



Introduction

A. Overview

The Introduction to the Stow Comprehensive Land Use Plan begins with a summary of existing conditions and trends affecting the City. It continues with a review of the project's history and concludes with an outline of the plan document itself.

B. Existing Conditions and Trends

The City of Stow is a suburban community located in northern Summit County eight miles north of Akron and 28 miles southeast of Cleveland. Stow's 2000 population of 32,139 makes it the third largest city in Summit County next to Akron and Cuyahoga Falls.

Stow, along with many of the surrounding northern Summit County communities, has experienced steady growth in the last decade. Since 1990, Stow's population has increased 4.8 percent, which is consistent with the growth trend for the remainder of northern Summit County.

Since 1990, single-family residential growth has occurred primarily in the eastern part of Stow with the continued development of Eastwicke Farms, Highland Chase, and Hunter's Crossing subdivisions. This also includes the new developments of Timber Creek, Quail Highlands, Stow Woods, and Pebblehurst. As a result of this growth, there are very few large areas remaining in the City for residential development. Higher density multi-family development has generally occurred near the SR 8 interchanges at Graham Road and Steels Corners Road, including such developments as Heron Springs, Bridgewater Park, and Wyndham Ridge/Edgebrook.

Commercial development has primarily occurred adjacent to existing commercial areas or near SR 8 interchanges. This includes the Stow Community Shopping Center (across from Stow-Kent Shopping Center), Stow-Falls Center, and WalMart/Lowes located near Graham Square at Graham Road and SR 8. Bridgewater Park, at Steels Corners and SR 8, is a retail/office development constructed in the last five years. This project and other office and retail projects currently planned indicate that this interchange is becoming an attractive location. It is hoped that this development may be facilitated through a recently adopted flexible zoning district (C-8 Office/Service) that permits both office and limited retail and services uses.

Another positive trend is the conversion of homes along Darrow Road for re-use as business offices. The Darrow Road Overlay and Residential-Business Districts have facilitated these projects that preserve the residential architectural character of the area while providing valuable space for attractive commercial and office uses.

Because Stow is in a strategic location along a growth corridor between the Cleveland and Akron metropolitan areas, it is likely that these development trends will continue. They have been considered in the Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update. More detailed analysis regarding Stow's population, housing, and land development trends in the last decade can be found in the Appendix.

B. History of the Project

The Comprehensive Plan Update was initiated by the City to consider changes to the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, as a result of the amount of development that had occurred in the intervening years. The Planning Commission worked with the Planning Department in preparing this update. All meetings were open to the public and input was actively solicited.

The City asked ACP – Visioning & Planning, Ltd. (ACP) to work with the Staff and Planning Commission in preparing the update. Joining

ACP was Development Economics (DE), which supported the update with a real estate market study and fiscal analysis.

The process began with an orientation session with the Planning Commission in late February, 2000. ACP prepared a matrix that included all of the policies from the 1991 plan. A Community Meeting was held on April 12 to generate ideas about the future of Stow. Facilitator training preceded the meeting on April 5.

The Planning Commission considered the results of the Community Meeting on May 2. A series of eight Input Workshops were held to review and discuss the policies by topic area. Members of City Council participated in these workshops. The public was represented in these workshops as well. The workshops resulted in proposed changes to existing policies and the addition of new policies.

A real estate market analysis was prepared by Development Economics as input into the policy analysis. It considered retail and office demand for Stow within the Akron metropolitan market. The Planning Commission and Staff considered this data in their evaluation of retail and office policies.

ACP conducted a land use analysis of 15 sites or areas. The analysis considered land use, zoning, access, character, environmental, and other development-related issues. ACP prepared a policy recommendation for consideration by the Planning Commission.

Development Economics conducted a fiscal analysis. The firm considered net fiscal impact of single-family, multi-family, retail, office, and industrial land uses. DE also evaluated the net fiscal impact of three of the study sites, evaluating alternative land use scenarios in each case. The Planning Commission and Staff also considered this information.

A final set of three policy formulation workshops was held to reevaluate the draft development policies. These occurred from December, 2000, through March, 2001.

B. Document Organization

The Comprehensive Plan Update is comprised of the following chapters:

- 1. Introduction:** The Introduction summarizes existing conditions and trends affecting the City, discusses the history of the process that led to the Comprehensive Plan Update, and provides this summary of the organization of the document.
- 2. Executive Summary:** The Executive Summary provides highlights of the plan itself, including the vision and goals, key recommendations, community meeting, existing conditions and forecasts, fiscal considerations, and implementation priorities.

3. **Comprehensive Plan:** The Comprehensive Plan policies are presented in the third chapter. These policies are presented in the following order: goals, development character policies, citywide policies, and area policies.
4. **Appendix:** The Appendix is comprised of a glossary of planning terms, subject index, detailed presentation on existing conditions and trends, matrix used in the policy analysis, community meeting summary report, land use assessment memorandum, market study, and fiscal analysis report.



Executive Summary

A. Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan establishes policies for land use, development, transportation, parks and open space, schools, and the cemetery within the City of Stow. These policies reflect the City's vision of itself as a quality suburban community in which the residents' needs are met for goods and services, employment, education, and recreation among a host of areas.

The Plan is a guideline to be used by the Staff, Planning Commission, and City Council as zoning and subdivision approvals are considered. The Plan is also used as a guideline in making capital improvement, other infrastructure, and service decisions.

The Executive Summary presents highlights of the Comprehensive Plan. This includes the **vision and goals, key recommendations**, a summary of the **Community Meeting**, a summary of the **fiscal analysis**, and **implementation** considerations.

B. Vision and Goals

The vision that is reflected in the Comprehensive Plan Update is a continuation of the policy direction established in the 1991 plan. Stow will continue to be a residential community of quality neighborhoods, where retail and commercial uses are concentrated in specific areas, and where the industrial base is diversified with the addition of corporate offices and flex space. A city center will be created around the Darrow-Graham intersection to create a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use “downtown” for the City.

The goals of the Comprehensive Plan Update are summarized as follows:

1. Based on Stow’s location and characteristics, and the community’s preference, future development should continue the pattern of suburban residential development, while offering a variety of housing choices, in suitable locations.
2. Within this residential context, the City should actively promote the expansion of quality office (first priority) and light industrial development in suitable locations to expand the tax base and be able to maintain and even expand City services, with a minimum increased tax burden on residential property owners.
3. The City should become more aggressive in providing economic incentives, such as constructing utility infrastructure. The use of such incentives will be directly proportional to the economic benefits to the City.
4. Within controlled locations, commercial businesses should be provided to reasonably meet the retail needs of the City’s existing and projected population.
5. The City will limit future retail rezonings unless the benefits to the City are clearly demonstrated and the surrounding land use pattern is predominantly retail.
6. The City should ensure that new development enhances the general appearance of the community.
7. Future development should occur in locations and in a manner that minimize adverse impacts on existing residential areas – particularly avoiding incompatible land use relationships and minimizing an increase in traffic on local as well as major residential streets.
8. The City will prepare a Thoroughfare Plan. The subdivision process will be strengthened to ensure that right-of-way dedications will match Thoroughfare Plan recommendations.
9. A development pattern should be established (through land uses, circulation, public facilities, and commercial development) which

fosters both community and neighborhood identity. The City will establish appropriate gateway treatments at key entry points. The City will facilitate the development of neighborhood parks to create focal points. This goal will be accomplished through:

- 9.1 A mixed-use city center at Darrow and Graham Roads, which is developed with a combination of public, business and higher density residential uses. The City will study the concept further and prepare a plan for consideration.
 - 9.2 Several neighborhood focal points provided by open space, public and private community facilities, and convenience commercial services. The City will support the creation of landscape gateway features at subdivisions and neighborhoods, as requested.
10. The City should convey to the community on a continuing basis the purposes and rationale for these planning policies and objectives. The City will publicize the status of implementation of the Plan through the City newsletter and website.

C. Key Recommendations

The following summarizes key recommendations that are reflected in the Comprehensive Plan.

1. Corporate Office Park

A critical opportunity exists for the City at the SR 8 and Seasons Road interchange to create a high-end corporate office park. This would include office, flex-office, light industrial, and industrial space in a well-designed, campus environment. Supporting uses could include hotels and higher end restaurants. This development may require aggressive incentives on the part of the City to ensure the vision is fulfilled. The development should be a joint effort with the City of Hudson. A zoning overlay was proposed during the update of the Comprehensive Plan. Its purpose is to provide additional guidance to ensure that the most appropriate development occurs in the SR 8 corridor.

2. Residential Development

The Plan continues to promote clustered residential development for undeveloped parcels; especially those that have physical constraints or that contain important natural features. The “mixed residential” land use category on the plan map promotes clustering. The PRD, PUD and clustered development districts continue to be appropriate zoning mechanisms that not only permit a flexible arrangement of dwellings, but also permanently preserve open space.

3. Open Space and Parks

The Plan recommends an increased focus on the preservation and enhancement of quality natural areas, open space, and greenways/trails. This can be accomplished through the use of wetland and riparian corridor buffers, conservation easements, and public land dedication. The linkage of parks and major public and private facilities is also recommended.

4. Retail Concentrations

The Plan continues to focus retail development in the current nodes: SR 8 and Graham Road; SR 8 and Steels Corners Road; Fishcreek, Darrow, and Norton Roads; Fishcreek and Graham Roads, Fishcreek and Kent Roads; Darrow and Kent Roads; and Darrow and Graham Roads (City Center). Retail development will continue to be contained in these areas.

5. Fiscal Considerations

Office uses offer the City the best fiscal return, as noted in the fiscal analysis prepared for the Comprehensive Plan. The findings of that analysis show that the City must take fiscal considerations into account in its zoning decisions. This is especially important given that the City's remaining undeveloped land is quickly diminishing.

6. City Center

The Plan recommends implementing the policy of the 1991 plan to create a City Center focusing on the Darrow-Graham Road intersection. This would be a mixed-use "downtown" that would provide office, retail, civic, and residential uses. Components of the City Center would include the office district to the south along Darrow Road and the business cluster around the Darrow-Kent intersection. The Plan recommends preparing a master plan for the City Center and adopting an overlay zoning district to guide implementation.

D. Community Meeting

The public input to this update of the Comprehensive Plan occurred in April 2000, with the Community Meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to generate ideas and identify critical issues from the public about the future of land use and development in the City.

The meeting was held on Wednesday, April 12, at Lakeview Intermediate School. Over 50 members of the community attended and a total of 280 ideas were generated. Parks and open space had the highest percent of ideas (17 percent), followed by development character (15 percent), and land use (13 percent).

Among the themes that were generated by the ideas were the following:

1. Create a town center.
2. Enhance community atmosphere, make aesthetics and design a priority, and improve design of corridor development.

3. Increase the tax base through economic investment, attract vibrant businesses, and provide more office space.
4. Encourage single-family development, limit two-family and condominiums, and determine the appropriate amount of multi-family.
5. Control the impact of retail development, strengthen existing retail, and do not over-saturate the market.
6. Review and minimize environmental impacts, acquire additional open space, and provide open space corridors to buffer and connect uses.

**NET FISCAL BENEFIT BY LAND
USE FOR THE CITY – BY ACRE**

| <i>RESIDENTIAL</i> | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Single-Family R-1 | \$588 |
| Single-Family R-2, R-3 | \$2 |
| Condominium | (\$74) |
| Multi-Family | (\$2,537) |

| <i>NON-RESIDENTIAL</i> | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Retail | (\$2,489) |
| Office | \$7,113 |
| Industrial | \$2,713 |

**NET FISCAL BENEFIT BY LAND
USE FOR THE SCHOOLS – BY
ACRE**

| <i>RESIDENTIAL</i> | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Single-Family R-1 | \$1,486 |
| Single-Family R-2, R-3 | \$1,015 |
| Condominium | \$3,753 |
| Multi-Family | (\$3,655) |

| <i>NON-RESIDENTIAL</i> | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Retail | \$8,203 |
| Office | \$20,702 |
| Industrial | \$3,305 |

E. Fiscal Considerations

A fiscal analysis was conducted as an input to the update of the Comprehensive Plan. The analysis had two components: (1) estimate the net fiscal impact of various land uses; and (2) assess the net fiscal benefit of alternative development scenarios for three study areas. The analysis compared the estimated costs of servicing development to the estimated revenues to the City. Development Economics prepared the analysis.

In terms of the citywide net fiscal impact, the analysis found that office uses had the most positive impact, which was estimated to be \$7,113 per acre.

Industrial development had a positive net impact of \$2,713 per acre and retail development had a negative net loss of \$2,489 per acre. The reason for the higher benefit for office and industrial is the higher income taxes generated by high-wage jobs. Office has the highest per acre service cost but the relatively high wages more than offset the cost of providing services. The negative fiscal impact of retail development is a result of the high service cost not being offset by the generated revenues.

On the residential side, one-acre single-family development had a positive net impact of \$588 per acre, and lots in the R-2 and R-3 zoning district were breakeven at \$2 per acre. Condominiums had a negative net impact of \$74 per acre and multi-family development had a negative net impact of \$2,537 per acre. The multi-family result reflects the higher cost of servicing higher density development coupled with lower per acre property tax revenues.

The analysis also found, however, that when factoring in the school district, net fiscal benefit is higher across the board – except for multi-family development. The accompanying chart provides the summary. It is also important to point out that multi-family development meets certain housing and other social needs, despite its poor fiscal return.

The site-specific analysis that was also conducted evaluated two alternative scenarios for each of three locations (a memorandum presenting the site-specific analysis can be found in the Appendix). For two of the sites (A and B), the analysis found that pure retail resulted in a negative net return to the City, but that adding office resulted in a positive net return. The third analysis (Site J) focused on the SR 8 and Seasons Road interchange. Development of the 200

acres in the site would return to the City a net benefit of slightly over \$1 million if developed with industry and about \$2.3 million if developed with a combination of office, research and development, and retail.

F. Implementation Priorities

The City will continue to implement its Comprehensive Plan through its day-to-day development and zoning decisions. The Staff and Planning Commission will continue to use the plan as a guideline for working with developers and property owners. The following summarizes key implementation actions.

1. Zoning Code and Subdivision Regulations

- a. Adopt a new zoning overlay for SR 8 corridor.
- b. Establish locational criteria and design standards for retail development, and require submittal of a market study to assist in justifying retail rezonings.
- c. Require three acres as the minimum lot size for multi-family development, remove maximum allowable area for cluster housing, and update the zoning code to classify cluster housing as a permitted-by-right use.
- d. Adopt a limited overlay district that links the approval to the actual proposed development, update Darrow Road overlay to delete multi-family uses, and study the creation of a Hudson Drive overlay zoning district.
- e. Create a Public Facilities Zoning District and rezone the KSU airport property to this district.

2. Economic Development

- a. Promote office, research and development, light industrial, and flex office at SR 8 and Seasons Road.
- b. Implement a business retention and expansion program along with an economic development marketing campaign.
- c. Participate in funding infrastructure improvements in the SR 8 corridor.
- d. Offer incentives for new industrial and office development and expansions.

3. Transportation

- a. Prepare a Thoroughfare Plan.
- b. Establish a formal traffic study policy and methodology.

- c. Establish criteria for traffic calming measures.
- d. Implement various road improvements as noted in the Plan.

4. Parks and Open Space

- a. Revise cash-in-lieu of parkland formula.
- b. Establish new standards for preserving natural areas, including update to subdivision regulations and establishing a zoning overlay.
- c. Require signs demarcating private open space.
- d. Revise subdivision regulations to require private ownership and maintenance of open space in single-family subdivisions.

5. City Center

- a. Prepare a master plan for the City Center, including the City complex.
- b. Adopt a zoning overlay to implement the City Center master plan.



Comprehensive Plan

A. Introduction

The Comprehensive Plan presents the City’s planning policies in a structured hierarchy. This hierarchy is important to comprehensively address the various concerns facing the City as it continues to develop and grow. One of the critical issues that was addressed in preparing this update was the fact that Stow has limits for future growth and the quality of the development of the City’s remaining vacant parcels is critical to the City’s quality of life and fiscal well being, among other priorities.

The Comprehensive Plan is organized based on the following: **Goals** present the broad-based policy foundation; **Development Character Policies** present the City’s preferences for the character of development; **Citywide Policies** address policies by general topic area (i.e. residential, retail, etc.); and **Area Policies** present policies by geographic areas of the City, in particular addressing several key development sites.

B. Goals

1. Based on Stow's location and characteristics, and the community's preference, future development should continue the pattern of suburban residential development, while offering a variety of housing choices, in suitable locations.
2. Within this residential context, the City should actively promote the expansion of quality office (first priority) and light industrial development in suitable locations to expand the tax base and be able to maintain and even expand City services, with a minimum increased tax burden on residential property owners.
3. The City should become more aggressive in providing economic incentives, such as constructing utility infrastructure. The use of such incentives will be directly proportional to the economic benefits to the City.
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7. Future development should occur in locations and in a manner that minimize adverse impacts on existing residential areas – particularly avoiding incompatible land use relationships and minimizing an increase in traffic on local as well as major residential streets.
8. The City will prepare a Thoroughfare Plan. The subdivision process will be strengthened to ensure that right-of-way dedications will match Thoroughfare Plan recommendations.
9. A development pattern should be established (through land uses, circulation, public facilities, and commercial development) which fosters both community and neighborhood identity. The City will establish appropriate gateway treatments at key entry points. The City will facilitate the development of neighborhood parks to create focal points. This goal will be accomplished through:
 - 9.1 A mixed-use city center at Darrow and Graham Roads, which is developed with a combination of public, business and higher

density residential uses. The City will study the concept further and prepare a plan for consideration.

- 9.2 The City will support neighborhood focal points. These can be created by open space, public and private community facilities, and convenience commercial services. The City will support the creation of landscape gateway features at subdivisions and neighborhoods, as requested.
10. The City should convey to the community on a continuing basis the purposes and rationale for these planning policies and objectives. The City will publicize the status of implementation of the Plan through the City newsletter and website.

C. Development Character Policies

The City seeks to utilize various administrative means to ensure that quality is maintained. Such measures will include:

1. Maintain the City's site plan review process.
2. Modify the various site development standards in order to achieve an enhanced site appearance, including screening of mechanical units, dumpster enclosure material, and lighting standards.
3. Continue to support local historic districts and encourage appropriate development guidelines for each through incentives.

D. Citywide Policies

1. Residential

- 1.1 Continue to promote detached single-family housing as the City's preferred residential pattern. In creating single-family neighborhoods, development should be clustered. The City will adopt incentives to encourage clustered development.
- 1.2 Encourage owner-occupied housing.
- 1.3 Strengthen landscaping requirements for multi-family housing that are geared to building height.
- 1.4 Require that multi-family development and cluster developments meet the following locational criteria.
 - 1.4.1 In areas that are removed from single-family development and/or locations where single-family dwellings are not suitable. Multi-family dwellings and/or cluster developments are more suitable for areas where natural areas are to be preserved since the units can be grouped on the buildable portion of the site while still achieving the permitted density.

- 1.4.2 In areas where multi-family can serve as a transition between existing single-family development and non-residential uses.
- 1.4.3 Require a minimum of three acres to ensure that each project creates an appropriate residential environment. The Zoning Code will be changed to reflect this standard.
- 1.5 Apply the above location criteria and subsequent references to multi-family policies to assisted living and nursing homes whether built independently or in conjunction with assisted living.
- 1.6 Continue to utilize flexible zoning techniques to encourage development that is similar to and compatible with a standard single-family subdivision.
 - 1.6.1 Include planned residential developments that are specifically permitted on large tracts of land.
 - 1.6.2 Encourage cluster housing developments at single-family densities using the following techniques:
 - a. Modify the zoning code to eliminate the maximum allowable area.
 - b. Use of design standards to achieve an enhanced site appearance, such as reducing side yards, requiring off sets between units, and adopting massing standards.
 - c. Use gross density as the basis for establishing the permitted number of detached units.
 - d. Use net density as the basis for establishing the permitted number of attached units.
 - e. Establish new standards to preserve natural areas (i.e. minimum setbacks along streams, proportional preservation of woodlands, preservation of slopes above 15 percent, mandatory wetlands preservation).
 - 1.6.3 Require new standard single-family developments to be designed to provide open space and recreation areas for the residents with the land and improvements being privately owned, improved, and maintained.
 - 1.6.4 Require the posting of signs on private open space that designate it as such.
 - 1.6.5 Establish programs to continuously monitor (and modify as necessary) current development standards and review procedures

to ensure that new residential construction is of the highest quality and existing dwellings are adequately maintained.

- 1.7 Cluster developments and the Residential Business District (RB) are preferred as buffers between residential and non-residential development.

2. Retail

- 2.1 Continue to limit commercial development to major intersections in order to create shopping “nodes” while at the same time preventing strip commercial development. This has been a long-standing policy of the City. The City should continue to confine commercial development because it is an important way of preserving the character of the City.
- 2.2 Continue to provide convenient retail services to all residents and persons employed within the City, by considering limited retail expansion in the following locations:
 - 2.2.1 In prime locations, such as adjacent to an interchange, but only as a supporting use to industrial or office development.
 - 2.2.2 Support expansion of existing retail areas only to a logical “barrier” when the City determines that such extension will have a minimum impact on adjacent or nearby residential areas, that it will reinforce the retail choices available and thus the quality of the retail environment, and that it will allow for the redevelopment of older residential areas impacted by decline and lack of reinvestment.
 - 2.2.3 As part of a mixed-use development approach in the City Center area that focuses on the Darrow Road and Graham Road intersection.
 - 2.2.4 Enhance commercial areas through appropriate public and private improvements.
 - 2.2.5 Promote and encourage coordination among commercial properties to share parking, curb cuts, access to side streets, and cross-access easements for the efficient use of land and improved traffic flow.
 - 2.2.6 Promote and encourage the reuse of empty retail space prior to constructing new retail buildings.
- 2.3 Adopt an overlay zoning district for the Seasons Road and SR 8 interchange. The overlay should prohibit uses that would compromise the long-term development viability of the area.

2.4 The City will consider requiring the submittal of a marketing study as a major criterion to justify future retail rezoning. The market study will be prepared by the applicant according to criteria established by the City.

2.5 The City will establish design standards for retail development.

3. Office and Industrial

3.1 Promote and expand office and industrial development in locations suitable for these uses to generate a larger tax base. This includes designated areas that do not currently permit office and industrial development under current zoning.

3.2 Concentrate office, flex office, and industrial expansion primarily along the SR 8 corridor; in particular the SR 8 interchanges of Steels Corners and the proposed Seasons Road interchange.

3.3 Adopt the new overlay district (C-8) to manage development along the SR 8 corridor.

3.4 Support new office development at KSU airport. The City should consider rezoning the airport from Industrial to a more appropriate district that supports long-term development potential (i.e. Public Facilities District).

3.5 Undertake an aggressive marketing campaign to promote office and industrial development. The campaign may continue to consist of the following activities as deemed appropriate: economic development updates; development review flyer; tax incentives; retention and expansion calls; infrastructure improvements, ranging in scope from small drainage projects up to the proposed interchange at SR 8/Seasons Rd.; and identify and purchase individual properties for marketing purposes.

4. General Corridors

4.1 Limit commercial development to major intersections and confine substantially to locations that now have commercial zoning or development.

4.2 Contain the commercial areas by allowing mixed residential, office or the Residential Business (RB) district to serve as a transition from commercial areas to existing single-family development.

4.3 Support multi-family development in locations consistent with the multi-family criteria and/or office uses in areas along the corridors. This should occur where single-family uses are either unlikely or unreasonable and where the multi-family or office development will not have an adverse effect on single-family areas.

- 4.4 Encourage single-family dwellings along the remainder of the corridors. Combined lots should be supported to accommodate cluster development where appropriate. Some design flexibility should be permitted:
 - 4.4.1 Simplify the zoning process to encourage cluster development on sites that can accommodate it by allowing cluster development as a permitted-by-right use subject to site plan approval.
 - 4.4.2 Encourage the economic use of small parcels where single-family density is appropriate but a standard subdivision difficult, by allowing the owner to achieve the statistical single-family density through the clustering provision.
 - 4.4.3 Consider provisions for Planned Residential Developments, PUD's or cluster developments on larger parcels where single-family development is suitable and that encourage the preservation of open space and orientation of units away from major streets.

5. General Transportation

- 5.1 Prepare a Thoroughfare Plan.
- 5.2 Study and adopt an ordinance for requiring traffic calming studies and improvements.
- 5.3 Review existing stub streets and determine if improvement to a continuous street is feasible.
- 5.4 Improve major intersections to ensure safe pedestrian and bicycle access, including enhanced crosswalks, better signage, and improved signal timing.
- 5.5 Support and promote non-motorized transportation modes, including the following: construct sidewalks where they currently don't exist, as appropriate; and add bike lanes to street improvement projects, where feasible and safe.
- 5.6 On Graham Road, Hudson Drive and Fishcreek Road, limit widening improvements to street intersections when possible in order to minimize the negative impact and retain the residential character within these

corridors.

5.7 Target the following road improvements for 2001 and beyond:

5.7.1 Construct the Seasons Road connector.

5.7.2 Construct the Seasons Road and SR 8 interchange.

5.7.3 Upgrade the Graham Road bridge over SR 8.

5.7.4 Construct additional bike trails and bike lanes.

5.8 Extend Arndale Road to Ellsworth Road in order to alleviate traffic congestion and improve emergency access in the area.

5.9 Extend Fishcreek Road to connect with Norton Road.

5.10 Minimize the widening of streets, in general, where a substantial portion of frontage is already residentially developed. If such improvements are necessary for a particular street, the street should be widened only to the extent necessary to reasonably reduce the existing congestion.

5.11 Establish a formal traffic impact study policy, including criteria for requiring and preparing the study.

5.12 Consider establishing a policy and criteria and implement traffic calming measures in residential neighborhoods.

6. Parks and Open Space

6.1 Preserve sensitive natural areas including ravines, wooded areas, wetlands, and riparian corridors as permanent open space to protect the environment and to help retain the open suburban character of Stow. This can be accomplished through the PRD and PUD Districts and clustering.

6.2 Establish a network of paths or trails for hiking and biking that connect major open spaces, parks, neighborhoods, and commercial developments.

6.3 Acquire and maintain public parkland, which can be divided into four types of facilities:

6.3.1 Neighborhood parks primarily for the use of those residents within walking distance.

6.3.2 Athletic fields and other active recreational facilities devoted to organized recreation programs.

- 6.3.3 Community parks which generally combine the features of a neighborhood park and athletic fields, as well as opportunities for other types of passive and active recreation.
- 6.3.4 Natural areas or preserves, which provide opportunities for passive recreation, educational programs, and observance of wildlife habitats.
- 6.4 Make capital improvements on the park sites such as renovation of shelters and lodges, athletic facilities, play areas and equipment, landscaping, accessory parking, and service drives.
- 6.5 Provide cost-effective programming that meets the needs of a highly active community like Stow, yet minimizing duplication of programming by the schools and the private sector.
- 6.6 Preserve sensitive natural areas based upon state and federal environment regulations, as well as various flexible local zoning techniques that provide incentives to maximize preservation. Study subdivision regulations to identify and resolve possible conflicts. Consider an overlay zoning district as a means of protecting sensitive natural areas. Encourage the donation or acquisition of conservation easements to further protect environmentally sensitive areas.
- 6.7 Acquire key natural areas when land satisfies the following criteria and it is apparent that, despite other regulatory controls, the land may not otherwise be satisfactorily preserved.
 - 6.7.1 Areas that are the most environmentally sensitive. Criteria will be established to define these characteristics and they will be incorporated into the overlay zoning district mentioned in 6.6. Environmental sensitivity should be mapped and evaluated.
 - 6.7.2 Areas that could serve as a buffer between potentially “conflicting” land uses.
 - 6.7.3 Areas that provide key linkages between community facilities, between parks and open spaces, between residential neighborhoods, and between residential areas and supporting commercial services.
 - 6.7.4 Suitable land that is offered for City ownership.
- 6.8 Continue to secure local parklands and open space through the subdivision regulation’s mandatory public dedication. The cash-in-lieu formula will be reviewed and updated if appropriate. Clearer criteria will be established for defining the suitability of land for dedication (see 6.9 below).

- 6.9 Require cash-in-lieu of land when it is clear that there is an “abundant” supply of public open space or parks in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development, the land (to be dedicated) is to be fragmented, there is no substantial benefit to the City relative to the proposal, and the City views the proposed dedication as undesirable as viable open space.
- 6.10 Consolidate new open space with existing open space to the extent possible, to create larger and more useful tracts rather than creating several smaller fragmented areas, both within the site and connecting to adjacent sites.
- 6.11 Determine and clearly convey to the public whether the parcel is to remain in a natural state or be developed for recreational purposes, prior to accepting any land.
- 6.12 Concentrate local funding for parks and recreation on the following:
 - 6.12.1 Provide major community recreational opportunities such as ball fields, swimming, and picnic areas that are available for use by the entire community.
 - 6.12.2 Rehabilitate and improve the existing neighborhood parks in order to increase the value and usability of each facility and enhance the value of the surrounding residential areas.
 - 6.12.3 Maintain existing parks to ensure continued safety and attractiveness of each facility.
 - 6.12.4 Earmark cash-in-lieu funds for the expansion or improvement of the closest neighborhood park facilities when feasible.
- 6.13 Consider the public purchase of private recreation facilities when the owners propose such facilities for closure.
- 6.14 Encourage the preservation of the former Pennsylvania & Ohio Canal property (Acken Property) in the southeast portion of the City.

7. Schools

- 7.1 If additional school sites area needed, the areas of greatest need are likely to occur in the southeast and northeast corners of the City where vacant land is targeted for residential development.

8. Cemetery

- 8.1 Ensure that the cemetery on Stow Road will meet long-term needs of Stow’s residents.

E. Area Policies

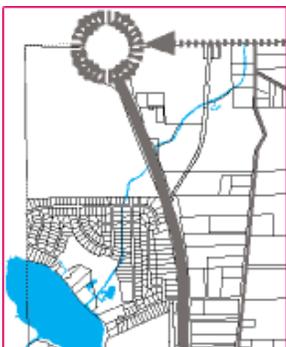
1. Hudson Drive Corridor



Hudson Drive Corridor

- 1.1 Maintain and promote industrial development consistent with the existing zoning on the east side of SR 8 in the vicinity of Commerce Drive, McCauley Road, and Allen Road.
- 1.2 Promote office, flex-office, and light industrial development in the corridor to the south of Commerce Drive.
- 1.3 Support construction of the proposed interchange at SR 8 and Seasons Road.
- 1.4 Encourage the improvement of the abandoned Conrail spur for an access road to the area west of SR 8.
- 1.5 Promote office, flex-office, and limited industrial along the east side of Hudson Drive from Ellsworth Road to Springdale Road, consistent with existing zoning (Site L-1).
- 1.6 Encourage mixed residential development at single-family densities south of Springdale Road on the east side of Hudson Drive (Site L-2). Provide design flexibility to maximize the preservation of wetlands and other natural features. Allow unit credit for preservation of sensitive natural areas, resulting in higher net density for the buildable area than would otherwise be permitted.
- 1.7 Promote office, flex-office, and light industrial uses on the west side of Hudson Drive southward to the Conrail spur, between Hudson Drive and SR 8 to take advantage of proximity to the expressway (Site L-3).
- 1.8 Promote office south of the Conrail spur to the SR 8 overpass at Graham Road (Site L-4).

2. SR 8 Corridor: Seasons Road



SR 8 Corridor at Seasons Road

- 2.1 Encourage high-quality, well-planned office development, research and development as the primary land use and flex office and light industrial as the secondary land use at the proposed SR 8 and Seasons Road interchange (Site J). Create an overlay-zoning district to manage development.
- 2.2 Initiate steps (i.e. utilities, roads, and suitable development standards) to promote this location as the premier office location along the corridor in the City.
- 2.3 Permit supporting retail/services near the Seasons Road interchange only as needed to meet the needs of the surrounding office development. Hotel and quality sit down restaurants are appropriate supporting uses.

- 2.4 Protect the existing Wyoga Lake Subdivision by extending single-family northward a minimum distance to provide the opportunity to design a residential development that would be compatible with the proposed office development to the north, and also to preserve the existing wetlands.



SR 8 Corridor at Steels Corners Road

3. SR 8 Corridor: Steels Corners Interchange East

- 3.1 Restrict commercial services to the existing zoned area on the northwest and southwest corners of Steels Corners and Hudson Drive.
- 3.2 Require that special attention be paid to architecture, landscaping, and site design given visibility to SR 8. Access should be combined with adjacent parcels.
- 3.3 Support office and/or retail at the northeast corner of the SR 8 and Steels Corners Road interchange (Site I). The C-8 zoning should be used on this site. Special attention should be paid to architecture, landscaping, and site design given visibility to SR 8. Access should be combined with adjacent parcels.

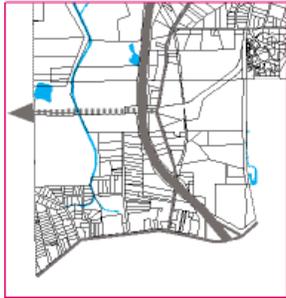
4. SR 8 Corridor: Steels Corners Interchange West

- 4.1 Support offices, retail/services, and restaurants at the interchange. (Sites H and I). Special attention should be paid to architecture, landscaping, and site design given visibility to SR 8. Access is a concern and a traffic study may be warranted.
- 4.2 Support mixed residential development on the north side of Steels Corner Road, west of SR 8 (Site N). Clustered development is appropriate. Environmentally sensitive areas should be set aside.
- 4.3 Encourage limited industrial, office, and flex-office uses on the west side of SR 8 south of Bridgewater Parkway and Edgebrook condominium development (Site G). Residential development should be prohibited. Buffers and setbacks may be necessary to protect nearby residential uses. Floodplain limitations must be addressed and stream corridors should be set aside as open space. Stormwater should be well managed. Rely on zoning and other regulations as well as development incentives to preserve the area's natural features.
- 4.4 Support office and flex-office in the southeast quadrant along Gilbert Road (Site G). Support access east of SR 8 via the vacant rail right-of-way and from Gilbert Road, provided:
 - 4.4.1 Any use other than the present single-family development will require the street to be improved and water service to be provided to accommodate higher density development;

- 4.4.2 Such uses should be situated to avoid isolating any remaining single-family areas; and
- 4.4.3 If the abandoned Conrail spur is improved as a roadway, Gilbert Road should be extended to provide alternative access from the area via Hudson Drive.
- 4.5 Determine whether a traffic study may be warranted for Site G given its access limitations.

5. SR 8 Corridor: Graham Road Interchange West

- 5.1 Maintain retail along Graham Road corresponding to the existing commercial zoning. Allow limited expansion to the north on the east side of Hudson Drive south of S.R. 8 when coordinated with the Graham Road development.
- 5.2 Support office development for 11 parcels located on Caleb Road, north of Graham Road (Site F) provided:
 - 5.2.1 A significant buffer should be provided along the western boundary, including a 20-foot-wide earthen, landscaped mound; and
 - 5.2.2 Office uses should be lower density. Lots should be combined. Architecture should be residential in character. Future uses should not be permitted access to Homewood Avenue.
- 5.3 Preserve single-family development north and west of the commercial/office frontage along Graham Road where the lots are smaller and more difficult to assemble for redevelopment than along Gilbert Lane or the 11 lots along Caleb Road (Site F).



SR 8 Corridor at Graham Road West

6. Darrow Road: North

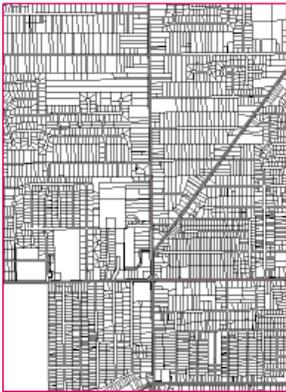
- 6.1 Prohibit further expansion to the south of the present commercial area on Darrow Road between Fishcreek and Norton Roads.
- 6.2 Require clustered development or mixed residential as a boundary for the commercial retail area, limiting the potential for future expansion, as well as providing a transition between retail uses and existing single-family.
- 6.3 Preserve the Leisure Time Golf Course as public open space if the existing recreational uses are abandoned. Consider using state or federal funds, if available, to acquire the property.
- 6.4 Maintain existing single-family development for parcels nearer Darrow Road and to the extent possible, promote new development at single-



Darrow Road North

family densities. Encourage orientation onto side streets or internally – not onto major streets. Allow flexibility in design and lot area when necessary to promote residential development on “difficult” sites while still retaining a low-density character compatible with the suburban environment of Stow.

- 6.5 Support office uses or single-family development for lots with frontage onto Darrow Road as an extension of existing development, when shown to be consistent with development objectives for the Darrow Road corridor. Revise the Darrow Road Overlay to remove multi-family uses.



Darrow Road North

7. Darrow Road: Graham Road Intersection

- 7.1 Encourage the creation of the City Center by preparing a master plan that promotes mixed-use development (Site O). Include Site D and all of the City-owned property around the Darrow and Graham Road area. Consider adopting a City Center overlay district with design guidelines and an incentives package to encourage redevelopment. Consider the City’s property for high activity public uses (such as a performance space) and mixed-uses (public, office, retail).

- 7.1.1 New structures along Darrow Road should have shallow building setbacks, provide strong pedestrian connections, contain retail on the first floor, reflect high-quality design, and locate parking to the rear.

- 7.2 Maintain the current RB zoning along the east side of Darrow Road from Uniondale Drive to Bryn Mawr Drive.

- 7.3 Maintain existing single-family development along Darrow Road north of the City Center (Site O) and to the extent possible promote new development at single-family densities. Encourage orientation onto side streets or internally – not onto major streets. Allow flexibility in design and lot area when necessary to promote residential development on “difficult” sites while still retaining a low-density character compatible with the suburban environment of Stow.



Darrow Road South

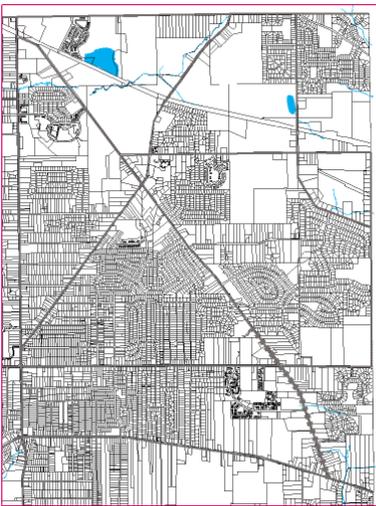
8. Darrow Road: South

- 8.1 Support redevelopment of the commercial area around the Darrow and Kent Roads intersection as necessary to achieve the objectives of the City Center (Site M). Continue to have a focus on retail and services.

City investments may be necessary to spark redevelopment. Building setbacks should be lessened and parking should be located to the side and rear of structures. Screen and buffer adjacent neighborhoods. Vacate the portion of the unusually wide right-of-way along the north side of Kent Road. Preserve significant public structures. Maintain sidewalks and soften the Kent-Darrow intersection to encourage walking.

8.2 Adopt a new overlay district to implement the proposed City Center master plan, which should include this area.

8.3 Continue to support RB zoning and office uses along Darrow Road between Kent and Graham Roads.



Fishcreek Road

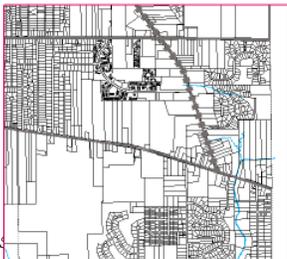
9. Fishcreek Road

9.1 Encourage retail development between Stow Road and Call Road to create a neighborhood shopping area.

9.2 Consider mixed residential on the west side of Fishcreek Road across from Wexford Boulevard. These lots are too shallow for a standard single-family development.

9.3 Consider office uses west of Fishcreek on the north side of Graham Road, between the existing commercial zoning and the church, which abuts the east side of Oregon Trail Park.

9.4 Support standard single-family development with the option that cluster development at single-family densities may be considered for the large undeveloped areas located off of Fishcreek Road north of Call Road (Site E). Accommodate a mix of residential uses and types. Preserve the stream corridor and ravine as permanent open space, with a significant portion of the woodlands also set aside. Incorporate into the site connections to the bike path. Direct higher residential densities to the site's southern part. Match the gross density to nearby single-family subdivisions.

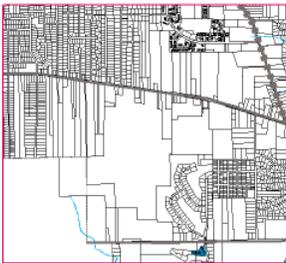


10. Stow-Kent Area: Retail

10.1 Confine commercial/retail uses substantially to the existing commercial zoning. Consider extension of commercial zoning, however, if proposed development is coordinated with existing development.

10.2 Support commercial development south of the current K-Mart shopping center, integrated with existing retail development, and provide access through the existing shopping center (Site C). Provide sufficient buffering to insulate adjacent residential areas and no access permitted from Marsh Road.

- 10.3 Support a mixed-use approach for Site A with residential and open space on the northern half of the site and retail and office on the southern half of the site. Screen the Stow-Glen Nursing Home from commercial development. Address these issues in the site plan process.
- 10.4 Work with existing shopping center owners to identify both public and private remedial measures, which can be taken to assure that these centers remain competitive in light of emerging commercial centers and changing highway patterns that have made other locations more accessible and competitive.
- 10.5 Encourage offices and retail development along the east side of Fishcreek Road from north of the existing commercial (at the northeast corner of the Fishcreek Road/Kent Road intersection) north, to the VFW property (Site B). Master plan the site with parcels combined, access controlled, and connection to a bike path provided. Architectural design should be residential in character.



KSU Airport

11. Stow-Kent Area: KSU Airport

- 11.1 Consider airport overlay regulations for areas adjacent to the KSU airport. Such regulations would limit the height and bulk of buildings according to their relative proximity to the airport and its related clear zones.
- 11.2 Encourage the airport to gain ownership of the area encompassed by the clear zones, as this is the only guaranteed way to prohibit development within these areas.
- 11.3 Support rezoning the airport property to a new Public Facilities Zoning District to remove the industrial zoning in this part of the City; the Kent Road corridor is not appropriate for industrial development. Support the addition of office development on the airport property. Work with Kent State University in master planning the property.
- 11.4 Prohibit extension of commercial development to the west of the KSU airport's eastern boundary, both north and south of Kent Road.
- 11.5 Support office and retail uses for the four parcels between the Stow Community Shopping Center and the K.S.U. Airport, and combine the parcels into a single development site.
- 11.6 Maintain mixed residential on the remaining vacant land (Site K). Consider residential at single-family densities to allow flexibility in design to create visual interest on relatively flat land and to provide for a variety of housing choices. Initiate rezoning of I-1 land west of storage units to R-3 compatible with the surrounding residential area.



Appendix

A. Glossary

1. **Buffer:** Land area used to visibly separate one use from another or to shield or block noise, lights, or other nuisances.
2. **Conservation Easement:** An easement precluding future or additional development of the land.

3. **Flex Office:** An office and associated warehouse and distribution use where the office portion occupies at least 50 percent of the total gross floor area of a building designed to accommodate multiple-tenants with variable space needs. Manufacturing, assembly, retail sales, and outdoor storage are not included.
4. **Goal:** A broad policy statement that indicates preferences for specific subject areas or planning values.
5. **Intensity:** Regarding land use, intensity is an indication of the amount of development on a site and is a reflection of the effects generated by that development. These effects include traffic, stormwater runoff, noise and light, etc.

6. **Land Use:** The way in which land is used or occupied by people.
7. **Light Industrial Development:** Light industrial development is defined as comprising uses that are non polluting and low impact, such as research and development, high tech manufacturing, light assembly, and warehouse and distribution.
8. **Mixed Residential:** A mixture of single-family and two-family dwellings, with densities that are consistent with the surrounding area. This includes clustered development. The Planned Residential District (PRD) and Planned Unit Development District (PUD) are the appropriate zoning mechanisms. Mixed residential requires that the developer take into account the natural character of the site. To determine consistency with area densities, the developer should calculate the average residential density for all similar developments within a one-quarter-mile radius of the subject site.
9. **Mixed Use:** A building where the uses are mixed horizontally and vertically. Typical uses include office, retail, civic, and residential. Parking facilities are shared, which reduces the total amount of off-street parking space necessary for serving all of the individual uses. A mixed-use building may offer retail space on the first floor, office space on the second floor, and residential space on floors above the second floor.
10. **Open Space:** Land reserved from development as a relief from the congestion of urbanization. It is often intended to be used for passive recreation purposes, but may also include pedestrian plazas or active recreation areas.
11. **Pedestrian-Oriented Development:** A kind of urban form and land development pattern that is conducive to pedestrian access and circulation rather than or in addition to automobile or transit service.
12. **Research and Development:** A business that engages in research, or research and development, and testing laboratories of innovative ideas in technology-intensive fields. Examples include research and development of computer software, information systems, transportation, geographic information systems, and multi-media/video technology. Development and construction of prototypes may be associated with this use. This does not involve the mass manufacture, fabrication, processing, or sale of products.

Such uses shall not violate any dust, odor, smoke, gas, noise, radiation, vibration, or similar pollution standard.

- 13. Residential Density, Gross:** Gross residential density is a measure of total residential units compared to the total site.
- 14. Residential Density, Net:** Net residential density is a measure of the total residential units compared to the total site minus land set aside for roads, parks, and open space.
- 15. Subdivision:** The splitting of tracts of land into smaller parcels. The most common usage of this word applies to the splitting of large land parcels into numerous housing lots or lots for commercial uses.
- 16. Traffic Calming Measures:** These are physical improvements to a local street that slows traffic speeds and discourages cut-through traffic movements. Examples include stop signs, speed bumps, intersection tables, intersection islands, and chicanes.

B. Subject Index

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C. Supporting Materials

The Appendix includes the following supporting materials:

- 1. Existing Conditions and Trends:** Summary information is presented regarding existing conditions of Stow and forecasts.
- 2. Matrix:** The Matrix was used as a means of cataloging the policies from the 1991 Comprehensive Plan, and providing space for commentary, preliminary changes, and final changes. It is a record of the discussions held with the Planning Commission during the Input and Policy Formulation Workshops.
- 3. Community Meeting Summary Report:** This report summarizes the results and process of the Community Meeting. The meeting generated ideas for the future of Stow in a facilitated group setting.
- 4. Land Use Assessment:** This memorandum presents a land use analysis conducted by ACP of key development sites and areas throughout the City. This assessment was used as input to the development of planning policies.

5. **Market Study:** The Market Study is the final report of the analysis of the retail and office markets prepared by Development Economics in support of this project.
6. **Fiscal Analysis Report:** The Fiscal Analysis Report is the final report prepared by Development Economics in support of this project.