

Introduction

To establish a common base of understanding for the reader, the Introduction addresses the reasons why Wayne County has chosen to update its current plan, reviews the project's management structure and planning process, and provides an historic perspective relative to development.

Why a Comprehensive Plan?

As the old saying goes, "If you don't know where you're going, you don't know how to get there." This saying simply describes the reasons behind preparing a new plan for Wayne County. The Commissioners initiated this effort to establish a blueprint that will lead the County over the next 10 years or so, that will publicly set the agenda to address growth concerns, as well as preservation concerns related to the County's historic fabric of farming and beautiful open spaces. This effort brought the community together, debated important issues and resulted in a consensus regarding the County's future. **Its implementation is the next bold step.**

Basis for Undertaking the Plan

The Wayne County planning process was undertaken with the understanding of the following conditions:

- **Project Mission** - The Plan was to address thoroughfares, analyze population trends, identify capital improvements, address park and recreation needs, recommend suitable development strategies, encourage green/open space development and preserve agricultural lands.
- **Adoption and Implementation** - The Board of Commissioners under the Ohio Revised Code has legal responsibility for adopting a comprehensive plan for the unincorporated area. Implementation will involve all political jurisdictions in the County, as well as citizens and the private sector. The planning process integrated these various interests to the extent possible.
- **Planning Area Attributes** - Within the planning area of Wayne County, the planning process recognized the unique attributes that define the area's character and considered the impact of those attributes on the County's future. Such attributes (whether internal or external) included regional growth trends, sanitary sewer and water service, annexation, road improvements, open space and agricultural lands.
- **Government Structure** - The County is comprised of county government and 16 townships, three cities and 12 villages, all of whom have some degree of responsibility in the area of growth management (policy, regulations, capital improvements).
- **Metropolitan Neighbors** - The County is part of an expanding region in Ohio comprised of three major cities: Akron, Canton and to a lesser extent, Cleveland.

Management Structure

The management structure for undertaking the Plan involved the following key entities:

- **Wayne County Commissioners** - The Commissioners hold the legal authority under the Ohio Revised Code to adopt the Plan and are the ultimate implementor of all planning-related goals, policies and strategies for the unincorporated area. The final plan was adopted by the Commissioners who will direct its implementation.
- **Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee** - The Committee was appointed by the Commissioners following an open application process and was charged with undertaking the day-to-day preparation of the **Comprehensive Plan**. The Committee worked with the Planning Department, Planning Team and community, and provided input and direction as various components were prepared within the framework of the program.
- **Wayne County Planning Commission** - The Planning Commission has among its responsibilities the approval of subdivision plats within the unincorporated area. The Commission held public hearings and forwarded a recommendation to the County Commissioners regarding adoption of the **Comprehensive Plan**. The Commission will also be expected to implement the Plan through its ongoing responsibilities.
- **Wayne County Department of Planning** - The Planning Department served in an administrative and support capacity to the Comprehensive Plan project and will be responsible at the staff level for ensuring its implementation and future update. The Department also served in an administrative capacity to the project's consultants, who together worked in a collaborative environment to assist the Steering Committee and County Commissioners throughout this process.
- **Planning Team** - The Planning Team was selected by the County Commissioners to provide additional staff assistance and expertise during this project. The team was led by Karlsberger Planning Inc., a Columbus-based planning firm, with the support of Burgess & Niple, Ltd., a Columbus-based engineering firm. The team participated in all phases of the project and prepared the final product.

Planning Process

The process involved the following major components:

- **Project Setup** - The first phase focused on several management tasks, including appointing the Steering Committee and developing a project identity.
- **Data Gathering and Analysis** - In the second phase existing conditions were inventoried and analyzed, and projections made based upon current trends.
- **Visioning** (Goals, Objectives and Strategies) - The public was brought into the process during this phase to assist in developing goals to drive the Plan. Ideas regarding the County's future were generated by the public at Community Forum #1 in five locations throughout the County. A survey was also circulated to a random sample of residents and farmers. Objectives and strategies were prepared with the Steering Committee to detail the Plan's goals, which were reviewed

and approved by the Planning Commission and County Commissioners.

- **Plan Conceptualization** - The Plan was drafted in conceptual form in this phase following a growth scenarios workshop with the Steering Committee and Economic Development Task Force (Wayne Development Council). The land use plan in particular was conceived and refined by the Steering Committee and later reviewed by the public at Community Forum #2 in three locations. Detailed actions were identified.
- **Plan Finalization** - The Plan was further refined in the fifth phase and completed following an Open House at the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (OARDC). The final document was presented to the Planning Commission and County Commissioners for adoption in early spring of 1997.

Location and Structure

Wayne County is located in the northeast quadrant of Ohio, about 35 miles south of Cleveland and is directly southwest of Akron, abutting both metropolitan regions. Wayne is adjacent to Medina, Summit, Stark, Holmes and Ashland counties. The County had a 1990 population of 101,461 (U.S. Census) and a 1995 estimated population of about 105,000 (Karlsberger Planning Inc.). Wooster is the county seat and major city. Other cities are Orrville and Rittman, and several major villages include Doylestown, Smithville, Shreve and Fredericksburg. Wayne County is also comprised of 16 townships.

Historical Development

Overview

Upon the British ceding their holdings to the newly formed United States government in 1782, a series of treaties were signed with the Native Americans creating the Northwest Territory, later to be claimed by a few of the first states. Known as the Congress Lands, Wayne County was included in this area.

On February 13, 1808, the County's initial boundaries were defined by the state legislature, however, it was placed under the jurisdiction of Columbiana County and later Stark County. Wayne County was fully recognized on January 4, 1812, by the Ohio General Assembly -- giving its citizens the ability to elect their own county-level officials. Once Holmes County was formed in 1825, Wayne County was reduced to its current boundaries. The County is the third largest in Ohio with a total of about 561 square miles.

The County was named for General Anthony Wayne, a famous Revolutionary War hero and negotiator. General Wayne established a peace treaty with local Native Americans that was instrumental in opening Ohio to settlement.

The City of Wooster was surveyed in 1808 by proprietors John Bever, Joseph H. Larwill and Judge William Henry, who owned the area where it lay. Bever promised to build a courthouse if the county seat was placed in Wooster. The first township to organize in Wayne County was Congress Township on October 5, 1818, from parts of Mohican and Wooster Townships. The first settlement was made by George and Issac Poe in 1815.

Early Settlers-Pioneers

Among the early settlers in newly formed Wayne County were pioneers, who came in search of land. Upon arriving, their first task was to build a cabin. Next they cleared a few acres to grow pumpkins, corn, potatoes and fruit trees. The self-sufficient pioneers were often forced to depend on fish, wild berries and game to sustain them until crops could be harvested. Farming was done with hand tools until 1850. Cash crops or items were not common among the pioneers, thus it was often difficult for them to pay land debts.

Regarded by the Native Americans as a great medicine man due to his eccentric yet calm behavior, Johnny Appleseed was known to plant appleseeds in the Wayne County area as late as 1846. An apple nursery near Apple Creek dating back to 1802 is believed to be one planted by this legendary figure.

Transportation

Transportation in Wayne County was a hurdle for earlier settlers. Fallen trees often blocked navigable streams and rivers. Further, there was a lack of adequate roads. East-west roads had to cross cumbersome hills and thick forests. Eventually the State solicited landowners to spend a few days building roads. Eventually in 1824 stock was sold to finance the development of a turnpike between Wooster and Cleveland. Later a stagecoach ran regularly between Wooster and Newark. Unlike neighboring areas, Wayne County was not part of the Erie and Ohio Canal. The first railroad to cross Wayne County was the Pittsburgh, Ft. Wayne and Chicago; the first train from this venture arrived in Wooster in 1852.

Primary Education

Early schools were found in churches, mills and homes, and were funded on a private basis as the government had not yet provided financial support for public schools. Social activities such as speeches, spelling bees and entertainment centered on the school. In 1825, a state law was passed that set a tax of one-half mill for schools, allowed townships to establish school districts and provided tuition for pupils who could not afford an education.

Those who sought education beyond the eighth grade generally sent their children to the eastern United States until such schools were established locally. Parents eventually bought stock to establish local higher education schools. The first school of this type in Wayne County was Edinburgh Academy which was chartered in 1841. By 1847 a charter was obtained to establish the academy as a college, but Edinburgh eventually closed in the late 1860's.

Other private secondary schools established during this time included Pope's Grove Female Institute, Fredericksburg Academy and Smithville Academy, all of which closed in the later 1800's or, in the case of Smithville Academy in 1903. In 1863, the Ohio General Assembly adopted a new school law that resulted in ward schools in Wooster and other places. Such schools offered both primary and secondary education. Later in Wayne County, a "Literary Society" was formed to encourage students, especially high school students to express and discuss their ideas and viewpoints in an organized group.

The Wayne County Schools Career Center formally known as the Wayne County Joint Vocational School, was opened in 1969. The school provides training in various trades as well as offers night school classes to adults who wish to obtain high school credit.

Higher Education

Schools of higher education included the College of Wooster (1866), Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (1892) and Wayne General Technical College (1972).

- **Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center** - The Agricultural Technical Institute is an instructional unit of The Ohio State University College of Agriculture located on the campus of the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center (1892). ATI offers a two-year course of study in agriculture.
- **College of Wooster** - Founded in 1866, the College continues to be ranked among the top liberal arts colleges in the country. The College offers a four-year degree in liberal arts studies. Early contributors included area farmers and businessmen who recognized the importance such an institute would have on the community. Land was donated by Ephram Quinby, Jr.
- **Wayne General** - Wayne General and Technical College in Orrville founded in 1972, is a branch of Akron University. The College offers the first two years of general college study in connection with Akron University.

Religion

Between 1800 and 1835 several churches were established in Wayne County. Protestant, as well as Catholic churches and communities developed a presence in these years that is still strong today. Among the early churches was the Sonneberg Church (Reformed Mennonite) which was started by pioneers of the community who descended from the Jura Mountains of Canton Bern, Switzerland.

Culture, Arts and Entertainment

The first public hall was known as the Academe and was built in 1857 in Wooster. The structure housed a theater, shops and offices. In 1874, the building was destroyed by fire at which time J.B. France converted the third floor of what is now known as the Freelanders Department Store, into a theater. The new site was eventually called France Hall. The Quinby Opera House was erected in 1876 by the Quinby Hall Association. Wooster City Hall built in 1887, was also used for cultural, social and entertainment events. The College of Wooster also used this facility, as well as the refurbished Memorial Chapel for cultural events. Later in 1937 Scott Auditorium was dedicated. In 1975, the new Freelanders Theater was dedicated and by 1979, it became home to the Ohio Light Opera Company. The longest running movie theater in Wooster was the Lyric Theater which opened in 1912.

Business, Trade and Industry

Early merchants began trade in the area in the early 1800's. One of the earliest, Benjamin Jones was known as a dedicated supplier to pioneers with goods even if it meant traveling to obscure places. John and Joseph Larwill's early drygood sale endeavors started Larwill, Girling and Co. in 1818. John Larwill was also a moving force in building the Pennsylvania Railroad through Wayne County.

Wayne County quickly emerged as a statewide leader in agriculture and was an early trendsetter in new and innovative practices, such as contour farming, winter cover crops, no-till planting and consolidated dairy, meat and egg operations. Early crops included wheat, oats, rye, barely, buckwheat and flax. Fruits and other miscellaneous items raised in Wayne County included apples, peaches, pears, quince, plums,

cherries, currants, berries, grapes, cheese, butter, sorghum, maple sugar, potatoes and some tobacco. In 1954, Wayne County was ranked first in earned farm income in the state of Ohio.

The first salt works was opened in 1815 on the Killbuck by Joseph Eichar, but was later destroyed by fire. Oil and gas drilling also became a major industry operating and headquartered in the County. Industry has evolved as a major force within the Wayne County economy. Some of the large industrial employers, still in operation today include the Wooster Brush, The J.M. Smucker Company, Gerstenlager, Morton Salt and Rubbermaid Inc.