

## CHAPTER II: GOALS AND INITIATIVES

Planning is an orderly, open approach to determining local needs and wants, describing a vision of a community's desired future, setting goals, and priorities, and taking action.<sup>3</sup>

The goals and initiatives in this plan support the values of the community, which have been expressed by a public opinion survey, visioning workshops, and professional recommendations of sound planning and land use management practices.

At least every two years, Copley Zoning Commission and Township staff will be responsible for reviewing on the implementation of goals and initiatives and updating the plan with any needed appendices as well as updating the corresponding Zoning Resolution as necessary.

### **Land Use Plan Goals**

#### 2.1 - Community Character

- a) Balance community design with open space conservation.
- b) Protect historic and cultural resources.
- c) Identify ways to maintain historic corridor areas.
- d) Promote and beautify entranceways into the Township.
- e) Expand cultural opportunities.
- f) Encourage citizen and stakeholder participation in the principles of sustainability.
- g) Instill neighborhood pride within residential and business districts.

#### 2.2 - Transportation & Infrastructure

- a) Assess vehicular and pedestrian access and improve where necessary.
- b) Create *walkable* neighborhoods with sidewalks and trails; encourage pedestrian networks in local business districts.  
(*Definition: The extent to which the built environment is friendly to*

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<sup>3</sup>T. Wilson and G. Blonde, Lay of the Land, Land Use Education Program, 2002, U of Wisconsin

*the presence of people living, shopping, visiting, enjoying or spending time in an area.)*

- c) Encourage public transportation into and through the Township's main thoroughfares.
- d) Create scenic byways on county and state rural routes.
- e) Inventory current sewer and water infrastructure and identify future needs.
- f) Identify and work to correct stormwater runoff and flooding within and beyond the Township's borders.
- g) Educate the public on local government authority and how citizens can protect their property rights including, but not limited to cellular towers and oil and gas wells.

### **2.3 - Commercial & Retail**

- a) Balance commercial/retail development within areas where adequate infrastructure is in place while protecting natural resources and maintaining rural character.
- b) Enhance historic, cultural and visual qualities of the Township.
- c) Encourage partnerships among public and private sectors of the Township.
- d) Ensure that the development process is fair and predictable.
- e) Apply conservation development and low impact development (LID) principles to all new development.
- f) Parking requirements.

### **2.4 - Industrial**

- a) Maintain and expand the tax base and provide employment opportunities.

### **2.5 - Natural Resources**

- a) Protect and enhance the environmental integrity of Copley Township.
- b) Protect the watersheds.

- c) Educate the public on the benefits of natural resource preservation.

## 2.6 - Parks & Recreation

- a) Maintain and enhance open spaces and recreational opportunities.

## 2.7 - Residential

- a) Keep rural character in the undeveloped areas of the Township.
- b) Reduce adverse impacts of development on the community, with regard to:
  - 1) The cost of government services.
  - 2) Any impact on schools.
  - 3) Any impact on the environment.
  - 4) Increasing the potential for flooding.
  - 5) Ground water quality and quantity.
- c) Preserve housing diversity and mixed-use developments.
- d) Enhance the visual quality of the community.
- e) Ensure that the development process is fair and predictable.
- f) Evaluate the type and number of residential zoning classifications.

## 2.8 - Agriculture

- a) Preserve and promote agriculture in the Township.
- b) Support farming as an economically viable use.
- c) Reduce adverse impacts of development on agricultural lands.

## 2.9 - Economic

- a) Promote and protect the economic well being of the community.
- b) Encourage tourism.
- c) Use redevelopment as an economic tool to protect land value and maintain the property tax base.

## **Land Use Plan Initiatives**

### 2.1 – Community Character

#### **A. Balance community design with open space conservation.**

- 1) Balance development and the need for services and businesses with protection of natural resources, historic structures, and maintain rural character.
- 2) Protect cultural resources including historic districts, buildings, structures, sites, public works, transportation corridors, archaeological sites, heritage areas and corridors, cultural landscapes, objects and related built forms.
- 3) Ensure the conservation of housing stock in residential neighborhoods, economic development and revitalization, protection of historic landscapes, and preservation and growth management of rural areas, and conservation of farmland.
- 4) Work with the private sector, independent organizations and citizens to increase awareness of, and to protect and enhance Copley's historic resources.
- 5) Support continued dialogue between local planning agencies, the general public, and the development community to discuss the public costs associated with new development, reaching an understanding on the calculation of such costs, and establishing alternative means for financing these costs, including the use of impact fees.
- 6) Sustain Copley as a good place to live by offering affordable housing opportunities.
- 7) Sustain the biodiversity of the natural environment, both for the contribution that it makes to the quality of human life and for its own inherent value.
- 8) Develop architectural design guidelines to help define desired architectural elements in new development.
- 9) Make districts distinctive and attractive destinations by using design guidelines.
- 10) Integrate preservation into the land planning process, including incorporating preservation goals into the Land Use Plan and reconciling and coordinating preservation policies with state and other local policies.
- 11) Educate and encourage methods of landscape design, landscape and park maintenance, and agriculture that reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers as well as encouraging the use of compost and conserving water.

- 12) Identify traditional Township settlement patterns as a desirable means to promote community character and diversity.
- 13) Encourage compact and mixed-use development that minimizes the need to drive, re-use existing infill and brownfields sites that have been thoroughly reclaimed and remediated before using open land.

**B. Protect historic and cultural resources.**

- 1) Encourage land owners to recognize the value of historic resources as major contributions to the quality of life and to cultural vitality, and as resources that both remind us about our past and provide a stimulus to economic vitality and the potential for tourism.
- 2) Support funding of programs for the preservation of Copley's historic resources.
- 3) Support enabling legislation to provide tax incentives to encourage the rehabilitation of historic resources, including tax credits and tax abatements.
- 4) Adopt Design Guidelines.
  - a) Require specific design guidelines for each defined district.
  - b) Set up architectural review board and/or individual review by a professional and establish clear requirements and timeline.
  - c) Require illustrations of façade treatment, building signage, for floor plans, site, landscape, lighting, material and color selections.
  - d) Identify appropriate district wide improvement standards for streetscape treatment, signage, lighting, landscaping.
- 5) Appoint a Historic District Preservation Committee.
  - a) Identify, preserve and enhance historic, cultural, or scenic resources.
  - b) Develop entry signage and landscape improvements for selected entranceways into the Township.
  - c) Work with the Copley Township Historical Society to locate and protect historic structures.

6) Copley Circle

- a) Define, protect, and enhance a designated area around Copley Circle as a historic district.
- b) Seek historical designation for the Copley Circle to allow land owners access to loans and protection against certain types of development.
- c) Improve the Circle by installing historic style fixtures such as benches, lighting and other amenities.
- d) Prepare a historic district master plan for improvements of district such as streetscape, traffic, landscaping, signage, and façade renovations.
- e) Encourage mixed-use in district including ground-floor retail and upper level residential uses.
- f) Accommodate the reuse of closed or obsolete buildings and uses.
- g) Encourage walkability throughout district and enhance pedestrian environment.
- h) Develop comprehensive wayfinding signage.

**C. Identify ways to maintain historic corridor areas.**

- 1) Create a Scenic Byway Committee to work with ODOT to develop byway designations to connect with the Ohio and Erie Canal and the Heritage Corridors of Bath.

**D. Promote and beautify entranceways into the Township.**

- 1) Create a Gateway Improvement Master Plan.
- 2) Create landscaped entryways where Copley abuts Fairlawn, Akron, and Bath.

**E. Expand cultural opportunities.**

- 1) Work with the Summit County to build a library in Copley.
- 2) Highlight cultural assets through public art and community events.
- 3) Explore developing a community center.

**F. Encourage citizen and stakeholder participation in the principles of sustainability.**

- 1) Encourage alternatives from gas-powered vehicles, to public transit, alternatively-fueled vehicles, bicycle and pedestrian routes.
- 2) Encourage sustainable design & green building in all public buildings.
- 3) Support recycling programs throughout the Township.
- 4) Sustainable maintenance operations.

**G. Instill neighborhood pride within residential and business districts.**

- 1) Public education.
- 2) Support a property maintenance code.

## 2.2 – Transportation and Infrastructure

**A. Assess vehicular and pedestrian access and improve where necessary.**

- 1) Address railroad crossings.
  - a) Coordinate crossings with County and state agencies regarding gates and lights.
- 2) Address traffic intersections with high volumes, accidents, or safety concerns.
  - a) Work with County Engineer and ODOT to implement traffic calming measures such as Roundabouts.
  - b) Cooperate with County Engineer on the design and installation of Roundabouts at specific intersections.
  - c) Work with the State of Ohio on traffic and safety along the RT-18 corridor.
  - d) Require traffic impact studies for developments above a certain threshold size.
  - e) Identify trails and bike path projects to connect specific areas of the Township including schools, parks, and residential areas.
  - f) Conduct “Level of Service” studies of intersections to determine future needs.
  - g) Conduct noise studies where appropriate.
  - h) Explore sound barriers.
  - i) Explore street lighting.

**B. Create *walkable* neighborhoods with sidewalks and trails; encourage pedestrian networks in local business districts. (*Definition: The extent to which the built environment is friendly to the presence of people living, shopping, visiting, enjoying or spending time in an area. See page 201*).**

- 1) Connect future residential subdivisions with existing or planned bikeways or walking trails.
  - a) Identify roads that could safely support bike lanes.
  - b) Identify trails and bike path projects to connect specific areas of the Township including schools, parks, and residential areas.
- 2) Encourage walkable designs in all new developments including walkable access to services such as banking, restaurants, grocery stores, medical and transportation.
  - a) Work with applicable agencies to develop bike lanes when roads are expanded.
  - b) Encourage connectivity of open spaces and development of greenways with public multi-purpose trails.
  - c) Create a pedestrian circulation plan for Copley Circle.
  - d) Require sidewalks whenever possible.
- 3) Create a Trails and Greenway Committee.
  - a) Develop a Trails and Greenway Plan.
- 4) Implement the Summit County Greenway Plan.
  - a) Create a scenic byway committee to work with ODOT to develop byway designations to connect with the Ohio and Erie Canal and the Heritage Corridors of Bath.

**C. Encourage public transportation into and through the Township's main thoroughfares.**

- 1) Work with AMATS and Metro transit to expand public transportation opportunities in Copley.

**D. Create scenic byways on county and state rural routes.**

**E. Inventory current sewer and water infrastructure and identify future needs.**

- 1) Encourage expansion of sewer and water in appropriate locations.
  - a) Identify a short and long term plan for sewer and water extensions and upgrades.
  - b) Work with Summit County Board of Health on identifying failing septic systems.

**F. Identify and work to correct stormwater runoff and flooding within and beyond the Township's borders.**

- 1) Create a plan to monitor and maintain stormwater basins.
- 2) Identify opportunities for natural stormwater mitigation projects such as the Copley Bog.
- 3) Conduct watershed flooding studies to identify areas of concern.
- 4) Comply with EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Phase II requirements.

**G. Educate the public on local government authority and how citizens can protect their property rights including, but not limited to cellular towers and oil and gas wells.**

- 1) Discourage cell towers via scenic byways and historic district designations.

## 2.3 – Commercial and Retail

**A. Balance commercial/retail development within areas where adequate infrastructure is in place while protecting natural resources and maintaining rural character.**

- 1) Limit commercial development to designated commercial zoned districts.
- 2) Monitor the amount of commercial space and consider community impact.
- 3) Encourage mixed-use development in appropriate locations.
- 4) Encourage plans for adaptive re-use of commercial space.
  - a) Promote reuse and development of underused and vacant sites.
- 5) Promote economic development in the Joint Economic Development District.
- 6) Encourage ways to redevelop to reduce and eventually eliminate non-conforming uses.
- 7) Create incentives to improve properties.
- 8) Create urban activity centers in mature suburban areas.
- 9) Study opportunity for best use of the land:
  - a) Copley Road Corridor.
  - b) Cleveland-Massillon Road Corridor.

- c) Collier Road.
- d) Ridgewood Road Corridor.
- e) White Pond Drive.
- f) Copley Circle Area.
- g) Route 18 Corridor between I-77 and South Hametown.

10) Prohibit spot zoning.

11) Redefine zoning classifications.

## **B. Enhance historic, cultural and visual qualities of the Township.**

- 1) Create Appearance Review Board.
  - a) Require site design review and illustrate examples.
  - b) Establish clear requirements and timeline for Appearance Review Board.
  - c) Require illustrations of façade treatment, building signage, for floor plans, site, landscape, lighting, and material and color selections.
  - d) Identify appropriate district wide improvement standards for streetscape treatment, signage, lighting, landscaping.
- 2) Use redevelopment as a tool for creating a sense of place based on unique natural and cultural assets.
- 3) Develop architectural design guidelines to encourage preservation of rural character and illustrate appropriate examples. Create guidelines for each development district.
- 4) Adopt property maintenance regulations.
- 5) Encourage submission of applications for state historic districts' designations.
- 6) Explore community block grant funding.
- 7) Revise sign regulations to address size, location, height, placement, and design.
  - a) Enforce existing temporary sign regulations.
  - b) Explore implementing new signage requirement when uses change.

## **C. Encourage partnerships among public and private sectors of the Township.**

### **D. Ensure that the development process is fair and predictable.**

- 1) Encourage intergovernmental and agency cooperation.
- 2) Create development process checklist.

**E. Apply conservation development and low impact development (LID) principles to all new development.****F. Parking requirements.**

- 1) Address parking design requirements for developments.
  - a) Establish minimum parking requirements that allow for impervious parking areas.
  - b) Allow shared parking with other uses (for example: retail and churches or movie theatre and offices).
  - c) Allow land banking of parking.
  - d) Require landscaping in parking areas.
  - e) Support the use of bioswales in parking islands.

**2.4 – Industrial****A. Maintain and expand the tax base and provide employment opportunities.**

1. Attract and retain industrial and business users.
2. Create incentives to improve properties with alternative funding matches.
3. Limit industrial development to currently zoned areas.
4. Define a process for determining eligibility of designating areas in which Copley has the authority to engage in redevelopment projects including both prevention and elimination of blight and provision for public/private partnerships.
5. Address parking design requirements for developments.
  - a) Establish minimum parking requirements that allow for impervious parking areas.
  - b) Allow shared parking with other uses (for example: retail and churches or movie theatre and offices).
  - c) Allow land banking of parking.
  - d) Require minimum landscaped areas in parking areas.
  - e) Support the use of bioswales in parking islands.

**2.5 – Natural Resources****A. Protect and enhance the environmental integrity of Copley Township.**

- 1) Encourage natural resource protection in all development projects.
  - a) Encourage conservation/open space development and low impact design principles.
  - b) Redefine, retain, and expand conservation districts and include environmentally sensitive lands.

- c) Work with appropriate land conservancy organizations such as the Western Reserve Land Conservancy and MetroParks Serving Summit County to engage in acquiring environmentally sensitive lands and/or protective easements.
  - d) Protect and restore environmentally sensitive areas.
  - e) Incorporate protection of sensitive environmental features into land development reviews over which the Township has authority.
- 2) Encourage restoration, enhancement and recreation of wetlands through wetlands banking projects.
    - a) Make the ecological integrity and public health and safety functions of significant remaining undeveloped lands and environmental sensitive landscapes the priority for conservation acquisitions and open space subdivision dedications.
  - 3) Encourage overland flow (water) and other means of retaining, slowing, and treating storm water with vegetated landscape features.
    - a) Incorporate impervious surface limits into zoning to protect groundwater recharge and minimize contaminated stormwater runoff.
    - b) Encourage the county to require maintenance agreements for stormwater management areas prior to new development approval.
  - 4) Minimize canopy cover loss with planting requirements by requiring tree preservation on private property during development.
  - 5) Create an Overlay District to protect significant environmental features.
    - a) Promote preservation and protection of the most environmentally sensitive lands (e.g., riparian corridors), recognizing their important role in the public health and safety, livability, and character of the community.
    - b) Identify priority conservation areas where natural resource protection and restoration should occur.
  - 6) Adopt a policy of “no net loss” of wetlands within the Township and require mitigation for any destroyed wetlands.
    - a) Maintain a riparian overlay district limiting use to conservation development and passive recreation.
    - b) Prohibit development in the floodplain.
    - c) Keep wetland mitigation within Copley Township.
  - 7) Create a development Guide.
    - a) Prepare and adopt a development guide for natural resources which should be included in Zoning Resolution.

**B. Protect the watersheds.**

- 1) Work with adjacent communities at the watershed level to solve water resource problems.
  - a) Conduct a pollution source inventory to identify any past, present, or proposed activities or land uses that have the potential to contaminate drinking water sources.
  - b) Implement the 6 Minimal Control Measures:
    - Public Education and Outreach on Storm Water Impacts
    - Public Involvement/Participation
    - Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
    - Construction Site Storm Water Runoff Control
    - Post-Construction Storm Water Management in New Development and Redevelopment
    - Pollution Prevention/Good Housekeeping for Community Operations and Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) which is all the storm water drainage systems in Copley Township.
- 2) Create Wolf Creek, Pigeon Creek, and Schocalog Watershed Committees.
- 3) Explore funding for bioengineering and stream channel restoration.

**C. Educate the public on the benefits of natural resource preservation.**

- 1) Education of natural resource protection via conservation design and LID land use controls and Best Management Practices that landowners can implement.
  - a) Develop a citizen education program on vegetated riparian corridor zone.
  - b) Develop a school educational program on natural resource preservation.

## 2.6 – Parks and Recreation

**A. Maintain and expand open spaces and recreational opportunities.**

- 1) Encourage the creation of parks and recreation facilities.
  - a) Create a citizen committee to develop a parks and recreation master plan.
  - b) Investigate the creation of a parks and recreation coordinator.
- 2) Encourage neighborhood parks and greenways.
  - a) Create new neighborhood parks and greenways in the community.
- 3) Encourage connectivity of open spaces and development of greenways with public multipurpose trails.
  - a) Create a Trail and Greenways Committee.

- b) Encourage public access to open space dedication in conservation developments.
  - c) Develop a trail system connecting parks, open spaces, residential developments, and commercial destinations.
  - d) Seek open space and trail grants to create linked greenways that provide opportunities for trail and preserve sensitive lands.
  - e) Encourage residents to donate easements for a Township-wide trail system.
- 4) Encourage the protection of unique and significant natural places in the community.
  - 5) Encourage joint recreational program with the schools.

## 2.7 – Residential

### **Preamble**

*In 2007, Copley Township issued a survey in which over 7,000 local households were given the opportunity to provide input for the rewrite of the Land Use Plan. Respondents indicated the top three reasons for moving to Copley Township were due to the quality of education/schools, rural atmosphere and the “small town feel”. Many residents also identified protecting open space, preserving agricultural land, protecting riparian corridors and waterways throughout the Township, as critical elements to be included in the Plan. The guiding factor for the “Residential” section of the Land Use Plan is to direct future decisions which will preserve Copley Township’s rural character while not attempting to change areas such as Heritage Woods. Instead, preservation and restoration of green infrastructure, along with creating additional open spaces where possible, is essential to maintaining natural ecological processes that impact air and water resources throughout the Township.*

### **A. Keep rural character in undeveloped areas of the Township.**

- 1) Apply conservation/open space development and low impact design principles.
- 2) Preserve views of the rural landscapes by locating homes out of the sight lines on existing roads, whenever possible.
- 3) Use buffers between single-family detached housing and commercial development.
- 4) Identify environmentally sensitive areas and farmland sending areas and development receiving areas for potential Transfer of Development Rights.
  - a) Use Purchase/Transfer of Development Rights (PDR/TDR) to assign development credits, which can be bought or sold to shift density from environmentally sensitive areas and farmland in the rural agricultural and Wolf Creek and Copley Bog regions

to more suitable for development, i.e. the northern part of Copley Township, eastern section of Copley Township and commercial areas.

- 5) Reduce densities based on environmental capacities.
- 6) Encourage single family residential developments.
- 7) Consider amendments to the zoning resolution to make conservation development the permitted use and traditional development a conditional use.

**B. Reduce adverse impacts of development on the community, with regard to:**

- The cost of government services.
  - Any impact on schools.
  - Any impact on the environment.
  - Increasing the potential for flooding.
  - Ground water quality and quantity.
- 1) Encourage conservation development and low impact design principles.
  - 2) Work with the Township officials and the school board to assess service constraints and impact fees.
  - 3) Minimize storm water runoff impacts and maintain natural hydrologic function.
  - 4) Minimize land disturbance including clearing and grading.
  - 5) Minimize soil compaction, managed turf and landscapes.
  - 6) Evaluate government services and infrastructure in order to define needs and capacity restraints.
  - 7) Review minimum lot size requirements and consider movement toward overall maximum development.
  - 8) Consider an effective net density formula to determine the number of residential units in the Township.
  - 9) Encourage natural landscapes in all new development.

- 10) Encourage the use of vegetated open channel storm water conveyance instead of pipes, culverts, and catch basins, whenever possible.
- 11) Encourage more frequent natural drainage structure versus large engineered storm basins.
- 12) Ensure that development commitments are secured through legal and financial guarantees such as bonds.
- 13) Encourage both active (playing fields) and passive (parks and trails) open space.

**C. Preserve housing diversity and mixed-use developments.**

- 1) Encourage senior housing.
- 2) Encourage mixed use residential.

**D. Enhance the visual quality of the community.**

- 1) Adopt property maintenance regulations.
- 2) Identify appropriate Township-wide improvement standards for streetscape treatments, signage, lighting, landscaping, etc. within residential developments.
- 3) Adopt a neighborhood/community clean-up day.

**E. Ensure that the development process is fair and predictable.**

- 1) Encourage intergovernmental and agency cooperation.
- 2) Create development process checklist.
- 3) Establish a developer's checklist.
  - a) Include a checklist for development submittals and define review and timeline criteria.
  - b) Require developers to produce preliminary conceptual plans with staff and agencies such as Summit County Health, Summit County Planning Department, Soil & Water and other such agencies.

**F. Evaluate the type and number of residential zoning classifications.**

- 1) Revise to reflect the concept area map.

- 2) Re-evaluate and classify districts to reflect appropriate use.

## 2.8 – Agriculture

### **A. Preserve and promote agriculture in the Township.**

- 1) Educate residents on agricultural land as a valuable resource that should be preserved.
  - a) Map and monitor agricultural lands in order to document the amount of land in farm production and the rate at which it is being developed.
- 2) Form a farm advisory committee.
- 3) Redefine and expand conservation districts to include farmland.
  - a) Adopt zoning which would discourage lot splits in conservation areas.

### **B. Support farming as an economically viable use.**

- 1) Support Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) or any legislation that links incentives to continue farming and discourage development of agricultural land.
- 2) Explore the adoption of Transfer of Development Rights and Purchase of Development Rights for possible future preservation of agricultural land.
- 3) Encourage future farmland focus on niche agricultural activities. (e.g. organic farming, ag-tourism)

### **C. Reduce adverse impacts of development on agricultural lands.**

- 1) Encourage conservation development.
- 2) Adopt buffer zones for new development adjacent to farms.
- 3) Support the use of impact fees for residential and commercial development. (drainage)

## 2.9 – Economic

### **A. Promote and protect the economic well being of the community.**

- 1) Support the use of impact fees as a means to provide additional resources for an adequate public infrastructure and services.
- 2) Initiate a cost-of-service study to look at the cost of various Township services versus the revenue source to identify what types of land use provide or require the highest revenue and expenses.

**B. Encourage tourism.**

- 1) Establish a committee to encourage tourism.

**C. Use redevelopment as an economic tool to protect land value and maintain the property tax base.**

- 1) Support Farmland Preservation incentives.
- 2) Create incentives to improve properties with alternative funding matches.
- 3) Promote reuse and development of underused nonconforming uses and vacant commercial and industrial sites.
- 4) Support redevelopment that recognizes the value of historic preservation and cultural resources.