization is focused on key redevelopment opportunities that include infrastructure improvements, wayfinding, safety and lighting, walkability, cultural infusion, infill housing, the Vail School Site, the Carnegie Library, AK Steel/ Cleveland CLIFFS site, CERTA site, and the City's Oakland Park.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines are suggested to guide the revitalization and redevelopment of the Oakland Neighborhood.

Uses :

- The Oakland Neighborhood should remain

a primarily single-family neighborhood that may include some two-family homes and complementary uses such as public facilities, parks, and neighborhood-serving commercial uses.

- *The Vail School Redevelopment Site should include a mix of uses that complement and support the surrounding neighborhood, which may include residential, service, commercial, office, entertainment, and public facilities. Residential uses may include a mix of types and densities including townhomes, attached housing, and small-scale multi-family or mixed-use buildings.*
- *The AK Steel/ Cleveland CLIFFS and CERTA sites are envisioned to include high-tech industrial and office uses that create employment opportunities.*

Site :

- *Streets within the neighborhood should be designed and engaging for the pedestrian, which may include clearly identified crosswalks, wayfinding signage, sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented lighting, street furniture, and traffic-calming where needed.*
- *Pedestrian, multi-modal, and vehicular connectivity should be provided throughout the school redevelopment site with clear and safe connections to the surrounding neighborhood.*
- *Strategic open spaces should be provided throughout the site that provide both passive and active recreational opportunities which could include parks, common gathering*

spaces, sculptures, interactive art, and gardens.

- *New development within the school site should feature appropriate landscaping and buffering elements that include street trees, parking lot and building perimeter landscaping, and other privacy screening options.*

Building :

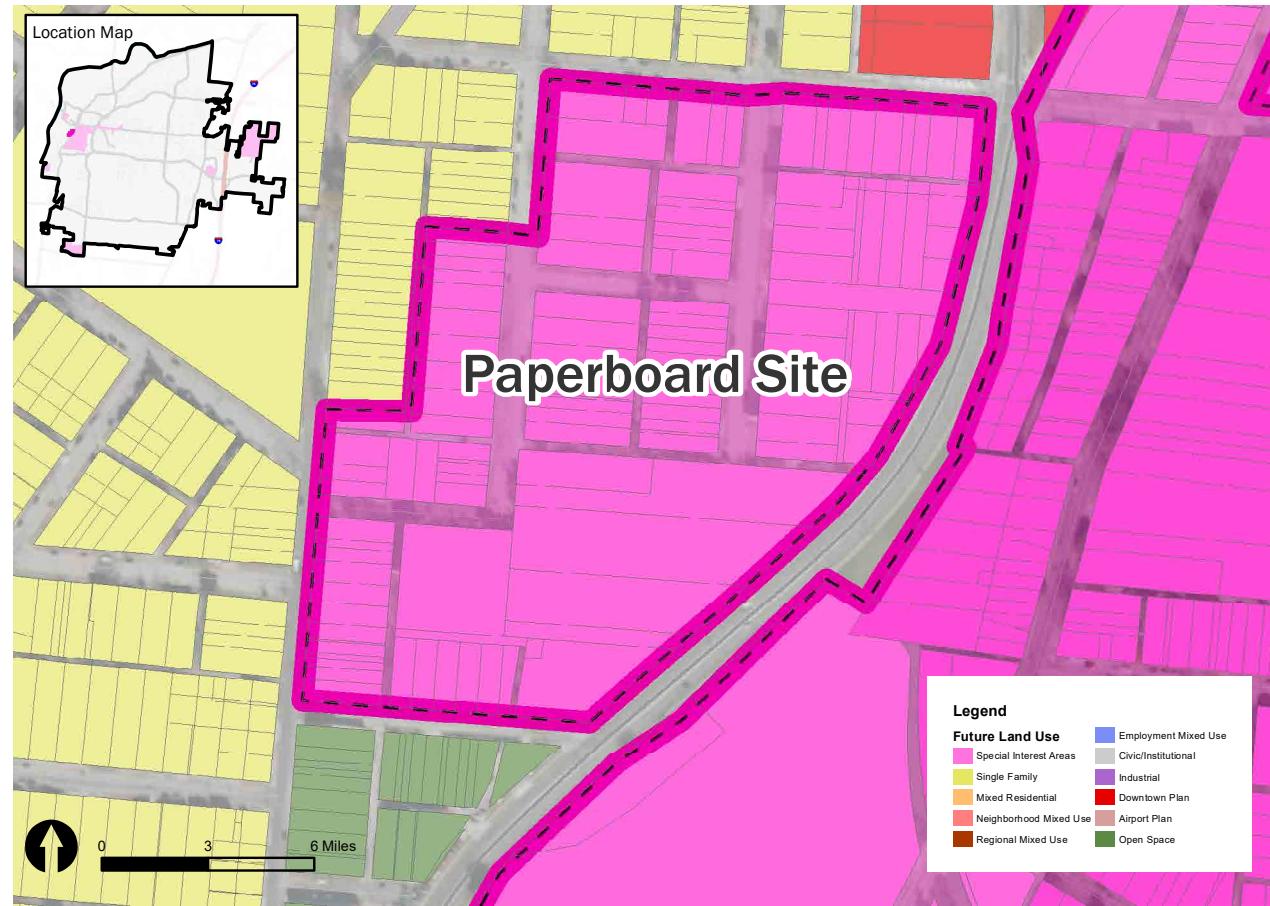
- *Non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family buildings should have clearly designed pedestrian entrances and pedestrian-oriented design elements such as storefront windows, outdoor dining patios, stoops, and landscaping.*
- *Non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of quality building materials and colors.*
- *Existing buildings within the neighborhood (not within the redevelopment site) should be revitalized in accordance with the historic guidelines as established by the city.*



Images - Development typologies



PAPERBOARD **Special Interest Area**



VISION

The vision for the Paperboard Site is a campus-style mixed use development that serves both as an employment destination within the city and may include a variety of modern residential housing options, commercial, and service uses.

BACKGROUND

The Paper Board Site spans across multiple parcels that have frontage along Verity Parkway, Girard, and Park Street. The Middletown Paperboard Company originally opened in the mid-1800's and produced boxboards from recycled paper. In the late 1800's there was an expansion, and a paper mill was constructed on the site that produced manila and bag paper. The facility had various owners that utilized the site for production and storage. The facility closed permanently in 2000.

In January 2020, much of the site was destroyed by a fire. The majority of this site is comprised of vacant and underdeveloped properties with high potential for redevelopment. The site abuts residential neighborhoods and the Old South Park to the west of site.

The Paperboard Site is located along main corridor that leads to Downtown Middletown and is within a few blocks of the city's central business district. It is also located across Verity Parkway from the Oakland Neighborhood (Special Interest Area 1). This location has multiple potential uses such as commercial/business, residential, entertainment, recreational facilities, and cultural institutions.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines are suggested to guide the revitalization and redevelopment of the Paperboard Site.

Uses :

- *Uses within the Paperboard Site may include a mix of uses that include high-tech industrial and manufacturing, commercial, office, live/work and co-working spaces, service, mixed use, assisted living, public facilities, and residential uses.*
- *Lower density uses such as residential and office should be used as transitional uses to the existing neighborhoods to the north and west of the site.*
- *Higher density and larger scale developments should be located along the eastern edge of the development fronting along Verity Parkway.*
- *Industrial uses that produce excessive noise, odors, or emissions are not appropriate for this site due to its location and proximity to residential homes.*

Site :

- *New development should be constructed in a campus-style format with a mixture of uses that may be mixed vertically (i.e., office/commercial uses on ground level with office/residential uses above) or horizontally.*
- *Streets within the area should be designed for and be engaging for the pedestrian and which may include clearly identified crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented lighting, and street furniture.*
- *Pedestrian, multi-modal, and vehicular connectivity should be provided throughout the site with clear and safe connections to the surrounding neighborhood.*
- *Strategic open spaces should be provided throughout the site that provide both passive and active recreational opportunities which could include parks, common gathering spaces, and gardens.*
- *New development within the site should include appropriate landscaping and buffering elements including street trees, parking lot landscaping and perimeter screening, and building perimeter landscaping. Screening should be provided between non-residential uses and the surrounding residential neighborhoods as appropriate.*
- *Buildings should be located adjacent to the street, locating parking and service areas to the rear or the interior of the site when possible.*

Building :

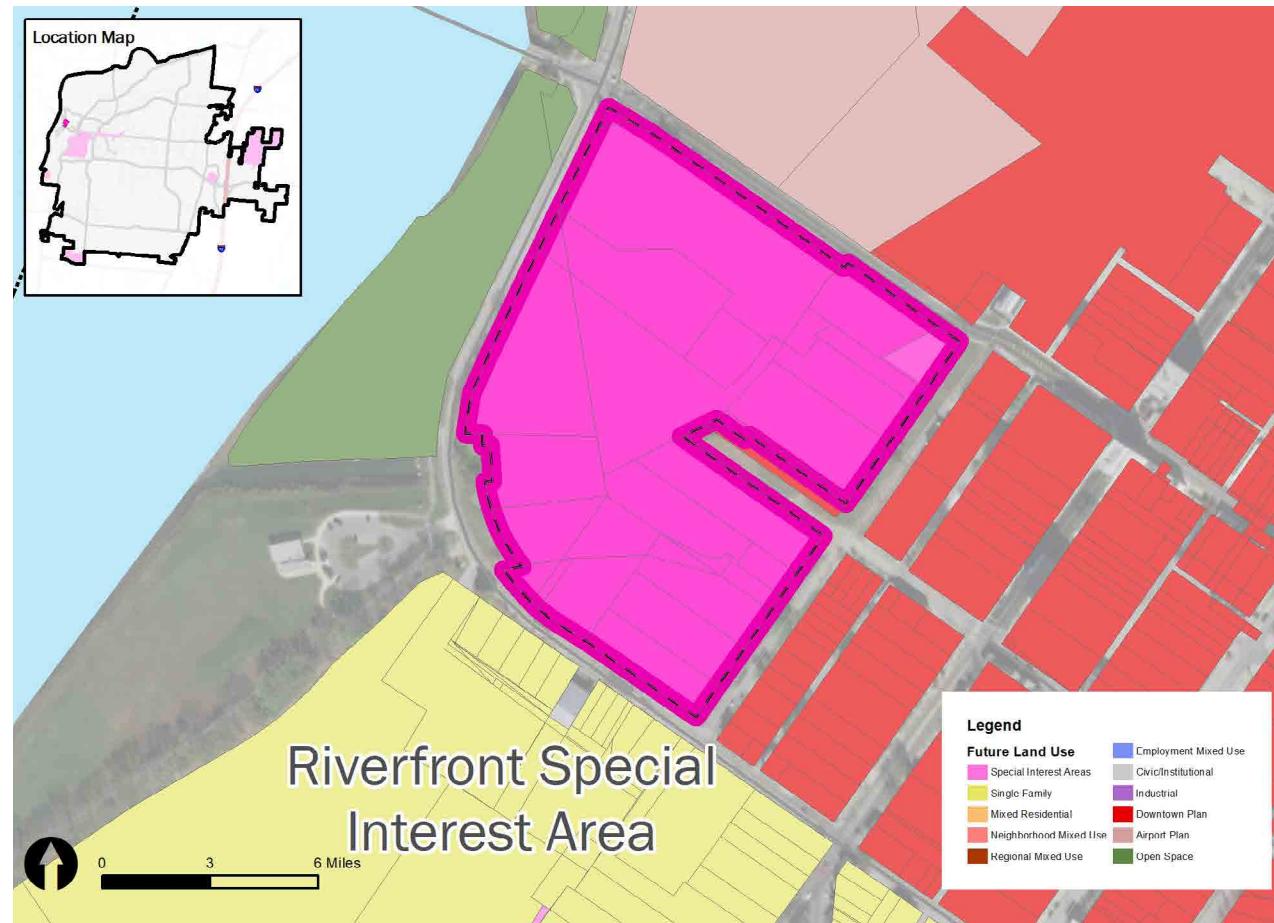
- *Non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family buildings should have clearly designed pedestrian entrances and pedestrian-oriented design elements such as storefront windows, outdoor dining patios, stoops, and landscaping.*
- *Non-residential, mixed use, and multi-family buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of high-quality building materials and colors.*
- *Modern and innovative architecture and a creative use of building materials, design, and site layout is encouraged on this site including the use of public art, murals, and other features to engage and inspire the public.*



Images - Development typologies



RIVERFRONT **Special Interest Area**



VISION

The vision for the Riverfront Area is to incorporate uses that preserve the natural amenities, support, and encourage use of the recreational features of the Great Miami Riverfront, and also complement the adjacent areas including the downtown and surrounding single-family neighborhoods. This Riverfront Area is located within close proximity to the Forest Hills Golf Course as well as the Great Miami Bike Trail, which is a valuable amenity that could encourage connectivity around this site to Downtown Middletown.

BACKGROUND

The Riverfront Special Interest Area is approximately 17 acres of underutilized and available land for development. In order for future development to occur, any existing structures will need to be demolished and the site will need remediation.

The site is bordered by Central Ave, Water Street, Carmody Boulevard, and 2nd Street – with 1st Street ending on the site's property. Across from Carmody Boulevard is the Great Miami Recreational Trail and the Great Miami River, giving the site access to highly desirable recreational amenities. The site is

also surrounded by the downtown to the east, single-family development to the south, and airport supporting uses to the north.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines are suggested to guide the development of the Riverfront Area.

Uses :

- *Uses within the Riverfront Area may include a mix of neighborhood-serving commercial, retail, office, hospitality, entertainment, and service establishments.*
- *Parks, open space, and recreational uses that complement the riverfront is encouraged. Consider creative and unique recreational opportunities such as adult playgrounds or outdoor fitness parks.*
- *Lower intensity uses, such as office, should be used as transitional uses to the existing neighborhoods to the south of the site.*
- *Uses that produce excessive noise, odors, or emissions are not appropriate for this site due to its location and proximity to residential homes and the riverfront.*

Site :

- *Streets within the area should be designed for and be engaging for the pedestrian, which may include clearly identified crosswalks, sidewalks, pedestrian-oriented lighting, and street furniture.*

- *Pedestrian, multi-modal, and vehicular connectivity should be provided throughout the redevelopment site with clear and safe connections to the surrounding neighborhoods and districts with emphasis made to connections to the riverfront trails and Downtown.*
- *Strategic open spaces should be provided throughout the site that provide both passive and active recreational opportunities which could include parks, common gathering spaces, and gardens. Public art and interactive spaces are encouraged to attract visitors to the site.*
- *New development within the site should include appropriate landscaping and buffering elements including street trees, parking lot landscaping and perimeter screening, and building perimeter landscaping. Screening should be provided between non-residential uses and the surrounding residential neighborhoods as appropriate.*
- *Buildings should be located adjacent to the street, locating parking and service areas to the rear or the interior of the site when possible.*

Building :

- *Buildings should not exceed four stories in height.*
- *Commercial and mixed-use buildings should have clearly designed pedestrian entrances and pedestrian-oriented design elements such as storefront windows, outdoor dining patios, stoops, and landscaping.*

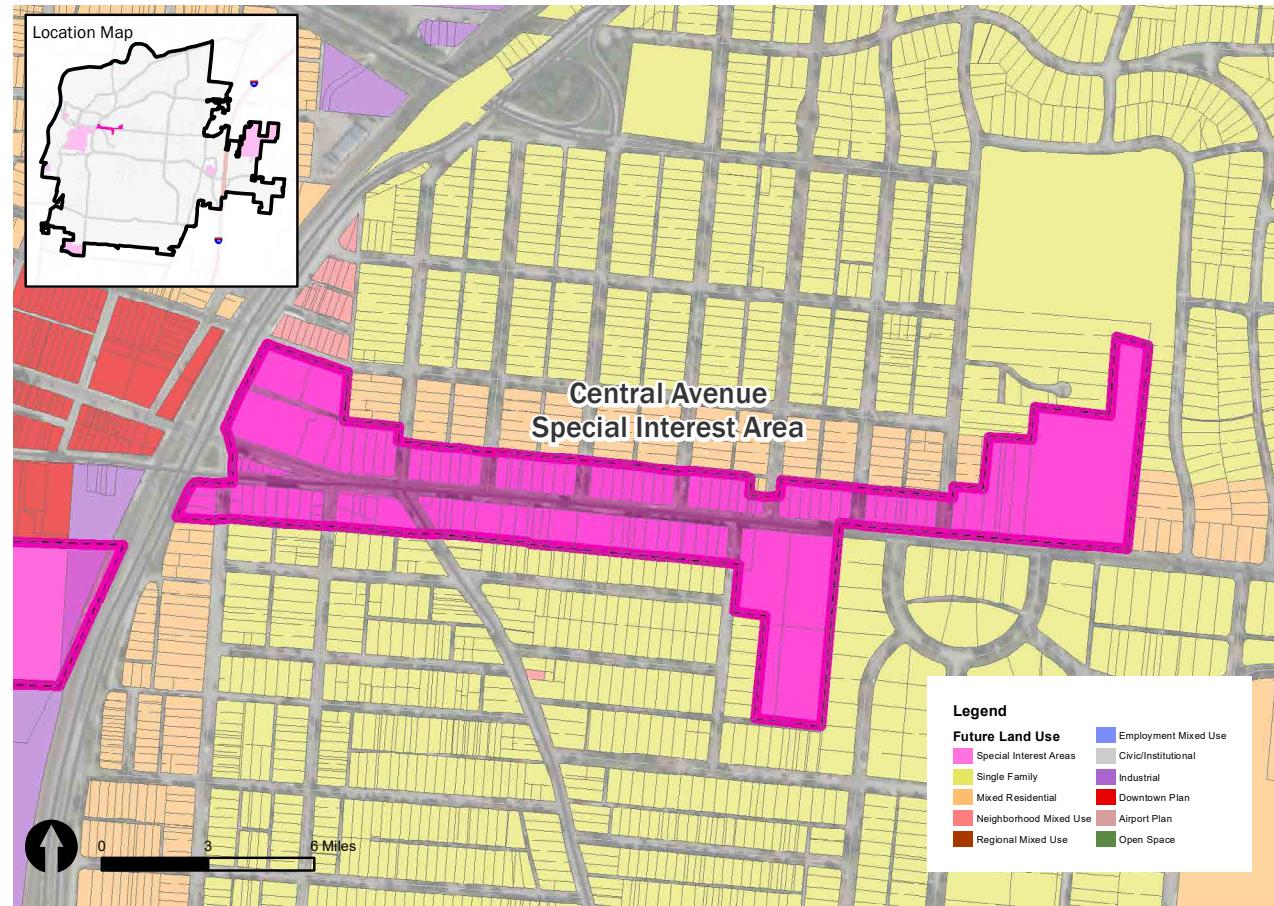
- *Commercial and mixed-use buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of high-quality building materials and colors.*
- *Modern and innovative architecture and a creative use of building materials, design, and site layout is encouraged on this site including the use of public art, murals, and other features to engage and inspire the public.*



Images - Development typologies



CENTRAL AVENUE CORRIDOR **Special Interest Area**



VISION

The vision for the Central Avenue Corridor is a flourishing neighborhood-scale commercial corridor district that is walkable and is a destination location for the city. This corridor is envisioned to continue movement from the Downtown that serves and receives support from the surrounding neighborhoods. The corridor has two large-scale redevelopment opportunities through reimagining the old Roosevelt School Site & former Lincoln School into a premier mixed residential development.

BACKGROUND

The Central Avenue Corridor consists of 40 acres of small-scale commercial and office uses and includes the frontage lots along Central Avenue from N. University Boulevard to the west to the old Roosevelt School site moving east. The site serves as a neighborhood business district to the residents of central Middletown and as an access/gateway to the city's east side. This corridor is home to popular restaurants, night life, specialty shops, personal service establishments, and a convenience store. It is also close to the City's Highland Historic District and newly renovated City Sunset Park.

The Roosevelt & Lincoln School sites are a redevelopment priority for this area. Additional reinvestment in this area should focus on improvement and enhancement of the area such as improved streetscaping and design while uses should complement and serve the adjacent neighborhoods.

DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The following development guidelines are suggested to guide the revitalization and redevelopment of the Central Avenue Corridor.

Uses :

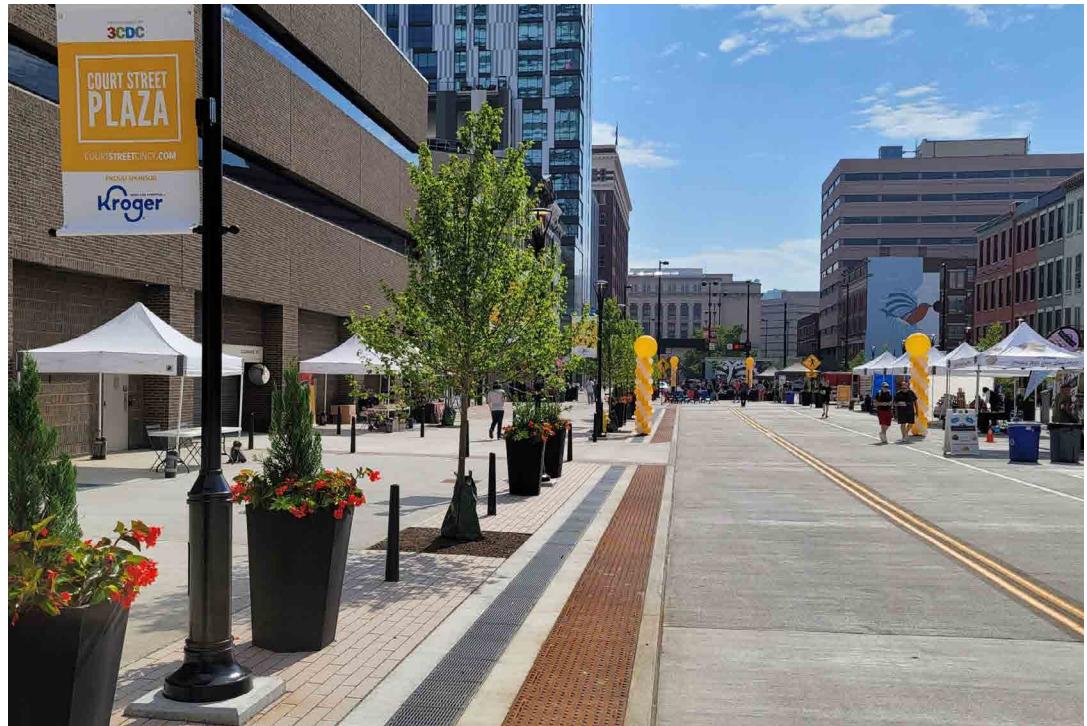
- *Uses within the Central Avenue Corridor may include a mix of neighborhood-serving commercial, retail, office, service, and residential uses.*
- *Uses that produce excessive noise, odors, or emissions are not appropriate for this site due to its location and proximity to residential homes.*
- *The Roosevelt & Lincoln School sites should include a mix of residential uses that complement and support the surrounding neighborhood and corridor. Residential uses may include a mix of types and densities including townhomes, attached housing, and small-scale residential condominiums, or mixed-use buildings.*

Site :

- *The lots that face Central Ave have a fairly defined development pattern with buildings located close to the street with small front yards and rear or side parking for commercial uses. This development pattern should be retained and promoted when redevelopment or new development occurs along the corridor.*
- *The open area between the building and the street should be landscaped with grass, shrubs, and trees and may also include outdoor seating and eating areas for commercial uses.*
- *Pedestrian, multi-modal, and vehicular connectivity should be provided throughout the site with clear and safe connections to the surrounding neighborhood.*
- *Strategic open spaces should be provided throughout the site that provide both passive and active recreational opportunities which could include parks, common gathering spaces, and gardens.*
- *New development within the site should include appropriate landscaping and buffering elements including street trees, parking lot landscaping and perimeter screening, and building perimeter landscaping. Screening should be provided between non-residential uses and the surrounding residential neighborhoods as appropriate.*

Building :

- *Non-residential, mixed use, and attached residential buildings should have clearly designed pedestrian entrances and pedestrian-oriented design elements such as storefront windows, outdoor dining patios, stoops, and landscaping.*
- *Non-residential, mixed use, and attached residential buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of high-quality building materials and colors.*
- *Modern and innovative architecture and a creative use of building materials, design, and site layout is encouraged on this site including the use of public art, murals, and other features to engage and inspire the public.*
- *Commercial and mixed-use buildings should not be designed with uninterrupted lengths of blank walls and utilize a variety of high-quality building materials and colors.*



Images - Development typologies

Central Avenue Corridor Concept Plan

The following concept plan has been created for the Central Avenue Corridor to illustrate a graphic framework for potential development scenarios.



Improved streetscaping and landscaping along Central Avenue with specific focus on key intersections and gateways leading into the district. Another important plan for this corridor is incorporating wayfinding signage to assist in movement to and from the downtown.

HOOK FIELD

Development Opportunity Area

The Middletown Regional Airport/Hook Field (MWO) plays an increasingly important role in the future economic development of Middletown, Butler County, and the surrounding communities. Hook Field is an integral component for serving the growing air transportation needs of local businesses and residents. It is owned and operated by the City of Middletown and is a General Aviation Airport which serves both corporate and private aircraft. Hook Field is conveniently located between Cincinnati and Dayton with easy access to Interstate 75. The Airport/Hook Field contains 13 city-owned buildings that consists of 66 T-Hangar units, 2- 50'x50' aircraft hangar units, an 8,000 sq. ft. Terminal Building, a 24,000 sq. ft. maintenance hangar, and 39,000 sq. ft. of corporate/community hangar space. The city also owns and operates a 40,000 gallon above ground aviation fuel storage facility. The Middletown Regional Airport/Hook Field accommodates approximately 110 based aircraft, over 40,000 annual aircraft operations and sells 160,000 gallons of aviation fuel each year. The Airport is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

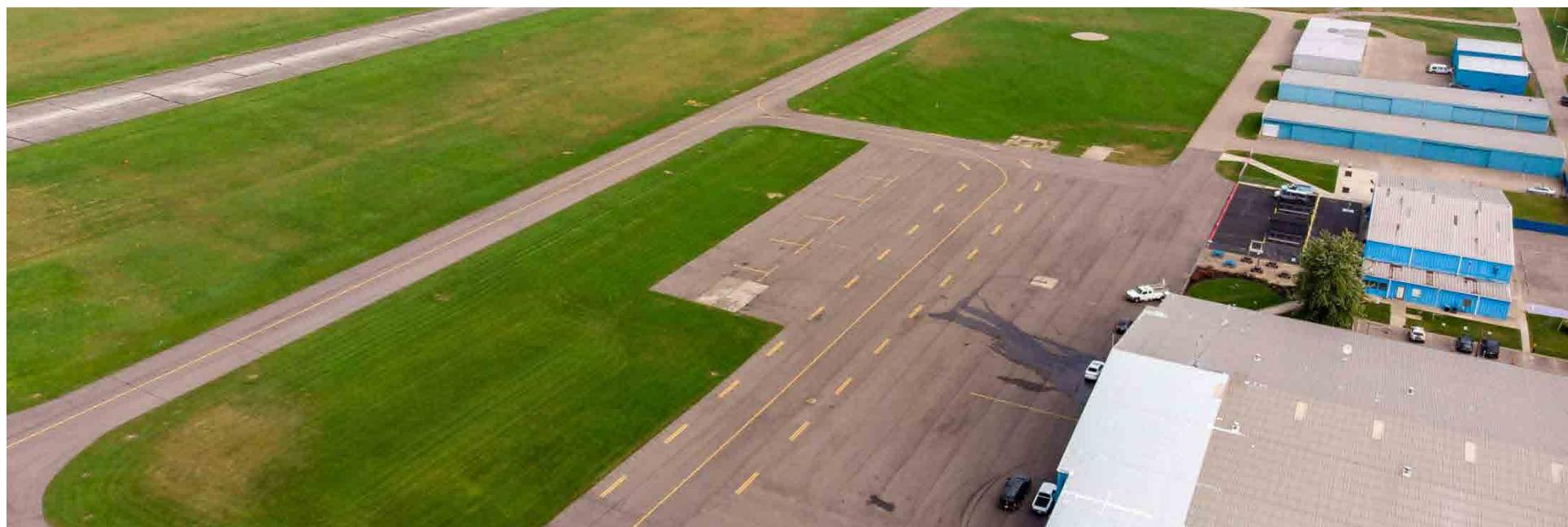
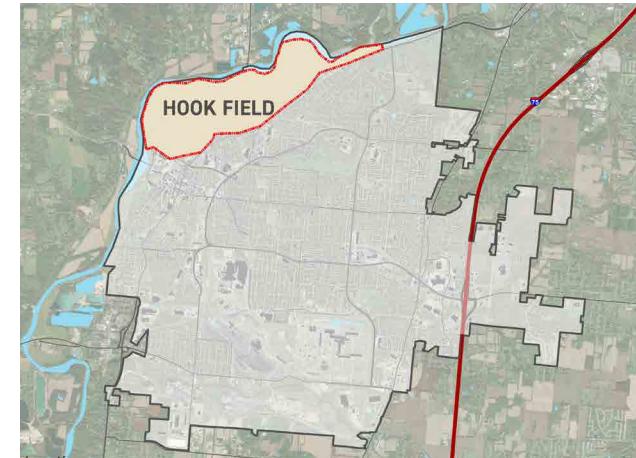


IMAGE : Middletown Regional Airport

VISION

Hook Field Municipal Airport will be redeveloped with modern air-side accessible amenities to complement and fully benefit from the longest general aviation runway located in south-west Ohio. Demand for airport facilities and services will create the need for a modern aeropark located on and/or adjacent to airport grounds. Additional retail, restaurant, and office support uses will be needed to service airport-related activity.

FUTURE LAND USE

The majority of this area is comprised of the Airport Plan future land use designation. The City of Middletown's Airport Plan will guide the development of the airport and its ancillary uses. Additional land uses in this area include Mixed Residential, Single Family Residential, Industrial, and Open Space.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Airport Facilities** – *The airport itself requires on-going capital improvements to meet FAA standards. From a more practical perspective, new airport facilities are needed to modernize Hook Field.*
- **Airport Gateway** – *A new high-quality Hook Field entry sign is needed at the Germantown entrance to improve airport branding and visibility.*
- **Airport Service Road** – *A full length service road is needed to connect Germantown and Smith Park entrances.*

MIDD CENTRAL

Development Opportunity Area

VISION

Midd Central's healthy neighborhoods will remain vibrant and attractive. Notable characteristics of this area include pedestrian-friendly streets, parks, and neighborhood-oriented businesses that include a sustainable mix of retail, service, professional office, and restaurants. This area also includes the City's Nationally Registered Historic Highlands District.

FUTURE LAND USE

This area is comprised of Single Family Residential, Mixed Residential, and Open Space land use designations, along with a portion of the Central Avenue Special Interest Area (see the *Urban Core Development Opportunity Area for the Central Avenue Special Interest Area description*).



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Road Improvements** – The most direct route from I-75 to downtown follows Roosevelt and Grand Avenue to Sutphin Street and Central Avenue. Widening Sutphin and Grand and/or reconfiguring the intersections of Sutphin/Central and Sutphin/Grand would improve the capacity and functionality of this route and improve access to downtown. This recommendation will be difficult to implement given the probable need for additional right-of-way and the close proximity of existing structures next to the roadway.
- **Streetscape Improvements** – Streetscape improvements are needed to better define the Central/Sutphin neighborhood business district. Pedestrian amenities should be offered including small plazas, benches, trash cans, and decorative street lighting.
- **Bike Lanes** – Bike lanes are planned in the existing Central Avenue roadway. Bike lanes will provide a cross town connector dedicated for the preferential use of bicyclists. Bicycle facilities are envisioned to eventually connect downtown and the Great Miami River to Towne Mall and the Renaissance/East End Development Opportunity Area.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



INTRODUCTION

The role of the city's Economic Development Department is to improve Middletown's economic wellbeing through efforts that entail job creation, job retention, workforce development, tax base enhancements, tourism, and quality of life. The department's efforts will increase municipal revenues needed to provide first class public services and facilities.

The Middletown Advantage

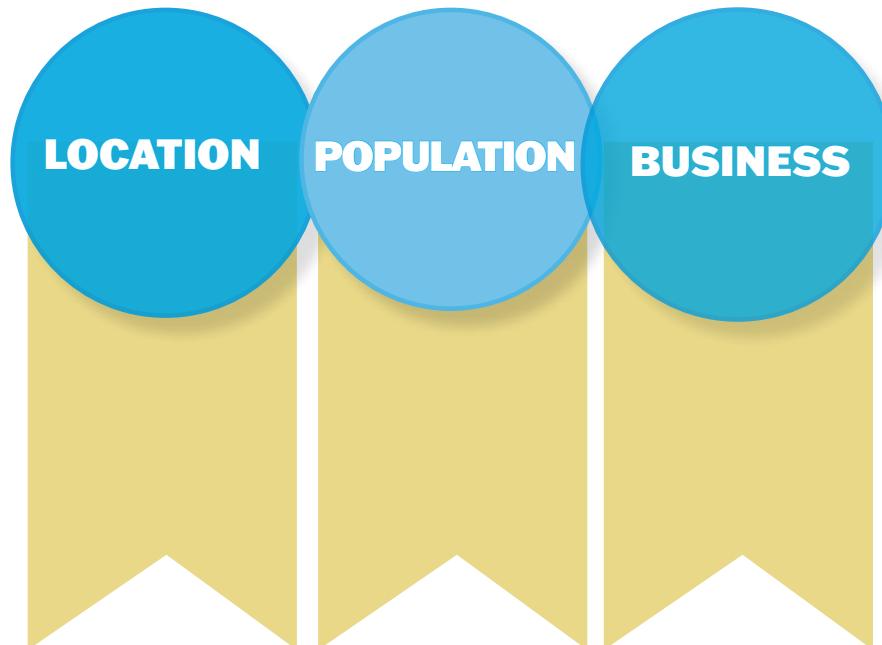


Image - Torchlight Pass



Image - 75 Logistics Center



THE LOCATION ADVANTAGE

The City of Middletown is strategically located between the Cincinnati-Middletown Metropolitan area and the Dayton Metropolitan Area, with less than a 30-minute drive to either downtown Cincinnati or Dayton. Middletown has readily available transportation, including interstate, air and rail - making for easy and efficient business connections. The Middletown Region Airport (MWO) is within an hour drive of Cincinnati (CVG) and Dayton (DAY).



THE POPULATION ADVANTAGE

Middletown is advantageously located within a combined Cincinnati-Dayton metropolitan area that houses three million people. This ranks the metropolitan region as the 18th largest in the U.S. Additionally, Middletown has access to a wide variety of higher-education choices: Cincinnati State, Miami University Middletown, Butler Tech, the Warren County Career Center, and the Greentree Health Sciences Academy.



THE BUSINESS ADVANTAGE

Middletown's professionally managed Economic Development department, is the first line of contact for all existing businesses and those businesses considering Middletown as a prospective location. The department serves as the liaison between businesses, city departments, and community partners for the promotion of Middletown's economic growth. The city's Economic Development team provides assistance with:

- Funding
- Tax incentives
- Demographic data
- Site selection
- Workforce development
- Introductions to city and community partners

ASSETS AND STRATEGIES



STRATEGIES

- Revive existing historic buildings to accommodate for modern residential or retail operations while still maintaining its historical integrity
- Utilize tax credits and incentives for historical buildings
- Utilize the City of Middletown Port Authority by acquiring vacant or blighted properties and allocate resources from the land bank to either demolish or bring back such properties to adequate condition
- Work closely with the Small Business Development Center to help guide new business owners in the right direction and assist existing businesses exceed current goals
- Develop a menu of incentives to encourage a diverse downtown business district
- Partner with downtown organizations to bring awareness to new opportunities and promote new businesses within the historic downtown

Skilled Workforce



STRATEGIES

- Work closely with the Small Business Development Center to guide business owners in the direction of growth and expansion.
- Continue to partner with Butler Tech in developing a workforce hangar dedicated to aviation
- Promote Workforce Housing development in target areas.
- Partner with REDI Cincinnati and JobsOhio to help facilitate training and resources to educate the workforce and promote the industries within Middletown
- Encourage full use of higher educational institutions in the area including Miami University, Cincinnati State University, Butler Tech, Warren County Career Center.

Municipal Airport



STRATEGIES

- Promote Opportunity Zones
- Support land use initiatives and evaluate alternatives to maximize economic development
- Work with all education partners to expand academic opportunities available for users and their employees
- Align new development with Airport Master Plan
- Continue to streamline airport operations to increase net receipts and increase number of users



Development Opportunities



STRATEGIES

- Identify sites and redevelopment opportunities in the city that will create new jobs and new investments in Middletown
 - Riverfront Redevelopment
 - Town Mall Redevelopment
 - Renaissance East Development
 - Oakland Park Redevelopment
 - Airport Development
- Align proposed developments with Future Land Use Map.
- Ensure existing and future businesses have access to the resources to thrive and succeed in Middletown
- Implement recently established Downtown Middletown INC's Downtown Strategic Plan.
- Continue to collaborate with Great Miami Riverway and Metro Parks

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HOUSING



INTRODUCTION

Middletown is known for family-friendly neighborhoods and housing affordability. Millennials, young families, and retirees have discovered the biggest benefit of Middletown housing – prices are affordable here. Housing within the city costs only 52 percent of the national average. There is a healthy rate of homeownership in the Middletown community because prices have not skyrocketed like they have elsewhere in the country. Middletown offers many housing options that can accommodate a range of needs and interests- from families looking for a starter homes to retired couples with a desire to downsize.

This chapter draws upon the 2016 Housing Study for data and driving trends in Middletown housing. To best understand the market and demand for the future, an updated housing study is recommended to address the current housing demands, needs, and desires for Middletown as the community emerges from the COVID pandemic.

Housing Availability

Ohio has some of the best housing value in the United States and Middletown, in particular, offers plentiful affordable housing options. The city is also unique in housing options for several reasons.

TYPES OF HOUSING INCLUDES:

- *Starter homes*
- *Historic homes*
- *Downtown housing*
- *Newer subdivision housing*



Images - Housing types

STARTER HOMES

Middletown offers a wide range of starter housing built in the earlier 1900's that are in good structural condition and contain the types of crown molding and ornamental woodwork seldom seen in similarly priced housing.



HISTORIC HOMES

The City of Middletown currently has five historic districts (South Main Historic District, South Main Commercial District, Highlands Historic District, Urban Core Historic District, and Oakland Historic District). These districts contain plenty of housing options with historic and architectural value for prospective residents.



DOWNTOWN HOUSING

The Middletown Downtown Master Plan calls for renovated apartments above existing storefronts, newly constructed multi-family housing, and student housing in support of Cincinnati State Middletown and Miami University-Middletown. The first of these new proposed units is currently under construction. Goetz Tower, a former office building downtown, is being renovated into a 16-unit complex, and will offer one- and two-bedroom market rate apartments, including two-story penthouses with spiral staircases between floors. The city anticipates that this will be completely rented before construction is complete. This project gives Middletown a comparative property to recruit other developers and funding sources for additional new construction.



NEWER SUBDIVISION HOUSING

The city also offers modern housing options to invite a wider spectrum of residents. The new Renaissance Subdivision - Renaissance I & II is a prime example of such housing and is located East of Interstate 75. More construction is proposed 2 miles adjacent to this area, and the new development is estimated to include 545 upper-end single family homes and 78 patio homes when complete.



Images - Housing types

MIDDLETOWN HOUSING STUDY

The City of Middletown hired a consultant, Danter Company, to perform a comprehensive analysis of current housing stock conditions throughout the city, completed in 2016. The goal of the Housing Study was to:

- *Understand the housing environment for those who live and work in the city in order to identify ways to increase housing opportunities and options;*
- *To identify support levels for housing development types;*
- *To establish general guidelines for future housing development to be used in response to developers' proposals for development; and*
- *Identify demand in the current housing market to prioritize future unit types.*

Due to the changes in the housing market caused by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the city has committed to updating the 2016 Housing Study. The update will focus on the city's current demands, with a focus on multifamily residential needs.

City Housing Committee

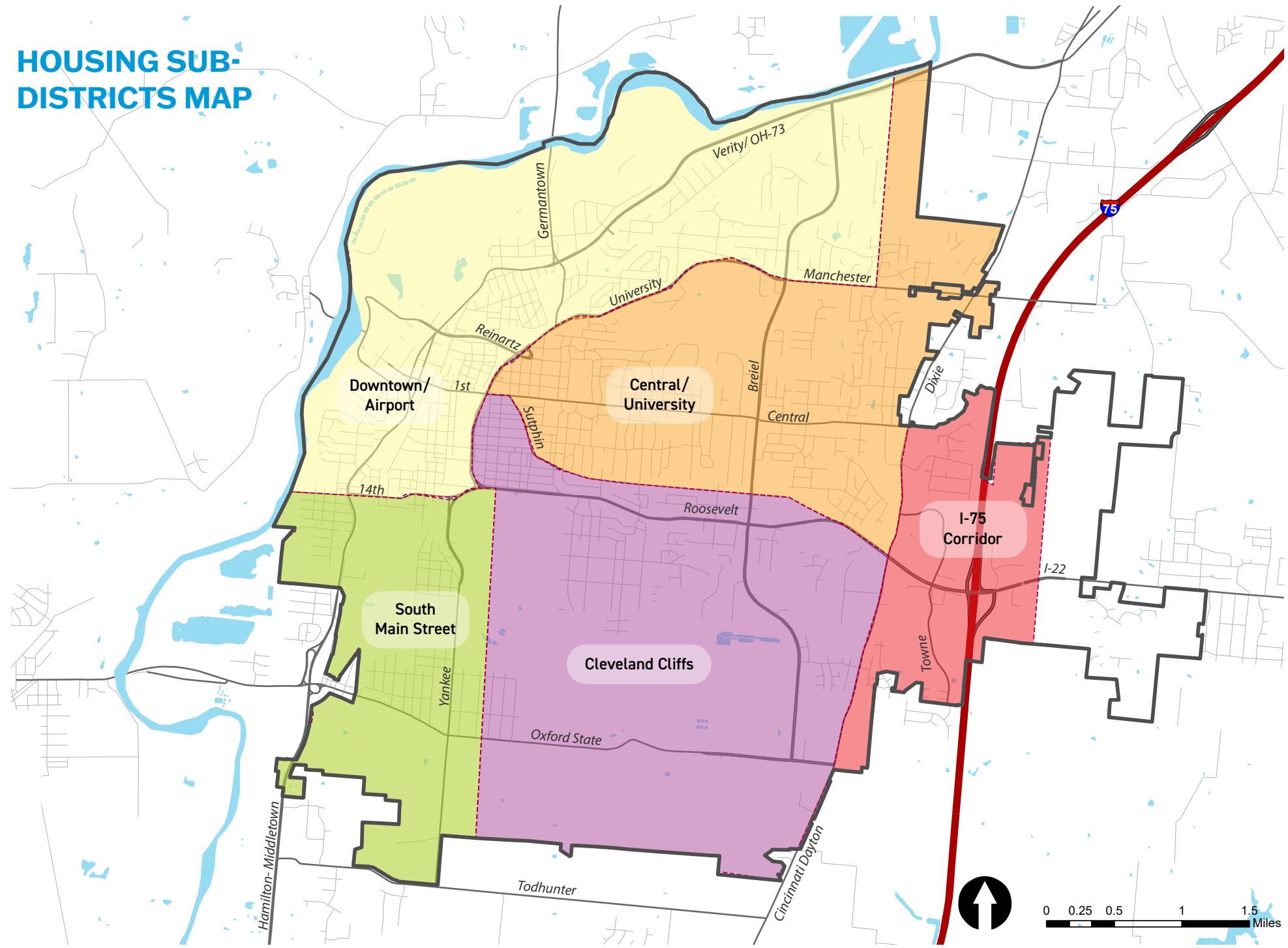
Following the adoption of the Housing Study, the city formed a Housing Committee to take a closer look at the existing conditions of the city's housing and review ways that the plan should be implemented. The Housing Committee was composed of residents, bankers, developers, homebuilders, landlords, ministers, community leaders, council members, and city staff.

The committee spent more than a year studying issues facing Middletown and its housing stock and developed a new policy, which was completed in 2019. The committee met for several months discussing the issues and identifying some strategies for the next 10 to 20 years.

HOUSING GOALS DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE:

- Reduce the amount single family homes from rental back to owner-occupied - increase owner-occupied housing
- Purpose built single family homes need to be converted back to single family home owners
- Encourage infill owner-occupied housing developments
- Develop additional purpose built multifamily developments
- Develop stock of next-level housing - three or more bedrooms beyond starter housing
- Build more single family homes with a starting price-point of \$150,000 or higher
- Ensure compliance with property maintenance codes
- Develop buffers from residential to commercial to industrial areas
- Increase investment and reinvestment throughout Middletown
- Target neighborhoods for revitalization, such as the Oakland neighborhood

HOUSING SUB-DISTRICTS MAP



HOUSING DEMAND

The Housing Study identified five housing sub-markets within the city, as identified on the map. The study identified a total housing demand, across all five sub-markets of 21,528 households. Most of the city's available lot inventory is priced below \$150,000, but there is the need for homes that are priced between \$150,000 and \$200,000.

The Housing Study concluded that there is an estimated demand in the city for an additional:

Table 1: 127 SINGLE FAMILY HOMES of varying price points, with a majority of those in the **\$150,000-\$250,000** range

Single Family Price Range	Estimated Annual Demand
\$150,000-\$199,999	45
\$200,000-\$249,000	36
\$250,000-\$299,999	14
\$300,000-\$349,000	12
\$350,000-\$399,999	10
\$400,000-\$499,999	7
\$500,000 and over	3
TOTAL	127

Table 2: 33 CONDOMINIUMS of varying price points, with a majority of those in the **\$150,000-\$250,000** range;

Condominium Price Range	Estimated Annual Demand
\$150,000-\$199,999	15
\$200,000-\$249,000	6
\$250,000-\$299,999	4
\$300,000-\$349,000	4
\$350,000-\$399,999	2
\$400,000-\$499,999	1
\$500,000 and over	1
TOTAL	33

Table 3: 670 SUBURBAN MULTIFAMILY UNITS including conventional style apartments, units integrated into a mixed use

Housing Unit Type	Yearly Demand Units	Housing Model	Estimated Annual Demand
Conventional Suburban Apartments	200	Studio, One, Two & Three Bedroom	\$750-\$1500
Integrated Use	170	Studio, One, Two & Three Bedroom	\$850-\$1850
Townhouse	120	Two & Three Bedroom	\$1,400-\$1,900
Senior Living	180	One & Two Bedroom	\$850-\$1,350
TOTAL	670		

Table 4: 248 DOWNTOWN MULTIFAMILY UNITS including units over existing store fronts, new construction or adaptive reuse, and streetscape

Housing Unit Type	Yearly Demand Units	Housing Model	Estimated Annual Demand
Over Existing Store-Fronts	72	Studio, One, Two & Three Bedroom	\$500 - \$950
New Construction or Adaptive Reuse – Conventional Walk-up or Elevator Building	92	Studio, One, Two & Three Bedroom	\$750 - \$1,200
Streetscape Townhouse	84	Two & Three Bedroom	\$1,350 - \$1,650
TOTAL	248		

HOUSING CONTINUUM

Households typically move in predictable patterns as their economic and/or family situations change. Typically, young households start in entry-level multifamily/rental and move up as their economic circumstances improve and/or their family circumstances change (marriage, children, etc.). A balanced housing stock is a subjective evaluation that creates a diverse housing stock, providing best possible choice in:

- *Housing types (mix of single family/ multi-family)*
- *Size of housing (mix of sq. feet/ bedrooms, etc.)*
- *Age of housing (new construction/ renovated/historic)*
- *Affordability (mix of price ranges of homes/rents)*
- *Amenities (garage/off street parking/ parks)*
- *Location*
- *Housing density*

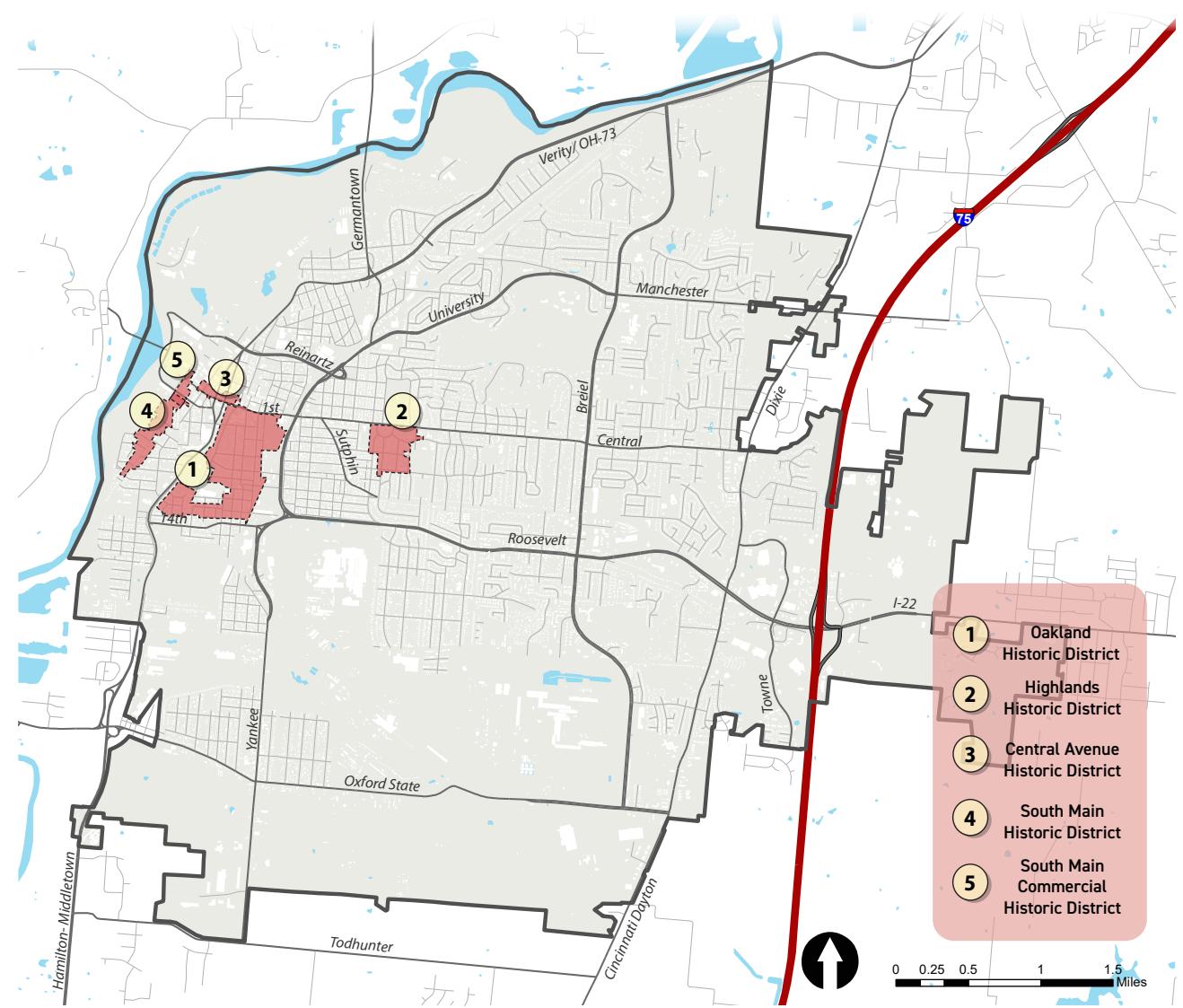
These options are needed to attract a wide range of residents with varying family sizes and household incomes resulting in full occupancy, increased demand for homes and rentals, with the highest possible income tax potential and appreciating property and rental income values.

Middletown is a diverse community with neighborhoods that range in design, scale, age, and composition. The city values its diversity and is committed to improving the health and safety of its neighborhoods. Preferences for housing choices are changing and existing housing stock does not provide attractive options for all spectrums of the population. The city wants its residents to have multiple, attractive housing options available every time they wish to move. This commitment is evident in the city's adopted Housing Policy, which will guide housing development in the years to come.



Image - Townhomes

HISTORIC PRESERVATION



INTRODUCTION

This chapter on Historic Preservation refers to a wide range of strategies that can help sustain Middletown's past. In most cases, the term Historic Preservation is used in reference to buildings, but it may also apply to other man-made structures, objects, archaeological sites, landscapes, and intangible heritage. The term also describes a range of specific treatments for historic sites such as rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Preservation planning for the future of the city is important to ensure proper maintenance of the remnants from its past. In order to protect these historic resources while also furthering sustainability, the city must gain a clear picture of the existing resources and how they can be integrated into the city's future growth.



Image - Sorg Mansion, Journal News

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

City of Middletown has five historic districts:

- *Oakland Historic Conservation District*
- *Highlands Historic District*
- *Central Avenue Historic District*
- *South Main Street Historic District*
- *South Main Commercial Historic District*

In April 2020, the city designated the Oakland Historic Conservation District. The intent of the Oakland Historic Conservation District is to conserve the distinctive character of the Oakland Neighborhood. The Oakland Historic District is significant at the neighborhood level and is regulated with more flexible historic resource protections than the City of Middletown's other historic districts. The Conservation District will preserve Oakland's distinctive character through architecture styles, density of the area, built height, and setback guidelines.

Certified Local Government Designation

In May 2020, Middletown was awarded the Certified Local Government (CLG) status through the State of Ohio Preservation Office and National Park Service. The CLG program is a local, state, and federal government partnership to preserve, protect, and increase awareness of historic resources. An eligible municipality must possess an adequate preservation ordinance and review board to designate historic properties and oversee alterations. By becoming a Certified Local Government, the city is eligible to apply for special grants that assist to identify and evaluate significant historic properties, review and submit nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, produce preservation education materials (such as booklets and brochures), and make updates to the city's preservation plan.

As a CLG, the city will have direct access to State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) staff for assistance with the historic commission, building assessments, surveys and nominations, and general preservation

assistance. State staff and the National Park Service offer regular training for CLGs, as well. Each SHPO designates a CLG Coordinator to assist CLG communities.

States receive annual appropriations from the Federal Historic Preservation Fund. States are required to give at least 10% of their funding to CLGs as sub grants. The grants can fund a wide variety of projects including the following: surveys, National Register nominations, rehabilitation work, design guidelines, educational programs, training, structural assessments, and feasibility studies.

IN THE FUTURE

The city has many properties that should be further studied as they near or surpass 50 years old, the age at which a property can be considered historic, and potentially deemed worthy to be protected from demolition or alteration. Middletown has a rich history that should be celebrated and preserved. Helping property owners learn how to maintain their historic properties as active, viable assets is a key part of a successful preservation program. Many property owners willingly comply with appropriate rehabilitation procedures and develop compatible designs for new

construction when they are well informed about preservation objectives.

The city's preservation program will be used by the city to guide and monitor preservation efforts in the community and serve as a policy document for the City Council, Planning Commission, Historic Commission, and other city boards, business owners, property owners, and the general public may also use the plan to learn about the preservation program and the status of preservation efforts. Historic Preservation is a part of many community interests including sustainability, public participation, community design, housing, and economic development. The plan seeks to balance broader community objectives while achieving its core mission of retaining cultural resources.

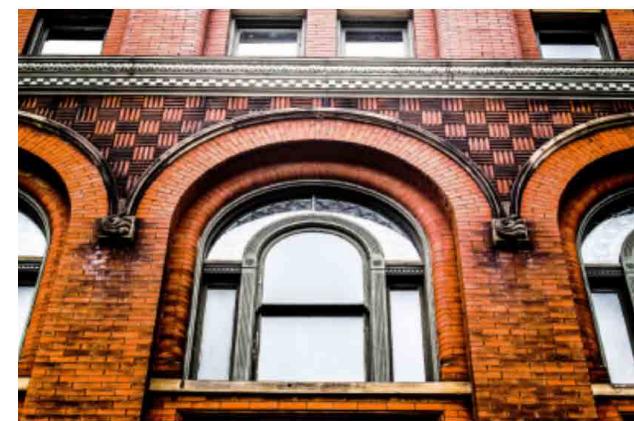


Image - Sorg Mansion, Journal News

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TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE



INTRODUCTION

The condition, availability, and capacity of essential infrastructure is an important element that, in part, defines a community's quality of life, and the desirability of a location to establish a business. This chapter surveys the condition of essential city infrastructure based on available resources. No primary data gathering was performed for this analysis. Recommendations are made regarding the city's transportation, sanitary sewer, and water systems to accommodate future growth.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

An examination of the traffic patterns, access points, and conditions of the street network is an integral part of the Comprehensive Plan because land use and the street system are interdependent. For example, commercial uses generate high traffic volumes and numerous turning movements. As a result, commercial uses gravitate toward primary thoroughfares that have high traffic capacity like Roosevelt Boulevard. Industrial and warehousing operations generate heavy truck traffic. Office and industrial employment centers generate high peak-hour volumes and need convenient routes to expressways. Residents desire convenient access to work and shopping, but generally want safe, low-volume streets in their neighborhood. A well-designed street system can safely accommodate a mix of traffic generated by each land use.

Overview

Middletown has a good system of streets and highways connecting the city internally and to the greater region. There are three primary interchanges that connect Middletown to I-75 via state routes. The state routes provide high capacity routes to easily move from the highway to the commercial, industrial, residential, and urban areas within the city. The SR 122/I-75 interchange is located within the city and the other two major interchanges, SR 63/I-75 and SR 73/I-75, are located south and north of the city, respectively.

Due to the city's history of large industrial and manufacturing facilities, the city was originally designed with large boulevards to provide high capacity transportation corridors throughout the city. The network of

boulevards runs north and south along Breiel Boulevard and east and west along University Boulevard. In addition to the boulevard system, Verity Parkway is a high-volume roadway that runs north and south on the west side of the city near the Great Miami River. Verity Parkway parallels I-75 and connects all of the state routes to the west of the city.

In recent years, the large industrial and manufacturing facilities have downsized and the city has gone through a period of economic depression. As economic conditions continue to improve, the city is currently working to reinvest in the transportation system and other infrastructure. In 2020, the residents approved raising the income tax by 0.25% to provide additional funds for road projects throughout the city. The new levy is expected to generate about \$31.3 million in total over 10 years. The city has committed to paving 137 lane miles with these funds. This is a big step forward for the city, taking into account two failed levies in 1996 and 2004.

Improvements to Existing Roadways

There are plans for additional improvements to interstate access which include street-widening projects. One area of focus is the “Parallel Roadway” system to I-75 using the Cincinnati-Dayton Road and the Union Road corridors. A cooperative improvement of **Cincinnati-Dayton Road** from SR 63 in Monroe to SR 122 in Middletown was completed between 1998 and 2005. The city has since completed a project to widen Cincinnati-Dayton Road, north of SR 122, to three lanes. There are proposed plans for a three-lane section from SR 122 to Franklin. The last two sections from Central Avenue to the City of Franklin fall almost entirely within unincorporated Warren County. Improvements for these sections will require coordination with the City of Franklin and Warren County.

Union Road is also one of the “Parallel Roadways” that the city has been working to improve. This roadway, just north of SR 122, was recently widened to improve access to the Atrium Medical Center and other green spaces that are suitable for development. If economic development in Middletown accelerates near I-75, the remaining sections to the south and north would be widened to accommodate the increased traffic. Completing the Union Road “parallel roadway” would also benefit the cities of Franklin and Monroe, as well as Warren County, Franklin Township and Turtlecreek Township.



Image - Roadwork

Extending Existing Roadways

There is scope for a few major new roadways to be built over the next decade for continued traffic flow upgrades in the city. In the southwest section of the city, **Yankee Road** has been widened to three lanes from Lafayette to Todhunter Road, and extended to SR 63 in the City of Monroe. This greatly improves access to some of Middletown's few remaining areas of commercially and industrially zoned greenfield areas.

Hendrickson Road is another roadway that requires future extension. Extending Hendrickson to intersect with Breiel Boulevard in the west will add another secondary east-west connector in the city's growing east side. The existing section of Hendrickson Road also needs substantial upgrades. This will require collaboration with the City of Monroe and Warren County, as the widening would need to extend until the intersection with Union Road east of I-75. Middletown could also work with Monroe, Warren County, and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in a collaborative effort to extend and widen the Hendrickson Road bridge over I-75. A dedicated pedestrian path could also be provided on the bridge as few pedestrian crossings are available across I-75 in the area.



Image - Infrastructure Improvements

Upgrades to Existing Roadways

Oxford State Road, from SR 4 to just west of Breiel Boulevard, has been depicted in Middletown's Master Plans since the 1970's but most of this area has only been incorporated into city limits recently, and a small portion still remains outside the city's control. Oxford State Road has been widened to three lanes from Yankee Road east to the existing widened section near Breiel Boulevard, presenting an alternative to the Trenton Bypass by serving a similar purpose but yielding improvements in access to Middletown.

Grade separations would be very beneficial to vehicular and rail traffic, as well as emergency vehicle access. If and when high speed rail service comes to Ohio, it is highly likely that the Conrail Line will have a grade separation built-in. Improving this roadway section will be beneficial to several greenfield, as well as brownfield sites within the city identified on the *Development Opportunities Map*. As mentioned, it will be one of the more difficult and expensive sections to upgrade.

The Downtown partial loop of **Reinartz Boulevard (Columbia), Carmody Boulevard, and Second Avenue**, including the First-Second connector, could also be revisited for upgrades. This would be crucial in the future, if high speed rail service comes through Middletown. If existing rail lines are used, then the proposed system will run through Middletown's Downtown, parallel to University Boulevard. Grade separation will be designed where possible. The First Avenue intersection with University has long had excess right-of-way set aside for an overpass with the rail line similar to the overpass at Reinartz Boulevard built in the late 1960's.

A 0.5 mile segment of **Central Avenue** from University Boulevard to Verity Parkway (Canal St.) is set to be reconstructed in the City of Middletown. The project consists of replacing pavement, curb, sidewalk, water main and services, and street lighting. It will also include rehabilitating the existing combined sewer, providing new storm sewer with sustainable storm water management BMPs, traffic calming, technology infrastructure, and other functional streetscape amenities consistent with the City's Downtown Master Plan.

Grand Avenue from the split with Roosevelt Boulevard, near Marshall Road, can also be evaluated for another major access into Downtown. The roadway length is predominantly already a four-lane roadway. The western connector with Central Avenue (Sutphin) could be widened to four lanes as well, with a reconfiguration of the intersection with Central Avenue to favor Grand/Sutphin.

Extending **Central Avenue** east from its present terminus with Cincinnati-Dayton Road could also be studied. An overpass that crosses I-75, connecting to Union Road would add another major east/west access way through the entire city and improve access to the new Hospital for both the public and Middletown Emergency Medical Service (EMS) vehicles. Extending Central Avenue would not be an easy project because of the existing residential developments and the ravine towards west of I-75.

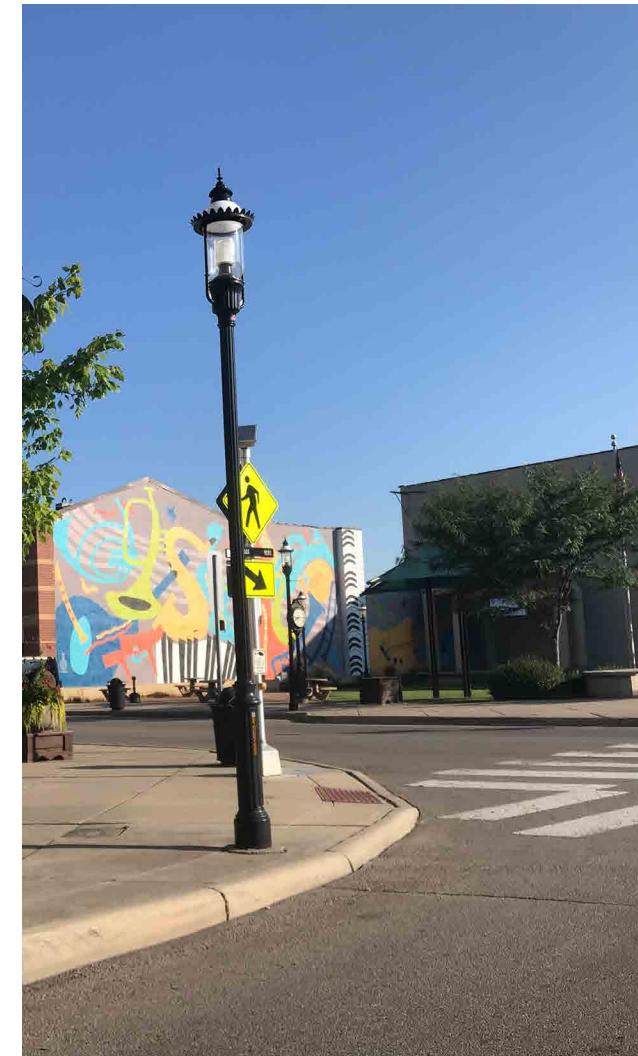


Image - Downtown street intersection

Other potential improvements

To improve local traffic flow, other future roadway projects could include:

- Extending Marshall Road south to intersect with Lefferson/ Breiel Boulevard
- Upgrading Lefferson Road from Breiel Boulevard east to Cincinnati-Dayton Road
- Extending Riverview Drive east to connect with Cincinnati-Dayton Road
- Extending Miller Road east to connect with Decker Road (in Franklin)
- Upgrading Columbia Avenue west of Main Street
- Upgrading Nelbar Street, upgrading Lafayette St. west of Verity
- Extending Rosedale to Cincinnati-Dayton Road
- Upgrading Highland Street south of Roosevelt
- Upgrading Carmody Boulevard east of Germantown Road



Image - Intersection

Roads outside the City (not previously mentioned)

Todhunter Road (Monroe); Greentree Road (Warren County); SR 122 east (Warren County); Manchester Road (Franklin and Warren County); SR 73 through Trenton or Trenton Bypass are all regional roadway improvement interest areas which Middletown could support both because of the direct benefit to the City of Middletown, and also to build strong relationships with neighboring areas. Coordinating with neighbors on future plans for roadway systems furthers potential for more efficient road networks and access ways and also accelerates and expands opportunities for funding/grant approval from external agencies. Regional collaboration also minimizes competition for limited external and internal funds for such high cost projects.

Multi-Modal Connectivity

Bus Transit - Middletown has a fixed route transit system operated by Butler County, that is functional and economically viable. Middletown could proactively engage with the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) and the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in adding linkages with Warren County, Queen City Metro, Dayton Transit and even smaller specialized transit services, such as Senior Citizens. Future scope of development includes the potential expansion of the bus transit system to include micro-transit services.

Bike Paths - Bike paths are another good opportunity for advancing multi-modal efforts. Middletown has an established bike path network through the downtown Smith Park as well as along the Great Miami River, from Oxford State Road to SR 73. The city is currently looking for funding options to connect the bike trail south to Hamilton, Ohio. This is part of "The Great Connector" planned to eventually connect Dayton with Cincinnati. Additionally, a bike path was built parallel to S. Verity Parkway in 2003 but connects to no other path at present. There is also a path/trail around the ravine behind the Atrium Medical Center site northeast of 122 and Union Road. The city currently has plans for numerous new bike lanes and intends to work towards becoming a bike friendly city in the future.

Light Rail - A third multi-modal opportunity that may eventually come to Middletown is high speed or light rail service. This possibility continues to be discussed by federal, state, and local officials. The high speed service is proposed at present to use existing rail lines. The connector from Cincinnati to Dayton would go through Downtown Middletown parallel to University Boulevard. If the light rail system is approved, the present planned alignment is along the median of I-75, which will run through Middletown's east side. The City of Trenton discusses the need to connect to this rail system in Middletown in their Comprehensive Plan. The Cities of Monroe and Franklin both lie along the rail alignment but neither is shown to have a destination stop, at present. The City of Middletown could take a more proactive role in the future rail alignment discussion to ensure that political interests do not divert the final alignment away from the city. It is also imperative to consider these alignments when planning infrastructure improvements over the next 5-10 years.



Image - Public transit

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

The City of Middletown's sewer system is tributary to the Middletown Reclamation Facility and serves an area of approximately 10,000 acres. The sanitary sewer system is comprised of over 230 miles of combined and sanitary sewer and six pump stations. The Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) has the capacity to treat up to 26 million gallons per day (MGD) and currently treats approximately 14.5 MGD from all residential, commercial, and industrial users.

Combined Sewers

Middletown, as an older industrial city, still employs combined sewers (i.e., sewers that carry both sanitary and storm water) that account for approximately one-third of the entire system. Many new lines have been built, particularly in the east end. However, most new sanitary lines flow into the combined system prior to reaching the Water Reclamation Facility at the southwest corner of the city. The system typically has adequate capacity during dry weather when there is only sanitary flow in the system. However, during wet weather, the storm water overwhelms the capacity of the sewer system and the excess flow overflows into the Great Miami River. There are nine combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to the Great Miami River spread along the main interceptor from Manchester Avenue south to Lafayette Avenue.

Long Term Control Plan

Middletown entered into a consent decree with the US and Ohio Environmental Protection Agencies in 2018 that requires the implementation of a Long-Term Control Plan (LTCP) to manage the city's CSOs to the Great Miami River. Compliance with the LTCP implementation requires significant investment in the city's wastewater system, as well as the development of new infrastructure designed to capture the large volume of sewage that would otherwise overflow during wet weather events. Combined, the estimated cost of these investments is over \$265 million.



Image - Infrastructure improvements

These investments include necessary improvements to the collection system and WRF that the city would have made over the next 20 years, regardless of the consent decree. This includes a condition assessment of the collection system which will allow the city to prioritize to rehabilitate or replace portions of the system that are in poor condition. It also includes major projects to replace and update critical infrastructure at the water reclamation facility (WRF).

Additional projects required by the LTCP include two large CSO storage basins and two green infrastructure projects. The two green infrastructure projects involve removing stormwater from the combined sewer system and redirecting it. These are scheduled to be completed at the end of 2021. Design for the first of the two CSO storage basins is scheduled to begin in 2022 with construction beginning in 2023. The final CSO storage basin will be constructed in 2040.

System Capacity

The average design flow for the WRF is 26 MGD, up to 45 MGD under peak flow conditions. Currently the average daily flow is 14.5 MGD. Collection system capacity is routinely exceeded during wet weather events resulting in combined sewer overflows. With the implementation of the city's LTCP, the amount of stormwater in the system will be reduced and additional system storage will be provided.

The city has a well-developed collection system distributed throughout the city's service area. Sewer service extends to most areas of the city that have the potential to be developed or redeveloped. While the city's WRF has unused capacity, the collection system capacity is more limited. Capacity is typically assessed on a case-by-case basis, depending on the location and upstream and downstream flow conditions.

The city's sewer ordinance and Ohio EPA permit place certain restrictions on the types of discharge that the city's sewer system and WRF can accept. The city prohibits stormwater discharges to the sanitary sewer system and restricts discharges of fats, oils, and greases (FOG), toxic substance, and other restricted substances. A pretreatment program may be required by users that do not meet the limits to discharge to sewer system.



Image - Cleveland Cliffs, previously AK Steel

Financing

The city's sanitary sewer infrastructure is funded through an Enterprise Fund where sewer rates generate the revenue required to fund the operation, maintenance, capital investments for the sanitary sewer system.

In reviewing the latest City of Oakwood Rate Survey for southwest Ohio, Middletown is on the higher end of the rates at number 55 of the 63 cities and systems reporting for their sewer rates. The city's water rates are lower than average resulting in a combined rate for water and sewer that ranks 41 of 63 systems that provide both water and sewer.

Given the significant investments required to maintain the existing sewer infrastructure as well as invest in implementing the LTCP, the city anticipates that annual rate increases of 2-5% will be required for the foreseeable future. Rate increases are approved by City Council without public vote.



Image - Middletown City building

STORM SEWER SYSTEM

The city's stormwater system is comprised of storm sewers, combined sewers, pump stations, detention ponds, and dry wells. While the system is primarily a passive system requiring no treatment, the city conducts regular maintenance to mitigate overland flow, storm sewer backups, and maintain the pump stations.

The City of Middletown is required to comply with the Phase II stormwater regulations under Ohio EPA's MS4 program. As part of the stormwater program, the city maintains a Storm Water Management Plan and maintains a general permit required to pollution associated with stormwater runoff.



Image - Public seating

System Capacity

There are tributaries and streams throughout the city that receive stormwater discharges from the city's storm sewers. New stormwater discharges are not permitted in the combined sewer system due to the city's efforts to mitigate CSOs. Currently, there are no restrictions on stormwater discharges to tributaries and streams aside from the requirements of the MS4 General Permit and Storm Water Management Plan.

WATER SYSTEM

The City of Middletown operates a water distribution system which is served by a 20 MGD groundwater plant. The city's distribution system contains approximately 305 miles of water main up to 30- inches in diameter. The system is served by a low service pump station at the plant, two booster stations, and four elevated tanks. The system is comprised of four pressure zones: Low, Intermediate (Blueball), High (Manchester), and Made.

A water distribution system model was developed for the city in 2012 and has been updated twice; in 2017 and 2019. The model has been used by the city to determine the average daily demand within each pressure zone and assess capacity, water storage, water pressure, water age, and pipe flow velocities.



Image - Bioswale

System Capacity

Current average daily flow for the City of Middletown is 10.24 MGD, just over 50% of the water plant's capacity, and the latest model shows the system performs well overall during peak flow conditions. The current limitation of the water distribution system is the elevated storage tank capacity. Based on regulatory guidance documents and industry best practices, each pressure zone should have elevated storage capacity that is equal to the average daily demand. Three out of four pressure zones currently meet this minimum requirement. However, any significant increases to the water demand in these areas would require further evaluation and likely additional water storage. The Blueball pressure zone is the only one that does not currently meet the minimum requirements for elevated water storage.

The city is in the process of completing a detailed Asset Management Plan as well as a Risk and Resiliency Plan. These plans, along with the current assessment of the water distribution system, will provide the city with a framework for maintaining and improving the city's water assets. Currently, the city has plans to design and construct a 2-MG elevated storage tank in the Blueball pressure zone and provide backup power generation to critical assets.

Financing

Like the Sewer System, Middletown's Water System is set up as an Enterprise Fund and collects revenue to fund the operation, maintenance, and capital improvement projects.

In reviewing the latest City of Oakwood Rate Survey for southwest Ohio, Middletown is on the lower end of the rates number 15 of the 66 cities and systems reporting for their water rates. Given the higher rates for sewer, the combined rate for water and sewer puts them 41 of 63 systems that provide both water and sewer.

Due to increased regulatory requirements, the age of the water system, and the potential needs to increase elevated water storage throughout the water system, the city anticipates annual rate increases of 2-5% to provide revenue for the required investments.



Image - America Flag Kids

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