

**YEAR ELEVEN: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

We are proud that the goals and objectives found in Howland Township’s Comprehensive Plan have become ingrained into how we – your elected officials and the many employees in our departments – plan and act. The Comprehensive Plan not only lays out the community’s future hopes and intentions but assists your Township officials in making decisions daily, both large and small. As we look back over the past eleven years, we see that many of the initiatives and actions taken in those early years have continued, while others have not. That is progress. We also see that some of the planning steps have turned into grants and then into actual projects. This is particularly true in the Golden Triangle.

We frequently note that local government plays an important role in know that our community – and the Mahoning Valley – faces challenges from an ever-changing economic environment. Four years ago, we emphasized the role that small businesses play in our local economy and that “[l]ocal governments have some ability to help create the environment for these small businesses to succeed, particularly with the physical infrastructure upon which those businesses rely.” That remains true.

And there are small actions that have large consequences. For example, in December 2010, the Board of Trustees adopted a home-rule resolution that sets forth regulations that govern the demolition of structures and the reclamation of lands following structural demolitions. This applies to all properties, residential, commercial, and industrial. Rather than allow the owner of the former Republic Steel property to cannibalize the site by taking what it wanted and leaving an eyesore with no imminent plans for development, Howland Township enforced the demolition resolution and required the property owner to demolish all of the buildings on the property and to return the property to its “green” state. If you drive by the site, you will not see anything but undeveloped land. And, now, the Western Reserve Port Authority has taken over the property in a condition that better positions it for future development. That would not have happened if Howland Township had done nothing.

We had planned to spend Year Ten examining the state of our comprehensive plan to see whether it needs updating to address the work that has been done and any conditions that have changed since it was adopted and to revise its outlook for the next decade. The pandemic changed those plans. But it also provided us with opportunities to adjust how we operate and with new federal and state funds. We intend to make strategic investments in our community that will have the greatest long-term impact.

Your township trustees,

Rick G. Clark  
*October 13, 2021*

Dr. James J. LaPolla, Jr.

Matthew G. Vansuch

Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan

Township Project/Policy/Program	<i>Demographics &amp; Housing</i>	<i>Land Use</i>	<i>Economic Development</i>	<i>Natural Resources</i>	<i>Public Health</i>	<i>Community Services &amp; Facilities</i>	<i>Transportation, Mobility &amp; Accessibility</i>
The Planning & Zoning Department upgraded its zoning software to accept online permit applications and collect fees. This enables the staff to more easily and timely work with the outside engineer to review these plans.		X	X			X	
The upgraded software allows residents to electronically submit complaints and issues to the Planning & Zoning Department through an online portal with the option of sending photographs and videos. This allows for issues to be brought to the department’s attention in a timelier manner and to enable the staff to more timely respond. In addition, the software enables the staff to better manage the complaints and the enforcement process.		X				X	
The Public Works Department was added to the software that the Planning & Zoning Department uses. Residents can select the department receiving the complaint. This allows for issues to be brought to the department’s attention in a timelier manner and to enable the staff to more timely respond. In addition, the software enables the staff to better manage the complaints and the enforcement process						X	X
The Township annually appoints a representative to the Trumbull County Health Advisory Board to ensure issues that affect Township residents are learned and appropriately addressed.					X		
The Howland Farmers Market, in its fourteenth year, continues to grow, as new farm and food vendors come on-board every year. The Market is held all year, each week during the summer months and bi-monthly in November through May at the John D. Emanuel Senior Center.		X	X		X		
The Township continues to support the Howland Community Gardens by administering the program, providing basic tools, tilling the garden spots in the spring and fall, and providing water to the site. Participation remains strong. This past year, the Township brought educational speakers to the community gardens.	X				X	X	
Creekside Gardens continues to donate time, labor, and materials to maintain the gateway signage and landscaped area at the Niles-Cortland Road and SR 82 interchange.			X				
The Howland Farmers Market adapted during the pandemic to continue helping small businesses and farms through online-ordering and drive-through pick-up. The farmers market continued to accept SNAP EBT cards, PRODUCE PERKS, WIC, and the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition program to enable all of our residents to access fresh, locally-sourced produce and foodstuffs.					X	X	

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Staff participated in the Mahoning Valley Farmers Market Network, a group funded through a USDA grant and led by the Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership to promote the regional coordination of farmers markets and help with their long-term success.			X		X	X	
The Township received a \$1,000 grant from the Geauga Trumbull Solid Waste District to collect 1,029 scrap tires from township residents. The tires are then recycled, keeping them out of our landfills.				X	X		
The annual leaf and Christmas tree collections and the semi-annual limb and branch collection events divert bio-degradable material from landfills. The collected material becomes compost and is reused.				X		X	
Howland Township continues to encourage recycling among township residents. The Township worked with the Geauga-Trumbull Solid Waste District, the Trumbull County Engineer, and the Trumbull County Commissioners to improve the private North River Road recycling center run (run by volunteers on property owned by the Township).				X		X	
Interested residents continue a Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration for the community. The sixth year of the event will take place this year.	X					X	
The Township applied for and received \$132,685 from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund to preserve 84 acres of environmentally sensitive property along North River Road in the Mosquito Creek Corridor.				X			
The Township applied for, and was awarded, a grant from the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments Transportation Alternative Program for \$190,000 to install sidewalks along High Street and Willow that will connect to the East Market Street sidewalks. The Trumbull County Engineer provided engineering and design for the project. Construction is almost complete.						X	X
The Planning & Zoning Department collaborated with the Trumbull County Planning commission to display an interactive zoning map on the Township website. Residents and business owners can now inquire about a property's zoning classification on their own through the website. In 2021, an environmental indicators tool was added that allows significant streams, wetlands, and floodplains to be shown on the interactive map.		X		X		X	
The Planning & Zoning Department collaborated with the Trumbull County Planning commission to create an online boundary look-up tool to allow interested parties to look up an address and to see the jurisdiction in which they are located and their proximity to the City of Niles.						X	

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Thanks to an additional fire/EMS levy that was passed in November 2019, the Fire Department now operates the Bolindale station #31 on Ridge Road 24/7, when that station had been closed or staffed only by volunteers. This will lower response times by providing improved staffing and vehicle deployments.			X		X	X	
The Township supports the Community Store Initiative (through the Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership and the Trumbull County Combined Health District) to help expand healthy food options in convenience stores in the Bolindale and Morgandale neighborhoods. The initiative helps alleviate the financial barriers for these store owners to provide fresh produce offerings.					X	X	
The Police Department is certified by the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board for police policy ad procedures. Officers continue to be certified in Crisis Intervention. This improves their response when dealing with individuals who show signs of behavior issues, mental illness, and drug and alcohol problems and the developmentally disabled.						X	
The Township and the Howland Local School District continue their collaboration for the school resource officer program, which places a patrol officer in the school buildings every day during the school year. The school district pays for one full-time officer during the school year, and the Township and the school district split the cost for a second officer.	X				X	X	
The Police Department works with Project Dawn and the Trumbull County Combined Health District to supply our officers with Narcan.					X	X	
The Police Department continues a number of programs to assist its residents. A Drug Drop Off box is located in the front lobby of the Police Department for residents to dispose of un-needed medications, removing them from the public. Through the "Are U Ok" Program, officers check on the well-being of elderly Howland Township residents who qualify for the program. By designating the rear parking lot (west side of building) as a Safe Exchange Zone, the Police Department provides an area that is under 24/7 video surveillance and will be a safe location for child custody exchanges and finalizing internet sale exchanges. The Police Department promotes community-oriented policing by having officers routinely walk foot beats through local businesses and the schools. And active-shooter training is offered to interested local churches.					X	X	
The Township negotiates with natural gas providers to secure the best price for Howland consumers.						X	
During the pandemic, staff delivered meals to Township residents when Trumbull Mobile Meals lost volunteers.					X	X	

Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan

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The Township, Warren City, Trumbull County Engineer’s Office, and the Trumbull County Commissioners continue to host Golden Triangle Business Advisory meetings with these business leaders to discuss the progress of the Golden Triangle Infrastructure Improvement Plan and to maintain communications with the business community to assess their ongoing needs.			X				X
The Township, Warren City, Trumbull County Engineer’s Office, and the Trumbull County Commissioners applied to the US Economic Development Administration funding for \$3,287,964.00 to upgrade the local roadways and intersections within the Golden Triangle Industrial Area by realigning the Larchmont Avenue/Bronze Road/Overland Avenue intersection, realigning Dana Street, and improving Bronze Road. Although the project was not funded, a new application was submitted for a second round of EDA funding in 2021.		X					X
In 2018, Howland Township applied for a Transportation Planning Grant from the Eastgate Regional Council of Governments to determine the feasibility of installing sidewalks along Niles Cortland Road from State Route 82, north to North River Road. The plan was completed in June 2019. The Township enlisted the assistance of the Trumbull County Engineers Office and GPD. The team conducted walkability audits to document existing conditions and determine the current level of service for both pedestrians and bicyclists. The team looked at activity nodes and noted land uses that serve as pedestrian generators and pedestrian destinations.			X				X
The Township Zoning Commission continues to work on modernizing the Zoning Resolution and stormwater regulations. In 2020, updated sign regulations – the allowance of electronic message-center signs, setback reductions, and new rules for window and directional signs – went into effect..	X	X	X		X	X	
The Township Administrator continues to sit as a member of the Trumbull County Planning Commission.	X	X					X
The annual leaf and Christmas tree and the semi-annual limb and branch collection events divert bio-degradable material from landfills. The collected material becomes compost and is reused.				X		X	
The Zoning Department annually responds to approximately 225-250 property maintenance complaints, primarily in residential neighborhoods, with nearly a quarter of them being high-grass nuisance complaints.	X						
For a nominal amount, the Township leased the building at the Old Sloas Farm to the Trumbull County MetroParks for its office space.				X			

**Appendix: Goals and Objectives**

**DEMOGRAPHICS & HOUSING**

**DEMOGRAPHICS**

**Goal:** Provide bases for public policies through up-to-date population, demographic, and socio-economic data.

**Objectives:**

1. Acquire federal, state, regional, and local source data for use in the development of public policies, particularly U.S. Census data;
2. Regularly update the Comprehensive Community Plan data; and
3. Make population, demographic, and socio-economic information available to the general public.

**HOUSING**

*“Howland Township is a community with well-established, attractive and diverse neighborhoods. 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...” Comprehensive Community Plan, July 2010*

**Goal #1:** Preserve and enhance the quality of life in existing neighborhoods.

**Objectives:**

1. Strengthen and promote neighborhood stability;
2. Create neighborhood empowerment and engagement programs;
3. Evaluate the type and number of residential zoning classifications and “right-size” certain districts; and
4. 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:**

1. Provide a range of housing options to serve the long-term needs of the Township;
2. Encourage the provision of additional public and private amenities, the preservation of open space and environmentally responsible development practices;
3. Evaluate the need for, and proper location of, senior housing;
4. Encourage mixed-use residential;
5. Develop neighborhood overlays to define and delineate locally significant districts;
6. Promote the re-development of older residential areas; and
7. Evaluate potential markets for residential growth.

**LAND USE**

**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;
5. Encourage preservation of open space and environmentally responsible development.

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**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 area 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.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**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;

## Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan

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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).

## NATURAL RESOURCES

**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.



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### 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.

## PUBLIC HEALTH

**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.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES & FACILITIES

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

### Objectives:

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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 curbside 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.

## **TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY, & ACCESSIBILITY**

**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.

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**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.