

INTRODUCTION

In 1998 Genoa Township was no longer a sleepy farming community; it was a bustling suburb growing by 250 new homes per year, rapidly losing its beloved natural beauty and agricultural lands. In response to growth pressure, a group of Township residents came together to form a comprehensive plan steering committee and began to put together a land use plan for the Township. The committee presented their 1998 Comprehensive Plan to the Zoning Commission and Township Trustees who, in turn, adopted it in early 1999. Zoning amendments were subsequently made to implement the Plan.

From 1998-2003, 3,810 new residential dwelling units were permitted in Genoa Township, adding over 7,000 new residents and nearly tripling the population. The growth highpoint during this period occurred in 2002, with 716 new residential dwelling permits being issued that year.

In 2004, significant efforts were made to update the 1999 plan; however, no changes were ultimately adopted. Another attempt at updating the document was made in 2007 which resulted in a new plan being adopted in December 2008. The 2008 Comprehensive Plan was designed to shape development in Genoa Township over the next five years, or until such time as a new version was commissioned and approved. While some information and concepts from the 2004 update attempt were utilized, a majority of the revisions and additions to the plan were a result of the 2007 Visioning Process, a public outreach effort established by the Trustees at the request of the Comprehensive Planning Committee and coordinated by two consulting professors from Otterbein University.

Following a recession, development of all types effectively ended in Genoa Township. Housing sales and building were halted and the planning considerations from the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and its subsequent 2009 update were stalled. As the economy began to rebound and development slowly restarted, Genoa Township was again faced with reviewing its future and capturing the current vision in a revised Comprehensive Plan. Questions from zoning proposals made in 2012 and 2013 identified gaps in the 2009 Comprehensive Plan in need of further explanation, specifically in regards to future commercial development. In response to these findings, the Zoning Office started the process of updating the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. At that time, a consolidated document, encompassing all of the relevant information in the Township was undertaken. Numerous meetings were scheduled with stakeholders for the purpose of collecting information and points of view. In addition, residents representing many other important aspects of Genoa Township life, including parks, economic development, police, and fire protection, were engaged to provide content for a new plan titled, "Conserving Our Future, Genoa Township Plan for 2025".

Despite the time and effort expended on this document, it became apparent that it was too expansive to be maintained. The land use provisions were deemed inadequate to replace the Comprehensive Plan document by the Zoning Commission and the public. Because the draft document had been posted online, there was significant confusion about the purpose and future of the document. To clarify that the document would not be adopted, and effectively rescind the draft, the Zoning Commission clarified the repeal at a meeting held on June 29, 2015. This action

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clearly indicated that the 2009 Comprehensive Plan remained the official Comprehensive Plan of Genoa Township unless and until the Genoa Township Trustees adopted a new Comprehensive Plan in the form of this 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

Over the past several years higher density housing proposals aimed at providing age-restricted cluster housing options within the Township for those 55 years of age and older have been introduced. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan did not address this new form of residential development. These proposals, along with the aforementioned commercial zoning issue and the desire to periodically revisit the plan, clearly identified the need to once again review, analyze, and discuss Township development patterns and market trends with the ultimate goal of formulating a new comprehensive plan.

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan contains similar text to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. This is not the result of “skipping” over sections of text in favor of a technical update. Each and every word of the document was contemplated in open, public meetings of the Zoning Commission and the Board of Trustees. Any language from the 2009 Comprehensive Plan that has not been changed in this 2016 Comprehensive Plan has been specifically and deliberately retained in the document.

I. Planning and Development Issues

This 2016 Comprehensive Plan supersedes the 2009 Comprehensive Plan and provides guidance for continued development of Genoa Township. Unlike the 2008 Comprehensive Plan and its 2009 Update, this 2016 Comprehensive Plan is focused on a limited number of immediate issues for resolution or clarification. This document can stand as the guide for future development until circumstances warrant another review, update, and/or replacement of the Plan.

During the course of the preparation of this 2016 Comprehensive Plan, the Zoning Commission spent considerable time reviewing specific, recent zoning activities for age-restricted condominium developments. While the Township has zoned several Planned Residential District (PRD) developments as 100 percent cluster development, including three notable high density developments (The Courtyards on Tussic, The Courtyards at Maxtown, and The Villas at Tussic), the Commission found during their open houses and meetings that there was, generally, no expressed ongoing support by the public for higher density development based solely on age-restricted ownership.

It is the intent of Genoa Township to consider all PRD applications in accordance with the Zoning Resolution. The prior exceptional zoning densities permitted were conditioned on age-restriction. At this time, Genoa Township does not intend to permit future higher density allowances, bonuses, or divergences solely on the basis of age alone.

Other issues identified:

- Significant land area has been developed since 1999. The current population of Genoa Township, according to the Delaware County Regional Planning Commission, is estimated at 25,195. Less than 30 parcels of land in excess of 20 acres remain to be developed and these parcels appear primarily in the Olentangy and Big Walnut school districts.

- Open space and environmentally sensitive areas should continue to be conserved.
- Sewer availability and planning remain key considerations for the development of certain areas of the Township. In addition to density restrictions associated with sewer service, Genoa Township has recognized density restrictions to protect the general welfare (including by protecting environmentally-sensitive areas and imposing infrastructure requirements).
- The current Delaware County Thoroughfare Plan and Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) “Access Ohio 2040 Long-Range Transportation Plan” provide valuable information regarding the future of traffic patterns and volumes in and around Genoa Township. The continued growth on all sides of Genoa Township will impact this infrastructure and directly impact quality of life.

II. Objectives

The 2016 Comprehensive Plan intends to:

- revisit and modify planning policies, as well as review and update the Township’s planning areas, as needed;
- engage the public utilizing various forms of communications and hold numerous meetings and open houses to allow for an open dialogue with the community and to provide the opportunity for public input, feedback, and commentary;
- update the “situation analysis” last prepared in 2008, to show the changes in land use, population, population projections, utility services, and roads that have occurred from 2008 to 2016; and
- clarify the continuing commitment or change in assumptions collected in the substantial Appendices to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan.

III. Public Participation

In addition to the thirteen meetings at which the 2009 Comprehensive Plan was read and reviewed among the Zoning Commission members, four open houses were held to allow for resident participation and input on a few selected topics. Specifically, the concepts of streetscape, neighborhood-scale commercial development, and high-density cluster housing development were shared through a room-sized display of questions, current zoning content, and illustrative photographs. A summary of these open houses and the comments received are included as Appendix C (Executive Summary of 2015 Comprehensive Plan Open House Meetings). A complete list of dates of public meetings held during the 2016 Comprehensive Plan process can be found in Appendix A (List of Public Meetings Held).

In order to ensure a broader sampling of Township residents was represented and provide an additional data point for consideration, the Genoa Township Trustees also commissioned a professional blind telephone survey of 301 residents in the Township. The survey was conducted over a four day period in November 2015. Analysis of the survey results is included in Appendix D (2015 Community Survey, Key Findings Recap & Results).

After considering all forms of public input, the Zoning Commission moved forward with final

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revisions to the 2016 Comprehensive Plan, held a public hearing on April 4, 2016, and subsequently recommended the Plan for approval upon conclusion of the hearing that same night. The Plan was reviewed by Delaware County Regional Planning Commission during their March 31, 2016, public meeting and received a recommendation of approval from the Commission on that date. Finally, the Genoa Township Board of Trustees held numerous public hearings to publically review the plan and solicit feedback from the community prior to adoption. Each Township meeting and open house was advertised in the Delaware Gazette, posted at the Township's Administration and Zoning Office, made known in multiple locations on the Township's website, posted on the Township's social media accounts, and communicated through the Township's News and Information e-mail subscription service. Township staff also relayed meeting information and updates to the Genoa Township Business Association and Genoa Township Citizen's Coalition.