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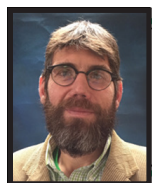
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Keeping growth from becoming sprawl

Experts say area is not alone in struggles with development



By
Mac Cordell
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Referendums, growing tension between local entities, voter unrest, traffic.

As growth in and around Marysville continues, officials say the community will continue to see many of these issues.

The good news, they say, is that there is a path forward and out of the frustration. The bad news is that the path isn't easy and it takes time.

"We hear that everywhere," Dr. Kerstin Carr, chief regional strategy officer for the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, said of the frustration in Marysville over growth. "Marysville is not the only area where we are hearing concerns."

Dr. Edward Hill, a professor of economic development at The Ohio State University said the change in Marysville was gradual, "then all of a sudden people wake up and say 'Hey, this place is different.'"

Officials think the change will continue.

"We do believe Union County will continue to be one of the fastest growing counties in the region," said Carr.

Officials estimate that by 2050, Union County's population will grow by nearly 50% to more than 90,000 residents with an increase of about 10,000 new homes.

Not everyone is pleased about the growth. Marysville residents in 2023 expressed their frustra-

tion over growth, voting down a school levy, showing up to council meetings to oppose a variety of developments, overturning an annexation that would have allowed a significant housing development on the city's northwest corner, ousting three incumbent council members.

As Hill put it, there is a large population of residents in Marysville that want to be "country, just happy to be Mayberry."

"They want to preserve the community of Ozzie and Harriet," Hill said.

The problem, the professor explained, is that growth will come and without a plan, it will "swamp" the community.

"They are going to lose and they are going to get development in a way that is not coherent and with unexpected and unintended consequences," Hill said.

Carr and Hill agree the community needs to decide where it wants to go.

"It really is getting community consensus where you want to end up," Hill said.

He added that, "If you don't do that, what you are going to have is shouting matches and referendums."

Carr said leaders need to "bring in all the perspectives of the community members" not just the ones who come to a council meeting to oppose a specific project.

She said residents who live next to a proposed development will come to council to object, but many others in the community may support the project but not come to council.

Carr said communities need to "not wait for people to show up at the council meetings to address the project, but go to the places where people already are and engage them there." She specifically mentioned community events, gatherings and parks.

Carr acknowledged it can be

difficult, but said people need to "step outside" their own interests right now. She said they need to consider what they might want in 20 years or what other community members might need.

She said if residents want their children to live close to them, they need to support housing options and jobs for young people and families. If they want educated people in the community, they need to support schools.

"They have to ask their neighbors, their children, their grandparents, 'What do you need?'" Carr said. "They have to think, 'Maybe I don't want it right now, but that doesn't mean we don't need it as a community and that doesn't mean I might not be glad it's here at some point.'"

She said a big part of that is having a diversity of housing. She said it is important to have "housing for a diverse life span and diverse workforce."

"We need to have updated comprehensive plans and zoning codes that make it easier for development to occur and make sure we have that diversity of housing platform in place," Carr said.

Carr said the change can't be just legislative.

"I believe just as important as having the right housing options is having a sense of community," Carr said.

She said that if residents want their city and school employees, retail workers and other service providers to live and participate in the community, they need to allow for housing options affordable to those workers.

She said it is important to "take advantage of strategic approaches and opportunities to develop these housing options."

"The more we focus on infill and redevelopment, the better it is for all of our resources," Carr said.

Hill and Carr both said it is

"It really is getting community consensus where you want to end up. If you don't do that, what you are going to have is shouting matches and referendums."

-Dr. Edward Hill,
professor of economic
development at OSU

also important to provide for areas of higher density.

They said infill and higher density developments often generate opposition among neighbors, but benefit a community as a whole. Officials said infill, redevelopment and higher density housing areas reduce sprawl, make better use of existing infrastructure, cause less strain on school and municipal services, help eliminate blight and eyesores in the community and can be more affordable for developers and ultimately home buyers.

The question for many is how to make growth not just attract new residents, but also provide benefits for existing residents.

Carr said accommodating growth "takes a cultural change as much as an infrastructure change."

She said residents need to see and support the long-term plan and bigger picture even though the process "at first might feel like a piece-meal approach."

She said Marysville's Professional Parkway, which was built a section at a time by developers as they expanded in the area on the city's southeast side, is a good example of how the apparent piecemeal approach can work.

She said once the plan begins to come into focus, "then you

will start to see the people using these things and it becomes part of the culture."

Hill said starting when Honda came more than 40 years ago, Marysville, "has become a complicated municipality."

He said the community is able to provide municipal amenities like parks, trails and police protection. Businesses have grown and new businesses have arrived.

"No doubt about it, Marysville is a well run city, a professionally run city," Hill said, adding that growth has provided and paid for a lot of the expanded opportunities in the community.

Carr said it can help to recognize the benefits growth can bring to a community citing new roads, a diversity of food and retail options, expansion of recreational opportunities, new jobs and increased municipal services.

Hill said finding a way to pay for the needs associated with growth is also a source of frustration and is "the most important piece."

Hill said every entity thinks they need the revenue from growth most and that they will make the best use of that money, often not thinking of the other entities impacted by the growth or the existing taxpayers. He said many of the economic development incentives communities use are "very inefficient ways to fund public services and probably shouldn't happen."

Hill said communities need to take a larger, cooperative approach to growth saying they need to "think as a county much more than just as a collection of municipalities." He said the region needs to work together to create a cohesive plan so local communities are not competing against each other. He said schools and municipalities and

**Please see Sprawl
on page 4**



Pictured above is a section of Mill Valley along Route 31 as seen on the website apartments.com listing the Mill Valley Ranches.

(Photo submitted)

Sprawl

(Continued from page 3)

other entities all need to look outside their own needs to work together to make growth work for everyone.

Hill said municipalities need to be creative to find solutions, specifically mentioning things like the option cities have to share income tax revenue with the local school system, an option that makes sense if the city is using tax increment financing agreements (TIF) to bring housing and industry to the community.

"Unfortunately, this is the kind of thing where the silver bullet just doesn't exist," Hill said. "There is no way to finance public services that does not involve money."

He emphasized that school funding is "the hardest nut to crack in all this."

Carr said things like housing, jobs, recreation, commerce, public services and schools all need to work together to "create places that produce positive emotional attachment."

Hill said communities need to examine and learn

from communities that have grown successfully and communities that have struggled.

He referenced Carmel, Indiana, some townships around Akron and Lakewood as examples to follow. He said Lakewood saw businesses and housing leave and spent a decade investing in things like schools, infrastructure and façade improvements for the community.

"This is a community that survived by saying, 'The only way we are going to survive is by investing in ourselves,'" Hill said, noting the community has seen a renaissance.

He said a community should have high standards but needs to have a "reasonable idea" of what they want the community to be like in the future.

"But if you keep trying to reinvent the land of Ozzie and Harriet, remember they are dead and they couldn't afford to live there anymore," Hill said.

He added that, "those people who want to go back to when it was just

corn and soybeans, want to live in a fantasy."

"While holding your breath and saying 'No' may get you reelected, it's not going to solve the problem," Hill said.

Carr said residents can look at communities around the state that have not adapted.

"Ask a lot of the counties around the state how they are feeling seeing the population fall, losing jobs, losing economic opportunities," Carr said.

She said she has "deep empathy for the resident that feels like things are changing too fast or there is too much."

"Change takes time when we are talking about communities," Carr said. "It takes a while to get used to the change when it does happen."

Hill said that while change takes time and can be difficult, the best time to start is always "now."

"If you don't invest in your future, you don't get to shape it," said Hill. "If you just say 'No' and don't participate, you don't get a say. It is handed to you."

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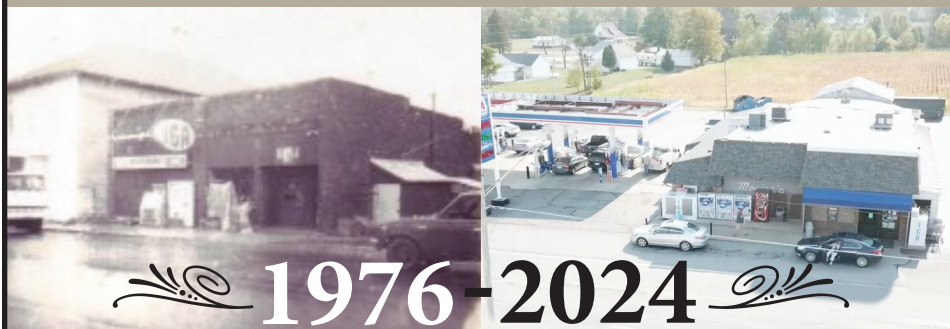
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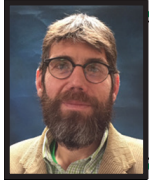
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April eclipse expected to bring surge of visitors to county



By
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Union County's brightest are preparing for one of its darkest days.

On Monday, April 8, a 124-mile-wide band across Ohio, which includes Union County, will experience a total solar eclipse.

Officials have said the solar eclipse has "the potential to be one of the largest events in Union County, drawing thousands of people to the county."

"The state of Ohio anticipates that Union County could double in population with visitors and travelers through the county on the day of the eclipse," Brad Gilbert, EMA executive director, wrote in a preparedness plan. "This

influx of visitors will put a strain on resources and responders."

Gilbert said the county has been planning for the event for more than a year already. He said local officials are working with regional and state EMA resources.

"Planning is going well," Gilbert said. "All our partners are participating."

In the report, which is still in draft form, Gilbert stressed that, "planning with an effort to contact or involve all county stakeholders will help to alleviate many of the difficulties surrounding the event." In February, Gilbert will host a table top exercise for emergency responders and other stakeholders.

"We will just be talking about different scenarios for that day we could possibly face and how we would work through those issues," Gilbert

said.

In March, EMA will have a training for staff, volunteers and others involved in the executing the county-wide plan.

Gilbert said there "isn't any major concerns about that day except traffic."

He said the traffic is "our big concern for that day, especially after the event," Gilbert said.

He explained that viewers could be coming into or through the area for hours, even days ahead of the eclipse.

"But as soon as the event is over, they will all leave and be coming through the area at the same time," Gilbert said.

He said that research on past eclipse events have shown that traffic congestion will cause problems for all types of travelers including emergency response.

He said a 2017 eclipse, which spanned from Oregon to

Kentucky "caused massive traffic jams."

"At one viewing point in Oregon, families waited for more than four hours to leave a parking area," according to an assessment in the written plan. "In Idaho, where NASA was based for viewing there were traffic jams over 20 miles long."

Gilbert said there is also concerns about individuals who may be on their way to a viewing site and not make it or who have no idea ahead of time the eclipse will be happening.

"What is it going to look like when the eclipse happens and people start pulling over on the side of the road?" Gilbert asked.

He said that if traffic is especially heavy, it could be difficult to get emergency responders to a crash or to another medical emergency. The EMA

director said these are the kinds of issues officials are looking to prevent or at least mitigate but also planning to deal with.

In addition to increased traffic, the plan deals with issues such as the possibility of civil unrest, increased food and campsite inspections by the Union County Health Department, the possibility of bad weather and other concerns.

Gilbert said county officials are encouraging visitors to "come early and stay late."

He said that should help spread the burden of the traffic and other issues over a longer period to help lessen the issues caused by the congestion.

In an effort to give visitors a reason to come early and stay late, Union County Tourism has created a webpage dedicat-

**Please see Eclipse
on page 7**



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Eclipse

(Continued from page 6)

ed to highlighting area events such as watch parties and resources for visitors in the area.

“There’s so much to see and do in Union County year-round, but even more so during this extraordinary event,” according to the page. “Plan your visit and make the most of the solar eclipse in Union County.”

The page offers advice for how to safely view the eclipse.

It also offers advice for those who live in Union County.

“As Union County is in the path of totality, we encourage residents to stock up on gas, food, prescriptions and supplies early,” according to the web-page.

Officials said the eclipse, from beginning to end, will last about two hours, with the total eclipse lasting 2 minutes and 49 seconds.

“A total solar eclipse is a rare and spectacular event,” according to the report.

On average, an eclipse happens somewhere on Earth about once every 1.5 years. Since America’s birth, only 21 total solar eclipses have crossed the lower 48 states.

The last total solar eclipse visible in Ohio was in 1806. The next total solar eclipse in Ohio will be in the year 2099.



On April 8, a total solar eclipse will cross parts of America, including Union County, creating a path of totality. During a total solar eclipse, the moon completely blocks the sun while it passes between the sun and Earth. In Marysville, the eclipse will begin at 12:55 p.m. and end at 3:26 p.m. with the sun totally eclipsed between 2:10 and 2:13 p.m.

(Graphic submitted)





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Climbing county revenue has mirrored area growth



By
Michael Williamson
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Though growth has been a topic of contention for many Union County residents, it has brought with it a noticeable boost to finances, both locally and across the central Ohio region.

The county commissioners passed their budget in November, looking at 2024 with a general fund of 34,900,657, up from \$33 million at the beginning of 2023. The county also had \$34,900,657 listed as revenue certified by the auditor's office and that revenue number is also up from last year when it was certified at \$32 million.

In five years, those numbers have gone up nearly \$10 million due to a variety of factors such as growth to the tax base and a higher cost of living.

Changes for 2024

General fund dollars are used to operate the county for the year and includes funding for all the main departments such as the sheriff's office, engineer, auditor, courts and others.

Commissioner Steve Robinson said though passing the budget was a fairly straightforward process, much of the change this year came from cost-of-living increases.

"In my estimation, most of the elected officials requested cost-of-living raises for employees. But other than that, it was pretty much just a flat budget," Robinson said.

"With the way employment is right now, it doesn't appear they're jumping ship because when you have an opening, there's no one there to take it."

Staffing issues have been at the forefront of discussions at the county over the last year and the board elected to up the budgets of various departments, most significantly the sheriff's office, to encourage both

retention and future employees.

The commissioners approved a \$1.2 million increase to the sheriff's budget, bringing it up to \$10.6 million.

Most of the key departments at the county saw increases from the auditor's office to the board of elections to the courts, the engineer's and prosecutor's offices, the Emergency Management Agency and IT.

The IT budget alone jumped noticeably from \$600,000 to \$900,000 from 2023 to 2024, but that was due mostly to cloud storage upgrades, officials said.

County budget breakdown

The majority of the general fund comes primarily from sales tax or approximately 41% of the total revenue. There is a portion of the real estate tax that comes in at 23% and investment income at approximately 10%.

Letitia Rayl, assistant county administrator and budget officer, said the budgeting process always has several goals.

"A few goals that are utilized for budgeting are as follows: limit annual appropriations to no more than the Union County Auditor's annual general fund revenue estimate and/or resources available from funds carried over from previous years," she said.

"(Also) maintain a beginning of the year carryover equal to no less than 10% of the approved general fund budget appropriations to account for beginning of the year expenditures prior to revenue receipt."

General fund carryover dollars fund the county budget stabilization fund and the salary and benefit liability fund also. At the start of this year, there is a total of \$5.6 million between the two funds. Rayl said the current total cash from both funds would fund the

general fund for three months of current level of operations.

While the county will use the \$34 million as the operating budget, the remaining funds are split between special funds (\$73 million) and "non-oversight funds" (\$33 million).

Special funds include more than 110 line items ranging from equipment funds to \$13 million for capital infrastructure. Non-oversight funds range from hundreds of dollars for a ditch project to the \$14 million that funds the Union County Board of Developmental Disabilities.

The county has \$10 million in capital special project dollars that are currently set aside to fund a portion of the Millcreek logjam project as well as 11 pending petitioned ditch projects and the Magnetic Springs wastewater treatment project.

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Jerome's second firehouse a community hub Revenue—



By
Kayleen Petrovia
kayleen@marysvillejt.com

When it comes to the Jerome Township Division of Fire's new station, Chief Doug Stewart thinks the things you don't immediately notice might be the most impressive.

"The little things are going to pay dividends," Stewart said.

"One of the best things," he says, is the front porch of the building. Already, Stewart said local families and children will stop by to hang out on the bench and Adirondack chairs on either side of the station's front door.

The front porch and the open bay doors reflect Stewart's vision that Station 211, JTFD's second fire station, will serve as a "community firehouse" - a hub where residents and families can gather and become involved in their fire department.

"When I grew up, everyone was at the firehouse," he said.

JTFD held a dedication ceremony for Station 211, located at 11840 Ewing Road, in July. An open house was also held, during which there were station tours and opportunities to meet the firefighters.

The interior of Station 211 is essentially split into two sides, one of which is "clean," meaning that no turnout gear or firefighting equipment is brought into that area to avoid contamination.

The heart of that area is a large, open concept kitchen with a dining table and communal area with sofas and a TV.

"A lot of the public doesn't realize that we cook all our meals here," Stewart said, adding that the "wide open" area allows crew members to spend time together while one might be cooking.

From the kitchen area, there is a doorway into the physical fitness room, which includes a bench, free weights, treadmill, stationary bike and rowing machine. The chief said



Station 211, the Jerome Township Division of Fire's first new fire station in 31 years, is pictured above. The firehouse is located at 11840 Ewing Road, off Ravenhill Parkway, and is intended to serve as not only a firehouse but a hub for the community.

(Journal-Tribune photo by Kayleen Petrovia)

it was "designed by the crews" based on what equipment they desired.

In the adjacent room is a laundry area specifically for "clean" items like uniforms and bed linens.

The laundry room is next door to the bunk area, which is divided into five separate rooms and a private restroom (including a shower) on each end.

Stewart explained that most firehouses have a more communal bunk area in which individual beds are divided only by curtains. However, he said he wanted to "plan way out," especially in light of more and more female firefighters joining the department.

Separate rooms afford them privacy in general, and ensure female firefighters have lactation areas when necessary.

Each bedroom has a bed with built-in storage space underneath and a study area with a desk. Stewart said many of the crew members are working on college classes or other continuing education.

The rooms also have blackout shades and a ceiling fan to ensure firefighters can sleep comfortably.

Station 211 will begin with three firefighters on each shift, but Stewart said it will eventually expand to five. The lieutenant's office was

designed to fit a fold-down Murphy bed, so the station can sleep six.

The main hallway of the building has office space for the township's Public Safety Officers, provided through a contract with the Union County Sheriff's Office, and JTFD's lieutenant and community safety lieutenant.

There is also a training room that seats 12, though the larger table can be separated and reconfigured so the room can accommodate more active trainings like CPR or car seat installations.

After leaving the training room, before entering the bay, there is also a "watch room" through which firefighters can see the apparition bay and the road. There, Stewart said they can work on reports or go through individual trainings.

Station 211 has two and a half bays and houses the only bariatric truck in the county.

Within the bay area, there is a room for turnout gear as well as a decontamination area with showers and sinks.

The bay was also designed to allow firefighters to undergo specialized trainings within the firehouse.

There are tie-outs on the floor and wall so that firefighters can practice repelling and rope training.

The training mezzanine is separate from the station's HVAC system so that firefighters can "smoke the room up" and practice searches.

On the opposite side of the bay, the turnout lockers and tool room, which also function as the building's tornado shelter, were designed to accommodate confined space trainings.

Since the room would already be there, Stewart said a chute-type opening was included on the top of the structure so that crew members can train for rescues from tanks or sewers.

He said it is clear that "everyone had input" on the design of the new station, as his crews are "beaming ear to ear" when they walk through.

"I want them to be able to make it their home," Stewart said.

He noted that it has been 31 years since a fire station was constructed in Jerome Township. He said he anticipates Station 211 will serve the community "for the next 50, 60, 70 years."

"We have a 19-year-old firefighter," Stewart said. "She'll retire in 30 years and this will still be here."

While he has already seen the positive effect of Station 211 on his crews, Stewart said he is looking forward to seeing it benefit the community.

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"There are additional road infrastructure requests that we are currently unable to fund," Rayl said. "Estimates currently exceed \$40 million."

Union County and the region

The county is not the only one experiencing growth. Union, Delaware and Franklin counties all regularly vie for top spots as the fastest growing counties in the state. So but how does its budget and general fund operating dollars compare to surrounding counties?

Unsurprisingly, Franklin County leads that list with a \$2 billion overall budget and approximately \$665 million of that comes from the general fund for operational expenses. That number is up from the \$590 million figure in 2023.

The Delaware County Commissioners approved its general fund budget for 2024 at \$143.8 million, which is a 5.1% increase over the 2023 budget of \$136.8 million for operating and capital expenditures.

Other counties bordering Union County ranged significantly from Franklin and Delaware. Marion County's general fund balance is \$27,738,311 for 2024. Madison County approved a budget with a \$22,719,909 general operating fund and Logan County has a general operating fund at \$18,831,465.

County Administrator Bill Narducci said operating the counties is a balancing act, especially when it comes to funding departments and employment in those departments.

As more residential and commercial development comes to the area, money increases but so do the responsibilities, he added.

"Overall, you're obviously trying to be competitive - with all of our offices - we're trying to be competitive with both the private sector and adjacent communities because that's realistically where people are looking," Narducci said. "I look at it across the board with any profession, people switch jobs. Is it always salary related? No, there are other factors. But we're seeing it at the sheriff's office."



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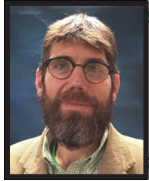


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Samantha Sloan
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New water plant will allow city to grow into the future



By
Mac Cordell

mcordell@marysvillejt.com

Marysville officially began operations of the city's new water treatment plant in 2023.

"I've been waiting a long time to say this, 'Welcome to the new and improved Marysville Water Treatment Plant,'" Scott Sheppard, city water superintendent, said at the event.

Officials said that for several weeks in late 2022 and early 2023 "the majority" of water in the city came from the new plant. They said that eventually in January the old plant was shut down and switched the system entirely to the new plant.

"We are making better quali-

ty water than we have made in this community in years," Sheppard said.

He said the former water plant on North Main Street was built in the 1890s.

Public Service Director Jeremy Hoyt said the city purchased the about 31.4 acres on Raymond Road near the city's Upground Reservoir in 1999 in preparation for a new water plant. He said city officials began planning the new facility in 2009.

Council member Henk Berbee credited decades of councils, administrators and other city leaders for their vision in creating the plant.

"Today, all of that is culmination, that is coming together," Berbee said.

He added that he is "amazed at the type of people" that can have decades of forethought.

City Manager Terry Emery

said the plaque inside the building lists current city officials, but it would need room for 100 to 150 names if all those who made the plant possible were included.

Sheppard said the new site, which includes 10,500 square feet for administration and 21,700 square feet for processing, "dwarfs the old plant."

In addition to creating better water, officials said the larger plant will allow the city to process nearly twice as much water each day. Officials said the city was pushing the limits of the old plant.

"It is one of the fastest growing regions and that's why we need to do this project," Berbee said.

Emery said the city also ser-

vices the southeast portion of the county, including Jerome and Millcreek townships.

"This facility will help them a great deal," Emery said.

The city borrowed nearly \$40.5 million. The remainder of the project is being paid for with money already in the water capital fund which is supported by capacity fees.

"It is remarkable that we never had to raise rates for our customers," Emery said.

He added that city officials have no plans to raise the water rate anytime soon, "and we are hopeful there will come a day when we can adjust those rates the other way."

Bids for the plant were

opened in May 2020 and construction began in July of that year.

The low bidder, Peterson Construction Company, came in at \$40.57 million.

The engineer's estimate was \$50 million.

In addition to the water plant, the overall project ran water lines along Raymond Road from West Fifth Street to the reservoir, connected the waterline from the reservoir to Mill Valley, drilled a well near the maintenance and operation center and erected a water tower in in southeast Jerome Township.

The total project is estimated to cost \$57.7 million.

"When it came to building the building, we really hit the trifecta," Berbee said, noting the low interest rate, lower than expected bids and enough saving.



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Plain City plans to be selective with new development



By
Kayleen Petrovia
kayleen@marysvillejt.com

In the growing region of Central Ohio, Plain City's development manager is focused on embracing growth while being selective about what exactly comes to the village.

"We are focused on responsible, controlled growth in Plain City," said Development Manager Jason Stanford. "It has to make sense."

Stanford and Village Planner Derek Hutchinson shared an update with village council in September, detailing the current development in Plain City and how officials are preparing for more.

Hutchinson said nearly 5,000 residential units are at some point in the development process.

Of those, 1,835 have been approved and are currently under construction. They include Madi-

son Meadows and Madison Meadows II, Darby Station, Hamlet on the Darby and The Run at Hofbauer.

Another 1,955 units are in the approval process, whether developers are seeking annexation of land, submitting development plans or applying for land to be rezoned.

Likewise, more than 1,200 units are "in discussion" with the village.

He said those that are "in-process" or in discussion will likely begin construction within two to five years and be completed within five to 10.

In preparation for more residential and commercial growth, Stanford said the village is working toward a development agreement, or Cooperative Economic Development Agreement (CEDA), with Darby Township.

He noted that even if land is not annexed into the village for developments, the growth will still hap-

pen in surrounding townships, so they and Plain City need to work together.

Hutchinson also noted that changes are being made to the village's zoning code to help dictate growth.

He clarified that there will not be an entire rewrite of the zoning code, as he feels the majority of existing sections do not need to be replaced.

However, he said some sections will be updated, including the sign code, impact and development fees and tree preservation.

New sections will also be added to govern planned unit developments, regulations for temporary uses like food trucks and seasonal vendors, registration requirements for short-term rentals such as Airbnb and VRBO and building typologies.

Stanford said staff is also focusing on improving infrastructure to facilitate growth and make sure existing infrastructure is "up to

par."

"We're improving issues that have been lingering quite a while," he said.

He highlighted the Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion project, which will increase the village's capacity, as well as regionalizing Plain City's water and sewer services with Madison County through creating the Mid-Ohio Regional Water and Sewer District.

The village is also planning pedestrian improvements like crosswalks, signals and sidewalk to the U.S. 42 and West Avenue intersection, along with a culvert project along West Avenue and a U.S. 42 South traffic impact study.

Along with changes focused on pedestrians, Stanford said he is pleased to see the improvements to the Uptown coming together including the streetscape projects and the Bigelow Avenue public parking lot.

As developments come to the

village and other changes are made, Stanford said staff is working to better communicate with residents and businesses.

"We are doing more and more to get the word out to our residents," he said.

He noted the new Plain City website is up and running and monthly newsletter is emailed to local businesses.

Over the next two years, Stanford said staff plans to complete a number of plans and studies to ensure Plain City's growth is moving in the right direction.

They will include a transportation plan, connectivity and mobility study, communications and marketing action plan, land use update and comprehensive plan update.

Stanford touched on his department's mission, which centers on balancing preserving the village's character while welcoming new businesses and residents.

"We want the growth that makes sense for Plain City," he said.

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Memorial Health continues to grow to meet area's needs in 2024

Editor's note: The following information is supplied by Memorial Health.

The conclusion of 2023 will be marked with a tremendous amount of notable progress and growth for Memorial Health. Our service lines are growing, expert providers continue to join our ranks, and partnerships with other elite organizations are elevating the level of expertise available locally.

Memorial Expands Primary Care Services with New Providers/Practices

Memorial works every day to operate at the next level of care and efficiency for the people who look to our health system for primary care services. Our focus is on reaching further in the region with additions to our growing team of primary/specialty care physicians and mid-level providers.

Joining the Memorial Family Medicine/Gateway practice last year is Kelly Loman, DO. Dr. Loman provides family medicine needs for patients of all ages. Her dedication is rooted in taking care of her community, a labor of love that has been inspired by her father who is a community-focused physician in Indianapolis. Dr. Loman loves connecting with her patients on a one-to-one basis, forming a team so that together decisions can be made. Dr. Loman has a passion for well-child/pediatric care and women's health and has an interest in treating those patients with diabetes and hypertension. To become a new patient of Dr. Loman, call (937) 578-7950.

Jennifer Bissel, FNP-C, has joined Memorial Family Medicine/Mill Valley with over 11 years of experience as a nurse and six years of experience as a Family Nurse Practitioner. Previously, she served at The

Little Clinic in Marysville, with numerous years in a dual role as a provider and clinic manager. Enhancing the experience of her patients by delivering high-quality, patient-centered care is a passion of Jennifer's. She loves to focus on building lasting relationships across the lifespan while partnering with her patients to deliver preventive care, maintain wellness, and treat both acute illness and chronic disease. Jennifer is accepting new patients – the practice can be reached at (937) 578-4004.

Two new providers have joined Memorial Damascus Family Medicine, both of which are accepting new patients. Memorial Damascus Family Medicine can be reached at (937) 578-4040.

Megan Keighley, FNP-C, is a familiar face at Memorial Health, as she has served as a nurse for 12 years within the Critical Care Unit and Emergency Department. A key goal of Megan's is building relationships with her patients and understanding their life's goals. She works diligently to gain the trust of her patients and educate them on preventive measures for health and wellness. Her areas of expertise include diabetes education, blood pressure management, and weight control.

Sara Morrison, FNP-C, joins Memorial with over 20 years of experience as a nurse, with extensive expertise within the Cardiac Intensive Care Unit. She served ICU patients at Dublin Methodist Hospital most recently, with nearly 15 years prior at Riverside Methodist Hospital. Sara's passion is helping her patients see the benefits of preventive care, with regular check-ups and an adjusted plan of care based on age and current health. She has years of experience with high blood pressure and cardiac



Memorial Health now offers Galleri, a blood test that help in the early detection of 50 types of cancer.

(Photo submitted)

hypertension and is devoted to helping patients tackle these conditions.

Joining the Memorial Primary Care/Scottslawn practice is Amanda Myers, FNP-C. Amanda has been in practice as an FNP-C for 10 years, most recently at the Mercy Health Family Medicine and Pediatrics practice in Urbana. Shared decision-making is at the forefront of Amanda's care model. She believes in being a partner with her patients – working on acute and chronic conditions, with a focus on preventive care. Amanda has experience with diabetes and high blood pressure and will work with each patient to develop a personalized plan of care. Those interested in joining the practice may call (937) 578-5555.

Additionally, Memorial has

opened the Memorial Family Medicine/Japanese Clinic, a clinic focused on providing primary care services exclusively to the area Japanese population who are employed by Honda. The clinic, located at 500 London Avenue (Entrance G), has a Japanese-speaking provider and is open for patient appointments on Thursday mornings. Future plans are focused on continuing to grow the practice and add availability for other Japanese-speaking patients.

Advancements in Care

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Memorial has announced the availability of Galleri, a multi-cancer early detection (MCED) blood test that can

Please see Memorial on page 18

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Memorial

(Continued from page 15)

detect a signal shared by more than 50 types of cancer, to eligible patients of Memorial Medical Group primary or specialty care practices. Memorial is the first health system in the region to offer the test.

"Screening for cancer is important, because when cancer is found in early stages, treatment is more likely to be successful. However, many cancers are still detected too late, after a person develops symptoms, and the cancer has spread," comments Kevin P. Henzel, MD, Memorial Internal Medicine, and the physician who championed for availability of the Galleri test at Memorial.

"We are thrilled to offer our Memorial primary and specialty care patients the Galleri blood test, which can screen for multiple cancers at once, many of which lack recom-

mended screening tests today. The test can also alert you to hard-to-detect, aggressive, and often fatal types of cancer like pancreatic, ovarian, and esophageal cancers. Memorial believes multi-cancer early detection tests like Galleri are the new front for the war against cancer," adds Dr. Henzel.

More details regarding the Galleri multi-cancer early detection (MCED) blood test are available at <https://memorialohio.com/multi-cancer-early-detection-test>.

Additional service line extensions

Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy: This specialty area of physical therapy concentrates on the muscles of the pelvic floor and focuses on treatment of both women and men with pelvic floor dysfunction. Patients experiencing the following conditions can benefit

from Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy to address underlying muscle weakness, muscle spasm, and soft tissue restrictions:

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- fecal incontinence
- pelvic organ prolapse
- constipation
- pain with intercourse (dyspareunia)
- pelvic pain
- generalized strengthening and mobility following abdominal or pelvic surgeries
- pain during and/or after pregnancy
- urinary incontinence after prostate or colorectal cancers



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To schedule an evaluation, patients will need a referral placed for Pelvic Floor Physical Therapy by your doctor.

Neurologic conditions can be life changing, but the Neurological Rehabilitation program at Memorial is here to help patients along the journey of recovery. Our team has experience treating patients with a variety of neurologic conditions including:

- Balance disorders/falls
- Brain injuries/traumatic brain injuries
- Brain tumors
- Cerebellar ataxia
- Cerebral palsy
- Concussions
- Degenerative disorders
- Guillain-Barre syndrome
- Functional neurologic disorder (FND)
- Multiple sclerosis (MS)
- Parkinson's disease
- Spinal cord injuries
- Strokes

•Vertigo/vestibular conditions

More information can be obtained by calling our Physical Therapy team at (937) 578-7841.

On the Horizon

As a perpetually-growing healthcare system, Memorial undertakes a continuous cycle of Master Facility Planning exercises, focused on enhancements to our existing facilities and forecasting of new facilities. As we expand service offerings and partnerships, we must make sure that we have the right capacity, the right pathways of care, and the right talent in place to take care of these patients. Future planning such as this is an investment in our patients, in our health system, and in our community. It is a key part of our efforts to improve the health and wellness of those who entrust us with their care.



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Health department named model practice for 2023



**From
J-T Staff
Reports**

The Union County Health Department is one of just 23 local health departments across the nation to earn a 2023 Model Practice award from the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO).

The Union County Health Department's award-winning pilot project studied how locking pill bottles could increase safety and access for medications used to treat people with substance use disorders.

"The intent of the pilot project was to see if locking pill bottles could be used as a tool to decrease diversion and increase patient safety and confidence

when using medications for opioid use disorders," said Lindsay Fetherolf, health planner for the Union County Health Department and recipient of the award. "We began by talking with patients and providers about barriers and concerns. From these conversations we learned safety and confidence in carrying and using these medications can be a barrier. We then conducted a pilot project to see if locking pill bottles could help."

The pilot project was co-led by Sarah Channell with Lower Lights Christian Health Center who had done some initial studies of locking pill bottles and who participated in the study as a healthcare provider. Several other local treatment providers and locally owned pharmacies also participated in the project, agreeing to use the locking pill bottles for patients already being prescribed medications for people with opioid use disorders.

ple with opioid use disorders.

"We are very proud to have received this award. The award truly reflects the incredible partnerships and resources we have within our community who are working to make recovery possible," said Fetherolf.

Model Practices are programs demonstrating exemplary and replicable qualities in response to a critical local public health need. NACCHO, the voice of the country's nearly 3,000 local governmental health departments, selects Model Practice award winners as part of its annual recognition of the work being done by the nation's local health

departments. This year, 23 outstanding local health department programs were recognized as Model Practices. Winning projects were determined through a competitive, peer-reviewed process and are added to NACCHO's Model Practice searchable online database where other local health departments can review these best practices and adopt them for use in their community. The awards were presented during the 2023 NACCHO360 Annual Conference in Denver on July 12, 2023.

"Local health departments have continued to support their communities across a host of

programmatic areas and public health challenges, even throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. It is phenomenal to bear witness to the effort to respond to a pandemic and still be innovating, spreading, and sharing best practices amid crisis," said NACCHO's Chief Executive Officer Lori Tremmel Freeman. "We are proud to recognize the 2023 Model and Promising Practice Awards as a showcase of the best and brightest in local public health. Winners display excellence in a diverse range of topics including issues such as veterans' health, overdose prevention, and many more."



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Marysville planning for the future of electric vehicles



By
Mac Cordell
mccordell@marysvillejt.com

Marysville is on “the front end of getting prepared” for electric vehicles.

That was the message of Michael Baker International, a consulting group hired to help the city create an electric vehicle, or EV, readiness plan.

“I would say you are ahead as far as setting up a plan,” Jeff Kupko with Michael Baker told city council at an August meeting.

Kupko was at the meeting to present a preliminary version of the readiness plan the company was working on.

Officials said they wanted to “create a master plan identifying where and how Marysville should deploy EV infrastructure” and to “identify actions that will lead to EV Charging Readiness on both public and private property.”

Officials broke the plan into two parts — creating infrastructure for EV drivers to use and working with the city’s fleet to include EVs.

Michael Baker looked at the city’s current fleet of vehicles and facilities as well as how they are used.

Jim Katsafanas, with Michael Baker, recommended taking a phased approach to including EVs in the city fleet. He recommended purchasing 15 vehicles that would be used at four city facilities. The city would need to install charging capacity at those four facilities.

The EVs would be assigned to staff members that are in administration or management and that have a driving schedule that would require the vehicles be charged only once or twice a week.

He said that other vehicles

need replaced, EVs be considered, based on the use.

Kupko said EVs are more expensive as an initial purchase, but have “a lower cost over the lifespan.”

The company also looked at how to help the public as it transitions to EVs.

“We are not encouraging the city to install public infrastructure, but to encourage businesses to do it through zoning and code revisions,” Katsafanas said.

Officials said there is also an opportunity for the city to install the infrastructure then charge users or to contract with an outside vendor to provide charging services.

Marysville Mobility and Construction Manager Marc Dilsaver said the Michael Baker company held a series of stakeholder meetings and site visits. The company also created and distributed a 14-question survey designed to gauge the public’s knowledge and perspective on electric vehicles and the availability of charging facilities in the city.

Officials said existing EV infrastructure is currently clustered in the eastern and central parts of Marysville. Katsafanas said that because Marysville is in the early stages of EV readiness, “many gaps exist across the city.”

He said the city has 62.5 electric vehicles for every public charging station. By comparison, the state of Ohio has one charging station for every 7.6 electric vehicles. The recommended ratio is one charging port for every six to 10 EVs.

“There is a little bit of a gap there,” Katsafanas said.

The survey gave the company a sense of the barriers to using EVs, what it would take to overcome those barriers, how residents would like use charging infrastructure and



In 2023, Honda announced it would move the Accord out of the Marysville Auto Plant and transition the local factory to produce electric vehicles. Around the same time, local officials learned that Marysville is ahead of the curve in preparing for electric vehicles coming into the community. Council discussed community preferences and what to do with charging stations like this one on North Plum Street.

(Journal-Tribune photo by Mac Cordell)

where they think it should be located.

Jim Katsafanas, with Michael Baker, said the survey had 449 individual respondents. He said the response rate was “very high.”

“229, roughly half, said they would never buy an EV,” Katsafanas said.

He explained that about half of those did not take the complete survey.

He said there were others who did not complete the survey in earnest. He said those responses were disregarded.

Not all council members agreed with the survey with at

least one saying it was biased toward those who support electric vehicles.

Katsafanas said the purpose of the survey was to gather information. He said those who say they will never buy an EV then chose to not answer additional questions or not answer in good faith do not help city officials know what EV users want.

Dilsaver said some of the answers are, “not applicable because they are not being forthright and truthful in their actual answers.”

He said the survey documents that the respondent will not

consider an EV, but some of the ridiculous responses are discarded “because they can skew the rest of the results with just haphazard answers, for lack of a better term.”

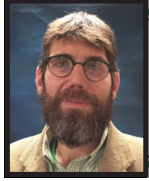
Dilsaver reminded council that the plan is “the preliminary plan, the first take” adding that officials “continue to fine tune that.”

He added that “this is a guiding document, kind of like the comprehensive plan.”

City Manager Terry Emery said the plan is important.

“I am not a big EV guy, but I do think it is appropriate for us to be prepared,” Emery said.

Silo project could expand city's Uptown district



By
Mac Cordell
mcordell@marysvillejt.com

Marysville City Council has approved an agreement to move forward with developing more than 16 acres in the city's north end.

Council in January of this year approved a development agreement with Connect Real Estate LLC allowing the company to move forward with plans for the area around the city's former water treatment plant, the Heritage silo site and several other commercial properties.

Connect has said it plans to build a \$100-million development, titled "The Silos at Marysville" on the 16.6 acres. The development is set to

include 250-300 apartments, corporate housing entertainment sites, a co-working area, a fitness center, public parking, a community arts area, a restaurant and bar and what the developer terms as "high end hospitality." Officials said that while the silos will not have a painted mural, there will be art projected onto them.

Officials have said they would like to see the project completed by 2030, if not earlier.

Bob Lamb, senior vice president of development at Connect Realty, called the development agreement "the first step in the process."

A development agreement is a legally binding contract between a local government and a property owner or developer. The agreements grant

both parties responsibilities and protections. They can outline financial incentives, specify land use and include any special provisions. Development agreements are especially useful for long-term, large-scale projects, ensuring that rules don't change during the project process.

Lamb said that while the agreement will offer the developer some assurance the city will work with them, any project specifics will still need approval by the planning commission, board of zoning appeals, design review board or council.

He said the city land that will be donated to the developer "is not an asset." He said the land is currently in a flood plain and needs to be cleaned

because of prior uses.

Lamb said if the project falls through in the future, the property will revert back to the city, "and only time will be spent."

He said once the redevelopment is complete it will look similar to several other projects the company has worked on, including The Trolley District which has been redeveloped into the East Market in Columbus' Old Town East or the Municipal Light Plant on Nationwide Boulevard in Columbus.

"We really want to take that water front (on Mill Creek) and make it a destination," Lamb said.

In preparation for agreement to come forward, city council members in 2023 toured the Trolley District to learn about Connect and possibilities for the site.

Connect has said it will use a variety of federal and state grant and tax assistance programs to make the project financially feasible. City Manager Terry Emery said Connect's history working with historic buildings and using the federal and state programs make it one of the few companies that would take a project like this,

"There is not a lot of companies that are interested in taking on these sites because of some of the things that come with them," Emery said.

The developer is also asking for a 30-year, 100% tax increment finance (TIF) agreement that would divert tax money voted on for schools, libraries and other public uses to repay the developer for upfront

**Please see Silo
on page 23**



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Silo

(Continued from page 22)

improvements it will make to the area. Lamb said Connect is already working with the schools to agree on a Payment In Lieu Of Taxes (PILOT).

Some council members expressed concern about the agreement with the schools, expected to be completed later this year.

Lamb said Connect has been working on the project for more than a year “in good faith.” He said the company has a timeline it wants to make.

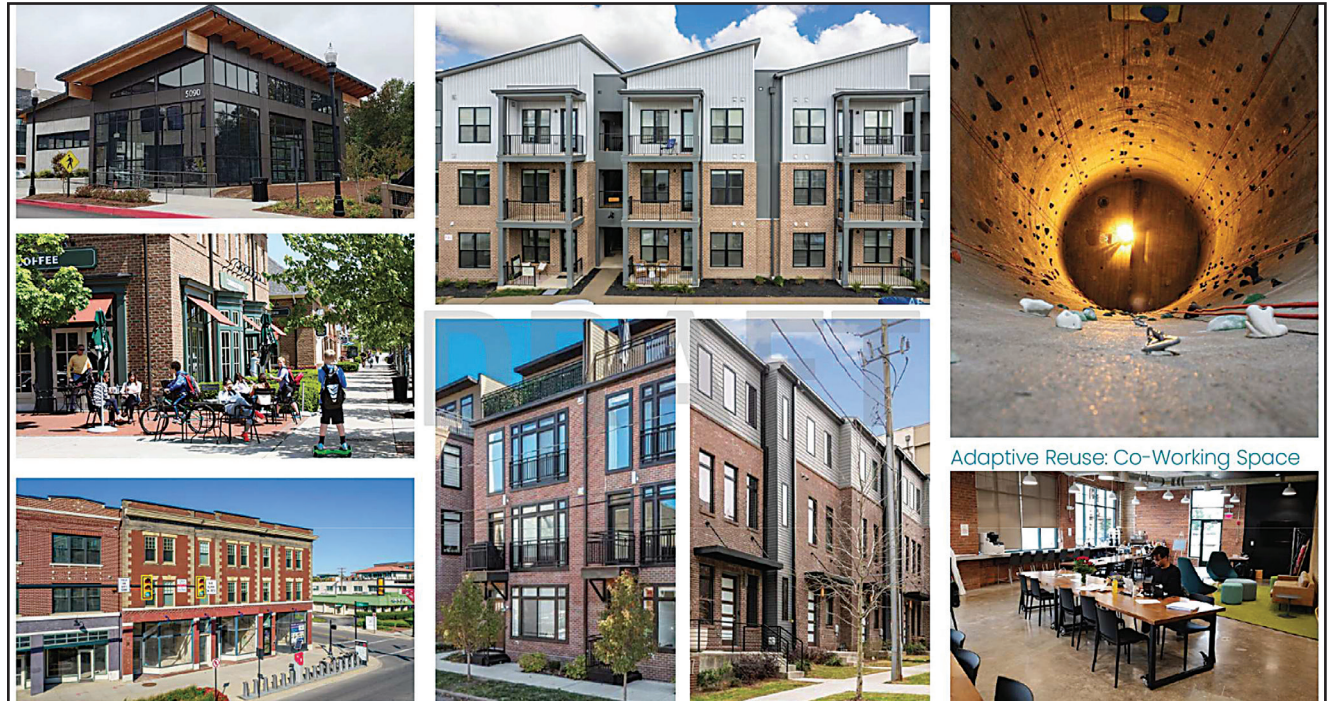
He said the project will include a variety of park-like features along the waterfront areas as well as a pedestrian bridge across Mill Creek and the extension or connection of trails.

Council member Donald Boerger said the project needs to be done and is “a way better use than a swimming pool.”

Berbee said he believes everyone agrees the project is needed and would be a welcome addition to the Uptown.

“I think we all want it, but what we have to ask ourselves is can we afford it,” Berbee said.

Lamb said that without the Connect redevelopment, the properties would likely not reach their full potential and some could sit vacant for some time.



Adaptive Reuse: Co-Working Space

Connect Real Estate LLC is moving forward with the redevelopment of a variety of parcels in the north end of Marysville’s Uptown. The development, known as The Silos at Marysville” is set to include 250-300 “affordable” apartments on the west side of Main Street as well as corporate and co-working areas, public parking, a community arts area, recreational areas and a variety of restaurants and bars.

(Graphic submitted)



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MARYSVILLE DISTRICT'S FINANCIAL HEALTH: YOUR TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

By Todd Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Marysville Schools

In January, Marysville Schools will release its 2023 Financial Report. The purpose of this report is to provide a transparent and comprehensive overview of the district's financial status, highlighting achievements, challenges, and future plans to ensure fiscal responsibility and support educational excellence.

Here are some highlights:

A Good Value

Our district stands out for having the second-lowest tax rate in Central Ohio. That means our schools provide high-quality educational experiences at a lower cost than schools in Union and Franklin Counties. In addition, we spend less per pupil than the state average and have the 19th lowest local tax effort in Ohio, which means residents are paying a smaller share of school taxes as compared to taxpayers around the state.

Award-Winning Financial Reporting

Our commitment to transparency is evident in our financial reporting, which has been recognized with awards by the Auditor of State. This transparency ensures stakeholders are well-informed about our financial decisions and their impact.

Stable Permanent Improvement and Bond Funds

Our Permanent Improvement and Bond Funds remain stable, reflecting our strategic approach to long-term fiscal planning. These funds are crucial for maintaining and upgrading our facilities.

Operating Fund: A Cautious Approach

The Operating Fund of Marysville Schools is an area of concern due to not meeting two key financial benchmarks: maintaining at least a month's worth of expenses in the cash balance, which is only achievable until Fiscal Year 2026, and keeping expenses within 1% of revenues. Rising inflation, increasing student enrollment, and limited growth in future state funding contribute to a growing operating deficit, despite \$2 million in recent budget reductions. To stabilize, the district must either increase revenue or further reduce expenditures.

Navigating Future Financial Challenges

The Marysville Schools Board of Education announced its intent to propose an operating levy for the November 2024 ballot. Funds from a levy will sustain our current operations, which will retain quality teachers and avoid increasing student-to-staff ratios.

The Marysville Schools Financial Report for 2023 demonstrates our commitment to fiscal responsibility, educational quality, and transparency. We are dedicated to maintaining our district's financial health while ensuring the best possible educational outcomes for our students. Together, we are building a brighter future for our students.

The full report will be available early next year. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact me at tjohnson@mevsd.us or Superintendent Diane Allen at diane.allen@mevsd.us.



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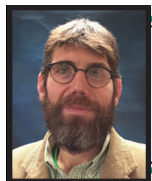
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Common ground

Marysville
Schools,
city reach
TIF concession



By
Mac Cordell
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In December, Marysville City Council gave final approval to an agreement to revise the city's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreement with the school district.

Council unanimously agreed to create a two-year window — from the start of this year to the end of 2025 — for the school district to pass a property tax increase and receive 100% of the increase on residential properties, even those already in a tax increment finance (TIF) district.

A TIF is an economic development tool that diverts a property's tax payments from things like schools, libraries, mental health and other entities that rely on property tax revenue, to the city for projects related to that property. While the property owner pays its full tax bill, the money goes to the city rather than those other entities.

Under the new agreement, if the school district passes a new property tax, the city will continue to get the same millage it already receives through the TIF agreement, but the school district would receive the entire amount of the newly passed increase.

City and school officials said

the agreement is the result of a series of meetings between the full council and school board as well as work sessions between a smaller subgroup.

City Manager Terry Emery has said the two-year window works best because leaving the agreement open ended could "hand-cuff" future city councils.

Even so, Emery and Marysville Superintendent Diane Allen agreed the city could choose to extend the new agreement or reinstate it in the future, depending on the city's financial condition.

School district officials have expressed hesitancy to make a final decision on any new levy options until the agreement was finalized.

Allen explained that as the school board looks at future money requests — property tax, income tax or a mixture — the city agreement will "influence some of that thinking."

City officials have explained that when the residential TIFs were implemented between 2006 and 2008, the city needed to build a wastewater treatment plant.

The city placed residential TIFs on all or part of Adena Point, Walker Meadows, Keystone Crossing, Chestnut Crossing, Links Village, Woods at Mill Valley, Scott Farms and The Legends.

As the school passes property tax increases, the additional money in those areas continues to be funneled to the city.

Most of the TIF agreements expire in or near 2037, depending on the exact agreement.



School supporters have argued that with increased property values, the TIFs generate far more money than the city needs to service their portion of the intended debt.

In 2022, between commercial and residential TIFs, the city collected about \$8 million approved for the schools. The city returned about \$3.1 million of that revenue to the school district.

School district Treasurer Todd Johnson has said residential TIFs have cost the district approximately \$13 million over the last five years, while bringing as many as 1,000 additional students to the district.

Sue Devine, who was on school board at the time and sat on the city-school working subgroup, was in attendance at the meeting.

She said council and the school board, "have committed to an improved partnership."

She said there has been "a lot of great team work."

Emery agreed, noting there has been "very productive."

In addition to observing the TIF agreement legislation, Devine said she wanted to express the school board's appreciation for the cooperation between the schools and city.

Devine said decisions on projects, "are never taken lightly and require careful consideration by all entities involved, which is the reason that cooperation between the city and schools is vital and requires open and honest dialog."

Devine said the board is grateful to be part of the decision making process.

Triad hopes to expand career, technical programs



By
Kayleen Petrovia
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Triad officials are hopeful a grant opportunity will lead to more of its students graduating with career certificates and prepared to enter the workforce.

The district applied for \$2.5 million in funding through the Ohio Career Technical Education Equipment Grant, Superintendent Vickie Maruniak explained during the December Board of Education meeting.

If awarded, Triad would construct an expansion on the high school building adjacent to the loading dock that adds an allied healthcare lab, IT lab and renovates the existing agriculture lab and adds a lecture space.

"We're looking for jobs that kids can graduate and be already in the market," Maruniak said.

Maruniak said in an interview that the goal of the grant is to expand the number of career and technical programs at districts throughout the state.

While Triad has a number of students that participate in these programs, Maruniak said they all currently go to Ohio Hi-Point to do so. If Triad is awarded the grant, students will be able to take these classes at the district's high school.

Maruniak emphasized that "our goal is not to take (students) away from Hi-Point."

She said some of the more popular pathways - like nursing - meet their capacities at Hi-Point quickly, so Triad offering courses would allow more students to participate.

She said nearby districts have also expressed an interest in bussing their students to Triad to participate in those courses.

Maruniak noted that, when Triad eighth graders move on to high school, they are required to declare two career pathways.

Along with their core classes like English and math, students take classes that correspond with their pathway. Those courses begin their freshman year and continue until they graduate.

Students who pursue nursing or IT in Triad's new, in-house pathways would have similar schedules, Maruniak said.

She said the curriculum is largely laid out by the state and there are a variety of courses that can be offered for each pathway. Students are required to complete a certain number of classes in order to earn certifications.

Students in either of the new pathways would be able to graduate with a number of career certifications.

In nursing, they range from first aid to patient care technician to STNA (state tested nurse aid), which qualifies a student to work in a nursing home.

Those in IT could earn CompTIA certifications, which are the industry standard for information technology careers.

In the allied healthcare lab, there would be four medical stations, each with hospital beds and a sink, separated by curtains that can be pulled forward.

That lab would connect to a lecture space with folding

Please see Triad
on page 28

Triad

(Continued from page 27)
chairs and tables so it can be rearranged as needed. Maruniak said the room could also be used as a community space.

Across the hallway would be a renovated ag lab, next to a new IT lab.

Maruniak said the space would likely have screens on the walls and be equipped with laptops so it enables “movement” depending on what layout best suits the course. She said she can also envision the space being used for gaming clubs or eSports after school.

Maruniak said she feels Triad’s application for the grant is strong.

She said awards are based partly on increasing the number of career “concentrators,” and Triad technically has none since they go to Hi-Point.

The superintendent said she feels the district’s plans to add two new programs “also gives us a leg up.”

“I think our chances are good,” Maruniak said.

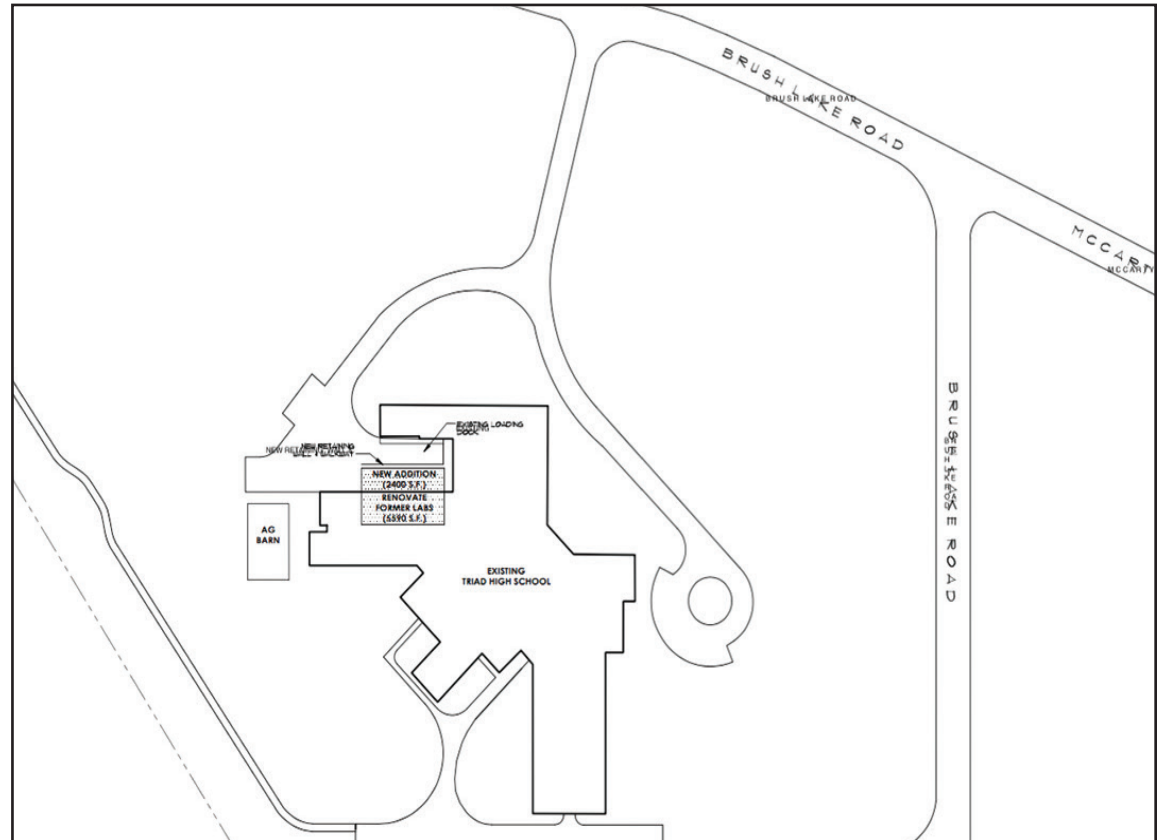
The grant would cover the cost of everything but personnel, she said. The district plans to hire two new teachers for the new programs.

“I don’t think there’s any issue (financially) in adding those two,” Treasurer Nathan Hilborn said.

Instead, Maruniak said the toughest part will be finding and hiring teachers who are qualified to instruct the courses for those pathways.

The district expects to be notified late this month if it is awarded the grant.

If so, it must begin offering the proposed classes by August.



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Honda to make Ohio its hub of EV operations

Editor's note: The following information is supplied by Honda of America

Marysville is where it all started. In November 1982, our very first Honda Accord rolled off the line here and we haven't looked back since.

Over the next 40 years, the plant and its iconic flagship vehicle, the Accord, would lay the foundation for an unprecedented success story.

Associates at the Marysville Auto Plant (MAP) have produced nearly 15 million autos over the four decades since its opening.

The plant has continuously produced the Accord since the beginning and associates added another generation to MAP's history earlier this year with production of the 11th-generation Accord and the Accord Hybrid. The facility and its 4,700 associates also build the Acura TLX, and last year, MAP also returned the iconic Acura Integra to its production lineup.

But while Honda's history of accomplishment is firmly rooted in Marysville, the company's operations in Union, Logan and Shelby counties will serve as a launch point for an exciting and cleaner future.

Honda will expand hybrid and electric vehicle (EV) production significantly in the coming years as part of its transition to 100% EV sales by 2040 and the company's global commitment to achieving carbon neutrality in all of its operations by 2050.

MAP, along with the Anna Engine Plant (AEP) and the East Liberty Auto Plant (ELP), will be the first facilities involved in manufacturing battery electric vehicles in North America, creating a new EV Hub in Ohio.

To create the EV Hub in Ohio, Honda announced that it would invest \$700 million to retool several of its existing auto and power-train plants, to prepare for the production of battery electric vehicles

in 2025. The Marysville Auto Plant (MAP), where Honda began auto production in America in 1982, will be Honda's first auto plant in the U.S. to transition to making EVs.

As part of the EV Hub, MAP, AEP and ELP will play a key role in developing the company's knowledge and expertise in EV production that will be shared across Honda's entire North American auto production network in

the coming years, even as many Honda plants continue production of gasoline-powered vehicles.

As with everything that has ever happened – and will ever happen – at Honda, the 15,000 associates that work in the company's Ohio operations and the 4,700 at MAP will be the impetus for Honda's success in the journey to electrification.

"Honda's more than 40 years of operations in Marysville is only

possible through the daily work of our associates, our business partners and suppliers, as well as our community partners," said MAP Plant Lead Jun Jayaraman. "I would like to thank all of the gov-

ernment and community representatives for their continued support of Marysville operations and Honda's extensive operations in Ohio."

Meanwhile, the Performance Manufacturing Center (PMC) that came to life 10 years ago as the exclusive home to the NSX supercar is now undertaking its own journey to cleaner-burning transportation. The PMC will begin production of the CR-V FCEV early in 2024, and the vehicle will utilize Honda's next-generation fuel-cell technology co-developed with General Motors.

"Starting with the Acura NSX supercar, through the PMC Edition models, the Civic Si race car that

we assembled for Honda Performance Development and now the FCEV, PMC is the perfect facility to showcase small-volume production models," said PMC Division Manager Gail May. "Being entrusted to build the FCEV is an honor, and we look forward to incorporating the same craftsmanship, excitement and exclusivity that all of the models produced here are known for."

The transition to electrification will not take place overnight and Honda's high quality internal combustion engines will continue to have a place in the current lineup. So, as Honda expands hybrid and electric vehicles sales in the coming years in support of the company's environmental goals, Honda's plants, and associates, will continue to evolve as well.

Community support

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Please see Honda on page 30



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Toshihiro Mibe, director, president and representative executive officer, Honda Motor Co., poses next to the newly unveiled concept car, the Honda Zero Series "Space-Hub" electric vehicle during a Honda news conference during the CES tech show Jan. 9 in Las Vegas.

(AP Photo)

Honda

(Continued from page 29) environment, all while managing production and delivering high-quality products to a varying global customer base. This would not have been possible without the many talented associates who rose to the challenges and came together as one team to support the company and its surrounding communities.

Honda associates volun-

teered their time and resources to help Union County and Central Ohioans in needed through 2023, including conducting numerous food and clothing drives benefiting organizations such as the Mid-Ohio Foodbank, Care Train of Union County, Our Daily Bread and The Nature Conservancy. MAP and PMC associates volunteered their time or resources in more than 50 events through-

out the year.

Honda continues to be committed to not only building quality vehicles and the engines that drive them, but also contributing to quality communities. That's why Honda is proud of its long-standing commitment to Central Ohio and enjoys working with its neighbors in the community to ensure a bright future for the area.

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