

Mt. Healthy Comprehensive Plan -- 2007



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Executive Summary

In 2005 Mt. Healthy City Council and staff discussed revisions in the Zoning Ordinance and decided that before decisions were made to change the zoning controls, there should be a reevaluation of the city's long term plans. A Steering Committee was selected from business representatives, professionals, community interests (school) and other residents. The Steering Committee gave consistent participation and evaluation to this planning process. Depending solely on periodic public meetings does not give the continuity to a long term study that is necessary to assess a complex study. The Steering Committee gave their time and commitment for repeated attendance and supervision of this study. A professional planning consultant was contracted to work with the city and this committee to develop a revised long term Comprehensive Plan for Mt. Healthy.

A consultant specializing in economic influences was included in the study team. The Steering Committee met monthly to review the results of the study elements being prepared. A general evaluation of local economic conditions was completed and local business representatives were interviewed. Bureau of Census data was collected and evaluated along with field inspection of environmental and land use characteristics were delineated. A general citizen questionnaire was prepared and distributed throughout the city (detail from these studies is explained in later sections). A public open house was held to get additional citizen input and priority feedback for preliminary analysis. Further detail discussion/analysis was completed with the Steering Committee and another public presentation was made and the feedback was used to refine the study.

The following conclusions were recognized as consistent issues that needed to be addressed by future solutions or planned improvement:

1. There are a high proportion of rental units in Mt. Healthy and home ownership cannot be substantially increased. The city needs to initiate a rental permit program that will upgrade rental occupancy conditions.

2. The current spending and income patterns in and near Mt. Healthy will not support national chain restaurants. The type of business that will succeed in Mt. Healthy is a specialty operation that is unique and will attract customers from a 15 to 20 mile radius. Detail explaining these conclusions are presented in the "Economic Development" section starting on page 21. Because of surrounding regional business activity and the recent development of a Wal-Mart at the north edge of the city, the businesses that will succeed in Mt. Healthy will include auto parts, consignment shops, medical services, used books, florist and artistic supplies/sales (beads and design jewelry). A business association can promote clustering of activities in the historic district. Just as used car dealers do better with comparative shopping opportunities; small businesses need the traffic to increase choice/selection/sales.

The experience in Charleston, Virginia was that the businesses were more successful when the sidewalks were attractive/walkable and had a "people" scale and windows that encouraged people to return. Street landscaping, seating, lighting and consistent signs make the shopping experience more pleasant. Promoting a small town feeling, improving the driving/parking

experience and still having “wireless” services at curb-side or sidewalk coffee service will make Mt. Healthy economically vibrant (detail on page 40).

3. A person needs to recognize that they have arrived in Mt. Healthy. A consistent entry feature will help brand the community as a destination. Five entry points were identified as needing significant signage and landscaping to create a new image for the city. The Steering Committee hopes that the Hamilton County Engineer will cooperate with a new effort to landscape the west bound exit ramp to Hamilton Avenue from Cross-County Highway.

4. The Ohio Department of Transportation and the Hamilton County Engineer has recognized that Hamilton Avenue has traffic volumes that exceed the capacity of the right-of-way and surrounding existing buildings that would permit sufficient widening of the roadway without extensive demolition of one side of the historic business district. A solution is necessary and will require further detailed traffic study and design.

5. The history of Mt. Healthy is significant and the Steering Committee felt that demolition and urban renewal tactics would not be good for the city. Preservation and redevelopment that has a consistent scale and design was recommended. The group further concluded that the theme of “health” should be a core format and starting point for regional recognition.

6. Development regulations were evaluated and zoning text amendments were prepared which added provisions for an architectural review board and an overlay district which will encourage infill development that will conform to surrounding characteristics and preserve historic characteristics.

7. In order to implement the recommendations of this plan, a continued citizen participation plan is needed. The Steering Committee started this long term plan but it will need continued inspection from neighborhood groups to help City Council decide on priority expenditures. A staff position for the business association will help consolidate a business development plan and a “main street association” may be the tool to add.

8. The Steering Committee developed a SWOT analysis (discussed on page 54) and the following Vision Statement:

Mount Healthy Vision Statement

The future vision of the City of Mt. Healthy is to sustain community vitality and continuously improve the quality of life of our residents by ensuring public safety; by providing comprehensive public services and facilities; by supporting local educational, religious, and social institutions; by celebrating our heritage, and by encouraging investment by diverse businesses and residents.

Implementation often becomes a difficult action for political leaders; 1) because it is not their money and they do not want to be accused of misusing public money, 2) the expenditure often seems rather risky and political leaders do not want to spend public money if it does not pay off with an expected positive benefit. It is evident that a community that invests in its own businesses and citizen needs for infrastructure, in turn gets private investments made reciprocally. The above points outline the direction of this Comprehensive Plan. The following initiatives are recommended to be implemented as City Council can decide on their funding priority (they are repeated at the end of this plan along with a "score card" that should be used by all stakeholders to follow-up on how the initiatives are being implemented):

Initiative A -- Improve the Visual Character of the City

1. Create entry images at the five main entry points to Mt. Healthy. This will include a strong sign branding and landscaping. Additional landscaping and signage should especially be added to the west bound exit ramp from the Cross-County Highway.
2. Improve the city signage regulations. The Steering Committee has reviewed zoning amendments that will make the signs more uniform in the business areas and enhance the identification of businesses from Perry Street and Harrison Avenue.
3. The City will develop criteria in the zoning ordinance that will provide for tree replacement with plan approval. There are streets that need additional trees and a fund can be created from fees or earmarked from the budget to add trees where necessary along the street right-of-way.
4. Evaluate/Search for the opportunity to remove overhead utility wires along Hamilton Avenue and especially in the business district.
5. Street name signs throughout the city should be uniform and include address number ranges.
6. The Planning Commission and Council should act on the recommended zoning ordinance changes before the end of 2007.
 - 6.a. Appoint an "Architectural Review Board" that will be responsible for reviewing proposed development.
7. Preserve significant historical buildings and sites using the design standards added to the zoning ordinance and by review from the Architectural Review Board.
8. Note: the street improvements recommended in Initiative F will also improve the visual character of Mt. Healthy.

Initiative B – Foster a Healthy Branding

1. Design and acquire easements or right-of-way for a walking/biking/rollerblading pathway. This walkway can become a strong healthy symbol for Mt. Healthy.

2. Sponsor an annual city run/walk event using the 3.8 mile pathway.
3. Organize year-round "HEALTHY" activities at the community center.
4. Implement a recreation department that will be responsible for youth activities at the community center, year round.
5. Develop a marketing strategy and possible incentive to go after the healthcare industry to locate satellite offices in the business district.

Initiative C – Promote a Higher Level of Home Ownership in Mt. Healthy

1. The City should initiate a landlord permit and inspection program that will provide taxing information and standards for multi-family unit maintenance.
2. Develop a way to land bank the city's future – for open space preservation and/or as part of new development. The City will set aside an open space preservation fund that will be used to acquire significant areas for historic reasons, additional healthy right-of-way, or environmentally sensitive sites.
3. Organize four neighborhood groups that will elect citizen representatives to participate in a development preview advisory group to the Planning Commission, responsible for concept review of any new development proposals. This group will also be responsible for reporting concerns of their neighborhood to city council and to prepare articles for a city newsletter.
 - 3.a. The City will prepare communication in the newsletter that informs the residents of home loan, renovation assistance, new permit processing for residents and counseling to buy rather than rent.
4. Continue the curb and gutter improvements plan the city is currently implementing. It encourages private investment within the neighborhoods.
5. Add low profile, wide speed bumps along Clovernook Avenue.
6. Increase the awareness of residents to the Hamilton County Home Improvement Program (HIP).

Initiative D – Stimulate Economic Development

1. Prepare a public information folder that explains the economic assets of Mt. Healthy and distribute it to realtors and other national development interests.
2. The Future Land Use Map encourages new commercial development between Harrison Avenue and Perry Street from Cross-County Highway to Hill Avenue.
3. City Council should approve a staff position to lead economic development responsibility that will focus on the potential infill and redevelopment sites. This

responsibility will coordinate with county, state and federal funding sources and staff resources.

- 3 a. This responsibility will contact the Ohio Development Council and present a "Main Street Association" program to the businesses and city council in Mt. Healthy.
- 3.b. An event committee must be formed (either separate or in cooperation with the Main Street Association) that will be responsible for developing promotional information about the economic opportunities and changes in Mt. Healthy. This committee will be responsible for organizing quarterly events that will bring people to Mt. Healthy. These events may reinforce the heritage and historic character of Mt. Healthy.
- 3.c. This committee will be responsible for creating a branding identity for Mt. Healthy. The Steering Committee has recommended that the central branding theme should be around healthy activities, businesses, and facilities (walking and recreation).
- 3.d. Work with property owners to complete feasibility studies for the redevelopment of key sites shown on the Future Land Use Plan.
- 3.e. Prepare an ordinance that sets forth the procedure for acquiring or tearing down abandoned, vacant and dilapidated structures.
- 3.f. Increase awareness of Enterprise Zone and CRA opportunities that exist for future improvements as well as new developments so that the right type of new development or improvement will be offered these incentives. It is also important to note that the Hamilton County Home Improvement Program (HIP) has been expanded to commercial uses. Develop criterion for the level of abatements offered. This criterion could be linked with Initiatives B, E & F.

Initiative E – Safe Walkable Environmentally Sensitive Community

1. The city should evaluate funding alternatives that will provide 15 foot high colonnade street lights in the areas shown in the "Lighting Plan".
2. The city should evaluate funding to the Police Department that will provide key location street surveillance and improve the image of crime prevention.
3. Evaluate adding bicycle police patrols in shopping areas, parking lots and along pedestrian walkways.
4. Maintain and encourage city services and convenient businesses within the central business district – especially the post office, library, community center/park, groceries and restaurants.
5. Evaluate the City's use of hybrid vehicles.
6. Require "green building" elements in new development approval and the construction process. This can include pervious surfaces, rain water irrigation, non-toxic materials and more; especially in public buildings.

7. Work with Hamilton County Environmental Services to continue to improve recycling and disposal of hazardous wastes.
8. New development must include analysis of any environmental condition such as ephemeral water courses or "brownfield" conditions.

Initiative F – Eliminate Traffic Congestion on Hamilton Avenue and Promote Rear Entry Design Access for Businesses

(To sufficiently handle the future traffic only on Hamilton Avenue would require the demolition of the historic buildings on at least one side for 4 to 5 blocks, in order to have enough right-of-way.) The following initiatives are presented as initial option concepts; all of which will require further detailed study and design in order to select the final solution.

1. Implement a phased improvement study of Hamilton Avenue that will proceed with assistance from ODOT, OKI and the Hamilton County Engineer to upgrade the through traffic system. This additional detailed study may find alternatives that will solve this traffic problem. The initial concept selected by the Steering Committee, was to create a smooth right turn to Harrison Avenue and Perry Street from Hamilton Avenue and to provide left turns at Compton Road with roundabout intersections. This alternative suggested that the city needed to identify off street parking needs and new off street parking locations; and the third aspect would be to eliminate parking along Hamilton Avenue between Stevens and Adams, build a median boulevard with landscaping, this would eliminate left turns from Hamilton Avenue and permit the sidewalks to be widened.
 - 1.a. A field design and traffic study should be initiated to present a plan to ODOT and the Hamilton County Commissions for inclusion in their capital improvement plans.
 - 1.b. A detailed wayfinding plan should be developed to orient drivers to the options designed and especially for alternative parking options for the businesses.
2. Study the redevelopment of the Hilltop Plaza, the mobile home parks, and the vacant Standard Publishing site (in the northern section of Mt. Healthy). This may be coordinated with Springfield Township studying the redevelopment possibility of the Rinks site.
3. Amend the zoning ordinance as recommended to include more flexible standards for mixed use development with clearly defined requirements.
4. Coordinate Initiatives A, D, and E with this major effort. As an example, the entry signs and landscaping from Cross-County Highway must identify the business district, the history and healthy branding.

The following text gives the basis for the above summarized initiatives. Reviewing the text detail will assist you in understanding how recommendations were concluded.

Introduction

Mt. Healthy initiated a study of existing conditions in August, 2006. The study's intent was to prepare a comprehensive plan for the future development of a mature community. The steps of analysis were presented to a steering committee monthly and discussed in great depth. Elements that were studied included the public infrastructure, demographic characteristics, social considerations, changes in the local public and parochial schools, environmental concerns, public services, business and economic conditions, traffic concerns, images, and more. Other input came from local business interviews, a general community questionnaire, and public open houses where issues were discussed and recommendations presented. This document is then a compilation of that analysis and public participation. The Steering Committee worked consistently to find the most reasonable path toward making Mt. Healthy a community for living!

One guiding element the Steering Committee agrees upon early in the process was this Vision Statement:

The future vision of the City of Mt. Healthy is to sustain community vitality and continuously improve the quality of life of our residents by ensuring public safety; by providing comprehensive public services and facilities; by supporting local educational, religious, and social institutions; by celebrating our heritage, and by encouraging investment by diverse businesses and residents.

Mt. Healthy is an older community that has much to offer to the public. A strong history, schools, neighborhoods, families, locally owned businesses, a library, parks, police, a diverse population, and a city government.

Mt. Healthy is located just north of the Cross County Highway in Hamilton County, Ohio. Hamilton Ave (U.S. 127) runs through the heart of the city and gives the town a main commercial strip. Compton Road is the main east-west intersection; and the west portion of Compton is spotted by small mixed use redevelopment (some using existing houses for offices and commercial activity). A historic vibe captures the essence of the city. Historic structures, a small scale streetscape and the grid road system with alleys and sidewalks, help keep the small town city feel. Slowly modern buildings have been built in the core but most have managed to keep the integrity of the city intact.

As you travel north on Hamilton Ave. coming from the Cross County Highway visitors will notice the tree-lined streets off of Hamilton Ave. The grid street system and well maintained older homes keep the old neighborhoods thriving. The addition of newer homes and multi-family buildings has been nicely integrated within the fabric of the city. Newer street designs, including cul-de-sacs are distributed throughout the city with a broad mixture between the old and new.

Further north on Hamilton Ave. the small town city feeling is replaced with the current commercial thoroughfare feeling. Parking is prohibited on the street and parking lots face the street with strip centers behind these lots. Wider driving lanes welcome speeding traffic and few identifying features allow visitors to connect with the city entering from the north.

Mt. Healthy is at a very critical point in its development history. It must plan for the future so that the city's integrity can remain and it continues to be a mature vibrant community. As the city continues to age the fight against keeping the current structures maintained, pressure for new in-fill development, and the loss of a city center identity may continue. Many older communities have begun to feel the effects of change and how they deal with it will determine if they maintain a sense of place and unique identity.

Mt. Healthy is not new to the idea of planning for the future. In 1989 a land use plan was prepared for the city with its main recommendation being to keep Mt. Healthy a mostly residential community with emphasis on single and two family dwellings. It also stated that the city should resist future retail development and instead should encourage office, institutional and research parks.

In 1989 the housing market was just beginning to boom. Newer subdivisions are sprouting up in areas further from Cincinnati with promises of newer homes on larger lots with little common open space, or sidewalks and retail needs found in shopping centers (creating the car bound suburbs). Older cities like Mt. Healthy have felt these effects as the population moves out to these newer suburbs and leave behind deteriorating structures. These cities need to offer more to the public to keep them thriving.

This plan is suggesting ways this city can remain vibrant. In-fill development, increasing the tax base, guiding new mixed-use residential and commercial development and promoting the city, are ways to help maintain an identity for Mt. Healthy. With strong suggestions on growth and how to guide and implement it, Mt. Healthy can become a desirable destination.

Why does a community prepare a Comprehensive Plan?

Cincinnati was the first City to prepare a Comprehensive Plan in the U.S. in 1925. In 1948 William Gossman from Mt. Healthy participated in the "Steering Committee" for the Cincinnati Regional Comprehensive Plan. There is a long standing commitment in Ohio to find our way into the future with a guiding community plan.

There has been a lot of recent discussion among planners that a Comprehensive Plan is "overkill". The argument is that with this process we don't get to a level of implementation that makes a difference in the active change in a community. And to some extent we believe plans are developed that are too conceptual and never get to a level of detail that shakes the decision makers out of the conservative "wait 'till we have more information, then we can make a decision". The Comprehensive Plan has to take a risk in predicting how a community wants to change and agree to take steps that may be controversial.

Up through the 1960's the planning process was predominantly autocratic and didn't reach consensus deliberatively. The "ivory tower" study was elite and given to the "kings of government" to implement.

The Comprehensive Plan is a tool that reflects the desires, hopes and aspirations of its citizens and leaders for how Mt. Healthy will change in the future. This plan is a record of words and illustrations that describe how it wants to stay the same, change, mature and

prosper. This document creates a record of this intent as a standard to be used by elected, appointed officials and all those interested in the city. It also should be periodically evaluated for what items recommended has been implemented and if any amendments should be made in the future.

A Comprehensive Plan can be defined as: tying the community structure into an integrated strategy for future change. Turning a new vision into reality is the basic goal. Analyze the social issues, environmental, and physical structures and place the plan into motion – that's comprehensive planning. (Source: APA – www.planning.org)

Nostalgia may direct us to try to stay the same, but it is evident that change is always in front of us. Some changes are small and prompt few if any immediate impacts on the city. But to make the desirable "big" changes it will require perseverance and long term commitment. These major changes may be the most uncomfortable because there will always be an element of surprise or set-back that discourages the progress for that change. And it will bring out new citizens who say you didn't ask me if I wanted this change. We have held public open houses to present these ideas and have received feedback from many residents and through public meetings the plan will be adopted, but when new change occurs; there will be new complaints. We hope that those new complaints will be allayed with the contents of this plan. In both cases, this is a guide for the future and will require review and detailed decisions by the city's Planning Commission and Council to assure that change fits the circumstances and is managed efficiently.

Without this comprehensive plan, city staff, Planning Commission and City Council will have no reference or basis to evaluate new proposals for change. This plan should help the city make future decisions and know that it is based in thorough research and public consensus that conforms to community goals and benefits the general public welfare.



It is very unusual for a city of 7,500 to have such a strong Historical Society. The city has cooperated to place two historic buildings on the city park property along McMakin Street just east of city hall. One is the toll house that collected fees (starting in 1832 when the city was called Mt. Pleasant) for traveling from Cincinnati to Hamilton. As an example the toll for a horse and rider was \$0.0625 – then 6 ¼ cents and a passing hog cost ½ cent. The second building is the "Free Meeting Hall". It was built in 1825 for visiting religious speakers and later used for any public gathering.

The Mt. Healthy Historical Society meets monthly and helps to maintain the two museums on McMakin Street. The society has recorded that "Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road were once Indian trails, that the first school house was a log cabin located at Compton and Elizabeth Street, that six homeowners within Mt. Healthy helped escaping slaves in the mid-1800's as part of the "underground railroad", and that vital industry included coopering, carriage and wagon making, potters, sawmills, slaughterhouses, silk growing and brickyards." There are many interesting buildings older than 100 years in Mt. Healthy and a list is maintained by the Historical Society. One of the past industries in Mt. Healthy was tailoring. One of the old tailor shops (with large windows for light) is still on Kinney Avenue west of Elizabeth Street.*

* Source: Uncle Pete Blum's Tailor Shop, Vierling Blum, November 2, 2006 and One Square Mile, Mt. Healthy Historical Society, 1992.

Below is the brief history included on the Mt. Healthy web site (www.mthealthy.org):

"Welcome to the City of Mt. Healthy, Ohio. The history of our city is very unique in many ways. Mt. Healthy was first settled as a village in 1817, and was originally named Mt. Pleasant. With many of its citizens surviving the Cholera epidemic of 1850, this small community was later renamed as Mt. Healthy. Officially becoming a City in 1951, our city has prospered for over 175 years and continues to flourish. Conveniently located, Mt. Healthy is just 15 miles north of downtown Cincinnati, and minutes from I-275 and the Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway. Our community consists of a collection of individually designed and unique homes situated among lofty trees that provide a natural and enchanting atmosphere. Mt. Healthy is a pleasant residential community striving to provide a quality way of life. Its strong tradition has attracted outstanding citizens dedicated to positive community values."

To confirm the process that the City is following in the preparation of this Comprehensive Plan (update), we briefly describe the steps: 1) define the goals, 2) identify the problems/conditions that the steering committee and public hearings defined, and should be addressed, 3) identify alternative solutions to these problems that reflect the initially agreed to goals, 4) compare, analyze, and select solutions that show merit toward giving the city desired direction, and 5) monitor the progress toward accomplishing the solutions selected.

Representatives or stakeholders from the city were recommended by the administration and presented to City Council and they were asked to participate in a Steering Committee for the development of this Comprehensive Plan. Soon after those appointments, City Council funded the project and as it proceeded, other members were added to the Steering Committee. They were charged to meet at least once a month to oversee the work and analysis being done for the Comprehensive Plan. The Committee looked at the 1989 Comprehensive Plan for Mt. Healthy and tried to look ahead another 20 years. This group further assisted in small group work that was completed during the process. The Committee met 12 times over 9 months. They assisted in distributing information, questionnaires and organizing public open houses on January 20th, 2007 and April 3rd, 2007. These meetings added input to the research and thought process to assure broader consensus from the community of what results/solutions were being recommended.

The first phases of this plan involved data collection, field observations, interviews with citizens and officials, then clarification and identification of issues that need to change. This Comprehensive Plan should be considered an ongoing process that evaluates the changes that are made and what steps should be taken next. This approach should be flexible since it is impossible to determine the location of all future land uses and change. This document is a guide for public decisions.

A public survey was used to supplement the input from public hearings and the steering committee (a summary of the response is included in the Appendix, page 84). This community questionnaire was developed for distribution. It was given to the Steering Committee, published in the local Community Press newspaper, posted on the city's web site, the Steering Committee members distributed it in their neighborhoods and it was given to residents in apartment complexes within Mt. Healthy.

A majority of the responses came from people who have lived in Mt. Healthy more than 10 years. Some issues that rose to the top were: Hamilton Avenue traffic needed to be fixed, the schools needed to be upgraded and the levy's supported, public safety needed to be braced up, a walking/biking path was wanted, the community center needed year round youth and adult activity, the business district needed historic preservation and more specialty stores, home maintenance and ownership needed to increase. The weighted responses seemed to express a positive feeling about existing city services, a negative opinion of the school system, a strong desire to upgrade the streets, and a strong desire to preserve the historic business character of Mt. Healthy.

Demographics

Examining populations from the past, present and future paint a very strong image about where a community has been and where it is headed. The changes in the demographic characteristics in Mt. Healthy help evaluate what public efforts may help the city develop a stronger image and economy. Current projections by the U.S. Bureau of Census for this community reflect a decrease in population. Mt. Healthy faces the same challenges that many aging communities experience as the current population ages and moves away.

The American Planning Association and the Bureau of Census described changes in the United States by showing how our population is growing at an increasing rate every 10 years. The Census determined that in 1915 the U.S. reached its first 100 million population; that took over 300 years. Then 53 years later in 1968 it had 200 million, 39 years later October 16th, 2006, America had 300 million and the Census projects that in another 30 years we are expected to reach 400 million in population! What does the next 100 million mean to Mt. Healthy?

The population of Mt. Healthy has grown over the past one hundred years at a steady pace. It reached a peak between the 1970's – 1990's with approximately 7,500 people residing here. Over the thirty year span (1960-1990) there was little change in the number and composition of people living here; an additional 134 people. However from 1990-2000 Mt. Healthy started to lose population; over 400 people left the City.

The U.S. Bureau of Census predicts that the population for the next 30 years will decline. The projections show a slight rebound between 2000 and 2010 with the city gaining 145 people. However this jump is short lived and there is another significant decrease in population between 2010 and 2020 with the city losing 368 people. By 2030 the Bureau of Census predicts its population will decrease by another 674 to 6,252.

The breakdown of the population between 1990 and 2000 shows some interesting changes in some of the age groups. The largest decrease was in the 60-64 and 65 to 74 age group. There was a thirty to forty percent decrease in that cohort group. The other largest decrease was in the 25-34 age group and the number of children under age 5. These decreases suggest young families are not moving in and the older population is moving out.

Mt. Healthy did see some cohort increases in population. The largest group was the over 85 age group. They experienced a doubling in population. Some of this can be attributed to the development of new assisted living and nursing homes. There was also a large jump in the age 45 to 54.

The lack of undeveloped land in Mt. Healthy means there is little room for new development. Instead much of the building activity is repairs to existing structures. Over the past fifteen years there have only been eight new single family and two multi-family building permits issued. The last new home permits were issued in 2002. Given that the city is mature, the lack of new buildings are not surprising but it still needs to be evaluated.

Some existing structures are needing repair and seem to show decline in recent years. The city does not want to see this when prosperity of the business district is related to the health of the neighborhoods. There has been a decline in home repair permits since 2002. Fewer people are investing in their homes which means less investment into the community. Some of the noticeable drops in permits issued are for roof repair, siding and window replacements.

One of the reasons there could be such a decline is the high percentage of rental properties in the community. Fifty two percent of the dwelling units in Mt. Healthy are renter occupied housing units. There are 3,421 housing units and in 2000 the Census said that 199 were vacant (2.2% of the owner units and 5.6% of the rental units); 1,545 of the occupied units were owned and 1,677 were rented. Defined in that total: 1713 (about 50%) are single-family detached, 151 are mobile homes and the rest are attached units (1,562). The owners of these rental units may feel that they have less reason to invest into the community and do not maintain the units as well as owner occupied households would.

This data indicates that approximately 2% of the single-family detached houses are renter occupied. The citizen response has thought that Mt. Healthy should increase home ownership; however this will only occur if some of the attached multi-family units are converted to a condominium title.

Another interesting Census figure is that there are 419 households (12.9%) that do not have access to cars. This reflects a need for continued public transportation service in Mt. Healthy (bus routes are discussed later).

Mt. Healthy has also seen an increase in vacant properties. Between 1990 and 2000 the amount of vacant housing units jumped from 135 to 199 an increase of 47.4 percent. There was also a loss of 76 housing units from 1990 to 2000 (from 3,497 to 3,421). As Mt. Healthy matures this trend could continue if nothing is done to promote more home maintenance or include new residential development along with new commercial development (mixed use). The Census indicates that the city is experiencing a decrease in population, housing units, and the maintenance of the existing units.

Housing in Mt. Healthy has a broad value in single-family homes and in rental price ranges, giving people a lot of choice. The median single-family price is \$85,900. This market value has seen a 47.8 percent increase from 1990 to 2000. The lower average housing price makes the area affordable for first time home owners.



The median household income levels in Mt. Healthy are below the national average with the median at \$32,982 according to the 2000 U.S. census. The income has risen since 1990 by 44.6 percent from \$22,801.

Over half of the population in Mt. Healthy is in the work force; 62.7 percent of those over age 16 are employed and 75% of this group earns their living by working in jobs that are management/professional related or sales/office related. The Census also indicates that 33.2% of the population over 16 years in age is not in the labor market and that 2% are unemployed. A few other interesting statistics provided by the Census are that 8.9% of the population in Mt. Healthy has income below the poverty level; 18.2% of the households are single persons aged 65 or more; and 15.3% of households are female headed with no husbands present.

Mt. Healthy has a diverse education level among its residents over 18. Twenty-two point seven percent of the population does not have a high school diploma. Thirty-four point nine percent over age 18 have received their high school diploma or equivalency. Twenty-eight point one percent have some college or their associate's degree. Thirteen point two percent have earned their bachelors or higher.

Mt. Healthy Change is Population

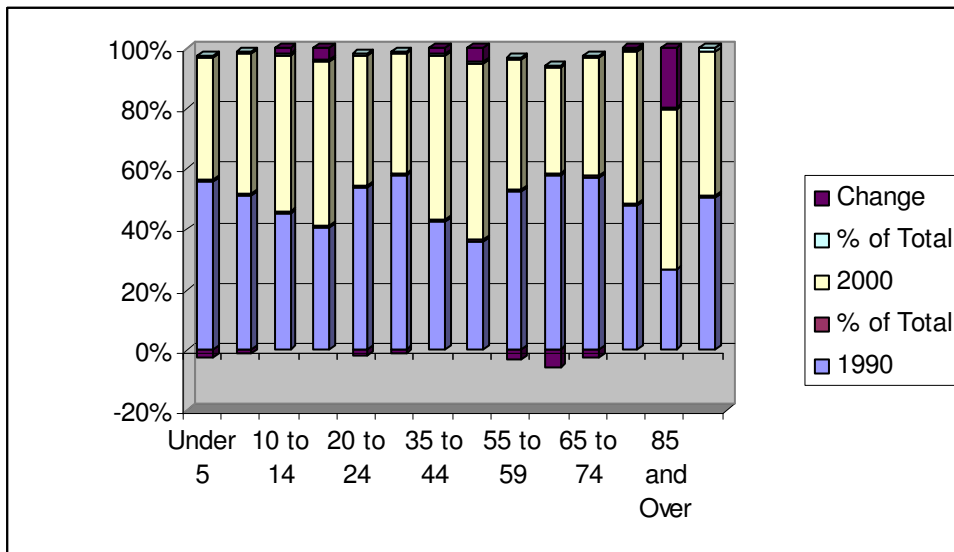
Year	Population
1900	1,354
1910	1,799
1920	2,255
1930	3,530
1940	3,997
1950	5,533
1960	6,553
1970	7,446
1980	7,562
1990	7,580
2000	7,149
2010	7,294
2020	6,926
2025	6,592
2030	6,252

Mt. Healthy Cohort Population – 1991 and 2000

	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	Change
Under 5	663	8.7	482	6.7	-27.3
5 to 9	541	7.1	490	6.9	-9.4
10 to 14	405	5.3	458	6.4	13.1
15 to 19	342	4.5	453	6.3	32.5
20 to 24	538	7.1	431	6.0	-19.9
25 to 34	1,537	20.3	1,064	14.9	-30.8
35 to 44	871	11.5	1,109	15.5	27.3
45 to 54	499	6.6	797	11.1	59.7
55 to 59	314	4.1	254	3.6	-19.1
60 to 64	381	5.1	232	3.2	-39.1
65 to 74	828	10.9	562	7.9	-32.1
75 to 84	529	7.0	556	7.8	5.1
85 and Over	132	1.7	261	3.7	97.7
	7580	100.0	7,149	100.0	

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census

Cohort Distribution Change – 1990 to 2000



New Construction in Mt. Healthy

	1990	%	2000	%
# of Households	3,497	100.0	3,421	100.0
Occupied Housing	3,362	96.1	3,222	94.2
Vacant Housing	135	3.9	199	5.8
Owner Occupied Housing	1646	49.0	1,545	48.0
Renter Occupied Housing	1716	51.0	1,677	52.0
Person Per Household	2.25		2.16	
Median Household Value	\$58,100		\$85,900	

Source: Mt. Healthy Permit Records

Safety

1. From the questionnaires and during public meetings the Steering Committee received many opinions that “crime was high in Mt. Healthy.” It appears that the residents “hear the police sirens and think crime.” The Steering Committee and police department believe that this high-crime perception is wrong. For example, most of the cars stopped by police along Hamilton Avenue involve non-Mt. Healthy residents. The public can’t distinguish why the police made the run, so the perception is “high crime rate”. No matter what the crime, the police department takes it seriously and their efforts are working. Just because residents hear an occasional police siren does not mean that Mt. Healthy is a high-crime area. The Hamilton County Sheriff’s Department records indicate that Mt. Healthy has a low crime rate relative to most other cities in Hamilton County. The Block Watch and NAG organizations help make a neighborhood feel safe.



2. The Steering Committee decided that a lighting survey was needed. Touring the city at night the committee found that a majority of the residential street lights were on utility poles some 35 feet above the street and were not providing the light needed to make many of the neighborhoods feel safe (refer to Map on page 38). In the business district there are some more traditional 15 foot high streetlight poles; however, the interval/spacing were too far apart to give the “colonnade” lighting that feels adequate in a business district. The Steering Committee agreed that the existing 35 foot high “cobra” street lights were often blocked by the tree leaves, many were “burned out”, and that some streets did not have any streetlights. They felt that especially Adams Road, Elizabeth Street, Compton Road, Stevens Avenue, Madison Avenue, and Hamilton Avenue needed additional lower profile (15 foot) streetlights. The objective of this lighting was to encourage more walking from the neighborhoods to the businesses along Hamilton Avenue. The Steering Committee also suggested that the elimination of overhead utility poles along Hamilton Avenue be studied.

Economic Development

A community's economy, character and fabric cannot "turn on a dime."

The Mt. Healthy web site sets the stage for understanding that there are opportunities for community development throughout the city. There is obviously a strong concern for home maintenance and business continuity. The city has maintained a street upgrading program as it can budget new curb and gutter plus pavement where possible. The existing conditions map shows additional streets that need these repairs and are on the list of streets that the city plans to upgrade (refer to Map on page 43). It appears that this street improvement strategy has reinforced the private interest in fixing up the houses throughout Mt. Healthy – a compounding benefit for the residents.

Small town services abound in Mt. Healthy. During the summer, April through September, the City dump trucks are available to rent. The Street Department then takes the refuse to Rumpke for disposal.

BUILDING A STRONG TAX BASE

This section links factors that affect the economic activity in Mt. Healthy. Studying these points support many of the final initiatives that were developed.

The following thoughts are meant to identify "buzz words" which have the capability for producing significant opportunities and desired progress.

- Go after business **entrepreneurs**. Rents in Mt. Healthy are cheap, a definite plus.
- Go after **artists**. They have regional drawing power.
- Focus initially on the **old downtown core** along Hamilton Avenue.
- Do not overlook **corridors of opportunity**, such as represented by Hamilton Avenue & Cross County Highway.
- Whenever possible, look to **cluster** businesses. Look what the Bridal District has done for the City of Reading.
- Look into **Foundation grants**. Also, explore the benefits of participating in the **First Suburbs Consortium**.
- Adopt a **Can Do** attitude. Be relentless in proclaiming the positive.
- **Market. Market. Market.** Every city needs to learn how to do a lot more of this in the future in order to survive and compete, let alone provide a desirable quality of life.
- Tap into the cheap labor **talent pool** of students in the Mt. Healthy school district with respect to helping market the city to others.
- Consider investing in a **Community Image Enhancement** program.
- Tap into a broader circle of **leadership** in order to facilitate discussion, planning, strategizing, and implementation strategy. For example, look to churches, service, and civic organizations.
- Consider building a **brand** for Mt. Healthy - something which can be used to more effectively market the city.
- Create a **vision** for attracting new businesses and resulting investment.

- Invest in establishing **wi-fi** throughout the business core. This is best accomplished in creating a **Third Place** environment such as oftentimes exists at places like Starbucks and Panera.
- Revise the City's **sign ordinance**.
- Play up the City's **strengths** such as: affordable housing, neat/clean look, pedestrian friendly streets, a compact walkable downtown, a small hometown feel/appeal, etc.
- Create an **attractive gateway** and main street corridor.
- Work more closely with local **banks** - they have money to invest.
- Establish **incubator space** to help attract new businesses.

BUILDING PERMIT SUMMARY

Planning & Development Solutions was interested in learning what types of residential and commercial building permits had been issued during the period 2000 - 2005. The reason for looking through building permit data was to obtain a better understanding of not only what was happening, but the pace and value of permit activity.

Most Common Activity by #	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
- Roof related (193)	17	22	59	42	30	23
- Signing (103)	23	18	28	11	17	6
- Window related (98)	30	12	30	11	6	9
- Fencing (78)	11	14	13	13	15	10
- HVAC related (58)	8	7	13	10	9	11
- Deck related (35)	5	11	10	5	3	1
- Siding related (30)	4	4	11	4	4	3
- Shed related (19)	6	0	6	3	2	2
Totals By Year	104	88	170	99	86	65

CONCLUSION: Building permit activity has been declining since 2002. In fact, there has been an across the board decline in every permit category - something you not only don't expect but don't want to see. The questions that have to be asked are why, and what does this mean?

Other Important Permit Activity	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
- Residential Additions	4	2	5	5	1	0
- New Homes	1	2	3	0	0	0
- New Garages	0	1	3	3	3	1

CONCLUSION: New home activity has been absent since 2002. Given the fact that Mt. Healthy is a mature city, this is not surprising. Nonetheless, why this trend is occurring is something which needs to be discussed. In the long run, the future prosperity of the City's business district is directly related to the health of its neighborhoods. As such, the greater the amount of investment in residential permit activity the better, and vice versa.

CENSUS RELATED

It is possible to assess Mt. Healthy's "trade area" in a number of different ways. One of the most valuable is to look at **drive times**. Another means of analysis is to examine **radii**. The third and least informative is to focus solely on the city's **corporation limits** (Refer to Claritas reports attached in this section).

In all instances, such important variables as total population, race, age groups, educational attainment, median household income, household size, occupations, occupation classification, renter vs. owner occupied housing, housing values, and age of housing stock can be easily compared.

The value of such an exercise is to think analytically like a person who is making a site selection decision on behalf of a business they either own or represent.

If a business caters to a convenience crowd, then studying drive time data is very important. On the other hand, if a business happens to be more destination or specialty oriented, looking at demographic rings is of greater value. The least important means of gaining an understanding about local customers is to look solely at the population residing within a community's corporation limits.

It should be understood that while studying **nighttime demographics** is essential, getting a good handle on **daytime demographics** is also recommended. Indeed, customer generation originates not only from people living in the surrounding rooftops, but from persons working in the city and the surrounding area as well as from persons who are driving through or visiting. This is why **traffic counts** are a valuable tool to many analysts.

Note: OKI reports the 2005 traffic count for the Ronald Reagan Cross County east of Hamilton Avenue as 43,187 vehicles per day. The most recent (2002) daily traffic count reported for Hamilton Avenue north of Cross County is 31,250. To a site selector, both traffic counts are impressive.

For education purposes, a quick comparison of select census variables is being provided for each of the 3 aforementioned demographic areas. In each instance, the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road is used as the basis for the data cited.

Population

- 7 minute drive time	=	44,972	2006 (est.)
- 2 mile radius	=	45,586	2006 (est.)
- city	=	6,701	2000 (act)

BA Degree

- 7 minute drive time	=	13.81%	2006 (est.)
- 2 mile radius	=	13.58%	2006 (est.)
- city	=	11.25%	2000 (act)

Household Income of \$75,000 or more

- 7 minute drive time	=	23.45%	2006 (est.)
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- 2 mile radius	=	24.02%	2006 (est.)
- city	=	9.28%	2000 (act)

Median HH Income

- 7 minute drive time	=	\$46,169	2006 (est.)
- 2 mile radius	=	\$48,365	2006 (est.)
- city	=	\$34,081	2000 (act)

Mgmt., Bus, Finan, & Prof Jobs

- 7 minute drive time	=	30.02%	2006 (est.)
- 2 mile radius	=	30.17%	2006 (est.)
- city	=	30.32%	2000 (act)

Housing Values - \$150,000 or more*

- 7 minute drive time	=	19.04%	2006 (est.)
- 2 mile radius	=	18.36%	2006 (est.)
- city	=	1.64%	2000 (act)

CONCLUSION: When promoting Mt. Healthy as a place to do business do not restrict yourself to providing information only about the City because you end up taking some of the wind out of your sail. Think "trade area" instead of corporation limits.

*Owner Occupied

Source: Claritas

The staff interviewed business representatives in the City and the format of that questionnaire is included on page 84.

BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The following information summarizes the results of the questionnaires which were discussed with a select group of business people, city councilmen, planning commissioners, and property owners. Note: some elected and appointed officials also are on the Steering Committee which was appointed to work with McGill Smith Punshon.

Question #1 dealt with identifying **anchors** within the local business district.

- many people lamented the fact that the local hardware store closed (5)
- banks (4)
- jewelry store (4)
- antique mall/stores (3)
- drugstores/pharmacies (3)
- restaurants (2)
- bakery (2)
- library (1)
- post office (1)
- funeral homes (1)
- Aquatics & Exotics (1)
- Herbalist (1)

Question #2 asked about **competing business districts**.

- Colerain/Northgate (7)
- Brentwood (4)
- North College Hill (2)
- Tri-County (2)

Question #3 asked what types of **land use** should be encouraged on vacant and/or underutilized property.

- **restaurants** (1)
- hardware store (1)
- medical **office** (1)
- medical equipment (1)
- residential (1)

Question #4 asked survey respondents to identify business district **strengths**.

- amount of parking/free parking (4)
- collection of niche/specialty businesses (3)
- small compact/well defined area (2)
- easy to walk to & from (2)
- **accessibility** to surrounding areas (2)
- **proximity to Cross County Highway** (2)
- Business Association (1)
- community's central location (1)
- small town feel & character (1)

Question #5 asked survey respondents to identify business district **weaknesses**.

- | | |
|--|--|
| - no current plan for the future (2) | - not much critical mass (1) |
| - poorly maintained parking lots (2) | - no regional draw (1) |
| - increased crime (2) | - vacancies (1) |
| - traffic congestion (1) | - not promoted enough (1) |
| - no real name recognition (1) | - property maintenance (1) |
| - buildings need to be updated (1) | - odors from grease traps (1) |
| - no Design Review Board (1) | - more signing flexibility (1) |
| - many businesses are marginal (1) | - building demolition (1) |
| - more businesspeople are moving away from the city (1) | - parking lots need to be improved with landscaping & lighting (1) |
| - alleyways need to be improved to promote more connectivity (1) | |

Question #6 asked about **voids** in the business district.

- upscale **restaurants** (4)
- easy flowing traffic (1)
- a real anchor (2)
- a coffee shop (1)
- **a more balanced tax base** (1)
- more police visibility (1)
- public/private sector communication (1)
- police not enforcing short term parking (1)

Question #7 wanted to know what types of **opportunities** exist.

- need to attract additional **specialty businesses** (3)
- promote high traffic count (1)
- revise the sign code (1)
- promote cheap rents & affordable properties (1)
- seek out restaurants and start up businesses (1)
- relocate telephone poles to the rear of lots (1)
- promote new development/redevelopment (1)
- actively market/promote the business district outside Mt. Healthy (1)
- reconfigure roads to alleviate traffic congestion (1)
- city & businesses need to partner to enhance the local tax base (1)
- create special character like Old Milford & Madison, Indiana (1)
- clean up eyesores (1)
- secure an anchor store (1)

Question #8 asked about **business revenues**.

- increasing (3)
- decreasing (1)
- about the same (1)

Question #9 asked survey respondents about the adequacy of two things: **(a) signing & (b) parking**.

Adequate signing:

- no: easy to miss because of being **flat** on a wall as opposed to being a **projecting** yes (3)
- lighted signing would be helpful (1)

Adequate parking:

- yes (7)
- no (0)

Question #10 asked if customer **surveys** or research were conducted.

- no (5)
- yes (1)
- look at checks & charge cards (1)

Question #11 asked about what types of **incentives** would be most attractive.

- **low interest loans** for façade improvements (3)
- including business people on city boards & committees (2)
- **tax abatements** (2)
- clean streets & sidewalks more frequently (1)
- establishing design & color restrictions (1)
- creating a TIF (1)
- increased sign opportunities (1)
- picking up leaves (1)
- not City's job to provide (1)

Question #12 asked how the various businesses **marketed** themselves.

- word of mouth (2)
- internet/web (2)
- telephone directories (1)
- home & garden shows (1)
- suppliers/other businesses (1)
- flyers (1)
- radio (1)
- national publications (1)
- church & school publications (1)
- don't (1)

Question #13 wanted to know if business people planned on **expanding**.

- no (3)
- yes, but not locally (2)

Question #14 asked why this particular **location**.

- born/raised here (4)
- bought an existing business (1)
- needed a larger building (1)

Question #15 asked what word(s) best describe(s) the **image** of the business district.

- homey/quaint (2)
- mediocre/unattractive (1)
- old/tired (1)
- schools hurt (1)
- historic character (1)
- nothing special (1)
- **near cross county highway** (1)

Question #16 asked about membership in any group or **organization** which promotes the City.

- Business Association (5)

The following are classified as **miscellaneous comments** which respondents made but were not specific to a particular question or to the business district.

- **land assembly** is necessary to encourage more development (3)
- need to create a niche/small cluster of complimentary businesses (2)
- traffic congestion on Hamilton Avenue is a deterrent (2)
- City missed the boat on **annexation** (2)
- **schools** need to improve (2)
- there is a need to restrict building colors (1)
- **redevelopment** needs to occur near Cross County Highway (1)
- **Wal Mart** coming to Rink's area could become an opportunity to attract new stores (1)
- the City needs to obtain Federal funds to help make improvements (1)
- people want to go to an area where they can do more than one thing (1)
- Business Association needs to attract members from beyond Mt. Healthy (1)
- Business Association needs to focus (1)
- Business Association is a wonderful resource (1)
- retail has "gone to pot" (1)
- bars draw people from outside Mt. Healthy (1)
- Hamilton Avenue running north & south is a big plus (1)

- No one seems to be interested in running for Mayor (1)
- Hilltop Plaza needs new anchors (1)
- employing a dress code for schools is a real positive (1)
- the name Mt. Healthy leaves a positive first impression (1)
- emphasis on decorating store windows pays off (1)
- signing previously represented visual clutter (1)
- the City should establish an Enterprise Zone in order to split revenues with Springfield Township (1)
- a former gas station still has underground tanks in place (1)
- demolishing old buildings affects community identity (1)
- 85% of people arrested in Mt. Healthy live outside the community (1)
- rise in car thefts is annoying (1)
- the local dairy bar is a great asset for bringing in outsiders (1)
- Speedway expansion is ok but is not the properties highest and/or best use (1)
- school teachers & staff are doing a great job; the same cannot be said for many parents (1)
- the City has a tight budget (1)
- we should not go after chain stores and restaurants because we will sacrifice our identity and become "anywhere USA" (1)
- sidewalks roll up too early (1)
- City does not do enough planning regarding the use of vacant lots (1)
- new business people don't seem to have a strong interest in the City (1)
- we get passed up for development which ends up going to Colerain Avenue or Winton Road (1)



WORKPLACE INFORMATION

The following information describes employment within a 2 mile radius of the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road. This is the geographic area which is most likely to produce daytime sales opportunities for the Mt. Healthy business community.

Total Number of Employees

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------|
| - Private sector | = | 12,040 |
| - Government & Non Profit | = | 2,783 |

- Total	=	14,823
- Employees per establishment	=	13

Largest Employment Sectors

- Wholesale Trade	=	5,073	
- Service	=	4,895	(a)
- Retail	=	2,532	(b)
- Finance	=	572	(c)
- Residential Population/Business	=	39	

- (a) Service includes all of the following: Lodging, personal services, business services, motion picture and amusement, health services (#2), legal services, educational services (#1), social services (#3), and miscellaneous.
- (b) Retail includes all of the following: Building materials and garden supply, general merchandise, food stores, auto dealers and gas stations, apparel and accessory stores, home furniture/furnishings and equipment, eating and drinking places, and miscellaneous.
- (c) Finance includes all of the following: Bank/savings and lending institutions, security and commodity brokers, insurance carriers and agencies, real estate, and trust/holdings and other investments.

Source: Claritas for Planning & Development Solutions

WORKPLACE & EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

October 3, 2006

Source: Claritas

	1.0 mile ring	1.5 mile ring	2.0 mile ring
Total # Employees/Business	10	9	13
Total # Businesses	404	689	1,171
Total Employees	3,929	6,120	14,823
Total # in Private Sector	2,424	4,074	12,040
Total # in Public/Non Profit Sector	1,505	2,046	2,783
Construction Employees	272	371	540
Manufacturing Employees	176	367	513
Retail Employees*	794	1,183	2,532
Finance Employees**	228	328	572

Service Employees***	2,083	3,184	4,895
Resident Population/Business	32	40	39
Households/Business	14	16	16

* mostly food/grocery and restaurant businesses

** mostly real estate and banking/S&L/Credit Union businesses

***mostly social service, education & health care employers

MARKET GAPS & OPPORTUNITIES

The following represents an initial look at business uses and categories which represent either some or limited opportunities. They are based on field and market observations made by Frank Raeon.

POTENTIAL USES

Auto Parts & Accessories
Chiropractic services
Consignment Shops
Doctors & Dentists
Florists
Garden Center/Lawn Equipment
Insurance offices
Office Supplies
Learning Centers
Start up restaurants
Used bookstore
Used Tape/CD store

LITTLE OR NO OPPORTUNITY

Appliances & Electronics
Bookstores
Building Materials & Supplies
Clothing & Shoe stores
Furniture/Home Furnishings
Hardware
National t.s. restaurants
Paint & Wallpaper stores
Sporting Goods stores

One of the easiest ways to help attract and promote new and small businesses is to cluster them in close proximity to one another. For instance, in the automotive group, concentrating complimentary businesses such as auto parts, tire, muffler, oil change, and car wash uses can lead to not only an expanded trade area but increased sales. In Cincinnati, a good example of successful clustering is the Kings Auto Mall in Deerfield Township.

We all have a tendency to recognize the obvious and desire the glamorous. Examples are retail stores and restaurants. In doing so we often overlook an important "labor intensive" sector which is not very "sexy." I am speaking about the service sector.

Customer demand, most often generated by nearby rooftops, leads to both supply and opportunity. Critical mass, the amount of commercial square footage within an area, also leads to supply and opportunity and results in competition. In the case of Mt. Healthy, critical mass oftentimes trumps nearby rooftops.

RETAIL CAPTURE RATE ANALYSIS

While the Retail Gap Analysis identified marketplace opportunities, what is essential to understand are two things; per capita demand, and the extent of what is known as the capture rate. As an example, a per capita spending opportunity amounting to \$300 or more may, in fact, be encouraging for the establishment or expansion of certain types of businesses. On the other hand, a \$1,000,000 opportunity gap may, with only a 20% capture rate, represent \$200,000 in expected revenues - not really a significant amount for many businesses.

What follows is intended to identify businesses which represent potential market opportunities within the 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 mile rings surrounding the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road.

Annual Per Capita Demand

Business	1 mile	1.5 miles	2.0 miles
Auto Parts	\$225	\$177	\$169
Furniture	\$189	\$191	-
Home Furnishings	\$128	\$138	\$147
Appliances/TV	\$213	\$232	\$215
Radio/TV/Electronics	\$170	\$177	\$156
Home Centers	\$536	\$597	\$634
Bldg Mat/Lumber	\$186	\$164	\$155
Family Clothing	\$237	\$235	\$197
Wareh Clubs/S Stores	\$823	\$836	\$852
Full Serv Restaurant	\$489	\$484	\$174
Lim Serv Restaurant	\$238	\$170	\$194
Hardware	-	\$252	\$118
Nursery & Garden	-	\$131	\$128
Supermarkets	-	\$388	\$143

BOLD Lettering = Best Bets

Based on the use of two different capture rates, the aforementioned list of businesses can be pared down. Each of the following represent what are referred to as the "best bets" within the 1.5 mile ring for either attracting new businesses, or, expanding sales levels at existing businesses. The sales cited are derived from the information previously identified in the Retail Gap Analysis.

Business	20% Capture Rate	30% Capture Rate
Auto Parts	\$ 970,769	\$1,456,154
Appliances/TV	\$1,269,599	\$1,904,399
Home Centers	\$3,269,198	\$4,903,797
Family Clothing	\$1,286,271	\$1,929,407
Wareh Clubs/SS	\$4,575,055	\$6,862,582

Full Serv Restaurant	\$2,649,912	\$3,974,868
Lim Serv Restaurant	\$ 927,906	\$1,391,860
Supermarkets	\$2,121,282	\$3,181,923

CONCLUSION: The City of Mt. Healthy should make an on going effort to attract each of above identified business types to the Hamilton Avenue business district. Given the vital role convenient access plays in promoting high levels of customer sales, the City would be wise to create as many opportunities as possible within close proximity to Cross County Highway. Otherwise, it would be advantageous for businesses to cluster at the north end of Mt. Healthy either at or near the existing Hilltop Plaza.

RETAIL GAP ANALYSIS

The following is based upon data which has been provided by Claritas, Inc. - a primary source of market research statistical information. The conclusions drawn from this data are solely the author's, and are based upon an interpretation of the data provided.

The following *retail gaps* exist within the 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 mile ring areas focused on property at the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road, otherwise known as 7522 Hamilton Avenue.

Retail Use	1.0 mile gap value	1.5 mile gap value	2.0 mile gap value
<i>Auto Parts</i>	<i>\$2,895,026</i>	<i>\$4,853,845</i>	<i>\$7,700,874</i>
<i>Furniture</i>	<i>\$2,429,403</i>	<i>\$5,216,315</i>	<i>an over supply exists</i>
<i>Home Furnish</i>	<i>\$1,645,487</i>	<i>\$3,788,485</i>	<i>\$6,714,614</i>
<i>Appliances/TV</i>	<i>\$2,734,308</i>	<i>\$6,347,996</i>	<i>\$9,820,512</i>
<i>Radio/TV/Elect</i>	<i>\$2,183,067</i>	<i>\$4,844,145</i>	<i>\$7,100,697</i>
<i>Home Centers</i>	<i>\$ 6,895,193</i>	<i>\$16,345,990</i>	<i>\$28,885,063</i>
<i>Bldg Mat/Lumb</i>	<i>\$ 2,386,509</i>	<i>\$4,497,092</i>	<i>\$7,062,331</i>
<i>Fam Clothing</i>	<i>\$ 3,045,591</i>	<i>\$6,431,356</i>	<i>\$8,996,381</i>
<i>Wareh Clubs/SS</i>	<i>\$10,580,688</i>	<i>\$22,875,273</i>	<i>\$38,825,563</i>
<i>Full S Restaur</i>	<i>\$6,280,292</i>	<i>\$13,249,561</i>	<i>\$7,952,404</i>
<i>Lim S Eat Pl</i>	<i>\$3,059,387</i>	<i>\$4,639,532</i>	<i>\$8,840,516</i>
<i>Hardware</i>	<i>\$1,417,606</i>	<i>\$3,235,802</i>	<i>\$5,377,932</i>
<i>Nurs & Garden</i>	<i>\$1,558,565</i>	<i>\$3,584,407</i>	<i>\$5,836,856</i>
<i>Supermarkets</i>	<i>an over supply exists</i>	<i>\$10,606,411</i>	<i>\$6,496,931</i>
<i>Shoe Stores</i>	<i>\$534,674</i>	<i>\$1,766,333</i>	<i>\$2,221,427</i>
<i>Sport Goods</i>	<i>\$685,060</i>	<i>\$1,747,112</i>	<i>\$2,221,427</i>
<i>Book Stores</i>	<i>\$53,611</i>	<i>\$691,833</i>	<i>\$1,572,198</i>
<i>Office Supply</i>	<i>\$1,033,379</i>	<i>\$2,269,135</i>	<i>\$3,915,877</i>
<i>Gift/Novel/Souv</i>	<i>\$792,827</i>	<i>\$1,576,740</i>	<i>\$2,468,241</i>
<i>Women's Cloth</i>	<i>\$1,008,111</i>	<i>\$1,873,953</i>	<i>\$2,776,505</i>
<i>Jewelry</i>	<i>an over supply exists</i>	<i>\$637,531</i>	<i>\$1,809,360</i>
<i>Hobby/Games</i>	<i>\$491,554</i>	<i>\$1,219,127</i>	<i>\$2,296,272</i>

CONCLUSIONS: The aforementioned data suggests that Mt. Healthy does, in fact, have a number of potential business categories that could either be supported, or be partially supported, by the population living within the surrounding 1.0, 1.5, and 2.0 mile rings. While some businesses display a significant retail gap, others display a more modest gap. As a result, while some new businesses could potentially be self supporting, others are best advised to be combined with an already existing and complimentary business.

Many factors will determine whether going after “gap” businesses is likely to be the right strategy. For instance, *competition, the availability of adequate parking, and the provision for adequate signing* are some of the more important items that need to be assessed prior to undertaking an “economic development outreach effort.”

Another very important determinant is the availability of land and/or existing buildings. Some “gap” businesses can, no doubt, make use of existing facilities. Still, others will require a major financial investment, whether for property acquisition or for building remodeling/redevelopment.

Whoever elects to open a “gap” business will also need to be, at a minimum, a good or excellent operator. In addition, he or she needs to be someone who understands the importance of marketing, marketing, marketing. These can be tough challenges for many start up or small “mom & pop” businesses.

While some “gap” businesses can attract sufficient customer traffic on as little as ½ - 1 acre, many will require larger parcels of property - something which may, without City assistance of some kind, prove to be a significant deterrent. Ideally, the local Business Association will continue to work with the City in order to catalyze new business interest as well as help to facilitate business expansion.

Learning how to *prospect* for new businesses is something local leadership must become adept at if it is, indeed, able to attract business investment. With this in mind, financial incentives, fast tracking permits, and establishing relationships with the metropolitan region’s commercial realtors are absolute musts. Like the business person who needs to market and advertise his or her business in order to survive and thrive, *Mt. Healthy needs to aggressively promote itself. Accordingly, monies need to be budgeted by the City in order to help “spread the word.”*

MOST FREQUENT NEARBY LIFESTYLE SEGMENTS

Based upon U.S. Census information, Claritas has developed a proprietary, comprehensive lifestyle segmentation system known as PRIZM. Briefly, the lifestyle behavior of the American population has been segmented into 66 different groups. Each household is classified according to: where people live, where they shop, where they eat, age levels, educational attainment, types of jobs, types of housing, and income levels.

The 66 lifestyle segments which have been identified by Claritas are numbered according to socioeconomic rank, with 1 being the most sought after classification and 66 being the least attractive. As a result of this sophisticated segmentation process, American businesses

are capable of reaching a “deep understanding” of the many different types of consumer groups who are scattered throughout the areas surrounding their businesses.

**From the Intersection of Hamilton & Compton
TOP EIGHT PRIZM LIFESTYLE GROUPS**

0-1 Mile	0-1.5 Miles	0-2 Miles	45231 Zip Code
Middleburg Managers #27 (19.22%)	Middleburg Managers #27 (19.95%)	Middleburg Manager #27 (17.51%)	Middleburg Managers #27 (not available)
Sunset City Blues #41 (11.85%)	Sunset City Blues #41 (11.62%)	Sunset City Blues #41 (10.86%)	Sunset City Blues #41 (not available)
Family Thrifts #63 (10.76%)	White Picket Fences #34 (9.06%)	White Picket Fences #34 (9.63%)	White Picket Fences #34 (not available)
White Picket Fences #34 (8.86%)	Family Thrifts #63 (7.61%)	Family Thrifts #63 (6.77%)	Home Sweet Home #19 (not available)
Mobility Blues #53 (8.56%)	Mobility Blues #53 (6.58%)	Second City Elite #10 (6.01%)	Pools & Patios #15 (not available)
Park Bench Seniors #60 (7.60%)	Boomtown Singles #35 (5.60%)	Mobility Blues #53 (5.78%)	Beltway Boomers #17 (not available)
Boomtown Singles #35 (6.33%)	Second City Elite #10 (5.60%)	Brite Lites, Li'l City #12 (5.69%)	Upward Bound #13 (not available)
Upward Bound #13 (5.64%)	Upward Bound #13 (5.59%)	Upward Bound #13 (5.54%)	New Empty Nests #14 (not available)
# Average = 40.8 Total: 78.82%	# Average = 34.5 Total: 71.61%	# Average = 31.6 Total: 67.79%	# Average = 22.5 Total = n.a.

CONCLUSION: The further one goes from the intersection of Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road the more affluent the lifestyle groups become. This is born out by the fact that the number average of the Top 8 lifestyle groups decreases the further the distance from the aforementioned intersection as does the overall average for the eight clusters. Another way to arrive at the aforementioned conclusion is to identify how many of the Top 33 clusters are represented within each of the different rings. This is best illustrated as follows:

The 0-1 mile ring contains only 2 of the Top 33 lifestyle groups.
The 0-1.5 mile ring contains 3 of the Top 33 lifestyle groups.
The 0-2 mile ring contains 4 of the Top 33 lifestyle groups.
The 45231 Zip Code contains 6 of the Top 33 lifestyle groups.

PRIZM PROFILE SUMMARIES
By Socioeconomic Rank Within 0-2 Miles

Household PRIZM Group	Housing Income	Age	Composition	Tenure	Education	Job	Race
10: Second City Elite (6.01%)	upper	45+	married couples	owners grads	college	white collar	white
12: Brite Lites, Li'l City (5.69%)	upper mid	25-54	married couples	owners	college grads	white collar	white
13: Upward Bound (5.54%)	upper	25-54	families with kids	owners	college	white collar	white
24: Up & Comers (5.34%)	mid	under 35	singles & couples	renters	college	white collar	white
*27: Middleburg Managers (17.51%)	mid	55+	singles & couples	owners	college	white collar	white
34: White Picket Fences (9.63%)	mid	25-44	families with kids	mix	some college	w & b collar	white & blk
35: Boomtown Singles (5.22%)	lower mid	under 35	mostly singles	renters	some college	white collar	white
41: Sunset City Blues (10.86%)	lower mid	65+	singles & couples	owners	some college	w & b collar	white
53: Mobility Blues (5.78%)	low	under 35	mostly singles	renters	high school	w & b collar	white & blk
63: Family Thrifts (6.77%)	low	under 45	families with kids	renters	elemen- high sch	w & b collar	black

*By far the most significant lifestyle cluster in Mt. Healthy & the surrounding area

LIFESTYLE & MEDIA CHARACTERISTICS OF TOP 10 PRIZM GROUPS

Second City Elite (#10)

2005 Median HH Income: \$72,279

- Description: Prosperous executives who decorate their homes with multiple computers, large screen TV's, and wine collections. This well educated group enjoys cultural activities – from reading books to attending theatre and dance productions.
- Lifestyle: Enjoy foreign travel (322), Belong to Country Club (317), Contribute to NPR (288), Shop at Talbot's (277) and Member of Frequent Flyer Program (266)
- Media: Watch the Golf Channel (258), Listen to All News Radio (242), Read Travel Magazines (203), Watch CNBC (194), Watch BBC America (181)

Brite Lites, Li'l City (#12)

2005 Median HH Income: \$69,005

- Description: This is a group of well off, middle aged couples. Residents are typically classified as DINKS - double income, no kids. They have well paying business and professional careers and swank homes filled with the latest technology.
- Lifestyle: Order clothing from J. Crew (378), shop at COMP USA (270), buy from Ebay (227), shop at Bombay Company (225) and Banana Republic (205)
- Media: Watch MTV (208), Watch VH 1 (206), Watch the Movie Channel (204), Watch the Travel Channel (184), and Watch the Golf Channel (177)

Upward Bound (#13)

2005 Median HH Income: \$78,874

- Description: More than any other lifestyle segment, this is the home of Soccer Mom's & Dad's. These are dual income middle class families who are heavy purchasers of computers, board games, and bicycles.

- Lifestyle: Contribute to NPR (238), play soccer (234), go jogging (220), shop at Costco (219), and shop at Ann Taylor
- Media: Watch Nickelodeon TV (241), watch the Disney Channel (226), listen to The Wall Street Journal Report (202), watch the Learning Channel (179), and watch ABC Family Channel (167)

Up & Comers (#24) 2005 Median HH Income: \$47,961

- Description: This is a stopover segment for young, mid scale singles before they marry, have families, and establish more sedentary lifestyles. They are mobile 20 "something" and include a disproportionate number of recent college graduates. They enjoy athletics, technology, nightlife, and entertainment.
- Lifestyle: Go snowboarding (316), go scuba diving (223), play soccer (196), go jogging (184), and shop at Banana Republic (168)
- Media: Watch MTV (183), watch Comedy Central (172), watch VH 1 (168), watch Speed Channel (157), and watch Sci-Fi Channel (141)

Middleburg Managers (#27) 2005 Median HH Income: \$48,449

- Description: These are empty nesters with solid managerial jobs and comfortable retirements.
- Lifestyle: Play bingo (221), eat at Cracker Barrel (169), eat at Bob Evans (160), contribute to NPR (156), and eat at Long John Silver's (148)
- Media: Watch the Golf Channel (187), watch Turner Classic Movies (151), watch National Geographic Channel (150), watch the History Channel (139), and listen to Oldies Radio (133)

White Picket Fences (#34) 2005 Median HH Income: \$48,666

- Description: These are young married couples with children who live in modest homes. They are ethnically diverse and include a disproportionate number of Hispanics and African Americans.
- Lifestyle: Rent videos (226), eat at Rally's (198), eat at Taco Bell (161), play bingo (161), and buy from Papa John's (156)
- Media: Watch Nickelodeon TV (262), watch the Disney Channel (222),

watch VH 1 (198), watch BET (186), and watch MTV (163)

Boomtown Singles (#35)

2005 Median HH Income: 38,239

Description: This group lives in affordable housing and is well represented in entry level jobs. They pursue active lifestyles amid apartment complexes, bars, convenience stores, and laundromats.

Lifestyle: Buy from Papa John's (162), buy Rap music (158), eat at Long John Silver's (158), like to play pool (132), and go bowling (124)

Media: Watch BET (166), listen to Gospel Radio (140), watch Comedy Central (130), watch MTV (130), and watch E! Entertainment (109)

Sunset City Blues (#41)

2005 Median HH Income: \$37,088

Description: These singles and couples live in older neighborhoods. They are either retired or approaching retirement. They are empty nesters who enjoy low key lifestyles.

Lifestyles: Eat at Bob Evans (173), eat at Golden Corral (173), play bingo (129), eat at Cracker Barrel (104), and shop at K Mart (103)

Media: Read a daily newspaper (126), watch Turner Classic Movies (116), watch the Bravo Network (113), watch A & E Channel (112), and listen to major league baseball on radio (111)

Mobility Blues (#53)

2005 Median HH Income: \$28,767

Description: Young singles and single parents living in working class neighborhoods. Racially mixed and under 25, they are transient, lower income, blue collar workers with modest lifestyles. They are regulars at going to the movies, playing basketball, and shooting pool.

Lifestyles: Attend auto racing events (184), shop at Lerner (129), eat at Rally's (125), buy from Dairy Queen (113), and buy from Papa John's (113)

Media: Watch wrestling on TV (133), listen to Classic Rock Radio (120), listen to Urban Contemporary Radio (118), watch daytime television (106), and watch Court TV (104)

Family Thrifts (#63)

2005 Median HH Income: \$29,096

Description: These are young, ethnically diverse parents with lots of children and

entry level service jobs. They reside in apartment filled neighborhoods where kids use the street to play.

Lifestyles: Buy rap music (196), buy Domino's Pizza (156), eat at Long John Silver's (155), eat at Golden Corral (130), and rent videos (119)

Media: Watch Nickelodeon TV (216), watch BET (207), watch wrestling on TV, watch the Disney Channel (152), and watch MTV (133)

Note: (100) = average score. Numbers above (100) indicate higher frequency.

Source: PRIZM NE Demographic Reference Chart

CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning & Development Solutions believes that ***vision, energy, financial resources***, and a ***"can do" attitude*** are essential elements for not only increasing but diversifying the local tax base. Implementing a successful economic development program is not an easy or fast job, and, requires a high level of committed ***leadership*** that goes far beyond City Hall.

The following summary information is being cited with the hope that in the short and long term future the documents which are listed below will serve as a "blueprint" for action.

- A series of retail gaps exist within Mt. Healthy and the nearby surrounding area - please reference each of the following: "Mt. Healthy Retail Gap Analysis" dated October 2006, and "Mt. Healthy - Market Gaps & Opportunities" dated October 3, 2006.
- Based upon the findings of the "Mt. Healthy Retail Capture Rate Analysis" dated October, 2006, Mt. Healthy should direct its "business attraction" efforts primarily to a small group of businesses.
- The recommendations identified in the document titled "Mt. Healthy - Building A Strong Tax Base" dated October 3, 2006 provides a comprehensive overview of what should become a list of priorities.
- The October 3, 2006 document labeled "Workplace & Employment Information" points out a lack of balance in the types of jobs found in Mt. Healthy and the nearby surrounding area.
- Results of conversations with business people, property owners, council people and planning commission members are detailed in the document titled "Mt. Healthy - Questionnaire Results."
- A fascinating peek at the different lifestyle groups living in and around Mt. Healthy and their respective buying and media behaviors is incorporated into the document titled "Mt. Healthy - Most Frequent Nearby Lifestyle Segments."
- The types of Building Permits issued for the period 2000 - 2005 are identified in the document labeled "Mt. Healthy - Building Permit Summary".
- An examination of key demographic variables is provided in the document titled "Mt. Healthy - Census Related."
-

Local leaders, business people, property owners, developers and investors must "think out of the box" in terms of how they choose to compete with the Colerain and Winton Road commercial corridors, both of which are larger, more diverse, better anchored, and more

dynamic than is the case in Mt. Healthy. As such, an emphasis needs to be placed on each of the following:

- recognition that **small and specialty businesses** will dominate the City's landscape, as opposed to large regional and national chains.
- promoting **walkable and attractive pedestrian scale streetscapes** are important ways to differentiate Mt. Healthy from places like Colerain Avenue and Winton Road.
- creating a **more diversified mix of retail, restaurant, and office uses** which are located in close proximity to Cross County Highway is a "smart" way to focus limited financial resources.
- encouraging **the construction of new rooftops** on infill and redevelopment parcels is a way to help boost local sales revenues as well as make the City's businesses more competitive.
- creating **architectural and design standards** for new commercial and new residential construction without going overboard is an important way of being able to protect and enhance both the look and appeal of the City's streetscape.
- constant **advertising, continuous promotion, and holding special events** periodically are all important means of building name recognition and customer patronage for local businesses.
- more attention needs to be paid to **keeping the City's primary thoroughfares looking attractive and appealing**, especially since first impressions tend to be lasting impressions.
- **high levels of street lighting** are essential to promoting a feeling of safety as well as helping to extend the length of the business day.
- **involving non resident stakeholders** in creating a vision for Mt. Healthy is a good way to not only build awareness but prompt commitments which can help to facilitate implementation.
- **street trees** add beauty but are not always business friendly.
- looking into **the installation of wi-fi** in the core business district is a great way to not only attract attention but to attract entrepreneurs.
- in order to enhance individual business recognition **revising the City's sign ordinance** should become an immediate priority.
- **promoting affordability** is a theme that needs to be incorporated into any prospecting efforts directed at attracting new businesses.
- **promoting the City's small town feel** should benefit Mt. Healthy by helping attract residents as well as business people who value a sense of place.

Mt. Healthy Web Site – Economic Development:

"New construction and the remodeling of existing structures will help us balance our need to preserve our history while providing for growth. There are a few plans under consideration now for expanding the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA), and establishing a Link Deposit Program, a Business Investment District (BID) and an Architectural Review Board. These programs will help us promote our city and encourage investment. The Economic Development committee is discussing these programs.

CRA Explained - Businesses can request 50% to 100% tax abatement for 10 years. This is on new/improvements to buildings in the CRA. Property taxes are collected at the same level for 10 years. For example, if a landowner owns a building valued at \$100,000 and completes \$20,000 in improvements, they are assessed at \$100,000 for 10 years at 100% abatement. Under the law the City can give 50% without School Board approval. To give 100% the City needs School Board approval.

Link Deposit Explained - This program will offer two incentives to businesses along Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road. First, with the creation of this program, eligible businesses can get an interest rate lower than prime to improve or expand existing buildings. Second, the Business Association has reinstituted its facade improvement grant program. By coupling the Link Deposit Program with the grant program businesses can receive a grant from the Business Association of up to \$1,500 for improvements.

How it Works: The city places \$25,000 from its General Fund into a special Certificate of Deposit (CD), which allows businesses to receive a reduced rate of interest. By transferring \$25,000 into the CD we defer that interest and that's how businesses receive a lower interest rate. The goal of a Link Deposit program is to provide:

- Low interest loans to businesses along Hamilton Avenue and Compton Road.
- Loans shall be used for facade improvements including replacement windows, doors, awnings, painting, and brickwork.
- Establish a five-person committee comprised of the Safety Service Director, Auditor, Mayor, one member of the Economic Development Committee, and the President of the Business Association, which will screen and approve applicant's projects.
- For every \$5,000 approved for lending, the Business Association will provide \$1,000 in grants for the project (maximum of \$1,500 per year).
- The maximum amount to be borrowed shall be determined by the Committee and lending institution.
- The initial investment by the City shall be \$25,000. The City does not guarantee nor underwrite the loan; it only allows businesses to receive a lower interest rate.
- Application fees and points should be waived by the lending institution.
- Loan periods shall be 1, 3, and 5 years depending on project and amount borrowed.

To take advantage of this program, please contact your local US Bank Representative at 728-7010 or the City of Mt. Healthy at 931-8840.

The Hamilton County Economic Development Company will assist new business interests to start a new business or mentor an existing business.

A downtown niche is one of the most powerful tools available for downtown revitalization.

Groupings of related businesses and services can give your downtown a competitive edge and provide the focus you need for successful promotion and recruitment programs.

"Niche Strategies for Downtown Revitalization" takes you step-by-step through the process of identifying current or potential niches in your downtown. It will show you how to use them as the focus for downtown organization, promotion, and recruitment. And, it will give you the tools you need to use these powerful revitalization strategies in your downtown.

To view the complete table of contents and purchase your copy, please visit our website at: <http://www.DowntownDevelopment.com/nsdr.php>

There are so many things that impact a community's economic well being and the library is an element that contributes greatly to the vitality of the spending public. Instead of watching TV people get out and go to the library, then they visit other businesses – why? – its human nature to buy a coffee or a present after exercising the brain. "The difficult question is how do you account for those things that a library does that nobody else can do, that don't translate into an immediate economic value? You want to find a way to talk about these things in ways that make it possible to compete for tax dollars ... the library's business is to create social capital, and there are ways of talking about that," says Steve Lydenberg, chief financial officer, Domini Funds.

Steering Committee Results

The Mt. Healthy City Council appointed a Steering Committee (10 persons representing the community stakeholders) to work toward the development of a revised Comprehensive Plan. The Committee started meeting on August 1st, 2006, and each month to review research and analysis presented to them by Planning Consultants. They participated in goal evaluation, visioning, problem definition, reviewing designs, prioritizing alternative solutions, assisting in public open house input, and recommending directions for the comprehensive plan for Mt. Healthy.

The Steering Committee participated in problem definition, data evaluation, goal setting, citizen participation open houses and questionnaire distribution. Another source of citizen information came from the Mt. Healthy Block Watch and Neighborhood Action Group (NAG). Both organizations are assisted by the city police and administrative staff and their meetings are notified through the city's web site. The Block Watch group often has guest speakers and their emphasis is to reduce the opportunity for crime.

The NAG is organized as a citizen participation group to solicit concerns, issues and suggestion from residents and then report those points to City Council and staff, requesting corrective action. This group gave good input to the Comprehensive Plan and its development.

Citizen participation is so very important because, "We are smarter than me!"

There was a discussion about the parks in the city. The Committee members felt that some of the parks are not very user friendly. The park to the southwest is not inviting at all. It was also noted the parks along the south of the city are owned by the state and the

city is responsible for mowing the lawn and are not sure they want more responsibility for the parks.

The Steering Committee discussed the need to highlight the city's entry nodes. The existing conditions pointed out the importance of five of those locations but the Committee pointed out that there are eight points of entry to Mt. Healthy. It may be appropriate to develop a plan for the image and decide which entries have the highest priority for construction. However, it was also noted that the Steering Committee would like strong entry identification on the east and west end of Adams Road. The Committee pointed out that Adams Road, east of Seward Avenue is in need of repair – even beyond the city limits.

Lighting Improvements

The Committee agreed that Park Avenue is not a major entry node for the city, but it should be included in the future image identification plan.

There was also a concern about safety in the community. Members of the Steering Committee mentioned placing street cameras in the city. This would give the police department another tool to investigate local crime. The members of the committee really seemed positive to the idea. One cause of crime was blamed on the fact that there is currently no place for teens to "hang out" and they tend to hang out in the park and other key locations. It may be appropriate to have park volunteer supervision and activities other than sports for the youth. The school gyms are not being used for any kind of activity center for teens.

The Committee brought up the concern for street lighting being too low in many areas of the city. Members of the Steering Committee volunteered to field research locations they thought would benefit from the addition of street cameras and more street lighting.

The Committee felt that Clovernook Avenue has a low priority for street repair. They fixed the road a few years back and do not believe it needs an immediate repair. The idea of installing "speed humps" in the Clovernook roadway was mentioned but the group indicated that traffic was not that high speed.

Werner Avenue is in need of repair but the city will wait until the new school is built before this street improvement is made since construction would damage the road again.

Reviewing the map, MSP described the possible redevelopment of the frontage of Lake of the Woods apartments on Hamilton Avenue, because this was a strong entry point to Mt. Healthy from the Cross County Highway. Stephen Wolf mentioned the idea of bringing a restaurant to the city that could possibly overlook the lake. The Committee liked that idea and suggested that it might be similar to "Tavern on the Green".

The map indicated an infill redevelopment potential in the area between Martin Street and Seward Avenue. Some committee members suggested that the whole block could be used for redevelopment. It was stated that the land between Seward and Rambler had deeper lots and more room for development but the location between Martin and Seward seemed more capable for redevelopment.

The depth of commercial development along Hamilton Avenue is mostly limited to the alleyways. When Walgreen's came in they tried to build to Perry Street, the city did not

approve that depth of development. Property adjacent to the commercial uses along Hamilton Avenue is often residential. To keep these adjacent residential neighborhoods with the same high maintenance characteristics it was suggested that only mixed uses development be permitted behind the commercial uses. The Cross County Highway has added a strong development pressure near the exit to Hamilton Avenue. The plan needs to suggest ways to satisfy this new demand and greater traffic.

A member of the Steering Committee suggested that they review techniques that will protect the existing natural features and waterways in each neighborhood. There are three floodplain areas in Mt. Healthy and no development should be permitted within their limits. The committee agreed that natural resources should be protected.

The group discussed the traffic problems along Hamilton Avenue and reviewed the proposed street redesigns. There was a lot of discussion about the parallel parking on Hamilton Avenue in front of the businesses. The general consensus was that parking on the street could be eliminated and a third left turn lane can then be provided and the sidewalks widened.

The group felt that a landlord permit and maintenance policy should be adopted by the city. Leasing is a business and should be included in the permit and inspection process for public safety, welfare and protection of property value.

The group agreed that cameras for crime surveillance would be a beneficial tool; especially along key streets such as Adams, Elizabeth and Cloverbrook.

Problem Definition:

During the first few meetings, the Steering Committee studied existing conditions in Mt. Healthy and the committee's discussions clarified what problems and opportunities were of primary concern to the group. MSP reviewed the agenda and passed out the priority results of the last meeting that defined problems and opportunities. Safety was shown to be the most prevalent issue to the Steering Committee. The committee will use that information and the information presented today to start developing specific goals and land use strategies. MSP then opened the discussion with an explanation of existing conditions they had observed from field work, research and discussions with local interests. The following are descriptions of those points:

- There are five entry nodes to Mt. Healthy and it will be appropriate to focus on a strong identity and image of community at those points. This needs some additional design attention.
- There are a high proportion of homes that are well maintained. It appears that the city has made a concerted effort to upgrade the residential streets with new curbs and pavement and the city's building inspection group has enforced the code to make housing maintenance a success in image throughout Mt. Healthy. The wide range of house types and price ranges make the demographics very diversified and active. All this makes the residential setting reflect a high standard of house maintenance.

- There are ten street sections that still need to be upgraded and the city is planning to make curb and pavement improvements for South Lynndale and Duvall Place, both need cul-de-sac turn arounds, and portions of Werner Avenue between Compton Road and the Athletic Association's field, and the access drive to the field (it may be a private street though). Other streets that need upgrading include Martin Street, Van Fleet Avenue, the north stub of Elizabeth Street, the east section of Adams Road, and Clovernook Avenue through the Compton Grove Apartments.
- Discussions with Police Chief Schaefer indicated that traffic tripled along Harrison Avenue after the County Highway opened. There are a few loitering problems and a few drug arrests at Hilltop Plaza. He enforces the curfew and the 72 hour on street parking limit (cars are towed). There are occasional domestic violence calls to the mobile home parks and to the apartment complexes. He indicated that the "Heritage Day" turned into a carnival and security was too expensive. The Car Show seems to be a good event for the City. He indicated that safety may be improved by adding street lighting in some areas or simply trimming the trees to let the light down to the sidewalks. Overall there is not a "drug problem" in Mt. Healthy.
- Clovernook Avenue carries more traffic than it is designed for; it is a strong connection to Galbraith Road and although the city has permitted parking only on one side, the homes do not have sufficient parking for visitors and the traffic seems to pass this way at speeds too high for the residential setting. It may be undesirable to widen this street however the "stripped humps" may be a reasonable method to reduce the traffic speed.
- Redevelopment – There are a few areas that are likely to be subject to new/changed development uses. The two mobile home sites on the north side of town may be purchased for a more intense land use. Because Cross County is so close to the business area, the first two blocks north of the highway may be appropriate for new commercial development – even the first two apartment buildings at Lake of the Woods may be included for redevelopment and a greater depth of commercial for the next two blocks north.
- Infill development – There are a few vacant areas that may be under pressure for development because there is little land left or the families may want to subdivide their large lots.
- Hamilton Avenue business is developed and maintained primarily at the depth of the alleys (or half-block). The homes on the next streets (east and west of Hamilton) that back into the business areas seem to be in a fine relationship. However, new development will pressure for a greater depth. Is that good or not?
- Unusual development (non-conforming uses) – There are a few sites in Mt. Healthy that have uses that stand out from what is generally around them. On the west side of the city south of Compton Road there is an auto repair service south of a utility station but within a more residential area. And on the east side of the City

along Compton Road there are quite a few residential structures that have been re-used for businesses. They are among other single-family uses. Does this key a general change direction that should be reflected in the Comprehensive Plan?

- Defining neighborhoods – Communities that have developed neighborhood organizations have created a strong source for feedback to the city leaders. There is a Neighborhood Action Group (NAG) and a Block Watch. We recommend that the Steering Committee review the Plan by neighborhoods and we show five neighborhoods on the map – West Adams, East Adams, Historic Stevens, Historic Madison and Harrison Business District. Leadership through a Citizens Participation group for each neighborhood can be encouraged to hold meetings and develop articles for a Mt. Healthy newsletter.
- Parks – there are three public parks in the city. Is that sufficient?
- Two mixed use areas – The drive-in site has been developed as a mixed use and the area along Compton Road east of Harrison Avenue has about two blocks of mixed uses. This may point out a need for zoning regulation changes that will give the city more flexibility and control for mixed use, infill development and redevelopment.
- Deterioration – The building department has done a very good job to visit areas that have been neglected for maintenance. There were only a few single-family houses that needed repair and apartments at the end of Martin Street are showing neglect in maintenance. The only area that seemed to show an overall appearance of decline was Summe Drive.
- Historic buildings (business and residential) – There are many buildings over 100 years old; however, a thorough evaluation of the historic quality is needed. We believe that special architectural quality should be added to the criteria for “historic” – just old isn’t enough. There is an old “industrial” building on the north side of Kinney Avenue just west of Elizabeth Street that appears to be used residentially. Is that a historic building? There is a large “industrial chimney” next to a home on the east side of Elizabeth Street just south of Compton. Is that historic? The map shows a few residential buildings that appear to be “old and architecturally significant”; we did not note all the business buildings that meet those criteria yet.
- Flood Plains – three areas. There is an area south of the Hilltop Plaza that is flood prone (there appears to be two houses within this flood plain). The area around the new High School football field is in a flood plain and the FEMA 100 year flood prone area extends south almost to Compton Road along two ravines (there appears to be one house that may be in the flood plain) and southeast almost to Adams Road. The area between Clovernook Avenue and the County Highway has a flood plain that appears to effect eight houses.
- The Duvall Elementary (on East Compton) is likely to be demolished and this site will provide an opportunity for redevelopment. It is south of the “drive-in” redevelopment site but not as large an area. The drive-in site is approximately 10.5

acres (435 feet wide), while the school site is approximately 5.7 acres and 300 feet wide. There are quite a few unusual (or non-conforming) existing uses along Compton Road in this vicinity and the mixed use development on the Drive-in site, points out the need for a special/flexible development regulation in the zoning ordinance.

Existing Conditions and Changing Land Use

- Multi-family units scattered throughout the city and this does not seem to effect any property values or intent on home maintenance.
- The center of town – you know when you get there? No. There is little identification of Mt. Healthy for people traveling the County Highway or consistent way finding signs that let you know you have arrived in Mt. Healthy. Plus the center of town is only marked by a stop light – we believe that a strong landmark symbol will help the image of your arrival to Mt. Healthy.

The consultant from Planning Development Solutions presented research information about what demographics within time and distance from Mt. Healthy will influence business decisions. He handed out material for discussion and later review.

After a brief introduction, the consultant mentioned that his first impressions of the City were positive. In particular he mentioned the fact that the grid street system made it very convenient for people to get around; the compact business core had a definite sense of place; that, for the most part, homes seemed to be well maintained; and, that the access provided by Cross County, Compton Road, and Hamilton Avenue were outstanding building blocks.

The consultant then presented information on two very important research tools: demographics and psychographics. He briefly explained how they will influence future buying decisions and impact local business revenues. Simultaneously, the consultant handed out several other items and proceeded to briefly discuss each of them. Afterwards, he encouraged members of the Steering Committee to review each information item when they had more time.

The Consultant also summarized the responses from the people the City's Safety Service Director had asked him to interview:

- Specialty stores and services are business district strengths. Attracting more of these types of businesses should become a priority.
- Another business district strength is the amount of free parking which is available, both on the street and behind buildings.
- Proximity to Cross County Highway is seen as a definite plus. The consultant thought the City should try to take better advantage of the access afforded by this important east - west highway.

- Several mini anchors exist in the business district. They include banks, the jewelry store, the antiques mall & stores, and the drug stores. The loss of an anchor like the local hardware store was mentioned repeatedly.
- Restaurants and office uses appear to be the two most desired uses for vacant and/or underutilized property. In addition, restaurants were the most frequently identified void in the business district.
- Signing was mentioned as a concern by a number of business and property owners. They felt that having more visible signing, as opposed to all wall signs, could help boost business identification.
- The two most important incentives the City should use to promote reinvestment and attract new business were low interest loans and tax abatements.

In concluding his presentation, the consultant stated that the three most important influences on local quality of life were: City services, local schools, and a healthy business district. He said that collectively they would influence people's decisions to move into or out of Mt. Healthy.

Goals:

After meetings discussing problems, opportunities, future visions and many other factors about Mt. Healthy the Steering Committee evaluated the following goals:

- Street signs need to be uniform and include address numbers or ranges
- Business signs will be regulated to create a uniform image and more easily identify the establishments – wayfinding will be included in the process
- Development regulations will be formalized to make infill and redevelopment sites formatted for flexible review and approval
- A single signature image will be designed and adopted that includes color, symbols and landscaping that will be used to identify all entryways to Mt. Healthy – create a strong entry point image
- Organize a group that will be responsible for producing an information brochure about Mt. Healthy that will aide the city in competing for regional interest. This group will be responsible for pointing out the competitive advantages for living and operating business in Mt. Healthy
- Work with the Ohio Main Street organization to assist and strengthen the city's business district
- Clarify the sign regulations to eliminate "street bench" advertising and install uniform seating that will encourage pedestrian movement throughout the City

- Reinforce open space preservation with all new development or redevelopment; can an endowment be created that will purchase and preserve environmental features
- Work with the Hamilton County Commissioners to locate more distinctive identification for the Mt. Healthy exits from Cross County Highway. These features should conform to the other image symbols and landscaping developed. This should further identify the business activities
- The city will deliberate and select a distinctive niche or theme that will be followed by all events and promotions made in Mt. Healthy. It should center on healthy living. Live up to our name: make it a walkable city, develop a street planting scheme, market environmentally conscious business, healthy restaurants, environmental consulting firms, promote recycling, promote energy efficiencies, and healthy school lunches. "A downtown niche is one of the most powerful tools available for downtown revitalization." (Source: Downtown Digest, October, 2006)
- Create a walk/run/bike path around the city to promote healthy activity
- Evaluate an internet access zone near Compton and Hamilton Avenue
- Promote anger management and budgeting classes at the religious and school institutions as a public service to reduce domestic violence
- Evaluate hybrid vehicles for city use
- Develop a recycling service for drop off of large items and paint products
- Promote public safety – by adding bicycle police patrol in shopping areas and along major pedestrian areas – by adding 12 to 15 foot street light poles along Adams Road, Compton Road, Elizabeth Street, Hill Avenue, Madison Avenue, Stevens Avenue and Kinney Avenue; and cut back the trees on other streets that obscure the existing street lights. Cameras can be installed along commercial areas, at street intersections which have major pedestrian movement and near schools
- Create a pedestrian linkage to circle the city and its parks
- Evaluate the removal of overhead wires in the business district and along Hamilton Avenue
- Work with the school district to have a healthy and energy efficient science fair
- Select areas that Mt. Healthy can accept growth and expansion
- Develop a plan that will attract business and new employment opportunity
- Prepare information and hold events that will reinforce the heritage of Mt. Healthy and expand upon the positive aspects of the city

- Make it safe for everyone to walk downtown during the evenings
- Develop a plan that permits better traffic flow through the community and improves visibility for businesses
- Improve the development approval process by clearly outlining the requirements and providing flexible standards for mixed uses
- Study the redevelopment of the Hilltop Plaza as impacted by the Wal-Mart project in Springfield Township and include the mobile home parks near the Plaza
- Develop a way to "land bank" for the city's future; this can include open space preservation and new redevelopment options
- Make landlords accountable for their building maintenance; this may be implemented by council legislation to inspect and license the owners units
- Preservation of significant historical buildings and sites should be encouraged with design standards. Architectural review should be required for all improvements and new developments
- New commercial development should be encouraged between Harrison and Perry Streets from Cross County Highway to Hill Street
- The Public Library and Post Office are important features to Mt. Healthy and should be supported to stay
- Revitalize the Mt. Healthy business district with organized events and recruited business that make it a strong destination. New businesses could include bead shop, larger restaurant, animal care plus boarding
- Increase home ownership percentages among existing residential units. This can be aided with adult education programs, federal home loan lending concentration, Habitat for Humanity lot purchases, condominium conversions and redevelopment
- Strengthen the trend for increasing home values and household income levels in Mt. Healthy. This will be supported with home maintenance inspections and additional employment opportunities



SWOT:

The Steering Committee worked on evaluating a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat Analysis). A thorough discussion of these factors was completed and the members spent a month reviewing the elements and concluded the following list:

STRENGTHS:

- Mt. Healthy has an exit on Cross County Highway.
- Mt. Healthy is a walkable city.
- Mt. Healthy has a Post Office and Library.
- The housing mix and condition is good - lower price point is a good option for younger families.
- The alley and grid street system are desirable and unique. There is a broad mix of population characteristics in Mt. Healthy – it is not a homogeneous ethnic or income group.
- The downtown business district has mature feel - often lacking in urban sprawl areas.
- The sanitary sewer infrastructure is adequate for potential new infill development.
- There are monthly meetings of the Mt. Healthy Block Watch, Neighborhood Action Group (NAG) and the Beautification Committee.
- There are several non-profit organizations that provide social services to residents and disadvantaged people in the area.
- The Mt. Healthy Youth Athletic Association had provided alternative recreation for young people in the area.
- The building inspection and maintenance encouragement program is working well.
- Mt. Healthy promotes the Hamilton County Home Loan Program.
- The City has a development incentive programs - Enterprise Zone for the entire city and Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) in all E and E-1 zoned districts.

WEAKNESSES:

- Hamilton Avenue has more traffic than capacity during rush hour.
- Rear parking is neither visible nor adequately signed for users.
- No developed identity to the downtown business district.
- Business identification/location is limiting by the sign regulations.
- Street lighting is too high and is blocked by the trees in the summer.
- There is not a strong pedestrian link in the community.
- There are limited employment opportunities in Mt. Healthy.
- Community activities are not frequent or unique.
- There are no organized recreational activities for youth that are not sports oriented.
- There is very little land for new development in Mt. Healthy.
- Not enough attention has been focused on redeveloping the Hamilton Avenue corridor with 2000 feet of Cross County Highway.
- The average income and the number of residents in Mt. Healthy may not be high enough to support a national table service restaurant or other retail opportunities.
- Professional offices and medical offices are in short supply.
- There are a few areas in Mt. Healthy with only 6 inch water lines.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Specialty and niche businesses are the most likely to be market friendly to draw people to downtown Mt. Healthy and strip business districts.
- An independent and clear identifiable brand or "signature" can be developed from the name Mt. Healthy – make it a healthy attraction city.
- There are eight entry points to Mt. Healthy that can be enhanced by a new image with identification signs and landscaping.
- Image signs and landscaping can be installed along Cross County Highway to better identify Mt. Healthy.
- Promotional material can be produced by the neighborhoods that would create a stronger identity for Mt. Healthy.
- The Cross County Highway has tripled the traffic into Mt. Healthy.
- Establish a Community Image Enhancements Program.
- Mt. Healthy could market its history with emphasis on the historic and healthy theme.
- The land owned by the School District that may not be fully utilized, it could be potential new developments within the City.
- Begin purchasing land as a means of facilitating new development.
- Buy multi-family residential units that are under maintained to facilitate new owner occupied residential units.
- The Hilltop Plaza has potential for redevelopment as a peripheral impact from the development of Wal-Mart.
- Sites visible from the Cross County Highway could attract retail, office and restaurant development from the 10 - 20 minute market area.
- Create an economic development plan for the City.
- Establish a relationship with the local Homebuilders Association could prompt the development of new single family attached and detached housing.
- Create a list of amenities which can help promote/elevate Mt. Healthy's local quality of life to future residents and business people.

- Create a cheerleader mentality with commercial and residential realtors in order to further promote sales within the City.
- A Main Street Association could be proposed to the Ohio Department of Development that can organize the business in Mt. Healthy.
- Create a Community Foundation to help enrich local quality of life.
- With the help of local banks, create a venture fund which can assist in facilitating the establishment of new, targeted start up business.

THREATS:

- The Hamilton County Thoroughfare Plan calls for a 120 foot wide right-of-way -- the current right-of-way through Mt. Healthy is approximately 65 feet wide.
- The proportion of rental households to owner households is larger than most suburban communities - need requirements and standards for landlord accountability.
- The possibility of Assumption school closing.
- There is a perception that there is a high violent crime occurrence in the city - often perception becomes reality.
- There is a perception that there are multiple issues in the public school system (crime, drugs, etc.) which is unfounded - often perception becomes reality.
- Some of the old business buildings are deteriorating and are not acceptable to new businesses that require product delivery.
- Tear-down redevelopment is a strong option for some of the residential and business areas.
- The taxing structure of Ohio does not give equal opportunities for community services.
- No income tax in surrounding townships.

Citizen Participation:

An open house was held at the Community Center on Saturday, January 20th, 2007 from 1 to 3 p.m. Each person attending was offered "sticky" note paper to write comments/suggestions and post them on the illustrations. They were also given six adhesive "dots" to help emphasize which three goal statements were most important to them and which three SWAT statements needed the most attention from the City. The Mission Statement was posted, along with the Steering Committees recommended goal statements and the total SWOT assessment. Illustrations were mounted along the walls that included the "Existing Conditions Map" (page 43), the recommended "Walking/Bike/Rollerblade Path Plan" (page 51), the recommended "Street Lighting Improvement Plan" (page 38), three concept street improvement plans for traffic on Hamilton Avenue (page 64, 65 & 66), and the composite recommended "Future Land Use Plan" (page 68). After the citizens had reviewed the information, McGill Smith Punshon made a short summary presentation of what has been concluded and what are the future steps the City will take. Many questions and comments were received and discussed; with support from City staff and elected officials.



The written and verbal comments included:

- better trash control is needed
- a walkway connecting Mt. Healthy to Winton Woods is needed

Mt. Healthy Proposed Hike/Bike Trail Map

- the two street continuous by-pass makes a lot of sense but the northern one would better locate north of Adams Road to connect to the north dead end of Harrison Avenue
- include the alleys in the walkway improvement plan
- eliminate on street parking from 7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.
- move the southern continuous by-pass further south to St. Clair Avenue.
- the dual by-pass, both north and south was not well accepted
- eliminating parking along Hamilton Avenue as a first phase, widening the sidewalks and creating a median parkway for left-turn storage at three intersections was supported favorably
- a theme business district was favored – i.e.: a “healthy menu” restaurant, crafts, unique gifts
- annexation strategies were questioned
- give business tax incentives to locate in Mt. Healthy
- forget about infill housing – focus on making Mt. Healthy’s current housing more desirable
- the goals that did not get a lot of “dots” (not a high priority) should still be supported
- don’t let bus routes pass on residential streets
- aggressive well thought out business promotion strategies must be developed for small businesses (this was a repeated comment)
- make landlords accountable, maybe annual fire department inspections
- make home ownership a high priority

The most frequently supported goals (citizens placing a “dot” next to it) were:

1. Increase home ownership
2. Create a walk/run/bike path around the city to promote healthy activity
3. Select a distinctive niche or theme

4. Prepare information and hold events that will reinforce the heritage of Mt. Healthy
5. Evaluate the removal of overhead wires in the business district and along Hamilton Avenue
6. The Public Library and Post Office are important features for Mt. Healthy – support them
7. Revitalize the Mt. Healthy business district
8. Make landlords accountable for their building maintenance
9. Preserve significant historical buildings and sites
10. Study the redevelopment of Hilltop Plaza
11. Create a pedestrian linkage to circle the city and its parks
12. Develop a recycling service
13. Make it safe to walk downtown during the evening
14. Develop a plan that will attract business and new employment opportunity
15. Promote public safety – bicycle police patrol, 12 to 15 foot high street lights, surveillance cameras
16. Reinforce open space preservation with all new development or redevelopment
17. Develop an Ohio “Main Street Association”

The most frequently supported SWOT statements (citizens placing a “dot” next to it) were:

In Strengths:

1. Mt. Healthy is a walkable community
2. Mt. Healthy has a Post Office and Library
3. The alley and grid street system is desirable and unique
4. The building inspection and maintenance encouragement program is working well

In Weaknesses:

1. Hamilton Avenue has more traffic than capacity during rush hour
2. Community activities are not frequent or unique
3. No developed identity to the downtown business district
4. There is not a strong pedestrian link in the community.
5. There are limited employment opportunities in Mt. Healthy
6. There are no organized recreational activities for youth that are not sports oriented
7. Professional offices and medical offices are in short supply

In Opportunities:

1. Establish a Community Image Enhancements Program
2. Mt. Healthy could market its history with emphasis on the historic and healthy theme

3. Buy multi-family residential units that are under maintained to facilitate new owner occupied residential units
4. Sites visible from the Cross County Highway could attract retail, office and restaurant development from the 10 – 20 minute market area
5. Establish a relationship with the local Homebuilders Association could prompt the development of new single family attached and detached housing
6. A Main Street Association could be proposed to the Ohio Department of Development that can organize the business in Mt. Healthy

In Threats:

1. The proportion of rental households to owner households is larger than most suburban communities - need requirements and standards for landlord accountability
2. There is a perception that there is a high violent crime occurrence in the city - often perception becomes reality
3. There is a perception that there are multiple issues in the public school system (crime, drugs, etc.) which is unfounded – often perception becomes reality
4. Tear-down redevelopment is a strong option for some of the residential and business areas

The citizens attending the open house then discussed the detail of what they saw and asked questions. The group agreed that all the goal statements and SWOT statements were important; that even though some of them did not get a “dot”, they should still be included in the City’s plans and considerations. The listed goals and SWOT statements above are considered more important and are given a priority consideration over the other statements.

Open House Assessment

The written and verbal comments included:

- better trash control is needed
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- the two street continuous by-pass makes a lot of sense but the northern one would better locate north of Adams Road to connect to the north dead end of Harrison Avenue
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- eliminate on street parking from 7-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m.
- move the southern continuous by-pass further south to St. Clair Avenue
- the dual by-pass, both north and south was not well accepted
- eliminating parking along Hamilton Avenue as a first phase, widening the sidewalks and creating a median parkway for left-turn storage at three intersections was supported favorably
- a theme business district was favored – i.e.: a healthy restaurant, crafts, unique gifts
- annexation strategies were questioned

- give business tax incentives to locate in Mt. Healthy
- forget about infill housing – focus on making Mt. Healthy’s current housing more desirable
- the goals that did not get a lot of “dots” (not a high priority) should still be supported
- don’t let bus routes pass on residential streets
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- make landlords accountable, maybe annual fire department inspections
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5. Evaluate the removal of overhead wires in the business district and along Hamilton Avenue
6. The Public Library and Post Office are important features for Mt. Healthy – support them
7. Revitalize the Mt. Healthy business district
8. Make landlords accountable for their building maintenance
9. Preserve the significant historical buildings and sites
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In Threats:

1. The proportion of rental households to owner households is larger than most suburban communities - need requirements and standards for landlord accountability
2. There is a perception that there is a high violent crime occurrence in the city - often perception becomes reality
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The citizens attending the open house then discussed the detail of what they saw and asked questions. The group agreed that all the goal statements and SWOT statements were important; that even though some of them did not get a "dot", they should still be included in the City's plans and considerations. The listed goals and SWOT statements above are considered more important and are given a priority consideration over the other statements.

Elements of Change

Staff met with Springfield Township representatives and was informed that their Planning Commission and Trustees approved the development of an 187,000 square foot Wal-Mart retail center (primarily groceries) on the "old Rinks" site adjacent and north of Mt. Healthy. This development has since been delayed and may be abandoned. It would have competed with the Kroger store which is just south of Mt. Healthy in North College Hill. The redevelopment of the "Rinks site" and the Standard Publishing site will attract new trips to and through Mt. Healthy. Residents outside of Mt. Healthy will travel along Compton Road (from the east and west) to visit this kind of new development. It will be important to create an image along those routes to encourage additional stops for business activity within Mt. Healthy. This can be aided by improved off-street parking, consistent or uniform signs for the business and to identify a "brand" for Mt. Healthy.

This kind of redevelopment will also impact the "Hilltop Plaza" across the street in Mt. Healthy. The Hilltop Plaza is "underutilized" with vacancies and deteriorated building appearance and parking lot. A supporting retail activity such as an Office Depot, Staples or an overall re-design and development of this site would help capture employment opportunity in Mt. Healthy.

The entrance to the Standard Publishing industrial site and the Mt. Healthy Christian Home are in Mt. Healthy but these facilities are primarily in Springfield Township. One of the Standard Publishing's warehouses is in Mt. Healthy and there is a tract of land adjacent to it that could be developed in the future. The redevelopment of the Rinks site may consolidate some of the Standard Publishing property creating a more suitable large site.

Mt. Healthy has to compete with other communities for business and new residences interest. One of the tools that will help is a colorful brochure that points out the positive aspects of Mt. Healthy.



A Main Street Association is a state sponsored program that helps older business districts to organize and promote their growth and economic stability. Mt. Healthy may want to initiate application to organize this program. The city would be asked to fund a portion of a manager's income for this association and the businesses would provide other funding. This association would work with the city to promote local business marketing and other activities that will enhance local businesses.

"Funding Downtown Promotions" is a guide (published by Downtown Digest) that has listed techniques that can be used by a business association to raise the money needed for downtown marketing and promotions. It also has detail that will guide the association in making those dollars go further with sponsorships, vendor fees, co-op advertising, volunteers, and more.

This hands-on manual contains sample forms, letters, budgets, and detailed case studies – many things needed to get started raising money for downtown promotions.

A business association, such as Main Street, can help generate new ideas and make them successful strategies. The process of building a business association will require long term commitment from the city and local business stakeholders. Some ideas will fail, but the association can create a foundation for promoting renovation of buildings and business vitality. This association will need to build support from the citizens and other local interest groups.

One myth about downtown vitality is that there is not enough parking. A vital business district cannot blame parking for its problems. All the ways of getting there have to be enhanced: walking, biking, public transit and cars have to be planned. If you think parking problems are limiting downtown's growth, think again. "The truth is, parking has virtually nothing to do with whether or not people come downtown," says Aaron Renn, a commentator on transportation and urban planning. "It is simply an easy scapegoat for people to whine about when answering surveys. People who don't come downtown, stay away because there is nothing there they want. Provide these people with real attractions and they will come, regardless of parking. The best bet for the redevelopment of business districts is to make sure they are selling something people want to buy - not ensuring that they have a huge parking lot."

Mt. Healthy's business district will improve if there is a commitment to an association that builds on its assets and coordinates its efforts with the City and its neighborhoods.

Environmental Issues

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources does not identify any areas in Mt. Healthy as being part of an aquifer recharge area or in an environmentally sensitive setting.

FEMA has designated three flood plain areas in Mt. Healthy. They are shown on the existing conditions map (page 43) and on the zoning map (page 69). Any development within these flood plains would have to be reviewed and approved by the City's Consulting Engineer and conform to FEMA regulations. The flood plain in the southeast corner of Mt. Healthy appears to impact homes along Bernard Avenue, Clovernook Avenue and at both ends of Van Fleet Avenue. The flood plain north of Hickman Street may impact a few houses along the north end of Elizabeth Street. This water course passes under the Hilltop commercial center and appears to pass under existing buildings at the center and under the old "Rinks" center in Springfield Township and exits into a natural stream just north of the center and west of Hamilton Avenue.

If redevelopment occurred at the Hilltop Center, new buildings would not be permitted over this storm water pipe and new detention would be required.

The following analysis shows that future infill development in some cases will require other public improvements to support new growth:

AREA NO.	WATER	SANITARY
1	There are 8" mains running along the North and West of the site as well as through the site.	A 12" main runs along Hamilton Ave.
2	There is an 8" main in Seward Ave. to the SW of the site.	A 12" main runs North from Seward Ave. to the West of the site.
3	There is no water main adjacent to the site. A new water main will need to be extended to the site. Further investigation will be necessary to determine the scope of that extension.	An 8" main runs through the site.
4	There is a 4" main to the South of Harrison Ave. and a 6" main along Hamilton Ave. One or both of these mains will likely require upgrading if the site is developed.	There is a 10" Main along Hamilton Ave.
5	The 6" main on Hamilton Ave. will likely be required to be upgraded if the site is developed.	A 10" main runs along Hamilton Ave.
6	A 6" main in Adams Road will likely require upgrading if this site is developed.	There is a 12" main on Elizabeth Street.
7	There is a 6" main in Adams Road. CWW will likely require upgrading of this main if it is developed.	A 10" main runs through the site.
8	8" water mains run along Martin St. and Seward Ave. to the East and West of the Site.	There is an 8" main in Seward Ave. to the East of the site.
9	An 8" cast iron main runs along Compton Road. CWW indicated that it is very old and will likely need to be upgraded upon development of the site.	An 8" main runs along Compton Road just north of the site.
10	8" cast iron mains run East & West and 6" mains run North and South of the site. New development will likely require upgrading of one or more of these mains.	7" mains run North and South from Compton Road in both

		alleys that are East and West of Hamilton Ave.
11	The old cast iron 8" main in Compton Road will likely have to be upgraded.	There is a 12" main in In Compton Road.
12	There is an old cast iron 12" main in Hamilton Ave. which CWW will likely require be upgrading for any new development.	An 8" main in Hamilton Ave. serves the Northern 2/3 of the site and a 10" main serves the Southern 1/3 of the site.
13	An 8" main runs along Elizabeth Street.	There is a 24" main in Elizabeth Street.
14	There is an 8" main in St. Clair Avenue.	A 24" main runs along St. Clair Avenue.

Transportation

There are numerous bus routes that pass through Mt. Healthy and make it a desirable community that offers a way to get to work or shopping via a mass transit option. Many residents in apartments need this service; plus it reduces the carbon emission per person/carrier. More and more this option is becoming an ethical choice for general travel.

Hamilton Avenue is a State road (State Route 127) and the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission's Thoroughfare Plan classified it as a "Major Arterial" and recommends a 120 foot right-of-way for the future traffic volumes that are expected through Mt. Healthy. Compton Road is classified as a "Minor Arterial" and recommends a 100 foot right-of-way width. Clovernook Avenue and west along Adams Road are classified as "Collector Roads" and is recommended to have an 80 foot right-of-way.

The completion of the "Cross-County Highway" along the south edge of Mt. Healthy has caused a tripling of traffic volumes along Hamilton Avenue and the current right-of-way width through the Mt. Healthy business district is about 65 feet in width; two lanes with parking on both sides of the street and some left turn storage lanes at a few traffic lights. The traffic is so bogged down at rush hour that many drivers avoid Mt. Healthy and Hamilton Avenue. The second conflict in traffic is the left turn movement permitted at practically every intersection along Hamilton Avenue and the conflict of alley access crossing Hamilton Avenue.

This traffic pattern does not encourage strong commercial activity. In fact, it discourages business patronage from outside the city. And the "carrying capacity" of Hamilton Avenue has decreased because of the on street parking and left turn conflicts. The businesses

want and need the on street parking to keep the "hometown" feeling and give the short term opportunity for parking. But maneuvering a curb parallel park is very difficult with the volume of frustrated drivers waiting for that person to park.

Because of the anticipated traffic volume on Hamilton Avenue, the 1989 Mt. Healthy Land Use Plan recommended that a "causeway" be constructed over the street, so that pedestrians, bikers and joggers could cross Hamilton Avenue (not at grade). And as part of the "City Square" concept, a pedestrian bridge was recommended to connect the City Hall area with McMakin Street. The plan further called for Harrison Avenue and Perry Street to be made one way in opposite directions to take the traffic off Hamilton with right turns on Madison and Adams.

Alternative traffic improvement concepts were reviewed by the citizens, at a Saturday public open house at the community center and at City Hall at an evening open house presentation. There are a few predominant factors that consistently surfaced. One was that the on street parking along Hamilton Avenue was still desirable (this was indicated as well in the 1989 plan). Second, was that left turns were especially "clogging" to the traffic along Hamilton Avenue. Third, the parking behind the businesses along Hamilton Avenue were underutilized (not much non-resident traffic makes it back to those parking areas). And fourth, the use of roundabouts have proven to facilitate smoother left turn traffic movement. Roundabouts can be a desirable addition to street systems, enabling traffic to more easily move from major arterials to the secondary arterial and collector streets. A roundabout is an intersection design that permits continuous turning movements without traffic lights and eliminates the right angle accidents that are more deadly. Accidents in a roundabout are deflecting type and cause less personal injury and vehicle damage. The merging for left turns around the center is smooth and continuous.

Two new alternative traffic design solutions were considered. The traffic demand for Hamilton Avenue requires two traffic lanes in both directions and numerous center left turn storage lanes (that requires 58 feet of pavement width). Adding curb, gutter and sidewalks would require another 40 feet – a total width of 98 feet. The only way to increase Hamilton Avenue's right-of-way to permit 5 lanes, parking along the street and sidewalks would be to tear down the existing buildings along one side of Hamilton Avenue – not practical.

The Steering Committee also felt it was undesirable to make Harrison Avenue and Perry Street one way only. The concept presented is to create continuous smooth right turns from Hamilton Avenue; to a roundabout at Compton that would permit the east/west turns instead of a left turn off of Hamilton onto Compton (refer to Illustrations on page 65 & 66). A hard right turn from Hamilton would slow down the through traffic and not encourage the traffic to find the parking behind the Hamilton Avenue businesses, accessed from Perry Street or Harrison Avenue. Members of the Steering Committee discussed the traffic impact of diverting left turns along Hamilton Avenue (part of the redevelopment alternative). It was pointed out that these alternative traffic patterns would change the business character along Hamilton Avenue. Would the new signage and additional activity along Perry Street and Harrison Avenue compensate for the slower traffic now traveling along Hamilton Avenue with intermittent left turns? Would the business district be stimulated or distracted? It is believed that diverting local traffic to Perry Street and

Harrison Avenue will strengthen the business district. A boulevard will create a strong identity and soften the heavy through traffic movement.

The location of the continuous right turns from Hamilton will have to be chosen based on property acquisition and detailed final street engineering design. There would be some building demolition; however the demolition is a smaller impact than other solutions.

Option "B" & "C" (page 65 & 66) shows two new intersections at the north and south edge of the historic business district that would be signalized. They would permit left turns and continuous right turns. The remaining intersections between these two new intersections would not allow any left turns and Compton Road could be closed between Hamilton and Perry and Harrison, with only a pedestrian crossing signal. Signs would be placed before these intersections to direct persons who want to travel east or west to Compton Road to turn early. There would be a three-way roundabout that would facilitate the turns onto Compton from both Harrison Avenue and Perry Street. This alternative also permits both Harrison Avenue and Perry Streets to be two-way.

Further this allows Compton to be closed and create a pedestrian path toward Hamilton Avenue businesses and significant street features could be included in this area to identify the center of Mt. Healthy – it would create a landmark or destination point/image. A person would know they have arrived at the center of Mt. Healthy!

Zoning

Feedback from the business community, the members of the Steering Committee and at the Public Open Houses, citizens have indicated that there is a need to revise the zoning ordinance to provide more appropriate sign identification, review of infill development, and regulations that improve the property values with screening, color coordination and historic building style and massing.

Most American cities have followed a "Euclidian" development control concept with zoning since the end of WWII. This premise required that only one kind of land use is permitted in a common area, that business and industry be separated from residential and multi-family be separate from single-family and that these uses be graded by density. However, with the recent gasoline prices and environmental studies showing that carbon emissions are drastically increased by urban sprawl, the compact walkable community is again trending toward popularity. For this reason we believe that the Bureau of Census Projections of housing decline in Mt. Healthy is wrong! We believe that with careful promotion of infill development and regulations that encourage innovative community structure Mt. Healthy will be facing a positive revitalization trend. It will require all of Mt. Healthy leadership – political, citizen, staff and business to foster this positive knowledge and trend.

Infill Development

It is recognized that not all new land uses can be classified and defined in a succinct fashion. As an example 20 years ago there were no free standing coffee shops and zoning ordinances did not have definitions for them. It is expected that some proposed use will be active in the future that is not defined in this zoning ordinance. In that case the zoning administrator will make a determination of the most reasonable and similar classification.

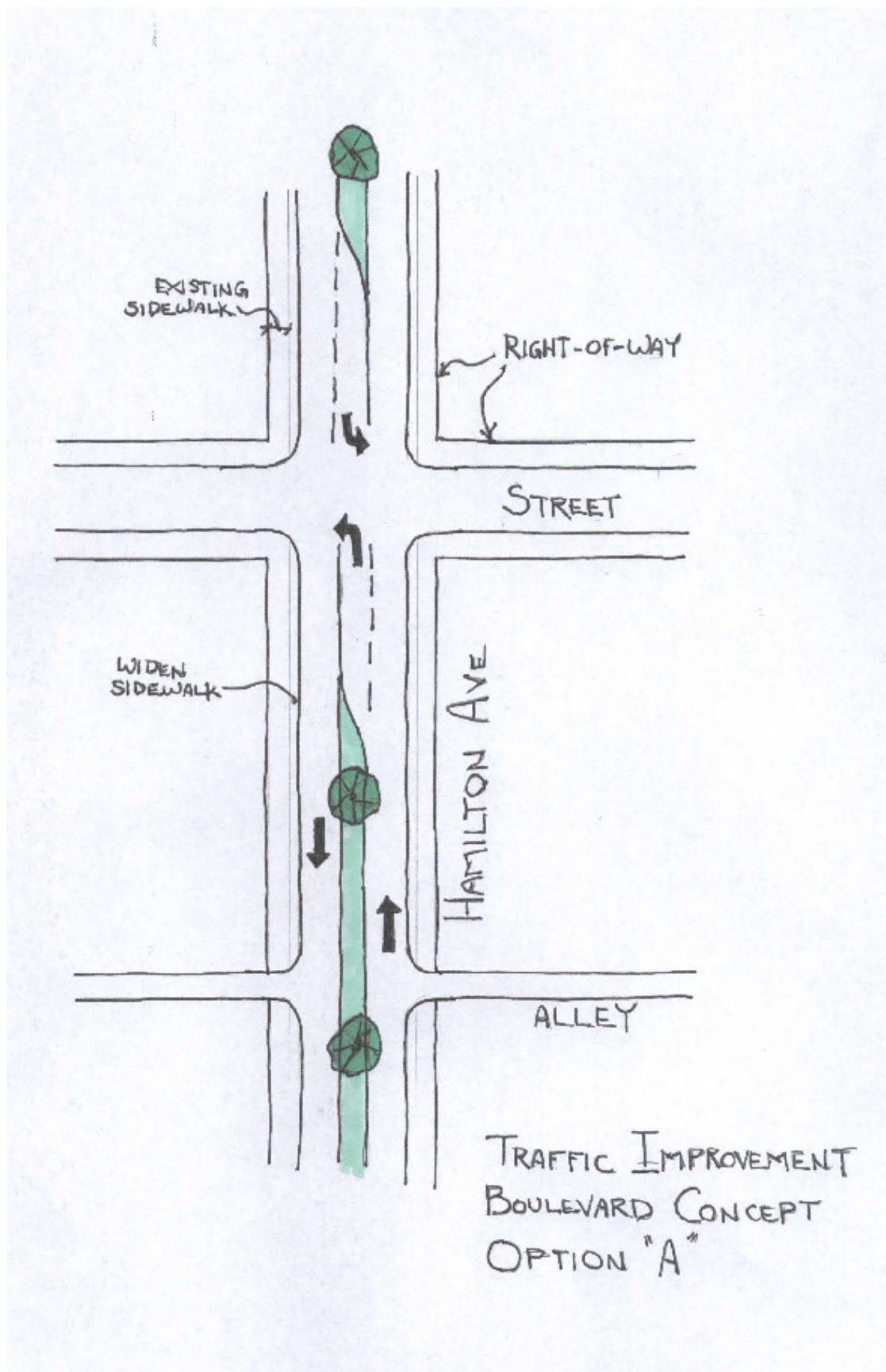
This classification would then determine which zoning district the new use would be permitted. If the petitioner for the new use classification was not satisfied with the decision of the zoning administrator, the petitioner could make application to the Planning Commission for a final interpretation (as outlined in Section 152.05(B)). A second option would be for the petitioner to apply for an "Infill Development Overlay" zone change (as outlined in the proposed zoning text amendments).

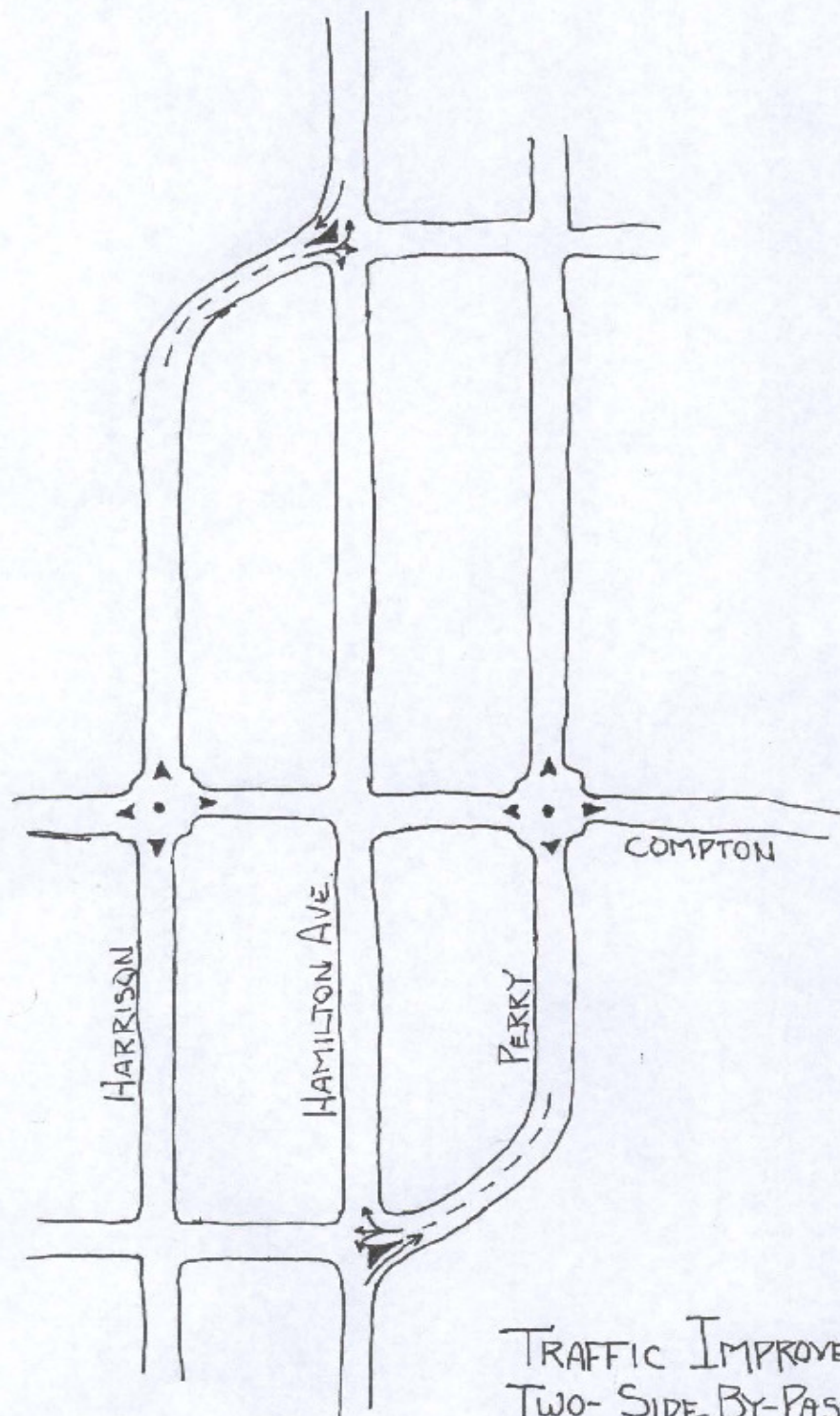
Infill Development Overlay District

Mt. Healthy is a mature community with very little "undeveloped land". There is market and economic pressure to redevelop property in some cases and the objective of this zoning overlay classification is to give the City a basis to review the proposed new development and protect the general welfare of the community when infill redevelopment is proposed.

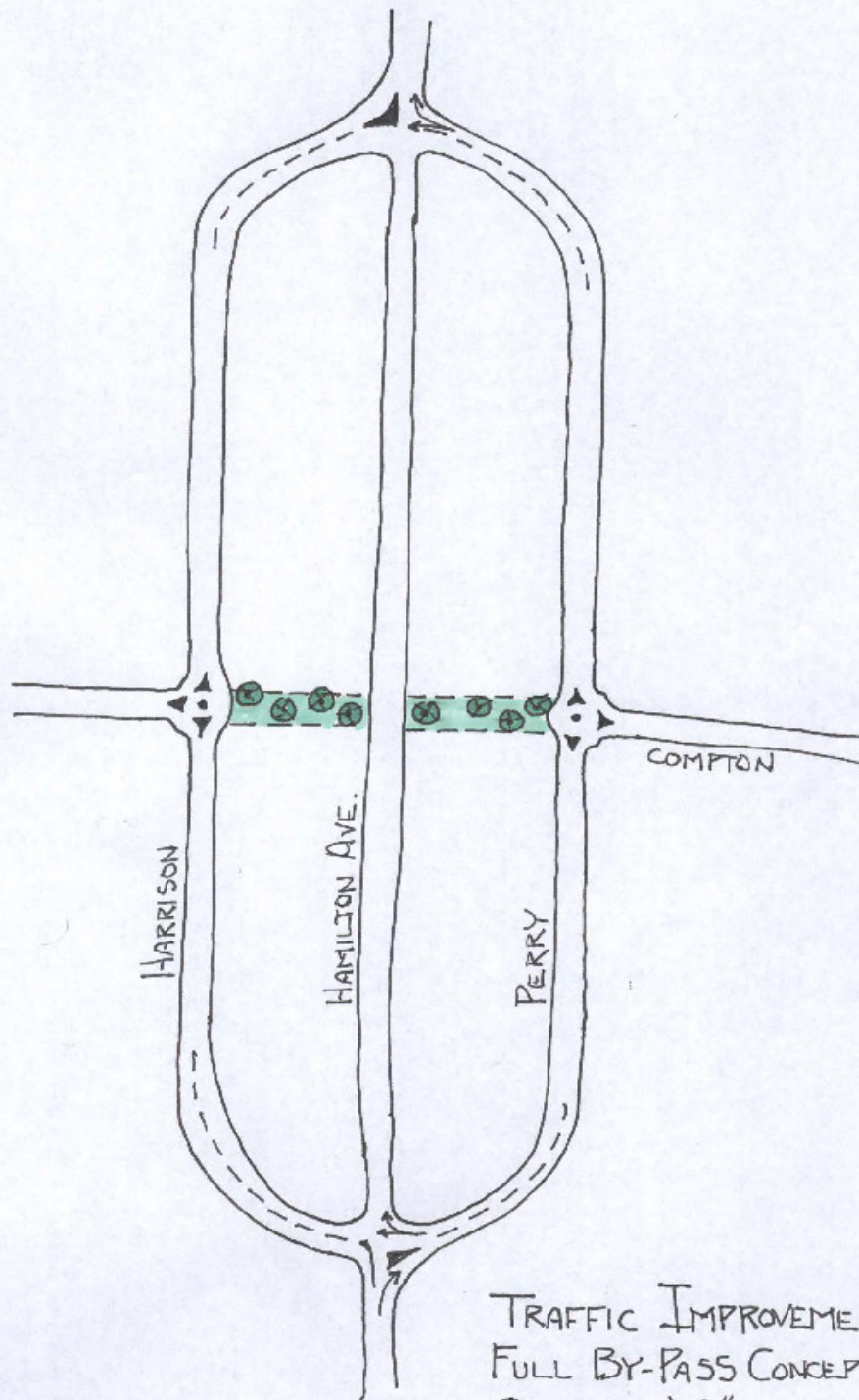
The Infill Development Overlay District may include an underlying classification or it may propose a change of classification.

Maybe this is just a public review process and not a zone change. However, the Steering Committee believes it should be handled as a zone change.





TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT
TWO-SIDE BY-PASS CONCEPT
OPTION "B"



TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT
FULL BY-PASS CONCEPT
OPTION "C"

Architectural Review Board

An Architectural Review Board will be established with the responsibility to review any final building designs for construction in Mt. Healthy. The standards for this review will be that the material (color and tone), building scale, landscaping, lighting, fencing, screening and other features of a buildings design reflect the history, scale of the surrounding community, and conform to the style that protects the value of property adjacent to the new construction.



The zoning administrator, building inspector or Planning Commission may refer a building proposal to this Architectural Review Board for a recommendation or assessment of conformance with community standards.* Note: an application form and procedure may need to be prepared.

Sign Regulations:

The Mt. Healthy business community and the Steering Committee indicated that the current zoning regulations only permitted “flat” façade signs on the business establishments (the ground sign is possible only in a very few cases because the buildings are generally very close to the right-of-way).

The two alternatives considered are to permit a perpendicular sign of consistent size (suggested maximum size of 3’ by 6’ and mounted at least 10 feet above the sidewalk elevation. The mounting cannot interfere with the architectural style or the fenestration of the building and it must conform to Ohio Building Code requirements and only have 10 candle power lighting on both sides.

The second alternative is to add street lamps at approximately 20 foot intervals on both sides of Hamilton Avenue (in the business district) that have an extended banner pole above the lamp. The businesses may pay the city for a standard banner that identifies their business on a colored banner of size 2 feet by 6 feet hung at an angle over the right-of-way.

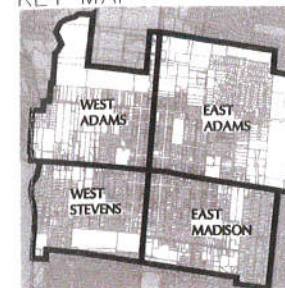
The purpose of the sign regulations needs an addition of "freedom of speech" provision. This amendment may state: To permit the public right to express and display and receive religious, political, economic, social, philosophical and other First Amendment protection messages. These signs may be permitted one per property owner and of a size that is similar to the sizes permitted in the existing zoning district. It may not interfere with pedestrian movement or distract from vehicular management and movement. Persons with signs mounted or carried by them may stand on the property but not in the right-of-way in a way that impairs traffic or safety. The sign carried or worn may not exceed a size of three feet by five feet in area.

Mt. Healthy Future Land Use

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KEY MAP



- FUTURE LAND USE**
- ENTRY NODE
 - MIXED USE REDEVELOPMENT
 - PUBLIC/SEMI PUBLIC
 - HEALTHY CITY CENTER
 - SPECIAL BUSINESS
 - PRESERVATION
 - STREET IMPROVEMENT
 - MAJOR ARTERIAL
 - MINOR ARTERIAL
 - COLLECTOR
 - CEMETERY
 - FLOOD PLAIN
 - TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS
 - EXISTING PARCELS



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Drawn By SB Project Mgr. LW
CAD File CADFILE
X-Ref File

Issue/Revision	Revision Number	Date

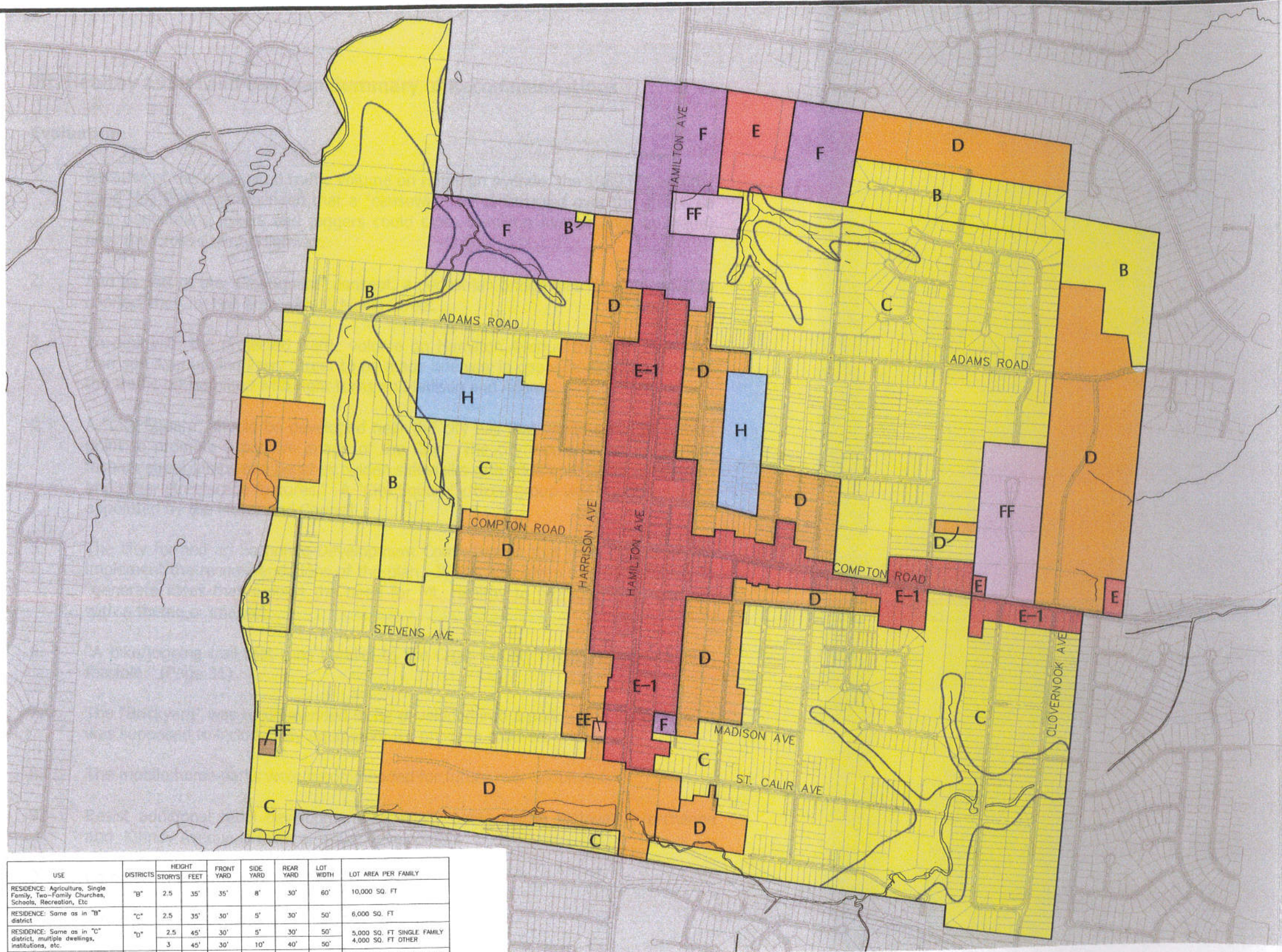
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MT. HEALTHY, OH COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



Sheet Title	
FUTURE LAND USE	
Project No.	06346.00
Scale	N.T.S.
Sheet No.	1
File No.	06-346

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LEGEND

- SINGLE FAMILY
- RETAIL
- MULTI-FAMILY
- PARKS & RECREATION
- LIGHT INDUSTRY
- PARCELS
- PAVEMENT
- RIVERS & STREAMS
- FLOOD PLAIN

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X-Ref File

Issue/Revision	Revision Number	Date

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MT. HEALTHY, OH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

USE	DISTRICTS	HEIGHT STORIES	HEIGHT FEET	FRONT YARD	SIDE YARD	REAR YARD	LOT WIDTH	LOT AREA PER FAMILY
RESIDENCE: Agriculture, Single Family, Two-Family Churches, Schools, Recreation, Etc.	"B"	2.5	35'	35'	8'	30'	60'	10,000 SQ. FT.
RESIDENCE: Same as in "B" district	"C"	2.5	35'	30'	5'	30'	50'	6,000 SQ. FT.
RESIDENCE: Same as in "D" district, multiple dwellings, institutions, etc.	"D"	2.5	45'	30'	5'	30'	50'	5,000 SQ. FT. SINGLE FAMILY 4,000 SQ. FT. OTHER
		3	45'	30'	10'	40'	50'	
RETAIL BUSINESS: Same as in "D" district, Retail Shops, Restaurants, Garages, etc.	"E"	3	45'	30'	5'	15'	*	5,000 SQ. FT. SINGLE FAMILY 4,000 SQ. FT. OTHER
RETAIL BUSINESS: Same as in "D" district	"E-1"	3	45'	NONE	** NONE	*** NONE	*	5,000 SQ. FT. SINGLE FAMILY 4,000 SQ. FT. OTHER
RETAIL BUSINESS: Same as in "E" district provided the development is laid out as a unit	"EE"	3	45'	No structure shall be closer than 35' to more restricted district. *			No more than 25% of the property can be covered by buildings	
LIGHT INDUSTRY: Industrial uses without offensive emissions	"F"	5	50'	NONE	8'	30'	60'	5,000 SQ. FT. SINGLE FAMILY 4,000 SQ. FT. OTHER
PLANNED LIGHT INDUSTRY: Same as "F" district provided the development is laid out as a unit	"FF"	5	50'	No structure shall be closer than 100' to a residential district or 50' to any other district, other than industrial.			No more than 35% of the property can be covered by buildings	
PARKS AND RECREATION: Same as in "D" district	"H"	2.5	35'	30'	5'	30'	50'	5,000 SQ. FT. SINGLE FAMILY 4,000 SQ. FT. OTHER

THERE ARE NO AREAS CURRENTLY ZONED "A", "D-D" OR "G" (JUNE 11, 2007).
* PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW SECTION 152.33
** Side yard requirements for dwellings are the same as "D" district. In all other cases side yards are not required unless property abuts a "B", "C", or "D" residence district, in which case there shall be a side yard of no less than 5 feet.
*** Year yard requirements for dwellings are the same as "D" district. In all other cases a year yard is not required unless property abuts a "B", "C", or "D" residence district, in which case there shall be a side yard of no less than 15 feet.



Sheet Title	MT. HEALTHY ZONING MAP
Project No.	06346.00
Scale	1"=400'
Sheet No.	1
File No.	06-34600

Mt. Healthy Zoning Map

Mt. Healthy 1989 Land Use Plan Summary of Recommendations

Evaluation:

1. Because of the anticipated traffic volume on Hamilton Avenue, the 1989 Mt. Healthy Land Use Plan recommended that a "causeway" be constructed over the street, so that pedestrians, bikers and joggers could cross Hamilton Avenue (not at grade) near the Cross-County Highway.
2. And as part of the "City Square" concept, a pedestrian bridge was recommended to connect the City Hall area with McMakin Street.
3. To deal with the projected traffic volume on Hamilton Avenue the plan called for Harrison Avenue and Perry Street to be made one way in opposite directions to take the traffic off Hamilton with right turns on Madison and Adams.
4. A "City Square" should be developed near the city hall that would serve as a focal point to promote a positive image of the City. The city would invest in "period-fashion street lamps and benches, widen sidewalks with additional landscaped areas and other streetscape features." A "City Square" citizen group was supposed to be appointed by the Mayor and Council.
5. The city formed an Economic Development Committee at that time that looked to implement the recommendations of the plan. It was also given the responsibility to "generate ideas that support the need for Mt. Healthy to promote itself, perhaps with a theme or image."
6. "A bike/jogging trail that runs parallel to the Cross-County Highway appears quite feasible." (Page 31)
7. The "Brickyard" was recommended to be developed into a park – and it was..... it was supposed to include play equipment for pre-teen children.
8. The mobile home parks were recommended for future redevelopment.
9. Resist additional retail development especially between the highway interchange and Kinney Avenue in favor of office development.
10. Complete the traffic light upgrade.
11. Provide off street parking.
12. Eliminate on street parking to increase traffic lanes on Hamilton Avenue.

2007 Comprehensive Plan Initiatives (this is repeated from the Executive Summary)

The following summary of recommendations is listed as initiatives and there is a score card at the end that should be used by the City Planning Commission, Council and citizens to evaluate the progress toward a better Mt. Healthy in 20 years.

Initiative A -- Improve the Visual Character of the City

2. Create entry images at the five main entry points to Mt. Healthy. This will include a strong sign branding and landscaping. Additional landscaping and signage should especially be added to the west bound exit ramp from the Cross-County Highway.
2. Improve the city signage regulations. The Steering Committee has reviewed zoning amendments that will make the signs more uniform in the business areas and enhance the identification of businesses from Perry Street and Harrison Avenue.
3. The City will develop criteria in the zoning ordinance that will provide for tree replacement with plan approval. There are streets that need additional trees and a fund can be created from fees or earmarked from the budget to add trees where necessary along the street right-of-way.
4. Evaluate/Search for the opportunity to remove overhead utility wires along Hamilton Avenue and especially in the business district.
5. Street name signs throughout the city should be uniform and include address number ranges.
6. The Planning Commission and Council should act on the recommended zoning ordinance changes before the end of 2007.
 - 6.a. Appoint an "Architectural Review Board" that will be responsible for reviewing proposed development.
7. Preserve significant historical buildings and sites using the design standards added to the zoning ordinance and by review from the Architectural Review Board.
8. Note: the street improvements recommended in Initiative F will also improve the visual character of Mt. Healthy.

Initiative B – Foster a Healthy Branding

1. Design and acquire easements or right-of-way for a walking/biking/rollerblading pathway. This walkway can become a strong healthy symbol for Mt. Healthy.
2. Sponsor an annual city run/walk event using the 3.8 mile pathway.
3. Organize year-round "HEALTHY" activities at the community center.

4. Implement a recreation department that will be responsible for youth activities at the community center, year round.
5. Develop a marketing strategy and possible incentive to go after the healthcare industry to locate satellite offices in the business district.

Initiative C – Promote a Higher Level of Home Ownership in Mt. Healthy

1. The City should initiate a landlord permit and inspection program that will provide taxing information and standards for multi-family unit maintenance.
2. Develop a way to land bank the city's future – for open space preservation and/or as part of new development. The City will set aside an open space preservation fund that will be used to acquire significant areas for historic reasons, additional healthy right-of-way, or environmentally sensitive sites.
3. Organize four neighborhood groups that will elect citizen representatives to participate in a development preview advisory group to the Planning Commission, responsible for concept review of any new development proposals. This group will also be responsible for reporting concerns of their neighborhood to city council and to prepare articles for a city newsletter.
 - 3.a. The City will prepare communication in the newsletter that informs the residents of home loan, renovation assistance, new permit processing for residents and counseling to buy rather than rent.
4. Continue the curb and gutter improvements plan the city is currently implementing. It encourages private investment within the neighborhoods.
5. Add low profile, wide speed bumps along Clovernook Avenue.
6. Increase the awareness of residents to the Hamilton County Home Improvement Program (HIP).

Initiative D – Stimulate Economic Development

1. Prepare a public information folder that explains the economic assets of Mt. Healthy and distribute it to realtors and other national development interests.
2. The Future Land Use Map encourages new commercial development between Harrison Avenue and Perry Street from Cross-County Highway to Hill Avenue.
3. City Council should approve a staff position to lead economic development responsibility that will focus on the potential infill and redevelopment sites. This responsibility will coordinate with county, state and federal funding sources and staff resources.
 - 3 a. This responsibility will contact the Ohio Development Council and present a "Main Street Association" program to the businesses and city council in Mt. Healthy.

- 3.b. An event committee must be formed (either separate or in cooperation with the Main Street Association) that will be responsible for developing promotional information about the economic opportunities and changes in Mt. Healthy. This committee will be responsible for organizing quarterly events that will bring people to Mt. Healthy. These events may reinforce the heritage and historic character of Mt. Healthy.
- 3.c. This committee will be responsible for creating a branding identity for Mt. Healthy. The Steering Committee has recommended that the central branding theme should be around healthy activities, businesses, and facilities (walking and recreation).
- 3.d. Work with property owners to complete feasibility studies for the redevelopment of key sites shown on the Future Land Use Plan.
- 3.e. Prepare an ordinance that sets forth the procedure for acquiring or tearing down abandoned, vacant and dilapidated structures.
- 3.f. Increase awareness of Enterprise Zone and CRA opportunities that exist for future improvements as well as new developments so that the right type of new development or improvement will be offered these incentives. It is also important to note that the Hamilton County Home Improvement Program (HIP) has been expanded to commercial uses. Develop criterion for the level of abatements offered. This criterion could be linked with Initiatives B, E & F.

Initiative E – Safe Walkable Environmentally Sensitive Community

- 1. The city should evaluate funding alternatives that will provide 15 foot high colonnade street lights in the areas shown in the "Lighting Plan".
- 2. The city should evaluate funding to the Police Department that will provide key location street surveillance and improve the image of crime prevention.
- 3. Evaluate adding bicycle police patrols in shopping areas, parking lots and along pedestrian walkways.
- 4. Maintain and encourage city services and convenient businesses within the central business district – especially the post office, library, community center/park, groceries and restaurants.
- 5. Evaluate the City's use of hybrid vehicles.
- 6. Require "green building" elements in new development approval and the construction process. This can include pervious surfaces, rain water irrigation, non-toxic materials and more; especially in public buildings.
- 7. Work with Hamilton County Environmental Services to continue to improve recycling and disposal of hazardous wastes.
- 8. New development must include analysis of any environmental condition such as ephemeral water courses or "brownfield" conditions.

Initiative F – Eliminate Traffic Congestion on Hamilton Avenue and Promote Rear Entry Design Access for Businesses

(To sufficiently handle the future traffic only on Hamilton Avenue would require the demolition of the historic buildings on at least one side for 4 to 5 blocks, in order to have enough right-of-way.) The following initiatives are presented as initial option concepts; all of which will require further detailed study and design in order to select the final solution.

1. Implement a phased improvement study of Hamilton Avenue that will proceed with assistance from ODOT, OKI and the Hamilton County Engineer to upgrade the through traffic system. This additional detailed study may find alternatives that will solve this traffic problem. The initial concept selected by the Steering Committee, was to create a smooth right turn to Harrison Avenue and Perry Street from Hamilton Avenue and to provide left turns at Compton Road with roundabout intersections. This alternative suggested that the city needed to identify off street parking needs and new off street parking locations; and the third aspect would be to eliminate parking along Hamilton Avenue between Stevens and Adams, build a median boulevard with landscaping, this would eliminate left turns from Hamilton Avenue and permit the sidewalks to be widened.
 - 1.a. A field design and traffic study should be initiated to present a plan to ODOT and the Hamilton County Commissions for inclusion in their capital improvement plans.
 - 1.b. A detailed wayfinding plan should be developed to orient drivers to the options designed and especially for alternative parking options for the businesses.
2. Study the redevelopment of the Hilltop Plaza, the mobile home parks, and the vacant Standard Publishing site (in the northern section of Mt. Healthy). This may be coordinated with Springfield Township studying the redevelopment possibility of the Rinks site.
3. Amend the zoning ordinance as recommended to include more flexible standards for mixed use development with clearly defined requirements.
4. Coordinate Initiatives A, D, and E with this major effort. As an example, the entry signs and landscaping from Cross-County Highway must identify the business district, the history and healthy branding.

SCORE CARD

Mt. Healthy Comprehensive Plan Initiatives – 2007

Recommendations: Year Accomplished: Modifications: Costs/Funding Source:

A 1.

A 2.

A 3.

A 4.

A 5.

A 6.

A 7.

B 1.

B2.

B 3.

B 4.

C 1.

C2.

C 3.

C 3.a.

C 4.

C 5.

C 6.

D 1.

D 2.

D 3.

D 3.a.

D 3.b.

D 3.c.
D 3.e.

E 1.

E 2.

E 3.

E 4.

E 5.

E 6.

E 7.

E 8.

F 1.
F 1.a.
F 1.b.

F 2.

F 3.

F4.

References

1. Hamilton County Economic Development Office, Katherine Fitzgerald, 1776 Mentor Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio 45212
2. Springfield Township, Christopher Gilbert, Development Services Director, Springfield Township, 9150 Winton Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45231
3. Al Schaefer, Police Chief, City of Mt. Healthy, 7700 Perry Street, Mt. Healthy, Ohio 45231
4. Ted Mack, Zoning Administrator, City of Mt. Healthy, 7700 Perry Street, Mt. Healthy, Ohio 45231
5. Vierling Blum, Mt. Healthy Historic Society

Appendix

1. Source (Downtown Digest, October 15, 2006): Downtown Idea Exchange . . . Why the 504 loan program is especially good for downtown:
The U.S. Small Business Administration's Certified Development Company (CDC/504) Loan Program is designed to help small businesspeople own their facilities. This loan program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings, and enables 90-percent financing. The 504 loan program is especially good for downtowns because it encourages owner-occupied small businesses and long-term commitments, Kurt Chilcott, president and CEO, CDC Small Business Finance, noted during the recent annual conference of the International Economic Development Council.
2. Source for Mt. Healthy Historic Information: Mr. & Mrs. Vierling Blum and the writings of Mr. Owen Kinney for the Mt. Healthy Historical Society in One Square Mile.
3. American Planning Association; seven strategies for local business retention:
 1. Survey local businesses to determine plans for changes or expansion and their attitudes toward local government.
 2. Hold regular business roundtables or breakfasts.
 3. Institute regular visits by local government officials to downtown businesses.
 4. Create teams of top local government managers to expedite responses to problems identified by local businesses.
 5. Publish newsletters and send them to local businesses.
 6. Get active involvement by local government officials in chambers of commerce and other business groups.
 7. Appoint local business owners or managers to local boards and commissions.

Exhibits:

MT. HEALTHY BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRE
August 2006

BUSINESS: _____ DATE: _____

The following questions are being asked in order to learn more about business conditions in Mt. Healthy as a result of having conversations with a select group of merchants who operate small businesses in the city's central business district.

1. What business(es) do you think of as being an **anchor(s)** for the city's Central Business District?

2. Which community and regional **areas** do you and the CBD compete with the most for customers?

3. What types of land use would you most like to see established on the city's **vacant** and **underutilized** commercial property?

4. What do you regard as the **strengths** of the Mt. Healthy Central Business District?

5. What do you regard as the **weaknesses** of the Mt. Healthy Central Business District?

6. In your opinion, what types of **voids** exist in the Mt. Healthy Central Business District?

7. What are some of the **opportunities** you think can be created in the Mt. Healthy Central Business District?

8. Has your business experienced an increase or decrease in **business revenues** during the past 3 years?

9. Does your business have adequate **signing**? _____

Does your business have adequate **parking**? _____

10. During the recent past have you conducted any **customer surveys** or completed **research** to find out where your customers are coming from?

_____ If not, why? _____

11. What kinds of **incentives** would you like to see the City of Mt. Healthy offer as a means of encouraging new business investment? (Examples may include: low interest loans for façade improvements, painting, free public parking, adding street trees, sidewalk enhancements, improved and/or additional lighting.

12. How do you **market** your business? _____

13. Do you plan to **expand** your business in the near future? _____

14. Why did you decide to **locate** your business in Mt. Healthy? _____

15. From an **image** perspective, what one word best describes the Mt. Healthy Central Business District?

16. Are you a member of any **group** which actively promotes business in Mt. Healthy? If so, which organization is it?

OTHER COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS:

Mt. Healthy Comprehensive Plan for its Future Requesting Citizen and Stakeholder Response

Dear Mt. Healthy Citizens, Stakeholders and Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Member:

Mt. Healthy is undertaking the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan to guide current and future growth and prioritize capital improvement projects. In preparation for a public open house meeting this winter, please take a few minutes to fill out the survey and return to City Hall, 7700 Perry St., Mt. Healthy, Ohio 45231, by fax (728-3189), mail or in the city's drop box (before December 8, 2006, please).

What is your opinion and what suggestions do you have?

a. How many years have you been a resident/property owner in Mt. Healthy?

b. Name (optional) _____,
Address(optional)_____

c. My occupation
is:_____

d. My age is (please circle a range): (25 or younger) (26–40) (41–60) (61 +)

e. My approximate travel time to work is (please circle a range):

(stay at home parent) (work from home) (5-15 minutes) (15-30 minutes) (30-45 minutes) (+ 45 min.)

other (please list): _____

d. I am currently serving on the following citizen/organization committees:

(please list):_____

e. As a resident or business interest/owner of Mt. Healthy, are there any special issues that are already of concern to you? Can you please describe this issue.

Please respond to the first 12 statements by circling a "5" if you strongly agree or circling a "1" if you strongly disagree or as you believe somewhere between:

1. The following public services in Mt. Healthy meet my expectations.

5	4	3	2	1	Schools
5	4	3	2	1	Police
5	4	3	2	1	Fire Protection
5	4	3	2	1	Life Squad (EMS)
5	4	3	2	1	Roads (paving, striping, repair, etc.)
5	4	3	2	1	Snowplowing
5	4	3	2	1	Community Facilities (library, post office, community center)
5	4	3	2	1	Public Facilities (Fire, EMS, Police, Administration)
5	4	3	2	1	Parks
5	4	3	2	1	Zoning & Permits

2. I want the streets in my area to be upgraded/widened adding curb gutter, sidewalks and improved lighting.

5 4 3 2 1

3. There are not enough shopping areas or restaurants close to my home.

5 4 3 2 1

4. More public transportation (bus, transit, etc.) is needed in Mt. Healthy.

5 4 3 2 1

5. There is not sufficient employment opportunity in Mt. Healthy.

5 4 3 2 1

6. I usually shop outside of my community.

5 4 3 2 1

7. The public recreational opportunities are very good in Mt. Healthy (publicly owned property).

5 4 3 2 1

8. The private recreational opportunities are very good in Mt. Healthy (non-public property).

5 4 3 2 1

9. The main gathering place for citizens in Mt. Healthy is the central park.

5 4 3 2 1

10. There should be more pedestrian ways (sidewalks) to link important areas in Mt. Healthy.

5 4 3 2 1

11. Historic preservation is important in Mt. Healthy.

5 4 3 2 1

12. The original business district of Mt. Healthy should be preserved.

5 4 3 2 1

13. Most of my banking and shopping is done in (circle one): (Mt. Healthy) – (Forest Park/Tri-County) – (College Hill) or (please list): _____

14. If you retired in Mt. Healthy, what kind of home would you want to have and what additional options/amenities would be important to make your residing here more pleasant?

15. Please describe any recreational needs you believe are needed in Mt. Healthy (please provide a location if applicable):

16. Are there any traffic or street improvements that you feel will help Mt. Healthy (please list any street / intersecting street names and suggestions for improvement)?

17. Are there any services in Mt. Healthy that need to be changed, added, or upgraded?

18. Are there businesses or services that you believe should be added in Mt. Healthy?

19. If you are currently employed; approximately how many miles do you travel (one way) to work and can you indicate the general location of your employment?

_____ (miles) _____ (location)

20. Demographic trends indicate that Mt. Healthy will experience moderate new development growth. Will you please describe how you believe new development should occur and if there are desirable different kinds of building use and character that should be encouraged (height and density):

21. Do you believe there are some issues that should be addressed for public education and its facilities?

22. Do you believe there are some issues that should be addressed for public facilities and services?

23. Please take a moment and write a few descriptions of what you want to see happen in Mt. Healthy in the next 5 to 15 years.

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete the public survey.

Please return the completed survey by December 8, 2006 by dropping off at City Hall, via fax 728-3189, or via mail to:

Mt. Healthy City Hall
c/o Public Opinion Survey
7700 Perry St
Mt. Healthy, OH 45231