

CHAPTER VII: VISIONING WORKSHOP

Land Use and Zoning

Residents were interested in seeing how their property was currently zoned and the permitted uses within their specific district. It was suggested that continuing to build without a plan for the future would put a burden on services and overload the Township's financial resources.

LAND USE & ZONING

COPLEY TOWNSHIP ZONING

Questions:

- (1) How do you see the zoning and planning legislation currently in place serving the Township well?
- (2) Which zoning issues do you feel need additional attention?
- (3) How important is it to maintain a rural character to the Township?

Current Township Zoning Map

Current Land Use Map Current Large Parcels Property Parcel Map

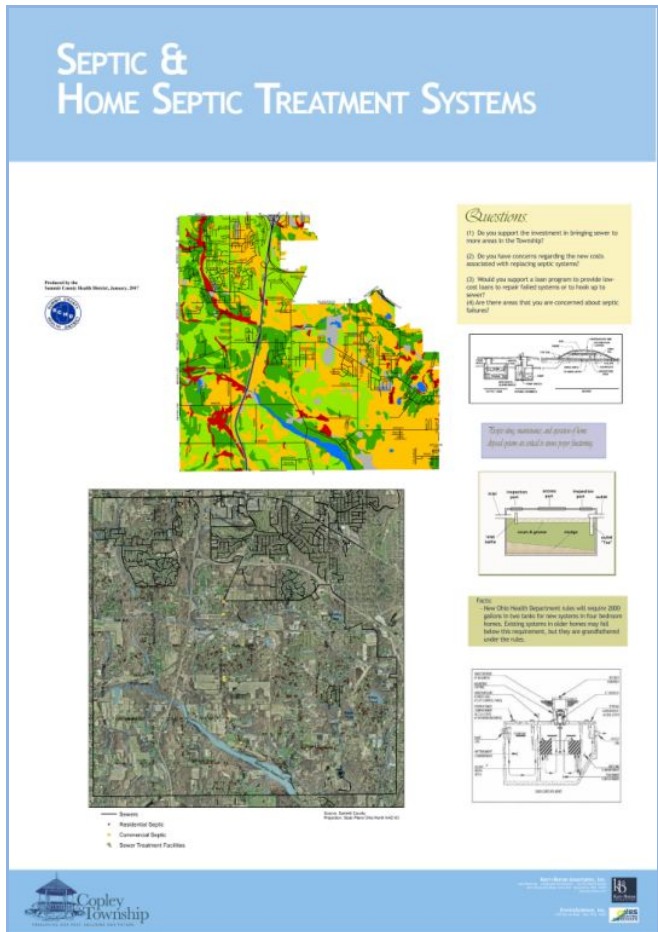
Copley Township

Septic and Home Septic Treatment Systems

Residents had many questions about septic regulations in the Township. Some wanted to know how to get sewer extensions to their homes, while others were concerned about paying for sewer expansions when they just replaced their septic systems. Others expressed concern that sewer would bring too much development. There were also complaints about poorly functioning septic systems.

Other questions were concerned with information on how to maintain a well or septic system. Comments included keeping sewer areas close to existing development.

There was also concern over the recent changes in Ohio septic regulations, that were scheduled to go into effect in January 2007, that were put on hold. However, the Ohio General Assembly put a moratorium on these changes until July 2009 or until amendments were introduced and approved by the legislation before that date.



Transportation, Utilities and Services

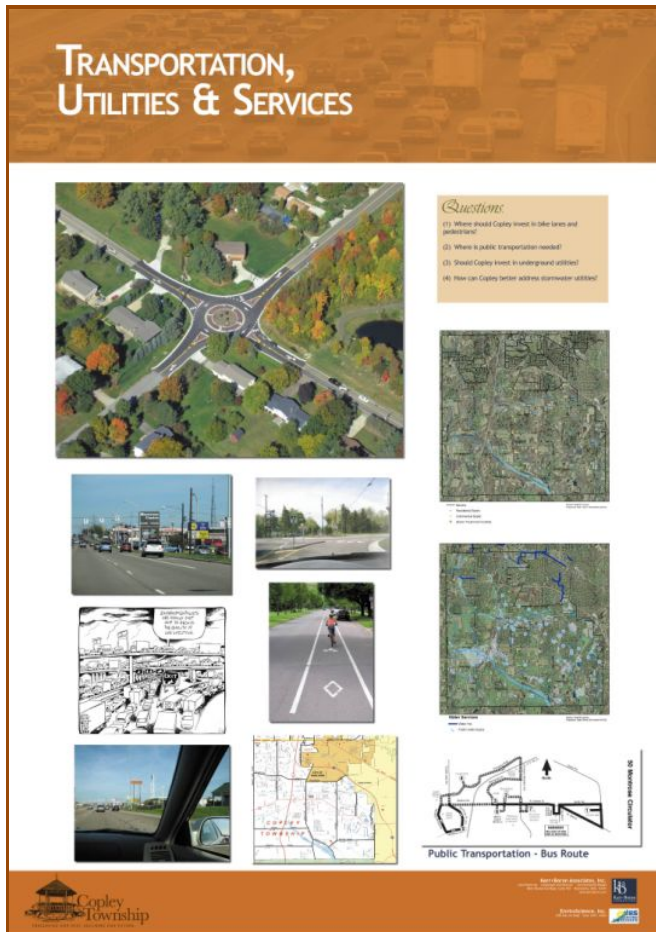
In terms of transportation, the responses to the roundabout on Hametown Road were consistently positive. In addition, the responses to the additional planned roundabouts were generally favorable.

State Route 18 generated the most interest. Most common comments relate to the amount of traffic on Route 18. Of all the Route 18 issues, the proposed Montrose West Avenue Relocation generated the most conversation.

Jack Noble, P.E., Transportation Planning & Programs Administrator, District 4, Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) was on hand for explanations and answered questions. Most of the comments expressed curiosity only. Many were glad that ODOT is doing something.

A question raised about the Montrose West Avenue relocation was relative to the impact on the land owner. ODOT held meetings with a representative of the primary land owners that would be affected. They are working together on the proposed improvements. The land owner's representative attended the open house meeting.

Another question about the Montrose West Avenue relocation was what affect it would have on the Heritage Woods Drive residential neighborhood. There were comments that this neighborhood will benefit greatly by the improved traffic flow on Route 18.



One person commented that if a roundabout would be built at the proposed intersection of Montrose West and Heritage Woods, it wouldn't be able to handle truck traffic. There were comments that most people have observed the difficulty large trucks often have making turns at traditional intersections. It is easier for a large truck to make any movement around a modern roundabout than to make any turn at a traditional intersection.

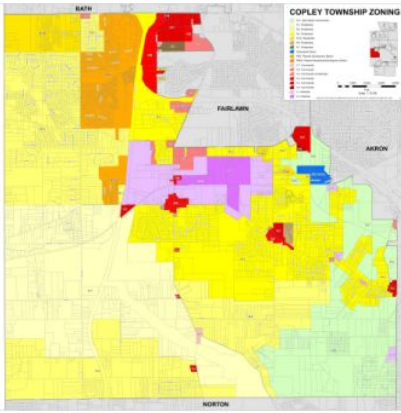
Mr. Noble expressed surprise at the large turnout at the open house, and that it was much better attended than most ODOT open public meetings.

Economic Development

In terms of economic development, some residents felt that the Township should “guarantee” sound commercial growth in keeping with existing development to ensure a healthy tax base and school funding. There were comments that high taxes are acceptable as long as these goals are achieved.

Many residents did not have any problems with granting economic incentives as long as there is accountability and follow up to make sure government funds are giving the effects intended.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





2007 Appropriation Resolutions Summary

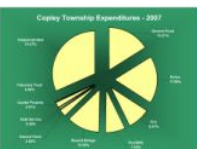
Category	Amount	% of Total
General Fund	\$ 1,100,000	49.1%
State	\$ 1,100,000	49.1%
Local	\$ 1,100,000	49.1%
County	\$ 1,100,000	49.1%
Other	\$ 1,100,000	49.1%
Total Revenue	\$ 3,100,000	

Questions

- Are you willing to pay more property tax if the township restricts commercial development?
- Are you willing to pay the 2007 tax (.23% of annual increase) for residential other and rural?
- Are you willing to pay additional property tax for additional open space?
- Do you think the township should set certain economic development incentives, such as tax abatements and tax increment financing to attract or retain business?





Copley Township Expenditures - 2007



Category	Amount	% of Total
Police	\$ 1,100,000	35.5%
Fire	\$ 1,100,000	35.5%
Public Works	\$ 1,100,000	35.5%
Administration	\$ 1,100,000	35.5%
Public Safety	\$ 1,100,000	35.5%
Professional Services, Management, etc.	\$ 1,100,000	35.5%
Total Expenditures	\$ 3,100,000	

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Total Expenditures	\$ 3,100,000	



Commercial Districts, Retail Development and Industry

Most people were interested in seeing and trying to understand the current commercial zoning districts within the Township. One question asked residents opinion on future areas for commercial growth. A few of the responses were the expected "N.I.M.B.Y.," (Not-in-my-back-yard) type. Most believed that commercial growth was acceptable and probably needed but it should be limited to areas along "higher" traffic corridors such as the Copley Circle, Cleveland-Massillon Road closer to I-77, near exits along Rt. 21, and Route 18 extending thru Montrose. Many were concerned about the impacts from commercial development on traffic and congestion.

Of particular interest was the comment that Copley needs to be pro-active along South Cleveland-Massillon Road and Ridgewood Road area so we do not fall behind Fairlawn in the office development venue. It was pointed out that more should be done to attract the businesses that are leaving Akron for Fairlawn.

There seemed to be consensus that commercial development should be restricted to the Cleveland-Massillon corridor between Copley Circle and I-77 or along Route 18. Most seemed surprised about the current industrial zoning there is west of the Circle and south of Ridgewood Road. However, no one voiced any suggestions for change. Some owners on Copley Road to the east where groundwater is contaminated, which is under EPA remediation, voiced a need to somehow tap into Akron water systems for that area. Some voiced a desire to maintain open spaces and restrict



development of the land surrounding the Barberton reservoir area, and had a concern of storm water run-off from developments into the reservoir. Some residents wanted to see more retail zoning at Rt.18 from South Hametown to Medina Line Road. They also wanted to encourage development along Copley Road to the Circle.

In terms of the look of retail development, residents wanted to see attractive, pedestrian-friendly retail development with nice streetscapes and sidewalks along Rt. 18. They would like to see these areas more walkable with a reduction of driveways along that stretch. Residents also voiced a concern that businesses need to be required to pay attention to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance due to an aging population.

Residential Development

Residents were very concerned about further residential development and the impact it has on the water supply, stormwater run-off, and schools. They would like to see more stringent restrictions on larger developments requiring larger green space areas for park like settings within the development, play areas for children, and walking paths. Many also raised concerns about the Pulte development including the current status. Many are concerned about the amount of retail/commercial growth in the Montrose area, in particular the threat of encroaching commercial construction on the Rt. 18 corridor. They feel that area should be kept residential as much as possible to preserve the rural atmosphere.



Traffic concerns were also very prevalent. The lack of turn lanes or arrows at the Circle and the traffic jam it causes during the 5 o'clock rush hour seemed to be the most popular topic. Many were also concerned about the number of traffic lights and the inadequate timing of them on Route 18 causing major congestion at rush hour and on the weekends.

Some residents felt that Copley should require more specific open space subdivision design, preserving open spaces and developing trail systems. By clustering residential development, Copley could avoid more sprawl and reduce infrastructure costs. It was suggested that Copley might consider increasing the density around the schools, Route 18, and near Fairlawn. Another concern is building large homes on small lots. Residents felt this creates water quality and quantity problems.

Agriculture and Farmland Preservation

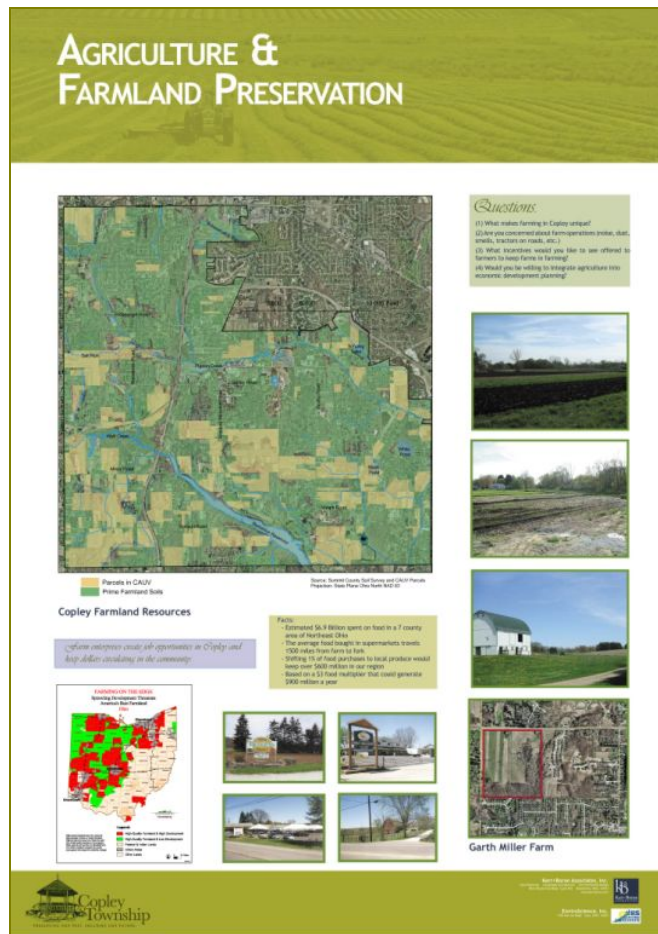
There was overwhelming support for preserving open spaces and farmland. Farmland and country settings were seen as very desirable. Residents want to retain and protect the farms, especially local producers. Generally, residents wanted no more development or traffic. Many residents argued that “they want the door to the Township shut behind them.”

Farming activities were not seen as a nuisance. However, it was suggested that Copley require a buffer between residential development and

agriculture uses. Residents enjoy the rural countryside views and voiced support for the proposed farmers markets. Farmers, however, had concerns about keeping government out of their business.

Residents felt that agriculture is a good way to diversify the local economy; that farming should be encouraged; and that new residential developments should be kept away from existing farms. They felt it is important to set up a long-term plan to help all farmers determine ways to obtain the value of their property. Residents want Copley Township to find additional ways to support current farmers.

While many individual homeowners were only concerned about the look and feel of the Township, farmers were concerned about economic and environmental impacts. Farmers were concerned about the negative impact that upstream development has on them. They were frustrated the residents didn't necessarily understand the concept of “land as a factor of production.” It was pointed out that the land itself represents the single

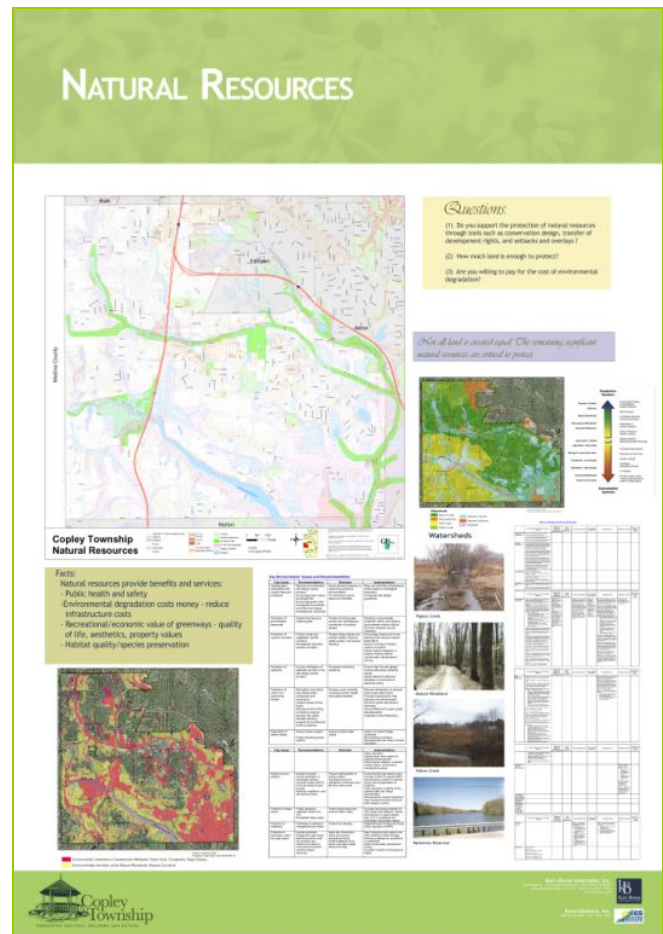


largest factor of production for any farm. Like any other asset or business holding, there reaches a time when an asset must be sold. Those people who have more common or traditional types of savings accounts may not see the problem with restricting opportunity for land sales. However, most of these same people would object to a group of well meaning citizens who decided that their life's savings, IRA, 401(k) etc., were now worth just a fraction of their fair market value.

Natural Resources

There was overwhelming support for natural resource protection. Residents felt that natural resources should be protected through a variety of tools to preserve the quality of life in the Township. Residents felt that preserving and developing natural resources will keep Copley attractive and maintain the land value. It was suggested that Copley with Bath Township and Sharon Township work together in prioritizing natural resource preservation.

Residents want to protect sensitive environmental areas. They felt that there should be more stringent requirements for developers to maintain the environment and quality of life of the Township. Specifically, residents wanted to see additional protection along riparian corridors, protecting riparian vegetation and discouraging excess fertilizer use and pesticides especially along the waterways. They also would like to see attention given to protecting the remaining woodlands and would like to see resolution requiring trees to be planted with any new development. There was also overwhelming support for the wetland restoration in the southeast portion of Copley. Some residents felt that development is affecting the water runoff and floodplain of the entire community; that traditional development is also destroying the valuable remaining natural landscape. Most residents wanted to encourage conservation design and easements.



Parks, Greenways and Open Space

Residents want more parks. People seemed to value the open space they have in Copley Township but would like to see more parks and natural areas open to the public. Residents wanted more parks with both passive and active recreational opportunities, neighborhood parks and a community/recreational center.

By about a 50/50 split, some residents are willing to pay an additional tax for acquisition and creation of park areas. Some felt that they already pay into the Metro Park levy and that MetroParks Serving Summit County should have a presence in Copley.



There was an overwhelming demand for hike and bike trails. Residents like long-line, all purpose trails like the Towpath and would like similar trails in Copley. There were concerns that there is no safe place to bike or walk.

There seemed to be confusion about open-space subdivision requirements. Residents were concerned about higher-density neighborhoods even if it means preserving large areas of undeveloped land.

Community Character and Quality of Life

Generally, residents want more conservation in all places. People were very concerned about “eye sores along Copley Road and in the “Little Farms” area, west of Collier Road. They wanted a noise resolution to address the noise from 4-wheelers and fireworks; controlling light pollution; impervious surfaces associated with parking areas. Residents want to maintain the high quality of schools, and they want a local/community library.

Residents supported redeveloping the Copley Circle area as a historic district, developing a retail center for the Township. There were mixed feelings about keeping the Gazebo where it is versus a sketch that shows it relocated to the east side of the Circle.

Finally, they would like to see more activities for children in Copley outside the formal school programs. Many supported a recreation center.

