

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

The Development Strategies bring the Vision down to the neighborhood scale. They provide guidance for creating and maintaining quality places. The local and incremental steps that they describe are a key aspect of the overall Vision, and like the Recommendations, they are tailored to address the unique needs of the many different communities found in our region. These Strategies are not intended to present a rigid planning formula or to prescribe the future of a community—they are meant, instead, to illustrate the tremendous transformative potential of thoughtful planning, design, and development.

This section references many of the community categories presented throughout Vibrant NEO 2040: A Vision and Framework for Our Future. The section includes the six place types, as well as the smaller development types that made up the building blocks of the scenarios. See the “Existing Conditions” section for more information.

To make the best use of the Strategies, readers should look for the development types found in their communities or that their communities are considering building. The Strategies associated with those types will offer guidelines and best practices for getting the most out of their investments and for creating the highest quality outcomes.

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE TOWN DISTRICT

Neighborhoods surrounding a university or college. Combines the needs of students and educators with nearby communities to provide various housing options and amenities. Typically high density, compact, and mixed-use in legacy cities and established cities and towns.

- Maximize the potential for linking students, residents, and employees through connected and shared spaces and amenities.
- Connect to adjacent institutions and businesses to create knowledge-sharing communities, linking students with potential jobs.
- Encourage density through mixed-use, off-campus housing options and supportive amenities like grocery stores, retail, restaurants, etc.

- Locate and expand within existing urban fabric and infrastructure networks. Focus on infilling adjacent surface parking lots and vacant lots and on renovating vacant buildings to expand and consolidate the campus footprint.
- Promote healthy living and active lifestyles by creating walkable environments, multimodal streetscapes, and integrated public and park spaces.
- Incentivize employees to live near their work and be part of the greater education community.
- Promote the expansion of transit connectivity and multimodal options through the development of transit centers that connect to regional networks, bicycle amenities, continuous sidewalks and walkable neighborhoods.
- In higher density districts, incentivize parking garages rather than surface parking to free-up land to develop the density and mixture of uses essential to creating a vibrant urban district.

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE TOWN DISTRICTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• Medical / Institutional Centers• Transit Oriented Development• Compact Residential• Business / Commerce District (Mixed-Use)• Neighborhood Main Street• Downtown Commercial Core• Western Reserve Town Centers	NEW UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE TOWN DISTRICTS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical / Institutional Centers• Downtown Residential• Arterial Commercial Districts

**SUCCESS STORY: CITY OF KENT AND
KENT STATE UNIVERSITY¹⁴⁰**

Kent is a city in Portage County that in 2008 foresaw an opportunity to connect the region’s largest public university to its struggling downtown with millions of dollars of reinvestment made by both the public and private sectors to generate activity and attract business to the college town.

The growth and vitality of Kent is linked directly to the city’s largest economic driver, higher education. Its ties to Kent State University, with over 5,000 employees and 28,000 students, are strengthened and capitalized upon by dense, mixed-use redevelopments. Recently, an increase in private development has revitalized the downtown, improving and enhancing the historic fabric. Acorn Alley, at the center of this downtown district, was repositioned with a blend of renovation and new construction to create a concentration of retail and shops aimed at attracting employees, students and residents to downtown Kent. New mixed-use buildings have provided office space for businesses. The University has extended its campus into downtown Kent with an esplanade, gateway, and two new planned academic facilities. The City of Kent, and Portage County, and the Portage Area Regional Transportation Authority (PARTA) have partnered with the University to construct a new hotel, a retail-anchored mixed-use district and transit center/parking garage that supports the adjacent uses and connects downtown Kent and the University to the wider region. The resulting district is a transit oriented, multimodal, and walkable downtown community draws residents, employees, and students to downtown Kent. Improving the transit connectivity and the quality of its off-campus, Kent has positioned itself with potential students, faculty and employees as high-quality; competitive place to learn, work and live. As Kent continues to grow, it has the potential to expand its role in the region by developing its connections to the region’s major population centers through enhanced transit connections.



Historic Downtown Kent Photo by JonRidinger, (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Downtown_Kent_Ohio_2.jpg)



Kent Central Gateway, which opened in 2013 includes retail, bus bays, and a parking garage Photo by JonRidinger, http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kent_Central_Gateway_night_1.JPG

¹⁴⁰ Statistics from www.kent.edu and www.kentohio.org

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: MEDICAL / INSTITUTIONAL CENTER

Medical and institutional centers and the associated development and services that emerge around them. Larger campuses are typically located in legacy cities, but smaller campuses and satellites develop in suburbs and smaller cities and towns. Large campuses tend to become regional centers for research, science, medicine, and innovation. They employ large numbers of people in many levels of employment and often serve as regional economic generators. Smaller centers may build around associated uses and cause related development, like medical office space, to occur.

- Coordinate and attract supportive amenities such as parking garages, transit system upgrades, residential uses, parks and green spaces, and commercial uses that support employees and visitors.
- Connect with universities and educational facilities to expand curricula and link students with potential employers and resources for entrepreneurship.
- Promote healthy living and active lifestyles by creating walkable environments, multimodal streetscapes, and integrated public and park spaces.
- Zone for specialty uses and “spin-off” development like incubators and labs.
- Assemble and consolidate larger tracts of land for redevelopment, paying particular attention to vacant land and buildings adjacent to existing medical facilities.

- Limit surface parking and impervious surfaces by updating zoning to require the use of green building standards and shared parking; to reduce parking requirements and establish parking maximums; and to support use of transit and bicycling for commuting.
- Locate new development near existing infrastructure to minimize the need for extensions and public subsidy. Emphasize sites where recent infrastructure investment has already been made.
- Prioritize areas that can facilitate future expansion and growth.
- Identify underserved markets—particularly the growing population of aging Baby Boomers—and enable their access to care by transit as well as the private automobile.

SUCCESS STORY: UNIVERSITY CIRCLE

University Circle, the historic cultural district of Cleveland, has grown as a mixed-use district and emerged as an educational and medical center for the Northeast Ohio. Home to the region’s largest private research university, Case Western Reserve University. The Cleveland Institute of Art, The Cleveland Institute of Music, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Cleveland Symphony, multiple museums, and two nationally recognized hospital systems—University Hospital and Cleveland Clinic—the district has expanded from its formal institutional roots to become a vibrant mixed-use, transit oriented regional employment center and residential community. Public spaces and a multimodal street network complement the built environment and help define the identity of one of the most densely-developed, transit-connected, live-work-play communities in Ohio. In recent years, over a billion dollars of combined private and public investments have infused new uses into the neighborhood with walkable streets, mixed-use retail, new transit connections, and access to nearby cultural amenities. Strategic partnerships between the educational and medical institutions have replaced surface parking lots with new residential and commercial developments that have connected their campuses to the adjacent neighborhoods. A growing demand for residential options serving students and employees has led to substantial development of multi-family housing ranging from affordable apartments to high-end townhomes. Health tech and biomedical incubators have filled new office and laboratory

buildings along the Euclid Corridor, a rapidly developing mixed-use district connected to University Circle and downtown Cleveland by a bus rapid transit (BRT) line. The expansion of University Circle as one of the region’s most vital employment centers has the potential for stimulating reinvestment in the adjacent neighborhoods and creating around the Circle a vibrant cluster of diverse, attractive, walkable urban neighborhoods that appeal to the Circle’s employees, students and visitors.



Uptown Mixed-Use Student Housing *City Architecture*



Cleveland Clinic *City Architecture*



Museum of Contemporary Art *City Architecture*

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING MEDICAL / INSTITUTIONAL CENTER <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• Senior Living Communities• Transit Oriented Development• Compact Residential• Business / Commerce District (Mixed-Use)• University / College Town District	NEW MEDICAL / INSTITUTIONAL CENTER <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood• Arterial Commercial• Light Industrial Business Parks• Corporate Campuses• Suburban Subdivisions• New Town Center

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Communities and developments that are adjacent to, and influenced by, the coast of Lake Erie and other bodies of water. Residential and mixed-use buildings that provide access to the water and waterfront living. Consideration for the continued access by adjacent communities to the waterfront through parks and other public recreation spaces.

- Strengthen connections and access to waterfronts across the region
- Revitalize industrial waterfronts by redeveloping obsolete industrial sites and formerly inaccessible areas with new land uses, such as housing, retail, and recreation
- Reuse and repurpose functionally-obsolete industrial and commercial structures along the region’s legacy industrial waterfronts
- Connect trails and bikeway networks by strengthening access to water, creating trailheads, and providing amenities along the routes
- Activate waterfronts with complete communities that include residential and commercial uses and green space within the development
- Maximize the potential of development by consolidating large tracts of land to allow for consistent development guided by thoughtful master planning
- Incorporate quality public space and green infrastructure
- Protect waterways from potential ecological damage
- Minimize run-off and impervious surfaces through zoning standards such as parking maximums, percent landscaping minimums, tree cover, and bio-retention

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Before and after Quay 55 Residential Redevelopment, Cleveland *City Architecture*



Before and after Harbor Walk, Lorain *City Architecture*

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Downtown Commercial Core• Heavy Industrial Development (replacement)• Compact Residential• Mixed-Income Neighborhood	NEW WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Living Communities• Downtown Residential Neighborhood• New Town Center• Lifestyle Center / Mall District

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY

Residential communities for aging populations with needs not easily met by traditional residential neighborhoods. Residents range in age and circumstances. Many such households are made up of empty-nesters who have downsized from larger homes or grandparents raising their grandchildren and have unique intergenerational needs. Focus on accessibility and independence by locating everyday needs nearby like retail and social gathering space.

- Integrate into existing communities and neighborhoods to allow residents to age in place.
- Develop around existing amenities like parks, community centers, retail nodes, and cultural institutions.
- Design for a variety of family structures.
- Provide housing options that can be adopted to meet changing needs.
- Provide quality connections that integrate seniors into the community and allow for varying levels of independence. These include fully accessible sidewalks, transit stops, green spaces and exercise facilities.
- Locate near existing transit access or extend existing transit to serve these communities.
- Connect to health care systems or provide access within the neighborhood.
- Prioritize sites that connect seniors with the community, including areas near college campuses, downtowns, institutional centers, etc.

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Gabriel’s Green, Cleveland *City Architecture*



Foster Pointe, Cleveland *City Architecture*

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• University / College Town District• Transit Oriented Development• Compact Residential• Western Reserve Town Center• Neighborhood Main Streets	NEW SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood• New Town Centers• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• Waterfront Development• Arterial Commercial Districts• Lifestyle Center / Mall District• Downtown Residential Neighborhood

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: MIXED-INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD

Residential neighborhoods, typically with existing public infrastructure and aging housing stock, that may be transitioning through waves of renovation, restoration, demolition, or replacement. Smaller lot sizes that maintain proximity of neighbors and original fabric. Housing of a type and scale that may no longer meet the needs and demographic characteristics of the contemporary market. Tend to be within legacy cities or older suburbs.

- Encourage variety in the types and scales of available housing options: single-family homes, duplexes, townhomes, multi-family buildings, etc.
- Revitalize existing neighborhoods by refurbishing vacant and aging building stock to maintain original character. Infill vacant land to strengthen fabric.
- Consider strategic demolition of housing that no longer meets contemporary market demand.
- Develop high quality housing options for a range of income levels, age groups, and household sizes.
- Create communities that meet the needs of aging populations by offering access to transit, community centers, healthcare, and retail amenities.
- Leverage and strengthen existing assets that support residential communities, such as parks, schools, recreation and neighborhood centers, retail, and access to employment.
- Combine market rate and affordable options within residential developments.
- Connect neighborhoods with safe, multimodal routes for children and residents that link transit, school, and other amenities.
- Locate near existing and growing job centers.

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING MIXED-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University / College Town Districts• Medical / Institutional Centers• Compact Residential• Western Reserve Town Centers• Neighborhood Main Streets	NEW MIXED-INCOME NEIGHBORHOODS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Living Communities• Waterfront Development• Transit Oriented Development• New Town Centers

SUCCESS STORY: CENTRAL CHOICE NEIGHBORHOOD

The Central Neighborhood is a 670 acre tract of land immediately southeast of downtown Cleveland that supports an existing dense population of over 10,000 residents, educational institutions, a hospital system and an array of social services organizations. Nearly half of Central’s residents live in subsidized housing, with 91% of families led by single females. The neighborhood is plagued by meager educational attainment, unemployment, a lack of access to healthcare, poor health literacy, and high crime rates. Eighty percent of its children live in poverty. In 2012, the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA) undertook a Choice Transformation Plan—an initiative financed by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development—to comprehensively understand Central’s challenges and opportunities, rediscover its potential and needs, and envision a transformation that reconnects the community, attracts residents from all income levels, and creates ladders of success for residents and children to lead quality and productive lives. Many of the necessary elements of a complete community already exist in the Central Neighborhood: excellent transit, ongoing initiatives to create complete streets, several educational opportunities from cradle to college, parks, recreation centers, a library, and a grocery-anchored shopping center. A major focus of the transformation is a reversal of the stigma of public housing that has limited the neighborhood’s potential for becoming a vibrant, mixed-income community. To emphasize the Housing Authority’s commitment to transforming Central, CMHA demolished functionally obsolete housing that discouraged connectivity and positive social interactions.



Aged, functionally obsolete housing estates are reimagined as a new mixed-income community
City Architecture

Replacing the outdated and inaccessible walk-up style buildings are new, outward-facing townhomes with individual front doors and yards facing new streets that re-establish the neighborhood's historic street network and enable the houses to blend in with nearby single-family homes. The Care Alliance began construction on a new, on-site health center in 2013 that will provide quality health, dental, pediatric, and geriatric care to residents regardless of their ability to pay. A new multi-story mixed-use, LEED building will anchor the site and connect to Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)'s Metro Campus. CMHA has formed a partnership with two of the neighborhood's anchor institutions--Tri-C and St. Vincent's Charity Medical Center--to encourage their employees to live close to work in new a mixed-use apartment building and new townhomes. CMHA has also worked to reduce or eliminate the social isolation of public housing residents: Subsidized units will make up 50% of the redevelopment and will be interspersed throughout enabling residents of all income to live side-by-side throughout the Central neighborhood.



The redevelopment of the Cedar Estates encourages connectivity to the institutions found at the east end of the study area with a goal of providing housing options for employees and students to live in the neighborhood they work *City Architecture*



Vacant land and lack of commercial amenities are reimagined as neighborhood centers that mix housing options with resident needs *City Architecture*

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: SUBURBAN MULTI-FAMILY NEIGHBORHOOD

Residential neighborhoods that grew along major transit corridors connected to a dense downtown central business district. Typically found in legacy cities and their 1st ring suburbs. Various types of housing from standard lot single-family, duplexes, and a mix of multi-family options. Schools, city halls, parks, and other community amenities are often embedded in the residential fabric.

- Preserve density and the fabric of neighborhood through zoning regulations.
- Enhance walkability and connectivity through continuous sidewalks and bicycle amenities.
- Encourage higher density, particularly along transit corridors, through multi-story development and a variety of housing options.
- Consider the scale, dimension, and character of typical streets. Create standards and guidelines for new development that reflect the hierarchy of the street network, with higher density and multi-family homes along arterials that blend and scale down to low-traffic, lower-density residential side streets.
- Incorporate housing options that meet the needs of an aging population.
- Intersperse market rate and affordable housing within neighborhoods.
- Assemble and consolidate large tracks of land for redevelopment to allow for consistent and comprehensive master planning.
- Integrate and enhance transit access and quality green space, along with amenities that support existing neighborhoods.

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING SUBURBAN MULTI-FAMILY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Waterfront Development• Senior Living Community• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• Corporate Campuses• Light Industrial Business Park• Transit Oriented District• Western Reserve Town Center	NEW SUBURBAN MULTI-FAMILY <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical / Institutional Centers• Transit Oriented District• New Town Center• Lifestyle Center / Mall District

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: CORPORATE CAMPUSES

Commercial office space with multiple buildings clustered together. May be a single corporation with multiple departments and buildings or several corporations occupying one campus. Typically located adjacent to similar uses like light industrial, commercial, and retail. They are places with good access to highways. Usually located away from dissimilar uses like residential neighborhoods and shopping centers. Have large parking lots or garages and are set back from roads with few connections to the adjacent roadway network. May require facilities for shipping and truck traffic, and some green space and landscaping may be incorporated into the site’s layout. Usually has a large number of employees who commute daily to the site. May have associated supportive retail.

- Locate near existing infrastructure and networks to minimize the need for extensions and public subsidy.
- Prioritize sites where recent infrastructure investment has occurred.
- Incentivize employees to live near their work: create residential communities adjacent to existing campuses and incorporate mixed-use, transit oriented walkable residential/commercial development in the development of new campuses.
- Prioritize areas that can support future expansion, particularly on sites that are vacant and underutilized.
- Limit surface parking and impervious surfaces through the use of green building standards and parking maximums.
- Remediate and consolidate former industrial site or large tracts of vacant land to create opportunities for planned redevelopment and strategic growth.
- Plan new developments to incorporate green space, recreation areas, and natural landscapes that benefit both employees and adjacent residents.

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING CORPORATE CAMPUSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• Heavy Industrial Development• Light Industrial Business Park• Downtown Commercial Core• Business / Commerce District	NEW CORPORATE CAMPUSES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical / Institutional Center• Transit Oriented District• Business / Commerce District

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Goodyear Headquarters, Akron *City Architecture*

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: LIGHT INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS PARK

Commercial campuses that mix together office buildings, light industrial warehouses, distribution centers, and consumer goods production. They are often large employment centers and are found in nearly every type of community. They develop near access points to regional transportation networks—highways, rail corridors, and shipping channels. Often designed to accommodate heavy truck traffic volumes. Many legacy cities with vacated industrial land could benefit from the redevelopment of those areas into Light Industrial Business Parks, bringing jobs and activity back into the core of the cities.

- Locate near existing infrastructure and networks to minimize the need for extensions and public subsidy.
- Prioritize sites where recent infrastructure investment has occurred.
- Identify, assemble, and consolidate large tracts of vacant industrial land. Organize and plan these areas to create concentrated industrial zones that can take advantage of shared infrastructure networks.
- Inventory, prioritize, and maintain critical infrastructure to preserve the value of industrial sites.
- Locate near existing economic centers to foster innovation and job creation focal points.
- Connect to regional economic and job centers through quality transit options.
- Make access for employees a priority site location factor. Identify industrial sites near existing transit services or within proximity of potential employees to bring jobs and people closer together.

- Incentivize assembly, clean-up, remediation, and marketing of sites to create shovel-ready redevelopment opportunities, particularly near existing and historic employment bases.
- Consider changing designated land use of vacant properties particularly if they are located near sensitive uses like education, residential, or recreation. Utilize tools like highest and best use studies to determine the appropriate land use for these sites.
- Minimize the impacts on environmental systems and incentivize programs that prevent future contamination of sites.
- Maintain a walkable, multimodal network that facilitates access to the employment center.

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING LIGHT INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS PARK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical / Institutional Centers• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• Transit Oriented Development• Compact Residential• Business / Commerce Districts• Western Reserve Town Center• Heavy Industrial Development• Arterial Commercial District	NEW LIGHT INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS PARK <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Campuses• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• Transit Oriented Development• Business / Commerce District• New Town Center• Suburban Subdivision

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL CORE

Mixed-use regional economic centers with a variety of high-density building stock. Centrally located in an urban core and pairs predominantly office space with related retail. Increasingly features multi-family residential uses.

- Maintain or create design standards that are complimentary of historical fabric.
- Incorporate quality public spaces, parks, and amenities that enhance connectivity and the outdoor experience.
- Create coordinated wayfinding systems and design in order to highlight major attractions, historic destinations, dining, retail, and transit systems.
- Encourage and provide for an active tourism economy through marketing, branding, and accommodations.
- Introduce green infrastructure to mitigate stormwater runoff and provide quality landscaping, tree lawns, and public art.
- Connect to surrounding communities and the region with high-quality transit options that are accessible and intuitive.
- Maintain a walkable, multimodal network that encourages access to the employment center.
- Revise zoning requirements to favor development of parking garages. Reduce parking space requirements to reduce the size and environmental impact of surface. Adopt parking lot design standards that screen cars from view and maintain the urban street edge.
- Infill vacant and underutilized lots and renovate abandoned buildings before expanding outward.
- Incentivize reuse and renovation through public subsidy, particularly for buildings of historical significance and character.

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:

EXISTING DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL CORES

- Mixed-Income Neighborhood
- University / College Town District
- Transit Oriented Development
- Compact Residential

NEW DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL CORES

- Waterfront Development
- Downtown Residential
- Transit Oriented Development

SUCCESS STORY: FLATS EAST BANK

Cleveland was first founded in the Flats of the Cuyahoga River Valley when Moses Cleaveland came ashore on the east bank of the Cuyahoga River in 1796. Historically the Flats have been the industrial spine of Cleveland, home to John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Company, and several integrated steel mills. The industry that built the city's wealth also damaged its environment: Most notably, the Cuyahoga River infamously caught fire in 1969. This event was one of the environmental disasters that led to the establishment of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and passage of the Clean Water Act of 1972. As heavy industry receded from the Flats the district took on a new role and identity as the region's premier waterfront entertainment district. From the mid-1980s to the late 1990s the district flourished. Eventually crime and speculation tarnished its image, leading to the abandonment and demolition many once-prosperous establishments.

After almost a decade-long fallow period, the Flats re-emerged as a transit oriented, mixed-use, LEED ND waterfront district. The first of three phases of redevelopment was completed in 2013 and included an 18-story office tower, a 150-room hotel, and several restaurants. Subsequent phases will reconnect the Flats to the river with restaurants and urban piazzas and a river walk that will extend the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail to Lake Erie. Phase 2 includes introducing residential density to the district by developing a mixed-use building consisting of 140 apartments and related retail amenities.

The East Bank site represents a major public-private partnership with developers working alongside government agencies to make the project a reality and restore to the city's riverfront long-absent energy and excitement. The ongoing redevelopment of Cleveland's Flats promises intimate connections to the Cuyahoga River, exceptional views of the city's industrial valley and historic bridges expanded downtown residential options, and a unique and vibrant meeting place for the city's growing convention and visitor market. Most importantly, this development represents a renewed commitment to sustaining the urban core of the City.



Historically, the Flats thrived with industry. This image shows the area in the mid 1950s. Copyright: Cleveland Memory; Image created by Herman Seid, originally published in the Cleveland Press, Oct. 27, 1955. Available online through the Cleveland Memory Project <http://web.ulib.csuohio.edu/SpecColl/>



GCRTA Flats East Bank Rapid Station City Architecture



Flats Phase 2 Concept along river; Completed Phase 1 in background flatseast.com

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

Residential communities located in core urban areas. These areas take advantage of existing building stock by renovating, restoring, and infilling the historic fabric. Residents have the ability to travel easily, often by walking, to amenities like retail and parks.

- Renovate and adapt historic building to retain their character, density, and to responsibly reuse the existing building stock
- Revitalize vacant or underused buildings to attract and create new living options
- Take advantage of existing incentive programs (ex: Historic Renovation Tax Credits) and establish new programs and policy to catalyze investment
- Infill vacant lots with contextual architecture that maintains design standards that are complimentary of the historic fabric
- Update zoning codes to permit shared or reduced parking, a mixture of uses, and the densities necessary to support a robust transit system
- Incentivize employees to live near their work
- Coordinate private development with public capital improvements, such as streetscape enhancements, public parks, and other pedestrian-scale amenities

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Realty Building and Wick Building *City Architecture*



ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University / College Town Districts• Mixed-Income Neighborhoods• Senior Living Communities• Waterfront Development• Transit Oriented Districts• Western Reserve Town Centers• Corporate Campuses• Downtown Commercial Cores• Business / Commerce District	NEW DOWNTOWN RESIDENTIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Town Centers• Medical / Institutional Centers• Compact Residential

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: TRANSIT ORIENTED DISTRICT

Nodes and corridors, organized around transit that have the potential to be densely developed, mixed-use districts. Examples of catalyzing infrastructure include express buss, bus rapid transit and streetcar lines. Development is typically a mix of commercial retail, office and residential uses. The transit focus of the neighborhood encourages complete live-work-play communities that are walkable and convenient for many age groups and family sizes.

- Expand the regional transit network and closely coordinate land use and transportation planning to find opportunities for synergy.
- Enhance the transit experience to attract increased ridership.
- Focus development around quality transit infrastructure.
- Promote mixed-use, walkable, and dense neighborhoods.
- Encourage retail options that support commuters, employees, and residents.
- Emphasize development linking large student populations and concentrations of jobs to transit networks.



Shaker Square *City Architecture*

Associated and Supporting Development Types:	
Existing Transit Oriented Development	New Transit Oriented Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• University / College Town Districts• Mixed-Income Neighborhoods• Senior Living Communities• Waterfront Development• Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood• Light Industrial Business Parks• Corporate Campuses• Downtown Commercial Cores• Business / Commerce District• Compact Residential• Downtown Residential Neighborhood• Arterial Commercial District• Lifestyle Center / Mall District• Neighborhood Main Street• Heavy Industrial Development• Western Reserve Town Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Town Centers• Mixed-Income Neighborhoods• Senior Living Communities• Downtown Residential Neighborhood• Lifestyle Center / Mall District• Business / Commerce District

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: COMPACT RESIDENTIAL

Residential neighborhoods, typically with existing public infrastructure, with aging housing stock that may be transitioning through waves of renovation, restoration, demolition, or replacement. Smaller lot sizes that maintain proximity of neighbors and original fabric, but type and size of housing may no longer be appropriate to meet changing needs and demographics. Tend to be within legacy cities or older suburbs.

- Preserve density and fabric of neighborhoods through zoning regulations and design review.
- Enhance walkability and connectivity with continuous sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle amenities.
- Encourage infill of vacant lots or create programs that allow adjacent homeowners to purchase and maintain sites (example: side-yard expansions).
- Create and support land banks to monitor and maintain vacant parcels until redevelopment becomes viable.
- Expand existing densities by redeveloping large tracts of land with compact lot sizes or townhome clusters.
- Consider scale, dimensions, and character of typical residential streets when planning new developments. Important variables include tree plantings, lawns, setbacks, yards, driveways, sidewalks, rights-of-way, and on street parking.
- Integrate green space and recreation areas to encourage activity and a sense of community.
- Plan for services and infrastructure upgrades that increase value of neighborhoods.
- Incorporate housing options that meet the needs of an aging population and enable residents to age in place.
- Improve ease of access to transit options, retail amenities, community centers, and medical care.



Existing Eveready Facilities *City Architecture*

SUCCESS STORY: BATTERY PARK

Once the national headquarters and plant for Eveready Battery, this redevelopment has incrementally transformed a 14.6 acre, heavily-polluted industrial site into a thriving urban mixed-income neighborhood. Situated on a bluff overlooking Lake Erie and downtown Cleveland, Battery Park marks the first major housing development specifically identified by the city’s Lakefront Plan. It also serves as a critical part of a larger revitalization effort in the Detroit Shoreway Neighborhood. A range of public spaces including volleyball courts, bike trails, and a newly-restored pedestrian link to Lake Erie’s shoreline provide access throughout the surrounding neighborhood, views of the lakefront and an easier, safer connection to Edgewater Park and the Gordon Square Arts District. Small scale walkable streets with on-street parking and lighted sidewalks add to the welcoming atmosphere and sense of community felt within the neighborhood. The development incorporates a broad range of residential unit types and price points that include townhomes, loft buildings, and single-family homes. The original Eveready Powerhouse and its landmark smokestack are preserved and memorialize the industrial heritage of the site. The powerhouse has been renovated to incorporate a restaurant, market, fitness facilities, and community meeting space. The diversity of the architecture is reflected in its residents and is found throughout the neighborhood, offering variety and vitality while respecting the surrounding fabric. Battery Park was conceived with substantial public involvement, input, and participation. A true sign of Battery Park’s success is its positive impact on the surrounding neighborhoods including related economic development, increased property values, and an improving market for home ownership.

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING COMPACT RESIDENTIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University / College Town Districts• Mixed-Income Neighborhoods• Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood• Medical / Institutional Centers• Transit Oriented Districts• Western Reserve Town Centers• Heavy Industrial Development• Neighborhood Main Streets	NEW COMPACT RESIDENTIAL <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Living Communities• Mixed-Income Neighborhoods• Waterfront Development• New Town Centers



Battery Park Townhomes *City Architecture*

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: WESTERN RESERVE TOWN CENTERS

Traditional town or small city centers that developed around central space like a town square or public green. Often these communities serve a civic function as county seats and can be cultural or economic centers. Typically, these communities grew at the same time period as the region’s legacy cities and often suffer similar issues of aging building stock and infrastructure, leaving many in need of rejuvenation. Redevelopment and opportunities to re-establish these communities exist, with many successful examples throughout the region.

- Maintain, strengthen, and celebrate assets that define a place, including its central green or square and other gathering spaces, historic architecture and building fabric, street level activity, natural features, and cultural institutions.
- Create consistent and complimentary design standards and guidelines to preserve the character and charm of these established places. Preserve the traditional street-wall that defines the central green or square and resist the intrusion of surface parking lots and free-standing structures that diminish the integrity of the central space and its immediate surroundings.
- Utilize historic town centers to create nodes and points of interest along regional networks (bikeways, scenic drives, etc.).

- Invest in core infrastructure to maintain economic vitality, encourage investment, and facilitate growth.
- Focus investments at the core to create a critical mass of development and complimentary uses that will attract supportive markets and further investment.
- Use mechanisms like SIDs (Special Improvement Districts), BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) Historic Tax Credits (federal and state), and Mainstreet programs to generate investment capital.
- Use mechanisms like historic designation and local design review to preserve the existing fabric of the district. Resist demolition of historic and contextual buildings for the purpose of creating surface parking lots.
- Invest in branding, marketing, and public art campaigns to increase awareness.
- Encourage towns to actively pursue National Register historic designation of their town centers and connect to assets of similar significance across the region.
- Activate town centers by reimagining upper-story development and encouraging residential and live/work spaces that attract a residential population and support continued use of historic and contextual buildings.



Medina Town Square *City Architecture*

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:

EXISTING WESTERN RESERVE TOWN CENTERS

- University and College Town Districts
- Senior Living Communities
- Medical / Institutional Centers
- Compact Residential
- Mixed-Income Neighborhood
- Waterfront Development
- Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood
- Corporate Campuses
- Downtown Residential Neighborhoods
- Neighborhood Main Street
- Business / Commerce Districts

NEW WESTERN RESERVE TOWN CENTERS

- Do not occur
- New town centers may act as replicas

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: NEIGHBORHOOD MAIN STREETS

Neighborhood scale streets that function as main access corridors to community retail and cultural assets like theaters, while incorporating multiple modes of access and walkable environments. Historically, they were developed as streetcar commercial districts, with residential incorporated in the form of mixed-use buildings along the streetcar route and lower density one- and two-family residential development on adjacent side streets.

- Promote pedestrian enhancements and amenities.
- Incorporate bicycle lanes and facilities.
- Enhance the transit user’s experience.
- Calm traffic through well designed streets.
- Take advantage of initiatives like Cleveland’s Storefront Renovation Programs.
- Use mechanisms like SIDs (Special Improvement Districts) and BIDs (Business Improvement Districts) to generate investment capital.
- Invest in branding, marketing, and public art campaigns to increase awareness.
- Maintain setbacks of adjacent buildings to ensure the continuity of the established urban fabric.
- Encourage mixed-use development with active ground floors.
- Strengthen relationships to sidewalks.
- Provide wide sidewalks that accommodate leisure and outdoor retail.
- Integrate on street parking in strategic locations.
- Maintain a defined street frontage and encourage the redevelopment of vacant lots and surface parking.

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD MAIN STREETS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University and College Town Districts• Senior Living Communities (Mixed-Use)• Transit Oriented Development• Compact Residential• Mixed-Income Neighborhood• Western Reserve Town Center	NEW NEIGHBORHOOD MAIN STREETS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University and College Town Districts• Senior Living Communities (Mixed-Use)• Transit Oriented Development• Compact Residential• Mixed-Income Neighborhood

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Cedar Fairmount City Architecture



Highland Square City Architecture

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: BUSINESS / COMMERCE DISTRICTS

Commercial campuses and districts that have grown up adjacent to freeway interchanges and along existing arterial roads and transit corridors. Many of them may be deteriorating or adjusting to new market conditions. These districts are found in many types of communities. They often have a concentration of multi-story office buildings that may include limited retail to serve those employed in the district. They may also consist of free standing retail or small strip retail centers. They often feature extensive landscaping and large surface parking lots with related stormwater retention basins. Many of these districts were developed incrementally by individual property-owners and developers and lack a master plan or overall organizational framework that connects the individual developments, minimizes environmental impacts, enables transit access and manages commuter traffic flows effectively.

- Identify areas that are existing or emerging and prioritize development in strategic locations.
- Inventory, prioritize, and maintain critical infrastructure to preserve the value of vacant land within emerging districts.
- Assemble and consolidate large tracts of vacant and underutilized land for coordinated planning efforts and specialized zoning classifications.

- Plan for future development that connects and unifies businesses into districts.
- Zone for a mixture of uses that incorporates green space that encourages outdoor activities and provides retail, fitness and related amenities for employees.
- Locate near existing transit infrastructure and where recent public investments have already been made.
- Design new developments to support transit service, daily walking and bicycle commuting.
- Consider revised parking requirements, shared parking strategies, percent landscaping, and green building codes.
- Enhance district streetscape extend sidewalks and bicycle facilities to improve multimodal access.

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Chagrin Highlands Spec Office jresgroup.com



Eaton Center, Chagrin jresgroup.com

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:

EXISTING BUSINESS / COMMERCE DISTRICTS

- Compact Residential
- Corporate Campuses
- Light Industrial Business Parks
- Transit Oriented Development
- Medical / Institutional Centers
- Downtown Commercial Cores
- Arterial Commercial Districts

NEW BUSINESS / COMMERCE DISTRICTS

- Transit Oriented Development
- Light Industrial Business Parks

DEVELOPMENT TYPE:
HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Industrial districts that are traditionally embedded in the urban cores of the legacy cities, but have since spread out across the region. Compact residential neighborhoods historically grew up or were developed around these sites to provide housing for workers in close proximity to their employment. Many of the companies in these districts produce materials and products, such as steel, chemicals, machined goods and industrial equipment, that are used by other firms rather than by consumers directly. Facilities are often large-scale and require extensive road, rail and port infrastructure to support them. During the a two-decade period from the late 1970s to the late 1990s the region saw many of these companies close, relocate or downsize substantially resulting in widespread abandonment of these districts. The resulting concentrations of brownfield heavy industrial land can be found in each of the region’s legacy cities and many of its first ring suburbs.

- Identify, assemble, clean and consolidate large vacant industrial sites land that can take advantage of existing infrastructure networks and facilities. Organize and plan these areas to create competitive “industrial opportunity zones” that can meet contemporary market demand and restore these properties to productive use.
- Inventory, prioritize, and maintain critical infrastructure to preserve their value to adjacent industrial sites.
- Locate near existing economic centers to foster innovation and job creation focal points.
- Connect to regional economic centers through high-quality transit service.

- Make access for employees a priority site location factor. Identify industrial sites near existing transit services or within proximity of potential employees to bring jobs and people closer together.
- Incentivize assembly, remediation, and marketing of sites to create shovel-ready redevelopment sites that meet the expectations and needs of contemporary businesses. Develop zoning designations that allow former heavy industry sites to be developed as complimentary uses, such as Light Industrial Business Parks, Corporate Campuses, or Business / Commerce Districts.
- Consider changing the zoning classification of vacant heavy industry sites adjacent to sensitive uses such as schools, housing, and parks. Utilize analytic tools like highest and best use studies to determine the appropriate contemporary land use for these sites.
- Encourage repurposing vacant industrial land that is located near ecologically sensitive areas to passive uses that protect and expand these areas.



Study Area—Ohio Works Site Youngstown *MRCI*

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compact Residential• Corporate Campuses• Light Industrial Business Parks	NEW HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transit Oriented Development• Light Industrial Business Parks• Business / Commerce Districts• Waterfront Development (as a replacement)

SUCCESS STORY: MAHONING RIVER
CORRIDOR INITIATIVE

The Mahoning River Valley is the central industrial corridor for the greater Youngstown-Warren community. Historically lined with mills and steelyards, the 800-acre river corridor suffered a protracted period of disinvestment and massive job loss in the 1970s and 1980s. The resulting decline, population loss, and abandonment left behind many large heavy industrial sites. All of these were environmentally contaminated and have required remediation in order to be returned to productive use. As a result of over 100 years of heavy industrial use, the Mahoning River has been classified by the Ohio EPA as “unfit for human contact.” In response to this major challenge, the Youngstown State University’s Center for Urban and Regional Studies established the Mahoning River Corridor Initiative (MRCI). The Initiative has undertaken a comprehensive approach to clean-up, reuse, water quality restoration, job creation, and recreational development. This multi-year effort began with a feasibility report that identified and inventoried potential project sites as well as major infrastructure and environmental projects necessary to make the sites economically productive and ecologically viable again. The Initiative’s process has led to the funding and marketing of several sites. Successful manufacturing firms that have relocated or expanded along the Mahoning River and its tributaries include Fireline Inc., Allied Erecting and Dismantling, and most notably, Vallourec, a state-of-the-art steel and pipe manufacturing facility on the site a demolished former integrated steel mill. Vallourec’s capital investment totals almost \$1 billion and resulted in a significant number of new, well-paying industrial jobs.



MRCI Study Area & Identified Sites *MRCI*

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: ARTERIAL COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Commercial strips that develop based on proximity to vehicular access points like highways and major arterial roads. Typically a series of strip retail centers and outparcels, these centers tend to be built new and without an overall planning strategy. Many have become outdated and subsequently abandoned, rather than renovated, before their physical life expectancy is reached.

- Develop master plans that encourage overall development strategies and study existing districts to create connections between individual buildings.
- Encourage density around transit connections and provide pedestrian infrastructure.
- Incentivize renovation and redevelopment before expanding outward: reduce retail vacancy and premature obsolesce.
- Revise zoning codes to incorporate shared parking strategies, parking maximums, storm water retention, and on-site filtration.
- Create design standards to establish place-based identity and support retail continuity within districts.
- Invest in marketing, consistent signage, landscape screening, and branding efforts.

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Golden Gate Strip Center *City Architecture*

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:

EXISTING ARTERIAL COMMERCIAL

- Lifestyle Centers / Mall Districts
- Transit Oriented Development
- Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood
- Senior Living Communities
- Suburban Subdivisions

NEW ARTERIAL COMMERCIAL

- New Town Centers
- Waterfront Development
- University / College Town District
- Medical / Institutional Centers
- Business / Commerce District
- Lifestyle Centers / Mall Districts

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: LIFESTYLE CENTER / MALL DISTRICT

Commercial developments that combine a variety of retail options into a major commercial center. Indoor malls and their outdoor equivalent, the lifestyle center, allow consumers to go to one central location that houses multiple shops, department stores, restaurants, etc. Allows consumers to park and walk around, enjoying a fully retail environment. Modern lifestyle centers often incorporate outdoor spaces, entertainment, and recreation to complete the experience and allow consumers time to take a break while remaining in the retail center. Many are beginning to create live-work-play environments by adding mixed-use office space and residential to their retail program.

- Create design standards, consistent signage, landscaping, and screening requirements.
- Integrate development into an overall master plan that accommodates growth, connect to existing street network in a logical manner, and minimizes negative impacts on adjacent properties.
- Prioritize investments and “re-modeling” of existing malls to meet market demands rather than building new ones. Adapt and retrofit old, declining malls into lifestyle centers or other non-retail uses consistent with local zoning.
- Revise zoning codes to accurately determine parking requirements, stormwater management, and percent landscaping versus hardscape.
- Integrate mixed-uses into new mid-rise buildings that have retail focused ground floors and a combination of office and residential above.
- Determine locations to avoid market oversaturation and discourage avoidable retail vacancy and premature obsolesce.

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Legacy Village *City Architecture*



Summit Mall, Akron *City Architecture*

Associated and Supporting Development Types:	
Existing Malls / Lifestyle Centers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arterial Commercial District• Transit Oriented Development• Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood• Senior Living Communities• Suburban Subdivisions	New Malls / Lifestyle Centers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Town Centers• Waterfront Development• University / College Town District• Medical / Institutional Centers• Business / Commerce District• Arterial Commercial District

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: NEW TOWN CENTER

Contemporary version of the traditional town center. Creates a central, public space in areas that have no existing centers or cultural assets but do have a growing population to support a district that consolidates commercial, civic, and cultural activities.

- Locate where concentrated growth is occurring or anticipated and where no community “place” exists to build around
- Encourage the building of these centers in areas where they will not be in competition with existing centers (ex: Western Reserve Town Centers) or otherwise detract from existing assets or communities
- Design a central focal point, such as a park or town square, that serves as a community gathering space
- Create design standards that encourage consistency and a sense of place, address signage and streetscape and landscaping.
- Develop master plans to guide future and limit the impact of development on traffic congestion, and sensitive ecological areas
- Focus density and development around transportation infrastructure to allow for a logical street hierarchy, shared infrastructure, and manageable growth and maintenance
- Integrate mixed-use into mid-rise buildings
- Revise and create zoning restrictions to allow for shared parking strategies

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING NEW TOWN CENTERS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University / College Town Districts• Medical / Institutional Centers• Waterfront Development• Senior Living Communities• Mixed-income Neighborhoods• Corporate Campuses• Light Industrial Business Parks• Transit Oriented Development• Business / Commerce Districts• Arterial Commercial Districts• Lifestyle Centers / Mall Districts• Suburban Subdivisions	NEW TOWN CENTERS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University / College Town Districts• Medical / Institutional Centers• Waterfront Development• Senior Living Communities• Mixed-income Neighborhoods• Corporate Campuses• Light Industrial Business Parks• Transit Oriented Development• Business / Commerce Districts• Arterial Commercial Districts• Lifestyle Centers / Mall Districts• Suburban Subdivisions

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: SUBURBAN SUBDIVISION

New planned residential communities that are developed all at once, rather than by individual builders. Typically they are developed in new locations that are not traditionally or formerly residential, so they require new infrastructure to be installed. Housing sizes vary from moderately-scaled developments for families and seniors to large lots with significant separation between homes.

- Prioritize sites that are adjacent to existing infrastructure or residential development in order to backfill the urbanized area before extending outward.
- Establish guidelines that promote green building and energy efficient design.
- Take advantage of resources to assist smaller communities in subdivision process, addressing topics such as how to zone, establish setbacks, manage rights-of-way, etc.
- Consider revising existing zoning codes in urbanizing townships to better respond to changing market demands.
- Consider adjusting minimum lot size requirement to support denser suburban development instead of than rural residential.
- Use zoning to protect ecologically sensitive areas and farmland.
- Conduct long-term financial analysis to ensure that the development is cost effective for local jurisdiction.
- Consider using cost impact analysis tools to establish infrastructure fees and maintenance cost sharing.

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



Subdivision Street, Strongville *City Architecture*

ASSOCIATED AND SUPPORTING DEVELOPMENT TYPES:	
EXISTING SUBURBAN SUBDIVISIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lifestyle Centers / Mall Districts• Arterial Commercial Districts• Suburban Multi-Family Neighborhood• Senior Living Communities	NEW SUBURBAN SUBDIVISIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Town Centers• Waterfront Development• Lifestyle Centers / Mall Districts• Medical / Institutional Centers

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: RURAL RESIDENTIAL

Typically occurs in townships where land use is predominately rural or agricultural. Homes are spread out on large lots often as part of a farm or estate. Connections to retail, civic, and commercial amenities are distant. Infrastructure is limited—water and sewer utilities are not typically available. Most properties have their own well supply and septic system.

- Maintain rural character and density through zoning and development guidelines.
- Encourage good stewardship to preserve high-quality agricultural land and natural areas.
- Take advantage of resources, such as 208 Water Quality Management Plans, to assist smaller communities in managing their own growth.
- Conduct long-term financial analysis to ensure that the development is cost effective for local jurisdiction.

LOCAL EXAMPLES:



NEOSCC



Photo by Scott Bauer, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

DEVELOPMENT TYPE: CONSERVANCY / PARKS

Areas like national and state parks, nature preserves, high quality wetlands and habitats, and local parks. Found throughout the region in a variety of forms. Provide ecological functions and recreational areas for residents. May be connected with bike and trail networks, scenic railways, waterways, and roads. Ecologically and culturally sensitive assets that increase value and the quality of nearby neighborhoods and communities. In more densely developed areas, parks may be small pockets with plazas that serve as social gathering spaces and landscaping that softens the urban environment. Also play an important role of maintaining outdoor recreation in communities for families, exercise, events, dog walking, etc.

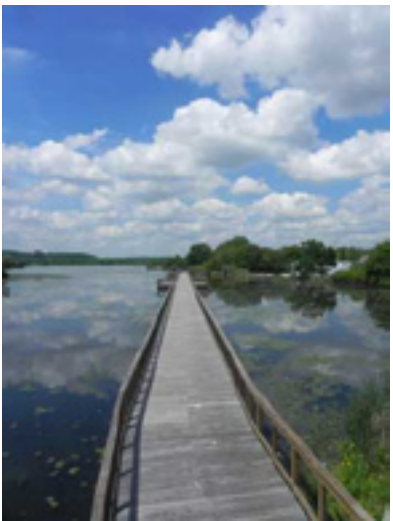
- Advocate for regulation to prevent damage and destruction of waterways, farmland, and high ecological value land.
- Continue to place value on our ecologically sensitive areas and habitats by expanding conservation efforts.
- Invest in infrastructure and programming that expands access and connectivity of parks and green space.
- Continue to invest in greenways and connections that link the region’s green space network together.
- Consider conversion of vacant urban land to parks and green space, particularly if sites are no longer viable as economic generators, are adjacent to other conservation areas, and could be used as an amenity to an existing neighborhood.
- Integrate parks and green space in new and established areas.
- Utilize parks and green space to incorporate natural functions in urbanized areas, such as storm water retention, bio-filtration, reduced heat island effect, and to reduce air pollutants.
- Provide parks and recreation areas that incorporate gathering spaces, shade trees, canopy structures, programming for different age groups, and fitness amenities.
- Design multi-purpose trails and bikeways to be accessible and enjoyable for all residents.

SUCCESS STORY: THE OHIO AND ERIE CANAL TOWPATH TRAIL

The Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail is a multi-million dollar trail network that is nationally recognized as a one of the best examples of regional public partnership for a greenway system. Tracing the historic Ohio and Erie Canal from Cuyahoga to Tuscarawas County, the Towpath Trail is an 84-mile scenic bikeway that attracts over 2.5 million users per year. Originally constructed in the early 19th Century, the Ohio and Erie Canal was a freight waterway intended to connect Lake Erie to the Ohio River. The economic viability of the Canal was diminished when railroads began to take over the freight market. The Canal had 146 lift locks and a rise of 1,206 feet and was used for over 85 years until it became unnavigable due to neglect and damage from flooding. In 1966, the canal was declared a National Historic Landmark. Much of the central portion was incorporated into Cuyahoga Valley National Park in the 1980s. The multi-purpose trail today follows the original mule towpath through forest land, under and over bridges, through towns and cities, and even over water bodies. The Towpath was made possible through a public partnership between agencies throughout the region—The National Park System, Cleveland MetroParks, StarkParks, Summit MetroParks, and Tuscarawas County. Each entity brings their own unique assets and attractions to the Towpath. The Towpath includes 48 trailheads, 10 visitor centers, and hundreds of miles of connecting trails that lead through towns, cities, and local parks. The Towpath Trail is fully accessible by foot and bike and most of the length is ADA accessible. Sections of the trail link to horseback bridle paths. A majority of the route follows the Cuyahoga River, the Scenic Railroad, and the Ohio & Erie Canal Scenic Byway (part of the National America’s Scenic Byways program). The Towpath Trail partnership continues to grow, with extensions planned to add 17 miles including a connection through the industrial Flats in Cleveland to its northern terminus on the shores of Lake Erie. New amenities for bikers and hikers, historical markers, recreational facilities, restaurants, and scenic lookouts continue to be planned and built along the Towpath route enhancing the path’s quality as a nationally-recognized bikeway and regional asset.



Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, Brecksville CSVR



Grainger Bridge, Independence, and Summit Lake Floating Trail, Akron
Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Area

SUCCESS STORY: MILL CREEK METROPARKS

Mill Creek MetroParks is a cherished asset of the Mahoning Valley and serves as a key example of publicly-lead investment and strategic conservation of a valued resource in the Northeast Ohio Region. Mill Creek MetroParks is the metropolitan park district serving Mahoning County. Its 4,400 acres of land represent one of the largest metropolitan park systems in the country and are home to historic sites, recreational facilities, public gardens, and trails open to residents and visitors since 1891. Lanterman's Mill, falls, and covered bridge were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. Lanterman's Grist Mill, the inspiration for the park's name, was built in the 1840s and restored in the 1980s.

The Mill continues to serve as an educational monument to the Mahoning Valley's industrial past. The MetroParks' strategic plan, developed in 2013, guides the future of the park system and encourages sustainable growth, operations, and partnership. As part of this plan, the park identified the need to improve access and connections between the park and surrounding community, expand education facilities, and update their marketing strategy to engage the public, evoking the original intent of the park as a natural sanctuary for the residents of the city. Today, the MetroParks provide a range of options for visitors to experience and enjoy nature with formal gardens and scenic wildlife, an outdoor amphitheater for concerts and performances, sports facilities for golf, tennis, fishing, boating, volleyball, skiing, sledding and hiking, and a variety of environments to explore and enjoy. The MetroParks also boasts 15 miles of trails that pass through steep hillsides, deciduous and evergreen forests, extensive wetlands, grass meadows, and gorges with cascading waterfalls. One of the more notable additions is the D.D. & Velma Davis Education and Visitor Center, which opened in 2000 in Fellows Riverside Gardens. The D. & Velma Davis Education and Visitor Center provides a venue to host events, an auditorium for lectures, a banquet hall, horticultural library, museum, café, gift shop, classrooms, and an observation tower overlooking Lake Glacier, the park's 44-acre recreational lake created in 1906 from the damming Mill Creek. To strengthen their commitment to sustainability, the park has also led wetlands restoration and protection programs and water quality improvement projects like retrofitting parking lots to create natural biofiltration gardens and prevent run-off into the surrounding sensitive ecosystems and habitats.



Suspension Bridge *Mill Creek MetroParks*



Covered Bridge *Mill Creek MetroParks*



D.D. & Velma Davis Education & Visitor Center *Mill Creek MetroParks*



Lanterman's Mill *Mill Creek MetroParks*



Judge Morley Pavilion *Mill Creek MetroParks*



New Biofiltration Parking Lot *Mill Creek MetroParks*