

CITY OF ORRVILLE

PLAN SETTING

The Comprehensive Plan for Orrville is intended to be an update to the 1989 plan, prepared for the City by the Center for Urban Studies at the University of Akron. While the 1989 plan provided a valuable tool for making planning decisions, changes in the rate of growth and patterns of development have necessitated an update.

Orrville is located in northeast Ohio, in the eastern portion of Wayne County (Figure 1-1). The community has a reputation as a prosperous center for business and industry which can be traced to the City's founding fathers who started their farms and businesses in the area more than 170 years ago and passed their work ethic and entrepreneurial spirit to subsequent generations.

In addition to being a center of business and industry, Orrville has long been viewed as a desirable place to live and raise a family. The quality of life realized by Orrville residents is a result of stable neighborhoods, quality city services, and a strong education system. Orrville has experienced significant commercial and residential development since the completion of the 1989 Comprehensive Plan. The combination of its strong business reputation, outstanding quality-of-life, and small-town atmosphere has heightened the City's profile in the region, contributing to the recent development pressures.

In order to maintain and protect the qualities that define Orrville, the City has taken a proactive stance to maintain both a high quality-of-life and promote appropriate development. In addition to updating the 1989 Plan, the purpose of this plan is to identify and guide desired growth through a well thought-out set of land use and development plans and policies. The plan provides a framework for making development and zoning decisions, promoting orderly land use, implementing public improvements, and generating private investment. In addition, the plan establishes a vision of what the residents of Orrville want their community to be in the future and provides a detailed strategy to achieve that vision. The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide decision-makers with a tool to make short-term decisions that promote orderly long-term development and represent the views of the citizens.

Historical Context

Community history began in 1814 with the arrival of a veteran of the Revolutionary War, James Taggart Jr., to stake out the claim to which his war service entitled him. He chose a half section (160 acres) in Baughman Township, deep in the heart of what is now Orrville, lying east of Main Street, between Orr Street and the southern corporation line. He later returned to his home in Washington County, Pennsylvania, but the next year his sons, Samuel and Robert Taggart, came to settle on this claim. The Taggarts were of Irish extraction. Other early settlers were of Pennsylvania Dutch and German heritage. James Taggart's son, Samuel, built the first house in this

CITY OF ORRVILLE

Figure 1-1

CITY OF ORRVILLE

section in 1828, and from that unpretentious beginning, Orrville grew. This house is still standing today at 421 East Fike Street. During the Civil War, this house was one of those in the chain of the Underground Railway that sent slaves to freedom in the North.

In 1851, the Pittsburgh and Fort Wayne Railroad was being promoted through this area and one day, soon after the news was heard by the settlers in the area, Smith Orr and Christian Horst discussed the coming changes. Horst decided he wanted no part of land that would be cut up by the railroad. At these words, it was assumed Orr saw his opportunity and he promptly purchased Horst's 80 acres. Judge Orr, at the age of 53, moved his family from a farm in the Orrville area into the house that Horst had built in 1844 at 365 West Market Street. Judge Orr persuaded the railroad to include in their plans a water tower to be located in Orrville. He then entered into a partnership with William Gailey and they started a sawmill to furnish wood for the steam engines.

In 1852, the lands on which the town was located belonged to Robert Taggart, Christian Horst and Christian Brenneman. Orr persuaded Taggart to lay out ten acres in 42 town lots that sold for \$50 each. They lay north of the railroad and east of Main Street. Meanwhile, other homes were being built on either side of West Market Street on land Judge Orr purchased from Horst. Jesse Straughn made the first plat of the town and gave it the name of Orrville. Orrville was incorporated on May 9, 1864, and William Gailey was the first mayor.

In 1860, the first census was taken and the population was 500 and in 1864 Orrville became a village. In 1888 population was 1,441 and by 1900, an additional 400 people had been added to the figures. The greatest population spurt came between 1900 and 1910 when the census showed a count of 3,066. These ten years also marked the period of the greatest centralization of railroad activities here. By 1940, Orrville had grown to 4,484 and in 1950 became a city with a population of 5,150. In 1960, the count stood at 6,511; in 1970, the population was 7,408; and the 1990 census credited Orrville with 7,712 people. Since 1990, Orrville's population has grown to 8,551, an increase of 10.9 percent.



Orrville's early growth was driven by the development of the railroads.

Orrville has come a long way. Gradually, the railroad has been supplanted as the key factor in the town's economic life by many diversified industries. Drawn by a good labor market and prime location near the Akron/Canton and Cleveland metropolitan areas, new industry has put down roots in Orrville since the end of World War II. The Orrville Industrial Park has recently been developed in the north end and is the home to several industries. Orrville proudly boasts of a "diversified" industrial base, manufacturing everything from jams, jellies, and ice cream to pipe organs and castings for the aerospace and automotive industries.

CITY OF ORRVILLE

Planning Process

The process used to develop the Orrville Comprehensive Plan was “community driven” and relied on participation by members of the community. The plan is intended to be a reflection of the citizens of Orrville’s values, ideas, and vision for the future. The development of the Comprehensive Plan is a multi-step process. Figure 1-2 graphically illustrates this process.

The first step of the process is to define the existing trends, issues, opportunities, and constraints within the community. The information for this analysis is gathered from several sources, including a solicitation of issues, ideas, and visions for the future through a comprehensive public participation program. This program includes the formation of a plan steering committee that helps guide the development of the plan and reviews elements of the plan throughout its development. In addition, a series of interviews, planning workshops, and a thorough inventory of existing conditions are used to identify issues affecting the future of the community. From this information, a set of planning principles will be identified that will help guide the development of the planning concepts for commercial and industrial development, housing, transportation and access, utilities, parks and recreation, community image, and natural resource preservation. Finally, recommendation for land use, transportation, economic development, utilities, and parks and recreation will be developed. A strategy will be developed that provides measures to implement the plan concepts and recommendations. The purpose of the implementation plan is to provide the City with a tool to achieve the vision of Orrville’s future that will be developed in this plan.

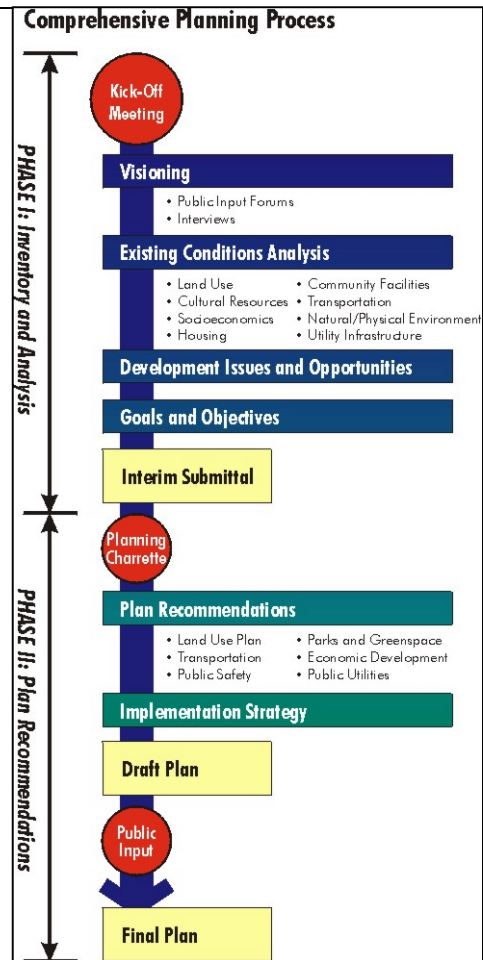


Figure 1-2 Planning Process

Public Involvement

One of the most important elements of the comprehensive plan is the public involvement program. This program was designed to allow every resident the opportunity to influence, participate in, and direct the outcome of the plan. The public involvement took the form of interaction with the steering committee, community interviews, and public meetings.

A series of individual and group interviews were conducted early in the planning process to discuss issues that were important to the future of the city. The goal of the interviews was to gather input from residents representing a wide range of community interests. Interviews were conducted with recent and long-term residents, business owners, high school students, neighborhood leaders,



The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee played an important role in the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

CITY OF ORRVILLE

and other concerned citizens (a complete listing of Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee members and interviews is included in Appendix A). The interviews provided a forum for the interviewee could voice their opinions concerning Orrville's strengths and weaknesses, and discuss how they would like to see the community grow in the future.

Public meetings that focused on the Comprehensive Plan were also conducted as another means to gather input concerning the Plan. These meetings were open to all residents and provided an opportunity to present preliminary plan findings and gain additional community feedback. The public involvement portion of the meetings focused on a community image survey, group dialogue of general issues related to transportation, land use, and growth, and then discussions on the results from the image survey. A detailed summary of the community image survey and results are included in Appendix B.

The goal of the survey was to help identify the style, density, and overall development theme that residents would like to see reflected in their community. The survey is a strong tool to help the citizens identify what they would like the community to look like in the future.

Numerous images were shown to the groups, and the images that received the highest scores represented planning and design concepts that the community envisions for the future of Orrville. These ideas, concepts, and images were used to guide the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan.



Several public meetings were conducted during the planning process to solicit public input.

The result of the meetings, personal interviews, surveys, and data gathering provides insight into the topics that Orrville residents feel are important. Although the Orrville Comprehensive Plan is adopted, the public's responsibility in participating in the process is not over. Good planning is a dynamic process requiring active participation of the public, business owners, and city officials throughout the life of the plan.

Planning Issues

A number of issues that affect quality of life, economic development, and future growth were identified during the various stages of the planning process. These issues identify unique concerns of the community and opportunities for the future of Orrville. These issues have been analyzed against a backdrop of information on demographics, land use, transportation and access, natural resources, and utility infrastructure. Figure 1-3 graphically illustrates the key issues in a graphic format. The following statements summarize the issues identified during the planning process:

CITY OF ORRVILLE

- Recent residential development has occurred in the northwest portion of the city. Much of this housing provides “move up” opportunities for existing homeowners. Future housing supply needs to accommodate demands for a variety of housing options.
- Route 57 provides regional access to Orrville and is important to the industrial vitality of the community. High volumes of truck traffic are found Route 57 through Orrville, resulting in traffic congestion and increased road maintenance.
- Aesthetics, particularly along gateways leading to the City, need to be preserved and maintained to provide a positive image to visitors and residents.
- Access to open space and parks needs to be improved in some neighborhoods, particularly in the southern part of the city.
- Accessibility between the north and south sides of Orrville is poor due to limited crossings over the rail lines that bisect the community.
- Access to the Gradall site is through an established neighborhood, creating incompatible land use relationships in this area.
- The ability to extend utilities, particularly sanitary sewer, to areas south of Orrville is limited due to topography and drainage basin boundaries. This limits the potential for growth and development in this area.
- The housing stock in the traditional neighborhoods is aging. The long-term viability of these areas as an affordable housing option may be in jeopardy.
- Available industrial development sites with infrastructure in place are becoming scarce, potentially limiting Orrville’s economic development activities in the future.
- Connectivity between newer neighborhoods and the mature areas of the City is limited. Pedestrian and bicycle access to activities in the northwest area of the City is particularly poor.



High volumes of truck traffic are found on Route 57 (Main Street) in Orrville.

- Residents of Orrville enjoy a variety of benefits typically found only in larger cities, including access to education opportunities, excellent city services, quality healthcare, a strong local economy, good local banks, and a variety of housing opportunities. These benefits need to be protected and nurtured to preserve the quality-of-life for residents.



Access to quality education plays an important role in the quality-of-life of Orrville’s residents.

CITY OF ORRVILLE

Figure 1-3

CITY OF ORRVILLE

CITY OF ORRVILLE

- Several school buildings are outdated, undersized, and not properly configured for modern teaching techniques, particularly the Junior High School. Recent growth and development has put strains on the existing neighborhood schools also, most notably Maple Street School.

The identification of key planning issues is critical to the formulation of the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan. In essence, the issues identified here provide focus, shape the recommendations of the Plan, and translate into the planning framework.

Planning Framework

The purpose of the Planning Framework is to transform the issues expressed throughout the planning process into basic underlying concepts. The framework provides general guidance and is used to formulate the recommendations guiding the future of Orrville. The framework is made up of a series of overriding planning principles that focus on maintaining the high quality of life that Orrville residents are accustomed to. The principles apply to land use, transportation, economic development, utilities, and community facilities, which are all integral elements in the overall vision of the community. These principles were developed based on key issues, ideas, and concerns voiced throughout the planning process, and they describe the goals and concepts that the comprehensive plan will strive to achieve.

The planning framework for Orrville focuses on maintaining the high quality of life in the community. Quality of life in Orrville is reflected in the abundant housing, economic, and growth opportunities; good community services; the well-established business and industrial base; and the proud and close-knit feel of the community. These are the elements that the Comprehensive Plan strives to preserve in order to maintain the strong sense of place that residents and visitors appreciate.

The following points summarize the planning principles that support the planning framework. These principles build upon the existing characteristics of the community with the intent of preserving and protecting the important features.

1. **Focus on Neighborhood-Oriented Development Patterns**—Keep residential streets at human scale, keep community facilities within neighborhoods, link open space to residential areas, and ensure connectivity between neighborhoods.
2. **Focus Commercial Development within the Downtown/Uptown Concept**—Promote and preserve the location of community facilities in the downtown, keep development on the community scale, avoid sprawling tendencies, and maintain, and ensure access to commercial opportunities from all areas of town.

CITY OF ORRVILLE

3. **Ensure Transportation Mobility and Accessibility Throughout the Community**—Provide improved north-south connections, improve truck access, establish a functional roadway classification system, provide sidewalks, and encourage alternate modes of transportation.
4. **Focus Future Roadway Development on the Multiple Roles of the Street**—Explore using the street for alternate modes of transportation, the street as public space, and the relationship between the street and adjacent buildings.
5. **Develop a Neighborhood Housing Strategy**—Incorporate conservation design principles, promote housing rehabilitation and preservation, encourage neighborhood reinvestment and quality infill development.
6. **Provide Open Space Throughout the Community**—Improve linkages to Orr Park, provide access to neighborhood parks in all areas of the community, explore the dual use of school playgrounds, and strive to meet national recreation standards.
7. **Protect Natural Resources**—Protect and preserve prime farmland, wetlands, floodplain and other important natural features.
8. **Recognize the Importance of Aesthetics**—Promote quality design and development throughout the community, paying special attention to community gateways and main corridors.
9. **Actively Pursue ETJ Planning**—Actively participate and take a leadership role in planning issues affecting the Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) of the City, including farmland protection, township zoning, regional transportation issues, and utility system expansions.