

# HOWLAND TOWNSHIP

## COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

JULY 2010



**Stantec**





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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY





### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Introduction

Each and every Township resident has a vision of what their community should be in the future. Although their visions may be different, they each share common qualities. They each aspire to create a safe, beautiful Township for their families, children, for future generations.

Collectively, they envision a Township with diverse housing and job opportunities, where the natural environment is protected, and where excellent services are provided in a manner where public health is maximized. They aspire to create a Township that



is economically-sustainable and a good place to do business. No matter where the differences may surface, they collectively cherish their community.

This Plan update builds upon the momentum created by the Township’s first planning process back in 1998-99. It integrates the ideas and aspirations of Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan Steering Committee, its residents, businesses, and Township officials into a coherent vision of proactive initiatives and ideas.

#### Purpose of the Plan

The Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan is the Community’s official document that enumerates goals, objectives, and strategies in several areas such as community services and facilities, public health, demographics and housing, economic development, land use, transportation, and natural resources.

The Plan will serve several roles in promoting the quality of life of Township residents and business owners. It will be used by the Township Trustees and

Zoning Commission to evaluate land use changes and to make capital improvement decisions. It will be used by Township staff and their respective departments- in conjunction with the Zoning Resolution- to promote planning and development initiatives and to continue to protect and preserve the Township’s natural resources. It will be used by citizens, neighborhood groups, and developers to help in promoting a more green and sustainable community.

#### Use of the Plan

This Plan has numerous uses. Not only will it serve as a document that highlights the Community’s intentions for the future, the Plan also provides tremendous assistance in the following ways:

1. To serve as a guide for the overall growth and redevelopment including providing assistance and direction to residents, business officials and public officials.
2. To serve as a basis for the administration of the Zoning Resolution and as a guide for



making reasonable decisions on development and rezoning applications.

3. To promote innovative, sustainable and “green” development and redevelopment practices.

4. To ensure the continuity of long-range economic development, planning, and capital improvement policies and programs.

5. To assist in applying for state and federal grant programs that would benefit Howland Township.

6. To preserve the aesthetic and natural character of Howland Township.



7. To promote the safety, prosperity, health, morals, and aesthetics of Howland residents.

### **The Planning Process**

The planning process utilized the 1999 Comprehensive Plan as a basis of where to begin. The process consisted of analyzing the existing conditions of Howland, establishing goals and objectives, deciding upon alternative solutions to problems and selecting methods of implementing the Plan. Throughout the 18-month process, public and private officials, business owners, and citizens were involved and had several methods to provide comment.

### **Major Initiatives of the Plan**

Several ideas surfaced during this Plan update (See Map: Future Initiatives). These ideas, coined “Future Initiatives” are:

#### **Promote and Revitalize Major Commerce Centers**

Howland Township’s key access to main transportation routes has helped to promote its economic growth. It is home to key commerce

areas like the “Golden Triangle,” and the East Market Street, Elm Road, and SR 46 commercial corridors. Proactive strategies are contained in this Plan to help promote these areas and the businesses that occupy them.

#### **Promote Pedestrian Connectivity**

Increasing healthy mobility opportunities for Township residents is a major theme of the Plan and future goal of the Township. Providing this amenity will help to promote healthy alternatives of travel and help to minimize vehicular congestion.

#### **Protect and Preserve Natural Resources**

Howland Township has a wide array of natural assets and resources within its boundaries. The community has an overwhelming amount of mature trees and protected open and green spaces along the Mosquito Creek Watershed. Ensuring that future development is sensitive to the Township’s natural assets is a goal defined throughout this Plan. Promoting conservation easements, developing a Tree Preservation Resolution, and



pursuing grant resources to continue this policy of preservation is supported in the Plan.

### Utilize Economic Development Tools

The Plan identifies additional economic development incentives and methods that will help Township officials with business attraction, retention, and expansion efforts. The entire Township is already designated an Enterprise Zone. New tools like Community Reinvestment Area program, Cooperative Economic Development Agreements (CEDA), Joint Economic Development Zones (JEDZ), Special and Business Incentive Districts, the development of a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) and other grant/loan programs have been described in detail in this Plan and could be utilized to encourage innovative growth and redevelopment efforts.

### Update the Zoning Resolution

Because the Plan recommends new ideas, it is important that the Township’s Zoning Resolution be updated to reflect these ideas and able to

promote a type of development envisioned in the Plan. An updated and streamlined zoning resolution could help the Township’s development and revitalization efforts. Zoning tools and strategies are highlighted within the Land Use chapter.

### Encourage Infill Development

Addressing the revitalization of existing commercial centers and encouraging infill development will assist the Township in maintaining sustainable growth. These areas include Elm Road, Bolindale and Morgandale. The Economic Development and Land Use chapters of this Plan are developed to work in unison to encourage mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly opportunities where feasible, and to help attain many of the important goals outlined in the Plan.

### Improve Gateways and Signage

Additional gateways and signage were proposed to enhance the Township’s image, identity, and to compliment its character. These elements will function as a decorative feature as well as

directional signage to improve the experience of visitors and residents within the community.

### Promote Additional Corridor Planning

The Plan supports the community’s vision to reduce vehicular usage, promote public health through pedestrian linkages, and improve the visual appearance and safety of its commercial corridors. This Plan recommends several methods that can be applied to these corridors, such as the “Complete Streets” model.

### Potential Roundabouts

Various locations in Howland Township may be candidates to examine for possible roundabouts. As a method to promote efficient traffic flow, roundabouts are generally accepted as safer alternative for a couple of reasons. One is they decrease the number of possible conflict points between vehicles and eliminates left turns.

Roundabouts can also offer 30 percent higher capacity than traditional traffic signals. The East Market/SR 46 and SR 46 and North River Road



intersections may be possible good locations for a roundabouts (See Map: Potential Gateways, Roundabouts, and Pedestrian/Bike Linkages for other locations).

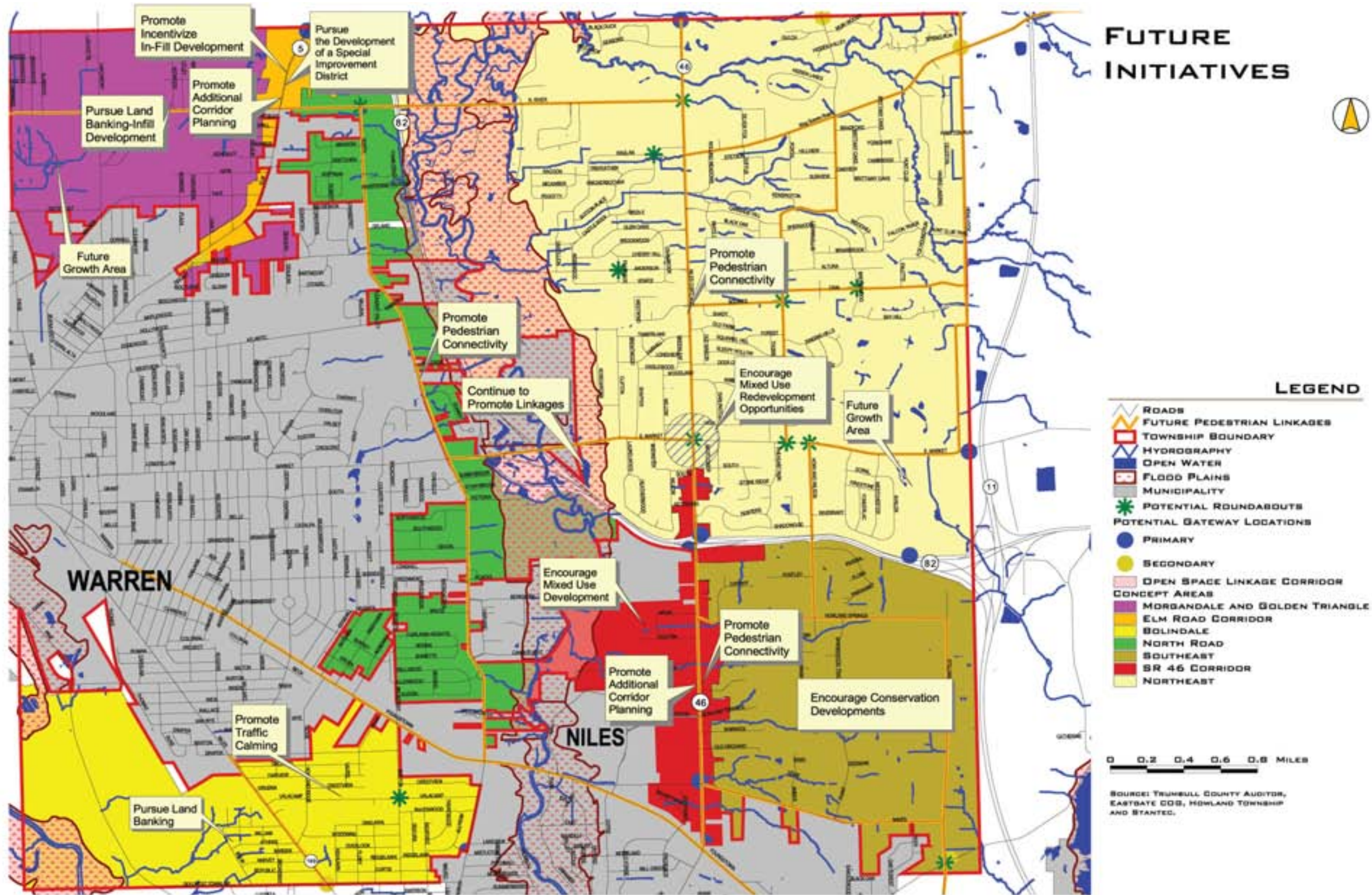
Implementation Chapter, the Plan should also be reviewed, updated and/or amended to reflect the current growth and economic trends, and community preferences.

### Continued Stormwater Mitigation Improvements

A variety of conditions have led to flooding in some of the Township's neighborhoods of the last several years. Increased impervious surfaces, soils, topography, increased precipitation, and aging infrastructure are all variables that have helped to promote flooding. To help minimize flooding, Township Officials have adopted a Riparian Setback resolution and the Plan illustrates many methods the community can use to minimize stormwater runoff.

### Updating the Comprehensive Community Plan

Because of the fluid nature of community and economic development, it is recommended that this Plan be reviewed annually by the Township Administration and Zoning Commission to ensure that the Plan's general goals and objectives are being met. As highlighted in this Plan's



HOWLAND TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN





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Howland Township  
Planning + Progress



### Welcome


We appreciate your interest in the Howland Township community

- Planning Process ▶
- Planning Materials ▶
- Community Survey ▶
- Planning Committee ▶
- Planning 101 ▶
- Press ▶
- FTP ▶



Howland



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# COMMUNITY SURVEY



### COMMUNITY SURVEY

#### Introduction

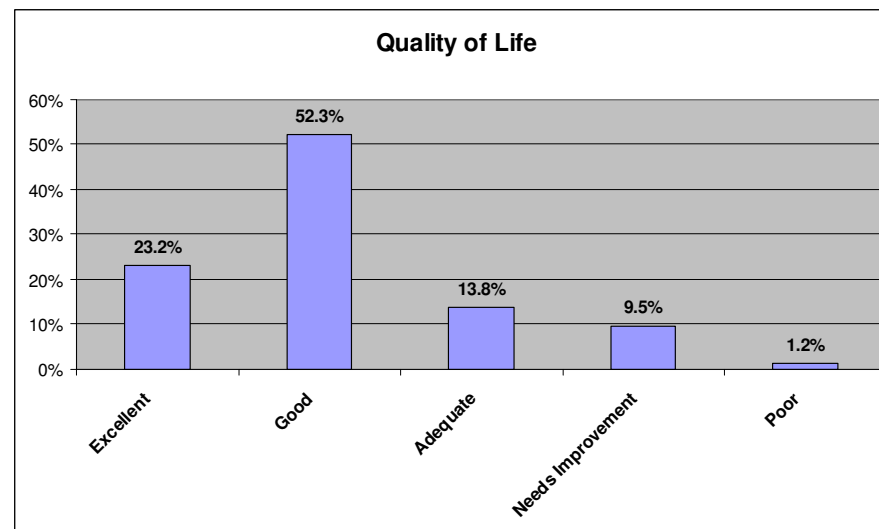
An interactive website ([www.planhowland.com](http://www.planhowland.com)) and online community survey was developed and customized by the planning steering committee to assist in the collection of public opinion. During three weeks in August 2008, approximately 500 Township residents completed the survey on the website and information on the planning process was posted to the site to inform and invite residents to participate in planning their community.

#### Survey Results

The residents that responded to the survey were mostly homeowners (94%). Business owners and renters accounted for roughly three percent (3%) each. Less than one percent (1%) of survey takers were absentee property owners. Fifty-four percent (54%) of the respondents were female.

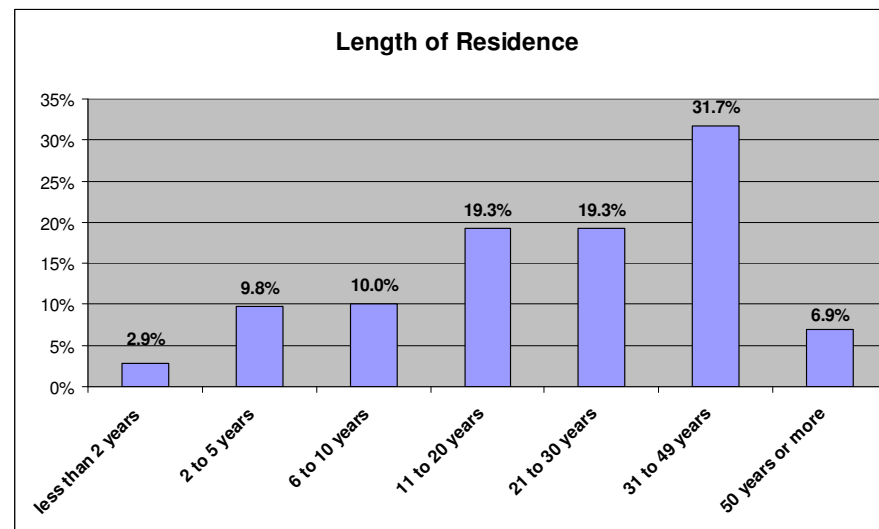
A majority of respondents indicated that the quality of life in Howland is “Good”. In fact, Fifty-two percent (52%) of the residents who were surveyed said that was the case. Twenty-three percent (23%) of

residents said their quality of life was “Excellent”,



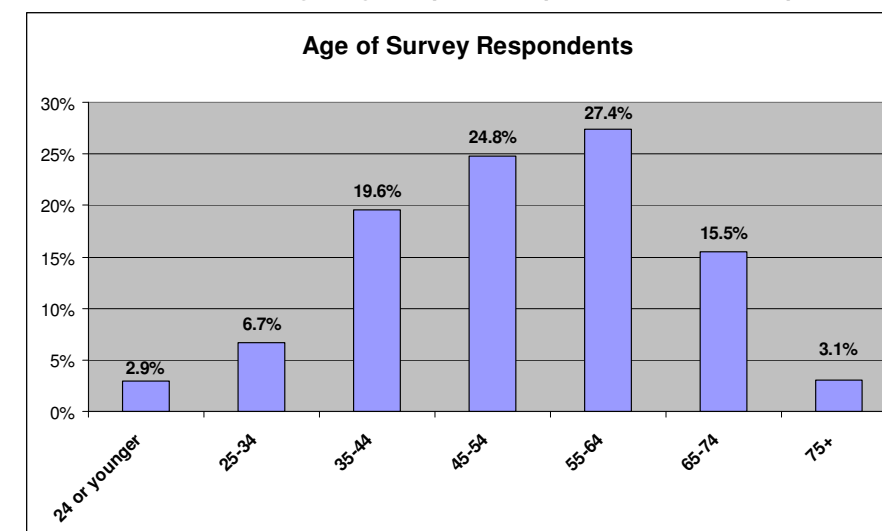
compared to only ten percent (10%) that said the Township “Needs Improvement”. Fourteen percent (14%) said their quality of life in the Township was “Adequate” and one percent said it was “Poor”.

A majority of Howland residents surveyed noted living in Howland for over 20 years (57.9%) with the largest



percentage of residents surveyed living in Howland between 31 and 49 years (31.7%). Forty-two percent (42%) of the residents surveyed have lived in Howland for less than 20 years. Approximately 22.8% of the surveyed residents lived in Howland Township for less than 10 years indicating a good range of tenure by residents.

The age of the respondents was a strength of the survey. It trended toward the bell curve more than surveys implemented in the same manner. The largest percentage of residents was in the 55 to 64 age category (27.4%). Twenty-five percent (25%) were between the ages of 45 to 55, twenty percent (20%) were between the ages of 35 to 44, and sixteen percent (16%) were between the ages of 65 to 74. The 25 to 34 age group comprised seven percent



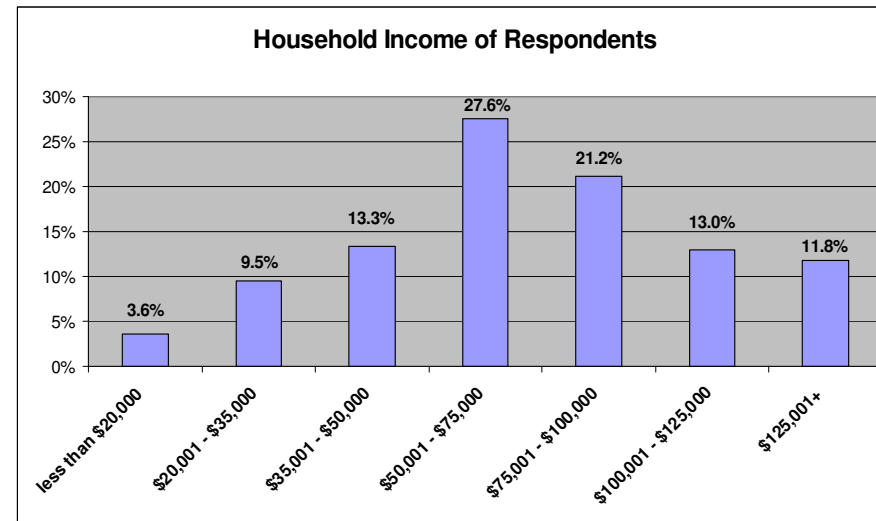


(7%) of the survey sample. The smallest age groups to complete the survey percentage-wise were the 75 and older and 24 and younger, with three percent (3%) each.

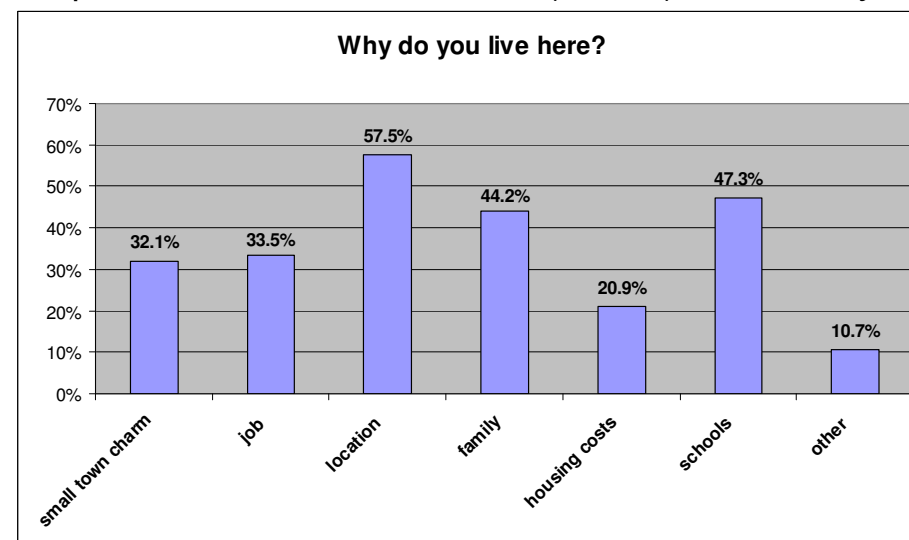
The race of the surveyed residents resembled the racial composition of the 2000 Census. Caucasians made up ninety-two percent (92%) of the surveyed residents, seven percent (7%) were African American and the remaining one percent (1%) were of Hispanic, Asian, American Indian, or of another descent.

The household income of the surveyed residents also shows a good representation of audience. Twenty seven percent (27%) of the surveyed residents noted a household income between \$50,000 and \$75,000. The next highest percentage of reported household income was the \$75,000 to \$100,000 category (21.2%). Thirteen percent (13%) noted incomes between \$35,000 and \$50,000, while three percent (3%) of respondents noted a household income of under \$20,000. Household incomes above \$75,000 are a much smaller percentage. Thirteen percent (13%) of the residents surveyed have household

incomes between \$100,000 and \$125,000. The remaining eleven percent (11%) of residents surveyed reported household incomes of over \$125,000.



The most popular/prominent reason why people noted moving to Howland Township was its “location” (57.5%). The second most popular reason respondents noted is schools (47.3%) with family a



close third (44.2%). Jobs are also an important factor: roughly thirty-four percent (34%) of the surveyed residents believed this to be true. The small-town charm was a reason for thirty-two percent (32%) of those surveyed, while housing costs and other reasons were less important to the surveyed residents with approximately twenty percent (20%) and ten percent (10%), respectively.

The employment status and location of employment for residents varied. Twenty-five percent (25%) of the respondents surveyed are retired. Thirty-eight percent (38%) of the respondents and the majority of employed residents work in Trumbull County, but outside of Howland.

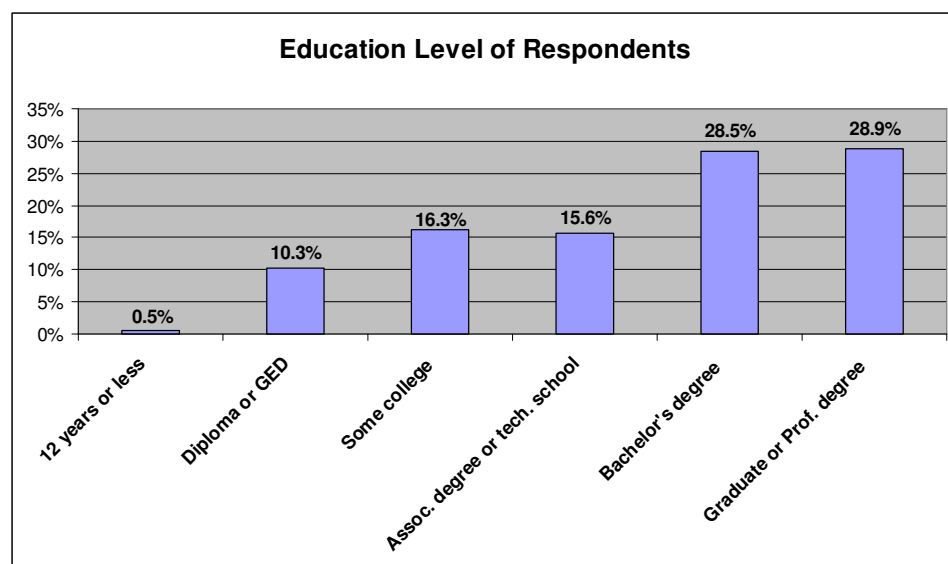
Residents who work in Howland accounted for nineteen percent (19%) of respondents. Thirteen percent (13%) noted working outside of Trumbull County and three percent (3%) are self-employed. Only two percent (2%) reported being unemployed.

The households of the survey respondents were generally small with forty-four percent (44%) of those



surveyed have only two (2) people. Three- and four-person households accounted for twenty percent (20%) and nineteen percent (19%) respectively. Single households made up ten percent (10%). Five or more person households accounted for less than ten percent (10%) of the surveyed respondents.

Owning a home is an important characteristic of Howland Township with ninety-six percent (96%) of those surveyed saying that they are homeowners. When asked if they would consider buying a home in Howland, seventy-five percent (75%) of renters said yes.



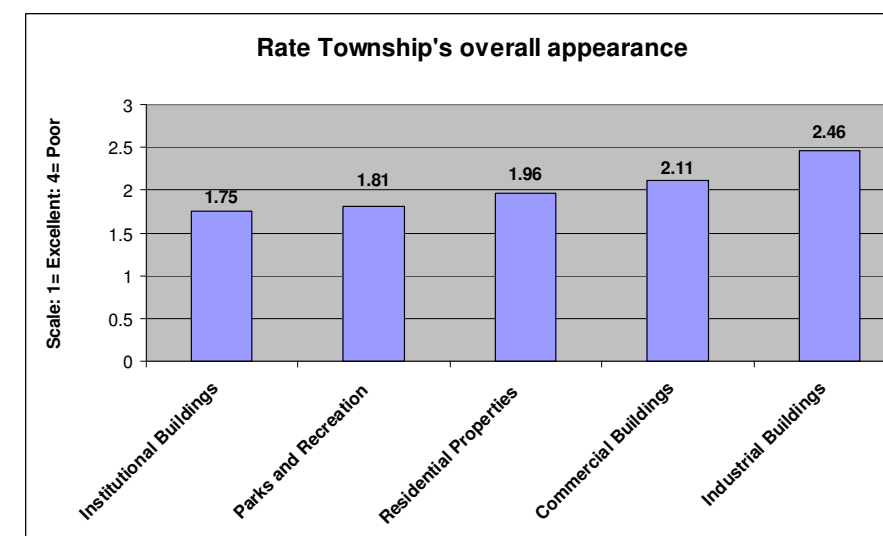
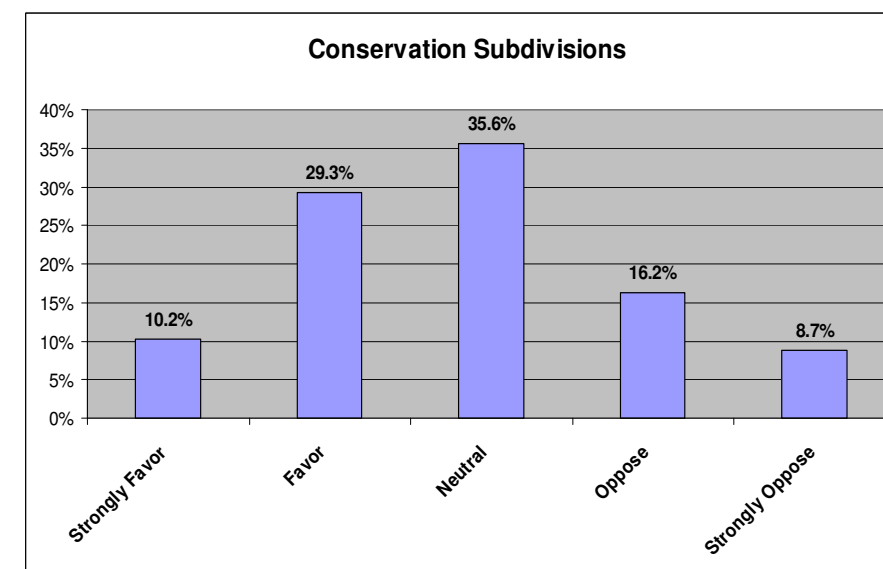
The education attainment of those surveyed was high: approximately twenty-nine percent (29%) reported

having a bachelor's degree, with roughly the same percentage having a graduate or professional degree as well. Sixteen percent (16%) of those surveyed reported having an associate's degree or had some college credit. Ten percent (10%) reported their highest level of education to be a high-school diploma or GED. Less than one percent (1%) of respondents did not complete high-school.

In the last few years, Howland has made an effort to develop more environmentally-friendly planning and zoning standards, but would wish to do more. As an example, those surveyed were asked their opinion on the use of "conservation subdivisions." The response was generally positive, although thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents were neutral on the issue.

Those in favor made up thirty-nine percent (39%), with ten percent (10%) strongly favoring it. Those opposed made up the other twenty-four percent (24%), with nine percent (9%) strongly opposing the subdivisions.

The appearance of Howland Township and the buildings and facilities that comprise it is important to the community. Residents were asked to rate the look of the township from 1 to 4, 1 for excellent, 4 for poor.





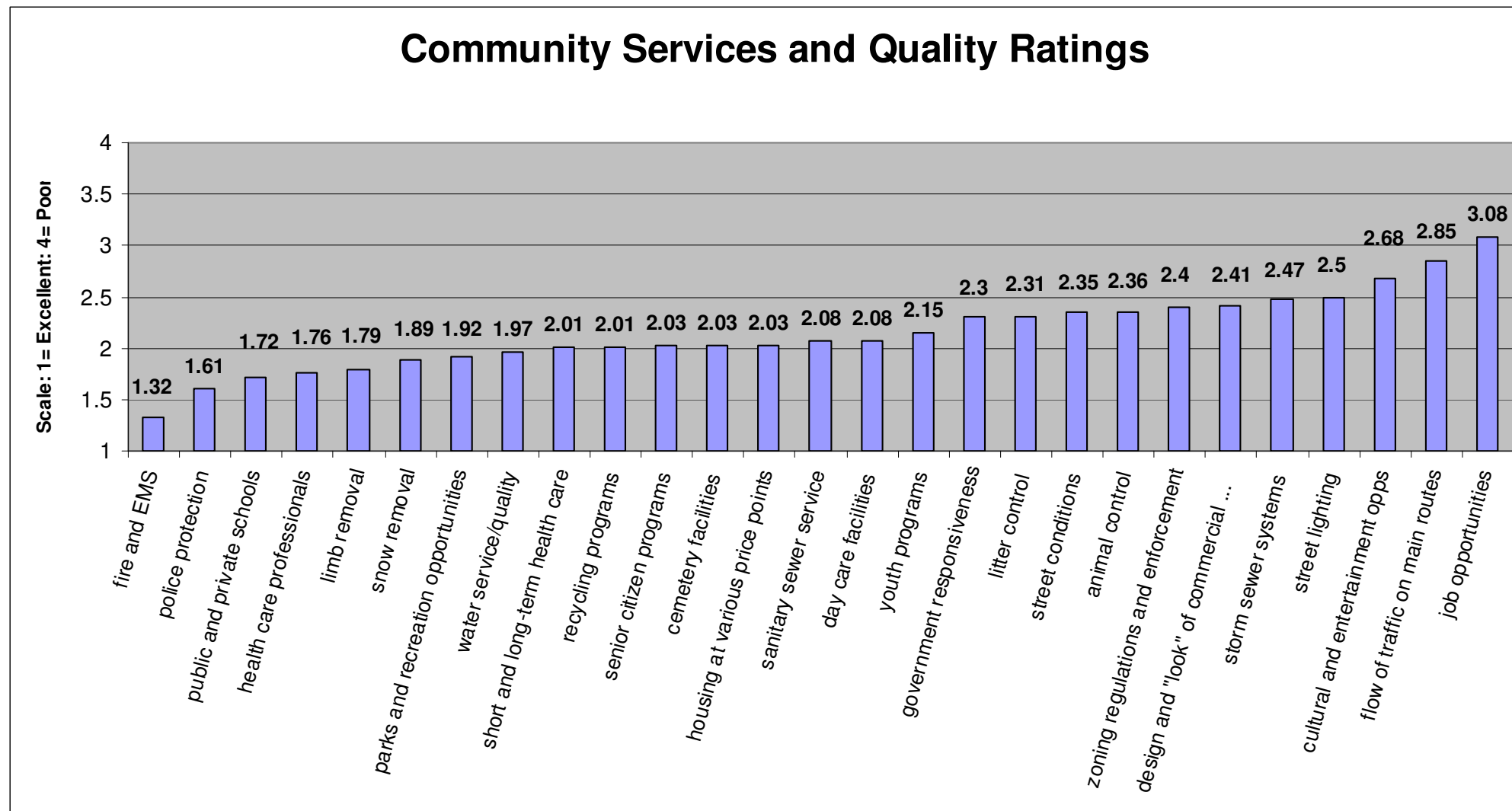
The appearance of institutional buildings (Hospitals, Churches, Government) received a rating of 1.75. Parks and residential properties received ratings of 1.81 and 1.96 respectively. Commercial properties were rated at 2.11 and industrial buildings receiving a rating of 2.46.

Those surveyed were asked if they felt that there was a clear vision for Howland. More than half were unsure and the other half were split with 24.5% saying no and twenty-three percent (23%) saying yes.

Howland residents were asked to rate the Township's services from 1 to 4, 1 for excellent, 4 for poor. Of the 27 services surveyed, none of the services rated poorly. Services receiving a 2 rating or better included fire/emergency, police protection, schools, health care, limb removal, snow removal, and water.

Services receiving a 2.5 rating or better are sanitary and storm sewer, building/design, zoning, government, youth programs, litter control, day care facilities, street conditions, and street lighting. Services receiving a 3 rating or better include job

opportunities, flow of traffic on main routes, and entertainment options.

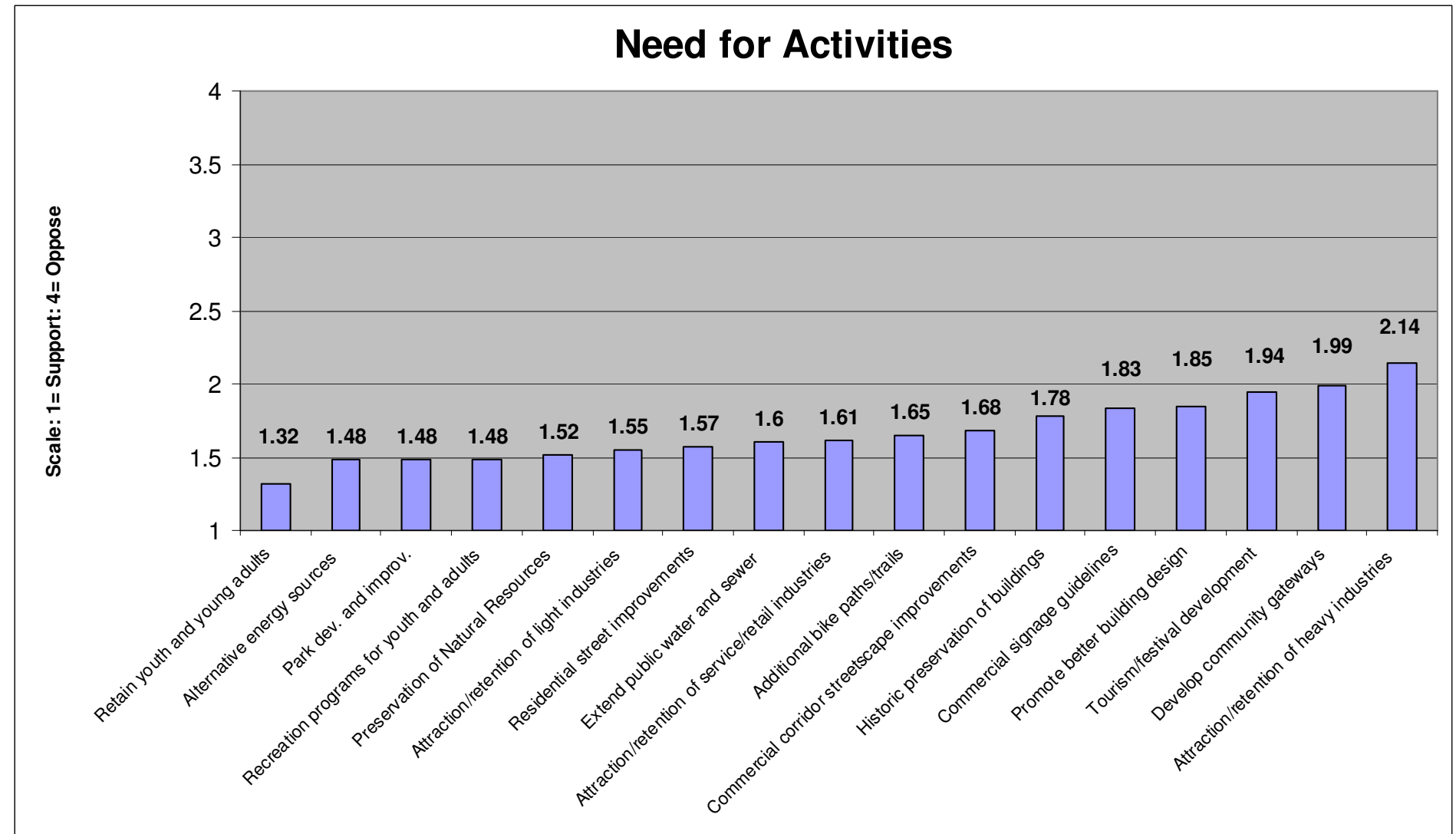




Residents were also asked to rank Howland’s need for activities on a scale from 1 to 4. None of the activities were opposed.

Activities with a 1.5 rating or better include retaining youth, alternative energy sources, park development, and recreation programs for youth.

Activities receiving a 2 rating or better include sewers, historic preservation, commercial signage, and improved building design. Attraction/Retention of heavy industry was the only activity that received over a 2 rating. It appears that those surveyed desire additional movement in most of the activities.





The remaining portion of the random-sample survey asked residents to respond to several open-ended questions ranging from Howland Township’s main strength, to Howland Township’s greatest weakness and from the most needed improvement, to the greatest challenge. Although the results varied, several common themes emerged from them. For full list of comments, please see the Howland Planning and Zoning Department.

Greatest Strength

Public and Private Schools; Fire/EMS and police protection; Sense of Community; People in the community; Small-town feel; Clean and quiet.

Biggest Challenge facing Howland Township

Retaining jobs in the community; Keeping young people in community; Traffic on major roadways;

Neglected and unattractive properties; Current economic conditions; and school finances.

Most Important Improvement

Roadway improvements; Flooding in residential areas; Sidewalk expansion and upkeep; School system improvements; Increase jobs to create tax base; Enforce zoning regulations.

Most Needed Businesses/Services

Different grocery options; Youth/community center; Small, specialized stores; Jobs that encourage youth to stay in community; Sewer improvements and expansion; Expanded entertainment options.

Most Attractive Developments

Township building/Post Office; Hunt Club; Avalon Country Club; Brittany Oaks; The Woods; Gazebo and parks.

Open-Ended Comments

Residents love the community but are concerned about the future of Howland and its school district (with open enrollment), its traffic, and infrastructure; Concerned about schools levies; Encroachment of Warren and Niles into the Township.



## PUBLIC HEALTH





## PUBLIC HEALTH

### Introduction

The public’s health is at the heart of planning, zoning, and land use. Through the Ohio Revised Code, Townships are charged with protecting and promoting the public’s “health, safety, and general welfare” and the courts have repeatedly protected this authority for the public good. This Plan will provide the principles upon which land use decisions will be based, and the goals and objectives for Howland to work toward over the short- and long-term.

Every section of this Plan – Housing and Demographics, Natural Resources, Community Services and Facilities, Economic Development, Land Use, and Transportation and Mobility – will incorporate a public health focus, and subsequent goals, objectives, and implementation strategies. Some of these strategies include mixed-use zoning in certain areas, utilizing a ‘complete streets’ model for roadways, improving quantity and access to parks and open spaces, incorporating LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) development standards for construction, traffic calming, tree

preservation, and community gardens, to name a few. In-line with the role of Township government and the principles and goals of this plan, Howland is committed to ensuring that public health will be a top priority in all future decisions.

### Goals and Objectives

**Goal #1:** Support healthy lifestyles in Howland Township.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Consider public health impacts in all land use, transportation, and community design decisions.

**Goal #2:** Improve air quality and subsequent respiratory health.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Decrease dependence on motor vehicles through affordable, safe, and sustainable transportation options;
2. Promote alternative and renewal energies;

3. Maximize investments made in infrastructure; and
4. Maximize coordination with governmental and non-governmental agencies on exposure reduction.

**Goal #3:** Improve the built environment to encourage active lifestyles.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Ensure street, sidewalk, and bike path safety and accessibility for all users;
2. Increase and enhance park, open space, and recreational facilities; and
3. Ensure accessibility, safety, beauty, and cleanliness of public spaces.

**Goal #4:** Establish a stronger local/regional food system.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Promote community gardens and farmers markets;



- 2. Encourage small scale agriculture in the Township; and
- 3. Encourage county/regional farmland preservation to advocate a local agriculture economy.

**Goal #5:** Improve access to medical, mental health, and social services for all residents.

**Objectives:**

- 1. Maximize use of available resources and programs through other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

**Goal #6:** Improve water quality through greater consideration in land use decisions.

**Objectives:**

- 1. Preserve and enhance existing watershed resources; and
- 2. Protect a safe and reliable water supply that can be used by all sectors of the community.

**Existing Conditions and Trends**

The following excerpt from the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* on “The Public Health Roots of Zoning” provides an excellent public health background as it relates to zoning, planning, and land use:

During the Industrial Revolution, the population and size of major cities in Europe and America grew explosively as people came to work in the steel, coal, and manufacturing industries.<sup>1</sup> Cities did not have the physical infrastructure or the policies to accommodate such rapid growth. The migration to cities, lack of sanitary infrastructure, and relocation of industry within residential areas created ideal conditions for a series of public health crises, such as tuberculosis and cholera. Health experts in the 19<sup>th</sup> century theorized that “miasmas” or “poor atmosphere” resulting from urban accumulations of filth and foul smells,

caused epidemic disease outbreaks.<sup>2,3</sup> Although medical understanding of infectious disease evolved during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the need for regulatory means to protect city dwellers continued. Interest in sanitation reform spurred interest on both continents in the development of legal measures to mitigate the adverse public health impacts of urban development and industrial uses.<sup>4</sup>

At the turn of the century, infectious diseases were the leading causes of death in the United States.<sup>5</sup> Crowded living conditions prevailed for poor residents of cities. Laws designed to address crowding and unsanitary conditions were passed, such as New York City’s Tenement House Act of 1901

<sup>1</sup> Platt, RH. Land-use and society – geography, law, and public policy. Washington DC: Island Press, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Achievements in public health 1900–1999. MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 1999;48(50). Available at: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm4850.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm4850.pdf). Accessed April 29, 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Melosi MV. The sanitary city: urban infrastructure in america from colonial times to the present. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press; 2000.

<sup>4</sup> Platt, RH. Land-use and society – geography, law, and public policy. Washington DC: Island Press, 1996.

<sup>5</sup> Rosen G. A history of public health. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993.



that set forth requirements for the construction and maintenance of dwelling units to increase light and air, and improve living conditions. Such public health laws were based on the powers of state and local governments to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the general public.<sup>6</sup>

Prior to the landmark case of *Ambler Realty v. Village of Euclid*, the only tool that legislators and policy makers had to protect the public's health from unsanitary conditions and excessive smoke, noise, and odors was through declaring them public nuisances.<sup>7</sup> At that time, fire, contagion, and disorder were major concerns in many communities. The *Euclid* case afforded communities zoning powers to provide a more systematic strategy to handle public health issues by validating zoning as a tool for government.

<sup>6</sup> Schilling, Joseph JD, LL.M. and Linton, Leslie S., JD, MPH. The Public Health Roots of Zoning: In Search of Active Living's Legal Genealogy. *Am J Prev Med* 2005;28(2S2):96-104 © 2005 American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Available at: [www.act-trans.ubc.ca/documents/schilling-AJPM-05-zoning.pdf](http://www.act-trans.ubc.ca/documents/schilling-AJPM-05-zoning.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Schilling, Joseph JD, LL.M. and Linton, Leslie S., JD, MPH. The Public Health Roots of Zoning: In Search of Active Living's Legal Genealogy. *Am J Prev Med* 2005;28(2S2):96-104 © 2005 American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Available at: [www.act-trans.ubc.ca/documents/schilling-AJPM-05-zoning.pdf](http://www.act-trans.ubc.ca/documents/schilling-AJPM-05-zoning.pdf)

Fast forward to today, and the causes for concern over public health have evolved. Rates of obesity, type-2 diabetes, and heart disease have reached epidemic proportions. Other infectious diseases and cancer have been on the rise for years as well.

These are all compelling public health problems for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The good news is, by being proactive and developing a better understanding of these issues and their causes on a local level, many of these conditions are reversible. Comprehensive Land Use Plans and local Zoning Resolutions play a major role in systematically trying to address these public health concerns. Linking development patterns and the built environment to health outcomes is important in establishing a connection with a myriad of health issues, such as access to healthy foods, water quality, indoor air quality, and violence prevention, just to name a few.

### ☐ Increasing Physical Activity

- Limited physical activity is a known risk factor for becoming overweight or obese, and a



determinant of a multitude of chronic illnesses including heart disease, cancer, stroke, and type-2 diabetes. Twenty-three percent (23%) of Trumbull County adults report that they failed to participate in 30 minutes per day of moderate physical activity at least five days a week, according to the Ohio Department of Health's 2008 Healthy Ohio Community Profile for Trumbull County. The same profile identifies 37.4% of Trumbull County adults as overweight and 25% as obese. And, according to the 2007 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance, 12.7% of Trumbull County children between the ages of two and five are overweight and over 40% of third



graders are overweight or at risk of being overweight.

- Residents need more opportunities to incorporate physical activity into their daily lives. Howland Township neighborhoods were largely built without the amenities that encourage a more active lifestyle. Neighborhoods lack sidewalks and connecting pathways that could accommodate an evening walk, a bike ride, or a trip to an area destination like the grocery store, a restaurant, or a public park.
- Residents of “highly walkable” communities are more than twice as likely to get the recommended 30 minutes of moderate exercise per day as those who reside in auto-centered communities.<sup>8</sup>

### □ Access to Healthy Food Retail

- Nearly 78 % of Trumbull County residents report consuming fewer than the

<sup>8</sup> Health Perspective on Planning: Built Environments as Determinants of Health, 2008, Public Health Law & Policy (available at [www.healthypartners.org](http://www.healthypartners.org))

recommended five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Low consumption of fruits and vegetables are considered behaviors that increase risk for heart disease, stroke, and certain cancers.<sup>9</sup>

- Public policies that take the food environment into account in order to develop successful strategies should encourage the consumption of healthier foods.

### □ Environmental Health

- *Water Quality* – With development come acres upon acres of pavement and rooftops. These impermeable surfaces prevent rainwater runoff from slowly being absorbed into the ground where natural vegetation, soil, and rocks filter pollution naturally. Instead, the parking lots and roads accelerate runoff, bypassing the cleansing properties of unpaved earth, and carry with it chemicals and microbial contaminants into recreational and drinking water sources.

<sup>9</sup> Healthy Ohio Community Profiles, Trumbull County, 2008, The Ohio Department of Health.



- *Indoor Air Quality* – Americans spend almost 90% of their time indoors. The presence of allergens from pets, pests, dust, radon, and VOCs (volatile organic compounds) from carpeting and paint, second-hand smoke, and mold growth all contribute to poor indoor air quality. The use of low-VOC materials, natural sunlight, and circulation of outdoor air improve indoor air quality.<sup>10</sup>
- *Outdoor Air Quality* – Air pollution aggravates lung diseases such as asthma and bronchitis, causing increased medication use and doctor visits. In particular, particle

<sup>10</sup> Health Perspective on Planning: Built Environments as Determinants of Health, 2008, Public Health Law & Policy (available at [www.healthypartners.org](http://www.healthypartners.org))



pollution exposure has also been linked to heart attacks and cardiac arrhythmias. Primarily, ozone and particle pollution contributors are mobile sources such as motor vehicles, and lawn equipment.

Center for Disease Control (CDC) Research shows that “more than 32 million people in the United States have been diagnosed with asthma at some time. Of the 22 million U.S. residents who currently have asthma, 12 million have had an asthma episode or attack over the past year.”<sup>11</sup> The burden of asthma “falls on our schools, our families, our neighborhoods, our workplaces, our cities, and our states. It falls on our health care system. It falls on all Americans... because we pay for that burden with higher health insurance rates, with lost productivity, and with our tax dollars.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *America Breathing Easier*, CDC National Asthma Control Program.

<sup>12</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *America Breathing Easier*, CDC National Asthma Control Program.

### Size of the Problem in Ohio

- Current prevalence estimates for the State of Ohio indicate that 10.3 percent of adults have been told by a doctor that they have asthma (872,153 adults) - compared to 7.7 percent with diabetes, 5.4 percent who have experienced myocardial infarction and 2.5 percent who have experienced stroke. (Graphs and sources related to these data can be found in Appendix C.)
- The National Health Interview Survey (2002) reports a prevalence rate of 12 percent of children aged 0-17 who have been told by a doctor that they have asthma. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), asthma is the most common long-term childhood disease, affecting 6.3 million children. Nearly one in 13 school-aged children has asthma, and the rate is rising more rapidly in pre-school-aged children than in any other age group. Approximately 4.2 million children had an asthma attack in the last year.
- Healthy People 2010 goals target reduction of hospitalization for asthma. Ohio rates, in all age groups, exceed 2010 targets by at least 40 percent.

### Seriousness of the Problem

- Asthma is the No. 1 cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness resulting annually in approximately 14 million missed school days and an estimated \$957 million lost from care-takers' time off work.
- Asthma accounts for many nights of interrupted sleep, limitation of activity and disruptions of family and care-giver routines. Asthma symptoms that are not severe enough to require a visit to an emergency room or to a physician can still be severe enough to prevent a person with asthma from living a fully active life. For example, the Women & Asthma in America Study found that more than one in four women with asthma report having symptoms every day in the past four weeks.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), asthma is the third-ranking cause of hospitalization among those younger than 15 years of age.
- Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey System (BRFSS) data for Ohio indicate that nearly 40 percent of adults who have asthma say that it has rendered them unable to work or carry out usual activities at some point during the 12 months prior to the interview.
- According to Ohio Hospital Association data in 2001, total hospital charges for individuals with a primary diagnosis of asthma were more than \$100 million.

### ☐ Injury Prevention

- Wider roads lead to exponentially higher crash rates and faster driving speeds.<sup>13</sup> Roads designed to maximize car traffic – high speed, unobstructed, and wide multi-lane roads – are far less likely to be accessed by pedestrians and cyclists.

### ☐ Elder and Child Health

- Studies of children with attention deficit disorder show that the more green the setting for a child, the less likely and less severe his or her attention symptoms.<sup>14</sup>
- Nationally, there are approximately 4.5 million Americans over the age of 75 that do not drive, with this figure likely to grow.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> P. Swift et al., Residential Street Typology and Injury Accident Frequency, originally presented at the Congress for the New Urbanism, Denver, CO, June 1997 (updated Summer 2006).

<sup>14</sup> A. Taylor et al. *Coping With ADD: The Surprising Connection to Green Play Settings*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Environment and Behavior, at 54-77 (2001).

<sup>15</sup> A. Kochera and A. Straight, *Beyond 50.05, A Report to the Nation on Livable Communities: Creating Environments for Successful Aging*, AARP Public Policy Institute (2005).



### ❑ Mental Health and Substance Abuse

- Being close to natural environs regularly, like park, open space, or naturally conserved or preserved settings, reduces anxiety and accelerates recovery from illness.<sup>16</sup>

### ❑ Violence Prevention

- The built environment plays a key role in crime prevention, feeling of safety and control, and neighborhood stability and longevity. The number of bars and drive-through alcohol retailers in a neighborhood can correspond with the amount of violence.

### ❑ Chronic Health Disparities/Poverty

- The greatest rates of mortality in the United States are in cities with the greatest income inequality.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> C. Maller, *Healthy Nature Healthy People: 'Contact with Nature' as an Upstream Health Promotion Intervention for Populations*, Vol. 21, No. 1, Health Promotion International, at 45-54 (2006).

<sup>17</sup> H. Kahn, *Pathways Between Area-Level Income Inequality and Increased Mortality in U.S. Men*, Annals of the NY Academy of Sciences (December 1999).

### ❑ Regional Location

- The convenience in location of residential development to central business districts, healthy food sources, and other resources is a major determinant in the amount that people drive, cycle, walk, or use public transportation. The more inaccessible the basic needs are for residents, the higher the amount of vehicle miles traveled. The subsequent high volume in vehicle miles traveled increases air pollution, vehicular accidents, obesity, anxiety, and blood pressure.<sup>18</sup>

### ❑ Density of Development and Land Use Mix

- Increases in the density of development and the mix of land uses generally correspond with an increase in physical activity, and hence less obese populations, traffic injuries and casualties, and air pollution. Because more dense and diverse developments bring

<sup>18</sup> Health Perspective on Planning: Built Environments as Determinants of Health, 2008, Public Health Law & Policy (available at [www.healthypartners.org](http://www.healthypartners.org))

residents into a closer proximity to destinations, people are more likely to walk and be physically active.

### ❑ Street Connectivity and Street Design

- Roundabouts and other traffic calming measures reduce the risk of pedestrian – particularly children and the elderly – accident, injury, and death.<sup>19</sup>
- Simply slowing traffic down, providing sidewalks and bike lanes, street landscaping, and limiting street widths will severely limit traffic injuries and fatalities to drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians due to traffic accidents.

### ❑ Access to Recreational Facilities

- Establishing better access to existing facilities and providing new places and opportunities to recreate will increase the

<sup>19</sup> E. Geddes et al., *Safety Benefits of Traffic Calming*, Insurance Corporation of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia (1996).



number of residents who exercise three times per week by 25%.<sup>20</sup>

### ☐ Presence of Greenery

- Feelings of stress are reduced by the presence of trees.<sup>21</sup>
- Children more easily concentrate in school when they have easy access to green space at home.<sup>22</sup>

### ☐ Distance from Air Pollution Sources

- “Air pollution is one of the most underappreciated contributors to asthma episodes. Children with asthma are particularly vulnerable to ozone, even at levels below the Environmental Protection Agency’s current standard. Pollution from truck and auto exhaust... raises the risk of

asthma symptoms.”<sup>23</sup> An increase in the number of asthma sufferers and asthma severity is burdened most heavily by those living close to heavily trafficked areas.<sup>24</sup>

- Residents within 1,000 feet of busy streets are at an increased risk of exposure to particulate matter, nitrogen oxide, hydrocarbon, and carbon monoxide poisoning.<sup>25</sup>
- A disproportionately greater number of impairments in lung development in children living near busy highways can lead to long-term respiratory problems.<sup>26</sup>

### ☐ Affordable Housing

- Low-income areas face increased vulnerability to health problems. When affordable housing is available, low-income individuals and families are able to spend

more money on healthy foods and health care, as opposed to transportation and housing costs. Community development strategies can be carved out to improve health conditions and outcomes in low-income areas. This may include community gardens, pocket parks, walkable neighborhoods, and close access to healthy food options.

### ☐ Social Cohesion

- Sharing of open spaces and natural areas is associated with strong social ties within neighborhoods and among neighbors.<sup>27</sup>

These represent just a small snapshot of existing conditions locally, statewide, and nationally. In summation, our modern-day society is very auto-dependent, segregated, and land-hungry. In the 1960s, 50% of school age children walked or rode their bicycle to school. Today, just 10% of kids do the

<sup>20</sup> F. Kahn et al. and the Task Force on Community Prevention Services, *The Effectiveness of Interventions to Increase Physical Activity*, American Journal of Preventive Medicine (May 2002).

<sup>21</sup> P. Tabbush and E. O'Brien, *Health and Well-being: Trees, Woodlands and Natural Spaces*, Forestry Commission, Edinburgh (2003).

<sup>22</sup> A. Taylor et al. *Coping With ADD: The Surprising Connection to Green Play Settings*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Environment and Behavior, at 54-77 (2001).

<sup>23</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *America Breathing Easier*, CDC National Asthma Control Program.

<sup>24</sup> Y. Men et al., *Living Near Heavy Traffic Increases Asthma Severity (August 2006)*, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research.

<sup>25</sup> Sierra Club Foundation, *Highway Health Hazards*, at 10 (2004).

<sup>26</sup> W. Gauderman et al., *Effect of Exposure to Traffic on Lung Development from 10 to 18 Years of Age: A Cohort Study*, Vol. 369, Issue 9561, Lancet, at 571-577.

<sup>27</sup> E. Kuo et al., *Transforming Inner-City Neighborhoods: Trees, Sense of Safety, and Preference*, Vol. 30, No. 1, Environmental Behavior, at 28-59 (1998).



same. In many instances, walking or bicycling may not be practical or safe. In other cases, public transportation is inadequate. Overall, many of these public health categories are in need of improved outcomes through community health solutions.



### **Strategies and Recommendations**

In Howland, good health is a core value that is shared by all, and creating a healthy community that cares for its citizens is a common goal. This is especially true for populations that are particularly vulnerable including the elderly, children, and low-income individuals and families. Howland residents appreciate safe environs for their children so that they can be physically active, and for the elderly so that they can age safely. Howland is concerned about social and environmental justice.

Public health is also a core component to retaining and attracting economic development. Planning for a safe, healthy, and vibrant community will encourage investment. State and County Health Departments can save resources by preventing illnesses that would otherwise require treatment, so safeguarding public health makes sense economically. A strong public health policy focus will make Howland an even more attractive place for people to choose to live, work, recreate, and visit.

Adoption of health-oriented policies embrace a long-term view and vision for Howland and put more control over impacts to our health in local hands, as opposed to an arms length away through county, state, and federal agencies.

### **Promote Access to Recreational Facilities**

Increased physical activity is associated with decreases in obesity as well as a host of illnesses, most prominently diabetes, hypertension and cancer. In general, study findings support the conclusion that greater access to, and higher densities of, recreational facilities in a community, including public parks, play spaces, hiking/biking trails and exercise facilities, can increase the number of people who are physically active at least three times a week by 25 percent. Recreational facilities affect activity levels for both adults and children.

The greatest increases in physical activity are observed where off-street recreational facilities are accessible by way of an on-street network of sidewalks and bicycle lanes. While no local health statistics exist on obesity and other health indicators





for Howland Township, residents in Trumbull County are generally more obese and less active than state average.

While there are no specific requirements about the amount, type and location of recreation facilities, studies support the conclusion that providing a variety of recreational opportunities within walking distance of homes, which is approximately a quarter of a mile, will increase the likelihood of physical activity and therefore achieve positive health outcomes. Street lighting, other safety concerns such as the perception of crime levels and the number of other people using a facility as well as the perception of easy accessibility, also influences how recreational facilities are used.

The development review process should also be utilized in the future to ensure all new development provide linkages to nearby recreational outlets or other pedestrian outlets. For more information on National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards, see the Community Services and Facilities.

### **Promote Access to Goods and Social Services**

One overarching theme of this Plan update is to improve the overall livability and quality of life of Howland Township residents. While this main theme is supported in each of the Plan's chapters, it is crucial for Howland residents to have the fewest obstacles possible in living a healthy lifestyle.

A healthy community as described by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2010 report is one that continuously creates and improves both its physical and social environments, helping people to support one another in aspects of daily life and to develop to their fullest potential. Healthy places are those designed and built to improve the quality of life for all people who live, work, worship, learn, and play within their borders -- where every person is free to make choices amid a variety of healthy, available, accessible, and affordable options.

### **Promote Public Health with Zoning**

The built environment--that is, the street layout, zoning, recreation facilities, parks and location of

public buildings among other design elements -- are all components of a community that can either encourage or discourage active living.

Although many of Howland Township's movement systems and physical layout have been established, these systems can be redesigned with a pedestrian focus and provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to engage in routine physical activity and to have optimal access to goods and services.

The Township's land use and zoning policies and programs can be used to support this active living, and include practices of mixed-use development, pedestrian and transit-oriented development, brownfield redevelopment, infill development, and improved access to its parks, recreational outlets and trails. While some of these practices are currently in play right now, recommendations are enumerated throughout this Plan to help promote the Township become fully aligned as a healthy community.



## Complete a Community Health Assessment

The best available data for Howland has been compiled by the Trumbull County Board of Health for Trumbull County, the State of Ohio, and national agencies such as the CDC. Data more specific to Howland would be even more valuable and accurate, so that appropriate public policy can be crafted to meet Howland’s specific needs. A Community Health Assessment is something that Howland should complete in the future to provide recommendations to increase positive health outcomes and minimize adverse health outcomes. The following outline is an example of topic areas that should be studied through a Howland Community Health Assessment:

### ☐ Overall Health of Community

- *Causes of Death*
- *Vulnerable Populations*
- *Obesity and Overweight Rates*

### ☐ Physical Activity

- *Proximity to Parks, Open Space, and Recreation Facilities*

- *Mix of Uses*
- *Jobs-housing Balance and Match*
- *Land Use Density*

### ☐ Nutrition

- *Access to Healthy Food*
- *Number of Fast Food Restaurants and Off-Site Liquor Retailers*
- *Local Agricultural Resources*
- *Food Distribution*

### ☐ Transportation and Accessibility

- *Traffic Injuries and Fatalities*
- *Mode Split*
- *Commuting*
- *Transportation Network*

### ☐ Respiratory Health

- *Asthma and Other Respiratory Ailments*
- *Air Quality/Toxic Contaminants*

### ☐ Mental Health and Social Capital

- *Mental Health*
- *Participation*

- *Stability*
- *Community Safety*

The CDC also recognizes several of these significant health issues related to land use. The major steps involved in this process include:

- ☐ **Screening** – Identify useful projects and/or policies
- ☐ **Scoping** – Identify health effects to consider
- ☐ **Assessing Risks and Benefits** – Identify affected population and how are affected
- ☐ **Developing Recommendations** – Propose changes to mitigate adverse impacts or generate positive impacts
- ☐ **Reporting** – Present results to decision-makers
- ☐ **Evaluating** – Determine the affect on the decision-making process

Additional studies that could be conducted include Walkability and Bikeability Audits, which identify barriers to walking and cycling within neighborhoods and identify specific improvements that would make



routes more attractive and useful. This could include workplace walkability and bikeability audits. Due to the high incidence of heart disease and diabetes percentages locally, this would be a valuable tool to mitigate this negative trend.

A Community Food Assessment would also shed light on the quality, quantity, price, and location of food retailers within Howland. Due to the high obese and overweight percentage of the population, a Community Food Assessment can help Howland not only identify gaps and opportunities for access to healthy, affordable foods, but also help make a case for attracting new, healthy food retail and farmers market options. Restricting unhealthy food options (such as fast food) is another potential outcome that could be pursued based on the data gathered in a Community Food Assessment.

Another example of such an assessment, LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), is used primarily to promote healthy development. It

was developed by the US Green Building Council and can be found in the Demographics and Housing Chapter.

### **Continue to Pursue Outside Resources to Preserve Natural Resources and Public Health**

Howland Township officials, staff and residents should continue to utilize their unique skills and strengths to leverage outside resources to promote the goals and objectives within this chapter. Many of these outside resources are in the form of grants and loans and can be found within the Community Services and Facilities chapter.

### **Continue to Support the “Trumbull-Mahoning Green Pact”**



Breathe in the fresh air while bicycling on the Western Reserve Greenway Bicycle Trail that starts in Trumbull County and continues into Ashtabula County.

Communities throughout the Mahoning Valley have signed on in support of “The Trumbull-Mahoning Green Pact.” This Initiative outlines a

commitment to provide a healthier living environment for residents through ten important goals. Almost all of these goals are incorporated into the Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan.

The “Trumbull-Mahoning Green Pact” goals are:

- Growing a Strong, Green Economy
- Encourage the Purchase of Green Products
- Implementing Sustainable Development Policies and Practices
- Building Green Facilities and Reducing Energy Consumption
- Reducing Waste
- Educating and Engaging Our Communities
- Preserving Green Space and Creating Greenways
- Reducing Emissions
- Greening Public Fleets
- Promoting Alternative Transportation



## COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES





### COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES

#### Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to assess Howland Township’s current services and facilities, discuss their adequacy, and to make general recommendations to ensure they remain effective and viable in the future. In order to provide these amenities in an efficient and effective manner, Township Officials must consistently assess the community’s current and future needs in order to anticipate demands for these facilities and services.

Howland Township officials should continue to ensure a level of communication exists that helps to reduce redundancy and promote the most effective use of resources.

This effective level of communication can increase opportunities to plan efficient, attractive and sustainable facilities. By having community services and facilities that are up-to-date, responsive to residents’ needs, effective, and efficient, Howland

Township will be able to retain its small-town essence while providing high-quality amenities to its residents and businesses.

#### Planning Issues

Predicting future population growth (or decline) and understanding demographic trending is crucial for planning the expansion of community services and facilities. Prediction of future population and demographic changes can only serve as an estimate of what may happen in the future. It is very important to understand that certain age cohorts prefer certain services over others. Attracting and retaining residents in the future will be based upon delivering these preferred services at the most effective price point.

Because “quality of life” is often an important factor in the retention and attraction of residents and businesses, Howland Township has a clear interest in ensuring that the several community services and facilities that assist in promoting its quality of life are properly planned, developed and funded.

According to the recent community survey that accompanied this Plan and the planning process, it appears that the residents’ needs are being met, as most variables that comprise the Township’s quality of life are well regarded by residents (see Chapter: Community Survey).

#### Goals and Objectives

**Goal #1:** Continue to support recycling of as much of the solid waste generated by residents and businesses as possible.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Encourage waste reduction and cost-effective re-use and recycling through appropriate policies and programs;
2. Ensure convenient access to recycling facilities for Township residents; and
3. Enhance existing curb-side collection programs when possible.

**Goal #2:** Prepare for catastrophic events to minimize damage and effectively implement recovery operations.

**Objectives:**

1. Maintain and periodically update an effective emergency response program;
2. Reduce the potential for loss of life and property damage in areas subject to flooding; and
3. Reduce the potential for loss of life and property damage due to fallen power lines.

**Goal #3:** Continue to provide adequate police and fire protection and emergency medical services to Township residents.

**Objectives:**

1. Minimize the response time for all emergencies; and
2. Ensure safety in existing and future neighborhoods.

**Goal #4:** Ensure adequate provision of utilities and services provided by non-Township agencies and service providers.

**Objectives:**

1. Inventory current sewer and water infrastructure and identify future needs;
2. Identify areas with failing septic systems;
3. Support conversion to underground utilities; and
4. Work with existing utility providers to maintain or improve services to the Township.

**Goal #5:** Increase access to information technologies and its utility for all residents of the Township.

**Objectives:**

1. Improve computer and information technology access in the Township; and
2. Use technology to improve internal processes and service to residents and businesses.

**Goal #6:** Promote quality active and passive recreational and cultural opportunities for Township residents and businesses.

**Objectives:**

1. Inventory existing facilities available to the public;

2. Increase the number of active and passive parkland acres to meet or exceed National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards through coordination with the Howland Township Park District;
3. Identify future recreational facility needs; and
4. Engage in long-term capital planning for Township facilities, parks, and infrastructure

**Existing Conditions and Trends****Library**

The Howland Township Branch library is part of the Warren-Trumbull County Library System and is located at 9095 E Market Street. The main library is located at 444 Mahoning Avenue in Warren.

The library strives to appeal to both adults and children. The Branch supports the schools through accelerated reading programs and participation in the English Festival. The Branch is not responsible for outreach; this is the responsibility of the Main Library. Advances in technology are constantly a challenge for the library but also mean they have a broader range



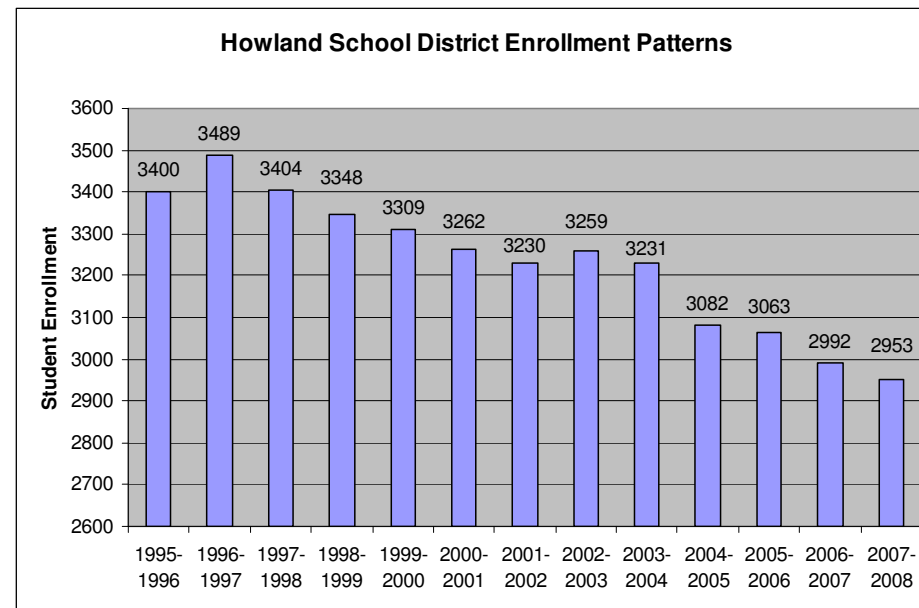
of opportunities to deliver the information people desire through computers, books-on-tape, DVDs, etc.

The building was constructed in 1998. It features a large children's area, a fireplace, two outside courtyards, a public meeting room, and six computers to access the library database and the Internet.

The library receives excellent support from the community; in particular from the Friends of the Howland Library, a volunteer organization that coordinates fundraisers. With funds raised, they recently purchased a computer for the Library.

### Howland Township Schools

Howland Township is the benefactor of one of the most proficient public school districts in Trumbull County. According to its most recent Ohio Department of Education report card, its performance standards have increased: In 2008-2009, the school district met 29 of 30 performance indicators and received a performance index score of 100.9 (out of 120). The Howland School District usually outscores the average Ohio school district performance



categorical scores by at least 10-15% and beats similar school districts by five percent or more. In 2008, the School District graduated 97.6% of all its seniors.

The State of Ohio Department of Education rated the Howland School District "Excellent with Distinction," the highest rating available and the only district in Trumbull, Mahoning, and Columbiana Counties to receive this rating two years in a row.

### Howland Township Fire Department

Howland Township's Fire Department has one main station and two sub-stations that house approximately

25 full-time members. The Department has three fire engines, a reserve fire engine, a ladder truck, and four ambulances. The Department responded to a total of 2,655 EMS calls in 2008. This was a 9.3% increase in medical services delivery when compared to the prior year.

An aging population, increasing traffic and traffic congestion, a rise in visitor traffic frequenting medical and retirement facilities and evolving and changing regulations has required the Howland Township Fire Department to adapt with new strategies to continue to be the highest rated community service in Howland Township (see Community Survey Chapter for more information).





In addition, the State of Ohio now mandates continuing education for all firefighters and EMS and advances in technology have resulted in the need for more training in order to effectively use today's equipment. To help meet this need the leadership of the Fire Department developed the Howland Fire and EMS Training Center.

The Howland Fire and EMS Training Center continues to provide state certification courses and continuing fire and EMS education to first responders in the area. Reviews from the State of Ohio were excellent and the average pass rate for the EMS program is over 91%. The Fire Department is currently in the process of developing opportunities for departments to contract with this organization for all of their continuing education needs.

To do so, the Department could partner with Kent State (Trumbull Branch) and Trumbull Career and Technical Center to develop a complete training facility on their campus in order for them to meet current training standards without incurring the cost of developing their own training facility.

### Police

Safety is one the most important factors in assessing a community's quality of life and ability to attract new residents and business opportunities. Howland Township has a reputation of being a safe community. This is the result of great support from the Township residents through the passing of a permanent police levy and the effectiveness of its police department.

The Howland Township Police Department is comprised of approximately 20 full-time officers, one full-time administrative assistant and one part-time employee for evenings. The Department has mutual aid agreements with surrounding communities for investigations and emergency situations. The State Highway Patrol has jurisdiction on State Route 82 and State Route 46 that usually pertains to traffic accidents. The Department values training and investing resources in its officers. They have a reputation of being professional and courteous toward the Howland Township residents they serve.



Crime appears to be increasing in the neighboring communities of Warren and Niles and budget constraints have resulted in reductions in staffing at their police departments. Reducing the spread of crime from these neighboring communities into Howland has been a priority with the Department. In addition, Howland has changed with more people visiting the area during the day to work and shop which may have helped to increase these related criminal activities.

Computers and technology have changed dramatically. Some of these improvements have helped the police department, such as the ability to process and secure data during investigations. However, some of the technological advances have resulted in negative effects such as better communication between criminals through cell phones, rise in identity thefts and the spread of child pornography.

Despite these challenges, the Department is meeting the safety and law enforcement needs of the





community and appears to be adequately funded well into the future.

### Public Works

The Howland Township Public Works Department currently has a staff of 14 full-time and 5 part-time/full-time staff in the summer. The Department is located at 3600 North River Road. The Public Works Department has the maintenance responsibility for 78.5 miles of roadway.

In addition to road maintenance including paving, cleaning, snow and ice removal, and sign maintenance, the Public Works Department conducts limb and branch pick-up twice per year, Christmas tree pick-up, and contracts services for leaf pick-up and household trash pick-up. The public works department also has the maintenance responsibility for township cemeteries.

Some notable issues facing the Department and community include traffic and street sign vandalism and/or theft. Signs throughout the Township are

frequently stolen or vandalized to an extent that it is having an effect on the Department's budget.

Another notable issue occurs while trying to provide snow removal during the Winter and during heavy snowfalls where the facility's northern location may increase the time it takes to remove snow in certain areas of the Township.

### Recycling

As of 2008, Howland Township residents are provided with many opportunities to recycle:

Allied Waste has been named the preferred garbage hauler for Howland Township. Residents that sign up for weekly trash service through Allied Waste are able to participate in a bi-monthly curbside recycling service at no extra charge. Each participating household is given a 65-gallon container to use for recycling. Discounts are provided to seniors and to households limiting their trash output to one can per week. Items accepted for recycling include: paper products, plastic containers designated numbers 1 through 7, metals, and glass.

Residents may elect to use the Township's two drop-off recycling centers located behind the Howland Township Fire Stations at 169 Niles-Cortland Road (State Route 46) and 3403 Ridge Road SE in the Bolindale neighborhood. These sites are managed by the Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste Management District. Items accepted for recycling include: paper products, plastic containers designated numbers 1 through 7, metals, and glass.

Scrap tire recycling is offered by Howland Township with funding support provided by the Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste Management District.

The Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste Management Household Hazardous Waste Collection facility is located at 5138 Enterprise Blvd. in Warren and is open on select days to Trumbull County residents.

Also offered, but one day a year at Enterprise Blvd





facility, is the opportunity to recycle old appliances. Other opportunities to recycle are offered through the Howland Recycling Center, a private business that provides drop-off recycling services at their North River Road facility.

### Utilities

Water and sewer services are provided in most locations throughout Howland Township through infrastructure owned, maintained and operated by three entities: The City of Warren, the City of Niles, and the Trumbull County Sanitary Engineer.

Most sections of the Township have water services (See Map: Water Service Areas). Some areas that currently do not have water service are: Huntley, Briar, parts of Morgandale, and Old Orchard.

Howland Township also has an extensive infrastructure of sanitary sewers. Most of the Township is either currently served by sanitary sewer lines or could be connected to sanitary sewers. Trumbull County's Mosquito Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant is the primary purveyor of these

services, including most of the central and eastern portion of the Township.

It is feasible to service areas not currently served by sanitary sewers but the provision of these services would most likely be financed through private development or by individual property owners through front footage assessments. Due to new State and County health regulations some property owners with failing septic systems can be forced to tap into the sewer system if they are in the general proximity of sanitary sewers. In Trumbull County, if sanitary sewer lines are within 250 feet of the affected property (or 200 feet in petition case), then the property owner must tap-in to the system regardless if the septic system is failing.

Some areas of the Township served by septic systems are therefore prone to flooding and subjected to septic system failure (do to an overload of the system). A long-term objective for Howland Township involves continued collaboration with outside assistance to develop an evaluation and maintenance

assurance program for on-site sewage disposal systems (See Map: Sewer Service Areas).

Howland Township has completed a Stormwater Management Plan and enacted subsequent Stormwater Management regulations based on the results of that Plan. The purpose of the Stormwater Management Plan and regulations is to safeguard persons, protect property, prevent damage to the environment, and promote the public welfare by guiding, regulating, and controlling the design, construction, use, and maintenance of stormwater facilities and development within Howland Township.

The idea is to prevent land disturbing activities from resulting in an increase in the rate and/or location of stormwater runoff from properties in order to safeguard adjoining properties from the negative impacts of such runoff. Furthermore, it is intended to require the temporary storage of and control the rate of release of excess stormwater, thereby equitably apportioning the liabilities and benefits of stormwater runoff between dominant and subservient properties.



A continued effort is being made to identify and eliminate illicit stormwater connections and discharges through landowner awareness education and enhanced mapping capabilities. See Map: Stormwater Management Areas of Concern.

### Senior Center

The Howland Senior Center is part of a regional organization known as SCOPE, Senior Citizen's Opportunity Programs in Education. They have been designated by the Area Agency on Aging, District XI, as the "focal point" for aging services in Trumbull County. They are approved by the State of Ohio's Department of Aging Services. SCOPE's mission is to provide a focal point to inspire, strengthen and



enrich adults in Trumbull County, enhancing self reliance, fulfillment and dignity.

Even though they are a part of SCOPE, the Howland Senior Center has their own goals and organizes their own programs that are appropriate and in demand by the Center's users. The Center has not invested a lot of its resources in long-term planning, rather they choose to remain flexible to the desires of their visitors and adapt as needed. For example, keeping up with technology is always a challenge and seniors want access to the latest technology training. "How to burn a CD" and "How to operate a digital camera" are popular programs offered by the Center.

Another low-technology example of the Center's ability to adapt to trends is reflected in the recent corn-hole tournament they organized that attracted over 40 participants.

The senior population is growing in Howland: people are living longer and some seniors are choosing to relocate to Howland due to its high quality of life. Some of the future demand for services will be met by

private business. That is, many of the 55 and older communities and assisted living communities have their own staff and funding to provide social services to their residents. The remaining demand will likely be met by the Center as they continue to adapt to the growing and changing needs of the residents they serve.



### Parks and Recreation

The Howland Township Park District was created in April of 1984 to replace the Howland Township Joint Recreation Board that was created in 1976. The District's three commissioners are appointed by the



Trumbull County Probate Court to staggered three-year terms. The Commissioners supervise the Bolindale-DeForest Park, Morgandale Playground, and the 172-acre Howland Township Park. The 200 or more acres of the Howland Wildlife Preserve and newly constructed elevated boardwalk are owned and maintained by the Howland Township Trustees. This area is protected from development in perpetuity.

The Park District maintains four pavilions, eight soccer fields, four playgrounds, four tennis courts, bocci court, two basketball pads, four ball fields, horseshoe pits, hiking trails, sand volleyball court, and a lake. These facilities are provided for the recreational use of all Howland Township residents.

### **Strategies and Recommendations**

#### **Learning Services Recommendations**

##### **Encourage Partnerships between Howland Township and Learning Institutions**

The institutions of learning in Howland Township should continue to embrace a level of communication in which they are knowledgeable with the current

needs, trends, and issues of the school district and library.

Issues that Howland Township are well-versed in, such as current and future land use, economic development, park and recreational needs, and public finance will be beneficial to the officials of these learning institutions during times of growth and during the development of new services. With these respective parties in clear understanding of the issues that each face, the ability for both parties to partner in a host of mutually beneficial areas will be greatly enhanced.

Several institutions of higher learning with a regional presence could be brought closer to Howland Township residents by developing arrangements with area institutions like Youngstown State University, Kent State University (Trumbull Campus), ITT Technical Institute, ETI Technical Training Center Inc., TCTC Adult Training Center, and Trumbull Business College. This endeavor could occur through the mutual sharing of space or resources, or by the

Township providing space for faculty and staff of these institutions to teach classes.

#### **Parks and Recreation Recommendations**

Howland Township residents cherish their active and passive park and recreational opportunities in the community. According to the community survey that accompanied this Plan, park and recreation improvements were ranked by Township residents as one of the most important improvements needed.

Because Howland Township Park District is its own entity and not an official responsibility of the Howland Township government, the recommendations highlighted are suggestive in nature and could be used to begin discussion of future improvements.

##### **Increase Collaboration with Entities with Similar Recreational Needs**

Park District officials and Township staff should seek additional opportunities to partner with contiguous school districts and communities like Niles and Warren, or other contiguous townships when it can do so in a mutually beneficial manner.



The Park District and Howland community should seek to partner with private sector entities when mutually beneficial and it should partner or coordinate services with other public and private service providers to serve residents without significant duplication or competition.

### **Embrace Trail and Greenway-Based Recreational Programming**

Howland Township contains one of the largest riparian corridors in Trumbull County, and it has a huge potential to be linked to other parts of the County and the region with all-purpose trails. Howland officials and recreation staff should work with area recreation planners and providers to tap into this growing national interest in trail and greenway-based recreational program.

### **Develop a Parks and Recreation Master Plan**

Recreational programming and the development of recreation programs can be controversial because of the diversity of interests within the community. Programming can often be dictated or “pushed” by a small, yet collective population. However, if

developed properly, programs can be developed that spike the interests of every resident. To first do so, it is important to engage in an active recreation planning process that assesses needs that are based in demographics as well as interests, as the two are often different and conflicting.

A Park and Recreation Master Plan could include trail design guidelines for all future redevelopment areas. These guidelines could include sidewalks, separated bike and pedestrian paths and trails, and an on-street bike path system.

Other suggestive recommendations for the Park District and/or Howland Township are:

1. The Park District should considering adopting additional and firm policies for the use of its parks. They should insist that groups schedule their events in advance, clean up after their event and assist with long term maintenance of the park. If “for profit” groups use the park they should contribute to the parks maintenance.

2. Add parking to Howland Township Park and/or encourage team members and spectators to car pool to games.



3. Provide more opportunities to access the Preserve. These areas should be adequate to accommodate small groups that convene before entering the path system and should include attractive facilities such trail maps in a kiosk, restrooms, emergency call boxes, benches, picnic tables, small shelter etc. as well as adequate off-street parking. These access points should be designed in a consistent



manner that forms a cohesive design statement when repeated throughout the Township.

4. Form a strategy that allows the park system to grow as development occurs. Over time, it is important that Howland identifies and acquires new parkland that will most effectively serve new and existing users.
5. Howland Township should continue to pursue additional resources that help offset the costs affiliated with property acquisition, park development, maintenance and programming. Future resources should be planned and coordinated to meet the goal of linking the Howland Township Wildlife Preserve with trails to eventually connect Mosquito Lake State Park to the Mahoning River (south of Niles).
6. Standards from the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) should be utilized when developing or assessing the adequacy of Township park facilities.

A. For this study, a comparison of the Township’s park facilities with three of NRPA standards is presented in order to provide a broad understanding of the level of service the Parks District is providing. This analysis will also help guide a more in depth discussion and planning effort in the future.

NRPA recommends that 10 acres of “ground space” should be provided for every 1000 residents. Areas dedicated to conservation of environmentally sensitive features should not be included in the calculation. NRPA does not give standards for these areas, rather states that “the amount of conservation land should be dependent on the number and quality of natural and historical resources in the area, public desire to preserve these valuable sites, and the willingness of the elected body to provide funds for their preservation.”

Open space that is not owned by the Howland Township Park District and is available for the general public to use could be counted in the

calculation. Such as schools and institutional facilities, churches, and private athletic clubs or golf courses like the Avalon Lake Golf Course or the Old Avalon Public Golf Course, owned by the City of Warren.

With a population of 18,598, approximately 185 acres would need to be allocated for recreational purposes (18,598/1000 x 10). When the total amount of Township acreage allocated for active and passive recreational opportunities is calculated, it appears that the Township exceeds NRPA standards.

B. Distance from Neighborhood Park.  
NRPA recommends that a person should live no more than a half-mile from a neighborhood park. They define a neighborhood park as “the basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood.”

The areas of Howland Township that are underserved per this method are:



1. South of State Route 82 and east of State Route 46
2. North of State Route 82 and east of State Route 46
3. North of Glen Oaks Drive and west of State Route 46

It may be possible that some of these residents' neighborhood park needs are being met by other sources that would require further study to understand. It is also possible that some needs can be mitigated through pedestrian safe connections to Howland Township Park.

On the contrary, it may be possible that some of the Township neighborhood park needs are not being met even though they are within a one-half of a mile of a neighborhood park due to a physical barrier such as a busy road, ravine, or fences that make walking to the park unsafe.

### C. Distance from Community Park

NRPA recommends that a person should live no more than three miles from a community park.

A community park is defined as: "Larger in size and serve a broader purpose than neighborhood parks. The focus is on meeting the recreational needs of several neighborhoods or large sections of the community. They allow for group activities and offer other recreational opportunities not feasible at the neighborhood level."

All of Howland Township is within three miles of Howland Township Park.

### Safety Services Recommendations

#### **Include Safety Service Department in Growth, Redevelopment and Zoning-Related Discussions**

The police, fire, and public works departments should be involved during the initial discussions over future land development or redevelopment projects to assess the impact of providing additional services.

#### **Continually Seek to Improve Service Delivery**

As Howland Township's population ages or becomes more congested with traffic, the Safety Services departments could be hard pressed to maintain optimal response times. Longer response times are usually anticipated during peak traffic times or during times of bad weather. To maintain proper and safe response times, the Township's safety service providers should continue to discuss how to best maintain and stabilize response times while retaining the same high quality level of service.

In addition, the Township should perform a review of snow removal service to insure it is as efficient as possible. For example, it may be necessary to develop a more centralized location for equipment and materials to reduce run times and miles traveled to address all of the Township's roads during winter storm events.

#### **Continue to Promote Community Policing**

The Township should promote the expansion of community policing efforts by encouraging additional outreach programs, particularly among the youth.



Neighborhood watch programs should be expanded where requested by individual neighborhoods.

### Utilities Recommendations

#### **Continue to Update and Address Critical Infrastructure Issues**

Most areas of the township are currently served by water lines from either the City of Warren, City of Niles, or the county, and much of the township is either currently served by sanitary sewer lines or could feasibly be connected to sanitary sewer systems. The county’s Mosquito Creek Waste Water Treatment Plant serves a very large area of central Trumbull County including nearly all of central and eastern Howland Township.

There seems to be very few geographic, engineering or service area obstacles to providing public infrastructures to Howland Township. Areas not currently served by water and sanitary sewers could have service depending on the availability of funding (most likely from private developers or residents of these areas through front footage assessments).

Township officials should continue to evaluate and assess the capacity and quality of the water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure and provide corrective action through either private, local or countywide initiatives. Planned land uses and economic development goals should be incorporated into these assessments. When private development does occur, an incentive program should be considered to provide opportunities for public improvements and infrastructure upgrades that will better serve the development and the community.

By eliminating illicit connections and excess road runoff, the Township will be able to quickly and efficiently handle stormwater runoff without causing flooding or other environmental problems. An additional resource that the Township may consider to properly handle stormwater events and enhance the aesthetic character of the area is to consider “green infrastructure.”

Green infrastructure offers a more natural means for handling stormwater. For example, wetlands and pervious pavement allows water to slowly infiltrate

into the groundwater table, without the burden of flooding, and may be a lower cost alternative to “bricks and mortar” infrastructure solutions.

The Township should continue to upgrade its stormwater collection system to provide adequate outlets for surface water. A key to controlling and limiting wet weather flows in the sanitary collection is to make certain that the storm sewers are sufficiently sized and in good condition – Water that accumulates on the streets and in yards will find an outlet.



Other methods to minimize stormwater problems include:

1. Promote shared parking and land banking;





2. Incorporation of compact parking spaces as a means of reducing impervious cover;
3. Setting maximum parking space dimensions rather than specifying minimum dimensions (a minimum stall size of 10' x 20' or 9' x 18' are the most commonly cited dimensions) could also reduce impervious area as can decreasing driveway widths;
4. Incorporation of bioretention or rain gardens into existing requirements for landscaped islands and revising landscaping requirements to require a set percentage of landscaping of the total paved area can help to offset some of the impervious surfaces;
5. Incorporation of stormwater best management practices such as sand filters and filter strips into perimeter and interior landscaping can also help in offsetting impervious surfaces; and
6. Incorporation of porous pavement in overflow parking areas can reduce the runoff generated by parking lots as well as decreasing impervious surfaces.

### **Pursue the Feasibility of Building a Wireless Community**

Mobile devices such as laptops, cell phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) are an important lifestyle element of residents and business people alike.

Deploying community-wide wireless infrastructure offers many potential benefits to Township residents and businesses—from increased productivity to lower costs to greater citizen satisfaction—while being practical and cost-effective. It also helps to promote entrepreneurial activities. The City of Warren currently provides free Wi-Fi access within certain areas of downtown Warren and is in the progress of providing a Wi-Fi system that will cover an area outside the city limits, including most of Howland Township.

A coordinated wireless broadband network in Howland Township of single or multiple network(s), including but not limited to, wireless, DSL, and fiber, would provide residents and businesses with access to high-speed broadband. Providing internet access

to every resident, school, community organization, business and visitor of the Township will ensure an enhanced quality of life. Howland Township should promote careful planning of future infrastructure to protect community aesthetics and promote safety by planning for well-sited and well-designed personal wireless service facilities that fit unobtrusively in the Howland Township environment.

### **Continue to Pursue Additional Funding Sources**

Funding for Township utility improvements can come from the combination of several sources. These sources include local revenues, tap charges and assessments, as well as grant and loan funds administered by the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA), the Ohio Water Development Authority (OWDA), USDA/Rural Development, the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Ohio Water and Sewer Rotary Commission and the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD).



At the time of final project development and planning, each of the potential funding programs will need to be evaluated in detail for consideration and applicability. The following is a general summary of some of the various programs that may be available.

### Link Deposit Fund

The Link Deposit Fund is a low interest loan program through the Ohio EPA that can be used by Howland Township residents that have an existing failing sewage system and are under orders of the Board of Health to repair/replace said system with an on-lot system or new state approved off-lot system. A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) is required for any sewage system that will discharge into waters of the state. Alterations to off-lot systems that involve maintaining the primary treatment component (and thus a NPDES permit will not be required) are NOT eligible.

It may also be used for the purpose of lateral connections and tank abandonment for mandated sanitary sewer connections. The program cannot be used for new construction. The participating

institutions for this program in Howland Township are Cortland and Farmers National Banks. Contact the Trumbull County Health Department for more information.

### ODOD “Rapid Outreach” (412) Account

This ODOD program was created to assist counties, municipalities, townships and other political subdivisions in the creation or retention of jobs and may be utilized for the installation of sanitary sewer, sewage disposal, water distribution and water treatment. The project must be related directly to job creation or retention. Funding is in the form of a grant and is generally in the range of \$15,000 per job.

### Ohio Public Works Commission

The OPWC provides financial assistance to governmental entities to maintain operations and adequate capacity for water, sewer and solid waste facilities. Assistance can be in the form of grants, low interest loans, local debt support and credit enhancement. Local debt support provides funds to cover the costs of interest through construction and up to one (1) year after. Credit enhancement is a

grant to pay the cost of bond insurance and provide assistance to the entity to secure affordable debt.

### Ohio Water Development Authority – Community Assistance Fund

The OWDA Community Assistance Fund provides below-market financing when other means will create an economic hardship and is available only for drinking water projects. In order to qualify for this funding, the proposed project must meet an existing need and cannot include provisions for oversizing and the anticipated annual costs from the system must meet or exceed economic hardship criteria of 1.5% of the median household income (MHI) for Trumbull County.

### OWDA Loan Fund

The Community Assistance Fund noted above is for those situations that create economic hardship. The OWDA also has a loan fund that can be used in most any situation for the construction of wastewater or drinking water facilities, as well as engineering design, legal fees and inspection. OWDA charges a one-time administrative fee of 0.35% of the total loan



amount. The interest rates associated with these loans are generally higher than other forms of financing and, once the final loan is determined, the debt may not be retired ahead of schedule. The advantage to the OWDA loan is that most every applicant is funded and the cost and time associated with the approval process is limited.

### USDA Rural Development

Rural Development funding can be in the form of grants or loans and may be utilized for water and sewer infrastructure. Loan terms can extend up to 40 years at varying rates, depending upon the median household income of the area to be served. Supplemental grants of up to 75% of eligible costs are also available to areas with an MHI below 80% of the State MHI and up to 45% for those areas between 80% and 100% of the State MHI.

Currently, Howland Township exceeds the State of Ohio MHI and therefore would most likely not qualify for a USDA grant. However, individuals or groups of homes within a project area may qualify for assistance. Prior to commencing any of the projects

noted later within this report, we recommend that the Township perform an income survey to determine if and where USDA grant money could be applied.

### Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF)

The WPCLF is administered by the Ohio EPA DEFA, with assistance from the OWDA. The purpose of the program is to provide low interest loan funds for water pollution control. These monies can be applied to upgrading existing facilities or installing new. Planning and design loans are also available for up to three (3) years and may be incorporated into the final 20-year construction loan. Technical assistance from the Ohio EPA is also available and WPCLF may be used in conjunction with other forms of funding assistance.

### U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD funding includes the use of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to assist low to moderate income households and aims to correct issues of immediate threat to public health and safety. Certain areas of the Township are eligible for this

funding source. Any areas or targeted areas that may appear not to qualify can be validated or rechecked by households in the targeted area by preparing an income survey.

### Ohio Water and Sewer Rotary Commission

The Ohio Water and Sewer Rotary Commission offers interest-free loans to pay the portion of costs from a sanitary sewer or water main extension that is to be assessed against agricultural lands, with a minimal up-front administrative cost. The primary emphasis of this program is to balance the preservation of valuable farmland, while allowing the governing authority to extend needed infrastructure. Another major goal of the program is job creation or retention. It should be noted that the Rotary Loan money does not reduce the total cost of the project to the District, nor does it reduce the assessments to other properties. This money is strictly applied to cover the assessments on properties that qualify.

Any loan funds acquired for a project must be secured in the form of revenue bonds or assessment bonds issued on behalf of the Township. Revenue bonds



are generally paid back through the income generated from monthly user fees charged to customers. Revenue can also be contributed from tap charges collected from new customers. That is, the income generated from the operation of the system pays back the loan (bond) used to finance the system.

Assessment bonds are paid back from the collection of assessments applied to the properties that benefit directly from the improvements. These assessments are an expense to the property owner regardless of whether he/she uses the available service and may be calculated by several different methods, but must be applied only to those properties receiving a special benefit from the improvements.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### Introduction

It is reasonable to expect land use planners and economic development professionals to work closely to optimize development in a community. This is not always the case unfortunately. Planners envision whole communities that meet the needs of residents and plan for a built environment that meets those criteria. Meanwhile, economic development specialists work hard to ensure a thriving local economy. This often means attracting business to maximize jobs and taxes in and for the community-businesses that may not reflect the vision of land use planners and public health professionals.

Increasingly, economic development policy can make unique and potent contributions to stimulate the development of healthy food retail options, and healthier living and working environs. The ultimate result is to increase access to healthy foods, green spaces, and other healthy lifestyle choices to help drive productivity up and the physical, mental, and emotional costs down.

A strong economy is essential to Howland Township’s sustainability. Without a strong economic and tax base, the Township may not have the wherewithal to provide the services desired by its residents and businesses. A healthy economy means more than just new jobs; it means increased income for residents, a welcoming environment for existing and new businesses, and increased fiscal capacity and financial stability.

Economic development and renewal are two concepts that should remain interlinked in Howland Township. To a great extent, economic development in the community involves the renewal and redevelopment of industries and lands in the Golden Triangle areas and along the existing corridors like SR 46 and East Market Street. Economic renewal includes the marketing, promotion, and revitalization of the existing core businesses along Elm Road.

Most importantly, the Township’s economic development efforts must provide the reliability and predictability that is essential in attracting new economic investments to the community while

retaining and supporting the existing business community. In uncertain economic times, support for a regional and collaborative approach in attaining economic growth, when feasible, should also be embraced.

#### Planning Issues

All trends indicate that the economy is currently in a pattern not seen for seven decades or more, and Ohio, Northeast Ohio, Trumbull County and Southwest Pennsylvania are at the epicenter of it all primarily due to shifts in the global economy and modifications in the manufacturing sector. The Mahoning Valley is largely linked to the steel and automobile industries. Delphi, GM’s largest independent supplier and one of the regions largest employers is located in Howland Township.

One of GM’s most productive assembly lines is





less than 30 minutes away in Lordstown, and southern Howland Township is also home to integrated flat-rolled steel producer Severstal. As of Spring 2009, Severstal temporarily shut down its production lines due to changes in the economy.

Even with these and other closures, Howland Township's tax base has remained consistent, primarily due to the fact that most of its income is derived from residential property taxes (73%) and it has higher percentage of industrial land uses than most townships in the County.

The region has also been home to several success stories: According to the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce, over 8,408 jobs have been created with a cumulative payroll of \$376 Million during 2004-2008, with new fixed asset investments topping almost one billion dollars. They also estimate that over 9,419,300 square feet of building space was absorbed or constructed during the same period.

Although still emerging from bankruptcy, GM announced that its Lordstown Assembly Plant will produce the 2010 Chevrolet Cruze in 2010 and the National Association of Homebuilders listed the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman MSA as the second most affordable housing market in America.

### Goals and Objectives

**Goal #1:** Ensure that Howland Township is an attractive environment for economic development.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Retain existing industries and businesses;
2. Promote Township resources to prospective businesses and industries;
3. Revitalize industrial areas and brownfields to provide for adaptive re-use or other types of development;
4. Provide regulations and incentives that encourage sustainable development and enhance community character; and
5. Formulate and adopt an Economic Development Plan for Howland Township.

**Goal #2:** Ensure diversity in the Township's employment base.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Provide a variety of jobs at varied skill levels within the Township;
2. Broaden the Township's partnership with local Universities and trade schools;
3. Recognize, enhance, and promote employment, cultural, academic, and recreational opportunities within Howland Township;
4. Promote a balance between industrial, office, commercial/retail, and residential property tax revenues; and
5. Work with local, regional, and statewide organizations to promote Howland Township as a desirable place to start a business.



**Goal #3:** Reinforce existing corridors as Township commerce centers.

**Objectives:**

1. Promote the Sustainability of the “Golden Triangle”;
2. Promote mixed-use development in the Howland Corners and Elm Road areas to encourage a vibrant and sustainable commercial environment;
3. Promote Howland Corners as the office, commercial, and cultural center of the Township and encourage activities that attract a diverse and multi-generational population; and
4. Enhance highly-traveled gateways into Howland Township with unique and distinctive landscaping, signage, and other design features.

**Goal #4:** Become a leader in the development of manufacturing, office, and research facilities associated with the health care industry “tech-belt” promoted by Congressman Tim Ryan.

**Objectives:**

1. Identify compatible areas for a range of uses within the Township.

**Goal #5:** Welcome green and ecologically sound businesses, developments, and solutions.

**Objectives:**

1. Understand barriers and opportunities for new and existing business development;
2. Develop incentives to assist in small business development that will help grow the green economy;
3. Promote energy technology that is conservation-based and draws from renewable sources to help existing and future industry and business; and
4. Support the principles of sustainability (transportation, energy efficiency, green building, and waste minimization).

**Existing Conditions and Trends**

Howland Township strategically located where it provides effective overnight ground access to the

entire New York City and Chicago Markets. The Township and the region’s outstanding infrastructure allows for the “Just in Time” movement of goods, people and information.



If coordinated properly, the right amount of energy and resources

could help to continue to keep Howland Township less vulnerable to economic hiccups than other areas.

**Local and Regional Workforce Quality**

Howland Township is situated with the Youngstown-Warren-East Liverpool Combined Statistical Area, and is at the center of a vast knowledge base. It is a quick drive from a number of colleges and universities.

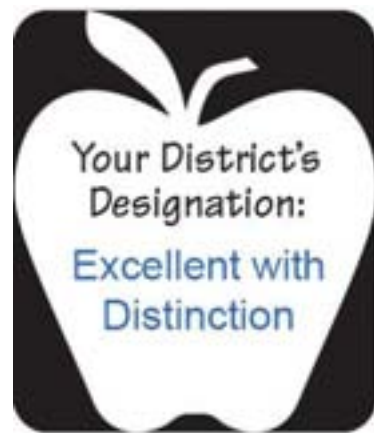
Within a 75-mile radius of Youngstown-Warren, Ohio, 55 colleges and universities in Ohio and Pennsylvania





provide opportunities in advanced education. From 95 campus locations, these public and private institutions furnish firms competing in the global marketplace with a highly trained and motivated workforce, and many of these institutions have gained national recognition in particular fields of study.

The workforce that encompasses Howland Township and the region is well versed in adapting to changes in the economy. The reason for this is that “economic development begins at home” and with good schools. In 2007-2008, 40 of the 45 school districts in the Valley (89%) were ranked by the Ohio Department of Education as “Excellent” or “Effective,” more than any other urbanized region in the state of Ohio. Over 93% of these school districts met or exceeded State standards for attendance and graduation.



The Valley’s educational success is one notch higher in Howland Township. In 2008-2009, the Howland Township Local Schools received the “Excellent with Distinction.”

### Past and Current Employment Trends

Howland Township is situated within the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman Metropolitan Statistical Area. Unlike population, housing and other demographic data that is tabulated at the township and block level, employment data is primarily tabulated and collected at the county level or higher. For this purpose, the discussion of current or future employment trends will utilize regional datasets and be used to draw general conclusions.

As of 2008, the employment composition of the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman Metropolitan Statistical Area was diverse, but largely dominated by the Food Services, Health Care Services, Administration and Support Services, Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, and Fabricated Metals/Production sectors.

Although the Hospital sector is comprised of only 20 establishments, they employed over 10,100 residents. Durable goods and those industries pertaining to the automobile sector also employ thousands of area residents, although the looming issues and

Youngstown-Warren-Boardman Metropolitan Statistical Area Employment by Sector, 2008					
Sector	NAICS	Industry Description	Employment	Overall Rank	Establishments
Food Service	722	Food services & drinking places	21989	1	1308
Health Care	621	Ambulatory health care services	15378	2	1449
Professional	561	Administration & support services	13878	3	669
Health Care	623	Nursing & residential care facilities	12268	4	223
Manufacturing	336	Transportation equipment manufacturing	11726	5	48
Health Care	622	Hospitals	10113	6	20
Manufacturing	332	Fabricated metal product manufacturing	8501	7	272
Manufacturing	331	Primary metal manufacturing	7588	8	66
Professional	541	Professional, scientific & technical services	7205	9	1127
Other	813	Religious/grant making/civic/professional & similar org.	6671	10	949
Retail	452	General merchandise stores	6664	11	152
Retail	445	Food & beverage stores	6537	12	373
Construction	238	Specialty trade contractors	6521	13	1052
Wholesale	423	Durable goods merchant wholesalers	6451	14	500
Health Care	624	Social assistance	5389	15	294
Transportation	484	Truck transportation	5299	16	336
Finance	522	Credit, intermediation & related activities	5202	17	483
Retail	441	Motor vehicle & parts dealers	4804	18	337
Retail	448	Clothing & clothing accessories stores	3900	19	375
Education	611	Educational services	3817	20	143
Professional	551	Management of companies & enterprises	3418	21	82
Manufacturing	326	Plastics & rubber products manufacturing	3365	22	63
Retail	444	Building material & garden equipment & supplies dealers	3114	23	252
Service	811	Repair & maintenance	3045	24	510
Retail	446	Health & personal care stores	2992	25	235

downsizing of GM continue to create tension and uneasiness within other economic sectors.



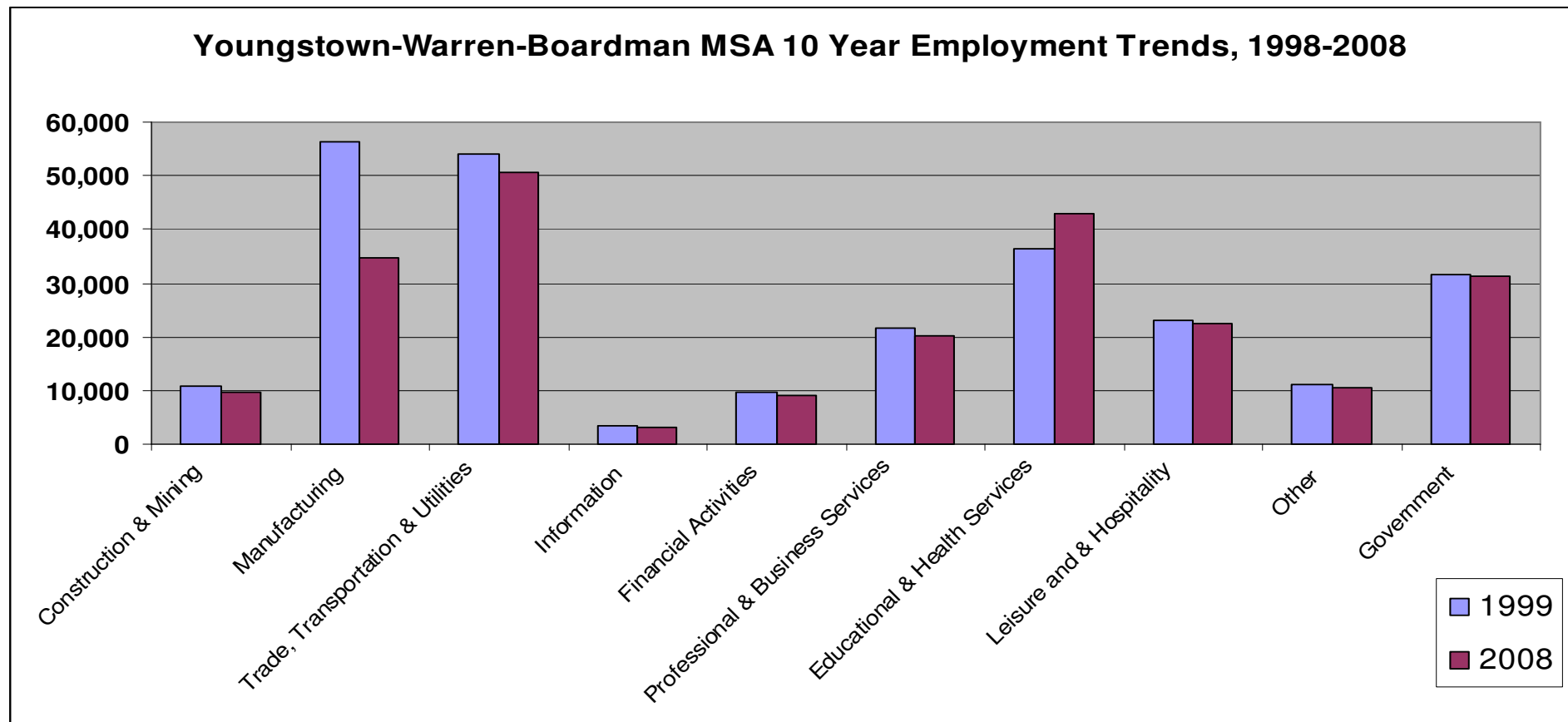
According to the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Lordstown GM plant creates an estimated 1.5 additional jobs for each plant worker. A downsized Lordstown plant could impact the region and other sectors tremendously.

### Future Economic Outlook

The downsizing of various sectors in the region has been occurring systematically over the last decade. In fact, the automobile sector has been downsizing since the late 70s.

Since 1998, employment trends for the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman Metropolitan Statistical Area indicate all but two employment sectors- Educational and Health Services, and Government- have been downsizing. The Manufacturing sector has been downsized the most, largely due to its linkages to the automobile sector.

According to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the workforce will undergo some alterations as the consumer trends change. These changes will



Occupational Title	Percent Change	Total Annual Openings	Average Wage Nov. 08*
Personal and Home Care Aides	47.1%	67	\$9.03
Substance Abuse & Behavioral Dis. Counselors	44.0%	16	\$18.78
Home Health Aides	43.6%	119	\$9.07
Social and Human Service Assistants	42.2%	24	\$12.37
Mental Health Counselors	41.7%	22	\$18.66
Child, Family and School Social Workers	36.9%	38	\$17.07
Mental Health & Substance Abuse Social Work.	36.7%	17	\$16.74
Financial Analysts	35.7%	6	\$30.66
Medical Assistants	34.7%	48	\$11.93
Occupational Therapist Assistants	32.0%	12	\$22.97
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	30.0%	5	\$31.48
Dental Assistants	28.9%	21	\$13.72
Physical Therapist Assistants	28.6%	17	\$22.51
Dental Hygienists	28.2%	19	\$26.61
Physical Therapists	26.2%	25	\$34.03
Occupational Therapists	24.1%	11	\$33.41
Preschool Teachers, except Special Education	23.8%	17	\$10.12
Surgical Technologists	23.1%	7	\$19.57
Computer Systems Analysts	21.9%	16	\$30.05
Social and Community Service Managers	21.4%	6	\$29.87
Pharmacy Technicians	21.0%	32	\$10.98
Medical and Health Services Managers	20.4%	19	\$37.75
Medical and Public Health Social Workers	20.0%	10	\$16.85
Physical Therapist Aides	20.0%	3	\$11.86
Registered Nurses	19.4%	192	\$28.93
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	18.5%	11	\$27.71
Amusement and Recreation Attendants	17.6%	11	\$9.21
Education Admin., Pre & Child Care Center/Prog.	16.7%	5	\$20.53
Emergency Medical Technicians & Paramedics	16.7%	14	\$12.26
Tire Repairers and Changers	16.7%	9	\$9.86

\* May 2007 wages aged to November 2008.  
Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Bureau of Labor Market Information, March 2009.

set in motion a slight restructuring of the workplace. Some of the regions fastest growing occupations are predicted to derive from the health care, social services, education, and computer fields. Occupations in demand in the near future in the Youngstown-Warren-Boardman MSA, of which



Howland Township is part of, are predicted to be in the fields of: Community and Social Services, Healthcare Support, Healthcare Practitioners and

Technicians, and Computer and Math fields, among others.

the region, and most particularly the connection to both the Cleveland and Pittsburgh Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA).

Youngstown-Warren-Boardman MSA Occupational Employment Projections by Major Occupational Group, 2006-2016						
Occupational Title	Employment		Change in Employment		Total Annual Openings	Average Wage Nov. 08*
	2006 Annual	2016 Projected	2006 - 2016	Percent		
Total, All Occupations	251,300	254,400	3,100	1.2%	7,169	NA
Management Occupations	10,570	10,210	-360	-3.4%	228	\$41.90
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	7,070	7,610	540	7.6%	179	\$25.76
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	1,660	1,870	210	12.7%	65	\$27.09
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	1,970	1,800	-170	-8.6%	48	\$29.37
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	550	550	0	0.0%	16	\$26.10
Community and Social Services Occupations	5,260	6,430	1,170	22.2%	208	\$17.99
Legal Occupations	1,240	1,240	0	0.0%	25	\$30.11
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	11,850	11,990	140	1.2%	288	\$22.92
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, & Media Occ.	2,640	2,640	0	0.0%	77	\$15.74
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	16,230	18,710	2,480	15.3%	559	\$30.40
Healthcare Support Occupations	9,930	11,990	2,060	20.7%	329	\$11.86
Protective Service Occupations	4,990	5,290	300	6.0%	175	\$18.38
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	23,610	25,520	1,910	8.1%	970	\$8.89
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance Occup.	10,410	10,680	270	2.6%	202	\$11.42
Personal Care and Service Occupations	6,680	6,690	10	0.1%	240	\$10.11
Sales and Related Occupations	29,500	30,430	930	3.2%	1,093	\$14.03
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	34,080	33,720	-360	-1.1%	839	\$13.68
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	390	380	-10	-2.6%	11	\$13.29
Construction and Extraction Occupations	10,970	11,320	350	3.2%	257	\$21.06
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	10,440	10,420	-20	-0.2%	195	\$18.62
Production Occupations	30,320	24,720	-5,600	-18.5%	623	\$18.09
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	20,950	20,160	-790	-3.8%	546	\$14.51

\* May 2007 wages aged to November 2008.

Source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Bureau of Labor Market Information, March 2009.

Some occupations experience losses are expected to be in the fields of: Production, Architecture and Engineering, Transportation and Material Moving, and Management, among others. Overall, a 1.2% increase in new employment opportunities is predicted in the region by 2016.

### Regional Economic

### Development Initiatives

The Tech Belt Initiative (TBI), Team Northeast Ohio (Team NEO), Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce and other organizations are continuing to promote economic development by playing on the strengths of

Many of these initiatives seek to enhance and promote technology-led economic development strategy. The ongoing result of the strategy should create more companies and more high-paying jobs, increase venture capital, accelerate “tech transfer” between area research universities and businesses, and build an enhanced national image for Northeast Ohio and Southwest Pennsylvania.

The reality remains that future growth, innovation and productivity lies in technology-based enterprises like alternative energy, biosciences, IT/Robotics, advanced manufacturing and advanced materials, and health care. Howland Township is at the epicenter of the health care sector in the region and is home to numerous health and health care related businesses of all sizes. The demand for these services in the future, combined with the “graying” of the population should help Howland Township retain its edge over other communities.



### Strategies and Recommendations

#### **Nurture Existing Business & Industry**

The Township’s first and foremost economic policy should be to preserve its existing base of businesses and industries. However, Township Officials and residents need to have a more in-depth discussion as to what future industries they’d like to have in the community.

Some of Township’s existing businesses, especially in the Golden Triangle are industries that could benefit from additional “economic clustering.” For instance (although not located in the Golden Triangle), Severstal Steel has a coke plant adjacent to it and coke is required in the production of steel

A best practices economic development strategy would be one where existing businesses would be expanded by clustering or piggybacking suppliers or related businesses around them. Incentive policies should be created and granted to those businesses that are complimenting existing or preferred economic

clusters and compliment the region’s existing business base.

#### **Promote Howland Township**

Communities are like merchandise, in that their success largely depends upon branding and reputation. Attaining market share of each variable requires tedious planning and resources. Unlike many communities, the Howland Township “brand” is relatively known in the region, but could be better promoted with the help of a vast array of projects like the development of unique signage/banners/gateways, innovative economic tools, zoning, green initiatives, and targeted public infrastructure investments.

In today’s competition for tomorrow’s workforce, residents, and consumers, one constant holds true—Howland should continue to be proactive in developing its own image or it will eventually acquire one. Imagine Howland as the “Greenest Township” in



Ohio, as over 20% or more of Howland’s land is green space.

#### **Revitalize Existing Retail Shopping Nodes**

Certain areas in Howland are in need of revitalization and should be addressed. The Elm Road Corridor





is one such area. The Township should work with property owners to ensure that their facilities are being actively marketed. Site selection consultants often look at commercial vacancies in a community's main shopping hub as an indicator that the local economy is not good for investment.

### **Pursue the Feasibility of Developing a Community Improvement Corporation to Encourage Economic Growth**

While industrial and commercial development in Howland Township is promoted by various organizations, no one agency (except the Township Administration) is solely dedicated to promoting development, redevelopment, and revitalization efforts in Howland Township.



Economic development in many communities and political subdivisions is promoted through the use of a public (501c3) or private (501c6) not-for-profit entity called a Community Improvement Corporation (CIC). The benefit of a 501c6 over a 501c3 is that it is classified as a "business league" and as a public/private partnership can be better adapted to addressing the needs and challenges of economic development than a 501c3 may be.

With economic development in the hands of a new agency, new energy could be directed towards the commercial and industrial growth/revitalization of the Township's corridors, the "Golden Triangle," business attraction and retention, and brownfield redevelopment. This new entity could also work with other regional CIC's like the one housed at the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber.

### **Pursue the Feasibility of Land Banking**

Howland Township could pursue the feasibility of establishing a policy of land banking to be used as a tool to promote adaptive reuse, economic development, public spaces, community gardens,

neighborhood preservation, and for the overall health of the community and public safety.

Having a functional GIS in place would assist in this endeavor in a similar manner that it assisted officials in Cleveland's Slavic Village in

assembling vacant and underutilized parcels for economic development purposes.

Over the past thirty years, land banks have emerged as powerful tools for converting vacant and abandoned properties into assets for community





revitalization. Land banks have special powers to acquire and assemble multiple abandoned properties and then legally transfer the land to responsible nonprofit and private developers for redevelopment. They take on the initial risk of preparing land in areas that have uncertain real estate markets. As a private non-profit, a newly established CIC could raise its own funds through memberships and accept gifts, monetary contributions and other resources that other non-profits may not be able to. They also are better equipped to handle confidential economic development matters due to this legal structure.

With the passing of S.B. 119, the tax-delinquent land reutilization law was modified to authorize political subdivisions to prosecute property tax foreclosures, and acquire such lands through foreclosures before the land is offered at a tax sale, and sell such property at less than appraised market value. This process could be handled by a Howland CIC.

### **Promote Business Retention & Recruitment Tools**

A variety of financial and tax incentives are used to encourage and stimulate new business investments.

The promotion of these incentives is handled by various entities.

The Trumbull County Planning Commission and the County Commissioners assist with the Enterprise Program and Community Reinvestment Area program and the Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation assists in the administration and assistance of the State of Ohio "166" Small Projects Fund, SBA programs, and also has its own revolving loan fund and "mini-loan" program. The Reinvestment Partnership Corporation also provides businesses in Trumbull County with micro lending solutions.

To promote the visibility and awareness of these incentives and tools, the Township should consider developing methods to better disseminate this information on its updated website or through promotional tools. In clearly establishing and defining these incentives, the Township could better position itself to attract new businesses consistent with the Township's economic base and overall character.

All tax and financial incentives should be treated as investments rather than subsidies. These tools

should be performance-based where costs and benefits honor their job, income, tax, and other commitments. The Township should also define a course of action to take when firms receiving local incentives do not reach their commitments.

The following development incentives are available to qualifying businesses establishing themselves in Howland Township. It is important to note that approval must be obtained for nearly all of these programs prior to the start and/or announcement of the project. It is advisable to start the approval process early in order to make the best use of these programs.

Businesses in Howland Township could be eligible for the following grant, loan, tax credit, or other incentive programs from the County, State and Federal Government:

#### Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program

The Enterprise Zone Program provides abatement of real estate taxes for a period up to ten years. The entire Township is a designated enterprise zone.



Businesses must agree to retain or create employment and establish, expand, renovate their businesses. The abatement must first receive final approval from the Trumbull County Commissioners, and be reviewed and approved by the school district if the abatement is over 60%.

There are currently four businesses in Howland Township with seven active enterprise zone abatement agreements.

### Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program

Very similar to the Enterprise Zone program, the CRA program assists local businesses by granting tax abatement, up to 100%, on real property for any increased valuation that would result from improvements to the property in the form of new construction or remodeling of existing residential, industrial and commercial structures by the property owner. Abatement periods are typically approved for up to 10-15 years.

The major difference between the EZ and CRA programs is that the CRA program provides tax incentives for residential property improvements.

All incentives providing over 50% abatement for commercial or industrial development require a school donation agreement with the local school district. All CRA abatements must first receive final approval from the Trumbull County Commissioners and be reviewed and approved by the school district.

No CRA exists in Howland Township. To create this incentive area, the Township Administration will have to undertake a housing survey within the area to be incentivized and residential blight must be documented. The findings resulting from the survey shall be incorporated in the resolution describing the boundaries of an area. Township officials may also stipulate in the resolution that only new structures or remodeling classified as commercial, industrial, or residential, or some combination thereof, and

otherwise satisfying the requirements of section 3735.67 of the Revised Code are eligible for exemption from taxation under that section.

The legislation authorizing the CRA could also provide that additional stipulations be met before the abatement can be granted. These stipulations could require that a certain percentage of the residential improvements to promote “Green” concepts, be LEED-certified, encourage energy conservation, or meet some other locally-preferred benchmark.

If construction or remodeling classified as residential is eligible for exemption from taxation, the resolution shall specify a percentage, not to exceed one hundred per cent, of the assessed valuation of such property to be exempted. The percentage specified shall apply to all residential construction or remodeling for which exemption is granted.

Below are the State of Ohio residential abatement thresholds:



1. Residential Remodeling (2 units or less; minimum \$2500)
  - Up to 10 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA
2. Residential Remodeling (more than 2 units; minimum \$5000)
  - Up to 12 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA
3. Residential New Construction
  - Up to 15 years as specified in the legislation that creates the CRA

### Tax Increment Financing and Incentive Districts

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Incentive Districts provide a funding mechanism for infrastructure improvements through a partnership between local government and a private developer and/or company. Expected growth in property tax revenues from a designated area are used to finance the bonds that pay for improvements in the TIF and Incentive District. Commercial, industrial, and

mixed used developments that include residential land uses are all eligible activities for Incentive Districts, a newly enabled TIF tool.

Under tax increment financing, developers or companies continue to pay real estate taxes on the value of the property prior to the creation of the TIF district. As the improvements increase the value of their property the new tax money is directed into a fund to pay for the improvements. Qualifying infrastructure improvements include public roads, water and sewer lines, environmental remediation, land acquisition, demolition, stormwater and flood remediation, and the provision of gas, electric, and communications service facilities.

Such a tool could be used to revitalize neighborhoods in Bolindale, Morgandale, or promote economic renewal projects in Howland Township’s core at SR 46 and East Market Street or elsewhere where allowable and feasible.

### CDBG Economic Development Loans and Grants

This program provides gap financing for local business development with the goal of creating and/or retaining permanent private sector jobs, principally for low and moderate-income (LMI) persons through the expansion and retention of businesses in the community. The amount loaned or granted for economic development loans is usually \$20,000 for every job created or retained, 51% of which must come from LMI households. For infrastructure projects, the loan/grant threshold is usually \$10,000 per job created or retained. The Trumbull County Planning Commission assists Trumbull County communities with this program and program standards may change periodically.

### Roadwork Development (629) Account

Roadwork Development (629) Account funds are available to induce companies to move forward with capital investment and job creation and/or retention projects in Ohio. Retail projects are not eligible.





Companies and developers may also apply. 629 funds can be used for off-site public road improvements. Engineering for roads can be covered. If improvements are being made to an existing road, and the water and sewer lines need to be removed and replaced, these costs can also be covered. ODOT must be notified if 629 funds are used on a state route outside of a municipality, as they must approve any improvements. Expenditures made prior to State Controlling Board approval are not eligible for reimbursement and 629 funds are granted on a reimbursable basis.

Funds are determined by the amount of grant funding available, the cost of the needed roadway improvements, and the number of jobs related to the project. Substantial local financial support and participation in the project is required. The use of State funds may require the payment of State prevailing wage rates. Applicants must apply for funding through the Ohio Department of Development's Economic Development Division.

Ohio Rapid Outreach Grant (Formerly 412 Business Development Program)

The State of Ohio provides eligible businesses that create and retain jobs up to \$500,000 in grant dollars to purchase machinery and equipment, for site acquisition, building improvement, and to offset other required infrastructure costs. Applicants must apply for funding through the Ohio Department of Development's Economic Development Division.

Revolving Loan Fund Program

The Trumbull County Revolving Loan Fund program provides fixed-rate loans for the purposes of acquiring land, new construction, acquiring a building, renovating an existing building, and acquiring new and/or used machinery and equipment. The program will loan up to 45% of the eligible project cost.

The project must demonstrate job creation and/or justifiable retention and \$20,000 per job created, up to \$500,000, can be requested. At least 51% of the new employees must be

classified as low-to-moderate income prior to being hired. This program is handled by the Trumbull County Planning Commission.

Mini-Loan Fund Low-Interest Loans

This program works through local banks providing 50% of the funds in loans that they would otherwise not consider. The interest rate on this loan is fixed at time of closing, at a rate of one percent over prime. Mini-Loan funds may be used to purchase assets for the operation of a qualified small business, including machinery/equipment, leasehold improvements, inventory, and limited working capital. This program is handled by the Reinvestment Partnership Corporation and is administered by the Warren Redevelopment and Planning (WRAP) in Trumbull County. The Trumbull County Planning Commission acts as the lead agency for all loans outside of the City of Warren.



### Ohio 166 Direct Loan

The 166 Direct Loan Program provides low-interest loans to businesses willing to commit to creating new jobs or preserving existing employment opportunities in the State of Ohio (up to \$35,000 per job created or retained, with jobs created within three years). Eligible businesses include those engaged in, but not limited to, manufacturing, research and development, and distribution. Retail projects are ineligible for the 166 Program. This program is handled by the Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation.

The 166 Direct Loan Program may finance up to 30 percent of eligible project costs directly related to the fixed-asset purchase. The minimum loan amount is \$350,000 and the maximum is \$1,000,000. Businesses requesting \$350,000 or less may participate in the Regional 166 Direct Loan Program.

The term of any loan awarded through the 166 Direct Loan Program is conditioned upon the useful life of the financed assets with the

maximum limit up to 15 years for real estate and up to 10 years for machinery and equipment. Interest rates for the 166 Program are fixed at/or below market rates and typically do not exceed two-third of the current prime rate. A minimum of 10 percent equity is required and the equity requirement may be higher for start-ups and special purpose facilities.

Eligible project costs may include:

- Purchase of land and/or building; if the project involves the purchase of an existing building, the business must occupy at least 51 percent of the premises.
- Purchase of machinery and equipment.
- Building construction and/or renovation costs; if the project involves new construction, the business must occupy at least 75% of the premises.
- Long-term leasehold improvements.

- Purchase of ongoing business' fixed-assets.
- Limited soft costs directly related to the fixed-asset purchase.
- **Refinancing is ineligible.**

### Small Business Administration (SBA) 504 Program

The SBA 504 loan program provides long-term, fixed-rate, subordinate mortgage financing for acquisition and/or renovation of capital assets including land, buildings and equipment. Virtually all types of for profit small businesses are eligible for this program.

The SBA 504 loan is distinguished from other SBA loan programs in these ways:

- Lower down payment; allows a business to conserve valuable operating capital by injecting a minimum 10 percent of total project cost. Injection amounts may be higher for new businesses or special purpose property.



- Fixed interest rate; borrower knows cost of occupancy for the next 20 years.
- Rate is usually below market rate.

All project costs can be financed, including acquisition (land and building, land and construction of the building, renovation, machinery and equipment) and soft costs such as title insurance, legal, appraisal, environmental and bridge loan fees. Closing costs may be financed. This program is handled by the Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation.

### Small Business Administration (SBA) Loan Guarantee Program

The Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) loan guarantee program gives banks additional comfort when considering an unusual project and improves the company's ability to access needed capital.

### Foreign-Trade Zone

Howland Township is located in Foreign Trade Zone #181, which is part of a 12-County area under the administration of the Northeast Ohio Trade and Economic Consortium, of which Trumbull County is represented on the board of directors. Land currently in a general purpose zone for business expansion is available in five Trumbull County locations, including the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport, Aero-Park in Vienna Township, Warren Commerce Park, the Delphi North River Road Facility (in Howland and Bazetta Townships), and Lordstown Commerce Park. The purpose of this special economic area is to stimulate foreign trade by granting special tariff status and tax relief for businesses engaging in foreign commerce. Goods may be imported into, and then exported from, the foreign trade zone without the payment of duty and excise taxes to all non-NAFTA countries. Inverted tariff relief occurs when imported parts are dutiable at higher rates than the finished product into which they are incorporated. Land for business



expansion is currently available and owned and/or marketed by the Western Reserve Port Authority and the Youngstown-Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce.

### Innovation Ohio Loan Fund

The Innovation Ohio Loan Fund was created to assist existing Ohio companies develop next



generation products and services within certain Targeted Industry Sectors (Advanced Materials, Instruments, Controls and Electronics, Power and Propulsion, Biosciences, and Information Technology) by financing the acquisition, construction and related costs of technology, facilities and equipment. Ohio’s manufacturing sector will be a key target of this program.

The Innovation Ohio Loan Fund provides competitive financing terms on loans to finance projects that will positively impact Ohio by creating high-value jobs, increased tax revenues, and improve the economic welfare of the State of Ohio. It is intended to supply capital to Ohio companies having difficulty securing funds from conventional sources due to technical and commercial risk factors associated with the development of a new product or service.

The Innovation Ohio Loan Fund can finance up to 75 percent of a project’s allowable costs to a

maximum of \$2 million and a minimum of \$500,000.

Eligible costs include the cost of acquisition, construction, renovation, expanding or improving project facilities, and the acquisition and installation of equipment for eligible innovation projects. Additionally, loan funds may assist with software development, and the cost of creating and protecting intellectual property including costs of securing appropriate patent, trademark, trade secret, trade dress, copyright or other forms of intellectual property protection for an eligible innovation project or related products or services.

Industrial Site Improvement Fund

The Ohio Industrial Site Improvement Fund (ISIF) Program is administered by the ODOD’s Strategic Business Investment Division. The primary purpose of the ISIF Program is to assist geographically and/or economically disadvantaged counties around Ohio in the expansion and modernization of buildings,

remediation of environmentally contaminated property and completion of other infrastructure improvements at sites used primarily for commercial or industrial activities.

A total of approximately \$3.5 million in grants were made available in FY 2009, with \$750,000 maximum grant awards available for each eligible county. Grant amounts cannot exceed 75 percent of the total costs incurred under the site improvement project. Grant funds are provided on a reimbursement basis.

Urban Redevelopment Loan Program

The Urban Redevelopment Loan Program provides low interest loans to municipalities or designated nonprofit economic development organizations to acquire real estate for assembly into developable parcels and remediate any brownfield contamination site to entice private business investment in distressed urban locations. Eligible project costs may include:

- Purchase of land and/or building



- Remediation of brownfield contamination
- Infrastructure and site preparation
- Demolish buildings and remove building debris
- Retention ponds and/or flood and drainage improvements
- Construction of streets, roads, bridges and installation of traffic control devices
- Construction of parking lots and facilities
- Installation of water and sewer lines and wastewater treatment plants
- Installation of gas, electric and telecommunication hook-ups
- Improve waterway and railway access
- Limited soft costs directly related to fixed-asset expenditures
- **Refinancing is ineligible**

The Urban Redevelopment Loan Program may finance 40 percent of the total project costs directly related to the eligible costs. The

maximum loan amount is \$5,000,000 with a term of up to 15 years. Payment of loan principal and interest may be deferred up to five years to allow the applicant to market the property. The sale or lease of the project site or facility may trigger repayment, as determined by Ohio Department of Development.

Interest rates for the Urban Redevelopment Loan Program may be set as low as zero percent for the first five years, with the interest rate beginning in year six, fixed at/or below half of the current prime rate.

#### Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund

The Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) capitalized by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) offers below-market rate loans to assist with the remediation of a Brownfield property to return it to a productive economic use in the community.

#### Ohio Research Commercialization Program

The Ohio Research Commercialization Grant strives to improve the ability of small technology companies to assess and realize the commercial potential of research projects, and to promote the competitiveness of these companies through the augmentation of federal research and development funding. The Ohio Research Commercialization Grant is a primary component of Ohio technology company assistance. Contact the Ohio Department of Development for more information on this program.

#### Job Training Grants

This program can assist with up to 50% of the funding of orientation, training for new or current employees, improved management techniques, instructor training and related training needs at manufacturing businesses that create or retain jobs.



### Micro Enterprise Program

The Micro Enterprise Business Development Program provides low and moderate-income persons with access to capital for micro enterprise business development and self-employment with the goal of creating and retaining long-term jobs in the private sector. Micro Enterprises are defined as for-profit entities with five or fewer employees. The Mahoning Valley Economic Development Corporation is the contacting entity for this program.

### Research and Development Investment Loan Fund

The Research and Development Investment Loan Fund provides assistance in the form of a low-interest loan, partnered with a tax credit, to promote economic development, business expansion and job creation by encouraging private-sector research and development investments.

The R&D Fund can finance up to 50 percent of a project’s allowable costs, with loans ranging in size from \$1 to \$5 million for a period up to 15 years for real estate and up to 10 years for machinery and equipment. Interest rates are fixed at/or below market rates and typically do not exceed half of the current prime rate.

Eligible projects are defined as those in which research is undertaken for the purpose of discovering and developing new or improved products, processes, techniques, formulas, or inventions. It is expected that project employment will be comprised of a significant representation of scientists, researchers, and technicians.

Eligible project costs include the following types of investments, which are being used for research and development activities:

- Purchase of land and/or building; if the project involves the purchase of an existing building, the business must occupy at least 51% of the premises
- Purchase of machinery and equipment

- Building construction and/or renovation costs; if the project involves new construction, the business must occupy at least 75% of the premises
- Long-term leasehold improvements
- Purchase of an ongoing business’ fixed-assets
- Limited soft costs directly related to the fixed-asset purchase
- **Refinancing is ineligible**

In addition, businesses that meet the program requirements (i.e. job creation commitments, timely loan repayments, commitment to Research and Development activities, etc.) are eligible for a dollar-for-dollar credit against their Ohio tax liability, equal to the amount of principal and interest repaid on the loan. The maximum annual credit is \$150,000. The credit will be non-refundable, but can be carried forward.



### Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit

A business can receive a refundable tax credit against its corporate franchise/income tax based on the state income tax withheld on new, full-time employees. The amount of the tax credit can be up to 75% for up to 10 years. The tax credit can exceed 75% only upon recommendation of the Ohio Department of Development that there is an extraordinary circumstance that merits an exception. Approved projects generally range between 50% to 60% for five to ten years.

A five-member authority determines eligibility and terms. Businesses must agree to create at least 25 new, full-time jobs with 3 years of operation. The average wage of all employees must be at least 150% of the current federal minimum wage. The business must demonstrate to the state that the tax credit is a major factor in its decision to go forward with the project. The Township must also provide local financial support for the project.

### Ohio Research & Development Investment Tax Credit

The Ohio Research and Development Investment Tax Credit, which is authorized within Section 5733.351 of the Ohio Revised Code, is a nonrefundable credit against an Ohio C-Corporation's Corporate Franchise Tax. The tax credit currently is applied against a company's Corporate Franchise Tax but will be taken against the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT) for corporations subject to ORC Section 5733.01(G)(2).

In order to qualify, the taxpaying Corporation must invest in "Qualified Research Expenses", as defined in Section 41 of the Internal Revenue Code. "Qualified Research" is research undertaken for the purpose of discovering information that is technological in nature and the application of which is intended to be useful in the development of a new or improved product, process, technique, formula, or invention. Both In-house expenses, such as

wages and supplies, and contract expenses qualify.

The credit equals 7% of the amount of Qualified Research Expenses in excess of the taxpayer's average investment in Qualifying Research Expenses over the three preceding taxable years. Any excess credit not used for the taxable year in which it is earned may be carried forward for up to 7 years. There is no special application or approval process for this tax credit.

The credit may be claimed on a franchise tax return, but will be subject to audit by the Department of Taxation.

### Technology Investment Tax Credit

The Technology Investment Tax Credit program offers a variety of benefits to Ohio taxpayers who invest in small, research and development and technology-oriented firms. Through this innovative program, Ohio investors may reduce their state taxes by 25%-30% of the amount



they invest in qualified, technology-based Ohio companies. Both the companies and their investors must meet several requirements specified by Ohio law in order to gain access to the Technology Investment Tax Credit program.

### Promote a Unified Theme

Much of the economic development strategy is dependent upon image and building upon momentum. While the short-term benefits of employing a unifying banner theme around the community may be slow to recognize, there are several long term benefits that derive from consistency and a consistent message. First impressions are extremely important, especially when entering a Township. Gateways provide a sense of place and set the tone for the entire



community. The visual appearance of routes leading into the Township is vitally important. Howland Township needs to look visually appealing and give a good first impression to encourage investment, shoppers, and visitors as well as providing an attractive and pleasant environment for its residents.

Currently, Howland's gateways are absent or less than desirable. New gateway features are a key component to promote Howland Township's image. These gateways must be strategically placed in high visibility areas on major thoroughfares near the Township's borders. This could prove especially

effective for the "Golden Triangle" or Howland Corners.

Township banners also promote community pride and create visual appeal to the streetscape. Banners are most effective when defining a sub-area of the Township, such as a commercial, recreational, or historic area. Another use for banners is to promote holidays and seasonal festivities.

Way-finding signs provide visitors, as well as local residents, a pleasant experience while visiting Howland. Whether shopping in Howland Corners, visiting a park, or driving through the Township, way-finding signs can become very helpful when navigating through town. There are many different options when it comes to way-finding signs. These options include kiosks, columns, banners, and pole signs.

Even though typical gateway opportunities throughout Howland have very limited space in which to locate signs and landscaping, it is still possible to create a





significant gateway feature while conforming to site constraints.

Each potential location will need detailed analysis to ensure driver’s sight lines are not blocked, vehicle safe zones are respected, and existing utilities are avoided. The gateway concepts illustrated in the Transportation chapter and throughout this Plan were designed for the space between the existing sidewalk and curb.

Medium-scale monuments could be placed at key entry points into neighborhoods throughout Howland. These provide a consistent architectural theme and help give each neighborhood a sense of identity. They are also useful wayfinding signs for neighborhood visitors.

Small-scale monuments, such as address markers in a business district and direction to the Township’s parks, could be placed throughout the community to provide useful way-finding information to visitors. Their style should be consistent with the large-and-medium scale monuments.

### **Expand Resources for Community Planning and Economic Development Efforts**

Community and economic development initiatives are currently being handled in-house by the Township Administrator and the Planning and Zoning Department. A large percentage of economic development responsibility ultimately falls to the Planning Commission and other regional agencies, such as the Regional Chamber. Adequate resources need to be allocated so that optimal returns and progress can be made. The most successful communities in Ohio in the economic development arena allocate sufficient resources to combined economic development and planning efforts.

### **Pursue the Feasibility of Utilizing Special Improvement District**

Howland Township is strategically-placed with key access to the region, with many state routes, rail lines, and other main thoroughfares traversing it. One key tool to ensuring the commercial areas that accommodate this traffic are continually maintained is through the utilization of a Special Improvement District (SID). Three key areas could benefit from this

tool: The Elm Road Corridor, State Route 46, and Howland Corners.

The Elm Road Corridor is a primary Township gateway from the north and is need of additional revitalization efforts. Although the former DIY building is currently being leased and reused, the corridor has a variety of vacant properties and is generally unappealing aesthetically.

State Route 46, south of SR 82 to US 422 is a unique economic destination in the region. It has comparable advantage in the region due to the sheer brand diversity available to consumers. To provide additional visibility to this area, the Township and interested businesses should consider establishing a Special Improvement District (SID) to generate funds to undertake and support additional infrastructure, marketing, burying of utilities, economic development, boulevards, and other “Complete Street” activities.

The SID, if agreed upon by the majority of the property owners, would assess a fee to properties within the SID. Funds raised from this self-assessment would be placed in a special account at



the Township to finance specific area projects. The formula to determine that fee would be decided upon and agreed to by the property owners. Another promising area for this tool to work would be in Howland Corners to help encourage more pedestrian traffic, wayfinding, green and adequate parking, and other infrastructure improvements.

### Update the Zoning Map and Resolution

Howland Township’s zoning resolution and map should be updated in the future to ensure that it embodies the goals and objectives of this chapter and promotes economic growth and development rich with visual appeal and sensitive to the environment and pedestrians. See the Strategies and Recommendations Section in the Land Use Chapter for more information.

### Develop an Economic Development Plan

Before any future development of considerable impact can occur it must first be planned so that it can occur smoothly and in the best location and interests of Howland and her residents. A plan, regardless of whether or not it is established through ad-hoc

measures or by new processes completely aside from the economic development component in this Plan, should analyze the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and outside threats facing Howland and its economic base. This analysis should form the basis and the exact suitability of growth anticipated to occur in the redevelopment areas identified in the Plan, with the capital improvement program modified accordingly to accommodate this growth. The capital improvement program and Economic Development Plan should reiterate the economic development goals and objectives that surfaced during the planning process and that are highlighted within this Plan’s Economic Development chapter.

### Encourage Entrepreneurial Enterprises

New businesses, including home-based, that meet local market needs should be considered in future planning and economic development decisions. These types of activities could include those that assist already established local and regional businesses in the service, manufacturing, or medical sectors, or could be business ventures completely new to the Howland service sector. New start-ups

and endeavors<sup>28</sup> that have fared well in other areas similar to Howland include:

- Specialty home modification/remodeling and unique repair services (House Doctors, Handyman Connection, Budget Blinds, Inc., Nationwide Floor & Window Coverings, Jet-Black International Inc., and Kitchen Tune-up)
- Carpet, Upholstery & Drapery Services (Chem-Dry and Servpro)
- Commercial Cleaning (Jani-King, ServiceMaster Clean, CleanNet USA Inc., Coverall North America Inc., Anago Franchising, and Vanguard Cleaning Systems)
- Residential Cleaning (Merry Maids and Molly Maid Inc.)
- Business service and support services (sign services, postal services, printing services, and office space business centers)

<sup>28</sup> The franchise and start up costs of these ventures can vary depending upon business type. Some of these proposed business opportunities can be home-based.



- Computer and Technical Services (computer repairs, computer and software training, and Internet services)
- Children’s products and support services (new and used kids clothing/equipment and tutoring services)
- Senior Care services (Home Instead Senior Care, Home Helpers)
- Baked and whole goods stores (Panera Bread and French Street Bakery)
- Hotels & Motels (Choice Hotels International, and Days Inns Worldwide, Inc.)

### **Create a Business Retention and Expansion Program**

The Township could formalize a business retention and expansion (R&E) program where existing businesses could be contacted on an annual basis by Township or economic development officials to better understand the issues these firms face in doing business in Howland Township and abroad. Issues such as site selection, utility services, permitting,

financial and tax incentives can be identified and responded to through this type of R&E program.

One such method to promote business development within the R&E program would be to include this information on the Township’s newly created website or disseminated through a newly created Howland Township Community Improvement Corporation (CIC).

Information such as current financial and tax incentives, economic development growth areas, zoning, and infrastructure capabilities would be valuable to business officials. Developing the site with an interactive forum would also allow businesses and industries to post information that could help facilitate Business-to-Business opportunities and other marketing information.

### **Effectively Manage Traffic Congestion Issues**

Economic growth and success is an incubator for future traffic congestion issues. While traffic congestion may be only limited to key nodes and peak times in Howland, this could change in the

future, especially if additional economic expansion occurs in the region. During peak times, SR 46 has a fair amount of congestion.

### **Pursue the Feasibility of Developing a Consumer Shopping Needs Survey**

The survey that accompanied this Comprehensive Community Plan update asked respondents their feeling concerning government services and other community amenities. A similar survey can be done to survey residents as to their unique shopping needs to see if a “float” exists. A “float” is defined as the difference between the existing supply and the current demand.

In addition to surveying the direct consumption needs of area residents, the survey could also ask residents what types of services they’d like have in specific shopping areas of the Township. This information could be very important in assisting the chamber of commerce, existing businesses, and entrepreneurs in business districts. The survey could be performed inexpensively with the use of volunteers or online vendors.



## LAND USE



### LAND USE

#### Introduction

The Land Use Chapter of the Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan helps to set the tone for future growth and development, not only in pattern of development, but development type, density, and flavor. The community sits within some of the greenest lands within the Mahoning River Valley, and where environmental diversity is profound.

The manner by which land develops has implications on the numerous environmental variables that create the quality of life for the residents and businesses of Howland Township.

It is important that future land use and zoning decisions be decided broadly rather than daily. The most desired growth occurs most often when the decision making process is planned, transparent, and consistent. Consistency is especially important with land use issues, as a majority of any community's growth and financial well-being often occurs through private sector investment decisions that involve property transactions, either for agricultural,

residential, commercial, or industrial development.

Continued consistency in land use decisions will promote an economically-sound, diverse tax base. Land use decisions should be made in conjunction with the most current information possible. The following illustrations, maps and recommendations work to achieve that goal.

The recommendations that are highlighted herein, while ultimately implemented through tools like the Zoning Resolution and other means should be incorporated into the scope of daily activities.

#### Planning Issues

The true sense of community is often embodied in the visual element: What people see often defines the way they think about other issues. For Howland Township residents, pride in the community is strong.

Building upon this pride is important as Howland Township continues to not only grow and age, but also to redevelop and become more diverse. This will require the Township develop a true identity as to

what it wants to be, how it wants to develop, and what image it wants to resonate with potential new businesses and residents. Consistency is key to economic growth and it begins with proactive land use planning.

There are many tools to help address this vital question of identity. The strategies and recommendations within this Plan and the Zoning Resolution are primary tools. When used incrementally in conjunction with the Identity and Branding tools that were developed as part of this planning process, the Township should be able to continue to claim its status as one of the best places to live in the Valley.

#### Goals and Objectives

**Goal #1:** Preserve and enhance the character and quality of life in residential areas.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Promote residential development that protects existing, low-density neighborhoods while



allowing greater flexibility at the periphery and core of the Township;

2. Protect and enhance the quality of life in existing residential neighborhoods;
3. Develop incentives to encourage the provision of additional public amenities;
4. Ensure that all development is compatible with the surrounding use, scale, and character; and
5. Encourage preservation of open space and environmentally responsible development.

**Goal #2:** Ensure that Howland is well-served by attractive, cohesive commercial districts in appropriate locations that meet the daily needs of its residents and visitors.

**Objectives:**

1. Provide a broad range of office and commercial venues;
2. Enhance the appearance of existing and future office and commercial development;
3. Promote small- to medium-scale office and commercial developments;

4. Promote re-development and infill of existing, underutilized commercial areas; and
5. Allow for greater flexibility to accommodate progressive development strategies, and greater control by the Township to ensure a high quality development environment.

**Goal #3:** Maximize the benefits derived from public investment in community facilities and infrastructure.

**Objectives:**

1. Create and enhance land use policies that promote efficient use of public infrastructure; and
2. Promote the location of community facilities in areas compatible for their use and which are accessible to the public served.

**Goal #4:** Achieve a sustainable balance between development activities, preservation of natural resources, and open space.

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure that Township Resolutions reflect a high priority for the environment;
2. Establish a unified open space and greenways network;
3. Encourage preservation of trees and forests;
4. Protect and enhance surface and ground water quality;
5. Develop and promote innovative grading and soil conservation practices;
6. Promote local food production; and
7. Enhance scenic qualities along major roadways and gateways to the Township.

**Goal #5:** Eliminate annexation in order to maintain our current boundaries.

**Objectives:**

1. Establish cooperative relationships with neighboring municipalities and townships to manage sustainable growth and development;
2. Develop strategies to guard against annexation;
3. Encourage infill development through incentives; and



4. Identify objectives, policies, and programs for joint planning and decision-making.

### Existing Conditions and Trends

#### Residential Land

Residential areas are where people spend most of their time and have their greatest investment – their homes and property. The most desirable and suitable development pattern, preservation, and upgrading of these areas should be of the utmost concern to all members of the community.

The following types of residential structures are included in the classification and analysis of residential land uses within Howland Township:

detached housing units and their properties, and dwellings that house more than one family in a single structure. Some examples of multi-family residential units are apartment buildings and duplexes.

(See Map: Existing Land Use)

Residential land uses occupy 4,609 acres and comprise 51% of the Township’s assessed land usage; however its taxable assessed value comprise almost 73% of the Township’s total valuation, 10% more than Trumbull County.

#### Commercial Land

Many of Howland Township’s main corridors are devoted to commercial activity. This includes SR 46, East Market Street, Elm Road, and portions of North

River Road. Commercial activities include retail stores, theaters, offices, banks, building supply stores, gasoline stations, garages, restaurants, hotels and motels, and any other establishment where retail activity takes place.

Land dedicated to commercial uses in Howland Township occupies 1,118 acres, or 12% of the Township’s assessed land usage. Its taxable assessed value comprise 16.4% of the Township’s total valuation, four percent higher than Trumbull County.

#### Industrial Land

Land dedicated to industry within Howland Township occupies 1,165 acres, or 13% of the Township’s assessed land usage. Its taxable assessed value comprise 3.7% of the Township’s total valuation.

In Howland Township, the amount of land currently dedicated to industrial land use is substantial compared to other Township’s in the County. While capacity is currently available in existing industrial parks, identification of additional sites for potential

	Howland Township		Trumbull County	
	Acreage	% of Total	Acreage	% of Total
<b>Agricultural</b>	<b>1,045</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>232,678</b>	<b>59.6</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>1,165</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>12,543</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>1,118</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18,899</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Residential</b>	<b>4,609</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>77,318</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>47,792</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Utility</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1,716</b>	<b>0.4</b>
<b>*Total</b>	<b>9,069</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>390,945</b>	<b>100</b>

\*The totals are approximate and do not exclude mineral rights.



future industrial use could support additional economic growth and development. A large undeveloped tract of land south of North River Road and North of Dietz Road in Morgandale could possibly fill this role if existing environmental and other issues are mitigated at the site.

### Public/Institutional/Exempt Land

Areas designated as public are lands developed by public funds and are usually operated as part of governmental function and are reserved for public use. Activities that are included in this category are state lands, public utility facilities, government properties, cemeteries, firehouses, post offices, public hospitals, libraries, museums, schools, parks, and playgrounds.

In 2008, land dedicated to these uses amounted to 955 acres, or 11% of the Township's assessed land usage. Its taxable assessed value comprise 5.3% of the Township's total valuation (the lower the value the better because this land use is "exempted" from property taxes). On a percentage basis, Trumbull County has almost twice as much exempted property than Howland Township.

Areas classified as semi-public are lands developed by a limited group of people for their own use with limited public control and accessibility. Examples of semi-public uses include churches, private schools, service clubs, lodge halls and fraternal organizations.

### Utilities

Public utilities include water distribution facilities, sewage treatment facilities, gas lines, cell towers, transportation facilities, and other municipal controlled resources. Transportation classifications typically include: streets, highways, railways, and airport facilities.

There are approximately 177 acres of land, or 2% of assessed Township lands that are dedicated to this use. Its taxable assessed value comprise 1.3% of the Township's total valuation.

The public water and wastewater systems are partially or completely controlled by public entities other than Howland Township. In the future, sound land use practices should be used to reduce the mileage of new roads required to support future growth. The maintenance of roads can be reduced through clustering of development.

### Agriculture

Agricultural land uses include harvested cropland, summer-fallow cropland, cropland in soil improvement grass and legume areas, cropland

	Howland Township		Trumbull County	
	Assessed Value	% of Total	Assessed Value	% of Total
<b>Agricultural</b>	\$3,527,380	0.77	\$311,524,250	8
<b>Industrial</b>	\$16,771,220	3.7	\$144,236,940	3.7
<b>Commercial</b>	\$74,425,440	16.4	\$473,374,760	12.2
<b>Residential</b>	\$329,483,900	72.6	\$2,417,710,370	62.4
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	\$23,943,020	5.3	\$415,248,470	10.7
<b>Utility</b>	\$5,936,470	1.3	\$111,589,690	2.9
<b>*Total</b>	<b>\$454,087,430</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>\$3,873,684,480</b>	<b>100</b>

\*The totals are approximate and do not exclude mineral rights.





used in pasture rotation with crops, and pastures on land more or less predominately used for the purpose of animal grazing.

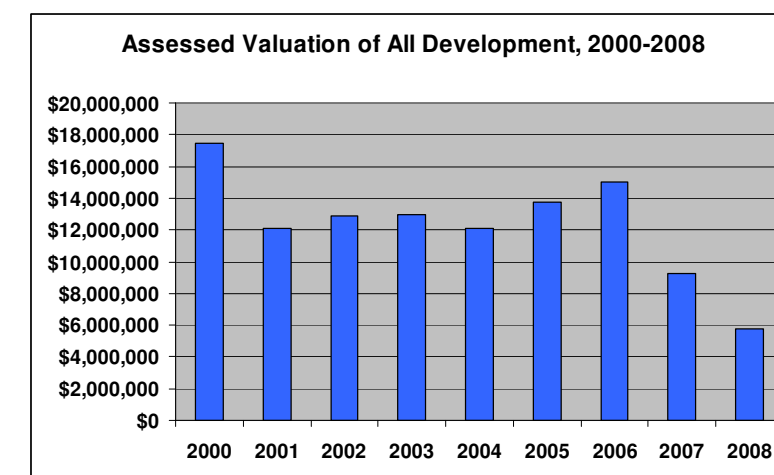
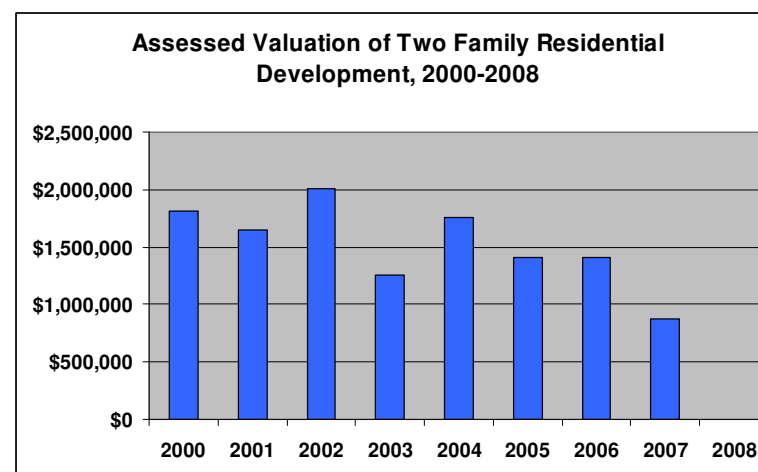
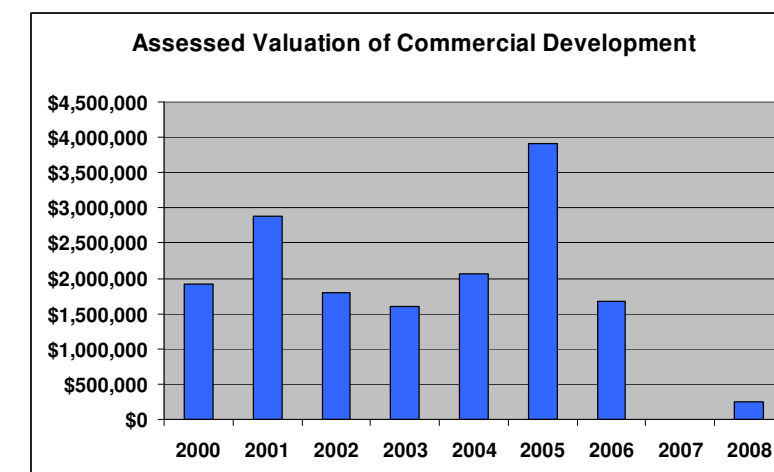
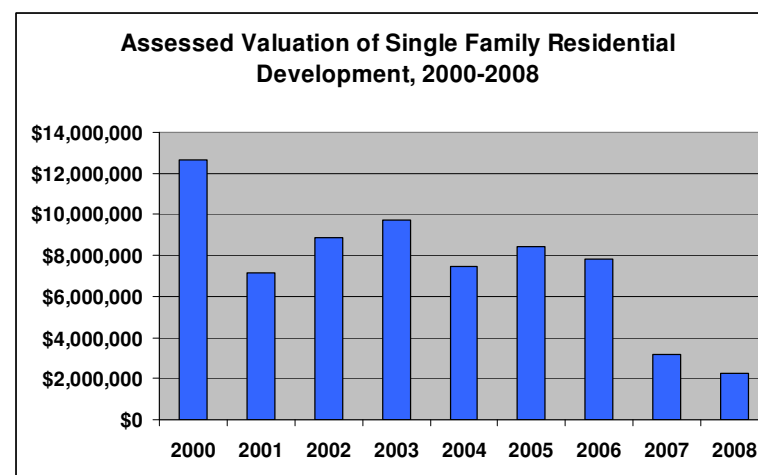
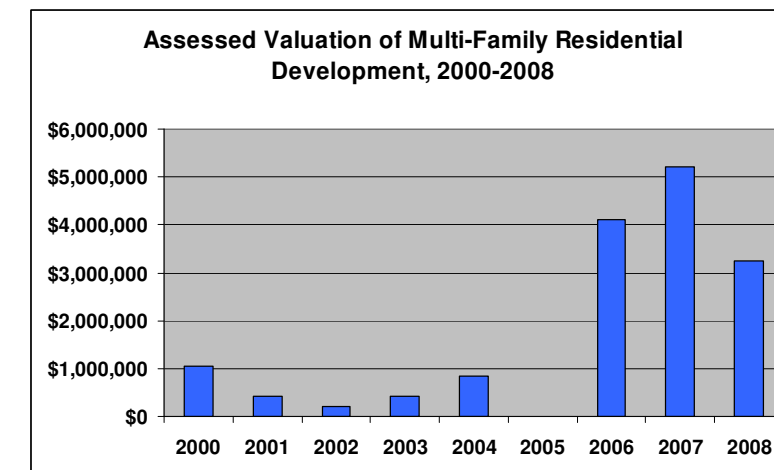
Approximately 1,045 acres or 11% of the Township's assessed land usage are occupied by agricultural land uses. Its taxable assessed value comprise less than one percent of the Township's total valuation.

### Land Use Trends

The trending of land use development over the last eight years illustrates that new investments are slowing. This trend is not new to Howland Township as new development has been limited on a national basis due to current issues in the financial sector, the housing market, and the general economy. According to some analysts, some regions are 50-60% over-commercialized. This has helped to suppress rents and lower the profit margins of developers and property owners. The lack of lending has also stalled development.

These issues are evident in the trending of Howland Township's assessed valuation of all development

and with temporary increase of vacancies along commercial corridors. However, due to Howland's location and stable residential base, the development community continues to make sustained investments and the last several years has witnessed new multi-family and commercial development.





### Future Land Use and Concept Areas

This Plan promotes the use of broad “Concept Areas” to promote future land uses in the Township. This is done so that the community can address land use in a proactive, yet flexible manner. The hope of promoting the Township’s land uses by way of Concept Areas is to promote an ongoing dialogue as to what the community can look like when all systems are aligned.

Zoning is the primary tool used in promoting future land uses and its basis is the dialogue that is generated from this Plan.

So that the Township can best refine its zoning and development procedures, the Concept Area method will help to answer many questions: What should these areas look like? What land uses should be promoted within them? Should certain areas within them be the recipients of capital improvements over other Concept Areas? Should they be pedestrian friendly, lively with mixed uses zoned with straight zoning classifications, or zoned with a planned unit

development overlay? While this list is endless and the time by which to capture future growth is now.

For this purpose, eight concept areas have been developed and are illustrated on Map: Concept Areas.

They are:

1. Morgandale and the Golden Triangle Concept Area
2. The Elm Road Corridor Concept Area
3. Bolindale Concept Area
4. The North Road Concept Area
5. The Northeast Concept Area
6. The Southeast Concept Area
7. State Route 46 Corridor Concept Area
8. Open Space Linkage Corridor Concept Area

### **Morgandale and Golden Triangle Concept Area**

#### Main Characteristics

This is the primary industrial hub in Howland Township. Land uses are primarily industrial with residential and scattered commercial. Many of Morgandale’s neighborhoods, especially the “Wood” streets contain a high amount of vacant, blighted

properties and undeveloped platted lots. Some of the undeveloped lands still retain wooded and other environmental assets.

#### Concerns and Trends

The Golden Triangle’s linkage to selective manufacturing sectors is unsettling in the current economy. However, the infrastructure and amenities in this area make it a solid contender in the global economy if retooled to meet the needs of other markets.

Manufacturers should be able to, if needed, retool their current business environments to compete in other sectors. The Concept Area has undeveloped land that, if environmental issues are addressed properly, could accommodate additional economic growth. The vacant residential lands in the “Wood” streets has valuable potential to be redeveloped for affordable housing for nearby employers, for mixed uses, or planned business parks.

#### Suggested Future Land Use Recommendations

- Promote the redevelopment and revitalization of the area’s existing industrial capacity



through the capitalization of resources for green technologies, renewable energies and other emerging technologies, and brownfield remediation loans and grants.

- Continue to upgrade the water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure (possible regional stormwater detention basin) to ensure its marketability.
- Improve aesthetics. Greening and visual appeal of the area should be improved through additional planning, open space, green space, and other public health amenities that will devolve to employees. This will raise property values and encourage future investment in the area.
- Promote residential reinvestment and encourage affordable housing by eliminating residential blight, the merging of residential lots (in the “Wood” streets), and using the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) incentive program. Possible “Live-Work” concepts could apply in this area.

### The Elm Road Corridor Concept Area

#### Main Characteristics

This is a main commercial corridor within the Township typified by large big box retail facilities, many of them vacant. Poor access management, signage and visual aesthetics and appeal make this corridor appear scattered. This area is also pedestrian unfriendly and vehicle dominant. The corridor also has poor use



of signage (e.g., gateways, landmarks, business signage).

#### Concerns and Trends

Elm Road is a major gateway to the Township. Visual appeal to first time visitors and private investors (potential new residents or business officials) is very important. If timely and tactical improvements are not made to this area, future blight could impact nearby residents and businesses. The commercial vacancy rate is above average and is possibly increasing in the area.

#### Suggested Future Land Use Recommendations

- Future opportunities to “right size” this area exist if empowered with additional resources, planning tools and the right zoning. Doing so will require major investments and the coordination, timing, and matching of public and private sector resources.
- This area is prime candidate to be retrofitted with a “Complete Streets” model, and a planned unit development overlay that encourages



integrated, well buffered, and visually-appealing mixed uses that are pedestrian-friendly.

- The feasibility of designating all or sections of this Concept Area as a Community Reinvestment Area should be pursued to encourage reinvestment.
- Discuss with property owners the feasibility of creating a Special Improvement District to update and improve pedestrian connectivity, signage, site access, and other issues that might be preventing the Corridor from attracting and retaining commercial investments.
- Pursue the feasibility of creating a multi-jurisdictional economic development tool like a Cooperative Economic Development Agreement (CEDA) or Joint Economic Development Zone (JEDZ) with Warren, Cortland, and Bazetta and Champion Townships. Both models provide for the sharing of costs and revenue affiliated with the redevelopment of the area.

### **Bolindale Concept Area**

#### Main Characteristics

Primary land uses include higher density 4-6 dwelling units per acre residential, large industrial land uses (Severstal Steel Corporation), and sporadic commercial uses along Niles Road. Neighborhoods west of SR 169 (Niles Road) contain a high percentage of vacant platted residential lots and blighted residential properties.

#### Concerns and Trends

As one of the Township’s oldest neighborhoods, infrastructure is aging or deficient in certain areas, but has been and will continue to be a priority for Township research and investment. This area has been hit hard with foreclosures and will be the recipient of future mitigation through Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) resources.

Some neighborhoods (west of SR 169) that historically did not have sanitary sewers will be receiving them in 2010. Flooding (from stormwater) is problematic in some areas.

Severstal, the area’s largest employer, has temporarily stopped production due to the current economic climate. However, the “Buy American” provisions in the American Recovery Act could be beneficial to the company and the community by helping to create employment opportunities for local residents.

#### Suggested Future Land Use Recommendations

- Utilize a combination of zoning, land banking, and increased awareness to revitalize certain sections.
- Incentives, like the Community Reinvestment Area program, should be pursued to encourage residential reinvestment in selected neighborhoods.
- Continue to pursue outside resources, like CDBG and NSP, to mitigate blight and infrastructure issues, and promote residential and economic reinvestment.
- Although the new sewers in the neighborhood west of SR 169 will minimize septic and other health issues, additional issues could limit the potential for the area to reach full residential capacity as originally platted for. This could substantiate the



need to combine several residential lots to ensure adequate service.

- Investigate strategic locations for appropriate, neighborhood-level commercial opportunities. This includes areas that are easily accessible by the neighborhood (walkable or short bike ride) to help the local residents meet essential needs. For example, through a future Community Health Assessment, it may be determined that healthy food options are lacking, thereby creating an opportunity for a local grocery or dairy store.
- Residential reinvestment is hindered due to the setbacks in the current zoning code. To encourage property owners to make additional investments to their properties, the zoning setbacks in the R-1, Single-Family District could be modified to allow for these improvements. An overlay can be established to “right size” existing non-conforming lots, or a new zoning classification could also be established.
- The close proximity of the Western Reserve Greenway, if properly planned and linked, could help promote additional pedestrian connectivity.

Future redevelopment of this area should take this important amenity into consideration.

### **The North Road Concept Area**

#### Main Characteristics

The primary land uses are residential subdivisions that abut Warren. Large “bowling alley” residential lots exist east of North Road that abut the floodway and other environmentally-sensitive areas.

#### Concerns and Trends

The area lacks pedestrian connectivity. Most neighborhoods and roads do not have sidewalks and no linkages to the elementary school exist. Flooding and stormwater issues are prevalent. Lands east of North Road contain areas of open space and other limited development potential.

The recent acquisition of 142 areas of open space east of North Road in the Mosquito Creek Watershed will help to provide additional passive recreational opportunities in this area, and should be linked to for access in the future.

#### Suggested Future Land Use Recommendations

- Additional pedestrian connectivity should occur in this area to promote both North-South movement up North Road and East-West movement so that neighborhoods west of North Road could link up with the Mosquito Creek Open Space Corridor.
- This area would greatly benefit from the continual mitigation of flooding issues. Impervious surfaces should be limited to the greatest extent possible through progressive stormwater practices and the use of pervious surfacing methods.
- Incentives, like the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program, should be pursued to encourage residential reinvestment in selected neighborhoods.
- Small agricultural and farming opportunities should be promoted in this area, particularly east of North Road.
- A “Live-Work” development concept should be encouraged in this area to maximize land resources.



### The Southeast Concept Area

#### Main Characteristics

Primary land uses consist of residential subdivisions, large lot and vacant residential lands, and agricultural land uses. The eastern portion of this concept area contains environmentally-sensitive features such as slope, special habitats and wildlife, wetlands, and hydric soils.

#### Concerns and Trends

Environmental features such as slope, wetlands and hydric soils should be preserved and incorporated into future development. This Concept Area also lacks pedestrian connectivity. Residents that frequent shopping outlets on SR 46 almost exclusively do so using a vehicle. Long, straight roads that help to



promote higher traffic speeds may also inhibit safe pedestrian and biking opportunities. In addition to a general lack of pedestrian linkages, this area also has poor access to, and a lack of, recreational opportunities and civic spaces.

#### Suggested Future Land Use Recommendations

- Residential development within or adjacent to sensitive environmental resources should follow conservation design practices and impervious surfaces should be minimized.
- Small scale agricultural operations and family farming ventures that produce local commodities for the local market, which is linked to several sustainable, public health goals of the community.
- Township Officials should pursue the feasibility of purchasing conservation easements and other



lands in this area that help to promote recreational opportunities or protect and preserve other natural amenities. With regard to recreational programming, this should be coordinated with the Howland Township Park District. Preservation areas could be coordinated with the Trumbull County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) or other similar local agencies.

### The State Route 46 Corridor Concept Area

#### Main Characteristics

This corridor is the primary commercial hub and main arterial within the Township and it requires vehicle usage to access.

#### Concerns and Trends

Traffic congestion and a lack of pedestrian connectivity exist in areas both North and South of State Route 82. Stormwater issues along SR 46 still pose a moderate risk in some areas.

Incompatible land uses are still in play, e.g., residential land uses either used for commercial,



home occupations or residential uses (See Map: Existing Land Use for a better indication as to where these incompatible residential uses are located).

### Suggested Future Recommendations

- Pursue the “Complete Streets” model for SR 46 and other main routes identified on the Map: Potential Gateways, Roundabouts, and Bike Lanes
- Pursue the feasibility of refining the zoning along SR 46. The corridor in areas south of SR 82 is almost exclusively used for commercial purposes. It is currently guided by two zoning districts that are similar and may provide for too many allowable uses: Corridor Review District (CRD) 1 and Corridor Review District (CRD) 2. Refining and consolidating the allowable uses or a planned unit



development overlay to ensure the same outcome promoted in the CRD language, should be something the Township pursues in the future.

### **The Northeast Concept Area**

#### Main Characteristics

The Concept Area consists of primarily residential, commercial, public and institutional uses and is the largest of the concept areas. This area contains some of the Township’s newer residential neighborhoods. Most of the Township’s “Open Space Linkage Corridor” and environmental preserves are located in this area. This Concept Area also suffers from the lack of pedestrian connectivity.

#### Concerns and Trends

As the “Center” of the community (Howland Corners), traffic congestion continues to increase due to more vehicular traffic, a lack of pedestrian connectivity, and an increase in outside visitors frequenting medical facilities and other businesses. Certain neighborhoods continue to have flooding and stormwater issues.

This Concept Area contains all the variables to be the recipient of revitalization/redevelopment (Howland Corners) and future growth (SR 46 and North River Road area).

### Suggested Future Land Use Recommendations

- Continuing the Township’s investment along the “Open Space Linkage Corridor” will be valuable in meeting the preference of residents, keeping residential values high, and be a potential economic generator.
- Because this Concept Area contains the most residential valuation relative to all of the other Concept Areas, it will be important that capital improvements and investments are continued to promote healthy neighborhoods.
- The use of Special Improvement Districts and the use of special assessments could be useful tools to help encourage additional residential improvements most desired by residents in these areas.



### Open Space Linkage Corridor

#### Main Characteristics

The Mosquito Creek Watershed that bifurcates Howland Township in a North-South fashion has some of the County's richest environmental diversity. In 2009, Trumbull County purchased 142 acres with Clean Ohio funds to fulfill the vision of a continuous linkage along this Corridor.

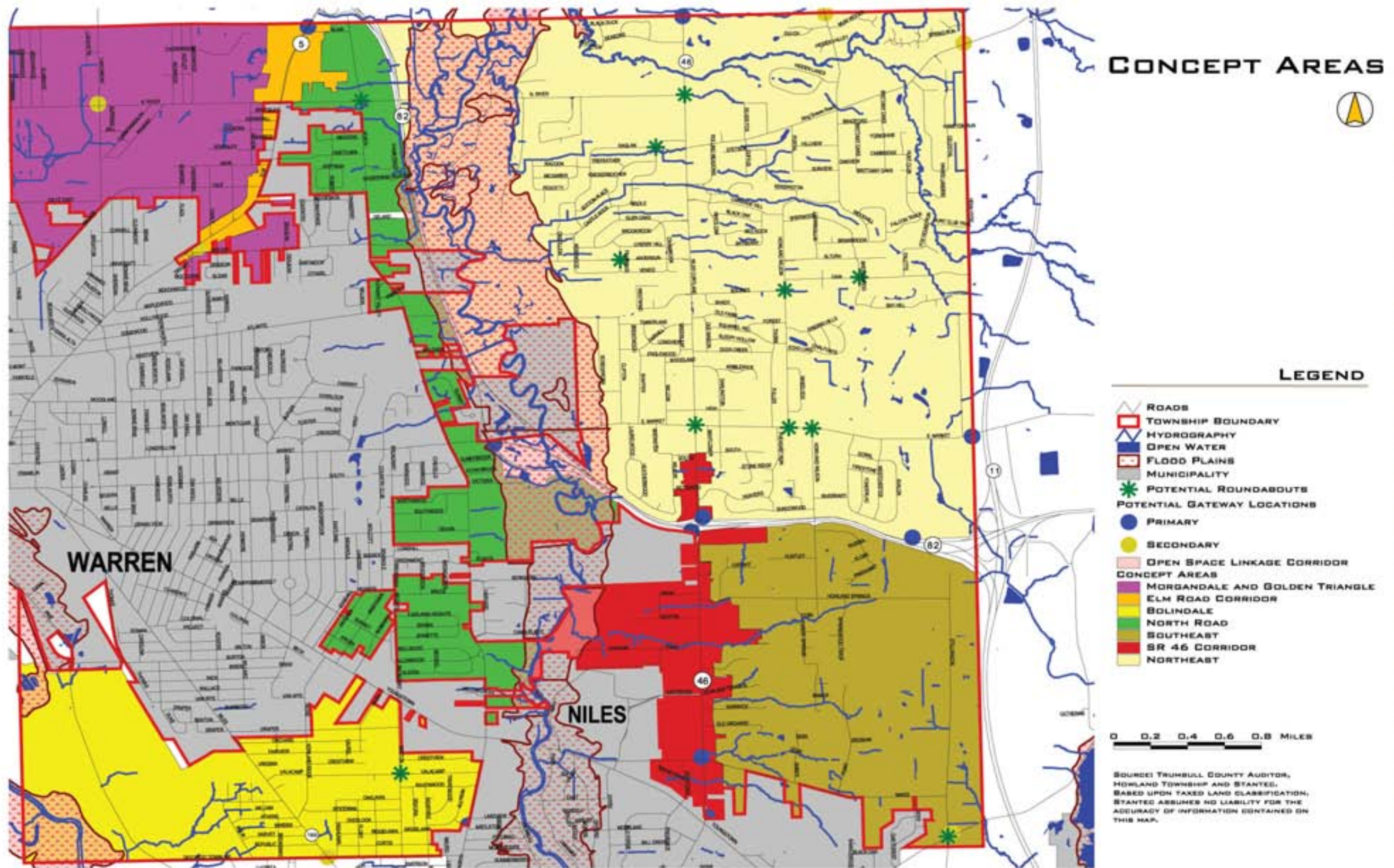
#### Concerns and Trends

Because this area is located in the floodway and contains sensitive environmental resources, it is imperative that any development that occurs adjacent to it follow many of the strategies highlighted in the Public Health, Natural Resources, and Land Use Chapters. Residential development along the floodway should follow conservation design practices and impervious surfaces should be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Recently passed Riparian Setback language will help to maximize the stormwater utility value of Howland's watercourses and minimize impact to the ecology with all future development.

#### Suggested Future Recommendations

- The Township should continue to work cooperatively with the Trumbull County Planning Commission, adjacent communities, and other organizations to make a continuous open space system in the Mosquito Creek Corridor a reality.
- The Corridor currently provides mostly passive recreation opportunities. Additional planning and investments should be pursued to provide for year-round use of the trail system. Creating trails that can be accessed all year is an example of something that the Township can pursue.





HOWLAND TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN



## Strategies and Recommendations

### **Promote Future Growth that is Consistent with Existing Community Character**

All types of development – residential, commercial, mixed-uses, and light industrial – should be encouraged. However, it is recommended that each project and particular use can be sufficiently serviced without reducing the flow of services and quality of life to existing residents and businesses before each are embraced. Potential nuisances should be ascertained to ensure these projects are compatible with the existing built environment and infrastructure, and utility demands. Prior planning and forethought should be incorporated into all future development decisions.

Throughout the development of this Plan there was a strong public desire to ensure that future development not affect traffic safety, detract from the existing quality of life, or diminish the Township’s environmental resources.

### **Update the Zoning Resolution and Map**

Zoning is largely tied to planning. They each support one another, and under current law (ORC 519.02), zoning must be developed “in accordance with a comprehensive plan.”

For a variety of Plan goals to be met, the Township Zoning Resolution should be updated and reorganized to promote consistency. Some of the following issues are, but not limited to:

1. Streamline the number of zoning classifications. Howland currently has too many zoning classifications with many overlapping similarities.
2. Consider rezoning areas along SR 46, Elm Road, and North River Road for specific uses with a planned unit development overlay instead of using the Corridor Review Districts, or consider converting the Corridor Review Districts to overlay districts that help promote visual aesthetics and pedestrian-friendly amenities.
3. Make the zoning process visual by displaying zoning regulations and design goals with

pictures and renderings that better illustrate Howland’s development goals.

4. Clean-up the zoning map. The districts should mirror as close as possible to parcel lines so as to know the zoning of any specific parcel (See Map: Zoning).
5. Revisit Lot Sizes for Residential Districts. Minimum lot sizes for the various residential classifications should be altered to give consumers more choices and more competitive price points. At the current time, the zoning resolution has a 12,000-square foot minimum with all straight residential districts.

Setbacks in residential districts should also be revisited to encourage additional residential reinvestment and improvements. When the Zoning Resolution is revisited, adding a zoning classification for smaller lots (Bolindale and Morgandale) and larger lots (Stillwagon and southeast neighborhoods) could be a useful tool, as an alternative (see TND at the end of this Chapter).



- 6. Home occupations should be accommodated in a reasonable, non-intrusive way.
- 7. The 50 acre minimum for the Planned Unit Development district should be modified to allow it at 20-25 acres. Open space requirements could be “flexed” for infill development projects.
- 8. There are currently three Corridor Review Districts (CRD-OI, CRD-1, and CRD-2). It may be possible that the intent of each district be implemented using one corridor overlay review district. With the exception of CRD-1 and CRD-2 differing in the allowance of drive-throughs, hotels/inns, offices and other tourist attractions, minor differences exist between the three districts.
- 9. Drive-Through facilities should be made a conditional use in applicable districts.
- 10. Greener development practices (particularly with regards to stormwater) and landscaping standards should be pursued.

### **Consider the Development of a Conservation Design District**

Updating the zoning resolution to include a Conservation Design zoning district or overlay district could help encourage more innovative subdivision design, as well as provide incentives and guidance to developers of these areas targeted for conservation design.

It will also help better utilize Township land resources for future growth and also meet the need of township residents: Over 50% of surveyed residents favored this type of development (see Chapter: Community Survey). This land use technique helps to alleviate stormwater and environmental constraints and retain the existing natural landscape, while possibly reducing the development and infrastructure costs.

This Plan recommends that new residential development, when necessary, be developed in a manner friendly to the environment and protective of the existing natural amenities and assets.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has developed an online development worksheet to help illustrate the benefits and costs savings with promoting conservation developments (<http://www.csc.noaa.gov/alternatives/econWorksheet.html>).

The Natural Lands Trust promotes the following four-step process in the design of new development in order to emphasize land conservation principles<sup>29</sup>.

The Township’s development regulations and procedures will require that this process be followed. These steps must be accomplished at the sketch plan stage - before any detailed engineering is completed.

#### 1. Identifying Existing Features that Should Be Conserved.

First, the areas that are most worthy of preservation will be mapped, including wetlands, flood-prone areas, creek valleys, and

<sup>29</sup> Source of Sketches - Growing Greener Handbook by the Natural Lands Trust



very steeply sloped lands. These are known as the Primary Conservation Areas.

Other features that are important for conservation should be mapped, such as wetlands, floodplains, hydrology, woodlands and existing canopy cover, scenic vistas, preferred recreational and pedestrian linkages, and other community preferred assets. These are known as the Secondary Conservation Areas.



The most appropriate areas for preservation of open space should be identified.

The areas with the fewest important natural, scenic and historic features will be identified as the "Potential Development Areas."

### 2. Locate Home Sites

Next, the most appropriate locations for homes should be selected. The zoning resolution should establish a maximum overall density for the site, but should not include overly strict lot requirements that would prevent reasonable flexibility in the site layout. Home sites should be chosen to avoid the important features mapped in the first step. Home sites should also work to take advantage of existing woodlands and environmental assets on the tract.

### 3. Locate Roads and Trails.

After the home sites are selected, then a road system should be designed that serves those homes. A trail system should also provide links between homes and to destinations outside of



the tract. The trail system is critical to make the open space accessible and providing the linkage helps to attain the goal of providing residents with pedestrian connectivity.

Trails should be developed prior to the occupancy of any neighboring homes to avoid opposition to the trails.



### 4. Draw in the Lot Lines

The last sketch plan step is to draw in lot lines. In conventional development, with strict “cookie-cutter” lot requirements, this is often the first step before any consideration of natural features of the site.

This Plan recommends that great care be used in the design and location of preserved open space areas within planned unit developments and conservation design subdivisions. In addition to preserving agriculture, a priority of this Plan is to have usable amounts of permanently preserved open spaces that create a true feeling of open space. The goal is to have open space that truly serves a public purpose, as opposed to areas that are simply “leftover” after a developer’s preferred pattern of roads and lots are laid out. For this reason, the existing R-CH, Residential Cluster Home language in the Zoning Resolution is ineffective.

Valid public purposes for open space include:

- Usable recreation areas and important links in a trail system;
- Agricultural lands;
- Environmentally sensitive areas, particularly creek valleys and concentrations of mature woods; and,
- Areas where stormwater can be mitigated in a more attractive and naturalistic manner that protects water quality, as opposed to engineered channels and traditional fenced-in detention basins.

Future developments should create contiguous swaths of open space in visible locations that maintain a feeling of open space and that provide a visual relief between developments. At best, some open space would be preserved along exterior roads. In most cases, at least half of the required open space should be in one contiguous area. Isolated areas (such as less than one acre) and narrow areas of land (such as less than 100 feet wide) should not be counted as open space.



However, more narrow stretches may be suitable as open space if they truly serve as part of a regional trail system. Detention basins should not be considered open space unless they are designed as a major scenic asset (such as a natural appearing pond) or are clearly suitable for recreation. Wider, not narrow buffers, should be used. Also, a maximum percentage of open space that can be covered by impervious surfaces should be established.



To count towards the required open space, land should be:

- Landscaped in trees, shrubs and other attractive vegetation;
- Maintained in agricultural uses, which may include a tree farm;
- Preserved in woods or natural wetlands vegetation; or,
- Used preferably for active or passive recreational uses.

Open Space should be interconnected with common open space areas on abutting parcels where possible, including provisions for public trails to link trail systems within Howland Township to its adjacent neighbors.

### **Encourage Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TND)**

The future could pose some opportunities for Howland Township to embrace this type of development, especially in areas that may be underutilized or vacant. Opportunities could exist for this type of development in Morgandale, Bolindale,

along East Market or Elm Road Corridors, or in vacant areas easily linked to commercial or mixed use opportunities, as well as other places in the Township.

Traditional Neighborhood Design (TND) is a planning concept that calls for residential neighborhoods to be designed in the format of small, early 20th century



villages and neighborhoods. Those traditional formats were characterized by one-family and two-family homes on smaller lots, narrow front yards with front porches and gardens, detached garages in the backyard, walkable “Main Street” commercial areas with shops lining the sidewalk, and public parks, town greens, or village squares. TND is intended to provide an alternative to bland subdivisions and suburban

sprawl and could reemerge as a development of choice after the housing “bust” forces some communities to “right-size” their housing stock.

Most contemporary development is characterized by an orientation to the automobile, separation of land uses, and low intensities. In contrast, TND calls for compact, pedestrian-oriented neighborhoods with a mix of commercial and residential uses, a variety of housing types, and public places where people have opportunities to socialize and engage in civic life. The automobile is still accommodated, with ample parking and efficient circulation, but it no longer dominates the landscape.

This type of development could be feasible in areas where higher density development and mixed uses are warranted. Housing types are usually platted on 6 - 8,000 square foot lots, which is not currently allowable under the Township’s current zoning classifications. Currently the minimum lot size for all of Howland’s residential lots are 12,000 square feet.



Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) review criteria could include some of the following standards:

### Size

A TND should be designed at a walkable scale – considered to be approximately a 5 to 10 minute walk from core to edge, or a 1/4 to 1/3 mile maximum distance.

### Composition

The proposed development could have a mixture of residential and non-residential land uses, with at least 10% of the developed area consisting of non-residential uses. Most non-residential uses are located within the community core area.

Within the core area, a minimum of 15% of floor area could be devoted to commercial uses oriented towards TND residents. Public structures, such as schools, churches and civic buildings, and public open spaces, such as squares, parks, playgrounds and greenways,

could be integrated into the neighborhood pattern.

### Density and Intensity

Residential densities, lot sizes and housing types may be varied, but the average gross density of the developed area could be at least 4-8 units per acre. Higher densities, often involving multi-family or attached dwelling units, are generally proposed in, adjacent to or within close proximity to the core areas. Lower densities, usually detached single family dwellings, are generally located towards the edges. Non-residential development intensities could be sufficient to encourage and promote pedestrian access. Development intensities of non-residential buildings could be such that buildings emphasize street frontages, sidewalks and paths, and transit stops. Regardless, the intensity of non-residential development should be compatible with and reflective of surrounding residential development patterns.

### On-Street Parking

Many streets in TND neighborhoods have on-street parking. On-street parking is a common traffic calming element of a TND, in that it slows vehicular traffic while providing a buffer between street and sidewalk.

### Street Network

All or most streets within the proposed network must be part of an interconnected pattern. TND streets should connect with adjacent street networks as much as possible. The degree of interconnectivity should be assessed by its ability to permit multiple routes, to diffuse traffic, and to shorten walking distances. Most TND streets are designed to minimize through traffic. Streets are relatively narrow and often shaded by rows of trees. Alleys may be used to provide site access. Larger vehicular corridors are usually, although not exclusively, found within the core area and near the perimeter of the proposed development.



### Block Length

All or most low speed, low volume streets should have short block lengths of between 250 and 500 feet. Exceptions may be needed due to topography, drainage, environmental resources, preservation of cultural resources, and similar considerations.

### Curb Cuts

Curb cuts should be minimized to reduce effects on on-street parking, conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists, and interruptions of traffic flow.

### Rights-of-Way

Within a TND, the right-of-way is an important design element of the public space or “streetscape.” The right-of-way width should be the minimum needed to accommodate the street, median, planting strips, sidewalks, utilities, and maintenance considerations. The right-of-way width should be appropriate for adjacent land uses and building types. Planting strips between curb and sidewalk may be used to provide sufficient space for street trees. Use

of alleys and other alternate access or easements for utilities and maintenance vehicles should be taken into account when determining sizes of rights-of-way.

### Relationship of Buildings to Street

Buildings are oriented toward the street. All lots and sites should have pedestrian connections and the core area must be fully accessible to pedestrians. Parking lots and garages rarely face the street. Off-street parking may be located to the side or behind buildings but not in front of buildings or in such a manner as to interfere with pedestrian access.

### Sidewalks

To comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, sidewalks should be a minimum of 5 feet wide and should be wider in commercial or higher intensity areas, when directly abutting curbs without a planting strip or parked cars, or when adjacent to walls or other built elements which reduce usable width. Sidewalks should be on both sides of the street. Wherever

possible, there should be a continuous pedestrian network adjacent to the streets. Curb cuts should be minimized to reduce conflicts with pedestrians.

### Pedestrian Street Crossing

Street crossings must not be longer than are actually necessary. The needs of pedestrians should be balanced with the needs of vehicular traffic. Mid-block crossings, bulb-outs, raised crosswalks and similar techniques are commonly used to accommodate pedestrians when appropriate for traffic conditions and site specific situations.

### Highways and Large Through Corridors

The proposed development cannot be penetrated by arterial highways, major collector roads and other corridors with peak hourly traffic flows of 1,200 vehicles, or average daily traffic volumes of 15,000 or more vehicles. Such corridors should be located at the edge of a TND.





### Enforce Sidewalk Requirements

Sidewalk construction requirements should be created and enforced on all new property development within the Township. Exceptions to this should be limited to only the rarest of circumstances. An added focus should be on sidewalk development within the “Core” areas of Howland Township (e.g., Howland Corners) and on State Roads 46 and 82, and roads highlighted in the Transportation Chapter as potential bike lanes. These improvements should focus on interconnected pedestrian walkways in phases.

### Promote Infill Development

Howland Township could pursue incentives to promote infill development of vacant land, or rehabilitation of existing structures, in already urbanized areas where infrastructure and services are in place. Prime locations for infill development are Elm Road, Morgandale, and Bolindale.

Certain areas in Bolindale are currently slated to receive sewer service and this area could be a prime area for infill development and redevelopment in the



future. The “Wood” street areas in Morgandale also make a prime candidate for infill redevelopment in the future.

Howland Township could offer infill incentives for a number of reasons:

- Infill development reuses properties that may have been underutilized or blighted, helping to catalyze revitalization.
- Infill has the potential to boost jobs, purchasing power, and public amenities in core neighborhoods.
- Infill housing is dense in comparison with housing in suburban areas and represents an effective way to meet affordable housing or population growth needs.

- Infill areas are located in proximity to existing transit routes or within walking distance of services and entertainment, infill development could reduce auto use and accompanying congestion and pollution.

Various infrastructure-related incentives could be utilized, such as:

#### Upgrading infrastructure and amenities

A key strategy for encouraging infill development is a focused public investment strategy to improve antiquated infrastructure and add public amenities such as parks, sidewalks and streetscapes. These upgrades can make a target area more attractive.

#### Lowering of assessment or related administrative fees

Communities often charge fees to offset the costs of public facilities and services necessary to serve new development.

Most communities charge a uniform fee that may not account for the higher costs to serve more distant locations. Offering lower charges for infill projects can



more accurately reflect the true costs for providing services through existing infrastructure. This approach makes infill parcels more attractive, and builds greater equity into growth patterns.

Howland Township could also help to offset infrastructure hookup fees, if any, for infill projects to lower costs to developers. Various incentives related to the zoning and development process could also be utilized. These incentives would fall under the purview of the Planning and Zoning Department as well as the Zoning Commission, and are enacted in response to direction from the Township Trustees. Because Howland Township works with other utility purveyors, these entities would have to be included in this process as well.

Some of these incentives could be:

### Fast Track and Streamlined Permitting

Fast track permitting, applied within targeted infill development areas, allows developers of infill parcels to get their application processed ahead of non-infill applications.

### Reduce Lot Sizes, Setbacks, and Parking Requirements

Key incentives could allow for modified regulations that reduce residential lot sizes, reduced setback requirements, and reduced street and parking standards.

Older standards often make development of infill parcels impractical because they tie up a large percentage of a site's total land area.

### Rezone for Mixed-Use Development

Traditional zoning has emphasized the separation of land uses. Smart growth principles emphasize the creation of integrated, multi-use districts that blend housing, services, recreation and jobs. Howland Township currently has in place a planned unit development (PUD) zoning designation that could be better suited to promote infill development than its conventional zoning classifications.

### Increase Density Allowances

Increasing the maximum allowed density for infill areas in the zoning resolution is an important incentive.

Higher densities permit more intensive development of a parcel and allow the developer the opportunity to spread development costs over more units. Howland Township could also provide density bonuses to developers of infill sites that designate a certain percentage of housing units as “market rate.”

### **Continue to Create System of Inter-Connecting Green Spaces**

Howland Township should continue to focus on developing a system of inter-connecting green spaces within and throughout the community, commencing with sidewalk development in the core sections of Howland Corners, with outlying bike trails or walking trails constructed through the acquisition of easements and/or land set asides for future development or as improvements to SR 46 and East Market Street are made.



The Township should continue to work with Trumbull County Planning Commission to preserve additional lands along the Mosquito Creek Corridor. In the Summer of 2009, Clean Ohio funds were used to purchase another 142 acres in the Mosquito Creek Corridor along North Road. It is possible that the entire length of this corridor in the Township could be linked together in the future.

### Plan Major Corridors

Major corridors must be managed to minimize impacts, protect traffic flow and safety and enhance the Township's economic base and quality of life.

Major corridors, like East Market Street, SR 46, Elm



Road, and North River Road are important because they serve multiple functions and may be under pressure to accommodate new growth or revitalize. However, some locations on these corridors are currently in transition and have land uses, predominately residential uses, incompatible with the surrounding commercial uses (See Map: Existing Land Use to see the location of these parcels).

New development should be located adjacent to existing, similar development where access is appropriate, where utilities are present and with the intention of encouraging the creation of nodes of activity that can be properly managed. Wherever feasible joint access should be required, with cross-access easements to ensure adjacent properties can link with existing driveways.

Residential development should not be encouraged fronting onto major corridors. Signs for commercial and industrial development should be subdued in design, such as monument-style signs designed to complement the primary structure and externally illuminated.

### Encourage Less Impervious Surfaces

Impervious surface refers to anything that prevents water from soaking into the ground. Common examples include roofs, driveways, sidewalks, streets, and parking lots.

Because impervious surfaces do not allow water to soak into the ground, the amount and distribution of these surfaces can negatively impact an area's



hydrology, promote flooding, and increase stormwater management costs. When impervious surfaces cover areas where water naturally seeps into underground water sources, or aquifers, they reduce the amount of water available for wells and springs. Pollutants from



the air and vehicles also accumulate on impervious surfaces.

During storms, excess water flows across impervious surfaces and sweeps these pollutants into surrounding waters, the Mosquito Creek Watershed and downstream. The amount of impervious cover in a watershed can be correlated with stream and watershed health. Research has shown that watershed health begins to decline when impervious surfaces coverage exceeds 10 percent and becomes severely impaired if this number climbs beyond 30% of the total watershed area.

It is important to consider impervious surface during the development or site planning process. Site design and regional planning to reduce and compact impervious surface can help alleviate its negative effects. Reducing impervious surface often requires innovative techniques, materials, or devices. Simple design components can help too; for example, a grass parking area can help control temporary flooding, help filter pollutants out of water soaking into

the ground, help reduce the heat island effect, and cost less than paving.

Another unintended consequence of impervious surfaces is the urban heat island effect. Surfaces like roofs, parking lots, and roads absorb heat during the day and release it at night when outside temperatures fall. This causes the average temperature to be higher in areas where there are many impervious



surfaces. The heat island effect can make summer days six to eight degrees hotter in developed areas than in non-developed areas.

The heat island effect also means higher energy bills. To combat this effect, development that reduces reflective impervious surfaces, preserves or utilizes trees, uses reflective, cool (white) or green roofs should be encouraged. By applying mitigation measures such as these, a Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory study noted

that direct energy savings could range between 10 to 40% when applied to residential and commercial buildings. Implementing these tools could cool the surrounding temperatures around these improved areas up to 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The benefits of reducing impervious surfaces are clear, yet challenges associated with the techniques for doing so remain.

- Allow reduced residential street widths
- Relax parking requirements and encourage cooperative parking arrangements
- Encourage use of alternative and pervious paving materials for sidewalks, parking lots, and roads
- Encourage cluster development and allow taller buildings in certain corridors
- Avoid clear-cutting lots where possible
- Encourage white, reflective, or green roofs
- Preserve existing vegetation and plant more vegetation to absorb extra runoff



- Provide public transit to reduce the traffic demand for widened or new roads
- Encourage infill development in existing built areas

### **Promote the Use of New Technologies to Guide Development**

Several new tools exist that may be beneficial in the land use and development arena. Seeing land use changes over years and decades helps citizens understand the repercussions of unplanned growth. Impacts of development over time can be significant.

By using geographic information system (GIS) applications and analyzing land use data collected over time, residents and public and private officials may be more apt to support quality growth and the necessity for holistic and comprehensive planning.

The Howland Township Planning and Zoning department is beginning to promote GIS technology to perform in-house tasks like updating the zoning map. The use of this technology could be expanded so that residents, the Zoning Commission, and other individuals and groups can use the system to access

specific information concerning their property, school districts, soil types, and other information.

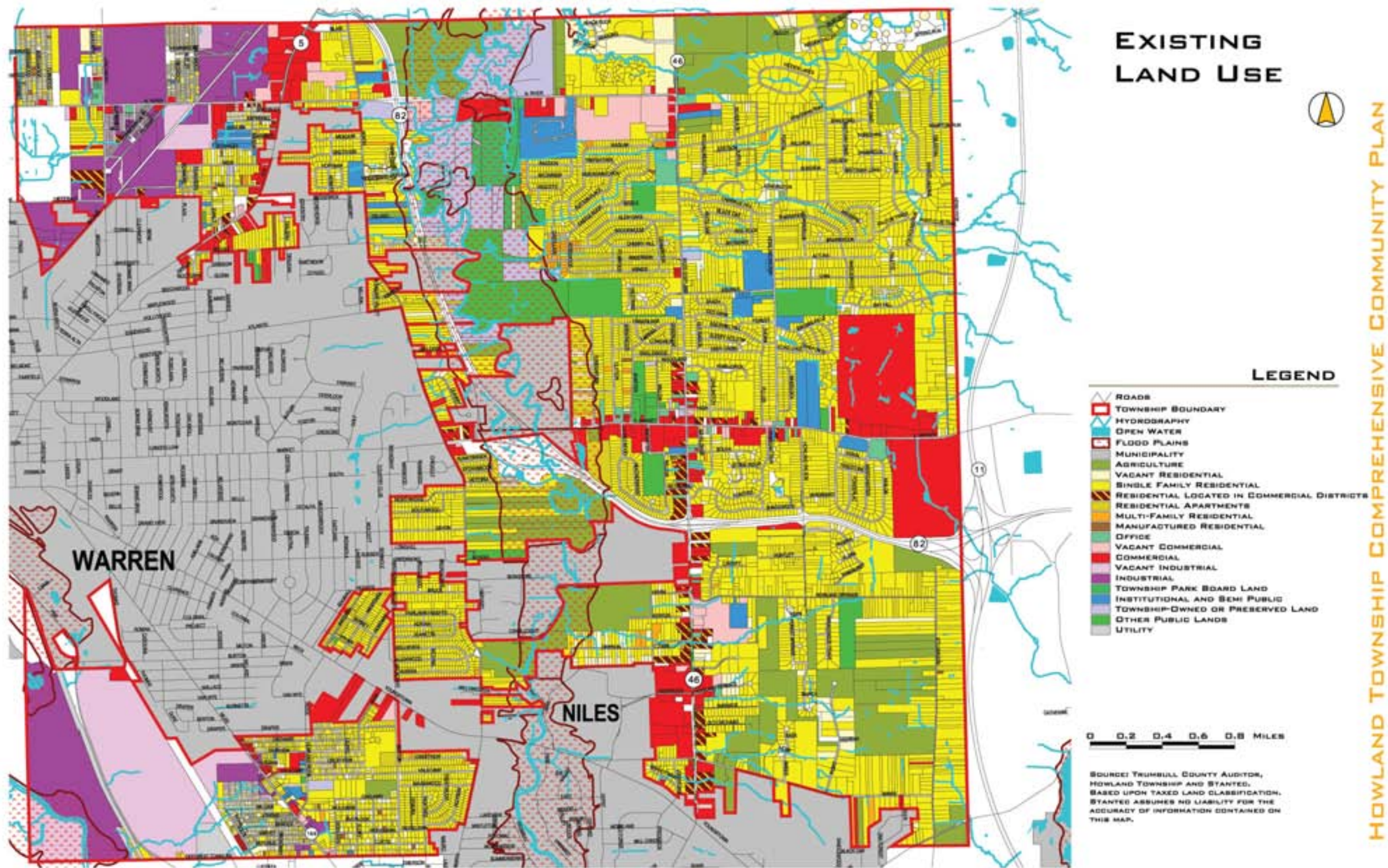
Data such as environmental constraints (floodplains, wetlands, groundwater pollution potential-DRASTIC Index), specific soils data (prime soils, soil productivity, septic constraints, etc.) could be very important in understanding development constraints and making the development process visual.

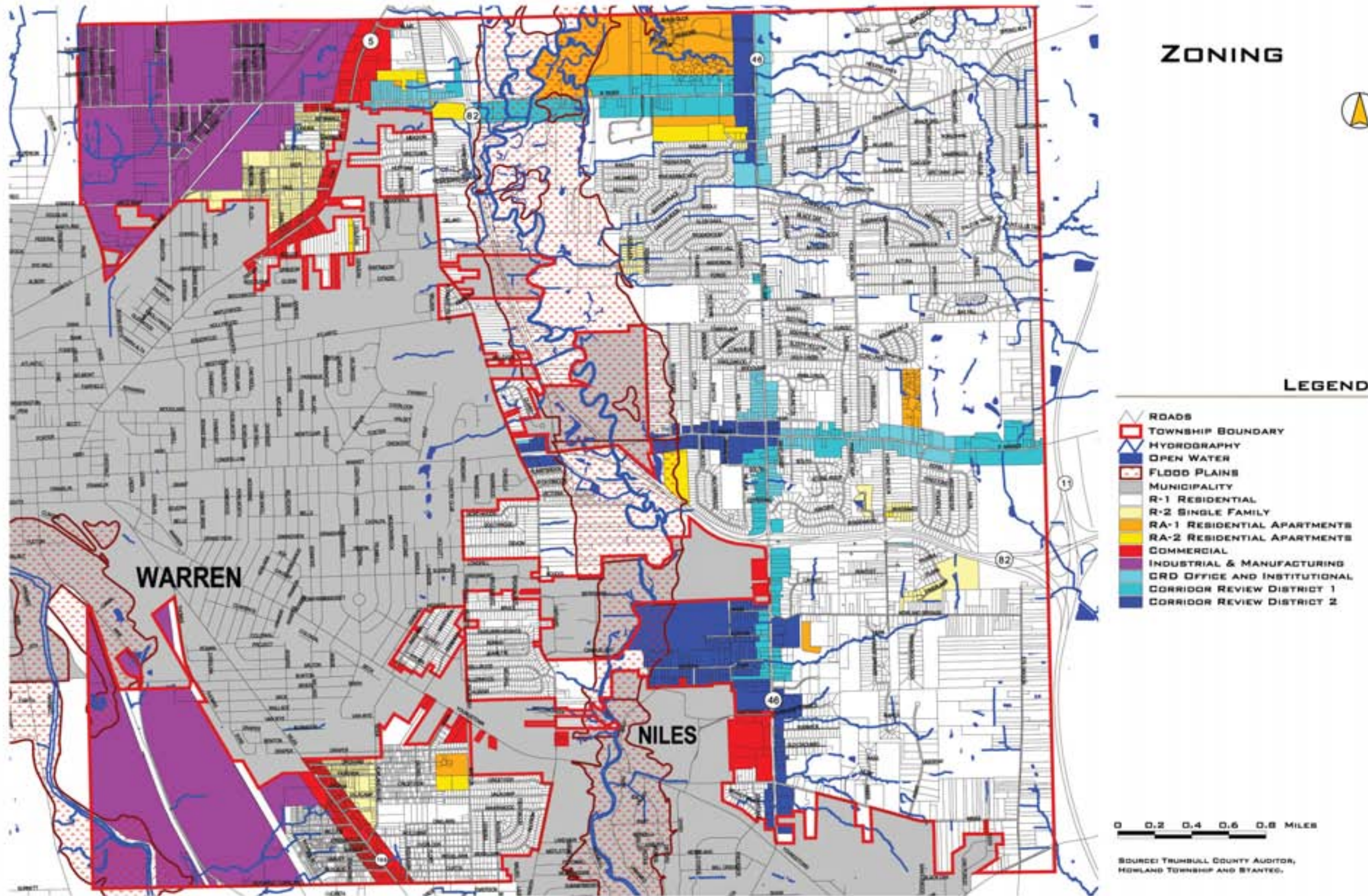
### **Encourage Conservation Easements**

A conservation easement is a legal document that is granted, and sometimes sold, to a non-profit conservation organization. When a conservation easement is in place, the landowner retains ownership of the land and has the ability to control access to the property. Conservation easements permanently restrict the type and amount of development that could occur on the land. Some conservation easements allow a limited number of new structures, although buildings may be restricted to specific locations on the property. A conservation easement does not require that public access be granted to the property. Donation of a portion of or all

development rights to a conservation development organization usually qualifies as a charitable contribution on the donor's federal income tax returns. A benefit for some landowners could include estate tax benefits, which would enable heirs to retain lands within a conservation easement.

Easements can be used for many public purposes such as: the protection of open space for greenways, parks, trails and riparian corridors, and the preservation of scenic vistas through the appropriate location of telecommunication towers, and improved control of billboards.





HOWLAND TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN



NATURAL RESOURCES







### NATURAL RESOURCES

#### Introduction

There is an important interrelationship and link between the residents of Howland Township, their linkage to the natural environment and their overall quality of life and health. A well-functioning natural environment has economic, social and health benefits for those living and working in Howland Township.

These include floodplains, wetlands, hydric soils, critical wildlife habitats, riparian corridors, native woodlands, and diverse topography. The Mosquito Creek Corridor, the Township’s defining natural riparian feature, should be incorporated into an open space and active and passive recreational framework.

Emphasis should be placed on defining those natural features and functions, together with the sustainable building design, parks, open space and trails system, that create a green space framework within which growth and development may be permitted to take place.

Howland Township contains some of the County’s highest concentrations of natural elements that should be considered worthy of the highest level of protection, buffered from higher intensity land uses and linked, where appropriate and possible, into a network of walking trails and other pedestrian linkages and corridors.

These corridors are not only important to creating uninterrupted systems for maximum biodiversity, but also contribute to the establishment of a network of green infrastructure that visually and functionally links the various neighborhoods. The linkages may or may not incorporate community parks, open space and trail systems, depending on the environmental sensitivity of the site.

These natural elements can also serve to support and expand the green infrastructure network and help to meet the broader county and regional goals of “Going Green”. This Chapter should be used in conjunction with the applicable policy documents identified at the end of the Chapter, when making decisions.

#### Planning Issues

Preserving and building upon Howland Township’s existing environmental quality of life will require well coordinated and consistent planning. Moving Howland Township in the direction to attain many of the objectives set forth in this Master Plan update are already taking place.

Howland Township has long been committed to providing its residents with opportunities to embrace an active lifestyle. In just over the last seven years, the township acquired over 450 acres of open space along the Mosquito Creek Corridor and built over 1.5 miles of nature trails. The nature trail connects users to other neighborhoods and to the Howland Township Park, a hub of recreational activity that includes soccer and baseball fields, tennis and basketball courts, a playground, a one-mile paved fitness trail, nature trails, and a newly constructed wetland boardwalk trail. Plans to extend the boardwalk in the near future are currently being planned.

In the Spring of 2009, Howland Township planners began to lay the ground work for what may become a



Howland Community Orchard and Garden. Located at the Howland-owned 120 acre nature preserve on North Road, the Howland Township administration envisions working in conjunction with area non-profits to use the site to promote healthy lifestyles.

To continue momentum of this nature, it is recommended that Township officials continue to build upon its existing natural assets and utilize the recommendations outlined in this chapter when and where feasible to continue building a “green infrastructure” framework that is second to none in the region.

### **Natural Resources Goals and Objectives**

**Goal #1:** Retain the beauty and function of the natural environment that characterize Howland Township.

**Objectives:**

1. Ensure that conservation of natural resources and the environment is a high priority;

2. Restore and improve natural environs previously impacted; and
3. Establish a unified open space and greenway network.

**Goal #2:** Protect, maintain, and enhance the Township’s forest and tree resources.

**Objectives:**

1. Realize the amenity value of the Township’s wooded areas;
2. Preserve existing trees and forests; and
3. Preserve and improve the quality of the tree-growing environment.

**Goal #3:** Maintain and protect the quality and quantity of surface and ground water resources.

**Objectives:**

1. Preserve and enhance existing watershed resources;
2. Protect a safe and reliable water supply for all sectors of the community; and

3. Support water conservation measures in all sectors of the community.

**Goal #4:** Promote energy conservation and pollution prevention practices to reach a sustainable use of natural resources.

**Objectives:**

1. Link land use and transportation planning to reduce vehicular miles traveled;
2. Embrace alternative, renewal energies and investments in alternative energy sources; and
3. Coordinate with governmental and non-governmental agencies to promote waste and emission reduction, the purchasing of power saving items, preserving green space, and implementing lasting energy saving policy.

**Goal #5:** Preserve scenic features that characterize Howland Township.

**Objectives:**

1. Preserve and enhance visible topographic and other notable features;



- 2. Preserve and enhance scenic qualities along roadways and gateways; and
- 3. Ensure that the design of new development embraces, complements, and enhances the Township character.

## Existing Conditions and Trends

### Floodplains

Floodplains are areas adjacent to rivers and streams that are subject to periodic or regular flooding (See Map: Environmental Considerations). The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides maps indicating the 100-year flood zone, an area where there is theoretically a 1-in-100 chance that a flood will happen during any year in this area.

The floodplain map gives a general location of the floodplains and represents areas most likely to flood during the most severe storms. Flood insurance rates paid by property owners are based on risk levels determined by their location relative to a mapped 100-year floodplain boundary.

Under FEMA regulations, communities are required to develop appropriate standards for development in floodplains and floodways, and may restrict development there, to minimize safety hazards and preserve flood storage capacity

### Hydric Soils

Hydric soils are formed over time under conditions of inundation and/or saturation. Hydric soils are generally limited to areas along larger streams and drainage ways, and generally correspond with wetland areas. On soils that are subject to flooding, there is a special hazard to life and property if the soils are used for building sites (See Map: Environmental Considerations). Buildings on flood plains tend to restrict the flow of floodwater and can result in higher flood crests upstream.

Non-hydric soils with hydric inclusions are scattered throughout the Township, especially on the relatively level, higher ground above the streams. Small, isolated wetlands can be expected in these areas. Hydric soils are often found in the lowest landscape positions in conjunction with wetlands and are prone

to flooding or being frequently wet. These soils tend to collect and pond runoff from adjacent areas due to their poorly drained nature.

Hydric soils and non-hydric soils with hydric inclusions are often not suitable for building due to stability concerns, permeability characteristics that preclude septic tank use, frequent association with wetlands, and septic system problems. Soils that are poorly drained or that have high water tables are usually unsuitable for septic systems. Hydric soils affect development by their poor drainage.

### Riparian Corridors

Riparian corridors include stream banks and associated areas adjacent to a flowing waterway. Protection of existing natural riparian corridors is critical to Howland Township's overall stream and water quality.

If a riparian area is developed or farmed to the water's edge, water quality degradation will occur. Flooding, erosion, sedimentation of surface waters, increased stormwater runoff, loss of wetlands and riparian



areas, increased pollution, and wildlife habitat losses are some of the problems that occur if riparian corridors are not protected.

In addition to environmental importance, riparian corridors may possess significant economic value, recreational and health benefits, cultural enhancement, increased property values, and an improved quality of life.

Acquiring or protecting riparian corridors with conservation easements is recommended. This standard should be integrated into all community zoning review provisions. The width of setback or buffer zone can vary according to the characteristics of the floodplain, hydrological characteristics, and adjacent steep slopes. The Ohio Department of

Natural Resources (ODNR) recommends a minimum buffer of 120 feet; this guideline is based on the minimum width needed to establish a mature forest – the most effective vegetative buffer.

### Soils

Sound land use and management as well as improvements in environmental quality are dependent upon a thorough understanding of soils and their properties. Although, many soils in Howland Township have poor natural drainage and remain wet for long periods of the year, a large percentage of the community consists of prime soils perfect for farming when drained properly (see Map: Prime Soils).

In areas with insufficient drainage or stormwater facilities, these soils can assist in promoting flooding

especially in developed areas with impervious surfaces. In areas where development is limited and drainage is provided these soils may be excellent areas to promote practices that assist in sustainability like local small-scale agriculture and community gardens.

### Topography

Elevations in Howland Township range from highs greater than approximately 1,096 feet above sea level in the eastern portion of the township to areas lower than 856 feet above sea level in the area of Mosquito Creek.

Topography is an important physical element that can influence the growth and development, and should be preserved. There are steep slopes in Howland





Township, particularly in the northeast and southeast areas of the Township.

The most prominent slopes are located east of State Route 46 and run in a north-south direction. This change in topography is most notable when traveling uphill from Howland Corners on Warren-Sharon Road toward Avalon Inn, and even more extreme when traveling east uphill on Howland-Springs East Road. The depth of bedrock is shallow and may even be exposed in some areas. Slopes in these areas range from 6 – 50 percent and may raise additional issues like erosion, drainage, and development concerns (See Map: Environmental Considerations).

When development takes place on or near steep slopes, vegetative cover is greatly reduced. Loss of this vegetative cover on steep terrain significantly increases soil instability, and thus the risk of erosion. Soil erosion and sedimentation into waterways poses several threats to the watershed.

Slopes of less than two percent can also be a hazard to manmade development. Some areas in Howland

Township are near or less than two percent slopes which cause poor storm drainage. This nearly flat condition has led to the evolution of areas with hydric soils, wetlands, or flood plains.

In Howland Township, this occurs in the land outlining Mosquito Creek and in the Northeast and Southeast quadrants of the township. The need to protect slopes in Howland Township should be site specific. It should be subject to criteria based on percent slope, the length of that slope, soil erosion, percent of vegetation, and proximity to streams or wetlands.

### Wetlands

Wetlands are defined as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, fens and similar areas.

Wetlands provide valuable environmental functions that include filtration and purification of water, flood





storage, ground water recharge, minimizing erosion, supporting diverse communities of flora and fauna, recreation (hunting and fishing) and commercial use (fur and fish harvesting).

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources provides data on wetlands in its Ohio Wetlands Inventory (OWI), which is a map depicting the general locations and concentrations of wetlands based on analysis of satellite data and existence of hydric soils.

Maps were not prepared for this study because the accuracy and current relevance of the data is questionable, but a vast majority of the wetlands are located within the Mosquito Creek Corridor or located in the Southeast quadrant of Howland Township.

Most of the wetlands in Howland Township are scattered near adjacent flood areas, streams, or are found in and around hydric soils (See Map: Hydric Soils). Some wetlands are an invaluable natural resource and should be preserved and protected during the site development process. The Clean Water Act requires permits to be obtained for any

disturbance to a wetland. Either a 401 permit (Ohio EPA) or a 404 permit (Army Corps of Engineers) may be needed depending upon the type of wetland.

### Woodlands

Howland Township has a diverse array of woodland resources that are aesthetically pleasing and contribute significantly to the scenic character of the

Township. Severe problems can arise when natural woodlands are developed without proper planning and mitigation.

Woodlands and wooded areas on or contiguous to riparian are especially important for stream or river system protection. Riparian woodlands provide many benefits to the Township's environmental quality and

waterways,

including

absorption and

removal of

pollutants from

stormwater and

other impervious

surface runoff.





### Strategies and Recommendations

#### **Protect Woodland Resources**

Township Officials should protect and manage its woodlands for future generations and consider adopting a tree preservation resolution. Such a



mechanism would provide the basis for a tree management and preservation strategy. The components of a tree preservation resolution should include provisions for protecting the remaining forest by requiring tree evaluation and preservation during site design review; and for mitigation of lost canopy cover on development sites.

The resolution could also make provisions for the protection of the remaining forest stands by requiring their evaluation and preservation during site design review. Tree preservation measures could also be embraced for public road and other civic improvement projects.

Generally, the tree preservation will apply to properties where new construction or redevelopment is planned or for any clear-cutting activity. It would not apply to currently developed properties where there is no proposed construction.

Another tree preservation method the Township could embrace would be to create a tree commission, which would be active in planting and tree maintenance

projects, and educating the public. If a tree preservation resolution was adopted, this committee would work with the zoning board during times in which their guidance was needed.

#### **Protect Wetlands**

Wetlands should be protected from development through mitigation, isolated wetlands and/or riparian wetlands. Wetlands, floodplain areas, and other natural habitats could be protected by acquiring them, if and when possible, and converting them to passive park lands, open space, or for other purposes.





Wetland (and Riparian) setbacks are recommended as part of a Howland Township’s management program for flood control, erosion control, groundwater recharge, and water quality protection.

Township officials should consider developing setback widths for all wetlands based upon their Ohio EPA classification, either Category 1, 2, or 3.

Category 3 wetlands are considered the highest quality wetlands and the Ohio EPA recommends a minimum 120 foot buffer surrounding them and any new development. Category 2 wetlands are of moderate quality and are considered good candidates for wetland enhancement with a 75 foot buffer. Category 1 wetlands are considered of lowest quality and least benefit to public health, habitat or safety and the Ohio EPA only recommends a 25 foot buffer. To determine the quality of the wetland, Township Officials should use the Ohio EPA’s Rapid Assessment Method as guidance.

### **Protect Floodplains and Hydrological Resources**

Development within a watershed can change flooding characteristics. Flooding in the middle or lower reaches of a watershed may be influenced by changes that occur upstream. Downstream flooding can be reduced by a sufficient presence of upstream woods, wetlands, vegetative cover, and permeable soils. Flooding increases when stormwater runs directly off the land and into streams, especially where woodlands, wetlands, and vegetation have been replaced with impermeable building and parking lot surfaces.

The Soil and Water Conservation District’s Rainwater and Land Development Manual, developed in 2006, outlines several mitigation strategies to protect these water resources through structural and non-structural methods, and permanent and temporary runoff control practices, sediment control and soil stabilization practices, and stormwater management practices.

#### Buffer Zones

Similar to vegetative filter strips, buffer zones provide a physical separation between different

areas. There may be buffer zones between development and nature preserve or between agricultural uses and open water. Buffer zones are not necessarily designed to filter water that may flow through them. Where topography allows and when designed properly, buffer strips can also function as vegetative filter strips.

#### Contour Buffer Strips

Contour buffers are strips of perennial vegetation alternated with wider crop strips (like oats, rye, sudangrass), farmed on the contour. These strips of permanent vegetation, similar to filter strips, slow runoff and trap sediment but do not border bodies of water. Because they are an upland treatment, their primary purpose is to slow overland runoff and reduce potential soil erosion. They are an excellent practice to use with vegetative filter strips.

#### Riparian Setbacks

Another method to help improve Howland Township’s riparian environs and reduce flood impacts from stormwater is through riparian





setbacks. If implemented, these setbacks would buffer certain types of the Township’s hydrology and watercourses meeting any one of the following criteria:

1. All watercourses draining an area greater than ½ square mile, OR
2. All watercourses draining an area less than ½ square mile and having a defined bed and bank. In determining if watercourses have a defined bed and bank, Howland Township may consult with technical experts as necessary. Any costs associated with such consultations may be assessed to the applicant, OR

If adopted, recommended riparian setbacks on designated watercourses could follow the standard recommended state guidelines as follows:

- A minimum of 120 feet on either side of all watercourses draining an area equal to or greater than 20 square miles.

- A minimum of 75 feet on either side of all watercourses draining an area less than 20 square miles and equal to or greater than one-half (0.5) square mile.
- A minimum of 25 feet on either side of all watercourses draining an area less than one-half (0.5) square mile and having a defined bed and bank as determined in Section E(1) of this regulation.

For more information of the location of these preferred riparian setbacks, please see Map: Riparian Setbacks. The map was prepared by the Township’s engineer to help assist in mitigating stormwater issues in the Township.

### Utilize Stormwater Prevention Practices

There are many tools that can provide for cleaner water, safer environs, and better land usage. Many of these stormwater management practices can be found in the Rainwater and Land Development Manual developed by ODNR’s Division of Soil and Water Conservation. Using the manual in conjunction

with using the Township’s Zoning Resolution to reduce parking requirements and also providing for “green parking facilities” would minimize stormwater runoff.



### Vegetative Filter Strips (VFS)

One method to protect Howland’s floodplains, hydrological resources and wildlife would be through the use of vegetative filter strips. They are designed to remove sediment, organic material, nutrients, and chemicals carried in runoff or waste water.



Vegetative filter strips are planted between a potential pollutant-source area and a surface water body, and is considered a best management practices. In a properly designed VFS, water flows evenly through the strip, slowing the runoff velocity and allowing contaminants to settle from the water. In addition, where VFSs are seeded, fertilizers and herbicides no longer need to be applied right next to susceptible water sources. Vegetative filter strips also increase wildlife habitat.

### Increased Awareness Efforts

Howland Township officials should encourage township landowners along creeks, streams, wetlands, floodplains, and other hydrological resources to participate in conservation and nutrient management plans administered by the local conservation departments and agencies (SWCD and NRCS).

### **Minimize Slope Development and Preserve Scenic Vistas**

The Township could consider adopting a steep slope protection resolution as part of official Zoning Resolution (See Map: Environmental Considerations).

Depending on the site, mitigation plans should be conducted as part of the site development process to describe proposed additional protective measures.

The maximum retention of natural topographical features such as natural drainage swales, slope ridge lines, and trees or other natural plant formations should be encouraged. This protection should focus on influencing the design of new subdivisions and the location of soil disturbing activities.

Steep slope protection will conserve and promote public health and safety by minimizing problems due to water runoff and soil erosion incurred in adjustments of topography to meet developmental needs. In addition to public health and safety concerns, protecting steep slopes preserves the unique scenic resources and vistas.

One approach to dealing with the problem of development on steep slopes could be to make any construction of a principal use on property with natural slopes greater than six percent or more a conditional use through zoning, or at the minimum provide additional review of the lands through site visits and additional development restrictions.

Conditional use approval could be used to review proposed developments in steep slope areas, with the applicant required to submit a detailed site plan wherein addressing both environmental and structural issues. Clearing and grading of forest and natural vegetation on slopes over a designated percentage could be prohibited or permitted only conditionally.

In situations where slopes are considerably steep, the Zoning Resolution could require evidence that erosion and sedimentation issues are addressed. This could include imposing the requirement that a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWP3) be submitted when construction of a principal use on slopes greater than 12% is proposed.

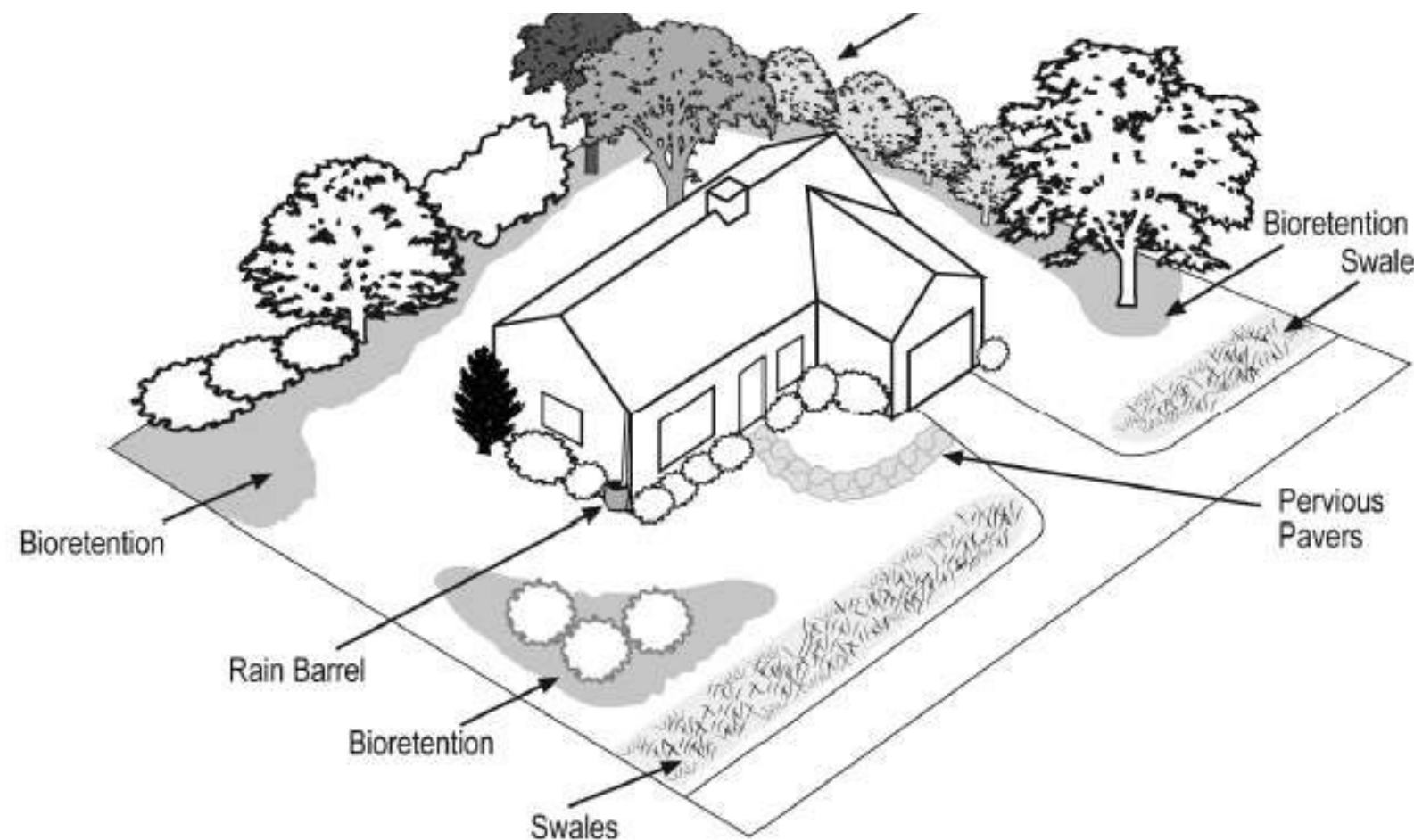
Evidence that structural issues are adequately addressed could include the requirement that the applicant provide foundation plans approved by a Professional Engineer. This could verify that the foundation and structure will be stable and will not slide down to adjacent property.

### Encourage Low Impact Development (LID)

Low Impact Development (LID) is a comprehensive land planning and engineering design approach with a goal of minimizing land development and stormwater impacts on hydrology and water quality. LID methods use small scale, decentralized practices that infiltrate, evaporate, detain, and transpire stormwater. These practices are even more valuable when used in conjunction with other planned development land use techniques like conservation development design that require 40% or more open space and additional buffering.

LID site planning strategies and techniques provide the means to achieve stormwater management goals and objectives; facilitate the development of site plans that are adapted to natural topographic constraints; maintain lot yield; maintain site hydrologic functions; and provide for aesthetically pleasing, and often less expensive stormwater management controls.

Land use methods that emphasize the saving of green space and the redevelopment of existing urban regions, can utilize LID to promote infill and redevelopment in areas that would otherwise be inappropriate for conventional site design. In addition, the full LID process starts with many of the same conservation and impact minimization principles inherent in other strategies.



The LID approach includes five basic tools:

1. Encourage conservation measures;
2. Promote impact minimization techniques such as impervious surface reduction (this could be accomplished by reducing parking requirements or by “greening” existing parking areas);
3. Provide for strategic



runoff timing by slowing flow using the landscape;

- 4. Use an array of integrated management practices to reduce and cleanse runoff; and,
- 5. Advocate pollution prevention measures to reduce the introduction of pollutants to the environment.

### Encourage Green and LEED Development

The Howland Township of the future will be one that remains economically competitive and with few consequences- if any- to the environment. In the cost of doing business, one of the highest capital outlays, aside from personnel and health care costs, derives from utility costs.

Promoting and adopting sustainable practices that reduce energy consumption will allow residents, businesses, and the Howland Township Administration to allocate fiscal resources to other areas that have a better return on investment, like infrastructure, neighborhood revitalization, parks, and other public amenities most desired by residents as indicated in the Community Survey.

The US Green Building Council (USGBC) has developed many LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) practices that can be adopted to help promote a more sustainable Howland Township. These standards can be applied to new development and buildings and also to existing residential, commercial, public and industrial buildings. Some of these practices include:

- Retrofitting existing residential homes with practices outlined in the Green Home Guide and discussed in the Demographics and Housing chapter of this Plan.
- Utilizing the USGBC standards for Neighborhood Development which emphasizes the creation of compact, walkable, vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods with good connections to nearby recreational and shopping outlets. These standards can also be found in the Demographics and Housing Chapter. Research has shown that living in a mixed-use environment within walking distance of shops and services results in increased walking and biking, which improve human

cardiovascular and respiratory health and reduce the risk of hypertension and obesity.

- New residential development LEED practices as highlighted in the LEED for Homes Rating System.
- Pursuing other energy saving tools like greenroofs, the utilization of drought resistant grasses, and alternative energy sources like solar and wind power.

### Continue to Promote Local Sustainability Practices

Howland Township currently embraces several initiatives aimed at improving sustainability and promote healthy eating and lifestyles. These initiatives include the Howland Township Farmers Market and the recently created Community Garden program.

In 2009, the Howland Township Administration developed a program that offers township residents the opportunity to plant vegetable or flower gardens on the Sloas Nature Preserve, a 120 acre preserve



the Township purchased along North River Road in 2002 with Clean Ohio grant dollars.

The community gardens will help residents in promoting sustainability while promoting local agricultural practices. Community gardens may also be feasible in certain neighborhoods of the Township where homes were recently demolished or on other vacant residential lots in Bolindale or Morgandale.

### **Reuse Vacant and Former Residential Lots**

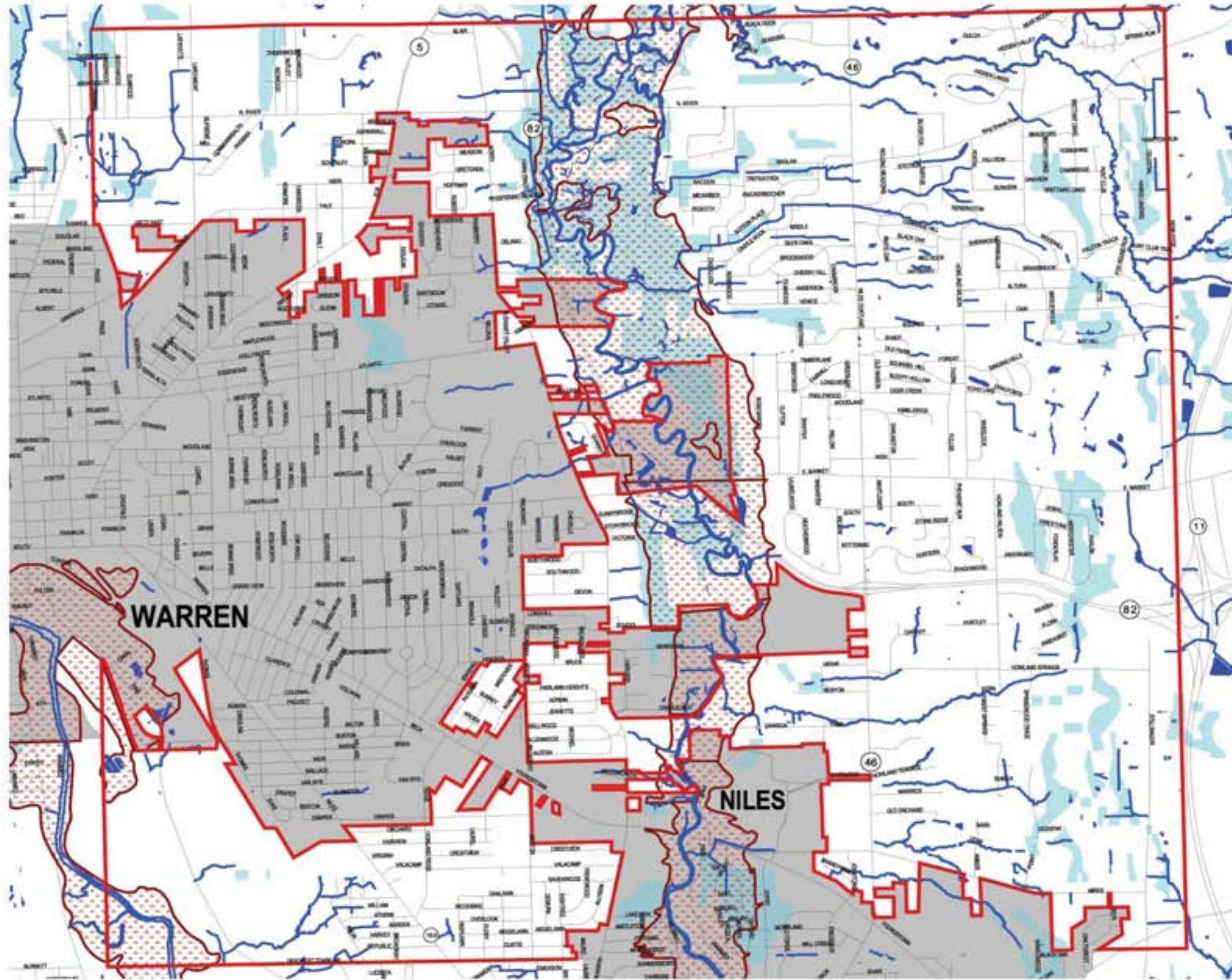
There may be vacant, underutilized or lots with recently demolished residential units that could be prime candidates to be used as an outlet to promote public health.

These lots could either be under Township control in a land bank or sold or granted to local neighborhood associations.

Some of the uses for these lots could be:

- Private and Community Gardens
- Meeting Places
- Active Playgrounds and Ball Courts

- Passive Playfields
- Outdoor Workshop Areas
- Paths
- Outdoor Markets
- Orchards, Meadows, and Groves
- Parking Lots
- Flood Control and Storm Drainage



## HYDRIC SOILS



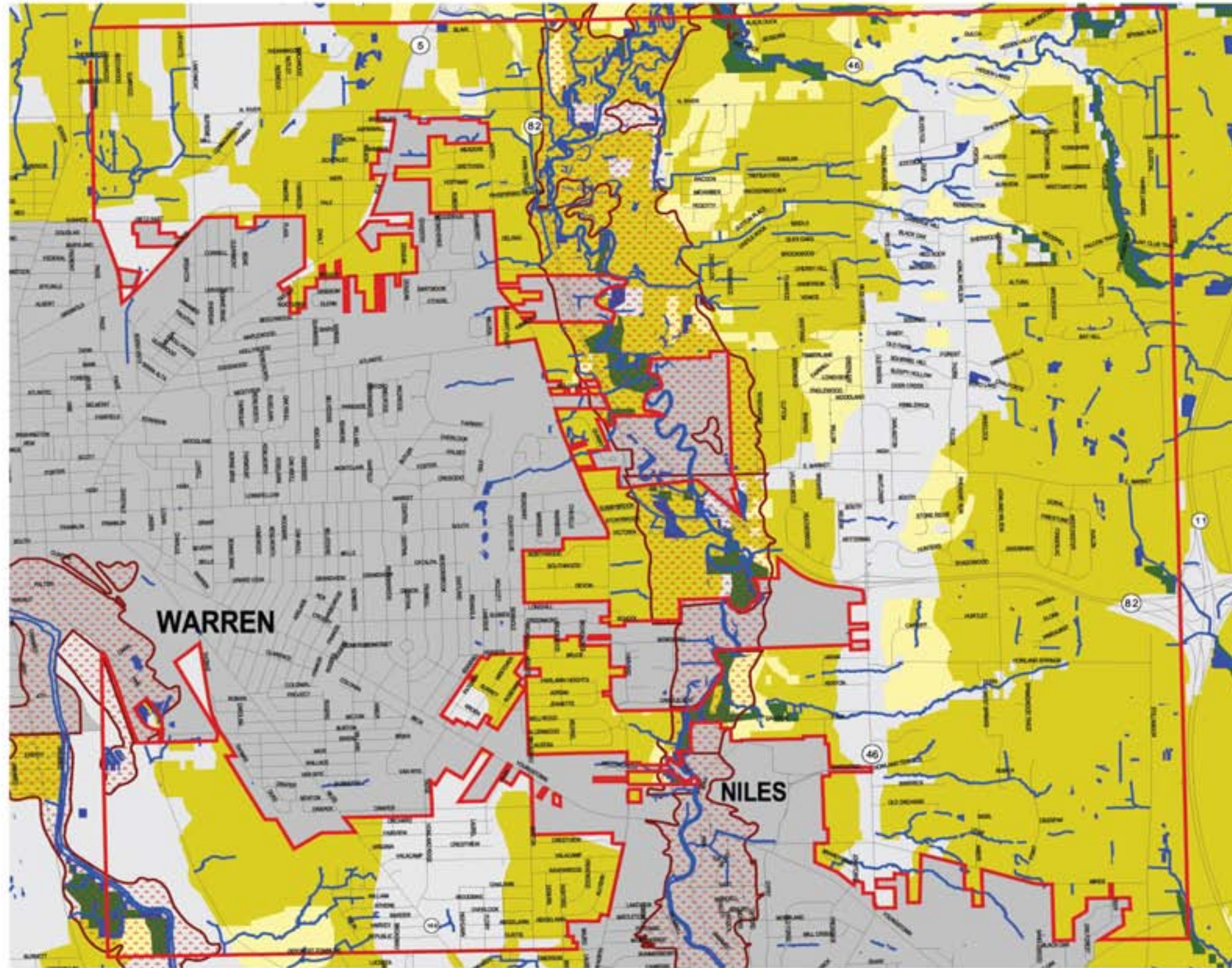
### LEGEND

- ROADS
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
- HYDROGRAPHY
- OPEN WATER
- FLOOD PLAINS
- HYDRIC SOILS
- MUNICIPALITY

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 MILES

SOURCE: NRCS, FEMA, AND STANTEC.

HOWLAND TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN



## PRIME AGRICULTURAL SOILS



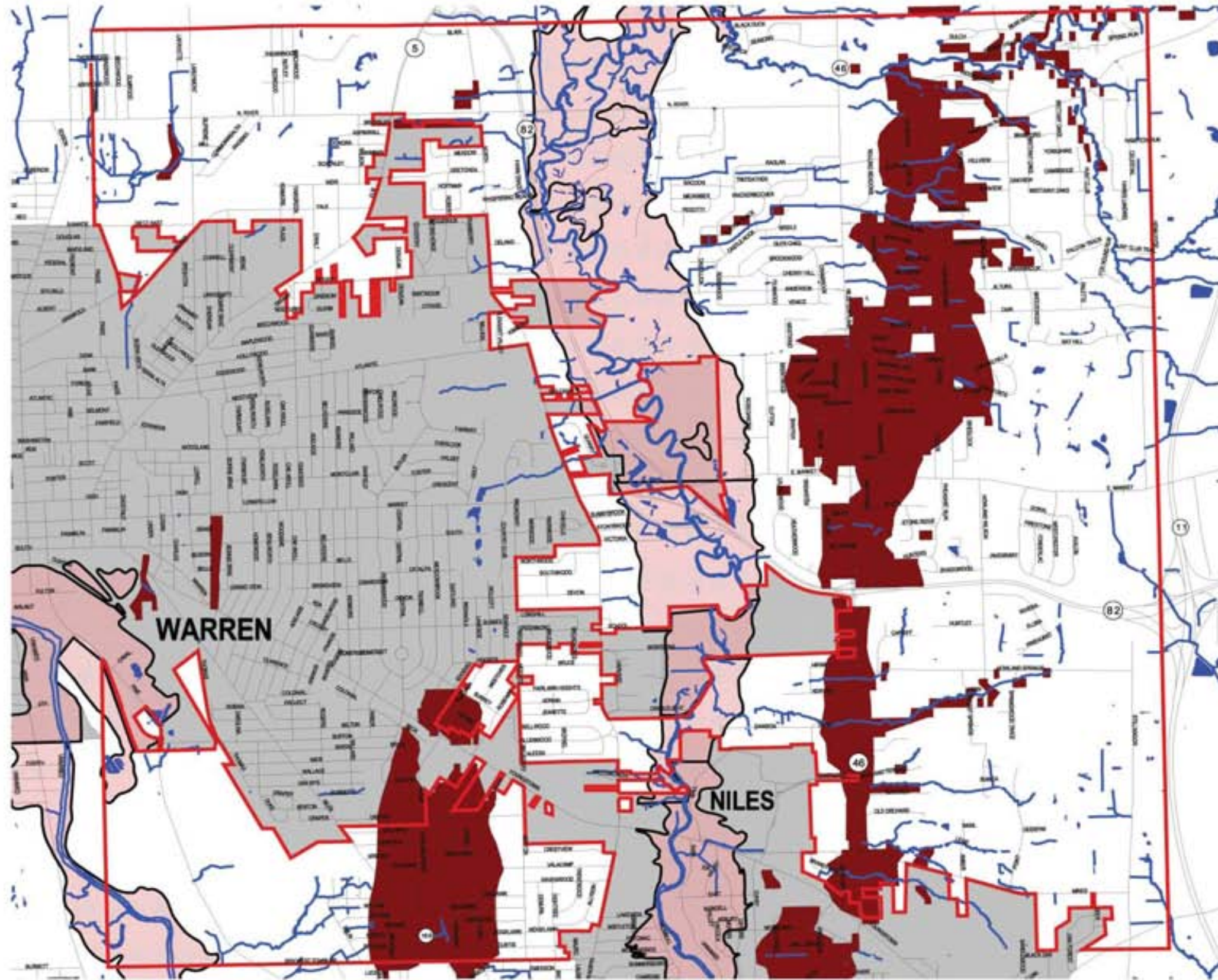
### LEGEND

- ROADS
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
- HYDROGRAPHY
- OPEN WATER
- FLOOD PLAINS
- MUNICIPALITY
- PRIME SOILS**
- OPEN WATER
- PRIME
- PRIME IF DRAINED
- PRIME IF PROTECTED FROM FLOODING
- PRIME IF DRAINED AND PROTECTED FROM FLOODING
- NON-PRIME SOILS

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 MILES

SOURCE: NRCS, FEMA, AND STANTEC.

HOWLAND TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN



## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS



### LEGEND

- ROADS
- TOWNSHIP BOUNDARY
- HYDROGRAPHY
- OPEN WATER
- SLOPE CONSIDERATIONS**
- GREATER THAN 6% SLOPE
- FLOOD HAZARD AREAS
- MUNICIPALITY

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 MILES

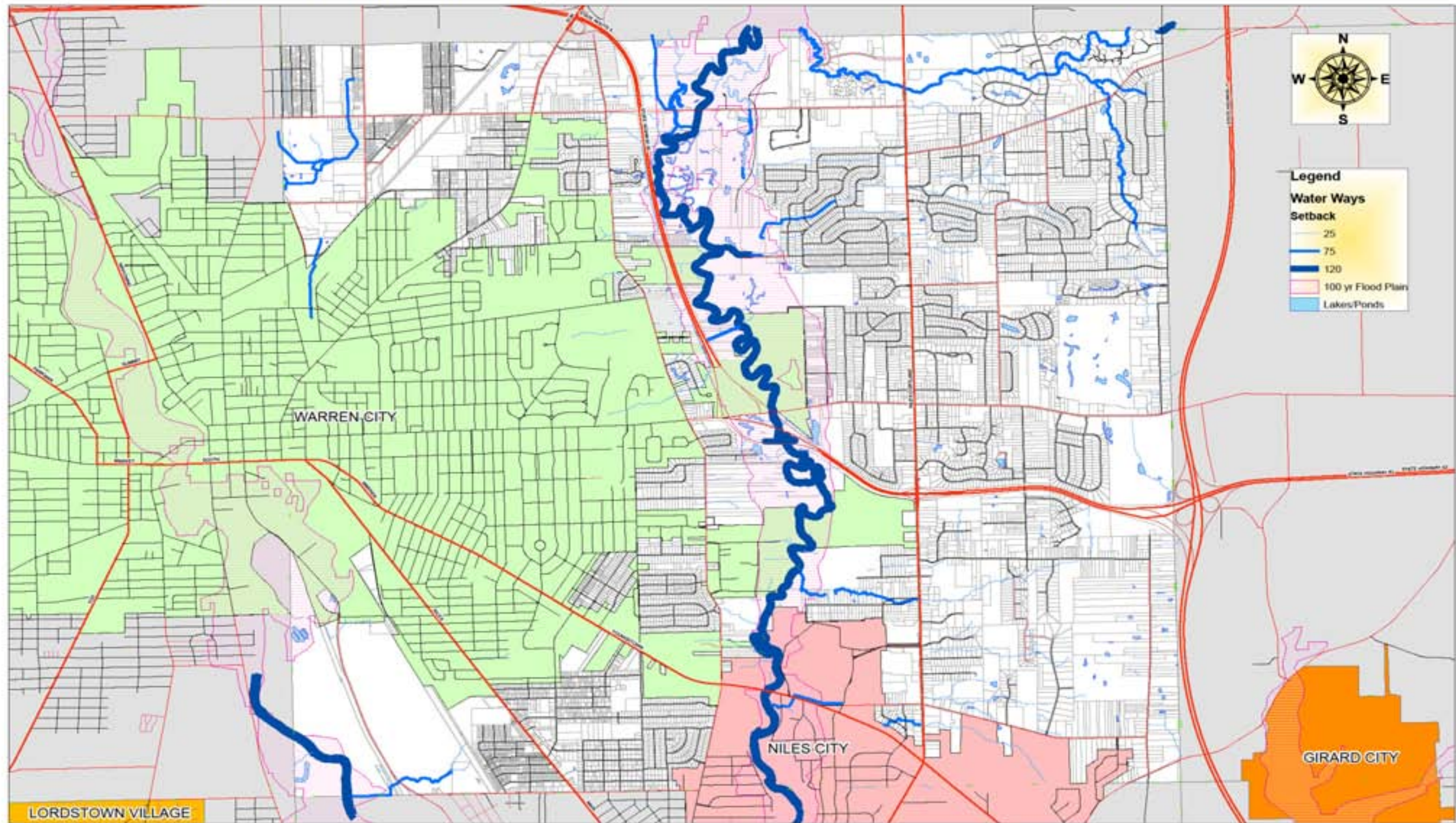
SOURCE: NRCS, FEMA AND STANTEC.

HOWLAND TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN





### Riparian Setback for Howland Township, Ohio





## DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSING





### DEMOGRAPHICS AND HOUSING

#### Introduction

Howland Township is a community with well-established, attractive and diverse neighborhoods. The vast majority of the Township’s housing stock was constructed during two decades of strong growth beginning in the 1950s. Distinct neighborhoods were created with period design.

The preservation and enhancement of the variety of housing styles and living options for area residents is essential to its identity and charm.



Because the Township’s land base is predominately occupied by single family residential homes and an aging population, the Township is focused on maintaining a high quality residential living environment by accommodating the various future needs and housing options for the community.

The proactive guidance of various types of housing redevelopment in Howland Township raises several planning issues. New planning methods exist that can help to promote housing development, housing revitalization and infill development. The incorporation of these methods require an update to the zoning resolution and map, and the utilization of other organizations and agencies.

The most important housing and neighborhood-related issues that in Howland over the next several years will be related to the recent and still-ongoing national housing market issues like predatory lending and foreclosures. In sections of Howland Township that abut Warren, these issues may be more imminent due to the high foreclosure rate within the City.

Howland is not immune from these issues. However, a review of the Township’s management of these issues reveals that the planning department is utilizing very aggressive and proactive policies and procedures to minimize the detrimental effect of these unfortunate issues.

#### Planning Issues

The promotion of neighborhood revitalization, stabilization, and infill housing development may be addressed through the following actions:

1. The mitigation of blight and foreclosures by continuing to remove or rehabilitate blighted houses, outbuildings and commercial structures.
2. Revising the zoning resolution to account for new best practices and additional tools.
3. Reviewing zoning, administrative and legal procedures on a continual basis to overcome barriers for property owners.
4. Encouraging the infill of vacant lots in suitable locations where utilities are available. A proactive Neighborhood Community



Improvement Corporation would assist in this endeavor.

- Utilizing a Capital Improvement Program and Ohio’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) initiative to support neighborhood redevelopment.
- Promoting housing development that addresses issues like the aging of the population, pedestrian connectivity and attracting younger populations with updated housing and lifestyle amenities.

## Goals and Objectives

### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Goal:** Provide bases for public policies through up-to-date population, demographic, and socio-economic data.

#### **Objectives:**

- Acquire federal, state, regional, and local source data for use in the development of public policies, particularly U.S. Census data;

- Regularly update the Comprehensive Community Plan data; and
- Make population, demographic, and socio-economic information available to the general public.

### HOUSING

**Goal #1:** Preserve and enhance the quality of life in existing neighborhoods.

#### **Objectives:**

- Strengthen and promote neighborhood stability;
- Create neighborhood empowerment and engagement programs;
- Evaluate the type and number of residential zoning classifications and “right-size” certain districts; and
- Reduce the incidence of property maintenance and nuisance regulations.

**Goal #2:** Provide adequate, high quality, and diverse housing and living opportunities within Howland Township.

#### **Objectives:**

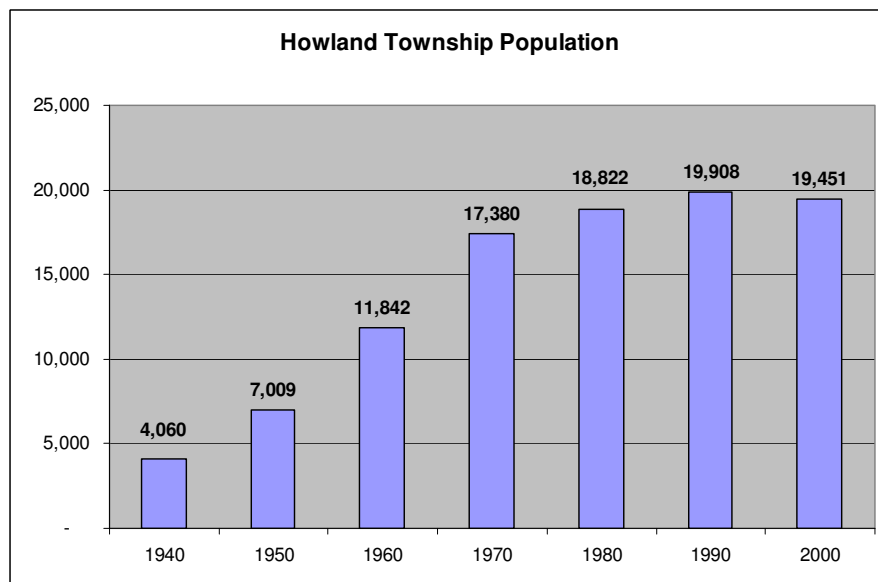
- Provide a range of housing options to serve the long-term needs of the Township;
- Encourage the provision of additional public and private amenities, the preservation of open space and environmentally responsible development practices;
- Evaluate the need for, and proper location of, senior housing;
- Encourage mixed-use residential;
- Develop neighborhood overlays to define and delineate locally significant districts;
- Promote the re-development of older residential areas; and
- Evaluate potential markets for residential growth.



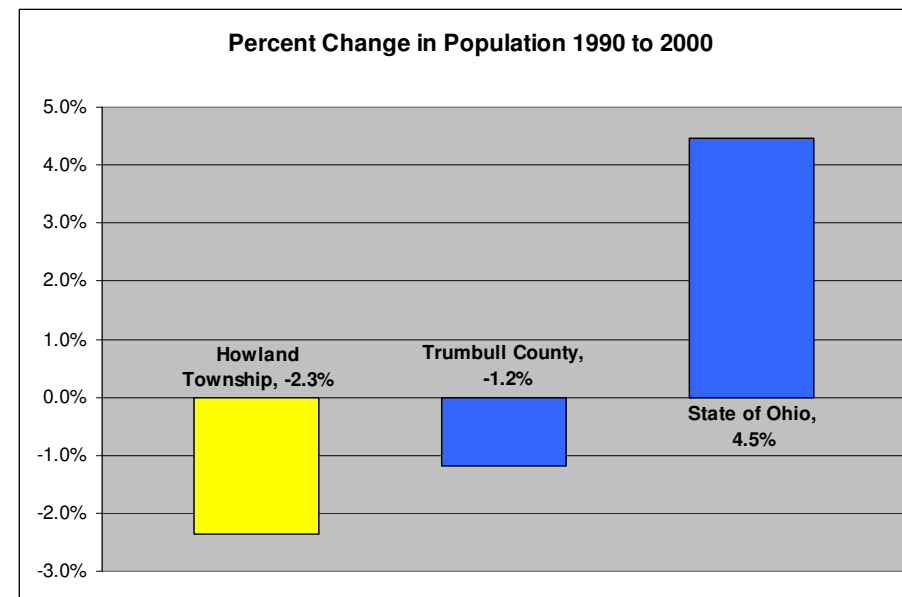
### Existing Conditions and Trends

#### Population

In the 2000 Census, Howland's population was 17,546, a decrease of 13.5% since 1990. Since 1940, Howland Township has undergone significant growth, sustaining double digit growth for many decades. From 1940 (4,060) to 1950 (7,009) there was a 42% increase in population and another 41% increase from 1950 to 1960. Howland grew another 32% during the next decade. The Township's population had remained generally stable until 1990, but has declined in population ever since.



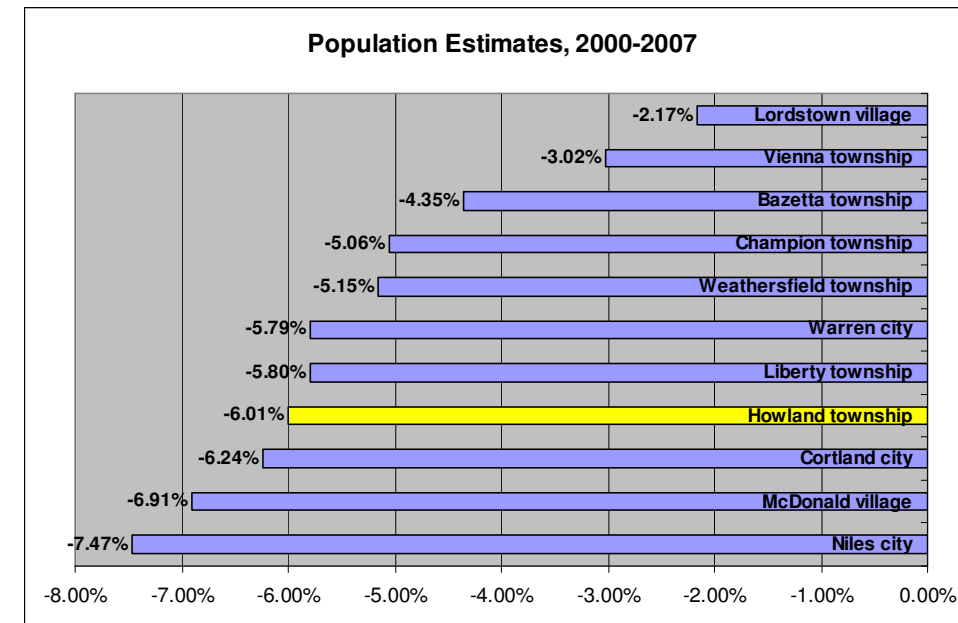
The Township experienced another 2.3% decline in population during 1990 and 2000. Trumbull County witnessed a 1.2% loss and the State of Ohio experienced growth of 4.5% during the same time period.



In 2000 the population was fairly evenly distributed between males and females, with 48% male and 52% female. This was the same distribution that was recorded in 1990 with 48% and 52% respectively.

#### Population Projection

Recent projections prepared in 2008 by the Ohio Department of Development for selected Trumbull



County communities highlight more recent population trends. According to these estimates, Howland Township has decreased in population approximately 6% since the last decennial census in 2000.

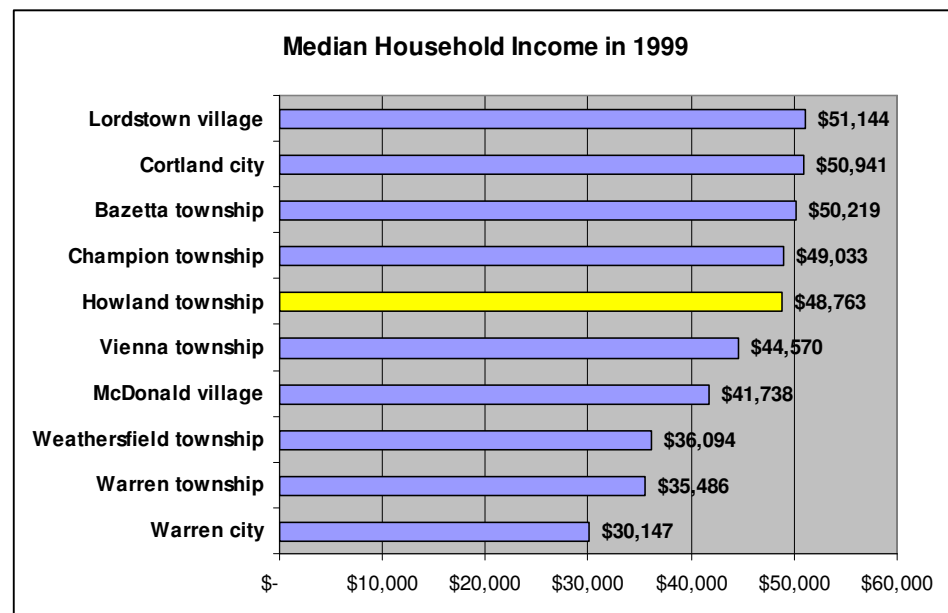
#### Income

Median income is an important statistic as income may determine what goods and services a household can and cannot afford to purchase.

The median income for Howland Township is \$48,763. When compared to other subdivisions in Trumbull County there are only four that are higher. They are Champion Township (\$49,033), Bazetta

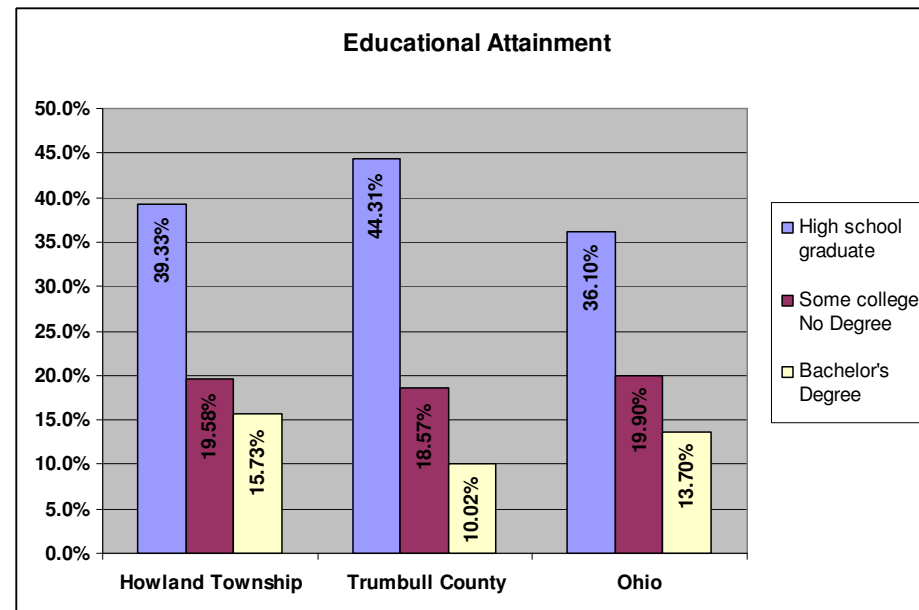


Township (\$50,219), City of Cortland (\$50,941), and Lordstown Village (\$51,144). The lowest median income in Trumbull County is in the City of Warren followed by Warren Township.



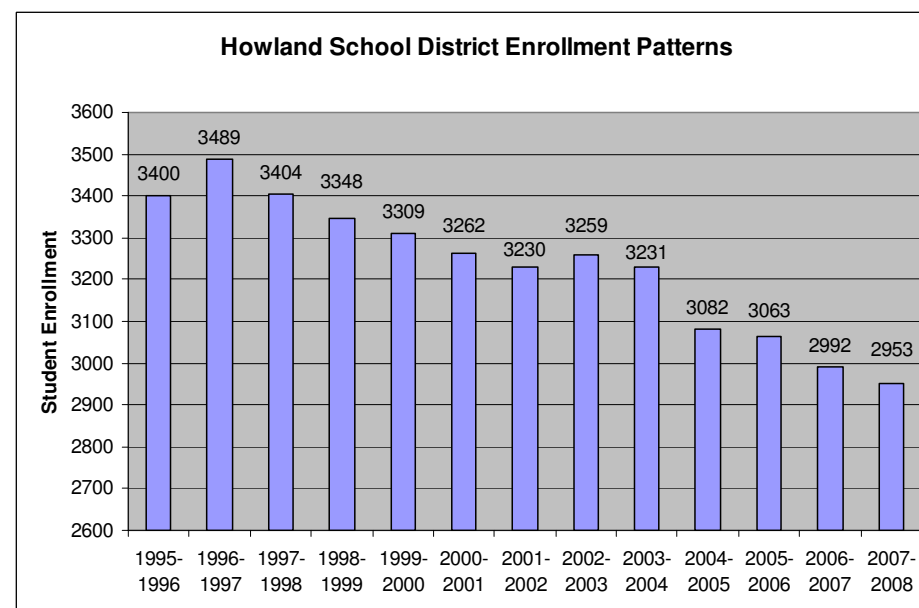
### Education

The highest percentage of educational attainment is found in the population with a high school degree (including equivalency). This is followed by residents with some college and no degree and then those with a bachelor's degree. Howland Township has the highest percentage of residents with Bachelor's Degrees when compared to other Trumbull County subdivisions. Howland also has a higher percentage



of residents with Bachelor's Degrees than the State of Ohio.

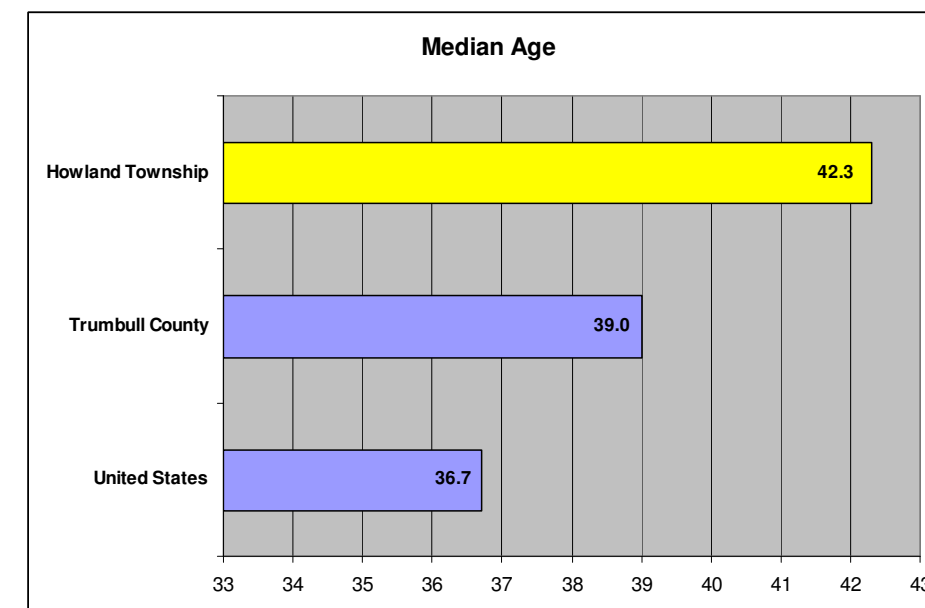
Enrollment in the Howland School District has been



steadily decreasing, declining more than 500 students since its peak in 1996. This trend signifies a graying of the Township that will need to be addressed.

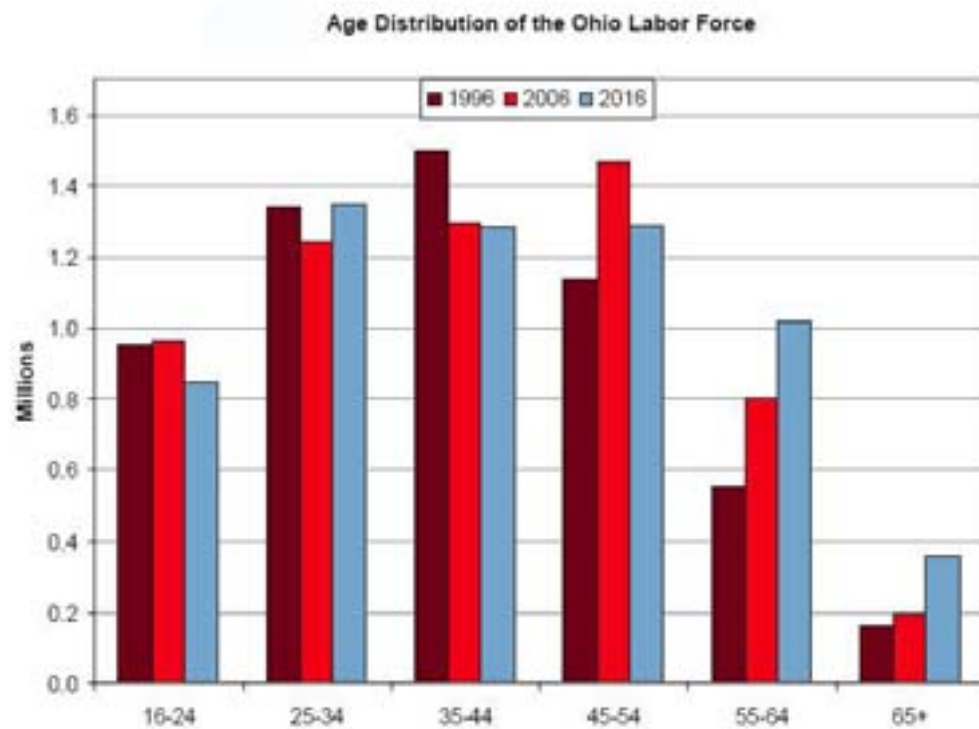
### Age

Compared to Trumbull County (39.0) and the United States (36.7), Howland (42.3) has a high median age. The median age for males was 42.3 and 43.4 for females. As the population ages, different amenities and services will be required. With the Township's median age increasing, Howland should consider introducing more programs and services that meet the needs of these age cohorts, such as additional transit or pedestrian connectivity outlets.





Recent population projections by age for Ohio to 2016 show that the aging “baby boom” generation will have a considerable impact in their communities and local work force. Making the Township more elder-friendly should be an important topic of discussion based upon the current trends.



### Unemployment

Trumbull County had a higher unemployment rate (14.7%) in January 2009 when compared to Ohio (8.8%) and the national unemployment rate (7.6%). When compared to other counties in the region, it ranks the highest and 12<sup>th</sup> highest among all 88

Ohio Population by Age

Age Group	1996	2006	2016
Total	11,242.8	11,478.0	11,641.5
Under 5	771.3	734.7	757.7
5 to 14	1,620.2	1,534.6	1,518.2
15 to 24	1,536.8	1,597.5	1,471.5
25 to 34	1,640.5	1,459.4	1,541.1
35 to 44	1,820.2	1,621.7	1,462.6
45 to 54	1,399.8	1,738.5	1,557.4
55 to 64	949.9	1,259.7	1,529.1
65 to 74	836.0	766.6	1,011.4
75 and older	668.1	765.4	792.7

Populations are shown in thousands. The baby boom generation is included in the groups highlighted above.

counties in Ohio. The unemployment rates in other counties in the region were Ashtabula (13.4%), Mahoning (13.4%), Portage (10.2%), and Geauga (6.5%).

### Worker Mobility

According to the 2000 Census, the main mode of transportation to work for Township residents is an automobile. Almost all (97.2%) of the workers over the age of 16 drove to work. The rest of the working population of Howland used public transportation (0.5%), worked at home (1.3%), walked to work (1.0%), or used other means (0.1%). According to

walkscore.com, Howland Township’s walkability rating is 32/100 or “car dependent.”

### Strategies and Recommendations

This section should be updated in light of the completion of the 2010 U.S. Census. Federal, State, and local sources can be accessed to record changes in trends. These changes in trends lead to necessary changes in services and amenities offered to the public. This information should be used when considering growth and development options and should serve as a guide for future planning for land use, economic development, community services and facilities and for safety services.

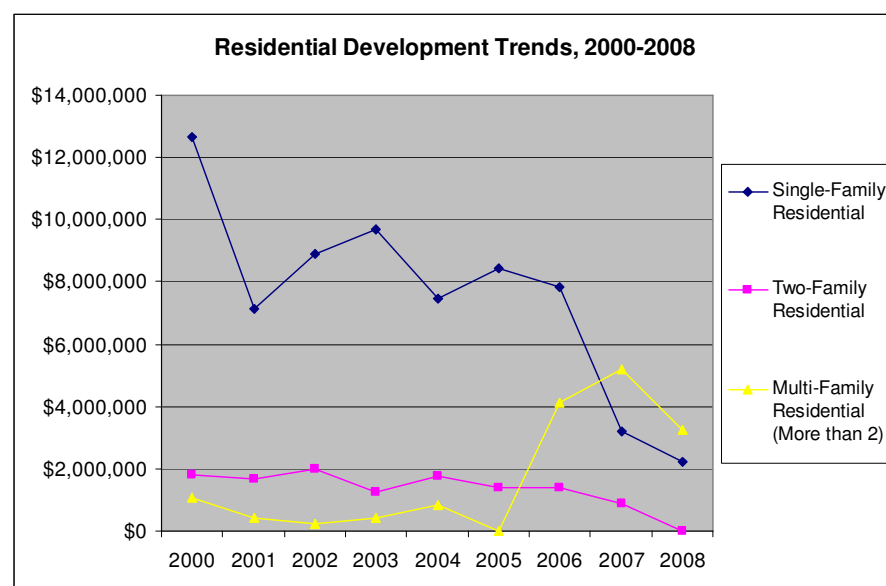


### HOUSING

#### Introduction

Howland Township's neighborhoods and housing stock are integral to its quality of life. The math behind the definition of community is simple: Well maintained neighborhoods attract residents that build stable and long lasting communities.

Roughly 57 new single-family houses have been built over the last three years. Currently, the addition of multi-family residential development in the Township has seen increase over the last three years. To mitigate issues of blight, the Planning and Zoning Department estimates that 3-5 homes (funding



permitted) could be demolished each year to improve neighborhoods. This activity could be increased with the influx of additional federal stimulus dollars to improve neighborhoods.

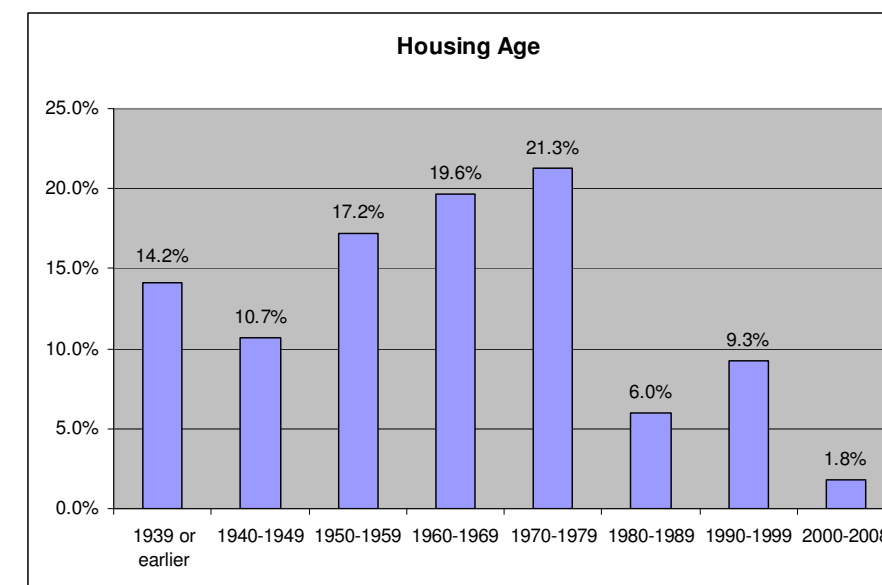
Although foreclosure rates in Trumbull County are currently below national average, increased pockets of foreclosures are on the rise across the County. Approximately 22 houses in Howland Township were offered at sheriff's sale in April 2009 alone. To help address statewide housing issues the State of Ohio was awarded \$116.8 million from the federal Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP).

Trumbull County was awarded \$3.4 Million in NSP funds to help communities address issues of blight, foreclosures, housing affordability, and other neighborhood issues through land banking, demolition and affordable housing construction over the next several years. Trumbull County has selected 10 "Target Areas" for funding based upon criteria established by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. Two census tracts in Bolindale (9205 and 9216) and three in Morgandale (9213,

9216, and 9205) have been slated to receive assistance to help in the demolition of blighted and vacant properties.

#### Conditions and Trends

Howland's housing stock is diverse. While a majority of the housing stock was constructed during 1940-1970 (62%), another solid portion of the community was born since 1970 (38%).



Most of these neighborhoods were developed in the northeastern sections of the Township (east and north of SR 82) and in selective areas south of SR 82, east of SR 46. There has been limited residential

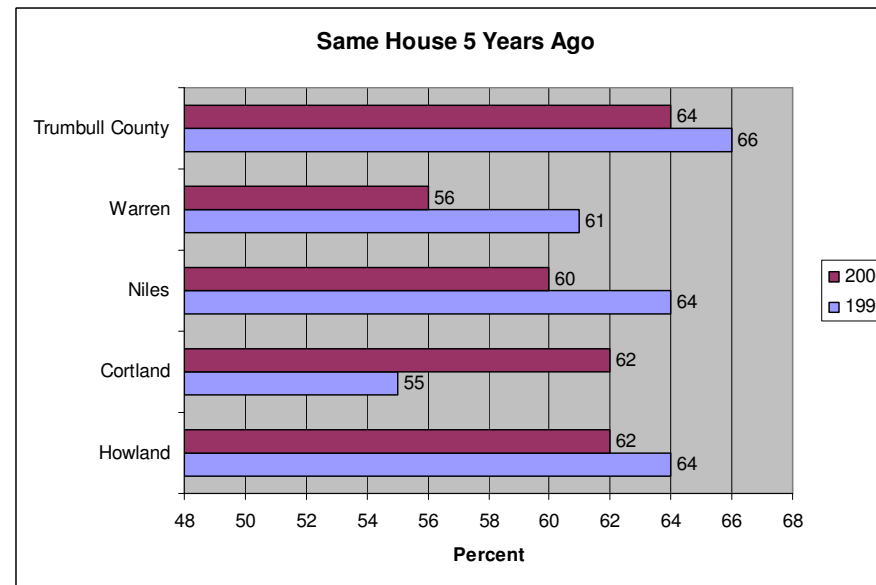
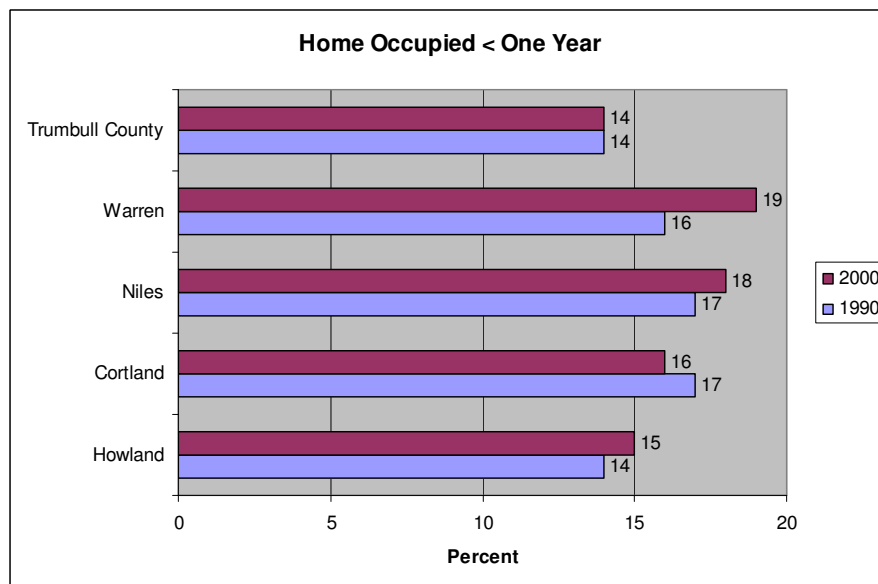




development since 2000 due to either the lack of infrastructure in undeveloped areas or was simply a byproduct of having limited new land resources, and lacking sanitary and other infrastructure.

A vast percentage of Howland homeowners (62%), as noted in Census 2000, lived in the same home during the 1990s. As indicated on the recent survey that accompanied this planning process, a majority of these homeowners have lived in Howland for more than 20 years.

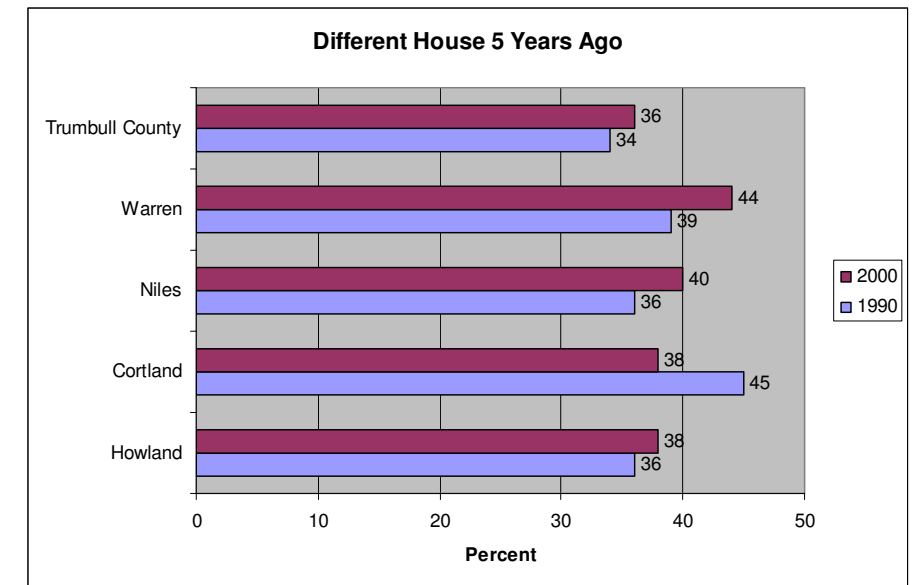
This indicates that the high trend “home-shifting” does not occur in Howland- as well as in Trumbull County,



where 36% of homeowners moved into other housing units in other locations of the County. This indicates that a degree of satisfaction of “community” does exist among Howland and Trumbull County residents.

Transitory residents are limited in Howland Township (15%), unlike Warren where 19% of homeowners have lived less than one year in their homes in 2000. However, both Howland and Warren have higher averages for transitory residents than County average.

The housing market and growth trends of new housing development within Howland Township have



been stagnant, yet nothing new for Trumbull County subdivisions.

Due to a decrease in mortgage interest rates and fueled by several national market conditions, the housing market during the 1990s witnessed a tremendous increase in home values. During the 1990s, median home values in Ohio increased 29% to \$103,700, and increased again to 24.7% by 2007. Median home values across Trumbull County and Howland Township both increased by 19.8% from 2000 to 2007.

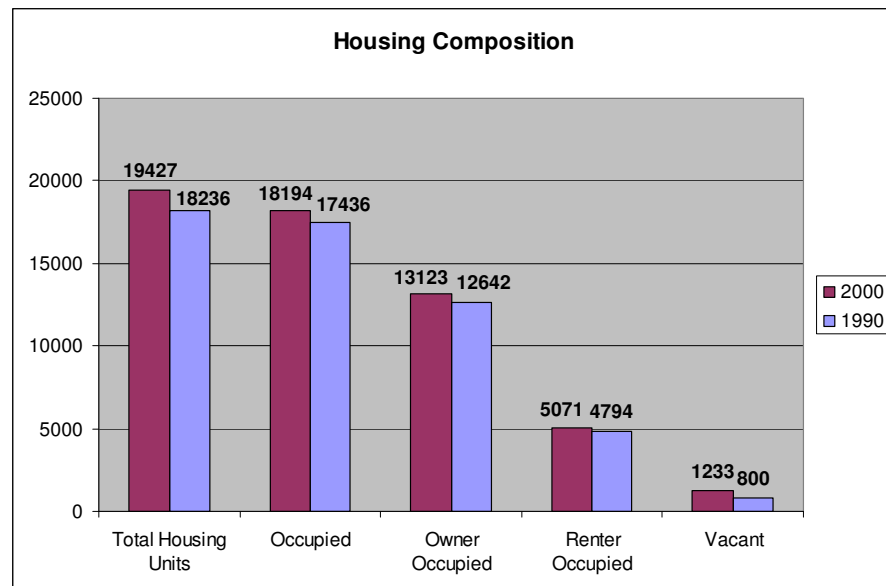
The recent home crisis has helped to readjust housing values which may make some locations more affordable than others. This recent trending in



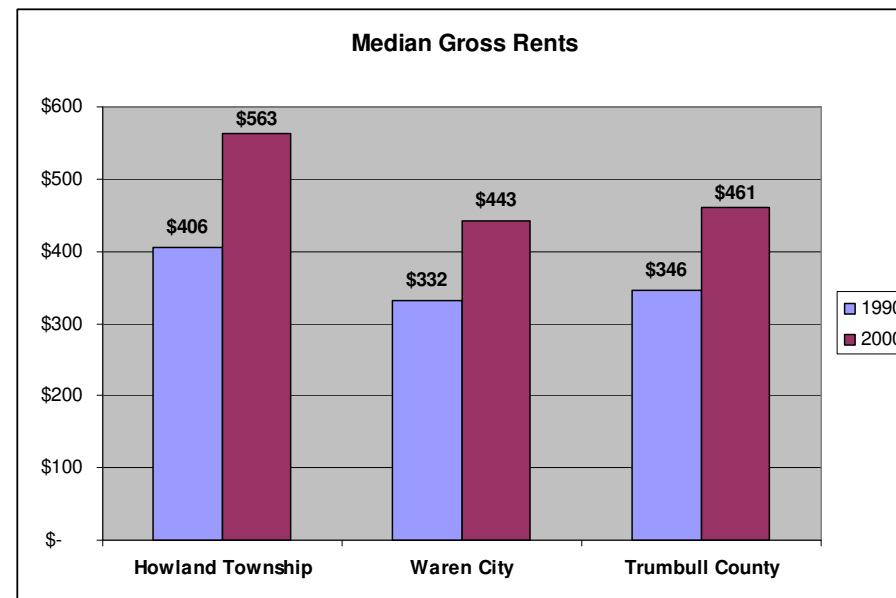
affordability may be more beneficial to Howland Township over time because of the location and attractions. This affordability could be beneficial to potential homeowners, officials of relocating and expanding businesses, and to outside economic interests. New commercial growth could occur in Howland over the next decade through the development and redevelopment of existing corridors and new residents could likely follow that sector for employment opportunities.

### Neighborhood Characteristics

Several conclusions can be made when reviewing Howland's neighborhoods by its ten census tracts: 9205, 9213, 9214, 9215, 9216, 9327.01, 9328, 9329,



9330.01 and 9330.02. From 1990 to 2000 there was steady growth overall in the housing sector in Howland that was greater than the county average. It should be noted that census tracts 9205, 9213, 9214, 9215, 9216, 9328, and 9327.01 include areas that are not part of Howland Township (see map in the Strategies and Recommendations Section, Page 129).



In addition, according to financial data from 2007, residents in these neighborhoods had higher loan approvals than residents in other neighborhoods. Neighborhoods in these census tracts also have more

owner-occupied homes, especially 9330.01, whereas 9327.01 and 9328 have generally more rental units. Gross rents in Howland Township have exceeded countywide rent averages since 1990, which is generally a good reflection on the condition of Howland's base of apartments and single family rental units, as well as overall quality of life.

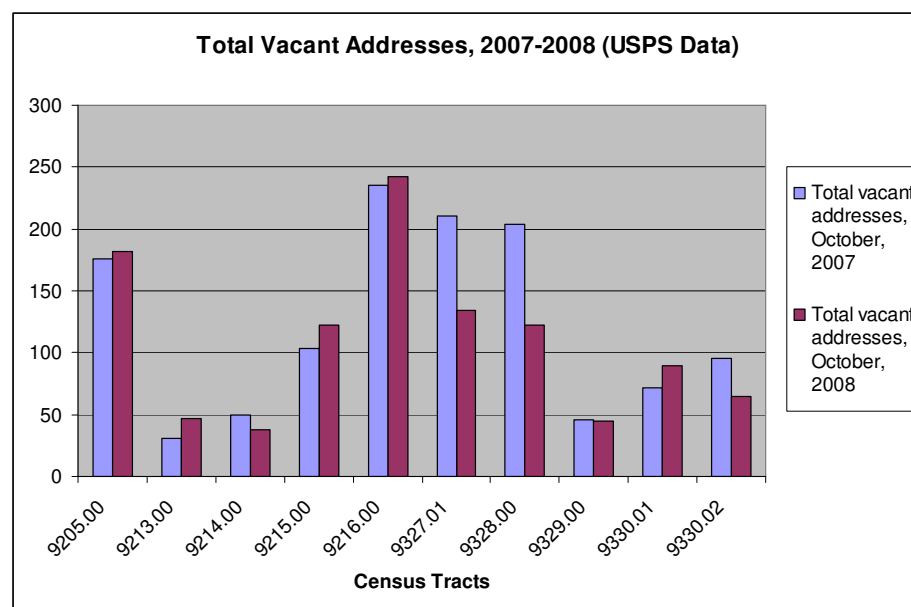
### Foreclosures

The last few years have been particularly difficult for homeowners in Trumbull County and across the nation. According to the Supreme Court of Ohio, there has been approximately a 32.6% increase in foreclosures in Trumbull County since 2004 compared to 2008. Current data indicates that there has been a four percent decrease in foreclosures since 2007.

Getting the correct story on local foreclosures requires that various sources of data be attained from the County Auditor, Treasurer, Clerk of Courts, Sheriff, and US Postal Service. The auditor's information on foreclosures is generally supported from information attained from the US Postal Service concerning vacant addresses. While the USPS lump



residential and commercial properties together, the conclusion is the same: Census Tracts 9205 and 9216 have the highest vacancy and turnover rates in the Township, followed by census tracts 9327.01, and 9328. Each of these areas is most contiguous to Warren and Niles and each census tract is shared by these political subdivisions and Howland Township.



The number of foreclosures is a concern for Howland officials, simply for the reason that homes often go in a state of disrepair and have profound effect on the contiguous residents and property values.

### Strategies and Recommendations

Howland Township may have little control over many of the factors that affect housing prices, including national and international economic trends, private lending practices, interest rates, labor and materials costs, and other factors that are subject to change. Population growth, migration patterns and shifting demographics, and an aging population can have dramatic affects on the demand for land and housing, but are also matters largely out of the realm of local government's control and influence.

However, Howland can exercise clear control in setting local land use and development regulations which have significant impacts on housing development costs, most notably in the areas of land acquisition, site development and construction costs. These costs, in turn, are reflected in local housing prices. The following strategies have been shaped to assist Township officials meet and exceed the best interests of existing and future residents.

Recognizing the links between land use regulation and housing costs, Howland Township can encourage

a wide array of housing opportunities by reviewing and updating, where appropriate, land use and development policies contained in the comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinance that regulate how land can be used and developed. To help attain the housing objectives and planning issues stated earlier, a variety of techniques largely tied to zoning and land usage could be examined.

### **Promote Planned Unit Development and Residential Cluster Homes**

Howland currently utilizes Residential Cluster Home (R-CH) and Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning classifications to promote innovative residential and conservation development. The Township should consider increasing these zone types in special, undeveloped areas or areas prime for redevelopment through overlays. According to the Community Survey, 39% of the respondents favored conservation subdivision development and another 36% were neutral indicating that more public education is needed concerning this development type.

While PUDs in Howland Township are regulated as a



separate zoning district, some communities also designate PUDs as “floating zones” which do not apply to a particular location until an application is received and approved. Doing so could help the Township have more influence on the protection of natural resources, pedestrian connectivity and other issues important to the community. To maximize the use of both zone types the Township should consider modifying the R-CH to provide for less open space in areas where the protection of natural and other resources are not needed or where the promotion of affordable housing is more valuable. The current acreage minimum for R-CH is 5 acres with 25% allocated to open space. The two car garage provision could also be lessened to promote flexibility.

The current Planned Unit Development code could be modified to relax the 50 acre minimum and maximum 8% non commercial uses to make this zoning type attractive to more mixed uses and more beneficial to the community.

New housing developments adjacent to mixed use areas should encourage design flexibility that allows

clustering and attaching residential units for a walkable living environment where residents can access commercial and food services within close proximity to their home. Providing residential living that is accessible to older residents, such as elevator lifts and ease of parking (R-CH requires enclosed two car garages) should be considered in the zoning resolution and during the site plan review. This type of housing would provide options for both seniors and young singles or small families who lack other options in the Township but seek local living opportunities.

### **Update the Zoning Resolution**

Howland could refine its zoning map to help promote infill development and/or new housing redevelopment. Howland could lower the costs of creating affordable housing by updating or modifying its resolution where possible. Minimum requirements can often be lowered to reflect actual projected usage and needs. An update may help promote the marketability of some of Howland’s neighborhoods where residents may wish to expand their homes but cannot because the setbacks do not provide for it.

Another area of the Zoning Resolution that could be reviewed and improved is that of home occupations. While most of the businesses currently being operated out of residential structures are usually located near main routes or commercial areas, the language defining home occupations in the current code could be better refined to make it either allowable by conditional permit only or refined to limit its use to non intensive service types to minimize the impact on adjacent residential properties.

### **Pursue the feasibility of Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs)**

Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs) are areas of land in which property owners can receive tax incentives for investing in real property improvements. Under the Ohio Revised Code, CRAs are areas where slum, blight, or historic districts are documented. The Community Reinvestment Area Program is a property incentive tax exemption program benefiting property owners who renovate existing or construct new buildings. This program permits municipalities, townships (with county assistance and approval) and counties to designate



areas where investment has been discouraged to encourage revitalization of the existing housing stock and the development of new structures (residential, commercial, and/or industrial). The benefit of the program is that taxes are abated for the increased valuation on the improved property for the certain period of time.

Although townships are not empowered to authorize these abatements without County approval, Township officials can petition the County Commissioners to establish new CRA areas and define the terms of the abatement in these as well as the term and extent of the real property exemptions.

Howland Township has participated in the CRA program for industrial projects, most recently for an area business to assist with business expansion efforts. The same program could also be used to help promote revitalization in neighborhoods where there is blight and a lack of residential reinvestment or to promote the development of “green” or eco-friendly developments.

### Promote Infill and Housing Redevelopment

Infill refers to development that takes place on land within built-up areas that have been passed over for various reasons during previous development phases and have remained vacant or under-utilized. There are currently various locations in Howland that can accommodate infill residential development. Some of these possible areas like those areas off of Elm Road, Bolindale, and areas where higher density development can be supported by services and is compatible with the surrounding development.

Howland can encourage infill development as part of a strategy to revitalize and bring new activity to older neighborhoods and locations. This type of development can also provide opportunities for the construction of affordable housing. Infill development can range from the construction of single-family housing on one or two adjacent lots, to the redevelopment of larger areas containing mixed residential and commercial uses like those on the Elm Road Corridor.

Careful design, with particular attention to enhancing

compatibility with surrounding buildings, parking, and traffic problems, will help to increase neighborhood acceptance. Howland officials could encourage infill development, if and when necessary, by:

- ✓ Preparing an inventory of potential infill sites and making it available to developers, area real estate agencies and residents;
- ✓ Sponsoring a workshop for developers to demonstrate infill development opportunities and tour potential sites. The type of development required on small infill parcels may be unfamiliar to some developers;
- ✓ Adopting flexible zoning and building regulations which allow development of irregular or substandard infill lots;
- ✓ Allowing mixed uses for infill developments which may enhance the economic feasibility of projects;
- ✓ Assisting in the consolidation of infill lots into larger, more easily developed sites. Assembling large parcels can be difficult if there are different owners who may be holding out for higher prices;
- ✓ Allowing sufficient density to induce housing development; and,



- ✓ Always ensure that infill developments relates to surrounding development in terms of scale.

### **Encourage the Utilization of Neighborhood Associations and Group**

Neighborhood groups could be active at the Township administration level on activities and decisions that affect their neighborhoods.

The neighborhood groups could work with the Township’s Planning and Zoning staff to identify issues and concerns, and suggest solutions. Many residents noted a preference in the community survey that maintenance of private properties and code enforcement were needed in their neighborhoods. Private, more localized, efforts could help make the job a bit easier and result in greater impact and more successful enforcement.

The partnership proposed to be created in the Housing chapter could work with the Community Development and Building departments to identify all rental units within the various neighborhoods (including single-family dwellings) so that the

Township can properly address issues related to rental housing.

House Bill 294, which went into effect Sept. 28, 2006, requires all rental property owners to register their contact information with the Trumbull County Auditor. The new law also requires that the registered owner must update their information within ten (10) days after any change occurs. Nonresident owners of residential rental property in Ohio are now required to designate an in-state agent for service of process.

Failure to register these properties is considered a minor misdemeanor.

The neighborhood groups could assist the Township to ensure that the rental property owners are abiding by the law and are reporting all rental properties to the County auditor. Neighborhood groups could be engaged to work with their elected officials and the Planning and Zoning Department to provide input on the activities in the various neighborhoods.

These neighborhood groups could work not only with the Township administration and neighborhood

associations, but also with the School District; businesses, churches and agencies within their neighborhoods; civic and fraternal groups in the community; the Township’s Police, Parks, Public Works departments; local banks; and, residents of the neighborhoods. The Township could earmark funds to support the neighborhood groups with mailings, newsletters, flyers, announcements, and other communication and administrative tasks.

The Neighborhood Groups could work closely with elected officials and the Township’s Police Department to enhance existing Block Watch groups, or to start new ones, until every neighborhood in the Township is covered.

### **Promote Neighborhood Branding**

Howland Township has very unique neighborhoods with special character, such as the “Heights, Hunt Club, Bolindale, Morgandale, Brittainy Oaks, or Foxcroft.” Some neighborhoods, as they develop from an organizational standpoint, may benefit from adopting and promoting an identity specific to that neighborhood.



While creating a special identify serves many functions, each neighborhood must also remember that it is part of a much bigger picture and continue to work for the betterment of the community at large. Neighborhoods could work with Township officials and departments, and their neighborhood association (if one exists) on these activities. Some newer developments in the Township have homeowners associations that function like neighborhood associations to collectively benefit their neighborhoods with image and other physical improvements. Other neighborhoods in Howland could collectively utilize the same methods.

### **Continue to Ensure Neighborhood Quality of Life**

Howland’s neighborhoods are the fundamental building blocks for the community. These residential areas should be developed, redeveloped and revitalized as cohesive sets of neighborhoods, sharing an interconnected network of streets, schools, parks, trails, open spaces, activity centers, and public facilities and services.

### Continue to Implement and Revise Building and Maintenance Standards

Howland Township should continue to utilize its building, property maintenance codes, and nuisance codes proactively to ensuring neighborhood quality and heightened building standards.

### Signage

The Township should explore the acquisition of non-conforming signs through direct compensation or other means. Signage has a great impact on Howland’s visual attractiveness and its neighborhoods. The Township could begin a process to identify non-conforming signs and prioritize those deemed most undesirable to adjacent neighborhoods.

### Review the Landscaping Requirements in the Zoning Code

The Township should review the existing landscaping requirements in the zoning code in its Commercial “C” district to ensure they correspond with the goals in the updated Plan.

New landscape requirements should provide stricter guidelines for screening and buffering parking lots and service areas in commercial and industrial districts to reduce their visibility from residential uses through enhanced buffers.

Other methods to improve neighborhood quality include:

- ✓ Redirect moderate/high traffic away from residential neighborhoods.
- ✓ Institute a traffic calming program to reduce speed and volume of through traffic.
- ✓ Create aesthetically pleasing neighborhood gateways. These can be designed around decorative signage, special street tree plantings or street pavement treatments that





provide a sense of arrival and distinction for individual neighborhoods.

- ✓ Encourage the construction of traditional neighborhood design features (e.g., reduce front yard building setbacks, alleys, garages located to the rear of principal structures).
- ✓ Link park and recreation facilities to existing and planned neighborhoods. For example, an opportunity exists to link the Crosswinds development to the Howland Township Park, making it more accessible to residents.
- ✓ Ensure existing and emerging neighborhoods are connected via the road network, sidewalks, and possible bike lanes and trails. The Township has worked in the past to address the lack of sidewalks in certain areas of the community. It is important that Township officials continue to look for



opportunities to promote pedestrian connectivity in light of Howland’s aging demographic and desire of residents (as expressed in the Community Survey) to have better movement and linkage opportunities throughout the Township. Most of the Township’s neighborhoods do not have sidewalks.

A priority of Trumbull County and Howland Township is “Going Green” through the Trumbull-Mahoning Green Pact. Two of the ten priorities set forth in the plan are reducing emissions and promoting alternative forms of transportation. Encouraging pedestrian connectivity through sidewalks and bike lanes across the Township would support these goals. As mentioned previously, according to walkscore.com, Howland Township’s walkability rating is 32/100 or “car dependent.”

### Utilize Federal and State Programs

Beyond specific zoning and other land use techniques that could help foster additional housing opportunities, the State of Ohio and the Federal government offer

other programs and specific incentives. Most of these incentives would require the coordination with the Trumbull County Planning Commission. One program of current importance is the Neighborhood Stabilization Program and the other is the CDBG program (for infrastructure) and CDBG HOME program.

### CDBG Programs

Trumbull County receives financial resources every year under the community development block grant program (CDBG) to assist communities mitigate slum and blight issues and to assist low and moderate income families, among other issues. Since 1990, Howland Township has received over \$10 million dollars for projects to improve neighborhood quality through infrastructure projects, like water, sewer and street projects.

The CDBG HOME program is designed to provide funding for affordable housing activities. This funding can be used to expand the supply of decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing in the community, primarily for people with very low incomes. Activities





such as site acquisition, site improvements, tenant relocation and demolition can also be funded.

Certain areas in Bolindale and Morgandale would be prime candidates, as well as other pockets of the Township where demolition and the development of income-based rental and multi-family development could occur.

Eligible activities include projects typically undertaken by housing developers such as homeownership programs, homeowner property rehabilitation, rental housing development, and tenant-based rental assistance. Once again, it should be kept in mind this is only a sampling of possible eligible activities.

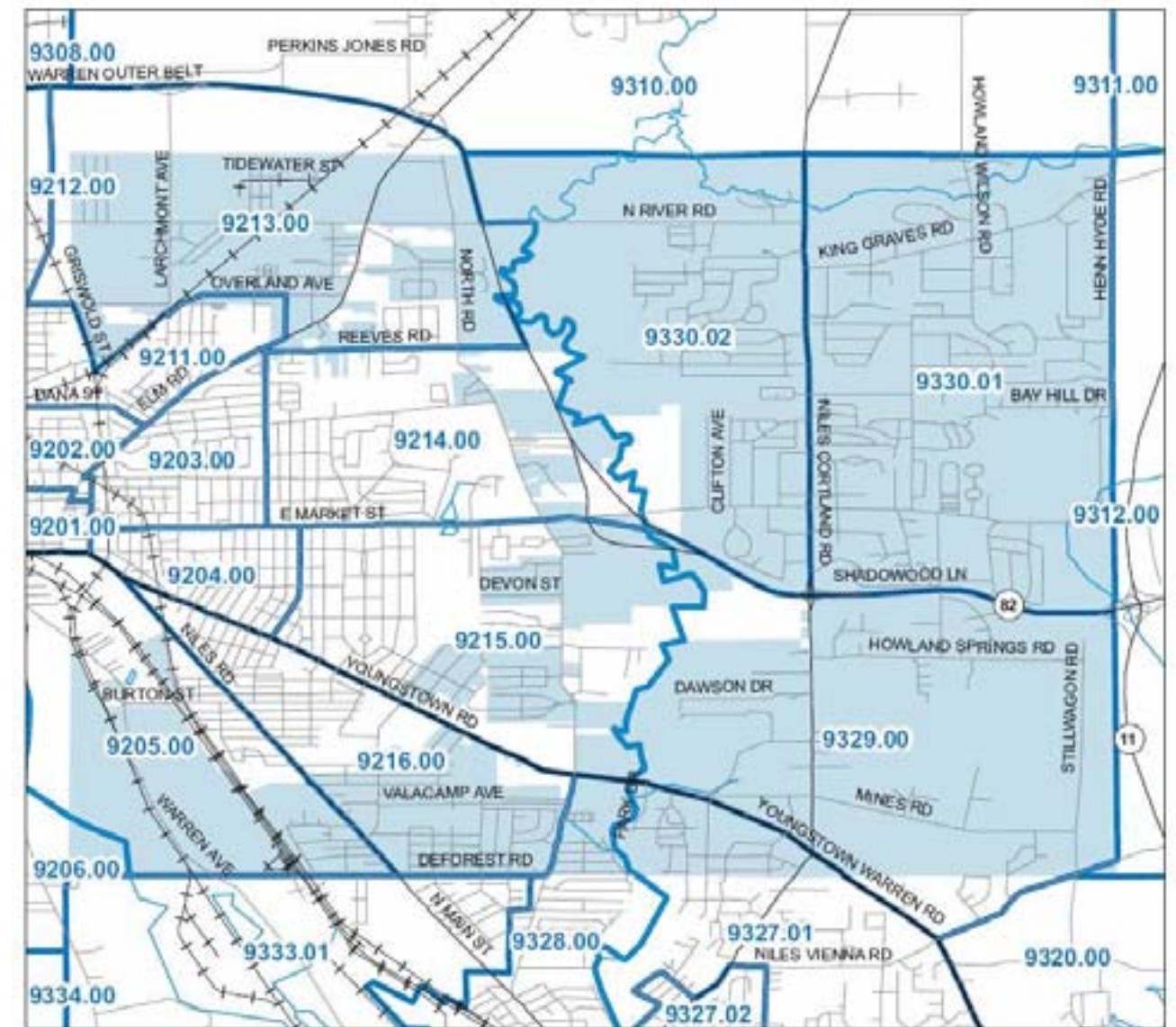
Each activity must conform to a number of programmatic regulations such as providing a match, implementing rent limitations for specific time periods, and providing required program documentation. Regardless of the type of housing activity, it must benefit very low income people. These income thresholds change yearly and can be attained from the Trumbull County Planning Commission.

### Neighborhood Stabilization Program

HUD's new Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) will provide emergency assistance to state and local governments to acquire and redevelop foreclosed properties that might otherwise become sources of abandonment and blight within their communities. NSP provides grants to every state and certain local communities to purchase foreclosed or abandoned homes and to rehabilitate, resell, or redevelop these homes in order to stabilize neighborhoods and stem the decline of house values of neighboring homes.

Based upon evaluation criteria developed by the Trumbull County Planning Commission, 10 neighborhoods were selected to receive NSP resources in the county. Bolindale and Morgandale are two of these ten targeted areas. It is anticipated that these resources will be used for the removal of blighted properties and land banking, and

the possible construction of new affordable infill residential homes. Overall, the Township plans on demolishing or rehabilitating approximately 30 homes over the next several years using these resources. These actions will primarily take place in the census tracts of 9213 (Morgandale), 9216 and 9205





(Bolindale), and 9329. Please see the Census Tract Map on the previous page to estimate the location of these areas.

### Low Income Housing Tax Credits

The Township should investigate the use of Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) for applicable projects. Use of this tax credit can result in substantial leverage for owners looking for innovative ways to fill gaps in building rehabilitation pro formas. Not only could this tax credit help make units available to residents with fixed incomes, such as the senior population, but it could also provide living opportunities for families just starting out who cannot afford to purchase a home of their own.

### **Promote an Elder-friendly Community**

One demographic trend not only apparent nationally, but also in the Township, is that the population is aging. In fact, the Township’s median age is one of the highest in the area (42.3) and almost six years higher than the national average.

To accommodate this trend, Howland Township could benefit from an Elder-friendly community building

process that involves assessment, planning that anticipates and prepares for the aging of its citizens, and implementation. This results in policies that maximize opportunities to age comfortably.

There are three main Elder-friendly indicator groups that would help Howland Township to promote user-friendly lifestyles for seniors and retirees. Township officials should use these variables in the development and redevelopment process, and in assessing its safety services.

These variables are:

#### 1. Home Life Variables

- ✓ Availability of a range of housing options with different styles, prices, and locations.
- ✓ Regulations and codes supportive of and sufficiently flexible to meet the changing housing needs of older adults.
- ✓ Age-friendly businesses.
- ✓ Availability of programs, incentives, and services to make housing affordable.
- ✓ Availability of programs to educate older adults about in-home safety hazards to

prevent falls and accidents and home modification options.

- ✓ Availability of home modification and repair programs to assist older adults with having a safe home that accommodates their changing physical needs.

#### 2. Mobility Variables

- ✓ A range of affordable travel modes within the community, including services for persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Age-friendly public environments, signage, infrastructure, and mobility amenities for walkers, like trails, walking paths, and sidewalks.
- ✓ Monitoring/feedback mechanisms to ensure adherence to speed limits/stop signs.

#### 3. Community Life Variables

- ✓ Inclusion of older adults in municipal decision making, planning, and zoning codes.
- ✓ A diverse range of social, recreational, leisure and faith-based resources, and access to lifelong learning programs.



- ✓ A community focal point, such as an office on aging, to link older adults to health and social services.
- ✓ Programs to assist older adults with home chores and other services.
- ✓ Approaches to dealing with safety and crime issues to create a sense of safety and security for older adults.
- ✓ A system of responsive safety forces trained and sensitive to the needs of older adults and linked to the health and social service community.

### **Encourage Green Development & Redevelopment**

There are a variety of new techniques that can be embraced to encourage the use of methods that promote the efficient use of natural and manmade resources in both the redevelopment and development process. Many of these methods can take place across the Township and in any of its neighborhoods at a pace comfortable to economic resources.

There are many new practices and equipment that can be used to retrofit existing homes and neighborhoods in Howland Township to use less energy, such as solar thermal system, rain gardens to keep storm runoff on-site and out of the watershed, triple pane high performing windows, low flow toilets, green cabinetry, and landscaping that includes native drought resistant plants. There are also renewable, roof-mounted energy systems that generate solar power onsite.

These types of “Green” structures use valuable resources such as energy, water, materials, and land more efficiently than buildings that are simply built to code. Green buildings are kind to the environment, and provide healthy, comfortable, productive indoor spaces.

Additional tips on using green technologies within residential settings can be found at [www.greenhomeguide.org](http://www.greenhomeguide.org). Additionally, the US Green Building Council (USGBC) provides guidance on developing new or retrofitting older neighborhoods with green principles.

Using the LEED for Neighborhood Development criteria for new planned unit, cluster, and other development projects in Howland Township could help to successfully:

- Enhance community health and connectivity;
- Reduce vehicular congestion, emissions and promote better air quality; and,
- Improve the overall quality of life for Howland Township residents.

See the following page for the LEED Scorecard and listing of variables.



## LEED for Neighborhood Development 2009 Project Scorecard

Project Name:

### Smart Location & Linkage 27 Points Possible

Yes	?	No			
Y			Prereq 1	Smart Location	Required
Y			Prereq 2	Proximity to Water and Wastewater Infrastructure	Required
Y			Prereq 3	Imperiled Species and Ecological Communities	Required
Y			Prereq 4	Wetland and Water Body Conservation	Required
Y			Prereq 5	Farmland Conservation	Required
Y			Prereq 6	Floodplain Avoidance	Required
			Credit 1	Preferred Locations	10
			Credit 2	Brownfield Redevelopment	2
			Credit 3	Reduced Automobile Dependence	7
			Credit 4	Bicycle Network and Storage	1
			Credit 5	Housing and Jobs Proximity	3
			Credit 6	Steep Slope Protection	1
			Credit 7	Site Design for Habitat or Wetlands Conservation	1
			Credit 8	Restoration of Habitat or Wetlands	1
			Credit 9	Conservation Management of Habitat or Wetlands	1

### Neighborhood Pattern & Design 44 Points Possible

Yes	?	No			
Y			Prereq 1	Walkable Streets	Required
Y			Prereq 2	Compact Development	Required
Y			Prereq 3	Connected and Open Community	Required
			Credit 1	Walkable Streets	12
			Credit 2	Compact Development	6
			Credit 3	Diversity of Uses	4
			Credit 4	Mixed-Income Diverse Communities	7
			Credit 5	Reduced Parking Footprint	1
			Credit 6	Street Network	2
			Credit 7	Transit Facilities	1
			Credit 8	Transportation Demand Management	2
			Credit 9	Access to Public Spaces	1
			Credit 10	Access to Active Public Spaces	1
			Credit 11	Universal Accessibility	1
			Credit 12	Community Outreach and Involvement	2
			Credit 13	Local Food Production	1
			Credit 14	Tree-Lined and Shaded Streets	2
			Credit 15	Neighborhood Schools	1

### Green Infrastructure & Buildings 29 Points Possible

Yes	?	No			
Y			Prereq 1	Certified Green Building	Required
Y			Prereq 2	Minimum Building Energy Efficiency	Required
Y			Prereq 3	Minimum Building Water Efficiency	Required
Y			Prereq 4	Construction Activity Pollution Prevention	Required
			Credit 1	Certified Green Buildings	5
			Credit 2	Building Energy Efficiency	2
			Credit 3	Water Efficient Landscaping	1
			Credit 4	Existing Building Reuse	1
			Credit 5	Historic Building Preservation and Adaptive Use	1
			Credit 6	Minimize Site Disturbance in Design and Construction	1
			Credit 7	Stormwater Management	4
			Credit 8	Heat Island Reduction	1
			Credit 9	Solar Orientation	1
			Credit 10	On-Site Renewable Energy Sources	3
			Credit 11	District Heating and Cooling	2
			Credit 12	Infrastructure Energy Efficiency	1
			Credit 13	Wastewater Management	3
			Credit 14	Recycled Content in Infrastructure	1
			Credit 15	Waste Management Infrastructure	1
			Credit 16	Light Pollution Reduction	1

### Innovation & Design Process 6 Points

Yes	?	No			
			Credit 1.1	Innovation in Design: Provide Specific Title	1
			Credit 1.2	Innovation in Design: Provide Specific Title	1
			Credit 1.3	Innovation in Design: Provide Specific Title	1
			Credit 1.4	Innovation in Design: Provide Specific Title	1
			Credit 1.5	Innovation in Design: Provide Specific Title	1
			Credit 2	LEED® Accredited Professional	1

### Regional Priority Credits 4 Points

Yes	?	No			
			Credit 1.1	Regional Priority Credit: Region Defined	1
			Credit 1.2	Regional Priority Credit: Region Defined	1
			Credit 1.3	Regional Priority Credit: Region Defined	1
			Credit 1.4	Regional Priority Credit: Region Defined	1

### Project Totals (Certification estimates) 110 Points

Certified: 40-49 points, Silver: 50-59 points, Gold: 60-79 points, Platinum: 80+ points



As green developments are become popular with consumers and younger audiences, they may become more attractive to the development community because of this additional demand.

Incorporating these criteria into the planning and zoning process will help the Township’s new and existing developments incorporate many of the goals and objectives highlighted throughout this Plan.

There are currently various locations in Howland that could be good candidates for green and conservation subdivisions. Some of these locations, like those areas off of Mines Road do not have sewer infrastructure but could be suitable for this type of residential development in the future. Other areas for conservation subdivisions would be areas in the Township that have environmental issues. These environmental issues are highlighted in the Natural Resources section.

### **Promote the Preservation of Historic Properties**

Almost 25% of Howland’s housing stock could qualify for historic status because it was built before 1950,

although variables other than housing age are required to qualify like historical significance and unique architecture. There are a variety of methods Howland could use to promote the preservation of historical homes among its existing housing stock, such as the use of “Historical Overlay” zoning.

Additional methods to promote historic properties include:

#### Preservation of historic structures and properties through zoning

To help preserve historic properties, another tool to use is zoning, especially when used to back the historic preservation resolution. Through this procedure, a historic preservation classification must first be established within the zoning code. When established, the resolution could operate as an “overlay,” with reference to architectural design or modification of existing structures, on the existing zoning of historic districts. To ensure historic continuity in the area, it is important that conflicts between

zoning and preservation efforts are minimized by ensuring that existing zoning codes do not allow for uses that may be injurious to historic properties or the historic “aesthetics” of the nearby environment. Nevertheless, if preservation planning and zoning can be properly coordinated, both can work to ensure a tranquil and historically-pleasing environment.



#### Using financial and tax incentives

Financial and tax incentives for preservation, rehabilitation, and adaptive uses of historic properties can take shape in many forms, some implemented at the local level, with others



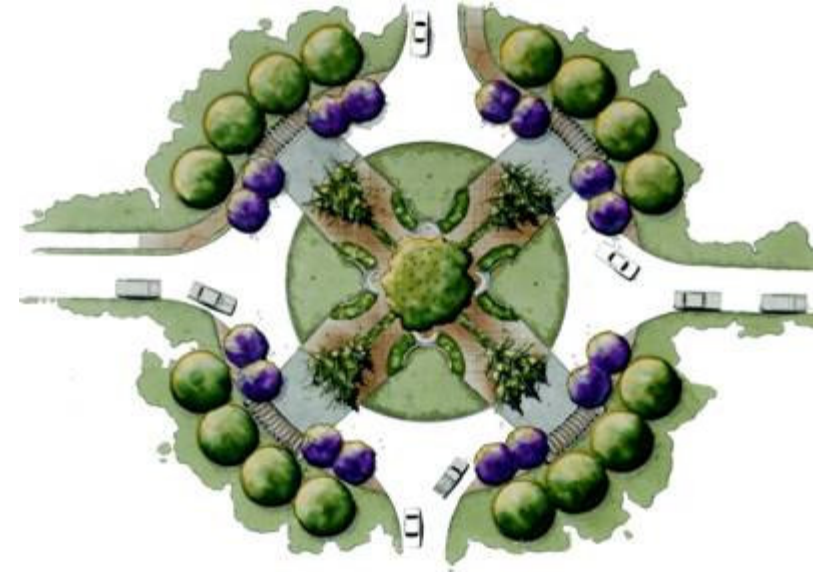
requiring a joint collaboration between state and federal agencies.

Tax incentives, such as investment tax credit (ITC) programs like the federal rehabilitation tax credit program are valuable tools to help a community promote historic preservation by reducing overall costs affiliated with rehabilitation of properties. This is especially true for the rehabilitation tax credit program which allows owners or developers to receive a 20% rebate on costs affiliated with rehabilitating income-producing properties listed on the National Register. For example, a \$1 million dollar rehabilitation project would actually cost \$800,000 after the tax credit is applied.

For property owners who undertake rehabilitation projects to qualify for the 20% tax credit, work must conform to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Although this tax credit applies only to National Register income producing properties, non-

historic income generating properties built before 1936 could qualify for a 10% tax credit, seeing that they also meet the above rehabilitation standards. Both types of projects must undertake a three-part process, with each phase being handled in cooperation with a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). In addition, due to federal tax law changing from time to time, it is important to consult a SHPO before getting involved with these types of tax programs.



## TRANSPORTATION





### TRANSPORTATION

#### Introduction

Howland Township's thoroughfare and transportation network affect the movement of people, shape the character of the community, influence its redevelopment trends, and shape its development potential.

It is important to consider transportation when planning for the future to ensure these systems can support the goals, such as pedestrian connectivity, land use, and economic development. Transportation as it applies to Howland Township includes not only the road system, but other means of non-vehicular mobility. Additional modes of transportation and mobility are addressed and discussed in this chapter.

Some residents responded during the community survey that they indicated feeling overwhelmed by greater traffic volumes, higher speeds, and cut-through traffic in certain portions of the Township. These trends are likely to continue if not mitigated. This chapter provides solutions to these issues and

also aims to provide residents with a full range of transportation choices. While automobiles are expected to continue as the predominant means of transportation, all transportation modes need enhanced standing to promote additional mobility and access across all modes. By offering a diverse and well-functioning transportation system, Township residents and visitors will be offered greater mobility to travel to their destinations.

#### Planning Issues

A safe, expeditious, and varied form of transportation is important in promoting Howland Township's overall quality of life.

The Township's Public Works department maintains a significant amount of Township roads in conjunction with the County Engineer, Cities of Warren and Niles. Other parties are also involved if federal and state resources are being used and additional oversight is needed. The involvement of numerous parties can create coordination challenges. The Township must rely upon other agencies like Eastgate COG, Trumbull County Planning Commission, and the Ohio

Department of Transportation (ODOT) when significant and costly improvement projects are needed.

As appropriate, the Township may need to advocate aggressively on behalf of its transportation improvement goals and work proactively with other entities to continue to upgrade the 160 linear miles of roadways and other related infrastructure under its jurisdiction.

The existing transportation trends in Howland Township are very similar to other communities. While the Township's population is declining, car ownership has increased to where more household members have access to vehicles and frequently use them independently. When added to the traffic Howland Township is receiving from its robust health care services and commercial sector, the result is a traffic pattern that has peak congestion issues and could have an impact on the expeditious delivery of safety services and other public services like snow removal.





Other planning issues also stem from an aging roadway system with some sections over 30 years old.

The curb, gutter and storm sewers in older residential areas in the community in Bolindale like Trentwood and Ravenwood need completely updated. Key areas for continued economic development in Howland Township like the “Golden Triangle,” Howland Corners, and the SR 46 and Elm Road corridors also need constant transportation updates to be effective players in the regional and global economic market.

The perpetual planning theme with transportation improvements is prioritization and coordination. To ensure the greatest benefit to the community, the targeting and timing of these resources should be planned, prioritized and successfully linked to outside leveraging resources.

### Goals and Objectives

**Goal #1:** Provide greater choice, accessibility, and flexibility for all people to move about the Township.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Require multiple modes of transportation as part of new developments;
2. Incorporate multiple modes of transportation into road construction projects, and work on cooperative maintenance agreements;
3. Encourage pedestrian networks in local business districts to allow a friendly built environment for living, shopping, visiting, or passive enjoyment;
4. Encourage the connectivity of open spaces, greenways, and recreational areas with public multi-purpose trails;
5. Encourage public transportation into and through the Township on main thoroughfares;
6. Implement safety improvements at substandard intersections;
7. Retro-fit existing neighborhoods with sidewalks and bike trails, where applicable;

8. Develop a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan for Howland Township.

**Goal #2:** Promote safe and efficient flow of vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Participate in area transportation planning efforts;
2. Increase traffic calming measures;
3. Improve traffic flow by reducing congestion on the major corridors serving the Township;
4. Improve and expand alternative transportation systems;
5. Develop a Town Center circulation plan for the Howland Corners area; and
6. Continue multi-year capital planning for roadway improvements.



**Goal #3:** Provide connectivity to adjacent communities, throughout the region, and beyond.

**Objectives:**

1. Plan for Howland access to regional, statewide, and nationwide alternative transportation and multi-modal planning efforts;
2. Encourage safe and efficient use of existing rail lines; and
3. Maintain and enhance the Township’s access to railroads and air service.

**Goal #4:** Protect and enhance the natural environment along transportation corridors.

**Objectives:**

1. Limit road expansion and widening by offering progressive solutions to traffic issues; and
2. Promote beautification efforts along corridors and entrances to the Township.

**Existing Conditions and Trends**

**Functional Classification System**

National Functional Classification (NFC) is a planning tool which federal, state and local transportation agencies have used since the late 1960's. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) developed this system of classifying all streets, roads and highways according to their function and developed a suitable party responsible for them. This classification system also provides the basis for federal, state and local funding. See Map: Functional Classification System for a better understanding of these road classifications.

Interstate

Includes freeway and expressway routes that are intended to move traffic to regional, statewide, and out-of-state destinations. No Interstate Highways exist in Howland Township.

Principal Arterials

Principal Arterials generally carry long distance, through-travel movements. They also provide

access to important traffic generators, such as major airports or regional shopping centers. State Route 82, SR 46 from US 422 to SR 82, and SR 5 (Elm Road) are classified as principal arterials in the Township.

Minor Arterials

Minor Arterials are similar in function to Principal Arterials, except they generally carry trips of shorter distance and to lesser traffic generators.

Road segments in the Township that are classified as Minor Arterials include: East Market Street (Warren Sharon Road) east of SR 82 to the Township Boundary; SR 46 from SR 82 to N. River Road; N. River Road; and King Graves Road from SR 46 northeast to the Township Boundary.

Collectors

Collector roads tend to provide more access to property than do arterials. Collectors also funnel traffic from residential areas to arterials. There are currently no roads in the Township listed as



collectors, although all or certain segments of Howland Wilson Road and possibly Henn Hyde Road could warrant such a designation due to their frequent use.

### Local

Local roads primarily provide access to property. These are all other roads identified on the map.

### Howland Township Public Works Department

The Howland Township Public Works Department, formerly the Streets Department, is responsible for routine road care, including maintenance and repair of curbs, storm sewers, and snow and ice removal.

Approximately 160 linear miles of roadway are under its jurisdiction, consisting of mostly urbanized streets. Approximately 25 linear miles of roads within the Township limits are maintained by other jurisdictions including ODOT, the Trumbull County Engineer, the City of Niles, and the City of Warren. Public Works staffing includes fourteen full-time employees: a

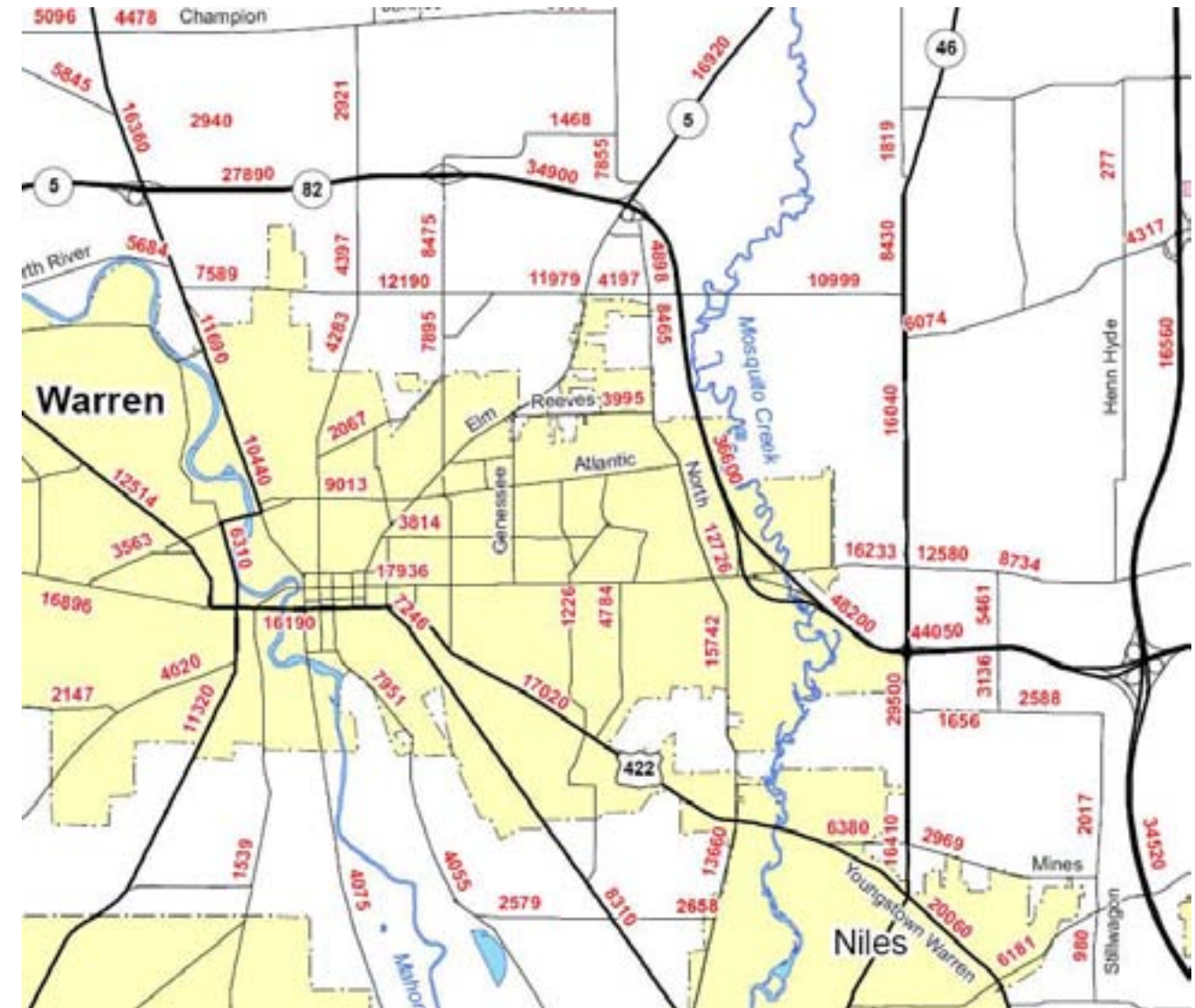
superintendent, foreman, one mechanic and eleven operators/maintenance workers.

### Traffic Flow and Congestion

The existing transportation trends in Howland Township are very similar to other communities. While the township's population has declined, car ownership has increased. When survey respondents were asked to rate the traffic flow on main routes in the community, 62% rated it "adequate or poor."

To ensure traffic flow and congestion are addressed properly, Eastgate periodically takes traffic counts in key areas. Those depicted above were taken during 2002-2006.

In 2005, a US 422 Traffic Corridor Analysis was prepared with resources from the Eastgate Council of Governments. Much of the study area (the original



and expanded) included most areas in Howland Township with a primary focus on key commercial and congestion areas like SR 46, SR 82, Howland Corners, and other areas like North Road. The report recommended updates such as lane widening and signalization improvements at key intersections. Some of these improvements include signalization



and turn lane upgrades at East Market Street and Howland Wilson Road and SR 46/82.

### **Transportation Improvements and Enhancements**

The Eastgate Regional Council of Governments is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for Trumbull and Mahoning counties. As such, they are responsible for the development of and periodic updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). All transportation projects receiving state or federal funding must be included in the LRTP and the TIP. In this capacity, Eastgate serves as the region's clearinghouse for federal and state funding for transportation improvements.

The agency also manages the Transportation Enhancement Program. According to their website [www.eastgatecog.org](http://www.eastgatecog.org), the program will fund "transportation related activities that go beyond the customary cultural or environmental mitigation required when developing a transportation program." The TE program's focus is on historic, scenic, environmental, bicycle and pedestrian improvements

associated with a transportation project. Eastgate, along with the Trumbull County Engineer, provide assistance to the Township in ensuring identified transportation improvement and enhancement projects are eligible for funding and once funded assist the community in working with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) for the implementation phase of the project.

The Eastgate COG also works with Township officials in establishing transportation priorities that should be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that is updated every two years. The Fiscal Year 2008-2011 TIP provides a comprehensive listing of highway, bridge and transit system improvements that will be utilizing federal and state funding, and are scheduled for implementation over the next four years.

Some projects set to receive funding from this program include signalization and turn lane upgrades at East Market Street and Howland Wilson Road and interchange and signalization improvements to SR 46/82. Additional resources to study various traffic

alternatives in the vicinity of the Eastwood Mall area have also been programmed into Eastgate's Transportation Improvement Program. In 2008, Township officials applied for resources from these programs for gateway and beautification improvements along the SR 46 corridor from the SR 46/82 intersection north to High Street.

### **Transit Services**

Transit service in Howland Township is limited. Unlike other communities that provide formalized transit fixed line haul routes, like Lake County's LAKETRAN, transit services must be scheduled by residents through the Niles-Trumbull Transit program. Township residents currently pay a one-way fee of \$1.50 to \$4 to travel anywhere in the County. The fee schedule varies depending upon age and disability. Trips are limited to the hours of 7AM to 6PM, Monday through Friday, and 8AM to 3PM on weekends and holidays. There are currently no regular fixed line haul routes in the Township.



### Traffic Impact Studies

The Township currently requires traffic studies for certain types of development. This tool helps ensure that traffic impacts are properly evaluated and addressed.

Howland Township requires a traffic impact study for developments in the zoning classifications of R-A-1 & R-A-2 (residential apartments), and all corridor review districts. Commercial and R-CH, cluster residential districts, require a traffic impact study if the proposed development is anticipated to create over 100 trips per peak hour.

### Existing Pedestrian Connectivity

Pedestrian connectivity is limited in Howland Township. Few areas in the community have sidewalks and pathways that can be used exclusively for walking, biking, rollerblading, and other modes of non-motorized travel. The exception being East Market Street in areas closest to Howland Corners (See Map: Potential Gateways, Roundabouts, and Bike Lanes, for the location of existing sidewalks). Most of the township's neighborhoods are without

sidewalks and lack safe pedestrian and bicycle connections to other neighborhoods, schools, commercial districts, and parks.

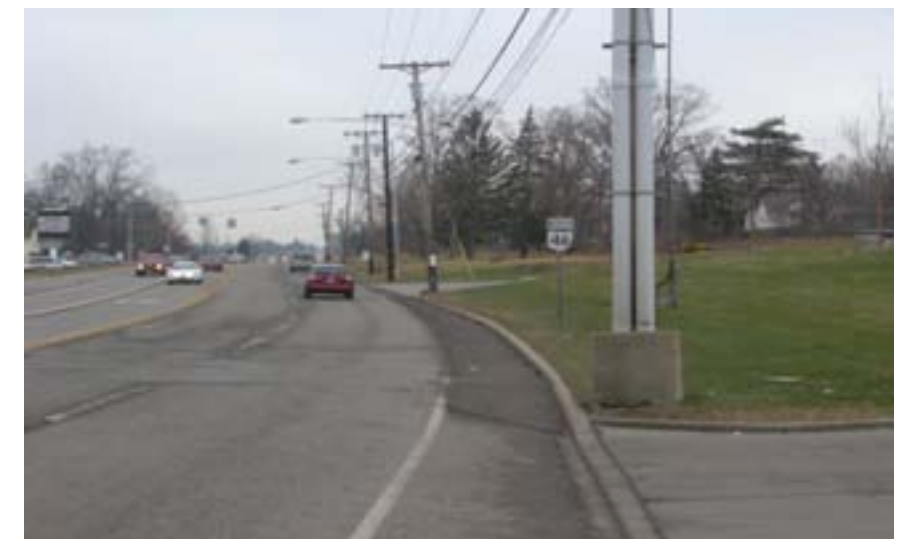


Providing a separate system for non-motorized travel is important to improve accessibility throughout the

community, to promote a healthy lifestyle for its residents, relieve traffic congestion, and minimize the future widening of roads.

### Street and Corridor Character

Street width and scale, presence of on-street parking and sidewalks, block length, building setbacks, design speed, street trees and even pavement markings and signs all contribute to how the street functions and the perceptions of the driver. Some areas of Howland Township have a unique feel to them that residents wish to have perpetuated throughout the community. The area most mentioned is the Howland Corners area and East Market Street, where it extends out east and west of SR 46.





Driver perceptions can affect vehicle speed and the care used in driving. The character of street corridors as viewed by the motorist also impacts the image of Howland Township. A possible conclusion of a first time visitor entering the Township from SR 5 on Elm Road could be that rest of the community is unattractive.

The Township’s commercial corridors should be made free of unsightly clutter and signage and be visually pleasing, whereas residential streetscapes should make you intuitively drive at a low speed. In some cases, the road design elements in the Township’s newer developments reinforce this element.

In other neighborhoods in the Township like Bolindale, or certain streets in the “Heights,” improvements need to be considered. When asked to rate and prioritize various improvements in the community survey (on a scale of one to four, with one being the most needed), respondents prioritized residential streetscape improvements (1.57) over commercial streetscape improvements (1.68), although both activities rated in high need by residents.

### Existing Gateways and Signage

The Township currently uses standard signage to delineate its boundaries, but ineffectively. The Township could benefit from clarifying and establishing a unique identity through entryway treatments. The development of Howland Township’s “Identity” was discussed in length during the Plan update and the images and designs that were developed during this dialogue are included in the strategies section of this chapter and also in the Land Use chapter.

### Wayfinding

There is currently no wayfinding program in place in Howland Township. A comprehensive wayfinding system is proposed in the Recommendations Section in order to improve accessibility for residents, visitors, and workers of Howland Township.

An adequate level of wayfinding is achieved by developing a consistent signage system that points travelers in the direction of their destination. It is important that all these signs look similar as the sign becomes the community “brand”. Over time the visitor and resident will quickly learn what to look for to find the next piece of information. Gateways and other Signage previously discussed are also a form of wayfinding because it indicates an arrival to the destination.



### Strategies and Recommendations

#### **Pursue the Feasibility of Utilizing Roundabouts and Traffic Circles**

Township officials should pursue the feasibility of roundabouts and traffic circles (and traffic calming circles) to address existing and future traffic congestion and air quality issues. Several locations in the Township could be candidates for this type of mechanism. Some notable locations include: East Market Street and SR 46, SR 46 and N. River Road, and N. River Road and North Road. Other locations for smaller traffic circles were identified at several locations throughout the Township. However, such a task will require additional planning and acquisition of additional rights of way and/or property. For a look at the proposed roundabout and traffic circle locations, see Map: Potential Gateways, Roundabouts and Pedestrian/Bike Lanes.

Roundabouts are circular intersections with specific traffic control features such as channelized approaches, appropriate geomantic curvature to slow

speeds (typically less than 30 mph), and yield control of all entering traffic.

Modern roundabouts when properly applied can have significant advantages over traditional signalized intersections. There are some locations in Howland Township where either one or two lane roundabouts could apply after further study. The benefits of roundabouts are:

#### 1. Improved Safety

- Roundabouts are safer for pedestrians by reducing the potential vehicle/pedestrian conflict points
- Roundabouts can offer 30 percent higher capacity than traffic signals
- Right angle crashes become less severe and less frequent
- Left turning crashes do not occur
- Rear-end crashes become less frequent because roundabouts have less queuing
- Accidents that do occur are less severe
- There are no electrical components to malfunction





### 2. Increase Vehicle Capacity

- Left turns are not subordinated to through traffic. Vehicles enter under yield control instead of stop control
- Turn lanes are not needed
- Roundabouts are typically designed for speeds from 20 to 30 mph

### 3. Improved Aesthetics and Environment

- Roundabouts are natural focal points
- Properly installed landscaping is both attractive and functional in it alerts a driver to changes in direction
- Substantial reduction in pollution and fuel use since vehicle do not idle at red lights

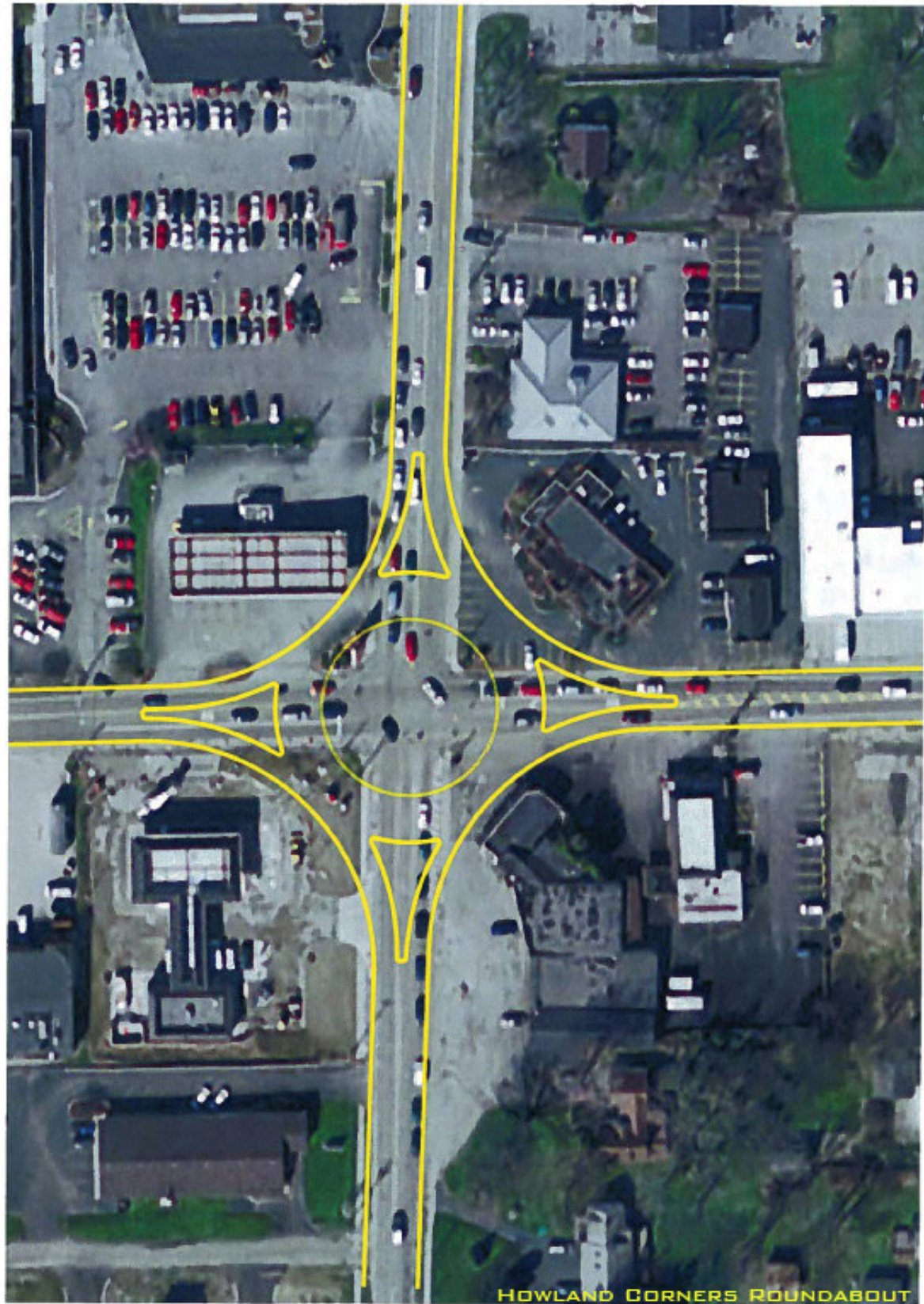
In addition, signalized intersections have their disadvantages:

- Accidents can be severe due to high speeds in intersections
- Signals are mechanical devices that require maintenance, periodically malfunction and do not provide any control during power failures

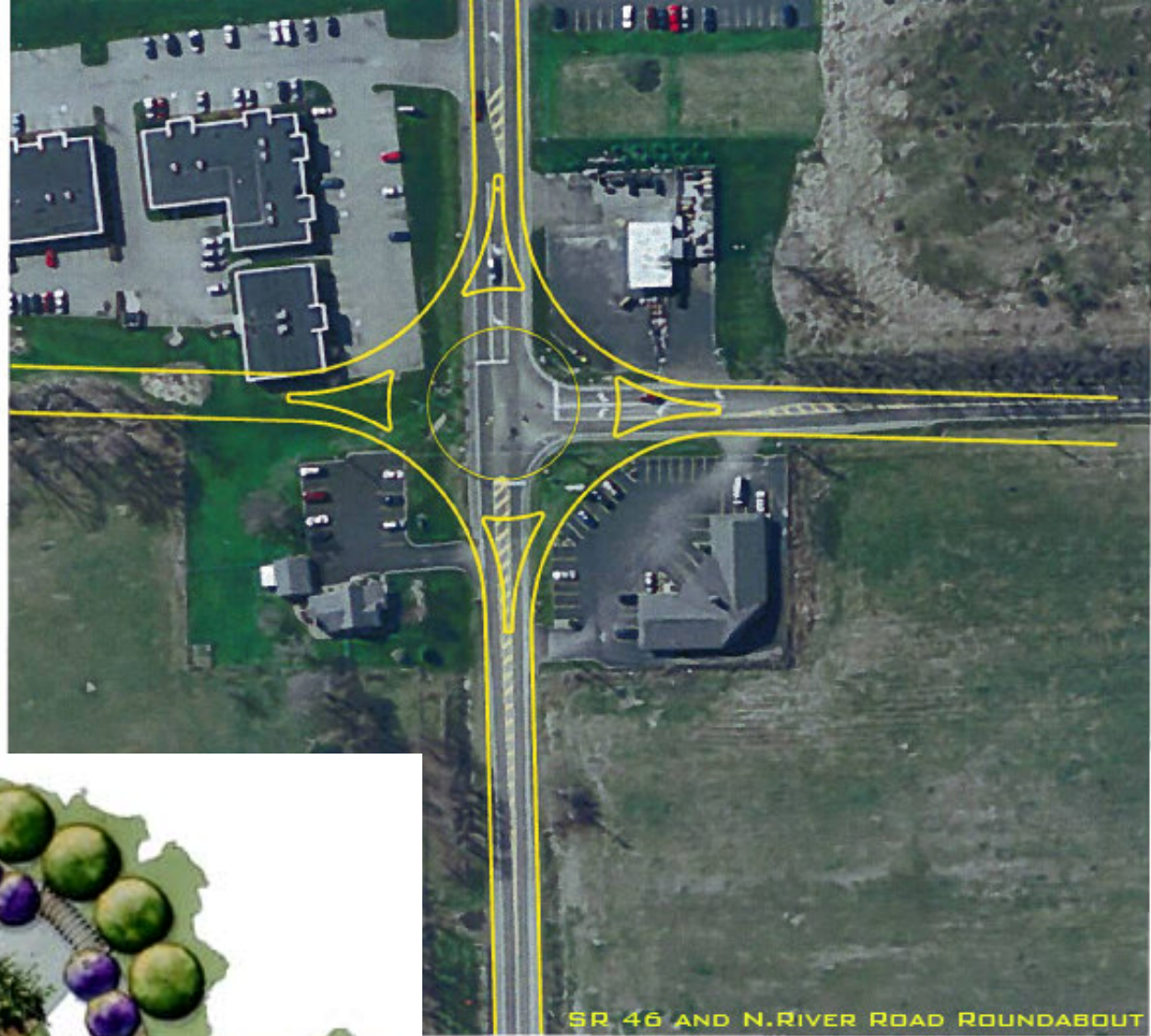
- Permitted left turns and right turns on red introduce additional pedestrian conflicts
- The need to provide a minimum green time to each movement in every cycle may create time intervals in which no vehicles are entering the intersection.
- Left turns require dedicated phases that reduce time from the major movements



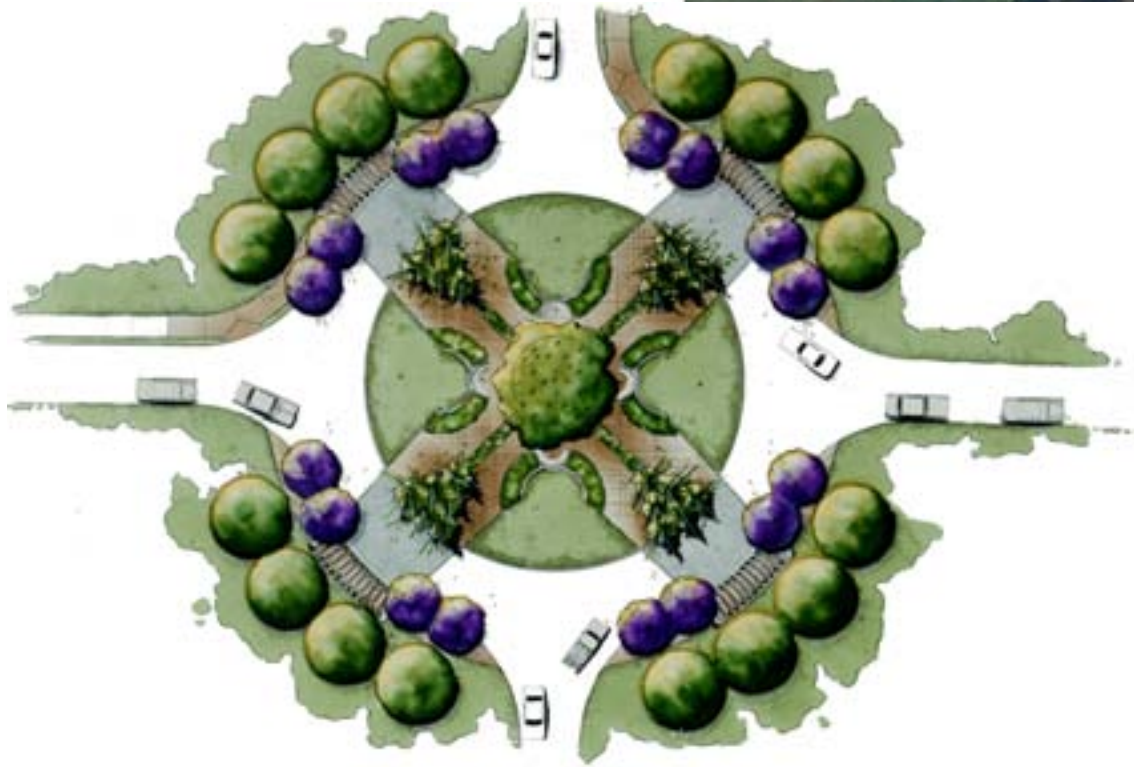




HOWLAND CORNERS ROUNDABOUT



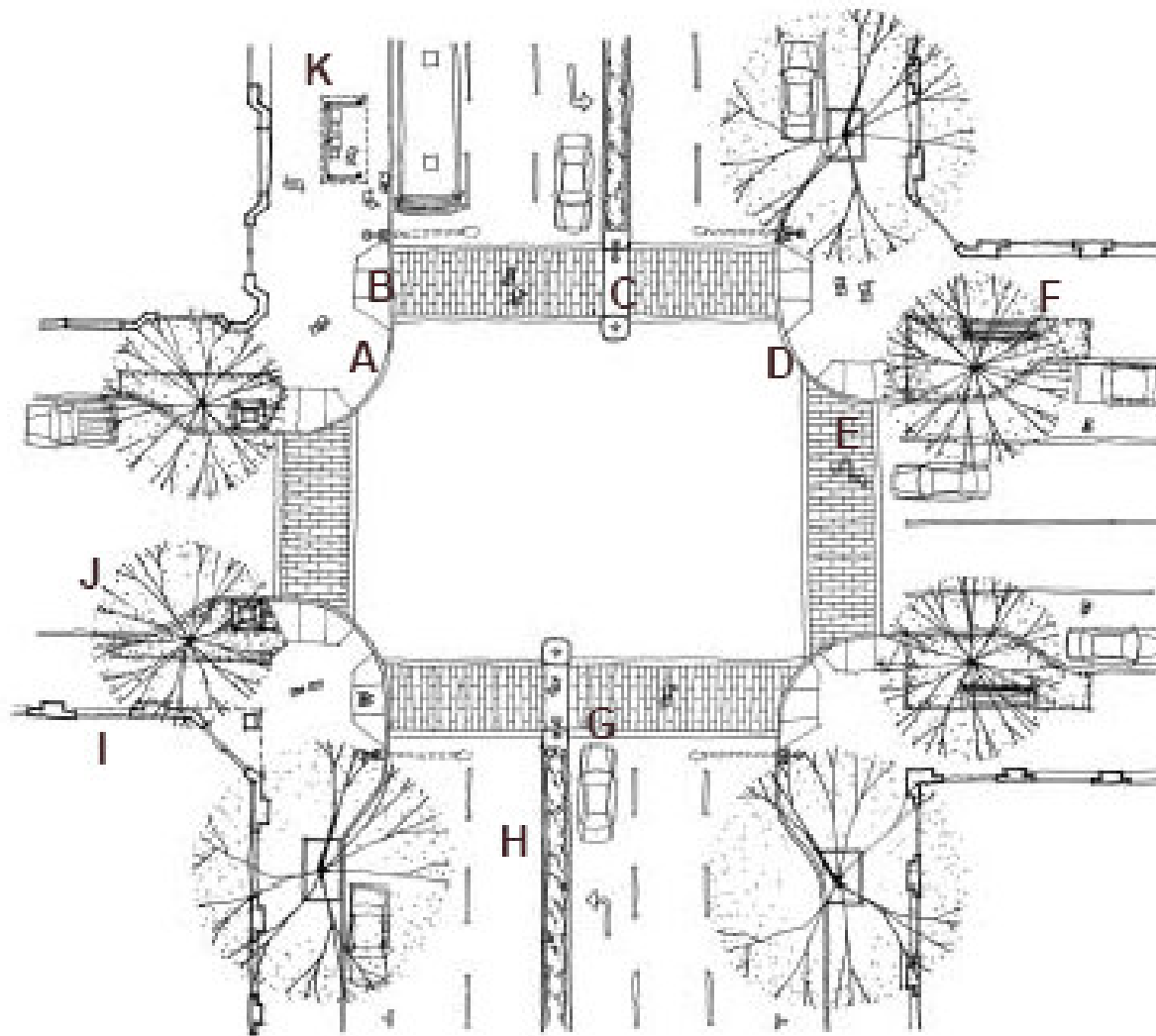
SR 46 AND N. RIVER ROAD ROUNDABOUT





### Improve Pedestrian Connectivity at Key Intersections

Many of the Township's key intersections are not user friendly for pedestrians and often require that people use their vehicles to make short trips that would otherwise be served by walking or bicycle.



Pedestrians should be made as visible as possible since multiple conflict points for vehicles and pedestrians exist at intersections.

- A. Pedestrian bulb-outs
- B. Wheelchair access ramps
- C. Pedestrian refuge islands
- D. Curb radii no greater than 15'
- E. Special paving in crosswalks
- F. Benches and other amenities
- G. Pedestrian-scale lighting
- H. 10'6" travel lanes
- I. Building articulation
- J. Street trees
- K. Accessible transit stops

- Intersections which limit the crossing distance, crossing time, and exposure to traffic tend to be more attractive for pedestrian travel.
- Increased pedestrian activity can equate to increased economic profitability from area businesses.



### Develop Attractive Gateways

Entrances to communities set the initial impression for residents, visitors, and potential investors. Gateways should announce that you have entered Howland Township. The gateways function as signage and as landscape features. They should be lighted, well landscaped and designed so that they present a lasting positive image. The signage used in the gateway should be part of a predetermined family of signage easily recognized by viewers as belonging to Howland Township. Fifteen or more locations have been identified as potential areas for gateways and other signage (See Map: Potential Gateways, Roundabouts, and Bike Lanes).

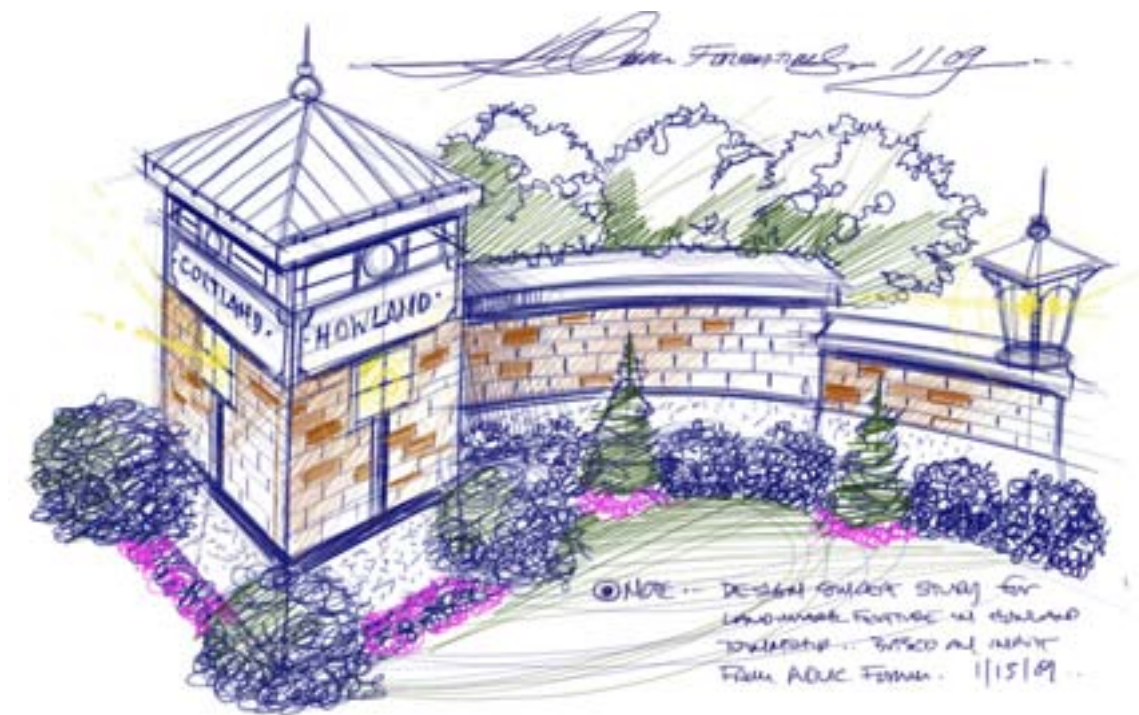
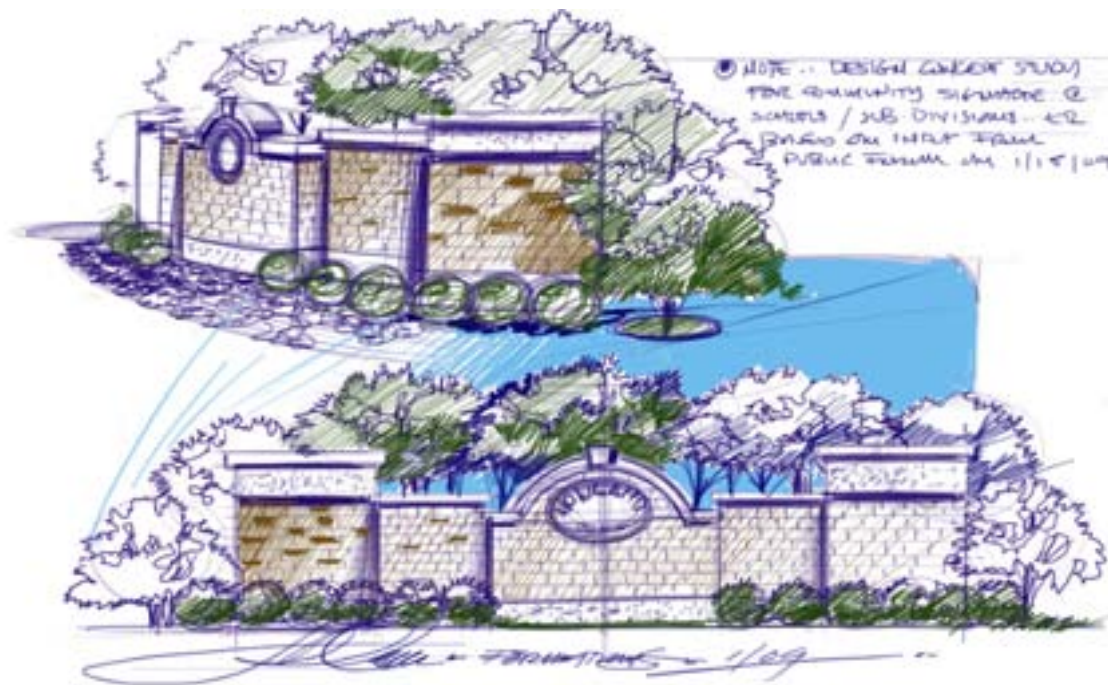


The jurisdictional boundary with the Cities of Warren and Niles can be somewhat confusing to visitors and residents. The location of gateways, or entryway treatments should highlight Howland Township for the greatest number of people with aesthetically appealing signage and plantings.

Gateways into Howland Township can often provide the strongest impression of the Township, as these focal points are a reflection of the collective image of the

community as defined by its residents and businesses. Large broad plantings that sweep around the entryway and open it up visually can create a sense of grandeur that reflects the current and future Howland Township.

To maximize impact and resources, some of these gateways into the Township could be developed through a collective discussion with the City of Warren on East Market Street, Niles Road, North Road, and Elm Road. Opportunities for joint signage with Niles also exists at around the US 422/SR 46 area know as “Drake Corners.”





Gateway development may require coordination with the County Engineer, the Ohio Department of Transportation, or Eastgate COG, especially if funding under the transportation enhancement program is being sought.

To maximize impact, attractive gateways could be constructed at the following areas and intersections:

- SR 46 and SR 82
- SR 46 (Township’s northern boundary) or SR 46 and N. River Road area
- “Ray Corner” or East Market Street and SR 82 area
- SR 46 “Drake Corners” area or SR 46 and “Madden Corners” area
- Elm Road Corridor (South of SR 5)
- Niles Road (northbound from Weatherfield Township)

Secondary “inbound” entryway treatment locations may include:

- Howland Wilson Road and the Township’s northern boundary

- SR 82 and the Township’s boundary
- East Market Street and the Township’s boundary or Henn Hyde Road area
- Stillwagon and Niles Vienna Roads
- Henn Hyde and King Graves Roads
- Elm Road (exiting Warren)
- Niles Road and Orchard Avenue
- North Road and US 422
- “Brown Corners” (N. River and Larchmont)

### Promote Wayfinding and Landmark

A comprehensive wayfinding system is recommended in order to improve accessibility for residents, visitors, and workers of Howland Township.

Achieving an adequate level of wayfinding is achieved by developing a consistent signage system that points travelers in the direction of specific destinations. It is important that all these signs appear similar in design, a kind of “community branding”. Over time the visitor and resident will more

efficiently navigate around the community. Gateway treatments previously discussed are also a form of wayfinding because they announce an arrival to a destination.

### Signage

Public and private signage play a significant role in the image of Howland Township. Informational and directional signage can reflect our community’s heritage and overall image. Signage improvements





along corridors should be part of larger plan for corridor enhancements.

Business signage is an extension of commercial development; they announce the location of a business. Without public guidance, business signs can diminish the overall image of its commercial community. Local ordinances should seek a balance between private and public objectives.

### **Promote Traffic Safety by Access Management**

Access management involves comprehensive controls on the number, spacing and placement of commercial driveways along major arterials. Numerous studies in Ohio and nationally demonstrate how proper access management reduces the potential for crashes and preserves the street’s traffic carrying capacity. Fewer driveways also create more attractive and pedestrian-friendly roadways. Some key elements of access management are:

#### Number of Access Points

The number of driveways allowed along major streets affects traffic flow, ease of driving, and

crash potential. Every effort should be made to limit the number of driveways; and encourage access off side streets, service drives, frontage roads, and shared driveways.

Those developments which generate enough traffic or have sufficient frontage to consider allowing more than one driveway should locate these second access points on a side street or shared driveways with adjacent uses where practical.

#### Driveway Spacing from Intersections

The minimum distance, on the same side of the street, between a driveway and an intersecting street should follow the current ODOT standard. At major intersections where there are long vehicle queues, driveway spacing should be 200 feet. Where driveways are located closer to intersections, they should be restricted to right turn only.

#### Driveway Spacing from Other Driveways

Minimum and desirable driveway spacing requirements should be determined based on posted speed limits along the parcel frontage, traffic conditions, sight distance and in consideration of the amount of traffic a particular use is expected to generate. Minimum spacing between two commercial driveways should be 200 feet.

Where it can be demonstrated in redevelopment projects that pre-existing conditions prohibit adherence to the minimum driveway spacing standards, the driveway spacing requirements could be modified, but the driveway spacing should not be less than 60 feet.

#### Alternative Access

Frontage drives, rear service drives, shared driveways, and connected parking lots should be used to minimize the number of driveways, while preserving the property owner's right to reasonable access. Along commercial corridors, rear yard parking lots should be



shared and alleys or rear service drives used to connect adjacent commercial sites.

### Traffic Studies

A well prepared traffic impact study will also address site access issues, such as the potential to share access or use service drives. The study should analyze options to mitigate traffic impacts, such as changes to access, improvements to the roadway, or changes to the development. In some cases, the developer can assist in funding improvements to help offset the impacts of the project.



### **Promote Traffic Calming**

Certain areas in Howland Township contain neighborhoods with long straight roads. Many of these streets are without sidewalks. Residents expect low volumes of traffic and low speeds within neighborhoods.

Because of the orientation and significant lengths of many residential streets in Howland Township, this may be especially challenging. For example, residents are using the parallel residential streets to avoid SR46 and East Market Street (e.g., Brewster and Willow Drives to South and/or Kettering Streets to SR 46) and this may be increasing traffic volumes and speeds in certain neighborhoods, especially those around the High School. “Retrofitting” traffic calming measures may be appropriate for existing situations in some neighborhoods.

Some of the common traffic calming measures described below may be appropriate in certain situations in the Township after considering a number of factors such as crash statistics, traffic volumes, cost, maintenance, and impact on emergency access.

### Speed Humps

Vertical constraints on vehicular speed and are designed according to a safe vehicle speed (15 to 20 mph). They are raised areas that extend across the width of the pavement and may range between 2-4 inches in height and 14-22 ft in length. Speed hump designs are site specific and dimensions are unique to each location.

### Speed Tables

Vertical constraints, similar to speed humps, constructed with a table or flat portion in the center. They can create a pedestrian friendly street environment with a secondary use as a raised crosswalk. They provide visual enhancement, reduce vehicle speed and enhance the use of non-motorized transportation.

### Street Narrowing, Slow Points, or Chokers

Curb modifications, channelization, and sometimes landscaping features that narrow the street to a minimum safe width. They are often installed at intersections to reduce speed and/or



redirect traffic. They provide larger areas for landscaping, enhance the neighborhood, facilitate loading and unloading and optimize the pedestrian crossing locations.

### Angle Points or Chicanes

Curbed horizontal deflections in the path of vehicle travel. They are built along the edge of travel-way similar to street narrowing treatments. They use physical obstacles and parking bays, and are staggered so drivers must slow down in order to maneuver through the street. Trees are often used at the slow point to restrict driver vision and create a feeling of a “closed” street.

### Boulevard Slow Points or Channelization

Center located islands that divide the opposing travel lanes at intersections or at mid-blocks, pedestrian refuge treatments and the other standard forms of intersection traffic control islands. These are aimed at reducing speeds while enhancing the pedestrian crossing points and safety.

### Intersection Diverters

Features that partially close an intersection to limit the allowable turning movements and divert traffic. They are used to convert an intersection into two unconnected streets, each making a sharp turn. This alters traffic flow patterns and limits the ability of vehicles to cut-through residential neighborhoods.

### Street Closures

Street closures may be an option, but are highly constrictive and affect the network traffic flow by eliminating neighborhood traffic from cutting through. Developing a Thoroughfare Plan would better help address these issues.

### Perimeter Treatments

Visual and physical treatments should used to communicate a message to drivers entering a residential neighborhood. Traffic signs, intersection narrowing, boulevards, textured pavement surfaces such as brick and landscaping features are often used to create this effect. Entry treatments can and are

recommended to increase driver awareness to changes in roadway environment.

### Other Traffic Calming Elements

Implementation of a traffic calming program should involve the following:

1. Traffic calming measures should be examined from an area-wide traffic perspective.
2. Traffic calming measures should be used as speed controls rather than volume controls to prevent the diversion of through-traffic to parallel residential streets.
3. It is important to highlight the presence of traffic calming measures by landscaping and treating the street edges. These measures complement the engineering design by softening the appearance of speed humps and enhancing the appearance of more aesthetic measures such as chicanes and traffic circles. Also, landscaping measures can enhance



engineering measures and make them more effective and safer by highlighting their presence.

4. Traffic calming devices should be designed in coordination with emergency services to ensure that safe emergency vehicle access is maintained to all areas. Details such as mountable curbs and gutters can often help resolve access problems.
5. A risk management program should be implemented to minimize liability issues through proper location, design, signage, marking and lighting of traffic calming devices.

### Encourage Pedestrian Connectivity and Other Modes of Transportation

Opportunities that link Howland Township should be pursued when and where the resources provide for doing so. There are currently limited opportunities for non-vehicular movement within the Township.



Pathways and sidewalks provide an additional mode of transportation for residents on short trips. They provide recreation opportunities, improve connections throughout the Township, help reduce a sense of isolation for many, and can even help reduce traffic volumes to some degree when connections are short and attractive.

The Township may consider formally designating pedestrian and bike lanes along key routes when and where feasible. Each type of pathway is briefly described below:

### Sidewalks

Sidewalks are usually a 5-foot wide concrete surface along one or both sides of a public street for the purpose of providing for pedestrian circulation. Walkways are normally separated from the street by a distance of 10 feet or more. This option may be limited because it would require retrofitting existing neighborhoods, an agreeable public and the possible acquisition of rights of way.

These options should be pursued for all new developments and redevelopment areas. Other areas that should be pursued for sidewalks







would be areas of the Township that connect the most people to the greatest number of amenities for the least amount of capital. One such example is using Howland Wilson Road from Carriage Hill to link the Township's northeastern neighborhoods to East Market Street and therefore to the Howland Corners and destinations located in the southern half of the community.

A broader attempt to promote pedestrian connectivity throughout the eastern portion of the Township, in the near future, could come from incorporating bike lanes on certain Township roads, as discussed in the Bike Lane section below and on Maps: Functional Classification System and Potential Gateways, Roundabouts, and Bike Lanes.

### Multi-Modal Paths

These pathways can accommodate higher volumes of pedestrians than sidewalks and are more appropriate for other types of travel such as joggers and bicyclists. The federal standard

for all new pathways is ten foot in width. These options should be pursued for all new developments and redevelopment areas.

The Trumbull County Metroparks has plans for a regional network of pathways to link their facilities together. The County has developed design standards for these facilities so consistency with the Township's design standards should be examined.

### Bike Lanes

A bike lane is usually a 4 to 8 foot wide portion of a street designated for exclusive use by bicyclists. The lane is distinguished from the automobile travel lanes by paint stripes, signs or other similar devices.

A bicycle travel inventory report, based on data collected by Eastgate Regional Council of Governments during the development of Eastgate's Regional Bicycle Network Map, has been completed and highlights various routes in Howland Township that could serve in the network and link Howland

Township to the rest of the County and beyond. These "priority" routes are identified on the map contained within this Plan.

Eastgate, with local community feedback, identified and prioritized conditions along roadways throughout Howland Township and the region and documented their potential for selective use as bicycle routes. These routes were also selected in cooperation with area bicyclists who proposed and recommended that specific routes be available to provide service between local residential neighborhoods and public or commercial attractions.

Variables like traffic volumes, posted speeds, width of outside lanes and the presence or absence of connectivity at activity centers were also considered. Based upon these criteria, several road segments in Howland Township were selected and prioritized as suitable bike routes. See Map: Potential Gateways, Roundabouts, and Bike Lanes.

Priority One: Route segments that will require major rehabilitation to be conducive to bicycle travel. These



route segments in or adjacent to Howland Township are:

- State Route 5 from Howland Township’s northern boundary to Cortland
- SR 46 from US 422 to East Market Street
- US 422
- Niles Road
- East Market Street (at Howland Corners) west to North Road in Warren

Priority Two: Route segments that are somewhat conducive to bicycle travel, but are in need of minor rehabilitation. No segments of this class exist in Howland Township.

Priority Three: These route segments have been judged to be relatively better for bicycle travel in the Township but further analysis by Township Officials and Eastgate to include these routes in the network may be warranted.

Priority Three routes in the Township are:

- King Graves Road west to Howland Wilson Road

- Henn Hyde Road (from the Township’s northern boundary) south to East Market Street
- East Market Street west to Howland Christian School and eastward to the County boundary
- Howland Wilson Road, from East Market Street south to Howland Springs Road
- Howland Springs Road, east to Stillwagon Road
- Stillwagon Road, south to the Township’s southernmost boundary with Weathersfield Township

Several other roads have been identified for potential bike lanes. Please See Map: Potential Gateways, Roundabouts, and Pedestrian/Bike Lanes, for more information.



According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), neighborhoods with 1500 average daily trips (ADT) or less are suitable to provide for safe biking. Anything above 1500 ADT should require a separate bike lane. In addition to ensuring a comprehensive system of sidewalks, pathways, and bike lanes, the Township can accommodate non-motorized transportation by:

- Improving signalization specifically for pedestrian crossings
- Ensuring curb ramps at all corners.
- Installation/improvement of crosswalks at intersections and mid-block
- Consistent maintenance of facilities to fix cracks, holes and other issues
- Requiring site plans be designed to ensure the pedestrian will feel comfortable walking within a site or to neighboring properties
- Reducing vehicle speeds to create a more walkable and pedestrian friendly environment in appropriate locations

In some cases, the Township will need to work with the Trumbull County Engineer, the Ohio Department



of Development, Eastgate, and residents and businesses to achieve these changes.

### Promote Public Transit Opportunities

It is important to consider transit as a valuable asset to the transportation system because it not only offers an alternative to the automobile, it will help provide the Township in becoming “elder-friendly,” reduce traffic congestion, promote safety, reduce emissions, and promote the “Complete Streets” concept.

If the Township’s population continues to age as the trends indicate (see Population and Housing Chapter), having a transit system and improved connectivity will grow increasingly important to assure the mobility of the senior population. Transit routes should continue to coincide with existing and planned key destination points in the Township including shopping nodes and community facilities. Transit-oriented design, which is an approach that assures pedestrian-friendly and bus-friendly locations and maneuverability, should be encouraged.

### Encourage Transit and Pedestrian-Oriented Design (TPOD) Standards

Future land use and zoning decisions should consider enhancing the transit-friendly environment through promoting Transit and Pedestrian-Oriented Development (TPOD) standards, especially within and near core areas like Howland Corners, and at other commercial corridors like the Elm Road Corridor and the Eastwood Mall Area, preferably on SR 46, south of SR 82 to US 422. These standards could also be applied at the other notable “corners” in the Township when and if resources are available or redevelopment at these corners makes it possible.

Some of these design elements are already included in the corridor review districts that Township currently utilizes. It is important the pedestrian connectivity is upheld as a requirement for all future developments in these districts as well as in other planned developments.

Elements of TPOD include:

1. Perpetuation of a community desired look and theme, cultural amenities, easy walking distance

to goods and services, access to regional and local trail systems, and the opportunity to live and work in the same area

2. Heightened sense of community through increased pedestrian activity and development at a more human scale
3. Clustered development with pedestrian and transit access offering better access to goods and services
4. Enhanced marketability of new development and enhanced property values
5. Encouraging the sharing of parking
6. Decreasing the parking space requirements and enhancing landscaping requirements (for example, one 2.5 inch caliper tree for every 10 parking spaces)
7. Stronger intermodal connections, providing additional mobility opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists
8. Increased economic development opportunities in attractive commercial and employment locations



Future building design along main thoroughfare routes should support pedestrian connectivity and future transit services by increased intensity of development, improved pedestrian connections and appropriate locations of buildings, and flexible parking standards.

Sites should be designed so that multiple buildings are oriented to each other and focus towards pedestrian connections. Surface parking should be located to the sides and back of buildings in a manner that still offers convenient vehicle parking without becoming the dominant feature of the site.

### **Continue to Pursue Funding Opportunities to Upgrade Transportation Infrastructure**

Township officials consistently pursue transportation funding to revitalize their transportation infrastructure. Most of this funding is either derived from federal or state programs or allocated from the Township budget (for projects the Township does without outside assistance like street resurfacing, etc.).

Transportation funding opportunities vary depending on the functional classification of the targeted roadway and project type. Federal programs like the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program, a funding mechanism that would likely fund a roundabout for example, could be used but the Township would be required to partner with an eligible entity like the Trumbull County Engineer or ODOT. Likewise, the Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) can be tapped but only by eligible entities and for roadways that meet designated functional classifications. However, the Township can apply directly to Eastgate for funding under Transportation Enhancement Program, the State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP), and the Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP).

It is recommended that Township officials continue to be proactively engaged in transportation planning discussions at the county level and regionally as the availability of funding opportunities vary depending on the functional classification of the targeted roadway and project type.

As the clearinghouse for transportation-related funding programs, Eastgate holds regular project review meetings with representatives from ODOT, local transit operators, officials from the local communities to review and discuss the status of individual highway and transit projects. It is important that Township Officials and key Township Staff such as Planning, Public Works, and Safety Services staff are included in these discussions to ensure that local priorities are considered in projects located within the Township but not sponsored by the Township.

It is recommended that the Township look to the Transportation Enhancement program to help implement their transportation goals targeting scenic enhancement of corridors and multi-modal upgrades. Enhancement projects can be either supplemental to a planned roadway project, or a stand alone project.

The Transportation Enhancement program will provide up to 80% of the total construction cost for the project, including Construction Engineering, Inspection and Testing.



Funding for transportation enhancement projects is available for the following activities:

### Historic and Archaeological Transportation Enhancements

- Acquisition of historic sites
- Historic highway programs
- Historic preservation
- Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structure, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and research)
- Archaeological planning and research
- Establishment of transportation museums

### Scenic and Environmental Transportation Enhancements

- Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic sites
- Scenic highways programs including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities
- Landscaping and other scenic beautification

- Anti-litter Education
- Control and removal of outdoor advertisement Mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff or reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity

### Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

- Pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- Safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicycles
- Preservation of abandoned railway corridors for pedestrian and bicycle trails

### **Pursue the Creation of a Thoroughfare Plan**

Township officials should pursue the development of a Thoroughfare Plan to address the many transportation issues currently in play and highlighted in this Chapter. Thoroughfare planning is a process used by public officials that identifies roadway facility needs based on projected long-term growth within the area.

When developing the Thoroughfare Plan the following topics should also be addressed:

### Long-term Needs of Howland Township

Identify the major facilities, future land uses, economic development centers, and rights-of-way needed to meet the long-term needs of the Township.

### Functional Classification Hierarchy

All existing and future streets should be based upon a functional hierarchy of residential and collector streets, minor and major arterials, freeways and expressways. Decisions concerning speed, delay, and access control should be consistent with this hierarchy. Developing a Thoroughfare Plan could also examine whether or not new roads in Howland Township need to be added or existing roads reclassified in the functional classification system so that they can qualify for federal and state funding (Henn Hyde and Howland Wilson Roads). See Map: Functional Classification System.



### Travel Forecasts

Use travel forecasts in determining facility and system needs. Coordinate data on a regional basis.

### Level of Service Standards (LOS)

Develop level of service standards for pedestrians, bicycles, high occupancy vehicles, transit and freight, and include them in system planning, infrastructure planning, land use decisions and the development review process.

### Transportation System Needs

Identify and plan for infrastructure needs, including required facilities, location of appropriate transportation corridors and transfer points, and additional right-of-ways in order to develop a multi-modal transportation system.

### Infrastructure and Service Provision

Encourage all transportation facilities and services are provided within a reasonable time frame of development.

### Right-of-way Reservation and Dedication

Planning for right-of-way reservation and dedication for transportation and utility facilities should be made through the land development process and planned for accordingly.

### Street Design Criteria

Street design criteria should be developed to support multi-modal uses, with design elements reflecting the nature and scale of the adjacent land uses. These design criteria should be supported in the zoning resolution and subdivision regulations.

### Public Participation

Encourage, promote and facilitate proactive citizen participation to help identify long-term mobility and transit needs at the neighborhood, township, and regional levels.

### Regional and Local Transportation Systems

Plan, design and implement a transportation system, including services and facilities that support the integration of the regional and local

transportation networks. Facilitate access to the system for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, mass transit services, and persons with disabilities. Incorporate the transportation needs of public and private schools in system planning. Coordinate planning and implementation with federal highway, railroad and air transport authorities.

Other transportation system improvements the Thoroughfare Plan could discuss in detail could be:

- Traffic demand by mode
- System mobility
- Vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle safety
- Preservation of neighborhood character
- Ease of traffic operations and traffic circulation patterns including efficient signalization, parking, and access management
- Protection of natural and historic resources
- Utility, stormwater, and other facility needs
- Maintenance costs



### Continue to Prioritize Transportation Improvements

In order to maintain and improve the level of service of the transportation system, long-range planning will become increasingly important and new types of stable revenue sources will have to be identified.

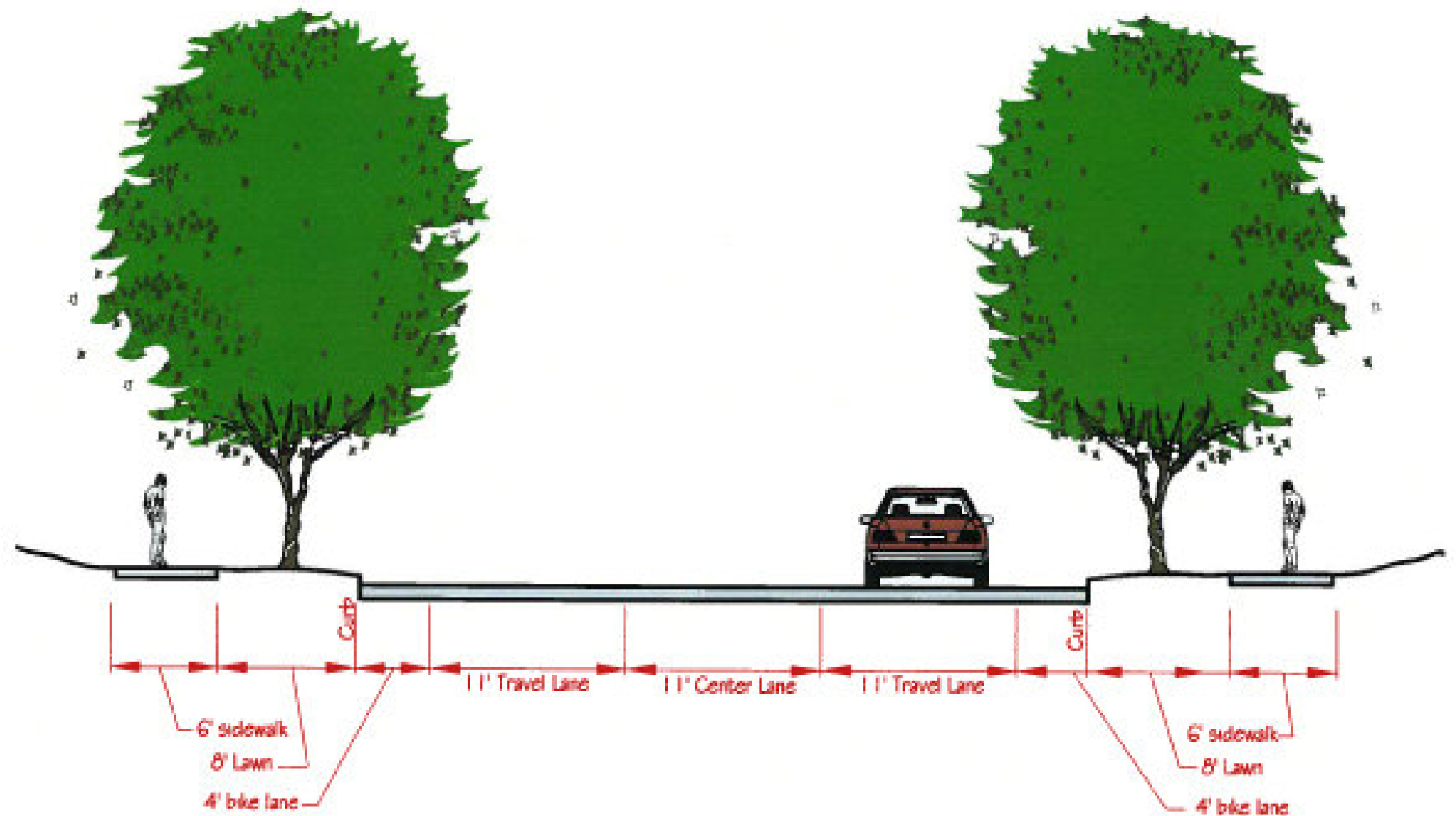
Over 160 linear miles of roadways exist within the Township's limits. The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) should be used to identify, prioritize, and evaluate capital needs and financing options to ensure transportation improvements are balanced with long-term mobility needs and the fiscal capacity of the Township.

While priorities can change depending upon unique circumstances, usual priority should be given to operational maintenance, handicap accessibility (ADA compliance), safety improvements, and capacity improvements that are cost-effective projects (such as signalization and light sequencing upgrades, turn lanes, and signage) and increase level of service.

### Utilize the "Complete Streets" Concept

Many of the roads were designed to a standard relevant to the time they were constructed. However, with the increased flow of traffic and development, a significant number of roadways throughout Howland

Township are unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists including children, seniors, and the disabled. Several roadways in Howland Township that could benefit well from the Complete Streets variables would be SR 46 and all of the roadways highlighted as potential bike





lanes on the Map: Potential Gateways, Roundabouts, and Bike Lanes.

The “Complete Streets” concept is based upon one major premise: Streets should function effectively for all users, just not for motorists, but pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and the disabled.

A community with a complete streets policy considers the needs of older residents every time a transportation investment decision is made. Proven methods to create Complete Streets for pedestrians include: retiming signals to account for slower walking speed, constructing median refuges or sidewalk bulb-outs to shorten crossing distances, and installing curb ramps, and sidewalk seating. Improved lighting, signage and pavement markings are among the measures that can benefit drivers of any age, but particularly older drivers.

Providing residents with mass transit options is also another variable of complete streets. Some facts supporting the use of Complete Streets include:

1. Twenty-five percent of all car trips are less than one mile, and this is especially true in Howland Township. Streets that are safe and accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users will enable many to walk and bike for short trips. This will have an added benefit of less overall traffic and enhanced opportunities for physical activity.
2. Retail and commercial development is often accessible only by automobile along roads that have become jammed even on weekends. Potential shoppers are left with no choice but to fill up the tank and drive. For many, that can mean staying home. According to the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership, this is particularly true for seniors; research shows that “half of all non-drivers age 65 and over – 3.6 million Americans – stay home on a given day because they lack transportation”.
3. Streets designed to move traffic more efficiently but slower are safer for everyone. If we slow

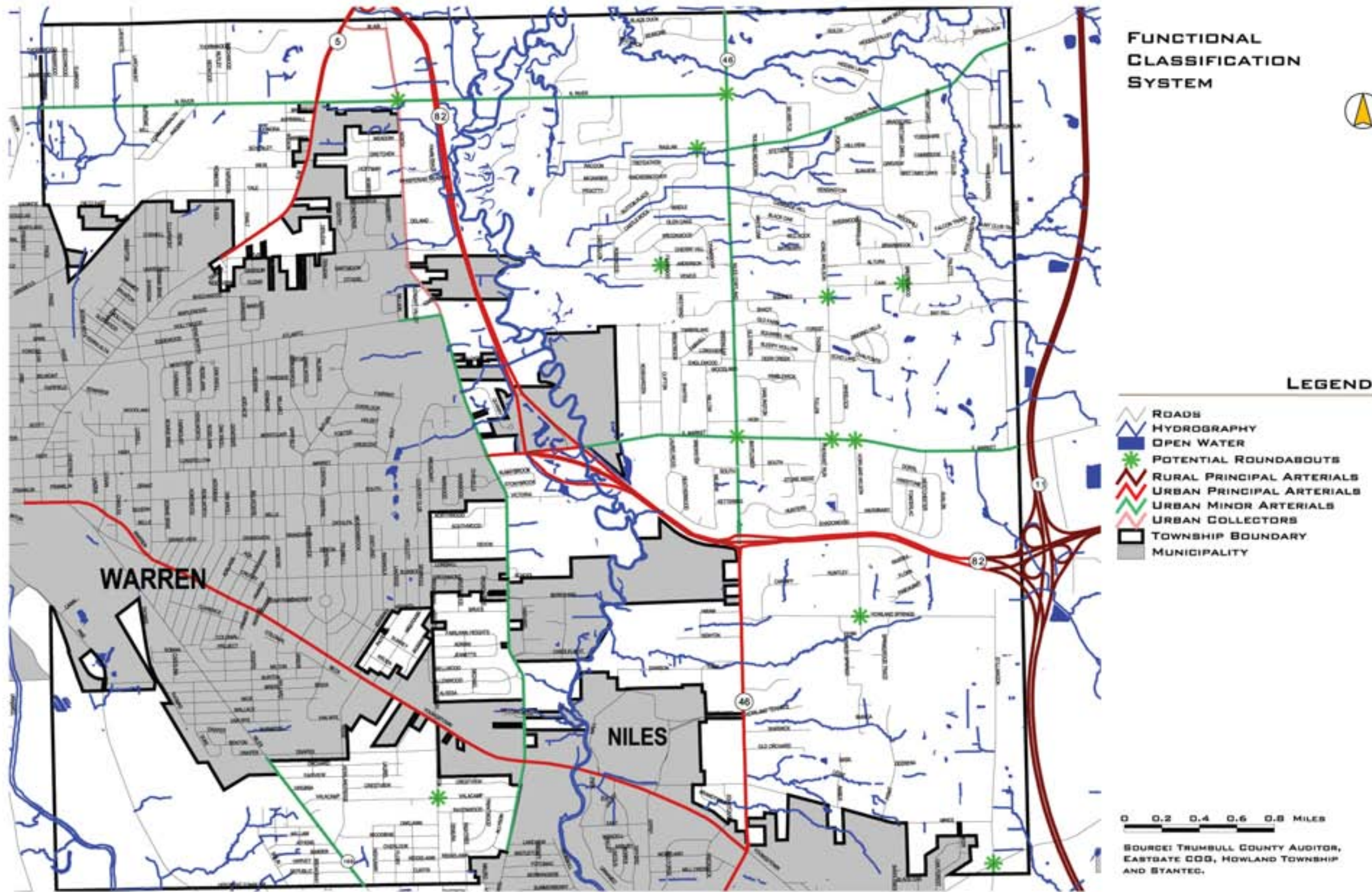
the streets, we can move more traffic and the street environment will be safer for all users.

4. With safer “complete” streets, many people will be able to leave their cars at home and walk and bicycle for short trips. This puts more “eyes on the street,” which will also enhance the safety of the street.

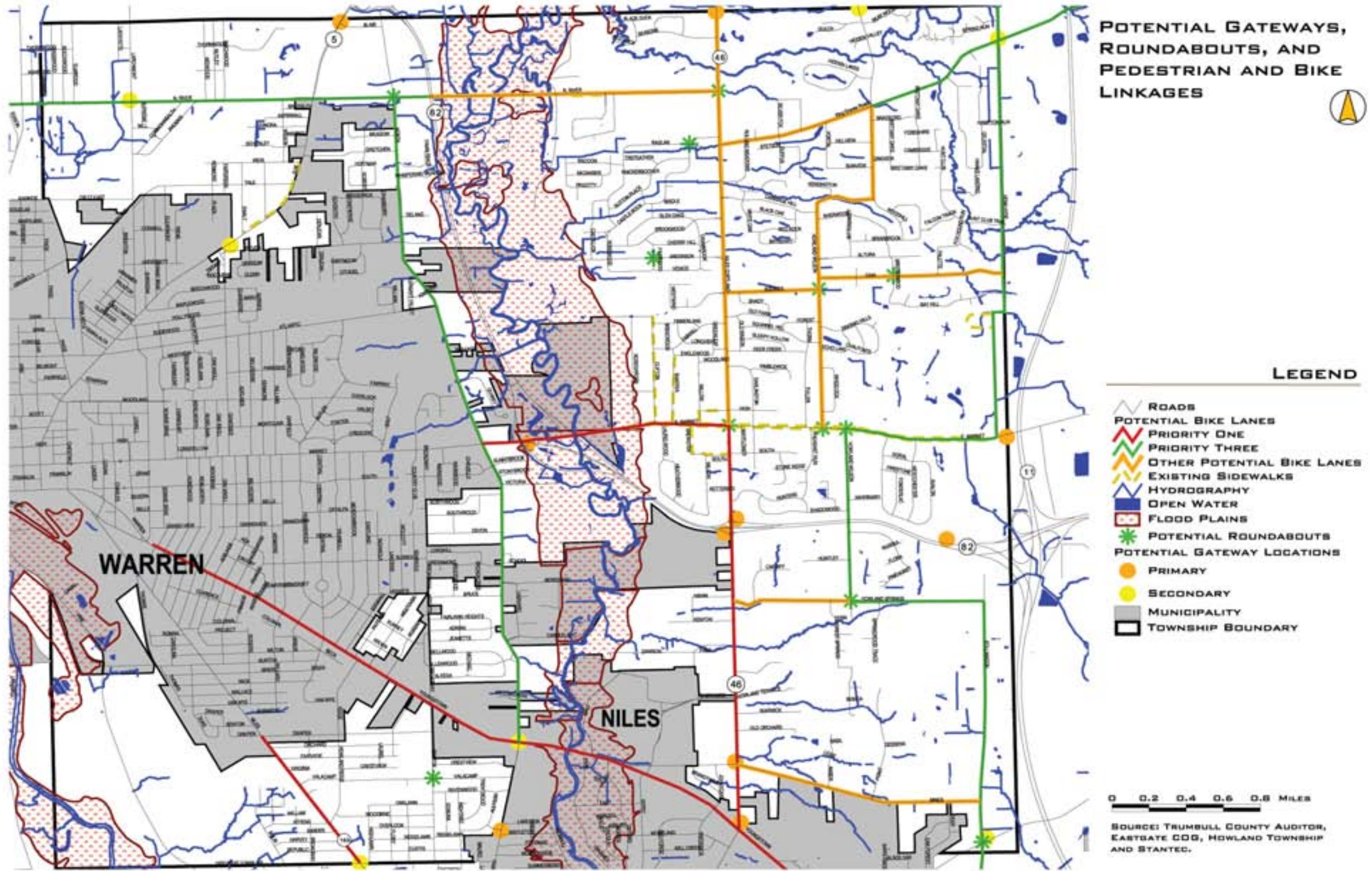
Township Officials should develop clear design and implementation procedures to assure that all roadway projects provide accessibility for all users, and work in conjunction with local and state officials to adhere to them where and where financially feasible.







HOWLAND TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN



HOWLAND TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN



# IMPLEMENTATION



### IMPLEMENTATION

#### Introduction

The Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan represents the culmination of over 18 months of dialogue during which a genuine conversation occurred as to how the community should continue to grow, revitalize and prosper.

The greatest challenge to any plan is to sustain the energy to implement it. Because it is a byproduct of human engineering, it is also easily affected by human error, poor decision making or ineffective leadership. A plan cannot implement itself.



Another challenge to implementing a plan can occur when conditions change that existed when the plan was prepared. One of the few certainties when using this Plan is that new situations will arise that were not anticipated when this Plan was developed and adopted. These may be due to shifts in economic markets, changes in desired community services, or new opportunities that arise. Whatever the reason, this Plan must remain a useful tool in helping Howland Township, its residents, and business community work toward the Plan’s goals and objectives.

One of the most important considerations that the reader, user, proponent, or opponent of this unique planning document should understand is that any plan is only as effective as the level of communication that exists between local government officials and the community. For this reason, interaction and communication between Howland Township officials and their constituency must remain high.

#### Strategies and Recommendations

Planning succeeds when several strategies work in unison. Successful implementation will require a dedication in working toward each planning area’s goals and objectives, not necessarily its strategies. Therefore, if success can be attained using other strategies, then it should be encouraged in an effort to achieve the over-arching goals.

This Plan provides public and private officials with a blueprint to encourage and manage sustainable growth. The Plan’s strategies are by no means completely exhaustive: They were developed in conjunction with public input, and take into account past, current and projected problems. Over time, each strategy may need to be revised or amended to reflect the current environment. (see Table: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Organization or Entity).

To ensure a type and level of growth consistent with the public’s preferences, it is encouraged for the Plan to be used in the following situations:



### Planning and Zoning Affairs

Land Use and Housing goals and objectives will be affairs primarily delegated to the Planning and Zoning Department, the Zoning Commission, and ultimately, the Township Trustees.

After public approval and adoption, all planning and zoning decisions should be made in accordance with this Plan (as well as in accordance with other adopted regulations and resolutions).

Rezoning, Zoning Resolution updates or modifications, the approval of zoning variances and conditional uses, etc., should be reviewed and modified based upon their conformity with this Plan and on their specific impact upon the public, the business community, and the Plan's goals and objectives.

### Economic Development

Expanding economic development opportunities in accordance with the public's desires will

require the assistance of a variety of public and private organizations. These organizations should be knowledgeable of the Plan and its preferred outcomes.

Areas deemed most suitable for development- as well as the type of growth affiliated with these selected areas- should be clearly defined so that these organizations may help facilitate this growth.

Once the above conditions are established, smooth and efficient zoning and permit procedures- as well as correlating incentives (if and where applicable)- should be implemented to help the development community facilitate this growth.

### Capital Improvement Projects

This Plan assists in highlighting areas that were identified throughout the planning process as those most preferred or suitable for future development. Whether it is the extension of water or sewer facilities, the resurfacing of

roads, the restructuring of bridges, or any other improvement, it should be done in accordance with the Plan's goals and objectives.

### Intergovernmental Relations

The continued amiable relationship between Howland Township, Trumbull County and its contiguous neighbors must occur for this Plan to be properly implemented and for balanced growth to occur in a manner that makes the most appropriate use of resources.

It is recommended that the Plan be used to develop a stance on joint issues and programs, and also be utilized to move forward on programs and initiatives in which Howland





Township, the cities of Warren and Niles, Trumbull County, and the surrounding townships could mutually benefit from.

### **Updating the Comprehensive Community Plan**

Because of the ongoing nature of community and economic development, this Plan is not a static document, but one that will evolve over time. It is recommended that the Plan, and sections therein, be updated or reviewed in the following manner:

#### Annual Review

It is recommended that this Plan be reviewed annually by the Township Administration and Zoning Commission to ensure that the Plan's goals and objectives are being achieved. This discussion should identify the Plan's beneficial impacts to the Township, and recognize areas where the Plan may not have assisted in facilitating the Plan's goals and objectives, or attaining the best use of fiscal or human resources. Revisions based upon these discussions should occur as needed.

#### Critical Review

Because many conditions that affect Howland Township's growth and revitalization- and ultimately the Plan itself- may change every three to five years, it is recommended above all else that the Township Trustees and Zoning Commission take the necessary steps to review the Plan over time.

Conditions that could have major effects on this Plan could be: national or regional economic expansions or recessions, natural disasters, new or revitalized housing development, new or revitalized industrial growth, the extension or increased capacity of water and sewer services, regional stormwater mitigation, rezonings, new state legislation affecting planning and zoning authority, and transportation-related projects to name a few.

#### New Data Development

This Plan should be amended or updated if and when new data, such as demographic, GIS, population, and economic data, brings about a

change in policy. Existing land use maps should be developed using the Planning and Zoning office's new GIS capabilities and software every six months to ensure zoning and land use policy decisions reflect the current landscape.



One major new source of information will be the 2010 Census, with questionnaires being

mailed to every household by March 2010. By 2011, information released from this Census will be ready for review and should be incorporated into this Plan. This data will play a vital role in the continued relevance of some of this Plan's goals and objectives, as well as the strategies developed to promulgate them.

For public and private officials to make rational and informed decisions, it is necessary that they utilize current information when making these decisions. It is important that the new information released by the 2010 Census be



utilized in the Plan or in conjunction with the Plan when making decisions.

### **Policy and Project Implementation**

The recommendations in the Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan include detailed and specific strategies, directives that need additional consideration and research, and adjustments to the existing activities. This means that some recommendations can be implemented immediately, while others need to be subjected to further scrutiny by public officials and residents.

Some recommendations are focused around a one-time action, while others represent ongoing efforts. All Plan objectives are assigned to a public or private body for further consideration and possible implementation. Please see Table: Plan Implementation.



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Demographics	<b>Goal #1: Provide basis for public policies through up-to-date population, demographic and socio-economic data.</b>								
Demographics	Acquire federal, state, regional, and local source data for use in the development of public policies, particularly U.S. Census data		X						X
Demographics	Regularly update the Comprehensive Community Plan data		X						
Demographics	Make population, demographic, and socio-economic information available to the general public		X						X
Housing	<b>Goal #1: Preserve and enhance the quality of life in existing neighborhoods.</b>								
Housing	Strengthen and promote neighborhood stability	X	X	X	X	X		2,3,6,8,9,10,15	X
Housing	Create neighborhood empowerment and engagement programs	X	X		X			15	X
Housing	Evaluate the type and number of residential zoning classifications and "right-size" certain districts		X	X					
Housing	Reduce the incidence of property maintenance and nuisance regulations	X	X		X			3,9,15	





### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Housing	<b>Goal #2: Provide adequate, high quality and diverse housing and living opportunities within Howland Township.</b>								
Housing	Provide a range of housing options to serve the long-term needs of the Township	X	X	X				4	
Housing	Encourage the provision of additional public and private amenities, the preservation of open space and environmentally responsible development practices	X	X	X	X	X	X	4,7,11	X
Housing	Evaluate the need for, and proper location of, senior housing	X	X	X				16, Senior Center	X
Housing	Encourage mixed-use residential		X	X				4	X
Housing	Develop neighborhood overlays to define and delineate locally significant districts	X	X	X				13,14,15	
Housing	Promote the re-development of older residential areas	X	X	X		X	X	1,2,4,6,15	X
Housing	Evaluate potential markets for residential growth		X	X				4,15	



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Land Use	<b>Goal #1: Preserve and enhance the character and quality of life in residential areas.</b>								
Land Use	Promote residential development that protects existing, low-density neighborhoods while allowing greater flexibility at the periphery and core of the Township	X	X	X				1,2,4,6,7 11,12,13, 14,15	X
Land Use	Protect and enhance the quality of life in existing residential neighborhoods	X	X	X	X	X	X	11,15	
Land Use	Develop incentives to encourage the provision of additional public amenities	X	X	X		X	X	4,11,12, 13,14,15	X
Land Use	Ensure that all development is compatible with the surrounding use, scale, and character		X	X					X
Land Use	Encourage preservation of open space and environmentally responsible development	X	X	X			X	7,11	X
Land Use	<b>Goal #2: Ensure that Howland is well-served by attractive, cohesive commercial districts in appropriate locations that meet the daily needs of its residents and visitors.</b>								
Land Use	Provide a broad range of office and commercial venues	X	X	X				4,8	
Land Use	Enhance the appearance of existing and future office and commercial development	X	X	X				4,15	



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Land Use	Promote small- to medium-scale office and commercial developments		X	X				2,4,8,11, 15	
Land Use	Promote re-development and infill of existing, underutilized commercial areas	X	X	X		X		2,4,8,11, 12,13,14, 15	X
Land Use	Allow for greater flexibility to accommodate progressive development strategies, and greater control by the Township to ensure a high quality development environment	X	X	X				11	
Land Use	<b>Goal #3: Maximize the benefits derived from public investment in community facilities and infrastructure.</b>								
Land Use	Create and enhance land use policies that promote efficient use of public infrastructure	X	X	X		X		1,4,6,9,11, 12,13,14	X
Land Use	Promote the location of community facilities in areas compatible for their use and which are accessible to the public served	X	X	X	X	X	X	1,2,6,9,10	X
Land Use	<b>Goal #4: Achieve a sustainable balance between development activities, preservation of natural resources and open space.</b>								
Land Use	Ensure that Township Resolutions reflect a high priority for the environment	X	X	X				7,9,11	X



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Land Use	Establish a unified open space and greenways network		X	X		X	X	6,12,13,14,16: TC Metroparks	X
Land Use	Encourage preservation of trees and forests		X	X				2,7,9,11,16:ODNR	X
Land Use	Protect and enhance surface and ground water quality	X	X	X				1,2,3,7,9,11	
Land Use	Develop and promote innovative grading and soil conservation practices		X			X		1,2,3,7,9,11	
Land Use	Promote local food production	X	X					2,3,9,15,16: Ag. Community	
Land Use	Enhance scenic qualities along major roadways and gateways to the Township		X	X		X		1,4,6,9,16: ODOT	
Land Use	<b>Goal #5: Eliminate annexation in order to maintain our current boundaries.</b>								
Land Use	Establish cooperative relationships with neighboring municipalities and townships to manage sustainable growth and development	X	X					2,8,12,13,14	X
Land Use	Develop strategies to guard against annexation	X	X					4,11	
Land Use	Encourage infill development through incentives	X	X	X				2,4,11,15	X



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Land Use	Identify objectives, policies, and programs for joint planning and decision-making	X	X					6	X
Economic Development	<b>Goal #1: Ensure that Howland Township is an attractive environment for economic development.</b>								
Economic Development	Retain existing industries and businesses	X	X		X	X		2,4,8,9	X
Economic Development	Promote Township resources to prospective businesses and industries	X	X					8,9,15	
Economic Development	Revitalize industrial areas and brownfields to provide for adaptive re-use or other types of development		X	X				1,2,4,6,8,11	X
Economic Development	Provide regulations and incentives that encourage sustainable development and enhance community character	X	X	X				11	
Economic Development	Formulate and adopt an Economic Development Plan for Howland Township	X	X					2,4,5,6,8,9,11	
Economic Development	<b>Goal #2: Ensure diversity in the Township's employment base.</b>								
Economic Development	Provide a variety of jobs at varied skill levels within the Township							4,8,10,16: Higher Ed. Institutions	X
Economic Development	Broaden the Township's partnership with local Universities and trade schools	X						4,8,10,16: Higher ED Institutions	



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Economic Development	Recognize, enhance, and promote employment, cultural, academic, and recreational opportunities within Howland Township	X	X				X	2,4,7,8,10,16: Arts Community	X
Economic Development	Promote a balance between industrial, office, commercial/retail, and residential property tax revenues	X	X	X				4,8,9,11,15	X
Economic Development	Work with local, regional, and statewide organizations to promote Howland Township as a desirable place to start a business	X						2,4,6,8,9,15, 16:ODOD, Elected Officials	X
Economic Development	<b>Goal #3: Reinforce existing corridors as Township commerce centers.</b>								
Economic Development	Promote the sustainability of the "Golden Triangle"	X	X	X		X		1,2,4,8,11,15	
Economic Development	Promote mixed-use development in the Howland Corners and Elm Road areas to encourage a vibrant and sustainable commercial environment	X	X	X		X		1,2,4,11	



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Economic Development	Promote Howland Corners as the office, commercial, and cultural center of the Township and encourage activities that attract a diverse and multi-generational population	X	X	X		X		1,2,4,8	
Economic Development	Enhance highly-traveled gateways into Howland Township with unique and distinctive landscaping, signage, and other design features	X	X	X	X	X		1,6,9,11,12,13,14, 16:ODOT	
Economic Development	<b>Goal #4: Become a leader in the development of manufacturing, office, and research facilities associated with the health care industry "tech-belt" promoted by Congressman Tim Ryan.</b>								
Economic Development	Identify compatible areas for a range of uses within the Township	X	X	X				2,4,5	X
Economic Development	<b>Goal #5: Welcome green and ecologically sound businesses, developments and solutions.</b>								
Economic Development	Understand barriers and opportunities for new and existing business development	X	X					2,4,5,6,8,9,15	X
Economic Development	Develop incentives to assist in small business development that will help grow the green economy	X	X					2,3,4,8,11,15, 16: Ohio Dept. of Dev.	X



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Economic Development	Promote energy technology that is conservation-based and draws from renewable sources to help existing and future industry and business	X	X			X		2,4,9,11,16: ODOD, US Dept. of Energy	X
Economic Development	Support the principles of sustainability (transportation, energy efficiency, green building, and waste minimization)	X	X	X	X	X	X	1,2,4,5,6,7,8,9,10, 15, 16: W.R. Port Authority, Niles Trumbull Transit, W.R. Transit Authority	X
Natural Resources	<b>Goal #1: Retain the beauty and function of the natural environment that characterize Howland Township.</b>								
Natural Resources	Ensure that conservation of natural resources and the environment is a high priority	X	X	X			X	7,9,11,16:Ohio EPA	X
Natural Resources	Restore and improve natural environs previously impacted	X	X			X		2,4,7,9,16:Ohio EPA, ODNR	X
Natural Resources	Establish a unified open space and greenway network	X	X			X	X	2,7,9,10, 12,13,14,16: TC Metroparks	X
Natural Resources	<b>Goal #2: Protect, maintain and enhance the Township's forest and tree resources.</b>								
Natural Resources	Realize the amenity value of the Township's wooded areas	X	X	X				7,11,16:ODNR	
Natural Resources	Preserve existing trees and forests	X	X	X				7,11	





### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Natural Resources	Preserve and improve the quality of the tree-growing environment	X	X	X				7,11	
Natural Resources	<b>Goal #3: Maintain and protect the quality and quantity of surface and ground water resources.</b>								
Natural Resources	Preserve and enhance existing watershed resources	X	X	X		X		2,3,4,6,7,9,12,13,14,16: Ohio EPA, Water/Sewer Providers	X
Natural Resources	Protect a safe and reliable water supply for all sectors of the community		X	X				3,6,9,12,13,14,16: San. Sewer Dept, Meander Water, Ohio EPA	
Natural Resources	Support water conservation measures in all sectors of the community	X	X			X		7,9,16:Water Providers	
Natural Resources	<b>Goal #4: Promote energy conservation and pollution prevention practices to reach a sustainable use of natural resources.</b>								
Natural Resources	Link land use and transportation planning to reduce vehicular miles traveled		X			X		1,6,11,16: ODOT	X
Natural Resources	Embrace alternative, renewal energies and investments in alternative energy sources	X	X	X		X		2,4,9,16:ODOD	



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Natural Resources	Coordinate with governmental and non-governmental agencies to promote waste and emission reduction, the purchasing of power saving items, preserving green space, and implementing lasting energy saving policy	X	X		X	X		1,2,4, 7,9,10,12,13,14, 16:ODOD	X
Natural Resources	<b>Goal #5: Preserve scenic features that characterize Howland Township.</b>								
Natural Resources	Preserve and enhance visible topographic and other notable features		X	X				4,7,9	X
Natural Resources	Preserve and enhance scenic qualities along roadways and gateways	X	X	X		X		1,4,6,9,11,12, 13,14,15	
Natural Resources	Ensure that the design of new development embraces, complements, and enhances the Township character	X	X	X				4,5,9	X
Public Health	<b>Goal #1: Support healthy lifestyles in Howland Township.</b>								
Public Health	Consider public health impacts in all land use, transportation, and community design decisions	X	X	X	X	X	X	All Entities, 16:ODOT, OEPA	X
Public Health	<b>Goal #2: Improve air quality and subsequent respiratory health.</b>								



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Public Health	Decrease dependence on motor vehicles through affordable, safe, and sustainable transportation options	X	X		X	X		1,2,6,16: Niles-Trumbull Transit, W.R. Transit Authority, ODOT, Air Quality Control Agency	
Public Health	Promote alternative and renewal energies	X						2,4,6,7,9,16: Ohio Dept. of Dev.	
Public Health	Maximize investments made in infrastructure	X	X	X		X		1,2,3, 4,16:Health Care Community	
Public Health	Maximize coordination with governmental and non-governmental agencies on exposure reduction	X	X					2,3,16:Health Care Community	
Public Health	<b>Goal #3: Improve the built environment to encourage active lifestyles.</b>								
Public Health	Ensure street, sidewalk, and bike path safety and accessibility for all users	X	X	X	X	X	X	1,2,4,6,9,16: ODOT	X
Public Health	Increase and enhance park, open space, and recreational facilities	X	X	X		X	X	6,9,16: TC Metroparks	X
Public Health	Ensure accessibility, safety, beauty, and cleanliness of public spaces	X	X			X	X	9	
Public Health	<b>Goal #4: Establish a stronger local/regional food system.</b>								



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Public Health	Promote community gardens and farmers markets	X	X	X		X		4,9,16:Ag. Community	
Public Health	Encourage small scale agriculture in the Township	X	X	X				4,9,16:Ag. Community	
Public Health	Encourage county/regional farmland preservation to advocate a local agriculture economy	X	X	X				4,9,16:Ag. Community	X
Public Health	<b>Goal #5: Improve access to medical, mental health and social services for all residents.</b>								
Public Health	Maximize use of available resources and programs through other governmental and non-governmental agencies	X	X			X	X	2,3,16:Health Care Community	X
Public Health	<b>Goal #6: Improve water quality through greater consideration in land use decisions.</b>								
Public Health	Preserve and enhance existing watershed resources	X	X	X		X		2,3,4,7,9,11,12,13,14,16:San.Sewer Dept, Meader Water	X
Public Health	Protect a safe and reliable water supply that can be used by all sectors of the community	X	X	X		X		2,3,4,7,9,11,12,13,14,16:All Drinking Water Providers (public and private)	X
Community Services & Facilities	<b>Goal #1: Continue to support recycling of as much of the solid waste generated by residents and businesses as possible.</b>								



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SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Community Services & Facilities	Encourage waste reduction and cost-effective re-use and recycling through appropriate policies and programs	X				X		3,4,9,16: Geauga/Trumbull Solid Waste MGT Dist.	
Community Services & Facilities	Ensure convenient access to recycling facilities for Township residents	X				X		3, 16: Geauga/Trumbull Solid Waste MGT Dist	
Community Services & Facilities	Enhance existing curb-side collection programs when possible	X				X		4	
Community Services & Facilities	<b>Goal #2: Prepare for catastrophic events to minimize damage and effectively implement recovery operations.</b>								
Community Services & Facilities	Maintain and periodically update an effective emergency response program	X			X	X		16: Trumbull Sheriff, Trumbull EMA, Dept of Homeland Security	
Community Services & Facilities	Reduce the potential for loss of life and property damage in areas subject to flooding	X			X	X		11, 16: Trumbull EMA, FEMA	X
Community Services & Facilities	Reduce the potential for loss of life and property damage due to fallen power lines	X			X	X		4,16: Sheriff	
Community Services & Facilities	<b>Goal #3: Continue to provide adequate police and fire protection and emergency medical services to Township residents.</b>								



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SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Community Services & Facilities	Minimize the response time for all emergencies	X			X			12,13,14,16: Trumbull EMA	
Community Services & Facilities	Ensure safety in existing and future neighborhoods	X	X	X	X	X		2,15,16: Sheriff	
Community Services & Facilities	<b>Goal #4: Ensure adequate provision of utilities and services provided by non-Township agencies and service providers.</b>								
Community Services & Facilities	Inventory current sewer and water infrastructure and identify future needs	X	X		X	X		2,3,6,11,16: San. Sewer and Drinking Water Providers	
Community Services & Facilities	Identify areas with failing septic systems	X	X			X		2,3,6,12,16: San. Sewer and Drinking Water Providers	X
Community Services & Facilities	Support conversion to underground utilities	X	X		X	X		1,2,4,6,9,14,16: Utility Providers, ODOT, Elected Officials	
Community Services & Facilities	<b>Goal #5: Increase access to information technologies and its utility for all residents of the Township.</b>								
Community Services & Facilities	Improve computer and information technology access in the Township	X	X		X			2,4,10,16: Local Providers	
Community Services & Facilities	Use technology to improve internal processes and service to residents and businesses		X		X	X		4, 8,16: County Agencies	X
Community Services & Facilities	<b>Goal #6: Promote quality active and passive recreational and cultural opportunities for Township residents and businesses.</b>								



### Howland Township: Plan Implementation by Objective and Collaborating Entity or Organization

SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Community Services & Facilities	Inventory existing facilities available to the public	X	X			X	X	6,11,12,13,14,16: TC Metroparks	X
Community Services & Facilities	Increase the number of active and passive parkland acres to meet or exceed National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards through coordination with the Howland Township Park District	X	X				X	2,6,10	X
Community Services & Facilities	Identify future recreational facility needs	X	X	X			X	6,9,10,11	
Community Services & Facilities	Engage in long-term capital planning for Township facilities, parks, and infrastructure	X	X			X	X	2,3,4,6,7,9,10, 11	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	<b>Goal #1: Provide greater choice, accessibility and flexibility for all people to move about the Township.</b>								
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Require multiple modes of transportation as part of new developments	X	X	X		X		1,4	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Incorporate multiple modes of transportation into road construction projects, and work on cooperative maintenance agreements	X	X	X		X		1,6,11,16:ODOT	



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Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Encourage pedestrian networks in local business districts to allow a friendly built environment for living, shopping, visiting, or passive enjoyment	X	X	X	X	X		4,16: ODOT	
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Encourage the connectivity of open spaces, greenways, and recreational areas with public multi-purpose trails	X	X	X		X	X	1,2,6,9,10, 16: ODOT, T.C. Metroparks	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Encourage public transportation into and through the Township on main thoroughfares	X	X					2,9,12,13,14,16:N iles Trumbull Transit, West. Res. Transit Auth.	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Implement safety improvements at substandard intersections	X	X		X	X		1,6,11,16: ODOT	
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Retro-fit existing neighborhoods with sidewalks and bike trails, where applicable	X	X	X		X		6,9,15,16:T.C. Metroparks	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Develop a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Plan for Howland Township	X	X		X			9,10,11,16:ODOT	
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	<b>Goal #2: Promote safe and efficient flow of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic.</b>								





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SECTION	OBJECTIVE	TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES	PLANNING & ZONING DEPARTMENT	ZONING COMMISSION	SAFETY SERVICES	PUBLIC WORKS	TWP PARK DISTRICT	OTHER	COUNTY PLAN COMMISSION
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Participate in area transportation planning efforts	X	X			X		1,2,6,11,16: ODOT, Niles Trumbull Transit, W. R. Transit Auth, W.R. Port Authority	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Increase traffic calming measures	X	X	X	X	X		1,6,9,11, 16 ODOT	
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Improve traffic flow by reducing congestion on the major corridors serving the Township	X	X			X		1,6,11,16:ODOT	
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Improve and expand alternative transportation systems	X	X					1,2,6,11,16:Niles Trumbull Transit, W.R. Transit Authority	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Develop a Town Center circulation plan for the Howland Corners area	X	X	X	X	X		1,4,6,9,11,16:ODOT	
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Continue multi-year capital planning for roadway improvements	X				X		1,2,6,11	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	<b>Goal #3: Provide connectivity to adjacent communities, throughout the region and beyond.</b>								
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Plan for Howland access to regional, statewide, and nationwide alternative transportation and multi-modal planning efforts	X	X					1,2,6,8,11,12,13,14,16:ODOT, W.R. Port Authority	X



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Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Encourage safe and efficient use of existing rail lines	X	X			X	X	1,2,4,6,16: T.C. Metroparks	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Maintain and enhance the Township's access to railroads and air service	X				X		1,2,4,6,16:W.R. Port Authority, Ohio Dept. of Dev.	X
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	<b>Goal #4: Protect and enhance the natural environment along transportation corridors.</b>								
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Limit road expansion and widening by offering progressive solutions to traffic issues	X	X	X		X		1,6,11,16: ODOT	
Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility	Promote beautification efforts along corridors and entrances to the Township	X	X	X		X		1,2,6,11,16: ODOT	X

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 County Engineer                       | 9 Howland Township Residents   |
| 2 County Commissioners                  | 10 Howland Township School District Officials  |
| 3 County Health Department              | 11. Private Consultant   |
| 4 Township Business Community           | 12 Adjacent Townships  |
| 5 Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee | 13 City of Warren  |
| 6 EASTGATE COG                          | 14 City of Niles   |
| 7 Soil and Water Conservation District  | 15 Community Improvement Corp, Community Development Corp, or Neighborhood Association |
| 8 MVEDC - Warrern/Youngstown Chamber    | 16 Other Agency/Organization   |