



## Executive Summary

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### 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.

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

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

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

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

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