



OPEN FORUMS

RESIDENT LED

EXPANDED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR INEVITABLE
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Created by Angie Herrick

ABOUT US OUR MISSION



We're a “SPROUTING COALITION” of Harlem Township residents and property owners, joined together with a common goal: to heighten awareness, deepen our understanding of the challenges and decisions arising from inevitable growth and development, explore our diverse options, and ensure inclusivity for all. Our aim is to collectively shape our destinies and rise as a community.

Believing in the strength of unity and collaboration, our coalition is dedicated to navigating the complexities of growth. Through our collective efforts, we aim to foster a supportive environment where every voice is heard, and each unique lifestyle is valued. Through education and dialogue, we strive to discover innovative solutions that honor Harlem Township's essence while embracing progress.

Together, we are committed to crafting a future where every resident thrives and contributes to the rich fabric of our township. With foresight and planning, we endeavor to safeguard our community's heritage while embracing opportunities for sustainable growth.

COMMUNITY LED VISION

In June 2019, Harlem Township initiated updating its Comprehensive Plan, first adopted in 2008. The Harlem Township Steering Committee, appointed for this task, convened between December 2019 and May 2021.

Over eighteen months, the Committee held initial meetings at the Township Hall, focusing on communicating Township conditions and gathering public input.

A survey, yielding 374 responses, highlighted community preferences, notably the desire to maintain the Township's rural character. Balancing this with limited commercial development, the Committee aimed to preserve large lot development and prevent annexation.

The plan outlines five key goals derived from the survey: maintaining the rural character, protecting cultural and natural resources, expanding open space, developing within community service capacities, and safeguarding agricultural uses.

Detailed chapters analyze Township demographics, land use, transportation, and development patterns, aligning findings with community preferences and feasibility.

***The 2020 Harlem Township Comprehensive Plan was Adopted
November 2021***

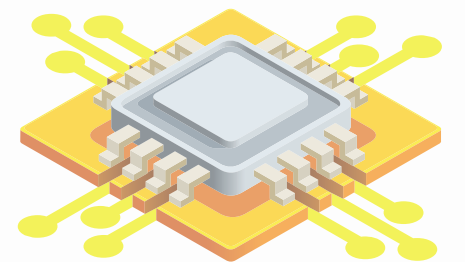


INTEL ANNOUNCEMENT JANUARY 2022



On January 21, 2022, Intel Corporation announced a \$20 billion investment in microchip manufacturing plants in neighboring Jersey Township, impacting the Columbus Region and situated just a few miles from Harlem Township. Recognizing the significant development risks, Township officials acted. In March 2022, the Township Trustees appointed a **Strategic Planning Committee (SPC)** and engaged Crossroads Community Planning, LLC, to assist in implementing the **2020 Comprehensive Plan** amid impending development. Crossroads conducted a thorough planning process, including a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and research on infrastructure and development pressures, resulting in specific recommendations outlined in a **Quick Strategy Guide (QSG)**

The **Quick Strategy Guide** supplements the existing Harlem Township 2020 Comprehensive Plan, providing additional recommendations in land use, communications, and administrative capacity to prepare for development pressures. It is designed to complement the Comprehensive Plan and offers further clarity on open space and density calculations for conservation developments.



WERE ACTIONS TAKEN PER PLAN?



Upon examination of the **Quick Strategy Guide (QSG)**, it is evident that the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) did not effectively utilize it to innovate and implement solutions.

Reviews of meeting minutes and recordings reveal that the core team lacks adequate organizational skills and resources to develop fact-based near, mid, and long-term plans effectively. Briefs of conversations are verbally provided and appear to be mostly informal and loosely coordinated, and details regarding meeting objectives and attendees with neighboring communities for joint development efforts were not documented and made available for public inspection as of yet if available.



Westerville Takeover Dissolves Harlem Township Forever!

HOW'D WE GET HERE??



While many in our community were unaware, and the majority remain uninformed, we were shocked to learn on February 29, 2024, during an impromptu public announcement at Harlem Church, that Harlem Township's Strategic Planning Committee and Township Trustees have been meeting secretly behind closed doors since July of last year to negotiate the largest annexation of Harlem Township. This merger would integrate our township as one parcel with the second-largest municipality in Ohio. It was disheartening to realize that the township and committee members we trusted to communicate with residents had no better plan than to move forward with what is essentially a sell-out of our rural community under the guise of a merger.

While residents had expressed concerns about possible annexations and rapid growth and development in our area, we had no idea that our trusted leaders were so out of touch and working in collaboration towards such a drastic step. Blind fears about small annexations were used to justify their actions, which we quickly realized were unfounded. They appear to not be listening and are pushing forward towards our township's complete dissolution into a larger government entity, along with new tax assessments starting January 1, 2025.

NOW WHAT?

We learn and we grow together

Now we find ourselves woven into the fabric of an awakened and engaged community, where our shared aspirations and the possibilities are our collective destiny.

In Harlem Township, we now find ourselves on a journey of shared purpose, where each resident becomes a steward of our collective community. Together, we embark on a path of co-creation, where dreams meet reality through careful planning and deliberate development, beauty, and sustainability.

As we chart our course forward, we do so with a sense of mindful intention, working hand in hand with our township leaders, developers and builders to shape a community that reflects our shared values and aspirations. Through collaborative efforts and thoughtful initiatives, we breathe life into our vision for a vibrant, sustainable future that preserves the legacy of this small community with the spirit of what America wants to be for generations to come.

In this landscape of opportunity, we seize the reins of progress, forging ahead with determination and purpose. Here, amidst the intersection of dreams and pragmatism, we find the fertile ground upon which our collective aspirations take root and blossom into reality.

