

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Claridon Land Use Plan Update Committee formed in June of 2023 with the goal of providing the first update to Claridon's comprehensive land use plan since 1994. A survey was modeled after the one sent out in 1994 and some modifications were made in an effort to ask questions that more accurately gauge the sentiment of residents on a wide range of topics about Claridon Township. A postcard with instructions of how to take the online survey was mailed to every address in Claridon Township in November 2023. Also included on the postcard was an invitation to sign up for 'Claridon News & Notes' which is an email publication sent by one of the Claridon Trustees. Responses were received and analyzed in December 2023 and January 2024. We received 255 responses.

## **DEMOGRAPHICS**

The majority of respondents were over 40 years old, with 49% over 60 years old. 58% of respondents have lived in Claridon over 20 years while only 17% have lived in Claridon less than 5 years. 96% of respondents owned their own home and responses were evenly distributed from all four sections of the Township. When asked what size lot your home is located on, the amount of 3-5 acre lots and 5+ acre lots was evenly split, but less than 20% live on lots less than 3 acres.

## **RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS**

When asked what minimum lot size is best for the residential district, over 50% thought the current minimum of 3 acres should remain, less than 20% wanted something less than 3 acres and the rest thought a minimum lot size of 4 or 5 acres was ideal. Regarding lot width and frontage, again 53% said that the current minimum of 250 feet should remain while 26% said they would be OK with a smaller minimum width and frontage and the rest preferred a minimum lot width and frontage greater than 250 feet. Residents were also asked about flag lots and if they should be approved as buildable lots, 44% answered "no" 38% answered "yes" and 16% were unsure.

The current minimum floor area for a new home is 1000 square feet. When asked if this should remain, 50% of residents said yes, while 4% chose a smaller number and 46% said the minimum floor area for a new home should be 1500 square feet or more. Respondents were overwhelmingly in favor of accessory dwelling units with 75% being for allowing them, of those that want to allow ADU's, two thirds think they should be attached and share a common wall with the Primary Dwelling on the property.

When asked about higher density housing options such as duplexes, triplexes, apartments and condos/ townhomes, the response was overwhelmingly against. No less than 63% disapproved of every option and no more than 24% approved of any option, with duplexes receiving the most support.

## **COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS**

Claridon currently has 4 commercial districts and one industrial district. The survey asked if the size of each district should be decreased, increased, remain the same, or be eliminated. The majority of all respondents answered they would like these districts to remain the same. Residents were then asked about a myriad of commercial and recreational opportunities and whether these were located within a reasonable distance of their home. These included fast-food restaurants, sit-down restaurants, retail shopping such as grocery and clothing stores, services like banks, salons/barbers, accountants, gas stations, schools and recreation facilities for adults and children, such as parks.

For each specific category in the survey, over 80% of people said that particular facility was within a reasonable distance of their home. The question of whether shopping facilities such as clothing and apparel were within reasonable distance drew the most “no” answers with 18% saying those facilities were not within a reasonable distance of Claridon.

## **INSTITUTIONAL DISTRICT**

A question was posed regarding the possible expansion of uses within the existing institutional district. Of seven listed possibilities for new uses, a majority were in favor of two; sit-down restaurants and a senior center. Half were in favor of keeping the use as-is, and half were in favor of additional government offices moving into the institutional district. When asked specifically about a small hotel in the institutional district, 45% were in favor and 51% were against. A majority were against adding fast food, banks, gas stations or personal services like a barber shop.

## **ZONING AND LAND USE**

When asked about the purpose of zoning, an overwhelming majority of at least 70% in each category responded that zoning should exist for purposes such as protecting property values, protecting the environment, controlling development, providing for recreational areas, protecting farmland and open spaces.

The survey asked whether people were satisfied with zoning in Claridon Township and 71% said yes while only 13% said no, the rest were unsure about zoning. Regarding zoning enforcement, residents were asked on a scale of 1-10 how important proactive zoning regulation enforcement by the zoning inspector is. 25% said 10, being very important and over 58% answered somewhere between 7 and 10.

## **ROADS**

Respondents were asked if they had any specific concern about traffic, road maintenance or safety anywhere in the township. 52% said they did not have any concerns while 40% indicated they did. The comments that followed showed those with concerns focused on just a few intersections in Claridon, while also showing a general lack of understanding the difference between township, county and state roads. Some comments pertained to roads that are not in Claridon.

## **PARK**

Claridon Township operates one park. Residents were generally favorable to ideas such as grooming sports fields to increase use, improving and adding playground equipment and walking trails, adding lighting to the pavilion, and adding restrooms with running water. Only 19% said no improvements were needed.

## **HOME BASED BUSINESSES**

Currently Claridon zoning allows for some home based occupations with a permit, the survey asked if the following occupations that are currently not allowed should be allowed: Assembly, crafting, sales, and service of items and products made of fabric, glass, leather, metal, plastic, vinyl and wood; Building trade contractors, landscapers, craft/hobby shops, pet groomers and veterinarians. When asked about each category, a small majority answered they would like to see each category permitted as a home based occupation if all other applicable zoning regulations were met.

## **SIGNAGE**

Pertaining to signage there was a question about lowering the maximum height of signs from the current 25 feet down to 6 feet. 40% were in favor, 15% were against lowering the sign height, 11% were unsure and the rest did not answer the question. Another question was about the small Claridon signs at several entrances to the township. Residents were asked whether they support spending money to install more signs at other entry point in the township. The majority were in favor of doing so.

## **LIVING IN CLARIDON**

Respondents were asked what reason they would have to leave Claridon Township. This was an open ended question and the vast majority of comments related to the reason for leaving being that they had died, or that they had retired and moved to a warmer climate. Many other individual reasons were also given.

Finally, residents were asked what the 3 top goals of Claridon should be in the next 10 years. The top 3 answers were to maintain the rural character, protect ecologically sensitive areas and substantially improve internet service. Improving amenities at the township park was a close 4<sup>th</sup>.