

Stonelick

Township

Growth Management Plan

6 March 2002

Prepared for:

The Stonelick Township Trustees
Clermont County, Ohio

Prepared by:

Edwards
AND **Kelcey**

5533 Fair Lane
Cincinnati, Ohio 45227
513.272.5533
513.272.5522 – Fax
www.ekcorp.com – Web Site

Cincinnati, OH



Indianapolis, IN



Charleston, WV

Acknowledgements

Growth Management Plan Steering Committee

Kermit Beckworth
Tom Bellar
George Benson
Chris Clingman
Pat Craver
Clifford Craig
Jane Eckstein
Perry Gerome
Janet Hines
Gary Knepp
Faye Miller

Jim Penrod
Paul Ritchey
Dan Rouster
Ray Sebastian
Steve Seitz
Chip Shaw
Charles Shreve
Harry Snyder
Dan Stauff
Gary Teeter

Stonelick Township Trustees

Skeets Humphries
John Hanley
Ray Davis

Zoning Commission

Mary Bellar
Clarence Barnes
Richard Paston
Donald Koester
Eric Averwater

Board of Zoning Appeals

Jerry Brown
Ronald Beach
Robert Buroughs
Kenneth Foust
Mike Cornwell

Township Clerk

Tracy Sumner

Township Zoning Inspector

Lee Ottoway

Township Secretary

Terri Hoerth

PKG Project Staff

Jack Pflum, P.E.
Chris Anderson, AICP
Caleb A. Faux, AICP
Scott LeCount, AICP

Paul Culter, AICP
Jeff Nelsen, ASLA
Diana L. Bauknecht

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Existing Conditions	2
Existing Land Use	2
Environmental Constraints.....	5
Utility Infrastructure and Capacity	7
Land Capacity and Demand.....	12
Demand Analysis.....	14
Plan Goals and Objectives	19
Goal 1.....	19
Goal 2.....	19
Goal 3.....	20
Goal 4.....	20
Goal 5.....	20
Growth Assumptions	23
Growth Scenarios.....	24
Growth Management Plan	27
Policy Area Plan	27
Thoroughfare Plan	33
Implementation	34
Revisions to Zoning Resolution.....	34
Open Space Subdivisions.....	35
Traffic Sheds.....	35
Transfer of Development Rights.....	35
Administrative Process	36
Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow	36

List of Tables

Table 1 – Existing Land Use Composition	3
Table 2 – Development Capacity Under Current Zoning	12
Table 3 – Projected Population Growth	14
Table 4 – Population Growth, Clermont County Townships 1990-2000	15
Table 5 – Population Growth, Clermont County Municipalities 1990-2000	16
Table 6 – Residential Building Permits	16
Table 7 – Residential Zoning Permits	16
Table 8 – Plan Implementation Tools	21
Table 9 – Policy Area Elements	32

List of Figures

Figure 1 – Existing Land Use Map	4
Figure 2 – Environmental Constraints	6
Figure 3 – Public Water Line Map	8
Figure 3A – Public Water 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan	9
Figure 4 – Public Sewer Line Map	10
Figure 4A – Public Sewer 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan	11
Figure 5 – Existing Zoned Areas With Potential Development	13
Figure 6 – Policy Area Plan	28

List of Graphs

Graph 1 – Projected Dwelling Units	18
--	----

Appendix

Open Space Subdivision Guidelines	A-1
Open Space Design	A-3
Neo-traditional Development	A-7

Introduction

This Growth Management Plan for Stonelick Township has been prepared on behalf of the Stonelick Township Trustees and Zoning Commission. It is meant to serve as a basis for future decision-making regarding growth and development in the Township. The Plan has been prepared with the assistance of the Steering Committee consisting of Township residents. This Committee met regularly beginning in August 2000 to review data and analysis, provide insight on local conditions, and with the assistance of the Consulting team in formulating goals for the Township and in the development of the Plan.

Clermont County has become one of the faster growing counties in the Cincinnati metropolitan region. To date, this trend has had a larger impact on other parts of the County than on Stonelick Township. Nevertheless, there is clear reason to conclude that the growth trend in the County will place growing pressure on Stonelick Township in the coming twenty years. It is expected that this pressure will generally be exerted on the Township from the south, growing from the State Route 32 corridor passing through Batavia Township. The purpose of this Growth Management Plan is to anticipate and prepare for that pressure, and to establish a strategy through which the Township can cope with growth as it occurs. It should provide a framework that will allow the Township to ensure that when growth does occur, it happens in a manner that provides lasting value and a desirable community in the years to come.

Clearly, the residents of Stonelick Township take great pride in the rural character and scenic beauty that is now present in the Township and would like to retain that character to the greatest degree possible. This Plan is also designed to provide a strategy that will allow growth to occur in a rational and reasonable manner while protecting the Township's interests in minimizing its service burden and ensuring the Township's rural character preservation.

Stonelick Township is not alone. Events in adjacent Townships, Clermont County and Ohio all will shape and affect the future of Stonelick Township. It is important that specific, and regular, coordination channels be established so that communication and understanding between political jurisdictions is maintained. The Trustees can best take a leadership position on this ongoing issue.

Ultimately, the success of this Growth Management Plan will depend upon the adoption of updated regulations and the interpretation and explanation of these regulations by Township officials.

Existing Conditions

Present conditions in Stonelick Township provide a basis to assess current and future needs, development trends, and constraints to particular courses of action. The existing conditions also provide a reference point for discussion of the future and identification of goals and objectives for the Township. The inventory of existing conditions includes the Township's current land use, environmental constraints to development, and current population.

Existing Land Use

The existing land use map (**Figure 1**) provides a snapshot of Stonelick Township, showing how each parcel of land is currently being used. The map illustrates past development patterns in the Township.

The map was developed using Geographic Information System and aerial photography information from Clermont County. Each use was identified and field verified to create an accurate portrait of how land in the Township is used. This understanding of the current land composition provides a basis on which to build future development policies.

Existing land uses¹ are mapped under several categories that describe their current condition. The categories are descriptive only and do not necessarily reflect the zoning of the property. The categories used in the process of building the database are as follows:

- ◆ *Rural Residential*: Rural residential areas are those that are not part of a larger subdivision development with connection to an approved sewage treatment facility. They are single-family dwellings that have individual access to the roadway system.
- ◆ *Suburban Residential*: Suburban residential areas are those that were most likely developed as part of a larger subdivision development. They are single-family dwellings that are connected to a series of cul-de-sac roads along with minimal access to the main roadway system.
- ◆ *Multi-Family*: Multi-family areas refer to apartment and condominium development.
- ◆ *Commercial/Office*: Commercial areas are those characterized by typical retail, personal services, and business-related development. Office areas refer to any large or small-scale complexes that typically operate as sources of employment and administrative functions. These types are grouped together due to the similarity of use.
- ◆ *Institutional*: Institutional areas refer to any public or semi-public facilities, such as schools, churches, hospitals, libraries, and government complexes. Institutional uses are mostly accessible by the public.
- ◆ *Industrial*: Industrial areas represent any range of manufacturing uses that operate in the production or assembly of goods from raw or previously manufactured components.
- ◆ *Recreation*: Recreational areas refer to those specifically structured for active and/or passive recreational uses. Recreation includes both public uses, such as parks, and private uses, such as golf courses.

¹ These land use designations are not intended to represent property boundaries, tax status or current zoning districts. They reflect only the observed land use conditions as of November 2001.

- ◆ *Agricultural*: Agricultural areas are those that are maintained as farmland or for the raising of livestock.
- ◆ *Woodlands*: Woodland areas represent large areas of timberlands and forested areas.
- ◆ *Undeveloped*: Undeveloped areas represent land that is not observed as being occupied by any other land use type listed above.

One feature of the existing land use in Stonelick Township is the presence of platted residential lots upon which have not been built. Comparing the existing land use with the data from the County Auditor can identify unbuilt residential lots. Along Township roads, such as Winter Hill, Autumn Ridge, Belle Meade, and others, the number of platted residential lots is equal to or greater than the number of lots with houses built upon them. This pattern also occurs in scattered areas along most of the Township’s main roads. The amount of undeveloped residential lots reveals a capacity for residential growth without the need to further new subdivision activity.

The amount of land in acres for each land use category is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1
Stonelick Township
Existing Land Use Composition

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total
Agricultural	7,132	34.6
Commercial/Office	36	0.2
Industrial	131	0.6
Institutional	108	0.5
Multi-Family Residential	24	0.1
Rural Residential	2,042	9.9
Suburban Residential	274	1.3
Recreation	219	1.1
Woodland	10,677	51.7
TOTAL	20,643	100.0

The current land use distribution above shows approximately 86 percent (or 17,809 acres) of the Township's total land area as agricultural or woodland use. For the purpose of this analysis, these areas were considered as available for development under existing zoning regulations.

The remainder of the land is dominated by residential use totaling about 11 percent (or 2,340 acres) of the Township. Such development is scattered throughout the Township, with some concentrations or clusters along State Route 131 in the north and U.S. 50 in the south. Nearly all of the local commercial and office development has occurred within or near the Village of Owensville.

Figure 1 -Existing Land Use Map

Environmental Constraints

The environmental constraints to the development of land in Stonelick Township are primarily steep slopes (15 percent and above) and the 100-year floodplain. **Figure 2** illustrates the topography of the Township, the areas with steep slopes and the locations of floodplains. The two conditions are typically found in close proximity in Stonelick Township, especially in the Stonelick Creek valley. This valley is the most prominent physical feature of the Township and is in many ways its most valuable natural asset.

Steep slopes constrain development due to both the cost and practicality of building upon them. In southwest Ohio, land that is steeply sloped is also often prone to landslides and, if building were to occur on such land, additional (and costly) stabilization could be necessary.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency, using computer modeling and historical data, determines the 100-year floodplain based on past flooding conditions. The program is administered locally by the Clermont County Building Department. The 100-year floodplain represents an area that has a statistical probability of 1 percent per year of being flooded. Such an event is referred to as a 100-year storm. Land within the 100-year floodplain is restricted to certain kinds of development and elevations in order to minimize the loss of life and property during a flood and the burden placed on local communities in responding to floods. The Federal Emergency Management Agency requires that local communities put such restrictions in place as a condition for participation in the Federal flood insurance program. A local community can further restrict development within the 100-year floodplain if it so desires.

The overall issue of water quality, of course, is closely related to storm water management, silt control, regulation of impervious surface, and density of development. Later sections of this report will discuss how growth management policy can affect this important element.

Riparian rights are related to an individual property owner's basic right to have access to a stream. Obviously, these rights must be carefully balanced by regulations, which benefit the greater good and public welfare. Closely related to riparian rights is the hydrology of stream and channel flow of water. The Clermont County Engineer should be consulted whenever a development involves a potential impact on streams or storm water management.

Figure 2 shows generalized locations of wetland areas in the Township. These areas are an important part of the environmental fabric and should be protected. Federal and Ohio State regulations should be reviewed carefully whenever development may occur in close proximity to these areas.

Together, the environmental constraints of steep slopes and floodplain dominate the western, central, and northeastern sections of the Township, as shown in **Figure 2**. Land with these environmental features was removed from the calculation of development capacity. Doing so creates an environmentally realistic projection of the potential development capacity within Stonelick Township.

Figure 2 - Environmental Constraints

Utility Infrastructure and Capacity

A major factor that influences where and how development occurs is the existence of public utility systems. This factor occurs in three phases. The first is often the extension of a rural water system that supplies drinking water but does not supply adequate water for fire suppression. The second is the extension of water lines adequate for fire fighting. The third is the extension of a public sewer system.

Figure 3 shows the current location of water lines in Stonelick Township. Presently, large areas of Stonelick Township have no public water available. Water lines follow U.S. 50 and State Route 131, State Route 132, and State Route 276 and also extend throughout the Village of Owensville. These water lines do include the capacity for providing fire suppression. **Figure 3A** shows the proposed five-year Capital Improvement Plan as presently proposed by the Clermont County Sewer and Water District.

Figure 4 illustrates the extent of sanitary sewer lines in Stonelick Township and the areas immediately adjacent. As can be seen, sanitary sewer service is confined to the Village of Owensville and along State Route 132 in the immediate vicinity of Owensville. As a practical matter, development with substantial density cannot occur without sanitary sewer service. Residential development does occur in rural areas using septic systems to treat waste, however, this typically requires a two-acre lot to provide adequate room for septic leach fields. Substantial commercial and industrial uses on septic systems are not practical.

No plans currently exist to extend public sewer much beyond the areas now served. Due to the limits created by the Township's topography, the only areas where the extension of sewers would be practical from a physical standpoint are located in the southern part of the Township. Sanitary sewage is now treated at Clermont County's Middle East Fork Plant, located to the south in Batavia Township along the East Fork of the Little Miami River. The Middle East Fork Plant has an average daily flow of approximately 4 million gallons and a permitted capacity of 5.4 million gallons per day. **Figure 4A** shows the proposed five-year Capital Improvement Plan as presently proposed by the Clermont County Sewer and Water District.

Extending main collection lines to this plant from the northern, eastern, and western areas of the Township would be enormously expensive and will not be practical in the foreseeable future. Extending sewer lines in any other direction would require the use of forced mains and pumping stations which are also costly, unreliable, and have limited capacity.

Thus, the utility systems dictate that most of the Township cannot support anything more than a semi-rural level of development within the next ten years at a minimum and more probably throughout the planning period of twenty years.

Careful attention should be given to areas in the Township where extensions of sewer or water lines are placed. Periodic meetings should be held with the Clermont County Water and Sewer District.

Figure 3 -

Figure 3A

Figure 4 -

Figure 4A

Land Capacity and Demand

Planning involves, at its core, the thoughtful allocation of scarce resources, including among other things, land. An understanding of the supply of and demand for land in the future provides part of the basis for decision making by public officials and private citizens in the coming years. The purpose of this Capacity and Demand Analysis is to compare estimates of available land capacity to the potential for future population growth.

The estimates of land capacity presented in this document are based on data provided by Clermont County and collected by PKG. The data was analyzed using a Geographic Information System application to determine the net amount of land available (environmental constraints are removed) and to forecast the amount of additional residential and nonresidential units that could be accommodated under regulations contained in the existing Township Zoning Resolution and Zoning Map (see **Figure 5**). The five areas shown on Figure 5 and Table 2 represent only those areas containing remaining vacant land with potential for development.

The estimated demand presented in this analysis was developed by PKG. It was extrapolated from United States Census data, estimates provided by the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio State University Extension. The estimates are meant as a reality check regarding future population in the Township.

Together, the demand and capacity analyses are key components of the basis for making future policy and land use decisions in the development of this Growth Management Plan.

To conduct the capacity analysis, 100-year floodplain, wetlands, and steep slopes were deducted from lands currently available for development. This reduction yielded a total of 10,824 acres available for development. This adjusted acreage was then further reduced by 15 percent for public right-of-way and eight percent for reduction in lot layout to produce a net developable acreage. The existing zoning was then applied to yield a potential buildout capacity for residential and nonresidential units. The results are shown below in **Table 2**.

Table 2
Development Capacity Under Current Zoning

District	Land Area (acres)	Net Land Area* (acres)	Min. Lot Size	Residential Units	Business/Industrial Units	Square Feet Per B/I Unit	Business/Industrial Sq. Ft.
<i>Business</i>	119	92	N. A.		92	20,902	1,922,984
<i>Estate</i>	9,712	7,478	N. A.	8,143			
<i>Industrial</i>	79	61	43,560		61	42,420	2,587,620
<i>Sub. Res.</i>	546	420	20,000	916			
<i>Urban Res.</i>	368	283	20,000	964			
Totals	10,824	8,334		10,023	153		4,510,604

* The Net Land Area column reduces the Land Area by 23 percent to account for public right-of-way and for reduced lot layouts.

Figure 5 -

Demand Analysis

Estimating the demand for land in the future is a difficult task. Many factors influence the growth and development of communities, not the least of which is the free market. It is possible, however, to produce a reasonable range of expected future population that can be relied upon for planning purposes. A review of the demand analysis follows.

Population Estimates and Projections

The Ohio State Data Center is a cooperative venture of the U.S. Census Bureau, the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research, and many other agencies and organizations throughout Ohio. It serves the data and information needs of The Ohio State University, Ohio State University Extension, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center and Ohio's citizens. The Data Center produces estimates and projections for all 88 Ohio counties as part of a general county profile report distributed regularly. This report provides a basis for projecting demand for future development in Stonelick Township.

Shown below are projections for Clermont County prepared by the Data Center as published in 1998. Annualized growth rates² calculated by PKG are displayed below the population figure for the time periods between Ohio Data Center estimates and actual Census counts.

Table 3
Projected Population Growth
Clermont County 1990 – 2015

	1990*	1995	2000*	2005	2010	2015
Population	150,187	166,877	177,977	182,300	190,700	199,000
Percent Change	-	11.11%	6.65%	2.43%	4.61%	4.35%
Annual Growth Rate	-	2.13%	1.30%	0.48%	0.91%	0.86%

** indicates actual U.S. Census population count.*

Sources: U.S. Census, Ohio State Data Center

The estimates above indicate a decreasing annualized rate of population growth in Clermont County from 1990 through 2015 with an overall projected annual growth rate of 1.13 percent.

Profiles, published by the Data Center, estimate that the neighboring counties of Butler, Hamilton, and Warren will continue to experience annual growth rates of 1.45 percent, 0.14 percent, and 1.92 percent respectively. While Warren County has recently emerged as the second fastest growing county in the State of Ohio, the Data Center profile estimates suggest that all of these counties (Butler, Clermont, and Warren) will experience decreasing rates of growth through 2015. This would indicate that the boom in residential construction during the late 1980s and early 1990s may have peaked and population growth may be more modest for the foreseeable future.

² Growth rates are calculated using an annualized formula, not an arithmetic mean.

These projections are based on the official U.S. Census estimates, which are derived from an analysis of birth rates, death rates, and migration (estimated based on Federal Income Tax filings.)

Table 4 illustrates the population growth recorded by Clermont County townships in the 2000 Census. As shown, Stonelick Township has the eighth fastest growth in the County with an annual growth rate of 2.42 percent and a gain of 1,238 persons. Stonelick Township accounts for 3.04 percent of all growth in Clermont County townships. The majority of new growth occurred in Union (22.03 percent) and Miami (20.72 percent) townships, with a total of 42.75 percent of the County’s overall growth within townships.

**Table 4
Population Growth
Clermont County Townships 1990 – 2000**

Township	1990 U.S. Census	2000 U.S. Census	Number Change	Annual Growth Rate
Williamsburg Township	2,467	5,005	2,538	7.33%
Ohio Township	2,902	5,245	2,343	6.10%
Batavia Township	11,233	17,503	6,270	4.53%
Franklin Township	2,817	4,348	1,531	4.44%
Tate Township	5,992	8,935	2,943	4.08%
Pierce Township	8,471	12,226	3,755	3.74%
Miami Township	28,201	36,632	8,431	2.65%
Stonelick Township	4,578	5,816	1,238	2.42%
Union Township	33,368	42,332	8,964	2.41%
Washington Township	1,936	2,351	415	1.96%
Wayne Township	4,316	5,025	709	1.53%
Goshen Township	12,701	13,663	962	0.73%
Monroe Township	7,762	8,236	474	0.59%
Jackson Township	2,461	2,576	115	0.46%

Source: U.S. Census

Furthermore, the 2000 Census shows that the majority of growth within Clermont County is occurring within the townships and not the unincorporated municipalities.

Table 5 displays the population growth and decline reported by Clermont County municipalities in the 2000 Census. Owensville village experienced the largest loss of population within a Clermont County municipality, with a decline of 203 persons. Other municipalities experiencing population loss between 1990 and 2000 are Batavia village, Chilo village, Moscow village, New Richmond village and Neville village. Although six of the fifteen municipalities experienced population loss, Amelia village and the City of Milford (pt.) experienced population growth, with Amelia village comprising 44.29 percent and City of Milford comprising 28.75 percent of the overall population growth within municipalities.

**Table 5
Population Growth
Clermont County Municipalities 1990 – 2000**

Municipality	1990 U.S. Census	2000 U.S. Census	Number Change	Annual Growth Rate
Amelia village (pt. - Pierce)	1,118	1,905	787	5.47%
Amelia village (pt. - Batavia)	719	847	128	1.65%
Newtonsville village	427	492	65	1.43%
City of Milford (pt.)	5,655	6,249	594	1.00%
Bethel village	2,407	2,637	230	0.92%
City of Loveland (pt.)	1,675	1,835	160	0.92%
Felicity village	856	922	66	0.75%
Williamsburg village	2,322	2,358	36	0.15%
Batavia village	1,721	1,617	-104	-0.62%
New Richmond village (pt. - Ohio)	2,408	2,219	-189	-0.81%
Moscow village	279	244	-35	-1.33%
Owensville village	1,019	816	-203	-2.20%
Chilo village	130	97	-33	-2.89%
Neville village	226	127	-99	-5.60%
New Richmond village (pt. - Pierce)	0	0	0	

Source: U.S. Census

Building and Zoning Permits

As a crosscheck against the official estimates and Census data, building permit data was retrieved from County records. The data show in **Table 6** shows that 11,452 permits were issued from 1990 to 1999. There were a total of 55,315 residential units in 1990 and 66,763 units in 1999, an increase of 20.7 percent. These totals include single family detached, two-family, or three-family attached residential units.

**Table 6
Residential Building Permits
Clermont County 1990 - 1999**

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
755	720	994	1,140	1,140	1,072	1,450	1,131	1,391	1,659

Building permit information was only available at the County level. Zoning permit data was collected from Stonelick Township. **Table 7** shows that 252 residential permits were issued from 1990 to 1999. There were a total of 2,053 units in 1990 and 2,305 units in 1999, an increase of 12.3 percent.

**Table 7
Residential Zoning Permits
Stonelick Township 1990 - 1999**

1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
20	32	30	30	28	29	18	19	23	23

These data are useful in projecting future development in the Township. Applying the annual growth rates of the County and Township population estimates to existing Township population over time will produce one set of projections. Utilizing the annual growth rates of the County and Township building and zoning permits will produce another set of projections. This methodology creates a range of potential outcomes that provide the framework for policies in the Growth Management Plan.

Future Population Forecast

There are several methods by which projections for future population in Stonelick Township can be made, each of which requires some basic assumptions. The assumptions made in projecting population in this analysis are as follows:

- Persons per household will be 2.82 through the planning horizon year.
- The 1990 U. S. Census recorded 2.82 persons per household in Clermont County. The Year 2000 Census shows that household size in Clermont County has declined to 2.67.
- Market forces (growth rates) will remain constant through the planning horizon year.
- Annualized growth rates were calculated and used to make several population projections. Determining annual growth rates through the nineties provides a means of estimating future growth based on current trends. While it is expected that these rates will fluctuate in coming years, there is no solid ground on which to base modification of these rates.

One method that can be used to project future population in Stonelick Township is to assume that development in the future will occur at the same rate that permits were issued in Clermont County during the 1990s. Applying this annual rate through the planning period would yield an additional 1,053 dwelling units by 2020, increasing the total number of units in the Township to 3,358.

Using the same approach of applying building permit data, another way to project future population in the Township is to propose that development over the next 20 years will continue at the same pace as permits were issued in Stonelick Township during the 1990s. Stonelick Township logged 252 new residential units during this time, bringing the number of existing dwelling units up to 2,305 by the end of 2000. If this growth rate is sustained through 2020, the Township will gain an additional 608 dwelling units, for a total of 2,913.

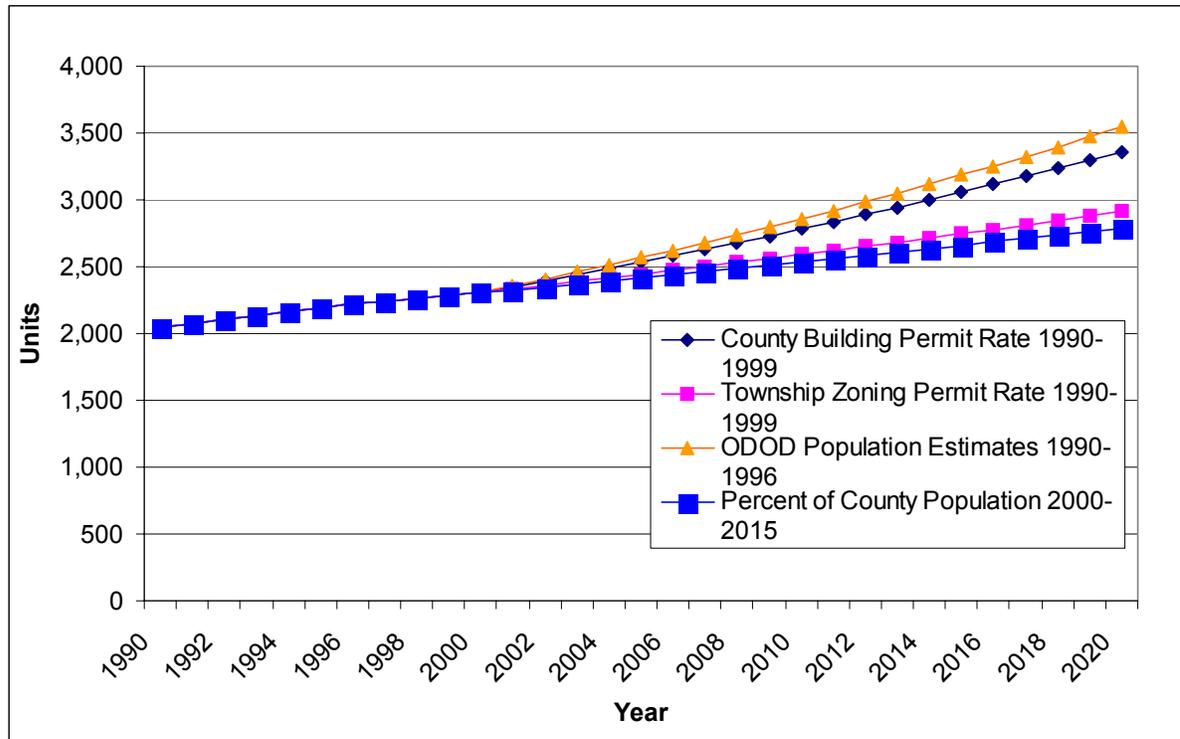
A third annual growth rate figure, that of 2.18 percent estimated by the Ohio Department of Development for 1990 through 1996, could also be used to project population in the Township. If this rate of growth was experienced for the 20-year planning period, Stonelick Township could be home to 8,743 residents in 2020. If persons-per-household remains unchanged, this translates into 795 additional residential units for a total of 3,100.

One final method for estimating the future population and dwelling units is to assume that the Township maintains the same ratio of population to that of Clermont County. In 1990, Stonelick Township accounted for 3.0 percent of the County population (4,578 of 150,167).

The Ohio Department of Development estimate for 2015 is 199,000 for Clermont County, an annual growth rate of 1.13 percent. Extending this growth rate through 2020 would increase the County projection to 210,500 people. If Stonelick Township maintained 3.0 percent of the County’s population, it would contain roughly 6,315 residents, or 2,239 dwelling units.

The graph below shows a comparison of dwelling unit forecasts.

**Graph 1
Projected Dwelling Units 2000–2020**



There is no question that the available land in Stonelick Township can easily accommodate the range of growth that may occur over the next twenty years, if the current zoning regulations remain unchanged. The range of future population as determined in this analysis is from 6,222 to 7,912. This increase of 1,644 to 3,334 new residents would require approximately 485 to 1,243 additional dwelling units. The capacity for new residential construction under the existing zoning regulations as determined by this analysis is for an additional 10,023 units. The highest projected demand for new homes would only consume about 12 percent of the land capacity in Stonelick Township.

It is easy to imagine that a single large development of residential lots could exceed the lower end of the range of population forecast. Thus, the Township must be constantly vigilant and closely monitor development activities.

Plan Goals and Objectives

The Growth Management Plan for Stonelick Township must be based upon the desires and vision of the Township's residents. The Steering Committee has reviewed information, established goals, and made policy recommendations for inclusion in the Plan. Other methods for obtaining public feedback included one-on-one interviews with people in the County and public input during Steering Committee meetings. During the planning process, the Steering Committee adopted the following goals for the development of the Growth Management Plan.

Goal 1. Preserve the rural character of the Township.

Objectives:

- Carefully plan for the type, placement, and location of future growth.
- Establish a strategy for preserving open space in the Township.
- Preserve environmental assets of the Township, including water quality and riparian protection.
- Maintain current roadway system capacity.
- Establish guidelines to require proper buffering between residential and commercial/industrial uses.
- Maintain the current rural atmosphere enjoyed by Stonelick Township residents.

Goal 2. Ensure high quality development that meets or exceeds the standards established by the official Zoning Resolution, and does not require significant additional public investment to correct problems created by such development.

Objectives:

- Establish requirements for recreational facilities.
- Establish design requirements for sidewalks in subdivisions, properly sized roads, turn lanes, and building materials.
- Establish access management and performance standards for commercial and industrial development.
- Establish requirements for wastewater treatment in the Township.

Goal 3. Provide for existing and future transportation needs of the Township.

Objectives:

- Discourage pass-through traffic patterns in residential areas.
- Maintain a roadway and traffic system that is safe.
- Provide for interconnectivity of new roadways with the current roadway network to decrease congestion.
- Encourage investment in transportation facilities to accommodate regional traffic with the least amount of impact on local residents.
- Minimize impact of traffic and prepare a traffic impact study for significant projects.

Goal 4. Retain viable agriculture within the Township in areas where appropriate.

Objectives:

- Establish a strategy for assisting landowners who wish to preserve their property in its current agricultural state.
- Establish criteria for determining viability of agricultural uses.

Goal 5. Establish Township-level procedures for evaluation and approval/denial of future infrastructure improvements in the Township.

Objectives:

- Establish evaluation criteria to assess the impact of proposed infrastructure projects on financial resources of the Township.
- Adopt enabling legislation that will permit Zoning Commission to consider fiscal impact on Township resources prior to approval of proposed development.

Table 8 shows the plan references and implementation tools for each of the Goals and Objectives, to serve as a guide to future implementation of the objectives. “Plan References are sections of the Growth Management Plan that relate to a specific objective. “Implementation Tools” are methods for achieving the objectives, some of which are beyond the scope of this Plan, or require coordination with outside agencies such as Clermont County or the State of Ohio.

**Table 8
Plan Implementation Tools**

Objective	Plan References and Implementation Tools	Responsibility
Goal 1. Preserve the rural character of the Township.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carefully plan for the type, placement, and location of future growth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Area Plan 	Township
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a strategy for preserving open space in the Township. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open space subdivisions Revisions to Planned Unit Development Transfer of Development Rights 	Township Private Property Owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preserve environmental assets of the Township. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storm water management Enforcement of 100-year floodplain Open space subdivisions Riparian Protection Zone 	County Township
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain current roadway system capacity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoroughfare Plan Traffic shed analysis Access management Inter-governmental cooperation 	Township County State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish guidelines to require proper buffering between residential and commercial/industrial uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to the Zoning Resolution 	Township
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain the current rural atmosphere enjoyed by Stonelick Township residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy Area Plan Water & sewer extension policy Transfer of Development Rights 	Township County Private Property Owners
Goal 2. Ensure high quality development that meets or exceeds the standards established by the official Zoning Resolution, and does not require significant additional public investment to correct problems created by such development.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish requirements for recreational facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to the Zoning Resolution 	Township
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish design requirements for sidewalks in subdivisions, properly sized roads, turn lanes, and building materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with Clermont County Planning Commission. Planned Unit Developments 	County Township
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish access management and performance standards for commercial and industrial development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to the Zoning Resolution Coordination with Clermont County and Ohio Department of Transportation 	Township County State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish requirements for wastewater treatment in the Township. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with Clermont County 	County

Table 8 – Continued

Objective	Plan References and Implementation Tools	Responsibility
Goal 3. Provide for existing and future transportation needs of the Township.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discourage pass-through traffic patterns in residential areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traffic Calming 	Township
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a roadway and traffic system that is safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with Clermont County 	County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for interconnectivity of new roadways with the current roadway network to decrease congestion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neo-traditional development 	Township County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage investment in transportation facilities to accommodate regional traffic with the least amount of impact on local residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State Route 132 Bypass 	State County
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize impact of traffic and prepare a traffic impact study for significant projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to the Zoning Resolution 	Township
Goal 4. Retain viable agriculture within the Township in areas where appropriate.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a strategy for assisting landowners who wish to preserve their property in its current agricultural state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer of Development Rights 	Township Private Property Owners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish criteria for determining viability of agricultural uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with Ohio State University Extension Service 	County
Goal 5. Establish Township-level procedures for evaluation and approval/denial of future infrastructure improvements in the Township.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish evaluation criteria to assess the impact of proposed infrastructure projects on financial resources of the Township. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fiscal Impact Analysis Coordination with Clermont County and Ohio Department of Transportation 	Township County State
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt enabling legislation that will permit Zoning Commission to consider fiscal impact on Township resources prior to approval of proposed development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisions to the Zoning Resolution 	Township

Growth Assumptions

The goals and objectives also led to the development of four growth assumptions for Stonelick Township:

1. *The Stonelick Creek Valley is the Township's most important asset and should be protected from development impacts.* The Stonelick Creek Valley is a unique asset in terms of its topography, environmental sensitivity, continuity of ownership, historic assets, and scenic views.
2. *Growth Pressure will come primarily from the south.* Growth in Clermont County is tied to growth in the Cincinnati Metropolitan Area, and the movement of population has followed two corridors in the County: State Route 28 and State Route 32. Of the two corridors, State Route 32 is the more important in terms of its proximity to the Township, and growth that had been confined to Union and Batavia Townships will begin to move north into the southern portion of Stonelick Township.
3. *The Township should deter annexation.* The only municipality contiguous to Stonelick Township is the Village of Owensville. While growth, particularly suburban residential, commercial and industrial developments, is more likely in the Owensville vicinity due to utilities, the growth should occur without annexation.
4. *Adequate provision should be made to prevent added traffic congestion.* The impact of regional traffic as a result of land use changes outside the Township is unmistakable. Thus, it is important that Stonelick Township officials consult with adjacent Townships, Clermont County, and the State of Ohio in order to adequately coordinate efforts. It should be clear that most of the congestion on U.S. 50, State Route 276, and State Route 132 is not related to development in Stonelick Township.

The Township should require that a traffic impact study be completed for land use changes.

Growth Scenarios

During the Planning Process, the Steering Committee considered four growth scenarios, based upon the expected demand for new housing in the Township. Extensive, and sometimes spirited, discussion revolved around the prospects for land use change and growth. The consensus of the Committee was that Scenario No. 3 and Scenario No. 4 best reflected the preferred approach for long-range growth management. These discussions are reflected in the eight Policy Areas shown in Figure 6.

Scenario No. 1 – Do Nothing

Approach: Development continues in the Township consistent with the existing official Zoning Resolution.

Zone Change(s):

- 1.) Estate Residence/Agriculture District:
Raise minimum lot size from 1.0 acre to 5.0 acres.

Policy Change(s):

- 1.) None

2020 Result(s):

Total Lots: 1,243
Total Acreage Consumed: 6,215 acres

Scenario No. 2 – Scattered Development/Scattered Impact

Approach: Development continues at a density of 1 unit per 2.5 acres across the Township. Development projects are scattered to dilute the impact on roadways and maintain rural character where possible. Open space subdivisions are encouraged.

Zone Change(s):

- 1.) Estate Residence/Agriculture District:
Raise minimum lot size from 1.0 acre to 5.0 acres.
- 2.) New District:
Adopt Planned Overlay District for open space subdivisions.

Policy Change(s):

- 1.) Encourage open space subdivisions on 2.5-acre (and smaller) lots.

2020 Result(s)

Total Lots: 1,572
Total Acreage Consumed: 3,628

Scenario No. 3 – Minimal Infrastructure/Capital Expenditures

Approach: Development continues at lower density but is directed to vacant areas surrounding the Village of Owensville. The creation of neo-traditional neighborhoods in these areas are encouraged by requiring interconnected roads, smaller lot sizes, and shared open spaces. It should be recognized that neo-traditional neighborhoods can, and should, support small retail areas, which serve these areas of higher density residential. A few examples of neo-traditional neighborhood developments are given in the Appendix.

Zone Change(s)

- 1.) Estate Residential District:
Raise minimum lot size from 1.0 acre to 5.0 acres.
- 2.) Amendments:
 - Change Estate Residence District to Suburban Residence District within sewer service area (20,000 square feet minimum lot size).
 - Change Suburban Residence District to Urban Residence District within sewer service district (12,800 square feet minimum lot size).
- 3.) New District:
Adopt Planned Overlay District for open space subdivisions.

Policy Change(s):

- 1.) Encourage development of Neo-Traditional Neighborhoods around Owensville.
- 2.) Encourage open space subdivisions on 2.5-acre (and smaller) lots.
- 3.) Encourage further study of the concept of Traffic Sheds.

2020 Result(s):

Total Lots: 1,244
Total Acreage Consumed: 839

Scenario No. 4 – Preservation of Natural/Agricultural Landscape

Approach: Development continues at lower density, but is generally discouraged along State Route 131, the Stonelick Creek Valley, and other open space, agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas. New growth and land use changes are encouraged to be restricted to the area around Owensville and the limited western and eastern edges of the Township, where subdivision platting is occurring. Open space subdivisions are encouraged.

Zone Change(s):

- 1.) Estate Residence/Agriculture District:
Raise minimum lot size from 1.0 acre to 5.0 acres.
- 2.) Amendments:
Change Suburban Residence District to Urban Residence District within sewer service area (12,800 square feet minimum lot size).
- 3.) New District:
Adopt Planned Overlay District for open space subdivisions.

Policy Change(s):

- 1.) Consider the implementation of the concept of “transfer of development rights” (See Figure 6): Policy Areas 5 and 7 would generally act as “sending” areas. Policy areas 1 and 2 would generally act as “receiving” areas by permitting higher densities.
- 2.) Encourage development of Neo-Traditional Neighborhood around Owensville.
- 3.) Encourage open space subdivisions on 2.5-acre (and smaller) lots.

2020 Result(s):

Total Lots: 1,250

Total Acreage Consumed: 2,306

Growth Management Plan

Policy Area Plan

Figure 6 illustrates the recommended Policy Area Plan for Stonelick Township. The Plan divides the Township into eight basic Policy Areas. The appropriate policy for each Area is described below. Note that the boundary of each Area is approximate and may vary depending upon specific development criteria.

The consistent application of these policies over time will result in a cohesive and effective land use plan for the Township. The Zoning Commission should monitor land use changes and prepare an annual update and review of the Zoning Map and Land Use Map. Any deviation from policy, or indicated changes in the policy, will become evident.

The Township should consider implementing a land use conservation and preservation concept called “transfer of development rights.” This approach encourages development in those areas that can most efficiently be provided with public services while at the same time providing strict controls to development and a means of compensation for landowners in areas where development is viewed as less desirable. Areas, where development is to be directed, are defined as "receiving areas" while areas, where development is considered less desirable, are defined as "sending areas." While the Policy Area Plan defines in general terms those parts of the Township that should be sending and receiving areas, it must be understood that the actual installation of such a system will require more detailed study before implementation.

Implementation of the Plan does not depend only upon the application of transfer of development rights. The Plan can be successfully implemented and administered through more traditional methods of land use control. For example, it is recommended that the Township Zoning Resolution be updated to reflect the intent of the Plan.

Policy Area 1

Policy Area 1 is located in the immediate vicinity of the Village of Owensville. It is assumed that development in this Area will take place in conjunction with the provision of the full range of public utilities, i.e., sanitary sewer and public water. It is recommended that development in this area be for residential uses. The Plan recommends this area be developed in a fashion that is in keeping with the village atmosphere of Owensville. This would assume development at a density in the range of 2 to 3 units to the acre. Subdivisions that occur in this area should be developed using the principles of neo-traditional neighborhoods. This concept promotes homes set close to the street, garages located behind the home, streets that are interconnected and narrow in scale to allow traffic circulation while suppressing vehicle speeds (no cul-de-sacs), and the provision of sidewalks for pedestrian circulation. Front porches are encouraged and an overall quality of a village atmosphere and walkability is desired. Dwelling unit density would be varied in these neighborhoods.

Figure 6 - Policy Area Plan

In part, the strategy of allowing a higher density in Policy Area 1 is tied to the strategy for other areas of the Township. Full utility services are available, a basic network of streets is beginning to emerge, and retail services are available. Fire, police and emergency services can also be provided efficiently.

The overall significant benefits of more direct focusing of development is offset by the increased possibility of traffic congestion. Close attention should be given to implementation of a grid street pattern. Also, the township and the Village of Owensville should work with Clermont County to improve regional traffic by adding capacity to the roadway system. Policy Area #1 could be treated as a “receiving” area in the transfer of development rights.

Policy Area 2

Policy Area 2 is also located in the vicinity of the Village of Owensville and surrounds Policy Area 1. It is recommended that development in this area be for residential use and that no commercial or retail use be permitted. Recommended residential development densities in Policy Area 2 are 1 unit per 2 acres in the absence of public utilities and 1 unit per acre with public utilities.

The expansion of the existing park in this Area is encouraged. Policy Area 2 could also be treated as a “receiving area” within a transfer of development rights system. Net development density should not exceed 2 units to the acre.

There will be some potential for development of highway service and retail uses along U.S. 50 in Policy Area 2 and Policy Area 3. These uses will be in conflict with the overall Plan, however, there may be some merit in the specific use or service since U.S. 50 will continue to carry high volumes of traffic. Each proposed commercial use must be carefully examined and evaluated in terms of traffic impact, access management and, most importantly, its effect on the surrounding residential uses.

Policy Area 3

Policy Area 3 is located to the west of the Village of Owensville along U.S. 50. This Area could conceivably be serviced with public sewers in the near term future. Policy Area 3 contains a substantial amount of developable land that is not constrained by environmental factors. Thus, it is reasonable to expect that development pressure will increase in this area. It is recommended that land use in this area be restricted to residential use at about 1 unit per acre if public utilities are available and 1 unit per 3 acres in areas without public utilities. This Area contains a school and the expansion of this facility is in keeping with the spirit of this Plan.

It is also recommended that the Township Zoning Resolution be modified to create an incentive for the use of the open space subdivision concept. This concept is illustrated in the Appendix of this document and should be seen as the preferred development pattern in this Area.

See comments in Policy Area 2 concerned with the possibility of non-residential development in this Area.

Policy Area 4

Policy Area 4 is located to the east of the Village of Owensville. It contains a substantial amount of developable land but is not likely to receive sanitary sewer service in the near future. Policy Area 4 should be reserved for residential use with a density of 1 unit per 2 acres or 1 unit per 3 acres. The use of open space subdivisions should be seen as the preferred development pattern in this Policy Area. In the event that sewers are extended into this area, the appropriate density should be one unit per acre. Commercial development along the frontage of U.S. 50 should be carefully evaluated so as not to create a commercial strip. See comments in Policy Area 2.

Policy Area 5

Policy Area 5 is split into four sections located in the central and northern areas of the Township. These are the more rural areas of the Township located outside the major transportation corridors and also outside the Stonelick Creek Valley. Narrow, curving, and often-hilly roads, substantial agricultural uses, and significant woodlot areas characterize these areas. Land uses in these areas should be confined to agricultural and low-density residential uses.

Two strategies for policy implementation are recommended for consideration. The first is a modification of the Zoning Resolution to require large residential lots of 3 to 5 acres or more. The second is the possible installation of a traffic shed system that will regulate development densities based on the existing capacity of the road system to handle traffic. The development of a traffic shed system will require additional analysis and research. However, it does have the advantage of linking permitted development levels directly to the capacity of the roadway system to support it.

The use of the open space subdivision concept should be encouraged in these areas to provide for long-term protection of open space. Using Transfer of Development Rights, Policy Area 5 would be a “sending area.”

Policy Area 6

This area is comprised of the State Route 131 corridor extending east/west across the northern portion of the Township. Due to its regional connectivity, it also will experience development pressure in the coming years. There is no expectation that sewer will be extended into this Area in the foreseeable future, although it does contain two subdivisions where homes have been constructed on small lots using septic systems. Development in this Area should be restricted to residential uses at a density of one unit per two acres.

Commercial development should be confined to carefully constricted locations at the major intersections.

The open space subdivision approach should be encouraged in this area.

Policy Area 7

Policy Area 7 is made up of the Stonelick Creek Valley and its tributaries in the Township. In contrast to the other policy areas, the boundaries of Policy Area 7 follow the elevation lines associated with the Stonelick Creek Valley. This area is the Township's greatest asset in terms of its rural and scenic character and should be vigorously protected from suburban development. This may be accomplished in several ways. First, rigorous observation of a policy of not allowing development and filling in 100-year floodplain should be a priority. Second, zoning classifications should be modified to require five acres for a single family home. Third, developable land in this area should be a primary candidate for purchase of development rights through a transfer of development rights system.

Sanitary sewers should not be extended into this area. If that proves necessary to correct a problem with failing on-site septic systems, any such extensions should be sized only to correct the existing problem and not to support future development. Consideration should also be given to creating an overlay zone in the Zoning Resolution that provides enhanced protection to the riparian corridors along the creek and its tributaries for the purpose of protecting water quality.

Policy Area 8

Policy Area 8 is actually made up of seven locations within the Township that are indicated as commercial, highway services, and neighborhood business districts. These are located at four points along State Route 131, and three points along U.S. 50. These locations are at the intersections of the primary roads and reflect current zoning patterns. The intention of the Plan is to prevent an extension of commercial uses along the full lengths of these two roads that would result in the creation of an unsightly strip development, significant traffic congestion and safety hazards.

Well-known and proven commercial land development principles are available as a guide for these Areas. Access management, set backs, buffering, signage, and landscaping are among the elements to be considered. These principles should be included in the Zoning Resolution since the private market will dictate when and where the potential for non-residential development will occur. The Zoning Commission will then have the necessary tools for evaluation of the proposed land use changes.

The Township Zoning Resolution should be reviewed and amended to provide improved requirements pertaining to signage, landscaping, on-site lighting, and building appearance. Consideration should be given to modifying the Township Zoning Resolution to include a requirement for site plan review and approval by the Zoning Commission of development occurring in commercial districts. Poorly planned and executed commercial development has the potential to become a blight and liability for the Township in the long run, and every effort should be made to ensure that this does not happen.

Table 9 is a brief summary of Policy Area Plan elements, which will help to understand the relationship of policy to implementation.

**Table 9
Policy Area Elements**

Policy Area	Density Without Public Utilities	Density With Public Utilities	Subdivision Type	Subdivision Maximum Density	Possible Development Rights Receiving Area	Possible Development Rights Sending Area
1	1 unit on 2 acres	2-3 units on 1 acre	Neo-traditional	2-3 units on 1 acre	Yes	N. A.
2	1 unit on 2 acres	1 unit on 1 acre	Open Space	2 units on 1 acre	Yes	N. A.
3	1 unit on 3 acres	1 unit on 1 acre	Open Space	2 units on 1 acre	N. A.	N. A.
4	1 unit on 2 or 3 acres	1 unit on 1 acre	Open Space	2 units on 1 acre	N. A.	N. A.
5	1 unit on 3 or 5 acres	N. A.	Open Space	2 units on 3 to 5 acres	N. A.	Yes
6	1 unit on 2 acres	N. A.	Open Space	1 unit on 2 acres	N. A.	N. A.
7	1 unit on 5 acres	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	Yes
8	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.	N. A.

Thoroughfare Plan

Consistent with the overall objective to retain open space and protect the rural lifestyle of the Township, suggested roadway improvements are modest. There are two critical areas to be considered. The first is the Owensville area and secondly, the State Route 131 corridor.

Conceptually, it is important to relieve congestion in and near Owensville by providing additional local roadway links as new development occurs. Similarly, new local street network in the State Route 131 corridor should be planned if and when development is anticipated.

Currently State Route 132 jogs slightly, in the Owensville area, following U.S. 50 for roughly one-half mile. The intersection of U.S. 50 and State Route 132 in the center of Owensville creates easily the most significant traffic congestion problem in the Township. By relocating State Route 132 to the west, it is possible to correct this problem. Development has not yet blocked that alternative. But, in the next few years that may well happen. For the purpose of facilitating future traffic flow within the Township and avoiding increased congestion in the future, it is critical that this link be made. (See discussion in Policy Areas 1 and 8.) The County Engineer should be asked to conduct a preliminary engineering and location study. The result of the study would be an “establishment hearing,” which would legally establish the location of the proposed roadway and potentially protect the right-of-way as new development occurs.

Also, in the area around Owensville, it will be important that a linked grid street system with multiple connections be created so as to relieve pressure on the main intersection in the center of the Village and to prevent safety concerns on U. S. 50. Subdivision site plans must be reviewed and approved with that in mind.

In the State Route 131 corridor (see Policy Area 6), it is recommended that two new local streets approximately parallel to State Route 131 be established as development occurs. This too will help to avoid overloading State Route 131, thereby forcing a widening on State Route 131 that is inconsistent with rural character. As new subdivision development occurs, a grid system with connecting links for local roads should be established.

Implementation

The creation of a Growth Management Plan has allowed Stonelick Township to consider its future and determine its goals. This is just the first step toward organized growth and development. Any plan, however, is only made effective through implementation. Implementation may require changes to the Zoning Resolution, a different approach to capital improvements, and adoption of new tools not previously used in the Township.

The Growth Management Plan articulates the goals of the Township, explains the basis for those goals, and sets out strategies, policies and directions in a general fashion. The following implementation strategies will help make the Plan a reality.

Revisions to Zoning Resolution

The following suggested changes to the Stonelick Township Zoning Resolution have been identified:

1. Revise Planned Unit Development regulations to identify and provide standards for appropriate types, location, quality, and quantity of open space;
2. Revise Planned Unit Development regulations to clarify provisions regarding density;
3. Revise Planned Unit Development to identify either net or gross acreage in determining density of the project;
4. Consider the adoption of Overlay District standards, for example, density, building height or architecture, for application along specific commercial corridor/areas within the Township;
5. Consider establishing an Agricultural District to promote the preservation and protection of farmland and agricultural activities;
6. Consider making the “environmental performance” standards from the Industrial Districts applicable to all districts;
7. Consider developing a Comprehensive Sign Regulations chapter to control the location, type, and size of signage within Stonelick Township; and
8. Consider adopting a Bufferyard and Landscaping chapter to promote transitional bufferyards, the preservation of existing mature trees, and landscaping of signs, parking lots and other necessary areas of the Township.
9. Consider adopting rigorous site plan review requirements for traffic impact, environmental impacts, and other site elements with the cost to be absorbed by the applicant/developer.
10. Add a riparian protection zone on land directly adjacent to waterways to preserve water quality.

Open Space Subdivisions

The purpose of the open space subdivision concept is to allow for development to occur while providing a mechanism that will preserve existing natural features including mature tree stands, stream channels, pasture lands, fields, wetlands, hillsides, etc. Open space subdivision regulations are integrated into a zoning resolution and are generally treated as an overlay, whereas a developer could choose to apply for a zone change to the Overlay District. This district would permit higher density construction, beginning with the current (underlying) zoning district, so long as the developer would provide for a set percentage (50 percent) of the total site area to be permanently preserved as open space. The advantage for private development companies is that a reduction in minimum lot sizes (50 percent) is granted, therefore, permitting the same number of units as the current zoning. This approach permits creative site designs that often result in decreased infrastructure costs that are typically made upfront by the developer.

Traffic Sheds

The application of “traffic shed analysis” to planning in rural communities is an effort to base development densities on the capacity of rural roadways. As described in Planning Advisory Service Report #485, these “roads may be narrow, winding, or unpaved, sometimes featuring one-lane bridges or even fords- all characteristics that illustrate a substandard rating.” Given these conditions, and limited financial resources to fund improvements, additional development in rural communities such as Stonelick Township could produce traffic problems that are very difficult to mitigate.

The traffic shed concept “stems from the premise that rural residents use the local roadways to get to major arterials (typically state or federal highways) upon which they commute to their jobs. It is essential to the traffic shed concept that the commutation pattern on the arterials be largely unidirectional. Thus, the flow of traffic, down the rural road, to a major arterial is similar to the flow of water downstream from a creek to a river-hence, the term traffic shed. The traffic shed is the land area [around the rural roadway] that generates the traffic that flows to the road.”

The first critical step is to determine road capacity. Second, the area of the traffic shed for each road must be calculated. Once these two factors are identified, the amount of development that can be supported in the traffic sheds can be established.

Transfer of Development Rights:

The transfer of development rights from one area to another presents a unique approach for the preservation of open space in Stonelick Township. The transfer is arranged by private citizens who choose (freely) to enter into a contractual agreement that is satisfactory to both parties. The purchaser offers cash payment (the amount to be negotiated) to the seller in return for the development rights of the seller’s property. The seller’s property can continue to be used as it is currently, but no future development or subdivision of land is permitted. The purchaser then gains additional density that can be applied to the zoning requirements currently governing his/her property, allowing a higher density development and some return on the investment in preservation made elsewhere in the community.

Prior to the initiation of this private sector, free market agreement, the controlling regulatory authority in the area would establish areas in the community where development rights could be purchased (the sending area) and those portions of the community where these additional development rights could be realized (the receiving area) through the construction of higher density development.

Administrative Process

While the citizens of Stonelick Township have the ability to control and direct land use changes, there are other elements of the infrastructure, which are not within the purview of the Township. For example, other political jurisdictions and agencies can make decisions independent of input from the Township. It is extremely important that the Township establish a positive, regular and comprehensive dialogue with these jurisdictions and agencies. This would include at least the Clermont County Engineer, Clermont County Water and Sewer District, Clermont County Board of Commissioners, Clermont County Planning Commission, and the adjoining townships of Miami, Goshen, Wayne, Jackson, Batavia, and Union.

The members of the Zoning Commission and the Board of Zoning Appeals as well as the Zoning Inspector, the Clerk and Secretary will be critically involved in the implementation of the Plan. The day-to-day decisions will ultimately determine the success of the Plan. Thus, it will be necessary to arrange for periodic training of these individuals so they understand the basic premise of the Plan and how to administer the regulatory documents.

The Township Trustees have final review and decision-making authority for most of the regulatory documents. It will be their responsibility to “set the agenda” for the Growth Management Plan, establish priorities based on sound fiscal management, and put the administrative mechanisms in place for effective and efficient operation.

Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

Woodrow Wilson, the 28th President of the United States said, “Those who ignore history are bound to repeat it.” Winston Churchill, in remarks to the people of the United Kingdom, echoed his sentiments.

Thus, we learn from other experiences and apply our knowledge by taking actions limited only by our intellectual, financial, and human energy abilities. We cannot truly know the future or shape it to precise dimensions. We can, however, prepare for it by planning and providing the necessary resources today so we can meet the challenges of tomorrow.

Appendix

OPEN SPACE SUBDIVISION GUIDELINES

Open space development is an alternate form of residential and commercial development, which incorporates open or green space as part of the development. It is a conscious effort to preserve the significant features of the site to maintain as much of the predevelopment character of the land as possible rather than a small island of green space surrounded by street and lots.

Open space development, when properly designed, will preserve the most important environmental features of the site including stream channels, lakefront, wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes as well as other sensitive environmental concerns. It also will try to maintain the character of the site by minimizing disturbance to the natural and cultural qualities of the site, such as the woodlands, meadows, and farmland that create the visual quality and character of the land.

A good characterization of the open space development is that it is similar to a residential development around a golf course, except that in this case the golf course is substituted for by farm meadows, woodlands, lakes, ponds, streams, and other natural features. Instead of viewing the foursome on the green, the view is a heron at a pond's edge or a large sentinel white oak in the old meadow.

This type of development, sometimes referred to as conservation development, is a compromise with the typical conventional development

That subdivides the entire tract of land into multiple parcels contiguous to each other and its interior roads. The conventional design is more oriented to maximizing the total lot yield. This type of development takes the unique characteristics of the entire tract and divides among all the new lot owners. For example, a large mature woodland on a tract can be managed by multiple property owners with some cutting trees, others, thinning all the understory, while others plant grass under the trees with each owner's land management ending abruptly at each of their property lines. The visual quality takes on a mosaic postage stamp look with the woodland's character now lost to the houses and yards.

This same parcel, utilizing open space development methods, limits the depth of the lot into this unique natural feature of the site. Instead, the large portion of land is left in a woodland forest maintained and managed by the entire homeowners association or other designated entity. A binding legal agreement, usually a conservation easement held by a third party permanently protects the undeveloped status of the open space.

Typically the lot sizes are reduced in an open space development relative to the parcel's base zoning. In Stonelick Township, for instance, on parcels that are zoned for five-acre lots, a 100-acre site minus road development may equate into 18 lots. On the other hand, if the zoning allowed for an alternate development scheme for open space subdivision, the parcel could accommodate more house sites on 1-2 acre lots with less road with at least half of the parcel's unique features

undisturbed by development, minimizing the impact of the rural character of the Township.

There is extensive information available on open space or conservation development. Pursuing this development option will require both the developer and Township to become more familiar with this process. Additional reference sources are provided at the end of this section. Appendix A contains illustrations of the open space subdivision approach as applied to a hypothetical site.

The open space design should be prepared and also reviewed by professionals who are trained in land planning sensitive to the natural and cultural aspects associated with open space development.

Briefly, the following considerations are outlined to provide the Township or developers with the process for implementing open space development planning.

Inventory and site analysis of the parcel is the first step in this process. Utilizing topographic mapping at a suitable scale preferably 1" = 50' or 100' scale with two foot contour minimum. The mapping has to be current. With this mapping, the site should be field reviewed for the following natural and cultural features:

1. Vegetation (woodlands, meadows, scrub/shrub);
2. Slopes;
3. Soils;
4. Hydrology (wetlands, streams, lakes, ponds, floodplains, ground water);
5. Wildlife habitat;

6. Cultural impact (farm, cemetery, historic or archeological significance);
7. Views into and out from the site; and
8. Adjacent land uses (existing and planned).

It is critical that this inventory be performed and then graphically illustrated on the base mapping.

Additional information regarding the zoning, past land uses, utilities available or present, and any other pertinent information regarding the site needs to be assembled for review.

Prior to commencing with the design process, a meeting with several key entities is important to gain input for a plan that will be acceptable to the Township and minimize the objections of the adjacent landowners. Meetings with the Township planning staff and/or Trustees, to inform them of the project and solicit input regarding the site features most important from the Township's perspective, will help focus the design of the development. A similar meeting with adjoining property owners will also be helpful in order to address their concerns also in the design process.

The design process should go through a four step process of identifying all the possible open space, locating the house sites, layout of the roads and trail system, and finally drawing the lot lines. Finalize the schematic design and begin the process of gaining approvals from the Township.

OPEN SPACE DESIGN

The Countryside Program in Lyndhurst, Ohio has cited elements of good open space design as follows:

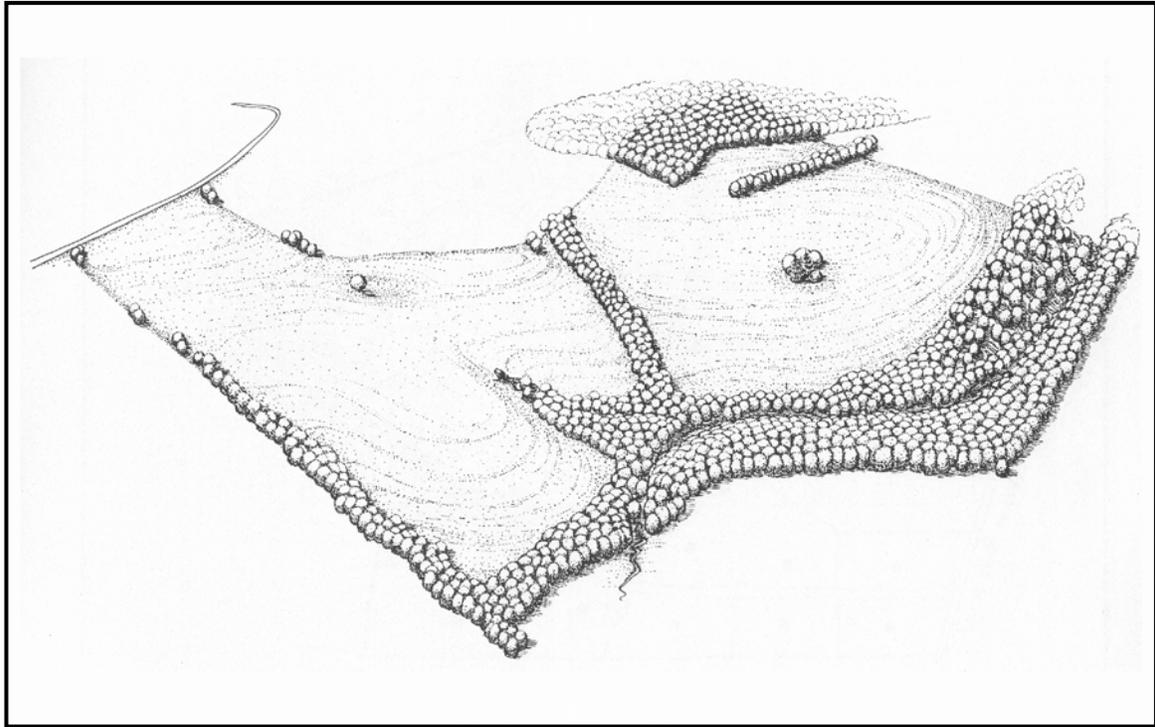
- The presence of large, contiguous areas of open space. Generally, with dimensions greater than 100 feet.
- Centrally located or distributed in such a way that physical and visual access is available to all users, preferably from each lot.
- Circulation network provided through the use of linkages.
- Wherever feasible, linkages are substantial rather than narrow.
- To the maximum extent possible, each lot backs into open space. Added benefits are gained from lots that also front on open space, but this approach is not always feasible.
- Creative siting of homes opens up views, rather than creating a "wall" of lots along a road that effectively blocks out unique features of the site.
- Protects rural views from the community road.
- Buffers, both perimeter and internal, are designed to maximize their benefits and reduce loss of openness due to fragmentation. Flexible buffer widths are used according to the need for privacy or visual quality, but do not consume significant amounts of land area that could be consolidated into a large, contiguous common open space.

- Minimal inclusion of active recreation areas (maximum 5% of total open space).
- Where possible, internal open space of a project links to outside community open space.
- Common open space at shoreline or water's edge protects resources and provides access for all residents.

Maintaining the open space and character of that land will require preparing a management plan, which may involve the formation of a homeowners association, granting the land to a land trust or other creative options.

For more information regarding open space development review the following:

- Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet CDFS-1270-99, Cluster Development;
- The Country Side Program, 1998 Conservation Development Resource Manual, Lyndhurst, Ohio, the Western Reserve Resource Conversation and Development Council; and
- Arendt, Randall, 1994 "Designing Open Space Subdivisions: A Practical Step-by-Step Approach," Media, PA, Natural Lands Trust.

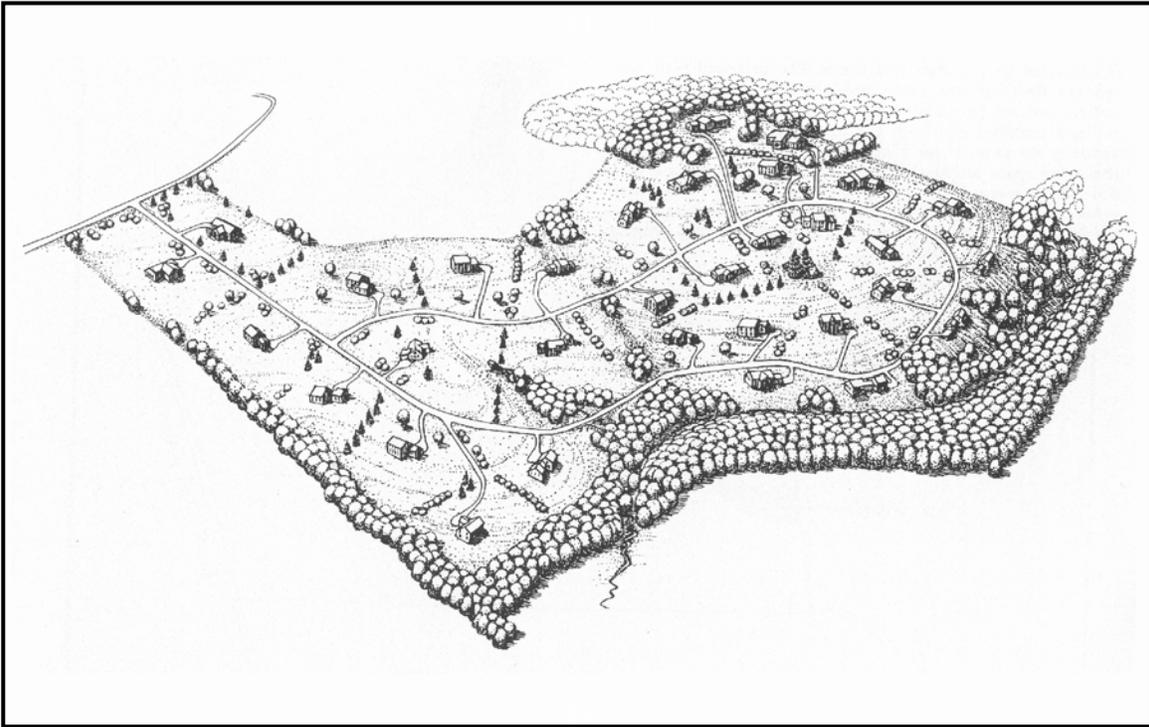


Aerial view of undeveloped 82 acre site³

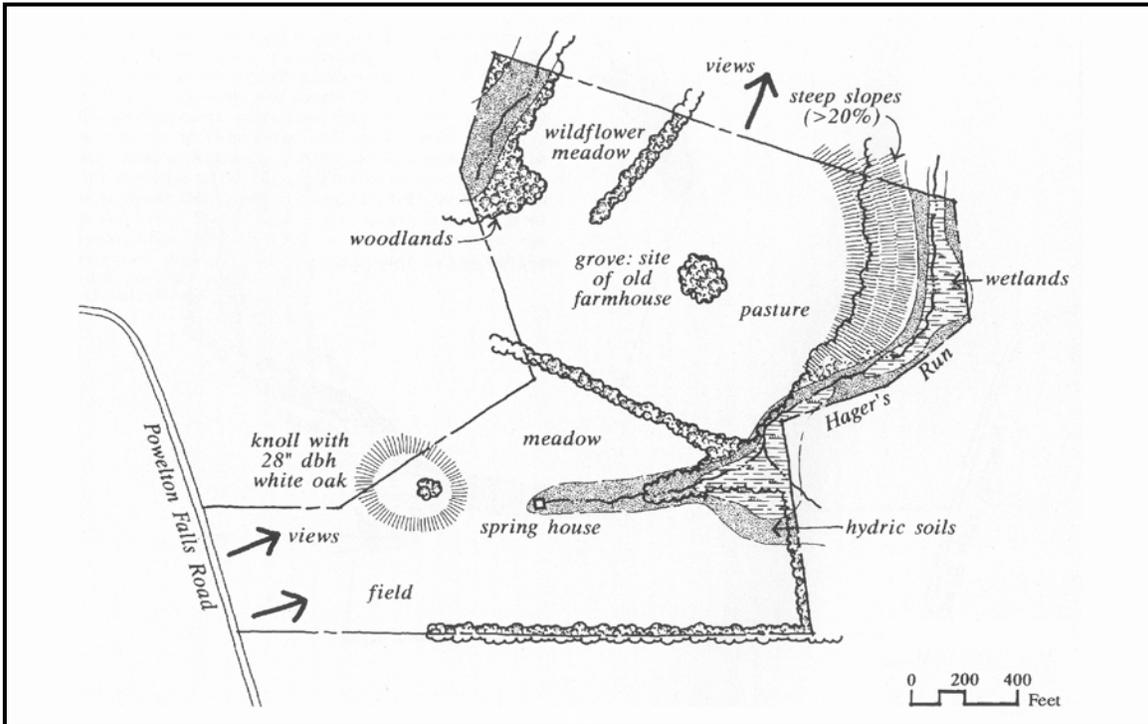


Typical conventional subdivision layout with an average lot size of two acres.

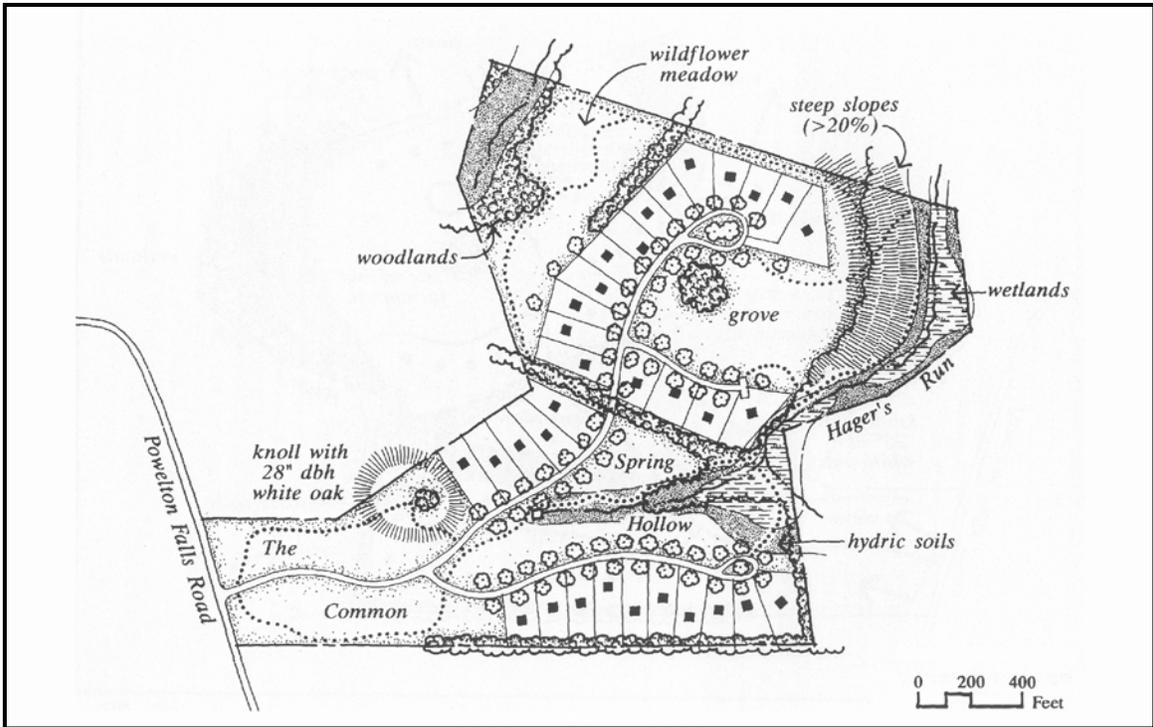
³ Illustrations are used with permission from *Designing Open Space Subdivisions: A Practical Step-By-Step Approach* by Randall Arendt, published by the Natural Lands Trust of Media, Pennsylvania.



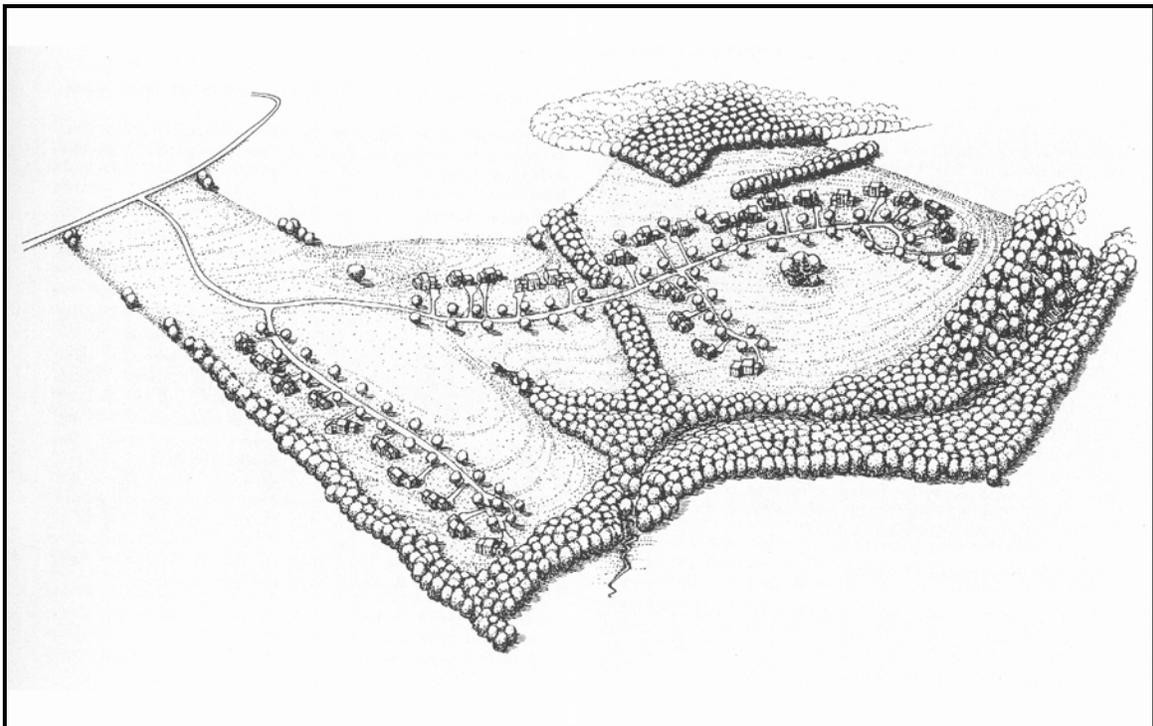
Aerial view of typical subdivision layout (32 lots - average lot size of two acres)



Site Asset Analysis



Open space subdivision layout (32 lots - average lots size 30,000 square feet with 52 acres in permanently-preserved, commonly-owned open space).



Aerial view of open space subdivision development.

NEO-TRADITIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Neo-Traditional Development practices are particularly suitable for areas surrounding older villages such as Owensville, hence the term “neo-traditional.” In contrast to a typical suburban pattern of curvilinear streets, large lots prominent garages and lack of sidewalks, the neo-traditional approach allows new development to better mesh with the best features of older villages.

Some of the principles of neo-traditional development include:

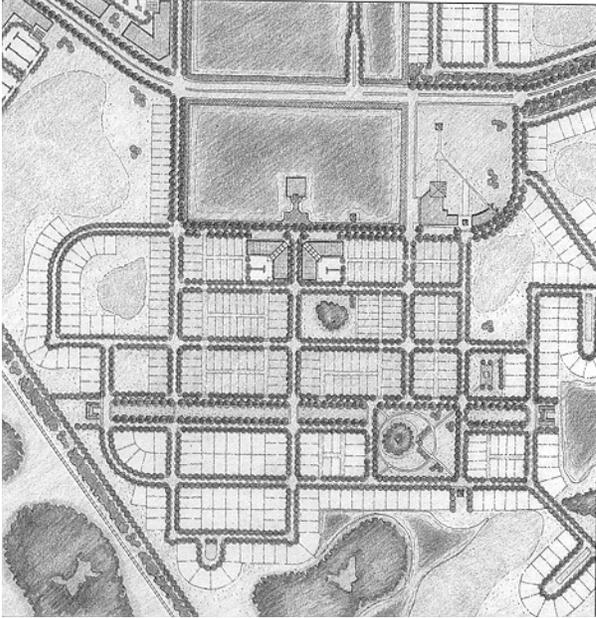
- A five-minute walk from the edge to the center of the neighborhood.
- An emphasis on the architectural compatibility of buildings rather than uniform housing densities.
- Public spaces within the neighborhood are well-understood open-space types, such as parks, greens, squares or plazas.
- The streets are arranged in a hierarchical network and interconnected. This can be an extension of the street grid of the adjacent village.
- Sidewalks, curbs and street trees are carefully planned.
- Private parking is located at the rear of the lot, allowing a porch on the front of the house.
- Public parking is located at the curb.
- Ponds, wetlands, mature stands of trees and other natural resources are retained and incorporated into the development.
- Small-scale retail and office buildings are permitted to allow residents access to conveniences without using their car.⁴

These are just some of the principles of neo-traditional development, which at its heart seeks to incorporate the best features of the village while accommodating new growth and development.

Two examples of neo-traditional neighborhood plans (from *The New American Metropolis*, by Peter Calthorpe, 1993) are shown on the next page.

⁴ *Suburban Nation*, 2000, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk and Jeff Speck, pp. 246-251.

Lexington Park, Polk County, Florida



South Brentwood Village
Brentwood, California

