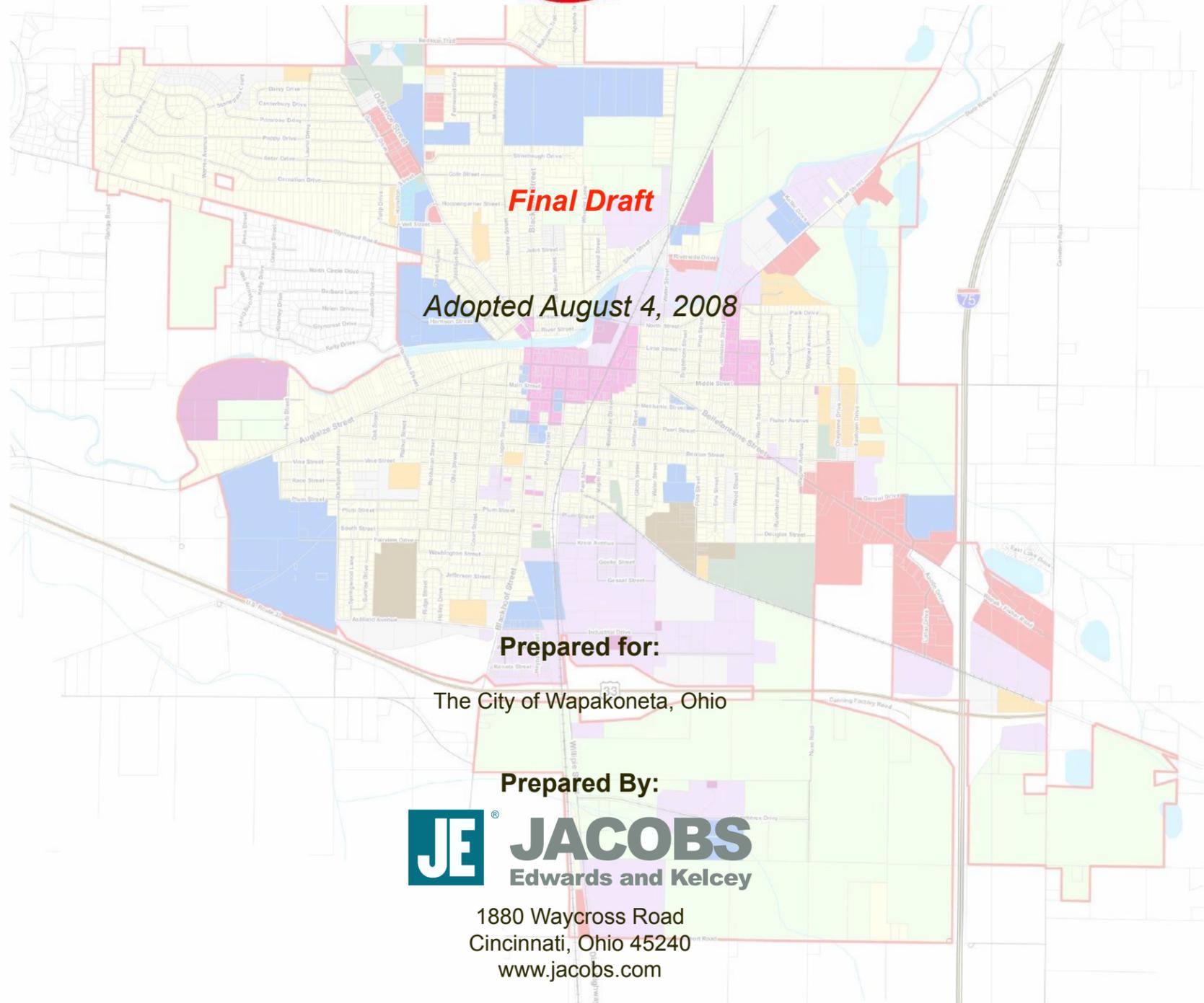


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★





Acknowledgements

Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee

Rachel Barber	Blaine Kohler	Charlotte Parsons	Judy Walter
Chad Doll	Mary Ann Kohlrieser	Eric Pfenning	Barbara Wibbeler
Laura Frame	Darla M. McCauley	Lucas Poppe	Katie Yinger
Alex Gondola	Greg Myers	Kelly Schattschneider	Bonnie Wurst
Rex A. Katterheinrich	Chris Niekamp	Mary Ruck	Deb Zwez
Denny Kemper	Dale F. Palmer	Ed Wallen	

City of Wapakoneta Council

The Hon. Donald Wittwer, Mayor (to Dec. 2007)	Donald Jump
The Hon. Rodney Metz (after December 2007)	James Neumeier
Rachel Barber (to Dec. 2007)	Ed Wallen (after Dec. 2007)
David Campbell	Stephen Walter
Dan Graf (after Dec. 2007)	Wilbur Wells
Steve Henderson (to Dec. 2007)	Bonnie Wurst
	Deb Zwez (to Dec 2007)

Jacobs Edwards and Kelcey Project Staff

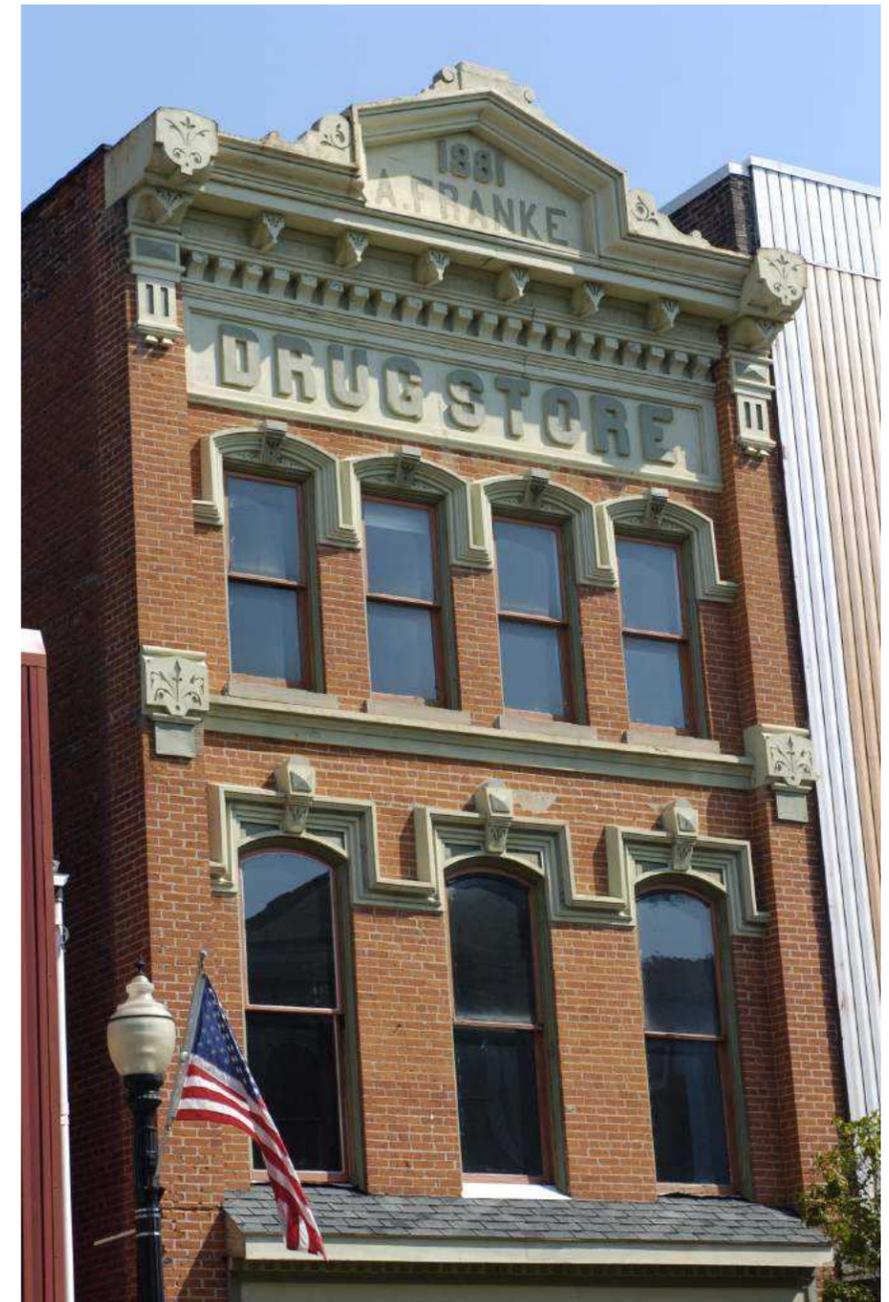
Della Rucker, AICP
Sarah Headlee
Mark Kirby, ASLA
Tamara Schlagbaum, ASLA
Paul Culter, AICP

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Existing Conditions	3
<i>Figure 1: Location and History of Development</i>	3
<i>Figure 2: Existing Land Use</i>	9
<i>Figure 3: Existing Zoning</i>	11
<i>Figure 4: Environmental Constraints</i>	13
<i>Figure 5: Existing Water Lines</i>	15
3. Concept Areas Analysis.....	17
<i>Figure 6: Draft Concept Areas</i>	21
4. Demographic and Economic Analysis	23
5. Selected Public Feedback.....	37
6. The Comprehensive Plan Vision	45
Plan Element #1: Economic Vitality.....	47
<i>Figure 7: Future Commercial</i>	57
Plan Element #2: Downtown Revitalization	59
<i>Figure 10:- Downtown Revitalization</i>	69
Plan Element #3: Enhance Residents’ Quality of Life.....	71
Plan Element #4: Improve and Upgrade Infrastructure.....	77
<i>Figure 11: Existing Thoroughfare</i>	83
<i>Figure 12: Infrastructure</i>	85
Plan Element #5: Improve City Land Use Regulations.....	87
The Implementation Matrix.....	91



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



1. Introduction

The City of Wapakoneta Comprehensive Plan was designed to help the City's officials, administration, residents and business operators develop a shared understanding of Wapakoneta's future needs and the best strategies for ensuring a successful future. Like many historic market center communities, Wapakoneta enjoys a number of assets, but it also faces a number of challenges, both today and into the future.

The City understood from the beginning that their Comprehensive Plan must achieve several goals:

- ◆ The Plan must be based on a clear-eyed, realistic evaluation of the City, including its assets, its challenges, its economic context and the likely impacts of these issues over the coming 20 years.
- ◆ The Plan must draw on the meaningful, active involvement of the widest range of the City's stakeholders possible, including its residents, its business operators, its elected officials and its own municipal staff.
- ◆ The Plan must develop a vivid statement of its Vision for its future - a statement that encapsulates the direction in which the City intends to grow.
- ◆ The Plan must design an ambitious but achievable program of improvements that will give the City the capacity and the methods for achieving that Vision.
- ◆ The Plan must lay the groundwork for its implementation by developing a specific plan of action for making its recommendations become reality.

This document reflects the best efforts of a large number of Wapakoneta residents, officials, business operators and others to meet these high goals.

Planning Process

The City of Wapakoneta Comprehensive Plan process began with the retention of Jacobs Edwards and Kelcey in late 2006 and the appointment of a Steering Committee that was designed to represent a broad cross-section of the community. The Steering Committee was developed from a pool of dedicated persons who applied to the Communication & Rules Committee of City Council. Nearly 30 people applied to serve on the Steering Committee, and 25 persons were selected. Members were selected to represent the broadest cross-section of City residents as possible, and ranged from retired professionals to high school students.

The Plan process was guided through regular meetings between JEK staff and the Steering Committee throughout 2007 and early 2008. The Steering Committee was responsible for reviewing the community's existing conditions, formulating the Plan Vision, and developing Plan elements that fit the community's needs. The Steering Committee met regularly for over 14 months and participated actively in the development or review of every aspect of this Plan.

The planning process involved several integral elements, which were based on professional best practices and the specific needs of the City. These included the following:

- ◆ Regular working meetings with the Steering Committee.
- ◆ Compilation and analysis of existing conditions data and projections, including demographic trends, market structure characteristics, transportation networks and environmentally-sensitive land areas.
- ◆ The creation, distribution and analysis of a community survey, the first of its type conducted in Wapakoneta. Over 5,000 surveys were distributed and more than 700 were returned, for an unusually high response rate of over 14%.
- ◆ The solicitation of detailed feedback from over 75 members of the community through one-on-one interviews, focus groups and a Public Vision Open House in April 2007.
- ◆ The development of a Vision statement that provides a clear policy foundation for the Plan's recommendations.

- ◆ The development of a number of recommendations organized around five thematic Plan Elements, which include economic development, downtown revitalization, quality of life maintenance and improvements, infrastructure improvements and land use regulations. Each of these Plan Elements is derived directly from the Vision and earlier feedback, and is specifically designed to meet one or more of the Vision's statements.
- ◆ The development of an Implementation Matrix that provides recommended priorities, timeframes, partners and funding opportunities for specific recommendations.

The creation of a draft and final Comprehensive Plan document that presents the final versions of these elements, as reviewed and revised by the Steering Committee.

A Final Word

A Comprehensive Plan is critical to a community's success because it facilitates a coordinated effort to realize the community's potential. However, a Comprehensive Plan document alone does not make success happen.

A Comprehensive Plan is a tool - it helps the community organize its needs and decide on its actions, and it can lay the groundwork for making great things happen. But no Comprehensive Plan alone can create a better community. Wapakoneta residents have demonstrated through this process that they understand the hard work necessary to make their community the place they want it to be, and it is hoped that this Plan will help organize and channel the initiatives that their energy will carry forward. Plans are successful if they give people a strategy and direction to make something happen, but a Plan is worth little more than paper if the community's people do not use the plan to make the future they desire happen.

Wapakoneta will achieve its Vision if the full range of its stakeholders makes a consistent, long-term effort to make the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations become reality. Reaching that Vision is seldom easy, and there will be multiple frustrations. This process, however, has demonstrated that Wapakoneta is ready to work toward the Vision that its residents desire for their future. Maintain that commitment, and the Vision will become reality.



2. Existing Conditions

This chapter summarizes the existing characteristics of the City of Wapakoneta and surrounding areas at the time of this Plan's initiation. Existing Conditions analyses identify physical characteristics, such as existing land use and locations of natural features, as well as market characteristics, demographics and other factors that may impact the City over time. This information was used by the Steering Committee to guide the development of the Vision and the Plan Elements.

Some of the sections below contain a figure reference in the heading. The figures are generally provided at the end of that section.

Figure 1: Location and History of Development

The City of Wapakoneta is the county seat of Auglaize County, a relatively rural county in west central Ohio. A historic regional market center, Wapakoneta is largely surrounded by rural townships and separated from other nearby municipalities, such as the City of St. Marys and the Village of Cridersville, by distances of at least eight miles. The City of Wapakoneta is served by three interchanges with Interstate 75, a major national transportation route between Detroit, Michigan and Miami, Florida. These interchanges occur at U.S. Route 33, Bellefontaine Street and State Route 67. U.S. Route 33 crosses Wapakoneta in an east-west direction near the City's current southern border. The City's land development is organized around a hub-and-spoke system of historic-era routes that converge on the city center and downtown area, including Bellefontaine, Defiance, Blackhoof, and Water streets, among others. An east-west grid is overlaid on this older pattern.



With an estimated 2008 population of approximately 9,500 residents, Wapakoneta's development history contains many elements similar to other small western Ohio cities. Site of a major center of Miami and Shawnee Native American settlement during the 18th and early 19th centuries, the Shawnee Council House at the site of modern Wapakoneta hosted the signing of the Treaty with the Shawnee in 1831, which resulted in the removal of the remaining Native American nations from the State of Ohio. Wapakoneta's first plat was filed in 1833, Auglaize County was created in 1848, and the Village of Wapakoneta was incorporated in 1849. Between 1850 and 1880, Wapakoneta's population grew by 500%, reaching 2,800 residents by the 1880 Census.

The majority of this 19th century population growth derived from immigrants from German states, part of a massive exodus of ethnic Germans who arrived in the United States between 1850 and 1900 and populated most of the upper Midwestern states during that period. Persons who emigrated from German states during this era tended to be middle-class farmers, merchants and craftsmen with some financial resources, and as a result the Wapakoneta area developed a typical rural Midwestern settlement pattern of a small city surrounded by farming territory. Although Wapakoneta initially served as a market center for area's rural farmers, who both sold crops and livestock and bought goods and services in the city, the city gradually developed an industrial base as well. Industrial production generally began as small operations producing goods for the city's local market, but with the arrival of rail connections in the 1870s, Wapakoneta's manufacturers gained access to a much wider market area and developed the financial and technical capacity to ramp up their production. By the mid- 20th century, one account indicates that

Factories in Wapakoneta produced bricks, brooms, wooden handles, wagon wheels and spokes, horse-drawn carriages, wood furniture, cast iron goods, glass and bent wood butter churns, sheet steel toys, chrome steel furniture, cheese, soda pop, specially-hardened steel cutting blades, compressor parts, rubber pavement components, automotive parts and paper product packaging for distribution locally and throughout the world.¹

One source also claimed that Wapakoneta produced more butter churns than any other community in the United States during the late 19th and early 20th century.

As Wapakoneta continued to prosper in the years following World War II, the City's population continued to grow and several hundred acres were annexed for new commercial, industrial and residential development. With the construction of a new high school (now the Wapakoneta Middle School) on the City's north side, residential development accelerated in this area, while

¹ "History of Wapakoneta (or is it Wapaghkonnetta?)". www.wapakoneta.net/history. Accessed March 18, 2008.



the completion of Interstate 75 in the 1960s led to a boom in commercial development along Bellefontaine Street. However, changes in the regional and national economies in the last quarter of the 20th century limited Wapakoneta's opportunities for additional commercial and industrial growth, and the City lost several industrial employers and some commercial establishments during that period. By the beginning of the 21st century, a modest amount of new commercial and residential construction appeared to indicate an uptick in investment in the community. In 2006, Wapakoneta was the smallest community to receive a Jobs Ready Sites grant from the State of Ohio Department of Development, under a program designed to stimulate new industrial development by facilitating creation of new industrial sites.

Wapakoneta's current development patterns demonstrate much of this history. Wapakoneta's historic-era building stock is largely concentrated on the south side of the Auglaize River, with high-style 19th and 20th century homes lining West Auglaize Street (historically the City's primary entrance point, since it was on the road to the City of St. Marys), and generally more modest homes of the same period along several streets south of the downtown area, which is located along the Auglaize River's south bank. Another, more vernacular collection of older residences and businesses are located on the north bank of the river. The City's oldest industrial buildings occur generally along the river east of the central business district and south of the primary concentration of residential development, where some industrial properties are interspersed with residences in a manner common to 19th century industrial communities. Newer industrial development is generally concentrated further to the south, to the north and south of U.S. 33, and newer residential development generally occurs on the north side of the river, in proximity to two major community institutions: the public high school and the regional YMCA. The City's swimming pool and a major park are also located on the near north side of the river.

Commercial development, other than that in the downtown area, is mostly concentrated along Bellefontaine Street near the I-75 interchange. Several blocks of mid-20th century homes, along with the large and active Veterans Park, lie between the Bellefontaine commercial area and the largely late-19th/early 20th century residences southeast of the central business district. The northeastern quadrant of the city is not intensively developed, and this area includes a large amount of agricultural and recreational land, as well as a small amount of commercial development along Wood Street (State Route 67). Finally, a heavily-traveled rail line extends from the south-southwest to the northeast through the center of the City, providing rail access to industrial businesses on the south side of the city but creating traffic blockages in the city center.

Existing Land Use (Figure 2)

Land use, as the term is used in planning, refers to the primary activities that humans pursue on a given parcel of land. It is essential to note that an existing land use map is based on a categorization of current uses. Land use categories do not indicate either existing zoning or any planned future land use. Existing zoning for any given property may be entirely different from the existing land use; zoning only comes into effect when a property changes its land use through development, redevelopment or a change in use. Similarly, land uses that may be planned for the future do not necessarily reflect the existing land use.

Existing land use classifications are generally developed for each community, and the categories are designed to address City issues. Existing land uses for this Plan were developed from close analysis of aerial photographs and windshield surveys of sites. The following land uses are currently identified within the City, and the classifications used for this Plan are defined below.

- ◆ *Single Family Residential.* These parcels are occupied by single family residential buildings. In a small number of cases, a property with this designation may actually house two families, whether as a result of the building's original design or as a result of later alterations. In these areas, however, the functional and physical scale of the single-family residence dominates the area's character.
- ◆ *Multi-Family Residential.* These properties provide housing for more than two households, including both apartment buildings and group homes or assisted living facilities.
- ◆ *Mobile Home.* This designation applies to both mobile home parks (one property that rents space to multiple mobile homes) and to groups of mobile homes on individual sites.
- ◆ *Suburban Commercial.* This designation applies to parcels whose primary use is to sell goods and services. It includes all types of commercial businesses with the exception of the Downtown Commercial properties, which are described below.
- ◆ *Downtown Commercial.* Properties in the Downtown Commercial Classification have generally commercial land uses, but their site design characteristics and their location within the City differ from that of the Commercial properties. Downtown Commercial businesses have generally smaller parcels and exist in a more dense environment than Commercial existing land uses. Properties may be historic or non-historic, and they may or may not have on-site parking, yards or paved or landscaped areas surrounding the

buildings on the parcel. Downtown Commercial properties are similar, however, in that the density of their location creates heightened requirements for their successful future use.

- ◆ *Industrial.* Industrial existing land uses include all properties that appear to be engaged in the production, manufacturing, storing or shipping of products.
- ◆ *Office.* Properties placed in this classification include any that appear to provide professional for-profit services that are not physically part of a commercial establishment or an institution.
- ◆ *Institutional.* This classification includes public and private-sector facilities that provide a center of public activity. This includes churches, schools, government offices, recreational facilities that are not public parks, and the County Fairgrounds.
- ◆ *Utility.* This category includes a small number of properties that support the City's infrastructure needs, such as well fields, sanitary sewer facilities and electrical transformers.
- ◆ *Park and Recreation.* These properties provide public outdoor recreation facilities and preservation of natural resources.
- ◆ *Agriculture/Undeveloped.* Agriculture/Undeveloped properties have relatively large acreages and exhibit either no activity or evidence of agricultural activity (such as farmsteads and hedgerows). Most of these parcels are located near the City boundaries. This designation is not intended to imply that parcels that are being used for agriculture at this time are not valuable for their agricultural use, but only that these are relatively large sites with a low intensity of use at this time.
- ◆ *Vacant.* Vacant properties have no evidence of significant activity and are either too small or poorly located for agricultural use. This category does not include developed sites with vacant buildings, as those sites change frequently and cannot be reliably identified at this scale.

Existing Zoning (Figure 3)

Zoning is the primary mechanism used by local governments to regulate the types of land uses that are permitted, the manner in which those land uses are distributed throughout the community, and the manner in which new development can be constructed. While zoning is commonly a reactive tool (districts are typically changed upon the request of an applicant), zoning can be proactively used to implement the policies of a land use plan.

It is critical for any community to enforce an up-to-date set of zoning regulations that permit the community to implement plans and studies that guide their future. Communities with outdated regulations often find that they are put in the difficult position of denying a project that they desire, or accepting a project that they do not necessarily want.

A basic zoning district has two primary components: the types of land uses that can occur within the district, and the standards that a site's development must meet. Land uses can be *Permitted*, *Conditional* or *Accessory*. *Permitted* uses are allowable as of right, without any zoning review or approval. *Conditional* uses can be permitted if the appropriate zoning authority determines that a specific development would be acceptable. *Accessory* uses are permitted only when they are secondary to another use. Site standards generally address minimum parcel dimensions; height restrictions; the distance that must separate a building's walls from its parcel boundaries, and other similar characteristics. Most zoning codes also include a variety of other provisions that address such issues as parking and loading standards; grandfathering of pre-existing properties; signs and others. Codes can also include performance standards, which are statements that specify that an approved development must have certain criteria, such as not producing fumes, even if the proposed land use is a permitted use on that property.

The current City of Wapakoneta Zoning Code was largely developed in 1980 and has undergone limited modification since that time. Over the past 28 years, zoning codes in a large number of Ohio municipalities have also added other controls, including buffering and landscaping standards; clustering strategies to preserve open space; architectural design standards; overlay zones for specific design characteristics; and access management standards.

The existing Zoning Code establishes minimum standards for application throughout the City by means of Districts or Zones. The City of Wapakoneta currently has 11 Zoning Districts, which are summarized below. **This summary does not include all zoning requirements and should not be used in place of the official zoning code.**

- ◆ **A-1 Agricultural District.** Permitted uses are limited to single family dwellings, agricultural activities, water and wastewater treatment plants, government facilities and buildings, schools and colleges, public parks and recreational facilities, hospital and similar institutions. Permitted conditional uses include riding stables, cemeteries, country clubs and other recreational facilities. Home occupations are also permitted. Site standards permit any lot over 150 feet frontage, 40 feet setback, and side yards totaling at least 40 feet. The code includes a minimum lot area and minimum floor area per family, but does not impose any size or lot coverage restrictions on non-residential uses.
- ◆ **R-1 Suburban Residence District.** Permitted uses include only single-family dwellings. Conditional uses include offices or studios used by the resident, keeping no more than two roomers, customary home operations and bed and breakfasts. Both offices/studios and bed and breakfasts are subject to detailed restrictions. There are no permitted accessory uses (which would appear, on paper, to also eliminate sheds, detached garages and other accessory structures). Lots must have at least 80 feet frontage, 25 feet total side yards and a ten-foot rear yard.
- ◆ **R-2 Single-Family Residence District.** Permitted uses in this district include all of the uses permitted in the R-1 District, plus two-family homes provided that they comply with the site requirements. Lot requirements specify a frontage of at least 70 feet, side yards totaling 20 feet and a minimum rear yard of 8 feet. Minimum lot area per family is 7,500 for single family residences and 6,000 for two-family residences.
- ◆ **R-3 Single-Family Residence District.** Permitted uses in this district include all of the uses permitted in the R-1 and R-2 Districts. This district also permits conversion of single-family dwellings into two-family dwellings, provided that they meet the site requirements noted, as well as educational and religious institutions. Conditional uses include child care facilities. Lots must be at least 50 feet in width, with side yards totaling at least 10 feet and rear yards of at least five feet. This district also has different minimum lot areas per family based on whether the property is in one family or two family use.
- ◆ **R-4 Multiple Family District.** Permitted uses in this district include all of the uses permitted in the R-1, R-2 and R-3 District, plus “multifamily dwellings for any number of families or housekeeping units. Lot requirements specify a frontage of at least 50 feet, side yards totaling 20 feet and a minimum rear yard of 8 feet. Minimum lot area varies depending on the number of residences in the building; minimum floor area per family is 500 square feet.
- ◆ **R-5 Mobile Home District.** Permitted uses in this district include all of the uses permitted in the residential districts above, plus mobile homes on individual sites or in mobile home parks. Mobile homes are limited to this district, and are required to not have their wheels removed and not be fixed to the ground. R-5 lots must be at least 50 feet in width, with side yards totaling at least 10 feet and rear yards of at least 5 feet. Minimum floor area per family is 500 square feet.
- ◆ **B-1 Neighborhood Business District.** This district permits any of the uses found in the R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 districts, as well as a variety of small-scale retail and service businesses, such as retail bakeries, banks, repairs and dry cleaning. The district also permits service stations, parking lots, restaurants, vehicle sales establishments and a number of similar activities if they existing before zoning was implemented. No new uses in these categories are permitted. There are a variety of performance criteria designed to limit the scale of the operation, such as number of employees and horsepower of any machinery. Lot requirements are generally comparable to those of the R-4 above.
- ◆ **B-2 General Business District.** This district permits a very broad range of uses, including any of the uses found in the R-1, R-2, R-3, and R-4 districts; vehicle sales and repair; restaurants and entertainment establishments; repair facilities; laundries; wholesale businesses; warehousing; lumber yards; and billboards. Several uses have restrictions requiring buildings on the site to be located at a greater distance from a lot line that adjoins a residential district, and several uses are only permitted if they are entirely enclosed by a building or a solid fence. Lot requirements include a minimum 60 foot frontage, 40 foot depth of front yard, and total of 40 feet for the side yards.
- ◆ **B-3 Central Business District.** This district permits all of the uses identified in all of the districts above, with the exception of mobile homes, plus a small number of additional uses that include jewelry manufacturing and research and development. Lot requirements permit taller buildings with no setback and no other yards.
- ◆ **M-1 Industrial District.** This district permits a very broad range of uses, including any of the uses found in the B-1, B-2, B-3, and A-1 districts, wholesaling, offices, assembly plants, truck and rail terminals, printing, salvage and landfill, and building materials sales and supply. There are also a large number of conditional uses, most involving chemical processes and materials fabrication. New residences are prohibited, in addition to a number of potentially noxious or dangerous manufacturing or distilling activities. Several uses have restrictions requiring them to be located at a greater distance from any residential district, and uses must meet a performance standard prohibiting

objectionable impacts. Lot requirements include a minimum 100 foot frontage, 40 foot depth of front yard, and total of 20 feet side yards, which can be varied based on adjoining uses.

- ◆ *M-2 Industrial District.* The M-2 Industrial District is identical to the M-1 Industrial District, with the exception of requiring 50 foot frontage and no side or year yard requirements.

Environmental Constraints (Figure 4)

Figure 4 illustrates the location of floodways, flood plains, water bodies and wetlands. Such features are often referred to as environmental constraints because, in addition to providing natural character and important natural resources, they may limit the amount or type of development that is advisable in a specific location.

The Floodways and the 100-Year Flood Plains or Flood Fringes associated with the Auglaize River and its tributaries are very narrow and do not appear to significantly impact any developed areas within the current City boundaries, with the exception of a small area near the Wentz Street/Wood Street intersection. Officially-designated floodways and flood plains are established by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) based on hydrogeologic modeling. A floodway is the area adjacent to an open waterway that is subject to flooding when there is a significant rain, while a flood plain is an adjoining area that has some chance of experiencing flood conditions every year. Statistically, a 100-Year Flood Plain has a 1% chance of flooding in any given year (in many locations, properties in the 100 year flood plain may actually flood more often due to surrounding site development and stormwater management characteristics. Although areas outside of a Flood Plain can flood, Flood Plain designations provide the official basis for FEMA's determination of a property owners' eligibility for flood insurance. Figure 4 also identifies two wider Flood Plain areas outside the City to the east and west of the current City boundaries along the Auglaize River.

Existing Water Lines (Figure 5)

Figure 5 indicates that the entire City is served by 57 miles of City water lines, the water for which is drawn at this time from seven wells located in three well fields. One is located at Canning Factory Road and U.S. 33, another is located near the waste water treatment plant, and the third is located near the intersection of Harrison Street and the rail line. All well fields access a carbonate aquifer. Development of a new well field and treatment facility improvements are under consideration at this time. The City has adequate existing and anticipated water capacity to meet anticipated future water needs.





Other Utilities

In addition to City water, the City of Wapakoneta also provides sanitary sewer service to all areas of the City and maintains appropriate surplus capacity. The City's complete sanitary sewer system was in the process of being documented digitally at the time of this Plan's development, and reproducible maps of the system were not available at this time. The existing sewer plant was constructed in 1982 on Herbstree Street.

As in many mature cities, the City of Wapakoneta has older combined sewer/stormwater systems along many major streets and in some older neighborhoods, including the Benton and Water Street corridors. These systems, which were common in the late 19th to mid 20th centuries, allow stormwater runoff to enter the sanitary sewer system, which can result in overflows of untreated sewage when stormwater exceeds the system's sanitary processing capacity and sewage can also backup into buildings. Although the City is not under an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-mandated stormwater and sanitary sewer separation order at this time, the City is undertaking stormwater separation reconstruction efforts with every appropriate street reconstruction project. Newer City neighborhoods are generally served by separate storm sewer systems, although some areas on the outskirts of the City do not appear to be served by any stormwater system, including some older portions of the Ashland/Dearbaugh Avenue vicinity.

Wapakoneta is unique in that it owns and manages its own electric distribution system. Electrical power is purchased from American Municipal Power (AMP), but passes through City-owned transformers and transmission lines before reaching the City's power users. Power consumers pay the City for electrical use.

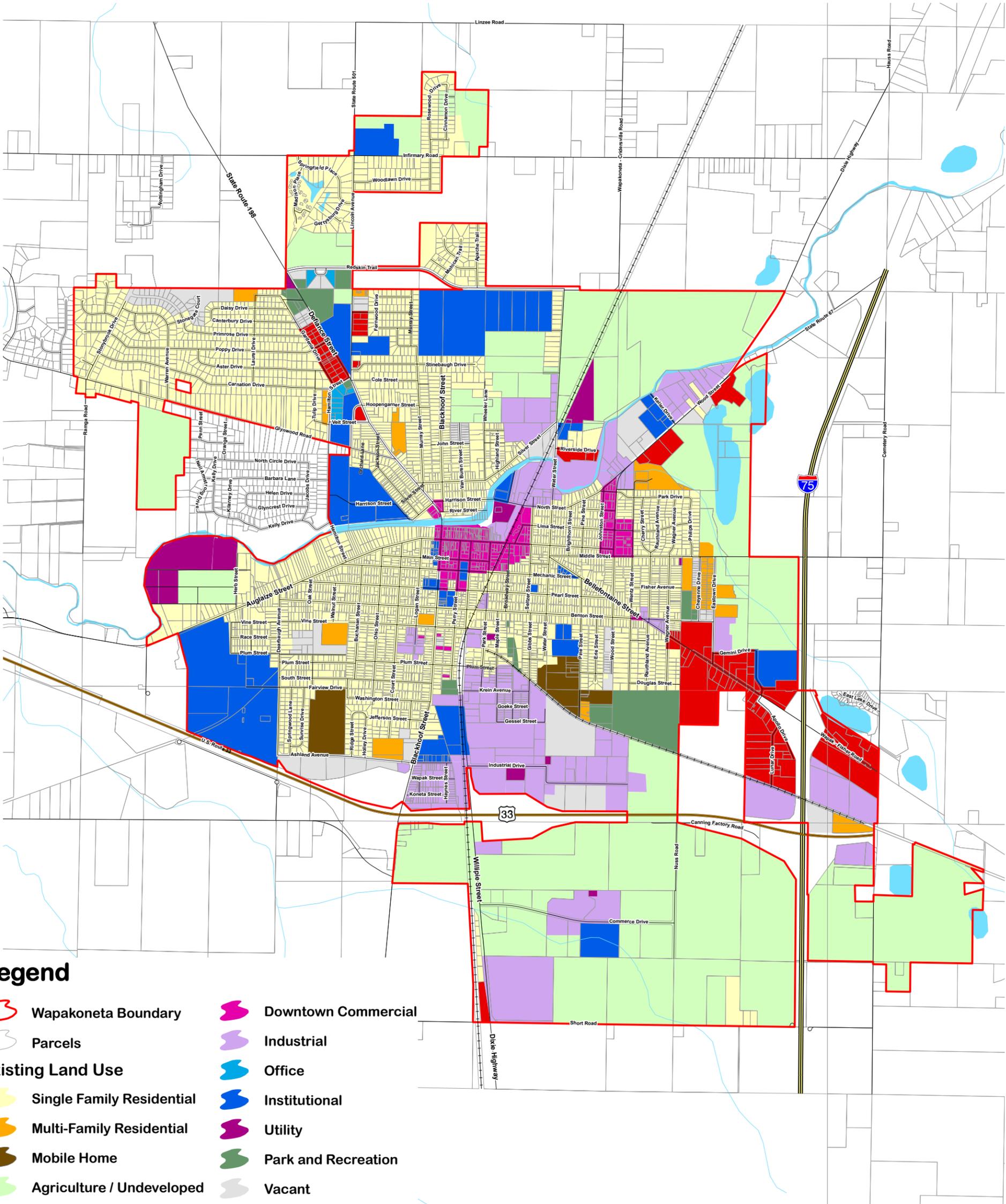
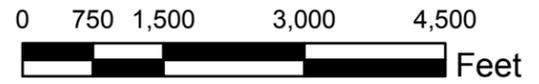
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★

Source: Auglaize County GIS Department / Windshield Survey



Legend

- Wapakoneta Boundary
- Parcels
- Downtown Commercial
- Industrial
- Office
- Institutional
- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Mobile Home
- Utility
- Park and Recreation
- Vacant
- Suburban Commercial

Existing Land Use

Figure 2



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



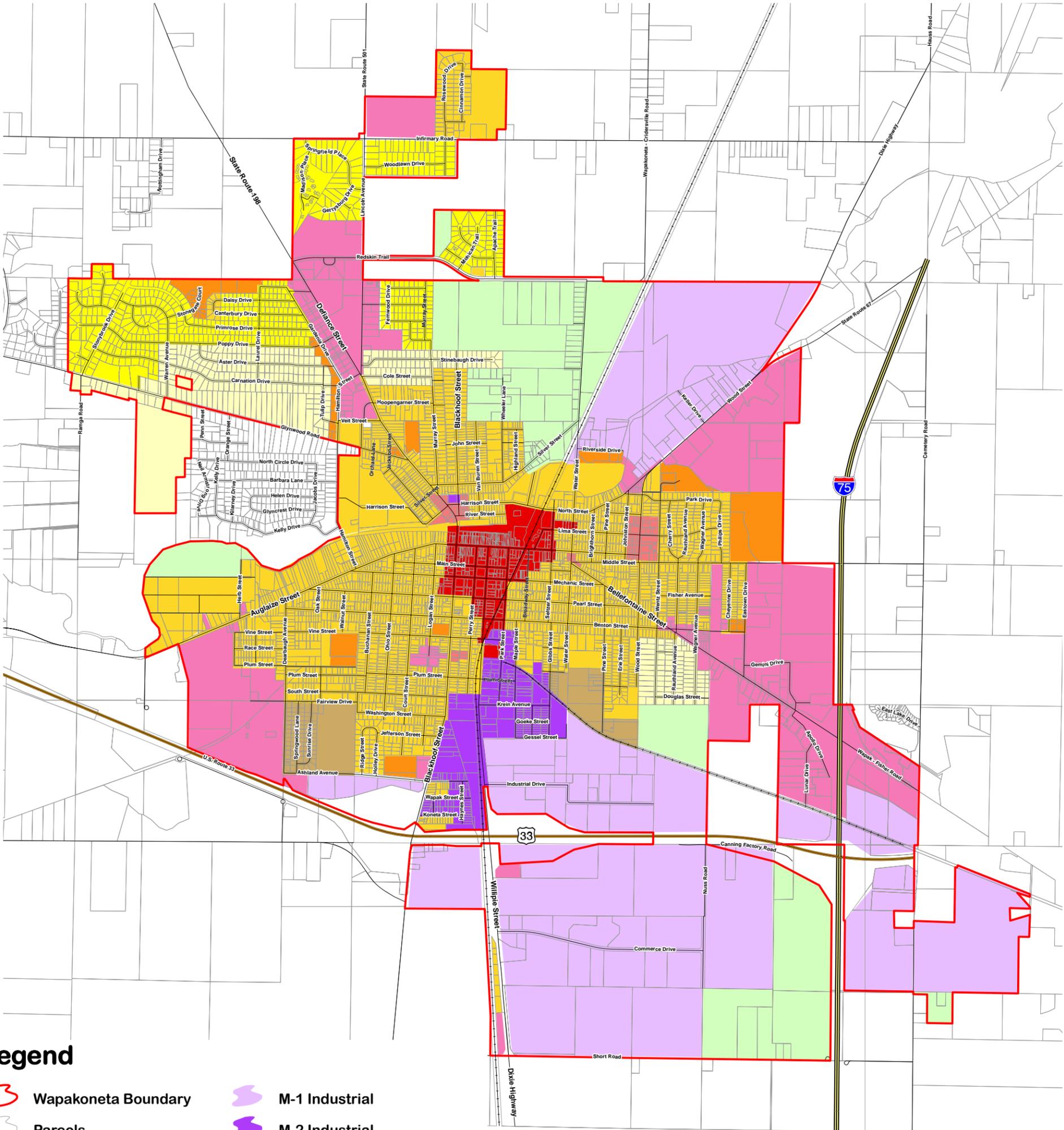
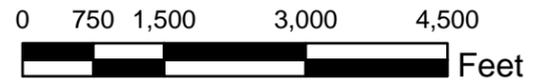
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★

Source: City of Wapakoneta



Legend

- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Wapakoneta Boundary | M-1 Industrial |
| Parcels | M-2 Industrial |
| Existing Zoning | R-1 Suburban Residence |
| A-1 Agricultural | R-2 Single Family Residence |
| B-1 Neighborhood District | R-3 Single Family Residence |
| B-2 General Business | R-4 Multiple Family Residence |
| B-3 Central Business | R-5 Mobile Home District |

Existing Zoning

Figure 3



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



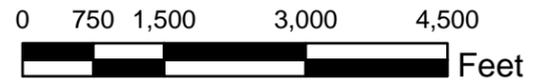
Auglaize County, OH ★

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

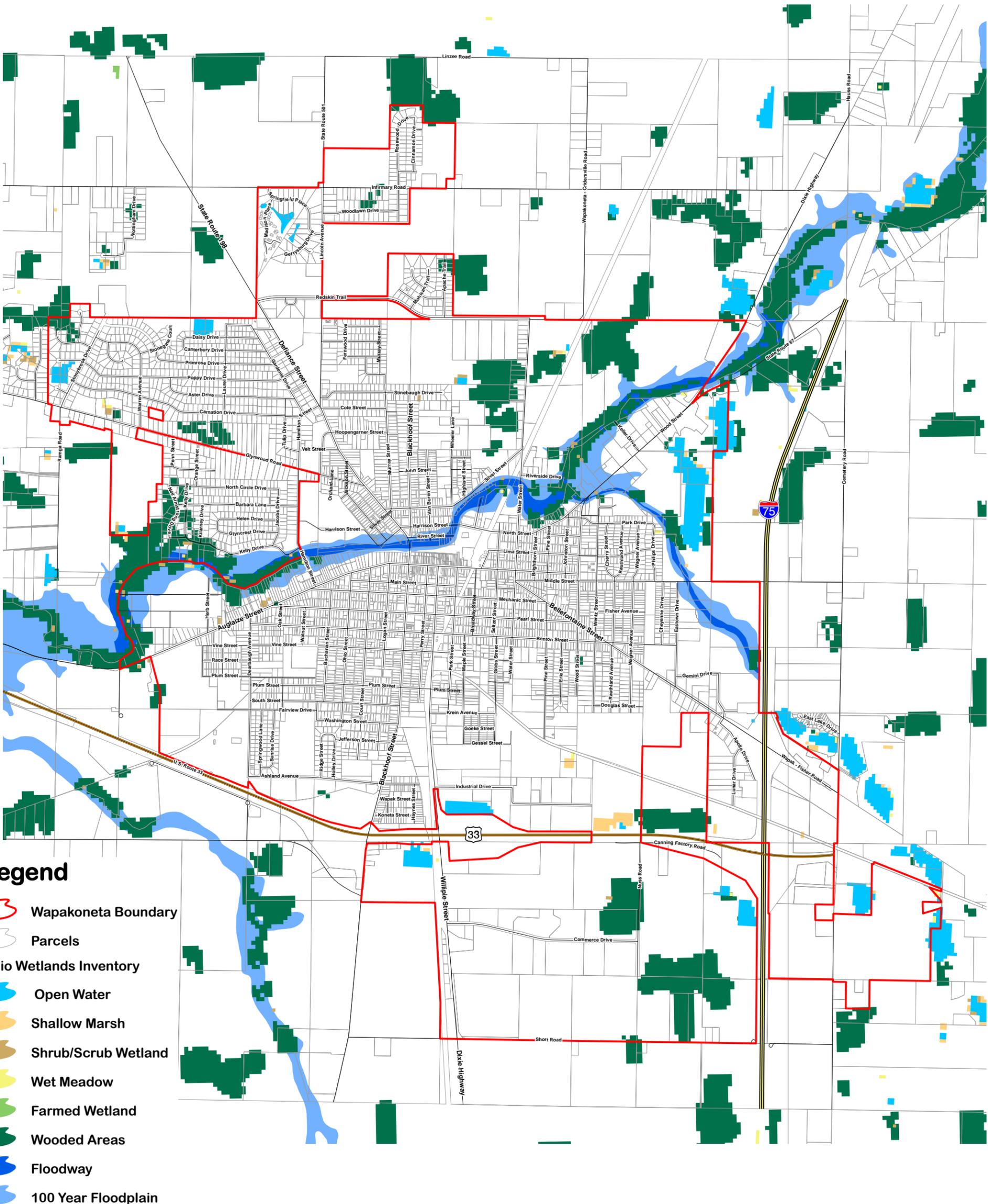
★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★



Source: Auglaize County GIS Department / ODNR



Legend

- Wapakoneta Boundary
- Parcels
- Ohio Wetlands Inventory**
- Open Water
- Shallow Marsh
- Shrub/Scrub Wetland
- Wet Meadow
- Farmed Wetland
- Wooded Areas
- Floodway
- 100 Year Floodplain

Environmental Constraints



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★

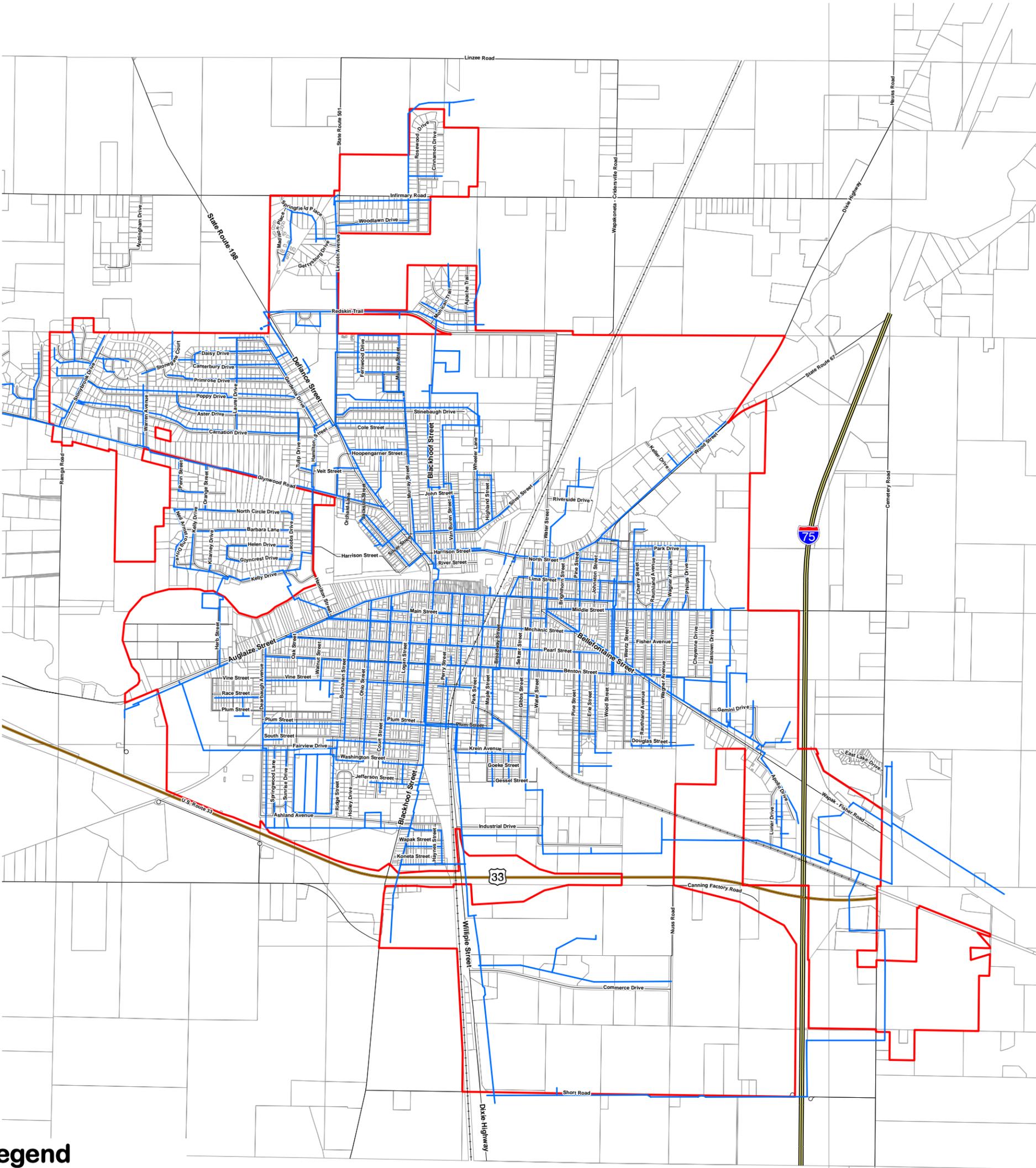
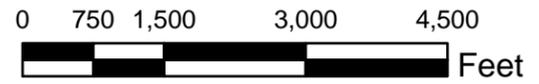
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★

Source: City of Wapakoneta



Legend

- Water Lines
- Wapakoneta Boundary
- Parcels

Existing Water Lines

Figure 5



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



3. Concept Areas Analysis

Like most communities, Wapakoneta is not a monolith, but includes a large number of separate areas that have different land uses, design characteristics, strengths, challenges and potential future needs. In February 2007, the Steering Committee identified 11 separate Concept Areas within the City and outlined the approximate boundaries of these Concept Areas. The Steering Committee also outlined some of the issues relating to these Concept Areas. An outline of their perceptions of the Concept Areas is provided below; the Concept Areas are also shown on Figure 6.

Industry South

Characteristics

- ◆ Large undeveloped industrial sites.
- ◆ Attractive properties - generally well maintained.
- ◆ Good roadway access.
- ◆ Does not encroach on residential neighborhoods.

Challenges

- ◆ There is a small amount of existing residential development that can lead to conflicts.
- ◆ There may be potential annexation issues in the area surrounding the Concept Area.
- ◆ Expansion will require annexation.
- ◆ Infrastructure may need to be upgraded and will need to be maintained.
- ◆ Environmental considerations must be anticipated, especially in new construction.
- ◆ High levels of capital investment needed.
- ◆ Area needs an end user.

Future

- ◆ This area should experience industrial growth.
- ◆ City needs to continue to enhance infrastructure.

Industry North

Characteristics

- ◆ Older buildings.
- ◆ Smaller lots.
- ◆ A diverse mix of uses.
- ◆ Properties that have mixed uses within them.
- ◆ Area has good rail access.

Challenges

- ◆ Buildings and sites often exhibit deferred maintenance and deterioration.
- ◆ Some building may be obsolete for their original or current uses.
- ◆ Truck access is difficult and causes aesthetic and environmental challenges.
- ◆ Area may be impacted by future annexation concerns.
- ◆ Presence of environmental contamination risks / remediation needs.

Future

- ◆ Continue industrial use, development and redevelopment.

Bellefontaine Entrance Corridor

Characteristics

- ◆ Area is known as “hamburger row” for predominance of fast food restaurants.
- ◆ Excellent I-75 access.
- ◆ Newer businesses.
- ◆ Auto-oriented development patterns.
- ◆ Lot sizes become much smaller as one moves toward the City center.
- ◆ Lots have irregular shapes.
- ◆ There is a diversity of businesses.

Challenges:

- ◆ A small but highly visible number of vacant buildings.
- ◆ Relatively poor pedestrian access.
- ◆ Traffic congestion - need to maintain and control traffic.
- ◆ Appearance of businesses is often less than desirable - buildings, sites, and signs.
- ◆ Potential land use conflicts, especially to northwest near Postwar Boom neighborhood.
- ◆ Appearance of street and streetscape is often poor, utilitarian and deteriorated.
- ◆ Some building may be obsolete for their original or current uses.
- ◆ There are a small number of vernacular historic era homes.
- ◆ Truck access can be difficult given number of intersections.
- ◆ Area includes some properties that may present annexation concerns.
- ◆ Environmental contamination risks / remediation needs.
- ◆ Zoning needs to be improved so that it does not look like Cable Road in Lima.

Future

- ◆ Continued planned development. Maximize land systematically.
- ◆ Find a good fit for future businesses.

Postwar Boom Neighborhood

Characteristics

- ◆ Proximity to Veterans Park and Bellefontaine Street shopping.
- ◆ Good I-75 access.

Challenges

- ◆ Increased businesses on Bellefontaine - more traffic.
- ◆ Zoning - management of land use conflicts.
- ◆ Street potholes/ street maintenance.
- ◆ There may be an increasing number of rental units.
- ◆ Houses are relatively small.
- ◆ Lots are relatively small.
- ◆ Some property owners appear to struggle with home maintenance.

Future

- ◆ Street improvements.
- ◆ Maintenance of homes.

West Auglaize Corridor

Characteristics

- ◆ Dominated by relatively high style historic era homes.
- ◆ Route is the major entryway to City from west.
- ◆ Neighborhood has proximity to the Auglaize River.
- ◆ Most properties have attractive landscaping, property maintenance.
- ◆ Neighborhood is close to Downtown, churches, institutions, etc.
- ◆ Tree-lined streets.
- ◆ Access to county fair grounds.

Challenges

- ◆ Important to maintain single family residences.
- ◆ Necessary to preserve architectural character.
- ◆ Upkeep/maintenance of streets must continue.

Future

- ◆ Street improvements.
- ◆ Maintain pride in homes.

Historic Downtown Wapakoneta

Characteristics

- ◆ Historic architecture.
- ◆ Listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- ◆ Diversity of small businesses.
- ◆ Attractive environment.
- ◆ Developed an antiques niche.
- ◆ Unique shopping experiences.
- ◆ Proximity of Auglaize River to downtown.

Challenge

- ◆ Underused buildings.
- ◆ Vacant storefronts.
- ◆ There is a common perception that there is not enough parking, although that might not be true.
- ◆ Need more mixed use activities.
- ◆ Back of downtown buildings has a poor appearance.
- ◆ Abandoned gas stations create eyesores and appearance of deterioration.

Future

- ◆ Maximize building use (all floors).
- ◆ More residences in downtown, esp. upper floor lofts.
- ◆ Develop mixed uses.
- ◆ Clean up entrances.
- ◆ Clean up back of building area.

River Town

Characteristics

- ◆ Older buildings.
- ◆ Mix of land uses.
- ◆ Small lots.
- ◆ Location of Harmon Park and the Swimming Pool.
- ◆ Location of the Middle School.
- ◆ Includes a significant amount of usable green space.
- ◆ Area enjoys attractive vistas and photogenic views of downtown.

Challenges

- ◆ Property maintenance is often poor.
- ◆ Street infrastructure needs significant work.
- ◆ Pedestrian access to the Auglaize River is limited.
- ◆ Flooding/Flood Plain limits development potential.
- ◆ River flow is stagnant at times.

Future

- ◆ Enhance riverfront for pedestrians/tourists.
- ◆ Improve aesthetics.
- ◆ Develop a River walk.
- ◆ Improve lighting.

Stinebaugh Neighborhood

Characteristics

- ◆ Mid- to late-20th century buildings.
- ◆ Mostly single family residential construction.
- ◆ Some apartment buildings east and west of Defiance Street south of City building.
- ◆ Location of Northridge Elementary School and a new elementary school to be built by 2010.
- ◆ Adjoins open land.

Challenges

- ◆ Property maintenance.
- ◆ Upgrading and maintaining street infrastructure.

Future

- ◆ Improve property maintenance

Flower Streets/New Neighborhoods

Characteristics

- ◆ Predominately post-1969 single family residential homes.
- ◆ Some undeveloped lots.

- ◆ Varying income levels.
- ◆ Some new construction.
- ◆ Next to open land.
- ◆ Has the largest number of higher end homes in City.

Challenges

- ◆ Pedestrian access is limited in some areas.
- ◆ Some houses are without basements - on slabs
- ◆ Storm drainage creates challenges
- ◆ Lack of sidewalks
- ◆ Houses in some locations do not represent the highest quality of construction.

Future

- ◆ Sidewalks.
- ◆ Improve sewers and storm drainage.

Northeast Wapakoneta

Characteristics

- ◆ Large areas of undeveloped land.
- ◆ Includes the State Route 67 Corridor.
- ◆ Includes the City's closed landfill.
- ◆ Minimal existing roadway access.
- ◆ Location of High School

Challenges

- ◆ Maintaining State Route 67 Corridor.
- ◆ Future land use.
- ◆ Future infrastructure & capacity.
- ◆ Reuse of landfill site.

Future

- ◆ Identify preferred land uses.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★

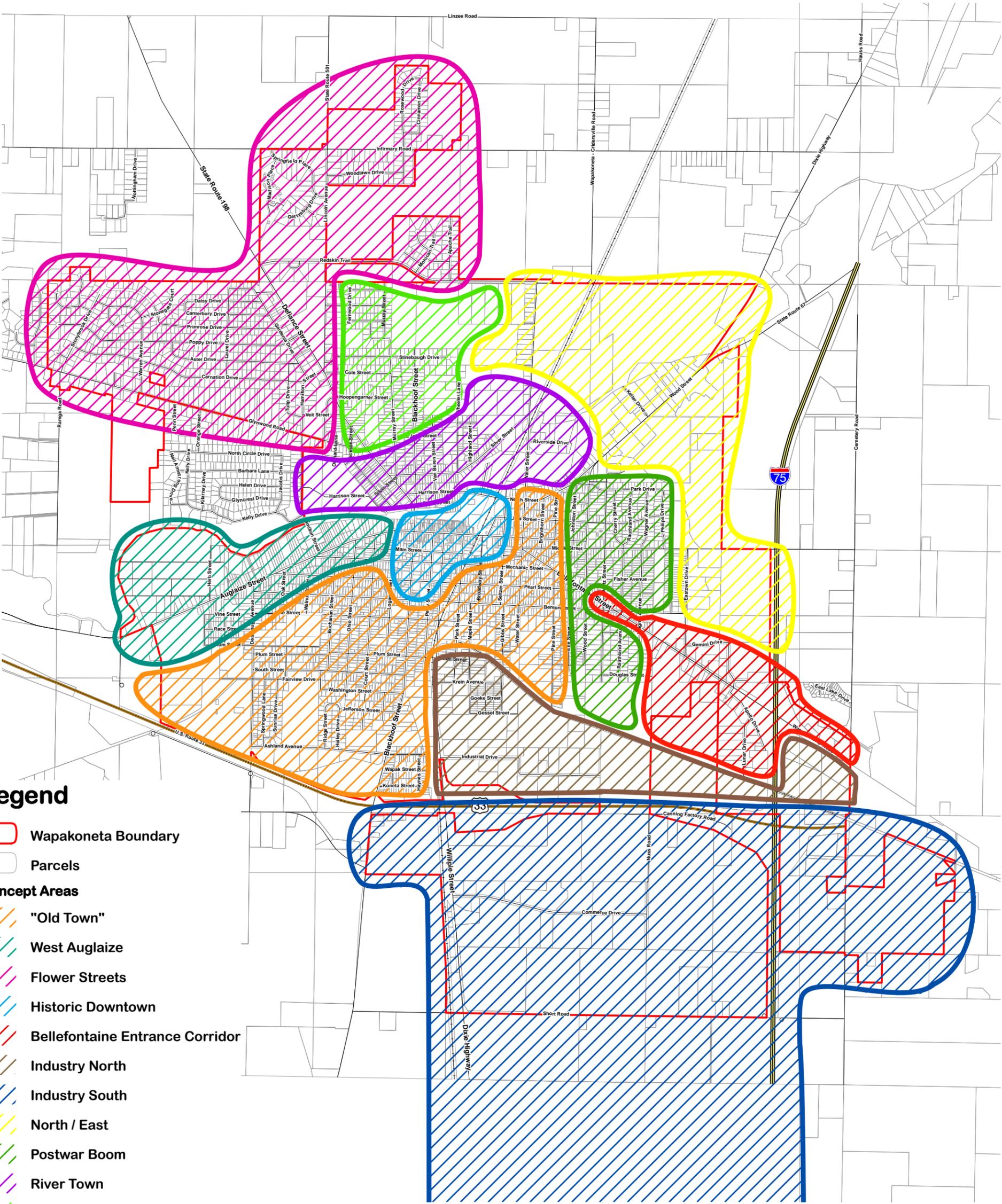
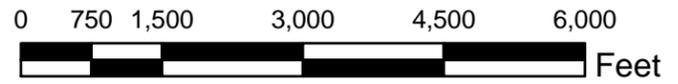


COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★



Legend

Wapakoneta Boundary

Parcels

Concept Areas

"Old Town"

West Auglaize

Flower Streets

Historic Downtown

Bellefontaine Entrance Corridor

Industry North

Industry South

North / East

Postwar Boom

River Town

Stinebaugh Neighborhood

Concept Areas

Figure 6



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



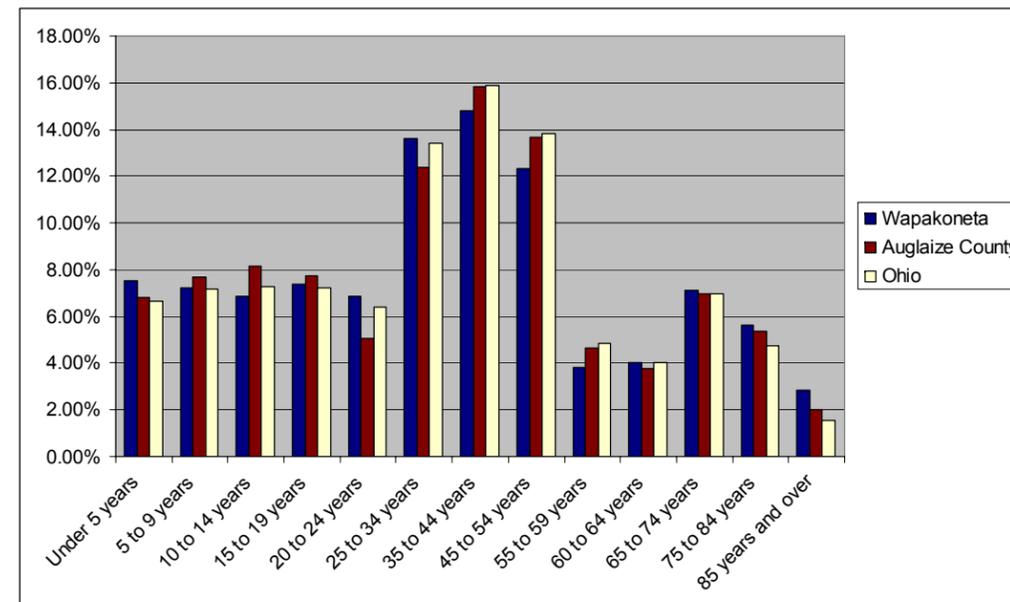
4. Demographic and Economic Analysis

Demographic Overview

Source for all data is the 2000 U.S. Census, Data File 3 and 4

Total Population and Age Distribution

This table and the chart below illustrate how Wapakoneta's total population in 2000 compared to Auglaize County and the State of Ohio. Wapakoneta's age distribution is generally comparable to the County and State, although Wapakoneta had a slightly higher proportion of young children and young adults.



	<i>number</i>	<i>percent of total</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>percent of total</i>	<i>number</i>	<i>percent of total</i>
Total population	9,474	-	46,611	-	11,353,140	-
Under 5 years	711	7.50%	3,164	6.79%	754,930	6.65%
5 to 9 years	684	7.22%	3,583	7.69%	816,346	7.19%
10 to 14 years	652	6.88%	3,805	8.16%	827,811	7.29%
15 to 19 years	698	7.37%	3,602	7.73%	816,868	7.20%
20 to 24 years	651	6.87%	2,350	5.04%	728,928	6.42%
25 to 34 years	1,289	13.61%	5,777	12.39%	1,519,894	13.39%
35 to 44 years	1,400	14.78%	7,373	15.82%	1,805,316	15.90%
45 to 54 years	1,169	12.34%	6,360	13.64%	1,566,384	13.80%
55 to 59 years	361	3.81%	2,154	4.62%	553,174	4.87%
60 to 64 years	381	4.02%	1,751	3.76%	455,732	4.01%
65 to 74 years	673	7.10%	3,253	6.98%	790,252	6.96%
75 to 84 years	535	5.65%	2,492	5.35%	540,709	4.76%
85 years and over	270	2.85%	947	2.03%	176,796	1.56%

Median age (years)	35.4	36.5	36.2
--------------------	------	------	------

Race (alone or in combination with one or more other races)*

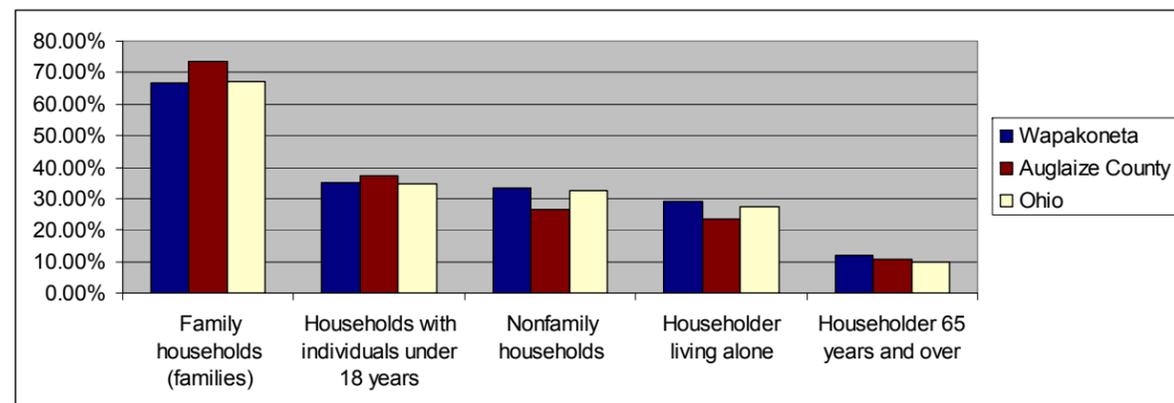
*Because some respondents claim multiple races, subtotals do not equal total population

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Total population	9,474	-	46,611	-	11,353,140	-
White	9,351	98.70%	46,110	98.93%	9,779,512	86.14%
Black or African American	33	0.35%	219	0.47%	1,372,501	12.09%
American Indian and Alaska Native	62	0.65%	265	0.57%	76,075	0.67%
Asian	55	0.58%	242	0.52%	159,776	1.41%
Some other race	50	0.53%	171	0.37%	135,655	1.19%
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	82	0.87%	310	0.67%	217,123	1.91%

Households by Type

Most of Wapakoneta's households consist of families (two or more persons related by marriage or birth). Approximately one-third of Wapakoneta's residents do not live in families, and the majority of these people live alone.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Total households	3,803	-	17,376	-	4,445,773	-
Family households (families)	2,539	66.76%	12,776	73.53%	2,993,023	67.32%
Households with individuals under 18 years	1,328	34.92%	6,449	37.11%	1,534,008	34.50%
Nonfamily households	1,264	33.24%	4,600	26.47%	1,452,750	32.68%
Householder living alone	1,099	28.90%	4,057	23.35%	1,215,614	27.34%
Householder 65 years and over	453	11.91%	1,831	10.54%	446,396	10.04%



Average household size	2.43 (X)	2.62 (X)	2.49 (X)
Average family size	2.99 (X)	3.11 (X)	3.04 (X)

Housing Occupancy & Vacancy

Most of Wapakoneta's housing stock was occupied in 2000. Approximately one-third of the City's housing stock was rental property in 2000, which is a smaller proportion than the State as a whole.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Total housing units	4,057	-	18,470	-	4,783,051	-
Occupied housing units	3,803	93.74%	17,376	94.08%	4,445,773	92.95%
Vacant housing units	254	6.26%	1,094	5.92%	337,278	7.05%

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Occupied housing units	3,803	-	17,376	-	4,445,773	-
Owner-occupied housing units	2,644	69.52%	13,536	77.90%	3,072,522	69.11%
Renter-occupied housing units	1,159	30.48%	3,840	22.10%	1,373,251	44.69%

Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	1.9 -	1.5 -	1.6 -
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	9.5 -	8.3 -	8.3 -

School Enrollment

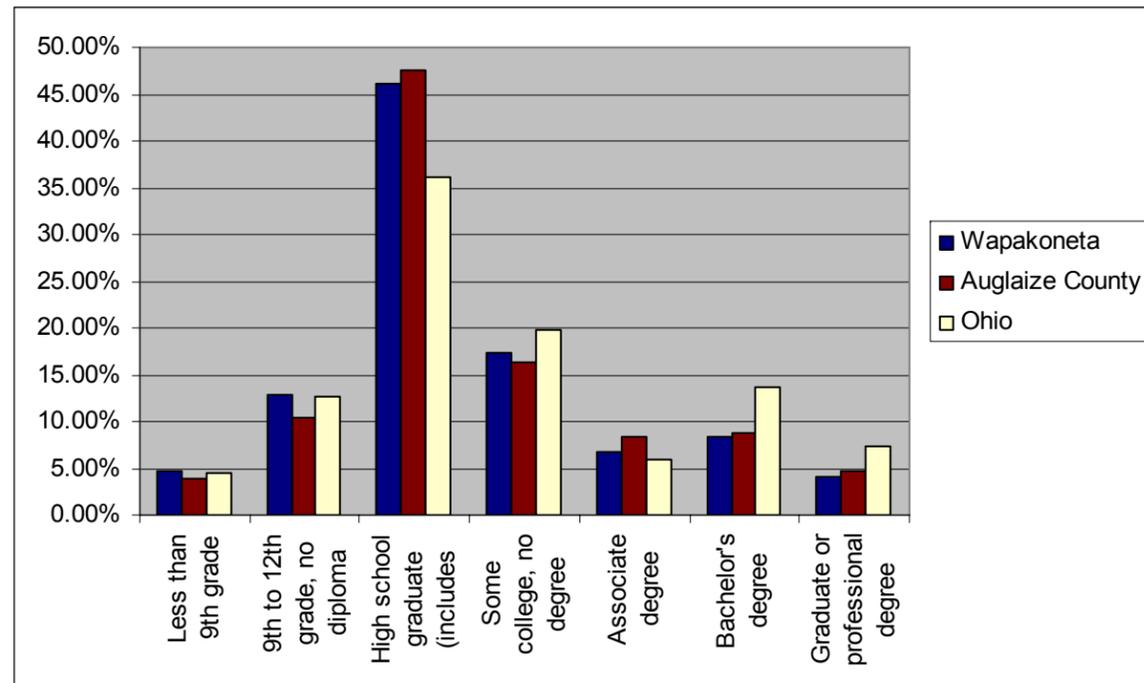
	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Population 3 years and over enrolled in school	2,256	-	12,239	-	3,014,460	-
Nursery school, preschool	170	7.54%	813	6.64%	204,086	6.77%
Kindergarten	114	5.05%	701	5.73%	163,537	5.43%
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	1,112	49.29%	6,100	49.84%	1,349,361	44.76%
High school (grades 9-12)	503	22.30%	3,076	25.13%	645,083	21.40%
College or graduate school	357	15.82%	1,549	12.66%	652,393	21.64%

Wapakoneta had a slightly higher proportion of persons enrolled in nursery school or preschool in 2000, as compared to the County and State. The City's proportion of persons enrolled in college or graduate school was more than the County's proportion and less than the percentage statewide.

Educational Attainment

Wapakoneta had a higher proportion of persons with high school diplomas in 2000 than in the State as a whole. The City also had a smaller proportion of persons who had completed bachelor's degrees than the State as a whole.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Population 25 years and over	6,151	-	30,093	-	7,411,740	-
Less than 9th grade	289	4.70%	1,160	3.85%	331,801	4.48%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	795	12.92%	3,151	10.47%	930,284	12.55%
High school graduate (includes equivalent)	2,833	46.06%	14,317	47.58%	2,674,551	36.09%
Some college, no degree	1,062	17.27%	4,912	16.32%	1,471,964	19.86%
Associate degree	410	6.67%	2,506	8.33%	439,608	5.93%
Bachelor's degree	515	8.37%	2,658	8.83%	1,016,256	13.71%
Graduate or professional degree	247	4.02%	1,389	4.62%	547,276	7.38%
Percent high school graduate or higher	82.4	-	85.7	-	83	-
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	12.4	-	13.4	-	21.1	-



Residence in 1995

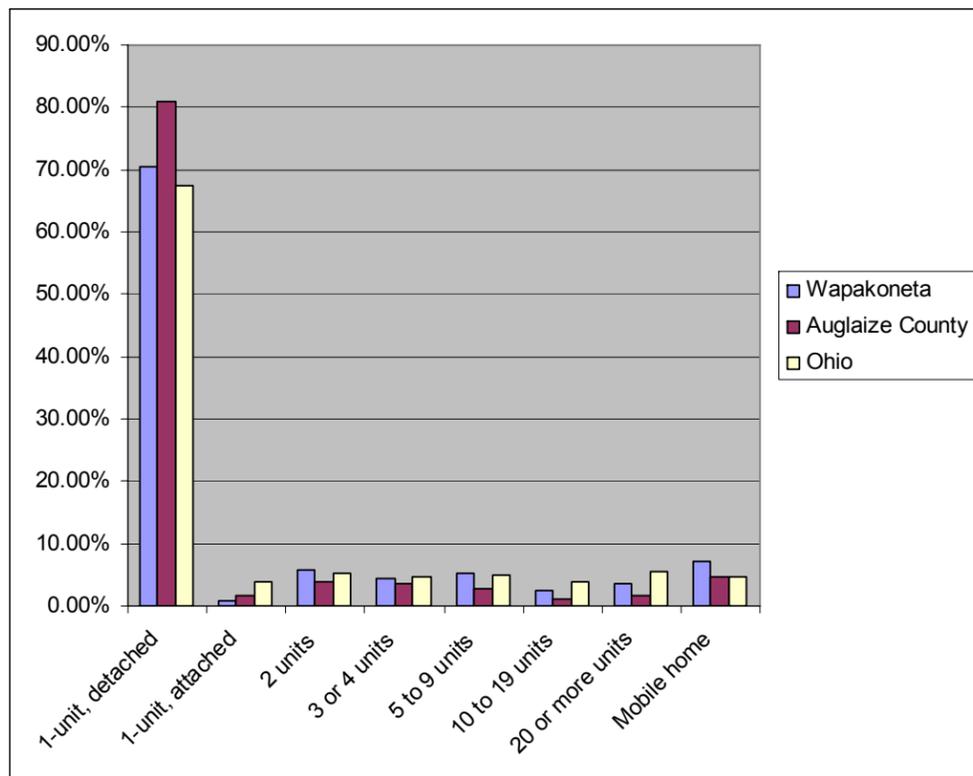
This table attempts to identify migration trends by identifying whether respondents lived in their existing home or elsewhere five years' previous to the Census. Wapakoneta's residents were about equally likely to have moved as to have stayed in the same house between 1995 and 2000, and the majority of those who moved came from another location within Auglaize County.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Population 5 years and over	8,755	-	43,498	-	10,599,968	-
Same house in 1995	4,561	52.10%	27,339	62.85%	6,095,656	57.51%
Different house in the U.S. in 1995	4,187	47.82%	15,938	36.64%	4,383,727	41.36%
<i>If different house in 1995...</i>						
Same county as present house	2,681	30.62%	9,807	22.55%	2,792,785	26.35%
Different county from present house	1,506	17.20%	6,131	14.09%	1,590,942	15.01%
<i>If different county in 1995...</i>						
Different County in same state as present	1,038	11.86%	4,709	10.83%	1,002,292	9.46%
Different State than present house	468	5.35%	1,422	3.27%	588,650	5.55%
Lived outside USA in 1995	7	0.08%	221	0.51%	120,585	1.14%

Housing Unit Type

The majority of Wapakoneta's housing units are in single-family detached homes. Wapakoneta has a somewhat higher proportion of mobile homes than the County as a whole.

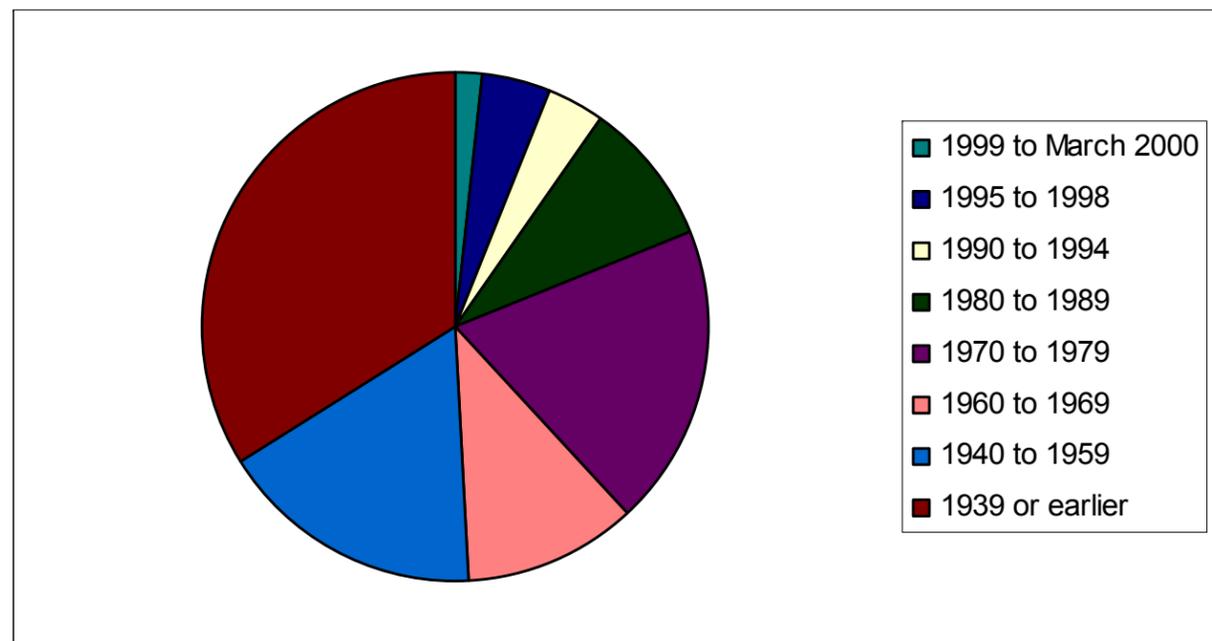
	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Total housing units	4,038	-	18,470	-	4,783,051	-
1-unit, detached	2,848	70.53%	14,949	80.94%	3,221,505	67.35%
1-unit, attached	37	0.92%	285	1.54%	183,922	3.85%
2 units	235	5.82%	702	3.80%	247,134	5.17%
3 or 4 units	174	4.31%	648	3.51%	228,116	4.77%
5 to 9 units	209	5.18%	502	2.72%	231,088	4.83%
10 to 19 units	102	2.53%	224	1.21%	187,060	3.91%
20 or more units	148	3.67%	304	1.65%	260,818	5.45%
Mobile home	285	7.06%	856	4.63%	220,213	4.60%



Year Structure Built

Approximately one-third of Wapakoneta's housing stock in 2000 had been built in 1939 or earlier.

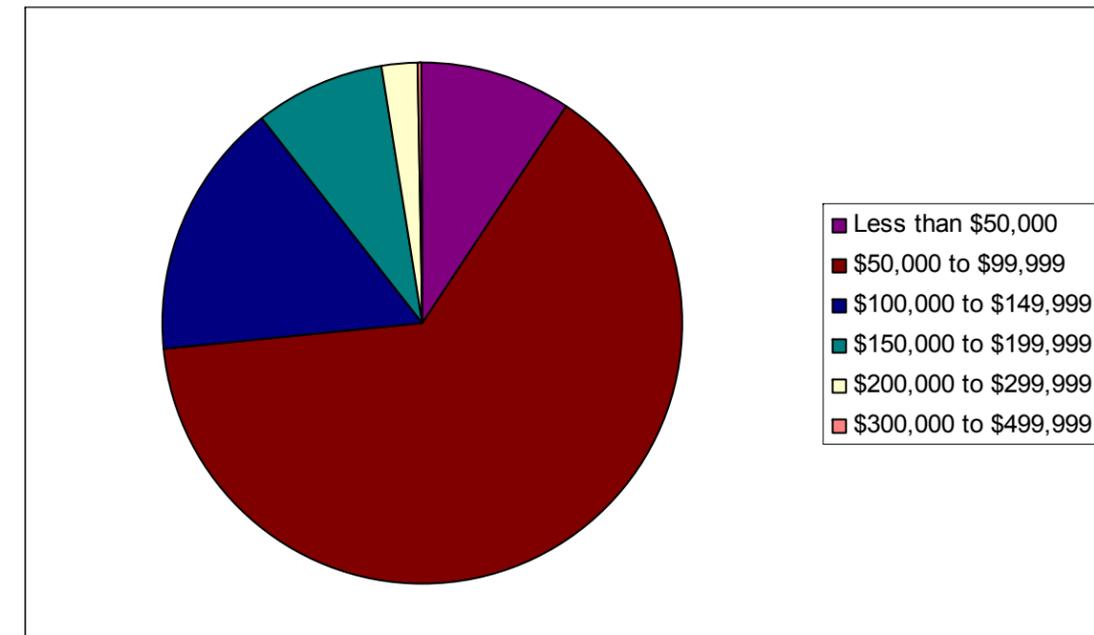
	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Total housing units	4,038	-	18,470	-	4,783,051	-
1999 to March 2000	68	1.68%	282	1.53%	84,481	1.77%
1995 to 1998	177	4.38%	925	5.01%	275,361	5.76%
1990 to 1994	144	3.57%	1,160	6.28%	274,662	5.74%
1980 to 1989	378	9.36%	1,741	9.43%	455,996	9.53%
1970 to 1979	768	19.02%	3,037	16.44%	757,116	15.83%
1960 to 1969	445	11.02%	1,753	9.49%	684,305	14.31%
1940 to 1959	695	17.21%	3,494	18.92%	1,175,325	24.57%
1939 or earlier	1,363	33.75%	6,078	32.91%	1,075,805	22.49%



Value

Over one third of Wapakoneta's housing stock was reported as having a value of between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in 2000. Wapakoneta's median housing value was approximately \$20,000 less than the State median in 2000.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Specified owner-occupied units	2,320	-	11,191	-	2,613,123	-
Less than \$50,000	222	9.57%	950	8.49%	221,166	8.46%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,480	63.79%	5,716	51.08%	1,025,855	39.26%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	371	15.99%	2,749	24.56%	730,803	27.97%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	186	8.02%	1,200	10.72%	336,163	12.86%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	54	2.33%	447	3.99%	204,386	7.82%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	7	0.30%	100	0.89%	72,753	2.78%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	0	0.00%	29	0.26%	17,898	0.68%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	4,099	0.16%
Median (dollars)	79,300	-	90,600	-	103,700	-



Employment Status

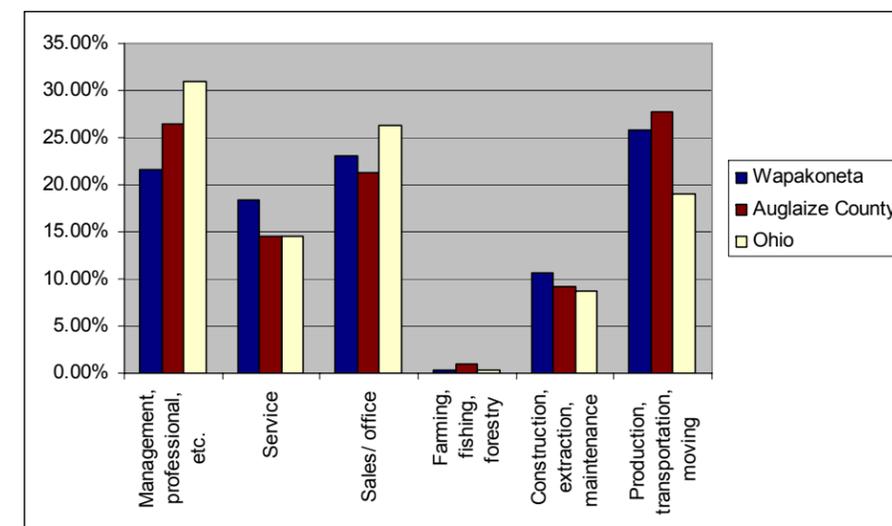
Over two-thirds of the City's population was in the labor force in 2000. Only two percent were unemployed.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Population 16 years and over	7,297	-	35,348	-	8,788,494	-
In labor force	4,894	67.07%	24,406	69.04%	5,694,708	64.80%
Employed	4,739	64.94%	23,631	66.85%	5,402,175	61.47%
Unemployed	155	2.12%	773	2.19%	282,615	3.22%
Not in labor force	2,403	32.93%	10,942	30.96%	3,093,786	35.20%

Occupation

A somewhat smaller proportion of Wapakoneta's residents were employed in managerial positions, as compared to the County and State, in 2000. A slightly higher proportion was employed in service, sales and construction and maintenance occupations.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Employed civilian population 16 years and over	4,739	-	23,631	-	5,402,175	-
Management, professional, and related occupations	1,026	21.65%	6,238	26.40%	1,672,257	30.96%
Service occupations	875	18.46%	3,414	14.45%	786,725	14.56%
Sales and office occupations	1,096	23.13%	5,031	21.29%	1,423,755	26.36%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	12	0.25%	211	0.89%	18,627	0.34%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	507	10.70%	2,164	9.16%	471,714	8.73%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	1,223	25.81%	6,573	27.82%	1,029,097	19.05%



Industry

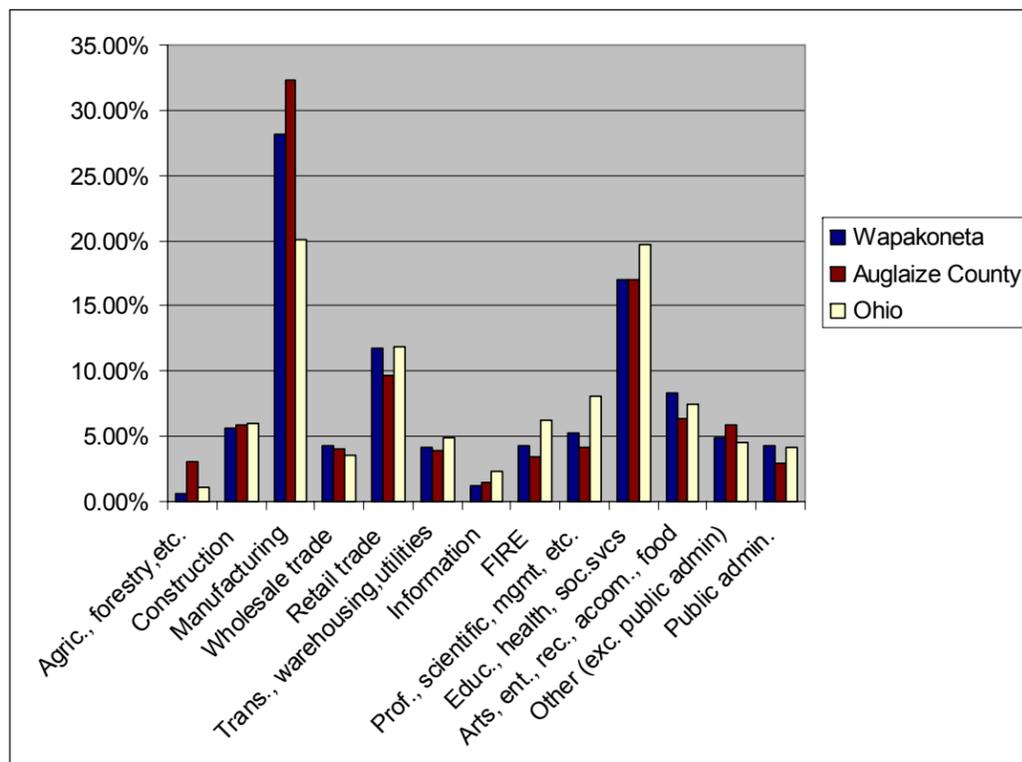
In Census terminology, an “industry” is a broad classification of similar businesses (most of which do not manufacture anything). Both Wapakoneta and Auglaize County have a higher proportion of their residents involved in the Manufacturing industry than in the State as a whole.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Employed civilian population 16 years and over	4,739	-	23,631	-	5,402,175	-
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	31	0.65%	724	3.06%	57,518	1.06%
Construction	264	5.57%	1,381	5.84%	324,553	6.01%
Manufacturing	1,336	28.19%	7,646	32.36%	1,082,185	20.03%
Wholesale trade	205	4.33%	963	4.08%	193,219	3.58%
Retail trade	556	11.73%	2,272	9.61%	643,058	11.90%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	197	4.16%	923	3.91%	267,324	4.95%
Information	60	1.27%	342	1.45%	128,081	2.37%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	202	4.26%	802	3.39%	339,090	6.28%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	251	5.30%	974	4.12%	434,694	8.05%
Educational, health and social services	808	17.05%	4,031	17.06%	1,064,882	19.71%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	397	8.38%	1,510	6.39%	403,684	7.47%
Other services (except public administration)	230	4.85%	1,375	5.82%	242,149	4.48%
Public administration	202	4.26%	688	2.91%	221,738	4.10%

Income in 1999

Census data on income is based on what respondents identified as their total income from all sources for the year before the Census. Wapakoneta’s median household income for 1999 was less than the median income reported for Auglaize County or the State.

	Wapakoneta		Auglaize County		Ohio	
	number	percent of total	number	percent of total	number	percent of total
Households	3,786	-	17,441	-	4,446,621	-
Less than \$10,000	245	6.47%	926	5.31%	406,698	9.15%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	318	8.40%	1,070	6.13%	285,372	6.42%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	581	15.35%	2,207	12.65%	594,143	13.36%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	554	14.63%	2,400	13.76%	602,996	13.56%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	859	22.69%	3,675	21.07%	771,129	17.34%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	702	18.54%	3,869	22.18%	905,323	20.36%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	338	8.93%	1,927	11.05%	444,599	10.00%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	109	2.88%	943	5.41%	289,049	6.50%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	31	0.82%	203	1.16%	71,062	1.60%
\$200,000 or more	49	1.29%	221	1.27%	76,250	1.71%
Median household income (dollars)	38,531	-	43,367	-	40,956	-



Population Projection

A population projection is developed as a part of a comprehensive plan to help the community anticipate the potential impacts of future population change. Depending on how population is projected to change, the community may need to plan for additional housing, annexing territory, facilitating the reuse of residential properties for other activities, etc.

Projecting future population is a highly inexact science that seldom identifies the future population exactly. The results of any given method for creating a population projection depend on a stated set of assumptions. Projections made on the basis of different information generally result in differing projections, and several reliable methods may produce different results.

Based on available existing information, population projections for Wapakoneta can be developed from three separate sets of information:

- ◆ A linear progression of the average rate of Wapakoneta's historical population growth;
- ◆ A linear progression of Wapakoneta's estimated population growth between 2000 and 2005 (using a total for 2000 based on the U.S. Census count, and the Census's 2005 estimate of Wapakoneta's population);
- ◆ An application of the County's projected population growth rate, as developed from statistical models and prepared by the Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research.

Historical population trend

As the table below indicates, an average of Wapakoneta's annualized growth rates between 1960 and 2000 is nearly 1% per year. However, this average reflects growth rates in the 1960-1970, 1970-1980 and 1980-1990 periods that were significantly higher than the annualized growth rate in the most recent period.

Year	Census Population	Percent Change	Annualized Growth Rate
1960	6,756	-	-
1970	7,324	8.4%	0.8%
1980	8,402	14.7%	1.5%
1990	9,214	9.7%	1.0%
2000	9,474	2.8%	0.3%
Average Annual Growth Rate			0.9%

Source: Office of the Ohio Secretary of State
<http://www.sos.state.oh.us/SOS/PublicAffairs/fedRoster.aspx?Section=1584>

Estimated growth per U.S. Census, 2000 - 2005

As the table below indicates, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates that Wapakoneta has experienced only very slight population growth between 2000 and 2005. The "2000 Estimate Base" number derives from the fact that Census counts are completed in March of the Census year, but that estimates are prepared to reflect the population as of July 1 of the year. As a result, official Census tabulations are generally used to estimate population as of July 1 of the Census year, and subsequent years' estimates are prepared based on that number.

Year	Population	Amount of Change	Annual Growth Rate
2000*	9,474	-	-
2000 Estimate Base	9,548	-	-
2001 (est.)	9,561	13	0.1%
2002 (est.)	9,530	-31	-0.3%
2003 (est.)	9,502	-28	-0.3%
2004 (est.)	9,521	19	0.2%
2005 (est.)	9,602	81	0.9%
Net estimated population change, 2000 to 2005		54	0.1%

* Actual 2000 Census Population
 Source: U. S. Census Bureau

Auglaize County growth projections, 2000 - 2030

The Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research prepares population projections on the basis of sophisticated statistical models. However, such projections are only prepared at the state and County levels. An evaluation of Auglaize County’s projected population growth may provide some additional insight into expectations regarding Wapakoneta’s growth. As the table indicates, this source also projects very small amounts of population growth.

Year	Population	Percent Change	Annualized Growth Rate
2000*	46,611	-	-
2005	47,000	0.01	0.002
2010	47,680	0.01	0.003
2015	48,780	0.02	0.005
2020	49,740	0.02	0.004
2025	50,840	0.02	0.004
2030	52,060	0.02	0.005
Population Change,	5,449	0.02	0.004

* Actual 2000 Census Population
 Source: Ohio Department of Development, Office of Strategic Research

Conclusions

Based on the annualized growth rates generated by the three sources above, Wapakoneta’s 2030 population can be projected at approximately 12,500 to 9,500 residents. Since the rate based on historical growth is significantly higher than the rates based on recent growth trends, and since the rates based on recent growth trends appear to reflect a stable population, it may be reasonable to expect that Wapakoneta may have a future growth rate of approximately one-half of one percent per year. Such a growth rate would result in a 2030 population of approximately 10,800 residents, unless major changes in the City’s or region’s employment characteristics were to occur.

Year	Wapakoneta Historical Growth Trend	Wapakoneta Population Estimate	Wapakoneta proportion of Auglaize County Population Projection
	0.9%	0.1%	0.004%
2000	9,474	9,474	9,474
2005	9,900	9,548	9,476
2010	10,346	9,596	9,478
2015	10,811	9,644	9,480
2020	11,298	9,692	9,482
2025	11,806	9,740	9,483
2030	12,338	9,789	9,485

Market Analysis

This analysis is intended to provide a broad snapshot of two issues: the current structure of the Wapakoneta economy as a whole, and an assessment of the current retail economy. The reader should note that these analyses are at a very broad scale, using several estimate sources and the very limited amount of available local data.

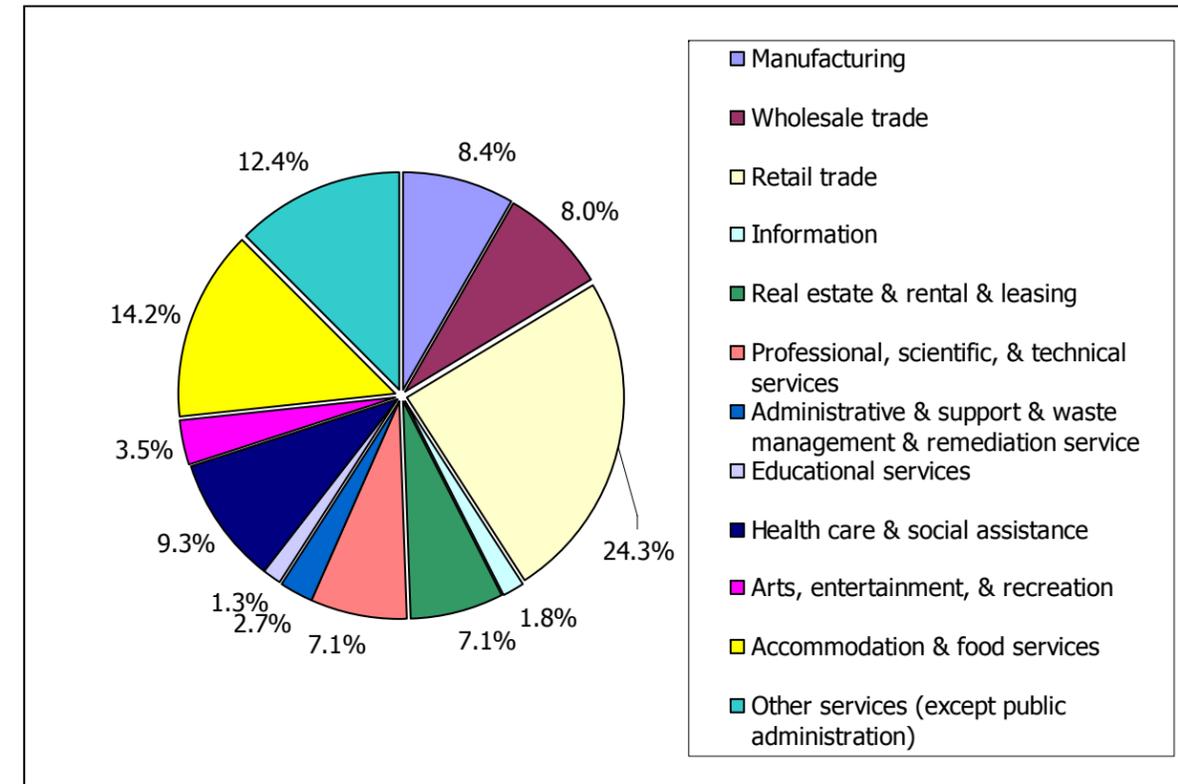
This analysis should be used to support discussions relating to comprehensive plan strategies. This analysis should *not* be used to recruit businesses; a finer level of detail is necessary to provide a reliable basis for business decision-making.

Section 1: Wapakoneta Economic Structure

Distribution by NAICS code, 2002 Economic Census

2002 NAICS code	Meaning of 2002 NAICS code	Number of establishments	Sales, Shipments, receipts, revenues (\$1,000)**	Annual payroll (\$1,000)**	Number of employees
Total		226	468,960	71,261	3,423
31-33	Manufacturing	19	166,878	37,337	1,059
42	Wholesale trade	18	146,600	5,198	156
44-45	Retail trade	55	93,624	9,159	598
51	Information	4	N	4,201	144
53	Real estate & rental & leasing	16	3,457	531	38
54	Professional, scientific, & technical services	16	11,935	3,342	150
56	Administrative & support & waste management & remediation service	6	D	D	59.5
61	Educational services	3	D	D	59.5
62	Health care & social assistance	21	12,302	5,049	259
71	Arts, entertainment, & recreation	8	2,482	564	49
72	Accommodation & food services	32	17,287	4,829	528
81	Other services (except public administration)	28	14,395	5,252	323

Source: 2002 Economic Census, U.S. Census Bureau

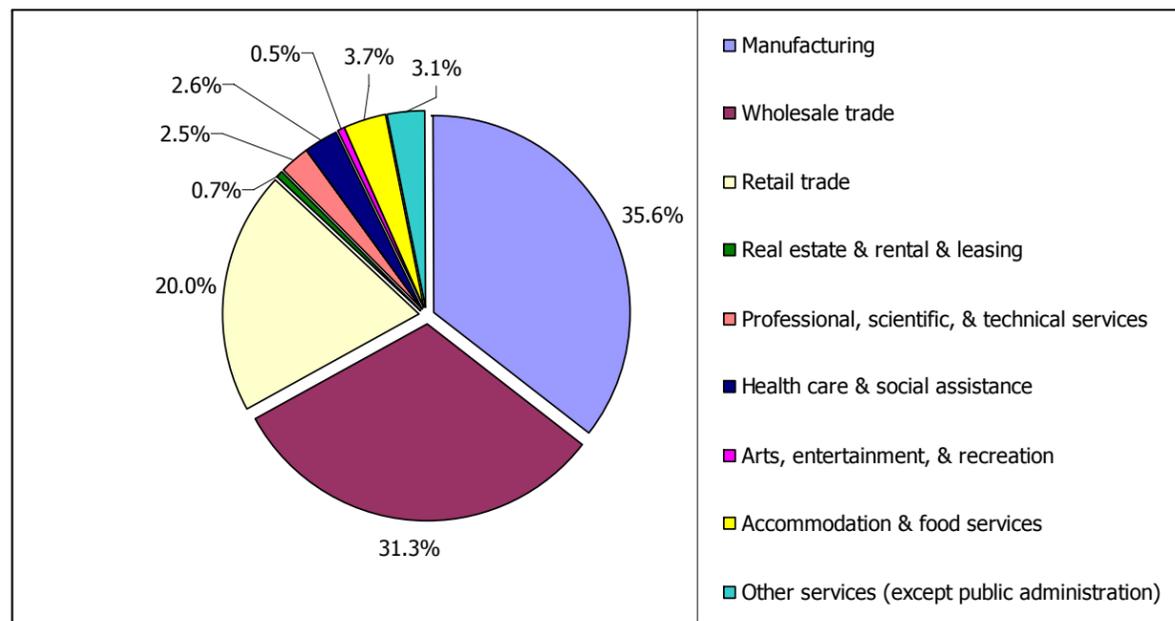


As the figure demonstrates, the largest numbers of establishments in Wapakoneta are in the Retail and Accommodations & Food Service categories.

As Table 1 demonstrates, Wapakoneta’s establishments are distributed across a wide range of business types. In most cases, including Manufacturing, the number of different types of establishments within each category has prevented the Census Bureau from releasing subsector data due to the need to protect establishment confidentiality. This indicates that Wapakoneta has few establishment clusters (groups of businesses providing similar goods and services), and no establishment clusters in the Manufacturing sector.

Distribution of Establishments by NAICS code, 2002 Economic Census

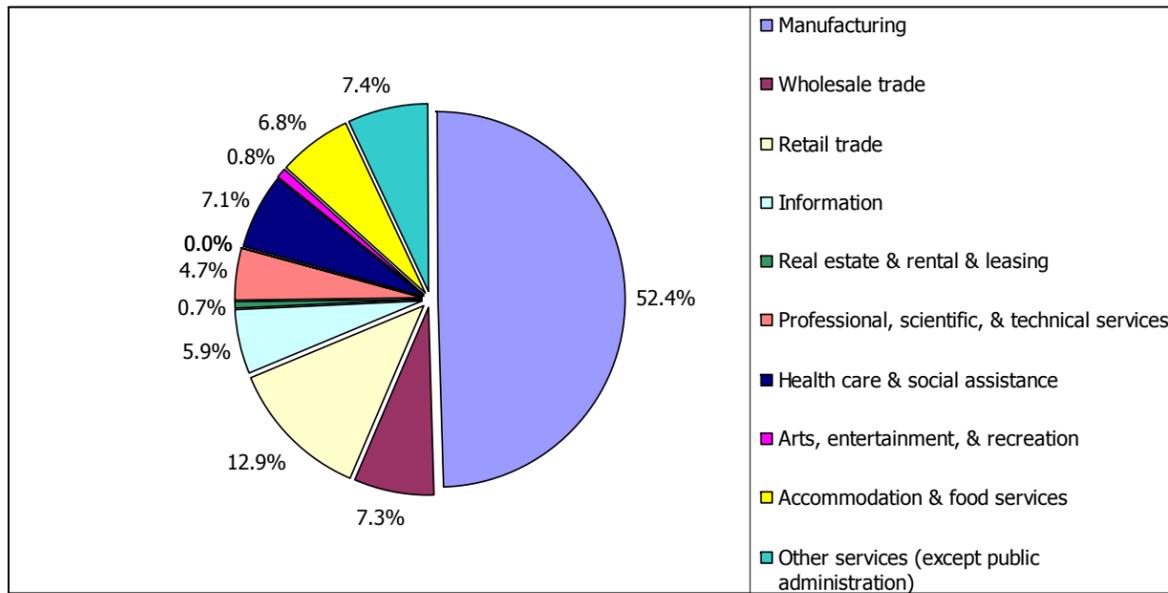
Distribution of Sales, Shipments, Receipts, etc. among Reported Sectors, 2002 Economic Census



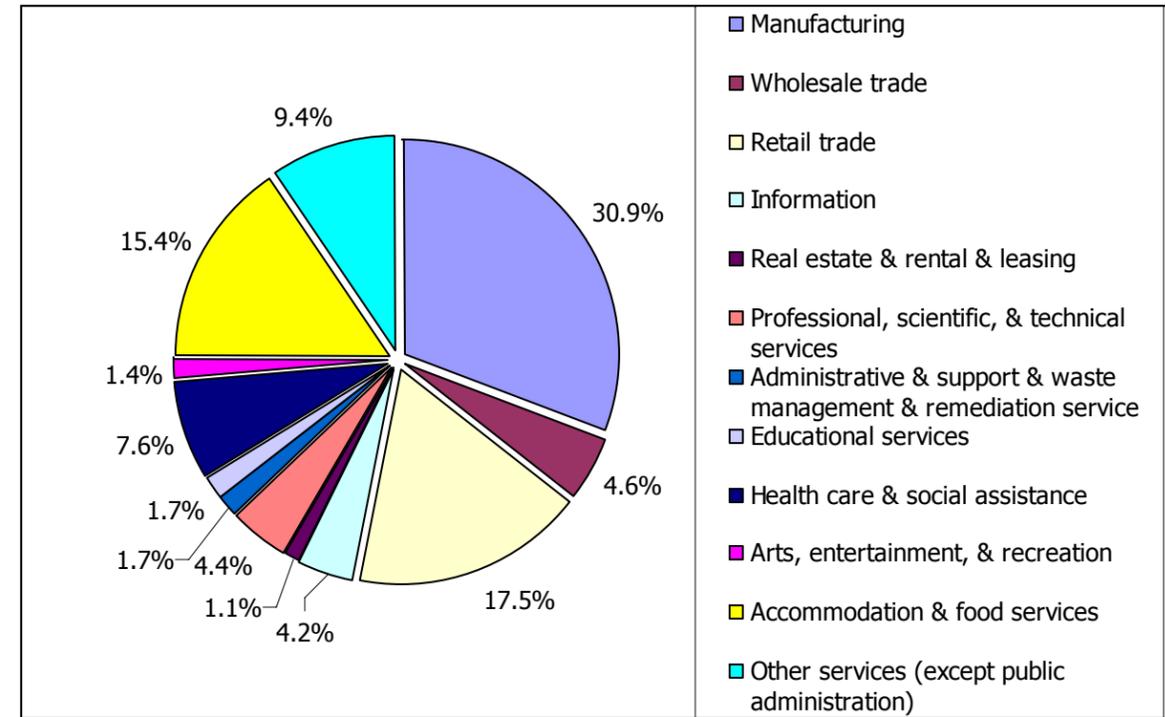
This figure demonstrates that Manufacturing and Wholesale Trade, which accounted for less than 20% of total establishments in 2002, also accounted for two-thirds of all reported sales, shipments, and related activity. Three sectors (Information, Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Service, and Educational Services) did not have sales reported due to confidentiality requirements that were triggered by the small number of establishments in these sectors.

Distribution of Payroll among Reported Sectors, 2002 Economic Census

This figure demonstrates that Manufacturing accounted for over half of all reported payroll in 2002, while Wholesale Trade accounted for just over 7%. Two sectors (Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Service, and Educational Services) did not have payroll reported due to confidentiality requirements.

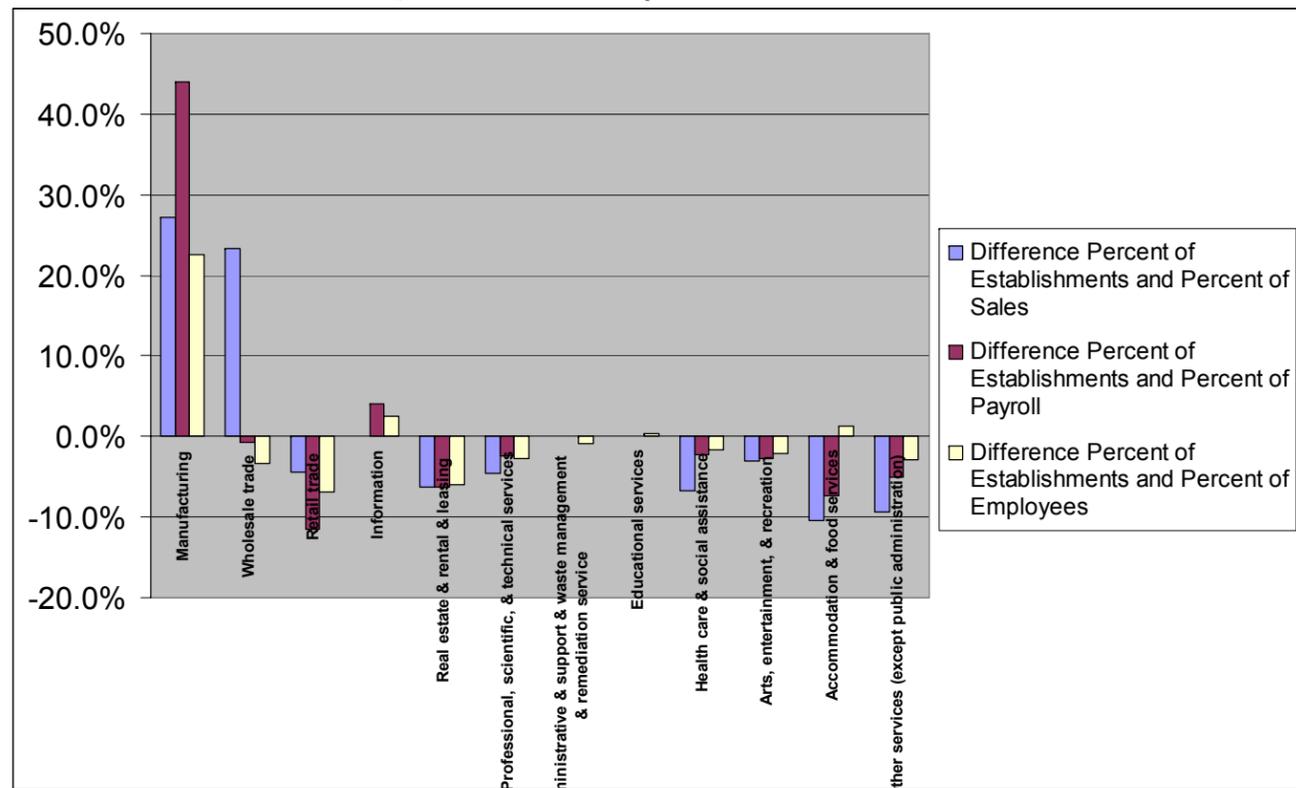


Distribution of Employees among Reported Sectors, 2002 Economic Census



This figure illustrates the actual distribution of employees. Two sectors (Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Service and Educational Services) were reported as having between 20 and 99 employees to protect business confidentiality; a median number of 59.5 is used for this analysis.

Differences in Distributions, Other Data Compared to Number of Establishments.



This figure indicates the relative impact of establishments in each sector on the City's sales, payroll and employment. This graph indicates several key elements of Wapakoneta's current economy:

- ◆ A relatively small number of Manufacturing establishments are responsible for a disproportionate amount of the proportion of reported payroll and sales as compared to the number of establishments.
- ◆ The Wholesale Trade sector had a disproportionately large proportion of total sales as compared to the number of establishments, but the sector produced relatively small amounts of employment and payroll as compared to the number of establishments.

- ◆ The Information sector was the only sector other than Manufacturing to represent a higher proportion of payroll and employment than it did of total establishments. This difference is positive, but extremely slight.
- ◆ The Retail Trade sector produced a smaller proportion of total sales, payroll and employees than its proportion of total establishments.

Section 2: Wapakoneta Retail Capacity and Leakage Overview

This section is designed to provide a broad overview of the current retail environment. The purpose of this overview is to provide information appropriate to the level of a Comprehensive Plan: this section is intended to identify whether certain broad categories of retail may be over- or under-represented within the local market. Market analysis, like most kinds of research, is highly sensitive to the quality of the data available. This analysis is based on readily-available data that has been adjusted as best as possible to approximate local conditions. However, the reader must keep in mind that the data provided are broad estimates based on a high level of extrapolation from other data sources. Market analyses conducted for business location decisions are based on extensive local consumer surveying and research, which is beyond the scope of a Comprehensive Plan. The analysis following is not sufficiently refined to use for business location decision-making.

Consumer unit calculation and Consumer Expenditure Survey baseline adjustment, 2005

2000 Population:	9,474
Wapakoneta median household size	2.6
Number of estimated consumer units, 2005	3,644
Estimated Wapakoneta median household income, 2005:	\$38,700
Estimated Midwest average median consumer unit income after taxes, 2005	\$54,280
Estimated median Wapakoneta proportion of median Midwest consumer unit average	71.30%

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditures Survey 2005, 2000 U.S. Census

This table is provided as a basis for establishing the number of Wapakoneta “consumer units” and adjusting the national consumer unit baseline estimates provided in the following table. The reader should keep in mind that the Midwest region identified here is a district defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and includes 10 states and eight major metropolitan areas, which vary widely in terms of demographic and income data. Additionally, Consumer Expenditure Survey data is collected in metropolitan regions, not in rural communities. As a result, incomes in the Consumer Expenditure Survey tend to skew higher than would be the case if rural communities were included. Median Household Income, as calculated by the U.S. Census Bureau, is generally before-tax income.

Wapakoneta Estimated Expenditures per Consumer Unit, 2005

This table estimates the amount of expenditures that Wapakoneta residents may have made in 2005, if Midwest regional spending patterns (as noted above) are followed in Wapakoneta.

Category	Midwest regional consumer unit estimate	Wapakoneta adjusted consumer unit estimate	Total estimated Wapakoneta Annual Expenditures
Food at home	\$3,242	\$2,311	\$8,422,416
Food away from home	\$2,522	\$1,798	\$6,550,768
Alcoholic beverages	\$450	\$321	\$1,169,780
Housing	\$14,138	\$10,080	\$36,731,090
Utilities	\$3,152	\$2,247	\$8,188,460
Household supplies, furnishings/equipment	\$2,341	\$1,669	\$6,082,856
Apparel and shoes	\$1,756	\$1,252	\$4,562,142
Vehicle purchase	\$3,107	\$2,215	\$8,071,482
Gasoline and Motor Oil	\$1,981	\$1,413	\$5,147,032
Other vehicle expenses	\$2,296	\$1,637	\$5,965,878
Health drugs/supplies+ personal care	\$1,171	\$835	\$3,041,428
Entertainment	\$2,386	\$1,701	\$6,199,834
Education	\$991	\$706	\$2,573,516

Comparison of Estimated Expenditures versus Estimated Available Retail Space, 2005

This table estimates the amount of expenditures that Wapakoneta residents may have made in 2005, if Midwest regional spending patterns (as noted above) are followed in Wapakoneta. The Estimated Sales per square foot are adjusted from industry averages produced by the International Association of Shopping Centers and the Newspaper Association of America for neighborhood shopping centers. Only categories for which expenditure data *and* sales per square foot data are available are provided. In this table, “Estimated Volume Local Sales Capacity” refers to the estimated amount of existing space available.

The analysis indicates that the estimated volume of local sales capacity exceeds the estimated amount of expenditure in all of these categories, with the possible exception of the “Food Away from Home” category. These findings appear to indicate that the categories are either supplying a trade area that is wider than just the City, or that there is excess capacity in the current retail environment in these categories.

Category	Estimated Amount of Square footage in Wapakoneta available for expenditure	Estimated sales per square foot	Estimated volume local sales capacity	Total estimated Wapakoneta Annual Expenditures	Difference Estimated Local Capacity versus Estimated Annual Expenditures
Food at home	55,000	275	\$15,125,000	\$8,422,416	6,702,584
Food away from home	15,000	250	\$3,750,000	\$6,550,768	(2,800,768)
Household supplies, furnishings/equipment	60,000	200	\$12,000,000	\$6,082,856	5,917,144
Apparel and shoes	41,000	200	\$8,200,000	\$4,562,142	3,637,858
Health drugs/supplies+ personal care	20,000	200	\$4,000,000	\$3,041,428	958,572

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditures Survey 2005

This estimate can also be calculated on the basis of purchasing unit expenditures, as follows:

Wapakoneta Estimated Expenditures per Consumer Unit, 2005

Category	Estimated Amount of Square footage in Wapakoneta available for expenditure	Estimate square feet support per household (UWEX)	Estimated total available support	Difference Estimated Square footage and Estimated Total available support
Food at home	55,000	11.6	42,269	(12,731)
Food away from home	15,000	12.4	45,184	30,184
Alcoholic beverages	5,000	1.5	5,466	466
Household supplies, furnishings/equipment	60,000	19	69,233	9,233
Apparel and shoes	30,000	5.8	21,134	(8,866)
Gasoline and Motor Oil	10,000	5.5	20,041	10,041
Health drugs/supplies+ personal care	20,000	3.1	11,296	(8,704)

Conclusion

An overview examination of Wapakoneta’s market characteristics indicates reasonable levels of purchasing power and a continuing reliance on the manufacturing sector. The City does not appear to have any areas of significantly unmet basic market sector demand, although a review of the local market offerings indicates relatively little choice in goods and services. Both employment and retail offerings appear to provide significant opportunities for diversification.

5. Selected Public Feedback

The City of Wapakoneta conducted an extensive program of public feedback as an element of the Master Plan's development. This included:

- ◆ A written survey that was distributed to over 5,000 City services clients. Over 700 surveys were returned, for an exceptional response rate of over 10%.
- ◆ A series of key person interviews and one focus group discussion with a wide variety of residents and business operators
- ◆ A Public Vision Open House, which was held on April 24, 2007 and was attended by more than 50 residents.

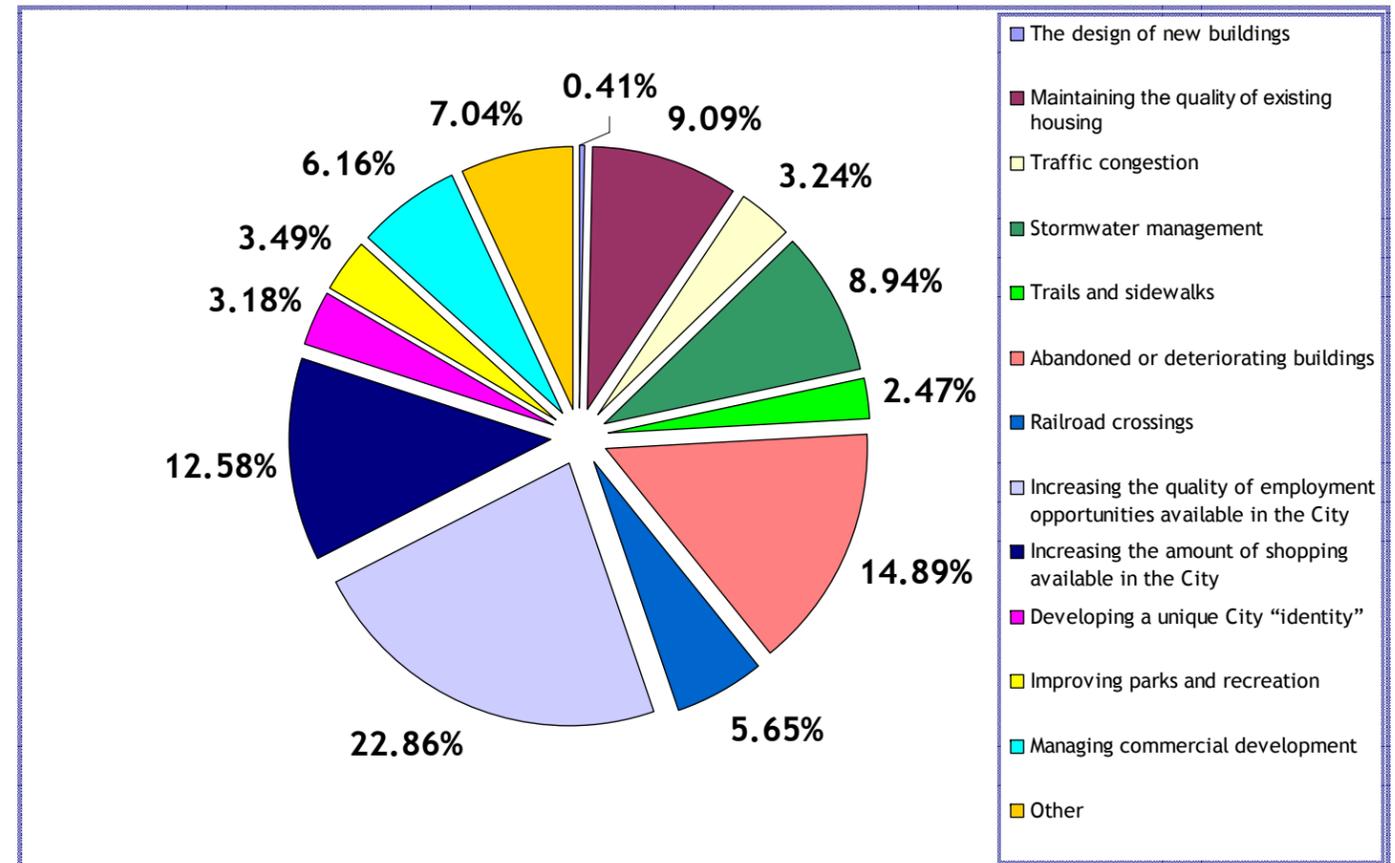
Selected results are provided below. The full set of all public feedback results are provided in Appendix A.

The Comprehensive Plan Survey

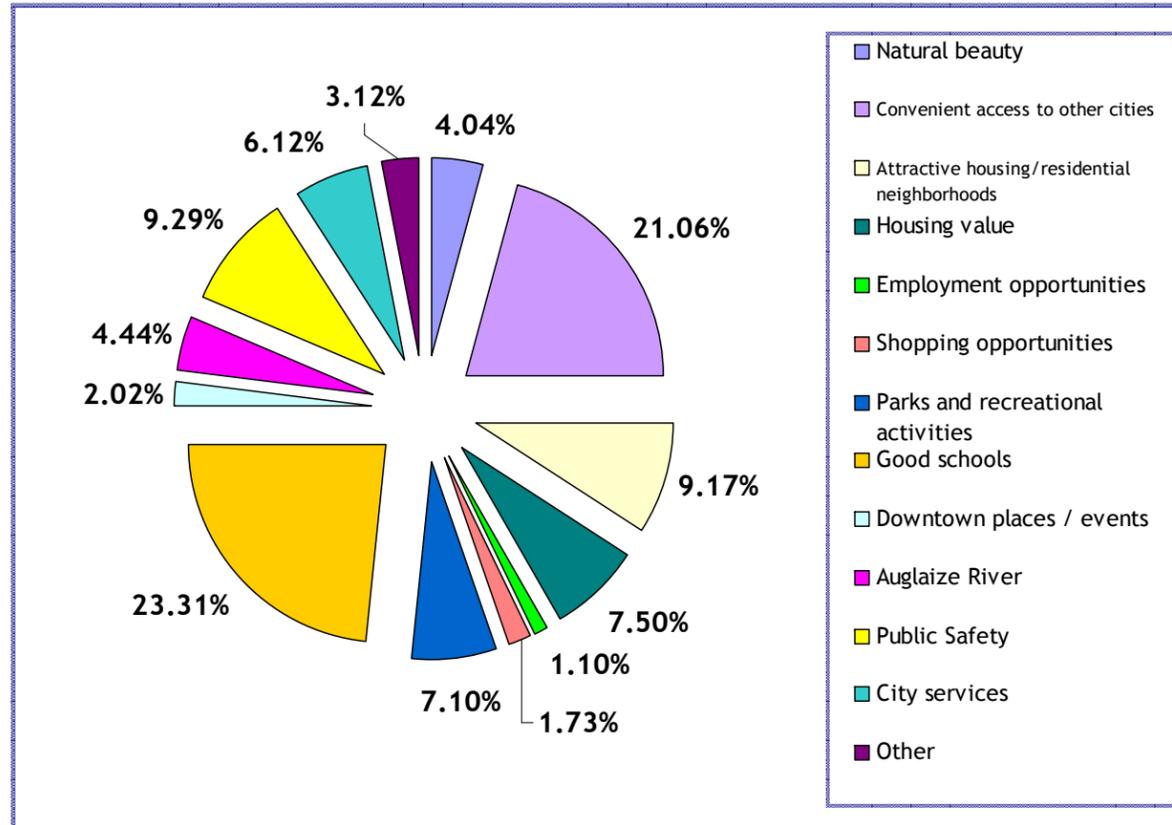
The Master Plan Survey was structured as a multiple-choice activity which provided opportunities for written responses to every question. These charts summarize the numerical results from the Survey. Pie charts segments follow the order of the legend clockwise, starting with the segment at the 12:00 position.

The Survey also provided an invitation and space to write in additional, open-ended comments. The results of the multiple choice questions are provided below. Over half of survey respondents also provided written comments. Due to the volume of these comments, they are provided in Appendix A.

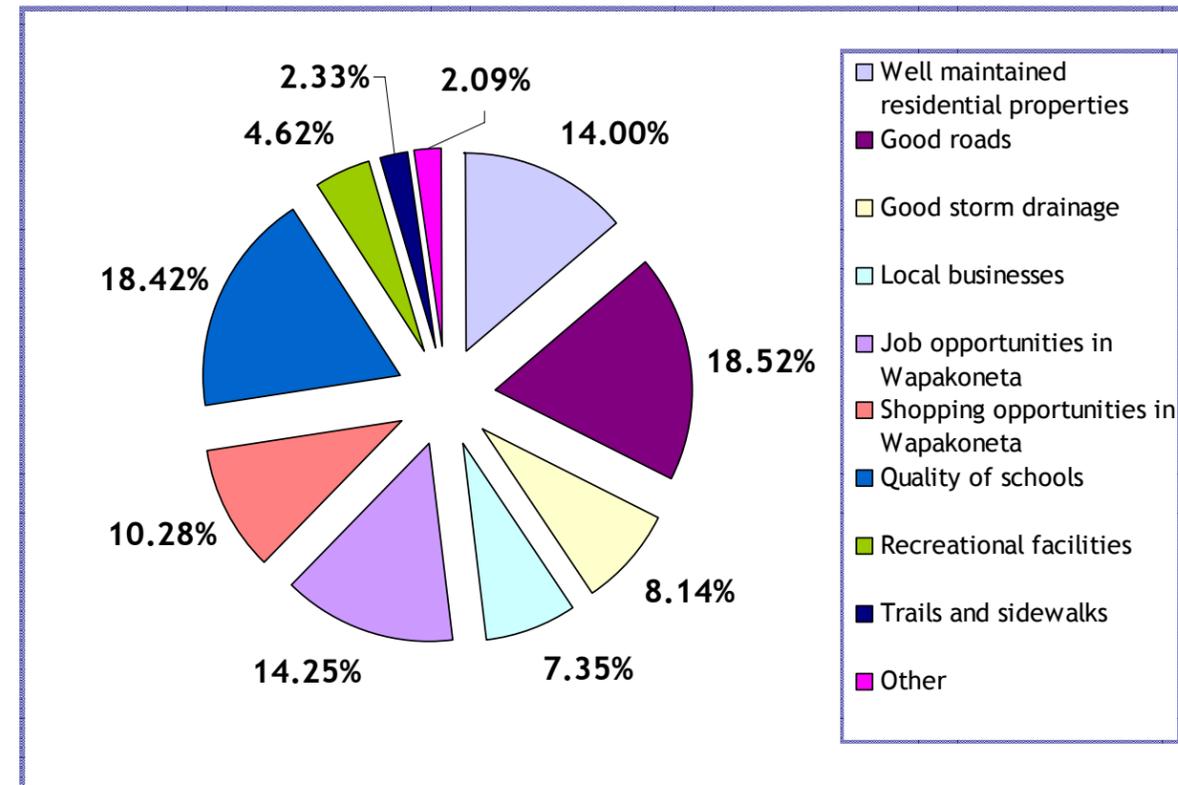
What do you think are the most important issues facing the City today? (respondents could choose three answers)



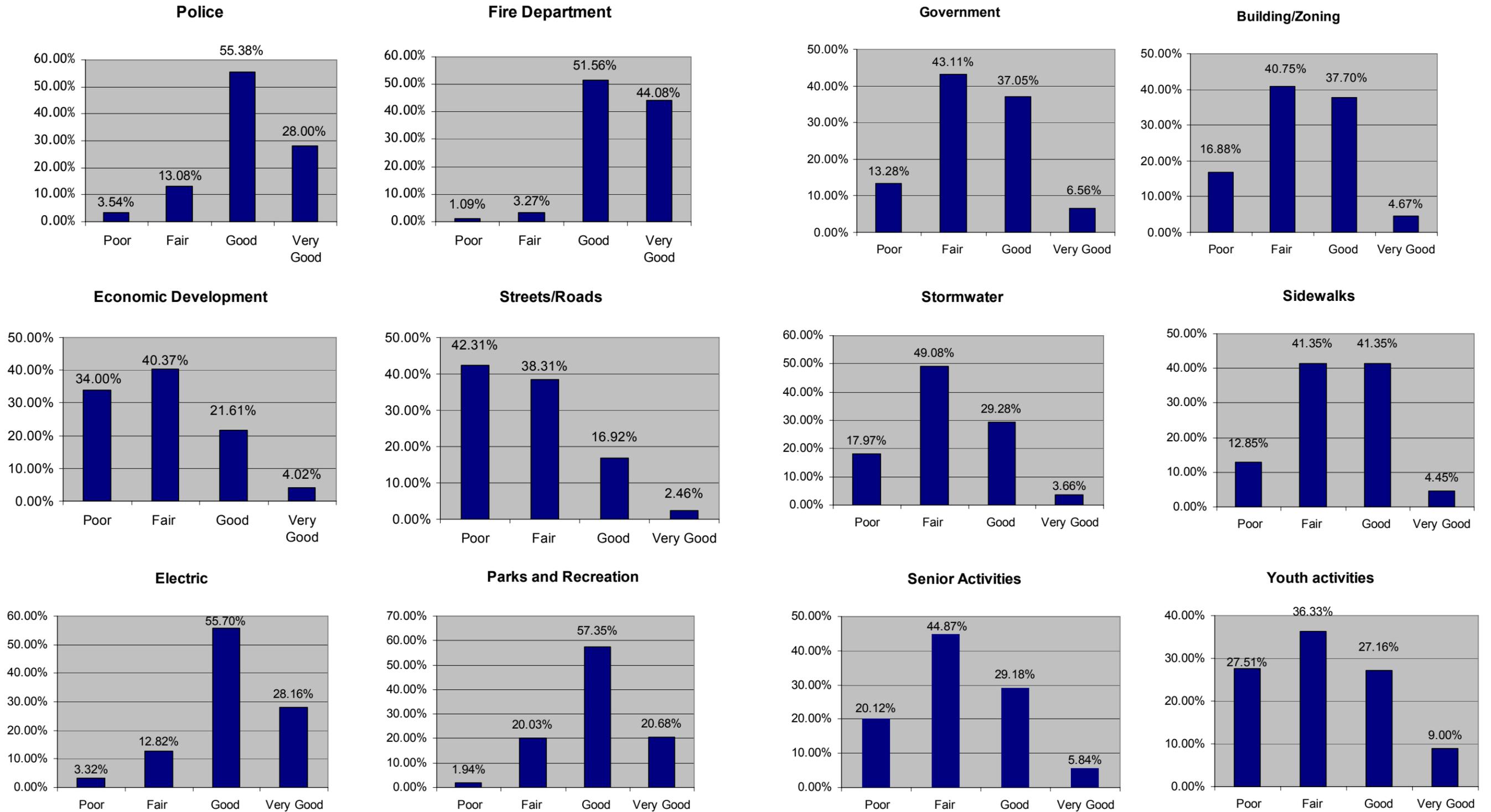
What is Wapakoneta's greatest strength? (respondents could choose three answers)



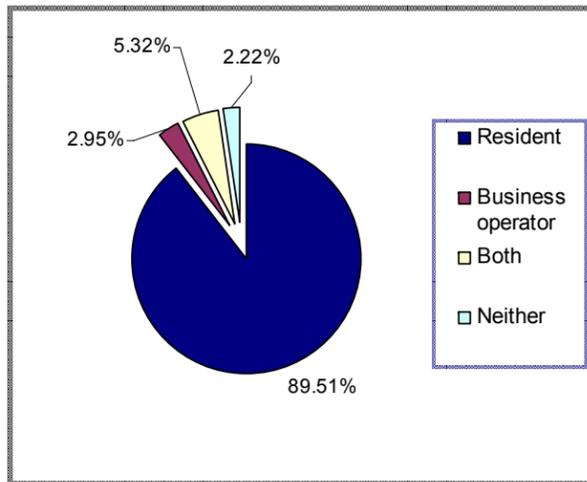
Which of the following are most important to your quality of life in Wapakoneta? (respondents could choose three answers)



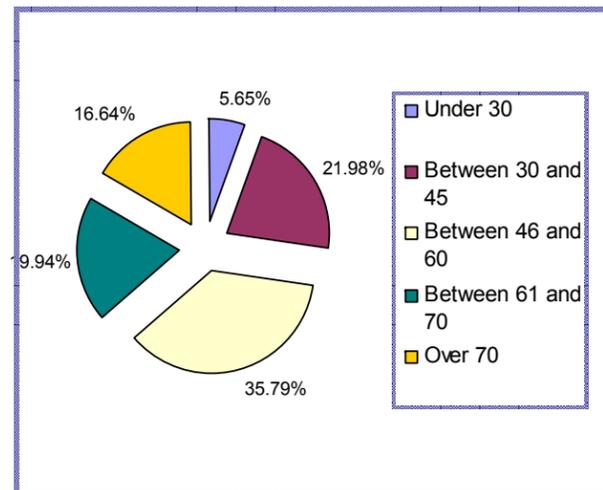
How do you feel about the quality of City services? (Participants chose category. Percentage indicates proportion of respondents choosing that response)



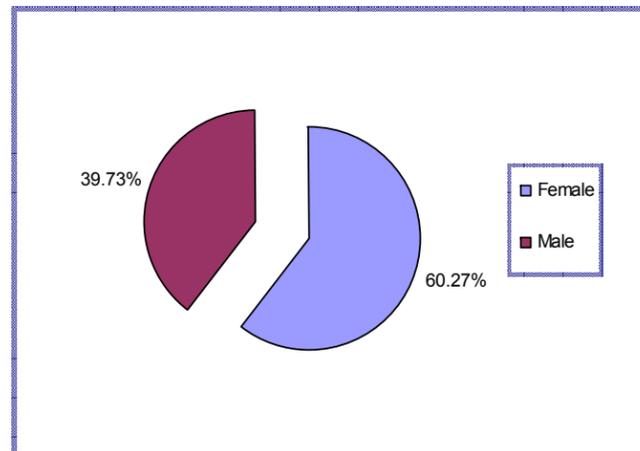
Respondent type



Respondents by Age Group



Respondent Gender



Key Person Interviews and Focus Group

During the first months of 2007, Jacobs staff conducted Key Person Interviews with 12 persons identified by the City as likely to have valuable insight into the City’s issues, history and future challenges. One of these sessions involved multiple persons who volunteered to participate and was conducted as a focus group. The full results of the key person interviews are provided in Appendix B. A few selected comments that reflected more than one interviewee’s opinions are provided here to ensure that the reader has some sense of the results of this effort. The reader is strongly encouraged to review Appendix B for the full interview results, and to keep in mind that each comment reflects the opinions of only one person. For sake of honesty in comments, all interviewee identities have been removed. The different colors in the text below indicate different speakers.

- *The way our county is set up, there are some barriers to success.... There are three almost equal population centers, therefore we take these small little areas and break them down even farther.... Fragmentation? Horrible. Each of the municipalities in the County has 10,000 residents. There is no strong County leadership - no County plan, direction, strategy.*
- *I think that the local work ethic is good, but in today’s economy I don’t think that’s enough. When economy was manufacturing based, I think that made sense, but I don’t know that that’s enough anymore. In today’s economy there are so many things you have to do as baseline assumptions just to compete, in my mind, just about any place where someone wants to locate a manufacturing plant of any size there are gonna be people willing to work. We have resources, but I don’t know if the resources we have are as important as they used to be.*
- *This town is still too white, too German, too Catholic. It’s not the real world, man. But I think that the rural places that are going to grow have to accept that. So I think it’s time for younger folks to stand up and lead town. I think you’re seeing some of that with this planning process. A lot of people have been glad to have us stay white, German Catholic. But that doesn’t bring any talent to your town.*
- *We are a municipal power provider. Outside of good local service, I don’t know if that does anything for us anymore. In the supposed deregulated power environment... this is not 1913. Anyone can get us municipal power, reliability is not an issue anymore. We need to get electricity as cheap as we can get it. It’s a commodity. If we hope to attract business to town, we must have power as cheap as we can get it. Right now,*

deregulation in the state is kind of broken. What can you do locally to decrease power rates? There's one thing you must have...strong mayor, strong City government, people must be able to educate themselves on topic. Very very complicated.

- Advantages to being in Wapakoneta? Overall people are well grounded, family oriented. We have good families.... We [have a good school district] because have good families. Other advantages...it's not as widespread as it's needed, but there is a strong spirit of cooperation. Even starting this process [the comprehensive plan], people have been very receptive in a positive manner. I have heard no one say anything bad. Perfect example. Several things in town - local events where community comes together
- Wapakoneta has been known as a place where if there's something you want to do, you can get away with it. A lot of surrounding communities have had stronger standards for years... demanded higher safety service issues, inspection, etc. People doing construction in Wapakoneta have free rein. All developments currently need building and zoning permits, but there is no means of enforcing.
- People in the community expect the services to be top notch, but eventually they will have to realize that we've got to pay for it. Costs continue to rise even if we do nothing new.
- Why have levies failed? I think it's a mindset - people claim that the City has enough money, just need to spend it better. There must be some people seeing fat that isn't there. The administration hasn't been able to convince the community.
- When you peel away all the layers, people do care about one another. But there's a sense that you have to earn your buttons to have any input. I think there's a lot of folks that could be very helpful. I think we're not very good at including.
- City Hall does not communicate. I don't care who you are, you make mistakes, no one will say they made a mistake. There's always an excuse... people have developed distrust.
- Part of the money is there, and you can get the money. They didn't pass bond because they didn't communicate well. You gotta tell people why if you want them to support.
- There are a lot of hidden agendas - has an impact on local activities. Hidden agendas have been clouding the judgment of the people making the decisions. City Council can't see the forest because they are looking at one tree.
- People have been hanging their hat on manufacturing, but this is a shrinking portion of the pie, here and all over.

- It's critical to strengthen education: skills, degrees, keep degreed people in town. Need to get Bachelor's degree rate among residents up to 40%. The colleges are here, there are many opportunities within driving distance. The norm has to be college, not the exception. I think now it's the exception. Among kids who are selected to attend Rotary meetings, some are going into agriculture, not enough say that they are planning on going to college.
- The school district looks good compared to other surrounding districts.
- Bellefontaine is in terrible shape - the roads and the houses. Makes an ugly entry into the City - why would I want to drive this? Compare to Bellefontaine or St. Marys - entrance is on road lined with grand houses. Ours look like we paved alleyways. Not well planned out.
- City administration has been reactive, has been holding City back. Question is always "Who's asking for it?" not "Should we be doing it?" There has been no planning for the future. Recreation Commission has had plan to purchase land for additional parks.... Has not been fully supported by City administration.
- Cost of living is low, its safe, people look out for one another. You can feel like you're part of the community.
- Two issues: codes and code enforcement. You can go into any neighborhood and find code violations. Lack of willingness from City to enforce codes, or not good enough code. Strong sense of property rights.
- The community will have to face the fact that surrounding communities have more amenities and decide how to pay for what they want.



Public Vision Open House

The City of Wapakoneta hosted a Public Vision Open House on April 24, 2007 that was attended by over 50 participants. Participants had the opportunity to complete a variety of activities designed to elicit their ideas regarding the City's current issues and future needs and opportunities. Participants had the opportunity to complete the following activities:

- ◆ Recording their ideas regarding the City's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
- ◆ Recording their ideas regarding what the City should do about six key issues (Land Use, Economic Development, Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure and Open Space and Natural Resources).
- ◆ Completing a Visual Preference Survey, which asked participants to rate each of a series of photographs on a scale of -5 to +5. A +5 rating indicated that the participant wanted very strongly to see the type of development shown in the photograph occur in the Village, while a rating of -5 indicated that the participant strongly opposed that type of development in the City.
- ◆ Selecting and adding photographs to a collage that was designed to present a visual summary of the participants' preferred types of development.
- ◆ Recording their responses to the question, "If you were King or Queen of Wapakoneta for a day and could do anything, money no object, what would you do?"
- ◆ Completing a scenario-based survey entitled "What Would you Say?"
- ◆ Providing any other comments.

Full results of the Public Vision Open House are provided in Appendix C. A few selected items from one activity, the Six Issues, are provided here to ensure that the reader has some sense of the results of this effort. The reader is strongly encouraged to review Appendix C for the full Open House results, and to keep in mind that each comment below reflects the opinions of only one person.

Land Use:

- ◆ Stricter zoning codes.
- ◆ Enforce existing zoning laws - no changing from residential to commercial as was done for drug store.
- ◆ Prevent sprawl - preserve neighborhoods, define commercial and industrial space.
- ◆ Zoning should be flexible enough to help citizens or at least give alternatives. Wapak has name for being so difficult that some contractors will not even bid job.
- ◆ Replace members of zoning appeals board.
- ◆ Make use of what we have already.
- ◆ Revisit zoning to allow Wapakoneta the ability to plan for the future.
- ◆ Plan - businesses should not locate in residential areas if they have to take down houses to do it.
- ◆ Help the fire department enforce the state building code.
- ◆ Keep industry to the south/east.
- ◆ Keep new subdivisions under strong, basic requirements.

Parks and Recreation:

- ◆ More parks, some just green space.
- ◆ Develop wildlife areas.
- ◆ Develop River walks.
- ◆ Develop the lake at the light plant into a water rec. park.
- ◆ River is important. Set level and leave it. Expand some.

- ◆ Parks are good now. Not much more is needed.
- ◆ Add more open space for parks - trails - for walking and bicycles - wooded areas.
- ◆ Rebuild the “old park” along the river.
- ◆ [Create a] designated spot for skateboarders.
- ◆ Focus on river potential - park, dining on the river, paddle boats, water park.
- ◆ Improve areas along the river, especially behind downtown.
- ◆ Provide somewhere teens can play and have fun. There are no places to have meetings, dances, etc.
- ◆ Develop Heritage Park behind town - bury the lines and take down the poles - add play equipment in the grass.
- ◆ Take down electric poles and wires behind downtown.

Economic Development:

- ◆ Need factory that produces a product, more income for City.
- ◆ Currently, Wapakoneta is heavily skewed to antiques. We need greater variety downtown to draw a greater mix of people.
- ◆ Promote Wapak more.
- ◆ Promote small businesses.
- ◆ Redevelop historic downtown.
- ◆ Apply for CDBG funds, establish TIF zones, tax breaks.
- ◆ Pursue tourism.
- ◆ Focus on what we have - River, 2 lakes close, etc.
- ◆ Need to attract new businesses.
- ◆ Take action on abandoned gas stations.

- ◆ “Sell” downtown to younger people as creative living spaces, studios... modern open interiors.
- ◆ Make friendly for places like Kohl’s, T.J. Maxx and more trendy restaurants like TGI Fridays.
- ◆ Do something about abandoned, falling apart businesses.
- ◆ Need shopping and restaurants.
- ◆ Multi use downtown.

Transportation

- ◆ Maintain speed limits on East and West Auglaize.
- ◆ Make Bellefontaine Street 35 mph - everybody drives at that speed or higher now.
- ◆ Fix Streets.
- ◆ Bus route.
- ◆ Fix Bellefontaine Street - every body uses this. West and south streets hardly used, only property owners.
- ◆ Repair Streets.
- ◆ Bike paths.
- ◆ Pedestrians need better access.
- ◆ Repair Benton Street.
- ◆ Streets...Streets...streets.
- ◆ We need a taxi service.
- ◆ Nature path along a cleaned river.
- ◆ Borrow \$ / ask for additional tax levy to fix streets that need it NOW and continue maintenance of existing streets.



Residential

- ◆ Go after people with junk in their yard first then get after those that need paint, etc.
- ◆ Promote/protect historic sites.
- ◆ Green space in development.
- ◆ Promote restoration.
- ◆ Enforce the regulations and codes that are already in place - especially sidewalks, trash and vehicles.
- ◆ Don't allow single homes to be changed into apartments where there is not adequate off-street parking!
- ◆ Better housing codes.
- ◆ Discourage homes becoming rentals.
- ◆ How can sidewalk be built if residents don't want to foot the bill? Have City cover cost of curbs, gutters and sidewalks.
- ◆ Promote restoration - give incentives from local sources to encourage bringing back some of our older properties to their original splendor.
- ◆ Limit number of automobiles that can permanently be parked at a residence.
- ◆ Protect integrity of existing neighborhoods - no sideway homes, please.

Public Services

- ◆ Public transport.
- ◆ Fill the position of code enforcement officer
- ◆ Let's have a large enough police force for the size of our community. We're really understaffed for the acceptable percentages.
- ◆ Better code enforcement.
- ◆ Better housing codes.
- ◆ Sweep streets.
- ◆ Build a fire department on the east side.
- ◆ Fill position of enforcement code officer to enforce the existing codes for residential and commercial properties.
- ◆ TIF, GOB and other capital improvement projects need to be adopted to improve streets, stormwater and sewers.

6. The Comprehensive Plan Vision

This Vision was crafted by the Steering Committee based on public feedback and a series of exercises that helped formulate the issues that the Plan should address. Results of the Key Persons and other exercises are provided in Appendix D.

The Vision is designed to capture all of the fundamental characteristics that Wapakoneta should have in the future. The Vision was adopted by the Steering Committee on October 23, 2007.

City of Wapakoneta Vision

As a forward-thinking community, Wapakoneta will strive to meet the economic, social, spiritual, cultural and recreational needs of its people.

Our community will offer a variety of opportunities for employment, education, shopping, dining and culture.

Wapakoneta will offer a variety of attractive and well maintained housing options for people of all ages, lifestyles and incomes.

Wapakoneta will provide excellent streets, utilities, emergency and medical services for all of its citizens.

Wapakoneta's residents will expect and support high standards for the appearance and efficiency of our business sites.

Our major corridors, public areas and key entry points will demonstrate that Wapakoneta is a place people want to be.

We will preserve Wapakoneta's historic landmarks, green space and natural beauty.

Wapakoneta residents will enjoy outstanding indoor and outdoor recreational resources, including our natural spaces.

People will travel the City comfortably and safely by car, on foot or on a bicycle.

Wapakoneta will cooperate with surrounding communities to attract businesses and industries strategically and responsibly, enhancing the community's total quality of life.

Our citizens will be proud to say they live in Wapakoneta.

Shared Assumptions

The following statements summarize the Steering Committee's expectations of the real-world context in which Wapakoneta will be implementing its plans during the next ten to 20 years. These statements were developed to help the Steering Committee evaluate the likely issues that may constrain or impact their efforts to implement the Vision

- ◆ Unless Wapakoneta attracts a large number of additional employers, the City's population will remain stable, especially since land suitable for residential growth is limited.
- ◆ Employment of the type Wapakoneta may be able to attract will continue to require a variety of skills and training, many of which will require training beyond the high school level.
- ◆ Most industrial shipping will probably continue to occur by truck or rail.
- ◆ Wapakoneta's economic future will continue to be linked to the region's economic health.
- ◆ Wapakoneta will have opportunities because of the telecommunications connections within the community.
- ◆ Some residents will oppose economic growth/change
- ◆ Young adults will continue to seek employment elsewhere, at least in the early phases of their careers.
- ◆ Wapakoneta will attract more employers because of the Job Ready Sites property.
- ◆ Wapakoneta's future retail options will be limited by the community's proximity to Lima and other regional shopping destinations.
- ◆ Wapakoneta will experience retail growth along I-75.
- ◆ Wapakoneta will continue to be able to provide enough water and sewer facilities to serve expected new developments.
- ◆ Wapakoneta will have to pursue alternative energy sources one day.
- ◆ Wapakoneta's population will continue to become more diverse.
- ◆ Wapakoneta residents' average age will probably continue to increase gradually.
- ◆ Demand for health care services is likely to increase.
- ◆ Wapakoneta's residents will continue to demand recreational activities.
- ◆ Wapakoneta's cultural opportunities will reflect the identity of the community.
- ◆ Wapakoneta's location will continue to provide residents with access to urban amenities.
- ◆ Wapakoneta's population growth will be moderate at best.

Plan Element #1: Economic Vitality

Introduction

Two of the most pressing concerns identified by community members in the public participation initiatives conducted for this Comprehensive Plan revolve around economic development: availability of local, good-paying employment and quality of choices for local shopping, dining and services. These two elements will play a pivotal role in the long-term success of Wapakoneta as a place where people choose to live and work.

In recent years, Wapakoneta has experienced modest declines in manufacturing employment and the number of manufacturing establishments, along with a modest increase in the number of retail and service providers available to the local population. Wapakoneta has maintained stability in its manufacturing economy much longer than many other areas of the state, but it is likely that issues relating to globalization, changes in manufacturing technology and employee requirements will continue to impact Wapakoneta. The successful Job Ready Sites application is expected to open additional manufacturing opportunities, but maintaining and reusing existing manufacturing sites will remain an issue requiring attention. At the same time, Wapakoneta has experienced a modest amount of new retail and service development that has largely met the basic needs of the community. However, choices of many types of goods and services within Wapakoneta remain limited.

These two trends mirror the State of Ohio as a whole, where the number of jobs in traditional manufacturing industries has declined and the number of retail and service establishments have grown at a faster pace than the growth in retail expenditures would have predicted. As a result, Wapakoneta can learn from the experiences of other Ohio communities: it can work to avoid the long periods of disinvestment that have plagued “rust belt” cities, and it can manage its retail and service sector growth to ensure that it benefits the community and does not create additional long-term challenges. Meeting these challenges, however, will require a more proactive approach to development recruitment and management. Recent initiatives to build the City’s economic development presence must be continued and expanded, and must be supplemented with a strengthened City regulatory control system. The City must use the tools it has available to channel growth and ensure that it meets critical needs without creating unnecessary roadblocks for desirable developments.

The reader should note that this Plan Element is designed to address new industrial and commercial development areas and the revitalization of areas that are currently used for commercial and industrial activities. Downtown Wapakoneta is excluded from this Plan Element because it has significant differences in physical characteristics and because it is important to the community for reasons that go beyond economic development. Downtown Wapakoneta is the subject of Plan Element #2.

Statements from the Wapakoneta Comprehensive Plan Vision that are reinforced by this Plan Element:

Our community will offer a variety of opportunities for employment, education, shopping, dining and culture.

Wapakoneta’s residents will expect and support high standards for the appearance and efficiency of our business sites.

Wapakoneta will cooperate with surrounding communities to attract businesses and industries strategically and responsibly, enhancing the community’s total quality of life.

Plan Element Strategies:

1. **Continue to revitalize Wapakoneta’s manufacturing sector to support high quality jobs and ensure the best use and reuse of its available industrial property.** Although manufacturing employment and establishments have declined throughout Ohio and the Midwest, there is evidence to suggest that Wapakoneta can complete successfully for specific types of manufacturing employment. This section addresses recommended land use development and redevelopment strategies, but intentionally does not attempt to identify specific types of industries to be recruited. These strategies have been largely developed and are being implemented by the Wapakoneta Area Economic Development Council (WAEDC). It should be noted that workforce readiness may be a key element in recruiting businesses; potential opportunities to expand workforce training in Wapakoneta are addressed in section 3 of this Plan Element, but programming should be developed in close consultation with the types of businesses considering a Wapakoneta location.
 - 1.1 **Aggressively pursue development of the West Central Ohio Industrial Center properties in accordance with the Job Ready Site grant application’s proposed activities and requirements.** The fact that that Wapakoneta’s site was awarded this highly competitive grant in 2006 is a strong indicator of the potential that this site presents. Both the City and the Wapakoneta Area Economic Development Council should continue to place a high priority on supporting this area’s development.
 - 1.1.1. *Evaluate existing zoning applicable to this site to ensure that it does not present any barriers to the types of development desired, does not allow types of development that are not desired, and reasonably controls site development characteristics to ensure that sites do not lose their market value over time.* Although the Job Ready Sites application demonstrates that the property is ready for development, a careful review of existing zoning and the zoning districts that may be applied to the property will help ensure that proposed developments can

proceed smoothly and do not create unintended negative consequences. A thorough review in partnership with the City, WAEDC, the Wapakoneta Chamber of Commerce and existing and potential business owners will help ensure that the City's zoning supports outstanding developments on this site. Particular issues that may require attention include the following:

- ◆ Wapakoneta's existing M-1 Industrial District permits a variety of uses that may not provide the community benefits in terms of jobs and revenues that the City and its economic development partners envision. The existing zoning may also include permitted uses that could discourage more desirable types of land uses from locating in this area. For example, the M-1 District's permitted uses include a variety of salvage, wrecking and landfill operations. A flexible but accurate list of permitted uses will be necessary to ensure that the West Central Ohio Industrial Center properties can be developed for desirable uses.
- ◆ The zoning code's existing height and area requirements may be unnecessarily limiting and may not provide adequate flexibility for all types of sites. A more flexible, performance-based approach to height and area requirements may eliminate potential stumbling blocks due to variance requirements. Conversely, the side yard requirements may not be adequate to maintain the attractive industrial park environment that may be desired.
- ◆ The existing zoning code does not appear to place any requirements on new developments regarding landscaping or access management, and does not specifically address requirements for signs in industrial districts. Poor or nonexistent landscaping and out of scale or flimsy signage may discourage the type of development that is desired by allowing the area to appear poorly regulated and undesirable, while poorly-placed driveways, inadequate turning radii or other access issues may create traffic conflicts or congestion when multiple properties have been developed.

1.1.2. *Address transportation impacts that may result from buildout of the West Central Ohio Industrial Center.* If the full 717 acres is developed for industrial activity, employees' demand for commercial services may create unwanted traffic congestion in the central city as a result of the lack of surface routes connecting the West Central Ohio Industrial Center area to existing and potential commercial and service districts. Although the presence of large numbers of employees at the West Central Ohio Industrial Center location is likely to create new demand for downtown goods and services, excessive traffic congestion could impair the

downtown area's ability to attract customers. Depending on the nature of the area's buildout, one of the following strategies may be necessary:

- ◆ Signs and traffic management tools can be used to route traffic that is not seeking downtown goods and services to Route 33;
- ◆ Willipie Street may require improvements and enhanced traffic management techniques to lessen congestion between the West Central Ohio Industrial Center and downtown;
- ◆ Strategic locations within the West Central Ohio Industrial Center area may be designated for locally-oriented commercial or service uses, such as restaurants, mailing services or support offices.

1.2 **Avoid permitting land outside of the West Central Ohio Industrial Center from being broken for industrial development until the area has been largely built out, and until redevelopment or reuse of existing industrial sites has been pursued.** As noted previously, the West Central Ohio Industrial Center area represents an extremely large amount of undeveloped land to which the City and State have committed significant investments. These investments should be as fully maximized as possible before additional infrastructure expenditures to support industrial development are considered; otherwise the City may find itself supporting underutilized infrastructure and incurring more costs for constructing and maintaining infrastructure than it is receiving from the investments.

1.3 **Use the success of the West Central Ohio Industrial Center to facilitate redevelopment of existing industrial areas on the south side of Wapakoneta south of the railroad right of way.** Wapakoneta has a significant amount of land that is currently used for industrial activities, and like many older industrial cities, some of this land is being used productively and other areas are vacant or being used for marginal purposes. Of the existing industrial areas, the area with the greatest opportunity for continued industrial success is the area designated as the North Industrial Concept Area - the triangular area on the south side of the City bounded to the north and east by the railroad right of way and on the south by U.S. 33. This area includes both newer industrial park-style development along Industrial Drive and older urban industrial areas closer to the City core. Redevelopment of this land should be one of the City's key future priorities, both because these areas can support economic activity, and because allowing them to continue to deteriorate will create severe challenges to the health and viability of surrounding areas and the City in general.

Revitalizing or redeveloping these sites is a complex legal and technical issue that requires extensive education; this discussion can only scratch the surface of the issue and orient the reader to some of the key issues.

1.3.1 Maintain and intensify existing land uses. The area between the railroad right of way north of Plum Street and U.S. 33 should continue to have predominantly industrial land uses, although these may be mixed with office and distribution uses as necessary. Commercial land uses should not be permitted, although a commercial outlet in conjunction with an industrial establishment may be permissible if appropriate site development standards can be met. A small amount of convenience commercial activity may also be permitted in conjunction with intensive development, provided that it is designed for local, predominately walk-up customers rather than generating additional vehicular traffic.

1.3.2 Develop a comprehensive strategy for addressing brownfield redevelopment. Older industrial areas can be very desirable because of their existing buildings, existing infrastructure and excellent access to both potential employees and regional transportation networks. However, existing industrial areas also present a high level of investment risk, largely as a result of potential liability to new owners that may result from environmentally damaging materials used by previous occupants. These risks often prevent potential new owners or users from being able to find funding for their plans, and may scare off potential new owners who fear being sued over contamination that they inherited with the site.

Older industrial areas are often known as “brownfields,” which are defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) as “Abandoned, idled, or underused industrial or commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination.” (www.epa.gov). Designation as a brownfield does not guarantee that a site has environmental contamination: a brownfield is a site whose potential for being reused is impaired by real or perceived environmental contamination. Brownfields have become particularly difficult to redevelop in the past 20 years, as concerns over potential liability for contamination led many business owners and developers to reject existing industrial sites as feasible business sites. As a result, brownfield sites are particularly likely to be abandoned or minimally used, they are often not well maintained and they are likely to remain in this state for years unless something is done to make the site more marketable.

With very few exceptions, most existing industrial sites in Wapakoneta are likely to be considered brownfields by potential users. Given their age and history of more intensive industrial use, the properties between the railroad right of way and the north parcel lines of the properties fronting onto Industrial Drive are particularly likely to experience the classic brownfield pattern of disinvestment

and deterioration. To facilitate the redevelopment of these properties, the following strategies should be considered:

- ◆ Familiarize community and business leaders with the Ohio EPA Voluntary Action Plan (VAP) program, which allows properties that have contamination to be remediated to a level appropriate to the proposed future land uses, instead of requiring complete remediation. The program also creates a legal mechanism through which property owners can avoid future liability for any unanticipated impacts from the preexisting contamination, a process that makes reinvestment in an existing industrial site a much safer business proposition.
- ◆ Develop a matching grant program to help fund Part 1 evaluations for existing industrial sites. Part 1 evaluations are inexpensive investigations that consist of record searches and site sampling to determine whether environmental contamination is, in fact, likely to exist on a given site. A site whose Part 1 evaluation does not indicate likely contamination may be more easily marketed with that information, while a site whose Part 1 evaluation does indicate likely contamination can be targeted for more intensive intervention. Funding for such a program could come from a variety of sources, including Small Cities Community Development Block Grant funds and private donors.
- ◆ Build relationships with brownfield investment specialists, including developers, realty advisors, legal advisors and environmental insurance specialists. In most major Midwest industrial centers, brownfield revitalization specialists have become a “niche” market consisting of people who understand brownfield situations better than most practitioners and who have a better chance of capitalizing on the significant profits to be made with a high-risk, desirable product.

1.3.3 Evaluate strategies for facilitating site assembly in areas dominated by small parcels. A second issue that may impair redevelopment of older industrial properties is the fact that older industrial sites often have smaller lot sizes than conventional modern facilities. As a result, a potential business may be required to assemble multiple smaller parcels in order to create a sufficient building or expansion site. If surrounding property owners are unable or unwilling to sell enough property, then the site will probably not be developed. The City can work through the WAEDC or its Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) to purchase strategic parcels at market rates when the opportunity presents itself, and then hold that property until it can be sold to help assemble properties for a business’s redevelopment or expansion. Increased funding for such programs can be established as a revolving loan.

1.3.4 Evaluate strategies for establishing a business incubator in the North Industrial Concept Area. Business incubators provide several benefits:

- ◆ they foster the growth of new, locally-based industries,
- ◆ they create a positive environment for entrepreneurs,
- ◆ they allow the City to promote itself as a good business opportunity, and
- ◆ they create a low-impact use for vacant or underutilized buildings.

Business incubators usually generate income, and some may be self-sustaining, although most receive support from a nonprofit agency or federal entitlement funds. Incubator space is usually available to start-up businesses, and incubator members may share administrative services and conference facilities as a means of lessening their operating costs. Business incubator occupants usually “graduate” from the incubator when they reach a size and economic sufficiency that will permit them to fund their own space and administrative services.

Business incubators currently exist in Lima and Dayton, as well as several other locations in the State. A small business incubator in Wapakoneta may provide an excellent opportunity for generating a new crop of small industries that may later populate the City’s industrial areas and increasing the city’s profile as a desirable business location.

1.3.5 Review existing zoning requirements to identify any potential barriers to redevelopment and strategies for fostering high-quality redevelopment. Similar to the issues discussed in Item 1 above, the existing M-2 and M-1 zoning districts currently applied to this area may include some permitted uses that do not reinforce the Vision. They may also create unnecessary barriers to redevelopment and may not adequately address the City’s need to ensure quality appearances and site design if properties are redeveloped. A comprehensive review of these zoning districts should be pursued, and they should be revised to ensure that they carry out the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

1.3.6 Actively support the transition of all lands currently used for industrial activities north of Plum Street to uses compatible with their surroundings. One of the characteristics of most older industrial cities are pockets of moderate or heavy industrial activities in close conjunction to relatively sensitive resources, such as residential neighborhoods, central business districts and rivers. Wapakoneta has several of these pockets, the largest being located along the south edge of the Auglaize River and extending to the edge of the central business district. Two smaller sites are located between Court and Blackhoof streets and near the

intersection of Vine and Park streets. Each site is zoned for a more appropriate use, but that use has not materialized. In most cases, demolition or adaptive reuse needs, as well as environmental remediation requirements, will increase the costs of redevelopment to such an extent that the City may be required to play an active role in helping develop funding or providing incentives. Recommendations for the most important redevelopment sites are as follows:

- ◆ **Park and Vine Street area.** This site is currently zoned for M-2 Industrial and Commercial uses. It would be difficult to reuse for residential purposes due to its proximity to the railroad tracks and the higher levels of environmental remediation necessary. Potential beneficial uses include a medical office building or new neighborhood commercial development. This redevelopment could occur through market forces if the land becomes available, but the site may need additional promotion.
- ◆ **Plum and Blackhoof Street area.** This site is currently zoned for general business, but it is located in the center of a residential block. This area should be reused for residential development, although any environmental contamination will make a market development difficult. If there is significant contamination, it may be possible to use state or federal funding for environmental remediation issues that impact resident health to facilitate its cleanup. Higher density residential development may be necessary.
- ◆ **South of the Auglaize River and west of Water Street.** As noted in the Introduction, this area includes a number of 19th and early 20th century industrial buildings, many of which are still in use. However, there is little room for expansion or building improvements in this area, which is immediately next to Downtown Wapakoneta. If current users vacate this area, the existing historic-era building would provide a good opportunity for offices, studios and other similar uses.

2. Facilitate retail redevelopment and controlled amounts of new development to provide a wider range of shopping and services to Wapakoneta’s residents (Figure 7). Although there are no basic products or services that are not available to Wapakoneta’s residents, evidence indicates that there are market niches and specific goods and services that could be profitably provided in Wapakoneta. Attracting these businesses will depend in part upon Wapakoneta’s demographic and income characteristics, but also on the market’s awareness of Wapakoneta’s business opportunities. Wapakoneta is likely to see a modest increase in basic retail and service providers without significant recruitment effort as a result of the increasing fragmentation of retail and service markets and the increasing oversaturation of larger markets, such as Dayton and Lima.

2.1 Limit commercial development on undeveloped, “greenfield” sites, particularly in the Bellefontaine corridor, unless the development will help catalyze high quality redevelopment. Although conventional developers generally prefer to build on new sites, rather than deal with issues surrounding reuse of existing sites, permitting a large amount of new development on greenfield sites will divert demand from existing sites that need redevelopment, and result instead in development of sites that require potentially expensive extensions of utilities and infrastructure. Undeveloped land should not be zoned or annexed for retail development.

It may, however, be in the City’s best interest to permit development of a new commercial site if the proposed development will catalyze high quality redevelopment. This may be the case if the proposed development will:

- ◆ Follow much higher standards for architecture, site design, traffic access, etc. than surrounding properties;
- ◆ Includes a collection of retailers or entertainment destinations with sufficient cachet to help reposition the Corridor as a retail/entertainment destination;
- ◆ Include redevelopment of frontage sites to ensure high levels of visibility;
- ◆ Address other important City interests, such as providing workforce training facilities or remediating an environmentally contaminated site.

Perhaps most importantly, a successful catalyst greenfield development will require that the City have in place zoning and design review processes that will both require high quality development and provide sufficient flexibility to permit innovative site designs. The zoning code at present does not provide the City with these valuable tools.

2.2 Revitalize the Bellefontaine Corridor. More than ever, Bellefontaine Street functions as Wapakoneta’s “front door.” This corridor is seen by more visitors and residents than any other single part of the City, and both new residents and visitors will form a large part of their impressions of the City based on this corridor’s appearance and function. The challenges facing this corridor are discussed in the Concept Areas analysis. Improving the appearance and economic vitality of this district is one of the City’s most critical issues at this time.

Based on successful corridors across Ohio, a successful Bellefontaine corridor will have the following characteristics:

- ◆ A fine-grained and varied mix of retail, offices, services and other destinations that creates an environment that one visits for a variety of reasons, rather than just for basic shopping.

- ◆ Changes in density and use to visually and functionally break up the corridor into a series of interesting nodes of activity.
- ◆ High-quality buildings with attractive architectural designs whose front façades parallel Bellefontaine Street.
- ◆ Landscaping around buildings, in islands within parking lots, and in all other appropriate locations.
- ◆ Facilities that not only permit walking, but make walking comfortable, such as wide sidewalks with shade trees and dedicated walkways within parking lots and between buildings.
- ◆ Driveway locations and spacing that reasonably limit the number of access points, which frees up additional space for businesses and lessens the potential for traffic conflicts.
- ◆ Reasonable but attractive streetscape features, such as gateway markers, landscaping and ornamental streetlights. Since these items would be on the public right of way, they are addressed in a later Plan Element.

To reach this future, the following strategies should be pursued:

- ◆ Revise the existing zoning code. Zoning code revisions should provide a high level of flexibility, but should include detailed requirements for:
- ◆ Requiring buildings to be oriented to the street right of way, rather than to the rear lot line.
- ◆ High quality architectural treatments, such as building surface materials and building form.
- ◆ Site design standards, including landscaping, parking lot design and layout, driveways and ground-mounted signage.

Figures 8 and 9 in this section provide conceptual illustrations of how new construction on the number of small Bellefontaine Street sites can be enhanced through modestly enhanced land use regulations, such as are in effect and being successfully used in cities across the State of Ohio. These graphics show a collection of three parcels that are located on the south side of Bellefontaine Street, and were designed to fit within the constraints of these existing sites. A few features of these graphics should particularly be noted:

- ◆ The buildings are faced in brick and have hipped roofs, residential-scale windows and door surrounds and modest architectural ornamentation. Such features are commonly included in land use regulations for commercial corridors in Ohio and across the Midwest.
- ◆ Although each building maintains its own parking area, both parking areas are served by a single driveway. This access management technique lessens the number of curb cuts that are necessary to serve the businesses and increases the safety of Bellefontaine Street by lessening the number of opportunities for rear-end or left-turning accidents.
- ◆ The site's total parking area is partially shifted to the rear of the building. This allows the building to be closer to the street and lessens the visual impact of the parking lot, while meeting typical commercial expectations of immediately accessible parking. This arrangement also places more parking spaces in closer proximity to the building, which can be beneficial for providing accessible spaces for handicapped users.
- ◆ The site's parking area is bounded by modest landscaping, including a narrow tree lawn, a sidewalk that has been shifted slightly away from the roadway, a few trees and bushes and a small picket fence. It should be noted that other desirable landscaping features, such as landscaped refuge islands within the parking area or a walkway from the sidewalk to the building, are not possible under the City's existing off-street parking requirements, which may be excessive for a building of this size.

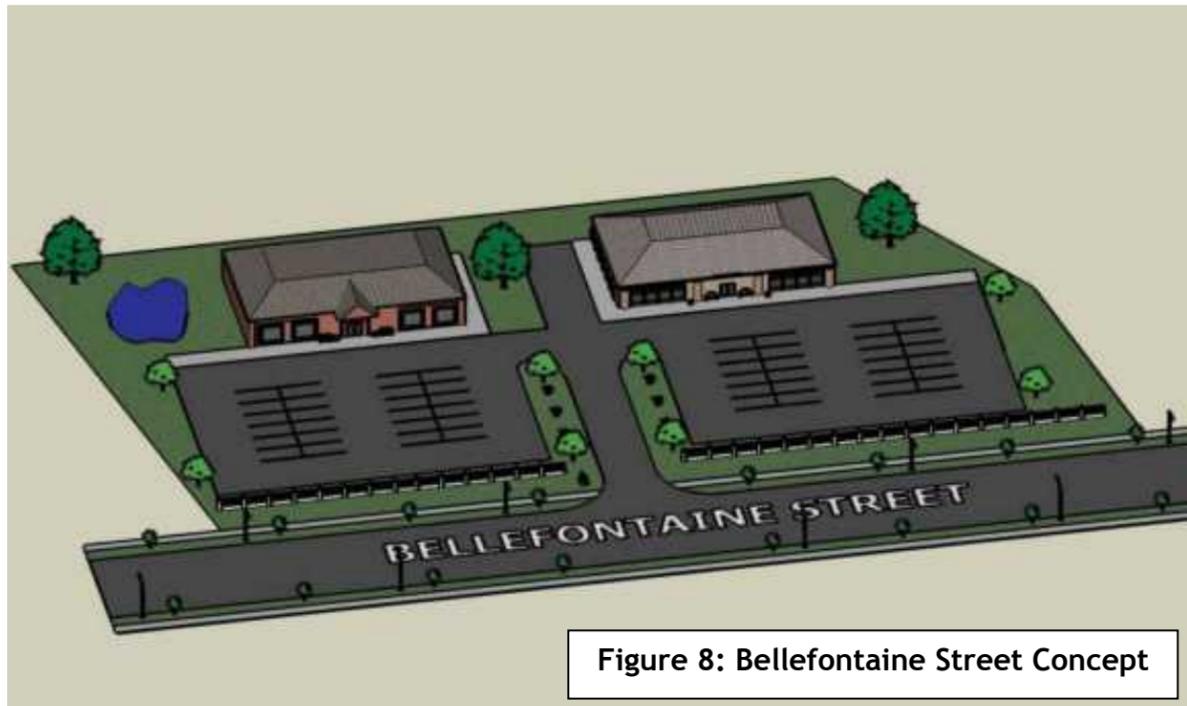


Figure 8: Bellefontaine Street Concept



Figure 9: Bellefontaine Street Concept

◆ The site orients the buildings so that their front facades are parallel to Bellefontaine Street, which runs in a northwesterly direction, rather than to the rear lot lines, which are exactly east-west. Like many parcels along Wapakoneta’s main thoroughfares, these parcels are not rectangular, but have rear lot lines that are oriented to cardinal compass points and front lot lines that extend at an angle, making a trapezoidal lot with the non-square angles along the front façade. The existing zoning code does not require a building’s primary façade to be parallel to the roadway it faces, and a large number of existing buildings on Bellefontaine and other major corridors in Wapakoneta parallel their back lot lines and appear to be angled on their site when viewed from the public right of way. This creates a ragged street appearance and makes side facades, which are usually less finished than the front façade, highly visible to passerby. This orientation also often results in odd un used spaces along the front lot line, particularly when the orientation of the building to the rear lot lines and the demand for parking in front of the building leads to a rectangular parking lot and a small triangular strip of land along the street front. Although some of these spaces are well maintained, many are not, and it is likely that a site that requires stormwater detention ponds or other such features will put it in this irregular triangle, where it will be highly visible (this is the case with the retention pond in front of the Wal Mart facility on Bellefontaine Street.) The Concept Design in Figures 8 and 9 places a small stormwater retention pond on such a corner, but it is located at the rear of the property because the building and parking lot are square to the street frontage.

2.2.1 *Negotiate with owners of deteriorated or unattractive properties to improve their sites, particularly with regard to such items as unmaintained parking lots, deteriorated facades, retention pond, fencing and deteriorated signage.* Although property owners will be under no legal obligation to make any improvements, it may be possible to convince owners or managers to invest in modest site improvements that will allow it to demonstrate that it is a “good neighbor” and generate positive publicity. For example, replacing the fence around the retention pond at Wal-Mart with a more ornamental type of fence and adding some landscaping would help to improve the appearance of the entire Corridor and establish a higher standard for site improvements.

2.2.2 *Avoid expanding the corridor any further to the northwest than its current Wagner Avenue terminus, although appropriate redevelopment of the*



narrow industrial site at the corner of Benton and Bellefontaine should be encouraged if possible. Permitting commercial development northwest of this location could weaken redevelopment efforts on the rest of the Bellefontaine corridor by diluting the concentration of improved properties and lessening the opportunity to create a “keeping up with the neighbors” effect among existing and future property owners. Given the size of lots in this area, it is also likely that any new commercial develop in this area would perpetuate the small-scale and piecemeal appearance of the Bellefontaine Street Corridor. It is also possible that additional commercial expansion to the northwest would further weaken the residential neighborhoods of the Postwar Boom and Old Town Concept Areas. If commercial redevelopment is desired in the future, strict regulatory standards and potentially active public sector economic development activity would be necessary to ensure consistent and attractive development that will have long-term value for both the City and surrounding residents. For example, an overlay could be placed on this segment of the Bellefontaine Street corridor requiring coordinated development standards or the reuse of existing buildings for commercial activity.

2.3 Permit new commercial/service developments in other strategic locations, particularly the Defiance/Redskin Trail area. Although commercial development may be expected to continue to concentrate at the Bellefontaine intersection, the Defiance Street/Redskin Trail area on the north end of the City will provide significant opportunities for small-scale commercial and service development oriented to the needs of surrounding residents and visitors to the area’s destinations, most notably Wapakoneta High School. This area can provide a fine-grained, walkable mix of commercial and neighborhood services. Buildings should be designed to maintain a neighborhood scale, and they should include substantial landscaping. Pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods should also be required to the greatest extent possible.

3. Increase Wapakoneta’s access to office employment and office-based services, including medical and educational facilities. As previously documented, Wapakoneta’s access to medical and education facilities, and to employment types that are primarily office-based, is significantly lower than desired, and less than might be expected in a community of this size. The commercial revitalization and new construction discussed in section 3 above includes several references to office uses interspersed with more conventional commercial activities, a strategy that both provides multiple reasons to visit a location and creates a built-in customer base for the retailers in the form of office employees and office visitors. Office uses are also compatible with the industrial uses discussed in section 1 above, since office uses and industrial uses often occur together. However, there are two other types of offices that would further benefit Wapakoneta:

- ◆ *Destination employment offices.* Destination offices are places that people travel to for the purpose of doing office work, often professional or technical services. These facilities require multi-acre sites, good highway access, and convenience to employees. They do not need to be highly visible, although some prefer high visibility locations as a marketing tool. They may create localized traffic congestion at the beginning and end of the conventional business day.
- ◆ *Destination service providers.* These offices provide a regional destination for people seeking a specific service, such as education or medical care. These facilities require relatively large sites, good highway access, and high visibility. Depending on the specifics of their operation, they have the potential to generate very large waves of traffic at peak times.

Given recent trends, it appears more likely that a destination medical facility, such as a hospital or urgent care center, may be constructed in Wapakoneta in the near to mid term future than an educational facility, although interest in Wapakoneta from educational facilities may increase if a large employer builds on the Job Ready Sites location. Destination Employment offices have no significant history of locating in Wapakoneta, but the reported trend of corporate executives residing in Shawnee Township and Lima may create some new opportunities for this type of development.

- 3.1 Recruit a destination employment office development to Wapakoneta as a means of diversifying Wapakoneta’s employment opportunities, preferably to a new development or redevelopment site along Wood Street/ Dixie Highway on the north end of the City.** This corridor has several advantages that would benefit efforts to facilitate destination office development, including convenience to the interstate, convenient access to Allen County residents and business establishments, roadway capacity and rural, wooded sites suitable for campus-style office developments. Sites that provide natural water bodies may be particularly desirable, although water bodies can be created as part of a development site. A potential recruitment strategy would target businesses that have industrial operations in Lima that may desire a more attractive and more convenient headquarters or back office location to attract and retain skilled employees.
- 3.2 Support efforts to attract an urgent care facility and/or outpatient care facility to Wapakoneta, preferably to a site in or near the Old Town or Postwar Boom Concept Areas.** Likely candidates may include clinics associated with Wapakoneta doctors and regional health care facilities. Developing health care facilities will benefit the City both by increasing access to health care and adding high-paying jobs, but it will also exacerbate demand for improved transportation options between the east and west sides of the City.
- 3.3 Recruit a workforce training facility and/or a community or technical college branch, preferably to be located near the interchanges of Interstate 75 or U.S. 33.** Increasing access to postsecondary education is probably one of the most critical issues facing Wapakoneta’s economic future: as Key Person Interviews with business leaders indicated, the types of manufacturing that have the potential to be recruited to Wapakoneta will require specialized skills and additional training. Although Wapakoneta’s residents have access to such training in Lima, providing these facilities in Wapakoneta will help build the city’s economic competitiveness and will raise the City’s profile in terms of the quality of available employees. Current trends in state funding and economic development priorities may also provide opportunities for establishing workforce development and higher education facilities in Wapakoneta, since increasing Ohio employees’ competitiveness has been established as a high priority for the current gubernatorial administration.

Whether this need is for non-degreed work force training or for programs resulting in a degree or certification will depend on the type of businesses that occupy the Job Ready Sites area and other industrial properties.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



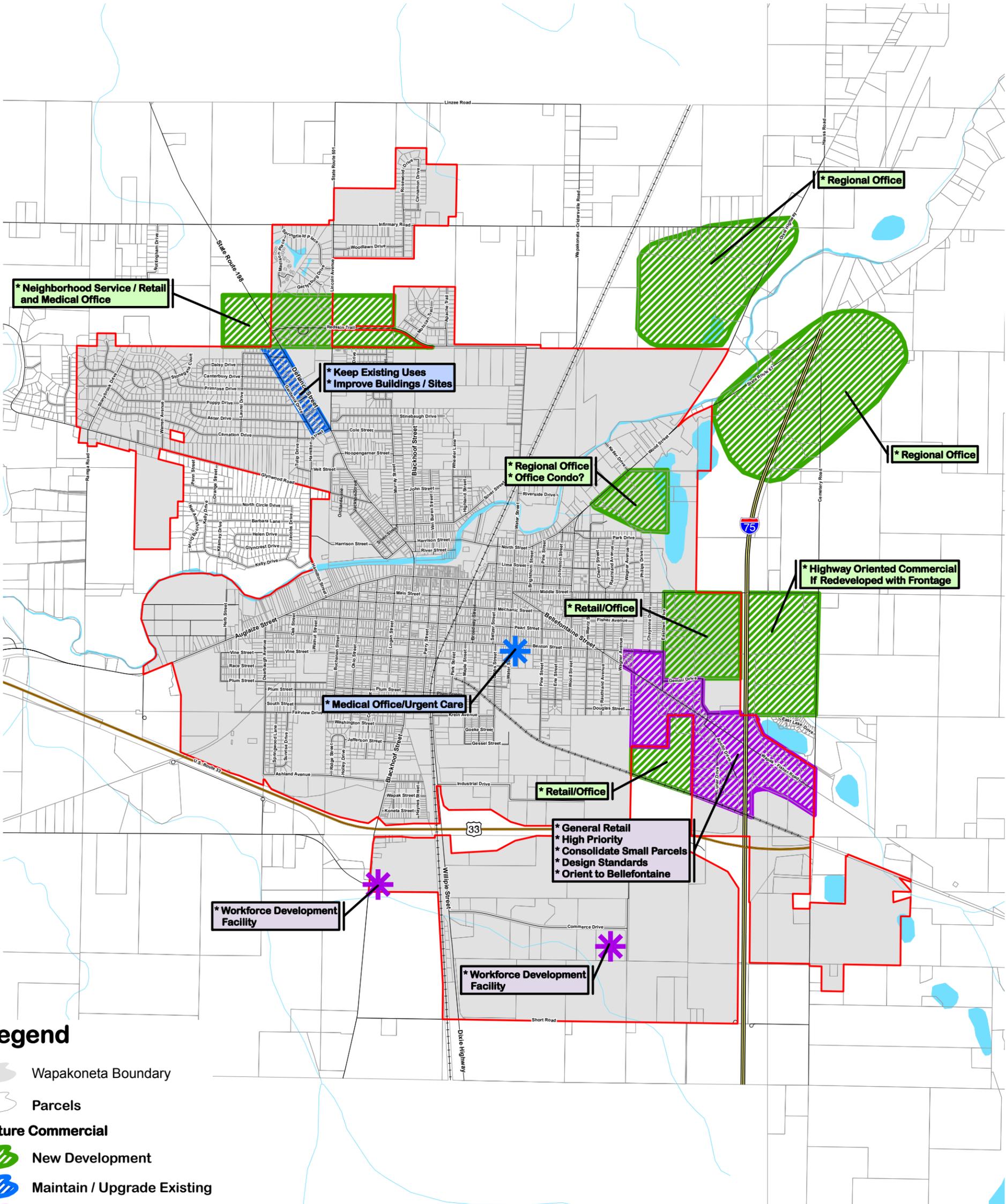
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★

Source: Auglaize County GIS Department / Windshield Survey



Future Commercial

Figure 9



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



Plan Element #2: Downtown Revitalization

Introduction

Feedback from Wapakoneta’s residents and Steering Committee members has indicated that maintaining a healthy and vibrant downtown that functions as the heart of the community is one of the highest priorities for Wapakoneta’s future. The survey results indicate a continued strong interest in maintaining downtown Wapakoneta’s attractiveness and role in the community, and that people desired that downtown Wapakoneta remain a destination for goods and services.

Surveys and comments from the Steering Committee also indicated a significant interest in improved public access to the Auglaize River, and the segment of the river immediately north of

Downtown Wapakoneta at Heritage Park is one of the most widely know public access locations.

Downtown Wapakoneta embodies many of the trends that have characterized small city central business districts for much of the late 20th and early 21st century. Originally developed as a commerce center for both City residents and people from throughout the countryside and villages, many of Downtown Wapakoneta’s historic market functions have been replaced over time by newer developments in outlying areas of the city and by commercial centers elsewhere in the region. Downtown Wapakoneta has maintained a large number of basic retail and service providers to date and has supplemented these with specialty retail, services and restaurants.

However, Downtown Wapakoneta is experiencing a number of ongoing challenges, including:

- ◆ Storefront vacancies
- ◆ Upper story vacancies
- ◆ Deferred maintenance to historic buildings
- ◆ Inappropriate alterations to historic buildings
- ◆ A lack of connection to the Riverfront
- ◆ Vacant and underutilized property along the eastern and western edges of the Downtown area.

These characteristics are familiar to dozens of small cities and villages across the State of Ohio, where changes in shopping and entertainment habits over the late 20th century have weakened many central business districts’ ability to compete for successful businesses, shoppers and patrons. Although many downtowns still support a vibrant mix of shops, services and entertainment facilities, most successful downtown businesses have shifted from simply providing basic goods and services to filling specialty niches or providing a type of service that is not available from conventional basic retailers.

Perhaps more importantly, successful downtowns are increasingly capitalizing on a role in the community that used to be taken for granted: the role of the center, or “heart” of the community. Downtowns have always served as the place where community-wide events occur, where informal public interaction is most likely to take place, and as the place that is most commonly identified with the city in people’s imaginations. But as cities become increasingly complex, and as the variety of types of places continues to grow, successful downtowns are increasingly those that have a strong “sense of place” - that is, a perception of being unique, a reputation for being an exciting and interesting place where people will go because downtown is a place where people want to be. This role as the heart of the community goes beyond simply buying and selling goods and services, although stores and service providers continue to be critical elements of what makes a successful downtown. However, since shoppers have so many more shopping options than they did when Downtown was first constructed, successful downtowns provide more than just goods and services. Successful downtowns provide a complex and interesting mix of activities - from public events to informal “hanging out,” and from entertainment to living and shopping.

Perhaps the best news for Downtown Wapakoneta comes in two elements:

- ◆ Wapakoneta has a downtown with excellent potential. One of Downtown Wapakoneta’s greatest assets is its buildings - Downtown Wapakoneta offers a unique environment that is markedly different from every other place in the City and from most of the places where Wapakoneta residents usually go. Wapakoneta is also unique from other downtowns, since Wapakoneta’s mix of buildings and businesses are different from any other downtown. And as every retailer knows, uniqueness that is attractive makes a product more valuable.
- ◆ The challenges that Downtown Wapakoneta has faced are not unique to Wapakoneta. People and organizations across the United States have been working on strategies for addressing the same issues that Downtown Wapakoneta is facing, and they have been doing so for over 30 years. Several very successful small city revitalization efforts are located within a few hours’ drive of Wapakoneta, and exhaustive information on what has worked and what has not is readily available to anyone willing to look for it. Wapakoneta has an outstanding opportunity to benefit from this body of knowledge - a large portion of which was developed in communities facing precisely the same as Wapakoneta. Wapakoneta will have little need to reinvent the wheel - the biggest challenge will probably be sorting through all of the available information to find the strategies that will fit Wapakoneta best.

Capitalizing on Downtown Wapakoneta’s opportunities, however, will require a more proactive, more coordinated and more focused approach than the City and persons interested in Downtown have historically taken. A passive or helpless attitude toward downtown will ensure that current trends continue for the following reasons:



- ◆ Neither small businesses nor nonprofits can do it alone - they must work in an active partnership with the City. Successful downtown revitalization almost always requires a coordinated public-private partnership that makes the central business district a priority. Cities have access to resources that small businesses and nonprofits do not have, and nonprofits and the private sector can tap resources that governments cannot supply. Both public and private sector resources, ranging from grants to sources of volunteer labor, must be marshaled to meet downtown's objectives.
- ◆ Revitalizing Downtown Wapakoneta will take years - longer than a political term of office, and longer than many volunteers will be able to continue with the effort. Downtowns never get to the point of needing revitalization overnight, and Downtown's challenges will not disappear overnight, either. Real downtown revitalization will take time, and everyone involved should remember that the reasons why downtowns decline are complicated and multi-faceted. One-shot fixes, such as large construction projects, don't usually create real change unless they are partnered with a range of other approaches.
- ◆ Downtown Wapakoneta's uniqueness and value are directly linked to its buildings, and preserving those buildings requires diligent enforcement of regulations and a community that supports that enforcement. Just because a building is old does not mean its owners should have free rein to do whatever they want. Maintaining the quality of the appearance, structure and systems that make up older buildings is critical. In general, the materials and the construction technologies that were used to build historic buildings cannot be replicated completely today, and a historic-era building that is lost or loses its historic character will irreversibly change how Downtown Wapakoneta looks and feels.

Finally, the reader may note that this Plan Element includes little discussion of whether or not particular land uses should or should not be permitted in Downtown Wapakoneta. This is because downtowns work best when they include a variety of land uses, preferably mixed together. Retail and service establishments, offices, entertainment, dining and even some forms of light industry (such as artists' studios or handicrafts) can all function well within a downtown area, and this mix of uses allows downtown establishments to reinforce each other by providing multiple reasons to visit and convenient local customers for an establishment's goods and services. One critical element of this mix in many communities is residents, who often inhabit upper-story spaces that may have been used for offices in the past but which are not compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Rather than use conventional zoning approaches to dictate land uses, Wapakoneta would likely benefit from a performance-based approach that permits a wide range of potential uses, provided that the applicant can prove that the proposed use will not have negative impacts on surrounding

land uses. This approach is more likely to generate the variety of uses that successful downtowns require while at the same time meeting the needs of downtown building occupants to be protected from negative impacts that could result from their neighbors' activities. This regulatory strategy will be discussed in more detail in Plan Element #5.

Statements from the Wapakoneta Comprehensive Plan Vision that are reinforced by this Plan Element:

Our community will offer a variety of opportunities for employment, education, shopping, dining and culture.

Wapakoneta will offer a variety of attractive and well maintained housing options for people of all ages, lifestyles and incomes.

Wapakoneta's residents will expect and support high standards for the appearance and efficiency of our business sites.

Our major corridors, public areas and key entry points will demonstrate that Wapakoneta is a place people want to be.

We will preserve Wapakoneta's historic landmarks, green space and natural beauty.

Wapakoneta residents will enjoy outstanding indoor and outdoor recreational resources, including our natural spaces.

People will travel the City comfortably and safely by car, on foot or on a bicycle.

Plan Strategies:

1. Continue current efforts to establish an advocate organization for Downtown Wapakoneta that includes a wide variety of public and private sectors participants.

The Downtown Wapakoneta Partnership (DWP) is, at the time of this writing, pursuing efforts to develop a more robust downtown revitalization program, and is exploring the Main Street Approach © as a model for its future efforts. These efforts are critical for the future of Downtown Wapakoneta and the City as a whole, and should be fully supported by the City, local institutions and businesses and residents.

Although communities are sometimes reluctant to give downtowns special attention out of a fear that other neighborhoods will be perceived as being less important, downtowns need concentrated attention from people and organizations who are focused on making the central business district successful. This concentrated attention is necessary for several reasons. First, downtowns generally have the most intensive development pattern in the City - there are more buildings, more elaborate and on average larger buildings, in a downtown than in any other part of the City. Second, downtowns tend to include a much wider and more varied mix of uses than in any other part of town. Whereas other neighborhoods may be dominated by houses, or factories, or stores, downtowns can easily include all of these uses and many more, creating a level of complexity that requires detailed attention. Finally, downtowns often include more of a City's formal public spaces and informal public gathering places than any other single neighborhood of the City, and they tend to have more visitors and more through traffic than any other area, making the downtown area much more visible and much more capable of influencing the popular perception of the city than any other neighborhood. For these reasons, it is good public policy to support organizations and people that are focused on Downtown Wapakoneta. The downtown revitalization organization typically becomes the lynchpin that allows the rest of the public and private sector community to mobilize its resources around downtown and translate good intentions and ideas into action.

The Downtown Wapakoneta Partnership has historically operated as a business association, typically a loose affiliation of downtown business operators that strives to coordinate and maintain communication among downtown business operators. However, downtown business organizations generally have limited capacity to instigate downtown revitalization - they usually lack the organizational capacity, the funding and the community support necessary to turn around a faltering district. Without staff and a funding source, downtown business organizations usually find that they lack the manpower and the funding to implement the types of initiatives that are critical to changing perceptions or recruiting new businesses and customers. Perhaps most significantly, however, downtown business associations often struggle to assert downtown's importance within the social and political context of the City. Without participation from a wide cross-section of the community, it

becomes very difficult for downtown small business owners to assert that the level of downtown investment needed will benefit the entire city.

An effective downtown revitalization organization needs:

- ◆ *People.* A base of volunteer participants that is drawn from the widest possible cross section of the community, including residents, political leaders, social organizations, business operators outside of the downtown area, and downtown business and property owners. This cross-section of volunteers is needed for everything from the Board of Directors to manning special events.
- ◆ *Promotion and Events.* In many communities with downtowns that need revitalization, residents may have lost the habit of going downtown on a regular basis. As a result of this trend, residents may tend to assume that "there is nothing interesting downtown" or that downtown is "dead," when its offerings have simply fallen out of their personal experience. One of the critical challenges of every downtown revitalization program is changing negative perceptions, and this is usually done through a combination of promoting positive downtown developments and hosting special events that give people a reason to come downtown. Although not all downtown events will generate increased same-day sales for all downtown businesses, successful events will increase visitation to downtown, allowing visitors to discover businesses and destinations that they did not know or had forgotten and improving their perception of downtown as an enjoyable place to be.
- ◆ *Strategies for supporting and growing small businesses.* Although a downtown's role in a community goes far beyond buying and selling, there is no question that a healthy and interesting mix of shops, service providers, restaurants and other businesses are critical to downtown success. Small businesses, however, are fragile, and just because downtown insiders know that a business opportunity exists does not mean that the person capable of operating that business will open up in downtown. Effective downtown revitalization organizations help downtown establishments succeed by helping them communicate and helping them find the resources and opportunities they need, and they help potential new business operators uncover opportunities.



Although there are a variety of downtown organizational structures, The Main Street Approach © developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides a proven model that is designed for a downtown of Wapakoneta's size and characteristics. The National Main Street Center and Downtown Ohio, Inc. (the state organization that coordinates Main Street programs in Ohio) are also excellent resources in terms of information and networking opportunities that can help communities that are new to downtown revitalization learn about tools and techniques that may address their needs. Wapakoneta is familiar with the Main Street Approach © as a result of a DART visit and report prepared by Downtown Ohio Inc. in 2004 under the sponsorship of the Wapakoneta Chamber of Commerce. Persons interested in downtown Wapakoneta's long-term viability should carefully review the results of that report and evaluate strategies for implementing a new downtown revitalization organization.

generally will not occur in places where the properties next to the development site will be allowed to deteriorate or be poorly maintained in such a way as to lessen the value of the redeveloped property.

- 2. Continue to improve downtown building maintenance and ensure that alterations are sensitive to downtown's unique historic character.** Persons who have limited experience with historic preservation often view policies on treatment of older buildings as an all-or-nothing proposition: either one must require perfect, museum-quality preservation, or one must permit any type of alteration that offers some hope of making an older building "workable." The fact of the matter, however, is that the most appropriate treatment for most older buildings is somewhere in between. Buildings need to be permitted to change over time - both to allow repairs and to accommodate the upgrades necessary to meet new social and technological needs. However, it is critical for a community to maintain those aspects of older buildings that define the *character* of an area, particularly a downtown. Features that define an area's character will vary, but may include the size and spacing of buildings, their materials, their architectural features and the look and feel of the pedestrian environment. If a downtown loses these characteristics through either loss of buildings or alterations that damage or obscure important features, then the downtown becomes less unique, and thus less valuable.

As Wapakoneta has recently discovered, the building codes that govern alterations to historic buildings can be interpreted with a high degree of flexibility, flexibility that can allow older and historic buildings to meet safety requirements without forcing alterations that damage the character of the downtown area. Wapakoneta needs to continue to ensure that enforcement of building codes maintains this flexibility and that downtown building owners understand both the requirements of the code and the flexibility that it provides. One of the strongest themes of the community participation gathered for this plan was dissatisfaction among residents regarding the City and downtown's current maintenance and appearance and demand for higher quality redevelopment. Higher quality redevelopment

2.1 Develop a package of incentives to help encourage downtown building maintenance and sensitive alterations. As noted in the introduction, successful downtown revitalization will require a more proactive approach than has been traditionally taken toward Downtown Wapakoneta. Although the word “incentive” may appear to imply large costs, effective inducements to appropriate downtown building treatments do not have to be costly, and can be implemented to a great extent by drawing on existing resources. Again, detailed models of these and a variety of other incentives can be found through Main Street sources and other programs. The advocacy organization in #1 above would be the preferred administrator of these programs, since the City has no such capacity and will have other important roles to play.

- ◆ Educational opportunities regarding appropriate methods for repairing, updating or improving historic buildings. The Ohio State Historical Society’s Building Doctor program is an excellent example of an effective educational method, which can be supplemented by media coverage and printed materials.
- ◆ Information regarding the unique funding resources that owners of historic buildings can access, including the federal Certified Historic Structures Investment Tax Credit and the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit. The federal Investment Tax Credit is one of very few federal income tax credits remaining, and can be either used by the building owner or sold to an investor as a way to generate up-front financing.
- ◆ Targeted seed grants. Seed grants involve a small amount of cost, but can have an impact that far exceeds the size of the grant. Most seed grants are targeted to specific improvements that are needed by several buildings in the area, such as signs, painting or removing inappropriate materials. A seed bank pool of as little as \$2,000 can provide a matching grant of \$500 for four projects, which can be enough to encourage a small business or property owner to install a more appropriate sign or paint a façade.
- ◆ Competitions. Competitions for a small cash prize can be used to target either desired building improvements (such as a prize for the best storefront window), or to help encourage new businesses. One particularly effective competition, which is run by the Chippewa Falls Main Street program in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin, established a yearly competitive grant and/or access to a low-interest loan for the business plan judged to be the best by a panel of bankers, small business owners and other qualified persons. Funding for this prize was obtained from local banks.

2.2 Develop appropriate strategies for ensuring the preservation of character-defining features. Wapakoneta has historically had mixed experience with regulations, but ensuring that Downtown Wapakoneta maintains its unique character and continues to be an asset to the city will require some measure of improved regulation. Just as economic development can be stymied by regulations that do not fit the site characteristics or desired land uses for a particular area, downtown revitalization can be hobbled if building owners are permitted to demolish buildings unnecessarily or alter them in ways that damage the unique character of the central business district. It should be noted that almost all successful central business districts in Ohio have some form of architectural review for downtown’s historic buildings.

Regulations are sometimes assumed to damage business prospects, but the opposite is actually true - well-designed architectural review processes actually protect property owners, and increase new property owners’ comfort level, because they provide some assurance that surrounding property owners will not be permitted to make alterations that damage the value of their property. This is a particularly critical need in a downtown area, where buildings are in such close proximity to each other and where an insensitive alteration or demolition of one building can have an impact on a dozen others.

An effective architectural review process will include the following elements:

- ◆ A review body, consisting of a combination of residents, downtown property owners and construction or architecture professionals. This body must be trained in the requirements and alternatives available under the review process and cannot be allowed to act arbitrarily.
- ◆ A review process, comparable to the zoning review process;
- ◆ A definition of the geographic area to be addressed by the review process and a summary of the features that define the character of the area and key landmark buildings (such as the Wapa Theater or the fire station). Character-defining features typically include building heights and massing, façade materials, window forms and spacing, building setback, and ornamental or other architectural feature.
- ◆ Guidelines for appropriate treatments and alterations, including maintenance of existing materials and appropriate alterations and new construction. Photographs or line drawings that show acceptable and unacceptable alterations are usually helpful.

An effective architectural review process will also be supplemented by zoning regulations that are designed to foster diversity of land uses while controlling potential negative impacts. These zoning issues were mentioned in the Introduction to this section and will be elaborated in Plan Element #5.

3. Enhance Heritage Park and the riverfront area to provide a destination and increase Downtown Wapakoneta’s capacity for hosting events that draw residents and visitors downtown. As noted previously, one of the roles in community life that downtowns are uniquely suited to play is the place for communitywide formal and informal gatherings. Developing promotional events as a means of reintroducing people to Downtown Wapakoneta was also discussed as one of the key tasks of a downtown revitalization organization in Section 1 above.

Downtown Wapakoneta is exceptionally fortunate to be adjoined by an attractive open public space, one that provides one of the very few public access points to the Auglaize River. Heritage Park has been the recipient of a number of recent improvements, which have created a very attractive space. However, Heritage Park is not as effective as a destination as it could be, and the potential that it could create for Downtown Wapakoneta has not been fully realized.

At present, most Downtown Wapakoneta events are held at either the Auglaize County Courthouse (on the lawn or within the building) or on closed-off streets in the downtown area. Both of these locations are appropriate for certain types of events, but the size of the space available and the logistics involved in their use are likely to limit the types of downtown events that can be held.

The most significant challenges to maximizing the effectiveness of Heritage Park and the riverfront are as follows:

- ◆ Location at the rear of buildings on the north side of Auglaize Street.
- ◆ Lack of directional signage to Heritage Park
- ◆ Large amount of “no man’s land” to the east of Heritage Park
- ◆ Negative impact of parking lot condition and transformers
- ◆ Lack of clear access to Park from east



View of Heritage Park

As a result, the following site improvements should be considered and programmed into future City capital improvement expenditures as funding permits:

- 3.1 Install directional signage leading people from Downtown Wapakoneta to Heritage Park.** Preferably, such signage should be coordinated with the downtown wayfinding signage discussed in the next section.
- 3.2 Purchase or obtain easements for as much of the paved area east and southeast of Heritage Park as possible and incorporate as much of this area as feasible into Heritage Park while maintaining access from the east.** The fact that the City maintains this paved area as part of the parking lot and drive system may give it a stronger claim.
- 3.3 Continue efforts to obtain ownership of the drive area on the east side between Auglaize Street and the parking lot and create a clearly delineated driveway to the Heritage Park area.** Although it is possible at present to see and drive to the Heritage Park area from the east side, the lack of signage and a clearly-defined route will limit many visitors’ willingness to access the area from this side, and may create a negative perception of the Heritage Park area. Without clarified access, trespassing claims may also become a concern.
- 3.4 Upgrade the parking lot to enhance the desirability of the Heritage Park area and strengthen the connection between the park and the Auglaize Street businesses.** The transformer should be moved when funding and logistics make this feasible. After the transformer has been moved, the parking lot should be repaved and redesigned to include a walkway between the park and the arched gateway.



Parking lot walkway, Norwood, Ohio

4. Construct targeted improvement to public sector spaces in Downtown Wapakoneta. Unlike many downtowns, Downtown Wapakoneta presents a generally pleasant, clean and well-maintained streetscape (the public space between the building facades and the curb that includes sidewalks, light poles, planters, etc.) Thanks to the previous streetscape enhancements and the high quality of maintenance that these features have received, Downtown Wapakoneta’s public space requires relatively little improvement. A few items that would enhance Downtown Wapakoneta’s unique identity are noted below:

4.1 Downtown Gateways. As noted in the section below, Downtown Wapakoneta suffers from deteriorated properties at both the east and west ends of what is otherwise a very intact historic district. Although these properties need to be redeveloped, such redevelopment may take many years. Constructing gateway markers near the eastern and western edges of the downtown Auglaize Street corridor could help offset the negative impact of these properties and further establish Downtown Wapakoneta as an attractive and desirable location that is worth a visit.

with professional mural design experience to ensure that the final results is visually appealing and carries the desired impact, but the actual painting of the mural can often be done by volunteers under the coordination of the mural designer.

4.2 Wayfinding. Although persons who visit Downtown Wapakoneta on a regular basis can probably find their way around easily, visitors for special events or destination businesses may find the process of getting to and around Downtown Wapakoneta somewhat confusing. There are existing directional signs on Bellefontaine and Wood streets that direct visitors to the downtown area, but these signs are relatively unobtrusive and are easily overlooked in the mix of other street signage. Additionally, there is a small amount of signage on Auglaize and Blackhoof streets that give some directional indication for the parking lot next to Heritage Park, but again these signs are small and easily overlooked. There is also no directional signage that would direct people to destinations in or accessible from downtown, including the courthouse, the aquatic center, the YMCA, the West Auglaize Historic District or Heritage Park. A wayfinding system will create a coordinated system of signs that will direct people into the downtown and to parking and destinations, while also presenting Downtown Wapakoneta as an interesting and worthwhile destination.



Example of directional signage, Loveland, Ohio

4.3 Banners. Wapakoneta currently has banners on its pedestrian gas-style lights, but these banners are dated and generic. Downtown supporters have expressed interest in upgrading the banners but have not been successful in finding a funding source. One potential funding method is to sell sponsorship of the banners - local businesses can pay for a banner in exchange for having their name and logo printed in a small area of the banner. This method allows the banners to maintain the visual consistency that downtown banners should provide while also providing a funding mechanism.



Example of light pole banners, Green Bay, Wisconsin

4.4 Murals. Although not necessary, murals can provide a relatively inexpensive strategy for improving the appeal and uniqueness of a downtown, particularly in locations where demolition of corner buildings has created blank side walls in highly visible locations (like the east and west edges of the block of buildings on the north side of Auglaize Street). A mural should be designed by a person

4.5 Downtown Parking. Although Downtown Wapakoneta may have adequate total off-street and on-street parking for existing and anticipated future uses, residents and visitors may claim that there is not enough parking for three reasons:

- ◆ Off-street parking, especially the lot north of Auglaize Street, may not be as well known to occasional downtown users as people familiar with the area may assume. Without signage indicating where available public parking is located and how to get to it, some users may assume that the only public parking is what they see on the street in front of them.
- ◆ The public parking lot north of Auglaize Street may be perceived by some users as unsafe or uncomfortable because of the appearance of the lot and the appearance of some of the rear entryways. The walkway through to Auglaize Street from the parking lot is a significant improvement, but more upgrades may be necessary to maximize use of the lot.
- ◆ A large amount of off-street parking in the downtown area is held for private use and may be unoccupied most of the time. These unused spaces represent not only a lessening of the Downtown capacity, but potentially missed income for property owners who could be using that parking to generate more business activity in their property's area, increasing the value of their property and creating more street traffic to support their business.

An effective way to begin to evaluate the City's parking needs is to conduct a parking utilization survey. A parking utilization survey inventories all of the parking spaces in an area and determines the amount of occupancy and the amount of turnover that each parking space experiences. As a result, it is possible to demonstrate whether parking in a specific area is being used a large or small percentage of the time and whether that parking is being used by visitors and customers or by employees. The results of this evaluation can help convince property owners to explore other alternatives for parking lots and provide clear evidence of where more parking is needed.

5. Improve the deteriorated areas on the east and west ends of Auglaize Street. Downtown Wapakoneta has an exceptionally intact building stock for an Ohio central business district, with only one "gap" in the building faces on Auglaize Street, and this space has been filled with an attractive and valuable walkway. However, both the east

and west ends of the central business district's main spine are marked by vacant land and deteriorating buildings and pavement. The parcel at the corner of West Auglaize and Blackhoof streets consists of a closed gas station on a parcel of approximately .25 acres. This parcel is adjoined at the rear by a vinyl-clad building owned by the Y.M.C.A., which historically served as an armory. The eastern edge of the Auglaize Street downtown corridor consists of two utilitarian, mid-to-late 20th century commercial buildings and an exceptionally large expanse of unmarked paved asphalt. This area also includes the informal, unmarked eastern entrance to the Heritage Park parking area. Both of these areas exert a strong negative influence on the success and vitality of Downtown Wapakoneta and should be high priorities for redevelopment.

5.1 Facilitate redevelopment of the corner of Blackhoof and West Auglaize streets as either a "pocket park" or a commercial/residential development, depending on the availability, historic status and reusability of the historic Armory building to the north. The gas station parcel has exceptional visibility, but its relatively small size is likely to create challenges for anyone wishing to construct a building on this site alone, particularly if the City requires that new construction in this area include on-site parking. One strategy that has worked for other central business districts is to redevelop the site as a combination public space/gateway with landscaping and parking. Redevelopment as a park would create some opportunities for state matching funds through the NatureWorks and other similar programs, and a landscaped area could include a space for small public events, such as informal concerts, as well as the gateway marker discussed previously. The space could also include a small number of parking spaces to provide additional convenient access for downtown businesses and events.

The redevelopment potential of the site could change if the Y.M.C.A./Armory building and parcel behind it were also available for development. Not only would this property increase the size of the available parcel, it would open up access and views to the river, which could enhance the desirability of the site for residential, commercial or restaurant development. One significant question is whether or not the Armory building is capable of being restored to its historic appearance, and whether the building's construction methods, windows, etc. would allow it to be a candidate for reuse. If possible, alternatives for using the Armory building or incorporating it into a future development should be carefully considered, particularly if the building's historic appearance can be restored. If the building is not able to be reused, development of the site should be complimentary to Downtown Wapakoneta's historic character.

Facilitating redevelopment of this site will probably require participation by a public sector or quasi-public sector partner to support site assembly and developer recruitment.

These funds can be used for public sector and infrastructure improvements, ranging from roadway improvements to landscaping.

5.2 Facilitate redevelopment of the area on the east end of the Auglaize Street downtown corridor for multi-use commercial development.

This site is the largest single parcel near Downtown Wapakoneta. The property's size and convenience may help generate more opportunities for commercial development, particularly as Downtown Wapakoneta becomes an increasingly desirable place to be. This site is also likely to require less brownfield mitigation than most urban Wapakoneta locations, and will become more valuable as Heritage Park increases in use and visibility. Wapakoneta's downtown and economic development entities may find themselves in a brokerage or mediator position as interest in this property develops, and it may be beneficial to establish a Planned Unit Development (PUD) process to allow future developers flexibility on the site and ensure that the public access to the parking lot and Heritage Park is maintained.



- ◆ Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs) and Enterprise Zones (EZ's) can be established through state programs to provide tax incentives to businesses that create and retain jobs in the designated areas.
- ◆ The New Market Tax Credit can be accessed from tax credit holders, such as Fifth Third Bank, to help fund redevelopment and adaptive reuse of existing buildings and community spaces sponsored by a Certified Development Entity (CDE).
- ◆ The federal Certified Historic Structures Income Tax Credit and the state Historic Preservation Income Tax Credit can be used to support renovations and improvements to historic structures.

It should be noted, however, that all of these funding strategies have very detailed and stringent requirements, including the types of properties and businesses that qualify, the types of matching funds required, etc. However, there are a wide variety of strategies for helping to fund improvements, and with some evaluation Wapakoneta can identify the opportunities that will work best for this community.

6. Develop financial incentives and funding pools to support Downtown Revitalization.

As noted previously, a number of the initiatives discussed in this section have been considered by persons interested in revitalizing Downtown Wapakoneta, but the significant stumbling block to date appears to have resulted from a lack of a "go-to" organization and lack of funding capacity. Funding capacity will also impact future reuse and improvements to historic buildings and new construction on the sites noted previously - although sometimes older buildings can be repaired more cheaply than new ones because of the quality of the original materials, in other situations, addressing the needs of older buildings can be more expensive than if one were working with a newer building. Additionally, construction on a previously-developed urban site is almost always more costly than if the same development occurred on a "greenfield" site, again because of the additional complexity involved with demolition and removal of older materials and other factors.

However, Downtown Wapakoneta can take some significant steps to help lessen these economic impacts and help develop a pool of funding that can be used to construct public sector improvements and provide other incentives. These may include the following:

- ◆ Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIFs) can be used to capture and bond against the increase in valuation that will occur as properties develop and become more valuable.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



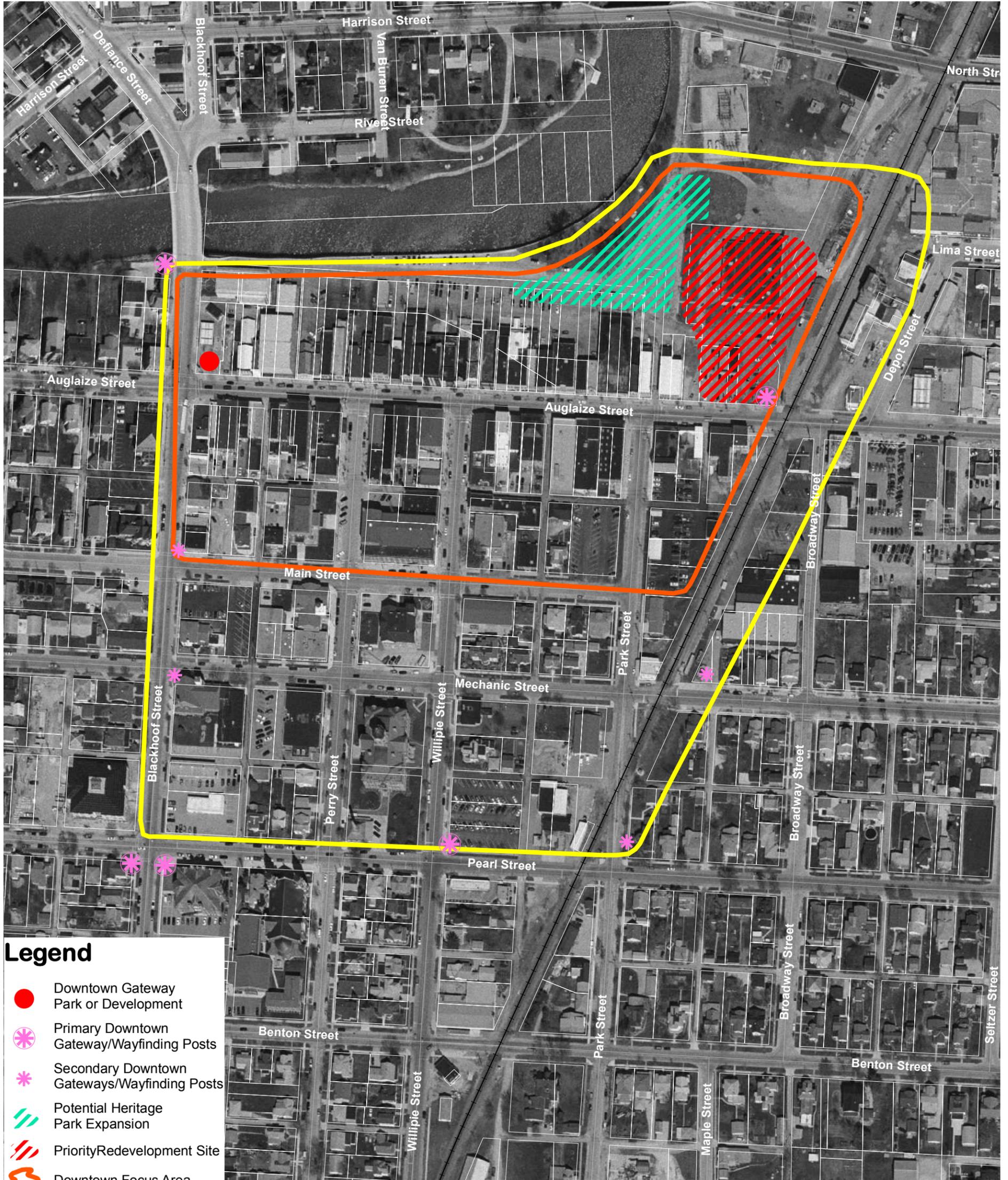
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★

Source: Auglaize County GIS Department



Legend

- Downtown Gateway Park or Development
- Primary Downtown Gateway/Wayfinding Posts
- Secondary Downtown Gateways/Wayfinding Posts
- Potential Heritage Park Expansion
- Priority Redevelopment Site
- Downtown Focus Area
- Central Business District

Plan Element 2: Downtown Revitalization

Edwards
AND
Kelcey

January 4, 2008

Figure 10



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



Plan Element #3: Enhance Residents' Quality of Life

Introduction

Quality of life is a term that generally embodies the aspects of a community that lead people to choose to live there. Quality of life features such as attractive neighborhoods, community activities and recreational options are playing an increasingly important role in small cities' economic success, since highway and internet access make it easier for people to live many miles from their employer. As noted in previous sections, Wapakoneta must become a community of *choice* - a place where people want to live, a place that attracts and retains residents because it provides a high quality of life. With the exception of a small and often unfortunate portion of the population, virtually all residents have the power to leave a community in which they do not want to live.

Quality of life issues are often perceived to be embellishments -- non-essential enhancements that would be nice if they were possible, but that can be eliminated when money is tight. Although this may have been the case in the past, when business and job opportunities were focused on a small area and peoples' living options were limited to within a few miles of their work, this is no longer the case. If Wapakoneta does not provide an excellent quality of life, the City will find it increasingly difficult to attract new residents, retain residents who have the ability to move elsewhere, and expand its business base.

Quality of life issues have a particularly critical impact on how existing and potential residents and businesses perceive the City. Consider:

- ◆ When properties in residential neighborhoods are permitted to deteriorate or be poorly maintained, they not only decrease the number of attractive housing options that the City can offer, but they also decrease the value of surrounding properties. If a community does not provide interesting and attractive housing options, both in new and established neighborhoods, people who can choose where to live will choose to live elsewhere, and businesses will balk at locating in the community because they fear they will not be able to retain employees.
- ◆ When public spaces are not attractive, they project an image of the City as a place that is not interested in being a community of choice -- or of a community that is too impoverished or too demoralized to take care of its resources. This is a message that both potential residents and potential business operators hear - a community that has not maintained or upgraded its public spaces in the recent part is interpreted as a place that is on the decline, whether the decline is real or not.

- ◆ When recreational resources do not provide a full range of opportunities for activity, this may support perceptions that the City is an uninteresting and unattractive place. This becomes increasingly important as residents and business operators become increasingly conscious of maintaining healthy families and employees.

Wapakoneta is currently a city of choice for a large number of its residents, who appreciate the community's small town character, its safety and comfort, its excellent schools and access to regional metropolitan areas. However, the City faces several challenges, as identified by the Steering Committee, survey results and public feedback. These challenges include:

- ◆ Deteriorated residential properties in some neighborhoods, particularly those on the east side of the City.
- ◆ Deteriorated or minimally-improved public spaces.
- ◆ Concerns regarding the amount of park space, as well as its maintenance and types of activities provided.
- ◆ Concerns regarding the types of recreational activities available.

Residents have also expressed a great deal of concern over the appearance and maintenance of key City streets and major corridors. For sake of simplicity, these issues are addresses in Plan Element #4: Improve City Infrastructure.

Perhaps the most critical element for improving Quality of Life, and the fundamental challenge that the Steering Committee identified, is the perception of a trend in the community toward a negative community image. As Steering Committee members noted, Wapakoneta has a large number of quality of life assets, but that these assets are not communicated to residents and visitors. Steering Committee members also noted a trend toward a negative self-perception on the part of a number of Wapakoneta residents, leading to an undercurrent of sentiment that the City is poorer, more deteriorated and more lacking in opportunities than it actually is. Although physical improvements alone will not change how residents feel about Wapakoneta, improving the City's appearance should help offset negative assumptions. However, neither perceptions nor property often changes overnight, and the City and its partners will need to commit to a sustained improvement effort if they are to help Wapakoneta improve its status as a city of choice.



Statements from the Wapakoneta Comprehensive Plan Vision that are reinforced by this Plan Element:

Our community will offer a variety of opportunities for employment, education, shopping, dining and culture.

Wapakoneta will offer a variety of attractive and well maintained housing options for people of all ages, lifestyles and incomes.

Our major corridors, public areas and key entry points will demonstrate that Wapakoneta is a place people want to be.

We will preserve Wapakoneta's historic landmarks, green space and natural beauty.

Wapakoneta residents will enjoy outstanding indoor and outdoor recreational resources, including our natural spaces.

People will travel the City comfortably and safely by car, on foot or on a bicycle.

Plan Strategies:

1. Protect the value of Wapakoneta's existing housing stock by proactively supporting property maintenance.

1.1. Support aggressive and detail-oriented code enforcement relating to property maintenance. Successful mature communities protect their value by ensuring that properties are well constructed and maintained. Successful mature communities are able to attract new property owners and keep existing property owners because people have confidence that their investment will not be devalued by other peoples' lack of investment. Code enforcement protects other property owners against the impacts that poorly-maintained properties have on the value of what is probably their largest investment.

Although property maintenance enforcement may create potential hardships for some property owners, these hardships can be addressed through strategies such as those identified in 1.3. Any such concerns, however, must be balanced against the benefits

that Wapakoneta's residents and property owners gain from being located in a well-maintained community.

Wapakoneta's residents used the Community Survey to express a clear dissatisfaction with the maintenance of a number of properties in Wapakoneta. The most frequently-cited property maintenance issues raised in the Community Survey revolved around exterior storage and maintenance, mostly notably outdoor trash and abandoned vehicles and failure to maintain yards. Although these results do not constitute a scientific survey of property maintenance issues, they do provide a reasonably clear indicator of a few high visibility issues upon which the City can start.

Wapakoneta's existing Codified Ordinances give Wapakoneta the power to eliminate these and a number of other potential property maintenance concerns. Chapter 660 (Safety, Sanitation and Health) includes provisions on these and other topics:

- ◆ Storage of unlicensed or disabled vehicles
- ◆ Cutting of weeds and grass

As a result, one of the initial steps that Wapakoneta can take to manage its property maintenance is to make enforcement of these provisions a high priority. Such directive must come from the Mayor and/or Council. Although enforcement of such laws may seem less critical than other public safety activities, such activities may actually lessen the incidence of criminal activity. The "Broken Window" theory, first articulated by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling, and now used by public safety organizations nationwide, asserts that permitting small offenses to go unpunished encourages more serious criminal activity by creating a perception that crimes will not be punished. Pursuing enforcement of these standards will also give the City a relatively easy and immediate opportunity to demonstrate that failing to maintain private property will no longer be tolerated.

It may be possible to target this and other property maintenance strategies to neighborhoods that are facing particularly difficult property maintenance issues, although it would be necessary to establish some documentation of specific neighborhoods' needs in order to ensure that the targeting is legally defensible. A simple method for establishing this data would be for a small number of City staff, potentially coupled with community volunteers, to conduct a windshield survey of specific areas and tally the number of property maintenance issues noted. This data could be collected as a total sum for an area, without noting the specific property where the violation occurred. The results of such a survey would provide the City and its community partners with a relatively objective basis for targeting specific areas.

Public safety and other code enforcement officials could then be trained to watch for property maintenance violations in these areas.

- 1.2. Evaluate strategies for enhancing the City’s ability to enforce property maintenance.** Wapakoneta’s existing codified ordinances give the City far less power to enforce property maintenance standards than most Ohio Cities enjoy. Cities across Ohio employ specific property maintenance codes that establish standards and prohibitions relating to property management. Property management codes can require reasonable levels of maintenance for a variety of property elements, and can address issues as varied as open storage in yards, broken windows, hanging gutters, etc. Property maintenance codes are one of the key elements used to protect and increase investment in older neighborhoods, where a small number of properties with significant deterioration can undermine the investments of property owners throughout the neighborhood. The City may find it useful to collect property maintenance codes from Ohio communities and evaluate them for items that can be included in the City of Wapakoneta’s ordinances.

As Wapakoneta begins to more proactively address property maintenance issues, the City may find that this task exceeds its current staff’s capacity to address them. If funding additional staff person(s) is not immediately feasible, the City may consider establishing a contract with an experienced independent code professional to provide these services at a lesser cost.

Although property maintenance assistance programs have begun to develop in western Ohio, a larger number of such programs exist in the Greater Cleveland area, as well as mature areas throughout the eastern United States. The City may find it useful to pursue opportunities such as Ohio Municipal League meetings to discuss these issues with other mature communities throughout the state.

- 1.3. Help City residents, particularly its elderly, disabled and low income homeowners, to meet the City’s property maintenance standards.** Wapakoneta’s home owners include a significant number of elderly and disabled residents, some of whom may find it challenging to make necessary repairs or conduct home maintenance. Since these homeowners are valued residents, vital to the community’s stability, it is in the community’s public interest to help these residents meet the standards necessary to maintain the City’s property values and residential desirability. Although these programs may require some investment of City time to initiate, there are likely to be a relatively small number of homeowners who would be eligible for such assistance, so the actual investment is not likely to be extensive. The Auglaize County Council on Aging does provide some of the services below for senior citizens.

- 1.3.1 Tap volunteer networks to coordinate regular cleanup/maintenance assistance.** Churches and other community groups in surrounding communities sometimes sponsor volunteer work days to assist senior and disabled homeowners with routine maintenance, seasonal cleanup and other relatively simple but labor-intensive tasks. This can occur through the national Make a Difference Day initiative or through private initiatives or local events.

The City may find it useful to initiate discussions with churches and other social groups in or near Wapakoneta to discuss the possibility of participation in a Help Out day. The City and its organizations may also find that such an activity provides an opportunity to engage the business and industrial sectors by inviting them to participate. The City may also offer to help arrange publicity for the businesses that participate, thus giving them an added incentive. The City Recreation Department or YMCA may also wish to use this opportunity as an initiative to launch a youth community service group, such as is discussed in Section 3.3 below. Such a program can provide not only a constructive, peer-oriented activity for community youth, but it can also provide an additional resource for volunteers for this and other City activities.

- 1.3.2 Actively promote available County and State tools for financing homeowner improvement.** A variety of existing programs are available from County, state and private providers, but these programs are often poorly promoted and little known. For a relatively small investment of City time in terms of compiling information and increasing the public awareness of these programs, the City may be able to help its residents access funding opportunities that they would not otherwise know existed. Potential sources include the regional Agency on Aging, Inc. and reverse mortgage providers.

- 1.3.3 Consider establishing a “Mayor’s Handyman” program to assist seniors and disabled residents with minor repairs.** This strategy is not essential and may be more costly than others in this section, but it may be an alternative to consider if

- ◆ The previous strategies do not appear to be providing sufficient resources for residents in need of assistance;
- ◆ There is occasional, short-term surplus City capacity among employees who would have the technical capability to do simple repairs, or
- ◆ A reliable volunteer source of such assistance can be developed.

A small but growing number of communities with significant populations of seniors and disabled persons have found that providing a service that offers basic assistance with small repairs can help these residents maintain their homes. Such

a program can also reinforce a positive relationship between the City and residents. Specific parameters for appropriate work and a process for tracking such work should be developed.

- 1.4 Establish a local Historic Preservation Ordinance and historic district protections for significant historic neighborhoods, particularly West Auglaize Street.** The overwhelming consensus of the public feedback gathered for this Comprehensive plan has been that the West Auglaize Street district is one of the City’s most positively viewed and most character-defining aspects of the City. This is also a neighborhood in which property owners have made significant investments and have clearly demonstrated a high level of pride in ownership. This neighborhood, however, has also experienced isolated incidences of deterioration and ill-planned alterations, situations that are detriments to the neighborhoods overall desirability and that may have negative impacts on nearby properties’ values.

Establishing a local historic district program will give the City the ability to establish a design review process for this neighborhood that will help protect dedicated property owners from being negatively impacted by a small number of property owners’ carelessness or indifference to their property’s impact on their neighbors. A local historic district program is established by ordinance, similar to a zoning code, and includes the following:

- ◆ Criteria for establishing a reviewing body, similar to a Planning Commission.
- ◆ Criteria for designating properties as a Local Historic District or a Local Historic Landmark.
- ◆ Standards and guidelines for acceptable and unacceptable alterations, including building façade materials, treatment of architectural features, new construction and additions, etc.

Development of this program should be led by a City-appointed committee of residents and property owners in a manner similar to the development of the Comprehensive Plan. Although some residents may assume that historic district design standards will automatically be so detailed and stringent as to limit all alterations down to paint color changes, this does not have to be the case. The historic district design standards should be structured to protect those elements of the neighborhood that define its character and provide reasonable homeowner latitude for alterations that would not adversely impact the proposal.

- 1.5 Evaluate options for establishing Conservation Districts to protect the property values of historic-era neighborhoods that do not have sufficient architectural character to warrant historic district designation.** Property owners in more modest neighborhoods may not be interested in or need a full historic district review process, but property values and quality of life in these older neighborhoods may also be negatively impacted by demolitions and inappropriate alterations. Many Ohio neighborhoods have benefited from the establishment of conservation districts. Conservation districts generally work in a manner similar to that of historic districts, but their design standards are generally less stringent and less focused on architectural details, such as window surrounds or “gingerbread” decorations. Instead, conservations districts are more concerned with maintaining the character of the neighborhood’s environment. Conservation district regulations are generally more focused on maintaining original façade materials, avoiding oversized window replacements or other clearly out of place alterations, preventing demolitions and protecting against new buildings or building alterations that will provide a jarring contrast with the remainder of the neighborhood. Development of a conservation district program would follow a similar structure and process as the historic district program discussed previously.

- 1.6 Develop a regional promotional initiative aimed at highlighting Wapakoneta’s residential assets to recruit new homeowners who want a Wapakoneta-style small town environment.** As residents have indicated, Wapakoneta provides an extensive array of benefits to residential property owners, including:

- ◆ A pleasant small-town environment;
- ◆ Reasonable housing costs;
- ◆ Convenient access to regional entertainment and employment centers;
- ◆ High levels of public safety; and
- ◆ A high quality school district,

among others. However, even residents who spoke positively about Wapakoneta’s residential experience often noted that they thought this perception flew against their sense of the general opinion of Wapakoneta on the part of residents and outside observers. If Wapakoneta is to benefit from its assets, it will be necessary to get the word out about them.

A promotional initiative can be extensive or modest, and a number of low-cost methods can be employed. These may include the following:

- ◆ Internet sites, preferably including links to data sources such as city-data.com or epodunk.com.
- ◆ Pages on MySpace and Facebook.
- ◆ Advertisements in regional weekly newspapers and local news Internet sites.
- ◆ Public relations initiatives, including familiarization tours for regional travel reporters.

2. Manage the process of new housing construction and ensure high quality new housing and new subdivision design. Wapakoneta has established reasonable standards for new housing construction, and housing constructed within the past 10 years has been of generally good quality. Wapakoneta has also been able to use a Planned Unit Development (PUD) on some recent subdivisions to enable the preservation of some common open space. The following recommendations will help Wapakoneta support the quality of new housing and manage its potential impacts on the rest of the City.

- 2.1. Concentrate new housing to the north of the City, near current new housing.** New housing has been occurring in this location in part because of its proximity to the High School and YMCA, but new housing should also be encouraged to concentrate in this area in order to preserve land on the south and east side of the City for industrial and commercial development.
- 2.2. Encourage the continued used of the PUD and consider refining the PUD's requirements to provide more guidance in preserving open space and valuable natural features.** The existing PUD regulations have served the City well, but most Ohio cities provide more guidance to help staff and the Planning Commission evaluate priorities relating to open space preservation, landscaping, design standards, etc. Additionally, it is critical to require and enforce the establishment of home owners associations (HOAs) to maintain the public spaces within PUD subdivision. Without an HOA, these spaces are unlikely to be adequately maintained and may eventually become a public nuisance and a burden on City resources.
- 2.3. Consider requiring landscaping standards for new housing.** Given that a great deal of Wapakoneta's potential new housing would be constructed on relatively treeless former farm fields, landscaping criteria will be critical to ensure that

new neighborhoods do not look raw and uncompleted. Moderate standards for landscaping can be incorporated into the PUD regulations and can be used to ensure that new neighborhoods include appropriate trees, berms, foliage screening, etc.

2.4. Anticipate and address the impacts that new residential development northwest of the City may have on the City's road network in the future. Although, as noted previously, residential development should be limited to the north and west quadrant of the City in order to ensure the preservation of land appropriate for commercial and industrial uses, this pattern may exacerbate an existing challenge: Wapakoneta's roadway system follows a traditional hub and spoke pattern, meaning that all major through routes pass through the City Center. Although traffic congestion has not been identified as a significant issue at this point, it is possible that additional development both north and south of the City Center may eventually create traffic congestion problems within the City. Since this is an issue that will impact not only the residential area, but the City as a whole, it is further addressed in Plan Element 4: Improving City Infrastructure.

3. Continue to improve and diversify Wapakoneta's recreational resources, particularly for passive recreation activities. Part of the reason that Wapakoneta residents appreciate the City's quality of life is the availability of a wide range of recreational athletic opportunities for children and adolescents. The availability of Veterans Park, Harmon Park and the other active recreational resources (active recreation generally includes organized sports and activities requiring specialized facilities, such as ball courts), as well as the newly-approved reconstruction of the City aquatic facility, give City residents a variety of opportunities for public recreational activities.

However, public feedback also indicated a lack of opportunities for activities of the type known as passive recreation. Passive recreation includes physical activities that are not part of an organized sport and do not require sport-specific facilities. Passive recreational activities include walking, bicycling, nature observation and other such activities. Passive recreational activities are the fastest growing types of recreational participation, and they are increasingly cited by residents, real estate professionals and recreation providers as the most in-demand types of recreational facilities.

3.1 Evaluate existing park and recreational sites for opportunities to add passive recreational facilities to existing recreation sites. Passive recreational facilities have the benefit of being generally linear and requiring relatively little site improvement. Opportunities may exist to install walking trails or bicycle paths along the perimeter of existing fields, such as the river bank along Harmon Park. Matching grant funds through the Ohio Department

of Natural Resources are available on a competitive basis to fund trails and similar improvements.

- 3.2** Develop a long-term strategy for creating a trail system through the City to permit longer bike or walking trails than would be possible within existing facilities. The Heritage Trail Park District of Auglaize County is currently working on a master plan and trail improvements designed to link all of Auglaize County via an extensive trail system. Wapakoneta should have key linkages to that trail system. Particular attention should be given to creating trail access to Heritage Park and Downtown Wapakoneta, in addition to other facilities, such as the City parks.



Plan Element #4: Improve and Upgrade Infrastructure

Statements from the Wapakoneta Comprehensive Plan Vision that are reinforced by this Plan Element:

Introduction

Wapakoneta's residents have a very clear understanding of the impact of the City's infrastructure system - in part because maintaining and improving this system has been a pressing issue in recent years. "Infrastructure" generally refers to the systems that keep the City operational, including electrical delivery systems, water and sanitary sewers, storm water management systems, and roadways. For the purposes of this Plan Element, however, discussions of infrastructure will be mostly limited to roadway, water/sewer and stormwater issues, since the City's electrical distribution system has been the subject of other recent studies.

Infrastructure systems, however important, are often a challenge for cities to address. This in part because they require expensive maintenance and improvements, and in part because their background (and often underground) existence makes them easy to overlook until there is a crisis. Maintaining the quality of these complex systems also requires consistent and often proactive efforts, efforts that much of the general public may not see or understand fully. As a result, it may be difficult to develop popular or political support for the investments that effective infrastructure systems require.

Infrastructure systems also have an impact not only on the services they provide, but on how the City is perceived by visitors and the general public. Visible infrastructure systems that do not present a positive public appearance will have a negative impact on the City's perceived desirability for residents and businesses, and systems that function but are awkward to use may create unintended negative impacts.

Although Wapakoneta residents rejected income and property tax increases in recent years that were earmarked for street repairs, respondents to the Comprehensive Plan Survey identified infrastructure, particularly relating to arterial streets on the east side of the City, as among the most significant issues. Residents have also expressed a great deal of concern over the appearance and maintenance of key City streets and major corridors. For these reasons, both functional and aesthetic issues relating to infrastructure systems are addressed in this section.

Finally, readers should keep in mind that infrastructure maintenance and improvements are costly and complex issues, and that most improvements will not occur overnight. Improving the City's infrastructure will require an incremental, long-term commitment to prudent funding and improvement strategies, as well as a consistent long-term strategy to meet future needs.

Wapakoneta will provide excellent streets, utilities, emergency and medical services for all of its citizens.

Our major corridors, public areas and key entry points will demonstrate that Wapakoneta is a place people want to be.

We will preserve Wapakoneta's historic landmarks, green space and natural beauty.

People will travel the City comfortably and safely by car, on foot or on a bicycle.

Plan Strategies:

1. Continue to pursue aggressive strategies to repair and upgrade roadway segments and underlying systems that are in need of improvement. Wapakoneta's recent experience with grants, including the Ohio Small Cities Grant to reconstruct a segment of Bellefontaine Street, indicates that the City has an increasing will to pursue available funding to help with necessary infrastructure improvements. Although Wapakoneta has been fortunate to receive several grants for infrastructure and park improvements in recent years, such programs are increasingly competitive and require well-documented needs and local funding. The following strategies are designed to help increase Wapakoneta's ability to successfully pursue such funding sources and efficiently allocate the City's own limited resources.

1.1 Update and expand the inventory of roadways, sanitary and stormwater sewer systems that was prepared in 2004 to identify priority areas and demonstrate the scope of the need. One of the challenges facing the City at present appears to be that, while a few high-visibility street segments are known to need repair, the full range of needs does not appear to be comprehensively known, at least outside of the departments whose address these systems on a daily basis.

A comprehensive, organized inventory of roadway and sanitary/stormwater needs will provide a sound basis for department and Council decision-making and resource allocation, and it will provide a tool for communicating to the general public about the actual level and scope of needs facing the City's infrastructure systems. Such detailed information will be critical to making

the case for any future infrastructure funding needs and convincing residents that such needs must be met.

The inventory can be organized by roadway segment, and should address all aspects of the system, including the roadway surface and subsurface, known stormwater separation or sanitary sewer upgrade needs, curb and gutter conditions, street lights and signs, etc. The inventory should be compiled in a spreadsheet that identified the relative condition of each aspect of the roadway segment. If possible, the data should also be incorporated into a Geographic Information System (GIS), which will allow users to depict of multiple aspects of the system simultaneously. Finally, the inventory should develop a quantitative system for evaluating the relative urgency and priority of each roadway segment so that a system of priority improvements can be established, and those priorities can be incorporated into the Capital Improvement Plan.

- 1.2 Expand the City’s previous Capital Improvement planning system to schedule and budget funding for priority improvements, and develop a system for updating the Capital Improvement Plan on a regular basis.** Although detailed capital improvement planning is currently conducted for the City’s enterprise funds, planning for general fund obligations has been generally conducted on a yearly basis. Given the extensive and complex needs facing some aspects of the City’s roadway-related infrastructure systems, a longer-term capital improvement planning process would benefit the City by improving its ability to anticipate and budget for improvements that require multiple years’ funding or are expected to occur well into the future.

A Capital Improvement Plan creates a link between subsequent years’ annual budgets by identifying the full scope of complex improvements and identifying a multi-year funding strategy for attaining it. As a result, a capital Improvement plan strengthens the City’s ability to save funds toward an improvement over multiple years and helps the City maintain its priorities and its commitment to major future improvements. A Capital Improvement Plan also helps demonstrate the extent of the City’s infrastructure needs and the gap between available funding and improvement costs. Demonstrating this gap will help support grant applications and can be used to help convey the scope of the City’s needs to the public.

- 1.3 Create a formal update of the Existing Thoroughfare Plan (Figure 11) to identify appropriate design standards based on an understanding of projected future traffic volumes and routing.** A Thoroughfare Plan designates the long-term role in the local circulation system that will be played by each roadway segment. Thoroughfare Plans generally identify each roadway as belonging to a specific classification (such as Arterial, Collector and Local) based on its projected future traffic volumes and roadway characteristics. Roads within a specific classification are linked to a standard roadway section, which identifies the preferred number and dimensions of lanes, sidewalks, tree lawns, medians, etc.

The Thoroughfare Plan provides a basis for determining how roadways should be improved when they become candidates for improvement - for example, the Thoroughfare Plan may indicate that when a certain road segment is improved, the right of way needs to be widened or a sidewalk needs to be installed. In this way, the Thoroughfare Plan helps ensure that roadway improvements are not designed short-sightedly, but that they are designed to accommodate the future traffic that is expected to use this route, thus preventing a situation where a new roadway becomes problematic before its design life is completed. It also helps ensure that cost estimates included in the Capital Improvement Plan adequately account for the full cost of the needed improvements and do not under-budget for future improvements based on existing, inadequate roadway dimensions.

Given the priorities expressed in the Vision, it is also important that the Thoroughfare Plan make use of the Complete Streets model of transportation planning and design. To the greatest extent possible in any location, the typical sections associated with the Thoroughfare Plan’s classifications should include accommodations for bicycle paths or lanes, sidewalks and trails and context-sensitive features, such as landscaping or streetscape improvements. Particularly along heavy-use arterials and highly visible corridors, multi-modal transportation options and streetscape improvements will help residents and visitors perceive the community as one that offers a wide variety of attractive transportation options.

- 1.4 Continue to aggressively pursue grants and other funding for roadway and related infrastructure improvements.** As Wapakoneta has recently learned, a small but significant number of state and regional transportation improvement funding options are available that can have a significant impact on the City’s ability to fund larger projects. Such grants and other funding assistance generally require matching funds, and thus do not eliminate the City’s costs or the need for capital improvement planning, but they can have a significant impact in terms of

extending the City’s available funding to cover more needed projects. Such grants are also generally competitively awarded, and successful competition for funding generally requires an experienced grant writer and the appropriate information to demonstrate the need for the request, such as long-term thoroughfare planning and the types of data on infrastructure conditions that would be compiled by the inventory discussed in 1.1. Potential funding sources may include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ County Issue 2 funding
- ◆ SAFETEA-LU and related Transportation Enhancements funding
- ◆ Ohio Small Cities Grant
- ◆ Municipal Bridge Fund
- ◆ Safe Routes to School
- ◆ State Infrastructure Bank and Bond Fund

Each funding source has its own standards and requirements, and not all funding sources will be appropriate to City needs. The City may find it beneficial to establish a contractual relationship with an independent grant writer to assist in finding and pursuing appropriate grants.

1.5 Consider the use of TIFs. In certain situations, particularly those where commercial or industrial development is proposed, the City may find it beneficial to establish a Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) as a means of funding infrastructure improvements related to the development site. A TIF removes the increase in property value that results from improvement of a site and sets the amount of what would otherwise be increased taxes aside from the usual revenue funds. These funds can then be used for infrastructure improvements, including roadway improvements, streetscape enhancements, stormwater management systems in the public right of way, new street lights, etc.

Improvements are generally funded by bonding against the projected increase in value, generally calculated over ten to 30 years. In many cases, a Payment in Lieu of Taxes may be made to the school district to offset all or part of the increment, although such payments do decrease the amount that can be generated to retire the bond. Improvements funded by the TIF must be located in the vicinity of the TIF’d site, although the improvements that are funded can have benefits well beyond the site. TIF options should be evaluated in conjunction with all significant non-residential developments, particularly those that require public infrastructure improvements.

2. Evaluate strategies for updating signal timing or traffic response timing programs in locations where peak hour congestion is experienced.

Although the public feedback gathered for this Comprehensive Plan did not indicate any severe traffic operations issues, it is possible that localized issues exist or may develop as a result of new construction. Signals in Wapakoneta appear to be generally set to operate on a fixed time benefit; the City may find it beneficial to determine whether timings can be optimized based on existing or projected traffic patterns.

3. Evaluate strategies for addressing railroad crossing issues.

Railroad crossing issues have been raised repeatedly throughout this Comprehensive Planning process. The number and frequency of railroad crossings are identified with a number of challenges, ranging from noise and inconvenience to safety and emergency access concerns and the health impacts of consistent noise levels and diesel fumes. As many as 38 trains are now estimated to pass through Wapakoneta on a daily basis, and that number may be expected to increase as rail freight traffic increases nationwide.

Wapakoneta is not alone in this issue. As rail freight traffic has grown during the 1990s and 2000s, small communities across Ohio and the United States have faced mounting challenges resulting from the impacts of train traffic on their communities.

Unfortunately, local communities have few options for changing train behavior in their communities, since the railroads are generally governed by federal regulations that do not address local impacts. Local communities have virtually no power to control how or when a train crosses their community.

One of the few options available to local communities is to construct improvements that eliminate opportunities for train/vehicle conflicts. Such improvements are key to the implementation of “Quiet Zones,” areas in which trains are not permitted to sound their horns (they are otherwise required by federal law to sound them in certain situations, such as when entering a populous area). Railways are required to construct crossing gates at locations that meet certain safety criteria, but the basic gates required do not relieve them of the obligation to blow horns when approaching a crossing.

Depending on the City’s objectives, crossing improvements generally take one of three forms:

- ◆ Grade-separated crossings, which reconstruct an intersection so that vehicular traffic passes over or under the railroad track without ever directly intersecting a train’s path.²
- ◆ Enhanced crossing gate systems, which may involve Constant Warning Time control circuitry and more extensive crossing gates;
- ◆ Closing railroad crossings to through vehicular traffic.

² The federal Quiet Zone program will permit enhanced at-grade crossings, generally involving such improvements as gates with flashing lights. However, grade-separated crossings would be the only method that would permit both Quiet Zone standards and the unimpeded movement of emergency vehicles from one side of the City to another.

With the exception of closing crossings, any such improvements are extremely costly and difficult to construct, particularly in mature urban environments where private buildings lie in close proximity to the crossing. As a result, the City must carefully evaluate its options for any such improvements and determine whether the benefits of such improvements will outweigh the costs.

3.1 Inventory railroad crossings and identify crossings that could be closed to improve safety and efficiency, as well as crossings that may be candidates for grade separation. Improved access and “Quiet Zone” initiatives generally include a combination of improvements to a small number of key intersections and closing of crossings that are relatively little used or that present particular safety issues. Each of the City’s street/rail intersections should be evaluated with regard to their traffic volumes and their compliance with appropriate engineering standards, such as queuing distances, intersections, availability of land for grade separation approaches, etc. Based on this analysis, the City should be able to determine two to three candidates for intersection improvements and several intersections that could be closed to cross traffic with minimal impacts on the community. The City can then retain assistance to prepare engineering studies and cost estimates and seek funding.

3.2 Conduct a cost-benefit analysis comparing the immediate and long-term costs of potential crossing improvements to the cost of building and staffing a new Fire/EMS Station on the southeast side of the City. One of the critical reasons cited for improved rail crossings is the fact that the City’s Fire Department is headquartered on the west side of the railroad tracks, and that the Bellefontaine Street corridor, a large number of residents and a large amount of potential future development is located east of the main line rail route that bisects the City. Given the City’s size and projected modest population growth, it is possible that the entire City could be efficiently served by the one existing station if the railroad crossings were improved. It is also possible, however, that existing demands on the City’s Fire and EMS are such that they will need to be expanded in the future, and that such expansion may be conveniently and efficiently located on the east side of the City.

To help ensure a prudent solution, the City may find it useful to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of maintaining existing Fire and EMS services

while improving one or more crossings versus constructing and staffing a new Fire and EMS substation and leaving the crossings as they are. Although this strategy will not permit the City to address the other reasons to improve rail crossings, most notably the desire to lessen the need for train horns, a cost-benefit analysis would provide a rational basis for decision-making with regard to whether the grade separation option or enhanced crossings are more appropriate.

4. Improve the function and appearance of Wapakoneta’s key intersections, entrances and corridors. The public feedback gathered for this Comprehensive Plan indicated significant concern regarding the appearance of the City’s entrances and key corridors, although most respondents couched their response in terms of dislike for the deterioration they perceived in these places, rather than a response to strictly aesthetic issues. As noted in previous Plan Elements, one of Wapakoneta’s great challenges is to improve its public image, both to help recruit new investment and to help enhance the City’s self-perception. Like other appearance issues, gateways and streetscape enhancements are often perceived as embellishments, and as nice but not essential improvements. But such features are increasingly important to the competition for new businesses and residents, who have greater choice than ever with regard to where they locate. Gateway and streetscape improvements are essential to creating a positive public image and demonstrating that a community is worth investing in.

4.1 Develop an Urban Design Plan to establish a program of gateway and major corridor streetscape improvements. Because of the number and scope of landscape improvements needed, Wapakoneta will find it necessary to phase the recommended improvements over a period of several years. One of the greatest challenges of urban design is to ensure that improvements that are made over a long period of time are visually consistent and convey a high quality public image. Uncoordinated, piecemeal improvements are likely to lead to an uncoordinated, piecemeal appearance. Without a high level of consistency, landscape features or other improvements will not demonstrate the City’s commitment to quality, and are likely to be mistaken for private property landscaping or become simply another part of the jumble of the landscape.

The Urban Design Plan must create a vocabulary of public space improvements that will clearly appear to be continuations of the same City identity. The Urban

Design Plan will ensure that all public space improvements constructed by the City contribute to the perception of the City as a high-quality place. By coordinating designs through a detailed design plan. A coordinated urban design program will also strengthen the Village's efforts to raise its requirements for private development by establishing higher standards for site improvements.

The Design Plan must be based on a detailed analysis of the trees, plants and hardscape (walls, paving, etc.) materials that will work best across the range of locations where improvements are planned. As every home gardener knows, a plant that thrives in one location often does poorly in another because the light, pollution or other factors are different. Because of the scale and the public investment necessary, Wapakoneta must ensure that the design palette will work equally well in all planned locations.

The Urban Design Plan should include the following elements:

- ◆ It should identify the exact locations of improvements. Given the need to acquire property or easements in some instances, these locations may need to be revised over time.
- ◆ It should develop a standard set of design features, including sign design, types of stone or paver blocks, and specific variants of trees and plants to be used. These features should be adaptable to any of the proposed improvement sites and should be able to thrive in all of the proposed locations.
- ◆ The Urban Design Plan should develop a hierarchy of typical designs for each of the different types of improvement locations (major gateways, secondary gateways, intersection improvements, etc.). These typical designs should identify the preferred elements for any site of that type and should demonstrate how these elements should be arranged. These typical designs can be modified to fit the specifics of each location, but the typical designs will ensure that the final results are part of the overall system and convey the same visual message.
- ◆ The Design Plan should estimate costs for construction and maintenance, and it should develop a phased schedule of construction that will help the City budget for the improvements over several years. The phasing should also prioritize improvements so that the Village's funds are spent most effectively.

4.2 Identify available land near the City's primary entrances for new or enhanced gateways. One gateway currently exists near the Bellefontaine Street exit from I-75; this gateway has a highly visible location and is generally attractive, although the brown wood sign and white script is of a dated design and may not be compatible with desired design features. Other potential gateway locations include the following:

- ◆ The I-75 and U.S. 33 interchange;
- ◆ The State Route 67 /Dixie Highway intersection (which is on the route between the I-75 intersection with State Route 67 and the City);
- ◆ Auglaize Street near the west City boundary.

Funding for most gateways can be supported by transportation enhancements or context sensitive design funding as part of a state-sponsored improvement, and the City's odds of receiving such funding will be enhanced by using capital improvements programming to designate appropriate matching funds before the design year.

5. Anticipate long-range needs for improving the efficiency of the transportation network, including alternative circulation routes around the City and improved access management on City streets. As Wapakoneta continues to grow and add new businesses during the next 20 years, it is likely that the city's roadway network may face new and increasingly urgent challenges resulting from increased vehicle traffic. Although the City does not appear to be experiencing significant traffic congestion in any locations at present, the experience of other Ohio cities provides ample indications that successful industrial, commercial and housing growth is likely to place a great deal of pressure on the existing roadway network. Although these future issues may not be critical at present and cannot be immediately remedied, anticipating and planning for their improvements in the near future will have a substantial impact on the City's potential for future success.

5.1. Begin preliminary planning for circulation routes that connect industrial, commercial and residential centers without passing through the city center. As has been mentioned in most of the previous Plan Elements, one of the most significant long-range challenges that may face the City is the fact that the most appropriate areas for industrial, commercial and residential development are primarily linked by routes that converge on the city center. Although conventional wisdom often holds that heavy traffic is good for city centers, the opposite is usually more true: when traffic volumes significantly increase, city centers can become choked with through travelers, who are unlikely to patronize local businesses and who actually make it harder for persons who want to patronize downtown to get to their destinations.

Such converging traffic also hurts the quality of life and economic livelihood of the City, since it increases transportation costs, drive times and motorists' aggravation for what would otherwise be a simple trip of a few minutes. Additionally, the density of buildings and the often historic character of the area where these routes converge often make significant changes to roadways in the city center difficult or impossible. Cities across Ohio and the Midwest struggle with the impacts of historic hub-and-spoke roadway systems, and routing unnecessary through traffic away from these dense and already busy areas becomes increasingly critical as economic activity and vehicle miles traveled increase. A few possible new routes that would enable this traffic movement are shown as dotted lines on Figure 12. The reader should note that these are conceptual routes and are not based on land surveys or engineering requirements

Constructing new roadways is a complex and challenging proposition, particularly when readily available funding is tight and improvements are known to face a variety of obstacles, such as rail lines, waterways and the environmental approval process. Preparing for the construction of such roadways requires a multi-year process that includes the following:

- ◆ Using the Thoroughfare Plan discussed previously to identify preferred future routes.
- ◆ Preparing preliminary engineering plans that identify the preferred potential routes and estimate costs associated with various alternatives.
- ◆ Journalizing the preferred route(s). Journalizing is an administrative process that officially records the City's intention to build a road in a certain location. This process helps ensure that future real estate transactions in this area are done with the knowledge of the City's plans, and that the route is protected from developments that would prevent the roadway from being constructed. Journalizing does require a public process similar to a plan approval.
- ◆ Incorporating cost estimates into the Capital Improvement Plan to aid in budgeting for City shares of future development efforts.

5.1.1. *Plan to upgrade certain roadways in conjunction with new circulator route construction to ensure that roadway capacities are adequate.* Figure 12 shows two routes that were designated as Secondary Arterials in the 1980 draft Thoroughfare Plan, but which may require expansion and improvements for higher volumes of traffic if the circulator route identified is completed. The

extent of such improvements will be determined by the new Thoroughfare Plan, which should identify typical sections for each type of road.

5.2. Develop access management standards to use in conjunction with new development, particularly along commercial corridors. A second issue that often arises when cities experience a great deal of through traffic on surface roadways is that traffic congestion is often exacerbated on commercial corridors because a large number of motorists stop unexpectedly to turn into one of dozens of driveways. The profusion of such opportunities for drivers to turn can lead to a variety of undesirable effects, including an increase in vehicle accidents and increasing traffic congestion cause by the impacts of multiple, randomly-stopping and turning vehicles on the smooth flow of traffic. Although conventional site design methods assume that every individual parcel should have its own driveway, modern traffic modeling has indicated that even a modest decrease in the number of driveways accessing a roadway can have a significant impact on the roadway's Level of Service (LOS), a measurement of the efficiency of a given roadway segment. Access management is particularly critical to facilitating pedestrian and bicyclist movement, since large numbers of curb cuts create a dangerous and intimidating environment for these more vulnerable travelers.

Access management standards generally include the following elements:

- ◆ Minimum distances between driveways,
- ◆ Design standards for private driveways,
- ◆ Criteria for construction of turn lanes,
- ◆ Standards, criteria and potentially incentives for the construction of shared driveways and access road segments.

5.3 Consider requiring traffic impact studies as a condition of review for all significant commercial and industrial development, and provide tools within the development review process to ensure that any issues raised by the traffic impact study are properly addressed. Traffic impact studies are small engineering studies that project and analyze the impact that a specific new development may have on traffic operations. Traffic impact studies may indicate that the volume of traffic projected to turn into the site will necessitate a turn lane, widened travel lanes or other such improvements, and constructing or paying for the necessary improvements can be a condition for approving the proposed development. In this way, new developments can avoid adding to the City's existing transportation pressures.

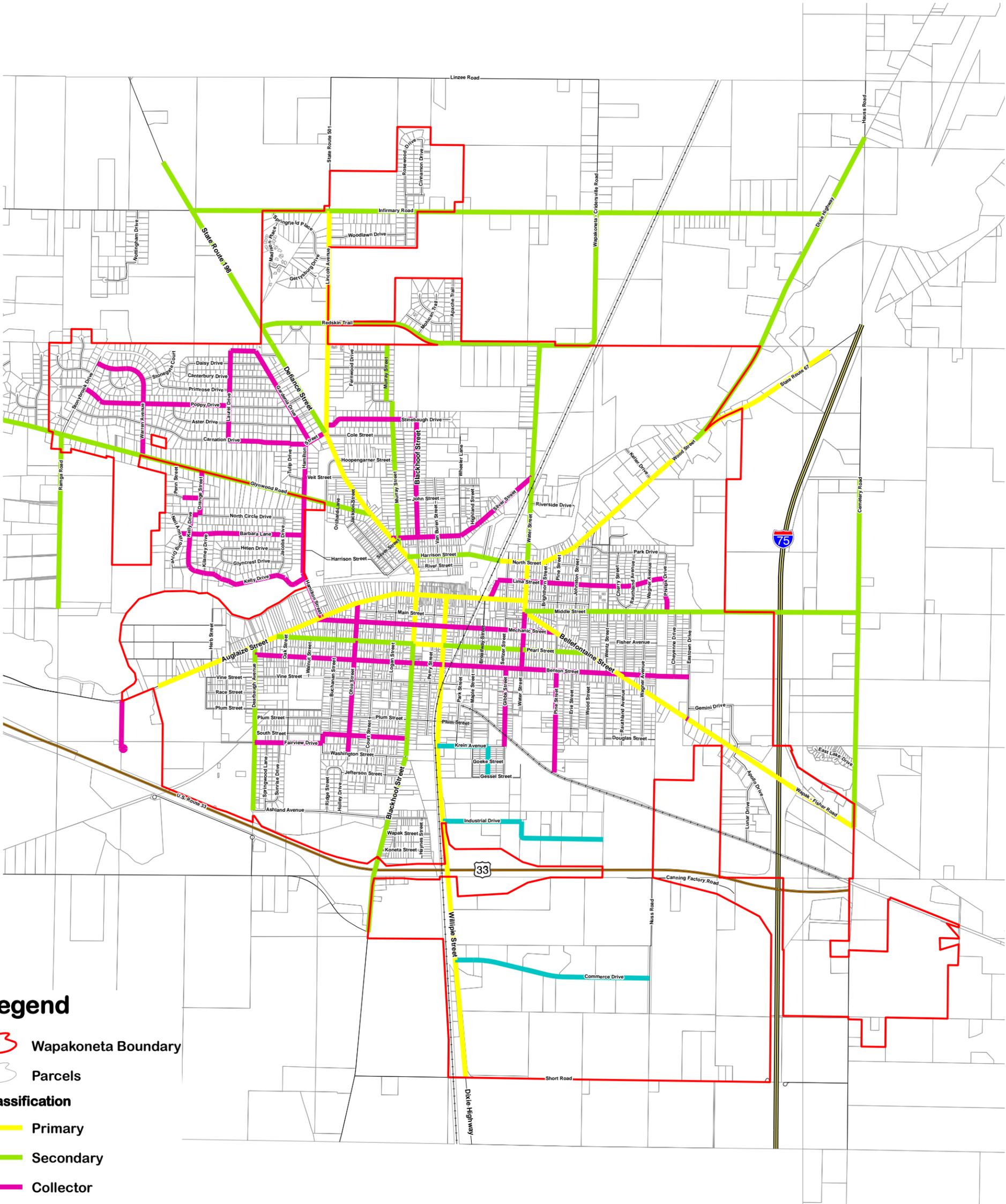
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta



Auglaize County, OH ★

Source: Auglaize County Engineers



Legend

-  Wapakoneta Boundary
-  Parcels
- Classification**
-  Primary
-  Secondary
-  Collector
-  Industrial

Existing Thoroughfare

Figure 11



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

★ City of Wapakoneta

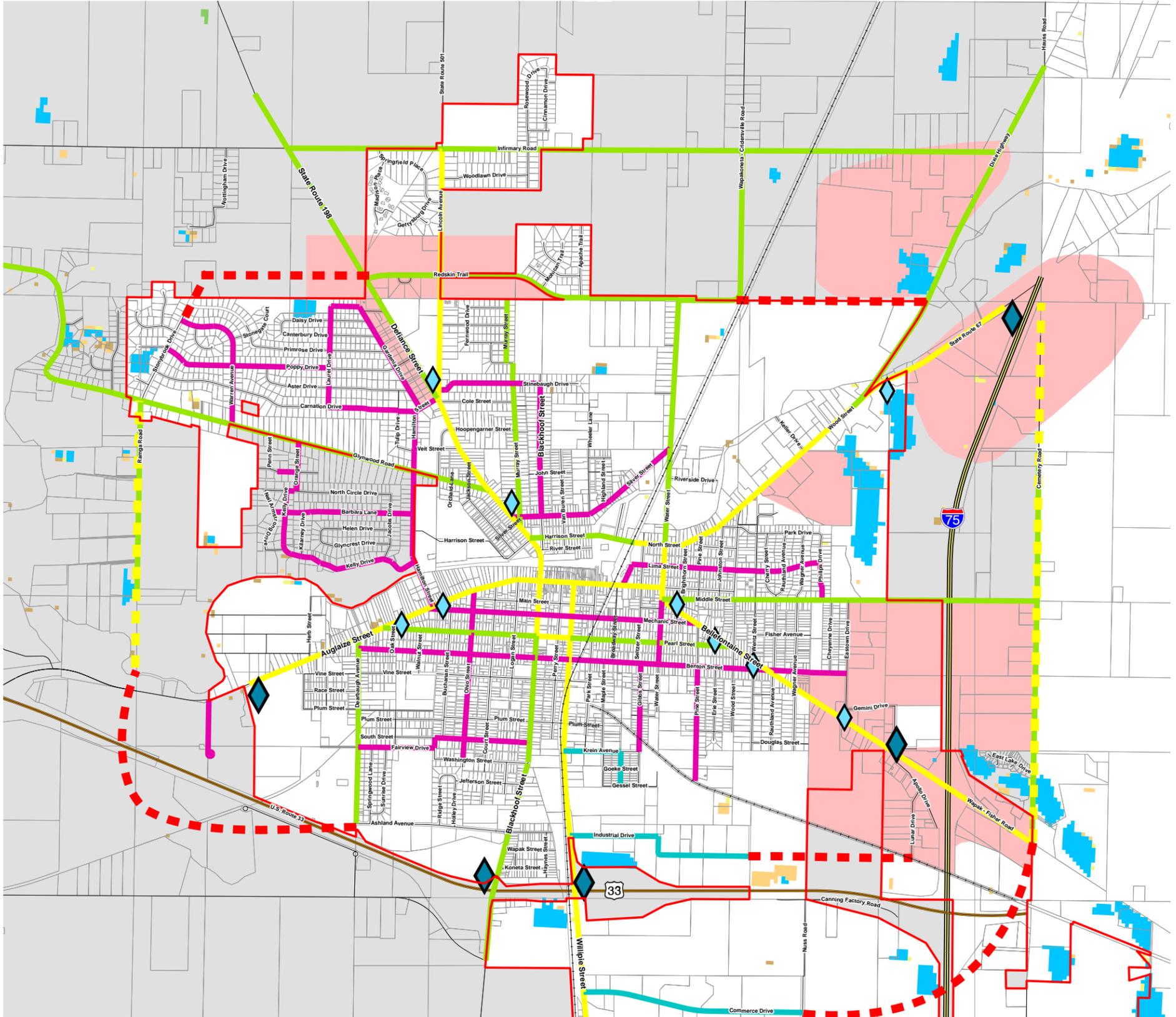


Auglaize County, OH ★

Source: Auglaize County Engineers

0 750 1,500

Feet



Legend

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| | Wapakoneta Boundary | | Open Water |
| | Gateway Landscape Improvement | | Shallow Marsh |
| | Neighborhood Landscape Improvement | | Shrub/Scrub Wetland |
| | Parcels | | Wet Meadow |
| | Future Commercial | | Farmed Wetland |
-
- | | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| Classification | |
| | Primary |
| | Secondary |
| | Collector |
| | Industrial |
-
- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| | Proposed Thoroughfare Modifications |
| | Proposed New Thoroughfare Connection |

Plan Element 4: Infrastructure

Figure 12



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



Plan Element #5: Improve City Land Use Regulations

Introduction

In order to properly implement the vision, goals and strategies of the Comprehensive Plan, changes in other documents must be made. The existing Zoning Code provides one legal mechanism for the City to implement recommended land use strategies of the Comprehensive Plan. The City can choose to be proactive and initiate Zoning Code or Map changes or can choose to be reactive and wait for an applicant to come to the City before changes are being made.

While this document suggests several changes to specific areas of the Zoning Code as they relate to recommended strategies in the Plan, it is suggested that the entire Zoning Code undergo a complete technical review and potential update. Many of the regulations, uses and development standards were originally developed 28 years ago during the last Code rewrite. Since that time, there are many trends, regulations and standards that can be incorporated in the Zoning Code that would benefit the City.

This document summarizes the potential changes to the Zoning Code as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.

General Recommendations:

Plan Element #1 - Economic Development

Section 1.1.1

Update the M-1 Industrial Zoning District to remove some of the heavier and noxious industrial uses such as: agriculture, slaughterhouses, stockyards, and quarries, salvage yards, wrecking and landfill operations. These types of uses do not support high employment levels and, because of their noxious nature, typically discourage desired manufacturing and light industrial uses such as research and development or operations that are conducted in a completely enclosed structure.

Section 3.2

Create a corridor overlay district that establishes a variety of mixed commercial, entertainment, office and services uses in a well-designed, coordinated environment along the Bellefontaine Corridor. A common architectural design theme, building orientation, shared parking, common building materials, color schemes, landscaping

elements and coordinated signage (e.g. wall and low level ground mounted signage) are all items to consider for this corridor as part of a change in regulations.

Plan Element #2 - Downtown Revitalization

- ◆ Establish design guidelines for the downtown area that focus on reflecting the historic character of the buildings, signage and overall urban mixed use environment. Design guidelines should focus on the types of permitted building materials (brick, not vinyl or Dryvit), appropriate types of infill development to reflect the existing historic fabric, color palettes (earth tones and muted colors, not fluorescent or neon colors) and lot development standards (setbacks, heights, etc.).
- ◆ Establish a form-based zoning district for the downtown area, in conjunction with the design guideline elements that focuses on the physical form, character and look of the district, not necessarily the uses permitted. This will promote mixed uses in a cohesively designed environment and provide a more predictable physical environment. Performance standards are applied, much like those established in Section 1292.08 of the Zoning Code, to prevent negative impacts on surrounding uses.
- ◆ Revise the sign regulations to permit different types of signage in the downtown area. For example, sandwich board type signage permitted on the sidewalk, as long as it doesn't block the sidewalk, could be permitted to advertise daily specials or sales. The current sign regulations in Chapter 1286 do not permit signage in the right-of-way.

Plan Element #3 - Enhance Quality of Life

- ◆ Create limited design guidelines for commercial districts in the City to encourage some type of cohesive design elements to tie each area together rather than promoting a wide variety of designs. Design guidelines can be implemented as properties develop or redevelop and promote higher property values.
- ◆ Create an overlay district for the property that fronts on along the Auglaize River which would limit uses and preserve the natural viewshed of this amenity.

Section 1.3.5

Create a "Residential Conservation Overlay District" that focus on providing design standards to maintain original façade materials and design of dwellings in the City that are worthy of preservation in the historic era neighborhoods, but may not be eligible or warrant historic district designation.



Section 2

Overhaul the Planned Unit Development Section (1292.04) to provide qualitative and quantitative standards for development using a PUD. As a minimum, standards should be established for open spaces (types, maintenance of, percentages of, etc.), phasing, mix of uses, landscaping on public and private property, and other types of design elements needed to provide a thorough review and informed decision for approval. Planned unit developments will typically provide some type of bonus (e.g. density increase) for the additional process and open space requirements. Planned unit developments are used more often if there is a clearly defined process and guidelines/standards in place so that the applicant has an idea as to what the City is seeking to be considered for approval.

Plan Element #4 - Infrastructure

Section 3 - Establish a program of gateway and major corridor streetscape improvements.

While zoning does not control development or design in the public right-of-way, certain changes can be made in the Zoning Code for private property that will emphasize coordinated design along major corridors, key intersections and entrances (or gateways) into the City. Consider the development of overlay districts that develop design guidelines for private property in key, highly visible locations in the City. Building materials, color schemes, building orientation, sign requirements and other urban design guidelines. This requirement for private property should be balanced with similar improvements in the public right-of-way (e.g. a coordinated streetscape with street trees, ornamental lighting features and banners, street furniture, and sidewalk/crosswalk enhancements that are coordinated with the design requirements of the overlay district).

Specifically, the City should consider creating a “Gateway Overlay” zoning district that is applicable to the following locations:

- ◆ The I-75 and U.S. 33 interchange;
- ◆ The State Route 67 /Dixie Highway intersection (which is on the route between the I-75 intersection with State Route 67 and the City);
- ◆ Auglaize Street near the west City boundary.

Section 4.2 - Develop access management standards to use in conjunction with new development, particularly along commercial corridors.

Incorporate access management principles in the commercial zoning districts that are located along the primary commercial corridors in the City. This could include limiting curb cuts and driveways to one per street frontage or to the amount lot frontage and encourage the interconnection of parking lots in highly commercialized areas. The standards would apply to new development and properties that are redeveloped. Appropriate changes would also need to be made to Chapter 1284, Off-Street Parking and Loading to require, or provide an incentive for, parking lot connectivity.

Other Recommendations:

During the early phases of development of this Comprehensive Plan, the Steering Committee was presented with a professional review of the City’s existing zoning code. That memo made a series of recommendations that remain relevant to the implementation of the City’s Vision and its priorities. These are summarized below:

- ◆ All existing and new districts should be amended to include a Purpose Statement. Wapakoneta’s existing zoning districts do not include any Purpose Statements. A zoning district’s Purpose Statement is one of the first items that a judge examines if the legality of a zoning decision is challenged. Without a Purpose Statement, it is likely that a legal challenge to a zoning decision would be upheld, because the judge would have no basis for determining that the zoning decision was not arbitrary and capricious (or lacked rational nexus).
- ◆ All existing and new districts should be revised to include a maximum lot coverage or impervious surface ratio. This regulation will establish a maximum coverage for property so that green space is preserved and stormwater run off is adequately managed. For example, if a 10,000 square foot single family residential lot had a maximum lot coverage of 45%, only 4,500 square feet could be covered by a building footprint, driveway, patio, sidewalk and other impervious surfaces. Percentages and ratios vary by type of district and by community.
- ◆ All districts should include buffering requirements between adjoining non-compatible uses. The City’s districts generally do not require buffering, with the exception of a few non-residential districts that require wider yards if a property with a specific use abuts a residential district. All appropriate districts should also specify whether buffers should consist of landscape elements, such as berms or trees, and/or hardscape elements, such

as walls or fences. Landscape and hardscape elements can be required in situations where distance alone will not adequately buffer the impacts or where increased yard widths are not feasible due to site requirements. Hardscape and landscape requirements should include substantial minimum standards, such as minimum tree caliper, a required palette of hardscape materials and preferred plant lists.

- ◆ Even in the case of zoning designations that are not recommended for revision above, existing districts should be revised to require physical improvements in site design. Such standards are common practice in Ohio communities, and can include such items as building design standards (for example, requiring the front door to directly face the primary street frontage and have pitched roofs), building surfaces standards (such as requiring siding materials that are natural or closely mimic natural materials), and landscaping (such as requiring masonry retaining walls and a minimum number of trees of a certain caliper per site).
- ◆ All sign regulations, in addition to those referenced in the overlay districts above, should be revised to require that signs be ground-mounted, that their bases be constructed of the same materials as the building's facing, or that signs may only rise above the property to a limited height.
- ◆ The provision in 1250.04 (f) that specifies that there can be "no more than one main building on one lot" may be problematic in practice and may hamper attempts to attract office campuses and other high-quality, multi-building development.
- ◆ All parking lots, regardless of their district, should be required to be paved. The zoning code currently specifies that parking areas must be paved in R and B districts, but it does not require paved lots in the M or A districts. Unpaved parking lots are not only unsightly and have a negative effect on property values, but they contribute to groundwater contamination by allowing pollutants to leach directly into the ground, rather than being routed through stormwater management systems
- ◆ Parking lot locations should be managed in each district to reinforce the physical character desired for the area. The City's zoning provisions do require screening of parking lots from adjoining residential or institutional uses, and they permit shared parking agreements, which can be a great benefit in reducing the total amount of land consumed by parking. However, parking areas can be located virtually anywhere on the lot in all districts except M-1. In many districts, parking should be at least partially located to the side and rear of the building to lessen the visual dominance of the parking lot and make it easier for pedestrians and bicyclists to reach the building safely.
- ◆ As recent development proposals have indicated, Wapakoneta's required minimum off-street parking is more than what is necessary for successful commercial development. The City should lower the amount of parking required to a reasonable standard that is in

keeping with other recently-revised parking standards in Ohio and the Midwest. Excessive parking requirements have a number of negative impacts, including large separations between buildings, excessive stormwater runoff resulting from expanses of impervious services and eliminating any opportunity to offset the visual and functional impact of the parking lot by installing landscaped islands, pedestrian walks, or perimeter enhancements

- ◆ The parking standards specify two off street parking spaces for each residential unit of any type, with the exception of boarding houses and similar establishments, where 1 ½ spaces per sleeping room are required. This is not a standard that can be met in many of the City's older neighborhoods, and it may be beneficial to revise these standards in relation to those areas.
- ◆ Lighting standards should be revised to enhance the light protection required for adjoining land uses. The existing code specifies that parking area lighting is to be directed away from any premises in an R district, but residential uses that may exist in other districts, or the level of light protection that would be required, are not addressed. Modern lighting technology permits a wide range of full-and partial-cutoff lighting fixtures that minimize the impacts on surrounding property.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



The Implementation Matrix

The final major element of the City of Wapakoneta Comprehensive Plan is the Implementation Matrix. This table identifies each of the Plan's recommendations and outlines a strategy through which the City can work toward achieving that recommendation. Implementation elements include the relative level of priority, time benchmarks, lead and supporting entities and a preliminary understanding of funding needs and potential funding sources. The Implementation Matrix was developed by the Steering Committee for implementation by various City Councils, Boards and Commissions as well as private entities.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
★ City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH ★



Plan Element #1: Economic Vitality

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
1. Continue to rebuild Wapakoneta's manufacturing sector to support high quality jobs and ensure the excellent use and reuse of its available industrial property.										
A	1.1	Aggressively pursue development of the West Central Ohio Industrial Center properties in accordance with the Job Ready Site grant application's proposed activities and requirements.	Revise existing zoning to remove potential impediments to desired development. Continue infrastructure, recruitment and promotion efforts. Address transportation impacts.	2008	2017	Ohio Department of Development	WAEDC	City of Wapakoneta, Auglaize County Regional Coalition	\$250,000	Job Ready Sites (JRS) Grant Proceeds and City/County Support
A	1.2	Avoid permitting land outside of the West Central Ohio Industrial Center from being broken for industrial development until the area has been largely built out, and until redevelopment or reuse of existing industrial sites has been pursued.	Evaluate zoning code standards and rezoning procedures; revise as necessary	2008	2017	Pusheta Township, Duchouquet Township, Auglaize County, City and County Planning Commissions	City Council and Planning Commission	Townships, County, WAEDC	\$5,000	
B	1.3	Use the success of the West Central Ohio Industrial Center to facilitate redevelopment of existing industrial areas on the south side of Wapakoneta south of the railroad right of way.	Maintain and intensify existing industrial land uses. Develop comprehensive strategy for addressing brownfield redevelopment issues. Evaluate strategies for small site assembly. Evaluate business incubator strategies. Review existing zoning requirements to identify potential barriers to redevelopment/ strategies for high-quality redevelopment.	2008	2017	Ohio Department of Development, statewide entrepreneurship and manufacturing incubator initiatives as they may develop	WAEDC	City Council, Ohio Department of Development	\$10,000	Incubator and Entrepreneurship Support Grants and Loans (Ohio Department of Development and private entrepreneurship support)
C	1.4	Actively support the transition of all lands currently used for industrial activities north of Plum Street to uses compatible with their surroundings.	Park and Vine Street area, Plum and Blackhoof Street area, south of the Auglaize River and west of Water Street	2008	2017	Surrounding property owners and redevelopment initiatives	WAEDC	City Council and Planning Commission	Costs limited to staff involvement and any promotional/recruitment activities	
2. Facilitate retail redevelopment and controlled amounts of new development to provide a wider range of shopping and services to Wapakoneta's residents.										
C	2.1	Limit commercial development on undeveloped, "greenfield" sites, particularly in the Bellefontaine corridor, unless the development will help catalyze high quality redevelopment.	Facilitate redevelopment of deteriorated sites; avoid strain on City infrastructure. Use definition of catalyst development as provided in text.	2008	Ongoing	Bellefontaine redevelopment initiatives	WAEDC, Council and Planning Commission	Townships, Property Owners.	Costs limited to staff involvement and any promotional/recruitment activities	
A	2.2	Revitalize the Bellefontaine Corridor.	Revise zoning to encourage successful corridor characteristics, avoid further expansion north.	2008	2010	Other zoning revisions, new development opportunities, streetscape improvements.	WAEDC, Council and Planning Commission,	Bellefontaine Corridor Property Owners	\$5,000	
B	2.3	Permit new commercial/service developments in other strategic locations, particularly the Defiance/Redskin Trail area.	Emphasize neighborhood scale, pedestrian connections and pedestrian/bike friendly site design	2008	2010	Surrounding neighborhoods, pedestrian and vehicular access needs	WAEDC, Council and Planning Commission	Chamber of Commerce, City Council and Planning Commission	\$10,000	

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH

Plan Element #1: Economic Vitality (Cont.)

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
3. Increase Wapakoneta's access to office employment and office-based services, including medical and educational facilities.										
B	3.1	Recruit a destination employment office development to Wapakoneta as a means of diversifying Wapakoneta's employment opportunities, preferably to a new development or redevelopment site along Wood Street/ Dixie Highway on the north end of the City.	Identify available sites; campus style development preferred.	2008	2013	Larger regional institutions and businesses, regional developers, impacted townships.	WAEDC	Ohio Department of Development, regional commercial developers	Costs limited to staff involvement and any promotional/recruitment activities	
B	3.2	Support efforts to attract a hospital, urgent care facility and/or outpatient care facility to Wapakoneta, preferably to a new development site north of Bellefontaine Street.	in-city site near existing residential may be preferred.	2008	2013	Regional hospitals and health care providers.	WAEDC	regional doctors groups and health care providers	Costs limited to staff involvement and any promotional/recruitment activities	
A	3.3	Recruit a workforce training facility and/or a community or technical college branch, preferably to be located near the Bellefontaine Street/Interstate 75 interchange.	tap into developing state initiatives	2008	2013	Regional industries and economic development, state-operated and for-profit education and training institutions.	WAEDC	Regional colleges, universities and training programs, Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services, Ohio Department of Development	Costs limited to staff involvement and any promotional/recruitment activities	

Plan Element #2: Downtown Revitalization

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
1. Continue current efforts to establish an advocate organization for Downtown Wapakoneta that includes a wide variety of public and private sectors participants.										
A			Enhanced Downtown Wapakoneta Partnership (DWP) or other endorsed organization	Ongoing	Ongoing	City government, WAEDC and Chamber efforts	Downtown Wapakoneta Partnership	City, WAEDC, Chamber, residents, downtown business owners, large business owners.	Cost of Paid Staff for DWP may approximate \$40,000 if full time	For stability, funding should come from a mix of government, large business and small business/personal contributions.
2. Continue to improve downtown building maintenance and ensure that alterations are sensitive to downtown's unique historic character										
B	2.1	Develop a package of incentives to help encourage downtown building maintenance and sensitive alterations.	Can include information packages, access to training, referrals to state programs, seed grants, etc	2008	Ongoing	Building Code administration, WAEDC and Chamber initiatives	DWP	City, WAEDC, Chamber, residents, downtown business owners, large business owners, banks.	Cost depends on nature of incentives. Effective incentives can be implemented for as little as a few thousand dollars per year.	CDBG funds, Community Reinvestment Act initiatives (banks), donations.
C	2.2	Develop appropriate strategies for ensuring the preservation of character-defining features.	Historic preservation designations and protections; options vary widely depending on building and political needs.	2008	2013	Building code enforcement, historic promotion, WAEDC and Chamber initiatives	City Council	City, WAEDC, Chamber, residents, downtown business owners, large business owners.	Historic designation and historic preservation initiative may require increase in City staff.	Staff can be contract, competitive grant from Office of Housing and Community Partnerships (ODOD) and/or National Trust for Historic Preservation may be available.

Plan Element #2: Downtown Revitalization (Cont.)

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
3. Enhance Heritage Park and the riverfront area to provide a destination and increase Downtown Wapakoneta's capacity for hosting events that draw residents and visitors downtown.										
A	3.1	Install directional signage leading people from Downtown Wapakoneta to Heritage Park.	Should be coordinated with but visually distinct from other gateways and wayfinding	2008	2010	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide gateways, wayfinding and streetscape.	City	DWP, County Engineer	Approx. \$5,000 for design, construction and City installation of up to four park wayfinding signs on existing public right of way.	Can be part of Downtown Streetscape initiative (Tier 2 of Downtown Revitalization program, Office of Housing and Community Partnerships).
B	3.2	Purchase or obtain easements for as much of the paved area east and southeast of Heritage Park as possible and incorporate as much of this area as feasible into Heritage Park while maintaining access from the east.	Claim unused land to enhance Heritage Park	2009	2015	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide gateways, wayfinding and streetscape.	City	DWP, WAEDC	Cost will depend on fail market value of easements.	NatureWorks grant (Ohio Department of Natural Resources)
A	3.3	Continue efforts to obtain ownership of the drive area on the east side between Auglaize Street and the parking lot and create a clearly delineated driveway to the Heritage Park area.	Critical to improve visibility and access to east side of Auglaize, especially for visitors.	2009	2011	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide gateways, wayfinding and streetscape.	City	DWP, YMCA, WAEDC	Cost will depend on fail market value of easements.	NatureWorks grant (Ohio Department of Natural Resources)
A	3.4	Upgrade the parking lot to enhance the desirability of the Heritage Park area and strengthen the connection between the park and the Auglaize Street businesses.	Create dedicated walkway between Auglaize Street building pass-through and Heritage Park.	2010	2012	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide gateways, wayfinding and streetscape, and Heritage Park.	City	DWP, YMCA	Cost will depend on fail market value of easements.	NatureWorks grant (Ohio Department of Natural Resources)
4. Construct targeted improvement to public sector spaces in Downtown Wapakoneta.										
B	4.1	Design and construct Downtown Gateways	Coordinated design of signs for primary and secondary Downtown entrances.	2008	2010	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide wayfinding and streetscape, and Heritage Park improvements.	City	DWP, WAEDC	Cost will depend on gateway design; total design and construction cost should not exceed approx. \$30,000	Can be part of Downtown Streetscape initiative (Tier 2 of Downtown Revitalization program, Office of Housing and Community Partnerships).
A	4.2	Design and install Downtown Wayfinding	Coordinate with Gateways	2008	2010	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide wayfinding and streetscape, and Heritage Park improvements.	City	DWP, WAEDC	Cost will depend on system design; total design and construction cost should not exceed approx. \$30,000	Can be part of Downtown Streetscape initiative (Tier 2 of Downtown Revitalization program, Office of Housing and Community Partnerships).
A	4.3	Purchase and install banners	Verify that existing poles can support them first.	2008	2010	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide wayfinding and streetscape, and Heritage Park improvements.	City	DWP, WAEDC	Cost will depend on design; total design and fabrication cost should not exceed approx. \$10,000	Can be part of Downtown Streetscape initiative (Tier 2 of Downtown Revitalization program, Office of Housing and Community Partnerships).
A	4.4	Evaluate strategies to install Murals	Identify appropriate walls and amenable property owners	2008	2010	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide wayfinding and streetscape, and Heritage Park improvements.	City	DWP, WAEDC, School District, YMCA, other volunteer sources	Cost will depend on design; can be implemented with volunteer assistance	
A	4.5	Downtown parking	Conduct a parking utilization study to determine if the City has an adequate number of parking spaces	2008	2010	Outside consultant and City staff.	City	Volunteers		

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Wapakoneta Auglaize County, OH

Plan Element #2: Downtown Revitalization (Cont.)

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
5. Improve the deteriorated areas on the east and west ends of Auglaize Street.										
B	5.1	Facilitate redevelopment of the corner of Blackhoof and West Auglaize streets as either a "pocket park" or a commercial/residential development, depending on the availability, historic status and reusability of the historic Armory building to the north.	Determine YMCA plans for and condition of Armory site to decide plan.	2010	2013	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide wayfinding and streetscape, and Heritage Park improvements.	WAEDC, City	DWP	Cost will depend on amount of property involved, purpose of redevelopment and design characteristics. Cost of purchasing corner property only may be approximately \$50,000; remediation costs, if any, are unknown.	Clean Ohio Brownfield Revitalization Grant, Tier 2 Downtown Revitalization Grant
A	5.2	Facilitate redevelopment of the area on the east end of the Auglaize Street downtown corridor for multi-use commercial development.		2009	2015	Other urban design, including Downtown and citywide wayfinding and streetscape, and Heritage Park improvements.	WAEDC, City	DWP	Cost will depend on amount of property involved, purpose of redevelopment and design characteristics, and amount of public expenditure vs. private development, which will depend on distribution of land use between public and private uses.	Tier 2 and 3 Downtown Revitalization Grant, Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks Grant
6. Develop financial incentives and funding pools to support Downtown Revitalization.										
B		Investigate various funding opportunities including but not limited to the following: TIF's, CRA's, New Market Tax Credits, CDE, and the Federal Certified Historic Structures Income Tax Credit		2010	2013	Outside consultant and City staff.	City	Economic Development Consultant		

Plan Element 3: Enhance Residents' Quality of Life

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
1. Protect the value of Wapakoneta's existing housing stock by proactively supporting property maintenance.										
A	1.1	Support aggressive and detail-oriented code enforcement relating to property maintenance.	Public policy support and communication of successes	2008	Ongoing	Zoning, Legal requirements, Safety Services, other building code enforcement systems	City Council	Planning Commission, Building Department, Safety Services.	Cost depends on whether additional staff is required.	Inspection Fees
A	1.2	Evaluate strategies for enhancing the City's ability to enforce property maintenance.	Consider options for enhancing residential property maintenance through code enforcement.	2008	Ongoing	Zoning, Legal requirements, Safety Services, other building code enforcement systems	City Council	Planning Commission, Building Department, Safety Services.	Cost depends on whether additional staff is required.	Inspection Fees
A	1.3	Help City residents, particularly its elderly, disabled and low income homeowners, to meet the City's property maintenance standards.								
A	1.4	Establish a local Historic Preservation Ordinance and historic district protections for significant historic neighborhoods, particularly West Auglaize Street.	Necessary to communicate the benefits of historic preservation designations; many case studies demonstrating improved property values available	2008	2010	Zoning, Legal requirements, property owners	Neighborhood Organization	Building Department, Planning Commission, Historical Society, Council	Cost depends on whether additional staff is required.	Cost can be partially offset by small permit fees.
A	1.5	Evaluate options for establishing Conservation Districts to protect the property values of historic-era neighborhoods that do not have sufficient architectural character to warrant historic district designation	Necessary to communicate the benefits of conservation district designations; many case studies demonstrating improved property values available	2008	2012	Zoning, Legal requirements, Safety Services, property owners, other building code enforcement systems	Neighborhood Organization	Building Department, Planning Commission, Historical Society, Council	Cost depends on whether additional staff is required.	Cost can be partially offset by small permit fees.
A	1.6	Develop a regional promotional initiative aimed at highlighting Wapakoneta's residential assets to recruit new homeowners who want a Wapakoneta-style small town environment.	Will require coordinated effort with Realtors ©	2008	Ongoing	Other City and regional promotions	Local REALTORS©	WAEDC, Chamber of Commerce	Cost depends on nature and media of promotion	

Plan Element 3: Enhance Residents' Quality of Life (Cont.)

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
2. Manage the process of new housing construction and ensure high quality new housing and new subdivision design.										
C	2.1	Concentrate new housing to the north of the City, near current new housing.	Ensure that existing zoning does not permit extensive new residential development in other areas; ensure that existing zoning to North is appropriate	2008	Ongoing	Commercial property plans in area; roadway and sidewalk network.	City Council and Planning Commission	Neighborhood Associations	Cost limited to staff time as necessary	
A	2.2	Encourage the continued used of the PUD and consider refining the PUD's requirements to provide more guidance in preserving open space and valuable natural features.	Revision of existing PUD (per zoning code revisions below)	2008	2009	Residential property standards	City Council and Planning Commission	Neighborhood Associations, residential developers	Cost included in zoning code revisions to residential items	
A	2.3	Consider requiring landscaping standards for new housing.	Can be incorporated into PUD; should also be in straight zones	2008	Ongoing	Residential property standards	City Council and Planning Commission	Neighborhood Associations, residential developers,	Cost included in zoning code revisions to residential items	
C	2.4	Anticipate and address the impacts that new residential development northwest of the City may have on the City's road network in the future.	See Infrastructure Plan Element below.	2008	2018	Regional City and County roadway network	Council (Streets and Alleys), County Engineer	WAEDC, Chamber of Commerce, Planning Commission, Ohio Department of Transportation	Cost to be determined through long-term planning	
3. Continue to improve and diversify Wapakoneta's recreational resources, particularly for passive recreation activities.										
A	3.1	Evaluate existing park and recreational sites for opportunities to add passive recreational facilities to existing recreation sites.	Example: install walking trail around periphery of park.	2009	2010	Plans for existing recreation facilities; surrounding street and sidewalk networks	Recreation Commission	Neighborhood Associations	Cost will depend on specifics of each situation; costs per park facility unlikely to exceed \$20,000	Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks grant; other Clean Ohio and private recreation support matching grants
A	3.2	Develop a long-term strategy for linking to and enhancing the regional trail system through the City to permit longer bike or walking trails than would be possible within existing facilities.	Close communication with regional trail initiatives	2009	2010	Existing regional trail plans; revised Thoroughfare Plan.	Recreation Commission	Heritage Trails, Streets and Alleys, City Engineering Department, County Engineer	Costs will depend on strategies chosen; master plan for trail facilities will permit cost estimates.	Transportation Enhancements grants (Ohio Department of Development), Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks grant; other Clean Ohio and private recreation support matching grants.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

City of Wapakoneta
Auglaize County, OH

Plan Element #4: Improve and Upgrade Infrastructure

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
1. Continue to pursue aggressive strategies to repair and upgrade roadway segments and underlying systems that are in need of improvement.										
B	1.1	Update and expand the existing inventory of roadways, sanitary and stormwater sewer systems to identify priority areas and position for capital grants.	Add to existing inventory: presence of combined sewer, estimated life span of storm/sanitary sewer system, presence and condition of sidewalks, signs, traffic signals, lighting.	2008	Ongoing	Planned and computed projects	City Engineering Department	Streets and Alleys Committee of Council; Public Works Dept.	Approx. \$80,000 labor and contracts	Street and Sewer Improvement Fund
B	1.2	Do the City's annual Capital Improvement planning system to schedule and budget funding for priority improvements and grant matches.	Build on previous capital improvement planning efforts.	2008	Ongoing	Planned and computed projects	Council; City Engineering Department	Streets and Alleys Committee of Council; Public Works Dept.	Costs to consist primarily of staff time expenditure.	
C	1.3	Create a formal update of the Thoroughfare Plan to identify appropriate design standards based on an understanding of projected future traffic volumes and routing		2009	2011	Comprehensive Plan	Planning Commission; City Council	City Engineering Department	If not completed in house, cost is likely to be approx. \$40,000	
A	1.4	Continue to aggressively pursue grants and other funding for roadway and related infrastructure improvements.		Ongoing	Ongoing	Capital Improvement Plan, Annual Appropriations	Director of Safety Services, Engineering Department	Council Committees	Costs to consist primarily of staff time expenditure unless contract relationship with grant preparer is necessary.	
C	1.5	Consider the use of TIFs.								
B	1.6	Evaluate strategies for addressing railroad crossing issues.	Will require detailed plan of action and careful evaluation of all alternatives.	2009	2012	Railroad plans and safety services	Director of Safety Services, Council	Transportation engineering consultant, Engineering Department	Approx \$250,000 for engineering study; construction costs to be determined by study.	Grants from ODOT and County may be available for construction based on results of study.
2. Evaluate strategies for updating signal timing or traffic response timing programs in locations where peak hour congestion is experienced.										
B										
3. Evaluate strategies for addressing railroad crossing issues										
B										

Plan Element #4: Improve and Upgrade Infrastructure (Cont.)

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
4. Improve the function and appearance of Wapakoneta's key intersections, entrances and corridors										
A	4.1	Develop an Urban Design Plan to establish a program of gateway and major corridor streetscape improvements.	Develop coordinated, phased plan for gateways, key corridors and intersection improvements	2010	2012	Downtown Design improvements; zoning requirements	City Council & Committees	Planning Commission, WAEDC, Chamber	Approx. \$50,000 for urban design plan; costs and cost phasing for improvements to be determined by urban design plan	
A	4.2	Identify available land near the City's primary entrances for new or enhanced gateways.		2009	2012	Urban Design Plan; existing gateway features and locations	City Council, WAEDC	Engineering Department; owners of key properties; managers of existing gateways		
5. Anticipate long-range needs for improving the efficiency of the transportation network, including alternative circulation routes around the City and improved access management on City streets.										
B	5.1	Begin preliminary planning for circulation routes that connect industrial, commercial and residential centers without passing through the city center.	Identify and map routes; conduct preliminary transportation planning. Evaluate journalizing routes when preferred route is identified but funding not yet acquired	2010	2020	Comprehensive Plan, sewer and water service areas, existing sensitive areas and natural resources, such as cemeteries and water bodies.	City Council	Engineering Department, County Engineer, ODOT, WAEDC, Chamber.	Preliminary planning can be incorporated with Thoroughfare Plan Update; Cost to be determined by nature and scope of proposed improvements.	
A	5.2	Develop access management standards to use in conjunction with new development, particularly along commercial corridors.	Can be incorporated with zoning code.	2009	2013	Comprehensive Plan, existing zoning requirements, Capital Improvement plans, economic development initiatives.	City Council; City Engineering Dept.	County Engineer, WAEDC, Chamber	Can be completed as part of revisions to existing zoning code.	
A	5.3	Consider requiring traffic impact studies as a condition of review for all significant commercial and industrial development, and provide tools within the development review process to ensure that any issues raised by the traffic impact study are properly addressed.								

Plan Element #5: Improve City Land Use Regulations

Importance	Element Number	Action Plan Steps	What should it include?	Begin By When?	Complete by When?	What does it need to be coordinated with?	Who should lead?	Who should help?	What will it cost (Estimate)?	How pay for it?
A		Revise Zoning code	All zoning elements mentioned previously; can be phased or completed as one initiative	2008	2015 (if phased)	Comprehensive Plan recommendations, development trends	Planning Commission, City Council	Engineering Department, Law Director, Steering Committee	If phased, anticipate 6 to 8 phases at \$5,000 to \$10,000 per phase; comprehensive revision may cost approximately \$40,000	CDBG funds (matched by City funds)