

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CITY OF MASON^N

2 0 1 0

Executive Summary





Executive Summary

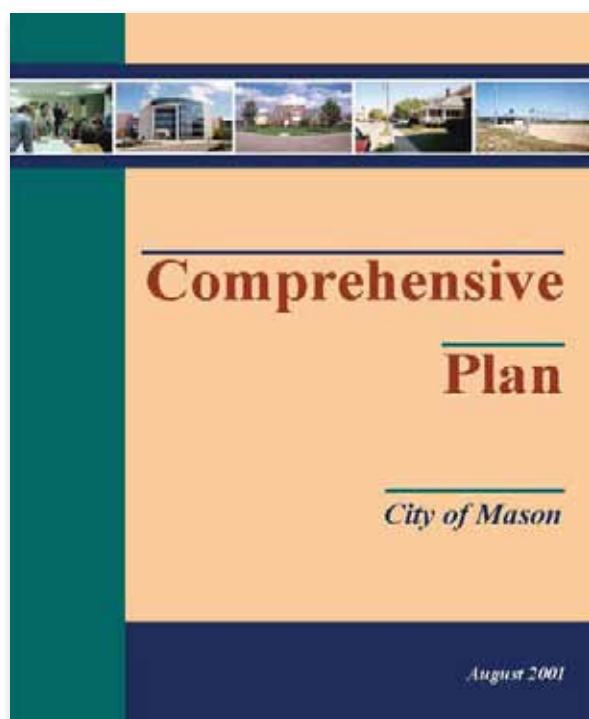
1. Introduction.....	1 EX
2. Plan Organization.....	2 EX
3. Public Participation.....	4 EX
4. Implementation.....	7 EX
5. Policy Summary.....	8 EX

The City of Mason created the 2010 Comprehensive Plan in its continuing efforts to provide a high quality of life for its residents and excellent environment for business. The 2010 Comprehensive Plan is the culmination of two years of intense fact finding, data analysis, and public meetings. This plan is inspired by public feedback received from residents and key stakeholders during interviews, steering committee meetings, town hall meetings and open houses.

1. Introduction and Context

When was the last Plan created?

The original Comprehensive Plan was prepared in 1992 with a major update in 2001. Minor updates were created in 2004 and 2006 in response to additional growth pressure. Mason commissioned a Downtown Master Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Way Master Plan in 2001.



Why was the Plan updated?

After decades of rapid growth, Mason's development is slowing and the community is reaching maturity. The 2001 Plan served Mason well but it lacks the specific policy guidance needed to effectively manage the issues presently facing the community.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

The 2010 Comprehensive Plan represents an ideal vision for community growth and what the community wants to be. It is an important decision-making tool for City officials, residents and developers. It also:

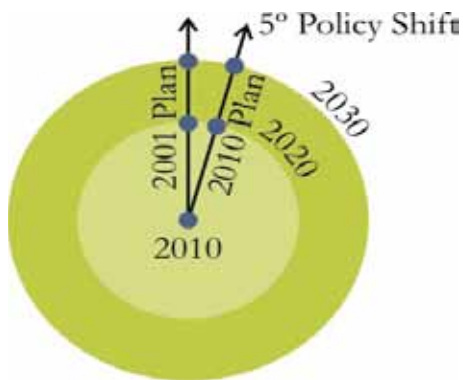
- Considers opportunities and constraints
- Directs the location, timing and quality of growth
- Provides a flexible road map for civic and private actions geared towards implementation
- Identifies priorities, strategies and resources needed to implement goals
- Supports zoning decision-making and provides a legally defensible land use policy
- Supports alternative funding and grant requests

Chapter Cover Photo

As the photo collage illustrates, Mason contains many positive attributes including a unique blend of high quality housing, public facilities and infrastructure. Mason is also home to Fortune 500 companies, amusement parks and professional sports. Collectively, these characteristics attract residents and businesses alike and make Mason a true community of choice. These attributes, among others, are addressed throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

What has changed since 2001?

Shifting demographics, lifestyle changes and fewer large development parcels were considered by the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee, to maintain Mason's premiere community status, proposed policies to deal with such changes. The Steering Committee considered this new policy as a "5 degree" course correction from the 2001 Comprehensive Plan. Though viewed as minor today, this policy shift will have a noticeable impact thirty years out as the below graphic illustrates.



Mixed Use. Demographic shifts, retirement of Baby Boomers and changing lifestyle expectations for more leisure time are driving sales of lower maintenance, higher density housing and mixed use developments that integrate live, work, and entertainment options.

Land Availability. Fewer tracts of undeveloped land remain available for development inside the corporate boundary. This underscores the need to maximize the social, environmental and economic benefit gained from each new development. It also underscores the need to revitalize and perhaps reinvent some older areas.

Remaining tracts of vacant land are shown on the Planning Issues Map on page 3 as are potential reinvestment areas. Other issues are summarized on this map as well.

What challenges are we facing?

Transitioning from fast-growth to mature-community status is often challenging. As it transitions, Mason can expect:

- slower growth
- stable (flatter) tax revenues
- need to look inward and reinvest in older neighborhoods and business districts
- pressure to relax single land use and setback standards
- need to maximize benefit from remaining development opportunities

Due to slower growth, Mason will be challenged to provide the same high-quality life and level of services residents have learned to enjoy.

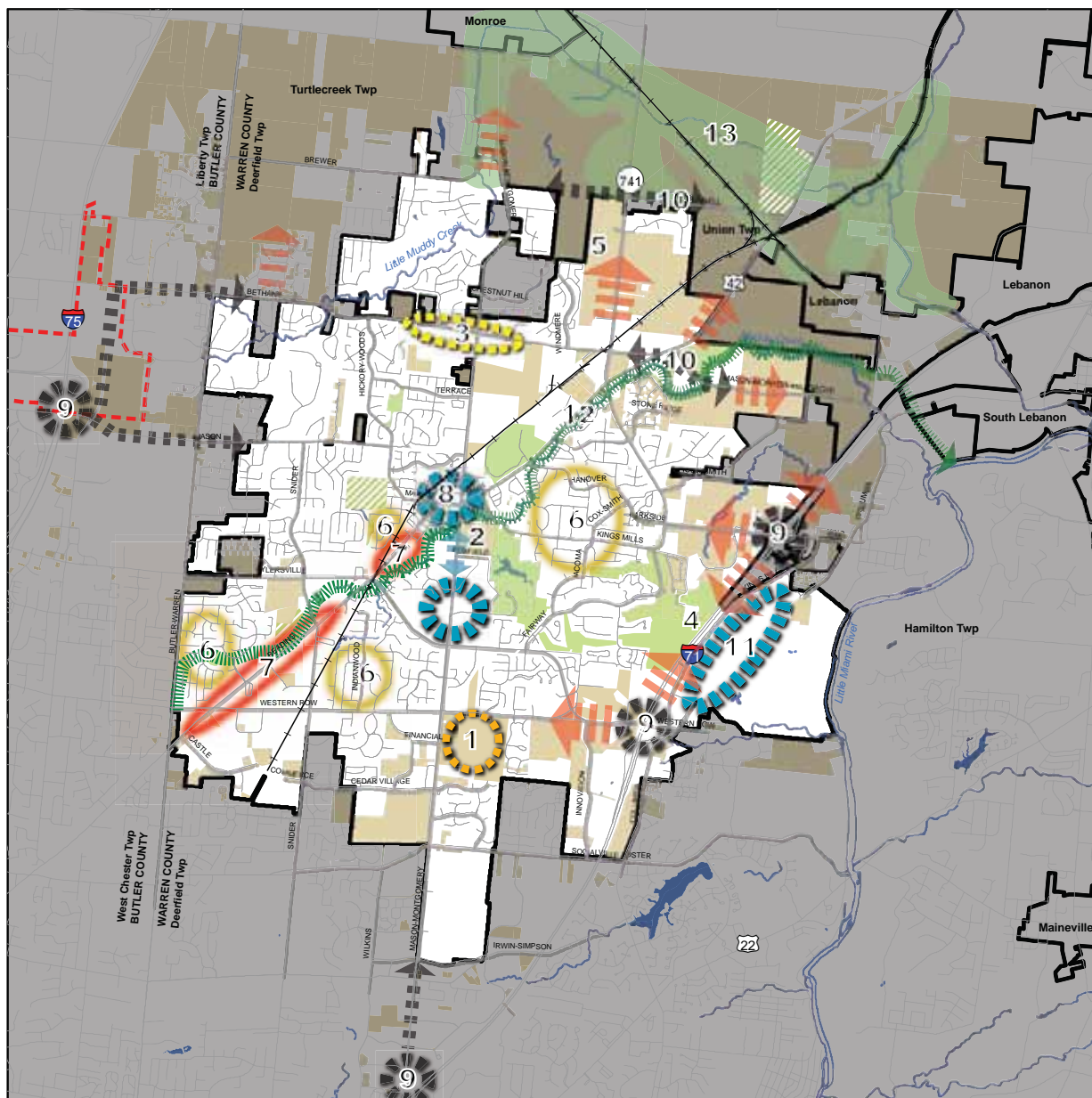
At the same time, looming infrastructure maintenance and replacement costs will start to compete for general fund dollars that have traditionally been spent on new public facilities and improved services.

What can be done?

Mason, confronted with tough choices, has to weigh its options as it balances competing needs and interests. Possible solutions range from tax increases to freezing or decreasing existing service levels.

A third option, one that is proposed in this Plan, is to add jobs to the local economy as part of sustainable mixed use development strategy aimed at keeping Mason highly attractive - environmentally, socially, and economically - well into the 21st Century.

Planning Issues Summary Map



PLANNING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Development Opportunities

1. Western Row Golf Course
2. Connect downtown to civic campus
3. Existing large-lot single-family homes
4. City-owned Golf Center at Kings Island
5. City-owned business park

Revitalization

6. Aging neighborhoods
7. Aging commercial district
8. Downtown revitalization

Infrastructure Improvements

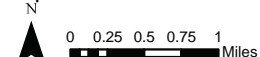
9. Planned interchange improvements and gateway enhancements
10. Improved east-west connections needed
11. "Entertainment district" branding

Natural Areas

12. Muddy Creek greenway opportunity
13. Environmentally sensitive area

LEGEND

- Growth path
- Interchange improvement
- Improved roadway connections
- Joint Economic Development District
- Existing park
- Planned park
- Potential development impact areas



What are some differences between Plans?

Many difference exist between the 2001 and 2010 Plans. The topical organization of chapters in the 2010 Plan is a noticeable difference. Some notable policy differences follow: (1) The 2010 Plan is strategic with prioritized strategy and action statements; (2) A new emphasis is placed on mixed-use sustainable development, energy efficiency, low impact design, preserving natural resources, and reducing vehicular trips; (3) Greater emphasis is placed on connecting neighborhoods, parks, schools, and business parks with paths and greenways; (4) The 2010 plan promotes mixed land use in appropriate higher intensity areas and is concerned about the performance of land use development; and (5) Greater residential density is desired in strategic locations in-line with shifting marketing demand.

2. Plan Organization

How is this Plan Organized?

The Comprehensive Plan document includes an Executive Summary, eight policy chapters, and a separately bound Existing Conditions Report.

The Executive Summary summarizes the planning process and provides a quick snapshot of Mason's 2010 Comprehensive Plan land use policy.

Chapters 1 through 7 are policy chapters focused on a different topical element. Each policy chapter starts with a vision and purpose statement followed by a summary of existing conditions. Goals and strategies offered at the end of each chapter provide guidance towards achieving a common vision.

Chapter 8 Sub-area Plans provide a preferred land use and development strategy for six strategic locations. Chapter 9 Action Plan organizes goals, strategies and action statements found throughout the Comprehensive Plan into prioritized summary tables.

The Existing Conditions Report documents analyzes social, economic and physical conditions that affect future growth. This report offers additional background information.

Comprehensive Plan Organization

- **Executive Summary**
- **Policy Chapters**
 - 1: Housing and Population
 - 2: Natural Resources and Open Space
 - 3: Community Facilities
 - 4: Economic Development
 - 5: Infrastructure
 - 6: Transportation
 - 7: Land Use
 - 8: Sub-area Plans
 - 9: Action Plan
- **Existing Conditions Report**
(Separately bound document)

3. Public Participation

Who participated?

Hundreds of people participated in the creation of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan including:

City Council. City Council gave the directive and provided the resources to prepare this Comprehensive Plan. City Council held a public hearing and updated The Comprehensive Plan on November 1, 2010.

Planning Commission. Planning Commission reviewed the final draft, held a public hearing on August 30, 2010, considered public comments, and made an approval recommendation for City Council's consideration.



What was the planning process?

2010 Comprehensive Plan vision and policies were developed in collaboration with the public through an extensive public participation process, as directed by City Council.

Excellent turnout was experienced during public meetings validating City Council's desire for active community participation. The project webpage, www.plan4mason.org, provided a project information portal.

The following six step process was utilized to develop the 2010 Comprehensive Plan:

Step 1 Existing Conditions Analysis and Mapping.

Plan vision statements and recommendations were informed by an extensive inventory and analysis of Mason's demographic, environmental, housing, transportation and economic characteristics.

Step 2 Major Issues Identification. The Steering Committee developed five major planning issues that the Comprehensive Plan must address. These major issues were addressed during subsequent meetings.

Step 3 Mason Planning Month (Visioning). Mason Planning Month was heavily advertised to promote public participation. Meetings were held weekly for 4 consecutive weeks. This intense process proved to be highly popular and successful.

Public participants, including Steering Committee members, broke out into small groups and brainstormed strategies for each major planning issue identified in Step 2. Participants prioritized group ideas and strategies.

The second meeting identified the community's vision for the built environment. A public planning charrette followed to identify publicly supported land use and development outcomes for vacant land and areas in need of reinvestment. An open house format was used to present the results of the previous three meetings and seek additional feedback.



Steering Committee. A sixteen member Steering Committee (see top picture above) gave significant resident and stakeholder input. The Steering Committee represented a diverse cross section of Mason's resident and business community. Eight Steering Committee meetings were held.

Residents. Over 200 residents participated in four Mason Planning Month meetings, one open houses and two public hearings.

City Staff. City staff provided project management, day-to-day communications with the residents and consultants, and review draft documents.

Consultants. The City of Mason retained the services of Woolpert and McKenna Associates to facilitate the planning process, record public comments and assemble the Comprehensive Plan document.

Public Meeting Record	
Event	Date
Steering Committee Kick Off	7.28.2008
Public Kickoff	9.10.2008
Public Visioning Session	9.17.2008
Public Charrette	9.24.2008
Public Open House	10.1.2008
Steering Committee Meeting	12. 10.2009
Steering Committee Meeting	2.24.2010
Steering Committee Meeting	8.17.2010
Public Open House	8.17.2010
Planning Commission Public Hearing	8.30.2010
City Council Public Hearing and Adoption	11.1.2010

Step 4 Strategy Development. The Steering Committee created and reviewed goals and strategies for all policy related chapters using public input from Mason Planning Month as guidance.

Step 5 Comprehensive Plan Creation. Goals, action statements, maps and analysis created throughout the project were assembled into a draft comprehensive plan document. The draft document was presented to the public at an open house before the adoption step started.

Step 6 Adoption. The adoption process offered additional opportunities for the public to review and comment on the plan during Planning Commission and City Council public hearings. Planning Commission considered the 2010 Comprehensive Plan and forwarded an approval recommendation to City Council. City Council held a public hearing and formally adopted the plan on November 1, 2010.

What do residents like about Mason?

Mason residents are proud of their community. The below list of items were reported when residents were asked what they liked about their community.

- Numerous golf courses
- New community center
- Home-arama neighborhoods
- Community contributions/Volunteers
- World class events such as Pro Tennis Classic and Pro Volleyball
- Regional recreation venues such as Kings Island, The Beach, Tennis Center and the Great Wolf Lodge
- Close to Little Miami Scenic River and Trail
- Public library
- Downtown retains a small town feel
- Excellent rated schools
- High quality public facilities
- Family orientated community, great neighborhoods
- Pine Hill Lakes Park
- Responsiveness of City government
- Convenient location and access
- Community and neighborhoods are family orientated
- Extensive bike paths and sidewalk system
- Attractive landscaped medians and streetscape
- A mix of land uses
- Pools: indoor and outdoor
- Park system and greenspace
- Strong planning history; proactive community
- Residents identify with Mason; not Cincinnati
- Fortune 500 companies



The high-quality and iconic design of the Mason Municipal Center sets a high standard for the community as a whole.

What do residents dislike about Mason?

Even though the community enjoys several positive attributes, residents noted the below items when asked to identify what they dislike about Mason.

- Confrontations between city and township
- Traffic on US 42 between Butler-Warren and Tylersville
- Congestion on SR 42 through Downtown
- Downtown is hard to find
- Lack of city services for condos
- Lack of a cohesive theme for the entire community
- Increasing traffic and speed
- Homogenous architecture
- All thoroughfares do not connect
- Lack of Downtown revitalization
- Not enough shopping
- Power lines on Mason-Montgomery Road
- High taxes
- No 50 meter pool
- Need more local eateries, too many chains
- No art center
- Lack of major medical and hospital
- No municipal art program
- Willingness to give up green for development
- Zoning and plans do not represent highest and best use around interstates
- Not enough parks
- Not enough bike paths
- Bike paths do not connect to regional paths



What is the ideal vision for Mason?

The Steering Committee, when asked to define an ideal vision for Mason, responded with “We are and strive to be a “family-friendly” community characterized by:

- Excellent schools
- Bike paths
- Parks and greenspaces
- Safe neighborhoods
- Eco-friendly development
- Family-orientated entertainment
- A revitalized downtown

It is these attributes that define who Mason is and what its residents value. These values drive environmental stewardship, active civic involvement and socialization.



Top: The Muddy Creek Trail, an example family-friendly amenity, gives residents pedestrian access to Downtown and Pine Hill Lakes Park, both located in the Community Core.

Left: Downtown Revitalization is a high priority. This photo showcases the new downtown plaza and streetscape located in front of historically significant structure.

Major Planning Issues

The Steering Committee identified five major planning issues. These issues guided Plan policy development through out the planning process. Residents brainstormed ideas on how to best address these issues. The results are shown in the “Public Priorities” summary box on page 9.

1. Develop as a Sustainable (eco- and family-friendly) Community
2. Enhance family-friendly Tourism and Industry
3. Create a Fully Functioning Live-Work-Play (family friendly) Downtown
4. Develop a safe and multi-modal Transportation System
5. Improve Community Image and Quality of Life

What are the major planning issues?

These five planning issues were identified by the Steering Committee to further define the family- friendly vision:

1. Develop as a Sustainable (Eco- and Family-Friendly) Community. Excellent schools and neighborhoods currently drive the desired family-friendly community perception. Residents also speak highly of Mason’s parks, paths and greenspaces and more are desired with greater greenway connectivity.

Residents also desire to leave an enduring legacy for future generations. Eco-friendly developments with low impact (sustainable) and energy efficient design are desired. Mixed use and pedestrian-oriented developments are now desired as new investment occurs.

2. Enhance Family Friendly Tourism and Industry. Mason, with regional recreational amenities, amusement parks and professional athletics, is one of the largest tourist destinations in the Midwest. Leveraging this tourism base to bring additional visitors and “out-of-town” dollars to Mason is a priority.



Expanding high wage jobs with existing employers like Luxotica and attracting new corporate headquarters to the I-71 corridor is essential to maintain and grow Mason's high-quality facilities and services.

More events and attractions are needed to attract additional visitors. Developing tourism packages, improving connectivity among venues and developing new amenities are all ideas explored in this Plan.

Increasing resident access to multiple world-class venues and attractions is a side benefit to achieving these goals.

The city’s ability to maintain and add high-quality facilities and services as expected with the “Mason” brand is linked to high-wage employment growth. The I-71 growth corridor is an ideal location for such activity. Downtown revitalization is also viewed as an integral part of a socially sustainable tourism and industry strategy.

3. Revitalize Downtown. Downtown was raised most frequently during public meetings and received many votes during public visioning exercises.

Mason residents are frustrated over Downtown’s progress relative to the rest of the community. Mason’s image is tarnished by Downtown’s current under utilized state. As one stakeholder noted, “Mason cannot be viewed as a complete community until downtown revitalizes.”

4. Transportation. Residents enjoy Mason's bicycle paths and sidewalk system and additional, multi-modal choices are desired. Preventing through traffic and calming traffic (i.e., slowing down vehicles) were cited as important steps to make the city's transportation system safer and make biking and walking more attractive. These ideas were based on the community's desire to have a family-friendly transportation system.

5. Community Image and Quality of Life. Mason has earned an excellent reputation with top rated schools, excellent neighborhoods and high quality infrastructure and public services. Residents were asked what could further improve Mason's community image and quality of life. The number one response was developing additional pedestrian-friendly paths and sidewalks that converge on downtown followed by adding a full-service and high-quality medical facility.

As mentioned previously, the city's image as a whole will be elevated once the downtown and sections of connecting corridor return to a vibrant state. Downtown offers a reprieve from everyday life; a welcome alternative to suburban development.

What do residents want?

The Steering Committee held a visioning session with residents during Mason Planning Month. Residents were asked to identify priority community goals using the "Family-Friendly" community vision and the five major planning issues as guidance. Residents brainstormed several dozen ideas and then prioritized their selections. Resident top ten priorities are summarized on the table provided at the top of the next column.

Public Priorities

Rank	Community Wants (Wish List)
1	Less through traffic on local roads
2	Complete downtown revitalization from Tylersville Road to Hanover Road
3	Make downtown a destination with a vibrant restaurant, arts, retail and lodging scene
4	Another major sports venue for national swim meets or minor league baseball
5	Top notch golf course
6	Walkable community with network of connected paths and greenways
7	Make downtown an 18 hours destination with a synergistic mix of residential, retail and restaurants
8	Pedestrian friendly transportation system with paths, sidewalks and Muddy Creek Greenway that converges on downtown
9	Develop a Performing Arts Center
10	Connect Community Center to Downtown with a new mixed use district

4. Implementation

Who implements the Plan?

City Council will prioritize Plan recommendations and give the Administration guidance on how to move forward in a prioritized manner. The Administration, including all City Departments, will work corroboratively with other governments, civic organizations, developers, residents and property owners, etc. to implement this Plan. Most Plan recommendations are summarized in Chapter 9 Action Plan.

How does implementation work?

The Administration will integrate Plan recommendations into departmental annual plans and capital improvement plans as directed by Council. Department heads will report to council on a regular basis regarding progress. Stakeholders can petition the City regarding a Plan policy or recommendation as a potential implementation partner.

How long will implementation take?

This plan offers several recommendations with a range of immediate (0 to 4 years), intermediate (4 to 7 years) and long-term (7 to 10 plus years) action strategies. Persistence on the part of the City and its partners is essential regardless of time frames or obstacles.

Will all recommendations be implemented?

Not all plan recommendations will be implemented over the life of this Plan. Some recommendations will lack political support and/or adequate funding.

When will this Plan be updated?

A minor plan update is anticipated in 5 years and a full update is expected in 10 years.

What should be done first?

Priorities are set in Chapter 9 linked to resident feedback received during the planning process. City Council has authority to further prioritize Plan recommendations.

Will the Plan be implemented exactly as written?

No. Implementation will occur as resources warrant and as opportunities arise and not necessarily in priority order as defined by the Plan.

Is the Plan law?

No. The Plan is a flexible policy development. It guides growth and development consistent with community vision. Care was taken to make the Plan informative of that vision. The City desires stakeholder buy-in and a collaborative implementation effort instead of relying on prescriptive policies.

How much will implementation cost?

Financial figures were not prepared as part of this Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is not designed to be a financial document. Operating and capital costs will be defined during the implementation phase to determine if planned projects are financially feasible. The City prepares this type of financial analysis during the annual budgeting process between Council and City Staff.

Who will pay for implementation?

Funds used to pay for implementation will come from a variety sources. Private sector participation, multi-jurisdictional involvement and public-private partnerships are desired to spread costs across multiple parties. The City and its partners will also use the Plan to pursue alternative funding sources including grants.

5. Policy Summary

This section summarizes major Plan policies including the goals created for six policy chapters, future land use and roadway transportation improvements.

Goals

Goal statements found in the first six policy chapters are summarized on page 11. More information on these goals can be found in each policy chapter. These same goals - complete with strategies and action statements - are summarized in Table 9.2A in Chapter 9 Action Plan.

Future Land Use

The City's Future Land Use policy is summarized on page 12 and page 13. The Future Land Use Map on page 12 shows planned land use throughout the City and, in a few instances, land located adjacent to the City in case annexations are proposed by property owners.

The table on page 13 summarizes the goal, recommended land use and development guidelines assigned to each future land use category. Together, the map and table paint a picture of the type of land uses that are desired. The summary table also references ideal density and development standards.

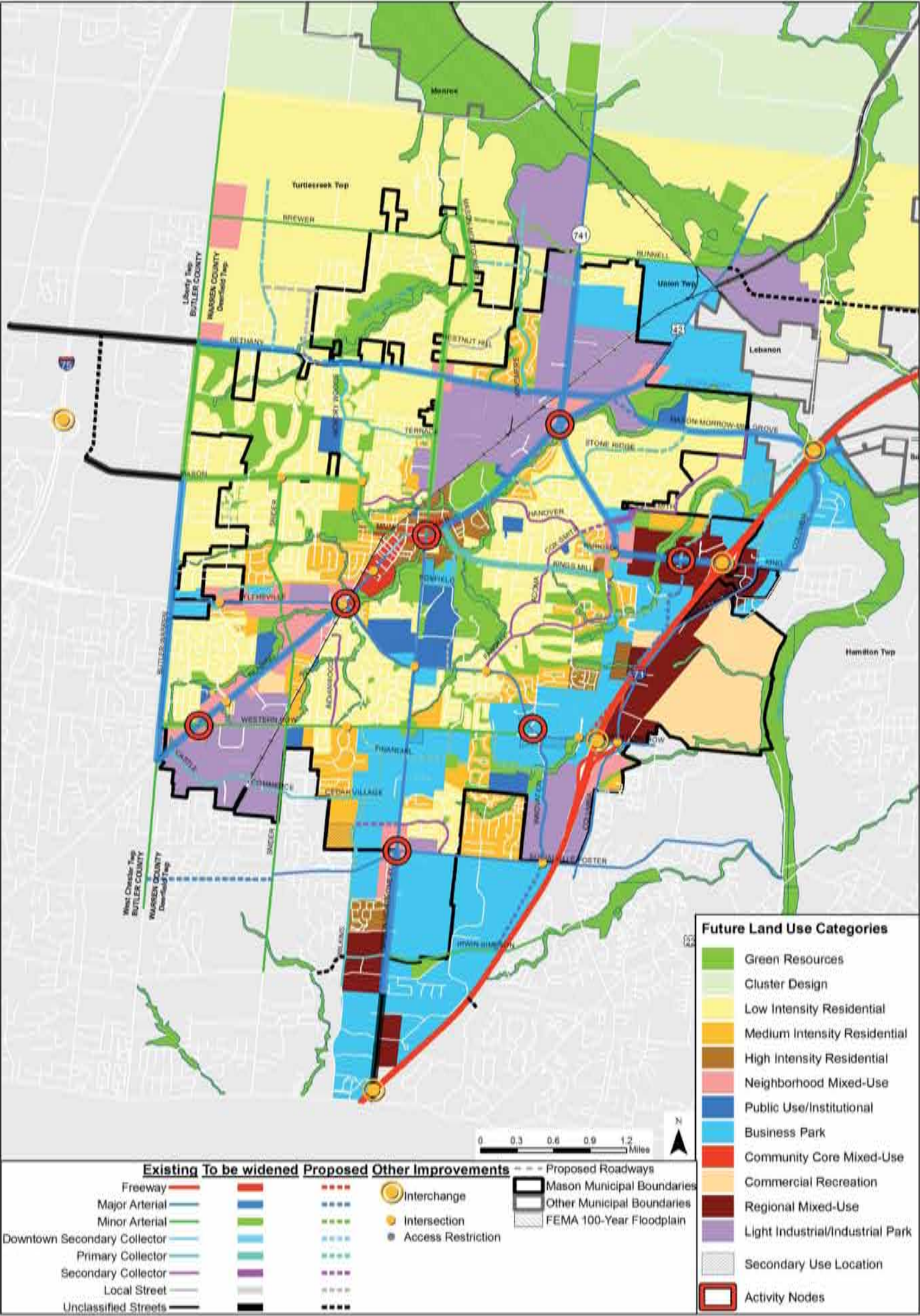
Thoroughfare Improvements

Planned thoroughfare improvements are shown on page 12. Thick lines indicate where road widening projects are planned to accommodate future growth and traffic. Dashed lines indicate where new road and road extensions are planned. Yellow dots represent planned intersection improvements. Additional details regarding these and other transportation projects can be reviewed in Chapter 6 Transportation.

Goal Summary Table

					
<p>Chapter 1: <i>Housing and Neighborhoods (HN)</i></p> <p>Goal HN-1. Encourage investment in older neighborhoods.</p> <p>Goal HN-2. Promote new housing types that recognize shifts in market demand and demographics.</p> <p>Goal HN-3. Promote street and pedestrian connectivity and design in neighborhoods.</p> <p>Goal HN-4. Encourage young professional housing integration.</p> <p>Goal HN-5 Encourage downtown housing as a critical component of downtown revitalization and as a means to create an indigenous market for retail and restaurants.</p>	<p>Chapter 2: <i>Natural Resources and Open Space (NR)</i></p> <p>Goal NR-1.Preserve environmentally sensitive areas.</p> <p>Goal NR-2.Provide a variety of quality open space, distributed equitably throughout Mason.</p> <p>Goal NR-3. Reduce the ecological footprint of development.</p> <p>Goal NR-4. Increase the tree canopy in the City.</p>	<p>Chapter 3: <i>Community Facilities (CF)</i></p> <p>Goal CF-1. Expand Park system.</p> <p>Goal CF-2. Provide more leisure opportunities for residents.</p> <p>Goal CF-3. Preserve and enhance Mason’s historic and cultural assets.</p> <p>Goal CF-4. Support expansion of continuing and higher education opportunities in Mason.</p> <p>Goal CF-5. Promote a vibrant arts and cultural presence in Mason.</p> <p>Goal CF-6. Maintain and enhance public safety and emergency response levels of service to support community growth.</p> <p>Goal CF-7. Maintain and enhance the quality of Mason’s school system.</p>	<p>Chapter 4: <i>Economic Development (ED)</i></p> <p>Goal ED-1. Develop the I-71 corridor in Mason as a premier corporate address.</p> <p>Goal ED-2. Attract light industrial businesses to the North State Route 741 Sub-Area and other areas planned as Light Industrial to maintain a divers local economy.</p> <p>Goal ED-3. Update and align economic development policies with performance related goals.</p> <p>Goal ED-4. Grow Mason’s family friendly tourism industry.</p> <p>Goal ED-5. Brand and market Mason’s unique districts.</p> <p>Goal ED-6. Continue to grow and diversify the local economy.</p> <p>Goal ED-7. Maintain and enhance Mason’s strong aesthetic image at key entrances and along thoroughfares.</p> <p>Goal ED-8. Be a leader in small business growth.</p>	<p>Chapter 5: <i>Infrastructure (IN)</i></p> <p>Goal IF-1. Improve Technology Infrastructure for Business Parks and neighborhoods.</p> <p>Goal IF-2. Improve stormwater quality and maintenance throughout the City.</p> <p>Goal IF-3. Grow in a fiscally responsible manner.</p> <p>Goal IF-4. Monitor future drinking water supply.</p> <p>Goal IF-5. Improve floodplain, floodway and waterway maintenance.</p> <p>Goal IF-6. Monitor sanitary sewer treatment capacity.</p> <p>Goal IF-7. Upgrade sanitary sewer treatment capacity.</p> <p>Goal IF-8 Examine ways to provide cost effective secondary benefits of Water Reclamation Plant.</p>	<p>Chapter 6: <i>Transportation (TR)</i></p> <p>Goal TR-1. Encourage alternative methods of transportation.</p> <p>Goal TR-2. Strive for pedestrian friendly, “Complete Streets”.</p> <p>Goal TR-3. Reduce vehicle miles traveled in Mason.</p> <p>Goal TR-4. Provide a safe and efficient roadway system.</p>

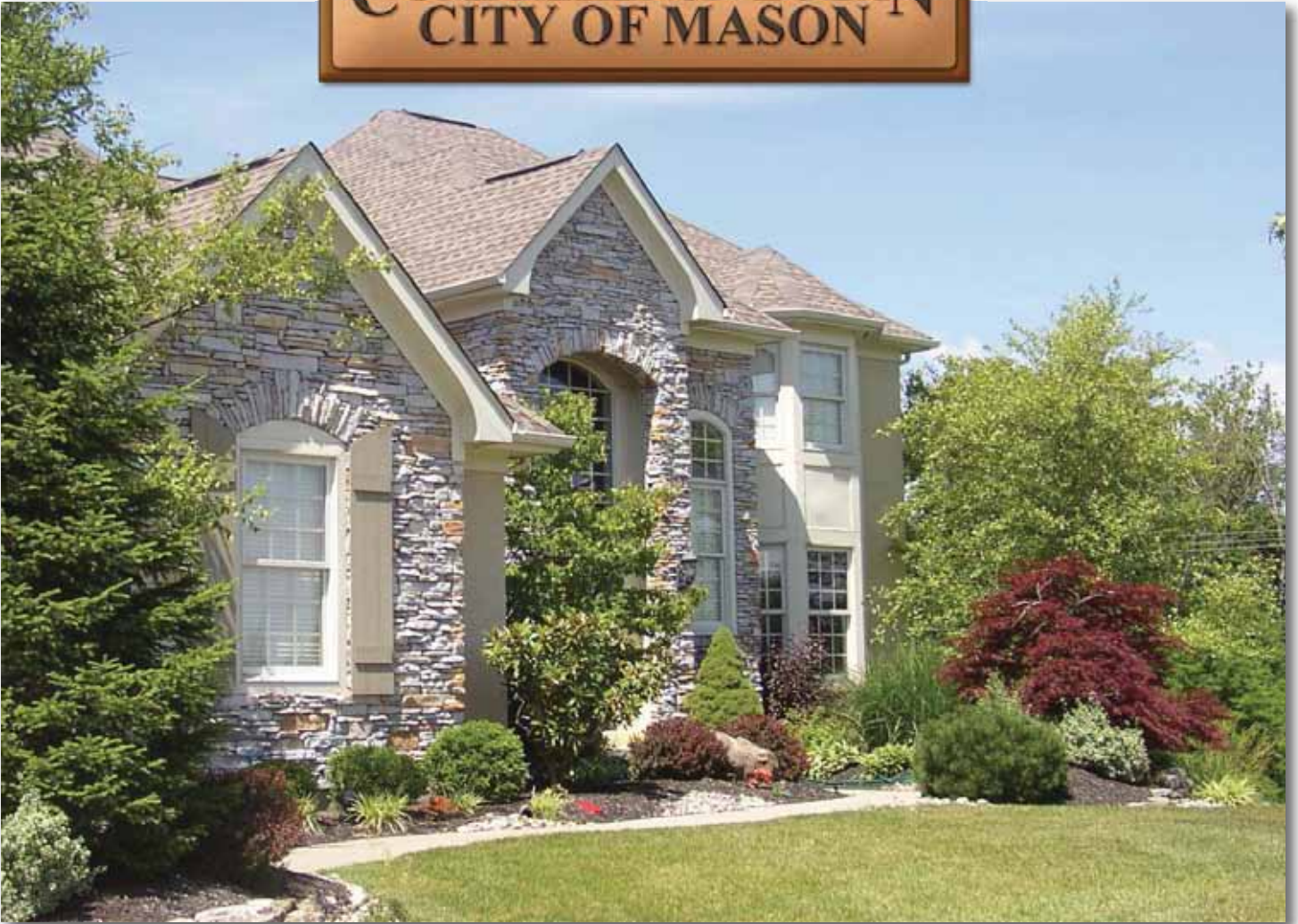
2010 Future Land Use Map and Recommended Thoroughfare Improvements



Future Land Use Summary Table

Future Land Use	Goal	Recommended Land Uses		Development Guidelines
		Primary	Secondary	
Activity Node	Create clusters of higher density development at major intersections in Mason. These nodes will become centers of activity within the community for social interaction and daily service needs. These nodes will enhance gateways into the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High frequency retail and services (excluding drive-through facilities)• Restaurants (excluding drive-through facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office / Live-Work• Multi-family residential• Public and institutional uses• Pedestrian amenities (plazas, outdoor seating, etc.)• Mixed use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-story buildings• Ground floor reserved for retail uses• Traffic calming on local streets• Place new buildings close to street with parking to the side or rear• Human-scale buildings with storefront windows on ground floors and façade articulation
Light Industry/ Industrial Park	Create employment concentrations along major thoroughfares with a campus-like environment that includes light industrial, light manufacturing and wholesale/ distribution, as well as supportive service and retail amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Light industries• Light manufacturing• Wholesale trade• Distribution centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supportive retail and services at intersections of major arterials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping• Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses• At least 30% open space in new developments greater than five acres.• Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades• Mitigate negative visual/ environmental impacts on residential areas
Regional Mixed-Use Secondary Use Location	Meet the retail needs of Mason residents and visitors while encouraging mixed-use, walkable design through redevelopment and infill projects. Promote tourism by providing additional entertainment and shopping opportunities for families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retail sales and services that serve the entire community and/or attract patrons from elsewhere in the region• Restaurants• Hotels• Conference Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential on upper floors• Offices• Public and institutional uses• Pedestrian amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outlot buildings placed close to roadway to hide large parking lots and create human-scaled streets• Facade articulation to mitigate bulk of large buildings• Pedestrian connections between uses and with adjacent neighborhoods
Commercial Recreation	Support the existing tourism economy in Mason with the addition of commercial recreation opportunities for families. Attract additional visitors to the community through recreational tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial sports stadiums and tournament facilities• Commercial recreation complexes• Amusement parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restaurants• Hotels• Conference centers• Pedestrian amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outlot buildings placed close to roadway to hide large parking lots and create human-scaled streets• Pedestrian connections between uses and with adjacent neighborhoods• Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping• Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses• Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades
Community Core Mixed-Use Secondary Use Location	Maintain, enhance, and grow the Community Core as a vibrant, mixed-use gathering place and cultural center, with an emphasis on retail, arts and entertainment uses. Maintain a highly urban, pedestrian-focused environment through building and streetscape design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighborhood and specialty retail sales and services• Restaurants• Arts, cultural and entertainment establishments• Upper floor residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-family residential including upper-floor units• Single-family attached residential• Office / Live-Work• Public and institutional uses• Pedestrian amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous “street wall” with buildings adjacent to the sidewalk• Rear parking or limited side parking only• Storefront windows and façade articulation• Traffic calming• Ground-floor storefronts and/or architectural detailing on parking structures• Connect Downtown with the Civic Campus
Business Park Secondary Use Location	Create an employment corridor parallel to I-71 that supports the growth of Mason as a business destination. Create a campus-like, mixed-use environment that includes office, research and low-impact industrial uses, as well as supportive retail amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offices• Research facilities• Educational centers• Indoor light manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supportive retail and services <= 15,000 sq. ft. per store, only in Secondary Use locations• Structured or underground parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-story buildings• Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping• Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses• Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades• Mitigate negative visual/ environmental impacts on residential areas
Public Use/ Institutional	Create a cohesive, well-defined campus for medical, public services and educational institutions, with supportive office, service and residential uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public and institutional uses• Offices• Structured or underground parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-family residential• Limited retail and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar to Business Park• Encourage neighborhood master-planning that links medical and educational with offices and services.
Neighborhood Mixed-Use Secondary Use Location	Concentrate retail in dense, walkable, mixed-use nodes located at major intersections in order to promote a sense of community and a range of services that enhance the value of Mason’s neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convenience-oriented retail sales and services that primarily serve a radius of one mile• Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offices• Attached residential• Public and institutional uses• Pedestrian amenities (plazas, outdoor seating, etc.)• Mixed use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum of 20,000 square feet per store• Place new buildings close to street with parking to the side or rear• Human-scale buildings with storefront windows on ground floors and façade articulation• Traffic calming
High-Intensity Residential Secondary Use Location	Encourage low-maintenance, high-density housing that supports Activity Nodes and downtown and provides a transition between commercial or office and single-family development. Promote walkable neighborhood design that creates attractive and functional roadway corridors and attached residential neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family and multi-family attached residential• Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public and institutional uses• Offices, live-work and limited retail along arterials• Recreational amenitie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to eight uits per gross acre• Place non-residential and higher-density residential buildings close to major roadways and Activity Nodes• At least 20% open space in new developments greater than three acres• Architectural transitions between land uses, such as similarities in building height, massing, roof pitch, and rhythm of windows and façade detailing.• Walkable neighborhood design
Medium-Intensity Residential Secondary Use Location	Provide a transition between High- and Low-Intensity Neighborhood areas, while providing a wide range of housing formats and price points. Promote compatible infill development and walkable neighborhood design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family attached and detached residential• Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited multi-family residential along major roadways• Local public and institutional uses• Recreational amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four to five units per gross acre• At least 20% open space in new developments of three or more acres• Architectural transitions between land uses, such as similarities in building height, massing, roof pitch, and rhythm of windows and façade detailing• Walkable neighborhood design
Low-Intensity Residential	Provide large-lot, low-density housing options and protect existing low-density neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family attached or detached residential• Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local public and institutional uses• Recreational amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One units per gross acre with at least 30% open space.
Conservation Design	Provide for residential growth in currently undeveloped areas. Environmentally sensitive development will preserve rural character through low-impact development practices, cluster design and preservation of natural resources and open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family detached residential• Open space• Recreational amenities• Low-impact storm water management facilities• Flood storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local public and institutional uses• Cemeteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve rural character• Encourage Low-Impact Development principles• Develop non-motorized pathways to connect neighborhoods, businesses, parks, and regional greenways• Limit residential uses to one unit per gross acre or less with at least 40% open space
Green Resource	Create an interconnected network of green infrastructure that preserves environmentally sensitive areas, protects water resources through low-impact storm water management, provides floodwater storage, provides community open space and recreational opportunities, and preserves agricultural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open space• Recreational amenities• Low-impact storm water management facilities• Flood storage• Agricultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilities other than storm water management• Single-family detached structures• Cemeteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve and restore natural hydrology• Encourage Low-Impact Development principles• Develop non-motorized pathways to connect neighborhoods, businesses, parks, and regional greenways• Where development cannot be avoided, limit to residential uses at one unit per gross acre or less with at least 50% open space

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF MASON



Chapter 1: Housing and Neighborhoods

1.1. Purpose	1	HN
1.2. Housing and Neighborhoods Snapshot	1	HN
1.3. Goals and Strategies	6	HN

Vision Statement

Mason's neighborhoods will exhibit a strong sense of community due to their walkability, diversity and residents involvement. Walkable design will create safe and convenient neighborhoods with vibrant streets. Diverse housing choices will attract and retain a range of incomes and age groups. Viable neighborhoods will encourage residents to maintain and invest in their homes by incorporating green building practices and energy efficiency. New housing development will serve as a model for sustainable development in the region.

Section 1.1. Purpose

The Housing and Population Element identifies and analyzes existing and forecasted housing needs in Mason. This element identifies standards and programs for the elimination of substandard dwelling conditions, improvement of housing quality, variety and affordability, and for provision of adequate neighborhoods.

Primary components of this element include:

1. An analysis of subjects related to Mason's existing neighborhoods, including trends in population, age, households, household types, and housing affordability, as well as neighborhood design issues.
2. A vision, goals and strategies aimed at improving neighborhood design, increasing the diversity and quality of housing products, and complementing the City's network of green infrastructure.

Section 1.2. Housing and Neighborhoods Snapshot

This section contains a summary of existing housing and population conditions, issues and opportunities. Information has been gathering from a number of resources including the CBSA, Core Based Statistical Areas. A Statistical Area is a county or counties that have at least one urban core area of at least 50,000 population, plus an adjacent area that has a high level of social and economic integration with the core.

Examples of Housing in Mason



Top: Townhome condominium (left); older single-family (right). Bottom: Newer single-family (left); large-lot single-family (right)

Chapter 1 Cover Photo

Mason enjoys diverse housing options including a significant concentration of high-end custom homes as shown.

Highlights

- Mason is nearing the end of a growth cycle that has nearly tripled its population in the last 20 years.
- Much of the growth is due to migration of residents from older communities in Hamilton County.
- The City can expect an additional 12% population increase in the next five to 10 years, based on a build-out of remaining vacant land within its borders. Annexation will lead to additional growth.
- Age distribution, household size and household type characteristics indicate that Mason is particularly attractive to families with children.
- The increases that the City has experienced in the 20 to 24 and 55 to 64 age groups, combined with a recent increase in multi-family construction, indicates a demand for more affordable and/or low-maintenance housing types.
- A recent increase in the 85 and older age group, along with an aging national population, creates a need for additional senior housing and services.
- Mason's housing stock is dominated by large and high-value single-family homes on lots between 0.25 acre and one acre, built within the last 10 to 20 years.
- The local housing market remains healthy in terms of vacancy but new construction has been affected by the national downturn in the housing market.
- Mason is beginning to experience subdivision of large-lot single-family properties along thoroughfares such as Bethany Road.
- Current zoning and charter restrictions limit development of higher-density housing types such as townhomes, condominiums and apartments.

Existing Population and Household Characteristics

Population Age

- Mason's past increases in the 55 to 64 and 85 and above age groups are consistent with a nationwide trend toward an aging population. If continued, this trend may indicate a future need for housing that appeals to "empty-nesters" and seniors.

Household Characteristics

- The average size of the households in the City increased from 2.7 to 2.8 between 1990 and 2008, while it has dropped in the CBSA, State and Nation.
- The total percentage of households with people living alone (20.1 percent) and households with persons 65+ (16.5 percent) in the City of Mason are lower than the CBSA and the State percentages.

Existing Housing Characteristics

Housing Types

- The predominant land use within the City of Mason is *single-family residential* by design. The City has promoted this land use pattern with the intent of building a family-friendly community. The approximately 7,480 single-family detached lots in Mason account for 86% of the residential land area. Furthermore, nearly half of all single family homes have been built since 1995.
- Multi-family* occupies 4.6% of the City and generally consists of townhome condominiums. Few apartment buildings exist in the community. Mason's zoning code and charter generally discourage multi-family housing, due to lot size and density restrictions (no more than eight units per acre).

Housing Tenure

- The City has 10,418 occupied housing units, with greater than three-fourths of all occupied units being owner-occupied (8,669 units). The City has a much higher percentage of owner-occupied units and a much lower percentage of renter-occupied units than the CBSA and State.
- The percentage of rental housing increased slightly in Mason from 2000 to 2008, from 14.7% to 15.8%.

Housing Value

- The City's median home value (\$213,887) was nearly 50% higher than the CBSA's, and nearly 75% higher than the State's.

Land Usage within the City of Mason

Land Use	Acreage	% of City
Agricultural	932	7.90%
Commercial	390	3.30%
Commercial Recreation	694	5.90%
Industrial Park	1,271	10.80%
Multi-Family Residential	54	4.60%
Office	89	0.80%
Public Use/Institutional	779	6.60%
Recreational/Open Space	1,424	12.10%
Single Family Residential	3,397	28.80%
Undeveloped/Vacant	1,233	10.50%
Public Right-of-Way	1,028	8.70%
Total City area	11,778	

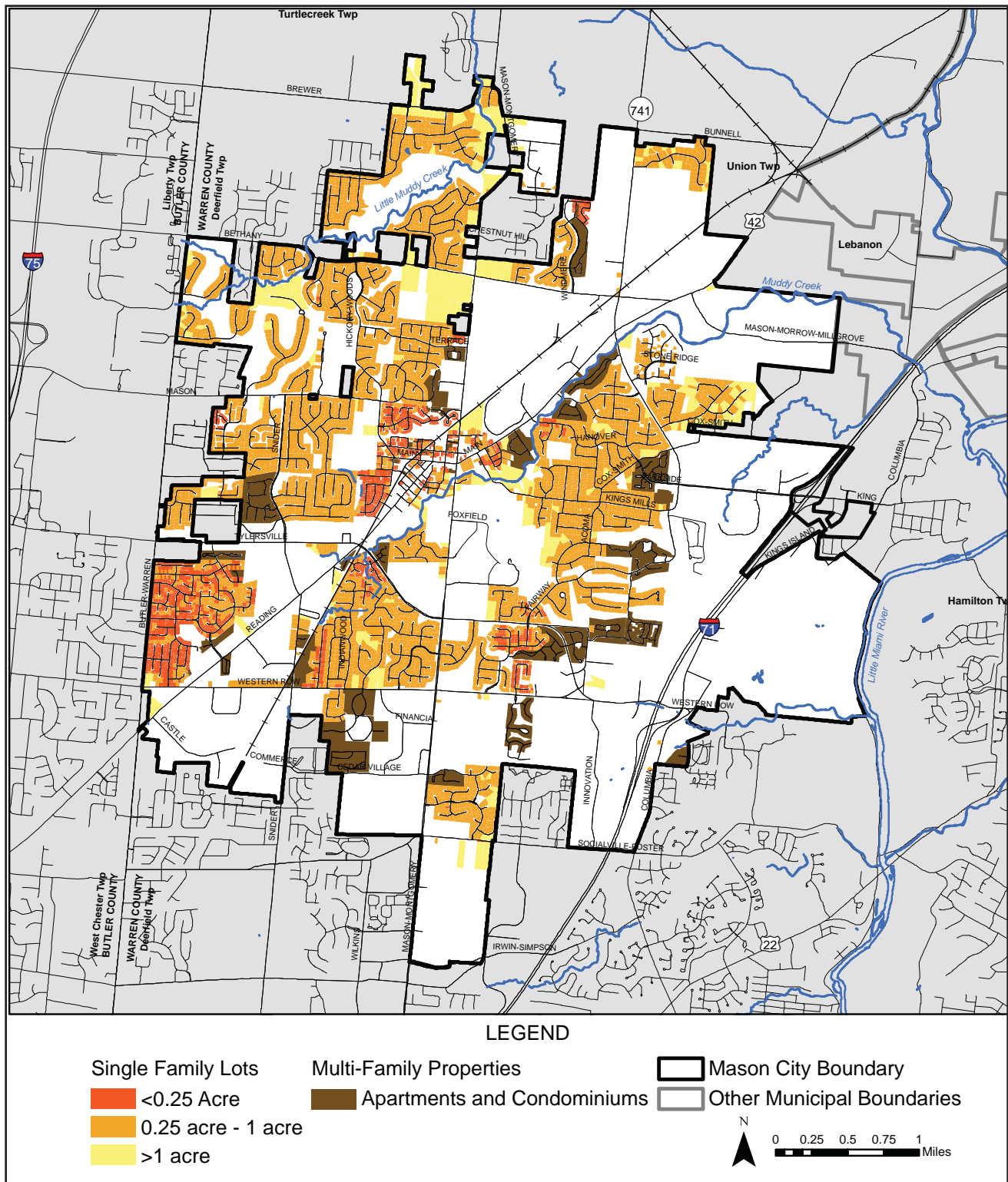
Source: City of Mason, 2008

Figure 1.2A: Housing Value Trend Comparison



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, ESRI

Map 1.2A: Existing Residential Land Use



Build-Out Analysis

- The City experienced steady growth in the number of residential building permits issued between 1990 and 2000, with the greatest number of permits (837) issued in 1999. During the 1990's, nearly 70 percent of all housing permits were issued for single-family residential units.
- The largest number of permits issued between 2000 and 2009 occurred in 2001 (672), with a steady decrease between 2001 and 2009. The decrease in new housing construction corresponds with three factors:
 - A slowdown of the national economy, due in large part to the struggling housing market.
 - Declining availability of undeveloped, residentially-zoned land in the City. Mason is approaching build-out, based on remaining available land within current boundaries.
 - Price of land and construction costs.
- Based on build-out analysis as shown on Table 1.2B, the City could add up to 1,241 housing units at build-out, increasing its population by 12% to 32,877. Based on permit trends over the last five years and depending on the housing market, this increase could occur over five to 10 years.

Denser housing development and extra-territorial growth would increase the City's buildout population further. See Chapter 7 for more details.

Table 1.2A Housing Permits Issued 2000-2007

Permits	Single-Family	Multi-Family	Total
2000	333	259	592
2001	372	300	672
2002	323	166	489
2003	264	130	394
2004	178	113	291
2005	137	155	292
2006	68	79	147
2007	60	17	77
2008	36	3	39
2009	26	8	34
Total:	1,797	1,230	3,027

Source: City of Mason Building Department

Table 1.2B Housing Build-Out Analysis

Units under construction or in the planning/platting process:	831
Units possible with subdivision of remaining undeveloped, residentially-zoned land in the City*	167
Units possible with subdivision of existing single-family, residentially-zoned lots greater than four acres*	242
Total additional units at buildout	1,241
Estimated additional population at buildout, assuming 2.82 persons per household	3,498
Total population at build-out	32,877

*Assumes current zoning

Section 1.3. Goals and Strategies

Goal HN-1. Encourage investment in older neighborhoods.

New housing development in Mason will continue to compete with existing, older neighborhoods. Keeping existing housing competitive requires continued maintenance and modernization of homes. Additionally, compatible infill housing or mixed-use development can reinvigorate older neighborhoods with new housing products, amenities and services.

Strategy HN-1.1.

Encourage context sensitive infill development in older neighborhoods.

Action HN-1.1.1. Develop residential infill design standards to ensure new housing development in established neighborhoods is compatible with existing neighborhood architecture and scale.

Action HN-1.1.2. Implement zoning text and map changes to better identify areas in which reinvestment is desired and infill development is encouraged. Incorporate infill standards developed in Action HN-1.1.1. and HN-1.3.1.



Townhouses (See HN-1.2)

Strategy HN-1.2

Encourage land use transitions between major thoroughfares and adjacent neighborhoods through selection of appropriate land uses, compatible architecture and scale of buildings, and the use of open space and buffering.

Thoroughfares are generally not desirable for detached residential product. Existing single family should be allowed to transition to a higher and better use. Live-work units and townhomes shown below offer a good alternative to single family residential and to excessive strip retail development on busy thoroughfares.

Action HN-1.2.1. Implement transitional zoning along Major Thoroughfares that allows mixed use including attached residential, particularly those areas planned as “High Intensity Neighborhood” or “Activity Nodes” on the Future Land Use Map in Chapter 7.

Strategy HN-1.3.

Promote the modernization of functionally obsolete housing units and re-investment in older neighborhoods.

Older neighborhoods typically offer housing that lack the amenities desired by today’s buyers. These neighborhoods also offer lower price points for families that don’t mind updating.



Live-work units (See HN-1.2)

Action HN-1.3.1. Create a housing modernization idea book with strategies for enhancing older housing in ways that are compatible with existing neighborhood character. Examples include aesthetic improvements such as adding front porches, shutters and dormers, or functional improvements such as garage and room additions and replacing mechanical equipment with energy efficient units.

Action HN-1.3.2. Partner with the Home Builders Association to modernize an outdated house as public demonstration project.

Action HN-1.3.3. Seek and provide financial incentives for energy efficiency improvements such as energy savings performance contracting, on-bill financing, and revolving loan funds.

Action HN-1.3.4. Promote home energy audits.

Example of Housing Modernization

The below photos depicts a modernization of house type commonly developed in the 1970s. A rehabilitation project increased the home's interior space and modified the layout to meet modern needs. A new front porch improved the home's curb appeal and relationship with the street.

Before Rehabilitation



After Rehabilitation



Strategy HN-1.4.

Promote code enforcement and proper maintenance through proactive enforcement efforts, increased community involvement and education.

Action HN-1.4.1. Look at the effectiveness of a Property Maintenance Code to maintain the desirability of neighborhoods, maintain homeowner confidence and to prevent violations from spreading.

Action HN-1.4.2. Use code enforcement to prevent code violations from spreading into adjacent neighborhoods.

Action HN-1.4.3. Educate community members about the importance of proper property maintenance and the enforcement process.

Action HN-1.4.4. Use code enforcement as an incentive. Property owners are more likely to invest in housing updates and maintenance when confidence in their street and neighborhood is high.

Action HN-1.4.5. Actively enforce codes along major thoroughfares realizing community perception is largely based on what people see traveling through a community.

Action HN-1.4.6. Track and monitor code enforcement violations using GIS. Analyze data to identify trends early and prevent issues from spreading.

Strategy HN-1.5.

Maintain, add and enhance infrastructure and public space in older neighborhoods.

Sound infrastructure, parks, natural features, schools and green space make neighborhoods attractive, provide civic pride and maintain property values. Ongoing maintenance of neighborhood infrastructure and amenities maintains a fresh appearance.

Action HN-1.5.1. Inventory neighborhood facilities and infrastructure and determine approximate age, condition and adequacy.

Action HN-1.5.2. Ensure to the extent practical that older neighborhoods have access to a public space (park, school yard, or greenspace) within a 5-minute walk or about a 1/4 mile. Older neighborhoods were platted before the city required greenspace set-asides. See Strategy CF-1.1.1.

Action 1.5.3. Coordinate infrastructure and public facility improvements with priority neighborhood reinvestment efforts.

Action 1.5.4. Add sidewalks and bike paths where they are missing consistent with funding availability per the Sidewalk Program as directed by Council (see Strategy TR-1.1.1 in Chapter 6).

Action 1.5.5. Seek opportunities to acquire additional property that adds benefit and value to surrounding property owners.

Action 1.5.6. Work with the Mason City Schools to ensure that school buildings stay where they are currently located. A recent trend is to move schools out of neighborhoods and rely on busing. Schools, like parks, add value to housing and serve as neighborhood anchors.

Strategy HN-1.6.

Establish redevelopment incentives in targeted investment zones. (See HN-5.1.2)

Action HN-1.6.1. Study the benefit and need to establish incentives for targeted neighborhood reinvestment. The city can incent reinvestment in specified areas by waiving building permit fees and offering property tax abatement on building improvements (i.e. Community Reinvestment Area).

Action HN-1.6.2. Use City-owned property as leverage in encouraging redevelopment.

Goal HN-2.

Promote new housing types that recognize shifts in market demand and demographics.

As the average household size decreases regionally and nationally and as the Baby Boomer generation ages, lower-maintenance housing such as townhomes and flats are gaining market appeal.

Strategy HN-2.1.

Permit higher density, lower maintenance housing in the Community Core and in Activity Nodes.

Empty nesters tend to downsize but maintain high quality housing standards. Young professionals tend to gravitate to low maintenance housing located in vibrant areas. Both market segments desire low maintenance housing to pursue life interests.

Action HN-2.1.1. Ensure that zoning permits the highest housing densities (eight units per acre) in Activity Nodes and the Community Core Subarea (see Map 7.3A in Chapter 7).

Action HN-2.1.2. Encourage redevelopment and infill development of multi-family housing, townhomes and mixed-use buildings with upper-floor housing units in the Community Core and Activity Nodes, with the incentives discussed under Strategy 1.6.

Strategy HN-2.2.

Permit and promote a variety of living options that are attractive to Mason's growing senior population.

Seniors often find it difficult to age in place due to a lack of supportive and/or affordable housing options and services such as transportation.

Action HN-2.2.1. Encourage transportation services that enable seniors to obtain necessary goods and services city-wide.

Action HN-2.2.2. Permit senior housing units within walking distance to retail, medical, personal services, and educational and cultural facilities.

Goal HN-3.**Promote street and pedestrian connectivity and design in neighborhoods.**

Connectivity in neighborhoods reduces the distance a pedestrian must travel between neighborhoods. This encourages walking, reduces reliance on automobiles and increases opportunities for interaction between neighbors.

Strategy HN-3.1.

Reform zoning and subdivision codes to require pedestrian and vehicular connectivity within and between neighborhoods, as described under Strategies TR-1.1 (sidewalk requirements) and TR-2.1 (complete streets) in Chapter 6.

Strategy HN-3.2

Promote pedestrian orientated design.

Action HN-3.2.1. Encourage pedestrian-friendly design features in high intensity residential developments, such as recessed or rear garages and front porches in single-family development, and rear parking lots and front entrances in multi-family developments and mixed use developments.

Action HN-3.2.2. Establish additional street design standards that promote uniqueness and livability. Encourage the provision of traffic calming features such as chicanes, mini traffic circles, narrow streets and neck downs at intersections. These features can also be used for place-defining landscape design to brand neighborhoods, break street monotony, and encourage pedestrianism.

Action HN-3.2.3. Encourage space for pedestrian gathering and circulation during the development review process. Examples include village greens and pocket parks connected to housing by sidewalks and paths.

Strategy HN-3.3.

Encourage mixed land use patterns that place residents within walking distance of services.

In addition to design features, mixed-use development helps to achieve a walkable neighborhood. Mason's commercial corridors represent opportunities for mixed-use redevelopment on the edges of neighborhoods.

Action HN-3.3.1. Encourage developers to adhere to the mixed land use vision proposed in Chapter 7.

Goal HN-4.**Encourage young professional housing integration.**

Matching Mason's housing stock with its workforce will help to reduced commuter traffic and make the community a more desirable place to live, work and do business.

Strategy HN-4.1.

Work with employers to identify young professional housing needs.

Action HN-4.1.1. Conduct a survey of employers to determine employees' incomes, places of residence, and desire to move to Mason.

Action HN-4.1.2. Encourage variability of lot and unit sizes integrated into an overall development plan to offer a range of housing options.



Greenspaces enhance property values and offer additional outdoor living room for pedestrian activity and socialization. See HN-3.2.3

Action HN-4.1.3. Require similar exterior architectural materials and features to ensure such units are generally indistinguishable from the street when integrated as part of HN-4.1.2.

Action HN-4.1.4. Develop professional housing in or adjacent to employment centers as part of mixed use sustainable developments.

Action HN-4.1.5. Promote mixed-use redevelopment along major thoroughfares through zoning map and/or text amendments in accordance with the High-Intensity Neighborhood and Neighborhood Activity Center classifications on the Future Land Use Map - see Chapter 7 Land Use.



Mason's business community employs a workforce with a wide range of housing needs.

Strategy HN-4.2.

Encourage modern, high-quality, multi-family housing in high activity areas.

Renters are important as they introduce new residents and future homeowners to Mason. About 40% of the rental market chooses to rent for lifestyle reasons while others wait to purchase housing after family size and incomes increase.

Action HN-4.2.1. Push multi-family in high intensity mixed use areas integrated with other uses including retail and office through complementary architecture.

Action HN-4.2.2. Adopt multi-family design standards to avoid monotonous and homogeneous architecture on attached residential units.

Goal HN-5

Encourage downtown housing as a critical component of downtown revitalization and as a means to create an indigenous market for retail and restaurants.

Strategy HN-5.1.

Create a critical mass of downtown housing.

Housing is a crucial component of downtown vitality. When combined with retail, office and entertainment uses, urban housing contributes to the round-the-clock vitality and foot traffic that characterize a successful downtown. The City can encourage downtown housing through zoning, charter amendment, tax incentives, assistance with redevelopment, and marketing.

Action HN-5.1.1. Ensure that the Zoning Code permits and/or encourages urban housing options in the downtown. Urban housing types include rowhouses, multi-family buildings, housing on upper floors of mixed-use buildings, and live-work units that incorporate residential units with offices, artist studios, or services.

Action HN-5.1.2. Offer incentives such as Community Reinvestment Area and Tax Increment Financing to help achieve this goal. The CRA program provides tax abatements for rehabilitation or new construction projects. TIF provides funding for public infrastructure projects that support mixed-use developments. (See HN-1.6)

Action HN-5.1.3. Assist with land assembly for redevelopment projects. Redevelopment often requires public assistance to be financially feasible. Public acquisition and demolition of deteriorated or underutilized properties can be a powerful incentive. It also provides the City with leverage to control urban design.

Action HN-5.1.4. Market downtown housing opportunities. Promotional materials, presentations and walking tours can inform potential developers and residents about the opportunities for living in downtown Mason.

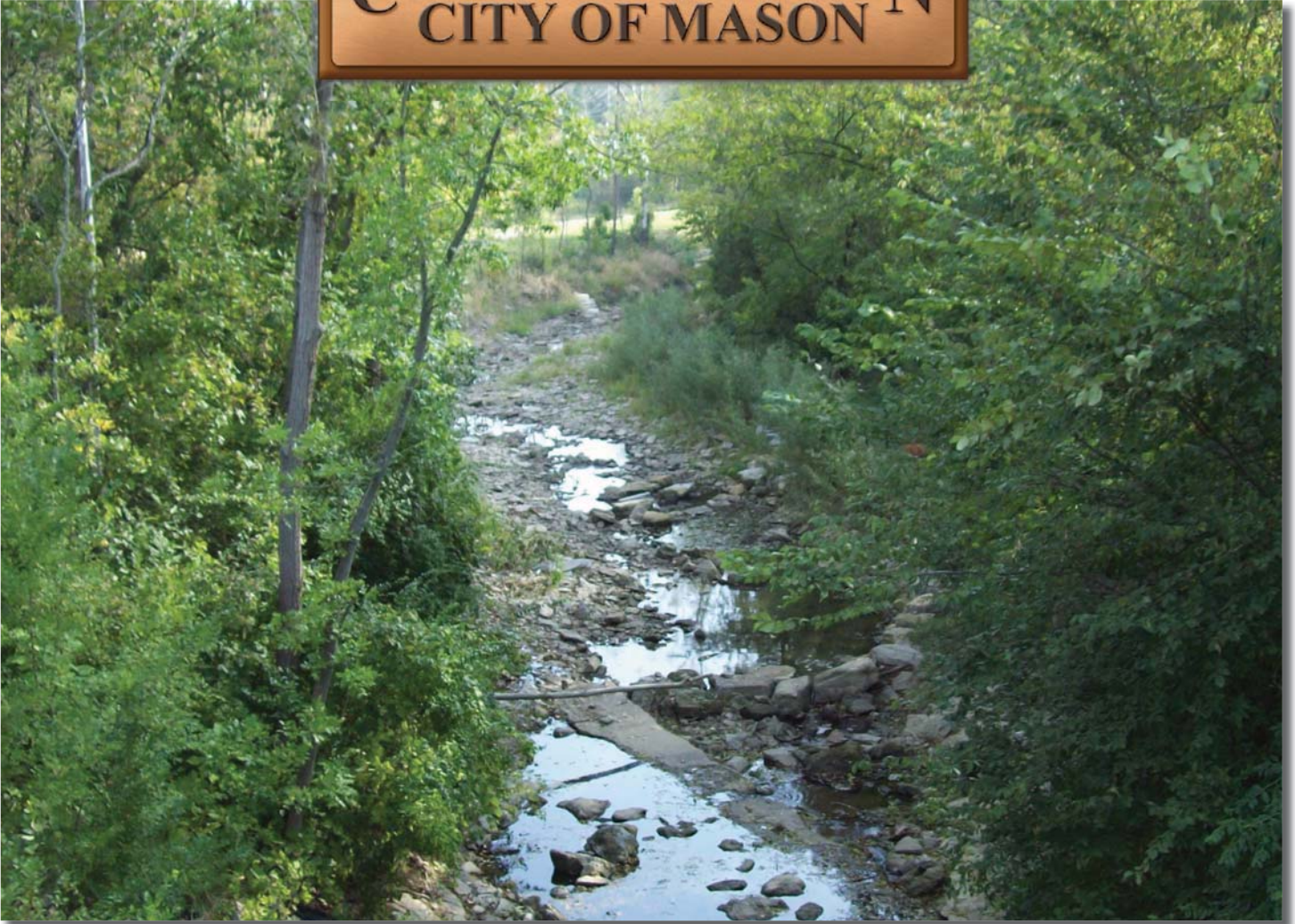
Action HN-5.1.5. Place a charter amendment on the ballot to gain voter approval for increased density in the Community Core and any other area where higher residential density is desired.

Chapter 2

Natural Resources and Open Space



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF MASON



Chapter 2: Natural Resources and Open Space

2.1. Purpose	1 NR
2.2. Natural Resources and Open Space Snapshot	1 NR
2.3. Goals and Strategies	5 NR

Vision Statement

Mason will be known for its success in protecting vital open spaces, reducing its ecological footprint, and maintaining natural resources that support its prosperity. Preservation of environmentally sensitive areas will protect citizens from natural hazards, improve water and habitat quality and contribute to an interconnected network of recreational open space. Low-impact development will promote clean air and water through energy efficiency, stormwater management and reduced waste. These ecological success will maintain a healthy, attractive community for current and future generations.

Section 2.1. Purpose

The Natural Resources and Open Space element creates a framework for preservation of sensitive natural areas, and ecological systems in concert with future development. Preserving these features will help to sustain air and water resources and contribute to the health and quality of life of Mason residents.

Primary components of this element include:

1. An inventory of natural resources including wetlands, topography, streams and associated floodplains, in addition to land used for agriculture.
2. A vision, goals and strategies aimed at the preservation and restoration of natural areas and processes as Mason continues to grow.
3. Recommendations for establishing a “green infrastructure” network in Mason.

Strategies recommended in this element relate to several other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, including Population and Housing, Community Facilities, Infrastructure, Economic Development, Transportation and Circulation, and Land Use and Development.

Section 2.2. Natural Resources and Open Space Snapshot

This section contains a summary of existing conditions, issues and opportunities related to natural areas in Mason. Detailed information can be found in the Existing Conditions Report.

Introduction

Mason’s relatively level terrain originally made the area suitable for farming. More recently, the relative lack of topography has facilitated development in Mason and has been a factor in the community’s rapid growth. The Natural Resources and Open Space element creates a framework for preservation of sensitive natural areas, and ecological systems in concert with future development. Preserving these features will help to sustain air and water resources and contribute to the health and quality of life of Mason residents.

Chapter 2 Cover Photo

Muddy Creek is one of Mason’s more prominent natural features. This photograph was taken near Downtown. Muddy Creek drains into the Little Miami Scenic River and offers unique riparian habitat for wildlife. Muddy Creek Greenway, when extended, will connect several neighborhoods to schools and parks.

Open Space and Natural Areas

- In addition to nearly 300 acres of public parkland, the City includes close to 1,200 acres of private open space, which includes golf courses, buffer and retention areas, preserved natural features and private neighborhood recreation facilities.
- While Mason's relative lack of natural barriers to development has facilitated growth, it has also produced many neighborhoods that are devoid of natural features. Developments have had to utilize creative designs to build attractive subdivisions.
- Natural areas are limited to isolated riparian corridors such as the Muddy Creek, Frank Hosea Woods, and several parks and golf courses.

Floodplains

- Floodplain areas are generally found in narrow stream valleys and do not comprise large, contiguous areas. The Muddy Creek and its tributaries comprise the majority of floodplain area in the City.

Wetland Areas

- Most of the potential wetland areas are less than an acre in size and are scattered throughout Mason. Additionally, most of the potential wetland areas identified by the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) are actually ponded areas.

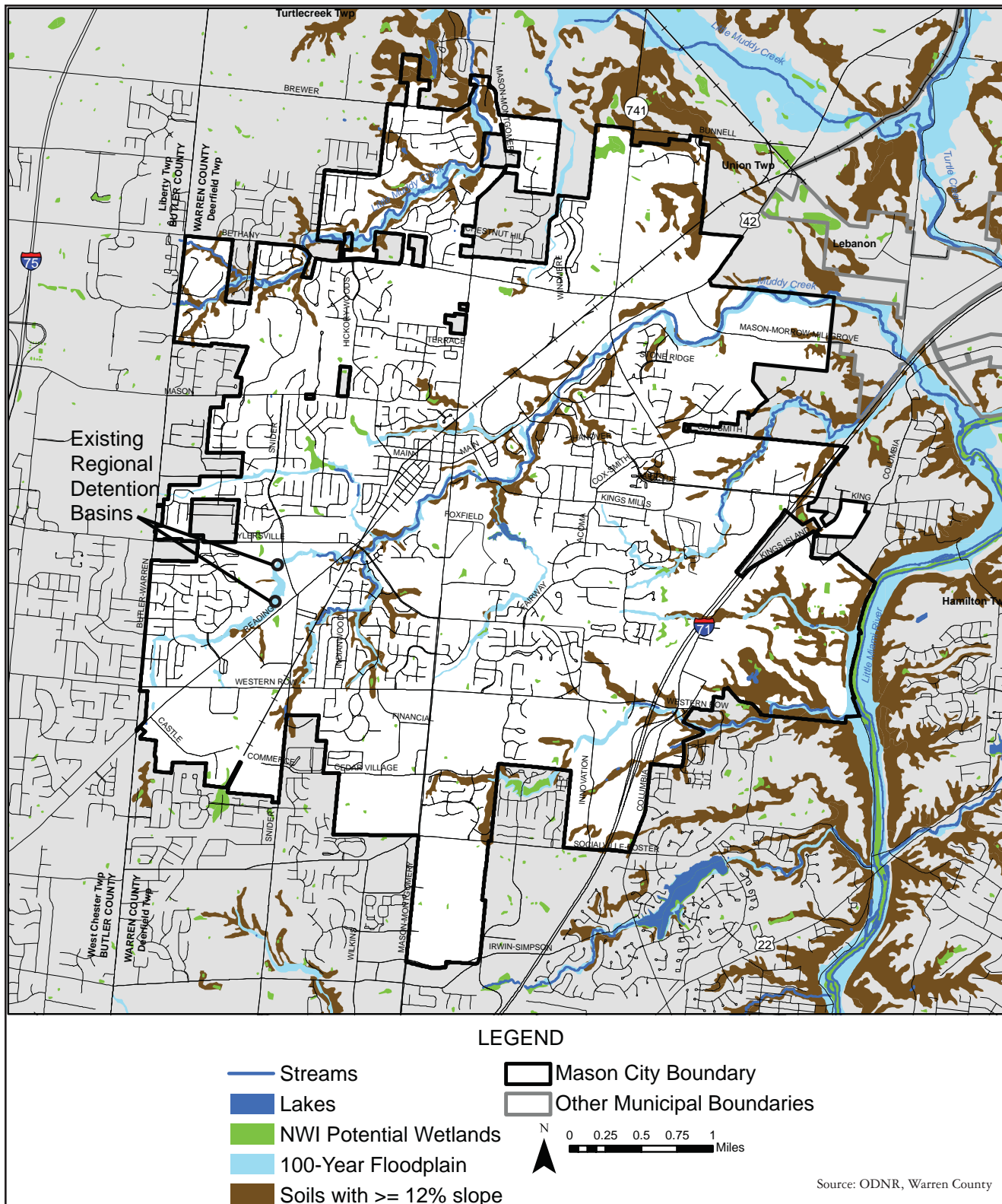
Highlights

- Relatively few development constraints such as steep topography, wetlands and floodplains have helped to allow rapid growth and development in Mason.
- Mason's limited physical development constraints have also created neighborhoods that are absent of value-enhancing natural features.
- Large areas of steep slopes, floodplains, and wetlands to the north of Mason may present challenges to future growth, as well as opportunities for attractive preservation areas.
- The City of Mason, through the stormwater utility fund, is correcting, enhancing, and stabilizing riparian zones as well as managing stormwater infrastructure.



Mason contains multiple golf courses including the City of Mason owned Golf Center at Kings Island. Golf courses provide desired open space and recreational opportunities.

Map 2.2A Natural Features



Mason - Tree City USA



Mason is a member Tree City USA community. Members must meet Arbor Day Foundation minimum requirements to join the program. These requirements include having:

- a Tree Board
- a funded urban forestry program
- a tree care ordinance
- an annual tree observance and proclamation

The City's Landscape and Street Tree Code is responsible for saving and/or replacing several thousand trees that would otherwise be lost to development. These trees enhance Mason's character, remove pollutants, screen incompatible uses and cool structures in the summer.

Groundwater Resources

- To help protect limited groundwater resources Mason turned to the City of Cincinnati for its water supply and treatment needs.
- The City contracted with Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) in 2002 to provide water from regional sources, and GCWW now utilizes the City's Water Treatment Plant as a backup water source.

Water Quality

- The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) sampled water quality in the Muddy Creek and Little Muddy Creek in 2007 based on the EPA's criteria for Aquatic Life Use (suitability for supporting aquatic organisms).
 - Muddy Creek partially attained this criteria. A drought in 2007 and effluent from the Water Reclamation Plant prevented full attainment.
 - The Little Muddy Creek fully attained this criteria.
- The OEPA also evaluated the Muddy Creek based on its Primary Contact Recreation criteria (suitability for full-body-contact recreation activities such as wading, swimming and canoeing) and found the creek to be in non-attainment.

Air Quality

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has designated Warren County, along with the remainder of the Cincinnati metropolitan area, as in non-attainment for eight-hour ozone and Particulate Matter 2.5 standards.

Tree Canopy

- Mason, like most of the region, was once covered in a lush natural canopy. Through centuries of farming and more recently development, much of the canopy has been removed.

Mason Codes

- The City's Landscape Code has helped to begin the reestablishment of lost vegetation in the area. Street trees, shrubs, and various other amenities are required as part of new projects.

Section 2.3. Goals and Strategies

Goal NR-1. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas.

Preserving stream corridors in their natural state can protect life and property from flood hazards, improve site aesthetics and protect wildlife habitat. Naturally vegetated drainage features also tend to slow stormwater runoff and improve water quality through filtration.

Strategy NR-1.1.

Discourage and reduce development of structures and impervious surfaces within the FEMA Floodway and 100-Year Floodplain.

Action NR-1.1.1. Require the identification and mapping of natural features as part of site plan review.

Action NR-1.1.2. Preserve and use natural drainage and drainage features in site design.

Action NR-1.1.3. Require appropriate use of plant species in drainage pathways and buffers. Use species that are adapted to conditions found along natural drainage pathways and can tolerate seasonal drought and high water conditions.

Action NR-1.1.4. Offer fees in lieu of compliance as an alternative for projects that do not meet floodplain protection requirements. Utilize fees for stormwater management projects elsewhere in the City.

Strategy NR-1.2.

Establish riparian setbacks in order to protect water quality, reduce erosion, and protect wildlife habitat.

Action NR-1.2.1. Develop a natural resources inventory map that identifies and classifies wetlands, watercourses and other sensitive areas in the City in detail. This map will inform site plan review and the riparian setback ordinance. See CF-2.4.1.

Action NR-1.2.2. Develop a riparian setback ordinance for streams in Mason. Vary setbacks based on the size of the area drained by the stream or other indicators of conservation value and develop standards for each buffer “zone”, as described in Figure 2.3A.

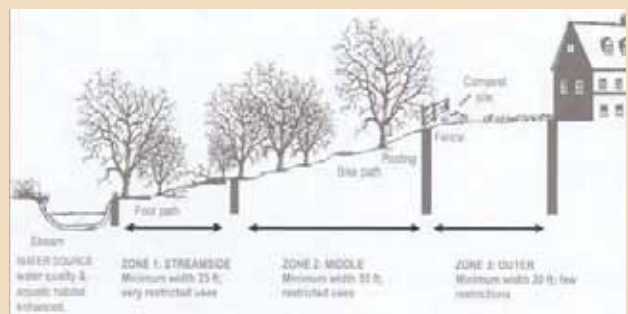
Figure 2.3A: Riparian Buffer Zones



Riparian buffer areas are critical to the biological, chemical and physical integrity of our waterways. They protect water quality by cooling water, stabilizing banks, mitigating flow rates, and providing for pollution and sediment removal by filtering overland runoff before it enters the water.

Typically, riparian buffers can be divided into three different zones.

- The “streamside zone”, begins at the edge of the stream bank of the active channel and extends a minimum distance of 25 feet, measured horizontally on a line perpendicular to the water body.
- The “middle zone”, extends immediately from the outer edge of the “streamside zone” for a minimum of 55 feet.
- The “outer zone” extends a minimum of 20 feet immediately from the outer edge of the “middle zone”.



Action NR-1.2.3. Develop guidelines and provisions for Low-Impact Development within and adjacent to setback areas (see Figure 5.3A in Chapter 5 for more information).

Action NR-1.2.4. Incorporate no-mow zones in the riparian setback ordinance in order to protect native riparian vegetation.

Action NR-1.2.5. Promote and establish intergovernmental coordination of regulations among communities located along riparian corridors.

Strategy NR-1.3.

Encourage restoration of natural habitat, streams and drainage patterns in developed areas. Development has occurred in or close to several environmentally sensitive areas, resulting in developed or cleared floodplains, and piped or channelized (rerouted streams).

Action NR-1.3.1. Establish guidelines for planting vegetation along streams and rivers in order to shade streams, improve water quality and prevent erosion.

Action NR-1.3.2. Encourage replacement of riparian vegetation when vegetation is damaged or removed during construction.

Action NR-1.3.3. Restore natural habitat along streams such as the Muddy Creek as properties are acquired for greenways, flood storage and stormwater management.

Action NR-1.3.4. Encourage redevelopment projects to restore natural floodplain functionality to previously disturbed areas.

Action NR-1.3.5. Implement a stream restoration project on city owned property or on a redevelopment site to educate the public.

Cluster Development (See NR-2.1)

Cluster developments offer distinct and measurable economic advantages over conventional layouts, including, but not limited to:

- Reduced impervious area and total disturbed areas at development sites
- Lower infrastructure and construction costs
- Marketing and sales advantages
- Appreciation of market value
- Environmental and ecological protection and preservation.



*Conventional Subdivision
- 1 unit/acre*

*Cluster Subdivision
- 1 unit/acre*

Goal NR-2. Provide a variety of quality open space, distributed equitably throughout Mason.

Numerous studies document the benefits of preserved natural resources and open space and their impact on community quality of life, property values and economic development. The following strategies will help to build an interconnected network of “Green Infrastructure” in Mason. Coordinate efforts with Goal CF-1 in Chapter 3.

Strategy NR-2.1.

Encourage cluster development that preserves open space while allowing a return on investment.

Action NR-2.1.1. Allow smaller lots and/or provide density bonuses to developers who provide greater open space in areas planned for Low-Intensity Neighborhood on the Future Land Use map.

Strategy NR-2.2.

Acquire or encourage acquisition of environmentally sensitive properties.

Action NR-2.2.1. Seek deed restrictions and/or conservation easements in new developments that preserve sensitive areas such as steep slopes, wetlands and riparian corridors.

Green Infrastructure (See NR-2)

The Green Infrastructure concept views natural systems as a crucial part of a community's infrastructure that requires the same level of attention as utilities and roadways. Green Infrastructure is defined as an interconnected network of greenspace that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides associated benefits to the human population.

Components of such a network can include parks, greenways, buffer areas, working lands such as farms, and nature preserves.



Source: Sprawlwatch Clearinghouse, 2002

Action NR-2.2.2. Acquire strategically important open space areas such as land adjacent to the Muddy Creek through dedication requirements with new development.

Action NR-2.2.3. Acquire floodplain properties or easements for the purpose of restoring natural floodplain functionality.

Action NR-2.2.4. Identify and use funds for natural features protection and acquisition. This could include dedicated funds, grants, civic contributions, bonds, etc.

Action NR-2.2.5. Provide leadership towards creating an urban land trust. Such trusts have raised millions of dollars and have preserved thousands of acres in urban and metropolitan areas across the county.

Strategy NR-2.3.

Promote preservation of woodlands, steep slopes, and riparian areas.

Action NR-2.3.1. Adopt a natural resource protection ordinance that includes provisions to protect woodlands, wetlands and steep hillsides.

Strategy NR-2.4.

Promote the location and design of open space areas within developments so they connect green infrastructure on adjacent properties to create a linked network.

Action NR-2.4.1. Develop a Green Infrastructure plan using the natural resource map developed under Action NR-1.2.1. Identify priority areas for open space dedication and acquisition.

Goal NR-3. Reduce the ecological footprint of development.

The ecological footprint is a measure of human demand on the Earth's ecosystems. Mason can reduce its footprint through energy-efficient and low-impact development practices as well as individual resident actions.

Strategy NR-3.1.

Promote sustainable and energy efficient building practices. The City seeks wise use of energy utilizing cost effective solutions that offer a reasonable payback period.

Action NR-3.1.1. Ensure that all new municipal buildings follow energy efficient practices in order to set an example for private development.

Action NR-3.1.2. Encourage the School District to follow energy efficient practices.

Strategy NR-3.2.

Enable and encourage Low-Impact Development practices in stormwater management, as described in Figure 5.3A in Chapter 5.

Strategy NR-3.3.

Encourage residents to engage in activities that reduce their ecological footprint.

Action NR-3.3.1. Develop an energy efficiency and conservation strategy for the City that addresses public and private actions, projects and funding sources.

Action NR 3.3.2. Provide ecological awareness through the City's web site, classes, and brochures.

Action NR 3.3.3. Develop citywide goals for waste reduction and recycling participation.

Action NR 3.3.4. Work with Warren County and local jurisdictions to prepare a site selection and recycling center feasibility study. Curbside service and drop-off centers exist but other needs are not met such as tire, paint and household chemicals.

Goal NR-4. Increase the tree canopy in the City.

Trees and wooded areas are community-defining natural features that soften the built environment and have several measurable community benefits.

The City's Landscape and Street Tree Ordinance has made a profound impact on Mason's community image and quality of life. Additional flexibility is proposed as part of these successful policies to ensure this strong heritage is continued in the future.

Strategy NR-4.1.

Increase the flexibility of the City's Landscaping and Street Tree Ordinance by providing alternative means of compliance.

Action NR-4.1.1. Study the Landscape Code to identify alternative requirements for tree plantings such as fee-in-lieu-of compliance and allowing more smaller-caliper trees.

Action NR-4.1.2. Support reforestation efforts in areas that have been cleared for development. This strategy can cut down on mowing, add aesthetic value to a neighborhood and add to community character.

Benefits of Trees (NR-4)

Cooling/Reduced Energy Costs

The shading and cooling effects of trees can provide comfort in urban areas and reduce energy costs. The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day. Furthermore, trees placed properly around buildings can reduce air-conditioning needs by 30 percent and can save 20 to 50 percent in heating costs (source: U.S. Department of Agriculture).

Increased property value

Healthy, mature trees add an average of 10 percent to a property's value (source: USDA Forest Service).

Improved air quality

One acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and produces four tons of oxygen, which is enough to meet the annual needs of 18 people (source: U.S. Department of Agriculture).

Stress relief

According to research at Texas A&M University, visual exposure to settings with trees has produced significant recovery from stress within five minutes.

Improved water quality

Tree leaves and roots help to reduce stormwater runoff and erosion through rainwater interception, absorption and soil stabilization. Wooded areas help to prevent the transport of sediment and chemicals into streams (source: USDA Forest Service).



Tree-lined street in the Parkside subdivision

Chapter 3 Community Facilities and Services





Chapter 3: Community Facilities and Services

3.1. Purpose 1 | CF

3.2. Community Facilities Snapshot 1 | CF

3.3. Goals and Strategies 8 | CF

Section 3.1. Purpose

The Community Facilities and Services Element provides an analysis of Mason's existing public facilities and services such as schools, parks, and public safety, and to identify community needs in each area. This element provides a vision to efficiently use public facilities, meet long-term public safety needs, and provide residents with ample park and recreation opportunities.

Primary components of this element include:

1. An inventory of open space areas, recreational resources, and designations of access points to open space areas and resources;
2. An analysis of forecasted needs, policies for managing and protecting open space areas and resources, and implementation strategies to acquire additional open space areas and further establish recreational resources;
3. Policies and implementation strategies designed to promote a regional system of integrated open space and recreational resources for existing and future spaces.
4. Recommendations to enhance and improve the City's public safety facilities and services.
5. Recommendations to enhance the utilization and efficiency of services and facilities.

Vision Statement

Mason will create a legacy of public facilities and efficient management of public services that supports a safe, healthy, attractive and fiscally sustainable community. Public safety facilities will expand to protect a growing population and business base. Parks and recreation facilities will grow to serve developing areas while improving connections to existing neighborhoods.

Section 3.2. Community Facilities

Snapshot

This section contains a summary of existing conditions, issues and opportunities related to community facilities in Mason. Detailed information can be found in the Existing Conditions Report.

Introduction

High quality community facilities and public amenities make Mason a highly desirable place to live. Excellent public schools, parks and city services contribute to Mason's high quality of life and sustainability as a community of choice.

Chapter 3 Cover Photo

Red, Rhythm and Boom - a Mason signature event - is held each year in celebration of Independence Day. Thousands of people gather in Corwin Nixon Park to enjoy live music and watch one of the largest fireworks displays offered in Southwest Ohio.

School System

- Mason prides itself on its availability of high-quality public and private education.
- The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) has designated Mason City Schools as Excellent, its highest rating for student achievement and progress, for the past seven years.
- The system has an enrollment of roughly 10,700, which is the size of a small city.
- The ODE ranked Mason City Schools fourth of the Ohio's 613 school districts in its overall performance index score for the 2006-2007 school year.
- The Ohio Physical Activity Plan, the principles of which have been adopted by the City, aims to make schools "centers of community physical activity" through physical education, sports, and routine active transport (see Chapter 7, Section 7.2 for additional information).

Higher Education

- A recently opened Mason branch of Sinclair Community College offers associate degrees and general post-secondary education.

Libraries

- The Mason community has its own independent public library, located at 200 Reading Road (see Map 3.2A).
- The Library completed an expansion in 2000 that doubled its size. Due to ongoing growth, the library is once again exploring expansion or satellite locations.

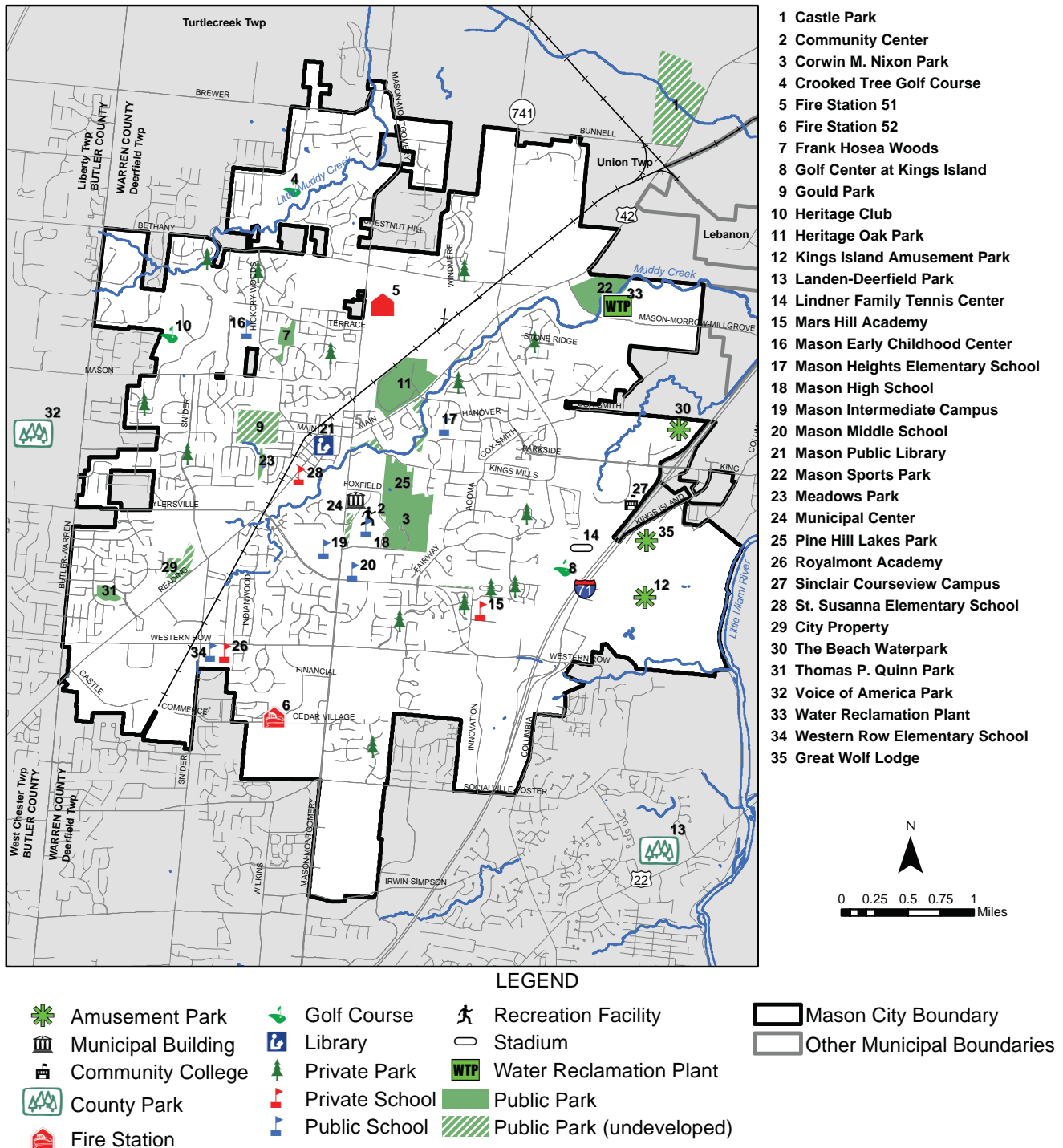


Mason Public Library

Highlights

- Mason residents enjoy access to one of the top-rated public school systems in Ohio.
- Mason's parks, Community Center and the Golf Center at Kings Island offer year-round, state-of-the-art recreation facilities.
- Many of Mason's schools, community parks and recreation facilities are concentrated in a central location. Some facilities are shared between the School District and City, which allows residents to utilize multiple services in one location.
- Mason City School District teaches students in grade-specific buildings, as opposed to neighborhood schools. Students are bussed to the school facilities, which are located in campus-style settings throughout the community.
- Private parks, located in subdivisions, help to increase the amount of recreation opportunities for residents.
- Mason Public Library needs to expand to serve a growing membership.
- Planned new parks will help to serve growing areas to the northeast, address a neighborhood park service area gap in southwestern Mason, and add a new greenway along the Muddy Creek.
- Recent development near Kings Island indicates an opportunity to create a branded "entertainment district" in this area.
- Efforts have been completed to improve the image and function of Downtown as the City's focal point and a pedestrian-friendly gathering spot. These efforts include streetscaping, façade improvement, greenway connections, and future cultural/entertainment facilities.
- The City maintains a high standard of public safety and administrative services.
- The Fire Department is currently rebuilding the outdated Station 51 on Alliance Drive and to adjust existing services to meet the needs of the growing community.

Map 3.2A: Community Facilities



Parks and Recreation

- Overall, Mason residents have access to an impressive array of public and private open space and recreational facilities.
- The City includes nearly 300 acres of public parkland in seven City parks with a range of active and passive recreational facilities, as well as an indoor community recreation facility and public golf course.
- The City also includes several private recreation facilities such as golf courses, neighborhood parks, athletic facilities and amusement parks.
- The Ohio Physical Activity Plan envisions the development of a statewide trail, bikeway, and open space network. The 2001 Bicycle and Pedestrian Way Master Plan provides guidance on developing a city wide bike and pedestrian system.
- The City owns The Golf Center at Kings Island located on Fairway Drive. The course, developed in 1972, was designed by Jack Niklaus. Mason residents enjoy discounted golf rates. Other amenities include a pro shop, locker rooms, the Courseview Restaurant and Bar, Patio Grille and meeting and banquet rooms.

Existing Parks

- Mason is well-served by community parks (see Map 3.2B). However, the City has limited public neighborhood parks, particularly in the eastern half of the community. Private parks, located in subdivisions, help to meet the need.

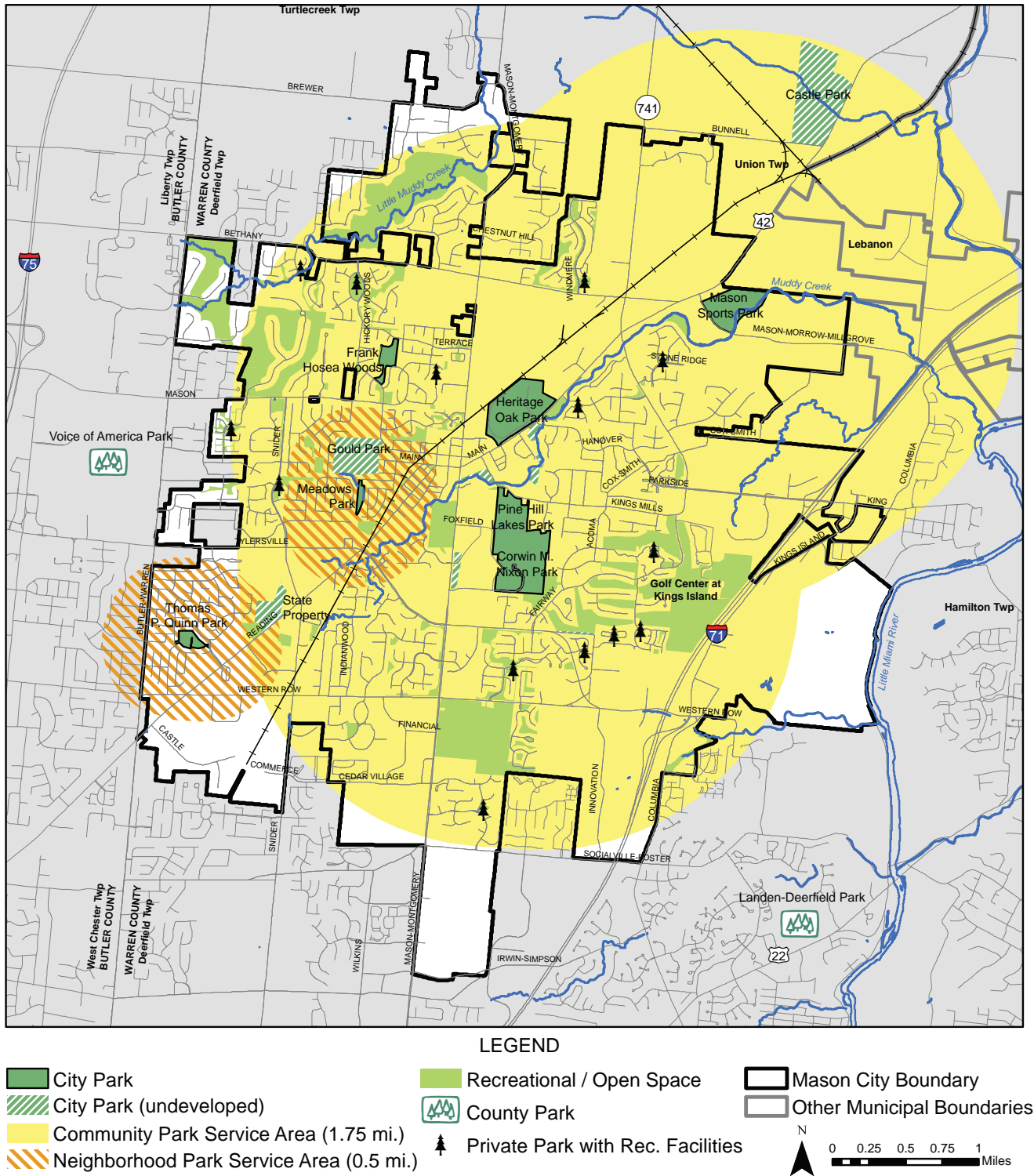
Community Center

- In addition to its public park system, Mason offers a 150,000 square foot indoor public recreation and activity center. The center includes recreational and leisure facilities and equipment, as well as hundreds of programs and activities. The community center expanded in 2010 and includes additional fitness and recreation space as well as a medical office building for Group Health Associates and Bethesda Physical Therapy. The community center will also have space for tenants that can help to achieve the goal to “live well in mason”.



The Golf Center at Kings Island offers several public amenities such as a gazebos, meeting rooms, banquet hall, and restaurant in addition to golf.

Map 3.2B: City Park Service Areas



Private Recreation

- Mason has several private recreation establishments that serve as tourist attractions including:
 - Kings Island Amusement Park
 - The Beach Waterpark
 - Wall-to-Wall Soccer
 - McGees Courts-for-Sports (volleyball and basketball)
 - Sports Express (indoor volleyball)
 - Lindner Family Tennis Center
- The Great Wolf Lodge, adjacent to Kings Island, complements the amusement parks' offerings with a hotel, conference center and indoor water park.
- Golf courses in Mason include the private Heritage Club in northwest Mason and Crooked Tree Golf Course, which is open to the public.

Planned City Parks

- Mason adopted a Parks Master Plan and New Park Design in 2004 that identified recreation facility and open space needs and developed concept plans for several park locations. Implementation of these recommendations is well underway. The City has completed the Mason Sports Park and initial phases of the Muddy Creek corridor trails.



Downtown is located in the historic core of Mason and includes several older structures such as the former City building.



Kings Island Amusement Park

Proposed New Parks

Muddy Creek Greenway Corridor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greenway with pedestrian path linking parks, neighborhoods and downtown in central and northeastern Mason.
Crooked Tree Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.9 acre property on Brewer Road near Crooked Tree Estates
Old Stitt Road Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Stitt Road right-of-way • Improvements will include landscaping and a bike trail.
Kathleen Bevan Castle Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portion of the 126-acre property to the northeast of the City. A portion will be retained for non-park use.
Memorial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4.5 acres adjacent to Veterans Memorial, Municipal Center, High School and Community Center.
Former State Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23-acre property on U.S. 42 purchased by the City by the State of Ohio. • Will be developed as a neighborhood park serving the southwestern portion of Mason.
Gould Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49-acre former farm. • Planned primarily as passive open space and neighborhood park use.

Downtown

- As the historic and cultural center of Mason, downtown is a unique kind of community facility.
- The City completed the Downtown Revitalization Plan in 2002, which recommended a series of improvements aimed at making downtown a vibrant mixed-use environment and gathering spot.

- The City is pursuing implementation of several of the recommendations, including:
 - Burying of utilities (completed).
 - Establishment of public parking lots.
 - Construction of pocket parks.
 - Gateway signage.
 - Establishment of a Train Depot.
 - Development of the Muddy Creek greenway.
- The Water Reclamation Plant houses the Public Utilities Department, while the Public Works Department operates from a separate facility near the intersection of State Route 741 and Bethany Road.
- Mason's largest single source of revenue, like many Ohio cities, is its Income Tax. Mason's one-percent income tax rate produced over \$21 million in 2008.
- Mason began offering a 100% credit in 2010 to residents who pay income taxes to other communities.
- The Finance Department earned a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada, the highest recognition for government accounting and financial reporting numerous times.

Public Safety and Administration

Fire & EMS

- Fire and EMS services are provided by the City of Mason Fire Department, which operates two fire stations in the community (see Map 3.2A).
- Ongoing growth continues to necessitate improvements and expansions in the Fire Department, including:
 - A replacement for the current Station 51, due to the lack of adequate space.
 - Eventual construction of a third station and potential relocation of Station 52.

Police

- The City of Mason Police Department has achieved accreditation by the international Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, a voluntary distinction that indicates a high level of quality in law enforcement services and administration.
- The Department faces a surge of calls for service during summer months, due to the seasonal influx of tourists to local venues such as Kings Island Amusement Park, The Beach Waterpark, and the Lindner Family Tennis Center.
- A potential satellite facility at Kings Island has been discussed.

City Administration

- The Municipal Center, built in 2002, includes the Police Department as well as operations for Administration, Fire, Engineering and Building, Finance, and Parks and Recreation departments.



Mason Municipal Center

Section 3.3. Goals and Strategies

Goal CF-1. Expand park system.

A healthy community includes a variety of parks and open spaces located within reasonable walking distance of residents.

Parks meet a community's recreational needs, provide community gathering spots and add value to neighborhoods and encourage healthy lifestyles. They also contribute to economic development efforts because they improve a community's overall quality of life.

Strategy CF-1.1.

Provide a park or usable open space within a 5 to 10 minute walk of every resident.

The City should expand its park system through acquisition, requirements for new development, and shared facilities with the School District as the community grows and as funding permits.

Action CF-1.1.1. Include recreational amenity requirements in greenspace standards for new residential developments that are not within a 5 to 10 minute walk of an existing park or open space.

Action CF-1.1.2. Develop pocket parks where neighborhoods lack convenient access to parkland or usable open space and along the Muddy Creek Greenway to help satisfy park needs, particularly at trailhead locations.

Action CF-1.1.3. Ensure adequate resources are available to maintain parks as the system grows.

Strategy CF-1.2.

Continue to work with the school system to develop shared use facilities.

Action CF-1.2.1. Establish regular and ongoing dialogue with the school system to determine the opportunity for shared facilities, programs, and needs.

Action CF-1.2.2. Work with school officials to collocate and place additional fields, hard courts and playgrounds on school property to serve the needs of adjacent families and residents.

Strategy CF-1.3.

Continue to acquire additional park land as the City grows. Utilize strategies described under Goal NR-2 in Chapter 2 which include cluster development, acquisition/dedication of sensitive areas and development of a Green Infrastructure Plan, in addition to the action below.



Private Open Space with gazebo and soccer field in the Parkside subdivision (See CF-1.1.1)

Action CF-1.3.1. Support the Mason Parks Foundation in partnership with the private sector as a funding source for future parks.

Strategy CF-1.4.

Continue to rely on developer contributions and private open space to off-set public demand for parks.

Residents expect excellent parks and recreation facilities; future residents will do the same. Impact fees and dedications partially pay for one-time upfront costs but do little to pay for ongoing maintenance.

Action CF-1.4.1. Consider increasing the 5% minimum greenspace set-aside requirement to 10% in the subdivision regulations and offer in-lieu-of fees.

Action CF-1.4.2. Evaluate the City's park impact fee and increase if determined set fees are not commensurate with costs.

Strategy CF-1.5.

Develop benchmarks to guide sound parks and recreation decision making related to growth.

Action CF-1.5.1. Establish a per capita park acreage benchmark.

Ten acres of parkland per 1000 capita has become a commonly accepted benchmark. It is thought to be the smallest amount needed to accommodate resident recreational needs. Adequate park acreage seems to exist in Mason at this time and into the immediate future given the city's acquisition of additional acreage. Equitable distribution is perhaps a higher priority, particularly in older neighborhoods that lack neighborhood schools and parks.

Goal CF-2. Provide more leisure opportunities for residents.

Recreational, social and cultural facilities and programming make a community an attractive place to live. Mason already offers excellent recreational facilities and programming. Additional elements desired by residents include vibrant public spaces and an arts venue.



Frazee Pavilion in Kettering, Ohio (See CF-2.2)

Strategy CF-2.1.

Develop urban, pedestrian-oriented parks that offer comfortable and interesting spaces to relax, stroll and socialize.

Action CF-2.1.1. Work with local residents, businesses and merchants to identify strategic areas to develop urban parks and plazas.

Action CF-2.1.2. Develop public and private partnerships to fund the construction and maintenance of urban parks and plazas.

Action CF-2.1.3. Activate urban parks with adjacent mixed-use development and continuous programming.

Strategy CF-2.2.

Conduct a feasibility study to determine the need for an outdoor performing arts venue such as Frazee Pavilion (Kettering, Ohio) and a community arts center as well as a skate park and 50 meter pool.

Action CF-2.2.1. Retain the services of a consultant to determine need, costs and financial feasibility of these facilities.

Goal CF-3. Preserve and enhance Mason's historic and cultural assets.

Historic buildings provide a connection to the City's past and are a source of community identity and uniqueness. Preserving these properties is critical to preserving Mason's vitality and sense of place.

Strategy CF-3.1.

Maintain and enforce provisions of the Downtown Overlay District that preserve landmark historic buildings.



An example historic landmark structure in downtown.

Action CF-3.1.1. Provide technical assistance, low interest loans and grants for the preservation and rehabilitation of landmark historic buildings and structures.

Goal CF-4. Support expansion of continuing and higher education opportunities in Mason.

Expanded higher education opportunities can make Mason a more attractive place to live and can become a driver for economic development.

Strategy CF-4.1.

Work with Sinclair Community College, the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, the University of Dayton, and Miami University to increase educational opportunities and degree programs in Mason.

Action CF-4.1.1. Establish and maintain dialogues with university decision-makers, aimed at exploring branch campus locations, partnerships with local schools and businesses and other means of increasing higher education opportunities.

Action CF-4.1.2. Encourage higher education providers to share facilities.

Action CF-4.1.3. Support transit linkages to facilities within Mason and outside Mason.

Action CF-4.1.4. Enhance education-at-a-distance opportunities by improving home broadband access as part of the broadband plan discussed in Goal IF-1 in Chapter 5.

Strategy CF-4.2.

Offer Mason High School and the Community Center as classrooms for higher education.

Action CF-4.2.1. Work cooperatively with the School District to share facilities and programs.



Mason High School is a state of the art facility located in the Community Core.



Focal point example (See CF-5.2.2)

Goal CF-5. Promote a vibrant arts and cultural presence in Mason.

The arts are a proven tool for improving community quality of life and generating economic activity. A vibrant arts and cultural presence will broaden and solidify Mason's appeal to businesses and residents.

Strategy CF-5.1.

Promote art as part of the Mason experience.

Action CF-5.1.1. Support the arts with resources such as funding, meeting or exhibit space and equipment.

Action CF-5.1.2. Consider an Art fund for public art.

Strategy CF-5.2.

Promote the Community Core as a focal point for the arts.

Action CF-5.2.1. Consider local talent sources when appointing artists. This will encourage artists to reside in Mason.

Action CF-5.2.2. Encourage the development of artists lofts, studio and gallery space.

Action CF-5.2.3. Allow art in the downtown to reinforce its identity and sense of place.

Action CF-5.2.4. Incorporate an outdoor performing arts facility in the downtown that can be used for theatrical and musical performances. See CF-2.2 to determine feasibility.

Strategy CF-5.3.

Develop a system of wayside exhibits and interpretive panels in key locations through the City.

Action CF-5.3.1. Inventory historic people, places and events as well as significant natural resources to identify content and location for interpretive panels.

Action CF-5.3.2. Develop wayfinding and interpretive sign guidelines and regulations. Integrate the signage with the system of districts established as part of Goal ED-5 in Chapter 4.

Strategy CF-5.4.

Continue to support the Mason Arts Festival, Heritage Festival, and Red Rhythm and Boom.

Action CF-5.4.1. Seek corporate sponsors and offer naming rights for large events to help offset costs to the city.

Goal CF-6. Maintain and enhance public safety and emergency response levels of service to support community growth.

Maintaining and enhancing these essential services will eventually require new facilities as well as strategies to use facilities efficiently, monitor levels of service, and develop land use patterns that support public safety efforts.

Strategy CF-6.1.

Establish new Fire and Police stations to service growth areas.

Action CF-6.1.1. Establish a third fire station to improve the level of service and meet future growth needs or rely on mutual aid if adequate service levels are achievable.

Action CF-6.1.2. Encourage collocation of multiple public safety services where appropriate to utilize tax dollars efficiently.

Action CF-6.1.3. Continuously monitor and evaluate staff, equipment and facility resources with respect to the volume, type and geography of calls for service as well as changing technology and socioeconomic conditions.



Wayside Exhibits (See CF-5.3)

Developing visible connections between the urban environment, landscape features and a storyline can help define a community and acknowledge a sense of place. Wayside exhibits are a means for exploring, learning about, enjoying, and conserving the City's history, special places, neighborhoods, parks, and community.

Interpretation is more than facts or stories; it is information that builds connections between personal interests and a place, event, resource or landscape. The result is a deeper sense of history and appreciation for the place, resource or landscape.

Action CF-6.1.4. Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in public spaces and as part of landscape and site plan review to promote a pedestrian-friendly community and to complement police services.

Goal CF-7. Maintain and enhance the quality of Mason's school system.

Mason Public School District has been and will continue to be a primary factor in determining Mason's success in attracting residents.

Strategy CF-7.1.

Continue to seek opportunities to partner with school to improve community facilities.

Action CF-7.1.1. Continue to work with the School District to seek opportunities for collocation and shared use of City and School District facilities.

**Mason Community Center - an example of a successful public-private partnership
(Goal CF-7 and CF-1.2)**

The Community Center is attached to Mason High School, the result of a unique partnership between the City and School District. The School District built the facility, while the city operates and manages it.

The design of both the High School and Community Center as a single structure, as well as the sharing of resources between the two jurisdictions, saved taxpayers about \$12 million and enabled the City to provide a state-of-the-art facility. The facility won a Partnership Award from the National Recreation and Park Association.



This Mason Community Center addition added 31,000 square feet to this state of the art facility.

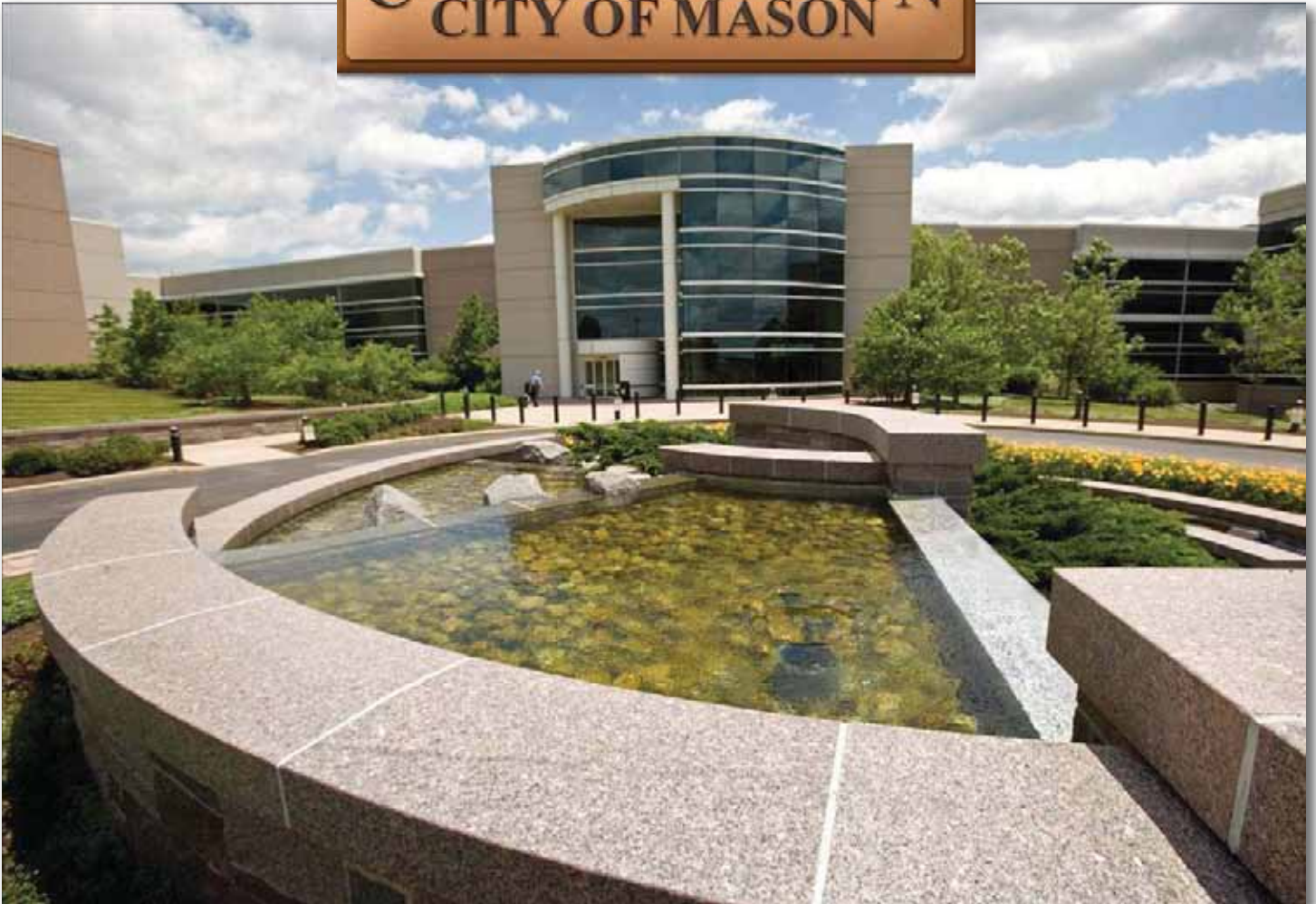
2010 expansion costs will be offset by TriHealth's medical office addition. The expansion includes 31,000 square feet of medical office space, a new fitness floor nearly three times the current size, a warm-water therapy pool, a new multi-purpose/gymnastics room, new flexible open programming space, a "Main Street" entrance to enhance the traffic flow and provide cross-marketing opportunities for local businesses and community groups, expansion space for the possibility of additional complementary tenants, and an expanded Kids Korner child-care area.

The city will lease office space to Group Health Associates and Bethesda Physical Therapy, while maintaining ownership of the entire facility. The annual lease payment will cover all costs associated with such office space and a portion of the costs for the additional areas.

Chapter 4 Economic Development



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF MASON



Chapter 4: Economic Development

4.1. Purpose	1 ED
4.2. Economic Development Snapshot	1 ED
4.3. Goals and Strategies	5 ED

Vision Statement

Mason will expand its economic base with a focus on a vibrant and sustainable local economy. Mason is a thriving tourism destination with a premiere location for high-tech industry, corporate campuses and light industrial development. Mason will set policy to attract a more vertical office market while retaining its diverse business investments. Economic development efforts will grow employment opportunities and increase municipal revenues needed to provide existing and desired high quality public services and facilities.

Section 4.1. Purpose

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to guide efforts to diversify and expand Mason's mix of businesses and tax base, while retaining and enhancing Mason's existing industries. A vibrant economic base will provide employment opportunities close to residents, reduce the overall tax burden and improve quality of life.

The primary components of this element include:

1. An analysis of Mason's current economic base and employment characteristics.
2. Analysis of trends in tourism markets and opportunities.
3. Recommendations for policies, practices and partnerships that will encourage economic growth that is appropriate for Mason.
4. Specific recommendations to enhance attractiveness of Mason for business development.

Section 4.2. Economic Development Snapshot

This section contains a summary of existing conditions, issues and opportunities related to Mason's business environment. Detailed information can be found in the Existing Conditions Report.

Introduction

Economic development in Mason in recent decades has included the establishment of numerous high-tech industries, research facilities and corporate headquarters in the City. Due to a variety of factors including Mason's strategic location, availability of land, proximity to a highly educated workforce, and proactive municipal policies, Mason has been highly successful in balancing job growth with housing growth. The result has been an abundant tax base and close proximity between jobs and Mason residents.

Chapter Cover Photo

Mason is home to several Fortune 500 companies including P&G. This research and development facility is located on P&G's health science campus located on Mason-Montgomery Road.

Photo provided courtesy of P&G.

Highlights

- Close to half of Mason’s working residents are employed in managerial/business/finance or professional occupations.
- Mason’s residents are highly educated.
- Mason’s household incomes are considerably higher than the Cincinnati region and Ohio.
- Mason residents overwhelmingly drive alone to work, although commute times are relatively short due to the presence of local jobs.
- A relatively high percentage (nearly a fourth) of Mason’s working residents work in Mason.
- Mason’s daytime population (workers) is nearly as high as its nighttime (resident) population.
- Mason’s business mix includes a major healthcare research facility, corporate headquarters, and high-tech manufacturing.
- 1100 acres of land zoned for business parks is either vacant or agricultural. A substantial amount of this land is located near I-71 interchanges.
- The City owns 300 contiguous acres zoned for business parks along State Route 741.
- A JEDD (Joint Economic Development District) located in Liberty Township will help to fund significant transportation improvements that will improve pedestrian and vehicular circulation throughout Mason and improve access to I-75.

Income

- Mason’s median household income was 48% higher than the CBSA in 2000 and remains 44% higher than the CBSA, and 64% higher than the State’s (see Table 4.2A).

Jobs and Employment

- The highest percentage of Mason residents (42.3 percent) are employed in service industries, which include professional services such as lawyers, doctors, architects, engineers, etc, but exclude finance, insurance, and real estate service professionals.

Commute Patterns

- Mason residents have relatively short average commute times when compared to the CBSA and State, likely due to the availability of jobs in Mason and surrounding communities.

Table 4.2A:
Median Household Income: 2000-2008

	2000	2008	Change
Mason City	\$66,293	\$85,697	29.30%
Cincinnati-Middle-town, OH-KY-IN CBSA	\$44,842	\$59,701	33.10%
State of Ohio	\$40,998	\$52,391	27.80%

Source: 2000 Census. 2008 estimates from ESRI

Top Employers

- Mason has become a premier business location within the Cincinnati region, due to its location, demographics, available land, and municipal policies.
- Businesses in Mason employ over 20,000 people and include corporate headquarters, research facilities, and high-tech industries.
- Mason's top 10 employers alone generate over \$5 million annually in income tax revenue.

Business Parks

- Mason's business parks consist of approximately 2600 acres zoned for industrial and office uses and are generally found in three areas (see Map 4.2A):
 - Along I-71, clustered around the interchanges at Fields-Ertel Road, Western Row Road, and Kings Mills Road.
 - Near the intersection of Western Row Road and Butler Warren Road.
 - Near the intersection of State Route 741 and Bethany Road.

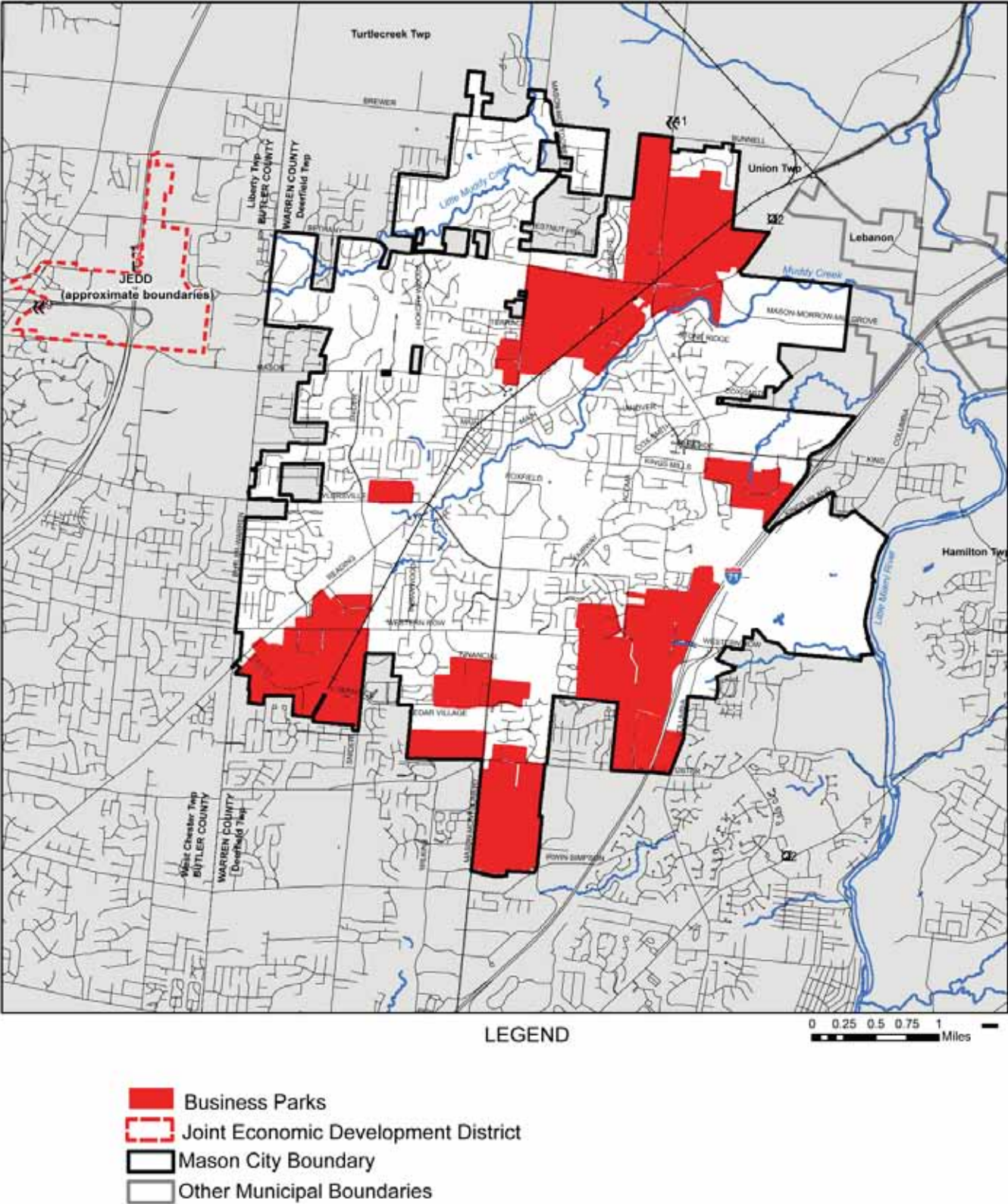
Development Opportunities

- Mason's business parks are approximately 58% developed, with 1100 acres of vacant or agricultural land remaining within these areas.
- The largest concentration of undeveloped land is located along both sides of State Route 741 north of U.S. Route 42.
- Undeveloped business park land is also concentrated near the I-71 interchanges at Western Row Road and Kings Mills Road, which are prime locations for business park uses.



Luxottica Office Building at Tylersville and Western Row Road

Map 4.2A: Business Park Locations



Section 4.3. Goals and Strategies

Goal ED-1.

Develop the I-71 corridor in Mason as a premier corporate address.

The I-71 corridor in Mason, home to multiple Fortune 500 companies, has a considerable amount of vacant land remaining for additional corporate-office development. Improved interstate access and circulation between interchanges will maximize the development potential of this corridor. Introducing a pedestrian-orientated, mixed-use development with supportive amenities will preserve this corridor as a competitive business destination. Accordingly, a new model of economic prosperity is envisioned for the I-71 corridor that will set the standard for sustainable development within the region.

Strategy ED-1.1.

Preserve areas planned as Business Park along the I-71 corridor for corporate offices, high-tech uses and other businesses that create high-paying jobs.

Action ED-1.1.1. Amend the Zoning Code to restrict the I-71 corridor for corporate office. Consider adopting a new overlay district to allow and establish guidelines for parking garages, taller buildings, mixed land use, circulation, stormwater management and architectural controls.

Action ED-1.1.2. Pursue opportunities to acquire strategically located properties as they become available and as funding permits.

Action ED-1.1.3. Utilize city-owned property to induce developers and corporate users to the I-71 corridor.

Strategy ED-1.2.

Improve access and circulation at the I-71 and Western Row Interchange gateway.

Action ED-1.2.1. Work with state, county and regional governments to promote employment and long range development planning via a full interchange improvement at I-71 and Western Row.

Action ED-1.2.2. Watch for viable opportunities for a connection between Kings Mills Road and Western Row Road.

Action ED-1.2.3. Look at alternative transportation options such as shuttles and people movers that connect corporate office buildings to shared parking lots, parking decks and support amenity uses.

Strategy ED-1.3.

Create a master planned, mixed-use (corporate-office) business park environment with support uses to catalyze development within an amenity rich district.

Action ED-1.3.1. Develop an integrated network of pedestrian and bicycle paths that connects all uses within the I-71 corridor.

Action ED-1.3.2. Study the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian connection across I-71.

Action ED-1.3.3. Integrate existing amenities, such as the Golf Center and Lindner Family Tennis Center, to create a truly unique corporate environment.

Action ED-1.3.4. Support amenity retail, retail services and hospitality uses integrated as part of a well thought out mixed use development to increase Mason's long-term sustainability and attractiveness.

Goal ED-2.

Attract light industrial businesses to the North State Route 741 Sub-Area and other areas planned as Light Industrial to maintain a diverse local economy.

Even though the industrial market has been relatively flat in recent years and the office/high tech market is now in-fashion, it is still important to market industrial parks to maintain a diverse local economy.

Strategy ED-2.1.

Improve and actively market older industrially zoned properties and parks.

Action ED-2.1.1. Include more information on each of the city's industrial parks on the Economic Development web page.

Action ED-2.1.2. Improve industrial park visibility and identity by improving or adding entry features and signage.

Action ED-2.1.3. Promote Mason's industrial property to site selection consultants and regional brokers. Ensure such professionals are aware of Mason's multiple industrial parks and their competitive advantages.

Strategy ED-2.2

Promote more flexible use arrangements in industrial parks to ensure older properties generate tax income and are properly maintained.

Some of Mason's more mature industrial parks and buildings are slightly outdated. Obsolescence can create a competitive disadvantage relative to newer properties but it can also create a price advantage.

Action ED-2.2.1. Review zoning and amend, if needed, to permit a broader mix of uses in industrial districts. Consult real estate experts as part of this action to ensure competitiveness within the region.

Action ED-2.2.2. Permit flex-office configurations. Flex-office demises larger buildings into several smaller spaces. Each space is demised to meet user-specific floor area needs for office, manufacturing and warehousing.

Action ED-2.2.3. Promote vacant buildings to area incubators. Incubators are a great way to grow new business and create demand for space.

Goal ED-3.

Update and align economic development policies with performance related goals.

Clear incentive policies make the economic development process more predictable. Incentives can be financial or non-financial ranging from tax abatement, waived fees, and/or public infrastructure improvements. All of these

incentives are appropriate tools but they should only be used when city goals are met and the benefits outweigh costs.

Strategy ED-3.1.

Make the use of incentives transparent and predictable - linked to performance.

Action ED-3.1.1. Adopt minimum requirements (performance standards) for the use of incentives. Incentives should be linked to jobs created and wages provided (i.e. fiscal return) for office, retail and industrial uses.

Action ED-3.1.2. Enhance economic development webpage and collateral material to inform existing and perspective companies of the city's minimum performance requirements and their tie to incentives.

Strategy ED-3.2.

Ensure incentives are provided in return for adherence to Comprehensive Plan goals.

Incentives are powerful tools. They should be leveraged to drive compliance with Comprehensive Plan vision, goals and policies.

Action ED-3.2.1. Utilize development agreements, where applicable, when incentives are offered to ensure projects are developed consistent with Comprehensive Plan goals.

Action ED-3.2.2. Offer incentives in the I-71 Corridor only when users can adhere to the highest development standards consistent with a leading-edge, high-tech and corporate office environment.

Action ED-3.2.3. Consider extending incentives to projects that meet job, industry and wage goals and also incorporate supportive mixed uses such as retail and services.



The Diamond Back courtesy of King Island

Goal ED-4.

Grow Mason's family friendly tourism industry.

With amusement parks and professional sports, Mason is a family-orientated destination and tourism powerhouse. World-class events and venues bring millions of people to Mason annually and offer the City a significant amount of national exposure and prestige. Mason's family-oriented tourism industry offers potential for synergistic development that can have broader economic development benefits.

Strategy ED-4-1

Develop and economic development based tourism strategy. The tourism industry in Mason is quite large but it has room to grow.

Action ED-4.1.1. Work with the Warren County Convention and Visitors Bureau and/or tourism consultants to create a strategy aimed at increasing Mason as a Regional Tourism Center.

Strategy ED-4.2.

Promote entertainment and hospitality uses in the Kings Mills Sub-area (See Chapter 8 and Chapter 7, LU-17).

Central to this strategy is a new, mixed use lifestyle center (entertainment, shopping, and restaurants) that supports and is co-marketed with Kings Island, The Beach and professional sports to drive overnight trips.

Action ED-4.2.1. Ensure suitable acreage in the Kings Mills Sub-area (see Chapter 8) is preserved for a pedestrian and family friendly, mixed use lifestyle center.

Action ED-4.2.2. Work with property owners and developers to cooperatively establish a pedestrian-friendly hospitality, entertainment and retail district.

Strategy ED-4.3

Grow Mason's sports and recreation themed cluster in the I-71 corridor.

Action ED-4.3.1. Support the development of a regional sports event/tournament facility in or close to the Kings Mills Sub-area.

Action ED-4.3.2. Continue to support regional events and facilities including ATP Tennis Tournament, and Duramed Golf Tournament.

Goal ED-5.

Brand and market Mason's unique districts.

Mason is one of the most visited cities in Ohio. This is an unique distinction for a community of Mason's size. The following actions are offered to attract additional visitors and to generate multi-day trips.

Strategy ED-5.1.

Develop a unified system for creating and naming districts.

Action ED-5.1.1. Identify districts that have unique market appeal. The sports, recreation and entertainment clusters located in the I-71 corridor is an obvious example. Downtown is another.

Strategy ED-5.2.

Develop a branding strategy for each district (see Map 4.3A) that provides a positive image for the district and the community as a whole.

Action ED-5.2.1. Assess target audience (i.e. developers, businesses, residents and visitors) needs for attractions, land use, entertainment and hospitality and develop a branding theme and strategy for each district.

Action ED-5.2.2. Develop marketing materials based on the branding themes aimed at attracting developers and businesses to each district.

Action ED-5.2.3. Identify synergies between districts and co-market unique district attributes and large events to drive overnight visits (e.g., turn day trips into weekend trips). An example is the development of restaurant and entertainment uses in the Community Core to provide an alternative experience for visitors visiting Kings Island or attending professional sporting events.

Action ED-5.2.4. Study the feasibility of linking Mason's districts and notable tourist attractions via a supportive transportation system.

Action ED-5.2.5. Develop district branded marketing material that includes maps, attractions and events. Place these items on-line, in hotels and restaurants, etc.

Action ED-5.2.6. Enhance the streetscape and gateways in each district so as to reflect the established theme and provide stronger physical connections to other districts. Include wayfinding elements that direct motorists and pedestrians to key destinations. See CF-5.1.3, CF-5.1.5 and ED-7.



Cintas maintains a large educated workforce at its Mason campus.

Goal ED-6.

Continue to grow and diversify the local economy.

Strategy ED-6.1

Encourage retention and expansion of existing Mason businesses.

Existing businesses will play a critical role in growing Mason's economy. Development regulations and incentive policies must cater to existing businesses while attracting new ones.

Action ED-6.1.1. Conduct "customer satisfaction" surveys of businesses who have recently been through the City's development review process.

Action ED-6.1.2. Work with the business community to identify changes to the zoning code and/or review process to facilitate business expansion.

Action ED-6.1.3. Establish a mechanism for improved and regular communications between business leaders and city officials. Hold regularly scheduled meetings and ad-hoc meetings when necessary to discuss issues of mutual importance, to share needs and discuss pending policies and solicit feedback.

Action ED-6.1.4. Continue to refine economic development programs, incentives and policies for business retention and growth based on business feedback.

Strategy ED-6.2

Continue entrepreneurial approach towards economic development.

Strong regional competition for jobs is making corporate recruitment more challenging. The city, in response, has adapted over time and created a “port authority” to vigorously pursue opportunities.

Action ED-6.2.1. Use the Mason Port Authority to aid the development goals of the City by using creative financing and incentive resources.

Goal ED-7.

Maintain and enhance Mason’s strong aesthetic image at key entrances and along thoroughfares.
See CF-5.1.3.



Mason’s manicured boulevard treatments and streetscape investment along primary thoroughfares enhances community image and creates a welcoming appearance.

Strategy ED-7.1.

Establish gateway enhancements to provide a greater sense of entry and arrival at key locations.

Action ED-7.1.1. Incorporate entry style gateway signage at or close to important City entry points and use streetscaping and signage to signify arrival at important intersections.

Action ED-7.1.2. Promote denser, mixed use development at key intersections as planned in Chapter 7 Land Use, LU-19. This will create activity nodes, generate pedestrianism and add variety along corridors.

Strategy ED-7.2.

Continue to enhance and extend landscape parkways with ornamental lighting and decorative features. This is a signature “Mason” placemaking element.

Action ED-7.2.1. Consider a lighting and landscaping special assessment district to pay for or help offset costs.

Goal ED-8.

Be a leader in small business growth.

Small business is the growth engine of our national economy, representing between 60% to 80% of all new jobs created on an annual basis. Communities are taking note by developing new economic development policies and programs targeting small business growth.

Strategy ED-8.1

Make Mason a small business community of choice.

Action ED-8.1.1. Incorporate the importance of entrepreneur and small business development into economic development strategies.

Action ED-8.1.2. Promote small business resources on the City’s webpage.

Action ED-8.1.3. Advertise the city’s small business advocacy program and co-market with area chambers and Small Business Administration, etc.

Action ED-8.1.4. Review the Zoning Ordinance and amend to recognize increased telecommuting and home based business trends and practices.

Action ED-8.1.5. Consider adding live-work units as a permitted use type as explored in Chapter 2, HN-1.2 and Chapter 7, LU-11.3 and LU-15.3. These units promote small business development.

Strategy ED-8.2

Ensure the resources and infrastructure needed for small business success is in place.

Action ED-8.2.1. Ensure a wide variety of flexible office spaces exist suitable for a variety of different sized small businesses located throughout the City. These office types generally offer shared administrative services and conference rooms.

Action ED-8.2.2. Work with area higher education service providers to meet entrepreneur and small business workforce development needs.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CITY OF MASON^N

2 0 1 0

Chapter 5 Infrastructure





COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF MASON

Chapter 5: Infrastructure

5.1. Purpose	1 IF
5.2. Infrastructure Snapshot.....	1 IF
5.3. Goals and Strategies	3 IF

Vision Statement

The City of Mason will ensure sustainable drinking water, sanitary sewer service and technology for its residents and businesses. These efforts will support the continued vitality of the City of Mason as well as the region to which its economy and quality of life are linked.

Section 5.1. Purpose

The Infrastructure Element provides policies to maintain and improve the quality of the City's infrastructure, including water, sewer, and technology in a sustainable and cost efficient manner as the community grows.

The primary components of this element include:

1. An analysis of existing Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) water supply and treatment, wastewater treatment, stormwater management utilities and their respective capacities.
2. Recommendations to address existing shortcomings in utilities and services.
3. Recommendations to ensure an adequate supply of water and water/wastewater treatment capacity.
4. Recommendations to maintain and improve the quality of the City's water supply, as well as the quality of wastewater and stormwater.
5. Strategies for Low-Impact Development that conserves water, reduces stormwater runoff and improves stormwater quality.

Highlights

- Mason has access to an abundant supply of water through an agreement with the GCWW.
- A recently constructed Water Reclamation Plant serves Mason's current needs and allows for future growth. Minor modifications could increase capacity to more than double the current average daily usage.
- Mason continues to make improvements to its Stormwater Management Program, which includes public education and outreach, illicit discharge detection and elimination, construction site runoff management, post-construction stormwater management, and pollution prevention/good housekeeping for municipal operations.

Section 5.2. Infrastructure Snapshot

This section contains a summary of existing water, sewer and information technology infrastructure conditions, issues and opportunities. Detailed information can be found in the Existing Conditions Report.

Chapter Cover Photo

This is a "Rain Garden" located in Pine Hills Lake Park. This rain garden intercepts stormwater runoff from an adjacent parking lot. The rain garden holds and filters stormwater and reduces ground water and surface water contamination. Rain gardens add utility and aesthetic quality, using natural processes, to Mason's high-quality infrastructure.

Water

- Studies in the 1990s showed that the City's water sources were insufficient to meet the demands of future growth. The City signed a 30-year contract in 2002 that transferred all water operations to GCWW. GCWW currently provides water treatment for most of the community.
- The Warren County Water Department services a small percentage of the City on its eastern boundary.
- GCWW obtains a dominant amount of its water from the Ohio River via its Miller Plant, located near the mouth of the Little Miami River.
- The City's current contract with GCWW stipulates a limit of 15 million gallons per day (MGD) of water to be supplied to Mason. It would be possible for the City to increase this limit by amending the contract if the need arises.

Sewer

- The City of Mason provides sanitary sewage treatment and maintains sewer lines for the entire Mason community. A new Water Reclamation Plant (WRP), completed in 2006, provides sewage treatment with an average capacity of 8.67 million gallons per day (MGD), with a theoretical peak capacity of 30 MGD. Relatively minor modifications could expand the plant's average capacity to 13 MGD.

Stormwater Management

- Stormwater runoff in urban areas can carry pollutants into water sources and aquatic habitats and can increase flooding and erosion.
- The City of Mason established a Stormwater Utility in 2001, and a Stormwater Management Program in 2003. The Stormwater Utility provides a funding stream for stormwater management projects.
- Some examples of stormwater management projects include:
 - Regional detention along the Muddy Creek near Snider Road, and near Fairway Drive on the Golf Center at Kings Island golf course.
 - Installation of new stormwater systems in older neighborhoods to address flooding problems and a lack of prior stormwater management infrastructure.
 - Installation of a rain garden in Pine Hill Lakes Park and pervious pavement at the Pine Hill Lodge.

Information Technology

- Cincinnati Bell and Time Warner Cable provide high-speed internet and other telecommunication services for both residential and business purposes in Mason. Advanced Technology Consulting and Embarq concentrate on business telecommunication needs.
- A 1,600-mile fiber optic network that connects Ohio's major metropolitan areas includes a segment that runs parallel to I-71 between Columbus and Cincinnati.



Rain Garden at Pine Hill Lakes Park after initial planting - compare with the cover photo taken two years earlier.

Section 5.3. Goals and Strategies

Goal IF-1.

Improve Technology Infrastructure for Business Parks and neighborhoods.

Education and innovation, both of which fuel economic development, depend on effective sharing of information. The telecommunications infrastructure is now just as vital to economic growth as transportation systems. Proactive efforts to expand broadband infrastructure will help business recruitment efforts, attract desired jobs, and possibly promote higher education in Mason.

Strategy IF-1.1.

Develop a plan to expand fiber-based broadband infrastructure in Mason and connect to the statewide fiber-optic network.

Action IF-1.1.1. Form a task force, including City officials, service providers, and representatives of local businesses and higher education institutions to explore the expansion and/or improvement of fiber-optic infrastructure throughout the community.

Strategy IF-1.2.

Require easements and conduit installation with new development and through capital improvement projects.

Action IF-1.2.1. Update Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to require empty conduit for future fiber-based broadband infrastructure.

Action IF-1.2.2. Assign a portion of the Capital Budget to development of “backbone” elements of the broadband infrastructure.

Goal IF-2. Improve stormwater quality and maintenance throughout the City.

Runoff from agricultural or developed land can increase flooding and erosion and carries pollutants into groundwater, streams and rivers. The Ohio EPA continues to address this issue by adopting stricter stormwater management requirements that local communities like Mason must enforce. There are also several innovative, low-impact stormwater management strategies that can be applied at a variety of scales as a supplement to or

(with special Ohio EPA approval) substitute for Ohio EPA requirements.

Strategy IF-2.1.

Modify building and zoning codes to promote Low-Impact Development (LID) practices such as bio-infiltration swales, rain gardens, xeriscaping or low-moisture landscape plantings (see Figure 5.3A).

Action IF-2.1.1. Educate development review officials about Low-Impact Development approaches.

Action IF-2.1.2. Encourage reduced parking and driveway areas with regulatory changes such as parking maximums, “shadow” or land-banked parking, and narrower driveway width requirements. This action will complement the reduced local street widths recommended under Chapter 6, TR-2.1. (See Figure 5.3B)

Action IF-2.1.3. Allow pervious pavement materials on driveways and parking lots.

Figure 5.3B “Shadow” or “land-banked” parking (See IF-2.1.2)

This regulatory technique reduces impervious surfaces by permitting the reduction in the amount of required parking to be installed by setting aside “green space” for future parking if warranted.

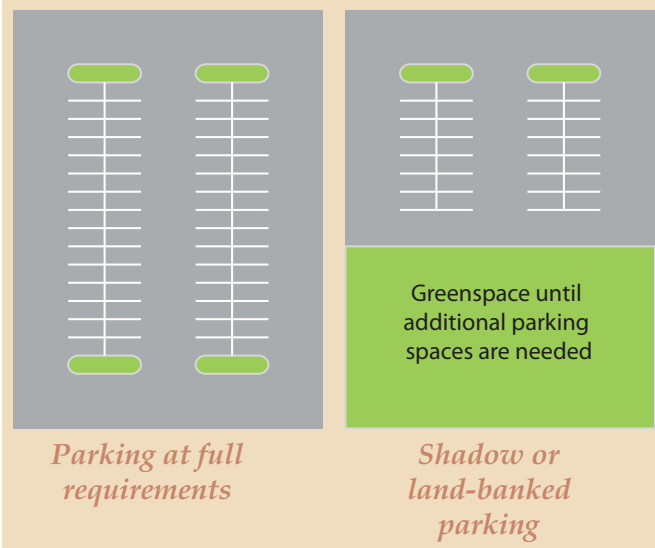
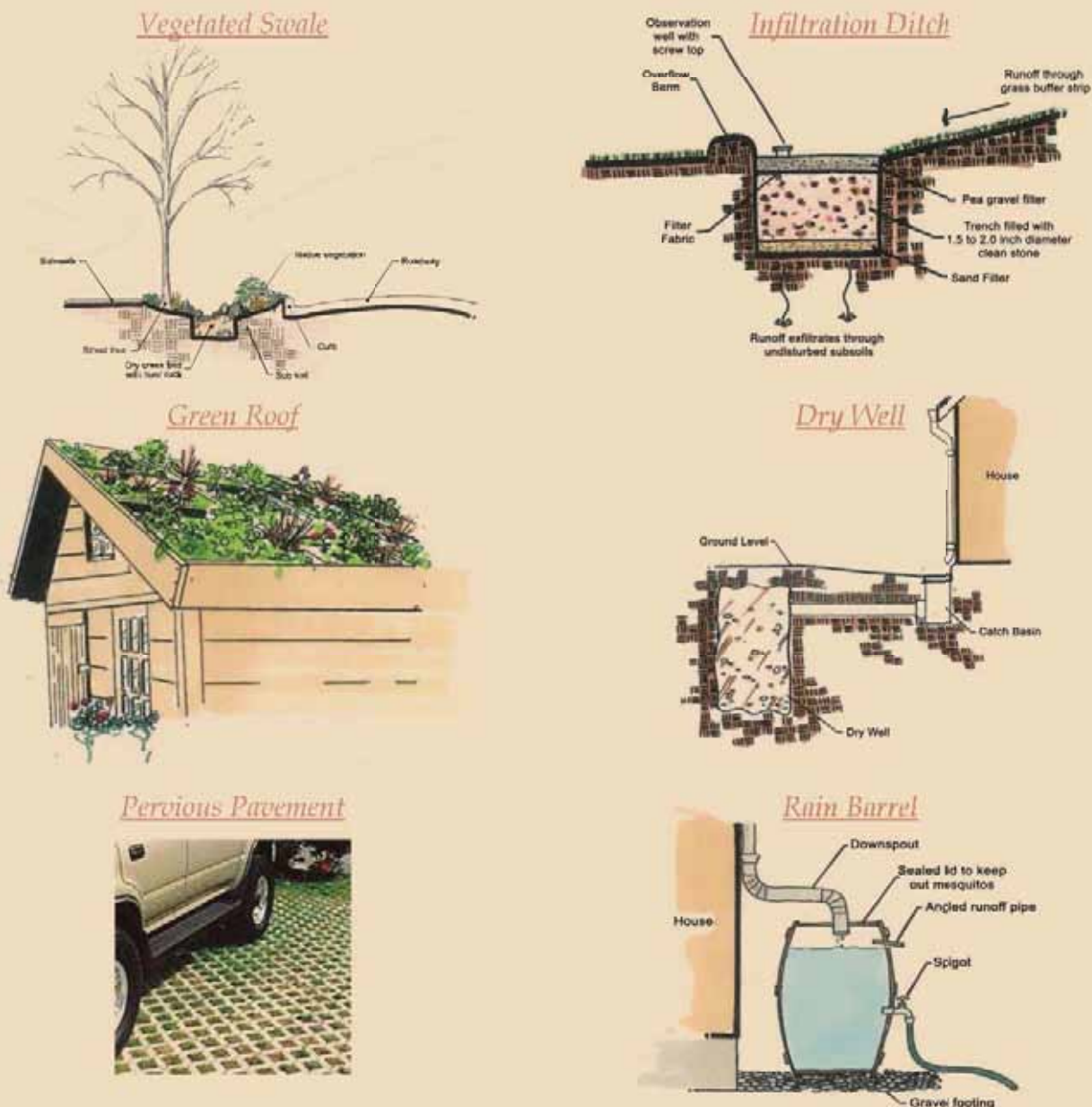


Figure 5.3A Low-Impact Development (See IF-2.)

Low-Impact Development (LID) is an approach to stormwater management at the site level that seeks to mimic natural hydrology and processes with small-scale, decentralized practices that infiltrate, evaporate, detain and transpire stormwater. LID practices known as Integrated Management Practices (IMP's) are designed to minimize disturbance and manage stormwater at its source, rather than relying solely on centralized BMP's such as detention basins. Below are several examples of common IMP's.



Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Rainwater Manual

Action IF-2.1.4. Develop design guidelines for Integrated Management Practices and incorporate them into the site plan review process as an alternative to conventional stormwater management practices.

Action IF-2.1.5. Develop educational materials that instruct property owners on how to implement and maintain Low-Impact Development features such as bioswales and rain gardens.

Action IF-2.1.6. Promote energy efficient and environmental design principles for sustainable development. (See NR-3.1)

Strategy IR-2.2.

Continue the development of regional detention basins in strategic locations.

Action IF-2.2.1. Select site location for future regional detention that ties into the City's Green Infrastructure network (described in NR-2).

Action IF-2.2.2. Design future regional detention basins as aesthetic and recreational assets to the community. Integrate the basins with gateway or streetscape designs where applicable and connect the sites to the City's bicycle and pedestrian path network.

Strategy IF-2.3.

Incorporate current Ohio EPA standards for stormwater detention into existing stormwater regulations and detention basins in order to improve stormwater quality and facilitate detention basin maintenance.

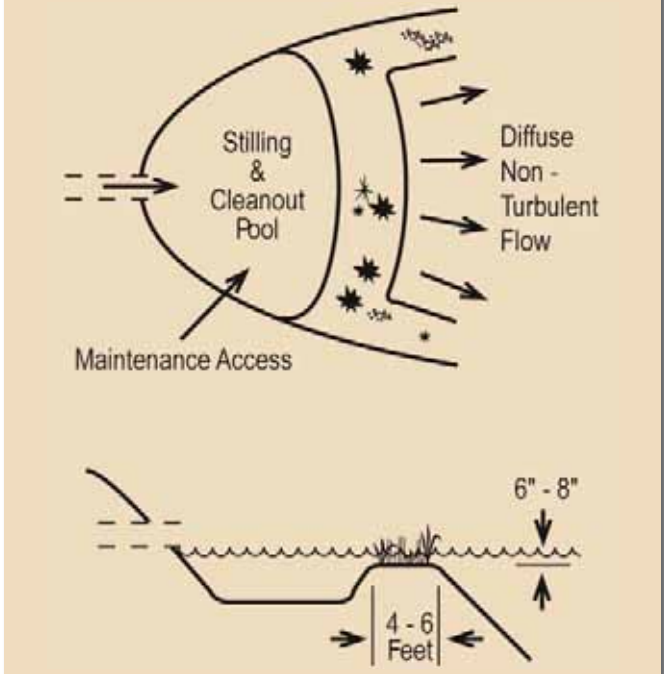
Action IF-2.3.1. Retrofit existing regional detention basins to include "forebays" and other Ohio EPA design requirements. (See Figure 5.3C)

Action IF-2.3.2. Update stormwater regulations to reflect current Ohio EPA requirements.

Strategy IF-2.4.

Restore and stabilize damaged floodplain areas as described in Chapter 2, NR-1-3.

Figure 5.3C Example of Forbay Detention System. (See IF-2.3.1)



Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Rainwater Manual

Goal IF-3.

Grow in a fiscally responsible manner.

Mason will encourage development within the existing municipal boundary (see Chapter 8) to maximize the investment made in existing infrastructure and services.

Strategy IF-3.1.

Direct development to planned growth areas that have adequate sewer and water infrastructure.

Action IF-3.1.1. Upgrade water and sewer lines as needed to facilitate development in priority growth and reinvestment areas - see sub-areas identified in Chapter 8.

Action IF-3.1.2. Modernize and maintain existing water and sewer lines in order to promote continued investment, infill and redevelopment in existing neighborhoods. Coordinate with strategies identified under Goal HN-1 in Chapter 1.

Strategy IF-3.2.

Evaluate growth-related capital improvements and costs of services against anticipated economic returns for new projects and proposed annexations.

Action IF-3.2.1. Use the OKI model or develop an interactive fiscal analysis tool that projects the future capital and operating costs and anticipated revenues of annexations, new development and infrastructure projects.

Action IF-3.2.2. Explore opportunities for additional revenue streams such as user fees, agreements with adjacent jurisdictions and other solutions as needed.

Strategy IF-3.3.

Consider adopting an adequate public facilities ordinance.

Action IF-3.3.1. Require a determination by the City for planned development and site plan review applications that adequate water, wastewater, and roadway infrastructure and services are or will be in place when development occurs.

Action IF-3.3.2. Require developers to offset increased public costs when existing public infrastructure, facilities and services are inadequate to accommodate new demand.

Strategy IF-3.4. Account for true, long-term infrastructure costs in annual budgeting.

Action 3.4.1. Budget for long-term maintenance and replacement costs on an annual basis. Annual set asides will accumulate over time commensurate with anticipated maintenance and replacement costs.

Goal IF-4.

Monitor future drinking water supply.

Strategy IF-4.1.

Work with Greater Cincinnati Water Works to estimate future water needs and secure adequate supply and pressure to meet the needs of future growth.

Action IF-4.1.1. Evaluate the need to amend the City's contract with Greater Cincinnati Water Works to increase limits of water provided in the future.

Goal IF-5.

Improve floodplain, floodway and waterway maintenance.

Waterways form the backbone of the City's Green Infrastructure network. Maintaining riparian vegetation and avoiding damage and obstructions to the floodplain (discussed further under Goal NR-1 in Chapter 2) will improve stormwater management efforts and flooding hazards. Preserving stream corridors as recreational greenways will raise awareness of natural systems, provide recreational amenities and preserve natural drainage functions.

Strategy IF-5.1.

Promote development of greenways and paths along the Muddy Creek and other riparian corridors as discussed under Strategy NR-2.2 in Chapter 2 and TR-1.2 in Chapter 6.

Goal IF-6.

Monitor sanitary sewer treatment capacity.

Strategy IF-6.1.

Implement findings of City-wide Inflow/Infiltration Analysis by identifying and constructing remedial sewer projects in areas of high inflow and/or infiltration.

Action IF 6.1.1. Prioritize projects that are in highly sensitive areas and ones that provide the best results for the cost.

Strategy IF-6.2.

Develop electronic Operation & Maintenance Manual with standardized procedures and computerized maintenance inventory system.

Strategy IF-6.3.

Update the Wastewater Master Plan to take into account newly developed and annexed areas.

Goal IF-7.

Upgrade sanitary sewer treatment capacity.

Strategy IF-7.1.

Complete planned expansion of Water Reclamation Plant timed to accommodate planned growth.

Strategy IF-7.2.

Examine existing lift stations.

Action IF-7.2.1. Upgrade existing lift station near the Beach Water Park to improve service and provide for future expansion of sewer system.

Action IF-7.2.2. Eliminate existing Parkside lift station and provide for future system expansion by construction of a new gravity sewer in Bethany Road west of Mason-Montgomery Road.

Goal IF-8

Examine ways to provide cost effective secondary benefits of Water Reclamation Plant.

Strategy IF-8.1.

Prepare a feasibility study to turn the Water Reclamation Plant into a regional system.

Action IF-8.1.1. Proactively contact area wastewater treatment facilities such as Warren County Water and Sewer, Butler County Water and Sewer, Cincinnati MSD, the City of Lebanon and the Village of South Lebanon to explore sharing of excess capacity.

Strategy IF-8.2.

Develop ways to use by-products of Water Reclamation Plant.

Action IF-8.2.1. Study re-use of effluent water.

Action IF-8.2.2. Study re-use of bio solids as fertilizer for residential and agricultural uses.

Action IF-8.2.3. Study re-use of bio solids as alternative energy source and/or production.

Action IF-8.2.4. Construct facilities to treat and convey WRP effluent to Mason Sports Park for irrigation, replacing purchased water.



An aerial and street level view of Maon's Water Reclamation Plant located on Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road.

Chapter 6 Transportation



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF MASON



Chapter 6: Transportation

6.1. Purpose	1 TR
6.2. Transportation Snapshot	1 TR
6.3. Goals and Strategies	7 TR

Section 6.1. Purpose

The Transportation Element classifies and analyzes performance of existing automobile, bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit infrastructure and provides direction for future improvements. Analysis and recommendations reflect coordination with the Land Use Element and Development Plans.

The main components of this element include:

1. Classification and analysis of existing roadways and traffic patterns.
2. Identification and analysis of bicycle, pedestrian and mass transit infrastructure.
3. Recommendations to maintain and improve roadway level of service as growth occurs, including new roadways, expansion of existing roadways, and access management.
4. Recommendations for creating a balanced multi-modal transportation system, including new pedestrian pathways, mass transit improvements, and traffic calming strategies.
5. Recommendations to enhance the appearance of the City's main thoroughfares and gateways.

Chapter Cover Photo

Mason has taken extensive steps to improve the transportation system by separating local and through traffic and offering bicycle paths and sidewalks as a means of being a multi-modal and family-friendly.

Vision Statement

Mason will provide a balanced and integrated multi-modal transportation system that is interconnected with the regional transportation system. Mason's streets will be designed to provide an acceptable level of service for local traffic and commerce while providing a comfortable environment for pedestrians, bicycles and transit. Greenways will provide off-street pedestrian connections to local and regional destinations in addition to providing recreational amenities. This multi-modal approach will meet vehicular transportation needs while complementing other goals of this Comprehensive Plan.

Section 6.2. Transportation Snapshot

This section contains a summary of existing transportation conditions, issues and opportunities. Detailed information can be found in the Existing Conditions Report.

Transportation Network

Roadway System

- Overall, rapid growth and proximity to both I-71 and I-75 have placed significant pressure on Mason's roadways, leading to increased traffic congestion.
- Mason has made substantial improvements to its roadways, but there remains a lack of continuous north-south arterials in central and northern Mason.

Highlights

- Rapid growth combined with a lack of north-south circulation has created several traffic chokepoints, including intersections along Mason-Montgomery Road, Tylersville Road and Western Row Road at Kings Island Drive. Planned roadway improvements will help to address this issue.
- Expanded interchanges on I-75 and I-71 will improve regional access but may also generate more traffic on local roadways.
- Event traffic contributes significantly to local traffic congestion in the eastern portion of Mason.
- Developments still remain that were constructed prior to strict access management regulations.
- Through the implementation of the 2001 Bicycle and Pedestrian Way Master Plan, numerous biking facilities have been created. These facilities need to be more interconnected through future projects
- Sidewalks are planned in several older neighborhoods built prior to sidewalk requirements, with the exception of the Trailside Acres subdivision east of SR 741.
- Planned arterial widening projects that include sidewalks and bike paths will improve connections between neighborhoods.
- Although Mason has done an exceptional job of planning for pedestrian facilities, the community's low-density, segregated land use pattern necessitates the use of the automobile for most practical trips.

Accident Locations

- According to the City of Mason, the total number of traffic accidents in the City has declined substantially since 2006: approximately 854 traffic accidents were recorded in 2006, 575 in 2007 and 601 in 2008.
- The highest concentrations of accidents occur at intersections along Tylersville/Western Row Road, a heavily travelled artery and the only continuous link between I-75 and I-71.

Past Thoroughfare Plan Recommendations

- Mason's Thoroughfare Plan was originally adopted in 1969 with the most recent update in 2005.
- The 2005 Thoroughfare Plan (Map 6.3B) recommends future roadway improvements and classifies roadways according to their desired functional objective, such as local access or regional mobility. Table 6.2A describes the function and characteristics of Mason's roadway classifications.
- Surrounding counties and the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) all play a role in planning future roadway improvements in surrounding areas.
- In addition to Mason's Thoroughfare Plan, Map 6.3B incorporates recommendations from the Thoroughfare Plans of Butler and Warren Counties, OKI's Regional Transportation Plan, and the Southwest Warren

County Transportation Study that was completed in 2005.

- The planned roadway improvements generally accomplish the following objectives:
 - Increase access to development opportunities.
 - Improve east-west movement at the north end of the City.
 - Improve access to I-75 and I-71.
 - Improve/extend roadways parallel to I-71.
 - Relieve pressure on congested arterials by constructing alternative, parallel collectors.
 - Re-align intersections to improve efficiency.
 - Improve safety and efficiency of existing intersections.
- The Southwest Warren County Transportation Study's prioritized recommendations included several transportation improvement projects that are within Mason or within potential future growth areas:

High Priority

- Widen and connect Bethany Road and Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road between Butler-Warren Road and SR 48.
- Construct full interchange at I-71 and Western Row Road.
- Improve the I-71/Kings Mills Road interchange.

- Widen SR 741 between US 42 and Kings Mills Road.

Medium Priority

- Widen Butler-Warren Road between Western Row Road and Bethany Road.
- Widen Columbia Road between Kings Mills Road and Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road.
- Widen Mason-Montgomery Road between Fields-Ertel Road and Western Row Road.
- Construct bike paths on SR 741 from Bunnel Road to Hamilton Road, and on Socialville Fosters Road from Columbia Road to the Little Miami River, continuing to SR 48 via Foster-Maineville Road.

Low Priority

- Widen Snider Road from Fields-Ertel Road to Tylersville Road.
- Widen SR 741 from US 42 to SR 63.
- Extend Bunnel Road to Columbia Road via McKinley Road.
- Bus circulator system linking Kings Island, downtown Mason, and several business parks along the I-71 corridor from Fields-Ertel Road to Kings Mills Road.

Table 6.2A: Function, Characteristics and Estimated Traffic Volume Ranges of Functional Classifications

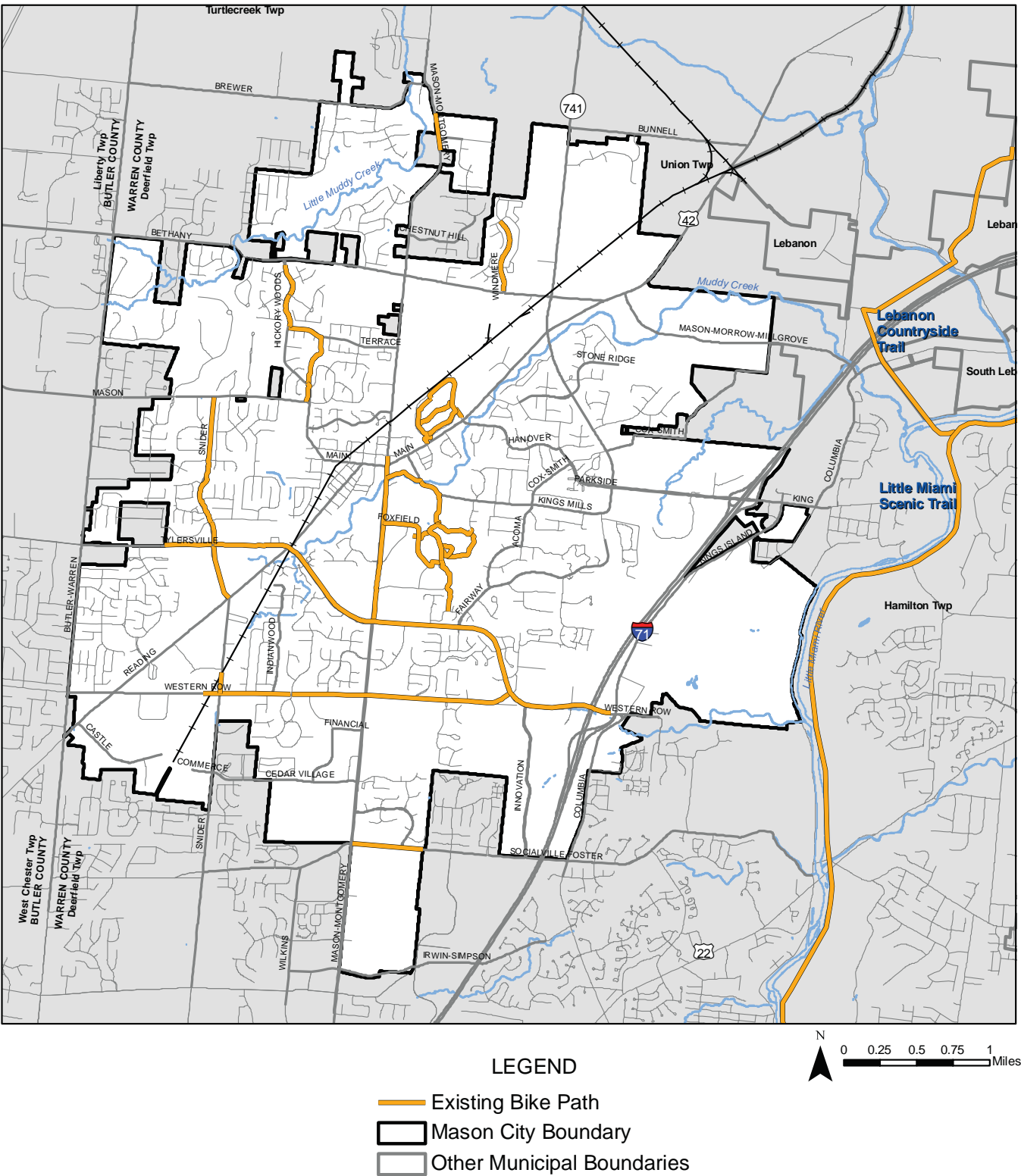
Roadway Type	Function and Characteristics	Existing ADT*	Proportion of Service
Freeway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry high volumes of traffic at high speeds over long distances. • Serves interstate/intrastate/interregional/intracity travel. • No direct property access. • Median/grade separation of opposing traffic movements. 	Over 20,000	
Major Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides mobility at moderate to high speeds/volumes/distances. • Serves interregional, intercity, and intracity travel. • Direct property access is not permitted or restricted. 	9,000 - 20,000	
Minor Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access and mobility at low to moderate speeds/volumes. • Serves intercity, intracity and intracommunity travel. • Direct property access is restricted. 	4,000 - 12,000	
Primary Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access and mobility at lower speeds, with equal priority assigned to access and mobility. • Connects local or secondary collector streets to arterials. • Residential driveways not permitted; commercial driveways restricted by number/spacing/site distance. 	3,000 - 6,000	
Secondary Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects primary collectors to local streets. • Limited residential or commercial driveways based on volume/speed/sight distance/spacing. 	1,000 - 4,000	
Local Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides local land access. • Carries traffic to and from local land developments and collectors. • Direct property access is permitted. 	Less than 1,000	

Source: FHWA
Functional
Classification
Guidelines

*Based on City of Mason Subdivision Regulations

**Estimates based on City of Mason 2008 Traffic Counts

Map 6.2A: Existing Bike Paths



Section 6.3. Goals and Strategies

Goal TR-1.

Encourage alternative methods of transportation.

The City's past efforts to develop non-automobile forms of transportation have boosted Mason's quality of life and regional image as a place to live and work. Further improvements to bicycle, pedestrian and transit infrastructure will extend these benefits to all areas of Mason, while encouraging physical activity, community interaction and reduced automobile traffic and pollution.

Strategy TR-1.1.

Expand the City's bike path and sidewalk system in order to continue the City's progress toward creating a connected bike path and sidewalk system (see Map 6.3A) (coordinate efforts with Chapter 1, HN-1.5).

Action TR-1.1.1. Require bike paths or fees-in-lieu of as part of future project approvals and as part roadway improvement projects along routes identified on Map 6.3A.

Action TR-1.1.2. Require sidewalks with all new development and new or widened roadways.

Action TR-1.1.3. Construct sidewalks where they do not exist on developed residential streets. Prioritize projects based on Thoroughfare Plan classification

(i.e. Collectors have a higher priority than local streets).

Action TR-1.1.4. Encourage pedestrian access easements between dead-end streets and other nearby streets.

Action TR-1.1.5. Establish a non-motorized pathway gap development fund that is funded by grants, donations, and/or payments in lieu of requirements.

Action TR-1.1.6. Evaluate and update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Way Master Plan as needed to address potential changes in priorities and resources since 2001. Incorporate Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies such as the proposed Muddy Creek Greenway.

Action TR-1.1.7. Encourage the provision of bike racks in multi-family and commercial developments.

Action TR-1.1.8. Build community support for pedestrian facilities by promoting an active lifestyle through recreational events and programs. Examples include community walks or running or biking races.

Action TR-1.1.9. Construct a pedestrian bridge across I-71, connecting the Lindner Family Tennis Center with Kings Island.

Strategy TR-1.2.

Use green infrastructure such as stream corridors as pedestrian routes.



The Lebanon Countryside Bike Path, a nearby connection to the Little Miami Scenic River Trail, is easily accessible from Mason as shown on Map 6.3A on page 6.9.

Action TR-1.2.1. Complete the Muddy Creek Greenway as shown on Map 6.3A as greenway land is acquired or dedicated. Require trail segment construction or fees-in-lieu with new development on properties that include portions of the greenway, while using capital improvement funds or grants for remaining portions.

Action TR-1.2.2. Construct a bike path and greenway along the stream extending from the Lindner Tennis Center and Kings Mills Sub-Area to the Muddy Creek bike path, using the same implementation strategy as Action TR-1.2.1.

Action TR-1.2.3. Connect downtown to neighborhoods, parks, community center, planned Activity Nodes and the Little Miami Scenic Trail via the Muddy Creek Greenway.

Strategy TR-1.3.

Consider the development of a trolley loop that connects the Community Core Sub-Area to the Kings Mills Sub-Area and Kings Island. (see ED-5.2.5)

Action TR-1.3.1. Explore feasibility, funding options and potential partners such as the Southwestern Ohio Transit Authority, Warren County Transit Services and Kings Island.

Strategy TR-1.4.

Politically support rail connectivity from Mason to downtown Cincinnati.

Action 1.4.1. Work with OKI and other jurisdictions along I-71 to re-establish the I-71 light rail corridor as a priority in OKI's Long Range Regional Transportation Plan.

Action 1.4.2. Work with OKI and other jurisdictions to establish a commuter line with a station in Downtown Mason on the I&O Railroad. There is a 3 mile gap of track that needs restored starting at Mason's southern border.

Action 1.4.3. Work with SORTA and Warren County to establish transit connections with 3C Passenger Rail Station in Sharonville.

Goal TR-2.

Strive for pedestrian friendly, "Complete Streets".

A Complete Street (as defined by the National Complete Streets Coalition) is a road that is designed to be safe for drivers, bicyclists, transit vehicles and users, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities (see Figure 6.3A for more information). Complete Streets help to create a balanced and sustainable transportation system and vibrant, desirable neighborhoods. Completing Mason's streets will require new design standards for future streets as well as retrofits to existing streets.

Strategy TR-2.1.

Amend subdivision regulations to promote Complete Streets concepts.

Action TR-2.1.1. Consider reducing minimum local residential street widths and curb return radii.

Action TR-2.1.2. Develop maximum-block-length requirements for residential neighborhoods, with block ends defined by intersections, alleys or mid-block pedestrian paths.



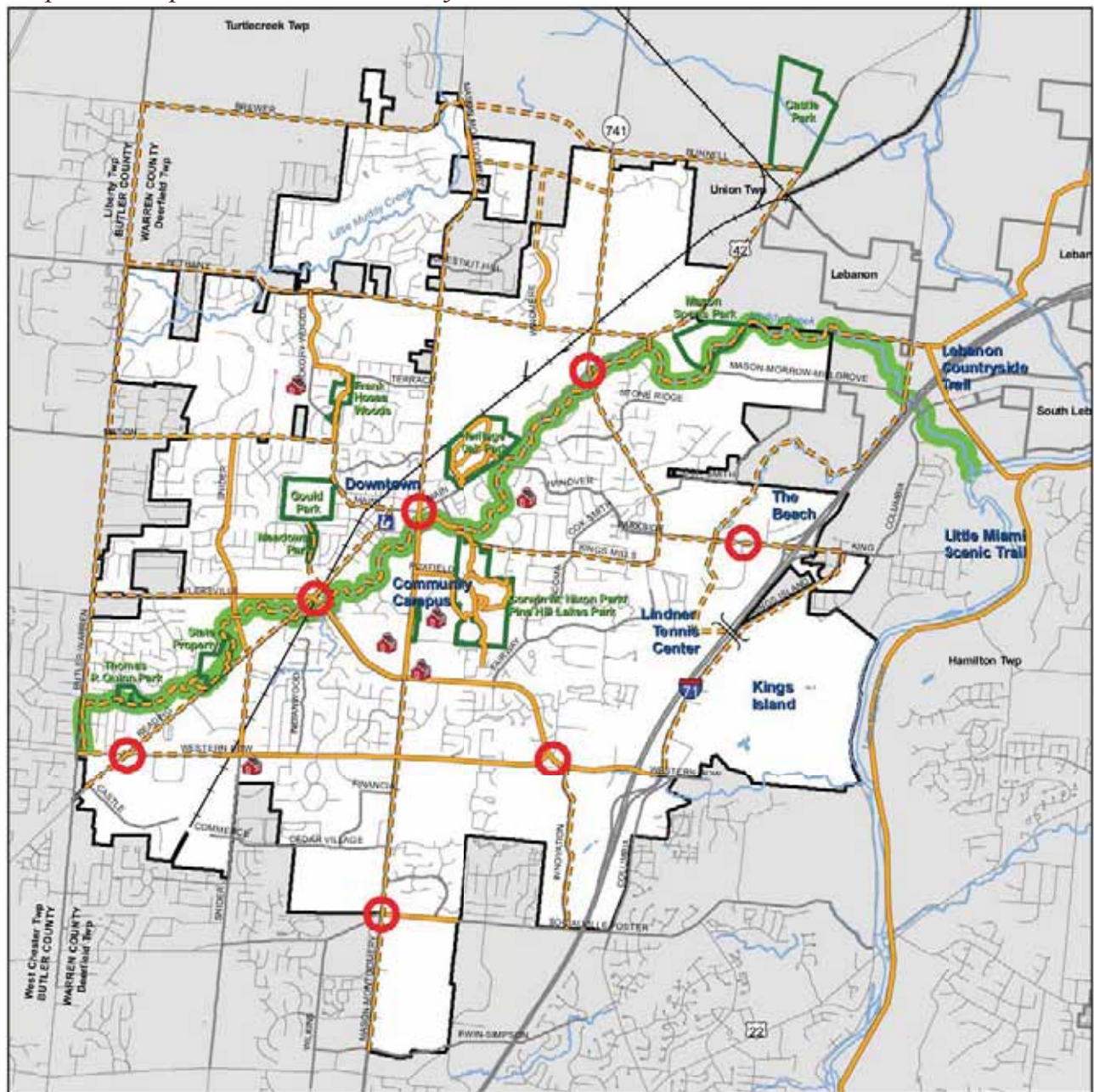
Strategy TR-2.2.

Implement traffic calming measures in residential areas where appropriate.

Action TR-2.2.1. Develop a traffic calming program for local streets (see case study in Figure 6.3B) where speeding, accidents and non-local traffic are concerns. See Figure 6.3A for examples of traffic calming measures.

Action TR-2.2.2. Encourage incorporation of traffic calming measures with new developments where appropriate.

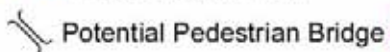
Map 6.3A: Proposed Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan



LEGEND

Pedestrian/Bike Infrastructure

- Existing Bike Path
- - - Proposed Bike Path



Potential Pedestrian Bridge

Pedestrian Attractions

- Library
- Public School
- Planned Activity Node
- Existing and Planned Parks

Muddy Creek Greenway

Mason City Boundary

Other Municipal Boundaries



0 0.25 0.5 0.75 1 Miles

Action TR-2.2.3. Establish safe routes to school by identifying key walking routes as priorities for traffic calming and other pedestrian safety measures.

Goal TR-3.

Reduce vehicle miles traveled in Mason.

Reducing vehicle usage leads to less roadway congestion and pollution. Furthermore, reducing the need for automobiles by encouraging non-automobile transportation leads to increased physical activity, social interaction and convenience. Reducing automobile necessity requires a focus on pedestrian-friendly mixed land use patterns, in addition to the non-automobile infrastructure strategies discussed under Goals TR-1 and TR-2.

Strategy TR-3.1.

Promote mixed use development at Activity Nodes (see Chapter 7, LU-19) to provide daily necessities at convenient locations.

Action TR-3.1.1. Amend the zoning map and create new districts or overlay districts to promote mixed-use development in Activity Nodes as identified on the Future Land Use Map (Map 7.4A).

Action TR-3.1.2. Provide live/work opportunities at appropriate locations throughout the City, as described under Goal HN-1 in Chapter 1 and Chapter 7 Land Use.

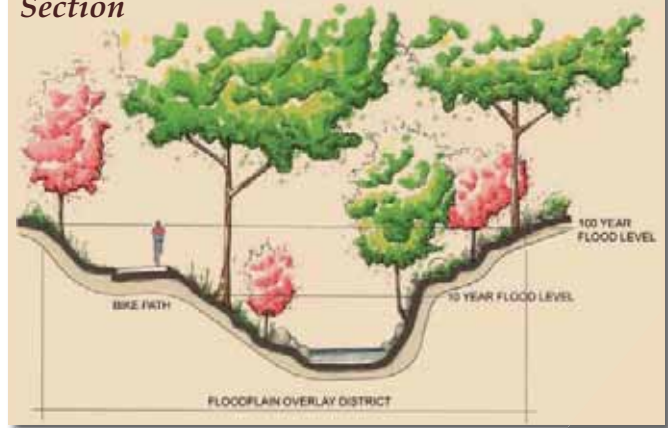
Action TR-3.1.3. Integrate young professional housing in new mixed-use and residential developments to increase the possibility of both living and working in Mason. Implement actions recommended under Goal HN-4 in Chapter 1.

Goal TR-4.

Provide a safe and efficient roadway system.

Although a multi-modal approach (see Goals TR-1 through TR-3) will help to reduce automobile usage and improve circulation, some new roadways and improvements to existing roadways will be needed as well as shown on Map 6.3C Proposed Thoroughfare Plan. The City has a history of effective access management and planning for future roadway improvements to

Proposed Muddy Creek Greenway Cross-Section



Source: 2004 Mason Parks and Recreation Master Plan

accommodate growth. The following strategies continue this legacy and address lingering problems associated with Mason's roadway network.

Strategy TR-4.1.

Upgrade existing roads that are performing poorly to meet Level of Service requirements. The following improvements increase roadway, intersection and interchange capacity by adding lanes and constructing alternative, parallel routes.

Action TR-4.1.1. Support the widening of Butler-Warren Road between US 42 and Bethany Road.

Action TR-4.1.2. Construct a full interchange at I-71 and Western Row Road.

Action TR-4.1.3. Improve the I-71/Kings Mills Road interchange.

Action TR-4.1.4. Support the widening of Mason-Montgomery Road between the Fields-Ertel Road and Socialville-Fosters Road.

Action TR-4.1.5. Widen SR 741 between US 42 and Kings Mills Road.

Action TR-4.1.6. Extend Financial Way east of Mason-Montgomery Road to Western Row Road.

Action TR-4.1.7. Extend White Blossom Boulevard west to an extended Wilkins Boulevard.

Figure 6.3A: Complete Streets Design Concepts

Below are several examples of Complete Streets design concepts, based on information provided by the National Complete Streets Coalition. Additional information can be found at www.completestreets.org.

1. Reduced Street Width



Conventional Local Street (29')

This typical 29-foot residential street in Mason provides more than enough space for two travel lanes and one lane of on-street parking, despite the presence of private off-street parking.



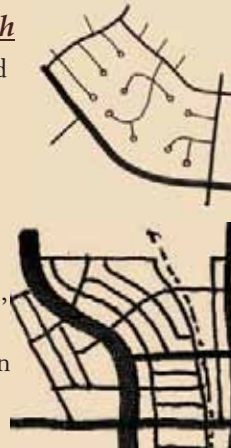
Reduced-Width Street (18')

Streets as narrow as 18 feet provide ample two-way driving space for low-volume streets, while forcing traffic to slow down, reducing pedestrian crossing time and leaving more room for open space¹.

2. Connectivity and Block Length

This street system is poorly connected and includes lengthy blocks, encouraging speeding funneling traffic onto arterials.

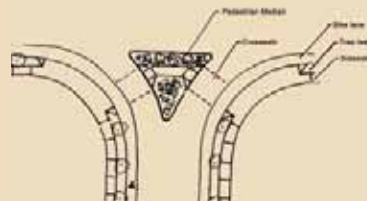
A well-connected street grid with shorter blocks helps to discourage speeding, disperse cut-through traffic, reduce arterial congestion, and improve pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods and land uses.



5. Medians/Pedestrian Refuge Islands

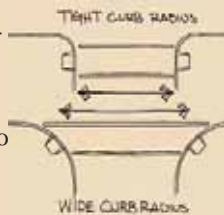


Landscaped medians and Pedestrian refuge islands help to visually narrow the roadway, provide a pedestrian crossing refuge, and improve access management.



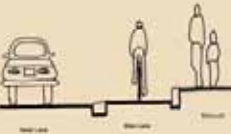
3. Reduced Curb Radii

Tightened curb radii slow vehicle turning movements and reduce pedestrian crossing times. New Urbanism principles suggest a curb return radius of no greater than 15 feet¹.



4. Bike Lanes

Bike lanes provide bicycle mobility and a buffer between vehicular lanes and sidewalks. Furthermore, painting bike lanes on excessively wide roadways reduces their perceived width, providing an inexpensive form of traffic calming.



6. On-Street Parking/Curb Extensions



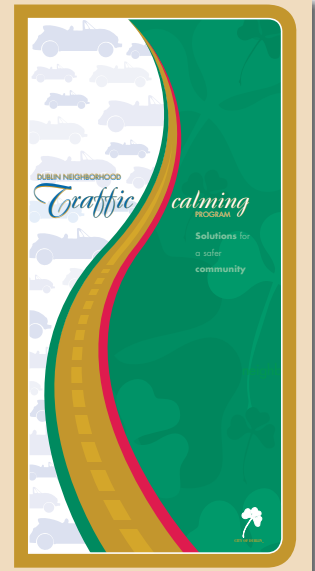
On-street parking provides access to businesses while narrowing the travelled way and calming traffic. Often seen in combination with on-street parking, curb extensions narrow the roadway, shorten pedestrian crossings and improve vehicle sight lines.

¹ Steuteville et al, *New Urbanism: Comprehensive Report and Best Practices Guide* (New York: New Urban Publications, 2003) 8-21, 8-24.

Figure 6.3B: Case Study: City of Dublin, Ohio Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program (see TR-2.2)

The City of Dublin Engineering Department administers a proactive, community-based program for calming traffic on local streets.

1. Residents petition the Police Department for pre-traffic-calming solutions such as speed monitoring trailers and targeted enforcement.
2. If the above step is ineffective, residents are invited to petition the Engineering Department for the Traffic Calming Program.
3. If the petition is approved, the Engineering Department conducts a comprehensive traffic study to determine whether traffic calming is recommended.
4. If traffic calming is recommended, the Engineering Department works with neighborhood residents to select and design the appropriate calming measure.



Action TR-4.1.8. Extend Wilkins Boulevard north to Financial Way and extend Financial Way northwest to Western Row Road.

Action TR-4.1.9. Widen US-42 from Butler Warren Road to Tylersville Road.

Action TR-4.1.10. Widen Kings Mills Road from US-42 to SR-741.

Action TR-4.1.11. Extend Cox-Smith Road from SR-741 to Parkside Drive.

Action TR-4.1.12. Implement intersection upgrades indicated on Map 6.3B in coordination with roadway widening projects.

Action TR-4.1.13. Explore *roundabouts* as a potential upgrade for intersections (see Figure 6.3C for a description).

Action TR-4.1.14. Uphold access management policies to preserve roadway capacity, safety and efficiency.

Action TR-4.1.15. Update the Thoroughfare Plan to reflect the changes indicated in Table 6.3.A.

Figure 6.3C: Roundabouts (see TR-4.1.13)

A roundabout is a circular intersection in which incoming traffic yields to circulating traffic. Roundabouts have fewer automobile/automobile and automobile/pedestrian conflicts than a conventional stop-sign or signalized intersection (for example, left turns). As a result, roundabouts can potentially improve the safety and operation of an intersection.

Roundabouts also provide opportunities for community enhancement, as the center of a roundabout can be a focal point for landscaping, gateway signage or public art.



Sources: Federal Highway Administration, Ohio Department of Transportation
Photo: Roundabout in Golden, Colorado, courtesy of the Applied Technology and Traffic Analysis Program (partnership between University of Maryland - College Park and Maryland State Highway Administration)

Non- Motorized Circulation

- The City has adopted the principles of the *Ohio Physical Activity Plan*, a statewide initiative that focuses on programs, policies, and environmental changes to encourage Ohioans to be more physically active. Many components of the plan's vision encourage a pedestrian-oriented transportation system.
- Mason is primarily an automobile-oriented community, although the City has made considerable efforts to accommodate pedestrians. Pedestrian connections have improved substantially since the 2001 Comprehensive Plan.
- The City now has a growing bike path system (see Map 6.2B), and new neighborhoods have expanded the network of streets with sidewalks and improved connectivity.
- Remaining areas of need include older neighborhoods built prior to sidewalk requirements, connections between newer neighborhoods along thoroughfares, and connections to regional trail networks such as the Little Miami River bike path.
- The City completed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Way Master Plan in 2001 that recommended phased construction of bike paths, bike lanes and bike routes throughout the City, mainly on the City's thoroughfares. The plan also recommended sidewalks along arterials and key local streets in older portions of the City and along thoroughfares that connect newer neighborhoods.
- The City has completed several paths in Corwin M. Nixon Park, Pine Hill Lakes Park and Hosea Woods, as well as extensions of paths along Tylersville Road, Snider Road and Western Row (see Map 6.2B). A current widening project is adding a bike path segment on Mason Road.
- Future thoroughfare widening projects such as US 42 and Bethany Road will include bike path segments and sidewalks. The City also plans to construct sidewalks in the Manhasset Village and Mason Heights subdivisions.

Rail

- A single railroad line, the Indiana-Ohio, provides freight service to several local industries in Mason.
- Ohio's 3C Passenger Rail System is in the planning

Ohio Physical Activity Plan Vision Components

- Incorporation of Complete Streets concepts into roadway construction, maintenance, and resurfacing.
- Development of state enabling legislation for enlightened regional and local zoning and transportation policies, such as impact mitigation requirements and encouragement of non-motorized transportation opportunities.
- Regional cooperation on transportation and land use planning and zoning and development of inter- and intra-regional mass transit and non-motorized transportation.
- Reduce vehicle miles traveled and the number of vehicular trips.
- Designing all new developments to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles.
- Incentives by health insurance organizations and employers for healthy lifestyles, including exercise and active commuting.
- Active environments and programs that make schools centers of community physical activity.
- Comprehensive effort to develop a statewide trail and bikeway, greenway, and open space network.
- Engagement of a variety of partners in implementing the Plan, particularly health professionals.
- Institutionalization of all components of the Plan.

stages with a proposed opening date set for 2012. The closest station is planned in Sharonville, Ohio.

Transit

- Although the City of Mason provides no mass transit service, the Southwest Ohio Transit Authority (SORTA) provides service between Mason and downtown Cincinnati via Routes 71X and 72.
- Warren County Transit Services provides transit to any location within Warren County using a demand response system.

Strategy TR-4.2.

Develop new roads or road connections and improve existing roads to support future growth and improve east/west and north/south connectivity.

Action TR-4.2.1. Widen Mason Road from downtown to Butler-Warren Road.

Action TR-4.2.2. Widen and connect Bethany Road and Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road between Butler-Warren Road and SR-48.

Action TR-4.2.3. Construct a new roadway parallel to I-71 from Kings Island Drive near Western Row Road to Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road, with a connection to Fairway Drive.

Action TR-4.2.4. Extend Kings Island Drive north to Columbia Road.

Action TR-4.2.5. Construct a new Primary Collector from Western Row Road to Innovation Way.

Action TR-4.2.6. Widen Mason-Montgomery Road from downtown to the northern boundary of Mason. Straighten the curve south of Brewer Road to improve safety and traffic movement.

Action TR-4.2.7. Widen SR-741 from US-42 to the northern boundary of Mason.

Action TR-4.2.8. Widen Kings Mills Road from I-71 to Parkside Drive.

Action TR-4.2.9. Widen Columbia Road between Kings Mills Road and Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road.

Action TR-4.2.10. Widen US-42 north of downtown to the Mason Sports Park.

Action TR-4.2.11. Extend Stone Ridge Drive east to Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road and west to US-42.

Action TR-4.2.12. Connect Bunnel Road and Brewer Road.

Action TR-4.2.13. Connect Avalon Trail, Windemere Way and Batsche Trails Boulevard to the Bunnel-Brewer Connector with new roadway extensions.

Action TR-4.2.14. Construct a new Primary Collector parallel to Butler-Warren Road north of Bethany Road.

Strategy TR-4.3.

Improve access and circulation in the Community Core.

Action TR-4.3.1. Extend Foxfield Drive northeast to Kings Mills Road.

Action TR-4.3.2. Extend Foxfield Drive south to Tylersville Road. Consider a design treatment that mitigates cut through traffic. Some options include changing street names, restricting turning movements onto Kenwood Drive from Mason-Montgomery Road, and/or installing a cul-de-sac or creating a one-way street south of Tylersville Road.

Strategy TR-4.4

Prioritize transportation projects in-line with City land use and development goals.

Coordinated land use and infrastructure projects can synergistically further multiple goals at the same time.



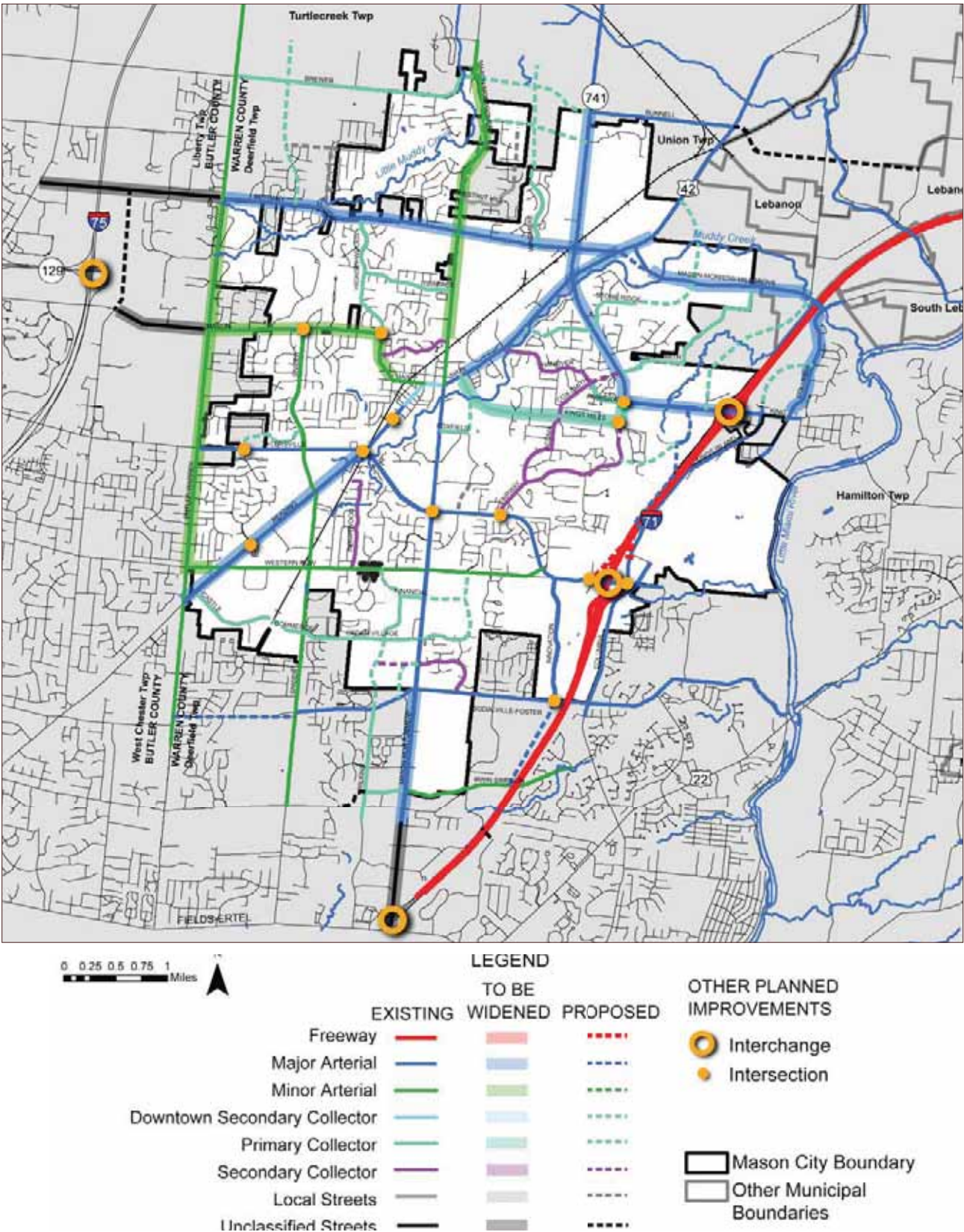
SR-741 north of Bethany Road

Table 6.3A: Proposed Changes to Functional Classifications

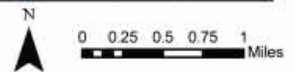
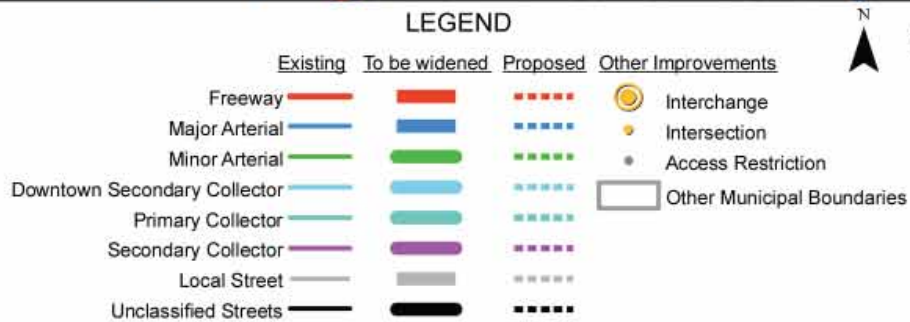
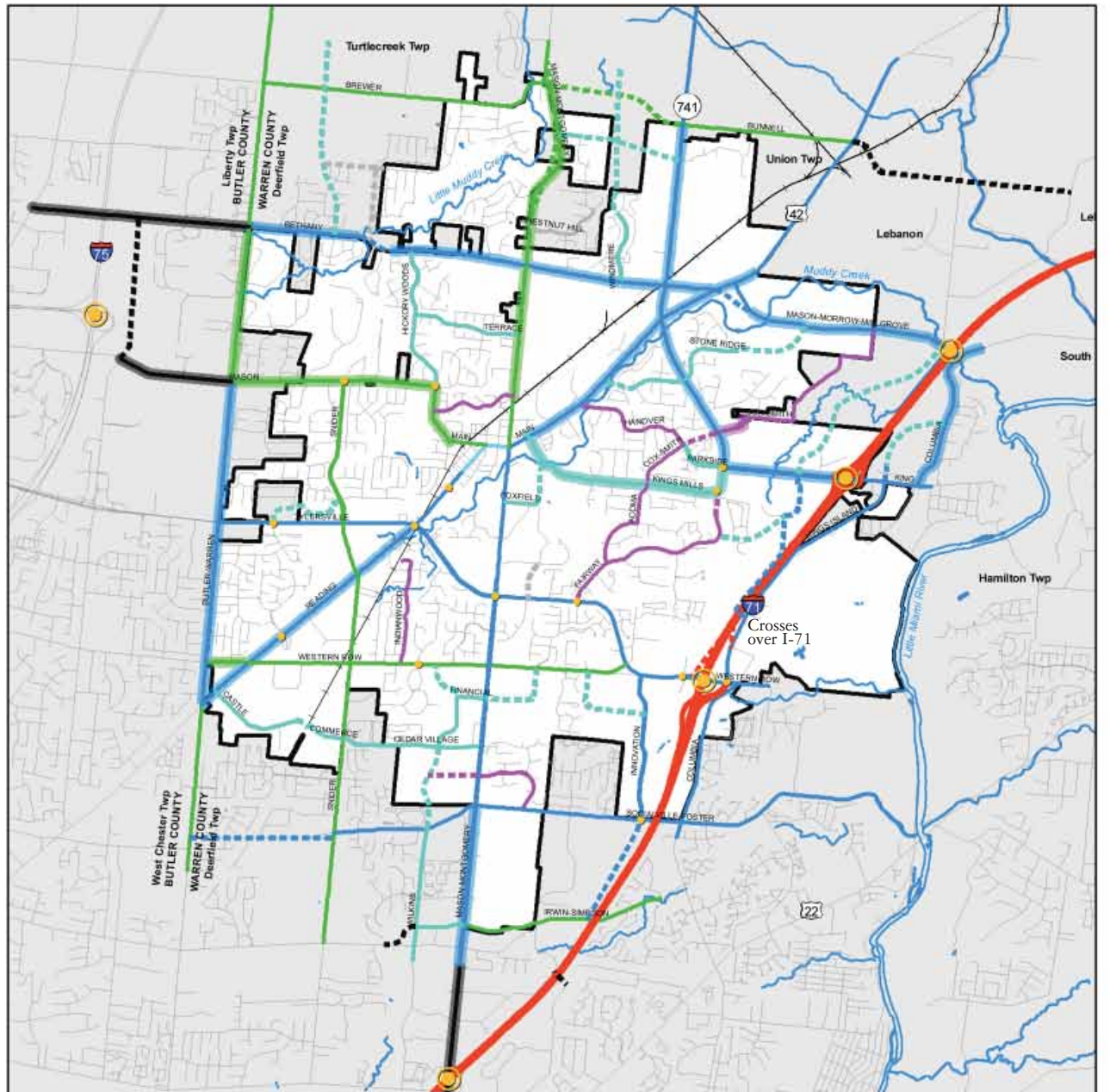
Roadway Segment	Existing Classification	Proposed Classification	Justification*
Brewer Road, Proposed Brewer-Bunnel Connector	Primary Collector	Minor Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected 2030 ADT (6,700) exceeds existing range for Primary Collectors. Proposed connections to Bunnel Road and Columbia/Kings-view will increase through-traffic demands, including employee and truck traffic for proposed Light Industrial uses.
Bunnel Road	Major Arterial	Minor Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves similar function to Brewer Road.
Butler-Warren Road (Reading Road to Mason Road)	Minor Arterial	Major Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected 2030 ADT (14,400 - 15,000) exceeds existing range for Minor Arterials. Continuous north-south route through the City.
Cox-Smith Road	Primary Collector	Secondary Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected 2030 ADT (2,300) is less than existing range for Primary Collectors. Proposed Beach Boulevard extension will provide a parallel alternative for through traffic. Will help to preserve Low-Intensity Residential character and uses.
Kings Mills Road	Primary Collector	Minor Arterial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected 2030 ADT (12,500) exceeds existing range for Primary Collectors. Supports through traffic travelling east-west through Mason and to the Kings Mills/I-71 interchange.

*Based on an analysis of functional objectives, comparison of projected 2030 ADT to existing ADT ranges, and Land Use chapter recommendations. 2030 ADT projections were obtained from the Southwest Warren County Transportation Study, completed in 2005.

Map 6.3B: Existing Thoroughfare Plan and Planned Roadway Improvements



Map 6.3C: Proposed Thoroughfare Plan



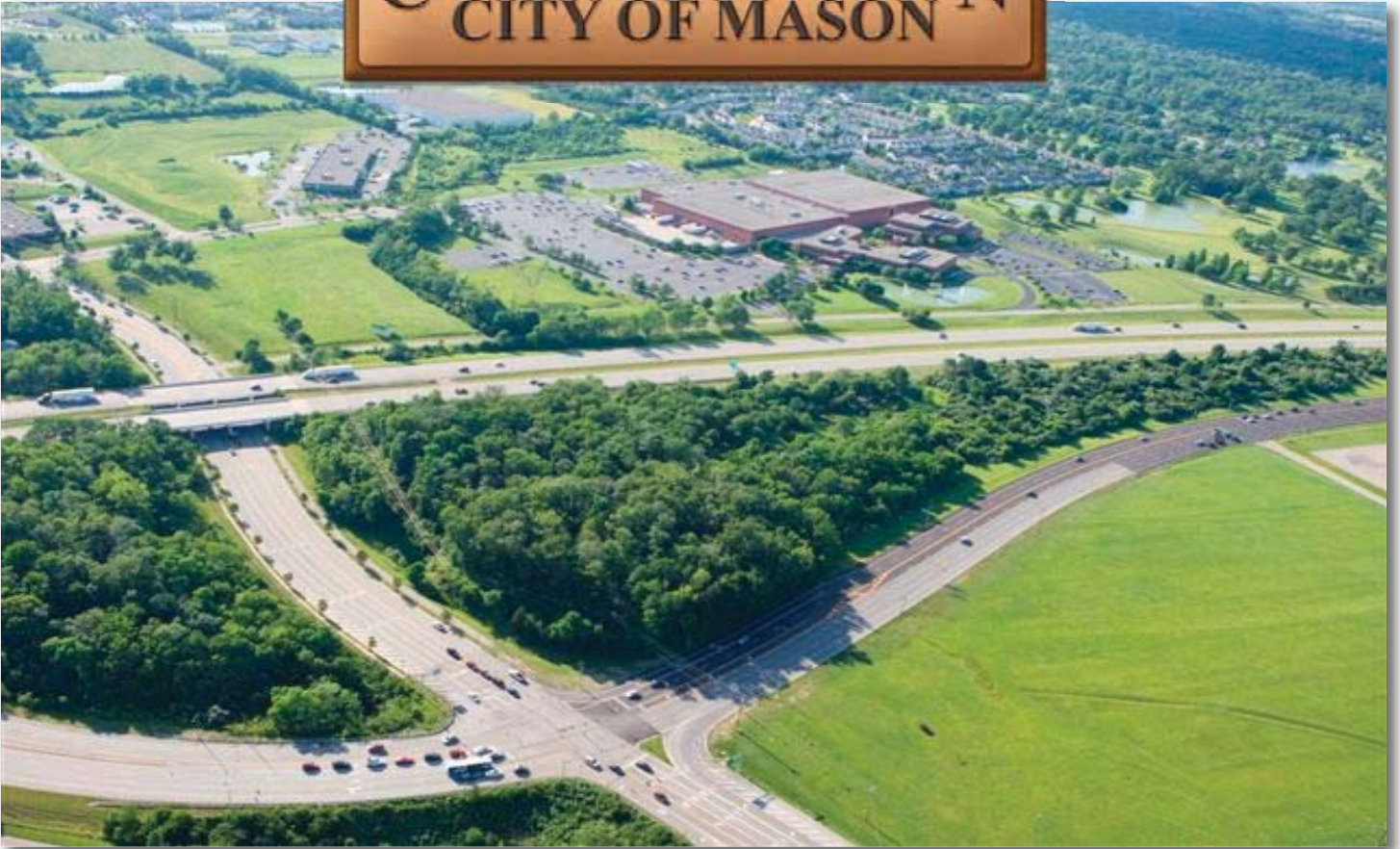
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CITY OF MASON^N

2 0 1 0

Chapter 7 Land Use



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF MASON



Chapter 7: Land Use

7.1. Purpose	2 LU
7.2. Land Use Snapshot	2 LU
7.3. Development Framework.....	5 LU
7.4 Future Land Use Plan	9 LU
7.5 Goals and Strategies	11 LU

Section 7.1. Purpose

The Land Use Element analyzes existing development patterns and recommends land use, development standards for future growth and redevelopment in all areas of the City. This element also recommends areas for potential growth of the City's boundaries and identifies focus areas for infill and revitalization. Detailed concept plans are provided in Chapter 8 for these areas. The framework for land use policies and decision making in this element reflects the vision statements, principles and strategies of all elements of this Plan.

The major components of this element include:

1. Mapping and analysis of existing land use patterns and creation of a Development Framework.
2. General citywide principles to guide future land use decision making.
3. Designation of future land use and development categories for all portions of the City that reflect Comprehensive Plan recommendations and include:
 - Goals:
 - General intent of each category.
 - Strategies:
 - Location description.
 - Recommended primary and secondary land uses.
 - Guidelines for density and urban design.

Vision Statement

Land use and development in Mason will provide a synergistic balance of land uses that meets the diverse housing, goods and services, and employment needs of area residents and businesses while maintaining a stable tax base. Development in Mason will serve as a regional model for mixed use infill development and greenfield development that occurs in concert with planned infrastructure improvements as a means to create jobs and preserve and enhance Mason's community character.

Section 7.2. Land Use Snapshot

This section contains a summary of existing land use conditions, issues and opportunities. Detailed information can be found in the Existing Conditions Report.

Existing Land Use

Mason contains a relatively well-balanced mix of land uses. The single largest land use in Mason is single-family residential, although the community contains substantial percentages of recreational/open space, industrial park, agricultural and vacant or undeveloped land. Following is a description of each land use designation. Existing Land Uses in Mason are shown on Map 7.2A: Existing Land Use.

Agriculture

The Agricultural designation includes land that is actively used for farming. Mason was once primarily a farming community, although rapid growth and development in the past 40 years have eliminated all but a few farms within the City. Much of the remaining farmland within the City limits is subject to approved development plans. Unincorporated areas north of Mason contain large farms, although these areas are located within the logical path of growth.

Chapter 7 Cover Photo

This aerial view shows the I-71 corridor looking north from Western Row. Cintas and other corporate users are seen close to the interstate. Residential uses are located farther in the background.

Highlights

- Single-family homes dominate Mason, although the community also contains substantial industrial parks, open space, and vacant/agricultural land.
- Residents enjoy abundant local employment opportunities but must travel to other communities for shopping needs other than daily convenience.
- Mason's business mix includes a major health care research facility, corporate headquarters, and high-tech manufacturing as well as numerous small and family owned businesses.

Commercial

The Commercial designation includes retail sales and services. Commercial uses in Mason are limited, consisting mainly of strip shopping centers that serve the local community or surrounding neighborhoods with convenience orientated goods and services such as gas stations, convenience stores, drug stores, restaurants, and grocery stores, etc.

A retail cluster at the I-71/Kings Mills Road interchange offers highway orientated includes gas stations, fast food restaurants, specialty retail and hospitality uses that cater to travelers and visitors.

As an exception to this pattern, downtown offers a small-town atmosphere that reflects what Mason was before its rapid growth.

Regional shopping centers with a wide range of stores and merchandise are located near the City limits, including Deerfield Towne Center at Mason-Montgomery Road and Irwin-Simpson Road, Voice of America Center at Tylersville Road and Cox Road, and numerous regional shopping centers near the I-71/Fields Ertel interchange.



Agricultural Land Use North of Mason

Commercial Recreation

This designation, unique to Mason, includes amusement parks and commercial sports facilities, such as Kings Island Amusement Park, The Beach Waterpark, the Lindner Family Tennis Center, and private driving ranges. These land uses make Mason a significant tourist destination and provide unique amenities to local residents, although they also generate substantial impacts on traffic, police and fire services. A more detailed discussion of commercial recreation uses can be found in the Community Facilities section.

Industrial Park

This designation includes most businesses that are located in Mason's business parks (identified in the Economic Development section), which include a variety of light industrial uses as well as large corporate headquarters and research facilities. The Industrial Park designation actually includes office uses, although the offices in this designation tend to be large-scale, campus-like facilities, unlike the smaller-scale facilities in the Office designation.

Table 7.2A: Land Usage in Mason

Land Use	Acreage	% of City
Agricultural	932	7.90%
Commercial	390	3.30%
Commercial Recreation	694	5.90%
Industrial Park	1,271	10.80%
Multi-Family Residential	54	4.60%
Office	89	0.80%
Public Use/Institutional	779	6.60%
Recreational/Open Space	1,424	12.10%
Single Family Residential	3,397	28.80%
Undeveloped/Vacant	1,233	10.50%
Public Right-of-Way	1,028	8.70%
Total City area	11,778	

Business parks are located along the I-71 corridor as well as in clusters in the northeastern and southwestern parts of the City. Industrial Park uses outside Mason can be found in Lebanon along Columbia Road and Kingsview Drive, and in West Chester Township near the intersection of Cox Road and Hamilton-Mason Road. Mason's mix of businesses are discussed in further detail under Economic Development.

Office

The Office designation includes smaller-scale office developments such as office condominiums that are not located in one of Mason's business parks. This use occupies the smallest percentage of the City in comparison to other uses, as most of the City's office developments are larger-scale corporate headquarters and research facilities that are located in business parks.

Multi-Family Residential

Multi-Family Residential includes all attached residential uses, including rental and owner-occupied townhomes as well as stacked flats. By design, multi-family residential makes up a small percentage of land usage within the City, because Mason has strived to be a community of single-family, owner-occupied homes. A limited amount of senior housing is located south of Western Row Road between Mason-Montgomery Road and Snider Road. The Housing section discusses Multi-Family housing types in greater detail.

Public Use/Institutional

This designation includes public and private schools, public facilities such as the Mason Municipal Center and fire stations, religious establishments, and hospitals. Public and religious establishments are generally scattered throughout Mason, although a sizable cluster of public/institutional uses containing the High School, Middle School, Intermediate School, Community Center, and Municipal Center is located near the intersection of Mason-Montgomery Road and Tylersville Road. The nearest hospital is the newly constructed West Chester Medical Center, located on Cox Road near the I-75/Tylersville Road interchange. The Community Facilities section contains a more detailed analysis of public facilities.

Recreational/Open Space

The Recreational/Open Space designation includes public and private parks, passive open space and golf courses. Public parks include several City parks and the Voice of America Park located west of Mason. Private parks and open space include neighborhood parks and recreation facilities maintained by homeowners' associations, as well as buffering and retention areas. Golf courses include private country clubs such as the Heritage Club, and courses open to the public such as Crooked Tree and The Golf Center at Kings Island. Recreational/Open Space occupies the second highest percentage of land in the City. The Community Facilities section contains a more detailed analysis of recreational/open space uses.

Single Family Residential

Single Family Residential occupies the highest percentage of land in Mason. The sole use found in this designation is the detached, single-family home. Most single-family homes are in platted subdivisions, and some are located in master-planned communities that contain private recreational amenities. The Housing section contains a detailed discussion of housing characteristics, including lot size, age of structure, and demographics.



Mars Hill Academy - an example of an "institutional" land use.

Undeveloped/Vacant

The Undeveloped/Vacant designation includes all lands not occupied by structures and not actively used for farming. Most vacant land in the City is located in Mason's business parks, particularly near the I-71/Western Row Road interchange and areas north of the State Route 741/Bethany Road intersection.

Section 7.3. Development Framework

Map 7.3A serves as a framework for the Future Land Use Plan by identifying areas where future growth and land use change will likely occur. The majority of future growth will occur on land identified on Map 7.3A as "development opportunities," which include vacant or agricultural land and large single-family properties.

Growth within the City

Development opportunities exist in pocketed areas throughout the City. These development "infill" opportunities take precedent from a growth policy perspective because they take advantage of existing public infrastructure and services.

Several "sub-areas" of the City have been designated for a detailed study based on their development or redevelopment potential and are outlined in blue on Map 7.3A. Concept plans for many these areas are shown in Chapter 8.



Undeveloped property on SR-741

Extra-Territorial Growth

Although Ohio municipalities do not have zoning and subdivision jurisdiction over areas outside corporate limits, the Future Land Use Plan (see Map 7.4A) includes recommendations for an "Extra-Territorial Growth Area (ETGA)." The ETGA does not endorse annexation nor does it represent an official annexation policy. The ETGA (see Map 7.3A) merely acknowledges where growth is expected to occur. Map 7.4A communicates the City's desired land use policy for when annexation petitions are submitted.

The ETGA primarily includes large, unincorporated agricultural tracts located north of the City. A secondary component is unincorporated "holes" located in the western half of Mason. Annexation to the west (into Butler County) is unlikely due to the City's JEDD agreement with Liberty Township. Suburban development and adequate public infrastructure located south of Mason makes annexations less likely in those areas.

Section 7.4. Future Land Use Plan

The Future Land Use Plan is a set of long-term policies that will guide the City's land use decision-making in specific parts of the City. Decisions regarding future zoning map and text amendments will rely on the Future Land Use plan for policy guidance.

This section includes an overview of the Future Land Use Plan Principles, categories and impacts of the plan's implementation.

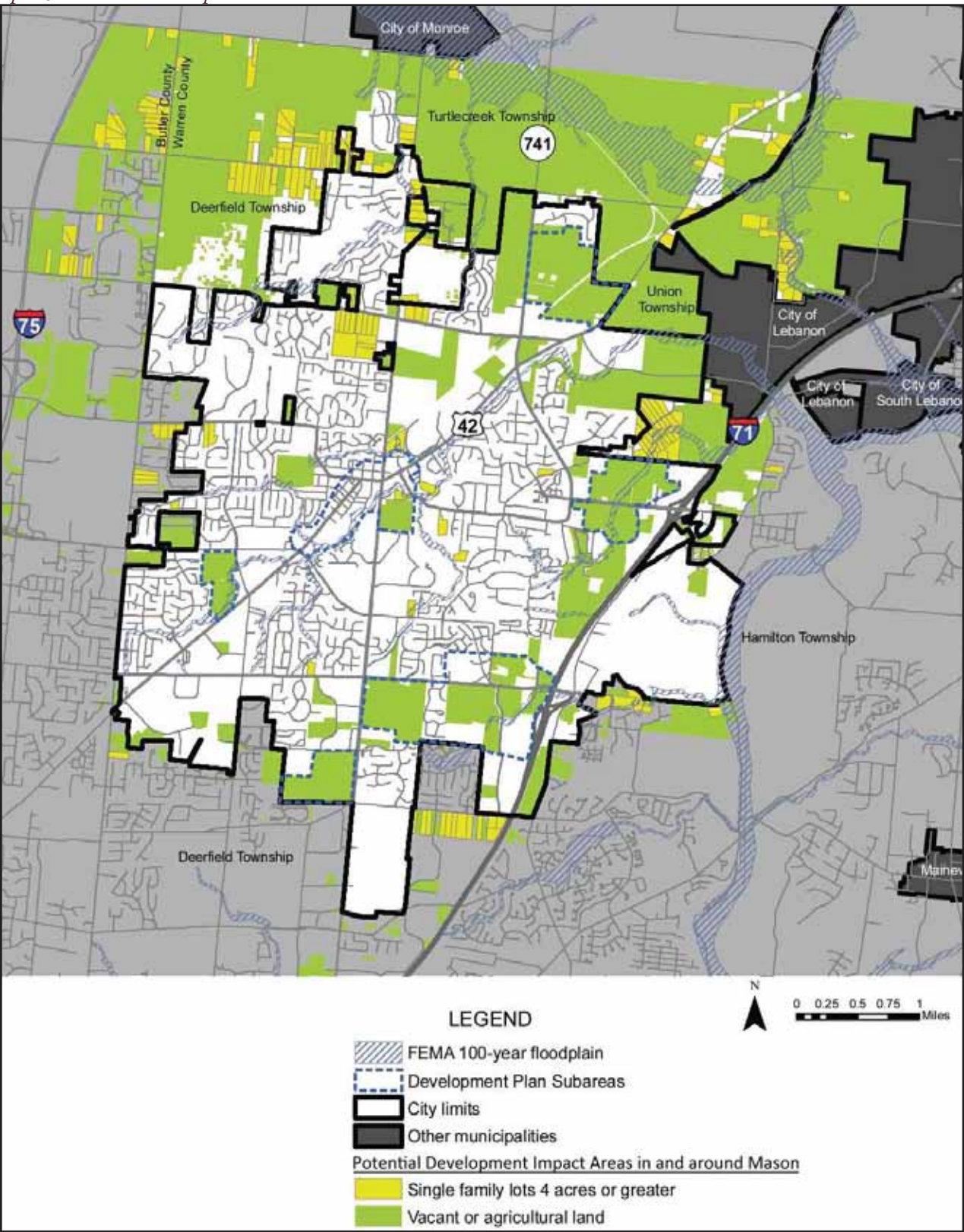
Principles

The Future Land Use Plan Principles (see Figure 7.4A) are citywide policy statements that serve as a framework for area-specific Goals and Strategies. They are subsets of the Land Use Vision Statement provided at the beginning of this chapter.

Categories

Map 7.4A identifies Future Land Use categories that define a future direction for development in all portions of the City and adjacent potential growth areas. Table 7.4A summarizes the intent, preferred land use mixes and

Map 7.3A: Mason Development Framework



development guidelines for each category. The Goals and Strategies in Section 7.5 provide more detailed guidance for each category. Below are definitions of key terms used in Table 7.4A and Section 7.5:

Goal: The policy intent of each future land use category.

Primary Uses: Recommended land uses in a given future land use category.

Secondary Uses: Land uses that support primary uses in a mixed-use environment. Stand-alone secondary uses are permitted only in areas identified as Secondary Use Locations on the Future Land Use Map. In all other locations Secondary Uses are permitted only in combination with a primary use as part of a mixed-use development.

Development Guidelines: Guidance for development form and density, including building setbacks, parking location, building design and units per acre.

Land Use Impacts

Understanding the impacts of the Future Land Use Plan will help the City to make short-term decisions about funding allocations, infrastructure improvements and land use policy. Figure 7.4B estimates the impacts of developing all remaining development opportunities

(identified on Map 7.3) in the City and Extra-Territorial Growth Area (ETGA) according to Future Land Use Plan recommendations. Below is a summary of the key findings:

- The daytime (employee) population will surpass the nighttime (resident) population, due to relative increase in land planned for industrial and business park uses. The resulting increase in income taxes will decrease the tax burden on City residents, although it will also increase the potential for commuter traffic and additional housing demand.
- The City will maintain roughly the same percentage of open space through preservation of environmentally sensitive areas and creation of new parks, even if some former golf courses are developed.
- A proportional increase in the Commercial/Mixed-Use category in the City build-out scenario will increase neighborhood services available to residents and businesses and expand upon the City's tourism industry.
- Future growth opportunities beyond the City's current boundaries are mostly residential.

Figure 7.4A Future Land Use Principles

- Encourage retail development as an amenity to add vibrancy at pedestrian-oriented Activity Nodes throughout the City. Promote developments that encourage family-friendly entertainment and socialization.
- Integrate retail with mixed-use developments rather than stand-alone retail developments.
- Promote fiscally responsible development, annexation and expansion of Mason's municipal boundary.
- Create an interconnected network of green infrastructure that preserves environmentally sensitive areas, protects water resources and provides community open space.
- Encourage low-maintenance, high-density housing as part of mixed-use developments.
- Maintain, enhance and grow the Community Core as a vibrant, mixed-use, 18-hour gathering place.
- Create an employment corridor along I-71 that supports the growth of Mason as a business destination.



Mason High School



Example of a Single Family House in Carmelle Subdivision



Lindner Family Tennis Center

Pull this page out to view a side by side spread of the 2010 Existing Land Use Map and Future Land Use Map on pages 8 and 9.

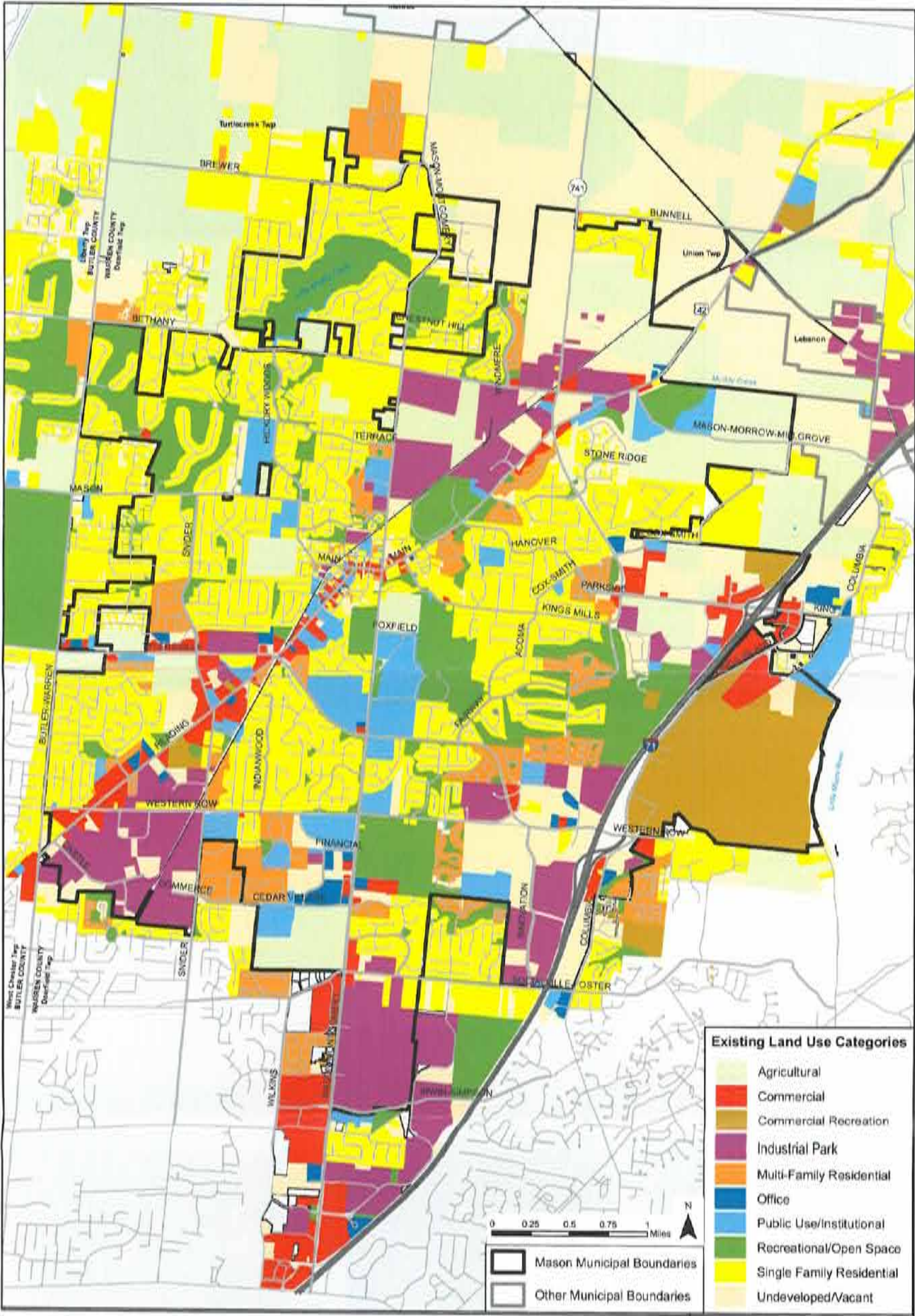


Prasco Headquarters



Great Wolf Lodge

Map 2.4A: 2010 Existing Land Use Map



Map 7.4A: 2010 Future Land Use Map

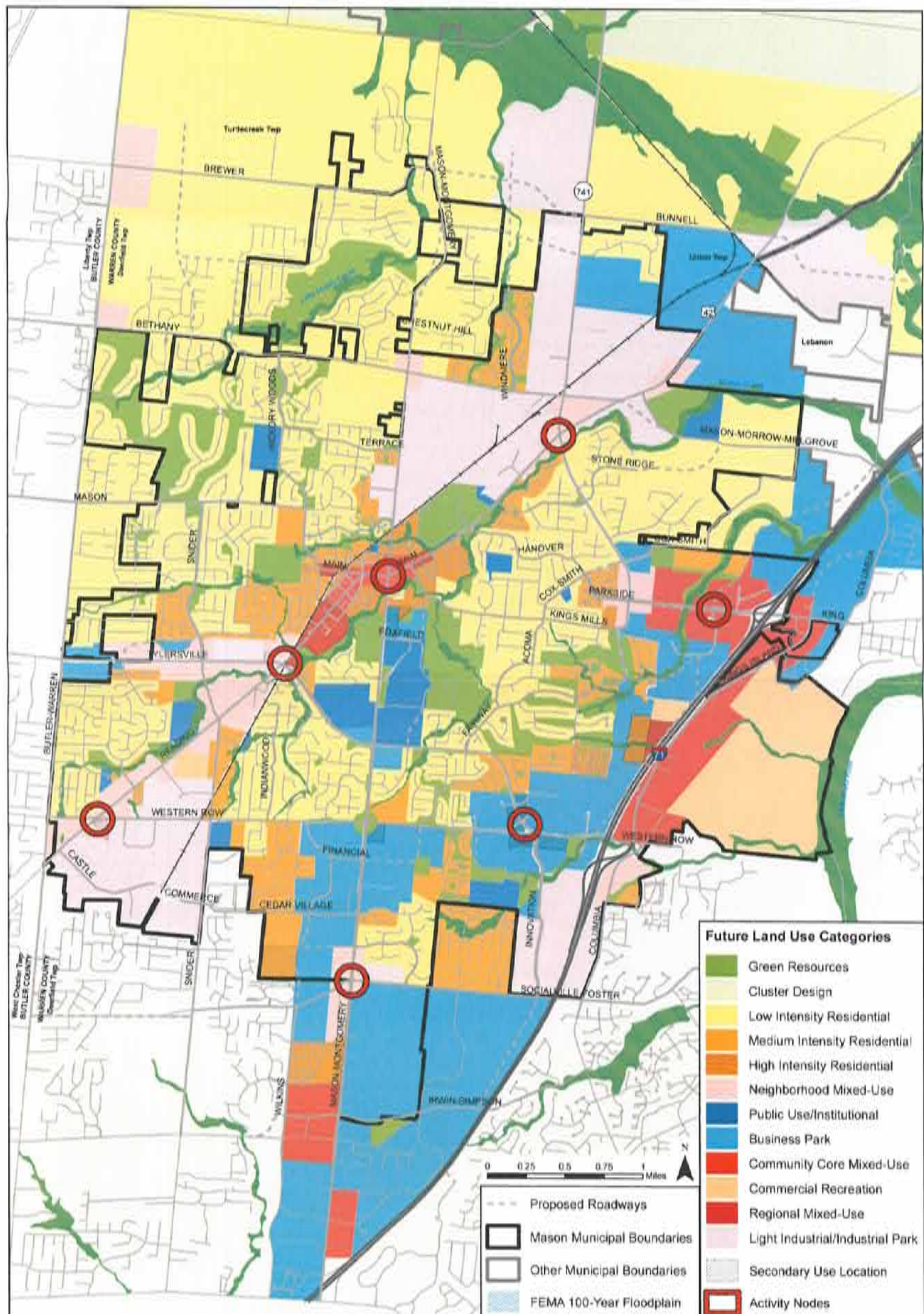


Table 7.4A: Future Land Use Summary Table

Future Land Use	Goal	Recommended Land Uses		Development Guidelines
		Primary	Secondary	
Activity Node	Create clusters of higher density development at major intersections in Mason. These nodes will become centers of activity within the community for social interaction and daily service needs. These nodes will enhance gateways into the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High frequency retail and services (excluding drive-through facilities)• Restaurants (excluding drive-through facilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office / Live-Work• Multi-family residential• Public and institutional uses• Pedestrian amenities (plazas, outdoor seating, etc.)• Mixed use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-story buildings• Ground floor reserved for retail uses• Traffic calming on local streets• Place new buildings close to street with parking to the side or rear• Human-scale buildings with storefront windows on ground floors and façade articulation
Light Industry/Industrial Park	Create employment concentrations along major thoroughfares with a campus-like environment that includes light industrial, light manufacturing and wholesale/distribution, as well as supportive service and retail amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Light industries• Light manufacturing• Wholesale trade• Distribution centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supportive retail and services at intersections of major arterials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping• Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses• At least 30% open space in new developments greater than five acres.• Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades• Mitigate negative visual/ environmental impacts on residential areas
Regional Mixed-Use Secondary Use Location	Meet the retail needs of Mason residents and visitors while encouraging mixed-use, walkable design through redevelopment and infill projects. Promote tourism by providing additional entertainment and shopping opportunities for families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retail sales and services that serve the entire community and/or attract patrons from elsewhere in the region• Restaurants• Hotels• Conference Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residential on upper floors• Offices• Public and institutional uses• Pedestrian amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outlot buildings placed close to roadway to hide large parking lots and create human-scaled streets• Facade articulation to mitigate bulk of large buildings• Pedestrian connections between uses and with adjacent neighborhoods
Commercial Recreation	Support the existing tourism economy in Mason with the addition of commercial recreation opportunities for families. Attract additional visitors to the community through recreational tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commercial sports stadiums and tournament facilities• Commercial recreation complexes• Amusement parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restaurants• Hotels• Conference centers• Pedestrian amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outlot buildings placed close to roadway to hide large parking lots and create human-scaled streets• Pedestrian connections between uses and with adjacent neighborhoods• Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping• Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses• Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades
Community Core Mixed-Use Secondary Use Location	Maintain, enhance, and grow the Community Core as a vibrant, mixed-use gathering place and cultural center, with an emphasis on retail, arts and entertainment uses. Maintain a highly urban, pedestrian-focused environment through building and streetscape design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Neighborhood and specialty retail sales and services• Restaurants• Arts, cultural and entertainment establishments• Upper floor residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-family residential including upper-floor units• Single-family attached residential• Office / Live-Work• Public and institutional uses• Pedestrian amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuous “street wall” with buildings adjacent to the sidewalk• Rear parking or limited side parking only• Storefront windows and façade articulation• Traffic calming• Ground-floor storefronts and/or architectural detailing on parking structures• Connect Downtown with the Civic Campus
Business Park Secondary Use Location	Create an employment corridor parallel to I-71 that supports the growth of Mason as a business destination. Create a campus-like, mixed-use environment that includes office, research and low-impact industrial uses, as well as supportive retail amenities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offices• Research facilities• Educational centers• Indoor light manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supportive retail and services <= 15,000 sq. ft. per store, only in Secondary Use locations• Structured or underground parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-story buildings• Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping• Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses• Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades• Mitigate negative visual/ environmental impacts on residential areas
Public Use/Institutional	Create a cohesive, well-defined campus for medical, public services and educational institutions, with supportive office, service and residential uses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public and institutional uses• Offices• Structured or underground parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multi-family residential• Limited retail and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Similar to Business Park• Encourage neighborhood master-planning that links medical and educational with offices and services.
Neighborhood Mixed-Use Secondary Use Location	Concentrate retail in dense, walkable, mixed-use nodes located at major intersections in order to promote a sense of community and a range of services that enhance the value of Mason’s neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convenience-oriented retail sales and services that primarily serve a radius of one mile• Restaurants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offices• Attached residential• Public and institutional uses• Pedestrian amenities (plazas, outdoor seating, etc.)• Mixed use	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maximum of 20,000 square feet per store• Place new buildings close to street with parking to the side or rear• Human-scale buildings with storefront windows on ground floors and façade articulation• Traffic calming
High-Intensity Residential Secondary Use Location	Encourage low-maintenance, high-density housing that supports Activity Nodes and downtown and provides a transition between commercial or office and single-family development. Promote walkable neighborhood design that creates attractive and functional roadway corridors and attached residential neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family and multi-family attached residential• Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public and institutional uses• Offices, live-work and limited retail along arterials• Recreational amenitie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Up to eight uits per gross acre• Place non-residential and higher-density residential buildings close to major roadways and Activity Nodes• At least 20% open space in new developments greater than three acres• Architectural transitions between land uses, such as similarities in building height, massing, roof pitch, and rhythm of windows and façade detailing.• Walkable neighborhood design
Medium-Intensity Residential Secondary Use Location	Provide a transition between High- and Low-Intensity Neighborhood areas, while providing a wide range of housing formats and price points. Promote compatible infill development and walkable neighborhood design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family attached and detached residential• Open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited multi-family residential along major roadways• Local public and institutional uses• Recreational amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four to five units per gross acre• At least 20% open space in new developments of three or more acres• Architectural transitions between land uses, such as similarities in building height, massing, roof pitch, and rhythm of windows and façade detailing• Walkable neighborhood design
Low-Intensity Residential	Provide large-lot, low-density housing options and protect existing low-density neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family attached or detached residential• Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local public and institutional uses• Recreational amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One units per gross acre with at least 30% open space.
Conservation Design	Provide for residential growth in currently undeveloped areas. Environmentally sensitive development will preserve rural character through low-impact development practices, cluster design and preservation of natural resources and open space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Single-family detached residential• Open space• Recreational amenities• Low-impact storm water management facilities• Flood storage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local public and institutional uses• Cemeteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve rural character• Encourage Low-Impact Development principles• Develop non-motorized pathways to connect neighborhoods, businesses, parks, and regional greenways• Limit residential uses to one unit per gross acre or less with at least 40% open space
Green Resource	Create an interconnected network of green infrastructure that preserves environmentally sensitive areas, protects water resources through low-impact storm water management, provides floodwater storage, provides community open space and recreational opportunities, and preserves agricultural resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open space• Recreational amenities• Low-impact storm water management facilities• Flood storage• Agricultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Utilities other than storm water management• Single-family detached structures• Cemeteries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preserve and restore natural hydrology• Encourage Low-Impact Development principles• Develop non-motorized pathways to connect neighborhoods, businesses, parks, and regional greenways• Where development cannot be avoided, limit to residential uses at one unit per gross acre or less with at least 50% open space

Section 7.5. Goals and Strategies

The Goals and Strategies correspond to Future Land Use categories identified on Map 7.4A and Table 7.4A and describe the intent, preferred land use mixes and development guidelines for each category.

Goal LU-7. Green Resource

Create an interconnected network of green infrastructure that preserves environmentally sensitive areas, protects water resources through low-impact storm water management, provides floodwater storage, provides community open space and recreational opportunities, and preserves agricultural resources.

Strategy LU-7.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- The FEMA 100-year Floodplain.

- Existing and planned City, County and private parks
- Stream corridors
- Areas with steep slopes

Strategy LU-7.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

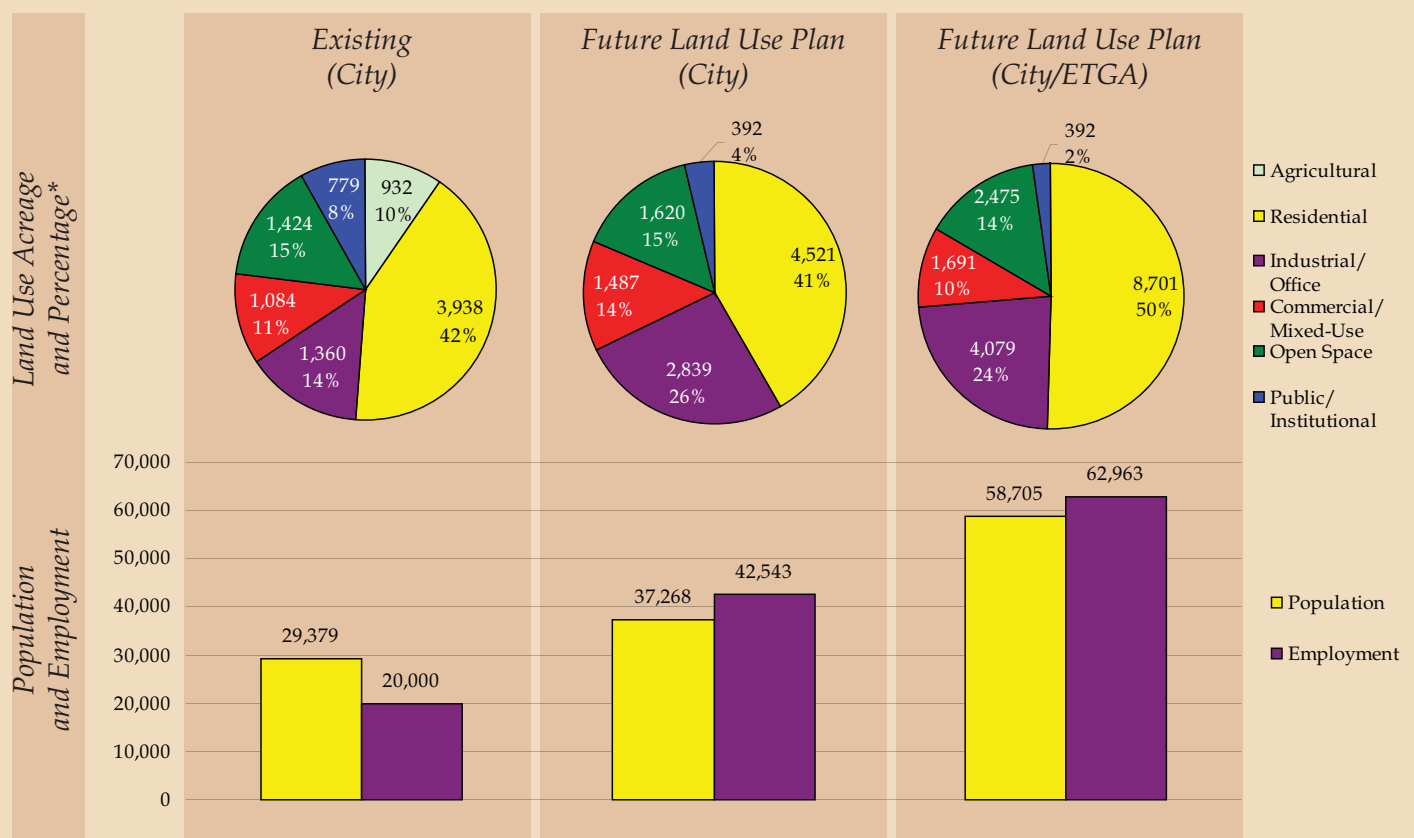
- Open space
- Recreational amenities
- Low-impact storm water management facilities
- Flood storage
- Agricultural

Strategy LU-7.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Utilities other than storm water management
- Single-family detached structures (with at least 80% open space)
- Cemeteries

Figure 7.4B: Future Land Use Plan Build-Out Analysis



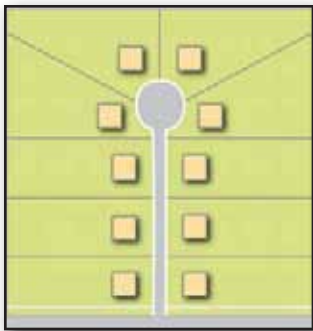
Strategy LU-7.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Preserve and restore natural hydrology
- Encourage Low-Impact Development principles
- Develop non-motorized pathways to connect neighborhoods, businesses, parks, and regional greenways
- Where development cannot be avoided, limit residential uses to one unit per gross acre or less with at least 50% open space

Goal LU-8. Conservation Design

Provide for residential growth in currently undeveloped areas. Environmentally sensitive development will preserve rural character through low-impact development practices, cluster design and preservation of natural resources and open space.



Conventional Subdivision
- 1 unit/acre



Conservation Subdivision
- 1 unit/acre

Strategy LU-8.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Existing agricultural and residential land north of the municipal boundary.

Strategy LU-8.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Single-family detached residential
- Open space
- Recreational amenities
- Low-impact stormwater management facilities
- Flood storage

Strategy LU-8.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Local public and institutional uses
- Cemeteries

Strategy LU-8.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Preserve rural character
- Encourage Low-Impact Development principles
- Develop non-motorized pathways to connect neighborhoods, businesses, parks, and regional greenways
- Limit residential uses to one unit per gross acre or less with at least 40% open space

Goal LU-9. Low Intensity Residential

Provide large-lot, low-density housing options and protect existing low-density neighborhoods.

Strategy LU-9.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Existing and planned low density residential neighborhoods
- Vacant land adjacent to existing low density residential neighborhoods

Strategy LU-9.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Single-family attached or detached residential
- Open space

Strategy LU-9.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Local public and institutional uses
- Recreational amenities

Strategy LU-9.4.

Development Guidelines:

- One unit per gross acre
- At least 20% open space with new developments of three or more acres
- Density can be increased if additional open space is provided, as follows:
 - 30% open space: up to two units per acre
 - 40% open space: up to three units per acre

Goal LU-10. Medium Intensity Residential

Provide a transition between High- and Low-Intensity Neighborhood areas, while providing a wide range of housing formats and price points. Promote compatible infill development and walkable neighborhood design.

Strategy LU-10.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Existing and planned medium density neighborhoods
- Undeveloped properties that are surrounded or adjacent to medium density neighborhoods
- Undeveloped properties or properties with potential for redevelopment that are adjacent to planned activity nodes

Strategy LU-10.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Single-family attached and detached residential
- Open space

Strategy LU-10.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Limited multi-family residential along major roadways
- Local public and institutional uses
- Recreational amenities

Strategy LU-10.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Four to five units per gross acre
- At least 20% open space with new developments of three or more acres
- Architectural transitions between land uses, such as similarities in building height, massing, roof pitch, and rhythm of windows and façade detailing
- Walkable neighborhood design

Goal LU-11. High Intensity Residential

Encourage low-maintenance, high-density housing that supports Activity Nodes and downtown and provides a transition between commercial or office and single-family development. Promote walkable neighborhood design that creates attractive and functional roadway corridors and attached residential neighborhoods.

Strategy LU-11.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Priority infill development areas adjacent the traditional downtown in the Community Core
- Existing high density neighborhoods

Strategy LU-11.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Single-family and multi-family attached residential
- Open space

Strategy LU-11.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Public and institutional uses
- Offices, live-work units and limited retail on properties with frontage on a Major or Minor Arterial as defined on Map 6.3B.
- Recreational amenities

Strategy LU-11.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Up to eight units per gross acre
- Place non-residential and higher-density residential buildings close to major roadways and Activity Nodes
- At least 20% open space in new developments greater than three acres
- Preserve natural features and incorporate a variety of pedestrian orientated amenities such as landscaped paths that lead to common areas, greens and plazas, etc.
- Architectural transitions between land uses, such as similarities in building height, massing, roof pitch, and rhythm of windows and façade detailing
- Walkable neighborhood design

Goal LU-12. Neighborhood Mixed Use:

Concentrate retail in dense, walkable, mixed-use nodes located at major intersections in order to promote a sense of community and a range of services that enhance the value of Mason's neighborhoods.

Strategy LU-12.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Major intersections along existing commercial corridors including:
 - Bethany Road and Butler Warren

- Brewer Road and Butler Warren Road
- Kings Mills Road and SR 741
- Mason Montgomery Road and Socialville Foster Road
- Mason Montgomery Road and Bethany Road
- Tylersville Road and Snider Road
- US 42 and Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road
- US 42 and SR 741
- US 42 and Tylersville Road
- US 42 and Snider Road
- US 42 and Western Row Road
- Western Row Road and Columbia Road

Strategy LU-12.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Convenience-oriented retail sales and services that primarily serve a radius of one mile
- Restaurants

Strategy LU-12.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Offices
- Attached residential
- Public and institutional uses
- Pedestrian amenities (plazas, outdoor seating, etc.)
- Mixed use

Strategy LU-12.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Maximum of 20,000 square feet per store
- Place new buildings close to street with parking to the side or rear
- Human-scale buildings with storefront windows on ground floors and façade articulation
- Traffic calming

Goal LU-13. Public/Institutional:

Create a cohesive, well-defined campus for medical, public services and educational institutions, with supportive office, service and residential uses.

Strategy LU-13.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- The existing civic campus on Mason Montgomery Road.
- Existing and planned schools, City service buildings,

and other public structures.

Strategy LU-13.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Public and institutional uses
- Offices
- Structured or underground parking

Strategy LU-13.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Multi-family residential
- Limited retail and services

Strategy LU-13.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Similar to Community Core Support
- Encourage neighborhood master-planning that links medical and educational with offices and services

Goal LU-14. Business Park

Create an employment corridor parallel to I-71 that supports the growth of Mason as a business destination.

Create a campus-like, mixed-use environment that includes office, research and low-impact industrial uses, as well as supportive retail amenities.

Strategy LU-14.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Locations with excellent interstate accessibility and/or visibility:
 - Surrounding the Proctor and Gamble healthcare research facility
 - The Western Row Road/I-71 interchange
 - Between the Western Row Road and Kings Mills Road interchanges on I-71
 - Between the Kings Mills Road/I-71 interchange and the City of Lebanon
 - Tylersville Road at Butler-Warren Road (near I-75)
 - The Mason Montgomery Road corridor south of Western Row Road and near the existing civic campus
 - The US 42 corridor between Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road and Bunnell Road

Strategy LU-14.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Offices
- Research facilities
- Educational centers
- Indoor light manufacturing

Strategy LU-14.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Supportive retail and services, not to exceed 15,000 square feet per store, only in Secondary Use locations identified on the Future Land Use Map (Map 7.4A)
- Structured or underground parking

Strategy LU-14.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Multi-story buildings
- Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping
- Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses
- Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades
- Mitigate negative visual/ environmental impacts on residential areas

Goal LU-15. Community Core Mixed Use

Maintain, enhance, and grow the Community Core as a vibrant, mixed-use gathering place and cultural center, with an emphasis on retail, arts and entertainment uses. Maintain a highly urban, pedestrian-focused environment through building and streetscape design.

Strategy LU-15.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- The area encompassing the traditional downtown on Main Street extended south along US 42 to Tylersville Road.

Strategy LU-15.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Neighborhood and specialty retail sales and services
- Restaurants
- Arts, cultural and entertainment establishments

Strategy LU-15.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Multi-family residential, including upper-floor units
- Single-family attached residential
- Offices and live-work units
- Public and institutional uses
- Pedestrian amenities

Strategy LU-15.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Continuous “street wall” with buildings adjacent to the sidewalk
- Rear parking or limited side parking only
- Storefront windows and façade articulation
- Traffic calming
- Ground-floor storefronts and/or architectural detailing on parking structures
- Connect Downtown with the Civic Campus

Goal LU-16. Commercial Recreation

Support the existing tourism economy in Mason with the addition of commercial recreation opportunities for families. Attract additional visitors to the community through recreational tourism.

Strategy LU-16.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Existing amusement parks, private recreation facilities and stadiums

Strategy LU-16.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Commercial sports stadiums and tournament facilities
- Commercial recreation complexes
- Amusement parks

Strategy LU-16.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Conference centers
- Pedestrian amenities

Strategy LU-16.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Outlot buildings placed close to roadway to hide large parking lots and create human-scaled streets
- Pedestrian connections between uses and with adjacent neighborhoods
- Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping
- Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses
- Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades

Goal LU-17. Regional Mixed Use:

Meet the retail needs of Mason residents and visitors while encouraging mixed-use, walkable design through redevelopment and infill projects. Promote tourism by providing additional entertainment and shopping opportunities for families.

Strategy LU-17.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Commercial areas surrounding the I-71/Kings Mills interchange and the I-71/Western Row interchanges
- The existing Deerfield Town Center at Mason Montgomery and Deerfield Boulevard

Strategy LU-17.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Retail sales and services that serve the entire community and/or attract patrons from elsewhere in the region
- Restaurants
- Hotels
- Conference Centers

Strategy LU-17.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Residential on upper floors
- Offices
- Public and institutional uses
- Pedestrian amenities

Strategy LU-17.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Outlot buildings placed close to roadway to hide

large parking lots and create human-scaled streets

- Façade articulation to mitigate bulk of large buildings
- Pedestrian connections between uses and with adjacent neighborhoods
- Ensure that any approved “big box” retail stores meet the City’s “Large Retail Establishment” design standards.

Goal LU-18. Light Industry/Industrial Park

Create employment concentrations along major thoroughfares with a campus-like environment that includes light industrial, light manufacturing, warehousing, wholesale/distribution, and supportive service and retail amenities.

Strategy LU-18.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- The North 741 and North 42 industrial corridor
- Existing industrial properties on Innovation Way
- Existing and planned industrial properties near the US 42 and Western Row intersection
- Premier business park area

Strategy LU-18.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- Light industries
- Light manufacturing
- Wholesale trade
- Distribution Centers

Strategy LU-18.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Supportive retail and services at intersections of major arterials defined in the Thoroughfare Plan (see Chapter 6)

Strategy LU-18.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Moderate front setbacks and abundant landscaping
- Pedestrian connections to multi-use pathways and between uses
- At least 30% open space in new developments greater than five acres
- Façade articulation and windows to break up large facades

- Mitigate negative visual/ environmental impacts on residential areas

Goal LU-19. Activity Node

Create clusters of higher density development at major intersections in Mason. These nodes will become centers of activity within the community for social interaction and daily service needs. These nodes will enhance gateways into the City.

Strategy LU-19.1.

Locations on the Future Land Use Map:

- Major intersection along local commercial corridors
- Emerging or planned commercial activity centers

Strategy LU-19.2.

Primary recommended land uses:

- High frequency retail and services (excluding drive-through facilities)
- Restaurants (excluding drive-through facilities)

Strategy LU-19.3.

Secondary recommended land uses:

- Offices and live-work units
- Multi-family residential
- Public and institutional uses
- Pedestrian amenities (plazas, outdoor seating, etc.)
- Mixed use

Strategy LU-19.4.

Development Guidelines:

- Multi-story buildings
- Ground floor reserved for retail uses
- Traffic calming on local streets
- Place new buildings close to street with parking to the side or rear
- Human-scale buildings with storefront windows on ground floors and façade articulation

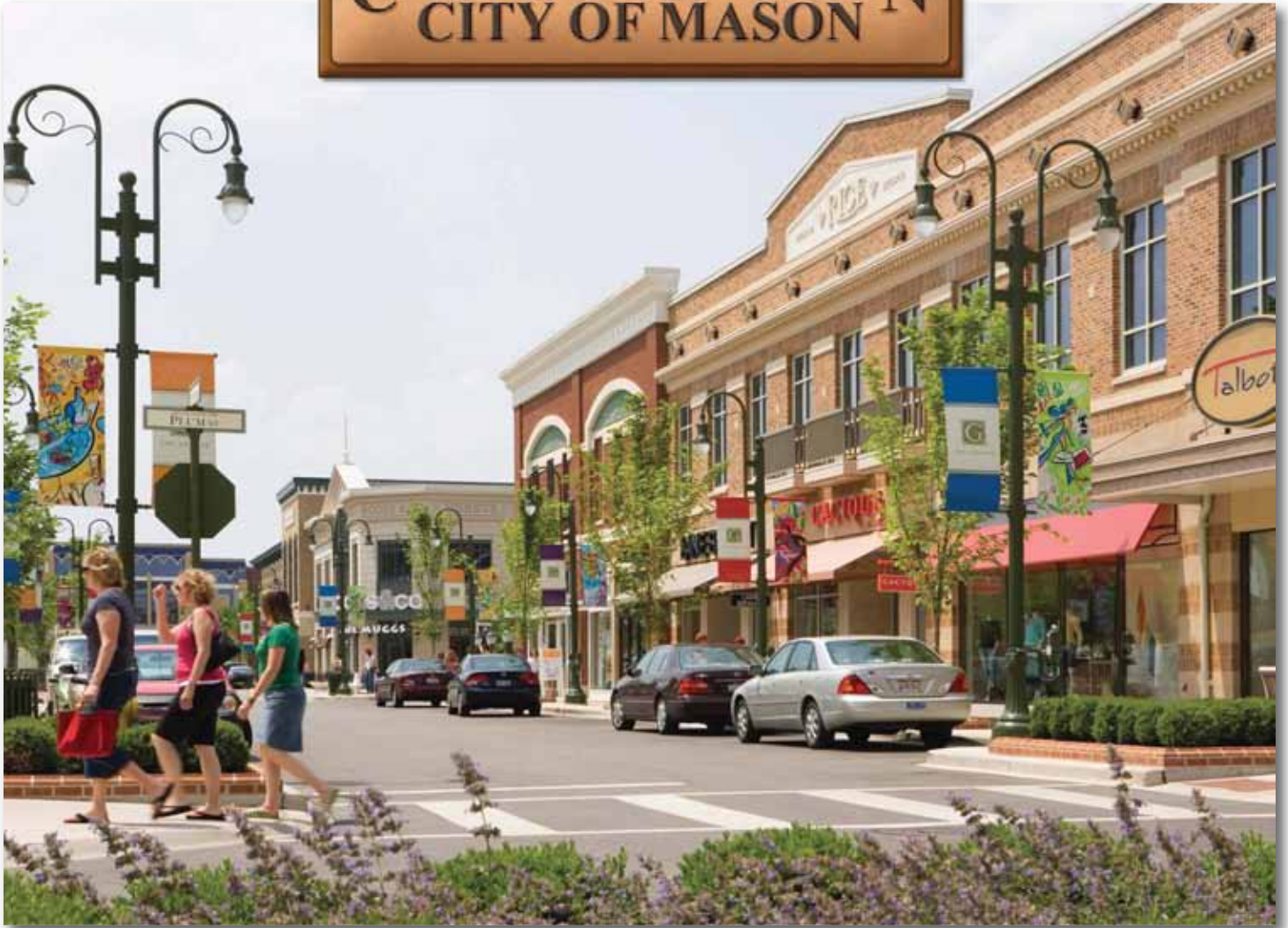
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CITY OF MASON

2 0 1 0

Chapter 8 Sub-area Plans



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN CITY OF MASON



Chapter 8: Sub-Area Plans

8.1. Purpose	1 SA
8.2. Community Core.....	2 SA
8.3. Western Row.....	5 SA
8.4. Kings Mills	8 SA
8.5. North SR 741	11 SA
8.6. Mason Montgomery/Socialville Fosters	13 SA
8.7. Snyder/Tylersville	15 SA

Section 8.1. Purpose

The Sub-Area Plans Chapter features proposed development concepts for strategically located infill development (i.e., undeveloped land within city boundary limits) opportunities. This Chapter details conceptual development plans for six sub-areas:

1. Community Core Sub-Area
2. Western Row Sub-Area
3. Kings Mills Sub-Area
4. North SR 741 Sub-Area
5. Mason Montgomery/Socialville Fosters Sub-Area
6. Snider /Tylersville Sub-Area

The concepts for each of these sub-areas are strategic development initiatives that promote the sustainable land use and development policies and goals outlined in previous chapters. Such policies endorse mixed use development, dense housing at key activity nodes, and pedestrian orientated design.

Changes proposed in some of these sub-areas will require zoning amendments and the Community Core in particular requires voter approval to increase density as envisioned in the Downtown.

This chapter was included in the Comprehensive Plan to underscore the importance of remaining development opportunities. The major components of this Chapter include:

1. Location and background information on each of the sub-areas.
2. Sub-area concept plans and the development strategy for each sub-area.
3. Recommendations for implementation of each sub-area concept including phasing, and design guidelines.

Vision Statement

Mason will guide the development of strategic sub-areas to promote long-term economic, social and environmental sustainability consistent with Comprehensive Plan policy. Sub-area development will provide pedestrian friendly, mixed use alternatives. A variety of housing types, attractive locations for businesses and additional entertainment and leisure activities for residents are incorporated into these plans..

At some point, widening roads beyond existing widths will not make sense from many different standpoints ranging from community image to economics. The need to look at alternative modes of circulation will increase over time as the City develops more housing and jobs. Several options exists that can holistically tie Mason's strategic areas together including the six sub areas presented herein. A modern transit system along with a complement of parking strategies and strategically located walkways integrated into multiple mixed use developments all offer viable strategies to road widening projects.

Chapter Cover Photo

This is a typical street scene taken of The Greene Towne Center located in Beavercreek. This outdoor "lifestyle" center caters to regional consumer shopping and entertainment needs. The same pedestrian-friendly design used at The Greene is desired at many locations throughout Mason including the Kings Mills Sub-area.



Section 8.2. Community Core Sub-Area

Location and Background

The Community Core area encompasses the traditional downtown area along Main Street; adjacent residential neighborhoods roughly located between Muddy Creek and the railroad corridor; portions of US RT 42 north of Tylersville Road to just past Kings Mills Road; and Mason Montgomery Road from Foxfield north to the railroad overpass.

Development Concept

Conceptual plans include extending the traditional grid pattern of streets south of Main Street to the Muddy Creek Greenway. Significant historic or landmark building should be preserved or adaptively reused while respecting their architectural character. New infill development may include mixed-use retail/office/residential. Typically, retail will be provided on the first floor with office and residential above. Buildings should be at least two stories and be built to the street wall. Parking shall be provided in shared lots located to the rear or side of buildings with landscaping and screening. Public spaces and urban plazas should be located throughout the district.

Row houses and townhouses will be provided along Mason-Montgomery Road north of Main Street to the railroad overpass. Infill residential will be provided along the new grid pattern of streets.

The area north of Laurel Wood and Muddy Creek will be developed with a pedestrian friendly urban plaza adjacent

to the Muddy Creek Greenway. Two story buildings with retail and restaurants may be constructed on the upper banks of the Muddy Creek. Patrons would enter the building from the upper level and interior parking lot and be able to view the Muddy Creek Greenway from the south-facing upper level balconies and lower level patios and seating areas, which will be connected to the plaza and greenway.

The Muddy Creek Greenway corridor will be enhanced by extending the existing non-motorized pathway along the creek to the southwest and eventually terminate at Gould Park. Pedestrian linkages from the Creek to the northern neighborhoods and the Main Street business district will be provided.

The large undeveloped parcel of land (Westerkamm property) located north of Foxfield Road will be developed with a mix of medical offices and townhomes surrounding a new neighborhood park. The new uses will compliment existing and future development on the adjacent community campus.

Retail uses that serve the new office development and community campus users will be permitted as an alternative, secondary use in the hatched area along the Mason-Montgomery Road frontage (see Map 8.2A). New retail businesses must complement and not compete with efforts to strengthen downtown's retail presence.

A new roadway will connect Mason-Montgomery Road to Kings Mills Road via Foxfield Drive and will help to relieve congestion at the Mason-Montgomery Road/Main Street intersection.

Development Phasing

Development phasing must ensure that retail uses occur only in conjunction with or after the development of office uses.

Design Guideline Recommendations

The design intent for the Community Core Sub-area calls for a unified image with high quality, mixed use developments that are built in a traditional urban grid pattern with integrated urban plazas, streetscape elements, and pedestrian friendly amenities. Adherence to

a flexible set of design guidelines is necessary to achieve the above goal including:

1. High-quality construction, design, workmanship and materials.
2. Use of durable, long lasting building materials such as brick, stone and decorative masonry block on all building walls facing a public street.
3. Placement of residential uses on or near major streets to increase potential pedestrian traffic on these streets.
4. Place buildings close to Mason-Montgomery Road and Main Street (US-RT 42) to create an identifiable image unique to the sub-area with adequate room for streetscape elements, parking lot screening, and pedestrian amenities.
5. Permitting and encouraging diversity through mixed-uses will enliven the community core and the street by inviting different people for different purposes.
6. Locate the majority of parking fields in rear or side yards in order to make buildings the focal point of every development site.
7. Preserve and integrate existing tree stands along the Muddy Creek greenway and along other open spaces to maintain the area's natural character.
8. Integrate pedestrian paths that connect the business district and residences to plazas and greenway areas. Incorporate amenities such as benches, fountains, and kiosks that provide gathering spots and add interest to pedestrian spaces.
9. Incorporate sound design techniques to minimize intrusion on adjacent residential uses and the Muddy Creek Greenway to the extent possible by placing buildings and parking lots in appropriate locations and providing adequate landscape buffer areas.
10. Require cross access agreements with shared use service drives in the rear of buildings.
11. Use architecturally compatible wall identification signs, including projecting signs, and low profile ground signs where appropriate. Monument signs, located in the Community Core Support Mixed-Use areas should complement the building it advertises and its surroundings by using high quality building materials and landscaping around the sign base.
12. Window displays should be attractive and interesting to customers so they want to come inside and look around.
13. Provide gateway enhancements at key entrances to the Community Core and downtown. Gateways should include decorative signage and landscaping at the following locations:
 - Southwest: the Tylersville and Reading Road intersection
 - West: the Main Street/Mason Road intersection
 - North: the Mason-Montgomery Road/North Street intersection
 - South: the intersection of Mason-Montgomery Road with the Muddy Creek Greenway
 - East: the US-42/Fox Street intersection
14. Create focal points that terminate vistas into downtown along key streets and reinforce downtown's identity, as follows:
 - Existing plaza at Main Street and Mason Road: Continue to enhance and activate the plaza with public art elements and active retail uses in adjacent buildings.
 - The Main Street/Mason-Montgomery Road intersection: Redevelop all four corners with multi-story buildings placed close to the street and incorporate a small urban plaza with public art and/or a water feature.
15. Encourage public spaces: Public spaces have many real and measurable economic benefits. Parks can contribute significantly to land value
16. Promote higher density housing in Downtown/Community core through Charter amendment.

The map illustrates the Riverfront Community Center area, showing various land use zones and transportation infrastructure. Key features include:

- Land Use Zones:**
 - High Intensity Residential (Red)
 - Community Core (Orange)
 - Medium Intensity Residential (Yellow)
 - High Intensity Residential (Secondary Uses) (Dark Red)
 - Business Park (Secondary Uses) (Dark Blue)
 - Business Park (Light Blue)
 - Community Core (Secondary Uses) (Light Orange)
- Parks and Recreation:**
 - Meadows Park
 - Gould Park
- Water Features:**
 - Muddy Creek
- Transportation Infrastructure:**
 - New Roadway (Black line)
 - Pedestrian / Bicycle Path (Orange line)
 - Gravel Trail (Blue line)
- Other Features:**
 - Focal Point (Yellow circle)
 - Gateway (Yellow circle)
 - Neighborhood Mixed-Use (Yellow circle)

A scale bar indicates distances from 0 to 600 feet. A legend in the top right corner defines the symbols for New Roadway, Pedestrian / Bicycle Path, Focal Point, Gateway, and Neighborhood Mixed-Use.

Section 8.3. Western Row Sub-Area

Location and Background

The Western Row Sub-area includes the area west of I-71 along the Western Row corridor to Mason Montgomery Road and south to Cedar Village Drive. This sub-area also includes parcels along Innovation Way from Western Row to the Makino campus.

This sub-area area includes the former Western Row Golf Course site, a substantial development opportunity at a prominent and visible intersection in the City. The area also includes several corporate campuses including Fujitec, Cintas, Luxotica and L3. The Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati developed the Lindner Center of Hope Behavioral Healthcare facility located at the rear of a 106 acre parcel on the south side of Western Row Road, west of Innovation Way. This area is already an important employment center in Mason and has promise for additional business development and support activities.

Development Concept

The I-71 Western Row interchange will continue to provide prestigious locations for corporate offices in denser, more vertical campus setting. The planned interchange enhancements provide additional access to the area for southbound traffic.

Support retail such as a hotel, restaurants, banks and services will be permitted in the hatched area on Map 8.3a on the southern Western Row frontage east of Innovation Way and between Innovation Way and Tylersville Rd. The Western Row and Tylersville intersection offers a prominent location for a corporate hotel/conference facility with signature architecture.

The former Western Row Golf Course site will be developed as an office campus with a potential supportive retail component in the hatched area surrounding greenspace at the Western Row and Mason Montgomery Road intersection (see Map 8.3A). Professional housing such as townhomes will be developed around a proposed park at the southeast corner of this site.



Development Phasing

Business park uses are the primary uses recommended for this subarea. Although retail uses can provide amenities that can help to attract businesses, retail development must be limited to a supportive role. To this end, development phasing must ensure that retail development occurs only in conjunction with or after the development of business park uses.

Gateway Enhancements

As part of the upgrade to a full access interchange, add aesthetic enhancements to create a true southern gateway that is uniquely branded to announce entry into Mason.

Design Guideline Recommendations

The design intent for the Western Row Sub-area calls for a unified image with high quality, mixed use developments in a vertical (multi-story), urban style setting with integrated open spaces, plazas, boulevard streets, and pedestrian amenities. Adherence to a flexible set of design guidelines is necessary to achieve the above goal including:

1. Use of durable, long lasting building materials such as brick, stone and decorative masonry block on all building walls facing a public street with possible exceptions for buildings deemed to be of otherwise exceptional architectural quality.

2. Place buildings close to Tylersville Road to create an identifiable image unique to the sub-area with adequate room for tree preservation zones and/or landscape buffer yards between buildings and road rights-of-way.
3. Locate the majority of parking fields in rear or side yards in order to make buildings the focal point of every development site. Treat parking fields as future development parcels. Add parking decks when parking lots are built on.
4. Preserve and integrate existing tree stands on development parcels and along corridors to maintain the area's natural character.
5. Integrate pedestrian paths that connect office buildings to open spaces, common break areas and amenity oriented uses.
6. Minimize intrusion on adjacent residential uses through landscape buffering and context-sensitive architecture.
7. Preserve place-defining natural features to the extent possible as development occurs.
8. Require inter-parcel, shared use service drives with access off of local roads to preserve arterial roadway capacity and efficiency.
9. Utilize traffic calming measures on local access roads to minimize cut-through movements while improving street connectivity.
10. Use low profile monument signage and encourage architecturally compatible wall identification signs. Monument signs should complement the building it advertises and its surroundings by using high quality building materials and landscaping around the sign base.

Map 8.3A: Western Row Sub-Area Plan



Section 8.4. Kings Mills Sub-Area

Location and Background

The Kings Mills subarea includes the area west of the Kings Mills / I-71 interchange to Parkside Drive. The sub-area includes the southern frontage of Kings Mills south to Sports Center Complex Drive and Courseview Drive and the northern frontage of Kings Mills Road to Cox Smith Road.

This area of Mason features undeveloped land with easy access to I-71. It is in close proximity to Kings Island, The Beach Water Park, Great Wolf Lodge, existing retail business and a hotel. Several different developments have been proposed for this area, including a regional open-air mall, a power retail center, as well as a commercial sports complex. These projects have not materialized, which provides an opportunity to develop a vision for vacant land in this area.

Development Concept

The development plan for this sub-area transforms the site into a regional activity center (i.e., regional entertainment district) featuring retail, dining, entertainment and hotels developed along Kings Mills Road and a preserved greenway along an existing stream corridor (see Map 8.4A).

The concept for the area west of the proposed greenway envisions a walkable and family-friendly retail and entertainment complex. This family-friendly entertainment district will serve as Mason's version of the "The Greene" in Dayton and "Easton Town Center" in Columbus.

The complex will not only serve the retail and social needs of the community, but will serve as an additional tourism draw, increasing the economic impact of families coming to Mason to visit Kings Island, The Beach, Great Wolf Lodge and other attractions.

A development plan was proposed and approved by the City several years ago for the site west of the



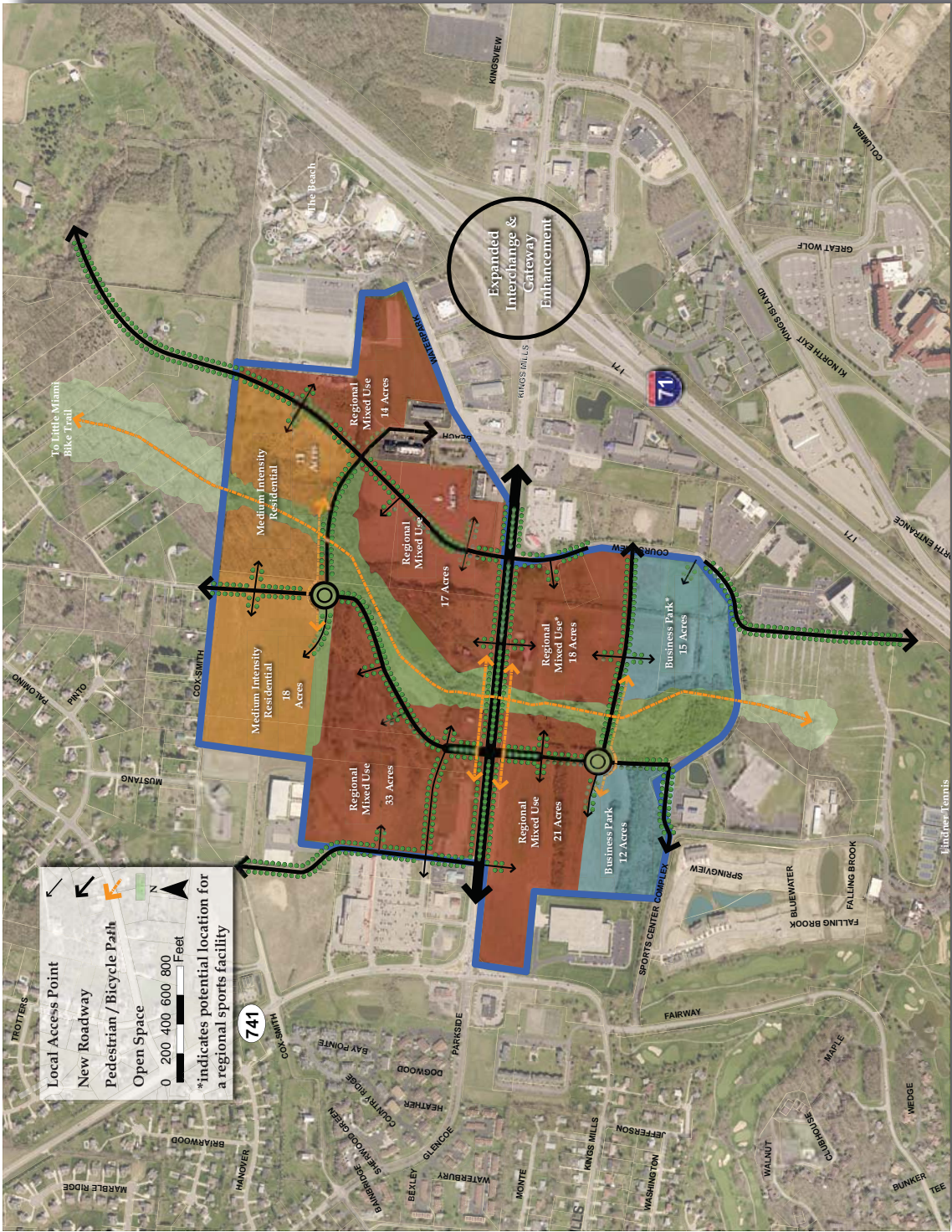
proposed greenway and north of Kings Mills Road, although construction has not yet commenced. The plan features a more automobile-oriented design that will conflict with the new vision for this area. The lack of action pursuant to this proposal may create an opportunity to revise it to better fit the vision for this area.

Areas east of the greenway will focus on hospitality needs of area tourists. Hotels and additional restaurants, along with supportive retail services are envisioned for this area. A sports complex suitable for national tournament play and/or minor league sports is also suitable at this location. Such a venue could provide an anchor for the proposed retail and entertainment complex to the west and provide an additional tourist attraction in Mason.

The northern edge of the Kings Mills Sub-Area will feature attached residential homes and serve as a buffer between the entertainment district and the existing residential to the north. The southern edge of the Sub-Area will be an extension of the existing Business Park uses located along I-71.

A new loop road will tie into Courseview Drive in the southern portion of the area and connect across Kings Mills to Cox-Smith Road and Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road to the north. A new roadway will connect Courseview Drive south to Western Row Road, creating a continuous parallel access road along I-71 from Western Row Road to Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road.

Map 8.4A: Kings Mills Sub-Area Plan



Gateway Improvements

A key component of this sub-area is a major gateway enhancement to the I-71 and Kings Mills Road Interchange. The current infrastructure contains minimal design enhancements and lacks the elements needed to set a welcoming and branding front door image. Mason's distinct street tree and boulevard treatment should be extended east as far as possible to the interchange.

Design Guideline Recommendations

The Kings Mills Sub-area will feature design that is proportional to human scale. Human scale can be achieved through proper massing, use of building materials, changes in texture and patterns, use of colors, adequate, comfortable site furnishings and details. The height and width of buildings, street width, setbacks, sidewalk width and other elements combine to create comfortable settings for human interaction. Adherence to a flexible set of design guidelines is necessary to achieve the above goal including:

1. Use of durable, long lasting building materials such as brick, stone and decorative masonry block on all building walls facing a public street with possible exceptions for buildings deemed to be of otherwise exceptional architectural quality.
2. To establish the Kings Mills area as a destination for entertainment, a comprehensive design plan should be created that includes signage, lighting, landscape tree lawns, site furnishings and handicap accessible pedestrian walkways. These site furnishings and amenities should be compatible with the architectural character of the area.
3. Locate the majority of parking in the interior of building groups or to the rear and side yard of buildings so that the visual impact of vehicles is minimized. On street parking should be encouraged on interior access streets in front of buildings.
4. Preserve and integrate the existing riparian corridor and vegetation on development parcels to maintain the area's natural character.
5. Integrate pedestrian paths that connect buildings and development areas to one another within the sub-area and to open spaces and amenity oriented uses.
6. Require inter-parcel, shared use service drives with access off of local roads to preserve arterial roadway capacity and efficiency.
7. Use low profile monument signage and encourage architecturally compatible wall identification signs. Monument signs should complement the building it advertises and its surroundings by using high quality building materials and landscaping around the sign base.

Section 8.5. North SR 741 Sub-Area

Location and Background

This sub area is bisected from north to south by SR 741, between Bunnel Road & Bethany Road, and extends to the west to US RT 42.



Development Concept

The planned land use is predominately Light Industrial located in a campus-like layout. A proposed business park is located in the northern portion, east of SR 741, as a buffer between existing low density residential and Light Industrial uses. A small area, located in the southeastern portion of the sub area, on either side of US RT 42, has been reserved for Retail Mixed-Use, providing neighborhood retail and services that support nearby businesses, future residential growth near this area, and activities at the Mason Sports Park. (see Map 8.5A)

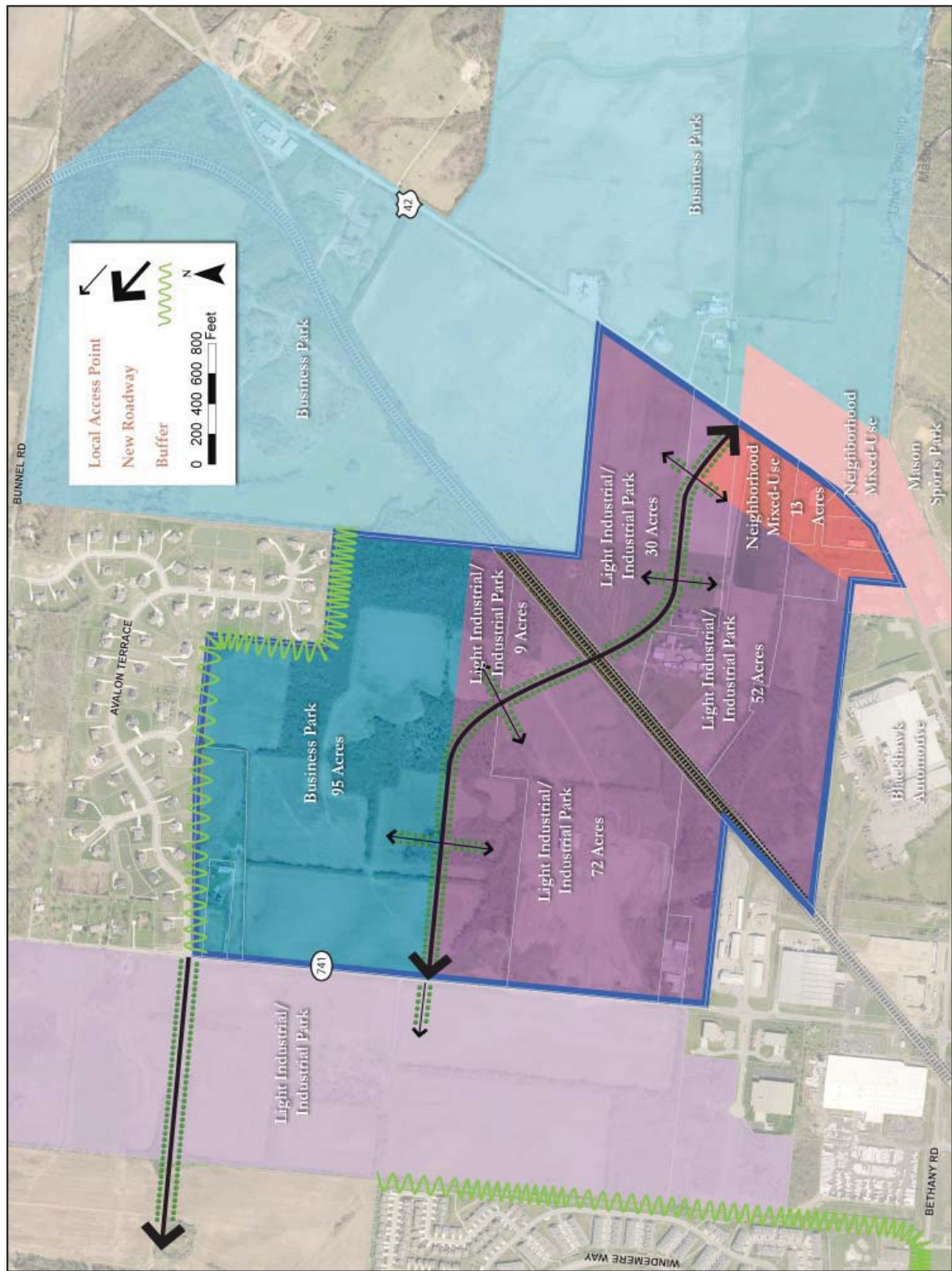
The Light Industrial orientation of this area continues a land use pattern already established in this area and takes advantage of rail access as well as proximity to both I-75 and I-71. A proposed east-west connector road will provide access to future development east of SR 741 and provide an additional connection between SR-741 and US-42 for truck traffic.

Design Guideline Recommendations

The design intent for the North SR 741 Sub-area calls for a light industrial research park development that is laid out in a campus-like setting with large open spaces. Adherence to a flexible set of design guidelines is necessary to achieve the above goal including:

1. Multi-story buildings with moderate setbacks. Large and long façades shall be broken up with architectural features and windows.
2. At least 30% of land area shall be dedicated for open space. Provide abundant landscaping and adequate room for tree preservation zones and/or landscape buffer yards between buildings, parking lots and road rights-of-way.
3. Locate the majority of parking fields in rear or side yards in order to make buildings the focal point of every development site.
4. Preserve and integrate existing tree stands as part of the required open space to maintain the area's natural character. Mitigate negative visual/environmental impacts on residential areas.
5. Integrate pedestrian paths that connect buildings to other uses and open spaces.
6. Roof top mechanical equipment shall be hidden from view from adjacent properties and from the rights-of-way. Incorporate sound design techniques to minimize intrusion on adjacent residential uses and on place-defining natural features to the extent possible by placing buildings and parking lots in appropriate locations and providing adequate landscape buffer areas.
7. Require inter-parcel, shared use service drives with access off of local roads to preserve arterial roadway capacity and efficiency.
8. Design local access roads with traffic calming techniques that minimize cut-through traffic.
9. Use low profile monument signage and encourage architecturally compatible wall identification signs. Monument signs should complement the building it advertises and its surroundings by using high quality building materials and landscaping around the sign base.

Map 8.5A: North SR 741 Sub-Area Plan



Section 8.6. Mason-Montgomery/ Socialville Fosters Sub-Area

Location and Background

This sub area is located west of Mason Montgomery Road, between Cedar Village and Socialville Foster Roads. A north-south local connector road is proposed between Cedar Village and Socialville Foster Roads.



Development Concept

The area will be planned for office in a campus like layout with neighborhood retail mix-use developed at the southeast corner. Attached residential is planned for the western portion of the sub-area and will be separated from the office development by a greenbelt buffer zone.

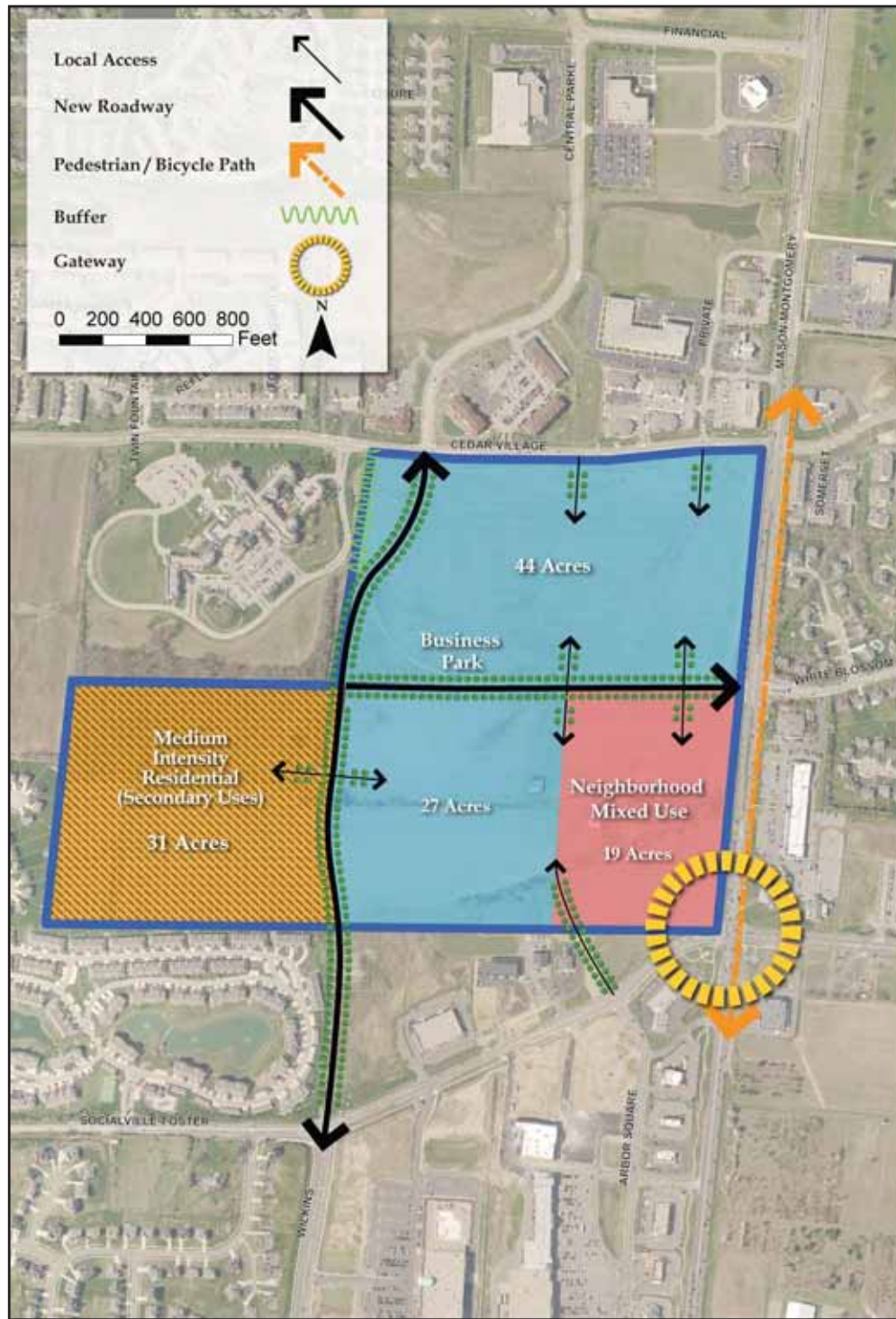
A gateway feature is planned for the intersection of Socialville Foster and Mason Montgomery.

Design Guideline Recommendations

The design intent for the Mason-Montgomery/Socialville Foster Sub-area calls for a unified image with high quality, mixed use developments that are urban and campus-like in nature with integrated open spaces, boulevard streets, and pedestrian pathways. Adherence to a flexible set of design guidelines is necessary to achieve the above goal including:

1. Use of durable, long lasting building materials such as brick, stone and decorative masonry block on all building walls facing a public street with possible exceptions for buildings deemed to be of otherwise exceptional architectural quality.
2. Place retail buildings close to the intersections of Cedar Village & Mason Montgomery Roads and Socialville Foster & Mason Montgomery Roads to create an identifiable image unique to the sub-area with adequate room for tree preservation zones and/or landscape buffer yards between buildings and road rights-of-way.
3. Locate the majority of parking fields in rear or side yards in order to make buildings the focal point of every development site. A double row of parking is permitted in front yards.
4. Preserve and integrate existing tree stands on the attached residential development parcels to preserve woodlands and provide passive open space.
5. Integrate pedestrian paths that connect office buildings to adjacent residential development, retail nodes and open spaces.
6. Incorporate sound design techniques to minimize intrusion on adjacent residential uses to the extent possible by placing buildings and parking lots in appropriate locations and providing adequate landscape buffer areas.
7. Require inter-parcel, shared use service drives with access off of local roads to preserve arterial roadway capacity and efficiency.
8. Design local access roads with traffic calming techniques that minimize cut-through traffic.
9. Use low profile monument signage and encourage architecturally compatible wall identification signs. Monument signs should complement the building it advertises and its surroundings by using high quality building materials and landscaping around the sign base.

Map 8.6A: Mason-Montgomery/Socialville-Fosters Sub-Area Plan



Section 8.7. Snider/Tylersville Sub-Area

Location and Background

This sub area is located west of Snider Road, between Tylersville and Reading Roads. The Muddy Creek bisects this area from northeast to southwest.

Development Concept

Neighborhood Retail mixed-uses are proposed along Tylersville and Snider Roads. High density residential is proposed along the western edge of the sub area adjacent to the Finsbury Point subdivision. A future park and pathway is proposed on the State property located along the southern portion of the sub area with access from Reading Road.

Design Guideline Recommendations

The design intent for the Snider/Tylersville Sub-area calls for a unified image with high quality, mixed use neighborhood developments that are vehicular oriented. Architecture shall be high quality with extensive site landscaping and parking lot screening. Pedestrian pathways should be developed to link the adjacent residences to neighborhood commercial and to the greenway corridor and the future park. Adherence to a flexible set of design guidelines is necessary to achieve the above goal including:

1. Use of durable, high quality building materials such as brick, stone and decorative masonry block should be used whenever possible as they project importance, integrity and substance. The building facades should be beautiful with balanced features and attractive colors that are compatible.
2. Storefront lighting should highlight the attractive architectural features of the building and be adequate for the customer to feel safe.
3. Locate the majority of parking fields in rear or side yards in order to make buildings the focal point of every development site.
4. Preserve and integrate existing tree stands along the existing greenway corridor to maintain the area's natural character.
5. Integrate pedestrian paths that connect residences, office buildings, and neighborhood retail to the greenway corridor and future park.
6. Incorporate sound design techniques to minimize intrusion on adjacent residential uses and on place-defining natural features to the extent possible by placing buildings and parking lots in appropriate locations and providing adequate landscape buffer areas.
7. Require inter-parcel, shared use service drives with access off of local roads to preserve arterial roadway capacity and efficiency.
8. Design local access roads with traffic calming techniques that minimize cut-through traffic.
9. Use low profile monument signage and encourage architecturally compatible wall identification signs. Monument signs should complement the building it advertises and its surroundings by using high quality building materials and landscaping around the sign base.

[illegible]

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
CITY OF MASON^N

2 0 1 0

Chapter 9 Action Plan





Chapter 9: Action Plan

9.1. Purpose 1 | AP

9.2. Goal, Strategy and Action Summary 1 | AP

9.3. Implementation Strategies 23 | AP

Section 9.1. Purpose

Several parties will take an active role in Plan implementation. The Action Plan provides focus to City and stakeholder implementation efforts. The City and its stakeholders are encouraged to use this chapter as a communication, collaboration and monitoring tool throughout the planned 10 year implementation time frame.

Primary components of this element include

1. Tables that summarize plan recommendations, strategies and actions in a user friendly format.
2. Implementation tools and resources the City and its partners can use to aid in the implementation process.

Section 9.2. Goal, Strategy and Action Summary

Table 9.2A Action Plan summarizes plan goals, strategies and actions as found in Chapters 1 through 6. The table prioritizes each action and identifies responsible parties and time frames.

Goals

Goals statements link strategies and actions back to an overall vision as defined by residents. Goals are listed in sequential order starting with those found in Chapter 1.

Strategies

Strategies offer broad guidance on how goal statements can be achieved.

Action Statements

Actions are steps, tasks and/or tactics that must be undertaken to achieve defined strategies and individual goals. Most action statements require some form of active participation by the City and its partners to implement.

Vision Statement

The City will work with residents, businesses, community groups developers and other stakeholders to implement the Comprehensive Plan in a strategic, coordinated and fiscally responsible manner. City and stakeholder efforts will result in the positive change envisioned by residents.

Responsible Parties

The Responsible Parties column identifies the parties that are individually and/or collectively responsible for implementing the identified action task. The first entity listed is considered the task leader. A task leader's primary responsibility is to manage the assigned action, hit project milestones and coordinate with partners. The task leader is not necessarily responsible for funding but should be part of a funding solution.

Chapter Cover Photo

Mason Municipal Center's grandeur stands as a testament to the City's ability to turn vision for sustainable economic development into reality. As in the past, strong Council leadership and a talented administration will be behind Mason's continued success.

Implementation Principles

- Implementation will occur in a series of small incremental steps over the Plan's ten year time frame.
- In order to ensure a deliberate and consistent approach, the city needs to incorporate Plan implementation into its normal business procedures and communication methods.
- Implementation requires collaboration with a diverse group of residents, community groups, businesses, other governments and developers. The City cannot do this alone.
- Implementation efforts will require leadership, resources and priorities from City Council. Staff will carry out Council's priorities and include such projects in departmental strategic plans, annual budgets and the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.
- Not all recommendations will be implemented over the life of this plan. Recommendations that remain unfinished will be re-evaluated as part of a minor Plan update in five years and a major update in ten years.
- Flexibility is built into the implementation process so the City can address unforeseen situations, opportunities and constraints.
- Though flexible, deviations from Plan policies and priorities should be made only after the impacts of such action is fully considered. Signification deviations should require a Plan amendment.
- Communication and monitoring progress is vital. City staff should give City Council regular updates during departmental reports.

Time Frame and Priority

This plan has a ten-year implementation time frame. Not all actions will be implemented within this time. Years provide a time frame for project commencement and completion. Color is used to designate priority as follows:

- *High Priority* Actions, shown as green on Table 9.2A, generally start within the first 3 years after adoption and are typically planned to end by year 5. The City and its partners will pursue "High" priority actions first.
- *Medium Priority* Actions, shown as yellow, generally start within 4 to 5 years or as resources become available. Completion of medium priority actions are planned to end by year 8.

- *Low Priority* Actions, shown as red, will start after the majority of higher priority actions are substantially complete or as resources become available.

Action Type

The majority of Plan recommendations actions fall into one of five action types. These actions are described more fully as:

- **Amendment.** Amendment indicates a amendment to an existing development regulation is needed to implement a particular action. In some cases, new design standards or guidelines are needed to provide additional direction regarding roadway, utility and real estate development.

- **Communication.** Communication activities are aimed at working cooperatively together and/or gaining support.
- **Actions.** The goal of many actions identified as communication is to inform residents and stakeholders of City policy, gain support and/or seek stakeholder participation. This can be done by presenting to stakeholder groups, making and distributing marketing materials, and holding meetings with targeted stakeholders.
- **Continuous.** Continuous actions are activities that do not have a start or end date but rather should be integrated into daily activities throughout the ten year planning period.
- **Construction.** Construction recognizes actions that require physical effort to change the landscape such as restoring vegetation along streams, erecting gateway entry signage or improving a roadway.
- **Study.** Study implies additional consideration is needed before moving forward. In some cases, outside expertise will be needed to determine project feasibility or determine a recommended course of action while in other cases City staff will be able to do the same in-house.

Goals / Strategy	Action	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HN-1. Encourage investment in older neighborhoods.														
HN-1.1. Encourage context sensitive infill development in older neighborhoods.	HN-1.1.1.	Develop residential infill design standards to ensure new housing development in established neighborhoods is compatible with existing neighborhood architecture and scale.	Planning	Amendment										
	HN-1.1.2.	Implement zoning text and map changes to identify areas where reinvestment is desired and infill development is encouraged. Incorporate standards developed in Action HN-1.1.1. and HN-1.3.1.	Planning	Amendment										
HN-1.2. Encourage land use transitions between major thoroughfares and adjacent neighborhoods through selection of appropriate land uses, compatible architecture and scale of buildings, and the use of open space and buffering.	HN-1.2.1.	Implement transitional zoning along Major Thoroughfares that allows mixed use including attached residential, particularly those areas planned as "High Intensity Neighborhood" or "Activity Nodes" on the Future Land Use Map in Chapter 7.	Planning	Amendment										
HN-1.3. Promote the modernization of functionally obsolete housing units and re-investment in older neighborhoods.	HN-1.3.1.	Create a housing modernization idea book with strategies for enhancing older housing in ways that are compatible with existing neighborhood character. Examples include aesthetic improvements such as adding front porches, shutters and dormers, or functional improvements such as garage and room additions and replacing mechanical equipment with energy efficient units.	Planning, Building, HBA	Study										
	HN-1.3.2.	Partner with the Home Builders Association to modernize an outdated house as public demonstration project.	HBA, Building											
	HN-1.3.3.	Seek and provide financial incentives for energy efficiency improvements such as energy savings performance contracting, on-bill financing, and revolving loan funds.	Planning	Continuous										
	HN-1.3.4.	Promote home energy audits.	Building	Communication										
HN-1.4. Promote code enforcement and proper maintenance through proactive enforcement efforts, increased community involvement and education.	HN-1.4.1.	Look at the effectiveness of a Property Maintenance Code to maintain the desirability of neighborhoods, maintain homeowner confidence and to prevent violations from spreading.		Study, Amendment										
	HN-1.4.2.	Use code enforcement to prevent code violations from spreading into adjacent neighborhoods.	Building											
	HN-1.4.3.	Educate community members about the importance of proper property maintenance and the enforcement process.	Building											
	HN-1.4.4.	Use code enforcement as an incentive. Property owners are more likely to invest in housing updates and maintenance when confidence in their street and neighborhood is high.	Building											
	HN-1.4.5.	Enforce codes along major thoroughfares realizing community perception is largely based on what people see traveling through a community.	Building											
	HN-1.4.6.	Track and monitor code enforcement violations using GIS. Analyze data to identify trends early and prevent issues from spreading.	Building, Planning, GIS	Continuous										

Goals / Strategy	Action	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HN-1. Encourage investment in older neighborhoods.														
HN-1.5. Maintain, add and enhance infrastructure and public space in older neighborhoods.	HN-1.5.1.	Inventory neighborhood facilities and infrastructure and determine approximate age, condition and adequacy.	Planning, Engineering											
	HN-1.5.2.	Ensure to the extent practical that older neighborhoods have access to a public space (park, school yard, or greenspace) within a 5-minute walk or about a 1/4 mile. Older neighborhoods were platted before the city required greenspace set-asides. See Strategy CF-1.1.	Planning, Parks											
	HN-1.5.3.	Coordinate infrastructure and public facility improvements with priority neighborhood reinvestment efforts.	Engineering, Planning											
	HN-1.5.4.	Add sidewalks and bike paths where they are missing (see Strategy TR-1.1. in Chapter 6) consistent with funding availability per the City's sidewalk program as directed by City Council.	Engineering	Continuous, Construction										
	HN-1.5.5.	Seek opportunities to acquire additional open space property that adds benefit and value to surrounding property owners.	Council, Parks	Continuous										
	HN-1.5.6.	Work with the Mason City Schools to ensure that school buildings stay where they are currently located. A recent trend is to move schools out of neighborhoods and rely on busing. Schools, like parks, add value to housing and serve as neighborhood anchors.	Planning	Continuous, Communication										
HN-1.6. Establish redevelopment incentives in targeted investment zones. (See HN-5.1.2)	HN-1.6.1.	Study the benefit and need to establish incentives for targeted neighborhood reinvestment. The city can incent reinvestment in specified areas by waiving building permit fees and offering property tax abatement on building improvements.	Council, Planning, Economic Development											
	HN-1.6.2.	Use City-owned property as leverage in encouraging redevelopment.	Council, Economic Development	Continuous										
HN-2. Promote new housing types that recognize shifts in market demands and demographics.														
HN-2.1. Permit higher density, lower maintenance housing in the community core and in activity nodes.	HN-2.1.1.	Ensure that zoning permits the highest housing densities (eight units per acre) in Activity Nodes and the Community Core Subarea (see Map 7.3A in Chapter 7).	Planning	Amendment										
	HN-2.1.2.	Encourage redevelopment and infill development of multi-family housing, townhomes and mixed-use buildings with upper-floor housing units in the Community Core and Activity Nodes, with the incentives discussed under Strategy 1.6.	Planning, Economic Development	Amendment										
HN-2.2. Permit and promote a variety of living options that are attractive to Mason's growing senior population.	HN-2.2.1.	Encourage transportation services that enable seniors to obtain necessary goods and services city-wide.	Planning, Engineering, Warren County											
	HN-2.2.2.	Permit senior housing units within walking distance to retail, medical, personal services, and educational and cultural facilities.	Planning	Amendment										

Goals / Strategy	Action	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HN-3. Promote street and pedestrian connectivity and design in neighborhoods.														
HN-3.1. Reform zoning and subdivision codes to require pedestrian and vehicular connectivity within and between neighborhoods, as described under Strategies TR-1.1 (sidewalk requirements) and TR-2.1 (Complete Streets) in Chapter 6.	HN-3.1.1.	No action statements are associated with this strategy. See actions under TR-1.1 and TR-2.1.	Planning, Engineering											
HN-3.2. Promote pedestrian orientated design.	HN-3.2.1.	Encourage pedestrian-friendly design features in residential developments, such as recessed or rear garages and front porches in single-family development, and rear parking lots and front entrances in high intensity residential developments and mixed use developments.	Planning	Amendment										
	HN- 3.2.2.	Establish additional street design standards that promote uniqueness and livability. Encourage the provision of traffic calming features such as chicanes, mini traffic circles, narrow streets and neck downs at intersections. These features can also be used for place-defining landscape design to brand neighborhoods, break street monotony, and encourage pedestrianism. See TR-2.	Engineering, Planning	Amendment										
	HN- 3.2.3.	Encourage space for pedestrian gathering and circulation during the development review process. Examples include village greens and pocket parks connected to housing by sidewalks and paths.	Planning	Continuous, Communication										
HN-3.3. Encourage mixed land uses that place residents within walking distance of services.	HN- 3.3.1.	Encourage developers to adhere to the mixed land use vision proposed in Chapter 7.	Planning	Continuous, Communication										
HN-4. Encourage workforce housing integration.														
HN-4.1. Work with employers to identify young professional housing needs.	HN-4.1.1.	Conduct a survey of employers to determine employees' incomes, places of residence, and desire to move to Mason.	Economic Development											
	HN-4.1.2.	Encourage variability of lot and unit sizes integrated into development plans to offer a range of housing options.	Planning	Continuous, Communication										
	HN-4.1.3.	Amend zoning, require similar exterior architectural materials and features to ensure such units cannot be identified from the street as part of HN-4.1.2. above.	Planning	Amendment										
	HN-4.1.4.	Develop professional housing in or adjacent to employment centers as part of mixed use sustainable developments.	Planning											
	HN-4.1.5.	Promote mixed-use redevelopment along major thoroughfares through zoning map and/or text amendments in accordance with the High-Intensity Neighborhood and Neighborhood Activity Center classifications on the Future Land Use Map - Chapter 7.	Planning, Economic Development	Communication										
HN-4.2. Encourage modern, high-quality multi-family housing in high activity areas.	HN-4.2.1.	Push high intensity housing in planned mixed use areas integrated with other retail and office through complementary architecture.	Planning, Development	Continuous										
	HN-4.2.2.	Adopt multi-family design standards to avoid monotonous and homogeneous architecture on attached residential units.	Planning	Amendment										

Goals / Strategy	Action	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HN-5. Encourage downtown housing as a critical component of downtown revitalization and as means to create an indigenous market for retail and restaurants.														
HN-5.1. Create a critical mass of downtown housing.	HN-5.1.1.	Ensure that the Zoning Code permits and/or encourages urban housing options in the downtown. Urban housing types include rowhouses, multi-family buildings, housing on upper floors of mixed-use buildings, and live-work units that incorporate residential units with offices, artist studios, or services.	Planning	Amendment										
	HN-5.1.2.	Offer incentives such as Community Reinvestment Area and Tax Increment Financing. The CRA program provides tax abatements for rehabilitation or new construction projects. TIF provides funding for public infrastructure projects that support mixed-use developments. (See HN-1.6)	Economic Development											
	HN-5.1.3.	Assist with land assembly for redevelopment projects. Redevelopment often requires public assistance to be financially feasible. Public acquisition and demolition of deteriorated or underutilized properties can be a powerful incentive in encouraging development projects, and it provides the City with leverage to control land use and urban design.	Economic Development											
	HN-5.1.4.	Market downtown housing opportunities. Promotional materials, presentations and walking tours can inform potential developers and residents about the opportunities for living in downtown Mason.	Economic Development	Communication										
	HN-5.1.5.	Place a charter amendment on the ballot to gain voter approval for increased density in the Community Core and any other area where residential density is desired.	Council, Manager											

Goal / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	5	6	7	8	9	10
NR-1. Preserve environmentally sensitive areas.													
NR-1.1. Discourage and reduce development of structures and impervious surfaces within the FEMA Floodway and 100-Year Floodplain.	NR-1.1.1.	Require the identification and mapping of natural features as part of site plan review.	Planning	Continuous									
	NR-1.1.2.	Preserve and use natural drainage and drainage features in site design.	Engineering	Continuous									
	NR-1.1.3.	Require the appropriate plant species be used in drainage pathways and buffers. Use species that are adapted to conditions found along drainage pathways that can tolerate from seasonal drought and high water conditions.	Planning, Engineering	Amendment									
	NR-1.1.4.	Offer fees in lieu of compliance as an alternative for projects that do not meet floodplain protection requirements. Utilize fees for stormwater management projects elsewhere in the City.	Engineering	Amendment									
NR-1.2. Establish riparian setbacks in order to protect water quality, reduce erosion, and protect wildlife habitat.	NR-1.2.1.	Develop a natural resources inventory map that identifies and classifies wetlands, watercourses and other sensitive areas in the City in detail. This map will inform site plan review and the riparian setback ordinance. See CF-2.4.1.	Engineering, WCSW	Study									
	NR-1.2.2.	Develop a riparian setback ordinance for streams in Mason. Vary setbacks based on the size of the area drained by the stream or other indicators of conservation value and develop standards for each buffer "zone", as described in Figure 2.3A.	Planning, Engineering	Amendment									
	NR-1.2.3.	Develop guidelines and provisions for Low-Impact Development within and adjacent to setback areas (see Figure 5.3A in Chapter 5 for more information).	Planning, Engineering	Amendment									
	NR-1.2.4.	Incorporate no-mow zones in the riparian setback ordinance in order to protect native riparian vegetation.	Planning, Engineering	Amendment									
	NR-1.2.5.	Promote and establish intergovernmental coordination of regulations among communities located along riparian corridors.	Planning	Communication									
NR-1.3. Encourage restoration of natural habitat, streams and drainage patterns in developed areas. Development has occurred in or close to several environmentally sensitive areas, resulting in developed or cleared floodplains, and piped or channelized (rerouted streams).	NR-1.3.1.	Establish guidelines for planting vegetation along streams and rivers in order to shade streams, improve water quality and prevent erosion.	Planning, Engineering										
	NR-1.3.2.	Encourage replacement of riparian vegetation when plants are damaged or removed during construction.	Planning, Engineering	Amendment									
	NR-1.3.3.	Restore natural habitat along streams such as the Muddy Creek as properties are acquired for greenways, flood storage and stormwater management.	Engineering	Continuous									
	NR-1.3.4.	Encourage redevelopment projects to restore natural floodplain functionality to previously disturbed areas.	Engineering	Continuous									
	NR-1.3.5.	Implement a stream restoration project on city owned property or on a redevelopment site to educate the public.	Engineering	Construction									

Goal / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	5	6	7	8	9	10
NR-2. Provide a variety of quality open space, distributed equitably throughout Mason.													
NR-2.1. Encourage cluster development that preserves open space while allowing a return on investment.	NR-2.1.1.	Provide density bonuses to developers who provide greater open space in areas planned for Low-Intensity Neighborhood on the Future Land Use map.	Planning	Amendment									
NR-2.2. Acquire or encourage acquisition of environmentally sensitive properties.	NR-2.2.1.	Seek deed restrictions and/or conservation easements in new development that preserve sensitive areas such as steep slopes and riparian corridors.	Planning, Engineering	Continuous									
	NR-2.2.2.	Acquire strategically important open space areas such as land adjacent to the Muddy Creek through dedication requirements with new development.	Engineering	Continuous									
	NR-2.2.3.	Acquire floodplain properties or easements for the purpose of restoring natural floodplain functionality.	Engineering										
	NR-2.2.4.	Identify and use funds for natural features protection and acquisition. This could include dedicated funds, grants, civic contributions, bonds, etc.	Engineering										
	NR-2.2.5.	Provide leadership towards creating an urban land trust. Such trusts have raised millions of dollars and have preserved thousands of acres in urban areas.	Administration										
NR-2.3. Promote preservation of woodlands, steep slopes, and riparian areas.	NR-2.3.1.	Adopt a natural resource protection ordinance that includes provisions to protect woodlands, wetlands and steep hillsides.	Planning	Amendment									
NR-2.4. Promote the location and design of open space areas within developments so they connect green infrastructure on adjacent properties to create a linked network.	NR-2.4.1.	Develop a Green Infrastructure plan using the natural resource map developed under Action NR-1.2.2. Identify priority areas for open space dedication and acquisition.	Planning, Engineering	Study									
NR-3. Reduce the ecological footprint of development.													
NR-3.1. Promote sustainable and energy efficient building practices.	NR-3.1.1.	Ensure that all new municipal buildings follow energy efficient practices in order to set an example for private development.	Administration	Continuous									
	NR-3.1.2.	Encourage the School District to follow energy efficient building practices.	Manager	Continuous, Communication									
NR-3.2. Enable and encourage Low-Impact Development practices in stormwater management, as described in Figure 5.3A in Chapter 5.		No action statements are associated with this strategy											
NR-3.3. Encourage residents to engage in activities that reduce their ecological footprint.	NR-3.3.1.	Develop an energy efficiency and conservation strategy for the City that addresses public and private actions, projects and funding sources.	Council, Manager										
	NR-3.3.2.	Provide ecological awareness through the City's website, classes, and brochures.	Parks	Communication									
	NR-3.3.3.	Develop citywide goals for waste reduction and recycling participation.	Council, Manager										
	NR-3.3.4.	Work with Warren County and local jurisdictions to prepare a site selection and recycling center feasibility study. Curbside service and drop-off centers exist but other needs are unmet such as tire, paint and household chemicals.	Manager, Engineer	Study									
NR-4. Increase the tree canopy in the City.													
NR-4.1. Increase the flexibility of the City's landscaping and street tree code by providing alternative means of compliance.	NR-4.1.1.	Study the Landscape Code to identify alternative requirements for tree plantings such as fee-in-lieu-of compliance and allowing more smaller-caliper trees.	Planning	Amendment									
	NR-4.1.2.	Support reforestation efforts in areas that have been cleared for development. This strategy can cut down on mowing, add aesthetic value to a neighborhood and add to community character.	Planning, Parks	Continuous									

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CF-1. Expand Park system. A healthy community includes a variety of parks and open spaces located within reasonable walking distance of residents.														
CF-1.1. Provide a park or usable open space within a 5 to 10 minute walk of every resident.	CF-1.1.1.	Include recreational amenity requirements in greenspace standards for new residential developments that are not within a 5 to 10 minute walk of an existing park or open space. See Action HN-1.5.2.	Parks	Amendment										
	CF-1.1.2.	Develop pocket parks where neighborhoods lack convenient access to parkland or useable openspace and along the Muddy Creek Greenway to help satisfy park needs, particularly at trailhead locations.	Parks											
	CF-1.1.3.	Ensure adequate resources are available to maintain parks as the system grows.	Council, Parks	Continuous										
CF-1.2. Continue to work with the school system to develop shared use facilities.	CF-1.2.1.	Establish regular and ongoing dialogue with the school system to determine the opportunity for shared facilities, programs, and needs.	Manager	Continuous, Communication										
	CF-1.2.2.	Work with school officials to collocate and place additional fields, hard courts and playgrounds on school property to serve the needs of adjacent families and residents.	Manager, Parks	Continuous, Communication										
CF-1.3. Continue to acquire additional park land as the City grows. Utilize strategies described under Goal NR-2 in Chapter 2 which include cluster development, acquisition/dedication of sensitive areas and development of a Green Infrastructure Plan, in addition to CV-1.3.1.	CF-1.3.1.	Support the Mason Parks Foundation in partnership with the private sector as a funding source for future parks.	Council, Manager, Parks, Business	Continuous										
CF-1.4. Continue to rely on developer contributions and private open space to off-set public demand for parks.	CF-1.4.1.	Consider increasing the 5% minimum greenspace set-aside requirement to 10% in the subdivision regulations and offer in-lieu-of fees.	Engineering	Amendment										
	CF-1.4.2.	Evaluate the City's park impact fee and increase if determined set fees are not commensurate with costs.	Council, Manager	Study										
CF-1.5. Develop benchmarks to guide sound parks and recreation decision making related to growth.	CF-1.5.1.	Establish a per capita park acreage benchmark.	Council, Manager, Parks											
CF-2. Provide more leisure opportunities for residents.														
CF-2.1. Develop urban, pedestrian-oriented parks that offer comfortable and interesting spaces to relax, stroll and socialize.	CF-2.1.1.	Work with local residents, businesses and merchants to identify strategic areas to develop urban parks and plazas.	Planning, Parks	Communication										
	CF-2.1.2.	Develop public and private partnerships to fund the construction and maintenance of urban parks and plazas.	Council, Parks											
	CF-2.1.3.	Activate urban parks with adjacent mixed-use development and continuous programming.	Planning, Economic Development, Parks											
CF-2.2. Conduct a feasibility study to determine the need for an outdoor performing arts venue such as Frazee Pavilion, a community arts center, and a skate park and 50 meter pool.	CF-2.2.1.	Retain the services of a consultant to determine need, costs and financial feasibility of these facilities.	Council, Parks	Study										
CF-3. Preserve and enhance Mason's historic and cultural assets.														
CF-3.1. Maintain and enforce provisions of the Downtown Overlay District that preserve landmark historic buildings.	CF-3.1.1.	Provide technical assistance, low interest loans and grants for the preservation and rehabilitation of landmark historic buildings and structures.	Planning	Continuous										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CF-4. Support expansion of continuing and higher education opportunities in Mason.														
CF-4.1. Work with Sinclair Community College, the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University, the University of Dayton, and Miami University to increase educational opportunities and degree programs in Mason.	CF-4.1.1.	Establish and maintain dialogues with university decision makers, aimed at exploring branch campus locations, partnerships with local schools and businesses and other means of increasing higher education opportunities.	Economic Development	Communication										
	CF-4.1.2.	Encourage higher education providers to share facilities.	Economic Development	Communication										
	CF-4.1.3.	Support transit linkages to facilities within Mason and outside Mason.	Economic Development											
	CF-4.1.4.	Enhance education-at-a-distance opportunities by improving home broadband access as part of the broadband plan discussed in Goal IF-1 in Chapter 5.	Economic Development											
CF-4.2. Offer Mason High School and the Community Center as classrooms for higher education.	CF-4.2.1.	Work cooperatively with the School District to share facilities and programs.	Economic Development, School District	Communication										
CF-5. Promote a vibrant arts and cultural presence in Mason.														
CF-5.1. Promote public art including sculptures and painting in public places.	CF-5.1.1.	Support the arts with resources such as funding, meeting or exhibit space and equipment.	Council	Continuous										
	CF-5.1.2.	Consider an Art fund for public art.	Council											
CF-5.2. Promote the Community Core as a focal point for the arts.	CF-5.2.1.	Consider local talent sources when appointing artists. This will encourage artists to reside in Mason.	Manager	Continuous										
	CF-5.2.2.	Encourage the development of artists lofts, studio and gallery space.	Planning, Engineering, Economic Development											
	CF-5.2.3.	Allow art in the downtown to reinforce its identity and sense of place.	Planning											
	CF-5.2.4.	Incorporate an outdoor performing arts facility in the downtown that can be used for theatrical and musical performances. See CF-2.2 to determine feasibility.	Parks, Engineering	Construction										
CF-5.3. Develop a system of wayside exhibits and interpretive panels in key locations through the City.	CF-5.3.1.	Inventory historic people, places and events as well as significant natural resources to identify content and location for interpretive panels.	Planning, Engineering, Parks											
	CF-5.3.2.	Develop wayfinding and interpretive sign guidelines and regulations. Integrate the signage with the system of districts established as part of Goal ED-5 in Chapter 4.	Planning, Parks											
CF-5.4. Continue to support the Mason Arts Festival, Heritage Festival, and Red Rhythm and Boom.	CF-5.4.1.	Seek corporate sponsors and offer naming rights for large events to help offset costs to the city.	Manager, Parks	Continuous										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
CF-6. Maintain and enhance public safety and emergency response levels of service to support community growth.														
CF-6.1. Establish new Fire and Police stations to service growth areas.	CF-6.1.1.	Establish a third fire station to improve the level of service and meet future growth needs or rely on mutual aid if adequate service levels are achievable.	Council, Fire	Construction										
	CF-6.1.2.	Encourage co-location of multiple public safety services where appropriate to utilize tax dollars efficiently.	Manager											
	CF-6.1.3.	Continuously monitor and evaluate staff, equipment and facility resources with respect to the volume, type and geography of calls for service as well as changing technology and socioeconomic conditions.	Manager	Continuous										
	CF-6.1.4.	Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles in public spaces and as part of landscape and site plan review in order promote a pedestrian-friendly community and to complement police services.	Planning, Parks, Engineering	Continuous, Communication										
CF-7. Maintain and enhance the quality of Mason's school system.														
CF-7.1. Continue to seek opportunities to partner with school to improve community facilities.	CF-7.1.1.	Continue to work with the School District to seek opportunities for co-location and shared use of City and School District facilities.	Manager	Continuous										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Party	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ED-1. Develop the I-71 corridor in Mason as a premier corporate address.														
ED-1.1. Preserve areas planned as Business Park along the I-71 corridor for corporate offices, high-tech uses and other businesses that create high-paying jobs.	ED-1.1.1.	Amend the Zoning Code to restrict the I-71 corridor for corporate office. Consider adopting an overlay district to establish guidelines for parking garages, taller buildings, mixed land use, circulation, stormwater and architectural controls.	Planning, Economic Development	Zoning Amendment										
	ED-1.1.2.	Pursue opportunities to acquire strategically located properties as they become available and as funding permits.	Council, Manager, Economic Development	Continuous										
	ED-1.1.3.	Utilize city-owned property to induce developers and corporate users to the I-71 corridor.	Council, Manager, Economic Development	Continuous										
ED-1.2. Improve access and circulation at the I-71 and Western Row gateway.	ED-1.2.1.	Work with state, county and regional governments to promote employment and long range development planning via a full interchange at I-71 and Western Row.	Council, Manager, Economic Development	Continuous										
	ED-1.2.2.	Watch for viable opportunities for a connection between Kings Mills Road and Western Row Road.	Engineering	Continuous										
	ED-1.2.3.	Look at alternative transportation options such as shuttles and people movers that connect corporate office buildings to shared parking lots, parking decks and support amenity uses.	Engineering	Continuous										
ED-1.3. Create a master planned, mixed-use (corporate-office) business park environment with support uses to catalyze development within an amenity rich district.	ED-1.3.1.	Develop an integrated network of pedestrian and bicycle paths that connects all uses within the I-71 corridor.	Engineering	Continuous										
	ED-1.3.2.	Study the feasibility of constructing a pedestrian connection across I-71.	Engineering											
	ED-1.3.3.	Integrate existing amenities, such as the Golf Center and Lindner Family Tennis Center, to create a truly unique corporate environment.	Economic Development, Planning	Thoughtful site design										
	ED-1.3.4.	Support amenity retail, retail services and hospitality uses integrated as part of a well thought out mixed use development to increase Mason's long-term sustainability and attractiveness.	Economic Development, Planning	Continuous										
ED-2. Attract light industrial businesses to the North State Route 741 Sub-Area and other areas planned as Light Industrial to maintain a diverse local economy.														
ED-2.1. Improve and actively market older industrially zoned properties and parks.	ED-2.1.1.	Include more information on each of the city's industrial parks on the Economic Development webpage.	Economic Development	Continuous										
	ED-2.1.2.	Improve industrial park visibility and identity by improving or adding entry features and signage.	Economic Development											
	ED-2.1.3.	Promote Mason's industrial property to site selection consultants and regional brokers. Ensure such professionals are aware of Mason's multiple industrial parks and their competitive advantages.	Economic Development	Continuous										
ED-2.2. Promote more flexible use arrangements in industrial parks to ensure older properties generate tax income and are properly maintained.	ED-2.2.1.	Review zoning and amend, if needed, to permit a broader mix of uses in industrial districts. Consult real estate experts as part of this action to ensure competitiveness within the region.	Economic Development, Planning	Zoning Amendment										
	ED-2.2.2.	Permit flex-office configurations. Flex-office demises larger buildings into several smaller spaces. Each space is demised to meet user-specific floor area needs for office, manufacturing and warehousing.	Economic Development, Planning	Zoning Amendment										
	ED-2.2.3.	Promote vacant buildings to area incubators. Incubators are a great way to grow new business and create demand for space.	Economic Development	Continuous										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Party	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ED-3. Update and align economic development policies with performance related goals.														
ED-3.1. Make the use of incentives transparent and predictable - linked to performance.	ED-3.1.1.	Adopt minimum requirements (performance standards) for the use of incentives. Incentives should be linked to jobs created and wages provided (i.e. fiscal return) for office, retail and industrial uses.	Council, Manager, Economic Development											
	ED-3.1.2.	Enhance economic development webpage and collateral material to inform existing and perspective companies of minimum performance requirements and therw tie to incentives.	Economic Development											
ED-3.2. Ensure incentives are provided in return for adherence to Comprehensive Plan goals.	ED-3.2.1.	Utilize development agreements, where applicable, when incentives are offered to ensure projects are developed consistent with Comprehensive Plan goals.	Council, Manager, Economic Development, Planning	Continuous										
	ED-3.2.2.	Offer incentives in the I-71 Corridor only when users can adhere to the highest development standards consistent with a leading-edge corporate office environment.	Council, Manager, Economic Development	Continuous										
	ED-3.2.3.	Consider extending incentives to projects that meet job, industry and wage goals and also incorporate supportive mixed uses such as retail and services.	Council, Manager, Economic Development	Continuous										
ED-4. Grow Mason's family friendly tourism industry.														
ED-4-1 Develop and economic development based tourism strategy. The tourism industry in Mason is quite large but it has room to grow.	ED-4.1.1.	Work with the Warren County Convention and Visitors Bureau and/or tourism consultants to create a strategy aimed at increasing Mason as a Regional Tourism Center.	Economic Development											
ED-4.2. Promote entertainment and hospitality uses in the Kings Mills Sub-area (See Chapter 8 and Chapter 7, LU-17).	ED-4.2.1.	Ensure suitable acreage in the Kings Mills Sub-area (see Chapter 8) is preserved for a pedestrian and family friendly, mixed use lifestyle center.	Planning	Zoning Amendment										
	ED-4.2.2.	Work with property owners and developers to cooperatively establish a pedestrian-friendly hospitality, entertainment and retail district.	Economic Development											
ED-4.3 Grow Mason's sports and recreation themed cluster in the I-71 corridor.	ED-4.3.1.	Support the development of a regional sports event/tournament facility in or close to the Kings Mills Sub-area. Commission feasibility study.	Manager, Economic Development, CVB	Continuous, Study										
	ED-4.3.2.	Continue to support regional events and facilities including ATP Tennis Tournament, and Duramed Golf Tournament.	Council	Continuous										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Party	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ED-5. Brand and market Mason's unique districts.														
ED-5.1. Develop a unified system for creating and naming districts.	ED-5.1.1.	Identify districts or areas that have unique market appeal. The sports, recreation and entertainment clusters located in the I-71 corridor is an obvious example. Downtown is another.	Economic Development, Planning											
ED-5.2. Develop a branding strategy for each district (see Map 4.3A) that provides a positive image for the district and the community as a whole.	ED-5.2.1.	Assess the needs of the potential target audiences (i.e. developers, businesses, residents and visitors) and the market for planned land uses in each district and develop a branding theme pursuant to this assessment.	Economic Development, Planning	Study										
	ED-5.2.2.	Develop marketing materials based on the branding themes that are aimed at attracting developers and businesses to each district.	Economic Development	Communication										
	ED-5.2.3.	Identify synergies between districts and co-market. An example is the development of restaurant and entertainment uses in the Community Core to serve visitors to Kings Island and the Lindner Tennis Center.	Economic Development											
	ED-5.2.4.	Study the feasibility of linking Mason's districts and notable tourist attractions via a supportive transportation system.	Engineering	Study										
	ED-5.2.5.	Develop district branded marketing material that includes maps, attractions and events. Place these items on-line, in hotels and restaurants, etc.	Economic Development	Communication										
	ED-5.2.6.	Enhance the streetscape and gateways in each district so as to reflect the established theme and provide stronger physical connections to other districts. Include wayfinding elements that direct motorists and pedestrians to key destinations. See CF-5.1.3, CF-5.1.5 and ED-7.	Planning, Engineering	Construction										
ED-6. Continue to grow and diversify the local economy.														
ED-6.1 Encourage retention and expansion of existing Mason businesses.	ED-6.1.1.	Conduct "customer satisfaction" surveys of businesses who have recently been through the City's development review process and/or worked with ED department.	Economic Development											
	ED-6.1.2.	Work with the business community to identify changes to the zoning code and/or review process to facilitate business expansion.	Economic Development											
	ED-6.1.3.	Establish a mechanism for improved and regular communications between business leaders and city officials. Hold regularly scheduled meetings and ad-hoc meetings when necessary to discuss issues of mutual importance, to share needs and discuss pending policies and solicit feedback.	Economic Development	Continuous, Communication										
	ED-6.1.4.	Continue to refine economic development programs, incentives and policies for business retention and growth based on business feedback.	Council, Manager, Economic Development											
ED-6.2 Continue entrepreneurial approach towards economic development.	ED-6.2.1.	Use the Mason Port Authority to aid the development goals of the City by using creative financing and incentive resources.	Manager, Economic Development	Continuous										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Party	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ED-7. Maintain and enhance Mason's strong aesthetic image at key entrances and along thoroughfares. See CF-5.1.3.														
ED-7.1. Establish gateway enhancements to provide a greater sense of entry and arrival at key locations.	ED-7.1.1.	Incorporate entry style gateway signage at or close to important City entry points and use streetscaping and signage to signify arrival at important intersections.	Planning, Engineering	Construction										
	ED-7.1.2.	Promote denser, mixed use development at key intersections as planned in Chapter 7 Land Use, LU-19. This will create activity nodes, generate pedestrianism and add variety along corridors.	Economic Development, Planning	Continuous										
ED-7.2. Continue to enhance and extend landscape parkways with ornamental lighting and decorative features. This is a signature "Mason" placemaking element.	ED-7.2.1.	Consider a lighting and landscaping special assessment district to pay for or help offset costs.	Manager, Engineering	Study										
ED-8. Be a leader in small business growth.														
ED-8.1 Make Mason a small business community of choice.	ED-8.1.1.	Incorporate the importance of entrepreneur and small business development into economic development strategies.	Economic Development											
	ED-8.1.2.	Promote small business resources on the City's webpage.	Economic Development	Communication										
	ED-8.1.3.	Advertise the city's small business advocacy program and co-market with area chambers and Small Business Administration, etc.	Economic Development	Continuous, Communication										
	ED-8.1.4.	Review the Zoning Ordinance and amend to recognize increased telecommuting and home based business trends and practices.	Economic Development, Planning	Zoning Amendment										
	ED-8.1.5.	Consider adding live-work units as a permitted use type as explored in Chapter 2, HN-1.2 and Chapter 7, LU-11.3 and LU-15.3. These units promote small business development.	Economic Development, Planning	Zoning Amendment										
ED-8.2 Ensure the resources and infrastructure needed for small business success is in place.	ED-8.2.1.	Ensure a wide variety of flexible office spaces exist suitable for a variety of different sized small businesses located throughout the City. These office types generally offer shared administrative services and conference rooms.	Economic Development, Planning	Continuous										
	ED-8.2.2.	Work with area higher education service providers to meet entrepreneur and small business workforce development needs.	Economic Development	Continuous										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Party	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
IF-1. Improve Technology Infrastructure for Business Parks and neighborhoods.														
IF-1.1. Develop a plan to expand fiber-based broadband infrastructure in Mason and connect to the statewide fiber-optic network.	IF-1.1.1.	Form a task force, including City officials, service providers, and representatives of local businesses and higher education institutions to explore the expansion and/or improvement of fiber-optic infrastructure throughout the community.	Engineering, Economic Development	Study										
IF-1.2. Implement the broadband plan through requirements for easements and empty conduits with new development and through capital improvement projects.	IF-1.2.1.	Update Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to require empty conduit for future fiber-based broadband infrastructure.	Planning	Amendment										
	IF-1.2.2.	Assign a portion of the Capital Budget to development of "backbone" elements of the broadband infrastructure.	Engineering	Construction										
IF-2. Improve stormwater quality and maintenance throughout the City.														
IF-2.1. Modify building and zoning codes to promote Low-Impact Development (LID) practices such as bio-infiltration swales, rain gardens, xeriscaping or low-moisture landscape plantings (see Figure 5.3A).	F-2.1.1.	Educate development review officials about Low-Impact Development approaches.	Engineering, Planning	Communication										
	F-2.1.2.	Encourage reduced parking and driveway areas with regulatory changes such as parking maximums, "shadow" or land-banked parking, and narrower driveway width requirements. This action will complement the reduced local street widths recommended under Chapter 6, TR-2.1. (See Figure 5.3B)	Planning	Amendment										
	F-2.1.3.	Allow pervious pavement materials on driveways and parking lots.	Planning	Amendment										
	F-2.1.4.	Develop design guidelines for Integrated Management Practices and incorporate them into the site plan review process as an alternative to conventional stormwater management practices.	Engineering, Planning	Amendment										
	F-2.1.5.	Develop educational materials that instruct property owners on how to implement and maintain Low-Impact Development features such as bioswales and rain gardens.	Engineering, Planning	Communication										
	F-2.1.6.	Promote energy efficient and environmental design principles for sustainable development. (See NR-3.1)	Engineering, Planning	Continuous, Communication										
IF-2.2. Continue the development of regional detention basins in strategic locations.	IF-2.2.1.	Select site location for future regional detention that ties into the City's Green Infrastructure network (described in NR-2).	Engineering, Planning											
	IF-2.2.2.	Design future regional detention basins as aesthetic and recreational assets to the community. Integrate the basins with gateway or streetscape designs where applicable and connect the sites to the City's bicycle and pedestrian path network.	Engineering, Planning	Continuous										
IF-2.3. Incorporate current Ohio EPA standards for stormwater detention into existing stormwater regulations and detention basins in order to improve stormwater quality and facilitate detention basin maintenance.	IF-2.3.1.	Retrofit existing regional detention basins to include "forebays" and other Ohio EPA design requirements. (See Figure 5.3C)	Engineering											
	IF-2.3.2.	Update stormwater regulations to reflect current Ohio EPA requirements.	Engineering	Amendment										
IF-2.4. Restore and stabilize damaged floodplain areas as described in Chapter 2, NR-1.3.		No actions are assigned to this strategy.												

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Party	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
IF-3. Grow in a fiscally responsible manner.														
IF-3.1. Direct development to planned growth areas that have adequate sewer and water infrastructure.	IF-3.1.1.	Upgrade water and sewer lines as needed to facilitate development in priority growth and reinvestment areas - see sub-areas identified in Chapter 8.	Engineering	Construction										
	IF-3.1.2.	Modernize and maintain existing water and sewer lines in order to promote continued investment, infill and redevelopment in existing neighborhoods. Coordinate with strategies identified under Goal HN-1 in Chapter 1.	Engineering, Planning											
IF-3.2. Evaluate growth-related capital improvements and costs of services against anticipated economic returns for new projects and proposed annexations.	IF-3.2.1.	Use the OKI model or develop an interactive fiscal analysis tool that projects the future capital and operating costs and anticipated revenues of annexations, new development and infrastructure projects.	Manager, Finance, Engineering, Planning	Continuous										
	IF-3.2.2.	Explore opportunities for additional revenue streams such as user fees, agreements with adjacent jurisdictions and other solutions as needed.	Manager	Study										
IF-3.3. Consider adopting an adequate public facilities ordinance.	IF-3.3.1.	Require a determination by the City for planned development and site plan review applications that adequate water, wastewater, and roadway infrastructure and services are or will be in place when development occurs.	Planning	Amendment										
	IF-3.3.2.	Require developers to offset increased public costs when existing public infrastructure, facilities and services are inadequate to accommodate new demand.	Manager	Amendment										
IF-3.4 Account for true, long-term infrastructure costs in annual budgeting.	IF-3.4.1	Budget for long-term maintenance and replacement costs on an annual basis. Annual set asides will accumulate over time commensurate with anticipated maintenance and replacement costs.	Manager, Finance, Engineering,											
IF-4. Monitor future drinking water supply.														
IF-4.1. Work with Greater Cincinnati Water Works to estimate future water needs and secure adequate supply and pressure to meet the needs of future growth.	IF-4.1.1.	Evaluate the need to amend the City's contract with Greater Cincinnati Water Works to increase limits of water provided in the future.	Engineering											
IF-5. Improve floodplain, floodway and waterway maintenance.														
IF-5.1. Promote development of greenways and paths along the Muddy Creek and other riparian corridors as discussed under Strategy NR-2.2 in Chapter 2 and TR-1.2 in Chapter 6.		No action is associated with this strategy.												
IF-6. Monitor sanitary sewer treatment capacity.														
IF-6.1. Implement findings of City-wide Inflow/Infiltration Analysis by identifying and constructing remedial sewer projects in areas of high inflow and/or infiltration.	IF 6.1.1.	Prioritize projects that are in highly sensitive areas and ones that provide the best results for the cost.	Utilities, Engineering											
IF-6.2. Develop electronic Operation & Maintenance Manual with standardized procedures and computerized maintenance inventory system.		No action is associated with this strategy.	Utilities											
F-6.3. Update the Wastewater Master Plan to take into account newly developed and annexed areas.		No action is associated with this strategy.	Utilities, Planning	Study										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Party	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
IF-7. Upgrade sanitary sewer treatment capacity.														
IF-7.1. Complete planned expansion of Water Reclamation Plant timed to accommodate planned growth.	IF-7.1.1	Construct WRP expansion to support City growth and economic development efforts.	Council, Manager, Utilities	Construction										
IF-7.2. Examine existing lift stations	IF-7.2.1.	Upgrade existing lift station near the Beach Water Park to improve service and provide for future expansion of sewer system.	Engineering, Utilities	Construction										
	IF-7.2.2.	Eliminate existing Parkside lift station and provide for future system expansion by construction of a new gravity sewer in Bethany Road west of Mason-Montgomery Road.	Engineering, Utilities	Construction										
IF-8 Examine ways to provide cost effective secondary benefits of Water Reclamation Plant.														
IF-8.1. Prepare a feasibility study to turn the Water Reclamation Plant into a regional system.	IF - 8.1.1	Proactively contact area wastewater treatment facilities such as Warren County Water and Sewer, Butler County Water and Sewer, Cincinnati MSD, the City of Lebanon and the Village of South Lebanon to explore sharing of excess capacity.	Manager	Communication										
IF-8.2. Develop ways to use byproducts of Water Reclamation Plant.	IF-8.2.1.	Study re-use of effluent water.	Utilities	Study										
	IF-8.2.2.	Study re-use of bio solids as fertilizer for residential and agricultural uses.	Utilities	Study										
	IF-8.2.3.	Study re-use of bio solids as alternative energy source and/or production.	Utilities	Study										
	IF-8.2.4.	Construct facilities to treat and convey WRP effluent to Mason Sports Park for irrigation, replacing purchased water.	Engineering, Utilities	Construction										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TR-1. Encourage alternative methods of transportation.														
TR-1.1. Expand the City's bike path and sidewalk system in order to continue the City's progress toward creating a connected bike path and sidewalk system (see Map 6.3A)(coordinate efforts with Chapter 1, HN-1.5).	TR-1.1.1.	Require bike paths or fees-in-lieu of as part of future project approvals and as part roadway improvement projects along routes identified on Map 6.3A.	Engineering	Continuous										
	TR-1.1.2.	Require sidewalks with all new development and new or widened roadways.	Engineering	Continuous										
	TR-1.1.3.	Construct sidewalks where they do not exist on developed residential streets. Prioritize projects based on Thoroughfare Plan classification (i.e. Collectors have a higher priority than local streets).	Engineering											
	TR-1.1.4.	Encourage pedestrian access easements between dead-end streets and other nearby streets.	Planning	Amendment										
	TR-1.1.5.	Establish a non-motorized pathway gap development fund that is funded by grants, donations, and/or payments in lieu of requirements.	Council, Manager, Engineer											
	TR-1.1.6.	Evaluate and update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Way Master Plan as needed to address potential changes in priorities and resources since 2001. Incorporate Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies such as the proposed Muddy Creek Greenway.	Planning	Study										
	TR-1.1.7.	Encourage the provision of bike racks in multi-family and commercial developments.	Planning	Amendment										
	TR-1.1.8.	Build community support for pedestrian facilities by promoting an active lifestyle through recreational events and programs. Examples include community walks or running or biking races.	Parks	Continuous										
	TR-1.1.9.	Construct a pedestrian bridge across I-71, connecting the Lindner Tennis Center with Kings Island.	Engineering	Construction										
TR-1.2. Use green infrastructure such as stream corridors as pedestrian routes.	TR-1.2.1.	Complete the Muddy Creek bike path as shown on Map 6.3A as greenway land is acquired or dedicated. Require trail segment construction or fees-in-lieu with new development on properties that include portions of the greenway, while using capital improvement funds or grants for remaining portions.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-1.2.2.	Construct a bike path and greenway along the stream extending from the Lindner Tennis Center and Kings Mills Sub-Area to the Muddy Creek bike path, using the same implementation strategy as Action TR-1.2.1.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-1.2.3.	Connect downtown to neighborhoods, parks, community center, planned Activity Nodes and the Little Miami Scenic Trail via the Muddy Creek Greenway.	Engineering, Planning	Study, Construction										
TR-1.3. Consider the development of a trolley loop that connects the Community Core Sub-Area to the Kings Mills Sub-Area and Kings Island. (see ED-5.2.5)	TR-1.3.1.	Explore feasibility, funding options and potential partners such as the Southwestern Ohio Transit Authority, Warren County Transit Services and Kings Island.	Engineering, Planning, Economic Development	Study										
TR-1.4. Politically support rail connectivity from Mason to downtown Cincinnati.	TR-1.4.1.	Work with OKI and other jurisdictions along I-71 to re-establish the I-71 light rail corridor as a priority in OKI's Long Range Regional Transportation Plan.	Engineering, Planning, Economic Development	Continuous										
	TR-1.4.2.	Work with OKI and other jurisdictions to establish a commuter line with a station in Downtown Mason on the I&O Railroad. There is a 3 mile gap of track that needs restored starting at Mason's southern border.	Engineering, Planning, Economic Development	Communication, Study										
	TR-1.4.3.	Work with SORTA and Warren County to establish transit connections with Ohio 3C Passenger Rail Station in Sharonville.	Engineering, Planning, Economic Development	Communication, Study										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TR-2. Strive for pedestrian friendly, "Complete Streets".														
TR-2.1. Amend subdivision regulations to promote Complete Streets concepts.	TR-2.1.1.	Consider reducing minimum local residential street widths and curb return radii.	Engineering, Planning	Study, Amendment										
	TR-2.1.2.	Develop maximum-block-length requirements for residential neighborhoods, with block ends defined by intersections, alleys or mid-block pedestrian paths.	Engineering, Planning	Amendment										
TR-2.2. Implement traffic calming measures in residential areas where appropriate.	TR-2.2.1.	Develop a traffic calming program for local streets (see case study in Figure 6.3B) where speeding, accidents and non-local traffic are concerns. See Figure 6.3A for examples of traffic calming measures.	Engineering, Planning	Study, Amendment										
	TR-2.2.2.	Encourage incorporation of traffic calming measures with new developments where appropriate.	Engineering, Planning	Continuous										
	TR-2.2.3.	Establish safe routes to school by identifying key walking routes as priorities for traffic calming and other pedestrian safety measures.	Engineering, Planning	Study										
TR-3. Reduce vehicle miles traveled in Mason.														
TR-3.1. Promote mixed use development at Activity Nodes (see Chapter 7, LU-19) to provide daily necessities at convenient locations.	TR-3.1.1.	Amend the zoning map and create new districts or overlay districts to promote mixed-use development in Activity Nodes as identified on the Future Land Use Map (Map 7.4A).	Planning	Amendment										
	TR-3.1.2.	Provide live/work opportunities at appropriate locations throughout the City as described under Goal HN-1 in Chapter 1 and Chapter 7 Land Use.	Planning	Amendment										
	TR-3.1.3.	Integrate young professional housing in new mixed-use and residential developments to increase the possibility of both living and working in Mason. Implement actions recommended under Goal HN-4 in Chapter 1.	Planning, Economic Development	Amendment										

Goals / Strategy	Action #	Action Description	Responsible Parties	Action Type	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TR-4. Provide a safe and efficient roadway system.														
TR-4.1. Upgrade existing roads that are performing poorly to meet Level of Service requirements. The following improvements increase roadway, intersection and interchange capacity by adding lanes and constructing alternative, parallel routes.	TR-4.1.1.	Support widening of Butler-Warren Rd between US 42 and Bethany Road.	Engineering	Continuous, Construction										
	TR-4.1.2.	Construct a full interchange at I-71 and Western Row Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.3.	Improve the I-71/Kings Mills Road interchange.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.4.	Support the widening of Mason-Montgomery Road between the Fields-Ertel Road and Socialville-Fosters Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.5.	Widen SR 741 between US 42 and Kings Mills Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.6.	Extend Financial Way east of Mason-Montgomery Road to Western Row Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.7.	Extend White Blossom Boulevard west to an extended Wilkins Boulevard.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.8.	Extend Wilkins Boulevard north to Financial Way and extend Financial Way northwest to Western Row Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.9.	Widen US-42 from Butler Warren Road to Tylersville Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.10.	Widen Kings Mills Road from US-42 to SR-741.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.11.	Extend Cox-Smith Road from SR-741 to Parkside Drive.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.12.	Implement intersection upgrades indicated on Map 6.3B in coordination with roadway widening projects.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.13.	Explore roundabouts as a potential upgrade for intersections (see Figure 6.3C for a description).	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.1.14.	Uphold access management policies to preserve roadway capacity, safety and efficiency.	Engineering	Continuous										
	TR-4.1.15.	Update the Thoroughfare Plan to reflect the changes indicated in Table 6.3.A.	Engineering	Amendment										
TR-4.2. Develop new roads or road connections and improve existing roads to support future growth and improve east/west and north/south connectivity.	TR-4.2.1.	Widen Mason Road from downtown to Butler-Warren Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.2.	Widen and connect Bethany Road and Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road between Butler-Warren Road and SR-48.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.3.	Construct a new roadway parallel to I-71 from Kings Island Drive near Western Row Road to Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road, with a connection to Fairway Drive.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.4.	Extend Kings Island Drive north to Columbia Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.5.	Construct a new Primary Collector from Western Row Road to Innovation Way.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.6.	Widen Mason-Montgomery Road from downtown to the northern boundary of Mason. Straighten the curve south of Brewer Road to improve safety and traffic movement.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.7.	Widen SR-741 from US-42 to the northern boundary of Mason.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.8.	Widen Kings Mills Road from I-71 to Parkside Drive.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.9.	Widen Columbia Road between Kings Mills Road and Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.10.	Widen US-42 north of downtown to the Mason Sports Park.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.11.	Extend Stone Ridge Drive east to Mason-Morrow-Millgrove Road and west to US-42.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.12.	Connect Bunnel Road and Brewer Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.13.	Connect Avalon Terrace, Windemere Way and Batsche Trails Boulevard to the Bunnel-Brewer Connector with new roadway extensions.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.2.14.	Construct a new Primary Collector parallel to Butler-Warren Road north of Bethany Road.	Engineering	Construction										
TR-4.3. Improve access and circulation in the Community Core.	TR-4.3.1.	Extend Foxfield Drive northeast to Kings Mills Road.	Engineering	Construction										
	TR-4.3.2.	Extend Foxfield Drive south to Tylersville Road. Consider a design treatment that mitigates cut through traffic. Some options include changing street names, restricting turning movements onto Kenwood Drive from Mason-Montgomery Road, and/or installing a cul-de-sac or creating a one-way street south of Tylersville Road.	Engineering	Construction										
TR-4.4. Prioritize transportation projects in-line with City land use and development goals.			Council, Manager, Engineer, Econ. Development											

Section 8.8. Implementation Strategies

This section provides a description of tools and techniques that the City can use to implement the recommendations of this plan.

Outreach and Marketing

Successful implementation requires widespread support. Implementation efforts will be aided by a deliberate campaign to inform stakeholders about the Plan. Residents should be made aware of the important opportunities and constraints that face the City.

Include Plan information in Mason Matters that specifically informs the reader on how to find more information on-line. Regular updates should be included in such publication.

Consider mailing the executive summary or the Future Land Use Map and Table to all addresses in Mason. Alternative, create a condensed brochure as a collateral piece that can be mailed and emailed.

Engage civic groups such as the Chamber to become active participants in the implementation process.

Network and inform retail consultants, developers and real estate brokers of Plan goals, priorities and opportunities.

Regulatory Updates

Update Mason's development policies and regulations to conform to Plan land use, development, transportation and infrastructure policies including:

- Stormwater regulations
- Subdivision regulations
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Way Master Plan
- Landscape and Street Tree Ordinance
- Transportation Thoroughfare Plan
- Downtown Master Plan
- Zoning Ordinance and Map

Zoning

Innovative zoning amendments to the city's current zoning code are needed to implement Plan land use and development regulations. Examples include provisions allowing a wider range of land uses permitted in the same zoning district, relaxation of building height restrictions, and shared and regional parking regulations.

1. **Overlay District.** An overlay district applies additional land use and design regulations on top of existing (underlying) zoning. The underlying zoning district regulations remain intact but they can be modified, added to or deleted by the overlay district. More restrictive architectural, landscape and site design standards could be incorporated in the overlay district. Places where an overlay district should be considered follows:

-The I-71 corridor between King Mills and Western row to promote a corporate office environment.

-Activity Nodes found at key intersections to promote urban design principles that support mixed use. Pedestrian friendly environments.

2. **Mixed Use Zoning.** The City could adopt a new zoning district or amend existing districts to permit a wider range of uses as well as mixed-use buildings. Mixed use zoning should include development standards that ensure compatible mixing of uses. Some communities offer performance-based zoning regulations that give bonuses or credits in return for performance of plan goals. Examples include granting density bonuses in return for the provision of additional open space or reduction of parking spaces required in a mixed use environment.

Mixed use zoning is appropriate along older corridors such as Reading Road where greater variety and visual interest is desired. Mixed use zoning can be used individually or in combination with overlay districts for use along corridors, at Activity Nodes and districts such as downtown.

3. **Form Based Code.** Many communities are turning to form based codes to simplify development

standards. Form based codes rely on graphics to convey community expectations for the built environment. This graphics based approach to zoning is easier to understand than reading zoning code text. Some initial reports claim that form based codes result in better developments because zoning standards are more readily understood. Form based codes are used when a specific development design and performance outcome is expected. In other words, form based codes leave less up to chance.

4. **Planned Unit Development (PUD).** Conventional zoning is often too rigid to meet master plan development goals. PUDs offer increased flexibility in return for increased design creativity and a better project than could be accomplished otherwise. Instead of establishing strict standards for development, PUDs establish a purpose, intent and broad guidelines that allow a community and the property owner to negotiate development standards.
5. **Low Impact Design.** Revise curb standards to permit gaps in curb or flat curb to allow overland flow of stormwater to bio-infiltration basins and ditches. Revise the Landscape and Street Tree Code to allow landscaped bio-infiltration ditches instead of mounded screening to collect, hold and filter rainfall.
6. **Alternative Energy.** Amend the Zoning Code Accessory Use section to ensure clear language is provided allowing, within limits, household scale and possibly community scale alternative energy devices such as wind turbines and solar arrays. Such uses could also be permitted as a principal or conditional use within individual zoning districts. Development standards regulating the size, design placement, location, screening and height of alternative energy equipment need to be added to the Zoning Code.
7. **Revise Height Limitations.** Height restrictions limit building, job and housing density. This was helpful when land was plentiful but such restrictions should be relaxed now that fewer development parcels remain. Some communities are eliminating height restrictions allowing the market to dictate building height in appropriate areas. Higher building height

allowances are needed in the I-71 corridor where land is planned as Business Park and in the downtown where higher density is desired.

8. **Sustainable Development Districts.** Create a Natural Features protection ordinance that provides additional guidelines on stream-side setbacks and the creation and preservation of green resource networks.

Finance

Intergovernmental Coordination

Many Plan recommendations have an impact beyond Mason's borders. Projects of regional significance require intergovernmental coordination and collaboration.

A full interchange at I-71 and Western Row Road is paramount to the success of Mason's and Warren County's ability to develop a leading class corporate office development. This development requisite will likely require the full collaboration and cooperation of the City of Mason and Warren County to accelerate planned improvements. This collaboration can be achieved through a united monetary and political policy. A unified front among local governments along with project stakeholders can influence funding priorities at regional, state and federal levels. Though collaboration is need, a project "champion" is often required to spearhead the effort such as Mason did in their bid to attract Luxottica's U.S. headquarters by improving essential infrastructure and providing an attractive and creative financing package.

Incentives and Inducements

The City's economic development programs provide a full array of incentives and inducements to attract targeted companies in targeted sectors. A new important step defined in this Plan is to identify minimum expectations for development performance in return for incentives. Having an agreed upon set of economic development tools in place as part of an overall economic development strategy will allow the City to market to perspective companies with confidence and disclosure.

Special Assessment (SA). A SA is an additional property tax that applies to a limited geographical area

and can be used to fund public improvement projects or ongoing public services that benefit the assessed properties. The assessment is charged by front foot of property, percentage of tax valuation, a proportion to the benefits received, or some combination thereof. Special assessment districts can be created voluntarily through a petition signed by property owners of at least 60% of the front footage or 75% of the area of real property within the proposed district. Alternatively, City Council can initiate an assessment without authorization of property owners. Voluntary special assessment districts can assess 100% of project costs to property owners, while involuntary (City-initiated) districts have legal limits on the assessment amounts.

The advantage of a SA is that it generates income for enhanced improvements and services in an area without relying on the City's General Fund. The disadvantage is that a special assessment increases the tax burden for property owners.

Special Improvement District (SID). A SID is similar to a special assessment in terms of the method of tax assessment and the potential uses of revenues. The difference is that a SID involves the creation of a non-profit organization with a Board of Directors that oversees the collection and spending of assessed revenues. Creation of a SID must be voluntary and requires the same petition as a special assessment district. A SID also requires the creation and approval by City Council of a plan for public services, improvements, and financing.

A SID has similar advantages and disadvantages of a special assessment district, but a SID permits property owners within the SID boundaries to control collection and spending of revenues.

Bonds. General obligation bonds are issued for a specific community projects and are paid off using property tax revenues. Revenue bonds are issued for construction of projects that generate revenues. Bonds are retired using income generated by the project.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF). A TIF district raises funds by capturing the incremental property tax from increases in property value over time. Existing property

tax collection and distribution is frozen at current levels, while the increment is diverted to a special fund that can be used for public infrastructure improvements. The City must create and oversee a TIF district through legislation and creation of the fund to receive TIF revenues.

The advantage of a TIF district is that it generates income without relying on the City's General Fund or increasing taxes for property owners. A disadvantage of TIF is that revenues are dependent on future property value increases and are difficult to predict unless a specific development project is underway in the district. Additionally, a TIF may divert future property tax increases from the City's General Fund, the School District, County agencies, and other recipients of property taxes.

Tax Abatement, Enterprise Zones, and Community Reinvestment Areas. These additional economic development tools may provide the City with opportunities for providing for nonresidential development in certain areas, and for utilizing certain income level conditions to meet qualifications. The City should explore the feasibility of tax abatement, enterprise zones, community reinvestment areas, and other financing programs for the purposes of facilitating implementation of this Plan.

Grants

Grants are a vital part to an overall implementation strategy. Numerous grant opportunities exist at the federal and state level. New opportunities become frequently available but often the window of opportunity is often short. Having an updated Plan is often necessary to obtain grants and at a minimum will prove helpful in this environment.

ODNR Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and NatureWorks Grant Programs. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources coordinates distribution of grants available for park development and land acquisition. The maximum grant for development varies from grant cycle to grant cycle. In the future, the City may wish to seek funding for acquisition of land principally for open space and natural resource preservation purposes.

Ohio Job Ready Sites Program. This grant is administered by the Ohio Department of Development. It is designed to make competitive sites “job” ready. Grantees are awarded money, up to \$3.5 million, to remove development obstacles. Eligible projects include utility extensions, road construction and new building construction. One more round of grants will be awarded in 2011 or 2012 unless the program is extended.

Clean Ohio Fund Grant Programs. Established following a Statewide referendum, the Clean Ohio Fund drives four programs coordinated by various State agencies and aimed at open space acquisition, brownfields redevelopment, farmland preservation, and the establishment of trails. Numerous opportunities exist within the City and should be explored to bring direct benefit to the City from the Clean Ohio Fund including the Muddy Creek Greenway extension.

Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21): In 2000, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) distributed more than \$15 million to over fifty (50) Ohio communities for a variety of transportation enhancement projects. This funding is provided through the TEA-21 landmark legislation, which was passed by Congress in 1998. TEA-21 requires each state to set aside ten (10) percent of their Surface Transportation Funds for Transportation Enhancement projects including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transportation beautification projects, and historic preservation projects.

Catalytic Development Organization

Mason’s Port Authority enjoys broad real estate and economic development related powers given to it by the Ohio Revised Code. As political subdivisions, port authorities are granted a number of powers that can foster economic development in local communities, benefiting both the community and local business. Port authorities possess the following powers:

- Acquiring Property to Facilitate Economic Development and Housing
- Receiving State and Federal Grants and Loans
- Exercising Powers on Behalf of Another Political Subdivision
- Issuing General Obligation Bonds
- Levying Voted Property Tax
- Engaging in Extraterritorial Activities

These powers can enhance, foster, aid, and promote Mason’s transportation, economic development, housing, recreation, education, and governmental operations. The Port Authority should be tasked with implementing some of the Plan’s strategic recommendations.

- Acquiring Property
- Issuing Revenue Bonds
- Facilitating Economic Development Transactions
- Exercising Eminent Domain Power