

# Planning Matters



CITY OF COLUMBUS, MAYOR MICHAEL B. COLEMAN

DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT, DIRECTOR BOYCE SAFFORD, III

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Columbus, Ohio 43215  
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## 2007 Year in Review

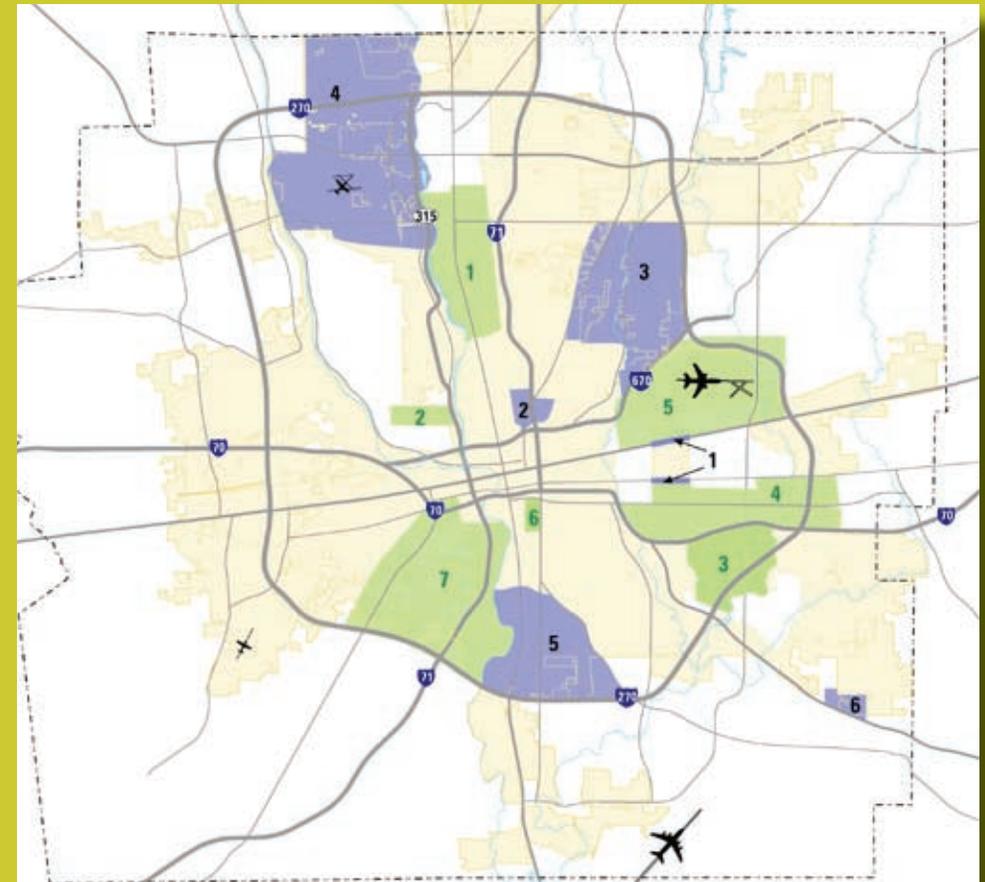
By Vince Papsidero, AICP

The Planning Division delivered on a number of initiatives in the past year, including a record number of adopted plans based on community consensus. Plus the staff garnered accolades with the receipt of several awards. Below is a summary.

**Adopted Plans.** Columbus City Council adopted a record six separate area plans in 2007, specifically:

- ▶ *Eastmoor Design Charrette (Broad and Main Streets)*
- ▶ *Milo-Grogan Area Plan*
- ▶ *Northeast Area Plan*
- ▶ *Northwest Plan*
- ▶ *Scioto Southland Area Plan*
- ▶ *Southeast Plan Amendment - Bixby Road Economic Development Amendment*

Of these plans, three were new plans for areas that had never had a plan adopted. Northeast and Northwest plans were complete revisions to plans that were over ten years old. ▶▶



### Plans Adopted in 2007

1. Eastmoor Main and Broad Street Corridor Revitalization Plan
2. Milo-Grogan Plan
3. Northeast Plan Update
4. Northwest Plan Update
5. Scioto Southland Area Plan
6. Southeast Area Bixby Road Amendment

### Plans Underway in 2008

1. Clintonville Area Plan Area Plan
2. Fifth by Northwest Area Plan
3. Hamilton Road Corridor Plan
4. Livingston East Area Plan
5. Port Columbus Area Development Partnership
6. Southside Plan Amendment (Merion Village and Schumacher Place)
7. Southwest Area Plan

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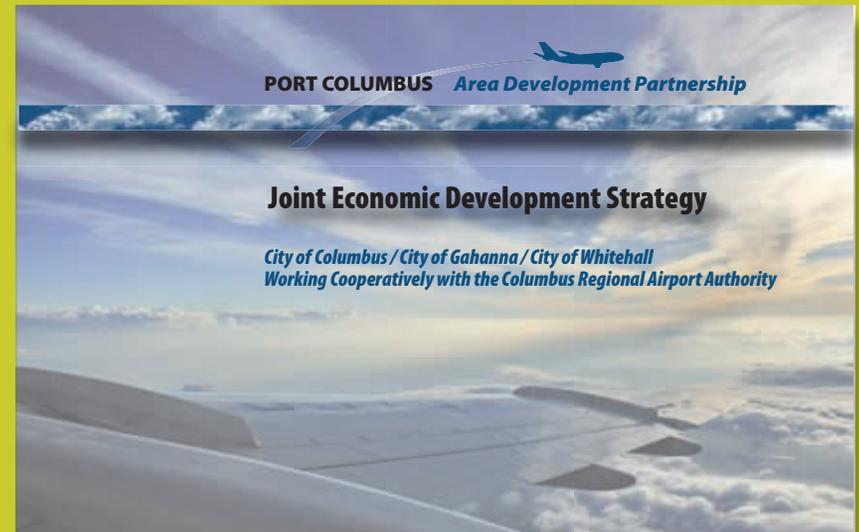
## 2007 Year in Review

**Plans Underway.** In 2007 the division initiated several planning processes that are concluding in early 2008, namely *Port Columbus Area Development Partnership* economic development plan, *Southside Plan Amendment for Merion Village and Schumacher Place*, and *Hamilton Road Corridor Plan* working with BBP and Carter Burgess.

Initial background research and community discussions were initiated in late 2007 for four new planning projects: *Clintonville Neighborhood Plan*, *Fifth by Northwest Neighborhood Plan*, *Livingston East Area Plan*, and *Southwest Area Plan*. None of these planning areas has an adopted plan and the Southwest project is a joint undertaking with the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department.

**Development Activity.** The Planning Division accepted administrative duties for annexations in 2007. As noted in the February 4th edition of *The Columbus Dispatch*, about 111 acres were added to the city in 2007, taking the city to about 215 square miles. Planning staff also conducted reviews of over 300 zoning and variance applications, right-of-way vacations and billboard requests.

**Zoning.** The division, working jointly with the zoning staff, city attorney's office, and council staff initiated revisions to the commercial overlays (urban, community and regional) as well as the Special Graphics Control Area provisions. The final legislation is scheduled to go to Council in April 2008. A comprehensive list of recommended overlays from area plans ►►



*The Port Columbus Area Development Partnership economic development plan and the Southside Plan Amendment for Merion Village and Schumacher Place.*



**SOUTH SIDE PLAN**  
Merion Village and Schumacher Place Amendment



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## Team Code

### Addressing Columbus Coding Issues Through Periodic Reviews and Updates

*By Kevin Wheeler*

Finding your way around the various codes and regulations that govern a community's built environment can be difficult. Cities like Columbus, with many types of neighborhoods and eras of growth, pose special challenges. Lot size and coverage, setbacks, vehicular access, and open space provisions can vary widely. The Columbus zoning code last underwent a comprehensive revision in 1958 and is viewed by many as reflecting a suburban orientation that is inconsistent with the City's emphasis on urban redevelopment and infill. Code standards that focus on auto-oriented development patterns don't work well in older neighborhoods. This results in nonconforming buildings and parcels as well as areas that don't fit neatly into any single district.

#### Commercial Overlays

Columbus has addressed many of these issues through periodic revisions and updates focused on specific code elements. The establishment of the Urban Commercial Overlay to address the unique pattern of older commercial corridors is an example of this approach. These standards and requirements, intended to



*Main Street UCO - Transit Center and Medical Office. Photo provided by Planning Division.*

reinforce a denser, walkable streetscape, supersede provisions of the underlying districts. While these overlays have proven successful, with many projects having been built, experience has also shown that there are problems in the current set of commercial overlay code sections that should be addressed. ▶▶

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## Team Code

### Addressing Columbus Coding Issues Through Periodic Reviews and Updates

During 2007, an interdepartmental staff team worked consistently to go through each type of commercial overlay and two special graphic control area designations to identify needed changes. This line-by-line approach, while time consuming, resulted in a comprehensive revision package that will be submitted to the Columbus Development Commission and City Council this spring. We are confident that the revisions will result in a substantially improved set of provisions for use in our neighborhoods.

The commercial overlay revision process proved so successful that other code revision initiatives have been identified. The key to this success was clearly the active engagement of key staff throughout every stage. This included participants from the Building Services Division, City Attorney's Office, City Council, Transportation Division, as well as the Planning Division. We meet every two weeks to go through a range of issues, which inevitably involves active discussion and debate. In addition to developing code revisions, the group can act as a sounding board for other code related efforts.

#### Parking

This year Team Code, as we refer to the group, will tackle a number of code items, with an emphasis on the parking section of the city's zoning code (CC 3342). The majority of this code section dates to the mid 1980s and has not benefited from a comprehensive review since that time. The code requires minimum levels of parking based on type and size of use. While these requirements may be appropriate for some



*Day after Thanksgiving, 2007.*

uses, in many cases they've proven to be out of sync with demand. The current code also does not adequately address the concept of shared parking or consider the differences in parking demands for suburban and central city portions of the community. Significant amounts of land within the city are allocated to unused or underused parking. This leads to an inefficient use of land and excess of impervious surface which conflicts with Mayor Coleman's Get Green initiative. The objective for Columbus will be to "right size" its approach to parking so that requirements are more closely linked to actual demand. ◆

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## Clintonville Kicks off New Planning Process

*By Christine Palmer*

The Clintonville planning process started at a brisk pace with the January 16th kick-off public workshop. The evening attracted over 200 Clintonville stakeholders, a record turnout for any recent planning meeting. Initial feedback focused on preserving and increasing the amount of green space, improving biking and sidewalk facilities, increasing the number of restaurant options, improving the Indianola corridor, preventing commercial encroachment into residential districts, and preserving historic structures and districts. Priority opportunity sites identified include the intersection at North Broadway and High, portions of High Street south of North Broadway and north of Morse, and at portions of Indianola south of Morse.

Attendees were presented a brief overview of the planning process and a summary of existing conditions tying in the existing plans and studies for the Indianola and High Street corridors. Following the presentation attendees divided into small groups to brainstorm and cluster issues that the plan should address. Next folks were able to contribute feedback on transportation concerns and opportunity sites through hands on exercises that utilized maps to identify where issues exist and where opportunities should be sought. An additional exercise utilized a map to identify places that they individually considered as a favorite or least favorite area. These visual tools will help to identify the priority areas in which to focus during the plan development phase.



*High Street and Longview Street block.*

Prior to the workshop, stakeholders identified by the Area Commission were interviewed by Planning staff. Main themes from the interviews were diversity of housing stock is highly valued and contributes to the attractiveness of Clintonville, a balance is needed between a walkable neighborhood and a car accessible commercial district, and protection of the Olentangy River and its tributaries is a priority. ►►

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## Clintonville Kicks off New Planning Process

The *Clintonville Neighborhood Plan*, initiated at the request of the Clintonville Area Commission, is the first comprehensive plan for the neighborhood. The plan coincides with the Planning Division's rollout of a new streamlined planning process. The new process is designed to better maximize participants' time along with making the public meetings more productive and meaningful to participants. Fewer meetings will be held in an effort to garner more feedback at a limited number of public workshops.

The timeline for the planning process has been reduced to a year to enable a plan to be created and adopted more timely. In addition, focus is put on early background research and issues identification through the stakeholder interviews. By using the interviews the Division has improved insight on the issues important to the community. This helps to deliver a more timely and pertinent plan. These improvements to the planning process in combination with the strong community participation will help to create a rigorous and meaningful plan for the Clintonville neighborhood.

For information on the *Clintonville Neighborhood Plan*, please contact Christine Palmer at [clpalmer@columbus.gov](mailto:clpalmer@columbus.gov). ◆



*Photos of the 200-plus people attending the January 16th kick-off public workshop for the Clintonville Neighborhood Plan.*

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## Southwest Area Starts the First Planning Process

*By Adrienne Joly, AICP*

The city and Franklin County are jointly undertaking a unique partnership to prepare a consensus-based plan for the Southwest area. About 57% of the area is in Columbus corporate limits and the remaining 43% is unincorporated Franklin County (Franklin and Jackson Townships). For this reason and at the request of the Southwest Area Commission, the city of Columbus and Franklin County are working together on a collaborative planning effort. A first for the community, the plan will set a vision for the future development of the area.

The Southwest area covers approximately 10 square miles and has 16,772 residents. The boundaries are Mound Street and Greenlawn Avenue on the north, the Scioto River on the east, I-270 on the south and the railroad tracks (west of Harrisburg Pike) on the west.

A new planning project opens the door to a new part of the city and the southwest is proving to be an interesting study. It contains historic treasures such as the leafy Greenlawn Cemetery, but also the infrastructure that keeps the entire city running in the Jackson Pike Wastewater Treatment Plant. There are both cozy neighborhoods tucked away off of major streets and numerous businesses along the I-71 corridor. A wealth of natural resources - Big Run, Early Run and the Scioto River – represents untapped recreational opportunities. The area has a rural atmosphere, but is near an urban setting and it offers a spectacular view of the downtown skyline.



*Garden near Big Run Road.*

A relatively young area commission, seated in 2004, the Southwest has worked hard to mobilize its diverse parties to begin this group planning effort. Under the leadership of the Area Commission, a 12-member working committee will work with staffs from the city Planning Division and the county Economic Development and Planning Department. The working committee is made up of residents, area clergy, township officials and people whose jobs are in the Southwest. The committee will begin its work in early March and will host its first public workshop in April. ►►

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## Southwest Area Starts the First Planning Process

The process will have four phases all crafted around public workshops and working committee meetings. Input from the community is essential for development of a successful area plan. Area residents, businesses and other interested stakeholders will have a variety of ways to get involved and have their voice heard. This is a historic moment for the Southwest, as the community begins its first efforts to collectively plan for its future.

For more information, please contact the following individuals:

### City of Columbus

Adrienne Joly, [aljoly@columbus.gov](mailto:aljoly@columbus.gov)

Brent Warren, [bewarren@columbus.gov](mailto:bewarren@columbus.gov)

### Franklin County

Ben Weiner, [biweiner@franklincountyohio.gov](mailto:biweiner@franklincountyohio.gov) ◆

*Greenlawn Cemetery  
entrance from Brown Road.*



*Buffer area.*



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109 N. Front Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
<http://development.columbus.gov>

## Contact Us

### ADMINISTRATION

Vince Papsidero, AICP	Administrator	614.645.8030	<a href="mailto:vapapsidero@columbus.gov">vapapsidero@columbus.gov</a>
Kevin Wheeler	Assistant Administrator	614.645.6057	<a href="mailto:kjwheeler@columbus.gov">kjwheeler@columbus.gov</a>
Lori Baudro, AICP	Senior Projects Coordinator	614.645.6986	<a href="mailto:lsbaudro@columbus.gov">lsbaudro@columbus.gov</a>
Linda Poulton	Administrative Secretary	614.645.8036	<a href="mailto:ljpoulton@columbus.gov">ljpoulton@columbus.gov</a>

### LONG RANGE PLANNING

Adrienne Joly	Senior Planner	614.645.0664	<a href="mailto:aljoly@columbus.gov">aljoly@columbus.gov</a>
Brent Warren	Planner	614.645.0662	<a href="mailto:bewarren@columbus.gov">bewarren@columbus.gov</a>

### NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING

Mark Dravillas, AICP	Manager	614.645.6823	<a href="mailto:mcdravillas@columbus.gov">mcdravillas@columbus.gov</a>
Christine Palmer	Senior Planner	614.645.8791	<a href="mailto:clpalmer@columbus.gov">clpalmer@columbus.gov</a>
Devayani Puranik	Senior Planner	614.645.0663	<a href="mailto:ddpuranik@columbus.gov">ddpuranik@columbus.gov</a>
Todd Singer, AICP, JD	Senior Planner	614.645.7565	<a href="mailto:tasinger@columbus.gov">tasinger@columbus.gov</a>
Elizabeth Linville	Planner	614.645.6556	<a href="mailto:eclinville@columbus.gov">eclinville@columbus.gov</a>

### URBAN DESIGN

Daniel Thomas	Manager	614.645.8404	<a href="mailto:djthomas@columbus.gov">djthomas@columbus.gov</a>
Dan Ferdelman, AIA	Urban Designer	614.645.6096	<a href="mailto:dbferdelman@columbus.gov">dbferdelman@columbus.gov</a>
Corrin Wendell	Urban Designer	614.645.8654	<a href="mailto:chwendell@columbus.gov">chwendell@columbus.gov</a>
Elsie Stiger	Graphic Designer	614.645.7244	<a href="mailto:elstiger@columbus.gov">elstiger@columbus.gov</a>

Newsletter produced by Elsie Stiger, Graphic Designer