

**YEAR NINE: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Nine years ago, the Board of Trustees adopted a comprehensive plan to provide a set of common goals and objectives to guide its public officials towards the future. This is the fifth update that the Board has provided to demonstrate to its residents that this blueprint for our future has not remained on the shelf gathering dust but has become ingrained into our decision-making process. We are proud of this.

We know that our community – and the Mahoning Valley – faces challenges from an ever-changing economic environment. Two 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 is no less true today than it was then.

We continue to work through the Golden Triangle Infrastructure Plan to address the needs of the businesses in this vibrant industrial area that is now the largest hub of industrial activity in Trumbull County. It is critical that we listen to, and work with, these businesses to address their needs.

The focus of our next year will be to examine 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.

We once again reiterate that the comprehensive plan is a living document and not a punch list. We strive to be a strong, forward-thinking community and the best-run township in Trumbull County, operating in a professional, transparent manner. We encourage you to read this update – together with the previous ones – to get the full picture of where your Township is headed.

Your township trustees,

Rick G. Clark  
*September 13, 2019*

Dr. James J. LaPolla, Jr.

Matthew G. Vansuch

Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan

Township Project/Policy/Program	Demographics & Housing	Land Use	Economic Development	Natural Resources	Public Health	Community Services & Facilities	Transportation, Mobility & Accessibility
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 twelfth 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 and the Howland Park Board received additional grants from the Trumbull County Combined Health District’s Creating Health Communities program to enhance Bolindale Park to install raised community-garden infrastructure at Bolindale Park and to support the bi-monthly Bolindale Farmers Market, a satellite of the Howland Farmers Market, which expands access to quality local produce and products to more of our residents. This market is held at Bolindale Christian Church monthly from June through October.	X				X	X	
The Howland Farmers Market and the Bolindale Farmers Market accept SNAP EBT cards to enable all of our residents to access fresh, locally-sourced produce and foodstuffs. In collaboration with the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, the Mercy Health Foundation Mahoning Valley, and other local partners, access to fresh and healthy fruits and vegetables is improved through the Produce Perks SNAP Double-Up Program! through which the Howland Farmers Market will match dollar-for-dollar (up to \$30) in SNAP benefits for fresh fruits and vegetables. The Howland Farmers Market also participates in the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Program that provides additional support to SNAP customers through prescription vouchers for patients to purchase fruits and vegetables to supplement a healthy diet.					X		
Township employees conducted another successful fundraising drive for the food pantries at Howland Community Church and Bolindale Christian Church, raising approximately \$7,000. The latter continues to serve approximately 70 families in the Bolindale neighborhood. Cooking classes are also offered.					X		
The Township continues to coordinate a summer recreation program with Kent State University’s International Center for Sports & Tourism Management and the Center for Sports & Recreation. Kids between the ages 6 and 13 can participate in fishing, football, cheerleading, soccer tennis, golf, swimming, outdoor adventures, painting, drawing, and pottery. This popular community program encourages physical activity, teaches new skills, builds confidence, and enhances the social bonds of the community	X						

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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 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). The site recently benefitted from a clean-up, and the parking area was paved.				X		X	
Interested residents continue a Holiday Tree Lighting Celebration for the community. The fourth year of the event will take place this year.	X					X	
The Township worked with ODOT on the public-input and planning process for the infrastructure improvements to the SR 46/82 area to advocate for safety-service needs and amenities for pedestrians and cyclists. This culminated in a public hearing in September 2018 where ODOT officials solicited public comments on a proposed diverging-diamond interchange and other improvements to nearby intersections.			X				X
Eastgate Regional Council of Governments awarded the Township a \$15,000 Moving the Community Forward Grant to study sidewalks and bicycle accommodations along Niles-Cortland Road from the SR 46/82 interchange to North River Road.		X					X
The Township is a participant in the Active Transportation subcommittee of the Health Community Partnership through the Youngstown Foundation of the Mahoning Valley.					X		X

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The Fire Department continues to operate the Bolindale station #31 on Ridge Road and Morgandale station #32 on Wilson Avenue, in addition to the Main Station #30, after those stations had been closed or staffed only by volunteers. Morgandale and the Main Station #30 on Niles Cortland Road NE are now staffed 24/7, and Bolindale is staffed as personnel-scheduling allows. If a fire/EMS levy is passed in November 2019, then the Bolindale station will be staffed 24/7; this will lower response times by providing improved staffing and vehicle deployments.			X		X	X	
The Fire Department continues to work with the American Red Cross to provide free smoke detectors and installation to our residents.					X		
The Fire Department is fully implemented its paperless initiative. Staff scheduling, special events, daily vehicle inspections, and training schedules are completed on web-based programs. This improves staff accessibility and efficiency. Patient care is charted on a secure ePCR iPad. This also improves operations efficiency.						X	
The Township received a \$12,800 grant in 2018 from the Bureau of Workers Compensation through which each firefighter received two pairs of firefighting gloves and two particulate hoods. This is part of the BWC's cancer mitigation program.					X		
By participating in the BWC's annual station safety inspection program, the Fire Department sees a reduction in its workers' compensation premiums.					X		
The Police Department's policies and procedures meet or exceed the state standards from the Ohio Collaborative Community-Police Advisory Board. All officers are 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 Police Department applied for the 2017 Community Oriented Police Grant which, if awarded, will provide the department with an additional police officer.						X	
The Township and the Howland Local School District expanded 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	
Officers continue to be equipped with naloxone kits, hazardous-material handling kits, and trauma kits. The Police Department also received a Bullet Proof Vest Grant (BVP) through the Ohio Attorney General's Office.					X	X	

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The Township, Warren City, Trumbull County Engineers 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 continued its collaboration with Howland High School graduating seniors and local businesses to conduct litter clean-up events in the Golden Triangle.			X				X
In 2019, the Township was awarded a grant from Clean Ohio to acquire 13.61 acres along the Mosquito Creek to preserve wetlands and other storm water beneficial resources.		X		X			
The Township, the Trumbull County Commissioners, and the Trumbull County Engineer secured a \$518,444 community development block grant to improve roadways and ditches in the Morgandale area.		X					X
The Township, the Trumbull County Commissioners, and the Trumbull County Engineer applied for a \$450,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission to improve Phoenix Road, a heavily-used road in the Golden Triangle that needs substantial improvements to aid the local business.			X				X
A part-time special-events coordinator was hired to coordinate the year-long activities at the Howland Farmers Market, the Independence Day activities, and the Food Truck Fridays.						X	
In 2018, the Township started a community event once a month during the summer that featured locally-operated food trucks and music at Richard E. Orwig Park. The community's response was extremely positive, and the events continued in 2019.						X	
The Police Department is transitioning to the Multi-Agency Radio Communication System (MARC)s, a system that uses cellular technology to greatly increase the communication between dispatchers, officers, and surrounding police agencies.						X	
The Police Department adopted 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. And, 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.					X	X	

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The Township Zoning Commission continues to work on modernizing the Zoning Resolution and stormwater regulations. The Zoning Department has updated the zoning map with several district adjustments being made to reflect existing uses.	X	X	X		X	X	
The Zoning Department adopted an electronic program for organizing and following zoning and property maintenance complaints. Residents can now submit complaints and issues through a website.		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						
The Township negotiates with natural gas providers to secure the best price for Howland consumers.						X	

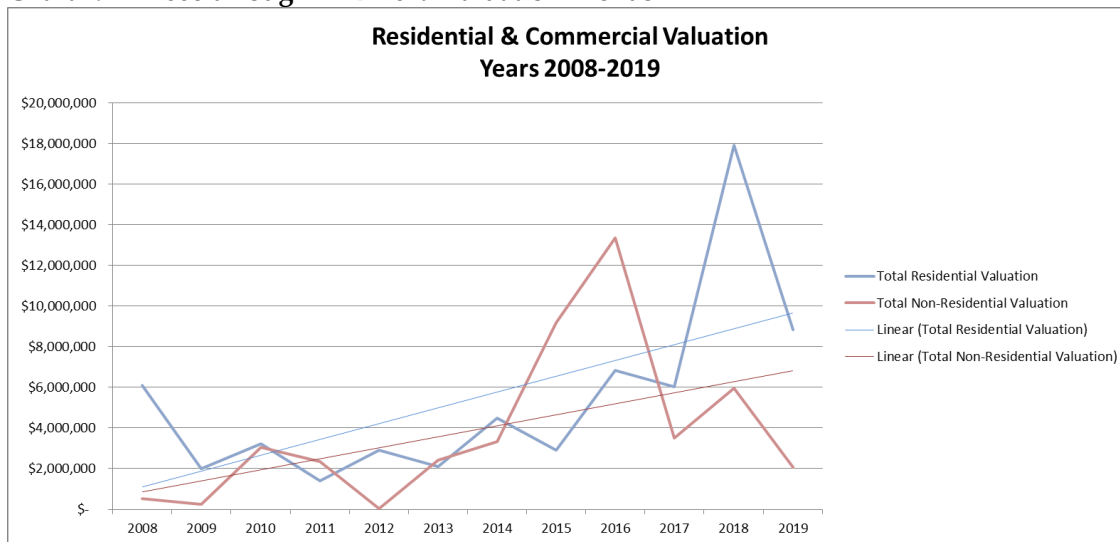
# Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan

Total valuation in 2017 fell from over \$20,000,000 in 2016 to \$9,522,949, but it shot back up in 2018 to over \$23,000,000. The Township has not seen this robust of total valuation since the late nineties. The most-recent upturn was due, in part, to the permitting of over 130 multifamily units in the Season Development. Construction on Phase 1 of the Seasons Patio Home Apartments is now complete, and Phase 2 is underway. Table 1 and Chart 1 below track the valuation totals and trends from 2008 through YTD 2019, with an additional \$2,000,000 in construction valuation expected by the end of this year. The valuation trends in residential and non-residential projects continue to climb from a 25-year (1995 – 2019) low that we experienced in 2009.

**Table 1: 2008 through YTD 2019 Valuation Table**

	Residential Valuation	Non-Residential Valuation	Total Valuation
2008	\$ 6,102,207	\$ 545,000	\$ 6,647,207
2009	\$ 1,987,375	\$ 230,000	\$ 2,217,375
2010	\$ 3,236,700	\$ 3,038,525	\$ 6,275,225
2011	\$ 1,392,798	\$ 2,352,864	\$ 3,745,662
2012	\$ 2,897,486	\$ 22,171	\$ 2,919,657
2013	\$ 2,097,427	\$ 2,408,030	\$ 4,505,457
2014	\$ 4,482,750	\$ 3,315,600	\$ 7,798,350
2015	\$ 2,905,264	\$ 9,180,687	\$ 12,085,951
2016	\$ 6,842,221	\$ 13,361,049	\$ 20,203,270
2017	\$ 6,022,949	\$ 3,500,000	\$ 9,522,949
2018	\$ 17,912,357	\$ 5,949,000	\$ 23,861,357
2019	\$ 8,823,530	\$ 2,065,811	\$ 10,889,341

**Chart 1: 2008 through YTD 2019 Valuation Trends**



**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.



## Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan

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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.

## Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan

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**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.

### 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.

## Howland Township Comprehensive Community Plan

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### 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.

## 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.

**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.