

**ORDINANCE NO. 9 ,2007**

**AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING GOALS AND POLICIES FOR A MONTGOMERY  
COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Montgomery is committed to the maintenance and enhancement of the City as a high-quality residential community; and

**WHEREAS**, the City must establish standards for infrastructure and services that will support such objectives and enhance the quality of life for the people of this community; and

**WHEREAS**, the Planning Commission has recommended initial goals and policies for a Montgomery Comprehensive Community Plan and this City Council deems that the same should be adopted and promulgated.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED** by the Council of the City of Montgomery, Ohio:

**SECTION 1.** The City Council hereby adopts the MONTGOMERY COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN: GOALS AND POLICIES dated April 16, 2007, revised July 18, 2007 and revised August 1, 2007. The same are attached hereto and incorporated in this Ordinance by reference as if fully written.

**SECTION 2.** This Plan shall form the basis for continuing examination of the means of achieving the realization of the said goals and policies. The Administration and the Planning Commission are hereby charged with responsibility for continuing the effort hereby initiated and the City Council pledges itself to the fulfillment of the goals and policies it now adopts.

**SECTION 3.** This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

PASSED: August 1, 2007

ATTEST: Susan J. Hamm  
Susan J. Hamm, Clerk of Council

Gerri Harbison  
Gerri Harbison, Mayor

APPROVED AS TO FORM

Terrence M. Donnellon  
Terrence M. Donnellon, Law Director



# COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

August 1, 2007

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Montgomery is a premier residential community of citizens, businesses, organizations and institutions who are committed partners with their local government in the care and support of our vibrant City. While respecting tradition, we are forward thinking, embrace change, and continuously seek opportunities for improvement. Parks, landmarks, pedestrian walkways, distinctive landscaping, and fountains contribute to the unique character and ambiance of our “Tree City”. Our neighborhoods are well-maintained, reflect a diverse population and, architecturally, are a pleasing blend of old and new. Our business community is varied and well balanced and our historic Heritage District is the signature of the community. The City is fiscally sound and delivers high quality programs and services to our customers.

## **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

This document, in conjunction with on-going strategic planning, the parks and recreation master plan, capital improvements plan, and other planning studies, are intended to establish the policies the City of Montgomery will use in guiding the future growth of the City. This document will provide the background and context which City Council, the Planning Commission and the administration will use in making decisions on public expenditures, land use regulations, and development proposals. It will be the basis for future modifications to the zoning code. This plan does not make specific recommendations on the development of individual parcels of land, rather it provides a framework of goals and objectives to ensure future decisions are consistent with the City's mission statement and the health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

## HISTORY

Montgomery was founded by settlers from Montgomery, New York, who first arrived in the area in October, 1795. Access to Montgomery at that time was up Sycamore Creek from the Little Miami River at Remington , and also through a series of established Indian trails. The community developed around the intersection of two Indian trails at the corner of Cooper Road and Montgomery Road. The community was already reasonably established by the time the first official plat was recorded by Nathaniel Terwilliger in 1802.

Early growth developed along the state road from Cincinnati to Columbus, which is now Montgomery Road. By 1824, this state road became a well maintained toll road which brought travelers through the village. Being 12 miles, or a comfortable one day trip from Cincinnati, the village became a natural stopping point along the road and a group of inns and businesses were opened. A number of those early buildings remain today, protected by a local preservation ordinance.

The village grew slowly through the 1800's, remaining primarily a farming community with a small commercial district surrounding Montgomery and Cooper Roads. In April, 1910, the village was incorporated and the population was approximately 500 people. By 1924, city water and electricity had come to the community and Montgomery Road had been resurfaced to concrete.

The village did not grow substantially until the conclusion of World War II. In 1940, the population was reported at 425, less than when it was incorporated thirty years earlier. However, that changed in the 1940's. Between 1943 and 1949 a building code was enacted and the first zoning code adopted. This ordinance established a business district and classified the rest of the village as residential. The first residential subdivision (Ferris-Williams) was developed east of downtown in 1946. Beginning in 1952 with an annexation that quadrupled the size and increased the population to 1,700, the village began a 15 year span that saw the land area increase ten fold and the population increase to 4,000 residents. By 1970, after another land annexation, the population swelled to 6,000 positioning Montgomery to become a city in 1971.

The growth of the City has followed Montgomery Road north, with the Indian Hill corporation line forming the east boundary and City of Blue Ash to the west. In 1957 the Myers Y. Cooper Company started development of the first commercial shopping center as part of the Montgomery Heights planned development that included residential housing and the dedication of land for a park and new municipal building. Montgomery Shopping Center has expanded several times since. A number of auto dealerships came to Montgomery Road during the 1960's, often over the objections of residents. City Council frequently resisted rezoning from residential to commercial along Montgomery Road during this period, sometimes winning these battles and other times losing in court.

The construction of I-71, I-275, and Cross County Highway in the 1960's made the City easily accessible from anywhere in Hamilton County, which helped spark growth and development throughout the City, including the downtown commercial district. In the early 1970's, the City became concerned that the increased demolition of the older buildings downtown was destroying the character of the City. Council took steps to limit growth and establish a vision for the community based on historic preservation and low density residential development. An historic preservation ordinance was adopted in 1976 and a streetscape master plan was implemented to help create the small-town, colonial image that the City desired.

In 1967, the City was approached by representatives of Bethesda Hospital about opening a new hospital on 88 acres on Montgomery Road north of Pfeiffer Road. A new zoning district, 'H' (Hospital) was established and the project proceeded despite opposition from surrounding residents. Bethesda North Hospital was opened in June 1970. The hospital has continued to expand its facilities and services, most recently in 2006 when it began construction of Phase II of a long-range capital improvement program that included a seven-story bed tower. The hospital has become the most important economic asset for the community and provides a positive image for the City to the rest of the county.

As a result of the development of the hospital, other property owners along Montgomery Road sought to rezone their property from single family residential to a commercial use. The City fought these proposals, but ultimately all the land fronting Montgomery Road between Pfeiffer and Weller Road was rezoned to an Office designation. Two parcels that abutted directly behind the office uses were developed as multi-family residential. Today, the corridor is developed primarily with medical-related office uses.

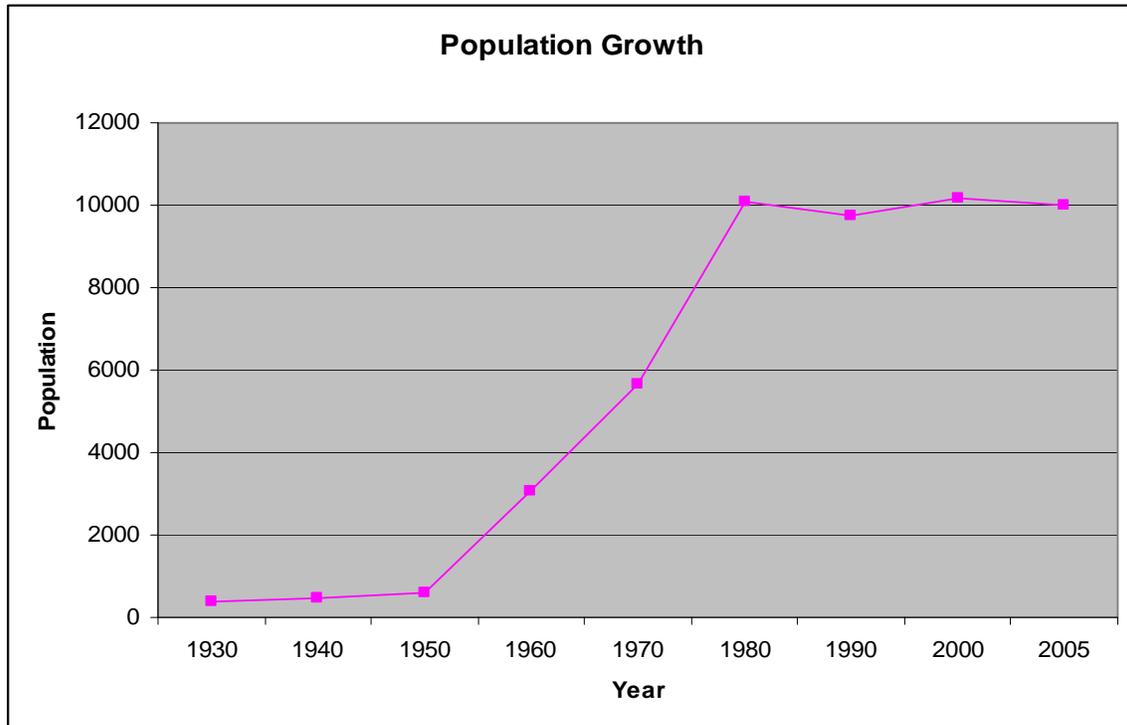
As it enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Montgomery finds itself built out, for the most part, and unlikely to grow significantly. The City is an affluent community of predominantly single family residences, with a small commercial and medical component. The town has continued to emphasize low density growth with an architecture that retains a colonial small-town feel. The economy is stable and the outlook positive.

## LOCAL CHARACTERISTICS

### Population

The population of the City of Montgomery increased dramatically between 1950 and 1980 when the population stabilized at approximately 10,000 residents as illustrated by Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Population Growth City of Montgomery 1930 - 2005**



The 2000 United States Census shows that the median age in Montgomery was 42.6 years of age, with 48% of the population being male and 52% female. The majority of Montgomery residents are between the ages of 18 and 64; however, the number of residents 65 years of age and over has been steadily growing from 4.7% in 1970 to 15.5% in 2000, as shown in Table 2. The percentage of Montgomery's population that is 65 years and over is greater than that of Cincinnati (12.3%), Hamilton County (13.5%), and the State of Ohio (13.3%).

**Table 2: Age of Population**

<b>Age</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Under 18 years of age	40.70%	33.34%	26.88%	28.13%
18 – 64 years of age	54.56%	57.71%	60.74%	56.34%
65 years of age and over	4.74%	7.76%	12.38%	15.5%

The population in the City of Montgomery has always been primarily Caucasian as illustrated in Table 3, with 94% of the population being white in 2000. The white percentage of Montgomery’s population is greater than that of Cincinnati (60.3%), Hamilton County (77.3%), and the State of Ohio (85%). The largest minority group in Montgomery is Asian with 3.3% of the population in 2000.

**Table 3: Racial Composition 1970 - 2000**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Percent of Population</b>			
	<b>White</b>	<b>African American</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Hispanic</b>
1970	99.8%	0.2%	0%	0%
1980	98.4%	0%	0.1%	0%
1990	95.8%	0.1%	3.1%	0.5%
2000	94%	1.6%	3.3%	0.8%

The percentage of married males and females has stayed fairly steady in the City of Montgomery since 1970, except for a low point in 1990 as shown in Table 4. The number of married men and women rebounded in 2000 with the highest rates in 30 years, as illustrated by Table 4.

**Table 4: Marital Status by Sex**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Percent Married</b>			
	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>
Male	70.8%	71.6%	56.04%	75.1%
Female	68.7%	65.9%	53.15%	69.8%

According to the 2000 United States Census 62.5% of persons over 25 years of age in the City of Montgomery have attained a Bachelor’s degree or higher, a number that has been on the rise since 1970, as shown in Table 5. In 2000, the residents of Montgomery had a significantly higher percentage of the population with a bachelor’s degree or higher than the City of Cincinnati (26.6%), Hamilton County (29.2%) and the State of Ohio (21.1%).

**Table 5: Educational Attainment**

Year	Percent of Population over 25	
	High School Graduate	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
1970	81.8%	35.2%
1980	89.9%	45%
1990	94.3%	52.5%
2000	95.7%	62.5%

The unemployment rate in the City of Montgomery had been increasing every decade until the year 2000, when the unemployment rate dropped to just 1.3 percent, as illustrated by Table 6. The unemployment rate in 2000 for the City of Montgomery was far less than the unemployment rate in the City of Cincinnati (4.6%), Hamilton County (3.3%) and the State of Ohio (3.2%).

**Table 6: Unemployment Rate**

	1970	1980	1990	2000
<b>Percent Unemployed</b>	2.02%	2.81%	3.4%	1.3%

The average commute time of 22.3 minutes has been increasing, as shown in Table 7; however, the average commute time in 2000 for residents of Montgomery was slightly shorter than the commute for residents of the City of Cincinnati (23.1 minutes), Hamilton County (23 minutes) and the State of Ohio (22.9 minutes).

**Table 7: Average Commute Time (in minutes)**

	1970	1980	1990	2000
<b>Average Commute Time (in minutes)</b>	N/A	18.6	18.5	22.3

### **Housing**

Approximately 70% of the land in the City of Montgomery is used for single family residential development with the majority of the homes being on half acre lots. The median home value in 2000 was \$219,700, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, which is significantly higher than the City of Cincinnati (\$93,000), Hamilton County (\$111,400) and the State of Ohio (\$103,700). The 2000 United States Census shows that the number of housing units in the City of Montgomery increased by approximately seven percent in the decade between 1990 and 2000; however, the total population has remained stable due to a reduction in household size, as illustrated in Table 8. This trend is expected to continue in the future. Vacancies decreased from 6.5 percent in 1990 to only 2.7 percent

in 2000, which is significantly less vacancies than the City of Cincinnati (10.8%), Hamilton County (7.1%) and the State of Ohio (7.1%).

**Table 8: Housing Characteristics**

	Year		
	1980	1990	2000
Average Household Size	3.25	2.94	2.75
Total Housing Units	3,069	3,462	3,716
Occupied Housing Units	96.3%	93.5%	97.3%
Vacant Housing Units	3.7%	6.5%	2.7%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	91.8%	87.6%	88.5%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	4.5%	5.9%	8.8%

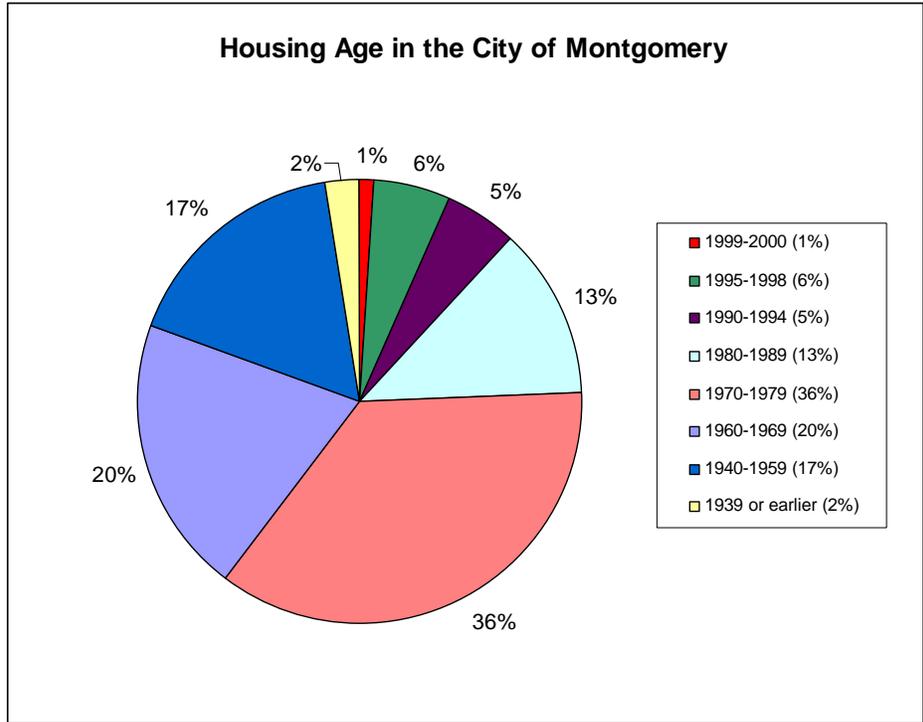
**Table 9: Gross Rent**

Gross rent increased from 1990 to 2000, with nearly 70% of the population paying \$750 or more in rent in 2000 vs. only 29% paying \$750 or more in 1990. This is dramatically higher than the percentage of the population paying \$750 or more in rent in 2000 for the City of Cincinnati (11.5%), Hamilton County (16.1%) and the State of Ohio (14.3%).

Amount of Rent (in dollars)	Year	
	1990	2000
< 200	1.01%	3%
200-299	4.02%	0%
300-499	26.13%	3.7%
500-749	30.15%	17.6%
750-999	17.09%	36.5%
Over 1000	12.56%	32.2%
No cash rent	9.04%	7.0%

The City of Montgomery is mostly built out with approximately 75% of the housing units being built prior to 1980 as illustrated in Figure 2. New housing units are being added through teardown/rebuild construction and through a new development on land previously owned by the Gate of Heaven Cemetery. High density multi-family infill development is beginning to be added to the Historic District. New higher density, multi-family development is also being targeted in the Old Montgomery Gateway District.

**Figure 2: Age of Housing**



**Economic Conditions**

The City of Montgomery is the beneficiary of excellent access to high volume transportation routes, such as Interstate 71, Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway and I-275. The City of Montgomery has an annual budget of \$15 million and derives much of its operating revenue from a one percent earnings tax to fund its full range of City services.

Services provided by the City of Montgomery include police and fire protection, plan review and building inspections, recreational programming, maintenance of seven parks, street maintenance and snow/ice control of 92 lane-miles of roadway, as well as a host of other City programs.

Montgomery is home to a variety of commercial enterprises, including Ohio National Financial Services, Century Motors, Columbia Chevrolet, and Camargo Cadillac and the City’s largest employer is Bethesda North Hospital, a non-profit organization. In addition, the historic downtown is a thriving retail and dining area, including the famous Montgomery Inn Restaurant. However, only about 6.5% of the land in the City is used for office/retail purposes and the City has no land zoned for industry.

The 10 largest taxpayers in the City of Montgomery for 2006 were:

1. Bethesda Hospital
2. Ohio National Financial Services
3. Sycamore School District
4. Cincinnati Eye Institute
5. Anesthesia Group Practice
6. Northeast Radiology
7. Cardiology Center of Cincinnati
8. Riverhills Healthcare
9. Trihealth
10. Meadowbrook Care Center

The 10 largest employers in the City of Montgomery in 2006 were:

1. Bethesda Hospital
2. Sycamore School District
3. Ohio National Financial Services
4. Montgomery Inn
5. Cincinnati Eye Institute
6. Trihealth
7. Meadowbrook Care Center
8. American Nursing Center
9. Kroger
10. Twin Lakes

In 2000, median household income was approximately triple that of Cincinnati and the per capita income has risen at an increasing rate from 1980 to 2000 as illustrated in Table 4. Per capita income in the City of Montgomery is nearly double the per capita income in the City of Cincinnati (\$19,962), Hamilton County (\$24,053) and the State of Ohio (\$21,003). The number of families below the poverty level has increased from 22 families in 1970 to 57 families or just 2.2% in 2000; however, this is significantly lower than in the surrounding areas and the state. In the City of Cincinnati, 18.2% of families were living below the poverty level in 2000, while Hamilton County had 8.8% of its families living below the poverty level and 9.2% of all Ohio families were living below the poverty level.

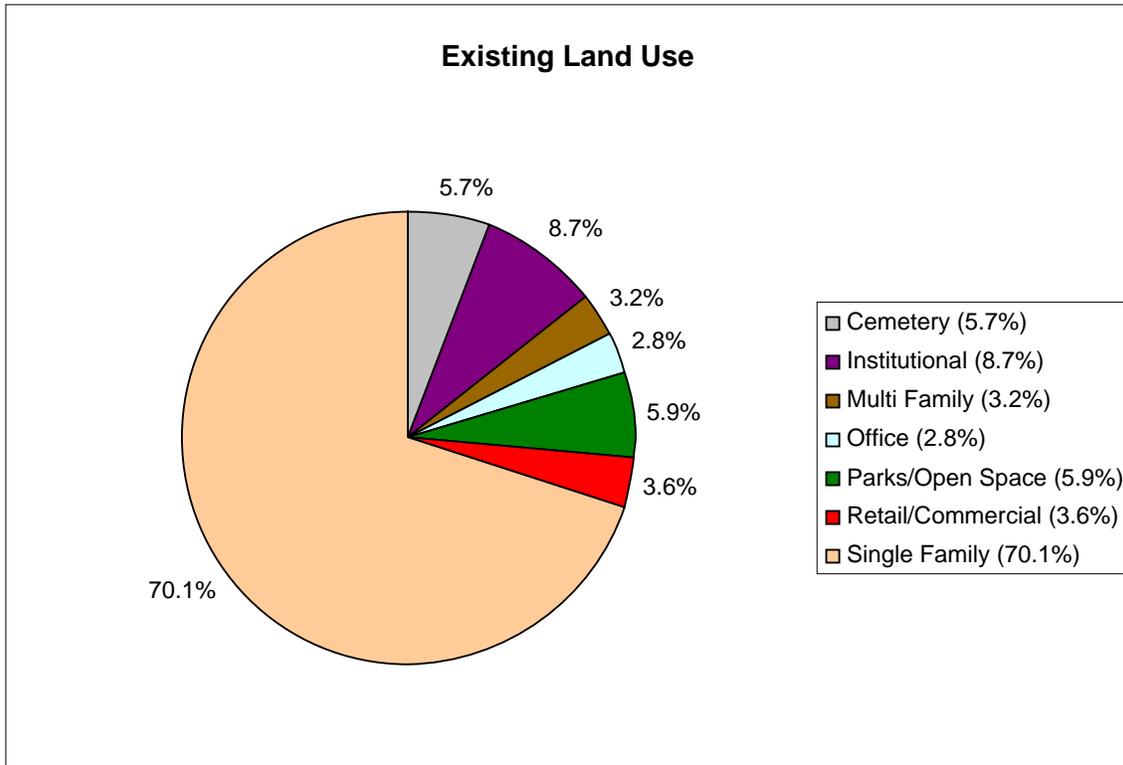
**Table 4: Economic Characteristics**

	Year			
	1970	1980	1990	2000
% in Labor Force, 16 years & over	37.4%	61.5%	65%	65.7%
Median Household Income		\$38,540	\$65,424	\$89,224
Median Family Income	\$18,902	\$39,637	\$69,967	\$100,158
Per Capita Income	\$5,144	\$12,342	\$18,987	\$45,460
Families Below Poverty Level	22	11	48	57

## Existing Land Use

The existing land use in the City of Montgomery is primarily single family residential. As illustrated by Figure 3, single family development accounts for approximately 70% of the land in the City, with multi-family development accounting for 3.2% of the land. Much of the land, which is being used for institutional and/or recreational uses, is also zoned for single family residential development. Office and retail uses only account for 6.4% of the land within the City, which is only slightly more than the land devoted to parks/open space and cemeteries as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Existing Land Use**



## **STATEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL LAND USES**

### **Background and Existing Conditions**

The City originally developed around the Cooper Road/Montgomery Road/Main Street intersections. Other than the Montgomery Road Corridor, the City has developed as a series of annexations of single family subdivisions. Beginning with the Ferris/Williams subdivision after World War II, the City now comprises over 15 distinct residential neighborhoods, most of which are zoned at the most restrictive single family classification (minimum 20,000 square foot lot). The evolution of the City reflects a preference for neighborhoods with multiple cul-de-sacs that connect to one of the City's major transportation arteries (Montgomery, Pfeiffer, Weller, Cooper, Deerfield, Kemper, and Zig Zag). Over 85% of the land in Montgomery is zoned single family residential and 70% has been built out with single family residential uses.

The City prides itself in its residential character and the quality of its neighborhoods. Montgomery residents expect the City to retain its healthy neighborhoods and protect them from inappropriate uses within and abutting the neighborhoods.

### **Past City Policies**

The Goals and Objectives of the 1986 comprehensive plan reflect the City's emphasis on its residential character:

*Goal: The character of the community will be maintained as predominantly high quality, low density residential, with open space for community use and environmental preservation.*

Objectives:

1. Permit new single family residential at a maximum density of two dwelling units per acre. Clustering of single family dwelling units on an appropriate tract of land will be permitted in accordance with the Montgomery Zoning Code.
2. Permit high quality multi-family residential development in accordance with the Montgomery Zoning Code.
3. Require property maintenance consistent with the character of the community through appropriate legislation.
4. Require comprehensive architectural and site review for multi-family proposals to ensure development consistent with the community's standards.

## **Current Issues Impacting Single Family Residential Uses**

1. Much of the existing housing stock lacks the features and amenities that today's home buyers seek, such as first floor master suites and open floor plans. Consumer demand in this regard is not expected to change in the future.
2. Increasing property values and construction costs are making the price of new single family housing unaffordable for many people, particularly those searching for starter homes. Property appreciation due to factors including teardowns, a desirable school district, community appearance, location and other market forces is increasing the cost of existing homes beyond the reach of first time homebuyers.
3. Energy costs may affect the size of new houses and the desirability of existing housing.
4. There are areas around the Heritage District where many of the lots do not meet the existing 'A' zoning regulations for lot width and size. This restricts the ability of owners to sell or upgrade these properties and results in a steady stream of dimensional variance applications to the Board of Zoning Appeals.
5. Existing single family residences on major arteries may not appreciate as quickly as other residences. Existing neighborhoods may be impacted by cut through traffic and an overall increase in traffic.
6. Teardowns will continue to impact single family neighborhoods, replacing older, modest dwelling units with more expensive houses that can impact the grading and drainage of the area.
7. Many of today's homebuyers seek pedestrian oriented neighborhoods where they can walk to shopping and services.
8. There will continue to be a significant amount of turnover of large lot properties as older residents seek to downsize and reduce property maintenance.

## **Policies for the Future**

- I. The City will continue to support and protect the high quality, low density, single family residential character of the City's established neighborhoods.

### *Strategies:*

1. The City will discourage rezoning land in existing healthy residential neighborhoods to non-residential zoning. The City is committed to maintaining the existing 'A' zoning with half-acre single family residential lots in neighborhoods which were developed under the 'A' regulations.
2. The City will maintain and enforce a rigorous property maintenance code program.
3. The City will continuously evaluate screening and buffering requirements between non-residential and residential uses to ensure that residential neighborhoods are protected.
4. Clustering of single family dwellings on appropriate tracts of land will continue to be permitted in accordance with the zoning code.

II. The City will allow market forces to determine the rate and extent to which existing neighborhoods are being redeveloped through the teardown/rebuild process.

*Strategies:*

1. The City will not create additional zoning or design regulations intended solely for the purpose of restricting or discouraging teardown activity.
2. The City will use strict grading guidelines to ensure redeveloped single family lots do not negatively impact existing drainage patterns which may threaten surrounding residences.
3. The City will ensure that existing building and zoning codes do not restrict innovative energy conservation techniques.

III. The City will evaluate areas in the City where the 'A' residential zoning may be restricting reinvestment and the proper maintenance of the properties.

*Strategies:*

1. The City will evaluate ways to reduce the number of non-conforming lots and buildings in the residential areas surrounding the Heritage District.
2. The City will evaluate the 'A' single family residential zoning along the Montgomery Road Corridor, while maintaining the single family residential zoning within the area, to determine if the zoning restrictions in the applicable district are causing a deterioration of property values.

## **MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL LAND USES**

### **Background and Existing Conditions**

Montgomery has developed as a primarily single family residential community. The amount of land reserved for multi family residential dwellings (apartments or condominiums) is approximately 5% of the land area of the City. Apartments are located along Cooper Road, Remington Road and Main Street, as well as near the Hospital on Montgomery Road. The Hightower area has a blend of single family and two family residences. The opening of Twin Lakes' main campus, at the intersection of Montgomery Road and Mitchell Farm Lane, in 2005 added 118 apartments for senior citizens. In addition to Twin Lakes, there are 123 apartments and 253 condominiums in the City.

Since 2005 there has been pressure on the existing apartment rental stock to switch to condominiums. Mayfair Apartments, located on Montgomery Road across from Bethesda North Hospital, has converted its 100 apartment units to condominiums. Apartments on both Remington Road and Main Street are currently proposed to be demolished in order to construct new condominiums. Undeveloped land on Montgomery Road on both the north end of the City (Vintage Club) and the south entrance (old Montgomery Chevrolet dealership), are being designed to accommodate condominiums.

### **Past City Policies**

Under the general Residential Land Use section of the 1986 Comprehensive Community Plan, the following objectives were identified for multi-family residential:

1. Permit new high-quality, multi-family residential development in accordance with the Montgomery Zoning Code.
2. Require comprehensive architectural and site plan review for multi-family proposals to ensure development consistent with the community's standards.

### **Current Issues Impacting Multi-Family Residential Uses**

1. Existing rental apartments are being torn down and replaced by condominiums, or the apartments themselves are being converted to condominiums. New apartments, other than for senior citizens at Twin Lakes, are not being developed.
2. There is an interest in higher density multi family condominiums on parcels surrounding the downtown historic district. The desired density exceeds the current zoning requirements.
3. There is a desire for land arrangements that encourage 'walkability' with a mix of uses including multi-family and office/retail.
4. Many older residents living on ½ acre lots would like to downsize and remain in Montgomery; however, there is a shortage of affordable options.

## **Policies for the Future**

1. The City supports development of new multi-family residential units in targeted areas outside of single family residential neighborhoods, and particularly surrounding the downtown historic district.
2. The City encourages mixed use developments which incorporate multi-family uses and are designed to encourage pedestrian connections between uses.
3. The City supports higher density development around the historic district than in other areas zoned for multiple dwelling units per lot; however, this density should not exceed ten units per acre unless developed under the Planned Unit Development criteria.
4. The decision of whether multi-unit developments are rental or ownership should be market driven.

## **OLD MONTGOMERY GATEWAY DISTRICT**

### **Background and Existing Conditions**

The Old Montgomery Gateway District (OMG) comprises approximately 19 acres on Montgomery Road between the Heritage District and Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway. Prior to 2006, the area was zoned for general business uses which resulted in the east side of Montgomery Road being developed into two large car dealerships and on the west side, a mix of medical offices, auto related uses, retail and restaurants. The area was rezoned in 2006 based on the recommendations of a planning study of the area conducted by City staff and planning consultant McBride Dale Clarion. The result of the rezoning was the creation of a new zoning category, the Old Montgomery Gateway District, which encourages creation of mixed use developments and restricts certain commercial uses that have a significant impact on surrounding properties and/or do not complement the adjoining Heritage District. This area had been added to the Heritage Overlay District in 1991; however, the creation of the Old Montgomery Gateway District eliminated the overlay district regulations and incorporated new more flexible architectural guidelines as part of the new zoning district.

The area has an automobile orientation. Large surface parking lots occupy most of the parcels and traffic entering and exiting the properties is heavy. There is also a significant grade change running south to north. One of the City's landmarks sits at the northwest corner of Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway and Montgomery Road.

### **Past City Policies**

This area was included as part of the Commercial Land Use Section of the 1986 Comprehensive Plan. The stated goal for the Commercial area was "The development of business/commercial uses which complement and serve the needs of the community, while maintaining the single family residential character of the City, will be encouraged".

The objectives stated in the 1986 plan are:

1. Discourage rezoning from non-business to business use.
2. Promote business/commercial development within the presently well-defined business areas.
3. Develop safe and convenient pedestrian access to business/commercial areas.
4. Develop safe and convenient vehicular access to business/commercial areas, including appropriate access control standards.
5. Require property and sign maintenance consistent with the character of the community.
6. Require comprehensive architectural and site review to ensure development consistent with the community.
7. Require extensive greenbelt buffers between business/commercial uses and residential uses.
8. Encourage transitional zoning where applicable.

The 2001 Heritage District Strategy Plan by McBride Dale Clarion identified the 9.5 acres on the east side of Montgomery Road as an area of potential redevelopment. It recommended that if the two properties are redeveloped, a mixed use 'city center' with a combination of residential, retail, office, and public use should be encouraged.

### **Current Issues Facing the Old Montgomery Gateway**

1. Increased traffic on Montgomery Road is increasing the difficulty of entering and exiting businesses along both sides of the road, as well as Hartfield Place.
2. The district is not pedestrian friendly.
3. There are a number of older developments on larger lots which are non-conforming to the OMG guidelines and do not complement the adjoining Heritage District.
4. There are a number of parcels south of Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway that are in the City of Montgomery, but not the OMG District. This area, while in Montgomery, does not share any identifying features with the City. Should the OMG district be expanded south to include this area?
5. There is currently no on-street or public parking in the district.

### **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will conduct a study of the parcels south of Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway to determine if they should be included into the OMG district.
2. The City will conduct a traffic impact study, including an analysis of access management.
3. The City will investigate establishing a traffic signal as part of the redevelopment of the property on the east side of Montgomery Road.
4. The City will encourage cross access movement along the rear of properties on the west side of Montgomery Road.
5. The City will continue to work with developers and property owners to ensure that any redevelopment includes pedestrian friendly features that connect the OMG district to the Heritage District.
6. The City will encourage the development of attached residential units at densities not to exceed 15 units per acre.
7. The City will investigate establishing an identifying entrance feature at Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway.
8. The City will be sensitive to the adjoining residential areas when considering redevelopment proposals.

## THE HERITAGE OVERLAY DISTRICT

### Background and Existing Conditions

The Montgomery Heritage District represents the original settlement of the City, which dates back to 1795. There are nineteen properties in the district which are listed as local landmarks, seven of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. There are a number of other historically and architecturally significant buildings in this area as well. The town was originally laid out in a grid pattern, with Montgomery Road and Cooper Road being the principal intersection. Main Street, one block east of Montgomery has been modified to provide a bypass around the busy Montgomery Road core blocks.

The District is made up of a variety of retail, institutional, office and residential uses. Directly north of the Heritage District on Montgomery Road is the principal commercial corridor of the City. The Heritage District generally contains smaller lots than the adjoining OMG District and northern commercial districts. The architecture and streetscape have created a common theme for the area, which is one of its principal attributes.

The District also includes stretches of Cooper Road both east and west of Montgomery Road. The eastern part of Cooper Road is a desirable single family residential street with a number of landmark houses in an appealing setting. The western portion of Cooper includes a number of landmarks as well; however, this area is primarily commercial in nature except for the parcels close to Zig Zag Road.

### Past City Policies

The 1986 Comprehensive Community Plan identified specific goals and a series of long range objectives for the Heritage District:

*Goal: The City recognizes the unique panorama of social and architectural history in its Historic Downtown area, and intends to preserve and enhance the area so that it will serve as living testimony of Montgomery's past, present, and future.*

Objectives:

1. Promote and ensure the economic viability of Montgomery's downtown.
  - a. Undertake downtown improvements and developments through private and public funding.
  - b. Promote and develop a coordinated downtown parking plan, offering adequate parking, and safe and attractive pedestrian walkways throughout the downtown.

2. Explore the feasibility of developing high-quality condominiums or apartments in the downtown area to further enhance the vitality of the area.
3. Work with the Landmarks Commission and Historical Society to ensure the historic integrity of the area.

In 1976, the City adopted legislation establishing the Heritage Overlay District, the Landmarks Commission, and the enabling legislation for designating local landmarks. The District was modified and expanded in 1991. In 2002, the City also established a streetscape master plan for the district which sets a specific set of requirements for sidewalk installation and other enhancements.

In 2001, the City completed a Heritage District Strategy which identified seven areas in and around the Heritage District as potential areas for redevelopment. This report identified the following five guiding principles to be used when evaluating development proposals and future public investment.

1. The current human scale, quality and historic significance of the Heritage District should be encouraged in order to preserve and enhance the character of the District.
2. Conditions and qualities that attract and retain viable revenue generating establishments should be maintained and encouraged.
3. Uses that enhance and integrate well into the fabric of the District should be encouraged and measures should be taken to ensure compatibility with the desired character of the District.
4. Pedestrian access to and within the District should be encouraged, preserved, and enhanced.
5. Convenient well-designed parking should be encouraged and provided within easy access to major draws within the District. Parking areas should be clearly identified with adequate signage.

### **Current Issues Impacting the Heritage District**

1. New developments are generating additional demand for on-street and on-site parking.
2. New developments may increase traffic congestion at certain times of the day.
3. Increased activity in the district will create more pedestrian/vehicular conflicts.
4. It is a challenge balancing the desire for new development while still maintaining the unique character of the District and a 'sense of place'.
5. The City may not be able to continue the same level of public investment that it has in the recent past.
6. There are a limited number of retail businesses, which makes it difficult for the retail that is there to thrive.
7. Office space in some of the older buildings may become outdated and difficult to rent.
8. Increased property values increase pressure for properties to be redeveloped at a higher intensity of use.

9. There will be continuing pressure to use modern building materials rather than historical, natural materials.
10. There is a lack of public open space.
11. With increased competition from other retail areas, the Heritage District needs an identity that can be marketed.

### **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will develop an overall marketing strategy for the Heritage District which defines a vision of the future and identifies types of uses that are compatible with the district and surrounding residential areas. This vision will encourage modestly expanding entertainment and restaurant opportunities.
2. The City will work with the Landmarks Commission and Historical Society to ensure the historic integrity of the District.
3. The City will pursue a focused public investment strategy to ensure the District gets the funding it needs without ignoring public improvements elsewhere.
4. The City will encourage a pedestrian friendly feeling while respecting the fact that Montgomery Road is a primary traffic artery.
5. The City will encourage higher density residential development on the fringe areas of the District.
6. The City will consider options for structured parking.
7. The City will provide additional public open space by establishing pocket parks, enhancing existing rights of way, and developing public art and amenities.
8. The City will maintain consistency with the Heritage District Study 'guiding principles' which are outlined in the McBride Dale Clarion report.

## MONTGOMERY ROAD COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR DISTRICT

### Background and Existing Conditions

The Montgomery Road commercial corridor district begins at the northern intersection of Main Street and Montgomery Road and continues north approximately half mile to the intersection of Montgomery Road and Schoolhouse Lane. Montgomery Road (State Route 22) was once the principal road to Columbus and Cleveland. Despite the construction of I-71, Montgomery Road has remained a major north/south artery on the east side of Hamilton County. Both sides of Montgomery Road developed with a variety of auto oriented commercial uses. There are currently five auto dealerships on the east side of the road, and two shopping centers with in-front parking on the west side. The area has always been zoned for general commercial use. Today, there is a hodgepodge of large and small lot retail and office uses. The new Montgomery Elementary School was built in 2003 on the same site as the old school.

### Past City Policies

The 1986 Comprehensive Plan identified the following Goals and Objectives for Commercial Land Use:

*Goal: The development of business/commercial uses which complement and serve the needs of the community, while maintaining the single family residential character of the City, will be encouraged.*

Objectives:

1. Discourage rezoning from non-business to business use.
2. Promote business/commercial development within the presently well-defined business areas.
3. Develop safe and convenient pedestrian access to business/commercial areas.
4. Develop safe and convenient vehicular access to business/commercial areas, including appropriate access control standards.
5. Require property and sign maintenance consistent with the character of the community.
6. Require comprehensive architectural and site review to ensure development consistent with the community.
7. Require extensive greenbelt buffers between business/commercial uses and residential uses.
8. Encourage transitional zoning where applicable.

In 2002, the City adopted a new zoning code which reconfirmed the general commercial zoning of the district, but adopted additional regulations to improve the appearance of the commercial areas. Interior and perimeter landscaping for parking areas was added and lighting restrictions were established for parking lots and exterior building lighting. While previously the code specified a minimum number of on-site parking spaces be

provided, a new maximum limitation was adopted to reduce the visual impact of large parking areas and control storm water runoff. Additionally, a number of previously permitted uses were made conditionally permitted uses to allow the City to impose additional conditions on high intensity business uses.

In February 2006, the City adopted additional regulations specifically for the Montgomery Road Commercial Corridor. The Montgomery Road Corridor Design Guidelines provide new flexible requirements for building design and exterior materials. There is also an emphasis on site design which encourages a pedestrian orientation. In April 2007, the City of Montgomery was awarded the Frank F. Ferris Planning Award from the Hamilton County Planning Partnership for the Montgomery Road Corridor Design Guidelines.

### **Current Issues Facing the Montgomery Road Commercial Corridor**

1. Traffic along the corridor has increased significantly. The 1986 Corridor Study completed by KZF, Inc. for the City reported average daily traffic counts of 14,400 on this section of Montgomery Road in 1982. A 2006 traffic count on the Montgomery just north of Schoolhouse, adjoining the commercial corridor reported 23,000 vehicles on this portion of Montgomery Road. This can be expected to continue and perhaps increase.
2. There are multiple access points and a need for better access management.
3. The corridor is not pedestrian friendly for the following reasons:
  - a. The width of Montgomery Road makes crossing the street challenging.
  - b. The traffic volume is high.
  - c. Sidewalk is lacking on the east side of the street.
  - d. There are numerous curb cuts on the west side which create conflicts with the sidewalk.
  - e. Businesses are set back from the road with in-front parking separating the sidewalk from the front doors.
  - f. A number of businesses do not have landscaping along Montgomery Road.
  - g. There are no public spaces along this stretch of Montgomery Road.
4. The overall appearance of the corridor is hampered by non-conforming landscaping, lighting, building design, and general site layout.
5. There are a variety of office and commercial uses which, in some cases, do not complement each other.
6. There are sensitive transitional areas between commercial areas and adjoining residential uses.
7. It is a challenge to balance the need for business identification signage and the overall appearance of the corridor.
8. There is a lack of emphasis on public transportation.

## **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will encourage a lively, synergistic mix of commercial uses along the corridor.
2. The City will develop safe and convenient pedestrian access to businesses.
3. The City will use access management, traffic control devices, curb cuts, and lane marking to maintain safe and orderly traffic flow; reduce the number of curb cuts where possible and improve vehicular access on and off commercial properties.
4. The City will use public/private partnerships to bring non-conforming properties into compliance with City codes.
5. The City will utilize zoning to transition from higher intensity commercial uses to less intense commercial and residential areas.
6. The City will invest in capital improvement projects that enhance the appearance of the corridor for both pedestrians and motorists.
7. The City will maintain strict enforcement of zoning and sign regulations and update the zoning code to meet changing technologies and market conditions.
8. The City will maintain strict buffer requirements between the rear of commercial properties and adjoining residential homes.

## **OFFICE AND MEDICAL LAND USES**

### **Background and Existing Conditions**

The development of the medical corridor along Montgomery Road north of Pfeiffer Road began in 1965 when an 88 acre tract on the east side of the road was purchased by Bethesda Hospital. The property was rezoned from single family residential to a planned unit development 'H' district and the hospital opened in June 1970. As a result of the hospital development, property owners along Montgomery Road north of Pfeiffer began pursuing rezoning of their properties for retail and office use. The City opposed these requests; however, in a series of court rulings between 1972 and 1982, the City was forced to rezone all of the land fronting Montgomery Road between Pfeiffer and Weller Roads to an office designation.

The hospital has undergone a series of expansions since 1970, the most recent of which is the construction of a new seven story, 130 bed addition on the north side of the property, a new diagnostics and support services wing, and a new parking garage. The hospital also owns property on the west side of Montgomery at the corner of Montgomery Road and Pfeiffer Road. In 2002, as part of updating of the zoning code, the City rezoned the main campus from the 'H' Hospital District to regular Office zoning, but maintained the 1967 and 1995 restrictions that were agreed upon between the hospital and neighboring residents.

There are several multi family projects that developed at the rear of the office zoning whose access is to Montgomery Road. One of these was developed as a condominium project while a 100 unit apartment complex is currently being turned into condominiums. There is also a senior citizen apartment complex north of the hospital; however, the rest of the corridor is comprised of medical office buildings of various sizes.

### **Past City Policies**

Since the courts directed the corridor to be rezoned away from single family residential, the City policy has been to encourage office uses with limitations on height and density. The City has established a cooperative working relationship with the hospital while being sensitive to the surrounding single family residential to the north and south.

### **Current Issues Facing the Medical Office Corridor**

1. Bethesda North may need to expand its campus, which may affect surrounding residential property.
2. As Bethesda expands, there will be increased traffic on Montgomery Road and pressure to add a traffic signal at the emergency room entrance.
3. The property at the northwest corner of Pfeiffer and Montgomery may be redeveloped which could impact the appearance of the corridor and intersection as well as surrounding residential property.
4. There may be pressure to rezone abutting residential property to an office use.

5. Access for small lots on the west side of Montgomery Road will get more difficult as traffic increases.
6. There needs to be more connectivity between existing office uses, particularly between the east and west side of Montgomery Road.
7. The existing Office zoning may restrict businesses which would complement and benefit the medical uses.
8. There is limited housing available in the vicinity for hospital personnel.

### **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will work with Planning Commission and existing property owners to develop flexible aesthetic design guidelines similar to the Montgomery Road Corridor Design Guidelines.
2. The City will work with Bethesda North Hospital and surrounding property owners to establish a vibrant medical campus that becomes a regionally recognized destination and provides branding of Montgomery as a medical center.
3. The City will investigate what other uses may complement existing medical uses and make adjustments to the office zoning code as appropriate.
4. The City will promote opportunities to develop housing for hospital personnel to provide a competitive edge for Bethesda North.
5. The City will investigate what public improvements may be warranted to improve connectivity between the east and west side of Montgomery Road.
6. The City will respect the residential integrity of the surrounding neighborhoods and ensure that good buffers are maintained and residential properties are not rezoned to office designation.
7. The City will maintain water quality standards for surface runoff into Sycamore Creek and ensure that there is no encroachment into the designated floodplain.

## **OTHER LAND USES**

### **Industrial Land Use**

#### **Background and Existing Conditions**

Currently, there is no land zoned for light or heavy industrial uses within the City and the City does not support re-zoning property within the City for industrial use. The zoning code does not establish an industrial classification.

#### **Past City Policies**

The goal of the 1986 comprehensive plan reflects the City's reluctance to re-zone property in the City to industrial; however, the City was open to annexing industrial land as long as it did not disrupt the existing single family development:

Although the City currently has no land zoned for light industrial use, the addition of this type of land through annexation to the City is conceivable. This should be permitted and even encouraged as long as the single-family character of the community is not jeopardized.

#### **Current Issues**

1. There is no area within the current corporation limits where a typical industrial use would not impact surrounding residential or office uses.
2. The evolution of certain types of assembly and production techniques, particularly in terms of electronics, medical and technology based enterprises may be able to operate within the City without impacting surrounding properties.
3. The City is not likely to annex vacant land that could be developed with industrial uses.
4. Industrial uses would likely add unwanted truck traffic, but could increase the City's tax revenues.

#### **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will not permit the re-zoning of any land in the City to industrial.
2. The City will explore adding low-impact technology or medically based light industrial development which is totally enclosed and properly buffered as a permitted use in some non-residential districts.

### **Agricultural Land Use**

Currently, there is no land zoned for agricultural uses and the City does not anticipate the need for agriculturally zoned land in the future.

**PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE**

**To be added upon completion of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.**

## TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC

### Background and Existing Conditions

Montgomery Road (U.S. Route 22) has always been the principal transportation artery through the City. The road opened as a toll road between Cincinnati and Columbus as early as 1824, and Montgomery became an important stopping point on this roadway. Montgomery Road runs from Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway, which was built in the late 1960's, north through the entire City and into Symmes Township. Despite the construction of I-71 in 1968, use of Montgomery Road continues to increase. Traffic is heaviest between Cross County Highway and downtown and then north of Pfeiffer to I-275. Average daily traffic counts for the area between Remington and Pfeiffer were reported between 14,400 and 14,900 in the 1987 Montgomery Road Corridor Study prepared for the City by KZF Inc. A 2006 traffic count found traffic volumes between Schoolhouse and Hopewell to be 22,800 vehicles per day. Montgomery Road has undergone a series of widenings and improvements, most recently in the area between Weller Road and the north corporation limit, which is expected to be complete near the end of 2007. Other than the area between Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway and Cooper Road, traffic volumes tend to increase as you travel north on Montgomery Road.

The other principal north/south arteries through the City are Deerfield Road and Zig Zag Road. East/West arteries are Cooper, Remington, Pfeiffer, Hopewell, Weller, Kemper and Cornell Roads. All of these except Weller and the section of Remington west of Montgomery are categorized as Class II roads.

The community developed as a series of subdivisions following World War II. During this time developers successfully lobbied the City to approve residential neighborhoods with one access point to a principal thoroughfare and then a series of cul-de-sacs in the subdivision itself. Consequently, there is not a lot of connectivity between residential neighborhoods, driving between neighborhoods takes longer, and traffic is concentrated on Class II roads. This development pattern has increased the traffic congestion on Montgomery Road, Pfeiffer Road, and other arteries.

Public transportation is provided by bus service along Montgomery Road by Queen City Metro. This provides access for downtown Cincinnati commuters, as well as workers, for the businesses along the commercial corridor.

During the post World War II development, the City concentrated on vehicular transportation needs and did not emphasize pedestrian connections. As a result, most of the residential subdivisions were built without sidewalks. The City began to address this issue in the 1990s in response to citizen demands and now has a sidewalk installation program which concentrates on establishing sidewalks on one side of most of the collector streets. A wide paver sidewalk was constructed along the west side of Montgomery Road, as well as a number of the City's other principal roadways. In the Historic District, the City has adopted a streetscape master plan (1998) to include paver sidewalks throughout the downtown area.

## Past City Policies

The City has maintained access and resisted traffic signals except as warranted along the Class II corridors. In the past, the commercial corridor was allowed to develop with multiple access points, which has caused access management issues between Schoolhouse Lane and the Historic District. The City now attempts to restrict and even reduce access points in this area when possible.

The 1986 Comprehensive Plan adopted the following goal for Montgomery's traffic and transportation component:

*Goal: The City must develop and maintain an efficient and effective traffic and circulation network for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic and improve access to employment and commercial areas.*

The following objectives were adopted:

1. Develop an up-to-date City Thoroughfare Plan.
2. Develop a plan for the upgrading of the arterial and collector street network.
3. Upgrade intersections to reduce traffic congestion.
4. Coordinate traffic signals to enhance the efficient flow of traffic.
5. Improve roadway shoulders, bridges, and drainage structures to provide increased safety.
6. Develop a comprehensive maintenance program for City streets.
7. Develop and implement a bikeway plan for safe bicycle access throughout the community, and to link with neighboring communities.
8. Develop and implement a pedestrian circulation plan with priority to sidewalks along arterial and collector streets for safe access to schools, parks, and neighborhood businesses.
9. Work with public transportation authorities in the development of public transportation.

The City commissioned a Montgomery Road Corridor Study in 1987 to assess improvements for Montgomery Road. In addition to recommending improvements to the road itself, the study recommended creating a bikeway, restricting parking in the Central Business District (CBD), and implementing a one-way traffic system in the CBD. Most of the recommendations have been completed; however, the City decided not to pursue the one way system in the Heritage District.

The 2006 Strategic Plan does not concentrate on road improvements, but does encourage more pedestrian linkages, enhancements at the City's gateways, and a review of structured parking in the downtown area.

## **Current Issues in Traffic and Transportation Facilities**

1. Despite the improvements made to Montgomery Road, traffic volumes continue to increase and cause congestion on Montgomery Road and Pfeiffer Road during peak hours. The 2005 Citizen Survey found that traffic congestion was the number one concern of residents.
2. Due to the increase in traffic there is pressure on the City to widen Montgomery Road and eliminate the medians. There is also pressure to widen other major arteries.
3. Increased traffic on Montgomery and Pfeiffer Roads is causing motorists to take alternative routes by cutting through residential areas.
4. Increasing redevelopment of the Heritage District is desirable, but may increase traffic and the need for additional parking in the future.
5. Expansion at Bethesda North Hospital will be a positive development in terms of providing medical service delivery and providing a sound tax base for the City, but may lead to increased traffic on Montgomery Road.
6. Expanding the bikeway to the Little Miami Bike trail or into Blue Ash will be difficult from an engineering, financial, and political standpoint.
7. Expansion of the sidewalk program may meet with resistance from some residents.
8. Access management is a concern due to too many curb cuts, particularly between the Historic District and Schoolhouse Lane.

## **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will work with neighboring jurisdictions to find remedies for congestion and optimize traffic flows.
2. The City will coordinate funding opportunities with OKI and seek out additional state and federal funding for transportation improvement projects.
3. The City will work with property owners during redevelopment to reduce curb cuts where possible.
4. The City will upgrade bus stops and work with other agencies on public transportation improvements as they develop. The City will also investigate establishing a multi modal transportation hub near the Cross County/ Ronald Reagan Highway/Montgomery Road interchange.
5. The City will encourage structured parking that is aesthetically pleasing to provide adequate parking and reduce impervious surface coverage.
6. The City will be flexible and open to new technologies that may develop and be proactive in integrating them.

## GOVERNMENT SERVICES

### Public Works

#### **Background and Existing Conditions**

The City of Montgomery maintains approximately 45 miles of streets within the City limits. Most of these streets are two lanes and many do not have curb and gutter. Also located in Montgomery's City limits are Interstate 71 from Cross County/Ronald Reagan Highway to just north of Pfeiffer Road, and the I-275/I-71 interchange. The Public Works Department has a street repair program in which streets are repaired based on the age of the street. The Public Works department also completes general maintenance, such as pothole repair, street sign erection and repair, snow removal, park maintenance, maintenance of traffic control systems, etc.

Most subdivisions were designed with a rural design, which, in addition to streets without curbs and gutters, excluded sidewalks. As the City has become more urbanized, residents' desire for pedestrian access and connectivity has increased and the City was lobbied to install a sidewalk and bikeway system. In 1988, the City established a City-funded sidewalk master plan, which allowed the City to construct sidewalks in key areas on one side of the road. Additional streets were added to the City's Sidewalk Master Plan in 1995, 1998 and 2000. The City also has a sidewalk repair program that allows the City to make structural repairs to the City's sidewalks at no cost to the residents.

The City of Montgomery's sewer and water service is provided by the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) and Cincinnati Water Works, respectively. Portions of the downtown east of Main Street are served by Indian Hill Water. Therefore, the Montgomery Public Works Department is not responsible for providing these services to the City's residents.

#### **Current Issues Impacting Public Works**

1. The City-funded sidewalk program is nearing completion and discussions concerning the continuation of this program, the installation of sidewalks on the east side of Montgomery Road and/or additional pedestrian and/or bike related infrastructure will be necessary in the near future.
2. Many collector streets (Deerfield, Zig Zag, Pfeiffer, and Weller Roads) are built without curbs and gutters.
3. Business owners in the Historic District would like the City to help maintain the area to contribute to the vibrancy of the downtown.
4. Until repairs and upgrades are completed, MSD has instituted a moratorium on new sewer tap issuance, restricting growth. Developers currently need to obtain matching credits for any increase in sewer taps.

## **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will continue to maintain the City's public streets, sidewalks, public streetscape improvements and gathering places at a high level of service.
2. The City will continue to maintain the Montgomery Road gateways into the community and investigate options for enhancing these gateways.
3. The City will re-evaluate the City-funded sidewalk program and consider the continuation and/or expansion of the program
4. The City will investigate City-business partnerships or a special service area for some public works services in the Heritage District.

## **Safety/Support Services**

### **Background and Existing Conditions**

The City of Montgomery initiated the development of its first Fire Department in October 1993. Prior to that time the City was served by the Montgomery Community Fire Company, a private company that also served a portion of the surrounding community of Sycamore Township. Today, the Montgomery Fire Department is responsible for fire suppression and prevention, as well as the emergency medical services for the City of Montgomery.

The Department staffs the fire station with dedicated and professional personnel 24 hours per day at the Safety Center located at the intersection of Montgomery and Hopewell Roads. This station houses two Medic Ambulances, one Rescue Pumper, one Fire Engine, one quint fire truck and one Support/Hydrant Maintenance Vehicle. Current emergency response volumes are approximately 1,300 fire and emergency medical calls per year. The Montgomery Fire Department is in a constant state of readiness for the response to, mitigation of, and recovery from, any emergency that the City might encounter and the City of Montgomery is committed to providing quality emergency and life services to its residents.

### **Past City Policies**

The Goal of the 1986 comprehensive plan reflects the City's commitment to providing quality emergency and life services for its residents:

The City of Montgomery recognizes the critical role that emergency and life support services play in supporting the well-being of the community, and will work with the appropriate units for maintaining this vital role to the residents.

### **Current Issues Impacting Emergency and Life**

1. The quality of service may be increased in the City and in surrounding communities by working together as a region.

2. Over the past ten to fifteen years, the number of runs has remained the same; however, the percentage of emergency medical service calls has increased. This trend is expected to continue in the future due to the aging population.
3. Threats of terrorism will continue to be a concern locally and regionally.

### **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will continue to own and operate its own Fire Department to maintain this vital role to the residents.
2. The City will continue to provide high-quality safety/support services to the residents.
3. The City will explore opportunities to work with surrounding communities to provide better service to emergencies.
4. The City will pursue opportunities to increase the City's preparedness for possible terrorist attacks.

### **Technology**

#### **Background and Existing Conditions**

The City of Montgomery maintains a web-site for use by the City's customers and provides broadband access for all of its employees. It is important for the City to keep its technology as up-to-date as possible within the budget constraints in order to provide its employees with the tools they need to provide the highest level of customer service possible.

The City of Montgomery is currently in negotiations with a company who will assist the City in completing an inventory of the current broadband, fiber and infrastructure assets that exist in Montgomery today, and then develop an information infrastructure plan that will position Montgomery and its businesses for the future. This broadband plan will hopefully give the City of Montgomery a competitive-advantage for the City and its' constituencies and will take into account changes in both the public and private market for broadband services.

#### **Current Issues Impacting Technology**

1. The City needs an inventory of current technological assets to determine what additional technology is needed and to create a technology master plan.
2. Existing technology is being replaced with updated versions of the same technology or entirely new technology.

### **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will create, implement and periodically update a broadband plan.

2. The City will strive to enhance City Services giving consideration to the latest technology and keep its technology as up-to-date as possible within budget constraints.

## **Government Facilities**

### **Background and Existing Conditions**

The government services provided by the City of Montgomery operate from the following City owned facilities:

1. City Hall (4,636 square feet) located at 10101 Montgomery Road at the intersection of Montgomery Road and Schoolhouse Lane houses the office of the City Manager, Customer Service Department, Community Development Department, Finance Department, Parks and Recreation Department, Public Works Department, and the Tax Office.
2. The Safety Center (12,934 square feet) located at 10150 Montgomery Road at the intersection of Montgomery Road and Hopewell Road houses the Police Department, the Fire Department and Mayor's Court.
3. The Service Center (10,344 square feet) located at 7315 Cornell Road is used by the Public Works Department.
4. The Annex Building located at 10115 Montgomery Road was originally used as the public works service center. It is now used primarily for recreation activities.
5. The Municipal Pool is located at 8075 Hopewell Road.
6. Swaim Lodge and Terwilligers Lodge are two meeting/reception facilities located in City parks.
7. The City also owns and maintains several historic Landmark buildings downtown. These include the Yost Tavern, Wilder Swaim House, Universalist Church and the Johnson Murdaugh building.

### **Current Issues Impacting Government Facilities**

1. The City administration building is essentially at capacity and can not handle additional growth without an expansion.
2. The Universalist Church and the other landmark buildings, as well as the Annex building cost a substantial amount to maintain and are not used as often as they could be.

### **Policies for the Future**

1. The City will consider expanding the current facilities if more space is needed in the future before building a new structure.
2. The City will actively pursue owners of historic buildings to allow their buildings to be designated as Landmarks.
3. The City would consider accepting buildings of significant cultural, historical or strategic value on a case by case basis.

## SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

### Background and Existing Conditions

Public educational services for Montgomery are provided by Sycamore Community School District. Within the City limits, there are five public schools: Montgomery Elementary, Sycamore Junior High School, Sycamore Senior High School, and small portions of Mapledale Elementary and Green Middle School. The Sycamore School District is one of the largest employers in Montgomery and the schools encompass approximately 96 acres of land. The Board of Education's projections indicate that enrollment in the school system should remain stable and may increase in the future. Enrollment for the entire system, including schools in Blue Ash and the townships, is approximately 5,600 students. Approximately 3,300 students are enrolled in Montgomery Elementary and the Junior and Senior High Schools.

Between 1999 and 2006, Sycamore invested heavily in their campuses: a new Montgomery Elementary School was built on the site of the previous school in 2003, and significant renovations and expansions were made to the Junior High, Senior High, Mapledale and Greene schools. The football stadium, located at the Junior High, was modernized in 2006.

In addition to the public school system, there are occasionally small private schools that operate in the City, frequently renting classroom space in one of the local churches. Enrollment at these schools rarely exceeds 60-70 students.

### Past City Policies

The 1986 comprehensive plan recognized the importance of the school system to the community. The plan set the following goal:

*Goal: The City of Montgomery recognizes the vital role that schools play in determining the character of the community, and will work with the school authorities/operators on matters of school location, site development, traffic flow, and pedestrian safety.*

The City has worked closely with Sycamore Community Schools in the recent past on the redevelopment of the elementary school site, the various renovations and expansions to the other schools, and the modernization of the football stadium. The City has also forged a working relationship with school authorities on other private development projects that involve tax increment financing funding, which affects school funding.

The police department also works with the school system on educational and enforcement programs. This coordination provides positive collaboration for both organizations.

### **Current Issues Facing Schools and Education**

1. There are parking shortages for evening outdoor recreational activities at the Junior High School.
2. Two school properties, Mapledale and Greene, straddle the corporation limits between Blue Ash and Montgomery.
3. There will be increasing pressure to use tax increment financing for public/private partnerships.
4. Montgomery Elementary School is currently near maximum enrollment.

### **Policies for the Future**

1. The City continues to recognize the vital role that schools play in the success of the City and will work with school authorities on issues of school location, site development, traffic flow, and pedestrian safety.
2. The City will utilize and expand partnerships with Sycamore Schools, such as the DARE program and School Resource Officer, when appropriate.
3. The City will work with the Board of Education on enhancing wireless and other telecommunication systems.
4. The City will continue to work closely with the Board of Education on Tax Increment Financing Proposals to ensure that the schools benefit, as well as the rest of the City.
5. The City will work with other private educational entities who may wish to locate in Montgomery either on their own property or in partnership with other institutions.

## ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

### Background and Existing Conditions

Most of the land in the City of Montgomery has been developed for residential or office uses. There are no manufacturing or industrial uses. The City does have significant parkland; however, there is a limited amount of other open space. Three nature preserves have been designated, one of which is a designated local landmark. The only significant watercourse in the City is Sycamore Creek, branches of which flow generally from northwest to southeast. Polk Run Creek also travels through the northeast corner of the City.

Since the 1970's, environmental issues nationwide have resulted in a series of Federal and State mandates which have impacted the City. The Clean Water Act of 1972 in particular has had a significant impact and resulted in a variety of ordinances addressing storm water management. Around 1985 the City adopted Hamilton County's storm water detention regulations. Storm water runoff is a prominent concern of residents today.

### Storm Water

The City of Montgomery is a member of the Hamilton County Storm Water District which was established in response to the federally mandated Phase II storm water program. The City is working with the District to meet the six minimum controls required by the Phase II regulations. Efforts include:

1. **Public Information & Education:** The City of Montgomery supplies residents with educational brochures developed by the Storm Water District
2. **Public Involvement & Participation:** The City partnered with volunteers to label storm drains in 2006 and the project will be complete in 2007. Volunteers also hang educational door hangers on all the doors in the neighborhood in which storm drains are labeled. The City also posted watershed signs throughout the City along waterways.
3. **Illicit Discharge Detection:** The City will begin working on an action plan to comply with this section in 2007.
4. **Construction Site Runoff Control:** The City adopted Chapter 154: Water Management, Sediment Control and Flood Damage Prevention in April of 2006 which requires developers to take measures to prevent erosion and requires bonds to be posted prior to approval and start of construction. This Chapter also takes measures to protect floodways.
5. **Post Construction Runoff Control:** The City of Montgomery is working with the Storm Water District and other member communities to determine what types of

best management practices should be suggested and/or required and how a riparian corridor protection program would be structured.

6. **Pollution Prevention & Good Housekeeping:** The City has included initiatives in the City's Snow Removal Policy to reduce the environmental impact of the snow removal operations. The City will be considering adding similar maintenance polices for the Safety Center and the Service Department in the future.

The City also passed legislation in 2005 to establish limits on the maximum number of parking spaces for all office and commercial uses in order to reduce the amount of impervious surface in the City and lessen the amount of storm water runoff.

### **Noise and Light Pollution**

The City of Montgomery enacted an ordinance regulating unnecessary noise in 1995 to lessen the negative impacts of noise pollution on the surrounding property owners. Between the hours of 10:00 pm and 7:00 am the following day, no person may generate unreasonable noise that is likely to cause annoyance to persons and is audible more than 200 feet from the source of the sound.

The City also enforces strict lighting standards which were first enacted in August of 2000 and expanded in 2005 to decrease the negative impact of light trespass on surrounding properties and the community as a whole. These standards limit the height of light poles in residential and business districts, require all light poles use luminaries with 90 degree full cutoff lenses, limit the allowable type and wattage of bulbs., and set maximum illumination levels for parking areas.

### **Environmental Advisory Commission**

City Council established an Environmental Advisory Group in 2002. This advisory group of citizens focused much of its attention on recycling and education efforts by establishing the computer recycling program and coordinating an education program on the City's automated trash collection, among other efforts. In 2006, City Council adopted legislation to establish this advisory board into a permanent Environmental Advisory Commission (EAC) whose mission is "to develop practical ways in which City Council, its Commissions, and City residents can responsibly use our resources so that Montgomery, Ohio is an environmentally-conscious community in which to live. Among these will be educational programs and initiatives on environmental issues including recycling, composting, storm-water management, reducing litter, air and noise pollution, green building processes, and protection of our natural resources". The EAC is now divided into three sub-committees 1) green building, 2) litter prevention and 3) recycling. These sub-committees are working to identify ways the City can improve environmental quality.

## **Nature Preserves**

In 1977, the United States Department of Interior listed Hazelwood Nature Preserve as a Registered Natural Landmark in recognition of the significance of the property as an ecological benchmark for this area and the extensive botanical research conducted at the site for more than 80 years by the University of Cincinnati and other organizations.

The City owns 7 acres of land directly adjacent to Hazelwood Nature Preserve that is also used as a preserve and is known as the Johnson Nature Preserve. On April 9, 1999, an F4 tornado damaged a path .85 miles long through the City of Montgomery including this nature preserve. Over 90% of the mature trees were destroyed by uprooting, splintering or shattering caused by the violent winds of the tornado. The recovery plan is to enhance the powerful natural reforestation process by leaving much of the fallen timber in place to provide stabilization of slopes, an enhanced wildlife habitat, and to add organic content to the soil of the forest floor. The City is monitoring the recovery and natural reforestation process. The recovery plan will be adapted if necessary to return the Johnson Nature Preserve to an urban forest and point of community pride, as well as an area for recreation, enjoyment and study for visitors to the preserve.

## **Past City Policies**

The Goals and Objectives of the 1986 Comprehensive Plan reflect the City's emphasis on protecting and enhancing the natural environment whenever possible.

*Goal: The natural and innate beauty of Montgomery shall be preserved, enhanced, and maintained whenever possible.*

The following objectives were adopted:

1. Protect existing natural areas to enhance the ambiance of the community.
2. Use open and natural areas to protect and buffer differing zoning classifications.
3. Develop and apply strict landscaping and continuing maintenance requirements for all new developments.
4. Develop and apply strict drainage and erosion control standards.
5. Adopt legislation which gives a developer the option of reducing minimum lot area in return for the dedication of public open areas.
6. Develop a City-wide Tree Maintenance and Management Program.
7. Develop and apply strict noise pollution control standards.
8. Encourage dedication of greenbelt areas by private citizens and developers.

The City has been successful in meeting many of these objectives. In the last seven years the City has adopted new erosion control measures, parking lot landscaping requirements, lighting regulations, and a tree maintenance and protection ordinance. Additionally, in 2005 the City adopted a new Planned Unit Development ordinance which encourages the protection of natural areas in exchange for greater density on other portions of a developing parcel.

## **Current Issues Facing the Environment**

1. There is a concern that increasing storm water runoff is leading to erosion of existing stream channels in the City.
2. There is some evidence of a decrease in the quality of the aquatic ecosystem in the City in the past 20 years, which may also negatively impact the ability of other wildlife to thrive.
3. Many existing businesses do not have any on-site storm water retention/detention which leads to an increase in the amount of storm water runoff and water pollution.
4. Landfill prices continue to increase and may impact the City's ability to provide yard waste and/or trash collection to the residents.
5. Teardowns generate a significant amount of building debris that is not reused and ends up in landfills.
6. New housing units, offices and commercial buildings meet current codes, but frequently do not incorporate proven energy saving features and technologies.
7. As energy prices continue to rise, it will cost more for the City to provide safety services, run the public works department and provide power for the government facilities and other City-owned buildings.
8. There is limited opportunity for the City to create additional public parkland or open space.
9. The increased value of land in the City of Montgomery is resulting in increased impervious surface because builders need to add square footage and parking to gain a reasonable rate of return.
10. The City's existing policy on limiting building height encourages greater lot coverage and a reduction of open space.
11. The City's past zoning polices have led to a separation of uses which forces the residents to drive to all destinations. Traffic has increased in the City over the past twenty years, especially along Montgomery Road, leading to increased traffic congestion and air pollution.
12. Many existing businesses have non-conforming lighting which results in light trespass.
13. The quality of the City's parks is being threatened by invasive plant species, such as honeysuckle.
14. The City's existing tree population is threatened by disease and parasites.
15. Due to substandard/insufficient sewage treatment facilities, there are currently restrictions by MSD on new development in parts of the City.

## **Policies for the Future**

The City of Montgomery is committed to providing a high-quality, sustainable community for all present and future residents. It is the goal of the City to develop innovative infrastructure and services that save money, support local businesses, improve quality of life, and protect the environment and public health. The following policies aim to protect and improve the quality of the City's environment by exploring ways the City's

actions and decisions can have positive effects on the natural environment and public health.

I. The City will strive to ensure the effective management of storm water runoff.

*Strategies:*

1. The City will maintain strict landscaping requirements and encourage non-conforming properties to add landscaping to bring the properties into compliance with the current zoning code, which will increase the amount vegetative cover and reduce the amount of impervious surface coverage in the City.
2. The City will continue to require new development to comply with Hamilton County's Phase I storm water requirements and encourage non-conforming properties to add storm water detention/retention when feasible.
3. The City will implement Hamilton County's Phase II storm water requirements.
4. The City will investigate and encourage additional storm water quality best management practices and adopt reasonable initiatives endorsed by the County storm water district. The City will continue to utilize the existing PUD regulations to negotiate increased open space and decrease the amount of impervious surface in new developments in exchange for increased density.

II. The City will continue to protect the existing natural areas within the City and to enhance the quality of the natural environment.

*Strategies:*

1. The City will continue to protect existing natural areas, such as Johnson Nature Preserve and Hazelwood Nature Preserve.
2. The City will encourage the buffering of sensitive areas and the establishment of greenbelts by private citizens and developers to enhance the ambiance of the community and preserve the existing ecosystem.
3. The City will evaluate the property maintenance code to ensure that there are no barriers for property owners wishing to allow rear portions of their property to remain in or revert back to its natural state in wooded areas and along watercourses as a way to enhance environmental quality and control storm water runoff.
4. The City will promote sustainable management of public open spaces and landscaping by controlling invasive plants, preserving and/or planting native vegetation and using integrated pest management.
5. The City will promote public and private opportunities to improve water quality and help restore the aquatic habitat in the City's waterways and

riparian corridors so that these habitats are healthy for wildlife and the City's residents to enjoy.

6. The City will continue to control the impacts of litter, graffiti, junk cars, and trash in order to protect the natural environment, human health and the livability of the City.

III. The City will maintain strict lighting standards and encourage non-conforming properties to bring existing lighting into compliance with the current zoning code to decrease light pollution.

IV. The City will strive toward achieving a building stock that is environmentally friendly, energy efficient and as independent of fossil fuels as practicable.

*Strategies:*

- 1) The City will ensure that existing building and zoning codes do not restrict innovative energy and conservation techniques.
  - 2) The City will promote investigations and education regarding environmental technologies, as well as encourage the use of materials and practices that assist in creating a more sustainable environment, with a particular focus on green-building technologies.
  - 3) The City will encourage the use of nationally recognized Green Building Certification through education, monitoring and recognition
  - 4) The City will investigate the possibility of working with other government agencies to upgrade the International Code Council's International Energy Conservation Code.
  - 5) The City will strive to make all future City buildings as close to zero energy as practical and will review the potential for energy upgrades, especially at the times of any major renovations.
- V. The City will strive to decrease its landfill fees, its impact on available landfill space, and the use of unnecessary energy associated with the manufacturing of new materials by having programs to develop ways for its residents, businesses, and employees to recycle.

*Strategies:*

- 1) The City will investigate enhancing City-sponsored recycling efforts.
- 2) The City will encourage recycling at existing commercial buildings by enhancing communications among the various business or property owners who may be able to share geographically convenient recycling containers and service arrangements.
- 3) The City will investigate amending the zoning code so that a developer's plans for residential and commercial development make provision for the efficient and aesthetically acceptable locating and servicing of recycling containers.

- 4) The City will investigate establishing a program that ensures residents of new residential properties, including private communities, have access to on-site recycling services.
- 5) The City will maintain a program that delivers information about recycling to new residents about recycling, including follow-ups.

VI. The City will strive to reduce energy consumption and pollution from City fleet vehicles.