

Comparable Cities/Counties Research May 2016

The following comparable cities and counties were selected for a variety of reasons. Some had similar population sizes or demographic qualities, similar employment characteristics, growth rates, historic districts, etc. The following information from the comparable communities are only themes pulled from each community's comprehensive plan. Questions regarding how similar communities handle different issues can be more easily answered now that these comparable communities have been identified.

Land Use: In each city researched, there seemed to be similar theme regarding current and future land use. New development is favored to provide multi-modal oriented site design and attractive streetscapes that are flexible to allow changes over time without detracting from the quality of the area. Preventing sprawl is important and each city/county has objectives/text in the comprehensive plan to create a vibrant commercial zone to help new businesses support existing businesses. The communities researched favor infill in more targeted urban areas. Development should be mixed use and these areas and designed/considered as "places" rather than "developments."

- **Georgetown, KY**
 - New Development: New development in Commercial Districts will be encouraged to locate and design buildings such that a percentage of building fronts directly face adjacent streets, provide a mix of types and sizes of businesses, provide pedestrian oriented site design, and incorporate convenient, safe and attractive parking areas into the block. (urban land use element page 6)
 - Street Tree Design: Street trees should be used in a formal architectural fashion to reinforce, define, and connect the space and corridors created by buildings and other features along the street. Canopy shade trees will constitute the majority of tree plantings, and a mixture of tree types will be included, arranged to establish partial urban tree canopy cover. Existing trees will be preserved to the maximum extent feasible. (urban land use element page 8)
- **Ashland, KY**
 - Commercial development should minimize curb cuts on roadways and maintain a defined roadway edge with specific points for ingress/egress; shared driveways with cross-development access should be required when possible. (pg 41)

- **Dublin, OH**
 - With few exceptions, the City's land use is distinguished by large scale, single-use, geographically segregated developments. To provide an alternative development choice, mixed use areas that more fully integrate uses and activities will be important. These areas should be thought of as "places" rather than "developments" and should be distinctive in their identity. The form, character and mix of uses should create vitality and facilitate opportunities to walk and bike within these places. Form and architecture should be flexible to allow uses to change over time without detracting from the quality of the area. (Land Use objective)
- **Boone, NC**
 - "The Town should consider green building incentives at the local level for developers who consider the use of the LEED rating system for buildings and/or developments" (land use plan Page 58)
 - Expansion of downtown areas for tourists and growing population
 - They have complete & green streets
 - Complete streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and bus riders of all ages and abilities are able to safely move along and across a complete street. By rebalancing the transportation system in Boone, the quality of the resident and visitor experiences in activity nodes can be enhanced, the sense of community will be enriched, and the overall quality of life in Boone will be improved. (land use plan page 66, Principle 3)
 - Bike lanes
 - Wide sidewalks
 - Ample lighting (updated streetscapes)
- **Nelson, County, KY**
 - Complete Streets
 - A complete street policy provides streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages. Complete streets improve safety for all users, encourage more livable community that allows choices in transportation, helps children and family by providing safe routes to schools, and reduces traffic and congestion by removing shorter trips made by car.

- **Oxford, MS**

- Promote pedestrian friendly design.
- Address parking as a major issue and explore location for and construction of a mixed use parking structure.
- Develop downtown design guidelines.
- Address relationships and compatibility with adjacent residential development.
- Promote mixed-use commercial/residential development (pg 11.)

Agriculture & Environment: All of the cities researched view farmland as the vital part of the community, and include specific language/measures in each comprehensive plan to preserve farmland and deter development from those outermost rural areas in the counties/cities. In areas that growth is expected to increase, there are different policies in place to help protect vital farming areas.

- **Dublin, OH**

- Most of Dublin was at one time under farmland cultivation or used as pasture for livestock. Dublin's agricultural roots evoke powerful images: open fields, stone and brick farmhouses, barns and outbuildings, and hedge rows and trees that define property boundaries. While areas to the north and west of Dublin remain in agricultural use or in fallow fields, continued development will require efforts to preserve these clear ties to the city's historic past.

- **Ashland, KY**

- Environmentally sensitive areas that should not be developed but may be utilized, in strategic and limited manners, as park and/or open space; these areas can provide educational and interpretative opportunities for the youth and public. (pg 42)

- **Boone County, Kentucky**

- 96.5% of the 658 farms in the county are classified as small family farms (<\$250,000 in sales)
- Comparable to the 85% in Scott county where the 15% being large production farms
- It is apparent that future development of the county's rural areas will occur. In order to protect those who want to continue to farm, tax structures, planning efforts, Purchase of Development Rights (PDR), incentive programs, conservation easements, and utility expansions should be explored. A

combination of these tools should be used instead of concentrating on a single solution.

- A good farmer's market network should supplement the successful Boone County Farmer's Market to link producers with grocers and customers.

Heritage & Urban Form: Each city/county researched strives to create a vibrant downtown area that is seen as the focal point of the community. Multi-use development is preferred, as well as increased accessibility from all forms of transportation. Preserving historical buildings and places in downtown is important, but upgrading these places for increased accessibility/usability is favored.

- **Dublin, OH**

- An attractive and vibrant downtown that serves as the focal point of the community and provides abundant opportunities for social, cultural, and economic interactions
- A mixture of uses throughout the area that may include a combination of retail, professional services, entertainment, public/government, and residences
- Well-designed public spaces with public art, landscaping and pedestrian amenities
- Improved accessibility to the Downtown area for all forms of transportation (pg 30)

- **Historic Conservation- Oxford, MS**

- A master plan should be prepared that identifies scenic elements along the corridor and at the gateways. The plan should also identify problem areas where improvements in the way of landscape planting and/or screening or other measures are recommended. The intent of the plan is to maintain and preserve significant visual assets within the gateway corridors and to enhance the visual appearance at problem areas and key locations at the entrances to the community. The plan should make specific recommendations as to projects and establish priorities for accomplishing gateway enhancements (pg 13)
- Extend regulatory protection to other potential historic districts (pg 12.)
 - Goal- Conserve and enhance those attributes that define Oxford's special community character and the cultural heritage of Oxford's historic neighborhoods (pg 7.)
- Downtown importance
 - Promote and support a diversity of business types to locate downtown.

- Aggressively pursue preservation as part of redevelopment.
- Promote pedestrian friendly design.
- Address parking as a major issue and explore location for and construction of a mixed use parking structure.
- Develop downtown design guidelines.
- Address relationships and compatibility with adjacent residential development.
- Promote mixed-use commercial/residential development (pg 11.)
- **Crown Point, IN**
 - The tremendous growth experienced by Crown Point has led to a strong community desire to preserve our historic past. The Crown Point Historical Society, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, was established in 1986. The City continues to support of efforts to safeguard the City's historic and cultural heritage and to foster civic pride through education and creating awareness of the City's unique legacy.
- **Unity, Maine**
 - Strategy 1d-1: The town shall maintain all the provisions in the Land Use Ordinance that concentrate new retail businesses (other than home-based businesses and retail associated with farming and forestry) in the downtown district, as a means of preventing sprawl and ensuring that new businesses help existing businesses by creating a more vibrant commercial zone, except as specified in Strategy 1d-2.
 - Strategy 1d-2: Retail businesses that are less fitting with a walkable community/shopping district (like a lumber yard, agricultural goods/feed store, auto dealership, or landscaping products store) should be allowed on lots along the Thorndike Road in portions of the Downtown and Rural districts from Route 9 to Leelynn Drive. Such businesses are also encouraged on the West end of School St in the Economic Development District (pg 2)

Economic Growth: Cities/Counties promote diversity of businesses, especially in downtown areas. Additionally, the communities supporting the expansion and retention of existing businesses. The comparable cities/counties all Identify tracts within corporate limits suitable for industries and businesses is an important way enhance economic development through new business recruitment

- **Danville, IL**
 - Like many manufacturing communities in the Midwest, Danville has suffered a declining economic and employment base in the last few decades due to changes in industrial sectors, location preferences, and the national economy. The economy in and around the City of Danville has struggled in recent years for a number of reasons. For example, a lack of private investment in the community coupled with the continued aging and deterioration of City neighborhoods and infrastructure is limiting the growth of the community. This in turn is driving up property tax rates, which is further hampering growth. The area also lacks a major regional employer or public entity to bring new jobs and development into the area so the economy is primarily isolated and self-supporting (pg 10)
- **Oxford, MS**
 - Promote and support a diversity of business types to locate downtown.
 - Aggressively pursue preservation as part of redevelopment.
- **Boone, NC**
 - Bringing tourist attractions to the city similar to the tourist importance of Scott Co.
- **Unity, Maine**
 - Partner with local non-profits, Unity College, and churches on appropriate projects that make use of their technical expertise and their skills in grant-writing and people organizing.
 - Ensure that the Land Use Ordinance allows for appropriate home-based business and for renting part of a home for lodging.
 - The town should seek out grant funds to support a shared office or shared manufacturing facility that will allow lower infrastructure costs to small startup businesses in an effort to encourage and facilitate their success. For example, “co-working”. Small manufacturers could share a loading dock, fork lift, sewage and waste treatment; also bring in annual education sessions for entrepreneurs and business development. Shared office spaces can benefit from shared secretaries, legal advice retainer fees, a fax/copy/scan machine, conference room (pg 3)

Infrastructure and Community Facilities: Quality housing is noted throughout all cities/counties researched. Most of the communities project exponential growth in the coming years and need places to house the growing population. Diverse housing is looked at in each community. Rural and urban living, multi and single family homes as well as connectivity to other areas of the community and accessibility to multi-modal transportation. Complete systems of parks and recreational facilities are desired throughout the community and multi-modal accessibility to parks is favored in each community. Complete & green streets, public transportation, downtown parking, and bike/pedestrian lanes are seen throughout each comprehensive plan as being very important for the growing diverse population.

- **Ashland, KY**
 - Amtrack 3 days a week connecting 6 large cities
 - C&O freight depot
 - Greyhound
 - Plan for multiple types of transportation that serve residents of all socio-economic backgrounds (pg 33.)

- **Danville, IL**
 - Define a complete system of parks and recreational facilities that meet the present and future needs of the community (pg 33)
 - Development of an appropriate mix of large and small parks to serve the active and passive recreation needs of the community
 - Connectivity between each of the community's parks and with natural open space area

- **Dublin, OH**
 - Primarily a road dependent community
 - Widening of the 2 lane highway to 3 lanes.
 - 77 miles of bike trails
 - COTA (Central Ohio Transit Authority) transportation alternative
 - Funded primarily by sales tax
 - Passenger fares, fed & state assistance, interest payments
 - Considering light rail options
 -

- **Boone, NC**
 - Expansion of walkability between downtown and surrounding areas
 - Classified as a "walking city"
 - They have a comprehensive pedestrian and bicycling network.

- **Manhattan, KS**
 - “Changes in residential growth capacity were impacted most significantly by the addition of the Blue Township Urban Growth Area and through targeted updates in the core area to accommodate a new Urban Core Residential Category adjacent to the KSU campus and expansion of areas designated for Residential High Density (pg 187). “
 - Minimize leapfrog development patterns and make efficient use of available services by containing future urban development within the geographical limits of the Urban Service Area Boundary and Blue Township Urban Growth Area. Ensure development within these areas is compatible with the guiding principles, goals, and policies contained in this Comprehensive Plan. Avoid development that may preclude the future implementation of transportation or other major regional facilities planned to serve the Manhattan Urban Area and surrounding region (pg 18)
- **Oxford, MS**
 - Address parking as a major issue and explore location for and construction of a mixed use parking structure.
- **Nelson, County, KY**
 - Complete Streets
 - A complete street policy provides streets that are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages. Complete streets improve safety for all users, encourage more livable community that allows choices in transportation, helps children and family by providing safe routes to schools, and reduces traffic and congestion by removing shorter trips made by car.
 - Green Streets
 - A green street incorporates a variety of design and operational treatments to develop a balanced approach to meet the transportation needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists and incorporate stormwater quality and quantity best management practices. Green streets assist in the reduction of stormwater runoff by diverting stormwater from the sanitary sewer system, reducing basement flooding, sewer backups, and combined sewer overflows and therefore improving general water quality. As a permitted community under the Kentucky Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (KPDES), the City of Bardstown is required to meet certain water quality provisions of the EPA's Water Quality Act of 1987. Thus, green streets provide a practical and cost-effective approach to address Bardstown's permitting obligation.

- **Boone, County, KY**
 - Mass transit options
 - TANK (Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky)
 - Pedestrian options
 - Complete roads & connections between subdivisions
 - Bike lanes connecting most of the county's major roads
- **Crown Point, IN**
 - Complete streets
 - Incorporating bike lanes into local roads
 - Walkable from downtown square to 5+ miles in any direction
 -
 - Public transportation
 - Gary Public Transportation- commuter bus system
 - 10 minute drive to South Shore Line (train) for access to Chicago & South Bend
 - Erie Lakawanna Trail
 - The trailheads are in Hammond, IN and in Crown Point, IN. It passes through several cities in Lake County including: Hammond, Highland, Griffith, Schererville and Crown Point.

Human Services & Community Building: Certification programs, training programs, and other work-related programs and developments available to get community members “work ready.” Local produce (farmer’s markets) and other goods are widely supported in each comprehensive plan reviewed. Communities express strong support for collaboration between human services organizations and city/county organizations to increase opportunity within the community to everyone.

- **Georgetown, KY**
 - Accessory Housing Units: The City will recognize accessory housing units as a viable form of additional, and possibly affordable, housing and will develop policies designed to facilitate their development while protecting existing residential neighborhood character.
 - Special Needs Housing: The housing needs of all special populations within the community should be met. Residential-care facilities, shelters, group homes, elderly housing, and low-income housing should be dispersed throughout the Georgetown urban area and Scott County.

- **Ashland, KY**
 - 71% houses built before 1970, 23% built before 1939 (pg 16)
 - Continue to coordinate programs and resources, such as certification programs or training centers, offered by existing secondary education facilities that meet the needs of existing businesses and the future workforce.
 - Coordinate with nearby programs to encourage the expansion higher education that includes additional four-year college or university programs that coordinate with workforce demands. (pg 34)
- **Boone, NC**
 - “Employer assisted housing” (pg 113)
- **Manhattan, KS**
 - Importance of maintaining rural residential areas
 - Expansion of City/High Density Residential areas