



# AVON LAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

**AVON LAKE, OHIO**  
SEPTEMBER 2019



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thank you to the many stakeholders who invested their time and expertise in the creation of this Comprehensive Plan update for the future of Avon Lake. Listed below are the members of an active and engaged project steering committee and city leadership which reviewed draft ideas, concepts, and plans, and helped steer the project team in the direction of the final plan.

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# Introduction

## OVERVIEW

In 2018, the City of Avon Lake initiated the process to conduct and complete a comprehensive land use plan for the city, which will serve as a guide for the next 30 years. The City of Avon Lake celebrated their Bicentennial, and as part of their celebration, desired a plan that takes the near and long-term hopes for the city and tie those into implementation strategies meeting the overall goals of the community. The Plan provides a guide for development and land-use patterns, identifies important and potentially transformative projects, and aligns resources to address growth and improve the community's quality of life. The comprehensive plan is a document by which all future policy and budgetary decisions should be evaluated.

## HOW TO USE THE PLAN

The Avon Lake Comprehensive Plan will be a living document. It will need to be reviewed annually and updated periodically. The City will be charged with overseeing the implementation of the Plan and coordinating the efforts of the parties identified as having responsibilities for implementing the Plan. As conditions change and various sections of the Plan are implemented, the City may find additional projects and/or strategies with which to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

A comprehensive plan is a community's blueprint for the future. It is the vision of what a community wants to become and the steps needed to realize that vision. The Plan will guide and inform City staff and officials during:

- The administration and revision of zoning and subdivision regulations;
- The location and construction of public and semi-public buildings and related community facilities including water, storm and sanitary sewer, and gas, among others;
- The acquisition and development of public and semi-public properties such as parks, trails, and open spaces;
- The preparation of annual work programs, budgets, capital improvement plans, and economic incentives; and
- Discussions with residents and private developers.

The Plan will also guide and inform private entities:

- As they make land use and investment decisions;
- On the long-term goals of the community as they relate to land use and development; and
- On the desired character of development including businesses and neighborhoods.





## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

*THE CITY OF AVON LAKE IS APPROACHING A CRITICAL JUNCTURE IN ITS DEVELOPMENT. THE AVON LAKE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AIMS TO BUILD UPON LOCAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS TO DEVELOP A NEW GUIDE TO SERVE AS A VISION FOR FUTURE DECISION-MAKING IN ORDER TO BETTER POSITION THE CITY AS A THRIVING COMMUNITY IN NORTHEAST OHIO.*

# INTRODUCTION

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## PLAN ELEMENTS

A collection of elements come together within the Plan to create a holistic and informed vision for future development of the City. These elements were established by a wide range of inputs from data collection, analysis, and best practices that are rooted in public engagement and included the following:

### Existing Conditions

Area conditions considered include current land use classification, zoning, parks and open space, mobility, development character, community vision, infrastructure and other specific investigations. With an understanding of the existing conditions, the planning team and the Steering Committee could make more informed decisions and goals for focus areas and policies that were identified during the planning and outreach process.

### Public Engagement

Throughout the planning process, the planning team facilitated discussions amongst community members, regional agencies, and stakeholders to delineate common direction and goals. Community issues and opportunities made apparent during discussions were used to formulate both general Plan objectives and targeted action steps. More details on the public engagement process, including a summary of results from the community survey and public meetings, can be found in Chapter 2 of this Plan.

### Trends

The existing conditions of Avon Lake's land use, zoning, demographics, and other characteristics were viewed through the lens of relevant local, regional, and national trends. These trends were used to paint a broader picture of the future of Avon Lake, anticipating market demand for particular uses, changing population demographics, and the shifts in retail trends and mobility. Avon Lake's location along Lake Erie, its proximity to the City of Cleveland, and its location along Interstate 90 increases the relevance of regional trends which reflect the changing landscape for the next few decades.

Figure 1-1: Plan Inputs



## ASSESSING...

Existing conditions throughout Avon Lake.



## APPLYING...

Best practices and regional and national trends to Avon Lake.



## ENGAGING...

With the Avon Lake community to create a vision for the future.

## PLANNING PROCESS

Comprehensive plans involve an engaging process that brings together people from various walks of life to discuss their ideas and aspirations for the future. The process engaged community members in fun and dynamic ways to share their visions for the future and strategize how they would like to see that future become reality.

The Avon Lake Comprehensive Plan process spanned approximately ten months and included both technical research and public involvement, resulting in an intuitive, informed, and proactive document. The following section outlines who was involved in the process and the action steps taken in creation of the Plan.

## WHO WAS INVOLVED?

### Project Team

The City of Avon Lake Administration and Staff oversaw the creation and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The City also retained OHM Advisors to assist in the planning process. OHM is an integrated engineering, architecture, and planning firm in Cleveland, Ohio committed to advancing communities. OHM brings more than 50 years of public and private sector expertise, forward thinking, and insightful counsel to help plan for the future of Avon Lake. Joining OHM as consultants on the project were Guide Studio, which assisted in the Community Branding and Market Focus.

### Steering Committee

A group of nine Avon Lake community members, residents, and business owners in the City were assembled to guide and inform the planning process. The City was represented by five individuals from varying departments such as public works, zoning, law, economic development, and city council.

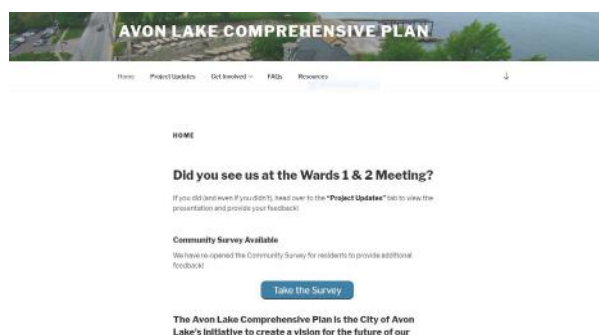
## Stakeholders

Through recommendations from the Steering Committee and City staff, additional community stakeholders were identified during the planning process. These stakeholders provided additional insight and feedback in the drafting of the Plan and the development of design concepts for the Focus Areas.

## The Public

The residents, businesspeople, and all community members of Avon Lake were invited to participate at regular intervals throughout the planning process. Opportunities for engagement included the project team attending a local festival, scheduled meetings, and an online survey.

Those unable to attend the public gatherings or whom had more to share were encouraged to participate through a project website developed for the Plan. Throughout the process, the website hosted meeting materials and draft documents. Public engagement results are identified in Chapter 2 of the Plan.



*A snapshot of the project website that was used during the planning process.  
([www.avonlakecomprehensiveplan.com](http://www.avonlakecomprehensiveplan.com))*



# INTRODUCTION

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

The Avon Lake Comprehensive Plan was structured around five phases, as shown in the project schedule below. Each phase involved input from the interested parties identified in the previous section, with an emphasis on community-driven goals and vision.

The project schedule below illustrates when each meeting or activity was conducted during the eleven-month planning process, with circular symbols under the corresponding month. Ongoing activities, including the community survey, occurred across phases of the Plan.

	2018						2019					
	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE
<b>PHASE 1 - PROJECT LAUNCH</b>												
Kick-off Meeting	●											
Steering Committee Meeting #1	●											
<b>PHASE 2 - UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT</b>												
Steering Committee Meeting #2		●										
<b>PHASE 3 - ENGAGE AND LISTEN</b>												
Public Meeting - Bicentennial Festival			●									
Community Survey			●	—	●							
Steering Committee Meeting #3				●								
<b>PHASE 4 - DEVELOPING THE PLAN</b>												
Steering Committee Meeting #4					●							
Stakeholder Meetings						●						
<b>PHASE 5 - FINALIZING THE PLAN &amp; SETTING UP IMPLEMENTATION</b>												
Public Meeting - Ward Meetings								●				
Steering Committee Meeting #5										●		
Steering Committee Meeting #6											●	
Elected Officials Meeting											●	→



*Steering Committee members provided invaluable guidance to Plan creation and implementation.*



*Discussion and feedback from the public and Avon Lake officials aided in the development of the Plan.*

## PLAN FRAMEWORK

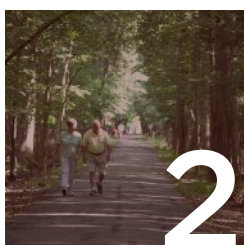
The Plan is organized around five chapters, listed below. Chapters 1-4 integrate the technical analysis and public input gathered during the planning process. This input was used to create informed recommendations around future land use and development in the City and within three defined

focus areas. Chapter 5 is the implementation strategy for the Plan that is organized around the plan goals and objectives. The recommendations for future land use, the focus areas, and within the implementation strategies help ensure the Plan is both far-reaching and focused, creating clear direction as the community implements the Plan.



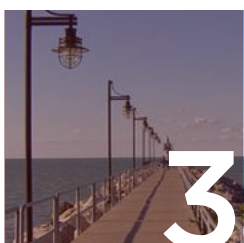
### INTRODUCTION

Provides an overview of the Plan purpose, inputs, and process (see page 4).



### PLAN FOUNDATIONS

Analyzes existing conditions and applies trends on land use, housing, economics, mobility, parks and open space, and outlines the community engagement process (see page 11).



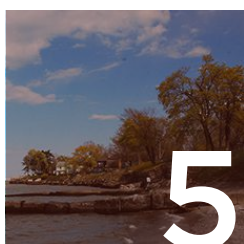
### COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

Includes the Future Land Use Map, Active Transportation Plan, and the Plan's Goals and Framework to guide the future of development in the City. (see page 41).



### FOCUS AREAS

Outlines recommended site design and implementation strategies in the three focus areas identified during the planning process as priority redevelopment or development opportunities (see page 65).



### IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Aligns targeted strategies and actions to Plan objectives to guide implementation of Plan goals (see page 83).





02

PLAN  
FOUNDATIONS

# Existing Conditions

## OVERVIEW

This section is intended to lay a foundation for the Plan framework by providing insight on the current physical and social conditions within Avon Lake. This includes an examination of existing demographics, housing, economy, parks and open space, mobility, zoning, land use, and regional and national trends. An examination of these existing conditions will help identify areas of strength and areas for improvement within Avon Lake. Building upon these conditions and trends will help identify not only the wants and needs of current Avon Lake residents, but can also shine a light on the needs and preferences of future residents that the City may strive to attract.

## PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

The Avon Lake Comprehensive Plan aims to build upon existing and previous planning efforts. The current Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2010 and reviewed in 2014. In addition to updating the Plan this document aims to consolidate goals and objectives of various existing or recent plans to create one updated, comprehensive vision for the future of Avon Lake. Understanding prior planning efforts, successes, and challenges helps create a feasible Plan and ensures cohesion across implementation strategies.

## PLANS OVERVIEW

- 2010 Comprehensive Land Use Plan
- 2014 West End Development Plan
- 2015 NOACA TLCI Active Transportation Plan
- 2016 NOACA TLCI Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity Plan

## Comprehensive Land Use Plan

The Avon Lake Comprehensive Land Use Plan was first adopted by the Planning Commission and City Council in 1995. The Plan was developed by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) which was comprised of the City Planning Commission, City Administrative officials, and Citizens. The 1995 plan was both comprehensive and long-range. It addressed a broad range of development issues. Some policies were implemented and other policies were more visionary and therefore, more difficult to carry out.

The 2004 update to the plan was prepared through a series of discussions at Planning Commission meetings. The intent of the 2004 update was simply to make the needed revisions that reflected the growth and development of the community and Planning and Zoning trends since the 1995 Plan.

The 2010 updates were completed through discussions at Planning Commission meetings and were intended to reflect the changes in development that have occurred since the 2004 update. The City of Avon Lake and the County as a whole have been in the middle of an economic downturn since 2009.

## West End Development Plan

In January of 2014, the City of Avon Lake facilitated a planning process which focused on identifying opportunities in the City's western neighborhood. The understanding of both the immediate and long-term future of the NRG power plant and its surrounding property were at the study's core. The plant's physical presence and historical significance have defined this waterfront area for over 100 years. During the planning process, the plant's operator, NRG Energy, announced its intention to convert the plant's fuel source from coal-fired to gas-fired operations.

The planning process resulted in a shared vision for the NRG and First Energy properties and a re-imagining of approximately 200 acres of connected Lake Erie property. Four distinct yet related districts were created: Waterfront District, Commercial Core, Residential Neighborhood, and the Office & Technology Park. Each offers attributes that have

the ability to position the City of Avon Lake to regionally compete for investments and strengthen its identity as a waterfront community.

## NOACA TLCI: Active Transportation Plan

The 2015 Active Transportation Plan was funded through a Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) grant through the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA). This Plan was an update to the 2009 Master Bicycle/Pedestrian Plan. The goal of the Plan was to develop a transportation plan which encouraged all transportation modes including walking and cycling. The goals of the plan were: (1) improve residents' and employees' quality of life, (2) enhance the city's economic viability, (3) improve safety and connections to key community resources with a more complete non-motorized network, and (4) reduce our impact on the environment. The updated master plan and recommendations included improved bike and pedestrian connections to local schools, parks, churches, public buildings (such as libraries), retail centers, and the lakefront. The recommendations also included both on-road bike facilities, such as bike lanes and sharrows, in addition to off-road, all-purpose trails for walkers, riders, and runners.

## NOACA TLCI: Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity Plan

The Lorain County Board of Commissioners partnered with Lorain County Metro Parks, the City of Avon Lake, the City of Sheffield Lake, the City of Lorain, and the City of Vermilion and NOACA to conduct a TLCI plan to develop a lakefront connectivity plan and economic development plan for key sites along Route 6. The final recommendations call for on-road bike lanes along the Route 6 corridor and a 10-foot trail along the length of the route, wherever feasible. Priority sites within each city were chosen along the route for economic development/redevelopment.



# PLAN FOUNDATIONS

## CURRENT TRENDS

### Overview



The Comprehensive Plan aims to align Avon Lake's vision and strategies for the future with recent local planning efforts as well as national and regional trends in demographics and housing. While the trends do not provide absolute projections for the future of Avon Lake, they may serve as a guide to better understand local data and to highlight external forces which may impact development and land use outcomes in the City.

### Shifting Demographics

Particularly relevant to Avon Lake are the types and ages of households projected to populate communities across the country in the coming decades. According to national trends, baby boomers and millennials will represent the majority of growth and currently account for roughly 45% of the nation's population.

Additionally, households without children, which may or may not include the aforementioned population groups, have proportionately grown over the last 50 years (see Table 1-1). Households without children, including retired seniors, require different public services, community amenities, and housing and transportation accommodations compared to families with children. Access to employment, restaurants, and health and human services may be prioritized by these populations over proximity to education or childcare facilities. These shifting demographics will have a tremendous impact on traditional subdivision development, which is characterized by large, single-family homes arranged around central schools.

Table 2-1: National Household Types

HOUSEHOLD TYPE	1970	2000	2015	2030
 With Children	45%	33%	28%	27%
 Without Children	55%	67%	72%	73%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2017)



The "Missing Middle" serves to accommodate shifting household structures and changing housing preferences.

### Housing Preference

The population groups projected to grow — millennials, baby boomers, and households without children — show a preference for attached housing and smaller lot sizes which provide less maintenance and more walkability than traditional single-family housing. As a community with limited space for new residential construction, it is imperative that Avon Lake consider these changes in housing preference when reviewing future residential development. Currently, Avon Lake's housing stock is primarily 1-unit detached housing (72.1%), which presents an opportunity for different housing to meet the needs of these growing demographic groups who wish to stay in the City.

To better accommodate millennials, baby boomers, and households without children, some cities are focusing on construction of "missing middle" housing such as townhomes, duplexes, and condos. Development of the "missing middle" housing aims to address changing household structures and shifting housing preferences by providing medium to high density options which strike a balance between detached single-family homes and high-rise buildings. The "missing middle" can help create walkable neighborhoods and serve as an entry-point

for new residents to move into communities and conversely for current residents seeking to downsize, while remaining in the community.

### Walkability

Many of the housing trends identified in this section are closely associated with a desire for walkability. The majority of Americans would prefer to live in communities with small yards in which they can walk to amenities, as opposed to living in auto-oriented communities, with large yards (National Association of Realtors, 2015). Walkability encompasses a safe environment to walk in, as well as providing amenities to walk to such as parks, restaurants, employment, or entertainment. Therefore, walkability as a trend has implications on both infrastructure and land use.

## PEOPLE

The City of Avon Lake had a 2017 estimated population of 24,184 people. This is a 7.1% increase since the year 2010, while Lorain County grew by about 2.2% during that same period. (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2017) This Plan considers the current demographic makeup of Avon Lake residents and the potential impact of regional and national trends on the future population, as well as opportunities for redevelopment which may better accommodate projected population growth.

### Age

At 44.4, the median age of Avon Lake residents is higher than that of the neighboring City of Avon (39.4), and of the State of Ohio (39.3), but is lower than that of neighboring City of Bay Village (45.7). In the short-term, there is still an influx of younger couples and families moving to the City, creating a potential need for entertainment options. In the long-term, as the older population continues to age, attention will need to be given to alternative housing options and other city fiscal and service implications.

### Tapestry Segments

Tapestry is a geodemographic segmentation system

that integrates consumer traits with residential characteristics to identify markets and classify U.S. neighborhoods. (ESRI, 2017) The tool was applied to the City of Avon Lake, where the population is broken down into tapestry segments which provides an accurate, detailed description of the community based on the residents socioeconomic and demographic composition. The analysis characterized Avon Lake into three tapestry segments: Savvy Suburbanites, Comfortable Empty Nester's, and Old and Newcomers.

**Savvy Suburbanites (37.2%)** are residents who are well educated, well read, and well capitalized. Families include empty nesters and empty nester wannabes, who still have adult children at home. Their suburban lifestyle includes home remodeling and gardening plus the active pursuit of sports and exercise.

**Comfortable Empty Nesters (24.5%)** are residents who are growing older, with half the households aged 55+. Many are still living in the suburbs they grew up in. They are professionals working in government, health care, or manufacturing. These Baby Boomers are earning a comfortable living and benefiting from years of prudent investing and saving. Many are also enjoying the transition from child rearing to retirement.

**Old and Newcomers (17.6%)** features residents who are living either a singles' lifestyle or on a budget. The focus for this group is more on convenience than consumerism, economy over acquisition. This tapestry is composed of neighborhoods in transition, populated by individuals either beginning their careers (or families) or retiring.

## PEOPLE KEY FINDING

**Avon Lake's median age (44.4) is high in comparison to neighboring communities, leading to the future need to provide alternative housing options for the aging population.**

# PLAN FOUNDATIONS

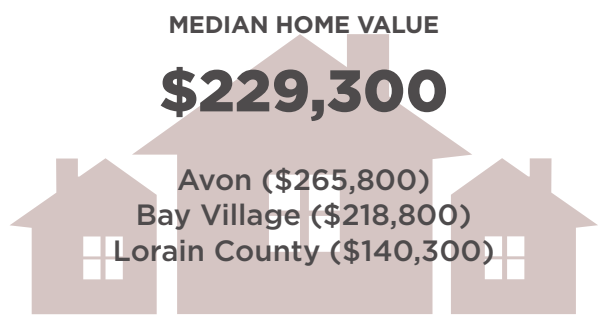
## HOUSING

### Housing Type

As shown in Table 1-2, Avon Lake has largely single family housing, similar to nearby communities. Approximately 72.1% of housing units in the City are single-family detached homes, while 10.3% are single-unit attached homes. Providing a range of housing types can help support diversity in a community’s households and businesses. Single-family detached homes generally support the functions of families with children and are available to those with the financial resources to purchase a home. Providing a range of housing sizes and styles can capture the needs of population groups who lack housing options including: multi-generational households, non-families, seniors living alone, immigrants, single-parent households, or young professionals. Additionally, a diverse economy requires diverse housing for the range of employee incomes, preferences, and lifestyles which different companies provide or attract.

### Housing Values

The value of housing in the market is a consideration for the ability to introduce new housing because it is economically feasible to build new housing only if the sale proceeds from the new dwelling unit are sufficient to cover the cost of constructing it. Median home values in Avon Lake are \$229,300, which is comparable to nearby communities of Avon (\$265,800) and Bay Village (\$218,800). Compared to Lorain County (\$140,300), Avon Lake’s median home values are higher, and only roughly 25% of Avon Lake home values are less than the median value of Lorain County.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (2017)

Table 2-2: Avon Lake Residential Percentage Breakdown (compared to neighboring cities)

Housing Type	Avon Lake ('16)	Bay Village ('16)	Avon ('16)	Ohio ('16)
1-unit, detached	72.1%	94.2%	75.9%	68.6%
1-unit, attached	10.3%	2.3%	12%	4.5%
2 units	0.5%	0.2%	1.2%	4.4%
3-4 units	1.7%	0.2%	5.6%	4.4%
5-9 units	2.2%	0%	1.2%	4.9%
10-19 units	4.9%	0%	1.3%	4.0%
20+ units	8.3%	2.7%	2.9%	5.3%

Source: 2017 American Community Survey Five-year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau



## EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

### Household Income

Household income is an important determinant of housing choice, including both tenure (owning versus renting) and the value of one's dwelling unit. Table 1-3 compares total household income from Avon Lake with the City of Avon and Lorain County. The local income distributions and the median incomes indicate that Avon Lake household incomes are slightly higher than those of Lorain County. While 31.1% of the county earns less than \$35,000, only 17.5% of Avon Lake residents fall into this category. To place this in context, 200% of the 2018 federal poverty line equals \$32,920 for a two-person household. About 21% of households in Lorain County earn less than \$25,000, compared to 12% of Avon Lake households. Only 22% of Lorain County households earn \$100,000 or more, but in Avon Lake that is 41%, which is telling of the higher home values.

### Education

Educational attainment is often linked to quality of life in the U.S. There are significantly fewer people with less than a high school diploma in Avon Lake than in Lorain County and significantly more with a bachelor's degree or higher. Approximately 29.3% of Avon Lake residents have a bachelor's degree or

higher compared with only 14.9% of those living in Lorain County. As Avon Lake considers the types of jobs and industries it would like to attract through its land use and development patterns, the education of its residents should guide those decisions.

### Employment

Employment is another important requirement for household stability and the ability to afford housing. Avon Lake's unemployment rate (2.8%) is comparable to the neighboring community of Bay Village (2.6%) and lower than Avon (3.8%). Compared to both Lorain County (7.0%) and the State of Ohio (7.2%) it is lower, which indicates a healthy workforce.

## HOUSING & INCOME KEY FINDING

Avon Lake has a strong single-family housing stock, but lacks diversity in its housing stock. While Avon Lake's household incomes are higher than Lorain County's.

TABLE 2-3: HOUSEHOLD INCOME DISTRIBUTION

HOUSEHOLD INCOME	AVON LAKE	AVON	LORAIN COUNTY
Less than \$10,000	2.6%	3.3%	6.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.0%	0.8%	4.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	7.0%	4.2%	10.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5.9%	7.1%	9.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	12.4%	7.3%	14.0%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	17.3%	17.5%	19.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11.5%	12.1%	13.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	22.0%	18.6%	13.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8.4%	15.0%	4.7%
\$200,000 or more	11.0%	14.1%	3.7%

Source: 2017 American Community Survey Five-year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

## PLAN FOUNDATIONS

### RETAIL

Within the City, retail is primarily in areas along major corridors. Existing outdated or aging retail spaces may collide with current market trends related to an increase in online purchasing and experience-based retail.

### MARKET TRENDS

Changes in how, where, and why Americans shop is impacting the relationship between retail and land use with serious implications for city finances and development patterns. This is at least in part due to growth in online shopping, consumer spending on travel, and eating out, and an increasing preference for experiences over goods. Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis shows spending on travel, recreation, and eating out has steadily increased over the last decade, while proportional spending on household goods, clothing, and other goods has steadily dropped. It also shows the e-commerce sales of apparel, footwear, and accessories are projected to exceed \$123 million by 2022. Figure 1-2 shows the spending facts/habits for the residents of Avon Lake. There is a significant amount of dollars spent on entertainment and travel, with apparel being a close third.

Similarly, according to research from the Harris Group, nearly 80% of millennials say they would choose to spend money on an experience or event as opposed to an item or good. Goods that are being purchased are increasingly being bought online. Retail expert Jan Rogers Kniffen argues that 50% of all retail not tied to bars and restaurants will be purchased online by 2030. Although e-commerce will likely continue to grow, supporting healthy brick and mortar retail will remain valuable to the local economy, particularly in re-establishing walkable commercial and mixed-use environments, such as Town Center.

These market trends and the effect of e-commerce offers insight to the future of not only the type of spending which will occur in the United States as a whole, but specifically in Avon Lake.

Figure 2-1: Retail Facts & Numbers (Source: San Francisco Retail Study, The New York Times)

# \$300 BILLION

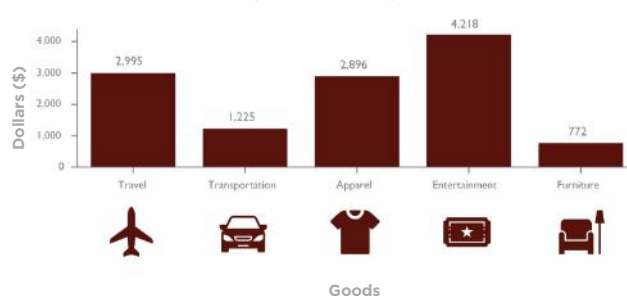
THE INCREASE IN ONLINE SALES  
BETWEEN 2006 AND 2016



THE AMOUNT OF RETAIL GROWTH  
FROM RETAILERS WITH NO  
PHYSICAL PRESENCE (2014-2016)

# 40%

### AVON LAKE SPENDING FACTS (\$-ANNUAL)



## RETAIL CENTERS

In Avon Lake, there are four commercial centers where the majority of the City's retail is located: Town Center, Beach Park Station (formerly Artstown), Learwood Square, and Drug Mart Plaza. Each retail center comes with its distinct advantages and disadvantages. However, all of them are experiencing various levels of vacancy. Strip centers face serious market challenges in a changing economy characterized by online shopping, a movement toward less auto-dependency, and a preference for walkable mixed-use communities. Existing outdated retail space within the City may be redeveloped to better serve the needs and preferences of Avon Lake residents. Strategies, including enhanced design standards and updated parking requirements, can improve the marketability of these spaces over time.

## SUPPORTING LOCAL

While some existing brick and mortar retail space in the City may be transitioned to a more productive use, the local and unique businesses of Avon Lake provide value to the overall community's identity and marketability. Avon Lake's Town Center can serve an important function as a signature place within the City. Signature places help establish a sense of place and enhance the City's ability to attract commercial activity and future investment. When updating land use and development policies to best reflect trends in retail, Avon Lake should also look to leverage the existing small and local businesses which create unique shopping experiences.



*Nordstrom's new, service focused concept store. The concept is a 3,000 square foot store with no inventory.*



*Aging retail strip centers are likely to be impacted by the rise of online shopping and experience-based retail.*



*Large big box retailers prefer to center themselves on highway interchanges.*

## RETAIL KEY FINDING

**Aging retail centers present a redevelopment opportunity, while experience-based, local retail can strengthen Avon Lake's marketability.**

## PLAN FOUNDATIONS

### CURRENT LAND USE

Figure 2-3 shows the summarized distribution of parcels in Avon Lake by land use classification with a related map on page 22 (Figure 2-5). The map comes from county data information and may not reflect the current land uses in the City. The City of Avon Lake is predominately a residential community with concentrated areas of industrial and commercial. Parcels identified as either institutional and parks and open spaces are dispersed throughout the City, although parks and open spaces have some key concentrated areas.

#### Residential

Figure 2-4 provides the breakdown of residential parcels in Avon Lake. Nearly 95% of the City's parcels are dedicated to single-family, low density residential lots, while the remaining residential parcels are dedicated to medium density or high density lots.

With relatively uniform housing development throughout the City, existing and future residents may not have the type of housing available to meet their needs as their lifestyle changes. Through the public engagement and survey, respondents indicated the desire to be able to stay in Avon Lake once they've decide to down-size. The issue they identified is the lack of housing options within the City limits to down-size to. With changing demographics, housing needs and preferences will also change, creating a need for smaller homes and lot sizes and a greater range of housing types available, including multi-family and retirement communities.

In addition to impacts on housing, a predominance of residential land use in the City has implications on the City budget, services, and on the education system. In general, housing requires a range of city services from roads to safety personnel to the school system and the majority of property taxes support schools, not other services. As the City considers land use decisions and future development, the financial implications should also be considered.

Figure 2-3: Existing Land Use

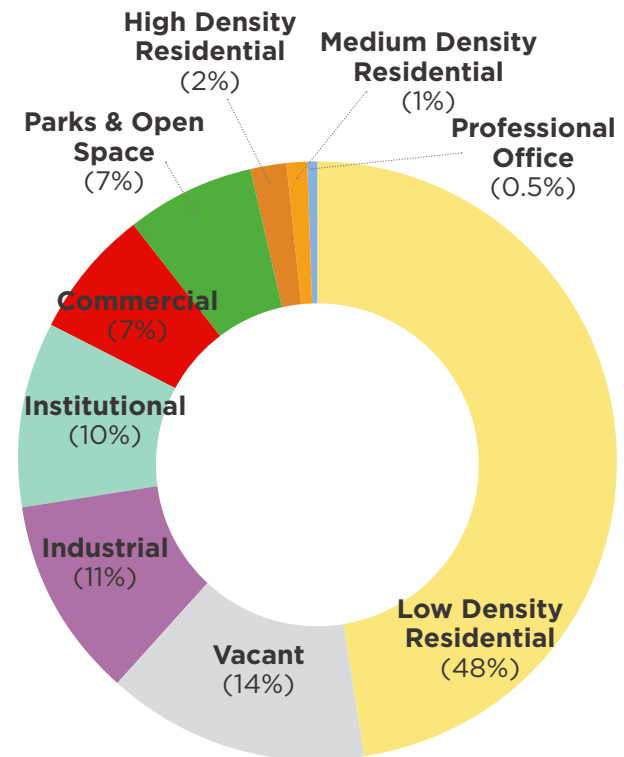
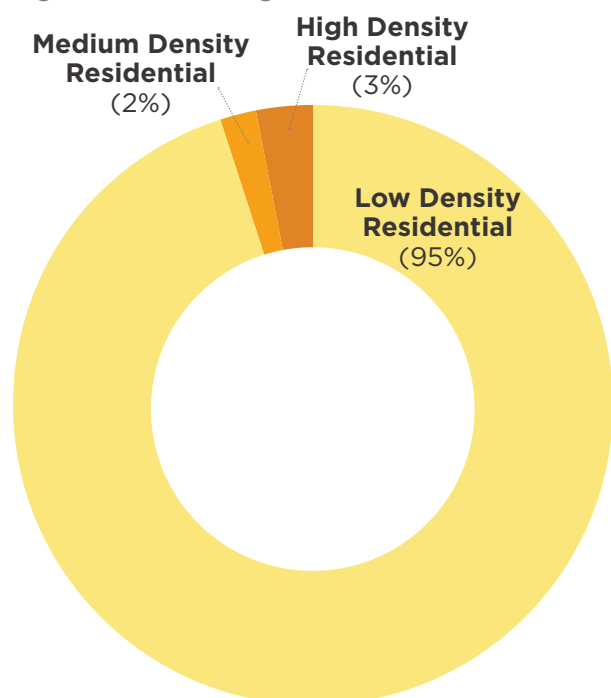


Figure 2-4: Existing Residential Land Use



## Vacant

Areas of vacant or underutilized land offer opportunity for growth and development within the City limits. Currently, vacant land makes up 14% of City land use. However, there are some areas of vacant land shown which are currently in the process of being developed. Those land uses are reflected in the future land use map (see chapter 3). While there are some tracts of vacant land dispersed throughout the City, it is predominantly focused on the southern end (south of Walker Road) of the City. The City should strategically develop this remaining land to ensure sustainable growth.

## Parks & Open Space

With 7% of Avon Lake's land dedicated to parks and open space, residents are well-served by parkland. Parkland is an attractive amenity for residents and can increase property values and quality of life elements. Ensuring parkland remains accessible in the City will be important as development or redevelopment occurs. It is also critical that the dispersal of parkland spans the entire City limits, and allows residents throughout the City to be within a 5-10 minute walk of park space.

## Industrial

Industrial uses (11%) are largely concentrated in the southwest portion of the City. These businesses include light manufacturing, warehousing, research and tech facilities, and utility companies. There are still large parcels of land available in this area that are currently vacant, which would significantly increase this use within the City. This available land is also grouped and set away from residential land uses, which helps avoid any potential conflicts.

## Commercial, Retail & Office

Commercial uses, which make up 7% of the City land use, are focused in a few pockets and along major corridors. The pockets include:

- The area near the NRG Power Plant on Lake Road, along the lakefront

- The intersection of Avon Belden Road and Walker Road known as Town Center
- The intersection of Walker Road and Lear Road, known as Learwood Square;
- The area around Lear Road and Electric Boulevard known as the 45s
- The areas around the southern edge of the City border on Avon Belden Road

Much of the commercial development is auto-centric, with strip malls, some big-box stores, and out-lot buildings oriented away from the street, with ample parking. Most of the larger, big-box retailers, such as Tops have left the City. In the area around Lear Road (in the 45s), the commercial buildings are positioned slightly closer to the street, creating the framework for a walkable building pattern. However, the condition of the street and parking oriented directly in front of the building entrances detracts from the overall walkability of the area.

Professional office use makes up 0.5% of City land use and is predominately located in the Town Center area, on Avon Belden Road and Walker Road. Most of the office spaces are single story buildings, some which are single tenant occupied, and others are multi-tenant.

## Institutional

Government owned land includes properties with government offices, schools or services. While this land does not generate property taxes, the land uses are important for quality of life and should be adequately represented by the City. Additionally, the land use can serve to bring visitors to the adjoining land uses.

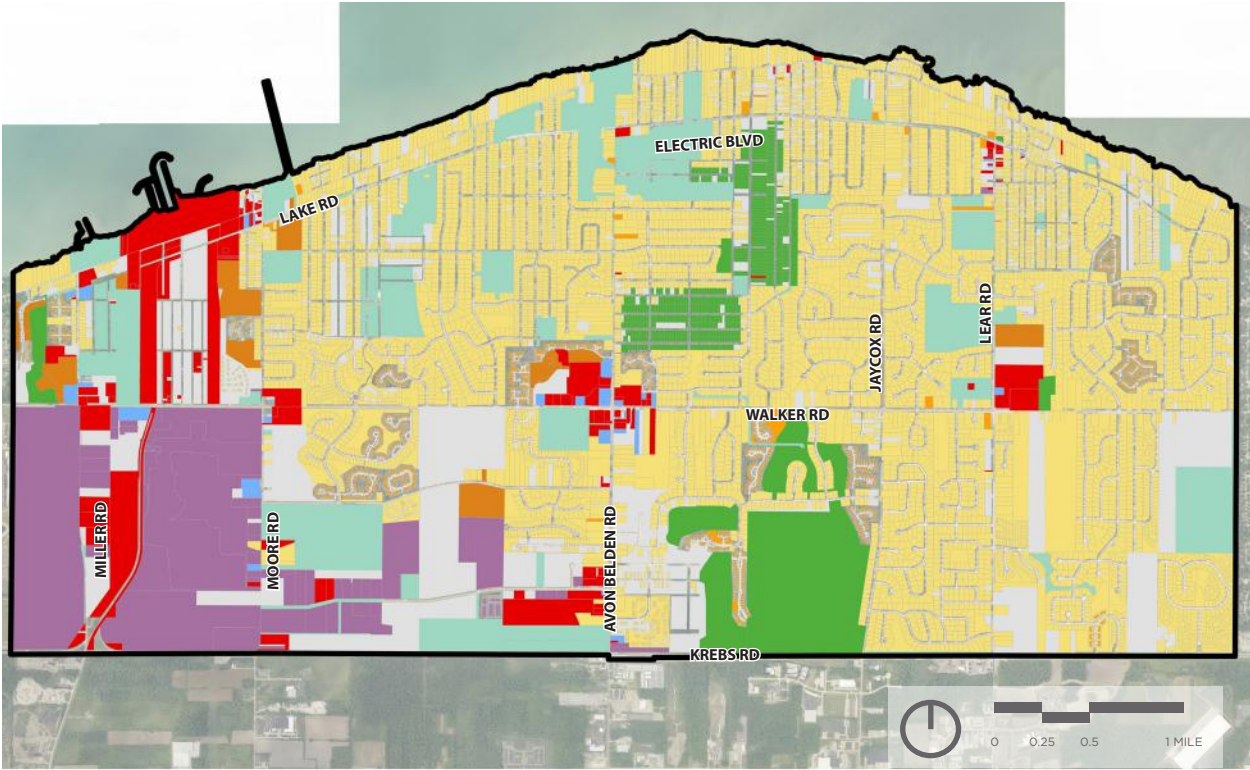
## LAND USE KEY FINDING

**With most of the land area built-out, the City may consider targeting specific areas for redevelopment, in order to meet future needs such as changing housing and retail markets.**









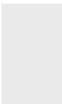


# PLAN FOUNDATIONS

Figure 2-5: Current Land Use Map



Source: Lorain County GIS Data

KEY					
	Low Density Residential		Commercial		Institutional
	Medium Density Residential		Professional Office		Parks & Open Space
	High Density Residential		Industrial		Vacant

## PARKS & OPEN SPACE

Parks and open space serve valuable recreation, leisure, and ecological needs in a community. Avon Lake boasts a variety of outdoor and recreational opportunities including a trail network, swimming pool, and a variety of programs for seniors, adults and children. Figure 2-6 displays the parcels in Avon Lake identified as parkland or open space including parks, golf courses and open, public spaces. While parks and open space serve special uses, they also represent space that is unlikely to be developed in the future. A large portion of the green or open space in Avon Lake is owned by the City, including Miller Road Park, Veterans' Memorial Park, Inwood Park, Bleser Park, Sunset Park, Resatar Park, Walker Road Park, Wedgewood Park and Belle Road Park. The Lorain County Metro Parks owns the Kopf Family Reservation within Avon Lake, a 162-acre woodland with over 10 different tree species present, and a two mile trail which winds through the reservation. Avon Lake is also home to Sweetbriar Golf Course, an 18-hole course.

The City also has the distinction of being located along Lake Erie. Miller Road Park and Veterans Memorial Park offer residents access to the lake, in addition to boat launches for recreational users. There are also smaller lakefront access points along Lake Road, which runs parallel to Lake Erie. However, the majority of the property is private residential homes.

Understanding the national benchmarks may be useful in determining how Avon Lake compares to the average park and recreation system across the country. According to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the typical park and recreation agency in the United States has:

- 9.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents
- 1 park for every 2,266 residents

Currently, the City of Avon Lake has roughly 382 acres of parkland. Approximately, 162 acres of those 382 are in the Lorain County Metro Parks Kopf Family Reservation, while the rest are city owned parks, playgrounds, and open spaces.

The location and access of this space is also important. A land use plan should aim to provide for a park or open space within a ten-minute walk of each resident. The map in Figure 1-8 shows walkability to parks in Avon Lake, compiled using Urban Footprint. The map shows that the majority of residents are within a 5-10 minute walk to a park, which is the national standard.

Figure 2-8 shows the walkability to lakefront access points for residents in Avon Lake. The City currently has three lakefront access points in Miller Road Park, Veterans Memorial Park, and a small access point near Lear Road and Lake Road. Figure 1-10 shows an additional lakefront access point in the focus area just east of the power plant, and the improvement to lakefront access. This analysis displays walking, but improving trail connections and developing, new trails will increase this access for pedestrians and bicyclists.

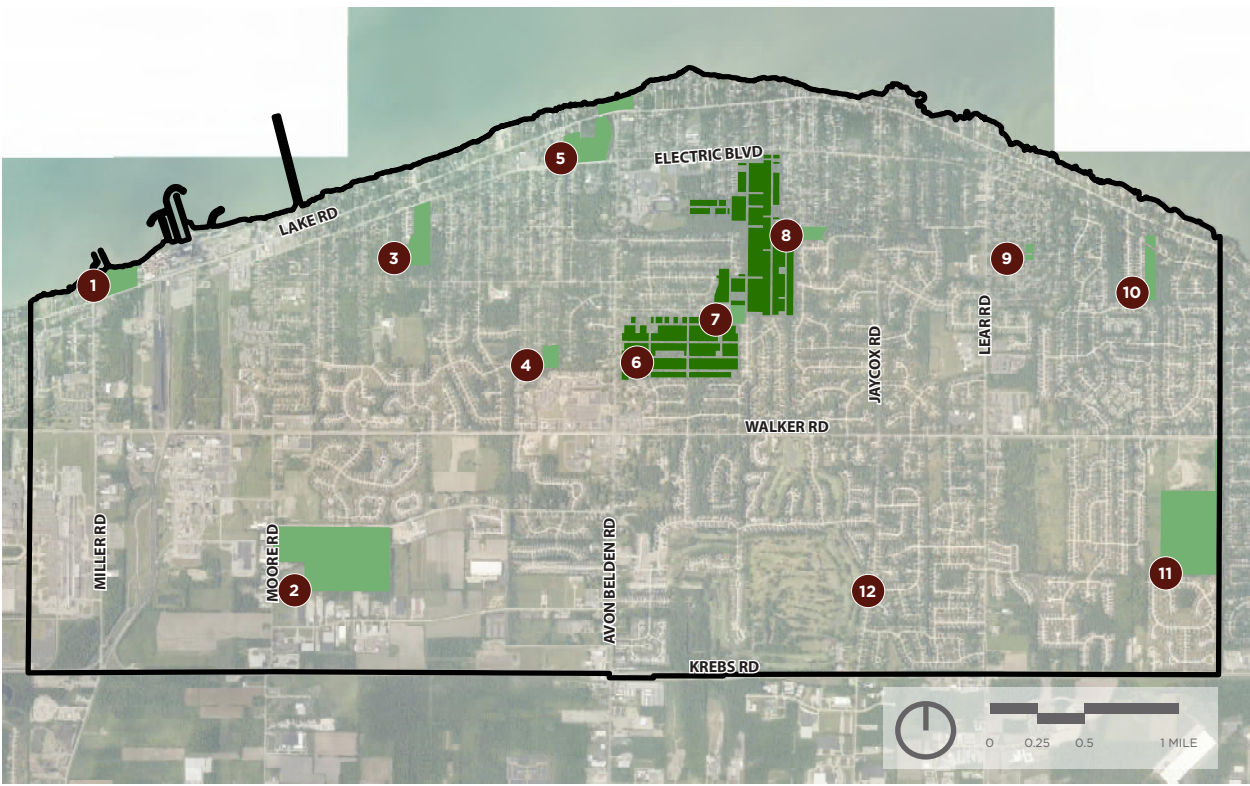
As Avon Lake plans for additional residential development, it must also plan for new and upgraded parks and open space to meet the needs of new residents and ensure healthy, sustainable growth. Changing demographics should help guide the type, location, and amenities included within green spaces so as to best serve the needs of the community.



*Image 2-1: Kopf Family Reservation; Lorain County Metro Parks*

# PLAN FOUNDATIONS

Figure 2-6: Parks and Open Space



KEY



Avon Lake Parks and Open Spaces



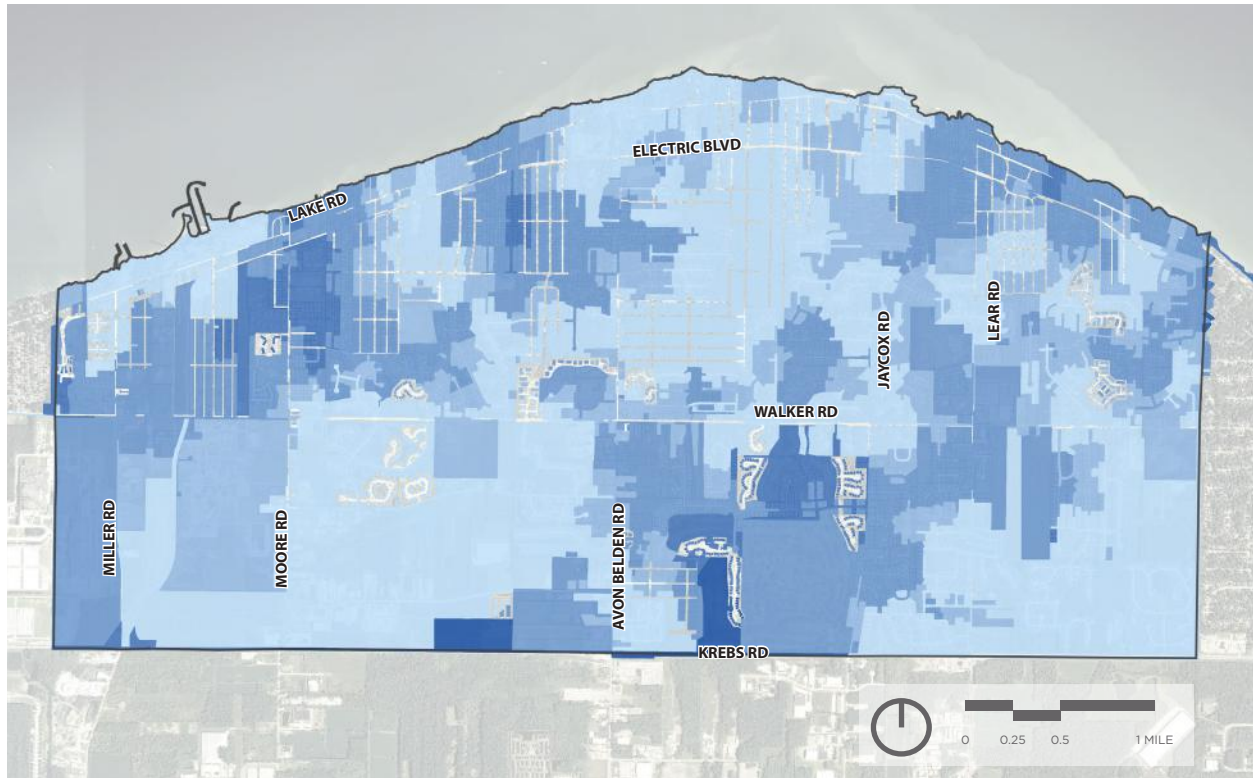
Lorain County Metro Parks

AVON LAKE PARK LABELS

1	Miller Road Park	5	Vetern's Memorial Park & Bleser Park	9	Overlook Park
2	Weiss Field	6	Kopf Family Reservation	10	Restar Park
3	Bicentennial Park	7	Belle Road Park	11	Walker Road Park
4	Inwood Park	8	Sunset Park	12	Wedgewood Park



Figure 2-7: Walk Access to Parks



KEY

0 - 2.5 minutes	10 - 15 minutes
2.5 - 5 minutes	15 + minutes
5 - 10 minutes	

## WALKABILITY TO PARKS KEY FINDING

While access to parks meets the national standard, efforts should be made to further increase the walkability and availability of parks in the City based on the ratio of acreage to population.

# PLAN FOUNDATIONS

Figure 2-8: Walk Access to the Lakefront - Current



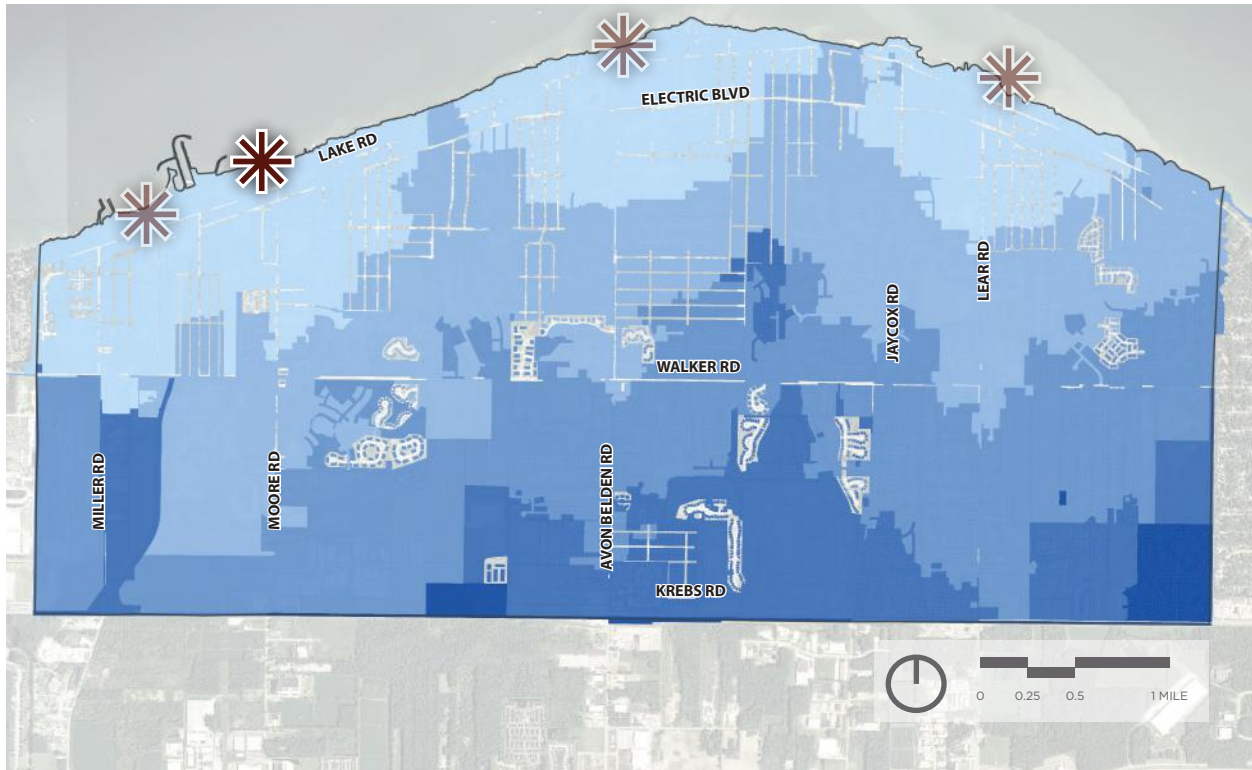
KEY			
	0 - 5 minutes		15 - 20 minutes
	5 - 10 minutes		20 + minutes
	10 - 15 minutes		Existing Lakefront Access Point

## LAKEFRONT ACCESS KEY FINDING

While access points are dispersed evenly across the City's Lake Erie shore, lakefront access needs to be improved through sidewalk and trail connections south, back to the community.



Figure 2-9: Walk Access to the Lakefront - Future



KEY					
	0 - 5 minutes		15 - 20 minutes		Future Lakefront Access Point
	5 - 10 minutes		20 + minutes		
	10 - 15 minutes		Existing Lakefront Access Point		

## FUTURE LAKEFRONT ACCESS KEY FINDING

By providing new and enhanced sidewalk and trail connections, access to the City's Lake Erie shore can be improved, providing more residents access.

## PLAN FOUNDATIONS

### ZONING

Avon Lake's zoning map generally reflects current development patterns in the community. The majority of the City is single-family residential, with the southwest portion of the City containing the most of the industrial development. Commercial zoned districts are scattered throughout the City, but are in distinct, concentrated areas, especially along the Walker Road corridor.

The City's code has 12 designations, with half of those attributed to residential designations. The City also incorporates Planned Unit Development (PUD) regulations in its zoning code. PUD's are conditional uses permitted within their residential districts to encourage a comprehensive and planned approach to unified and coordinated project development. Although this specificity allows the City to be prescriptive with future development, it may be overly complicated for some users, including those interested in starting a new business or modifying their home.

While the vast majority of the City is built-out and will likely remain as-is for the foreseeable future, there may be opportunities to change the development pattern in the identified focus areas. One such way to alter or intensify the development of an area while maintaining the existing zoning code is to create a zoning overlay, as outlined to the right. Overlays and districts like this aid Avon Lake in targeting development in the identified focus areas, while preserving existing neighborhoods and base zoning throughout the City.

A second manner to alter development patterns is to update or rewrite the zoning code, altering the base zoning and map, and redefining allowable uses and various regulations. It is worth noting that should a zoning code update or rewrite take place and a parcel's zoning district or regulations change, existing uses and structures are grandfathered in, meaning it would not require immediate changes to the site. Once alterations to existing structures or uses are requested by the owner, the new zoning code would apply to those parcels and additional updates or changes to the structures may be required or they would need a variance in order to remain.

### ZONING OVERLAYS

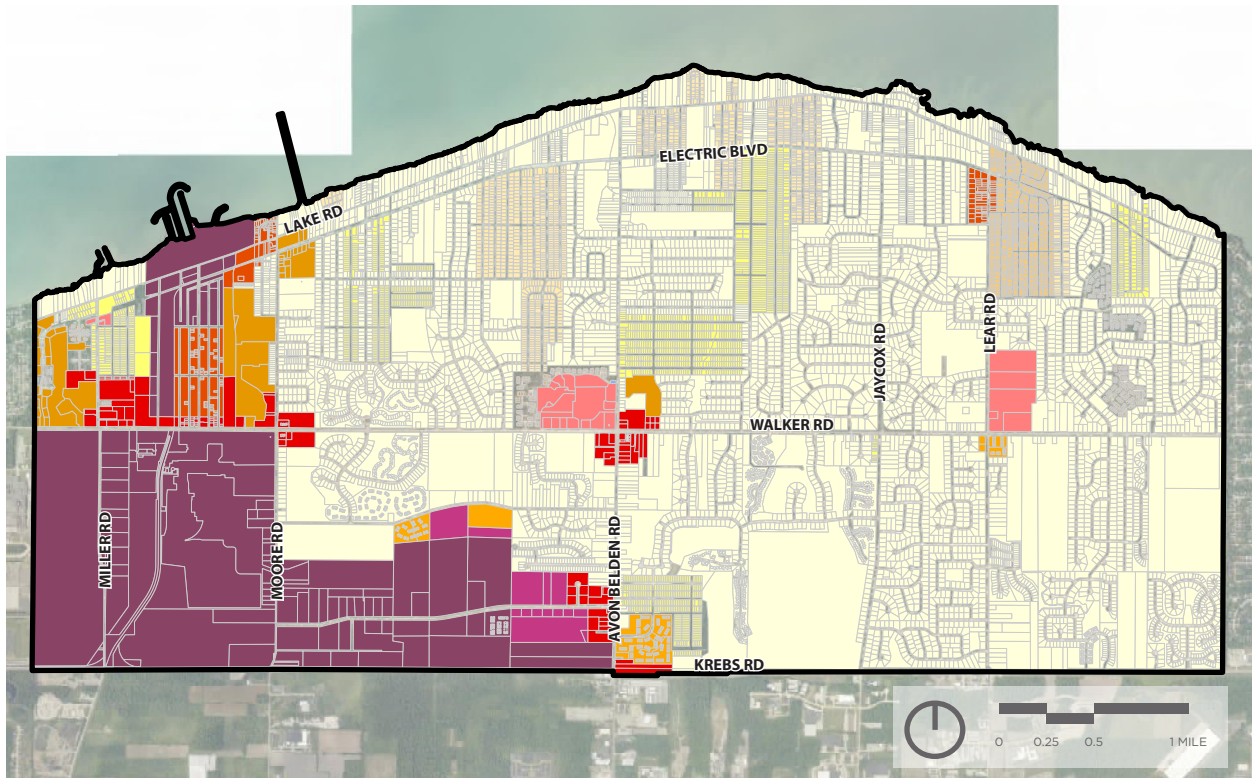
Zoning overlays are a tool used to define the character of a prescribed area in addition to its base zoning. Overlays recognize additional unique qualities or needs of a place without changing all of the parcels within the underlying zoning district or the underlying zoning code. Overlays may be used to protect natural features, historical assets, or to promote specific development character. Appropriate goals of zoning overlays may include:

- Increased building heights
- Decreased building setbacks
- Decreased parking requirements
- Increased landscaping requirements or non-modal transportation amenities
- A more intense mix of uses (i.e. light industrial may be incorporated as a conditional use creating a path towards such uses as microbreweries)















*Buildings that are constructed within an overlay district may have very different features from those outside the district. City's can use overlays to strengthen design standards for development in more urban and commercial environments.*

Figure 2-10: Current Zoning Map



KEY

	R1 - Single Family		R2 - Multi-Family		B3 - Special Commerce
	R1A - Single Family		R3 - Multi-Family		O1 - Office Space
	R1B - Single Family		B1 - Limited Business		I - Industrial
	R1C - Cottage District		B2 - General Commerce		LI - Light Industrial

## ZONING KEY FINDING

Updating zoning codes to reflect the desired character can be a long-term solution to ensure the community's values are included in the physical environment.

# Public Engagement

## OVERVIEW

Outreach and engagement was integral to the planning process to ensure the Plan was rooted in the values and aspirations of the community. Avon Lake residents, employees, and businesses were invited to participate throughout the creation of the Plan to share their individual thoughts and help shape a collective vision for the future of the City. The feedback gathered from the public was instrumental in shaping the outcomes of the Plan including future land use recommendations, policies, and focus areas. In total, over 700 people were engaged through formal meetings, community events, and online activities. The following section highlights the results of the public engagement efforts, while relevant feedback is also included within each Plan Chapter.

## OUTREACH

A variety of outreach methods were used by City Staff and the planning team to effectively communicate updates and opportunities for the public to engage in the process. The City website and social media pages provided updates on the planning process and posted opportunities to participate. A project website, ([www.avonlakecomprehensiveplan.com](http://www.avonlakecomprehensiveplan.com)) was created, which hosted meeting materials, updates, and documents. Business cards, which gave the web address to the project website were also distributed around the community.



*The public had the opportunity to provide input on the future of Avon Lake through community events such as the Bicentennial Beer Festival.*

## 760+ PEOPLE ENGAGED

400+ COMMUNITY SURVEY

100+ BICENTENNIAL FESTIVAL

125 WARDS 1 & 2 MEETING

125 WARDS 3 & 4 MEETING

10 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS



## ENGAGEMENT

### BICENTENNIAL FESTIVAL

The project team hosted a booth at the Bicentennial Beer Festival celebrating the 200th birthday of Avon Lake. The festival, hosted at Miller Road Park on September 22nd, 2018, had food, live music, and local breweries for attendees to sample a wide range of selections. At the project booth, the public was invited to participate in various activities to provide input on existing conditions, growth and development in Avon Lake.

#### Map Dotting Exercise

The first activity was a dot exercise centered around a map where individuals could indicate with three different dots, various conditions they felt were present in Avon Lake. The first dot (green) indicated areas they felt were positive, and which they liked about the City. The second dot (orange) indicated areas which were acceptable but could still use some attention and development. The last dot (pink) indicated areas where they felt the most attention was necessary in terms of new or redevelopment. Participants were also welcomed to indicate, with a smaller blue dot, where in Avon Lake they resided.

#### Comment Cards

The second activity involved asking participants to give answers to specific questions on comment cards, which were hung around the booth for others to read. The questions were:

1. What do you feel is missing from Avon Lake?
2. Which aspects or attributes of Avon Lake would you like to stay the same over time?

#### Who is Avon Lake?

The final activity involved asking a specific question, “Who is Avon Lake?” Participants were invited to place a sticker near their top three selections of adjectives listed on a board (see Image 2-3).



Image 2-2: Avon Lake residents interacting with the activities at the Comprehensive Plan booth.

### Who is Avon Lake?

If Avon Lake were a person, how would you describe him or her?  
Add a sticker next to your top 3 selections.

Educated	Likable	Proud
Family-Oriented	Cultured	Affluent
Open-minded	Attractive	Outspoken
Friendly	Traditional	Responsible
Active	Generous	Conservative

Do you have something different to add? Submit your add-in here! →

Image 2-3: Meeting attendees were asked to describe Avon Lake as if they were a person.



Image 2-4: Public outreach materials used during the Bicentennial Festival at Miller Road Park.



## PLAN FOUNDATIONS

### Results

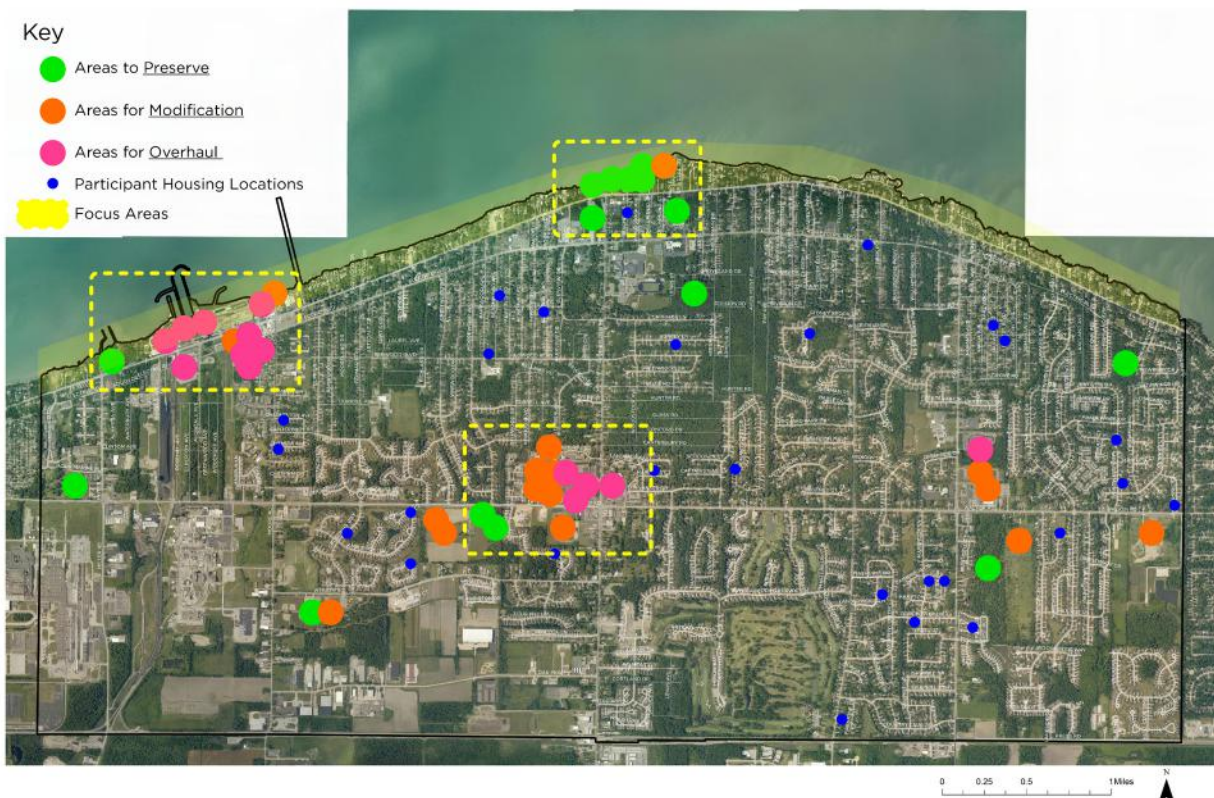
The results of the activities were very positive. The map dotting exercise is summarized in the image below, showing specific clusters around two areas where the participants indicated a need for either modifications or overhaul. The other area highlighted, was one in which the community viewed the area as a positive asset for the City. The results of this map exercise were combined with the results of a similar exercise completed with the Steering Committee to formulate the project focus areas.

Responses to the comment cards were also positive, but participants indicated that lakefront access, lakefront dining, a downtown/community center, and new walking/biking paths from newer residential areas to existing assets in the City were largely missing. Additionally, participants indicated that aspects and attributes such as the City park system, existing bike trails, the City library system, and the amount of natural green space there is

within the city are what they would like to see stay the same over time. Other observations and comments which were made during the festival was the frequency at which participants indicated their desire for additional lakefront public access points within the City. There were also comments to the vacant retail spaces located in Town Center and the desire to attract sustainable retail options, rather than a large big box retailer for the vacant spaces.

Feedback from the final activity showed that residents felt that Avon Lake was a proud, friendly, family-oriented community.

Figure 2-11: Results of the map dotting exercise at the Bicentennial Beer Festival



## COMMUNITY SURVEY

In addition to the in-person engagement activities, the public was invited to participate in an online community survey. The survey asked questions about the quality of life in Avon Lake, access to the lakefront, where they currently conduct their shopping, and preferences on the future of growth and development. The following section provides an overview of the community survey results and complete responses are provided in the appendix.

### Overview

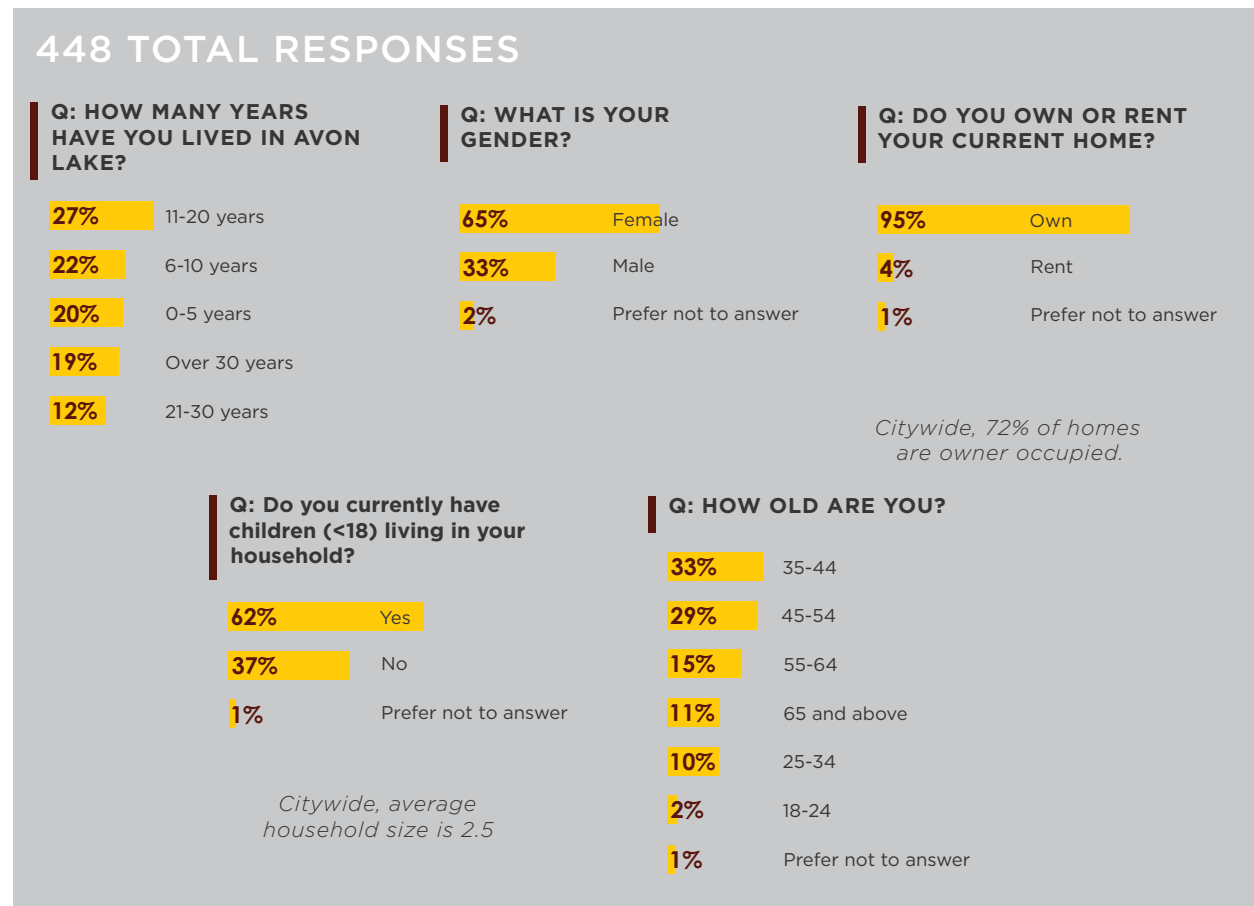
Generally, respondents provided valuable information to help formulate the direction and focus of the Plan. They indicated while most do their shopping outside of the City limits, they would still prefer to have certain retail options available

in town. They would like to see the creation of a downtown center, which housed some additional amenities that are not currently available. While respondents were split on if they felt the City had good lakefront access, the majority of respondents wanted to see improved walking/biking trails.

### Profile of Respondents

As shown in Figure 2-12, survey respondents generally reflected the Avon Lake community at-large. However, there was an increased rate of response from females compared to males and households with children under 18 years old. The majority of respondents were in the 35-54 age range, but there was a nice distribution of residents who lived in Avon Lake for a variety of years. These factors were taken into consideration as the public input was used to form the Plan.

Figure 2-12: Profile of Respondents



## PLAN FOUNDATIONS

### Overall Direction

Approximately 82% of respondents rated the quality of life in Avon Lake at or above a 4 on a scale of 0-5. Less than 2 percent felt that the quality of life was “extremely low.” Survey respondents’ on the quality of life rating for Avon Lake is generally similar, or higher, to other communities in the area such as Avon and Bay Village.

### Identity, Image, and Brand

The majority of respondents (77%) believe that Avon Lake has a distinct identity. Words used to describe that identity include “small town,” “friendly,” “good schools,” “safe,” and similar phrases or positive attributes of a family-oriented community. When asked what they would like the identity of Avon Lake to be, similar responses were given with an emphasis on a family-friendly culture, entertainment and attractions, lakefront destination, and unique small businesses.

### Lakefront Access

When survey responders were asked if they felt Avon Lake has good lakefront access, the responses were split 50-50. Those who responded “yes,” indicated they accessed the lake from Miller Road Park and Veterans Memorial Park, the only two publicly accessible spots. Those who responded “no” were asked why they felt there were no good lakefront access points in the City. They indicated that either Veterans Memorial Park was too small or that Miller Road Park, because of its location next to the power plant did not offer the type of access and amenities residents were seeking.

### Challenges

Survey responders were also asked what they believed to be the most significant challenge facing the City. The majority of respondents spoke to the lack of lakefront for public access, due to private residential development. They also cited the lack of green space (i.e. parks or general open space), and lack of commercial/retail options in the City.

Figure 2-13: Community survey results

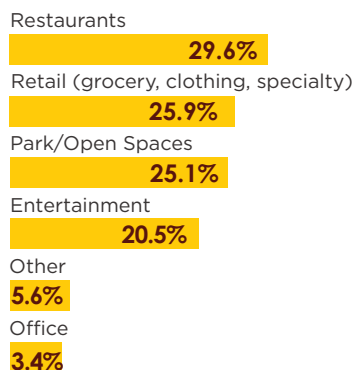
**Q: ON A SCALE OF 0-5, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN AVON LAKE?**



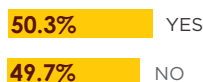
**Q: DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE CITY OF AVON LAKE HAS A DISTINCT IDENTITY?**



**Q: WHAT TYPES OF USES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN AVON LAKE?**



**Q: DO YOU THINK THAT AVON LAKE HAS GOOD LAKEFRONT ACCESS?**



**Q: WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OR IMPROVED BIKE/WALKING TRAILS WITHIN THE CITY?**



## What is missing in Avon Lake?

Another question that was posed to the survey respondents asked what they felt was missing in Avon Lake. This question was created with the hope to receive feedback related to what residents felt their biggest priority was looking towards the future of Avon Lake. Responses were similar in nature to what respondents felt were the challenges in the City, again mentioning lack of public lakefront access, open/green spaces, and options with respect to commercial/retail. In addition to those responses, there were also a majority of respondents who spoke to the lack of housing diversity for residents who are looking to down-size but remain within the City. Lastly, respondents spoke to the desire for increased walking/biking paths to destinations within the City.

## Commercial/Retail

When considering existing options for residents in the City, the survey posed questions asking where the majority of shopping occurs. The majority of respondents indicated that Learwood Square is where they conduct the majority of their shopping, which is where the local grocery store is located. Other respondents chose “other” as their option, further commenting that the majority of the shopping occurs outside the City limits, in either the City of Avon, City of Westlake, or City of North Olmsted. Despite the responses from the survey indicating residents typically shop outside of the City, respondents also indicated that they would like to see more options such as restaurants, entertainment, and other retail options (grocery, clothing, specialty) in the City. Respondents also had the opportunity to expand on their retail responses, with the majority indicating that they wish to not see duplicate retail options from surrounding cities be located within Avon Lake, but rather other services not offered, or services at a smaller scale that would fit into the nature of the community.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT KEY FINDINGS

- Residents do not want to add new retail options which are available in adjacent and nearby communities. Rather, they indicated the focus should be on the redevelopment of existing commercial/retail centers, specifically the Town Center and Lake Road areas, with options which are already available or adequate.
- There is a high value placed on the aesthetic of the community and the brand of the city which is demonstrated through the city corridors. Therefore improvements to the public right-of-way through aesthetic enhancements is desired.
- The existing trail and bike infrastructure within the City was a feature that was widely praised by the residents. As a result of the current success, residents expressed a large desire to continue the expansion of the trail and bike infrastructure within the City, to further connect community assets and destinations.
- Another widely praised asset and feature of the City was the quality park system. However, residents still expressed the aspiration to add more parks and open spaces within the community for increased social gathering opportunities.
- Residents indicated that one of the city’s assets that provide an identity to the community is the location on Lake Erie. Given the City’s location along the lakefront, residents expressed a desire to see increased and improved access for residents to the lakefront.

These findings were analyzed and shared with the project team and steering committee. They helped to form the Plan’s goals and objectives, focus areas, and implementation strategy.



## PLAN FOUNDATIONS

### AVON LAKE WARD MEETINGS

The project team presented the draft plan concepts and key elements at the annual Avon Lake ward meetings to the public to gather feedback. The meetings were held on February 12, 2019 at Learwood Middle School for Wards 1 & 2 and on February 27, 2019 at Troy Intermediate School for Wards 3 & 4. The first portion of the meeting was a presentation which included an overview of the planning process, purpose of the plan, goals and objectives, and an overview of the focus area draft concepts. The second portion of the meeting allowed community members to ask questions and view the Focus Areas draft plans. Large printed boards were positioned outside the auditorium in the hallways for viewing.

Community members were given comment cards to provide additional feedback on the draft plan and concepts, in addition to being able to speak with members of both the project team and steering committee. For those community members unable to attend either of the ward meetings, the presentation and focus area boards were posted to the project website, giving residents an opportunity to look closer at the plan and also provide their comments and feedback.

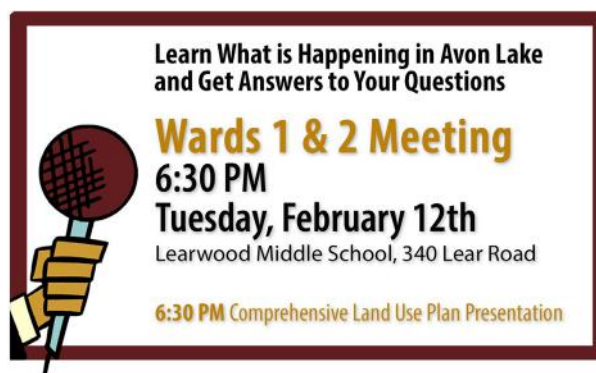
*“My husband and I love these plans! The idea of a downtown center is great. We love to do more local shopping and dining in Avon Lake. We also love the idea of the more walkable areas and lake front access.” - Avon Lake Resident*



Community members gathering around the focus areas board after the comprehensive plan presentation.



Those in attendance at the ward meetings, providing their feedback and comments from the presentation.



Ward meeting flyer that was distributed to residents announcing the presentation of the comprehensive plan.



*This page is left blank intentionally.*

### WHAT WE LEARNED

The following is a summary of key takeaways from the existing conditions analysis, community survey, stakeholder interviews, steering committee meetings, and comments by residents during the public open houses. The following page lists the goals developed based on the takeaways.

#### HOUSING MIX

There is a missing mix of housing for residents who would like to remain in Avon Lake and have a smaller footprint.

#### SINGLE-FAMILY CHARACTER

Residents have pride in the single-family character of Avon Lake and would like to maintain this identity moving forward.

#### COMMUNITY IDENTITY

Avon lake has a strong community identity and overall civic pride.

#### STRATEGIC REGROWTH

Residents desire a balanced approach to growth with conservation, identifying the current retail centers as opportunities for redevelopment.

#### RETAIL MARKET FORCES

The growth in e-commerce paired with big-box retailers located in neighboring communities proves to be a challenge for Avon Lake.

#### A TOWN CENTER

Residents expressed a strong desire for a central “downtown” place.

#### INDUSTRIAL ZONED GROWTH

There is currently a strong industrial sector of town, with areas of opportunity for additional growth and innovation.

#### PARKS / OPEN SPACES

The park spaces are strong, but there are opportunities to add new parks and open spaces to further support social and community gatherings.

#### CONNECTIVITY

There is a growing desire to have additional trails and bike lanes within the community that connect assets and destinations.

#### LAKEFRONT ACCESS

The community as a whole expressed a desire for increased accessibility and interaction with the lakefront.

## THE PLAN WILL



### IMPROVE LAKEFRONT ACCESS

Identify and establish new points of access to the lakefront through public green spaces where residents can interact with Lake Erie.



### OUTLINE STRATEGIC GROWTH

As the City attracts new businesses, stakeholders and the public emphasized redevelopment of existing commercial areas.



### CREATE A TOWN CENTER

There was a desire for a signature development area that serves as the economic and community center.



### ADAPT TO CHANGING RETAIL TRENDS

As significant changes to the retail market continue, such as online shopping and down-sizing of physical footprints, areas for redevelopment in Avon Lake will encourage development in line with these trends.



### ENHANCE THE PUBLIC REALM

Streetscape, signage, and gateway improvements across Avon Lake can be improved to reinforce the identity of the community.



### INCREASED TRAIL & BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE

Further enhancements of the trail and bike system can improve connectivity to community assets and destinations.



### ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Upgrading existing park facilities and expanding amenities and programming can improve resident experience. In addition, examine opportunities for new parks and open spaces to encourage social and community gatherings.



### SUPPORT HIGH QUALITY, DIVERSE HOUSING

Single-family housing should have a strong character and consistent high quality materials and design. Additionally, a variety of housing types will support all families including retirees and those without children.



### INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION

Continue the development of the industrially zoned areas through high quality design which will continue to support the tax base.



A decorative graphic consisting of a dark red square on the left and a vertical bar of a lighter, muted red color to its right.

03

## COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES



# Plan Goals

## OVERVIEW

This section establishes overall Plan goals and objectives. These goals were developed from the existing conditions analysis, public and stakeholder engagement process and confirmed by the members of the project team and steering committee. These goals and objectives form the structure of the Plan, the updated land use and active transportation plans (Chapter 3), the visions of the focus areas (Chapter 4), and the implementation strategies (Chapter 5).

The goals are organized by priority based on the outlined goals in the previous section. The icons above each goal, relate back to page 39 and the identified elements from the existing conditions. Each goal is followed by a vision statement and a series of action items. These action items are further expanded upon in Chapter 5.



*Additional public spaces should be explored to develop a new lakefront access point.*



*Commercial/retail development should be focused on existing vacant buildings.*



## IMPROVED LAKEFRONT ACCESS

Identify and establish new points of access to the lakefront through public green spaces where residents can interact with Lake Erie.



- One of the primary goals of the Plan is to maximize Avon Lake's physical location along Lake Erie by improving public access to the lake through parks and open spaces.
- Property acquisition is one strategy where this can occur in the form of expanding existing lakefront access points or acquiring contiguous parcels to develop and establish a new access point. This type of investment strategy signals the intention for improved and expanded lakefront access, and the promotion of water oriented development.



## DEVELOP A TOWN CENTER

Create a signature area which serves as the economic and community center offering a diverse mix of uses (retail, housing, open space), while enhancing the community brand and image.



- As the landscape of retail continues to evolve, Avon Lake should not over commit, but meet the needs and demands of its residents, while taking into account the surrounding retail options within the region.
- New development and re-development should be encouraged and focused on the existing commercial areas which leverage existing infrastructure.
- Enhancements to the areas streetscape, signage, and gateway can reinforce the identity and brand of the community.

## COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

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### EXPAND & ENHANCE BIKE & TRAIL CONNECTIVITY



Improve and expand active transportation to safely and efficiently support on-road and off-road (trail) infrastructure.

- Additional bike lanes and trails should be implemented to improve connectivity to community assets and destinations such as parks, schools, civic buildings, retail centers, the lakefront and neighboring communities.
- On-road infrastructure improvements should also incorporate enhancements to the overall streetscape to improve and reinforce the identity and brand of the community.



### CREATE NEW PARKS/OPEN SPACES

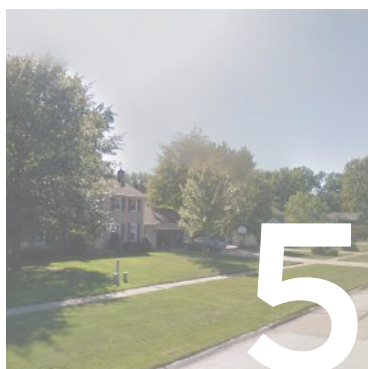


Look for opportunities to create or expand parks and open spaces which encourage community/social gatherings and events.

- Parks and open space improve physical and psychological health, strengthen the community and add value for residents of the community.
- Continuing to upgrade existing park facilities and expanding available amenities and programming for residents. This also includes the existing partnership with Lorain County Metro Parks.
- Identify locations for a new park along the lakefront.
- Provide green/open space in the redeveloped commercial areas for greater social interaction.

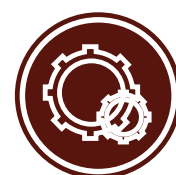


## MAINTAIN HIGH QUALITY HOUSING WHILE DIVERSIFYING THE HOUSING STOCK



Maintain single-family housing, while increasing the variety of housing types.

- The single-family character is an integral part of the community identity and should be maintained through strong character and high quality design and materials.
- Preservation of existing wooded areas within residential neighborhoods will retain the charm of the neighborhood and maintain a sustainable environment.
- A variety of housing types that support all families including retiree and those without children in designated areas.



## INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION

Continued development of the industrially zoned areas of Avon Lake.

- Efforts should remain focused on the continuation of development in the industrial areas with high quality design and appropriate site orientation.
- Focus should be on the attraction of industrial uses that will strengthen, innovate, and diversify the local economy



# Future Land Use

## OVERVIEW

The future land use plan applies public input, existing conditions research, and trends in planning and development to provide both broad and specific recommendations to guide future development. The land use map helps define where and how growth or redevelopment should occur, including the location, distribution, and character of different land uses within Avon Lake. Feedback in all of these areas was gathered from the Steering Committee, City staff, and the community and incorporated into the land use recommendations. Therefore, the future land use plan is rooted in the vision and aspirations of the community and strives to meet the needs of current and future residents and businesses as well as contribute to the fiscal health of the City. (See Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2).

As part of this Comprehensive Plan Update, a Future Land Use Map and related Land Use Type descriptions have been created. As future land use changes are made, both the map and descriptions should be referenced to ensure land use decisions are in alignment with the intent of this Plan. When proposed land use changes are not in alignment, careful consideration should be given to whether that change should be granted.

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

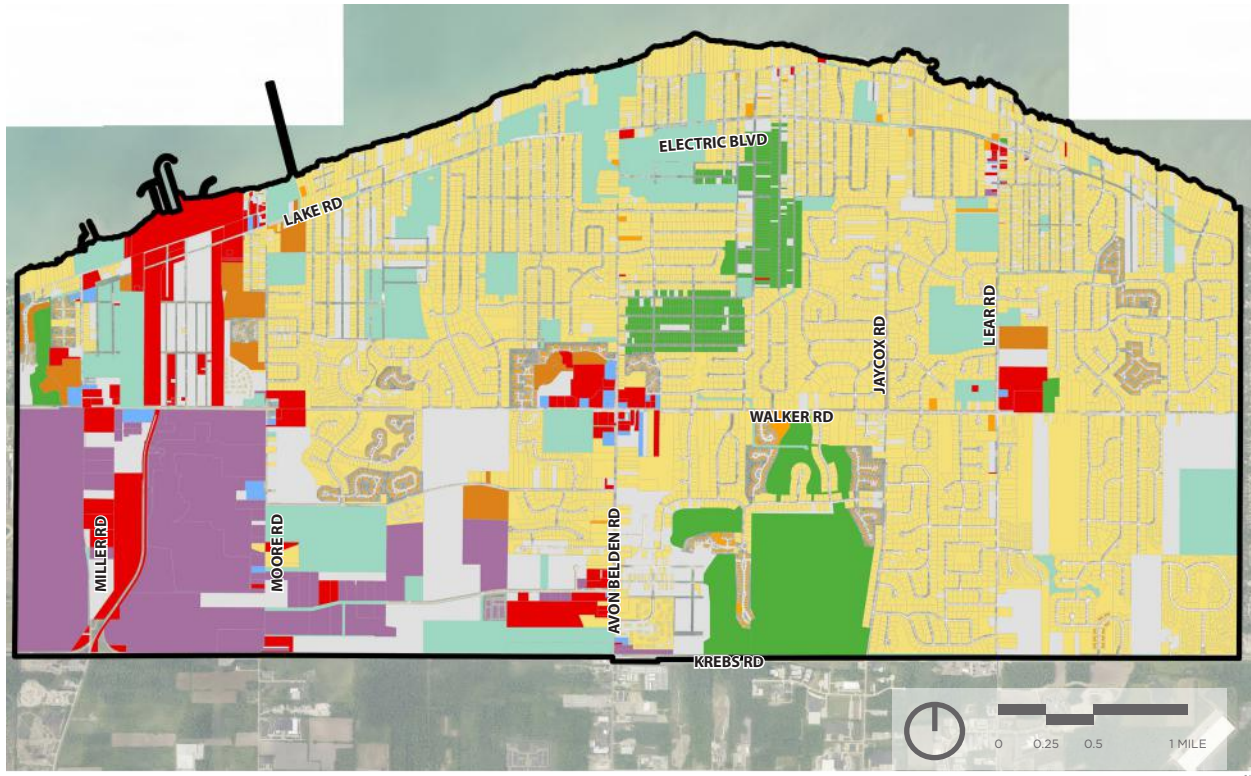
An important aspect of this comprehensive plan is the Future Land Use Map. Largely based on existing land use and development in the City, this map is meant to distinguish areas that are appropriate for certain development patterns. Distinct focus areas in the City have been identified for their potential to redevelop and change land use or development patterns over time. These areas are Town Center, Lake Road area between Moore Road and Avondale Avenue, and the Lear Road corridor between Division Road and Electric Boulevard. These areas are most appropriate for increased intensity and diversity in uses. Existing residential development should be well-maintained and woven into the urban fabric as new development and growth occur.

## LAND USE TYPES










The Future Land Use Map depicts nine Land Use Types. The Land Use Types offer enough detail to adequately provide guidance for future land use decisions, while remaining simple enough to create the needed flexibility for the built environment.

While the Future Land Use Map provides recommendations for the location of each Land Use Type, detailed descriptions of each are included on the following pages with key features and character images. These descriptions help one visualize how an area might look when recommendations from the land use plan are applied.

Figure 3-1: Current Land Use Map

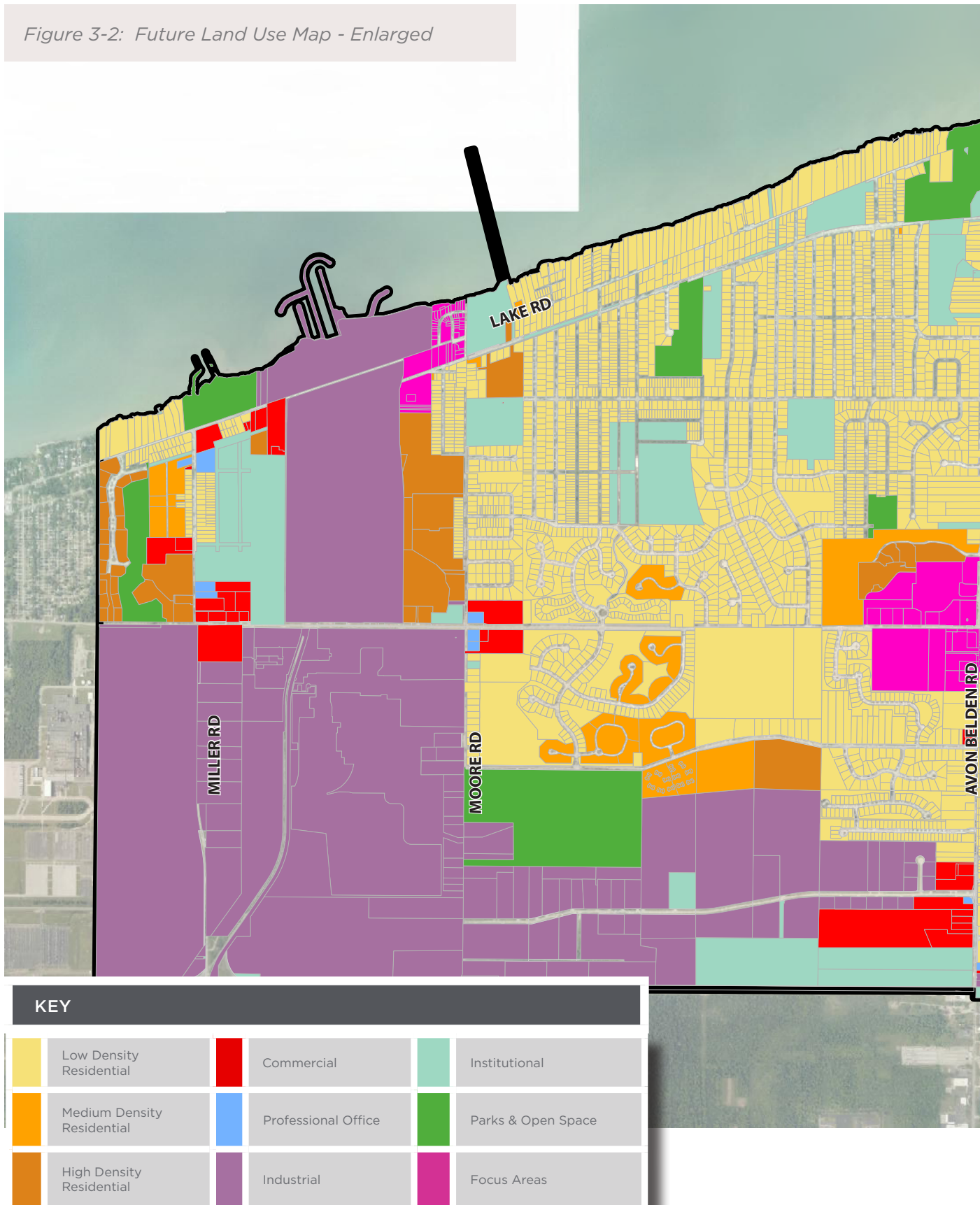


Source: Lorain County GIS Data

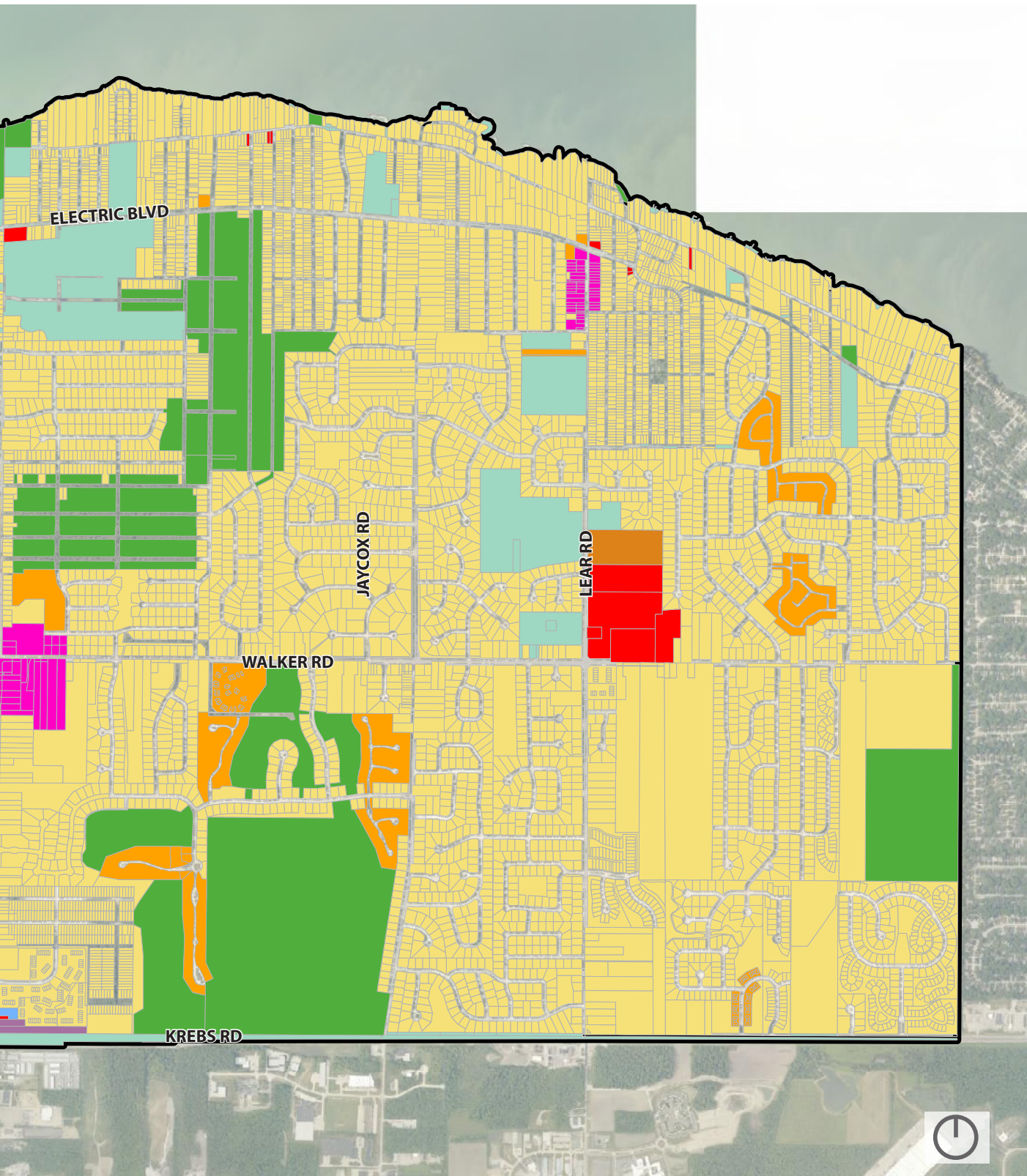
KEY					
	Low Density Residential		Commercial		Institutional
	Medium Density Residential		Professional Office		Parks & Open Space
	High Density Residential		Industrial		Vacant

# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

Figure 3-2: Future Land Use Map - Enlarged









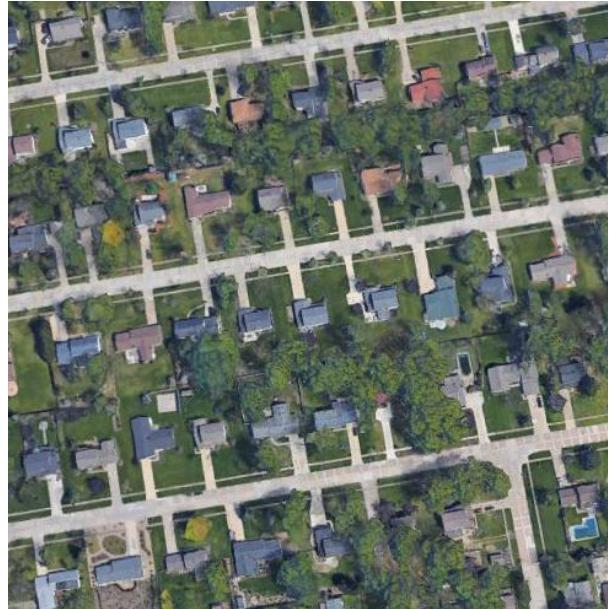
# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

## LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

### Description

The Low Density Residential development type is characterized by a variety of single family homes of various house and lot sizes. A range of architectural styles should be promoted, featuring rear or side facing garages and alleys, if possible. The development should be laid out to preserve and leverage environmentally sensitive areas. Cul-de-sacs should be avoided due to their limitations to neighborhood connectivity. Existing residential communities should be well-maintained and well-connected to nearby amenities.

Areas planned for new development should feature green spaces within or adjacent to the development. Streets should include sidewalks and street trees and be designed to promote a walkable environment with short blocks. Streets and paths should connect to adjacent developments. Every home should be within a half-mile walk of a park or public space, and can feature amenities such as playgrounds, dog parks, and community gardens.



### Development Character

<b>Height</b>	35 ft
<b>Building Coverage</b>	40%
<b>Front Setback</b>	10-30 ft
<b>Parking</b>	2 spaces / unit
<b>Intensity</b>	1-2 units / acre
<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detached Single Family</li></ul>



## MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

### Description

These areas are intended for well-planned medium density residential uses that can include a range of housing options at a range of price points, including small-lot single family homes, duplexes, and townhomes. Developments should incorporate open space and/or public spaces and integrated common areas. Various amenities should be available to residents and could include a community center, recreational paths, and natural areas.

Primary structures and entryways should face the street and be well-landscaped. Streets should include sidewalks and street trees and be designed to promote a walkable environment with short blocks. Parking should include and private parking in surface lots or garages, accessed from a service road behind the structure.



### Development Character

<b>Height</b>	45 ft
<b>Building Coverage</b>	30-50%
<b>Front Setback</b>	0-20 ft
<b>Parking</b>	1-2 spaces / unit
<b>Intensity</b>	3-12 units / acre
<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detached / Attached Single Family</li> <li>• Multifamily</li> </ul>





# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

## HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

### Description

High Density Residential uses are characterized by a variety of multifamily uses such as townhomes and apartments. Neighborhoods should be highly walkable to nearby parks, employment, and retail uses. Multifamily developments may act as micro-neighborhoods and provide a multitude of amenities on site such as a community center, pool, fitness center, recreational paths, and natural areas that are incorporated throughout the development.

Buildings should face the street and have narrow and well landscaped setbacks, creating an urban environment. Parking should be located to the side or rear of the structure or in a structured garage on the lower levels of the building and screened from view. Guest parking should be accommodated on-site and surface lots should incorporate landscaped islands and trees.



### Development Character

<b>Height</b>	50-60 ft
<b>Building Coverage</b>	30-50%
<b>Front Setback</b>	0-15 ft
<b>Parking</b>	1-1.5 spaces / unit
<b>Intensity</b>	More than 12 units /acre
<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attached Single Family</li><li>• Multifamily</li></ul>

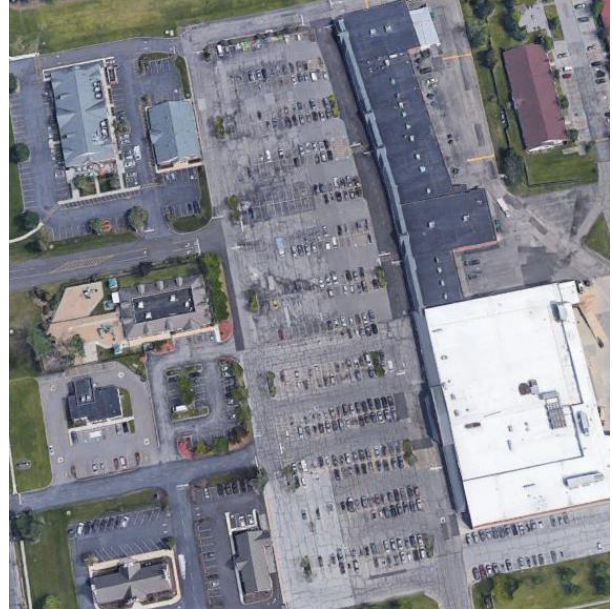


## COMMERCIAL

### Description

This district is intended for small to medium scale commercial uses adjacent to primary arterials that serve the larger community. This may include large format retail, entertainment uses, grocery stores, and restaurants. Buildings must be well designed and have distinct architectural character. When buildings are set-back from the street, landscaping should be used to define the street and internal parking should be organized with landscape islands and trees.

Uses in this area must be well-suited for both vehicular and pedestrian connections. Parking should be to the side or rear of the development and pedestrian and bike access provided to all surrounding uses. Cross-access drives are encouraged between developments to reduce curb-cuts on major roadways. Shared parking agreements may be appropriate for compatible uses to reduce overall parking ratios.



### Development Character

<b>Height</b>	45 ft
<b>Building Coverage</b>	30-40%
<b>Front Setback</b>	0-50ft
<b>Parking</b>	Rear/side of building; screen from view
<b>Intensity</b>	10,000-15,000 sf/acre
<b>Recommended Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail</li> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Hotel/Lodging</li> <li>• Medical Office</li> <li>• Hospital/ Clinics</li> </ul>





# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

## FOCUS AREAS - MIXED USE

### Description

The focus areas mixed use district allows for both residential and commercial (retail/office/entertainment) uses that serves the residents within the City. It should be characterized by a vertical and/or horizontal mix of uses that has high public and private realm features and materials, and is designed at the neighborhood and human scale to promote walkability and social interaction.

Open space should be highly connected and create both small and large places for people to gather including plazas, green lawns, and natural areas. Creating recreational path linkages to the larger trail network is encouraged. Architecture should consist of high quality, natural materials that reflect an urban environment with buildings that face the street and have narrow, well landscaped setbacks. Buildings should create visual interest on the street. Parking should be to the side or rear and screened from view. Roadways should incorporate “complete streets” that promote all modes of travel.



### Development Character

<b>Height</b>	40 ft
<b>Building Coverage</b>	30-40%
<b>Front Setback</b>	0-15ft
<b>Parking</b>	Rear/side of building; screen from view
<b>Intensity</b>	10-25 units/acre 20,000-40,000 sf/acre
<b>Recommended Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail</li> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Hotel/Lodging</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• Multifamily</li> </ul>



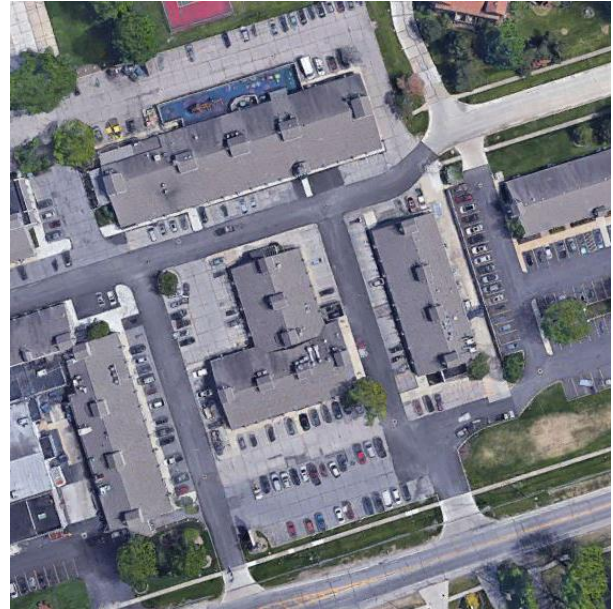
## PROFESSIONAL OFFICE

### Description

These areas are designated for a variety of office uses including small professional offices and large format offices in a campus setting. Buildings should serve business or medical uses and local, regional, and national tenants.

Buildings and sites should be integrated into the surrounding area and include both vehicular and non-motorized connections. Parking lots should be oriented to the side or rear of these facilities and be well landscaped with shade trees. Shared parking agreements are encouraged and may be used to lower parking requirements. Attractive landscaping, streetscape elements, and signage should be used to integrate larger sites into the existing street network.

Site designs are encouraged to include outdoor plaza and/or landscaped areas for employees and visitors. Pedestrian access and interconnected pathways that cross multiple developments are encouraged in large office settings to provide employees low intensity recreation options.



### Development Character

<b>Height</b>	40-50 ft
<b>Building Coverage</b>	30-50%
<b>Front Setback</b>	0-50ft
<b>Parking</b>	2-3 spaces / 1,000 sf
<b>Intensity</b>	10,000-20,000 sf/acre
<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Medical Office</li> <li>• Hospital/Clinics</li> </ul>





# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

## INDUSTRIAL

### Description

Industrial is intended for light industrial users that require space for wholesale, warehousing, and clean manufacturing, packaging, repair and related office functions. These uses require buffering from incompatible uses such as residential.

The Industrial type includes a variety of industrial, research & development, laboratory, design, and technology uses. Retail may be considered as a secondary use to accommodate workers. High interconnectivity through public plazas, green spaces, and pathways within and around the site should create a campus of cross-collaboration. Parks, public amenities, and pedestrian and bicycle access should be included.



### Development Character

<b>Height</b>	45 ft
<b>Building Coverage</b>	30-40%
<b>Front Setback</b>	50-60ft
<b>Parking</b>	Varies by use type
<b>Intensity</b>	45,000-100,000 sf/acre
<b>Recommended Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Industrial</li><li>• Office</li><li>• Wholesale</li></ul>



## CIVIC / INSTITUTIONAL

### Description

These areas are intended to accommodate public and semi-public uses. Buildings and land owned by the government, libraries, City emergency and service departments, privately owned schools and universities, and the public school system share this development character. Such facilities should be well designed and integrated into their surroundings.

Pedestrian access is key on these sites and must be ADA accessible. Structures should be connected to pedestrian and bicycle facilities in the area, and enhanced crossings should be provided to ensure pedestrian safety. In larger institutional settings, parking that serves a greater area may be located at a further distance to preserve the pedestrian experience within the site, such as on a university campus. Attractive landscaping, streetscape elements, and signage should be used to integrate larger sites into the existing street network.



### Development Character

<b>Height</b>	40-50 ft
<b>Building Coverage</b>	30-40%
<b>Front Setback</b>	0-50 ft
<b>Parking</b>	Varies by use type
<b>Intensity</b>	10,000-20,000 sf/acre
<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional</li> <li>• Government Offices and Services</li> </ul>





# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

## PARKS & OPEN SPACES

### Description

When considering the development of large expanses of greenfield land, it is important to recognize the value of land remaining in its natural state. Residential neighborhoods and mixed-use developments often gain an even greater value when located in proximity to parks and open space.

Park facilities should include a range of active and passive uses or activities, and be designed to reduce maintenance expenses. The existing park network should be expanded into new areas of development. New park development should be easily accessed by a variety of mobility options, include multi-generational activities, and provide environmental education opportunities. In urban settings, shared parking agreements with office and institutional uses may be appropriate to reduce the need for additional parking.



### Development Character

<b>Parking</b>	Varies by use type
<b>Permitted Uses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Park</li><li>• Recreation</li><li>• Natural Areas</li></ul>





## LAND USE TYPES

The following tables describe the desired future character and form for each land use type. *These descriptions are intended to be a general guide for how development may occur in the future, not a rigid set of standards.*

	LAND USE	HEIGHT	BLDG. COVERAGE	FRONT SETBACK	PARKING	INTENSITY	USES
	Low Density Residential	35 ft	40%	10-30 ft	2 spc./unit	1-2 units/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detached Single Family</li> </ul>
	Medium Density Residential	45 ft	30-50%	0-20 ft	1-2 spc./unit	5-15 units/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detached/Attached Single Family</li> <li>• Multifamily</li> </ul>
	High Density Residential	50-60 ft	30-50%	0-15 ft	1-1.5 spc./unit	More than 15 units/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attached Single Family</li> <li>• Multifamily</li> </ul>
	Commercial	45 ft	30-40%	0-50 ft	Rear or side	10,000 - 15,000 sf/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail</li> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Hotel/Lodging</li> <li>• Medical Office</li> <li>• Hospital/Clinics</li> </ul>
	Focus Area - Mixed Use	40 ft	30-40%	0-15 ft	Rear or side; screened	10-25 units/acre 20,000-40,000 sf/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retail</li> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Hotel/Lodging</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• Multifamily</li> </ul>
	Professional Office	40-50 ft	30-50%	0-50 ft	2-3 spc./1,000 sf	10,000 - 20,000 sf/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Medical Office</li> <li>• Hospital/Clinics</li> </ul>
	Industrial	45 ft	30-40%	50-60 ft	Varies	45,000 - 100,000 sf/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industrial</li> <li>• Office</li> <li>• Wholesale</li> </ul>
	Civic / Institutional	40-50 ft	30-40%	0-50 ft	Varies	10,000 - 20,000 sf/acre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional</li> <li>• Government Offices and Services</li> <li>• Religious uses</li> </ul>
	Parks and Open Spaces	--	--	--	Varies	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park</li> <li>• Recreation</li> <li>• Natural Area</li> </ul>

# Active Transportation Plan

## OVERVIEW

Active Transportation is any self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking or bicycling. Physical inactivity is a major contributor to the steady rise in rate of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and other chronic health conditions in the United States. Across the country, many view walking and bicycling within their communities as unsafe due to heavy traffic and a scarcity of sidewalks, crosswalks, and bicycle facilities. Improving these elements could encourage both children and adults to walk or bike to their destinations. Safety and convenience are important elements for the increased usage in active transportation. The improvements of these types of facilities will also spur investment within a community, to provide destinations for residents.

### Existing Trail Network

The City of Avon Lake has already implemented this type of infrastructure within the community. On-road facilities have been installed on main corridors such as Walker Road and Lake Road, while off-road facilities such as neighborhood and park trails have been implemented. As highlighted in Figure 3-3, the City has worked to connect the residential neighborhoods with schools and other community destinations through the bikeway network.

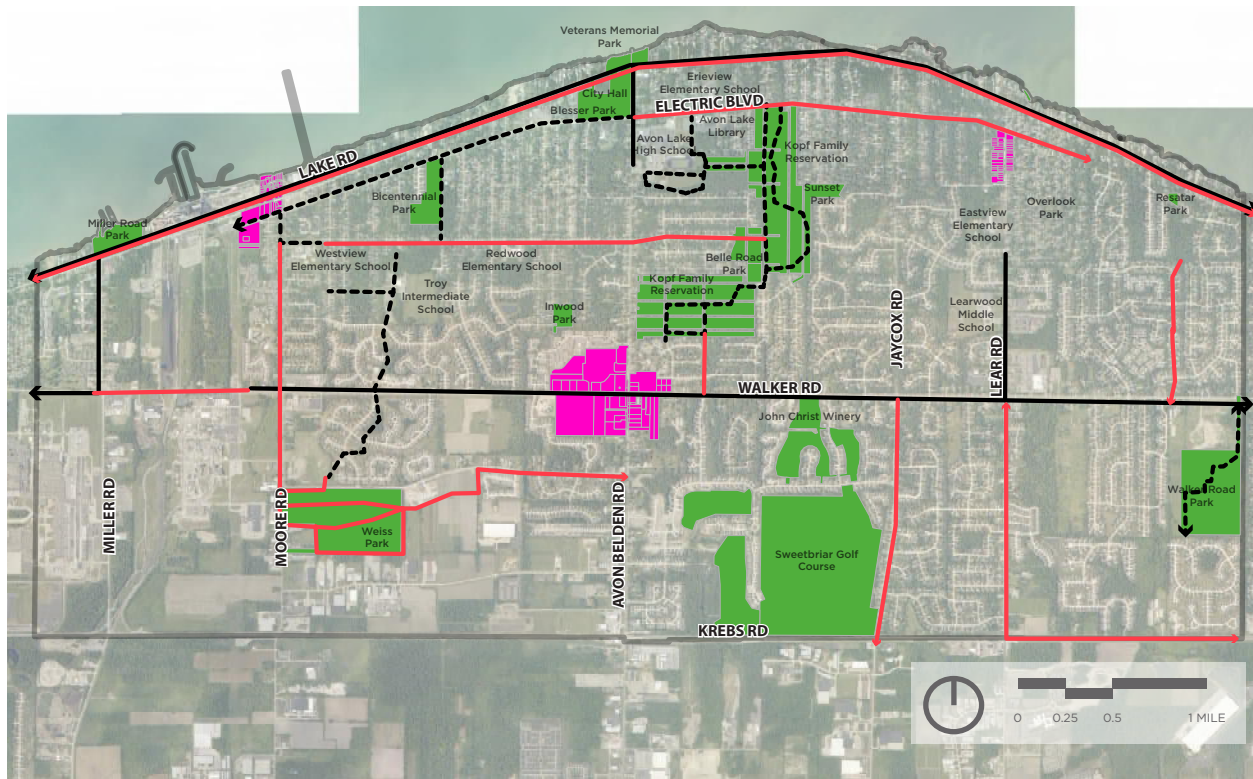
As Avon Lake plans for future facilities and investments, there are two different types of

trails and paths that can be implemented: off-road trails and on-road bike lanes and facilities. Recommendations for future network connections are shown in Figure 3-4.



*Bike lanes along Lake Road as part of the Lakefront Bikeway through Lorain County.*

Figure 3-3: Current & Previously Planned Bike Network



#### KEY

	Existing Bike Lanes		Park/Open Spaces
	Existing All-Purpose Trails		Focus Areas
	Proposed Additions (2015 Plan Update)		

## COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

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### REGIONAL MOBILITY EFFORTS

Throughout Northeast Ohio, several planning initiatives are either underway or have been completed in an effort to improve future mobility. These efforts include Avon Lake and will play a role in shaping the future for Avon Lake's bicycle network and facilities. These key projects, likely to impact future development, land use, and transportation in Avon Lake, are highlighted below.

#### NOACA's 2013 Regional Bicycle Plan

The Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) created a vision for increasing the use of bicycles for transportation and commuting, serving as a guide for developing bicycle infrastructure, and including a priority bikeway system that shows where bikeway facilities should be built. In 2018, NOACA staff worked on an update to the Lorain County portion of the Regional Bicycle Plan and the creation of a Lorain County Bike Map which would outline where bicycle facilities were located in the county, and categorized the skill level needed for each facility type: experts, confident cyclists, most adults, and all ages.

#### Lorain County Metro Parks - Kopf Family Reservation

Opened in 2008, the Kopf Family Reservation consists of 162 acres of woodlands and boasts two miles of asphalt trails which wind through the woodlands providing a central trail system for the residents of Avon Lake. The two mile asphalt trail winds through the forest allowing visitors and users of the trail to explore the flora and fauna. The trail travels from the Public Library to Belle Road Park and has a southern loop that comes back to Belle Road Park. Users can access the trail just east of the Public Library on Electric Boulevard and on side roads including Woodstock Street, Armour Street, and Hunter Street at Belle Road Park.

#### Lorain County Public Health

Lorain County Public Health's mission is to create



*Lorain County Metro Park employees working on the compacted stone trail within the Kopy Family Reservation.*

a healthy place for all to live, work, and play by preventing disease in the community, empowering people to make better choices, and promoting overall health and wellness. As part of their mission, they have created a Strategic Plan which guides staff to develop strategies, make decisions, and allocate resources.

As part of their Strategic Plan, their priorities include:

- Priority #1 - Link To Needed Services
- Priority #2 - Expand Coordinated Education & Prevention
- Priority #3 - Improve Weight Issues & Obesity
- Priority #4 - Strengthen Organizational Efficiency and Effectiveness

Their objectives in order to achieve their priorities include expanding the existing bike and trail system within Avon Lake to increase non-motorized access to health services, as well as help to create more opportunities for physical activity and promote a healthier lifestyle.

#### Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity Plan

The Lorain County Commissioners partnered with Lorain County Metro Parks, the City of Sheffield



Lake, the City of Lorain, the City of Vermillion, NOACA, and the City of Avon Lake to conduct the Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity Plan. Part of the plan included the study of the Route 6 corridor (Lake Road for Avon Lake) which serves as the primary east-west transportation artery for the communities listed above. It is also known as the Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail and the Great Lakes Circle Tour. The corridor is currently on the proposed Ohio State Bike Route System, a statewide network providing safe and convenient connections through areas of populations and destinations in Ohio, and is also on a number of long distance cycling maps produced by the American Cycling Association.

The plan called for a linear multi-modal transportation corridor (comprised of 28 miles) that balances the needs of existing transportation users, project stakeholders, and the public. The Avon Lake portion of the corridor called to maintain the existing bike lane and to increase the adjacent sidewalk to 8-foot wide, with a 3-foot lawn buffer between the walk and the road.

### Implications for Avon Lake

These regional bikeway efforts have identified Lake Road as an important corridor from a regional connectivity perspective. Lake Road is the primary bikeway connection along the lakefront and links Lorain County with neighboring Cuyahoga County. Redevelopment concepts for underutilized areas along this corridor, which can be found in the Focus Area Chapter, reflect the efforts to accommodate the increased bikeway usage along the corridor.

Additionally, Walker Road, Moore Road, and Lear Road have been identified as important local connections which create a critical link to Lake Road, providing residents access to the regional bikeway network. These recommendations and priorities are included in the updated Active Transportation Plan for Avon Lake.



*Current sidewalk condition along Electric Boulevard. A proposed off-road, all-purpose trail would be implemented connecting to The 45s.*

## FUTURE BIKEWAY NETWORK UPDATE

Figure 3-4 outlines an updated Bikeway Plan, which takes into account previous recommendations from both local and regional efforts. The updated Bikeway Plan shown was developed through feedback received from the community survey, steering committee, and the public meetings. The network recommendations take into consideration the location of schools, civic buildings (city hall, recreation centers, libraries, etc.), park and open space, retail, and other entertainment opportunities.

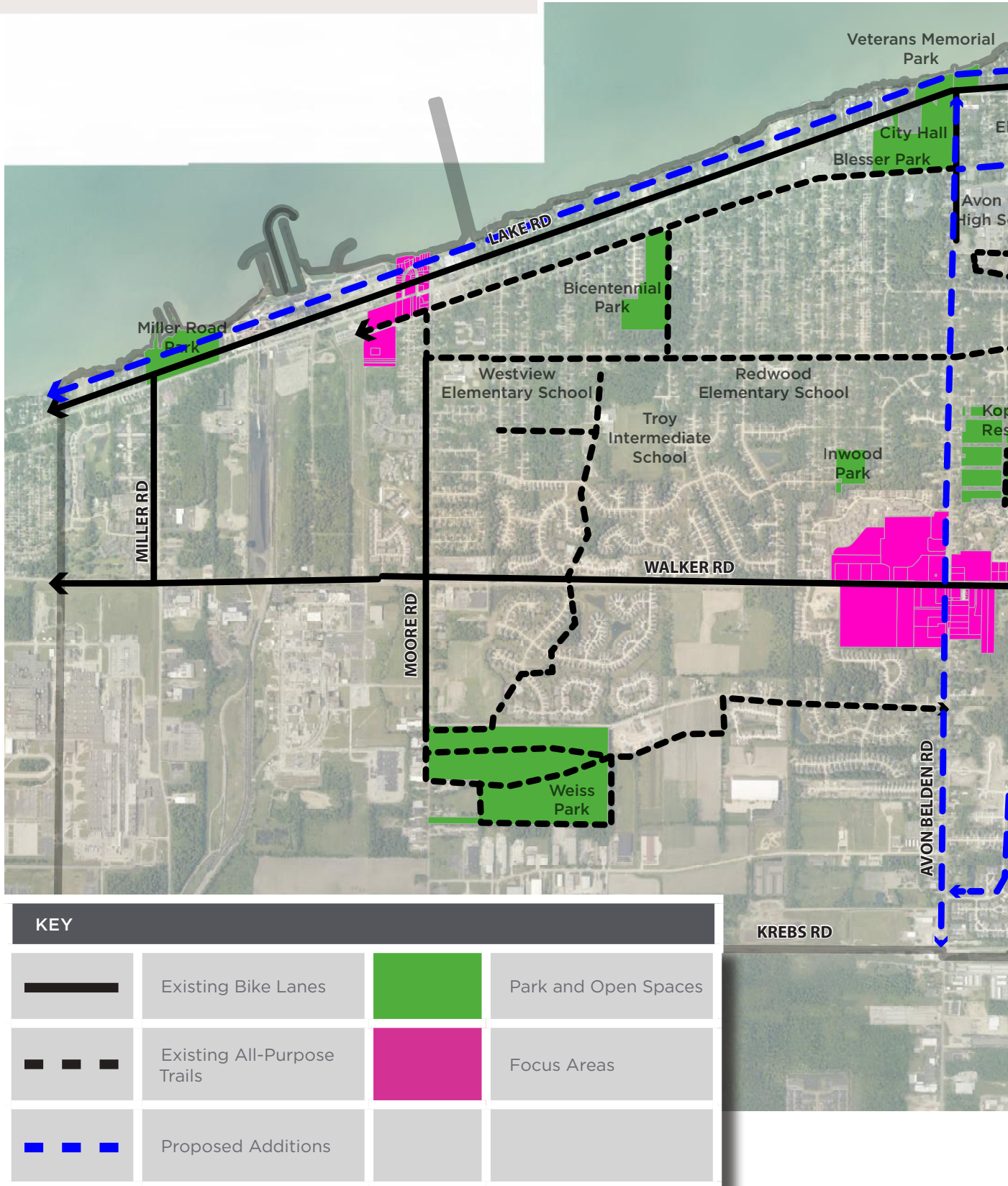
The goal of the plan is to provide for safe, bicycle and walking infrastructure which allows all user types and experience levels the opportunity to use the facilities. The updated plan also prioritized two key networks: the ability for the residents of Avon Lake to gain safe, equitable access to the regional trail network (Lake Road) and the ability to have a network within the City limits which creates access to community amenities and for exercise.

Establishing north-south connections on Moore Road, Avon Beldon Road, and Lear Road were important to further enhance the overall connectivity and provide an alternative east-west connection on Electric Boulevard, which was important to residents who are not comfortable biking along Lake Road.

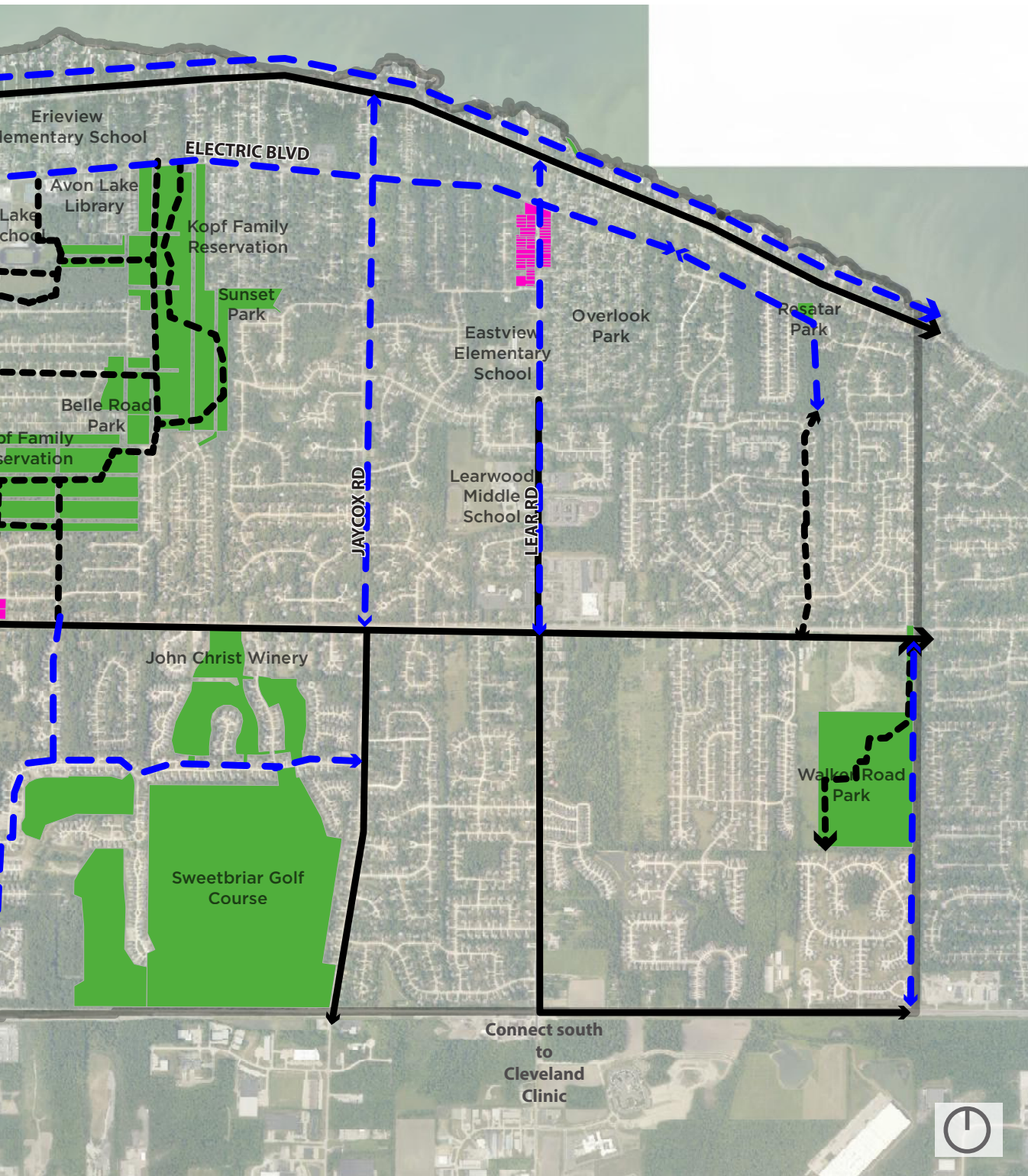


# COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

Figure 3-4: Future Active Transportation Map







# Communications Framework

## OVERVIEW

The City of Avon Lake is looking to the future. Development, lakefront access, and streetscapes are just the beginning of bringing a new vision for the city to life. These initiatives, however, come at a cost and take time, making it difficult to keep the attention of the public and garner and maintain support.

In this section, we present your Brand Foundation – the building blocks for communication that stir an emotional connection to the vision and the work you’re doing. Furthermore, it can help align stakeholders and partners as the project unfolds, so that decisions and initiatives all point in the same direction toward your ultimate goals.

In order to develop a Brand Foundation that is authentic to the community, we conducted Discovery sessions with key members of the committee and city staff to identify those themes and attributes that make Avon Lake, Avon Lake.

The purpose of these exercises and the outcomes were to build a Brand Foundation for the City of Avon Lake that supports future communication around their vision and planning. This Brand Foundation helps:

- Align decision-makers around a set of shared community values
- Inspire participation and support from partners and stakeholders

- Support communications with the general public for positive buzz and community buy-in

In this chapter, we highlight the key tools from your Brand Framework, including:

- Distinct Advantages: key themes that come together to paint an authentic picture of Avon Lake
- Personality Attributes: the personality of the city that gives your communication context and character
- Positioning Statement: an internal statement that succinctly aligns your audiences, what you offer, and the end benefit
- Purpose Lens: a tool for understanding Why you’re doing this work, How you’re accomplishing it, and What the outcomes could and will be

## DISTINCT ADVANTAGES

Distinct advantages are the combination of attributes that distinguish Avon Lake from neighboring communities.

### Lakefront Lifestyle

Avon Lake is one of few cities across our vast country that can boast lake views and access. Boating or swimming, building sandcastles and summer picnics,

or simply enjoying a sunset walk on the beach – the lake is central to our way-of-life.

### Safe and Comfortable

Low traffic, quiet neighborhoods, and a small town culture make residents feel secure and give parents peace-of-mind that their children are safe walking to school or riding bikes to a friend's house.

### Community Living

Avon Lake is a family-oriented community that supports residents, from youth to retirement, with top rated schools, high quality senior centers, recreation and more. Amenities and events bring the community together, from the Wine Fest to the Summer Market, fireworks to free concerts.

### Location, Location, Location

A quick commute to work with easy highway access, proximity to shopping and entertainment, and various walking and biking paths make getting to, from, and around Avon Lake simple.

## PERSONALITY

Brand Personality gives your communication context and character, influencing your written and visual communications

1. Active
2. Involved
3. Family-oriented
4. Proud
5. Full of potential
6. Conservative
7. Values-Driven
8. Generous
9. Affluent
10. Open-minded
11. Educated
12. Traditional
13. Religious
14. Protective

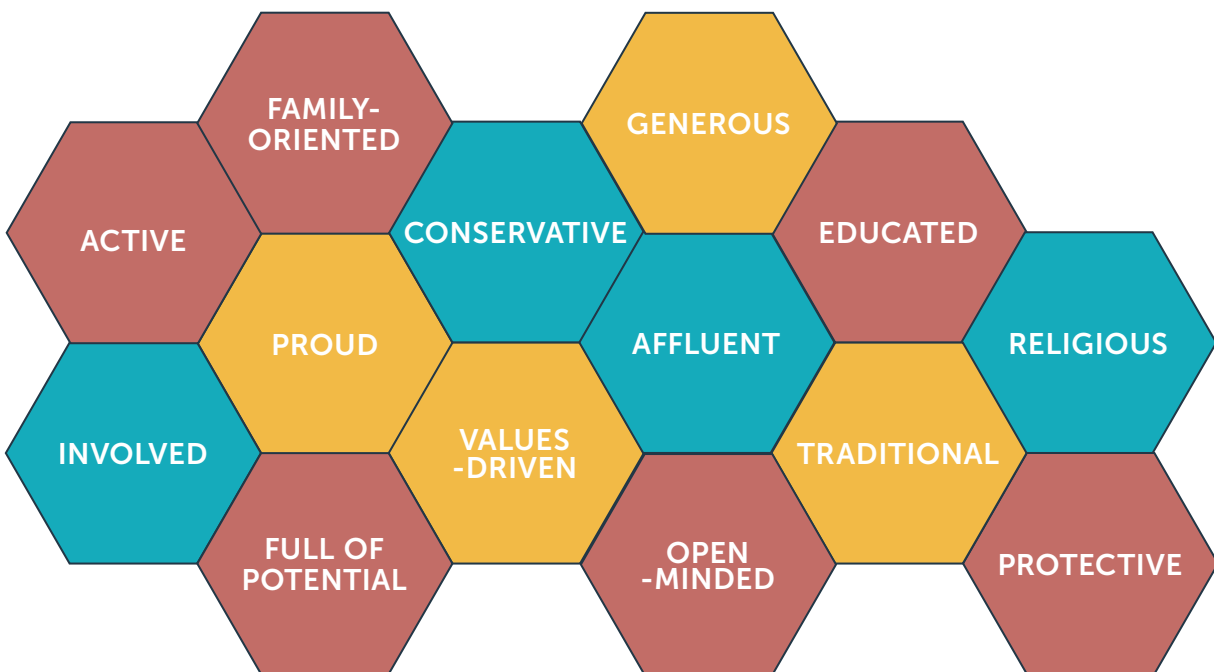


Figure 3-5: Avon Lake Brand Personality



## COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIES

### WHAT IS A POSITIONING STATEMENT?

A simple and concise internal statement that articulates who you are, what you offer, who it's for and the end benefit, while also identifying what makes you unique within the marketplace.

What is it for? To align and set a direction for marketing and communications.

### POSITIONING STATEMENT

Avon lake is a lakefront suburb of Cleveland with small town charm, where young professionals and families aspire to buy their forever homes, raise their children and retire, taking advantage of the city's excellent schools, safe neighborhoods and community amenities that support a healthy lifestyle for generations.

### WHAT IS A PURPOSE LENS?

A tool for understanding Why you're doing this work, How you're accomplishing it, and What the outcomes could and will be.

### AT THE HEART OF YOUR PURPOSE LENS

**Belief Statement:** We believe that by taking steps to better leverage our lakefront and small town character & charm, we can continue to evolve as a city, despite the slowing down of new housing developments.

**WHY:** Evolve in ways that elevate the entire community.

#### HOWs

1. Update Zoning Code to open doors for future development.
2. Remove barriers that prevent the City from taking a more direct role in improving access to the Lakefront.

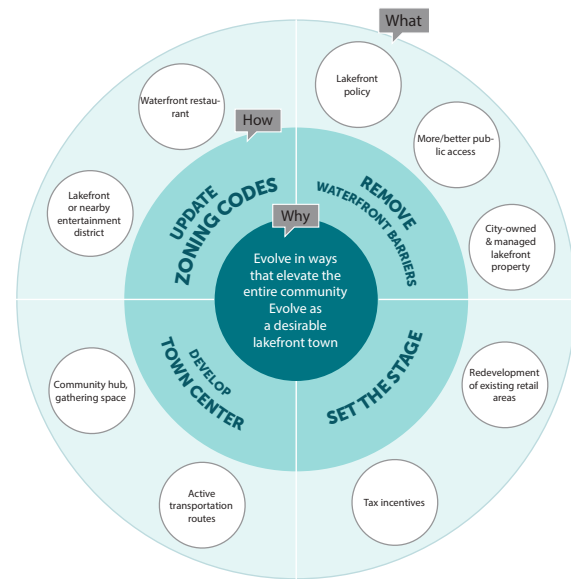


Figure 3-6: Purpose Lens

3. Set the stage for independent restaurants and retail to thrive.
4. Develop a town center and the supportive infrastructure to attract visitors and serve as a community hub.

### DON'T LET YOUR BRAND FRAMEWORK SIT ON THE SHELF

#### Put these tools to work.

Communication is the heart of any planning initiative. What, when, and how we communicate can dramatically influence the way your planning efforts are received and perceived. The recommendations below will help you leverage the Brand Foundation to tell your story and connect with your audiences.

1. **Develop Key Messages:** Popular belief is that you need to hear something seven times in order to remember and retain the information. That means that you have to be clear and consistent with your communications in order to get your point across and gain buy-in from

your audiences. Key messages align your Brand with your objectives in public-facing messages that can be copied and pasted across digital and print materials for consistency and repetition.

2. **Create an Emotional Connection:** People relate to stories. The human element of storytelling is what builds a connection between your plan and the people it will serve. Unfortunately, comprehensive plans often have long timelines and asks folks to be patient (delayed gratification). By connecting your audiences to the plan on a more personal level, you no longer have to rely on their patience because you've connected with them in a deeper way around shared values, rather than the immediate benefits. Produce a series of blogs or stories that illustrate the values on which your comprehensive plan is built. These stories are the backdoor entrance to garnering support that can be distributed via newsletter, website, and even shopped around to local publications.
3. **Share Across Channels:** Distribute updates and overviews on your plan across a variety of channels to ensure it reaches a broad audience. This content can be combined with key messages and repurposed from digital newsletters to social media, mailers to posters.
4. **Leverage Your Partners:** Identify current and prospective partnerships with organizations and people who have the attention of your audience(s). These partners can be your champions and help you distribute information about your comprehensive plan through their own channels. Develop an arsenal of content – from social media posts, videos, newsletter teasers, and stories – that these partners can easily share through their own communication channels.

## TAKE BRANDING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

When people think of brand, they think of a logo. This is a very important part of your brand, but it is only one component. You have developed the Brand Foundation that allows you to be strategic with your communications.

The way a city looks and sounds influences how their audiences receive and interpret information. For example, if a city doesn't have a brand, some people may assume that their comprehensive plan is not grounded in any mutual understanding. Or if a city's logo looks unpolished, people may see the city (and their efforts) as unprofessional or unsophisticated.

In order to maximize your brand, it's important to sound and look the part.

1. **Revisit Your Logo:** With clear objectives and positioning, you should revisit your brand identity (city logo) to make sure it's still a good fit. Does it fit the Personality in your Brand Framework? Does it visually represent your Purpose and Positioning? If not, explore your options to find a mark that suits where you are today and where you're going in the future.
2. **Develop Key Messages:** This can be done separately or in conjunction with other brand development work. (see section Don't Let Your Brand Framework Sit on the Shelf.)
3. **Build Brand Guidelines:** Protect the integrity of the brand work you've done, with detailed guidelines on how to use your logo and brand identity elements.
4. **Employ Placemaking:** Activate your brand in the physical environment and strengthen the connection between your audience and the city with signage, banner programs, and other placemaking opportunities.



04

## FOCUS AREAS



# Focus Areas

## OVERVIEW

While much of Avon Lake has been fully developed and will likely remain in its current land use, there are distinct areas that are able to accommodate future growth and provide opportunity for revitalization. Three focus areas were identified as part of the Future Land Use Plan.

These three areas within Avon Lake provide opportunities to guide new growth in a way that will most effectively promote new, sustainable economic development, provide alternative housing options for residents, improve the image of the community, and create new mobility connections. Although some of these areas contain vacancies, many also contain viable, existing businesses and development sites. The Focus Areas are priority growth areas and future decisions regarding capital improvements, development incentives, land use policies, and zoning should encourage investment and development.

Within this section, more targeted recommendations are outlined for how future growth and development should occur in each of these areas. This includes recommendations for land use, character, and general development goals. The recommendations in this chapter were formed by input from the Steering Committee and the public through the comprehensive planning process, as well as an understanding of market trends that will guide future growth and development in the region.

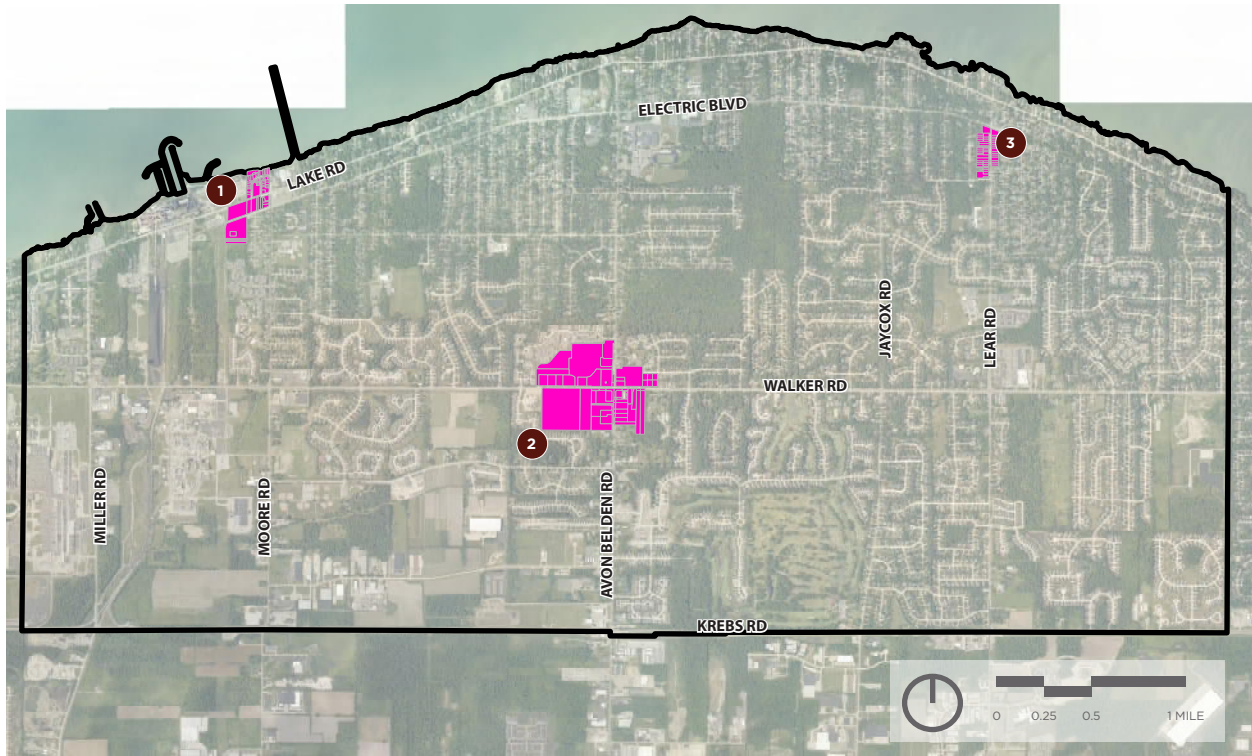
## SELECTING THE FOCUS AREAS

The Focus Areas were identified by City staff, the Steering Committee, and by the public through public meetings and a survey by asking questions related to current offerings, habits, and desired amenities for the community. These areas were selected based on a number of criteria which include:

- Under-utilized land and/or buildings;
- New opportunities to serve existing neighborhoods and districts;
- New opportunities to improve community identity; and,
- Opportunities to create a variety of housing choices and styles.

Participants were then asked to identify areas within the City limits where they felt these conditions existed. The result, was the establishment of the three focus areas: Town Center, Lake Road, and Lear Road (The 45s).

Figure 4-1: Focus Area Map



#### KEY



Focus Areas

#### FOCUS AREA LABELS

1

Lake Road

2

Town Center

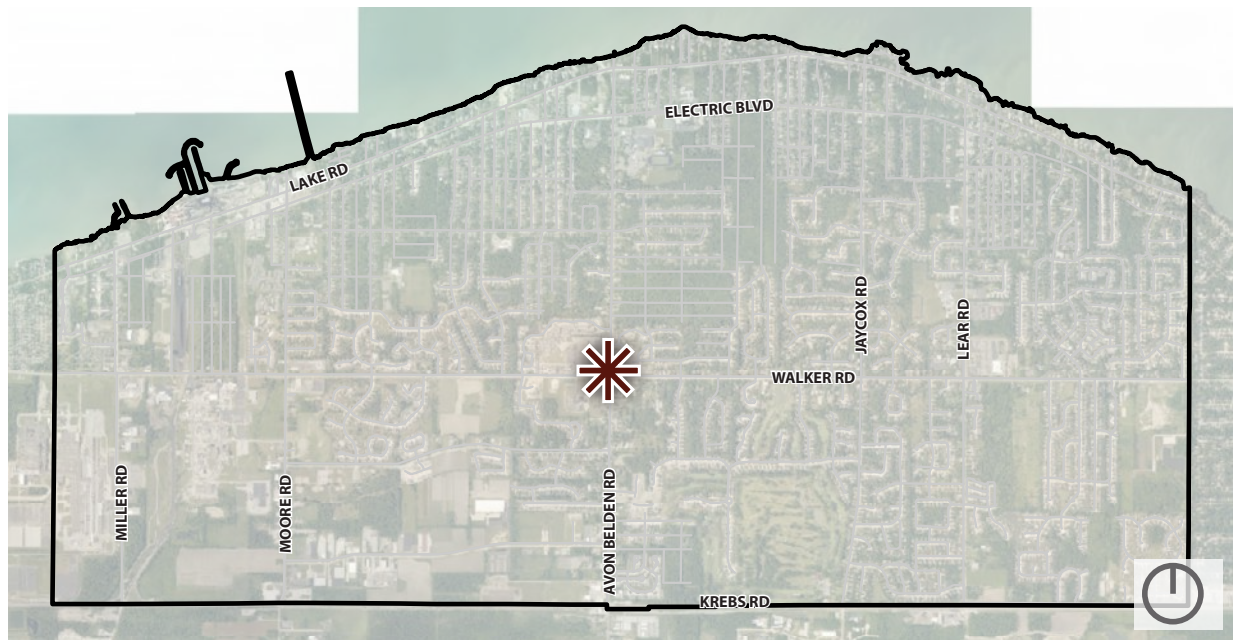
3

Lear Road (The 45s)

## FOCUS AREAS

### Focus Area #1

# Town Center



## OVERVIEW

The long-time vacant Tops building has become an increasing black mark on the overall Town Center area. However, it represents a significant development opportunity in the City. Big-box retail, particularly developed as stand-alone stores or adjacent to strip malls, are becoming increasingly obsolete as both consumer expectations and the business of receiving, storing, and shipping physical goods continues to change. Avon Lake has the opportunity to create a more sustainable development space, which enhances the quality of life for its residents.

Town Center is a significant space for Avon Lake that can serve as the primary hub of culture and entertainment and function as a true mixed use district. It should accommodate a mix of retail, office, public space, and housing uses that are integrated both vertically and horizontally. It also serves an important central space that connects the community both socially and physically.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



*Strip mall style developments will continue to become obsolete and are redevelopment opportunities.*



*Over supply of parking creates underutilized, valuable space.*



*An enhanced pedestrian environment, revitalization of underutilized properties, and implementation of city branding.*



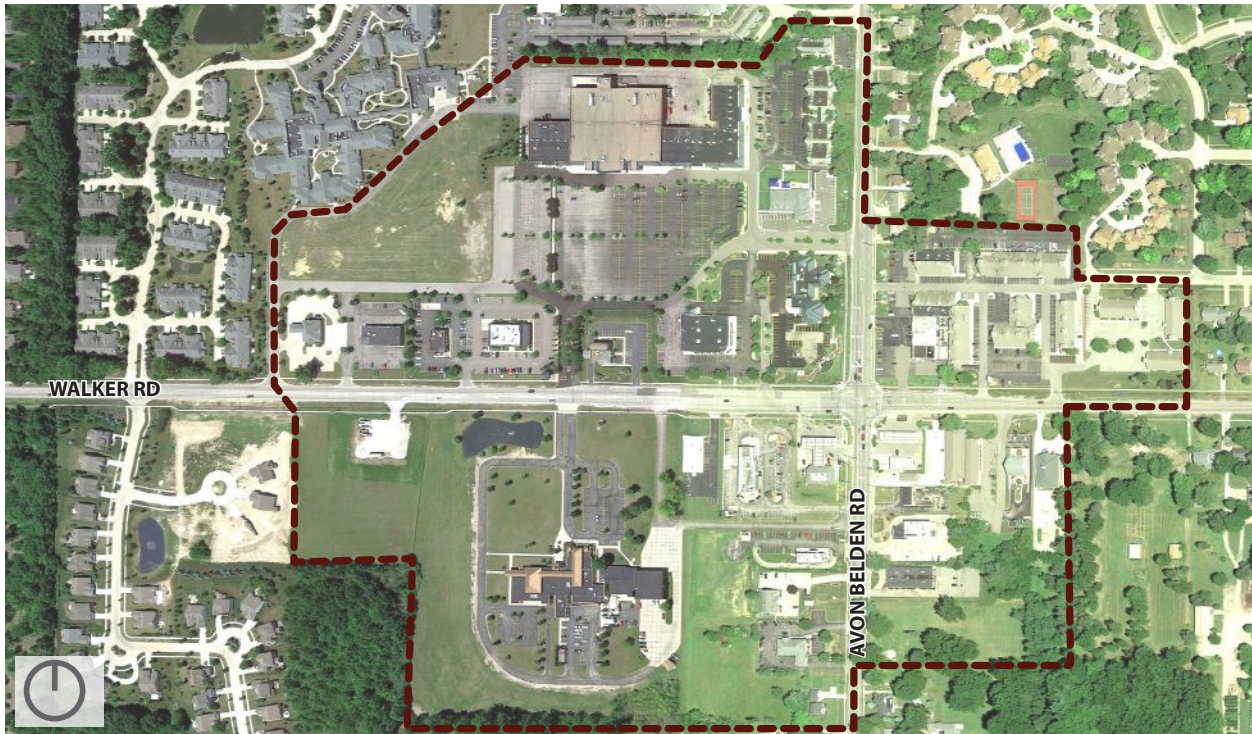


Figure 4-2: Existing Condition Aerial

## THE VISION

The intersection of Avon Belden and Walker Roads has the opportunity to transform into a dynamic city center for Avon Lake. Located in the center of the city, a mix of quality residential, retail, and integrated greenspace creates a dynamic space that builds social and economic value.

The concept on the following page shows a detailed breakdown of the mixed use district, indicating the primary uses within the focus area. Mixed use commercial and retail spaces would hold each corner of the intersection. Spaces above could either serve as residential or office spaces. A mixture of townhomes and medium to high density residential units would line the back edges of the focus area, providing a currently missing type of housing for the City. The space would be anchored by a centralized green/open space which would span across Walker Road, creating a gathering space for residents for community events and general socializing. The centralized green/open space would be flanked by civic buildings.

## DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Re-establish a new downtown/"town center" for Avon Lake.



Integrate new, smaller retail footprints throughout the site.



Create a new public green/open space for community gathering & events.



Transform the streetscape to promote the city's identity.



## FOCUS AREAS

### PROPOSED CHARACTER

The proposed character includes walk-up townhomes and apartments/condos with first floor retail fronting the street. Re-purposing existing buildings into civic spaces with parking integrated within the buildings but screened from sight. Buildings are constructed with natural materials, creating a quality aesthetic.



WALK-UP TOWNHOMES



MIXED USE BUILDING



CIVIC SPACE



WAYFINDING

### KEY NEXT STEPS

- 1 Re-zoning the focus area to a mixed use development to permit for the desire vision.
- 2 Create design guidelines for future development.
- 3 The implementation of the centralized public green/open space.
- 4 Streetscape enhancements, improved landscaping, pedestrian oriented lighting, increased street banners (including within the buildings).
- 5 Consideration of the relocation of civic spaces to the proposed locations within the district.

### STRATEGY

The first phase of the proposed concept would be to establish and develop the green/open space, creating a gathering space for residents for community events and general socializing. This begins to create the habit and condition for residents to view this as the Town Center. In addition, streetscape enhancements on both Avon Belden and Walker Road would be incorporated to reinforce the existing brand and identity of Avon Lake. To the extent possible, infill development within the mixed use areas should be leveraged to continue promoting the existing buildings and add density to the core.

The next phase would be the grouping or re-location of civic buildings around the green/open space to establish a centralized location for all City services. This would build upon the already existing safety services located in the area. Finally, the development of townhouses and multi-story residential units around the edge of the focus area serves two key purposes. First, it serves a need for a missing housing type for the City, and second it adds critical densities within the space to support the commercial entities.

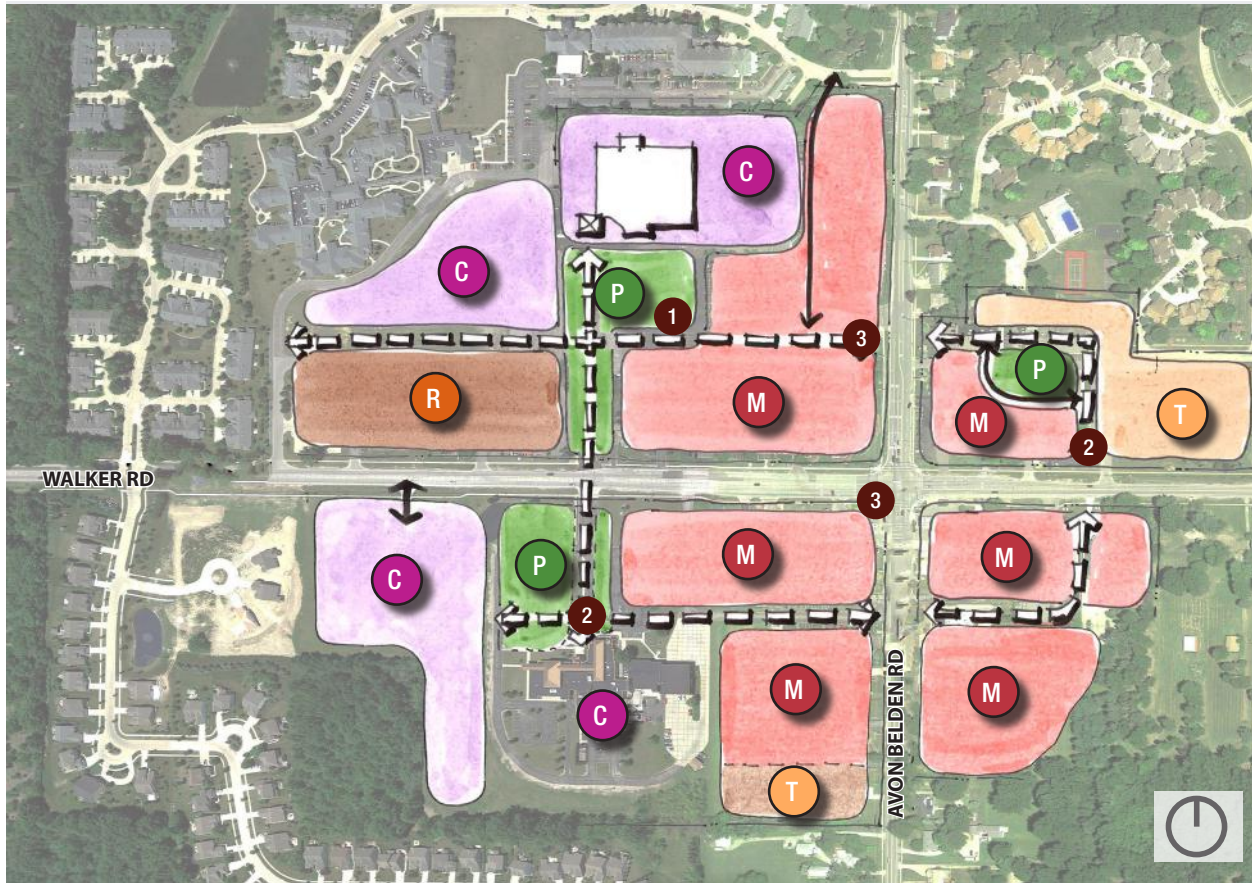


Figure 4-3: Focus Area Design Concept

KEY	
<b>M</b>	Mixed Use - Commercial/Retail/Housing/Office
<b>R</b>	Residential - Medium to High Density
<b>T</b>	Residential - Townhomes
<b>P</b>	Public Space
<b>C</b>	Civic/Institutional/ Mixed-Use

## CONCEPT FEATURES

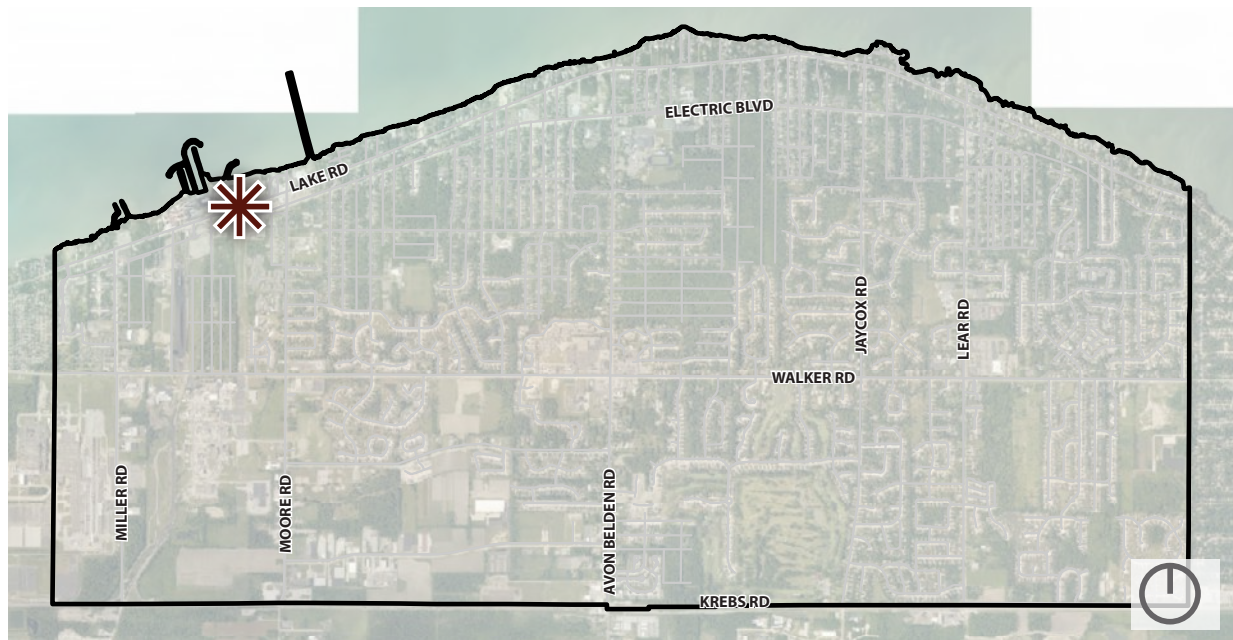
1. A centralized public space would anchor the entire district, serving as a location for community events and other social gatherings. This space can also be utilized by the residents of the surrounding housing.
2. The four areas of the district would be tied together through sidewalks along Avon Belden Road and Walker Road, in addition to a pedestrian oriented walkway through the spaces, to increase the overall walkability and accessibility of the space. Outdoor dining and seating areas will be oriented to this walkway to improve the overall sense of place.
3. Wayfinding and signage will be incorporated to ensure clear direction to users to gain access to the features of the space and to enhance the visual aesthetic of the district.



## FOCUS AREAS

### Focus Area #2

# Lake Road



## OVERVIEW

While being less than a half-mile away from the lakefront, the Lake Road focus area feels miles away from Lake Erie. The area is dominated by a power plant situated along the lakefront and traditional strip-center and plaza-style commercial developments with both vacant storefronts and non-complementing uses. Along the northern portion of the focus area are vacant, run-down homes which sit on the lakefront. There is also an existing park, Miller Road Park, located to the west of the power plant that feels largely disconnected.

The area contains a wealth of opportunities given its location along Lake Erie and on the Lakefront Bikeway which spans across Cuyahoga and Lorain Counties. The space could serve as a recreational destination both for cyclists and boaters.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



*The existing retail structures do not create a dynamic environment and are in need of repairs.*



*The existing streetscape is not pedestrian-friendly, and is largely unorganized and unsafe.*



*Residential homes which are either vacant or in major disrepair are located along the lakefront.*

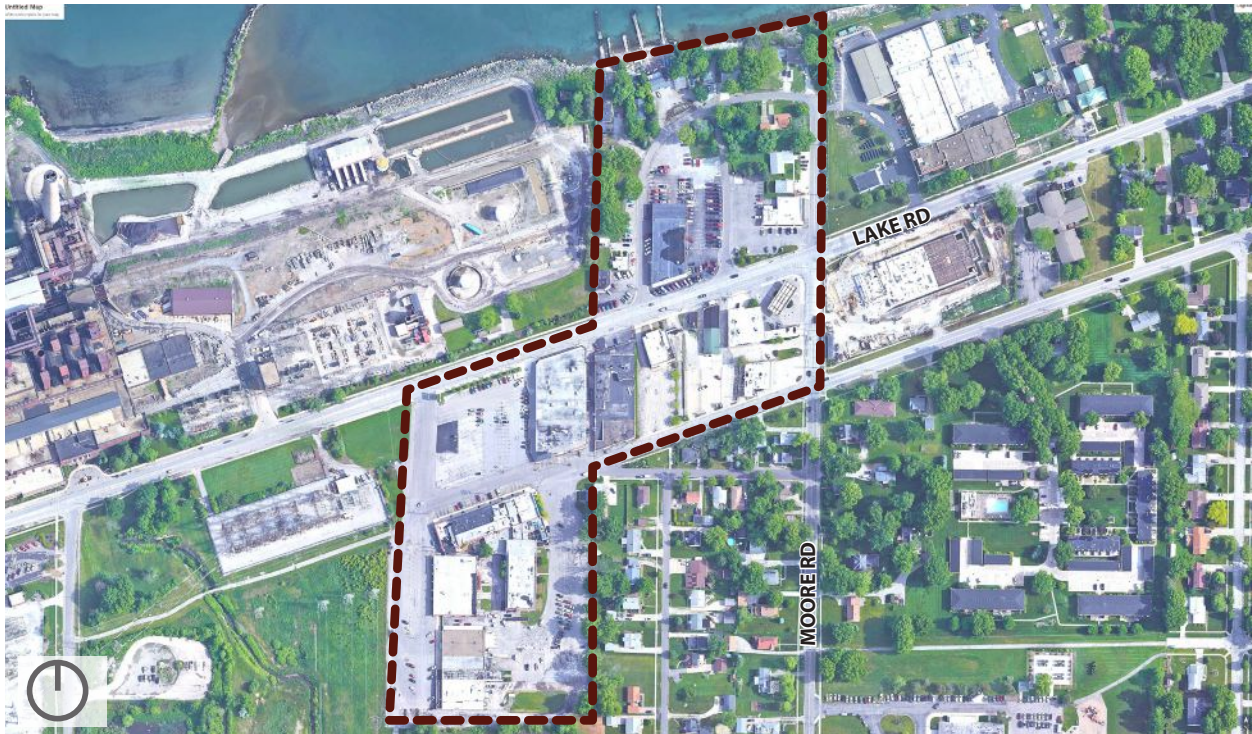


Figure 4-4: Existing Condition Aerial

## THE VISION

The area along the Lake Road corridor will include a new lakefront park with a marina, establishing a new public access point to Lake Erie for residents and boaters. A mixture of retail, commercial, and entertainment uses will complement the park, developing a vibrant, water-oriented district.

In the concept, the lakefront park will be the key driver to the entire focus area and district. Not only will it provide a new access point to the lake for residents, but it could also be a future marina location. The surrounding area will offer a mixture of uses such as retail and restaurants with development oriented to the street and the experience on the street enhanced, serving as a secondary public space throughout. The focus area will develop an identity which attracts visitors through boating as well as through the lakefront bike trail along Lake Road.

## DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Provide a new lakefront access point.



Integrate new, retail opportunities throughout the area.



Develop public green/open spaces



Increase walkability through streetscape enhancements



## FOCUS AREAS

### PROPOSED CHARACTER

The proposed character includes a new public space along the lakefront, which also offers amenities to enjoy the space. Mixed use buildings provide complementary uses with an appropriate, high quality design aesthetic. Enhanced streetscapes provide a safe, walkable route which also brands the area and City.



ACCESSIBLE LAKEFRONT



MIXED USE BUILDING



WATERFRONT AMENITIES



ENHANCES STREETSCAPES

### KEY NEXT STEPS

- 1 Property acquisition along the lakefront for public green/open space.
- 2 Re-zoning the focus areas to a mixed use development to permit for the desire vision.
- 3 Improved streetscape to include; sidewalks, pedestrian oriented lighting, street banners, landscaping, and gateway/wayfinding signage.
- 4 Identify current building stock for strategic demolition and rehabilitation opportunities.

### STRATEGY

The first phase of this concept will see the continued acquisition of land along the lakefront for the park. Once land is assembled, the design for the park can be completed. This establishes the new lakefront access point for residents and invites a future opportunity to include boaters (visitors) to the district.

Enhancing the walkability through the focus area and improving the overall streetscape along Lake Road is critical to the success of the overall district and adjoining uses. This also provides an opportunity to brand the district and to establish Avon Lake's identity in the area. Where possible, strategic demolition and infill development opportunities should be leveraged and promoted. Additionally, rehabilitation of underutilized buildings should also be in play. This preserves the existing character and charm of the area while promoting the new vision and identity. Formalizing a safe and convenient connection this focus area and Miller Road Park will help create an asset for both areas for events and day to day activities.

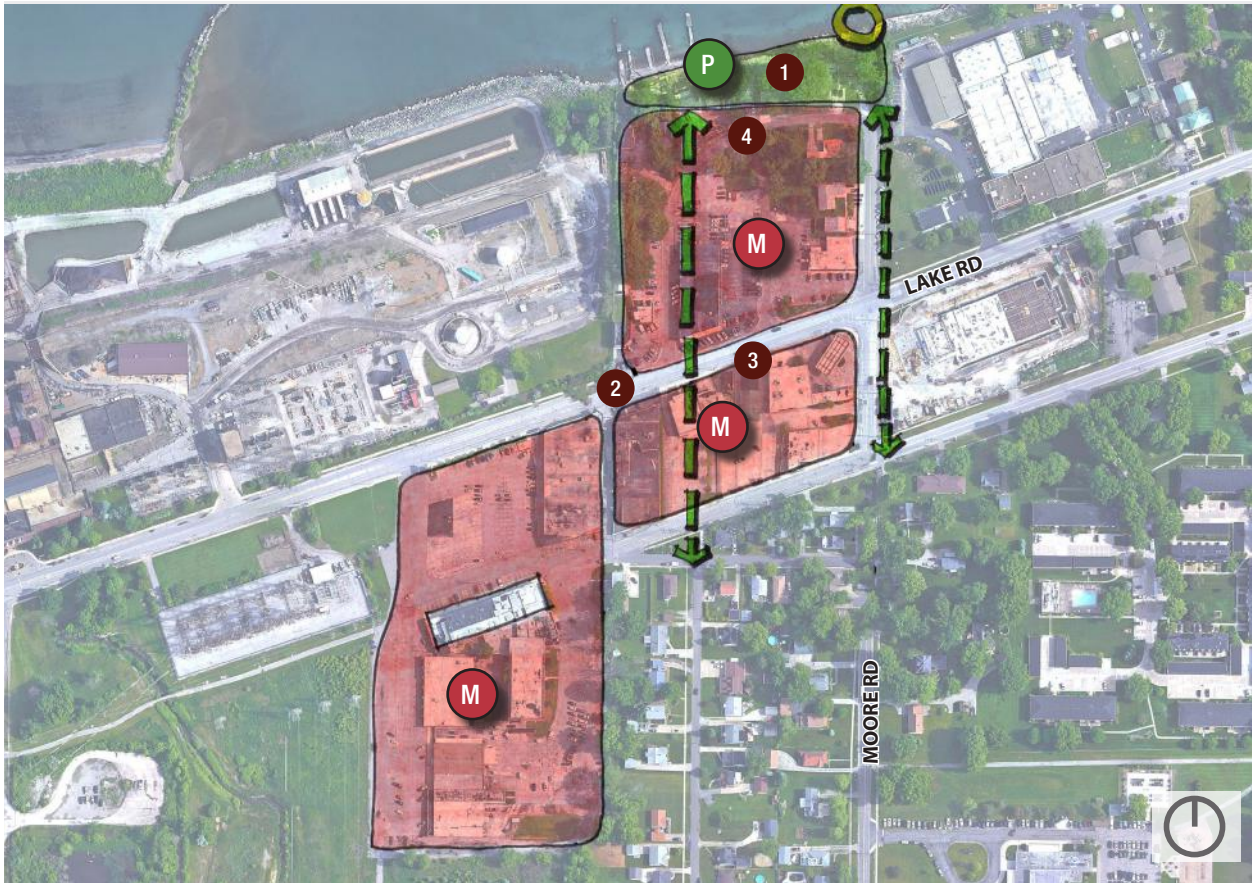




Figure 4-5: Focus Area Design Concept

KEY	
	Mixed Use - Commercial/Retail/Housing/Office
	Public Open/Green Space

## CONCEPT FEATURES

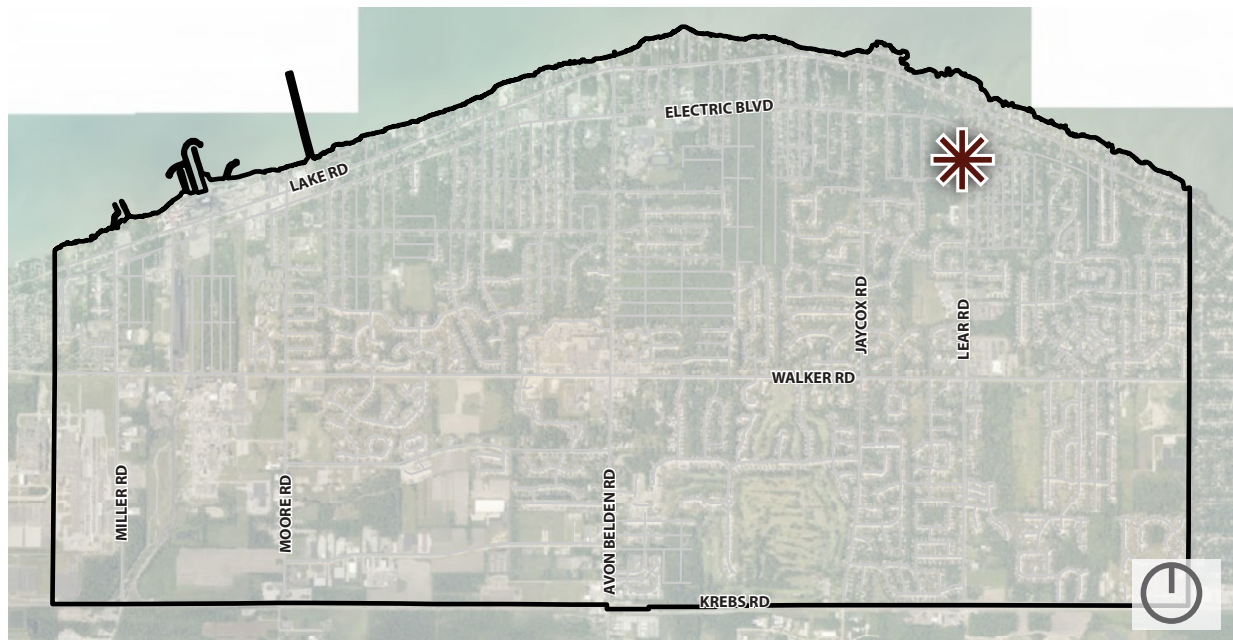
1. A public green/open space oriented along the lakefront, creating a new lake access point. The space would be connected to Lake Road and adjacent neighborhoods with pedestrian green-way connectors.
2. An enhanced streetspace which creates an inviting, walkable district that embraces the character of the lakefront. This would include improved sidewalks, pedestrian oriented lighting, street banners, etc.
3. Buildings will address the street, framing the public realm and promote walkability. These mixed use buildings may be any combination of commercial, office, and dining.
4. Outdoor dining areas are encouraged to improve the sense of place and blend the public and private realm.



## FOCUS AREAS

### Focus Area #3

# Lear Road (the 45s)



## OVERVIEW

Named after the stop number (45) on the Lake Shore Electric Railway, the 45s is an area made up primarily of quaint cottages which remain from Avon Lake's history as a summer vacation area. It is located approximately 1/4 mile away from the lakefront and contains a small commercial/retail district along Lear Road between Division Road and Electric Boulevard. The existing development lacks any type of cohesion or interaction with its surroundings. The lack of defined streetscape offers confusion for users and a lack of safety for pedestrians.

The space, however, can be transformed into an inviting, united district which offers walkable, safe streets, opportunities for outdoor dining and seating, and a cohesive aesthetic which celebrates the history of the cottage district.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS



*The existing streetscape provides no buffer to the street or comfort for pedestrians.*



*The existing storefronts along Lear Road offer little interaction with the street.*



*Parking is often an issue within the district, with area better used for outdoor dining being occupied.*



Figure 4-6: Existing Condition Aerial

## THE VISION

The Lear Road corridor is imagined as a walkable, pedestrian-oriented street which reinforces it as a neighborhood destination. The investment within the corridor will provide a leading example into upgrades and infill development along the corridor. The overall streetscape aesthetic and functionality would be improved through landscaping, improved sidewalk conditions, and branding.

Widened sidewalks, improved trail connectivity, pedestrian lighting, and enhanced crosswalks will improve the overall walkability and safety for users. Green infrastructure incorporated into the landscaping will help mitigate stormwater issues, while also improving the general aesthetic of the corridor. Defining a district parking plan would allow for outdoor dining space for the restaurants and eateries along the corridor. Infill development would keep to the historic nature of the corridor and adjoining neighborhood.

## DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Improve all-purpose trail connection.



Leverage public and private investments to strengthen vibrancy of the district.



Installation of green infrastructure for stormwater management.



Streetscape enhancements to improve walkability.



## FOCUS AREAS

Figure 4-7: Lear Road Proposed Streetscape





## FOCUS AREAS

### PROPOSED CHARACTER

The proposed character includes an improved pedestrian experience with enhanced crosswalks, landscaping, lighting, and appropriately scaled signage for the businesses. Outdoor dining and seating areas will also be incorporated throughout the corridor along with green infrastructure to better manage stormwater.



#### KEY NEXT STEPS

- 1 Acquisition of vacant or underutilized parcels for the implementation of district parking.
- 2 Re-zoning the focus areas to a mixed use development to permit for the desired vision.
- 3 Improved streetscape to include; sidewalks, pedestrian oriented lighting, street banners, landscaping, and gateway/wayfinding signage.
- 4 Implementation of green infrastructure to improve stormwater management.
- 5 Install all-purpose trail along the western edge to improve access to and through the space.
- 6 Creation of design guidelines for future development.

### STRATEGY

The public space will be the main driver to the redevelopment of the corridor. Developing a district parking plan for the area will allow for existing and future restaurants and eateries to convert their parking spaces in front of their businesses into outdoor dining and seating areas. Improving the trail connectivity and overall signage through the corridor will invite users to the spaces. Along with the trail connectivity, improving the pedestrian experience by widening the sidewalks, adding pedestrian scale lighting, and enhancing the crosswalks will promote the corridor as a safe, walkable neighborhood.

Implementing green infrastructure strategies into the landscaping will provide financial assistance for installation and will also soften the feel of the corridor and improve the overall aesthetic. The history of the neighborhood can be incorporated into the aesthetics of the streetscape through public art, crosswalks, banners or even markers along the street which speak to the story of how the neighborhood came to be.



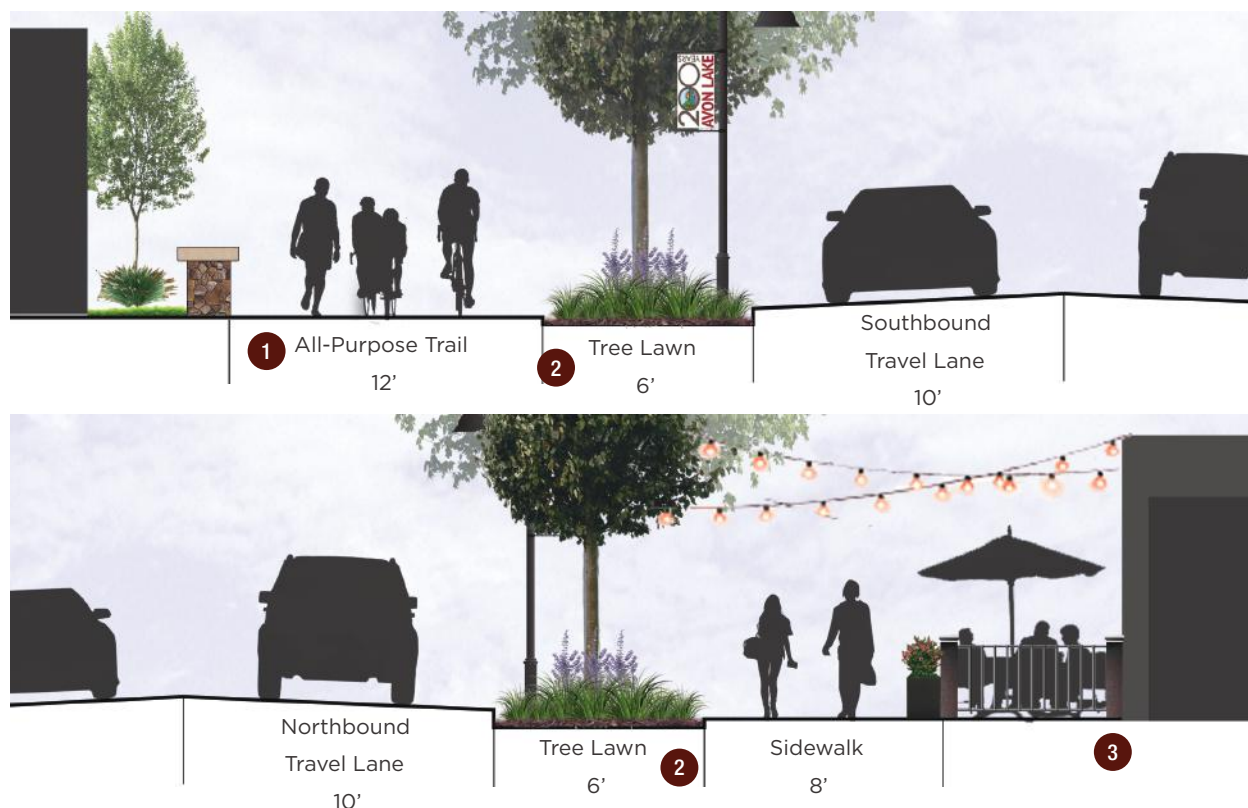


Figure 4-8: Proposed Streetscape for Lear Road Close-Up. Top: Westside of Lear Road, Bottom: Eastside of Lear Road

## CONCEPT FEATURES

1. An enhanced all-purpose trail connection on the western edge of Lear Road to improve the walkability and bikeability of the district.
2. An enhanced streetscape which creates an inviting, walkable district that embraces the character of the 45s. This would include improved sidewalks, landscaping, pedestrian oriented lighting, street banners, etc.
3. Buildings address the street, framing the public realm and promoting walkability. Outdoor dining areas are encouraged to improve the sense of place and blend the public and private realm.
4. Implementing district parking to address the needs of the existing and future businesses of the area.



Figure 4-9: Proposed lighting pole with banner





05

IMPLEMENTATION

# Implementation Strategy

## OVERVIEW

While communities around the Northeast Ohio region have considered their long-term goals and re-evaluated existing land use plans and objectives, the true test of a plan lies in the level of implementation a community succeeds in. Avon Lake initiated this plan at a crossroads point for the community. There is a desire to maintain the strong existing character of the City, but also a desire to re-imagine and re-focus on areas with new potential. The recommendations throughout this document and as outlined in this implementation strategy ahead strive to set an ambitious but flexible path forward to ensure the community achieves success for years to come.

## IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

The purpose of the implementation matrix is to assist the community in implementation of the Plan. Within the matrix, there are seven goals that have been identified throughout the process. With each goal, corresponding objectives and actions support implementation of that particular goal. Figure 1-1 shows this relation of goals, objectives and actions.

### GOALS

The goals encompass the desired outcome or vision of the community that was derived from key findings, including existing conditions, community

input, and from the planning team. These goals help set the direction for achieving the community's aspirations for the future.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives are the strategies designed to help achieve the goal. These objectives can help leadership make decisions as new opportunities develop.

### ACTIONS

Actions are programs, policies, or projects that support one or more of the objectives. These are the crucial activities that must take place to achieve the objectives. Each action also has a timeframe and responsible party.

### TIMEFRAME

Each action has been assigned a timeframe to help those using the matrix prioritize objectives and actions and evaluate progress (see Figure 1-2). The timeframe for each action may be short (0-2 years), medium (2-5 years), longterm (5 years or greater), or ongoing. While actions with a shorter timeframe will likely need to be focused on immediately, longer term actions may require a greater effort. It will be important to begin implementing these actions so the timeframe is met.

### RESPONSIBLE PARTY

Responsible parties (Figure 1-2) have been identified for each action. In some cases, one person or group may be responsible and in other cases many groups may be responsible. By assigning a person,

department, or group to each action, this creates clarity and responsibility for who should be carrying out that action, helping to ensure the action is implemented. Responsible parties should frequently revisit and evaluate progress on their assigned actions. The responsible parties include:

- Mayor
- City Council
- Planning Commission
- Law Department
- Zoning Administrator
- Economic Development
- Parks & Recreation Department
- Public Works
- Local Organizations
- Private Sector
- School District
- Residents (Voters)

Local organizations could include community improvement districts, rotary clubs, historic preservation or neighborhood block groups. The private sector would include developers, consulting firms, and other, similar types of organizations.

## MEASURING SUCCESS

The Plan recommendations should be used on a daily basis by City staff and leadership alike to confirm that the policies and budgetary decisions they make are furthering the goals within this Plan. On an annual basis, a meeting to thoroughly review the progress of the Plan's recommendations should be scheduled with all City staff, officials and members of the public that are working on the Plan's implementation. This is important to ensure progress is being made on the recommendations and to identify any obstacles or opportunities in completing the actions.

Figure 5-1: Implementation Matrix Framework

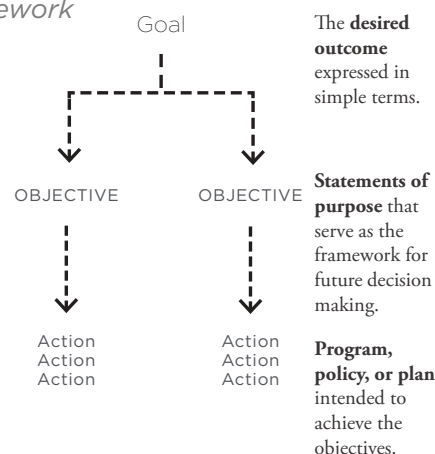


Figure 5-2: Implementation Parties & Timeframe

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES		
M	Mayor	
C	City Council	
PC	Planning Commission	
LD	Law Department	
Z	Zoning Administrator	
ED	Economic Development Department	
PR	Parks & Recreation Department	
PW	Public Works Department	
LO	Local Organizations	
P	Private Sector	
SD	School District	
R	Residents (Voters)	
TIMEFRAME		
Short	S	0-2 years
Medium	M	2-5 years
Long	L	5+ years
Ongoing	O	Continuous



# IMPLEMENTATION

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## PLAN GOALS



### IMPROVED LAKEFRONT ACCESS

Identify and establish new points of access to the lakefront through public green spaces where residents can interact with Lake Erie.



### DEVELOP A TOWN CENTER

Create a signature area which serves as the economic and community center offering a diverse mix of uses (retail, housing, open space), while enhancing the community brand and image.



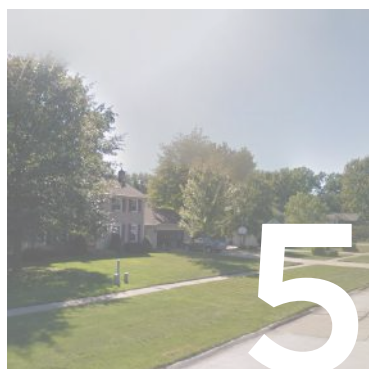
### EXPAND & ENHANCE BIKE & TRAIL CONNECTIVITY

Improve and expand active transportation to safely and efficiently support on-road and off-road (trail) infrastructure.



## CREATE NEW PARKS/OPEN SPACES

Look for opportunities to create or expand parks and open spaces which encourage community/social gatherings and events.



## MAINTAIN HIGH QUALITY HOUSING WHILE DIVERSIFYING THE HOUSING STOCK

Maintain single-family housing, while increasing the variety of housing types.



## INDUSTRIAL INNOVATION

Continued development of the industrially zoned areas of Avon Lake.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### GOAL 1:

*Identify and establish new points of access to the lakefront through public green spaces where residents can interact with Lake Erie.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.1:</b> Maintain and improve resident access to the lakefront through parks and open spaces.		
<b>Action 1.1.1:</b> Create a policy for purchasing lakefront land for the development of public spaces.	S	M C PC ED
<b>Action 1.1.2:</b> Outline lakefront zones for future city development.	M	M C PC ED PR PW
<b>Action 1.1.3:</b> Identify available parcels within the Lake Road Focus Area for purchase.	S	ED PR PW
<b>Action 1.1.4:</b> Identify available parcels near the Lear Road Focus Area for purchase.	S	ED PR PW
<b>Action 1.1.5:</b> Develop a plan for the implementation of a park space along the lakefront.	M - L	M C PC ED PR PW P
<b>Action 1.1.6:</b> Maintain and enhance existing parks and open spaces along the lakefront.	O	PR LO PW P
<b>Action 1.1.7:</b> Seek funding sources through local, regional, and federal agencies for implementation.	O	M C ED PR PW P

## GOAL 2:

*A City that has signature development areas that serve as economic centers, central gathering places, and that unite the community while enhancing the community's image and brand.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.1:</b> Strengthen the built environment, city's identity, promote walkability and integrate public spaces in the Lake Road Focus Area.		
<b>Action 2.1.1:</b> Create a detailed site plan for the area.	M	M C PC PW P
<b>Action 2.1.2:</b> Identify and create economic development incentives to advance the development of the district.	M - O	M C PC LD ED LO P
<b>Action 2.1.3:</b> Establish design guidelines to further enhance the industrial and lakefront district character and brand.	S	M C PC LD Z
<b>Action 2.1.4:</b> Enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized connections through the district and to Miller Road Park.	L	PC PR PW LO
<b>Action 2.1.5:</b> Identify strategic lakefront parcels for purchase to create and develop a public green space with lakefront access.	S - M	ED PR PW
<b>Action 2.1.6:</b> Review and amend existing zoning districts, specifically setbacks to encourage more street-scale developments and sign standards.	S	M C PC LD Z
<b>Action 2.1.7:</b> Look for opportunities to encourage recreational boater activity in the area.	O	M C PC PR LO P
<b>Action 2.1.8:</b> Develop marketing and communication tools to promote redevelopment of sites in the area.	M	ED PR LO P



## IMPLEMENTATION

### GOAL 2: continued

*A City that has signature development areas that serve as economic centers, central gathering places, and that unite the community while enhancing the community's image and brand.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.2:</b> Plan for and create a new, vibrant mixed use district located in the center of the community (Town Center Focus Area)		
<b>Action 2.2.1:</b> Create a detailed site plan for the area.	M	M C PC PW P
<b>Action 2.2.2:</b> Review and amend existing zoning regulations, specifically setback requirements, architectural design standards, sign standards, and density requirements to encourage more urban-style development.	S - M	M C PC LD Z ED LO P
<b>Action 2.2.3:</b> Develop a centralized public green/open space in the underutilized parking lot to create a focal space for community gatherings and events.	S - M	PC PR PW P LO
<b>Action 2.2.4:</b> Promote infill development within the area that has smaller footprints and fits the demand of the community.	O	ED LO P
<b>Action 2.2.5:</b> Enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and other non-motorized connections through and around the focus area.	M - L	PC PR PW LO
<b>Action 2.2.6:</b> Outline corridor improvements within the focus area which transform the overall streetscape and promote the City's identity.	M - L	M C Z PW P LO
<b>Action 2.2.7:</b> Look for additional opportunities to create small public spaces and amenities throughout the focus area which enhance the pedestrian experience.	O	ED PR PW LO P
<b>Action 2.2.8:</b> Identify and create economic development incentives to advance the development of the district.	M - O	M C PC LD ED P

## GOAL 2: continued

*A City that has signature development areas that serve as economic centers, central gathering places, and that unite the community while enhancing the community's image and brand.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>Action 2.2.9:</b> Promote facade and building improvements to existing owners and tenants that remain, to update their look and feel.	L	PC Z ED LO P
<b>Action 2.2.10:</b> Study the option to consolidate City buildings into the focus area to centralize all City departments and services.	L	M C LD PW SD R
<b>Action 2.2.11:</b> Develop marketing and communication tools to promote infill and redevelopment of the focus area.	M	ED LO P
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.3:</b> Promote infill development, a safe pedestrian network, and build on the historic character of the 45s (Lear Road Focus Area)		
<b>Action 2.3.1:</b> Maintain and enhance the aesthetics of The 45s including the public and private realm.	O	ED PW LO P
<b>Action 2.3.2:</b> Explore the idea of creating a historic district to promote preservation and open access to additional funding opportunities.	L	M C PC Z
<b>Action 2.3.3:</b> Review and amend existing zoning regulations, specifically setback requirements, sign standards, and sidewalk requirements to encourage pedestrian-oriented development.	M	M C PC LD Z ED LO P
<b>Action 2.3.4:</b> Plan for corridor improvements to enhance Lear Road and transform the overall streetscape (landscaping) and promote the areas identity and history.	M - L	PW LO P

## IMPLEMENTATION

### GOAL 2: continued

*A City that has signature development areas that serve as economic centers, central gathering places, and that unite the community while enhancing the community's image and brand.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>Action 2.3.5:</b> Identify vacant or underutilized parcels in the area for purchase to develop a district parking lot.	S - M	M C ED LO P
<b>Action 2.3.6:</b> Promote facade and building improvements to existing owners and tenants that remain to update their look and feel.	M - L	PC Z ED LO P
<b>Action 2.3.7:</b> Enhance pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure through the focus area for improved connections.	M - L	PR PW LO
<b>Action 2.3.8:</b> Look for opportunities for green infrastructure installation for stormwater management.	M - L	PR PW LO
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.4:</b> Retain existing small and local businesses within the community		
<b>Action 2.4.1:</b> Meet with local companies to discuss opportunities to expand and capture more local demand for their product(s) and identify challenges and barriers to expansion.	O	M C ED
<b>Action 2.4.2:</b> Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings to provide affordable yet updated space for small businesses.	O	PC Z ED LO P
<b>Action 2.4.3:</b> Collaborate with regional organizations to support and attract local businesses.	O	M C ED LO P
<b>Action 2.4.4:</b> Update the zoning code to support small format retailers and discourage large format retail.	M	M C PC LD Z

## GOAL 3:

*Improve and expand the transportation network to safely and efficiently support on-road and off-road (trail) bike infrastructure.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.1:</b> Continue to plan for enhanced active transportation facilities throughout Avon Lake.		
<b>Action 3.1.1:</b> Perform a pedestrian safety and accessibility audit to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current non-motorized framework.	M	PC PW LO
<b>Action 3.1.2:</b> Prioritize previously planned bikeway and trail connections to increase access and connectivity.	M	PC PW LO
<b>Action 3.1.3:</b> Prioritize an all-purpose trail on Electric Boulevard and Lear Road (north of Walker Road).	M	PW LO
<b>Action 3.1.4:</b> Establish bike facilities along Avon Belden Road and Jaycox Road for improved connectivity.	L	PW LO
<b>Action 3.1.5:</b> Increase and enhance current non-motorized connections from neighborhoods to parks and public spaces.	L	PR PW
<b>Action 3.1.6:</b> Explore additional funding opportunities such as Safe Routes to School, Clean Ohio Trails Fund, and local programs through NOACA, for installing pedestrian and bicycle facilities.	L	M C PC PR PW LO P
<b>Action 3.1.7:</b> Continue participation in the Lorain County Lakefront Connectivity Plan for further enhancements to the Lake Road bike facilities.	O	M C PC PR PW
<b>Action 3.1.8:</b> Update new bikeway and trail facilities within NOACA's regional bikeway plan and map.	L	PR PW LO
<b>Action 3.1.9:</b> Partner with neighboring communities and regional partners in coordinating bike and trail facility connections.	L	M C PC PR PW LO P



## IMPLEMENTATION

### GOAL 3: continued

*Improve and expand the transportation network to safely and efficiently support on-road and off-road (trail) bike infrastructure.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.2:</b> Apply brand elements to streetscapes and trail networks through active transportation implementation.		
<b>Action 3.2.1:</b> Update the Capital Improvements Plan for the City, which include updated bike and trail facilities.	M	M C PC PW
<b>Action 3.2.2:</b> Enhance gateways at key locations to welcome visitors and residents into the City.	L	M C PC PW LO P
<b>Action 3.2.3:</b> Enhance the overall design and aesthetic of thoroughfares through landscaping, lighting, and banner guidelines.	L	M C LD PW Z PC LO
<b>Action 3.2.4:</b> Apply the Avon Lake brand and image to signage.	O	M C PC PW LO P

## GOAL 4:

*Look for opportunities to create or expand parks and open spaces which encourage community/ social gatherings and events.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.1:</b> Continue to improve and expand parks in Avon Lake		
<b>Action 4.1.1:</b> Retain the existing recreational land.	O	M C PC LD ED PR
<b>Action 4.1.2:</b> Ensure all residents live within an accessible distance from parks (at least 1/4 mile) by creating new parks in existing and underserved neighborhoods.	O	M C PC PR
<b>Action 4.1.3:</b> Promote amenities within the park system for a variety of users (e.g. seniors, children).	O	PR LO
<b>Action 4.1.4:</b> Create a focus on health in the community through programming opportunities such as community gardens.	O	M C PC PR LO
<b>Action 4.1.5:</b> To provide adequate parkland for an increasing population, incorporate parkland and public space into site regulations for new developments.	O	M C LD PC PR LO
<b>Action 4.1.6:</b> Continue to maintain and enhance recreational land, facilities, programs, and services to meet the evolving needs of the residents of the City and its neighboring communities.	O	PC PR LO
<b>Action 4.1.7:</b> Create nodes in the Town Center to provide better connected public gathering spaces, as well as opportunities for enhanced social interaction.	L	PC LD Z ED PR LO P
<b>Action 4.1.8:</b> Maintain and enhance existing relationships that promote recreational land, programs, and services for all park and recreational facility users.	O	M C PC ED PR
<b>Action 4.1.9:</b> Continue to seek funding sources through local, regional, and federal agencies for implementation of new park spaces and upgrades to existing spaces.	O	M C ED PW

## IMPLEMENTATION

### GOAL 4: *continued*

*Look for opportunities to create or expand parks and open spaces which encourage community/ social gatherings and events.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.2:</b> Create an green space network in the City that is linked and cohesively planned.		
<b>Action 4.2.1:</b> Define and outline trail network priorities which link existing and future park spaces to one another.	S - M	PC PR PW LO
<b>Action 4.2.2:</b> Maintain existing partnership with Lorain County Metro Parks to support and expand park operations.	O	M C PC PR
<b>Action 4.2.3:</b> Partner with non-profits and foundations to support and potentially expand parks and open spaces within the community.	L	M C PC PR LO
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.3:</b> Plan for and create open spaces in commercial/retail and industrial areas for users and employees.		
<b>Action 4.3.1:</b> Define opportunities for open spaces (plazas squares, etc.) for use by users and employees for outdoor activity and interaction.	M - L	PC Z PR LO P
<b>Action 4.3.2:</b> Ensure a high quality of design and usability of the space.	O	M C PC Z

## GOAL 5:

*Promote a diverse mix of housing options, while maintaining single-family residential character*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.1:</b> Encourage a diversity of housing types to holistically serve the Avon Lake community.		
<b>Action 5.1.1:</b> Encourage a range of housing options that supports Avon Lake's aging population.	O	M C PC Z
<b>Action 5.1.2:</b> Promote the creation of high quality multi-family housing options in key areas that are well connected to nearby amenities to attract a younger generation of residents.	M	M C PC Z
<b>Action 5.1.3:</b> Encourage a variety of household types and structures to accommodate for the decreasing household and family size.	O	M PC Z
<b>Action 5.1.4:</b> Identify and plan for Capital Improvements that advance ongoing neighborhood revitalization efforts.	S - M	M C PC PW
<b>Action 5.1.5:</b> Update the zoning code to create flexibility for mixed use developments such as areas identified as Focus Areas on the Future Land Use Map.	S	M C PC LD Z
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.2:</b> Consider medium density residential development as a strategy to revitalize key focus areas.		
<b>Action 5.2.1:</b> Promote residential infill and redevelopment in key focus areas (see focus area goals for more information).	L - O	M PC Z P
<b>Action 5.2.2:</b> Create and implement quality architectural standards that are timeless and contextual.	L	PC LD Z
<b>Action 5.2.3:</b> Promote the creation and expansion of missing-middle housing.	O	M C PC Z



## IMPLEMENTATION

### GOAL 5: *continued*

*Promote a diverse mix of housing options, while maintaining single-family residential character*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.3:</b> Strengthen existing single-family neighborhoods.		
<b>Action 5.3.1:</b> Allow for flexibility in improvements and additions to existing homes.	O	PC Z
<b>Action 5.3.2:</b> Maintain and enhance single-family expansion techniques through zoning regulations.	L	M C PC LD Z
<b>Action 5.3.3:</b> Incorporate sidewalks, where currently lacking or in need of maintenance, into road repair plans.	L	PW Z
<b>Action 5.3.4:</b> Support coordinated street tree planting by private property owners or through a city led program.	O	M C PC PR PW LO
<b>OBJECTIVE 5.4:</b> Ensure all housing developments incorporate high quality materials and design.		
<b>Action 5.4.1:</b> Create design standards for multifamily residential development that regulate design and materials.	M	M C PC PW LD Z

## GOAL 6:

*Continue development of the industrially zoned areas of Avon Lake.*

	TIMEFRAME	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
<b>OBJECTIVE 6.1:</b> Continue to plan for strategic development to further enhance the industrial area.		
<b>Action 6.1.1:</b> Establish design guidelines to maintain a high quality of site orientation and building design.	M	PC LD Z PW
<b>Action 6.1.2:</b> Develop marketing and communication tools to promote site development and innovations.	O	ED LO P
<b>Action 6.1.3:</b> Ensure that future development within the industrial areas still includes pedestrian elements for employees.	L	PC Z PW
<b>Action 6.1.4:</b> Meet with local companies to discuss opportunities to expand and capture more local demand for their product(s) and identify challenges and barriers to expansion.	S - O	M C ED LO P
<b>Action 6.1.5:</b> Collaborate with regional organizations to support and attract new industrial businesses.	O	M C ED PW
<b>Action 6.1.6:</b> Identify and create economic development incentives to advance the development of the district.	L	M C PC LD ED P
<b>Action 6.1.7:</b> Ensure that the roadway network meets the demand and requirements for the industrial businesses.	O	M C PW



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