The City Of
BRECKSVILLE
MASTER PLAN

GOALS & ACTIONS
DRAFT December 6, 2018

RECOMMENDATIONS
RESIDENTIAL

Objectives Addressed:

Brecksville is a community of choice, characterized by pristine homes in well-maintained neighborhoods. These neighborhoods define the City and provide quality homes in which to live, raise a family, and grow into old age.

Brecksville's neighborhoods cover the largest section of the City, taking up almost 40% of all land. Having been constructed over the course of decades, these neighborhoods span various designs, styles, and layouts from the earliest Victorian homes to single-story ranches, apartment homes, and senior living facilities. Together, these structures are home to the more than 13,000 residents of Brecksville.

"PEOPLE TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN MAINTAINING THEIR PROPERTIES"

WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT

A home is often the largest investment residents make in the City of Brecksville. The decision to purchase a home requires confidence in the long-term stability of residential areas, the quality and type of services the City provides, and the amenities offered. Likewise, desirable homes and neighborhoods attract prospective residents, which increases home values that pay for services and schools. As such, a strong and stable housing market is the backbone of the City and requires ongoing maintenance and investment to keep Brecksville's neighborhoods pristine.

Residential neighborhoods must also cater to the market for housing. As demographics of a community change, housing must be able to meet new demand in order to attract residents as homes go up for sale. This might include different types of housing as people age, different locations of housing as people seek new amenities, and different sizes of housing as households shrink. Preparing for these changes and providing the housing desired by residents means keeping Brecksville a community of choice in the future.

WHAT DOES THIS TOPIC COVER

This topic covers strategies and actions for protecting and maintaining existing neighborhoods, engaging their residents, and providing the type of housing needed for the future.

"THERE IS A NICE VARIETY OF HOUSING OPTIONS CURRENTLY AVAILABLE"

OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

The Residential Recommendations section addresses multiple objectives of the Plan, including providing a broad range of housing options (housing), reinforcing Brecksville's sense of place (character), and strengthening connections between neighbors (community).

STRATEGY 1
PROTECT EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS

Brecksville's housing stock is comprised largely of single-family homes. Of all housing units in Brecksville, 77% are single-family detached houses while an additional 9% are single-family attached. This abundance of single-family homes shapes the look and feel of the community, and is critical to the City's identity.

The need to protect single-family neighborhoods was a common theme heard from residents. In the Resident Survey, the highest priority housing objectives reflected this: 84.9% of respondents said maintaining existing housing and neighborhoods was a high priority, and 53.6% said matching the scale and design of existing homes in new construction was a high priority. Together, these were the top two priorities and reflect the desire of residents for a commitment to protecting neighborhoods.

This strategy entails actions to keep single-family neighborhoods intact while allowing appropriate and well-designed infill housing in existing neighborhoods.

ACTION 1.1
MAINTAIN EXISTING SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS AS SINGLE-FAMILY DISTRICTS

Type of Action: Ongoing

The large majority of residents live in single-family neighborhoods, and they have a clear desire to protect them. The City should continue to maintain single-family subdivisions by limiting other uses within them.

The information on pages 18 to 21 describes in detail and maps the locations of single-family neighborhoods that should be maintained as such.

ACTION 1.2
PROTECT AND BUFFER SINGLE-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOODS AS ADJACENT AREAS DEVELOP

Type of Action: Reactive

New developments may occur within the City of Brecksville, but because few large parcels remain,

development may be in close proximity to existing neighborhoods. The City should work with developers to ensure there are appropriate buffers between existing neighborhoods and adjacent higher uses. This will limit any negative effects on nearby homes. Buffers could include wide setbacks or extensive landscaping.

ACTION 1.3
DEVELOP CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES ON INFILL HOUSING AND HOME RECONSTRUCTION

Type of Action: Proactive

As homes and neighborhoods age, the potential for demolition of existing homes and construction of new homes increases. This is especially true of desirable neighborhoods and communities such as Brecksville.

Home redevelopment can impact neighbors and the environment with noise, sediment, or traffic. The City should develop guidelines on how to properly construct new homes that limit adverse impacts on surrounding properties during construction.

For more information on infill housing construction practices, refer to the blue box on page 5.

DEEP DIVE
INFILL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES

Infill housing entails the construction of new homes within existing neighborhoods rather than in new subdivisions. They may be homes constructed on vacant lots that—for one reason or another—were never built, or they may include the demolition of an existing structure and the construction of a new one.

Infill housing will become increasingly common in highly desirable, built-out communities as large, new development sites become scarce. Constructing housing within existing neighborhoods comes with specific challenges because smaller lots with neighboring homes means the noise, debris, and dangers of a construction site are immediately adjacent to families who may have children or pets. Infill development guidelines can outline community requirements to developers and the best practices for constructing new houses within existing neighborhoods.

EXAMPLE: EDMONTON, CANADA

With a projected population increase of 170,000 by 2025, the City of Edmonton, Canada recognized that infill development would be increasingly common in the community. To prepare for this, the City embarked on an ambitious project to inform the community what infill meant, encourage appropriate infill, and provide best practices to make new construction in existing neighborhoods as easy as possible.

To accomplish these goals, the City completed an Infill Housing Roadmap, which outlined specific actions for the City. As a result, the City has completed various documents to reach these goals. The 2018 Best Practices: Residential Construction Guide provides a summary of actions developers can take to construct infill housing while limiting negative affects on neighbors or the environment. This includes best practices for traffic, worksite safety, fencing, trees, site cleanliness, and others.

While the Best Practices book is a powerful guide to developing infill housing in Edmonton, the Infill Housing Roadmap also outlined smaller ways the City could make new construction easier on neighbors. For instance, the City developed a free postcard for construction companies. The postcard can be sent to neighboring properties to tell them what is being constructed, how long it is intended to take, and who to contact with questions.

Finally, the City outlined a Worksite Conduct Flyer to be posted at infill sites. The flyer reminds construction workers of their responsibilities during development, such as cleaning up the site, keeping sidewalks clear, ensuring appropriate drainage, and keeping noise to allowed hours.

For more information on Edmonton's infill housing initiatives, visit www.CityofEdmontonInfill.ca.

SECTION 3
Worksite Safety

Your construction site must be kept safe for both neighbours and workers at all times.

Locating all underground and surface utilities and maintaining clearances from these utilities when constructing or temporarily occupying the road/boulevard is important. Also, ensuring proper sizing and construction of tree protection, and clearances from the canopy and branches will help protect crews, neighbours and trees from unintended injury or damage. The City has developed a tree protection fence detail which will

WORKSITE
CODE OF CONDUCT

Everyone on site is responsible for keeping it clean and safe.

NO TRESPASSING
RESPECT NEIGHBOURING SPACES AND PROPERTY.

KEEP SIDEWALKS & ROADS CLEAR
IF YOU SEE DIRT, GRASS, SNOW, ICE OR ANYTHING ELSE, CLEAN IT UP.

The images above showcase examples of infill housing and the guidelines developed by the City of Edmonton.

Source: CityofEdmontonInfill.ca

ACTION 1.4
▶ DEVELOP DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL HOUSING

Type of Action: Proactive

In the Resident Survey, respondents said that new homes should match the scale and design of existing homes. To accomplish this, the City should develop design guidelines that outline basic parameters for the development of new homes or updating of existing homes. These standards could address elements such as height, materials, windows, landscaping, shape and form of the home, and complementary architectural styles to ensure that new homes in Brecksville fit residents' desired look and feel.

Because Brecksville's existing homes span a variety of ages and styles, any new residential design guidelines could more broadly outline the placement and shape of new homes rather than requiring a specific architectural style.

For more information on residential design guidelines, refer to the blue box on page 7.

ACTION 1.5
▶ PARTNER WITH EXISTING NON-PROFITS TO CONDUCT FAIR HOUSING ACTIVITIES

Type of Action: Proactive

The federal Fair Housing Act protects buyers or renters from discrimination by making it unlawful to refuse to sell, rent to, or negotiate with any person because of that person's inclusion in a protected class. Those protected classes include race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, and national origin.

To actively address fair housing, the City of Brecksville should partner with existing non-profits such as the local Fair Housing Center for Rights & Research as well as the Cuyahoga County Department of Development to conduct fair housing activities. These can include educational outreach, workshops, training seminars, and testing activities.

The Brecksville Community Center incorporates classic Western Reserve elements in the design of the building including pediments, red brick, columns, and cupolas.

Source: City of Brecksville

DEEP DIVE
RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

Residential design guidelines are a way to reinforce community characteristics by establishing a baseline set of criteria for the construction of buildings. These design guidelines can range according to the needs of a community. For areas with a very unique architectural history or a very specific vision for development, design guidelines can be extremely detailed. Alternatively, areas with a diversity of architectural styles can have a broader set of baseline standards for the design of new structures. In both cases, the consistent use of design guidelines can yield an orderly and attractive community.

EXAMPLE: NEW ALBANY, OHIO

The City of New Albany, Ohio has established a set of branding and design guidelines for new buildings in the City, including residential structures. The guidelines are structured on the premise that the desirability of New Albany as a place to live, work, and invest is directly related to the quality of its built environment.

The design guidelines are based on the following principles:
- Quality building design on all building sides
- Design based on historic American architectural styles
- Pedestrian-friendly development
- Connectivity to existing streets
- Screened and landscaped parking
- Authentic and high-quality materials
- Attention to details and ornamentation
- Street trees, landscaping, and open space to enhance character
- Stewardship of natural and historic resources

These principles translate into specific architectural styles, designs, and layouts by outlining allowable height, orientation of doors, and exterior materials, as some examples.

The design guidelines have been used to shape a distinct community in New Albany. The focus on American architectural precedent has also been used in the City's public buildings, branding campaigns, and park designs to create a seamless feel through the entire community, as shown in the associated images.

For more information on New Albany's branding and design guidelines, visit www.NewAlbanyOhio.org.

The images above illustrate the City's design guidelines, example homes, and required detailing, such as window mullions.

Source: NewAlbanyOhio.org

STRATEGY 2
ENSURE THE ONGOING MAINTENANCE OF HOMES

Brecksville is a City composed largely of residential neighborhoods in a natural setting. An analysis of land use shows that 39.1% of land in Brecksville is comprised of single-family residential uses followed by 37.3% of land used for parks and open space. Together, these two uses account for more than three-quarters of all land in the City.

Because residential neighborhoods account for such a large portion of the City's built environment, taking care of those homes is important, and Brecksville's homes are aging. While the majority of homes in the City were built after 1970, the number of new homes built each decade has slowed because there is less vacant land available. Homes built between 1980 and 1989 account for 21.9% of all homes in the City, for instance, while homes built between 2000 and 2009 account for just 6.5% of all homes, showing that the pace of new construction has slowed. The median year built for housing units in Brecksville is 1978.

Homes in Brecksville are very well-maintained, residents continue to invest in home updates, and housing values are among the highest in the region. Because of this strong market, housing remains a strong point of the City. As homes age, however, additional problems can present themselves, and ongoing code enforcement can assist in identifying issues before they become major problems.

This strategy entails actions to identify code issues, track them, rectify them, and link residents to resources that can be of assistance.

Historic homes like this one in Brecksville, have character and charm that contribute to the community's image. These homes are also older, and they can bring maintenance issues that can be costly or difficult to complete.

Source: Flickr user Doug Kerr

ACTION 2.1
CONTINUE ACTIVE CODE ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

Type of Action: Ongoing

The City has existing staff dedicated to enforcing building codes in the City. As buildings age, these activities should continue to ensure the ongoing quality of the building stock.

ACTION 2.2
DEVELOP NEW METHODS OF REPORTING CODE COMPLAINTS

Type of Action: Proactive

Brecksville operates on a complaint basis for code enforcement, meaning that the City does not conduct Citywide checks of exterior home maintenance but rather relies on residents to inform the City when properties have code issues. To ensure that this process is easy, the City should develop new methods of reporting code complaints. This could include text based or online systems that allow residents to anonymously provide information.

For residents to understand what code issues look like, the City should provide easy to understand graphics or descriptions of basic code compliance on its website.

Cuyahoga County's Home Weatherization Assistance Program through CHN Housing Partners provides income-eligible homeowners and renters free home inspections and energy efficiency improvements, such as home insulation, that can help save money on utility bills.

Source: CHN Housing Partners

ACTION 2.3
TRACK NEIGHBORHOOD INVESTMENTS AND MAINTENANCE

Type of Action: Ongoing

To determine the extent and location of investments in home maintenance, the City should track investments in homes via building permit data to determine where investments are being made and where they are lacking. This can assist in pinpointing areas for code enforcement reviews.

ACTION 2.4
EVALUATE THE BENEFIT OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE HERITAGE HOME PROGRAM

Type of Action: Proactive

Historic homes are especially vulnerable to maintenance issues because of the age and detailing of these homes. The federal government generally defines historic structures as being 50 years or older, which would equate to approximately 2,100 units or 38% of Brecksville's total housing units.

The Heritage Home program through the Cleveland Restoration Society provides free technical assistance to homeowners of historic structures. The program also connects the owners of these structures to low-interest home loans so long as owners follow historic guidelines in making repairs. To be eligible for the Heritage Home program, the City of Brecksville would need to become a participating community in the program. The City should evaluate the costs and benefits of participation.

ACTION 2.5
CONNECT FAMILIES TO HOME MAINTENANCE ASSISTANCE

Type of Action: Ongoing

Programs already exist that can help homeowners make repairs and improve energy efficiency. Many of these programs are income-restricted; however, others are open to all residents.

The City should continue to connect owners to these resources by posting information on these programs to the City's website, advertising these programs in publications, and providing information at City Hall.

STRATEGY 3
ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF HOMES THAT ARE UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE TO ALL GENERATIONS

Universally accessible homes are structures that are designed to be usable by persons regardless of their physical abilities or attributes. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, but some examples include designing homes with lever handles that are more easily grasped by those with limited dexterity or with no-step entries to allow those in wheelchairs to access a home. The principle of constructing homes like this is called Universal Design.

Universal Design is becoming increasingly necessary because of demographic changes occurring nationally as well as locally. The increase in senior population is the largest driver of these changes because seniors tend to have more mobility issues than younger people. With the fourth highest life expectancy in the County, Brecksville will continue to see its senior population grow. This fits into the regional trend, which projects a 29.1% increase in seniors in Northeast Ohio by 2050.

The population trends occurring in Brecksville and the region mean that homes that are built with preparations for population changes will be better suited for the demands of the future. This strategy entails actions that can be taken to encourage the development of housing that can be accessed by all residents.

ACTION 3.1
DEVELOP UNIVERSAL DESIGN STANDARDS THAT CAN BE PROVIDED TO DEVELOPERS

Type of Action: Proactive

Universal Design is a method of designing, constructing, and rehabilitating homes that make the structures more easily used by the entire spectrum of human ability, regardless of one's age, size, ability, or disability.

Universal Design is broader than just accessibility, which tends to focus strictly on improvements that make homes wheelchair accessible. Rather, Universal Design can mean features that make homes more livable and safer for children, seniors, and those with disabilities. This may mean lower light switches that can be reached by those in wheelchairs and children. It may also mean the inclusion of grab bars to allow people to more easily sit and stand.

The inclusion of Universal Design principles in home construction not only yields homes that are able to be used by all, but it is also a way of constructing homes that can be more lucrative to developers. By developing homes that include Universal Design features, home construction companies expand the pool of potential buyers to include those with disabilities, those with children, or those with senior residents.
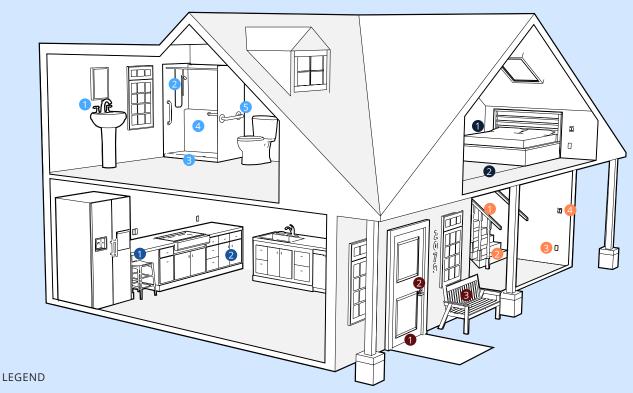
Many communities and organizations have already developed Universal Design guidebooks. Brecksville should work to develop or adopt an existing Universal Design standards book that can be provided to developers to encourage the inclusion of Universal Design features in new home construction.

For more information on Universal Design, refer to the blue box on page 11.

DEEP DIVE
UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Residences constructed using Universal Design techniques make them more accessible for owners, visitable for relatives, and marketable for developers. The diagram below displays some Universal Design features in a home. While not an exhaustive list, the features displayed encompass some common ways that developers can construct or retrofit homes to make them more usable.

Many communities and organizations have existing Universal Design guidebooks for new or renovated homes. One example is AARP's HomeFit Guide, which describes changes residents could make in their own home to make it suitable for themselves as they age. For more information on AARP's HomeFit Guide, visit www.AARP.org/livable-communities/.

LEGEND

Bathroom
1. Sink, bathtub, and shower faucets feature easy-to-use lever handles rather than knobs
2. Shower features a hand-held or adjustable showerhead
3. Shower has a no-step entry
4. Shower contains permanent or removable seating
5. Grab bars can be installed throughout the bathroom

Kitchen
1. Cabinets include a surface where a person can work while seated
2. Cabinetry is easy to open and uses "D" shaped handles

Bedroom
1. Bed is located for easy access to the bathroom
2. Rugs are secured to the floor with double-sided tape or non-slip mats

Entryway
1. Entrances are free of clutter and include a no-trip doorway
2. Doors use lever handles rather than knobs
3. A bench is available to place items when opening the door

Stairwell
1. Handrails are located on both sides of stairs and placed at user-appropriate height
2. Stairs have non-slip surfaces and are free of clutter
3. Wall plugs are placed higher on the wall
4. Light switches are located at the top and bottom of the stairway

ACTION 3.2
CONSIDER ALLOWING DENSITY BONUSES FOR MEETING UNIVERSAL DESIGN STANDARDS

Type of Action: Proactive

Density bonuses are a zoning tool in which a community allows a greater density of housing than is typically allowed in a given zoning district in exchange for certain criteria being met. In this case, the City of Brecksville could allow a greater density of housing within new subdivisions while requiring that developers construct homes using Universal Design standards.

To do so, the City should consider adding language to its Zoning Code to codify expectations for allowing density bonuses.

For more information on density bonuses, refer to the blue box on page 13.

ACTION 3.3
CONSIDER ALLOWING ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS FOR MULTI-GENERATIONAL HOUSING

Type of Action: Proactive

Accessory dwelling units or ADUs are second, small dwelling units located on the same property as the main home. They can take the form of a unit above the garage, a small attached or detached secondary house, or a basement unit with a separate entrance. In any case, the unit is separate from the main home but cannot be bought or sold separately.

Accessory dwelling units have become more prominent recently as trends have shown an increase in multi-generational families. This is especially the case for seniors who wish to retain independence and can maintain a home, but may desire to live in close proximity to family who can act as caregivers. ADUs can provide that space.

A number of attached ADUs already exist in Brecksville, but the City should explore updating its Zoning Code to allow the addition of separated ADUs in existing and proposed neighborhoods. This could include recommendations outlining the size and design of ADUs, as well as restrictions on who can reside there.

For more information on accessory dwelling units, refer to the blue box on page 13.

ACTION 3.4
SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-QUALITY SENIOR LIVING FACILITIES, ESPECIALLY ALONG BRECKSVILLE ROAD AND IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Type of Action: Reactive

For those seniors that choose or need an assisted living facility, the availability of those facilities in Brecksville is important. Beyond the existing facilities, the City should consider support for additional senior living facilities where market forces necessitate them. This should especially be true of areas within close proximity to services and amenities such as along Brecksville Road near the Town Center.

As with all structures in Brecksville, senior living facilities should be designed and built in a manner that includes attractive design and high-quality materials, with the ability to adapt to changing needs. This ensures that, should the market change in the future, senior living facilities could be repurposed to other uses if needed.

The Jennings at Brecksville is the City's newest senior living facility, with 74 one- and two-bedroom suites for residents.

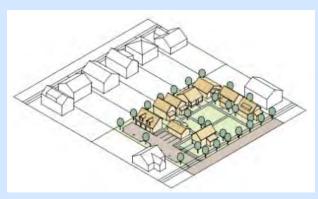*Source: Jennings Center for Older Adults*

DEEP DIVE
DENSITY BONUSES

A density bonus is an incentive-based tool that provides increases in the maximum number of units on a site in exchange for achieving other policy goals in the community. By providing regulatory relief to developers, cities can accomplish other policy goals without directly subsidizing new development.

Cities can exchange density bonuses to accomplish a variety of aims. The following outlines some of the ways communities use density bonuses:
- Special needs housing
- Underground parking
- Trail or pathway development
- Communal, park, or open space
- Preservation of historic structures
- Landscaping
- Various housing prices

The density bonus tool works best in areas where growth pressure is strong and land is limited.

The City of Spokane, WA used density bonuses in exchange for the development of more affordable housing units.

Source: City of Spokane, WA

DEEP DIVE
ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are second dwelling units located on the same property as the main home. Many zoning regulations restrict property owners from building more than one dwelling unit per lot to reinforce nuclear families. With more multi-generational families, ADUs can better provide for changing households.

While ADUs have advantages, Zoning Code changes are often required before any such structures could be built, and considerations must be made for local conditions. Among other local considerations, Zoning Codes should consider the following:
- Whether ADUs should be permitted by-right, by a special exemption, or as a conditional use
- Whether the homeowner should reside in the primary unit
- Whether the household within the ADU should be related to the owner of the primary unit
- Whether the design of the ADU fits neighborhood character and matches the primary structure
- If adequate parking, water, and sewer is provided

These and other considerations ensure that ADUs are a positive contribution to the community.

The image above shows an accessory dwelling unit located to the rear of the main housing unit.

Source: George Mason University

STRATEGY 4
INCREASE WAYS NEW RESIDENTS CAN BECOME ENGAGED IN THE COMMUNITY

Engagement is important to building community pride among residents. Engagement can be interpreted differently, but in Brecksville, the most popular ways people have said they are engaged with the City is through places of worship, neighborhood associations, athletic organizations, and schools according to the Resident Survey results.

More than 2/3 of respondents to the Resident Survey indicated feeling engaged in their community. There was also a clear correlation between engagement and quality of life. Among those who feel engaged, 67.4% said overall quality of life in Brecksville was excellent. Conversely, among those who do not feel engaged, only 34.5% said overall quality of life was excellent. This correlation shows how engagement is directly related to quality of life, and this strategy entails ways to ensure new residents become engaged members of the community.

ACTION 4.1
ENSURE ALL NEW RESIDENTS RECEIVE OR CAN ACCESS WELCOME PACKETS

Type of Action: Proactive

According to the US Census Bureau, approximately 1,200 residents moved into their Brecksville home within the last year. With such a large annual turnover, it is important to engage new residents to ensure they are welcomed in Brecksville and increase their quality of life. The City should seek to ensure new residents receive welcome packets, or post such information on the City's website.

For more information on welcome packets, refer to the blue box on page 15.

ACTION 4.2
INCREASE THE WAYS IN WHICH RESIDENTS CAN ACCESS INFORMATION ON EVENTS

Type of Action: Proactive

Community events are an important way for residents to interact with one another. Providing easy access to information about events is critical to ensuring residents are aware of them and can attend. The

City should continue publishing newsletters and information about events, but should also seek to increase the ways in which residents can access this information, such as through the use of an up-to-date community calendar or social media event pages.

ACTION 4.3
DEVELOP AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON FORMING AND MANAGING BLOCK CLUBS

Type of Action: Proactive

Block clubs can bring together residents in small areas or on specific streets to gather, organize, and have fun. They can connect neighbors who previously did not know each other, strengthen bonds, and host events.

The City should strengthen a block club program to connect neighbors and build local social networks. This could include developing materials on forming block clubs, encouraging residents to take ownership, mapping block groups and posting contact information, and streamlining a process for hosting block parties.

For more information on block clubs, refer to the blue box on page 15.

WELCOME PACKETS AND WEBSITES

Making new residents feel welcomed in their community can increase quality of life and turn new residents into life-long residents. Welcome packets can provide information, tell a story, and link neighbors to opportunities.

Welcome packets can include a variety of information for new residents. Common information includes contact lists, maps, guides to community services, and locations of amenities. To ensure residents can engage in their community, information on community groups, volunteer opportunities, and ways to get involved should be included. Providing up-to-date, well-designed, and comprehensive information communicates the community's values and brand.

Communities distribute welcome packets in multiple ways. Some of the most effective ways include working with Realtors, apartment complexes, and landlords to ensure they pass the information to new residents. Posting the information online is an increasingly common way for communities to distribute this information in a cheaper and more environmentally friendly manner.

The image above shows an example welcome packet from Delta Township, MI.

Source: www.deltami.gov

BLOCK CLUBS

Many residents seek to become engaged in their community but do not know how or where to start. Making the process of engaging with neighbors easier can facilitate the development of neighborhood networks. The steps below are based on the neighborhood block club manuals produced by the City of Chicago, which outlines the steps to set up an organization.

IDENTIFY A LOCAL RESIDENT
who can take a lead in building the neighborhood network

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

SET A MEETING
that is open to everyone and held in an accessible location

SET ROLES AND MISSION
to identify who does what, how to move forward, and what the goals are

BUILD A NETWORK
of neighbors by knocking on doors, placing calls, hanging flyers, and sending emails

DEVELOP AN AGENDA
of items to discuss, introductions to include, and rules for the discussion

HOLD THE NEXT MEETING
to keep the momentum going toward the first cookout, block watch, or other event

STRATEGY 5
ENCOURAGE A GREATER VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES IN MIXED-USE AREAS AND ALONG MAJOR CORRIDORS

Of Brecksville's housing stock, 86% is made up of single-family units, with the remaining 14% made up of other types of housing such as townhouses and small apartment or condo buildings. With coming changes in population such as smaller households, more seniors, and more young adults, providing housing that fits the needs of these population groups is important. Many of these groups tend to live in housing types other than single-family homes.

The desire for housing options in Brecksville is mixed, with residents cautious about the location, size, and type of new housing in the City. In general, the Resident Survey showed that respondents have a variety of housing options in mind when they consider future housing needs. Many respondents recognized a desire for smaller homes, homes in more walkable locations, or single-story homes. Seniors tended to describe a desire for homes that were senior-friendly and showed a preference for more townhouses and condos.

Many of the housing types discussed by residents constitute "missing middle" housing. Missing middle housing consists of a range of multi-unit or cluster housing types that are the same general scale as existing single-family homes but provide different types of living environments. These can include duplexes, fourplexes, cluster homes, townhouses, or small multi-unit buildings. The image at the bottom of the page showcases this range of missing middle housing.

To balance the desire to protect single-family neighborhoods while providing additional but limited opportunities for other housing options, the City should allow a greater variety of missing middle housing types in designated areas such as existing mixed-use areas and along major corridors.

Providing a range of housing options does not mean constructing large apartment complexes. While many communities provide single-family housing, there are a range of other options between single-family and mid-rise apartment buildings. These "missing middle" forms of housing such as duplexes, townhouses, or small multi-unit buildings can provide housing choice while retaining the character of a community.

Source: MissingMiddleHousing.com

ACTION 5.1
CONDUCT A HOUSING MARKET ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE DEMAND FOR HOUSING TYPES

Type of Action: Proactive

The Master Plan provides an overview of major housing market and population trends; however, it is not a segmented market study that showcases demand for various housing types, amenities, and prices. Such a market analysis can be helpful in determining the extent of demand for various products and at various price points. The City should work with a consultant to conduct a housing market analysis that can further inform the number and type of units needed and can assist in marketing potential redevelopment opportunities to developers.

ACTION 5.2
ALLOW A GREATER VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES IN MIXED-USE AREAS

Type of Action: Reactive

While the vast majority of Brecksville is and should remain devoted to single-family homes, the Town Center and VA site represent the best two opportunities for other types of housing that can attract young professionals, smaller families, and seniors looking for alternatives to single-family homes while remaining in the City of Brecksville.

Other areas that may be appropriate for additional housing types include the intersection of Fitzwater and Brecksville Road, and the intersection of Riverview and Chippewa Road.

The information on pages 18 to 21 describes in detail the appropriate types and locations of housing in each of these areas.

ACTION 5.3
ALLOW A GREATER VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES ALONG MAJOR CORRIDORS

Type of Action: Reactive

The increase in traffic and changing street design of major roads makes the possibility of new development types more likely.

Brecksville Road and Royalton Road have the greatest opportunity for changing land uses because they are major roads with high traffic and changing nearby land uses. A wider variety of uses may be suitable in these locations, including cluster homes and townhouses.

The information on pages 18 to 21 describes in detail the appropriate types and locations of housing for each of these corridors. Additionally, the design on page 22 shows how new housing construction could better fit with the traffic of major corridors.

A mix of two-family houses, townhouses, and single-family housing provides a variety of housing options for residents, but should be limited to mixed-use areas and major corridors in Brecksville.

Source: HUD.gov

AREAS FOR PROTECTION OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING AND AREAS SUITABLE FOR OTHER HOUSING TYPES

To display the locations in which single-family neighborhoods should be protected as well as those limited areas where other types of housing should be considered, the map on the following page and the table below should be used in tandem.

The map on the following page displays four categories: areas to protect as single-family, mixed-use areas where other housing types should be considered, major corridors where other housing should be considered, and major school sites. The edges are intentionally blurred as boundaries should be decided on an individual basis. Rather, they show general areas where single-family homes should be protected or other housing types could be introduced.
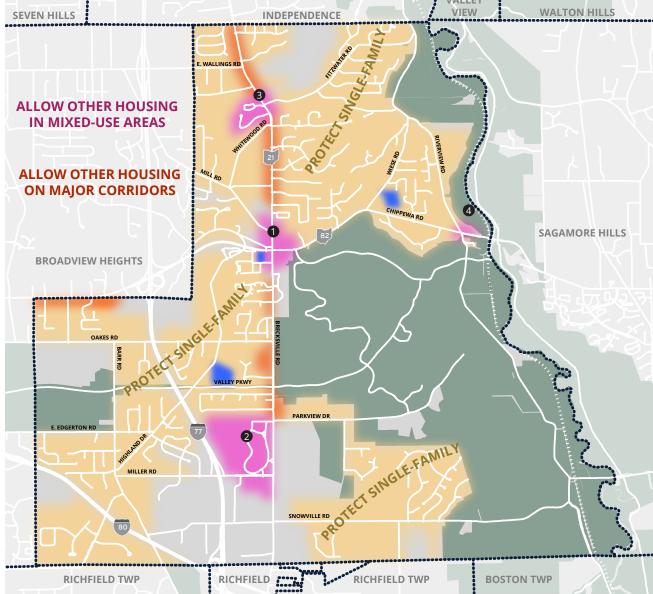
In general, all existing single-family subdivisions are shown as areas to protect for single-family housing in the future. Mixed-use areas include areas of existing or proposed commercial development: Brecksville

Town Center, the VA Area, Fitzwater Road at Brecksville Road, and Riverview Road by the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad station. These areas have an existing mix of businesses, restaurants, and housing that should continue.

Single-family homes that face the City's major spines of Route 82 and Route 21 are identified as areas where other forms of housing could be appropriate in the future. These are wide, high-speed corridors where single-family homes were historically built, but where changes in transportation may make single-family homes less of a future priority.

The chart below lists the mixed-use areas, major corridors and school sites, and it displays the types of housing that would be appropriate there. Additional information and displays of housing types are shown on the following pages.

MATRIX OF APPROPRIATE HOUSING TYPES BY AREA

	Brecksville Town Center	VA Area	Fitzwater @ Brecksville	Riverview and CVSR	Brecksville Road	Royalton Road West	Highland Elementary	Chippewa Elementary
Single-Family One-unit detached housing				■	■	■	■	■
Two-Family Two-unit attached housing				■	■	■	■	
Cluster Homes Closely grouped housing with shared open space			■	■	■	■	■	■
Townhouses Multiple, attached, side-by-side units	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Small Buildings Small, multi-unit buildings	■	■	■					
Mixed-Use Buildings Multi-unit buildings with first floor retail or offices and housing above	■	■	■					

Mixed-Use Areas   **Major Corridors**   **School Sites**

MAP 1
AREAS FOR PROTECTION OF SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING AND AREAS SUITABLE FOR OTHER HOUSING TYPES

ALLOW OTHER HOUSING IN MIXED-USE AREAS

ALLOW OTHER HOUSING ON MAJOR CORRIDORS

SEVEN HILLS
INDEPENDENCE
VALLEY VIEW
WALTON HILLS

E. WALLINGS RD
FITZWATER RD
WHITEWOOD RD
21
MILL RD
WIESE RD
RIVERVIEW RD
CHIPPEWA RD
82
PROTECT SINGLE-FAMILY
BROADVIEW HEIGHTS
SAGAMORE HILLS
OAKES RD
BARR RD
BRECKSVILLE RD
PROTECT SINGLE-FAMILY
VALLEY PKWY
E. EDGERTON RD
77
PARKVIEW DR
HIGHLAND DR
MILLER RD
SNOWVILLE RD
PROTECT SINGLE-FAMILY
80

RICHFIELD TWP
RICHFIELD
RICHFIELD TWP
BOSTON TWP

LEGEND

- ▢ Single-Family Neighborhoods for Protection
- ▢ Mixed-Use Areas for Other Housing Types
  - ❶ Brecksville Town Center
  - ❷ VA Area
  - ❸ Fitzwater @ Brecksville
  - ❹ Riverview and CVSR
- ▢ Major Corridors for Other Housing Types
- ▢ School Sites

- ▢ Park Lands
- ▢ Other Types of Land

APPROPRIATE HOUSING TYPES

The images below and on the following page display housing types that may be appropriate in given areas based on the matrix of appropriate housing types on the previous page.

SINGLE-FAMILY

Source: HUD.gov

Single-family homes are one-unit, detached structures typical of existing Brecksville neighborhoods

TWO-FAMILY

Source: Trulia.com

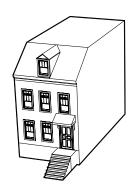Two-family homes are two-unit, attached structures that may be up-down or side-by-side buildings

CLUSTER HOMES

Source: ArchitectMagazine.com

Cluster homes are typically one-unit, detached structures, but are differentiated from single-family homes in that multiple buildings are clustered closely together around shared open space or amenities

TOWNHOUSES

Townhouses are comprised of multiple, attached units in a side-by-side configuration

Source: AbstractDevelopments.com

SMALL BUILDINGS

Small buildings are multi-unit structures scaled similar to surrounding structures and containing numerous individual units in a shared building

Source: rhconst.com

MIXED-USE BUILDINGS

Mixed-use buildings are multi-unit structures scaled similar to surrounding structures and containing numerous individual units in a shared building with other uses such as first-floor retail

Source: DublinOhioUSA.gov

HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT ON ROYALTON ROAD

Royalton Road west of the I-77 interchange is the dividing line between Broadview Heights to the north and Brecksville to the south. On the Broadview Heights side, commercial and industrial properties line most of Royalton Road, while single-family residential properties line the Brecksville side.

In an effort to alleviate congestion and improve safety, Royalton Road is being widened from the existing three lane road to five lanes from Town Centre Drive to Ken Mar Industrial Parkway. The increasing traffic and commercialization along Royalton Road has made single-family uses largely incompatible with the street design.

As development pressure along Royalton Road transforms the feel of this major corridor, Brecksville will have the possibility to offer new housing development types. Transitioning the current single-family lots into higher-density townhouse developments could support housing diversity and still provide an architecture and landscape familiar with the look and feel of Brecksville.

The design below shows how a trio of Royalton Road parcels could be reused for a slightly higher-density design. Homes face inward around common driveways. The design below also uses thick vegetation to separate residential uses from the higher-speed road.

By encouraging attached housing along Royalton Road West, the City can maintain the area for residential uses, limit the number of commercial spaces in the City, react to the decreasing demand for single-family standalone structures along Royalton Road, and maintain the community's woodsy feel.

Plans for Royalton Road include the addition of two lanes, a five-foot wide sidewalk, a 10-foot wide shared use path, lighting, and green and grey stormwater infrastructure.

Source: www.broadviewheights.org

POTENTIAL ROYALTON ROAD HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT DESIGN

LEGEND
1. Inward-facing housing development
2. Extensive landscaped buffer
3. Single, shared entrance

DEEP DIVE
HOME DESIGN ON MAJOR ROADS

Many communities on the edge of developing regions have been faced with the issue of previously rural streets lined by single-family homes that have slowly been widened and extended to become major corridors. These single-family homes now face wide, fast, and traffic-heavy streets.

In many cases, these streets transition away from single-family development as commercial or office uses are developed along the road. For communities seeking to retain residential uses along major corridors, however, home design along arterial roads can mean construction of structures that can add housing while retaining the rural feel of major roads.

EXAMPLE: BEACHWOOD, OHIO

Richmond Road in Beachwood, Ohio provides a strong example of how to develop housing along major roads. Richmond Road contains a number of major developments including Beachwood Place, City Hall, and numerous office buildings. Between these structures are a number of single-family homes as well as newer housing developments.

The pictures to the right showcase two of these newer housing developments along Richmond Road. The images display attached housing developments with shared driveways, common open space, and plentiful landscaping. Importantly, these developments provide wide buffers between high-speed traffic along Richmond Road and housing developments. Using fencing, trees, landscaping, and mounding, these developments provide multiple housing units that front the street and retain the feel of a wooded area. Likewise, the single, combined entrance to the development improves safety by limiting multiple curb cuts.

These two developments along Richmond Road in Beachwood, Ohio show the design, layout, and landscaping of residential structures along the major road.

Source: Google Earth

HOUSING REDEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL SITES

The City of Brecksville and the Brecksville-Broadview Heights School District are undertaking a land exchange that will allow the School District to construct a single, centralized school campus at Blossom Hill. As a result of this new construction, three existing schools will no longer be needed and provide opportunities for redevelopment. Given their differing locations, sizes, and structures, each school site can provide different redevelopment opportunities in the future. Below is a description of the existing school locations and proposed future uses.

CHIPPEWA ELEMENTARY SITE

The Chippewa Elementary School site is located off of Wiese Road in the wedge between Wiese and Chippewa Roads. Surrounded by single-family homes with limited buffers, any reuse of the school site should be limited to single-family homes with densities that match surrounding uses.

HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SITE

The Highland Elementary School site is located off of Highland Drive between Highland Drive and Valley Parkway. The school is bordered by housing, a church, and the parkway. Because of existing thick tree coverage, the school site is well-buffered from surrounding uses and could provide the opportunity for higher density single-family, attached housing, or townhouse-style developments to fit the need for a mix of residential uses in the City.

The images on the following page show examples of various densities that are possible at the Highland Elementary site.

CENTRAL SCHOOL SITE

The Central School site is located in Brecksville Town Center along Royalton Road just west of Brecksville Road. As the most historic and centrally located school, it holds the most promise for renovation of the existing structure as housing or offices.

The Central School site and potential reuse scenarios are discussed in detail on page 38.

	Chippewa Elementary	Highland Elementary	Central School
Parcel Acreage	12.1 Acres	21.2 Acres	3.6 Acres
Tree Canopy Coverage	8.3%	49.7%	12.9%
Current Zoning	R-20	C-F	C-F
Surrounding Zoning	R-20	R-20 R-30 C-F	R-8A C-F A-P

HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SITE

Nearly half the Highland Elementary school site is made up of wooded areas and has access to road access to Highland Dr.

Source: Google Earth

HIGHLAND ELEMENTARY SITE REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

The images below represent various densities of development that could fit on the Highland Elementary School site. The redevelopment scenarios present the maximum number of homes that could be constructed on the site if the minimum amount of green space is preserved.

R-20 Single-Family

Zoning: R-20
Minimum Lot: 20,000 Sq Ft
Reserved Open Space: 20%
Max Homes: 30

R-16 Single-Family

Zoning: R-16
Minimum Lot: 16,000 Sq Ft
Reserved Open Space: 20%
Max Homes: 37

R-8 Attached

Zoning: R-8
Minimum Lot: 8,000 Sq Ft
Reserved Open Space: 20%
Max Homes: 75

R-8 Townhouses

Zoning: R-8
Minimum Lot: 8,000 Sq Ft
Reserved Open Space: 20%
Max Homes: 75

Source: Connect Explorer

RECOMMENDATIONS
COMMERCIAL

Objectives Addressed:

Brecksville is a center for employment in the region, employing 10,000 people in stores, offices, and industrial buildings across the City. The majority of these jobs are concentrated in the southern end of the community, where industrial and office buildings are clustered to take advantage of the large parcels and convenient highway access.

Secondarily, Brecksville also has a concentration of jobs within the Town Center, where small stores, family-owned businesses, and a cluster of national retailers form the quaint community center of Brecksville. Together, the jobs in the City's south end and its Town Center combine to provide employment for thousands of people.

"THE CENTER OF TOWN IS A HISTORICAL GEM"

WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT

Brecksville's shopping and employment centers are important to the community's quality of life, sense of identity, and economic vitality. Brecksville's Town Center provides quaint shopping opportunities that enhance the high quality of life. The historic nature of the Town Center also provides a sense of identity for the community, which is steeped in history.

Maintaining the success of retail in the Brecksville Town Center will become an ongoing issue as more retail is constructed nearby and the changing nature of retail nationally puts pressure on the Town Center. As such, a concerted effort to manage and foster a vibrant Town Center is critical to the Plan.

Outside the Town Center, imminent changes to Brecksville will reinforce the south end of town as a major job hub. The mixed-use redevelopment of the former Veterans Affairs site will not only add jobs to the community, but will help shape the future of retail within Brecksville. If developed in a manner that is comprehensive, it also has the ability to positively impact surrounding properties. By fostering an attractive development, the City can attract new employment and grow the tax base, while maintaining its local character.

WHAT DOES THIS TOPIC COVER

This topic covers strategies and actions for managing the Town Center, fostering vibrant retail nodes, developing the VA area, and promoting economic development.

OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

The Commercial Recommendations section addresses multiple objectives of the Plan, including reinforcing Brecksville's sense of place (character), building upon our assets to grow employment opportunities (economic development), and enlivening our unique places (retail).

"ACTIVELY SUPPORT FUTURE RETAILERS"

STRATEGY 6
DEVELOP A BRECKSVILLE TOWN CENTER MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Historic, walkable retail districts such as the Brecksville Town Center can provide exciting and authentic experiences for visitors that differ from traditional retail centers. They can have a wider array of retail options, can include unique and interesting public spaces, and are often seen as the heart of a community. Despite these advantages, however, town centers also have specific challenges. Because they developed over time, they contain a mix of building types, sizes, conditions, and ownership. Without common ownership, town center districts can develop haphazardly or without a coherent retailing strategy.

Establishing a management framework for the Brecksville Town Center has long been a goal of City plans. The March, 1988 "Revitalization of Downtown Brecksville" report itself noted the lack of a managing organization, saying "it does not require a big organization with a big budget -- but it does require an organization." The need for such an organization remains, and this strategy entails steps to develop and fund that body, as well as activities it should undertake.

ACTION 6.1
CONVENE A MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION OF TOWN CENTER REPRESENTATIVES

Type of Action: Proactive

The City should work with businesses in the Town Center to convene a group of owners and operators for a Merchants Association. This association should be a first step in the formation of a lasting organization of businesses and stakeholders that can undertake the steps needed to guide the development of an active and vibrant Town Center.

ACTION 6.2
CONSIDER A SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT IN THE TOWN CENTER

Type of Action: Proactive

Enabled by the State of Ohio in 1994, Special Improvement Districts (SIDs) allow stakeholders in an area to provide funding for that area's improvement. Property owners can vote to pay additional property

tax assessments to fund special enhancements, improvements, or programs beyond regular City services. SIDs are in use throughout the County including the Gordon Square Arts District in Cleveland and the Coventry Village Special Improvement District in Cleveland Heights. These groups fund street and sidewalk clean-ups among other services.

A SID in Brecksville Town Center could help fund landscaping, street furniture, lighting, or improvements to shared parking areas. A SID could also fund ongoing cleanup and maintenance.

For more information on Special Improvement Districts, refer to the blue box on page 29.

ACTION 6.3
CONDUCT A RETAIL MARKET ASSESSMENT

Type of Action: Proactive

To determine the retail and services that are missing in the Town Center, identify those business types that should be targeted, and understand other business

SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

A Special Improvement District (SID) is a defined area in which property owners agree to levy additional funds on their property tax bills to finance cleaning, maintenance, and other improvements to the properties and public spaces in the SID. It is authorized under Chapter 1710 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC).

In partnership with the City, property owners are the principle partners in a SID's formation. Both the municipality and property owners draft a "Services Plan" outlining what services and activities will be funded by the assessments and for what length of time. On average, the process from conception to operation as a designated SID typically takes 18-24 months.

Following the formation of the SID, the organization is governed by a Board of Directors made up of members of the district and appointees from the legislative authority and Mayor.

BENEFITS OF A SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Many Special Improvement Districts are established as a way to supplement City services, but they can be tailored to the District's unique needs. Examples of programs and benefits include the following:

- Seasonal plantings
- More frequent trash pick-up
- Sidewalk snow removal
- Safety ambassadors
- District marketing
- Events such as concerts and art walks

FINANCING A SPECIAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Each SID has a different way of assessing business owners and their properties for the financing of services in the SID. A SID must be approved by 60% of property owners in the district as calculated by frontage length or 75% of total property owners in the district. The following are two examples of how property owners are assessed in a Special Improvement District.

Cedar Lee Special Improvement District, Cleveland Heights, Ohio

The Cedar Lee Special Improvement District assesses property owners based solely on the market value of properties as determined by the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Officer. The assessment is collected semi-annually and is voted on for a five-year term.

The 2018-2023 Plan of Services for the Cedar Lee Special Improvement District identified an annual budget of $155,888, generated almost entirely from these assessments. That money is intended to be spent for maintenance in the district, marketing, events, and physical improvements.

Gordon Square Special Improvement District, Cleveland, Ohio

The Gordon Square Special Improvement District assesses property owners based only on the front footage of properties.

In 2013, property owners in Gordon Square paid a fee of $29.225 per linear foot of frontage on Detroit Avenue, meaning approximately $900 per year ($75 per month) for a store with a 30-foot front. The Gordon Square SID generated $122,180 according to its 2013 income tax filing. More than 90% of that budget went to "Clean and Safe" programs that maintain the attractiveness of the district.

Image Sources: City of Cleveland Heights (top), Gordon Square Arts District (bottom)

districts, the City and its partners should conduct a retail market assessment. The results of such an assessment can provide a detailed analysis of the Town Center's economy and its potential. This will also be helpful in positioning the Town Center as it relates to the proposed mixed-use complex at the VA site.

For more information on Retail Market Assessments, refer to the blue box on page 31.

Home Days, but should expand the number and variety of events to attract additional visitors.

The City and a Town Center Merchants Association should work to expand existing events and add new ones. These events should highlight local businesses and foster activity in the area.

For more information on Town Center Events, refer to the blue box on page 31.

ACTION 6.4
ENCOURAGE LOCAL SHOPPING WITH MARKETING AND EVENTS

Type of Action: Ongoing

Brecksville's Town Center is a mix of local and national retailers. A study by the American Independent Business Alliance showed that local businesses keep dollars in a community and provide jobs to residents. They are also able to fill historic, small, or unique storefronts in a way that many national chains cannot.

To maintain and grow the local businesses in Brecksville Town Center, the City should undertake a "shop local" initiative that could include a local business guide, signage to identify local shops, and a campaign to bring attention to and celebrate small business.

Likewise, events are critical to Town Center businesses because they provide a reason for visiting the area besides shopping. The City of Brecksville already has a number of successful events in the area, especially

Shop Small stickers can showcase local businesses to help shoppers identify them.

Source: Flickr user Rusty Clark

ACTION 6.5
DEVELOP A LOCAL RETAIL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Type of Action: Proactive

Small businesses provide unique places to shop, are ingrained into the community, and help contribute to a sense of place, but they can also be difficult to start or to grow because of regulatory and financial hurdles. To assist in attracting, keeping, and growing small businesses, the City, Merchants Association, and Chamber of Commerce should work collaboratively to recruit new retail, provide financial and regulatory incentives, and offer resources to small businesses.

To recruit new retail, the City and its partners should actively seek out small businesses that could succeed in Brecksville. This should be tied with the retail market assessment outlined in Action 6.3. The City should list available spaces, market them to businesses, and provide easy ways of entering the market such as craft fairs and local markets that provide low-to-no-cost opportunities to test business concepts.

The City should also consider an incentive program to facilitate the opening of retailers in the Town Center. This program could include regulatory incentives such as faster approval processes or one-stop permit offices to ensure new businesses can quickly and easily navigate the system, or it could include financial incentives such as low-interest loans, facade improvement grants, or waived fees.

Finally, the City and its partners should work to assist businesses in addressing issues or trends. Examples include classes on changing tax laws for small businesses or resources on emerging technologies such as building a website, using social media, and selling goods online. Some of the current retail trends are outlined in the blue box on page 32.

Together these efforts can assist in attracting, maintaining, and expanding retailers in the Town Center.

DEEP DIVE
RETAIL MARKET ASSESSMENTS

The University of Wisconsin Extension in partnership with The Ohio State University and University of Minnesota Extension have developed a detailed guide for retail market assessments of small communities' business districts. According to their work, a retail market assessment is typically conducted to:

- help businesses understand their trade area to improve sales
- explore business development opportunities
- demonstrate the district's economic importance

The partnership developed a three-part market analysis toolbox for communities. Part 1 involves understanding the market by analyzing the trade area, developing demographic and economic analyses, and identifying peer city comparisons.

Part 2 analyzes the opportunities of sectors such as retail, restaurants, arts, housing, and office space to show what may be warranted.

Part 3 entails putting the research to work with conclusions for niche development, space usage, branding, recruitment, and benchmarking.

The analysis tool is free and accessible to all communities at www.fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis.

Retail market assessments can prove that demand exists for additional retailers.

Source: City of Cleveland Heights

DEEP DIVE
TOWN CENTER EVENTS

Community events are a critical piece of developing a business district identity and bringing new shoppers into an area. Hosting events in a district fosters a lively environment, attracts visitors, and provides a low-stress way of experiencing a district.

Events can be tailored to each district. Examples of events used in other communities include:

- Art walks
- Community concerts
- Mural painting
- Food truck festivals
- Chalk-on-the-walk
- Sidewalk book sales
- Parades
- Holiday markets
- Pop-up beer gardens
- Holiday tree lightings
- Craft shows

Events such as these can be undertaken by the City, local merchants, non-profits, or resident groups. By providing such events, these groups can support existing and potential retailers.

The image above shows a family-friendly art walk in Downtown Euclid.

Source: City of Euclid

DEEP DIVE
RETAIL TRENDS

The current national conversation paints a bleak picture of the future of brick-and-mortar retail in the United States—one of vacant storefronts, underutilized downtowns, and increasing online shopping. While the retail market is undergoing a substantial transition, due in large part to changing consumer preferences, physical retail is adapting alongside it.
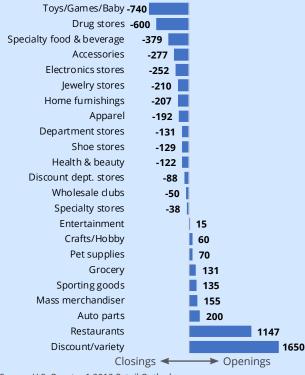
RETAIL TRENDS

The retail industry is in a transitional period characterized by widespread big-box and department store closures, and increasing e-commerce sales. While the impacts of these trends are far-reaching, the retail market is still expanding.

In the United States, consumer confidence is high, total retail sales are increasing at a rate of 2-3% per year, and shopping mall occupancy rates remain steady[1]. In addition, approximately 50,000 retail jobs have been added per month in 2018. This presents a stark contrast to the "retail apocalypse" often discussed on the national stage, when in reality, retail is undergoing a restructuring of industry dollars and key players[2].

While 2017 did set a record for announced store closings, these closings have been heavily concentrated in big-box electronics stores, apparel-based department stores, and clothing and footwear specialty stores[1]. Thus, the seemingly alarming volume of retail space being closed is due to large-footprint department store closures[3]. In addition, the majority of national retail closures are occurring in rural areas where there is not enough buying power to support them[4]. These large store closures are a natural response to the 1 billion square foot oversupply of retail in the United States, which has 40% more retail space per person than Canada, and 5 times more per person than the United Kingdom[1]. The Cleveland metro area has the third highest proportion of retail space per person nationwide, at 29.9 square feet[5].

The rise of e-commerce is significant in retail, with sales increasing an average of 15% per year since 2010; however, e-commerce sales still only accounted for 8.5% of total retail sales in 2017[6]. That said, brick-and-mortar sales growth has been strongest for retail with minimal e-commerce competition, particularly in the food and beverage and furniture sectors[6]. Grocery-anchored retail centers continue to be an attractive investment opportunity[7], and grocers,

warehouse clubs, and dollar and discount stores are adding physical locations, with Dollar General leading the pack at over 1,000 store openings in 2017[1]. In 2018, the number of total retail store openings across all categories actually exceeded the number of total retail store closures[8].

Figure 1
2018 Quarter 1 Net Announced Store Openings & Closings

Toys/Games/Baby	-740
Drug stores	-600
Specialty food & beverage	-379
Accessories	-277
Electronics stores	-252
Jewelry stores	-210
Home furnishings	-207
Apparel	-192
Department stores	-131
Shoe stores	-129
Health & beauty	-122
Discount dept. stores	-88
Wholesale clubs	-50
Specialty stores	-38
Entertainment	15
Crafts/Hobby	60
Pet supplies	70
Grocery	131
Sporting goods	135
Mass merchandiser	155
Auto parts	200
Restaurants	1147
Discount/variety	1650

Closings ⟷ Openings

Source: U.S. Quarter 1 2018 Retail Outlook

CONSUMER PREFERENCES

Consumer preferences play a significant role in shaping the future of retail. The two most prominent consumer trends in retail are a desire for convenience and a preference for experiences over goods.

Consumers consistently cite convenience as the top reason they shop online, and, similarly, cite long lines and inadequate parking as the top reason they avoid brick-and-mortar stores[9]. These preferences have implications for "commodity" retailers, which provide primary household goods and comprise the majority

of brick-and-mortar retail, such as drugstores, grocery stores, big-box stores, and warehouse clubs[10].

Consumers today, particularly millennials, also increasingly find time to be a more precious commodity than physical goods, and as such are more interested in creating shared memorable experiences than making purchases[11]. These preferences have implications for "specialty" retailers, such as open-air lifestyle centers, mixed-use districts, and entertainment centers, all of which are designed to offer an emotionally appealing retail environment for the delivery of aspirational goods and services[10].

Another important consumer trend is the growing consumption of food service. Consumer spending on food services has surpassed that of in-home and grocery spending, and all other retail spending combined[11]. In addition, 40% of consumers base their choice of shopping center primarily on the available dining options[11]. The share of shopping center space dedicated to food service has increased from 5% to 20%, and contributes to increased shopper traffic, higher dwell time, and greater spending[11]. Thus, restaurants can serve the purpose of experiential and destination retail[11].

RETAILER RESPONSES

The way retailers respond to changing market trends and consumer preferences will determine their future success. Retailers are adapting to the changing market through advances in technology, enhancing omnichannel strategies, providing unique customer experiences, and updating store design and layout.

To address consumers' concerns regarding convenience, retailers are adopting rapid checkout technologies, including mobile payment and checkout-free concepts[7].

Mobile checkout is increasingly connecting in-person shopping with mobile platforms for rapid checkouts.

Source: Adobe Stock

Retailers are also adopting omnichannel strategies that integrate technology into the traditional brick-and-mortar experience to provide seamless, unified coordination between online, mobile, and physical store platforms[6]. For example, Target and Walmart use omnichannel strategies to allow customers to place orders online for curbside pickup, and many retailers allow customers to return online purchases in-store[2].

Omnichannel retail also includes bringing online strategies into physical stores to enhance the consumer experience. Technology is being used to collect and manage consumer data through the use of geofences, which are virtual boundaries drawn around a store or shopping center that connect with shoppers' smartphones to track their movement and send tailored online promotions[12].

Retailers are adapting to consumers' desires for experiential retail by changing design elements of physical stores, recognizing that experience is one of the core competitive advantages that physical retail has over online shopping[13]. New retailers are setting up shop in historic buildings, or incorporating exposed brick, fine marble, artwork, and quality rugs into their stores and displays to convey an atmosphere of luxury[14]. Others are rolling out apparel stores with stylists to help customers put together ensembles using tablets, sporting goods stores with golf-stroke simulators, or cookware stores with cooking classes, to allow customers to test products and become fully engaged in new experiences[14].

To combat the oversupply of retail space, national retailers are creating smaller-footprint grocery stores, kiosks, and other small-format concepts, particularly for urban settings and mixed-use projects[1]. To reduce vacant retail space, landlords are repurposing former retail space into coworking space, which presents a viable solution to both decrease vacancy and drive additional foot traffic with a guaranteed daytime population that can revitalize the center and attract new tenants[15]. New leases in former department store space have been primarily smaller apparel and accessories stores, dining and food, craft and hobby, and entertainment, representing tenants that both address vacancy concerns and accommodate consumers' desire for experiences[16].

The retail transformation that is currently underway is a natural response to changing consumer preferences and advancements in technology. The next few years will likely bring continued closures and market adjustments among many national chains, but these closures will create space in the market for new, innovative retailers. Consumers are driving demand now more than ever, and in order to survive the shift and remain competitive, retailers must continue to adapt to consumers' needs.

STRATEGY 7
FOSTER VIBRANT RETAIL NODES IN EXISTING LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Brecksville's business districts and especially its Town Center provide community spaces, retail opportunities, employment, and a sense of place to its residents. The Town Center is centrally located and has strong anchors including Heinen's, Marc's, and cultural facilities. These assets should be built upon to improve the vibrancy of the district as a place to shop, linger, and meet with neighbors. Respondents to the Resident Survey said they preferred that the Town Center be a focus of retail activity, that the City should focus on filling vacant storefronts, and that local businesses were important. These can be handled by fostering vibrant retail nodes in the Town Center and other business clusters such as Fitzwater at Brecksville Road, and Riverview at Chippewa Road.

This strategy entails methods of fostering vibrant retail in the Town Center and other secondary retail districts. This includes updating regulations that will yield more walkable and better designed developments, considering protections for historic resources, and outlining the development potential within the Town Center.

ACTION 7.1
DEVELOP BUSINESS DISTRICT AND TOWN CENTER DESIGN GUIDELINES

Type of Action: Proactive

The City should outline design guidelines that facilitate vibrant and walkable business districts desired by residents. The principles of vibrant, walkable districts include some of the following:
- Buildings that are close to the street
- A mix of uses in a close area
- Clear, safe, and enjoyable pedestrian connections through an area
- Parking that is limited and located behind buildings

Design guidelines should outline the look, feel, layout, design, and materials of new developments. They should also outline building orientation, landscaping, and circulation to ensure new structures support a vibrant, walkable business district. Design guidelines should have similar characteristics across districts, but the Town Center should have more specific guidelines reflecting its importance.

For more information on commercial district design, refer to the blue box on page 43.

ACTION 7.2
UPDATE BUSINESS DISTRICT ZONING TO REFLECT DESIGN GUIDELINES

Type of Action: Proactive

The City should work to update its Local Business and Shopping Center Zoning Districts to reflect the proposed design guidelines. This should include reviewing permitted uses to eliminate those that are incompatible with vibrant, walkable districts—particularly automotive uses such as gas stations and drive-thrus. The City should also expand other allowable uses such as upper-floor residential to ensure an interesting and walkable mix.

Building layout should also be updated to require low-to-no setbacks and placement of parking areas that are behind or, if necessary, to the side of buildings.

Updating the regulations to require these changes will better prepare the local business districts for a more vibrant, walkable future.

ACTION 7.3
PARTNER WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOWN CENTER

Type of Action: Ongoing

The work of developing and programming local business districts will require the ongoing efforts of the City, merchants, developers, stakeholders, residents, and other groups working together toward a common vision. The City should work closely with these groups to facilitate the development desired by residents and outlined in the Master Plan.

The Brecksville Town Center Development Framework beginning on page 36 provides additional information and development principles.

ACTION 7.4
CONSIDER PROTECTIONS FOR HISTORIC STRUCTURES IN THE TOWN CENTER

Type of Action: Proactive

The Town Center retains multiple historic commercial structures, especially along Brecksville Road, that contribute to community character and cannot be easily replaced. To protect them, Brecksville should work with the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office to consider becoming a Certified Local Government and list structures for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places or a local historic program. This will allow structures to qualify for state and federal historic tax credits for their renovation.

ACTION 7.5
FURTHER REFINE OPTIONS FOR THE REUSE OF THE CENTRAL SCHOOL BUILDING

Type of Action: Proactive

The Central School site will be transferred to the City of Brecksville as part of an agreement for a new elementary school campus at Blossom Hill. Given the Central School's location, history, and size, its redevelopment will be important to the Town Center's ongoing success.

The Plan outlines similar projects and a redevelopment example beginning on page 38. The City should further refine this option, gather public input, and conduct a redevelopment request for proposals.

ACTION 7.6
EVALUATE REUSE OF CITY-OWNED LAND SOUTH OF THE TOWN CENTER

Type of Action: Proactive

The parcels immediately south of the Town Center include the Post Office, parking lots, and City service garage. Together, they form a nearly five acre site that could be reused for purposes that would more actively support a vibrant Town Center.

Because the sites are already used for government purposes, space to relocate those services would be necessary. The City should evaluate the potential for relocating existing services and redeveloping the site for a mixed-use development of housing, retail, or offices.

Granville, Ohio's quaint Downtown features historic structures and quality design that attracts visitors to the community.

Source: VisitGranvilleOhio.com

BRECKSVILLE TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Brecksville Town Center Development Framework provides an overview of the activities that will assist in enhancing the area. The development framework rests on a series of major principles, which are described in depth and displayed graphically on the following page. They are:

- Focus on strengthening the primary and secondary corridors
- Facilitate development of underused sites
- Encourage redevelopment of outdated structures
- Enhance existing walkable buildings
- Foster a consistent street face
- Expand a logical grid pattern of roads
- Leverage rivers, parks, and public spaces

STRENGTHEN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CORRIDORS

The Master Plan identifies corridors to be the focus of efforts to form a vibrant Town Center. The primary corridor is Brecksville Road south of Royalton and around the Town Square. This corridor has the highest concentration of walkable buildings and strategic assets. It should be the primary target for attracting new development, reinvestment, and activity.

The secondary corridors include Chippewa Road, Brecksville Road north, and Mill Road. These areas have fewer assets or walkable buildings, but future development could make these areas strong spines.

FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT OF UNDERUSED SITES

The Town Center Framework map on page 37 identifies three areas that are most likely to see development in coming years:

❶ Central School Site: This site could be reused as housing, live-work, creative office and green space. It is described in detail on the following pages.

❷ Former McDonald's Site: The restaurant's closure provides an opportunity to extend the Town Center south with a retail or mixed-use building.

❸ City-Owned Sites: The Post Office, parking lot, and service garage sites could be combined into a larger redevelopment site for a mix of uses.

ENCOURAGE REDEVELOPMENT OF OUTDATED STRUCTURES

The Framework does not identify other redevelopment areas, but identifies that older shopping plazas or outdated uses may ultimately change. These areas can be redeveloped in ways that support the vision of a vibrant retail center.

ENHANCE EXISTING WALKABLE BUILDINGS

The buildings in red are those structures that contribute to a walkable environment in the Town Center. They are up to the street, have front doors, and are commercial structures. Many are also historic buildings. These structures can continue to contribute to the Town Center if properly maintained or rehabilitated.

FOSTER A CONSISTENT STREET FACE

A consistent street face means buildings have similar setbacks from the road. The build-to lines display the streets where new construction should be required close to the street. Bringing new buildings adjacent to sidewalks creates clear pedestrian areas and supports walkability.
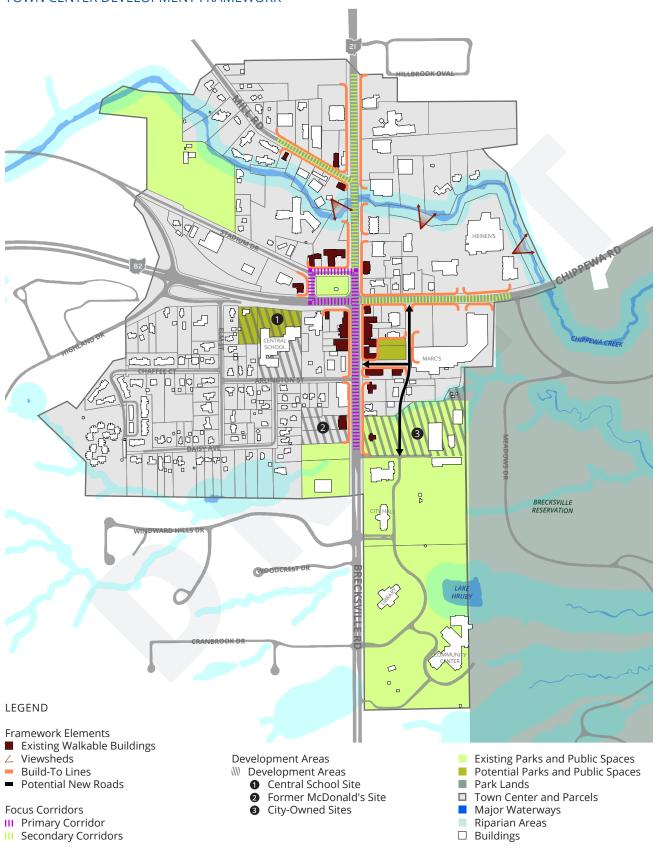
EXPAND A LOGICAL GRID PATTERN OF ROADS

The Town Center road network generally consists of the major corridors of Brecksville and Royalton/Chippewa Roads. To provide better access and define clear pedestrian and vehicular circulation, the City should encourage new streets through the southeast quadrant of the Town Center if it redevelops. This will better connect the retail district with redevelopment and recreation opportunities further south.

LEVERAGE RIVERS, PARKS, AND PUBLIC SPACES

To facilitate a more walkable and vibrant Town Center, the Development Framework map identifies the existing and potential rivers, parks, and public spaces that are natural assets. These areas are attractors and should be invested in as quality places.

MAP 2
TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

21

HILLBROOK OVAL

MILL RD

STADIUM DR

82

HIGHLAND DR

CHAFFEE CT

ARLINGTON ST

DAISY AVE

WINDWARD HILLS DR

WOODCREST DR

CRANBROOK DR

BRECKSVILLE RD

CENTRAL SCHOOL

MARC'S

HEINEN'S

CHIPPEWA RD

CHIPPEWA CREEK

MEADOWS DR

BRECKSVILLE RESERVATION

LAKE HRUBY

CITY HALL

LIBRARY

COMMUNITY CENTER

① ② ③

LEGEND

Framework Elements
- ■ Existing Walkable Buildings
- ∠ Viewsheds
- — Build-To Lines
- ▬ Potential New Roads

Focus Corridors
- ┃┃┃ Primary Corridor
- ┃┃┃ Secondary Corridors

Development Areas
- \\\\ Development Areas
- ❶ Central School Site
- ❷ Former McDonald's Site
- ❸ City-Owned Sites

- ▢ Existing Parks and Public Spaces
- ▢ Potential Parks and Public Spaces
- ▢ Park Lands
- ▢ Town Center and Parcels
- ■ Major Waterways
- ▢ Riparian Areas
- ▢ Buildings

CENTRAL SCHOOL SITE REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

Having been constructed in 1914, the Central School building is the School District's oldest structure. It has multiple additions that occurred in 1930, 1955, and 1980, and today it functions as a school for fourth and fifth grades. Given its location and historic importance, residents have communicated the desire to maintain the school building after the construction of a new school campus.

REDEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The graphic below displays the existing Central School site, including the various buildings, front green space, and rear parking areas. A detailed study will need to be completed to determine the feasibility of renovating some or all of the existing structures, but the color coding below shows a framework for how the site could be reused.

The green area is existing green space fronting Royalton Road that should be maintained. The historic 1914 structure in orange is the primary structure targeted for preservation due to its historic value and quality construction. The rear additions in pink could be considered for preservation or demolition because they do not contribute to the historic nature of the structure. Finally, the yellow parking areas represent potential development areas given the lower need for parking in reuse scenarios.

REDEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

Below are two redevelopment examples describing how other historic school buildings have been reused.

PITTSBURGH'S SOUTH HIGH

Pittsburgh's South High School was renovated in 2011 and is now used as apartments. The redevelopment maintained the existing lockers, hallways, and auditorium, but renovated classrooms into 76 apartments.
- Building Size: 172,260 sq. ft.
- Building Age: 1897 and 1924 (two attached structures)
- Reuse: 76 apartments
- Cost: $15.6 million, including $2.6 million in historic tax credits
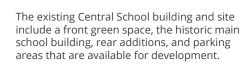- Redevelopment Completion: 2011

CLEVELAND'S MURRAY HILL SCHOOL

Cleveland's Murray Hill School complex is comprised of three buildings that were renovated into condominiums and galleries. They have maintained high occupancy since the redevelopment more than three decades ago.
- Building Size: 29,290 sq. ft. (gallery building)
- Building Age: 1907 and 1916 (two attached school buildings)
- Reuse: 44 condominiums and approximately 26 galleries/offices
- Redevelopment Completion: 1987

EXISTING CENTRAL SCHOOL
- Building Size: 73,504 sq. ft.
- Building Age: 1914 (main structure), 1930, 1955, and 1980 (additions)
- Site: 3.6 acres

DEVELOPMENT AREA

POTENTIAL REMOVAL

PRESERVATION & REUSE

GREEN SPACE

The existing Central School building and site include a front green space, the historic main school building, rear additions, and parking areas that are available for development.

REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIO: BRECKSVILLE'S CENTRAL SCHOOL

The redevelopment scenario below outlines a potential reuse for the Central School site. The scenario includes the renovation of the historic school as apartments, live-work units, or creative offices; the removal of more recent additions; and townhouses lining and facing Arlington Street. Parking would be accommodated between the townhouses and the historic school, and perimeter landscaping would protect adjacent homes.

The green space at the front is maintained, but divided. The area within the two school wings would become a private courtyard for tenants, while the area in front of the school would become public green space.

TOWNHOUSES FRONTING ARLINGTON ST
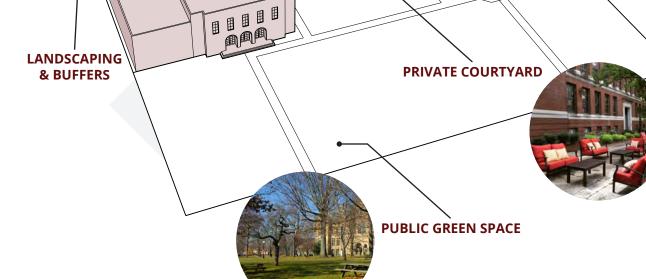
PARKING AREAS

ADAPTIVE REUSE OF HISTORIC SCHOOL
- Housing
- Live-Work Units
- Creative Office Space

LANDSCAPING & BUFFERS

PRIVATE COURTYARD

PUBLIC GREEN SPACE

Source Images (from top to bottom): Columbus Underground, Jax Stumps, The Residences at South High, Flickr user Jack W. Pearce

STRATEGY 8
DEVELOP A CONNECTED, MIXED-USE ENVIRONMENT IN THE GREATER VETERANS AFFAIRS AREA

At 103 acres, the former Veterans Affairs site is the largest and one of the most important development sites left in Brecksville and the County. The City and its selected developer have the opportunity to make a profound impact on the community through proper development of the VA site.

Residents have consistently said the VA site is critical to the City's future. The Steering Committee overwhelmingly identified the site as the greatest opportunity for future development. In the Resident Survey, respondents said they would like to see a mix of uses such as retail, office, parks, and even housing on the site.

Beyond development of the primary VA site, this strategy involves developing a seamless Greater VA Area that encompasses the VA site and adjacent properties. This ensures that development of the VA site meets the needs of residents and that further development works cohesively with the plans already underway.

ACTION 8.1
DEVELOP VA SITE DESIGN GUIDELINES

Type of Action: Proactive

While the VA site zoning has already been approved by voters, the City should develop more specific guidelines for the development of the VA site. These guidelines should require that the VA site be developed in a manner that yields a walkable, vibrant district that attracts new residents, businesses, and visitors.

Fostering this type of district requires updating standards to better match desired development types. The principles of vibrant, walkable districts include some of the following:
- Buildings that are close to the street
- A mix of uses in a close area
- Clear, safe, and enjoyable pedestrian connections through an area
- Parking that is limited and located behind buildings

The City of Brecksville should adopt development guidelines to better reflect these principles.

For more information on commercial district design, refer to the blue box on page 43.

ACTION 8.2
CONSIDER ZONING AND DESIGN GUIDELINES TO DEVELOP A SEAMLESS GREATER VA AREA

Type of Action: Proactive

The VA's redevelopment as a large-scale, mixed-use project with the potential for major employers, retail stores, and open spaces will yield development pressures beyond the site. Spin-off development seeking to take advantage of increased traffic will likely follow. Without proactive steps to ensure development fits with existing uses, adjacent construction could yield disconnected land uses. The City should proactively update its zoning and design guidelines for the areas adjacent to the VA site to ensure the Greater VA Area is developed cohesively.

One example of such a development is Dublin's Bridge Street District, which included design guidelines to develop a consistent feel for newly constructed buildings. For more information on this example, refer to the blue box on page 41.

DEEP DIVE
DUBLIN'S BRIDGE STREET DISTRICT

The City of Dublin is a wealthy, suburban Columbus community with a historic Downtown and a relatively underutilized river. While the City continued to add new subdivisions and residents in previously undeveloped areas, City planners recognized the need to reinvest in the City's core to maintain existing neighborhoods and capitalize on emerging trends. This core area they termed the Bridge Street District, which covers more than 700 acres in the heart of the City.

PROCESS

In 2009, the City of Dublin began planning for the Bridge Street District by identifying the trends shaping future development. Those trends indicated that walkable urbanism creates significant value, that employers seek these neighborhoods, that they boost home values, and that they advance sustainability initiatives. These and other trends indicated that to capitalize on changing demographics, Dublin had to plan for a different type of future.

To address this, the City's planning department embarked on a series of studies. These included a Corridor Vision that outlined a broad area vision, a specific Bridge Street Corridor Plan to encapsulate specific changes in the area, and Zoning Code amendments to codify these plans. Over the course of three years, the City of Dublin set the stage for planned redevelopment.

OUTCOMES

The Bridge Street Corridor Plan outlined specific public and private projects that would foster a connected and cohesive development. The Zoning Code amendments codified the look, feel, and placement of new buildings as well as the uses within each of them to ensure they fit together in a larger district. Within this context, the City identified public improvements that could contribute to a higher quality of life: streets, parks, waterways, trails, connections, and public buildings.

Together, these investments formed a complete district of parks, residences, businesses, and retail in a walkable, connected manner. Importantly, the Bridge Street District is not the effort of a single developer, but rather of many individual developments within a common planning framework.

The importance of Dublin's Bridge Street District is not only its superior planning but also its resounding success. By January 2017, the total public and private investment in the district had topped $120 million. That investment has included new roadways, a new park, hundreds of new residences, dozens of stores, a new convention center, new hotel, and new trails.

For more information on Dublin's Bridge Street District, visit http://bridgestreet.dublinohiousa.gov.

The rendering (top) and construction photo (bottom) show part of the Bridge Street District as envisioned and as built.

Source: BridgeStreet.DublinOhioUSA.gov

ACTION 8.3
PARTNER WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GREATER VA AREA

Type of Action: Ongoing

Seamlessly developing the Greater VA Area will require the ongoing efforts of the City, developers, stakeholders, residents, and other groups working toward a common vision. The City should work closely with these groups to facilitate development desired by residents and outlined in the Plan.

The Greater VA Area Development Framework beginning on page 44 provides additional information and development principles.

ACTION 8.4
ENCOURAGE A PHASED APPROACH TO THE VA DEVELOPMENT THAT FOSTERS COMPLETE NEIGHBORHOODS

Type of Action: Ongoing

The primary VA site covers 103 acres, and existing proposals call for more than 25 individual buildings to be constructed there. By contrast, the recently completed Pinecrest development in Orange Village covers approximately 55 acres and includes 12 new structures. Given the large size of the VA development site, full build-out will take years, and individual building sites may feel disconnected if constructed one at a time.

The City should encourage a phased approach to the development of the VA site that requires new structures to be clustered together as they are built. By building a series of structures in a small portion of the VA site initially, rather than constructing buildings that are disconnected on far ends of the site, the early phases of the VA development can form a complete neighborhood from the start rather than feeling disconnected.

The Grandview Yard development in Grandview Heights, Ohio has successfully attracted residents and offices in a well-designed, mixed-use development. Its phasing, however, has resulted in an incomplete feel with office workers and residents disconnected by vacant construction sites until market forces require additional development.

Source: GrandviewYard.com

DEEP DIVE
COMMERCIAL DISTRICT DESIGN

The design and layout of commercial districts and buildings are fundamental to how the area will be used. If it is designed to be safe and enjoyable for a pedestrian with wide sidewalks, attractive storefronts, and quality public spaces, people will be more likely to walk. If it is designed to move cars quickly and places large parking areas in front of stores, people will be more likely to drive.

To assist with the design of better district design, the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) has developed the "Getting to Great Places" report. It outlines principles for the design of commercial districts that are applicable across the country.

SEVEN KEY COMPONENTS TO DESIGNING VIBRANT PLACES

Based on research by the American Planning Association and Urban Land Institute, SPUR identified seven principles of urban design that are fundamental to the development of walkable places.

1. Create fine-grained pedestrian circulation: Develop frequent and densely interconnected pedestrian routes to provide visual interest and varied experiences. *(top image)*

2. Orient buildings to streets and open space: Place buildings immediately adjacent to sidewalks or public spaces to define streets and allow easy pedestrian access to stores and buildings.

3. Organize uses to support public activity: Active uses such as retail or event spaces should be placed along major pedestrian spines while pedestrian un-friendly uses like garages, blank walls, or loading docks should be hidden.

4. Place parking behind or below buildings: Parking lots should be placed behind buildings wherever possible to orient front entrances to the sidewalk rather than to the car.

5. Address the human scale with building and landscape details: Buildings should be designed with multiple storefronts, landscaping, clear windows, decorative elements, and other features that make walking feel interesting and enjoyable. *(bottom image)*

6. Provide clear, continuous pedestrian access: Sidewalks should be wide and form a completely connected network with frequent street crossings, lighting, street furniture, art, and trees.

7. Build complete streets: Streets should be designed to accommodate vehicular, bus, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic without building unnecessarily wide roads that encourage speeding and unsafe driving.

For more information and to read the full report, visit SPUR's website at www.designforwalkability.com.

The renderings above show an interconnected pedestrian network (top) and a human scale building with details at the street level (bottom), two principles of urban design.

Source: www.DesignforWalkability.com

GREATER VA AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Greater VA Area Development Framework provides an overview of the activities that will assist in enhancing the area. The development framework rests on a series of major principles, which are described in depth and displayed graphically on this and the following page. They are:

- Expand the development framework to include areas adjacent to the primary VA site
- Concentrate density toward the intersection of Brecksville and Miller Road
- Facilitate development of the primary VA site
- Foster a consistent street face
- Expand a logical grid pattern of roads
- Develop complementary residential neighborhoods

EXPAND THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The primary VA site is comprised of the former Veterans Affairs hospital campus; however, development of the campus into a mixed-use area will increase pressure on surrounding areas. To prepare for this change, the Greater VA Area Development Framework expands the scope to examine land uses beyond the primary VA site.

The framework on page 45 shows a Greater VA Area that includes three land use groupings:

- Office/Retail/Residential Mixed-Use: the primary VA site and some areas facing Miller Road provide the opportunity for a wide mix of uses

- Office/Industrial/Technology Mixed-Use: the existing manufacturing areas south of Miller Road provide opportunities for a mix of employment uses that would benefit from close location to residents and retail at the VA site

- Residential: the areas west and north of the primary VA site provide opportunities for residential development with a mix of densities

CONCENTRATE DENSITY

Given the size of the Greater VA Area, the site should be developed in a way that concentrates density at appropriate places—specifically, near the intersection of Miller and Brecksville Roads (❶). Density should dissipate further from this intersection.

By concentrating density in this area, it will create a clear center to the district and provide enough amenities in a small area to foster walkability. Residential, retail, office, and industrial areas should be less dense further from this area to transition into nearby residential neighborhoods.

FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIMARY VA SITE

The impetus for development of the Greater VA Area will be the appropriate development of the primary VA site. The City should continue to work with the developer to craft a layout that fits residents' needs, protects environmental features, and provides a catalyst for surrounding development.

FOSTER A CONSISTENT STREET FACE

To develop a vibrant and walkable Greater VA Area, visitors and shoppers must feel safe and comfortable walking between shops. The build-to lines display the streets where new construction should be required close to the street. Bringing new buildings adjacent to sidewalks creates clear pedestrian areas and supports a walkable VA area.
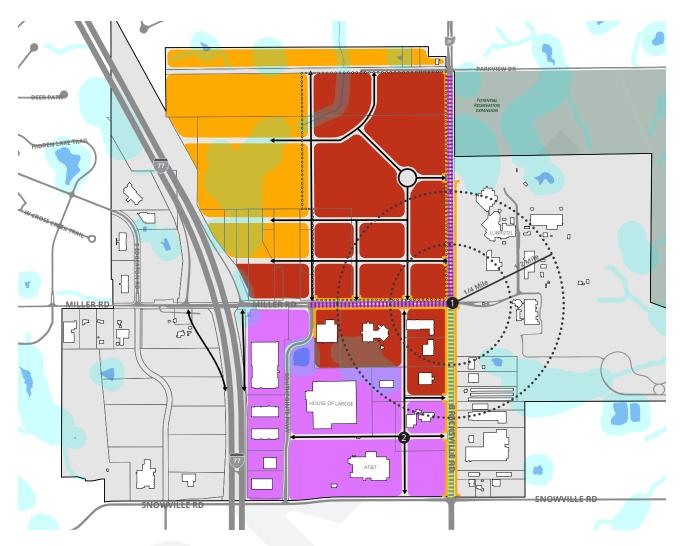
EXPAND A LOGICAL GRID PATTERN OF ROADS

The road network within the Greater VA Area generally consists of the major corridors of Miller Road, Brecksville Road, and I-77. As the area develops, expanding a logical grid pattern of streets running parallel to Miller and Brecksville Roads will help to distribute traffic, provide access points, and facilitate clear pedestrian networks (❷).

DEVELOP COMPLEMENTARY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

The area to the north and west of the primary VA site provides the opportunity for residential development located within walking distance of shops and offices. It can also provide space for alternate types of housing options. Like the mixed-use areas of the VA site, residential density should decrease as it gets closer to existing neighborhoods.

MAP 3
GREATER VA AREA DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

LEGEND

Framework Elements
- •• Density Core
- ▬ Build-To Lines
- ▬ Potential New Roads

Land Use Elements
- ■ Office/Retail/Residential Mixed-Use
- ■ Office/Industrial/Technology Mixed-Use
- ■ Residential

Focus Corridors
- ||| Primary Corridor
- ||| Secondary Corridors

- ▢ Greater VA Area and Parcels
- ■ Major Waterways
- ▢ Riparian Areas
- ▢ Buildings
- ■ Park Lands

Dublin's Bridge Street District is an example of a consistent street face along a multi-lane road.

Source: Google Earth

STRATEGY 9
BROADEN THE CITY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION

A community's website is increasingly the first place site selectors and developers visit when considering where to invest. According to research from GIS Planning, 97% of site selectors research locations online, meaning the branding of a website, ease of use, and availability of relevant data is critical to economic growth.

This strategy entails the updating and expansion of economic development information, especially on the City's website as a method of attracting and growing new businesses or helping existing ones remain and expand.

ACTION 9.1
EXPAND THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEBPAGE TO INCLUDE DETAILED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DATA

Type of Action: Proactive

Modern economic development websites include detailed information on available spaces, demographics, drive times, access to highways, major employers, and other relevant information. They also include contacts, a description of the development process, and incentives available to developers. Likewise, this information is targeted to new and existing businesses seeking ways to grow.

The City of Cleveland's Rethink Cleveland website is a good example of a local economic development platform with data, contacts, key industries, and helpful features.

Source: RethinkCleveland.org

The City should update and expand its economic development webpage to include information on the value of locating or expanding in Brecksville.

ACTION 9.2
POST CITY ORDINANCES ONLINE

Type of Action: Proactive

While many guides, PDF documents, and outlines of development ordinances are on the City's website, the full Zoning Code is not placed online in an accessible manner to residents and developers. The City should update its website to include its complete ordinances.

ACTION 9.3
CONTINUE UPDATING A MAP OF VACANT AND AVAILABLE ECONOMIC SITES AND POST THE INFORMATION ONLINE

Type of Action: Ongoing

The City has produced a map of vacant and available economic sites in past years. This information has displayed the location and availability of vacant parcels for new development. This powerful tool should continue in the future and be posted online.

STRATEGY 10
PROMOTE TOURISM AS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL

Tourism has become a formidable industry in the Cleveland region in recent years. In 2016, 18 million visitors came to the region, representing a 2.8% growth rate according to Destination Cleveland, the region's convention and visitors bureau. According to their research, this growth rate has outpaced the nation's growth rate for the 7th year and the spending of those visitors has supported 66,000 travel and tourism jobs.

With a regional goal of 20 million visitors by 2020, Brecksville has the opportunity to capitalize on this growing tourism trend. This can support jobs in the Town Center, introduce potential residents to the City, and add vibrancy to business districts.

This strategy entails promoting tourism as a means of supporting local economic development initiatives by attracting visitors and building upon the City's existing tourism assets.

ACTION 10.1
FORMALIZE A TOURISM STRATEGY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH REGIONAL PARKS TO ATTRACT VISITORS

Type of Action: Proactive

Brecksville has a unique charm with quaint retail spaces and amenities that draw not only residents, but also visitors from neighboring communities and patrons from both the Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. Every trip into the City is an opportunity to create repeat visitors and expand upon the "Brecksville" experience.

Broadening the City's tourism efforts is an opportunity for the City to reach a much larger audience and attract more visitors to its local shops, restaurants, and amenities. The City should formalize a tourism strategy in partnership with the Cleveland Metroparks and the National Park Service. This strategy could include ways to guide park visitors into the Town Center, links on the park district and City websites, articles in tourism magazines, or other forms of outreach.

ACTION 10.2
FOSTER THE RIVERVIEW AND CUYAHOGA VALLEY SCENIC RAILROAD AREA AS A TOURISM HUB

Type of Action: Proactive

The Riverview and Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad station area has the potential to become a hub for tourism to the City of Brecksville. The area includes a stop on the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, trail connections including the Towpath Trail, and the potential for a landing along a proposed Cuyahoga River water trail. Riverview and Chippewa Road is also an entrance to the Cleveland Metroparks and Cuyahoga Valley National Park.

The City should partner with the park districts to further refine plans for a recreation hub in this area that could provide multiple amenities, retail, and clear transportation connections.

ACTION 10.3
DEVELOP A WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM FOR THE TOWN CENTER

Type of Action: Proactive

A web presence is essential to increasing visitability and attracting attention. A Brecksville Town Center website that includes links to businesses and contains information about available commercial space, the community as a whole, and updates about developments or events would help attract visitors and investors. This creates a one-stop-shop for all those interested in working, living, or visiting the Brecksville Town Center.

In addition to websites, many people find their information through social media. It is becoming a predominant form of information sharing and marketing. Social media is a fast, easy, and cost-effective way to advertise and distribute information.

A Brecksville Town Center social media presence could include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other sites.

ACTION 10.4
DEVELOP TOURISM ITINERARIES FOR BRECKSVILLE

Type of Action: Proactive

Visitors to Brecksville may not know all of the attractions and sites in the Town Center or the City as a whole. The City should develop tourism itineraries for a day in Brecksville to outline the must-see attractions, most popular stops, and potential sites to visit as a way to showcase the City to potential visitors. These itineraries should be posted online to encourage tourism.

DEEP DIVE
TOURISM OHIO AND DESTINATION GEAUGA

Modern tourism no longer fits the standard mold of what a vacation should be, but often now takes the shape of day trips to local destinations. Tourism has evolved, and communities have taken notice.

In recent years, communities have identified the importance of marketing themselves regionally and nationally. Campaigns like "Pure Michigan" and "Ohio. Find it Here." have begun to change how we view tourism. Local communities have adapted as a result.

TOURISM OHIO AND DESTINATION GEAUGA

TourismOhio was formed through the Ohio Development Services Agency and is responsible for telling the story of what makes Ohio a unique and unforgettable place to visit. They promote Ohio as a "destination of choice" that enriches lives through authentic travel experiences, and they work with local communities to improve tourism infrastructure.

Destination Geauga is a tourism and social media platform that promotes the County as a diverse place to visit. In partnership with TourismOhio, they

developed a detailed website, marketing campaign complete with an eye-catching visitor's guide, and social media presence. TourismOhio's resources include social media pages, blog coverage, the Ohio Travel Guide, monetary assistance for advertising, group trips with media, brochure distribution, and listings on TourismOhio's online event database.

To find out more about tourism in Ohio, please visit www.ohio.org and for information on Destination Geauga, visit www.destinationgeauga.com.

TourismOhio's new brand is used to market communities across the state.

Source: www.Ohio.org

STRATEGY 11
CONTINUE ATTRACTING OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENTS TO THE SOUTH END OF THE CITY

Brecksville's 1980 Master Plan encouraged continued office and industrial development on the south end of the City to boost the tax base and provide jobs to residents. The strategy has successfully attracted major employers to the area, which now hosts more than 8,000 jobs of which almost two-thirds have a salary above $40,000.

The strategy of developing the south end of town for office and industrial developments should continue moving forward; however, the decreasing amount of available land, aging structures, and regional competition requires changing tactics. This strategy entails actions shifting attention toward redevelopment, multi-jurisdictional economic development initiatives, and clear incentives to attract continued investment in the area.

ACTION 11.1
PRIORITIZE RETENTION AND OUTREACH TO EXISTING BUSINESSES

Type of Action: Ongoing

As developable land in Brecksville dwindles, the City's economic development strategy will need to shift to prioritizing retention and expansion among existing businesses. The City already maintains high quality relationships with businesses in the community, but it should expand outreach to better understand business needs and any barriers to expansion.

ACTION 11.2
WORK WITH COMMUNITIES SOUTH OF BRECKSVILLE TO ADVERTISE THE AREA TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS

Type of Action: Proactive

While economic development efforts have historically been undertaken regionally or locally, there have been fewer multi-jurisdictional economic initiatives. Brecksville should be a leader in multi-jurisdictional economic development efforts by working with Richfield Township and the City of Richfield to develop high-quality marketing for the office, laboratory,

technology, and industrial area that straddles these communities. This could include resources for business attraction, shared incentives, and a consistent brand. Such an economic development consortium could also develop a labor supply study, craft a marketing campaign, identify needed infrastructure investments, and coordinate development efforts.

By working collaboratively to promote a shared vision, the district can be proactive in attracting new investment rather than shuffling existing employers.

ACTION 11.3
DEVELOP STANDARDIZED BUSINESS INCENTIVES

Type of Action: Proactive

The City of Brecksville is competing regionally, nationally, and globally for new employment. To win new jobs, the City must be proactive in its approach to job attraction by developing a standardized set of business incentives that are easily navigable by companies seeking to invest.

The City should work to develop a set of standard business incentives for adoption by City Council.

County Planning

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