



O-TOWN NEWS – November, 2021

Hello and Fall greetings from Age Friendly Oxford (AFO). November marks the one-year anniversary of O-Town News! Thank you to all who contribute information, help with funding, read and share the news, the volunteers who make it happen and to the many who encourage it to continue! It is a pleasure bringing community information to Oxford area residents. 😊

In addition to a calendar and announcements, a portion of this issue of O-Town News will be devoted to an important civic process that is underway right now and will continue into 2022:

OXFORD TOMORROW – The City’s Comprehensive Plan Update YOUR input is needed to help shape Oxford’s future!

If this seems a bit like of an “all call” to action, it is! It has been 13 years since Oxford last updated its Comprehensive Plan and much has changed in and around the City since then. Most likely your needs and stage of life have changed as well. Citizens of all ages and walks of life are urged to get involved and let their voices be heard in the **Oxford Tomorrow**–Comprehensive Plan Update. ***The City wants to know***

- * What is important to **YOU** in the City of Oxford over the next 10-15 years?
- * What do **YOU** need for your next phase of life as an Oxford resident?
- * What are the big questions **YOU** think the community should address?
- * How does the City best **balance** the diverse needs of all citizens with limited resources?

We hope this O-Town News helps readers see the importance of residents’ involvement in the Oxford Tomorrow Oxford’s Comprehensive Plan Update and that it helps residents be better prepared to offer informed input.

To help citizens learn more about the planning process, existing conditions in Oxford, and current trends, the City of Oxford created **Oxford Tomorrow - A Preliminary Information Booklet**. Citizens may access an electronic version of the booklet on the project website at www.oxfordtomorrow.org (click on “Documents” under the “Resources” tab at the top) or pick up a hard copy from the City’s Community Development Department located on the first floor at **15 S. College Avenue**.

Let’s begin with a basic understanding of city planning . . .

UNDERSTANDING COMPREHENSIVE CITY PLANNING - 101

What is a comprehensive city plan?

A comprehensive plan is an **official policy document** adopted by a municipality that illustrates a vision for the next 10-15 years and serves as a **guide** for future decision-making by City leaders and officials. Rather than being actual codified law, the Plan is a road map to help a community stay on track toward achieving its goals and overall master vision.

What makes a comprehensive plan a *good* plan?

A good comprehensive plan effectively conveys where a community currently stands in terms of its existing conditions and lays out a framework and vision for the future that is informed by robust public engagement. It should be developed with input and passion by the community along with assistance and participation of those in charge of day-to-day activities.

What is a *Strategic Model* of planning and governance?*

A strategic model of planning and governance is where a long-range plan provides a framework to help a City prioritize various goals and set policies, which in turn determine capital and operational budgeting decisions. Strategic models help a City mark progress and be accountable as it moves towards meeting long-term goals and priorities.

**In February 2021, the Oxford City Council passed a Resolution committing the City to a strategic planning model of governance.*

HOW WILL THE OXFORD TOMORROW PROCESS WORK?

There will be three phases to this process:

Phase 1: Where We Are (Summer/Fall 2021)

This phase involved creating a shared understanding of current conditions, recent trends, and pertinent issues. A Steering Committee was established by City Council and has thus far met on five occasions since May. Equipped with information from the Preliminary Booklet, the Committee participated in a number of SWOT exercises to further develop a sense of existing challenges and opportunities.

Phase 2: What We Heard (Fall/Winter 2021-2022)

During this phase, the community will be engaged through a variety of methods including at least three in-person public workshops and several online tools including a survey, ideas wall, and interactive map. Input received will help to inform what the City should continue doing (where it is excelling), and what the City should do differently moving forward.

Phase 3: Moving Forward (Winter/Spring 2022)

During this phase, a draft Comprehensive Plan will be developed based on the public feedback received in Phase 2 and presented to the Steering Committee for review and refine. At least one public open house event may be held to showcase draft plans and recommendations, before moving through the official approval process by City Council.

What did the Committee's *SWOT* exercises reveal?

The SWOT acronym stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Below are some of the key takeaways from the Committee's work:

- **Parks, trails, recreation, greenspace, and cultural institutions are a major strength**, contributing to a high quality of life.
- The **compact, grid layout of the Mile Square contributes to a walkable, connected community**. But, that pattern and ease of movement begins to disintegrate as you move outward.
- While there are a variety of housing types within the City, they are mostly geared toward students. There is a **critical need for more non-student housing, especially "missing middle" housing**. **Affordability is a concern** for both student and non-student housing.

- The **local economy and tax base is heavily dependent on Miami University** and the student population. There is a **need to establish a year-round, more diversified economic base and labor force.**

What elements will the plan address?

The plan elements may change as the work proceeds; however, at this stage of work (Phase 1 – heading into Phase 2) the main topic areas for the Oxford Tomorrow plan are as follows:

Climate	Economic Development
Housing	Parks and Recreation
Planning and Development	Safety, Health and Equity
Town/Gown Relations	Transportation
Utilities	

What are the “big questions” for Oxford’s future?

The following questions were recently shared with the Steering Committee. There are likely be more questions along the way for each of the elements listed above.

- How big do you want to be as a city?
- Do we want to grow? If we grow, do we grow up or grow out?
- Where would you add density in Oxford?
- How can Oxford attract businesses? What’s Oxford’s economic strength?
- Is there enough for K-12 students to do?
- Is there enough for older adults to do?
- Do you want Oxford to be an “age-in-place” community?
- How can we create more housing stock to meet the community’s need?
- What areas are disconnected for walking and biking?
- How can we increase active transportation trips?

How do I participate and give my input?

The City is currently at the tail-end of Phase 1, moving into Phase 2. To ensure maximum participation, ***in-person*** events will likely be scheduled following the holiday season, sometime in early 2022. However, the ***online*** portion of the public input phase is set to gear up sooner, likely launching toward the end of November, and will last into the New Year. Written input may be mailed to the City, 15 S. College Ave. by those without digital access and/or transportation.

Stay tuned . . . for participation details in the December O-Town News!

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF GROWING OLDER IN OXFORD?

Some readers might remember that this question was posed to the community back in 2013 at a community forum. That forum sowed the seeds for the current Age-Friendly Oxford (AFO) Initiative. The vision of AFO is stated in its 2019 Action Plan:

“The VISION of AFO is Oxford/Oxford Township as a livable community that is safe and secure, has affordable and appropriate housing and transportation options, and has supportive community features and services. These resources enhance personal independence; allow residents to thrive as they age in place; foster residents’ engagement in the community’s civic, economic, and social life, and support individuals and families when one a loved one needs additional care.”

Many issues being addressed in the Oxford Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan overlap with the framework of the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Cities, State and Communities which Age-Friendly Oxford follows. The elements of the Oxford Tomorrow Plan are very relevant to the needs expressed by Oxford and Oxford Township adults age 50+ in the 2019 Age-Friendly Oxford Community Needs Assessment completed by and reported on by Scripps Gerontology Center in 2019:

Through that survey, local residents age 50+ identified priorities for Oxford and responded to the importance of certain community features important for aging in place in the Oxford community and in their own homes. Here are just a few of the findings:

Housing

- 73% think affordable housing options for adults of varying income levels is important.
- 68% think accessible homes with features of universal design are important.
- 50% think affordable housing dedicated to older adults is important.

Transportation

- * 73% think reliable, affordable, accessible public information is important.
- * 69% think well maintained public transportation vehicles and safe stops are important.
- * 47% think special transportation services for older adults are important.

Community and Health Services

- * 87% indicate that *affordable* home health care is important.
- * 76% report that *well-trained* home care providers are important.
- * 73% report that personal care and housekeeping providers are important.

Communication and Information – when asked about information needs

- 80% information available in one central source is important.
- 79% use of the internet available in public places such government buildings and senior center is important.
- 76% - information delivered in person to those who have difficulty with internet and cannot leave their home.

The unfolding Oxford Tomorrow Plan has the potential to address these expressed needs from residents who plan to remain the Oxford community throughout their lifespan. The full survey of needs report and action plan can be picked up at Oxford Seniors, or found at AFO's website at www.agefriendlyoxford.org (click Reports tab).

MARK YOUR CALENDAR – LOCAL UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2021

Thursday, Nov. 11th: Oxford's Veteran's Day celebration will take place at the Uptown Park from 11:00 am-Noon. All are welcome to come honor the many individuals who have served and are serving our country!

Saturday, Nov. 13th: Empty Bowls is a program that supports the fight against food insecurity in our community. From 11am to 2pm, come join community members at the Oxford Community Arts Center to support this program.

Thursday, Nov. 18 - City of Oxford's Climate Action Steering Committee presentation - *Getting to Zero: A Community Commitment to Climate Action*; 6:00-8:00 p.m. at Oxford Seniors, Inc., 922 Tollgate Drive. The presentation will be hosted in partnership with Oxford Seniors Eco Club, Age Friendly Oxford and Oxford League of Women Voters. A virtual viewing option will be available by contacting Oxford Seniors at 513-523-8100.

Friday, Nov. 19 - Madcap Puppets presents "The Story Quest"; 7pm at OCAC. "The Story Quest," is a charming, interactive production about the royal storyteller Everett Hickenbottom. Tickets go on sale Nov. 8 - call: 513-524-8506. Ticket prices are \$7 Adult/\$5 Children 12 and younger.

Friday Nov. 26 – Dec. 24 - Kiwanis 2021 Salvation Army Bell Ringing
The Kiwanis Club asks you to join them in the long-standing tradition of holiday bell ringing in Oxford as it partners with the Salvation Army for this project. Ninety percent (90%) of the donations are earmarked for the Family Resource Center here in Oxford. There are 204 time slots to fill so hopefully one or two will fit your

schedule! Go to oxfordkiwanis.org then click on Volunteer Opportunities, then click sign-up for a date and time- or call Dave Belka 513-497-5747 to sign up by phone.

Monday Nov. 29-Dec. 17 – Oxford Community Foundation Sock Drive. Socks are the number one need of organizations serving those who are homeless and in homeless shelters. OCF will collect new socks of all sizes at the office, 22 E. High St. between 10am-4pm Monday thru Friday during the drive.

Tuesday, Nov. 30 – DIY Holiday Wreath Class – 1pm at Oxford Seniors, 922 Tollgate Drive, Oxford. Come learn how to make an easy and gorgeous DIY Holiday Mesh Wreath. All material provided, pre-cut and ready to go. \$15 fee for Oxford Seniors Members. \$20/non-members. Register today at 513-523-8100.

DECEMBER 2021

Friday, Dec. 3 - Friday Night Lights Movie- Monuments Men. 7pm at OCAC. Free admission. Popcorn/water are available for sale before the performance. A Member of the Miami Art Museum will host a brief conversation about the real monuments men and the works they saved.

Saturday, Dec. 4 –The Annual Oxford Holiday Festival!!!

9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. At Oxford Community Arts Center – Talawanda Band Craft Market; Pictures with Santa; Kids Korner (Holiday activities for kids)

5:00 p.m. – 9:00 pm at Uptown Parks – Musical Entertainment, Ice Skating Rink, Carriage Rides, Santa’s arrival by fire truck, Pictures with Santa (6-9 pm).



Oxford Holiday Festival
Saturday, December 4th 9 a.m. ~ 9 p.m.

at Oxford Community Arts Center
~Talawanda Band Boosters Craft Market
9 a.m. ~ 4 p.m.
~Pictures with Santa 12-2 p.m.
~Kids Korner 12-2 p.m.
(Holiday activities for kids)

at Uptown Parks
~Musical Entertainment 5-9 p.m.
~Ice Skating Rink 5-9 p.m.
~Carriage Rides 5-9 p.m.
~Santa's arrival by fire truck 6:30 p.m.
~Pictures with Santa 6:30-8:30 p.m.

PARKS & RECREATION
City of OXFORD
Oxford
Chamber of Commerce
ARTS CENTER
map

Friday, Dec. 10 - 2nd Friday-Evening of Art and Music; 6pm-9pm at OCAC. Celebrate a new month of fine and performing arts! Starting at 6 pm, stop by to view work from local and regional artists in one of three art gallery spaces. While enjoying complimentary hors d'oeuvres and wine, browse the Art Shop on the first floor or meet one of our Resident Artists on the third floor. At 7:30 pm, move into the Brant Ballroom for a free concert or performance.

As indicated earlier, all citizens are invited and encouraged to read the Oxford Tomorrow booklet to learn about Oxford's current conditions, recent trends, and pertinent issues. Watch for information in future editions of the O-Town News for details on how to participate in the public input opportunities. You can always visit the project website at www.oxfordtomorrow.org for the latest information.

Age-Friendly Oxford would like to thank the City of Oxford for funding this issue of O-Town News. If you have questions about the Oxford Tomorrow Plan, please contact the City of Oxford Planner Zach Moore, zmoore@cityofoxford.org or 513-524-5401. Ann Whelpton and Jessie Leek also participate in Steering Committee meeting and activities on behalf of Age Friendly Oxford; Ann can be reached at 513-520-7742 (leave a message) or agwhelpton@gmail.com and Jessie can be reached at jessie@agefriendlyoxford.org.

