



Policy Area 12

Existing Character

Characterized by beautiful turn of the century and older multi-story buildings, this Policy Area represents the downtown core of the City of Sidney and the County seat of Shelby County. The area is generally established by Lane Street in the north, the Great Miami River to the east, Dallas Street to the south and Walnut Street to the west. Buildings are generally constructed of brick or stone and are located at the sidewalk. Newer construction in the area tends to go against this design, often single story in height, setback from the sidewalk and constructed of glass or metal.

Courthouse Square, a National Register Historic District, is located at the center of the downtown area. The existing downtown character consists of a variety of building materials such as brick, wood and stone and includes such architectural styles as Greek Revival, Neo-Classical Revival and Art Modern¹.

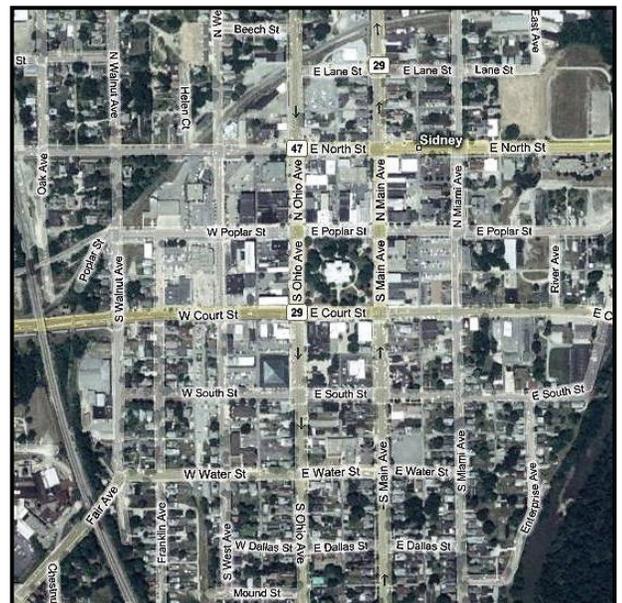
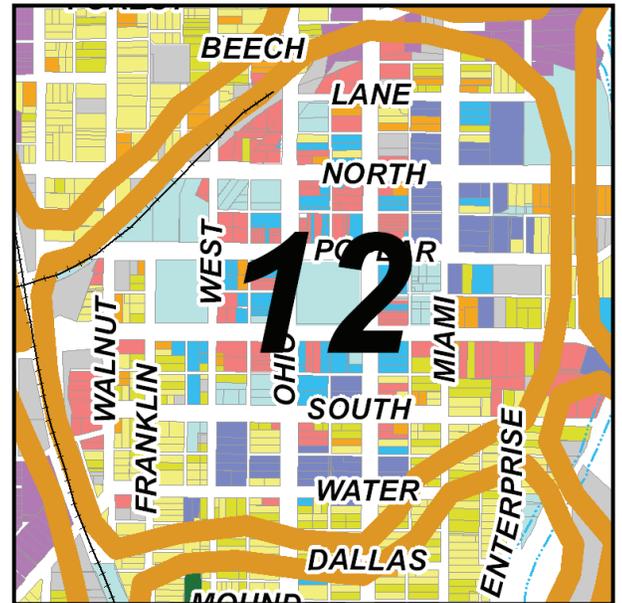
City and County services are distributed throughout this area along with attached and detached residential dwellings, commercial businesses, restaurants, offices, personal and professional services and institutional uses such as Central Elementary School and Holy Angels. The area is well connected from a pedestrian and vehicular standpoint with an extensive sidewalk and grid street system. Two park facilities exist in this area: Central School Park and the Julia Lamb Field facility. The downtown area is also home to many events in the City including the Farmer’s Market, Applefest and holiday events.

Most buildings are well maintained as are properties throughout the area with the exception of some buildings and properties around the fringes of this Policy Area along North Street. Recent development and redevelopment efforts include a new facility for the Police Department where period style architecture was used to mirror the design of the existing City Hall building.

The historical significance of this area is a characteristic that needs to be maintained and enhanced. According to a recent study, *The Sidney North Street Cultural Corridor*, the northern areas of this Policy Area along North Street, are suffering from blighting conditions “due to the presence of neglected buildings and three abandoned gas stations.” Two significant historical properties on North Street have announced major expansions: the Amos Memorial Public Library and the Ross Historical Center (Shelby County Historical Society Museum).

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has recognized the influences of heavy truck traffic moving through this Policy Area and has agreed to set aside capital funds in 2010 to relocate the truck route around North Street. The bridge over the Great Miami River, on North Street, was recently designed and replaced by the Ohio Department of Transportation.

Public utilities including sewer and water are readily available in this Policy Area.



¹ Sidney 2020 Plan



Zoning for this Policy Area is primarily B-5 Court Square business. This zoning district is surrounded to the north, east and west by R-3 Multi-Family Residence and to the south, east and west by B-1 Local Business and B-2 Local Business. R-2 Single and Two Family Residence zoning is located in the southern most portion of this Policy Area.

The area provides a distinct economic resource and a center for community activities and identity. It is in the interest of the City to protect and enhance these features of public interest by:

- Preventing the deterioration of property and the extension of blighting conditions;
- Promoting redevelopment activities to occur in such a fashion as to complement the existing, historic mixed-use character and architecture of the district; and
- Encouraging and protecting private investment which improves and stimulates the economic vitality and social character of the area; and preventing the creation of influences adverse to the physical character of the area.

Preferred Future Characteristics, Actions and Needs

- Continued support and maintenance of the historic character and feel of the Policy Area including development and redevelopment projects. This includes the rehabilitation of buildings instead of tear down (where financially feasible). In cases where buildings and structures must be torn down, infill development should be similar in materials, size and design to the surrounding buildings and structures.
- Continued safety for downtown residents, property owners and businesses.
- Increase in the number of small businesses into the downtown area including art and antique shops, bakeries, consignment shops, craft stores, etc.
- Promotion of a mixed use environment including promoting multiple uses in one building (e.g. commercial or service use on lower floors of buildings and residential units above).
- Expand existing downtown activities and events beyond the few that currently occur in order to attract more people downtown.
- Require rehabilitation or tear down of dilapidated and deteriorated buildings to remove blighting conditions.
- Create safe and efficient walkways and paths between the Downtown area and the River Corridor.
- Implement the recommendations of the Sidney North Street Cultural Corridor Study recommendations.
- Permit off-street parking behind buildings or, if landscaped or shielded properly, on vacant lots visible from the public right of way.



Landscaped off-street parking lot

Preferred Land Uses

The following land uses are preferred in this area in order to ensure the proper reuse or development of available land:

- Commercial business
- Offices
- Residential units (both attached and detached)
- Public and semi-public uses

Recommended Density and Open Space Requirement

- The maximum lot coverage for non-residential properties in this Policy Area should be 100% for buildings to maintain the dense downtown character. Off-street parking areas should be discouraged in the downtown core area with the exception of municipal parking lots, open for public use. All other non-paved areas should be landscaped, seeded with grass or left in its natural state.
- Detached single family residential dwellings are preferred at a moderately high density of 7-8 dwelling units per acre.
- Multi-family residential dwellings are preferred at a high density of 20 dwelling units per acre.



Implementation Strategies

Development and redevelopment activities in this Policy Area should continue to focus on accomplishing the detailed strategies of the 2020 Sidney Plan. Overarching themes include the maintenance and preservation of the historical character of the downtown area and continuing to achieve a mixed use environment that is the cultural, historic and social center of Shelby County. These strategies center on the downtown mission statement which is still valid today:

“The downtown mission is to revitalize the downtown with an emphasis on history, activities, commerce and the physical environment.”

The plan also identified the following objectives to promote success of the downtown area summarized below:

- **Objective 1 - Strategic Plan - Continue to focus on the Downtown strategic plan.**
The ongoing revitalization effort should continue in the downtown. Downtown Sidney (then Mainstreet Sidney) completed a strategic plan and the City initiated a streetscape program in 1997 and completed construction in 1999. The City needs to continually focus on Mainstreet Sidney's strategic plan in order to successfully promote and keep vital the downtown area.
- **Objective 2 - Public Improvements - Encourage revitalization through public improvements and improve traffic circulation and parking.**
Revitalizing the downtown can be sparked by public improvements including the provision of adequate and convenient parking. Efforts should focus on locating new government buildings and services downtown, renovating older vacant buildings and creating linkages between the existing park system, the Miami River corridor and the downtown.

Sufficient traffic flow and parking accessibility pose challenges for visitors to the downtown. Well lit, convenient parking is important to attracting consumers. However, convenience should not be sacrificed for cost and aesthetics. Therefore, well-designed and integrated parking areas should be encouraged in centralized locations. Off-street parking for individual buildings or uses should be discouraged in keeping with the historic downtown character.

- **Objective 3 - Local Economy - Encourage reinvestment by strengthening the local economy.**
An important part of revitalizing the downtown is a function of local economic strength. Reinvestment can be encouraged by increasing available housing in the area through the renovation of existing historic buildings, location of government and public offices and services and increasing security. Strengthening the local economy further occurs by protecting private investment and can be achieved through the establishment of design guidelines.