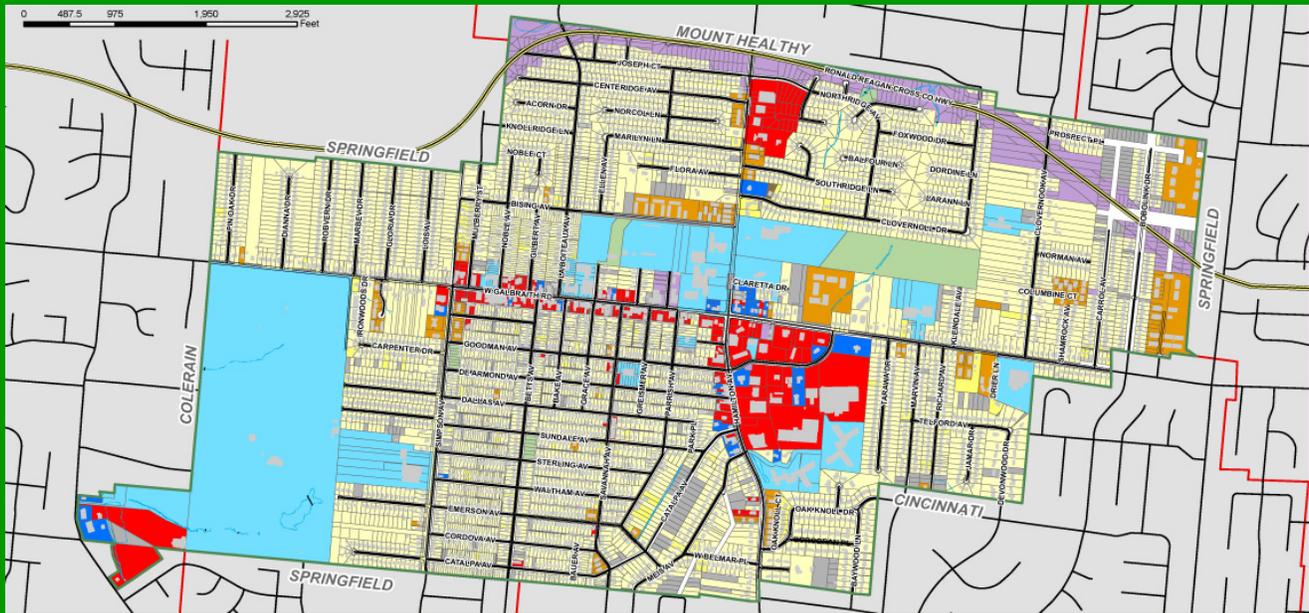




# North College Hill, Ohio COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



January 2008

**Prepared For:**  
The City of North College Hill  
Hamilton County, Ohio

**Prepared By:**



Loveland, Ohio



Cincinnati, Ohio



# **The North College Hill Comprehensive Plan**

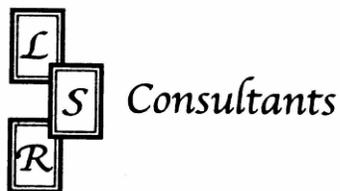
January 17, 2008

Prepared for:

**The City of North College Hill,  
Hamilton County, Ohio**

*Adopted By City Council on:  
4 February 2008*

Prepared By:



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# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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**RESOLUTION 3-2008**

**RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE NORTH COLLEGE HILL  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

WHEREAS, the top ranked goal from the October 2006 Nominal Group Technique (NGT) community visioning session was to develop a long range and comprehensive master plan for the city of North College Hill, and,

WHEREAS, in response to this interest and support, the city of North College Hill hired the planning firm of Jacobs Edwards & Kelcey (JEK) to work with council, staff and the community to develop the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan*, and,

WHEREAS, the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan* represents the hard work and dedication of the fifteen-member North College Hill Master Plan Steering Committee and many other resident and business stakeholders who participated in the process of developing the *Plan*, and,

WHEREAS, the purpose of the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan* is to provide the city a long-range guide to improve the physical appearance, economic vitality and overall quality of life for the city, and,

WHEREAS, the *North College Hill Comprehensive Plan* is intended to provide an overall context for future development decisions, to define a vision of how the community generally wants the city to develop and redevelop, and to outline the strategies it will take to achieve that vision, and,

WHEREAS, the recommendations presented in the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan* represent an ideal situation, and as each recommendation is pursued, issues such as ownership, acquisition, financing, and timing will determine the practicality and feasibility of implementation. Likewise, specific recommendations may need to be adjusted during the implementation process, as feasibility analyses and financing scenarios are completed and other new information comes to light, and

WHEREAS, adoption of this *Plan* does not mean that the city of North College Hill is committed to financing every single recommendation in the *Plan*; it does mean, however, that the city will base future decisions which affect the community on the basic tenets of the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan*, and,

WHEREAS, there are many benefits of the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan* including a means to provide legitimacy for land use decisions that go beyond the purview of zoning; a guide for future policy decisions for the development and redevelopment of properties; and a basis for facilitating the process of amending the existing zoning code, and,

WHEREAS, input was received from residents and businesses in the development of the *Plan* at a publicized public meeting, and,

WHEREAS, the North College Hill Planning Commission and North College Hill Master Plan Steering Committee unanimously recommended that Council adopt the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan* as a guide for revitalization of the city with the understanding that not every single recommendation in the *Plan* will be or should be implemented, and,

WHEREAS, the decisions that city council must make regarding the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan* will be much easier, more consistent, and less arbitrary, when they are based on the concepts and recommendations contained in the *Plan*.

NOW, THEREFORE, The council of the city of North College Hill adopts the *North College Hill, Ohio Comprehensive Plan* as a guide for the future development and redevelopment of the city.

Adopted this 4<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2008.

Attest:

Maureen P. Mason  
President of Council  
Kathleen P. Stojan  
Clerk of Council  
Roger R. Hummer  
Mayor/acting

Approved this 4<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2008.

Approved as to Form [Signature]  
Law Director



## **Acknowledgements**

### **Comprehensive Steering Committee**

Dick Alexander  
Dan Brooks  
Linda Deters  
Bill Diers  
Rick Dikeman\*  
Michele Douglas  
Marty Dunn

Vicky Dunn  
Gary Gellert  
Tom Graves  
Jerry Isham  
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John Overbeck

\*Supplied select photographs throughout the report.

### **Ex-Officio Members of the Steering Committee**

Jerry Thamann, City Administrator  
Linda Fitzgerald, Economic Development Consultant

### **Jacobs Edwards and Kelcey Project Staff**

Paul A. Culter, AICP  
Sarah L. Headlee

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of the *North College Hill Comprehensive Plan* (hereinafter referred to as “the Plan”) is to establish a mission statement and policy framework for guiding future development and redevelopment in the city over the next ten to fifteen years. The Plan elements reflect the community’s ideals that were derived through a public participation process including a fifteen member steering committee of city residents, businesses, and city and school officials, key person interviews, and a public open house.

The mission statement for the city of North College Hill sets the foundation for the goals, plan elements, future land use recommendations, and implementation strategies contained in the Plan. The mission statement was developed by the steering committee at the beginning of the planning process. The mission statement is:

*The city of North College Hill will strive to be a community of well maintained neighborhoods in which citizens can enjoy living, working, and playing in a safe, harmonious and environmentally responsible atmosphere.*

The goals for implementing the mission statement are outlined in the “Visioning Process” section of the Plan. The general themes of these goals include:

- Excellent public services;
- Attractive, well maintained and diverse residential neighborhoods;
- Pedestrian friendly and viable business districts;
- Opportunities for education and worship;
- Presentation of a positive public image and strong identity;
- Exciting portfolio of community events; and
- Efficient vehicular and pedestrian transportation network.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends four plan elements to guide the city of North College Hill towards the attainment of the established mission statement. These plan elements include the following:

1. Maintain and enhance existing housing stock;
2. Business district revitalization;
3. Image transformation and community branding; and
4. Improve school and city services and facilities.



Implementation strategies are established at the end of the document and present in a matrix format detailed guidance for the implementation of each plan element and its related objectives. Action steps necessary to accomplish each plan element are clearly articulated. Applicable policy areas, time frames for the implementation of each action step, and identification of groups and individuals responsible for spearheading the various efforts are also included in the matrix. Once City Council has adopted the Plan, the Planning Commission will prioritize goals and confirm and/or modify implementation timelines and responsible parties.

The *Plan* is intended to provide an overall context for future policy decisions, to define a vision of how the community generally wants the city to develop and redevelop and to outline the strategies it will take to achieve that vision. The Plan will result in a unifying vision and community pride that is created by and championed by a partnership of the key stakeholders who lead the implementation and management of the Plan. As the plan is implemented it should result in new behavior by stakeholders, residents, workers and employers that exemplifies the new ways in which North College Hill is operating.

The recommendations presented in the Plan represent an ideal situation, and as each recommendation is pursued, issues such as ownership, acquisition, financing, and timing will determine the practicality and feasibility of implementation. Likewise, specific recommendations may need to be adjusted during the implementation process, as feasibility analyses and financing scenarios are completed and other new information comes to light.

Adoption of this Plan does not mean that the city of North College Hill is committed to financing every single recommendation in the Plan; it does mean, however, that the city will base future decisions which affect the community on the basic tenets of the *Plan*.

There are many benefits of The Plan including a means to provide legitimacy for land use decisions that go beyond the purview of zoning; a guide for future policy decisions for the development and redevelopment of properties; and a basis for facilitating the process of amending the existing zoning code. The decisions that city council must make regarding The Plan will be much easier, more consistent, and less arbitrary when they are based on the concepts and recommendations contained in the Plan.



## Introduction

Strategically located just north of Cincinnati, Ohio, the city of North College Hill first incorporated as a city in 1941 with just over 5,000 residents. The post war baby boom quickly saw this population increase to 12,000 residents, and the population remains near this level today. The size of the community has also remained stable at approximately two square miles.

North College Hill is a “First Suburb” community meaning it is one of the mature, built-out communities located on the first ring surrounding the city of Cincinnati. First Suburb communities, and North College Hill in particular, offer to residents and businesses unique opportunities such as easy access to amenities throughout the Greater Cincinnati Area, a well built and affordable housing stock, an established downtown business district, and a compact and walkable city. The city also boasts first class golf facilities at the Clovernook Country Club, a city public school system that is undergoing reinvestment in facilities and services, and convenient access via Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway to major roads and the interstate system.

The intent of The Plan (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”) is to establish a vision statement that defines the future of the city based on community desires, goals, and recommendations. The Plan will include strategies necessary to attain this vision over a ten to fifteen year life span. Plan elements include a set of goals, a future land use plan, and implementation recommendations designed to attain the vision. The Plan was developed through a public participation process which included regular meetings of a fifteen member steering committee comprised of city residents, businesses, and city and school officials. A public open house was also held to obtain community input on the Plan.

This document is intended to allow the city to work in an efficient manner to provide the best services for the community in a fiscally responsible manner. As a first response planning tool, the Comprehensive Plan will help the community answer the following questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where are we going?
- What do we want to aspire to be?
- How can we get there?

In October, 2006 a Nominal Group Technique (NGT) process was used to determine and prioritize the goals for the city of North College Hill. (Summary findings and recommendations were subsequently presented in the February 2007 *Nominal Group Technique Economic Development Plan*). There were six recommendations resulting from the NGT with the first priority being the development of a city-wide master plan.



## Introduction

Based on that priority, The Plan was initiated in January 2007. The other five recommendations of the NGT included: Stabilization of the housing stock by increasing home ownership and providing home improvement incentives; Business retention; Stimulation of new business growth; Image enhancement through marketing and promotion; and Improvement of city and school facilities and services. These recommendations are discussed in the Plan Elements Section where applicable.

## Planning Process

Public input is an important and integral part of the planning process. It is from the public that intimate details and knowledge are realized that can be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. Three methods for attaining public input were utilized as a part of this process: monthly meetings with the steering committee created specifically to oversee the Plan; key person interviews, and; a public open house to review the Plan elements.

The consulting team of Jacobs Edwards and Kelcey worked directly with LSR Consultants (the city's economic development consultant), the City Administrator, and the steering committee to develop a detailed understanding of the city's need and issues. The steering committee was responsible for formulating and reviewing the city's current conditions, formulating the Plan vision, and developing Plan elements that fit the city's needs. One-on-one key person interviews were conducted with four individuals in the community to gain their specific input on the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities as they relate to the city. (See page 31 of the Plan for the names of the interviewees).

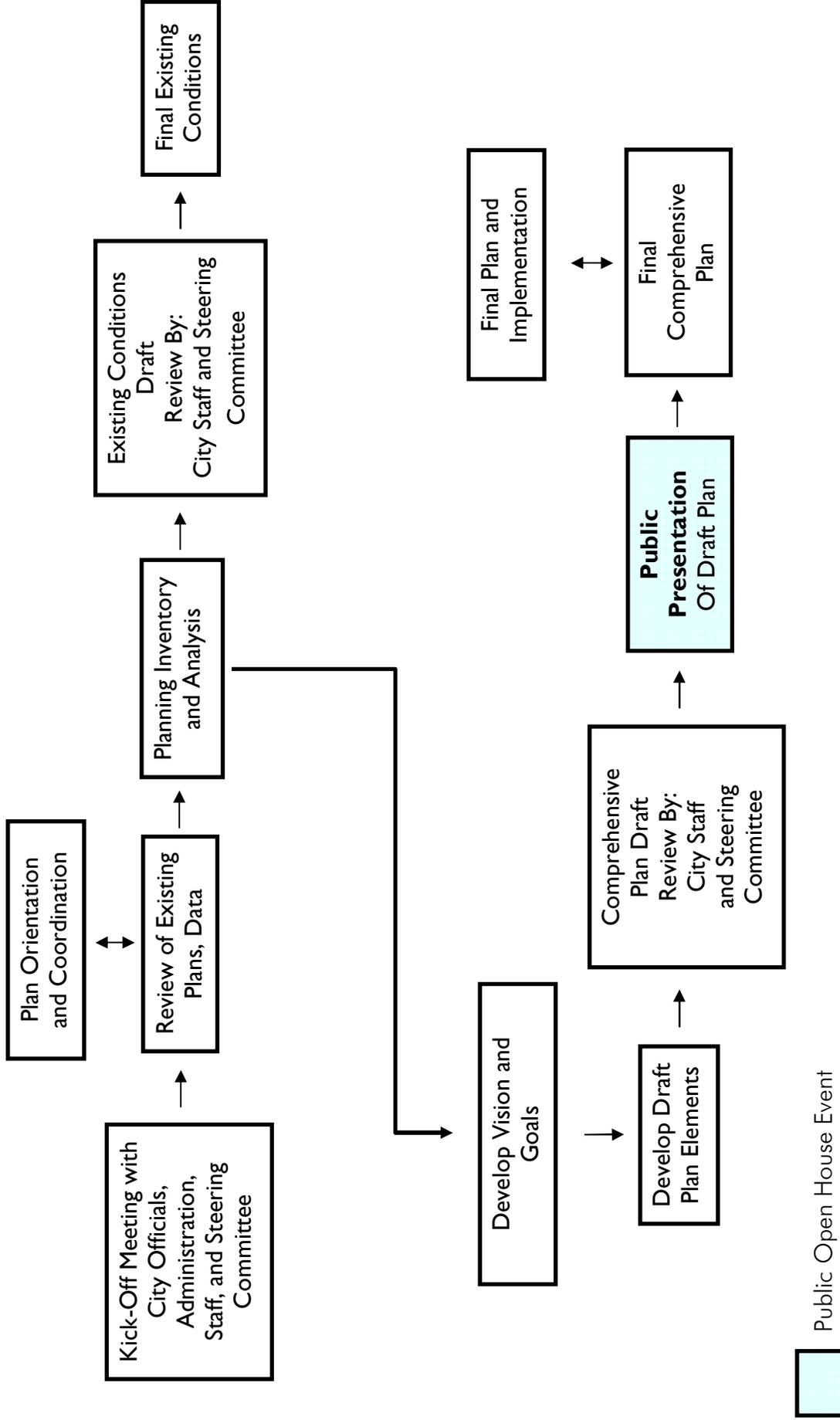
The work program for The Plan involved several elements (See **Figure 1**). These included the following:

- Regular working meetings with the steering committee
- Collection and review of existing conditions and trends
- A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis
- The development of a vision statement providing a clear policy foundation for the Plan;
- The development of a future land use plan;
- The development of an implementation strategy; and
- The creation of a draft and final Comprehensive Plan document.



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Figure 1



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Introduction



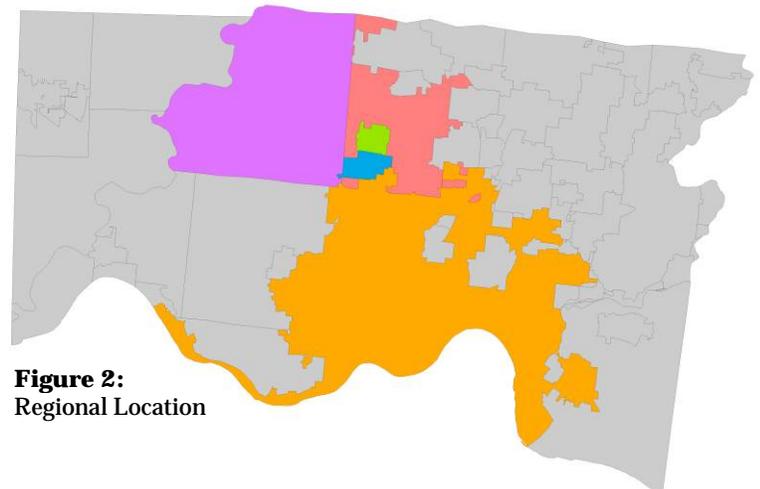
## Existing Conditions

### Introduction

Existing conditions analyses identify physical characteristics and constraints, such as existing zoning, infrastructure (sewer, water, and roadways), existing land use and other aspects of the community that could impact land use patterns and may be expected to influence future development and redevelopment possibilities in the city.

### Regional Location

As identified in **Figure 2**, North College Hill (blue) is located in the center of Hamilton County (gray). The city shares its southern border with the city of Cincinnati (orange) and the city of Mt. Healthy (green) is located directly north. To the east and north of North College Hill is Springfield Township (pink) and to the west is Colerain Township (purple).



**Figure 2:**  
Regional Location

### Existing Land Use

The existing land use pattern in North College Hill is identified in **Table 1** and **Figure 3** (the Existing Land Use Map). The single family residential use represents just over 50% of the total land occupied in the city. There is a significant gap between the number of acres used as single family residential and the next highest percent of land usage which is identified as institutional at 19% of the occupied land in the city. Commercial, right-of-way, public service/public utility, multi-family residential and vacant land uses range from 6.32% to 4% respectively. Park and recreation, two-family residential, and office and mixed uses collectively represent less than 5% of the total land in the city. It should be noted that single family residential and institutional type uses (schools, religious places of worship, etc.), typically do not pay for themselves in terms of taxes received in relation to city services provided.

With the North College Hill municipal building and the Junior/Senior High School located in the center of the downtown area on West Galbraith Road, a public institution and service hub has been established. The majority of the city's commercial, office, and service uses are located along the two major economic corridors, West Galbraith Road and Hamilton Avenue. A large grouping of commercial activity also occurs along Goodman Avenue in the southeastern section of



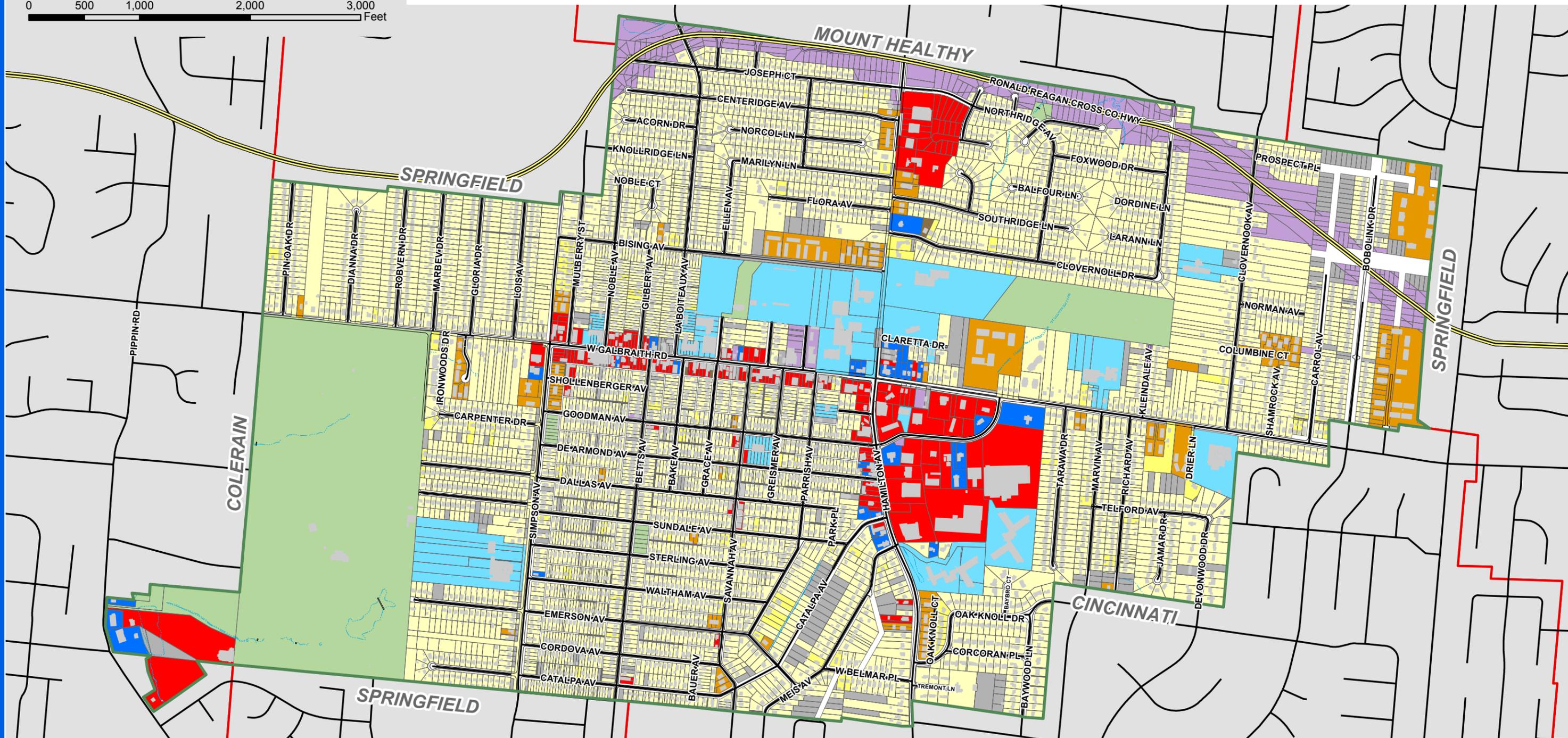
Existing Conditions

the city. The 112 acre Clovernook County Club is located in the southwestern corner of the city and the remainder of North College Hill is residential use.

In order to make a regional comparison, the existing land use distribution of North College Hill is compared to that of Hamilton County. Hamilton County’s land use distribution was provided in the Community COMPASS – State of the County Address and reflects the auditor’s data from the year 2000. The distribution percentages for the county are shown in **Table 1**.

<b>Table 1: Existing Land Use Distribution</b>				
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>North College Hill</b>		<b>Hamilton County</b>	
	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Total Acres</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% of Total Acres</b>
Single Family Residential	549.84	51.77%	100,221	41.00
Institutional	199.12	18.75%	10,403	4.00
Commercial	67.13	6.32%	10,968	4.00
Right - of - Way	54.63	5.14%	(X)	(X)
Public Service / Public Utility	53.97	5.08%	39,708	16.00
Multi Family Residential	44.93	4.23%	(X)	(X)
Vacant	42.53	4.00%	30,226	12.00
Park and Recreation	19.40	1.83%	12,821	5.00
Two-Family Residential	17.62	1.66%	(X)	(X)
Office	12.91	1.22%	(X)	(X)
Mixed Use	0.47	0.04%	(X)	(X)
Agricultural	(X)	(X)	24,744	10.00
Industries	(X)	(X)	13,232	5.00
NA - Not available & no code	(X)	(X)	8,217	3.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1062.08</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>250,540</b>	<b>100.00</b>
(X) = No data available				
For the purpose of the Community COMPASS, Hamilton County grouped all residential uses into one category identified as "Residential." This amount was placed in comparison with the highest residential use for North College Hill "Single Family Residential."				

Review of the table above indicates that North College Hill and Hamilton County have a similar distribution of commercial land uses, 6.32% and 4% respectively. Two notable differences between the city and county are the higher percentage of vacant land in the county (12%) as compared to North College Hill (4%), and; the county’s greater need for and dedication of land to public service uses, 18% compared to only 5.08% for the city. Hamilton County also has two land uses that North College Hill does not have, namely agriculture (10%) and industry (5%).



### Existing Land Use



Figure 3

### Legend

- |                             |                           |               |                                 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| North College Hill Boundary | <b>Land Use</b>           | Mixed Use     | Park and Recreation             |
| Buildings                   | Single Family Residential | Commercial    | Public Service / Public Utility |
| Streams                     | Two Family Residential    | Institutional | Vacant                          |
|                             | Multi-Family Residential  | Office        |                                 |

# Comprehensive Plan North College Hill, OH

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Existing Conditions





## Existing Zoning

Zoning is the legal tool that regulates the development of private property. Zoning typically mirrors the policies of the Comprehensive Plan and works to implement the goals and objectives of the Plan. Zoning establishes permitted land uses and regulates site elements including: minimum lot sizes, building heights and setbacks, signage, and lot coverage. Other elements regulated include, but are not limited to: off-street parking, planned developments, non-conforming uses and conditional uses. A zoning code diagnostics memorandum is located in **Appendix A** which identifies the strengths and weaknesses of North College Hill's existing zoning code which was first adopted in 1969 and has been revised, in parts, at various times over the last thirty-eight years.

There are currently nine zoning districts in the North College Hill Zoning Code. They are:

- R-1 One Family Residence District
- R-2 One Family Residence District
- R-3 One Family Residence District
- CO-1 Planned Business District
- CO-2 Planned Business District
- C-1 Neighborhood Business District
- C-2 Office District
- C-3 Central Business District
- C-4 General Business District

Of these nine zoning districts, seven are classified and listed on the Zoning Map (**Figure 4**). There is currently no land in the city zoned CO-2 Planned Business District or C-4 General Business District.

The majority of North College Hill is zoned R-2 One Family Residence which permits a relatively high density of single family detached dwelling units (approximately 5 dwelling units per acre) on individual lots in the city. The residential zoning districts, including the R-2 District, also permit two family dwellings, recreational uses, churches, day care and institutional type uses.

Business zoning, which permits both retail and office uses, is applied to major roadway corridors including Hamilton Avenue and West Galbraith Road. These districts provide for a wide variety of uses including, but not limited to: convenience stores, supermarkets, personal services, clinics, eating and drinking places, funeral homes, offices, banks, schools, hotels, gas stations, automotive repair, commercial recreation facilities, theaters and other types of entertainment facilities. North College Hill does not have an industrial zoning district available in the zoning code

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Existing Conditions



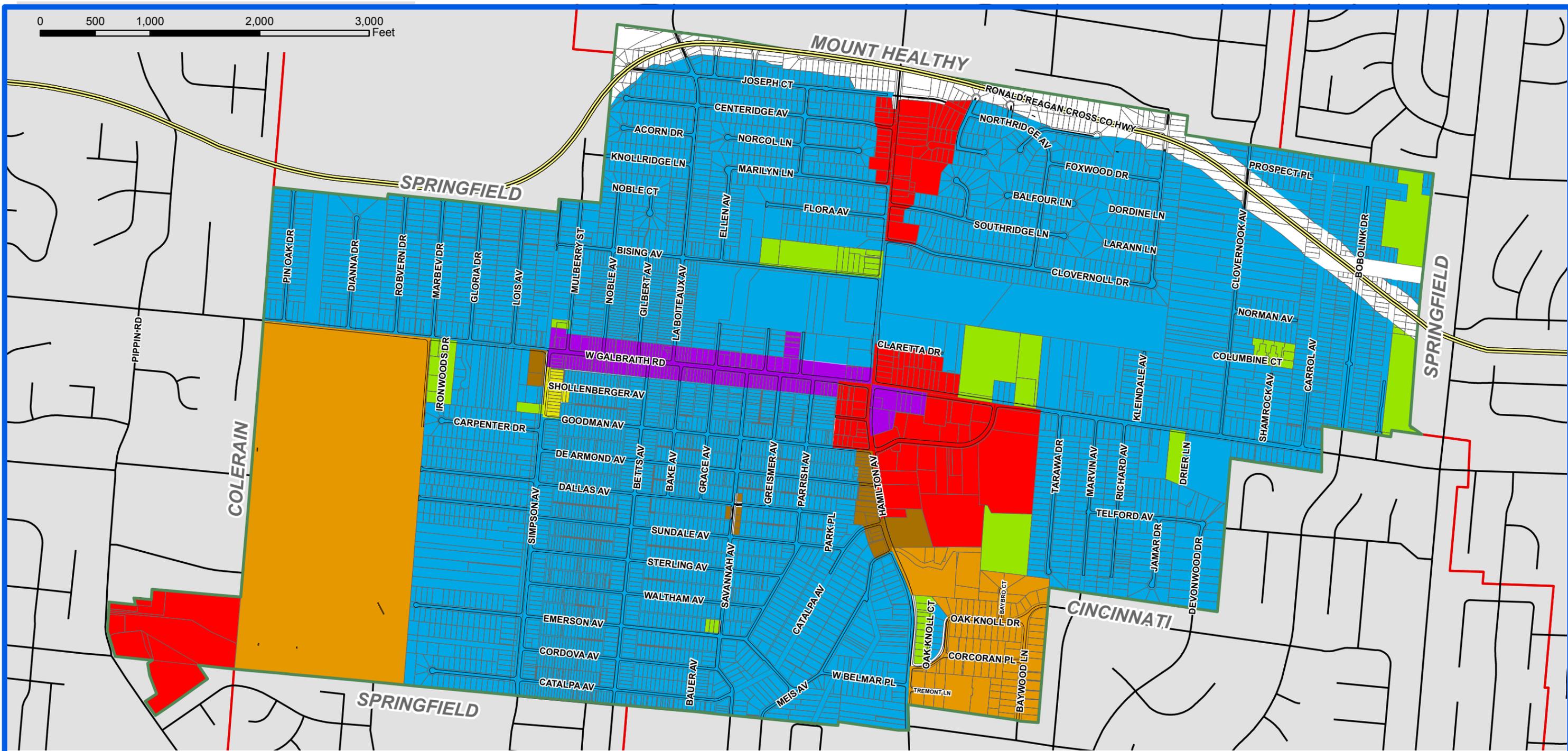


Figure 4

**Legend**

- North College Hill Boundary
- Zoning**
- CO-1 Planned Business District
- C-1 Neighborhood Business District
- C-2 Office District
- C-3 Central Business District
- R-1 One-Family Residence
- R-2 One-Family Residence
- R-3 Multi-Family Residence

NOTE:  
Both the CO-2 Planned Business District and the C-4 General Business District are zoning districts in the official zoning code however no land in the City is currently zoned as such.

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Existing Conditions





which would establish a specific zoning district to permit light industrial uses as well as research and development type facilities. Currently, laboratories and light manufacturing uses are permitted as a conditional use (requiring further review by the city's planning commission before approval) in the C-4 General Business District. Like commercial zoning districts, industrial zoning districts are an important contributor to the city tax base.

### Transportation

#### *Regional Access:*

The city of North College Hill's northern boundary with the city of Mt. Healthy is physically divided by the Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway. The two jurisdictions share an exit on this highway at Hamilton Avenue (US 127). The highway directly links North College Hill with Interstates 71, 74, 75, and 275, thus providing local, regional and state connectivity to city residents and businesses. Hamilton Avenue (U.S. Route 127) is an alternative route that allows north and south travel through the county and region without having to utilize the above mentioned interstates and provides a faster, more direct route to downtown Cincinnati and the Northern Kentucky area.

#### *Local Access:*

Local access to and in the city of North College Hill occurs along four prominent roadways: Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway, West Galbraith Road and Hamilton and Savannah Avenues. These roadways are identified as "prominent" because of their functional classifications as highways and arterials. Functional classifications identify roadways based on the type of service that they provide. The city of North College Hill has five functional classifications, all classified as urban roadways. Urban roadways generally include higher design standards that assume a higher volume of traffic than rural-designated roadways (e.g. including curb and gutter, wider travel lanes, etc.). The five functional classifications in North College Hill are defined as follows as identified by the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Hamilton County Engineer's Office:



1. **Freeway & Expressway.** Freeways and expressways are the highest type of roadway, always physically dividing directional lanes of traffic with limited access at interchanges. Higher speeds are generally realized on Freeways and Expressways, typically 50-70 miles per hour. Volumes of traffic generally exceeding 25,000 and often 100,000 vehicles per day are common. The Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway is the only roadway within North College Hill that is classified in the freeway and expressway functional classification.



## Existing Conditions

2. **Major Arterial.** Major arterials primarily connect the major activity centers of a metropolitan area and are intended to serve high volumes of traffic (typically between 10,000 and 25,000 vehicles per day). Major arterials carry the major portion of trips that travel through an area or community for distances greater than one mile. Hamilton Avenue is the only major arterial in North College Hill.
3. **Minor Arterial.** Minor arterials provide relatively high vehicle capacity and are used by through and local traffic. Minor arterials typically carry local traffic to or from major arterials or freeways. Individual site access from a minor arterial is often limited through regulations, but is not as restricted as on major arterials or freeways/expressways. Minor arterials are likely to have lower traffic volumes than major arterials. West Galbraith Road is the only minor arterial in North College Hill.
4. **Collector.** A collector street provides access from local streets to arterial streets. Access is generally less controlled, with multiple driveways. Traffic volumes generally range between 1,500 and 10,000 vehicles per day. Collector streets, especially in urban areas, generally have curbs and sidewalks. There are four collector roadways in North College Hill that included: Betts Avenue, Clovernook Avenue, Savannah Avenue and Simpson Avenue.
5. **Local.** Local streets exist to provide access to all abutting properties. Local streets generally accommodate lower traffic volumes, serve short trips (generally within neighborhoods) and provide connections preferably only to collector streets rather than arterials. Local roads in urban areas generally have curbs and sidewalks. All roadways in North College Hill, excluding the four roadways identified above, are local roadways.



### Population Demographics and Trends

An important component of the planning process is understanding the key demographics of the community as well as the general trends that may affect the future of the community. Issues that can be addressed with demographic information include: How has the city grown in the past? What is the development trend that is expected for the future? How will the city grow if such trends remain unchecked? Understanding and analyzing demographic information will provide community leaders the knowledge to know where to focus efforts to provide a high quality of life and a fiscally sound community.

The following information reflects the existing demographic trends that are likely to impact the city of North College Hill's future endeavors including housing types, governmental services and amenities needed. The data was derived from several sources including the United States Census (past demographic information and future estimates) and Claritas (future demographics estimates).

As of the last official U.S. Census count in 2000, there were 10,082 people residing in North College Hill. This population included 2,535 families residing in 4,191 households. There were 4,500 housing units in the city of which approximately 300 were vacant.

#### *Racial Breakdown*

As of the 2000 Census, the racial makeup of the city was:

- 76% White
- 22% African American
- 0.25% Native American
- 0.25% Asian
- 0.01% Pacific Islander
- 0.50% From other races
- 0.99% From two or more races.



Those that identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino of any race were 0.59% of the population.



## Existing Conditions

### *Household Breakdown*

According to Census figures, of the 4,191 households:

- 30.2% had children under the age of 18 living with them.
- 42.2% were married couples living together.
- 14.9% had a female householder with no husband present.
- 39.5% were “non-families” (persons living in a household who are not related).
- 34.4% of all households were made up of individuals
- 14.4% had someone living alone who was 65 years of age or older.
- The average household size was 2.33 and the average family size was 3.03.

### *Age Breakdown*

The breakdown of population in North College Hill, according to the 2000 Census, identifies that 43% of the population was either younger than 18 or older than 65 years of age. This breakdown identifies the need for quality public schools and parks and recreation for younger residents at one end of the age spectrum, and services for the elderly at the other end of the age spectrum. Specifically the population is broken out as follows:

- 25.5% under the age of 18
- 7.5% between 18 to 24
- 31.5% between 25 to 44
- 17.5% between 45 to 64
- 18.0% who were 65 years of age or older.

The median age in North College Hill was 36 years which is in line with that of the state of Ohio and Hamilton County.

### *Income Breakdown*

According to the 2000 Census, the median income for a household in North College Hill was \$37,776, and the median income for a family was \$45,149. In comparison, the county and state median income levels for households were \$40,964 and \$40,956 respectively. With respect to the median family income, the county and state levels were \$53,449 and \$50,037 respectively. The per capita income for the city was \$18,915, \$24,053 for the county and \$21,003 for the state.

According to the 2000 Census, about 6.8% of families and 8.7% of the population in the city were below the poverty line, including 11.5% of those under age 18 and 10.3% of those ages 65 or over. These numbers are slightly lower when compared to the county and state poverty numbers.



*Population Trend*

North College Hill, like many urban communities, has experienced a loss of population over the last several decades. Over the last 30 years, the city has seen a decline in population of 2,281 persons. The population change for the city of North College Hill, by decade from 1960 through 2000, is identified in **Table 2**. While there was a slight increase in population between 1960 and 1970, there has been an annualized average decline of 1.67% since 1970, with significant decennial population losses between 1970 and 1980 and between 1990 and 2000, and a slight population loss between 1980 and 1990. As projected by Claritas, the population in North College Hill is expected to decline by 11.93% between the years 2000 to 2010.<sup>1</sup> The 2006 U.S. Census population estimates indicate a resident population of 9,157 for North College Hill which is a -9.17% change since the year 2000 official US Census (an annual growth rate of -1.53).

Table 2: Population Change			
Year	Population	% Change	Annual Growth Rate
1960	12,035	-	-
1970	12,363	2.73%	0.27%
1980	11,114	-10.10%	-1.01%
1990	11,002	-1.01%	-0.10%
2000	10,082	-8.36%	-0.84%
<b>Average Annual Growth Rate</b>			<b>-1.67%</b>
Source: Unites States Census			

The general trends for population decline in urban communities are based in part on several factors including:

- A younger population desiring larger homes in newer subdivisions and/or the lack of housing choices in a particular community.
- An aging population seeking housing other than a two story single family dwelling, (e.g., condominiums, townhouses and single story floor plans).
- The migration of populations to warmer climates.
- The availability of adequate employment to the available workforce that matches the skills sets.
- The lack of amenities available to the resident to promote a high quality of life (e.g. parks and recreation system, convenient access, convenient shopping, governmental services, etc.).
- The reality or perception of better quality and better funded school districts in the rural/suburban areas.

<sup>1</sup> 2000/2010 Intellisat Demographic Data in Appendix B.



## Existing Conditions

- Lower taxes in outlying areas. It must be noted, however, that lower taxes in outlying areas typically mean that municipal services are not provided (e.g. trash removal, snow plowing, local police and fire services, etc.) at a level expected in urban areas. For example, taxes in townships are typically lower but police services are provided by a County Sheriff detail and fire services are typically volunteers instead of full time on paid professionals such as are seen in North College Hill.
- The general decline of the major metropolitan area near which the smaller urban city is located (increase in crime, high taxes, outmigration of population, etc.).

While not all of these factors are indicative of the decline in population for North College Hill, two seem to be readily apparent:

- The lack or readily available amounts of newer housing units and housing choices for differing populations. Many studies focusing on the population decline in urban areas have identified that population loss is almost perfectly correlated with the size and type of housing stock available in a city. With 75% of the single family dwellings in North College Hill being 50 years or older and no readily available land for new housing stock, housing choices remain limited for several segments of the home buying population including those with growing families who need a larger home and those who desire a new(er) home. These limited choices will prevent potential buyers from considering North College Hill as a place to call home.
- An older population leaving for warmer climates, dying or seeking alternative means of housing for assisted living. North College Hill has a higher percentage of aging population with 18% being 65 or older as compared to a national average of 12%.

The decline in population is relatively consistent with many first ring suburban cities and with Hamilton County in general. If these population trends continue and are not offset by new or differing types of residential development to meet the needs of a wide cross-section of homebuyers, North College Hill will likely continue to exhibit a loss in residential population. An influx of new residential housing development on currently vacant or underdeveloped/underutilized sites could halt or reverse this trend. Available sites such as the 3.5 acre vacant lot on West Galbraith Road across from Clovernook Country Club or the redevelopment of the vacant Regency Nursing Home could support residential housing. Discussions with homebuilders/developers should be a priority for the city to identify specific targeted housing types (e.g. townhomes, condominiums, detached single family dwellings, etc.).



### *A Comparison of a Similar Size Community*

**Table 3** summarizes North College Hill's 2000 Census demographic data and compares those categories to the city of Madeira and Hamilton County, Ohio. The steering committee felt that it was important to compare North College Hill's demographic information with a jurisdiction with similar population and physical size characteristics. Madeira was also selected for comparison because it was incorporated around the same time period as North College Hill and projects a similar small town atmosphere. Hamilton County figures are also shown to provide a general baseline for the county as a whole. North College Hill's population (10,082) is slightly larger than the city of Madeira (8,923).

The comparative analysis indicates that the city of Madeira exhibits several other characteristics similar to North College Hill, such as a clearly identified downtown business district; a city school system separate from other municipalities, location near a highway, and proximity to large regional employment and shopping centers. In specific comparison:

- Madeira's businesses are concentrated in a single commercial district along the primary north/south arterial, Miami Avenue, while North College Hill has several competing commercial districts (Hamilton Avenue, West Galbraith Road).
- A business inventory indicates that Madeira's business district, while smaller than that of North College Hill, offers a greater diversity in service and retail amenities. The Madeira business district also has a lower vacancy rate than North College Hill.
- The disposable income of both North College Hill and Madeira as well as the communities that surround each of these business districts differ dramatically. Specifically, residents from the higher income neighborhoods of Indian Hill and Sycamore Township patronize specialty retailers and restaurants located in the Madeira business district. The median household income for a household in North College Hill is \$45,149 as compared to Madeira with a median household income of \$70,625.

With respect to housing, both communities offer a diversity of options for residents. The median value of a single family residence in Madeira was reported as \$196,800 in 2000 as compared to North College Hill, which was \$101,600.<sup>2</sup> The primary difference between the two cities is the age of housing stock. This difference can be attributed, in part, to the newer housing stock being constructed in Madeira where homes on large residential lots are being razed and replaced with larger homes on smaller lots at a much higher price; often an average of \$400,000. This change in housing type caters to the professional household with a family and provides an option for individuals to "move up" in housing and stay in the city.

<sup>2</sup> [www.City-Data.com](http://www.City-Data.com).



## Existing Conditions

Table 3: Demographics Comparison						
Subject	North College Hill		Madeira		Hamilton County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>TOTAL POPULATION</b>	<b>10,082</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,923</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>845,303</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>SEX AND AGE</b>						
Male	4,640	46.0	4,208	47.2	402,969	47.7
Female	5,442	54.0	4,715	52.8	442,334	52.3
Median age (years)	36.0	(X)	41.6	(X)	35.5	(X)
<b>RACE</b>						
One race	9,966	98.8	8,866	99.4	834,174	98.7
White	7,682	76.2	8,539	95.7	616,487	72.9
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	59	0.6	69	0.8	9,514	1.1
Black or African American	2,187	21.7	115	1.3	198,061	23.4
American Indian and Alaska Native	23	0.2	12	0.1	1,481	0.2
Asian	26	0.3	169	1.9	13,602	1.6
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1	0	0	0	242	0.0
Some other race	47	0.5	31	0.3	4,301	0.5
Two or more races	116	1.2	57	0.6	11,129	1.3
<b>HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE</b>						
<b>Total households</b>	<b>4,191</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,383</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>346,790</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Family households (families)	2,537	60.5	2,474	73.1	212,459	61.3
With own children under 18 years	1,266	30.2	1,211	35.8	104,801	30.2
Married-couple family	1,770	42.2	2,127	62.9	150,483	43.4
With own children under 18 years	804	19.2	1,020	30.2	67,371	19.4
Female householder, no husband present	624	14.9	261	7.7	49,609	14.3
With own children under 18 years	387	9.2	140	4.1	31,060	9.0
Nonfamily households	1,654	39.5	909	26.9	134,331	38.7
Householder living alone	1,440	34.4	834	24.7	114,229	32.9
Householder 65 years and over	605	14.4	407	12.0	36,924	10.6
Households with individuals under 18 years	1,364	32.5	1,257	37.2	114,486	33.0
Households with individuals 65 years and over	1,189	28.4	1,038	30.7	80,640	23.3
Average household size	2.33	(X)	2.55	(X)	2.38	(X)
Average family size	3.03	(X)	3.06	(X)	3.07	(X)
<b>HOUSING OCCUPANCY</b>						
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>4,488</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,484</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>373,393</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Occupied housing units	4,191	93.4	3,383	97.1	346,790	92.9
Vacant housing units	297	6.6	101	2.9	26,603	7.1
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	5	0.1	17	0.5	1,275	0.3
Homeowner vacancy rate (percent)	1.5	(X)	0.8	(X)	1.4	(X)
Rental vacancy rate (percent)	12.6	(X)	9.1	(X)	8.9	(X)
<b>HOUSING TENURE</b>						
<b>Occupied housing units</b>	<b>4,191</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3,383</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>346,790</b>	<b>100.00</b>
Owner-occupied housing units	2,882	68.8	3,103	91.7	207,591	59.9
Renter-occupied housing units	1,309	31.2	280	8.3	139,199	40.1
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	2.45	(X)	2.61	(X)	2.62	(X)
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	2.07	(X)	1.95	(X)	2.02	(X)

Source: United States Census 2000 Summary File



Another point of comparison between the two cities is that neither community has an industrial base. A diverse industrial base can be a major contributor to a community's tax base and help fund projects and services that contribute to a community's overall quality of life. Unlike residential uses, industry provides little drain on public services such as education and recreation. Communities that rely primarily on the residential sector to generate income often find that the cost of public services outweighs tax revenues, thus forcing the community to reduce or cut essential services. Both North College Hill and Madeira currently find themselves in this position.

A demographic comparison between North College Hill and the city of Madeira in the areas of median age, household size, and housing occupancy helps characterize how these two communities have developed and what their futures hold.

- According to the 2000 U.S. Census, North College Hill has a younger population. North College Hill's median age was 36 years in 2000, compared to Madeira's median age of 41.6 years. North College Hill's median age is much closer to that of Hamilton County which is 35.5 years of age. Claritas projects that North College Hill's median age will continue to increase with a projected median age of 39.1 in 2010, an increase of 8.61% from 2003. This data indicates that both Madeira and North College Hill's populations will be generally older in 2010; a trend that will likely impact the types of services and facilities that residents need to sustain a certain quality of life.
- Both communities have a similar average household size; 2.33 for North College Hill and 2.55 for Madeira. North College Hill's household size is closer to that of the county which is 2.38. The future average household size for North College Hill is projected to decrease to 2.25 in 2010,<sup>4</sup> a trend that is common in similar established communities across the Midwest. Future North College Hill residents will be more likely to live alone or in two-person households than at present. Declining household size can mean that the types of housing stock available are not conducive to the needs of those with larger families looking for larger homes.
- North College Hill has a 93.4% occupancy rate for housing units compared to Madeira (97.1%) and Hamilton County (92.9%). Of the existing occupied housing units in North College Hill, 68.8% are owner-occupied, while Madeira's rate is much higher at 91.7%. North College Hill's rate of vacant housing is still relatively low, (6.6% of the housing stock which is less than the county at 7.0%), and generally comparable to most mature First Suburb communities. North College Hill does demonstrate a relatively low rate of owner-occupied housing units, however the ownership rate is higher than

<sup>3</sup> 2000/2010 Intellisist Demographic Data in Appendix B.

<sup>4</sup> 2000/2010 Intellisist Demographic Data in Appendix B.



## Existing Conditions

Hamilton County's which is 59.9%. The relatively low rate of home ownership has been a concern of the city of North College Hill and is expected to remain an issue in the near future. Higher levels of home ownership and housing occupancy are generally assumed to support the desirability of a city, since persons who own their homes and live in them are more likely to maintain the property and be personally invested in the success of the community. There is a concern that absentee landlords tend to take less interest in the community, especially those who live outside the city and in some cases outside the county or state. It should be noted that Madeira exhibits above average housing characteristics as compared to the majority of Hamilton County municipalities.

- The city of North College Hill, when compared to Madeira, has both a lower number of family households (60.5% and 73.1% respectively, a 12.6% difference) and a lower number of married-couple family households (42.2% and 62.9% respectively, a 20.7% difference). When compared to Hamilton County, North College Hill has about the same percentage of family households (60.5% compared to 61.3% for Hamilton County). North College Hill has a slightly lower percentage of married-couple family households (42.2%) compared to the county (43.4%). North College Hill's percentage of female-headed households/no husband present (14.9%) is higher than Madeira (7.7%) and the county (14.3%). Likewise, North College Hill has a higher percentage of non-family households (39.5%) than Madeira (26.9) and Hamilton County (38.7%).

Although the two-parent household with children is no longer the predominant household type in the United States, married couple households have been documented to correlate to higher levels of economic prosperity. A higher proportion of non-family households<sup>5</sup> have generally been shown to be associated with higher levels of poverty and lower levels of home ownership, and such a population often requires social services that are not typically required for other residents.

- School districts often play a large role in attracting families to communities. The Ohio Department of Education has established a report card system that ranks all schools in the state of Ohio in 30 performance standards as based on the Federal "No Child Left Behind" requirements. The ratings, based on how many of the performance standards were met during the testing period are: Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch and Academic Emergency. In comparing the two school districts, the Madeira School district is currently rated "Excellent" by the Ohio Department of Education according to the latest State District Report Card meeting all 30 performance standards established by the State. North College Hill City

<sup>5</sup> A "family" is defined by the Census as two or more persons who are related by blood or by marriage. Non-family households include persons who live alone and persons living with others to whom they are not married or otherwise related.



School District is currently rated “Continuous Improvement” on the same Report Card, meeting 10 of the 30 performance standards established by the state. While these performance standards are not definitive in characterizing a quality school system, they are highly promoted by individual communities as a quality of life issue to attract new residents.

- North College Hill has a significantly more culturally diverse population than Madeira, but is very similar to Hamilton County as a whole. According to the 2000 Census, 21.7% of North College Hill’s residents were African-American, while only 1.3% of Madeira’s and 23.4% of Hamilton County’s residents were African-American. Both Madeira and the county have a slightly larger number of residents of Asian descent, and both communities have a smaller number of residents of other ethnic backgrounds when compared to North College Hill.
- Cultural diversity is an increasingly sought-after characteristic among area residents, but it is also a characteristic that is not always maintained over the long run. If continued diversity is a priority for the city of North College Hill, community leaders must make a conscious effort to establish marketing programs that encourage and support a culturally diverse population. For example, many communities with a larger Hispanic population now post business signage in both English and Spanish.
- With respect to education levels, 81.8% of residents in North College Hill have attained a high school diploma or higher degree of education. In Madeira, that number is 92.0%. However, a larger discrepancy exists between the two communities when comparing college level education. The city of North College Hill, when compared to Madeira, has a noticeably lower level of college level graduates residing in the city. 14.1% of North College Hill residents have a Bachelor’s degree or higher. In contract, 44.6% of Madeira residents have attained a Bachelor’s degree or higher level of education.
- According to the 2000 Census, the median income for a household in North College Hill was \$37,776, and the median income for a family was \$45,149. In comparison, Madeira’s income level for households was \$59,626. With respect to the median family income, Madeira’s level was \$70,625. Per capita income for the city of North College Hill was \$18,915 and \$30,676 for the city of Madeira.



## Existing Conditions

- According to the 2000 Census, about 6.8% of families and 8.7% of the population in the city were below the poverty level, including 11.5% of those under age 18 and 10.3% of those ages 65 or over. These numbers are lower when compared to the county and state poverty numbers, but higher than Madeira's numbers which are under 1%.

In general, the demographic data and population projections indicate that regardless of their similarities (physical land size, population size, overall age of the city, etc.), North College Hill is more comparable to the majority of mature Hamilton County municipalities than it is to the city of Madeira. Reflecting trends in other Hamilton County first ring communities, North College Hill has more modestly priced housing, a younger and more transient population and a more diverse residential base in terms of both racial and ethnic heritage and household composition than does Madeira. Population demographics identify both strengths and challenges that may face the city of North College Hill, and indicate that the types of public services that city residents may demand in the future are likely to differ from current and previous expectations. The analysis also forecasts the type of community and economic development programs that will be required to meet the changing needs of the community. If North College Hill plans for and achieves changes in its housing stock, its business mix and the services it provides residents, the city will be able to attract and maintain residents and realize the vision established in this Plan.



**Existing Park and Recreation Facilities**

During the comprehensive planning process the Steering Committee and community members agreed that North College Hill’s existing park and recreation facilities and programs are inadequate. These needs were also identified in the February 2007 *Nominal Group Technique Economic Development Plan*.

North College Hill currently has seven parks that provide various recreational opportunities, both active and passive. Basketball courts, soccer and baseball fields, playgrounds and nature trails are all available in at least one of the city’s parks. **Table 4** identifies each of the seven parks including their location and features.

Table 4: Park and Recreation Facilities		
Park Name	Location	Features
Dumele	Simpson Avenue between DeArmand and Goodman Avenues.	Playground equipment, a slide monorail and a modular play set.
Northcreek	Located at the extreme end of the extension road at the end of Kleindale Avenue.	Soccer fields.
Pies	Located at the north end of Kleindale Avenue.	Offers physical fitness bars, soccer and baseball fields, playground equipment, and nature trails.
Schaeper	Behind the Swimming Pool near the corner of Bising and Ellen Avenues.	Playground equipment.
Stapleton	Northwest intersection of Northridge and Collegewood Avenues.	Playground equipment.
Veterans'	East side of Betts Avenue between Sundale and Sterling Avenues.	It includes physical fitness bars and playground equipment.
Wise	Goodman Avenue east of Hamilton Avenue next to Fifth Third Bank.	Benches and monument.

In addition to the above park and recreation facilities, there are nine athletic fields and a community pool serving the residents of North College Hill. **Table 5** lists each field as well as the pool, their locations, and the types of fields featured.



## Existing Conditions

During the city’s Business Retention & Expansion Program, several businesses noted the need to better maintain and operate recreation facilities, (particularly the pool), and the need to add new programs to the city’s recreation portfolio. The “Plan Elements” section of this Comprehensive Plan will provide recommendations to improve the city’s park and recreation system including the possibility of hiring a recreation director, providing a broader range of facilities and programs, and instituting a long term facilities maintenance program.

In addition to the public park and recreation system, North College Hill has two private recreational facilities: the Clovernook Country Club and the Colonial Tennis, Fitness and Swim Club (formerly known as the Colonial Racquet Club). The Clovernook Country Club, founded in 1923, is one of the oldest and most unique Golf Clubs in Greater Cincinnati. Featuring championship golf, a newly renovated pool, tennis courts and fine dining in a stately club house, Clovernook Country Club is known for its horticultural beauty and tree-lined fairways.



Since 1975, the Colonial Tennis, Fitness and Swim Club has offered swimming and tennis facilities for its members or on a pay-as-you-go basis. The club features an outdoor pool and sauna, racquetball courts, exercise and fitness equipment, and fitness classes. The facility was recently purchased by a member who is renovating and expanding the complex to meet the continued tennis, exercise, racquetball and swimming needs of the community.

Athletic Field	Location	Features
Field # 1	Dave Kreamelmeyer Memorial; at Ellen and Bising intersection.	Baseball
St. Margaret Mary Field # 2	Adjacent to Swimming Pool and behind St. Margaret Mary School (Grace Ave.).	Baseball
St. Paul Field # 3	Next to High School Gym at end of Kumler Avenue.	Softball
Pies Field # 4	At the end of Kleindale Avenue in Paul Pies Park.	No longer in use. (Soccer Now)
Fields # 5 & # 6	Behind Clovernook School at 1500 West Galbraith Road.	No longer in use.
Becker Field # 7	Home field of NCH Varsity Baseball: behind Becker School (Simpson Avenue).	Baseball
Becker Field # 9	Behind Becker School near Clovernook Country Club.	Baseball
Northcreek Field # 10	At the end of the extension road from Kleindale Avenue.	Soccer
<b>NCH Pool</b>	At the north end of Grace Avenue, adjacent to NCH High School Stadium.	Pool



### City Services

The city of North College Hill is served and protected by the North College Hill Police Department (NCHPD) and the North College Hill Fire Department (NCHFD). The NCHPD presently has thirteen full-time officers, one full-time clerk, eleven part-time officers, and four school crossing guards. Officers patrol the city with around-the-clock protection by car, bicycle, and on foot. The Fire Department serves the two square mile jurisdiction and operates out of one station. There are twenty-one part-time firefighters. The North College Hill Fire Department provides the following services: firefighting, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), vehicle rescue (extrication), and search and rescue. The NCHFD has a mutual aid agreement for fire and rescue services with Colerain and Springfield Townships, the city of Mt. Healthy, and several other nearby communities in Hamilton County.

During implementation of the city's Business Retention & Expansion Program, several businesses cited the need for more advanced training of EMS officers in the Fire Department. The perception is that North College Hill's EMS program serves simply as a "transport service". This problem is probably due to the fact that although the Fire Department has four personnel on duty at any given time, they cannot always guarantee that an advanced EMS officer will be on duty. To address this deficiency, the city should investigate grants that are available through the Ohio Department of Public Safety to offset the cost of training EMS personnel.

In addition to police and fire, North College Hill also provides the following departments and services:

- Economic Development (contracted services)
- Engineering (contracted services)
- Public Works
- Building Department
- Code Enforcement
- Tax Department
- Recreation Commission
- Clerk of Courts
- Contract Post Office With the United States Postal Services



Solid waste and curbside recycling programs are offered through Rumpke Consolidated Companies.



## Existing Conditions

### Infrastructure

Like most mature Hamilton County communities, North College Hill has a full complement of existing infrastructure. North College Hill's major surface thoroughfares include Hamilton Avenue and West Galbraith Road, and these cross-jurisdictional roads are key elements of Hamilton County's surface transportation network. North College Hill's local streets and local connectors are laid out in a grid pattern, providing the city with a high level of interconnectivity. Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway, located at the city's northern boundary, provides quick access to both Interstates 71 and 75. Roads are maintained by the city of North College Hill and, in the case of roads under county jurisdiction (e.g. Hamilton Avenue), by the Hamilton County Engineers' Office.

Sanitary sewer is provided and serviced by the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) of Cincinnati. While the system is older, it is still completely functional and maintained by MSD on a regular basis. All areas of the city have sanitary sewer available. In turn, the sanitary sewer is interconnected to a much larger regional system of the MSD. The current MSD Capital Improvement Projects plan identifies future sanitary sewer upgrade projects on De Armond and Dallas Avenues (between Simpson and Betts Avenues) and along Simpson Avenue between De Armond and Dallas Avenues. A future upgrade project is also planned for the area in and around Devonwood Drive and is identified as "Jamar SEP" in the 2007 Capital Improvement Program Phase 2.

Water service is provided by the Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW). As is the case with the sanitary sewer system, the water system is fully connected to a regional water system. Greater Cincinnati Water Works does not have any current or future water main projects planned for the city of North College Hill.

Electrical and natural gas service is provided and maintained by Duke Energy (formally Cinergy). The power grid is interconnected into an overall regional system providing reliable service to the city. Duke Energy currently has not identified any future projects, other than normal maintenance as necessary.

North College Hill is serviced by Cincinnati Bell Telephone for telephone and high speed internet needs through a digital subscriber network (DSL). Cable service is provided by Time Warner Cable which also provides high speed internet access through their high speed cable network.

All providers of the aforementioned utility services are active in the monitoring and maintenance of their networks, providing the residents and businesses of North College Hill with reliable and affordable services.



### Visioning Process

#### Steering Committee Involvement

Monthly steering committee meetings were conducted to develop an understanding of the needs and issues of North College Hill. The fifteen member committee included a combination of residents, business owners, community stakeholders and officials, as well as the economic development consultant and city administrator. The committee was responsible for reviewing the city's existing conditions, formulating the plan vision, and developing various plan elements that fit the city's future needs.

#### Key Person Interviews

To finalize the visioning process, city staff identified four (4) individuals with whom to conduct an interview. The general observations, positive and negative aspects of the city, and issues that interviewees would recommend for change are listed in Appendix C. These comments reflect the opinions of the interviewees. The interviewees included the following individuals:

- Bill Harvey – Buddy Rogers Music
- Andy Timme – Sign Effects Sign Company
- Dave Moore – Fire Department/resident
- Pat Hartzel – Board of Zoning Appeals/resident

#### SWOT Results

A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis was an integral part of the visioning process and was conducted with the Steering Committee at the beginning of the planning process. This activity led participants through a facilitated exercise to identify each individual's opinions on strengths, threats, weaknesses and opportunities facing the city of North College Hill. This was inclusive of internal and external factors. These issues serve to help establish a direction, vision, goals and objectives for the Plan. The summary results of the SWOT Analysis are located in Appendix C.

#### Open House

On May 23, 2007 the city of North College Hill hosted a public open house at the North College Hill Community Senior Center and approximately thirty (30) residents were in attendance. The public was invited to view existing conditions information, participate in a key issues prioritization exercise (results to follow), review the Plan mission statement and goals, and provide feedback and general comments on the Comprehensive Plan policy areas and draft recommendations.





## Key Issues Results

Another fundamental part of the visioning process was a “Key Issues” exercise. Key issues are items or elements that need immediate attention, are an asset, or are a detriment or issue that needs further action. The results of the Key Issues exercise confirmed many of the recommendations that resulted from the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) exercise. These issues were subsequently prioritized by the steering committee and public and are identified below by a first, second and third place voting process. Participants at the open house were individually asked to review and prioritize the list of Key Issues facing the community with a first, second or third place vote.

The numbers of votes are indicated in the chart below:

Key Issue*	Steering Committee Vote	Public Vote	Total Votes
Revitalizing the Business District	11	7	18
Lack of Community Feel (negative perception)	8	1	9
Housing Stock – Lack of Diversity	8	7	15
Negative Perception/Image	6	7	13
Tax Base/\$4.2 Million Budget Needed/Revenue	5	3	8
Redevelopment of the Local Schools	3	8	11
Proactive Adaptive Reuse of Land	3	0	3
Proactive Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Buildings	0	5	5

\*The steering committee and public voted on the Key Issues separately. The public vote was conducted during an Open House exercise after the steering committee vote and, therefore, the public may not have fully understood the issues as the steering committee understood them. This could account for the difference in numbers, in particular with the “Adaptive Reuse of Land” and “Adaptive Reuse of Vacant Buildings.”



## Mission Statement and Goals

In order to establish a road map for the future, the city has established a mission statement that is supported by specific goals for achieving that statement. The “Plan Elements” section of this Plan will summarize the initiatives and programs that the city should undertake to implement the goals that support the mission statement.

### City of North College Hill Mission Statement:

**The city of North College Hill will strive to be a community of well maintained neighborhoods in which citizens can enjoy living, working, and playing in a safe, harmonious and environmentally responsible atmosphere.**

### City of North College Hill Goals for Implementing Mission Statement:

- Our city government will provide the best services to its residents and businesses efficiently and in a fiscally responsible manner.
- Our neighborhoods will be attractive, well maintained and offer a variety of housing options for people in all life phases and income levels.
- Our business district will be cohesive, aesthetic and economically viable and enhance the community environmentally, physically and financially.
- Our city will provide excellent opportunities for employment, education and worship.
- Our city streetscape, public parks and facilities, business districts and residential areas will present a positive image to the public.
- Our gateways will be designed so that visitors and residents know when they enter and exit our community.
- Our park system will accommodate all age groups and provide links to the regional open space system.
- We will strive to have a strong schedule of community events building community spirit and pride.
- Our residents, both children and adults, will be able to travel throughout the city comfortably and safely using several transportation modes; public transportation will be widely available and provide access to and from the Greater Cincinnati Area servicing our community.



### Planning Policy Areas

When looking at the future land uses within the city of North College Hill, it is important to group areas with similar existing conditions to create “Planning Policy Areas” (policy areas). Due to their existing similarities, many of these policy areas will likely maintain similar characteristics in the future. For example, a policy area containing a large majority of single family residential units that collectively form a stable neighborhood exhibit a similar use characteristic today that will primarily continue to be single family residential neighborhood in the future. Any plan elements associated with that particular policy area will apply collectively to the entire policy area instead of on a parcel-by-parcel basis. This approach permits flexibility for the future while providing the necessary guidance to make educated decisions regarding land use and economic development issues.

**Figure 5** identifies the eighteen planning policy areas designated for North College Hill. Each policy area is numbered and corresponds with the “Planning Policy Area Chart” (**Table 6**). **Table 6** identifies the following important elements:

- The policy area number;
- The existing character and planning issues for each policy area;
- The desired future character and potential issues for each policy area, and;
- Possible planning and implementation strategies to attain the desired future character for each policy area.

*In summary:*

**Planning Policy Area 1** is located in the northwestern corner of the city and is bordered by Ronald Regan Highway to the north, Pin Oak Drive to the west, Lois Avenue to the east, and West Galbraith Road to the south. It contains single family residential units and encompasses Pin Oak, Dianna, Robvern, Marbev, and Gloria Drives as well as Lois Avenue.

**Planning Policy Area 2** is located along West Galbraith Road from Simpson Avenue east to the intersection at Hamilton Avenue. It contains primarily retail uses and constitutes the city’s traditional downtown area.

**Planning Policy Area 3** is located just north of Policy Area 2 and encompasses the existing junior/senior high school, municipal pool, Schaeper Park, and St. Margaret Mary Church.



**Planning Policy Area 4** is located in the northern half of North College Hill adjacent to the city of Mt. Healthy. It contains primarily single family dwelling units and is defined by Ronald Reagan Highway on the north, Galbraith Road and Bising Avenue on the south, Hamilton Avenue on the east, and Mulberry Street on the west.

**Planning Policy Area 5** is the Hamilton Avenue corridor from the northern city limits and continuing south to West Galbraith Road. Both residential and commercial properties are included in this area.



**Planning Policy Area 6** is located on the east side of Hamilton Avenue and is the home of the Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

**Planning Policy Area 7** is located on the east side of Hamilton Avenue from Clovernoll Drive north to the Ronald Reagan Highway and contains primarily single family dwelling units except for the commercial uses fronting Hamilton Avenue.

**Planning Policy Area 8** is located on the eastern border of the city north of West Galbraith Road. Both residential and institutional uses including the Clovernook Health Care Pavilion are included in this area.

**Planning Policy Area 9** is located in the south western most corner of the city off of Pippin Road and contains commercial, office, recreation (Lakeridge Hall and Lake Nina), and a health care facility.

**Planning Policy Area 10** is the Clovernook Country Club property.

**Planning Policy Area 11** is the city's oldest and largest neighborhood and is located south of West Galbraith Road, west of Hamilton Avenue and east of Simpson Avenue.

**Planning Policy Area 12** is the commercial area located in the south eastern corner of the West Galbraith Road and Hamilton Avenue intersection. This area also contains a significant recreational use, (the Colonial Tennis, Fitness and Swim Club), and a 96,508 square foot vacant big box store.

**Planning Policy Area 13** is accessed by Beech Knoll Drive and is located on the east side of Hamilton Avenue just south of the Goodman Avenue commercial area (Policy Area 12). This area contains the vacant Regency Nursing Home and serves as a buffer between the Goodman Avenue commercial area and an existing residential neighborhood (Policy Area 15).



## Planning Policy Areas

**Planning Policy Area 14** is located just south of West Galbraith Road on the eastern border of the city and contains primarily single family dwelling units, a few multi-family dwelling units and a church.

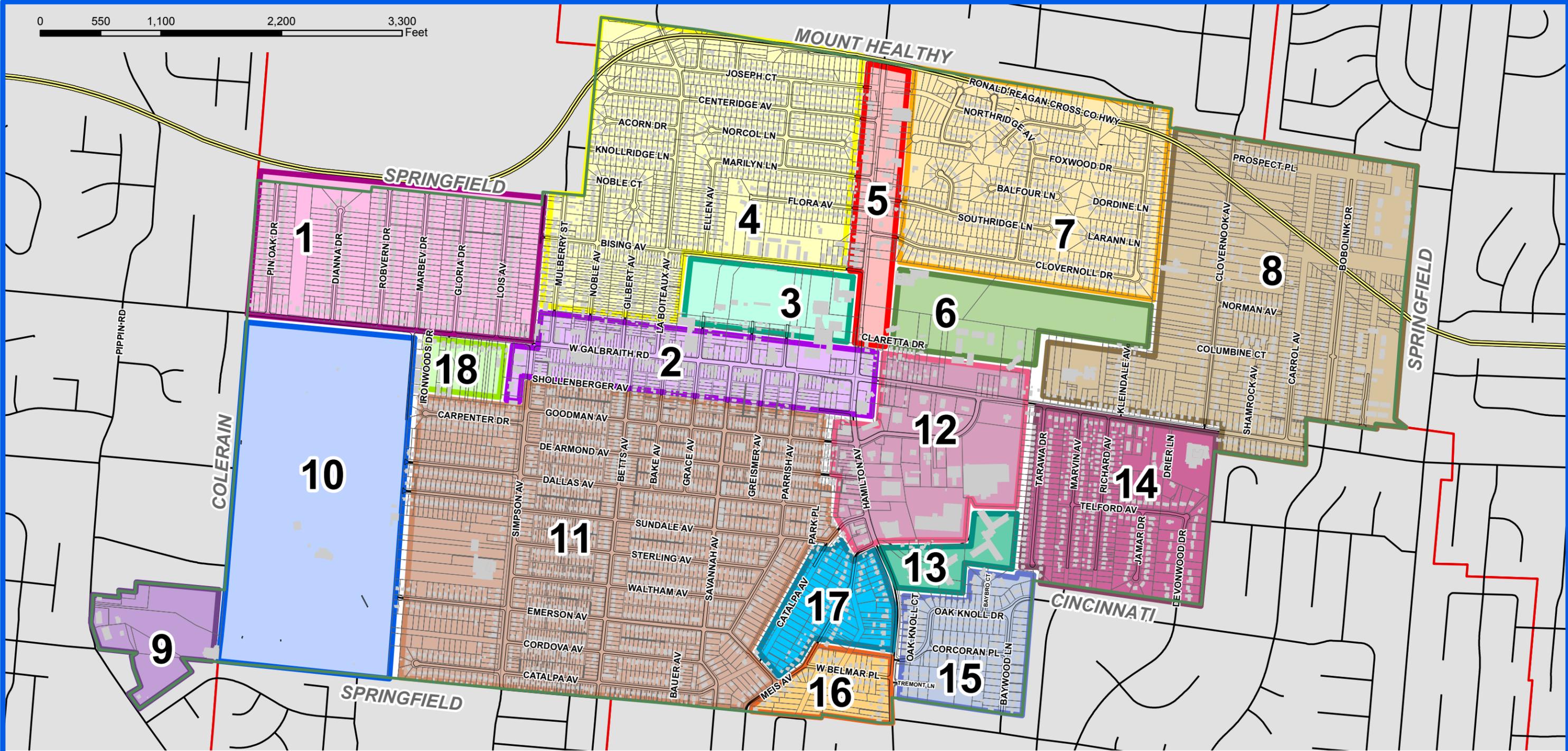
**Planning Policy Area 15** is the residential area that includes Oak Knoll and Baybro Courts, Oak Knoll Drive, Baywood and Tremont Lanes, and Corcoran Place.

**Planning Policy Area 16** is located east of Meis Avenue and both north and south of W. Belmar Place in the southern portion of the city. It is primarily single family residential dwellings with a few vacant parcels of land.



**Planning Policy Area 17** is located between Catalpa and Hamilton Avenues. It contains primarily single family residential units, a few multi-family units, commercial, office, and vacant parcels.

**Planning Policy Area 18** is located on the eastern side of the city just south of West Galbraith Road and adjacent to Clovernook Country Club. It had deeper single family residential lots and a multi-family residential complex.



Planning Policy Areas



Figure 5

Legend

-  North College Hill Boundary
-  Buildings
-  Planning Policy Area

Comprehensive Plan  
North College Hill, OH



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Planning Policy Areas





## Plan Elements

This section presents the key recommendations that have been developed to address the major issues identified during the Comprehensive Plan visioning process. Since North College Hill has a number of areas that have different characteristics, and since these key recommendations must be implemented in a slightly different manner from one area to the next, the city has been divided into eighteen “Policy Areas”. Policy areas are parts of the city that exhibit similar characteristics or areas that are desired to exhibit similar characteristics in the future. In the “Plan Element” text that follows, each plan element is described and recommendations are presented for the specific policy areas that are relevant to each plan element. These recommendations are also presented in the “Policy Areas” contained in **Table 6**.

### Maintain and Enhance Existing Housing Stock

One goal contained in the city’s mission statement is to ensure that “neighborhoods will be attractive, well maintained and offer a variety of housing options for people in all life phases and income levels”. Likewise, one of the highest priority recommendations from the February 2007 *Nominal Group Technique Economic Development Plan* is stabilization of the city’s housing stock and facilitation of home ownership. Increasing homeownership, creating strong neighborhood identities, and diversifying the city’s housing stock are three options that will aid North College Hill in creating a stable and attractive community. This goal is based on the belief that quality housing and homeownership in particular promotes family stability, creates positive environments for children, and contributes to success in the job market. Below are tools for implementing these three housing revitalization options:

#### *Increase Home Ownership*

1. Nurture Partnerships with Neighborhood Revitalization Organizations. In January 2007 the city entered into a joint agreement with Cincinnati Housing Partners, Inc. (CHP), a nonprofit organization committed to building and rehabilitating affordable homes for families in the Greater Cincinnati Area. CHP also assists home buyers to qualify for affordable loans, develops and implements programs to educate and equip new buyers to purchase and maintain their homes, and collaborates with community groups to engage them in the neighborhood revitalization program. CHP is responsible for meeting relevant building codes, developing designs that reflect modern housing standards, providing a one year warranty on non-routine maintenance items, and using building materials that reflect stability and durability including brick, stone and masonry.

By the end of 2007 CHP will complete renovation of a house on West Galbraith Road and construction of a new home on Bake Street. To engage the community in these projects, volunteers from the North College Hill



## Plan Elements

Business Association and Life Spring Christian Church are assisting with clean up, painting, and landscaping. The city also participates in the program by helping identify housing “candidates” for rehabilitation or new construction. With assistance from the North College Hill Community Concerns Group (CCG) and the city building department, a list of homes recently foreclosed upon is routinely provided to CHP.

To increase the momentum and effectiveness of North College Hill’s housing stabilization program, the city should investigate partnering with other organizations that are committed to promoting home ownership and strong neighborhoods. Four such organizations/programs are:

- The Real Estate Investor Association of Greater Cincinnati (REIA). REIA is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that operates the Neighborhood Redevelopment Program. Although REIA is a nonprofit organization, each member investor works for profit to renovate homes that when completed are sold to owner occupants. REIA operates on the assumption that the potential value of redeveloping multiple houses in a targeted area is that they will all combine to create increased value measured by stronger financial returns, increased property values and associated tax revenues, and faster property resale. There are no income restrictions for participating home buyers.
- Working in Neighborhoods (WIN). WIN is a nonprofit organization with the mission statement of “building strong communities through building strong neighborhood leaders and providing homeownership opportunities to low and moderate income families in Greater Cincinnati”. Central to this mission is building neighborhood stability through increasing and maintaining home ownership by providing home buyer and credit counseling, sponsoring financial literacy classes, renovating and building homes for first-time home owners, and training neighborhood residents to work together to improve their own communities. A member of the North College Hill Community Concerns Group (CCG) currently serves on the Board of Directors of WIN.
- The Hamilton County Housing Improvement Program (HIP). Under the HIP Loan Program, eligible property owners in Hamilton County can borrow money to repair or remodel their residential properties at an interest rate of 3% below the rate a bank would normally offer over a 5 year term. Loans are capped at \$50,000 and the property can be valued up to \$350,000. There are no income restrictions and multi-family projects are also eligible for HIP assistance.



- Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA). Ohio's affordable housing agency is trying to encourage home ownership and to curtail foreclosures among lower and middle-income families by offering the following three programs:
  - (i) *First-Time Homebuyer Program* - Offers 30 year, fixed rate mortgage loans at a competitive interest rate for first-time homebuyers.
  - (ii) *Opportunity Loan Refinance Program* - Provides an affordable 30 year fixed rate financing alternative to borrowers who have a current mortgage that is no longer suitable for their financial situation. To assist with closing costs the program also offers a 20 year fixed rate second mortgage for up to 5% of the appraised value of the home.
  - (iii) *Recapture Tax Reimbursement* - OHFA will reimburse first-time homebuyers for the actual amount of recapture tax paid to the Internal Revenue Service.
- 2. **Housing Revolving Low/No Interest Loan Fund.** The city, through its Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), could offer homeowners a below market rate loan for a portion of the total rehabilitation cost. Any outstanding loan balance would need to be repaid by the homeowner when the building is sold or within a specific date from when the loan was made.
- 3. **Loan Guarantee Housing Program.** The North College Hill CIC and local lending institutions could establish a loan guarantee program whereby the CIC would guarantee loans to renovate single-family housing units in exchange for the bank offering a below market interest rate.
- 4. **Waiving of Permit Fees.** For single-family new construction or renovation projects, the city could choose to waive all city permit and board fees including building permits and board of zoning appeals permits (for variances if required).
- 5. **Residential Tax Abatement.** The Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA) Program provides local real property tax incentives for homeowners undertaking new construction or rehabilitation in an area that the city has designated for reinvestment. Up to 100% exemption of the improved real property tax valuation for up to 15 years can be offered depending on the project.
- 6. **Marketing & Promotion.** The city has already capitalized on its recent designation by *Money Magazine* as one of the nation's best and most affordable communities by installing signs that recognize this designation at city entryways and distributing promotional items (notepads and cozies) with the designation noted. The city also coordinates with CHP to promote their



housing revitalization partnership through volunteer activities, special events and news articles.

7. **Target Rehabilitation of Foreclosed Properties.** A March 2007 report entitled “The American Dream Continues to Fade!” shows that foreclosures have increased in Hamilton County by 121% from 2002 to 2006 with 3,030 foreclosures reported in 2006. This report validated 75 foreclosures in North College Hill in 2006 ranking it 7<sup>th</sup> highest in foreclosures among 46 communities studied. The percentage of home foreclosures to owner occupied homes in North College Hill in 2006 was 2.60% compared to 2.66% for the city of Cincinnati and 1.46% for Hamilton County.

To better understand residential foreclosure and sales activity in North College Hill, an analysis of foreclosures (current and over the past 6 and past 12 months) was conducted using information from the Greater Cincinnati Multiple Listing Service. (See Summary of Findings in **Appendix D**). These numbers are less bleak than those shown in the “The American Dream Continues to Fade!” study suggesting for the most part foreclosures are not a significant problem in North College Hill and in fact probably no different than what is happening across the country.

This increasing rate of foreclosures comes at a time when communities including North College Hill are concerned about the decline in the number of owner-occupied housing. Both Cincinnati Housing Partners, Inc. and the North College Hill Community Concerns Group routinely track foreclosures in North College Hill to identify potential candidates for renovation. Foreclosed houses provide an excellent pool of rehabilitation candidates for housing revitalization groups like CHP, WIN, REIA and OHFA (see above) since these houses can generally be purchased either before sheriff's sale or at sheriff's sale at well below the market rate.

In an effort to lessen the impact of foreclosures on communities, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) updated its “\$1 Home Sales to Local Governments Program” policy on May 1, 2000. The update allows for the sale of single family real estate properties to local governments once a property has been offered to the public for at least six months and it has not sold. The home may be removed from the market and offered exclusively to local governments for one dollar (\$1.00) plus closing costs. Local communities may choose to renovate the home and place it back on the public market at a price that will create affordable homeownership opportunities. As a part of the program, all profits from the sale of the home must go to support local housing and community development initiatives. Communities in the Greater Cincinnati area that have taken advantage of this program include: Cheviot, Cincinnati, Lockland, Trenton and Middletown.



As previously noted, North College Hill, when compared to Hamilton County has higher percentages of female-headed households, households with no husband present, and non-family households, all of which are typically associated with higher poverty levels and lower levels of home ownership. The above programs should be instituted to reverse this trend by providing residents the tools and financial means to become responsible home owners.

### *Create Strong and Proud Neighborhood Identities*

To increase identity and pride in existing neighborhoods the city should work with neighborhood leaders to develop brand names that reflect the unique character of their neighborhoods and then identify these brands on city marketing materials, maps, and signage. Encourage residential realtors to identify North College Hill neighborhoods by their specific name. This neighborhood “branding” would support other successful neighborhood projects already underway by the North College Hill Community Concerns Group (CCG) including:

- The “Award of the Certificate of Pride” Program whereby the CCG recognizes property owners for maintaining their properties and enhancing their neighborhoods.
- The “Adopt A Block” Program which recognizes individuals and/or groups including neighborhood groups that help beautify the city’s appearance by focusing their efforts on maintaining single blocks.

### *Diversify Housing Stock*

To truly diversify the city’s housing stock there needs to be opportunities for different type of housing units, (single family homes, condominiums/townhouses and apartments). The housing stock should also offer various price ranges. Emphasis should also be placed on offering housing to accommodate different life phases including first-time home buyers, young professionals and empty-nesters. The zoning code may need to be revised to facilitate the development of a more diverse housing stock in specific areas of the city.

In 2000, the median value of housing in North College Hill was \$82,535 and it is projected to be \$108,445 in 2010<sup>6</sup>. According to the U. S. Census Hamilton County’s 2000 median housing value was \$122,736. A September 25, 2007 analysis of the Greater Cincinnati Multiple Listing Service shows that single-family homes listed for sale in North College Hill have an average list price ranging from \$80,248-\$166,567. These statistics indicate the need for higher end housing in North College Hill.

<sup>6</sup> 2000/2010 Intellisat Demographic Data in Appendix B.



## Plan Elements

According to the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, 1,309 (31%) of the 4,191 occupied units in North College Hill were renter-occupied. This indicates that North College Hill has a surplus of multi-family housing and housing programs should focus on maintaining and expanding ownership of single-family housing. With only two condominium developments (with a total of 62 units) available in the city, (Iron Woods next to the Clovernook Country Club and the Village of North College Hill on West Galbraith Road), the city should focus on identifying areas for expanding condominiums for young professionals and older residents.

Two goals related to diversifying the housing stock were outlined by the Steering Committee:

1. North College Hill needs to attract and retain younger families. As previously noted, North College Hill's population is aging and household size is decreasing meaning more people are living alone or in two person families. There needs to be an adequate pool of housing to allow young families to transition to a second tier home and stay within the city. Oftentimes these families are forced to move out of the city because they cannot find housing appropriate for a growing family. The focus of Cincinnati Housing Partners, Inc. is to expand small bungalow-style housing by adding an additional bedroom and bathroom. The 5.5 acre former Regency Nursing Home located on the east side of Hamilton Avenue south of West Galbraith Road is a potential location for a new residential development with homes in the \$250,000 range.
2. There is strong interest from North College Hill's growing senior population for "empty nester" housing such as condominiums and/or townhomes where they can still live independently but not be responsible for yard maintenance. The NGT Plan presented the potential for building high end residential condominiums near the Clovernook Country Club that would be similar to the existing condominiums on Ironwoods Drive just east of the Country Club. In fact Clovernook Country Club General Manager Mike Meckes has indicated his members would provide a captive audience for such a development. This recommendation however, would require acquisition and demolition of existing homes which can be very costly. As such, this option should only be pursued after documenting market demand with local developers.

Another potential opportunity for condominiums or high end single family homes is the approximate 3.5 acre tract of vacant land located between Pin Oak Drive and Dianna Drive in the northeast quadrant of the city. There is some speculation that this property may qualify as Wetlands as defined by the National Wetlands Institution, ("lands saturated with water"). Because such designation would limit redevelopment of the property, the city should validate whether or not the property qualifies as Wetlands and investigates options for incorporating an attractive central water feature in the water management plan for the site.

***Policy Areas Affected by this Plan Element Include:***

- #1.** This area has affordable and well maintained homes on tree-lined streets. The neighborhood was constructed in the mid-1940s, and houses are typically on small lots (.15 acre) with about 1,400 square feet and three bedrooms and one bath. There is a preponderance of brick and frame cape cod cottages with 1 or 1-1/2 stories. Streets are generally in good condition with the exception of Pin Oak Drive which is on the city's list of streets to be repaired.<sup>7</sup>

The average list price of homes in Policy Area#1 is \$106,364.<sup>8</sup> The neighborhood can be characterized as a “starter home” market and the city should work with local realtors to target this share of the market. A Greater Cincinnati Multiple Listing Service search indicates that during the six months preceding publication of the Master Plan, eleven of the approximate 300 homes in the neighborhood were for sale, and two homes were in lender foreclosure (both numbers slightly down from a year ago).<sup>9</sup> Given the current tight housing market, these numbers reflect a generally stable residential neighborhood.

As noted above, there is a 3.5 acre tract of land located between Pin Oak Drive and Dianna Drive that offers potential for new housing construction in this neighborhood including condominiums/townhouses for young professionals and/or “empty nesters” or more spacious homes appropriate for growing families moving from first-time homebuyer.

There is no connectivity among streets in Policy Area #1 as they are dead end streets and Ronald Reagan Highway provides a physical barrier at the north end of the neighborhood. The long term viability of this neighborhood would improve if pedestrian access (hiking/biking paths) was provided to the planned new consolidated school campus in Policy Area #3, retail amenities in Policy Area #2 (West Galbraith Road Commercial District), and other contiguous residential areas (Policy Area #4). One way to do this would be for the city to convert the existing unimproved path that extends along the side yards of homes from Robvern Avenue east to the connection at Bising Avenue in Policy Area #4. This would require the city to acquire an easement to construct a paved

<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise noted, for the purposes of this study housing information was obtained through a visual survey of areas and research conducted on the Hamilton County Auditor's web page.

<sup>8</sup> Unless otherwise noted, for the purposes of this study, information related to average listing price and number of foreclosures was obtained from the Greater Cincinnati Multiple Listing Service, September 25, 2007.



## Plan Elements

sidewalk for pedestrian and bike access to the school and municipal complexes in Policy Area #3. Another potential connection is at the dead end streets connecting east to Mulberry Street south to Bising Avenue. This would require use of state-owned property that was vacated when Ronald Reagan Highway was constructed.

- #4.** Like Policy Area #1, this neighborhood consists primarily of brick and frame cape cod cottages that were built in the early 1920s to early 1940s. As in Policy Area #1, the houses are built on small lots with about 1,400-1,600 square feet, and the average listing price for homes is \$101,508. An exception is the homes on the south side of Flora Avenue in the 1700 block; these homes are larger, sit on deeper lots and typically sell for about \$120,000-\$140,000. The city may want to target this area for an expansion and renovation “blitz” that would offer higher-end housing for families with children. Toward this end, the city should partner with those local housing revitalization organizations that do not have low-to-moderate income household limitations, (i.e., the North College Hill Community Improvement Corporation, the Real Estate Investor Association of Greater Cincinnati and the Hamilton County Housing Improvement Program).

As of September 25, 2007, of the approximate 750 homes in Policy Area #4, six lender homes were in foreclosure and twenty-eight non-lender homes were on the market. (Both figures are slightly higher than what was reported twelve months previous). In Policy Area #4 there were fifty “notices of violation” sent by the North College Hill Property Maintenance Code Enforcement Officer between January 1, 2007 and September 30, 2007. This Policy Area makes up 16.30% of the total violations sent within the city for that time period. To help stabilize Policy Area #4 the property maintenance code should be aggressively enforced and the housing revitalization programs discussed above should be targeted in the area.

Unlike in Policy Area #1 there are multi-family units interspersed throughout Policy Area #4. In fact, a September 2007 inventory of multi-family housing prepared by the North College Hill Tax Department shows 180 multi-family units in this neighborhood of which 98 are contained in the Village Square apartment complex on Bising Avenue, and the balance is contained in 2-8 family units<sup>9</sup> Although the Village Square is well maintained, some of the other smaller multi-family units are showing signs of disrepair. The city should target these units for renovation under the Hamilton County Housing Improvement Program.

<sup>9</sup> Unless otherwise noted, for the purposes of this study, information regarding number of multi-family units in specific Policy Areas was obtained from the City of North College Hill Tax Office.



Streets in Policy Area #4 are generally in good condition with the exception of Norcol Lane which is on the city's street repair list. There is an existing city-owned alley that runs between the backyards of homes on Lois Avenue in Policy Area #1 and Mulberry Street in Policy Area #4. Currently the alley is only used to provide backyard access to the homes on Lois Avenue and Mulberry Street. The city should investigate alternative uses of this alley, possibly to connect the two policy area neighborhoods.

Although there is no public green space in Policy Area #4, it benefits from proximity to Policy Area #3 which includes the city-owned pool and playground and the school-owned stadium and athletic fields. As the city and schools pursue upgrades and expansion of these outdoor recreational facilities, they should incorporate pedestrian linkages to the new facilities.

- #7. This area is a stable residential neighborhood of primarily two-story brick homes that were built from 1950-1955. As in Policy Area #1 and Policy Area #4, the houses are constructed on small lots with about 1,600 square feet. Policy Area #7 has a greater number of 3-4 bedroom homes than found in Policy Areas #1 and #4 where 2 bedroom homes dominate. The average listing price of homes is \$111,562 which is a slightly higher than average listing prices for homes in Policy Area #1 and Policy Area #4.

The fact that the majority of the homes are brick versus siding connotes a stable neighborhood. All seven streets in this neighborhood were recently repaired adding to the attractiveness and perceived stability of the area. The neighborhood is exclusively single-family with the exception of five small (2 to 4 units each) multi-family buildings located on Clovernoll Drive near Hamilton Avenue.

At the north end of Policy Area #7 (at Northridge and Collegewood Avenues) is a small tot lot (Staplewood Park) that is on land acquired by the state of Ohio as part of the Ronald Reagan Highway project. The neighborhood is also contiguous and accessible on the south side to a 16 acre recreational complex owned by Clovernook Home for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This complex is comprised of Pies Park and Northcreek Fields which are the city's only public soccer and baseball fields. The city, which currently leases the property, should consider acquiring the site to preserve the long-term use of the facilities for outdoor recreation.

The neighborhood's interconnectivity via sidewalks and proximity to retail amenities on Hamilton Avenue, (including Kroger's), and nearby parks and schools positions it to be marketed as a walkable "Neo-Traditional" neighborhood.



## Plan Elements

As of September 25, 2007 there were six homes for sale in this neighborhood, up from only one six months previous. Although this may simply reflect the glut in the residential marketplace in general, the city should continue to market the neighborhood as a good value for young families.

- #8.** Policy Area #8 is an eclectic mix of primarily two-story housing that includes a preponderance of brick with some siding, single-family and multi-family, and well maintained to deteriorating housing. Although the average size home is 1,600 square feet, there are a substantial number of larger homes, and houses sit on deeper lots than found elsewhere in the city, particularly on Clovernook Avenue. The neighborhood streets are lined with mature trees and access to the 16 acre Pies Park and Northcreek Fields complex is provided at the end of Kleindale Avenue.

The average list price of homes in Policy Area #8 is \$117,715 which is the third highest among the ten residential policy areas identified in this study. Homes were originally constructed in the 1920s-1930s, although a second wave of construction occurred from the 1940s-1960s (principally on Carrol Avenue, Bobolink Drive and a portion of Shamrock Avenue). In 2004 construction of a single family residential development began on Ashmore Drive, a new cul-de-sac off Clovernook Avenue. The homes range in size from 1,300-2,600 square feet and sell for \$150,000-\$200,000. To date, 8 of 14 lots have been developed.

There are three large apartment complexes (comprising 308 units) in Policy Area #8: Pine Meadow Town Houses on Columbine Court, Four Worlds Apartments on Galbraith Road, and Northwoods Apartments on Daly Road. Although there have been chronic nuisance complaints at the Pine Meadow Town House, it is encouraging that a new owner is working to improve conditions there. Fifteen other multi-family units are interspersed throughout the neighborhood.

The major street in Policy #8, Clovernook Avenue, (as well as the cross streets of Columbine Court, Norman Avenue and Prospect Place), are in need of repair. The city should seek Municipal Road Funds or State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) Funds to complete these street projects. West Galbraith Road, which is the southern border of Policy Area #8, is a hodge-podge of underutilized mixed residential and retail uses and is showing signs of disinvestment and deterioration. A reinvestment plan for this area is discussed in the "Business District Revitalization" section below. As a major gateway into the city and into residential Policy Area #8, it is critical that the vitality and appearance of the West Galbraith Road retail corridor be improved.



The 50,000 square foot Clovernook Health Care Pavilion located at 7025 Clovernook Avenue in Policy Area #8 is a significant employer for the city with 165 employees. The Pavilion is a recognized leader in comprehensive long term nursing care, and is particularly known for its Progressive Wound Centre. The attractive facility is situated on an approximate 3.5 acre wooded site that is buffered from the neighboring residential community. The city should support the continued operation and expansion of the Clovernook Health Care Pavilion as a compatible partner within the residential neighborhood.

A visual survey of the area indicates that although many of the homes in Policy Area #8 are well maintained, many others are beginning to deteriorate. There is a glut of houses on the market in the neighborhood as indicated by the fact that as of September 25, 2007, there were 18 homes on the market, up from only one six months previous. An aggressive code enforcement program should be instituted to help protect property values and enhance aesthetics in the area. Parallel with this should be a concentrated use of Hamilton County's Housing Improvement Program to encourage rehabilitation of both single-family and multi-family units in the area, particularly for those low and moderate income families who cannot afford needed repairs. Likewise, the city should partner with redevelopment organizations like Cincinnati Housing Partners, Inc. and Real Estate Investor Association to target Policy Area #8 for reinvestment. To help stabilize the neighborhood the city should promote use of the Ohio Financing Agency's new program to curtail foreclosures through a competitive refinancing program; establish a Community Improvement Corporation-sponsored low interest residential improvement loan program and/or a loan guarantee program; and consider designating the area as a Community Reinvestment Area to provide tax abatement on the value of housing improvements.

- #11.** This residential area, known as the southwest quadrant of North College Hill, is the most challenging from a redevelopment perspective in that it is experiencing notable disinvestment. The majority of homes were built in the early 1920s through the 1940s, with some infill housing being built primarily in the 1970s and 1980s, the majority of which is small multi-family units. Given the age of the structure, many are showing visible signs of significant deterioration. Houses are primarily brick and frame cape cod cottages with about 1,000 square feet, one bedroom/1 bath and situated on .15 acre lots. Although housing in Policy Area #11 is primarily single family, there are 157 multi-family units and 8 privately owned condominiums.



## Plan Elements

The average list price of homes in Policy Area #11 is \$80,248 which is the lowest among the ten residential policy areas identified in this study. Forty-eight market homes were listed for sale as of September 25, 2007, up from twenty-eight homes for sale the previous year, indicating that it is increasingly difficult to sell properties in Policy Area #11.

Policy Area #11 has a significant number of units owned by and/or subsidized by the Housing and Urban Development Agency and/or the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (12 as of September 2007); there are a large number of absentee landlords; and there is a disproportionate share of Homestead exemptions (indicating a large number of senior citizens).<sup>10</sup> These characteristics generally indicate populations with less income to purchase and maintain housing and in some cases more vulnerability to foreclosure. In fact there were 19 homes listed with a lender in Policy Area #11 as of September 25, 2007.

Three heavier volume connector streets run north to south through the neighborhood: Simpson and Betts Avenue both of which connect to Springfield Township to the south; and Savannah Avenue which connects to the city of Cincinnati to the south. Simpson, Betts and Savannah Avenues directly connect to the West Galbraith Avenue Business District. Another connector street, Goodman Avenue, connects to the Hamilton Avenue and Goodman Avenue retail districts. Not surprisingly, these four streets have a different character than other residential streets in Policy Area #11. Although they are primarily residential in nature, there are 16 small multi-family units (67 units total) located on these three connector streets. The Simpson Condominiums, an 8-unit owner-occupied development that looks more like an apartment complex, is located on Simpson Avenue. In addition to residential uses, these four connector streets have public institution and retail uses including a storefront church, two taverns, a hair salon and an upholstery shop on Savannah Avenue; a music store, Becker Elementary School, and Dumele Park on Simpson Avenue; a carry-out and Veterans' Park on Betts Avenue; and Goodman Elementary School and a home-based HVAC company on Goodman Avenue.



<sup>10</sup> Hamilton County Auditor's Office web page .



There are numerous streets that are in need of repair in Policy Area #11 including Bake Avenue (from West Galbraith Road to Dallas Avenue); Carpenter Drive, Simpson Avenue, Goodman Avenue (from Bake Avenue to Simpson Avenue); Grace Avenue, Greismer Avenue, Shollenberger Avenue, and Sterling and Waltham Avenues from Parrish Avenue to Savannah Avenue. A concentrated street improvement program should be targeted for these streets in Policy Area #11 using Municipal Road Funds (MRF), State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) funds, or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

A unique feature of Policy Area #11 is that there are privately-owned alleyways behind the east-west streets which provide rear-yard access to homes and businesses. During the city of North College Hill Business Retention & Expansion Program, several businesses noted the deteriorated conditions of these alleyways. The city should survey the alleys and work with property owners on a repair program that may include assessments.

There are two public schools in Policy Area #11: Goodman Avenue Elementary School and Becker Elementary School on Simpson Avenue. As part of the North College Hill City School District capital improvement plan all grades will be consolidated at a new campus located where the existing junior/senior high school is located in Policy Area #3. The school district intends to renovate Goodman Elementary School as a central office. The future status of Becker Elementary is not determined which is significant given the fact that it is situated on 12.8 acres which have great redevelopment potential. The city should consider acquiring and land banking this acreage for a mixed use development that would include outdoor recreation/green space and possibly upscale single-family or condominium housing adjacent to the Clovernook Country Club.

Although there are many homes that are well-maintained in Policy Area #11, given their age and obsolescence and the preponderance of low and moderate income households, many homes are falling into disrepair. Between January 1, 2007 and September 30, 2007, 165 “notices of violation” were sent by the North College Hill Property Maintenance Code Enforcement Officer to homeowners in Policy Area #11. This Policy Area had 53.22% of the total violations sent in that time period. The city should play an active role in the revitalization of this area by using available redevelopment incentives to target blocks with low owner-occupied housing rates, strengthen property maintenance requirements and renovate vacant and underutilized businesses into quality single-family or small multi-tenant dwellings. City staff should identify those streets in Policy Area #11 most in need of a focused housing rehabilitation program and partner with the various housing organizations previously discussed in this study. The



southwest quadrant should be “adopted” by the North College Hill Community Improvement Corporation and local lending institutions for a pilot housing rehabilitation low interest loan and/or loan guarantee. Given the high number of low and moderate income households in this neighborhood, local banks would be inclined to participate in such programs to meet their Community Reinvestment Act requirements.

Given the substantial needs in Policy Area #11, the city should consider “going the extra mile” by waiving permit fees and possibly designating the area as a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) whereby property taxes are abated on new investment for both single-family and multi-family housing. The city should also aggressively promote, through use of door-to-door flyers and news articles, Hamilton County’s Home Improvement Program (HIP) which provides low interest loans for both housing and commercial renovations; and the Ohio Housing Finance Agency Program to help forestall foreclosures by offering refinancing of residential mortgages at competitive rates.

- #14.** Policy Area #14 is in the southeast section of the city. In general the area’s housing stock has maintained its quality and represents a more upscale housing market. Homes are primarily brick cape cods with a mix of one and two stories, and are built on small lots with 1,300-1,500 square feet. The majority were built in the mid to late 1940s and the average list price of homes in Policy Area #14 was \$111,570 in September 2007, down from \$119,000 from the previous six month period. In the mid-1970’s larger homes (approximately 2,400 square feet on larger 1/3 acre lots), were constructed on Devonwood and Telford Drives; these homes typically sell for \$150,000-\$250,000 and add to the character and stability of the neighborhood.

Streets are tree-lined and in good condition except for Jamar and Devonwood Drives. The latter two streets should be repaired through the MRF, SCIP, and/or CDBG programs to maintain the upscale image and appearance of this neighborhood. Given the larger homes and deeper lots characteristic of Policy Area #14, it should be marketed through the real estate profession to families with children (second tier housing).

Life Spring Christian Church is on the eastern edge of Policy Area #14. Given the church’s strong presence in the North College Hill community and ongoing involvement in community events, it serves as an anchor to the neighborhood.



**#15.** This area is characterized by larger architecturally unique two-story brick homes with 3-4 bedrooms and 2,000 square feet or more of living space. The homes were built primarily during the 1940s and 1950s and are presented on larger lots with mature trees. Streets are well maintained. Average list price in September 2007 was \$166,567, (the highest reported for the city's ten residential policy areas), and up from \$162,500 six months previous. Homes have recently sold in the neighborhood for up to \$227,000. These numbers indicate that Policy Area #15 is perceived as desirable in the housing market and can sustain healthy property values.

Several small well maintained and managed multi-family complexes anchor the entrance to Policy Area #15. Homes along Hamilton Avenue south of Policy Area #15 (in the city of Cincinnati) are attractive and generally well maintained thus providing a nice transition and buffer to this North College Hill neighborhood. Unfortunately the Hamilton Avenue retail district located just north of Policy Area #15 has numerous vacant and run down storefronts. To protect this "hidden residential gem" of North College Hill, the city must undertake an aggressive economic redevelopment program along this section of the city's major north-south corridor. (See "Business District Revitalization" section below).

A future opportunity to expand Policy Area #15 is the 5.5 acre vacant Regency Nursing Home which is located just north of this residential neighborhood. The city should work with the property owner to help facilitate the adaptive reuse of the property as high-end single-family condominiums or estate housing. This is one of the last large tracts of land remaining for new residential development.

**#16.** This Policy Area, along with Policy Area #17 discussed below, is an "appendage" to Policy Area #11. It is comprised of larger single-family houses on the south end of Meis Avenue and West Belmar Place and exhibits unique characteristics that merit it being considered separately. Like Policy Area #15, lots are typically larger and deeper than elsewhere in the city, and the homes are situated back from the street and are generally much better maintained than in the rest of the southwest quadrant. Homes have an average of 1,470 square feet compared to only 1,000 square feet in Policy Area #11. Lots average .2 acre compared to .15 acre lots in Policy Area #11. As of September 25, 2007, the average list price of homes in this area was \$110,000 compared to \$80,248 the rest of the southwest quadrant.



Like Policy Area #15, this area attracts a high end buyer in the marketplace, namely people who are looking for larger more stately homes in an idyllic enclave. To preserve the integrity and property values in this small neighborhood, the city should enforce the property maintenance code.

- #17.** Like Policy Area #16 above, Policy Area #17 is contiguous to the southwest quadrant, but it exhibits unique characteristics that merits separate discussion and consideration in this plan. Housing generally reflects the modest housing stock in Policy Area #11 which is characterized by small size houses and lots and substantial units in need of rehabilitation.

The area contains approximately five acres of undeveloped residential property at the end of the paved portion of Catalpa Avenue along the “paper street” Catalpa Avenue. Although this acreage has potential for development of new single-family houses, such development would be costly to both developers and residents since the properties northwest of the street centerline are located within the 100 year FEMA flood plain. The property would need to be developed above the 100 year flood plain and residents would likely need to purchase flood insurance. Although several new homes have been built on this property over the past 3 years, the quality is marginal. The city should encourage either a residential developer or the various nonprofit housing agencies previously identified to construct quality market-rate housing on the vacant land. Cincinnati Housing Partners, Inc. in particular has indicated a willingness to begin building market rate housing within the next few years.

The northern entrance to Policy Area #17 is from the Hamilton Avenue Business District, (south of West Galbraith Road), which is characterized by substantial vacancies and deteriorated commercial properties. As with Policy Area #15, the ability to revitalize this retail corridor would have a positive impact on the stability of this residential area. The city’s goal for this policy area should be to reverse the trend of deterioration occurring so that the neighborhood begins to exhibit characteristics found in the more stable Policy Area #16 to the south. A very aggressive code enforcement program should be instituted, and all of the housing incentives previously identified in this plan should be implemented in the area.



**#18.** Policy Area #18 is comprised exclusively of the Iron Woods Condominiums, a 10-unit exclusive condominium complex located just west of the Clovernook Country Club off of West Galbraith Avenue. The complex offers views of the Country Club and many of the residents are members there. Built from 1986-1992, both 2 bedroom units (1,852 square feet) and 3 bedroom units (2,796 square feet) are offered with appraised values ranging from \$160,000 to \$207,000. The city should work with the country club and high-end residential developers to investigate opportunities for assembling additional contiguous acres to build additional condominiums in the area.

As with other Policy Areas that access retail corridors, it is important that the city undertake a comprehensive commercial revitalization program that complements proposed housing improvement programs.

## **Business District Revitalization**

According to the *City of North College Hill Business District Study* adopted by the city in April 2006, North College Hill currently has four business districts. Each of these business districts has its own unique physical characteristics and potential for development and/or redevelopment. These include:

**The North Hamilton Avenue Business District** (Policy Area #5) is the city's newest business district located just south of the Ronald Reagan Highway along Hamilton Avenue. It developed in 1977 as a direct outgrowth of the opening of the North College Hill extension of the highway and is marked with a Kroger Store and Perkins Restaurant at the north end, single-family and multi-family housing in the center, and North College Hill High School, the Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired, and a PNC Bank at the south end.

According to an August 2005 traffic count report published by the Hamilton County Engineer's Office, this business district has the highest daily traffic count in North College Hill, namely 39,610 on Ronald Reagan Highway at Hamilton Avenue, and 31,250 on Hamilton Avenue just south of the Highway. Recent roadway median improvements by the city and North College Hill Business Association and well maintained sidewalks, curbs and gutters contribute to the attractiveness of this business district. Given the success of the Kroger Store and the "captive audience" provided by healthy traffic counts, it is reasonable to assume that the area will continue to experience development pressure in the future. This will likely be manifested in the conversion of single and multi-family units to commercial and professional offices, and assemblage of individual properties for mid to large scale retail and office developments.



Anchor Associates has purchased the PNC site and adjoining Postal Workers' Union building at the northeast corner of Hamilton Avenue and West Galbraith Road and plans to construct a new Walgreens with a PNC Bank inside the store. When the store opens in spring 2009 it will provide a high name recognition store to anchor the southern end of the retail district, further reinforcing the economic vitality of this commercial area.

***The Goodman Avenue/South Hamilton Avenue Business District*** (Policy Area #12) is located in the southeastern section of North College Hill. It is comprised almost entirely of retail uses including two banks, a pharmacy, an optical center, florist and garden center, and restaurants. It also has a significant medical office complex and is home to the North College Hill Community Senior Center and the Colonial Tennis, Fitness and Swim Club. Goodman Avenue runs through the middle of the business district and serves as a major access road connecting Hamilton Avenue to West Galbraith Road. A major blighting influence in the area is the former Thriftway Supermarket and Big Lots "big box" stores which collectively comprise 97,000 square feet of vacant retail space.

This business district has multiple shared access concerns and lack of visibility to other pedestrians and vehicles. Although its design is similar to developments along Colerain Avenue, it lacks the direct highway access, visibility and critical massing to be able to effectively compete with the neighboring Colerain Avenue commercial corridor. Redevelopment of the two vacant big box stores is challenged by the fact that the buildings are located in the back of the district and not easily visible or accessible. If a desirable redevelopment of the area is proposed, the city may want to consider vacating a portion of Goodman Avenue to create more visibility from West Galbraith Road.

South Hamilton Avenue which is the western edge of the Goodman Avenue Business District is equally challenged with a mixture of building types, deteriorated commercial buildings, and numerous vacancies. Access is generally confusing and shifting topography limits views into the commercial area. Three contiguous vacant buildings, each separately owned, constitute a particular eyesore on the west side of South Hamilton Avenue in the district; these include a vacant wallpaper store, equipment rental store, and an abandoned gas station. Although collectively these parcels only comprise .876 acre, their combined asking price is \$700,000. These conditions are a deterrent to the adaptive reuse of the properties for a higher tax-generating use.



Traffic counts in the Goodman Avenue Business District are not as healthy as in the North Hamilton Avenue Business District. According to Hamilton County Engineer's Office 2005 traffic counts, Hamilton Avenue daily traffic counts drop from 31,250 near Ronald Reagan Highway to 21,300 at Goodman Avenue, and traffic counts at Galbraith Road at Goodman Avenue are just 20,300 vehicles per day. Attraction of new commercial development in the vacant big box stores would undoubtedly help boost traffic counts and retail activity in the Goodman Avenue Business District.

A positive development in the Goodman Avenue Business District is the recent acquisition and renovation of the Colonial Tennis, Fitness and Swim Club by a former club member. The new owner is undertaking a major renovation of the deteriorating facility and embarking upon an aggressive regional marketing campaign to boost the club's prestige and membership.

**The West Galbraith Road Business District** (Policy Areas #2 and #3) is the historic "Main Street" of North College Hill. It is comprised of neighborhood retail services including restaurants, cafes, hair salons, meat market, florist and bakery. Although most of the businesses in the West Galbraith Road Business District primarily serve North College Hill and surrounding areas, it does have several regional draws including the North College Hill Bake Shop and Buddy Rogers Music.

This business district encourages walking and is on a human scale exhibiting many elements of "Neo-Traditional" urban design. Attractive streetscaping was installed in the district adding to the attractiveness of the shopping area. Sidewalks are well marked and maintained, several public and private parking lots are available, and parallel on-street parking is clearly demarcated and serves as an effective barrier between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Buildings tend to be smaller and are often built right up to the public sidewalk. Lots on the south side of the street are rather shallow and additional access is provided by an alley that runs the length of the business district. Auto-oriented businesses are found at the western edge of the district.

The north side of West Galbraith Road is dominated by three significant public institutional uses: the city of North College Hill municipal building and contract post office, the North College Hill Junior & Senior High School, and St. Margaret Mary Church. Passage of the bond issue in November 2007 allows the junior and senior high school to be demolished and replaced with a new K-12 school campus. After the 2006/2007 school year, St. Margaret Mary School closed. A majority of the building however, still remains in use by the parish.





Three highly visible storefronts in the 1700 block of West Galbraith Road, (the former Underground Treasures clothing store), were vacant for over a year. It is encouraging that this property went to auction on November 17, 2007 and at the time this Plan was being written, there was a sale pending. Assuming the sale is executed, the city should work closely with the new owner to encourage a quality adaptive reuse of the buildings.

In addition to the planned renovation of the North College Hill School District facilities, two other exciting redevelopment projects are underway in the downtown area including construction of a two-story 2,900 square foot law office on property previously land banked by the city, and attraction of a private practice attorney to a vacant storefront at 1831 West Galbraith Road.

Completion of the Ronald Reagan Highway in 1997 substantially reduced commuting traffic along West Galbraith Road. In fact, the August 2005 traffic count conducted by the Hamilton County Engineer's Office reports only 11,837 vehicles per day in the downtown district, the lowest among all business districts in North College Hill. Redevelopment of vacant buildings and construction of the new consolidated school campus will likely attract substantial new pedestrian and vehicular traffic and help invigorate the downtown district.

**The *Hamilton Avenue & West Galbraith Road Intersection*** (Policy Areas #2 and #12) is the geographic center of North College Hill and the city's "100% retail intersection". Although it is recognized as a business district in itself, it demarcates the transition from the city's other three business districts. The four corners include on the northeast corner the PNC Bank site, (soon to be redeveloped with the new Walgreens); on the northwest corner the 1800's Laboiteaux-Cary Cemetery and Kemper Professional Building; on the southeast corner a Shell Gas Station co-located with a McDonald's Restaurant, and; on the southwest corner the newly constructed Greater Cincinnati Credit Union. Redevelopment of the southwest corner with the new credit union greatly enhanced the aesthetics of the intersection and sent a clear message to the development community and public that North College Hill is growing and prospering. This message will be reinforced when the new Walgreens is constructed.

The Hamilton County Engineer's Office 2005 traffic counts show 20,300 vehicles per day at the intersection of Galbraith Road and Hamilton Avenue. If the city is able to effectively recruit new destination businesses with regional appeal to vacant buildings in the other commercial districts, it follows that pedestrian and vehicular traffic will increase in these areas.



***The Pippin Road Business District*** (Policy Area #9) was not addressed in the *City of North College Hill Business District Study*, although it does merit discussion in this Plan. Located on the southwestern edge of the city adjoining Colerain Township, it is the “forgotten business district” in that many people do not even know it is in the city limits. Toward the rear of the district is the Lakeridge Hall banquet center and Lake Nina Restaurant, and fronting on Pippin Road are several medical office buildings; these properties are under single ownership. Although the banquet hall is well maintained and is attractively situated on Lake Nina, the medical buildings have a “tired” appearance and would benefit from façade improvements.

The Lakeridge Villa Nursing Home is a 100-bed skilled nursing facility situated on 5 acres located in the northwest corner of the Pippin Road Business District. The facility was built in 1998 and is approximately 95% occupied today. The nursing home has had a history of operational problems, and in fact in 1999 the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) determined that the facility was in non-compliance with state requirements for patient care and fined \$80,300<sup>11</sup>. Based on data obtained from CMS in June 2007, the nursing home remains on the National Nursing Home Watch List because in at least one area actual harm was caused to a patient and/or subjected the patients to immediate jeopardy.<sup>12</sup> Should the nursing home ever close, the city should aggressively work with the property owner to facilitate a desirable, high tax-generating adaptive reuse of the property.

## **Recommendations for All Business Districts**

### ***1. Develop Unique But Coordinated District Identity And Signage.***

As with the North College Hill’s residential areas, the city should develop a program to create and project a new and strong image for each of North College Hill’s five business districts. Central to this is a “brand strategy” that outlines the programs and the identity that will enable the city to increase its economic development performance and increase its quality of life. This brand strategy should ultimately be incorporated into streetscaping, signage, economic development, and marketing/advertising programs to produce a reputation that is positively memorable, attractive, unique, sustainable and reinforced and enriched by every act of communication between the city and the outside world.

To capitalize on the city’s recent designation by *Money Magazine* as one of the best and most affordable communities in the U.S. the city ordered drink coozies and notepads touting this recognition, and signs were strategically

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.hhs.gov>

<sup>12</sup> <http://memberofthefamily.net>



posted at community entryways and other high traffic areas. The city should capitalize on the great public relations garnered from the *Money Magazine* article by developing a city logo, tag line, and permanent gateway signage and applying these marketing tools consistently in all business districts.

### 2. *Develop A Strategy For Proactive Business Retention.*

Because 75%-80% of all new jobs in the United States are created through business expansion<sup>13</sup>, and because North College Hill is landlocked with minimal vacant land for new development, it is essential that the city develop and implement a comprehensive business retention program. The 2007 *North College Hill NGT Economic Development Plan* lists business retention as the city's third highest priority and makes the following recommendations to achieve this economic development goal:

- **Business Calling Program** – In December 2006 the city began implementing a business calling program whereby the economic development consultant interviews owners and CEOs from North College Hill's businesses to identify operating and expansion-related concerns and to provide appropriate follow-up. To date eighteen of the city's approximate 120 businesses have been visited. The city should continue this program as a way to identify businesses with expansion needs, to welcome new businesses to the city, and to remind long time employers that they are appreciated members of North College Hill's business community.
- **Welcome to North College Hill Program** – The city and North College Hill Business Association should develop a "Welcome to North College Hill Program" whereby representatives welcome new businesses by taking them a pie, flowers, fruit basket, or customized basket of North College Hill-made products or coupons for goods and services provided by local businesses.
- **North College Hill Business and Services Directory** – The April 2004 North College Hill Business Directory is currently being updated as a joint project by the city and business association. The directory will list all businesses alphabetically and by service category and a greeting from the mayor and business association president will encourage residents and businesses to "buy local". It can also be used to validate to prospective new businesses and residents that North College Hill has a diverse business base.

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce



- **Business Exposition** – The business association and city should consider sponsoring an annual business exposition at a community event such as the town meeting or annual picnic as an opportunity for local businesses to display and promote their goods and services to the general public. Dovetailing the exposition with an established city function provides a captive audience for the event.
- **Business Spotlight** – The North College Hill Business Association has an excellent program for recognizing businesses at its quarterly meetings. The city should consider sponsoring a similar program by recognizing outstanding members of the local business community at monthly council meetings and/or at one of the city’s annual events. A “Business Spotlight” should also be featured in each edition of the mayor’s newsletter and in the *Hilltop Press*.
- **Lunch with a City Official Program** – The city should initiate a “Lunch with a City Official” Program. A personal luncheon with the mayor, council member, police or fire chief, or city administrator is an excellent way to let local businesses know they are appreciated.

Business surveys conducted as part of the *City of North College Hill Business District Study* reveal the following information that is relevant to business retention:

- When businesses in operation for three years or more were asked to report sales trends, 16.7% said that sales had increased over the previous three years; 38.9% said sales had decreased, and; 44.4% reported sales had stayed about the same. These numbers indicate the need to increase vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the city’s business districts in order to be able to effectively retain and recruit businesses.
- When asked about plans for changes to their physical building or location, 23.5% of the respondents indicated that they had a plan to upgrade their place of business or change their business location in the next two years; 37.5% were investigating expansions; and 37.5% were considering relocation. These statistics underscore the need for city officials to keep a pulse on local business plans through a business calling program.



### 3. *Develop A Strategy For Proactive Business Recruitment.*

The fourth priority of the *NGT Economic Development Plan* is to increase the city's local tax and employment bases through business recruitment. Below are several methods for attaining this goal:

- **Filling Vacant Storefronts** – The economic development consultant should continue to contact owners of vacant buildings in the city's five commercial districts to ascertain business plans and to develop a plan for recruiting new businesses and improving the appearance and marketability of these buildings.
- **Vacant Building Inventory** - The city's inventory of available commercial and office buildings space should be periodically updated to assist in recruiting new businesses. It should list in one document all relevant information a prospect requires to evaluate a particular building including owner, contact person, square footage, lease or sale terms and other special conditions.
- **Targeted Business Marketing Program** – Not only did the *NGT* participants cite the need for a business recruitment program, they also had specific ideas about the type of businesses that should be targeted to North College Hill including professional offices, quality sit-down restaurants, a more diverse mix of other upscale retail and service establishments, “financially viable businesses”, and “high job-creating businesses”. Through a targeted business marketing program the city can identify and recruit specific business uses which will complement the city's existing character, meet unmet service needs, and add significantly to the tax base.

The *City of North College Hill Business District Study* conducted demographic analysis and a competition analysis to identify businesses that would be both desirable and feasible in a targeted business marketing program. The study also analyzed the city's potential to capitalize on the high growth health care industry as part of a targeted business marketing program. Below is a summary of the major findings from these three analyses:

- **Demographic Analysis** - The city provides affordable single family housing with a high population density. The population is both younger and older than Hamilton County in general, and has a higher than average number of younger first time homeowners and senior citizens. Based upon total commercial square footage, North College Hill's business districts are categorized by Claritas as “neighborhood shopping centers” meaning that a majority of city residents make use of the community businesses to meet their daily shopping needs due to



their close proximity. Several unique stores may pull customers from the region, but on the whole the businesses primarily support the local community.

North College Hill has a very compact population with an aggregate *effective buying income density*<sup>14</sup> that is almost twice the county average. *Consumer buying power density*<sup>15</sup> for North College Hill was also more than twice the County average. *Estimated business sales by industry type*<sup>16</sup> indicate that as a whole, North College Hill businesses were able to capture 44.52% of an estimated \$100 million in retail spending by the community's residents. North College Hill had a higher percentage in comparison to the county in the categories of eating and drinking places and miscellaneous retail. The significance of these numbers to a targeted business marketing program is that North College Hill is conducive to neighborhood-based businesses and has a significant opportunity for local businesses to capture retail spending currently being conducted outside of the community, particularly for eating and drinking places.

- **Competition Analysis** – North College Hill was compared to two other competing shopping districts, the Brentwood Plaza along Winton Road in Springfield Township, and Colerain Avenue from Banning Road to Ronald Reagan (including the Northgate Mall). Although commercial land use constitutes the largest percentage for all three districts, North College Hill has the lowest percentage at 31.38% compared to 47.15% for Brentwood and 57.42% for Colerain Avenue. Likewise, office use is more prevalent in the other two corridors – 12.48% in Brentwood and 5.25% in Colerain compared to only 3.69% in North College Hill. The city is unique in that a very large percentage of its land uses in the business districts is allocated toward institutional uses – 20% compared to <2% in Brentwood and 0.34% on Colerain Avenue. These statistics indicate that North College Hill does not benefit from the same critical massing as do its two counterpart commercial districts. It reflects a traditional urban shopping district as opposed to the other two corridors that tend to segregate uses within the community. The city should promote the benefits of this style of shopping district, namely a calm residential nature, better accessibility, and more convenience than is found in its two counterpart commercial corridors.

<sup>14</sup> 2005 Claritas Inc. Note: Effective Buying Income is income minus personal taxes.

<sup>15</sup> 2005 Claritas, Inc. Note: Consumer buying power equates to the estimated purchases made by residents on consumer items for the year.

<sup>16</sup> 2005 Claritas, Inc. Note: Estimated Business Sales is the estimated amount of sales generated within the geographical area for the current year.



- **Medical Office Market Research – Health care is a high growth industry predicted to add nearly 35 million new jobs between 2002 and 2012. During this same period ten of the twenty fastest growing occupations are concentrated in the health services and medical spending is expected to increase two-fold from \$1.54 billion in 2002 to \$3.1 billion by 2012<sup>17</sup>. This growth is primarily driven by the aging of the baby boomers and expanding commercial and residential development.**

North College Hill has many positive attributes that would aid in the attraction of medical office development including:

- **Ronald Reagan Highway provides good accessibility and high visibility, both of which are important to physicians.**
- **Two very specific demographic groups which could be underserved by the current medical services: facilities catering to young families and aging senior citizens.**
- **Two large hospitals within a few miles of North College Hill, (the Drake Center and Mercy Franciscan Hospital), and close proximity to the University of Cincinnati medical complex area. (Medical specialist prefer to locate near existing hospital and medical facilities).**
- **There are already approximately 20 existing medical-oriented businesses in the area including several assisted-living facilities; these businesses should be surveyed to determine the specific type of complementary medical users that should be attracted to North College Hill.**
  - **Landbanking - As previously noted, North College Hill has little raw land available for new development. As such, the city's economic development challenge is to use landbanking to acquire and improve contiguous parcels of land for future business development. The city has successfully undertaken landbanking in the downtown district with the acquisition of three deteriorated residential houses between the administration building and Mearl Avenue. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were then used to demolish the houses and prepare the site for construction of a two story legal office building for Ennis, Roberts and Fischer. In the following sections, other potential landbank sites will be identified that have the potential to stimulate redevelopment in commercial areas of the city that are beginning to show signs of building deterioration, have high vacancy rates, or underutilized uses.**

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services.



- Tax & Financial Incentives – As part of the *North College Hill NGT Economic Development Plan*, a summary of tax and financial incentive programs was developed to help promote commercial, office and if appropriate, light industrial development for new or expanding companies. These programs should be aggressively used to provide business prospects a competitive advantage to locating in North College Hill. (See list of incentives in the *North College Hill NGT Economic Development Plan*).
- Local developer surveys conducted as part of the *City of North College Hill Business District Study* identified the following challenges that should be considered in designing the city’s comprehensive business recruitment program:
  - Lack of class A office space (average lease rates of \$14.50/s.f. versus \$22/s.f. in other Greater Cincinnati suburban communities).
  - An aging population –need to attract younger homeowners and singles with disposable income.
  - Lack of cohesive identity for businesses in specific areas including Goodman Avenue, the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and West Galbraith Road, and the southern end of Hamilton Avenue.
  - High cost of demolition of deteriorated structures a deterrent to redevelopment.
  - Small and shallow lot sizes make reuse less attractive/feasible.
  - Given the glut of office space in the region, retail may demand a higher lease rate than office, thus deterring new office development.

#### 4. *Business District Streetscapes.*

Local developers interviewed as part of the *City of North College Hill Business District Study* complemented recent streetscaping along North Hamilton Avenue and West Galbraith Road, adding that this same treatment needs to be extended to the other commercial districts in the city. A consistent streetscape design should be developed including decorative sidewalks, signage, banners, street furniture (such as benches, planter boxes, and trash receptacles), and street trees and landscaping. The existing streetscape should be updated to include bicycle racks that are smaller





## Plan Elements

in scale (one to two bikes per rack) and have a decorative style that blends well with the urban streetscape. Key locations for bike racks include both sides of West Galbraith Road in the West Galbraith Road Business District and at other key locations throughout the city such as schools, parks, the pool and Kroger. As part of the streetscape plan, gateway signage and architectural treatments should be used to create a “sense of place” and identify when a person enters or exits North College Hill.



To complement an enhanced public streetscape, the city should consider amending the zoning code to adopt overlay districts and accompanying architectural design standards that apply to private property owners undertaking commercial renovation or new construction. Within these overlay districts guidelines may relax or further restrict the underlying zoning district regulations for land use, lot area, coverage, density, floor area, setback, parking, materials, building height, fencing, landscaping and other design components. The city should consider sponsoring a studio of students from the University of Cincinnati School of Design Art Architecture and



Planning to help develop a streetscape plan for each of the city's five business districts and sample façade improvement designs for buildings. Several financial incentives could then be offered to building owners to encourage them to improve their facades including a low interest loan through the Community Improvement Corporation (CIC), a loan guarantee program whereby area banks agree to reduce the interest rates for businesses loans that are guaranteed by the CIC, and use of Hamilton County's low interest loan Property Improvement Program (PIP).

### ***Policy Areas Affected by this Plan Element Include:***

- **North Hamilton Avenue Business District** (Policy Area #5). The North Hamilton Avenue Business District is likely to continue to experience development pressure that began with attraction of Kroger and Perkins Restaurant. This will likely include conversion of single and multi-family units to office and retail uses. Efforts should be made to retain the less-intensive residential character of the business district. Residential areas should be buffered when possible from Hamilton Avenue and commercial uses through the use of land use planning and zoning requirements to provide adequate transition between uses.

The city should target neighborhood-based businesses and services that complement Kroger Stores. An analysis by Hamilton County Development Company shows that these typically include video stores, book store, greeting card store, coffee shops, sandwich shops, family hair salons, pet stores and breakfast-oriented businesses.

The future viability of the North Hamilton Avenue will be enhanced if pedestrian accessibility from adjoining residential subdivisions to the east and west can be improved. This district may also suffer from competition from recent commercial sites in the region that incorporate green space and landscaping to improve pedestrian comfort and project a more upscale image. The city should consider the following policies for helping the North Hamilton Avenue Business District compete with surrounding commercial districts:

- Maximize and promote green space by consolidating or combining off street parking areas.
- Extend a pedestrian bridge across North Hamilton Avenue approximately at Bising Avenue that would provide safe access for clients at the Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired and residents in Policy Areas #4 and #7 to schools, shopping, recreation and the municipal building.



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- Encourage businesses in the district to follow the example of Kroger in improving accessibility for special groups, in particular the blind and visually impaired.
- Physically widen the business corridor to the greatest extent possible through deeper lots to provide more buildable space.
- **Goodman Avenue/South Hamilton Avenue Business District** (Policy Area #12). The Goodman Avenue Business District suffers from disinvestment, vacancies and poor regional visibility. The contiguous South Hamilton Avenue Business District, (Hamilton Avenue between Clover Lane and Meis Avenue), is characterized with a mixture of buildings with inconsistent road frontage, parking and access management issues. Several value-oriented businesses built into the front of residential houses exhibit little architectural appeal or interest to a vast majority of modern consumers. The city must adopt an aggressive economic development program to stimulate revitalization of these two adjoining business districts. The *City of North College Hill Business District Study* identifies four possible approaches to Goodman Business District revitalization:
  - Scenario A-1 recommends redesigning the 11.63-acre site that includes the vacant Thriftway/Big Lots for a mixture of flexible land uses. Specifically there is an opportunity to remarket and design the area to incorporate smaller retail spaces, flex office, and light manufacturing buildings. The existing lot could be divided into smaller lots with retail uses concentrated on Hamilton Avenue and flex office and light manufacturing to the rear (south) of the site. This scenario would require demolition of the existing buildings.
  - Scenario A-2 suggests that the site be redeveloped with residential housing. Under the city's current zoning code approximately thirty-five to fifty single family houses could be constructed on the site. To attract more "second-time" homebuyers, (a goal outlined by the Master Plan steering committee), some of the units should have 3-4 bedrooms and 2-3 baths; there is currently a dearth of such housing in the city. There should also be units with elderly-friendly design concepts such as zero steps, ramps for elevation shifts, larger restrooms, solariums and low maintenance materials. Examples of similar housing developments include Mariemont Landing in Columbia Township and Potterhill's Homes in the Mills of Carthage in the city of Cincinnati.
  - Scenario A-3 would maintain the Goodman Business District for retail use and attract of one or two "big box" stores or a collection of shops in a contemporary L-shaped strip mall configuration. As previously noted Goodman Avenue has minimal visibility from West Galbraith Road; as such the city may have to consider vacating Goodman Avenue and re-orienting retail on the more heavily-traveled, higher visibility Galbraith



Road. Another option would be to increase the height of the retail buildings along Goodman Avenue.

- Scenario A-4 considers the inclusion of the 5.62-acre Colonial Tennis, Fitness and Swim Club to the existing Goodman Avenue Business District to create a larger 17.25 acre redevelopment site. As previously noted, this club was recently sold to a new owner who is making major renovations and aggressively marketing new members. The city should meet with the new owner and explore options for including them in a comprehensive redevelopment scenario. The city should also begin planning now to redevelop the 1.7-acre site on South Hamilton Avenue just south of Goodman Avenue that will become vacant when Walgreens relocates north to its new location on Hamilton Avenue.

In addition to the above recommendations from the *City of North College Hill Business District Study*, the Master Plan steering committee offered the additional recommendations for the Goodman Avenue/South Hamilton Avenue Business District:

- If the city chooses not to redevelop Goodman Avenue for residential or light industrial use, they should consider targeting medical offices and complementary retail. There are already medical offices located on Goodman Avenue, and as previously noted, health services are a high growth industry that benefit from proximity to existing hospitals. This area should also be considered for redevelopment as a life sciences campus similar to the Genome Research Institute in the city of Reading, Ohio.
- Understanding that North College Hill is primarily a neighborhood retail market, the city may want to use the Goodman Avenue site to begin attracting destination retail such as a sports/entertainment complex, a high-end specialty grocer or a first class restaurant that will attract patrons from outside the city and region.
- Given the projected demographics of North College Hill and all of near-western Hamilton County, it may also be appropriate to consider the redevelopment of one or more vacant sites into a senior housing complex.
- Regardless of which use scenario is pursued for Goodman Avenue, the redevelopment should be designed and approved through the use of a Planned Unit Development (PUD) District. The city should immediately proceed to include this zoning classification in its zoning code. The unusual layout of the Goodman Avenue Business District lends itself well to a PUD since this particular zoning mechanism offers the city and developer the ability to negotiate a development with maximum design flexibility that is not permitted under conventional zoning. Application of a PUD zoning overlay district would enable the



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city to allow for the development of this area as a whole rather than allowing each parcel to develop separately. Interior circulation, mixed uses, open spaces and design are a few of the elements that can be controlled by the city under a PUD review process.

- The city may want to consider vacating Goodman Avenue to free up maximum acreage for development, and build a new public road linking Hamilton Avenue at Sundale Avenue to West Galbraith Road at Goodman Avenue. This would provide formal access for current businesses and increase the development opportunities for the overall site. Given the high costs associated with reconfiguring roadways and utilities that would be required as part of a redevelopment plan for the Goodman Avenue Business District, the city may want to consider designating the area as a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. TIF allows communities to temporarily divert any additional real property taxes generated by new development or redevelopment to pay for public infrastructure improvements which will benefit the business or developer making the new investment.
- The Goodman Avenue/South Hamilton Avenue Business District has three contiguous vacant and deteriorated buildings for sale on the east side of South Hamilton Avenue that constitute an eyesore at the southern gateway to North College Hill. Redevelopment of these properties should be a high priority for the city; given the high cost to purchase the 0.8-acre site, the city through its Community Improvement Corporation, may need to subsidize the land purchase in order to stimulate a new retail development. This redevelopment should capitalize on the successful commercial revitalization program underway in the neighboring Cincinnati community of College Hill.
- A façade improvement program and Community Reinvestment Area is recommended for the South Hamilton Avenue Business District. Zoning requirements for this area should also encourage a consistent design of facades, frontage, access and landscaping.
- Redevelopment of the 5.5-acre vacant Regency Nursing Home (Policy Area #13) is critical to the revitalization of the contiguous Goodman Avenue/South Hamilton Avenue Business District. Although the steeper terrain of the Regency property prohibits it from being assembled with the Goodman Avenue retail district, if the site is redeveloped with single-family housing, (as recommended earlier in this report), this will provide new patrons for Goodman Avenue retailers.



- **West Galbraith Business District** (Policy Areas #2 and #3). This district will be profoundly impacted by the North College Hill School District’s plans to construct a new consolidated K-12 campus on the site of the existing junior/senior high school in Policy Area #3. These investments will provide a catalyst for redevelopment of the West Galbraith Road Business District by increasing the number of adults and students in the area on a regular basis. The strong regional presence of the Clovernook Center for the Blind & Visually Impaired provides additional pedestrian and vehicular traffic that may support small businesses in the downtown district. The district has a significant number of vacant properties, which may provide opportunities for new sales and services that target these two groups. A good model may be the Buddy Rogers Music store, which draws both local students and regional businesses for music lessons, instrument sales, and other services.

The members of the Master Plan steering committee recommended the following strategies to help revitalize the downtown business district

- Conduct a resident survey to identify desired types of businesses for targeted recruitment, including businesses that serve niche markets with wide trade areas.
- Develop a city square, town center or similar type of gathering place at the intersection of West Galbraith Road and Hamilton Avenue. This area should include urban design elements that promote a welcoming and visually pleasing environment with unique art, open spaces, fountains and landscaping. One possible location for the downtown city square is the block including West Galbraith Road to the north, Goodman Avenue to the south, Hamilton Avenue to the east and Parrish Avenue to the west. A



*Madiera Millennium Plaza, Downtown Madeira*

developer recently showed interest in building a mixed use development on this site with retail and office on the first floor and residential on second floor. The idea is similar to the planning concept of New Urbanism which seeks to rebuild core city, walkable neighborhoods and prevent urban sprawl. Given the city’s dense residential neighborhoods abutting the downtown, there is a strong potential market for quality goods and services in the downtown. The city should market this “close to home” benefit of living near the downtown.



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- Adopt an overlay district and accompanying design guidelines to encourage responsible and attractive new construction and renovation of commercial buildings.
- Evaluate opportunities to acquire the privately-owned alleys behind buildings on the south side of West Galbraith Road. Combining these alleys with existing lots/commercial buildings on West Galbraith Road would provide much-needed depth for commercial redevelopment projects.
- Create additional city public parking lots.
- Develop a wayfinding system for parking and businesses.
- Work with businesses to develop consistent hours of operations.
- Develop a unique “brand” for the district to aid in marketing it to potential shoppers and businesses.
- Offer a low interest façade improvement program or matching grants for commercial property owners making building improvements that meet design criteria.
- Consider forming a Special Improvement District (SID) whereby downtown property owners agree to be assessed for capital improvement projects, marketing and promotion, special event planning and public safety/security. To form a SID the owners of at least 60% of the front footage of all property within the district must petition to form the SID and agree to be assessed to pay for the improvements.
- Permit businesses to use sidewalks for temporary seating or product display.

The *City of North College Hill Business District Study* made three specific recommendations for improving the West Galbraith Road Business District:

- The automotive business that is currently located on West Galbraith Road at Simpson Avenue does not provide a positive first impression into the business district from the west. Ideally this business should be relocated to a more appropriate location in the city and the site redeveloped with more neighborhood-oriented retail and restaurants as is found elsewhere in the business district. An example of an auto-oriented business that was converted into a restaurant can be found in Pleasant Ridge where Donovan's Auto and Tire on Montgomery Road was renovated into the Dubliner Irish Pub.
- If relocating the automotive business is not an option, at a minimum the operations should be screened or their fleets showcased in an attractive manner along the street frontage. Use of landscaping, low masonry walls, and other gateway features would dramatically improve the visual quality of the area and set a more upscale tone for the rest of the business district.



- A Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) should be established to encourage private commercial investment in the district. Under this program property owners are eligible for a 100% abatement up to a ten year term on the value of new investment associated with new construction or renovation. These tax exemptions allow companies to reduce their costs over the short term while they establish their business.
- **West Galbraith Road/Hamilton Avenue Intersection** (Policy Areas #2 & #12). Development of the new Greater Cincinnati Credit Union at the southwest corner of the city’s “100% retail intersection” enhances the public perception of North College Hill. The fact that the credit union was built close to the sidewalk helps maintain the feeling of a small walkable village. It is critical that when the new Walgreens is developed on the northeast corner of the intersection, that planning commission and council pay particular attention to the scale and style of the building, encouraging a New Urbanism approach to development rather than a default suburban design.

The *City of North College Hill Business District Study* identified two related strategies for improving the intersection. Scenario B-1 states that the intersection should maintain a small village feel, and notes that any improvements to parking or buildings should be designed to reinforce this character. The study particularly identifies the Kemper Professional Building as an existing building that has an appropriate scale and orientation. The city should encourage continued use of zero lot lines, decorative signage, landscaping, awnings and parking orientation that can be used to display the prestige of the location and reinforce the overall community character.

Scenario B-2 of the *City of North College Hill Business District Study* recommends that street furniture and landscaping be incorporated to promote pedestrian safety during high volume traffic hours such as when school opens and closes.

As recommended for the West Galbraith Road Business District an overlay district with architectural guidelines and a review process that extends beyond conventional zoning should be established to protect the architectural integrity of the intersection.



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- **Pippin Road Business District (Policy Areas #9).** Given the proximity of this business district to Mercy Franciscan Hospital, there is great potential to redevelop the area as a medical office corridor. The city should communicate with the two major landowners in the district, namely the owner of Lakeridge Hall/Lake Nina Restaurant and the owner of the Lakeridge Villa Nursing Home, to determine their future plans for their respective facilities. As opportunities arise for redevelopment of these properties, the city should undertake a targeted business marketing program to attract health related businesses.

### Image Transformation and Community Branding

The fifth highest priority ranked in the *North College Hill NGT Economic Development Plan* was image enhancement through marketing and promotion.<sup>18</sup> This priority was also identified in the *City of North College Hill Business District Study* which surveyed North College Hill business owners and local developers to determine their perceptions of North College Hill.

The city should develop a program to create and project a new and strong image for the city that communicates to residents and others outside the community what makes North College Hill different from other destination places and economic development competitors. This brand strategy should include the following components:

- A **brand equity inventory** in which an analysis is done to determine how North College Hill differentiates itself from its competitors based on its human, physical, cultural, heritage and relationship “equity”, e.g., history, existing businesses or retail niches, landmarks, architecture, public space, monuments, or natural features.
- A **competitive analysis** in which the tone and strength of competitor positioning strategies, key messages and surrounding contextual support are weighed to determine what brand position North College Hill may uniquely claim within the mind of the public.
- A **unifying vision**, (based on the brand strategy) that is created by and championed by a partnership of the key stakeholders who lead the development and management of the brand.
- A **detailed strategy** to realize the vision and implement the brand including a slogan that will be incorporated into city literature, letter head, streetscaping, and economic development and promotional programs.
- A set of **funded actions** to exemplify the changes taking place and the progress towards the vision.

<sup>18</sup> Appendix A: (5. Image Enhancement Through Marketing and Promotion)



- A **strategy for changed behavior** by stakeholders, residents, workers and employers which exemplifies the new ways in which North College Hill is operating.
- **Performance measurements** designed to assess the success of the branding campaign.

The ultimate goal of the brand strategy is to identify programs and the identity that will enable the city to increase its economic development performance and increase its quality of life. This brand strategy should ultimately be incorporated into streetscaping, economic development, and marketing/advertising programs to produce a reputation that is positively memorable, attractive, unique, sustainable and reinforced and enriched by every act of communication between the city and the outside world.

When developing a brand strategy, the city should consider the following observations made by businesses and developers in surveys conducted as part of the *City of North College Hill Business District Study*:

Business Owners Survey – Easy access, central location, and proximity to home were the most commonly cited benefits of being located in North College Hill. These “close to home” assets should be highlighted in the city’s marketing initiatives, particularly in light of the increasing cost of gasoline. The greatest disadvantages to doing business in North College Hill mentioned were traffic, crime and the general image of the community; the city should work to overcome these negative perceptions as part of its comprehensive marketing and targeted business recruitment programs.

Developer Surveys – Phone interviews with several local developers produced the following positive perceptions about North College Hill:

- Viewed as a typical west-side Hamilton County community with active citizens who have successfully maintained the character of their city.
- Has an historic neighborhood business district that is in the process of reinventing itself.
- Boasts great access.
- Has done an excellent job replacing aged infrastructure.
- Supports many strong “mom and pop” businesses and several quality new developments.
- Has attractive landscaping (except along Hamilton Avenue south of West Galbraith Road).
- Is primarily perceived as a retail-oriented location targeting moderate income “savers”.



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Building and managing a successful branding and image for the city of North College Hill must involve a unifying vision and strategy shared by all the key stakeholders, (people, companies, organizations and institutions), and an effective leadership from its champions and advocates. These include the city council, residents, representatives of the private and community sectors, the media and others whose resources may be required to make a reality of the vision. This partnership must provide effective leadership in the community to create a vision for North College Hill's future that commands widespread support for a unifying program to inspire consistent and on-brand behavior by local residents, workers and employers.

Although a professional public relations firm should be commissioned through a public/ private initiative to help create the brand strategy, there should also be community-based participation such as a city-wide logo competition or participation by local high school art and design classes.

In addition to a brand strategy, the NGT participants identified the following marketing and communication tools to improve the city's image:

- Sponsor periodic luncheons with area realtors, bankers and commercial and office developers to seek their input on how to more effectively market North College Hill to businesses and customers.
- Add an economic development page to the city's web site that provides relevant business information to prospective companies and provides them a quick "snap shot" of the community.
- Generate positive news articles on North College Hill in local newspapers.
- Identify unique or niche retail and service offerings that attract visitors or patrons from both within and outside the city. These might include the Clovernook Country Club, Burnett Ridge Winery, the Clovernook Home for the Blind, Buddy Rogers Music, and the North College Hill Bakery. Market these destination businesses as part of the city's brand equity.
- Once specific businesses have been identified for targeted marketing, a city prospectus should be prepared which identifies the features required by the targeted businesses. The city prospectus serves much like a firm prospectus; it allows the buyer to know what the community is offering and what opportunities are available. The prospectus should describe the community assets and business opportunities in terms of industrial, office and retail market potentials, as well as community trends over the past few years and expected future trends in industrial, office and retail markets.
- The city and North College Hill Business Association should evaluate existing special events to decide whether they should be continued and whether additional special events highlighting different themes should be introduced. For example, there has been some interest in introducing a "Taste of North College Hill" festival and a folk festival to the city's special events portfolio. Once the special events calendar is established, a detailed



budget should be outlined for each event. Given the cost associated with special events and the city's limited budget, it will likely be necessary to secure business sponsorships for special events.

- Joint multi-media advertising is another option for promoting the retail offerings and amenities that North College Hill has to offer. Although radio and TV advertising is generally considered cost-prohibitive for small individual retailers, by pooling their marketing dollars, (particularly through a Special Improvement District), merchants could purchase radio and TV ads. Also, if a special promotion sponsored by the merchants has general community appeal, (e.g., a sidewalk sale or a parade), the radio and TV stations may agree to feature the event as part of their news broadcast or as a community service.

### ***Policy Areas Affected by this Plan Element Include:***

- All policy areas are affected by this plan element. A prioritized system of branding and image transformation needs to be completed so that focused efforts are created.

### **Improve School and City Services and Facilities**

The *North College Hill NGT Economic Development Plan* prioritized the need to improve city and school facilities and services. Below are recommendations made in the NGT report and validated by the Master Plan steering committee relative to attaining this goal.

#### **School Facilities and Services**

A community's economic stability and overall quality of life is largely dependent on the public perception of the local public and private school systems. In fact, schools are always an important consideration when businesses and residents are making investment decisions. City and school officials must work together to enhance the real and perceived reputation of the North College Hill City Schools and continue to nurture a good working relationship between the city and schools.

Quality of schools is generally judged by physical facilities and academic achievements. North College Hill Schools have made notable strides in these two areas. In November 2007 residents approved a 3.99 mill bond issue to pay a portion of the district's local share of construction costs for new school buildings housing grades K-12 that will be consolidated on a single campus in Policy Areas #2 and 3 in the downtown. The junior high and high school buildings will be demolished and the new middle school and high school will be built on that site. Goodman Elementary School will become a central office and Becker





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Elementary and Clovernook Elementary will be closed while the school board determines their future use.

In addition to improving its physical facilities, the North College Hill Schools have also validated continuous improvement through several state of Ohio performance benchmarks. During the 2006/2007 school year Ohio's Accountability System showed that achievement goals in the North College Hill School District were met for all groups in reading and math. Reading scores increased by 5% over the previous school year and math scores increased by 9.4% over the previous year. Likewise only 30% of school district in Ohio currently meets federal accountability standards and North College Hill School District is one of these.

The NGT Study also recommended that the city and schools continue to facilitate a positive working relationship. A step in this direction was the establishment in October 2006 of the North College Hill City Council/School Board Committee. This committee, comprised of the mayor, school superintendent, students, the high school principal, and representatives of city council and the school board, meets regularly to identify and address the major issues facing the schools and city. The group is also committed to developing programs for enhancing the public perception of the two entities. Accomplishments include development of a policy for encouraging positive interaction between students and businesses at lunch time and dismissal; planned after-school and summer programs for students; re-introduction of the student government day at city council; and opportunities for student internships. The school superintendent's weekly emails to businesses and city officials also help improve communication between the schools and the public.

### **City Services & Facilities (Park and Recreation & Public Safety)**

Businesses interviewed during the city's Business Retention & Expansion (R&E) Program were generally happy with city services with two notable exceptions: 1) the need to improve park and recreation facilities and programs, and; 2) the need to increase manpower and training for the police and fire departments.

Both the NGT participants and member of the Master Plan steering committee expressed a strong desire to expand park and recreation programs and facilities. Although there are no grants available for financing recreation programs, the NGT Report identified three state grants for acquisition, development and rehabilitation of park and recreation facilities<sup>19</sup>. The city should leverage limited local funds with these grant funds to help finance expansion and renovation of existing park facilities.

Another high priority identified by the NGT participants and Master Plan steering committee members was to provide the additional human and financial resources required to reinforce public safety to foster and maintain a safe community.

<sup>19</sup> North College Hill Nominal Group Technique, page 21.



Businesses surveyed under the R&E Program noted the need for additional police officers and the need for more advanced training of EMS officers.

Due to overcrowded conditions at the Hamilton County Jail, the city recently contracted with Clinton County for an alternate incarceration facility for individuals who fail to pay required fines in municipal court. Ideally this will generate additional revenues that can be used for much needed services such as public safety personnel. The city should pursue the grant opportunities outlined in the NGT Report for hiring new police personnel<sup>20</sup>.

Another concern identified by businesses during the R&E Program is the need for more advanced training of EMS officers so that they do not merely serve as a “transport service” for residents. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that the fire department has a complement of four personnel on duty at any given time; thus the city cannot always guarantee that an advanced EMS officer will be on duty. The city should investigate a training grant available through the Ohio Department of Public Safety that offsets the cost of training EMS personnel.

The Master Plan steering committee underscored the need for better municipal financial planning and accountability. Passage of a new city charter on November 6, 2007 has paved the way for a more efficient and effective form of government that conforms to the city’s unique needs by giving residents a home-rule government structure. Under the charter amendment the appointed position of finance director with a requirement of education and experience was created to replace the elected positions of auditor and treasurer. The city recently adopted a new accounting software package that will allow the finance director to provide administration and council a thorough and accurate daily accounting of expenses and revenues. The charter amendment also changed the position of safety-service director to city administrator with all departments directly reporting to the administrator. These changes will give the city a better understanding of the amount of revenues that need to be generated through economic development in order to meet expenses.

*Policy Areas Affected by this Plan Element Include:*

- **Schools** - All policy areas affected by this plan element. Good schools beget good communities by improving public image and increasing residential property values. Three policy areas will be directly impacted by the school district’s plans to build a consolidated campus. The proximity of the new school buildings to the downtown commercial district (Policy Area #2) will have a positive and significant “spill over” effect on the vitality of the downtown by generating new customers (students, teachers and parents) for downtown businesses. Closing of Becker Elementary School in

<sup>20</sup> North College Hill Nominal Group Technique, page 22-23.

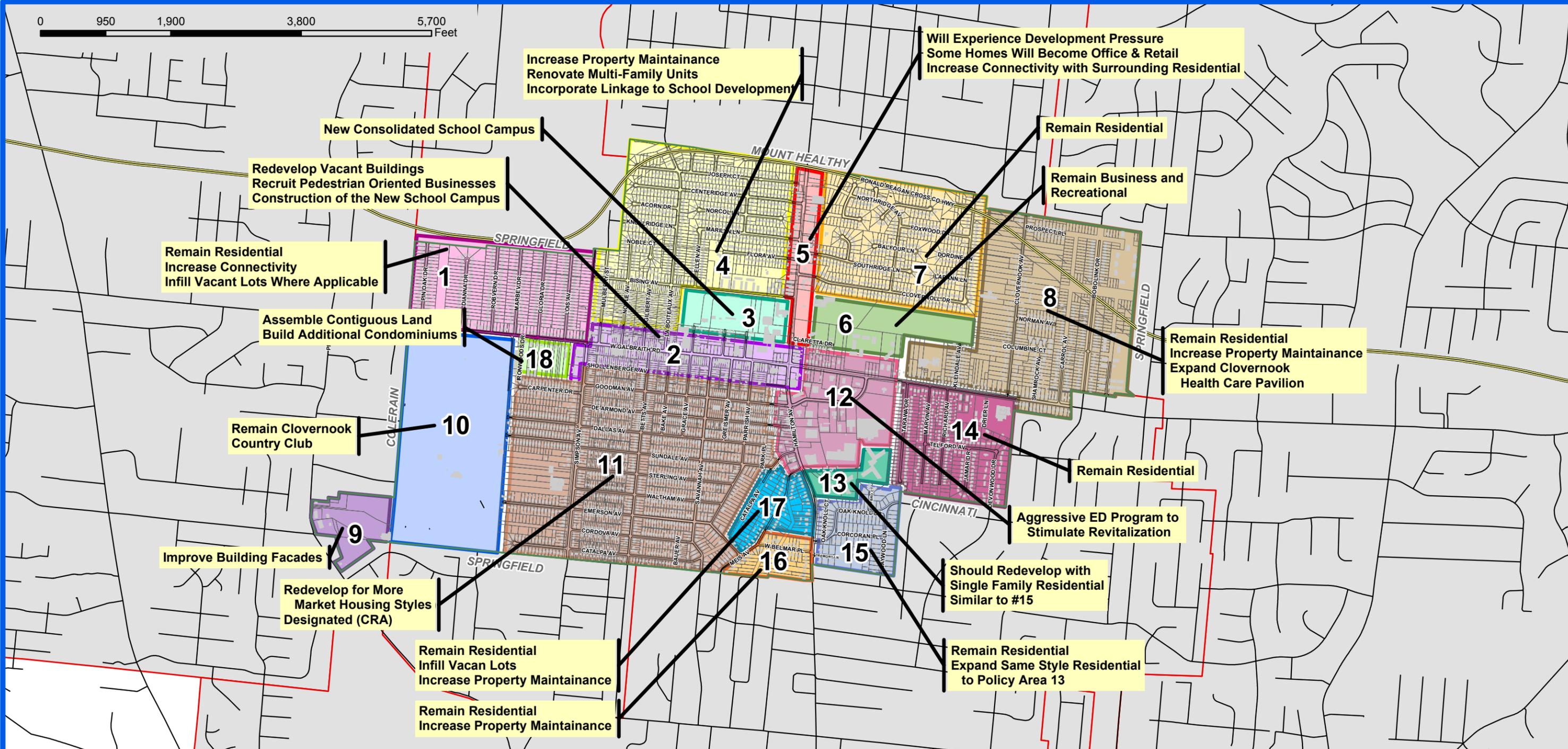


## Plan Elements

Policy Area #11 and Clovernook Elementary School in Policy Area #8 provide opportunities to facilitate adaptive reuse of these properties for alternative uses. For example, Becker Elementary School has the potential for expanding both public and private recreational uses. Given its frontage on West Galbraith Road, Clovernook Elementary School has potential for commercial or office redevelopment. The city and schools should cooperate to develop a plan for the adaptive reuse of these properties.

- **City Services** – All policy areas affected by this plan element. If a city has a reputation for delivering quality and efficient public services, that community will be attractive to residents and businesses.

During the R&E interviews businesses echoed the sentiments of participants in the NGT Study and the Master Plan steering committee, namely the need to increase police presence and safety in the West Galbraith Road Commercial District (Policy Area #2). Businesses in this retail district may want to establish a Special Improvement District (SID) to raise funds for projects that would increase safety in the retail district, e.g., hiring an additional police officer to maintain a stronger presence in the district during key business hours, and increase lighting in the district.



## Planning Policy Areas Future Land Use



Figure 6

### Legend

- North College Hill Boundary
- Future Land Uses
- Buildings
- Planning Policy Area

# Comprehensive Plan North College Hill, OH



# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Plan Elements





Policy Area	Existing Character and Planning Issues	Future Character and Potential Issues	Possible Planning Strategy
City Wide	<p>Proper Amount of Revenue to Provide NCH's Citizens with the Services they Deserve</p> <p>Increase the Number of Neighborhood Events</p> <p>Market the NCH City Schools to Families with School Age Children</p> <p>Update and Upgrade Codes and Ordinances</p> <p>Increase Police Protection</p> <p>Identify Areas for Patio Homes for Seniors Who Want to Stay in NCH (one story)</p> <p>Increase Code Enforcement</p> <p>Establish Neighborhood Resident Association to Increase Community Awareness/Pride</p> <p>Use Programs Like "Adopt a Block" to Engage Neighbors in Revitalization</p> <p>Community Concerns Group Does "Adopt a Park" Program</p> <p>Community Concerns Group Gives Monthly "Certificate of Pride" Awards</p> <p>Opportunity to have a Re-hab - ARAMA (Similar to Home Arama)</p> <p>NCH Version of HIP Program</p> <p>Community Reinvestment Act</p> <p>Clean Up Streets/Sidewalks/Public Areas</p> <p>Promote our Excellent / Affordable Housing and Make it Prime Marketing</p> <p>Enhance Entry Points into NCH</p> <p>Increase Homeownership</p> <p>Conflict Between City and Schools Regarding Usage and Maintenance of Recreational Facilities</p>		
1	<p>Single Family Residential Neighborhood - Cape Cod Style Homes</p> <p>Tree Lined Cul-de-sacs</p> <p>Adjacent to Clovernook Country Club</p> <p>Offers Affordable Well Constructed Starter Homes (Find Residents for 2nd Tier)</p> <p>Market the Homes and Redevelop</p> <p>Maintain Greenspace</p> <p>Give Those With Starter Homes Something To Purchase - Second Home in NCH</p> <p>Land Available to Develop or Create Another Neighborhood Park</p>	<p>Maintain / Enhance Small Town Charm (Market as NCH Prototype)</p> <p>Property Maintenance</p> <p>Create a Potential Walkway Through the Neighborhood Making a Connection with the School</p>	<p>Create a Major Gateway for the City in This Area</p> <p>Connect Neighborhood to Other Neighborhoods (e.g. Policy Area 4)</p> <p>Start Buy Local Program</p> <p>Build High End Condos for Country Club</p> <p>Have CHP and Realtors Target Residents for Relocating to 2nd Tier Housing</p>
2	<p>Minimal Off Street Parking</p> <p>Property That is in Foreclosure and Vacant Buildings</p> <p>Lack of Support from NCH Residents</p> <p>Need to Increase Goods / Services</p> <p>Lacking a Sense of Pride / Community</p> <p>No Physical Depth of Properties (Lot Size)</p> <p>Alleys are in Bad Condition</p> <p>Inconsistent Hours of Operation</p> <p>St. Margret Mary Closing</p> <p>Impact of Kids on Business District (After School) - Can Hurt Businesses</p>	<p>Keep Pedestrian Friendly - Play Off of the Walkability</p> <p>Target Types of Businesses Desired (Conduct a Resident Survey First)</p> <p>Make it More Comfortable / Cozy / Inviting</p> <p>Reuse of St. Margret Mary</p> <p>Make an Attractive City Square at the Corner of Galbraith and Hamilton</p> <p>Think of a "niche" Market Idea</p> <p>Opportunity for a Community Center - Something for the Youth to do</p> <p>Capitalize on Student Population</p>	<p>Redevelop Block by Block as Properties Become Available (Abandon Alleys to Get More Mass?)</p> <p>Create City Parking Lots</p> <p>Attract Businesses That Spin Off Each Other</p> <p>Target More Diverse Businesses &amp; Specialty Shops</p> <p>Update Streetscape - Include Wayfinding</p> <p>"Brand" NCH Business District</p> <p>Bring in Businesses that Would Work Well with Clovernook Center for the Blind</p> <p>Consistent Hours of Operation for Businesses</p> <p>Create a Business and Building Inventory</p> <p>Promote NCH "Landmarks" (e.g. Bakery, Smitty's, etc.) - Create a Buy Local Program</p> <p>Market Burnett Ridge Winery</p> <p>Streetscape Program (e.g. awnings, more attractive window displays, building facades, etc)</p> <p>Due to the Lack of Lot Depth - Explore Expansion Upward (Increasing Heights of the Buildings)</p> <p>Create A Façade Improvement Program</p> <p>More Sidewalk Presence from Businesses - Outdoor Seating Areas, etc.</p> <p>Welcome Basket for New Residents Featuring NCH Businesses</p> <p>Potential to Buy Homes to Expand the Alleys to Increase Depth</p> <p>Fill Vacancies</p>
3	<p>Not Visually Pleasing</p> <p>Scattered Sites</p> <p>Lack of Parking</p> <p>Pool is Outdated - Problems with Operation</p> <p>Status of Property Next To City Hall (Grace Ave)</p> <p>Traffic Flow For the Schools</p> <p>Underground Streams &amp; Old Dump Will Impact Development (Environmental Impact Study)</p>	<p>New Build / Consolidation Program</p> <p>Redevelop as "Town Center" and "One-Stop Shop"</p> <p>More Greenspace - Pocket Parks</p> <p>Signage / Wayfinding</p> <p>Expand School Property to East</p> <p>Commercial Property Ties</p>	<p>Shared Parking - School / City</p> <p>City to Capitalize CIC For Education Projects</p> <p>Add Pedestrian Connections from School / City Hall to Neighborhoods</p> <p>Capitalize on Student Population (1500 Potential Patrons)</p> <p>Redevelop Bus Stops - More Up-Scale</p> <p>Create a Recreational and Educational Hub</p>
4	<p>Primarily Single Family Dwelling Units</p> <p>Lack of Dedicated Green Space</p> <p>Concern for Foreclosure Rate</p>	<p>Primarily Single Family Dwelling Units with Medium Density</p> <p>Green Space</p> <p>Enhance Transition from Residential to Business</p> <p>Connection to the Schools</p>	<p>Create More Neighborhood Parks</p> <p>Buffer Zones</p> <p>Improve Street Lighting</p> <p>Create Pedestrian Access Points - and Enhance the Existing Walkways</p>
5	<p>Mixed Use</p> <p>Business / Multi-Family</p> <p>Lack of Compatible Business Types</p> <p>Lack of Cohesive Land / Building Mass</p> <p>Lack of Public Parking</p> <p>Lack of Pedestrian Accessibility</p>	<p>Northern Gateway to the City</p> <p>Synergy Between &amp; Among Businesses</p> <p>Congregate Business &amp; Parking facilities While Maximizing Green Space</p> <p>Keep the Area at the Kroger and Perkins Clean and Attractive</p>	<p>Consolidate Business Sites with Planned Green Space</p> <p>Strengthen Pedestrian Accessibility By Creation of Walk / Bike Access Trails From Surrounding Neighborhoods</p> <p>Develop Thoroughfare Plan For Traffic Management</p> <p>Widen Business Corridor</p> <p>Create Physical "Gateway" i.e. Pedestrian Bridge From East to West</p> <p>Better Control of Kroger Carts</p> <p>Market NCH Schools to Visitors Passing Through</p>
6	<p>Light Industrial</p> <p>Green Space</p> <p>Underutilization of Land</p> <p>Accessibility is an Issue</p>	<p>Recreational / Athletic Center &amp; Facilities</p> <p>Maintain Green Area</p> <p>Increase Accessibility &amp; Parking</p>	<p>"In Perpetuity" Green Zoning</p> <p>Engage Cooperative Efforts with School Board</p> <p>Possible Tours of the Clovernook Center For the Blind</p> <p>Provide a Safe and Convenient Link to the Schools - Pedestrian Bridge</p>
7	<p>Moderate Income Residential - Cape Cod Style</p> <p>Moderate Property Value</p> <p>One Small Park</p> <p>No Planning Issues - Remains Steady</p> <p>Commercial Code Enforcement - Kroger's</p>	<p>Turn over to Starter Homes</p> <p>Lack of Connective Issues</p>	<p>Children Attend Schools - Short Walk- Assistance in Crossings Needed</p> <p>Potential for a Pedestrian Bridge @ Bising</p> <p>Increase in Recreation Commission Taking a Role in Assisting More Regular Neighborhood Events</p>



Policy Area	Existing Character and Planning Issues	Future Character and Potential Issues	Possible Planning Strategy
8	Residential Proportion of Apartment Buildings Low to Moderate Income and Proportion value High Number of Rental / Subsidized Housing Safety & Property Maintenance Issues New Construction in the Area Columbine & Ashmore Areas Clovernook Medical Center	Focus on W. Galbraith Parcels as City Entrance Potential Expansion of Health Care Facility	Hope STEP Program Reinstated Increase Police Presence Possibility of City Incentives for Residential Along W. Galbraith Local City HIP Program
9	Retail, Office, Recreation and a Health Care Facility Visually Attractive Area Hodge Podge Development Developed for these Entities	Use Probably Remains the Same Potential Upgrade in the "Appearance" of Properties No One Knows it is in NCH	Work at Economic Development When Space Becomes Available Needs Identifying Signage Campus Style Office Possibilities Use the Lake as an Initiative for Bringing Businesses In Outpatient / Urgent Care Facility Possibility - Good Proximity to the Hospital
10	Membership is Costly	Lower Membership	Increase the Cooperation Between the City and the Country Club Exterior Property Enhancements (Fencing) NCH Day at the Country Club for Residents
11	Declining Residential Many Poorly Maintained Homes Broken Pavement Young Families Aging Housing Today's Homebuyers are Not Looking For This Style Alleys are in Bad Condition Small Lots (Cramped) Quiet and Not Busy (Slow Traffic Pace) Parks are Plain and Unattractive High Number of Rentals	Clean, Attractive, Well Maintained Housing Inviting Neighborhood Parks Develop Historic Area of NCH Improve Street Lighting Street Upgrades Empty Becker School (Future)	Identify Streets or Blocks for Potential Redevelopment (Residential and Business) Identify Streets or Blocks with Higher Owner Occupied Rates for Renewal & Renovation Use All Possible Legal Leverage to Eradicate Slum-Lords Community Fundraising Efforts for Parks Research Grants to Maintain Character of the Area Encourage / Incentives for Home Ownership Citywide Summer-long Home Renovation/Beautification Plant More Trees to Bring Back Tree Lined Streets Eliminate Business Rehab into Multi-Tenant Dwellings
12	Commercial & Industrial - Sports Complex (Services Ext. Areas) Large Vacancy Rate = Vandalism Pot Holes and Easement Issues	Professional Office Space Potential - Complex Entertainment / Amenities - Complex Access Management	New Development with Potential Assistance From the City Leverage College Hill Development Create New Infrastructure Off Catalpa Could Be a PUD Site Opportunity to Assemble Properties (CIC?) to Aid Redevelopment Potentially Redevelop Vacant Building to Senior Living - 1 Level
13	Vacant Nursing Home Beautiful Wooded Lots & Lake Crime and Vandalism	Infill Housing - Provide More Opportunities for Existing Residents to Stay Park and Open Space area With Walking Path & Natural Area	Create a Continuation of The Housing Style of Policy Area 15 Use Land To Fullest Potential and Benefit for NCH Maintain Green Space in Redevelopment Could Include a Mixture of Housing Types
14	Average - Upscale Housing Primarily Residential	Most Effected by Area 8 - Contingent Upon Connection Movement of Clovernook School	Make Certain That There Is High Concentrated Code Enforcement Branding of Neighborhoods
15	Larger Homes - Larger Lots - Less Density Single Family - Two Family - Four Unit (Purpose Built Rentals - Not Conversion)	Similar with Some Improvements / Upgrades Potential Issue is "Spillover" - Which Way	Comprehensive Surveillance Through Periodic Inspections Concentrated Code Enforcement
16	Middle Between Policy Areas 11 & 15 Shares Similar Characteristics with Policy Area 7 Varying Price Ranges	Maintain the Integrity and Property Values	Enforce Property Maintenance Code
17	Small Houses and Lots Substantial Units in Need of Rehabilitation & Maintenance	Infill of Market-Rate Housing on Vacant Land Should Strive to Exhibit Characteristics Similar to Policy Area #16	Aggressive Property Maintenance Code Enforcement Revitalize the Retail Corridor to Increase Stability of the Neighborhood
18	Mixture of Single and Multi-Family Housing Deep Lots	Additional High End Condominiums	Investigate Opportunities for Redevelopment with Market-Rate Housing



### Implementation

The creation of this Comprehensive Plan has allowed the city of North College Hill to develop a shared and accepted vision for its future and determine the actions necessary to achieve this vision. This Plan, however, is but the first step toward maintaining, building, and enhancing the both the existing and potential new residential areas and business districts as well as community pride. Any plan is only made effective through implementation and the desire and will of the community leaders and residents. Implementation may require the adoption of new tools, and/or administrative methods not previously used in the city. The Comprehensive Plan articulates the goals of the city, explains the basis for those goals, and set out strategies, policies and directions in a general fashion.

A matrix (**Table 7**) has been created to facilitate the implementation process of The Plan. The implementation matrix outlines each plan element and action steps necessary to accomplish each element. A time frame for when each action plan should begin and end, who has the lead role, who should help facilitate, and how the city can pay for each action plan are also included in the matrix.

The Plan has identified the planning issues that North College Hill's citizens and stakeholders believe are necessary to the success of the city's future. The recommendations presented in the Plan and in **Table 7** represent ideal situations, and as each recommendation is pursued, issues such as ownership, acquisition, financing, and timing will determine the practicality and feasibility of implementation. Likewise, specific recommendations may need to be adjusted during the implementation process, as feasibility analyses and financing scenarios are completed and other new information comes to light.

This Plan represents a 10-15 year visioning document that provides guidance, but is dynamic. Over the next 15 years, the city will continue to work towards the overall vision and goals of this Plan and may have accomplished many of the specific planning strategies identified for the Planning Areas. In addition to the recommendations for the Planning Areas and in **Table 7**, the city may find it beneficial to proactively manage its future to anticipate and address needed Plan or zoning revisions before such effort becomes reactive. Some effective strategies for managing this planning effort are:

- Reexamine the Comprehensive Plan on an annual basis to determine if changes or modifications are needed or if additional issues that were not apparent during this planning process need to be considered. The steering committee should be reconvened for this effort.



## Implementation

- Where applicable, evaluate the rezoning of property that may need to occur in light of any land use changes identified in this Plan. This task should be undertaken by the Planning Commission and City Council shortly after the adoption of the Plan.
- Revise the North College Hill Zoning Code to reflect any recommended changes in land use or land use character as identified in this Plan. This may include the development of new zoning districts or a modification of text for particular sections so that this plan can be easily and proactively implemented.



**Table 7: Implementation Matrix**

Plan Element	Action Steps	Applicable Policy Areas	Time Frame (When to begin and/or finish)	Who should take the lead?
<b>Maintain and Enhance Existing Housing Stock</b>	Increase Homeownership	Policy Areas: 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	Currently and Ongoing	City Administration and Staff
	Cincinnati Housing Partners, Inc. (CHP) Program	Policy Areas: 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	Currently and Ongoing (5 Houses Per Year)	City Administration and Staff
	Investigate Possible Partnerships with Organizations that Promote Homeownership	Policy Areas: 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	Begin Research As Soon As Possible	City Administration and Staff
	Create Strong and Proud Neighborhood Identities	Policy Areas: 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	Begin All Branding Efforts Within the First Year	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Diversify the City's Housing Stock to Include a Variety of Options (sizes, types, costs)	Policy Areas: 1, 4, 7, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18	Coordinate Efforts with Developers After the Zoning Code is Updated	Economic Development Coordinator
<b>Business District Revitalization</b>	Update the Existing Zoning Code to Reflect the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and Diagnostic Memo	Entire City	As Soon As Possible After the Plan Adoption	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Create A PUD Overlay District in the Goodman Business District	Policy Area 12	Would Be Included With The Zoning Code Update	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Utilize Large Vacant Commercial Buildings as Mixed Use (including retail office & light manufacturing)	Policy Area 12	Coordinate Efforts with Developers After the Zoning Code is Updated	Economic Development Coordinator
	Include Residential Housing in the Redevelopment of Large Vacant Commercial Buildings	Policy Area 2	Coordinate Efforts with Developers After the Zoning Code is Updated	Economic Development Coordinator
	Maintain a Small Village Feel	Policy Area 2	Ongoing	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Incorporate Street Furniture and Landscaping to Provide for Increased Pedestrian Safety (Student Traffic)	Policy Area 2	Can Be Implemented Immediately to Give the Community a Sense of Progress	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Conduct a Traffic Study at the Intersection of Hamilton Ave. and Galbraith Road	Policy Area 2	Within the First 6 Months After the Plan Adoption	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Develop a Unique but Coordinated District Identity and Signage	Policy Areas: 2, 5, 9, 12	Begin All Branding Efforts Within the First Year	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Market the Business Districts	Policy Areas: 2, 5, 12	Immediately After the Plan Adoption	Economic Development Coordinator
	Develop a Strategy for Proactive Business Retention	Policy Areas: 2, 5, 9, 12	Currently and Ongoing	Economic Development Coordinator
	Develop a Strategy for Proactive Business Recruitment	Policy Areas: 2, 5, 9, 12	Immediately After the Plan Adoption	Economic Development Coordinator
	Business District Streetscape Enhancements	Policy Areas: 2, 5, 9, 12	Can Be Implemented Immediately After the Branding Strategy is Completed to Give the Community a Sense of Progress	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Include Bicycle Racks in the Business Districts	Policy Areas: 2, 5, 9, 12	Can Be Implemented Immediately to Give the Community a Sense of Progress	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Attract Moderately Priced Sit-Down Restaurants	Policy Areas: 2,5,9, 12	Begin All Branding Efforts Within the First Year	Economic Development Coordinator
Conduct an Access Management Study Along the Business District Corridors to Identify Problem Areas and New Guidelines	Policy Areas: 2, 5, 9, 12	Should Be Done in Conjunction with the Zoning Code Update to Include New Guidelines	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff	
<b>Image Transformation and Community Branding</b>	Conduct a "Branding" Strategy for the City of North College Hill	Entire City	Begin All Branding Efforts Within the First Year	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Update the City's Website to Reflect the Results of the Branding Strategy	Entire City	Immediately After the Branding Study is Completed	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Add an Economic Development Page to the City's Website	Entire City	Immediately After the Branding Study is Completed	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Highlight the Opportunities for the City with the Formation of the City Charter and Commission	Entire City	Immediately After the Branding Study is Completed	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
	Build Gateways that Reflect the Results of the Branding Study	All Major Entry Points	Immediately After the Branding Study is Completed	External Consultants and/or City Administration and Staff
<b>School System, Services, and Facilities</b>	Upgrade and Expand Existing Park and Recreational Facilities	Entire City	Immediately After the Plan Adoption	City Administration and Staff
	Reinforce Public Safety to Foster and Maintain a Safe Community	Entire City	Immediately After the Plan Adoption	City Administration and Staff
	Advance the Training of EMS Officers	Entire City	Within the First Year After the Plan Adoption	City Administration and Staff
	Place a Focus on the Improvement and Perception of the School District	Entire City	Begin in Conjunction with Funding Campaigns for the School District Redevelopment Project	School Board, City Administration and Staff, and Economic Development Coordinator
	City and School District Should Continue to Facilitate a Positive Working Relationship	Entire City	Immediately After the Plan Adoption	School Board, City Administration and Staff, and Economic Development Coordinator





**Appendix A – Zoning Code Diagnostics Memorandum**

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Appendix A



## ***Zoning Code Diagnostics Memorandum***

**Date:** 23 April 2007  
**To:** City of North College Hill  
**From:** Paul A. Culter, AICP  
**Subject:** Initial Review of the North College Hill Zoning Code

The following memorandum serves to highlight comments derived from the initial review of the North College Zoning Code. Comments are referenced by Chapter and, where applicable, by Section and Subsection. The purpose of this review is to identify where strengths or weaknesses exist in the legal document that enforces land use in the City.

### **General Comments**

1. The existing Code does not include graphics which are essential in making this document user friendly. Graphics help to further clarify the standards and regulations within the City.
2. The existing Code should be reformatted to fit a more logical flow with respect to the way Zoning Codes are established. For example, Chapter 1123, Purpose and Interpretation, should be combined into a new “General Provisions” Chapter and should be the first Chapter of the Zoning Code. This is typically followed by Definitions, Districts Established, Districts, etc.
3. Regulations that should be included in the Ordinance are not present. For example, regulations on adult or sexually oriented businesses should be incorporated in the Ordinance unless established elsewhere in the City’s codified ordinances.
4. Each district should be freestanding in nature. This means that each zoning district should incorporate, as a minimum, the following sections to reduce cross referencing mistakes and to make the document user friendly: Purpose Statement, Permitted Principal Uses, Permitted Accessory Uses, Permitted Conditional Uses, and Lot Development Standards (minimum lot size, yard setbacks, maximum lot coverage, and maximum height for principal and accessory structures). Specific sections for signage and parking requirements can be cited. The existing document cross-references uses (e.g. the R-3 district states under Principal Permitted Uses “R-2 Uses. Any use permitted and as regulated in the R-2 district except as modified herein.” Such cross-referencing



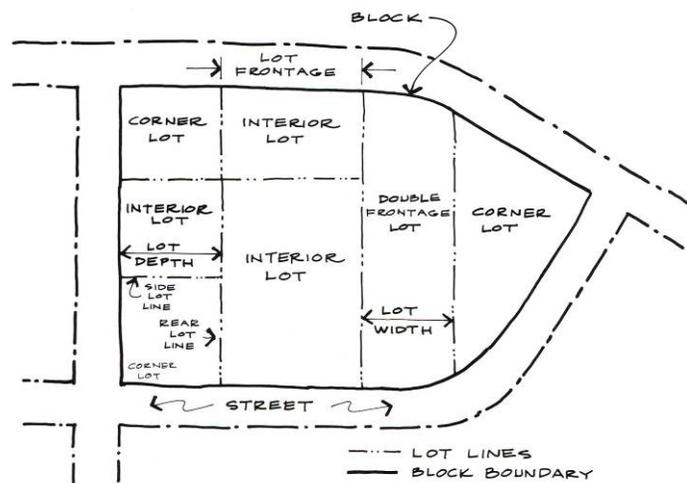
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becomes dangerous in that if a regulation is changed, it may have unintended consequences in other districts.

5. Many Zoning Ordinances are using more descriptive abbreviations for zoning districts. For example, all of the residential districts are identified as “residential districts”. We would recommend “R-LD” Residential Low Density; “R-MD” Residential Medium Density; “R-HD” Residential High Density, “B-L” Business Local; “B-G” Business General; etc..
6. Consider including regulations for overlay districts where there may be a need for design guidelines or creating a cohesive design atmosphere (e.g. business district on Galbraith Road).
7. Be consistent in the application of terms. In some cases, the document is referred to as the “Zoning Code” in other instances, it is referred to as the “Zoning Ordinance”.

**Chapter 1121 – Definitions**

1. Confirm that all words and terms defined are used in the Zoning Code and that all words and terms that are used in the Zoning Code are defined that need to be defined.
2. Consider including graphics, where necessary, to further explain a definition. For example, this graphic could be included with the definition of “Lot”.



3. Confirm that all definitions conform to the definitions of the State or Federal regulations, where applicable. For example, the current definition of Family was found to be illegal in a court of law when differentiating between those married and related by blood and those that are not. Also, the definition of Mobile Home needs to be updated based on the changes to law several years ago in comparing mobile homes, industrialized units and manufactured housing.



4. Consider placing similar terms/uses for ease of comparison. For example, consider grouping “Use”, “Use, Accessory”, “Use Permitted” and “Use, Conditional” together for comparative purposes.

### **Chapter 1123 – Purpose and Interpretation**

1. Consider moving this Chapter to the beginning of the Zoning Code since it establishes the purpose for the existence of the Zoning Code.

### **Chapter 1125 – Enforcement and Penalty**

1. Consider renaming the Chapter Administration and Enforcement and identify the responsibilities of the Building Commissioner in the enforcement and interpretation of the Zoning Code and the role of the Planning Commission and City Council with the Zoning Code.
2. Sections 1125.05-1125.08 cover certificates, unsafe and unlawful, removal and nonconforming signs. Consider moving these Sections to Chapter 1175, Signs.
3. In Section 1125.99, Violations and Penalties, consider removing the fine (\$100) and reference the type of misdemeanor. The reason is that if the amount of the fine is changed in the document, the City would have to go through a text amendment process, with a public hearing, to change the fee.

### **Chapter 1127 – Board of Zoning Appeals**

1. In Section 1127.07, Hearings and Fees, consider removing the fee (\$25) and reference the type of misdemeanor. The reason is that if the amount of the fine is changed in the document, the City would have to go through a text amendment process, with a public hearing, to change the fee.
2. Under Section 1127.33, Variances; Conditions, Findings and Action, consider stating that the applicant must show a “hardship” relating to their specific case. This Section should be reworded to reflect the identification and hardship and that the burden of proof is on the applicant to prove such hardship.

### **Chapter 1129 – District Change and Regulation Amendments**

1. Section 1129.03, List of Property Owners is unclear as written. Consider revising the notification to include property owners within a certain radius (e.g. 250 feet from the subject property) and to permit re-zonings to occur when the proposed district is not adjacent to the same existing district (e.g. currently, a property can only be rezoned as C-1 if adjacent to an existing C-1).



**Appendix A**

2. Under Section 1129.07, consider removing the actual fee from the Chapter. The reason is that if the amount of the fine is changed in the document, the City would have to go through a text amendment process, with a public hearing, to change the fee.

**Chapter 1141 – District Change and Regulation Amendments**

1. Consider modifying Section 1141.03, District Boundaries, to identify that the “scaling” is to be done by the Building Commissioner or his/her designee. This will permit an official determination of the boundary where disputes may occur and set up the process for appeal should a property owner not agree with the Building Commissioner determination.
2. Section 1141.05, Uncertainty as to Boundaries; Interpretation, conflicts with the scaling requirement of Section 1141.03. It is recommended that the Building Commissioner establish the uncertain boundary line by scaling with appeals being forwarded to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

**Chapter 1143 – R-1 One-Family Residence District**

1. There is no purpose or intent statement regarding why this district is being established. It is very important to provide purpose statements for every district. Where a conflict or appeal arises as to the permitted uses, lot development standards, etc. regarding a district, one of the things that a court of law considers is why the particular district established. Consider the following example:

“The “R-1” One-Family Residence District is established to provide for a predominately low density environment for single unit dwellings, on lots served by public water and sewer, along with certain other facilities sited to serve the residents who live in the district.”

2. Consider reformatting the permitted uses in a table format or in alphabetical order. This will present information in a better, user friendly format. For example, consider the following table format:

<b>Residential Uses</b>	<b>Public and Semi-Public Uses</b>	<b>Non-Residential Uses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Family Detached Dwellings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essential Services</li> <li>• Places of Worship; when located on an arterial or thoroughfare street pursuant to Section 1276.31.</li> <li>• Public Parks and Playgrounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agriculture; excluding the raising and breeding of livestock and poultry</li> <li>• Animal Hospitals or Clinics; no outdoor facilities</li> </ul>



3. Consider incorporating all lot development standards into a user friendly table format. Consider the following:

Minimum Lot Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15,000 Square Feet for Residential Uses</li> <li>• 20,000 Square Feet for All Other Uses</li> </ul>
Maximum Overall PUD Dwelling Density	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.0 Dwelling Units per Acre</li> </ul>
Minimum Lot Width	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 Feet of Frontage</li> </ul>
Minimum Front Yard Setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40 Feet</li> </ul>
Minimum Side Yard Setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 Feet</li> <li>• 20 Feet Sum of Both Yards</li> </ul>
Minimum Rear Yard Setback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 Feet</li> </ul>
Maximum Building Height	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 35 Feet for Principal Uses</li> <li>• 20 Feet for Accessory Uses</li> </ul>
Maximum Impervious Surface Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 30%</li> </ul>

4. The City currently has no regulations regarding a maximum coverage of land by impervious surfaces (driveways, building coverage, sidewalks, etc.). Consider implementing these types of regulations to reduce stormwater runoff and promote green space in the City.

**Chapter 1145 – R-2 One-Family Residence District**

1. There is no purpose or intent statement regarding why this district is being established. It is very important to provide purpose statements for every district. Where a conflict or appeal arises as to the permitted uses, lot development standards, etc. regarding a district, one of the things that a court of law considers is why the particular district established.
2. It is recommended that zoning codes refrain from cross referencing uses and create a freestanding district format for each zoning district as identified in number 4, General Comments, Page 1 of this memorandum.
3. Identify the different types of day care permitted under Ohio Law (A or B) in Section 1145.02, Conditional Uses.
4. The City currently has no regulations regarding a maximum coverage of land by impervious surfaces (driveways, building coverage, sidewalks, etc.). Consider implementing these types of regulations to reduce stormwater runoff and promote green space in the City.



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### Chapter 1147 – R-3 Multi-Family Residence

1. There is no purpose or intent statement regarding why this district is being established. It is very important to provide purpose statements for every district. Where a conflict or appeal arises as to the permitted uses, lot development standards, etc. regarding a district, one of the things that a court of law considers is why the particular district established.
2. It is recommended that zoning codes refrain from cross referencing uses and create a freestanding district format for each zoning district as identified in number 4, General Comments, Page 1 of this memorandum.
3. The City currently has no regulations regarding a maximum coverage of land by impervious surfaces (driveways, building coverage, sidewalks, etc.). Consider implementing these types of regulations to reduce stormwater runoff and promote green space in the City.

### Chapters 1149 and 1151 – CO-1 and CO-2 Planned Business Districts

1. There is no purpose or intent statement regarding why this district is being established. It is very important to provide purpose statements for every district. Where a conflict or appeal arises as to the permitted uses, lot development standards, etc. regarding a district, one of the things that a court of law considers is why the particular district established.
2. It is recommended that zoning codes refrain from cross referencing uses and create a freestanding district format for each zoning district as identified in number 4, General Comments, Page 1 of this memorandum.
3. Consider moving Section 1149.13, Plan Approval Procedure, and Section 1149.14, Plan Required Information, to Chapter 1181, Planned Development Projects which is the boilerplate language to establish Planned Districts. This would also work to eliminate Sections 1151.01, Plan Approval Procedure, and 1151.02, Plan Required Information, in Chapter 1151, CO-2 Planned Business District.
4. Section 1149.15, Reversion of Zoning, identifies that if a project is not completed in 24 months, the property will revert back to the previous zoning classification. Because of potential legal issues with rezoning property after a PD has been approved, many communities chose to let the final development plan expire, but keep the property zoned as the PD. The property owner must then re-file the final development plan and seek approval in order to develop in the future. This is the same for Section 1151.09.

**Chapter 1153 – C-1 Neighborhood Business District**

1. There is no purpose or intent statement regarding why this district is being established. It is very important to provide purpose statements for every district. Where a conflict or appeal arises as to the permitted uses, lot development standards, etc. regarding a district, one of the things that a court of law considers is why the particular district established.
2. It is recommended that zoning codes refrain from cross referencing uses and create a freestanding district format for each zoning district as identified in number 4, General Comments, Page 1 of this memorandum.
3. The City currently has no regulations regarding a maximum coverage of land by impervious surfaces (driveways, building coverage, sidewalks, etc.). Consider implementing these types of regulations to reduce stormwater runoff and promote green space in the City.

**Chapter 1155 – C-2 Office District**

1. There is no purpose or intent statement regarding why this district is being established. It is very important to provide purpose statements for every district. Where a conflict or appeal arises as to the permitted uses, lot development standards, etc. regarding a district, one of the things that a court of law considers is why the particular district established.
2. It is recommended that zoning codes refrain from cross referencing uses and create a freestanding district format for each zoning district as identified in number 4, General Comments, Page 1 of this memorandum.
3. The City currently has no regulations regarding a maximum coverage of land by impervious surfaces (driveways, building coverage, sidewalks, etc.). Consider implementing these types of regulations to reduce stormwater runoff and promote green space in the City.
4. Section 1155.02, Conditional Uses, identifies Hotels and Motels as a permitted conditional use. It is recommended to review all permitted uses in the City and remove uses that are not desirable or that are not likely to occur. In North College Hill, a Bed and Breakfast will probably have a better chance of occurring than a hotel.

**Chapter 1157 – C-3 Central Business District**

1. There is no purpose or intent statement regarding why this district is being established. It is very important to provide purpose statements for every district. Where a conflict or appeal arises as to the permitted uses, lot development standards, etc. regarding a



## Appendix A

- district, one of the things that a court of law considers is why the particular district established.
2. It is recommended that zoning codes refrain from cross referencing uses and create a freestanding district format for each zoning district as identified in number 4, General Comments, Page 1 of this memorandum.
  3. The City currently has no regulations regarding a maximum coverage of land by impervious surfaces (driveways, building coverage, sidewalks, etc.). Consider implementing these types of regulations to reduce stormwater runoff and promote green space in the City.

## Chapters 1159 – C-4 General Business District

1. There is no purpose or intent statement regarding why this district is being established. It is very important to provide purpose statements for every district. Where a conflict or appeal arises as to the permitted uses, lot development standards, etc. regarding a district, one of the things that a court of law considers is why the particular district established.
2. It is recommended that zoning codes refrain from cross referencing uses and create a freestanding district format for each zoning district as identified in number 4, General Comments, Page 1 of this memorandum.
3. The City currently has no regulations regarding a maximum coverage of land by impervious surfaces (driveways, building coverage, sidewalks, etc.). Consider implementing these types of regulations to reduce stormwater runoff and promote green space in the City.
4. Section 1159.04 lists prohibited uses. The way that zoning codes are established, if a use is not expressly permitted, it is, by default, prohibited. If a zoning district contains both permitted and prohibited uses, there is an issue as to if a use is not in the list of permitted uses or it is not in the list of prohibited uses, is it permitted or not? It is recommended that the zoning code refrain from identifying prohibited uses.

## Chapter 1161 – Architectural District

1. Section 1161.03, Application and Notice, identifies fees associated with applications for the Architectural District. We suggest removing the fee and citing an fee schedule because if the fee changes in the future, a formal text amendment process will be required to be followed to modify the zoning code.
2. Section 1161.04, Board of Architectural Review, identifies that the Planning Commission will act as the Board of Architectural Review. Typically, such boards require several of the board members to have some type of design background (architectural, planning, historic preservation, etc.). Is this a requirement fulfilled by the membership of the Planning Commission? As a minimum, the City may want to consider adding one member that has such a design background.



3. Section 1161.08, Appeals, sends the appeal of the Board of Architectural Review to the City Council. As previously mentioned, such decisions and appeals should have some member(s) with a design background. Is this fulfilled by Council? Another issue regarding appeals going to Council is that Council is typically not a quasi-judicial board (like the Board of Zoning Appeals) established to hear and determine appeals. Council is a political body established more so as a legislative function. Consider sending appeals from the Board of Architectural Review to a qualified Hearings Examiner.

### **Chapter 1171 – General Zoning Regulations and Standards**

1. Consider moving this Chapter, or portions of this Chapter, to the beginning of the Zoning Code since this language sets the rules for the application of this code to private property.
2. Consider additional applicable requirements such as for Portable On Demand Storage Units (PODS), Sexually Oriented Businesses, Lighting Standards, Satellite Dishes, Outdoor Storage and Display, etc.

### **Chapter 1173 – Performance Standards**

1. This Chapter states certain types of performance standards, but contains no minimum standards for enforcement. For example, there are no decibel levels for noise, no foot candle or other such requirements for lighting, etc.

### **Chapter 1174 – Cellular or Wireless Communication Systems**

1. Consider mentioning the desire for co-location of systems and antennas.

### **Chapter 1175 – Signs**

1. Consider using graphics to represent the sign measurement requirements in Section 1175.09, Measurement Standards.
2. Consider including requirements for landscaping the base of monument and freestanding signs.
3. Consider removing the actual fee from Section 1175.11, Fees, regarding issues previously discussed and reference a fee schedule as adopted by City Council.
4. Consider removing the dollar amount as it relates to the Penalty Section (1175.18) and simply reference it as a minor misdemeanor. This way, if the fee for a minor



## Appendix A

misdemeanor changes as per Ohio Law, the Zoning Code is automatically in line with the new penalty fee.

### Chapter 1177 – Off-Street Loading and Parking

1. Most parking requirements attempted to provide a number of spaces conducive to the busiest shopping days of the year, thus leaving parking lots underutilized for most of the year. Revisit the parking requirements (number of spaces required in Section 1177.03) to meet current standards and studies.
2. Consider implementing a “maximum number of off-street” parking space requirement to cap the amount of area being covered by asphalt or concrete. For example, you can incorporate a regulation that states, “The number of off-street parking spaces shall not exceed 25% of the minimum number of spaces as identified in the list in section 1177.03 without approval from the Planning Commission. Such approval may require the implementation of additional landscaping or the joint use of such additional parking spaces.”
3. Consider implementing regulations to require the joint use of off-street parking spaces.

### Chapter 1179 – Service Stations, Hotels and Motels, Garages and Parking Areas

1. Consider incorporating this Chapter with Chapter 1171, General Zoning Regulations and Standards.

### Chapter 1181 – Planned Development Projects

1. Consider moving Section 1149.13, Plan Approval Procedure, and Section 1149.14, Plan Required Information, to Chapter 1181, Planned Development Projects which is the boilerplate language to establish Planned Districts. This would also work to eliminate Sections 1151.01, Plan Approval Procedure, and 1151.02, Plan Required Information, in Chapter 1151, CO-2 Planned Business District.
2. Consider implementing additional standards for review as a part of the PD projects such as standards for open spaces (types, amounts, etc).
3. Section 1181.11, Reversion of Zoning, identifies that if a project is not completed in 24 months, the property will revert back to the previous zoning classification. Because of potential legal issues with rezoning property after a PD has been approved, many communities chose to let the final development plan expire, but keep the property zoned as the PD. The property owner must then re-file the final development plan and seek approval in order to develop in the future.

**Chapter 1183 – Swimming Pools**

1. Consider incorporating this Chapter with Chapter 1171, General Zoning Regulations and Standards.

**Chapter 1185 – Dwelling Conversions**

1. Consider incorporating this Chapter with Chapter 1171, General Zoning Regulations and Standards.

**Chapter 1187 – Lots of Record**

1. Consider a modification of the side and rear yard setback requirements for undersized lots of record. This can be done on a proportion basis. For example, if a lot is 25% smaller than the minimum size lot for this district, the side and rear yard setbacks can be reduced by 25%. This should be done as an administrative function.

**Chapter 1191 – Yard Projections**

1. Consider expanding on the regulations for fencing including fence materials, maintenance, orientation, etc.

**Chapter 1193 – Nonconforming Uses**

1. Rename the Chapter to be more inclusive of the Chapter. Consider “Nonconforming Uses, Structures and Lots”.
2. The Chapter falls silent on additions to nonconforming structures. Will the City permit an enlargement of a nonconforming structure (e.g. setback too close to the side lot line) as long as the nonconformity does not encroach further into the side yard?

**Other Considerations**

1. Consider implementing a Landscape and Screening Chapter to establish regulations for landscaping buildings and structures and providing adequate buffers between incompatible uses.
2. Review the Comprehensive Plan currently being completed and identify any additional needs/requirements that will affect the zoning code regulations and make the appropriate changes.





**Appendix B – Claritas Demographic Data Sets**





## 2000/2010 Intellisat Demographic Data

Hamilton County Development Company  
Economic Development

ID: 3996156272  
 STNAME: Ohio  
 CTYNAME: Hamilton County  
 CBSA\_NAME: Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN Metro  
 END\_NAME: City of North College Hill

	2000	2010	Change	Percent	2005 Hamilton County
Population	10,082	8,879	-1,203	-11.93%	812,803
Households	4,191	3,813	-378	-9.02%	337,837
Housing Units	4,488	4,090	-398	-8.87%	363,641
Median Age	36.00	39.10	3.00	8.61%	38.2
Median Value, Housing Units	\$82,535	\$108,445	\$25,910	31.39%	\$122,736
Average Household Size	2.33	2.25	0.00%	-3.43%	2.35
Owner Occupied Housing Units	2,882	2,635	-247	-8.57%	204,819
Renter Occupied Housing Units	1,309	1,178	-131	-10.01%	133,018
Population, 16+ Never Married	2,408	2,154	-254	-10.55%	199,213
Population, 16+ Married	3,575	3,222	-353	-9.87%	306,973
Population, 16+ Married Spouse Absent	378	350	-28	-7.41%	28,365
Population, 16+ Widowed	769	682	-87	-11.31%	47,374
Population, 16+ Divorced	823	736	-87	-10.57%	65,113
Per Capita Income	\$18,915	\$22,832	\$3,917	20.71%	\$27,603
Median Household Income	\$38,312	\$44,011	\$5,699	14.88%	\$53,557
Average Household Income	\$45,001	\$52,328	\$7,327	16.28%	\$65,749
Population, 25+ <9th Grade	356				
Population, 25+ Some High School	867				2010 2005 Hamilton County
Population, 25+ High School Graduate	2,424				Aggregate Household Effective Buying Income \$157,945,000
Population, 25+ Some College	1,628				Median Household Effective Buying Income \$36,664 \$43,450
Population, 25+ Associates Degree	498				Average Household Effective Buying Income \$41,423 \$52,437
Population, 25+ Bachelors Degree	626				
Population, 25+ Graduate Degree	321				

Source: Claritas, 2005.



**Appendix B**

**2000/2010 Intellisist Demographic Data**

Hamilton County Development Company  
Economic Development

Employed Population by Industry	2000	2010	Change	Percent
Agr., Forestry, Fishing, Hunting Mining	7	6	-1	-14.29%
Construction	326	299	-27	-8.28%
Manufacturing	623	565	-58	-9.31%
Wholesale Trade	215	189	-26	-12.09%
Retail Trade	617	555	-62	-10.05%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	287	262	-25	-8.71%
Information	206	185	-21	-10.19%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental Leasing	414	362	-52	-12.56%
Prof., Scient., Mngmnt. Admin. Wst Mangmnt.	354	307	-47	-13.28%
Educational, Health, and Social Services	958	853	-105	-10.96%
Arts, Entertnment, Rec., Accomd., Food Services	347	311	-36	-10.37%
Other Services	368	333	-35	-9.51%
Public Administration	127	114	-13	-10.24%
<b>Employed Population by Occupation</b>				
Management, Business, and Financial Operations	453	399	-54	-11.92%
Professional and Related Occupations	699	608	-91	-13.02%
Service Occupations	859	772	-87	-10.13%
Sales and Office Occupations	1,608	1,448	-160	-9.95%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	13	11	-2	-15.38%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance	501	458	-43	-8.58%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	716	645	-71	-9.92%
Blue Collar	1,217	1,103	-114	-9.37%
White Collar	2,760	2,455	-305	-11.05%
Service and Farm	872	783	-89	-10.21%
Average Daily Work Commute	26	26		

Source: Claritas, 2005.



**2005 Claritas Intellisat Demographics**

	City of North College Hill		3 Mile Blockgroup		Hamilton County	
2005 Population	9,466		110,872		812,803	
2005 Population Density (per Sq. Mile)	5,156		3,183		1,995	
2005 Households	4,010		45,327		337,837	
2005 Household Density (per Sq. Mile)	2,184		1,301		829	
2005 Housing Units	4,298		47,659		363,641	
2005 Housing Unit Density (per Sq. Mile)	2,341		1,368		893	
2005 Median Age	37.60		37.90		38.20	
2005 Family Life Cycle Code	N2					
Geonity Quality Score	090					
Population Density Centile	76					
Land Area in Square Miles	1.84		34.83		407.37	
2005 Median Value, Owner-Occupied Housing Units	\$98,016		\$108,240		\$122,736	
2005 Average Household Size	2.28		2.41		2.35	
2005 Population Age 15+ Never Married	2,272	30.17%	24,900	28.82%	199,213	30.79%
2005 Population Age 15+ Married, Spouse Present	3,390	45.01%	41,678	48.24%	306,973	47.44%
2005 Population Age 15+ Married, Spouse Absent	363	4.82%	3,665	4.24%	28,365	4.38%
2005 Population Age 15+ Widowed	728	9.67%	7,331	8.49%	47,374	7.32%
2005 Population Age 15+ Divorced	778	10.33%	8,820	10.21%	65,113	10.06%
	7,531	100.00%	86,394	100.00%	647,038	100.00%
2005 Owner Occupied Housing Units	2,759	68.80%	29,660	65.44%	204,819	60.63%
2005 Renter Occupied Housing Units	1,251	31.20%	15,667	34.56%	133,018	39.37%
2005 Per Capita Income	\$20,922		\$23,537		\$27,603	
2005 Median Household Income	\$41,187		\$46,446		\$53,557	
2005 Average Household Income	\$48,610		\$57,108		\$65,749	
Aggregate Household Effective Buying Income	\$156,407,500		\$2,041,162,500		\$17,715,012,500	
Aggrtle. Hshld. Effective Buying Income Density (per Sq. Mile)	\$85,189,270		\$58,605,257		\$43,486,723	
Median Household Effective Buying Income	\$34,574		\$38,323		\$43,450	
Average Household Effective Buying Income	\$39,004		\$45,032		\$52,437	
2005 Employed Population Age 16+ by Industry						
	48.32%		47.50%		48.70%	
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	6	0.13%	68	0.13%	532	0.13%
Construction	312	6.82%	3,062	5.81%	22,099	5.58%
Manufacturing	594	12.99%	7,611	14.45%	57,379	14.50%
Wholesale Trade	199	4.35%	2,038	3.87%	15,072	3.81%
Retail Trade	586	12.81%	6,158	11.69%	45,078	11.39%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	272	5.95%	3,106	5.90%	18,592	4.70%
Information	197	4.31%	1,433	2.72%	10,999	2.78%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	385	8.42%	3,910	7.42%	31,247	7.89%
Prof., Scientific, Mngmt Admin. and Waste Management	326	7.13%	5,306	10.07%	45,205	11.42%
Educational, Health, and Social Services	899	19.65%	11,321	21.50%	82,294	20.79%
Arts, Entertmnt., Rec., Accommodation & Food Services	328	7.17%	3,865	7.34%	33,502	8.46%
Other Services	350	7.65%	2,689	5.11%	18,072	4.57%
Public Administration	120	2.62%	2,101	3.99%	15,744	3.98%
Total	4,574	100.00%	52,668	100.00%	395,815	100.00%
2005 Employed Population Age 16+ by Occupation						
Mangmnt., Business, and Financial Operations Occupations	422	9.23%	6,427	12.20%	58,334	14.74%
Professional and Related Occupations	649	14.19%	10,170	19.31%	88,689	22.41%
Service Occupations	810	17.71%	8,102	15.38%	59,059	14.92%
Sales and Office Occupations	1,522	33.28%	15,974	30.33%	111,546	28.18%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	12	0.26%	81	0.15%	424	0.11%
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance Occupations	482	10.54%	4,107	7.80%	27,809	7.03%
Production, Transprt., and Material Moving Occupations	677	14.80%	7,807	14.82%	49,954	12.62%
Total	4,574	100.00%	52,668	100.00%	395,815	100.00%
Blue Collar	1,159	25.34%	11,914	22.62%	77,763	19.65%
White Collar	2,593	56.89%	32,553	61.81%	258,409	65.29%
Service & Farm	822	17.97%	8,201	15.57%	59,643	15.07%
Total	4,574	100.00%	52,668	100.00%	395,815	100.00%
2005 Workers Age 16+ Avg. Travel Time to Work	26		26		25	



## Appendix B

	City of North College Hill		3 Mile Blockgroup		Hamilton County	
		(Density by Square Mile)		(Density by Square Mile)		(Density by Square Mile)
2005 Estimated Consumer Buying Power by Retail Store Type (in Thousands)						
All Retail Stores	\$99,496	\$54,191	\$1,219,194	\$35,005	\$9,527,779	\$23,389
Grocery Store	\$21,259	\$11,579	\$251,266	\$7,214	\$1,878,035	\$4,610
Eating Places	\$12,363	\$6,733	\$147,568	\$4,237	\$1,163,577	\$2,856
Drinking Places	\$624	\$340	\$7,386	\$212	\$60,283	\$148
Health & Personal Care Solres	\$7,096	\$3,865	\$83,793	\$2,406	\$620,409	\$1,523
Building Material & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	\$2,848	\$1,551	\$35,417	\$1,017	\$267,801	\$657
Hardware Stores	\$314	\$171	\$3,944	\$113	\$30,329	\$74
Lawn & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers	\$439	\$239	\$5,383	\$155	\$41,035	\$101
Furniture Stores	\$2,069	\$1,127	\$27,565	\$791	\$229,180	\$563
Other Home Furnishing Stores	\$1,593	\$867	\$20,612	\$592	\$165,515	\$406
Appliance Stores	\$583	\$318	\$7,241	\$208	\$55,835	\$137
Radio, TV & Other Electronics	\$1,113	\$606	\$14,320	\$411	\$118,076	\$290
Department Stores	\$9,598	\$5,228	\$121,487	\$3,488	\$959,712	\$2,356
Clothing & Clothing Accessory Store	\$6,067	\$3,305	\$80,010	\$2,297	\$658,840	\$1,617
Shoe Stores	\$771	\$420	\$10,007	\$287	\$80,120	\$197
General Merchandise Stores	\$14,335	\$7,808	\$178,801	\$5,134	\$1,401,635	\$3,441
Warehouse Clubs & Superstores	\$3,731	\$2,032	\$44,777	\$1,286	\$342,586	\$841
Full-Service Restaurants	\$6,951	\$3,786	\$83,450	\$2,396	\$673,794	\$1,654
Fast Food restaurants	\$5,412	\$2,948	\$64,118	\$1,841	\$489,783	\$1,202
Jewelry Stores	\$877	\$478	\$12,165	\$349	\$109,041	\$268
Book Stores	\$705	\$384	\$9,726	\$279	\$90,870	\$223
Gift, Novelty, & Souvenir	\$617	\$336	\$7,484	\$215	\$60,135	\$148
Florists	\$162	\$86	\$2,050	\$59	\$15,879	\$39
Hobby, Toy, & Game Shops	\$667	\$363	\$8,601	\$247	\$67,768	\$166
Sporting Goods Stores	\$778	\$424	\$10,475	\$301	\$87,309	\$214
Camera & Photographic Supply	\$84	\$46	\$1,117	\$32	\$9,080	\$22
Luggage & Leather Goods	\$65	\$35	\$947	\$27	\$8,281	\$20
Sewing, Needlework & Piece Goods Stores	\$133	\$72	\$1,706	\$49	\$13,613	\$33
Convenience Stores	\$1,171	\$638	\$13,384	\$384	\$101,423	\$249
Home Centers	\$698	\$380	\$8,741	\$251	\$66,481	\$163
Nursery & Garden Centers	\$366	\$199	\$4,473	\$128	\$34,268	\$84
Computer & Software Stores	\$579	\$316	\$7,802	\$224	\$65,339	\$160
Clothing Accessory Stores	\$92	\$50	\$1,257	\$36	\$10,806	\$27
Auto Dealers	\$19,141	\$10,425	\$235,973	\$6,775	\$1,892,079	\$4,645
Automotive Part, Accessories & Tire Stores	\$964	\$525	\$11,552	\$332	\$88,964	\$218
Gasoline Stations with Convenience Stores	\$5,984	\$3,259	\$68,147	\$1,957	\$514,636	\$1,263
Gasoline Stations without Convenience Stores	\$2,424	\$1,320	\$27,856	\$800	\$209,813	\$515
Electronic Shopping & Mail Order	\$2,860	\$1,558	\$36,543	\$1,049	\$295,577	\$726
Total Accommodation & Food Services	\$15,400	\$8,388	\$185,811	\$5,335	\$1,477,071	\$3,626
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book & Music Stores	\$2,506	\$1,365	\$33,140	\$951	\$282,618	\$694
Office Supplies & Stationary Stores	\$189	\$103	\$2,492	\$72	\$20,802	\$51
GAF0: General Merchandise, Apparel, Furniture, Other Stores	\$29,100	\$15,850	\$372,781	\$10,703	\$3,002,649	\$7,371
2005 Establishments by Type						
Private Sector	195	85.15%	2,359	84.22%	28,808	86.79%
Government	34	14.85%	442	15.78%	4,383	13.21%
All Industries	229	100.00%	2,801	100.00%	33,191	100.00%
2005 Establishments by Sector						
All Retail	56	24.45%	678	24.21%	6,833	20.59%
Finance-Insurance-Real Estate	27	11.79%	262	9.35%	3,221	9.70%
Services	105	45.85%	1,296	46.27%	15,159	45.67%
Agriculture	5	2.18%	42	1.50%	459	1.38%
Mining	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	11	0.03%
Construction	17	7.42%	215	7.68%	2,194	6.58%
All Manufacturing	9	3.93%	119	4.25%	2,160	6.51%
Transportation, Communication, & Public Utilities	4	1.75%	60	2.14%	936	2.82%
Wholesale Trade	4	1.75%	97	3.46%	1,530	4.61%
Total	227		2,769		32,493	
Establishments by Service SubSector						
Hotels & Other Lodging	0	0.00%	5	0.40%	111	0.78%
Personal Services	23	21.90%	190	15.14%	1,696	11.88%
Business Services	11	10.48%	95	7.57%	1,816	12.72%
Repair Services	9	8.57%	124	9.88%	1,241	8.69%
Motion Picture & Amusement	6	5.71%	77	6.14%	755	5.29%
Health Services	17	16.19%	236	18.80%	2,575	18.04%
Legal Services	1	0.95%	32	2.55%	938	6.57%
Educational Services	10	9.52%	82	6.53%	764	5.35%
Social Services	22	20.95%	328	26.14%	2,921	20.46%
Engineering & Mgmt Services	6	5.71%	86	6.85%	1,457	10.21%
Total	105	100.00%	1,255	100.00%	14,274	100.00%



	City of North College Hill		3 Mile Blockgroup		Hamilton County	
<b>2005 Employees by Industry Type</b>						
All Industries	2,647	100.00%	34,318	100.00%	583,521	100.00%
Private Sector	1,700	64.22%	27,138	79.08%	486,310	83.34%
Government	947	35.78%	7,180	20.92%	97,211	16.66%
<b>2005 Establishments by Sector</b>						
All Retail	529	20.46%	9,463	28.10%	108,174	19.29%
Finance-Insurance-Real Estate	111	4.29%	1,540	4.57%	42,080	7.50%
Services	1,673	64.72%	15,954	47.38%	240,902	42.95%
Agriculture	44	1.70%	341	1.01%	3,095	0.55%
Mining	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	139	0.02%
Construction	77	2.98%	1,687	5.01%	23,419	4.18%
All Manufacturing	100	3.87%	2,266	6.73%	92,483	16.49%
Transportation, Communication, & Public Utilities	37	1.43%	1,104	3.28%	24,886	4.44%
Wholesale Trade	14	0.54%	1,319	3.92%	25,674	4.58%
	2,585	100.00%	33,674	100.00%	560,852	100.00%
<b>Employees in the Service SubSector</b>						
Hotels & Other Lodging	0	0.00%	76	0.48%	3,342	1.42%
Personal Services	74	4.42%	766	4.86%	8,772	3.74%
Business Services	64	3.83%	481	3.05%	25,374	10.82%
Repair Services	24	1.43%	536	3.40%	7,437	3.17%
Motion Picture & Amusement	66	3.95%	617	3.92%	9,915	4.23%
Health Services	539	32.22%	5,903	37.46%	72,487	30.90%
Legal Services	4	0.24%	127	0.81%	7,663	3.27%
Educational Services	247	14.76%	2,978	18.90%	40,998	17.48%
Social Services	638	38.14%	3,558	22.58%	33,544	14.30%
Engineering & Mgmt Services	17	1.02%	715	4.54%	25,068	10.69%
Total	1,673	100.00%	15,757	100.00%	234,600	100.00%
<b>Employees by Occupation Sectors</b>						
Executive & Professional Total	899	33.96%	12,481	36.40%	200,787	34.41%
Administration & Support Total	529	19.98%	7,913	23.07%	165,597	28.38%
Service Personnel: Total	744	28.11%	6,184	18.03%	75,073	12.86%
Trade & Labor: Total	475	17.94%	7,715	22.50%	142,139	24.36%
Total Employment	2,647	100.00%	34,293	100.00%	583,596	100.00%
<b>Employees by Occupation SubSectors</b>						
Total Employment	2,647		34,293		583,596	
<b>Executive &amp; Professional</b>						
Management	196	21.80%	2,414	19.34%	45,462	22.64%
Sales & Marketing	217	24.14%	4,732	37.91%	66,370	33.05%
Health, Legal & Social	236	26.25%	2,327	18.64%	32,819	16.35%
Engineers, Scientists & Computer Professionals	19	2.11%	407	3.26%	16,397	8.17%
Educators	191	21.25%	2,025	16.22%	27,053	13.47%
Journalists & Creative Professionals	40	4.45%	576	4.62%	12,686	6.32%
Total	899	100.00%	12,481	100.00%	200,787	100.00%
<b>Administration &amp; Support</b>						
Management Support	56	10.59%	793	10.02%	22,320	13.48%
Administrative & Clerical Support	371	70.13%	5,732	72.44%	118,034	71.28%
Technical Support	102	19.28%	1,388	17.54%	25,243	15.24%
Total	529	100.00%	7,913	100.00%	165,597	100.00%
<b>Service Personnel</b>						
Health Care	198	26.61%	1,378	22.28%	13,028	17.35%
Food & Beverage	340	45.70%	3,225	52.15%	38,901	51.82%
Personal Services	187	25.13%	1,323	21.39%	15,266	20.33%
Protective Services	19	2.55%	258	4.17%	7,878	10.49%
Total	744	100.00%	6,184	100.00%	75,073	100.00%
<b>Trade &amp; Labor</b>						
Construction	51	10.74%	1,109	14.37%	18,955	13.34%
Installation & Repair	178	37.47%	2,492	32.30%	35,991	26.32%
Craft Production	30	6.32%	549	7.12%	13,956	9.82%
Machine Operators	38	8.00%	720	9.33%	20,165	14.19%
Assemblers	9	1.89%	338	4.38%	10,501	7.39%
Transportation	66	13.89%	956	12.39%	17,364	12.22%
Agriculture	46	9.68%	450	5.83%	5,406	3.80%
Laborers	57	12.00%	1,101	14.27%	19,801	13.93%
Total	475	100.00%	7,715	100.00%	142,139	100.00%

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



## Appendix B

	City of North College Hill		3 Mile Blockgroup		Hamilton County	
<b>Number of Retail Establishments by Type</b>						
Building Materials & Garden Supplies	1	1.79%	29	4.20%	302	6.59%
General Merchandise Stores	1	1.79%	28	4.13%	197	2.88%
Food Stores	8	14.29%	67	9.88%	676	9.88%
Auto Dealers & Service Stations	4	7.14%	88	12.98%	652	9.54%
Apparel & Accessory	3	5.36%	67	9.88%	550	8.05%
Home Furniture	7	12.50%	54	7.96%	798	11.68%
Eating & Drinking Places	18	32.14%	164	24.19%	1,794	26.26%
Miscellaneous Retail	14	25.00%	181	26.70%	1,785	26.12%
<b>All Retail</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>678</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>6,833</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Estimated Sales by Industry Type (in Millions)</b>						
Building Materials & Garden Supplies	\$0.60	1.13%	\$59.60	4.67%	\$940.90	7.16%
General Merchandise Stores	\$0.10	0.23%	\$90.50	7.09%	\$1,026.70	7.81%
Food Stores	\$6.90	15.58%	\$214.10	16.78%	\$2,299.10	17.51%
Auto Dealers & Service Stations	\$3.70	8.35%	\$493.60	38.69%	\$2,965.70	22.58%
Apparel & Accessory	\$0.40	0.90%	\$45.40	3.56%	\$381.70	2.91%
Home Furniture	\$4.20	9.40%	\$96.10	7.53%	\$1,650.30	12.63%
Eating & Drinking Places	\$15.50	34.99%	\$141.50	11.09%	\$1,723.30	13.12%
Miscellaneous Retail	\$13.00	29.35%	\$134.90	10.57%	\$2,138.80	16.29%
<b>All Retail</b>	<b>\$44.30</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$1,275.70</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$13,133.50</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



**Appendix C – Visioning Results**

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Appendix C





## **Key Person Interviews Generalized Results**

### *General Observations*

- Anything that would help to reduce crime and speeding and to make the City more safe (radio communication and sirens, etc.) would be beneficial.
- An automobile repair shop would be good to have.
- Hotels and motels would be great where the Thriftway used to be (NCH Hilton).
- We don't have a lot of land space so we should utilize the sky space.
- A service shop for small appliances like lawn mowers could be helpful.
- Continue to get more people involved; the more support you have the better the chances are for success.
- Bring back the citizens police academy that was closed due to finances.
- Continue to educate the residents.
- Community service should be a punishment for crimes as a way to pay back to the community.
- Schools are getting older and that will be addressed this fall and will be a boost for the City.
- Taxes are reasonable in comparison to other cities this same size and nature.
- There should be a way to better enforce property maintenance to help improve the exterior appearance of properties.
- There are a lot of kids playing basketball in the street. They don't stop for cars to go through and that causes problems. Deterring that would be good.
- The City would have to create a reason for people to come here that would be unique.
- The schools are pretty good.
- Gary Gellert has done a good job.
- The City services have been really good.
- We should fully fund the school district. A quality school system would bring people here and keep people here.

### *Perception of North College Hill*

- With all of the basketball hype, people may look at us as a sports town.
- Frickers is a good place to go after a game.
- It is probably just a name that they hear.
- They just drive through it.
- Very negatively.
- They perceive us as a predominately black community.
- Consider us a lower income area.
- Trashy.
- Most people don't know that we are our own City.
- They think we are a continuation of College Hill.



## Appendix C

### *Positive Aspects*

- Not a big city.
- Not widespread.
- It has a little bit of everything in it (shopping, Doctor offices, and close schools).
- Most of the streets are in good shape.
- Accessibility and proximity.
- Close to downtown and shopping, but not inundated.
- Accessible to Ronald Reagan Highway.
- The fire chief leaving is a positive thing.
- Do not see a lot of positive things right now.
- Good housing, and good neighborhoods, but that is nothing based on what NCH is doing for itself.
- Business association is a good and viable association – as compared to other associations. Higher membership rate and dedication.
- Members of the police force are good people.
- Economic Development Director is a good position and a good move.
- Small Town Feel in the middle of the city.
- Has the “older” community’s characteristics (self-sufficient).
- Good neighbors.
- Low Crime.
- Good City Services.

### *Negative Aspects*

- Perception that the City is going down hill (insiders –people that live here).
- School periods – kids hang out and walking down the streets (isn’t just NCH – it is everywhere).
- Some people would like to have their streets re-paved (some have been waiting for years – City says they don’t have money - how long will they have to wait?).
- A Long Range Plan for money and roads should be implemented.
- Not enough drawing power to pull people here.
- Ronald Reagan Highway is a convenient bypass to get to the other major shopping draws.
- City administration and management needs to change.
- This City needs an Oversight Committee that contains members of the community.
- The City is afraid to fire people who are not doing their job.
- Eliminate the Police Chief – fiscally responsible.
- Eliminate the Recreation Department Chair.
- Community lacks a park and recreation plan.
- Our parks and pool lack contemporary amenities.
- How the City handles their budgeting.
- “Blue-Sky” syndrome the City is reaching way past what their true boundaries are.



- Southwest quadrant is going downhill and has a lot of crime.
- School system is not up to par.
- Lacking sustainable businesses.

### *Recommendations / Ideas*

- We need a larger draw to the community.
  - Find some kind of niche
  - Antique stores or crafting – etc.
  - An anchor store or a nicer restaurant would be great
- We are missing a store where you can get more than just groceries and pharmaceuticals.
- Would not cost money- it would be to build a task force that looks at every aspect of the community:
  - Management
  - Employee's
  - Budget
  - Department Budgets
  - Go through everything with a fine tooth comb
  - Take the changes and implement them
- What's missing is a significant opportunity to put in some nice restaurants.
- Anchor stores (e.g. Thriftway, Kroger, Old Navy significant location that bring people here)



## Appendix C

### SWOT Analysis Results

#### Strengths:

- Revitalization of School – Buildings and Programs
- Location
- Access to Highway System
- Infrastructure
- Small Town Community Feel
- City Services
- Financial Institutions
- Active Senior Center
- Diversity
- Specialty Businesses
- Active Business Association
- CIC
- Streetscape on Galbraith
- Clovernook Country Club
- Clovernook Center for the Blind and Buddy Rogers Corporate Center
- Have Existing Parks and Recreation
- Affordable Housing
- Bus Access
- Have our own School System
- Strong Neighborhood Identity
- Ministerial Association

#### Weaknesses:

- Weak Industrial Base
- Weak Economic Base
- Diminishing Community Identity
- Declining Churches
- Town Name
- Public Relation–Community Commitment
- Loss of Civic Pride
- Statutory Form
- Lack of a Community Center
- Limited & Deteriorating Housing Stock
- Lack of Housing Choices for Aging Population
- Declining Business Sector
- Access Management
- City Services
- Bad Image / Perception / PR
- High Rental Rate
- Minority Involvement
- Lack of Volunteers
- Perception of School
- Vacant Storefronts
- Land Locked
- Small Parcels
- Fear
- Lack of Significant Architecture – Very Linear
- Lack of Money for Services Citizens Expect
- Lack of Reciprocity



### **Opportunities:**

- Available Retail – Vacant Storefronts
- College Hill Development – Linden Park
- Affordable Retail
- Stable Business
- New School Buildings in the Central Core of the City
- St. Margaret Mary’s School/Church
- Gas and Utility Pricing Increase
- Proximity to Core City
- Thriftway Property
- Proximity to Retail
- Clovernook Country Club
- Relative Safety
- Vacant Housing
- Proximity to Healthcare
- Development of the Regency
- Cross County Highway – Identifiable Business District
- Hamilton Ave. from Cross County to Business District
- Availability of Local Government
- Model for Integrated Community

### **Threats:**

- Lack of Jail Space
- State Mandates
- Time
- Exodus of the Middle Class
- High Foreclosure Rate
- Perception of Crime
- Targeting by Slum-Lords / Absentee
- Predatory Business
- Income Tax Base
- College Hill Development – Linden Park
- Eminent Domain
- Federal & State Housing Mandates - CMHA







**Appendix D**

**Appendix D – Cincinnati Multiple Listing Service**







Policy Planning Area	Current Activity				Previous 6 Months				Previous 12 Months				Number of Housing Units (estimated)			
	Number of Listings		Average List Price		Number of Sales		Average Sale Price		Number of Sales		Average Sale Price			Market Min/Max		
	Lender	Market	Lender	Market	Lender	Market	Lender	Market	Lender	Market	Lender	Market		Lender	Market	
1	2	11	\$77,400	\$106,364	85/125	2	10	\$5,850	\$107,600	90/124	3	13	\$57,833	\$104,242	80/124	300
4	6	28	\$82,636	\$101,518	70/139	3	18	\$5,803	\$106,942	78/158	4	29	\$59,650	\$100,941	70/158	750
7	6	13	\$88,047	\$111,562	90/138	2	1	\$7,945	\$110,000	110/110	3	6	\$80,900	\$108,653	90/129	325
8	1	18	\$60,000	\$117,715	72/238	1	5	\$4,999	\$118,940	90/170	4	9	\$61,250	\$109,344	80/170	330
11	19	48	\$55,184	\$80,248	29/140	13	17	\$3,999	\$76,772	56/109	28	35	\$39,690	\$78,412	38/109	1800
14	3	15	\$76,467	\$111,570	78/135	1	3	\$119,000	\$106,800	82/147	1	5	\$119,000	\$105,320	82/147	250
15	0	3		\$166,567	150/180	0	1		\$162,500	163/163	0	4		\$180,534	163/227	80
16	0	1		\$109,900	110/110	0	0				0	0				50
17	0	1		\$144,900	145/145	0	0				2	0	\$57,500			60
18	0	0				0	2		\$88,450	80/117	0	2		\$98,450	80/117	10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>138</b>			<b>29/238</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>57</b>			<b>56/170</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>103</b>			<b>38/227</b>	<b>3955</b>

\*\*\* "Lender" includes any properties which are lender or government owned  
 \*\*\* An attempt was made to remove all Corporate, Short Sales, Estate Sales, and other non-market transactions from the above statistics  
 \*\*\* Properties that are "For Sale By Owner" are not included  
 \*\*\* Source: Greater Cincinnati MLS

# COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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## Appendix D

