ZONING AND LAND USE
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Overview

According to the community feedback gathered through the survey, it was determined that land development was the second-most pressing issue of concern in Orange Township. Land development is a key focus of many growing communities, especially considering that development decisions have economic, physical, and social implications. Thus, Orange Township should strategically guide the Township’s development and ensure sustainable development practices to help balance the many goals of the community. This can be accomplished through a strong zoning code and efficient development process that allows for flexibility to meet the needs of the community.

Land Use

The predominant land use in Orange Township is residential. Most industrial and commercial uses are isolated to the west of the Township and west of the railroad. Introducing additional commercial and light industrial uses in specific locations will help expand the Township’s tax base, create new jobs, and develop new places for residents to enjoy.

Zoning

The Zoning Resolution of Orange Township was originally adopted in 1955. Since then, the resolution has been amended several times, with the last minor amendment occurring in 2016. The zoning resolution is administered and enforced by the Orange Township Planning and Zoning Department. As stated in Article II, Section 2.01 of the Orange Township Zoning Resolution:

“This Resolution is enacted for the purpose of promoting public health, safety, morals, comfort and general welfare; to conserve and protect the natural resources and scenic areas; to secure the most appropriate use of land, to facilitate adequate but economical provision for public improvements, all in accordance with existing county or Township plans or plans which may be later adopted and as permitted by the provisions of chapter 519, Ohio Revised Code.”

The zoning code identifies 12 zoning district classifications. As part of the recommendations throughout this plan, the addition of new zoning districts is suggested:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing Zoning Districts</th>
<th>Potential Zoning Districts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm Residential District</td>
<td>Mixed-Use District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Density Residential District</td>
<td>Single and Double Family Residential District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium Density Residential District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Single-Family Planned Residential District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Multi-Family Planned Residential District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Office District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Commercial District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planned Commercial and Office District</td>
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<td>Planned Elderly Residential District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Industrial District</td>
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<td>Planned Industrial District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture Preservation District</td>
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</tbody>
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Fig. 25
Opportunities exist to update the zoning code. Updating the zoning code will help implement the goals of this plan and will ensure that the Township is developed in accordance with the community’s vision. It will also allow efficient administration by staff.

Growth

Orange Township has grown tremendously in recent decades. As mentioned in the Introduction chapter, Orange Township grew by 16.37% from 2010 to 2015. This growth trend is expected to continue. While growth helps the local economy and brings new and diverse people and opportunities to Orange Township, it also places a strain on existing resources. Orange Township must be prepared to accommodate this growth and ensure the efficient allocation of resources. It is essential that the Township strategically manage this growth to take advantage of opportunities that growth provides, while preventing or mitigating the negative impacts of growth.

Development Process

The Orange Township Planning & Zoning Department oversees the application process for zoning permits, rezonings, plan amendments, and subdivisions. New developments must be reviewed by the Planning & Zoning Department, and if applicable, must also receive recommendation from the Delaware County Regional Planning Commission. The overall development process is reviewed and regulated by departments and commissions of both Orange Township and Delaware County. The Township's Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals also play important roles in the development process. The duties of the Zoning Commission are to provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees on requests for rezonings and amendments to existing zoning applications. The Board of Zoning Appeals makes quasi-judicial decisions on requests for variances and conditional uses.

During our interviews with stakeholders and local government officials, opportunities to improve the development process were identified. Suggested improvements include a more efficient development process, an online application and permitting system, and additional regular training for staff and Board members.
Public Meeting 9/12: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The public expressed that the current land use and zoning configuration allows for a strong park system and that the existing Township boards and commissions are willing to work with the public.

Weaknesses

The public mentioned that there was a lack of commercial uses. Those present also expressed that the existing zoning makes it difficult to create a city center.

Opportunities

Well planned growth, additional commercial development, Evans Farm as a community a town center, and a good mix of density in Orange Township were among the opportunities identified by the public.

Threats

The threats identified during the meeting included the confusing development process, a lack of zoning enforcement, and potential negative impacts from commercial development that is not well-planned.

Public Meeting 10/5: Poster Presentations

At the second public meeting, the preliminary findings related to zoning and land use were presented in a poster format. Based on these findings, preliminary goals were also presented. The public in attendance provided feedback on these goals and were asked a set of questions to aid in formulating additional goals and strategies. Refer to Appendix C.2 for 10/5 Meeting Results

Online Survey Results

As mentioned previously, land development was the second most important issue in the community as per the survey results. The community expressed the following concerns and suggestions pertaining to land use and zoning:

- “Introduce more specific design guidelines/standards for commercial uses.”
- “Allow public art and plan for uses that accommodate art galleries or cultural spaces.”
- “Lack of town center, rapidly developing and loss of open space...”
- “Builders are not required to provide enough green space in new subdivisions.”
- “We need to preserve the natural beauty our Township has to offer, but also expand with new businesses and local restaurants.”
- “We must diversify our tax base by attracting more commercial enterprises.”
- “I would love more places to eat, drink, and shop! Locally owned!”

Refer to Appendix C.1 for 9/12 Meeting Results
Improving the Zoning Code

The zoning code is instrumental in guiding the Township’s development. There are a significant number of amendments in addition to the ones being proposed that can be considered to improve the zoning code. As a result of implementation, the physical development and image of the community will improve. Recommended amendments include adding a historic district, allowing for density bonuses, and requiring street trees in new developments. For a full list of recommended zoning amendments see Appendix B.4.

The following goals and strategies were formulated through significant public input and express the vision of the community. They are intended to improve the development process, preserve community character, enhance the community’s image, update the zoning code and land use map, encourage good design principles, introduce more commercial uses, and guide the future development of the Township to create the type of community that Orange Township desires.

Goal Z-1: Consider Amending the Zoning Code and Map to Enhance the Community's Image and Promote Pedestrian-Oriented Development

Strategy Z-1.1: Consider a new mixed-use zoning district and apply to targeted subareas.

Strategy Z-1.2: Consider a new commercial overlay district with development standards / design guidelines that encourage walkability and build community identity.

Strategy Z-1.3: Review and consider changing density requirements to achieve the community’s vision for the Township’s physical development.
**Goal Z-2**: Develop More Commercial Uses that are Compatible with Orange Township’s Community Character

**Strategy Z-2.1**: Consider incentives to attract specific commercial uses that are lacking in the Township.

**Strategy Z-2.2**: Consider updating the proposed land use map as a guide for the Township’s development.

*See Appendix B.3 for the Proposed Land Use Map*
Goal Z-3: Improve the Zoning and Development Process by Making it More Efficient and Increasing Training Opportunities

Strategy Z-3.1: Work with applicable agencies to make the development process efficient and guide the Township’s growth in a sustainable manner.

Strategy Z-3.2: Consider a task force including the Planning & Zoning Director, Zoning Commission and Board of Zoning Appeals members, and other stakeholders to review the current procedures, evaluate the existing zoning / rezoning and development permitting process, identify inefficiencies, and recommend improvements.

Strategy Z-3.3: Encourage staff and zoning commission board members to attend training opportunities on zoning best practices and innovative land use controls, and encourage Board of Trustees, Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and staff to attend annual training on the zoning process and related issues.

Strategy Z-3.4: Consider implementing staff reports that identify key goals / objectives related to the comprehensive plan for commercial, mixed-use and large-scale residential proposals.

Goal Z-4: Review and Revise Development Standards to Encourage a Sustainable Physical Environment that meets Orange Township’s Community Character and Aesthetic Standards

Strategy Z-4.1: Review parking requirements for commercial districts.

Strategy Z-4.2: Consider parking to be set to the side or back of buildings and be properly screened.

Strategy Z-4.3: Consider amending signage requirements to ensure that they are legal and consistent with community character.

Strategy Z-4.4: Review existing development standards in all zoning districts.

Responsible Parties:

The Planning & Zoning Department, Zoning Commission, and Orange Township Board of Trustees are the responsible parties for implementing the strategies recommended in the Zoning and Land Use chapter. In addition, the Delaware County Regional Planning Commission will be an essential partner in supporting Orange Township’s implementation of these goals and strategies. To move forward with implementation, the Planning and Zoning Department should initiate the effort by recommending them to the Zoning Commission, who can then make recommendations to the Board of Trustees. Ultimately, it is the Board of Trustees that can ensure that these goals and strategies are implemented.