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Executive Summary

This Executive Summary of the 2005 Fort Thomas Comprehensive Plan is provided to orient the reader to the process by which the Comprehensive Plan has been developed as well as to provide an overview of the content and organization of the plan.

Planning Process

This process continues the practice of on-going community planning for the City of Fort Thomas. It represents the most recent update of the comprehensive plan as required by KRS 100. The plan was prepared under the supervision of the Fort Thomas Planning Commission, the public body charged with initiating and overseeing comprehensive planning in Fort Thomas. Additional oversight was provided by the Fort Thomas City Council, who formally adopted the plan goals and objectives in April 2005. A Cooperative education student from the University of Cincinnati, Scott McGrath, worked closely with the City of Fort Thomas Planning Commission and staff to revise and update the 1998-99 Comprehensive Plan.

The 2005 update involved a review and adoption of the Goals and Objectives following a public hearing and minor changes recommended by the Planning Commission. This was followed by research and updating of all demographic and other data contained in the Existing Conditions section of the Plan. This also provided an opportunity to review and comment on changes that have occurred since the 1999 Plan was adopted. The final step involved reorganization and amendments to the Plan Recommendations. The intent of the reorganization was to better align the document with the requirements of KRS 100 and clearly reflect specific elements.

Background

Introduction

This 2005 update of the Fort Thomas Comprehensive Plan represents the current phase of the continuing planning process for the City of Fort Thomas. Fort Thomas adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1969. The plan has been updated on four prior occasions (1980, 1987, 1993, and 1999). The 2005 update is an outgrowth and refinement of these previous planning documents.

This is the fifth update of the original comprehensive plan for the City of Fort Thomas, and represents an extensive review and evaluation of the previous comprehensive plans by the Fort Thomas Planning Commission. During its preparation, the Planning Commission notified various public officials and agencies, as well as other organizations and citizens, of the opportunity to participate in the plan update process.

This comprehensive plan updates certain data that has not been directly addressed in recent plan updates, as well as the data that has been “traditionally” revised in previous comprehensive plan updates. The 1999 update did not update information relating to natural features and city history, and included it in the plan update by reference only.

While the majority of the information relating to natural features, climate and city history has not been greatly altered, it is important that updates be noted and included in the 2005 plan.

Legal Framework

Comprehensive plans are intended to guide the physical development of an area. Used by both public and private groups, plans are intended to reflect community attitudes and preferences about growth, community development, preservation, and revitalization. The 2005 Comprehensive Plan for the City of Fort Thomas, Kentucky has been prepared and adopted in a manner that is consistent with the requirements set forth in Chapter 100 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes. The Fort Thomas Planning Commission is the primary public agency responsible for preparing and administering the plan. The plan is intended to serve as a policy guide to the city. The plan should reflect the wide variety of land and land uses within the city, and make logical recommendations for both.

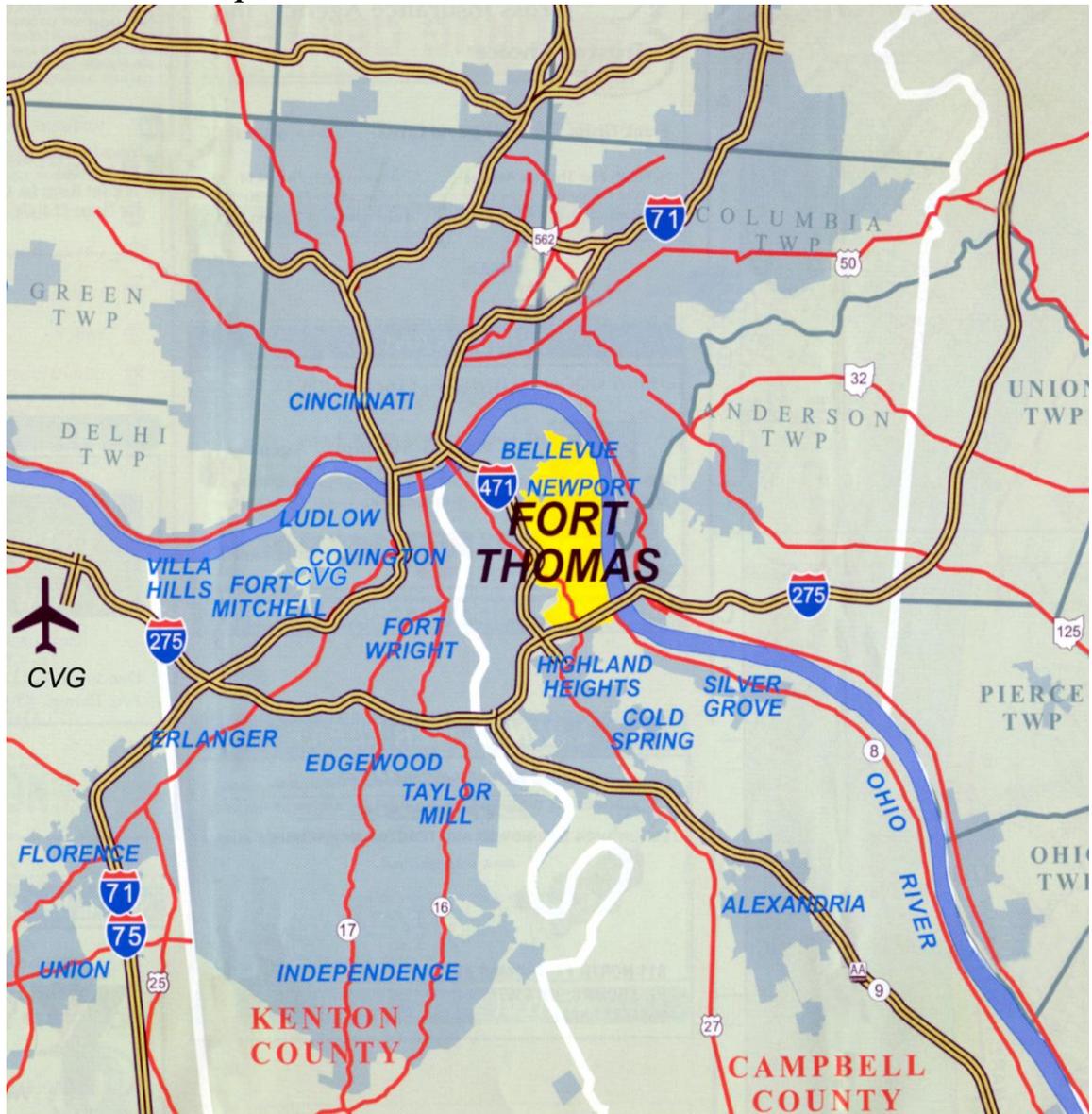
Ultimately, comprehensive planning is reduced to a set of choices requiring careful examination and thought. It is a response to a series of choices that offer different sets of advantages and disadvantages. The 2005 Fort Thomas Comprehensive Plan’s principle value will come from its continued use and periodic updates. The process of planning for the city is ongoing, and the adoption of the plan is only one step in this process. It is the responsibility of city leaders, developers, property owners, and citizens to actively work to implement the vision expressed in this plan.

Location

The City of Fort Thomas is located in the northeast corner of Campbell County, Kentucky and is part of the Northern Kentucky region. Northern Kentucky consists of a tier of three counties (Campbell, Kenton, and Boone) at the extreme northern tip of the state. Northern Kentucky is directly south of the City of Cincinnati, Ohio, and the Ohio River serves as a physical divider between the two areas.

The Cincinnati Metropolitan Statistical Area, of which Fort Thomas is a part, is located in the Mid-Ohio Valley and is within 600 miles of twelve major metropolitan areas. The area is linked by a network of interstate highways, passenger and freight rail, and a major freight and passenger airport hub. These linkages provided excellent freight and passenger linkages to all areas of the United States. Fort Thomas lies east-southeast of the City of Newport, Kentucky. It is bounded on the east by the Ohio River and abuts several incorporated communities. The city is approximately three miles southeast of downtown Cincinnati.

Location Map



History

The area in which the City of Fort Thomas is now located received the first impetus to settlement and development by conferring of land grants of 1,000 acres each to Samuel and David Perry in 1787. The grants were given by the State of Virginia, which had jurisdiction over this area at the time. Subsequent grants of land to several pioneers of Fort Thomas further encouraged the settlement of the area.

The District of Highlands, later to become the City of Fort Thomas, was created in March 1867 by a special act of the Kentucky General Assembly. Jacob Hawthorne, an earlier settler of the area, was particularly instrumental in acquiring the charter for the District of Highlands. Although predominantly rural in character at this time, the District of Highlands nonetheless became the location of summer homes for some of the affluent citizens of Cincinnati and Newport. The boundaries of the District of Highlands were very similar to the present city limits, though minor annexations and de-annexations have taken place on the borders of the city over the years.

One year after the District of Highlands received its charter, the area west of Alexandria Pike (U.S. 27) at the present site of Evergreen Cemetery was de-annexed. Horse-drawn bus or stage service from Newport to the District of Highlands was inaugurated in 1882. This route traveled along Alexandria Pike and Highland Avenue to River Road.

Two important events in the history of the City of Fort Thomas occurred in 1890. The construction of Fort Thomas Military Reservation was completed and the fort was occupied on this date. The post had been constructed to supplant the Newport Military Barracks, which had been consistently damaged by floods since its inception and which had been particularly hard hit by the flood of 1884. The Fort Thomas military post was destined to become the social and physical center of the community in the years to come.

The second major event that took place in 1890 was the dedication of rights-of-way for an electric railway through the city. The railway from Newport traversed North and South Fort Thomas Avenue. Due to difficulties in acquiring further rights-of-way, the line terminated first at Dixie Place, then at Bivouac Avenue, then at the water tower on the fort, and finally at a point north of Alexandria Pike. The railway route and the fort combined with other factors to greatly influence the pattern of development in the District of Highlands.

The District of Highlands was incorporated as a sixth class city in 1914, and at the same time adopted the name Fort Thomas from the military post located there. The post had been named for General George Thomas, the “Rock of Chickamauga” of Civil War fame. In 1920, with the city having grown to approximately 5,000 residents, Fort Thomas became a city of the fourth class. The Board of Education promoted the change in class in hopes of acquiring financing available from the state for educational purposes for fourth-class cities.

The 1920's witnessed a tremendous boom in Fort Thomas, during which time the city doubled its population. Most of the development during these years took place on either side of North and South Fort Thomas Avenue and along Memorial Parkway between Tower Hill Road and Military Parkway. The electric railway (which traversed North and South Fort Thomas Avenue and Memorial Parkway) influenced the pattern of growth in the community. While topography had a significant impact on the pattern of development, the electric railway was more of a catalyst for economic and population growth in the city. The Depression and World War II slowed the growth of the city

during the 1930's and 1940's. Many civic improvements, however, were completed during this time utilizing the various federal agencies and programs created as part of the "New Deal." An addition to Highlands School, which later became the senior high school, was constructed in the 1930's using Public Works Administration funds. Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) personnel were utilized to construct street improvements, sewers, improve public parks, and for a variety of other projects during this period.

The years following the end of World War II until 1960 were tremendous growth years for the city, with residential construction occurring at a rapid pace. In the early 1960's a new shopping area was constructed at the southern end of the city. Fire destroyed part of Highlands High School in 1962, but a new wing was built to replace the destroyed portions in 1963.

The late 1960's and 1970's was a time of maturation for Fort Thomas, as a new city building and YMCA was built. Interstate routes 471 and 275 were also completed during this time. These new roads increased access to all areas of Cincinnati for those living in Northern Kentucky. However, the interstate development also led to a shift in traffic and business development away from the existing commercial centers and towards the emerging interstates. The 1980's and 1990's have been a time of slowed growth, though development pressures in Fort Thomas remain high. New developments have been relegated to infill lots or to lots with steeper slopes that were considered unable to be developed in the past. In spite of a multitude of environmental concerns associated with construction on these slopes (such as slippage, landslides, and excessive water runoff), new developments continue to be proposed for these sites. In addition, infill "flag lots" and the use of shared driveways for new developments have proliferated during this time.

Fort Thomas continues to be a dynamic community committed to improve the quality of life of its residents. The challenge facing residents and city leaders is to maintain and increase the level and quality of public services while protecting the general health, safety and welfare of its residents.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and Objectives

Quality of Life

To maintain and enhance Fort Thomas as a desirable community in which to live and work.

- * Pursue the necessities of both residents and business.
- * Maintain and enhance the historically high quality character and standard of living in Fort Thomas
- * Continue to plan for improvements to the form and function of Fort Thomas.

To eliminate or mitigate (where necessary) visual blight.

- * Enforce and strengthen property maintenance codes.
- * Encourage buffering around unsightly property.

To enhance the inherent physical beauty of Fort Thomas.

- * Continue to institute the plans for the beautification of the major town centers.
- * Enhance gateways to the community from all major corridors.
- * Strengthen the multi-modal function and visual attractiveness of major corridors.
- * Maintain and enhance the appearance of park facilities.
- * Promote public gardens and overall beautification of the community.
- * Evaluate the need for architectural design guidelines in commercial areas, gateways, public lands, and other areas where appropriate.
- * Develop programs for improving facades in the commercial centers.

Recreation and Open Space

Continue to implement the city parks and recreation master plan with a vision for the short- and long-range provision of parks and recreation facilities.

- * Enhance the unique role each park plays in the total recreational experience of Fort
- * Explore methods of linking parks and open space with schools, commercial areas, civic centers and neighborhoods.
- * Explore possibilities for creating a sports complex including both outdoor and indoor recreation facilities.
- * Work collectively with the schools and other groups to provide for recreational opportunities.

To provide an adequate amount and variety of recreational opportunities to satisfy the full range of population needs.

- * Promote recreational facilities for all ages and interest groups including the handicapped.
- * Promote year round recreational facilities.
- * Investigate opportunities for providing additional recreation space as required based on user demand.
- * Encourage no net loss of parks and recreation areas.

To provide recreation and open space facilities and programs which are conveniently located and accessible to the community.

- * Promote regional facilities with an appropriate balance of active and passive recreation pursuits.
- * Promote neighborhood oriented facilities for day-to-day use.

- * Find creative methods of financing new recreational and open space (i.e. interagency coordination, public/private agreements, foundations, etc.).
- * Plan a system of parks, open space and linkages that create a minimal distance to recreational opportunities for all residents of Fort Thomas.
- * Coordinate with facilities outside of the City.
- * Disseminate to the public information on recreational facilities and functions.

To achieve the goals of this element without unduly disrupting the goals of other elements.

- * Explore alternatives for resolving conflicts between school sponsored sports and the impacts to residential areas surrounding the parks.
- * Recreation and open space should be interwoven with urban development.
- * Encourage no net loss of recreational or open space due to improvements.
- * Protect recreation and open space from intrusion by incompatible land uses by developing stricter guidelines.

Cultural Facilities

To provide for an adequate amount of well located cultural facilities to serve the basic needs of the community.

- * Establish and preserve programs and institutions that promote cultural pursuits of all segments of the population.
- * Consider location of cultural facilities to best suit the needs of the local residents.
- * Coordinate with the schools and other groups for use of the theater/performance space.
- * Coordinate with the Army Reserve facilities for use of the amphitheater, armory and Community Center.
- * Provide outdoor events, such as concerts and parades, for the entire community.

To enhance the sense of community and uniqueness of Fort Thomas through both the cultural facilities and events.

- * Require that the design of new facilities fit the historically high quality character of Fort Thomas.
- * Encourage performances that relate to the history and heritage of Fort Thomas.

To coordinate the provision and location of specialized types of cultural facilities in this area with facilities throughout the metropolitan region.

Housing/Residential Development

To provide safe and sanitary housing for all residents.

- * Promote incentives for eliminating or rehabilitating dilapidated and declining housing.
- * Promote the maintenance of existing housing stock.
- * Enforce the building maintenance code.
- * Encourage new housing as needed which fits with the historic community character.
- * Ensure that the City's zoning ordinances support development which fits the historically high quality character of Fort Thomas and maintains a balance of air, light, vegetation and space.

To encourage a variety of housing types and residential development to accommodate different needs and preferences of the population.

- * Encourage a variety of densities, types and styles to meet the needs and preferences of a wide range of family sizes, age groups and income levels.

- * Ensure equal opportunity in choice of housing by all elements of the population in the region.

To achieve the goals of this element without unduly disrupting the goals of other elements.

- * Protect areas proposed for residential development from intrusion of incompatible uses.
- * Promote new residential areas only where they can be reasonably and economically served with essential public services.

Transportation

To maintain and enhance a transportation system which reduces energy consumption and provides convenient access to and from residential areas, employment centers, education and health care facilities, and centers providing goods and services.

- * Plan for the location of various land uses so that they minimize distance between major points of origin and destination.
- * Support various modes of transportation to satisfy the needs of all segments of the population such as elderly, children, handicapped, low income families, and others.
- * Promote the use of mass transit facilities, such as buses.
- * Coordinate with existing and proposed regional transportation improvements to service Fort Thomas.
- * Implement and coordinate bike paths to all the major destinations in and around Fort Thomas including linkages to other systems in the region.
- * Improve sidewalks by both maintaining existing sidewalks and constructing sidewalks in areas where they do not currently exist.

Improve and Sustain transportation system capable of moving people and goods throughout and beyond the area in the safest and most convenient manner.

- * Promote a transportation system based on anticipated travel movements of people and goods throughout the region.
- * Incorporate and integrate all transportation modes including water, rail, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian.
- * Create a transportation plan which coordinates school and commuting schedules.

To achieve the goals of this element without unduly disrupting the goals of other elements.

- * Ensure that transportation facilities do not have a negative impact on other major areas of concentration such as those used for residential, commercial, recreational or public land uses.
- * Ensure that transportation facilities do not consume a disproportionate share of urban land area, divide neighborhoods or commercial centers, or adversely affect land uses along their corridors.

Commercial and Services

To improve the Economic performance within focused areas of Fort Thomas

- * Develop an overall strategy for the city with unique districts and commercial nodes catering to different needs and users.
- * Enhance and promote the multiple commercial districts (i.e. Town Center, South district and Midway districts) where each has a unique market focus or niche.

Improve and promote centers providing goods and services so as to maximize consumer safety and convenience while minimizing any adverse environmental effects.

- * Ensure that the amount and location of facilities providing goods and services is based upon need.
- * Provide for commercial districts oriented to primarily surrounding residents and secondarily to the transient public.
- * Encourage appropriate site design (i.e. off-street parking, adequate ingress egress, loading and service area, landscaping, and minimal adverse environmental effects).
- * Strengthen the physical characteristics and economic viability of the Town Center and Midway business districts.
- * Encourage residents to use local businesses and support their growth.

To promote a stable and diversified employment base.

- * Promote a variety of employment opportunities for the labor force and level of skill.
- * Market Fort Thomas to the types of commercial and service activities that appear to have the greatest potential for success and stability in the region.
- * Coordinate with regional economic development efforts.

To achieve the goals of this element without unduly disrupting the goals of the other elements.

- * Ensure that transportation and way finding facilities enhance, and not disrupt centers for goods and services.
- * Encourage the development of centers for goods and services near similar land uses.
- * Minimize the disrupting influence the centers for goods and services have on surrounding development.
- * Protect these areas from incompatible land uses.

Education

Provide a quality education to all children in the community.

- * Encourage coordination and access of facilities with other community groups.
- * Encourage ways to improve and enhance access to modern technological equipment.

Establish an effective working relationship between the local boards of education and public facilitators.

- * Encourage and promote the sharing of recreational facilities.
- * Facilitate safe pedestrian traffic to, from and around the local schools.
- * Promote civic programs within the schools (i.e. Arbor Day, Learn not to Burn, D.A.R.E.)

Utilities

Encourage and promote a dependable and adequate supply of all essential utility services to the population.

- * Ensure that all developed areas are provided with essential utility systems.
- * Promote a safe water supply and centralized sewerage facilities to all existing and anticipated development.
- * Promote adequate safety features that will ensure the dependability of the systems under normal and emergency situations.
- * Encourage “universal access” to the various information technologies to minimize vehicular dependency, enhance coordination between community facilities, improve

the efficiency of public services and safety, and aid in the management of community data such as land use and demographics.

- * Comply as a region with federal and state regulations for storm water management.

To promote all essential utility services as economically as possible.

- * Use the essential utility services as a method of controlling the direction and timing of new development.
- * Support utility markets that promote competition.

To evaluate the development of future telecommunication facilities to provide universal access without unduly disrupting the goals of other elements.

- * Coordinate within the region for telecommunication utilities.
- * Encourage telecommunication providers to collocate and employ the most up to date technology to limit the need for additional towers in the community.
- * Develop a list of criteria for the evaluation of telecommunication facility citing that encourages universal access and the use of existing structures or facilities as well as those criteria typical of other public utility facility sittings.
- * Encourage telecommunication providers to develop a plan for the removal of tower facilities should such facilities become obsolete.

Public Health and Safety

To provide adequate public and/or private health facilities to protect and care for the population.

- * Promote adequate and well located public health facilities to serve the entire population.
- * Promote public and/or private health programs to serve the different and unique segments of the population.
- * Continue to work with existing health care facilities to plan for future expansion.

To provide an effective comprehensive program to prevent sickness and disease.

- * Promote an adequate, sanitary, and safe means of collecting, transporting and disposing of solid wastes and stormwater.
- * Promote a storm water collection system that meets or exceeds all federal and state regulations.
- * Promote programs dealing with various forms of pollution control.
- * Promote a comprehensive program of health care and disease prevention including adequate facilities, personnel, and accessibility.

To provide an effective program of public safety to prevent, where possible, and minimize, when necessary, injury or damage to person or property.

- * Provide a prevention-oriented public safety program.
- * Provide adequate facilities, equipment, personnel and programs for fire and police protection, civil defense programs, flood protection, traffic safety, etc.

Resources and Environment

To ensure the most efficient and reasonable utilization of the area's physical resources while ensuring that any short-term uses of man's environment will be to the long-term benefit of all.

- * Coordinate with other government agencies to enforce existing or new regulations designed to protect environmentally sensitive areas of the community.
- * Identify potential environmentally sensitive areas and areas of critical concern.
- * Plan for the appropriate use or nonuse of environmentally sensitive areas and those of critical concern.
- * Promote and encourage restoration of any land areas which might be damaged due to resource extraction or temporary use.
- * Preserve man-made or natural features which have unique historical, architectural, or natural value.
- * Evaluate opportunities for developing parks or open space along the Ohio River.
- * Update development regulations to better manage growth in areas of steep slope or other environmental sensitivity.

To preserve a pleasant environment for the population.

- * Ensure the provision of areas with adequate light, vegetation, air and pleasing surroundings.
- * Identify and minimize pollution.
- * Promote the provision of sufficient open space within all types of development.
- * Promote and encourage smart and sensitive development for the protection of the greenbelt system around the City.
- * Provide incentives for the preservation of green space, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas.

To ensure that planning adequately considers methods of reducing energy consumption and adequate protection is afforded all energy resources.

Government

To ensure that all necessary functions of government are performed in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

- * Incorporate existing and new technology that improves efficiency and service delivery to the public.
- * Structure government to meet both short- and long-term goals of the community.
- * Promote responsible leadership, both in and out of government, which is accessible and responsive to the public.
- * Enact and administer uniform laws in an equitable and expeditious manner.
- * Consider regional options for efficiently and economically providing public services and ensuring that benefits gained and problems encountered in the area are shared equitably and solved cooperatively by the entire area.
- * Require fiscal responsibility including adequate and equitable financing of services and facilities.
- * Appoint an appropriate number of qualified administrative and service personnel to effectively conduct government business.
- * Coordinate activities and operations of all government functions to achieve efficiency and avoid duplication.

- * Improve the capacity to achieve the goals stated herein.
- * Identify a time table for achieving the objectives in this plan.
- * Investigate opportunities for outsourcing public services.
- * Explore alternative methods of disseminating information.
- * Encourage civic responsibility from all segments of the populations including various ages and social groups.

Existing Conditions

Demographic & Economic Assessment

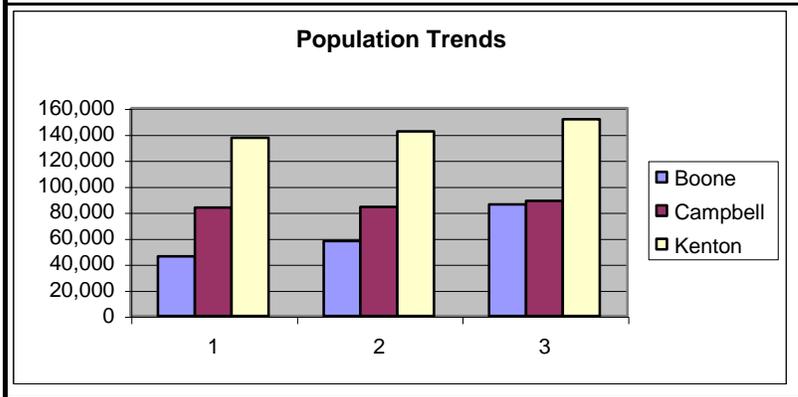
Population Trends

The population change in Campbell County was counter to those in other Northern Kentucky counties and regionally from 1980 to 2000. The population of Campbell County was flat through the 80's and rose 5.6% in the 90's. By contrast, Boone and Kenton Counties were experiencing significant population increases over this same period. Population growth in Boone and Kenton Counties has had a "spillover" effect in Campbell County during the 1990's. Based upon U.S. Bureau of Census data, Campbell County's population experienced an increase between 1990 and 2000 of 5.4 percent. If these trends continue, the population in Campbell County can be expected to increase to 95,000 by the year 2020.

Population Trends 1980-2000

County	1980	1990	2000
Boone	45,842	57,589	85,991
Campbell	83,317	83,866	88,616
Kenton	137,058	142,031	151,464

U.S. Bureau of Census

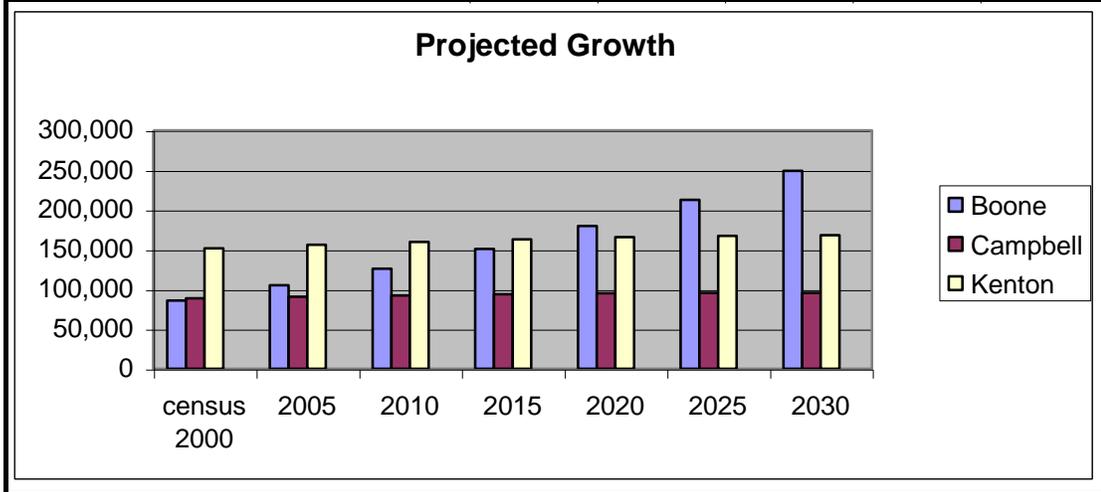


U.S. bureau of Census

As a mature city, however, Fort Thomas is not expected to experience the same levels of population growth. As a "landlocked" community surrounded by other municipalities, most new construction is expected to occur as infill development scattered throughout the city. This phenomenon is expressed through recent population trends and estimates at the local level. The population of Fort Thomas in 1990 was 16,032. In 2000, it was 16,495, an increase of less than 2.8% percent in spite of significant growth (around 5.4%) throughout the County. The population of the city has been generally stable during a decade of population growth for Campbell County as a whole. While this is typical of many of the mature cities on the far northern border of Campbell County (Newport, Dayton, Bellevue) and other Northern Kentucky Counties, it is still important that Fort Thomas strive to maintain its current population base, if not expand it.

Projected Growth

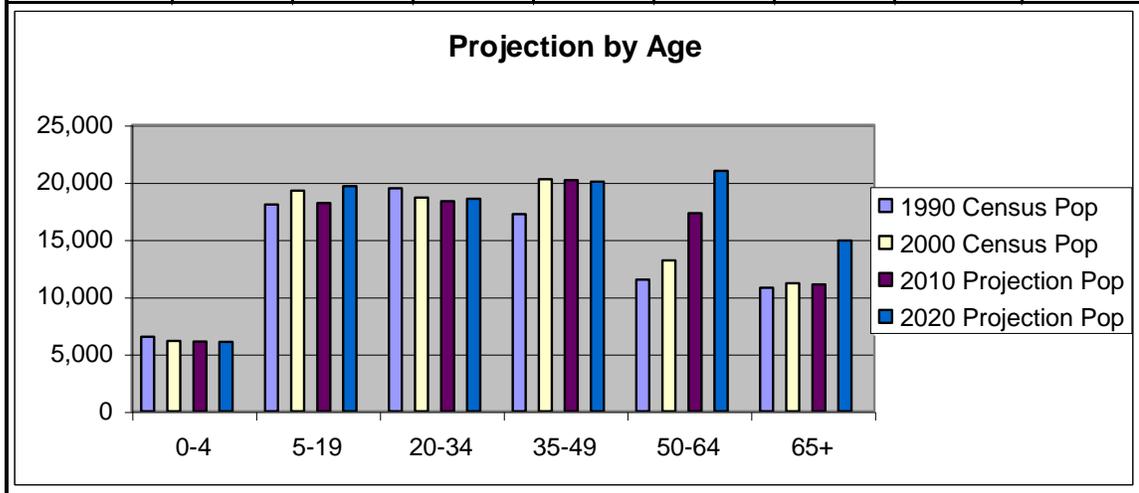
	census 2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
Boone	85,991	104,982	126,036	150,709	179,528	212,412	249,143
Campbell	88,616	90,700	92,385	93,818	94,931	95,542	95,547
Kenton	151,464	156,074	159,730	162,859	165,463	167,219	167,873



U.S. Bureau of Census, Kentucky State Data Center(University of Louisville)

Population by Age 1990-2010

Age Group	1990 Census		2000 Census		2010 Projection		2020 Projection	
	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%	Pop	%
0-4	6,497	7.7%	6,128	6.9%	6,095	6.7%	6,054	6.0%
5-19	18,045	21.9%	19,259	21.7%	18169	19.9%	19650	19.6%
20-34	19,458	23.2%	18,654	21.0%	18324	20.1%	18556	18.5%
35-49	17,221	20.5%	20,249	22.9%	20171	22.1%	20036	20.0%
50-64	11,482	13.7%	13,161	14.9%	17299	19.0%	20977	20.9%
65+	10,783	12.9%	11,165	12.6%	11072	12.1%	14894	15.0%
Total	83,866	99.9%	88,616	100.0%	91130	99.9%	100167	100.0%

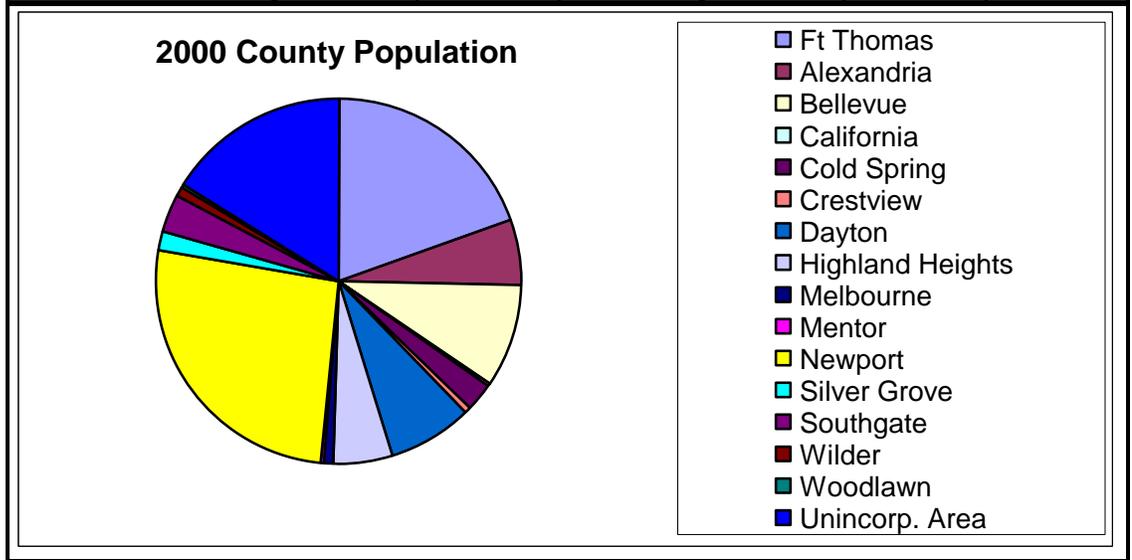


U.S. Bureau of Census, Kentucky State Data Center(University of Louisville)

As is the case with many communities, the “baby boomer” generation will continue to cause short-term population increases in successively older age groupings. This creates a wavelike effect in the populations of these age groups. The baby boomer generation, for example, is responsible for the projected spikes in the population of the 35-49 age group in Campbell County in the year 2000, and in the 50-64 age bracket in 2010. As this generation ages, there will be a corresponding increase in demand for services (public and private) geared towards an older population. This generation will not be leaving the workforce until shortly after 2010, but when it does there is likely to be a sharp increase in senior service demands with a comparative (if not actual) drop in the labor force, potentially straining traditional income tax collection mechanisms.

Population of Campbell County Cities

Area	Census Years			Change from 1990 to 2000		
	1980	1990	2000	amount	%	annual%
Ft Thomas	16,012	16,032	16,495	463	2.81	0.28
Alexandria	4,753	5,592	8,286	2,694	32.50	3.25
Bellevue	7,678	6,997	6,480	-517	-7.97	-0.80
California	135	130	86	-56	-65.12	-6.50
Cold Spring	2,117	2,886	3,086	200	6.48	0.65
Crestview	528	356	471	115	24.42	2.44
Dayton	6,079	6,576	5,966	-610	-10.22	-1.02
Highland Heights	4,435	4,223	6,554	2,331	35.57	3.55
Melbourne	628	660	457	-203	-44.42	-4.44
Mentor	169	169	181	12	6.63	0.66
Newport	21,587	18,871	17,048	-1,823	-10.69	-1.06
Silver Grove	1,260	1,102	1,215	113	9.00	0.90
Southgate	2,833	3,266	3,472	206	5.99	0.59
Wilder	633	691	2,624	1,933	73.67	7.36
Woodlawn	331	308	268	-40	14.93	1.49
Unincorp. Area	13,257	16,013	15,927	-86	-0.54	-0.05



U.S. Bureau of Census

The trends in Campbell County mirror those of the rest of the nation. The baby boomer generation was followed by a short “baby bust” cycle of extraordinarily low birth rates. This, in turn, has been followed by a “mini baby boom” in the 1970’s and 1980’s. Though significantly smaller in number than the baby boomer generation, this cycle of increased birth rates will nationally provide for the regeneration of a portion of the labor force lost when the baby boomers leave. This can somewhat be seen when examining the percent share of the population in Campbell County in the 5-19 age group in 2000, and the corresponding increase in the 20-34 age group in 2010. What is disturbing is the consistently declining birth rates over the past decade, and the anticipated continual decline of these birth rates. To maintain the labor force population, communities in Campbell County will need to attract in-migration of a labor force population to support the tax base needed to support the aging baby boomer population.

Construction in Fort Thomas

New home construction in Fort Thomas, like the population trend of the city, has been stable over the past ten years (1995-2004). According to city records, a total of 113 new single-family units were constructed in the last ten years. These figures support the characterization of flat population growth within the city and Fort Thomas’ status as a mature community.

As noted earlier, much of the population growth in Campbell County is in the central and southern portions of the county, particularly those areas with more available land and good proximity to highways leading into Cincinnati or other work areas in Northern Kentucky. Changes in the transportation network, the location of new work areas (such as new office or industrial parks), land pressures in surrounding communities, and in the general preferences of the home buying population could increase the pressure on the housing market in Fort Thomas. If this pressure is not met with a corresponding increase in new construction, home prices and land values can be expected to rise significantly.

CONSTRUCTION IN FORT THOMAS

Building Type	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	total	Average
New Single Family Dwelling	10	9	8	18	12	10	9	9	20	8	113	11.3
New Multi-Family Dwelling	2	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	2	12	1.2
Single Family Additions	31	43	47	52	35	30	33	49	57	69	446	44.6
Commercial Remodel/ Addition	9	7	11	11	2	3	8	6	5	14	76	7.6
Commercial New Construction	2	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0.6

City of Fort Thomas

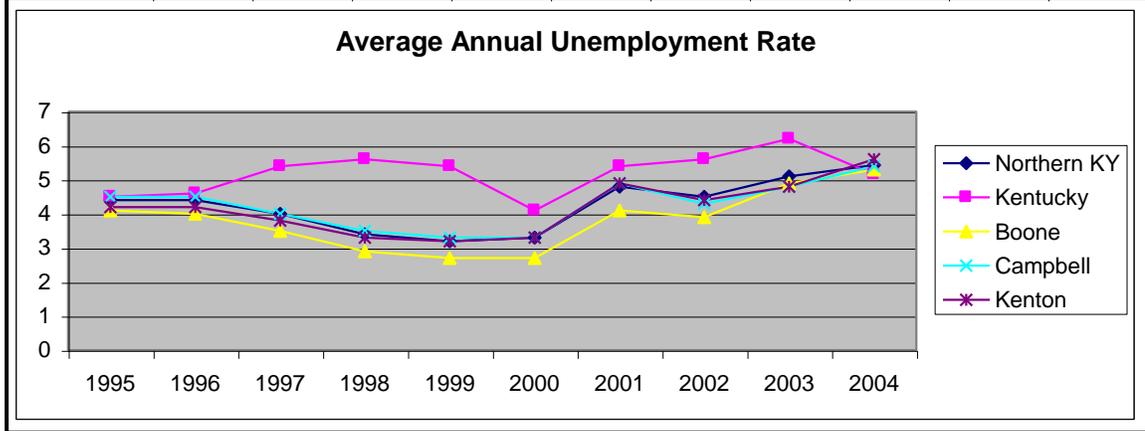
The above chart reflects steady and stable new home construction in Fort Thomas. Multifamily housing and new commercial building was very flat, while commercial building remodeling was sporadic. The increased trend of commercial remodeling may be stimulated by the city’s participation in the Renaissance on Main and National Main Street programs.

These programs focus on the vitality of the traditional business districts and the preservation of the historic fabric of the community. Fort Thomas Renaissance utilizes the proven Main Street four-point approach as the guideline for revitalization; stimulating interest and activity in the central business district redevelopment. Reinvestment in Fort Thomas’ central business districts and a vibrant business climate are critical components for a healthy community.

Employment

Unemployment Rates for Kentucky Counties: Annual Averages

Area	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Northern KY	4.4	4.4	4.0	3.4	3.2	3.3	4.8	4.5	5.1	5.4
Kentucky	4.5	4.6	5.4	5.6	5.4	4.1	5.4	5.6	6.2	5.2
Boone	4.1	4	3.5	2.9	2.7	2.7	4.1	3.9	4.9	5.3
Campbell	4.5	4.5	4	3.5	3.3	3.3	4.9	4.3	4.8	5.4
Kenton	4.2	4.2	3.8	3.3	3.2	3.3	4.9	4.4	4.8	5.6



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, not seasonally adjusted.

Labor force statistics indicate that Campbell County has a strong economy, which in turn indicates economic prosperity for the majority of residents and businesses in the individual communities in the County, including Fort Thomas.

Due in large part to steady county-wide population increases; there has been a steady rise in the civilian labor force in the county. The rise in the number of workers is often a secondary result of a solid economy--that is, new workers are attracted to areas of current economic prosperity.

The average annual unemployment rate in Campbell County has stayed equal with the surrounding counties (slowly rising since 2000) and lower than the state wide average for the past nine years.

Residents of Fort Thomas do not necessarily work in the city, and so the economic health of Campbell County and the surrounding region significantly impacts the economic prosperity of the city. Job growth in Campbell County provides another good mechanism by which to measure the current (and, to some extent, projected) economic health of the community.

The employment situation in Campbell County is encouraging. The local, as well as national, economy is on the rebound of the recession of 2000 and sharp recession after September 11, 2001.

The unemployment rate is still high. Although 1,000 new jobs were added between 2003 and 2004 bringing the county back to where it was in 1999-2000; the number of available workers has also increased leaving 523 more people unemployed than five years ago. The Northern Kentucky region's unemployment is higher than the state rate for the first time in a decade.

Civilian Labor Statistics

		Civilian Labor force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
Boone County	1995	37,923	36,374	1,549	4.1%
	1996	39,381	37,821	1,560	4.0%
	1997	40,948	39,478	1,470	3.6%
	1998	44,070	42,812	1,258	2.9%
	1999	46,415	45,165	1,250	2.7%
	2000	48,075	46,763	1,312	2.7%
	2001	49,233	47,201	2,032	4.1%
	2002	49,357	47,414	1,943	3.9%
	2003	50,539	48,070	2,469	4.9%
	2004	52,074	49,733	2,340	5.3%
Campbell County	1995	44,478	42,492	1,986	4.5%
	1996	44,521	42,534	1,987	4.5%
	1997	46,241	44,398	1,843	4.0%
	1998	45,648	44,055	1,593	3.5%
	1999	45,916	44,422	1,494	3.3%
	2000	46,301	44,800	1,501	3.2%
	2001	45,924	43,657	1,885	4.3%
	2002	44,223	42,338	1,885	4.3%
	2003	45,098	42,924	2,174	4.8%
	2004	46,587	44,409	2,178	5.4%
Kenton County	1995	76,828	73,586	3,242	4.2%
	1996	76,819	73,595	3,224	4.2%
	1997	79,838	76,820	3,018	3.8%
	1998	79,353	76,761	2,592	3.3%
	1999	80,293	77,747	2,546	3.2%
	2000	82,141	79,445	2,696	3.3%
	2001	81,619	77,629	3,990	4.9%
	2002	78,820	75,377	3,443	4.4%
	2003	80,254	76,420	3,834	4.8%
	2004	82,962	79,064	3,898	5.6%
Northern Kentucky	1995	159,229	152,452	6,777	4.3%
	1996	160,721	153,950	6,771	4.2%
	1997	167,027	160,696	6,331	3.8%
	1998	169,071	163,628	5,443	3.2%
	1999	172,624	167,334	5,290	3.0%
	2000	176,517	171,008	5,509	3.0%
	2001	176,776	168,487	7,907	4.4%
	2002	172,400	165,129	7,271	4.2%
	2003	175,891	167,414	8,477	4.8%
	2004	181,623	173,206	8,416	5.4%
Kentucky	1995	1,861,315	1,760,990	100,325	5.4%
	1996	1,867,760	1,762,722	105,038	5.6%
	1997	1,928,061	1,824,260	103,801	5.4%
	1998	1,933,335	1,844,158	89,177	4.6%
	1999	1,969,920	1,881,891	88,029	4.5%
	2000	1,979,248	1,898,571	80,677	4.1%
	2001	1,962,469	1,856,674	105,795	5.4%
	2002	1,932,470	1,824,480	107,990	5.6%
	2003	1,956,384	1,835,909	120,475	6.3%
	2004	1,983,223	1,881,041	102,192	5.2%

Kentucky Cabinet for Workforce Development, Department for Employment Services

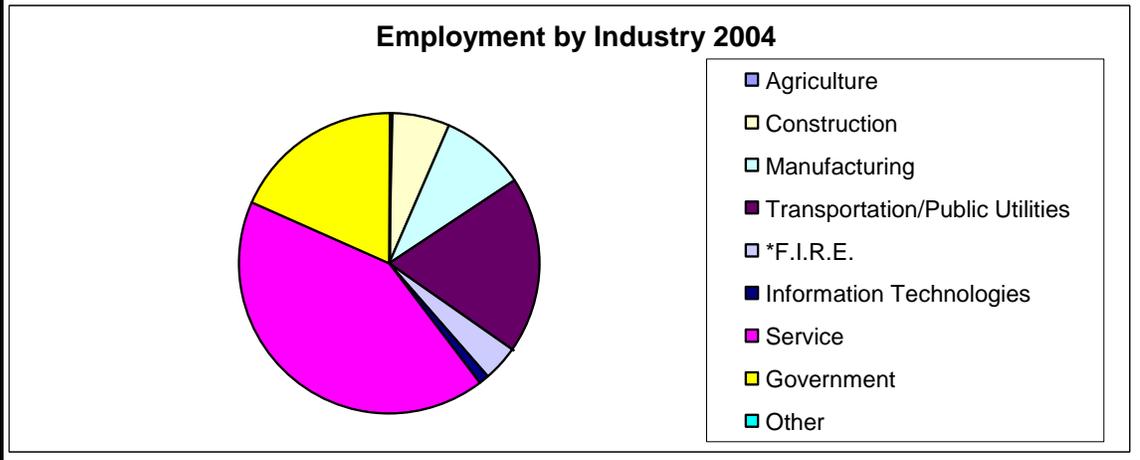
The diversity of the local economy is good but sliding towards a largely serviced based market. The service industry represents the largest percentage change in employment of any industrial category during that period (up 12.7% from five years ago). This group has the largest share of employees in the region. Information technologies have been added to this chart and are sure continue to grow, but we have no projections for this market at this time.

Employment by Industry

Industry	1990		1995		2000		2004	
	Jobs	% Share						
Agriculture	237	0.8%	298	0.9%	164	0.6%	75	0.3%
Mining	17	0.1%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%	-	0.0%
Construction	2,124	7.4%	2,316	7.3%	1,548	5.6%	1,705	6.0%
Manufacturing	3,044	10.6%	3,873	12.2%	2,676	9.7%	2,583	9.1%
Transportation/Public Utilities	553	1.9%	689	2.2%				
Wholesale Trade	864	3.0%	938	3.0%				
Retail Trade	6,685	23.3%	7,188	22.7%	5,258	19.3%	5,470	19.3%
*F.I.R.E.	1,751	6.1%	1,815	5.7%	1,075	3.8%	1,105	3.9%
Information Technologies					285	1.0%	292	1.0%
Service	8,228	28.7%	9,285	29.4%	11,468	42.1%	11,856	42.0%
Government	5,200	18.1%	5,309	16.8%	4,870	17.8%	5,213	18.4%
Other					44	0.1%	-	
TOTAL JOBS	28,703	100.0%	31,624	100.2%	27,223	100.0%	28,299	100.0%

*F.I.R.E.= Finance, Insurance, Real Estate

Kentucky Deskbook of Economic Statistics, Tri-Ed



Services includes professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services, Educational, health and social services, arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services, and other services (except public administration).

Certain industry groups hold special importance in the economic structure of Campbell County. Manufacturing is particularly important because it is the highest paying industry in Campbell County. Manufacturing employment constitutes just 9.7 percent of the total employment in the county (falling steadily since the mid 1990's). Diversity is clearly the key to the economic vitality of the county. Campbell County must strive towards a diversified job market to remain competitive.

Average Income by Industry

Industry	1995		2000		2004	
	Campbell Co.	Kentucky	Campbell Co.	Kentucky	Campbell Co.	Kentucky
Agriculture	\$ 10,953	\$ 15,341	\$ 18,283	\$ 26,017	\$ 32,800	\$ 27,290
Mining	\$ -	\$ 49,171	\$ -	\$ 46,827	\$ -	\$ 47,421
Construction	\$ 27,821	\$ 24,901	\$ 38,578	\$ 34,102	\$ 34,141	\$ 33,278
Manufacturing	\$ 43,013	\$ 36,029	\$ 41,942	\$ 39,119	\$ 42,316	\$ 42,236
Transportation/Public Utilities	\$ 24,161	\$ 35,133	\$ 31,006	\$ 41,024		
Wholesale Trade	\$ 28,429	\$ 32,365				
Retail Trade	\$ 12,410	\$ 14,080	\$ 17,913	\$ 20,959	\$ 29,627	\$ 29,698
*F.I.R.E.	\$ 19,619	\$ 23,229	\$ 34,263	\$ 39,614	\$ 37,060	\$ 39,117
Information Technologies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18,835	\$ 36,896
Service	\$ 22,826	\$ 21,895	\$ 29,527	\$ 27,719	\$ 22,251	\$ 26,133
Government	\$ 25,188	\$ 26,895	\$ 29,254	\$ 27,662	\$ 37,471	\$ 35,605
Average	\$ 23,824	\$ 27,904	\$ 28,201	\$ 29,955	\$ 29,599	\$ 32,279

*F.I.R.E.= Finance, Insurance, Real Estate

Kentucky Deskbook of Economic Statistics, Tri-ed

Social Statistics

As mentioned in the earlier discussion about population, the general birth rate had been declining at local, regional, and national; but has spiked since 1999. The teen birth rate in Campbell County declined almost 10 percent during the time period of 1989-1991 to 1994-1996; with an additional 25 percent decrease from 1994-1996 to 1999-2001 to the current rate of 13.9. Note that this percentage decline is significantly different than that of the general birth rate over the same time period in Campbell County. In other words, the ratio of teen births to general births is decreasing, indicating that the teen birth rate is declining not simply as a factor of overall declining birth rates, but due to other factors as well, such as teen pregnancy programs. Statewide, the ratio of teen births to general births has fallen faster than Campbell County but still has not reached the local rate.

General Birth Rates

Total birth rates per 1,000 Women 18-44					
Area	1989-1991	1994-1996	% of change	1999-2001	% of change
Boone County	65.1	64.1	-1.5%	78.1	12.1%
Campbell County	66.1	63.2	-4.4%	68.4	8.2%
Kenton County	68.7	67	-2.5%	73.7	10.0%
Kentucky	61.9	59.4	-4.0%	71.5	20.3%

Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources, Vital statistics Branch

Teen Birth Rates

Total Births to girls under 18 (rate of 10-17 per 1000)					
Area	1989-1991	1994-1996	% of change	1999-2001	% of change
Boone County	12.1	11.8	-2.5%	9.2	-22.1%
Campbell County	20.6	18.6	-9.7%	13.9	-25.3%
Kenton County	22.3	19.8	-11.2%	15.8	-20.2%
Kentucky	22	21.7	-1.4%	14.5	-33.2%

Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources, Vital statistics Branch

The infant mortality rate in Campbell County has also fallen over the same time periods. Infant mortality rates in Campbell County are declining faster than statewide rates. In fact, the infant mortality rate in Campbell County has remained lower than the statewide average for ten years.

Similarly, the child mortality rate in Campbell County is also declining faster than the statewide average. The child mortality rate in Campbell County is the lowest of the three Northern Kentucky counties.

Infant Mortality Rate

Deaths to children under 1 year old per every 1000 live births			
Area	1989-1991	1994-1996	1998-2002
Boone County	3.6	5.6	5.0
Campbell County	9.3	7.0	6.0
Kenton County	11.0	7.0	6.0
Kentucky	8.8	7.4	7.0

KentuckyYouth.ORG

Child Mortality Rate

Deaths to children 1-14 years old per every 1,000,000 population			
Area	1989-1991	1994-1996	1998-2002
Boone County	27.3	15.9	15.0
Campbell County	18.7	15.6	12.0
Kenton County	33.3	21.4	15.0
Kentucky	32.7	27.9	23.0

KentuckyYouth.ORG

Not all of the socioeconomic trends in Campbell County are positive. In spite of the increased number of jobs and the decreasing unemployment, the number of persons in poverty increased 24 percent between 1989 and 1993 and then decreased by 43 percent. The number of children in poverty increased over 27 percent from 1989 to 1993, this number went back down but the percent is incomparable because age perimeters have changed during the most recent period. The U.S. Census Bureau has changed the way it measures children in poverty, the old measurement of 5-17 years of age has been changed to 0-17 years of age. This will increase the overall number of children in poverty by adding five extra years to the chart.

Persons in Poverty

Area	1989		1993		2000	
	Total	5-17	Total	5-17	total	0-17
Boone County	4,221	967	5,688	1,365	4,924	1,787
Campbell County	9,087	2,205	11,264	2,808	7,524	2,594
Kenton County	13,792	3,638	19,815	4,854	13,005	4,549
Kentucky	681,827	160,547	747,919	180,606	550,332	182,746

U.S. Bureau of Census

Poverty Rates

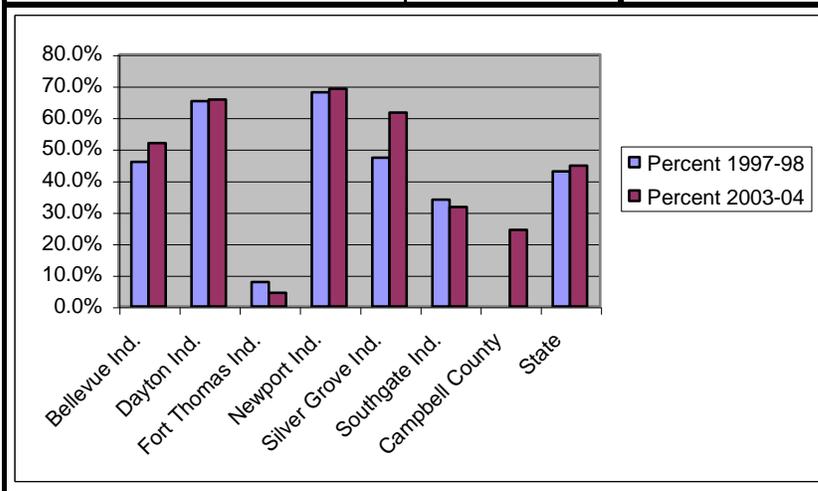
Area	1989		1993		2000	
	Total	5-17	Total	5-17	total	0-17
Boone County	7.4%	8.0%	8.4%	9.8%	5.5%	7.4%
Campbell County	11.0%	14.0%	13.0%	17.7%	8.6%	12.0%
Kenton County	9.9%	13.4%	13.7%	17.6%	8.6%	11.9%
Kentucky	19.0%	23.2%	19.6%	25.5%	13.9%	19.3%

U.S. Bureau of Census

There is evidence to suggest, however, that these poverty issues have not impacted the City of Fort Thomas to the same degree as other communities in the county. Though figures are not kept at the local level, one way to assess the poverty conditions in a city is through the school district free and reduced lunch programs. According to federal guidelines, children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of poverty level are eligible for free meals. Children from families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. As seen in the table (following this text), the percentage of students participating in the free and reduced lunch programs in the Fort Thomas Independent School District (I.S.D) is far below the rates of other school districts in the county. This indicates that the percentage of people in poverty who reside in Fort Thomas is much lower than that of other communities in Campbell County.

Free and Reduced Lunches

School	Percent 1997-98	Percent 2003-04
Bellevue Ind.	45.9%	51.9%
Dayton Ind.	65.2%	65.7%
Fort Thomas Ind.	7.8%	4.3%
Newport Ind.	68.0%	69.1%
Silver Grove Ind.	47.2%	61.5%
Southgate Ind.	33.9%	31.6%
Campbell County		24.3%
State	42.9%	44.7%



Kentucky Department of Education

Community Facilities

Introduction

This section reviews the major public and community facilities that affect the day-to-day lives of Fort Thomas residents. The term “community facilities” as used herein is meant to include: schools (public and parochial), park and recreational facilities, fire and police protection facilities, and library and human care facilities. This chapter will also address existing conditions concerning water, wastewater, solid waste, and storm water management facilities, as well as other facilities, which provide a public service or interest function to the community.

The availability, maintenance and expansion of community facilities are critical to creating and maintaining a high standard of living for all residents and workers in Fort Thomas. A review of current service and facility provisions can help local leaders develop future facility and service supply strategies.

Water Supply and Waste Management

General

Water supply and Waste Management Plans were included within the NKAPC 1972 Official Area-wide Comprehensive Plan and Update completed in 1981. These plans recommended plans for water supply systems, sanitary sewerage facilities, solid waste management and measures to improve storm water management. Water supply in Fort Thomas is provided by the Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) and serves the majority of the urban area within the Fort Thomas-Highland Heights water service area as well as other cities and portions of Unincorporated Campbell County. When needed, the Northern Kentucky Water District may also purchase water in order to supply their service areas.

Sanitation District No. 1 of Northern Kentucky serves all of Fort Thomas with centralized treatment provided at the Dry Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant in Kenton County. This wastewater treatment plant, constructed in 1979, serves large areas within Kenton and Campbell Counties, including the City of Fort Thomas. Solid waste management in Campbell County and Fort Thomas has changed significantly over the past 30 years. With the closing of the Fort Thomas Landfill, solid waste management has been dependent upon private contracts.

The storm sewer system in Fort Thomas is operated by the City of Fort Thomas but has future plans to consolidate with SD1. Storm water management within municipalities and industrial point discharges county-wide is affected by recent amendments to the Federal Clean Water Act of 1972 as amended by the Water Quality Act of 1987 and revised by the EPA in 2003. While municipal separate storm sewer systems serving incorporated areas of less than 100,000 people are not covered in the separate storm sewer permit requirements. However Boone, Kenton and Campbell counties entered into a joint agreement in 2003 to operate a regional storm water program with SD1 overseeing the program.

Water Systems

Water Agencies and Distribution

Much can be stated about the history between the Newport Water Works and the Campbell County Kentucky Water District regarding alternative sources of water supply for serving Campbell County, including the Fort Thomas-Highland Heights water service area. In the mid-1980's, alternatives considered included the following:

1. Expand the Newport Water Plant from 10.2 mgd (million gallons per day) to 16 mgd;
2. Buy water from Kenton County Water District No. 1 following the plant expansion to 34 mgd;
3. A combination of alternatives (1) and (2);
4. Build a new groundwater treatment plant for a 12 mgd capacity;
5. Build a new surface water plant for a 12 mgd capacity; or
6. Build a new source connection to Cincinnati Waterworks facilities beneath the Ohio River near California, Ohio.

Further study centered on a merger of water agencies in Northern Kentucky. In 1988 Campbell County Kentucky Water District voted to switch primary supply from Newport Water Works to Kenton County Water District No. 1 facilities. A 20-year agreement was consummated. In 1990, a circuit court judge rejected an order of the Kentucky Public Service Commission preventing Campbell County Kentucky Water District from buying water from Kenton County Water District No. 1. In May 1992, the Kentucky Court of Appeals ruled that Campbell County Water District could change water suppliers.

Today, Fort Thomas is served by the Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD). The Northern Kentucky Water District was formed after the merger of the Campbell County Kentucky Water District and the Kenton County Water District No. 1. The NKWD operates a treatment plant in southern Fort Thomas, and a treatment plant in northern Fort Thomas. Fort Thomas obtains all of its water through the NKWD. All raw water intakes for Cincinnati, Newport and NKWD serving northern Kentucky and southwest Ohio are located on the Fort Thomas side of the river due to lower sedimentation. The new NKWD intake and pumping station was completed in 1998.

Proposed Water Projects

Water Plants and Pump Stations	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
US 27 Pumping Station Expansion	\$2,300,000	starting construction			
Standby Generator at ORPS1	\$1,500,000				
FTTP Tube Settler Replacement	\$950,000				
MPTP Chemical Building/Raw Water PS/Transfer Pipe	\$500,000	\$4,000,000			
FTTP Ultraviolet Disinfection	\$500,000	\$3,500,000			
MPTP Filter Rehabilitation			\$530,000		
Replace ORPS1 #1 pump and install new pump #6	\$650,000				
New Rossford Tank; retire existing Lumley, Rossford Tanks				\$1,000,000	
FTTP Post-Filtration GAC (Part 1)					\$1,000,000

FTTP - Ft. Thomas Treatment Plant

MPTP - Memorial Parkway Treatment Plant

ORPS1 - Ohio River Pump Station 1 for the FTTP

Water Main Projects	Length	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Rossford Ave. from 12" to Tank, Covert	6350'	\$465,000	starting construction				
Covert Run Pike to 12"		\$50,000	starting construction				
Rossford Ave. Main Replacement 12"		\$184,500	starting construction				
Newport High Service 12" Interconnect	2150'	\$524,000	starting construction				
Newport LS/HS Interconnect/Regulated	2750'		\$520,000	starting design			

Please note: these project dates and cost are subject to change without notice.

Storm Water Management

Every building and paved surface in the community contributes to increased amounts of storm water runoff entering the waterways. This runoff can carry pollutants and contaminants off parking lots, streets and other hard surfaces that can foul the water supplies and negatively affect the environment. Because of this, Northern Kentucky is faced with meeting new federal regulations that focus on protecting and improving water resources from polluted storm water runoff. These new regulations are being enforced by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but federal dollars have not been set aside to help cities meet them, leaving local governments and consumers to bear the cost.

In an effort to reduce costs to residents and businesses in Northern Kentucky, the Judges-Executive of Boone, Campbell and Kenton Counties have requested that Sanitation District No. 1 (SD1) manage a regional storm water program. In response, SD1, with the help of several citizen focus groups, developed a Storm Water Management Plan for the tri-county area. This plan details how Northern Kentucky is going to meet the federal requirements which focus on water quality issues and, in addition, it addresses the need to focus on water quantity issues within the service area. The focus groups that assisted in this effort involved key stakeholder groups including: members of the business community, city leaders, engineers, planners, environmentalists, and citizens that have experienced flooding problems.

On August 1, 2003 SD1 officially assumed the role of overseeing this regional plan. New storm water responsibilities include:

- Monitoring the water quality of local waterways to identify types of pollution
- Identifying and eliminating improper connections that discharge waste into our rivers and streams
- Inspecting construction sites of one acre or more for compliance with established sediment and erosion control requirements
- Reviewing storm water control plans for pre- and post-construction projects
- Promoting good housekeeping efforts such as street sweeping and catch basin cleaning and implementing a variety of programs to educate the public on what they can do to help prevent contamination of storm runoff
- Assisting communities with prioritized upgrades and repairs to the existing storm water infrastructure to reduce flooding and pollution

Over the next three to five years, the District will be preparing for the transfer of the public storm water systems, including ownership and operation and maintenance responsibilities, from the cities and counties. Until these transfers occur, cities and counties will remain responsible for the operation and maintenance of their systems.

User Fees

Federal funding has not been provided to help our communities meet these new regulations; therefore, a funding mechanism has been developed to support the services that will be provided under the plan.

Residential properties, defined as detached, single-family homes and duplexes on a single parcel pay a flat monthly fee of \$3.75, which appears on the quarterly bill as \$11.25.

Non-residential properties pay a fee based on the actual amount of impervious surfaces on the property including rooftops, driveways, parking lots, sidewalks and other hard surfaces that prevent rain from soaking into the soil.

A Northern Kentucky survey concluded that the typical residential property contains 2,600 square feet of impervious area. This value is known as the Equivalent Residential Unit or ERU. The monthly storm water fee for non-residential properties is \$3.75 per ERU.

<i>Example Calculation for Gas Station/Convenience Store:</i>	
Building & Canopy	5,000 square feet
Service Lot	<u>40,000 square feet</u>
Total Impervious Area	45,000 square feet
45,000 square feet / 2,600 square feet = 17 ERUs	

Additional revenue will be generated through plan review and inspection fees.

Credits for Non-Residential Properties

SD1 has established a policy and procedures for providing credits against the storm water fee for non-residential properties that have implemented on-site storm water controls designed to reduce pollutants, water volume, and/or peak flows.

Credits can be granted for the following situations:

- Zero Discharge ~ no storm water is discharged from the property
- Water Quantity ~ retention or detention facilities exist on the property
- Water Quality ~ District-approved Best Management Practices (BMP) that meet specific design criteria exist on the property

- District-Approved BMPs for Water Quality Credits***
(Must meet specific design criteria)
- Wet pond
 - Dry pond
 - Artificial wetland
 - Oil/water separator
 - Infiltration practices
 - Multi-chamber catch basins
 - Porous pavement
 - Cistern
 - Vegetated roof
 - Grassy swales
 - Filter strips
 - Rain garden

The property can qualify for both water quantity and water quality credits, allowing for a credit of up to 80%. The maximum allowable credit for water quantity is 50% and the maximum allowable credit for water quality is 50%. The credit will be applied by reducing the number of billable ERU's.

SD1's credit policy is one of the most innovative policies in the country and is one of the only policies to offer water quality credits. To obtain a copy of the credit policy or the credit application visit www.sd1.org or contact SD1 at 859-578-7450.

How Businesses Can Help

Businesses can help reduce the amount of pollution reaching our waterways by:

- Reducing the amount of runoff leaving the property by reducing the amount of impervious surfaces or by utilizing BMPs where applicable.
- Keeping existing BMPs on your property maintained and operating properly.
- Using erosion and sediment controls on your property for any land-disturbing activities.
- Properly storing and disposing hazardous wastes including: oil, gasoline, diesel, paints and solvents, chemicals, chlorine, acids and corrosives, poisons and pesticides, etc.
- Washing vehicles in a covered area and in a location where the water drains to a sanitary sewer to prevent soap and debris from washing into storm drains.
- Picking up litter around your business and parking lot and disposing of it properly.

Sewer Systems

In July of 1995, Sanitation District No. 1 of Campbell and Kenton Counties assumed ownership and maintenance responsibility for all municipal sanitary sewer systems within Fort Thomas. The Dry Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, constructed in 1979 with a rated capacity of 46.0 mpg, serves Fort Thomas and large areas within Kenton, Campbell and Boone Counties. Wastewater treatment for residential, commercial and industrial users is accomplished by direct billing based on water meter readings made by the Northern Kentucky Water District.

Solid Waste Systems

Current Solid Waste Management Plan

In compliance with the Federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (PL 94-580), Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS) 224 and 109, Administrative Regulations and a Statewide Solid Waste Plan, a Solid Waste Management Plan for Campbell County was prepared by the Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD) in 1985. This plan, approved by the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet (NR&EP) in 1986, designated Campbell County as a Solid Waste Management Area, subject to implementation responsibilities and tasks within time frames in accord with an adopted schedule. Recommendations in that Plan expired in 1991. In 1992, a Draft Solid Waste Management Plan for Boone, Kenton and Campbell Counties, including the City of Fort Thomas, was prepared by the NKADD. This plan, reviewed and approved by the applicable fiscal courts, was submitted for review and approval by the NR&EP Cabinet prior to the January 1, 1993 deadline and approved on April 26, 1993. For specific details regarding past performance and future plans regarding solid waste collection, disposal, recycling, cleanup of litter and dumps, sitting issues, and enforcement of local, state and federal regulations, consult the current Solid Waste Plan prepared by the NKADD.

Existing Solid Waste Systems

Solid Waste services within the City of Fort Thomas are currently provided via contractual agreement under governmental authority between a private hauler (i.e.,

Rumpke, Inc.) and the City of Fort Thomas. This contract includes collection, storage, transportation, and disposal of solid wastes generated from primarily residential and commercial uses, including all city and school facilities. Private or open competition contracts with other individuals (i.e., commercial, institutional and industrial generators, etc.) also exist within the City of Fort Thomas. Currently, privately owned landfills in the Butler area within Pendleton County, Kentucky, Hamilton County, Ohio, and Williamstown, Kentucky are available for disposal of solid wastes generated within the planning area. Recycled materials are taken to the Rumpke Saint Bernard recycle plant.

Electricity

Electric power services are provided to areas within the City of Fort Thomas by the Union Light, Heat and Power Company, a subsidiary of Cinergy. The source of the electric power is Cinergy. Current residential and commercial rates can be obtained by contacting Cinergy at (513) 421-9500.

Natural Gas

Natural gas services are provided to areas within the City of Fort Thomas by the Union Light, Heat and Power Company, a subsidiary of Cinergy. The source of the natural gas supply is the Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation. Current residential and commercial rates can be obtained by contacting Cinergy at (513) 421-9500.

Campbell County Public Library, Philip N. Carrico Branch

In December 1995, the Campbell County Public Library opened the Philip N. Carrico Branch at 1000 Highland Avenue. The facility was expanded in 1999 and now encompasses 15,000 square feet. Attracting nearly 200,000 visitors annually, the branch houses nearly 70,000 items including books, DVDs, videos, audiocassettes and compact discs. The branch has many computer stations for patrons to access the World Wide Web or use Microsoft Office products to conduct research or personal business.

The Carrico Branch is one of three branches in the Campbell County Public Library system. Patrons can visit or request books from any branch in the system. The Library's catalog and other helpful information is available on the web at www.cc-pl.org. Special programs for children, young adults, and adults are held many times during the month at all locations. Programs and services are free.

Health Care

High-quality medical facilities are readily available in the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky region. There are 33 hospitals containing over 9,000 beds in the area. Several specialty hospitals, including the Shriners Burn Institute, Veterans Administration Medical Center, University Hospital Trauma Center, and the Children's Hospital Medical Center, are located in Cincinnati. Hospitals located in Northern Kentucky include St. Elizabeth Medical Center (Covington and Edgewood), St. Luke Hospital West (Florence), and St. Luke Hospital East in Fort Thomas. There are also several large nursing homes located in Fort Thomas; some of these include Carmel Manor, Highland Health Care, Veterans Administration nursing home and domiciliary, and Barrington Place Assisted Living. Each is staffed with the proper medical personnel and is accessible to the sick and elderly in the community and elsewhere.

St. Luke Hospital East (a member of Health Alliance) is located in Fort Thomas on Grand Avenue provides a wide range of medical services to the community. The Hospital staffs and utilizes 168 beds but has 338 licensed beds, including 17 intensive care beds, plus 26 skilled nursing beds and they employ 277 registered nurses 62 licensed nurse practitioners and total of 1031 full time staff. St. Luke East also recently completed a million dollar expansion of the emergency department to better serve the growing community; is home to the Northern Kentucky Cancer Treatment Center, and Long Term Acute Care Hospital. Additional services also include Northern Kentucky's first Cardiac Risk Reduction Center, a wound treatment center, medical house calls program, and an anticoagulation clinic, providing comprehensive care to the aging population. St. Luke has also partnered with Hospice of Bluegrass to provide an in-house Hospice service.

City Facilities

Fire Protection

Fire insurance ratings (or “classes”) are assigned for each fire district in the state by the Insurance Service Organization. These ratings are used by the Kentucky Department of Insurance to help establish fire insurance premiums in each area. Class ratings are based upon how quickly and effectively a fire department can respond to a fire emergency situation. Factors affecting class ratings include location and frequency of fire hydrants, water system pressure, water storage facilities, quality and quantity of mobile fire protection equipment, staffing, and other such factors. Ratings are assigned from Class 1 (the best or quickest response) to Class 10 (slowest or least effective response). Communities with lower fire protection class ratings have lower fire insurance premiums than communities with higher class ratings.

The City of Fort Thomas was assigned a Class 3 rating in 2003; this rating is good for 10 years. By comparison, Alexandria has received a Class 4/9 rating (4 in the city and 9 in the surrounding areas), Bellevue/Dayton a Class 3 rating, Newport a Class 3 rating, and Covington a 2 rating. Further study will be given as to how the city can improve its fire protection rating.

Police Protection

The Fort Thomas Police Department successfully passed their second state re-accredited in July 2004. The certificate of accreditation was first received in June of 1994. Every five years participating police departments undergo an in-depth examination in order to continue accreditation by the Kentucky Associations of the Chiefs of Police. The Re-accreditation process involves a complete inventory and audit of the Police Department including policies and procedures, facility, equipment, property and evidence handling, and many other facets of the police department too extensive to list.

City General Services Department

The City of Fort Thomas General Services Department entails multiple functions, including; Planning, Building Permits & Inspections, Zoning Enforcement, Public Works and Property Management. The Building Inspection division recently received an ISO (Insurance Services Office Inc.) Classification of 3. This classification combined with the improved fire department rating helps reduce costs for property insurance by 5-10%. ISO is a national program that grades the effectiveness of community efforts to prevent loss and property damage.

City of Fort Thomas Equipment

The following table summarizes vehicular equipment owned or leased by the City of Fort Thomas in Spring 05.

City of Ft. Thomas Vehicles

Department	Year	Make	Model
Administration	2001	Ford	Crown Victoria
Animal Control	1998	Ford	Econoline
Fire	1997	Ford	Crown Victoria
Fire	1996	Dodge	Pickup
Fire	2004	Chevrolet	Tahoe
Fire	2001	Sutphen	104' Aerial Truck
Fire	1982	Sutphen	Pumper
Fire	1993	Sutphen	Pumper/Rescue
Fire	1999	Freightliner	Fire Rescue
**General Services	1992	Ford	Bucket Truck
General Services	1997	Ford	Crown Victoria
General Services	1997	Ford	Crown Victoria
General Services	1995	Ford	Dump Truck
General Services	1981	Dodge	Pickup
General Services	1991	Dodge	Pickup
General Services	1993	Chevrolet	Pickup
General Services	2005	Chevrolet	Pickup
General Services	1991	Dodge	Pickup
General Services	2002	Chevrolet	Dump Truck
General Services	2002	Chevrolet	Pickup
General Services	1990	Chevrolet	Dump Truck
General Services	1992	Chevrolet	Pickup
General Services	1996	Ford	Aerostar
General Services	1996	Dodge	Pickup
General Services	1994	Kodiak	Dump Truck
General Services	1991	Kodiak	Dump Truck
General Services	1999	GMC	Dump Truck
General Services	2001	Dodge	Utility truck
General Services	1989	Chevrolet	Dump Truck
Parks/Recreation	1995	Ford	Pickup
Parks/Recreation	1992	Chevrolet	Pickup
Parks/Recreation	1996	Ford	Aerostar
Parks/Recreation	1998	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	1997	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2001	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2001	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2003	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2003	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2005	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2005	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2000	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	1998	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2000	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	1994	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	1992	Ford	Bronco
Police	2000	Jeep	Cherokee
Police	2004	Ford	Crown Victoria
Police	2004	Ford	Crown Victoria
** Split between three municipalities			

Parks and Recreation Facilities

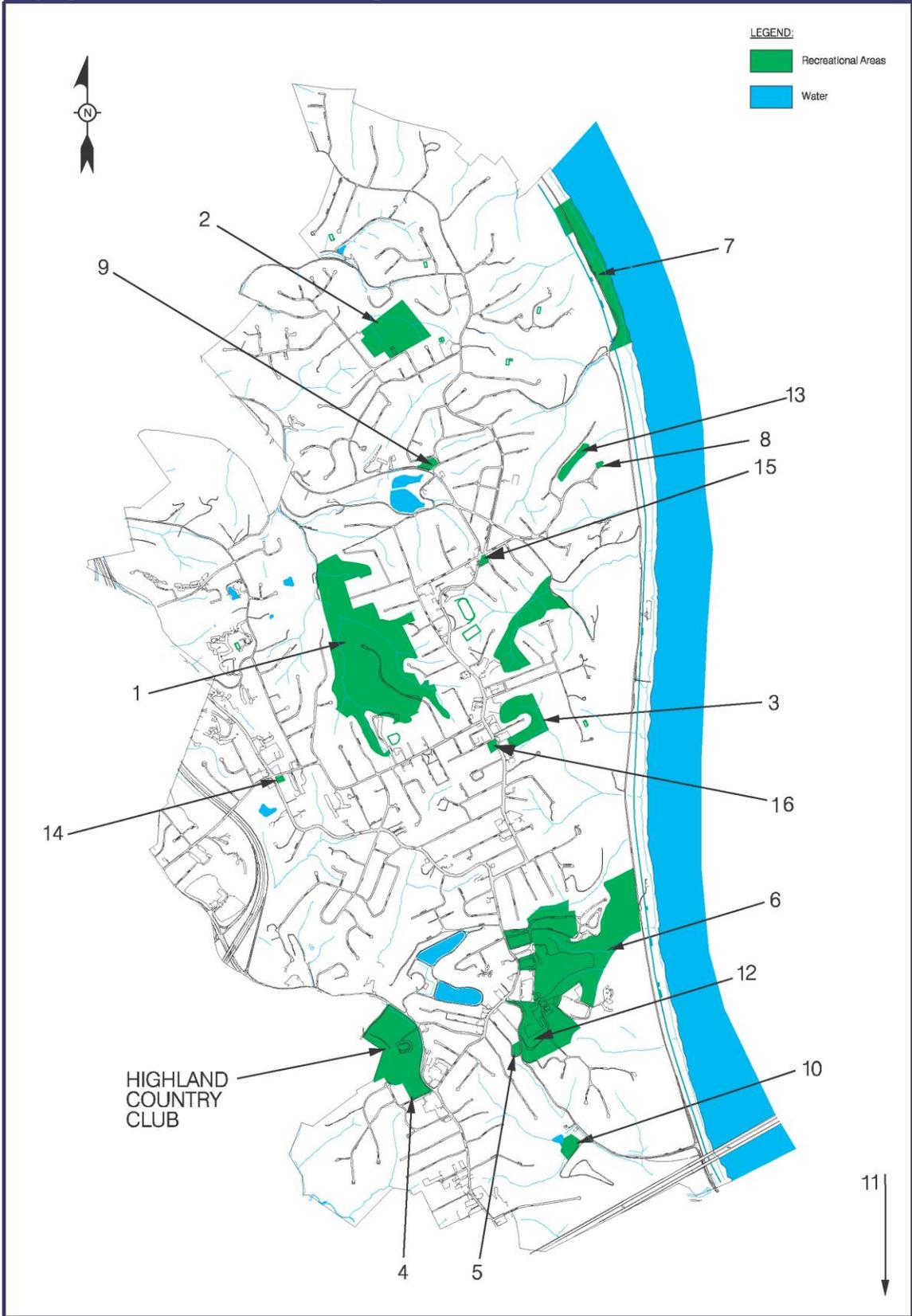
The City of Fort Thomas provides a number of parks and recreation facilities throughout the community, which serve the various recreational and open space needs of the citizens. These areas are identified as “Recreation” on the Generalized Existing Land Use Map, which generally reflects the current boundaries of the city’s park properties. There are a few quasi-private facilities located in Fort Thomas. These would include Highland Country Club, Fort Thomas Swim Club, and YMCA.

Tower Park is the largest park in the city and provides a wide range of recreational activities. The “Community Center” Building located in this park has been renovated and is used as a community center. The following table summarizes the Parks and Recreation system facilities.

City Park Facilities

Name	Map Node	Acres	Classification	List of Facilities
Highland Hills Park	1	77.4	Large Park	Sheltered picnic areas (2); basketball court; shuffleboard courts (4); horseshoes courts (2); ball field/ soccer field; Swings; walking trails; sand volleyball court; restrooms; Multiuse play equipment; 9 hole Frisbee golf ; 2 acre dog park 3 water fountains
Rossford Park	2	14.5	Playground	Sheltered picnic area; basketball court; walking trail; play equipment; water fountain baseball/softball/football fields (4),
Storrs Park	3	10	Ball field	Soccer field
Winkler Playfield	4	6.1	Ball field	Baseball/soccer/ football fields (2); water fountain
Shawnee Ball field	5	2.5	Ball field	Baseball field
Tower Park	6	86.69	Large Park	Park shelters (3); playground areas (2); a large play structure; tennis courts (6); combination lighted softball/baseball/football field; shuffleboard courts; walking trails; outdoor amphitheater; basket ball courts; soccer field; 400-meter track; restrooms; sand volleyball courts (4); armory gymnasium facility; community center; tree trail; and a mountain bike trail; 3 water fountains
Riverfront Land Route 8	7	20	Undeveloped	2,862 feet of river frontage
Riverside Parkway Land	8	21	Undeveloped	hillside
West Southgate Park	9	1	Neighborhood Playground	Picnic area (4 tables, 2 grills); benches (8); sandbox; play apparatus
River Road Soccer Field	10	3	Neighborhood Playground	Soccer field; parking facility
Ft Thomas soccer field	11	11	Soccer fields	soccer fields
South park	12	6	Soccer fields	soccer fields
Unnamed park	13	4.13	Undeveloped	Hillside
Highland and Grand	14	0.26	Pocket Park	Uncompleted park
Inverness	15	0.1	Pocket Park	Sitting park
Anderson Property	16	0.8	Pocket Park	Open space

City of Fort Thomas Parks Map



In addition, Campbell County owns and maintains A.J. Jolly County Park. Jolly Park is an 874-acre park that offers a 175-acre manmade lake with 11 miles of shoreline and scenic lake overlooks. The park also has an 18-hole golf course and clubhouse, bicycle and hiking trails, a swimming pool, tennis courts, volleyball courts, badminton courts, and a fishing pier. Picnic and camping areas include a 40-acre picnic area with shelter, grills and tables; 50 camping pads; a primitive camping area; a campsite reserved for scouts; a large redwood observation tower; and a 9-hole disc golf course.

Recreational Standards

Park Type	Acres/1000 Peoples	Size/Range	Service population	Maximum use radius
Playlots	n/a	2500 ft ² - 1 acre	500-2,500	small neighborhood
Vest Pocket Parks	n/a	2500 ft ² - 1 acre	500-2,500	small neighborhood
Neighborhood Parks	2.5	5-20 acres	2,000-10,000	1/4 - 1/2 mile
District Parks	2.5	20-100 acres	10,000-50,000	1/2 -3 miles
Large Urban Parks	5	100+ acres	1/50,000	Within 1/2 hour
Regional Parks	20	250+ acres	Entire Community	Within 1 hour

Source: Gold, Seymour M., Recreation Planning and Design, New York, 1980

Existing School Facilities

Public Schools

Enrollment

The annual enrollment generally ranges from 2275 to 2300. Although there is some inconsistency from year to year enrollment is expected to remain stable through 2009.

Facilities

In the fall of 2001, Highlands Middle School opened adjacent to Highlands High School. Highlands Middle School serves students in grades 6-8. The facility houses 600 students in a 95,000 square foot building. The building is comprised of a three story academic wing, gym, art and technology rooms, cafeteria, administration wing, and a parking garage.

The Board of Education is consulting with an architectural firm regarding the renovation of Highlands High School. It is anticipated that renovations will begin in the near future.

Test Scores

In 1990, the state legislature passed the Kentucky Reform Act in a broad attempt to improve public education in Kentucky. At that time the state instituted tests for elementary, middle, and high school students. The assessments, referred to as CATS (Commonwealth Accountability and Testing System), are used to determine which schools receive rewards for improvements or sanctions for declines.

Because CATS tests are administered in two-year cycles, the scores in the table reflect student performance from both the 2001-02 and 2003-04 school years. Overall, Fort Thomas schools scored exceptionally well. The district has earned the top score of all K-12 Kentucky school districts for the past 10 years.

CATS Test Scores, 2002-2004 Fort Thomas Independent School District

School Name	2001-2002	Goal	2003-2004
Johnson Elementary	96.3	96.8	101.6
Moyer Elementary	85.6	93.2	97.1
Woodfill Elementary	96.4	89.2	97.7
Highlands Middle School	90.1	94.1	96.9
Highlands High School	94.2	94.1	96.9

Johnson

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
K	59	48	45	34	35	48	54	52	50	58	52	53	53	53	54
1	70	55	49	43	43	34	43	57	58	65	62	56	57	57	57
2	75	63	60	56	56	45	34	42	52	50	62	59	54	55	55
3	69	73	68	56	56	60	46	38	42	55	53	65	62	57	58
4	66	60	71	68	68	62	59	49	40	41	57	55	67	64	59
5	65	53	60	67	67	68	63	62	48	43	42	58	56	69	66
6	79	61	50	70	71	64									
	483	413	403	394	396	381	299	300	290	312	328	346	349	355	349

Moyer

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
K	65	61	56	49	50	40	43	40	57	59	48	49	51	53	52
1	57	64	64	50	51	64	61	49	53	61	75	61	62	65	67
2	61	62	65	51	51	53	65	58	45	56	61	75	61	62	65
3	67	62	62	68	68	54	55	63	61	49	58	64	78	64	65
4	75	63	60	64	64	69	57	51	58	65	49	58	64	78	64
5	65	82	64	60	60	66	66	57	55	64	67	51	60	66	81
6	71	65	79	60	61	61									
	461	459	450	402	405	407	347	318	329	354	358	358	376	388	394

Woodfill

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
K	52	39	45	34	34	29	41	48	47	44	42	44	45	44	44
1	47	54	44	46	47	47	39	44	54	53	53	51	53	54	53
2	41	55	47	55	57	51	42	32	49	56	53	53	51	53	54
3	42	50	49	54	53	58	55	42	33	47	57	54	54	52	54
4	53	47	47	48	48	47	53	57	40	27	43	52	50	50	48
5	31	59	49	55	47	49	49	51	55	41	27	43	52	50	50
6	37	33	61	52	51	49									
	314	352	347	352	345	330	279	274	278	268	275	297	305	303	303

Highlands Middle School

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
6	187	159	190	182	183	174	196	195	180	173	156	144	160	178	195
7	208	196	171	183	193	206	190	198	195	189	183	165	152	169	188
8	180	207	201	197	174	175	195	185	204	191	185	179	161	149	165
	575	562	562	562	550	555	581	578	579	553	524	488	473	496	548

Highlands High School

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
9	218	200	237	184	185	216	201	204	211	225	211	205	198	178	165
10	188	217	197	208	209	187	209	199	199	199	220	206	201	194	174
11	172	181	192	224	226	200	191	211	200	195	198	219	205	200	193
12	169	168	183	179	182	215	195	181	208	195	189	192	212	199	194
	747	766	809	795	802	818	796	795	818	814	818	822	816	771	726

Summary

	95-96	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09	09-10
K-5	1060	1050	1005	958	955	944	925	892	897	934	939	970	994	999	988
6-8	575	562	562	562	550	555	581	578	579	553	524	488	473	496	548
9-12	747	766	809	795	802	818	796	795	818	814	818	822	816	771	726
	2,393	2,393	2,381	2,323	2,315	2,317	2,302	2,265	2,294	2,301	2,281	2,280	2,283	2,266	2,262

Projected Number

Source: FTISD

Private Schools

Two parochial elementary schools serve the City of Fort Thomas: St. Catherine of Siena School located on Rossford Avenue, and St. Thomas Elementary School, located on South Fort Thomas Avenue. Both schools are fully accredited and are under the direction of the Department of Education of the Catholic Diocese of Covington.

St. Catherine of Siena Elementary School Enrollment

Grade	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
K	20	36	31	17	37	23	27	25	24	22
1	25	23	25	31	18	37	24	31	27	21
2	26	25	22	36	32	18	36	24	28	24
3	25	25	27	22	36	30	17	37	22	27
4	31	26	25	26	22	31	33	17	35	20
5	24	31	27	25	21	23	32	32	16	31
6	24	24	31	24	25	22	23	28	30	10
7	21	20	18	29	19	15	22	22	23	23
8	25	21	19	21	30	18	15	20	20	23
Total	221	231	235	231	240	217	229	236	225	201

St. Catherine of Siena Elementary School

St. Thomas Elementary School Enrollment

Grade	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
K	35	34	26	31	21	24	21	22	25	29
1	28	38	37	22	36	20	28	26	21	26
2	34	25	37	38	21	34	21	27	27	23
3	29	34	24	35	35	20	30	20	28	28
4	40	25	34	23	36	33	19	28	19	27
5	32	37	25	34	23	36	33	19	30	23
6	30	30	36	24	34	24	35	30	20	31
7	30	22	30	33	21	32	22	35	29	23
8	28	29	22	29	32	21	34	23	36	30
Total	286	274	271	269	259	244	243	230	235	240

St. Thomas Elementary School

Postsecondary Education

Almost sixty-four percent of high school graduates from the class of 2003 were enrolled in colleges or universities in the fall, according to data released today by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The college enrollment rate of recent high school graduates was little changed over the year and remains near historically high rates.

Education Attainment

Area	High School Graduate or Higher (%)			Bachelors Degree or Higher (%)		
	1990	2000	Change	1990	2000	Change
Kentucky	64.6	74.1	14.7	13.6	17.1	25.7
Boone	76.4	85.1	11.4	15.3	22.8	49.0
Campbell	71.0	80.8	13.8	14.9	20.5	37.6
Kenton	74.4	82.1	10.3	17.0	22.9	34.7

Census of Population and Housing 1990 and 2000

No significant postsecondary education facility exists in the City of Fort Thomas; however, several nearby colleges and universities serve residents seeking various higher education degrees. Founded in 1968, Northern Kentucky University (NKU) is the largest university in the northern portion of the state. Located on a 400-acre campus about five miles south of Fort Thomas in the Campbell County community of Highland Heights, NKU serves the northern Kentucky region by offering 68 degree programs including postgraduate degrees in business, nursing, education, public administration, and law. NKU has also opened a 24-acre satellite campus in Covington. Several other colleges and universities serve Fort Thomas and the Greater Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky region. Many of these schools have outstanding national reputations in music, medicine, law, education, architecture, urban planning, and liberal arts. These schools are listed below.

Area Universities and Colleges

School	City	State	Enrollment
Art Academy of Cincinnati	Cincinnati	OH	182
Antonelli College	Cincinnati	OH	438
Beckfield College	Florence	KY	465
Cincinnati Bible College/Seminary	Cincinnati	OH	844
Cincinnati State College	Cincinnati	OH	8,624
College of Mt. St. Joseph	Cincinnati	OH	2,200
Hebrew Union College	Cincinnati	OH	130
Northern Kentucky University	Highland Heights	KY	14,011
Southern Ohio College / Brown Mackie	Cincinnati	OH	1,793
Thomas More College	Crestview Hills	KY	14,000
University of Cincinnati	Cincinnati	OH	34,086
Xavier University	Cincinnati	OH	6,600

City of Fort Thomas

Natural Features

Introduction

Information regarding natural features, such as soils, slopes, floodplains, and waterways, are helpful in evaluating planning strategies. Natural features have had a tremendous impact upon the built environment in Fort Thomas, and will continue to exert significant influence on future land development plans. Land planning decisions should be guided by careful consideration of the potential impact to both the natural and built environment.

Sensitive hillside development and restrictions on development within floodways can allow moderate development and redevelopment in Fort Thomas while maintaining the integrity of the natural environment and the safety of persons and property within the city.

General Physical Profile

Topography and Drainage

The rugged topography of Fort Thomas has had a decided impact upon the development of the city. The topography can be described, in general terms, as being quite hilly with steep slopes occurring along the hillsides in most instances. Elevations range from 455 feet at the Ohio River to over 850 feet on the tops of the ridges. The majority of the development of the community has taken place along the tops of these ridges at elevations exceeding 775 feet. The remaining land has, for the most part, been left undeveloped.

There are two major ridges that can be identified in Fort Thomas. The northernmost ridge follows North Fort Thomas Avenue from Dixie Place to Gregory Lane with a westward extension from North Fort Thomas Avenue occurring along the route of Rossford Avenue. The other major ridge exists along either side of North and South Fort Thomas Avenue and Memorial Parkway to the southern city limits. A continuation of this ridge projects from Fort Thomas Avenue in a westerly direction along the route of Highland Avenue.

Several valleys project into the center of the city. The most noticeable are those that follow Covert Run Pike, Waterworks Road, Tower Hill Road, and River Road. Several other valleys extend from Grand Avenue toward the center of the city and from Mary Ingles Highway toward the middle of Fort Thomas. Many of these valleys contain slopes of 30% or more and rise 225 feet or more from the lowest point on the valley floor to the high points on the edges of the hills. A relatively large amount of the vacant land in Fort Thomas has slopes of 20% or more. The high bluff along the eastern boundary of the city acts as a natural levee protecting the City of Fort Thomas from flooding by the Ohio River. An examination and comparison of the slope map with the land use map provided with this report will graphically illustrate how the land with excessive slopes has largely been bypassed and remained undeveloped. It should be noted that steep slopes do not necessarily preclude development, but they do present severe limitations and environmental hazards, such as the landslides that continually plague Columbia Parkway in Cincinnati. In fact, many of these steep slopes are in areas of development pressure.

For the most part, surface drainage is accomplished in the city through the natural valleys that occur here. Generally speaking, the area east of North and South Fort Thomas Avenue drains directly into the Ohio River. The area south of Highland Avenue and west of South Fort Thomas Avenue drains toward Three Mile Creek. The remaining area north of Highland Avenue drains toward Newport.

Soils

A survey of soils indicates the limitations and assets of an area for particular land uses from the standpoint of soil capabilities. The following list indicates some of the factors that would be identified by such a survey and which should be considered in planning for future land uses:

- 1) Areas subject to flooding;
- 2) Areas of poor soil permeability where on-site disposal systems and drain tile fields would not function or would function poorly;
- 3) Areas with steep slopes which place limitation upon development;

- 4) Areas with unusually shallow soils where underground utility construction would be difficult;
- 5) Areas of unstable rock bases or poor subsoil support;
- 6) Areas of soils suitable for fill material;
- 7) Areas with soils that have high or low fertility characteristics;
- 8) Areas that are highly eroded;
- 9) Areas with soils of high shrink-swell potential are likely to cause foundation problems.

The above list includes only a small part of the total number of characteristics included in a soil survey that are applicable to land use planning. Recognition should be given to the fact that a soil survey is necessarily general in nature and should not be used as a substitute for an on-site detailed analysis of soils by a soil scientist when construction is considered.

The surface soils in Fort Thomas range from silt loam, at the surface, to silty clay or clay near the tops of the rock formation. In other words, the soils are composed of fairly fine-grained material generally described simply as clay. Some sand is found on the tops of the ridges near the center of the city. Rocks of limestone and limestone with shale interblended occur below the soils.

The predominant soils found in Fort Thomas are Eden clay, Lowell silt loam and Allegheny silt loam. The following discussion summarizes the characteristics of the soils found in Fort Thomas.

Eden clay is the most frequently occurring soil in the city. This soil type generally occurs on rather steep slopes and can be found on the sides of the valleys that project into the center of the city and on the hillsides overlooking the Ohio River. Eden clay is generally not well suited for development because of the steep slopes on which it occurs and because the soil is often excessively drained.

Lowell silt loam is the second most frequently occurring soil and it is the soil on which much of the development of the city has taken place. This soil is usually found on slopes of up to 20%. Lowell silt loam is comparatively well suited for urban development where the slopes are not too steep to present problems.

Allegheny silt loam can be found at random locations within the developed area of the city. Generally this soil is found on slopes that are relatively minor. This soil's sand content and gentle slopes make it one of the best found in Fort Thomas for urban development.

Geology

A study of the geologic history of a region permits a better understanding of how an area achieved its present configuration and characteristics.

The major formations of rock found in Northern Kentucky-- and therefore in Fort Thomas--are listed below in the order of their occurrence:

- 1) Maysville: limestone with shale partings;
- 2) Eden: shale with limestone partings;
- 3) Cynthia: limestone exhibiting gnarly bedding;
- 4) Lexington: limestone with shale;
- 5) Chazy Black River: limestone with shale partings;
- 6) St. Peter: sandstone;
- 7) Knox: dolomite;
- 8) Shale, sandstone, igneous and metamorphic rocks.

Little information is known about the rock strata found below the Knox formation. The Knox formation was laid down in a sea that covered this area in early geologic time. This formation was then uplifted, the sea withdrew and the Knox was then subjected to wind and water erosion. The weathering of the rock, thus exposed, contributed to the formation of the hills and valleys that are present in the region. The St. Peter, Chazy Black River, Lexington, Cynthiana, Eden and Maysville formations were deposited, geologically speaking, shortly after the formation of the Knox. These rocks were composed of limestone, dolomite, and shale, whereas the St. Peter formation consists of sandstone. The three most recent formations--Maysville, Eden, and Cynthiana--outcrop in Northern Kentucky. Deposits of glacial soils, alluvial sands and residual soils cover the rock formations.

There is a distinct lack of glacial character to the geology of Northern Kentucky. This condition is due to the fact that the southernmost advance of the glaciers during the ice age was approximately to the edge of the Ohio River Valley. The lack of glacial character is somewhat advantageous because glacial soils are often problem soils.

Northern Kentucky did, however, receive some glacial deposits from melt-waters of the glaciers.

The four basic landform groups in Campbell and Kenton Counties are:

- 1) Glacial outwash terraces;
- 2) Alleviated valleys;
- 3) Limestone plateaus; and
- 4) Shale uplands.

The flat plain on which the northern part of Newport is located exemplifies a glacial outwash terrace. The flood plains and lowlands adjacent to the Ohio and Licking Rivers are examples of alleviated valleys having been formed from the deposits of watercourses. The land forms in Fort Thomas exhibit characteristics of the limestone plateaus. The Maysville limestone caps are more resistant to weathering than the Eden Shale; therefore, relatively flat tops and steep slopes are formed. Shale uplands are found mainly in the southern parts of both counties.

Some of the implications for land use planning that can be drawn from a knowledge of the geology of Fort Thomas include:

- 1) Maysville limestone is the major cap rock of the limestone plateau area and is capable of supporting heavy loads. Where the depth of this rock is sufficient, foundations for relatively large buildings may be constructed upon this formation.
- 2) Eden shale is often found on the slopes of limestone plateaus. Eden shale is relatively competent but not as strong as Maysville limestone. When clayey residual soils come into contact with shale such as Eden and are lubricated by water, a danger of slippage can sometimes occur. The foundations of structures built on soil-rock combinations just described are apt to slip and crack.
- 3) Tunnels for highways, etc., require additional support for Eden shale.
- 4) The groundwater through the Maysville, Eden and Cynthiana formations is not too corrosive. Therefore, ordinary coatings for sewer and water pipes should be sufficient.
- 5) The shallow soil cover in such of the uplands of Northern Kentucky may present some problems for pipeline construction due to the fact that the rocks encountered at relatively shallow depths may have to be ripped or blasted to permit the laying of the pipe below the frost line.

- 6) Water does not percolate well through Eden shale. Therefore, the installation of on-site disposal systems in areas where shale is near the surface presents distinct problems in the dispersal of effluent from clay tile fields or tanks.
- 7) Massive continuous beds of limestone provide excellent possibilities for the underground storage of gas and fluids.
- 8) The possibility of utilizing the process of underground disposal exists in both counties. The City of Fort Thomas has been developed primarily on the crests of the limestone plateaus mentioned above. Eden shale can be found under the soils on the slopes of the many valleys that are present throughout the city.

Erosion

Erosion has not caused many construction problems in Fort Thomas because most of the development in the city has taken place on the upland ridges where the least amount of erosion has occurred. One problem normally attributed to erosion is the loss of topsoil which hinders landscaping and the growth of trees, shrubs and grass. Severely eroded areas often produce gullies that must be accounted for in the design of subdivisions or urban development projects. Heavily eroded areas also contribute to increased runoff of storm water, thereby creating drainage problems.

Erosion has been moderate in the area east of North and South Fort Thomas Avenue to the Ohio River. The least amount of erosion in the city has taken place where Allegheny silt loam occurs. This includes the land along Highland Avenue between Newman Avenue and west of Grand Avenue from Highland Avenue north to the city limits, and the area along North Fort Thomas Avenue near Covert Run Pike is also relatively un-eroded. Extensive erosion has occurred in the valleys surrounded by urban development. This includes the valley that follows Waterworks Road and branches off into Highland Hills Park and into the valleys on either side of the subdivision that is divided by Clover Ridge Road.

It must be understood that soils, topography and/or slopes and erosion are closely interrelated. For example, erosion depends greatly upon the type of soil present in an area and the amount of slope that occurs there. The characteristics of soils are greatly affected by the slope of the land on which they occur. They have been discussed separately in this report merely for the purpose of simplifying analysis.

Climate

Climatological data is compiled nationally by the National Weather Service, which oversees the regional and local collection of climatological data. Climatological information for Kentucky and Ohio is gathered and disseminated regionally by the Midwest Climate Center in Champaign, IL. Figures for the City of Fort Thomas were gathered from the nearest National Weather Service climate monitoring station, which is located at Cincinnati Lunken Airport (station #331576). The winters in this region are relatively mild with an average winter temperature of 32.8° Fahrenheit. Maximum amounts of snowfall occur in January and February, though heavy snows occur well into March. Temperatures at or below freezing occur, on average, 90 days per year, with fewer than 3 days per year at or below 0° Fahrenheit. Generally, the first killing frost occurs in September and the last takes place in May.

Fort Thomas Temperature

Spring and early summer are punctuated with numerous thunderstorms. The prevailing south to southwest winds carry warm moist air from the Gulf of Mexico up the Ohio Valley to the Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati area, thereby causing the high frequency of thunderstorms. Temperatures of 90° Fahrenheit or above occur, on average, 25 days per year. Summers are moderately warm with daily maximum temperatures during June, July and August in the mid-80's. Fall is a pleasant time of year, with moderate temperatures and somewhat lower precipitation. Fall months also have the fewest number of days with precipitation.

The climate of this region is continental, which implies a wide range of temperatures. There are no extremely large water bodies or other factors, which would tend to stabilize temperatures. Temperatures range from an average daily low of 21.2° Fahrenheit in January to an average daily high of 86.6° Fahrenheit in July. Fort Thomas experiences an average of 40.70 inches of annual precipitation. This amount falls midway between the annual precipitation means extremes of other major cities in the region.

Land Use

Introduction

Good planning includes recommending areas suitable for additional development and discouraging the development of areas that are unsuitable for development. It is poor planning practice to support development in areas with sensitive environments or that are unsuitable for infrastructure. However, it is also poor planning practice to discourage development in areas where there are no such constraints.

Growth is a necessary function of a community and can be defined in several ways. Growth can mean an increase in the physical size of a community or it can mean the refining or advancing from one stage of development to another. Fort Thomas is nearing its capacity of physical growth. The process of refining and advancing the community of Fort Thomas requires a careful look at the existing land uses and noting areas where growth, refinement and advancement are possible and desirable.

Physical Setting/Development Context

Perched on a bluff overlooking the Ohio River, Fort Thomas' development pattern clearly reflects the environmental and social factors that formed the city. The river and neighboring communities form strong boundaries which have contained the growth in a relatively small land area. Higher densities and mixed use areas have developed as a response to the constrained land area. Developed as a bedroom community to Cincinnati, quality and stability have been the driving forces of Fort Thomas' urban form. The soils and the topography of the area limited development to non-agricultural uses and the position of the community overlooking the Ohio River attracted middle class workers from Cincinnati.

Land Use Classifications

The term "generalized land use inventory" suggests that the description of the districts is broad and inclusive and the location of such districts on a map are approximate. These descriptions are meant to provide a general idea of the types of land uses found in each classification, and the relationships between the various land uses.

Residential

The 1999 Land Use Plan described three classifications for residential land uses *low-, medium- and high-density*. Specific densities such as dwelling units per acre are reserved for the zoning ordinance and are illustrated on the zoning map.

Low density residential

This classification is characterized by single family homes on large lots.

Medium density residential

This classification is characterized by single family, duplexes or small apartment buildings on small lots.

High density residential

This classification is characterized by high-density apartment buildings and complexes.

Commercial

This plan continues to identify three commercial classifications; *general retail/service, highway retail/service, and office*. These classifications represent the existing land uses and indicate proposed land uses.

General retail/service

This classification is characterized by businesses with small setbacks and more pedestrian-oriented design. Often, parking for these businesses is located off-site.

Highway retail/service

This classification is characterized by automobile-oriented businesses with larger setbacks and a greater number of on-site parking spaces.

Office

This classification is characterized by office complexes and/or buildings and their associated necessities (i.e. parking areas, structures, etc.).

Mixed use development areas

A special development district classification was replaced with a mixed use development classification in the 1999 plan. This classification is intended to represent areas of the community where a variety of land uses are necessary and desirable. For instance, the intersection of Fort Thomas Avenue and Highland Avenue is an historically mixed use area. The variety of land uses that have developed there are both necessary and desirable to the community. Other districts such as the Midway area have similar characteristics.

Community Facilities

Three classifications for community facilities are continued from the 1999 Comprehensive Plan.

Schools

This classification includes all land owned and operated by the Fort Thomas Independent School District. This includes buildings, recreational areas and undeveloped land.

Park and Recreational Areas

The recreational classification includes all public or semi-public lands being used for either passive or active recreation.

Other community Facilities

This classification includes both public and institutionally owned non-recreational lands open to the public such as government buildings, large churches, libraries, cemeteries, etc.

Industrial

Industrial land uses include manufacturing, wholesale, mining, railroad, and other similar uses.

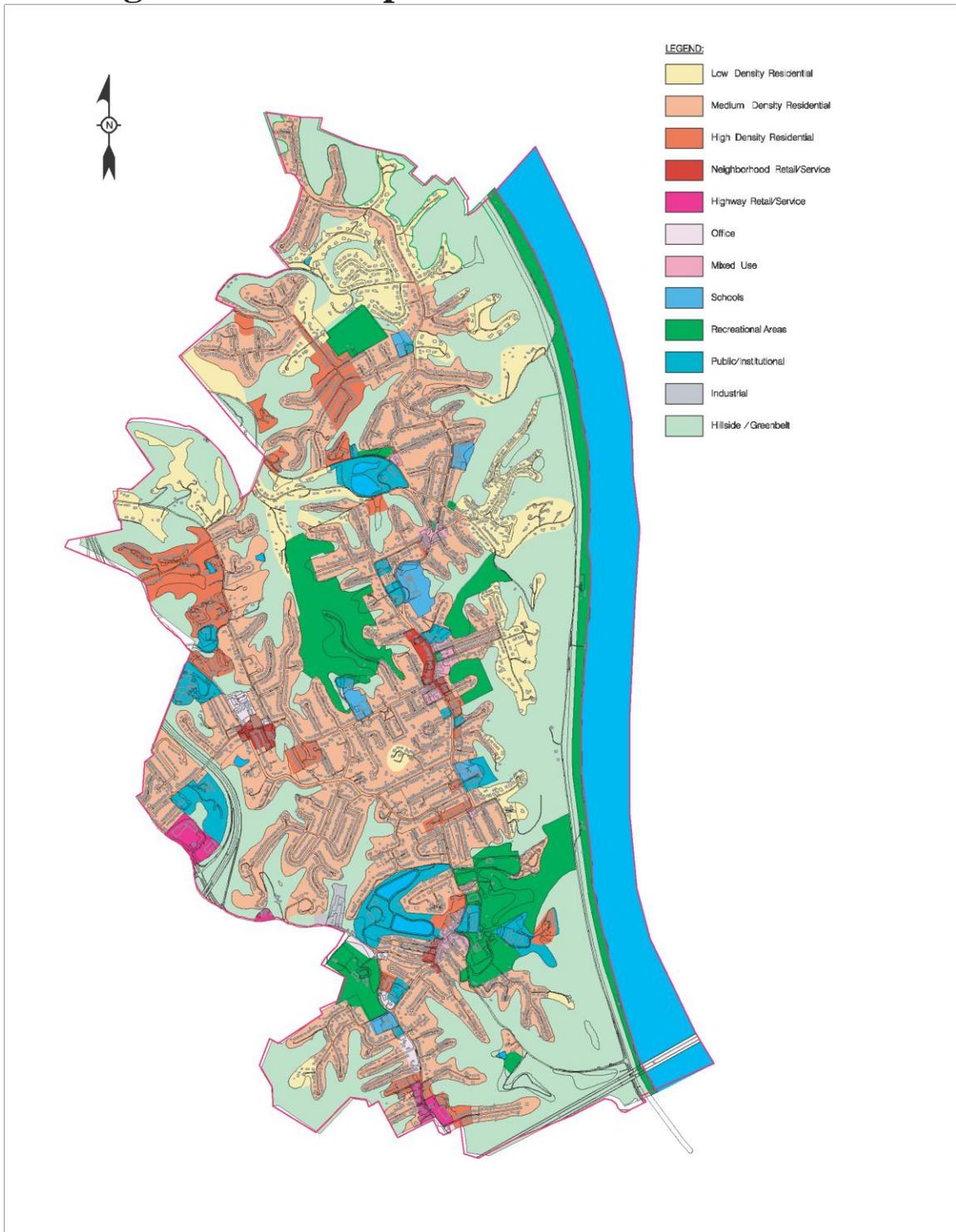
Hillside / Greenbelt

The hillside/greenbelt area is inappropriate for development due to the steep terrain (usually greater than 20%), frequency of flooding, poor soils and density of vegetation.

Agriculture

Agricultural lands are rare in Fort Thomas. The prime land for agriculture has been previously developed or is immediately next to the river. The area near the river, however, does not allow for productive farming because of other constraints.

Existing Land Use Map



Fort Thomas Development Overview

Physical and social forces influenced the settlement of Fort Thomas have clearly impacted the physical form of urban development. Although most of the City of Fort Thomas is medium density residential, various sections of the city have developed as a result of distinct forces affecting land use, form and character. A discussion of estimated acreage breakdown of the community and the forces which formed this combination of land uses follows.

Fort Thomas Existing Land Uses (Approximate Acreage)

Name	Square Feet	Acres	Percent of Total
Residential	66,252,666	1,589.42	44.06%
Low Density	11,577,461	277.75	7.70%
Medium Density	48,873,113	1,172.49	32.51%
High Density	5,802,090	139.18	3.85%
Commercial	2,680,628	64.33	1.80%
General Retail/Service	1,079,973	25.91	0.72%
Highway Retail/Service	1,081,628	25.96	0.73%
Office	519,029	12.46	0.35%
Mixed Use	918,766	22.04	0.61%
Community Facilities	20,865,724	500.56	13.87%
Schools	1,462,479	35.08	0.97%
Recreational Areas	14,666,409	351.84	9.75%
Public/Institutional	4,736,838	113.64	3.15%
Industry	243,358	5.84	0.16%
Hillside Area	59,390,266	1,424.79	39.50%
Total	150,351,408	3606.98	100.00%

Source: City of Fort Thomas

Residential

Nearly half (44 percent) of the land area in Fort Thomas is used for residential purposes. This high percentage is common in most bedroom communities. Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of the residential land is used for medium-density residential with low density residential accounting for 17.5 percent. High-density residential accounts for 3.85 percent of the total land area and 7.6 percent of the residential land area.

Most residential development follows the ridge lines. High-density and low-density land uses are scattered throughout the community with most of the high-density occurring at easily accessible sites near major arterials and most low-density occurring in the less accessible areas such as remote ridges.

Commercial

Commercial areas account for nearly two percent of the land area in Fort Thomas. Typically highway retail/service land uses are extremely low density due to large parking lots. Since highway retail/service land uses are limited in Fort Thomas, the amount of land dedicated to commercial use is low. Of the commercial lands, general retail/service and highway retail/commercial occupy equal proportions of 40 percent with office land uses occupying nearly twenty percent.

Mixed Use

Mixed use districts include the areas referred to in this plan as the Town Center and Midway. These areas represent less than two-thirds of one percent of the total land area in Fort Thomas. Unclear boundaries are inherent to mixed use land use classifications as the proportion of residential may increase the further from the nuclei of the mixed use area as it gradually transitions into a residential neighborhood. Difficulty in determining the boundaries of mixed use areas are compounded when residential uses are being converted to commercial and service uses as is the case with Fort Thomas. In conclusion, the amount of mixed use in Fort Thomas is difficult to precisely determine and may be more than the low amount estimated.

Community Facilities

Schools, recreational areas and public/institutional areas occupy nearly fourteen percent of the total land area of Fort Thomas with recreational areas alone occupying almost ten percent. The high percentage of residential land uses require a large amount of land devoted to community facilities.

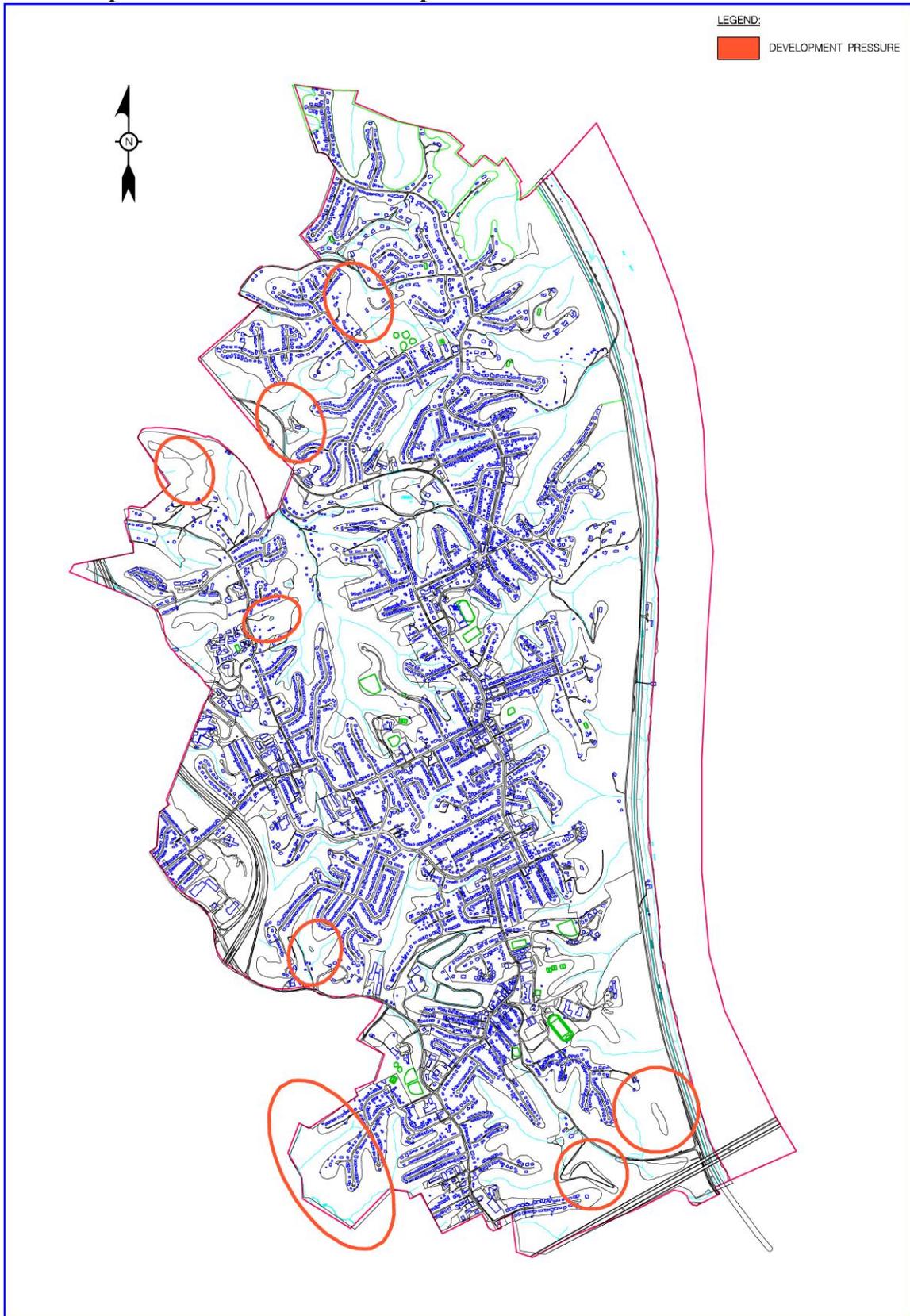
Industry

Industry accounts for only one tenth of one percent of the total land use.

Physically Restrictive Areas

More than one-third (39.5 percent) of the land area in Fort Thomas is considered physically restricted for development due to steep slopes and unstable soils. Physically restrictive areas are mainly located on the slopes descending to the Ohio River and drainage ways within the city. Development pressure is experienced in these areas due to the high demand for land in Fort Thomas.

Development Pressures Map



Town Center

The area at the intersection of Fort Thomas Avenue and Highland Avenue was the suburban equivalent of a downtown for Fort Thomas, developed to provide goods and services to the surrounding neighborhoods and as a center for local government. Residences in this area are mainly single family and low- to medium- density. Many residences are used for retail and service today, which can create conflict with the exclusively residential neighborhoods.

Midway

The area in the southern third of the city, in the rough proximity of Tower Park and the Midway commercial district, derived its form from the military land uses present. This area of the community developed with many of the functions necessary for a community in and of itself - - housing, recreation, retail, office, churches, etc. The housing is higher density than in most of the remaining community. Row houses, low rise apartment buildings, duplexes, and high density single family homes are interspersed throughout the neighborhoods. A commercial center, coined "Midway," developed to provide goods and services to the servicemen/women and their families. Midway is a mixed use area consisting of residential, retail, and service land uses. The former military base offers recreational areas, while the Veterans Hospital creates jobs.

Alexandria Pike

Alexandria Pike is a major north south connector between Cincinnati and the surrounding counties, but has seen a drop in traffic with the development of I-471 and I-275. This road has also developed with medium- to high-density residential, office and highway retail/service land uses. Physically restrictive areas have been left undeveloped. Some development pressure remains in terms of potential for redevelopment of underutilized property.

Transportation

General

Transportation issues, including highway facilities, have been updated for approximately the past 30 years as a part of the comprehensive plan updates, which recognized that the Fort Thomas roadway system was an integral part of the regional transportation system.

The Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI) has been charged with the planning and coordination of regional transportation for the region. The initial regional study was completed in 1972, and updated in 1981. In late 1993, OKI (as required by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act or ISTEA) adopted the report “Managing Mobility: Year 2010 Regional Transportation Plan.” In May 1998, OKI subsequently adopted the report “Looking Ahead: 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan,” which updates the 1993 plan - a process required three years after plan certification and every three years thereafter.

The 2020 Plan presents detailed recommendations that seek to allow the OKI region to accommodate growth and development, mitigate congestion, address transportation impacts, meet financial constraints, contribute to a strong economy, and respond to local concerns. This plan and its subsequent updates should be consulted with regard to detailed recommendations concerning activities in Fort Thomas, Campbell County, and the OKI region.

Existing Transportation System

Overview

The transportation system in Fort Thomas serves four broad user groups: (1) those people moving within the city; (2) those people moving into the city from other areas; (3) those moving from the city to other areas; and (4) those passing through the city (using such roads as I-471). As such, the road network in Fort Thomas is inextricably linked to that of the wider region. Previous city leaders have recognized this fact by becoming part of the OKI Regional Council of Governments. It is the intent of the Comprehensive Plan to recognize the relationship of the Fort Thomas roadway system within the larger OKI system.

Worker Commuter Patterns

In 1990, OKI conducted a survey of commuting patterns throughout the OKI region. The survey determined the origin and destination (at the county level) of commuters. This information was converted into an estimated Average Daily Trips (ADT). Results for Campbell County are shown in the following illustration.

Campbell County Worker Commuter Paterns:2000

From Campbell County	to	from	To Campbell County
652	Butler County	Butler County	318
322	Warren County	Warren County	70
14,946	Hamilton County	Hamilton County	2,739
579	Clermont County	Clermont County	744
56	Dearborn County	Dearborn County	135
4,062	Boone County	Boone County	1,150
5,782	Kenton County	Kenton County	3,921
15,474	Campbell County	Campbell County	15,474
41,873	In Region	Out of Region	947
42,820	Total	Total	25,498

Source: OKI Website, Maps and Data page

As would be expected, Campbell County is a commuter county. That is, more people leave the county each day to work elsewhere than those entering (or remaining in) the county for local jobs. As can be seen in the preceding table, a majority of workers in 1990 that left Campbell County traveled to Hamilton County, OH. Approximately 14,300 trips were taken within the county.





Traffic Counts

Periodically, OKI samples the traffic levels along certain roadways in Fort Thomas, Campbell County, and the OKI region. These traffic counts (measured in terms of Average Daily Trips or ADTs) are extremely important in determining where and what type of future transportation improvements are needed in specific areas. The last broad traffic count of Fort Thomas streets and intersections was in 2002. Traffic on most key roadways exhibited a decrease from previous traffic counts (where taken). The latest traffic counts sampled for the Fort Thomas roadways is presented in the following table.

Average Daily Trips

Street Name	Last Year Surveyed							
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Alexandria Pk (US-27) E. of I-471				12900			12800	
Brentwood Pl. South of North Fort Thomas Ave.	500			600				
Covert Run Pk. W of North Fort Thomas Ave		1600					1500	
Fort Thomas Ave (SR-1120) E of Taylor Ave.				2000				
Fort Thomas Ave (SR-1120) N of Grand Avenue (SR-1892)				6800				6800
Fort Thomas Ave (SR-1120) N of Highland Ave.	4800			4300			3900	
Fort Thomas Ave (SR-1120) S of Grand Ave. (SR-1892)						12300		
Fort Thomas Ave (SR-1120) S of Highland Ave.				7500				8700
Fort Thomas ave (SR-1120) S of Robroy Ave.				7700			7400	
Fort Thomas Ave. N of Memorial Pkwy (SR-1120)				2100				
Fort Thomas Ave. N of Robroy Ave.				7700			7400	
Grand Ave (SR-1892) N of Fort Thomas Ave (SR-1120)				6800				4400
Grand Ave (SR-1892) N of Highland Ave.			6700					7000
Grandview Ave (SR-445) E of Taylor Ave	5000			5100				
Highland Ave. W of Fort Thomas Ave.	8800						6900	
I-275 E of I-471	65200		52600		72700	72000		
I-471 S of Grand Ave (SR-1892)	79000	77500	75400			87600	67600	55000
Mary Inglis Hwy (SR-8) N of River Rd. (SR-445)				1800			2000	
Memorial Pkwy (SR-1120) N of North Fort Thomas Ave.				7600				
Memorial Pkwy (SR-1120) N of Fort Thomas Ave.				7600				
River Rd (SR-445) W of Mary Inglis Hwy. (SR-8)				4800				3900

Source: OKI Regional Council of Governments, accessed on-line at <http://www.oki.org/se/trips.htm> on April 11, 2005.

Roadway Classifications

Each roadway has been classified according to the function that it is presently performing, and the Transportation Plan identifies the roadways as they are recommended to function during the planning period. The following are definitions of roadway types used in the transportation plan update and the routes so designated (freeways, arterials, collectors, and local streets):

Freeways - a divided multi-lane highway for through traffic with all cross roads separated in grade and with full control of access.

The freeways include:

- 1) Interstate 471; and
- 2) Interstate 275.

Arterials - facilities which serve the major movements of traffic within and through the community.

The arterial's task is that of moving traffic, and access from residential areas to these facilities should be via collector streets. Arterial streets include:

- 1) Alexandria Pike (U.S. 27);
- 2) Memorial Parkway (SR 1120);
- 3) Fort Thomas Avenue (Covert Run Pike to Alexandria Pike);
- 4) Grand Avenue (SR 1892);
- 5) Mary Ingles highway (SR 8); and
- 6) Highland Avenue.

Collectors - facilities which serve the internal traffic movement within an area of the city, such as a subdivision, and connect this area with the arterial system.

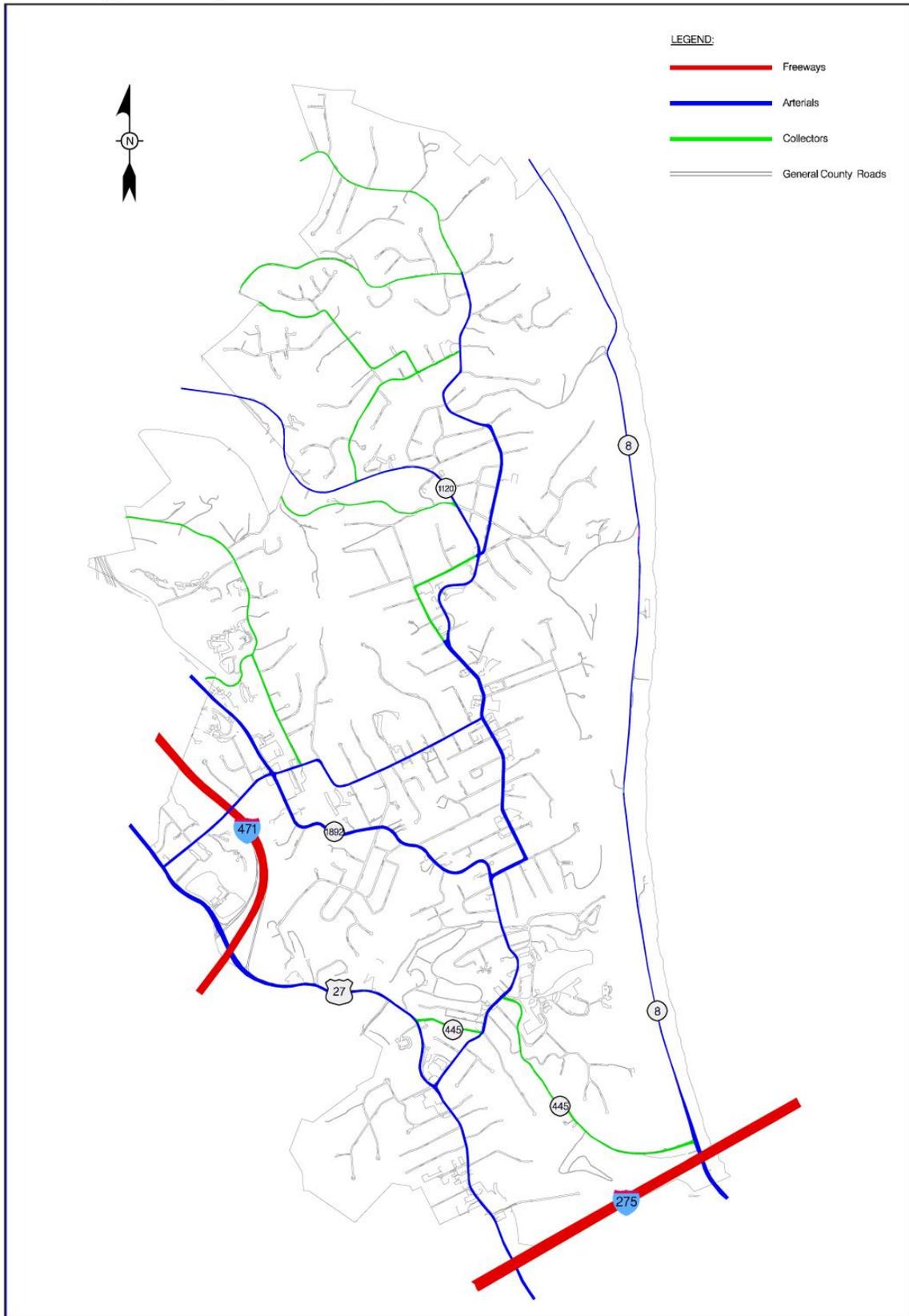
Collectors should not handle long through trips and, of necessity, should not be continuous for any great length. Collector streets include:

- 1) North Fort Thomas Avenue (Covert Run Pike to the Dayton corporation boundary);
- 2) Covert Run Pike;
- 3) Grandview Avenue;
- 4) River Road (SR 445);
- 5) Newman Avenue/Chesapeake Avenue;
- 6) Churchill Drive;
- 7) Waterworks Road; and
- 8) Clover Ridge Avenue/Rossford Avenue.

Local - facilities which are designated to be used primarily for direct access to abutting property.

Through traffic movement should be discouraged on local streets. All other streets in Fort Thomas that have not previously been identified are classified as local streets (Refer to the following map).

Roadway Classification Map



Other Transportation Facilities

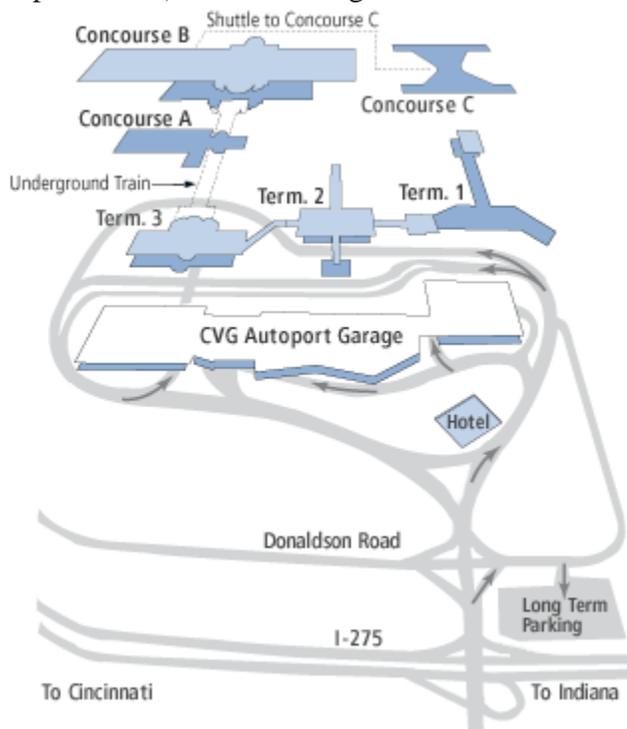
Airports

Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG)

The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG), owned by the Kenton County Fiscal Court and located within Boone County, is the primary air carrier airport serving all of Northern Kentucky and the Cincinnati Metropolitan area. Accessible primarily via U.S. 27, AA Highway, and I-275, the airport is approximately 20 minutes driving time from the City of Fort Thomas. CVG is one of the busiest passenger and cargo airports in the United States.

The airport serves as a major passenger hub to Delta and COMAIR airlines, and services 11 other passenger airlines. Airlines at CVG offer over 550 daily departures to over 120 cities worldwide. Over 22 million passengers pass through CVG annually and the airport ranks 21st nationally in the number of annual enplanements (passengers boarding planes) and 25th in international enplanements. DHL, the world's largest air courier, and Federal Express both operate major cargo operation facilities at CVG. These two carriers alone account for over 7.1 million tons of annual cargo. DHL plans to further expand its operations at CVG over the next several years.

In 1992, CVG and Delta began construction of a new Terminal 3, a new road system, and an underground transportation system connecting Delta's facilities. This \$500 million expansion was completed in 1994. By 1996, CVG became the world's fastest-growing major airport hub. In addition to airline expansion, shopping and other passenger/ consumer services have expanded in the airport. Many of these facilities are located in the new Terminal 3. As of 1996, retail sales volume (in terms of dollar expenditures) in CVG was greater than that of downtown Cincinnati.



CVG Airport

Other Regional Airports

The largest general aviation airport in the metropolitan area, Lunken Municipal Airport, is also accessible to Fort Thomas and Campbell County via I-275. Lunken Airport is owned by the City of Cincinnati and is located in Hamilton County, Ohio, across from the City of Fort Thomas. As of 2004, 314 aircraft were based on the field, including 66 jet airplanes, 4 helicopters, and 196 single engine and 48 multi-engine airplanes.

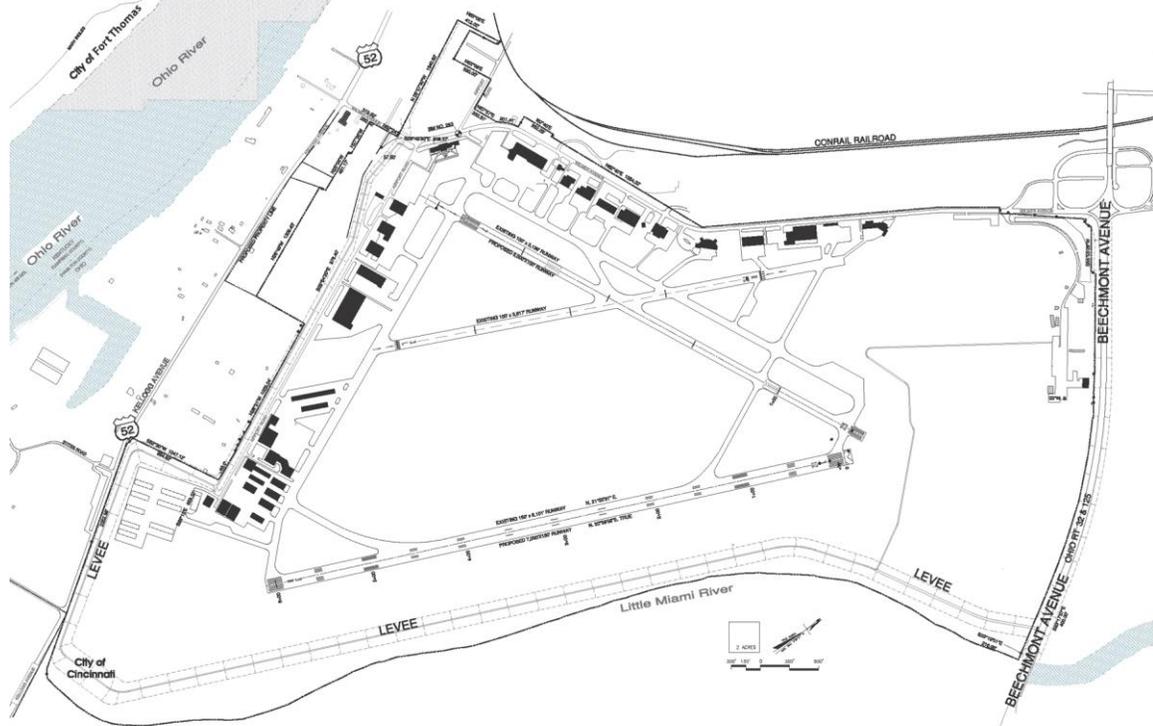
Fort Thomas officials have worked closely with Cincinnati Municipal Lunken Airport over the past several years as part of the Airport's master planning process and FAR Part 150 Noise Study. It is Lunken's stated mission to maintain and develop the Airport in an environmentally sound manner and to protect and enhance Lunken's unique setting, including the residential communities and recreational assets surrounding the Airport. To this end, a goal within the Cincinnati Municipal Lunken Airport master plan is to improve the Airport in a manner that minimizes the impact of aviation related noise in the residential and other noise-sensitive areas surrounding the Airport. Stated objectives in which to achieve this goal include:

1. Incorporating the Part 150 Noise Study analysis and recommendations into facility design recommendations;
2. Developing and installing a continuous noise monitoring and reporting system in appropriate residential areas surrounding the airport;
3. Adopt a set of metrics, with community input, that will be used as the basis for identifying significant changes in the impact of aviation-related noise in the residential areas surrounding the Airport;
4. Develop a set of goals, using the adopted metrics and the installed residential area noise monitors, to be achieved and maintained for the community noise impact;
5. Report bi-annually results of the noise monitoring system and metrics to assess progress towards achieving and maintaining those goals.

Other general aviation airports within approximately twenty miles of Northern Kentucky are the Cincinnati-Blue Ash Airport in northeastern Hamilton County, and the Clermont County Airport near Batavia, Ohio.

A map of Lunken Airport is on the next page.

Lunken Airport Map



Public Ground Transportation

The Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) provides local transportation to the Northern Kentucky Area and into downtown Cincinnati. Route 11 (Fort Thomas) and Route 16 (Ross, Grand Towers) provide public transportation to the Fort Thomas area seven days a week. Current information regarding regular and discount fares, routes, and other items may be obtained by contacting TANK by phone (665-9551) or via the worldwide web at “www.tankbus.org”. Greyhound and Trailways provide interstate passenger and freight service to the Cincinnati Metropolitan Area.

Rail and Shipping Facilities

The Norfolk Southern Corporation and CSX Transportation serve the Cincinnati Metropolitan Area in providing daily freight service. Amtrak provides passenger service to the area. Several barge and towing companies operate on the Ohio and Licking Rivers, serving the port of Cincinnati.

Alternative Modes of Transportation

OKI has organized several programs aimed at alleviating the traffic congestion. These include park and ride facilities, designated bike paths, an integrated bus system, and a water taxi system. The bike and bus systems have been growing in popularity throughout the Cincinnati region.

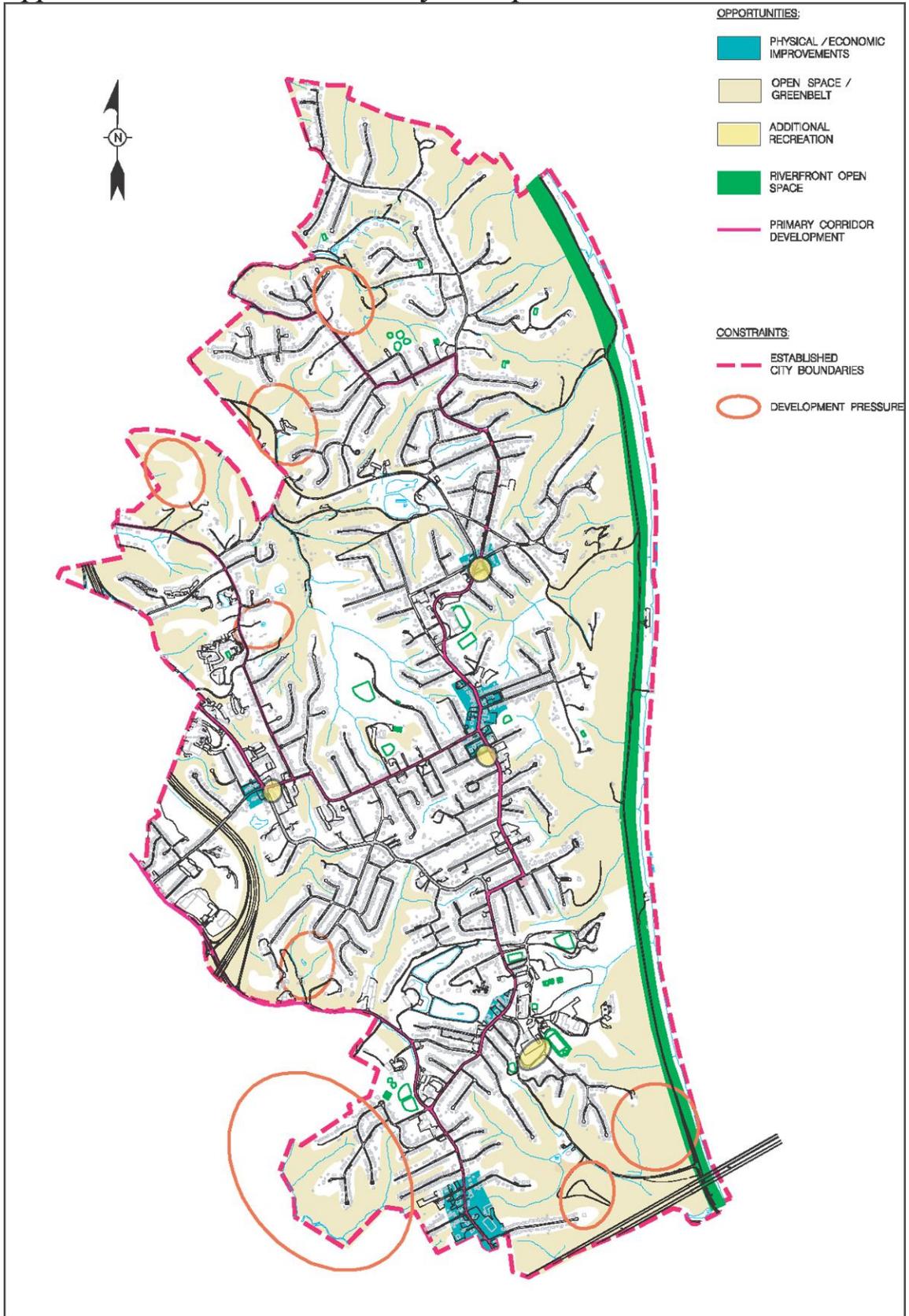
There are four major roads in Fort Thomas considered to be preferred bike paths in OKI's bike plan for the metropolitan area – the Mary Ingles Highway, Fort Thomas Avenue, Water Works Road, and Highland Avenue. Fort Thomas should remain aware of the OKI initiatives and participate in their planning and implementation when appropriate. A regional transportation approach will strengthen the metro area and ultimately Fort Thomas.

Opportunities & Constraints

Introduction

The analysis of existing conditions provides data about a community's strengths and weaknesses. Evaluation of this data is required before planning recommendations can be developed. The following is a listing of major opportunities and constraints for Fort Thomas based upon the evaluation of information in this report.

Opportunities and Constraint Analysis Map



Demographic

Opportunities:

- County population is expected to increase at a rate of 4-6% between 2000 and 2010.
- Growth pressures are present in the central and southern portions of the county.
- Increase in civilian labor force.

Constraints:

- Fort Thomas' population has grown slower than that of the county.
- Because most of Fort Thomas' developable land is fully "built out", most of the growth will have to be in the form of infill development and redevelopment.

Social

Opportunities:

- Teen birth rates in Campbell County are declining.
- General birthrates are up for the first time in a decade.
- Infant mortality rates are falling.
- Child mortality rate is falling.
- Fort Thomas Independent School District has low dropout rates and high retention rates and attendance.
- Fort Thomas Independent School District has a very low average expenditure per pupil.

Constraints:

- Increasingly elderly population.
- If adequate development does not occur to meet demands, home prices and land values may rise significantly.

Economic

Opportunities:

- An increase in the total number of new jobs.
- Campbell County's economy experienced a growth in actual employment.
- Physical improvements and programmatic improvements could encourage new growth in the business districts.

Constraints:

- Campbell County is suffering from an overall increase in "working poor" families; however Fort Thomas appears to be an exception.
- Business districts are isolated.

Transportation

Opportunities:

- Fort Thomas is part of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments, which is in charge of transportation planning for the area.
- There is one international airport (Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport) and three other airports located within a 20 minute drive from Fort Thomas.
- The Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) has two routes that provide service to Fort Thomas seven days a week.
- Fort Thomas is connected to the regional bikeways.

Constraints:

- 63 percent of the average daily trips made from Campbell County are to areas outside the county.
- Many of the roads in Fort Thomas have experienced an increase in average daily trips.

Community facilities

Opportunities:

- There are two water treatment plants within the city limits.
- Fire insurance rating of “Class 3” which is comparable to most of Northern Kentucky.
- The new Philip N. Carrico Library is the second largest in the Campbell County Library System.
- St. Luke Hospital East is within the city limits of Fort Thomas.
- All schools in the Fort Thomas Independent School System exceeded their goals on the KIRIS tests scores.
- Northern Kentucky University is located five miles south of Fort Thomas.

Constraints:

- A regional storm water management district has been established in Northern Kentucky which will eventually require storm sewer systems to be monitored and separated from municipal sewer lines.
- There are less than 10 residences still operating on septic systems.

Natural Features

Opportunities:

- Maysville limestone, upon which most development in Fort Thomas has occurred is very stable and can withstand heavy loads.
- Erosion has been limited in Fort Thomas.
- The hillside greenbelt creates a rather large expanse of vegetation and open space.

Constraints:

- The topography of Fort Thomas constricts the city in its ability to develop more land with slopes of 20 percent or more.
- Most undeveloped land in Fort Thomas has unsuitable soils for development such as Eden clays.

Land Use

Opportunities:

- Access to the major freeways and Cincinnati create a demand for development in Fort Thomas.
- Two areas for possible annexation: West of the Highland Country Club and the area behind the cemetery west of Crowell Avenue.

Constraints:

- The surrounding municipalities and the Ohio River form very strong boundaries to Fort Thomas.
- Several residences have been converted for retail/service use in the CBD.

Parks & Recreation/Open Space & Linkages

Opportunities:

- Pattern of open spaces and hillsides created by steep topography.
- Unrealized open space/riverfront corridor along Ohio River.
- Space around I-275 and Route 8 has potential to become a recreational area.

Constraints:

- Lack of strong pedestrian/non-motorized linkages between park and open space areas.
- Lack of local indoor recreation center.
- Areas of conflict between park areas and adjoining neighborhoods.

Commercial Business Districts

Inverness Business District

Opportunities:

- Pedestrian scale with excellent orientation and access to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Local business base with fairly strong physical identity.
- High levels of pedestrian activity.
- Historic significance to the development of Fort Thomas

Constraints:

- Conversion of retail structures to other uses.
- Corner real estate used for vehicular oriented businesses.

Midway Business District

Opportunities:

- Pedestrian scale with excellent orientation and access to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Local business base with fairly strong physical identity.
- High levels of pedestrian activity.
- Historic significance to the development of Fort Thomas.

Constraints:

- Parking constraints in Midway district.
- Conversion of retail structures to other uses.
- Lack of a high quality streetscape plan.
- Visual intrusion of overhead utility lines.
- Lack of strong urban “core”.

Town Center Business District

Opportunities:

- Ample parking according to the 2004 parking consulting document.
- Pedestrian scale with excellent orientation and access to surrounding neighborhoods.
- Local business base with fairly strong physical identity.
- High levels of pedestrian activity.

- Historic significance to the development of Fort Thomas.

Constraints:

- Conversion of retail structures to other uses.
- Corner real estate used for vehicular oriented businesses.

Highland & Grand/ Alexandria Pike

Opportunities:

- Major gateways to the community.
- High visibility.
- Good access.
- Adequate space for redevelopment on Alexandria Pike.

Constraints:

- Weakening demand for retail space in these areas.
- Visual intrusion of overhead utility lines.

LAND USE ELEMENT

Land Use Element

Introduction

The following chapter is intended to address the requirement for a Land Use Element under the provisions of KRS, Chapter 100.

The land use element is intended to do the following:

- Take into account various physical, infrastructure and public service systems that may enhance or hinder placing certain land uses in specific areas of the city.
- Indicate a logical progression and “destination” for the future development of Fort Thomas.
- Provide a tool for management of growth and development.
- Provide guidelines for future land use decisions to further the stated Goals and Objectives as adopted by City Council in April 2005.

The City of Fort Thomas is an established community with little opportunity to expand beyond the present corporate boundaries. Since Fort Thomas already has many of the necessities required for a high quality of life, attention can be focused on finessing its resources and raising its standards. Details like pedestrian amenities, maintenance of existing structures, adequate buffering and separation between incompatible land uses, improved pedestrian and vehicular linkages, streetscape improvements, and marketing commercial, retail and office property are particular areas of concern.

Large portions of this plan’s land use recommendations are the continuing revitalization of the Central Business Districts, as well as preservation and linkages of open space and hillside resources. The Town Center, Midway, and other smaller business districts should absorb most of the growth pressures and relieve potential impacts on the physically restrained areas. These two major goals, CBD development and hillside management, are discussed throughout the land use plan section.

Implementation is essential to the practice of growth management. This plan anticipates that implementation will be achieved by specific land use regulatory tools, including zoning, design review, tree/landscape controls, and subdivision regulations. These regulations will be reviewed and revised as needed upon completion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Existing land uses in Fort Thomas have been identified in Part II of the Comprehensive Plan. Those same categories have been used to determine the future land use plan for the city and are listed on page 80. Analysis of current land uses is a fundamental element of comprehensive planning because it reflects historic settlement patterns and how humans have interacted with the natural environment.

City Form

This comprehensive plan provides an opportunity for Fort Thomas to set in place policies to help achieve a desirable urban form for the city. Many suburban communities face similar problems in the lack of a well-defined town center. The solution other communities are finding is bringing back the urban form common to historic town centers. Town center characteristics encompass the types of land uses, the scale of development, the density of people, the design of the street setting, and development of special activities and programs.

The five activity centers of Inverness, Town Center, Midway, Highland and Grand Avenues, and Alexandria Pike each have the potential of becoming a center for its section of Fort Thomas. Inverness, the Town Center, and Midway each have specific recommendations for redevelopment. The following paragraphs are some general recommendations for recreating a town center.

Land Uses

Fort Thomas' uniformity in land uses throughout the entire city is common of bedroom suburbs. The land uses in Fort Thomas are very homogeneous with 83.56 % of land areas dedicated to residential, and 16.44% for all other activities. Historically, land use policy has been aimed at preventing incompatible land uses from locating next to one another, preventing nuisances, and preserving property values. The city, under the direction of its policies and regulations, needs to remain committed to these traditional values of the community, and also look at ways of increasing the diversity of land uses, raising densities (selectively), and, thus, preserving community values.

A mix of land uses in the town centers will no doubt provide goods and services more adequately to the residents, but it will also have some very tangible economic effects as well. With a variety of land uses there is a variety of service needs. Not all businesses will need their own building, parking lot, and freestanding sign. Sharing resources can save costs both for the city and the private business owner.

A mix of land uses will also weather minor fluctuations in the economy better than a more homogenous mix of land uses and may provide a more stable economy for Fort Thomas. Incompatible land uses should certainly be prevented from co-locating, but compatible land uses should be encouraged where they will thrive and add variety to an area.

Scale and Density

Town centers are defined partially by their scale and higher density of development. High concentrations of people begin to create successful business districts and neighborhoods -- the ingredients of a town center. Scale and densities are relatively uniform throughout Fort Thomas. Even in the activity centers of the community discussed above, there are very few developments of a significantly larger scale. This is due in part to the physical constraints of the community's slope and soil conditions. Medium-density developments cover most of the city with very few low- or high-density developments. The activity centers have even lower densities than the rest of the community -- leaving a majority of residents unassociated with an activity center.

To remedy the homogeneity of scale and density, Fort Thomas should commit the resources needed to increase densities and scale of select areas such as the Town Center and Midway. Policies pertaining to capital improvements and land use should continue to support the redevelopment of the Town Center and Midway area.

Street Setting

Typically, the pattern and design of the streets in a town center is a characteristic that separates it from the rest of the community. Since the last Comprehensive Plan Update, the city has made significant improvements in the town center, including locating utilities underground, new streets and sidewalks with designated pedestrian crossings and street furniture and landscaping. This project was completed in two phases and includes an area from Montvale Avenue to Elmwood Avenue.

Over the planning period of this Comprehensive Plan, the city plans to make improvements in the Midway business district. The ultimate design and appearance of this area has yet to be decided. However, items of interest include a pedestrian plaza, wayfinding signs and improvements in parking and streetscape. This is discussed in more detail under the Commercial Land Uses provisions of this chapter.

Land Use Categories

Hillside / Greenbelt

All dedicated areas of open space or areas with more than a 20 percent slope making development undesirable or costly.

Recreational Areas

All public or semi-public lands being used for either passive or active recreation.

Schools

All land owned and operated by the Fort Thomas Independent School District. This includes buildings, recreational areas and undeveloped land.

Public/Institutional

Both public and institutionally owned non-recreational lands open to the public such as government buildings, large churches, libraries, cemeteries, etc.

Low density residential

Single family homes on large lots.

Medium density residential

Single family, duplexes or small apartment buildings on small lots.

High density residential

High-density apartment buildings and complexes.

Neighborhood retail/service

Public, semi-public, retail, and office land uses with small setbacks and a more pedestrian-oriented design than Highway Retail/Service land uses. Often, parking for these businesses is located off-site.

Highway retail/service

Automobile-oriented businesses with wide setbacks and large areas for on-site parking.

Mixed use

Public, semi-public, retail, office, and high density land uses with small setbacks and a more pedestrian-oriented design than Highway Retail/Service land uses. Often, parking for these businesses is located off-site.

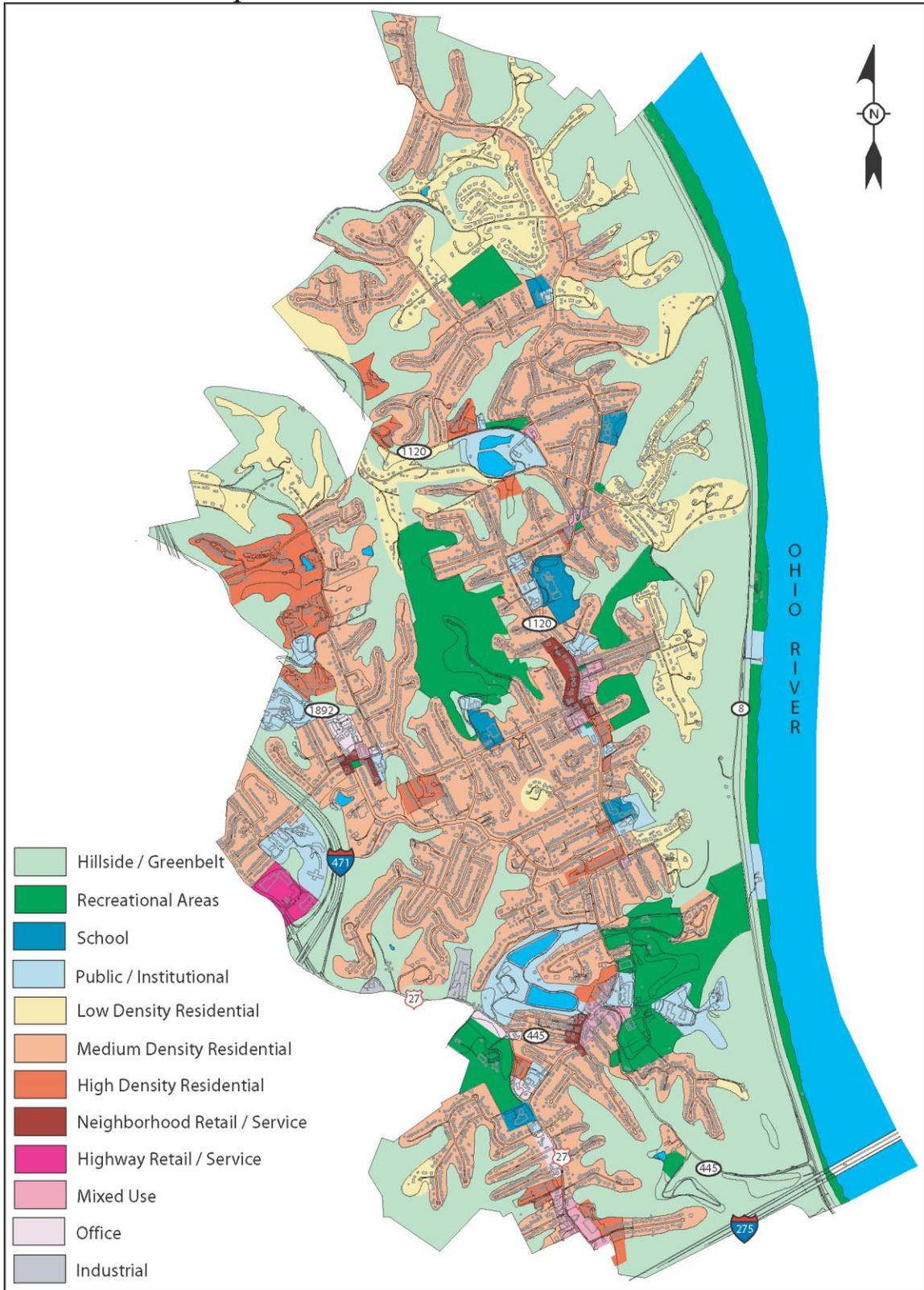
Office

Office complexes and/or buildings and their associated necessities (i.e. parking areas, structures, etc.).

Industrial

Heavy manufacturing, light manufacturing, warehousing, storage, and agri-business.

Land Use Plan Map



Residential Land Uses

Because of Fort Thomas' role within the region as a bedroom community for metropolitan Cincinnati, residential land uses dominate most of the developable land. Additional affordable housing is in high demand within Fort Thomas. This demand for affordable housing compliments the community's goal of forming a town center. As mentioned earlier, town centers often absorb the pressure for housing from the surrounding area.

Business Districts

Business districts offer the opportunity for higher densities such as apartments in second and third floors of commercial and office buildings. Fort Thomas' Town Center, Midway, and Inverness areas are well-suited for these higher densities of residential development. The Highland and Grand Avenue intersection has higher density residential development in close proximity to the intersection and is less likely to see mixed use development.

Neighborhoods

The remaining portions of the community are already nearly built to capacity at medium to low density residential land uses. A healthy mix of residential densities and other land uses are found in pockets throughout the community. Where land allows, future growth should take place in a manner similar to the established patterns.

Open Space

Growth pressure is occurring at the edge of the residential areas in the steep slopes formed from the old drainage paths leading to the Ohio River. Any proposed development in these physically restrained areas must consider the potential for erosion, infrastructure break down, structural damage, and landslides.

A common method of managing hillside development is with slope/ density regulations. By reducing the allowable densities on hillsides as slope percentage increases, overdevelopment and adverse environmental impact can be prevented. The land use map indicates greenways which, generally speaking, have slopes over 20%. These areas should have lower allowable densities than the other residential areas. As slopes become steeper within this zone, densities become lower.

Commercial Land Uses

Commercial areas are scattered along the major road corridors and intersections. These areas reflect the style of construction common to the era in which they were developed. Development from the early 1900's took place along Fort Thomas Avenue at the intersection of Highland and near Tower Park (the former fort for which the town is named). Development in the latter half of the century took place largely along Grand Avenue and South Fort Thomas Avenue. It is recommended that these areas continue to be the commercial focal areas in the community.

The following sections recommend redevelopment concepts for commercial nodes in the community including Inverness, Highland and Grand Avenues intersection and recommendations for Alexandria Pike at the southern end of the community. While redevelopment should be sensitive to existing patterns and styles in each area, a common element should be included in all the commercial areas that will provide a community-wide connection.

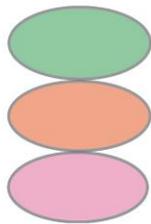
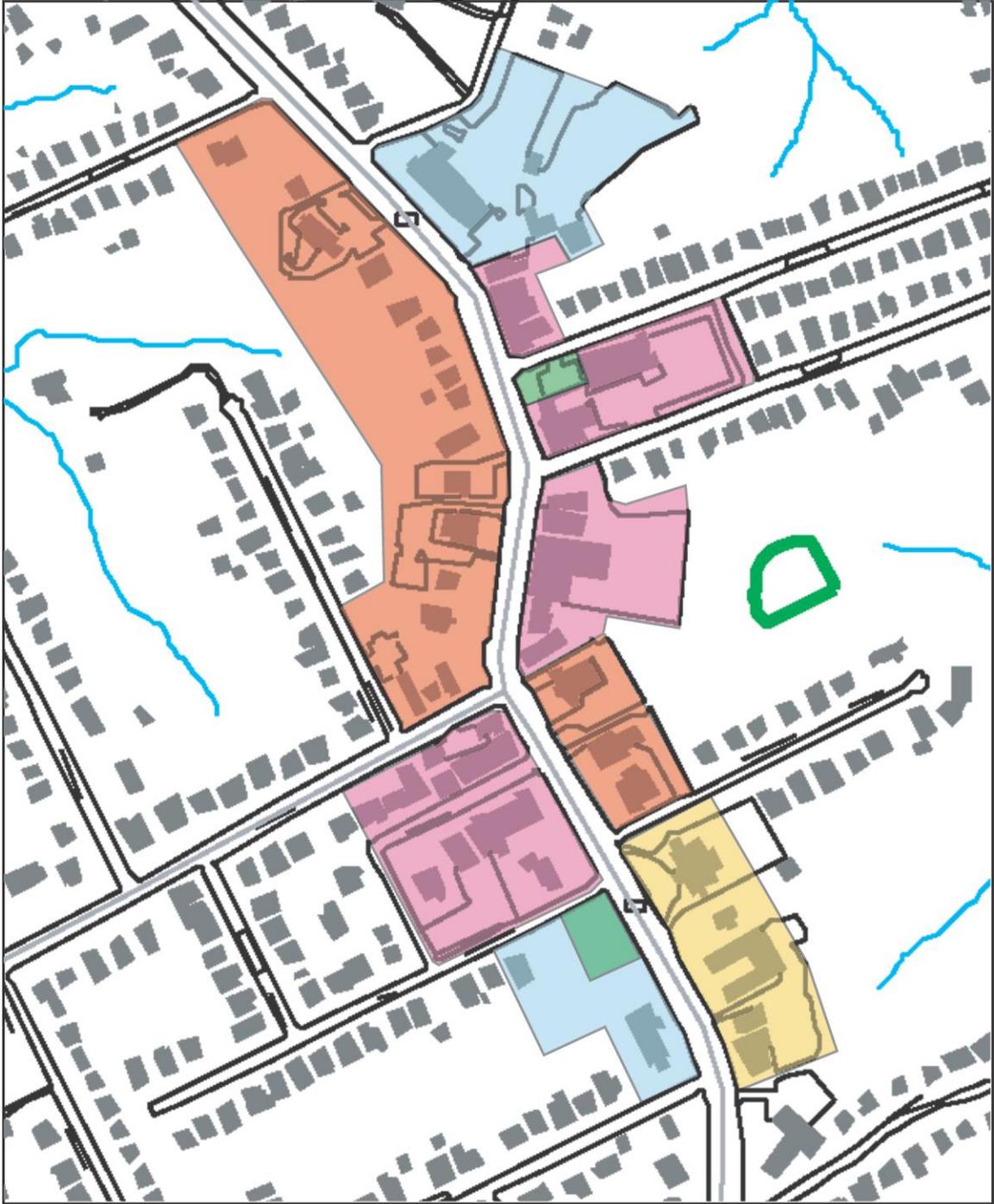
Town Center

The area surrounding the Fort Thomas Avenue and Highland Avenue intersection is referred to as the Town Center. During the last Comprehensive Plan update, the Town Center was identified as having poor circulation, low development density, limited gathering spaces and inappropriate land uses and site design. The redevelopment plan called for increased densities, more mixed use, improved intersections and connectors through parking lots, pedestrian plazas, pocket parks and flexible zoning for land use and parking requirements. Many of the goals of the plan have been realized through capital improvements made in recent years. On the west side of Fort Thomas Avenue, conversion of residential buildings for mixed use is occurring. A parking study found that on street parking is not at capacity and recommended lowering off-street parking requirements for the commercial areas. The zoning ordinance is to be amended to reflect the recommendations of the study and should encourage further redevelopment.

Following adoption of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan, the City continued to pursue redevelopment options for the Town Center. These efforts concentrated on an area extending east of Fort Thomas Avenue to Hagedorn Avenue, and north and south to include property along Miller Lane and Lumley Avenue. A number of options were considered, including demolition of the bank building at 110 North Fort Thomas Avenue and removal and redevelopment of several homes along Miller and Lumley. In August of 2001 council adopted a CBD master plan that proposed a more conservative approach that would not involve demolition. The plans now call for renovation and façade improvements to the bank and commercial strip building, as well as creation of a public plaza.

As a result of these decisions, changes are needed on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map to remove the existing residential structures from the mixed use category. This change should also be reflected on the zoning map by removing these properties from the Central Business District zoning classification.

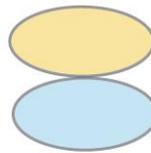
Town Center Redevelopment Plan Map



Parks and Recreation

Retail / Service

Mixed use



High Density Residential

Public / Institution



Redevelopment Plan

The 1999 a conceptual redevelopment plan was designed to achieve several of the stated goals for the Town Center. The following are some of the noted changes proposed for the Town Center area:

- A central plaza on Fort Thomas Avenue between Miller Lane and Lumley Avenue to create a pedestrian gathering space for the residents and visitors.
- A mix of retail and residential uses surrounding the central plaza and extending the time the town center is used.
- Increased densities in development to help support the existing and proposed businesses within the Town Center.
- Integration of the Town Center with the proposed city-wide trail system to connect it to other activity centers and neighborhoods.

Land Use Plan

The proposed land uses for the town center redevelopment should follow similar patterns of existing land uses. Where mixed-use development occurs, it is expected to continue. Existing residential areas on the west side of North Fort Thomas Avenue should redevelop with a mix of general retail/service and residential land uses to help encourage the growth of the Town Center. Off-street parking for converted properties should allow connections across property lines to create a secondary level of circulation and allow shared parking and access. Consistent with findings of a recent traffic study, the City should consider modifying parking requirements, particularly for the Town Center and Midway districts, to a more contemporary model that better reflects demand within the community.

Urban Design and Streetscape Plan

The 1999 Comprehensive plan addressed the development of a Central Plaza in the Town Center business district. This central plaza was to be located in the 100 block of North Fort Thomas Avenue between Lumley Avenue and Miller Avenue, and it would have been flanked by multiuse buildings on three sides. Since that time public input has called for a much more modest redevelopment plan, retaining the historic bank building, expansion of the retail/office center, and a smaller public plaza on the corner of North Fort Thomas Avenue and Lumley Avenue.

Street improvements have been completed and include removal of overhead utilities, new sidewalks, curbs, lighting, landscaping, furniture and street paving. Street improvements also included designated pedestrian crossings and the use of “bump-outs” designed to reduce traffic speed and the distance pedestrians travel to cross Fort Thomas Avenue. Phase II of this project extended the improvements north to the intersection of Memorial Parkway and Fort Thomas Avenue. The most significant elements of this work included creation of a small plaza in the triangle formed by Memorial Parkway, Fort Thomas Avenue and Avenue of Champions. The Avenue of Champions was closed and the intersection was reconfigured to allow Fort Thomas Avenue to intersect Memorial Parkway at a ninety-degree angle. These improvements have provided increased safety for pedestrians and created a clearly defined identity for the Town Center.

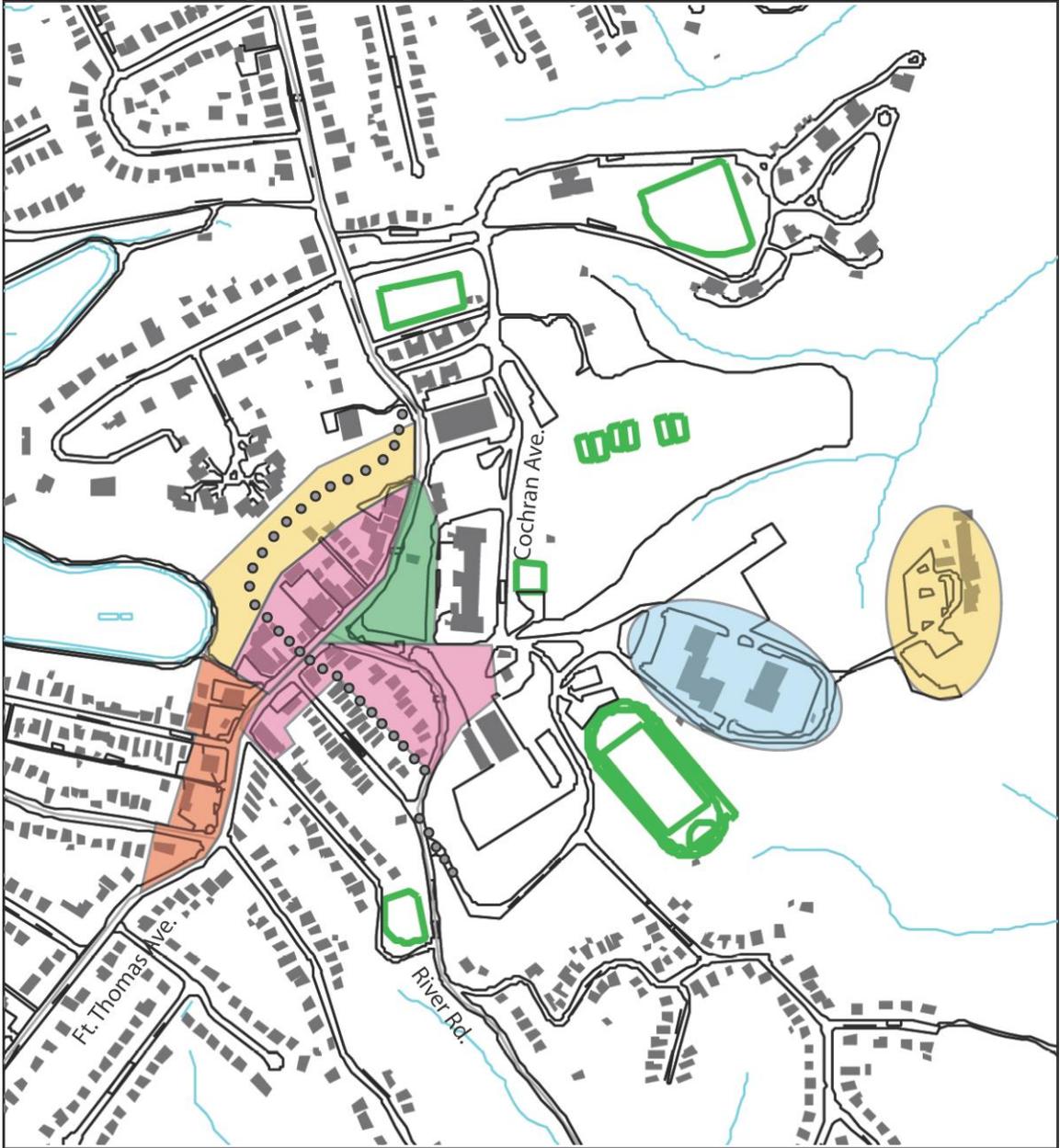
In addition to capital improvements, an ordinance for creation of the Design Review Board was adopted and a five-member board appointed. Town Center and Midway have been designated as local historic districts and Design Guidelines and Procedures have been adopted to address sign design, exterior renovation of existing buildings and to insure that new construction is in character with the surrounding area. Modification of parking and other regulations is anticipated following adoption of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan.

Midway

The area surrounding the Veteran's Administration Hospital is referred to as the Midway District. Since the early 1900's, the impetus for the area's business district was the Fort Thomas army base. The early 60's marked the downsizing of the base and the Fort was parceled out. Most of it remains under the control of the City, part is still under federal ownership, and a very small area is under private ownership. Since the 1999 Comprehensive Plan update, Army Reserves from Fort Thomas have been assigned to the war in Iraq. It is likely that the business district will need to rely on activity generated from the Veteran's Administration Hospital and the nearby recreational facilities for its customer base within the next five year planning period.

Weaknesses of this area are poor circulation, perceived shortage of convenience parking, and deterioration of building facades, sidewalks and streetscape elements. Additionally, the Midway business activity is not performing up to its potential. Redevelopment planning could be based upon a recreation focus--capitalizing on the area's significant park and open space assets. These issues will be addressed in this chapter as the recommended redevelopment concept is discussed and evaluated.

Midway Redevelopment Plan Map



- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--|--------------------------|
|  | Parks and Recreation |  | High Density Residential |
|  | Retail |  | Public / Institution |
|  | Mixed use |  | Proposed Street |



Redevelopment Plan

The redevelopment concept for Midway takes the existing space and reorganizes it to make both circulation and the built environment more functional. This includes better defining the circulation pattern, developing and redeveloping spaces, and better connecting the park and business district to a proposed trail system.

The circulation pattern in Tower Park and the Army Reserve Base should be revised to provide more seamless vehicular transportation through the site. For instance, the campus-like layout of streets leading to and through the Army Reserve Base has been simplified to a four-way stop that will be safer for both vehicle operators and pedestrians.

The concept of creating more a town square with the site of the VA hospital requires the edges of the space to be strengthened where currently the edges are weak. Strategies for strengthening the edge include increasing the development surrounding it or increase the usage of the surrounding land. Adaptive reuse or demolition of vacant buildings will provide opportunities for civic and other semi-public uses. The storage buildings south of the VA hospital could be either demolished or renovated to complement new development on the site.

Several vacant sites could be used for development to increase the density and usage of the site. The land northwest of the existing business district could be developed with both mixed use and town homes. Redevelopment of land directly south of the VA Hospital would be appropriate for mixed use and additional indoor recreation and physical therapy spaces.

Finally, the business district should be linked with the existing and proposed trail network. The trails previously proposed around the water reservoirs are no longer available and will require consideration of alternative routes that reach into the neighborhoods and down to the Ohio River.

Land Use Plan

Land use recommendations are depicted on the redevelopment concept illustration. Increased densities are important to building a market for the business district. Developing an organizational structure to the Midway area will increase its capacity to support business, recreation, and other land uses currently present.

The area behind the businesses is recommended for high-density residential (i.e. town homes) and additional space for the mixed-use buildings on Fort Thomas Avenue. To the north and south of the core business district, general retail/service should remain the principal land use. On the east side of Fort Thomas Avenue, the area in front of the VA hospital should be used for a pedestrian space. The area to the south of this pedestrian space is appropriate for mixed use allowing a combination of retail, service, office, and residential to occur. The new development at the site of the storage buildings could be used for recreational purposes connected to the track or for other indoor recreation needs such as fitness rooms, pools and locker rooms.

The land directly south of the VA Hospital could be developed to meet the needs of the park and the hospital. With additional indoor recreation facilities, the park could benefit. Physical and occupational therapy space could be used by the VA Hospital. The Army Reserve Post may also benefit from space for reserves to train and engage in sports. These changes could provide an opportunity to better use the space around the central plaza and also directly meets the needs of the surrounding neighborhood.

Urban Design and Streetscape Plan

Since this area of the community has such a colorful past, unique urban design and streetscape principals should be adopted. Civic spaces should complement the civic and recreational land uses within the district. Streetscape elements and furnishings should reflect the time period in which this area flourished (the 1920's population boom which was due, in part, to the electric railroad and the high activity at the fort). The urban design and civic spaces should reflect the unique and important role Midway has in the history of the community. A plaza should be developed to physically open the block to pedestrians and visually open the block to the passing vehicles. The pedestrian space should interpret the history of the military in the community.

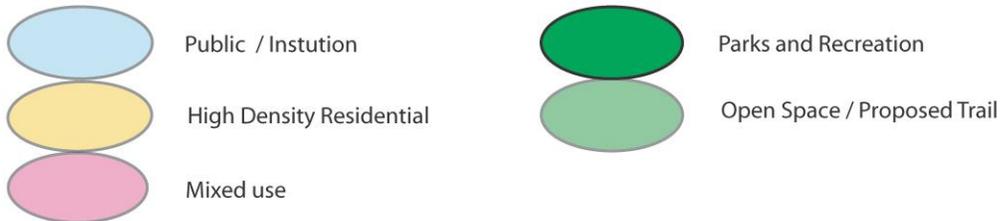
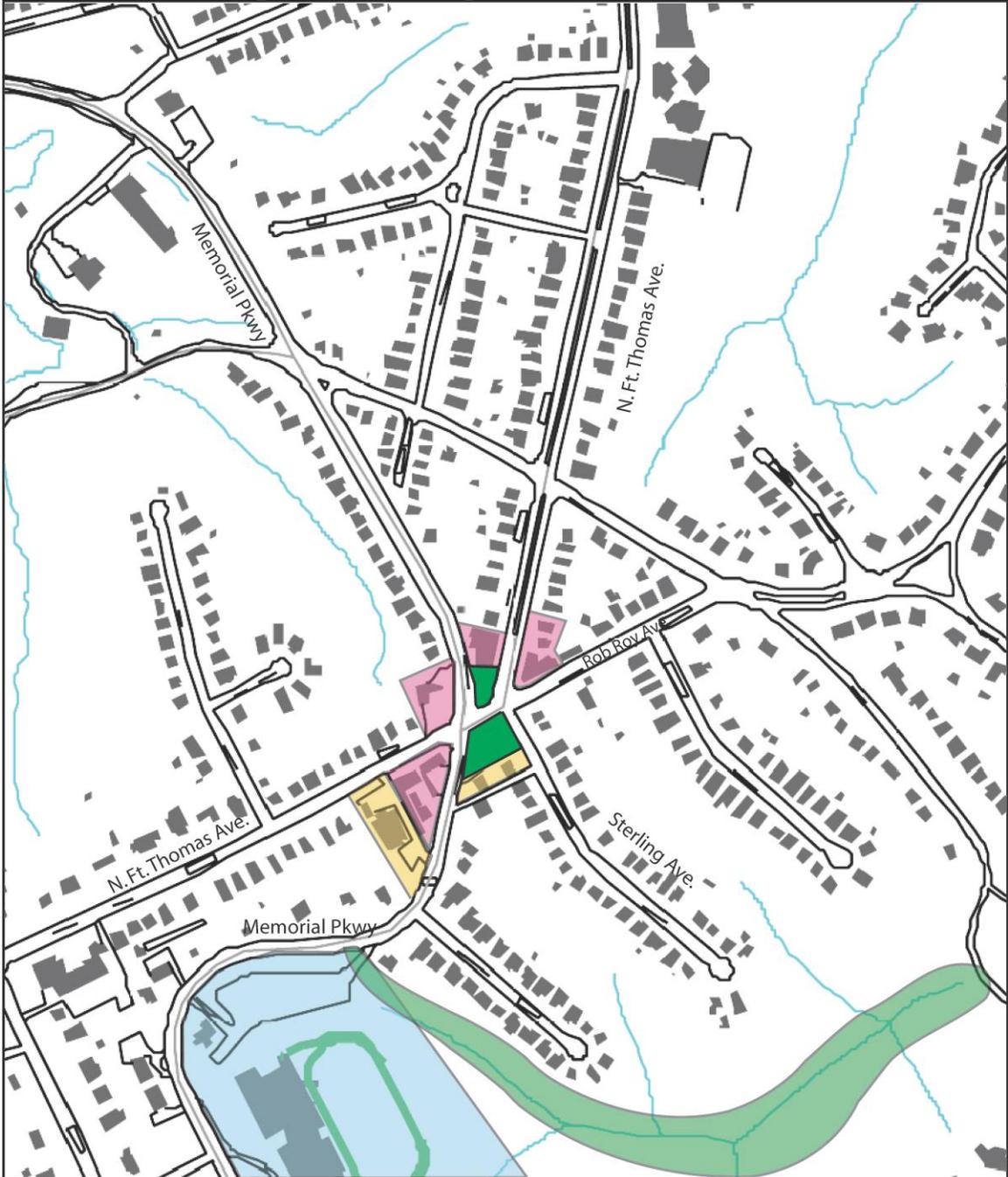
The streetscape should reflect the streets as they were in the 1920's when Midway was a thriving business district. Streetscape Guidelines produced by the Kentucky Heritage Council could be used to guide streetscape decisions. Any changes such as sidewalk treatment, street furniture, lighting, etc. should be documented for historic accuracy. If documentation is not available, new furnishings should be obviously modern, but fit with the historic character. Because of the pedestrian nature of the district and the location on the trail network, there should be adequate pedestrian amenities such as benches, trash receptacles, drinking fountains, and lighting. As noted previously, it is important that there be some common element in the streetscape to provide a community-wide connection or identity.

Inverness

The Inverness intersection is a mixed-use area developed as a result of the interurban transportation system that once served Fort Thomas. This system brought neighborhood businesses and second and third floor apartments as a result of providing easy access to and from Cincinnati. The intersection of Fort Thomas Avenue, Memorial Parkway, Rob Roy Avenue, and Sterling Avenue creates six corner lots. The convergence of the six streets at the intersection creates a feeling of activity, energy and excitement.

The notable weaknesses of the Inverness area are the confusion created by such a unique and large intersection and the under-utilization of the corner lots. When a vehicle operator approaches the intersection, confusion occurs due to the six converging roads. It is also difficult to determine which of the five other roads is the desired route on which to continue. The corner lots are currently used for automobile oriented business such as gas stations and service centers. Two corners continue to have the historic high-density buildings; however they are under-utilized and occupied with more service than retail uses.

Inverness Redevelopment Plan Map



Redevelopment Plan

Redevelopment of the Inverness intersection relies on the following principles:

- Increased pedestrian activity at the intersection;
- Better utilized historic building stock;
- A more understandable intersection for both the vehicle operators and pedestrians;
- Pedestrian plaza or pocket park space; and
- Linkages to a proposed citywide trail system.

The principles reflect the goals of the community as stated in the Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. The community sees the value of preserving its character, but improving some of the incompatibilities that have arisen over the course of time. Some modification is necessary to this redevelopment plan as a result of changes that have occurred since its adoption in 1999. The pocket park proposed for the northeast corner of the intersection has moved to the southeast corner following the City's acquisition of the property. The City has recently completed the acquisition of the car repair operation at the northeast corner and this site is slated for redevelopment as a pocket park within the next five years.

Further evaluation of the redevelopment plans for this area has concluded that there is not sufficient traffic generation and demand to justify extension of the mixed use area much beyond the current boundaries. Many of the existing residential uses proposed for redevelopment should be removed from the mixed use category until such time as conditions require expansion of this commercial area. The pocket park on the southeast corner precludes development that would have included the corner lot. As a result, the redevelopment plan will show reclassification of the two multi-family buildings for high density residential. The southeast corner of Rob Roy and Sterling Avenues will also be reclassified to reflect the current land uses. On the northwest corner, the mixed use recommendation will only include the existing business operation. These changes would not prohibit a developer from assembling properties and proposing redevelopment through a zone change process. Under the proper circumstances, it may be possible to find that economic conditions have changed that were not anticipated and that the existing zoning classification is no longer appropriate.

Land Use Plan

The redevelopment concept suggests that the northwest corner of the intersection change uses from General Retail to Mixed Use creating an increase in the diversity of businesses and residences at the intersection. Where appropriate, high density residential should surround the mixed-use development at Inverness; this would also increase the amount of activity.

This concept incorporates a pocket park on the northern corner between Memorial Parkway and North Fort Thomas Avenue. This would be incorporated into a series of pocket parks, including one at Burnet Ridge Avenue and one at the school complex providing respite for pedestrians and a gathering space for the surrounding neighborhoods. The trail would connect into the system of pocket parks at both the school site and the Burnet Ridge Avenue site.

Urban Design and Streetscape Plan

To make the intersection more understandable, consistent streetscape treatments should be used throughout the area. For instance, Memorial Parkway south of the intersection could incorporate a boulevard of trees to create a visual clue to the continuation of the road and the route to the Town Center. The urban design elements include better signage, pedestrian scaled lights reflecting the time period of the interurban transportation system, and consistent and thorough treatment of the sidewalks and pedestrian crosswalks. As with the other commercial areas, the City should decide on a common design element that ties all of these areas together.

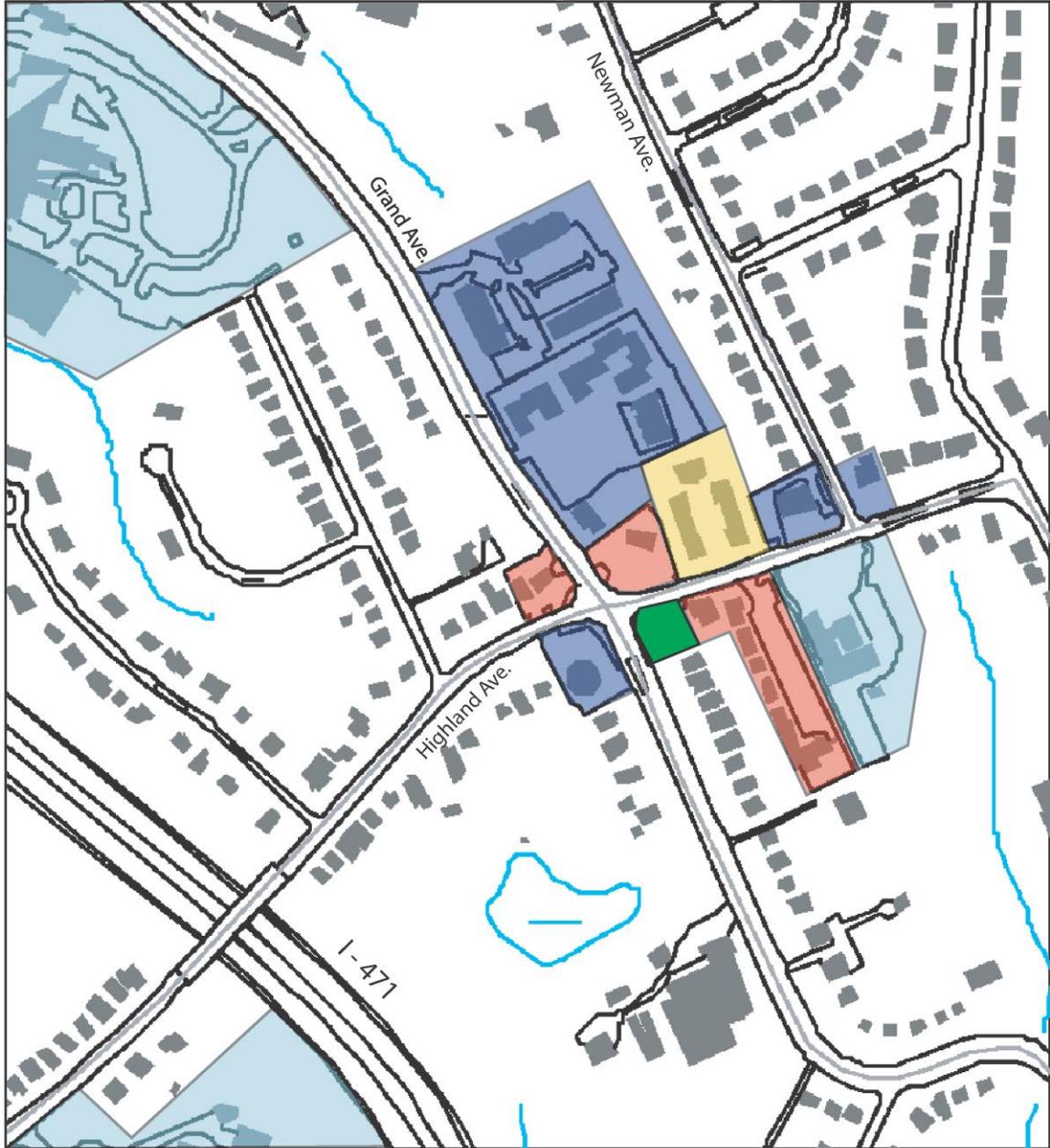
Highland and Grand

The plan on the following page illustrates the recommended treatment of the Highland and Grand Avenues intersection. It illustrates the diversity of redevelopment options -- minor improvements, buffering and design guidelines, and complete redevelopment. The illustration shows how all three levels of effort can be combined in one plan to create an effective and more affordable alternative while eliminating unnecessary curb cuts, improving sidewalk conditions, adding pedestrian scale lighting, and regulating the scale and placement of signage.

The southeast corner is shown completely redeveloped with a pocket park in the front to welcome those entering the city from this intersection. This departure from the 1999 recommendations results in reduced potential for the residential structures south of the park to be redeveloped for retail and service uses. As a result, residential property south of the intersection on the east side of Grand Avenue will not be recommended for commercial activity. This is reflected on the redevelopment plan map and the Land Use Map.

Grand Avenue's emerging business area is a mix of retail/service and office with excellent access to and from the major transportation routes leading into Cincinnati. The location in relation to Fort Thomas' medical facilities and retirement communities makes this area a perfect location for medical offices, drug stores, and medical supply stores. This niche would not interfere with the success of the other commercial centers in the community.

Highland and Grand Avenues Redevelopment Plan Map



- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|---|----------------------|
|  | Parks and Recreation |  | Office |
|  | Retail / Service |  | Public / Institution |
|  | High Density Residential | | |



Alexandria Pike

This area has struggled in recent years primarily due to a shift in commuting patterns from US 27 (Alexandria Pike) to I-471 and I-275. Since the last Comprehensive Plan update, the chain stores have closed and the buildings have undergone complete renovation for an electrical engineering office. The owners have also expanded the building to attract other office uses to the area.

The existing Frisch's Restaurant is showing signs of age and it is anticipated that this site will redevelop within the planning period. This site would be appropriate for a mixed use development or neighborhood related retail.

The current Comprehensive Plan recommends this general vicinity for Highway retail/service development. Given the change in commuting patterns, the lack of potential for significant redevelopment and the new office building development, a more appropriate designation for this area would be Mixed Use, which includes office development.

Parks and Recreation

Recreational opportunities in Fort Thomas are numerous. In fact, capitalizing on these opportunities is a major goal of the city as expressed in the Comprehensive Plan. Given the existing park system and open space, there is a unique situation where everyone in the community can be within a short walking distance to a trail linking the recreational spaces in town.

A Park Board was created to help lead the park master planning process for all of the park and open space within the city. The Parks and Recreation Board completed a master plan for the city parks department in 2000. For further information about park recommendations of individual parks and the community wide recommendations please refer to the City of Fort Thomas Parks and Recreation Departments Master Plan.

Riverfront Access Parks

The Ohio riverfront corridor is an extremely under-utilized resource in Fort Thomas. The only activity occurring along the riverfront is at the water intake stations and at one small marina, Aquaramp. Rivers are naturally exciting places for pedestrians and vehicle operators because they allow spectacular views, as well as a comfortable microclimate for pedestrians. The bluff on which Fort Thomas sits provides excellent views of the Ohio River as it bends into Cincinnati. At the riverfront, a pedestrian can look across at the Riverview, Tucker, and Four Seasons marinas as well as the mouth of the scenic Little Miami River, or they can look toward Fort Thomas at beautiful bluffs and stands of trees.

This plan recommends that the city pursue opportunities towards connecting the town to the riverfront through the use of a trail system and providing destinations along the riverfront for pedestrians, bikes and vehicle owners. The trails should follow the drainage basins as noted in the trail chapter (Transportation element) and allow pedestrians to access new riverfront parks for the passive enjoyment of the riverfront. These riverfront parks should be connected via this trail system to other riverfront parks, city parks, commercial activity nodes, and neighborhoods.

Hillside/Greenbelt

The “physically restricted” lands in the 1994 plan (land with slope percentage greater than 20%) were renamed “Hillside/Greenbelt” lands in 1999 to eliminate the notion that these areas cannot be redeveloped. Fort Thomas and the development community should view these areas as valuable to quality of life and strive to maintain environmental integrity and scenic values.

Recreational Opportunities

The Hillside/Greenbelt lands provide an opportunity for passive recreation and a trail system throughout the community. In this respect, these lands are not “physically restricted”, but instead rich with possibilities. As discussed in the previous chapter, the proposed trail system would follow the natural drainage paths through the community to connect most neighborhoods to activity centers. Areas of passive recreation could be scattered throughout the community where views of the river or other natural surroundings provide places for picnicking and simply enjoying nature. There should be guidelines for the design of trails and other passive recreation settings such as benches, signage, and lighting.

Tree Commission

Trees are an important asset to the city’s quality of life, supporting storm water runoff and energy use reduction, air and water pollution filtering, noise and light screening, biological diversity, slope stabilization and aesthetic beauty. The city values its urban forest as a capital asset being the first 4th Class city in Kentucky to establish a city tree commission. The community has also earned “Tree City USA” status from the National Arbor Day Foundation for 14 years in recognition of achieving urban forestry standards.

The City of Fort Thomas Tree Commission was established in 1990 to protect, replace, and preserve tree stock for the City of Fort Thomas. The Commission provides education and leadership in facilitating public awareness of tree conservation, protection and planting issues. The Commission also maintains records of “landmark trees” on public and private property. Trees may qualify as “landmark trees” if they are a rare species, over one hundred years old, connected to an historical event, of outstanding size or quality, and/or if it retains special significance to the city. The Commission also reviews and provides written recommendations with respect to tree/landscape issues in an advisory capacity to the Fort Thomas Planning Commission on all plans for preliminary subdivisions, development plans, and site plans submitted.

The City understands the functional differences between and among its landscaped urban forest and the irreplaceable natural heritage and ecological function of the remaining natural forest patches and belts within its boundary. The citywide Forest Quality Assessment completed in July 2003 identified, through aerial mapping, that only 4.6% of city land area is designated as large crown forests, with an additional 12.2% designated as medium crown forests. The Tree Commission will continue to promote awareness, and appreciation of these limited native forests as a valuable natural resource, and actively pursue forest conservation design principles and conservation easements.

FORT THOMAS FOREST QUALITY ASSESSMENT

Crown Size	Diameter	Acreage	% of City Area	% of Forest Area
Small Crown	Less than 12"	865.5	23.60%	58.50%
Medium Crown	12 to 18"	446.1	12.20%	30.20%
Large Crown	over 18"	168	4.60%	11.40%
Total Forest		1,479.5	40.4%	100%

Fort Thomas 3,661.0 acres

Hillside Management

Hillsides are frequently regarded as an attractive location for certain types of development, typically scattered site single family homes. Attractive views, a sense of isolation, opportunities for creating architectural uniqueness and a perception of being close to nature can provide value for residents. In Fort Thomas, a mature community where readily available land for development has been depleted, most recent residential development has been on steep slopes and otherwise constrained areas. This trend is expected to continue as home sites become increasingly fewer and the development of engineering solutions to hillside construction enters the marketplace. Rather than simply permitting or not permitting hillside development in areas with slopes greater than a specific amount, Fort Thomas should seek to balance the benefits and risks of hillside development. Existing policies and regulations should be incorporated into the subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances of the city. The benefits of hillside development have been briefly described.

The need to manage hillside development, and risks associated with hillside development are many and include:

1. Threat to property and lives through slides or other failures, including buildings and structures.

The Hillside Trust in Cincinnati was organized to promote better management of hillside development practices and in response to failures constructed on hillside developments. Not only are the hillsides along the Ohio River a valuable visual resource, they are among the most unstable in the country according to the U.S. Geological Survey (Planning for Hillside Development, *American Planning Association, 1996*).

2. Degradation of environmental and natural resources from excessive clearings, loss of ground cover and diminished soil stability.

3. Impacts on public services and public safety.

Public water and sanitary services are difficult to extend into relatively isolated hillside areas and may be costly to maintain. Access to hillside developments is typically via narrow cul-de-sacs or dead-end roads that provide poor circulation and access for service and emergency vehicles.

4. Impacts on aesthetic and scenic qualities.

5. Loss of open space and natural green areas that provide wildlife habitat, natural vegetation and buffering from traffic corridors.

6. Reduced ability to utilize drainage corridors and natural area to link open spaces and provide non-motorized transportation corridors throughout Fort Thomas.

Hillside Open Space Opportunities

A strategy to designate hillsides in Fort Thomas where slopes exceed 20% as valuable and irreplaceable resources that merit special protection is recommended. Employment of hillside management techniques and ordinances for development on steep hillside areas supports goals and objectives relative to protecting and enhancing valuable natural areas and open spaces.

The current hillside development controls in the Fort Thomas Zoning Ordinance are the most current model available to regulate hillside development. The community may benefit from additional engineering and site design standards for grading, storm water run-off, drainage and vegetation clearance that will reduce development impact on natural systems and minimize hazards to public safety. These provisions could be incorporated into the subdivision regulations, zoning ordinance and/or tree commission ordinance to ensure adequate review as part of the development or subdivision plan process.

Carefully describing hillside development policies in the comprehensive plan and including development standards in other regulatory provisions will serve two important purposes. First, Fort Thomas will provide a clear and consistent set of development regulations that best meet the policies set out in the comprehensive plan. And second, by relating development regulations back to plan goals and objectives, Fort Thomas may establish a stronger legal framework for the regulations.

Hillside Management Techniques

Hillside regulations must serve multiple purposes. In Fort Thomas, the purpose is not only to safeguard public safety and reduce unwanted environmental impacts, but also to protect sensitive and important green corridors and public spaces. Since hillsides are by nature unstable, protection against uncontrolled stormwater run-off and mass movements (landslides) that can threaten lives and property is important. Extending and maintaining infrastructure up hillsides is difficult and expensive, as is constructing and maintaining roads and emergency service routes. Additional objectives for Fort Thomas to pursue in drafting hillside regulations should include aesthetics and visual qualities, natural qualities, protection against fire hazards, recreation values and connections to adjacent open space.

In *Performance Controls for Sensitive Lands* (Thurow, 1975) three basic types of hillside management are described.

1. Slope and Density Analysis.

This technique provides for decreasing densities as slope increases. The zoning techniques for achieving this are relatively straightforward and include establishing minimum lot sizes for steep slopes, requiring a high percentage of the sloped lot to remain undeveloped and reducing the number of allowable dwellings units (reducing densities). This is one of the most widespread techniques for managing hillside

development and is currently employed by Fort Thomas primarily along the eastern edge of the city above Route 8.

This technique does not rely on engineering solutions to manage hillside development, but on increases in lot size and decreases in densities. Slope and density analysis may well be the most effective hillside management technique for Fort Thomas.

2. Soils Overlay Analysis.

This technique links development regulations to soil type as described in maps prepared by the Rural Development Agency (formerly the Soil Conservation Service). Complete soil mapping is readily available for all of Fort Thomas. There are several limitations with this technique that may reduce its appropriateness in Fort Thomas. Soil mapping at the community level is somewhat general by nature. Mapping may contain extrapolated data obtained from aerial or drainage information, and may be imprecise for lot-level use. Characteristics within major soil associations can be variable and may not produce consistent soil constraint information. This technique may provide general guidelines regarding suitability and constraints to development, but may be unsuitable for describing specific site development and engineering requirements. The requirement under the hillside development regulations for geotechnical reports prior to development does provide some guidance, but is still limited.

3. Guiding Principals Technique.

Under this approach, a hillside overlay district is created to cover all hillside areas within a jurisdiction. A guiding set of principles or development standards is developed and made applicable to all development in these areas. A key component of this approach is providing for flexibility in meeting the desired end. Individual developments can be tailored according to the characteristics of each site and innovation is encouraged in achieving stated principles. This technique is appropriate for Ohio River communities, including Fort Thomas. To be successfully implemented, any community must have access to fairly sophisticated engineering resources since technical approaches may vary between sites. Examples of guiding principles prepared for the City of Cincinnati by the Hillside Trust includes:

Subdivision Regulations

- Severe restrictions of development in mid-slope areas of hillsides;
- Preservation of natural character to the greatest extent possible;
- Technical reports by qualified engineers/geotechnical specialists for building permits-subdivision plats;
- Prohibition of all buildings, roads, etc. in slide prone areas; and
- Prohibition of septic systems/water wells in slide prone areas.

Zoning Ordinance

- Overall density restrictions in hillside areas;
- Reductions in coverage provisions in hillside areas;
- Height restrictions to create least impact to the natural character of the hillside;
- Protection of significant views and vistas from hillsides and public roads;
- Maximum retention of existing trees and vegetation; and
- Limits on grading, soil disruptions, etc.

In summary, three approaches have been suggested for managing hillside development:

Slope and Density Analysis;
Soils Overlay Analysis; and
Guiding Principles Technique.

The slope density analysis concept is reflected in most areas with slopes exceeding 20% on the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map. These areas are classified as Hillside/Greenbelt in the plan and have low-density residential classifications on the zoning map. Considering the limitation of the Soils Overlay Analysis technique, it is recommended that the City consider using the Guiding Principles Technique to supplement the existing regulatory scheme. A hillside overlay could be used to encourage creativity in design, such as open space subdivision regulations, that permits development and reduces potential negative impacts on surrounding properties.

Public/Institutional

The public/institutional land uses include the Fort Thomas Municipal Building, VA Hospital, St. Luke Hospital, the water treatment plants and the Army Reserve Base. The current uses should be encouraged to continue, however, a strategy should be developed for the redevelopment of the lands if they are vacated. For instance, if the Army Reserve Base were to close, what could be done with the land and how could it be integrated better into the surroundings? This is discussed in more detail in the Midway section of the plan.

Industrial

Historically, the community developed based on residential and commercial land uses; development can be expected to continue on this path for the five-year planning timeframe of this plan. Nevertheless, before other lands are allowed to develop as industrial uses, the surrounding land uses should be considered for compatibility.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Element

Introduction

Because of the close connection between transportation and land use, Kentucky Revised Statutes, Chapter 100, requires a transportation element in a comprehensive plan. The typical Transportation Plan Element includes recommendations concerning highways, mass transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and other transportation facilities. The City of Fort Thomas benefits from regional mass transit provided by the Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) and the Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. The railroad and the Ohio River run along Route 8 on the eastern edge of the community. With one exception, AquaRamp, the community makes little use of these two modes of transportation.

The purpose of transportation is to move people and goods in a safe and efficient manner. Since the 1950's, the predominant form of transportation has been the automobile. Fort Thomas depends on the automobile to transport its residents to and from Cincinnati, other communities and within the city limits. Other forms of transportation exist; however, they do not share the universal popularity of the automobile.

This chapter discusses how Fort Thomas could encourage alternate means of transportation to provide more options than the automobile. There are regional systems of transportation available as well as potential for an internal trail system for transportation. This chapter also discusses how additional development in the business district will require improvements in circulation and parking. Finally, connections to the Mary Ingles Highway will be explored and recommended.

Regional Connections

The region surrounding Cincinnati offers many opportunities for alternative modes of transportation to its commuters. Since much of the work force in Fort Thomas commutes to Cincinnati and other commerce centers in the region, methods of connecting and promoting the alternative transportation systems should be explored.

Fort Thomas is part of the OKI Regional Council of Governments, which has instigated several regional transportation programs such as the ride share, carpooling, vanpooling, and park and ride program. Fort Thomas should encourage the participation of residents in these and other programs offered by OKI. Within the five year planning period of this Comprehensive Plan, Fort Thomas may want to consider potential locations for a park and ride facility within the community.

OKI has recently produced an updated map showing the designated bike paths throughout the Cincinnati region. This map shows preferred routes through Fort Thomas including the Mary Ingles Highway, Fort Thomas Avenue, Water Works Road, and Covert Run Pike. Fort Thomas should connect the proposed trail system to the OKI designated bike paths. With the proposed trail system, Fort Thomas could become a destination for bicyclists throughout the metropolitan area. Bike facilities such as storage

racks, bicycle crossings, and bike lanes should also be considered to encourage the safe and enjoyable use of bicycles as an alternative mode of transportation.

TANK also passes through Fort Thomas and should be promoted to its residents. Fort Thomas Avenue, Grand Avenue, and Memorial Parkway are a few of the roads included on TANK routes. Bus stops with indoor waiting space should be developed in these areas to increase bus ridership.

The following is a list of potential road improvements contained in the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet’s list of Unscheduled Projects. These improvements are not funded or programmed, but are identified as long range needs when the funds become available.

Unscheduled State Projects Affecting Fort Thomas		
Route	Miles	Description
I-275	4.0	MAJOR WIDENING FOR 2 ADDITIONAL LANES FROM AA HIGHWAY TO OH STATE LINE
I-471	5.1	MAJOR WIDENING FOR 2 ADDITIONAL LANES FROM I-275 TO OHIO STATE LINE
I-471	0.5	WIDEN THE SOUTHBOUND I-471 RAMP TO WESTBOUND I-275
US 27	0.1	RECONSTRUCT INTERSECTION OF US 27 AND OVERLOOK DR IN FORT THOMAS
US 27	1.6	RECONSTRUCTION I-471 TO KY 1892 (CAROTHERS RD)
KY 8	1.8	RECONSTRUCTION CLARK ST TO TOWER HILL RD INCLUDES RAILROAD UNDERPASS
KY 8	2.9	RECONSTRUCTION TOWER HILL RD TO KY 445
KY 8	1.1	RECONSTRUCTION KY 445 TO KY 1998
KY 445	1.0	RECONSTRUCTION KY 8 TO KY 1120 WITH CURB, GUTTER AND SIDEWALKS
KY 445	0.2	RECONSTRUCTION KY 1120 TO US 27, PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TURN LANES
KY 1120	1.3	PROVIDE BIKEWAY ALONG MEMORIAL PKY BETWEEN BELLEVUE AND FT THOMAS
KY 1120	0.7	RECONSTRUCTION CLOVER RIDGE RD TO N FT THOMAS AVE WITH CURB & SIDEWALKS
KY 1120	0.2	RECONSTRUCT INTERSECTION AT N FT THOMAS AVENUE

Source: KDOT

Business District Circulation

Town Center and Midway districts each experience circulation problems that are driven by their physical organization. In the sections (in the Land use Element) devoted to the redevelopment of these areas, the transportation patterns are discussed and possible solutions to the problems are suggested. Refer to these chapters for a more detailed description of problems and possible solutions. Further study should be completed to determine the need for appropriate road extensions and connections.

Connection to Mary Ingles Highway and Riverfront

The riverfront has been left a largely underutilized resource due to its inaccessibility and elevation differences from Fort Thomas. Two roads currently lead to the riverfront from the city -- River Road (State Route 445) and Tower Hill Road (local street). Each road will require improvements to make them more accessible to motor and non-motorized transportation. Both roads need to include pedestrian-safe access via sidewalk or trail and bike access via paths or additional lanes. These roads will then be able to connect the existing OKI-designated bike paths and the proposed trail system. Tower Hill Road begins at North Fort Thomas and winds its way down to the Mary Ingles Highway. The northern section is a standard width for residential streets, but as it descends the side of the bluff, it quickly becomes a winding, narrow road with no curbs or sidewalks. This road needs shoulder improvements, better lighting, warning signage,

and widening in selected locations. The scope and complexity of the needed road improvements will require the City to seek significant funding assistance. Until such time as this can be accomplished, use of the road for a bike path or trail will not be possible.

River Road is a wider road with wider shoulders and more warning signage. Nevertheless, this road can be dangerous due to the grade, curves, and number and steepness of driveways on both sides. Signage should be installed to warn the drivers of the upcoming drives. Improvements to the northern portion of this road are suggested in the Midway District redevelopment plan.

Possibilities exist for water transportation connections such as water taxis from the opposite bank of the Ohio River. Large recreational and entertainment destinations are located across the river. Fort Thomas could benefit from making connections across the river.

Highland Avenue

The city is in the process of studying a transportation project for Highland Avenue. This study involves moving the Highland Hills Park entrance from Mayfield Avenue to James Avenue possibly near the abandoned tennis courts. The Mayfield Avenue entrance would be closed and a cul-de-sac created with two or three end lots. The properties would be sold to help pay for the new entrance off of James Avenue. Another part of the project involves creating an entrance and drop-off point for Ruth Moyer Elementary School, eliminating the dangerous practice of cars stopping in the street to drop off children in front of the school. This plan is dependant on the school's consolidation, and Ruth Moyer Elementary staying open. The following maps indicate existing and proposed conditions.

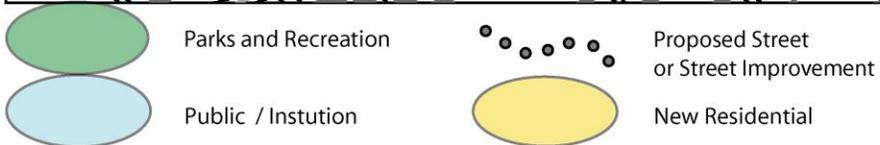
James and Mayfield Avenues Redevelopment Plan



Existing



Proposed



Community Gateways

The gateways identified by the community and field observations are as follows:

- Intersection of River Road and Fort Thomas Avenue
- Intersection of Alexandria Pike and Fort Thomas Avenue
- Intersection of River Road and the Mary Ingles Highway
- Intersection of Tower Hill Road and the Mary Ingles Highway
- Memorial Parkway at the Fort Thomas/Newport Line
- Covert Run Pike at the Fort Thomas/Bellevue Line
- Dayton Pike at the Fort Thomas/Dayton Line
- Waterworks Road at the Fort Thomas/Newport Line
- Grand Avenue at the Fort Thomas/Newport Line
- Highland Avenue at the Fort Thomas/Southgate Line
- Alexandria Pike at the Fort Thomas/Southgate Line
- Alexandria Pike at the Fort Thomas/Highland Heights Line

Guidelines for the treatment of gateways will be helpful to decision makers as the gateways to the community are improved. Guidelines should consider the location, scale, character, materials, and function of the gateways. The guidelines should be flexible enough to allow room for differences, but strict enough to create consistency.

The following are considerations for the treatment of gateways into the community:

1. The gateway should be identifiable as a portal to Fort Thomas. Since most of the communities in Northern Kentucky abut one another, it is important to have a distinctive and consistent treatment of gateways so that travelers know they are entering Fort Thomas.

2. The context of each gateway is important. A gateway should indicate the character of what is within a community. A simple sign and landscaped mound does not adequately indicate this character. Instead, the community's character needs to be reflected in the context of the area around the gateway.

3. The gateway should be timeless. As time periods change, styles of development often change. There are obvious trends in development that have become positive development styles such as the trend in the 19th century to create wider streets. There are just as many, if not more, development trends that have been failures such as the pedestrian malls installed all over America in the 1970's. The gateway should be built on timeless values like functionality, consistency to context, and aesthetic appeal.

Gateways and Corridors

To best analyze the gateways and corridors, they were divided into groups having similar characteristics. For instance, the gateways were divided into those that were major gateways into the community and those that were minor, as well as those that are part of a series of gateways. The major corridors are divided into four categories: scenic river road, scenic parkway, historic local connectors, and regional commuter roads. These designations were determined by both the character and the function of the road.

Gateways play an important role in presenting and defining the community. They are the point of arrival and entrance into the community and therefore should reflect the character historic to and desired by Fort Thomas. As stated by the Long Range Planning Committee in 1999, “a gateway describes an area of improvements, not merely a line or threshold relating to the city limits. It is not a sign, monument or wall, but a holistic environmental composition that marks the arrival to a different place.” This statement is profound because it requires a more in-depth analysis of necessary city-wide improvements. It indicates that the gateways to Fort Thomas should be more an arrival into a community held at higher standards than a passage through a gate.

Some techniques used to achieve this higher standard may include improvements to the streetscapes of most Fort Thomas streets such as sidewalks, lighting, bike lanes, street furniture, and consistent crosswalks. The amount and location of green-space and the types and organization of land uses will also create a sense of the high standards found in Fort Thomas. Ultimately, the maintenance of the gateway areas will reflect these high standards in spite of all other components.

Corridor Improvements

The streets in Fort Thomas must meet several needs. The first is the need for safe travel through the community. This cannot be done at the expense of community life, aesthetic appeal, and non-motorized travel.

Streets should connect when feasible. By connecting streets when appropriate, circulation improves, patrolling the street becomes easier, developable land is maximized, and the amount of infrastructure necessary is reduced.

Streets should fit a scale appropriate to their use. Many people will walk from their homes to surrounding businesses if possible. Streets flanked by residential land uses should be of a scale appropriate for pedestrians. The only streets that are appropriate at large scale are those that have limited access, no residential land uses, and no pedestrian trails adjoining.

Planned or proposed bikeways and trail heads should be properly integrated to existing streets and pedestrian ways. Streetscape planning should be developed within the main corridors and into localized neighborhoods.

Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage

Wayfinding and Interpretive Signage has become a standard in many communities and serves a variety of purposes at town centers and gateways, including orientation and way-finding. These purposes drive the way signage is planned and designed, from the overall look to the types of information that may be provided.

Interpretive signage can be used to promote Fort Thomas’ cultural and natural history. Graphical and narrative interpretive signage is an engaging tool to preserve the history of the community as it evolves with time. Interpretive signage comes in several forms, but the most commonly recognized is the interpretive "wayside". Wayside signs are really exhibits. They connect the viewer to the landscape, concisely orientating the resources and themes represented at the very spot the visitor is standing. Waysides are thus very site-specific in content, including both text and graphic elements. This signage generally provides directional information and site identification, and it can enhance people’s understanding of the city and encourage enjoyment and pride.

The complexity of Fort Thomas' terrain and roadway system can create an obstacle for both residents and visitors to actively make use of the multiple commercial districts and recreational areas within the city. The majority of local businesses rely on patronage beyond Fort Thomas' residential base, but are at a disadvantage being situated off the area's high traffic corridors and along routes that may be confusing for those not familiar with Fort Thomas. Clear wayfinding signage at the gateways to the city and at key intersections will guide vehicular and pedestrian traffic to these key city assets. Additionally, the 2004 parking study recommends utilizing wayfinding signage to direct traffic to public parking areas in the CBD.

Conceptual Trail System

Seldom can you solve two problems with one answer, but the development of a trail system may do just that. Two of Fort Thomas' major concerns are about creating linkages throughout the city and preserving sensitive hillsides from inappropriate development. By utilizing the hillsides surrounding the drainage channels, the value of these vacant lands is preserved while also creating a unique and extensive network of trails connecting most of the community.

Where land is available, a bicycle path separated from the other walking paths will avoid conflicts among users. In areas where the slopes are steep or land is not available, the trails can be combined. At the end of this chapter is a map of the pattern of creeks and culverts providing the city's surface drainage network and a superimposed trail system connecting the activity nodes throughout the community.

Bike Trail

The concept of construction of a bike path along Memorial Parkway, S.R. 1120 from Clover Ridge Avenue to the corporate limits has been investigated and evaluated since the mid-1990's. Staff has researched bike path safety and design issues and the Board of Council even considered a specific bike path request from a private development group in conjunction with scheduled resurfacing of Memorial Parkway.

A proposed bicycle route along Memorial Parkway is contained within the OKI Regional Bicycle Plan and remains on the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's unfunded priorities list, albeit a low priority. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet typically gives first priority to bike plans that connect destination points. The introduction of a bike path along Memorial Parkway creates a number of safety concerns as it relates to roadway alignment, posted speed limit, proximity of the proposed bikepath to the edge of pavement, and other existing conditions.

The proposed bike path would be available for pedestrians, cyclists, walkers and other recreational users including two-way traffic movement. Any proposed bike path design should ideally comply with the Federal Highway Administration Manual "Guidelines for Developing Bikepath Facilities". Specifically, a two-way bike path is recommended for a minimum width of ten (10) feet and, when located within five (5) feet from the edge of pavement, a physical barrier for separation should be considered. The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet does not support a physical barrier such as a guardrail or concrete wall along this highway.

Once constructed, the bike path would be the responsibility of the city for ownership, maintenance and repair. As a public improvement, the City is also responsible for the safe and efficient design of the bikepath that will serve the traveling public. While some pedestrians and cyclists are currently using this area without any bike path or sidewalk, the construction of a bike path would encourage increased utilization. Construction will be difficult because the path must meet minimum design standards recommended by the Federal Highway Administration as well as the challenging topography and lack of space in Fort Thomas.

Walking and Hiking Trails

The initial phases could include natural or wood chip type trails to allow pedestrian access only, but these would be subject to removal during flooding and would not allow the maximum use of the proposed facility. It is recommended that greenways be developed segment by segment, completing each segment entirely before moving on to the next. This will allow the completed segment to become an advertisement for the overall greenway, therefore building public enthusiasm and support for the project.

The trails should be well maintained and lit when in the neighborhoods and business districts. They will become more rugged as they drop in elevation towards the river. These trails should follow Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards within the areas immediately surrounding the Town Center and Midway areas. The remaining trails should follow trail standards set out by the National Park Service to ensure safety and preservation ethics. Many of the drainage areas through which the trails would travel are under private ownership. Easements or other agreements must be obtained to secure the public use of private property.

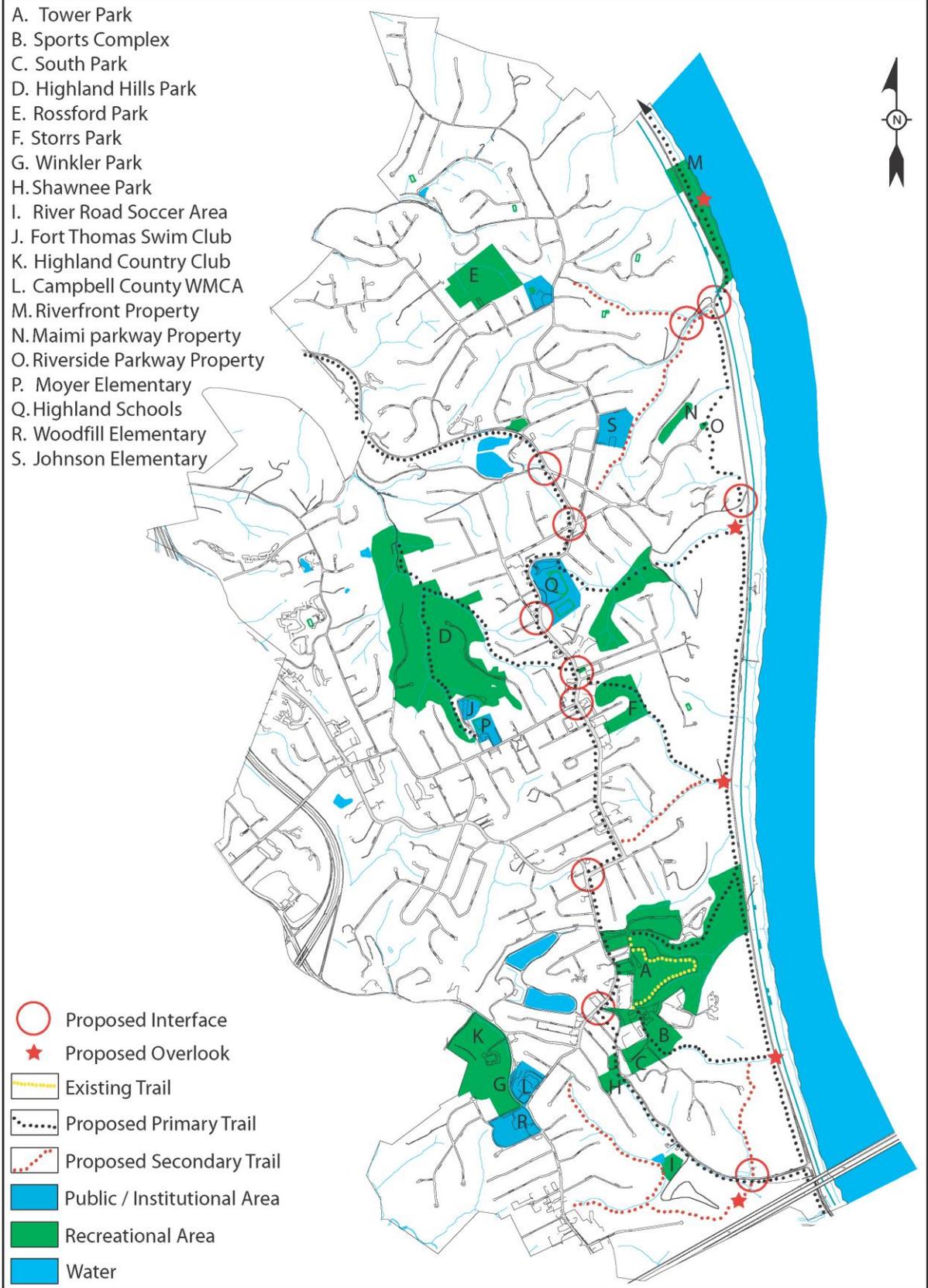
Vehicle - Pedestrian Interface

The map on the following page also indicates areas where the trails network will intersect with the major road network in Fort Thomas. These are areas that will require special attention to ensure that the system of linkages is effective.

Some overall considerations necessary for all intersections include the following:

- Warning signage for upcoming intersections;
- Pedestrian and vehicular lighting; and
- Crosswalks.

Drainage Network and Conceptual Trail System map



COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

Community Facilities Element

Introduction

The Community Facilities Element is intended to address recommendations for public or administrative facilities, fire and police stations, parks and recreation, schools, libraries, hospitals and utilities. As an established community, Fort Thomas should concentrate on maintenance and improvement of its existing facilities and working with independent agencies such as the school district, Campbell County, public utilities and hospitals to ensure coordination of their efforts with the City's goals of providing service to the residents.

Land use and community facilities are mutually dependent because community facilities' planning has the ability to stimulate growth and redevelopment efforts. Community facilities are usually planned for the areas in which the population and employment levels require the facility or service. Most facilities and services require a certain density to achieve the desired efficiency. For instance, the TANK bus routes are determined due to the proximity to the population centers and activity nodes.

Activity nodes are often destinations or areas where larger numbers of people consistently gather. The activity nodes fall in one of three categories – public/institutional, commercial, or recreational. Public/institutional activity nodes include the Fort Thomas Municipal Building, the hospitals, schools and the Army Reserve Base. These areas draw a large number of both pedestrians and vehicles on a regular basis. The commercial activity nodes include the cluster of businesses at the intersection of Highland Avenue and Grand Avenue, the area around the Municipal Building known as the Town Center, the Inverness intersection, Alexandria Pike, and the area known as Midway. Each of these areas offers retail and services that draw pedestrians and vehicle operators.

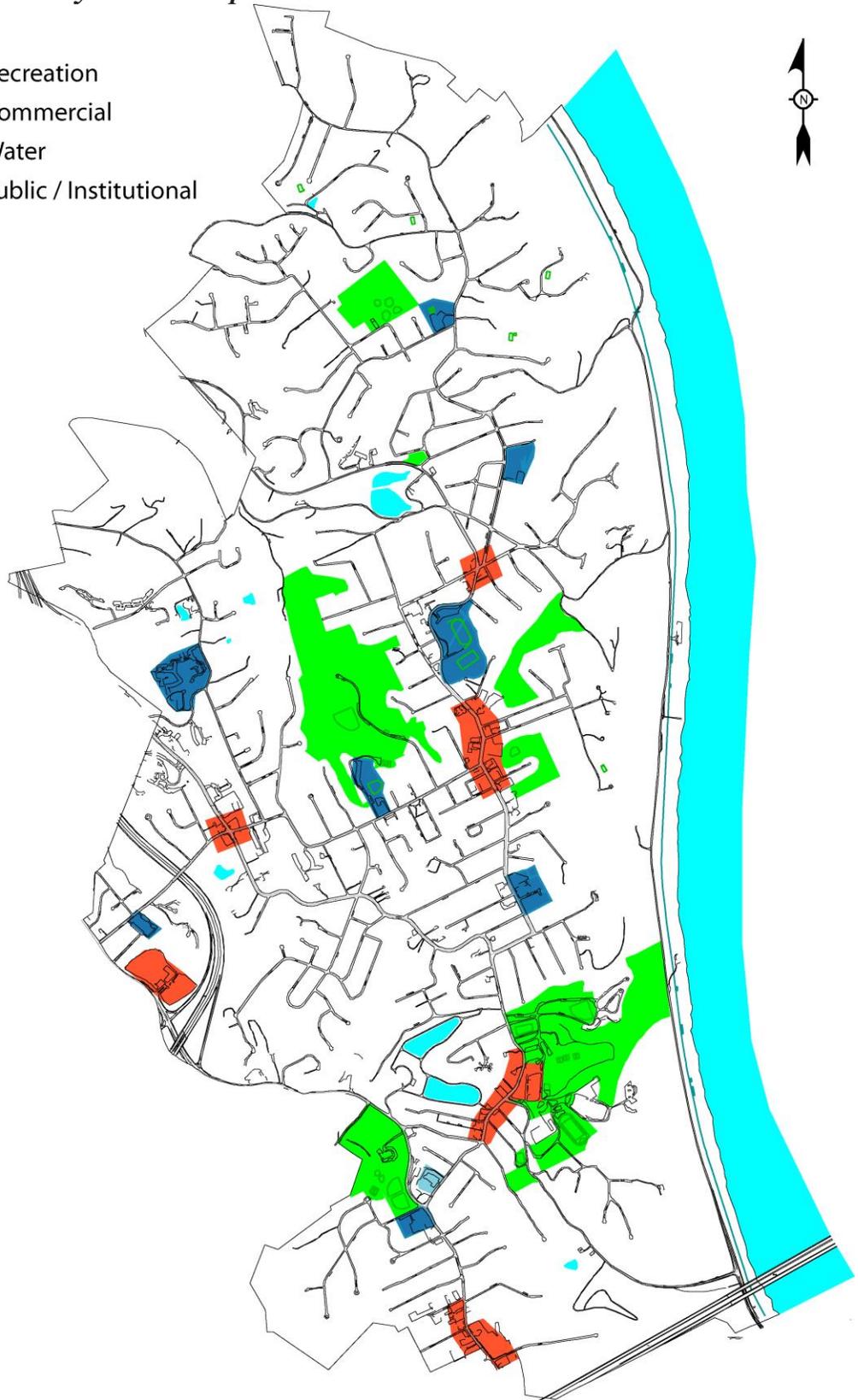
The recreational activity nodes include all the parks, the YMCA, Highlands Country Club, Fort Thomas Swim Club and the school recreational fields. These areas have high levels of use by both residents and out of town visitors. They are accessed by both foot and vehicle.

Each activity center offers unique amenities to those that gather there. There are several common amenities desirable at most activity centers. These include adequate lighting, accessible parking facilities, and pedestrian crosswalks. Linkages between pedestrian and vehicular paths usually occur at these areas and can be enhanced with additional amenities for both the pedestrian and vehicle operator. A focal element may be incorporated into the design such as a water fountain, signature business, or sculpture.

Existing Activity Nodes Map

Legend

- Recreation
- Commercial
- Water
- Public / Institutional



City Facilities

The city administrative offices are located at 130 North Fort Thomas Avenue on an approximately 2.5 acre site and truly serves as an anchor for the Town Center business district. This central location also permits efficient operation since vehicle parking, repair operations and supply storage are all in one location. The main city building houses the administrative staff, police and fire departments. The Public Works garage and offices were constructed in 1992 and the parking facilities were expanded at the same time. It is anticipated that there will be renovation and expansion of the Police Department offices within the next five years. The expansion would likely involve adding a second floor over the existing offices and therefore would not displace any parking. A concept plan has been completed and the city hopes to begin work in 2006- 2007.

In addition to the main offices for the city in Town Center, there is a secondary storage facility in the Midway business district. This site is surrounded by property owned by the Army Reserve Base and the VA Hospital. The Midway redevelopment plan recommends mixed use development in the parking area. Should this occur within the next five year planning period, the city would need to consider alternative locations. Possibilities include use of existing parks and recreation facilities or reorganization/expansion of the primary location on North Fort Thomas Avenue.

Business District Improvements

Business district redevelopment will require additional community facilities and services for them to be successful. Examples of facilities and services include:

- Urban design assistance;
- Streetscape improvements/public gathering spaces;
- Additional parking (possible parking garage);
- Facade improvements program;
- Street construction and repair (cross walks, etc.);
- Spot improvements to the water and sewer systems;
- Integrated trash pickup system; and
- Attention to fire and public safety.

Since additional densities are encouraged for each business district, parking demand may also increase. A recent parking study revealed that there is adequate parking in the Town Center and Midway Business Districts despite the perception from some property owners that more parking was needed. Violation of established parking limits was contributing to that perception and efforts are on-going to address the issue. The study also recommended a reduction in parking requirements as a means of encouraging economic development and redevelopment of residential structures in the business districts. Several of the redevelopment concepts recommend additional streets and street improvements to existing streets. Circulation in Midway is a concern of the citizens of Fort Thomas. New roads with less confusing intersections and improved character are recommended and are discussed in the redevelopment plan for the area. This may require constructing new roads, widening existing roads, filling cracks and holes, burying utility lines, installing boulevards, landscaping, installing new street lights and signage, and purchasing furnishings for pedestrians. These types of improvements should be included

in the redevelopment plans for the business districts. Additional densities may require spot improvements to the water and sewer systems in the redevelopment sites. Density also creates problems for garbage storage and pick up. The redevelopment areas should consider the needs of the trash service provider when designing the streets and trash storage areas. They should fit unobtrusively into the neighborhood surroundings, but also be accessible enough to make pick up easy.

Trail Maintenance and Improvements

The proposed community-wide trail system will be a unique and popular amenity for Fort Thomas. But as with other amenities, it will also require capital investment during construction and ongoing operation and maintenance investments. Initially, the trail will require a master plan to develop a specific path, layout priorities and phases. It should also begin to address standard design guidelines for the trailheads, intersections, and signage.

From the master plan, working drawings should be developed that will determine design standards and typical cross sections, as well as special situations like intersections, crosswalks, trailheads, river overlooks, etc. The purchase of easements will require intensive research and negotiations with the landowners. The city does have the right to exercise eminent domain if a tract of land threatens the implementation of a community goal. The trail system should be constructed as funding allows. The city should look to other sources for possible grant funding.

Maintenance and operations costs should be included into the city's budget to account for yearly trail clearing and maintenance necessary for user safety. Trailheads, intersections, lighting and signage will need consistent maintenance and repair.

Parks and Recreation

The City of Fort Thomas Parks and Recreation Department completed their master plan in December 2000. This document contains detailed and specific analysis of the existing parks and future needs of the community. Please contact the City of Fort Thomas Parks Department for additional information.

Tower Park

Tower Park is the largest park in the community at 87 acres. If the additional open space surrounding it is added to this figure, Tower Park nearly doubles in size making it one of the largest parks in Northern Kentucky. This park, with its surrounding facilities, could become an important recreation destination in Northern Kentucky. The challenges the park must overcome are poor circulation and an unplanned mix of land uses. The circulation pattern should be better organized and flow more easily through and around the parks. Better signage should be installed that leads people to, around and through the park. It should clearly identify parking areas, activity areas such as the community center, and connections to other recreation areas.

Highland Park

The Highland Park area also struggles with issues of circulation and incompatible land uses. Residents on Mayfield Avenue have consistently argued that their street is not the best entrance into the park. They object to the additional traffic and parking problems that arise from being the main entrance into the park. In 1999, the Long Range Planning Committee suggested James Street as an alternative entrance to the park since no houses are located there, but instead the Fort Thomas Swim Club and Moyer Elementary School flank the road. This plan also recommends examining the use of James Street as the major entrance into the park with Mayfield Avenue as a secondary entrance (see the *Transportation Section*).

Rossford Park

Rossford Park is a very actively used park in which ball fields and playgrounds are the predominant use. It is suggested this park remain a recreational activity center and maintenance should be ongoing.

Public / Institutional Facilities

Campbell County Public Library, Philip N. Carrico Branch

The Campbell County public library's Board of Trustees approved a long-range plan for the library on Thursday, June 9, 2005 that includes the next seven years of operation. The plan, which considered factors such as patron counts, collection material, computer software and facility access, was developed at the request of the Board of Trustees with collaborated assistance from branch managers to draft the plan for the Cold Spring, Carrico/Fort Thomas, and Newport branches.

According to statistics in the plan, between 2002 and 2004 the patron count in all three libraries increased by 4.5 percent, going from 452,956 to 473,163. The libraries have also steadily increased their collections of adult and juvenile books, with the collections numbers exceeding 169,000 titles.

Plans are in the works to build for a new "South Branch" library. A search for an appropriate site for the new building will not start until fiscal year 2006-07 with the project estimated to be completed in 2010.

The library will also begin operating on Sunday. The new hours are not scheduled to take effect until August 2005, and could be from 1-5 p.m. Another addition to the in the 2005-2006 budget is the inclusion of wireless technology, allowing patrons to use their own computers inside the library.

Schools

The Fort Thomas Independent School District is considering several capital improvement projects over the next few years. The school board is considering renovating and/or expanding the current high school building, and consolidation and reconfiguration of the aging elementary schools. The school plans to study renovating existing buildings, building a new building on an existing school location or choosing a new site for a new, consolidated elementary school.

In tandem with the School District plans, the City of Fort Thomas is considering an off street student drop-off for Ruth Moyer Elementary. Currently parents stop in the middle of Highland Avenue and drop off students at the curb, this is not safe for the children, and greatly disrupts the flow of traffic. This plan is in conjunction with Highland Hills Park entrance relocation discussed in the *Transportation Section* of this document.

Public Utilities

Electricity, Natural Gas, Existing Solid Waste Systems, Fresh Water Systems, and Sewer Systems were all covered in the existing conditions. At the time of this comprehensive plan printing the city was unaware of future changes to any of the above listed utilities.

Storm Water

The United States Environmental Protection Agency maintains regulations targeting the control of storm water runoff. The purpose of these requirements, known as the Storm Water Phase II regulations, is to improve the quality of surface waters that are currently impacted by storm water runoff. Under this rule, communities had to submit an application for a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to the State in 2003. Instead of all the communities in Northern Kentucky submitting for permits and attempting to individually meet the requirements of the mandate, Sanitation District #1 developed and has begun to implement a regional stormwater utility.

In an effort to comply with these requirements in a cost effective and efficient manner, local communities requested that a regional storm water management program be developed under the authority of a single entity - the Sanitation District #1 of Northern Kentucky. The District's Board of Directors has agreed to assume this new role and staff is aggressively working on the development of this program. SD #1's regional stormwater management program will affect the existing sewer service area for the district. Florence and Walton are not affected, and the program will affect approximately forty percent of the unincorporated county area. The boundaries of the service area have been delineated by the EPA Division of Water, and may be re-evaluated at the end of each five year permit cycle based on growth and impacts on water quality. The current permit cycle runs from 2003 to 2008, meaning that SD #1 is planning to take over ownership, operation, maintenance, and capital improvements of storm systems in the service area by 2008.

To date, SD #1 has completed a storm sewer inventory, created a single set of storm water rules and regulations, established a water quality-based credit policy for commercial and industrial properties, developed a land disturbance permit process for activities greater than one acre in the service area, begun detection and elimination of illicit discharges, initiated a public education program, and initiated a storm water surcharge for properties in the service area.

At the completion of the 2005 Comprehensive Plan update, the city will update the zoning and subdivision regulations. Revisions will be made to reference the regulations and permitting required through SD#1 as part of the subdivision review process.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Economic Development Element

Business District Marketing Strategy

Introduction

Because industry and high volume retail has never been a part of Fort Thomas' economy, this chapter has taken a more focused approach than most. First, a community-wide commitment to recruiting business must be made to ensure the continued success of the many business districts. Then, the growing health care industry in Fort Thomas must be addressed for its continual growth and infrastructure needs. Finally, the business districts each have a unique history and, therefore, a unique niche in the market. They should be promoted in different ways to support this diversity in business districts.

Business development must be considered in a public/private context. Since it is the private sector investment into the community that will strengthen the Fort Thomas economy, the city should continue to consider the impacts of new policies and regulations on the private business owners. Finding the right balance between regulation and rights of property owners will create the most effective, efficient and equitable types of business development and redevelopment.

Business Recruitment and Management

Fort Thomas should develop a program to recruit businesses to the community. This program should actively search the marketplace for businesses to fill existing and proposed retail and service space. Malls and strip centers actively recruit to keep their stores full. Therefore, successful business districts must also participate in business recruitment to be competitive.

The Renaissance on Main Program has developed a four point approach to improving historic business districts. Fort Thomas could benefit from using these approaches even if they are not participating in the Main Street Program. The four point approach, and Renaissance on Main are discussed in the Programmatic Improvements chapter of this element. It is worth mentioning here, however, that the fourth point deals directly with economic restructuring and could benefit Fort Thomas' pursuit to recruit businesses. One element involves a process of examining current economic and market forces affecting the downtown. From this study, a plan for the recommended mix of retail, professional services and housing can be developed. Some of the suggested tools include market analysis, business assistance programs, upper floor housing conversions, and business retention, recruitment and expansion efforts.

Fort Thomas should update the detailed market study from 2001, to indicate the existing economic trends and projections. This study should also re-examine the existing businesses to determine growth and decline in the market and make recommendations for the future focus of the business recruiting program.

A business assistance program should be implemented that will identify the threats to local businesses and develop recommendations for overcoming them. For instance, a loan program could be developed to help businesses fund facade improvements and renovations to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). Small business incubators could be effective tools for encouraging small businesses in the business districts and throughout the community.

As discussed in the chapters on the Town Center, Midway District and Inverness, increased density can create a larger market for the businesses in these areas. Therefore, upper floor housing renovations can create a mix of land uses that creates healthy commercial districts. Redevelopment will also provide the type of spaces needed for today's retailers and housing consumers.

Health Care Industry

The most prominent industry within the Fort Thomas city limits is the health care industry. St. Luke Hospital, the Veteran's Administration Hospital, numerous retirement homes, and health care offices create a center for health care in the greater Cincinnati area. There are certain business development techniques that Fort Thomas could incorporate into their business development strategy to help make a more suitable environment for the health care businesses. An example of this is installing the proper infrastructure. Elderly and sick people benefit from compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADAAG). This applies both to building interiors as well as the surrounding streets, parking lots and sidewalks. Other infrastructure needs include short term parking, advanced telecommunication technology, and senior community and recreation areas.

Business Niches

Town Center

The Town Center District is the civic center of the community with the Fort Thomas Municipal Building, post office and the nearby school campuses. Adding the proposed public plaza gathering space will enhance the civic nature of the district. The Town Center District is a vital part of the Fort Thomas Renaissance District with the city's largest concentration of retail and service-oriented businesses that serve the needs of local residents such as: banks; restaurants; gift shops; art oriented shops; stores that offer items for every-day needs; hair salons; and medical, legal, real estate, and insurance offices. In addition, the Town Center District houses fundamental public services, including City Hall, a U.S. Post Office branch and central office of the Fort Thomas Independent School District. The character of the district supports pedestrian traffic and should be encouraged to pursue destination businesses that generate walk-in business and compliment the civic and retail aspects.

Midway

The Midway District is an historically significant business district flanked by recreational space and a mix of land uses. Nestled between popular Fort Thomas recreation facilities makes it an ideal location for businesses that serve recreational needs such as sporting goods and fitness related services. Other businesses this Fort Thomas Renaissance district has historically hosted are: restaurants, bars, entertainment, and home furnishings. Attracting more of these businesses; along with pursuing National Historic District designation, possible streetscape enhancement and parking/way-finding needs of the district will augment the character and marketability of the Midway District.

Inverness

The Inverness area has traditionally been a neighborhood business district catering to the interurban transportation system users. This area has gradually evolved into less of a stand-alone, independent business district and more into a mixed use area of public plaza civic space, service and retail-oriented businesses, dining and residential uses. The redevelopment of a former auto service station into a public plaza/greenspace for the hosting of community events is a good example of the natural evolution of this area. The future business focus should continue to be directed to the surrounding neighborhoods, providing their daily needs and services.

Alexandria Pike

The Alexandria Pike business district was developed when U.S. 27 was a major commuter route into the Cincinnati metropolitan area. Business activity catered to the commuting traffic. Commuters generally take I-471 today and the businesses on U.S. 27 reflect this shift. As a result, this corridor has experienced a gradual shift away from retail business and instead toward office type uses, including the redevelopment of a large parcel that formerly housed an independent grocery and hardware store into prime, class A office/warehouse space.

Programmatic Improvements

Introduction

Implementation of Comprehensive Plan recommendations is expected to occur over a multi-year time frame. Portions of the plan will be implemented through actions taken by the Planning Commission and City Council in the review of development and redevelopment projects. Many of the plan's recommendations, however, are focused on longer term projects that will improve the form and function of the communities' corridors and commercial centers. Proposed improvements to the Inverness, Midway and Town Center business districts will require the organizational and financial commitment of the city, business owners and other groups and individuals.

The city is fulfilling its role of long-range planning and establishing community objectives and priorities. Responsibility for leadership in implementation should be led by the city, but not necessarily managed by the city on a daily basis. Private and not-for-profit organizations are excellent vehicles for bringing energy and focus to major improvement projects.

Following is a description of recommended organization structures that can provide leadership in planning and redevelopment projects. The Renaissance on Main Program is a well-established organization, it has a demonstrated record of success at the state and federal level and is a widely adopted model for downtown revitalization. Renaissance on Main has generated great interest state-wide and has produced project funding for certified communities. Community Development Corporations (CDC) are well established nationally, but have not been extensively utilized in the Commonwealth. In Kentucky communities where CDC's and similar quasi-public groups have been used, there are many examples of successful redevelopment. Madisonville in Western Kentucky is roughly the same size as Fort Thomas, and has been very successful in using the CDC model for redevelopment projects.

Midway National Historic District Designation

The City of Fort Thomas can trace its roots back to 1787, and for over 200 years the city has had a rich history. Fort Thomas is interested in the long-term protection of its cultural history that includes the fabric of the traditional business area of Fort Thomas that now makes up the City's central business districts. Participation in the Main Street program, the development of a local historic designation, and formation of the Design Review Board support preserving the City's heritage and offer a foundation to pursue other activities to enhance the CBD'S for future generations. A National Historic District Designation for the Midway business district will create a distinctive and marketable identity for the district and the city. It is a proactive method to celebrate the history of the community and develop linkage to the National Historic registered Mess Hall that earned the prestigious Ida Lee Willis award, as well as military commons. The nomination process encourages positive interaction with the stakeholders in the district. Furthermore, the nomination process and designation promote the cultural history and builds a more unified sense of community that can be enjoyed by future generations. The preservation of the contributing building fabric and sensitivity to future modifications are encouraged with this designation, without creating a burden to the building owners and stakeholders within the Midway business district.

Kentucky Main Street Program

Initiated in 1979, the Kentucky Main Street Program is one of the state's primary downtown revitalization programs. Under the direction of the Kentucky Heritage Council, the program is based on the national Main Street Program developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program seeks to improve the economic base of Kentucky's central business districts through revitalization and to preserve historic buildings by developing viable uses for them. In 2000 Fort Thomas was accepted to the program and adopted the name "Fort Thomas Renaissance." Approximately one hundred communities in Kentucky are actively participating in the Main Street Program with more communities considering participation.

Main Street Principles

Main Street is an economic revitalization program that is locally initiated, guided and implemented. Communities may receive grants along with other forms of assistance from the Kentucky Main Street staff, aimed at helping local programs determine and build upon their assets and to identify and strengthen their weaknesses.

The program centers around eight guiding principles:

1. Main Street represents a comprehensive approach to downtown revitalization;
2. The Main Street approach relies on quality;
3. A public-private partnership is necessary to make meaningful, long-term downtown revitalization possible;
4. The Main Street program involves changing attitudes;
5. Main Street focuses on existing assets;
6. Main Street is a self-help program;
7. The Main Street approach is incremental in nature; and
8. Main Street is implementation oriented.

The Main Street program is only effective in Fort Thomas when the community generates broad support, including financial support, for the program. It is important that all local governing bodies, including the Planning Commission and City Council, fully support and encourage the activities of the Fort Thomas Main Street program. In addition, it is particularly critical that the building and business owners, as stakeholders, are invested in a public-private partnership.

Four Point Approach

Fort Thomas Renaissance utilizes the Main Street four-point approach developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as a guide to revitalization. This model has proven to be successful when combined with strong community support and capable local management of the program. The four points are as follows:

- 1. Organization.** Organization includes the development and maintenance of a single body to govern the local program and to develop a cooperative spirit among key individuals involved in the revitalization effort. It is imperative that this board be able to effectively coordinate and communicate the efforts to improve downtown by the program, city and county government officials,

merchants, property owners, volunteers, development agencies, local lending institutions, and civic groups.

2. Promotion. Promotion involves projecting a positive, vibrant image of Fort Thomas. Promotion efforts include developing an image of a unified downtown (Town Center and Midway District) to residents and other consumers through innovative retail promotions, and special events. This is a key aspect to attracting new customers to the downtown area.

3. Design. Physical appearance of downtown areas can have a significant impact on perceptions of the area, which in turn impact the level of economic activity and investment in the area. Design oriented activities include building and facade renovations in keeping with the historic character of the buildings, improvements to and maintenance of public spaces, appropriate signage, and attractive display of merchandise.

4. Economic Restructuring. This component involves a process of examining current economic and market forces affecting the downtown and determining what mix of retail, professional services and housing will prosper in the area and recruiting contributing businesses to fill vacancies. Tools used in economic restructuring include market analysis; business assistance programs; upper floor housing conversions; and business retention, recruitment and expansion efforts.

An effective Main Street program addresses all four elements and requires continuous professional management. The program should focus on incremental progress, and emphasize quality, design, and cooperation.

Services Available to Kentucky Main Street Cities

Participation and membership in the Kentucky Main Street Program offers numerous benefits and services that assist communities.

Some of these services include:

- **Grants.** Each year there are a number of competitive grant opportunities for participating cities.
- **On-site Visits.** Kentucky Heritage Council (KHC) staff visits communities offering technical and design assistance, as well as programmatic support.
- **Manager Training.** Statewide three-day manager meetings, presentations by nationally recognized consultants, one-day intensive regional meetings and on-site assistance programs are offered. The training sessions also offer worthwhile networking opportunities.
- **Board Training.** On-site training sessions for the board and committee members can be requested.
- **Technical and Design Assistance.** A variety of technical and design assistance is provided to the local Main Street program upon request.
- **Resource Center.** KHC maintains a valuable resource center that participants can access.

- **List Serve.** KHC maintains a list serve to disseminate information pertinent to Main Street communities and to provide a forum for Main Street manager statewide for dialog.

As previously stated, the Main Street program is a self-help program that relies on establishing numerous successful public-private partnerships. State resources, however, can greatly assist Fort Thomas in utilizing this aspect of downtown revitalization.

Renaissance on Main

Renaissance on Main, launched in 1997 as Renaissance Kentucky, is a statewide initiative with the goal of bringing together communities and resources necessary to revitalize and restore Kentucky's downtowns through a focused approach in obtaining resources. This initiative is not intended to replace existing programs, but rather to enhance existing efforts.

The goal of Renaissance on Main is to stimulate job creation and economic development. Communities that take steps to revitalize and maintain vibrant, economically sound development in Kentucky's downtown areas will be rewarded. Objectives of the program include:

- Creating new methods for easier access to program funding from local, state and federal resources;
- Developing simplified access to state agencies for support and as a clearinghouse for information from the agencies;
- Developing customized strategies for each participating city for downtown revitalization;
- Encouraging the restoration and preservation of unique and historic structures in the downtown; and
- Recognizing cities that have achieved program objectives.

Renaissance on Main communities receive incentives including:

- Priority for Heritage Council financial assistance to conduct an assessment of existing buildings;
- Eligibility for Renaissance grant funds for facades and infrastructure;
- Eligibility for priority funding through CDBG, HOME, Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program, Transportation Enhancement Funds, TEA-21 and other state resources;
- Priority selection by the Transportation Cabinet to prepare a traffic study of the community;
- Inclusion in Kentucky's tourism and marketing endeavors;
- Statewide recognition as a Renaissance on Main community.

It is recommended that Fort Thomas continue its status as a Renaissance on Main community, so long as practical. Participation in the program provides Fort Thomas a wide range of funding, resource, and marketing opportunities not available to other communities. Participation in the program complements and enhances the city's overall development and redevelopment plans.

Community Development Corporation (CDC)

CDC's are typically organized as 501(c)3 tax exempt corporations with a mission of prioritizing, packaging and implementing major development and redevelopment projects. A CDC functions as a separate entity of the city, one that is focused on one or more activities relating to the development and redevelopment of downtowns and business district areas. They are organized to bring together public and private sector entities and resources to stimulate development or redevelopment on complex, expensive or controversial projects.

Typical CDC's are composed of local bankers, business owners, community leaders, local government representatives and community residents. Seed funding for CDC's frequently is provided by the local government, with support from area business and financial interests. Most CDC's have adopted the goal of financial self sufficiency within a certain period, typically five years. Other CDC's are structured as more long term quasi- development and redevelopment arms of local government, and receive long term financial support. The most appropriate model for any community, including Fort Thomas, is best determined by the goals, objectives and projects described in the CDC mission statement.

Sample projects and activities that are appropriate for a CDC in Fort Thomas could include:

1. Corridor streetscape improvements;
2. Storefront restoration and facade improvements;
3. Gateway improvements;
4. Upper story renovation;
5. Adaptive reuse of historic structures (Midway area);
6. Joint venture project with private developer (Midway/Town Center/Inverness);
7. Infill development projects;
8. New construction projects;
9. Site acquisition, packaging and developer recruitment;
10. Retail recruitment;
11. Funding pool for business district improvement projects (private, state, federal);
12. Grantsmanship technical assistance;
13. Business district market analysis; and
14. Creation of civic plaza for Fort Thomas.

Design Review Board (DRB)

The Design Review Board was established by the City of Fort Thomas in 2002 in an effort to implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan regarding developing an identity for the cities' business districts and to insure protection of historic resources. The mission of the Design Review Board is to work with business owners, citizens and the city to help preserve and enhance the unique and varied community character and architectural styles in its business districts. The first order of business for the Board was to create and adopt a set of guidelines and procedures.

In the Fall of 2002, the Board formerly adopted the Design Guidelines and Procedures manual for the Town Center and Midway Business Districts. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish specific design standards for new construction or exterior alterations of public and private properties.

As with any set of regulatory controls, on-going review and updating is necessary. It is anticipated that the guidelines will be updated over the next five-year planning period. Additional changes may also be required if the Midway business district obtains status as a National Register historic district.

Information Technologies

General

The purpose of this chapter in the comprehensive plan is to provide information and insight into the issues concerning the use and development of information technologies and their necessary infrastructure. The potential positive and negative impacts of such technologies on Fort Thomas is tremendous in scope, and this chapter should serve as the starting point for additional and ongoing education and planning efforts regarding these issues. For certain technologies, Federal and State legislation has detailed the ways in which local communities can and cannot regulate the growth of the technology infrastructure. For example, the 1996 Federal Telecommunications Act and the 1998 Kentucky House Bill #168 have clearly defined the role of local planning and legislative bodies in the regulation of the telecommunication utilities. Failure to comply with the new legislation—and, alternatively, to take full advantage of the provisions in this legislation—will hinder the ability of Fort Thomas to plan for and adapt to these new technology facilities.

Background

A New Infrastructure

As new information technologies develop, they become a greater part of the fabric of our lives. Information technologies include “infrastructure” facilities such as fiber optic lines, a new generation of cable/telephone internet lines, “satellite farms,” and other wireless facilities. Information technology services include a tremendous array of goods and services, including electronic commerce, access to remote education facilities, geographic information systems (and correlating tools, such as global positioning systems), electronic meter reading, intelligent transportation systems, video-conferencing, the “Kentucky Information Highway,” and incalculable other uses and services yet to be conceived. The importance of making these tools convenient to use cannot be underestimated. Providing or guaranteeing access to these technologies for all Fort Thomas residents should be regarded as being as much of a community service as the provision of library and education facilities. Likewise, these new technologies require a range of new facilities and infrastructure, which can range from the provision of an additional telephone line for a modem to a cellular tower array. The location of these facilities in areas that best serve the public while providing the least negative impacts is an issue to be addressed by Fort Thomas to the extent allowable in Federal and State law.

Primary Concepts

When speaking generally about information technologies, two primary concepts should guide Fort Thomas as it plans and provides for the expansion and/or regulation of such technologies. These concepts include universal access and the integration of information technology and infrastructure with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

The concept of “universal access” is defined as “the ability of every citizen in Fort Thomas to have access to information technology and infrastructure developments.” This does not necessarily mean a computer or Internet access in every home, but rather the ability for every citizen to have such access if so desired. This ability might be made available through facilities located in public libraries, city hall, schools, kiosks, or other public places. It could also be provided in residences through any number of service providers.

Planning for information technology and infrastructure should be viewed less as an independent exercise and more so as an extension of the planning process as a whole. Just as transportation or land use decisions should not be made in isolation from each other and from environmental, educational, and other factors, decisions regarding information technology and infrastructure should not be made in isolation from these factors, and vice versa. For example, the planning of new education or community facilities should include, where possible, recommendations as to how additional access to information technologies (such as teleconferencing or the Internet) can be provided and integrated into the facility. Likewise, surrounding land use, environmental factors, and the location of existing community and/or transportation facilities should be considered by private and public entities in the siting decisions for new telecommunication facilities, such as wireless communication structures. In all cases, information technology infrastructure should be provided in a manner consistent with the goals, objectives, and

recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan wherever such compliance is possible and to the full extent permitted under Federal, State, and local laws and ordinances.

Wireless Communication Facilities

Recent Federal and State legislation has had a dramatic impact on the way local communities can and cannot regulate the growth and development of such facilities. Since these facilities often have the most visible impact on the general landscape of any information technology infrastructure, and due to the unique regulatory climate surrounding such facilities, these facilities are discussed in more detail in this section.

Governing legislation

Two major pieces of legislation determine how and to what degree the City of Fort Thomas may regulate wireless communication facilities. These include the Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the Kentucky House Bill #168 (1998).

Telecommunications Act of 1996

This Act was adopted by Congress to accomplish two objectives. First, the Act seeks to promote competition in the telecommunications industry which will enable more carriers to provide service, will increase competition and promote a more active market. Second, the Act seeks to limit—but not prohibit—existing authority of state and local governments to regulate wireless facilities within their jurisdiction. More specifically, the Telecommunications Act also outlines some provisions. It preserves existing planning authority, prohibits activity that impedes wireless service, prohibits discrimination, requires timely review and action of local governments on wireless service proposals, requires all denials be in writing, and requires that court action, if necessary, be timely.

Kentucky House Bill #168 of 1998

Up until 1998, Jefferson County was the only municipality with enabling legislation for authority over wireless telecommunication facilities. House Bill #168 created opportunity for all municipalities with a planning commission to regulate telecommunication facilities.

The Bill outlines specific provisions. It states that only those municipalities with active planning commissions (thus, updated comprehensive plans) are enabled to regulate the wireless service providers. The Bill also states the wireless providers are required to submit their plans to the Public Service Commission. The Public Service Commission is only required to submit applications on the providers' behalf to communities whose planning commissions have filed a resolution with the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC). If a planning commission has not filed the resolution, then the service provider can proceed without further authorization. If a resolution has been properly filed with the PSC, then the service provider must submit a uniform application to the planning commission. The planning commission is then allowed no more than 60 days to accept or deny application. The Bill supports and encourages co-location of up to two service providers, thereby reducing the number of additional, separate facilities needed in a community.

The basis for the resolution and the decisions on the wireless service applications must have their roots in the comprehensive plan. With this additional provision in the Bill, it is important that Fort Thomas include policies on wireless communication service in this plan and that it be updated regularly.

It is important to note that, as of the time of passage of this Comprehensive Plan, House Bill 168 provides the **only** authority for zoning authorities adopting an ordinance to become involved in the regulation of wireless telecommunication facilities. Any power not expressly delegated to the planning commission in House Bill 168 is prohibited. In addition, the planning commission and other city leaders should be expressly and continually cautioned about the confidentiality provisions detailed in House Bill 168. This includes the rejection of any public request for inspection of most information included in the uniform application (as detailed in HB 168) and other important provisions. According to House Bill 168, “any person violating [these provisions] shall be guilty of official misconduct in the second degree.” This and other relevant legislation should be continually monitored for updates and changes.

Relationship to Goals and Objectives

The goal of “providing a dependable and adequate supply of all essential utility services to the population” suggests that information technologies could be used to minimize vehicular dependency, enhance coordination between community facilities, improve the efficiency of public services and safety, and aid in the management of community data such as land use and demographics. With the advent of telecommuting, universal access to information technologies will be increasingly vital to citizens of Fort Thomas. The increased expenditures for telecommuting infrastructure may be offset by the savings in reduced vehicular infrastructure. Telecommuting infrastructure also has the ability to save the City money with increased efficiencies and more accurate and accessible data.

The Telecommunication Act supports Fort Thomas’s goal of “providing all essential utility services as economically as possible” and the objective of “developing utility markets that promote competition.” Fort Thomas wireless service users will benefit from competition between wireless service providers as prices become more competitive.

House Bill #168 lays out a prescription for “evaluating the development of future telecommunication facilities to provide universal access without unduly disrupting the goals of other elements” as another goal of the comprehensive plans states. The Bill suggests co-location to eliminate the need for additional structures or facilities, coordinating within the region for telecommunication utilities, developing a list of criteria for the evaluation of telecommunication facility siting, maintaining accurate records of existing, approved and proposed telecommunication facilities, and encouraging telecommunication providers to develop a plan for the removal of new and existing facilities should such facilities become obsolete all of which compliment the needs of Fort Thomas.

Recommendations and Considerations

Information Technology Development Plan

Fort Thomas should develop a Strategic Information Technology Development Plan based upon the goals, objectives, provisions and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. This strategic plan should address the long-term technology and infrastructure needs of businesses, civic organizations, public entities, emergency services, and educational facilities. Particular attention should be paid to the safety, economic and educational benefits of new informational technologies, facilities, and infrastructure. The plan should evaluate traditional and creative alternatives towards bringing benefits of these technologies to the full population.

Internet

The City of Fort Thomas is in constant pursuit of a higher quality of life for its residents, including as a small component, up to date technology to provide better Internet service. The city is considering wireless Internet for its business districts; but has no formal plan of implementation yet. Possibilities include several methods of current and developing technologies:

Traditional Wireless (Wi-fi)

3G Technology

Broadcasting from a central tower with Internet phone technology

Traditional Wireless - sponsored by local businesses

The City has also considered working with the *Kentucky Information Highway* program to provide low cost, high quality, high-speed Internet service for all local residents. Fort Thomas could also email residents the city newsletters, permit forms, and other important documents; saving resident tax dollars for more essential functions of city business. Some other benefits are increased access to employment opportunities and educational resources, global email, and reduced voice, data and video communication costs.

Wireless Communication Facilities

Sites of wireless communication facilities, including cellular phone towers, personal communication system (PCS) facilities, satellite dishes, and structures accessory to these uses are subject to local review and approval. Service providers should be required, where feasible, to share towers and site facilities in order to minimize their proliferation. Aesthetic issues are prominent and will need to be addressed at the local level. It is also important that, as new technologies make such towers or other facilities unnecessary, their removal and disposal is assured.

The following is a list regulatory controls adopted as part of the zoning ordinance and used to evaluate the siting of such facilities:

1. File an appropriate resolution with the PSC.
2. Create a map of existing, approved and proposed cell towers in the region, and update this map on a regular basis.
3. Inform decision makers of the spirit of the Telecommunication Act and House Bill #168.
4. Use a published list of criteria for evaluating the applications, including:
 - Ability to co-locate.
 - Availability of existing structures (such as water towers, church steeples, etc.) or facilities which meet all of the requirements of the proposed installation.
 - Availability of more appropriate sites such as industrial and commercial areas.
 - Screening to reduce impact on surrounding areas, particularly for site in or abutting residential areas.
 - Setbacks based on the surrounding character.
 - Type of tower based on surrounding character; however, the capacity for future facility co-location should also be considered.
5. Provide a 60-day review flow chart detailing the review process.
6. Require that owner remove obsolete towers and the site be returned to its original state.