





5.0 Recommendations

WHATS INSIDE

The Recommendations section describes suggested strategies and actions that Brecksville can undertake over the coming years. This section includes five recommendation topic areas: Residential, Commercial, Infrastructure, Environmental, and Community Spaces. Each of these topics includes more specific strategies and actions.

The recommendations are based on input from the Public and Steering Committee as well as information from the Resident Survey.

HOW DO I USE IT?

The Recommendations section covers changes to City policy and actions that can be taken for the benefit of the City as a whole. It should be used as a guide for the City, residents, neighborhood groups, and others to decide on actions that can address identified issues.

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 128 to 131 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 115.

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

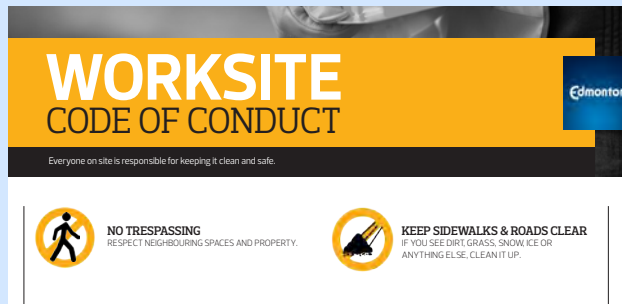
With a projected population increase of 170,000 by 2025, the City of Edmonton, Canada recognized that infill development would be increasingly common in the community. To prepare for this, the City embarked on an ambitious project to inform the community what infill meant, encourage appropriate infill, 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.



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 117.

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.

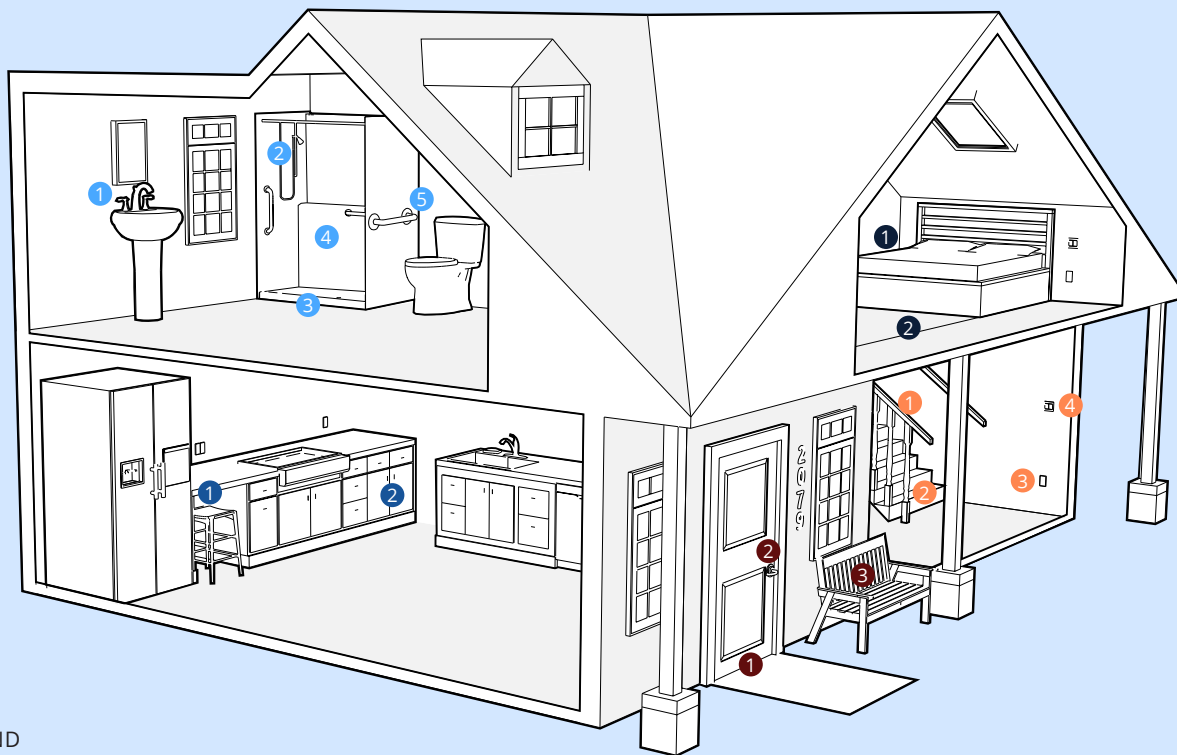
Many communities and organizations have already developed Universal Design guidebooks. Brecksville should work to develop or adopt an existing Universal Design standards book that can be provided to developers to encourage the inclusion of Universal Design features in new home construction.

For more information on Universal Design, refer to the blue box on page 121.

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 123.

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 123.

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

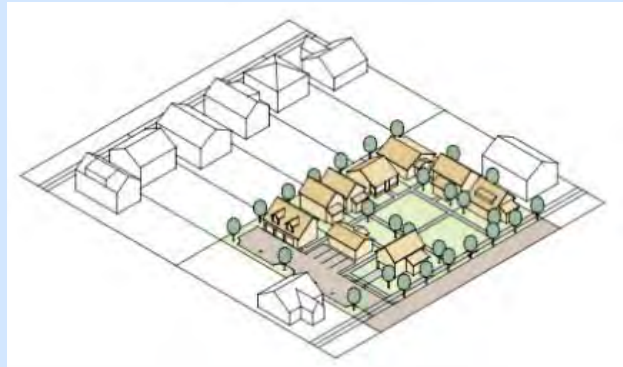
DEEP DIVE DENSITY BONUSES

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 125.

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 125.

DEEP DIVE 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.

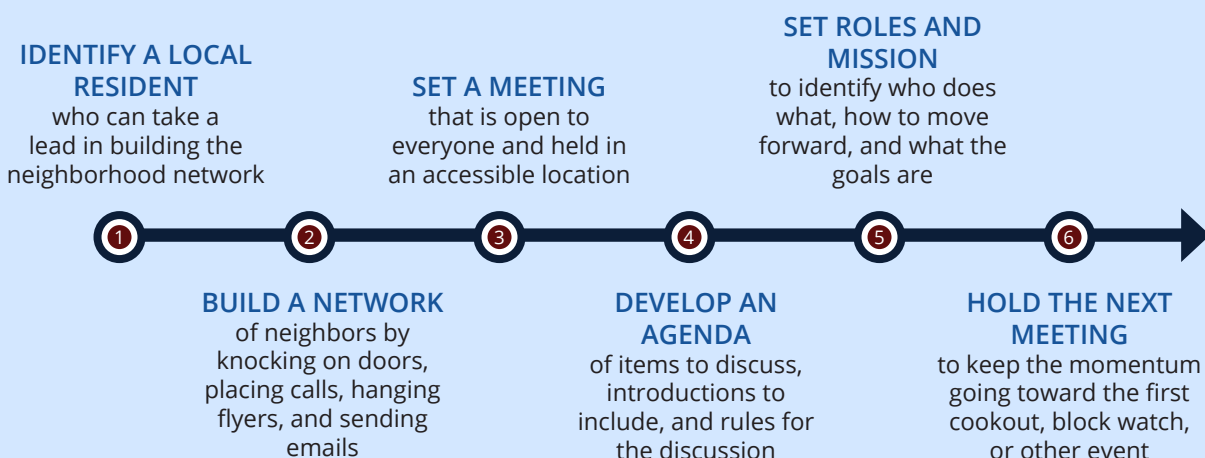


The image above shows an example welcome packet from Delta Township, MI.

Source: www.deltami.gov

DEEP DIVE 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.



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 128 to 131 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 128 to 131 describes in detail the appropriate types and locations of housing for each of these corridors. Additionally, the design on page 132 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 of single-family neighborhoods which should be protected as well as those limited areas where other types of housing could 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.

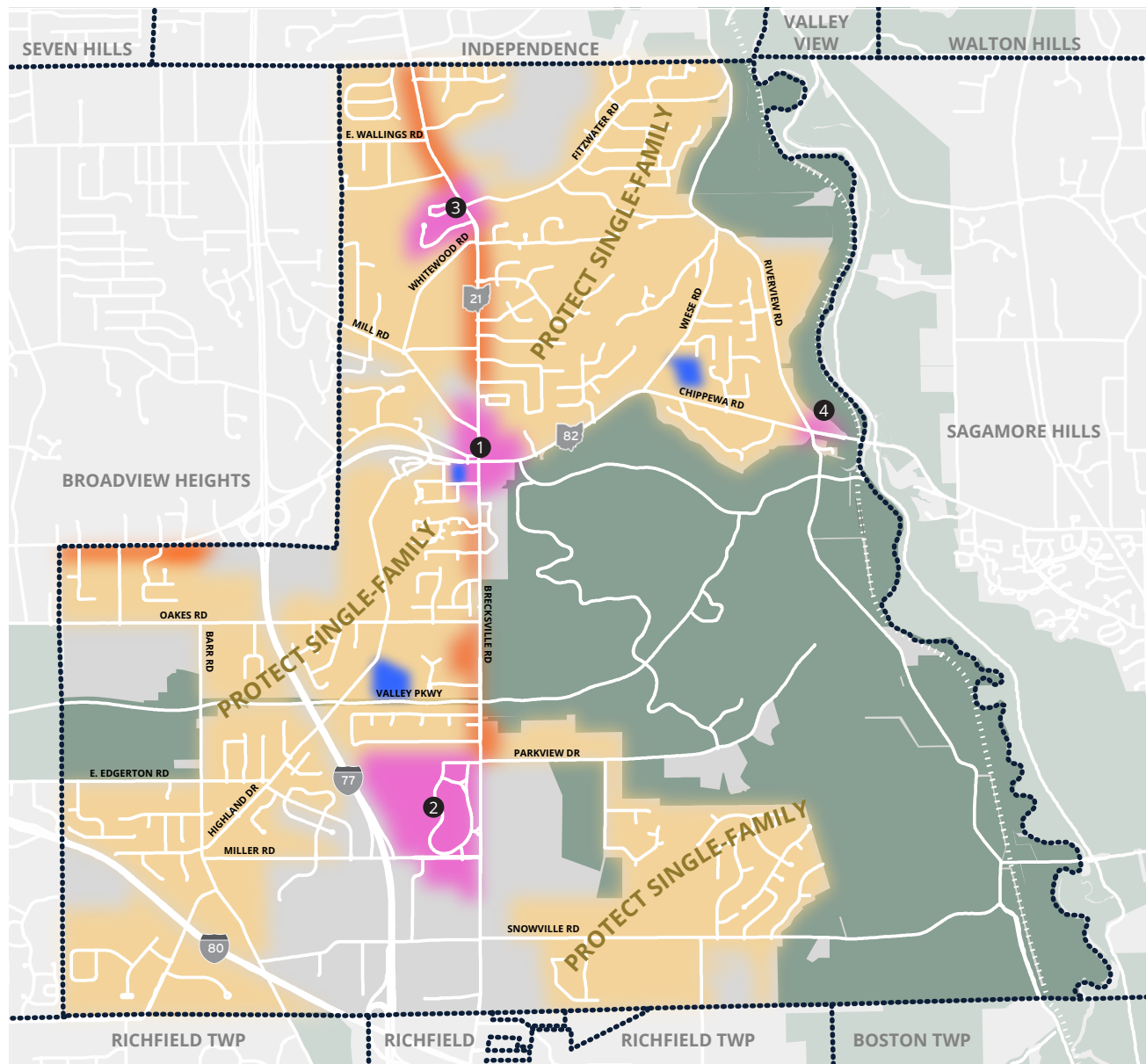
The chart below lists the mixed-use areas, major corridors and school sites, and it displays the types of housing that would be appropriate there. Additional information and displays of housing types are shown on the following pages.

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 34

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



LEGEND

- Single-Family Neighborhoods for Protection
- Mixed-Use Areas for Other Housing Types
 - 1 Brecksville Town Center
 - 2 VA Area
 - 3 Fitzwater @ Brecksville
 - 4 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

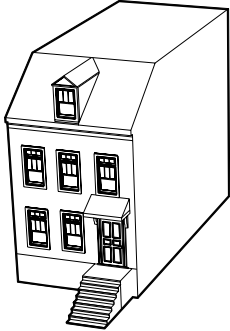
CLUSTER HOMES



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

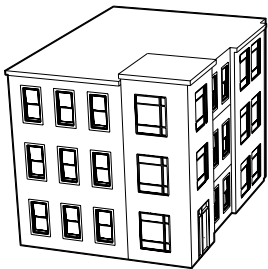
TOWNHOUSES



Source: AbstractDevelopments.com

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

SMALL BUILDINGS



Source: rhconst.com

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

MIXED-USE BUILDINGS



Source: DublinOhioUSA.gov

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

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.

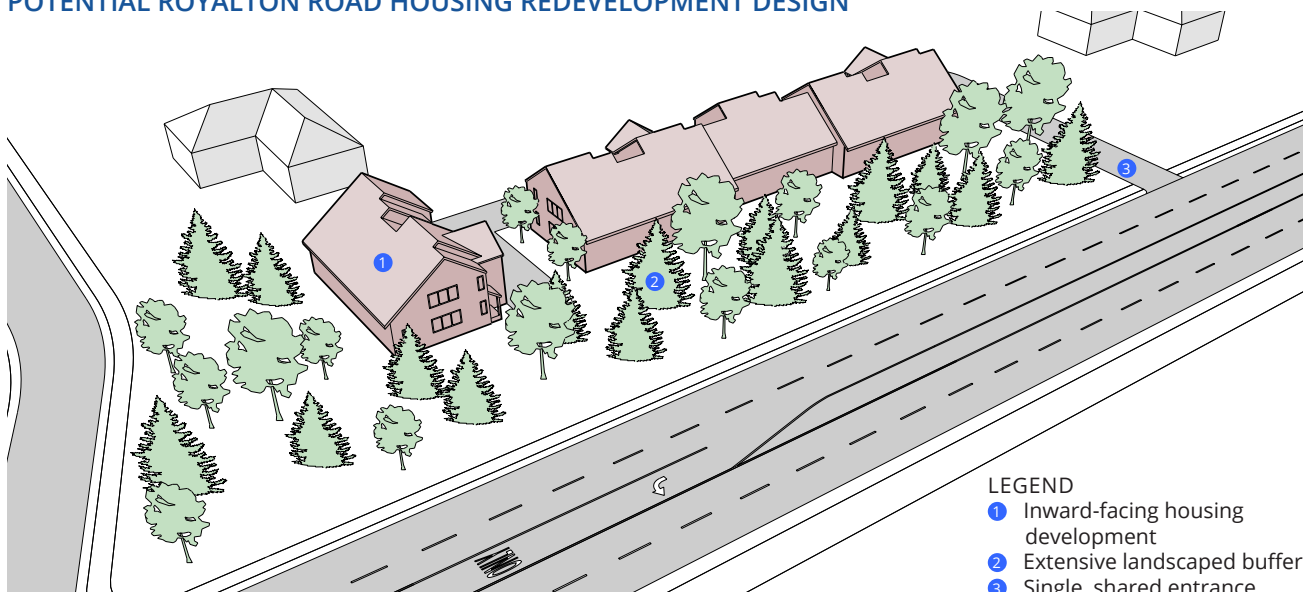
By encouraging attached housing along Royalton Road West, the City can maintain the area for residential uses, limit the number of commercial spaces in the City, react to the decreasing demand for single-family standalone structures along Royalton Road, and maintain the community's woodsy feel.



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



DEEP DIVE

HOME DESIGN ON MAJOR ROADS

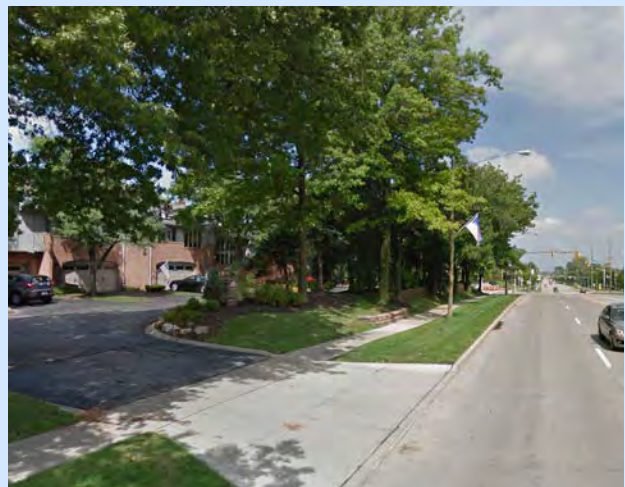
Many communities on the edge of developing regions have been faced with the issue of previously rural streets lined by single-family homes that have slowly been widened and extended to become major corridors. These single-family homes now face wide, fast, and traffic-heavy streets.

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 elementary school campus at Blossom Hill. As a result of this new construction, three existing school structures 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 of land 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 148.

SCHOOL SITES METRICS

	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 the site has road access to Highland Drive and potential access to Valley Parkway.

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.

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 139.

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

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

DEEP DIVE 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 141.

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

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 141.

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 142.

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.

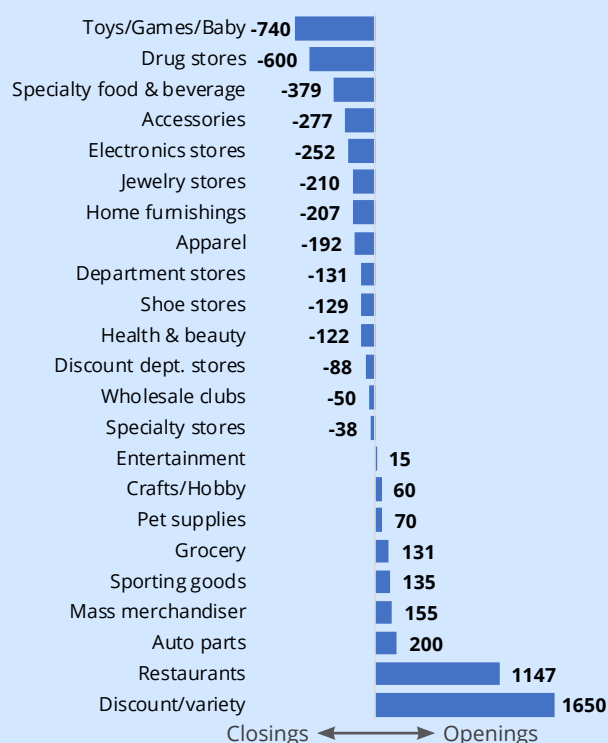
In the United States, consumer confidence is high, total retail sales are increasing at a rate of 2-3% per year, and shopping mall occupancy rates remain steady¹. In addition, approximately 50,000 retail jobs have been added per month in 2018. This presents a stark contrast to the “retail apocalypse” often discussed on the national stage, when in reality, retail is undergoing a restructuring of industry dollars and key players².

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 stores¹. Thus, the seemingly alarming volume of retail space being closed is due to large-footprint department store closures³. In addition, the majority of national retail closures are occurring in rural areas where there is not enough buying power to support them⁴. 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 Kingdom¹. The Cleveland metro area has the third highest proportion of retail space per person nationwide, at 29.9 square feet⁵.

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 2017⁶. 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 sectors⁶. Grocery-anchored retail centers continue to be an attractive investment opportunity⁷, 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 2017¹. In 2018, the number of total retail store openings across all categories actually exceeded the number of total retail store closures⁸.

Figure 57
2018 Quarter 1 Net Announced Store Openings & Closings



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 stores⁹. 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 clubs¹⁰.

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 purchases¹¹. 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 services¹⁰.

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 combined¹¹. In addition, 40% of consumers base their choice of shopping center primarily on the available dining options¹¹. 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 spending¹¹. Thus, restaurants can serve the purpose of experiential and destination retail¹¹.

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 concepts⁷.



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 platforms⁶. 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-store².

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 promotions¹².

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 shopping¹³. 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 luxury¹⁴. 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 experiences¹⁴.

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 projects¹. 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 tenants¹⁵. 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 experiences¹⁶.

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 153.

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 146 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 148. 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 147 identifies three areas that are most likely to see development in coming years:

- ① **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.
- ② **Former McDonald's Site:** The restaurant's closure provides an opportunity to extend the Town Center south with a retail or mixed-use building.
- ③ **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.

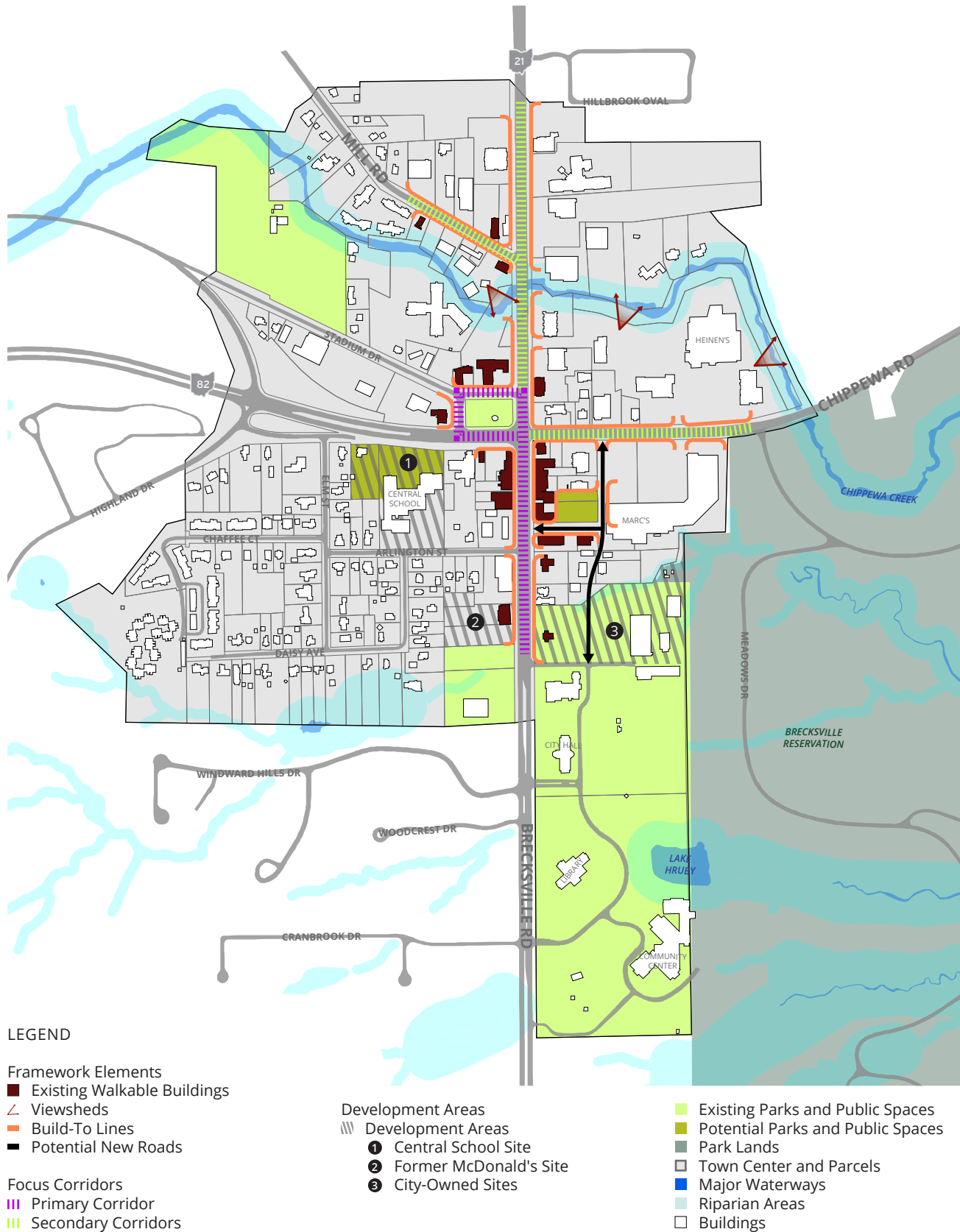
EXPAND A LOGICAL GRID PATTERN OF ROADS

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 35 TOWN CENTER DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



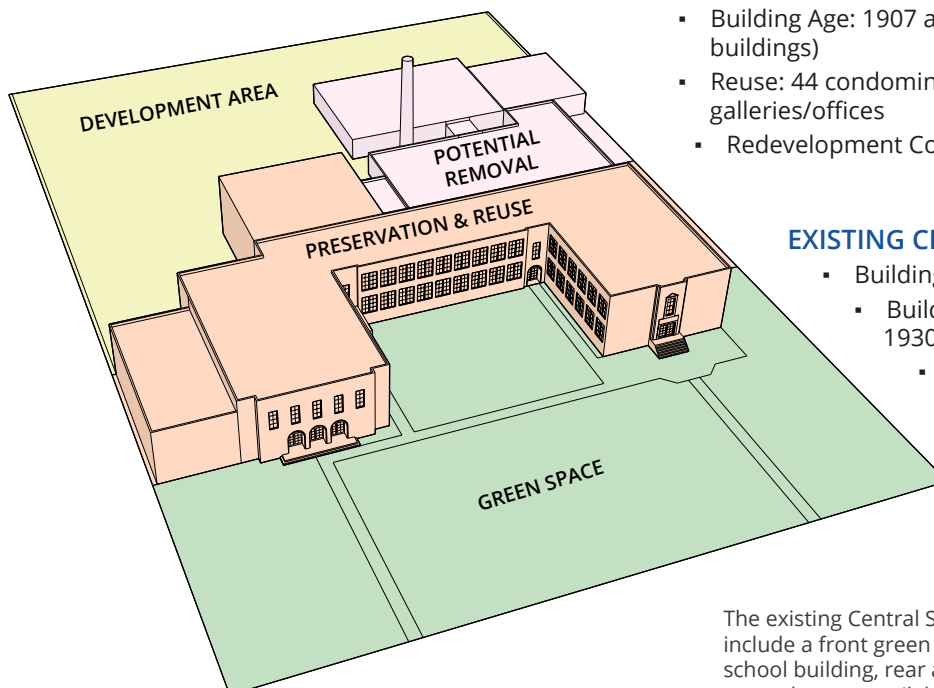
CENTRAL SCHOOL SITE REDEVELOPMENT SCENARIO

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

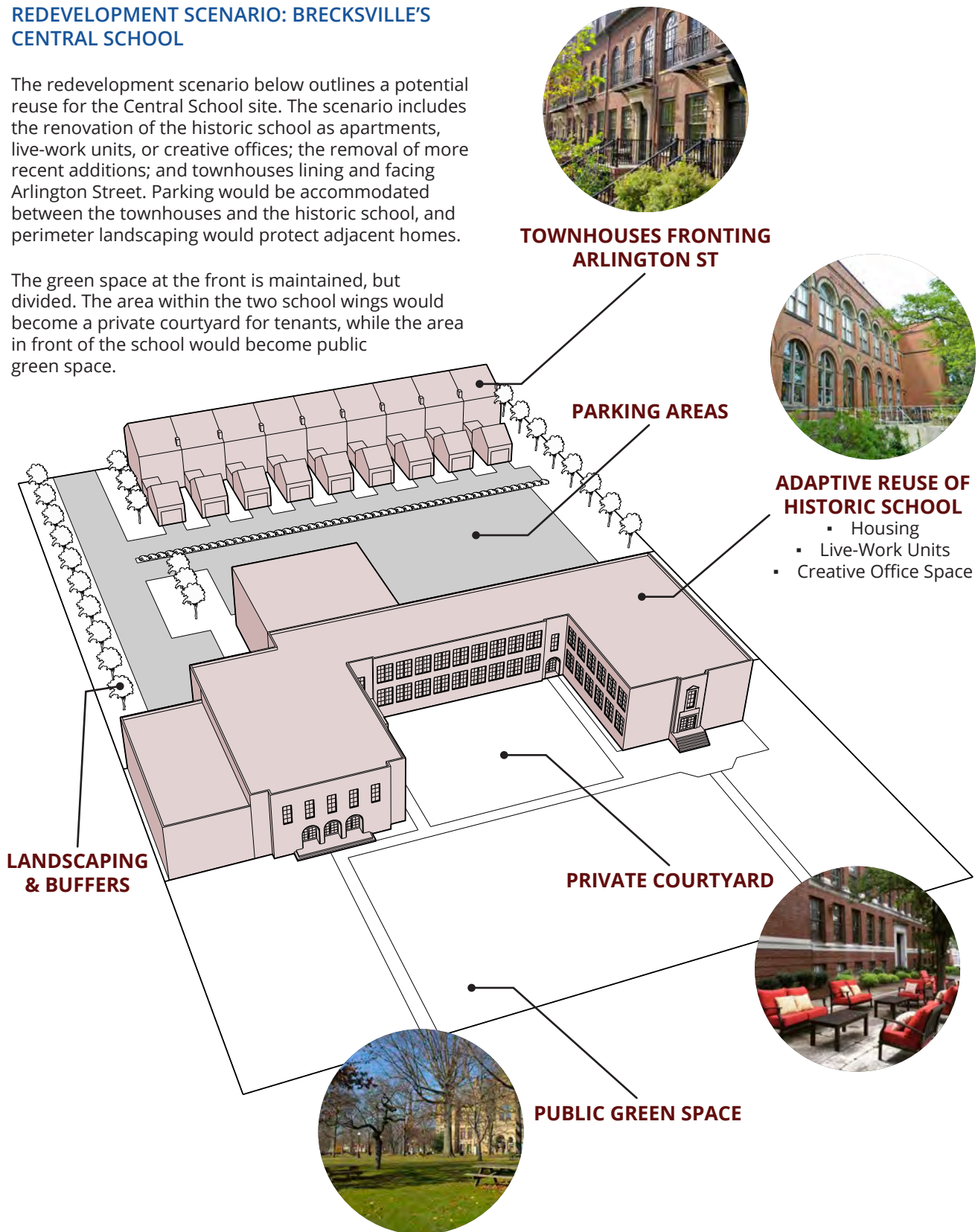
- Building Size: 73,504 sq. ft.
- Building Age: 1914 (main structure), 1930, 1955, and 1980 (additions)
- Site: 3.6 acres

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.



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 153.

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 151.

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 154 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 155 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.

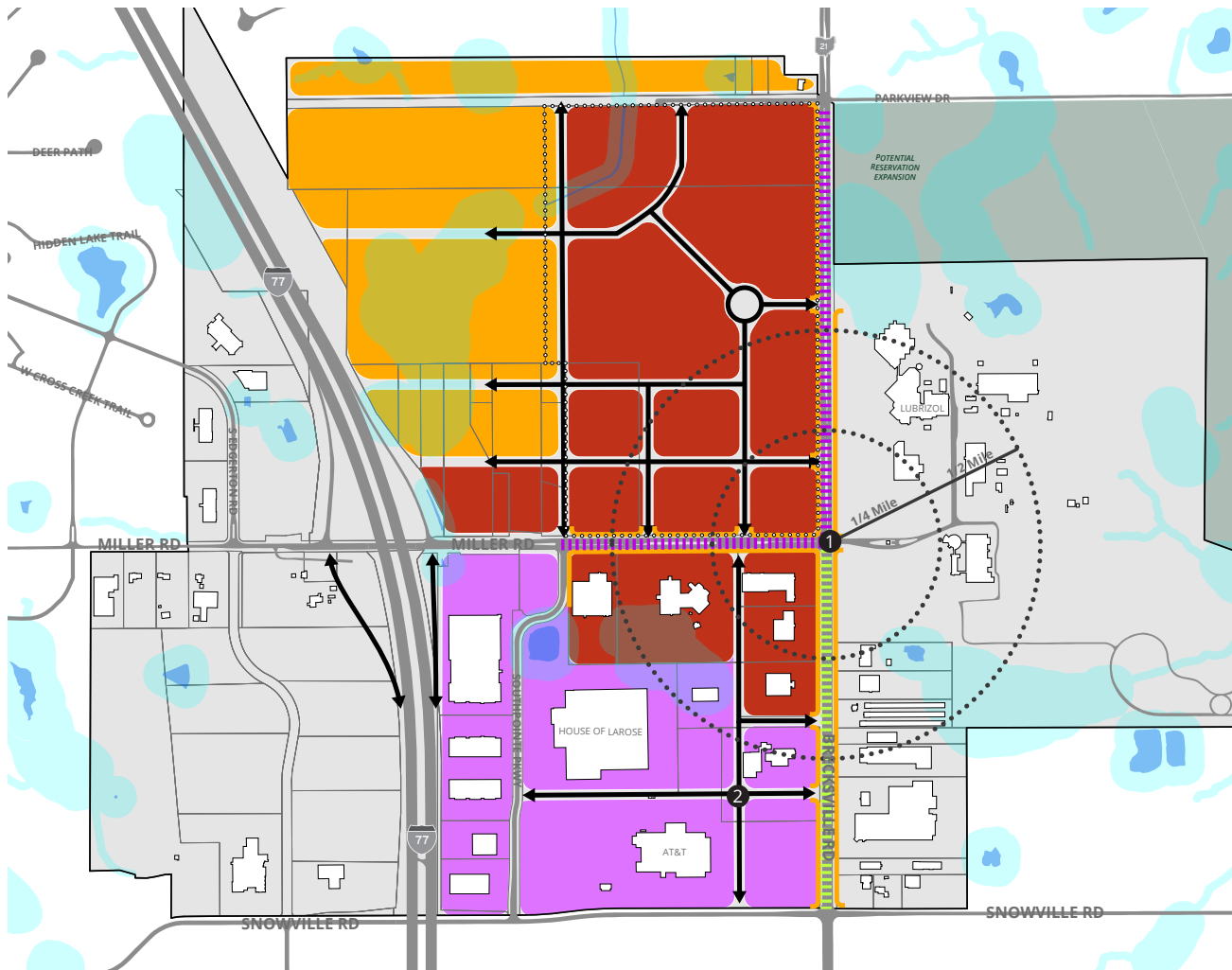
EXPAND A LOGICAL GRID PATTERN OF ROADS

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 36 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.

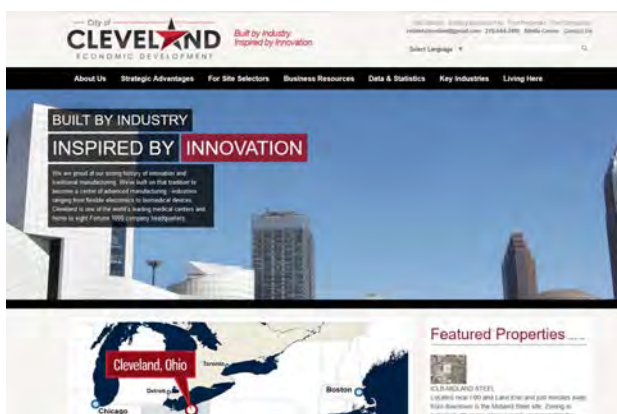
This strategy entails the updating and expansion of economic development information, especially on the City's website as a method of attracting and growing new businesses or helping existing ones remain and expand.

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.

RECOMMENDATIONS **INFRASTRUCTURE**

Objectives Addressed:



Infrastructure encompasses many aspects of municipal government. It is often thought of as roads, but a City's infrastructure network includes roads, sidewalks, trails, and storm and sanitary sewers. In our increasingly connected society, infrastructure has also expanded to include other networks such as green infrastructure and community broadband.

"I WOULD LOVE TO SEE MORE CONNECTIVITY FROM NEIGHBORHOODS TO THE PARK SYSTEMS"

WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT

Infrastructure is a key component of municipal government. The provision of roads, bridges, electricity, water, and other services are essential to the functioning of a community because they support economic development, enhance quality of life, and affect the perception of the community.

The government's ability to maintain its infrastructure and coordinate development is essential to keeping residents, attracting employers, and linking people to amenities. Because infrastructure can be important and costly, coordinating infrastructure across different projects becomes even more critical.

Infrastructure is not just provided by the City. It is a combination of local, regional, state, and federal resources as well as private utilities that provide infrastructure improvements for residents and businesses. Having a plan for the development and deployment of dollars toward infrastructure projects allows the City to better coordinate infrastructure improvements.

WHAT DOES THIS TOPIC COVER

This topic covers strategies and actions for developing a network of bike trails, updating roadways and parking standards to support walkable places, ensuring the safety of bicyclists, using future technologies to better manage

movement within the community, preparing the infrastructure network for growth and changes, and adding sidewalk coverage to provide a complete network.

OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

The Infrastructure Recommendations section addresses multiple objectives of the Plan, including maintaining the roads we have (transportation), connecting people to walkable places (connectivity), reinforcing Brecksville's sense of place (character), building upon assets to grow employment opportunities (economic development), and embracing world-class park amenities (parks).

"IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAINTAIN THE ROADS WE HAVE"

STRATEGY 12

MAKE IMPROVEMENTS THAT SUPPORT MORE WALKABLE PLACES

Walkability is a measure of how safe, comfortable, and low-stress it is to walk around. Wide, clear, and well-maintained sidewalks are the first element of a walkable place, but also physical separation from roadways, slow speed of traffic, clear crosswalks, shade, and places to rest such as benches are all elements of walkable places.

National trends have shown that people increasingly desire walkable places. The National Association of Realtors annual survey on community and transportation preferences showed people living in walkable communities reported a higher quality of life, sidewalk availability was the most important transportation consideration in deciding where to live, and six-in-ten people said they would be willing to pay more to live in a walkable community.

Beyond national trends, the Brecksville Resident Survey also showed preferences for walkable communities. When asked what residents would look for in a different community, the ability to walk more places was one of the top five answers, and more than two-thirds of residents said they would walk more if there were sidewalks and trails. The highest priority transportation improvement was improving the ease and safety of getting around by walking.

Because people desire walkable places, developing them has become an increasingly important economic development strategy. Research by the global real estate firm CBRE has shown that “urban-suburban” submarkets characterized by walkable features and mixed uses are best positioned for the future. The 2017 “North America Suburban Office Trends” report stated “net absorption and construction activity have been disproportionately concentrated in urban-suburban submarkets relative to their share of suburban office inventory.” That is, office developers are choosing to invest in walkable places and office tenants are actively filling those spaces.

This strategy entails methods for making walkability improvements in key areas to support retail and economic development strategies, while providing residents a higher quality of life.



Safe crossings, slow streets, trees, and lighting are all elements that foster a clear, safe, and enjoyable walking environment.

Source: City of Cleveland Heights

ACTION 12.1

DEVELOP A CLEAR, SAFE, AND ENJOYABLE PEDESTRIAN NETWORK IN THE TOWN CENTER

Type of Action: Ongoing

The presence of a complete pedestrian network in Brecksville Town Center is imperative to the goal of a community core where residents and visitors can safely walk between destinations, stores, and parks. The Town Center's existing pedestrian network generally includes sidewalks on major roads; however, efforts should be undertaken to make sidewalks wider, buffered from traffic, and well-connected to shopping centers, parks, and other destinations. Additionally, pedestrian crossings, lighting, landscaping, and other amenities could further define an enjoyable and safe environment.

The Town Center Infrastructure Framework beginning on page 164 provides additional information and a map of potential improvements in the Town Center.

ACTION 12.2

APPLY FOR A BRECKSVILLE TOWN CENTER TLCI PLAN

Type of Action: Proactive

A Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) plan is a grant from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) for the detailed study of transportation-related improvements that support walkable and livable communities. NOACA funds these planning studies across Northeast Ohio to leverage their substantial transportation knowledge in supporting local communities.

A TLCI plan opens up possibilities for further transportation funding. Specifically, communities with a TLCI plan have access to implementation funds—a pool of funds for infrastructure outlined in such plans.

The City of Brecksville should apply for a TLCI planning grant to study detailed engineering of potential Town Center improvements. This would support the recommendations of this plan and open the City to implementation funding grants.

ACTION 12.3

ENSURE THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE VETERANS AFFAIRS SITE INCLUDES A COMPLETE AND GREEN TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

Type of Action: Proactive

Complete streets are those that consider the needs of all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers,

and transit users. *Green streets* are those that not only handle traffic but also manage stormwater, use modern technology to reduce congestion, and incorporate environmentally friendly features like LED lighting, permeable pavement, and rain gardens. Together, complete and green streets can provide transportation access while limiting any negative environmental effects.

Given financial incentives in the form of stormwater credits, the developers of the Veterans Affairs site and the City of Brecksville should work collaboratively to design streets at the VA site that incorporate complete and green features.

The Greater VA Area Infrastructure Framework beginning on page 168 provides additional information on constructing a complete and green transportation network in the Greater VA Area.

ACTION 12.4

IMPROVE STANDARDS TO ENSURE COMPLETE PEDESTRIAN NETWORKS IN DEVELOPMENTS

Type of Action: Proactive

Existing commercial areas do not always include the most accessible and complete pedestrian or bicycle networks. Often sidewalks stop at the curb and do not extend into shopping centers. While having sidewalks along the right-of-way is important, extending sidewalks to business' front doors is equally important.

The City should identify missing sidewalks within existing and proposed developments and work with owners to make improvements.



Sidewalks from the street into setback shopping centers can be attractive and provide improved connectivity for pedestrians.

Source: Flickr user Montgomery County Planning Commission

BRECKSVILLE TOWN CENTER INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK

The Brecksville Town Center Infrastructure Framework provides an overview of the area's proposed infrastructure enhancements. The infrastructure framework rests on a series of major principles, which are described in depth and displayed graphically on the following page. They are:

- Define gateways into the Town Center
- Improve intersections and crossings to make them safer
- Improve streetscapes for a more enjoyable pedestrian experience
- Extend the streetscape further south
- Expand a logical grid pattern of roads
- Develop trails that connect into the Town Center

DEFINE GATEWAYS INTO THE TOWN CENTER

Brecksville Town Center is a defined area of the City with unique features and destinations. To define and market the area, the City should work to enhance entrances into the Town Center through the use of lighting, gateway features, landscaping and other elements. These improvements can provide a sense of place and identity for the area.

IMPROVE INTERSECTIONS AND CROSSINGS TO MAKE THEM SAFER

To develop a well-connected and pedestrian friendly Town Center, intersection improvements are critical. Well-lit and short crosswalks with decorative markings and walk timers make it feel safer and more pleasant to walk between shops. Both existing intersections and crossings, as well as potential intersections and crossings could be improved to form a safe pedestrian network.

IMPROVE STREETSCAPES FOR A MORE ENJOYABLE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

The walkways within the Town Center range from wide sidewalks separated from traffic to narrow pedestrian pathways adjacent to high-speed roads. To improve the pedestrian experience, the City should invest in enhanced streetscapes along key roads, especially Brecksville Road as it is the core area of the Town Center.

EXTEND THE CORE STREETSCAPE FURTHER SOUTH

The most vital part of developing a vibrant Town Center is reinvigorating the main street. Brecksville Road, south of Chippewa Road, provides the greatest opportunity for key changes because of its land uses and street width. To further the vibrancy of the area, any streetscape along Brecksville Road should be extended from Chippewa Road south to the entrance of the new Police Station. This will extend the core area of the Town Center to include the former McDonald's site and other historic structures.

EXPAND A LOGICAL GRID PATTERN OF ROADS

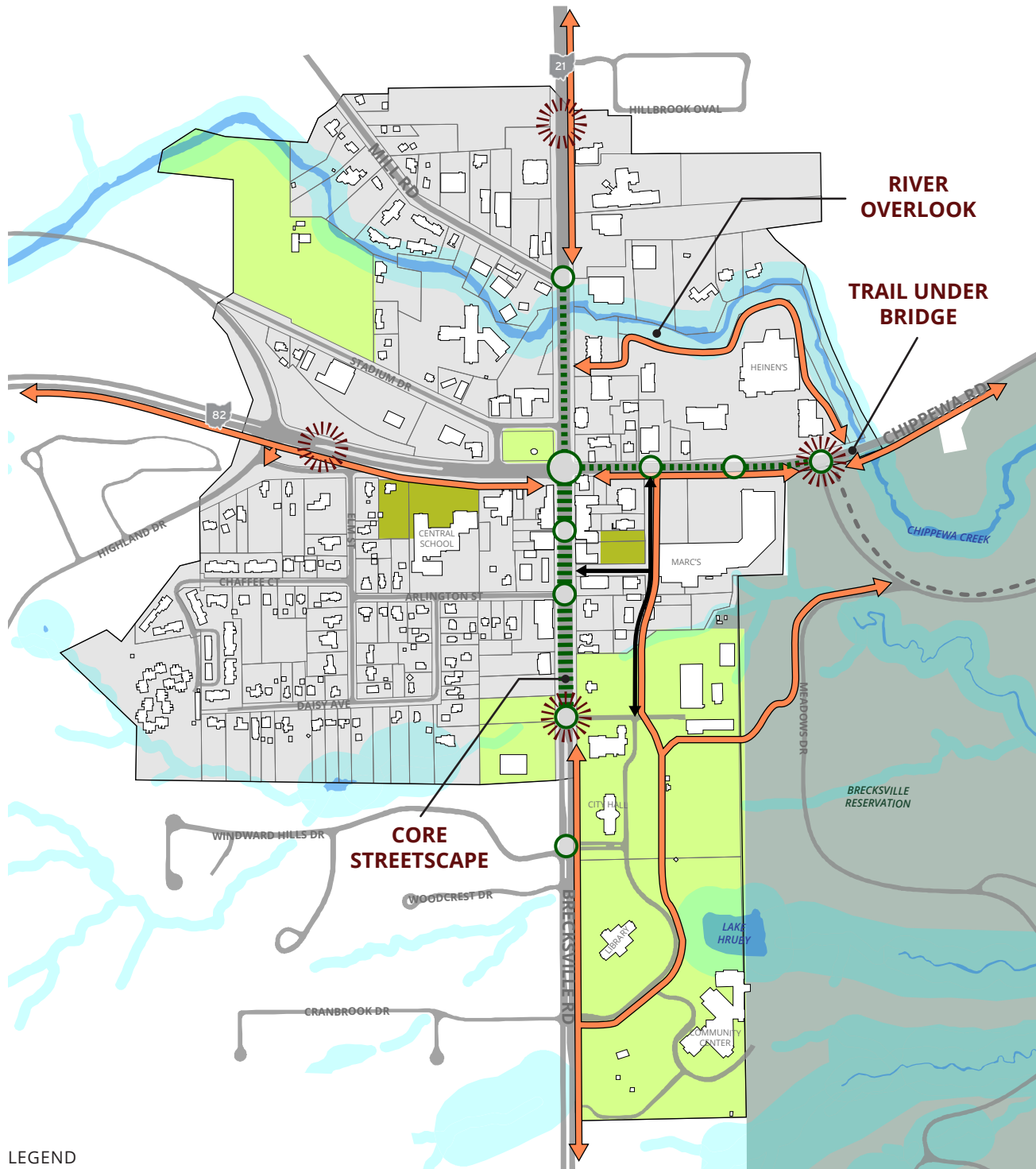
The Town Center road network generally consists of the major corridors of Brecksville and Royalton/Chippewa Roads. To provide better access and define clear pedestrian and vehicular circulation, the City should encourage new streets through the southeast quadrant of the Town Center if it should be redeveloped.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

DEVELOP TRAILS THAT CONNECT INTO THE TOWN CENTER

Brecksville Town Center is the physical and emotional heart of the community. Linking this area to neighborhoods and nearby destinations can provide additional ways for people to visit the area without driving a car, while also linking the area to recreational amenities nearby.

The map to the right shows trails connecting into the Town Center along Brecksville, Royalton, and Chippewa Roads, as well as secondary paths through the community center and along the river. While this riverside path already exists as a dirt trail, an upgraded path with a link to existing trails and terminating at a usable end point could make it more regularly used.

MAP 37 TOWN CENTER INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK



LEGEND

- Framework Elements**
- Town Center Gateways
 - Intersection and Crossing Improvements
 - Streetscape Improvements
 - Potential New Roads
 - Proposed Trails

- Existing Trails
- Existing Parks and Public Spaces
- Potential Parks and Public Spaces
- Park Lands

- Town Center and Parcels
- Major Waterways
- Riparian Areas
- Buildings

BRECKSVILLE ROAD STREETSCAPE

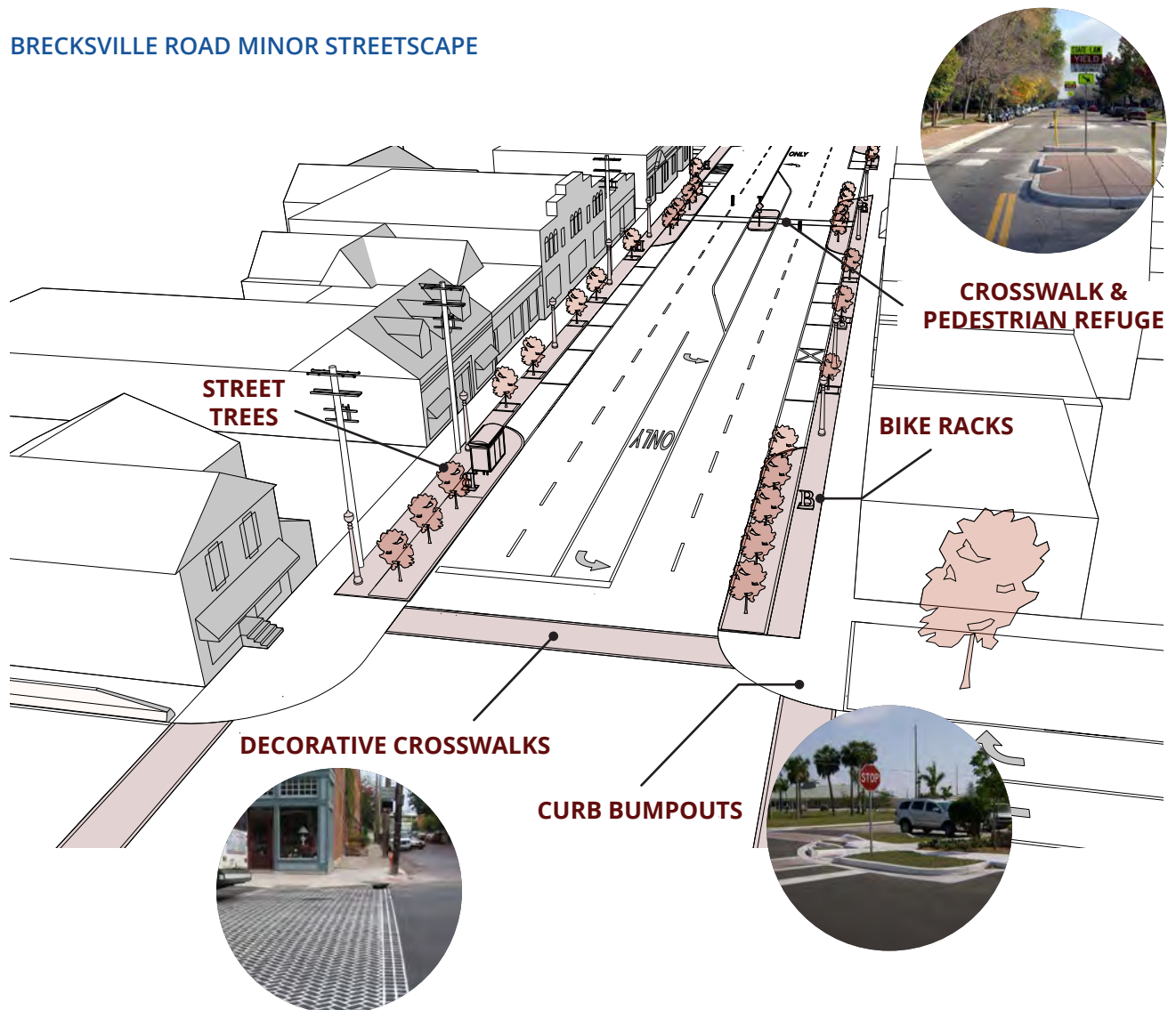
Streetscape improvements along Brecksville Road would reinvigorate the shopping area, provide a safe and enjoyable experience for shoppers, and expand the area considered the Town Center by extending the streetscape further south. Below and on the following page are two streetscape examples that entail minor improvements or more extensive changes to the street. A final streetscape design could choose from various elements of both examples for a complete and unified streetscape.

MINOR STREETSCAPE

The minor streetscape design suggests infrastructure changes that could create a safer pedestrian environment. They include:

- Curb bumpouts to shorten intersection crossings
- Additional street trees and landscaping in bumpouts
- A mid-block pedestrian crossing and refuge
- Bike racks and pedestrian amenities
- Decorative crosswalks and artistic elements

BRECKSVILLE ROAD MINOR STREETSCAPE



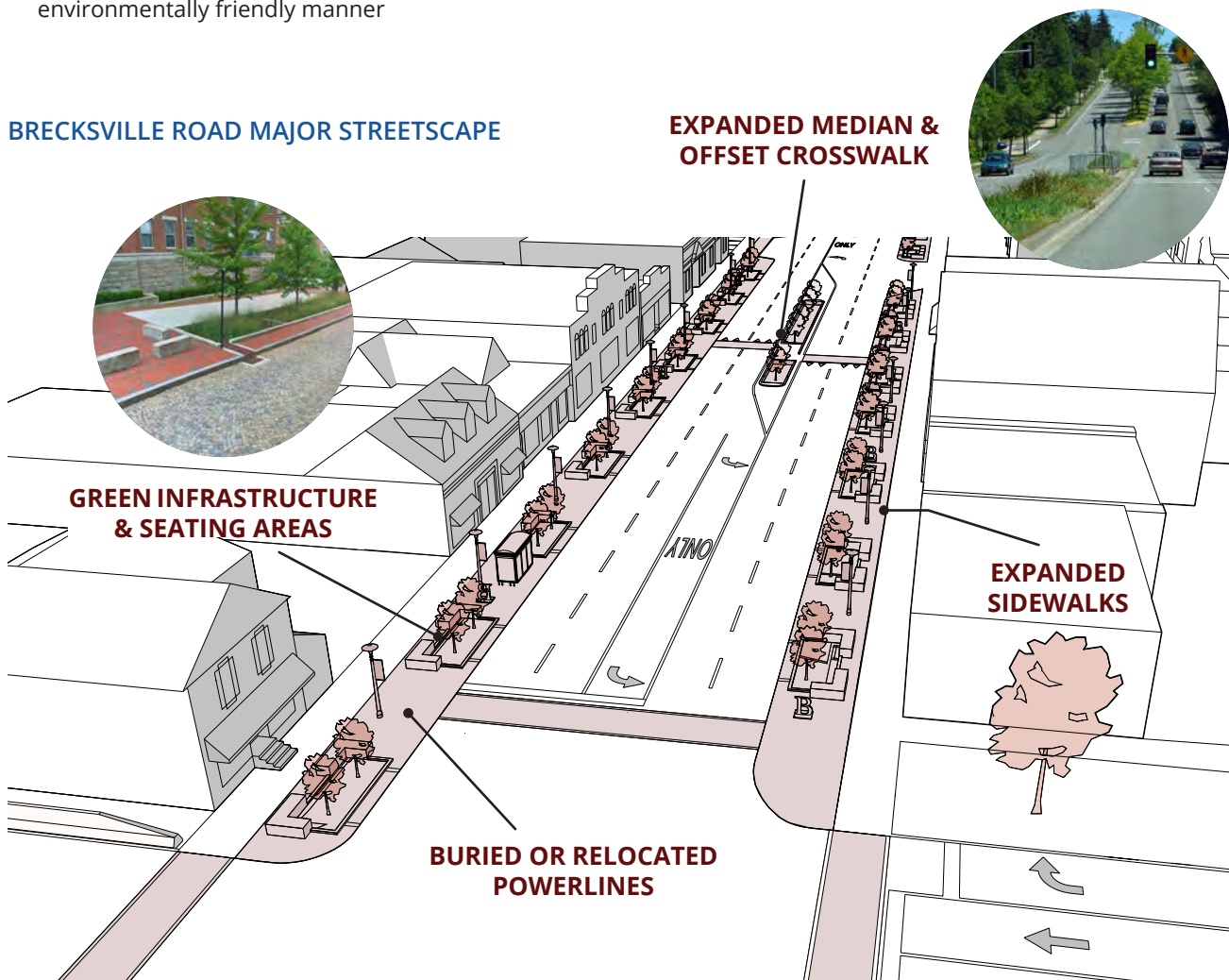
Source Images (from top to bottom): PBIC, Dan Burden; PBIC, Mitchell S Austin; Flickr user Andy Taylor

MAJOR STREETScape

The major streetscape design suggests many of the infrastructure changes from the minor streetscape in a more robust and comprehensive manner as well as additional features and green improvements. They include:

- Curb bumpouts to shorten intersection crossings
- A mid-block pedestrian crossing that is offset to improve safety
- A planted median
- Significantly wider sidewalks through elimination of on-street parking
- Wider planting areas for more robust trees
- Green infrastructure to handle stormwater in an environmentally friendly manner
- Buried or relocated powerlines to improve views along the corridor
- Bike racks and pedestrian amenities
- Updated and decorative lighting
- Decorative crosswalks and artistic elements

BRECKSVILLE ROAD MAJOR STREETScape



Source Images (from top to bottom): PBIC, Dan Burden; Google Earth

GREATER VETERANS AFFAIRS AREA INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK

The Greater Veterans Affairs (VA) Area Infrastructure Framework provides an overview of the area's proposed infrastructure enhancements. The infrastructure framework rests on a series of major principles, which are described in depth and displayed graphically on the following page. They are:

- Define gateways into the Greater VA Area
- Improve intersections and crossings to make them safer
- Improve streetscapes to coordinate with investments
- Expand a logical grid pattern of roads
- Develop a network of green streets
- Develop trails that connect the Greater VA Area
- Expand highway and road infrastructure to accommodate development

DEFINE GATEWAYS INTO THE GREATER VA AREA

As the Greater VA Area develops shifts to mixed-use, it will become a prominent destination for visitors and residents. To define and market the area, the City should work to enhance entrances through the use of lighting, gateway features, landscaping and other elements. As with the Town Center, these improvements can provide a sense of identity.

IMPROVE INTERSECTIONS AND CROSSINGS TO MAKE THEM SAFER

To better connect the Greater VA Area, intersection improvements are necessary. Well-lit and short crosswalks with decorative markings and walk timers make it feel safer and more pleasant to walk between areas. Because the VA's final street layout is not yet finalized, the necessary intersection improvements may also change, but the intersections on the development framework map display potential improvement locations.

IMPROVE STREETSAPES TO COORDINATE WITH INVESTMENTS

The streetscapes of Brecksville and Miller Roads presently reflect the past uses of the VA site wide and largely utilitarian roads for institutional and industrial uses.

As the Greater VA Area transitions to mixed-use, the City should invest in enhanced streetscapes along Brecksville and Miller Roads to complement the new developments and provide a comfortable and attractive pedestrian experience throughout the 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.

DEVELOP A NETWORK OF GREEN STREETS

As the VA site rests within an environmentally sensitive area, new streets should be constructed with green features that assist in the collection, retention, and absorption of stormwater. The City and developers should work together to construct a network of green streets at the site.

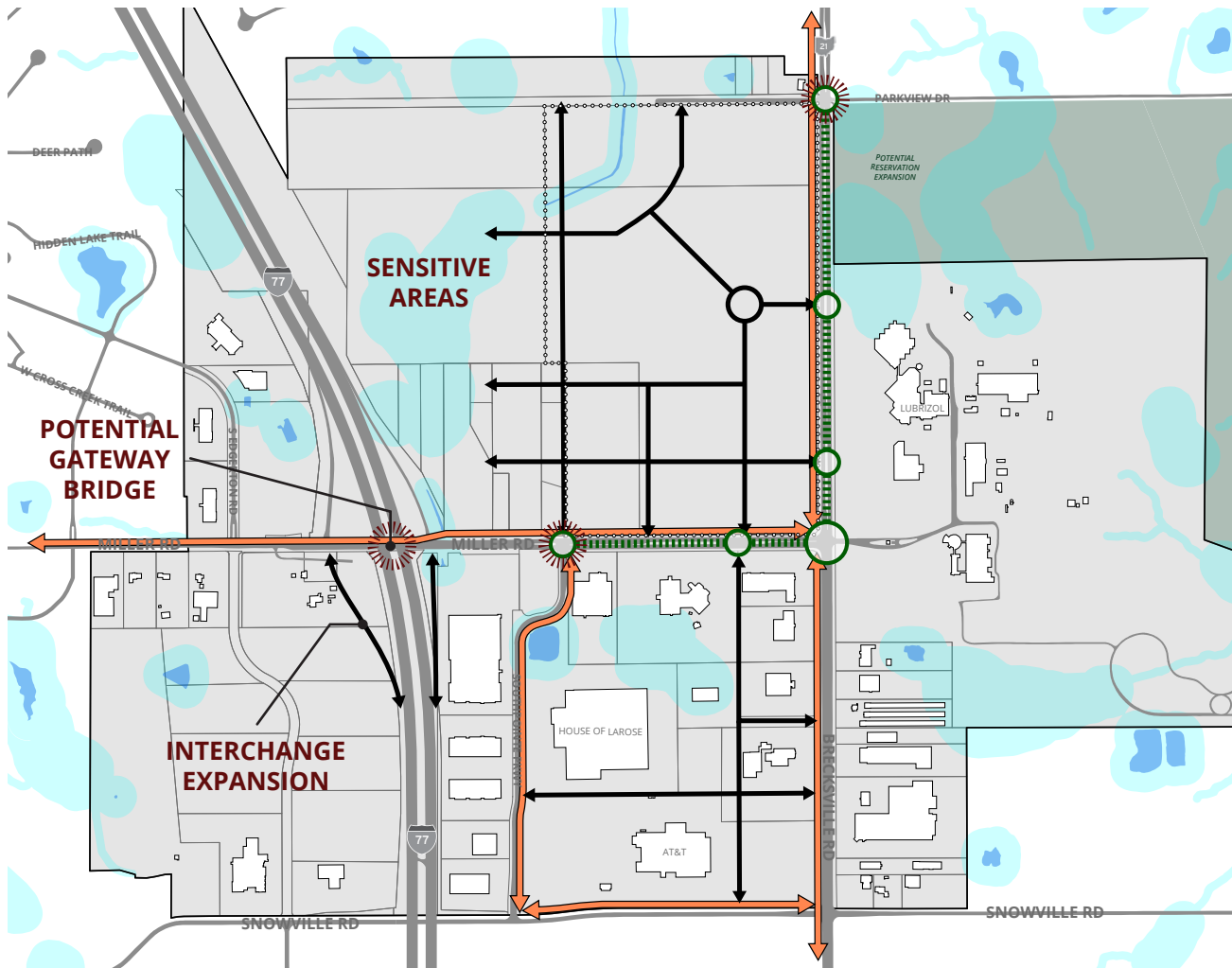
DEVELOP TRAILS THAT CONNECT THE GREATER VA AREA

As the Greater VA Area becomes a destination, linking the area to residential neighborhoods, the Town Center, and surrounding amenities is important. The map to the right shows trails heading north along Brecksville Road, west along Miller Road, and in a loop through the industrial areas south of the VA site.

EXPAND HIGHWAY AND ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE TO ACCOMMODATE DEVELOPMENT

The development of offices and housing will dramatically increase the number of vehicles accessing the south end of Brecksville. To accommodate this increase, the City should work with regional transportation agencies to expand highway access and road infrastructure, especially along Miller Road.

MAP 38 GREATER VA AREA INFRASTRUCTURE FRAMEWORK



LEGEND

Framework Elements

- ✱ Greater VA Area Gateways
- Intersection and Crossing Improvements
- Streetscape Improvements
- Potential New Green Streets
- Proposed Trails

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



This curb bumpout shows an example of green infrastructure, in which stormwater is directed to natural areas rather than storm sewers.

Source: Flickr user Chris Hamby

STRATEGY 13

DEVELOP A NETWORK OF KEY ALL-PURPOSE TRAILS AND SECONDARY CONNECTIONS

In the Resident Survey, respondents noted the desire for more options for walking and biking. Among respondents, 68.4% said they would walk or bike more if the City added more sidewalks or trails. The City's 1980 Master Plan outlined a series of trail priorities throughout the City; outside of the park system, however, few were constructed as a result of the lack of funds, difficult engineering, and other issues.

The City of Brecksville does have access to a series of incredibly popular trails including the Valley Parkway Trail and the Towpath Trail, which was rated among the most important and highest quality amenities in the City by survey respondents.

This strategy entails methods for connecting to these existing trails, adding new links by prioritizing major trails, and identifying connections to neighborhoods and amenities.

ACTION 13.1 PLAN FOR AND CONSTRUCT A MAIN ALL-PURPOSE TRAIL SPINE ALONG BRECKSVILLE ROAD THAT INCORPORATES EXISTING AMENITIES

Type of Action: Proactive

Brecksville Road is the primary spine of the community, linking the Town Center, VA site, job hubs, City Hall, community amenities, the park system, and many residential neighborhoods. In the Resident Survey, respondents almost equally preferred Brecksville Road to have a focus on vehicular traffic and safety for walking and biking.

Because of its important status, Brecksville Road should be developed as an all-purpose trail spine with access for walkers, runners, and cyclists. Especially from the Town Center south, a trail could link key cultural, community, and retail locations. Given the connection to existing park trails, a Brecksville Road spine could draw users from the popular Valley Parkway trail to community amenities and form a larger loop trail through the City and the parks, while highlighting amenities such as the library, community center, City Hall, Veterans Memorial, and Squire Rich Historical Museum. This could increase foot traffic to

these important sites and encourage more people to walk and bike through the community.

The City should work with private property owners, Cleveland Metroparks, and regional transportation agencies to plan for and construct a trail along Brecksville Road.

The Brecksville Road Trail Framework beginning on page 172 provides additional information.

ACTION 13.2 PLAN FOR AND CONSTRUCT A MAIN ALL-PURPOSE TRAIL SPINE ALONG ROYALTON/CHIPPEWA ROAD TO CONNECT TO PARKS AND SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

Type of Action: Proactive

Royalton and Chippewa Roads form the other primary spine of Brecksville, linking western neighborhoods, the Town Center, the park system, the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, the Towpath Trail, and other residential areas. With Broadview Heights presently

constructing an all-purpose trail along Royalton Road west of the I-77 highway interchange, there is an opportunity to better connect Brecksville by extending that trail to the east.

An all-purpose trail along Royalton Road and Chippewa Road would have to navigate a number of critical junctures including the highway interchange and the limited right-of-way around the Royalton Road and Brecksville Road intersection. The area east of the Town Center, however, provides an opportunity for partnering with the Metroparks to link to existing trails and park amenities. The Chippewa Road Trail Framework beginning on page 176 provides a graphic of the proposed trail through the Town Center.

The City should work with private property owners, Cleveland Metroparks, surrounding communities, and regional transportation agencies to plan for and construct a trail along Royalton/Chippewa Road.

ACTION 13.3 **CONNECT BRECKSVILLE'S** **NEIGHBORHOODS INTO THE REGIONAL** **NETWORK OF TRAILS**

Type of Action: Ongoing

The City of Brecksville is located at a key junction of the Valley Parkway and Towpath trails. The Towpath alone

sees more than 2.5 million users annually along its length. Because of the popularity of these trails, many communities seek to link to these assets.

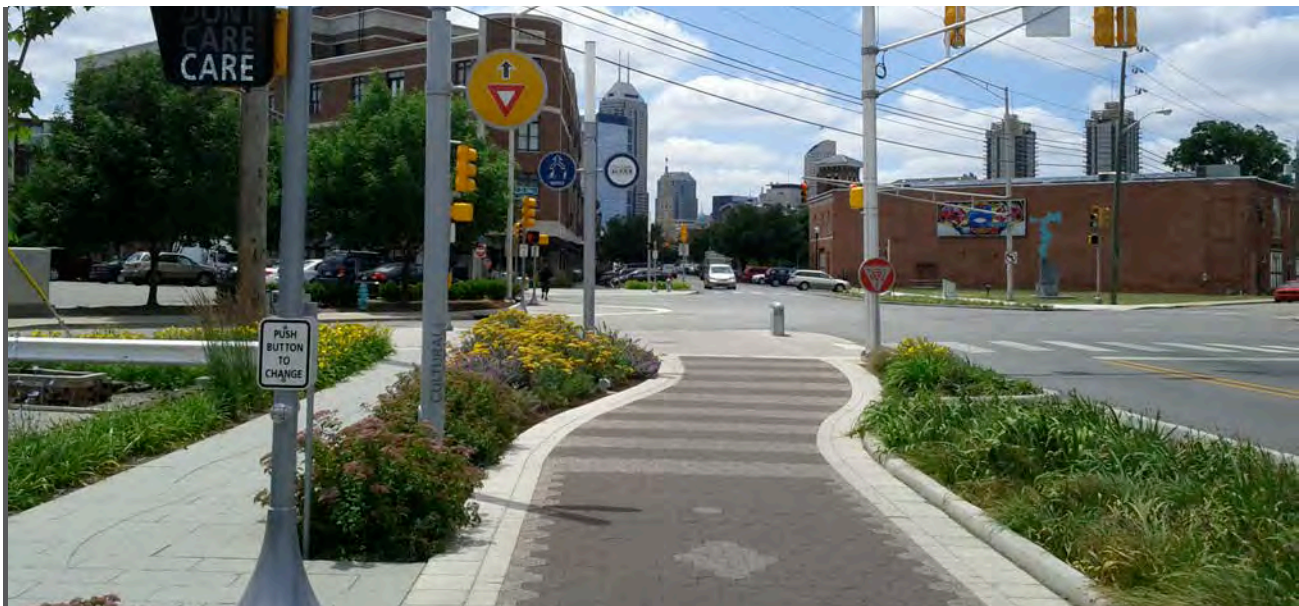
Brecksville should continue to work with neighboring communities, regional trail builders, the park system, and County Planning to build a network of all-purpose trails throughout the City that links into the Cuyahoga Greenways Plan and other regional bikeway plans.

The Priority Trail Framework beginning on page 174 provides additional information and a map of potential all-purpose trails in Brecksville.

ACTION 13.4 **CONSIDER A MAINTENANCE PLAN FOR** **TRAILS**

Type of Action: Proactive

As the City incorporates additional, separated bicycle facilities, it will need to maintain them. This is especially true for snow plowing during winter months. The City should proactively prepare a maintenance plan and identify the needed labor and equipment to accomplish this.



The Cultural Trail in Indianapolis, Indiana connects major destinations along a grade separated trail. Between 2008 and 2014, properties next to the trail increased 148% in value.

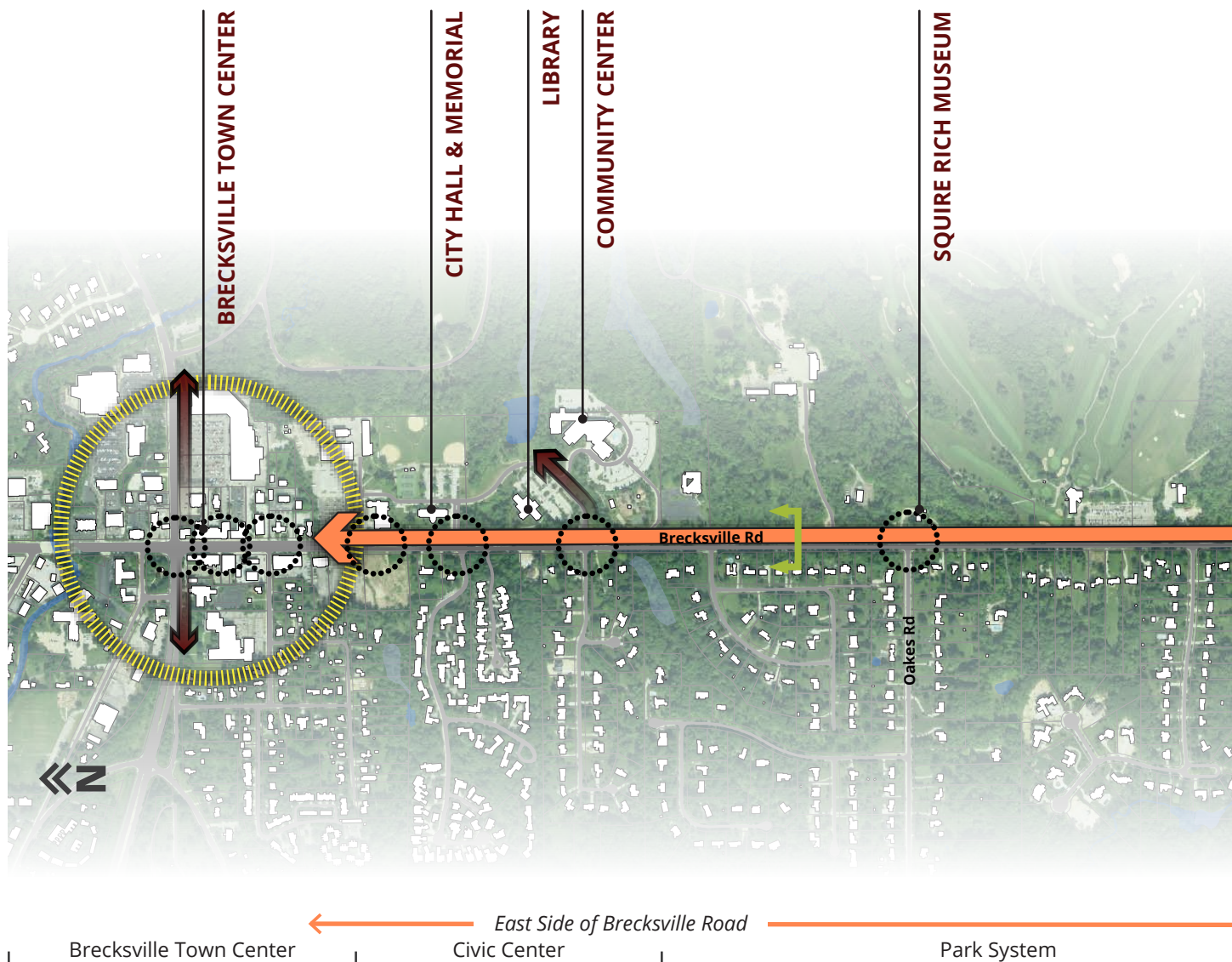
Source: Flickr user Eric Fischer

BRECKSVILLE ROAD TRAIL FRAMEWORK

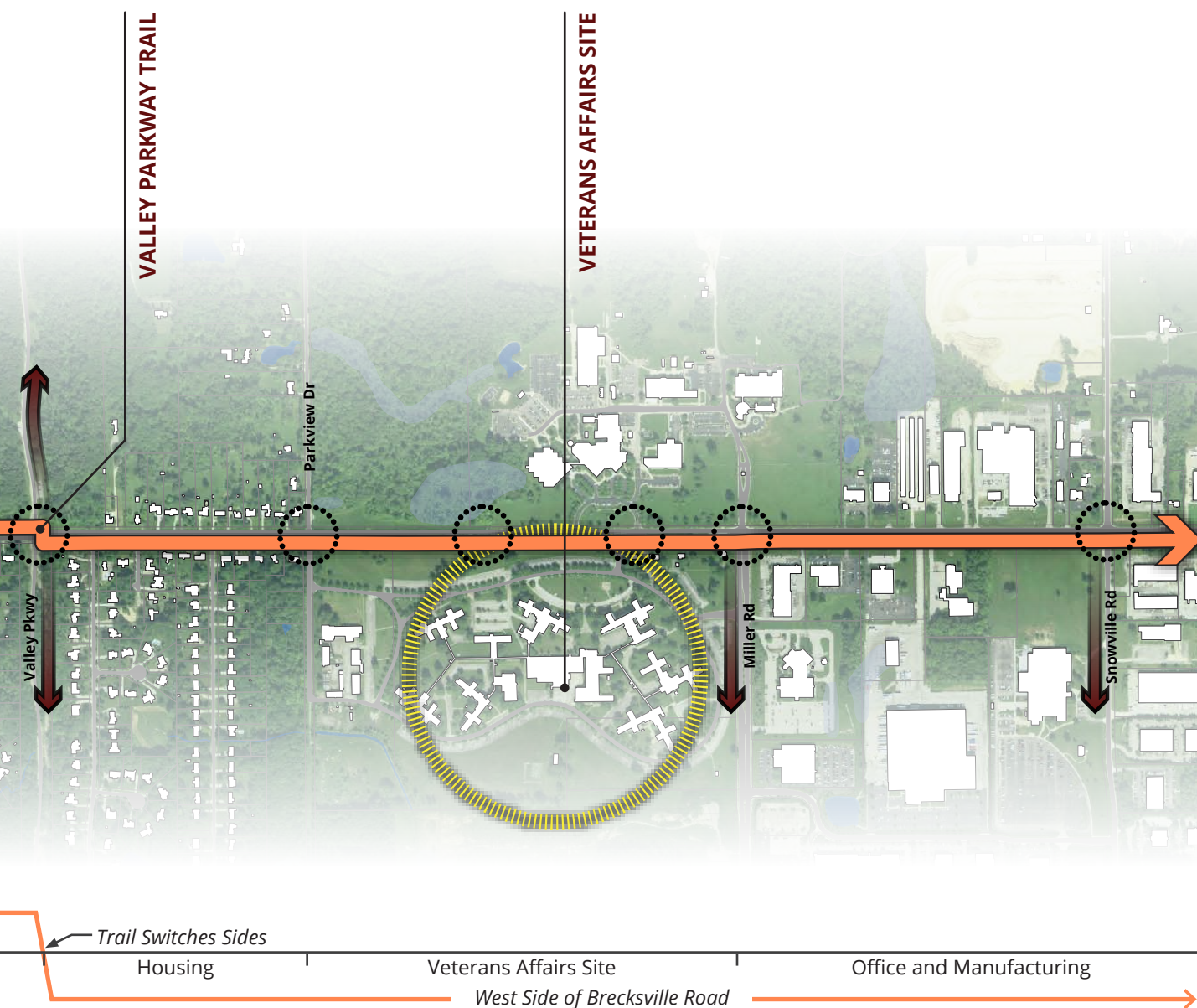
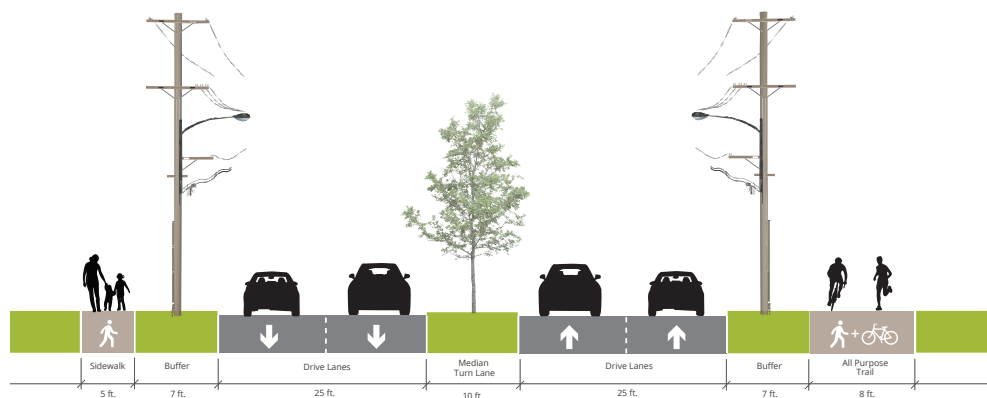
The Brecksville Road Trail is a critical link in the City. It will connect multiple major cultural and retail destinations while linking to existing and planned trails. Combined with existing Metroparks trails and a link along Royalton/Chippewa Road, the trail would complete an approximately 4.5 mile loop.

LEGEND

- Brecksville Road Trail
- Other Trail Connections
- Existing and Potential Crossings
- Major Destinations



The cross section shown here displays the width of the trail and the street as a whole. It corresponds generally to the green line displayed on the map.



PRIORITY TRAIL FRAMEWORK

Brecksville's existing all-purpose trails are located entirely within the Metroparks and National Park. These trails provide safe opportunities for running, walking, and exercising as part of a regional network. The potential trail system displayed on the next page would better link Brecksville's neighborhoods to this regional network and to local destinations.

MAJOR TRAILS

The potential trail system map on the next page identifies two 'major' trails that would follow the major routes within Brecksville: Brecksville Road and Royalton/Chippewa Road. These trail spines would provide trail access to the majority of City residences along residential streets or separated trails.

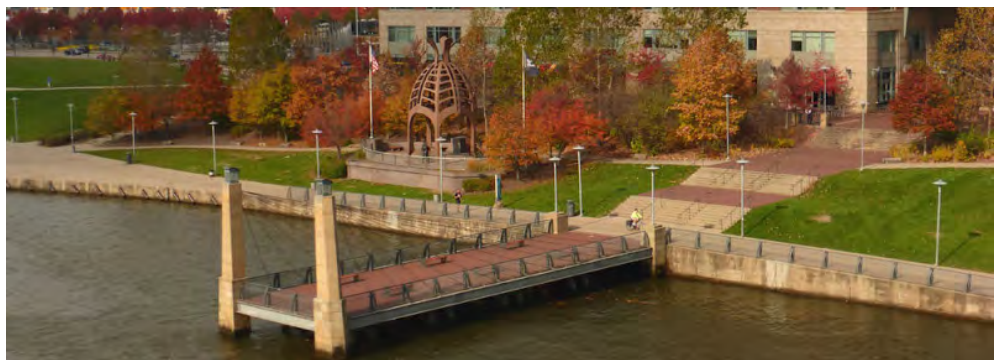
BRECKSVILLE TOWN CENTER

Brecksville Town Center is the intersection of both proposed major trails; however, within Brecksville Town Center, the trail system must work within confined spaces and must share space with pedestrians, vehicles, parking, and businesses.

The dotted area along Brecksville Road shows the area of the Town Center where right-of-way is insufficient to provide a completely separated trail. Here, cyclists would have to share a confined area with pedestrians and shoppers. As such it may be necessary to post signs indicating bicyclists should walk their bikes through this area. Secondary connections through parking areas to the rear of Town Center shops may provide a wide enough path for safe bicycling; however, such a path would require reworking parking and placing a trail along private property.

The Three Rivers Heritage Trail in Pittsburgh, PA links various memorials, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, shown here, via a recreational bike path.

Source: pghmurals.com



Additionally, the proposed trail segment along Chippewa Road just east of Brecksville Road is likewise constrained. Existing space along Chippewa Road does not allow for landscaping, a trail, and parking areas. Without the elimination of a drive lane or the narrowing of the street, a new trail would require the acquisition of private property. One potential solution is the reuse of the first row of parking as a trail. Within the Brecksville Town Center Shopping Plaza, using this first row of parking would provide sufficient space for a trail and landscaping, but would require the elimination of parking spaces. The result, however, would be a fully separated trail that would connect the shopping center and the Town Center to the Metroparks trail network.

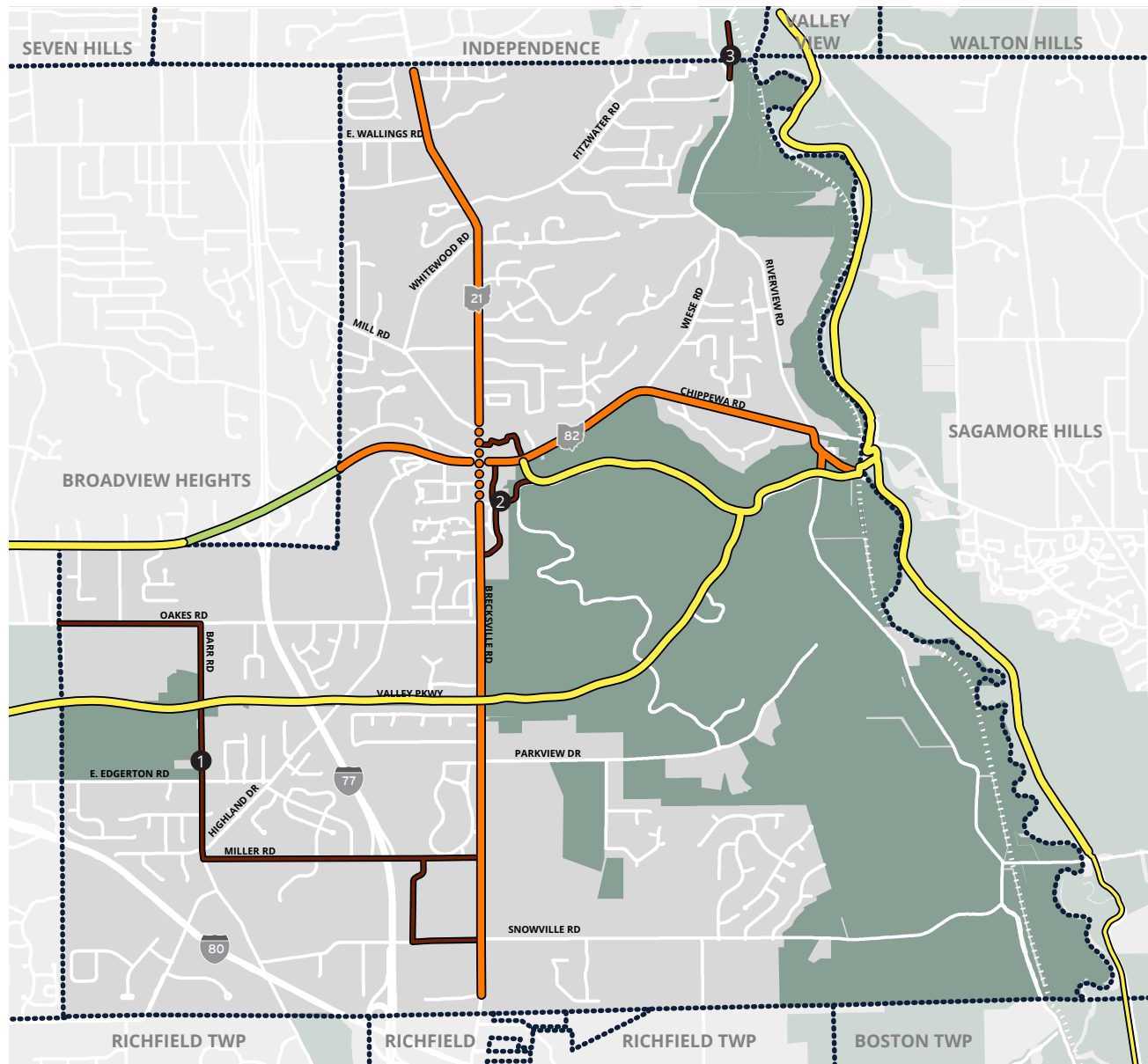
OTHER TRAILS

Beyond major trails, secondary connections would also help connect neighborhoods to various destinations. The first set of trails would connect the new school at Blossom Hill and various western neighborhoods to the VA site, the second would connect through Brecksville Town Center, and the third would provide a link from the eastern end of Fitzwater Road to the Towpath Trail.

TRAILS OUTSIDE BRECKSVILLE

Outside Brecksville, an under-construction trail along Royalton Road will terminate at Ken Mar Industrial Parkway, just to the west of I-77. A connection from Ken Mar through Broadview Heights to the Brecksville community boundary would form a complete link between Broadview Heights' Town Center to Brecksville Town Center.

MAP 39 POTENTIAL TRAIL SYSTEM



LEGEND

- Major Trails (*proposed*)
- Town Center Sidewalk Connections
- Other Trails Outside Brecksville (*proposed*)
- Existing Trails
- Other Trails (*proposed*)
 - ① Connecting western neighborhoods, VA area, and Blossom Hill
 - ② Connecting through Brecksville Town Center
 - ③ Connecting Fitzwater Road to the Towpath
- Park Lands
- Other Types of Land

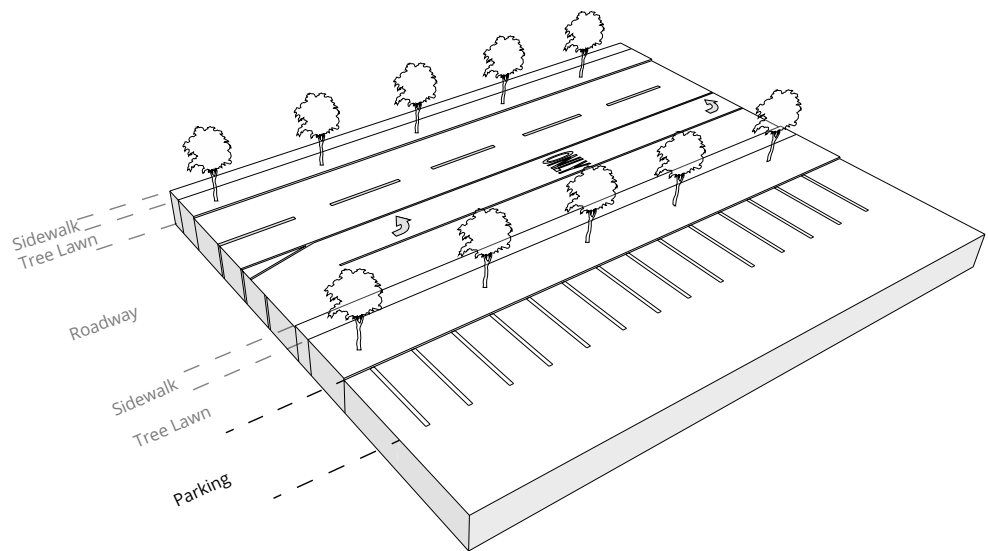
CHIPPEWA ROAD TOWN CENTER TRAIL FRAMEWORK

The Chippewa Road Town Center Trail Framework displays one method of navigating the complexities of trail development along the major corridors of the City's core. Because there is limited right-of-way, the framework displayed below shows how a single row of parking could be repurposed as a trail and landscaping.

Currently, this parking row is on private property and is required parking by zoning; however, a parking study may show that the additional spaces are unnecessary for the current shopping center. The framework below would result in the loss of 46 parking spaces, but the Brecksville Town Center shopping plaza would still have 349 parking spaces in front of the center as well as parking in the rear.

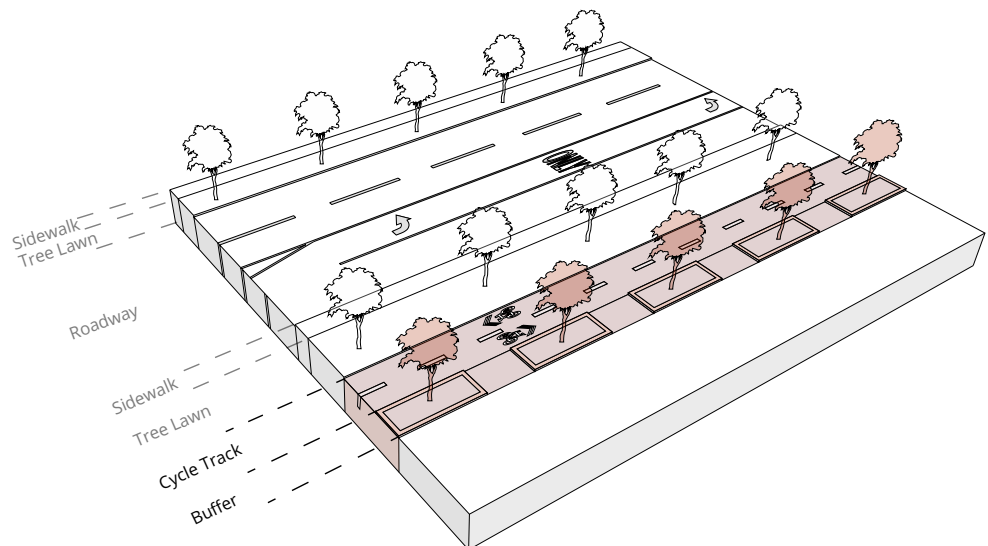
EXISTING CHIPPEWA ROAD LAYOUT

The existing layout of Chippewa Road is shown to the right. It includes three driving lanes, a turn lane, sidewalks, landscaping, and a row of parking. The parking row and landscaping is privately held land.



POTENTIAL CHIPPEWA ROAD LAYOUT

The potential Chippewa Road layout is displayed to the right. The layout eliminates the 46 parking spaces in front of Brecksville Town Center shopping plaza in favor of a two-way trail and additional landscaping to separate cyclists and pedestrians from vehicular traffic.



STRATEGY 14

PREPARE THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK FOR OLDER AND LESS MOBILE RESIDENTS

With the number of seniors in Cuyahoga County expected to increase 16.2% by 2050, the transportation system will have to adjust to their changing needs. Seniors tend to have higher disability rates than the population as a whole, with nearly 40% of persons age 65 and older reporting at least one disability, according to 2014 information from the U.S. Census. Of those, two-thirds say they have difficulty in walking or climbing. Given mobility issues among seniors, this strategy entails methods of identifying accessibility issues on streets and in municipal buildings to ensure that people can access goods, services, and amenities regardless of disability status.

ACTION 14.1

CONDUCT AN ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT OF COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS AND MAJOR CORRIDORS

Type of Action: Proactive

An accessibility audit is a review of public spaces for impediments to use by those with limited mobility or sensory functions. This type of audit determines the extent to which those persons can use an area given existing infrastructure. It also identifies changes that may improve overall accessibility. For example, an audit may identify that existing crossing times are too short and that curb ramps are missing. Older pedestrians with limited mobility may require longer crossing times to safely navigate wide roads.

Existing tool kits, such as those available from AARP, identify issues to consider, including:

- Presence of curb ramps, pedestrian signals, and crosswalks
- Duration of walk signals
- Blocked views for safe crossings
- Broken or blocked sidewalks
- Unsafe driveways crossing sidewalks
- Speeding cars
- Confusing or missing signage
- Lack of pedestrian amenities

The City should conduct an accessibility audit of commercial districts and major corridors in partnership with community groups, planners, property owners, users, and others.

ACTION 14.2

CONDUCT AN ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT OF MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

Type of Action: Proactive

An accessibility audit of municipal buildings would likewise determine the extent to which they are accessible for those with physical or sensory limitations. An audit of municipal buildings could include some of the following issues:

- Width and weight of doors
- Presence of accessible entrance ramps
- Presence of no-step entries
- Clear signage with braille or raised lettering
- Accessible restrooms

The City should conduct an accessibility audit of municipal buildings in partnership with community groups, planners, and users.

ACTION 14.3

UPDATE STREETS AND STRUCTURES AS A RESULT OF ANY ACCESSIBILITY AUDITS

Type of Action: Ongoing

As a result of any completed accessibility audits, the City and its partners should undertake improvements to address accessibility issues.

STRATEGY 15

UPDATE PARKING STANDARDS TO MEET MODERN NEEDS

In an outer ring community such as Brecksville, parking is a necessary part of developing successful business districts because the majority of visitors must drive. Presently, residents feel very comfortable with the amount of parking provided. In the Resident Survey, the majority of residents said parking in the Town Center is convenient and easy.

While parking will remain an important component of a successful Town Center, changing demographics such as smaller household sizes, modernization of transportation technology, a desire for walkability, and the unique needs of Brecksville Town Center require that parking standards be updated to change with modern needs. This strategy entails methods of updating parking standards to allow shared parking and fewer required spaces in developments.

ACTION 15.1

REVIEW MINIMUM AND SHARED OFF-STREET PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR REDUCTIONS

Type of Action: Proactive

Parking is a necessary component of development in the Town Center and throughout the City, but the minimum number of required spaces should better reflect modern standards and actual need. Nationally, cities have been reducing the minimum number of required parking spaces to better reflect needed parking.

Brecksville's present minimum parking requirements are among the highest of similar communities and significantly higher than more walkable communities elsewhere. The City should review minimum parking regulations and consider reducing requirements, especially in the Town Center.

Other components of the parking code should also be reviewed. Specifically, the City's shared parking requirements limit the types of uses that can share spaces with other businesses. The City should review this provision and provide additional flexibility for shared parking.

For more information on existing parking requirements, refer to the blue box on page 180.

ACTION 15.2

CONSIDER REGULATIONS ALLOWING DEVELOPERS TO MAKE PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF PARKING

Type of Action: Proactive

Presently, the City of Brecksville requires dedicated, on-site parking for businesses located in the Town Center. Due to the small lots and the walkable nature of the business district, accommodating such parking can be difficult, if not impossible.



Shared parking lots in Lakewood, Ohio reduce the overall number of parking spaces needed for development.

Source: Google Earth

The City already owns various parking lots Downtown. To accommodate the construction of new businesses and infill development, the City should consider allowing property owners to pay into a fund for area-wide parking improvements in lieu of the required number of spaces.

The fund should only be used for Town Center parking improvements that directly support all businesses. These could include adding or updating meters, improving City-owned lots, purchasing or building additional lots, or building a parking deck or garage.

ACTION 15.3 CONVENE TOWN CENTER PROPERTY OWNERS TO DEVELOP SHARED PARKING AND A "PARK ONCE" STRATEGY

Type of Action: Proactive

To develop a walkable, connected Town Center, residents and visitors must be able to park and walk from store to store. With individual parking lots devoted to separate businesses, residents are unable to park in one location for access to the entire Town Center. Municipal parking lots and on-street parking can fill some parking needs, but a "park once" strategy would better facilitate a walkable Town Center.

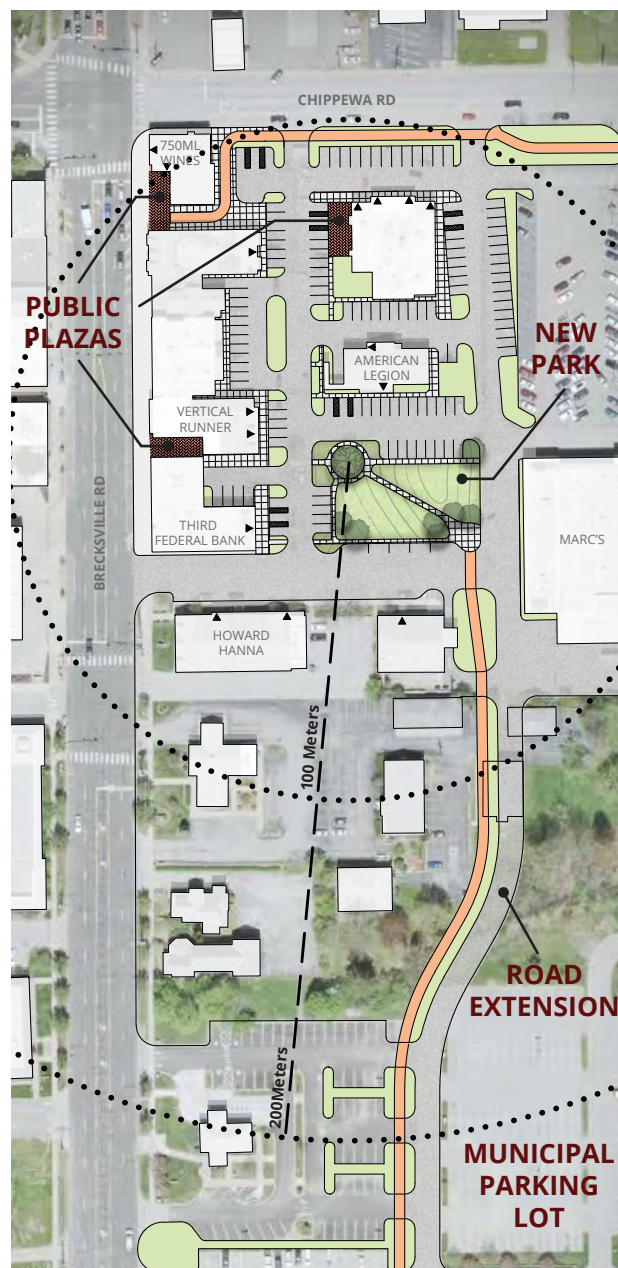
A "park once" strategy means that a resident can park their car in a single location and walk throughout the area before returning to their vehicle. To accomplish this, the City should work proactively with businesses, property owners, and institutions to develop shared parking agreements that allow visitors to park in any lot and walk throughout the area.

Property owners could combine and share parking areas in the Town Center. The image at right shows how separate, individual parking lots could be reorganized into one, shared lot. Shared lots could yield new park space, safe pedestrian paths, additional plazas, and a logical network of roads.

The image at right also shows how a proposed street from the municipally owned lots south of the Town Center could connect into commercial areas to the north. This would allow easier access from municipal lots to Town Center businesses, which are roughly a 200 meter walk from the core of the Town Center—equivalent to halfway around a track.

The layout to the right is an example of how a shared parking system could work, but any design should include extensive involvement of businesses and more detailed parking and engineering calculations.

MAP 40
EXAMPLE TOWN CENTER SHARED PARKING LAYOUT



LEGEND

- Buildings
- ▨ Parking and Drive Aisles
- Plazas
- Green Spaces
- ▶ Building Entrances
- Trails

COMPARATIVE PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Parking requirements are outlined in Zoning Codes to ensure that parking is adequately provided for visitors without necessitating a need to park on residential side streets or otherwise being unable to find parking. In new construction of previously undeveloped areas, parking requirements are generally more easily met; however, in historic areas or previously built locations, parking requirements can be difficult to achieve because of historic structures or smaller lot sizes.

The chart below showcases Brecksville's parking requirements compared to other communities. In general, Brecksville's requirements are slightly higher than comparable communities. As an example, Brecksville requires industrial buildings to have one

space for every 300 square feet, compared to 1 space for every 400 square feet in Independence.

In most cases, Zoning Codes outline the minimum number of spaces required in a development; however, many communities have found an excess of parking, which lowers tax revenues, increases flooding issues, and harms walkability. In response, they have implemented parking maximums that outline the maximum number of parking spaces allowed.

The provision of parking requires balancing the needs of the traveling public with the economic needs of developers, the requirements of businesses, and environmental impacts.

ZONING CODE PARKING REQUIREMENTS

Community	Single-Family	Multi-Family	Industrial	Offices	Restaurants
Brecksville <i>(additional employee parking required)</i>	2 spaces per dwelling unit (2 enclosed)	2.25 spaces per dwelling unit (1 enclosed)	1 space per 1.5 employees or 1 space for every 300 sq ft	1 space per 200 sq ft	1 space per 50 sq ft
Broadview Heights	➔ 2 spaces per dwelling unit (2 enclosed)	↓ 2.25 spaces per dwelling unit	➔ 1 space per employee on largest shift or 1 space for every 800 sq ft	↓ 1 space per 350 sq ft	➔ 1 space per 50 sq ft or 1 space per two seats
Independence	↓ 1 space per dwelling unit	↓ 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit	↓ 1 space per 1.5 employees or 1 space per 400 sq ft	➔ 1 space per 200 sq ft	➔ 1 space per 50 sq ft or 1 space per two seats
Bay Village	↓ 1 space per dwelling unit (1 enclosed)	↓ 1.5 spaces per dwelling unit	➔ -	↑ 1 space per 100 sq ft	1 space per 75 sq ft
Westlake	↓ 2 spaces per dwelling unit (1 enclosed)	↓ 2 spaces per dwelling unit (1 enclosed)	↓ 1 space for every 1.5 employees on the two largest successive shifts or 1 space per 350 sq ft	↓ 1 space per 250 sq ft of first floor offices, 1 space per 300 sq ft of other floor offices	↓ 1 space per 50 sq ft or 1 space per two seats
Hudson	↓ 2 spaces per dwelling unit	↓ 2 spaces per dwelling unit	↑ 1 space per employee on largest shift	↓ 1 space per 400 sq ft, with max of 1 space per 250 sq ft	➔ 1 space per two seats
Lakewood	↓ 1 space per dwelling unit (1 enclosed)	↓ Min: 1 space per dwelling unit Max: 2 spaces per dwelling unit	↓ Min: 1 space per 4 employees Max: 1 space per 1.5 employees	↓ Min: 1 space per 500 sq ft Max: 3.5 spaces per 1,000 sq ft	↓ Min: 1 space per 1,000 sq ft Max: 2.5 spaces per 1,000 sq ft <i>*businesses of 2,500 sq ft or less, no required parking</i>
<div> ↓ Lower Requirement than Brecksville ➔ Same Requirement as Brecksville ↑ Higher Requirement than Brecksville ➔ Different Requirement </div>					

EXAMPLE: RESTAURANT PARKING REQUIREMENTS

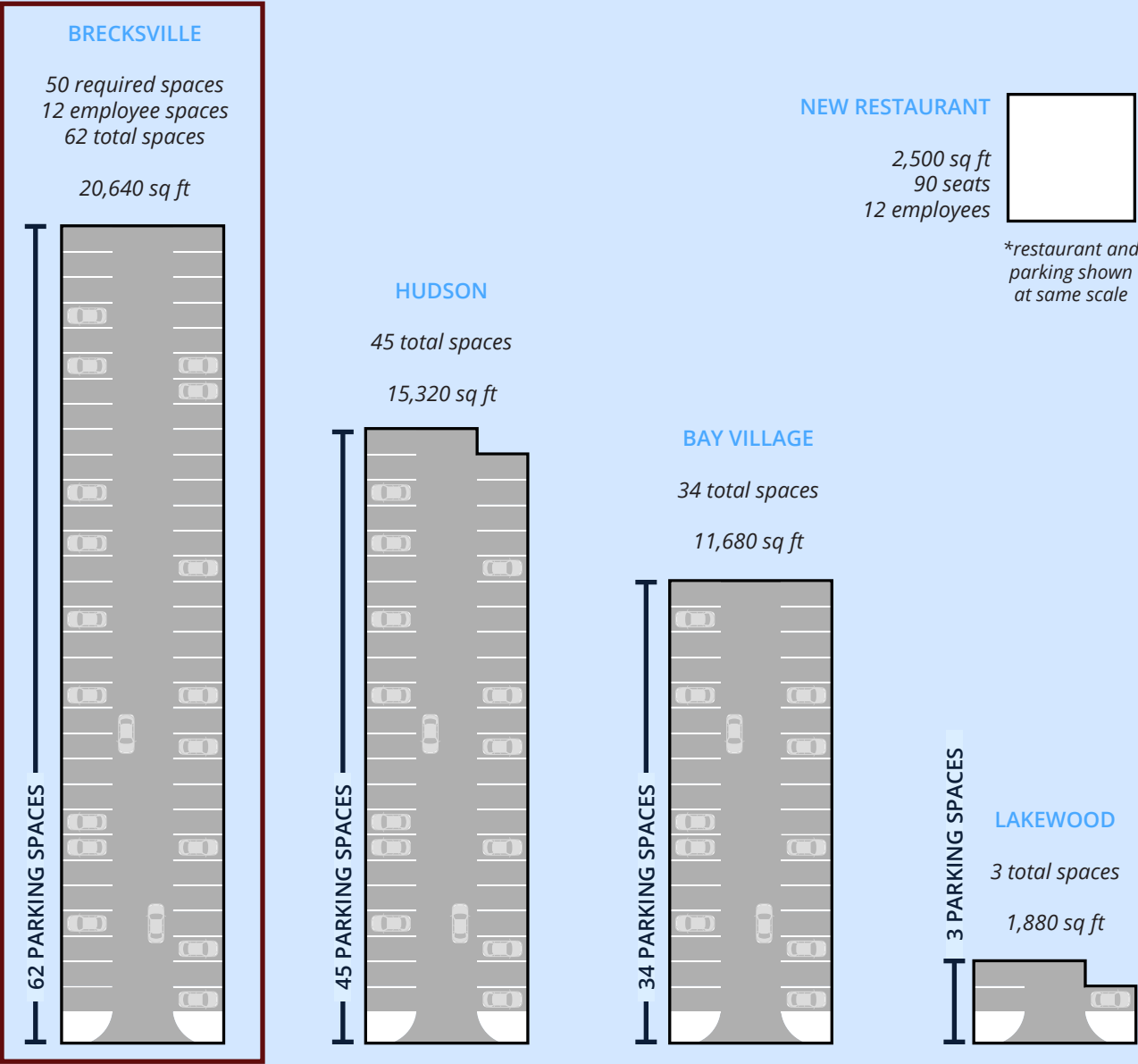
To illustrate the outcomes of applying various parking standards to the same development, the graphic below shows the amount of parking required by four different communities. In this example, a new restaurant of 2,500 square feet with 90 seats and 12 employees is proposed.

In Brecksville, such a restaurant would require 62 parking spaces and 20,640 square feet of parking and drive areas.

In Hudson, the same restaurant would require 45 spaces; in Bay Village, it would require 34 spaces; and in Lakewood, it would require three spaces.

In total, the same development would require a tenth of an acre in Lakewood, a third of an acre in Bay Village, two-fifths of an acre in Hudson, and more than half an acre in Brecksville.

The graphic does not take into account requirements for landscaping or potential reductions in parking from shared parking or variances. It does, however, show the differences among minimum parking requirements in various communities. Only in Lakewood does a community cap the number of parking spaces that are allowed.





Parking lots can be designed to provide shade trees, extensive landscaping, and screening from surrounding sidewalks to improve the look of the lot and reduce environmental issues.

Source: Flickr user Brett VA

ACTION 15.4

IMPROVE SCREENING, LOCATION, AND LANDSCAPING STANDARDS

Type of Action: Proactive

Parking standards in Brecksville require 10% of parking to be landscaped and for there to be a sufficient number and arrangement of sidewalks and medians to provide shade and pedestrian circulation; however, the Zoning Code presently allows parking in the front of buildings and does not explicitly require landscaping between the parking lot and sidewalk areas.

The City should update parking standards to require parking be screened from the street, located to the rear or side of buildings, and to provide standards for interior landscaping and pedestrian circulation.

ACTION 15.5

DEVELOP AN ONLINE PARKING GUIDE AND MAP

Type of Action: Proactive

With visitors increasingly planning their trips ahead of time, the City should develop an online parking guide that maps the available parking areas in Brecksville Town Center and provides directions to each. Placing the map online will allow visitors to plan their trip beforehand.

STRATEGY 16

EXPAND SIDEWALK COVERAGE TO CONNECT TO MAJOR DESTINATIONS AND PROVIDE CRITICAL LINKS

In the Resident Survey, respondents noted a strong desire for enhanced and improved pedestrian infrastructure throughout the community. Two-thirds of respondents agreed that connecting more residential areas and main streets with sidewalks was an infrastructure issue that they would like to see addressed. Additionally, a majority of respondents said that using City resources to improve the ease and safety of getting around by walking was a high priority.

Newer development within the City of Brecksville is required to install sidewalks along the frontage of their property, meaning many new subdivisions include sidewalks on both sides of the street. However, there remain missing links among older neighborhoods that puts some residents at a disadvantage in terms of connectivity and access.

This strategy entails methods for best identifying sidewalk installation priorities and provides ways to construct new pedestrian connections in residential neighborhoods.

ACTION 16.1 EXPLORE INSTALLATION AND REPAIR OF PRIORITY SIDEWALKS

Type of Action: Proactive

Some older neighborhoods lack sidewalk connections into nearby amenities such as parks, recreation facilities, or shopping plazas. While the City has added sidewalks along certain major corridors, critical gaps still remain.

The City should continue to add sidewalks with new subdivisions and add sidewalks where they are currently missing. Because of the number of streets missing sidewalks, the map on page 185 identifies those areas of the community that should be a priority for sidewalk installation. As funding and resident support is available, sidewalks should be added to these areas.

Additionally, the City should perform a sidewalk analysis to examine the condition of existing sidewalks as an initial step in prioritizing sidewalk repairs.



Sidewalks have the opportunity to connect residents to each other, to the Town Center, and to other community amenities.

Source: Zillow

ACTION 16.2

LINK THE ENDS OF CUL-DE-SACS WHERE POSSIBLE

Type of Action: Ongoing

Parallel cul-de-sacs often limit the ability of children or adults to easily walk between neighborhoods because of the distance to walk from one end of a cul-de-sac to the next. In some cases in Brecksville, the City has encouraged or mandated sidewalks or paths from the ends of cul-de-sacs to other neighborhoods or to nearby destinations. This shortens the walking distance between neighborhoods, allowing for safer and faster connections.

The City should continue to build or require links between the ends of cul-de-sac neighborhoods to other areas where possible and when feasible.

ACTION 16.3

EXPLORE GROUP REBATES OR MATCHING GRANTS FOR SIDEWALK REPAIRS

Type of Action: Proactive

The installation or repair of sidewalks can be an expensive undertaking for property owners. Some communities have lowered these expenses by providing matching grants to homeowners for assistance in installation.

Other communities have coordinated multiple sidewalk installations and repairs across the City.

By hiring a single contractor for the construction of multiple sidewalks, the City can assist in lowering the costs through a group discount or discounted rate.

ACTION 16.4

CONDUCT A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PLAN

Type of Action: Proactive

The Safe Routes to School program is intended to encourage and enable students to walk or ride their bicycle to school in a safe and comfortable environment. The Ohio Department of Transportation funds Safe Routes to School programs that can include planning, engineering, and programming that advance safe paths to schools. Examples include improved crosswalks, educational programs, or planning studies.

With the forward momentum of the soon-to-be combined elementary school campus at the Blossom Hill site in Brecksville, it is imperative that necessary infrastructure improvements be made for children traveling to school. Currently, all of the roadways that border the site are semi-rural in character, narrow, are two lanes, and lack sidewalks. The elementary school campus will ultimately trigger a need for further studies to be conducted in order to ensure a safe environment for children arriving at school.

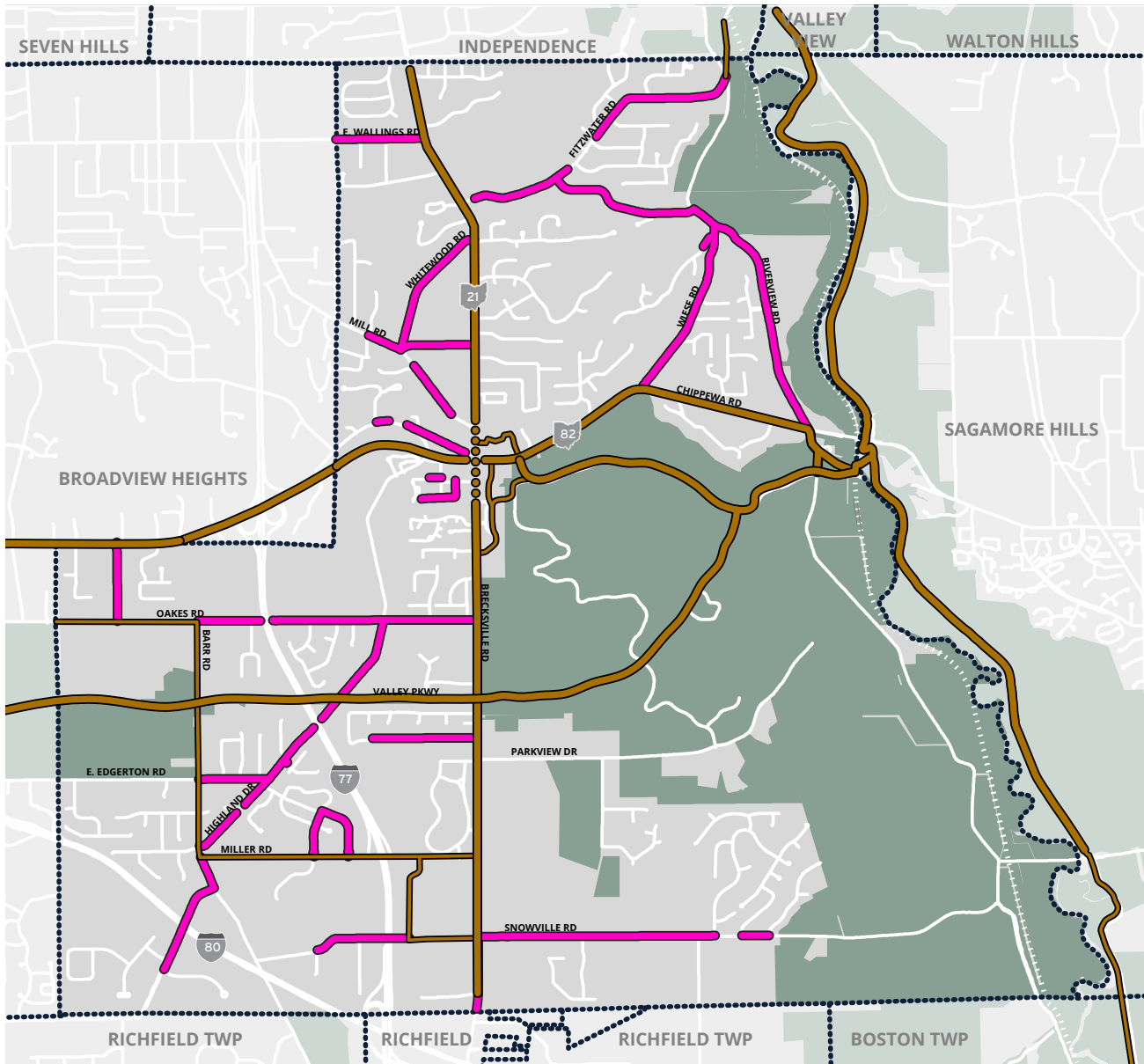
The City of Brecksville and the Brecksville-Broadview Heights City School District should apply for Safe Routes to School funding to ensure that students have the opportunity to safely walk to school.



Walking is a healthier and more environmentally friendly way for kids to get to school

Source: Flickr user Chris Hamby

MAP 41 PRIORITY SIDEWALK SEGMENTS



LEGEND

- Sidewalk Priorities
- Existing and Proposed Trails
- Park Lands
- Other Types of Land

STRATEGY 17

ENSURE THE SAFETY AND SECURITY OF BICYCLISTS

With existing major trails and new trails proposed, the addition of bicyclists on the roads and at destinations requires new infrastructure and amenities. At its most basic, bicyclists must have a place to park their bike near their final location. Well-designed and located bicycle parking can provide the necessary space for bicyclists, beautify the community, and stop bicyclists from inappropriately parking their bikes on existing benches, trees, or poles.

An increase in bicycling also means greater interactions between motorists and cyclists. With education on bike safety, Brecksville's streets can accommodate both groups. This strategy entails educating bicyclists and motorists about getting around the community and to their destination in a safe manner and with the needed amenities.

ACTION 17.1

CONDUCT BIKE EDUCATION OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

Type of Action: Ongoing

Northeast Ohio is home to extremely capable bicycling advocacy groups including Bike Brecksville, a chapter of Bike Cleveland. The City should work with these advocacy groups to provide bike education and safety training to residents and public employees. This ensures that people know the 'rules of the road' when it comes to interacting with traffic and using bike facilities.

ACTION 17.2

CONSTRUCT BICYCLE PARKING IN COMMERCIAL AREAS

Type of Action: Proactive

To make bicycling practical and convenient, riders require a secure place to park their bicycles at their destination, but there are few bike racks in Brecksville Town Center and other commercial districts. To facilitate bicycling to commercial districts, the City should work with existing property owners to construct bicycle parking.

ACTION 17.3

UPDATE DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS TO INCLUDE BICYCLE PARKING

Type of Action: Proactive

In addition to constructing bike parking at existing buildings, the City should update the Zoning Code to require developers to provide safe, accessible, and attractive bicycle parking in new developments. Bike parking can include basic racks, unique racks with specialty designs, as well as much larger bicycle boxes.

In general, bike parking should be sited close to destinations, should be easily viewed from the street, and should be well-lit.



Decorative bike racks such as these can provide visual interest as well as usable bike parking.

Source: Flickr user Sally Wilson

STRATEGY 18

USE TECHNOLOGIES TO MANAGE TRAVEL EFFICIENTLY

National transportation changes have occurred rapidly in recent years. As an example, the ride-sharing service Uber did not exist in 2008, but provided four billion rides in 2017. These Uber rides take the place of parking spots, transit trips, and can even reduce the need for car ownership, but the impact of increasing ride-sharing use is still being understood. Similarly, there has been a significant shift toward driverless car technology. These vehicles are already being tested on roads around the country, and manufacturers are investing more money in expanding driverless cars to the consumer market. Together, these transportation changes and new technologies are upending traditional transportation needs.

This strategy entails actions to prepare for future transportation changes and technologies such as ride-sharing and smart roads.

ACTION 18.1 MONITOR ONGOING PARKING LOT UTILIZATION

Type of Action: Ongoing

Based on anticipated transportation changes, the City should work proactively to monitor parking lot use in Brecksville Town Center to determine whether these changing technologies necessitate changes to the Town Center layout or parking standards.

ACTION 18.2 CONSIDER THE INCLUSION OF RIDE-SHARING DROP-OFF POINTS IN NEW AND EXISTING DEVELOPMENTS

Type of Action: Reactive

Many locations are not optimized for the increase in ride-sharing use. They can lack turnarounds, waiting areas, or safe stopping locations.

As ride-sharing and potentially driverless technologies increase, the City should consider drop-off areas in existing and new commercial districts. These locations can allow ride-sharing vehicles to idle safely without stopping traffic, can provide amenities such as a shelter, and can reduce the need for dedicated parking.

ACTION 18.3 PARTNER WITH NOACA ON MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL ROAD STUDIES

Type of Action: Reactive

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) conducts multi-jurisdictional corridor studies to determine best methods of reducing traffic. A pilot program on Cedar Road re-timed lights to reduce travel time by up to two and a half minutes.

The City should partner with NOACA on corridor plans for major roads, especially Brecksville and Royalton/Chippewa Roads, where the use of new technologies could enhance existing infrastructure.



Ride-sharing pick-up and drop-off points can centralize waiting areas, include amenities, and reduce traffic.

Source: Flickr user Paul Sableman

STRATEGY 19

IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE TO PROVIDE FOR A GROWING ECONOMY

Beyond the repair of existing infrastructure, the improvement and addition of needed infrastructure assists in business expansion by addressing modern needs. As Brecksville continues to grow, add jobs, and expand in certain areas, transportation and infrastructure improvements are necessary. The expansion of the Veterans Affairs (VA) site as a major, mixed-use center, the growing workforce need in the community, and new technologies to support the smart economy all relate to future infrastructure needs.

This strategy entails a variety of infrastructure improvements to address changing economic issues such as traffic pattern changes, new types of utilities, and needed workforce.

ACTION 19.1 WORK WITH ODOT TO EXPAND THE I-77 INTERCHANGE

Type of Action: Proactive

The development of the former VA site as a mixed-use center will bring jobs, residents, and visitors to the City; however, existing infrastructure at the Miller Road interchange is presently limited to a north-bound only on-ramp, south-bound only off-ramp, and a three-lane overpass. Given expected traffic, the City and developer should work with regional transportation agencies to expand the I-77 interchange to handle anticipated traffic increases.

ACTION 19.2 CONSIDER THE FEASIBILITY OF BROADBAND ALONG BRECKSVILLE ROAD

Type of Action: Proactive

Broadband access is increasingly important to technology firms, manufacturing centers, and office buildings due to demand for data at high speeds. Broadband fiber networks can also be used by governments to speed services, improve internet access at libraries, link transportation management networks, or as an economic development tool.

The City should map its existing fiber network, identify gaps, and consider laying fiber in coordination with other infrastructure projects such as the installation of a trail along Brecksville Road. A fiber connection linking the VA site, government buildings, and Brecksville Town Center could be a powerful economic development incentive.



Hudson, Ohio developed a municipal broadband network to act as an economic incentive for new businesses.

Source: Hudson Innovates

ACTION 19.3

CONSIDER THE INCLUSION OF A MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER AT THE VA SITE

Type of Action: Proactive

A number of existing transportation assets and proposed improvements in the Master Plan converge at the VA site. This includes the GCRTA and Akron Metro bus routes, the expansion of the I-77 and Miller Road interchange, and the proposed trail network. Likewise, the potential for the existing City-run park-n-ride on Brecksville Road to become a development site means a new park-n-ride may be necessary. Finally, the transportation technologies strategy discusses increases in driverless cars and ride-sharing trips that necessitate drop-off points.

These transportation changes could converge as a multi-modal transportation center at the VA site. Given the size and potential employment of the site as well as the surrounding employers, a multi-modal transportation center could be key to providing access for various transportation modes. This could include bus stops, direct trail connections, structured parking, and ride-share drop offs. This would form a comprehensive multi-modal transportation center that could attract visitors, employers, and workers.

ACTION 19.4

BURY OR RELOCATE POWERLINES WHERE POSSIBLE

Type of Action: Ongoing

Powerlines are a critical component of the economy, but overhead powerlines can detract from the aesthetics of an area and are susceptible to weather-related power outages. Burying powerlines can improve the aesthetics of the area and protect against weather issues, but can be very expensive. Estimates place the cost at one million dollars per mile.

Given the cost of burying powerlines, the City should consider burial when existing infrastructure projects are underway. This can reduce the cost of construction through coordination.

Alternatively, some communities have relocated power lines to the rear of lots to reduce their visual impact along major corridors. The City should consider these options during development reviews and infrastructure replacement.



Transit centers such as this one in Redmond, Washington can combine parking, trails, buses, and ride-sharing in one center.

Source: Wikimedia

RECOMMENDATIONS **ENVIRONMENTAL**

Objectives Addressed:



Brecksville is known for its abundant streams, valleys, forests, and picturesque setting. The City is encompassed by a vast and enviable amount of natural features, which is a major attractor for new residents.

Additionally, nearly 40% of the City's total land area is comprised of protected conservation lands and wildlife refuges located within the Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park. These park systems have an immense impact on the area and are not only a regional draw for visitors, but a national one as well.

"PROTECTING NATURAL FEATURES IS ESSENTIAL"

WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT

Brecksville has come to thrive within its unique environment, and the natural features prevalent throughout the community are something that should continue to be a protected piece of the City's character. To ensure this natural character remain pristine, it is imperative to work with neighboring communities, park entities, and residents to help reduce any impacts that could negatively effect these resources.

The natural setting which Brecksville residents call home is a critical component of what defines the community. The City needs to adopt policies to respond to changing development pressures and continue to protect what makes the community such a vibrant and beautiful place to live, work, and visit. Looking to the future, the City should strive to lead the region in sustainability measures, innovative infrastructure standards, and alternative energy sources. This will help not only help protect what makes Brecksville such a desirable community, but also reduce the City's overall environmental footprint.

WHAT DOES THIS TOPIC COVER

This topic covers strategies and actions for protecting the City's natural features, improving energy efficiency and sustainability, and providing educational resources to residents.

"THE VERY ESSENCE OF BRECKSVILLE IS ITS GREEN SPACES AND NATURAL PARKS"

OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

The Environmental Recommendations section addresses multiple objectives of the Plan, including providing a well-maintained system of roads (transportation), connecting people to walkable places (connectivity), reinforcing Brecksville's sense of place (character), continuing to be a regional leader (governance), protecting natural features (environment), and embracing the world-class park amenities (parks).

STRATEGY 20

IMPROVE COMMUNITY SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

As part of the Brecksville Resident Survey, over 80% of respondents said they agree that environmentally friendly development is important, and 62% said that encouraging environmentally sustainable development was a high priority. Together, these findings support a commitment to improving the City's environmental footprint through sustainable development. This strategy outlines actions for setting new sustainability standards for development as well as highlighting sustainable developments by current property owners.

ACTION 20.1

SET SUSTAINABILITY GOALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT

Type of Action: Proactive

Identifying the community's goals for sustainable development is the first step in outlining the type of development a community aspires to. While sustainability goals are not necessarily codified, they communicate the City's desires for new, sustainable development. During rezonings, incentive reviews, or other negotiations, these sustainability goals can become metrics against which new developments can be compared.

There are many programs, resources, and accreditation groups that can assist with the decision to go green. Some examples include:

- **LEED for Neighborhood Development (LEED ND):** framework for identifying, implementing, and measuring "green" building and neighborhood design; will strive to reduce the environmental impact of structures and restore the balance of natural systems
- **STAR Communities:** evaluate, improve, and certify sustainable communities; helps promote and enhance local sustainability efforts through marketing and implementation; utilize this certification as a "springboard" for future programs and funding
- **Sustainable Design Toolkit:** recommended best practices for sustainability in Cuyahoga County; provides strategies for government officials and sample legislation on a number of environmental issues such as energy, air quality, land use, transportation, and watershed management

These programs outline stormwater retention, energy consumption, recyclable material, and landscaping goals, among other forms of sustainable development. The City should formalize sustainability goals for new private and public development.

For more information about sustainability standards and best practices, refer to the blue box on page 193.

ACTION 20.2

DEVELOP A GREEN EMPLOYER AND RESIDENT AWARD PROGRAM

Type of Action: Ongoing

The success of environmental policies and programs will come through the support of not only City staff and elected officials, but also the community at large. Resident Survey results demonstrated high support for sustainable ordinances and development in the future. The City should encourage this type of development and improvements to private property through a "green" award program. This will not only enhance the aesthetics of the community, but also improve community pride.

The program should acknowledge investments made to businesses, homes, or other parts of the community to highlight the successes of environmentally friendly design. Currently, the City has a "Beautification Committee" that looks at renovations made across the City and also identifies a "Citizen of the Year." This committee could expand its role to include an annual "Green Employer" and "Green Resident."

DEEP DIVE SUSTAINABILITY STANDARDS

It is becoming common practice for communities to undertake a more extensive review of development applications to ensure the cohesiveness of design, the longevity and success of a project, and its overall sustainability.

While the use and location of a structure is important, it is equally as important to consider how the building will function on a site, the materials used for construction, and how the structure can contribute to a community's overall goal of sustainability. Increased open space set asides, green infrastructure requirements, and use of recycled materials are all examples of how codified ordinances could be modified to achieve sustainability.

EXAMPLE: BABCOCK RANCH, FLORIDA

Babcock Ranch is a planned development in the Fort Myers, Florida area that strives to be a life-long sustainable suburban community. It is roughly 17,000 acres in size and will accommodate 18,000 dwellings when fully constructed. It is estimated to reach build out in 2030 and is intended to provide 100% renewable energy solutions to power the community.

This eco-centric town has begun to raise the standard for sustainable development. Some of the residential design principles include:

Passive Cooling: porches, extended eaves, overhangs, appropriate window placement, and raised foundations that act to cool a home without air conditioning

Sustainable Design Principles: energy efficient homes, low impact landscaping, state green building requirements, and shared parks that promote sustainable development

In addition to these standards, Babcock Ranch also strongly supports responsible land use planning, water consciousness, solar energy, efficient buildings, locally sourced materials, community gardens, and transportation alternatives. The community uses the land's natural features and allows that to dictate the footprint of development. Manicured landscaping is limited to 30% turf coverage on residential lots, and homeowners must use at least 75% of native plant species for their remaining landscaping.

Babcock Ranch is also leading the standards for sustainable energy production. The community actually produces more energy than it consumes and provides energy to nearby communities. The Babcock Ranch FPL Solar Energy Center provides 74.5 megawatts of solar capacity from 343,000 solar panels. This energy center features a 10-megawatt/40-megawatt-hour battery energy storage system, which is the largest combined solar energy system in the United States. In addition to its large solar facility, the ranch also supports small-scale solar projects throughout the community. This includes solar panels on shared structures such as pergolas, community buildings, and neighborhood artwork in the form of "solar-trees."

With all of these amenities and sustainability initiatives, Babcock Ranch is a highly desirable area. However, housing types, sizes, and prices for homes are specifically mixed to accommodate a wide range of homeowners. Prices for homes range from the high \$190,000's to over \$300,000; making this a highly attainable community for a wide spectrum of income levels.

For more information on Babcock Ranch and their sustainable development initiatives, please visit www.babcockranch.com.



Source: www.babcockranch.com

STRATEGY 21

INCORPORATE GREEN FEATURES IN INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Currently, Brecksville primarily controls its runoff through traditional piping and treatment systems, and there is limited green infrastructure in place to control stormwater runoff from paved surfaces and rooftops. Green infrastructure does not work independently, but rather functions with existing stormwater management systems to increase overall system capacity. Proactively managing stormwater through green infrastructure can allow stormwater to be absorbed into the ground naturally and can lessen erosion during high water events.

Green infrastructure is a sustainable and resilient approach to managing stormwater in the built environment. It uses natural elements such as prepared soil mixes, aggregate, and native plantings to slow water flow, allow it to naturally absorb into the ground, and reduces stormwater entering the sewer system. This reduces pollutants entering nearby waterways as water will naturally be filtered of bacteria, heavy metals, and other types of contaminants. Types of green infrastructure improvements include rainwater harvesting, rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements, green roofs, and others. These types of improvements can be modified to fit the needs of the community, either at the a Citywide scale or individual residences and neighborhoods.

This strategy entails methods of reducing the stress on the community's stormwater system through green elements in public and private projects.

ACTION 21.1 REVIEW AND UPDATE EXISTING ORDINANCES TO ALLOW GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Type of Action: Proactive

Given the City's proximity to sensitive environmental areas and watersheds, the Zoning Code should encourage the use of green infrastructure in new and existing developments. The City should review and update its ordinances to allow green features such as rain gardens, rain catchment systems, permeable pavement, living rooftops, and downspout disconnections.

For more information on green infrastructure examples, refer to the blue box on page 195.

ACTION 21.2 WORK WITH PRIVATE PROPERTY OWNERS TO REDUCE IMPERVIOUS SURFACES

Type of Action: Ongoing

Brecksville has significant terrain challenges as it relates to stormwater management, with many steep slopes and water courses. Particularly, much of the Town Center and nearby amenities are paved. Chippewa Creek runs through the Town Center's heart and much of the stormwater runoff flows directly into this waterbody.

A reduction in impervious surfaces can limit the amount of runoff after heavy rain events and can also foster many physical and socioeconomic benefits. These include more aesthetically appealing streets and parking areas, reduced heat island effects, and more inviting environments for pedestrians.

Many green infrastructure enhancements can be easily integrated into new or existing parking areas. The City should partner with the Sewer District to encourage

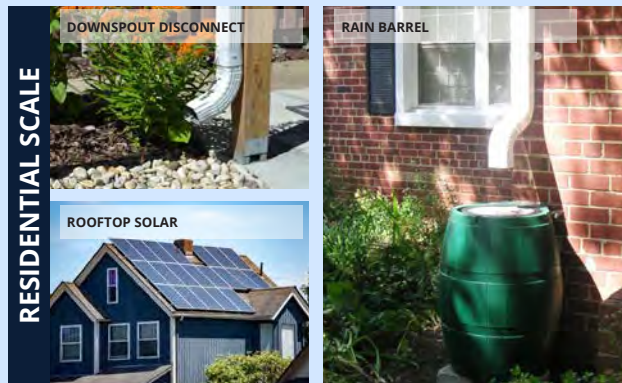
DEEP DIVE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE EXAMPLES

Communities across the country are beginning to see the intrinsic value of incorporating environmental elements into both development and infrastructure projects. Green improvements can take on many forms and can be tailored to a Citywide scale or smaller scales such as neighborhoods or even individual residences. The descriptions and images below show different types of green infrastructure used at various scales.

RESIDENTIAL SCALE

At the residential scale, home owners, property owners, and tenants can take small steps to help achieve a more sustainable City. These types of improvements could include:

- Rooftop solar, which collects sunlight to power the home
- Rain barrels, which capture rain from the roof for use around the property rather than draining into sewer systems
- Downspout disconnects, which direct rain from the roof and drain into planted areas or gardens to allow it to be naturally absorbed



NEIGHBORHOOD SCALE

At the neighborhood scale, Homeowner Associations (HOAs), block groups, committees, or local businesses can work with neighbors and City officials to integrate green elements into their landscapes. These types of improvements could include:

- Infiltration trenches, which slow rainwater and allow it to absorb into the ground
- Native landscaping, which uses plants native to the area to better thrive in the local environment
- Green parking, which drains stormwater runoff from parking areas into rain gardens



CITYWIDE SCALE

At the Citywide scale, City officials, developers, and business owners can work together to use green elements at a wider scale or adopt policies that allow or require the use of green infrastructure. These types of improvements could include:

- Solar powered signs and lights, which use renewable energy for power
- Green streets, which use bioswales to collect stormwater from roadways
- Permeable pavement, which allows water to naturally penetrate into the ground



Sources: www.designyourtown.org, www.sempersolaris.com, www.trafficsafetyzone.com

private property owners to install green infrastructure such as rain gardens and bioswales on private property, with an emphasis on the downtown core and nearby amenities.

ACTION 21.3

ADOPT A COMPLETE AND GREEN STREETS POLICY

Type of Action: Proactive

Complete streets are streets designed to safely accommodate all users within the right-of-way. This includes encouraging non-motorized transportation and prioritizing the needs of more vulnerable users such as children, the elderly, or those with physical limitations or disability. Complete streets are meant for more than just moving traffic efficiently. They also include public spaces, bike lanes, bus stops, trails, sidewalks, and other similar features.

In addition to a complete streets policy, many communities also seek to implement a *green streets* policy. Green streets are roadways designed to catch, divert, and filtrate rainwater and roadway runoff in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner. A green street could include rain gardens, planters, bioswales, or even permeable pavement or porous

asphalt. Green streets can also include solar-powered lights or smart features that can reduce other environmental impacts.

The City should implement a complete and green streets policy that requires consideration of complete and green features whenever roads are repaired or rebuilt.

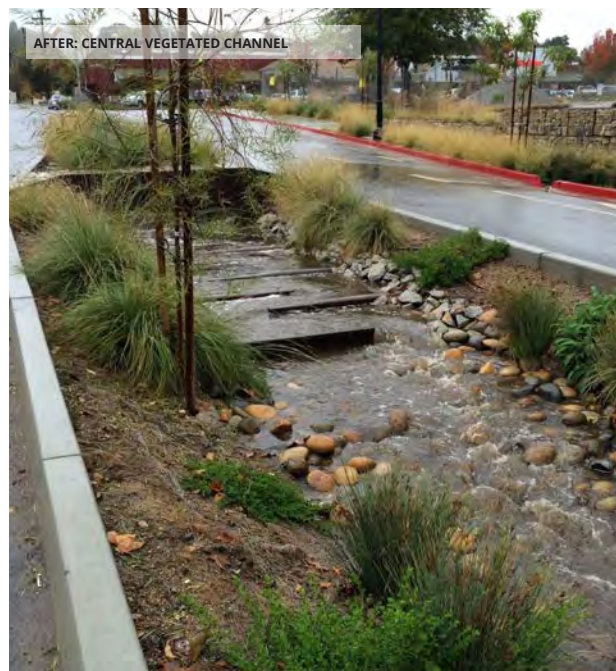
ACTION 21.4

INCORPORATE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IN PUBLIC SPACES, SUCH AS MEDIANS

Type of Action: Ongoing

The City of Brecksville owns many parcels throughout the community as well as manages an extensive system of roads and medians. The City can take an active role in incorporating green infrastructure in publicly owned spaces to act as a leader in sustainability. The City should look to retrofit and enhance public spaces, roads, and medians to better manage stormwater runoff in a sustainable manner.

For more information on how bioswales work to clean water from the public right of way, refer to the blue box on page 197.



In Paso De Robles, CA polluted runoff from impervious surfaces have been redirected down a central vegetated channel where water can be captured, treated, and absorbed. This has reduced flooding, improved the environmental quality of nearby waterways, and beautified the street.

Source: www.centralcoastlidi.org

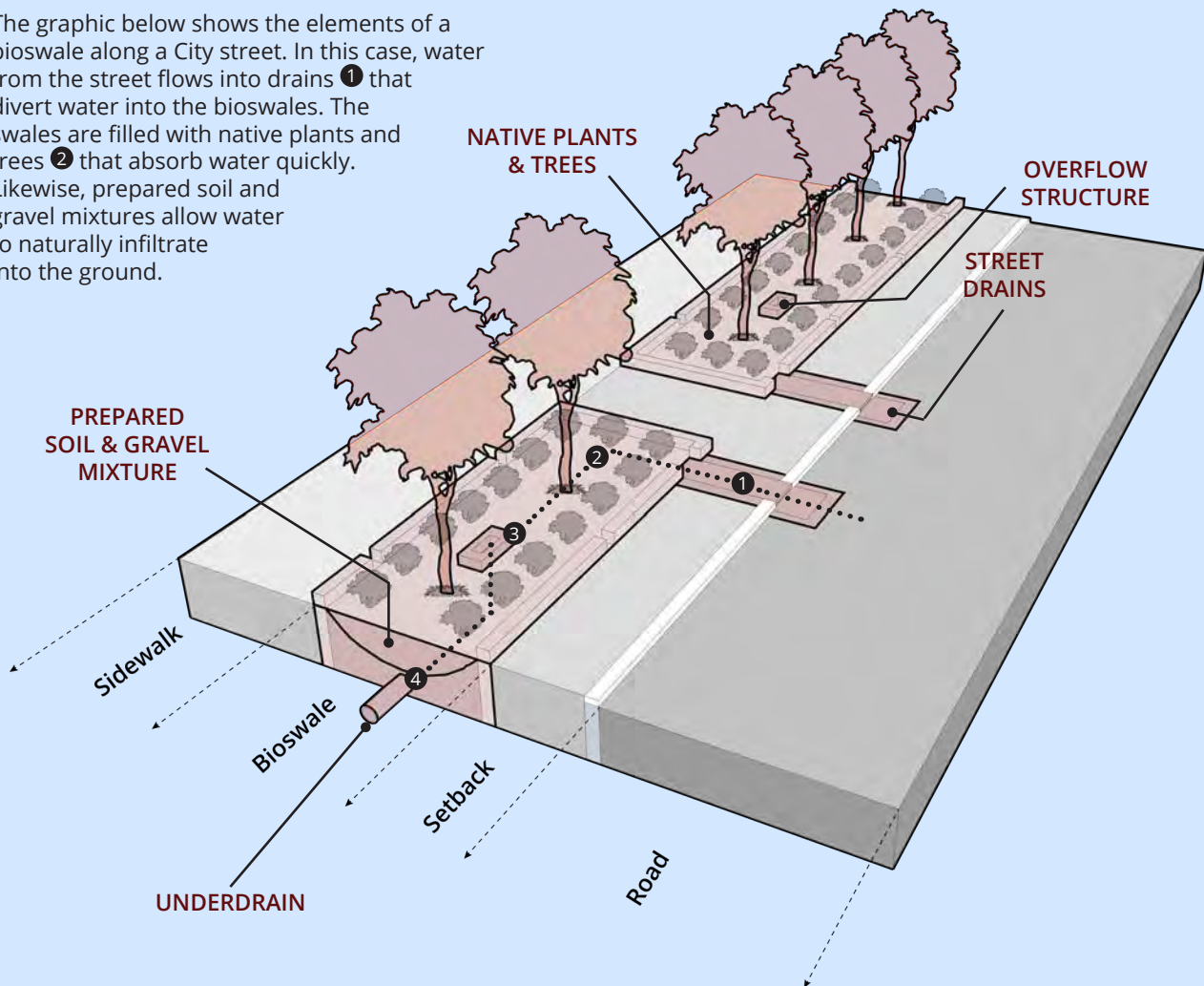
DEEP DIVE UNDERSTANDING BIOSWALES

A bioswale's main purpose is to manage stormwater in an effective and environmentally friendly manner such that water is slowly released into the soil after it has been naturally filtered through the swale. Bioswales typically occur in and along areas of high impervious pavement such as roadways and parking lots. They are not only aesthetically pleasing, but they also use prepared soil and rock mixtures that more efficiently manage stormwater runoff than just traditional sewer systems alone. This type of infrastructure also typically uses native plants, has overflow structures in the case of a significant flood event, and more effectively maintains water quality, consistent with current USEPA standards requiring the treatment of stormwater.

The graphic below shows the elements of a bioswale along a City street. In this case, water from the street flows into drains **1** that divert water into the bioswales. The swales are filled with native plants and trees **2** that absorb water quickly. Likewise, prepared soil and gravel mixtures allow water to naturally infiltrate into the ground.

During especially heavy rain events where bioswales cannot manage all water from the street and water begins to rise within the bioswale, an overflow structure **3** allows water to drain into a standard catchment connected to the City's sewer system **4**.

In this way, bioswales take water from the street and allow it to drain naturally while providing an attractive green area.



Source: County Planning

STRATEGY 22

USE ENERGY EFFECTIVELY AND SUSTAINABLY

The use of energy in buildings and lighting is a key component of how sustainable a community is. Whether the energy source is renewable, the amount of energy being consumed, and how light is affecting nearby structures are all ways that energy use can impact the environment. This strategy outlines methods for determining the environmental impact of City structures, ways to reduce light pollution, and ordinances that can encourage alternative energy solutions.

ACTION 22.1

CONDUCT A GREEN ENERGY AUDIT OF MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS

Type of Action: Proactive

A Green Energy Audit uses LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles for the sustainable auditing of structures. This audit examines building energy consumption, costs, and environmental impact. The City should pursue this type of audit because it seeks to not only optimize the performance of existing structures, but also retrofit older structures to become “greener” and more sustainable in the future.

ACTION 22.2

REVIEW AND UPDATE EXISTING ORDINANCES TO REDUCE LIGHT POLLUTION

Type of Action: Proactive

The physical presence of street lights produces many benefits: enhanced night safety, increased visibility, and the potential for increased usership of amenities. However, poorly designed lights can also have a number of negative effects as well—primarily light pollution.

Light pollution is the inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light and can include glare, skyglow or the brightening over inhabited areas, light trespass, and clutter or excessive groupings of light sources. Artificial lights can also have detrimental effects on sensitive

ecosystems, migrating animals, and can even disrupt a community’s natural circadian rhythm.

Unfortunately, light pollution is a common element of the built environment, but efforts can be made to minimize its effects on the community and surrounding natural areas. The City should review its existing ordinances and implement lighting standards that reduce negative effects on both the built and natural environments within the community by encouraging “dark-sky” compliant options. This could include replacing older lamps or retrofitting them with LED (light emitting diodes) panels, requiring any exterior lighting to contain a fully shielded light source to direct light downward, and encouraging “warm” lighting that reduces the amount of sky brightening blue light.



Dark sky compliant lighting shields the light source and focuses lighting downward to reduce light pollution.

Source: www.darksky.org; photo by Jim Richardson

For more information on dark sky compliant lighting, please visit www.darksky.org

ACTION 22.3

REVIEW AND UPDATE EXISTING ORDINANCES TO ENCOURAGE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Type of Action: Proactive

Currently, the City's codified ordinances allow small wind energy systems and solar energy systems. However, the criterion placed upon such units are challenging to meet.

Solar and wind capturing devices are sustainable, use 100% renewable energy, and the costs to effectively run such systems is steadily decreasing as this type of technology becomes more readily available to the

average consumer. Between the years 2010-2017, the cost of photovoltaic modules saw a decrease of 81% in price. This is largely due to the accelerated push for more renewable energy. It is even estimated that solar battery storage will be able to compete, head-to-head, with conventional power sources by the year 2025.

The City should review its ordinances to make the approval and installation of alternative energy solutions more accessible to its residents and developers.

For more information on Project Sunroof, an online tool for measuring solar potential, refer to the blue box on page 199.

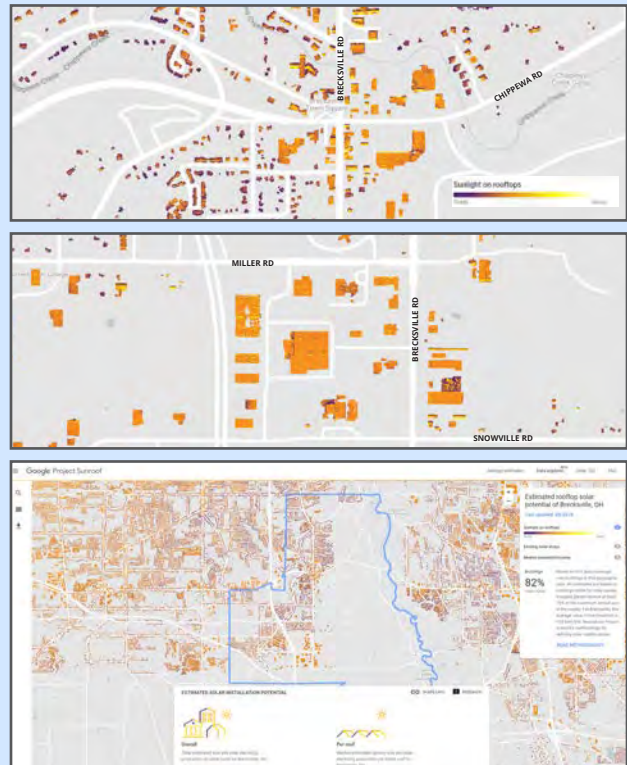
DEEP DIVE

PROJECT SUNROOF

Project Sunroof is an online tool that makes the process of understanding solar energy easy. Using 3-D images of rooftops, Project Sunroof then computes how much sunlight directly hits each roof over the course of a year. This process takes into account shadows cast by other structures or trees, all possible positions of the sun over the course of a year, and historical cloud and temperature patterns that could affect solar energy production.

According to Project Sunroof, it is estimated that 82% or approximately 3,000 rooftops of existing structures within the City are viable for solar panels; the majority of these being commercial or light industrial structures near the downtown area at the intersection of Brecksville Road and Royalton/Chippewa Road and in the southern portion of the community on Brecksville Road near Miller and Snowville Roads. These structures are typically free of tall obstacles that could obstruct sun collection and have ample space for solar installation. This makes these structures prime candidates for solar panels.

For more information on Project Sunroof, please visit: www.google.com/get/sunroof



Source: www.google.com/get/sunroof

STRATEGY 23

PROTECT THE CITY'S TREE CANOPY AND SEEK TO EXPAND IT

With 63.5% of Brecksville covered by an intact tree canopy, the City has the sixth highest tree canopy coverage in Cuyahoga County (2011). Tree canopy can be described as the amount of land covered by the leaves of trees when looking down from above. This canopy provides significant benefits by reducing the heat island effect in the summer, helping to reduce overall heating and cooling costs, lowering air temperature, reducing air pollution, increasing property values, providing wildlife habitats, and enhancing aesthetics. Additionally, the tree canopy reduces flooding by absorbing rain before it reaches a paved surface; where ultimately it could flow into a water body while carrying pollutants it may have gathered from roadway surfaces.

This strategy entails ways of maintaining and expanding the community tree canopy by protecting existing trees and planting new ones.

ACTION 23.1

EVALUATE A TREE CANOPY PROTECTION AND TREE BANK ORDINANCE

Type of Action: Proactive

In order to protect the existing tree canopy in Brecksville, the City should consider adopting a tree protection ordinance, which protects existing trees by quantifying their importance and requires fees for their removal. A comprehensive tree protection ordinance can entail some of the following:

- Prioritizes planting and protecting native species
- Provides incentives for protecting important trees
- Develops a fee schedule to determine the cost of removing trees based on their size and importance
- Addresses proper tree maintenance, including shared maintenance and requirements for utility companies

In some cases, developers may not be fully able to mitigate the loss of trees during land clearance, and tree banking may be one solution. In this instance, the City can permanently set aside land where developers or landowners can replace lost trees by planting new ones or by paying into a dedicated tree planting fund. Other options for establishing a tree bank can include land transfers, conservation easements, or deed restrictions. The City should work to evaluate its current tree protections and seek to expand its ordinances to increase the community's tree canopy.

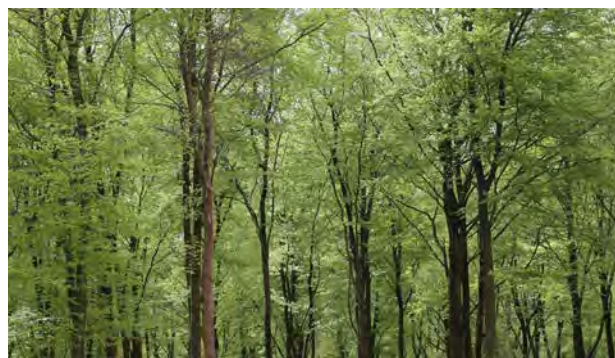
ACTION 23.2

CONTINUE TO PLANT TREES TO EXPAND THE TREE CANOPY

Type of Action: Ongoing

Brecksville has one of the most intact tree canopies in Cuyahoga County. This canopy not only improves community aesthetics, but also captures stormwater and improves property values on tree-lined streets.

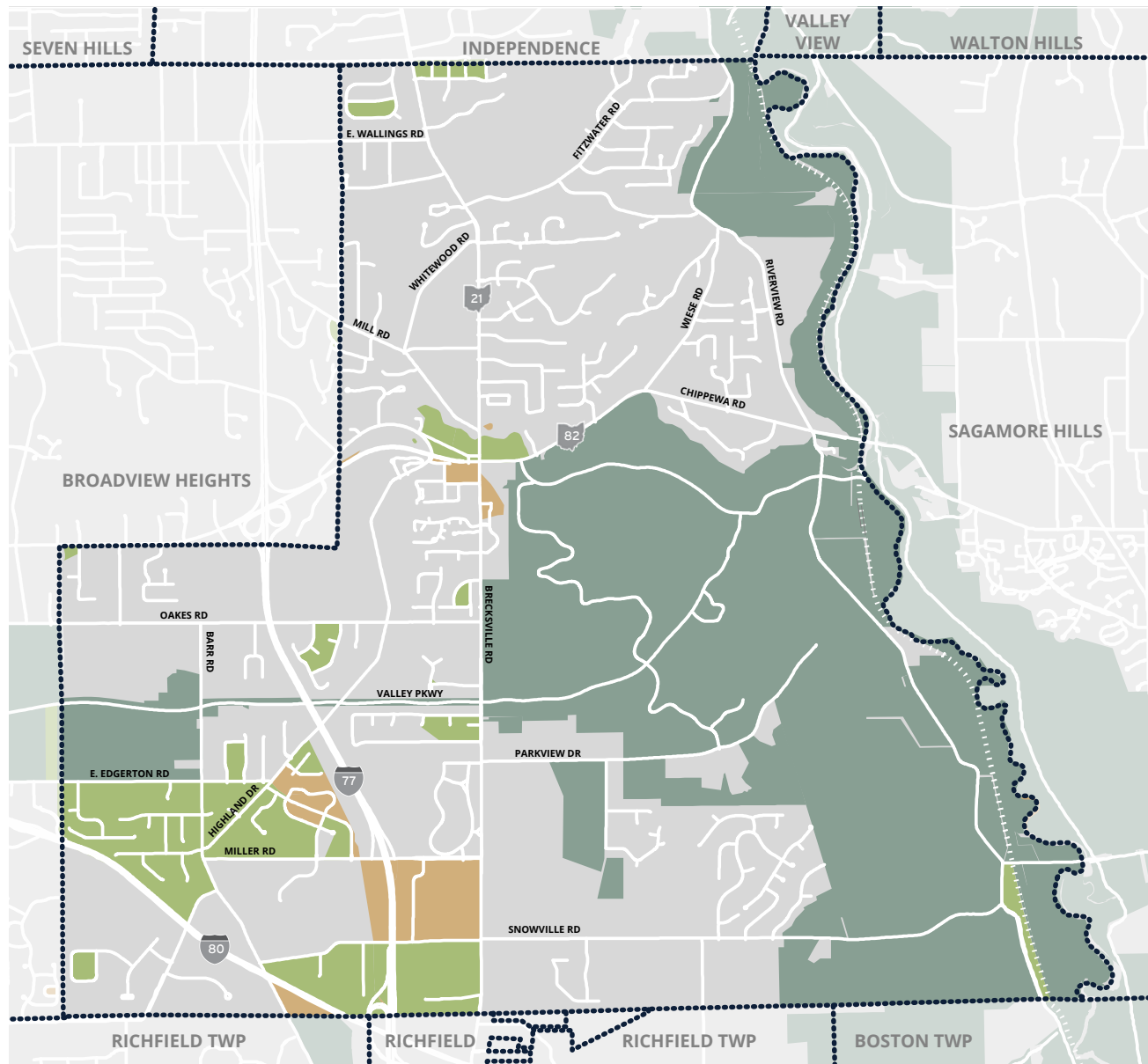
While the City has a resource in its existing tree canopy, parts of the City have lower canopy coverage. The map on page 201 displays areas of low tree canopy in Brecksville. The City should evaluate these areas, inform property owners of the benefits of trees, and plant trees in publicly owned locations.



An intact tree canopy has many environmental benefits.

Source: Flickr user Mark Kent

MAP 42 POTENTIAL TREE PLANTING PRIORITY AREAS



LEGEND

- Lower Tree Canopy Coverage Areas
 - 0% - 20% Tree Canopy Coverage
 - 20% - 40% Tree Canopy Coverage
 - Greater than 40% Tree Canopy Coverage
- Park Lands

While coverage in these areas may be lower than the City as a whole, tree planting may not be possible due to terrain, development, land use, or other constraints. This map is intended to showcase areas that could be considered as initial locations for tree planting.

STRATEGY 24

PRESERVE NATURAL LAND FEATURES AND STEEP SLOPES

With many waterways, wetlands, and steep slopes, the City of Brecksville's topography is beautiful, but also challenging. However, with the proper regulatory actions the City can take proactive measures in ensuring the health and safety of the community by protecting property from instability and bank erosion due to development along steep slopes.

Steep slopes are hillsides with a grade of 12% or higher. They can be difficult to develop and are ecologically important to the health of waterways. Development along steep slopes needs to be carefully monitored and cautiously reviewed because hillside development can reduce stormwater infiltration, increase flow velocity, raise the flood water elevation, and may ultimately change the natural flow of a watercourse.

This strategy entails actions to limit development along these steep slopes and protect critical environmental features.

ACTION 24.1

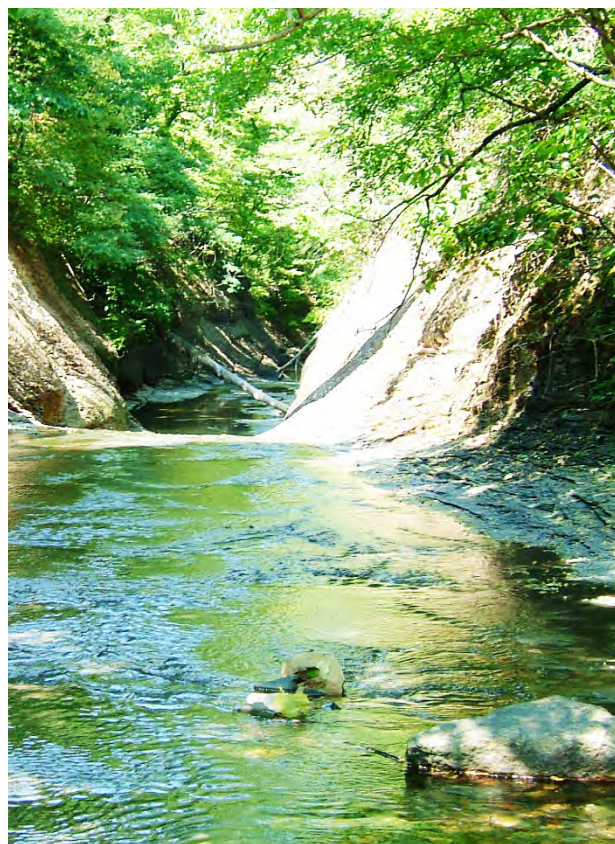
REVIEW AND UPDATE EXISTING ORDINANCES TO STRENGTHEN HILLSIDE PROTECTIONS

Type of Action: Proactive

The City of Brecksville has numerous steep slopes that are above a 12% grade. While a large portion of these areas fall within the boundaries of the Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, many are located within developable areas.

The City should review and update its Zoning Code to strengthen hillside protections by developing Protected Hillside Areas where unstable soil conditions or grades above 12% exist. Within these areas, hillside protection ordinances require additional documentation and information before a building permit can be approved. This could include topographic maps, grading and site plans, geotechnical reports, current and future site stability, erosion and sediment plans, and soil testing. Development should also be avoided on high points and more focused on gradual slopes.

Overall, a hillside protection ordinance can steer development away from steep slopes or identify mitigation techniques that can minimize disturbances.



Steep slopes such as this one could be protected from development as part of a hillside protection ordinance.

Source: County Planning GreenPrint

STRATEGY 25

EXPAND WATERWAY PROTECTIONS

The City of Brecksville is a highly valued and desired community with extensive waterways. With many sensitive ecological habitats, it is imperative that the City continue to use innovative stormwater management techniques for improved water quality and flood reduction. The terrain throughout the community is challenging, but it is the built environment that ultimately disrupts the natural flow of water, causing hillside erosion, flow increases, and pollution.

This strategy outlines methods for enhancing regulations to protect waterways, improve local waterway health, and increase natural absorption of water.

ACTION 25.1

PARTNER WITH NEORS D TO EXPAND USE OF STORMWATER PROGRAMS

Type of Action: Ongoing

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS D) not only provides wastewater treatment, but also regional stormwater management. The Sewer District's Regional Stormwater Management Program addresses problems related to stormwater runoff from hard surfaces. When property owners make changes or improvements on their properties to reduce the amount of runoff affecting local streams and storm sewers, they may be eligible for a reduction in their stormwater fee.

The City should partner with NEORS D to improve how stormwater is addressed within the community and encourage residents and businesses to participate in the District's Regional Stormwater Management Program.

ACTION 25.2

CONSIDER RIPARIAN SETBACKS FOR DEVELOPMENT

Type of Action: Proactive

Riparian zones are areas a specified distance from a river, stream, or waterbody based on the size of that feature and typically include the floodplain and



Reducing parking areas and constructing bioswales that handle stormwater runoff from parking areas can property owners' stormwater fees.

Source: Flickr user Aaron Volkening

wetlands. These riparian zones are important to protect for a number of reasons:

- Riparian vegetation along stream banks and in floodplains reduces the velocity of floodwaters, lessening the erosive force of a flood event
- Soils in this area absorb water during the wet seasons and slowly release it into the stream
- These areas serve as nature's water treatment facilities for watersheds because they capture and filter surface runoff that flows from higher ground

Riparian areas and wetlands are especially valuable downstream of urbanized areas of development. Their natural functions can counteract the effects of concentrated stormwater runoff from pavement and buildings, protecting water quality and the river channel itself.

As seen in the map on page 204, many adjacent communities with similar environmental features have adopted riparian setbacks. To ensure that

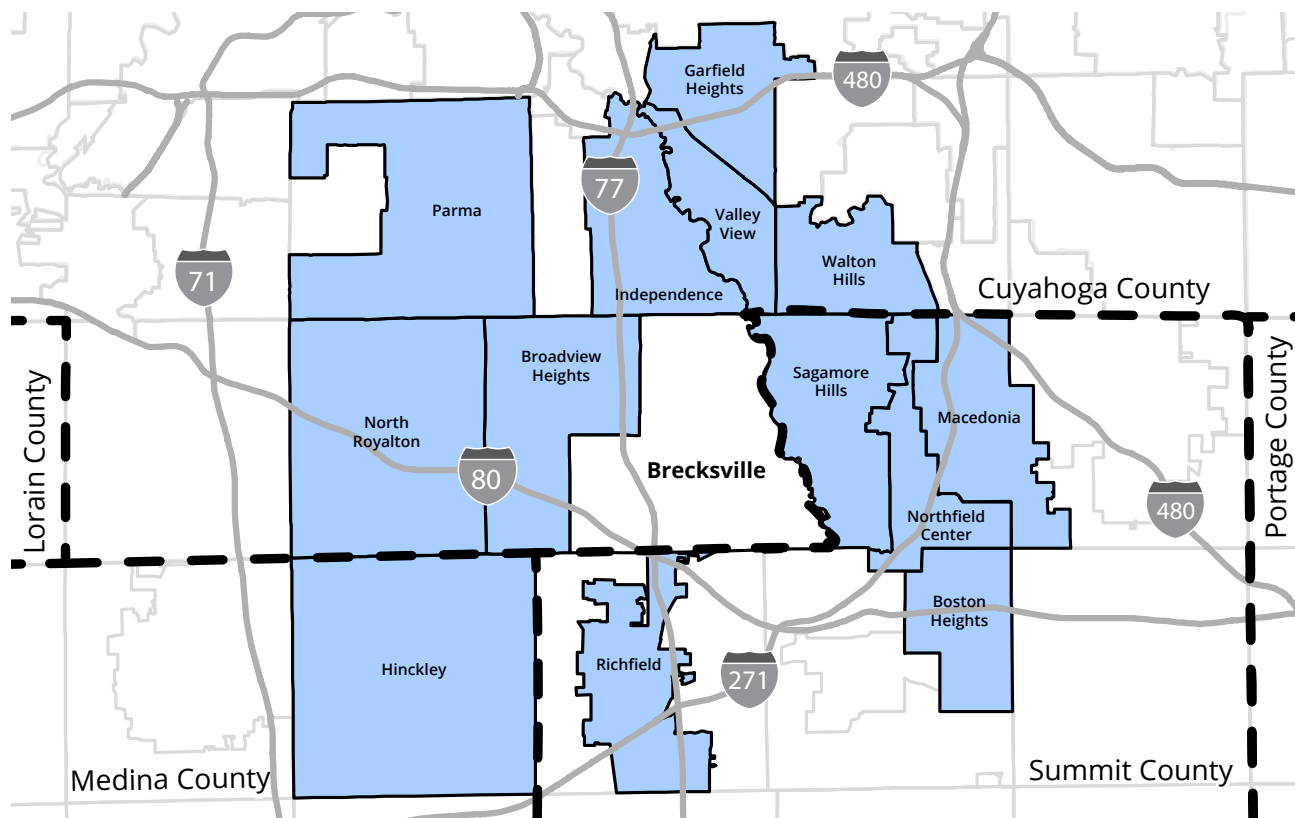
stormwater is properly managed in an environmentally friendly manner, Brecksville should review its existing ordinances and consider adopting riparian setbacks that limit development within specified distances of waterways.

ACTION 25.3 CONSIDER A LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE

Type of Action: Proactive

Low Impact Development (LID) is a stormwater management strategy that seeks to mitigate the impacts of runoff as close to the source as possible. It seeks to mimic natural processes that result in the infiltration of stormwater in order to protect water quality. This type of development can include a number of innovative techniques that capture

MAP 43
RIPARIAN SETBACK REGULATIONS IN ADJACENT COMMUNITIES



LEGEND

- Adjacent Communities with Riparian Setback Regulations
- Other Communities

stormwater and handle it on-site, such as bioretention facilities, rain gardens, planted rooftops, permeable pavements, and other types of green infrastructure.

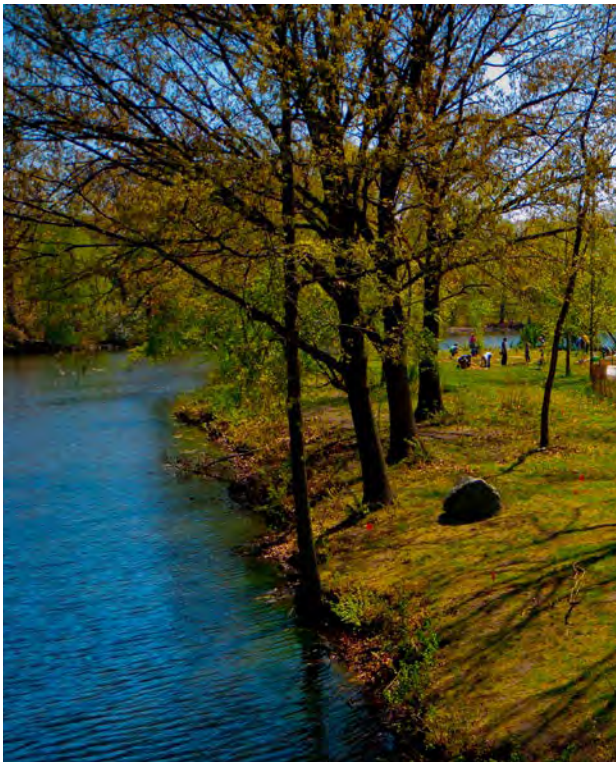
A LID ordinance requires development and redevelopment projects to capture and treat rainwater at its source, using natural resources. The City should consider a Low Impact Development ordinance as a new approach to managing stormwater in a cost effective and sustainable way.

ACTION 25.4

REVIEW AND UPDATE EXISTING ORDINANCES TO INCREASE THE REQUIRED AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Type of Action: Proactive

The City's current regulations require a minimum of 20% of Planned Unit Developments (PUD) be permanently preserved as common open space. Of that 20% set aside, at least 50% must be a slope



Riparian setbacks protect the natural areas adjacent to streams that help clean the water, reduce flooding, and maintain the natural environment.

Source: Flickr user Michael St John

less than 15%, be of a suitable size and shape, and be available for the design of active and passive recreation opportunities.

Reserving open space as part of a PUD is a best practice, however, many communities require higher percentages of open space be set aside in new developments. The Chippewa Creek Balanced Growth Initiative plan recommends that 40% of the area of PUDs be reserved for open space. Among the communities that participated in the plan, Brecksville required the lowest percent of open space in new developments.

The City should consider updating its ordinance to increase the amount of open space required for PUDs while further delineating potential uses of that space such as trail connections and recreation areas.



Reserving sufficient open space in new developments allows for the inclusion of trails and park space that can serve neighborhood residents.

Source: Flickr user Brisbane City Council

STRATEGY 26

INCREASE COMMUNITY EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

In the Brecksville Resident Survey, respondents showed a very high regard for Brecksville's natural amenities. Survey respondents ranked the Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park as the community's best amenities in terms of both quality and importance. Additionally, respondents saw the intrinsic value of environmentally friendly and sustainable development as a necessary means to ensure sensitive ecological areas remain protected in the future.

This strategy entails methods of educating residents on sustainability practices in their community and their homes to continue the preservation of the community's natural resources.

ACTION 26.1 DEVELOP AN EDUCATION PLAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Type of Action: Proactive

Brecksville has immense opportunity for collaborative efforts in raising the environmental awareness of its residents. Overall, environmental awareness is the understanding of nature's fragility and the importance of protecting it. Providing educational materials and opportunities will enhance the community's appreciation of their natural environment and encourage positive, self-empowered change among residents.

Both the Cleveland Metroparks and the National Park Service are invaluable partners for education efforts. Programs, education, and training opportunities already exist separately within these two entities. The City should collaborate with these organizations to increase their interactions with residents.

The City should also work to educate residents on various topics, such as alternative energy, green improvements that can be undertaken in their own homes, and how they can help make Brecksville a leader in sustainability. Additionally, the City should synchronize these efforts with those of the Cleveland Metroparks and the National Park Service. These natural areas are an incredible asset to the community and it is critical to work collaboratively with the park entities.

For more information on the types of sustainability improvements residents can make to their homes, refer to the blue box on page 207.



The Cleveland Metroparks recently completed its new Brecksville Trailside Program Center, which will provide programming and education to visitors.

Source: www.clevelandmetroparks.com

DEEP DIVE

SUSTAINABILITY ON THE RESIDENTIAL SCALE

Sustainable practices are just as practical on a small scale as they are on a neighborhood scale, and individual property owners can make improvements to their own home that decrease their effects on the environment. These improvements include reducing pavement, managing stormwater, increasing trees, and reducing energy consumption. The graphics below show how some of these improvements can be made to a typical home to improve the sustainability of the community.

TYPES OF INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS

1 Downspout Disconnection is the process of disconnecting roof downspouts from draining directly into the sewer system. Water is then redirected to flow into a rain barrel or to a lawn or garden where it can soak into the ground. Redirecting downspouts to a landscaped area is a great way to help reduce runoff from a property.

2 Reduced Pavement is the removal of existing paved areas and the replacement with natural areas that allow rainwater to soak into the ground.

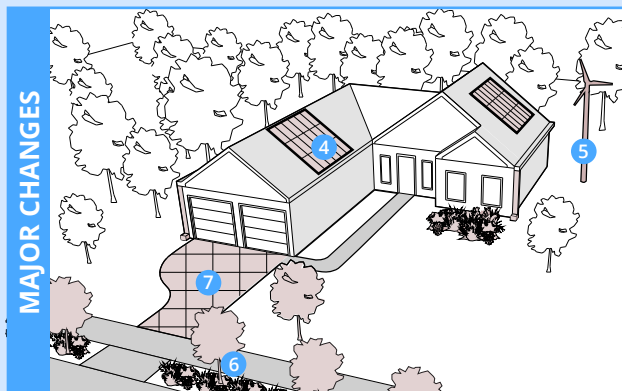
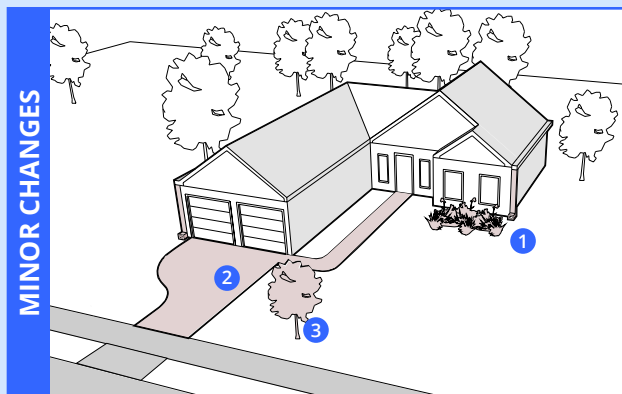
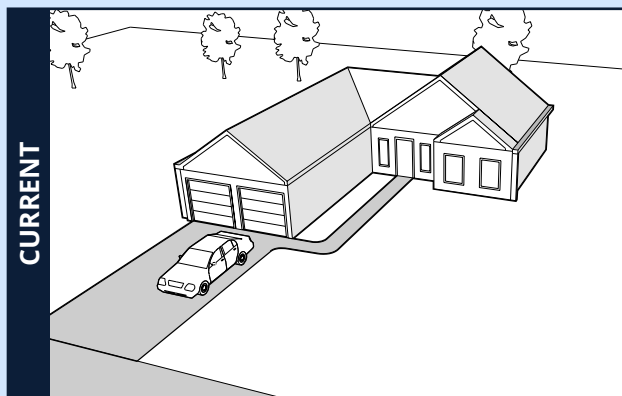
3 Tree Plantings reduce the amount of storm water runoff, which reduces erosion and pollution in our waterways and may help reduce flooding.

4 Rooftop Solar are renewable energy systems that collect solar power for home use. Investment in rooftop solar typically lasts close to 30-years, is 100% renewable and creates energy independence, and helps reduce environmental pollution.

5 Small Wind Systems are renewable systems that capture wind to provide power for a home. They are virtually emission free and can provide uninterrupted power supplies during extended utility outages.

6 Bioswales/Native Plants are designed to protect local waterways from stormwater pollutants by filtering roadway runoff and reducing standing water that can attract disease carrying insects such as mosquitoes. They also create a localized habitat for birds and butterflies, in addition to creating a native plant garden that brings a variety of flowers and color year round.

7 Permeable Pavers are types of pavement or other material with a high porosity that allow rainwater to pass through it into the ground below rather than draining into a sewer.



RECOMMENDATIONS **COMMUNITY SPACES**

Objectives Addressed:



The goal of a community space is to create a place that not only provides a setting for activities and events, but also fosters a sense of community among residents. A diversity of community spaces is important to engaging residents and providing opportunities for community interaction.

Community spaces can take on many forms, but the most successful spaces share a common theme: they create a place, not just a design. A place is welcoming, interactive, and open to all users, and it fosters relationships between physical structures and activities that occur within

“IT WOULD BE NICE TO HAVE CITY CONCERTS AT THE TOWN CENTER DURING THE SUMMER”

its shared space.

WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT

Brecksville is largely a bedroom community with easy access to highways, regional shopping, and expansive parks. However, its residents have indicated a strong desire for usable community spaces.

Community spaces offer a unique opportunity for small, everyday interactions that can greatly improve the lives of residents. Older residents or residents with physical or other limitations are much more likely to become isolated than others within the community. Having interactive community spaces that are warm, welcoming, and engaging is important for community inclusion and engagement.

WHAT DOES THIS TOPIC COVER

This topic covers strategies and actions for enhancing the City's architectural style, adding features, programs, and amenities to public spaces, and expanding the City's brand into a cohesive theme.

“WE NEED LOCAL ATTRACTIONS IN THE DOWNTOWN”

OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED

The Community Spaces Recommendations section addresses multiple objectives of the Plan, including reinforcing Brecksville's sense of place (character), strengthening connections between residents (community), continuing to be a regional leader (governance), enlivening our unique places (retail), and embracing the world-class park amenities (parks).

STRATEGY 27

CONTINUE TO USE THE WESTERN RESERVE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE FOR MUNICIPAL STRUCTURES

The majority of Brecksville's municipal and civic structures are located near the community's core along Brecksville Road. These include City Hall, the community center, the police and fire stations, the Central School building, the library, and others. These structures are largely constructed of red brick with white trim accents and provide an architecturally significant anchor and gateway into the Town Center area.

In the resident survey, 68.2% of respondents agreed that the City should focus on preserving its cultural heritage and history. This finding supports a commitment to ensuring future development in and around the City's civic core be of a similar style, material, and design to honor the historic nature and Western Reserve style of existing structures. This strategy entails developing design standards for civic structures to continue the tradition of Western Reserve architecture.

ACTION 27.1

DEVELOP DESIGN STANDARDS FOR CIVIC STRUCTURES

Type of Action: Proactive

Most recent municipal structures in the civic core have complemented the Western Reserve architectural style of the City's historic buildings, but Brecksville has few specific regulations guiding the design of structures within the civic core.

The City should develop and adopt specific guidelines for the design of municipal structures to further enhance and anchor the civic core. For more information on designing in the Western Reserve style, refer to the blue box on page 211.



Western Reserve style often uses red brick and white trim.

Source: Flickr user Doug Kerr

ACTION 27.2

CONTINUE TO CONCENTRATE CIVIC STRUCTURES ALONG BRECKSVILLE ROAD

Type of Action: Ongoing

Most of Brecksville's municipal buildings are located in very close proximity to each other, near the center of the community along Brecksville Road. Having a single, centralized civic core provides a convenient and accessible cluster of community buildings that allow residents to access City staff, services, and elected officials. As new municipal structures are built, the City should continue to locate them in close proximity to the existing civic core.



The gazebo in the Town Square is a signature of Brecksville.

Source: County Planning

DEEP DIVE

DESIGNING IN THE WESTERN RESERVE STYLE

Following the American Revolutionary War, as a way to pay off colonial debts by the Federal Government of the United States, frontier land was ceded to the State of Connecticut; these lands were known as the Western Reserve of Connecticut. The lands were rich with resources and eventually became what is known today as the northeastern portion of Ohio—including the City of Brecksville.

The communities of the Western Reserve adopted a unique blend of architectural styles and town planning. Many of the communities in northeast Ohio have retained this historic fabric—including the City of Brecksville, with its former City Hall and town square. The City continues to pay homage to its past by encouraging the Western Reserve style in its newer municipal structures.

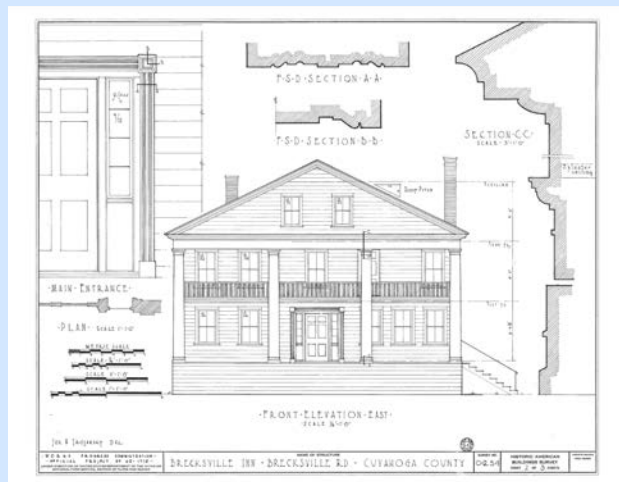
ELEMENTS OF THE WESTERN RESERVE STYLE

The Western Reserve style is a unique blend of many colonial influences, such as Georgian, Queen Anne, Greek Revival, and Federal styles. Examples of such architectural features and character elements of the Western Reserve style can be seen in the images to the right.

Common elements of the Western Reserve style typically include the following:

- Red brick as a predominant feature
- Horizontally lined wood siding
- White framed windows and structural trim
- Sparingly used and ornately carved stone
- Formal balustrades such as domes, friezes, spires, colonnades, pediments, etc.
- Typically two-story in height

A survey of historic structures in Brecksville, completed by the Works Progress Administration, shows one example of Western Reserve style architecture in the community: the Brecksville Inn. The Brecksville Inn was constructed around 1839 and was part of the Historic American Buildings Survey conducted in 1936. The original structure was two stories, had six bedrooms, one bathroom, a dining room, a living room, kitchen, space for storage, and is an excellent example of the Western Reserve architectural style.



Source: Mouldings One, *Architecture of the Western Reserve Style 1800-1860*, pg. 24-28, *The Brecksville Inn*

STRATEGY 28

ADD DESIRED COMMUNITY AMENITIES TO PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

Throughout the Resident Survey, respondents consistently marked parks, public spaces, and environmental issues as high priorities and key assets. Of the written comments, nearly a quarter of all respondents described available parks and greenspaces as the City's greatest strength (21.6%). These comments indicate that residents highly value the community's natural setting and want to be able to enjoy its abundant greenery. This strategy entails ways of enhancing existing natural assets, sharing those assets with visitors, and adding new amenities that can bolster the City's already well-maintained parks and public spaces.

ACTION 28.1

WORK WITH THE NATIONAL PARK TO IMPROVE THE CVSR STATION AREA AS A TOURISM GATEWAY INTO BRECKSVILLE

Type of Action: Proactive

The Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad (CVSR) is a unique tourism experience in Northeast Ohio, and it is a large regional and even national draw for tourists. In 2016, the CVSR hosted 214,000 passengers, a ridership record for the train system. The placement of a station within Brecksville yields tourism opportunities for the City.

The Brecksville CVSR station area sits at the intersection of the train system, the Valley Parkway Trail, the Bridle Trail, the Towpath Trail, and the Cuyahoga River, where a potential water trail landing could be built. Given the intersection of these amenities, the City should partner with the National Park, Cleveland Metroparks, and other organizations to install tourism-focused infrastructure in the area. This could include additional amenities in the station area, improved directional signage, educational installations, improved trail access to Chippewa Road, and Metroparks and National Park entrance signage. Such a tourism center could attract commercial development at Chippewa and Riverview, and additional investment by the park systems.

ACTION 28.2

WORK WITH NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES AND PARK DISTRICTS TO IMPLEMENT A REGIONAL WATER TRAIL

Type of Action: Ongoing

Planning is underway to designate the Cuyahoga River as a water trail that would allow increased access for boats, kayaks, and canoes. This designation could bring additional users to the river and additional visitors to Brecksville. The City should work with neighboring



The Brecksville Station of the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad is at the intersection of many recreational amenities that could form a hub for tourism.

Source: National Park Service

communities, the park systems, and other interested parties to plan for a water trail, ensure appropriate safety measures are in place, and incorporate a water trail boat launch in the City.

ACTION 28.3 MAINTAIN RECREATIONAL AREAS AT FORMER SCHOOL SITES

Type of Action: Proactive

A voter-approved issue is allowing the Brecksville-Broadview Heights City School District to move forward on a combined elementary school campus at the Blossom Hill site along Oakes Road. Upon completion, three elementary schools will be closed: Central School, Hilltop Elementary, and Chippewa Elementary.

As these smaller, neighborhood schools also acted as community centers, their closure could remove some neighborhood spaces. To maintain these locations as community assets, the City should work with the School District, neighborhoods, and potential developers to incorporate public green space and recreational areas when redeveloped. This will provide families a local outlet for recreation.



A water trail is a marked recreation route of navigable waterways for kayakers, boaters, and canoers.

Source: www.CuyahogaRiverWaterTrail.org

ACTION 28.4 CONTINUE WORKING WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO CONSTRUCT A COMMUNITY FIELD HOUSE AT BLOSSOM HILL

Type of Action: Ongoing

As the Brecksville-Broadview Heights City School District continues to refine plans for a combined elementary school campus at the Blossom Hill site, there is an opportunity to incorporate a shared Field House for indoor sports as part of the construction. The City should continue working with the School District on plans for a community field house as part of the Blossom Hill site planning.

ACTION 28.5 CONTINUE TO PARTNER WITH THE METROPARKS AND NATIONAL PARK ON SHARED SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Type of Action: Ongoing

In the Resident Survey, respondents ranked both the Cleveland Metroparks Brecksville Reservation and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park highest in terms of quality and importance. Though not City-owned or operated, these park systems are highly valued by residents. The City should continue to work closely with the Cleveland Metroparks and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park on shared services and amenities.



**BRECKSVILLE-BROADVIEW HTS.
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

"where fine education is a heritage"



Play areas are important amenities for families with children and they should be maintained after existing schools close.

Source: www.cvsnider.com, Brecksville-Broadview Heights Schools, Hilton Elementary playground

STRATEGY 29

DEVELOP AND PROGRAM PUBLIC SPACES

Brecksville Town Center is the historic center of the community, and residents have communicated a desire for a vibrant Town Center with retail, restaurants, and public spaces that are well-used, interesting, and welcoming. Likewise, Resident Survey respondents noted a desire for vacant storefronts to be filled.

To attract residents and visitors to Brecksville Town Center, the City should develop and program public spaces that provide visual interest, comfortable places to rest, interesting places to visit, and locations for informal gatherings. These types of public spaces can host events that attract new visitors to shop and stroll. This strategy outlines methods for enhancing or building public spaces in the Town Center to make them more user-friendly, to encourage more interactions among residents, and to provide space for frequent and diverse programming.

ACTION 29.1

ENHANCE EXISTING PUBLIC SPACES IN THE TOWN CENTER

Type of Action: Proactive

Brecksville Town Center has a fantastic public space in the Town Square, where mature trees, a historic gazebo, and quiet walkways form a pleasant escape from nearby traffic. Other small public or semi-public spaces are less enjoyable. These alleys, seating areas, and public walkways can be transformed into functional public spaces that foster a more interesting and vibrant Town Center.

Communities around the country have used many efforts to make a space more attractive. These include adding flowers, benches, or wall murals. In Brecksville Town Center, there are multiple existing spaces that could be enhanced. Placemaking strategies are described in detail on page 215, and Brecksville's potential public spaces are identified on page 217. The City should partner with property owners to make improvements to these public spaces.



The Brecksville Home Days celebration brings many residents and visitors to the Town Center as part of the festivities around the Town Square.

Source: www.Cleveland.com

DEEP DIVE CREATING PUBLIC SPACES

Public spaces need more than just well thought out design. They also need to encompass a location's character and essence to make it a successful place. Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people create and sustain public spaces that build strong communities. PPS has a number of resources available to help municipalities not only create great places, but great communities.

HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL PLACE

Great places are where daily life occurs and where residents can interact with each other and with their community. PPS has identified four (4) main qualities which define a successful place: they are **accessible**; people are engaged in **activities** there; the space is **comfortable** and has a good image; and finally, it is a **sociable** place where people meet each other and take people when they come to visit. A successful place will typically exhibit all four main characteristics.

THE POWER OF 10

To help communities understand how to achieve this, PPS created the "Power of 10" concept, which says that a successful place must have at least ten reasons to visit a place. For example, a park is good. A park with a fountain, playground, and popcorn vendor is better. A library across the street is even better, more so if they feature storytelling hours for kids and exhibits on local history. If there's a sidewalk café nearby, a bus stop, a bike trail, and an ice cream parlor, then you have what most people would consider a great place. When there are at least ten of these reasons to visit a place, it will be vibrant and interesting.



Murals can provide color and interest to a space.

Source: www.TripAdvisor.com

THE PLACEMAKING PROCESS

Placemaking can be described as the overall process undertaken to transform a public space. The process entails listening to the community and understanding their unique needs and ideas for a space. PPS has outlined a five (5) step process to help transform a public space into a great place:

- 1) **Define Place & Identify Stakeholders:** select the right site and community stakeholders
- 2) **Evaluate Space & Identify Issues:** take inventory of how a space is currently used and how it can be improved
- 3) **Place Vision:** create an overall vision for the space with community stakeholders
- 4) **Short-Term Experiments:** implement "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" (LQC) improvements as temporary solutions to see if a long-term version is the right decision
- 5) **Ongoing Reevaluation & Long-Term Improvements:** ensure ongoing maintenance of a space and be able to adapt to changing demand

By combining all of these elements and working closely with residents, stakeholders, and City staff a community can begin to successfully create great public spaces.

For more information about the Project for Public Spaces and their work to create great places and communities, please visit www.pps.org.



Seating and landscaping can attract users to a space.

Source: www.halifax.ca

ACTION 29.2

CONSIDER THE USE OF PARKING AREAS FOR NEW PUBLIC SPACES

Type of Action: Proactive

As identified in the Infrastructure Section, parking is a necessary part of successful retail in the Town Center; however, parking should be placed in the most effective locations to enhance the Town Center and not diminish public spaces. The parking lot behind Vertical Runner and adjacent to the American Legion and Marc's already has a small, underused parklet. Because many of the structures in this area have front entrances facing the parking lot, improvements could yield a pedestrian-friendly green space surrounded by retail stores, as shown in the map below.

The City should work with property owners to discuss how park space in the Town Center could be reorganized and used effectively.

MAP 44

POTENTIAL GREEN SPACE IN TOWN CENTER PARKING AREAS



LEGEND

- Buildings
- Parking and Drive Aisles
- Plazas
- Green Spaces
- Building Entrances
- Trails

ACTION 29.3

GROW AND EXPAND TOWN CENTER PROGRAMMING

Type of Action: Proactive

Events and activities are important ways of adding vibrancy to a business district because they bring visitors to an area that might not otherwise have a reason to stop. The City of Brecksville already has community events that occur in or around the Town Square. These include summer music concerts, parades, and holiday events.

The City should work with the community to identify other events and programming residents would like to see and implement a diverse and revolving schedule of entertainment options in the Town Center. Examples in use elsewhere include art walks, food truck festivals, community concerts, mural painting, chalk-on-the-walk, and others.

ACTION 29.4

DEVELOP AN EVENTS CALENDAR FOR THE TOWN CENTER

Type of Action: Proactive

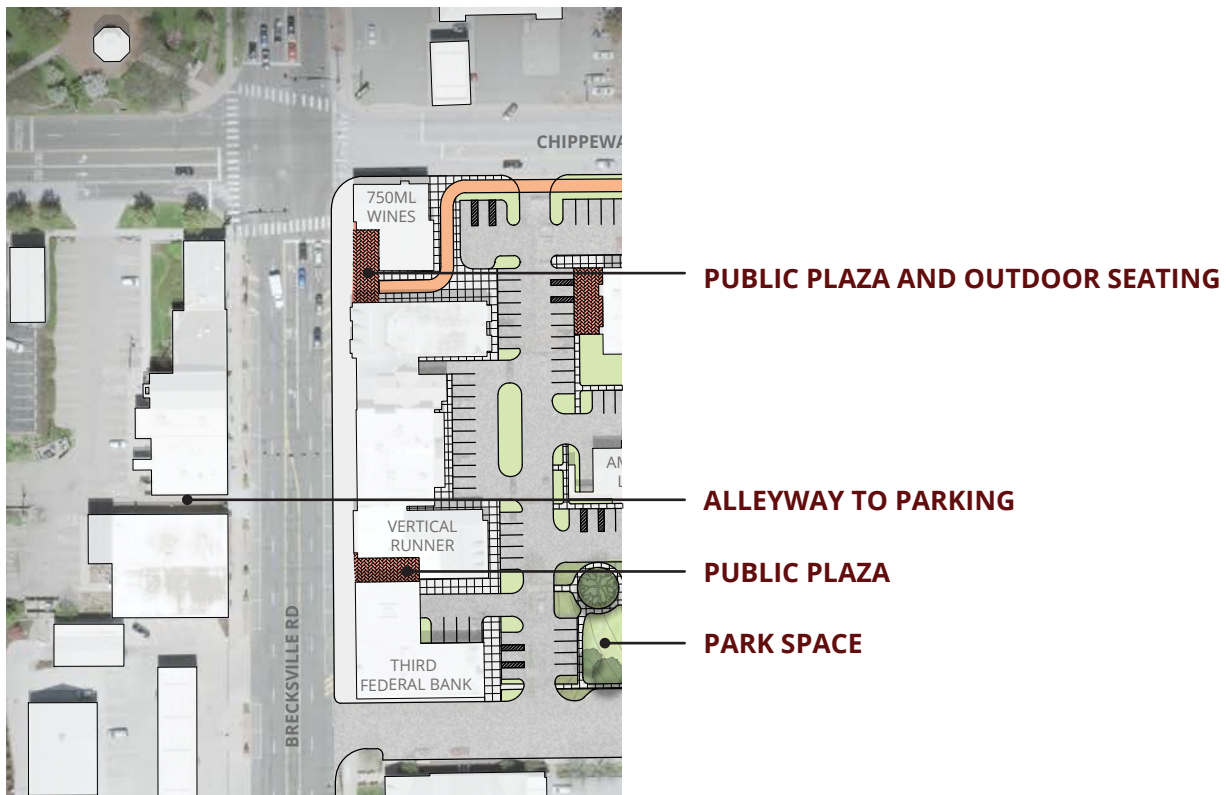
The City, cultural institutions, arts groups, and businesses often host events in the Town Center. To cross-publicize these events to various audiences, the City or its partners should develop a common events calendar that details all City activities.



Many of the buildings in Brecksville Town Center have entryways that face the parking areas as well as Brecksville Road.

Source: County Planning

MAP 45 TOWN CENTER PUBLIC SPACES



Alleyways can be colorful and interesting passageways.

Source: Diana Tavares

STRATEGY 30

UPDATE AND EXPAND THE CITY'S BRANDING

Brecksville has existing gateway, building, and park signs as well as a municipal logo depicting many of the community's most prominent buildings. This is a strong base of graphic elements, however, many of the City's signs are inconsistent. They can vary in size, shape, font, and logo use, and certain areas of the City lack maps or directional signage. To bring the Brecksville's logo and sign package into conformance and address contemporary designs, the City should update and expand its branding and wayfinding.

This strategy entails actions to update the City's existing branding program to reinforce the community's distinct identity while expanding the program to cover a larger portion of the community.

ACTION 30.1

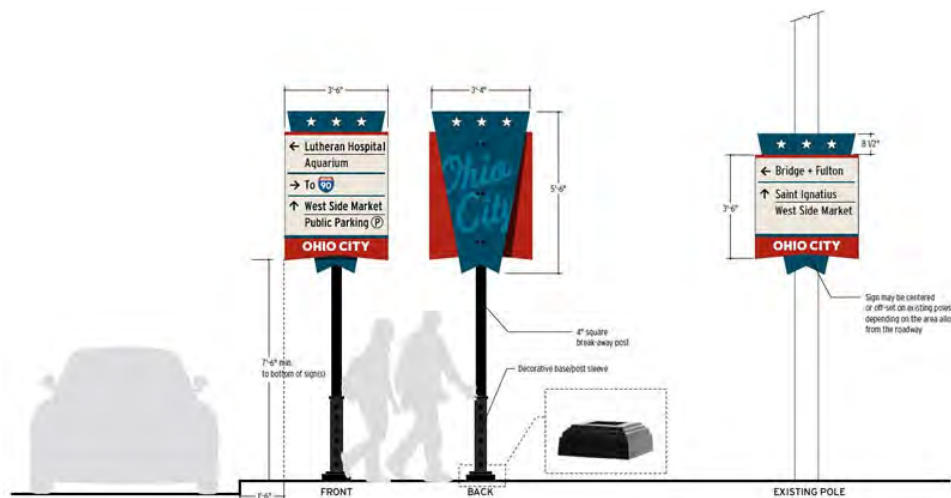
DEVELOP A MUNICIPAL BRANDING AND WAYFINDING SYSTEM

Type of Action: Proactive

A cohesive branding and wayfinding system for Brecksville should include features such as a logo, tagline, colors, and fonts that are standard across all City communication. Developing such a system is an in-depth process that looks at the essential components of community character and expands them into a communication system that underscores

that character. Brecksville has existing signage and a long history and architectural style that should be wrapped into a cohesive brand to better market the City. Given the popularity of the existing logo, such a branding scheme could be focused on expanding the use of that logo or reimagining it in a more contemporary way.

The City should engage a professional marketing firm or class at Cleveland State or the Cleveland Institute of Art to develop brand concepts. For information on an example community brand and wayfinding scheme, see the information on page 220.



In 2012, Ohio City went through an identity and re-branding effort to create a unique and functional wayfinding system that not only helps connect visitors and residents to commercial areas and attractions, but also acts as public art.

Source: www.guidestudio.com

ACTION 30.2

EXPAND THE USE OF A COMMON SET OF DECORATIVE INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENTS

Type of Action: Ongoing

The City of Brecksville already uses decorative infrastructure elements in key locations such as the Town Center and the civic core. These include green mast arms and pedestrian lighting. The City should continue to use these decorative elements and expand their use to other areas of the City. For instance, the development of the Greater VA Area is an opportunity to reinforce this brand.



ACTION 30.3

USE CONSISTENT MUNICIPAL BRANDING ON ALL NEW SIGNS

Type of Action: Proactive

As new developments or infrastructure improvements occur within the City of Brecksville, newly adopted sign standards should be implemented for all roadway signs and wayfinding systems. This could include municipal building signage, roadway signs, or any other type of wayfinding signage. This will ensure the Brecksville brand is consistently implemented across the community.



ACTION 30.4

IMPLEMENT A STREET SIGN REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

Type of Action: Proactive

Upon establishing a municipal brand for signage and wayfinding systems, Brecksville should then begin to make those changes to existing signs. As the City of Brecksville is a large municipality, this should be a phased-in approach.

The City should first focus its efforts within the Town Center, along main thoroughfares, around the VA site, and at key gateway points into the community. These areas constitute critical locations for residents and visitors. Once these enhancements have been completed, the City should then work out from these areas into the remaining residential subdivisions, secondary roadways, and edge zone areas to update existing signage to reflect the municipal brand.



The City of Brecksville currently uses a number of sign designs and styles, but share a common "Western Reserve" theme.

Source: City of Brecksville

DEEP DIVE CREATING A CONSISTENT COMMUNITY BRAND

Consistency in branding is important for a number of reasons. A brand image not only creates recognition and makes a place memorable, but it also builds credibility, reliability, and both tangible and intangible equity. Overall, branding matters and a strong image will make it easier for residents, visitors, and consumers to remember a community's core values and culture to stand out among other market competitors.

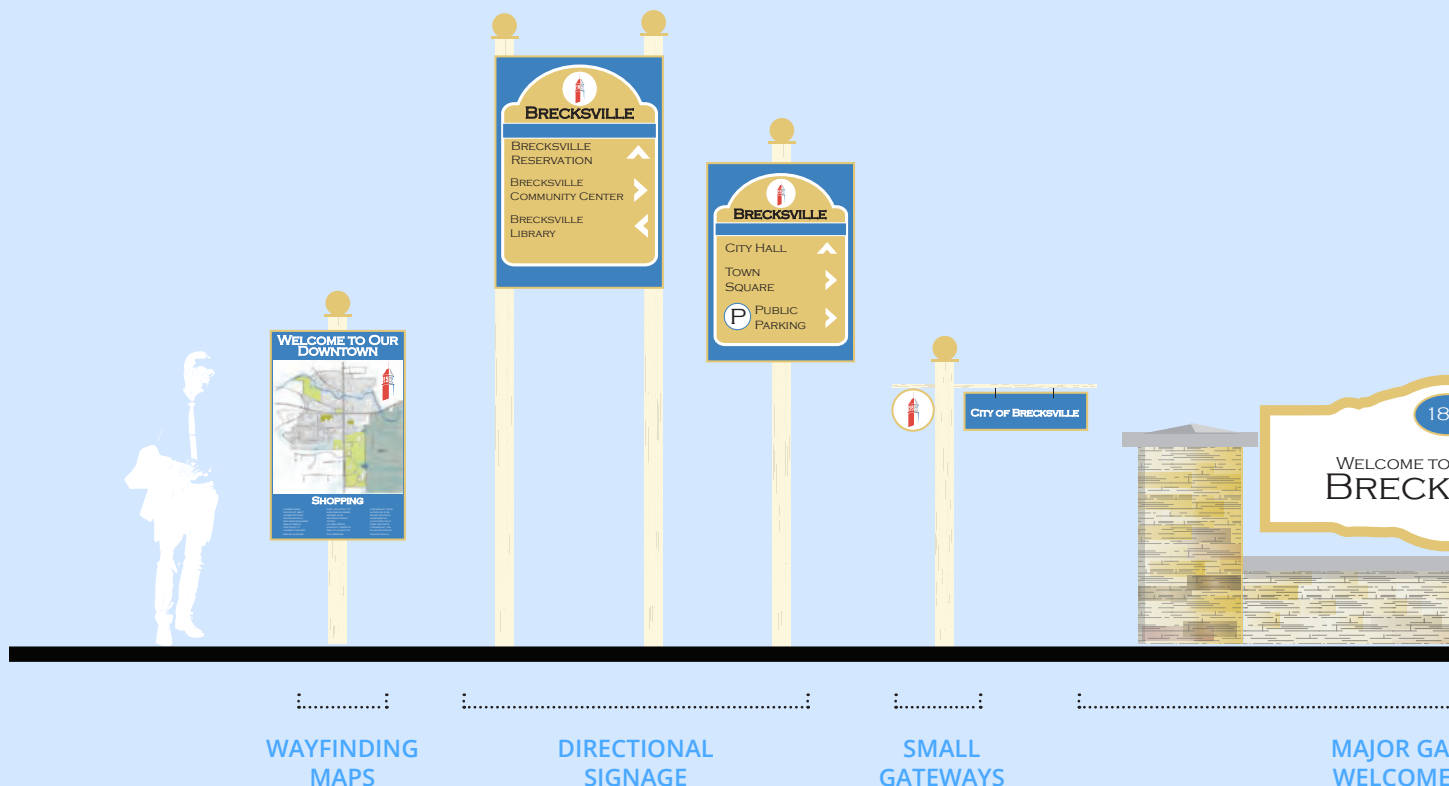
THE BRECKSVILLE BRAND

Brecksville is a community of choice, but offers services and amenities readily available to everyday visitors. It is important to make visitors and consumers feel welcome because that will encourage them to

return to the community and spend money within the its many shops, restaurants, and other businesses. As seen in the images below, a consistent Brecksville brand will tie the entire community together and visitors can quickly and easily identify when they enter or leave the community.

BRAND COMPONENTS

The brand represented in the images below is an example of how various brand elements can work together to reflect the City's values of tradition and hometown Americana feel. The colors play off of the current red, white, and blue theme, but contains gold to accent the various signage components. Branding elements could include everything within the public right-of-way, such as street signs and banners to other items like bike racks and downtown maps.



CONSISTENT BRANDING

Consistency is key when creating a municipal brand that encompasses many aspects of a community. One of the largest pieces of this brand is a refreshed community logo. Many municipalities have had the same logo and branding for years, but have not updated it to match contemporary styling.

As seen in the image to right, a modernized and simplified community logo for the City of Brecksville reflects the classic style of Brecksville, but with a contemporary feel. The images below show how that logo could be represented in various uses across the City.



CITY OF
BRECKSVILLE

