

**St. Clair Township  
Planning Advisory Committee  
October 27, 2008  
Summary of Discussion**

**ATTENDED BY:**

Steve Bartels	Gary Couch	Doug Dirksing
Bonnie Hobbs	Jerry Lanich	Eric Pottenger
Bobby Rice	Rich Santefort	Joe Schmidt
Ron Sunderhaus	Doug Wheelright	Ray Williams

Staff: Bill Miller, Larisa Sims and Jane Wittke, OKI ; Mike Ekberg, Miami Conservancy District

**Considerations for Policy Implementation**

At this meeting the committee focused on finalizing the policies to be included in the comprehensive plan and on clarifying who would be implementing them. In response to committee suggestions at the September 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, OKI staff requested review comments from several of the entities who would be implementing the policies about the level of effort and resources that would be required. OKI staff subsequently received comments from Joe Schmidt of the Butler County Department of Development, Eric Pottenger of the County Engineer's Office and County Storm Water District, Doug Dirksing of the Soil and Water Conservation District, Tim McLelland of the Hamilton to New Baltimore Ground Water Consortium, and Jerry Lanich and Gary Couch from the township.

OKI staff then consolidated these comments to add to a matrix of the policies to indicate not only the timing and frequency of policy implementation, and the responsible party or parties for implementation, but also the relative resource intensity of the policies. This matrix was then sorted into sections for ease of review and discussion, and mailed to the committee in advance for review. Discussion at the meeting first focused on some policy deletions which Jerry Lanich and Gary Couch had suggested as beyond local resources. (A one-page summary of the most recent deletions and changes was distributed at the meeting, and a copy of the full text of changes to the goals, objectives and policies was circulated during the meeting so that people could request copies of the full text if they preferred.)

Discussion then focused on policies that would represent new effort that would require additional resources; policies that would represent new effort but are probably feasible with existing resources; policies that would be led by organizations other than the township; and policies that are already being done. As the following summary indicates, consensus was reached on the policies to include in the draft of the comprehensive plan to be assembled for the November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting of the advisory committee.

**Policy Deletions**

- We may want to talk about policy H3.2 ("By 2020, create a program to guide preservation, rehabilitation, or demolition of locally significant historic homes.") and possible benefits.
- It would be helpful for the county to have a list of historic properties from the township, to refer to when funding or investment opportunities are available that could benefit them.
- The reason policy H3.2 was suggested for deletion was because creating and administering such a program would create a big workload for the township that may not be do-able.
- Butler County Department of Development has guidelines for historic homes that could be a template, adapted by the township to reduce their workload.
- At this point, the only significant historic resource that the township has identified is a church building which would need lots of money and effort to restore.
- Let's leave policy H3.2 in the plan and review the county's guidelines for appropriateness.

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**Policies Requiring New Action and Additional Resources**

- Policy C2.4 (“Adopt a priority list of capital improvements as part of the Township’s annual budgeting process”) may be hard to accomplish because of all the parties involved and the time required.
- Maybe the township trustees and clerk could get together for a work session on this specifically.
- The trustees already have an informal priority list of items that need to be accomplished based on funding opportunities.
- We should leave policy C2.4 in to acknowledge the need for it, as something to work toward.
- Can we clarify the meaning of PS2.2 (“Execute contracts to add police officers as warranted, contingent on available funding sources”) given that the township doesn’t currently have a police force?
- It’s about determining if we have additional needs that aren’t being met (such as dealing with railroad crossing blockages and ticketing), and trying to meet them if funding becomes available.
- Right now the county sheriff’s office provides public safety services to the township, which are limited because we don’t have a specific contract with them and they cover the whole county.
- If we want enhanced service, we would have to pay for contracting with the county and that isn’t cheap.
- If someone who worked for the township had control over public safety functions like ticketing, it would be more effective.
- Ohio law provides for a township to have a constable, but that also would involve finding additional funds for such a position.
- Given the increasing use of alternative energy sources like windmills and solar panels, maybe we should add a policy to address them because they can create disagreements about noise, reflections, aesthetics, etc.
- We could take a look at the work the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission is doing about alternative energy sources as a departure point.
- Let’s add a policy to the effect of “Develop standards for the use of alternative energy.”
- If we made an alternative energy policy a mid-term priority for 5 to 10 years out, and contingent on funds available, that could work.
- In the short term, we could identify a list of existing and acceptable alternative energy sources as a start.
- Do we have the manpower to enforce standards for alternative energy as a part of the zoning code?
- If the zoning code requirements were clear, it would be do-able.
- One approach could be using impervious surface ratios for different types of zones that would allow things like solar farms in industrial or commercial zones.

**Policies Requiring New Action Feasible with Existing Resources**

- Butler County Department of Development is already doing Policy IG5.3 (“Review proposed developments in the township for their potential to have impacts outside the township”), Policy IG5.5 (“Give adjacent local governments the opportunity to review development proposals along shared boundaries”), and Policy IG5.6 (“Establish an opportunity for review of development proposals by schools, utilities, and public service providers”).
- These policies are implemented during the county’s subdivision review meetings, and notice is given to adjacent governments when developments are on the border.
- Accordingly, these policies should be moved to the category of “already being done,” and Butler County Department of Development should be included in the list of Responsible Parties for them.

**St. Clair Township  
Planning Advisory Committee  
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- There seems to be a slight difference of opinion on Policy T1.5 (“By 2012, work with the County Engineer’s Office to identify needs and opportunities for sidewalks and bicycle facilities in conjunction with transportation projects in the township”) about whether it would require new resources or is do-able with existing resources.
- That’s because needs and opportunities aren’t that hard to identify but the sticking point is funding: there isn’t a dedicated funding source for providing sidewalks and bikepaths, and the County Engineer’s Office can’t automatically provide them.
- To follow up on action for needs and opportunities for sidewalks and bike facilities, the township would have to fund them or find funds through other sources such as grants.
- Based on this discussion, Policy T1.5 ought to be amended to add the phrase “contingent on available funding” and identified as requiring additional resources.
- There also seems to be a slight difference of opinion on Policy T4.10 (“Consider the feasibility of sidewalks and bicycle facilities construction during the site plan review process”) about whether it would require new resources or is do-able with existing resources.
- That’s because the Butler County Department of Development looks at the feasibility of sidewalks and bike facilities during development review.
- For clarity, Policy T4.10 ought to say “during the review of a subdivision plat” instead of “during the site plan review process,” because sidewalks are required within county subdivision regulations, and anything with 5 or more lots is covered by subdivision review, so Policy T4.10 ought to be identified as already being done.
- For Policy NS5.2 (“Ensure that development in areas identified with steep slopes is adequately controlled through local land use regulations”) and NS5.6 (“Encourage the design of open space areas to reduce stormwater runoff, using techniques such as landscaping features that support infiltration and water retention, pervious pavers, bio-retention areas or planting boxes”) it makes sense to add the Butler County Engineer’s Office to the list of responsible parties.
- Yes, especially since the BCEO would probably participate in the Zoning Work Group anyway.

**Policies Led by Organizations Other than the Township**

- For Policy T4.1 (“Monitor land development and traffic levels of service to identify transportation facilities and/or improvements that will be needed”), the County Engineer’s Office already does this for county roads, which is why it’s in this category.
- In addition, Policy T4.1 would mean that the township zoning administrator and road superintendent would also need to do the same on township roads.
- For Policy T4.4 (“Adopt land development regulations which provide for safe and convenient on-site traffic flow, and for motorized and non-motorized parking”), the County Engineer’s Office already deals with on-site traffic flow, but not automatically with parking, so identifying the policy as needing additional effort and resources to implement is accurate.
- Yes, but the County Department of Development also looks at the adequacy of parking and is willing to provide technical assistance to the township.
- For Policy NS3.5 (“Establish standards for the protection of wetlands and the natural functions of wetlands, including that land uses should be distributed in a manner that minimizes or mitigates the effect and impact on wetlands”), at minimum the responsible parties listed will have to carry out what is required by the federal government.

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- In Policy NS3.8 (“Ensure that the natural function of fisheries and natural riverine systems will not be altered except to mitigate activities harmful to their continued natural function and productivity”) the word “ensure” is not realistic. The wording should be altered to “Minimize alterations to the natural function of fisheries and natural riverine systems except to mitigate activities harmful to their continued natural function and productivity.”
- What is the Floodplain Committee listed under the Responsible Parties column for Policy NS4.1 (“Relocate, mitigate, or replace infrastructure and development within floodplains or areas with frequent flooding”) and NS4.3 (Work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to remap floodplain boundaries that consider the cumulative and secondary impacts of development in the floodplain)?
- It’s a Butler County Floodplain Committee that’s already established, that meets periodically when Butler County floodplain regulations are updated.
- If you want to simplify listings in the responsible parties column on the policy matrix, you could use “Butler County Department of Development” or “BCDOD” for policies that involve the Butler County Planning Commission, Butler County Community Development, Butler County Building and Zoning, and the County Floodplain Administrator.

**Policies Already Being Done**

The committee took a few minutes during the meeting to review this category of policies on the matrix, but did not offer any comments about them.

**Future Land Use Map and Explanatory Text**

Following discussion of the policies, a redrafted future land use map was distributed to the advisory group along with explanatory text, reflecting changes made in response to committee comments at the July meeting. OKI staff asked that any additional comments about the redrafted map be directed to them as soon as possible (to [lsims@oki.org](mailto:lsims@oki.org) and/or [jwittke@oki.org](mailto:jwittke@oki.org) ). At the next meeting of the advisory committee on November 17, the focus of discussion will be on the consolidated draft of all the plan elements that have been reviewed to date. The committee also tentatively scheduled a December 15 meeting if needed following the previously scheduled December 8<sup>th</sup> public meeting on the draft plan.