

## Chapter 9-Future Land Use

### Introduction

This chapter outlines the planning principles guiding this comprehensive plan and its future land use plan. Table 9.1 shows the future land use plan's land use distributions. The planning principles provide a general guide for future land use and development in Union, while the planning strategies outline more specific policy elements. This chapter, in conjunction with the thoroughfare design, aesthetics and regulatory elements will help establish the pattern and character of future development that reflects Union's vision.

### Citywide Land Use Planning Principles and Growth Framework

The following overall planning principles will guide the location and character of land use and development within the entire City.

- Enhance existing residential neighborhoods by introducing design guidelines, adding land uses for needed services and businesses to the downtown and at strategic locations east of the Stillwater River, and by making necessary transportation connections for both pedestrians and automobiles.
- Focus commercial development within the existing downtown and proposed mixed-use areas.
- Establish design and development guidelines that deliver quality, balanced and realistic development that is comfortable for both the car and the pedestrian.
- Ensure transportation mobility, accessibility and diversity throughout the City by making necessary roadway connections and linking neighborhoods to parks and commercial areas with greenways.
- Design streets appropriate to the street's location and function, with the understanding of the multiple functions of streets and roads.
- Focus industrial growth in areas with adequate infrastructure (roads and utilities) and areas that are not appropriate for residential development such as those close to the airport.
- Preserve existing open space/ recreational opportunities and seek new recreational opportunities where deficiencies exist by requiring new developments to incorporate public spaces into their designs and by creating a greenway system throughout the City of Union.

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**Table 9.1**  
**Future Land Use Distribution**

<b>City of Union Future Land Use</b>				
<b>Land Use</b>	<b>Area (SF)</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
Agricultural	37,501,823.9	860.9	23.9%	-43.28%
Commercial	1,347,323.2	30.9	0.9%	-10.04%
Low Density Residential	18,143,215.0	416.5	11.6%	NA
Medium Density Residential	47,240,934.1	1,084.5	30.2%	NA
High Density Residential	3,797,466.4	87.2	2.4%	NA
Public/Institutional/Civic	901,200.5	20.7	0.6%	-94.93%
Business/Light Industrial	14,607,971.1	335.4	9.3%	554.46%
Mixed-Use	6,686,424.6	153.5	4.3%	100.00%
Private Recreation	1,106,158.4	25.4	0.7%	0.00%
Public Recreation	22,698,897.3	521.1	14.5%	103.96%
Urban Corridor	2,443,314.1	56.1	1.6%	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>156,474,728.6</b>	<b>3,592.2</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

## Specific Land Use Principles and Strategies

The overriding long-term planning principle in Union is to enhance the current quality of life and to create a balanced network of neighborhoods, retail developments, and new business/light industrial developments. Ideally, redeveloped neighborhoods and newly developed neighborhoods will contain a mixture of housing and parks in close proximity to pedestrian friendly mixed-use developments, civic services, employment and entertainment areas.

The pattern of development should include linkages between various land uses, including neighborhood and community scale shopping areas, residential neighborhoods, high quality business park/light industrial developments in appropriate locations near the airport, services and public open space. Development or redevelopment should be designed at a more pedestrian scale by providing a balance between the needs of people and cars, a variety of opportunities for housing or businesses to thrive, in close proximity to one another, with multiple options to reach one's destination.

The land use plan responds to issues and opportunities to create a vision for a prosperous future for the City of Union. The first step to accomplishing that vision is the development of planning principles and strategies that address the issues of commercial and neighborhood development, employment areas, pedestrian and vehicular circulation, parks and open space. Planning principles serve as clear guides for finding solutions as issues arise, while planning strategies begin to lay out the actual implementation steps and direction that the city should follow. The recommendations are based on the overriding planning principles as well as the principles and strategies outlined within the discussion of each specific land use.

## Residential Development

### Planning Principles

Offering a diversity of housing options, will provide options for people as their housing needs evolve, and is very important for developing a sustainable future for the City of Union. It is possible to have additional residential development options that are still of high quality and are an amenity to the city. The residential planning principles are outlined below.

- Encourage a range of housing options to provide opportunities for people in all stages of life.
- Provide a more seamless city by providing pedestrian and vehicular connections between residential, mixed-use areas, and other destinations, such as schools and parks.
- Establish design parameters. This will promote compatibility between various housing types that may be developed in Union. As residential developments are constructed, the design parameters will establish scale and proportions of the different housing types that will range from higher density apartments to lower density single family homes. Higher density residential development should be focused in mixed-use areas as a transition between more intense and less intense areas such as lower density single family developments. Higher densities are an important component of mixed-use development because residents and businesses benefit from being close to each other within a walkable environment. Examples of higher density housing include townhouses, residential units above retail and apartment buildings that follow more “urban” design principles.

### Development Strategies

Development strategies are intended to implement the principles that have been established in this plan. Providing a variety of housing options with quality designs that balance all aspects of developments, buildings, roads, landscaping, and connections, will ensure the vision of this plan. The development strategies are outlined below.

- Housing options should range from higher density within mixed-use areas to lower density single family units.
- Higher density residential buildings may range from 10 to 15 units per acre (current R-4 and R-5 zoning designations). Higher density residential units shall be located within the centers of mixed-use developments, and also as buffers between commercial and lower and medium density residential uses.
- Medium density residential areas may range from 4 to 10 units per acre (current R-3 or R-4-duplex zoning designations). Medium density residential uses shall be located between higher and lower density residential uses.
- Lower density residential areas may range from 0 to 4 units an acre (current A-R, R-1 and R-2 zoning designations). Lower density residential uses shall be located on the edge of mixed-use developments and in existing agricultural areas throughout the city.
- Design residential streets to be balanced between vehicles and pedestrians and to be a part of an interconnected street network. Utilize street section designs that include narrower street pavement widths, allow on-street parking on both sides, and that utilize a planting strip between the curb and sidewalk. Refer to chapter ten for specific street design recommendations.

- Implement landscaping standards to create pedestrian friendly streets and to soften the transition between incompatible land uses.

## Commercial / Mixed-Use Development

### Planning Principles

The commercial developments within the City of Union are limited. In order to diversify Union's tax base, it is important to diversify the land use distribution. Commercial developments will become an important component to Union's success in the future. In order to ensure that newly developed commercial areas are sustainable and viable, they must be designed for future needs of the residents of the community. The planning principles for commercial development are outlined below.

- Commercial and mixed-use development should be focused within strategic locations in Union that best accommodate these types of uses. These uses need to be located in areas that have updated infrastructure with capacities that can support these uses, roads that can support higher traffic volumes, trade area demands and road intersections that facilitate traffic flow to adjacent communities.
- Create a hierarchy of mixed-use areas at a neighborhood or community scale to ensure long term viability for the development and the neighborhood. The scale of development is a function of the location, trade area, infrastructure and neighborhood attributes. Many commercial developments that are being constructed in communities such as Union are not built to a scale that is friendly to pedestrians. They are built for the automobile, and typically have large parking areas with the entrances to the stores located away from the streets. Reducing the size of parking lots by breaking them up with buildings and by placing the entrances of the shops on the streets, these developments will be at a human scale that is much more inviting for pedestrians. Mixed-use developments built at a human scale will also attract residents who want to live in a more urban setting. Incorporating residential units into these developments will make them more viable.
- Mixed-use areas should provide a variety of attractive housing types to own and rent for residents of different economic status.
- Design streets that are framed by buildings that form well-defined public spaces, are faced by doors and windows and balance the needs of pedestrians, shoppers and vehicles. Streets should contain on-street parking, street trees and wide sidewalks in retail areas.
- Prohibit the current retail trend of strip mall development patterns in Union. The strip mall pattern creates visually unattractive development, potential traffic problems and safety concerns for vehicles and pedestrians.

### Development Strategies

Mixed-use districts can enhance the City of Union by providing walkable, interconnected neighborhoods. In addition, mixed-use design provides the opportunity to develop a variety of housing options and creates entrepreneurial opportunities due to the mix of business and retail locations that offer a variety of rent levels. Mixed-use development also creates a sense of place and identity for the city. Mixed-use developments also help the transitions from differing land uses, such as residential neighborhoods to business park/light industrial developments, creating a more seamless city. The following development strategies are outlined below.



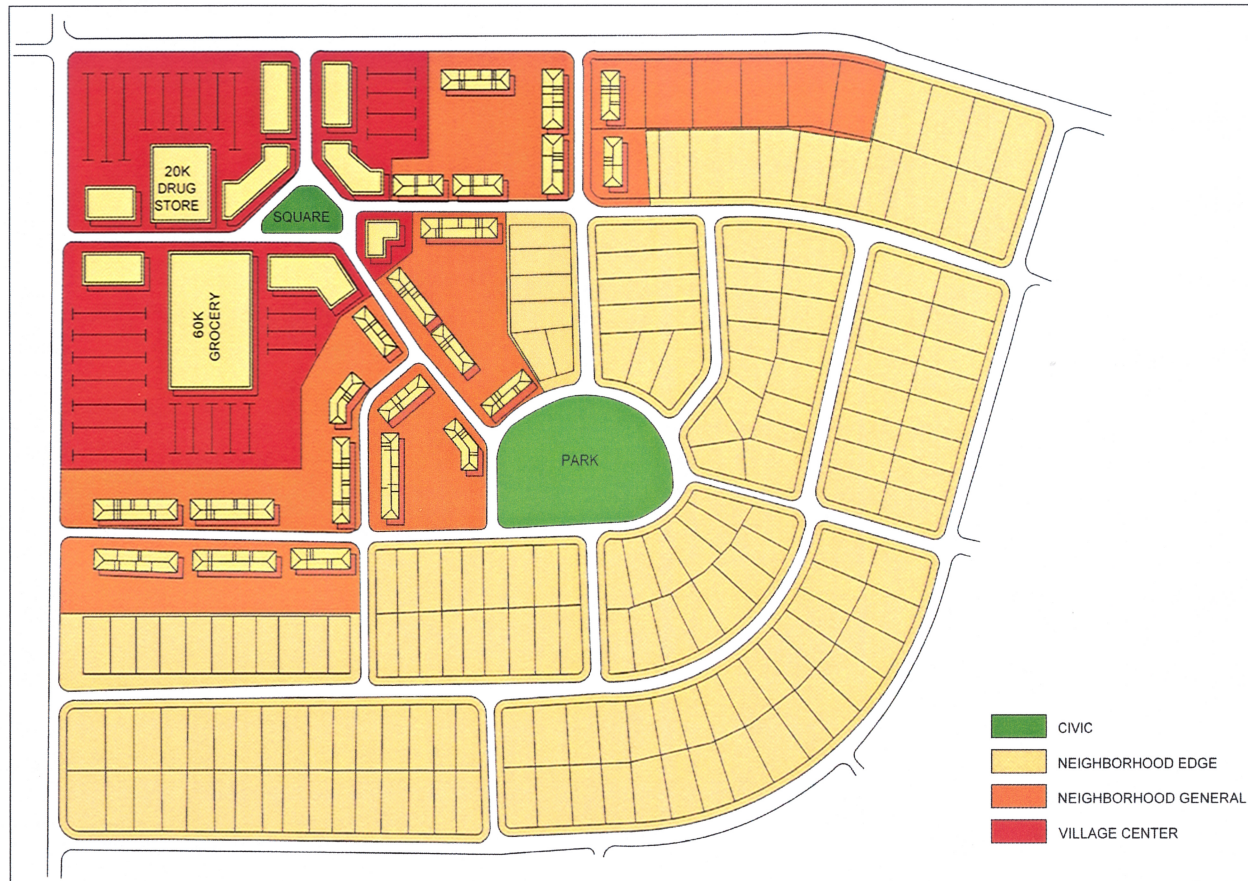
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- Mixed-use districts can enhance the City of Union by providing walkable, interconnected neighborhoods. In addition, mixed-use design provides the opportunity to develop a variety of housing options and create entrepreneurial opportunities due to the variety of rent levels within a district. Mixed-use also helps create a sense of place and gives an identity to the community.
- The walkability of the mixed-use pattern becomes practical due to its design and intensity. The proximity of housing to offices and shops make walking viable. Providing a safe street and sidewalk for people to walk on can make the street a pedestrian seductive environment and a place that people will use. Through site design and mixed-use buildings, it becomes viable to walk two or three blocks on a sidewalk as part of an interconnected street network.
- Efficiency of development is achieved as the higher intensity of mixed-use districts makes better use out of existing land and grows "up" rather than sprawling "out." Mixed-use also enhances the viability of "shared parking" and as a result, less impervious surface is needed for parking. Shared parking allows offices and retail uses to use the same parking lots, as their peak parking demand times are at different times of the day.
- Mixed-use commercial districts are flexible and can evolve to adapt to the market over time. The network of streets and blocks provides the framework for development and the changing users. The vibrancy will be retained because the framework for growth is in place.
- Locate commercial/mixed-use development in appropriate locations relative to its size and trade area as well as available infrastructure.
- Neighborhood scale commercial/mixed-use districts are intended to serve the immediate neighborhood and typically have a trade area of up to a one-mile radius. These districts should be limited to approximately 40,000 square feet of non-residential space and are located on primary or secondary thoroughfares. They may be anchored by a drug store or small grocery store.
- Community scale commercial/mixed-use districts typically serve the larger community and may have a trade area of up to a three-mile radius. These districts should be limited to approximately 150,000 square feet of non-residential space and be anchored by a large grocery store or a bookstore. They are most successful when located on a primary or secondary thoroughfare.
- Open space is "urban" in its design and is organized typically as a plaza or square. Typically public spaces are found on major thoroughfares and compliment the commercial and civic activities occurring around them.
- Streets should be designed to balance the needs of pedestrians, shoppers and vehicles. Incorporating traffic calming measures into the designs will help accomplish this balance.
- Parking should be located behind buildings to minimize the negative visual impact from the street of large seas of parking. This contributes to a more pedestrian-oriented streetscape design. Businesses should have an entrance on the pedestrian street frontage and an entrance on the rear, which faces the parking lot.
- Provide for a transition within mixed-use districts from higher intensity areas to lower intensity areas by using live over work or townhouse units.

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- Establish a mixed-use development code that outlines building typology, building design, building placement, street design and other features.



Example: 95 acre Mixed-Use Community Center design with approximately 150,000 sf of retail, 70,000 sf of second story office, 70 apartments, and a 15,000 square foot "village square" in the Village Center area; 150 townhouses and 20 apartments in the Neighborhood General area, 170 single family homes and a 2.3 acre neighborhood park with a community building in the Neighborhood Edge area.

## Public, Civic, and Institutional Development

Public buildings are an important component of the identity of a community. The location and design of public and institutional buildings are a reflection of the heritage and values of the people. Public buildings should set the standard in a community and buildings with civic stature, quality materials and prominent settings project a sense of permanence and human scale that express the dignity and importance of public institutions. George Washington stated that "public buildings in size, form and elegance must look beyond the present day."

Civic buildings should be constructed of high quality materials that will last for several generations. Civic buildings should be placed to serve as anchors in the neighborhood. Civic buildings are excellent landmarks within the community. Whether it is a fire station, school, utility building or courthouse, these buildings should be well designed and a credit to the community.

## **Planning Principles**

Place civic and public buildings in prominent locations to serve as anchors to the community as well as landmarks giving Union a unique identity contributing to residents' sense of place. Utilize quality design and materials that reflect the heritage and values of Union.

## **Development Strategies**

Preserve existing public, civic and institutional land uses and buildings throughout the city, as well as promoting new public, civic and institutional buildings in appropriate locations in newly developing areas of the city. It is also important to provide for appropriate expansion of existing schools, government buildings and institutional uses where appropriate.

## **Professional Office, Business, Research and Industrial Development**

Historically, industrial and commercial trade occurred near rail lines and waterways because those were the main transportation options available to transport goods to and from the market. However, in recent years, trucking and aircraft have become the dominant method to move goods nationally and internationally. Large industrial uses tend to gravitate to strategic locations served by transportation infrastructure such as roads, interstates, highways and airports. They also seek locations with adequate utilities, and a skilled worker base. Smaller scale industrial users such as research and development facilities may be more flexible in their location and may want to be closer to other amenities.

Office, business and industrial uses are an emerging land use in Union and should be located to capitalize on the road and utility network and or planned improvements to those networks. In addition, appropriate transitions in land use or buildings compatible in design to adjacent land uses should be considered as part of the design.

## **Planning Principles**

Provide a variety of economic development opportunities in Union. Business and industrial areas should provide flexibility in parcel size in order to accommodate different needs within the market. Provide for alternative transportation modes integrated into business and industrial areas. Transit, bicyclists and pedestrians should be accommodated in the design of streets and the street network in order to increase the connectivity of employment areas to nearby residential or shopping areas.

## **Development Strategies**

Emphasize environmentally clean businesses. New development should focus on clean, high tech and manufacturing industries. Capitalize on the proximity to the Dayton International Airport and regional connections around it. The transportation network near the airport provides easy access to Interstate 70 as well as the airport itself and is a competitive advantage that the city should promote to attract industrial and business investment.

## **Parks and Open Space Development**

Union is continuing to evolve from an agricultural based community to a bedroom community and now to a small, well diversified city. The city has been fortunate through this evolution to have retained parks and open space lands. However, as the city continues to grow, demand for park space will continue to increase and the need to plan for future recreation and open space needs will become more important.

## **Planning Principles**

Preserve existing parks and open space areas throughout the city. Utilize the Stillwater River floodplain for open space and greenway systems. The Stillwater River floodplain has limited development potential due to floodplain regulations. These areas provide an opportunity for conservation of open space that could be used for greenways and wildlife habitat preservation. Preserving the floodplain will also help minimize future flood impacts on the city.

New public spaces such as plazas, squares, greenspaces and parks shall be incorporated as a part of new development in mixed-use and residential areas. The siting of new public spaces will be an important aspect of all developments. Strategically sited and designed public spaces add value to a neighborhood and can be used as a trade off for higher densities.

## **Development Strategies**

Define the locational context and site design for dedicated open spaces. More urban locations should have open space in the form of a square or plaza, while less urban locations should have greenspace in the form of parks, playfields and greenways. Require public spaces be designed and appropriately incorporated as part of the overall development plans. Create and adopt a public open space planning document to formalize future park needs.

## **Future Land Use Recommendations**

The following section summarizes the recommended future land uses as shown in Figure 9.1. In general, areas west of the Stillwater River, which is the older section of the city, has been developed more extensively than the recently annexed areas east of the river. Future development west of the river will generally be similar to the existing land uses developed in the past, while areas east of the river will experience the most significant change in land use from the current agricultural uses.

## **Residential**

The City of Union is primarily a bedroom community. The residential land uses are broken down into three categories. The categories are Low Density, 0-4 units per acres, Medium Density, 4-10 units per acre, and High Density, 10-15 units per acre. The majority of the residential land uses are found west of the Stillwater River. There is one new residential development being developed east of the river, Stoney Crest, and seven new developments being developed west of the river. Stoney Crest is an up-scale single family development. There are also two retirement communities within the City, Union Springs along Phillipsburg Union Road and Mill Ridge Village along Sweet Potato Ridge Road.

The residential development pattern will be expanded onto agricultural land and vacant parcels found on both sides of the river. Residential uses will also be a component of the mixed-use developments found at the intersections of State Route 48 and Phillipsburg-Union Pike and the intersection of Frederick Pike and Old Springfield Road.

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Most of the land west of the river is outlined for medium density residential uses, with several groups of higher density residential uses located along Martindale Road and Sweet Potato Ridge Road. The lands east of the Stillwater River will be primarily low density residential, with a medium density residential area adjacent to the industrial/business land uses. Medium density residential areas on the east side of the river will act as a buffer between the more intense business/industrial/ commercial land uses and the low density residential uses.

## Commercial

Land uses that are exclusively commercial in nature are primarily found along State Route 48 and Martindale Road in and around downtown Union. In addition, there are some mixed-use / commercial uses within the downtown of Union. Commercial land uses fill the needs of residents, visitors and others for shopping and other needed services and businesses. Commercial uses are either located in a mixed-use area using "urban" store prototypes or located in single use pods using more "suburban" store designs.

This plan recommends providing areas for both "suburban" and "urban" store prototypes. For those commercial uses that prefer the suburban prototype store design, an area near the intersection of State Route 48 and Quinter Farm Road has been recommended as an appropriate location. This area is on the "homebound" side of State Route 48, which is generally the preferred side of the road by retailers. Commercial uses that prefer a more "urban" store design may locate in one of the areas designated as "mixed-use". These areas are explained in more detail on the previous page.

The establishment of additional areas for commercial development, as outlined in this plan, will help create an opportunity to establish a critical mass of retail, which will attract a more diverse variety of retailers as Union continues to grow.

## Mixed-Use

The City of Union's downtown area is the only mixed-use area within the city currently. The downtown should be enhanced, making it a much more viable mixed-use center for the City. To the north of downtown along State Route 48, a community scale mixed-use center is recommended at the intersection of State Route 48 and Phillipsburg-Union Pike. There are also two mixed-use centers planned east of the Stillwater River. The most intensive is a community scale mixed-use development at the intersection of Old Springfield Road and Frederick Pike. The other is a smaller, neighborhood scale mixed-use development at the intersection of Old Springfield Pike and Furnas Road.

Mixed-use centers cluster retail, office, civic and residential uses into a walkable development that will serve the needs of the residents of Union. Mixed-use centers cluster development, conserving land for other uses and create a walkable, connected development pattern. They will also become focal points for the city giving residents an identity and sense of place, which has been lost in most suburban communities today. The mixed-use centers will also act as a buffer between business/industrial uses and residential uses.





*An example of a neighborhood square in a mixed use development near Charlotte, NC.*



*An example of a grocery store in a mixed-use development.*

## Urban Corridor

An "Urban Corridor" area is typically a transitional area located along major roads and is a buffer between residential areas (to the rear) and the traffic and noise associated with higher volume roads such as State Route 48. Smaller scale buildings, typically a maximum of three stories tall, are used. These buildings frame the streetscape along the major road and create a more pedestrian-friendly pattern. The Urban Corridor pattern is part of a transition from less intense areas to more intense areas near the downtown. Parking is provided in the rear of buildings and is accessed from shared driveways between buildings or an access easement from nearby streets.

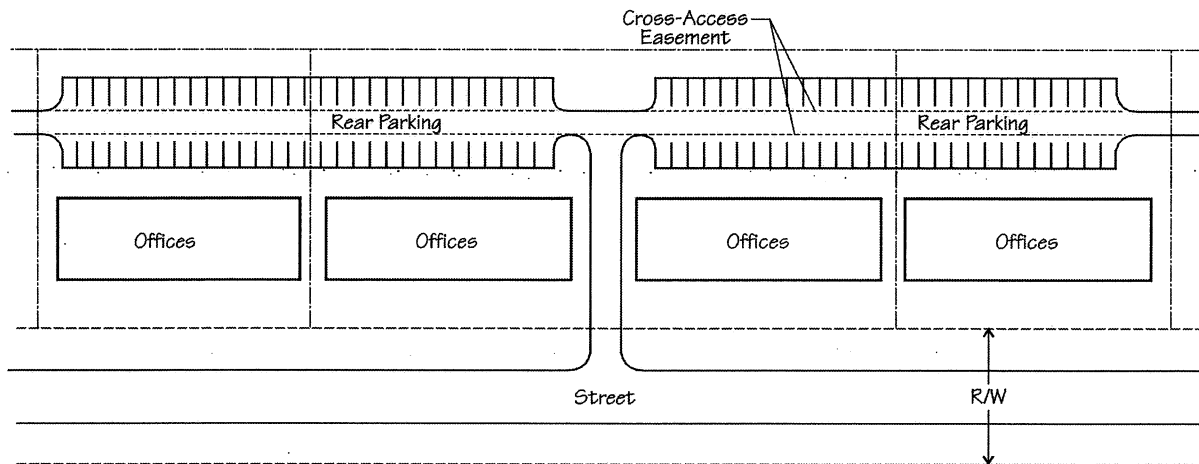
The urban corridor designation in this Plan is similar to the City's current R-O zoning category as far as the permitted uses and scale of buildings. The appropriate building types in this zone are smaller scale buildings such as small apartment houses, small office buildings, or townhouses.

The urban corridor framework enhances the current R-O zoning to outline certain design elements that impact traffic and curb cuts by

- Encouraging parcel consolidation
- Minimize curb cuts on major roads by using shared access driveways.
- Facilitate internal traffic flow by using cross easements at the rear of buildings.

The areas recommended for implementation of the urban corridor framework are along State Route 48 and Martindale Road. An example of a typical Urban Corridor site layout is outlined below.

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## Urban Corridor Development

### Civic/Public

The City has several civic/public buildings such as City Hall and Union Elementary School. Civic buildings are important anchors to a neighborhood and should be retained as civic sites. This plan recommends that the Union Elementary School property be expanded to the north as part of a trade between the City and the schools. The larger school site can be used to preserve the viability of the school and its current or future needs for playgrounds, ballfields and expansion when needed. The remaining Civic/Public buildings should remain in their current configuration in the future land use plan or be allowed to expand, if appropriate.

### Office

There is currently one office use within the City of Union, which is located on State Route 48 at the intersection with Lutz Drive. Office uses are an ideal use as a transitional use between more intense and less intense areas, because they can have a residential look to them and the activity is concentrated during normal business hours. In addition, office workers may live within walking distance to the office, and commercial services will most likely be located within close proximity as well. This not only will strengthen the economic viability of the offices, but also the economic viability of the commercial uses. Transitional uses such as the Urban Corridor or within a Mixed-Use area are most appropriate for office uses. Offices should be located in one of these two districts because of the proximity to housing and services, as well as the facilitated connectivity that State Route 48 and other thoroughfares provide to adjacent communities.

### Industrial

There are three existing industrial areas within the City of Union. The industrial land uses west of the Stillwater River are found along Phillipsburg-Union Pike, near the western boundary of the city, and at the intersection of State Route 48 and Quinter Farm Road. The industrial uses east of the river are found along Kessler-Frederick Road near the northern boundary of the city. These are primarily light industrial uses.

The Future Land Use Plan recommends retaining all three industrial areas and slightly expanding two of the three areas to help strengthen and diversify the tax base. The industrial area along the west side of State Route 48 north of Quinter Farm Road should be expanded slightly to the north and west to include several