

THE GREATER HILLTOP PLAN



THE GREATER HILLTOP PLAN

September 2001



City of Columbus

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The *Greater Hilltop Plan* was adopted by City Council on September 24, 2001 as the official guide for the Greater Hilltop area. Please direct all questions regarding the content of this plan to city of Columbus Planning Division, 109 N. Front Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

On September 24, 2001 Columbus City Council adopted the *Greater Hilltop Plan* as the city's official guide for development and investment in the Greater Hilltop Planning Area.

As one of the oldest neighborhoods in Columbus, the Greater Hilltop area is full of rich history. As with other older areas of the city, the Greater Hilltop has felt the impact of the outward growth of the region. The city recognizes the importance of investing and planning for the future of our older neighborhoods. The city is committed to engaging and promoting strong, distinct, and vibrant neighborhoods.

To meet the challenges of the future, the Planning Division has developed this plan with the assistance and input from neighborhood organizations, civic leaders and area residents, business and development interests, and governmental agencies. It is our goal that the private and public sectors use this plan as a working reference of planning guidelines for the Greater Hilltop area.

On behalf of the Department of Development, I would like to congratulate the planning committee for their excellent work and look forward to continuing our partnership with the Greater Hilltop neighborhood on future initiatives.

Mark Barbash, *Director*
Department of Development

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of the *Greater Hilltop Plan* was made possible only through the efforts and contributions of many individuals and organizations. The city of Columbus extends its appreciation to the members of the planning committee for their participation in the planning process.

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THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

Public planning processes are conducted to address growth pressure or special area development problems in specific areas of Columbus. The Greater Hilltop Area planning process began in August of 1999. The process was conducted by staff of the Planning Division in cooperation with citizens, public agencies and private interests. Members of numerous Hilltop organizations, including members of the Greater Hilltop Area Commission and the Hilltop Business Association, participated in the planning process.

The planning process addressed six subject areas. Members of the Greater Hilltop Planning Committee were encouraged to participate in all areas of the plan. The subject areas are:

- Recreation and Parks
- Traffic and Circulation
- Land Use and Zoning
- Community Service and Facilities
- Housing
- Economic Development

Members of each subcommittee met on a monthly basis to discuss the various subject areas and how each applied to the Greater Hilltop area. Goals, issues and strategies for each subject area were identified during open subcommittee planning meetings. Following subcommittee meetings, the full planning committee reviewed, modified and developed a consensus on each of the specific recommendations.

THE GREATER HILLTOP PLANNING AREA

The Greater Hilltop Planning area is located on the west side of the city of Columbus. The area is bounded on the north by Interstate 70, on the east by the B&O Railroad, and on the south and west by Interstate 270. It is one of the 30 community-planning areas in Franklin County.

There are several jurisdictions within the planning area. These are city of Columbus, Village of Valleyview, Franklin County, Jackson Township, and Franklin Township.



PURPOSE

The purpose of the Greater Hilltop Plan is to establish a series of guidelines that manage the future growth and development of the Greater Hilltop area. The plan will be used as a principal reference document by developers, the Greater Hilltop Area Commission, city staff, the Development Commission, and City Council when making decisions concerning the planning area.

The recommendations outlined in the Greater Hilltop Plan are intended to allow a degree of flexibility; however, deviations from this plan should be carefully evaluated.

NEXT STEPS

The Greater Hilltop Plan is designed to be a guideline and a stepping-stone for implementing change within the planning area. The Greater Hilltop Commission, with the assistance of the city of Columbus, should use the plan to establish a strategic action plan. Priorities will be established through the strategic action plan and these priorities should be monitored and modified on a regular basis.

HISTORY OF THE GREATER HILLTOP*

The Greater Hilltop area has had a full and rich history, which has helped to shape the neighborhood. Some of the major events that helped form the community as it is today include the following:

- The construction of the National Road (Broad Street) in the 1830's
- The establishment of Camp Case in the mid-1800's. It was the largest Civil War prisoner camp in the north
- The construction of the Columbus State Hospital (1870) and the Columbus State Institute (1868)
- The Flood of 1913
- The construction of Interstate 70 in the 1960's

While these events had major impacts on the community they were not the only forces that helped shape the Greater Hilltop. The residents, business owners, and political leaders were all strong forces in the community. As early as the 1920's the Hilltop Improvement Association was formed. This organization later became the Hilltop Business Association, which still operates today. The Hilltop Community Council was formed in 1944, giving a voice to the churches, schools, service organizations and businesses. The Greater Hilltop Area Commission was formed in the early 1980's. It was established to give the community direction and to encourage and support the community's revitalization.

The history and experience of the neighborhood has made it rich. This should be remembered as we plan for the 21st century.

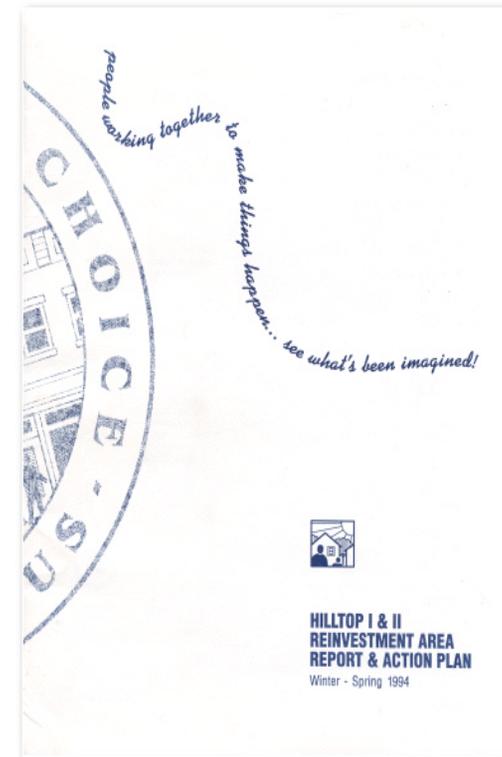
*This section has been extracted from *Hilltop USA: History and Homes*, 1984. Please refer to this publication for a more detailed account of the history of the Greater Hilltop.

PREVIOUS PLANNING STUDIES

In 1993, the city initiated the Community Reinvestment Area and Action Program. This program was one of the city's responses to recommendations made by a 1992 Low-Income Neighborhood Advisory Panel of the Urban Land Institute (ULI). The Panel advised that neighborhood revitalization activities be based on comprehensive, holistic, neighborhood plans.

The Community Reinvestment Program signaled a new approach to community reinvestment efforts in Columbus. It started as a pilot program with six of Columbus' central city neighborhoods. Initiated by the Trade and Development Department, the program was different from earlier revitalization efforts. Instead of focusing on single issues, problems, or programs, the city forged partnerships with neighborhood residents and stakeholders to develop long-range plans that communicated each neighborhood's goals and priority activities for getting things accomplished.

The Greater Hilltop area was included in this Program. The Hilltop I & II Area Report and Action Plan was published in 1994. Recommendations and action steps focused on various issues, including housing, social services, code enforcement, city services, and safety.



PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The *Columbus Comprehensive Plan* lays a framework for the provision of parkland in Columbus. There are generally three types of parks – neighborhood, community, and regional. Neighborhood parks should be provided within a one-half mile radius of all residents and be located on a minimum of 5 acres where possible. Community parks should be provided within 2 miles of all residents and be located on a minimum of 20 acres where possible. A number of parks cannot be classified as either neighborhood or as community parks. These are regional parks and include downtown parks, athletic parks, reservoir parks, campgrounds, and bike paths. Regional parks serve the entire Central Ohio area. Regional parks should be easily accessible by automobiles, public transportation, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

The Columbus Recreation and Parks Commission has adopted the standard of 5.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. Based on this standard and the planning area's projected 2003 population (see Appendix) of 70,686 people, approximately 389 acres of parkland should be provided in the Greater Hilltop. Currently, the Greater Hilltop area has 495 acres of parkland.

The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department operates and maintains 14 parks in the Hilltop. There are also 3 recreation centers serving the planning area.

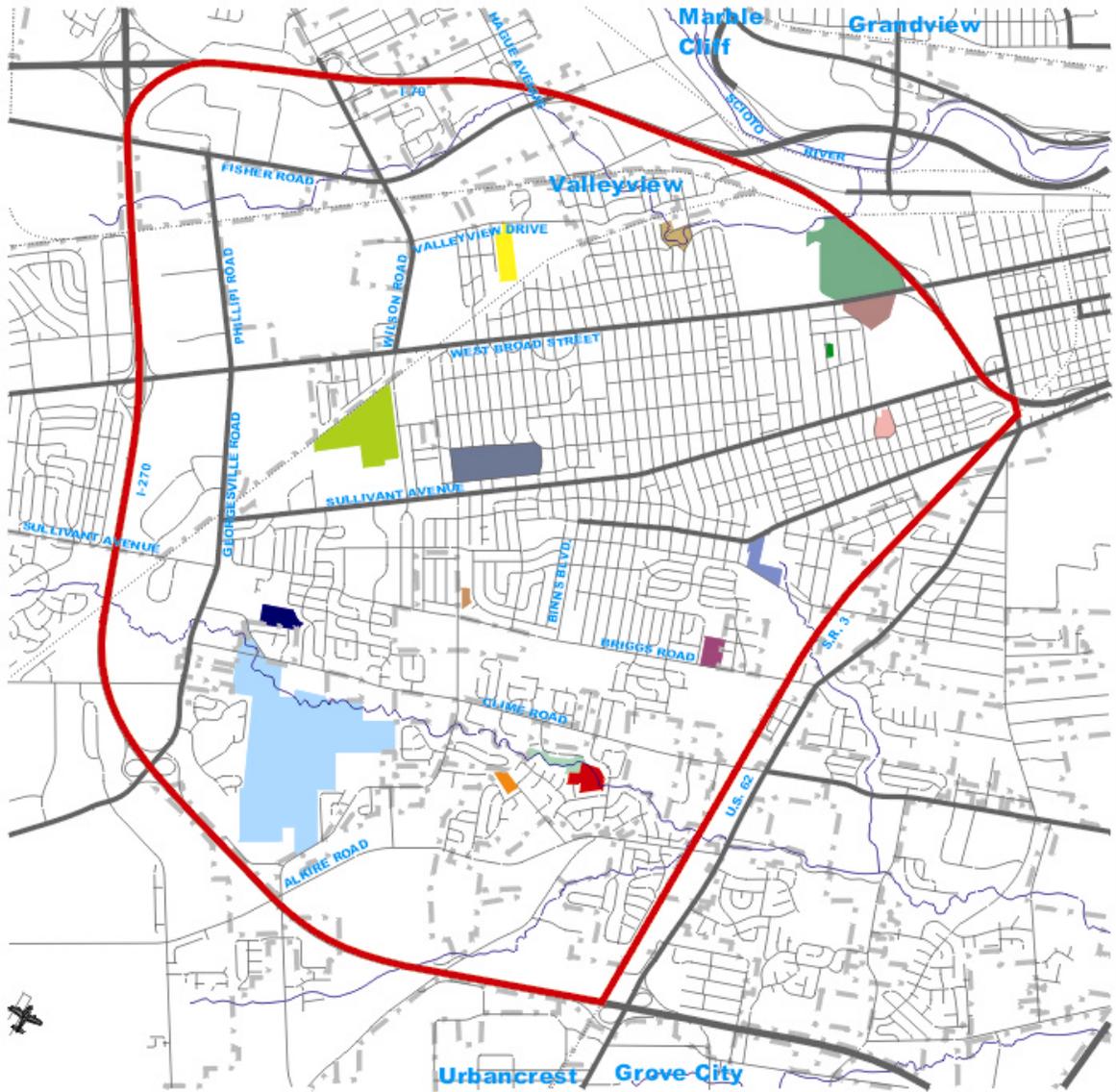
These parks range in size and type, from small to medium sized neighborhood parks – 5 to 10 acres, providing places to read, walk, have a neighborhood softball game or exercise the dog, to large community parks with tennis courts, lighted ball fields, picnic shelters, and adult athletic league play.

Grass island medians, found in some of the Hilltop's oldest residential neighborhoods, provide small areas of open space along otherwise narrow, busy streets.

Big Run Park, comprising over 240 acres, is an outstanding regional park located in the southwest portion of the planning area. It draws visitors from throughout metropolitan Columbus and offers an extensive wildlife area with walking trails, a disc golf course, a large athletic complex, a shelter house, and a soapbox derby facility.

Over time the Greater Hilltop parks should be assessed to determine if they are continuing to operate in a clean, safe, and appropriate manner. Additionally, as the population grows and changes the parks should be re-evaluated to determine if they are meeting the needs of the neighborhood.

The Big Run Creek is located within the Greater Hilltop. Stormwater runoff into the creek from surrounding development is a concern. Possible mitigation efforts, such as the establishment of wetlands, are being investigated by the city. Community participation will be key to the city's efforts.



Greater Hilltop City of Columbus Parks

- Big Run Park
- Creekview Parkland
- Georgian Heights Park
- Glenwood Park & Rec Ctr/Glenwood Swimming Pool
- Hantz Park
- Hilton Park
- Holton Park & Rec Center
- Lindbergh Park
- Rhodes Park
- Riverbend Park
- Riverbend Park II
- Stephens Drive Park
- Westgate Park & Rec Center
- Westmoor Park
- Wilson Road Parkland
- Wexham Park



February 2001

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Maintain the character of the Hilltop's parks and designate appropriate areas for new active and passive recreational opportunities
- Provide opportunities for safe recreational activities
- Develop more neighborhood-oriented park land, providing opportunities for residents throughout the Hilltop
- Improve the natural environment of the area by preserving existing parks and through the creation of new park areas

PLANNING ISSUES AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue

Park and recreation facilities throughout the Greater Hilltop area are in need of access, program and amenity improvements.

Strategic Recommendations:

Big Run Park

- Enhance park access by creating a bike route along Clime Road
- Encourage the development of a developed trail system throughout the park. This would include signage and mile markers along the trail system

- Encourage the Recreation and Parks Department to develop a park ranger program to the manage park and provide educational programming for both children and adults
- Create a "naturalist" education program and erect well-designed markers identifying the various types of flowers, plants, and trees growing in the park
- Encourage the development of multi-use trails along Big Run Creek

Rhodes Park

- Encourage the creation of an ice/roller skating facility in the park



Rhodes Park

Westgate Park

- Evaluate the possibility of expanding and refurbishing the park's recreation center
- Improve park use and accessibility by installing asphalt or concrete sidewalks, more amenable to wheel chair and stroller usage
- Evaluate creating a series of "through" paths to encourage more walking and passive use by the community
- Evaluate the need for increased senior programming
- Encourage removing or improving the appearance of the city water towers located in the park
- Consider the relocation of the athletic fields used by leagues to the new 40-acre park on Wilson Road. Remaining athletic fields would then be used for neighborhood use

Georgian Heights Park

- Create a visible main entrance to the park by extending and narrowing Eakin Road, which currently dead ends at Georgian Heights School
- Develop a master plan for the park to explore improvement possibilities. This master plan would also explore connectivity issues between the park and the church and school that are adjacent to the park

Hauntz Park

- Improve park use and accessibility by installing a sidewalk and curb around the park perimeter
- Expand the tree-planting program in conjunction with the installation of a sidewalk around the park perimeter
- Expand Hauntz Park to Sullivant Avenue to increase the park's visibility
- Enhance the amenities of the park to include flowerbeds, tot lots and senior amenities
- Evaluate the possibility of expanding on-site parking
- Reopen the existing shelter restroom facility for public use during the park's operational hours

Hilltonia Park

- Increase park access by developing two designated entrances, with one entrance from Mound Street and one from Eakin Road
- Evaluate purchase or lease of the closed Wayne Elementary School as a Recreation and Parks facility
- Study the need for additional playground equipment and lighting
- Encourage the development of on-site parking

Holton Park

- Preserve the natural creek setting
- Upgrade the eastern portion of the park (east of Eureka Avenue, along Glenview Drive to Wheatland Avenue)
- Replace old, worn out park equipment, such as picnic benches and backstops and maintain ball fields



Holton Park

Lindberg Park

- Replace old, worn out park equipment, such as picnic benches and backstops, and maintain ball fields

Westmoor Park

- Evaluate creek area for safety - consider adding lighting and/or fencing
- Develop additional access points into the park
- Study the need for additional playground equipment and lighting
- Initiate a dialogue with Village of Valleyview to determine if there is any interest in developing a "cooperative" community park

Wrexham Park

- Develop and maintain the passive recreational setting of the park
- Encourage the placement of safety lighting throughout park

Issue

Some parks experience flooding and drainage problems

Strategic Recommendation

- Examine the Greater Hilltop parks, especially Holton Park, Hauntz Park, and Glenwood Park, to identify flooding and drainage problems. Take appropriate action to correct problems



Small Community Park on West Broad Street

Issue

Greater Hilltop Parks are not as safe as they should be for the users

Strategic Recommendations

- Encourage discussion between the Columbus Division of Police, Columbus Recreation and Parks, and the community to

address safety issues, such as lighting and patrols, in Greater Hilltop parks

Issue

The Greater Hilltop parks are not connected in a way that enhances use and increases accessibility

Strategic Recommendation

- Create multi-use trails to connect Hilltop parks
 - Investigate developing an east-west “greenway,” providing a pedestrian and bicycle friendly linkage between Glenwood Park, Wrexham Park, West High School, the new regional library, Camp Chase and Westgate Park



Construction of Sullivant Trace Trail

- Expand the east-west “greenway” concept by establishing a north-south “greenway” linking Holton Park, Dry Run Creek, “Ridgetop Linear Park” (Hilltop State Lands), Glenwood Park, and Hauntz Park. Glenwood Park would serve as the north-south and east-west greenway connection.
- Construct a pedestrian foot/bicycle bridge across West Broad Street to enhance “greenway” use
- Create a pedestrian crossing along the “greenway” at Sullivant Avenue

Issue

The area west of Wilson Road lacks recreational opportunities. The city of Columbus has purchased 40 acres of land on Wilson Road, north of Sullivant Avenue, which is yet to be developed.

Strategic Recommendations

- Develop areas for athletic fields that could be used by adults and by leagues
- Assess the feasibility of developing a swim facility

Issue

The central and south central Hilltop neighborhoods lack sufficient open space. There are limited opportunities for active play in these neighborhoods,

despite the close proximity of Glenwood and Wrexham Parks.

Strategic Recommendations

- Encourage the development of a neighborhood-scale park in central and south central Hilltop

Issue

Grass island medians are in a deteriorated condition

Strategic Recommendations

- Prevent motorists from parking and driving on islands by working with the Traffic Engineering and Parking Division to install adequate curbs, install fencing, and/or eliminate on-street parking alongside the islands
- Encourage regular maintenance of the islands by the city of Columbus or form a civic garden association to care for the islands
- Form a regular planting program of trees and flowers and solicit neighborhood block participation and/or "adoption" of islands by organizations and churches

Issue

Street trees are not properly maintained and some are in need of replacement

Strategic Recommendations

- Continue systematic tree replacement, starting with major arterials and expanding to residential streets. Where possible, plant older, more mature trees
- Establish a regular maintenance system for trees, including reforestation along major arterials. Solicit support with maintenance from area civic associations
- Encourage neighborhood blocks to "adopt" their street trees and assist with care

Issue

Major intersections and community gateways lack landscaping

Strategic Recommendations

- Acquire approval from appropriate organizations to establish planting areas at major intersections
- Secure professional assistance on designing gateways and intersection plantings
- Secure funding for permanent plantings and maintenance

TRAFFIC AND CIRCULATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The traffic and circulation patterns found in the Greater Hilltop planning area reflect the historic development of the community. First surveyed in the late 1700s, the planning area has evolved from its agricultural beginnings into a diverse community reflecting both urban and suburban development trends. Circulation patterns document the westward growth of the Hilltop and exemplify the subdivision patterns that have dominated real estate trends over the last century.

The construction of the National Road (Broad Street) in 1836 was extremely influential in the growth and development of the Hilltop. The National Road was the primary east-west corridor linking Baltimore, Maryland to San Francisco, California.

The Greater Hilltop also has access to the city's network of Interstate Highways. The planning area is surrounded on three sides by two major interstate systems: I-70 on the north and I-270 on the west and south.

West Broad Street remains the major east-west traffic artery in the community, supplemented by Fisher Road, Sullivant Avenue, and Clime Road. There are three arterial streets running north and south of West Broad Street: Hague Avenue, Wilson Road, and Phillippi Road. North-south traffic circulation and access represents a significant problem in the Hilltop. There is a perception that the current north-south system is inadequate and that as a result, residential streets are

being forced to accommodate an unacceptably high level of traffic. There is also the perception that the major east-west roadways are in need of improvement.

It is a standard practice to refer to a "hierarchy" as a means to distinguish between different types of streets and their functions. The hierarchy consists of several basis designs, as follows:

- *Freeways* carry traffic in very high volumes for very long distances at the highest speeds. The high speeds are possible due to the generous width of roadway surface, absence of traffic signals, and strict control of ingress and egress – provided only at a limited number of entrance and exit ramps. Non-emergency parking is strictly prohibited. Their only role is mobility with no direct access to adjacent land uses.
- *Arterial streets* carry traffic in high volumes for long distances at moderate to high speeds. Their principal role is mobility. They generally face commercial development, which has access to the arterial only at a limited number of curb cuts. Parking is usually permitted only during off-peak hours, if at all.
- *Collector streets*, as the name suggests, collect traffic from local streets within residential areas and deliver that traffic to arterials. They serve the dual role of providing both mobility and access. These streets carry considerably less volume, have lower posted speed limits, and are narrower than arterials. They often have many

residential driveway curb cuts. Parking is usually permitted.

- *Local streets* are narrow, relatively short streets whose primary purpose is to provide direct access to abutting properties. Posted speeds are low and parking is almost always permitted.

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Provide adequate access to all Greater Hilltop Area neighborhoods/subdivisions
- Improve north-south and east-west access within the Greater Hilltop and connections to surrounding communities
- Improve traffic patterns at heavily used intersections
- Develop a system of bicycle paths and sidewalks to connect neighborhoods within the Greater Hilltop and to connect the Hilltop to other areas of Columbus
- Provide adequate public transportation to all areas of the Greater Hilltop

PLANNING ISSUES AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue

Inadequate north-south access to, from, and through the Greater Hilltop area is causing a strain on existing residential streets due to an increase in traffic

Strategic Recommendations

- Form a traffic committee to work with the city's Traffic Engineering and Parking Division and Division of Police to address the access problems and to explore solutions
- Specific attention should be given to analyzing the level of service, including number of lanes, intersection function, roadway extensions, etc., enforcement protocols and roadway improvements for major north-south roads. This would include an analysis of Demorest Road, Georgesville Road, Phillipi Road, Grandview Avenue, Hague Avenue, Kingsford Road, and Wilson Road. *Please refer to the Appendix for the Planning Committee's specific recommendations that should be considered*



Georgesville Road



Demorest Road

Issue

Existing east-west roads are providing inadequate access to the Greater Hilltop

Strategic Recommendation

- Form a traffic committee to work with the city's Traffic Engineering and Parking Division and Division of Police to address the access problems and to explore solutions
- Specific attention should be given to analyzing the level of service, including number of lanes, intersection function, roadway extensions, etc., enforcement protocols and roadway improvements for major east-west roads. This would include an analysis of West Broad Street, Clime Road, Sullivant Avenue, and Fisher Road. *Please refer to the Appendix for the Planning Committee's specific recommendations that should be considered*



West Broad Street

Issue

Neighborhood street and alley system is in need of enhancement and proper maintenance



Residential Alley

Strategic Recommendations

- Upgrade side streets to function as integral elements of the overall street network. This includes the addition of sidewalks
- Explore improvements to neighborhood alleys that would improve access, mitigate drainage problems, and enhance resident use for parking, and walking
- Install curbs and sidewalks along the Fremont Avenue side of Westgate Elementary School
- Upgrade Parkside Road to include curbs, gutters, and improve drainage

- Investigate the use of street front assessment to support improvements to neighborhood streets



Bus Stop on West Broad Street

Issue

Greater Hilltop area is not adequately served by mass transit. Presently COTA riders seeking to go cross-town in the Hilltop must ride the bus downtown to Broad and High street to transfer. Additionally, the present stop serving the Westland Mall is too far away from the mall and is not near a sidewalk or crosswalk, and is particularly difficult for elders to navigate. The area also has inadequate pedestrian and bicycle access

Strategic Recommendations

- Improve pedestrian access to community facilities such as the libraries, schools and

parks by providing sidewalks and crosswalks

- Incorporate sidewalks and curbs into street improvement and reconstruction projects
- Initiate a local cross-town Hilltop route, possibly using smaller buses and connecting with the primary north-south and east-west transit corridors.
- Establish a COTA bus stop closer to Westland Mall
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a pilot Hague Avenue – I-670 – I-70 bus route, encouraging inter-modal transit uses (auto, bus, and bicycle)
- Evaluate the possibility of including light rail stops in the Greater Hilltop when light rail is established in Central Ohio
- Conduct a pedestrian/bicycle study in the Greater Hilltop which looks at both existing roadways and alleys in terms of current level of pedestrian and bicycle access
- Include a bicycle right-of-way in all Clime Road improvements, with the goal of facilitating bicycle access to the Scioto River and Berliner Park
- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a bicycle right-of-way on West Broad Street, connecting the Hilltop to Downtown
- Study limiting vehicular access to Fremont Avenue in order to support an east-west pedestrian and bicycle route linking West High School, Westgate Park, and the library

Issue

In the Greater Hilltop, older residential and commercial areas have inadequate parking

Strategic Recommendations:

- Allow on street parking along both sides of West Broad Street. To allow this, the current lane configuration will have to be modified.
- Evaluate the need for, and potential location of, a public parking lot or shared use lot for commercial establishments on Sullivant Avenue and West Broad Street
- Examine ways to provide and organize residential parking along neighborhood streets, which are heavily congested with parked and moving vehicles



Glenview Boulevard

COMMUNITY SERVICE AND FACILITIES

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Adequate community services and facilities are extremely important to the quality of life in the Greater Hilltop area.

While most of the Greater Hilltop area is within the city of Columbus, several other jurisdictions fall within the boundaries. These include Franklin County, Jackson Township, and Franklin Township. Continued communication between and among these jurisdictions as it pertains to providing services is very important to maintain quality service to the residents.

As the population continues to grow in the Greater Hilltop area, community services become increasingly important. Continued investment in community facilities is important for the planning area.

Providing adequate community service definitely involves communication. Communication between law enforcement officers and Greater Hilltop residents has been improving. This has been due, in large part, to the creation of the Strategic Response Bureau's Community Liaison Unit. Through this unit communication and cooperation should continue to improve.



Big Run Police Substation

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Provide Greater Hilltop residents with adequate police and fire protection
- Provide a safe place to live and work
- Have more effective communication between the various governmental agencies serving the Greater Hilltop Area as it pertains to policing, fire service, street lighting, and other services
- Provide the Greater Hilltop area with adequate water, sewer and drainage services
- Provide adequate public library facilities and educational opportunities for Greater Hilltop residents

*PLANNING ISSUES AND STRATEGIC
RECOMMENDATIONS*

Issue

The communication improvements that have occurred over the last several years between law enforcement officers and residents of the Greater Hilltop area must continue.

Strategic Recommendations:

- Encourage police foot and bicycle patrols in areas with higher population densities
- Encourage increased community reporting of crime through easier accessibility and positive resident/police interaction
- Produce a fact sheet that will tell residents of the information necessary for police investigations
- Encourage better telephone responses by police personnel to public reports and inquiries

Issue

Lack of prevention programs and activities is contributing towards the opportunities for crime in the Greater Hilltop

Strategic Recommendations:

- Continue to support, and encourage the creation of, neighborhood block watch and other crime prevention programs
- Provide more wholesome and safe activities for youth and young adults. This could include the creation of an indoor swimming facility
- Allow for the year-round use of existing and new Recreation and Parks indoor facilities and centers
- Encourage resident/police interaction with Greater Hilltop youth and young adults
- Encourage Greater Hilltop organizations to create volunteer opportunities using the talents of city police, fire and service personnel
- Continue the support of the Greater Hilltop Community Crime Patrol and annually evaluate activities for possible expansion of service area

Issue

The level of communication between the various governmental agencies serving the Greater Hilltop area, as it pertains to providing services, is not always adequate

Strategic Recommendations:

- Coordinate efforts regarding street lighting programs

- Improve the communication among the various public safety departments servicing the Greater Hilltop
- Coordinate street improvement projects
- Explore the possibility of creating a “Neighborhood Pride Centers” to serve the residents of the Greater Hilltop Area. This office would have representatives from the various city agencies available to the residents

Issue

Areas within the Greater Hilltop area do not have adequate street lighting, sewer and drainage services

Strategic Recommendations:

- Complete implementation of city’s 2020 street lighting program
- Provide adequate lighting in alleys throughout the Greater Hilltop area
- Improve storm drainage throughout the Greater Hilltop area, especially focusing on:
 - The areas in the vicinity of Belvidere, Midland and Highland avenues
 - Wilson and Fisher road area
 - Wilson Road at the entrance to Consumer Square
 - Doran Avenue

Issue

There is a lack of cooperative programs that promote the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of public schools and education opportunities for Greater Hilltop residents



West Broad Street Elementary School

Strategic Recommendations:

- Facilitate no-cost, year-round “community enrichment” opportunities. For example, use of schools for afternoon and evening youth programs, adult programs and civic use
- Seek city of Columbus/Columbus Board of Education partnerships to improve the grounds and recreational facilities at schools in the Greater Hilltop area. Examples of collaborations include providing and/or improving sidewalks, street lighting and playground equipment

LAND USE

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Greater Hilltop, one of the city's largest planning areas, contains a wide range of uses. In many ways it is a small town, complete with newer and historic neighborhoods, churches, schools, a variety of stores, industrial and service sector enterprises, and a number of recreational uses. Residents can quite easily meet most of their daily needs without ever leaving the planning area.

The development of the Greater Hilltop followed an east to west pattern. The eastern portion of the Hilltop was first settled in the early 1800's. Accordingly, the community's earliest neighborhoods, parks and commercial uses are located here. The development pattern to the west takes on a distinctly suburban feel; commercial uses are larger, auto-oriented retailers and residential uses change from a traditional grid street pattern to winding subdivision streets and cul-de-sacs.

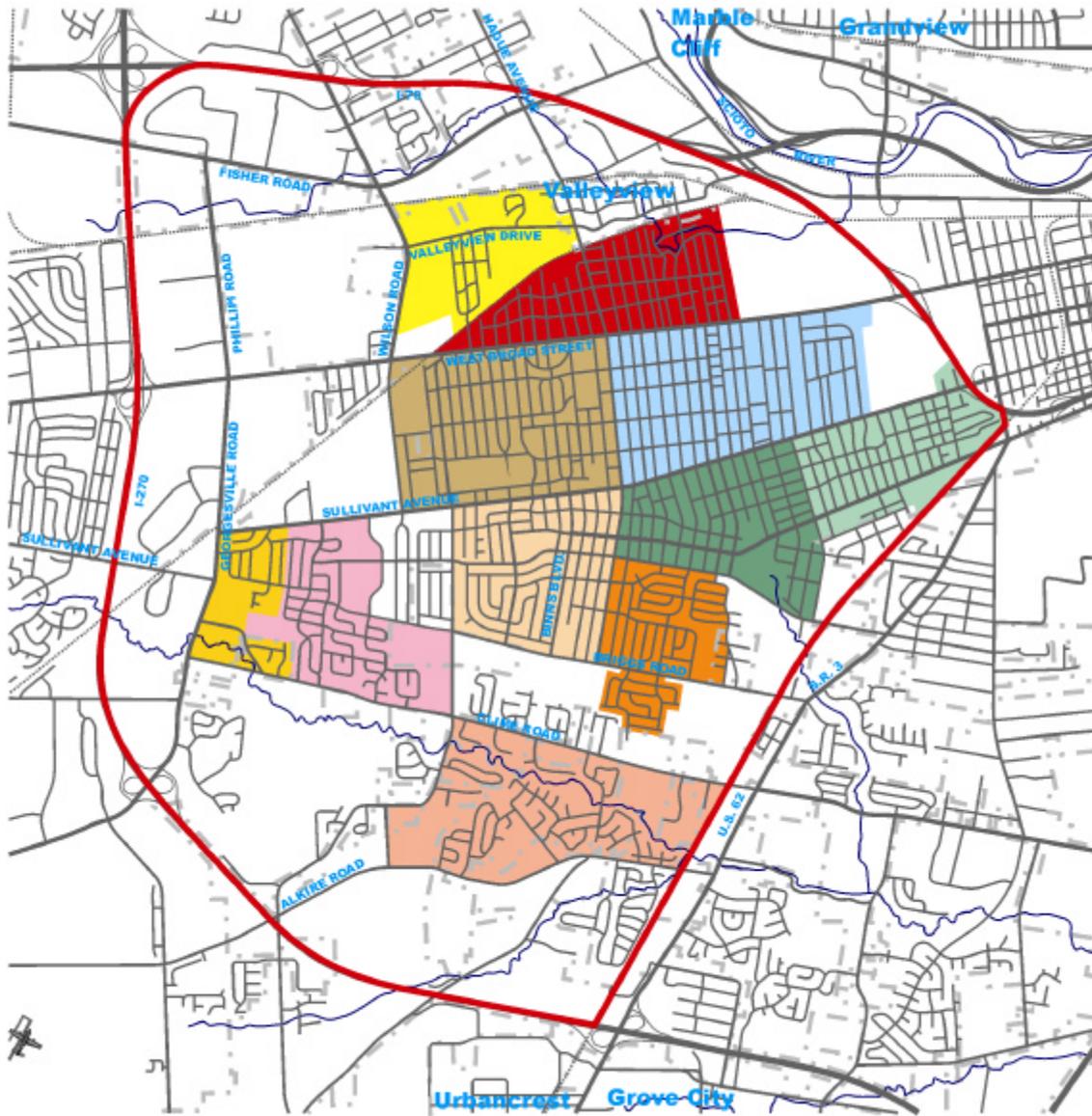
There is the perception that there are areas in the Greater Hilltop that are inappropriately zoned. This is true for some commercial development that is located within a residential zone and residential development that is located within a commercial zone. There are isolated parcels with intense commercial zoning located in residential districts. These are primarily small "Mom and Pop" type stores and should be rezoned to an appropriate neighborhood commercial classification. Additionally, the current 1 - 4 family and apartment

zoning in older Hilltop neighborhoods (North Hilltop, South Central Hilltop, Southwest Hilltop and South Hilltop) is not reflective of existing single family and duplex residential structures and encourages their conversion to higher density multi-family uses.

Many years have been spent debating the appropriate reuse of the Hilltop State Lands. The site comprises approximately 400 acres situated both north and south of West Broad Street, west of the I-70/West Broad Street interchange. The community has been involved in the discussions. The general agreement among the community is that these lands be developed in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding area.

Much of the built environment of the Greater Hilltop area, particularly its older established neighborhoods and commercial corridors, has distinctive architectural features that give these areas character. These features, which provide a sense of history and continuity to the Hilltop, can include the similar scale or size of structures and the physical relationship between structures of similar or different uses – all of which contribute to the rhythm, pattern, feeling, and texture that give an area its sense of place.

The characteristics of the built environment are an important influence on the identity and image of the Greater Hilltop. Further, these characteristics play a positive role in maintaining the general quality and appearance of many of the Hilltop's neighborhoods, as well as in stabilizing and improving local property values.



Greater Hilltop Neighborhoods

- Brookshire
- Central Hilltop
- Georgian Heights
- Holly Hills
- North Hilltop
- Riverbend
- South Central Hilltop
- South Hilltop
- Southwest Hilltop
- Valleyview Heights
- Westgate



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COMMUNITY GOALS

- Maintain the existing character of the Greater Hilltop’s residential areas from inappropriate commercial and industrial development
- Balance the amount of residential, commercial, industrial and other land uses to develop a “total community”
- Revitalize the West Broad Street and Sullivant Avenue corridors within the Greater Hilltop. Promote appropriate land uses
- Create community assets, such as parks, new residential/commercial infill development or side yards for adjacent development, as appropriate, on currently vacant lots
- Develop the Hilltop State Lands property in a comprehensive manner. Protect the existing natural landscape.

PLANNING ISSUES AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue

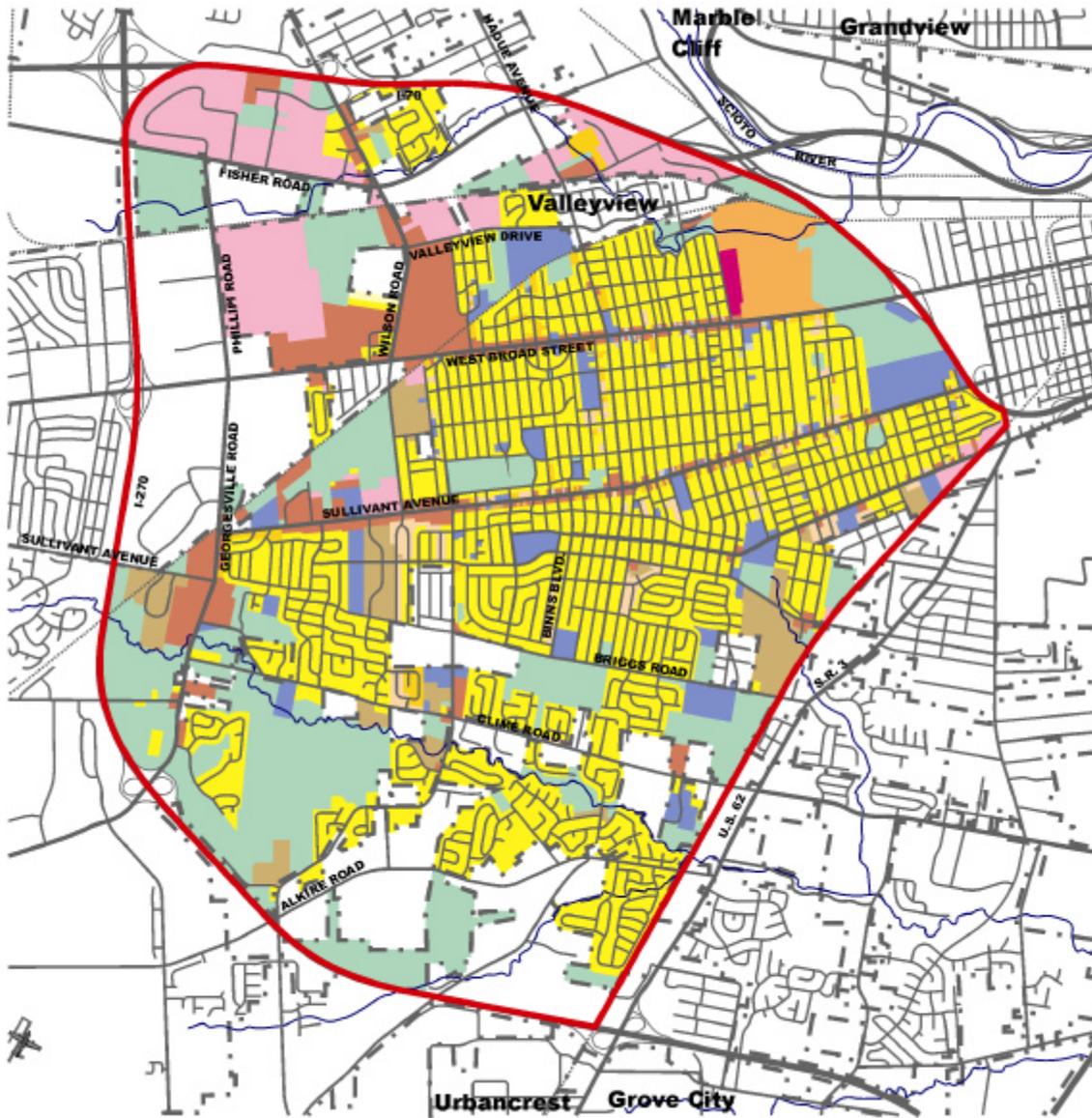
Existing zoning is not always appropriate or consistent with the surrounding area

Strategic Recommendations

- Inappropriately zoned parcels, in both residential and commercial areas, should be

rezoned so that they are consistent with current land use and surrounding uses. An inappropriate designation might include a parcel that is zoned commercial but that is used for residential or a parcel with an intense commercial zoning that is adjacent to a residential area

- Initiate a rezoning effort on the south side of West Broad Street, from Glenwood Park west to Highland Avenue. The rezoning should maintain multi-family residential as the desired land use and should allow office use, where appropriate
- Support community-based group storefronts and national and local commercial uses along West Broad Street west of Highland Avenue
- Study the feasibility of a parcel-by-parcel rezoning on both sides of Sullivant Avenue from Wheatland Avenue east to the Conrail Railroad. The rezoning should maintain residential as the desired land use and allow, where appropriate, higher density residential uses
- Support the development of commercial nodes at major intersections along Sullivant Avenue
- Consider expanding the permitted uses in older commercial areas to allow for limited “manufacturing” uses, such as fabrication and assembly



Greater Hilltop Generalized Existing Land Use

- Single Family
- 1-2 Family
- 1-4 Family
- Apartment Residential
- Office
- Planned Unit Development
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Manufacturing
- Parking
- Parks/Open Space
- Community Development Parcel



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- Conduct a parcel study of the older Hilltop neighborhoods (North Hilltop, South Central Hilltop, Southwest Hilltop, and South Hilltop) in the areas zoned for 1 – 4 family units and apartments/office to determine the feasibility of rezoning these areas for single family or 1-2 family units
- Where appropriate examine the possibility of using the Traditional Neighborhood Development Code for new development



West Broad Street Commercial Establishments and Residential

Issue

New construction and alterations to existing structures are not always compatible with the existing built environment

Strategic Recommendations:

- Establish guidelines for new development or changes to existing structures. These guidelines should include the following guidance:
 - Avoid removing or altering distinguishing characteristics of properties
 - New construction or additions should be compatible with the size, scale, materials and general built characteristics of the property and surrounding built environment
 - The building mass of a large development should compliment existing development
 - Provide appropriate buffering between land uses, particularly between residential and commercial or industrial uses

Issue

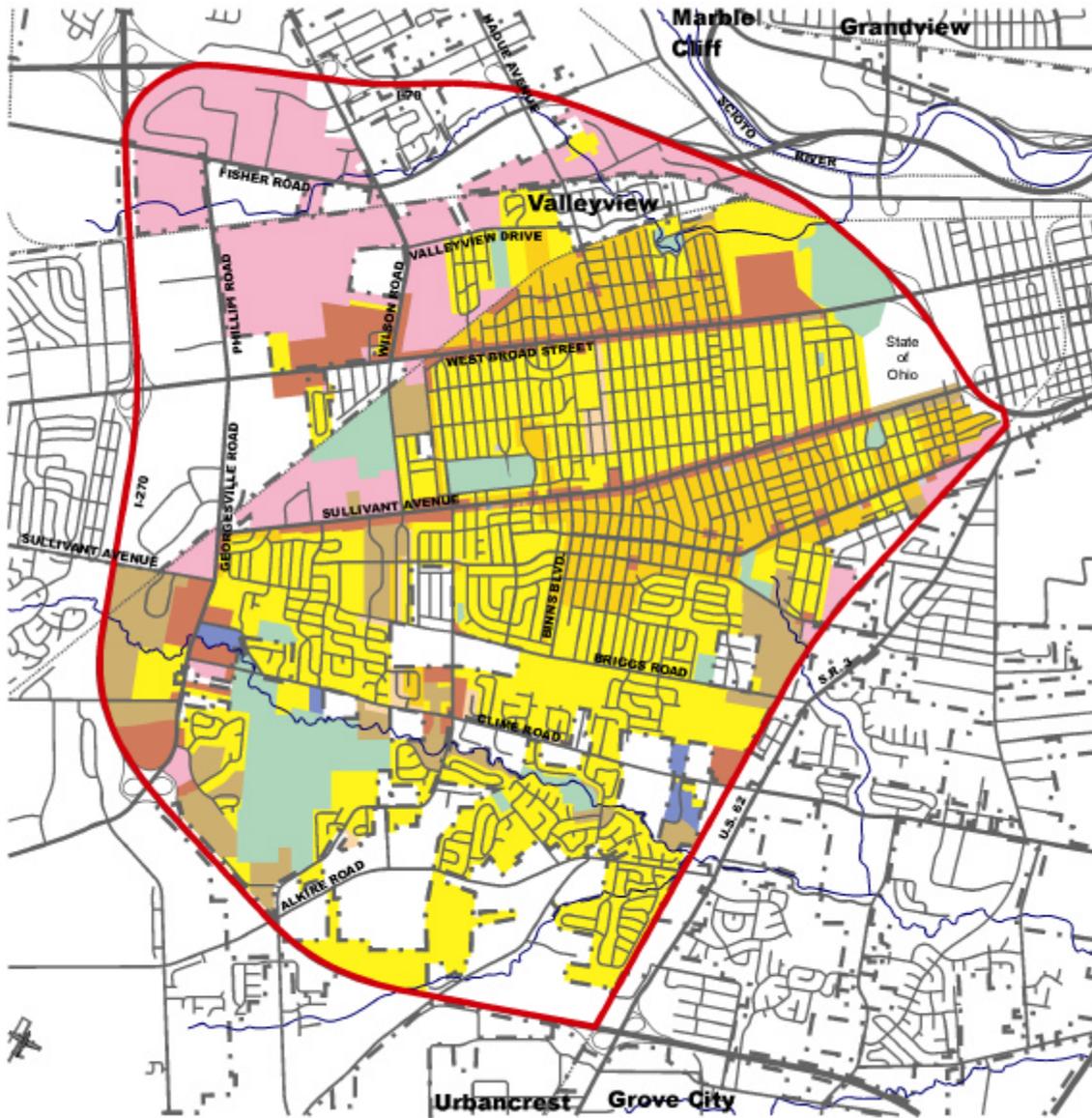
For the most part the Hilltop State Lands are developed. However, there is concern on how the portion that has been set aside for community use will be developed

Strategic Recommendations:

- Include the Greater Hilltop community in discussions on future development
- Develop the lands in a comprehensive manner and in a pattern complementary with the surrounding area



Hilltop State Lands – Community Development Parcel



Greater Hilltop Existing Zoning

- Single Family
- 1-2 Family
- 1-4 Family
- Apartment Residential
- Apartment/Office
- Planned Unit Development
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Manufacturing
- Parking
- Parks/Open Space



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HOUSING

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Given the long history of the Greater Hilltop, the housing stock is reflective of many periods. As the social and economic climate changed in the country so did the architecture and style of homes that were built. Architectural styles of Greater Hilltop homes include Farmhouse, Queen Anne, Bungalow, Colonial Revival, and World War II Era.

As the housing stock within the Greater Hilltop ages the condition of the structures becomes an issue. Issues range from the appearance and maintenance to the safety of the homes.

Additionally, as the population becomes more diverse within the Greater Hilltop, the need for the provision of a variety of housing opportunities increases. Specifically, housing opportunities need to continue to be provided for people in all stages of life and in all economic levels.



Greater Hilltop Residential Units

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Encourage an economically diverse population through the provision of a variety of housing opportunities. Attract new residents through the promotion of the Greater Hilltop area and its neighborhoods
- Provide a variety of housing opportunities suitable and attractive to people at different stages in their life, including senior citizens
- Preserve and protect the character of the Greater Hilltop's housing stock through compatible rehabilitation and new infill construction

PLANNING ISSUES AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue

Throughout the Greater Hilltop the condition of the housing stock is deteriorating

Strategic Recommendations

- Initiate and support the following efforts to upgrade and maintain housing stock for persons of all economic levels:
 - Support and promote existing home maintenance and repair programs. In particular, increase the visibility and accessibility of city-sponsored home maintenance programs

- Encourage the city, lenders, and/or Greater Hilltop housing/civic organizations to educate property owners about property maintenance requirements
 - Encourage the city, lenders, and/or Greater Hilltop housing/civic organizations to provide property maintenance and financial planning workshops to residents and property owners
 - Encourage private financial investment and joint participation by banks and other mortgage lenders, in upgrading private housing stock through the provision of loans and other incentive programs
 - Ensure that government-sponsored housing rehabilitation programs promote quality residential improvements that are compatible with existing housing stock
 - Encourage the Hilltop's housing/civic organizations to develop and maintain a list of public and private rehabilitation programs
- Explore the possibility of implementing a program on the Hilltop that would simultaneously coordinate residential property improvements when adjacent commercial property is being improved. This program would strategically target sections of the Hilltop's commercial corridors and adjacent residential areas, for comprehensive community revitalization

activities. The program would address the following:

- Combine and coordinate city services, such as code enforcement, infrastructure improvements, property rehabilitation and home ownership programs
- Use city investments in public infrastructure to encourage private investments in property maintenance and upkeep
- Install power, cable, and phone, lines to the rear of the property or underground
- Provide buffers between residential and other uses

Issue

Some areas within the Greater Hilltop are experiencing a decline in homeownership

Strategic Recommendations:

- Explore possible incentives, such as down payment assistance, to households purchasing homes in the Greater Hilltop area
- Explore the possibility of developing and implementing homeownership education programs, targeting both existing and potential Greater Hilltop residents
- Support organizations providing homeownership programs to the Greater Hilltop area

- Develop marketing materials promoting homeownership opportunities in the Greater Hilltop

Issue

Architectural character of existing housing stock is not always being enhanced and maintained in rehabilitation work and infill construction

Strategic Recommendations:

- The Greater Hilltop community should undertake a study, with the assistance of the city’s Historic Preservation Office, to determine Historic Register eligibility of Greater Hilltop properties and to follow-up that study with nominations to the register
- Encourage infill housing on vacant lots that is architecturally compatible with neighboring homes

Issue

Limited independent and assisted-care living opportunities exist within the Greater Hilltop area for seniors and persons with special needs

Strategic Recommendations:

- Evaluate the living needs of seniors and persons with special needs in order to ensure an adequate level of services

- Encourage the continued development of independent and assisted care housing and the adaptation of existing homes, as appropriate, to meet community needs

Issue

Limited awareness within the Greater Columbus community of the many different neighborhoods, diversity of housing stock and amenities available in the Greater Hilltop

Strategic Recommendations:

- Community/business organizations within the Greater Hilltop area should take the lead on promoting the many positive attributes of living and working in the Greater Hilltop. Activities could include:
 - Market the Greater Hilltop to a variety of different households as an attractive community in which to live and invest
 - Promote the many different amenities to be found in the Greater Hilltop, such as its historic character, new and historic housing stock, access to downtown, parks and recreational opportunities, and sense of community
 - Promote the mix of housing types, range of affordability, and cultural diversity of the Greater Hilltop community

Issue

Underutilized space on the second floor of commercial buildings

Strategic Recommendations:

- Encourage the rehabilitation of the second floors of commercial buildings through the use of financial and other incentives
- Eliminate unnecessary regulatory barriers to property rehabilitation and redevelopment



Residential Units on Sullivant Avenue

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Greater Hilltop area has many strengths that have directly benefited developers and business establishments alike. A quality work force combined with a substantial residential population has enabled the area to maintain a diverse and stable retail and commercial base. Accessibility to highways and transit, and the Greater Hilltop's proximity to downtown have also enhanced the area's ability to attract and maintain commercial, industrial and civic investment. A wide variety of housing and commercial options have also allowed the area to maintain its residential and employment base.

At the same time, portions of the Greater Hilltop are not unlike other areas within the city of Columbus. Older, traditional commercial corridors in the Greater Hilltop, such as West Broad Street and Sullivant Avenue, consist of structures with varying building conditions and have a lack of parking options and retail services. Newer commercial corridors, such as Georgesville Road and the western most portion of West Broad Street, have limited sidewalk access. In addition, the need for greater transit options and increased traffic affects both the newer and older sections of the area.

Overall, the Greater Hilltop continues to enjoy modest population growth and increased diversification, which has translated into greater diversity of retail options. The area also continues to attract development while preserving its historically strong sense of community.

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Maintain and enhance the employment opportunities in the Greater Hilltop area
- Create and maintain vital commercial districts throughout the Greater Hilltop by providing sufficient supportive amenities, such as, parking, sidewalks, lighting and transit opportunities

PLANNING ISSUES AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue

Outward migration and increased shopping center competition has impacted the vitality of both older and newer commercial areas within the Greater Hilltop

Strategic Recommendations

Older commercial districts (eastern portions of West Broad Street and Sullivant Avenue)

- Provide adequate and attractive lighting
- Enhance and/or develop parking opportunities
- Develop attractive directional and informational signs
- Consider implementing a comprehensive code inspection program



West Broad Street Commercial Uses

Newer commercial districts (Georgesville Road and the western most portion of West Broad Street)

- Construct sidewalks to provide convenient pedestrian access from residential to the commercial areas
- Construct and/or enhance COTA bus shelters and stops
- Establish landscape and design guidelines for commercial development. Standards for parking and building setbacks/orientation, parking lot landscaping, pedestrian access, and signage should be established and utilized during the rezoning process

Issue

Continued outward expansion of city of Columbus is threatening the success of the Greater Hilltop in attracting development in the industrial and commercial sectors

Strategic Recommendations:

- The business and civic organizations within the Greater Hilltop should take the lead on the following activities:
 - Encourage cooperation among all governing bodies whose jurisdictions are within the Greater Hilltop as to economic development activities
 - Evaluate and promote investment opportunities within the Greater Hilltop area
 - Consider development of a market strategy and action plan for the Greater Hilltop's commercial districts



Meijer's Store on Georgesville Road

APPENDIX

PLANNING COMMITTEE'S SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING NORTH- SOUTH AND EAST-WEST ROADWAYS WITHIN THE GREATER HILLTOP AREA

North-South Roadways

Demorest Road:

- Evaluate the intersection of Demorest Road and Sullivant Avenue to determine if the function can be improved
- Initiate the following road improvements from Sullivant Avenue to Briggs Road to reach the same standards of recent County-sponsored improvements:
 - Upgrade road by installing sidewalks, curbs, gutters, and street lights
 - Widen road to three lanes, with a middle turn lane
 - Install right turn only lanes at intersections
- Evaluate the intersection of Demorest Road at Parkwick Drive to determine if the function can be improved
- Connect Demorest Road with Georgesville Road by completing Parkwick Drive

Georgesville Road:

- Widen the road to five lanes from Sullivant Avenue to the north Clime intersection

- Evaluate the traffic flow for more consistent lane use from Old Sullivant Avenue north to West Broad Street

Phillipi Road:

- Upgrade the north-bound lane and include curb cuts
- Evaluate the traffic light timing at the intersection with West Broad Street
- Evaluate the need for the existing traffic light at the southern end of the “Consolidated” facility (closest to West Broad Street)
- Study the feasibility of constructing a railroad underpass or grade separation. The existing railroad crossing on Phillipi Road may no longer be adequate due to the substantial increase in warehouse-related truck traffic

Grandview Avenue:

- Consider extending Grandview Avenue south from State Route 33 (Dublin Road) to West Broad Street

Hague Avenue:

- Study Hague Avenue to determine appropriate ways to improve overall traffic flow, including the feasibility of upgrading as follows:

- Add a south-bound lane on Hague Avenue from West Broad Street to Briggs Road
- Extend Hague Avenue south to Clime Road
- Upgrade the Sullivant Avenue Intersection:
 - Determine the feasibility of installing left turn only lanes with designated signalization
 - Improve driver visibility at the northwest corner of the intersection
 - Determine the feasibility of changing from four travel lanes to three, with center turn/stacking lane
- Study the West Broad Street intersection to determine appropriate ways to improve the following:
 - Vehicular stacking due to the difficulty in making left-hand turns
 - Poor driver visibility
 - Crossing the intersection to reach West Broad Elementary School
 - Northeast curve radius (east bound West Broad Street onto northbound Hague Avenue). The turn radius appears to be too tight, causing automobiles to “ride-up” onto the curve
- Study the Briggs Road intersection to determine the feasibility of:
 - Increasing the visibility of drivers turning eastbound onto Briggs Road
 - Leveling the grade of the roadway intersection
 - Installing a three-way stop
 - Extend Hague Avenue south to Alkire Road (west of the Riverbend Subdivision and east of Southwestern Road)

Kingsford Road:

- Establish a two-way traffic pattern to alleviate the congestion at the Demorest Road and Sullivant Avenue intersection and reduce the high level of use on Demorest and Wilson roads

Wilson Road

- Upgrade to four moving lanes between West Broad Street and Sullivant Avenue
- Create turn lanes onto Sullivant Avenue
- Incorporate curbs, sidewalks, and bike lanes into improvements
- Consider a reduction in the speed limit and the addition of pedestrian crossings from West Broad Street to Sullivant Avenue

East-West Roadways

West Broad Street

- Study the feasibility of establishing a traffic pattern with center turn lanes, similar to High Street in the Short North and the University District
 - Establish five lanes with a center left turn lane marked at all major intersections from Lechner Avenue to Wilson Road. Where feasible, install left turn signals at marked left turn lanes
- Evaluate the need for signals at the intersections of Lechner Avenue and West Broad Street and Richardson Avenue
- Install a right turn only lane eastbound on West Broad Street at the intersection of Wilson Road to reduce traffic stacking. Improve signs alerting drivers of the lane choices available and clearly delineate the lanes with appropriate pavement markings
- Work with the Post Office to improve vehicular access to the drive through (drop off) mailboxes at the corner of West Broad Street and Harris Avenue
 - Broaden discussions to include officials from West Broad Street Elementary School to develop a way to mitigate combined Post Office, school, and vehicular congestion. Buses stack on West Broad Street, as do the cars of parents picking their children up

at school. This situation is further exacerbated by individuals trying to use the drive through mail drop-off boxes

- Install reflective lane markers along West Broad Street, concentrating on those sections west of Wilson Road
- Complete the installation of street lights on West Broad Street from Wilson Road to I-270
- Install sidewalks and curbs on West Broad Street from Wilson Road to I-670 (shopping areas)
- Study the feasibility of lowering speed limits along West Broad Street; consider pedestrian access when evaluating current speed limits
- Improve drainage to mitigate curb flooding at the intersection of West Broad Street and Terrace Street

Clime Road

- Encourage inter-governmental cooperation between the city and the county in order to uniformly upgrade Clime Road between Georgesville Road and Harrisburg Turnpike
- Upgrades should widen the road, as well as provide for curbs, sidewalks, and bike lanes

Sullivant Avenue

- Upgrade Sullivant Avenue from the intersection of Hague Avenue west to Georgesville Road:

- Construct sidewalks
 - Install benches and trash receptacles
 - Install street trees
 - Initiate a dialogue with the Columbus Public Schools, city traffic and engineering officials, and the Hilltop community to cooperatively resolve the traffic and circulation problems at Burroughs Elementary School
 - Problems include school-associated cars stacking on Sullivant Avenue and blocking the visibility of through traffic by parking too close to the intersection of Sullivant and Richardson avenues
 - Promote on site pick up and delivery of students to the school
 - Evaluate pedestrian access and circulation along Sullivant Avenue, particularly the ability to cross the street safely between Whitehorn and Wayne avenues
- Investigate the feasibility of connecting Fisher Road with State Route 33, possibly by constructing a bridge over the river

Fisher Road

- Upgrade Fisher Road and widen the street, and install curbs and bike lanes between McKinley Avenue, and from Wilson Road to Phillipi Road
- Study the benefit of installing sidewalks along Fisher Road between McKinley and Hague avenues, in order to make it easier and safer for bus commuters

GREATER HILLTOP CENSUS POPULATION

	1990 CENSUS*	2000 CENSUS*
TOTAL POPULATION	56,258	58,925
WHITE	48,092	47,500
BLACK	6,990	7,816
NATIVE AMERICAN	150	261
ASIAN	848	1,119
OTHER	179	614
HAWAIIAN ISLANDER	NA	30
MULTIRACIAL	NA	1,585
HISPANIC	445	1,239

* Data is based on a population model developed by the City of Columbus Planning Office. The model is based on official United States Census data.