



Brown Township, Franklin County Fall 2002

Planning Process Report

This is a project update addressed to the residents of Brown Township. Its purpose is to help maintain an ongoing flow of information about land use planning efforts in the township. This update comes as the township's agricultural and land use development committee wraps up the investigative phase of its work. Below you will find a summary overview of the committee and its work so far, as well as a discussion of the results of a township-wide questionnaire concerning land use and development issues.

During the summer of 2000, the Trustees formed the Brown Township Agricultural Preservation Plan Steering Committee (APPSC) because of their interest in land use issues related to agriculture and open space preservation. The members of this committee are:

- Donna Carrel, Chair
- Larry Baumgartner
- Tom Crook
- Cheryl Lorson
- Harold Jerman
- Joe Martin
- Steve Rider
- Dick Stahl

The mission of the Brown Township APPSC is:

"The development of a land use document defining suitable development which preserves agricultural land and open space while enhancing the health and sovereignty of the township as a whole."

In order to accomplish this goal, the Brown Township Board of Trustees assigned several topic areas for the committee to address. These topic areas are:

- Farmland Preservation

- Wastewater Treatment Issues
- Cluster Development
- Open Space Conservation
- Farm Village Development
- Township Zoning

The APPSC has done extensive research into a range of issues related to its task. This research ranged from hearing from technical experts, to site visits, to conducting a community survey. The group's work has also included analysis of natural and man-made features in the township that will influence growth patterns.

The committee's work was last reported in the April 2001 newsletter. At that time, the committee had heard from eight speakers, attended several training sessions and visited sites and facilities related to their assigned issues. Since then the committee has made a major effort to measure and analyze citizen attitudes about development and the township's future through a community-wide survey. The APPSC has also continued its investigative process through talks from the state and health department.... In addition, a committee member attended a session on conservation development planning conducted by Randall Arndt, a nationally recognized expert on the subject.

Having completed the tasks outlined above, the APPSC then turned to reporting its findings to the township trustees. To accomplish this, the committee is in the process of finalizing an interim report that discusses its findings and recommendations for next steps in light of these findings. The report provides information and recommendations for each of the six interest areas assigned by the Board of Trustees. This discussion is a first step in understanding the township's choices in defining its future. In doing this, the committee includes information and suggestions based upon work that has been done in recent years in the area of rural development options, namely conservation-style development.

Once the group has discussed this report with the trustees, it will enter into the next phase of its work. As part of the interim report, the APPSC has documented its work and proceedings in notebook form. This document provides background information for those wishing to learn more about the committee's work and is available for public inspection.

Residents' Survey Results

The Brown Township trustees appointed an Agricultural Preservation Plan Steering Committee to study land use issues and make recommendation land regarding the need to update the Township Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

To help address these issues the Committee sent a survey questionnaire to all 745 residents and property owners in Brown Township. A random list of 254 addresses was generated and referred to as the " Randomized Attitudinal Survey" where follow-ups and an incentive were used to ensure a good return of the survey forms resulted in an 80% response rate.

This carefully controlled and scientifically controlled study allows us to generalize the results to the entire population of Brown Township with 95% confidence ($\pm 4\%$) that this accurately represents the attitude of the Brown Township residents and property owners.

The remaining 491 residents and property owners were sent the same survey, referred to as the "general survey" where no follow-up or incentives were used and resulted in a 50% response rate. While the general survey was self-selecting and not generalizable to the population as a whole, the similarity in the results with the random survey supports the survey's overall findings (see data sheets).

The survey was used to determine the overall attitude of residents in six different areas or domains:

1. Support for development in the township.
2. Support for farmland preservation.
3. Support for protection of the natural environment.
4. Resident satisfaction with living in the township.
5. Support for a village center in the township.
6. Willingness to accept land use controls.

The results of this survey can be used as a tool to advise the committee, the trustees, and various governing entities concerned with land use issues. It may also indicate the need for educational programming to accompany any land use decisions.

Development:

There is little support for the type of development found east of Alton-Darby occurring within the township. Residents and property owners are supportive of open space, the environment, and farmland preservation; however, there is a very strong concern for retaining property values and the right to sell to the highest bidder.

Farmland Preservation:

The residents and property owners are supportive of farmland preservation and are generally willing to live with general farming practices. However, there was weak support for the issuances of a tax levy to support a farmland protection program.

Environment:

The residents and property owners feel strongly about protection of the environment. Preservation of the Big Darby Creek in its natural state is a very high priority.

Satisfaction:

The residents and property owners are quite satisfied with living in Brown Township. They are especially satisfied with fire protection services. They do not mind traveling to commercial activities, are satisfied with road maintenance, but are concerned with bicycle traffic on the roads.

Village Center:

There was only moderately support for the village center or cluster development concept. Residents appear to be most comfortable with the 2.5+acre type development. More education on the concept of village center/cluster development will be necessary before residents will be willing to accept the idea.

Control Measures:

The Township residents generally seemed open to some form of growth or land use control measures. The residents appear to favor zoning as the most appropriate means to implement this form of control and are less supportive of options like density bonuses or cluster developments.

Note: The complete survey report with raw data is available on the Brown Township website at http://www.brown.twp.franklin.oh.us/survey_results.htm

Brown Township Online

In the past, newsletters were the only effective means of distributing information on a large scale. The Brown Township Trustees wanted to provide a central reference and starting point for township information.

Through the help of OARnet, Brown Township has established a website (OARnet is a division of the Ohio Supercomputer Center, a technology initiative of the Ohio Board of Regents). With the website comes e-mail for the Township Trustees and the Clerk.

Residents will be able to stay current about current township life, meetings and planning initiatives as the website grows and develops. Over the next 30 days, the website will be updated to include:

- 1992 Comprehensive Plan
- 1998 Comprehensive Plan Update
- Past newsletters
- Information about rural driving and roads
- 2001 Residents' Survey Results and Report

Township history, well and septic system articles and a "Links" page for easy access to other websites of interest are planned for the website.

We welcome your contributions, suggestions and questions about this new website. Please do not hesitate to contact us via e-mail or phone. You can also contact us using the on-line feedback form in the "Contact us" section of the website. We hope that you find the new website informative and useful.