

Comprehensive Plan Summary:

The comprehensive plan is based on three underlying principles:

- Private land owners have certain rights with respect to land use decisions affecting their property. No public entity can deny all use of the privately held land without due compensation.
- Private land use decisions have ramifications on the general welfare of the community, particularly in regard to providing public services and the costs associated with providing these services.
- The comprehensive plan provides a framework for a variety of land use options while ensuring maintenance of the general welfare of the community.

General basis for the City adopting a comprehensive plan

The following write-up provides an overview of the basis for the adoption of a comprehensive plan for the City of Pataskala. Primary support for the existence of this document was the existing comprehensive plans that were in effect in the Village of Pataskala and Lima Township as of the date of the merger of the two entities. In many respects, this plan is a continuation of those long-standing documents. It is noted that the existence of these two documents are clear indicators that the citizens in this community support a planned approach to development and land use patterns. Additionally, the merger itself was partly supported because of concerns of encroachment by the development patterns supported at that time by the City of Columbus. Support of a planned approach to development and land use issues have been further supported by early work conducted by the Pataskala Development Committee, the Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Mayors Ad-Hoc committee which provided significant input into the development of this comprehensive plan. It is important to also note that the input from the Mayors Ad-Hoc committee included a wide cross-section of community leaders and private citizens. The Ad-Hoc members included area clergy, various council members over time, private citizens, business representatives, school board members, city staff members, and members from the planning and zoning commission. In addition to the significantly wide and deep knowledge and opinions of the community representatives, the Ad-Hoc committee solicited focus group input (i.e., community visioning sessions), community surveys, professional resources from the OSU department of City and Regional Planning, evaluated transportation and other public infrastructures, and reviewed existing environmental resources.

The Ad-Hoc committee passed its findings on to the Planning and Zoning Commission, the body charged with providing official recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan in accordance with the Pataskala City Charter. The commission reviewed the Ad-Hoc committee findings in relation to existing land use patterns and zoning designations, inserted additional planning tools into the Plan to make it more flexible, softened the transition from one area to another throughout the city in conformance with generally accepted planning practices, and reviewed new support information (e.g., the Pataskala

Utility Study) and the effects this new information might have on the proposed plan. Finally, the City hired a professional planner in 2001. This “in-house” professional resource also provided input that further refined the plan to make it more flexible and defensible.

Where we are 2002

It cannot be ignored that Pataskala is generally considered to be one of the many suburban areas surrounding the City of Columbus. Given its geographic proximity to Columbus, it is expected that development pressure will continue to build within Pataskala. However, as of 2002, Pataskala is still a largely undeveloped city in relation to typical suburban development patterns. This attribute has been cited by many involved in the comprehensive plan development process as one of the significant quality of life attributes that sets Pataskala apart from other central Ohio communities. Additionally, the undeveloped nature of Pataskala has provided some relief from the tenable financial status of the City as well as impeding the increased burden of an infrastructure that was designed largely for a rural community rather than a city. On balance, the current status of largely undeveloped land (versus being developed as either residential or heavy use commercial activities) has, thus far, minimized the deterioration of the existing public infrastructure, or demands for enhanced city services. It is recognized that all city and other public entity support services must be supported by some type of funding structure (typically via taxes or levies). Unplanned growth to date within the city has provided some indicators of the effects it can have on both the infrastructure and the ability for the city or other public entities to provide adequate public services. One example is the inability for the parks and recreation department to accommodate additional demand under a public disposition to not pass levies to support the growth related activities. Another example is the number of competing municipal, school and fire levies during the late 1990’s that all were attempting to provide continuing or additional resources to the rapid pace of growth within the city. At this time, the competing fiscal pattern continues while the request by developer for additional development within the city continues.

Use of the plan as a tool in the Zoning process

Zoning decisions for specific zoning change requests should be considered and approved based on comparison with the comprehensive plan, a review of existing infrastructure (both roadways and utilities) and any modifications associated with these as a part of the zoning change request, surrounding land use patterns, and the general welfare of the community. Any decisions concerning private property uses that denies all uses of the land should be avoided or should result in market based compensation for the land in question if denial is finalized. However, it should be recognized that the most profitable proposed zoning change of any land in question could be denied if it is contrary to the general welfare of the community and if other land use options are available. The goal of Pataskala land use decisions should be based on providing added value to the private landowner while resulting in either zero net effect or enhancement of the general welfare of the community.

Generalized Basis for proposed area land use patterns

Zoning is rooted in providing reasonable transition between dissimilar land use patterns in order to reduce or eliminate land use conflict and to ensure that the general welfare of the community is protected. With this in mind, the plan generally follows a transitional pattern as one travels from one area of the city to another. Some exceptions may be noted (for example, the heavy manufacturing area located near the preserved farmland in the south central portion of the city is the result of the farmland being preserved a few years after the manufacturing district was zoned as planned manufacturing), but attempts were made to provide for transition where possible.

Major influencing factors regarding transportation and public utilities:

Pataskala currently has two major transportation routes through the city; North-South State Route 310 and East-West State Route 16. Additionally, rail runs east west through the city. These transport-related resources have historically affected land use patterns in the area and will continue to significantly affect both development pressures and development patterns. Proximity to these resources both promote future economic development patterns and need to be considered when contemplating land use changes that reduce or enhance the efficient movement along or onto these resources. As a result, you will observe that the majority of future commerce related activities are predominantly proximate or adjacent to these community resources. Additionally, major electrical and natural gas pipeline resources near the transportation infrastructure further support the logical clustering of commercial activities along the transportation resources.

Summary

The proposed comprehensive plan seeks to strike a reasonable balance based on currently available information. Reasonableness and acceptance are the key to the success of the proposed plan and may actually increase land values while maintaining the general welfare of the community (e.g., the limited higher density planned areas may increase in value because of the resources in limited supply, the lower density areas may increase in value because of the certainty that they will continue to be lower density in the future). Although better/more detailed factual information or future public studies/plans may effect what is contained in this plan, the current version of this plan is reasonable and equitable and provides a rational balance between competing community desires and general welfare requirements placed upon the city.

It should also be stated that this comprehensive plan does not in any way change the zoning currently associated with any parcel of land. It is strictly a guide that will be utilized by the City in the future as zoning change requests for property are brought before the Planning & Zoning Commission and City Council.