

Orange Township Trustees Approve Overlay Plan for Rt. 23 Corridor

LEWIS CENTER, Ohio (Oct. 19, 2020) – The Orange Township Trustees have approved an overlay plan for the Rt. 23 corridor, creating a zoning outline that officials hope will make the north-south roadway a destination site for business and residential development.

The overlay approval zoned a total of 1,683 acres along the corridor, designating 487 for mixed-use development, 568 for commercial and office space, and 628 for light industrial use.

Housing units are capped at 400 between Shanahan and Lewis Center roads, 435 between Lewis Center and Orange roads, and 350 from Orange Road to the overlay's southern boundary, just south of Green Meadows Drive South.

Bill Bishop, chairman of the Delaware County Finance Authority, which served as a consulting arm in the creation of the overlay, said the plan will entice developers as the sites will be zoned and ready for construction.

“This is a huge step forward in guiding the growth in Orange Township,” said Bishop. “We knew we were only going to get one bite at this apple. By approving the overlay, the Orange Township trustees have assured their constituents of an orderly plan that will both protect the quality of life in the area and make the corridor a destination.”

The zoning plan will go into effect in 30 days, after which developers can apply for development plan approval. All plans must be approved by the Orange Township trustees.

Orange Township trustees Chair Ryan Rivers said the move puts the township on a path of growth that will transform the corridor from a largely agricultural strip to a mixed-use destination, such as Bridge Park in Dublin.

“This is a game-changer for Orange Township,” Rivers said. “This puts a plan in place that will keep the Rt. 23 corridor from becoming a hodge-podge of buildings. It is truly a plan for our future that will pay dividends in terms of income and jobs for our

community. We're going to see mixed-use buildings with commercial businesses on the ground floor and residential units on the upper floors."

Bob Lamb, economic development director for Delaware County, said the overlay is another step in balancing the tax base in the Olentangy School District.

"This is the kind of Smart Growth that will help relieve the tax burden on our families," Lamb said. "Over the past two decades, we have added thousands of houses in the school district. This overlay will bring in businesses that will benefit our schools and help our families. We estimate the overlay will create \$560 million in investment over the next ten years and \$385 million in total tax revenues, including \$125 million for Olentangy Schools."

The overlay plan will include 360-degree zoning requirements with no blank walls, parking-lot screening, right-of-way setbacks, side and rear setbacks, green spaces, maximum building heights and maximum ground coverage.

Lamb said his office and the Delaware County Finance Authority also are working with the trustees in Berlin Township to create and overlay for the U.S.37/SR36 corridor in the northern part of the Olentangy School District.