

**St. Clair Township
Planning Advisory Committee
December 10, 2007
Summary of Discussion**

ATTENDED BY:

Marjorie Angst	Jewel Collins	Gary Couch
Kevin Fall	David Fehr	Pearl Hicks
Bonnie Hobbs	Mark Koch	Jerry Lanich
Tim McLelland	Eric Pottenger	Rich Santefort
Ron Sunderhaus	Doug Wheelright	Ray Williams

Staff: Bill Miller, Larisa Sims, Jane Wittke, OKI

In a discussion about the following aspects of St. Clair Township and data and analysis presented in draft form by staff, those attending responded with the following points and issues:

--Population and Population Projections, Annexations, and Disabilities

None of the three sets of population projections will be realistic unless there are road improvements or business growth in the township.

Armco closing may have caused some of the population loss from 1990-2000.

The census numbers indicate that the township lost numbers of people in the younger age groups between 1990 and 2000 (the people who were ages 5-14 in 1990 were in the 15-24 age group in 2000, and that number in 2000 grew smaller).

This drop also may be reflective of families moving out because of Armco closing.

Cedar Grove was developed in the late 1970s and 1980s.

The moderate population growth projection is realistic.

Is there a chance the younger population declined because families went to other school districts?

We should probably compare trends in neighboring townships and counties.

Jobs and the economy will be the draw for increased population, or not.

Given the current economy, we should be conservative with population projections.

Sewers will fuel growth—I see 300-400 acres as likely to develop.

I don't really think more housing is needed in the township, which will affect population growth.

People down-sizing their homes (because their kids are grown and they're getting older, for example) may choose St. Clair Township to live in because of the available affordable housing stock—you can get a lot of house for your money in the township.

Grants may be available to fix up property.

Housing variety is needed to provide a place for everyone.

St. Clair is a safe place to live and is affordable.

We need investors to come in and wait for the market to rebound.

Taking the long view, the economy goes through cycles and will rebound.

A lot depends on transportation improvements—will we see the State Route 63 extension come through the township within 20 years?

I think the Washington St. bridge improvement will happen before any State Route 63 extension.

A lot of growth potential depends on whether agricultural property owners will sell their land.

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There's not a lot of numerical difference between the conservative population projections and the moderate population projections.

Given that there's not a lot of difference, after further discussion the group agreed to use the moderate set of population projections as the basis for planning.

More at-grade railroad crossings would cause more people to leave the township, as would an intermodal freight hub.

An intermodal freight hub would also drive improvements to roads in the township, though.

In terms of annexations from the township (which can affect township population numbers), 20-some years ago Hamilton annexed a few hundred acres along West Elkton Road (that belonged to the Schwartz family), but most of that area had been farmland and thus sparsely populated.

South of Washington Boulevard at West Elkton Road, Hamilton annexed 7-8 acres in 2003.

In 2003 Trenton annexed 18 acres north of Miller Brewing and 4 acres at the corner of State Route 73 and Wayne-Madison Road (which included a cemetery and some churches).

The bottom line is that most of the land annexed from the township was not densely populated if at all. According to the census definition of disabilities, which is really broad, the township has a high percentage of the population identified as disabled (39% compared to Butler County's 27%)—does that seem accurate?

Yes, because families in the township take care of their own, including those who are disabled.

Yes, it's also true that former residents who experience a disability may move back to the township because it's affordable.

The two most prominent sectors of employment for township residents are manufacturing and construction, and both of those have relatively high rates of injury.

As an example, probably many former AK steel workers with disabilities live in the township.

--Housing and Housing Projections, Rural Housing/Worker Needs; Historic Preservation; Opportunities for Infill

Relatively low transportation costs (low mileage-commutes to work) help to make township living more economical and inviting.

Are the housing values in the draft the tax value or the sale value of housing?

The Southwest Regional Water District (SWRWD) sends water to customers outside the township, so housing growth outside the township could affect the demands on the aquifer.

SWRWD has interconnections with other water suppliers which could help it to handle increased demand.

At the Butler Soil and Water Conservation District, increasing attention is being paid to water quality and not just to erosion.

The County Storm Water Management District's watershed study of the Jackson Ditch and the results of surface water modeling both recommend source water protection and management. Infiltration is needed watershed-wide, and Miller has a plan for four years and forward.

We're not aware of any rural worker housing needs, such as for migrant workers.

In terms of historic preservation issues, a historic grist mill was torn down on Augsburg Road to make way for an expanded business; the old house is still there.

In terms of opportunities for infill, most subdivisions are built out; Cedar Grove only has two vacant lots.

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--Schools, Enrollment Projections, and Private School Enrollment

While the New Miami School District has excess capacity on a large campus, it is not accurate to assume that adding building capacity would be easy if needed, because the campus has been flooded more than once.

A floodplain study is needed and mapping should be refined.

In terms of private schools which township students might be attending, options include Emmanuel Lutheran School, Westover, St. Peter School, St. Joseph School, St. Julie School, and Badin High School in Hamilton, and the Butler County Vocational School north of Hamilton on Route 4.

If the New Miami School District can't readily break out students attending from the township from the overall total of students, you could check with Laidlaw Bus Service that actually transports the students and they would probably have a pretty good idea of the numbers and maybe of the numbers of private students, too.

--Parks and Recreation, Standards, Needs and Implications for Source Water Protection

It's not really accurate to identify Antennen Park as a large community park, because it has "No Trespassing" signs to discourage visitors.

The land for Antennen was previously farmed; now there's lots of overgrown foliage and creek erosion cutting into the land.

Can we look at nearby townships to see if their parks are used by St. Clair Township people? (For example, we know that people from St. Clair Township go to Hueston Woods and Rentschler Park and Fox Park.)

Near-by school grounds are widely used for recreation by people from St. Clair Township, including Edgewood's, Seven Mile's and New Miami's, such as New Miami's ball diamonds which are owned by the Miami Conservancy District.

While they're not parks in the usual sense, because they're often on private property, there are plenty of pull-offs between State Route 127 and the railroad along Four Mile Creek that people use for fishing and wading. There are also pull-offs along West Elkton Road.

-- Existing Business Retention, Economic Development Opportunities, and Business Needs

Does the listing of township businesses by employee size count include part-time employees or does it list full-time equivalent employees (FTEs)? If FTEs are what's listed, how many hours a week were considered as full-time employment? What year is this information from?

To retain existing businesses, we need either more people in the township or more people traveling through the township.

The biggest impediment to the growth of small businesses is that most travel is along State Route 127, which is the township's "Main Street," and which involves floodplain or floodway.

FEMA regulations are very restrictive to development.

The township has an excessive amount of M-1 and M-2 zoning, and the county wants to steer M-1 development to the township.

Several types of businesses are needed in the township, including an urgent care facility or a satellite hospital facility, restaurants, childcare facilities and a drugstore.

Maybe we should re-think the township's business center, get it out of the floodplain, possibly by zoning. Population has to come first to create business growth; zoning alone won't do it—look at the example of how Union Centre was developed.

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--Public Meeting on January 28, 2008 at 7 p.m. in the Township Community Center

Almost everyone attending indicated they could attend the public meeting, and most said they could bring another person or two.

Public service announcements for radio and TV might help get people's attention about the meeting.