Comprehensive Land Use Plan

Milford Township
Butler County, Ohio

Adopted June 12, 2012
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ADOPTION OF THE MILFORD TOWNSHIP LAND USE PLAN

WHEREAS, the Milford Township Trustees wish to update the Milford Township Land Use Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Township Trustees selected residents to serve on the Milford Township Land Use Advisory Committee to make appropriate study, gather public input, and put forth their recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the Butler County Planning Division of the Department of Development provided staff and technical assistance to write the plan; and

WHEREAS, the Committee has completed their work after many months of study and a public open house in conjunction herewith; and

WHEREAS, the Milford Township Trustees recommended adoption of the Milford Township Land Use Plan to the Butler County Planning Commission which is to be included in the Butler County Land Use Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Butler County Planning Commission held public meeting on June 12, 2012 to take public comments regarding the Land Use Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Butler County Planning Commission finds the Milford Township Land Use Plan appropriate to provide orderly growth in the Township and provide guidance in the administration of the Butler County Rural Zoning Resolution and Zoning District Map.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Butler County Planning Commission adopts the Milford Township Land Use Plan.

Hamilton, Ohio
June 12, 2012

[Signature]
Chairman

[Signature]
Secretary
Executive Summary

- This plan was prepared by a citizens committee appointed in March 2011 by the Milford Township Trustees. The purpose of the Plan is to guide future development in Milford Township.
- Milford Township is rural in character, and township residents place a high value on preserving that rural character.
- The extensive contiguous expanse of farmland in Milford Township is this community’s most important resource. Finding practical ways to preserve and protect this resource is the central core value of this Plan.
- Milford Township has an inventory of environmental features that are critical to conserve, including streams, flood plains, steep slopes, and areas with high potential for aquifer pollution.
- The importance of preserving extensive areas of farmland and conserving resources should be the starting point for identifying appropriate land use activities in Milford Township.
- Every owner should have the ability to conserve land for agriculture or natural areas or use the land for a modest number of houses as long as they are developed in a manner that protects the township’s important natural features.
- This Plan allocates land to three uses:
  - Agriculture / Conservation areas
    Land which contains none of the environmental features and characteristics defined below and are areas suitable for continued agricultural production, natural areas, low-density housing, or small-scale clustered housing.
  - Areas of Water Supply Protection and/or Highly Erodible Soils
    Areas with high aquifer pollution potential as defined by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Water, and/or steep slopes containing soils considered highly erodible by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service. These areas are most suitable for continued agricultural production and natural areas. Low-density housing or small-scale clustered housing is possible but needs close scrutiny to minimize adverse impacts in these environmental areas.
  - Areas Unsuitable for Development
    Areas falling within the 100-year floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Land is best left in its natural state and given the highest priority for protection.
Figure I-1. Butler County townships
Introduction
Milford Township is situated in the northwest corner of Butler County. It is bounded by Wayne Township on the east, Oxford Township on the west, Hanover Township on the south, and Preble County on the north. Total land area of Milford Township is approximately 36 square miles.

Planning Process
This plan was prepared by a citizens committee appointed in March 2011 by Milford Township Trustees Russell McMillian, Brad Mills, and Paul Gillespie. The purpose of the Plan is to guide future development in Milford Township.

The Milford Township Plan Committee members are Mark Boardman, Dan Burkholder, Amy Butterfield, Don Dunkelberger, Greg Elam, Marna Evans, Eric Hollins, Rodney Kolb, Maria & Scott Lindley, Jim Reid, Rob Rich, Jim Rubenstein (chair), Jeff Schwab, Dana Saulnier, Daniel Truster, and Diana Zehler. The committee was assisted by Butler County Department of Development staff, including Director David Fehr, Planning Administrator Zeb Acuff, and Planning Intern Kendall McQuay.

The committee met once or twice a month between March 2011 and November 2011. Two or three Milford Township Trustees attended all meetings. The committee started by reviewing data, maps, and other information provided by the Department of Development. The committee then created preliminary goals for Milford Township.

Public input was received at an open house on January 24, 2012. The open house included posters of the key maps and goals and two brief presentations with extended question-and-answer periods. Participants were asked to complete a feedback form; the results have been incorporated into this Plan. Support for the Plan was very strong, as well as for each of the six goals of the Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Strongly Support</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>Strongly Oppose</th>
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<td>Please tell us your overall impression of the draft Plan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Please let us know if you agree with each of the principal goals in the Plan</td>
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<td>Goal 1</td>
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<td>Goal 2</td>
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<td>Goal 4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Goal 6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

The Milford Township Trustees heard public testimony at their February 7, 2012, meeting. Several members of the public requested that they be given more time to study the draft Plan. The Trustees granted the request by tabling the Plan and asking the committee to reconvene for further discussion. The
committee heard public statements at a meeting on March 13 and approved a revised draft of the Plan on March 20.

At its meeting April 3, 2012, meeting, the Milford Township Trustees recommended approval of this Plan by Butler County.

Butler County Planning Commission took action in 2012. Details to be added.

Overall Goal: Preserve Rural Character
Milford Township is rural in character, and township residents place a high priority on preserving that rural character. Maintaining rural character is the most frequently cited goal. The committee wishes to keep Milford Township the way it is now, given the already attractive community and landscape.

“Rural character” does not have a single straightforward definition. In this plan, rural character translates into six principal goals. These goals are the subject of each of the next six chapters
• Promote limited growth
• Conserve environmental resources
• Preserve agriculture
• Promote appropriate residential land use patterns
• Protect individual property rights
• Provide infrastructure appropriate for a rural low-density community
Figure 3-2. Milford Township parcels
Milford Township Positive Features to Preserve and Enhance

**Rural character**
- Clean air
- Farmland and second growth areas
- Green space
- Keep rural look in township
- Keep township as rural as possible
- Mainly rural
- Natural areas
- Preserve farmland
- Protect streams
- Rural character
- Rural characteristics
- Rural countryside, pleasing views
- Rural landscape
- Rural views
- Second growth areas foster diversity of wildlife and plants
- Sense of rural community
- Wildlife
- Wooded valleys

**Density**
- Duplex OK, no apartment buildings
- Keep lot size down
- Larger/medium lot size
- Like the larger lot setting, provided that they are upscale
- Limited subdivisions (2)
- Low population density
- Low/medium density residential areas
- Neighbors close, but not too close

**Community**
- Attracting professionals and their families
- Good neighbors
- Limited population
- Quiet peaceful neighborhood
- Sense of community
- Slow growth
- Small community atmosphere
- Small community feel
- Very low industrial land use

**Roads**
- A few good roads out and in
- Connected roads
- Good highways
- Limited highways
- Maintenance of roads
- Roads are much better than in Indiana

**Proximity**
- Access to amenities of larger towns
- Enjoy the relative closeness to Miami
- Enjoy the rural settings, but yet not too far from work or urban areas
- Proximity to a few small cities

**Farming**
- Children have opportunity to have animals
- Farms
- Viable agriculture

**Growth**
- Need to find ways to manage growth in a manner that protects or enhances the good qualities of the township
- Slow growth that protects sensitive features is desirable

**Property Rights**
- Property owners’ rights should be maintained
- Protect property rights

**Neighborhood school**

Source: Milford Township Plan Committee survey form
### Milford Township Elements to Improve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Lot Size</strong></th>
<th><strong>Nonresidential</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger than 200 ft frontage for 5 acre lots</td>
<td>Don’t like lack of requirements for either residential and especially commercial properties – want to see commercial properties required to upscale landscape and building architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller lot size</td>
<td>Development of tech park adjoining Oxford Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential lot size</td>
<td>Less industrial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like housing on small lots being set all distances from road</td>
<td>Limited strip mall business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to see any large housing developments</td>
<td>Want better development planning of commercial zones like strip malls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like where lots are sold and less desirable housing is placed on lots</td>
<td>Lack of enforcement of junk in places that can be seen from road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner made money but rest of us are left with blight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 acre lots are a poor use of land</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of high density cluster zoning for homes on less than one acre with green space for all residents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need smaller lots</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Growth</strong></th>
<th><strong>Control</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain slow growth</td>
<td>No unplanned developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very controlled attitude to subdivisions, allowing for green space</td>
<td>Unpredictable outcomes, anything can be built anywhere, any farm can be subdivided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want development like West Chester 10% growth in 10 years</td>
<td>Too much uncontrolled growth not desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encroachment from other side of Butler County</td>
<td>Efficient use of land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development pressure on border of Oxford-Milford townships</td>
<td>Growth will happen so we need to control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many lots for sale in a depressed market</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No West Chester</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried about large subdivisions going in, turning into a West Chestser</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Environment</strong></th>
<th><strong>Roads</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greenways adjacent to creeks</td>
<td>Road use that damages township roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of wooded areas</td>
<td>Roads in the township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parks focused on families, needed to attract families</td>
<td>Do we want wider roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need better protection of slopes</td>
<td>Roads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to preserve natural areas, especially water courses, river and creek valleys</td>
<td>Large highway splitting the township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of public parks, green space, trails</td>
<td>Can’t ride bicycle</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tax Base</strong></th>
<th><strong>Source:</strong> Milford Township Committee</th>
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<tr>
<td>Grow the tax base</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tax base</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need more income not less</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Concerned about industrial farming practices, large odorous animal production
1 Promote Limited Growth

The population of Milford Township has grown modestly in recent years. This plan calls for continuation of this modest rate of growth.

Goal

To manage and plan for limited growth with minimal change to protect Milford Township’s current assets and amenities.

Objectives

- To encourage slow stable growth in population and housing.
- To maintain quiet peaceful neighborhoods.
- To enhance a sense of community and small-town atmosphere.

Discussion

According to the 2010 census, the population of Milford Township is 3,550. The figure included the incorporated village of Somerville, which had a population of 281. The population of Milford Township increased from 3,262 in 2000 to 3,550 in 2010 (Table 1-1).

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>2,135</td>
<td>2,350</td>
<td>2,569</td>
<td>2,651</td>
<td>3,262</td>
<td>3,550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Milford Township’s population increased by 8.8 percent between 2000 and 2010 (Table 1-2). This figure was more rapid than the 1980s and slower than the 1960s, 1970s, and 1990s.

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Change</td>
<td>10.1%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The growth rate in Milford Township during the past decade is close to the average for Butler County as a whole (Table 1-3). Milford grew more rapidly than Hanover Township but less rapidly than Wayne Township or the incorporated portion of Oxford Township (excluding the City of Oxford, which lost population. The figures from neighboring jurisdictions indicates that Milford Township could face somewhat greater development pressure in the years ahead, especially after national economic conditions improve.
Table 1-3. Butler County and Nearby Townships Population Change 2000-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Milford</th>
<th>Hanover</th>
<th>Oxford*</th>
<th>Wayne</th>
<th>Butler County</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% Change</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Unincorporated portion only; excludes City of Oxford, which declined 3.2%
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Milford Township had 1,336 housing units, of which 1,267 were occupied and 69 were vacant (Table 1-4). The increase in vacant housing is a matter of concern to Milford Township. It may be related to the poor economic conditions prevailing in the region and country as a whole. Still, the vacancy rate of 5.2% is lower than the figures for Butler County (8.3%) or the United States as a whole (10.4%).

Table 1-4. Milford Township Housing Units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2010</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing units</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>1,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>1,267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacant</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy rate</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The number of housing starts in Milford Township has been small in recent years (Table 1-5). Five residential building permits were issued each in 2007 and 2008. With the onset of the recession, permits declined to 2 in 2009 and 2010. Four were issued during 2011.

Table 1-5. Milford Township Residential Building Permits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of permits</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Butler County Department of Development

Recommendations

- Provide opportunities for development of new housing at a modest rate of growth.
- Avoid spillover of growth through expansion of neighboring jurisdictions.
2
Conserve Environmental Resources
Milford Township has important natural resources, including several streams with associated floodplains, steep slopes, and wooded areas. This plan seeks to assure conservation of these natural resources.

Goal
To conserve Milford Township’s woods, water, wildlife, and other important environmental features.

Objectives
- Foster areas for wildlife and plants, especially river and creek valleys, steep slopes, and woodlands.
- Preserve as open space the portion of properties situated in the township’s most important environmental areas.
- Encourage development away from sensitive areas in order to maintain continuous wooded areas and farm fields and to prevent their fragmentation.
- Preserve and protect fields, grazing areas, and streams.

Discussion
Key environmental resources in Milford Township include waterways, flood plains, aquifers with high potential for pollution, and steep slopes.

Waterways
The two most extensive waterways in Milford Township are Seven Mile Creek and Four Mile Creek (Figure 2-1). Seven Mile Creek flows for 6 miles through Milford Township in a southeasterly direction from the northern boundary to the eastern boundary of the Township. Four Mile Creek extends for 4½ miles through Milford Township in a generally easterly direction across the southwest corner of the township. The 1998 Milford Township Land Use Plan designated these two river valleys as developmentally sensitive.

In addition to the two major creeks, Milford Township has several blue-line streams, shown on Figure 2-1. In this plan, a blue-line stream is defined as one that is named on the United States Geological Survey topographic map. The USGS itself does not use the term blue-line stream. Most of the named blue line streams are in the southern portion of the township, flowing into the Four Mile Creek. The named blue line streams include:
- Big Cave Run, which runs mostly southerly for 1 mile into the Seven Mile Creek south of Somerville.
- Brenners Run, which runs mostly westerly for ½ mile into Four Mile Creek south of Darrtown.
Coulters Run, which runs mostly southerly for 1 mile into the Four Mile Creek west of Darrtown.

Curlane Run, which runs mostly northeasterly for ¼ mile into Four Mile Creek south of Darrtown.

Darrs Run, which runs mostly southerly for 3 miles into Four Mile Creek east of Darrtown.

Scotts Run, which runs mostly southerly for 1 mile into Darrs Run north of Darrtown.

Tucky Run, which runs mostly southwesterly for 1 mile into Darrs Run east of Darrtown.

The largest lake in Milford Township is Greenbriar Lake, which is approximately 50 acres, located in the northeast corner of township.

Floodplains
Milford Township has two 100-year floodplains located along the Four Mile Creek and Seven Mile Creek (Figure 2-2). A 100-year floodplain is the area adjoining a river or stream covered by water during a 100-year flood. A 100-year flood is the level of flood that has a 1 percent chance of occurring (or being exceeded) in any single year. The floodplains form corridors typically between ¼- and ½-mile wide. Roughly 2,000 acres or 10 percent of the Township is located in a floodplain.

Aquifers
The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Water evaluates the susceptibility for contamination of the ground water, including such factors as depth to water, net recharge to the aquifer, aquifer type, soil type, topography, type of material above the aquifer, and hydraulic characteristics of the aquifer. In Milford Township, two extensive areas vulnerable to ground water pollution are in the Seven Mile Creek and Four Mile Creek floodplains (Figure 2-3). A secondary area of relatively high potential for ground water pollution is adjacent to the Four Mile Creek along Darrs Run.

Steep Slopes
Associated with the blue-line streams in Milford Township are steep slopes along the stream banks (Figure 2-4). The slopes shown in Figure 2-4 are those classified as highly erodible by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Recommendations
- Continue to encourage strong enforcement of existing zoning, floodplain and wellhead protection regulations to protect the natural environment and continue to monitor and update these regulations when appropriate.
- Continue the long-range storm water drainage and erosion control management programs along steep slopes to ensure proper control and
abatement of water pollution and flooding which threatens the health and welfare of Butler County residents.

- Protect the diversity of wildlife and plants in the second growth woods areas.
2-2. 100-year flood plains
2-3. Ground water pollution potential
2-4. Soils associated with steep slopes
3

Preserve Agriculture

Agriculture is the predominant use of land and economic activity in Milford Township. Approximately three-fourths of the township’s land is in agriculture. The township has lost approximately 650 acres or 3 percent of its agricultural land between 1999 and 2011.

Goal

To sustain and nurture the agricultural landscape and farming economy of Milford Township.

Objectives

- Minimize the rate of conversion of land from agricultural to residential uses.
- Keep as much large contiguous areas of farmland and agriculture as possible.
- Guide development away from the township’s highest quality farmland.

Discussion

Butler County Department of Development has prepared a map showing the use of land in Milford Township in 2011, based primarily on interpretation of aerial photographs (Figure 3-1). The two principal uses of land in Milford Township are for agriculture and residences. Agriculture land encompasses approximately 76 percent of the township, and residences 22 percent (Table 3-1). The remaining 1 percent includes businesses, public and semipublic places, and the incorporated area of Somerville.

### Table 3-1. Milford Township Land Use 1999 and 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Use</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acres (000)</td>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22.6</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Estimates from Butler County Department of Development Land Use Maps

The 2011 map can be compared to the one prepared by Butler County Department of Development in 1999, to assist with preparation of Milford Township’s previous land use plan (Figure 3-2). In 1999, agriculture comprised approximately 79 percent of the township and residential 19 percent.

Between 1999 and 2011, Milford Township lost approximately 650 acres of agricultural land, primarily to residential development, or approximately 54 acres per year. In comparison, the unincorporated portion of Oxford Township
lost approximately 125 acres of agricultural land per year between 1999 and 2007.

Agriculture is defined in this plan as land that has been entered in the State of Ohio’s Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) program. The CAUV program was enacted by the Ohio General Assembly in 1974 following passage of a referendum in 1973. Land registered in the CAUV program is taxed according to its value in agriculture rather than its full market value as potentially developable land. To qualify for the agricultural tax rate, the parcel must be at least 10 acres and be devoted exclusively to agricultural use.

At the time of the preparation of this plan, 76 percent of the township land is registered in the CAUV program (Figure 3-3). The map of CAUV participation closely matches the map of land currently used for agriculture in Milford Township. Virtually all eligible property owners are participating in the program.

Recommendations

- Encourage preservation of large contiguous areas suitable for agriculture; maintain large contiguous areas of rural landscape rather than small isolated patches
- Increase opportunities to keep agriculture a viable industry in Butler County and minimize conflicts between farming practices and areas of residential growth.
Figure 3-1. Land use in Milford Township, 2011
Figure 3-2. Land Use in Milford Township, 1999
3-3. Properties participating in Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) program
Encourage Low Density Residential Patterns

Approximately one-fourth of Milford Township’s housing is built on small lots of less than one-half acre. These small-lot houses are clustered primarily in the villages of Darrtown and Collinsville. Most of the remaining housing is on lots of at least 5 acres. Relatively few houses are situated on lots of between $\frac{1}{2}$ and 5 acres.

Goal
To maintain the current pattern of 5-to-10 acre house lots while at the same time encouraging alternative patterns at somewhat higher density, but not including subdivisions.

Objectives
- Maintain the current prevailing pattern of 5-to-10 acre gross density.
- Provide property owners the opportunity to cluster housing on large parcels at the same gross density of 5-to-10 acres.
- Provide property owners the opportunity to build houses on lots as small as 2 acres.
- Avoid small-lot subdivisions typical of the southeastern part of Butler County.

Discussion
The Plan Committee reviewed four development patterns:
- Low-density dispersed, primarily 5-10 acre lots.
- Clustered rural development, at gross density of 5 acres, with the houses clustered on a portion of a large lot with most of the land preserved as farm or natural area.
- Subdivision, with $\frac{1}{2}$ acre lots.
- Village infill on the edges of the villages of Darrtown, Collinsville, and Somerville.

For each of the four development patterns, committee members and open house participants were asked to indicate preferences along a line between strongly prefer and strongly dislike.

Results were scored on a scale of +1 for strongly prefer, $\frac{1}{2}$ for prefer, 0 for neutral, $\frac{-1}{2}$ for dislike, and -1 for strongly dislike. The alternative that received the highest score was clustered rural (Table 4-1). Second was low-density dispersed for the committee, and tied for first was village infill for the public. By a wide margin, committee members and the public least liked the subdivision alternative.

When the distribution of scores among strongly prefer, prefer, neutral, dislike, and strongly dislike is examined more closely, the result is somewhat less clear-cut. Nine of thirteen committee members selected “prefer” and only
one “strongly prefer.” Low-density dispersed and village infill both received more “strongly prefer” votes (Table 4-2). Support for the clustered alternative was widespread but cautious. It is supported as an additional option for property owners rather than as a substitute for the dispersed pattern that currently predominates in Milford Township.

Table 4-1. Preferred Development Pattern Overall Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clusters rural (small lots, preserve most of farm)</td>
<td>+5½</td>
<td>+3½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low density dispersed (5-10 acre lots)</td>
<td>+2½</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village (infill and edge of Darlington, Collinsville, Somerville)</td>
<td>-½</td>
<td>+3½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision (½ - 1 acre lots)</td>
<td>-5</td>
<td>-12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Milford Township Plan Committee Survey and Public Feedback

Table 4-2. Preferred Development Distribution of Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Strongly prefer</th>
<th>Prefer</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Dislike</th>
<th>Strongly dislike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clusters rural</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low density dispersed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village in fill</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subdivision</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Milford Township Plan Committee Survey and Public Feedback

Most members voted that they strongly dislike the subdivision alternative. Written comments reinforce the aversion to subdivisions.

Reaction to the village infill alternative was mixed. The pattern received a large number of strongly prefer and strongly dislike votes, and the fewest number of votes for the intermediate categories.

**Recommendations**

- Maintain the current legal framework that encourages 5-10 acre lots.
- Offer incentives for clustering of houses at gross density of 5-10 acres as an additional option for property owners.
- Use cluster housing as a desirable land use option for new residences especially in the presence of sensitive environmental conditions.
- Permit lots of approximately 2 acres as an additional option for property owners in areas that are not environmentally sensitive.
4-1. Development pattern alternative 1 Low density dispersed (5-10 acre lots)
4-2. Development pattern alternative 2 Clustered rural development (small lots, preserve most of farm)
4-3. Development pattern alternative 3 Subdivision ($\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 acre lots)
4-4. Development alternative pattern 4 Village (infill and edge of Darrtown, Collinsville, Somerville)
5
Respect Property Rights

Respect for individual property rights is especially important in Milford Township. In a predominantly rural township, a relatively high share of assets is held in the form of property. Undue restriction on the use of property can adversely impact property values.

Goal
To protect the rights of individual owners to develop property in accordance with current ordinances, while facilitating options for alternative patterns of development.

Objectives
- Continue to recognize and maintain current rights to develop property.
- Offer alternatives to current development rights for those who voluntarily wish to consider them.
- Enforce codes to secure removal of junk vehicles, timely cutting of lawns, and other property improvements that affect public health and safety.

Discussion
Zoning and subdivision regulations in Milford Township are the responsibility of Butler County. Approximately 97 percent of Milford Township is zoned A-1 (Figure 5-1).

According to the Butler County Rural Zoning Resolution, “the intent of the A-1 Agricultural District is to reserve land exclusively for agricultural cultivation, very low density residential development, and other activities that are basically rural in character” (Butler County Rural Zoning Resolution, p. 31). The minimum lot size for a single-family or two-family dwelling is 1 acre, and the minimum frontage along the road is 200 feet.

Approximately 1 percent is zoned R-2, which permits housing on small lots. The R-2 housing is clustered in the villages of Darrtown and Collinsville. Milford Township also has small amounts of land zoned B-2, permitting retail operations, primarily in the center of Darrtown and near the intersections of routes 127 and 73. One parcel each near Collinsville are zoned B-3 and M-2.

According to the Rural Zoning Resolution, “the Health Officer of Butler County, Ohio, may require lot areas to be enlarged to satisfy all applicable requirements concerning water supply and the disposal of sanitary wastes.” In practice in recent years, the combination of the 200-foot minimum frontage and Health Department waste management guidelines has resulted in the construction of most housing on lots much larger than 1 acre, typically between 5 and 10 acres.

Approximately 2 percent of Milford Township is zoned M-1, primarily along US 127 north of Harris Road. This area was zoned M-1 in the 1960s.
when it was under consideration as a site for a manufacturing firm, but the firm located elsewhere in Butler County. The parcels are being used for agriculture.

The owners prefer to keep the current M-1 zoning, in order to keep open the option of attracting a business. Placing a business at the site could help the Township’s tax base. The site is appropriate for a business that would benefit from the location along US 127.

According to the Butler County Rural Zoning Resolution:

The intent of the M-1 Light Industrial District is to reserve certain land areas for industrial development, wholesaling and warehousing uses, and limited commercial use, which will not adversely affect their surroundings, in locations which can be served by the necessary utilities and have good road access.

Agriculture is a permitted use on land zoned M-1, as are limited manufacturing, construction supply, offices, and warehousing, among others. A detailed list of permissible land uses in the M-1 zoning district can be in Article 19 of the Butler County Rural Zoning Resolution.

**Recommendations**

- Remove as much uncertainty as possible from the development processes within Milford Township.
- Reduce unpredictable outcomes, where anything can be built anywhere, and any farm can be subdivided.
- Increase enforcement of removal of junk vehicles, especially in places that can be seen from the road.
5-1. Milford Township Zoning Map
6 Maintain Sound Infrastructure

Infrastructure includes water, electricity, waste water, natural gas, and transportation. These services are provided primarily by private and nonprofit organizations, or by homeowners. Waste water and roads are the elements of infrastructure of particular concern to this Plan.

Goal
To provide high-quality infrastructure appropriate for a predominantly low-density rural community.

Objectives
- Maintain the current road network.
- Provide routine maintenance and repair as needed on roads.
- Promote innovative environmentally sound water, recycling, waste water, and solid waste management choices.
- Enforce ordinances regarding maintenance and upkeep of property.

Discussion
Proximity to high capacity roads and sewer lines has traditionally been a major factor in the location of development. Milford Township prefers to have infrastructure suitable for a rural community rather than for a rapidly growing urban one.

Waste water
Milford Township does not currently have connections to municipal waste water treatment facilities. Waste water is handled through individual septic, aerobic, and other home-based treatments. Improvements in these systems in recent years have made them more reliable and environmentally sound.

At the time of writing of this Plan, the City of Oxford was considering extension of a sewer line beneath OH 73 to the Milford Township line. If the line were to be constructed, this Plan does not support extension of it eastward into Milford Township.

The need to maintain a large leach field for handling waste water has traditionally been cited as a reason for very low density residential development. Standards vary by condition of soil, but in Milford Township a leach field of one-third acre is common. The leach field must be identified on a plat and protected legally from being covered by an impervious surface.

Butler County Health Department permits the leach field to be located on a different property from the one generating the waste as long as two conditions are met: (1) the leach field is delineated and protected by an easement and (2) the field is not compacted by heavy equipment or an impervious surface (see
Figure 6-1). This would permit clustering of a handful of houses on smaller lots, although a large subdivision could not be supported in this way.

The land above the field may not be developed, nor subject to disturbance or compaction. In terms of agriculture, the land above the field could be planted in grass or hand-tended crops, but could not be planted and harvested using heavy mechanical equipment. As technologies improve, other alternatives, such as mechanical systems, constructed wetlands, land application, or small community systems, may become available in rural areas.

If clustered housing is built, collective leach fields should not be employed. Each individual house must be attached to its own separate waste water treatment.

Transportation
Milford Township has two Principal Arterials. US 127 is a north-south route between Hamilton and Eaton. OH 73 is an east-west route between Oxford and Trenton. Principal Arterials are heavily traveled routes intended to move higher volumes of traffic between major traffic generators and are designed for speeds of 45 mph and above with right-of-way width of 120 feet.

OH 177 between Hamilton and Richmond is a Minor Arterial. A Minor Arterial is designed to serve through traffic with connections between Principal Arterials and lower-class roads.

When this Plan was being adopted, improvement of the intersection between OH 73 and OH 177 was nearing completion. Improvement of the intersection between OH 73 and US 127 was expected to start soon. These improvements are designed to improve safety at these two intersections.

Milford Township has five Major Collectors: Hamilton Eaton Road, Huston Road, OH 744, Oxford Milford Road, and Scott / Shollenbarger / Lanes Mills Roads. Major Collectors are designed to carry local traffic on short to moderate trips and to connect between arterials and lower-class roads.

Minor Collector roads include Bauer Road, Earhart Road, Frazee Road, Harris Road, Oren Road, Oxford Middletown Road, Somerville Road, State Road, the north-south portion of Shollenbarger Road, and Wayne Milford Road. Minor Collectors are designed to serve abutting properties with links to short trips, with 80 foot right-of-way width.

If Butler County were to invest in road improvements in Milford Township in the years ahead, a higher priority would be to improve the condition of existing east-west roads, such as Harris and Oxford Middletown roads. Improvements to these roads are important to facilitate movement of heavy vehicles, such as fire engines, ambulances, school buses, and refuse collection trucks. At the same time, this Plan does not support improvements that would result in widening of the roads or encouragement of high speed traffic on these roads.

The 2007 Butler County Thoroughfare Plan shows only one minor improvement planned for Milford Township—a short connection between Oxford Milford Road and OH 177 in the far northwestern corner of the township. This plan does not regard that improvement as a high priority compared to improvement of existing Collectors.
The County Thoroughfare Plan shows a connector road between US 27 and OH 73. The alignment of the Oxford Connector on the County Plan is situated entirely within the City of Oxford. This Plan does not support placing a possible Oxford Connector within Milford Township.

**Recommendations**

- Improve east-west Collector roads to facilitate the movement of emergency vehicles, but in a manner that discourages higher speeds.
- Encourage individual property owners to handle waste water by using the most environmentally safe techniques.
- Permit clustering of small numbers of houses in selected locations through the use of innovative waste water treatment techniques.
- Enforce codes to secure removal of junk vehicles, timely cutting of lawns, and other property improvements that affect public health and safety.
6-1. Butler County Thoroughfare Plan for Milford Township, adopted 2008
Land Use Plan
The goals of this Plan cannot be carried forward successfully by relying on the zoning and subdivision regulations currently available in Butler County. Consequently, this committee has reviewed innovative land use regulations that may be appropriate for a sparsely populated predominantly rural community.

Goal
Adopt innovative state-of-the-art land use regulations and techniques designed to implement the goals of this plan, and encourage other nearby localities to adopt similar tools.

Objectives
- Recommend to Butler County adoption of new land use regulations that address the needs of the county’s rural townships.
- Identify innovative land use regulations that can protect the ability of property owners to receive fair market compensation for their land.

Discussion
The typical housing development in Milford Township divides a large property into as many lots as is permitted by the zoning ordinance and health regulations. The two most frequent constraints on the number of lots are the amount of frontage available along a road and the amount of land needed for a leach field. The resulting pattern is a row of narrow and deep lots strung out along a rural road. The house is sited relatively close to the road and the deep narrow rear yard is either planted in grass or left to grow “wild.”

An alternative to this pattern of development known as Conservation Development has gained support in communities concerned with the loss of farmland through urban encroachment. Conservation Development allows residential construction while providing for more open space, including farmland.

Conservation Development starts by identifying the important environmental and cultural features of the property that are to be protected from destruction. Houses are clustered close together on the remaining portion of the property. Instead of becoming yards of individually owned lots, most of the land remains permanent agriculture, woods, or other open space.

Conservation Development may result in higher overall development costs. Longer access roads and water lines may be needed to reach houses if they are set back further from the road. Site preparation costs may be higher to prevent damage to important features and to place houses in the best possible locations. In such cases, higher development costs can be offset by permitting more housing units to be built than would be the case under “conventional”
zoning regulations. Furthermore, Conservation Developments around the country have been shown to generate more revenue per unit than “conventional” subdivisions, because consumers are willing to spend more for a house that overlooks open space rather than neighbors and roads.

To encourage Conservation Developments in Milford Township, Butler County zoning and subdivision regulations may need to be modified. Design standards may be needed to address the goals of conservation development. Examples are minimum lot sizes and minimum front, side, and rear setbacks. It is not appropriate in a long-range plan, however, to make detailed recommendations concerning specific zoning and subdivision regulations. That job should be undertaken after adoption of this plan, through the county, and consistent with the goals of this plan.

Recommendations

The recommended future land use plan map is shown in Figure 7-1. The map recommends allocating Milford Township to three land use areas:

- **Agriculture / Conservation areas**
  Land areas which contain none of the environmental features and characteristics defined below and are suitable for continued agricultural production, natural areas, low-density housing, or small-scale clustered housing.

- **Areas of Water Supply Protection and/or Highly Erodible Soils**
  Areas with high aquifer pollution potential as defined by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Water, or steep slopes containing soils considered highly erodible by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service. These areas are most suitable for continued agricultural production and natural areas. Low-density housing or small-scale clustered housing is possible but needs close scrutiny to minimize adverse impacts in important environmental areas.

- **Areas Unsuitable for Development**
  Areas falling within the 100-year floodplains as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Land is best left in its natural state and given the highest priority for protection.
Milford Township Future Land Use Plan

7-1. Milford Township Future Land Use Plan
Appendix: Fiscal Considerations

The following was prepared by Milford Township Fiscal Officer Susanne Dunkelberger:

Demographic and environmental information are important when creating a land use plan, but fiscal considerations are important as well. The Milford Township Land Use Plan Committee considered three fiscal considerations: existing Township budget, rate of taxation in Milford Township, and a cost of community services study.

Milford Township Fiscal Officer, Susanne Dunkelberger, reported to the Committee that Milford Township is on solid ground financially. From Ms. Dunkelberger’s perspective the Trustees are frugal with Township funds. They have at least $470,000.00 carried over each year. She considers the Township to be in good shape, but major expense could be problematic.

When comparing rates of property taxation in Butler County, Milford Township is in the middle of the pack. This fact is palatable for now, but increases in the future might be cause for concern.

In December 2004 the Butler County Commissioners approved a Cost of Community Services Study (CCSS) for the whole county. The County Commissioners believed it was important to understand the effects of land uses in the County and how those changes affect local government budgets. The CCSS approved by the Commissioners provided a snapshot in time of revenues versus expenditures based on public service demands.

The CCSS defined three land use categories: 1. Residential 2. Commercial and Industrial 3. Farm and Open Land. These three categories represent the general land uses in Butler County. They also represent different revenue and expense tendencies. What the CCSS found is Residential Land cost the local government (Milford Township and Butler County) $1.12 for every $1.00 in revenue. Commercial and Industrial Land cost the local government $0.45 for every $1.00 in revenue. Farm and Open Land cost the local government $0.49 for every $1.00 in revenue.

The Milford Township Land Use Plan found the CCSS revenue and expense tendencies to be important when considering development in the Township. A copy of the executive summary of the Butler County CCSS can be found in the Appendix of the Land Use Plan. A copy of the whole Butler County CCSS can be found at the Smart Growth Coalition of Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky’s website: http://www.sgcoalition.org/.