

Columbia Township

Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ)

Economic Development Plan

Introduction

The purpose of this plan is to set forth the goals and strategies for the economic development of the Columbia Township Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ). The intended result from this economic development planning effort is a more definitive strategy to move community goals and strategies forward through the creation of the JEDZ. This plan is intended to facilitate redevelopment, and new or expanded growth for commercial or economic development in the JEDZ area, Columbia Township, and the State of Ohio. This plan fulfills the requirement of Ohio Revised Code Section 715.691(D)(3).

Background

Columbia Township is one of twelve townships in Hamilton County, Ohio. At one time Columbia Township was one of the largest townships in the region in terms of land area. Due to annexations and incorporations, it has been reduced to nine “islands” of unincorporated land surrounded by multiple municipalities. Columbia Township now encompasses approximately 2.5 square miles, making it one of the smallest townships by land area.

The township adopted a comprehensive plan in 2005 and updated it in 2011. Economic development was a primary focus in the original plan. After the significant downturn in 2007 and after, the township suffered loss of businesses, declines in property values, and lack of development and growth. The comprehensive plan update in 2011 refocused development efforts in the business areas and encouraged sustainable development practices for existing and new businesses.

Goals for the Future

The Columbia Township Comprehensive Plan Update of 2011 established seven goals for the township:

- Create healthy and sustainable economic development initiatives to attract a mix of business that expands the tax base for the township.
- Promote commercial redevelopment in existing commercial districts.
- Provide and maintain an effective multi-modal transportation system to ensure healthy, safe and efficient movement throughout the township.
- Provide utility, infrastructure and associated services at a sustainable level of service to foster economic development and maintain or improve the quality of life of residents.

- Use the township image, brand, and identity to promote the quality of life offered in the community.
- Maintain, improve and protect the quality of residential neighborhoods as desirable places to live.
- Protect natural resources and opportunities for quality parks and recreation facilities for the benefit of residents and visitors.

Value Priorities

The values Columbia Township has established for residents and businesses along with their employees include:

- A safe, secure community protected by excellent police, fire and emergency medical services, and provision of other desirable public services.
- A vibrant and balanced economy creating employment opportunities in Columbia Township and the surrounding area.
- Encouragement of entrepreneurial opportunities through incentives for growth.
- Services and infrastructure improvements to support a broad range of social, economic, medical, recreational and intellectual opportunities.

Economic Development Goals and Strategies

Commercial development in Columbia Township is centered on three areas – the Ridge Avenue and Highland Avenue intersection, the Plainville Road Corridor, and the Wooster Pike Corridor. These areas primarily service commercial uses and provide a mix of uses from grocery stores and hardware outlets to small scale restaurants, boutique shops, and banks. These areas provide a majority of the economic base for the township. The Ridge-Highland area is a regional commercial center for the eastern Cincinnati region, while the Plainville Road and Wooster Pike corridors primarily service the eastern portion of the township and adjacent communities.

Goal: Healthy and sustainable economic development initiatives will be created to attract a mix of business that expands the tax base for the township.

Strategies:

- Prepare for and guide future development and redevelopment opportunities.
- Revitalize and strengthen neighborhood business centers to define the type, placement, and location of future growth.
- Promote cooperative economic development incentives between local governments and businesses for specific projects.

Goal: Commercial redevelopments will be promoted in existing commercial districts.

Strategies:

- Encourage public and private investments in commercial districts
- Develop a recognizable image and vision for each neighborhood business district. The requirements of existing Special Public Interest (SPI) Districts should be taken into consideration.
- Encourage investment and increased density in business districts.
- Encourage coordination and cooperation in land use planning in the Columbia Township area with the surrounding jurisdictions and unincorporated areas.

Goal: Public utility, infrastructure, and associated services will be provided at a sustainable level of service to foster economic development and maintain or improve the quality of life of residents.

Strategies:

- Create a township policy that requires full improvement to roads (and other infrastructure) when repairs and/or upgrades are needed, avoiding piecemeal, incremental, and ongoing construction activities.
- Promote sustainability in the design and maintenance of utilities, infrastructure, and services provided by the township.
- Identify funding opportunities for infrastructure, utility, and township service projects.

The attached Focus Area exhibits are extracted from the Columbia Township Comprehensive Plan Update adopted June 14, 2011 by the Board of Trustees of Columbia Township relating to economic development goals in the three business districts located in the JEDZ. The exhibits show specific implementation projects for each business area recommended for achieving township economic development goals and strategies.

Economic Priorities

- Promote redevelopment opportunities.
- Utilize economic development tools and incentives to generate revenue for project development, facilitate equitable sharing of tax revenues, and help support improvements to infrastructure associated with new development.
- Promote entrepreneurialism in Columbia Township, especially in neighborhood business areas.
- Stabilize the township tax base through encouragement of commercial development.
- Provide for safe and improved vehicular and pedestrian traffic patterns in business areas

In order to plan, develop and support economic development, Columbia Township will continue to provide the necessary infrastructure. The proposed services and improvements set forth in the attached Exhibit A and the tax revenues generated from the Zone, and the expenditures thereof, will have direct benefits to the future companies and employees operating in the JEDZ boundaries.

EXHIBIT A

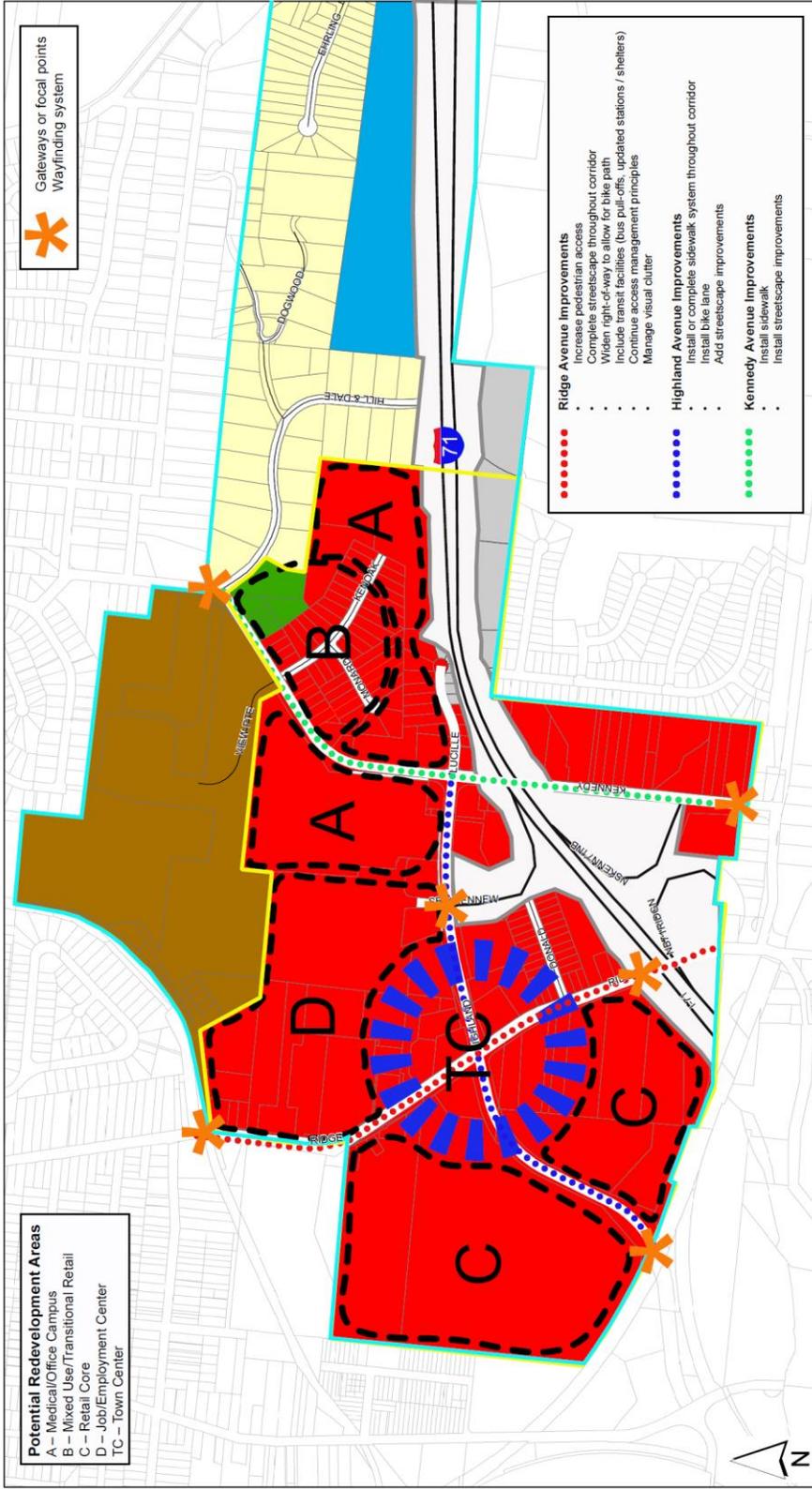
Schedule For the Provision of New, Expanded, Enhanced and Additional Facilities, and Improvements in the Columbia Township Joint Economic Development Zone

In accordance with Section 715.691(C), Columbia Township and the Village of Fairfax agree to provide services and improvements to the Columbia Township Joint Economic Development Zone ("Zone") to facilitate economic development. It is in the spirit of shared services as promoted by the State of Ohio that the Township and the Village agree to provide new, expanded, enhanced, and additional services, money, or equipment. The Township and the Village may each provide clerical and administrative services and staffing as each party, in its sole discretion, determines.

As set forth in the Zone Contract, the Village will administer, collect, enforce, and disburse the income tax. Additionally, upon request of the Township, the Village may: provide advice as to budgeting; promote, complement, and encourage economic and commercial development within the Zone; explore shared services such as enhanced mutual aid for police services; and any other services as separately agreed. .

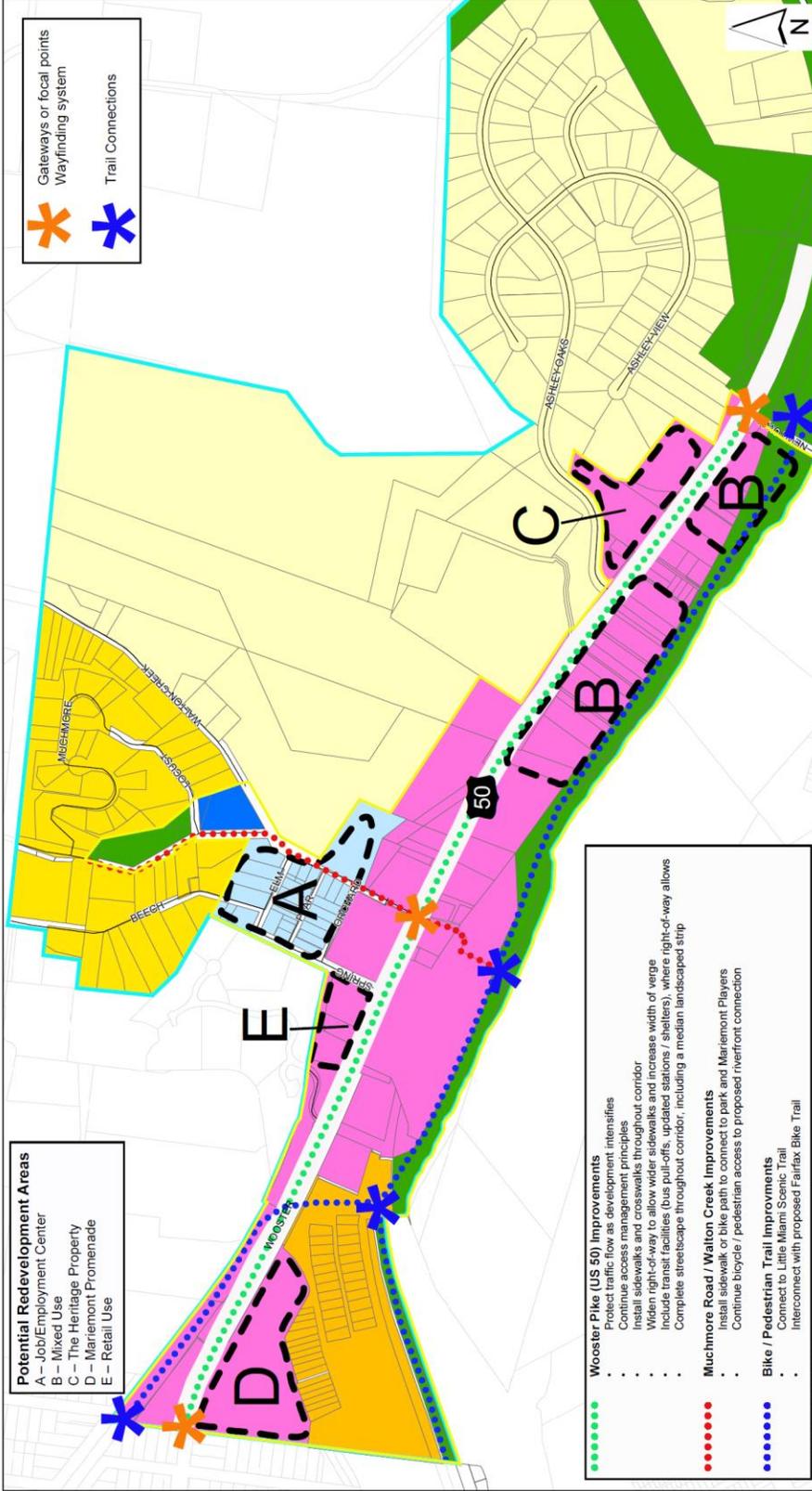
As set forth in the Zone Contract, the Township will provide infrastructure improvements in the Zone including, but not limited to, streets and roads including maintenance and repair, signalization, and streetscape buffers; enhancements to pedestrian circulation for ease of access and safety; increased stormwater capacity and quality initiatives; enhanced police patrols; enhanced fire and emergency medical services. In addition, the Township will provide administrative staff and professional services to the Zone for planning purposes.

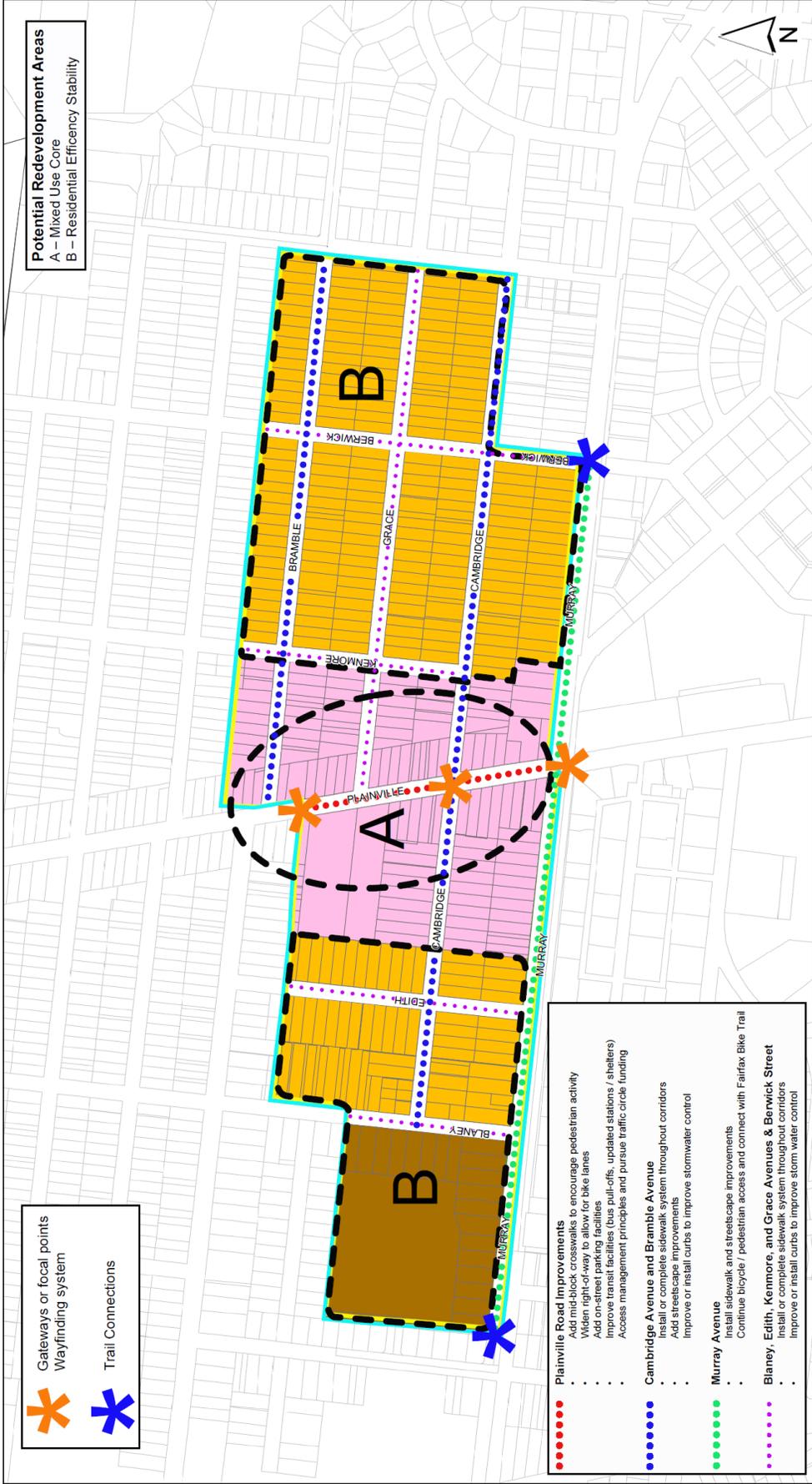
The Township shall prepare all documents of the Township and the Zone relating to the formation and operation of the Zone.



Columbia Township Comprehensive Plan Update
Ridge and Highland Focus Area







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