ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Overview

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on economic development in Orange Township. It provides general guidance for fostering proven development strategies that produce high quality and diverse employment opportunities while utilizing the surrounding area’s amenities to maximize economic potential.

Economic Areas

As one of the most affluent and fastest growing counties in Ohio, Delaware County has a plethora of economic development and commerce options. Orange Township specifically includes the US-23 corridor, a hub of economic activity, as well as surrounding areas of Orange Township such as Polaris Parkway, Tanger Outlets, the City of Columbus, and the City of Delaware. Over the years, business and retail development has grown substantially in these areas, and the Township’s population has also increased. Strong economic development and residents relocating to the Township are highly correlated; typically when one increases, so does the other.

Industry

There are over 2,000 employers within Orange Township, however, only 7% of its residents both live and work within its boundaries. Industries available and occupations held within Orange Township are listed in the charts below. Primary area industries available in Orange Township are Finance and Insurance, Healthcare, and Retail. Primary occupations held by Orange Township residents are Management, Sales and Retail, and Business. The two areas are not well correlated, meaning Orange Township must be more cognizant about aligning the area’s industries with the occupation interests of residents.

Top Three Occupations Held by Residents:
• Management
• Sales
• Business

Top Three Industries within Orange Township:
• Finance and Insurance
• Healthcare
• Retail
Small Business Enhancement

Township residents made it clear that they wanted to see the expansion of small businesses and local establishments through the plan’s public input sessions. Residents also stated that they would like to see an increase in community or family-friendly locales such as breweries, gathering spaces, sports bars, wineries, and other engaging places. Having more of these types of establishments will create the sense of camaraderie and community that residents so greatly desire.

Financial Tools & Resources

Funding:
- Local Revolving Loan Funds
- Enterprise Zones
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit
- Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA)
- Joint Economic Development District (JEDD)

Resources:
- Lewis Center / Polaris Rotary
- Delaware Area Chamber of Commerce
- Orange Township Economic Development Advisory Board

Evans Farm

Evans Farm is an upcoming development located off of Lewis Center Road in northern Orange Township. It will be a mixed-used district, including both residential and commercial development. It is important to note that Evans Farms plans to be the proposed “Town Center” as recommended in the 2010 Land Use Plan.

Many of the Township residents wish to see agricultural lands preserved, while others desire future development. Evans Farm will likely drive additional businesses to the area, which will stimulate the area’s tax base. The development will also lead to increased population, which may increase traffic and the increased need for infrastructure improvements. Ultimately, Evans Farm encourages growth that currently faces Orange Township.
Public Meeting 9/12: SWOT Analysis

Strengths
Stakeholders identified a lack of income tax and ease of conducting business within the Township as strengths for economic development.

Weaknesses
The main weaknesses documented by the public were the need for more high-paying jobs so that residents did not have to work outside of the Township.

Opportunities
Residents of the Township decided that opportunities for growth include more small business ventures that could enhance a diverse economic base while also instilling a sense of community pride. Additionally, residents feel Orange Township could do more to remain competitive with other areas.

Threats
Participants were mostly concerned about increased taxes and annexation.

Refer to Appendix C.1 for 9/12 Meeting Results

Public Meeting 10/5: Poster Presentations

Feedback from this public input session favored allowing stronger ties between businesses and economic development groups and considering funding options to support emerging businesses.

Goal One:
Enhance economic partnerships with local business groups and private entities to ensure the longevity of economic development in Orange Township.

Goal Two:
Consider new and innovative ways to collect funding for new commercially-zoned areas to support incoming businesses.

Goal Three:
Revisit the zoning code to allow for more flexible commercial business standards, such as mixed-use or a different architectural style.

Refer to Appendix C.2 for 10/5 Meeting Results
Online Survey Results

There were many comments related to Economic Development from the online survey, specifically about the need for more commercial businesses to aid in tax revenue. Additionally, residents and business owners wish to see more commercial development to help balance out the overwhelmingly residential development of the Township. Many people felt the residential growth has expanded too rapidly and, as a result, has hindered the school system's performance and the availability of open space.

This chart indicates the land use share percentages in Orange Township. Land use is predominantly residential, while commercial is significantly less predominant. This data supports many survey respondents' comments. With the goals proposed in the following section, ideally the Township will achieve a more balanced land use mix.
GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal ED-1: Attract Commercial Businesses and Industries

Having a strong commercial presence in Orange Township is vital for a dependable tax base and the balance between business and residential activity. These strategies will assist in retention while encouraging economic growth.

Strategy ED-1.1: Foster entrepreneurship and small business development.

Strategy ED-1.2: Encourage local high schools to partner with the Delaware Area Career Center.

Strategy ED-1.3: Encourage incubators for upcoming small businesses.

Strategy ED-1.4: Consider a process that reduces obstacles facing developers seeking to build in Orange Township.

Responsible Parties: Orange Township Planning and Zoning staff and boards, and Delaware County Economic Development Department.

Goal ED-2: Encourage Business Involvement or Affiliation with Business Resources and Economic Development Tools

Giving commercial entities the resources and tools they need to be successful is an important aspect for the longevity, creation, and retention of commercial businesses and development. These strategies will help aid in the enhancement of those tools and resources.

Strategy ED-2.1: Continue to expand and enhance the annual business appreciation day and other similar events.

Strategy ED-2.2: Encourage economic developer groups to collaborate with Orange Township’s Outreach and Communications Committee (OTOCC).

Strategy ED-2.3: As new commercial businesses enter Orange Township, recommend their involvement in many area economic resources.

Responsible Parties: Orange Township Zoning Department, Orange Township Human Resources staff and boards, Delaware County Economic Development Department, and OTOCC.
Goal ED-3: Consider Funding to Support Commercially-Zoned Areas and Desirable Businesses

As a township, being creative with income sources and funding can be a challenge, but taking advantage of the resources available can help to make a community's economic base more diverse and well-established. The following strategies will help implement funding that will support commercial areas.

Strategy ED-3.1: Explore grants that enhance Orange Township's economic base.

Strategy ED-3.2: Consider funding through Tax Increment Financing or Enterprise Zones.

Strategy ED-3.3: Encourage partnerships with private entities or other investment organizations.

Strategy ED-3.4: Explore opportunities for economic development that emphasizes high-paying jobs.

Responsible Parties: Delaware County Commissioners, Delaware County Economic Development Department, Orange Township Planning and Zoning staff and boards, and OTOCC, Township Administrator, Orange Township Trustees

Goal ED-4: Work to Increase the Percentage of Residents who Both Live and Work in Orange Township.

During the public engagement process, many residents stated that there is a need for more diverse employment opportunities that match the educational backgrounds and interests of Orange Township residents. These strategies will help in achieving a stronger and more diversified economic base.

Strategy ED-4.1: Attract industries which coincide with the educational and occupational interests of Orange Township residents.

Strategy ED-4.2: Encourage a diversified economic base in the Township by bringing in a variety of job opportunities for varying income levels.

Strategy ED-4.3: Offer incentives to those businesses who heavily recruit Orange Township residents.

Responsible Parties: Delaware County Economic Development Department, Orange Township Planning and Zoning staff and boards, Township Trustees, Township Administrator.