



## **Housing Workshop 9/14/2021**

Arnie Oliver opened the meeting with introductions. Poggemeyer Design Group reviewed a power point on the Comprehensive Plan and specifically housing. Key elements of planning and housing were reviewed, along with challenges and opportunities. Existing conditions in the county and visioning themes related to housing from the visioning session were reviewed.

Consultant reviewed existing housing data for Holmes County and Ohio. National housing trends were also reviewed. Granny flats or mother-in-law suites (as accessory dwelling units) are popular. Amish have something similar called “Daudy House.” Many communities are trying to figure out how to blend multi-family housing units within single-family neighborhoods. Some do low 1-2 story buildings that blend in with single-family houses.

### *Visioning*

Visioning themes from visioning workshop related to housing were reviewed. A participant thought land cost was the biggest barrier for housing development, then other issues are with the types of housing available, providing housing for aging and new workers coming in, and offering mid-price housing (townhouses, condos). Are these housing types feasible in Holmes Co? Data shows that most of housing stock here is single-family detached units, a few duplexes, and not a lot of rentals. Participants were asked, what types of housing are needed and how should they be developed? One thought is to assemble land through the community improvement corporation and do a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) to developers. Could offer a write down on land or offer tax abatement (CRA). Toledo has a lot of senior villas and offer a City-wide Community Reinvestment Area (CRA). The incentive is that owners are paying taxes for vacant land only for 15 years. Non-profit development corporations also could acquire dilapidated single-family homes and fix them up. For example, Habitat for Humanity would build new house and provide it at a lower cost for purchase. Participants were asked how do you see that type of development and where in the County?

There are CRAs in Millersburg, Killbuck, and Holmesville. The county administers the CRA for Killbuck and Holmesville. A participant mentioned that there have been a handful of residential abatements (renovations, not new construction) in the county, but the program has not been promoted. County also has a CDBG Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP). Another participant mentioned that Habitat builds a house a year in the county, but probably could do more. Currently, they own 3 lots total, and their construction projects are usually in villages (near utilities). Consultant mentioned that some larger hospitals will invest in their community by purchasing homes within their campus to provide housing to workers. Incentives are also provided including down payment and closing cost assistance. This typically leads to the shoring up of neighborhoods around hospital. The county could market a program or target major employer and institutions for these types of projects. A participant mentioned that Pomerene Hospital may own some houses. Millersburg’s zoning map does have a medical service overlay, and this includes houses for Amish patients to stay in or for other medical offices. At one time the CEO lived in a house next to hospital. Consultant commented that hospitals typically have the resources to do this. A participant mentioned that two houses on Woodland are empty, and one needs to be updated.

A participant mentioned that we need to look at residential building code creation and then enforcement. Consultant asked if there would be support here? Participants thought it may do better in villages and commissioners have discussed it over the years. A participant mentioned that all surrounding counties have a residential building code. Participants think it will be a tough sell, but not as difficult as selling zoning. Since the county does have a CHIP program, contractors are already using Residential Rehab Standards (RRS) (Ohio Basic 1,2,3 Code). In areas without codes, CHIP contractors need to use RRS standards. The point is these standards are already being applied in the county for these type of rehab projects. Participants thought builders here seem to use building codes from other counties. Another participant thought that it might be a hard sell because can’t tell people in the east what to do with their land, they are fiercely independent. Consultant suggested working through health and safety issues. Another participant thought health and safety issues are a touchy topic now anyway.

A participant thought there had been comments from some of the larger employers about doing company housing in the future. Consultant mentioned that there is definitely a need for more housing. Communities can spur projects by providing incentives for developers, it seems the market is there but may take a developer taking a chance and partnering with an institution. Participants mentioned that this did happen in Holmesville and Millersburg has something coming in. These developers are developing some small scale, more affordable housing.

A participant mentioned that housing in a tourist destination is unique. A house in her neighborhood was sold, flipped, and is already in business as Air B&B. So short term rentals may also be cutting into the county's residential inventory. The county is also getting "reverse snowbirds" who spend the cold months down south, but rest of time here because they have vacationed here in the past. A participant mentioned that it feels like a new Air B&B in Holmes Co pops up every week when searching the site. Millersburg comes up a lot and there are short term rentals here.

We have talked about looking to future and where potential areas of land for development are located if land use would change. A participant mentioned the Berlin trailer park, located on prime property in the middle of the tourism portion of the town. No plans to sell it now, but maybe someday and people will need to find other affordable places to live. Consultant mentioned that typically should get highest and best use from property. There is also a Millersburg trailer park with 73 units. Participant was not sure on exact occupancy numbers, but some are uninhabitable. This land is valuable. Local factories here do make industrialized units off site and bringing them to the site to install. This type of development is happening in Indiana to be installed in Toledo. Participant mentioned that Schrock in Loudonville also does it. JDM recently built a hotel on South Bass Island using this method. Holiday Inn was built this way and Unibilt in Dayton does it, and this provides a product at a more reasonable cost.

There have been tiny house applications in Millersburg. Tourism side of tiny houses is not slowing down. Consultant mentioned a church in Toledo that is doing something like this, with parishioners being able to buy the homes. Seattle used this to house their homeless, but it did not go well. Ashland County-West Holmes Career Center used modular units, but the cost to move them is high (\$15-20k). Amish are building tiny houses to be used by people as vacation homes and these are able to be moved on trailers. These types of units are built here and can be used here (due to lack of zoning) and may be an option to address housing stock.

A participant would like to add to visioning- adding second story residential in downtown buildings. Does Historic Downtown Millersburg (HDM) have lofts, upper floors counted, inventoried? HDM did comment that everything but the Young Building and building beside it are full on second floors. The Young building owner is hoping to put in lofts/condos. Holmes County Chamber & Tourism Bureau board talked about doing housing on top floor of the old Masonic Temple.

What about smart development/rural lot? A participant mentioned that from a tourism perspective, goal should be to protect, scenic vistas as this is one of the top reasons tourists come to Holmes County. Participant thought that it needed to be protected with zoning, not subdivision regs. Consultant thought this would be reason to support zoning, want to keep the tourists coming to visit. Residents still want to have billboards, even though this interferes with scenic vistas. There are few homeowners' associations in the County (HOAs) with varying levels of controls. Millersburg does not enforce deed restrictions. At some level, pretty useless since people don't sue each other here.

Participants felt that creating a land bank should really be pursued in the county. Millersburg, along with other villages, could utilize this to address dilapidated houses. Consultant commented that a land bank is a good tool to facilitate development. Land banks can acquire parcels, assemble, and resell or develop them. The rehab can be turned over to the existing owner for a homesteading program (if fix up, deed over the land/title).

Another participant thought that Millersburg only has a few dilapidated houses now and a few are currently being rehabbed. Things are heading in the right direction. Participant was not sure why property owner decided to complete rehab, maybe keeping up with neighbors? A local doctor and builder have partnered up to tear down and build another property because they saw an opportunity. Millersburg is going to acquire and tear down a property for a road safety project.

A participant mentioned that senior housing has been built by Danbury with CRA incentives (80-81 units in main building and 14 villas). Robin's Terrace was also built, but smaller and not local developers. CDC also constructed some senior housing. Consultant mentioned that for new construction the main program for developers is the low-income housing tax credit program with federal tax credits for developers to develop LMI housing. Elderly housing is what is supported most in communities. Picket Place is not senior housing, but a lot of seniors have downsized to here and it also attracts newly married couples, too. A participant thought that Millersburg has always had the senior housing options available and there is not that big of a senior population. Another participant thought Danbury is too expensive, but there is also Sunshine Villas, Glenwood (all one floor), Autumn Run (done by WODA), and Greenfield. Sunshine Villas and Autumn Run are subsidized.

Consultant mentioned that Toledo will register all Air B&B owners on an annual basis, requiring a local contact in case something happens. A participant mentioned that Erie County, Lake Erie Shores and Islands is trying this as a pilot program.

There are pros and cons here for tourism and need to determine whether registry will be enacted and/or enforced. Holmes County is aware of it, but not sure would work here. Local law enforcement has approached tourism board regarding a problem with short term rentals and parties. Not a huge problem but have educated the owners on how to research a renter on Facebook and install decibel sensors to determine if parties are being held.

### *Challenges*

Consultant listed challenges: Lack of housing options, lack of varying housing prices, lack of moderately priced housing, lack of housing stock for varying lifestyles and generational needs, commuters can't afford to live in county, adequate water/sewer facilities to accommodate growth, and cost of land. Participant mentioned that if prioritize list of challenges, cost of land rises to top. There is also a lack of housing inventory at all levels, not just moderately priced. This has been confirmed by realtors. If commuters cannot live in the county, then lose these people permanently, become "pirates for life." Also, since there is no public transportation, those commuters without cars cannot even work here. A participant mentioned that need to add high property taxes to challenges.

Another participant mentioned that no residential building codes may be opportunity for the county because more flexibility. Another participant said it could be challenge, would like to have to raise property values. Enforcement becomes an issue.

A participant asked do we know where a developer could connect to water/sewer, is there a list of this somewhere? County engineer commented that the county has been branching out for 15 years now with water/sewer. If developer wants to know, they can look on GIS, see where water and sewer are located and if their proposed development is close. A large parcel will be Dean Engle farm when it is ready to be sold. Mostly likely will not be low-income or moderate housing. Unless subsidize housing, not sure local builders will be able to build housing here. There are areas that the county has expanded to service water/sewer, there are a lot of opportunities.

A land bank should be examined. The county treasurer would form the land bank utilizing state statutes which requires set of board issues. Land banks can acquire property through tax foreclosure, then would clean tax lien (taxes/liens forgiven) and get to interested developers. A land bank can split parcels to give land to adjoining property owners. State has quite a bit of resources to acquire property, inventory, assemble, and provide to developers. Due to rural nature of county, there are different issues, constraints here than in more urban areas. Landbank holds the property, not the county. At a regular sheriff's sale, land bank has first dibs to get the property. Holmes Co is currently trying to clear properties, not sure who owns it, dealing with orphan parcels. Some are buildable, so this would be an interesting option. Participant mentioned that the commissioners had a presentation about this 10 years ago and seemed interested in it. Funding may be an issue and may need seed money. A participant asked if county has an inventory of industrial areas that could be converted to loft space? Not aware of it.

Another challenge is that not just have a shortage of housing, also have shortage of industrial and warehousing space. Add to this the shortage of workers. Huge issue here on space, overall. Also need infrastructure to support current and future uses of the land.

Participants reviewed newly created land use map. Participant mentioned that area above Holmesville is ODNR preserve, need to fix on land use map. Population has been increasing in certain areas of the County, but some participants felt that census data was misleading because Amish typically do not fill out survey forms. Other participants felt there was a good turnout for census data responses. Participant felt that State projections for Holmes County population done in 2010 will be exceeded. Participant mentioned that it used to be every 20 years, Amish population doubled, now its every 16 years.

Where are the conflicts with residential and neighboring land uses? Participant mentioned Holmes Rendering Plant. Participant mentioned that there are always minor conflicts with dog kennels and chicken plants. However, with mostly family farms here, there doesn't seem to be lots of conflicts. Holmes Co does not have factory farms or big feed lots. A participant mentioned "micro conflicts" when manufacturing that goes into field somewhere or with people living in the middle of an industrial park. Consultant will be provided with copy of Amish Country Scenic byway and participant noted that signage is a problem now (visual clutter conflict) and in the future conflict will be overdevelopment. Some conflicts with Amish and English tourists. English tourists want to see snapshot of Amish life and sometimes Amish will host a dinner in pole barn. There are not any Amish B&Bs. Participant mentioned that tourists are really intrusive with Amish. As a result, Amish are welcoming and great people, but they keep their distance. Participant mentioned a conflict with housing in Berlin with the trailer park in the middle of tourism. Also, a car wash just took up a large part of real estate in Berlin. In Lakeview, a few years ago, a developer tried to build huge condos/apt and there was conflict here with landowners who stopped this type of development. There seems to

be traffic conflicts in the county. For example, Dutch Valley has semis coming in on hilly, narrow township roads. Puppy mills have conflicts too. Anytime add housing to rural area, residents complain about smell of manure on the field.

At other workshops, we have discussed locations for new housing if land uses change. Some recreational land uses have become less popular, and many communities are turning them into housing developments. Underutilized recreational uses and 241 close to Millersburg are options to plan for future residential development if land uses change. Participants prefer to keep houses near existing villages (Nashville, Holmesville, Killbuck, Millersburg). Winesburg has the most expensive land, but also has sewer. Participants thought Baltic should be reserved for more industrial development, but there is also some land across from the WWTP (by CR 75) that could be for residential. Participants were not sure about land by the Airport, a business owner bought this in case want to expand by adding skeet/trap shooting. CR 58 by Autumn Run has land available and easily accessible to Village (could have water/sewer). Millersburg has residential capacity with its infrastructure.

Is there land available along bike trail for residential development? Land there is along flood plain, flood shed. A participant asked if there are unique and creative ways to develop here with housing, but not to disturb the area. How far north of Millersburg would you have to go to get out of floodplain? Not really able to build here because lots of floodplain and hardly any fall. West of 83 is flooded and east is up on the hill. Millersburg challenges include topography that is higher and have to look at booster stations.

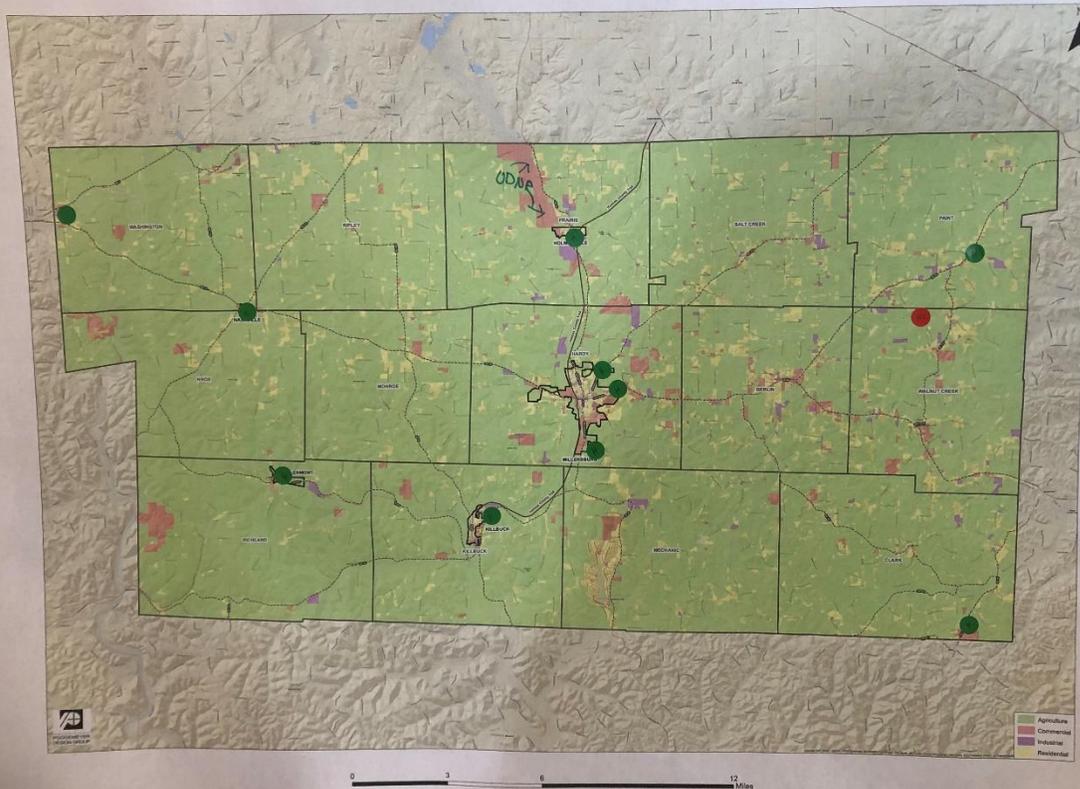
Killbuck has both water and sewer, but other communities just have one or the other. Tough sell for development if can't offer both utilities. Participants added green dots to land use map as to where residential could be developed. Areas include Nashville, Glenmont Killbuck, Loudonville (Holmes Co and has water/sewer), and Winesburg. Lakeville does not have infrastructure and Big Prairie has antiquated water system. Winesburg has opportunity for growth, but land is expensive. Nashville/Glenmont still have some potential, even though just have one utility, because land costs are more reasonable here, but prices have risen. If a developer wants secluded lots, there is scenic living in Glenmont and Nashville. Glenmont is more secluded.

Property taxes are high in the county depending on where live. Property taxes can become a barrier to home ownership. A participant thought Danville's are unbelievable high compared to other areas. East Holmes is less than west and valuation changes. NE quadrant of the County is more expensive related to real property taxes. Tri-way is in Holmes, and they have income tax plus real estate tax. Holmes County not as expensive as major city counties.

#### *Big Ideas*

- Identify land with ability to connect to utilities (maps are available on County website GIS to show water/sewer)
- Identify land for potential annexation
- Identify land where uses could change to residential
  - Mobile Home Parks in Berlin, Millersburg
  - Underutilized recreational uses
- Create county land bank
- Create and/or further promote incentives to residential developers, homeowners
- Support diverse housing options
  - Expand options that young and old can afford, utilize
  - Preserve neighborhoods for young families
  - Promote new developments in targeted areas
  - Create housing options that connect people to amenities

## Holmes County and Village of Millersburg Comprehensive Plan | Land Use



Committee members put red dots where land use conflicts between housing and other uses. These include rendering plant north of Walnut Creek and trailer park in Berlin.

Committee members put green dots on land use map where potential housing rehabilitation or new housing could be located and include:

- Western portion of county
  - SR 3 and SR 39
  - Nashville
  - Glenmont
  - Killbuck
- Eastern portion of the county
  - Holmesville
  - Millersburg (3 locations- SR 241, SR 39, southeastern portion of village)
  - Paint, US 62
  - Clark, SR 93

### *Next Steps*

- Map water/sewer on land use map (Consultant)
- Fix land use map to denote ODNR Preserve (Consultant)
- Inventory potential loft space (County/ HDM)
- Inventory vacant and/or dilapidated houses, potential greenspace for developments (County)

- Identify land for future land use changes (County, Millersburg)
- Inventory land for potential annexation (Millersburg)