



Economic Development Plan
for
Northeast Planning Area

Prepared by:

*Planning Division
Department of Development
City of Columbus*

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Introduction

Section 5709.40 of the Ohio Revised Code authorizes the legislative authority of a municipal corporation to create, by ordinance, an incentive district and declare improvements within the district to be a public purpose. Improvements are defined as increases in assessed values of properties that occur after adoption of the ordinance that created the district.

To be eligible for establishment, an incentive district must be enclosed by a continuous boundary, contain no more than three hundred acres and have one or more distress characteristics defined by the Code. Distress characteristics include (but are not limited to) blighted property, high unemployment rates and above-average poverty rates. In the absence of these characteristics, or in addition to them, evidence that the public infrastructure serving the district is inadequate to meet development needs may be presented, in the form of an economic development plan. The plan must be adopted by the corresponding legislative authority and certified by the municipal corporation's engineer.

In accordance with the above, this Economic Development Plan was created to document the public infrastructure needs of the Northeast planning area. The properties within the planning area have been targeted for development and public improvements will be necessary to ensure that the development is adequately served by utilities, roadways and other forms of infrastructure. The establishment of an incentive district will enable the city of Columbus to provide funding for these public improvements and thus meet the planning area's infrastructure needs.

Planning Area

The planning area (Exhibit A) lies within the city of Columbus corporate limits and its growth area and contains approximately 6,770 acres of land. It consists of 6,959 parcels and is generally bounded by the Franklin County boundary and the New Albany Expressway on the north, City of Columbus Corporate limit on the east, Morse Road on the south, and I-270, Big Walnut Creek and the eastern edge of Hoover Reservoir on the west. The properties within the planning area are presently zoned AR12, ARLD, C4, CPD, I, LAR12, LARO, LARLD, LC4, LC5, LI, LM, LM2, LR2, LR2F, LRR, LSR, PC, PUD2, PUD4, PUD6, PUD8, R, R1, R2, R2F, RRR, SR (Exhibit B).

The properties contiguous to the planning area have been zoned commercial, multi-family residential, single-family residential, neighborhood edge, and neighborhood general. Adjoining land uses include single-family and multi-family residential uses, agricultural uses, industrial and commercial uses.

Proposed Development

In accordance with the Northland Plan, Volume II approved by the City Council on June 24, 2002, it is expected that the planning area will be developed as a combination of single-family residential, multi-family residential, retail commercial, office, and other uses.

Infrastructure Needs

Significant improvements and/or additions to public facilities and infrastructure will be necessary to serve the new construction in the Northeast area. By providing additional infrastructure capacity where needed, the improvements and/or additions will also serve to mitigate any adverse impact upon adjoining properties, thereby preserving and enhancing economic values in the area. Infrastructure and facilities improvements and/or additions may include, but are not limited to:

Streets/Roadways - To provide safe vehicular access, right-of-way will be dedicated and roadway improvements will be constructed. Additionally, the construction of new roadways or extension of existing roadways may take place to provide access to serve new construction. The Northland Plan, Volume II and 21st Century Growth Team specifically recommends the following considerations:

- “The intersection of Little Turtle Way, Old Dublin-Granville Road and SR 161 expressway be evaluated regarding congestion and access issues.” (Northland Plan, Volume II)
- “Options for traffic calming be considered and implemented if warranted at Cambria Way, Little Turtle Way, and Longrifle Road.” (Northland Plan, Volume II)
- “Old Dublin-Granville Road between Little Turtle Way and Hamilton Road be evaluated to determine the need and appropriateness for traffic signalization, revised speed limit, turn lanes, and other modifications.” (Northland Plan, Volume II)
- Hamilton Road widening and extension (21st Century Growth Team)
- Central College widening near Hamilton Road (21st Century Growth Team)
- Warner Road reconstruction (21st Century Growth Team)

Schools – Acquisition of property and development of facilities needed in the provision of public schools for the area. These improvements may occur in conjunction with other public infrastructure and facility improvements such as parks and recreation facilities.

Parks and Recreation Facilities - Acquisition of property and development of facilities needed in the provision of public parks and recreation facilities to serve the development in the area. This may include neighborhood and community parks, multi-use trails, greenway corridors, and recreation facilities. The Northland Plan, Volume II specifically recommends the following consideration:

- “Consideration should be given to providing permanent protection to existing woodlots in the (Little Turtle District) area through public acquisition, conservation easements or other means.”

Other Infrastructure/Facilities - Provisions for internal vehicular access, pedestrian access, fire and police facilities, storm water drainage, refuse collection, transportation facilities, and/or sanitary sewer service will also be made. Other improvements may include connections to water, telephone, electric and/or natural gas lines.

Economic Impact

Development in the planning area is desirable for several reasons. It is expected that approximately 10,000 new residents will live in the area, approximately 1,600 new multi-family and 2,300 new single-family housing units will be built in the area*, and approximately 6,700 new jobs will be provided**. New tax revenue will be generated for the city of Columbus and the appearance and function of the built landscape will be improved. Over time, the development may also serve to attract contiguous growth by extending and expanding necessary public infrastructure.

*City of Columbus estimate

**Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission estimate

Supporting Policies

The Columbus Comprehensive Plan states: “Infrastructure is necessary whenever development and redevelopment occur. When adequate public infrastructure investments are planned and programmed to accompany development activities of the private sector, ‘growing pains’ can be minimized. It is one of the principal aims of this Plan to ensure that the city of Columbus coordinate and plan infrastructure investments, as well as investments in other municipal functions and services, to meet the needs of this growing community and enhance the quality of life for all.”

Similarly, the Principles of Progress contained in the Columbus Covenant 2000 recognize that provisions for adequate infrastructure are essential for economic growth and job creation. The Covenant also notes that the efficient delivery of services contributes to quality of life and helps to promote “strong, distinct and vibrant neighborhoods”.

As noted, the 21st Century Growth Team developed a series of policies and recommendation regarding new growth in Columbus, several of which are particular to the Northeast planning area. These include:

- Job-producing land uses will be protected and sought in the Northeast Growth Area using all tools at the City’s disposal, including annexation and zoning powers as well as marketing efforts.

- Near the State Route 161/Hamilton Road interchange (where approximately 450 developable acres exists), development will focus on job-producing land uses (with an emphasis on office use) integrated into a compact and efficient interconnected mix that will include residential and neighborhood scale commercial uses and connectivity to employment centers. The City of Columbus will reach out to landowners and prospective developers to determine their future plans and to share the city’s vision for the area around the interchange. The Rocky Fork – Blacklick Accord and the Northland Plan, Volume II, should be amended, as appropriate to provide for job-producing land use provisions at the State Route 161/Hamilton Road interchange and other appropriate locations.

- Non-school Tax Increment Financing Districts (TIF) will be created preferably with the cooperation of property owners to cover the entire Northeast Growth Area with the intent of helping to drive job growth. When creating non-school Tax Increment Financing Districts, the city will consider, on an area-by-area basis, returning a portion of TIF proceeds to agencies/jurisdictions that would otherwise receive revenues caused by creation of such districts. In the Northeast Growth Area, 15 percent to 25 percent of the proceeds will be directed to those agencies. When creating non-school Tax Increment Financing Districts, coordination will take place between the city and the school district. Nothing in this coordination should be construed to replace the district's participation in financing school facilities over the long term.
- A broad-based advisory committee will be established to monitor revenues and expenditures of funds in the Northeast Growth Area from New Community Authorities, TIF districts, developer contributions, and other sources and to make recommendations to the Tax Incentive Review Council on the performance of the TIF districts.
- Revenue generated in the Northeast Growth Area through TIF districts, New Community Authorities, developer contributions, and other sources shall be invested in the Northeast Growth Area.
- Because acquiring land for key facility needs in the Northeast Growth Area is critical and key roadways will need to be built in the short-term, the City should explore creative financing methods to address up-front cash flow needs in the Northeast Growth Area. The need to explore creative financing to address initial short-term cash flow needs replaces neither the developer contribution component nor the community development charge.
- Commitments to the Northeast Growth Area financing plan will be memorialized in zoning agreements and other appropriate vehicles to assure that developers, the City, and the community can depend on implementation of the financing mechanisms selected and implementation of the public improvements.
- The City of Columbus and residential and commercial builders should work together in the Northeast Growth Area and citywide to ensure that plan review efforts are completed in a timely manner and regulatory practices are reviewed to maximize efficiencies in the development and construction processes and to assure that the relevant city agencies are staffed appropriately.
- The City of Columbus should establish adequate staffing to ensure appropriate monitoring and coordination of the TIF Districts and NCA Authorities created and the developer contributions received for the Northeast Growth Area.

Public Process

The public infrastructure needs anticipated by this economic development plan build upon, and coincide with, the Northland Plan, Volume II, adopted by City Council on June 24, 2002, and the

recommendations of the 21st Century Growth Team that were developed over a year long public process involving a wide range of stakeholders in the city of Columbus, including the Northeast area.

Conclusion

The development of the Northeast planning area will contribute to the economic and physical growth of the city of Columbus. Though desirable, this growth must be served with adequate public infrastructure - at significant expense. The creation of one or more incentive districts will help the city of Columbus to provide this infrastructure and accommodate future growth, while providing for the safe and efficient delivery of public goods and services.

Certification

As evidenced by the information contained in this economic development plan, I hereby certify that the public infrastructure serving the Northeast planning area is inadequate to meet the future development needs of any incentive district within the planning area.

Randall J. Bowman, City Engineer

Date

Attachments

Exhibit A: Parcel Map

Exhibit B: Zoning Map