

Planning Matters

City of Columbus / Department of Development / Planning Division
Spring 2009



City of Columbus
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This is the first issue of Planning Matters since mid 2008. We're glad to be back reporting on the activities in the City of Columbus Planning Division as the staff works to improve the built environment throughout America's 15th largest city. The division has undergone some changes, but we've continued to move forward on our work program and fulfilling the expectations for the Planning Division.

Area & Neighborhood Planning

Three new plans were adopted by City Council in March – the Clintonville Neighborhood Plan, Fifth by Northwest Neighborhood Plan, and the Southwest Area Plan. Each was prepared with significant public participation using the division's new planning methodology of public engagement and interactive workshops.

The **Clintonville Neighborhood Plan** focuses new development on High Street as the neighborhood's central retail corridor, but ensures that such development respects adjacent residential neighborhoods. Mixed uses and higher densities are encouraged. The plan recommends changes to the Urban Commercial Overlay north of Henderson Road and establishes detailed commercial development standards.



The **Fifth by Northwest Neighborhood Plan** focuses retail and mixed use development along Fifth Avenue, with higher densities recommended for the Fifth and Northwest Boulevard intersection and adjacent to Grandview Avenue – reinforcing existing pedestrian zones. The eastern third of the planning area is recommended to continue as a jobs zone, thereby discouraging stand alone residential and retail development.

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The **Southwest Area Plan** was a joint project with the Franklin County Department of Economic Development and Planning, as well as Jackson and Franklin townships. The plan recommends consistent development standards, a mixed use redevelopment concept for the former Franklin County Children Services site, and retail redevelopment at key locations along Harrisburg Pike.

At the same time, work continues on the **Livingston East Area Plan**, which addresses land use and development issues for the neighborhoods along the Livingston corridor beginning with Berwick and continuing east to the corporate line with Reynoldsburg. The plan for this 7.5-square-mile planning area is scheduled for completion by early summer.

Plans that are to be initiated in 2009 include land use, urban design and development standards amendments to the Greater Hilltop, North Linden and South Linden plans, a replacement plan for the Near Southside, and plans for the Trabue/Roberts planning area on the west side and the Far East Broad Corridor on the east side. #

Commercial Overlays

Commercial overlays were established by the city as a way of influencing urban form in commercial corridors to improve walkability, establish a stronger street presence, facilitate reinvestment, and improve signage, lighting and landscaping. To date, over 14 linear miles of Columbus have been placed within one of the commercial overlays (urban, community, or regional). The following four sets of commercial overlays have been moving forward, with adoption by City Council expected in late Spring.

- In **Eastmoor**, Community Commercial Overlays (CCO) are to be placed on sections of E. Broad Street and E. Main Street, consistent with the Eastmoor Main and Broad Street Corridor Revitalization Plan (2007).
- In **Milo-Grogan**, the Urban Commercial Overlay (UCO) is proposed to be placed on sections of Cleveland Road and Fifth Avenue, consistent with the Milo-Grogan Neighborhood Plan (2007).
- In the **Near Southside**, the Urban Commercial Overlay and the Community Commercial Overlay are proposed to be placed on portions of Lockbourne Road between Whittier Street and Marion Road, consistent with the South Side Plan (2002).
- In the **Northwest**, Regional Commercial Overlays (RCO) are to be placed on sections of Bethel Road, Sawmill Road, and S.R. 161, consistent with the Northwest Area Plan Update (2007).



Concurrent with these overlays, the division in consultation with Building Services is proposing several amendments to the overlay code to provide clarity with its application to existing buildings and parking lots. #



Commissions, Boards & Panels Staffed by the Planning Division

- Board of Commission Appeals
- Brewery District Commission
- Columbus Art Commission
- Darby Accord Panel
- Development Commission (Policy Committee)
- Downtown Commission
- German Village Commission
- Italian Village Commission
- Historic Resources Commission
- Rocky Fork Blacklick Accord Panel
- University Area Review Board
- Victorian Village Commission

Historic Preservation

The Historic Preservation Office (HPO) joined the Planning Division earlier this year and we welcomed Randy Black and Jamie Goodman to the staff. Walter Green later joined the staff from BSD. With the addition of HPO, the Planning Division now staffs 12 commissions, boards and panels.

As part of moving forward, a **Historic Preservation Working Group** was created with staff and architectural commission(s) representation to consider ways in which the historic preservation function can be made more efficient. A written report and recommendations are to be issued in late spring/early summer. Along with consideration of a new structure for the commissions, the group is considering a hearing officer function, new hierarchy of applications and approvals, fee structure, and the preparation of an electronic *Comprehensive Historic Preservation Handbook*. #

Downtown

The Planning Division has been providing assistance to the Economic Development Division and Mayor's Office in the development of the **Mile on High** concept. Mayor Coleman announced his goal of reestablishing an invigorated High Street corridor downtown with additional retail, services, and entertainment framed and support by higher density development.

The Development Department revised its incentive policies to further this initiative and target retail businesses. A policy paper has been prepared that further details the Mile on High concept, including new density standards for the entire downtown. Public review and comment is to occur over the summer, with recommendations finalized this fall.



The **Downtown Commission** was transferred to the Planning Division from the Economic Development Division in January, 2009, with responsibility assigned to Daniel Thomas, Urban Design Manager. The commission's authority extends to external building changes, new construction, and wall murals within the downtown. Recent activity has included final approval of the Scioto Mile, a five-story multi-family building as part of Edwards Company's Gay Street residential project, and a large sidewalk dining area for the Columbus Renaissance Hotel. #



Columbus Art Commission

The city took an important step forward in terms of public art with the appointment last year of the **Columbus Art Commission**. Staffed by Lori Baudro, AICP, the commission has spent the past year establishing its policies and procedures, and began hearing cases. #



Kroger's proposed retail development at N. High and King

University Area Review Board

The UARB has heard several interesting cases since the last issue of *Planning Matters*, but one of the most important has been a proposed redevelopment of the **Kroger** store at N. High and King into a mixed use retail project. The 57,226-square foot grocery includes a separate 8,129-square foot retail building at High and King, and additional street level retail of 764 square feet along High Street. The unique site plan meets the requirements of the city's Urban Commercial Overlay. This project will have a significant beneficial impact on the south campus community and Weinland Park, as well as fill a key location in the High Street commercial corridor. #

TeamCODE

The division continues working with Building Services and other city staff in preparing revisions to the city's zoning code. A draft **parking chapter** will be vetted with the public in late spring. The proposed revisions include three significant "green" updates: additional perimeter screening and landscaping requirements, right-sizing parking space requirements (including some parking ceilings), and new requirements for bike parking in off-street parking lots. This project builds upon work successfully completed to update the commercial overlays, require a special permit for outdoor patios located near residences, and a requirement that the first floor of multi-story parking garages must include retail and/or office uses. #

Google

Dan Ferdelman in the Urban Design Section has been working with the Neighborhood Design Center to prepare 3-D models using Sketch-Up of the Downtown, NCR commercial corridors, and the University District for posting on **Google**. The goal of this project is to facilitate infill and redevelopment, promote the urban core of the city as a place for reinvestment, and promote the city from a design perspective to a national audience. #



Planning Matters is published twice a year as a service to the Planning Division's clients.

For further information or to be placed on the email distribution list, please call 614-645-8036 or email ljpoulton@columbus.gov.