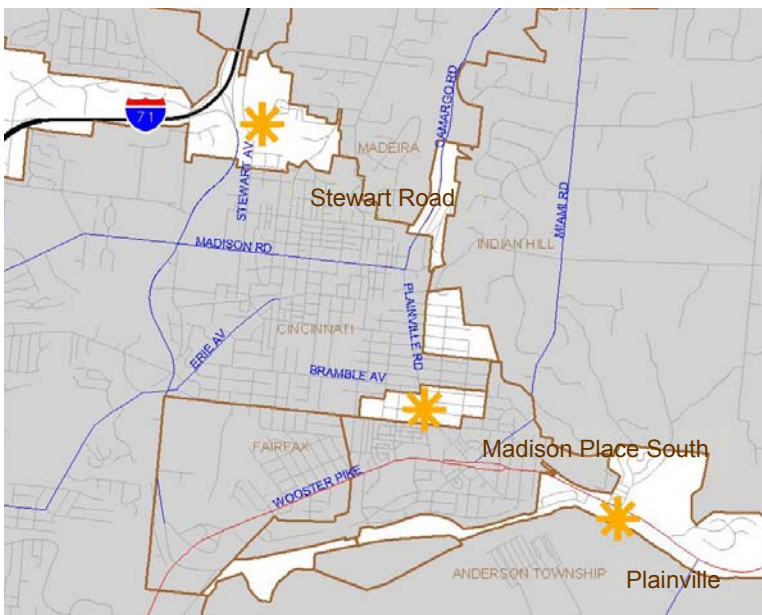


Columbia Township Comprehensive Plan

Plainville, Madison Place South, and Stewart Road Business District Studies



January 2005

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Plainville, Madison Place South And Stewart Road Business District Studies

Executive Summary

Introduction

Meisner & Associates commissioned the Hamilton County Development Company, Inc. (HCDC) to conduct an economic development analysis of three business districts of Columbia Township as part of the Columbia Township Comprehensive Plan. These areas are the Plainville area (Wooster Pike), Madison Place South area (Plainville Road) and the Stewart Road area. These business district nodes represent some of the larger property tax revenue generators for the township. Enhancing and maintaining their viability as commercial districts will help preserve the township's tax base as well as help create a sense of identity for the township. The goal of the study is to determine the best options for redevelopment of existing sites and to identify opportunities for new investment that will make the areas more viable. In addition, the types of businesses and land uses that would be most successful in these areas will be identified and possible implementation tools will be recommended.

The study outlines the existing conditions in the area such as road and utility infrastructure, zoning, land use and physical characteristics. A survey of developers, business owners and employees who work nearby provide additional insight into how these business districts are currently used and their future potential. Finally, redevelopment scenarios, potential viable businesses and implementation tools are presented for the township to consider from a public policy perspective and for inclusion into the overall comprehensive land use plan.

Background

The three study areas comprise merely a portion of Columbia Township's land area, but are the main commercial districts outside the Ridge and Highland area. Each area has its own specific characteristics and has seen redevelopment in recent years. Although some retailers and businesses draw from the region, most draw customers from the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Given the neighborhood oriented trade areas and the commuter traffic customer base of these areas, significant diversification of the business base beyond businesses

which cater to the existing neighborhood trade area or commuter base may be difficult.

Surveys and Research Findings

HCDC analyzed several data sources to determine what types of businesses would have the best chance of success, given the trade areas, market voids, and commuting patterns. Significant input from developers, business owners and employees that work in the area was also incorporated into the analysis. Based on these data sources, the uses that can be supported are: casual sit-down restaurants, office uses and neighborhood oriented retail. It should be noted that any new retail tenants that are developed should fill un-met market demands or potential new markets that may be associated with new office development.

Recommendations

A. Plainville Redevelopment Recommendations

Short Term

- Improve road and pedestrian access
- Encourage redevelopment of the Herring Property into a compatible business operation with limited access to Wooster Pike.
- Investigate the abandoned gas station site. Apply to HCDC's Urban Land Assembly Program (U.L.A.P.) for financial assistance.
- Assist the owners of the The Homestead restaurant, near Ashley Oaks Road.
- Market analysis suggests a bank, coffeeshop, women's apparel, office, and sit-down family restaurants would meet success in the corridor.

Long Term

- Evaluate the market potential of the Dawod and Pottorf properties (Hubcap shop) just east of Walton Creek.
- Improve the access, site layout, aesthetics, and general character of the collection of properties on the south side of Wooster Pike, east of Walton Creek.
- Encourage the expansion of the unique existing market niches such as female/family health & wellness.

B. Madison Place South Redevelopment Suggestions

General Area

- Give the area its own unique charm through streetscape treatments, including trees, low decorative walls, and focal points.
- Bolster the existing automobile and home improvement niche.

Site Specific

- Identify the owner of the vacant Walgreens location and discuss redevelopment opportunities, as this site represents the largest development site in the area.
- Interview the realtor currently marketing the vacant site at Bramble and Plainville Road to learn of owners plans and how it fits into the overall area plan.

C. Stewart Road Redevelopment Suggestions

Pursue multi-family residential or office development along Stewart Road.

Implementation Tools

The following section outlines the implementation tools that could be used as a catalyst to spur any of the redevelopment scenarios outlined above. These implementation tools are important to redeveloping the Business Districts throughout the Township because they will make it easier to attract investment and pay for improvements. Without implementation tools, the challenges of redevelopment in this area would minimize interest in the area by new investors. The following tools could be used by the township to spur investment and to provide possible revenue streams to fund infrastructure improvements for possible redevelopment scenarios.

- Create a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district to create revenue streams to help pay for public improvements within the district. A TIF district is a mechanism that collects property tax revenue from a specific geographic area based on the “increase in tax revenues due to improvements.” For example, a TIF could be set up to help pay for road and streetscape improvements in the Plainville Business District area. Under the TIF agreement, future property tax revenue increases are used to help pay for the road and streetscape improvements.
- Create a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) to create revenue streams to help pay for public improvements within the district. A JEDD is an agreement between two local governmental entities (usually a township and a municipality) to share income tax revenues generated within a certain geographic boundary. For example, a JEDD agreement would allow for an earnings tax to be levied on workers within certain boundaries in the township and those revenues would be shared with whatever municipality partners with the township. This money can be used to pay for public improvements within the district and provide a new income stream.

- Adopt Enterprise Zone (EZ) legislation to provide incentive to new private commercial investment within the area. This program allows for tax exemptions on new investment in buildings and equipment for office and industrial uses. Retail and residential uses are not eligible for tax exemptions under this program. Tax exemptions allow for companies to reduce their costs over the short term while they establish their business. For example, a new office building could be built where the property taxes are reduced by up to 60%, which could save the owner and tenants significant amounts of money for several years. After the tax exemption expires, property tax revenues revert to their normal levels. This program creates a long term tax base increase with a short term tax incentive.
- Adopt Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) legislation to provide incentive to new private commercial and residential investment in buildings. All land uses including retail, residential and commercial are eligible for exemptions under this program. Tax exemptions allow for companies to reduce their costs over the short term while they establish their business. For example, a new retail building could be built where the property taxes are reduced by up to 75%, which could save the owner and the tenants significant amounts of money for several years. After the tax exemption expires, property tax revenues revert to their normal levels. This program creates a long term tax base increase with a short term tax incentive.
- Create a Special Improvement District (SID) to create a revenue stream to fund improvements. A SID is a district, created by petition of the property owners, where an additional assessment is made on every property in the district and collected funds are used for marketing, landscaping, streetscape improvements, business recruitment, parking or other uses identified by the SID.
- Investigate the possibility of using eminent domain to acquire any needed lands for public improvements such as roads and sidewalks and in areas where existing conditions could justify its use. Explore the possibility of using eminent domain for economic development purposes. This tool could allow for land acquisition for any necessary infrastructure expansions and the assemblage of smaller properties into larger redevelopment sites.
- Adopt a performance based zoning and design code that allows for a big picture (more than one parcel) view of development and safeguards property values. This could be accomplished through an overlay code and could include regulations for landscaping, curb cut coordination, internal maneuvering/access between parcels, sidewalks, pedestrian oriented elements, building placement, building façade design, signage and a density bonus system to promote mixed use and higher density development. (A density bonus system can help encourage investment to allow for more intense development if certain parameters are met by the developer such as

building design and placement). This type of code can be used for any new redevelopment under any of the previously mentioned scenarios.

- Establish public/private partnerships with property owners, existing businesses, developers, residents and others who will champion the redevelopment.

Marketing Opportunities

- Market sites and buildings to businesses and uses with realtors, developers, and specific end users/franchisees outlined previously in this report.

Infrastructure

- Support recommendations of Eastern Corridor Transportation Plan as outlined previously in this report to alleviate traffic flow and access issues in the study area.

Next Steps

The Township is encouraged to take the lead in the implementation of a redevelopment strategy. The implementation phase can entail carrying out all or a portion of the recommendations suggested in the study. While the township can be the catalyst to spur revitalization, the ultimate success is dependent on partnerships being developed between the public and private sectors.

The township should consider some of the following steps to begin the implementation phase:

- Make this study available to all area property owners and potential developers.
- Seek input from potential partners (developers, landowners, investors) on the ideas presented.
- Potentially adopt a resolution stating the township's position on the study and making decisions on which recommendations it would like to implement. These decisions could also break the recommendations into timeframe categories such as short term (in the next one to two years), medium term (in the next three to five years) and long term (in the next six to ten years). Those recommendations that do not take any specific funding, should be implemented in the short term, while those with specific funding needs would be implemented over a longer term while strategies to secure funding are identified.

HCDC is eager to work with the township to implement any of the recommendations outlined in this study or any other development projects the township deems important.

Plainville (Wooster Pike) Business District Study

Existing Conditions

Location

The Plainville Business District area of Columbia Township is located immediately east of the Village of Mariemont along US Route 50 and shown on pages 3 through 5. US Route 50 is a major commuter route that provides access from downtown Cincinnati to residential areas further east. The study area includes the parcels that have frontage on Wooster Pike between the Village of Mariemont boundary on the west and Newtown Road to the east.

Existing Land Use

The Plainville Business District area is primarily composed of commercial uses. Large and small retailers are located in both “strip mall” and “stand alone” building style formats. The businesses in the area predominantly serve nearby residential neighborhoods and the commuter traffic on US Route 50. Neighborhood retail in the study area includes a grocery store, drug store, quick service and sit down restaurants, gasoline stations, hair salons and video rental. A complete list of businesses can be found on page A13. Other commercial uses include several medical and non-medical offices, and miscellaneous auto-related businesses. There are also several small vacant parcels in the center of the corridor near Walton Creek.



Kroger is the anchor for the Western Portion of Wooster Pike. A great deal of new investment has taken place recently in the surrounding area.

Due to the area being a viable location for neighborhood retail, reinvestment continues. For example, a new strip mall with a restaurant and health and wellness services recently opened east of Kroger's and a Walgreen's Drug Store recently re-located from Madison Place South to Wooster Pike, across from Kroger's. This reinvestment pattern indicates that this is a successful location for certain retail uses.



This strip mall recently opened next door to Kroger's indicating that the Plainville Business District area is a strong retail location serving adjacent residential areas and commuters on US Route 50.

Zoning and Development Regulations

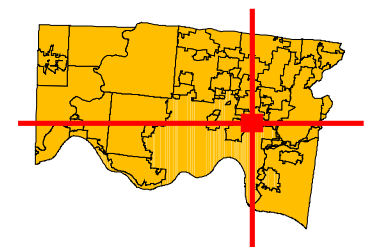
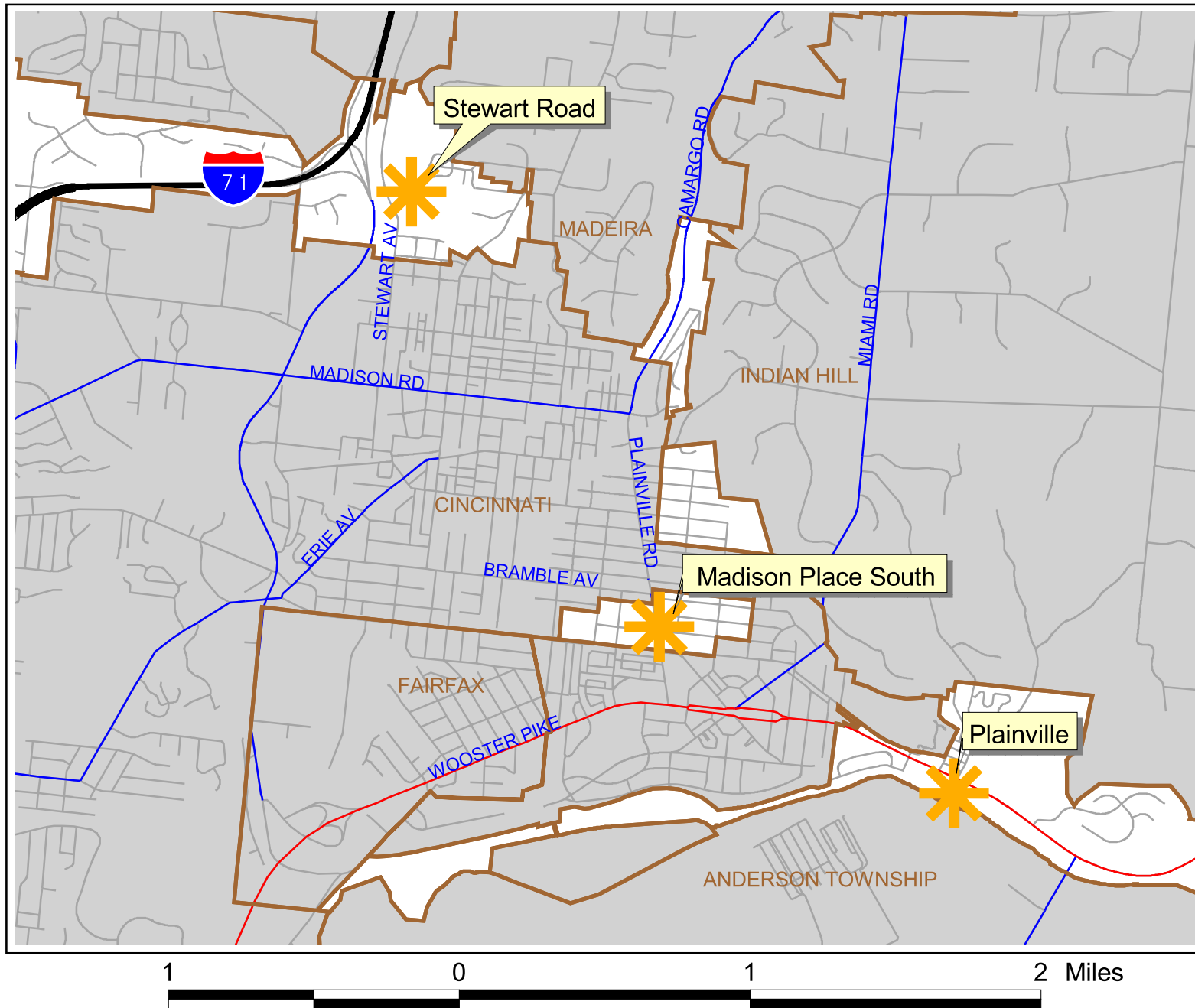
The Wooster Pike area between Newtown Road and the Village of Mariemont is zoned for retail and light industrial as shown on Exhibit 4. The areas closest to Mariemont are zoned for light industrial yet are currently being used for retail. The remainder of the study area is zoned retail and hosts retail, and office uses.

Wooster Pike has long been a major commuter traffic route connecting the expanding residential areas of Newtown, Anderson Township and Clermont County to employment centers to the West. Lately, retail uses have slowly come to dominate the character of the area.

Multiple entities, such as the Hamilton County Rural Zoning Commission and the Hamilton County Engineer, regulate development, design and land use. Improvements in street curb cuts, street design, street network, internal traffic movement, sidewalk requirements, and other elements will occur as sites and buildings undergo construction.

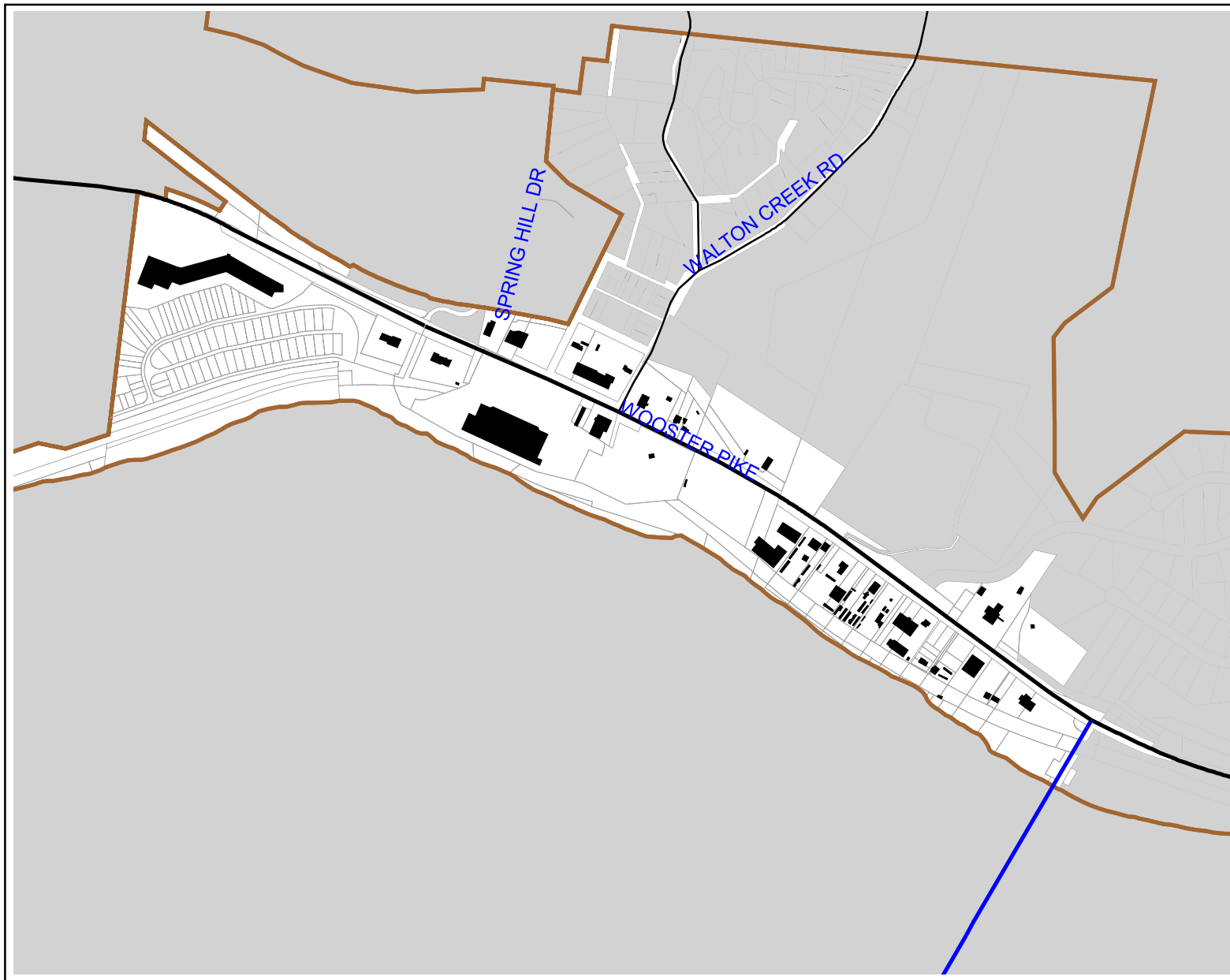
Columbia Township - Comprehensive Plan Location Map

Exhibit 1

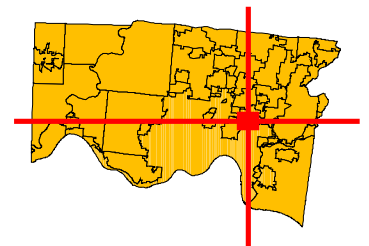


Columbia Township - Plainville District Existing Conditions

Exhibit 2



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets
 - Local
 - Interstate
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Highway Ramps
- Parcel Polygons
- Buildings



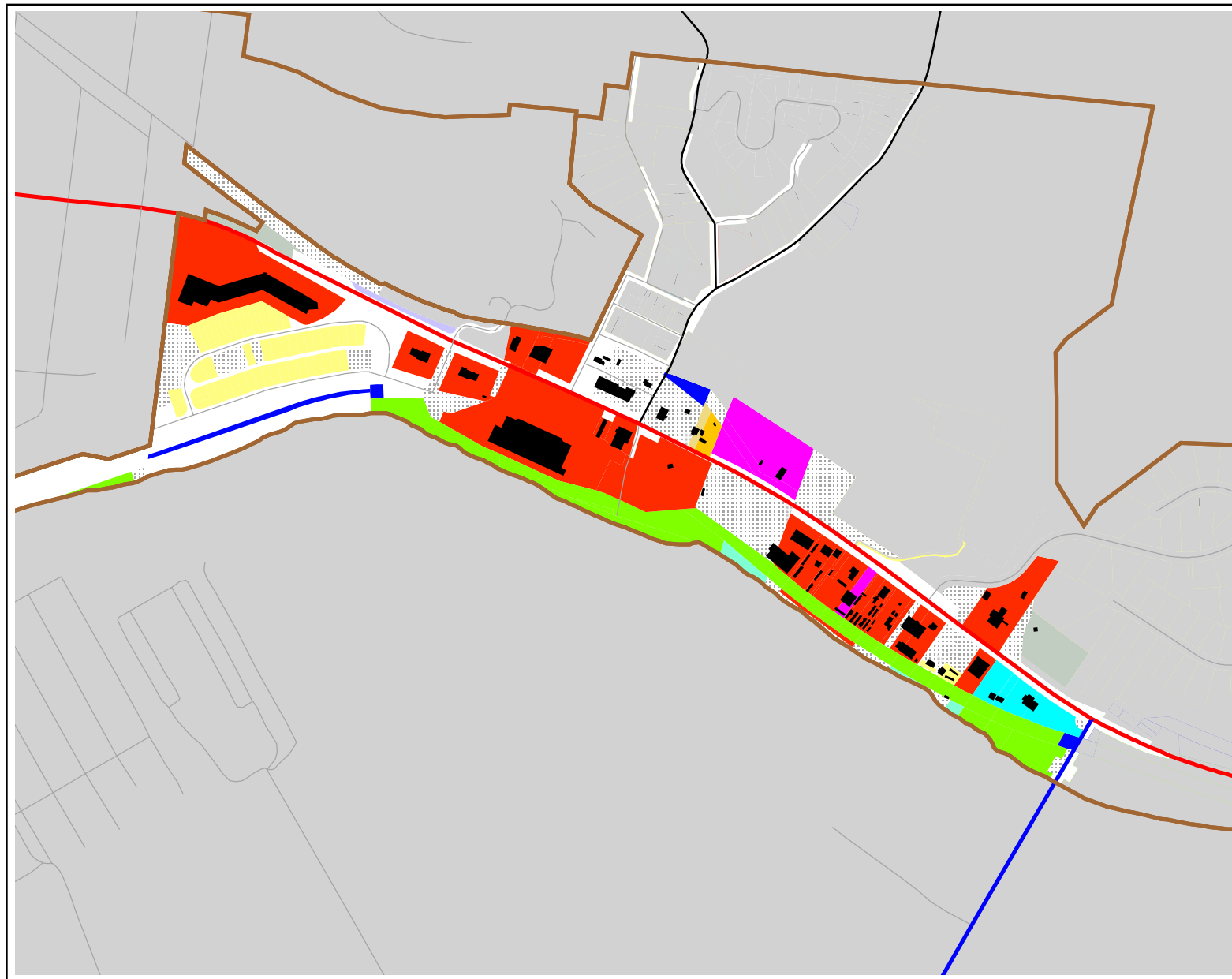
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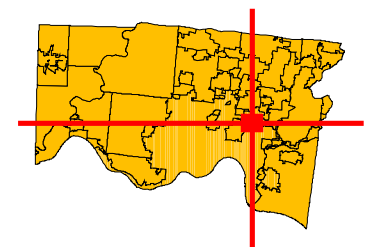


Columbia Township - Plainville District Existing Land Use

Exhibit 3



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets
 - Interstate
 - US & State Routes
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Local Streets
 - Highway Ramps
- Buildings
- Parcel Polygons
 - Agriculture
 - Vacant
 - Single Family
 - Two Family
 - Mobile Homes
 - Congregate Housing
 - Multi Family
 - Mixed Use
 - Office
 - Public/Semi Public
 - Commercial
 - Light Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Educational
 - Institutional
 - N/A
 - Public Utilities
 - Parks & Recreation



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0.25 0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Physical Characteristics

The physical characteristics of the area include several aesthetic elements such as building appearance, landscaping and signage as well as more technical elements such as the functionality of the streets, parking lots and topography. Several buildings towards the eastern portion of the study area have not been updated for a considerable amount of time. However, the retail uses have seen recent reinvestment such as the new Walgreen's and a new lifestyle strip center. Utilities are typically provided via overhead wires.

There is little signage to indicate political jurisdictions in this portion of Columbia Township. Small, wooden road signs read "Columbia Township" as one travels across the political jurisdiction line into Columbia Township along Wooster Pike and Plainville Roads at their boundary with Mariemont. The sign displays the specific neighborhood (either Plainville or Madison Place South). Unfortunately these signs are not very noticeable within the mix of road and business signs in the area.



This sign, located at the Plainville Road & Murray Avenue intersection in Madison Place South shows the size and style of the signs used to welcome visitors to Columbia Township.

Several technical issues, such as ingress and egress to various businesses and movement between sites, cause difficulty for drivers to navigate. Completing left turns as one exits or enters various sites are difficult due to the high volume of traffic on the roads, providing few breaks in traffic. In addition, the uncoordinated nature of curb cut locations, their close proximity to road intersections and the

lack of cross access between sites causes unsafe and confusing conditions for motorists and pedestrians alike. This is more of a problem on the north side of Wooster Pike than the south side as there are connections between the Kroger's parking lot and adjacent development.

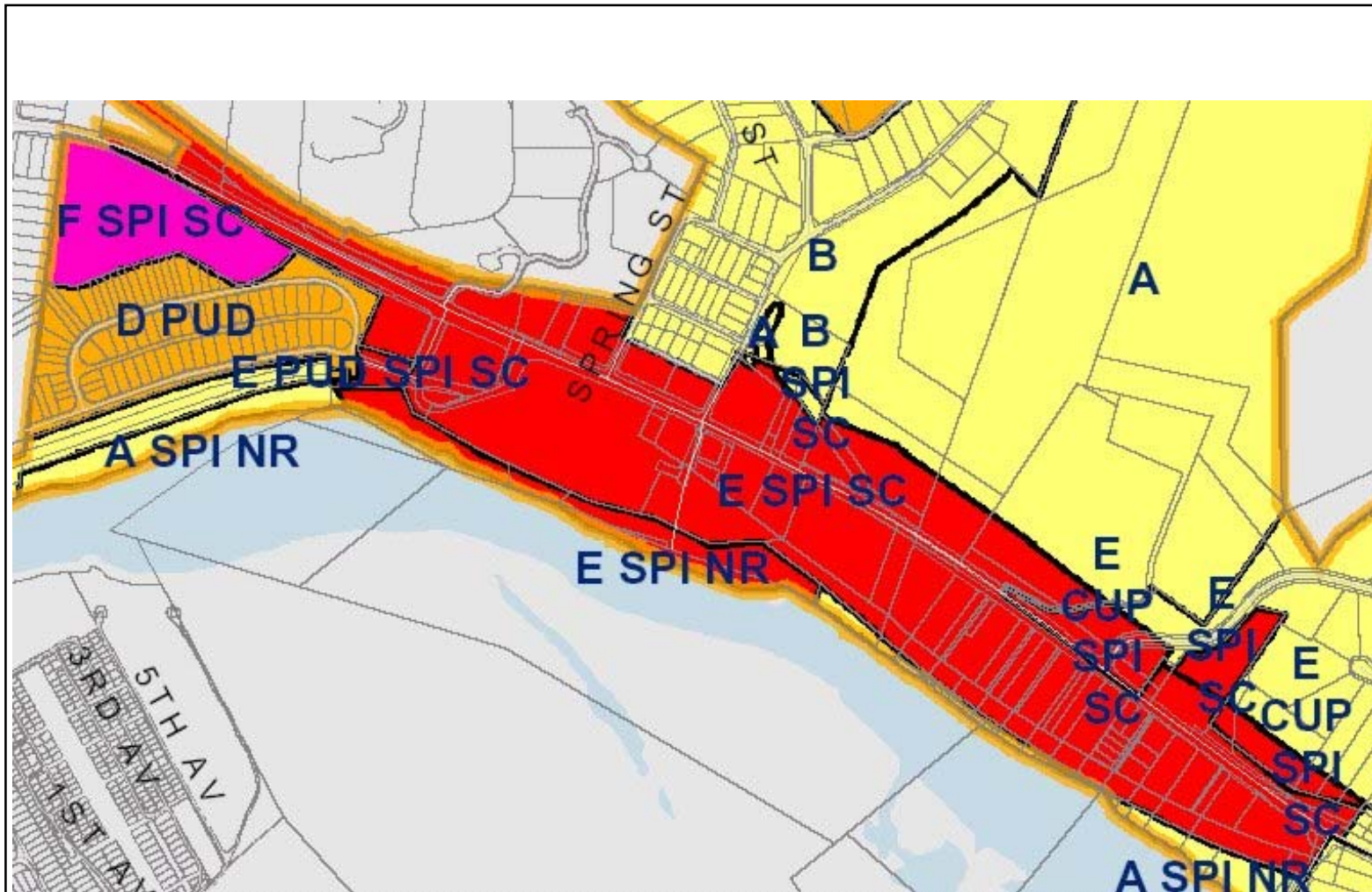


During peak periods, traffic is congested in the Walton Creek / Wooster Pike area and causes ingress/egress problems for adjacent businesses. One example of a possible safety improvement is the use of “right turn in and right turn out only” curbs at the Marathon gas station at the corner of Wooster Pike and Walton Creek Road. However, this prohibits shoppers from accessing the site via a left turn from eastbound Route 50.

Auditor's records obtained from CAGIS (Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System) reveal that property taxes from Wooster Pike businesses totaled \$538,170 in 2003. These businesses occupied 78.6 acres of land with an assessed market value of \$23,036,200. The average property tax collected per acre was \$6,847 as compared to \$7,124 for Highland & Ridge. This average tax per acre is somewhat lower due to the inclusion of roadways, floodplain property along the Little Miami River, and vacant land.

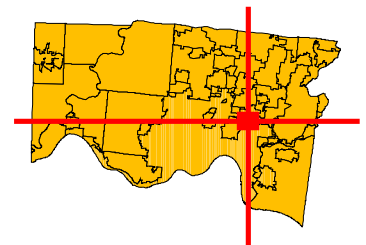
Columbia Township - Plainville District Zoning

Exhibit 4



Zoning

- Single Family
- Multi Family
- Retail
- Light Industry
- Heavy Industry



Utilities and Transportation Infrastructure

Water, gas, electric and phone service are all provided throughout the commercial portion of the study area. Exhibit Seven shows the location of water and sewer lines within the study area. Sewer lines exist in the area yet they currently connect to holding tanks in the business areas and processed by individual waste treatment plants in the residential areas. The sewer lines are scheduled to connect to the main Metropolitan Sewer District trunkline in the spring of 2005. It should be noted that the single family residences North of Walgreen's are serviced by septic systems.

Wooster Pike is the main transportation route within the study area and serves multiple roles, providing access to businesses and shopping areas within the study area, as well as providing a commuting route for thru traffic. Indicative of this area's automobile orientation is the absence of on-street parking and scattered existence of sidewalks.

According to the Hamilton County Engineer's office, traffic counts on Wooster Pike at the intersection of Walton Creek Road have been increasing. Traffic counts at this intersection have increased from 22,500 per day in 1997 to 28,000 in 2004. This is an increase of 24%. Traffic counts on Wooster Pike at the intersection of Newtown Road have been fairly constant with 29,634 in 1998 and 29,950 in 2004.

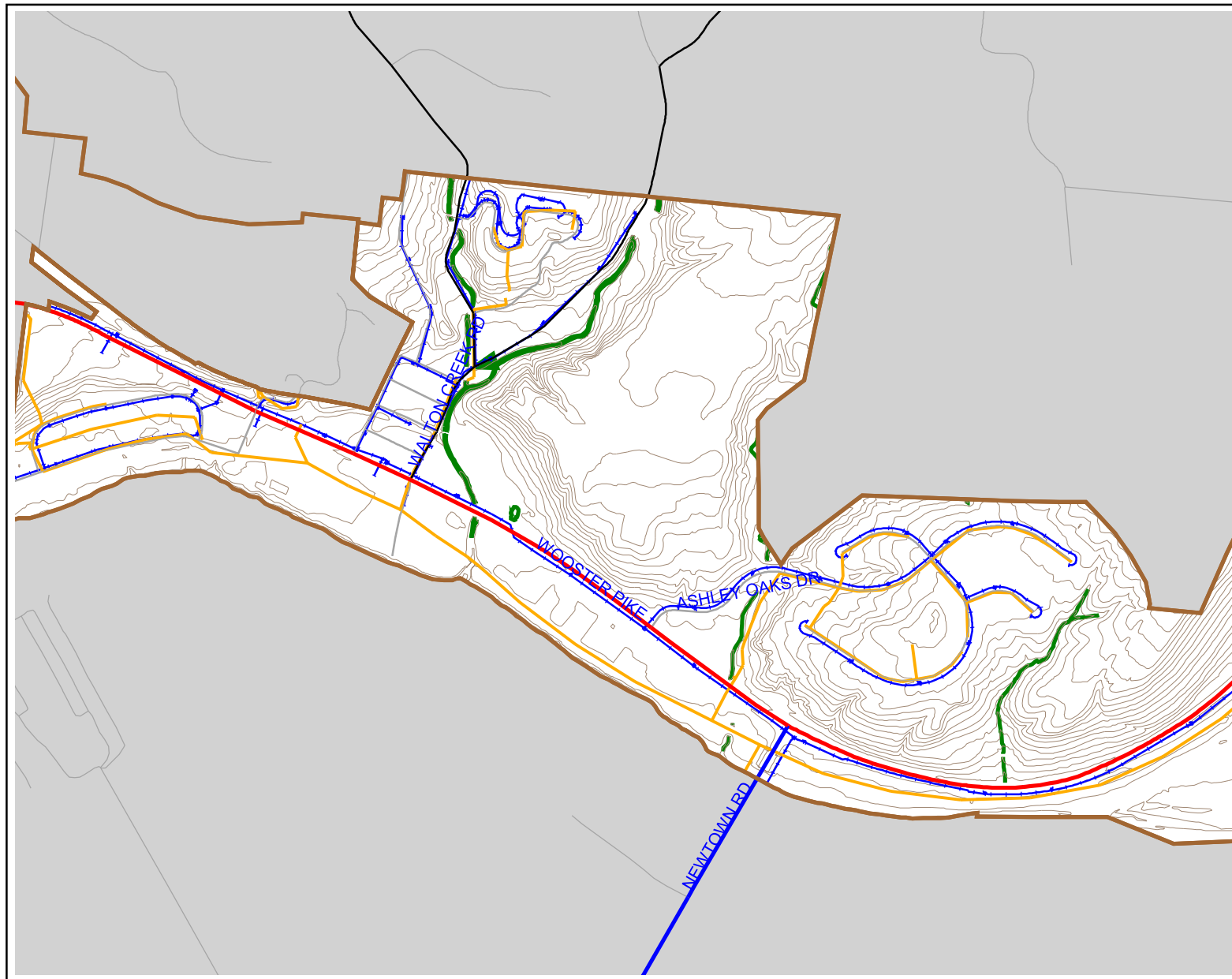
Wooster Pike is a four lane road within the study area. The street has an inconsistent pattern of sidewalks, with sidewalks existing in front of newer businesses and missing in front of older businesses. However, some sidewalks fronting older business are immediately adjacent to the curb and vehicle travel lanes. The sidewalks, parking lots and streets are in declining physical condition. Congestion problems between Newtown Rd and Walton Creek Rd occur where vehicles attempting to turn left cause cars to back up and impede the flow of traffic. These problems, especially at intersection of Walton Creek Road, cause safety concerns during peak hours.



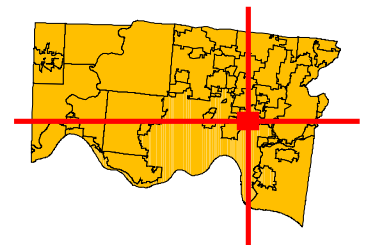
Above is a view of the overhead utility lines and the lack of curb between the sidewalk and road.

Columbia Township - Plainville District Utilities & Topography

Exhibit 5



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets**
 - Local (TBV)
 - Interstate
 - US & State Routes
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Local Streets
 - Highway Ramps
 - Sewers
 - Cww Water Mains
 - Streets
- Buildings
- 10' Contours
- Drainage



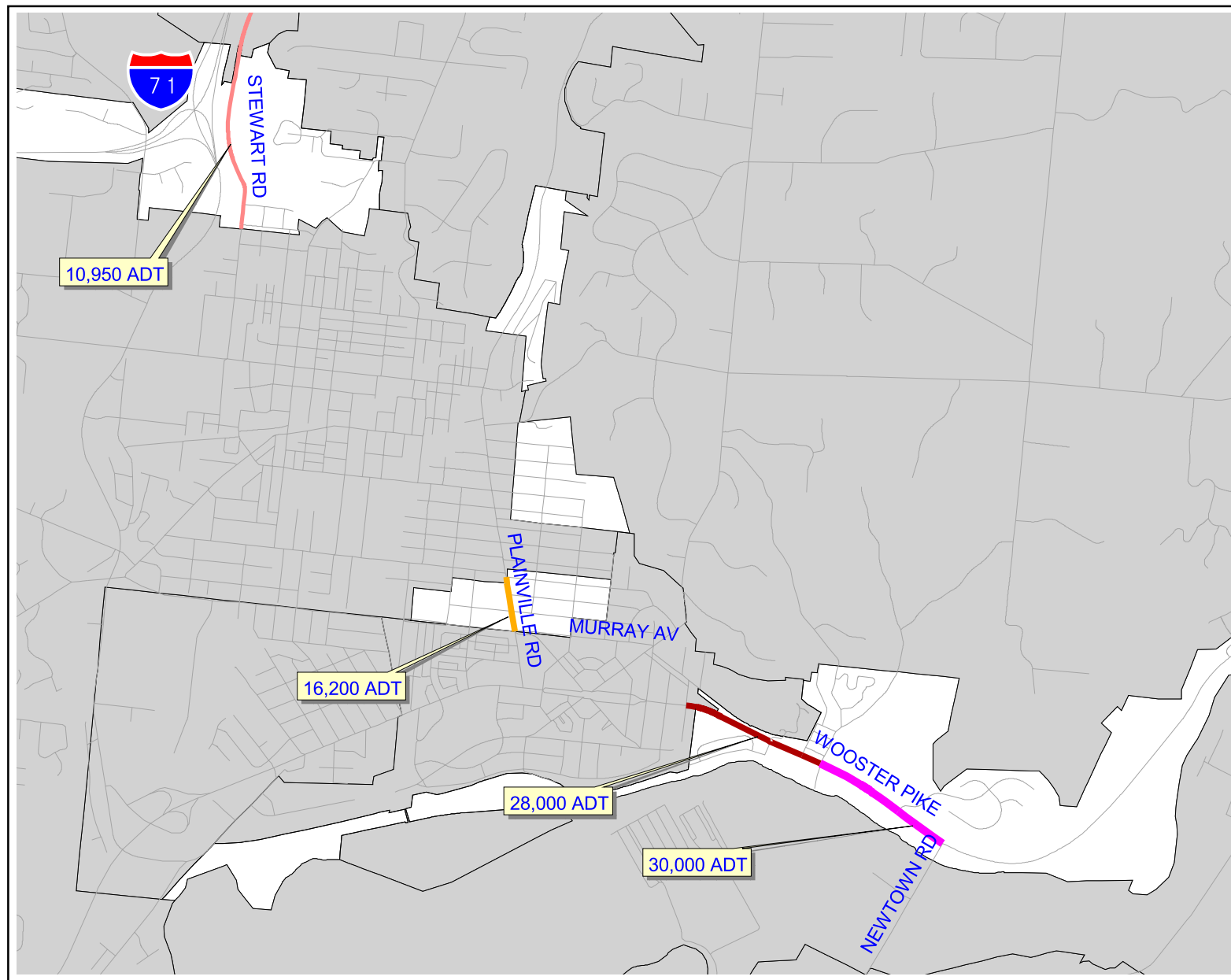
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Hamilton County Economic Development Office

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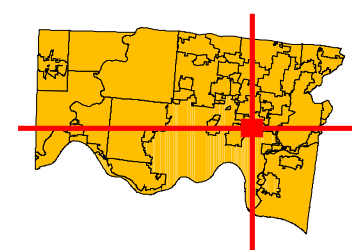
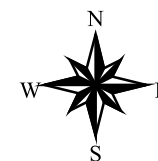
Columbia Township - Comprehensive Plan Traffic Counts

Exhibit 6



Average Daily Traffic

- 10950
- 16200
- 28000
- 30000
- Streets



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0.25 0 0.25 0.5 Miles

Eastern Corridor Transportation Plan / Ohio Department of Transportation Plan

The Eastern Corridor Plan does not outline any specific issues or recommendations within the Wooster Pike, Plainville Road and Stewart Road study areas. However, local leaders are seeking to alter proposed transportation improvement plans for Wooster Pike. The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) recommends that Wooster Pike be widened by fifteen to twenty feet to accommodate a center turn lane. The proposed design would eliminate sidewalks and require easements from numerous properties along the Pike.

Community and business leaders have pointed out that the proposed design is inconsistent with the land use plan and visioning in the Eastern Corridor Study. A preferred road upgrade would include a center median of grass and trees. The median would soften the nature of the area, and maintain consistency with the road pattern (with median) established in the neighboring community of Mariemont.

Recommendations of the Eastern Corridor Transportation Plan for Wooster Pike, Plainville Road and Stewart Road:

There are no specific recommendations for improvements for these roads within the study area. However, a new highway is proposed along a route from the Village of Newtown connecting to Red Bank Road just to the southwest of Mariemont. This new road is projected to impact travel volumes on Wooster Pike.

Households

US Census data reveals that Hamilton County households have increased from 322,238 in 1980 to 338,881 in 1990 and reaching 346,790 in 2000. This 7.6% increase in households from 1980 to 2000 may have supported and expanded home improvement consumer opportunities.

List of Current Businesses in the Wooster Pike Study Area

Retail

Kroger
Hollywood Video
The Snooty Fox
Mariemont Florist
All About Hubcaps
Mariemont Garden Center
Tire Discounters
DP Imports
GNC
Karin's Pet Shop
Bab Wine and Spirits
Baker Thrift Shop
Walgreen's
Cincinnati Bell Store
Carpet Depot
Rainbow Play Systems / Recreation Outlet
The UPS Store

Services

Valenti Salon
Barbershop
A-One Drycleaners
A plus Nails
Garner Rental Sales and Service
Gymboree

Great Clips
Curves for Women
Yoga Home
Youthland Academy
Mirage Tanning
Pro-Cuts

Restaurants

Subway
McDonald's
Arby's
Village Kitchen
Magic Wok
Penn Station
Dairy Queen
Tai Van Phaw

Office

Dan Pottorf
Elizabeth Carr Attorney
Coldwell Banker West Shell Realtors
Mariemont Chiropractic
Mariemont Eyecare
Rilco Incorporated

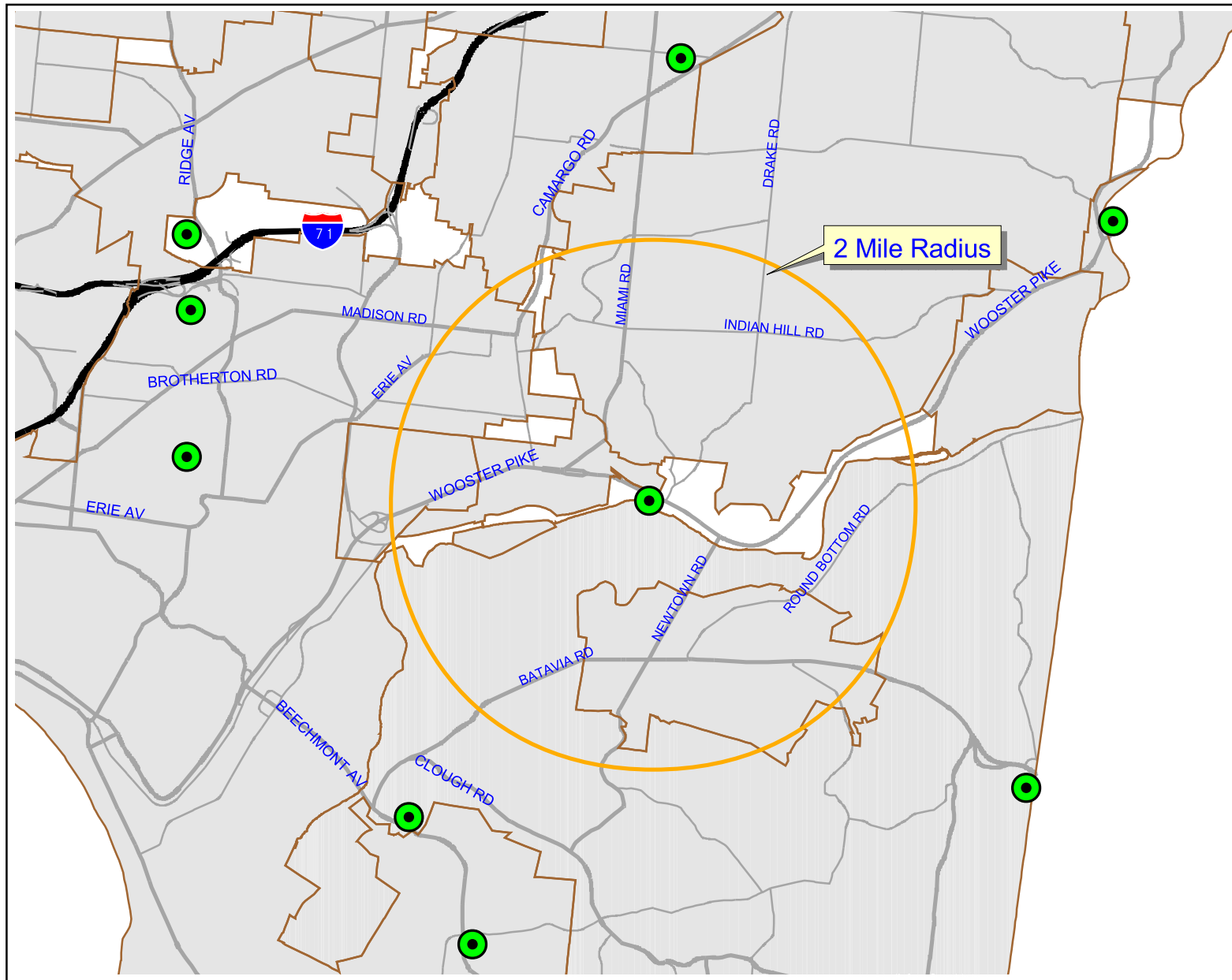
Business Orientation and Retail Analysis

The Wooster Pike / Plainville neighborhood business district is primarily a retail district with a mix of office and service businesses. The businesses are oriented towards serving the surrounding neighborhoods and commuter traffic. Typical businesses include quick service restaurants, grocery and drug stores. The district serves mainly the adjacent neighborhoods such as Mariemont, Terrace Park, Indian Hill, Columbia Township, Newtown, and Fairfax as well as commuters traveling through the area on US Route 50. However, specialty retailers such as Pete Delois' Recreation Outlet and some of the offices serve a more regional trade area.

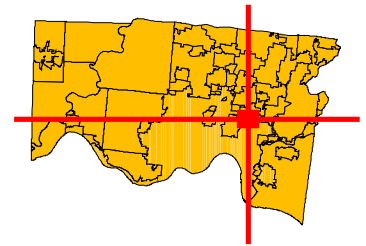
The following map shows the “neighborhood” oriented trade area for the Plainville area. The trade area boundary is based on the drawing power of the anchor (Kroger’s) store in the district and the proximity to other grocery stores nearby. Based on the location of nearby grocery stores, an approximately two mile radius from the Plainville Kroger’s was determined to be the neighborhood trade area boundary. Most of the shoppers in the Plainville business district are drawn from this two mile radius boundary.

Columbia Township - Plainville District Neighborhood Trade Area

Exhibit 7



Existing Grocery Stores



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The table below outlines typical retail store categories and notes whether or not there are businesses in each category within the study area or in nearby neighborhoods. Categories without stores in the study area and without stores nearby could be voids in the market that could be filled with a new store in the study area.

Listing of Retail Categories

| Retail Category | Are there businesses in the Plainville Business District Study Area | Are there businesses in surrounding neighborhoods in the trade area? (Fairfax, Mariemont, Newtown, Terrace Park, Madisonville) |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Women's apparel | Snooty Fox | Yes (1 store) |
| Women's shoes | | |
| Men's apparel | | |
| Men's shoes | | |
| Children's apparel | | Yes (1 store) |
| Children's shoes | | |
| Neighborhood/Family Restaurants | Village Kitchen | Yes (5 restaurants) |
| Fast food restaurants/deli | McDonald's, Arby's, Subway, Magic Wok, Penn Station, Dairy Queen, Tai Van Phaw | Yes (8 restaurants) |
| Coffee shop | | Yes (2 coffeshops) |
| Grocery store | Kroger's | |
| Meat and Fish market | | |
| Fruit / Vegetable market | | Yes (farmer's market) |
| Ice cream parlor | Dairy Queen | Yes (3 stores) |
| Retail bakery | yes-Kroger's and Baker Thrift Shop | Yes (2 stores) |
| Liquor wine store | Yes-(Kroger's)- wine Bab's Wine and Spirits | |
| Bar / tavern | | Yes (5 taverns/bars) |
| Appliance / electronic store | | |
| Automobile sales | Mort's Imports | Yes (2 car lots) |
| Art, Craft and framing | Mariemont Garden Center | Yes (3 stores) |
| Auto supply tires | Tire Discounters | Yes (2 stores) |
| Bank | | Yes (7 bank branches) |
| Book store | | |
| Card and gift shop/boutique | Kroger's | Yes (1 store) |
| Cell phone / pager | Cincinnati Bell Store | Yes (2 stores) |
| Computers and accessories | | |
| convenience and gasoline | Marathon | Yes (10 gas / convenience stores) |
| Discount merchandise store, furniture | | Yes (2 stores) |
| Drug store | Walgreen's | Yes |
| Florist | Mariemont Florist | |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Health and beauty | Mirage Tanning, Yoga Home, Curves for Women | |
| Home improvement, lumber, home décor, furnishings, carpets, accessories | Carpet Depot | Yes (2 stores) |
| Jewelry | | Yes (1 store) |
| Laundry / dry cleaning | A One Drycleaners | Yes (3 stores) |
| Luggage | | |
| Medical supply | | |
| Movie theatre | | Yes (1 theatre) |
| Music cd | | |
| Optical vision care | Mariemont Eyecare | |
| Office supply | UPS Store, Walgreen's | |
| Personal services-hair/nails | Valenty Salon, A Plus Nails, Pro-Cuts, Great Clips | (yes 10 salons/barber) |
| Pet supply | Karin's Pet Supply | |
| Photographic | Walgreen's | |
| Shoe repair | | |
| Sporting goods/bicycle | | Yes (3 stores) |
| Toy and hobby | Pete Delois' Recreation | Yes (2 stores) |
| Video rental / sales | Hollywood Video | |

Please note that the numbers in parenthesis in this table indicate the number of establishments in adjacent business districts of Fairfax, Mariemont, Newtown, Terrace Park, and Madisonville. The list of businesses was used to determine which retail categories have businesses within the study area.

Several store categories are not represented in the study area nor in neighboring business districts. Based on this information and commuter traffic volumes on Route 50 of 30,000 vehicles per day, the following types of stores could potentially be supported in the Plainville business district area:

- Bank
- Coffeeshop
- family oriented sit-down restaurant
- Specialty apparel store

It is important to note that there are other competitive shopping areas nearby as shown in the Trade Area map. These successful neighborhood oriented shopping areas in close proximity may limit the attraction of stores to Wooster Pike being that market demand has already been met.

Interviews with Developers - Plainville

HCDC conducted interviews with the following developers: Al Neyer Inc., Regency Shopping Centers, Midland Atlantic Properties, Vandercar Holdings, and Neyer Properties in order to gather insights and opinions on the potential of the study area. A summary of the responses is below.

What is your overall perception or impression of the area?

The overall perception and impression of the area was that of a neighborhood oriented area with newer development around the Kroger's and older buildings towards the eastern portion of the area. In addition, the traffic congestion issues were highlighted as an issue.

What are the advantages or opportunities of this area?

Some of the advantages outlined include:

- Good traffic counts on US Route 50.
- An active political leadership.
- Lack of local income tax when compared to other locations (especially for office uses).

What are the disadvantages constraints of this area?

The disadvantages mentioned include:

- Traffic congestion at numerous points.
- Limited trade area for more than neighborhood retail.
- Lack of consistent sidewalks.
- Land assembly of smaller parcels to allow for coordinated development.

What type of future development do you envision being successful?

Several uses were mentioned as possible future land uses including:

- Casual sit down family restaurant.
- Office
- Neighborhood oriented retailers.

What are the primary areas of competition for the study area?

The following areas were mentioned as the primary competition to the study area:

- The Newtown, Mariemont, Fairfax, Terrace Park and Madisonville business districts are the main competition for neighborhood oriented and service uses.
- The Kenwood Mall and Rookwood Mall/Hyde Park areas provide higher end retail shopping opportunities near the study area.

Interviews with Area Businesses and Employees

HCDC conducted a survey of area businesses and employees, both those located in and those nearby the study area, in order to gain input and opinions on the potential of the area and how it is used. The following is a summary of the responses.

What are your overall impressions of the Plainville Business District area?

Impressions of the area as a place to do business were generally “average” although there were several responses that indicated “below average.” Several respondents noted that things were improving.

What are the advantages of this location as a place to do business?

Location, customer base and access/transportation were the most predominant advantages for doing business, although several respondents indicated that the lack of an earnings tax was also an advantage.

What are the disadvantages of this location as a place to do business?

Traffic congestion and appearance were the most predominant disadvantages for businesses, although several respondents indicated that there were no disadvantages of this area.

Would you like to expand your business in this location?

Respondents were mixed in their views about expansion with both yes and no being equally popular responses. There were several “maybe” responses and one company recently did expand.

From where do you draw a majority of your customers?

A majority of the respondents drew a majority of their customers from the two to five mile radius although several draw from the Cincinnati region.

How often do you and or your employees use the Plainville Business District area?

Respondents that work within the study area indicated that they use the area on a daily basis. However, those that work outside of the study area frequent the area less often.

If the Plainville Business District area were redeveloped, what types of businesses would most likely succeed?

Value oriented retail, high end retail, sit down restaurants and offices were the most common uses mentioned. Retail was the most popular suggested potential land use with 70%, followed by casual sit down restaurants at 15% and office at 15%.

Recommendations

The Plainville Business District has been a successful commercial corridor due to its location along a commuter route and proximity to a relatively affluent household base. As discussed in the existing conditions section, challenges with traffic and flexibility for business expansions have been identified. The area has seen recent new investment to revitalize several parcels with viable businesses.

In order to pro-actively enhance the area, however, strategies to coordinate and leverage investment resources and guide redevelopment should be explored. Implementation of pro-active strategies will yield additional benefits and provide for long term viability of the area. Several recommendations to improve the Plainville Business District of Wooster Pike are outlined below.

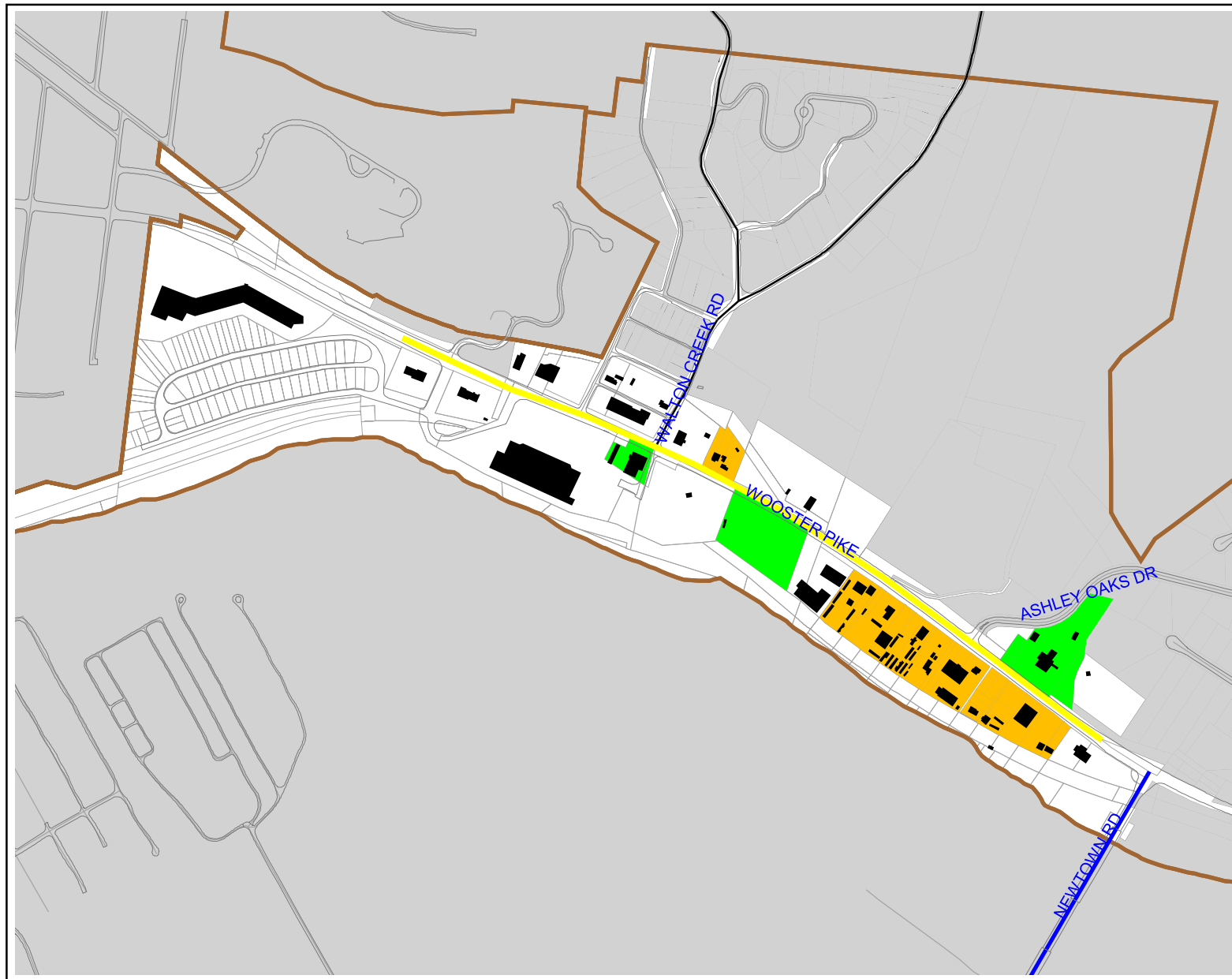
Recommendations

Short Term

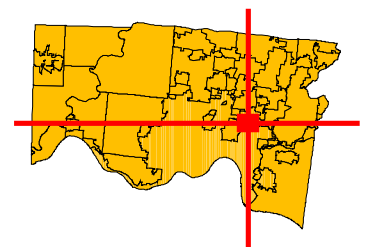
- Implement roadway design features from Mariemont such as medians planted with grass and trees and limited center turn lanes at Walton Creek. If a pedestrian-friendly development is desired pedestrian and vehicular access should be improved to ensure safety. Pedestrian traffic can be increased by providing adequate buffering between vehicular and non-vehicular traffic. Sidewalks should be positioned at a safe distance from the roadside and the street curbs should be raised.
- Encourage redevelopment of the Herring Property, located on the south side of the intersection of Walton Creek and Wooster Pike adjacent to Kroger. Renovation or restoration of this historic building would add character to the district. Access of the site should be permitted from the south side and the current curb cut to Wooster Pike eliminated.
- Investigate the abandoned gas station sites including current ownership, historical uses, market value, and floodplain implications. Conduct a phase one environmental assessment. Apply for financial assistance from HCDC's Urban Land Assistance Program (U.L.A.P).
- Assist the new owners of the Homestead Restaurant just East of Ashley Oaks Road. Access to the site could be provided from Ashley Oaks coupled with traffic calming, and a designated center turn lane along Wooster Pike.
- Market analysis suggests that a new bank, coffeeshops, women's apparel, office and sit-down family restaurants would meet success in the corridor.

Columbia Township - Plainville District Redevelopment Opportunities

Exhibit 8



- Transportation Improvements & Streetscaping
- Short Term Opportunities
- Long Term Opportunities



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1000 0 1000 2000 Feet

A scale bar with markings for 1000, 0, 1000, and 2000 feet.

Long Term

- Evaluate the market potential of the Dawod and Pottorf properties (All About Hubcaps) just east of Walton Creek. This area is brimming with surrounding redevelopment and the property has potential for improvement. The site is visually inconsistent with new development in the area.
- Improve the access, site layout, aesthetics, and general character of the collection of properties on the south side of Wooster Pike, east of Tire Discounters and west of Rilco. This older portion of Wooster Pike is a random collection of businesses which are somewhat inconsistent with the nature of the pike. Automobiles are randomly positioned on the sites, curb cuts are indistinguishable from the remainder of the frontage and pedestrian access is possible but hazardous. Vehicular traffic speeds up noticeably though this area due to its unorganized design. Due to the number of property owners this is the largest challenge for the Corridor. A secondary concern is the significant amount of frontage on Wooster Pike yet the limited lot depth and floodplain issues may present a challenge to conventional development.
- Encourage the expansion of the unique existing market niches, such as female/family health & wellness. Several businesses in the salon, fitness, and general wellness categories have met success. Additionally, unique businesses catering to the children's outdoor playsets niche have also realized success. Properties in the eastern portion of Wooster Pike could be ideal locations for such businesses.
- Consider the possibility of implementing eminent domain should it be needed to carry out Township goals.



The Herring building at the corner of Walton Creek and Wooster Pike is currently for sale. This location would be prime for redevelopment into a compatible use.



Redevelopment in the corridor is ongoing. In addition to the Walgreen's and strip mall, this site (the former Heritage Restaurant site) is currently undergoing renovation to reopen a new restaurant.



This vacant parcel on Wooster Pike is one of the few vacant sites available for development in the Plainville area. This site may have significant costs to redevelop due to it being a former gas station.

HCDC is willing to work with the township to implement any of the recommendations outlined in this study or any other development projects the township deems important.

Madison Place South (Plainville/Murray Roads) Business District Study

Existing Conditions

Location

The Madison Place South (Plainville/Murray Road) area of Columbia Township is located immediately north of the Village of Mariemont along Plainville Road as shown in Exhibit 1. This area is located along a major route providing access to areas north of Mariemont. The study area includes the parcels that have frontage on Plainville Road between the Village of Mariemont boundary on the south and Bramble Road on the north.

Existing Land Use

Commercial uses in the Madison Place South consist of small retailers and service businesses, some within typical retail buildings and others converted into single family and even multi-family buildings along Plainville Road. The retail categories tend to serve nearby neighborhoods and a radius of approximately one to two miles. The specific types of retail in the study area include home improvement, hardware, several auto repair shops, discount dollar store, restaurant and hair salons. A complete list of businesses can be found later in the report.



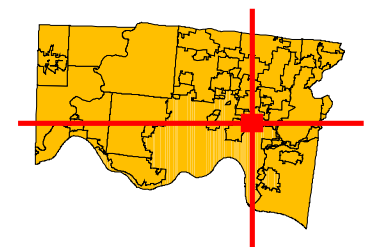
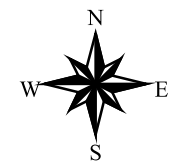
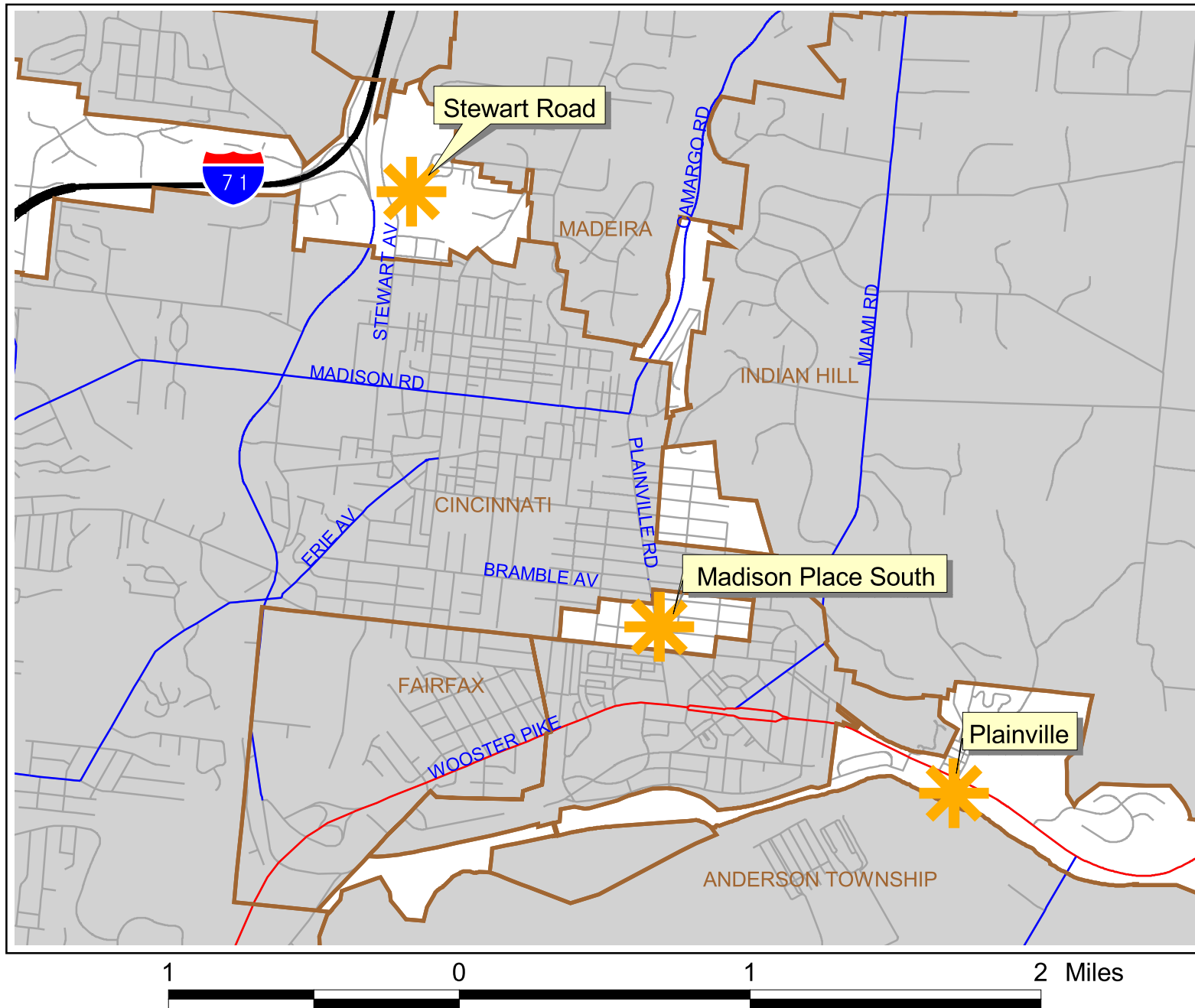
The Larry Daniels Auto Shop anchors the Madison Place South business district.



The vacant Walgreen's location is the largest site in the study area.

Columbia Township - Comprehensive Plan Location Map

Exhibit 1

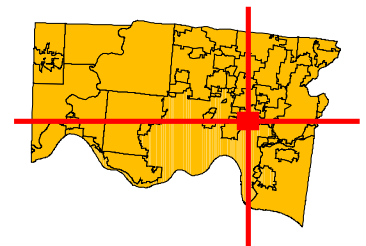
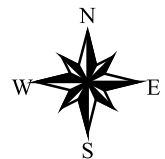


Columbia Township - Madison Place South District Existing Conditions

Exhibit 2



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets
 - Local
 - Interstate
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Highway Ramps
- Parcel Polygons
- Buildings



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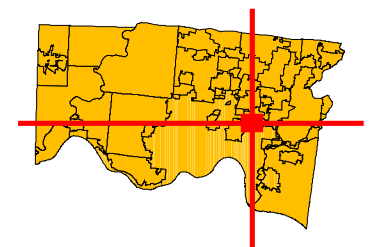


Columbia Township - Madison Place South District Existing Land Use

Exhibit 3



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets
 - Interstate
 - US & State Routes
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Local Streets
 - Highway Ramps
- Buildings
- Parcel Polygons
 - Agriculture
 - Vacant
 - Single Family
 - Two Family
 - Mobile Homes
 - Congregate Housing
 - Multi Family
 - Mixed Use
 - Office
 - Public/Semi Public
 - Commercial
 - Light Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Educational
 - Institutional
 - N/A
 - Public Utilities
 - Parks & Recreation



Zoning and Development Regulations

Physical Characteristics

This area is a typical neighborhood business district. Plainville Road serves as the main commercial spine which connects into Murray near Mariemont. The district is embedded in residential housing to the extent that some commercial buildings are actually converted single and multi-family units. Street parking is available on one side of the street and parking lots serve several locations. The streets were once lined by trees.

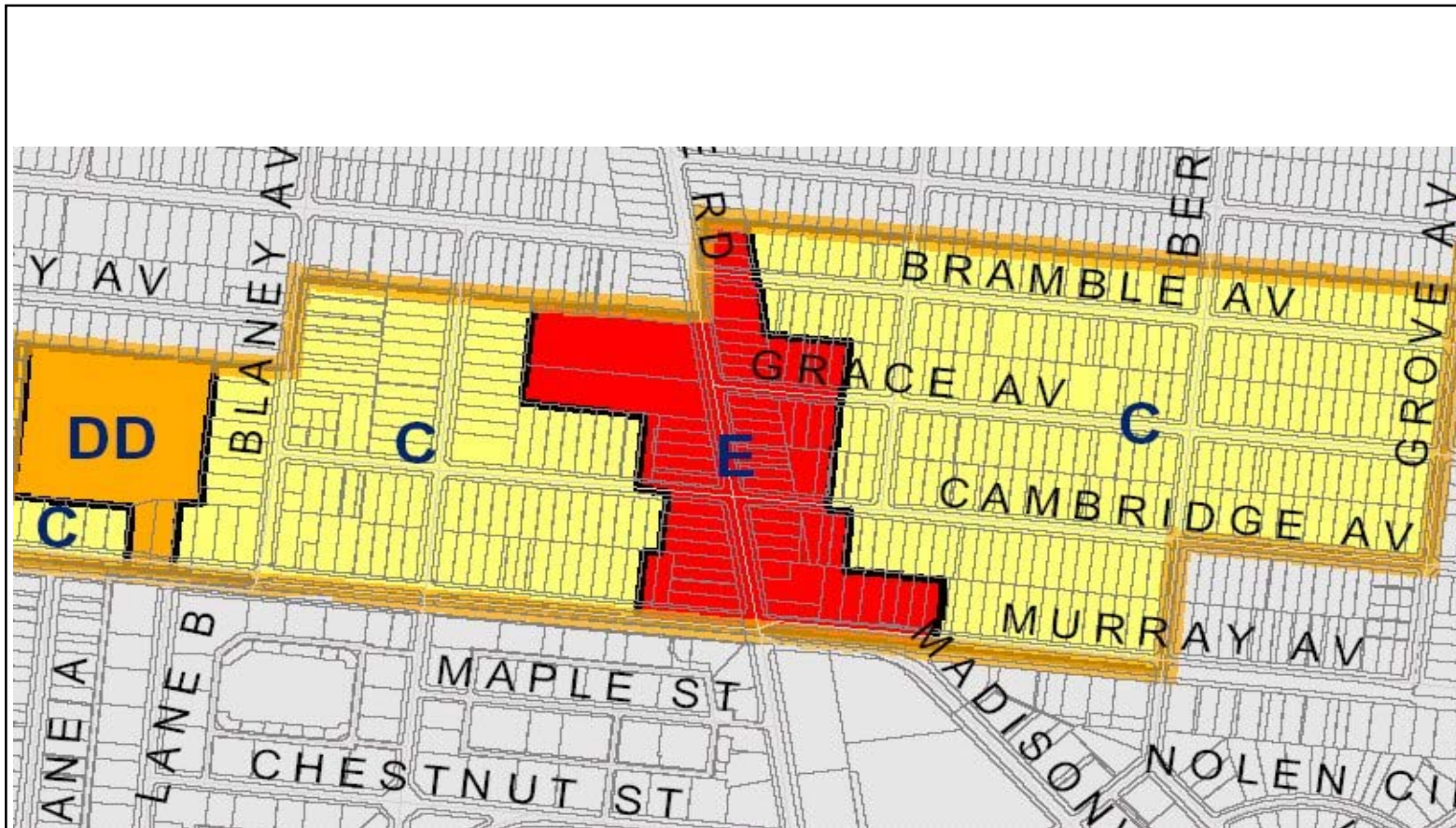
Businesses along Murray have a “cottage” feeling and match the scale and nature of the surrounding residential areas. The southern end of Plainville is dominated by auto repair and their associated car lots. There is some noteworthy development at this end with the newer restaurant and dry cleaners. Traveling on Plainville toward Bramble there are several value oriented retailers and home improvement/hardware shops. There is also a bar and an artist’s workshop in the area. The unoccupied Walgreen’s dominates the northern portion of the district with the UDF convenience store on the corner located within the City of Cincinnati.

Water, sewer, gas, electric and phone service are all provided throughout the entire study area.

Auditor’s records obtained from CAGIS (Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System) reveal that property taxes from Madison Place South businesses came to \$155,691 in 2003. These businesses occupied only 12.4 acres of land with an assessed market value of \$6,538,100. The average property tax collected per acre was \$12,556 as compared to \$7,124 for Highland & Ridge. The average property tax per acre is higher in this area due to its increased density and relatively little vacant land.

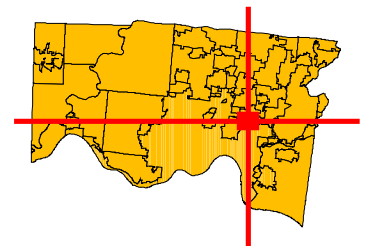
Columbia Township - Madison Place South District Zoning

Exhibit 4



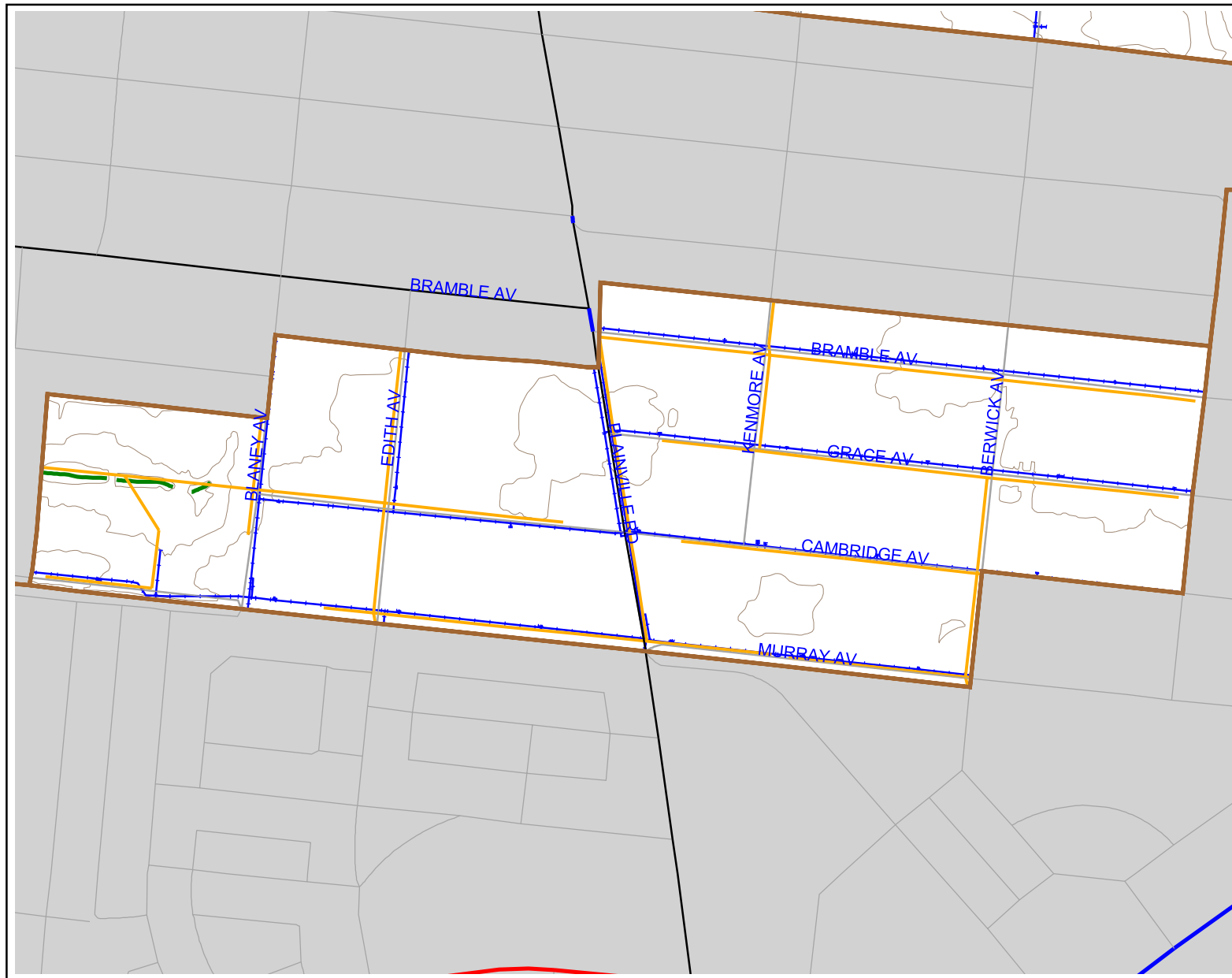
Zoning

- Single Family
- Multi Family
- Retail
- Light Industry
- Heavy Industry

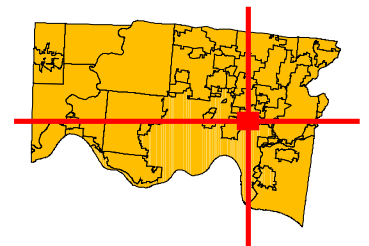
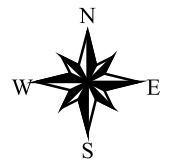


Columbia Township - Madison Place South District Utilities & Topography

Exhibit 5



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets**
 - Local (TBV)
 - Interstate
 - US & State Routes
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Local Streets
 - Highway Ramps
 - Sewers
 - Cww Water Mains
 - Streets
- Buildings
- 10' Contours
- Drainage



Business Orientation and Retail Analysis

The Madison Place South neighborhood business district is primarily a service district with a mix of service and retail businesses. The businesses are oriented towards serving the surrounding neighborhoods and some commuter traffic. The district serves mainly the adjacent neighborhoods such as Madisonville, other areas of Columbia Twp., Mariemont, Terrace Park, Newtown, Fairfax as well as commuters traveling through the area on US Route 50. However, specialty services such as Howard's Kitchen Design serve a somewhat larger trade area.

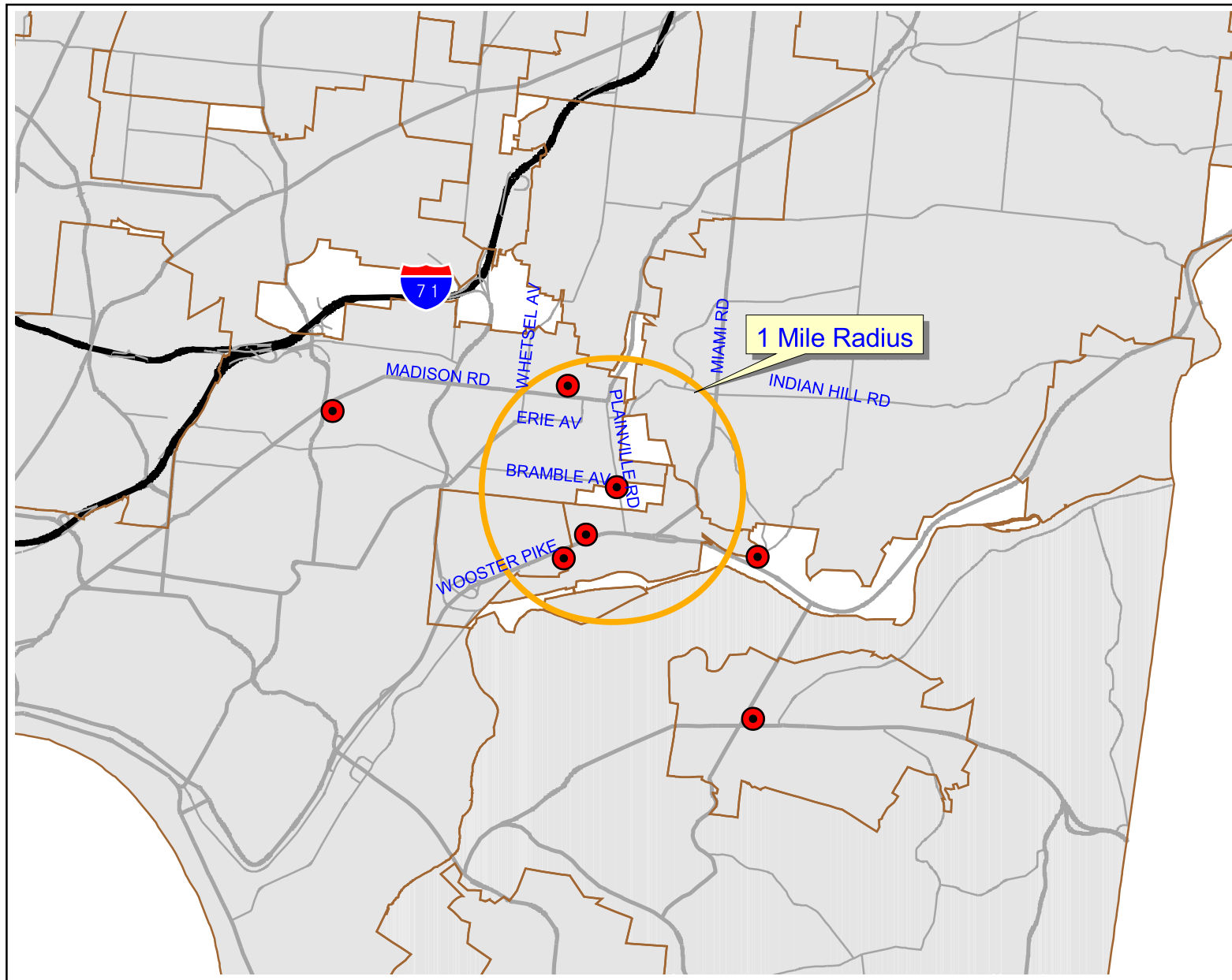
The following map shows the "convenience store" oriented trade area for the Madison Place South area. The trade area boundary is based on the drawing power of the anchor (UDF convenience store) in the district and the proximity to other convenience stores nearby. Based on the location of nearby stores, an approximately one mile radius from the Madison Place South UDF was determined to be the trade area boundary. Many of the shoppers in the Madison Place South business district are drawn from this one mile radius boundary.



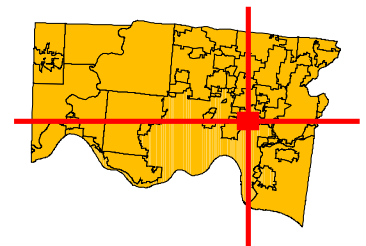
This picture shows the Madison Place South Business District facing south.

Columbia Township - Madison Place South District Convenience Store Trade Area

Exhibit 6



● Convenience Stores



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The following table outlines typical retail store categories and notes whether or not there are businesses in each category within the study area or in nearby neighborhoods. Categories without stores in the study area and without stores nearby could be voids in the market that could be filled with a new store in the study area. However, since the business district draws customers from an approximately one mile radius, any new stores that need a larger trade area than the one mile radius may not target the Madison Place South District.

Listing of Retail Categories

| <i>Retail Category</i> | <i>Are there businesses in the Madison Place South Business District Study Area</i> | <i>Are there businesses in surrounding neighborhoods in the trade area? (Fairfax, Mariemont, Newtown, Terrace Park, Madisonville or Plainville)</i> |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Women's apparel | | Yes (2 stores) |
| Women's shoes | | |
| Men's apparel | | |
| Men's shoes | | |
| Children's apparel | | Yes (1 store) |
| Children's shoes | | |
| Neighborhood/Family Restaurants | Italianette Pizza, Demetrios | Yes (6 restaurants) |
| Fast food restaurants/deli | | Yes (10 restaurants) |
| Coffee shop | | Yes (2 coffeshops) |
| Grocery store | Super Saver | Yes (1 store) |
| Meat and Fish market | Mariemont Meats | |
| Fruit / Vegetable market | | Yes (farmer's market) |
| Ice cream parlor | UDF | Yes (3 stores) |
| Retail bakery | | Yes (2 stores) |
| Liquor wine store | | Yes (2 stores) |
| Bar / tavern | The Arena Lounge | Yes (5 taverns/bars) |
| Appliance / electronic store | | |
| Automobile sales | | Yes (2 car lots) |
| Automobile repair | Larry Daniel's, Marathon, Mariemont Auto | Yes (5 shops) |
| Art, Craft and framing | | Yes (3 stores) |
| Auto supply tires | | Yes (2 stores) |
| Bank | | Yes (7 bank branches) |
| Book store | | |
| Card and gift shop/boutique | | Yes (1 store) |
| Cell phone / pager | | Yes (3 stores) |
| Computers and accessories | | |
| convenience and gasoline | Marathon | Yes (10 gas / convenience stores) |
| Discount merchandise store, furniture | Dollar General | Yes (1 store) |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Drug store | | Yes (1 store) |
| Florist | | |
| Health and beauty | | |
| Home improvement, lumber, home décor, furnishings, carpets, accessories | Howard's Kitchen and Bath, Bailey's Hardware | Yes (1 store) |
| Jewelry | | Yes (1 store) |
| Laundry / dry cleaning | Eastern Hill Dry Cleaners | Yes (2 stores) |
| Luggage | | |
| Medical supply | | |
| Movie theatre | | Yes (1 theatre) |
| Music cd | | |
| Optical vision care | | Yes (1 store) |
| Office supply | | |
| Personal services- hair/nails | YJ Hair Affair, Mehn Shop, Alterations by Annie, Mr. Earl's Hairstyling | (yes 8 salons/barber) |
| Pet supply | Mariemont Vet Clinic | Yes (1 store) |
| Photographic | | (yes 1 store) |
| Shoe repair | | |
| Sporting goods/bicycle | | Yes (3 stores) |
| Toy and hobby | | Yes (2 stores) |
| Video rental / sales | | Yes (1 store) |

Please note that the numbers in parenthesis indicate the number of establishments in adjacent business districts. The list of businesses was used to determine which retail categories have businesses within the study area.

Existing niches such home improvement and auto repair have emerged such as Bailey's Hardware, Howard's Kitchen and Bath, and Larry Daniel's Automotive are seen as having potential to expand in the future.

It is important to note that there are other competitive shopping areas nearby. These include the Fairfax, Mariemont, Madisonville, Newtown, Plainville, and Terrace Park areas as noted in the Trade Area map. The existence of these successful neighborhood oriented shopping areas in close proximity to the Madison Place South area may limit the attraction of stores to the area as retailers will not locate additional stores nearby if the market demands are currently being met.

List of Current Businesses in the Madison Place South Business District

Plainville Road

Demetrios IV
Larry Daniels Auto Center
Mariemont Auto
Eastern Hills Dry Cleaning
Dav's Complete Auto Repair
Marathon
Dollar General
Italianette Pizza
Howard's Kitchen Studio
Y.J. Hair Affair
Mehn Shop Family Hair Care
Alternations by Annelies
Bailey's Hardware
The Kitchen & Bath Store
The Arena Lounge
Paul Dirk Ludwig Photographiques
Marfay Auto Parts
Super Saver Grocery

Murray Avenue

Mariemont Vet Clinic
Mariemont Meats
Mr. Earl's Hairstyling
James F. Simon DBA Business
Intelligence Inc
Thor Investment Management

Developer Interviews – Madison Place South

HCDC conducted interviews with the following developers: Al Neyer Inc., Regency Shopping Centers, Midland Atlantic Properties, Vandercar Holdings, Ackermann Group and Neyer Properties in order to gather insights and opinions on the potential of the study area. A summary of the responses is below.

What is your overall perception or impression of the area?

The overall perception and impression of the area was dominated by comments about the poor, unsightly, tired appearance and perception of crime in the area.

What type of future development do you envision being successful?

Several uses were mentioned as possible future land uses including:

- Small retailers.

Interviews with Area Businesses and Employees

HCDC conducted a survey of area businesses and employees, both those located in and those nearby the study area, in order to gain input and opinions on the potential of the area and how it is used. The following is a summary of the responses.

What are your overall impressions of the Madison Place South Business District area?

Half of the respondents rated the area as “average”, one-third indicated it was “below average” and the remainder rated it as “poor.”

What are the advantages of this location as a place to do business?

Location, customer base and no income tax were the most predominant advantages for doing business.

What are the disadvantages of this location as a place to do business?

Appearance and perception of crime were the most commonly stated disadvantages.

Would you like to expand your business in this location?

Roughly half the respondents were interested in expansion possibilities.

From where do you draw a majority of your customers?

Customers were reported as being drawn from the minimum of a 5 mile radius with several indicating that they served the entire Cincinnati Region.

If the Madison Place South Business District area were redeveloped, what types of businesses would most likely succeed?

Value oriented retail was the most commonly suggested redevelopment category. Several business owners indicated that high-end retail and residential would most likely succeed.

Recommendations

The following additional recommendations are important to enhancing and marketing the Madison Place South area but could be implemented independently of the previously discussed recommendations.

Physical / Aesthetics Enhancements

- Give the area its own unique charm through design features. Reinstall and maintain street trees along Plainville Road. Consider installation of walls along the Plainville corridor with emphasis on the entryways near Bramble and Murray Avenues.
- The highest potential expansion opportunities lie in the automobile and home improvement niches already existing in the area.
 - The automobile related businesses in this section have been very successful yet they need to incorporate some cohesive design elements such as sign placement, and lot arrangement. The larger auto centers could expand and create more of a campus arrangement.
 - Bolster the existing home improvement niche. This area already has several independent home improvement shops which seem to be meeting success. Older housing stock needs more repairs and maintenance, which will help draw customers. The nearest big-box competitor is several miles away in the Ridge and Highland Business District.

Site Specific

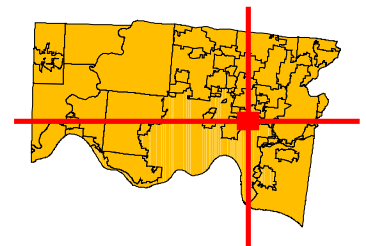
- Interview the realtor currently marketing the vacant site at Bramble and Plainville. Also discuss future plans with the neighboring Marfay Autoparts. Encourage them to expand to the vacant adjoining lot or couple the two properties together to create a more marketable site. The site has high visibility due to the terminus of Bramble Avenue.
- Identify the owner of the vacant Walgreen's location, determine their plans, and investigate development options. This the largest site and building in the corridor and its condition strongly influences the entire business district. Encourage redesign of the building footprint with any future development. A survey revealed that perception of crime limited the area's potential. This perception can be countered by ensuring that a majority of the vacant Walgreen's site be visible from the street and limit access to the service areas such as the loading docks. Concentrate on attracting a development which boosts the value of the property and spurs additional surrounding reinvestment.

Columbia Township - Madison Place South District Redevelopment Opportunities

Exhibit 7



- Streetscaping and Aesthetics
- Specific Sites
- Expansion Opportunities



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Stewart Road Business District Study

Introduction

Two primary issues dominate any discussion of development opportunities in the Stewart Road District - topography and access. This study focused on areas the area's potential to support commercial or multi-family use. Although there are several businesses along Stewart Road to the north in Silverton, development opportunities in Columbia Township are rather limited. Currently small single family residences dot the hillside near I-71.

Location

The Stewart Road area of Columbia Township is located along Stewart Road immediately south of the City of Silverton. The I-71 interchange to the north only provides access to I-71 South. An exit ramp is provided to Stewart Road from I-71 North only. Thus to access this area from the North via I-71, commuters must use the Red Bank Expressway exit and Madison Road which are to the West and South.

Existing Land Use

The existing land uses in the Stewart Road district are primarily single-family residential in nature, however, their long term viability may be questionable given their close proximity to and visibility from Interstate 71. Vacant land parcels mark the steep hillsides as shown on the Utilities & Topography map. In addition, new high-density residential units have recently been constructed at the terminus of Windridge Drive. Seven Hills School currently occupies the area in the southwestern corner of the map.

Redevelopment Scenarios

HCDC suggests that the 55-acre site, highlighted in Exhibit 6 be investigated for multifamily residential or office use. The location is challenged by issues such as lack of access, poor site visibility, access issues, lack of demand as evident in undeveloped vacant land nearby and constrained lot layout. Multi-family residential will have the density needed to make this hillside development financially feasible. The single family lots can be assembled to allow adequate area for high-density buildings and the required parking. The topography of the site actually ensures privacy in a multi-family setting. The interstate right of way on the west side of Stewart Road should continue to serve as a natural buffer. Office could be investigated as a long-term option.

Recommendations

This area has rather limited redevelopment potential due to the hillsides. Multifamily residential, in the current market, appears to be the most likely use of the property from an economic development perspective. There is some commercial and possible office development to the north but it is unclear if it would be able to extend into Columbia Township. The area is largely residential in nature. Shallow lot depth due to topography encourages the parceling together of lots where possible.

The potential redevelopment area equates to a 55 acre site, but approximately a large percentage of the area (perhaps as much as 50%-60%) will not support construction of any kind due to the slope of the hillside. Grading of hillsides is limited to a 30% slope in Hamilton County. The key areas to consider are right along Stewart Road, in the northern-most section, and at the terminus of Jordan Lane.

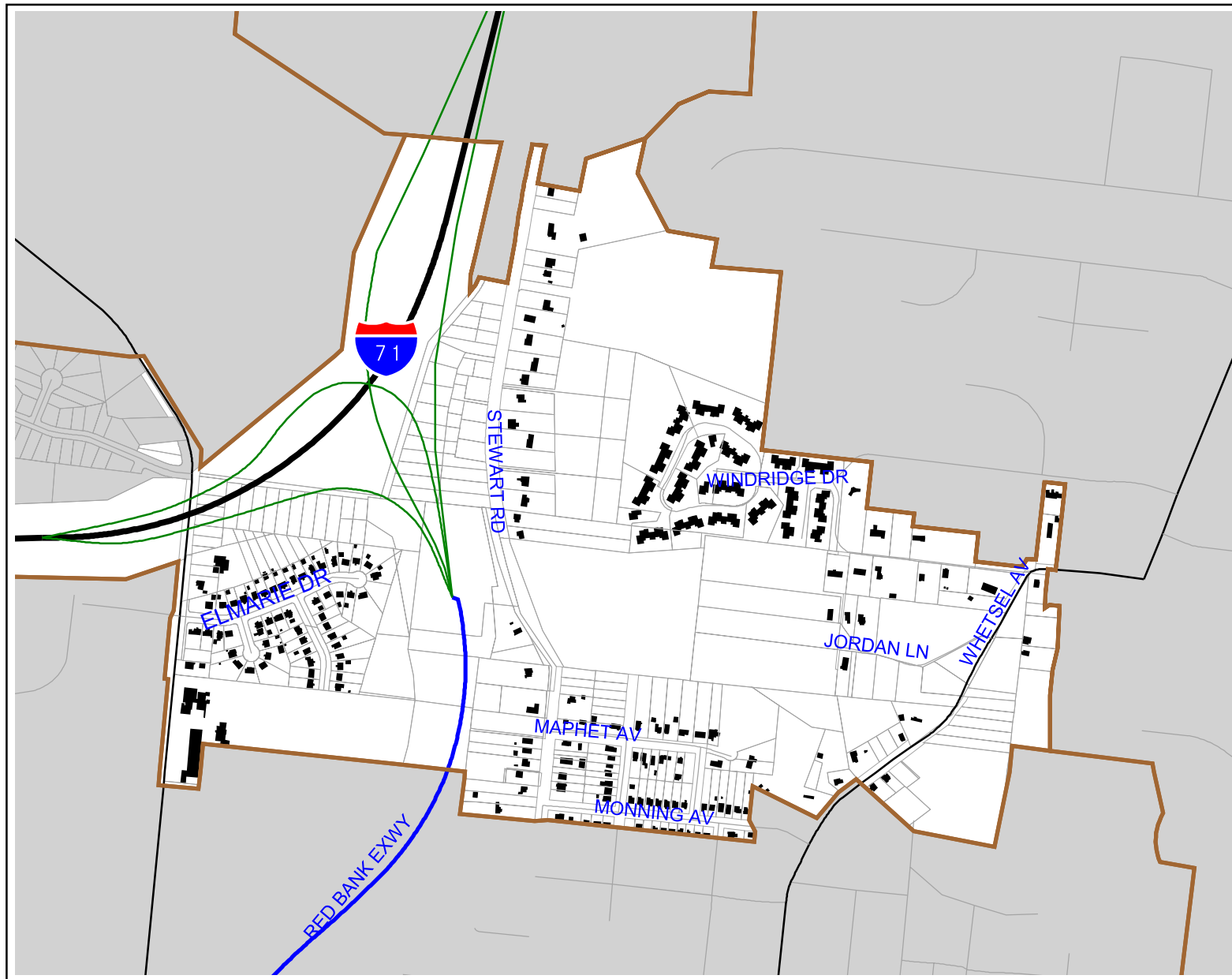
Under these constraints, high density multi-family residential use may prove to be the highest and best use to pursue as part of an economic development strategy. A great deal of grading and design will be needed to accommodate buildings and the required parking.

Access is mixed within this district given that the exits only allow ingress and egress to I-71 south of the area. Multi-family residential tends to host a more transient population and should match the detached nature of this section of Stewart Road. The interstate right of way on the west-side of Stewart Road should be encouraged to function as a natural buffer.

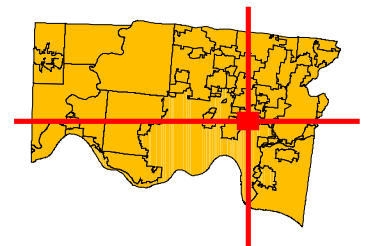
Office may be feasible at this location if access is improved to Red Bank Road and I-71. Recent demand for new office space has been soft in all but a few select areas in the Cincinnati Region. It is possible that demand could increase and Stewart Road is strategically positioned between Kenwood and Norwood in what has been coined a "Mid-City" location. The real determining factors may be the viability of assembling land parcels and the geotechnical possibility of building into a hillside. Zoning changes to allow office use would also be necessary. The land use plan and vision completed in conjunction with this study should clarify if this area is desired to remain single family or if office or multi-family use is preferred.

Columbia Township - Stewart Road District Existing Conditions

Exhibit 2



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets
 - Local
 - Interstate
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Highway Ramps
- Parcel Polygons
- Buildings

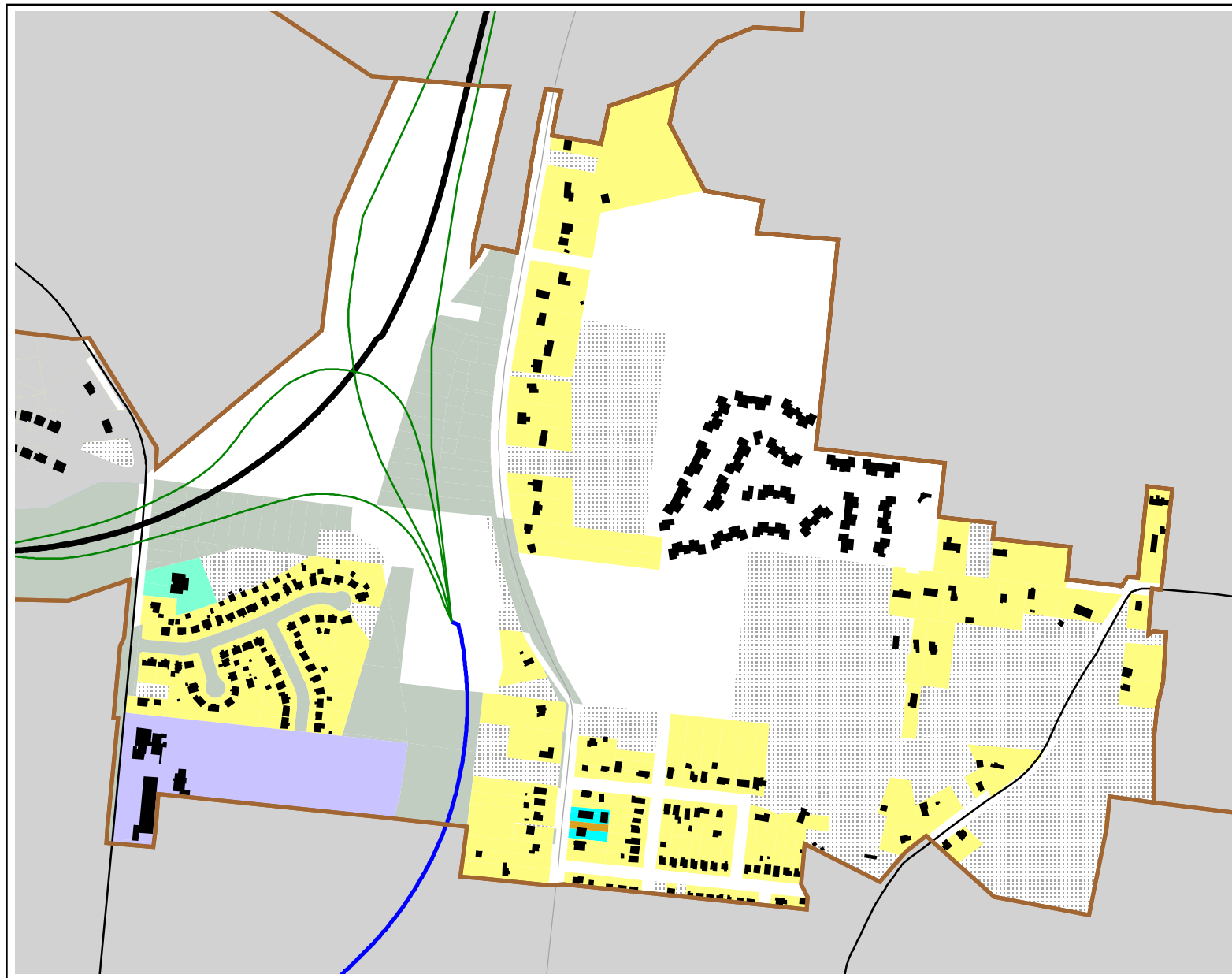


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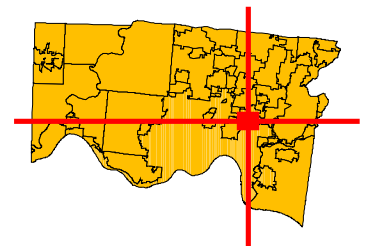
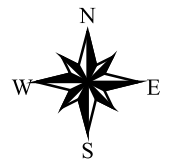
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Columbia Township - Stewart Road District Existing Land Use

Exhibit 3



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets
 - Interstate
 - US & State Routes
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Local Streets
 - Highway Ramps
- Buildings
- Parcel Polygons
 - Agriculture
 - Vacant
 - Single Family
 - Two Family
 - Mobile Homes
 - Congregate Housing
 - Multi Family
 - Mixed Use
 - Office
 - Public/Semi Public
 - Commercial
 - Light Industrial
 - Heavy Industrial
 - Educational
 - Institutional
 - N/A
 - Public Utilities
 - Parks & Recreation

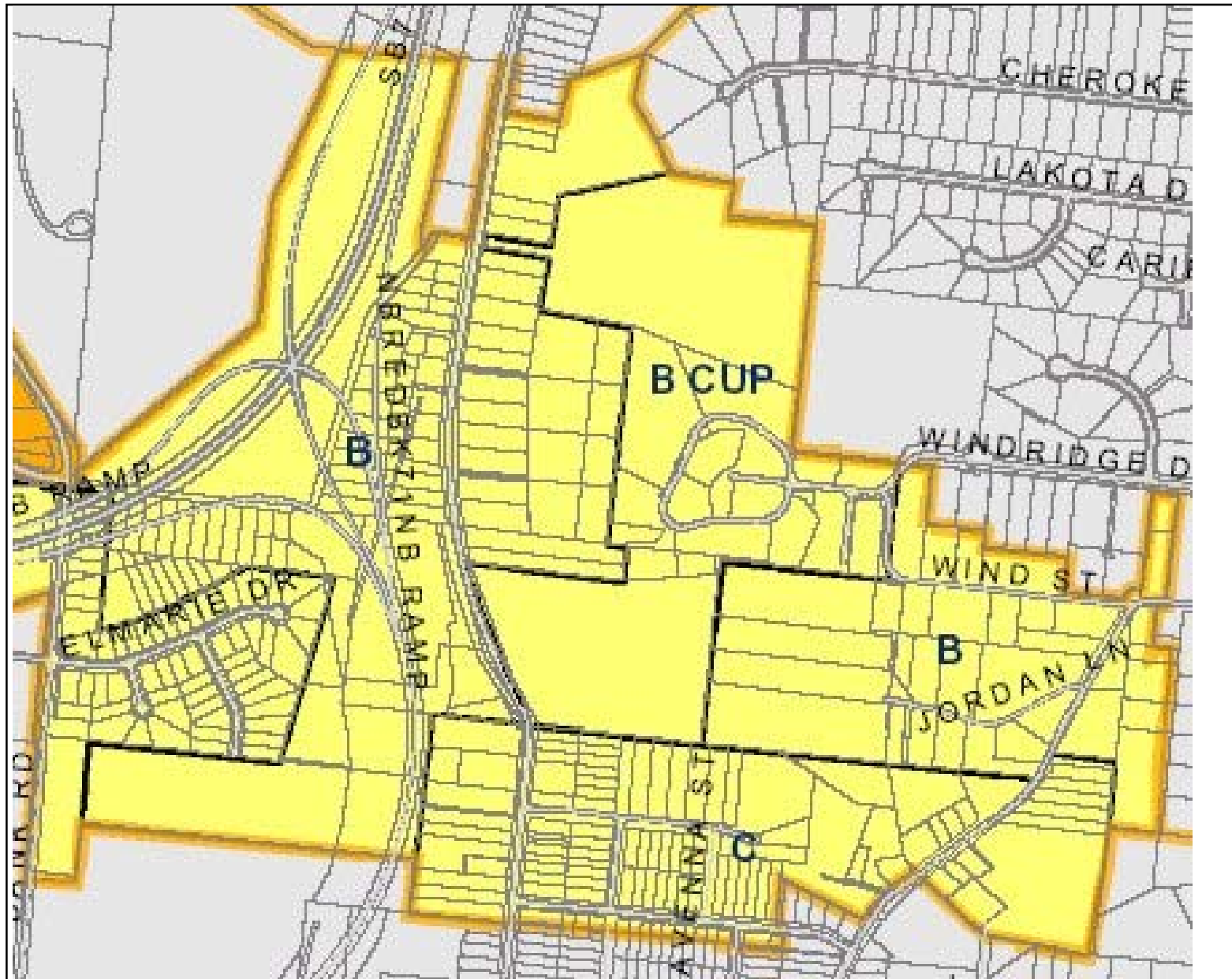


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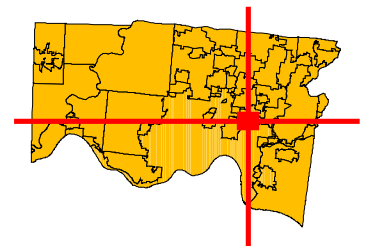
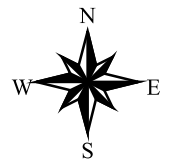
Columbia Township - Stewart Road District Zoning

Exhibit 4



Zoning

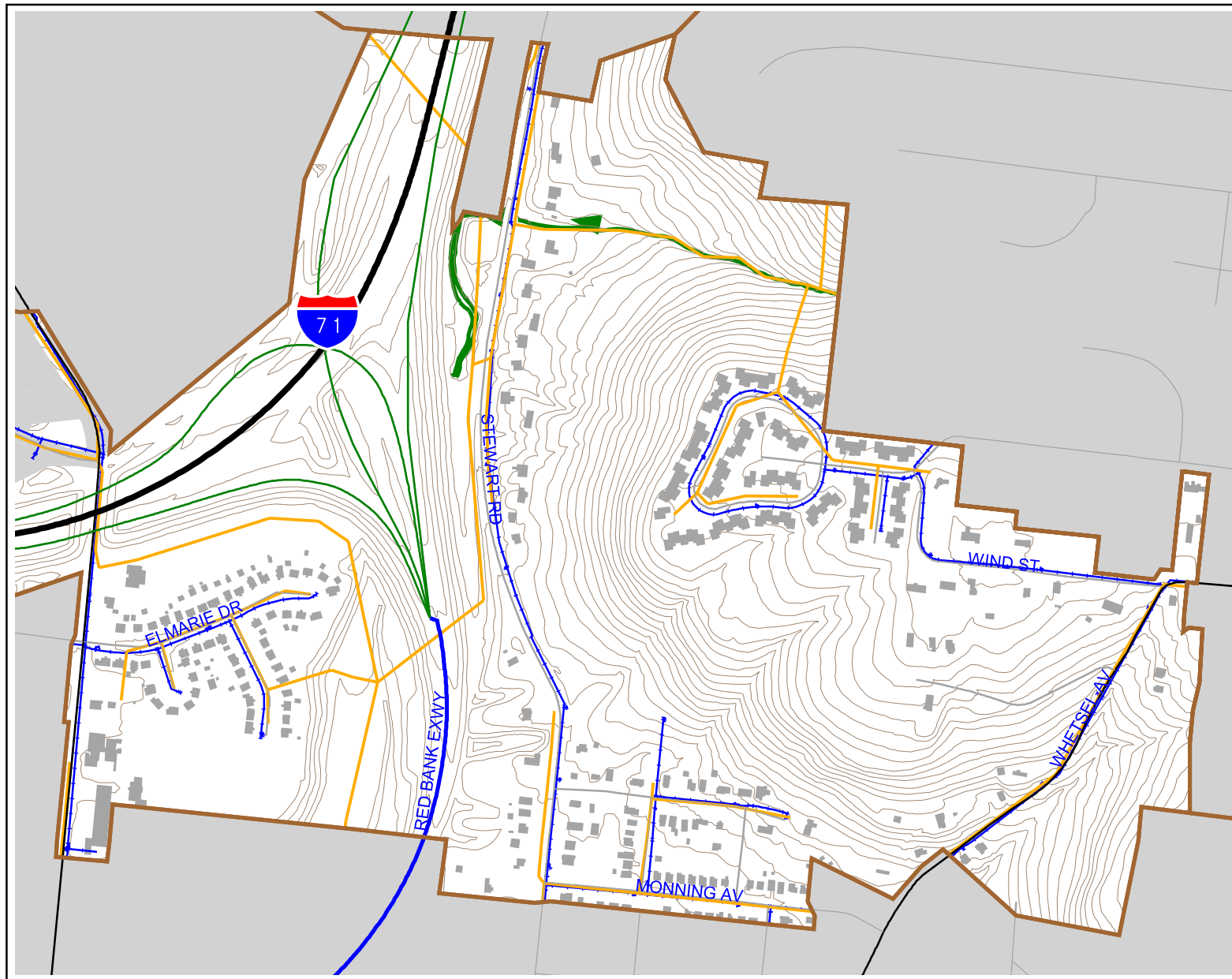
- Single Family
- Multi Family
- Retail
- Light Industry
- Heavy Industry



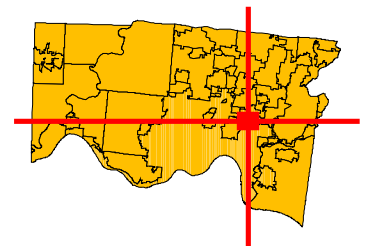
01/2005

Columbia Township - Stewart Road District Utilities & Topography

Exhibit 5



- Municipalities & Townships
- Streets
 - Local (TBV)
 - Interstate
 - US & State Routes
 - Arterial Roads
 - Collector Roads
 - Local Streets
 - Highway Ramps
 - Sewers
 - Cww Water Mains
- Streets
- Buildings
- 10' Contours
- Drainage



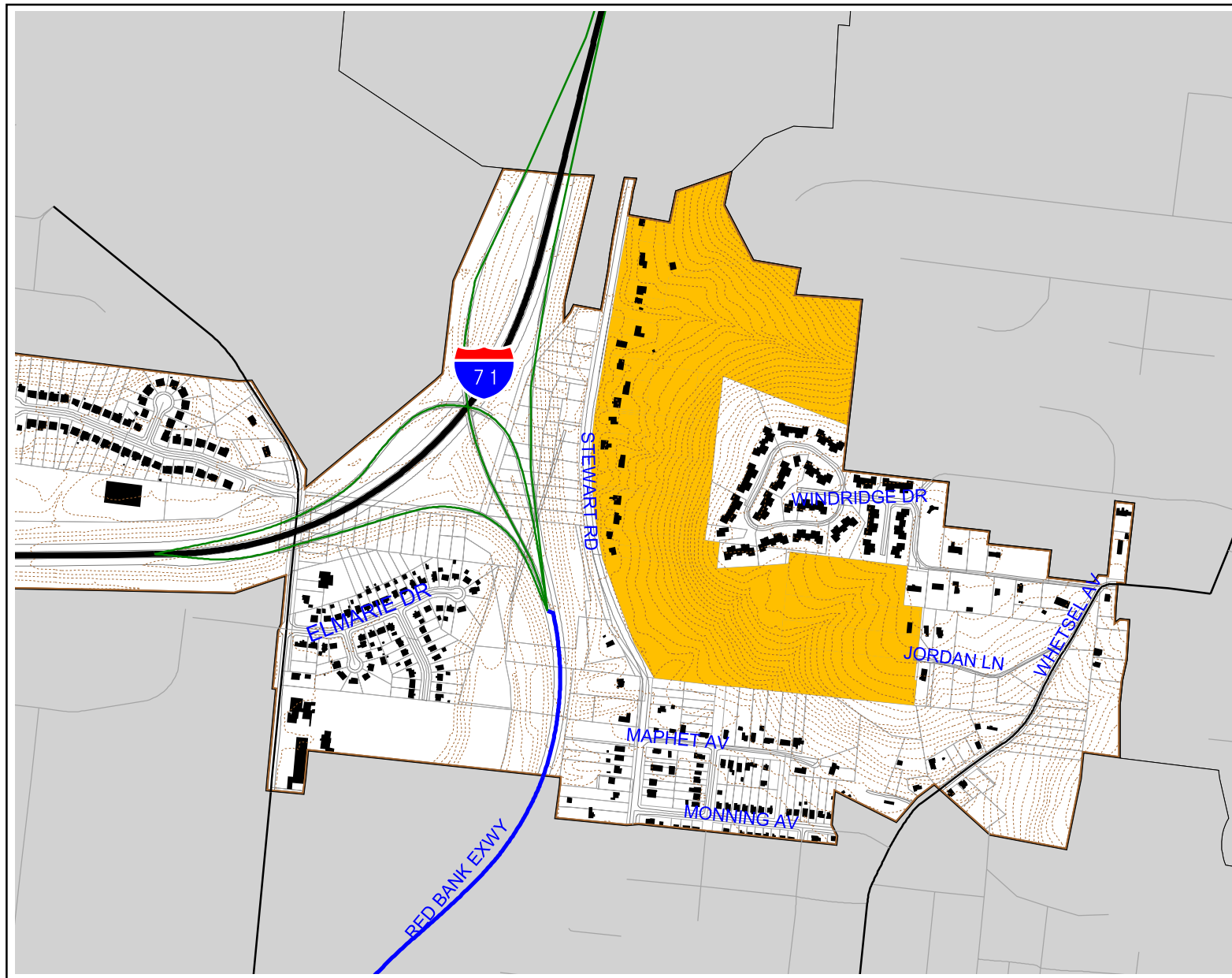
HCDC
Hamilton County Economic Development Office

01/2005

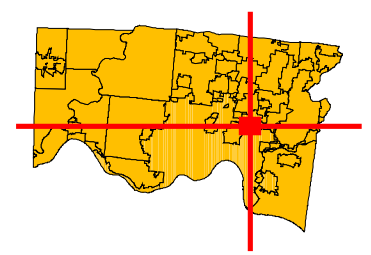
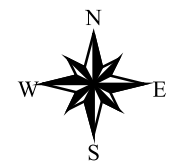


Columbia Township - Stewart Road District Redevelopment Opportunities

Exhibit 6



10' Contours
Development Opportunity



01/2005

