

“I see this as a way to reinvest in and redevelop neighborhoods,” Hardin said.

Twenty years from now, he said, “I see this will have grown whole neighborhoods of thriving businesses, like the Short North. If we do this right, this is how I see it. Storefront after storefront: What better way to bring back these neighborhoods than by having neighbor-owned businesses in the community? That’s my vision. We want to bring back the density along the corridors of small businesses and really make them distinctive corridors, walkable space where people live and interact.”

### **Envisioning the future**

The land-use planning initiative Insight 2050, developed by the Urban Land Institute Columbus and multiple partners, including the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, to help guide strategic development in the region, predicts that both 20-year-olds and 70-year-olds will want to live within blocks of a grocery store, coffee shop and jazz club. Hardin predicted: “You will see mixed development — residential upstairs, commercial downstairs. It really is going back to how it used to be: small businesses that serve the neighborhood.”

Bake Me Happy co-owners Wendy Miller Pugh, 40, and Letha Pugh, 45, opened their gluten-free bakery at 116 E. Moler St. in Merion Village in 2014, and are expanding to include a coffee shop. Neither is from Columbus, but they met and married and are raising their 6-year-old daughter here.