

THE WESTLAND PLAN

February, 1994

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Adopted by City Council on February 14, 1994.

THE WESTLAND PLAN

Introduction

The Westland area is experiencing extraordinary growth and change. Zoning and land use decisions are being made without the benefit of a plan or land use guidelines. In addition, the area experienced increasing traffic congestion and greater demands for police and fire services, parkland, and other community facilities.

Because of the rapid growth, area residents recognized the need to become involved in the development of the Westland area. In December of 1989 the Westland Area Business Association was formed in order to promote interaction between business and schools in the Westland area. The Westland Area Business Association was the catalyst for organization of the Westland Area Commission, which was established in April of 1991. The Westland Area Commission's objective is to provide citizen participation in decision making and to facilitate positive interaction among neighborhood groups, city officials, and developers. The Commission has advised on many local land use and zoning decisions since its inception.

The Westland Plan is a cooperative effort between the Westland Area Commission and the city of Columbus Planning Division to provide guidelines for decisionmaking concerning the Westland area. A planning committee representing a broad range of public and private interests worked together to develop the plan. Committee members included neighborhood representatives, city agencies, businesses, the public schools, affected jurisdictions, and other government officials.

The Westland planning area is bounded by the Conrail tracks on the north, Big Run Road on the south, Interstate 270 on the east, and the Hellbranch Run on the west.

The Westland Plan is a tool to ensure quality development and a proper mix of residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, and recreation/open space land uses.

Goals and Objectives

Community Goal

- To ensure quality growth and development in the Westland area by providing proper land use opportunities that are compatible with existing development patterns; providing adequate

community services and facilities; developing a safe and efficient circulation system; preserving environmentally significant and sensitive areas.

The initial focus of the planning committee was to address land use planning. The following objectives were identified:

- Encourage high-quality residential, manufacturing, industrial, commercial, and office development.
- Evaluate a “village center” concept for the Westland area.
- Develop adequate neighborhood parks and recreation facilities.
- Provide development standards for existing and new developments.
- Preserve environmentally sensitive areas.
- Encourage and improve cooperation among jurisdictions.

Land Use - Existing Conditions

The Westland area is characterized by a mixture of old and new residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. Most of the older development in the planning area is located in Prairie Township. The significant land uses in Prairie Township include Lincoln Village, a large planned residential community built in the 1950s, and older commercial strip centers located along West Broad Street.

Since the late 1980s the Westland area has been rapidly developing into a suburban community. Much of the agricultural land that was annexed by Columbus in the 1950s is now being developed primarily as single family and multi-family residential uses. It is estimated that population increased 29% between 1980 and 1990. The total number of dwelling units are estimated to have increased by 34% for the same period. Subdivision platting and rezoning requests indicate continued growth.

Industrial and manufacturing uses are concentrated in the eastern portion of the area near Georgesville Road and Bolton Field Airport. The area is experiencing development activity such as the new Columbus Dispatch Distribution Center and the American Sunroof Company.

Recommendations from the Columbus Comprehensive Plan, adopted on December 6, 1993, were considered during this planning process. The Comprehensive Plan designated an Industrial/Office District and an Environmental Conservation District, within the planning area boundary. These recommendations and others were incorporated in this plan.

The noise created by Bolton Field Airport is a major planning issue in the area. The Airport Noise Overlay Legislation that is being prepared for all Columbus airports will apply to Bolton Airport. This legislation will affect new residential or noise-sensitive commercial uses and major reconstruction or remodeling of existing structures. The legislation is designed to lessen noise impacts on surrounding areas while maintaining safe aviation practices. The land use map indicates the noise contour districts outlined in the proposed legislation.

The Westland area is severely affected by increased stormwater runoff as the result of new development. Flooding coupled with the presence of hydric soils may cause development restrictions in the area. There is concern that further development will exacerbate the drainage problems.

Hellbranch Run, the western boundary of the planning area, serves as a major drainage system for the west side of the greater Columbus area. It is also a tributary of the Big Darby Creek, a waterway that has been designated a state scenic river because of its ecological significance. The Big Darby Creek is also under consideration for Federal scenic river status. The Hellbranch is currently being studied by several agencies to determine the environmental impacts of increased stormwater runoff on the Big Darby. The city of Columbus is also studying the Hellbranch to determine its current stormwater drainage capacity.

It has been recognized that new development in the planning area should be sensitive to stormwater drainage issues, the Hellbranch Run, and other environmentally significant areas.

Recommendations

- Develop the Westland area in accordance with the Proposed Land Use Map.
- Develop the north central portion of the planning area as a planned development to include light industrial, office, and integrated open space land uses. Residential development is also appropriate for this area. Encourage access orientation away from Broad Street. Site design should be in a campus-like setting and should consider aesthetic and environmental quality, landscaping, as well as soils and natural drainage patterns. See conceptual site plan for office/industrial park.
- Develop the far northwest portion as low density residential. The recommended density is two units per acre. If water and sanitary sewer services become available to this area, higher density residential development should be considered. Future development must be sensitive to the stormwater drainage requirements for the area. Cluster design for the development is encouraged.
- Develop the area east of Bolton Field as manufacturing in accordance with the existing zoning.
- Develop the area directly south and southeast of Bolton Field as residential uses. The recommended density is three to five units per acre. Cluster subdivision design is recommended.
- Designate the far southeast portion of the planning area as very low density residential. The recommended maximum density is one unit per acre.
- Develop the Holt Road corridor as residential with adequate natural buffering and/or separation between the adjacent manufacturing uses. The recommended density is three to five units per acre. The density of any new residential development must be sensitive to existing residential development.
- Maintain land outside the Sewer Facilities Planning Area as agricultural and rural residential uses. If water and sanitary sewer services become available to this area, residential development with mixed densities should be considered as an alternative.
- Encourage development of village center at recommended locations (see land use map). Each node should include a mix of green space, limited commercial, institutional, single family and multi-family residential uses. This concept is further developed in the village center section of this plan.

- Promote the development of a community recreation area south of Bolton Field. Recommended uses include a golf course, a recreation center, playing fields, and/or nature trails.
- Encourage planned community development, such as subdivisions, in order to discourage lot splits along country roads for the development of spot single family homes.
- Support the Columbus Comprehensive Plan's recommendations and Plan Implementation Program to update the zoning code and other codes and regulations.
- Adopt the Ohio Department of Natural Resources recommended natural buffer of 120 feet, or the 100-year flood plain, whichever is greater, along Hellbranch Run and Big Run. Reserve the land as a no-build zone and encourage passive parkland where possible.
- Provide a forested buffer or environmental easement adjacent to tributary streams to act as a filter for runoff, sediments, and chemicals.
- Encourage development and enforcement of policies that promote environmental protection during the site development process.
- Protect natural resources such as streams, ravines, wetlands, and woodlands through a variety of methods including special site review, zoning overlays, conservation easements, etc.
- Preserve the sanctity of the Postle Cemetery and maintain public access to it.

The Village Center Concept

The concept of a village center was developed within the context of current suburban development patterns; it is not a replacement for the standard subdivision. Rather, it is a suggestion that planners and developers look for opportunities to create places that provide a focus for activity and interaction. The concept has drawn from some of the patterns of traditional town design and has integrated them with community needs.

This concept is often referred to as neotraditional town planning. The principle of neotraditional planning is the creation of a community with a mix of land uses, and housing types and densities. The concept stresses pedestrian-oriented circulation as well as grid-like street patterns which provide better internal and external connection and movement. Open spaces are designed to function well and meet the needs of community residents. A unified architectural design theme for the community is emphasized. Neotraditional town planning is a tool to help create a sense of community or place which is often lacking in contemporary subdivision developments.

Within this context two types of village centers were considered. One concept deals with developing vacant land. The second concept is a “retrofit” plan that may involve selected demolition and reconstruction activities. Both concepts are to be compatible with surrounding development.

The following illustration is a conceptual representation of the village center. It is not a proposed development plan.

Galloway Village Center

The Galloway Village Center would be located on a vacant parcel of land. An idealized illustration is shown on the following page. The design incorporates a mix of land uses: single family and multi-family residential, commercial, educational, religious, office, and recreational. All components are situated so that the environment is conveniently walkable. The residential component exemplifies the lifecycle theory in which single family, apartments and townhouses are combined to provide a complete community setting. The overall density of this plan is four units per acre.

Northern Tier

The northern tier is comprised of professional office uses and a formal open space such as a common. The common is surrounded with the highest density residential dwellings. Single family homes are situated along the fringe and serve as a transition to adjacent residential areas.

Central Tier

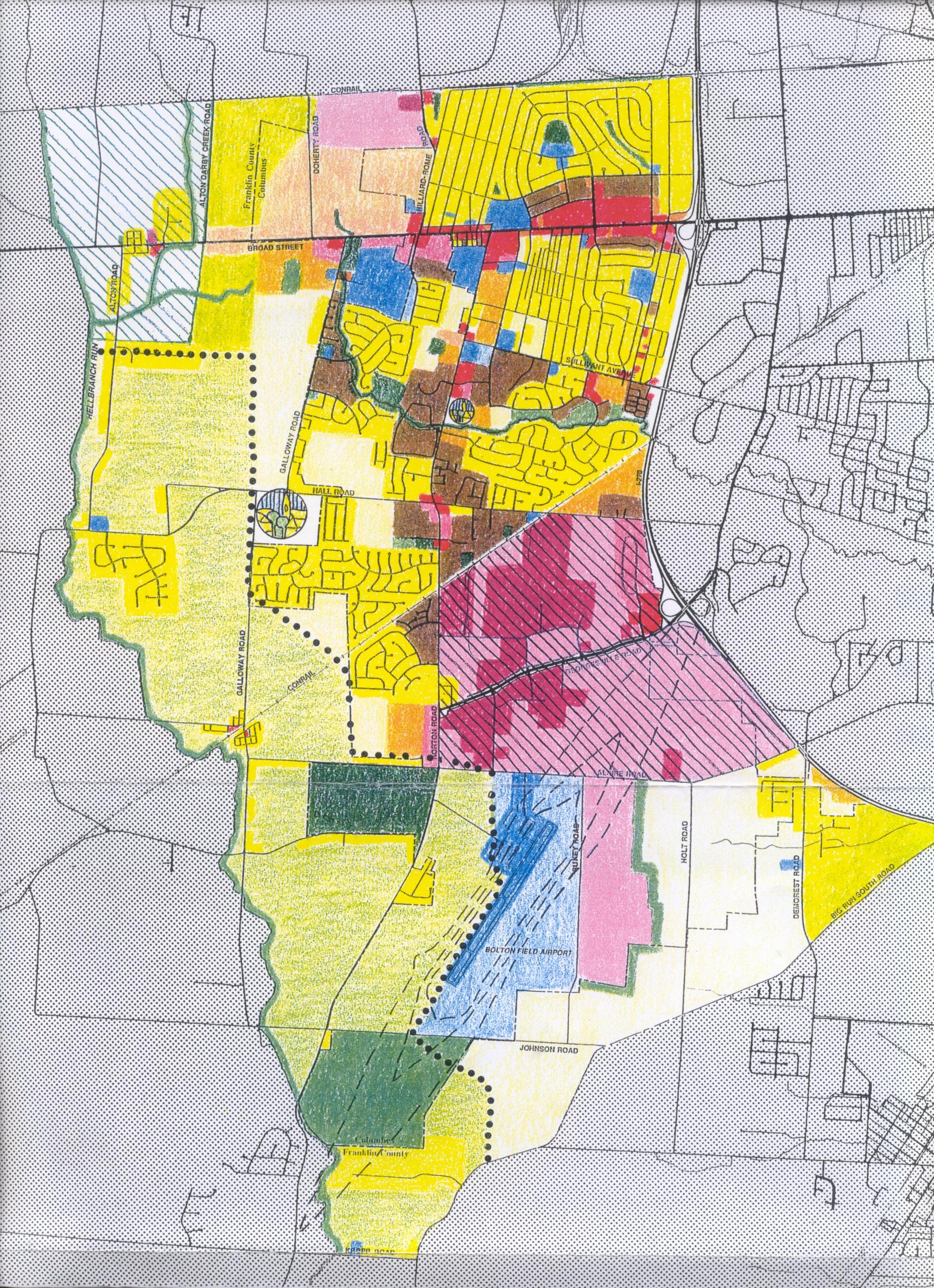
The central portion incorporates the commercial element of the concept. It would include neighborhood convenience shopping, such as a grocery store and restaurant.

Southern Tier

The southern portion integrates the roadway network from the existing adjacent subdivisions thus providing a connection to the surrounding environment. Land uses include a common, an elementary school, and single family dwellings.

Cherry Creek Village Center

This is an example of a “retrofit” village center. The land is already zoned for commercial development. A mix of uses would enhance activity for the center itself, as well as the existing residential and commercial developments surrounding the area. The natural environmental features of this area should be used to enhance the aesthetic quality of the site design.

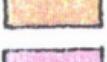


PROPOSED LAND USE

Existing

-  Agricultural / Very low density residential
-  Low density residential
1-2 units per acre
-  Residential
3-5 units per acre
-  High density residential
6 units per acre +
-  Commercial
-  Office
-  Industrial / Manufacturing
-  Institutional
-  Open space / Parks / Buffer

Proposed

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-  Columbus corporate boundary
-  Sewer facilities planning area
-  Bolton Field noise contours

-  Environmental Conservation District
-  Industrial / Office District
-  Village Center



feet

THE

WESTLAND

PLAN

Traffic and Circulation

Objectives

- Develop an efficient roadway system that will alleviate traffic congestion and provide safe movement now and in the future.
- Set priorities for roadway and intersection improvements.

The Westland area is served by Interstate 270, which is also the eastern boundary of the planning area. Interchanges providing access to the area are located at West Broad Street and Georgesville Road. Interstate 70 provides access to the area via Hilliard-Rome Road. West Broad Street serves as a major arterial providing east-west access.

Generally, the arterial road network consists of two-lane country roads inadequate to support increasing traffic demands. Additional arterials in the area are Norton Road, Hilliard-Rome Road, Galloway Road, Hall Road, Sullivant Avenue, and Georgesville Road. With the exception of Georgesville Road, these arterials do not meet the recommended standards of the Columbus Thoroughfare Plan.

The Westland area exhibits traditional suburban auto-oriented development patterns. Increased residential development has escalated traffic volumes in the planning area, especially during peak commuting hours. In order to help alleviate existing congestion and circulation problems and accommodate projected traffic volumes, improvements of the arterial roadway system are necessary.

The Columbus Thoroughfare Plan, presented in the Columbus Comprehensive Plan, includes arterial roadway improvements in the Westland area. The Westland Plan supports those recommendations and makes additional suggestions for roadway and circulation improvements more specific to the Westland area.

The lack of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the Westland area is a concern to area residents. There are few pedestrian or bicycle facilities in the planning area. Sidewalks exist in some residential areas. However, they are generally not connected with the surrounding environment including other residential areas, schools, shopping, parks, recreation, and employment. The city of Columbus currently requires sidewalks in new subdivisions that meet specific standards.

Pedestrian facilities include sidewalks, grade-separated walkways, crosswalks, and wheelchair ramps that increase pedestrian safety, accessibility, and efficiency. Also, pedestrian facilities can increase a sense

of community, reduce auto dependency and pollution, provide transportation modes for youths and others, and enhance the aesthetic quality of the area.

Bicycle facilities include bikeways, bicycle parking, and lockers. Bikeways include a path, route or lane designated as being suitable for bicycle travel. The bicycle is a viable alternative mode of transportation for many people.

Recommendations

Roadway Extensions, Connections and Widening.

- High priority roadway widenings are:
 - Norton Road from Broad Street to Alkire Road.
 - Sullivant Avenue from Norton Road to Interstate 270.
 - Hall Road from Galloway Road to Interstate 270.
 - Galloway Road from Hilliard-Rome Road to Alkire Road.
 - Broad Street from Interstate 270 to Alton-Darby Creek Road.
 - Alkire Road from Norton Road to Interstate 270.
- Improve roadways prior to, or in conjunction with, all development.
- Require turn lanes into every new business district or development.
- Improve north/south connections in Hilliard-Rome Road/Galloway Road corridor. Use existing roadways when possible.
- Evaluate the relocation of Galloway Road west between Broad Street and Hall Road.
- Require developers to work with residents to ensure roadway connections between new subdivision developments.
- Extend Holt Road north from Alkire Road to Georgesville Road.
- Extend Sullivant Avenue west of Norton Road.

Intersection Improvements.

Provide turn lanes and/or traffic lights at the following intersections:

- Norton Road at Hall Road.
- Norton Road at Sullivant Avenue.
- Broad Street at Galloway Road.
- Broad Street at Norton Road.
- Galloway Road at Sullivant Avenue.
- Hall Road at Galloway Road.
- Galloway Road at Westland High School entrance.
- Norton Road at Bay Tree Street.
- Norton Road at Wesliegh Run Drive.

Improved Access to Freeway System.

- Study possibility of additional Interstate 270 interchange between Sullivant Avenue and Big Run South Road.

Roadway Safety and Environmental Considerations.

- Provide grade separation at Hilliard-Rome Road and Conrail Railroad tracks or Galloway Road extension.
- Encourage use of street reflectors in roadway improvement projects.
- Encourage the burying of utility lines when roadways are improved.

Traffic Control Improvements.

- Limit the number of curb cuts along major arterial roads such as Broad Street, Hilliard-Rome Road, and Norton Road.
- Encourage land use practices which facilitate secondary street connections between existing and new subdivisions.
- Encourage cooperation between Prairie Township, Franklin County, and city of Columbus regarding roadway improvements and traffic control.

- Restrict the use of Greener Road to local traffic. Traffic control signs, right in/right out turns, and prohibited left hand turns should be considered and evaluated.

Pedestrian and Bikeway Facilities.

- Include sidewalks in all public roadway improvement projects on both sides of the street where appropriate and practical. Sidewalks should be constructed along the following major roadways:
 - Broad Street
 - Norton Road
 - Sullivant Avenue
 - Hall Road
 - Galloway Road
- Connect sidewalks and bikeways with existing and new residential developments, schools, parks, shopping, and proposed village centers. See illustration of pedestrian/bikeway connections.
- Support the development of the Ohio to Erie Bike Trail along the Conrail right-of-way intersecting the Westland area.

Alternative Modes of Transportation.

- Locate a Park-and-Ride facility in the planning area.
- Work with COTA to improve mass transit services in developing areas.

Use of Information Restricted

Pursuant to Section 409, Title 23, U.S. Code, the information set forth in this section of the Westland Plan shall not be admitted into evidence in Federal or State court or considered for other purposes in any action for damages arising from any occurrence at a location mentioned or addressed herein.

Community Services and Facilities

Objectives

- Ensure adequate police, fire, and emergency medical service as the area continues to develop and grow.
- Develop adequate neighborhood parks and recreation areas.
- Encourage and improve cooperation among jurisdictions.

Police Service

Overview

Police service in the Westland area is provided by the city of Columbus and the Franklin County Sheriff's Department. The Columbus Division of Police provides coverage by 10 Precinct for the areas south of Broad Street. The headquarters for this precinct is located at Bolton Field Airport, 2000 Norton Road. This sub-station is located within the Westland area planning boundary. The area north of Broad Street is covered by 15 Precinct. The headquarters for this precinct is at 2070 Sullivant Avenue. The Franklin County Sheriff's Department is responsible for the Prairie, Jackson, and Pleasant Township jurisdictions.

As the Westland area continues to grow and develop, crime and safety are becoming concerns for the residents. Police coverage, response times, and jurisdictional responsibility and cooperation are important planning issues.

Recommendations

- Expand police service to keep pace with the growth of the planning area.
- Support establishing a new sub-station in the Galloway Village Center, or expanding the existing sub-station at Bolton Field Airport.
- Encourage residents to report crime using the 911 Emergency System.
- To correct jurisdictional confusion, support the innovative Computer Aided Dispatch system.
- Establish block watch programs in all neighborhoods as a deterrent to crime.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services

Overview

Two fire stations are located within the Westland planning area. Columbus Division of Fire provides service from Station 31 located at Bolton Field Airport, 5305 Alkire Road. Columbus Station 26, located at 5433 Fisher Road, and Station 21, located at 3200 Sullivant Avenue also directly service the Westland area.

Fire and emergency medical service is supported through a mutual aid agreement with Prairie Township. Mutual aid is an agreement whereby either party will provide fire service assistance to the other upon request. Prairie Township provides coverage from Station 241, 123 Inah Road. Additionally, the city of Columbus has mutual aid agreements with Jackson Township, Pleasant Township, and several other Central Ohio jurisdictions.

Fire and emergency medical protection is also supplemented through an automatic response agreement with Franklin Township and other nearby communities. The automatic response agreement specifies that the closest available unit, in either jurisdiction, will respond to the emergency call.

Recommendations

- Eliminate the at-grade railroad crossing at Hilliard-Rome Road and Conrail.
- Expand fire coverage as the Westland area continues to grow.
- To improve response times, complete planned roadways at:
 - Sullivant Avenue
 - Westwoods Boulevard
 - Murray Hill Road
- Support the expansion of Doctors Hospital West.

Stormwater Drainage and Sanitary Sewer Service

Overview

Currently, stormwater drainage is provided by a conventional drainage system of tiles, pipes and ditches that flow into either the Hellbranch Run or the Big Run creeks.

As the west side of Columbus continues to experience rapid growth and development, increased stormwater runoff and inadequate drainage have been identified as major concerns to residents and developers alike. Flooding and ponding are frequent occurrences in the planning area. Flat terrain, hydric soils, and insufficient or overloaded natural drainage courses are all factors contributing to stormwater drainage problems in the area.

Preserving or enhancing the water quality in natural water courses is also a concern in the planning area. Accelerated erosion, sedimentation and stormwater runoff have the potential to degrade the water quality in the Hellbranch and Big Run drainage basins and the Big Darby Creek.

Sanitary sewer service is provided by the city of Columbus. The boundary for the Sewer Facilities Planning Area is located within the Westland area and is indicated on the land use map. Sewer service is provided for much of the area within the Columbus jurisdiction, while areas outside the sewer district or within the township or county jurisdictions are, for the most part, not serviced by the city of Columbus.

Recommendations

- Ameliorate roadway flooding at the following locations:
 - Hall Road and Norton Road intersection
 - Norton Road south of Broad Street
 - Lands surrounding Bolton Field

- Strengthen and improve Columbus' stormwater drainage standards. Include emphasis on maintenance of retention/detention ponds. Area-wide solutions should be considered rather than solutions on a development by development basis.

- Limit land development to levels the environment can sustain.

Parks, Recreation and Open Space

Overview

Two city of Columbus parks are located in the Westland area. Greene Countrie Park is located in the north central portion of the area. It is a traditional neighborhood park with 17 acres of playground, open space, softball facilities, and picnic areas. Hall/Norton Road Park is a new neighborhood park. It offers 8 acres of open space; however, funding has been budgeted for improvements. The city also operates an 18-hole, public golf course located on Alkire Road near Bolton Field Airport.

Westland area residents are able to take advantage of several large parks and public and private golf courses located near the planning area. Big Run Park is a regional park on the east side of Interstate 270. Battelle Metro Park is located along the Big Darby Creek.

In addition to school playground facilities, the South-Western City School District offers programs at the Westland Community Center at Westland High School. Exercise classes, a workout room, track facilities, and meeting rooms are offered through paid memberships to residents within the school district.

Prairie Township offers two small neighborhood parks and has designated open space in two residential subdivisions.

The city of Columbus has adopted the standard of 5.5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 in population. Applying this standard to the estimated 1990 population of 25,020, the Westland area should have approximately 138 acres of designated parkland. Currently, there are only 25 acres of Columbus-owned parkland, and approximately 8 acres of Prairie Township parkland available within the Westland area.

Recommendations

- Acquire parkland through donation or purchase to meet the city adopted standard of 5.5 acres of parkland for each 1,000 population. Place emphasis on developing active neighborhood parks.
- Reserve land in the floodplain and along waterways for parks, open space, and other recreational purposes such as bikepaths.

Street Lighting

Overview

The city of Columbus has legislation requiring developers of commercial and residential property to install street lighting along all roadways. However, because the Westland area experienced tremendous growth prior to such regulations, many developments and major roadways have inadequate street lighting systems.

Recommendations

- Include street lighting in all roadway improvement projects.
- Install street lighting systematically at key intersections. Consistency of design should be encouraged.

Natural Resources and Environmental Protection

Objective

- Preserve environmentally-sensitive areas

The quality of the environment is a growing concern in many developing communities. As the Westland area continues to grow, precautions must be taken in order to preserve environmental quality. The Hellbranch Run, Big Run Creek, mature woodlands, and several wetlands are some of the environmentally sensitive areas found in the Westland area.

Recommendations

- Encourage developers to work with the Environmental Protection Agency or the U.S. Corps of Engineers concerning the designation and protection of wetlands.
- Conduct an environmental quality and stormwater drainage study of Big Run Creek.
- Control the location of businesses that handle hazardous materials.

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Acknowledgements

Appreciation is given to those individuals and organizations whose efforts and participation helped make the Westland Plan possible.

Special thanks to Dick Ritchie and Daniel Thomas for their professional contributions and guidance throughout this endeavor.

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