



INTRODUCTION





2. Introduction

A. Overview

The Introduction is provided to assist the reader in understanding the reasons why the City initiated this update in 2009 to its Comprehensive Plan, the structure and process under which the Plan was prepared and perspectives regarding Sidney's historical development and its regional setting.

B. Why a Comprehensive Plan?

It is generally recommended that comprehensive plans be updated every five years. This allows time for most immediate and short-term strategies to be implemented and many mid term strategies to be initiated. Through this update to the 2002 Comprehensive Plan, the City is among only a few communities that have updated their plan within five years of acceptance. By doing this, many of the recommendations can be validated and if necessary, these strategies can be revisited to reflect changing circumstances or trends. Those responsible for implementing the Plan can also measure their progress.

As the old saying goes, "If you don't know where you're going, you don't know how to get there." This saying simply describes the reasons behind reviewing and updating the plan for Sidney. This effort brought the community together, debated important issues and resulted in a consensus regarding the City's future. Its implementation is the next bold step.

But more importantly the Comprehensive Plan provides sound guidance as to the City's priorities for expansion and future development. Sidney is a unique community with outstanding assets that continually attract employers and residents. The historic Courthouse Square, abundant parks and recreation facilities, Great Miami River and other factors are important to protect as the community grows.

Ensuring public utilities are adequate to support a future population of slightly over 30,000 is a major target of the Comprehensive Plan. The City provides an outstanding level of quality services, including utilities, and it is the Plan's intent that this level can be maintained and that sufficient revenues will exist to support its continuation. Likewise key transportation improvements are recommended to enhance the City's transportation network.

In the end it becomes clear that this updated Plan is important because it serves as the City's official set of development policies, which should guide City Council, Planning Commission and the Administration over the next 10 to 15 years. This Plan has also captured the public's priorities through the Community Forums and other meetings held to gather input. This is a Plan that reflects the community's broad priorities.

The Comprehensive Plan is adopted by resolution and not by ordinance -- which gives the City flexibility in its implementation. Plans by their definition are "living" documents, which will continue to evolve over time. The City will revisit the Plan on an annual basis and prepare major updates every five years. This will ensure that Sidney's Comprehensive Plan remains vital and responsive to the community.

C. Management Structure

1. Overview

The Comprehensive Plan was prepared in a team environment under a well-defined management structure. The following provides an overview.

2. City Council

As the primary policy body of the City, Council served several functions. It approved preparation of the update to the 2002 Plan and allocated general funds to support the project. Council approved the structure of the Steering Committee and appointed its members to represent the greater community. Council adopted the goals and promoted the planning process to encourage citizen participation. Council adopted the Plan in 1997 by resolution following its completion. The 2002 and 2009 Updates were also adopted by resolution.



3. Planning Commission

The Planning Commission is the next policy body involved in the City's planning process and was represented on the Steering Committee. The Commission provided Council with recommendations regarding the draft goals and the final plan itself. Under the City Charter the Commission is authorized to prepare the Comprehensive Plan and recommend its adoption to City Council.

4. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee was appointed by Council to represent the greater community. It was comprised of a broad cross-section, which allowed the Committee to discuss and debate several broad community issues. The Committee worked with the City Administration and Consultants throughout the planning process. The Committee helped structure public meetings and served as facilitators at Community Forums. The Committee presented the draft goals to the Planning Commission and Council. The Committee forwarded the draft plan to the Planning Commission for consideration.

5. City Administration

The City Administration provided the day-to-day management and support to the planning process. Members of the City Staff attended all Steering Committee meetings. The Community Services Director was responsible for the mechanics of the planning process, including scheduling meetings and distributing mailings. The Administration provided the Steering Committee and Consultants with technical expertise and knowledge.

6. Consultants

Jacobs of Cincinnati undertook the 2009 update of the Plan. This Team worked closely with City Staff and the appointed Steering Committee to review the Plan and make the necessary revisions that captured the vision, goals and objectives of the City based on the progress made since 2002.

ACP-Visioning & Planning, Ltd. of Columbus led the 2002 update of the Plan. Other members of the team included Development Economics of Washington D.C. and Floyd Brown and Associates of Marion, Ohio. The team worked with members of the community groups that the original 1997 Steering Committee was derived from and City staff to revise the Plan and determine what changes needed to be completed over a six-month period of time.

The 1997 Comprehensive Plan consulting team was led by Karlsberger Planning Inc. of Columbus (comprehensive planning) and included Wilbur Smith Associates of Columbus (transportation and utility planning) and Donald T. Iannone and Associates of Cleveland (economic development). The team worked with the Steering Committee and City Administration throughout the planning process. The team structured and implemented the work program under the City's direction.

D. 1997 Planning Process

1. Overview

A well-defined planning process was crucial to completing the Comprehensive Plan within the parameters of the project as defined by the City. The following summarizes the 1997 Comprehensive Plan process.

2. Phase 1: Project Set-Up

The first phase of the project focused on several administrative tasks necessary to properly organize the project, before the full effort began in earnest. These were intended to establish the management structure under which the planning process will occur. At the same time several tasks were included which organized and kicked off the Steering Committee's efforts. The outcome was a well-designed planning process with a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities among the various players.

3. Phase 2: Data Gathering and Analysis

The second phase of the project focused on data gathering and analysis. Base mapping was prepared. Planning issues were identified in a detailed fashion. Existing studies and plans were collected and reviewed. Where appropriate, new data was gathered and analyzed. Several trends analyses were conducted. The inventory and results of this phase were summarized in a written report. The outcome was a fully detailed and



objective analysis of the issues, existing conditions and potential trends affecting the City. The results were summarized for the public at Community Forum #1 and presented in a detailed fashion at the Open House.

4. Phase 3: Visioning

The third phase of the process focused on creating a vision for Sidney's future through citizen participation intended to focus input towards developing a vision and mission statements for the Comprehensive Plan. Input was used with the Steering Committee to draft a vision statement and mission statements. The outcome was a well-defined and accepted policy foundation for the Comprehensive Plan. The mission statements were adopted by City Council at the conclusion of this phase.

A project identity was created as a means of publicizing the planning effort to the general public and creating a sense of importance and excitement. The identity, "Imagine Sidney! Planning Our Future Together" was used on all meeting flyers, posters and advertisements, and was printed on t-shirts and banners.

Key to the success of the visioning effort was an Outreach Committee that was formed by the City to help design and execute the outreach effort. The Committee was comprised of community volunteers and members of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee.

This phase was comprised of the following key events:

a) Community Forum #1

The first community forum was held to officially kickoff the project with the general public, to provide a snapshot of Sidney and its current trends, and to engage the public through a participatory exercise designed to collect their opinions regarding ideas for the City's future. The forum was held on two evenings at Sidney High School (February 26 and 27, 1997) and a third meeting was held with seniors at Sidney High School on March 18, 1997. About 140 residents participated in the two forum meetings and about 75 students participated at the high school. All three meetings generated about 500 ideas and these were categorized in a database for the Steering Committee, which used the ideas as building blocks to develop mission statements, objectives and strategies.

b) Community Forum #2

The second community forum was held on May 22, 1997 at Sidney High School to gauge public opinion regarding the direction of the Comprehensive Plan by presenting the mission statements, objectives and strategies, and plan concept in a participatory environment. About 50 residents attended the forum. Of particular importance was an exercise in which participants selected a draft strategy and provided the City with written recommendations concerning its implementation. The Steering Committee reviewed the public's comments and incorporated recommendations into the draft Plan.

c) Open House

The draft Plan was presented to the public at an Open House on September 10, 1997. The Plan was presented in detail through a series of displays. Comments were recorded using a survey form. Members of the Steering Committee and Staff were present to answer questions. About 100 residents attended.

5. Phase 4: Plan Concepts

The fourth phase of the planning process focused on developing and adopting a preferred growth scenario for the planning area. The preferred scenario was presented to the public for review and comment. Draft chapters were prepared for review and approval by the Steering Committee. The outcome was a clear preference for the City's future relative to land use, community facilities, transportation and utilities.

6. Phase 5: Final Plan

The fifth phase of the process focused on preparing the final Comprehensive Plan, based on work completed in Phase 4. This phase involved the extensive writing of text and finalized graphics. The City Administration and Steering Committee reviewed and approved the final plan prior to its presentation to the public at an Open House. The Steering Committee assisted in designing and hosting the forum. The outcome was a draft Comprehensive Plan sufficiently complete to be considered for adoption.



7. Phase 6: Plan Adoption and Delivery

The final phase of the Comprehensive Plan process focused on adopting the final plan and its reproduction and delivery. Adoption involved a recommendation by the Planning Commission and adoption by City Council. The outcome was an adopted Comprehensive Plan and quality final document.

E. 2002 Planning Process

1. Overview

Due to the basis of the planning process being the same, similar steps were taken to complete the 2002 Update. Outlined below is a summary of the 2002 planning process.

2. Phase 1: Project Set-Up

During the first phase of the process, several administrative tasks were completed including a project kick-off meeting, which occurred between the Consulting team and the Plan Steering Committee. The project kick-off meeting served as a review of the accomplishments from the 1997 Plan and previewed what would take place during 2002 planning process.

3. Phase 2: Existing Conditions and Trends

During the existing conditions and trends analysis, the existing conditions from the 1997 Plan were updated to reflect changes that had occurred over the previous five years. The 2000 US Census data was used to update the population and housing analysis, though 2000 employment data was not available to evaluate the previous decade's employment trends. Also evaluated during phase two were Sidney's fiscal strengths and weaknesses.

4. Phase 3: Strategic Direction

In an effort to build upon the 1997 public participation effort and the public meetings conducted as part of the retail market study recently completed, phase three included an extensive public involvement process that ran concurrently with the Plan's phase two.

Phase three consisted of the following:

- a) Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee: The Steering Committee, made up of members from the previous Plan's Committee, met on a monthly basis to review the existing conditions and trends, the urban design component, and the draft Plan. Steering Committee members served as the public participation outreach committee, as well.
- b) Stakeholder Focus Group: In April of 2002, a Stakeholder Focus Group luncheon was held with the City's key stakeholders in Sidney. Many of Sidney's top employers were invited to allow the Team the opportunity to gather employee source data concerning housing-related retail marketing issues as well as other key issues concerning the City.
- c) Community Summit: In April of 2002, a Community Summit, which was opened to the public, was held at Sidney High School. Almost 50 participants were informed about what changes have occurred over the past five years in Sidney and were given the opportunity to break into small groups and share their opinions on where the "good places" and "bad places" are in Sidney.
- d) Open House: The draft Plan was presented to the public at an Open House on September 26, 2002 at Sidney High School. The Plan was presented in detail via a PowerPoint presentation, a series of displays, and copies of the draft plan. Comments were recorded using a survey form. Members of the Steering Committee and Staff were present to answer questions. About 20 residents attended.



5. Phase 4: Drafting the Plan

Drafting the Plan consisted of updating the existing conditions, reevaluating the 1997 Plan recommendations, and recommending any additional strategies. The Steering Committee was given the opportunity to review the 1997 recommendations and make suggestions on how relevant they were to Sidney in 2002.

6. Phase 5: Adoption:

The Sidney Planning Commission conducted public hearings to review Plan from November 2002 to January 2002. The Planning Commission recommended that City Council approve the Imagine Sidney 2020! Comprehensive Plan update at their January 20, 2002 meeting. City Council then conducted public hearing on the Plan during March 2002. On March 24, 2002, City Council adopted Resolution 21-03 adopting the Imagine Sidney 2020! Comprehensive Plan update.

F. 2009 Planning Process

1. Overview

The 2009 Update was established as a similar update to the 2002 Comprehensive Plan Update. Outlined below is a summary of the 2009 planning process.

2. Phase 1: Coordination, Collection and Kick-Off

During the first phase of the process, several administrative tasks were completed including a project kick-off meeting, which occurred between the Consulting team, City Staff and the Steering Committee. The project kick-off meeting served as a review of the accomplishments from the 2002 Plan and previewed what would take place during 2009 planning process. GIS base mapping was also obtained from the City and an analysis of existing land uses, including developed and undeveloped land, was conducted. The existing conditions from the 2002 Plan were updated to reflect changes that had occurred over the previous five years. The 2000 US Census data was used (and supplemented as much as possible with the US Census interim projections, to update the population and housing analysis and employment data.

3. Phase 2: Refining the Plan Vision and Preferred Future Development/Redevelopment Characteristics

As a part of this process, the Steering Committee went through several exercises to identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing Sidney in today's climate. A thorough review of the 2002 Plan's Vision, Mission Statements and Objectives were also conducted with the Steering Committee in a collaborative process to provide a list of desirable characteristics for Sidney for the five year update.

4. Phase 3: Development of Draft Comprehensive Plan Update and Implementation Elements

In an effort to build upon the 2002 public participation effort, this Phase included a multi-tiered public involvement process that ran concurrently with the Phase two of this planning process.

Phase three consisted of the following:

- a) Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee: The Steering Committee, made up of members that met on a regular basis to review the existing conditions and trends and the draft Plan. Steering Committee members served as the public participation outreach committee, as well. Policy areas were established through the Steering Committee that established 18 unique areas in Sidney based on properties exhibiting similar characteristics for which existing conditions could be analyzed, future characteristics and needs could be identified, and implementation recommendations established.



b) Open House: The draft Plan was presented to the public at an Open House on February 3rd from 4:00-7:00pm at the Sidney Middle School. The 18 policy areas of the Plan were presented via a series of displays to gather input from residents. Comments were recorded using a survey form. Members of the Steering Committee and Staff were present to answer questions. The Open House was advertised well in advance of the meeting date.

5. Phase 4: Final Comprehensive Plan

Drafting the Plan consisted of updating the existing conditions, reevaluating the 2002 Plan recommendations, and recommending additional strategies. The Steering Committee was given the opportunity to review the 2002 recommendations and make suggestions on how relevant they were to Sidney in 2009.

The Sidney Planning Commission conducted public hearings to review Plan on January 19, 2010. The Planning Commission recommended that City Council approve the update to the Imagine Sidney 2025! Comprehensive Plan at their March 15, 2010 meeting. City Council then conducted public hearing on the Plan during April 12, 2010. On April 26, 2010, City Council adopted Resolution 21-10 adopting the Imagine Sidney 2025! Comprehensive Plan update.

G. Historical Development

1. Overview

Understanding the historical setting within which we find Sidney today is important to appreciating the events and individuals that shaped the City. The following is an overview.

2. Early Settlers

The Sidney area was inhabited by Shawnee and Miami Native American tribes prior to the establishment of a trading post by French Canadian Peter Loramie in 1769 near present day Fort Loramie. The landscape was primarily forest. Loramie lost possession of the trading post to General George Rogers Clark in 1782. Revolutionary War General Anthony Wayne established the first official fort in the area in 1794. By the turn of the century, settlers began arriving in Sidney, many migrating from New England, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Kentucky. Among the earliest permanent settlers were John Blake, S.A. Leckey, Thomas E. English, Charles Starrett, Dr. Pratt, Dr. William Fielding, Joel Frankeburger and William Johnson.

Prior to settlement, the area inhabited by the City of Sidney was part of the Congress Lands between 1798 and 1801. The area was part of Montgomery County upon the admittance of Ohio to the Union in 1803, where it remained until 1807 when it fell into the jurisdiction of Miami County. In 1819, Shelby County was established and included the land of present day Auglaize and Allen counties. The Village of Hardin, which had been platted in 1816, served as the county seat of justice.

3. Sidney's Founding

Benjamin Cox laid out a grid pattern plat of Sidney in 1819, comprised of a 15-block area and 113 lots. Seventy acres of land located directly west of the Great Miami River was donated on behalf of Charles Starrett. Starrett received one-half of the proceeds from the sale of lots and required that one-acre be set aside for a public square, two-and-one-half acres for two religious societies, two acres for related cemeteries and one acre for educational purposes.

Later that year Sidney was designated as the permanent county seat of Shelby County and named for English poet and member of Parliament Sir Philip Sydney, meaning "the great light of chivalry". The original courthouse and jail facility was constructed in 1822. The first frame building was built in 1820 and was the residence of John Blake. The first brick building was constructed approximately 10 years later and served as a physician's office. As per Starrett's request, a log cabin schoolhouse was built in 1823 and Presbyterian and Methodist churches were completed in 1825.



By 1860 the population of Sidney had reached 1,997, an increase of nearly 350 percent from the mid-1830's. The Union School Building was opened in 1857, providing the first graded school system. The Monumental Building was constructed in 1875 and the Shelby County Courthouse was completed in 1881.

4. Industrial Revolution

The arrival of the Industrial Revolution in Sidney during the late 19th century was significant in that a local manufacturing base was established. Among the successful industries in the area between 1865 and 1900 were the R. Given and Sons Tanning Company, Slusser Steel Scraper Company, The Wagner Hollow Ware Company, The John Wagner and Sons Brewing Company and Sidney Steel Scraper Company. Approximately 40 manufacturing plants were supporting 1,500 workers by the end of the 1910's. With the growing community came a need for community services such as a municipal water service established in 1873, police patrol beginning in 1893, a sewer system established in 1901 and a paid city fire department in 1903. The Western Ohio Inter Urban Railroad also was operational in the early 1900's. Sidney adopted the Council-Manager form of government in 1954. The previous year was marked by adoption of the City's first zoning ordinance. Amendments to the ordinance were made in 1955 to include subdivision regulations.

5. Transportation's Impact on Sidney's Development

Ohio's evolving transportation network, beginning with water and continuing through the development of canals, railroads and interstate highways, has had a profound impact on the development and evolution of Sidney. The following is a brief overview.

a) Growth Fueled by the Miami-Erie Feeder Canal

Growth in Sidney and its surrounding area was slow in the early 1800's. A limited number of roads minimized access to outlying regions, resulting in a self-sufficient agricultural economy. By 1825, however, construction of the Miami-Erie Feeder Canal began, eventually providing a north-south transportation link between Cincinnati and Toledo. The 14-mile canal feeder, running through Sidney and linking Port Jefferson and Lockington, was constructed during the mid-1830's. The need for labor attracted many settlers, particularly German immigrants. With the opening of the canal in 1837 came an increase in regional trade and the first significant period of economic growth in Sidney. Goods were transported with relative ease and at lower costs.

b) Arrival of the Railroad

The Bellefontaine and Indianapolis Railroad provided the first east-west rail service to Sidney upon its completion in the early 1850's. The rail system offered a more rapid and economical means of transport for goods and passengers, further enhancing growth in Sidney. Approximately 1,200 workers, many of Irish decent, relocated to the area and comprised the labor force that constructed the railroad. The Dayton and Michigan Railroad was the second to serve Sidney. Constructed in the late 1850's, it provided a north-south transportation corridor.

c) Interstate Highway

The construction of I-75 through Sidney in 1962 was another major event that transformed the City's physical makeup. The interstate, creating a transportation link between Michigan and Florida, brought with it an influx of automobile industry related factories, as well as warehouse and distribution facilities. The interchange at SR 47 also became the City's main commercial area, attracting retail from the downtown and creating a sub regional retail center.



H. Regional Context

1. Overview

Sidney is located in west-central Ohio, approximately 40 miles north of Dayton, 100 miles south of Toledo, 85 miles west of Columbus and 120 miles east of Indianapolis. I-75 passes through Sidney in a north-south direction, and I-70, located approximately 30 miles south, provides a nearby east-west corridor. S.R. 47 and S.R. 29 bisect Sidney as well.



2. Population

The City's immediate surroundings include the counties of Auglaize, Champaign, Darke, Logan and Miami.

The 1990 population of this six-county region, as reported by the US Census, was 314,630. Shelby County's share was about 14 percent or 44,915. In 2000, the population of the six-county region was 331,593 according to the US Census, an increase of almost 17,000 from 1990.

The Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) has projected a 2020 population of 356,200, an increase of 24,607 persons (or 7.4 percent) from the 2000 Census. While the growth rate is expected to slow over the next 10 years when compared to previous decades, Shelby County is projected to maintain a stable share of the regional population, increasing 8.0 percent as a part of this major metropolitan area, both of which are forecast to grow in population (and assumed land area) through 2020.

a) Dayton-Springfield

The Dayton-Springfield MSA (Montgomery, Clark, Miami and Greene counties) is located directly south of Sidney. With a 2000 population of just under one million (950,558), it is projected to decrease by 16,738 persons or approximately 2.0 percent by 2020. A majority of this decline occurs in Montgomery County and, in particular, the City of Dayton. 2010 US Census estimates report a population of 937,940 which potentially results in a decennial decrease of 12,648 residents.

b) Lima

The Lima MSA (Allen and Auglaize counties) is north of Sidney. With a 2000 population of 155,084, it is projected to increase by 536 persons or 0.3 percent by 2020. This increase is a relatively significant slowdown from previous decades.

3. Employment

The six-county region had in 1994 about 113,078 employees, according to the US County Business Patterns, with Shelby County accounting for just fewer than 20 percent (or 22,020 employees). In 2006, the six-county region had 129,170 employees, an increase of 14 percent. Shelby County represented 21 percent (26,781) of the region's employees in 2006. Leading industries for the region in 2006 were:

- a) Manufacturing with 47,066 employees (36.4 percent).
- b) Retail Trade with 15,380 employees (11.9 percent).
- c) Health Care & Social Assistance with 14,203 employees (11.0 percent).

Shelby County employees comprised 29.5 percent of the manufacturing industry, 13.9 percent of the retail trade industry and 13.5 percent of the health care and social assistance industry. These figures are comparable to state figures of 16.3 percent, 12.6 percent and 15.1 percent respectively.



4. Agriculture

Nearly 9 percent of Ohio farms were located in the six-county region, as reported by the 2006 US Census of Agriculture, compared to 10 percent in 1992. A total of 6,869 farms covered 1,380,975 acres or over 79 percent of the six-county region in 2006. This is a 5 percent increase for farms and a 1 percent increase in acres of farm land since 1992. In comparison, 56 percent of Ohio was classified as farmland in 2006. By 2007, the number of farms declined to 6,680 covering 1,348,000 acres, resulting in a 2.4 percent decline in a one year period.

