
Chapter 4: **Goals and Objectives**

In order to be a useful decision-making guide for the City, it is important for the Comprehensive Land Use Plan to have clearly defined Goals that describe the City's desired outcomes for the future related to economic development, housing development, open space protection, etc. As such, the goals and objectives contained in this chapter provide the framework around which the subsequent policies and implementation strategies are drafted. The following goals and objectives are a refinement of the goals contained in the Willoughby Hills 1994 Master Plan.

A. Residential Character

To maintain the existing low-density residential character of Willoughby Hills in a manner that reinforces the motto "Where the City meets the Country", while ensuring that:

1. A variety of housing options are available to meet local demand.
2. Reasonable development opportunities are available on sites that cannot feasibly be developed with standard single-family subdivisions comprised of one-acre lots.
3. All residential neighborhoods have the level and type of amenities desired by the residents.

B. Economic Development

To achieve a more balanced economy that ultimately slows the rate of increase in residential property taxes while maintaining or improving services by promoting economic development in selected locations, and ensure that:

1. Economic development is properly located, designed, and operated so as not to jeopardize the low-density character of the City.
2. Non-residential development and redevelopment enhances the City's image and identity.

C. Sense of Community

To create a greater sense of community and ensure that:

1. Special community places are established within the City to serve as focal points and gathering places that foster interaction among residents.
2. Pedestrian and vehicular linkages are established to facilitate community use of local amenities such as the Chagrin River Corridor, City parks, and the Cleveland Metroparks system.
3. The overall quality of life in the City is enhanced.

D. Open Space and Natural Resources

To conserve and protect the natural environment and the unique natural features that contribute to the image and character of Willoughby Hills.

E. Defensible Zoning Regulations

To create a comprehensive land use plan that provides a rational basis for the City to make legislative, capital improvement, and administrative decisions

Chapter 5: Development Policies

The purpose of this Chapter is to set forth the specific policies that advance the goals and objectives summarized in Chapter 4. These policies address specific use recommendations, development requirements and administrative issues that are important to the ongoing planning agenda of the City.

Willoughby Hills has a unique dichotomy of uses ranging from intense uses like high-rise apartment buildings to low-density residential uses and undisturbed natural areas, hence the motto “where the City meets the Country.” Some areas are still farmed and face pressures for development; other areas are showing signs of becoming outdated and are in need of renovation or redevelopment. While this plan stresses the desire to preserve the low-density residential character and conserve open space, these goals must be balanced with economic development initiatives that will increase fiscal stability by increasing the non-residential tax base and reducing the tax burden on single-family homeowners.

The policies are divided into four sections: Residential Development, Economic Development, Community Image and Identity, and Open Space, Natural Resources and Community Facilities. These policies, illustrated on Map 6 on page 29, represent the land use directions to be pursued for various areas of the City. However, there are likely to be other areas of the City, which are not specifically identified in this Plan, yet which will be significantly impacted in the future – by new development, future road widenings, and/or increased traffic. Therefore, it is important to continually assess areas along major streets and adjoining nonresidential areas so the City is able to respond when existing development patterns are threatened.

Residential Development Policies

Single-family residential uses are, by far, the predominant use of land in Willoughby Hills. The majority of the remaining vacant land, when eventually developed, will be developed for houses. Therefore, it is important to set forth policies that help to achieve the goal of preserving the existing low-density residential character in a manner that permits reasonable use of land while also protecting natural resources and the unique natural features found in the City, and to meet the needs of current and new residents at various life-stages. The specific residential development policies are set forth below:

A. To the extent possible, encourage single-family development at a density of one unit per acre.

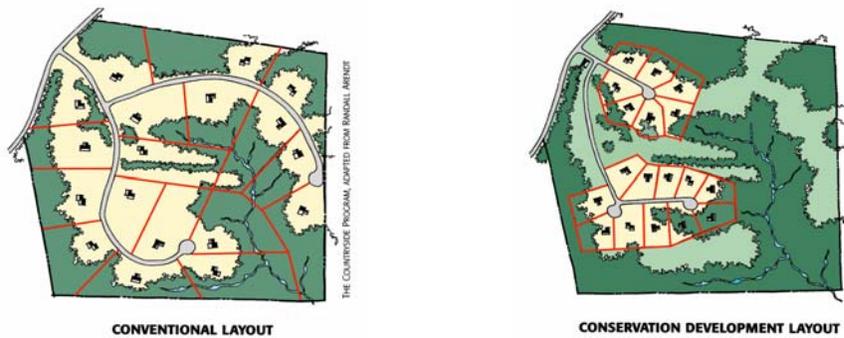
1. Maintain the R Residential District and its current lot regulations including the one-acre minimum lot size and the 100-foot minimum lot width and the minimum 75-foot front yard setback requirement.



Figure 4: Homes on 1-Acre Lots with Minimum Lot Width

2. Allow for the flexible arrangement of dwellings with a requirement to preserve a portion of the development site as aggregated open space. This would be an option to the standard single-family subdivision, and is referred to in this Plan as conservation development. This development option could be administered in one of two ways: by adding conservation development as a permitted use to the R District, which means conservation development could be proposed in areas already zoned R; or by establishing an overlay district that would be applied only in specific areas now zoned R.
- a) The purpose of the conservation development option is to enable houses to be grouped closer together so that more of the development site can be set aside as open space. Controlling the density while allowing greater flexibility enables developers to design around and therefore conserve landforms, protect important resources such as streams, wetlands, trees, historic elements and other features that contribute to the character and image of the City, and preserve large areas of open space when appropriate. (See Figure 5 below)

**Figure 5
Comparison of Conventional Development
to Conservation Development**

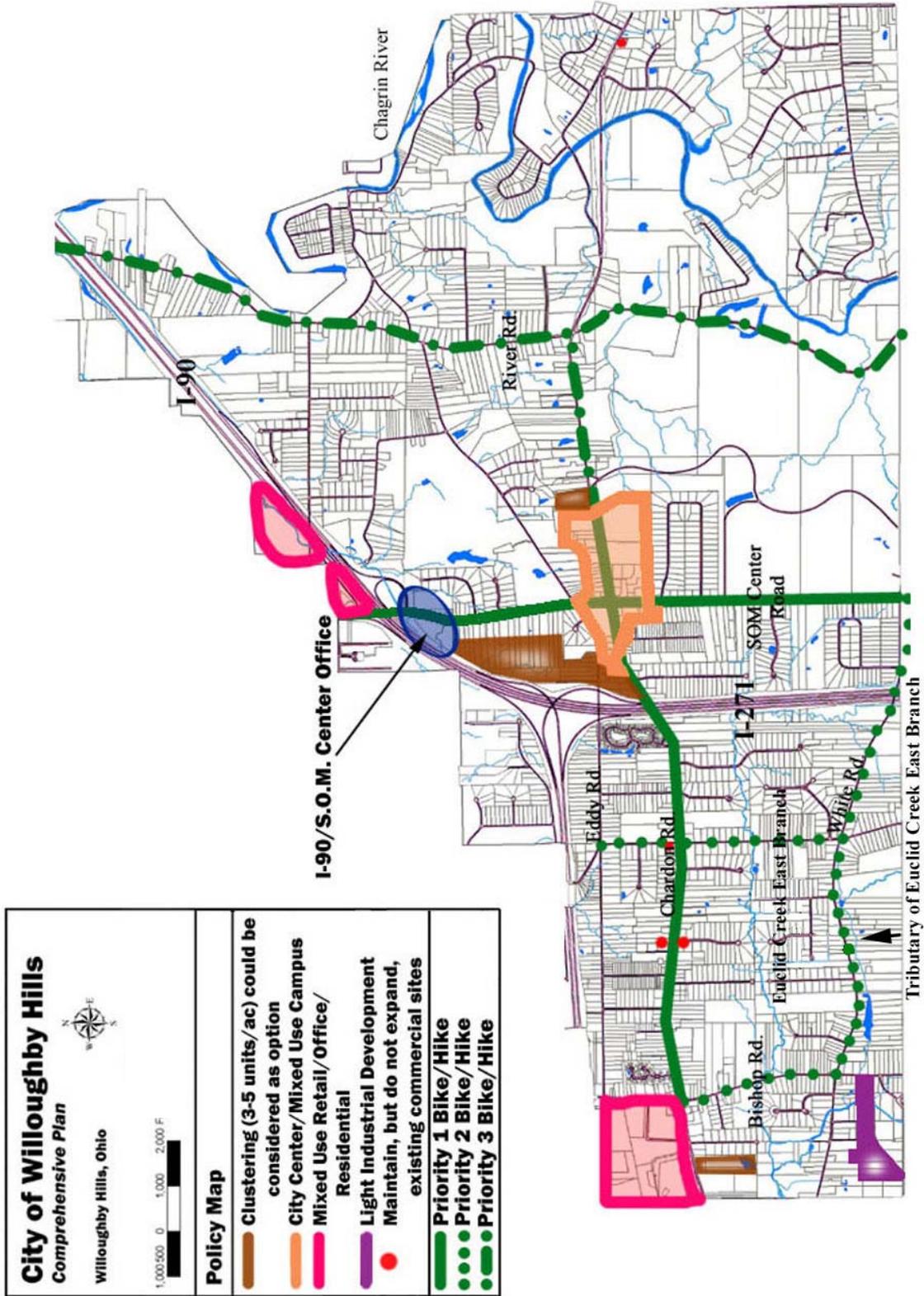


Area	36 acres	Area	36 acres
Lots	18 lots	Lots	18 lots
Undisturbed Open Space	none	Undisturbed Open Space	53%
Road Length	3,808 feet	Road Length	2,072 feet

Source: The Countryside Program, Workbook Section II, Handbook Fact Sheet Graphics.

- b) The principles of conservation development include maintaining an overall density that is the same as what could be achieved in a subdivision comprised of one-acre lots, while preserving a minimum of 20%-40% of the project/development area. More flexibility is permitted in the arrangement of units in order to enable the required preservation of open space.

Map 6
Land Use Policy Map



- c) The land area set aside as open space is referred to as restricted open space since it is no longer able to be developed or subdivided; its development rights having been used somewhere else on the site. Figure 6 indicates the manner in which a development plan would indicate the restricted open space. A mechanism must be established to ensure the perpetual maintenance and preservation of this open space. A homeowners association is the mechanism typically used to achieve this, but other options, such as conservation easements held by a land trust, are available provided the option chosen adequately addresses perpetual maintenance, oversight and liability.

Figure 6
Illustration of Conservation Development and Restricted Open Space



Source: Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character. Randall Arendt, et al. Planners Press, Chicago IL, 1994.

- d) Specific review criteria and procedures enable the City to require dwelling units within a Conservation Development to be arranged in such a way to protect/ conserve the “best” or most environmentally sensitive natural areas of the site. This would be accomplished by establishing design criteria and preservation priorities for the open space. From the City’s perspective, overall priorities for conservation efforts are listed below from highest priority to lowest. To the extent that the existence of natural features varies from one parcel to another, these priorities should be used as guidelines on a site-specific basis.
- 1) Riparian Zones (lands adjacent to rivers and streams)
 - 2) Wetlands and Floodplains
 - 3) Steep Slopes and Hillside Areas
 - 4) Woodlands
 - 5) Wildlife Habitat Areas
 - 6) Fields, Meadows, and Hedgerows
 - 7) Scenic Views and Rural Roads via Scenic Corridor Management
 - 8) Rural Structures (Barns, stone walls, fences, etc.)

As stated above, these preservation priorities are listed in order of overall importance for the City. However, the manner in which the restricted open

space is designed, and key site characteristics targeted for preservation/conservation should be determined based on their existence on a site-by-site basis. Priorities may also change based on future studies of natural resources by such entities as the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District. Figure 7 illustrates how the arrangement of the dwelling units and the areas of the site chosen to be protected can vary depending on the priorities chosen by the City and/or developer.

Figure 7
Illustration of How Different Preservation Priorities Can Be Emphasized¹¹



Source: Rural By Design: Maintaining Small Town Character.

- e) Encourage innovative legislation that would accommodate “rural sanitary systems,” for example, allowing private septic systems to be located in the restricted open space and utilizing easements to enable the homeowner to maintain his/her system. Since much of the area where the vacant land exists is not now, or expected to be, serviced by public sanitary sewer lines, many new homes will need to install septic system for waste disposal. The Lake County Health Department regulates the installation of new septic systems, so development within a Conservation Development will need to comply with the Health Department regulations. Depending on the physical characteristics of the parcels on which development is proposed, i.e., the quality of soils, topography, etc. the number of dwelling units permitted by the Health Department may be less than what the conservation development regulations permit.
3. Encourage coordinated development of backland, behind frontage lots, by promoting use of the conservation development option rather than through the use of flag lot subdivisions.

¹¹ This figure is used only for illustrating different ways of locating homes on a site to preserve either the farmland or the woodlands: it is not illustrative of the amount of open space to be preserved in Willoughby Hills. This figure shows approximately 67 % of the site being preserved as restricted open space, while the minimum being considered by Willoughby Hills is only 20% to 40%.

B. Encourage alternative housing options including senior citizen housing, cluster housing and townhouses in selected locations of the City. As the population ages, more and more older adults are seeking housing that features low maintenance (interior and exterior), quality construction, additional amenities such as recreation and dining facilities, and barrier-free access, and in some cases, personal and health care services. Another segment of the population that may benefit from increased housing options are young adults who have grown up in the City and wish to remain, but do not desire or can not afford a traditional single-family home.

1. Alternative housing options are appropriate in locations that meet the following circumstances:
 - a) When located as a transitional use between non-residential zoning/development (either existing or planned) and lower-density single-family areas, in specific, definable locations to help confine and restrict future expansion of commercial areas.
 - b) In locations that are adjacent to major highways, such as I-271.
 - c) In locations where it may not be reasonable to expect that low density residential can be developed.
2. Mechanisms to enable alternative housing include:

- a) Establishing a new zoning district titled R-2 Townhouse Residential to allow the construction of a variety of units, including senior citizen developments for independent and/or congregate living.
 - 1) Establish the purpose of this new district as a way to permit townhouses and enable senior citizen development.
 - 2) Allow a density of approximately 4 to 5 dwelling units per acre, which is similar to condominium projects Pebblebrook and Steeple Run.



Figure 8: Steeple Run

- b) Establishing an overlay district to permit senior citizen housing in addition to the range of uses already permitted in the underlying district. Overlay districts act as a re-zoning, but they simply impose additional and optional development guidelines on the land within the overlay boundaries. In this case, the overlay would impose the option to build senior citizen housing on land that is residentially zoned. The development regulations currently imposed on the land would still remain should the Senior Citizen option not be chosen.
 - 1) Accommodate the full range of housing needs for seniors, including dwellings for active, independent living, continuing care facilities and options in between, and associated facilities for congregate dining, health care, recreation, etc.

- 2) Determine the permitted density and intensity of the senior citizen development based on the density and intensity of the underlying district.
- 3) When located within a single-family neighborhood, require the senior housing project to have a similar residential character and scale as typically found in the surrounding neighborhood, as determined by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
- 4) When sited in an area where a facility or development could conceivably be completely screened to surrounding properties, permit greater intensity in return for greater green space (i.e. intensity could be increased if the development is completely screened from the property lines by natural buffers, for example, a tree buffer (with a depth of perhaps 50 to 100 feet) that adjoins the entire length of the abutting property.

Alternative types of housing, especially developments that are marketed as senior citizen housing or as high-end luxury units, typically are not occupied by families with children, and so do not increase the burden on the public school system. As such, alternative housing can be considered a form of economic development, since it, like non-residential development, pays school property taxes without adding any associated expense.

Whenever the City determines that due to traffic or adjacent development, some relief from existing low-density zoning is warranted, and the area(s) is not designated for future non-residential economic development, the policy is to promote higher density residential development.

- C. Regulate community facilities as conditional uses** to ensure they are designed, constructed, and operated in ways that make them compatible with the surrounding residential environment. Currently, community facilities such as churches, schools, museums, and libraries are permitted by right in the single-family residential district. However, these community facilities are less predictable in their size and nature of operations meaning the impacts of such facilities can vary significantly from one type of institution to another

In districts such as the single-family residential district where only a narrow range of uses are permitted, the compatibility of community facilities depends on the manner in which they are designed, arranged, sited and operated. Therefore, community facilities are best regulated as conditional uses in order to enable the City to thoroughly review each proposed facility, evaluate its impacts, and impose reasonable conditions to manage traffic congestion and noise, and preserve and enhance the surrounding residential neighborhood.

1. Establish the Planning & Zoning Commission as the body to review and approve proposed conditional uses.
2. Establish three levels of review criteria to guide the decisions of the Planning & Zoning Commission.
 - a) General subjective review criteria regarding a use's "fit" in the area where proposed. For example, one criterion could be that "the proposed use must be designed to be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and conform to the purposes of the District".

- b) Specific numerical regulations (in tables) that differ from the basic district regulations such as lot width, building setbacks and parking setbacks.
- c) Unique standards for specific uses such as placement and screening of parking lots, loading areas, dumpsters, etc.

Economic Development Policies

Economic development, which involves attracting new high quality, non-residential development to Willoughby Hills and supporting/enabling the expansion and/or redevelopment of existing businesses in the City, is necessary to increase the tax base and minimize the future tax burden on residential property owners. It is important that this new development occur in appropriate locations where it will have the least impact on adjacent residential uses.

The following policies were formulated to encourage economic development in Willoughby Hills.

A. Encourage light industrial or “quiet industrial” development along Curtis Wright Parkway near the airport. This area, which is predominantly vacant, is now zoned residential, yet is directly across the street from the Cuyahoga County airport. Since Curtis Wright Parkway serves an industrial park with existing industrial development on parcels outside Willoughby Hills, it is more suitable for industrial development than for single-family development.

- 1. The parcels along Curtis Wright Parkway should be rezoned to a new light industrial district in order to prohibit further residential development and to reserve land for additional economic development.
- 2. Encourage offices and light industrial uses whose operations are conducted entirely indoors.

B. Pursue the concept of a “City Center” in the Chardon/S.O.M. Center location. Traditionally, the “city center” is the heart of a community, where cultural, social and business activities are typically concentrated. Also, it is often the most identifiable physical expression of that community’s identity. Therefore, establishment of such a place is critical to conveying the City’s image to the rest of the world and creating a sense of community for current residents.

There already exists a substantial amount of commercial and office development at or very near the intersection, which is sufficient to provide the nucleus for the city center. The City Hall, police station, new fire station, the recreation center at Roemisch Field, and St. Noel’s Church are congregated at the eastern end of the city center area with vacant or underutilized parcels located between City Hall and the Chardon/S.O.M. Center intersection.

- 1. Elements of a “city center” include:
 - a) A mix of civic, retail and offices uses that are concentrated enough to encourage pedestrian activity and interaction among the uses. Commercial

uses and public/semi-public uses already exist in this area and should be considered as types of “anchors” or focal points for the city center.

- b) An integrated, functional and attractive environment achieved through design guidelines that require continuity and compatibility of signage, landscaping, building design and circulation.
 - c) Uses that are centered around or visually and functionally linked to some type of design feature, either open space or public plaza, which serves as a community focal point.
2. The “City Center” policies are summarized below and are illustrated on Map 7 page 49.
- a) Establish the “City Center” boundaries to include land east along Chardon Road to City Hall in order to link the existing government and park facilities with the commercial center.
 - b) Utilize the existing commercial and office development and public uses as “anchors” to begin to organize and design the city center.
 - c) Whenever the opportunity presents itself, continue to concentrate similar civic, public/semi-public uses in the city center area. The public investments that have been made for the new fire station and that are planned for the recreation center can be a catalyst to help create and organize the city center.
 - d) Encourage development and redevelopment of the area, with slightly higher density than what is currently permitted, while maintaining a more campus-oriented development characterized by an abundance of green space.
 - e) Encourage development closer to the road by permitting additional height for buildings located further from single-family homes.
 - f) Non-single-family development in this area should be oriented so that it fronts on S.O.M. Center Road or Chardon Road to help protect the single-family environment that surrounds this center.
 - g) Increase rear development standards – building and parking setbacks and screening requirements - to provide greater protection to abutting single family development.
 - h) Primarily rely on private development to provide the necessary supporting uses. Ensure that private development is consistent with the specific design and development standards formulated for this area. Any new development should be visually and functionally linked to the existing facilities.

C. Promote a more traditional Mixed-Use Commercial Center in the Bishop/Chardon Road commercial area (centered around the “Shops at Willoughby Hills”). This area already has a variety of uses that co-exist.

1. Elements of a more traditional Mixed-Use Commercial Center include:
 - a) Multi-story buildings (more than 2) that are devoted to retail uses on the ground floor and offices and/or residential uses on the upper stories.
 - b) Higher density compact development that is concentrated enough and properly designed to encourage pedestrian activity and interaction among the uses. Multi-family higher density buildings surround the current “big-box” commercial development but because each was independently developed there are few intentionally/pleasantly designed pedestrian connections.
 - c) Integrated design elements including signs, landscaping, building design and circulation that establish an attractive pleasant environment reminiscent of European cities and villages.
 - d) Uses that are centered around or visually and functionally linked to some type of community focal point or public gathering space that enables and encourages more social interaction.
2. Policies for this area are summarized below and illustrated on Map 8 on page 51.
 - a) Confine the “Mixed Use Center” area to the existing commercial uses and commercial district boundaries.
 - b) Encourage higher density compact development only on the northwest quadrant where buildings are desired to be occupied by a mix of uses, including offices, retail, restaurants, residential, and entertainment.
 - c) Maintain the existing lower density character along the east side of Bishop Road and the south side of Chardon Road.
 - d) Establish development standards that require buildings to be located closer to the street with parking areas located behind or to the side of the buildings or in parking garages to reduce the visual impact of cars;
 - e) Promote increased density through allowance for taller buildings (above the two story limit) in return for constructing parking structures in order to reduce the amount of surface parking.

D. Enhance these two “Centers” to create, in each location, a unique sense of place that contributes to the overall identity and image of the City. While the two existing commercial centers have very different functions, characteristics and surroundings, the following development policies are appropriate for both locations to help establish and enhance a “Willoughby Hills” image and identity:

1. Establish detailed site development standards, such as increased landscaping requirements, and improved vehicular/ pedestrian circulation patterns.

2. Require design elements for signs, landscaping, etc that are common to both centers to help ensure continuity.
3. Require pedestrian oriented amenities to encourage walkable environments; and
4. Establish design guidelines to enable more detailed review of buildings and public spaces.

E. Promote the South Side of I-90/S.O.M. Center interchange area as an office environment to take advantage of the prime location at the interchange. Offices are already located at the southwest quadrant of the interchange, and older vacant buildings exist across the street. This area is a prime gateway into the City for those who travel I-90. High quality offices that are similar in character to the existing office development will enhance both the tax base and the City’s image.

1. Modify the current E Research District to accommodate the desired type and density of office development and apply the district to this area to enable office development.
2. Restrict the application to only the areas where offices exist or are currently proposed.



Figure 9: The Cleveland Clinic Foundation

F. Promote the Northeast Quadrant of the I-90/S.O.M. Center interchange area as a mixed-use commercial environment to take advantage of the prime location at the interchange. The BP gasoline station is already located just north of the entrance ramp and there is still some developable land behind the gas station and along Maple Grove Road, between the Willoughby border and the I-90 highway. This area is a prime location for additional economic development and new commercial and office development would be sufficiently bounded by the highway to have no impact on the existing residential development in Willoughby Hills and.

1. Encourage a range of uses in this area, including offices, retail, restaurants, entertainment, and higher density residential by applying the new B-1A district to this area.
2. Require integrated design elements including signs, landscaping, building design and circulation that establish an attractive environment suitable to be Willoughby Hill’s “front door”.

G. Maintain but do not expand the small, **scattered commercial sites** along Chardon Road. Chardon Road is predominately residential except for these few sites. These commercial structures predate the zoning and the commercial zoning designation was given to avoid creating nonconforming situations. However, the current B Commercial District allows a much larger range of uses than is appropriate for this residential corridor. These commercial sites should be more stringently regulated to protect the surrounding uses.

1. Create a new B-2 limited commercial district that allows a more limited range of nonresidential uses.

2. Establish development standards that are tailored to accommodate the existing commercial development along Chardon Road
3. Rezone the existing sites to this district to avoid non-conforming use status and to encourage the existing structures to be properly maintained.
4. BUT, do not expand the B-2 zoning boundaries beyond the current Chardon Road sites.



Figure 10: Scattered Commercial Businesses on Chardon Road



Figure 11: Scattered Commercial Businesses on Chardon Road

Community Image, Identity, and Community Facilities

Improving Willoughby Hills’ image and community identity starts with improving the “front door” appearance. The entrances into the City and the quality of development along the major highways, the routes most travelers take through the community, establish the City’s image and, rightly or wrongly, create a perception of the overall quality of the community. In addition, a resident’s pride in his/her community is tied to the quality of his/her immediate neighborhood.

A major focal point – like the “City Center” discussed previously – helps to create a sense of community for current residents and convey the City’s image to the rest of the world since it is often the most identifiable physical landmark of the community.

The following policies seek to improve Willoughby Hill’s image and identity.

A. Promote higher quality development.

1. Improve/maintain the quality and character of streetscapes and buildings located at City entrances, gateways and key intersections, and along important corridors, by enhancing the visual characteristics of areas that serve as the City’s “front door”.
2. Adopt landscaping and streetscape standards for commercial areas. These standards could address screening of



Figure 12: Example of Installed Landscaping

parked automobiles, sign regulations, requirements for street trees, and the required/preferred types of landscaping and plants, which together serve to create a cohesive area.

3. Adopt a commercial maintenance code to ensure that, once constructed, buildings and their sites are properly maintained. A commercial maintenance code would address issues that are not regulated by the zoning or building code, including grass cutting, weeds, painting, staining and overall aesthetics of the property.

B. Create an improved community image for residents and non-residents when they think of Willoughby Hills, such as the “Garden Spot of Lake County.”

1. Encourage residents to invest in properties to improve overall city appearance.
2. Encourage “city cleanup” programs that aim to do things like reduce litter or to cleanup city gateways.
3. Work toward improving existing older neighborhoods, and enhancing the quality of new neighborhoods.
 - a) Upgrade existing roads to current engineering standards including installing curbs and gutters, where needed, and re-surfacing/rebuilding roads to meet minimum width requirements.
 - b) Plan and implement upgrades to existing neighborhoods so that they occur concurrently. For example, when the installation of sanitary sewers are planned and additional improvements such as sidewalks, re-paving or installation of a curb and gutter system are also desired, then all the improvements should be done at the same time to help minimize the negative impacts of such construction.
 - c) Install public utilities in areas where private septic systems are failing and where the presence and capacity of the current utility lines enables the extension.

C. Create a greater sense of community among residents by establishing a “city center” in the Chardon Road/S.O.M. Center Road area as previously described. It is important that the city center be a place where people can congregate for many reasons, both formally in scheduled events and informally in spontaneous events; where people in the community can relate and gain a sense of civic pride.

D. Focus transportation improvements on key corridors and at key gateways to improve traffic flow and circulation. Manage traffic at intersections instead of widening streets for capacity; limit new curb cuts and consolidate existing curb cuts to permit signalization if warranted, particularly along Bishop Road, Chardon Road and S.O.M. Center Road.

E. Promote the development (or redevelopment) of schools in Willoughby Hills. Schools are community facilities that spur community pride and interest. Difficulties exist, however, when a particular school building is not used as a school facility due to a drop in enrollment. Typically the building remains vacant until the school district decides if the reduction is likely to be long-term. Willoughby Hills has two schools that are no longer used by the Willoughby Eastlake School District. If and when it is determined that either building

is no longer needed as a district facility, the City should promote adaptive re-use of these buildings for residential purposes.

- F. **Establish partnerships with other jurisdictions/agencies on regional issues.** As communities become more aware of issues such as traffic, storm water management, open space and hike/bike networks that extend beyond the invisible boundaries that divide one city from another, it becomes more important to work cooperatively to jointly seek solutions to these issues.
- G. **Work cooperatively with adjoining communities** to ensure that the impacts of development along the city's borders are properly managed to the benefit of all affected property owners.

Open Space, Natural Resources, and Recreation

Residents in the City of Willoughby Hills are fortunate to have two of the region's natural jewels in their community. The North Chagrin Reservation, which is part of the Cleveland Metroparks Emerald Necklace, and the Chagrin River Valley are significant resources. Increasing access to these community facilities and protecting these treasured environments are key goals for the City.

- A. **Create and encourage the use of green space and pedestrian/bikeway networks throughout the community.**
 - 1. Create a solid network of bike, pedestrian, bridle or other type of paths/trails between the City's neighborhoods and the various recreational venues within the city.
 - 2. Encourage linkages with neighboring cities and their bike/hike systems and implement strategies/systems that complement adjoining systems to ensure maximum compatibility and to create a truly regional approach to recreational trails.
 - 3. Priority for the bike/pedestrian path should be as follows:
 - a) Any state route in which the state is willing to include money for bike/pedestrian paths should be a first priority. More specifically, these include Chardon Road from the Richmond Heights border to the North Chagrin Metropark, and S.O.M. Center from the Mayfield border to the Willoughby border.
 - b) Absent state funds, if the City chooses to provide bike/pedestrian paths on their own, project funding should be prioritized in this order:



Figure 13: Pedestrian Trails in the Chagrin Reservation

- 1) Phase I: A separated “Class I” bike trail system:¹²
 - Along Chardon Road from Bishop Road to Buttermilk Falls Parkway; and
 - Along S.O.M. Center connecting to the existing Mayfield bike route and leading north to the Willoughby border.

This system should be separated from the roadway and capable of two-way bike/pedestrian traffic. North of Chardon Road, the path could be located along or near the I-271 right-of-way. While it may be difficult to construct a bike path over the I-90 expressway, this should be a priority connection in order to provide a link to the larger regional hike/bike network.

- 2) Phase II: A combined “Class II” bike system:¹²
 - Along Rockefeller Road, between Chardon Road and Eddy Road;
 - Along White Road to S.O.M. Center Road;
 - From White Road to Chardon Road via Rockefeller Road.
 - And completing the loop with a link from White Road to Chardon Road via Bishop Road.

This system may be a painted shoulder attached to the roadway capable of separating two-way vehicular traffic from bike/pedestrian traffic.

- 3) Phase III: River Road (SR 174) separated “Class I” system¹² that runs the length of Route 174 to accommodate bike traffic on the east side of Willoughby Hills. There should be a connector from Route 174 to the Chardon Road separated system at Buttermilk Parkway. Due to the nature of Route 174, this system should be separated from the roadway and capable of two-way bike/pedestrian traffic.
- c) Despite the priorities listed above, the City should stay abreast of potential funding opportunities and be ready to pursue any of these desired links when available funding dictates one route over another, even if the potential route is not the highest priority.

4. New residential developments that are built adjacent to an existing or proposed bike path should provide connections to the path to enable residents to take advantage of the network system envisioned.

B. Establish specific development restrictions that protect environmental resources. There are many undeveloped areas within the Chagrin River Valley’s adjacent floodway and stream banks where development constructed according to the current zoning could jeopardize the quality of the natural environment. In addition to the open space requirement for Conservation Development, regulations should be adopted that apply to all development in the vicinity of the various natural resources found in the City. The following forms of environmental regulations should be further explored to protect lands adjacent to rivers and

¹² For definitions and selection criteria see Appendix E, pages 87-88.

streams and to help prevent the proliferation of development related impacts such as flooding.

1. Riparian setbacks along rivers and streams, which would prohibit development within the setback. The required setbacks should be related to the quality of soils and slope of the riverbank.
2. Buffers around designated wetlands.

When developing local environmental regulations, the City should be guided by the policies already established for the Chagrin River by the Chagrin River Watershed Partners. These regulations should have sufficient flexibility to preserve property rights and enable the City, when reviewing a project, to determine which natural features and open space areas are most important to protect.



Figure 14: Natural Areas in the Riparian Corridor Along the Chagrin River

- C. Promote the maintenance and upkeep of natural areas** (i.e. through flood prevention measures, etc.) in the Chagrin River area, so that the environment is preserved for future generations. Proper management and maintenance of these natural areas is key to the preservation of the community's natural heritage and historic landscapes as well as enabling opportunities for recreational use of the River.
- D. Promote, enhance, and strengthen the existing municipal active park space.** The City has municipal multi-purpose fields that act as a community gathering spot for residents, especially families with children, who actively participate in baseball, softball and/or soccer leagues, to name a few. It is important that these facilities are maintained and strengthened, and that the City develops a plan for long-term improvement.
- E. Work cooperatively with adjoining jurisdictions** to develop a comprehensive storm water management plan that complies with the federally mandated Storm Water Management Phase II requirements.

Chapter 6: Implementation Strategies

This comprehensive plan accomplishes two things: it serves as a guide for future land use decisions and it states the City’s goals for future partnerships and relationships that have a direct effect on the quality of life and development in the City. The following are implementation measures needed to achieve these policies:

- ❖ Zoning Text Amendments
- ❖ Zoning Map Amendments
- ❖ Administrative Policies and Procedural Changes

Zoning Text Amendments

Zoning is the City’s fundamental tool to accomplish many of the land use policies in this Plan. A number of new zoning districts are suggested to ensure that policies established in Chapter 5 are implemented to the fullest, each to be carefully crafted to achieve the specific goals and objectives previously noted. Other suggested amendments involve modifying or adding new development standards, which in some cases include specific numerical standards. These numbers are intended to serve as a guide and should be evaluated further by the Planning Commission and Council at the time the Zoning Code is amended to ensure that the appropriate numerical standards are ultimately adopted.

Table 9 indicates the existing and proposed zoning districts. The new zoning districts are shown in bold type.

<u>Existing Districts</u>	<u>Proposed Districts</u>
R Single Family	R-1 Single Family Residential <i>(amended)</i> R-2 Townhouse Residential SCRO Senior Citizens Residential Overlay
M Multi-Family	M Multi-Family
M-1 High-Rise Apartment	M-1 High-Rise Apartment
B Commercial	B-1 Commercial Campus/Mixed Use B-1A Commercial/Mixed Use B-2 Limited Commercial
E Research and Office	E Research and Office <i>(amended)</i> I-1 Light Industrial

The following amendments to the City’s zoning code are necessary to ensure that the regulations enable development to occur according to the policies stated in this plan. These changes are most effective when implemented as part of a complete review and update of the entire Willoughby Hills

Planning and Zoning Code. It is possible, but less efficient, to create new districts or modify existing districts in a more incremental way.

A. Residential District Changes

1. Maintain the R Single Family District and rename as R-1 for clarity and distinction between this district and any new adopted or modified residential district.
2. As a development option in the existing R-1 Single Family District, provide for the flexible arrangement of dwelling units in order to maximize preservation of open spaces and significant natural features, while maintaining the same number of dwelling units that would otherwise be permitted for standard lot development.

The key regulations for Conservation Development include:

- a) Establishing regulations that permit the same number of dwelling units in a conservation development as would be achievable in a standard subdivision. One way to determine the potential number of dwelling units for a particular parcel is to establish a maximum density that replicates the typical density of a standard subdivision. For example, establishing a maximum density of about 0.85 dwelling units per acre for a conservation development approximates the effective density of a standard one-acre lot subdivision. The effective density, as shown in Table 10, takes into consideration the land area within a subdivision that is devoted to roads and the fact that not all of the lots in a subdivision are exactly one acre in size.

For example, a 100-acre parcel, subdivided into one-acre lots, will typically yield 85 lots. Many of the lots will be larger than the one-acre minimum and a portion of the 100 acres is used for road right-of-way.

**Table 10
Determination of Approximate Effective Density**

Statistical density per acre	1.00 unit per acre
Minimum lot area	43,560 sq feet (1 acre)
PLUS additional area devoted to road per lot (based on lot width x 1/2 right-of-way)	+ 3,000 sq feet 100 ft x 30 ft)
Subtotal	46,560 sq feet
PLUS inefficient lot layout*	+ 4,656 sq feet (+10%)
Total area assigned to lot	51,116 sq feet
Effective density per acre	0.85 unit per acre
* The inefficiency of a development varies depending on the size and shape of the development site.	

The total number of permitted dwelling units for a particular project would be determined by multiplying the total project area by the permitted density. This is an easy calculation to determine the development potential of a project.

However, this manner of determining density would not be a guaranteed number of dwelling units since the topography and other natural features on a parcel must also be assessed, see item d) below.

- b) Require a minimum of 20% to 40% of the project area to be designated as restricted open space and clearly state that all such open space is restricted (that is, prohibited) from future development.
- c) Establish design criteria and priorities for the layout and design of the restricted open space to ensure that the project preserves the site's worthy natural features in a way that achieves the goals of the Conservation Development Regulations. This list of priorities should mirror the priorities in the Policy section of this Plan, and should reflect the overall desires of the community. However, priorities on a specific site may vary if the City feels that the certain natural features are more significant on a particular piece of property.

Priorities for conservation efforts are listed below, from highest to lowest priority:

- 1) Riparian Zones (lands adjacent to rivers and streams)
- 2) Wetlands and Floodplains
- 3) Steep Slopes and Hillside Areas
- 4) Woodlands
- 5) Wildlife Habitat Areas
- 6) Fields, Meadows, and Hedgerows
- 7) Scenic Views and Rural Roads via Scenic Corridor Management
- 8) Rural Structures (Barns, stone walls, fences, etc.)

These preservation priorities should be considered based on their existence on a site-by-site basis. They may also change based on future studies of natural resources by such entities as the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District.

- d) Many times with a lot size of one acre or more, unbuildable area can be incorporated into a standard single-family lot. Therefore, to encourage conservation development as an alternative to conventional single-family subdivisions, regulations should be established that recognize, depending on the size, shape and location of wetlands, water bodies and floodplains, these features and may or may not limit the development potential of a site.
 - 1) Permit land in wetlands, water bodies and floodplains to be counted toward an overall density when they are protected as part of the open space network, and do not exceed the required amount of restricted open space. This recognizes that in a standard one-acre lot subdivision, many

times, smaller areas of floodplain, etc. can be included in a lot's rear yard without affecting the overall density.

- 2) When it is likely that the size and/or shape of the wetlands, water bodies and floodplains reduce the overall development potential of a standard subdivision then the permitted density should be reduced appropriately.
 - When a wetland, water body, floodplain, or combination, exceeds the area required to be set aside as restricted open space, the excess is to be deducted from the total project area, and
 - The area deducted should not be used in the calculating the permitted number of lots.
- e) Allow for the flexible arrangement of units within the project site by allowing but not requiring units to be on subdivided lots.
- f) Allow units to be arranged/grouped closer together within the project while ensuring that a sufficient setback is maintained along existing streets and the perimeter of the project in order to create an adequate buffer area when adjacent to standard single-family lots by:
 - 1) Establishing both standard setback regulations (in the event individual lots are included) as well as separation requirements for “building envelopes” since the standard setbacks work only when lot lines exist. The standards should achieve the same results in terms of the distances between homes.
 - 2) Consider allowing homes and “building envelopes” to be located:
 - Closer to a new interior project street than the current minimum front setback of 75 feet;
 - Between 20 and 30 feet apart side by side (to be determined when legislation is drafted, so that the distance is reduced to permit greater flexibility in the arrangement of units);
 - 100 to 120 feet apart rear to rear compared to the current typical distance of 500 to 600 feet. The current minimum rear yard requirement is only 15 feet, yet few houses are located all the way to the rear of the parcel and are more typically located at or near the minimum 75-foot front yard setback resulting, on average, rear yard depths of 250 to 300 feet.
 - 3) Allow the option for private streets and, in certain situations, permit a reduced right-of-way width for internal public streets and reduced front setbacks along such rights-of-way to enable more flexibility and a greater ability to achieve the open space requirements.
- g) Require the perpetual maintenance of restricted open space. Include requirements for the establishment of a mechanism such as a homeowners association to protect and maintain the open space. This can also be achieved alternatively through the involvement of a land trust or other type of conservation organization that agrees to be responsible for the maintenance of the open space. The homeowners association covenants and restrictions are to be submitted at the time the proposed project is reviewed by the City and

reviewed and approved by the Law Director as a condition of approval of the entire project.

- h) Require review of projects by the Planning Commission to ensure that the objectives of the Conservation Development Regulations are accomplished with the proposed development.
 - i) Allow Conservation Development to be an option to standard subdivision, as a use permitted by right. As an alternative, Conservation Development could be categorized as a conditional use, however, if the regulations and criteria described above are in place, Conservation Development should be compatible with the surrounding development and therefore does not require the extra type of review required for conditional uses. Another option would be to create an overlay districts so that the option for conservation developments is permitted only in selected locations.
3. Create a new R-2 Townhouse Residential District to permit higher density townhouse or cluster development to act as a logical “step down” transition next to a more intense use where single family, one-acre lot minimums may not be realistic, but a residential environment is still desired by the community:
- a) Permit single family attached or detached units at a similar density to those developments already located in Willoughby Hills – Pebblebrook and Steeple Run (maximum density of 4 to 5 units/acre).
 - b) Require a minimum project size of 3 to 5 acres so that there are at least 12 to 20 units to a project, which is large enough to create a sustainable residential environment.
 - c) Require a minimum of two enclosed parking spaces per dwelling unit.
 - d) Require strict buffering along project boundaries that adjoin commercial development or single-family development.
 - 1) Require large buffers against commercial development to ensure long-term success and resale of units in the future. Ideally the burden should be on the commercial development to provide the buffer, but when a new residential project is constructed adjacent to an existing commercial development, the screening will need to be provided by the residential developer.
 - 2) Large buffers against single-family development are necessary for the project to truly act as a transition between commercial and residential property.
4. Create a Senior Residential Overlay District that permits the type of development typically desired by older adults whether it be in a multi-family environ, an attached single-family environ, or a detached single-family environ.
- a) Require a 10-acre minimum project size.

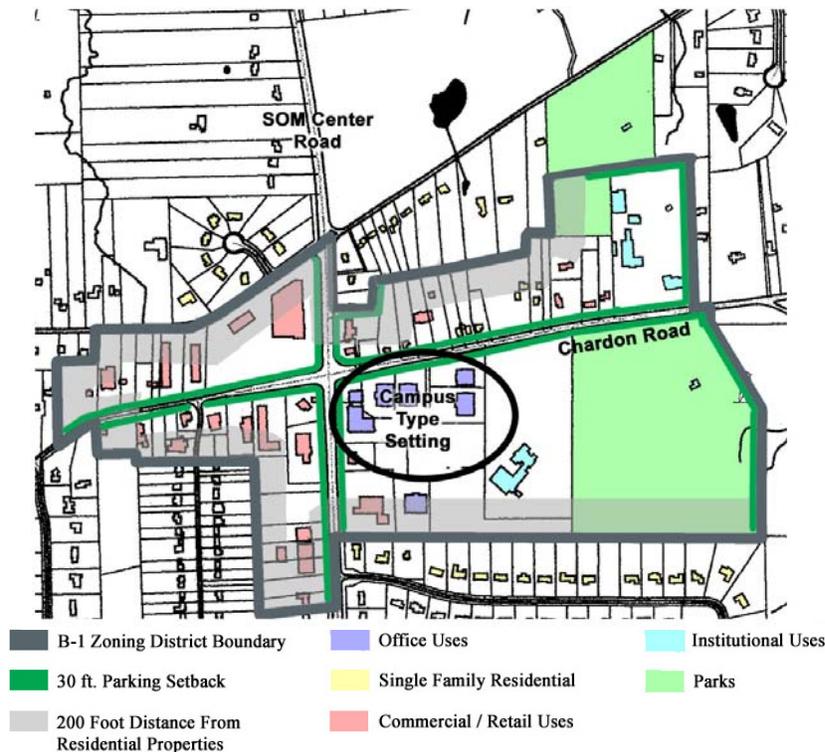
- b) Permit a density ranging between 2 and 12 units per acre depending on site location, surrounding characteristics, and if the development is of a cluster or attached single-family nature. Congregate senior housing in one enclosed building should be permitted up to 20 units per acre.
 - c) Establish development regulations that recognize the potential for reduced housing needs of senior citizens when the housing is reserved for older persons according to the Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995 as specified in the Fair Housing Act:
 - 1) Reduce dwelling unit floor area standards for senior citizen housing.
 - 2) Reduce parking requirements for units in a senior citizen development.
 - d) Draft development regulations to ensure that the project design provides for pedestrian connections to appropriate amenities and services.
 - e) When used as a transitional use between commercial and low density residential, the highest intensity use should be located closest to the commercial areas, and the intensity should logically flow to the lowest intensity use adjacent to the low-density residential land. This should be part of the consideration in the site plan review process.
5. Establish environmental regulations such as riparian setbacks and wetland buffers that protect sensitive natural areas by prohibiting development within a certain distance of these features. Local regulations should be guided by the policies and recommended standards established by the Chagrin River Watershed Partners.

B. Nonresidential District Changes

The City currently has only one commercial district and one research/office district. In order to properly regulate and manage the various types of retail, office, industrial, and mixed-use developments prescribed in these policies, it is necessary to create separate and distinct zoning districts for each.

1. Revise the current B Commercial District to be a mixed-use district. Rename to be called B-1 Commercial Campus/Mixed Use and apply this district to the Chardon Road and S.O.M. Center Road intersection (City Center). See Map 7 for an indication of the potential boundaries of this revised B-1 District.
 - a) Revise the list of permitted uses to enable smaller scale retail/office operations in a campus mixed use center:
 - 1) Consider deleting auto sales as a permitted use.
 - 2) Add multifamily as a conditional use.
 - 3) Prohibit outdoor storage.

**Map 7
B-1 Commercial Campus / Mixed Use District
(S.O.M. Center/Chardon Road)**

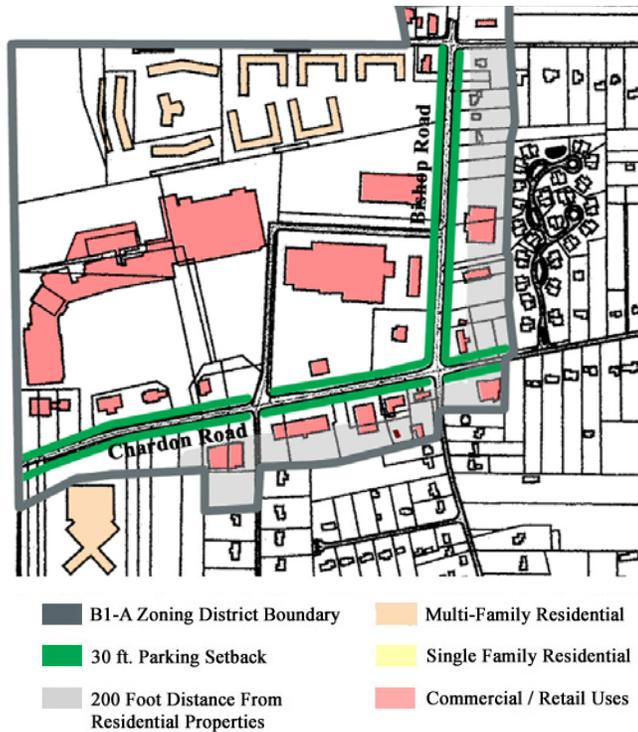


- b) In order to ensure a more pedestrian oriented atmosphere within the “city center”, several amendments to the existing standards should be considered:

- 1) Reduce the minimum building setback from Chardon Road and S.O.M. Center Road to 30 feet from the street right-of-way to promote pedestrian activity and to keep the visual scale of a small town commercial district. The current standard requires a setback of 100 feet from the centerline of a state route, which results in a setback of approximately 45 feet.
 - 2) Add a front parking setback requirement of 30 feet to create a substantial green area along the existing streets.
 - 3) Encourage the building site layouts, parking and on-site vehicular and pedestrian circulation to logically relate to adjacent parcels.
 - 4) Permit off site parking for commercial and residential uses:
 - Encourage joint venture parking lots among building owners to encourage parking away from the street.
 - Provide a square foot bonus structure for developments whose buildings front on either S.O.M. Center or Chardon Road and which provide for parking in ways that diminish the visual appearance of cars along these roads. Allow this bonus to be also be used by property owners who jointly provide parking off site.
- c) Maintain the maximum two (2) story building height within 200 feet of a residential property line. Permit three (3) story buildings when located at least 200 feet from the residential boundary.
 - d) Establish regulations for screening and buffering when adjacent to residential districts.
 - e) Require 30% to 40% of site area be comprised of landscaping and establish specific landscaping/planting requirements in the following locations:
 - 1) Along street frontages and in the fronts of buildings.
 - 2) Along the perimeter of parking lots to soften their appearance.
 - 3) In the interior of parking lots to reduce the large expanse of pavement.
 - 4) Where possible, storm water management and landscaping/buffering should work together. Landscaping islands and front or side yard setbacks could provide for integrated retention systems into them while still providing the landscaping desired by the community. This will help to minimize the impact of development on surface water runoff and flooding.
 - f) Revise parking guidelines:
 - 1) Require four (4) to five (5) spaces for every 1,000 sq ft of enclosed retail compared to the current parking standard that requires the parking area to be three times the ground floor area used for retail business or commerce.
 - 2) Require multi-family uses to have 1.5 to 2 spaces for every unit.

2. Create a new B-1A higher density mixed use commercial district with development standards appropriate for the existing shopping center located on the northwest quadrant of the Chardon Road and Bishop Road Intersection. See Map 8 for an indication of the potential boundaries of the new B-1A District.
 - a) The types of uses permitted are similar to those that are permitted in the B-1 with the following additions:
 - 1) Gasoline stations as a permitted use.
 - 2) Multi-family as a conditional use.
 - 3) Drive-thru facilities as a conditional use.
 - 4) Auto sales as a permitted use.

Map 8
B-1A Commercial / Mixed Use District
(Bishop/Chardon Road)



- b) Increase the maximum building height to encourage multi-story, mixed-use and more intense development.
 - 1) Building height bonuses may be granted when the developer agrees to provide structured parking to significantly reduce or eliminate surface parking.
 - 2) The 200-foot single-family residential separation (for height bonuses) as used in the B-1 district, would essentially prohibit more intense development along the east side of Bishop and the south side of Chardon Road.

3. Create a new B-2 limited commercial district to maintain the existing scattered commercial sites on Chardon Road.
 - a) Establish a very narrow range of permitted uses that essentially reflects the existing land uses.
 - b) Tailor the minimum lot area, lot width and yard requirements to accommodate buildings and sites

4. Create a new I-1 Light Industrial zoning district that restricts the types of industrial uses permitted and ensures that new development does not negatively impact the western portion of the City:
 - a) Permitted uses are to include the following:
 - 1) Offices;
 - 2) Light manufacturing/assembly;
 - 3) Repair services;
 - 4) Equipment sales; and
 - 5) Outdoor storage of fleet vehicles that are used in the operation of the manufacturing establishment. Other outdoor storage such as storage of supplies or scrap would not be permitted.
 - b) Proposed development standards include:
 - 1) Lot Area and Width: Require a minimum lot area of one acre and a minimum lot width of 150 feet.
 - 2) Front Yard Requirements: Require a building setback of 40 feet from Curtis Wright Parkway or other internal industrial park street, and for corner lots, a minimum of 100 feet from Bishop Road.
 - 3) Yard Requirements when Abutting Residential: Maintain a minimum buffer area of at least 50 feet for all buildings and 30 feet for all parking lots when the lot is adjacent to a residential zoning district.
 - 4) Parking Setbacks: Establish a parking setback of 60 feet from the right-of-way of Bishop Road and other streets that are not internal industrial park streets, (same as recommended for buildings). Establish a 20-foot parking setback from an interior street.
 - 5) Require significant buffering along property lines adjoining residential property. Significant buffering shall consist of materials designed to screen the residential property from view to a height of up to 6 feet.
 - 6) Establish performance standards that regulate various operational aspects such as requiring that there be no light trespass, glare, or other nuisance past the property boundary of the Industrial property.

5. Revise the E Research and Office district to include administrative, medical, and other professional offices and apply this zone to the “Corporate I-90” area south of the I-90/S.O.M. Center intersection.

- b) Permit development and expansion subject to development plan review.
- c) Establish landscaping, buffering, lighting, and other development standards appropriate for office development when adjacent to residential zones.
- d) Permit performance bonuses for office development for height, parking, landscaping and buffering.

C. Administrative/Procedural Changes

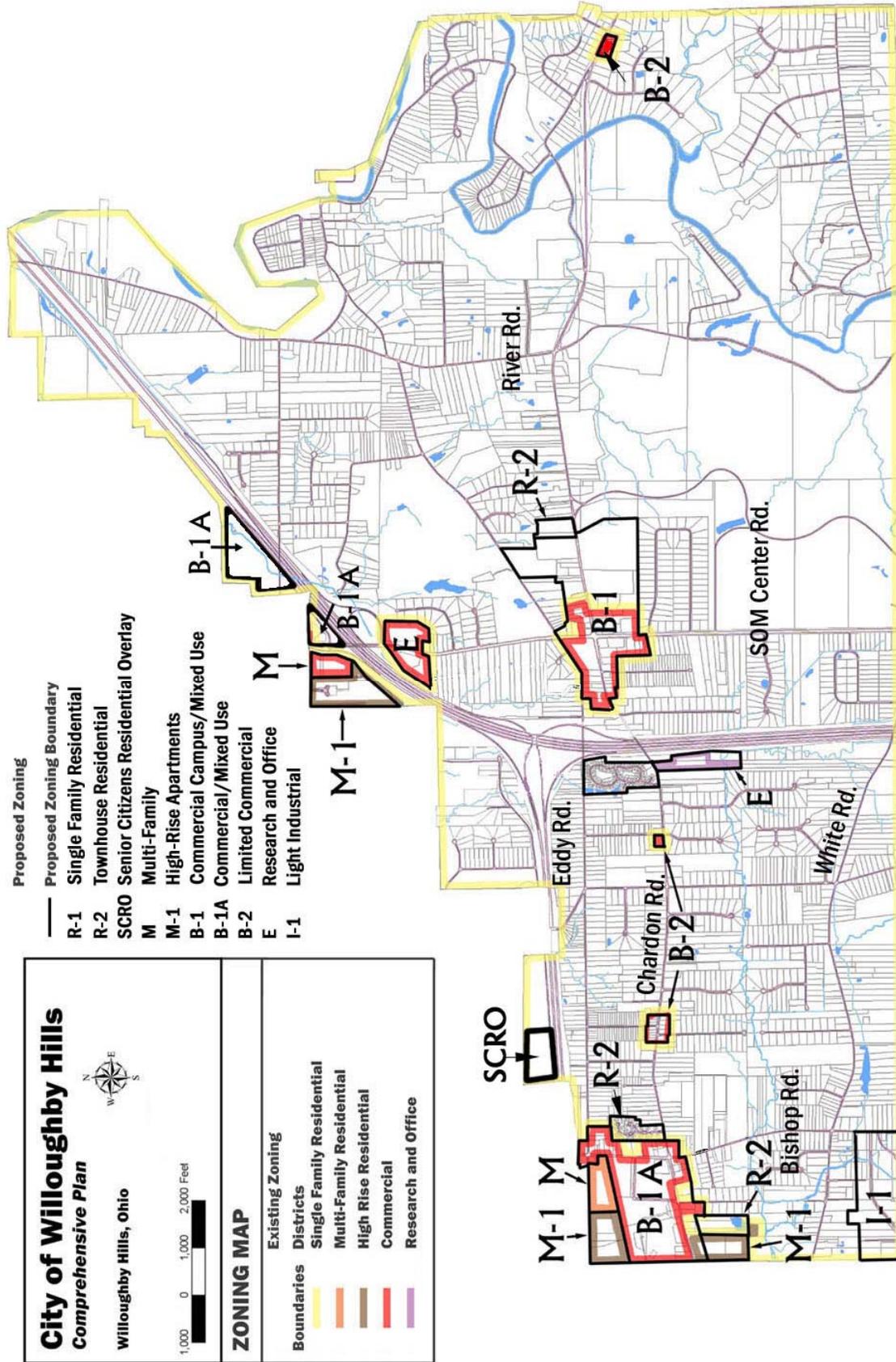
1. Create specific procedures for the review of large-scale commercial and residential development plans that are separate and distinct from the rezoning process and the architectural review process. Include specific approval criteria to guide decisions.
 - a) Require development plans to depict compliance with landscaping/planting requirements.
 - b) Require development plans to depict pedestrian circulation both internally within the specific site, and externally to other parcels.
 - 1) Internal pedestrian circulation shall be deliberately identified to denote specific circulation routes for the user.
 - 2) Pedestrian connections should connect to existing off-site pedestrian systems where possible, or should provide for these connections in the future should there be no pedestrian system adjacent to the development.
2. Create specific review criteria and procedures for conditional uses.
 - a) Include three levels of review for the Planning Commission's use in making conditional use determinations:
 - 1) General subjective review criteria regarding the use's "fit" in the area where proposed, (i.e., the proposed use is harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood, etc.).
 - 2) Specific regulations that differ from the district regulations such as lot width, building setbacks and parking setbacks.
 - 3) Standards that are unique to a particular use, such as spacing standards for group homes, maximum number of beds for a nursing home, etc. This is similar to the larger lot sizes required for churches, schools, etc in the residential districts.
 - b) Establish specific review procedures – i.e. requirements for a public hearing, time frame for notification to surrounding property owners, and time frame for Planning Commission action.
3. Establish a standard zoning amendment procedure that applies to all rezonings and zoning text amendments. There should be a specific process with submission requirements, time frames for review by the Planning Commission and Council, and public hearing requirements.

Suggested Zoning Map Amendments

The following zoning map amendments are recommended in order to implement the development policies established in Chapter 5. Map 9 on page 56, Suggested Zoning Amendments Map, identifies the areas where these suggested map amendments are located.

- A.** Rezone the following areas to the R-2 Townhouse District:
 - 1. The area immediately east of the B-1 City Center area land to act as a buffer or “step down” from mixed-use development to the surrounding residential.
 - 2. The area comprised of multiple contiguous vacant parcels on the south side of Chardon Road across the street from the Shops of Willoughby Hills (the B-1A), and adjacent to the M-1 District.
 - 3. The existing condominium developments, known as Pebblebrook Condominiums and Steeple Run Condominiums, which are now zoned for 1-acre single-family.
- B.** Consider application of the SCRO Senior Housing district on vacant land bordering Wickliffe behind the intersection of West Miller Road and Orchard Extension.
- C.** Rezone the commercial “city center” at S.O.M. Center and Chardon Roads to B-1 (same zone, different name), and expand the zoning to extend eastward to City Hall and Roemisch Field.
- D.** Rezone the following areas to the new B-1A District:
 - 1. The existing commercial area at the Bishop and Chardon Road intersection.
 - 2. The BP Gasoline Station area on the northeast quadrant of I-90/S.O.M. Center Road intersection.
 - 3. The parcels along Maple Grove Road, west of I-90 highway.
- E.** Rezone the small, scattered commercial parcels along Chardon Road to the new B-2 commercial district.
- F.** Rezone parcels along Curtis Wright Parkway to I-1 Light Industrial.
- G.** Rezone to the E-Office Research District the commercial area on S.O.M. Center Road, immediately south of the I-90 interchange.

Map 9
Suggested Zoning Amendments



Non-Zoning Implementation Steps

Some of the policy recommendations identified in Chapter 5 cannot be addressed solely through zoning. Therefore, in addition to the various zoning text and map amendments recommended in the previous sections, the following measures should be pursued to further implement the policies included in this Plan.

- A. Work with the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) to secure funding for multi-modal transportation improvements.
 - 1. Work with the State of Ohio DOT and NOACA to secure TEA-21 or other transportation grant money to include bike/pedestrian paths in state planned road improvement projects.
 - 2. Make fiscal contributions to a bike/pedestrian fund to ensure money is available for matching funds on such projects if necessary.

- B. Create a greater community identity by:
 - 1. Establishing design guidelines including:
 - a) Building design guidelines to encourage facades that attempt to replicate a neotraditional city center environment, regardless of the size of the buildings.
 - b) Sign and landscape planting guidelines to help create common themes and unity between the two major commercial areas of Willoughby Hills.
 - 2. Promote programming that helps to strengthen the external image of Willoughby Hills. Programs could include:
 - a) Code enforcement program.
 - b) General neighborhood improvement program.
 - c) Storefront renovation program.
 - d) Public streetscape improvement program to install special sidewalk treatments, banners, street furniture.
 - e) Commercial maintenance code.
 - 3. Promote programming that helps strengthen the internal quality of Willoughby Hills. Programs could include:
 - a) Expanded recreational programming (city funded or externally funded by leagues).
 - b) Enhanced community pride by improving the physical appearance of structures and sites within the City.

