

**Miami Township – S.R. 28 Redevelopment/Transformation Plan
Clermont County, Ohio**

a new urban village



May 2002

a new urban village
SR 28 Redevelopment/Transformation Plan
MIAMI TOWNSHIP, CLERMONT COUNTY, OHIO

May, 2002

Prepared by:

KZF Design Inc.

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acknowledgements



Miami Township Officials

Joseph W. Uecker, Trustee

Mary Makley Wolff, Trustee

Edwin H. Humphrey, Trustee

Eric C. Ferry, Clerk

Staff

David D. Duckworth, Township Administrator

Larry Fronk Jr., AICP, Community Development Director

Kim Laing, Community Relations

Walt Fischer, Service Director

Jim Whitworth, Fire Chief

Steve Bailey, Police Chief

Study Team

Sara Arseneau, Milford Miami Chamber of Commerce

Clay Barker, Mulberry Motors

John Bessey, Phillips Edison & Company

Mike Budzynski, Resident

James Civitello, Priority Properties

Ellen Contanza, Resident

Randy Cooper, Myers Y. Cooper Company

Geri Croley, Resident

Lou Ethridge, Dept of Community Planning and Development

Carl Hartman, County Engineer

John Imbus, Milford Self Storage

Ken Holloway, Resident

Christine McBroom, National Amusements

Vicky Miller, Resident

Dick Orcutt, Orcutt Financial

Mark Schirmer, Copy Shop

Tom Siberski, Resident

David Todd, Attorney at Law

Shirley Trester, Coldwell Banker/West Shell

Henry Wyner, Winthrop Management

KZF Design Team

Ronald K. Edgerton, AICP, Project Manager

Thomas M. West, Community Planner

Chad Edwards, Urban Designer

Rob Morgan, Illustrator

executive summary

A one mile stretch of State Route 28 in Miami Township once served as a busy commercial center. It was characterized by typical suburban strip centers, out parcels with stand-alone commercial functions, fast food restaurants, big box retailers, wide open surface parking lots and dozens of curb cuts along the three-lane state route. Development happened here like in so many other suburban areas; parcels were developed individually, parking and access to the arterial road were also developed individually, land uses were separated and sidewalks almost non-existent. All these factors created an area that was exclusively dependant on the automobile for all trips to and within the commercial center.

Business was good for a while. So good in fact, that the congestion created by the automobiles turning into and out of the dozens of businesses gave rise to the creation of a limited access four-lane bypass around the mile-long commercial center. The net effect of the bypass on businesses was what has come to be expected. In addition to avoiding the congested state route, drivers also avoided the businesses located there. At the east end of the bypass, where open land was available, new businesses entered the scene in what may one day become a duplication of the same problems of the older commercial center, where big box retailers have recently closed.

Out-dated facilities also contributed to the decline of the commercial center, new technological advancements in entertainment meant the cinema operators could capture a bigger market more efficiently with a new facility on virgin land, rather than redeveloping their existing site. Changes in the market and competition between major home improvement retailers led to the closing of a large hardware store. Other smaller operations tend to follow the large retailers.

What is left behind is a jumble of vacant or under used structures with architectural details that allude to their former occupants' names or uses, surface parking lots large enough to accommodate the needs of the Friday after Thanksgiving, dozens of curb cuts and a mix of smaller retailers, fast food restaurants and automotive service garages.

In many communities this cycle of leap frogging sprawl is accepted along with the less desirable, low rent uses that follow the mass exodus from such a commercial center. Flea markets and storefront churches, liquidation facilities and used clothing stores are typical tenants for such an area.

Miami Township is different. Its residents, who have some of the highest disposable incomes in the region, demanded more and saw the decline of the old commercial area as an opportunity to create something new and exciting... A REAL TOWN CENTER!

This study documents the journey of residents, business owners, township officials and other stakeholders as they developed a consensus about their vision for the future of their community. They set goals for the transformation of a withering commercial zone into a focal point of the community, replete with a town square, government center, neighborhoods, shopping, entertainment, dining, places to work and play, open spaces and narrow, character-filled streets... all with a decidedly pedestrian flavor. In their future, they saw a real urban village for Miami Township.

Once the community weighed in on its vision and goals for the area, KZF's planners and urban designers began developing

a concept to transform the out-dated commercial center into a thriving district for living, working, shopping and playing. Armed with a comprehensive assessment of the existing conditions in the area, including a market study, a plan was developed which would build on the community's assets:

- Location in the geographic center of the Township
- Popular arterial roads serve the area from all directions
- Higher than average income among Township residents
- Market conditions ripe for new uses commonly found in an urban village
- A high percentage of vacant or under-used property
- Adjoining neighborhoods
- Location of Township government facilities
- Strong public support for transformation
- A new bypass built to state standards

In order to make the plan more manageable, the study was divided into three districts, which together would form an urban village to serve as the heart of Miami Township. Unlike many of the new urban villages being developed nationally from scratch, Miami Township already has a large number of residential districts adjoining the transformation area. However, these existing residential areas are of a suburban nature and new neighborhoods are proposed in each of the three districts in order to increase the compactness of the retail market, offer new and different housing choices within the Township, and provide the variety of housing stock and amenities required for a cradle to grave community.

The proposed neighborhoods will take on a more urban character, including narrower streets, rear garages served by alleys or service ways, sidewalks, smaller setbacks, and grid pattern streets. They should also include a mix of housing types from townhouse apartments to single-family detached homes. Land uses in the neighborhoods are also not separated as strictly as in the past. New zoning will allow corner buildings at major intersections to be developed with neighborhood-oriented retail or services located on the first floor and housing above. Each neighborhood includes open



South Neighborhood

space for parks or recreation uses. All of these elements seek to create an opportunity to develop traditional neighborhoods instead of conventional “housing developments”.

The plan identifies three main districts, the Town Center, the Boulevard, and the Civic Center, along with several smaller focus areas including an auto sales and service focus area, where it is proposed that many of the automobile sales and service businesses be concentrated in order to create a critical mass of similar activity in a location more visible to traffic at the intersection of I-275 and State Route 28.

The Town Center is proposed to straddle State Route 28 near the west end of the study area. This district will serve as a “downtown Miami Township” with a mixture of office, retail, dining, entertainment, housing, and public spaces for community events and passive recreation. A grid pattern for the streets in the district ties into several existing roadways and helps form a town square one block north of State Route 28. Parking for workers, visitors and residents in this district is

located on-street and in surface lots located in the interiors of the commercial blocks. The Town Center is designed to be pedestrian-friendly and pedestrian-interesting, so that automobile trips between various uses within the Town Center are neither required nor desired.

The Boulevard links the Town Center and the Civic Center, yet serves as a district with its own character as well. The transformation of the majority of State Route 28 in the study area involves several major steps that will, in themselves, produce a profound impact on the look and function of this commercial strip. First, it is proposed that the County Engineer and the Ohio Department of Transportation develop an agreement for ODOT to abandon the existing one mile stretch of State Route 28 in the study area and designate the bypass as State Route 28. Once the existing route becomes a local street, the plan calls for it to be reconfigured as a boulevard with a central median, through lanes, secondary medians and local access lanes with angled, on-street parking. A grid pattern will create walkable blocks and

provide access points from the central part of the boulevard to the local access lanes and parking. Businesses located along the Boulevard may also develop interior block surface parking, if needed.

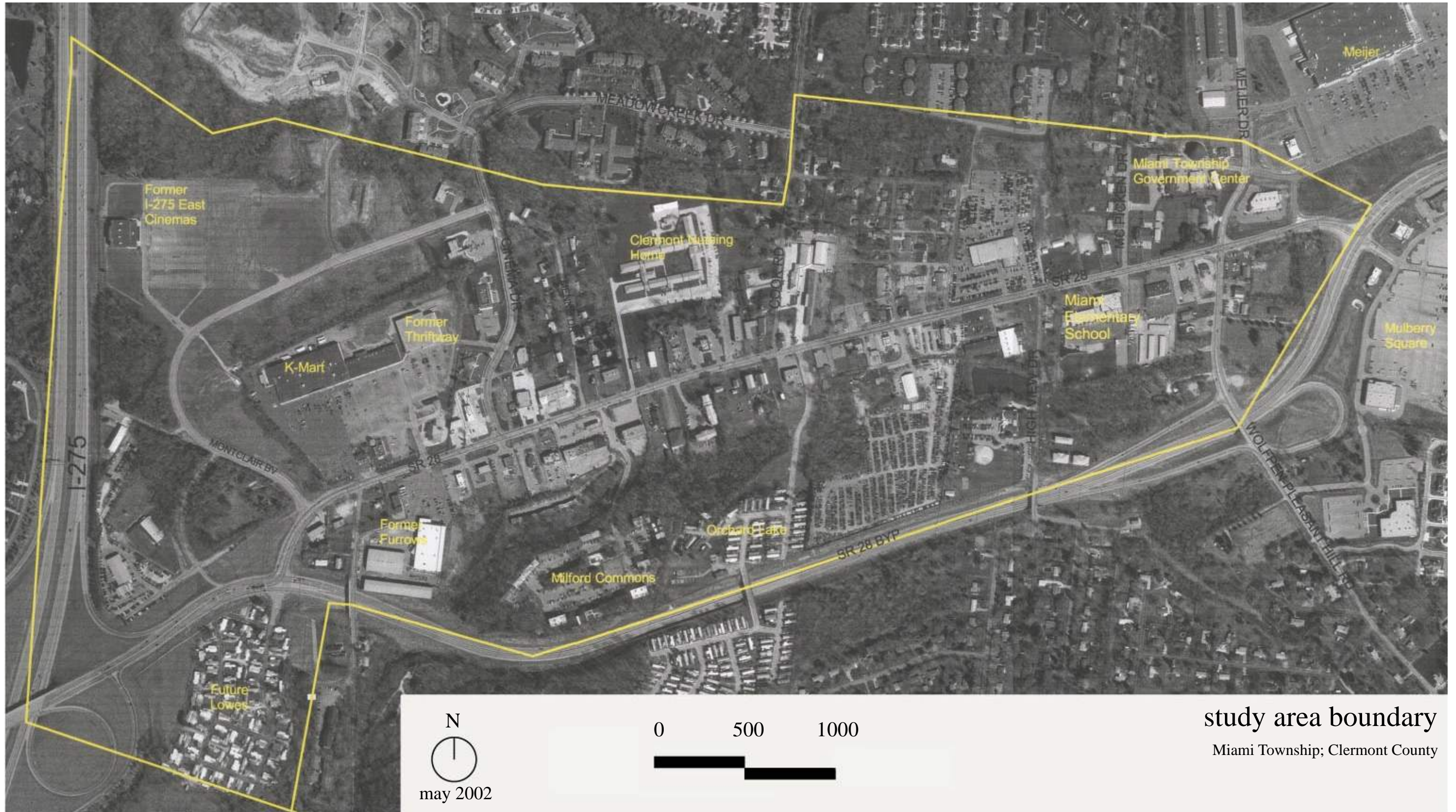
Along the south side of the Boulevard, development of full blocks is proposed with houses facing south across a natural ravine and a new neighborhood. The boulevard configuration can be developed within the existing right-of-way and setbacks for most structures. A few buildings will need to be demolished or moved in order to accommodate the new roadway. Several historic brick structures exist near the east end of the Boulevard. These structures provide an architectural character and connection to the past not found elsewhere in the study area. It is proposed that the Boulevard configuration narrow in this area to accommodate the possible restoration and reuse of these structures.

The Boulevard pattern terminates at the Civic Center, the plan’s major anchor for the east end of the Study Area. This

district takes advantage of the existing location of the Township’s government facilities and builds upon that asset with proposed recreation and cultural facilities. The Civic Center also contains a public school building, which will soon be vacated by the school system. Relocation of car dealerships to the new, highly visible auto focus area will open the door for the development of the plan’s smallest and most intimate neighborhood and a neighborhood park.

The implementation of the plan will require the commitment of the Township staff, trustees, stakeholders and residents. In order for the study area to truly develop both physically and socially as the heart of the Township, residents and property owners both inside and outside the plan area must take ownership in the execution of the plan. The Township must also commit to seeking out and assisting developers who share the community’s vision, while resisting developments and uses which do not comply with the plan in either spirit or design.





study mission statement

Miami Township officials have set forth a planning process that focuses on the original business district along SR 28 between I-275 and the east end of the by-pass. The mission for this undertaking is to address the following priorities:

- Create a plan that promotes and directs orderly growth
- Capitalize on redevelopment opportunities
- Diversify the tax base in the study area
- Maximize input through public participation from both residents and businesses.

The final plan provides land use planning goals, direction for future growth, identifies available tools to accomplish the township's goals, and identifies implementation strategies.

existing conditions

Redevelopment opportunities within the study area must be based not only on the vision and goals of the community and market influences, but in consideration of the existing conditions as well. As part of the planning process, KZF has obtained information from Miami Township on property boundaries, buildings and pavement coverage, topography, existing land use, zoning and utilities. This information has been mapped and follows this narrative.

Property, Topography and Utilities

Property boundaries depicted on the Existing Property, Topography, and Utilities Map indicate the wide variety of parcel sizes and shapes within the study area. Topographic features indicate that the landform is fairly flat on the north side of SR 28 but forms a significant natural wooded drainage ravine behind the properties along the south side of SR 28. Notable topographic relief also exists north of Montclair Blvd. west of Cinema Drive.

Both sanitary sewer and water services are available throughout the study area with sufficient capacity to meet the current land use. Redevelopment opportunities must be evaluated for their utility needs and the extent to which there is sufficient capacity to meet their needs in the future. Otherwise, system upgrades may be required. Natural gas, electric service and phone should have capacity to meet future development needs.



Existing Land Use

The predominant land use within the study area is retail, office and automotive services. As depicted on the Existing Land Use Map, most of the frontage property along SR 28 contains these uses. The largest concentration occurs at the west end and extends from the Cinema property (recently closed), to Miami Plaza (partially occupied) and south to the bypass; (through the property formerly occupied by Furrows). A self-storage facility has recently been built on the east side of Montclair Blvd. north of SR 28. Several large mostly vacant parcels are situated along both sides of Montclair Blvd. between SR 28 and Cinema Drive. Several offices and service facilities have been built recently along Cinema drive.

A relatively large concentration of single family residential structures are located mostly north of SR 28 behind the retail and situated along Menno Drive, Cook Road and McPicken Drive. Multiple family residential in the study area consists of several apartment developments between SR 28 and the bypass. There are also several major apartment and condominium complexes adjoining the study area, especially near Cinema Drive and Montclair.

Two mobile home parks also lie within the study area including the site south of SR 28 west of the bypass, which has been approved for redevelopment as a new Lowe's Home Improvement Store. The Orchard Lake Mobile Home Park is located south of SR 28 on both sides of the bypass.

Other notable uses within the study area include:

- Several churches.
- The Miami Elementary School on the south side of SR 28 (which will close once a new school is built outside the study area).
- Clermont Nursing Home north of SR 28.
- Castrucci Ford

- Miami Township Government Facilities (Administration Building, Police Station, Fire Station and Maintenance Facilities).
- Trester Auto Salvage Operation

A number of these uses are identified on the Existing Buildings and Pavement Coverage Map. This figure also characterizes the footprint of existing buildings and adjacent areas that are paved for parking and access.

The predominant land use north and south of the study area is residential (both single and multiple family, apartments and condominiums). Commercial shopping areas are located east of the study area including the Meijer and Kroger shopping centers. The west side of the study area is bordered by I-275.

Existing Zoning

Existing zoning within the study area generally conforms to the existing land use described in the previous section. As depicted on the Existing Zoning Map, General Business (B-2) extends along most of SR 28. Community Business Zoning (B-1) is concentrated at the east end of the study area.

Multiple Family Residence (C) zoning is located where the existing apartments are, south of SR 28 and north where the nursing home is located. Single Family Residence (B) zoning is situated along the north and south sides of the study area. Planned Multiple Residences (D) zoning occupies one parcel in the northeast quadrant. The Mobile Home Park (T) zoning district is assigned to the two mobile home parks.

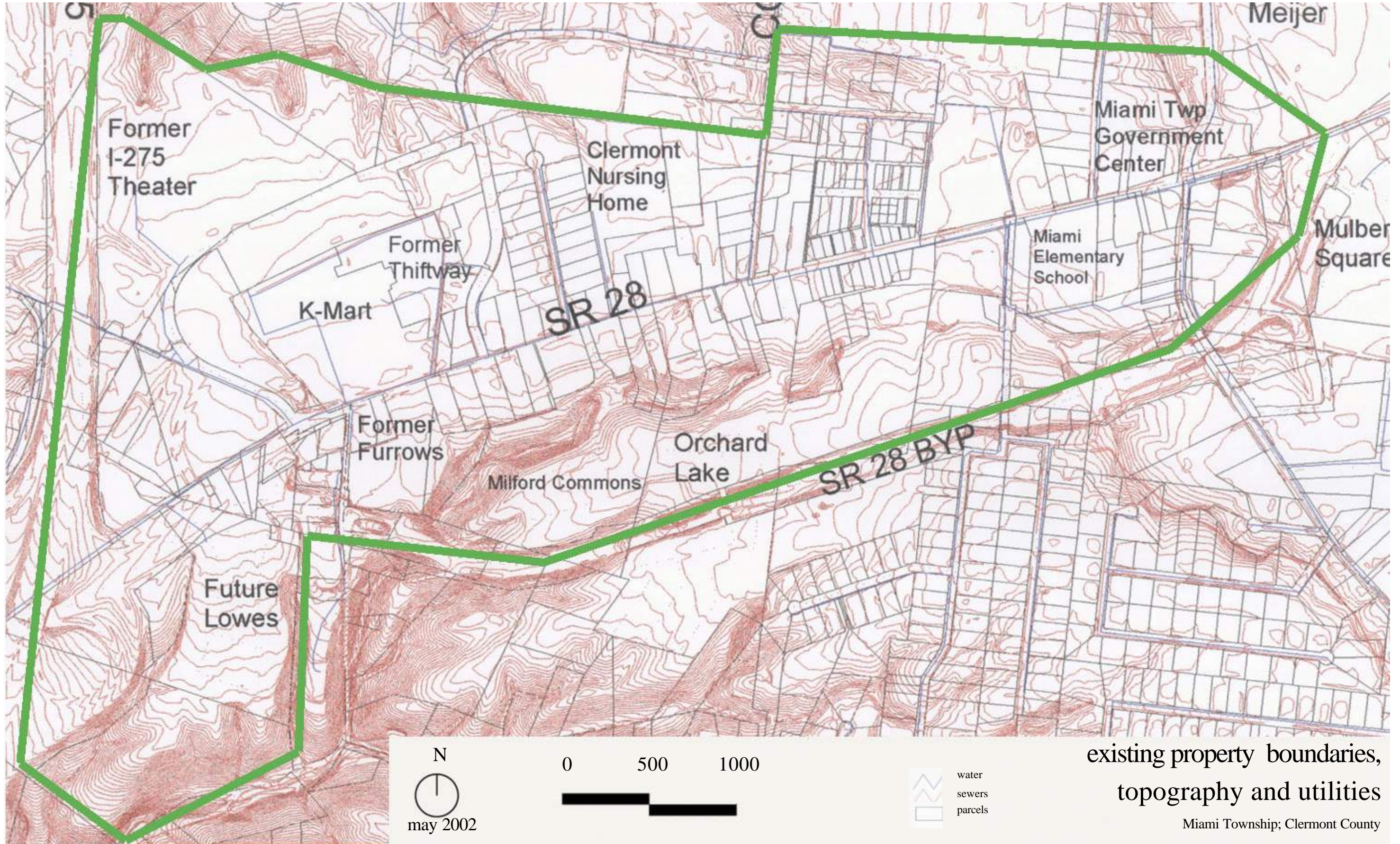
Institutional uses such as the school, churches and Township Government facilities are permitted in most zoning districts but require a conditional use permit. There is also a small cluster of parcels at the west end of the study area and extending south of the bypass that are zoned Light Industrial (I-A).

Existing zoning north and south of the study area consists primarily of Residence "B" and "C". Residential Planned Unit Development (R-PUD and PUD) are located north of the study area including the Bridgehaven Condominiums and residential development off Meadowcreek Drive. Zoning east of the study area is General Business (B-2) where Meijer and Kroger are located. Zoning west of the study area (west of I-275) is mostly single family Residence "A" and "B".

Allowable residential densities, as set forth in the Miami Township Zoning Code both within and adjacent to the study area, consists of:

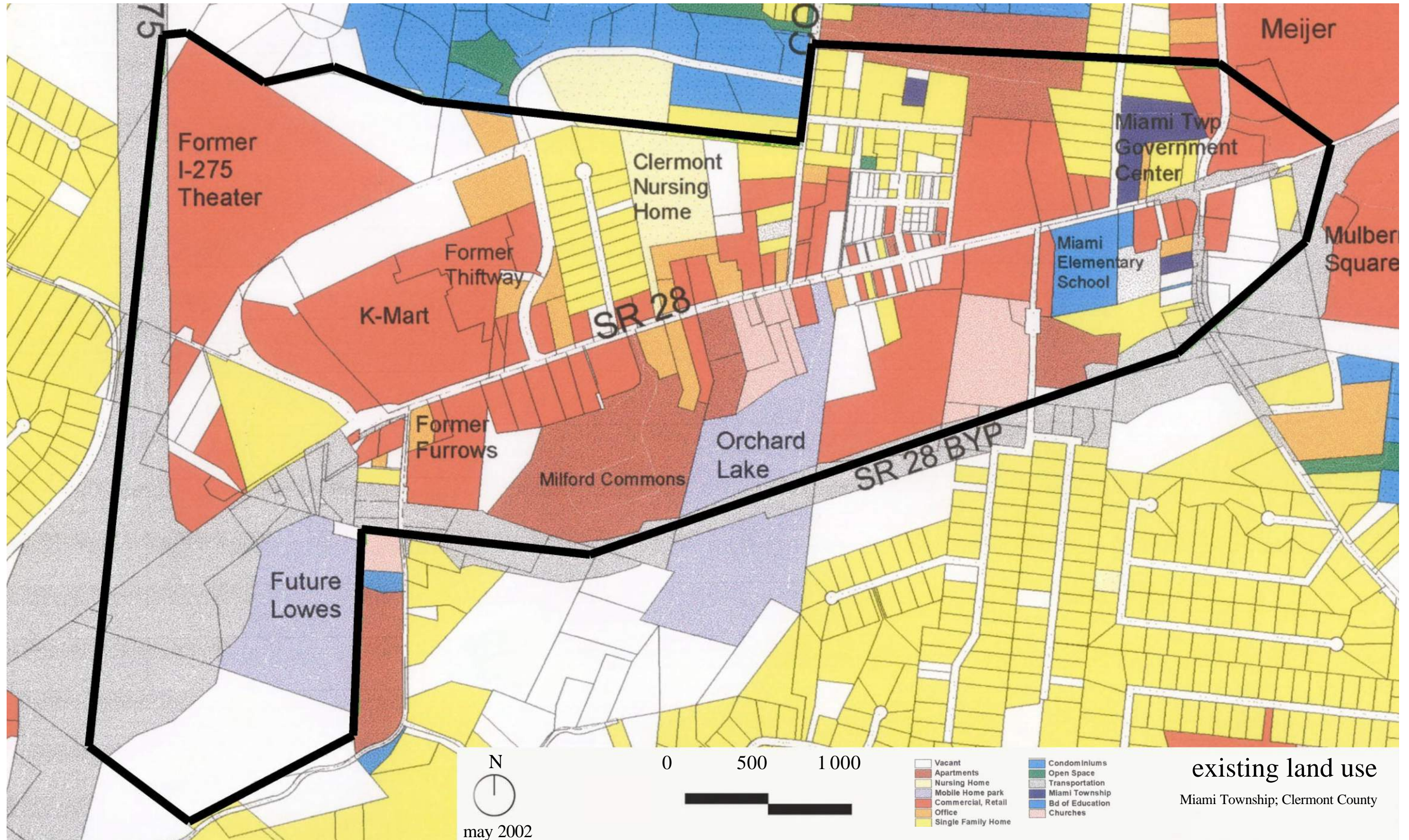
- Residence A (single fam.):
Minimum Lot Size: 20,000 sf (2.2 du/acre)
- Residence B (single fam.):
Minimum Lot Size: 12,800 sf (3.4 du/acre)
- Residence C (multiple fam.):
Min. Lot Size (s.fam.): 20,000 sf (2.2 du/acre)
(2 fam.): 27,000 sf (3.2 du/acre)
(add/ f.): + 7,000 sf (varies by lot size)
- Residence D (multiple fam.):
For between 10 & 20 Acres: (8 du/acre)
- Residence R-PUD & PUD:
Minimum 5 acres (per underlying zoning)

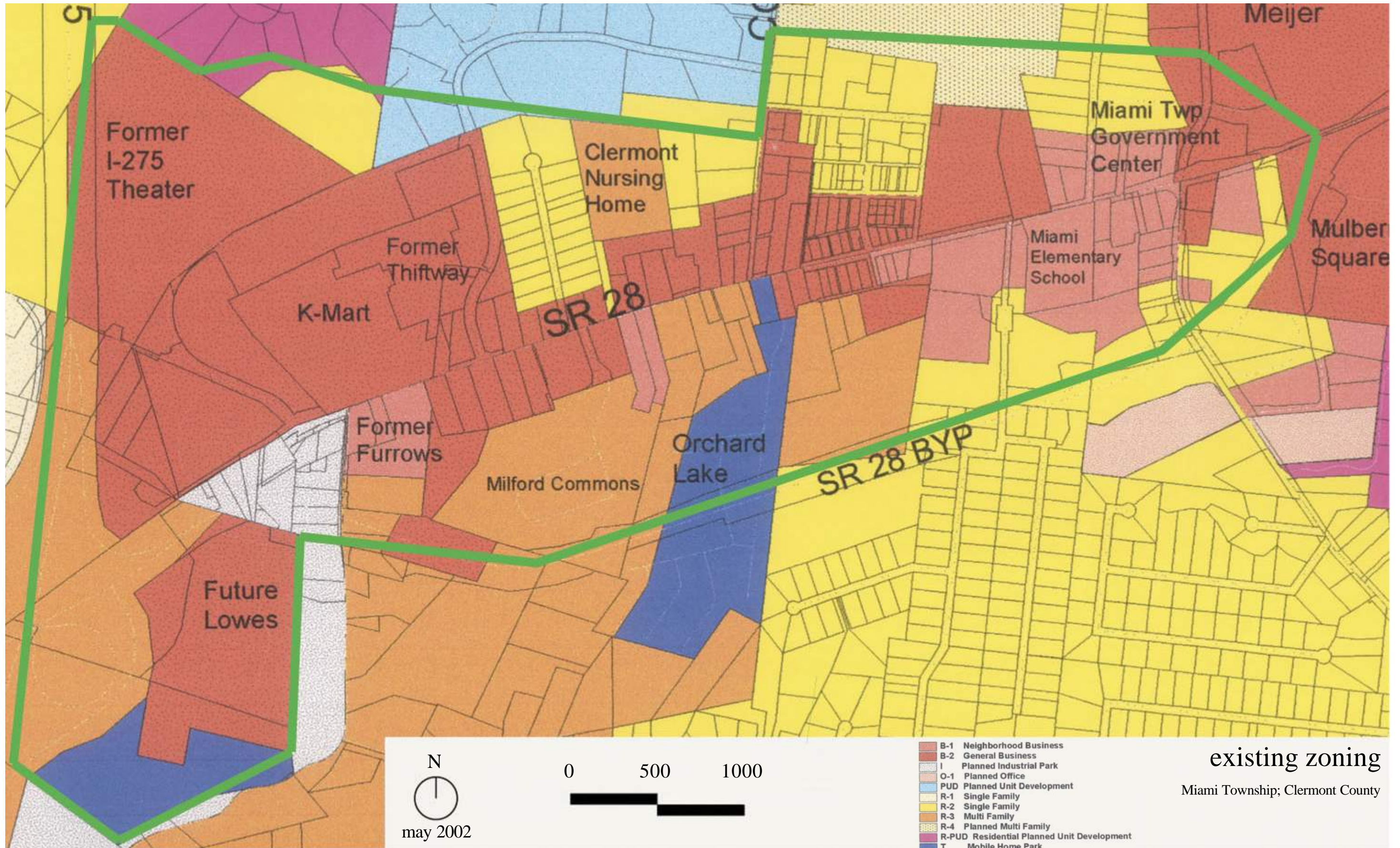
Future redevelopment within the study area calls for a different approach to zoning, both in use and densities. The implementation strategies section of this report addresses this matter further, with emphasis on mixed-use development in the context of a "Town Center" and an "Urban Village".



existing property boundaries,
topography and utilities

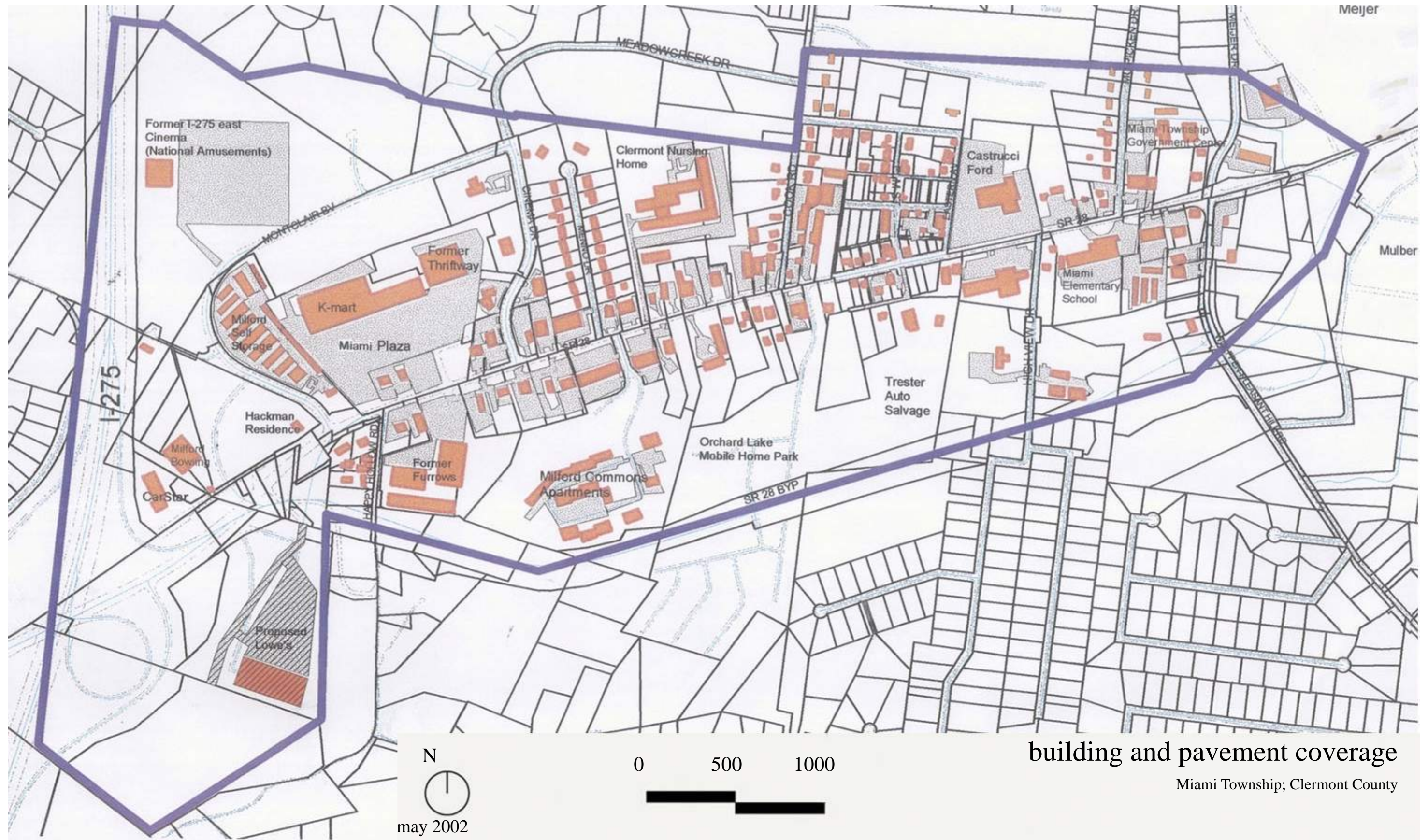
Miami Township; Clermont County

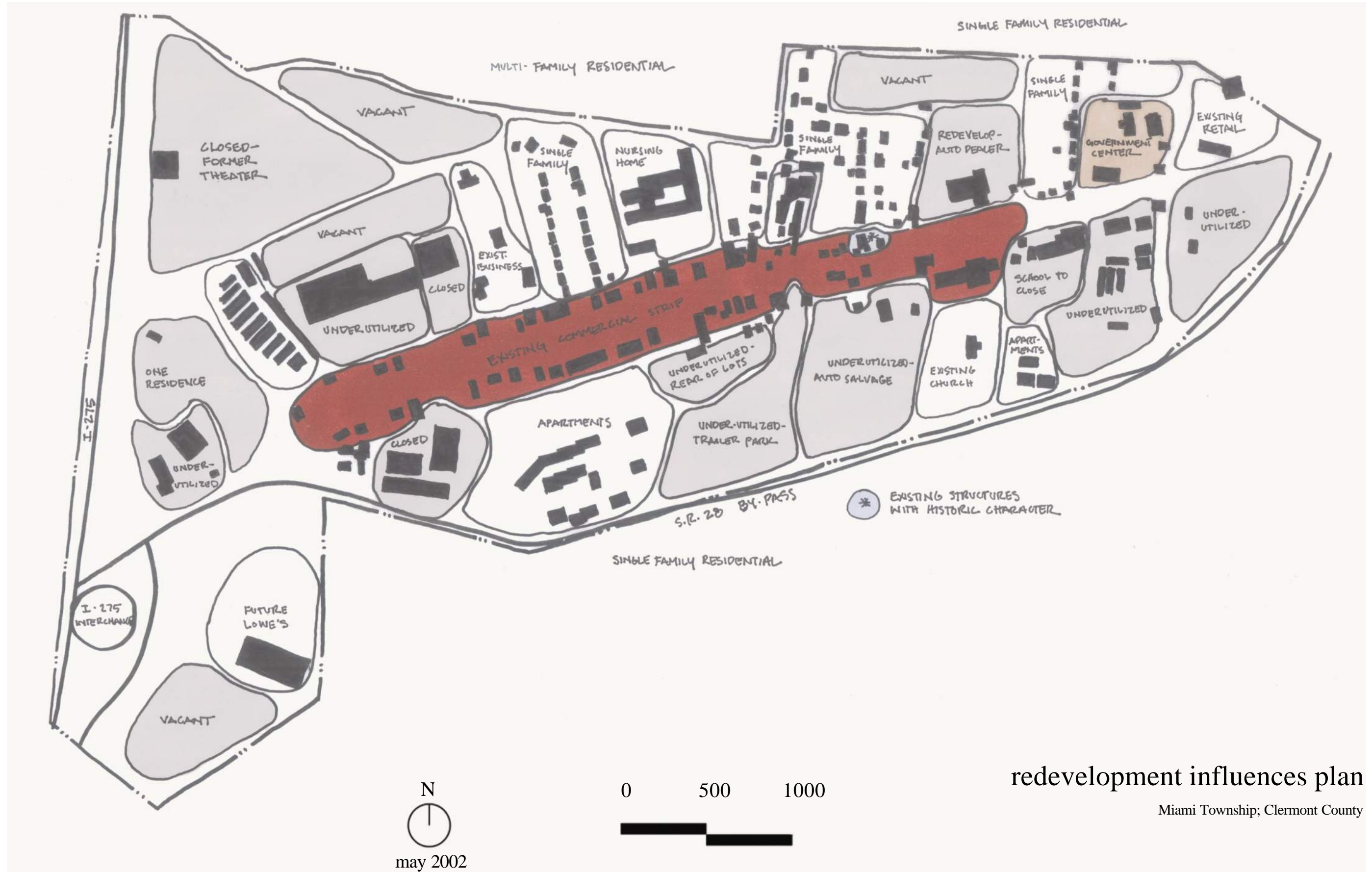




existing zoning

Miami Township; Clermont County





redemption influences plan

Miami Township; Clermont County



market study summary

In conjunction with the SR 28 Redevelopment Study, Miami Township contracted with The Gem Real Estate Group, Inc. and LRS Consultants to conduct a Market Study for the same area. The findings of this market study played a significant role in formulating the redevelopment plan with the following considerations:

1. The relevant "life" of the market analysis is significantly shorter than the redevelopment plan; Estimated 1-2 years for the Market Study as opposed to 10-20 years for full implementation of the redevelopment plan.
2. The market analysis does not account for the impact of the implementation of some or all elements of the redevelopment plan. Implementation of one or more components of the plan would be expected to significantly stimulate the market, especially over time.
3. Unforeseen circumstances, global, national, state, or local, can have a significant impact on the market.

Summary of Relevant Facts

Listed below are key findings from the market analysis which are relevant to the SR 28 Redevelopment Plan. The findings have been categorized according to specific topics of study.

Definitions

Study Area – The State Route 28 Business District located in Miami Township, Ohio

Primary Market Area (PMA) – The source and location that will generate the majority (typically 80%) of demand for a particular product or service. For this analysis the PMA is estimated to be a 1½ mile radius.

Secondary Market Area (SMA) – The source and location that will generate the remaining (typically 20%) of demand for a particular product or service. For this analysis the SMA is estimated to be the area between a 1½ mile and 4 mile radii.

Total Market Area (TMA) – The source and location that will generate all the demand for a particular product or service. For this analysis the TMA is estimated to be a 4 mile radius.

Demographics

Miami Township's population grew by 32% between 1990 and 2000 to approximately 37,000. It is estimated to increase 2.8% over the five-year period from 2001 to 2006. The reason for the lower rate of increase projection is the lack of available housing sites within the Township.

Income and wealth statistics for Miami Township indicate that it's residents are generally affluent and have relatively high disposable incomes and wealth as compared to Clermont County and the surrounding study areas.

Industrial Uses

The study concluded that industrial uses within the study area would be an inappropriate land use and redevelopment strategy.

Office Uses

The study concludes that "growth in the overall supply (of office space) currently outpaces the growth in demand which could indicate market saturation or possibly even overbuilding."

Residential Uses

The study addressed only the apartment market with the observation that the Cincinnati apartment market is stabilizing and that vacancy rates are a factor of both location and the proximity to amenities.

Retail Uses

The studies evaluation of the retail market points out that the study area has higher than average vacancy rates and lower than average rents. Local traffic counts and site location are cited as key factors that drive these rates.



Current Conditions

<i>Miami Township, S.R. 28 Business District</i>		
<u>Real Estate Inventory Summary</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
1) Number of Properties	100	100%
- Number of Sites with Buildings	82	82.0%
- Number of Sites with out Buildings	18	18.0%
	1.1	
2) Average Building Height (Floors)		
3) Total Building Square Footage	797,510	100%
- Total First Floor Square Footage	724,326	90.8%
- Total Upper Level Square Footage	73,184	9.2%
- Total Occupied Square Footage	669,960	84.0%
- Total Vacant Square Footage	127,550	16.0%
4) Total First Floor Square Footage	724,326	100%
- Total Occupied First Floor Square Footage	596,776	82.4%
- Total Vacant First Floor Square Footage	127,550	17.6%
5) Total Upper Level Square Footage	73,184	100%
- Total Occupied Upper Level Square Footage	73,184	100%
- Total Vacant Upper Level Square Footage	-	-%
6) Number of Occupied Buildings (i.e. >0% occupancy)	78	95.1%
- Square Footage of Occupied Buildings	695,960	87.3%
7) Number of Vacant Buildings (i.e. 100% vacant)	4	4.9%
- Square Footage of Vacant Buildings	101,550	12.7%

PMA Net Unmet Demand and Additional Supportable Square Footage Summary

<u>Consumer Category Type</u>	<u>Adj. Net Unmet Demand</u>	<u>PMA Maximum Potential S.F.</u>	<u>PMA Minimum S.F. Benchmark</u>
Apparel Products	\$23,468,617	47,491	12,385
Automotive Products & Services	-	-	-
Entertainment Products & Services	14,580,815	53,837	24,733
Food at Home (excluding Alcohol)	13,122,875	28,191	8,708
Food Away from Home. (Incl. Alcohol)	13,372,175	42,367	7,059
Household Products & Services	6,515,906	18,277	8,646
Other Misc. Products & Services	4,055,107	8,323	2,155
Total	\$75,115,495	198,486	63,686

SMA and TMA Unmet Demand Square Footage Summary

<u>Consumer Category Type</u>	<u>SMA Adj. Net Unmet Demand</u>	<u>SMA Maximum Potential S. F.</u>	<u>TMA Adj. Net Unmet Demand</u>	<u>TMA Maximum Potential S.F.</u>
Apparel Products	\$81,437,538	11,873	\$104,906,155	59,364
Automotive Products & Services	-	-	-	-
Entertainment Products & Services	42,713,442	13,459	57,294,257	67,296
Food at Home (excluding Alcohol)	46,620,535	7,048	59,743,410	35,239
Food Away from Home. Incl. Alcohol	68,452,415	10,592	81,824,590	52,959
Household Products & Services	22,069,634	4,569	28,585,540	22,846
Other Misc. Products & Services	14,724,160	2,081	18,779,267	10,404
Total	\$276,017,724	49,622	\$351,133,219	248,108

Potential Unmet Demand Square Footage Summary

Consumer Category Type	PMA Maximum Potential S.F.	SMA Maximum Potential S.F.	TMA Maximum Potential S.F.	TMA Min. S.F. Benchmark	TMA S.F. Mult.
Apparel Products:					
• Women's Apparel	14,178	3,544	17,722	2,130	8.3
• Children's Wear	8,824	2,206	11,030	1,508	7.3
• Men's Apparel	6,243	1,561	7,804	3,200	2.4
• Footwear	9,826	2,456	12,282	2,700	4.5
• Misc. Apparel & Accessories	4,331	1,083	5,414	1,620	3.3
• jewelry	<u>4,089</u>	<u>1,022</u>	<u>5,112</u>	<u>1,227</u>	<u>4.2</u>
Total:	<u>47,491</u>	<u>11,873</u>	<u>59,364</u>	<u>12,385</u>	<u>4.8</u>
Entertainment Products & Services:					
• TV and Audio Equipment	10,538	2,634	13,172	2,800	4.7
• Prerecorded Music – CDs, Tapes, Etc.	1,960	490	2,450	1,820	1.3
• Books	11,303	2,826	14,129	2,400	5.9
• Club Memberships/Dues/Fees	11,504	2,876	14,379	11,123	1.3
• General Sports Equipment	4,157	1,039	5,196	3,143	1.7
• Toys, Games & Hobbies	13,217	3,304	16,522	2,400	6.9
• Film Processing	<u>1,158</u>	<u>289</u>	<u>1,447</u>	<u>1,047</u>	<u>1.4</u>
Total:	<u>53,837</u>	<u>13,459</u>	<u>67,296</u>	<u>24,733</u>	<u>2.7</u>
Food at Home (Excl. Alcohol):					
• Bakery Products	5,508	1,377	6,885	1,606	4.3
• Meats	8,056	2,014	10,071	2,460	4.1
• Dairy Products	5,546	1,387	6,933	1,800	3.6
• Fruits/Vegetables	5,868	1,467	7,334	1,800	4.1
• Sugar, Nuts & other Sweets	<u>3,212</u>	<u>803</u>	<u>4,015</u>	<u>1,042</u>	<u>3.6</u>
Total:	<u>28,191</u>	<u>7,048</u>	<u>35,238</u>	<u>8,708</u>	<u>4.0</u>
Food Away from Home. (Incl. Alcohol):					
• Food Away from Home	15,225	3,806	19,031	2,142	8.9
• Alcoholic Beverages at Home	7,518	1,879	9,397	2,362	4.0
• Alcoholic Beverages Away from Home	<u>19,625</u>	<u>4,906</u>	<u>24,531</u>	<u>2,555</u>	<u>9.6</u>
Total:	<u>42,367</u>	<u>10,592</u>	<u>52,959</u>	<u>7,059</u>	<u>7.5</u>
Household Products & Services:					
• Furniture	11,167	2,792	13,959	5,400	2.6
• Major Appliances	3,713	928	4,641	2,046	2.3
• Fresh Flowers/Potted Plants	<u>3,397</u>	<u>849</u>	<u>4,246</u>	<u>1,200</u>	<u>3.5</u>
Total:	<u>18,277</u>	<u>4,569</u>	<u>22,847</u>	<u>8,646</u>	<u>2.6</u>
Other Misc. Products & Services:					
• Smoking Supplies & Accessories	6,679	1,670	8,349	1,440	5.8
• Male Personal Care (Hair)	<u>1,644</u>	<u>411</u>	<u>2,055</u>	<u>715</u>	<u>2.9</u>
Total:	<u>8,323</u>	<u>2,081</u>	<u>10,404</u>	<u>2,155</u>	<u>4.8</u>
Total Square Footage	<u>198,486</u>	<u>49,621</u>	<u>248,107</u>	<u>63,686</u>	<u>3.9</u>

Conclusions

- ❑ New upscale apartments or condominiums could be successful if price points and location in the district are appropriate.
- ❑ There is a strong indication of market need for new retail space in the district of between 64,000 and 250,000 SF.
- ❑ While automotive products and services appear to be meeting the market demand in the area, additional apparel products, entertainment, household goods, and food products (both at home and away from home) are needed in the study area, especially boutiques and specialty stores that cater to the upscale market in this area.
- ❑ A unified theme or image is required to attract new investment.
- ❑ A substantial change in the appearance, image and mechanics must occur and be supported by customers and businesses. Specific changes mentioned were: creation of a recreation/town center, improved traffic flow, streetscaping, adding a sit-down restaurant, upscale boutiques, and additional office space.



vision statement



This vision statement was developed based on public input, the related market study, study team input and the visual preference survey conducted as part of the planning process.

Vision

The new Miami Township Town Center will serve as a focal point and establish a community identity for Miami Township through the development of a mixed-use, pedestrian friendly, well-designed center of public, commercial and residential activity. The new town center will reflect the values of the community through architectural design, tenant mix, and focus on walkability, green space, and public spaces.

goals & objectives

Goal:
To create a vibrant mixed-use town center.

Objectives:

- Create a compact Town Center Core with a “downtown” feel.
- Create public spaces such as squares, plazas, playgrounds and pocket parks that are compact and surrounded by business and/or residential uses.
- Create opportunities for upper floor residential and/or office spaces above commercial uses in the core of the Town Center.
- Create opportunities for live/work developments near the core.
- Use on street and rear parking facilities to maintain the pedestrian focus and proximity to various uses.
- Develop a contract U.S. Post Office to serve the core and new walkable residential districts

- Create opportunities for unique, destination, and neighborhood retail activities.
- Create opportunities for office development in the core area.
- Create an opportunity for a multi-modal transit center fully integrated into the town center.
- Create an age-in-place environment with opportunities for various types of residential development for a variety of income levels and lifestyles.

Goal:
To create a pedestrian oriented environment within the Town Center.

Objectives:

- Convince ODOT to reassign SR 28 to the new by-pass and designate the existing SR 28 in the Town Center as a local street.
- Develop gateway features at both intersections with the by-pass and at other key points along SR 28.

- Enhance the visual appeal of the corridor by softening the impact of parking lots, large signs and vehicular traffic.
- Provide clear, safe and attractive separation of pedestrians and vehicles within the corridor.
- Develop a traffic-calming plan to reduce the speed of vehicular traffic through the corridor.
- Develop frequent and highly visible pedestrian crossings at all intersections and at other key locations.
- Design new streets for speeds of 15-25 mph, with narrow road profiles, on-street parking and stop signs at local intersections.
- Use alleys, rear garages and rear parking lots for residential and business developments within the town center.
- Use the transect model (see appendix) to determine setbacks for various uses in various parts of the Town Center.

Goal:
To create a visually appealing Town Center.

Objectives:

- Develop conceptual design guidelines for architecture, landscape, signs, parking facilities, and other elements of the built environment.
- Develop a framework for zoning categories based on the transect model to allow for compact development, appropriate setbacks, building heights and building envelopes.
- Develop recommendations to maintain all public amenities created by the master plan.
- Develop concepts to lessen the negative visual impact of overhead utility wires and poles.
- Prepare recommendations for appropriate streetscape amenities for each area of the Town Center..

community participation

A high level of community participation in the development of this plan was a major priority for Miami Township. The planning process offered several opportunities for residents, business and property owners, and study team members to provide input in a variety of ways (see appendix for sample forms for each exercise)

Community Vision Exercise

A public meeting was held on August 23, 2001, to kick off the planning process. Attendees included residents, property owners, business owners, Township officials, County officials, and other stakeholders. Those in attendance participated in a modified visioning exercise conducted by KZF Design using nominal group technique to solicit responses to the question, "What would you like to see in the new Miami Township town center?"

The following ideas, grouped by category, were generated by the participants:

Aesthetics

Underground utilities*

Better sign design* (also coordinated signage)

Landscaping* (includes streetscaping)

Consistent architecture styles*

Quaint & vibrant business area

Water features*

Improved appearance of parking lots

Gateways

Land use

Outdoor mall

Green space* (includes parks)

Entertainment*

Metro Hub connection

Dog run

Specialty shops* (progressive merchandise)

Senior Center

Recreation Center

Bookstores/coffee shops/bread stores

Concert area

Live over work opportunities* (mixed use residential/commercial)

Gardens

Town meeting area (plaza)

Library

Upscale housing walkable to business area

Transportation

Pedestrian friendly* (includes sidewalks and pedestrian facilities)

Separation of vehicular and pedestrian traffic

Metro Hub connection

Signs on by-pass to direct traffic into town center

Improved traffic control and access to businesses

Improved secondary roads

Change SR 28 to local street and change by-pass to SR 28

Improved appearance of parking lots

Gateways

Community values

Green space* (includes parks)

Pedestrian friendly* (includes sidewalks and pedestrian facilities)

Street vendors/buskers

Small town values

Rename the area

Town meeting area (plaza)

*** These items were mentioned by three or more of the groups.**

Photo Inventory

On August 23, 2001, disposable cameras were distributed to members of the Study Team. The team also received instructions and copies of a submittal form for their developed and printed photographs.

The Study Team was instructed to go out into the study area and take pictures of conditions, structures and environments they felt were either assets or liabilities, then mount the photos on the forms provided (see appendix) and describe the asset or liability they were photographing. Team members were also encouraged to either photograph other areas in the region or provide images of places they had visited which reflect in some way, some element they would like to see in the new town center.

The photographs submitted by the participants in the exercise were sorted according to general categories of assets and liabilities they represented, as well as examples from other communities. Listed below are the various categories represented in the photographs:

Assets

Assets within the study area identified in the photo survey consisted mainly of opportunities for development and redevelopment. Many of the structures and properties identified as redevelopment opportunities also showed up in the Liabilities category because they are either vacant or deteriorated. A few of the photographs in this category identified a few desirable uses and a very few examples of desirable architecture.

Liabilities

Most of the photographs identifying liabilities focused on SR 28 and its lack of pedestrian orientation, large asphalt parking lots, deteriorated properties, vacant buildings, masses of competing business signs, and overhead utilities. The lack of attractive gateways into the district were also identified.

Examples From Other Communities

Examples submitted of other communities that best represent the vision of what Miami Township's town center could be included photos of areas with compact development, walkability, a focus on landscaping, public spaces and good urban design.



Visual Preference Survey

An exercise designed to elicit responses to various images of built environments was conducted by KZF Design during the September 20, 2001 Study Team meeting. Participants in the visual preference survey were asked to rank 20 images on a scale of -5 to +5, with +5 representing the most positive response to the image and -5 being the most negative response. The group then reviewed the images and discussed each and specific elements of the images they liked or disliked.

Conclusions

Overall, there appears to be a preference for environments that are more walkable, pedestrian focused and value good design. There also appears to be a dislike for environments that are designed solely for the accommodation of vehicles and where hard surfaces are not broken up by landscaping.

As a group, there also appeared to be a preference for architecture scaled for humans, smaller intimate public spaces such as outdoor cafes, plazas, and squares. The team also expressed a preference for spaces that were well defined in terms of separation of vehicles from pedestrians. They also seemed to prefer environments where vertical elements were proportional to horizontal spaces in such a way that a more intimate urban feeling was realized.

The following are a few examples of the images, their average ranking, and selected comments from the group discussion. The full set of images are included in the appendix.

Postcards From The Future

KZF Design provided each Study Team member with a pre-printed, pre-addressed postcard at the September 20, 2001 meeting. Team members were instructed to complete the message: "Dear Aunt Gertrude, I know you haven't been to Miami Township in over ten years, but you should see the area around Route 28 now! It is..." Team members were then to mail the postcards to KZF Design.

The front side of the card proclaimed: "Greetings from Miami Town Center 2011" with ample space provided for participants to draw or paste images if they chose to do so.

Below are selected representative comments received on the postcards:

"We now have sit-down restaurants, stores, bookstores, entertainment, and a fountain area in the middle of the Town Center."

"It has pedestrian walkways with several mini parks and a large green space with a fountain and gazebo... there are many new shops and several small restaurants with outdoor patios."

"There are some unusual shops with living quarters above... you'd be amazed at the diversity of housing nearby, condos clustered homes as well as single family."

"Each weekend the amphitheater hosts entertainment that attracts young and old. This area is linked by a green way to some unique shops."

"There are shops on the first floor and apartments on the second, although a few shops have 2 stories such as the flower/gift shop and the bookstore/coffee shop. It has that European flavor with each shop having a unique, but compatible front."



redevelopment plan description

Overview

Throughout the planning process, the Study Team and Township residents who participated expressed their desire to see a transformation of the study area from a conventional suburban business corridor into a traditional town center. Strong support was expressed for the creation of an area that would feel comfortable for pedestrians, feature a mix of uses, have compatible

architecture, have a strong sense of place, provide venues for community gatherings, and become a destination for Miami Township residents as well as regional visitors.

When presented with images of various urban and suburban forms, a clear preference for the more urban

forms and designs became apparent. The residents and Study Team cited places like Mariemont and downtown Blue Ash as areas they liked and preferred to the existing conditions in the study area.

Several conditions exist within the study area, which make a complete transformation challenging, yet

entirely possible. Among these are: the width of open space between businesses on the north and south sides of S.R. 28; the development of the S.R. 28 by-pass which accommodates thru traffic and may allow for the existing S.R. 28 to become a local street (currently a state route under the jurisdiction of the Ohio Department of Transportation); a number of large vacant and underutilized parcels; a market study which indicates a demand for many types of commercial development typically found in town centers; and a desire by residents and business owners to affect a transformation.

Embracing principles of new urbanism and recognizing the opportunities for redevelopment, a master plan was formulated which recommends a dramatic transformation to meet the goals established by the Study Team and the Township. Maps and illustrations demonstrating the Study Team's vision for the village follow this description.

Realization of the plan could take as few as five and as many as 20 years to complete in a multiple phase implementation strategy, depending on market conditions, developer, business, and property owner interest, and the commitment of government at all levels.

In addition to the overall transformation of the area, several key elements deserve special focus. They include: The Gateways, The Boulevard, The Town Center, The Civic Center, and The Neighborhoods and Special Features.

The following proposed land use map demonstrates the transformation of uses and was developed from public, staff and study team input.



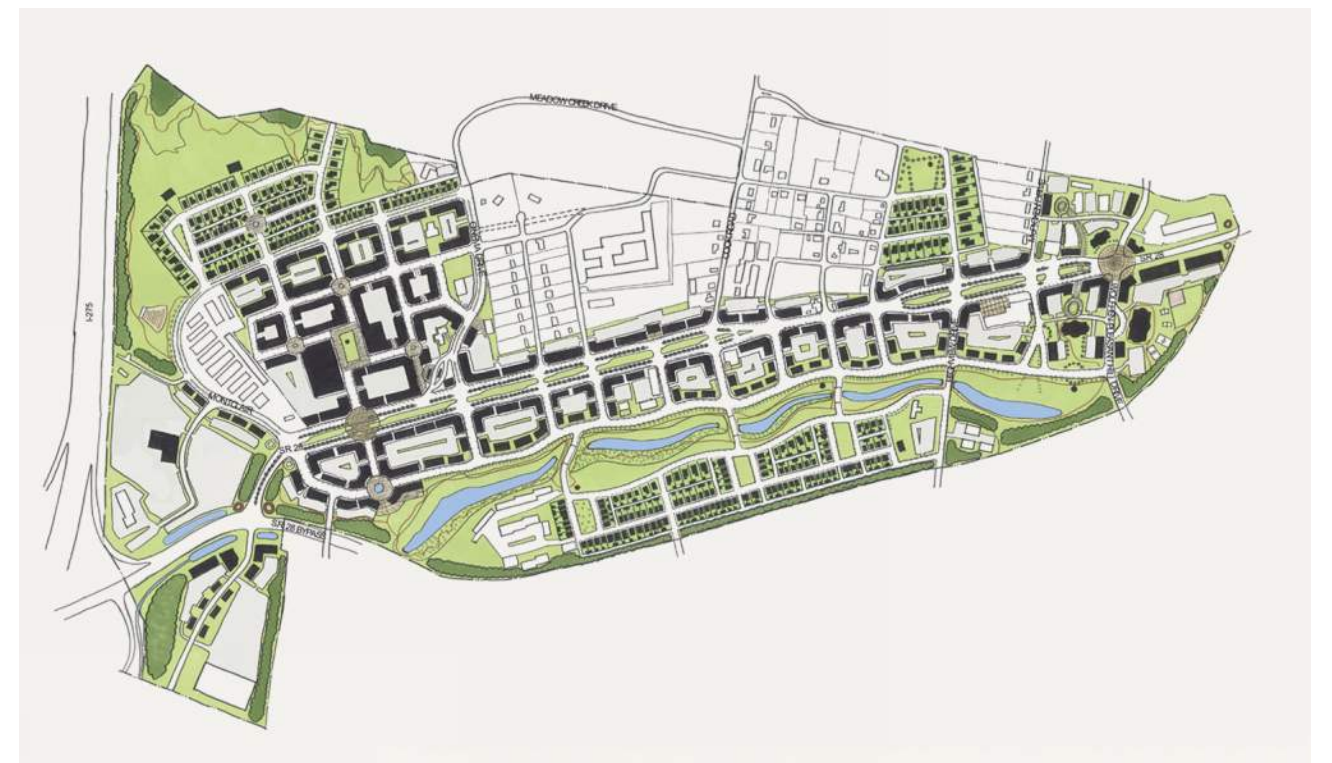
Montclair Boulevard

These drawings demonstrate the transformation of the study area:

S.R. 28 Study Area – Existing Conventional Suburban Development



S.R. 28 Study Area – Traditional Urban Village Transformation



The Town Center

The area designated as the Town Center is located in the western portion of the study area. The town center is planned to occupy the land inside Montclair Boulevard and Cinema Drive extending south across S.R. 28 to the by-pass.

There are a number of vacant and underutilized properties in this part of the study area and large parcels with a relatively small number of owners, which should simplify the process of acquisition for the Town Center Development.

The new Town Center will create a “downtown” area for Miami Township. City blocks of a walkable length (200’ to 400’) should contain well-lighted parking lots or structures in the center and buildings sited around the perimeter.

Utilities should be built underground. Structures in this area should vary in height from two to three stories. Some buildings such as churches, corner buildings or civic buildings could feature towers or copulas of greater height to accentuate focal points in the Town Center.

Structures should maintain a setback of 0’ to 5’ from the sidewalk in order to maintain the contiguous compact façade common to most town centers. Pedestrian walkways and parking entrances should be provided at regular intervals to facilitate easy access to the parking and retail establishments while maintaining the rhythm of the façades.

Streets in the Town Center should be designed on a grid pattern and easily accommodate vehicular traffic and on street parking, while providing a high level of comfort to pedestrians. Sidewalks should be wider in this area than other parts of the village, but should not exceed 10’, except where sidewalk cafes are planned.

The core of the Town Center should be designed around a public square or plaza, special paving for the abutting streets will help calm traffic in this area of frequent pedestrian activity. Structures forming the perimeter of the square should vary in height from three to five stories in order to create visual prominence and an intimate feeling within the square. Access to parking behind the businesses located on the square should be designed to remain accessible even if the streets



The Town Center



abutting the square are closed for a community event. The area around the square should accommodate the highest intensity uses such as a large square footage retailer, an entertainment venue (bowling alley, theater, etc.), as well as restaurants, specialty shops, and institutional uses.

Other significant intersections in the Town Center are designed around smaller squares or as roundabouts. This added level of design will create smaller intimate districts and link them back to the core of the Town Center. A transit center to accommodate public transportation is recommended for the Town Center to reduce the number of automobile trips and provide linkages to other communities.

Uses for the buildings in the Town Center should include first floor retail, cafes, restaurants, and entertainment venues, with a mix of upper floor office and residential spaces. Some Townhouses could be mixed in, provided they do not interrupt the comfortable flow of commercial pedestrian traffic.

As blocks radiate from the town square, the uses should become less intense. In these areas there may be a higher ratio of housing and office space, structures designed for live-over-work, narrower sidewalks, but still urban in nature. It is important to recognize the need for mixed income housing in the village to accommodate workers as well as business owners and managers. The Town Center offers the widest range of possibilities to create a variety of housing types from rental apartments over storefronts, to small apartment buildings, to town homes.

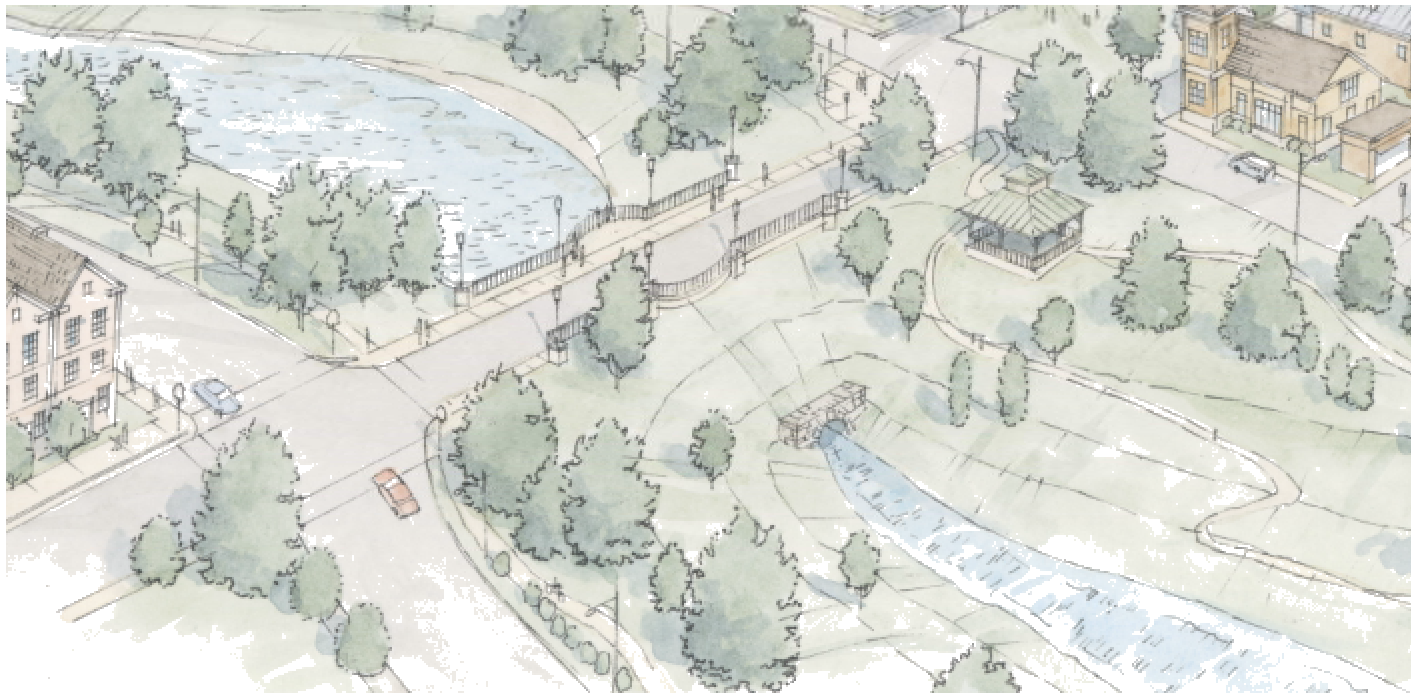
The north edge of the Town Center, along Montclair Boulevard, should be lined with town homes in row house style, with 0' to 5' setbacks and stoops. These structures will face the two-family or single-family detached homes with front porches across the street. Commercial structures on this edge should be limited to major intersections and only neighborhood oriented businesses permitted (food shops, drug stores, coffee shops, laundry, etc.).

The southern portion of the Town Center (south of The Boulevard) offers opportunities to create a significant office or mixed office/housing environment. This portion of the Town Center could be more focused on residents and employees

and less on retail. This will enable the development of a compact core area of pedestrian oriented retail north of the Boulevard, while accommodating uses which provide a significant customer base for those retailers.

The architecture of the Town Center should vary in style, including both traditional and contemporary, so as not to create a "single-development" look, common to many suburban shopping centers. However, a series of design guidelines should be implemented to assure compatibility on some levels.

Special Features



The Ravine

The Ravine

This plan calls for the use of natural topographical features to be used to complement new development. The retention of existing mature trees wherever possible is the preferred alternative to clear cutting, especially in residential areas. Maintaining natural slopes and wetlands is also preferred.

One of the most prominent features is the small ravine located to the south of S.R. 28. The natural valley of this ravine can be enhanced to serve as a storm water retention area during periods of heavy rain. The use of native vegetation will be employed to help filter the storm water

runoff of pollutants before it is returned to the storm water system or water table. The introduction of pathways for pedestrians and bicycles, as well as culverts and other structures designed to fit into a natural-looking environment, will create a park atmosphere. Properly designed, this open space will serve as a model for storm water management, enhance surrounding property values and offer a natural amenity for the village.

The Auto Sales/Service Focus Area

As the market study revealed, there is an overabundance of auto-related businesses located in the study area. The development of the by-pass has routed a large amount of vehicular traffic away from these businesses as well as the Mike Castrucci dealerships. Through the planning process, a high visibility area was identified for the creation of an auto sales and service district. Located in the plan at the western most portion of the study area, and north of S.R. 28, this proposed focus area offers visibility from I-275 and S.R. 28 west of the start of the by-pass. By concentrating the auto sales and service activities in this area, customers will find easier access to services, while business owners enjoy greater visibility to a larger number of potential customers.

To the south of S.R. 28, near the new Lowes store, out parcels should be developed to accommodate other auto-oriented businesses, such as quick serve restaurants with drive-thru service. They will also benefit from the visibility of this location and relatively easy access to the by-pass.

Integration of Existing Assets

Although the plan calls for dramatic changes in both the form and function of the properties and structures in the study area, efforts to identify and retain existing assets and incorporate them into the plan were made.

Existing structures which could be incorporated into the new village concept are identified in the plan. These include both businesses and residential neighborhoods. In some cases, opportunities to integrate existing neighborhoods through new links to the planned street grid are identified. Existing structures in the Civic center area such as the Township buildings and the school building are retained, although each may have new uses in the developed village. Existing apartment complexes are also integrated into the plan and enhanced by the addition of adjacent open space and access to the new street grid.

Existing roadways, such as Montclair and Wolfpen-Pleasant Hill are also incorporated with some minor modifications such as landscaped medians or curbs and sidewalks, etc. Existing roadways are also tied into the new grid pattern in order to reduce the demand on the collector (The Boulevard) for routine trips within the village.





implementation strategies



Montclair Boulevard

Public Improvements & Village Amenities

The transformation of the existing character and function of the study area to a vibrant self-sustaining village will require the development of partnerships, not only between Miami Township and private developers, but other public agencies as well. The basis of these partnerships will be common benefits realized by the participants in each partnership, be they tax revenue, reduced expenses or an improvement to the quality of life. As with most redevelopment investments by

the public sector, the initial infrastructure investment and policy changes will signal the commitment of government to the plan's implementation. As the transformation begins, public investment in new facilities and the redevelopment of existing structures will be required. Other amenities such as open space, parks, streetscapes and landscaped areas may be developed and maintained in partnership with private developers.

Key Public Sector Action Steps

1. Official adoption by the Township Trustees as a guide plan for redevelopment of the study area.
2. Encourage adoption by the Clermont County Regional Planning Commission.
3. Establish a Community Improvement Corporation to assist with implementation.
4. Promote the plan to state officials and elected representatives as a model of smart growth and quality development, in order to position Miami Township for any forthcoming state financial assistance with implementation.
5. Promote the plan to property and business owners within the study area.
6. Promote and facilitate an agreement between the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the Clermont County Engineer, for the abandonment of the existing S.R. 28 (in the study area) by ODOT and the designation of the new S.R. 28 bypass as S.R. 28.
7. New zoning categories and map changes must be adopted to allow for the types of development specified in the plan. New zoning categories will differ in a number of ways from existing zones including mix of uses and setback requirements. A greater emphasis on shared parking lots and on-street public spaces will also mean different requirements for parking, especially in commercial areas.
8. Develop design guidelines that, while flexible, will establish the general character of the village and its districts.
9. Develop incentives for property and business owners to invest in their own properties to meet the spirit and vision of the transformation. Examples of such incentives include Tax Increment Financing, low interest loans, gap financing, façade grants, etc.
10. Discourage development which does not contribute to realization of the vision of this plan.
11. Promote the plan to developers or a master developer and form partnership agreements only with those who share the Township's vision as depicted in this plan.
12. Market the vision of the plan to the region via local media, including business and real estate publications. The plan should be used as an example of community planning in response to sprawl. The Township should actively seek opportunities for media exposure whenever newspaper, television, or radio news outlets are preparing stories about sprawl, smart growth, new urbanism, suburban redevelopment, etc.
13. Seek funding sources based on the principles which guide the plan and its elements, including storm water management, transportation improvements, green space creation and protection, air pollution reduction, mixed (including affordable) housing, smart growth, sustainable design, etc.
14. In partnership with the Clermont County Engineer and adjoining property owners and possibly developers, begin the transformation of the road into a boulevard in phases. The initial phase should serve as a model for the remainder, in design, policy, and partnerships. This could involve agreements by property or business owners to reconfigure parking lots, donate right of way, etc. in exchange for the public investment in the capital improvements of the new design.
15. Design new public facilities and amenities to meet the vision and spirit of this plan.
16. Tie public improvements to redevelopment investment and compliance with the spirit and vision of the plan.

appendix

- The Transect Model
- Public Participation Forms
- Photo Inventory Form
- Visual Preference Form
- Visual Preference Images/Results
- Typical street sections

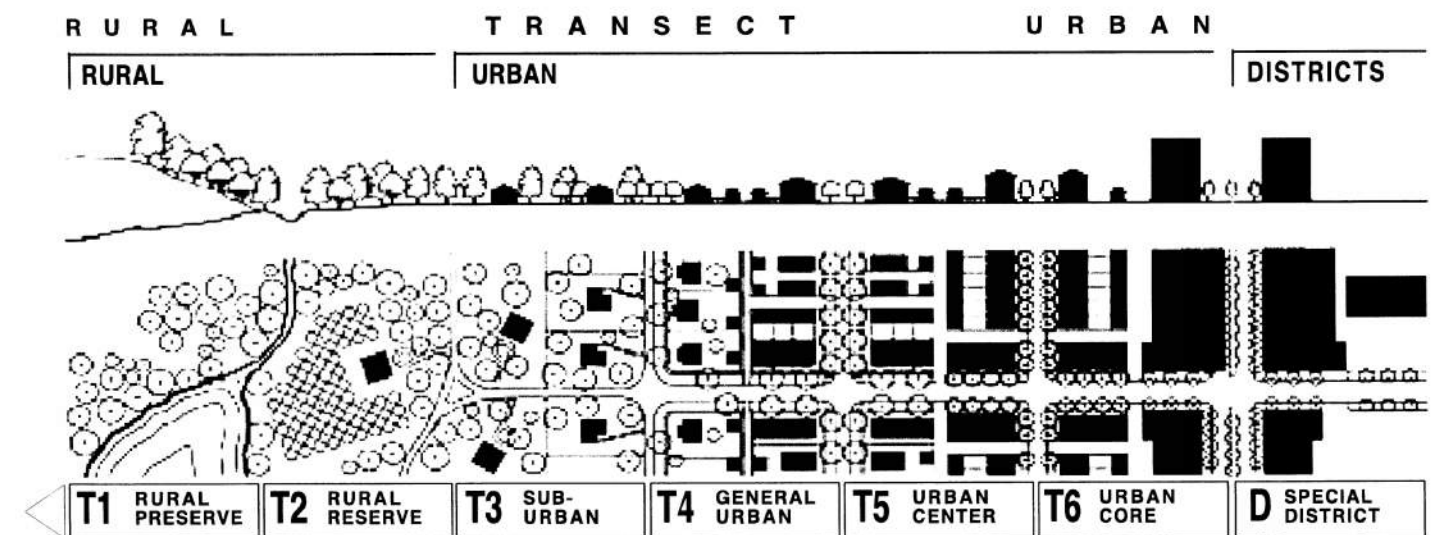
the transect model

From the wilderness to the compact urban cores, there exists a range of environments that support the viability of people within nature. Each environment is constituted of elements that reinforce each other to create a specific habitat, or "immersive environment." In contrast to the vast, homogenous tracts of suburbia, such immersive environments are complex ecosystems in nature and ecozones in urbanism.

The Transect conceptualizes the rural-to-urban range as a continuum of natural and man-made environments. The Transect places in relative order all elements of the natural and man-made environment. For example, a pool is conceived as more urban than a pond; a boulevard as more urban than a cluster of trees; a plaza as more urban than a park; a brick building as more urban than a wooden one; a curb as more urban than a swale; and a street as more urban than a road.

As a system of classification, the Transect is useful when developing zoning codes. When sliced into zoning categories for administrative convenience, each portion of the Transect retains the full complexity of the habitat, whether natural, rural or urban. Among the benefits of the Transect is the ability to better design environments for people. The transect helps us make our urban areas more viable and our allows us better opportunities to protect green space and the natural environment.

Source: The Seaside Institute



Source: Congress for New Urbanism

public participation forms

Community Input Workshop (Modified Visioning Exercise)

A vision is used to communicate how a community wants itself to look and feel in the future. A vision affords a community with the opportunity to dream about a possible future. A vision can put into words and pictures, some of the subtleties that don't always show up on land use maps or in zoning codes. A vision gives a clear picture of where we want to be.

In the space below, use short phrases to create a list of what **you** would like to see in the new Miami Township Town Center. A true town center serves many purposes, including establishing the identity of a community. What should Miami Township's new town center "say" about your community, and how?

Some things you might want to think about when making your list are: transportation, aesthetics, retail space, office buildings, parking, residential uses, parks and open spaces, walkability, architectural styles, landscaping, etc.

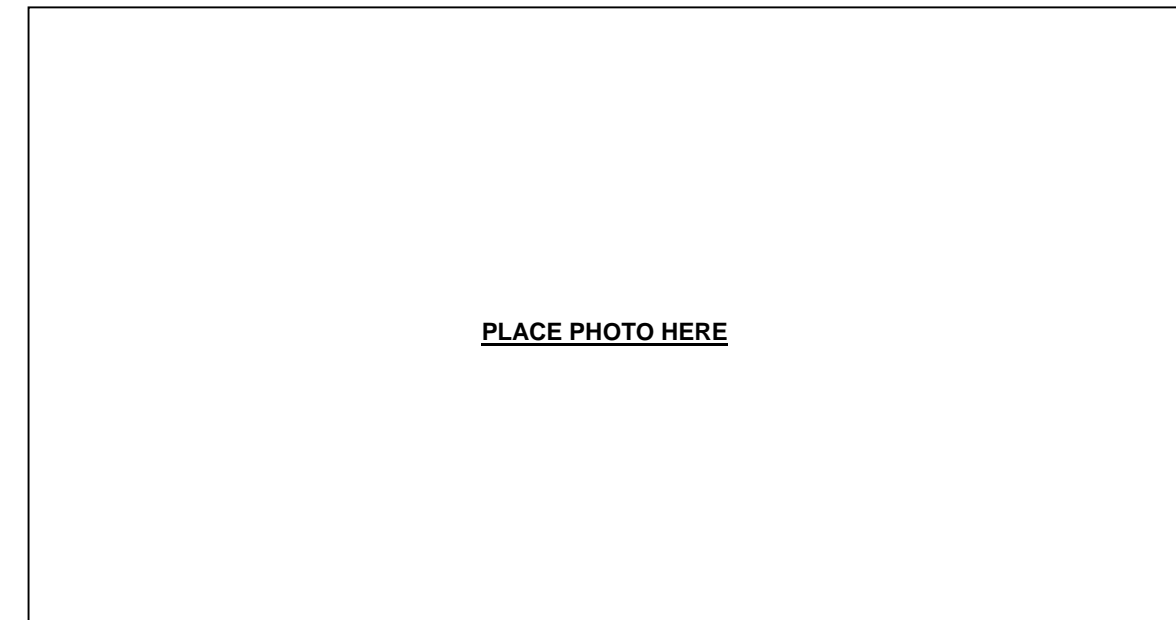
Here are some examples from another community's waterfront vision exercise:

- Pedestrian access to the water's edge
- Blend with historic architecture of Main Street
- Memorials and historic markers
- Outdoor dining
- Special event seating
- Lots of flowers
- Family-friendly
- Narrow streets

Use this space to write down **your** ideas for a new Miami Township Town Center:

photo inventory form

Photo Inventory of Assets, Liabilities, and Examples of Other Communities



Use the space below to briefly describe your thoughts about the contents of the photo:

This photo demonstrates the following **ASSET(S)** of the study area: _____

This photo demonstrates the following **LIABILITY(IES)** of the study area: _____

This photo represents a good **example of another Town Center** because: _____

visual preference survey

Circle the number which best indicates your gut reaction to each of the images as they are shown to you.

Image Number	Negative					Indifferent			Positive			
	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
1	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
2	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
3	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
4	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
5	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
6	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
7	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
8	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
9	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
10	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
11	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
12	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
13	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
14	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
15	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
16	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
17	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
18	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
19	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	
20	-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5	

visual preference images and results

The following pages contain copies of the images, their average ranking, and selected comments from the group discussion.





typical street sections

The following illustrations demonstrate the recommended widths of various streets within the village.

