

RETAIL DISTRICT

Overview

Retail uses provide the services that people rely upon to support their daily lives. They also provide one of the best non-civic, non-work/school environments in which people socially mix. As such, retail is an important component of people's quality of life - and its availability, quality, character, and ease of use are factors in which people judge communities. Retail uses come in many formats including small retail shops embedded in a historic town center, commercial retail centers along roadways, out lots with drive-thrus, regional malls, and outdoor lifestyle centers. With the ubiquity of the internet and massive distribution centers in every region, retail also takes the form of delivery vans dropping off packages at front doors.

Within New Albany, when people think of shopping, restaurants, and services they think of the Village Center. It is part of the identity of the community and its focal point. Historically, New Albany has been dedicated to growing and reinforcing retail uses in the Village Center.

This has taken the form of limiting retail uses outside of the Village Center in an effort to focus offerings there, make them more robust, and reinforce the Village Center as the heart of the community. This has generally been effective. As the city has grown geographically, more of the business park and new neighborhoods are farther from the Village Center or other retail centers outside of the city boundaries. This has led to requests for new retail uses outside of the Village Center.

The *2014 Strategic Plan* recognized two locations for expansion of limited retail uses outside of the Village Center. One was along US 62 at Smith's Mill Road and Forest Drive. The other was planned for Beech Road and Smith's Mill Road to serve the eastern business park areas. These were, and continue to be, locations for auto-oriented, smaller scale retail to serve the immediate needs of those working in or driving past these areas. The gas station and restaurant retail along US 62 also attracted hotel uses to serve the area.



Existing hospitality use



Existing retail use



Existing retail use



Existing retail strip

Data & Trends

When considering retail uses, it is important to understand market trends and the regional market in the context of New Albany. Retail is a use that follows residential and employment-based uses. It must have a large enough customer base, each and every day, to survive. As a rule of thumb, a minimum of 1,000 dwellings are necessary to support a corner store and 8,000 dwellings to support a grocery store. When the number of vehicles passing a store exceeds 15,000 vehicles per day, this can reduce the number of dwellings needed to support a store. Increased disposable income within the market area also helps. When looking at the Village Center today, there are almost 200 units (315+ residents) within a quarter mile walking distance. Within a half-mile, this number increases to almost 480 units and 1,200 residents. At the one-mile radius, there are more than 1,600 units and 4,500 residents. This highlights the importance of being a location that attracts visitors, having enough traffic volume passing by, consolidating stores into a destination, and providing places with enough residents and workers in close proximity.

To be successful, retail needs a substantial customer base within market proximity, traffic and convenient access, visibility, an assemblage of retail uses, distinctive and desirable products and store, ample parking, dynamic and compelling environment and programming, and patronage. Due to New Albany's location in relationship to other retail centers and its relatively low density, this last point is critical. If New Albany residents and businesses want more variety and amount of retail, it must be supported by the community. There is substantial regional competition within close proximity to New Albany, including the Kroger Shopping Center and Giant Eagle Shopping Center along New Albany Road, regional retail uses along Hamilton Road, and the destination retail Easton Town Center. A major new retail center, Hamilton Quarter, began opening in 2020. This adds to the importance of providing a distinctive experience and close convenience to the community.

Brick and mortar retail is under intense pressure in today's environment, particularly with internet supported front door delivery services, but also through continued automation and technology.

It is also under immediate threat due to the coronavirus pandemic. As a result, there is already an oversupply of retail in most markets. Grocery stores are consolidating, outdated malls are closing, and older retail strip centers are emptying and converting to other uses. Retail is moving in six directions: 1) Auto-oriented convenience retail, often stand-alone; 2) consolidated big box retailers; 3) experiential, dynamic shopping experiences like Easton Town Center; 4) "Third places" - restaurants, coffee shops, etc.; 5) well-programmed authentic town centers like the Village Center; and 6) the internet to home delivery.

There is demand for more authentic, walkable town centers. New Albany's Village Center is a great example. This is covered more fully in the Village Center section (see page 76). There is also demand for more "third places" where people can meet and where families can go out together. Outside of the Village Center, these are underrepresented in New Albany. This is covered more fully in the hamlets section (see page 73). There continues to be demand for auto-oriented support retail around employment centers. This is where New Albany's retail district applies.

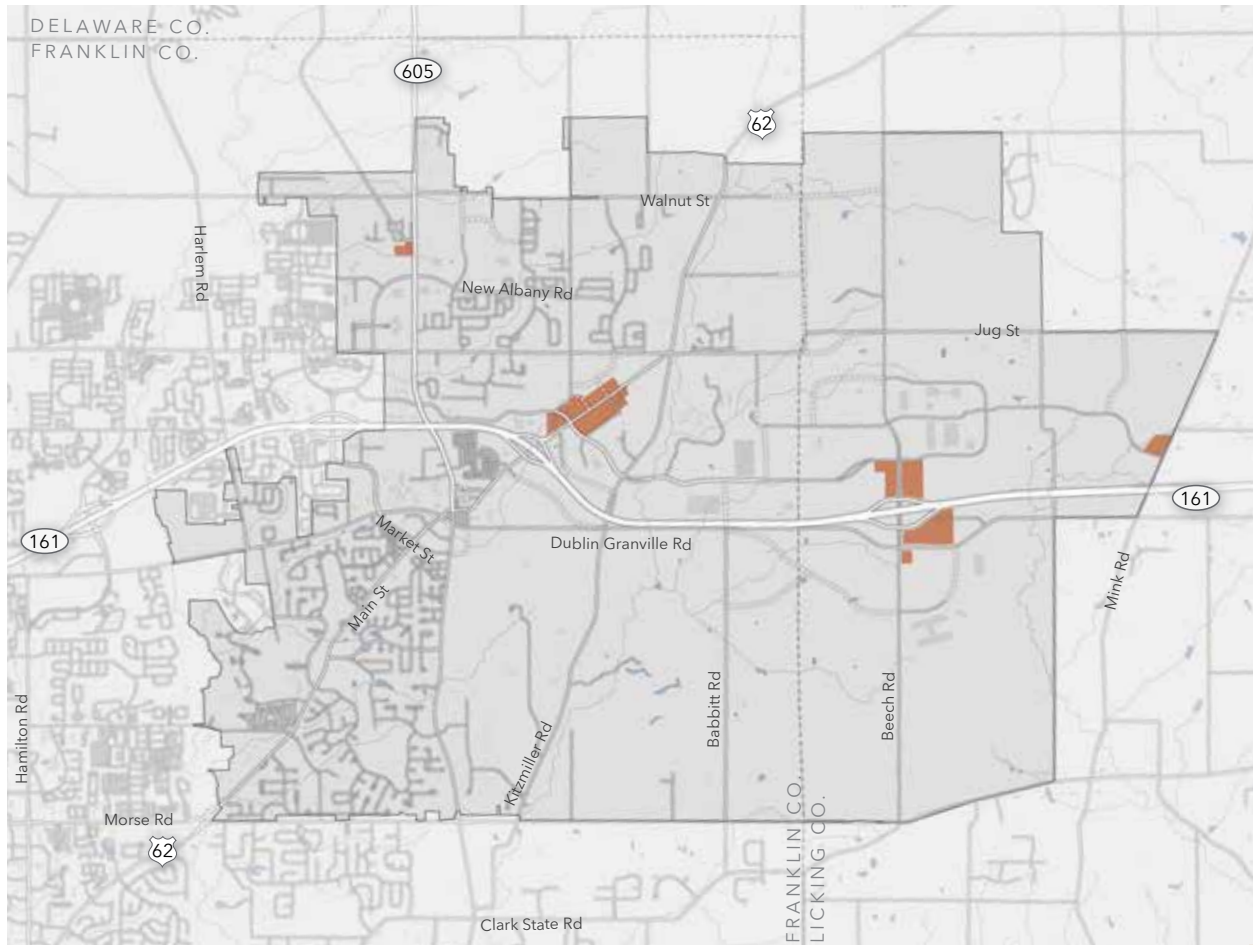
Development Standards

Any retail development should adhere to the high standards for architecture, site design, and landscaping in New Albany. Careful consideration should be given to the design and development of retail outside the Village Center. It should respond to the scale and design that exists in New Albany. Developments should take into account the need for automobile access, but also emphasize the importance of pedestrian access and comfort as well as other modes of transportation. The sites should have a strong street presence and include architectural and landscape features that respond to the existing New Albany character. Generally the standards for retail development in the city include:

- Parking areas should promote pedestrians by including walkways and landscaping to enhance visual aspects of the development.
- Combined curb cuts and cross-access easements are encouraged
- Curb cuts on primary streets should be minimized and well organized connections should be created within and between all retail establishments.
- Combined curb cuts and cross-access easements between parking areas are preferred between individual buildings.
- Retail building entrances should connect with pedestrian network and promote connectivity through the site.
- Integrate outdoor spaces for food related businesses.



Figure 3.15 | Neighborhood Retail District Map



Retail District Summary Table	
Building	
Gross Density	n/a
Streetscape	
Roadway Character Classification (see p. 104)	Commercial Center, Business Park
Parking	
Parking Type	Parking lot
Parking Location	Rear of building for parking lot
Open Space	
Open Space Type(s)	n/a
Size of Open Space	n/a
Location of Open Space	n/a
Sustainability	
LEED Certification Priority	Medium
Stormwater Management	Stormwater management ponds required. Native, low maintenance landscaping encouraged

Legend

Retail District

Study Area

MIXED-USE DISTRICT

Overview

As raised in the employment center section, national and regional trends are pointing toward a growing and desired market for walkable, mixed-use environments for office uses. In growing regions like Central Ohio, employers are competing to attract the best employees and those employees are increasingly desiring to work in environments that integrate shopping, restaurants, entertainment, parks, recreation, learning opportunities, and living in close walkable locations. This is a trend away from the office parks of the last 30 years. Mixed-use examples are at varying scales and locally include newer developments such as Easton, the Arena District, Grandview Yard, and Dublin Bridge Park; denser urban environments like Downtown Columbus and the Short North; and authentic town centers like Uptown Westerville, Old Hilliard, and New Albany's Village Center. While the city has its business park, it does not have enough mixed-use sites beyond the Village Center to meet this growing demand.

As previously described, employment-centered uses are critical to the financial health of New Albany, so this is an important long-term issue. It is also important because retail trends are also favoring mixed-use development.

There is a growing retail segment that desires to be located in walkable town centers. This is due to many factors that include the experience of place, the density of day-time customers and residents, the agglomeration of multiple retailers, and the pedestrian-oriented nature. With the increased popularity and importance of "third places" (restaurants, coffee houses, bars, entertainment), these walkable urban-styled places are great locations.

Further, speculative office development and new, desired mixed-use retail development is challenging to finance. This is particularly true in the COVID environment. Adding multifamily residential development into the mix, which is in high demand regionally, enables developers to obtain bank underwriting which they are often otherwise unable to secure. With housing, banks will provide similar credit for mixed-use development as if the commercial development were pre-leased. Residents living in the district make it more dynamic and add to the customer base for the retailers, creating a balance with the day-time workers. Providing a mix of uses also facilitates the construction of parking decks, which can be financed for the same reasons and which can park employees during the day and residents at night.

Development Standards

Walkable mixed-use development requires the right setting, design, and density. In New Albany, such development should not directly compete with the Village Center. For this reason, a mixed-use site needs to be physically distant from the Village Center and of a different style and smaller geographic scale. Because of the uses (office and retail), new mixed-use development needs proximity and access to a major transportation network, and ideally be visible from such. To be effective, mixed-use development must be accomplished at a larger scale, though it can be built in phases. For these reasons and with the growth of the city around the Beech Road interchange, the area south of SR 161 is the appropriate location for consideration.

There are several very important requirements for any proposed development within the mixed-use district:

- Commercial uses should be a substantial part of any development.
- Residential land uses will not be considered in isolation. Any proposed residential use should be part of a development proposal that blends commercial, retail, cultural and/or industrial uses. Any mixed-use proposal that includes residential uses in Licking County will be evaluated on the goals, strategies and development standards of the strategic plan, but also on its impacts on city services, city finances, school districts, and the overall sense of community.
- Development proposals within the mixed-use area should submit an overall master plan for the area showing how it fits together appropriately in terms of mobility, site layout, uses, and aesthetics.
- Traditional zoning regulations cannot adequately address urban design or achieve the desired development pattern in this district. Therefore, development in this area is expected to go through the Planned Unit Development rezoning process.
- Mixed Use development proposals will be evaluated on their ability to 1) provide a mixture of revenue producing uses, 2) foster integration, density and compatibility of land uses and 3) create a walkable community with uninterrupted pedestrian connections. (*Mixed-use Development Handbook*, ULI)
- Mixed-use development must meet the highest of development standards within the city.
- Mixed-use development is expected to propose an architectural style that is both distinctive and complementary to New Albany's character and brand.
- If mixed-use development is not desired or possible, development that meets the employment center future land use requirements is acceptable.
- Alternate street typologies and reduced setbacks may be appropriate based on the pattern of development.
- Discourage residential development within 300 feet of the SR 161 in order to be sensitive to noise.
- City staff should explore code changes and updates to the Design Guidelines and Requirements (DGR) to allow the Architectural Review Board (ARB) to review developments in the hamlet and mixed-use areas and establish standards for review.

Hamlets Concept

Overview

One type of mixed-use development is the hamlet concept. The reintroduction of this concept is appropriate given the evolution of the community and the need for continued balanced and responsible growth. The timing of hamlet development, however, should not compete with the Village Center either in density or the provision of amenities. The vision for the Village Center as outlined in the Village Center Plan has not yet been completely fulfilled and remains the fundamental priority for the city.

This concept identifies an opportunity to introduce walkable retail and commercial uses that are integrated with residential areas. A hamlet will typically not be a single site development and it is anticipated that land assemblage will be required to successfully execute it. The concept differs from the retail land use district in its scale, design and pedestrian orientation.

Hamlet Development Standards:

- Street edges and streetscape treatments are reinforced. Alternate street typologies and reduced setbacks may be appropriate based on the pattern of development.
- Hamlets need to incorporate public spaces like pocket parks or pedestrian corridors. These are gathering spaces for office employees and residents of the area.
- Buildings may not be taller than three stories in height around the civic green, nor taller than two stories at the perimeter.
- Hamlets should have a balance of neighborhood retail, commercial office, and residential uses.
- All non-single-family development should front on the green.
- A hamlet does not necessarily have to include residential uses if it is located near an area with established residences and has strong pedestrian connections to those existing neighborhoods.
- Surface parking should be located to the rear of commercial and non-single-family uses.
- Drive locations should be kept to a minimum and the placement of buildings should encourage pedestrian activity.
- Development proposals for identified hamlets should submit an overall master plan for the area showing how it fits together appropriately in terms of mobility, site layout, uses, and aesthetics.
- Hamlet development is expected to go through the Planned Unit Development rezoning process.
- Hamlet development should be high quality and built with a high level of attention to site and building design.
- Hamlet development is expected to propose an architectural style that is both distinctive and complementary to New Albany's character and brand.

Strategy

In considering this concept, the planning team referred to early Rocky Fork Blacklick Accord plans from 1996 and 2001. These plans contemplated the eventual build-out of the entire Plain Township area and the impact and needs of residential development north of SR 161. One of the recommendations was the creation of small hamlets at geographically spaced locations, with the goal of creating walkable, mixed-use environments connected to surrounding neighborhoods and integrated into an open space network. These hamlets were expected to consist of a focal point village green, some two-to-three story residential development around the green, a couple of retail spaces in or around the green, and some community parking. This strategic plan recommends reviving this concept to accommodate this original vision and the present desire of the residents. Such a compact development would provide opportunities for the age-in-place housing the community expressly desires, which is underrepresented in the city. This housing would be combined with a couple of neighborhood-serving retail spaces and integrated into a civic space plan.

The result would be several locations outside of the Village Center and mixed-use area of the city that would allow density above the one unit per gross acre if the overall impact to the density of the community is no greater than one unit per acre. This concept would also allow for very limited neighborhood retail in locations outside of the retail sites.




The locations identified on the future land use map for New Albany hamlets are: 1) the immediate vicinity of SR 605 and Central College; and 2) the immediate area of the five points intersection at US 62 and Central College. The 605 hamlet provides walkable connectivity to the Enclave, Cedar Brook, and Wolcott Manor neighborhoods. The five points hamlet provides walkable connectivity to the Links, Tidewater, and future residential development. Hamlet development is not required in these areas. They can be developed under the underlying land use. If a hamlet is developed, it should meet the standards listed to the left. These standards could also be applied to any development in the Winding Hollow focus area (see page 180).

Figure 3.16 | Mixed-Use District Map



Mixed-Use District Summary Table	
Building	
Gross Density	1 dwelling unit (du)/acre*
Streetscape	
Roadway Character Classification (see p. 104)	Business Park, Business Park Transitional
Parking	
Parking Type	On-street and parking lot/structure
Parking Location	Rear of building for parking lot/structure
Open Space	
Open Space Type(s)	Preserved open space, wetlands
Size of Open Space	0.5 - 10 acres
Location of Open Space	Near the center of each development as an organizing element, within 1,200' of all dwellings
Sustainability	
LEED Certification Priority	High for BD+C, ND
Stormwater Management	Regional stormwater management required. Native, low maintenance landscaping encouraged

Legend

- Mixed-Use District 
- Neighborhood Hamlet 
- Study Area 

* The density of a project may exceed this gross density, if a density "offset" is used to ensure that the overall density of the community remains at 1 unit per acre.