



# MAPLE HEIGHTS MASTER PLAN

PREPARED BY THE CUYAHOGA COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION  
ON BEHALF OF THE CITY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS

ADOPTED JANUARY, 2019



# Acknowledgments



## County Planning

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### ABOUT COUNTY PLANNING

The Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's mission is to inform and provide services in support of the short and long term comprehensive planning, quality of life, environment, and economic development of Cuyahoga County and its cities, villages and townships.

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Pastor David McKenzie  
Devin Nelson  
Linda Vopat  
Andrea Wilson  
Wendy Worthing

• Mayor Annette M. Blackwell •

*City Of*  
**MAPLE HEIGHTS**



Home of the  
Maple Heights  
Mustangs  
2010  
Division II  
State Champions



# OUR THANKS

A special thank you to all the residents, groups, public officials, business owners, and community representatives that participated in the Master Plan process. Your input at public meetings, online surveys, interviews, and one-on-one conversations ensured that this document included the thoughts, opinions, hopes, and goals of those who call Maple Heights home.

Thank you especially to those members of City Council and the Steering Committee that dedicated their time, energy, and expertise in crafting a Plan for the City.

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Finally, a special thank you to Remington College for opening their facility for our Steering Committee and Public Meetings.

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## COMMUNITY VISION PRINCIPLES

PAGE 31

← The Vision Principles are the foundation of the Plan and are the basis for all the Goals & Actions.

## GOALS & ACTIONS

← The Goals & Actions are the way to achieve the Vision Principles. They are broken into Place-Based and Citywide Goals & Actions.

### PLACE-BASED FRAMEWORK

PAGE 35

↑ The Place-Based Framework outlines the Goals & Actions that are tied to specific areas of the City.

### CITYWIDE FRAMEWORK

PAGE 75

↑ The Citywide Framework outlines Goals & Actions that are general and apply Citywide.



# 1. Introduction

## WELCOME TO THE MASTER PLAN

The Maple Heights Master Plan is a collection of community aspirations that aim to inspire and guide City officials and residents as they move the community into the future. By writing down these aspirations, we memorialize the hopes of the Maple Heights community and, importantly, we outline the steps necessary to achieve our goals.

The Maple Heights Master Plan examines the current conditions throughout the City to develop a profile of demographic trends that are shaping the City today. This helps to determine which trends should be fostered for the future and which need to change. These trends and the input of the public help determine the vision for the future that is outlined in the Master Plan. This vision is uniquely tailored to the community of Maple Heights and residents' goals for the future.

Based on the current conditions, input, and vision for the future, the Master Plan outlines specific steps that can be taken Citywide and in focus areas to deliver the changes residents wish to see. These ideas range from small changes that can improve daily life in Maple Heights, to large changes that will take time to implement.

With actions in hand, the Maple Heights Master Plan outlines specific steps that can be taken to move the City forward.

The Maple Heights Master Plan is the beginning of this process of transformation. It is intended to guide changes over many years. Only with the dedicated work of residents, business owners, and City staff can the Master Plan's goals be achieved. Together, we can work to create a greater Maple Heights.

## INTRODUCTION

- History of Maple Heights, page 10
- What is a Master Plan, page 12
- Public Involvement, page 14
- Previous Plans, page 16
- Planning Context, page 20

# 1.1 HISTORY OF MAPLE HEIGHTS

## EARLY HISTORY

Present day northeastern Ohio was a part of the Connecticut Western Reserve, land claimed by the state of Connecticut after the American Revolutionary War. The land was sold to the Connecticut Land Company in the late 1790s and divided into Townships and the City of Cleveland by surveyor Moses Cleaveland. The first known settler in the area was Benjamin Fitch in 1813. The area which is now Maple Heights was the Maple Grove area of Bedford Township, established in 1832, until it incorporated in 1915. The community incorporated to avoid annexation by Bedford Village. Maple Grove and Maple Heights were named for the area's many maple trees.

## CITY ESTABLISHMENT

Maple Heights incorporated as a village in July of 1915 with approximately 1,000 residents and the same boundaries that define it to this day. A Mayor-Council form of government was established in June of 1930. On January 1, 1932, the Village incorporated as a City after a significant population increase to more than 5,000 residents as a result of eastern European immigration to Cleveland spreading south. This included many immigrants from Italy, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and France.



The original Maple Heights school house now contains the Maple Heights Historical Society and Museum.

Source: Maple Heights Historical Society and Museum

## RAILROAD HISTORY

Maple Heights became a prime location for industry after the Cleveland & Pittsburgh Railroad was built through the area in 1849 as well as the Connotton Valley Railroad in 1881. The Akron, Bedford, & Cleveland interurban line also ran through Maple Heights from 1895 to 1932. Industry expanded after Dunham Road was built in 1827 and connected to the Ohio and Erie Canal. This included a variety of companies from Aluminum Smelting & Refining Co. and Jones and Laughlin Steel to Lempco Industries, an auto manufacturing company, and Kraft Foods.



The Mapletown Theater opened in November 1949 and expanded in the following decades. It anchored the larger Mapletown Shopping Center. The now-closed theater remains part of the Mapletown complex.

Source: CinemaTreasures.org user Jeterga

## POST-WAR BOOM

An increase in shopping centers followed the end of World War II in Maple Heights. Mapletown Shopping Center was constructed in 1947 at the intersection of Libby and Broadway, followed by Southgate Shopping Center in 1955. At the time, it had 44 stores but grew to 86 stores by 1961. Both retail areas still exist today.

Population boomed during this time as well, growing from around 6,500 residents in 1940 to 15,500 in 1950. By 1960, the population had more than doubled again to approximately 31,500 residents. The residents of Maple Heights were historically of eastern European descent, but over the course of the past 35 years or so the population has shifted to be majority African-American.

## MAPLE HEIGHTS TODAY

Since the end of the Post-War boom, Maple Heights has struggled to maintain prosperity. Southgate Shopping Center lost two of its department stores and has seen minimal investment since a new K-Mart opened in 1978. The City's

housing stock has also aged as new development has moved to greenfields outside the land-locked space of Maple Heights.

Despite the struggles associated with a built-out community and the remnants of the housing crisis of 2008, Maple Heights' retains many of the economic attractors that made it successful in the first place. The City's railroads still actively move freight and goods throughout the region and nation, its housing stock is affordable and attractive, and its location along major highways makes the City easily accessible. While difficulties remain, the City's strong fundamentals can be built upon for new development in the 21st Century.



The Southgate Shopping Center opened at the corner of Libby and Warrensville Center Roads in 1955 with 44 stores before expanding to 86 stores in 1961.

Source: Maple Heights Historical Society and Museum



"Envision" Cleveland, in partnership with Hope Alliance Bible Church, volunteering to clean Safety Town and the Stafford Park basketball courts in 2018.

Source: City of Maple Heights

## 1.2 WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN

### WHAT IS A MASTER PLAN

A Master Plan is a policy guide created by the City of Maple Heights in collaboration with residents, business owners, stakeholders, and interested groups. It is a long-term Plan for how the community wants to grow and develop in the future, and it is intended to look five to ten years out.

Generally, a Master Plan inventories what exists today, outlines a community's vision for the future, and describes concrete action steps to achieve that vision. Developing a Plan gives the community an opportunity to provide input on the general direction of the City. It prepares residents and business owners for changes, shapes future development, and gives a competitive advantage when applying for grants and funding.

Residents are encouraged to use the Master Plan to see what changes may occur in their neighborhoods and assist implementation by developing community groups or volunteer organizations to support it. Business owners are encouraged to use the Master Plan to find where the City is focusing business expansion efforts, and to see what land may be available. The City is encouraged to use the Master Plan when deciding what infrastructure investments to make, or what grants to apply for. These are substantive ways that members of the community can use the Master Plan to guide their decisions.

### MASTER PLAN AND ZONING

The Master Plan is particularly related to land development because it provides a guide for how the community would like to see new uses arranged and developed. While the Master Plan describes potential land use changes, it does not alter any zoning or regulations. Existing zoning remains the same until the City or a property owner seeks to change zoning through a rezoning or an update to existing City codes.

The Master Plan also cannot consider every potential future scenario. The Community Vision section is intended to outline the principles that should guide the character of future development and action even when it is not specifically addressed in the Master Plan.

The graphic below showcases some of the key features that differentiate Master Plans from Zoning Ordinances.

#### MASTER PLAN

- A GENERAL POLICY FOR FUTURE GROWTH
- DESCRIBES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE
- INCLUDES BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS THAT CAN BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE CITY, RESIDENTS, OR PARTNERS
- A FLEXIBLE DOCUMENT THAT IS INTENDED TO BE INTERPRETED AS CONDITIONS CHANGE

VS

#### ZONING ORDINANCE

- SPECIFIC RULES FOR DEVELOPMENT
- DESCRIBES WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED TODAY
- INCLUDES MANDATORY REGULATIONS ON DEVELOPMENT THAT ARE ENFORCED BY THE CITY UNLESS SPECIFICALLY WAIVED
- RELATIVELY RIGID SET OF REGULATIONS THAT CAN ONLY BE CHANGED BY A LEGAL PROCESS

## PHASES OF THE MASTER PLAN

The Master Plan for Maple Heights was grouped into five phases, shown at right. These phases are described in more depth below:

- **Current Conditions:** In this phase, we developed a demographic, land use, and housing overview of Maple Heights
- **Community Vision:** In this phase, we outlined a vision for how the community wants to grow and develop in the coming decade
- **Goals & Actions:** In this phase, we outlined specific steps that can be taken to achieve the community's desired future
- **Implementation:** In this phase, priorities, timelines, and responsibilities were attached to each action to show how to accomplish them
- **Master Plan Document:** In this final phase, the previous components were combined and completed into a final Master Plan document

## PROCESS



### CURRENT CONDITIONS



### COMMUNITY VISION



### GOALS & ACTIONS



### IMPLEMENTATION



### MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT

## 1.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Master Plan process included numerous opportunities for public involvement to ensure that the Plan reflected the concerns, ideas, and priorities of residents and business owners. Each phase of the process included the involvement of City staff and the public.

### INVOLVED GROUPS

The planning process involved the input of two groups: the Steering Committee and the public. These groups reviewed the Master Plan at various phases to ensure the goals and recommendations in the Plan fit what the community would like to see.

The Steering Committee was comprised of a small group of residents, business owners, and stakeholders that represented a cross-section of the City. The public included any interested residents or parties that wanted to be involved in the process. Each group met throughout the planning process, with three Public Meetings that covered the most important parts of the Plan.

The inclusion of these groups was important in confirming that the data, ideas, and policies to be presented were appropriate for Maple Heights. The involvement of the Steering Committee also assisted in identifying areas of the Plan that should be presented to the public for further feedback.

### PUBLIC MEETINGS AND ONLINE FEEDBACK

The Maple Heights Master Plan included three Public Meetings throughout 2017 and 2018 to allow community members the opportunity to provide input on the Plan recommendations. A summary of the three meetings is provided on the following page.

Meeting information was posted on the City's website, announced at City Council meetings, posted on social media, and distributed to various groups and mailing lists.

Following each meeting, a link was provided to an online survey mirroring the activity at the Public Meeting. Each survey was open for at least a week to allow those unable to attend the meeting to participate.

### USING THE RESULTS

County Planning used the results from the Public Meetings to make changes to the Master Plan. After presenting information to the public, the Master Plan documents were changed and updated to incorporate feedback from the public.

At the second and third Public Meetings, County Planning presented the results of the previous Public Meetings and showcased the changes that were made to ensure the public was aware of how the Plan was responsive to their comments.



Approximately 46 comments were left at the first Public Meeting, which was held at Remington College.

Source: County Planning

## PUBLIC MEETINGS



### **PUBLIC MEETING #1**

**CURRENT CONDITIONS AND COMMUNITY VISION**  
**DECEMBER 5, 2017**

At the first Public Meeting, representatives from County Planning introduced residents to the planning process, presented Current Conditions information, and gave an overview of the Community Vision Principles and focus areas. Members of the public were asked to review boards that included Vision Principles, focus areas, and major corridors. Residents were invited to say what they liked or wanted to change about each.



### **PUBLIC MEETING #2**

**GOALS & ACTIONS**  
**MARCH 22, 2018**

At this meeting, County Planning described the results of the first Public Meeting, introduced components of the Place-Based Framework, and outlined the goals of the Citywide Framework. Residents were asked to place a dot on each goal or component indicating if they gave the ideas a “Thumbs Up” or a “Thumbs Down.” If residents wanted to change a proposal, they were asked to write down their suggestions.



### **PUBLIC MEETING #3**

**IMPLEMENTATION**  
**MAY 31, 2018**

At the final Public Meeting, County Planning presented changes to the Place-Based and Citywide Frameworks from the previous meeting and introduced the implementation tables. Residents were then given a voting card and asked to rank their top three Place-Based components and top three Citywide goals in order to help the City prioritize action. Attendees were also given the opportunity to write down comments on boards and voting cards.



## 1.4 PREVIOUS PLANS

### 1999 MASTER PLAN

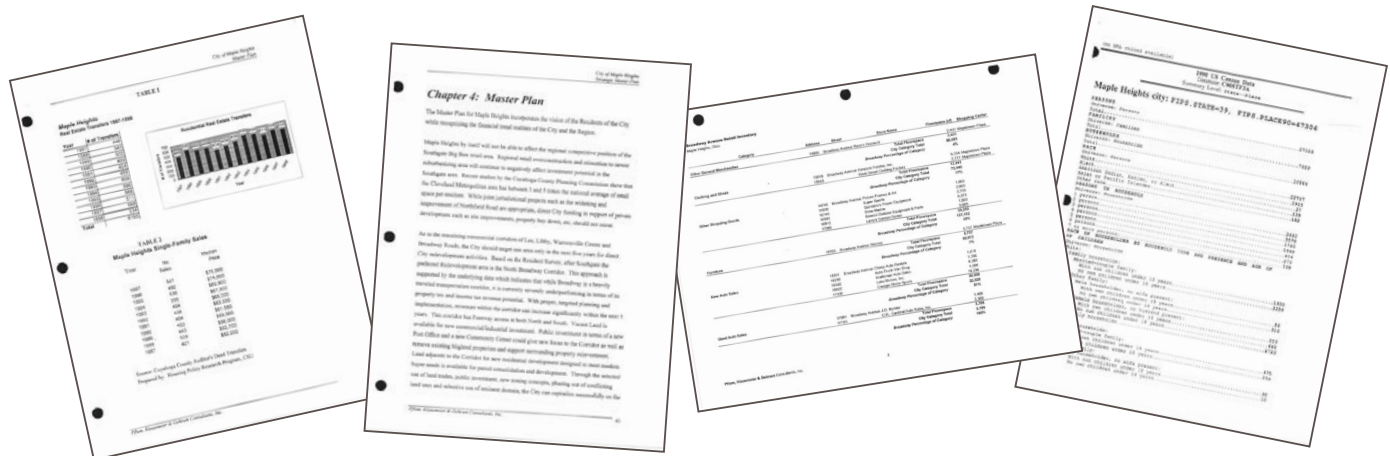
The 1999 City of Maple Heights Master Plan was completed by PKG Group as a Strategic Economic Development Plan. Through a community survey, an analysis of data, and the results of a series of sub-committees on particular topics, the Master Plan outlined a vision for Maple Heights: “This vision is one of an economically strong community of quality residential diverse neighborhoods, vibrant safe neighborhood and commercial districts, and continued high level of community pride and identity.”

To accomplish this vision, the Plan identified eight Citywide goals and recommendations, which are listed here:

- Increase the revenue generation potential in the City of Maple Heights
- Increase the percentage of regional housing market investment
- Enhance public participation in the Maple Heights community
- Guide specific, desired investment to appropriate areas in the City
- Create through public investment a new “City Center” in Maple Heights
- Improve transportation safety, accessibility, and pedestrian-friendly environment in the City
- Increase achievement of sound, consistent investment by updating the City of Maple Heights Planning and Zoning Code based on the principles of ‘Concept Area’ performance standards
- City of Maple Heights should acquire through purchase, donation, or eminent domain specific parcels for redevelopment for specific end-users in key target areas

Based on the goals of the 1999 Master Plan, the City identified six concept areas where specific land use actions were outlined. The Master Plan noted that development and efforts needed to be concentrated in areas, especially the Broadway corridor, in order to maximize public investment. The Broadway Avenue Corridor was a special focus of the Plan as it was intended to become a new “City Center” for Maple Heights. Through an updated streetscape, storefront renovations, and investments in public buildings, planners aimed for Broadway to become a Downtown for the community.

Some of the recommendations from the 1999 Master Plan were accomplished, some remain relevant, and others are no longer necessary. In terms of new codes, the City was successful in developing a Broadway Corridor Overlay; however, the updating of codes was not successful in developing a truly vibrant Broadway Corridor. Many of the recommendations related to neighborhoods remain important as housing market changes have left many areas struggling with property maintenance issues. Recommendations for Southgate USA were based on the need to improve infrastructure around the shopping center. As the shopping area ages, more intensive changes may be necessary in the future. These and other recommendations from the 1999 Master Plan were part of the analysis and policy recommendations for the current Master Plan.



## CONCEPT AREAS

The 1999 Master Plan identified Land Use Concept Areas that outlined desired types of land uses and development goals for each of the areas. For each concept area, the Plan described the area and provided key goals and recommendations. A summary of those recommendations follows:

**Residential Core Neighborhoods:** Need for improved overall aesthetics, increased greenspace, continued reinvestment, strengthened connections to business districts, an updated zoning code to allow cluster housing, and utilization of existing programs for residential property rehabilitation and land-banking.

**Southgate USA Retail Core:** Need for development of high-traffic and freeway-oriented commercial use, continued promotion and revitalization through investment, and improved transportation safety and accessibility.

**Retail Corridor Target Areas—Warrensville Center, Northfield, and Lee/Libby Roads:** Need for improved transportation safety and accessibility, development of high-traffic and freeway-oriented commercial use, continued reinvestment in commercial areas, an updated zoning code establishing commercial lot sizes, required landscape buffers to residential neighborhoods, and strengthened connections between business districts and residential neighborhoods.

**Neighborhood Retail Centers:** Need for continued reinvestment in commercial areas and strengthened connections between business districts and residential neighborhoods.

**Office, Industrial, and Institutional Campuses:** Need for improved overall aesthetics and industry compatibility, an updated zoning code to establish industrial lot sizes and permit high-traffic office/industrial campus uses and modernized industrial practices, brownfield cleanup, an established task force to consider reuse of vacant industrial space, required minimum jobs per acre for development and tax abatement programs, and increased greenspace utilizing railroad right-of-way.

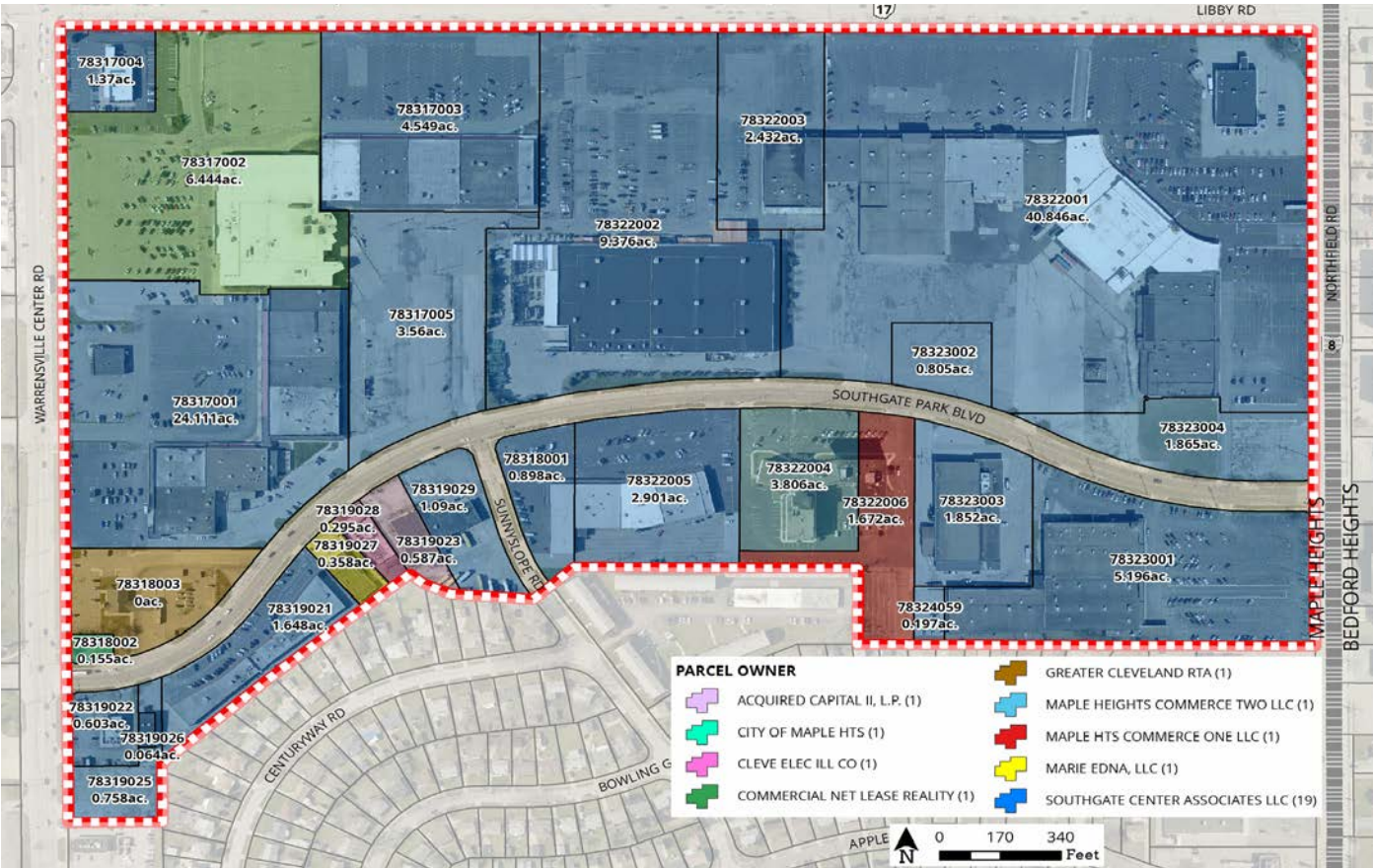
**Broadway Avenue Corridor:** Need for improved overall corridor aesthetics and industry compatibility, strengthened connections between business districts and residential neighborhoods, increased public investment to build the City Center, continued reinvestment in commercial areas, updated zoning to permit high-traffic office/industrial campus uses, increased greenspace and landscape buffers to residential neighborhoods, investment in appropriate areas of the corridor, and improved income and property tax generation potential in the corridor.

FIRST SUBURBS SITE PROFILE: SOUTHGATE SUMMARY

In 2016, the First Suburbs Consortium engaged County Planning to create site profiles of eight malls and development sites located in First Suburb communities. Southgate USA in Maple Heights was one of those selected sites.

The Southgate site profile described the existing conditions of the site, including topics such as current tenants, parcel ownership, utility availability, transportation access, and zoning. The profile also provided demographic information and detailed employment and workforce data within 15-, 30-, and 60-minute drive times.

The profile revealed a number of important findings for planning the future of Southgate. Unlike some shopping areas, a majority of the Southgate USA site is owned by a single entity, it is zoned almost entirely for commercial use, and has a major transit hub and access to various GCRTA bus routes. These physical attributes are important considerations for attracting new development opportunities at Southgate.



The Southgate USA Shopping Center is almost entirely owned by a single entity, making holistic development easier.

Source: County Planning

## **BROADWAY TRADE AREA MARKET PROFILE**

The 2017 Broadway Trade Area Market Profile project was undertaken by LISC MetroEdge to provide information on the types of retail needed along Broadway Avenue.

The market profile defined a trade area, as follows, for the purposes of analysis: the area bounded by I-480 to the north, Rockside Road to the south, State Route 8 to the east, and Turney Road to the west. The intersection of Broadway and Libby Roads lies at the center. The study included a demographic profile of this area as well as an analysis of the existing retail to determine the extent to which current retail establishments are meeting the needs of residents.

Major findings of the study included determinations that Maple Heights had a clear concentration of Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers and a lack of food service and drinking options, clothing and clothing accessories stores, and health and personal care locations.

## 1.5 PLANNING CONTEXT

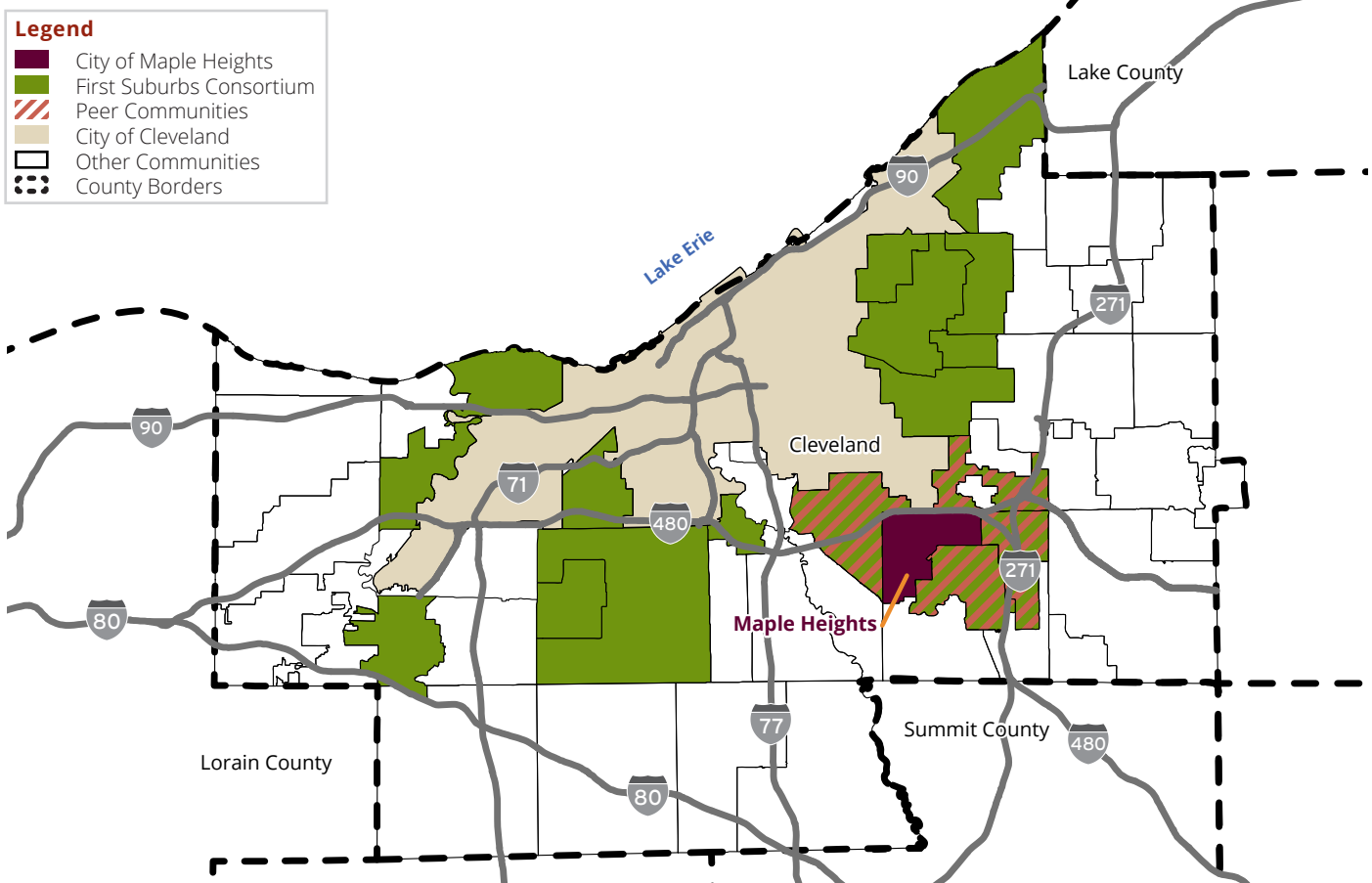
### REGIONAL CONTEXT

The City of Maple Heights is shown in purple on the map below. Maple Heights is located in the southeast corner of Cuyahoga County and borders Cleveland, Garfield Heights, Walton Hills, Bedford, Bedford Heights, and Warrensville Heights.

The map below shows in green the members of the First Suburbs Consortium, a group of communities that were mostly built out prior to 1960 and which are located in close proximity to Cleveland. These communities share common characteristics due to their development patterns. Maple Heights is included as a member of the First Suburbs Consortium.

The map also showcases four peer communities: Garfield Heights, Bedford, Bedford Heights, and Warrensville Heights. These peer communities border Maple Heights and are particularly good comparisons for the City as they are located in the same section of the County and share many of the same characteristics.

Map 1 — Regional Context



## CITY CONTEXT

The City of Maple Heights is shown in the map below. Interstate 480 largely forms the City's northern border, Northfield Road forms the eastern border, and East 141st Street forms a majority of the western border. The City's southern border juts in and out along various roads and municipalities. The City is bisected by rail lines that run diagonally through the City center, parallel to Broadway Avenue.

The City of Maple Heights is grouped into seven City Council wards. Wards 1 and 2 are located in the southeastern section of the City, west of the Norfolk & Southern Railroad. Wards 3 and 5 straddle Broadway Avenue. Wards 4, 6, and 7 lie to the northeast.

Map 2 — Planning Context

