

City of Conneaut 2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

January 22, 2018



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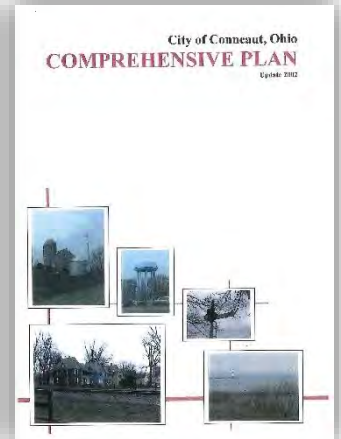
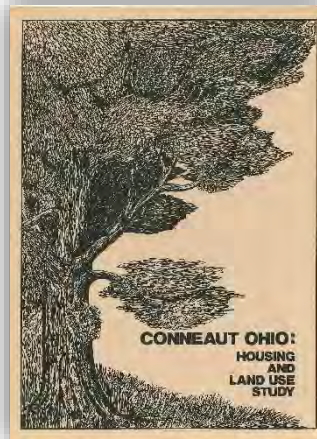
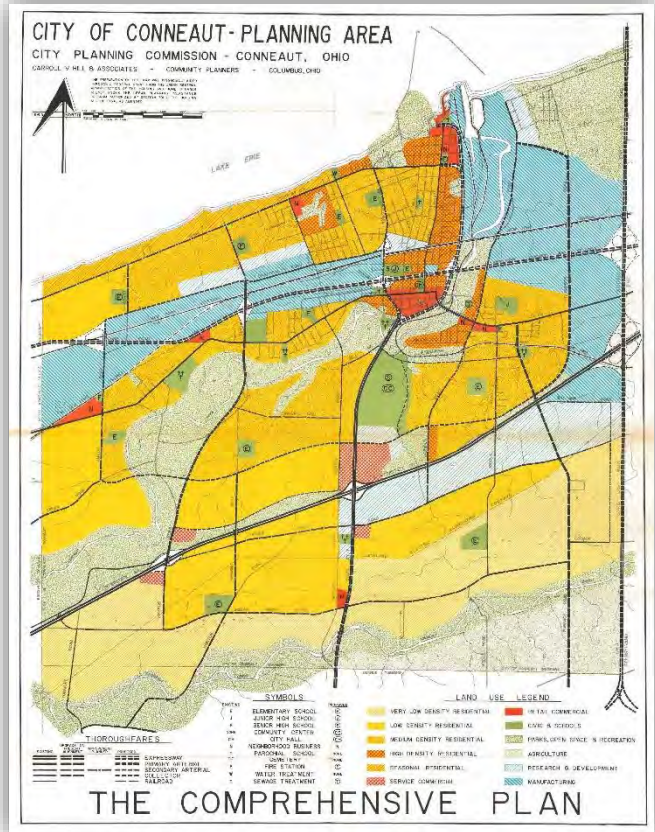


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The update of the Conneaut Comprehensive Plan has been a systematic and deliberative process of the Citizens Advisory Committee. Over the course of nine months, the committee met several times, conducted public meetings and obtained feedback from stakeholders, and presented a draft plan to the Conneaut Planning Commission and City Council. The resulting Plan Update is designed to be a working tool for many: the Planning Commission and Council in their decisions related to land-use policies and procedures as well as property owners and other stakeholders who wish to invest in our community. The purpose of the Plan is to provide both a vision and a pragmatic road map that will be used on an ongoing basis to guide the future of our City.

The City of Conneaut is grateful to the many interested persons who contributed to the formulation of the policies and recommendations contained in this Plan. Without such collective input, this Plan would not be as useful or complete. Furthermore, continued support is necessary for implementing the plan goals!

Advisory Committee

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Special thanks to the Conneaut Public Library, United Church of Christ, New Leaf Church, and Conneaut Human Resources Center for the use of their spaces for the advisory committee meetings and public forums.

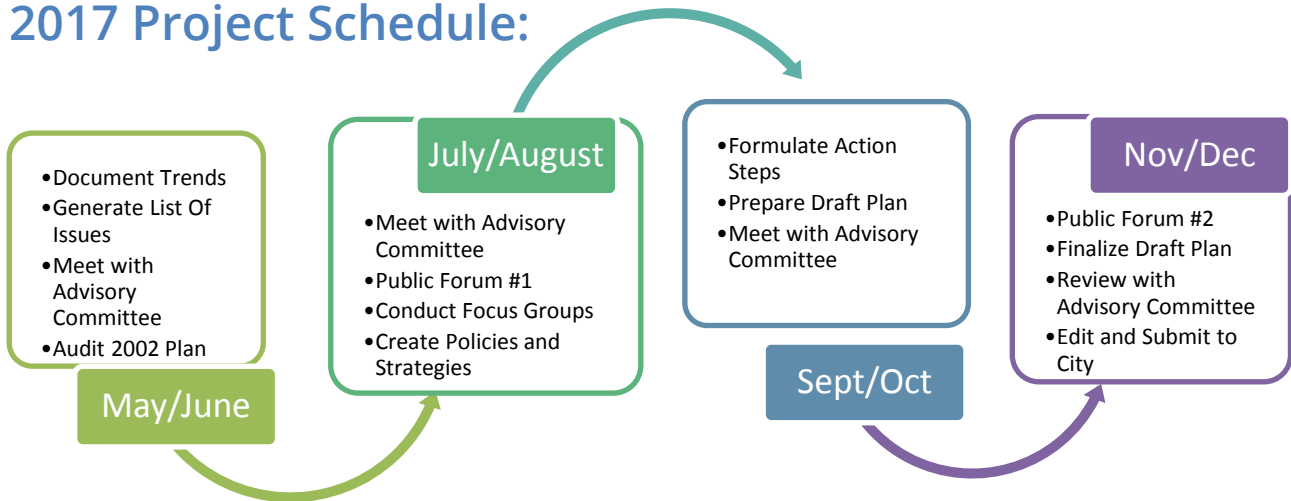
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

An advisory committee comprised of local citizens began work on Conneaut Comprehensive Plan Update in spring 2017. The project is funded by a \$70,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Coastal Management Access program, which enabled the city to hire a consulting firm, CT Consultants, to coordinate the work.

What is A Comprehensive Plan?

- A Set of policy statements (& maps) to guide future land use and physical development – which incorporates and updates the elements of the previous plans that are still relevant.
- A long-range outlook (10 years plus) for the future.
- Strategies and action steps to implement policies. This part of the Plan will provide a more comprehensive set of action steps which are prioritized to guide the City’s next steps. Many of the action steps will involve specific recommendations for changing the zoning districts, development standards and/or the zoning map.
- A guiding document, not regulatory. While the Plan will include recommended zoning changes, in order for the changes to actually be made, the City and Planning Commission will need to embark on a wholly separate process – drafting, reviewing and refining the zoning amendments (text and map), and holding the required public hearings.
- Involves public input to identify the City’s desired future and to ensure the plan’s policies and action steps are embraced by the community.

2017 Project Schedule:



Public Engagement Process

Citizens Advisory Committee

City Council appointed an ad hoc Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) comprised of over 30 citizens and stakeholders who had been deliberately selected so that a wide range of perspectives (e.g., business, housing, schools, recreation and other interests) were represented. The committee met seven times from May 2017 through December 2017 during the development of the Plan Update, with an additional review meeting with the Planning Commission. All of the meetings were open to the general public.

All of the members of the Planning Commission were part of the advisory committee for a number of reasons: they deal regularly with land use and zoning issues and therefore bring a broader perspective to the discussion, and attending the meetings and hearing the discussion among the committee members provides insights and a better understanding of the rationale for the policies, strategies and action steps, particularly the recommended zoning amendments. This understanding is helpful during the second step of updating the zoning code, when the recommendations are refined as formal zoning amendments.

Focus Group Sessions

To further understand specific issues and potential strategies for key areas, three focus group sessions were conducted in August, each devoted to a specific topic: the Lakeshore/Harbor area; the Downtown area; and Green Space Preservation, Management and Recreation. Invitees included resource persons knowledgeable about current conditions and best practices related to each topic, such as representatives from the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, the School Board, the Chamber of Commerce, the Conneaut Arts Center, as well as business and property owners from each of the areas.

Another method in which the planning process engaged the community as a whole was through two community-wide meetings that were held at strategic points in the process:

Public Forum #1

The first community-wide public forum took place on July 25, 2017 at the Conneaut Human Resources Center. Over fifty people attended including forty-five residents. The meeting began with a 45-minute presentation that included an explanation of the purpose and process of the Comprehensive Plan, an overview of the existing conditions and trends that shape and influence the future of Conneaut, a summary of the draft vision and city-wide goals, and draft policies for five focus areas/topics: the State Route 7/Interstate 90 Interchange, Downtown, the Lakefront/Harbor Area, Green Space Preservation and Management, and Community Character. The presentation provided the foundation to then begin the discussion of how the City can build on its strengths and overcome its challenges.

Afterward, attendees had a chance to express their opinions, respond to open ended questions and place stickers on specific actions that they felt were “important” or “not so important” (see examples below). The results of survey sheets are attached in Appendix C.

Public Forum #2

The second community-wide public meeting was held on November 28, 2017. At that meeting, committee members presented highlights of the Plan Update’s goals, policies, strategies and actions steps and asked attendees to help prioritize the implementation steps.

At the end of the public participation process, the CAC recommended the final draft of the Plan Update to the City Planning Commission and City Council for formal adoption.



GREENSPACE PRESERVATION / MANAGEMENT

Choose your preferred options for this focus area! Review the alternatives below and place a dot in the appropriate column you think is “Important”, “Not so important”, or “Not Sure” – Then, answer the questions on the right with a post-it or place a dot.

	Important	Not so Important	Not Sure
Add Walking Trail Along Conneaut Creek Connecting Camp Peet To City Schools And North To Downtown	●●●●●●●●●●		
Add Bike Trails (see map)	●●●●●●●●●●		
Convert “Old Hill Rd” to a Bike and Pedestrian Only Trail	●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●	
Provide Access to the new Turkey Creek Metropark (see map)	●●●●●●●●●●		
Develop Sandbar for Recreation (i.e. Walking Paths, Camping, Birding etc.)	●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●	
Connect Conneaut Township Park to Marina and Sandbar via Multi-purpose Trail	●●●●●●●●●●		
Provide Cabins / Camping Areas along Creek and/or in new Metropark	●●●●●●●●●●		●
Provide More Public Access Points for Fishing, Kayak and Canoe Entry	●●●●●●●●●●		
Add a Dog Park	●●●●●●●●●●		

COMMENTS:

1. What are your priorities for the City Parks? (Place a dot)

Fewer Parks \$	Improve Malek Park \$\$	Create More Parks \$\$\$
	●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●

2. Which recreation facilities do you use most often? (Place a dot)

City Parks	Lakefront/Township Park	Conneaut Creek	CLYO fields/Sparks	Other
●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●●●

3. Other Comments, Changes, Additions?

There is a partnership with the state to create a dog park in the park area.



How to Use the Plan

As a compilation of the City’s collective goals and consensus on policies and priority action steps, this document serves a number of purposes both for the City policymakers as well as for private property owners, businesses and future investors:

- Identifies appropriate zoning changes.
- Guides future decisions for rezoning, plan approval.
- Helps identify future capital improvements for fiscal planning.
- Provides predictability for current residents and businesses.
- Helps private property owners make decisions about investments in the community.

Plan Organization

This plan is divided into three parts:

Part 1. Conneaut Profile – Where We Are and How We Got Here provides a community overview that highlights trends and existing conditions that have an impact on planning decisions.

Part 2. Framework For Moving Forward sets forth the City’s main vision for the future plus a series of goal statements and outline of the overall approach. Following are five chapters that provide the core components of this plan: the Policy Framework summarizes the policies and strategies for each of the major topic areas.

Policy Framework

1. Strengthening Our Economy
2. Preserving, Conserving and Managing Our Greenspace
3. Improving Our Neighborhoods
4. Enhancing Our Community Character and Image
5. Ensuring Our Public Utilities and Infrastructure Meet Community Needs

Part 3. Implementation – Our Action Plan The final chapter outlines an implementation strategy for the City that summarizes the core group of recommendations. Some of the plan’s recommendations require additional study and the development of more detailed action steps that go beyond the scope of this project. The City’s Zoning Code is one of the primary tools for implementing many of the Plan’s goals and a number of the recommendations in this Plan Update involve making changes to the zoning regulations. However, amending the Zoning Resolution requires careful and detailed technical analysis. Once the Plan Update process is completed, the next step is a more thorough review of the specific sections of the Zoning Code that were identified for further study during the planning process.

PART I. CONNEAUT PROFILE – WHERE WE ARE AND HOW WE GOT HERE

The first step of creating a comprehensive plan is gathering information on the numerous factors that influence future development within the city, including trends that affect population growth, the existing development patterns, location of utilities and road and other existing conditions of the city and its surrounding areas, as well as the amount of vacant land remaining. Data was collected from various sources including Conneaut’s previous 2002 Comprehensive Plan. This information was then analyzed to help determine the City’s strengths and weaknesses, in order to discover future opportunities to strengthen the community and facilitate positive growth. This chapter presents a summary of the findings.



Location/Region

The City of Conneaut covers 27 square miles. It is located in Ashtabula County in Ohio’s northeast corner. The core city was incorporated in 1902, later merging with the surrounding areas of the city, formerly called the Village of Lakeville in 1966.

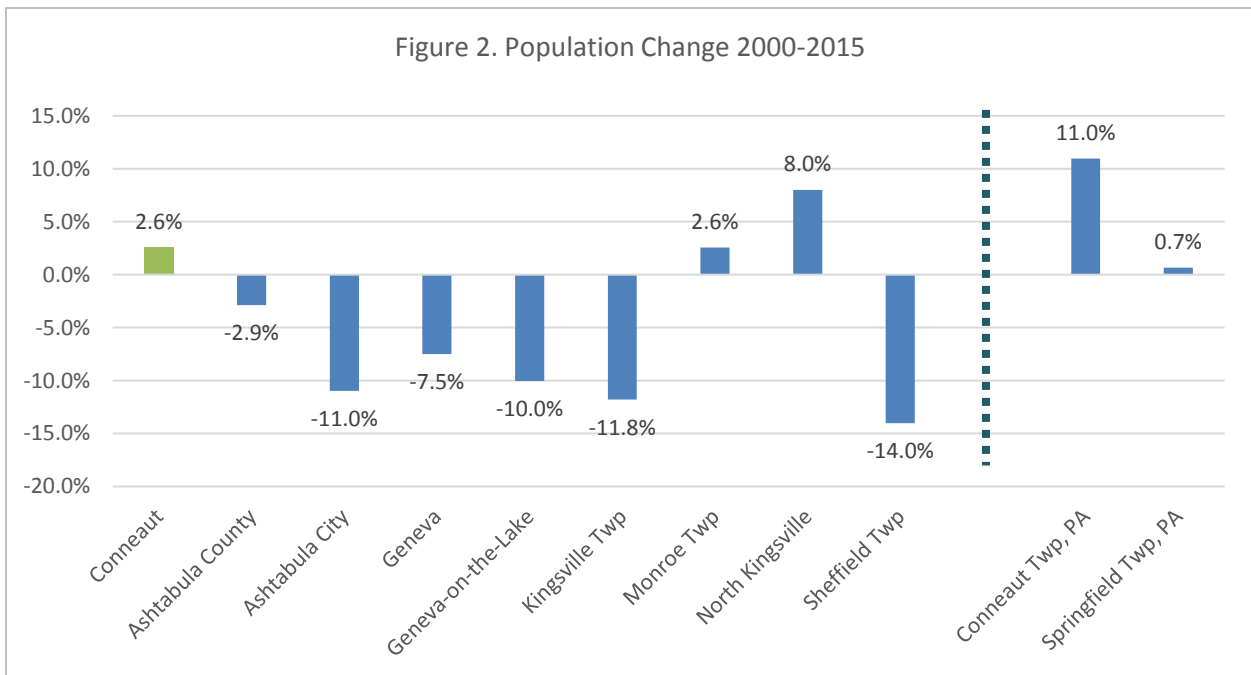
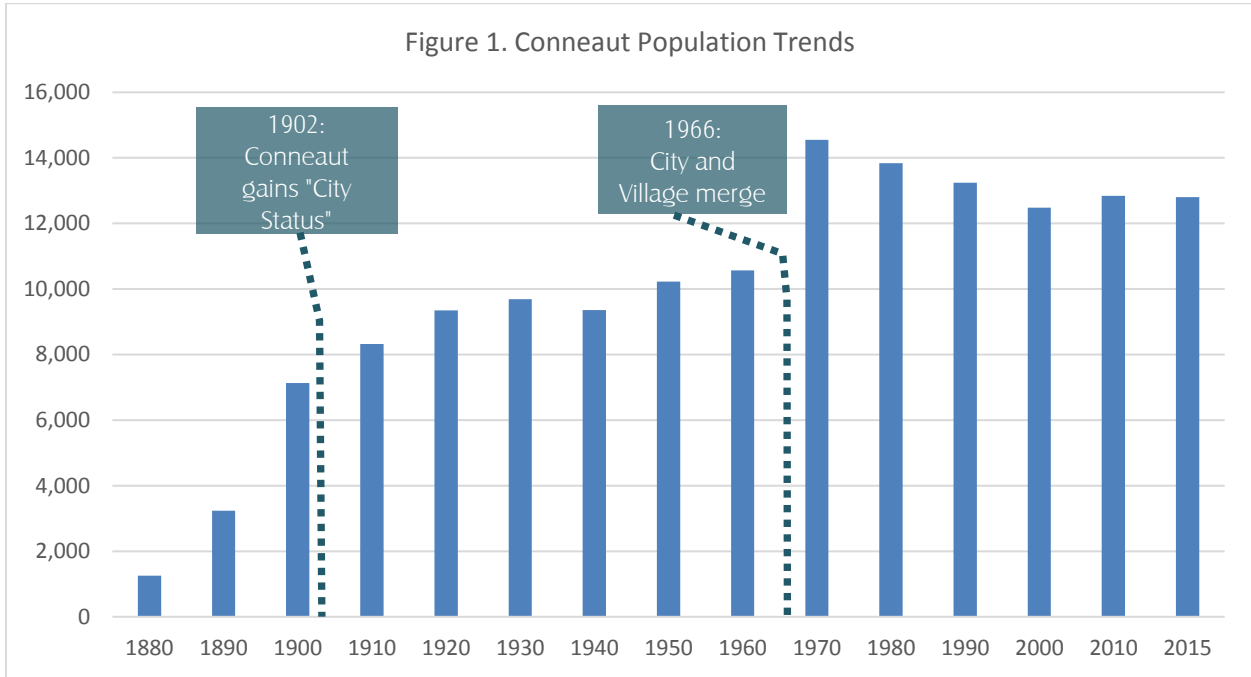
The city is well connected to the region by Interstate 90 as well as US 20, SR 7 and SR 531. However, distance from urban areas limits the availability of goods, services and cultural amenities. Conneaut is approximately 30 miles from Erie, Pennsylvania and 70 miles from Cleveland, Ohio. Erie is the closest sizeable urban area and where most residents travel for goods and services extending beyond everyday needs such as larger shopping trips, additional dining options and specialty services.



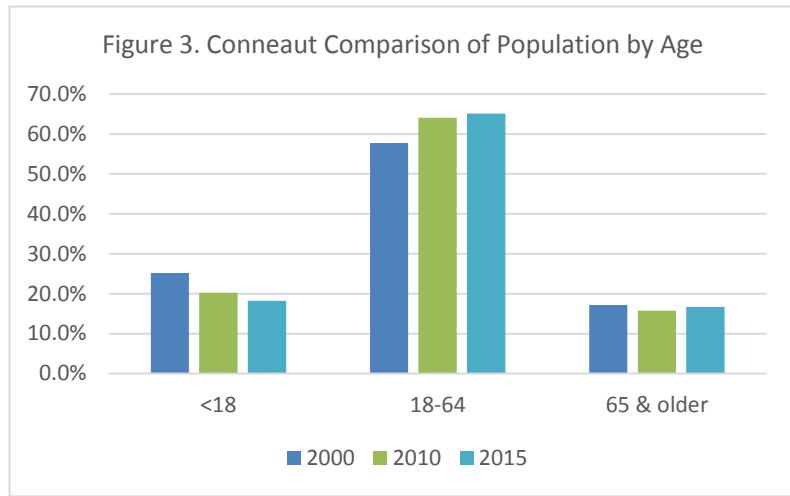
Conneaut is a lakefront community that also has a mixture of urban areas and agricultural land. The city boasts more than seven miles of coast along Lake Erie. It also contains Conneaut Creek, a designated Wild and Scenic River that is nationally renowned for its Steelhead fishing. Significant efforts have been made to conserve these lands. This Plan includes additional action steps for continued preservation.

Population

The City’s population reached its peak of 14,550 in the late 1060s and early 1970s after merging with the surrounding area, see Figure 1. Between 1970 and 2000, the City’s population declined by over 14%, while the population in Ashtabula County increased by 4.6%. However, since 2000, the City’s population has grown – with over 12,840 residents in 2010 – while other communities and Ashtabula County as a whole have lost population, see Figure 2.



Conneaut has an aging population and a changing household makeup. This is consistent with the whole of Ashtabula County. The percentage of Conneaut residents below the age of eighteen years has decreased from 25.2% in 2000 to 18.2% in 2015, while the percentage of households with children has declined from 30% to 23% during the same period. In contrast, the median age of residents has increased from 37.9 in 2000 to 40.3 in 2015.



Another common trend regionally and nationally has been the decline in average household and family sizes. This is also true for Conneaut, where the average household size has declined from 2.45 to 2.34 in 2016. Family size has fallen slightly from 2.9 persons in 2000 to 2.88 in 2016.

Housing

The 2015 American Community Survey estimates that there are total of 5,668 units in the city, with 212 units built since 2000¹. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of a portion of the new housing units constructed since 2000. A number of new houses were built in a new housing development approved as a Planned Unit Development on the former Conneaut Shores Golf Course. The property is about 80 acres.

Housing Type	Number	Average Square Footage	Average Market Value
Single Family Detached	115	1,805	\$170,468
Two- and Three- Family	4	1,635	\$103,725
Condominium	24	1,100	\$160,433
Farm House*	13	2,519	\$261,085

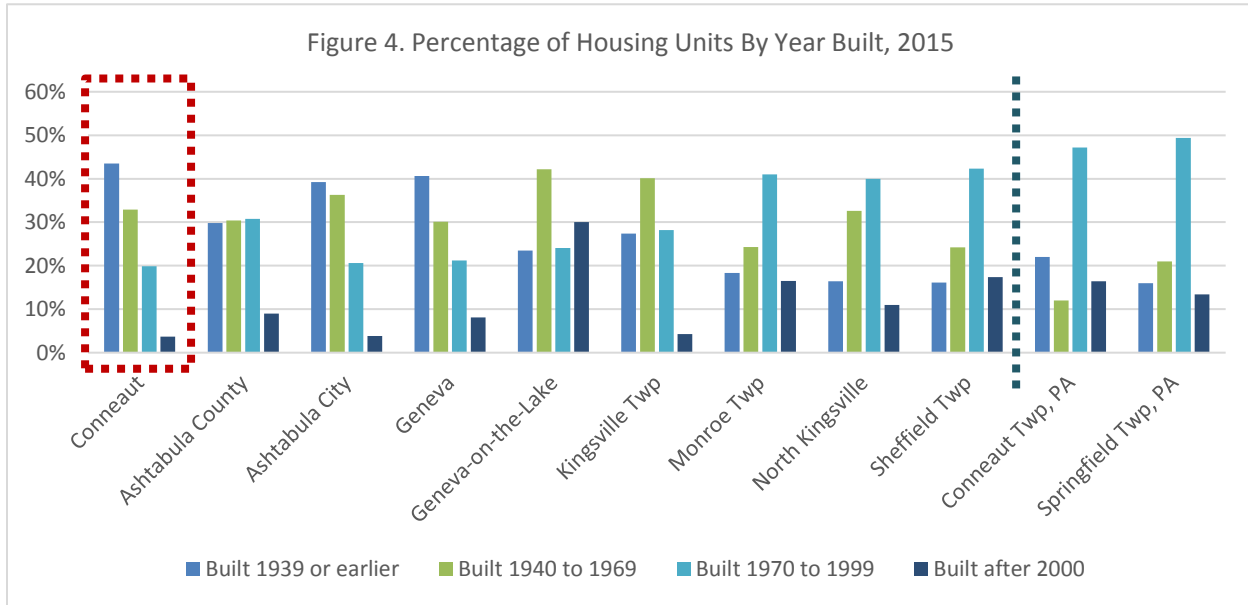
Source: Ashtabula County Auditor's records
 Does not include apartment buildings, nor "manufactured homes"
 * Described as a house on a parcel where primary land use is agriculture

Through project progress has been slow, the developer expects to build approximately 100 hundred homes. Yet, despite the construction of new housing, the total number of housing units in Conneaut has remained roughly the same since 1990, due in part to the demolition of older structures.

Since 2000, the percentage of occupied units that are owner occupied units has declined from 70% to 65.6% in 2015; similar to the change in the county (from 74.1% to 71.2%). Additionally, there has been a rise in the percentage of vacant homes, increasing from 11.7% in 2000 to 18.9% in 2015 (also similar to Ashtabula County's increase from 10% to 15.3%). These trends are the lingering effects of the 2008 housing crisis that had a devastating impact on the economy, inducing the decision of many households to rent now rather than own.

¹ The American Community Survey is an annual survey of a small sample of residents in each community conducted by the US Census Bureau. The accuracy of the responses is based on the homeowner's knowledge, and results can have a high margin of error.

With Conneaut’s early settlement, 76% of the housing units are at least 48 years old and 43% (2,463) were built in 1939 or earlier. Compared to surrounding communities, Conneaut has a higher proportion of older homes, and, depending on how well they have been maintained, many of these houses are in need of rehab and renovation, see Figure 4. The City has received nearly \$2.9M since at least 2002 from the state of Ohio’s Community Housing Improvement Program (CHIP) (funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)), to assist low-income owners to repair and rehabilitate their homes.



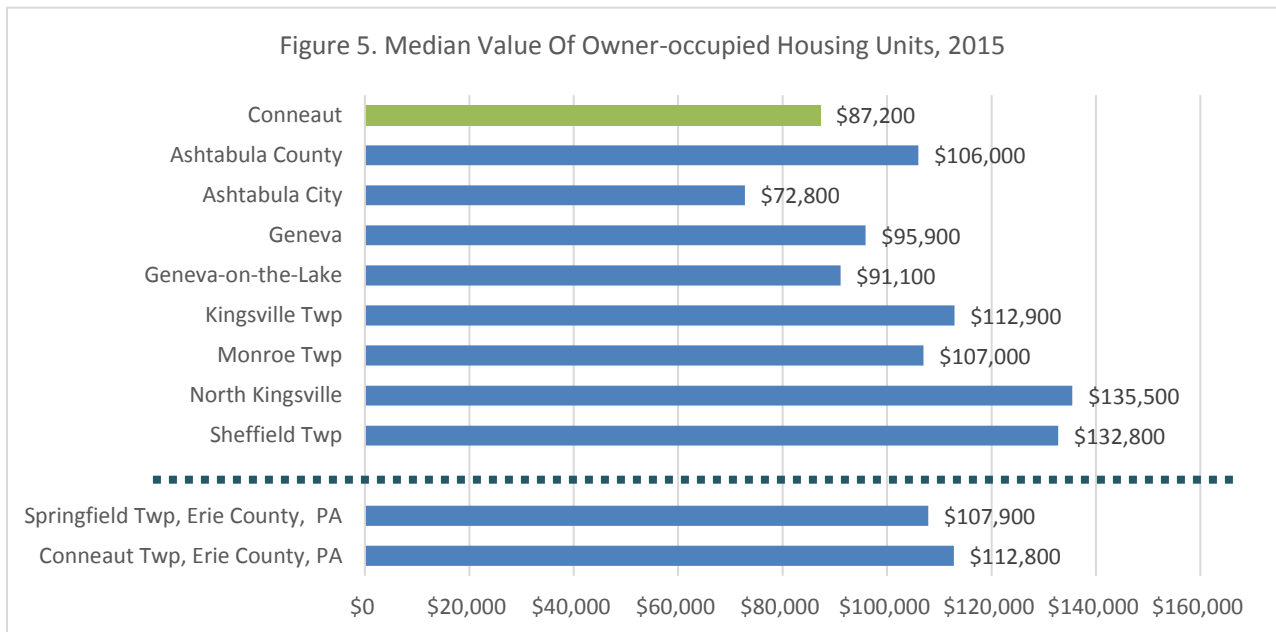
As noted in Table 2, three fourths of the dwelling units in the city are single-family homes, while 10% are duplexes. The third largest category of housing is apartment units that are in buildings with 20 or more units.

The median value of an owner-occupied house in Conneaut in 2015 was \$87,200. This number is lower than all surrounding or competing areas except the City of Ashtabula, and significantly lower than the average for Ashtabula County, see Figure 5. This may be a result of the City’s aging housing stock.

# of Units in Structure	Units	%
Single-family detached houses	4,281	76%
Single-family attached (condos)	42	1%
2 to 4 units in a building	582	10%
5 to 19 units in a building	144	3%
20 or more units in a building	260	5%
Mobile Home	359	6%
Total Housing Units	5,668	100%

Source: 2015 American Community Survey Data

Residents are increasingly concerned with the upkeep of existing properties. Citizens wish to take pride in the City’s image, however, many report that absentee landlords and the reduced number of owner occupied housing has led to the dilapidation of the housing stock. Housing maintenance is especially a concern in the older part of the City as is historical preservation.



In 2015 Conneaut’s median household income was \$33,396. The County and State averages were \$40,544 and \$49,429 consecutively. Additionally, 22.1% of persons in Conneaut are living at or below the poverty line. This is 3.5% higher than the County (18.6%) and 7.3% higher than the State (14.8%).

Economy

The US Census describes the workforce as all individuals 16 years and older. In Conneaut, there were 10,645 people 16 years and older in 2015. Of those, 48.6% were in the labor force, with an unemployment rate 2015 of approximately 12%.

In 2016, there were 4,312 jobs provided by businesses in Conneaut, a loss of 1,459 jobs since 2007.² Manufacturing jobs comprise the highest percentage (29.3%) while health care and social assistance jobs follow at 17.1%. Jobs in health care and social assistance have increased as an overall percentage in the last ten years while manufacturing jobs have decreased. Other significant employment sectors in the city are: administration and support/waste management and remediation (11.1%), accommodation and food services (9.1%) and educational services (7.1%). The sectors that have seen growth in the number of jobs since 2004 include: administration and support/waste management and remediation (+108 jobs), the hospitality industry (+42 jobs), and finance and insurance (+14 jobs).³

Some major employers within the city include Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) (309), General Aluminum (289), Conneaut Area City School District (283), Continental Structural Plastics (215), University Hospitals Health System-Conneaut Medical Center (209), Ashtabula County (148) and Lukjan Metal

² 2016 City of Conneaut Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (Beginning of Quarter Employment, 2nd Quarter of 2002-2014).

Products (143).⁴ Job opportunities are also available in the service-sector, especially seasonally. Residents hope that tourism will continue to be a vital part of the city’s economy, growing to be even larger. Additionally, the three major railroads: CSX, Norfolk Southern and Bessemer-Lake Erie continue to employ a number of persons, as does the city’s Port. Lastly, Conneaut continues to maintain a small portion of agricultural jobs.

Many Conneaut residents find work outside the community. The U.S Census reports over 3,000 residents are employed outside the city limits, see Figure 6. Additionally, there are approximately 1,850 people who work in Conneaut but do not live in the community. Only 1,361 residents are living and working in Conneaut, meaning that 57.6% of jobs are held by non-City residents.

The City is always searching for new economic development opportunities. Creating jobs through manufacturing and industry is an important key to this process. In 2012 Conneaut established the East Conneaut Industrial Park located 1.5 miles north of I-90 on US 20. It is owned entirely by the City of Conneaut, and contains 22 acres of developable land on the north side of US 20 and an additional 59 acres on the south side.

Figure 6. Inflow/Outflow Jobs, 2014



Conneaut pursues many special programs to incentivize improvement and growth. Grants to foster economic development allow the city to provide a maximum income tax credit at 75% for the creation of 100 or more jobs lasting for 15 years for an annual payroll greater than 3 million dollars. The City has established the entire municipality as part of a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) and new commercial and industrial facilities can receive up to a 100% tax abatement for 15 years. Existing commercial and industrial facilities can receive up to a 100% tax abatement for 12 years for renovation work. Additionally, residents who renovate their house can receive a tax reduction on the increased tax value of the property as a result of new construction or renovation of existing structures.

Tourism is a vital aspect of Conneaut’s economy and arguably the most important with the greatest potential. Conneaut’s lakeshore, natural resources, and recreational activities including fishing and boating all attract people from Cleveland to Erie and beyond to experience Conneaut. These tourists require accommodations and support services which, in turn, increases tax base for the city. Conneaut’s Board of Tourism is working to attract more tourists. One of their specific goals is the erection of wayfinding signs to make the city more navigable and highlight landmark destinations and tourist attractions. Consistent wayfinding also helps develop the city’s brand and image. Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau has also established this goal as a countywide initiative.

Additionally, the 293-mile Lake Erie Coastal Trail stretches from Toledo to Conneaut and connects travelers to beaches, state parks, and local communities such as Conneaut. Conneaut’s portion of the Lake Erie Coastal Trail follows SR 531 and connects to Conneaut Township Park, eastward to SR 7, then south on SR 7 to downtown Conneaut, where it then follows US 20 eastward into Pennsylvania. In 2005, the Lake Erie

⁴ 2016 City of Conneaut Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Costal Trail was designated as an American Byway, which highlights areas with coastal attractions and recreational opportunities like birding, fishing, boating and biking for travelers. Designation as an American Byway helps stimulate the tourism economy in Conneaut as the program not only recognizes, but also promotes and enhances scenic byways in the United States. Designation also helps cultivate a community’s image and brand, which are vital aspects of tourism promotion, and preserves historic and community character and a sense of pride.

Agrotourism is one emerging aspect of the overall tourism industry in Conneaut. Conneaut retains its agricultural land, mostly south of I-90 and its proximity to the lake and the resulting climate and soil type creates optimal conditions for wineries and the viticulture industry. Notable agrotourism businesses consist of three wineries, an alpaca farm, and a local farmers market. Conneaut Creek and renowned steelhead fishing is also a major draw for tourists interested in nature based and outdoor recreation.

The Harbor and lakefront are also primary draws for tourists, boaters, and fisherman. Studies and plans commissioned by the Conneaut Port Authority to improve the Harbor area have been completed over the last six years to create a vision for the underutilized harbor area. Additionally, the City recently commissioned a hotel feasibility study.

Several charter boats are based in Conneaut. This business activity draws tourists to Ashtabula County, with spin-off economic activity as charter boat customers eat at local restaurants, stay at local hotels, purchase gas, and shop at local stores. According to the Division of Watercrafts, Great Lakes boat owners spend approximately \$3,600 per year on their boat. About \$2,200 of that money is spent on expenses related to boating trips like food, lodging and on shore entertainment.

The Conneaut Port Authority’s marinas currently have 264 boat slips and their study indicates a need for more. The City hopes to take advantage of this significant revenue opportunity by adding more slips and increasing offshore services in the harbor area.



Conneaut Harbor is not solely a tourism draw. Conneaut Harbor is a deep draft commercial harbor that conducts major receiving and shipping on the Great Lakes, generating almost \$100 million in direct revenue and supporting over 1,300 jobs. There are four major docks in the Port, which are in good physical condition. The harbor includes over 2.2 miles of breakwater structures, a 142-acre outer harbor and 2,450 feet of federal channel in the inner harbor. Dredging of the harbor every 2 to 3 years is critical to maintaining its functionality, and the east breakwater needs to be repaired.

The Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock Company, a subsidiary of Canadian National Railway Company, operates as a bulk product terminal facility, and is supported by a substantial rail system. The Bessemer & Lake Erie

Railroad (owned by Canadian National) and the Union Railroad Company own all the land between the harbor and the new created Turkey Creek Metroparks, north of the CSX tracks to the Lake. The CSX tracks run parallel to the Lake south of the harbor, and Norfolk Southern tracks parallel them further south. Both are north of US 20. An extensive network of rail that once serviced a very busy harbor, still exists, most of which is currently inactive or underutilized. Commodities are brought in by ship, loaded onto trains, and shipped to cities such as Pittsburgh, for further distribution.

One concern for economic development is that there are limited locations and a lack of marketable properties for new businesses. There is a lack of available land. Much of the industrially zoned M-1 land is owned by the railroads. Other properties have environmental concerns and require expensive remediation of brownfield sites and mitigation of wetlands. Other sites may not meet contemporary requirements for major highway access. Existing available buildings are also in need of repairs.

Environment

Conneaut residents appreciate the City’s natural resources, even considering them one of the community’s top assets. In addition to Lake Erie, Conneaut has a variety of environmental gems. Recently, the Ashtabula County Metroparks, working with the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, acquired land abutting the Pennsylvania line east of Canadian National property. Furthermore, Conneaut Creek was designated a Wild & Scenic River in 2005. The City is working on preserving the Creek and its surrounding green space in partnership with the Ashtabula County Metroparks. There are plans for a trail along the creek spanning from Camp Peet to the City Schools and from the Schools north to connect to Downtown.

The harbor, and the 36 acre sandbar next to it serve as great birding and fishing spots as well as launch points for other recreational activities like boating, swimming and many other types of water sports. There is also a 25 acre sand beach for swimming and recreating. The sandbar was created over many years by waves that carried sand and silt over the west breakwater. Officials at the Conneaut Port Authority (who own the sandbar through a submerged land lease) initially viewed the sandbar as a nuisance, but more



recently have embraced it as another waterfront attraction. Its configuration creates a sandspit between Township Park and the marina, a protected area that has become a popular multi-recreational gathering spot that turns into a small village on summer weekends!



Together, the City and Conneaut Township Park Board own eight parks, most notably Conneaut Township Park. This park has a nearly half-mile sand beach, an area for fishing, as well as an upper park area with sports fields, a concession stand, picnic facilities, playground equipment and a gazebo. Conneaut Township Park is where the City’s famous D-Day Reenactment takes place every August. According to the Ohio Geological Survey, beaches are a scarce recreational resource along Lake Erie, with only a small percentage of the 57 miles of publicly accessible shoreline devoted to beaches with public access (out of the entire 312-mile shoreline).



Conneaut Creek is a 43.5-mile tributary of Lake Erie that winds its way from its mouth at Lake Erie through urban areas, rural landscapes, valleys, and gorges in Ohio and into Pennsylvania. Due to the management efforts and great public access of both the Ohio Division of Wildlife and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Conneaut Creek has become a major steelhead fishery from October to May.



A significant amount of land along Conneaut Creek is already preserved/protected through the Ohio Department of Natural Resources – either through ODNR ownership of Scenic River Lands, which allows public access, or through conservation easements (leaving the property in private ownership with public access available only if the property owner grants permission), see Map 1.



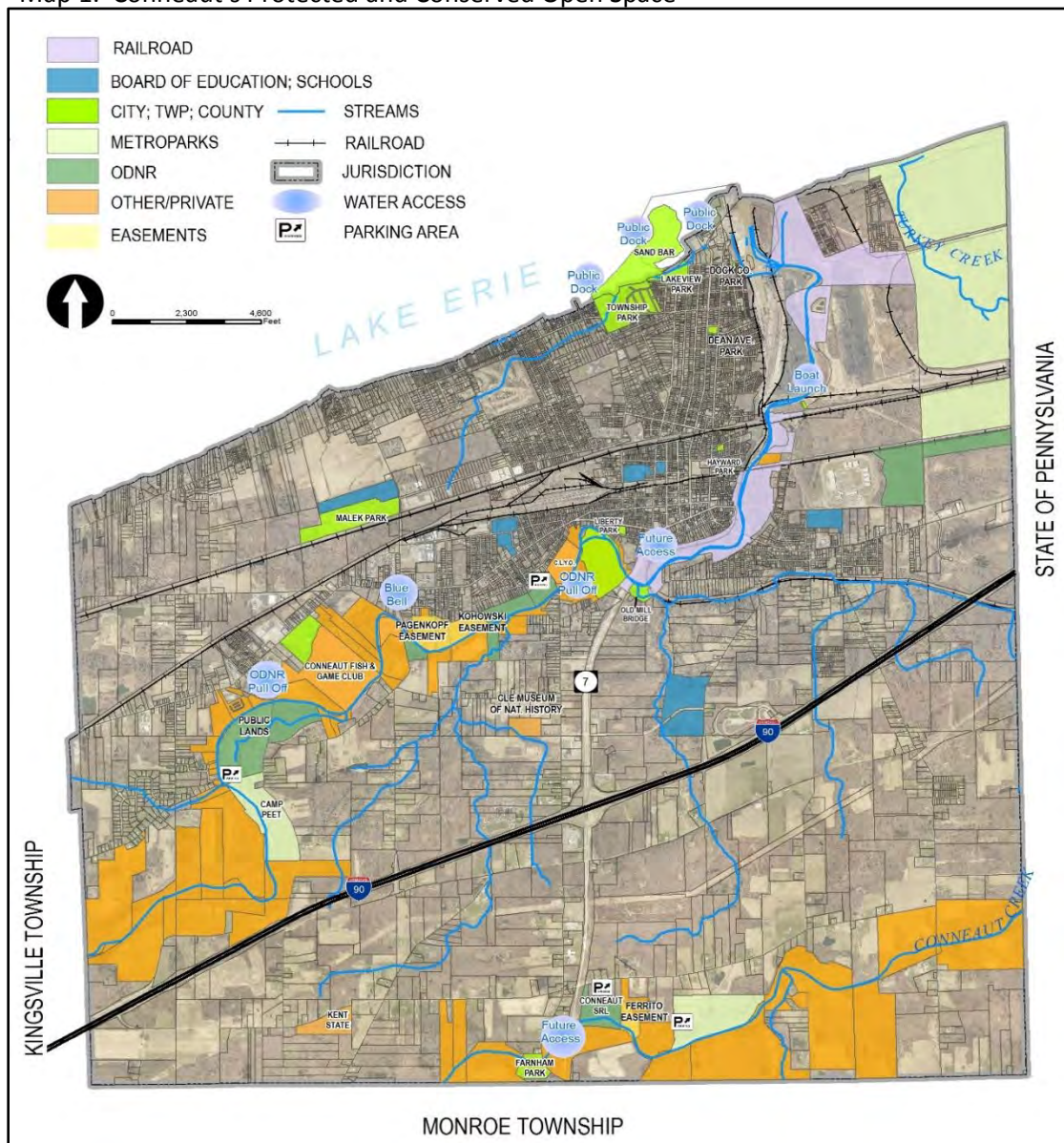
In 2017, the Ashtabula County Metroparks acquired 602 acres on Thompson Road in the extreme northeast corner of Conneaut, adjacent to the Pennsylvania state line. This area is now a Metroparks preserve with 225 acres of wooded wetlands, rare species of plants and wildlife with three miles of Turkey Creek, an outstanding trout fishing stream. Unfortunately, the park is largely inaccessible by roads in Ohio but is available from the PA side – through the State Game Land No 314.



Over the years, Conneaut’s cultural and natural areas, have become tourist attractions including four covered bridges, some of the area’s best local wineries, and a historical railroad museum. The Board of Tourism and Conneaut Chamber of Commerce continue to promote the City’s growing tourism industry. Indeed, the 2015 Lake Erie Coastal Ohio Trail Corridor Management Plan estimates that annual seasonal spending in Conneaut by single-day visitors to Conneaut Township Park is \$1.3 million.

Many residents believe that Conneaut’s natural amenities are what make Conneaut such a wonderful place to live. They understand the potential to develop these resources further to benefit the city economically, but insist that the prosperity and health of the sites come first. Throughout the process of utilizing environmental resources for tourism, citizens feel strongly that Conneaut should maintain its small town feel and strong sense of community. Many also support agricultural tourism, as long as similar considerations are taken towards environmental and community wellness.

Map 1. Conneaut’s Protected and Conserved Open Space



Existing Land Use

Conneaut’s land use pattern has not changed significantly in the last few decades. Residential uses continue to comprise the largest area devoted to buildings - approximately 13% of the land in the city. Most residential housing is single-family homes found in the north-central portion of Conneaut, with Lake Erie and Conneaut Creek serving as boundaries. These homes are located close to the rail lines and shipping facilities because they were the foundation of the city when it was established. Today the greatest concentration of housing remains the older “urban areas” stretching from downtown to the harbor and west of that area, see Map 2. Existing Land Use.

There are other residential areas scattered throughout the community, generally at lower densities than the core. A few new subdivisions have been added as well as some pockets of homes along US 20. Homes along the lakefront include both permanent and seasonal dwellings, though seasonal rentals are increasing in popularity.

Though less than 3% of the City is devoted to commercial and industrial uses, they remain a key component of the City’s future. Offices, retail and services have concentrated in five areas: downtown, the harbor, east of US 20, west of US 20, and at the I-90 Interchange. The downtown area has basically two distinct characters – the older traditional downtown and newer suburban style development along US 20 and SR 7. The harbor has a small concentration of places for food and drink and some businesses for fishing and tourism. However, there are a number of vacancies and buildings in poor condition. The City has taken a proactive approach to improving the Harbor area, demolishing buildings that have the least potential for renovation.

Land Use Category	Acres	% of Developed	% of Total
Residential			
Single-family residential	1,892	18%	11%
Two-family	43	0%	0%
Multi-family	41	0%	0%
Other Residential	216	2%	1%
Subtotal Residential	2,192	20%	13%
Commercial/Industrial		0%	0%
Retail Commercial	272	3%	2%
Office	31	0%	0%
Industrial	263	2%	2%
Subtotal Com/Ind	566	5%	3%
Institutional	461	4%	3%
Open Space			
Park, Recreation	1,460	14%	9%
Agriculture	4,063	38%	24%
Subtotal Open Space	5,523	51%	33%
Public Infrastructure/Utility	2,000	19%	12%
DEVELOPED TOTAL	10,742	100%	64%
UNDEVELOPED/VACANT	6,036		36%
TOTAL	16,778		100%



Historic Residential Downtown

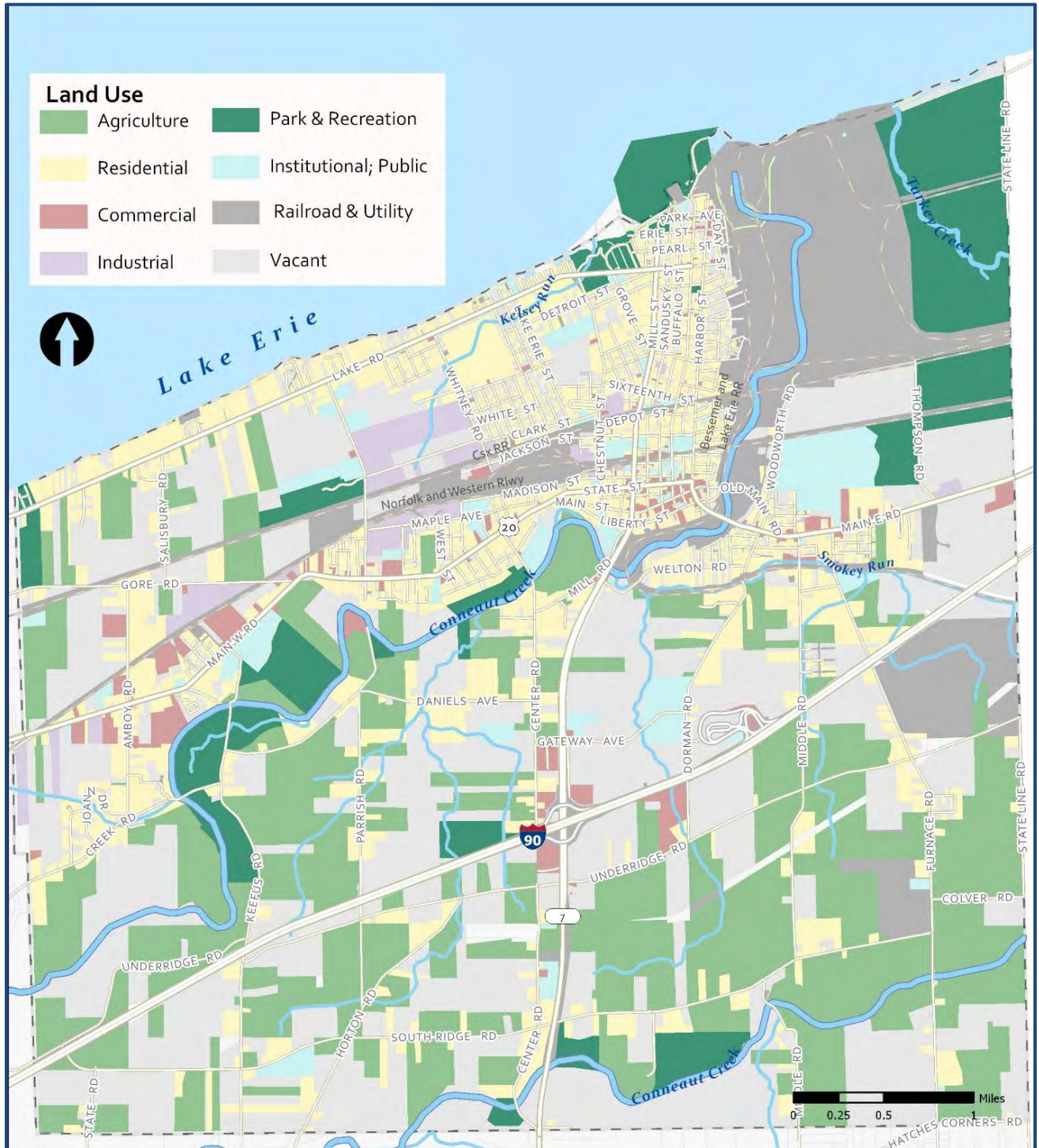


New Housing Construction



Multi-Family Housing

Map 2. Existing Land Use Map, 2017





Downtown Street view



Downtown Storefront



Harbor Area Shop

Both east and west of US 20 are strip commercial areas, with a mix of retail, restaurants and other commercial uses. As shopping trends change, such as increased online shopping, the impact on traditional bricks and mortar stores is evident in Conneaut from the number of vacant storefronts. Similarly, despite the high visibility and easy access of the I-90 interchange, the retail space along State Route 7 is also in need of updating and business attraction efforts. One observation is that more can be done to entice I-90 travelers to get off at the first/last exit in Ohio to take advantage of food and gas options, as well as the other numerous amenities offered in Conneaut, such as increased signage.

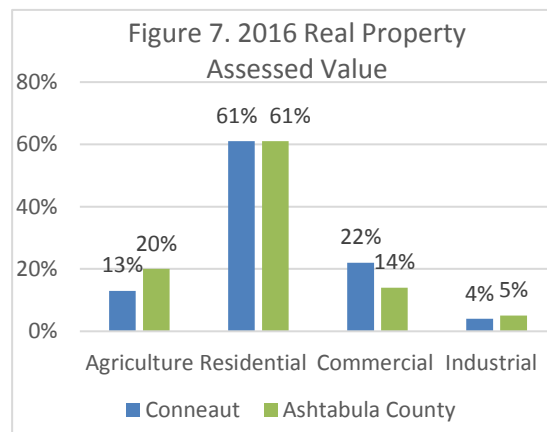
Industrial land clusters along the railroad tracks. However, while there are 3,169 acres currently zoned for the M-1 district, and 33% of the land is vacant, much of the land is either owned by railroads or impacted by wetlands, limiting much of its development potential.

Another 1,460 acres are devoted to the Metroparks, city parks and other park/recreational facilities available to residents. City-owned community and neighborhood parks include: Dean Avenue Park (1.5 ac); Liberty Street Park (1.4 ac); Hayward Park (1 ac) Lakeview Park (8.2 ac) and Malek Park/Arboretum (41 ac). Malek Park, on Parrish Road, is the largest, but is not very accessible to residents as Parrish Road does not have sidewalks. Conneaut Township park facilities include: Township Park on Lake Road (60 ac) includes a nearly half mile long beach and Farnham Park open space (9.4 ac). Other recreational facilities include the CLYO ballfields (20 ac) located on Center Road, next to Conneaut Creek, and the SPARC complex (“social place for athletics, recreation and community”) on the city’s east side. The location of these park facilities are shown on Map 1.

Approximately 2,000 acres in the City are devoted to roads, railroads and other public infrastructure, while 461 are used for public uses such as schools, churches, and the public library.

As table 3 indicates, over 4,000 acres (25% of the City) is designated as active agricultural use, located primarily south of Conneaut Creek. Land classified as agricultural by the Ashtabula County Auditor covers roughly 5,765 acres, and includes land not actively used for farming.

A number of farmers in Conneaut participate in the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) program through the Ashtabula County Auditor’s office, see Map 3. This allows farmland to be valued based on



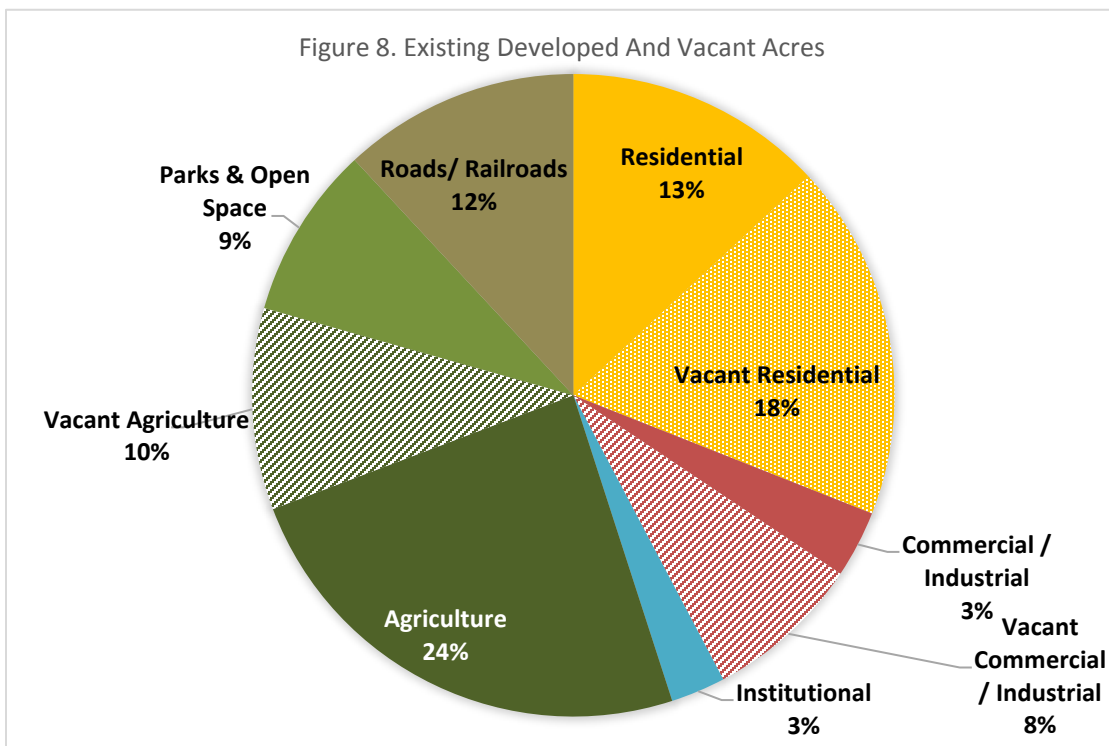
its current use as farmland (or other agricultural use) rather than based on its “highest and best” potential developed use. The intent of the program is to provide relief on property taxes for working farmers. In Conneaut, over 110 parcels and 4,000 acres are included in the program. This explains why agricultural land accounted for 13% of assessed property value in 2016, as shown in Figure 7.

While Conneaut has continued to experience housing growth and some commercial and industrial expansion, there still remain approximately 6,000 acres of vacant land. This does not include parcels that are not developed to their fullest potential.

Map 3. CAUV land In Conneaut



Figure 8. Existing Developed And Vacant Acres



As presented in Table 4 and highlighted in Map 4. Existing Zoning Map, the majority of land in the City is zoned A-1 Agricultural (which allows single-family residential uses as well as farming) and is also the largest category of undeveloped land (2,464 acres).⁵ Residentially zoned land comprises the second largest category of undeveloped land (2,247 acres), while there are approximately 1,325 vacant acres zoned for commercial and industrial uses. However, there are also a number of vacant acres that are impacted by wetlands, steep slopes and other natural features that make the properties difficult to develop. For example, Table 4 indicates there are approximately 800 vacant acres zoned M-1 Manufacturing, but after deducting the areas that are undevelopable based on constraints such as existence of wetlands, there are only about 300 developable acres.

Zoning District	Total Acres		Developed/Farmed/Protected Open Space				Vacant Land	
	Acres	%	Ag/Open Space*	Developed	Total Acres*	%	Acres	%
Agricultural and Open Space								
O-1	750	5%	631	119	750		0	0%
A-1	6,554	39%	3,380	710	4,090		2,464	41%
Subtotal	7,304	44%	4,011	829	4,840	45%	2,464	41%
Residential								
R-1	1,130	7%	328	264	592		538	9%
R-2	2,315	14%	439	811	1,250		1,065	18%
R-3	517	3%	0	263	263		254	4%
R-4	551	3%	13	336	349		202	3%
R-5	259	2%	0	71	71		188	3%
Subtotal	4,772	28%	780	1,745	2,525	24%	2,247	37%
Commercial/Industrial								
B-1	449	3%	22	186	208		241	4%
B-2	843	5%	90	498	588		255	4%
B-3	160	1%	0	160	160		0	0%
B-4	81	0.50%	1	52	53		28	0%
M-1	3,169	19%	619	1,749*	2,368		801	13%
Subtotal	4,702	28%	732	2,645	3,377	31%	1,325	22%
Total	16,778	100%	5,523	5,219	10,742	100%	6,036	100%
Note: Developed acres includes public uses, parks, roads and railroad properties. Not all land is developed according to the zoning district. For example, the Turkey Creek Metropark is zoned M-1.								

Based on the 2,247 acres of land zoned for residential (R-1 through R-5), it is estimated that there are approximately 1,446 acres with access (or potential access) to sanitary sewer. Using the minimum lot size requirements for each residential, it is estimated that there is the potential for about 5,500 additional housing units in the City.

⁵ Figure 8 indicates the vacant land noted by its zoning classification as a percentage of Conneaut's total land area, while Table 4 indicates vacant acres as a percentage of total Vacant Land.

Infrastructure/Utilities

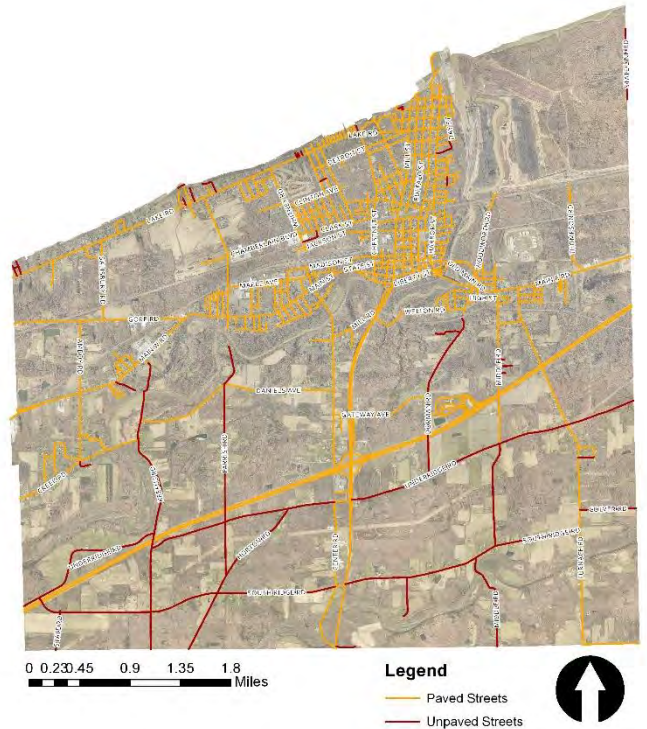
Conneaut must face its aging infrastructure issues. The City’s long-term capital improvement plan is gradually addressing the replacement of storm water pipes, maintenance and upgrades to the water and sewer service and maintenance and/or replacement of aging vehicles and equipment. This is funded by the approval of a 2.75 million dollar, five year real estate tax levy (which generates \$513,000 annually) approved by votes in 2013.

Some infrastructure is lacking entirely. Currently, there are no sewers lines west of Parrish Road. Conneaut also has several major roads to the south of Conneaut Creek that are not paved.

Map 5. Water & Sanitary Sewer General Service Areas



Map 6. Paved and Unpaved Roads

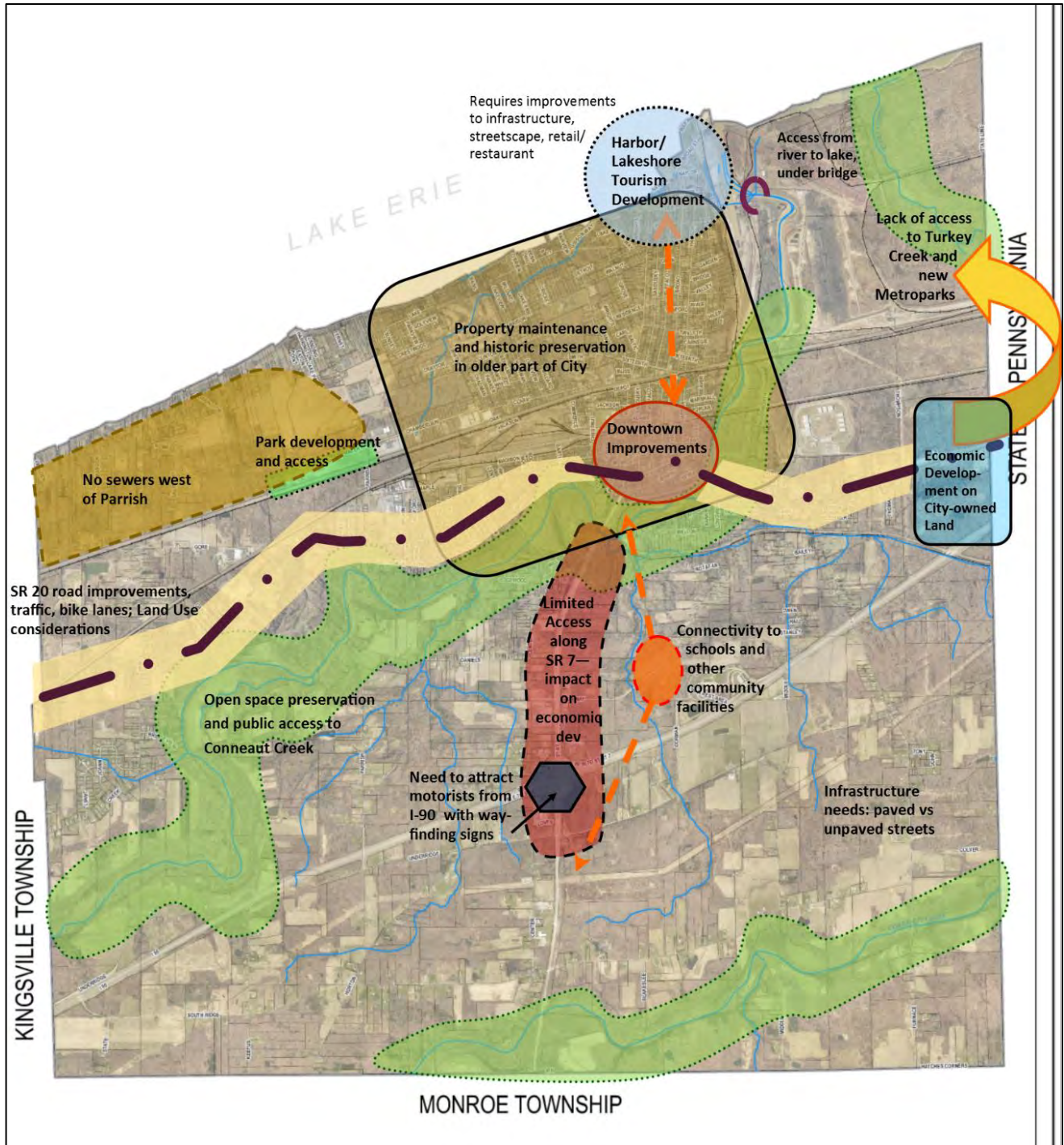


The City has made infrastructure a key priority in the past several years and embarked on a variety of capital improvement and infrastructure projects, with the assistance of grants and zero interest loans. Some of the planned and completed projects are: Major improvement to the sanitary sewer lines along the northern half of Parrish Road; Orange Street water line replacement; and pavement replacement and overlays for 17 streets and roads.

Issues

As part of the planning process, the Advisory Committee, with input from the public forum, identified the key issue areas within the city that are more important to address as part of the Comprehensive Plan Update. Map 7 summarizes the most crucial issues facing Conneaut that have been discussed in this section. These will inform the policies in Part 2 to continue to move in a positive direction.

Map 7. Issue Map



PART II. FRAMEWORK FOR MOVING FORWARD

Vision

Conneaut envisions a **prosperous and vibrant community** that responsibly maximizes the full potential of our...

- ...**Natural resources** (namely Lake Erie, Conneaut Creek, Turkey Creek and their many tributaries); and,
- ...**Small town attributes and charm** (characterized by our size, historical context, location).

When we say “**prosperous and vibrant**” we mean that our city will have and be known as a place with....



Through the planning process, we identified the key community strengths (assets) that we will leverage, and the various challenges we must address as we formulate our Goals, Policies and Strategies.

Build On Our Strengths:

- Lake Erie
- Preserve Conneaut Creek and other natural features
- Tourist attractions
- Retain our Agricultural Community
- Quality of Life
- Potential for Economic Development
- Top Notch Public Services
- Partnerships, with local civic organizations as well as nearby communities
- Variety of Housing Stock

Overcome the Challenges:

- Transportation limitations
- Waterfront issues
- Economic development: resources; vacant buildings; zoning
- Managing green space
- Tourism issues: services/accommodations; impact on neighborhoods; seasonality
- Maintaining housing stock
- Expanding sewer service
- Maintaining existing public improvements (such as parks, sidewalks)

In thinking about our aspirations for the future, we have further defined our vision with the following eight goals, which help to frame our development, investment, and conservation policies and provide direction for the action plan.

GOALS

1. Attract more businesses, industry, residents and tourists, so we have a diverse economic base, variety of retail and residents, employees and tourists to support them.

2. Properly manage the growth and development we hope to attract, making sure it occurs in the most suitable locations

3. Preserve and enhance the positive qualities of Conneaut.

4. Enhance our image, with quality development (good site design, landscaping, etc.) and property maintenance.

5. Ensure infrastructure supports our land use and economic development objectives.

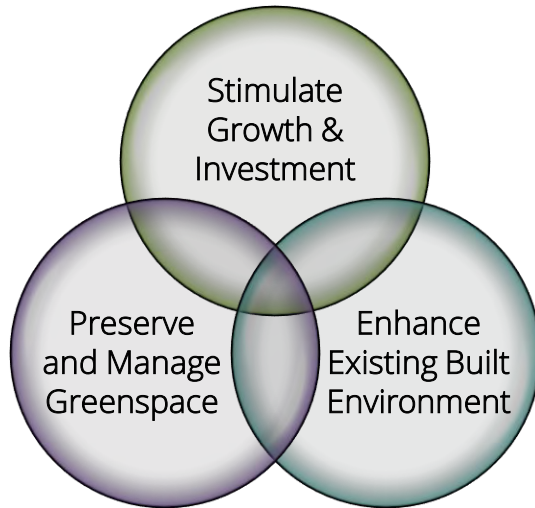
6. Preserve the natural environment in Conneaut, and provide opportunities for recreational activities, such as biking and hiking.

7. Promote a variety of housing types and enhance and revitalize older neighborhoods.

8. Promote community facilities to contribute to a high quality of life.

Overall Approach

To achieve our long-term vision and community goals, a **three-pronged approach** is important to pursue simultaneously:



- Stimulate **growth and direct economic investment**; e.g. new construction and redevelopment.
- Enhance our **existing built environment** by fostering **high standards of maintenance** for existing buildings – for residential and non-residential development alike, as well as our existing infrastructure.
- Practice **greenspace conservation and management** in order to protect our important natural environment, including our parkland and recreation areas.

All three of these types of activities are important to tackle at the same time. For example, in order to ensure that the **quality and amount of new investment is sustained** it is essential to also – and equally – sustain the **quality of the existing built environment** in which the investments are being made. We are unlikely to achieve one without the other. In addition, Conneaut’s history, character and vital assets are tied to its location on **Lake Erie** and along **Conneaut Creek**, as well as its surrounding **rural area and extensive wetlands and woodlands**. Protecting and properly managing these quality of life amenities will help attract the type of new investment we desire, including new businesses, residents and visitors.

It is also important to recognize that some public financial assistance will be needed to attract new investment. This represents the constant “tension” (dilemma) many communities face which is the need to “spend some money” to make money - that is, to generate new tax revenue through increased property values, increased income taxes (from new jobs and new residents), increased tourism, etc) which then provides the ability for the City to provide the essential improvements and services the community needs and expects, and helps businesses prosper.

Policy Framework

The policies and strategies are grouped into six topics that organize the broad policy guidelines and specific recommendations for projects, programs and administrative issues that are important to the on-going planning agenda of the City.

1. Strengthening Our Economy
2. Preserving, Conserving and Managing Our Greenspace
3. Improving Our Neighborhoods
4. Enhancing Our Community Character and Image
5. Ensuring Our Public Utilities and Infrastructure Meet Community Needs

In addition to these general policy topics, we have also identified specific locations in the city where a comprehensive list of policies and actions steps are recommended. These locations have been identified based on the understanding that land in Conneaut (as in other communities) is not equally suitable for all types of development and likewise is not equally worthy of conservation. As such, we embrace the concept of a balanced growth, maintenance and conservation framework that promotes economic development/redevelopment in the places that are **best suited for such development**, while at the same time, conserving our critical and unique natural resources that contribute significantly to the health and well-being of our residents.

Sustainable land use planning relies on an assessment of the suitability of areas of the city to accommodate growth (identifying which areas are not only capable of handling development but which have the highest potential for being developed) while also identifying areas where development should be minimized, or avoided, and where the natural features are so important that the City should make sure they are preserved. Using various suitability assessments and input from community representatives and local agencies, we have identified specific areas of the city for growth (Priority Development Areas (PDAs)) and other areas for conservation/preservation (Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs)). Focusing on these areas helps to ensure we make efficient investments in new buildings and other infrastructure, as well as investments in the protection and conservation of our natural systems for recreational and as well as environmental benefits. These specific PDAs and PCAs are depicted on Map 8, and are discussed in detail in the relevant chapters on economic development, greenspace and neighborhoods.

PDA

Priority Development Areas

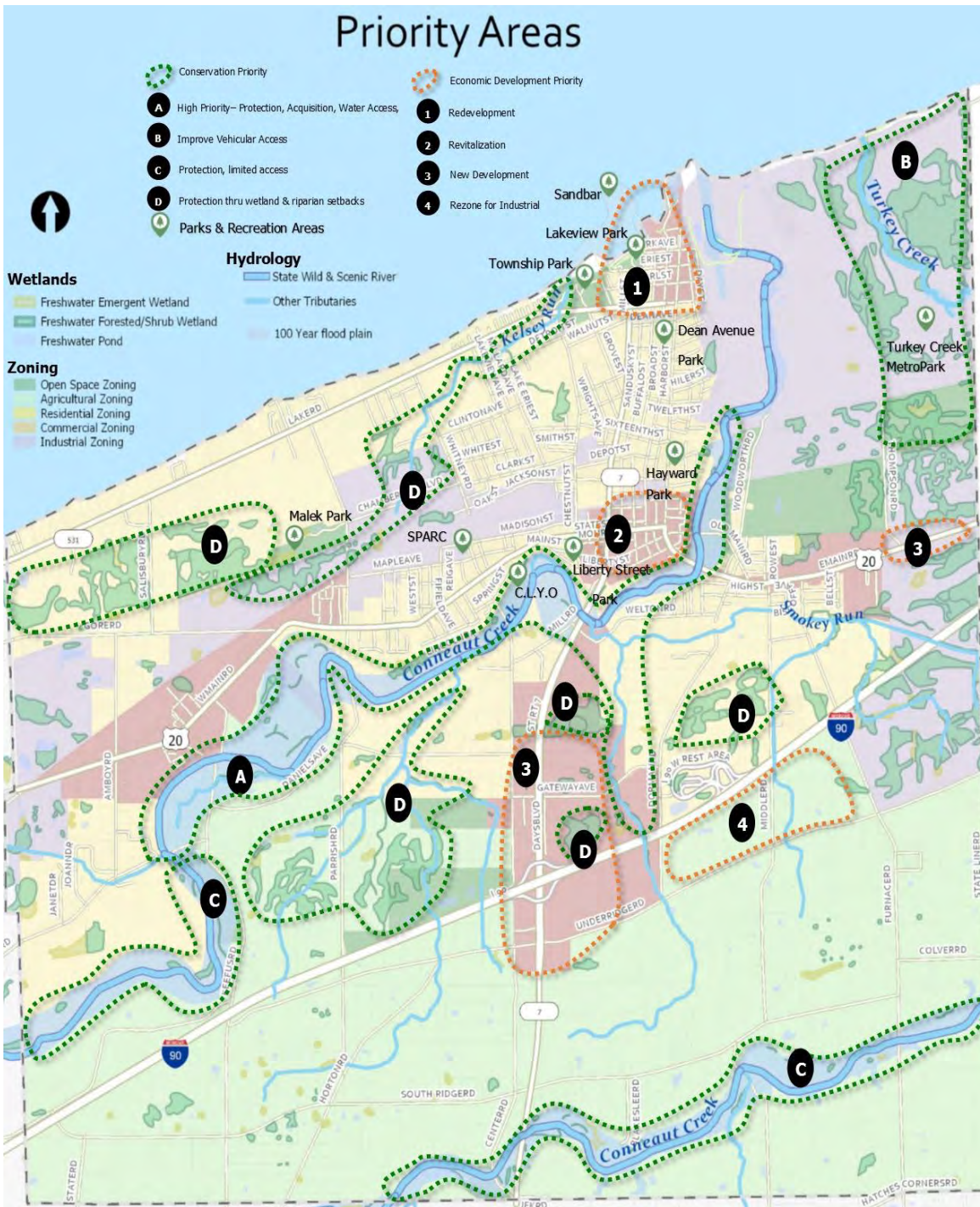
Locations in the city with greatest potential to attract new development and investment because of their proximity to Lake Erie, current development pattern, access from I-90/SR 7. Public efforts should be made to spur economic development as well as new housing development.

PCA

Priority Conservation Areas

Natural areas in the city that are most important to preserve, conserve and properly manage in order to ensure ecological health, provide recreational activities, benefit our economy and contribute to our quality of life.

Map 8. Priority Development Areas and Priority Conservation Areas



The rest of Part II discusses the policies, strategies and action steps for each of the topic areas and priority focus areas. In places where an action step is applicable to more than one strategy cross referencing is provided.

SEC. 1. STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY

Improving and maintaining the economic vitality of Conneaut is important for a number of reasons. Our local economy provides jobs for residents, attracts visitors and is important for our tourist industry, and contributes to our tax base, which helps support our public services. Providing more and better jobs as well as increased retail and service businesses will help our residents attain greater earnings, enabling them to invest in their homes, increase their spending at local stores and restaurants, and likewise increase their contributions to our tax base. In addition, tourism has been, and continues to be, a vital component of the City’s economy. There are a number of strategies we can take to increase and expand our tourism industry in ways that are beneficial to the City.

Sec. 1. General Economic Development Policies and Strategies

Through our land suitability assessment we have identified four priority development areas, discussed in detail later in this Chapter. Yet, identifying key development sites is only one aspect of economic development. Additional strategies for strengthening our economy include:

1. **Create and market shovel ready sites and move-in ready buildings.** Having an adequate supply of developable land and available code-compliant/updated buildings in suitable locations are fundamental to attracting new and expanding existing businesses.
 - 1.1. Ensure priority development sites have utilities in place (and upgraded if needed) to accommodate new development.
 - 1.2. Identify and address brownfield sites. A brownfield is any property (typically, industrial and commercial) that is abandoned or underutilized and where redevelopment or expansion may be complicated by possible environmental contamination (real or perceived):
 - (a) Identify brownfield sites that would benefit from public assistance in getting underway with the clean-up process. Priority areas are highly visible sites close to downtown, the harbor area and along US 20. Identify the adaptive reuse potential of such older industrial and commercial buildings.



MUNICIPAL INCOME TAXES AND REAL ESTATE TAXES ARE THE TWO LARGEST SOURCES OF GENERAL REVENUE FOR THE CITY, WHICH TOGETHER COMPRISE 86% (58% INCOME TAXES AND 28% PROPERTY TAXES).

There is sufficient vacant land zoned for economic development:

- B-1: 240 ac
- B-2: 250 ac
- M-1: 800 ac (but only about ~300 are developable)

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

- (b) Use U.S. EPA funding for inventories, assessments and brownfield funding, and work with Ohio EPA Technical Assistance and Targeted Brownfield Assessment Program staff.
- 1.3. Install city-wide broadband. Develop a telecommunications infrastructure plan that provides details on the necessary steps to create a city-wide broadband network. Work with state agencies such as Connect Ohio or a private consultant to conduct a broadband infrastructure assessment to determine how to attract or build greater broadband capacity.
- 1.4. Create a wetland mitigation bank on City-owned land in the East Conneaut Industrial Park to facilitate development of prime sites that have wetlands. A mitigation bank is a natural resource area that has been restored, established, enhanced, or preserved and then set aside to compensate for future conversions of wetlands in other areas of the City for development activities. For example, there are a number of parcels along SR 7 that are currently zoned for commercial development but have a portion of the site impacted by wetlands. For these parcels, it may be advantageous fill in the wetlands on site and contribute to the wetland mitigation bank to meet the federal wetland requirements. The City can create a mitigation bank under a formal agreement with the Ohio EPA and/or the Army Corp of Engineers, and then actively market its benefits.
- 1.5. Work with property owners to upgrade buildings, bring them up to code and otherwise enhance them so they are move-in ready. Educate business owners about available assistance programs through workshops, chamber of commerce events, Ashtabula Growth Partners, etc. that help to facilitate reoccupancy of these buildings.
- 2. Continue to attract new businesses, and help local businesses stay and grow in Conneaut.** This includes understanding and addressing businesses' physical and human capital needs.
 - 2.1. Survey business owners to understand how the City can help with their development/expansion needs, identify which services businesses consider to be most important and identify gaps in local skill sets.
 - 2.2. Conduct a market analysis of prime industry sectors to identify local barriers to entry and recommendations to overcome or eliminate such barriers.
 - 2.3. Provide financial incentives to attract and retain businesses. This includes researching, promoting and expanding business retention/attraction incentive programs such as tax abatement, storefront renovation loans, and property improvement/renovation programs.
 - (a) Develop a comprehensive portfolio of incentives and list on the City's website, including links to funding opportunities with the Ashtabula County Port Authority and the Growth Partnership website. Developers and small business entrepreneurs benefit from easily accessible information.
 - (b) Educate business owners on funding opportunities afforded to them, for example, historic tax credits (if applicable) and Community Development Finance Institution such as NEO Fund. This could be the responsibility of a new staff person charged with carrying out economic development activities.
 - 2.4. Support local businesses through the establishment of a Conneaut Business Association and/or by supporting/strengthen the Chamber of Commerce in order to create a sense of unity and action among business owners. Business associations are membership organizations engaged in promoting the business interests of their members. These associations typically perform activities that would be unduly costly or time-consuming for an

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

individual company to perform by itself, including event planning, research and information gathering, setting standards and carrying out local initiatives. For example, many small towns across the USA have established a Main Street organization to provide support to local downtown businesses.

- (a) Join the Heritage Ohio Downtown Affiliate Program as a lower cost preliminary step to the Main Street Program and receive technical assistance training to get started in the program. Embrace all four “prongs” of the national Main Street Program: Design/development; economic vitality; organization; and marketing.
 - (b) Connect new and existing business owners with access to training and capital. For example, form a relationship with the New Entrepreneurs Opportunity Fund, a micro-enterprise lending institution in Ashtabula County which has been utilized successfully for business owners on Bridge Street in Ashtabula Harbor.
 - (c) Attract new seasonal businesses through a concerted effort to fill vacant stores.
- 2.5. Coordinate with the Chamber of Commerce or new association on hosting regular events for local businesses that build a local network, increase awareness of business assistance programs at the local and county level, and encourage mentoring and coaching among members.
 - 2.6. Expand and promote employment-readiness of residents through educational programs, build on the programs offered by the Library and School District. Work with the school district to develop strategies to address any gaps in local skill sets that are identified through the survey in 2.1 above.
- 3. Develop appropriate building and site design requirements and guidelines to ensure that new development and redevelopment is compatible with the City’s goals, and adopt as part of the zoning code.**
 - 3.1. Develop context sensitive architectural and spatial design guidelines, and clarify the procedures for design review. Location specific standards and guidelines are discussed in more detail in relevant Priority Development Area sections. See also Sec. 4 Enhancing Our Community Character and Image for more discussion of design review.
 - 3.2. Evaluate the existing parking standards and reduce as appropriate in order to reduce the amount of hard surfaces and runoff. For example, the general retail category (in Section 1133.06) requires one parking space for every 150 sq. ft. of floor area plus 1 space for every employee, compared to a more contemporary requirement of one space for every 250 sq. ft., and even lower in compact, walkable areas with on-street parking. The result is likely a large number of unused parking spaces and hard surfaces adding to stormwater runoff volumes.
 - (a) Consider further reducing the parking requirements for compact/ walkable areas (e.g. Harbor and Downtown).
 - (b) Add standards for minimum aisle widths, apron widths and driveway spacing, including distance from intersections, to ensure that parking lots and access driveways are safely designed to adequately manage circulation onto and throughout the development site. (See also Sec. 5. for a discussion on access management plans.)

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- (c) Consider whether there should be a more specific requirement for paved parking, at least in the developed areas of the city.
- 3.3. Revise the development standards for the M-1 District.
 - (a) Establish a minimum lot size of 1 acre to 2 acres for industrial uses.
 - (b) Add a minimum 20-foot parking setback from the street, and require appropriate landscaping in this setback area.
 - (c) For lots adjacent to residential districts, require a minimum 20-foot parking setback from the rear and side lot line and require the area to be adequately screened.
- 3.4. Consider revisions to the site plan review procedures.
- 4. Embrace and promote tourism.** Our location on Lake Erie and Conneaut Creek's distinctive high quality fishing environment are already attracting visitors. Research shows that successful tourism promotion and development can have a positive impact on other areas of the local economy, including job creation. We hope to continue to build on our natural setting and cultural heritage.
 - 4.1. Provide educational events/activities to help business owners reframe their image of tourism and understand its potential for economic development as well as healthy place-making that can help us enhance our cultural, built and natural environment.
 - 4.2. Ensure there are supporting facilities that are focused on meeting the needs of tourists, such as but not limited to restaurants and public restrooms.
 - 4.3. Expand lodging facilities to accommodate a wide range of tourist needs, such as inns, Bed & Breakfasts, and summer cottages. This strategy is further discussed in Sec. 3 Improving our Neighborhood.
 - 4.4. Develop and build a unique city-wide branding campaign to promote Conneaut as a premiere tourist destination. Create a new slogan or reinstitute the old "sharpest corner" slogan and develop a strategy to invest in our local story. The branding campaign should incorporate our history and natural assets in marketing efforts, and product development. Coordinate the marketing campaign to align tourism with an economic development message. For example, resorts in the Pocono Mountains provide a new rack card title "Business is Greater in the Pocono Mountains," which aligns with the area's tourism tag line "Life's Greater in the Pocono Mountains." The front side has bulleted talking points noting that the reasons why people vacation in the Poconos and what makes the Pocono Mountains so wonderful are also equally good reasons to start or relocate a business to the region. On the back of the card is contact information for the four agencies responsible for economic development. This is a low-cost lead generating opportunity aimed at leisure travelers, for them to think about the area's business potential.
 - 4.5. Encourage innovative and unique "place-based" services and activities that leverage Conneaut's history and assets, such as creating a scenic railroad experience that builds on the area's railroad history.
 - 4.6. Improve the Tourism Board's online presence:
 - (a) Improve the website to meet current internet standards, increase digital advertising while maintaining print advertising, create a mobile app and collect demographics of site visitors, and to be self-managed under the direction of the Executive Director.

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- (b) Post a link to the Tourism Board’s website on the City’s webpage.
- (c) Continue to enhance social media presence, actively maintain the Facebook Account and explore a Twitter Account.
- 4.7. Continue to install wayfinding signs that make it easy for newcomers to maneuver around the city. Coordinate with other entities on wayfinding signs to ensure a similar look and compatible design.
- 4.8. Establish a physical location for a local Welcome Center and continue to maintain updated brochures and an up-to-date attractions maps so all of the local amenities are easily found map - especially with the rapid Metroparks improvements being made.
- 4.9. Expand event programming.
- 4.10. Develop benchmarks/metrics system to determine or more readily estimate the number of visitors who attend events, visit the harbor, etc. This data is beneficial information to include in grant and funding applications as well as to attract developer interest in the Harbor’s redevelopment potential.
- 4.11. Invest in and increase the capacity of the Conneaut Tourism Board in order to undertake initiatives to attract more tourists and economic development, such as: hiring staff and actively partnering with the Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Conneaut Public Library, Arts Center, and the Conneaut Port Authority on common goals and activities to increase visitors. Conneaut is fortunate to have many organizations invested in the City’s future, and everyone will benefit from “cross-promotion” through links to each other’s websites.

5. Coordinate/Partner with other local/ county economic development agencies.

- 5.1. Coordinate/partner with other local/county economic development agencies. The Conneaut Port Authority and City should coordinate with the Growth Partnership and other allied economic development groups on development projects and to develop incentives that can be used to match state and federal incentives and funding sources in order to increase the impact of economic development efforts. Collaborating also helps make grant applications more competitive because many funding agencies are also trying to level their recourses. They are more likely to select a grant application that fulfills the goals of two or more entities than one that is submitted by a single entity.
- 5.2. Encourage the Conneaut Port Authority to identify and promote its funding capabilities and be more aggressive in financing innovative and needed economic development projects that create jobs and/or make major investments in Conneaut.
- 5.3. Hire staff to promote/manage economic development activities. Establishing a champion for redevelopment is the number one step to engage both the public and private sectors, keep the momentum going and achieve results. Such a dedicated staff person would coordinate funding initiatives and financing options, provide technical assistance to properly utilize these options, help create interest in development opportunities, and manage new developments. The City and the Conneaut Port Authority could jointly fund a staff position, or this could be the role of an assistant city manager.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

- 5.4. Create/maintain an active website with up-to-date inventory of available properties. Contemporary economic development strategies depend heavily on an active web presence to market properties to developers and entrepreneurs.

6. Identify and pursue funding opportunities.

- 6.1. Research any and all potential revenue streams available to the City and the Conneaut Port Authority, and develop financing strategies for public improvements.
- 6.2. Pursue grant funding for streetscape and sidewalk improvements, façade improvements, public open space creation and improvements, critical infrastructure improvements, and neighborhood revitalization activities. Work with the Township Park Board to pursue grant funding that will be mutually beneficial to the Park and the Marina.
- 6.3. Explore the potential for establishing one or more special districts that enable the City and/or businesses to generate funding for improvements, such as:
- (a) Special Improvement District (SID), also referred to as a Business Improvement District (BID).
 - (b) Tax Increment Financing District (TIF) in conjunction with a major development project.
 - (c) Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD) and innovation district, which operate like tax increment financing (TIF) areas except that the collected service payments generally can be utilized for a wider range of uses than TIF service payments.

Given the reductions in local government funds and other general fund revenue sources, the City's goal has been to utilize as many tools as possible to increase revenue. An outline of these districts as well as other mechanisms is included in Appendix D Funding Toolkit.

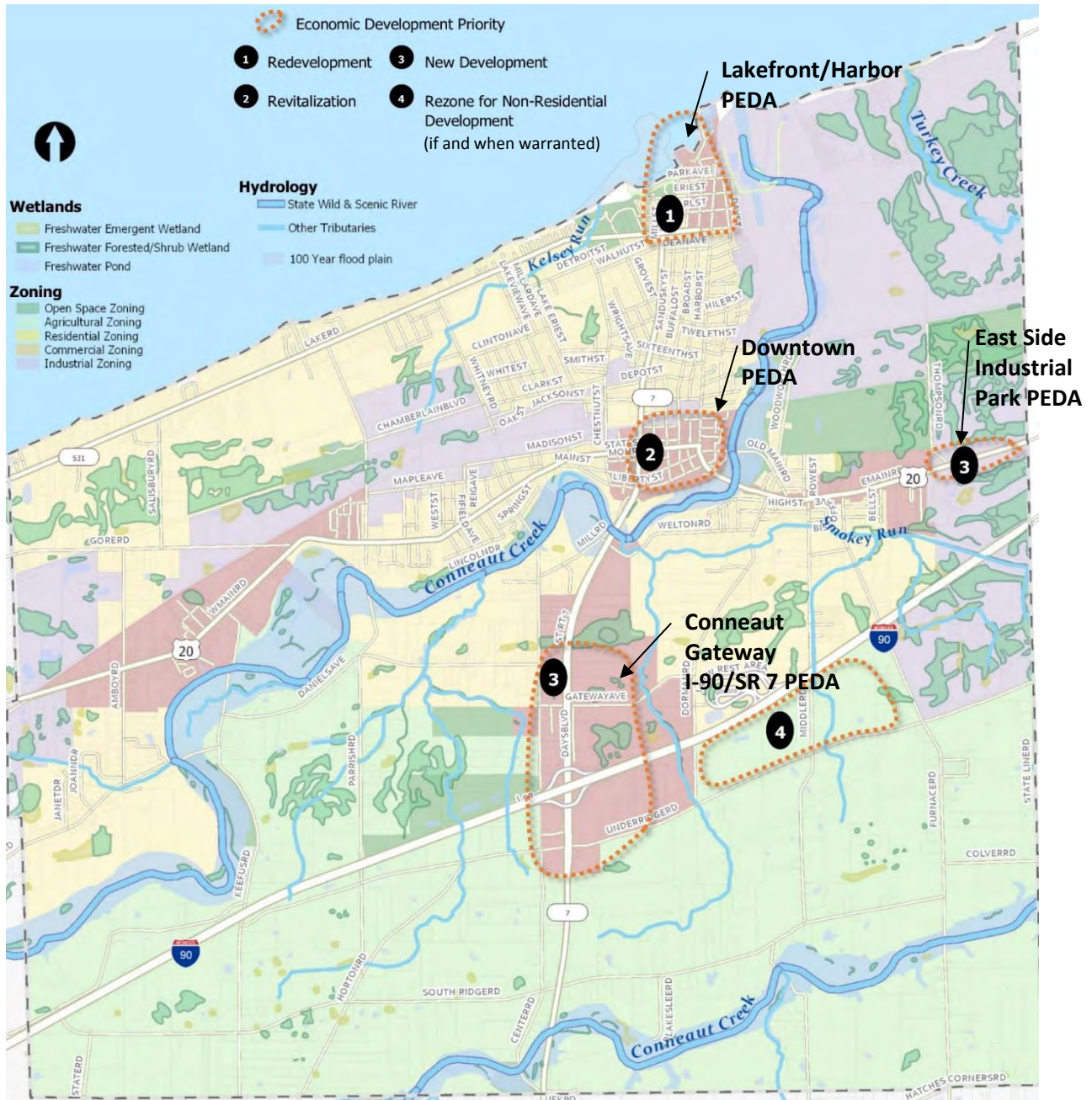
Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Priority Economic Development Areas

The section above outlines the general economic development strategies applicable throughout the City. The next few pages describe in greater detail how these strategies as well as more specific place-based land use policies can be utilized for our four Priority Economic Development Areas, shown on Map 9. Each section provides a short summary of existing conditions, guiding principles and strategies.

- Lakefront/Harbor Area
- Downtown
- Gateway (I-90/SR 7)
- East Side Industrial Park

Map 9. Priority Economic Development Areas (PDAs)



Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1A. LAKEFRONT AND HARBOR PEDA

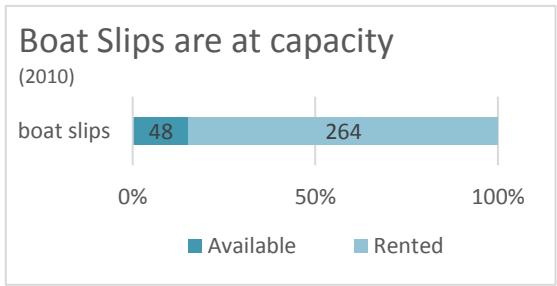
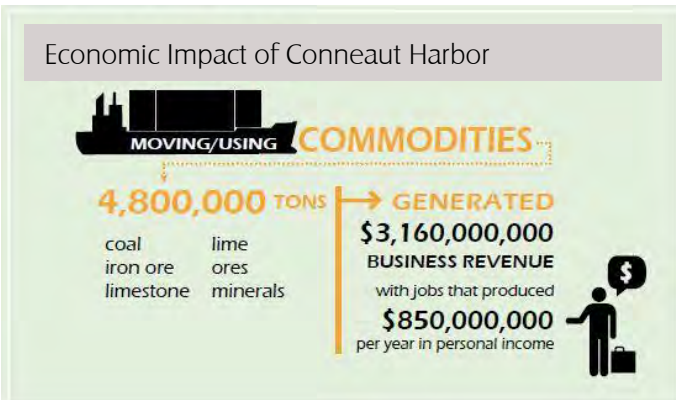


Existing Conditions

The 0.3-mile breakwater is used for fishing. A series of wooden boardwalks connect parking areas to the beach and shore.

Build on Previous Planning Efforts:

- 2011 Conneaut Port Authority Recreational Boating Analysis and Waterfront Plan
- 2013 Ashtabula County Coastal Management Plan
- 2014 Port Charrette/Visioning Report
- 2016 Port Design Proposal Update



annual averages
40,000 cubic yards = **5,400 dump trucks** filled and lined up **31 miles**

Source: Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1A. LAKEFRONT AND HARBOR PEDA

Guiding Objectives

The Harbor is the City’s biggest asset. Conneaut Harbor will be a premier recreational destination and year-round tourist attraction on the shores of Lake Erie.

Guiding Objectives

Enhance recreational offerings: Expand recreational and entertainment offerings which combat seasonality and supportive retail and services with encourages longer stays. Fishing, boating and birding

Enhance connectivity: Connect the main hubs of the city to each other including the park network, Downtown District, and throughout the Harbor Area.

Preserve historic features and cultivate a sense of place: Capitalize on and preserve Conneaut Harbor’s unique identity.

Increase housing options: Cater to different types of households to in this ultra desirable area.

Improve property maintenance: Enhance the appearance of the area by encouraging in property investment of residential and commercial properties.

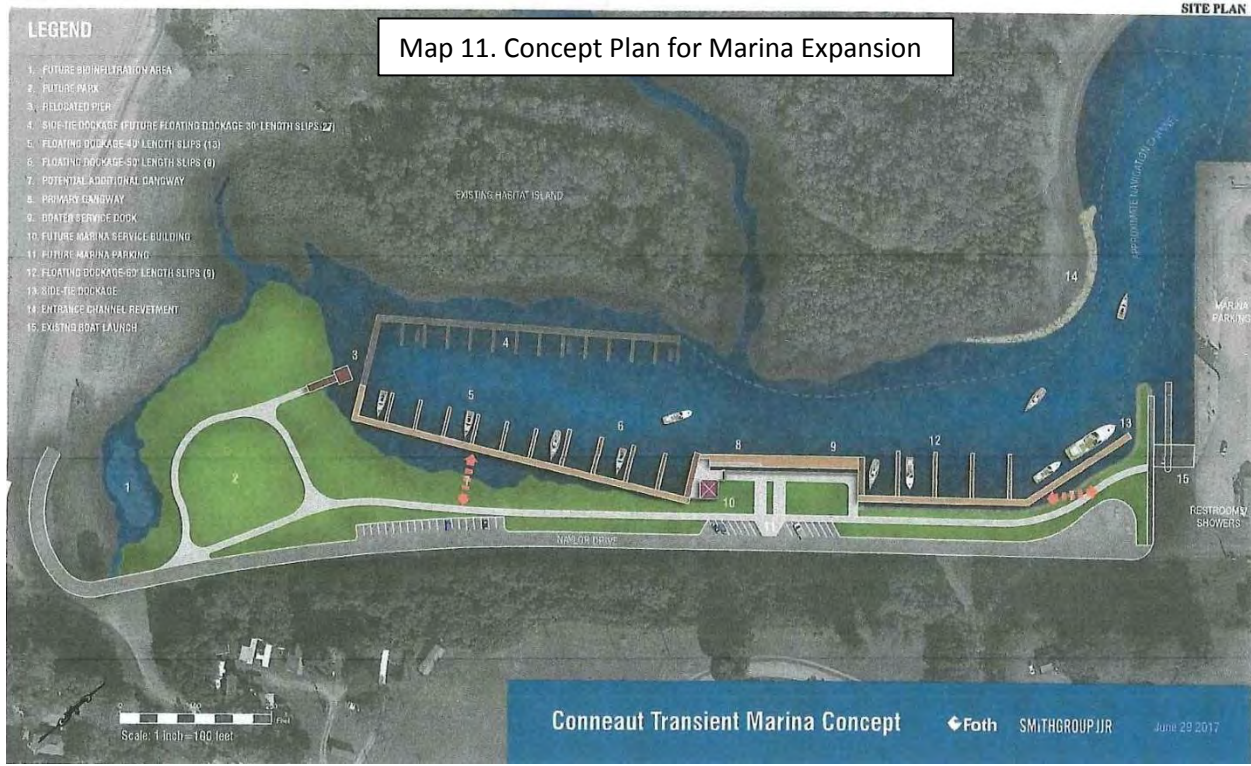
Diversify the economy: Balance the active – yet shrinking– port industry with a vibrant tourism-based economy to revitalize the Harbor District. Economic diversification will help to combat seasonality of a tourism economy and utilize the historic infrastructure that remains one of 7 active ports in Ohio.

Policies & Strategies

1. **Expand the Marina.** The City’s two public marinas, as well as the private Conneaut Boat Club (CBC), are operating at capacity during the boating season, and recent studies prepared for the Conneaut Port Authority highlight the need for another marina. Conneaut should capitalize on the regional demand for boat slips that can accommodate larger boats. Expanding the Marina will fuel economic development for the city while also expanding recreational opportunities for residents and tourists.
 - 1.1. Dredge the lagoon area next to Naylor Drive (south of the Sandbar) to enable the construction of new boat slips.
 - 1.2. Build new floating docks that provide large enough slips to accommodate larger boats (50 feet), as shown in the conceptual drawing below. Provide additional amenities for boaters, such as rentals, showers, restrooms. In addition, add transportation facilities, such rental bikes or golf carts, to enable visiting boaters to patronize local businesses and other amenities beyond the Harbor area. The goal is the construction of 100 new slips, which could be constructed over two or more phases.

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Sec. 1A. LAKEFRONT AND HARBOR PEDA



1.3. Develop a Sediment Management and Use Plan that identifies ways for utilizing the dredged material. Dredged material can be used as construction and landscaping material and can improve public spaces by enhancing soils, providing new landscape features and restoring ecosystems.

2. Increase and improve public access to and recreational use of the lakeshore. In addition to the Marina, the sandbar and Township Park provide access to the lakeshore.

2.1. Continue to promote diverse uses of the Sandbar. Promote a wide range of recreational offerings and supporting concessions, and continue to allow parking on a portion of the Sandbar. See also Sec. 2B. Parks and Recreation Improvements.

2.2. Improve Naylor Drive to provide a connection between Township Park, the sandbar and the marina.

(a) Create a boardwalk or multipurpose path, and consider restricting vehicle traffic.

(b) Prioritize and invest in infrastructure improvements (i.e. water, sewer, electricity) to Naylor Drive to enable utility extensions to the sandbar that could attract new concessions.

2.3. Build a public pier or boardwalk over the existing break wall to increase fishing opportunities.

2.4. Investigate the potential for public or private rental facilities for bicycles, kayaks, canoes, and other types of recreation equipment.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1A. LAKEFRONT AND HARBOR PEDA

- 2.5. Create a bike path or other multi-modal access between the harbor area and downtown. Investigate existing street rights-of-way and roadway configurations to identify the best north-south connection.
- 2.6. Investigate the need and best location for additional parking facilities. Work with the Township Park Board on joint parking opportunities.
3. **Redevelop the Harbor District.** Create a vibrant mixed use destination that takes advantage of proximity to and views of Lake Erie and promotes tourism and meets the needs of seasonal boaters/fishermen, water sport enthusiasts, as well as local residents and visitors.
 - 3.1. Pursue redevelopment of 10 acres of City-owned land (Lakeview Park and Lakeview Mobile Home Park). The bluff provides scenic views of the Lake and, as one of the largest areas for redevelopment, it can spur the comprehensive revitalization efforts of the Harbor District. The City has been exploring development opportunities including a recent hotel feasibility study and development concepts prepared by the Cleveland Urban Design Center.
 - (a) Issue an RFP to stimulate development for the site. The RFP process allows flexibility for developers to propose their designs. Conditions can be placed on the RFP to steer the concept; for example, require a provision to provide a connection to the Marina. Attach financial incentive package to facilitate development with a public private partnership.
 - (b) Consider a range of feasible and compatible uses, and enable developers to suggest uses they feel are best suited for the site.
 - (c) Keep a portion of the site devoted to public open space.
 - (d) Incorporate the historic Art Center located directly east of Lakeview Park.
 - 3.2. Build new housing with views of Lake Erie (multi-family, townhouses). Foster private housing development by providing and marketing economic incentives. Housing should be one of the primary new uses developed in the area, in order to bring in new residents to help support and spur future economic development.
 - 3.3. Attract new retail and restaurants to provide a destination for tourists with support services and build on Conneaut's unique lakefront character including the pier, birding and water-related activities. Tourists are already attracted to the Harbor area for recreational purposes, but additional businesses that serve the needs of tourists are needed to increase the City's tourism potential. Examples of desired uses include live music and entertainment, winery or brewery with fire pit, ice skating, and other uses that cater to families.
 - (a) Target Broad Street and Park Avenue to be the main commercial area.
 - (b) Encourage infill development and adaptive reuse of existing structures to achieve a compact, walkable and denser commercial/entertainment area.
 - (c) Ensure there are adequate parking facilities in the commercial area, without jeopardizing the compact character desired.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy**Sec. 1A. LAKEFRONT AND HARBOR PEDA**

- 3.4. Continue to investigate opportunities for hotel accommodations, and/or a boutique lodging experience. Make sure that there are lodging options for families.
 - 3.5. Create development sites through land assembly. There are already several vacant contiguous lots in the Harbor District, some of which are owned by the City. Conduct an analysis of the area and work with the Conneaut Port Authority and County Land Bank to develop a more targeted approach for strategic land assembly.
 - 3.6. Work with property owners to renovate and revitalize existing commercial and residential buildings to encourage re-occupancy and stimulate new development. While the City is actively pursuing new construction projects both commercial and residential, upgrading and maintaining the existing built environment is critical to enticing new investment.
 - 3.7. Improve the area's infrastructure, amenities and visual appeal to cultivate the Harbor's distinctive community character – i.e. benches, nautical style lighting, boardwalk, pavers, streetscape, and art/viewpoint/educational materials.
- 4. Continue to collaborate to increase the economic activity at Conneaut Harbor.** Conneaut Harbor is a deep draft commercial harbor, with four piers totaling over 2.2 miles in length. The Pittsburgh & Conneaut Dock Company, a subsidiary of Canadian National Railway Company, operates as a bulk product terminal facility, yet, the facility is underutilized. Continue to work with the company and the Conneaut Port Authority to activate the docks and increase container activity.
 - 5. Revise zoning and design standards** to enable and foster creative mixed-use projects and new housing options to attract both tourists and new residents.
 - 5.1. Create a new Planned Development Overlay District for the Harbor with standards and review process that provides flexibility, see Map 12. Consider standards such as:
 - (a) Limit residential height to 2-3 stories.
 - (b) Promote development which “brings in the lake.” Design guidelines should be flexible enough to facilitate a wide range of development but complement the character of the area.
 - (c) Promote the use of new materials i.e. shipping containers.
 - 5.2. Revise the B-4 district: consider making auto repair and boat storage conditional uses (instead of permitted uses), and consider restricting their location (as well as mini-warehouse and storage) within the district.
 - 5.3. In the R-4 and B-4 Districts, specifically address outdoor boat storage on residential lots, including landscaping and screening requirements, minimum setbacks, etc.
 - 5.4. Revise the R-4 District to specifically regulate bed and breakfast (see also Sec 3. Improving Our Neighborhoods).
 - 6. Establish a culture of collaboration in the private and public realms.** Conneaut and Ashtabula County are fortunate to have many entities as stakeholders in the future of the Conneaut Harbor District. Entities such as the Conneaut Port Authority and the Tourism Board, in

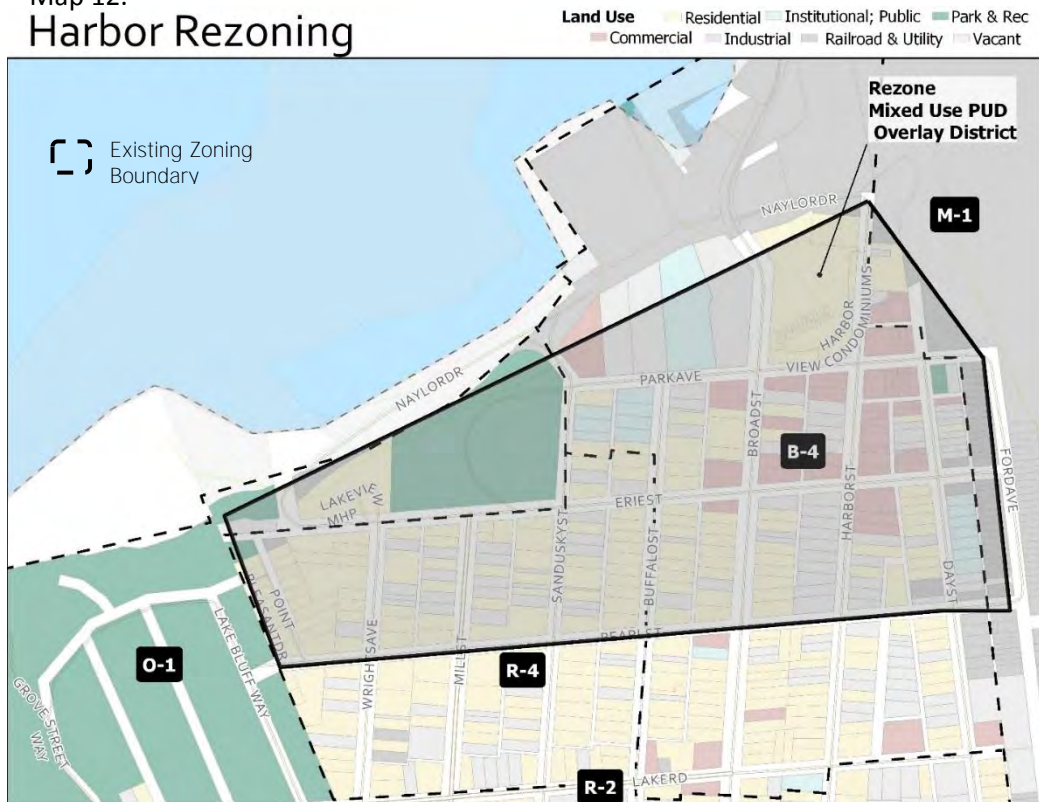
Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1A. LAKEFRONT AND HARBOR PEDA

addition to the County counterparts are key collaborators. These relationships should be leveraged as collaborating with them and developing public/private partnerships are essential to implementing a sustainable plan.

- 6.1. Conduct regular stakeholder meetings, at least quarterly, during the initial redevelopment phases, and continue to meet on a regular basis afterwards. Collaboration among all public players is key for a cohesive vision and efficient plan implementation. Stakeholders to include (but are not limited to) Conneaut City, Conneaut Port Authority, Ashtabula County Port Authority, Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Conneaut Tourism Board, Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County, Ashtabula County Metroparks and the Ashtabula County Commissioners. It is also important to cultivate and maintain a close relationship with our State legislators
- 6.2. Cultivate a relationship with Canadian National. The railroad is an important partner for the City. Obtain joint support of Council, County Commissioners, and State of Ohio., and if necessary, hire a maritime expert to investigate opportunities to collaborate.
- 6.3. Increase regional collaboration with neighboring communities such as Geneva on the Lake and Ashtabula, as well as Erie, PA on harbor/lake-related activities.
- 6.4. Collaborate with Township Park on joint funding opportunities as it is mutually beneficial to leverage the capacity of the other entity. A consolidated effort will generate the buy-in and leveraged assets necessary for a more competitive application. The City can serve as the fiscal agent.

**Map 12.
Harbor Rezoning**



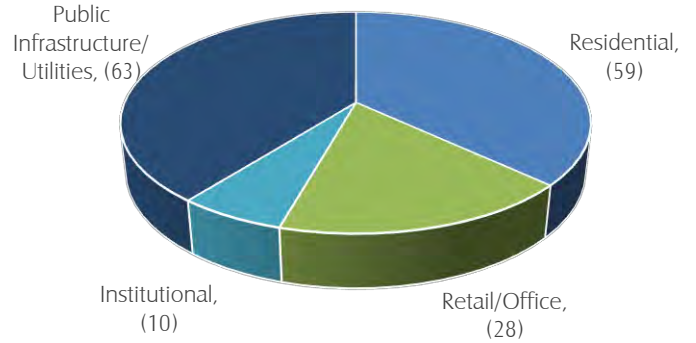
1 Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1B. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PEDA

Existing Conditions

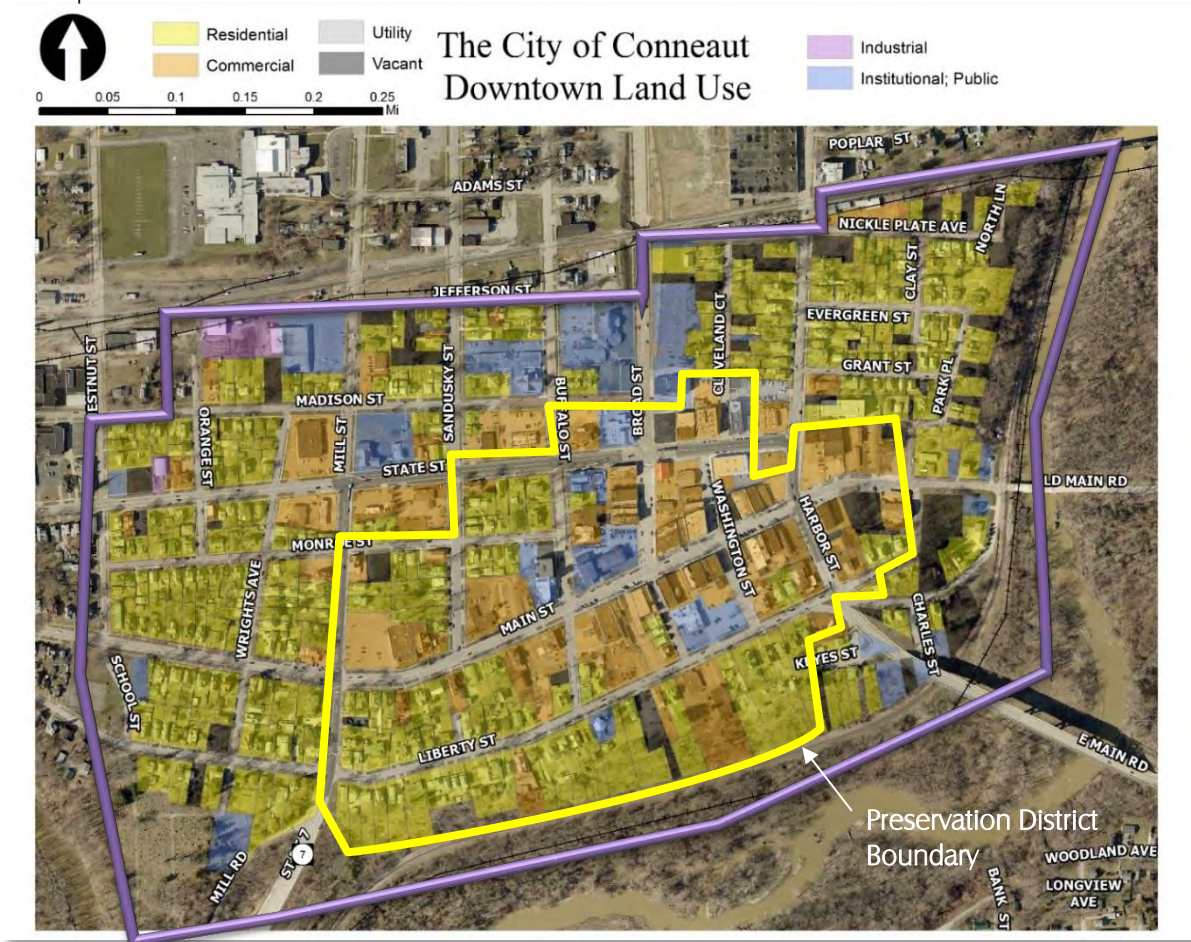
Downtown is the historic mixed-uses commercial core of the city, and is appropriately zoned B-3 General Business District. However, of the 160 acres in the B-3 District, more than one-third of the area is devoted to residential uses (37%), and 39% to public utilities and infrastructure (roads). Retail, office and institutional uses such as City Hall and the Public Library comprise the remaining 24%, as shown in Map 13 below.

Figure 9. Downtown Land Uses (acres)



The historic downtown, where the buildings are located close to the street, is located along Main Street generally between Buffalo and Harbor Streets and is only a small portion of this area. US 20 (State Street to Harbor Street) brings a sizeable amount of traffic through the edge of downtown.

Map 13.



Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1B. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PEDA

Guiding Objectives

Our goal is that downtown will be a vibrant environment where businesses are prospering and residents and visitors gather for community events. Our Downtown will serve the local community with essential services and act as a central business district for local offices and local business owners, while simultaneously supporting niche businesses that contribute to the tourist experience: Breweries, smaller eateries and retail. The Downtown Core will be pleasant to walk along the street, with quality building design, and places to sit outside, eat, shop, and mingle with friends and neighbors.

Guiding Objectives **Attract New Business and Encourage Entrepreneurship:** Local businesses are the heart of Downtown Conneaut. Local entrepreneurs bolster economic sustainability while contributing to a sense of place that is authentic with strong identity and character.

Retain Existing Businesses: The central business district has a large number of existing businesses, and a wide variety of retail and service uses. The City should continue to be in tune with the needs of the existing businesses and help them to thrive.

Create Distinctive Corridors: Manage the development of downtown and the surrounding areas to create a more consistent development pattern, reduce the potential of incompatible uses and require coherent vision and form to enhance the traditional downtown core and protect residential neighborhoods.

Improve Connectivity and Accessibility: Embrace the complete streets philosophy which provides a safe environment for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Connect downtown to the harbor area, which complements rather than replaces downtown.

Preserve and Enhance Historic Features and Charm: Build on our unique local strengths to create an inviting public space and enhance the authenticity of Downtown Conneaut. Promote historic preservation, façade and streetscape improvements, along with the creating a community gathering space.

Sec. 1B. Policies & Strategies

1. **Enhance and protect the traditional Downtown character and surrounding neighborhoods by updating the zoning requirements to promote appropriate development.** This policy recognizes that there are various character areas in downtown and the surrounding residential neighborhoods and seeks to cluster related and compatible uses based on these character areas. This will combat the negative effects that can develop from this small scale version of “sprawl”. Separating these areas based on their existing conditions will help retain the traditional walkable downtown character in the few blocks where it exists, while accommodating business oriented more toward drive-by traffic along US 20.

- 1.1 Main Street Traditional Corridor/Historic Downtown Core. Protect the historic fabric and traditional layout of the downtown core, where the existing buildings are close to the street and rely on primarily on-street parking. This would be accomplished through an

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

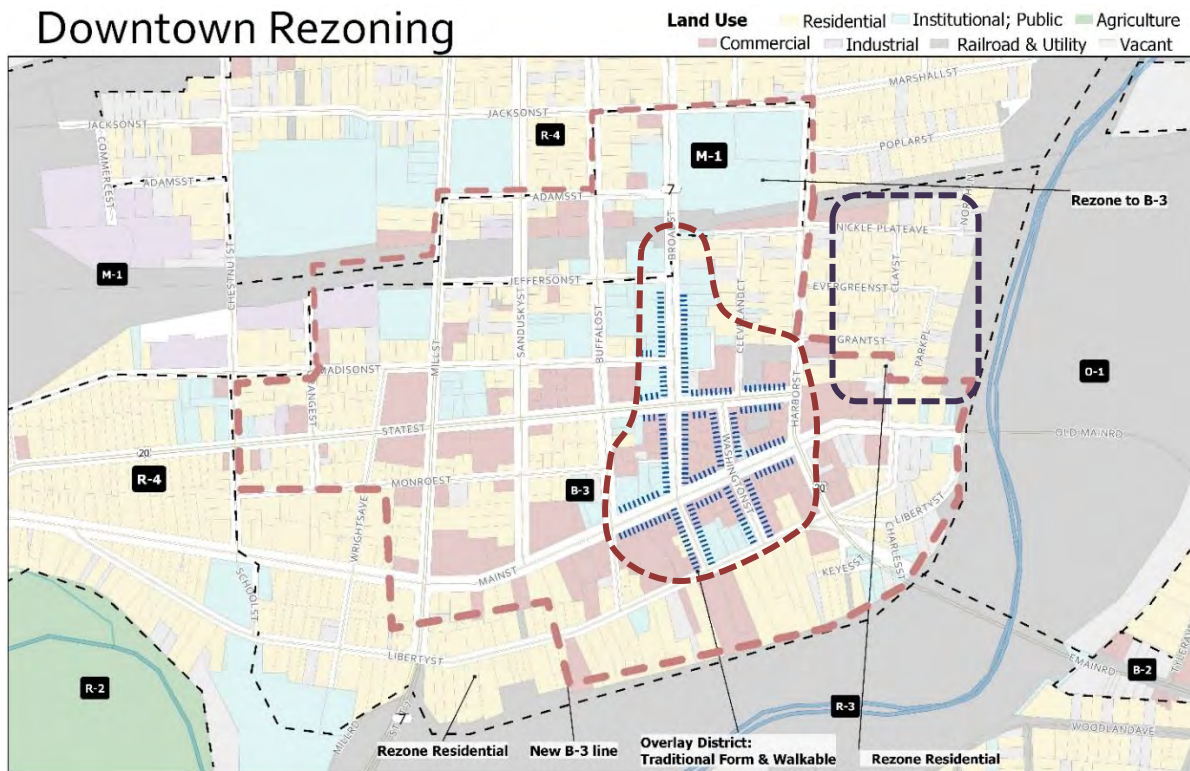
Sec. 1B. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PEDA

overlay zone that would retain the list of B-3 permitted uses, but establish specific form-based development and design standards that preserve the existing character, see Map 14. The overlay district regulations would:

- (a) Establish a maximum building setback so that any new building is located at or near the street in the traditional main street form;
- (b) Limit parking to areas next to or behind the building, and require the parking lot to have decorative fencing and landscaping;
- (c) Require a minimum amount of window display area on the first floor façade.
- (d) Require new buildings to be at least 2 stories or have a façade that is at least 20 feet tall to give the appearance of a 2 story building.
- (e) Specifically address regulations for mixed uses – permit apartments in the upper floors of commercial buildings with appropriate development standards.

Map 14.

Downtown Rezoning



1.2 Liberty Street Office/Service Corridor/Neighborhood Commercial. Many former houses have been converted into office space or other commercial uses such as hair salons or funeral homes. Continue to encourage these types of transitional uses, limited to areas where they already exist. Consider establishing an overlay district that seeks to retain the existing residential structures, limits the types of uses and requires any new construction to have setbacks and building design that is compatible with the surrounding buildings.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy**Sec. 1B. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PEDA**

- 1.3 Add the Downtown Preservation District boundaries to the zoning map and establish appropriate design guidelines to ensure that new development is compatible with the historic downtown character – using the above outline as a guide.
- 1.4 Protect areas that are still solid residential areas. Areas in the northeast and southwest section of the B-3 district are still solid residential areas and new – though permitted – commercial development would not acceptable if proposed in these areas. Encourage and promote rehabilitation and redevelopment of quality housing in these areas. Rezone these areas from B-3 to a residential district that will maintain the density of existing development.
 - (a) Area 1: Southwest Section. This area is comprised of older larger homes with historic character that should be preserved. Rezone this residential area (south of Madison and west of Mill St properties) to a residential district that will maintain the existing single-family lot sizes and density of the area.
 - (b) Area 2: Northeast Section. This residential area northeast of the US 20/Harbor Street intersection should be rezoned to the R-4 District. There is also future potential for a walkable residential area adjacent to the downtown.
2. **Recognize the auto-dominated nature of the US 20 highway corridor through downtown and update the zoning requirements to promote appropriate development.** This area is appropriate for business that rely more heavily on “drive-by” traffic requiring convenient parking near the entrance, as well as drive thru facilities. However, add regulations to the B-3 to improve the general appearance of new construction and existing properties when undergoing major renovations. Regulations to consider include:
 - 2.1 Require a 5-foot parking setback in the front yard and require the area to be landscaped with shrubs and/or a decorative fence/wall.
 - 2.2 Require building entrances to face the primary street (primarily US 20) and have highly visible and well defined building entrances.
 - 2.3 Extend the Downtown environment northward and improve the underpass area along Broad Street, this entails rezoning the adjacent M-1 district located north of Jefferson and south of Jackson Street.
3. **Conduct a downtown parking supply and utilization study.** If a lack of parking is found to be a major deterrent, the City can investigate areas to expand public parking.
 - 3.1 Public parking lots should be located in areas that are not disruptive to the historic traditional form.
 - 3.2 Review and reduce excessive parking standards to reflect contemporary requirements, and recognize the compact, walkable nature of downtown.
4. **Maintain downtown as the center of important public and semi-public facilities.** The presence of City Hall, the Police Station, Post Office, Library, schools, churches and other major community facilities is essential to maintain the position of the downtown as the core of the community. These uses support business in the downtown and draw customers. The

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy**Sec. 1B. DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PEDA**

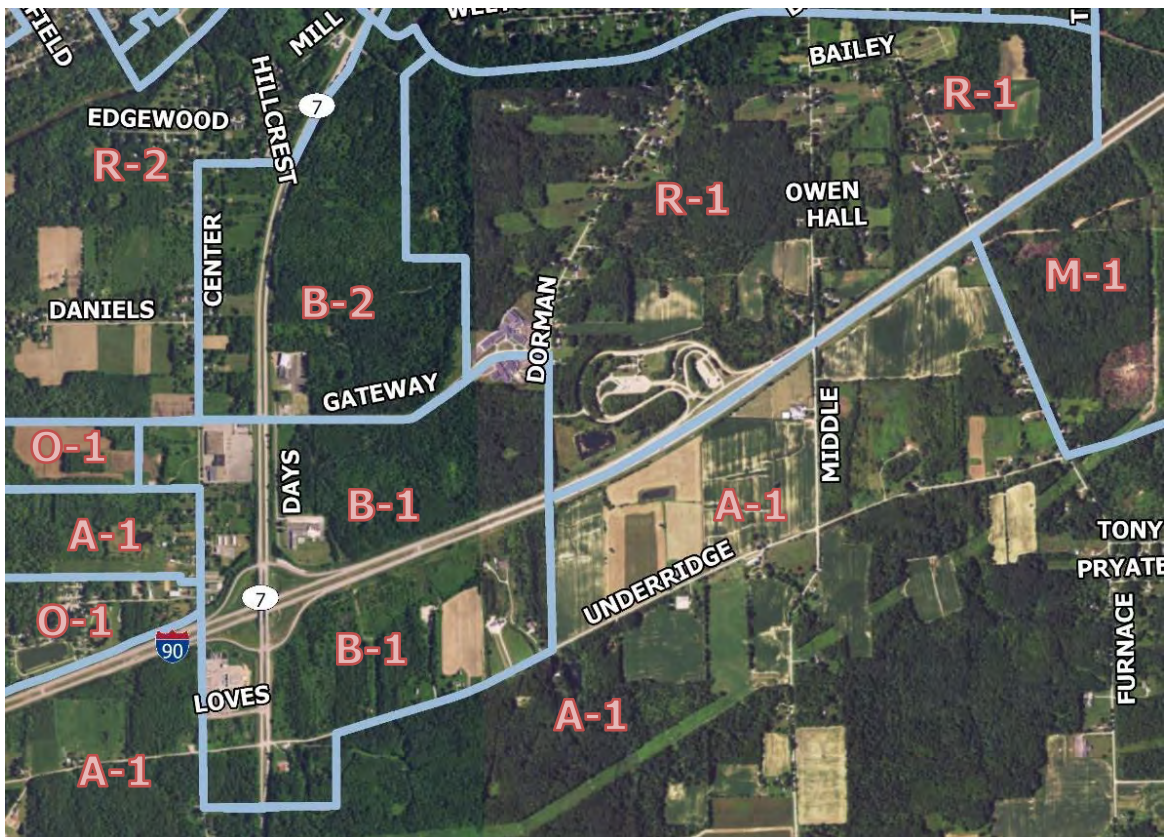
- City should encourage community facilities in downtown and consider downtown locations for any new facilities.
- 5. Improve the appearance of downtown.** Focus revitalization efforts on creating a sense of place and identity.
 - 5.1 Develop a façade improvement program to assist property owners in façade and code improvements for their buildings. This program will also support entrepreneurship and opportunities to reuse older properties.
 - (a) Keep track of accomplishments. For example, develop a recognition program to provide awards to businesses that improve their facades
 - (b) Help create a low interest loan program with area banks for building rehabilitation. Apply for CDBG funding through the Downtown Revitalization Grant from Ohio Development Services Agency.
 - (c) Educate business owners on funding opportunities afforded to them for example, historic tax credits (if applicable) and Community Development Finance Institution such as NEO Fund.
 - 5.2 Enliven blank walls on downtown buildings with colorful murals and public art.
 - 5.3 Reinvigorate the trees and bushes on public property (and public right-of-way) in the downtown – add, replace and properly maintain/trim.
 - 5.4 Expand and improve public gathering spaces and more green space, such as a pocket park in the vacant lot next to Orlando’s; identify a location for a Veterans Memorial.
 - 5.5 Install streetscape improvements and pedestrian features such as: street lighting fixtures, and streetscape, trash receptacles, and bike racks.
 - 5.6 Create a public open space with a tower element to help anchor the Broad/State street intersection. This was a key recommendation from the Cleveland Urban Design Center’s design charrette.
 - 5.7 Improve the appearance of the hillside on Broad Street near the underpass with terraced landscaping, which can double as seating for the Soap Box Derby events.
 - 6. Improve accessibility,** outline infrastructure needs, identify locations for crosswalk ramp and signal improvements.
 - 6.1 Improve sidewalks. Continue the Sidewalk Replacement Reimbursement Program. Identify any barriers and make improvements.
 - 6.2 Install a bike path to create better connections between Downtown and the Harbor, (see also Sec 2.B. Parks and Recreation Improvements). Install bike sharing stations in Downtown and Harbor (and other key destinations as well).
 - 7. Conduct more events downtown.** For example, build on Conneaut’s D-Day event and host corresponding feature events. These events will generate the necessary foot traffic to reinvigorate downtown. Another example is a “First Fridays” event concept. In addition, the events celebrate the history and character of Conneaut and build on civic pride.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1C. GATEWAY TO CONNEAUT- I-90/SR 7 INTERCHANGE PEDDA

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Map 15. Existing Zoning



Despite the prevailing commercial zoning at the I-90 interchange and along the SR 7 corridor heading north into Downtown Conneaut, there has been little commercial development in this area, and the commercial plaza located at Gateway and SR 7 has vacancies. This is attributable to the Limited Access designation placed on SR 7 by the Ohio Department of Transportation when SR 7 was constructed. Many of the parcels in this area are large, undeveloped lots, though there are some areas impacted by wetlands, and the Smokey Run tributary which flows north behind the Middle School.

Except for the B-1 Commercial Zoning at the I-90/SR 7 interchange area and the M-1 Manufacturing District west of Furnace Road, the area south of I-90 is zoned A-1 Agriculture and is primarily rural farmland.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1C. GATEWAY TO CONNEAUT- I-90/SR 7 INTERCHANGE PEDS

GUIDING OBJECTIVES

The Route 7/I-90 interchange area serves as a gateway to Conneaut and has significant untapped potential. As development in other areas of Conneaut increases, notably the harbor and recreational offerings, traffic at the interchange and along SR 7 is expected to increase as well. Conneaut intends to capitalize on the high visibility and accessibility of this location by providing services and creating a welcoming atmosphere to entice travelers.

Guiding Objectives	<p>Attract new development with greater flexibility: The properties surrounding the I-90 interchange have potential for new development due to their exposure and accessibility from I-90 and SR 7.</p>
	<p>Create an attractive gateway: Promote quality design and features to create an attractive and welcoming atmosphere in the Gateway to Conneaut. The area should facilitate economic development but also serve as a welcoming and attractive entrance into the city.</p>
	<p>Improve connectivity to Downtown and Harbor: The Route 7 corridor is the main north/south thoroughfare through the city and provides access to tourist destinations and economic hubs.</p>

SEC. 1C. POLICIES & STRATEGIES

1. **Attract new businesses to the Gateway/SR 7 corridor to serve Interstate travelers and accommodate new development.** The primary driver of demand for new development at interchanges historically has been for highway service facilities such as restaurants (both fast casual dining and full service establishments), hotels, automotive service stations and related motorist services. The locational characteristics of the Route 7/ I-90 Interchange are ideal to capture travelers, provided ODOT’s Limited Access designation can be relaxed or eliminated (see also Sec. 5. Ensuring Our Public Utilities & Infrastructure Meet Community Needs). Land use policies for this Priority Development Area will be advanced through the following zoning district and zoning map changes.
 - 1.1 Revise the B-1 District to reinforce it as a Highway Services District. While the intent is outlined correctly in the Code, the uses and lot requirements can be modified to more accurately reflect a Highway Services District. Revise the list of Permitted Uses as follows:
 - (a) Add a wider range of traveler services and local retail and services. Consider adding restaurants (both fast casual dining and full service) and offices (min 2 acre lot size) as permitted uses. Shopping centers would remain a permitted use but with updated standards.
 - (b) Consider adding other distribution/truck related uses as a conditional use. Warehouses can also remain a conditional use. Limit industrial uses to light industrial.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy**Sec. 1C. GATEWAY TO CONNEAUT- I-90/SR 7 INTERCHANGE PEDAS**

These truck-related uses are most appropriate south of the intersection where they still have excellent access and highway exposure, but which would limit the extent of on-off truck traffic.

- 1.2 Expand the boundary of the B-1 District north along SR 7 until the wetlands which provides a natural boundary and buffer, see Map 16.
 - 1.3 Tailor the B-2 Zoning District standards to accommodate the reduced B-2 area along SR 7 closer to Downtown, and the B-2 areas along US 20. Changes to this district are intended to encourage businesses that are located further from the highway interchange area. Revise the list of permitted uses to add:
 - (a) General commercial uses such as contractors' facilities.
 - (b) Auto repair, boat storage and warehousing as conditional uses.
 - (c) Day care centers, hospitals and nursing homes as conditional uses with specific development requirements.
 - 1.4 Consider expansion of non-residential if the need for additional land for economic development is demonstrated, see Map 16. The area along Underridge Road, south of I-90 and between the current B-1 zoning at the interchange and Furnace Road is currently zoned A-1 Agriculture. This area is characterized by large parcels and being adjacent to I-90 would appeal to businesses that desire to take advantage of the prime highway visibility. With current best practices in low impact development, new construction could incorporate the natural features into the development's site design that could help with stormwater management from water runoff from the higher elevation to the south. Criteria for approving any rezoning for new nonresidential development in this area includes:
 - (a) Restrict new development to business park/light industrial uses such as offices, research and technology, limited industrial uses which are located in a campus-like setting, and well-designed large scale regional retail development. Regardless of the use, all development would be restricted to uses conducted entirely inside buildings with no, or limited, outdoor storage.
 - (b) Install a marginal road parallel to I-90 and north of E Underridge Road to maximize the area's development potential and avoid stormwater issues along E Underridge Road. See also Sec. 5 Ensuring Our Public Utilities & Infrastructure Meet Community Needs.
 - (c) If appropriate in the future, consider the construction of a new interchange on I-90 near Furnace Road to accommodate the increased nonresidential development outlined above. This will be an expensive endeavor but if physically and financially feasible, this interchange could provide more direct access to the new development and reduce impacts on other areas of the city.
- 2. Pursue the potential adaptive reuse of Gateway Plaza.** See Sec.1 Strengthening Our Economy for strategies regarding hiring a city/port authority staff person dedicated to economic development as well as other strategies to market the property.

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1C. GATEWAY TO CONNEAUT- I-90/SR 7 INTERCHANGE PEDAS

3. Promote an attractive and welcoming atmosphere in the Gateway area. The visual, appearance and image of the interchange area is an important concern because it serves as the entrance to the city. While it is not recommended to be overly burdensome on developers, there needs to be a basic set of criteria that must be met to maintain orderly and consistent development.



TYLER BOULEVARD IN MENTOR
 SAYBROOK INDUSTRIAL PARK
 COFFEE CREEK IN AUSTINBURG TOWNSHIP

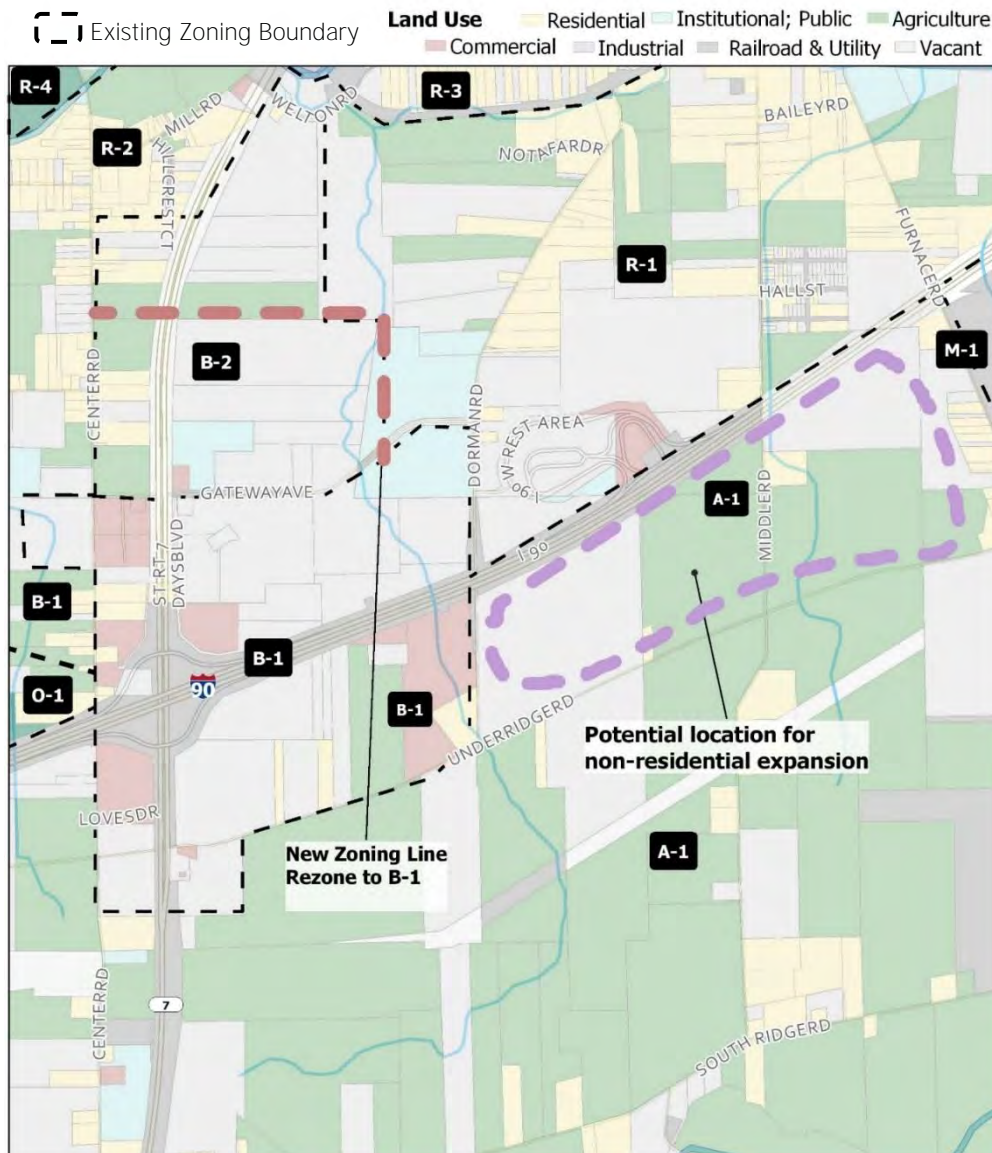
- 3.1 Add lighting to the SR 7 corridor, similar to the type of lighting installed along SR 11.
- 3.2 Connect visitors to Conneaut’s destinations and attractions.
 - (a) Install information and wayfinding signs at the Interchange area to entice travelers to visit Conneaut, and make it easy for them to find their way to area attractions, including downtown, the harbor, and the Tourism Bureau.
 - (b) Subsidize ODOT attraction signs for local businesses.
 - (c) Install an appropriate welcoming landmark. Wayfinding and landmarks should be installed throughout the Route 7 Corridor to Downtown and the Harbor.
- 3.3 Update/revise the business zoning requirements to ensure quality development in this Priority Development Area:
 - (a) B-1 District:
 - Consider increasing the minimum lot size for conditionally permitted industrial uses from 1 acre to 2 acres.
 - Increase the parking setback from the street from 5 feet to 20 feet, and require appropriate landscaping in this setback area.
 - For lots adjacent to residential districts, increase the minimum parking setback from the rear and side lot line from 5 feet to 20 feet.
 - Add a maximum percentage for lot coverage (the % of the lot that can be covered by building and parking) or a minimum percentage of open space (including the land within the setbacks)
 - Specifically regulate outdoor storage – require it to be located in the rear yard, behind the building and adequately screened or fenced
 - (b) B-2 District:
 - Add a minimum 10-foot parking setback from the street, and require appropriate landscaping in this setback area
 - For lots adjacent to residential districts, add a minimum 10-foot to 20-foot parking setback from the rear and side lot line.
 - Specifically regulate outdoor storage – require it to be located in the rear yard, behind the building and adequately screened
 - Add a maximum percentage for lot coverage (the % of the lot that can be covered by building and parking) or a minimum percentage of open space (including the land within the setbacks).

Sec. 1. Strengthening Our Economy

Sec. 1C. GATEWAY TO CONNEAUT- I-90/SR 7 INTERCHANGE PEDA

4. **Install a bike path to connect the Gateway to Downtown.** See Sec. 2 Preserving, Conserving And Managing Our Greenspace.
5. **Develop Access Management plans in order to relax the Limited Access restrictions.** Continue to work with ODOT on a plan for SR 7 to identify ways to eliminate or relax the current Limited Access status. One of the requirements is to develop an access management plan to manage new curb cuts and driveways that may be needed for new, anticipated development. See also Sec. 5 Ensuring Our Public Utilities & Infrastructure Meet Community Needs.

Map 16.
Gateway Interchange Rezoning



1 Strengthening Our Economy

Sec 1D. EAST SIDE INDUSTRIAL PARK PEDA

Existing Conditions

The City owns approximately 265 acres of land zoned M-1 Manufacturing District along US 20 (on both the north and south sides of the street) adjacent to the state line. The parcel on the north side has approximately 1,500 feet of frontage on US 20, and the south side has approximately 1,750 feet of frontage.

While this land has good visibility and access to US 20, a considerable portion of each parcel is impacted by wetlands, so that there are only about 22 acres developable on the north side of US 20 and about 59 acres on the south side, see Map 17.

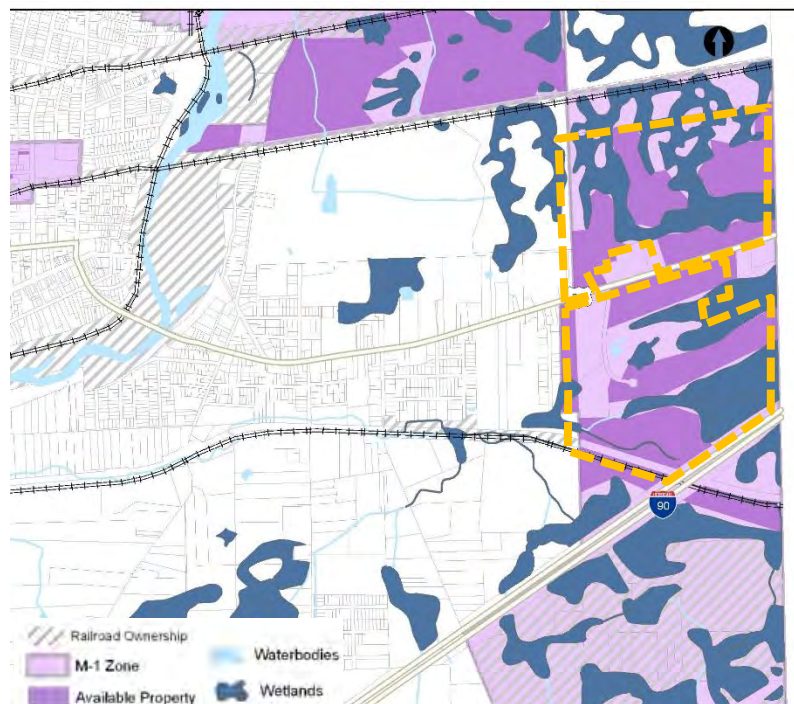
There are existing businesses in the vicinity, including Conneaut Leather, which is interested in expanding.

These existing conditions provide opportunities for the City to assist both existing businesses in this area, as well as attract new industrial users through strategic subdivision of the sites.

Map 17. East Side Industrial Park, City Ownership



Map 18. Developable Land in East Conneaut Industrial Park



1 Strengthening Our Economy

Sec 1D. EAST SIDE INDUSTRIAL PARK PEDA

Guiding Objectives

Conneaut has invested in an industrial park and intends to utilize existing infrastructure to market and promote Conneaut as an economically diverse city - attractive industrial town (in appropriate locations) in addition to a tourist town.

Guiding Objectives	<p>Attract new development: The industrial park should be marketed with the goal to be at full capacity. The City will meet the needs of prospective tenants.</p> <hr/> <p>Create buildable and affordable development sites: The City will intervene to help make shovel ready sites for businesses.</p> <hr/> <p>Improve access and capacity: Identify and address access concerns in order to create a more attractive development site.</p> <hr/>
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Sec 1D. Policies & Strategies

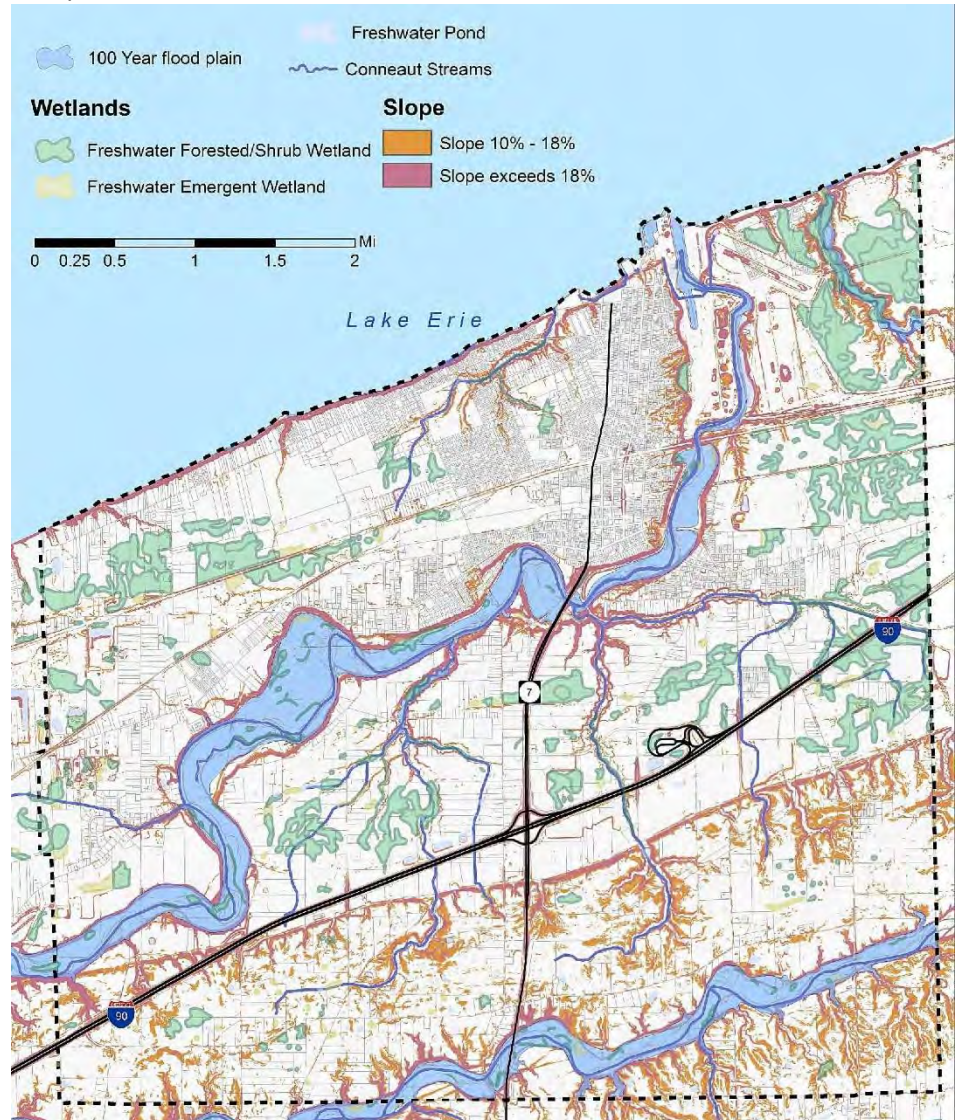
1. **Work with Conneaut Leather on their expansion needs.** Subdivide and transfer city-owned land to the company that will enable them to expand their operations.
2. **Market the East Side Industrial Park.**
 - 2.1. Aggressively market the City-owned frontage, making known the City’s incentives that are available, such as:
 - (a) City will subdivide the land in such a way that development sites have frontage on US 20, but little or no wetlands.
 - (b) City will clear the land to make it development ready.
 - (c) City is agreeable to “give land away” in exchange for development agreement regarding new jobs. These sites are also available for tax abatement through the City-wide Community Reinvestment Area designation.
 - 2.2. Partner with Ashtabula Growth Partnership to aggressively market the East Side Industrial Park.
3. **Establish access management strategies and make safety improvements** to make the industrial park attractive to freight logistics companies.
4. **Create a Wetlands Mitigation Bank** on City-owned land to facilitate development of prime sites in other locations that have wetlands (such as commercially zoned land near I-90/SR 7). A mitigation bank is a natural resource area that has been restored, established, enhanced, or preserved and then set aside to compensate for future conversions of wetlands in other areas of the City for development activities. The City can create a mitigation bank under a formal agreement with the Ohio EPA and/or the Army Corp of Engineers. See also Sec. 1 Strengthening Our Economy.

SEC. 2. PRESERVING, CONSERVING AND MANAGING OUR GREEN SPACE

Parks, trails and other recreational amenities create places where people want to live, work and play, and Conneaut has many natural areas that make it special. It is important that we capitalizing on the benefits gained by making connections to our recreational and natural assets but in a way that also preserves/conserves these very important assets.

Lake Erie provides a wide range of recreational activities as well as spectacular sunsets, and Conneaut Creek is a designated Wild and Scenic River that is particularly well known for steelhead fishing. In recent years, the City, Ashtabula County Metroparks and others have made progress in securing additional land for public use and access to the river, but more is needed.

Map 19. Sensitive Natural Areas



Sec. 2. Preserving, Conserving And Managing Our Green Space

Guiding Objectives

Greenspace management is a two pronged approach: preserve the vast natural features in Conneaut and provide recreation for both locals and tourists with a sustainable park system. Conneaut will be known as a premier ecotourism destination in the region highlighting the State Designated Wild and Scenic River, Conneaut Creek, and its tributaries for public enjoyment as well as an economic driver. The park system will provide quality amenities and recreational opportunities for everyone in the Community. Conneaut will continue to strengthen environmental protections to sustain public access for years to come.

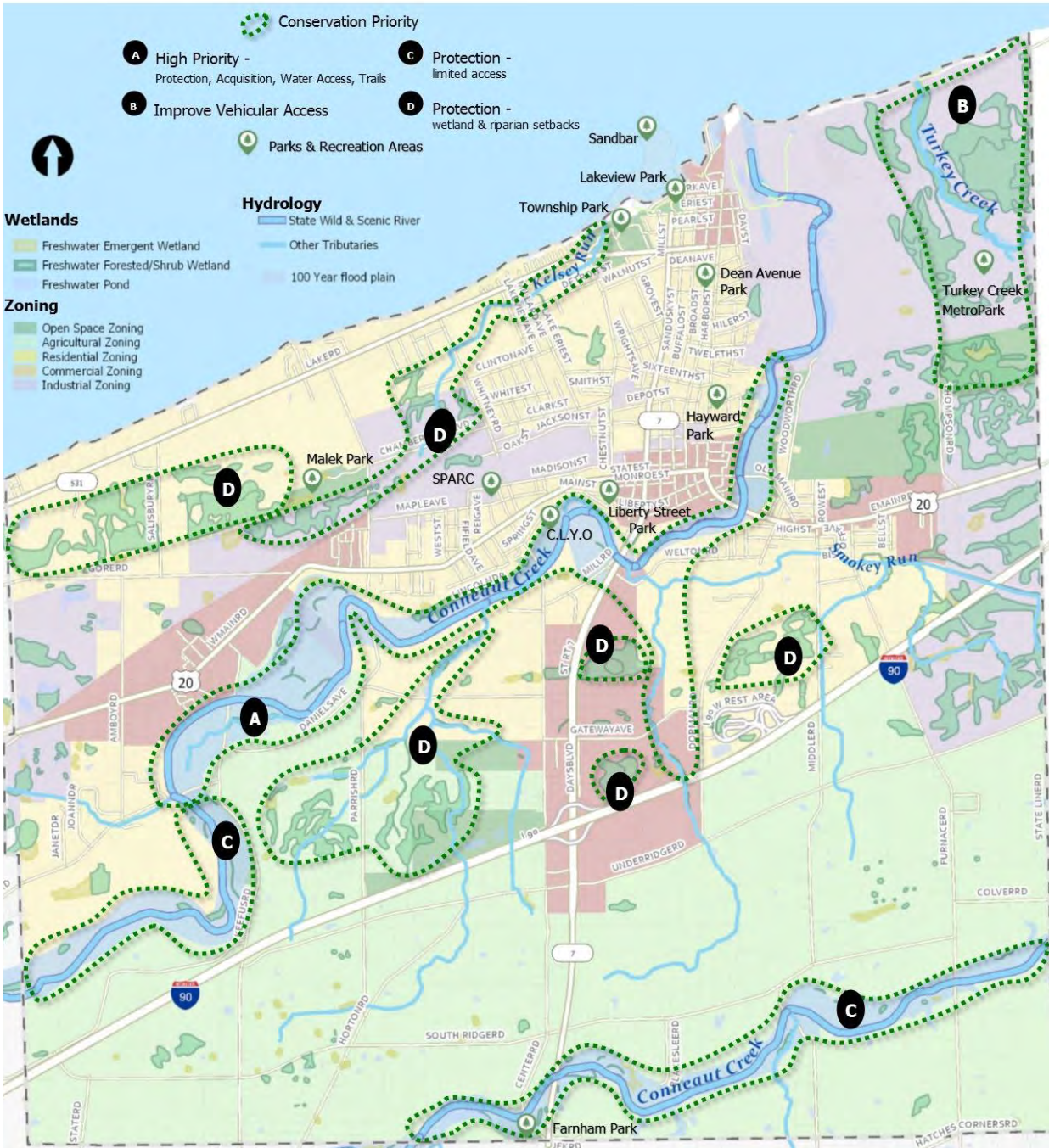
Guiding Objectives	Preserve Extensive Natural Features System: There are environmental, recreational, and economic benefits to preserving natural features such as Conneaut Creek, wetlands, and the tree canopy. Prioritize the areas of most importance so there is a balance between land conservation, public access and economic development initiatives.
	Expand Public Access: Encourage public spaces and open access to the lake, creek and park system for children and adults, and residents and tourists alike.
	Manage Resources and Facilities: In order to maintain an excellent park system, the City needs to create an efficient and sustainable method for the upkeep of quality facilities.
	Improve Connectivity: Create a cohesive park system to provide better access for all residents and create a full recreational experience based on walkability and bikeability.

Priority Conservation Areas

Our Priority Conservation Areas are shown on Map 20 and covered in detail in the following pages.

Sec. 2. Preserving, Conserving And Managing Our Green Space

Map 20. Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs)



Sec. 2. Preserving, Conserving And Managing Our Green Space

Sec. 2. Policies & Strategies

Sec. 2.A. PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS

1. **Conneaut Creek is the High Priority** for Conservation/Protection, Acquisition and Public Access Improvements, from Camp Peet to the Woodworth Road ramp, and south along the North-South Smokey Run tributary to the Middle School. Confirm priorities for preservation/conservation, as well as appropriate recreation related development improvements.
 - 1.1 Create map of larger region to show context – include all of Conneaut Creek (in OH), and PA game lands that provide access to Turkey Creek Metroparks. Depicting the entire watershed overall will reveal the interconnected system and will inform the conservation priorities and policies.
 - 1.2 Build a trail along Conneaut Creek to provide connections between Camp Peet and Downtown; and along North-South Smokey Run tributary to connect to Gateway Schools (and the Outdoor Learning Center/Discovery Trail). The trail will be managed through a partnership with the Ashtabula County Metroparks. Land for the trail would be either purchased outright from the current land owner, or authorization to use the land would be obtained through purchase of a conservation and access easement. Landowners would work out the details of location and restrictions in their easement agreement.
 - 1.3 Identify and create additional sites for access to the river, parking for the hike/bike trails:
 - (a) Add kayak/canoe launching area near Old Main Street
 - (b) Make sure these facilities are easy to find with good wayfinding signs.
 - (c) Make sure there are adequate trash receptacles at these sites.
 - 1.4 Identify potential locations for recreation business related uses such as kayak/canoe rentals, and fishing equipment and bait. Consider adding these types of uses as conditionally permitted in the relevant residential districts.
 - 1.5 Expand camping along the Creek, consider partnering with Ashtabula Metroparks on locations.
 - 1.6 Pursue designation of Conneaut Creek as a National Water Trail. Water trails are recreational routes on waterways with a network of public access points supported by broad-based community partnerships. Water trails provide both conservation and recreational opportunities. Designation as a national water trail increases awareness of Conneaut Creek as a recreation area – by having a listing in the National Water Trails System’s online searchable database of trails along with a dedicated page on the NWTS’s website to share trail information including water trail descriptions, maps, photographs, water trail manager contact information, links to applicable websites, and best management strategies and practices. See NWTS@nps.gov.
 - 1.7 Establish criteria to guide future land acquisition/conservation, such as land adjacent to existing park, and parcels needed to complete the trail network.

Sec. 2. Preserving, Conserving And Managing Our Green Space

Sec. 2A. PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS (PCA)

- 1.8 Install interpretive signage along the trails. Interpretive signs that explain the history, geology and biology of the river and its inhabitants, and reasons why it has been designated a Wild and Scenic River provide education opportunities to increase visitors' understanding and appreciation for the river's unique qualities.
2. **Make improvements to Turkey Creek Metroparks:**
 - 2.1 Partner with the state of Pennsylvania to establish interstate connections with adjacent PA game lands.
 - 2.2 Create a Turkey Creek park master plan to guide park improvements.
 - 2.3 Establish a recreational trail that highlights the riparian assets of Turkey Creek and the Lake Erie coastline within this recently conserved property.
 - 2.4 Rezone the Metroparks to O-1 Open Space District from M-1 Industrial District.
3. **Protect the "secondary" natural areas along the remaining portion of Conneaut Creek and in other areas through conservation easements** that keep the land in private ownership with limited access. Encourage and promote private donations of land through establishment of conservation easements. Begin a conservation easement campaign that educates and encourages large lot owners to place the unused portions of their properties into a conservation easement to be held by the Western Reserve Land Conservancy. In many cases this underdeveloped land provides productive storm water management and water quality services that are beneficial to the City and the watershed.
4. **Adopt zoning and subdivision regulations that protect the "secondary" natural areas** while facilitating development in lower priority conservation areas. Stream, floodplain and wetland protection regulations recognize the vital role these areas play in reducing the impact of flooding on property, and the potential negative impacts on business activity, health and safety. Regulations should be written in a way that balances environmental protection with economic development initiatives and does not overly limit property rights. Revise the Zoning Code to:
 - 4.1 Establish riparian and wetland setback regulations – with the setback width based on drainage area of waterway. Utilize the model regulations developed by the Chagrin River Watershed Partners.
 - 4.2 Restrict tree clearing in riparian and wetland setback areas, because trees help reduce erosion and increase the setback's beneficial functions related to water runoff and water quality.
 - 4.3 Create conservation subdivision regulations that encourage preservation of natural features without reducing the development potential, with a percentage of land preserved as open space. Conservation Development is a development technique that allows design and layout flexibility of an entire development parcel, to conserve resources while allowing development to occur at the same density as the underlying zoning.

Sec. 2. Preserving, Conserving And Managing Our Green Space

Sec. 2A. PRIORITY CONSERVATION AREAS (PCA)

- 4.4 Consider Woodland Preservation requirements in areas of the City where large wooded areas exist (e.g. near Conneaut Creek) to limit clear cutting for new residential subdivisions. This could be accomplished with a conservation/tree protection overlay zone, and would require a professional evaluation of the existing woodland at preliminary design stage. It is important in drafting such regulations to ensure that private property rights with respect to timbering are maintained.
- 4.5 Consider regulations that require developers to protect trees during construction of a development project. These construction protection measures ensure that existing trees that are intended to remain on the site are protected during construction in order to maximize the potential for their survival after construction is complete.
- 4.6 Revise the site plan review requirements to require detailed inventory of natural features, such as wetlands, streams, steep slopes, major wooded areas.

Sec. 2.B. PARKS AND RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

- 1. **Develop a City Parks improvement plan** to identify ways establish a more sustainable park system that could alleviate the financial strain on the City to maintain park facilities. Managing resources more effectively could also drive quality facilities while retaining an extensive park system with many neighborhood parks, active recreation facilities, and passive open space. (See inventory of existing parks in Appendix E).
 - 1.1 Conduct a survey of residents to ascertain their opinions on priority park improvements, evaluate the existing park facilities, and develop a park improvement plan that works within the City's budget.
 - 1.2 Explore the possibility of establishing an indoor recreation facility – consider partnerships with the YMCA.
 - 1.3 Continue to maintain and enhance Malek Park. Develop a master site plan for the park, including the 17 acres recently added, that identifies the general location of future amenities, including any future enhancements to the Arboretum. This will ensure that incremental improvements do not obstruct long term goals for the park.
 - 1.4 Redevelop Lakeview Park for economic development (see Sec 1A Lakefront and Harbor PEDAs.) Relocate the ball diamond currently at Lakeview Park in order to accommodate the planned redevelopment of the Park for housing and/or economic development. Retain a portion for public open space – with splash park or other recreation facility.
 - 1.5 Partner with the Township Park for grant applications and funding opportunities, such as for boardwalk connections from the Marina to Township Park, (see Sec 1A Lakefront and Harbor PEDAs.)

Sec. 2. Preserving, Conserving And Managing Our Green Space

Sec. 2B. PARKS AND RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

2. **Create an improvement plan for the Sand Bar** (see Sec 1A Lakefront and Harbor PEDAs.)
 - 2.1 Continue to promote diverse uses which highlight this ever-changing and versatile property, such as:
 - (a) Preserve the beach
 - (b) Maintain the walking paths
 - (c) Consider primitive or yurt camping
 - (d) Retain a portion of Sand Bar for a bird sanctuary. Support this specialized activity by providing educational materials such as interpretative signage.
 - (e) Consider providing various forms of transportation sharing including golf cart rentals and bike sharing stations at strategic locations in Downtown and the Harbor. This accommodates boaters and residents, children and adults to have easy access and transportation options to the Lake. This could be publicly or privately funded.
 - (f) Continue to allow parking
 - 2.2 Dredge the area north of Naylor Drive to create more boat slips. Develop a strategy for using dredged material; Conduct a cost analysis of establishing a dewatering location, (see also Sec. 1A Harbor/Lakefront PEDAs).
 - 2.3 Extend electricity to the sandbar to enable recreation-related sales/services and expanded marina (there are currently no utilities (electric, water, sewer) along Naylor Blvd).
3. **Create bike paths and hike/bike trails** to make it easier and safer to ride a bike in and around the City, especially to community facilities such as the Harbor area, Downtown, Conneaut Creek, the schools, and the library.
 - 3.1 Add a north/south multi-modal path to connect Downtown to the Harbor area. (See Sec. 1A and 1B.)
 - 3.2 Connect Conneaut Township Park to the Marina and sandbar via a multi-purpose trail.
 - 3.3 Develop a north/south multi-modal path along/near SR 7 to provide a connection between the schools and downtown. See options for reconfiguring SR 7 in Sec. 5. Utilities and Infrastructure. Other options including converting the vacated portion of "Old" Mill Road to a bike and pedestrian trail. Old Mill Road runs north of Welton Road parallel to RT 7 until it merges at the entry point into Downtown. It would provide a charming alternative route with the bridge over Conneaut Creek.
 - 3.4 Create a scenic bikeway along Lake Road (SR 531). Lake Road is part of the Lake Erie Coastal Trail Scenic Byway, and should be included as a bikeway that becomes part of the planned Erie to Cleveland bike path.
 - 3.5 Add bike accommodations to RT 20 to provide connections from Downtown to the Ohio/Pennsylvania boarder.

Sec. 2. Preserving, Conserving And Managing Our Green Space

Sec. 2B. PARKS AND RECREATION IMPROVEMENTS

4. Market the recreation/natural areas:

- 4.1 Develop and implement a plan for communicating the economic and community benefits of outdoor recreation, heritage tourism and land conservation. Use new and existing research to document the economic benefits of outdoor recreation, tourism and land conservation.
- 4.2 Install appropriate way-finding signs to guide people from the major travel routes such as I-90, SR 7, US 20, and the Circle Lake Route to our primary destination spots such as the Harbor and Downtown.
- 4.3 Contact the Adventure Cycling Association and similar recreation associations to be added to their list of resources and facilities registry.
- 4.4 Promote/create events that showcase the area's natural features and amenities. Partner with the school system to educate children on natural resource protection and introduce them to the lakefront and beach.
- 4.5 Investigate ways to increase winter recreation activities. Tourism naturally declines in winter months, but development of area snowmobile, cross-country skiing, sledding and related lakefront activities can help bring more activity to the area, and help sustain businesses through the slow months. Ice fishing on Lake Erie and other off-season or winter time sports associated with the Lake or lakeshore could bring additional tourists into the City during the off-season and could provide exercise and recreational opportunities for residents.

5. Educate hunters about new laws that allow hunting on public land. In order to ensure the safety of others, prepare educational materials to educate hunters about the new law, and post signs to delineate the limits of properties where hunting is and is not allowed, especially in areas near the schools and other public places where conflicts could occur.

SEC. 3. IMPROVING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS

Existing Conditions

Conneaut is home to more than 12,800 residents. There are over 2,190 acres in Conneaut devoted to approximately 5,670 dwelling units, mostly single-family homes (76%), as well as other types of housing such as duplexes, triplexes and apartments.

Many residents live in older neighborhoods where the houses were built before 1970, and 44% of all houses in the City were built before 1939. Older houses are more expensive to upgrade to contemporary standards – to be competitive with new housing, and there is a limited market for fixer-uppers, many buyers are not willing to invest the time to do extensive rehab.

It is important to encourage new housing construction in order to continue to attract new residents, and for existing residents who desire to “move up” or have changing housing needs (such as empty nesters). For example, approximately 15% of residents (712) earn more than \$50,000 annually and could afford to move up into new, higher priced housing that provides contemporary amenities.

Yet, only about 27 houses have been built since 2010, including The Shores housing project constructed on the former golf course.

Nevertheless, with more than 4,711 acres of vacant, undeveloped land zoned for residential use, including approximately 612 acres zoned in areas where water and sewer are generally available (R-3 and R-4), there is the potential for new housing development to occur. However, it is important that older housing in existing neighborhoods be properly maintained and renovated (or demolished if needed) in order for nearby vacant land to be attractive for new housing development.

Map 21. Housing Year Built in Original Conneaut

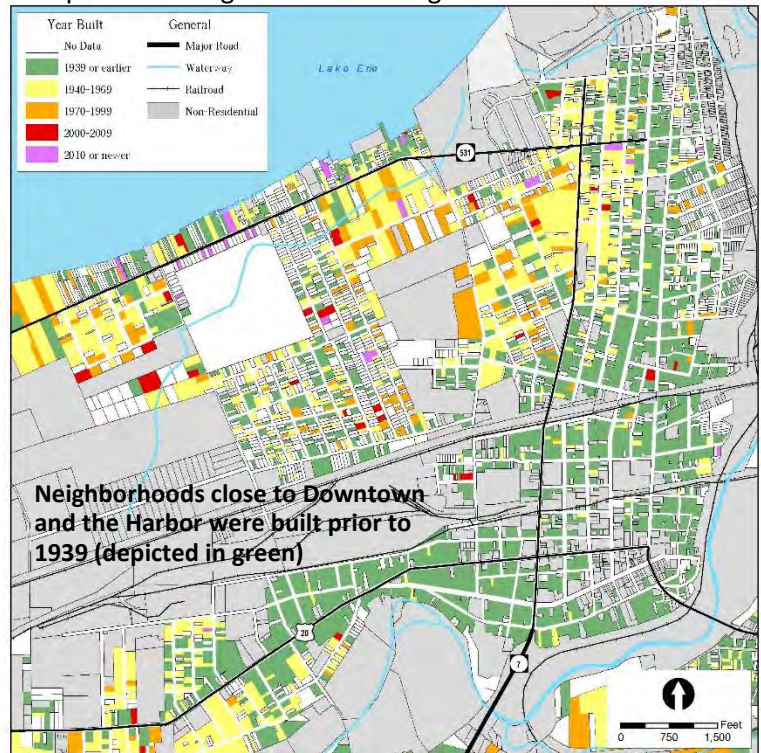


Table 5. Housing Units by Type

# of Units in Structure	Units	%
Single-family detached houses	4,281	76%
Single-family attached (condos)	42	1%
2 to 4 units in a building	582	10%
5 to 19 units in a building	144	3%
20 or more units in a building	260	5%
Mobile Home	359	6%
Total Housing Units	5,668	100%

Source: 2015 American Community Survey Data

Sec. 3. Improving Our Neighborhoods

Guiding Objectives

Our goal is to have and maintain attractive, stable, inviting neighborhoods that accommodate the needs of our current residents: families and seniors; empty-nesters and young adults, and that will attract future residential development. Increasing our population is important in order to support the retail stores, restaurants and services, and community facilities desired by residents.

Guiding Objectives	<p>Protect and Maintain Existing Residential Neighborhoods: Improving the health of existing neighborhoods is paramount to maintaining a high quality of life. Conneaut should institute the necessary policies which support stabilizing existing neighborhoods and protect living conditions.</p> <hr/> <p>Encourage New Diverse Housing Types: New and diversified housing stock is essential to support the changing demographics occurring nationwide, and is the first step to enticing new residents who are outdoor enthusiasts who appreciate living close by the Lake, Conneaut Creek and other local natural areas.</p> <hr/> <p>Preserve and Enhance Historic Features and Charm: Older and historic homes are an integral part of Conneaut's culture and image which contribute to our unique identity and sense of place.</p> <hr/> <p>Improve Property Maintenance: Encourage attractive and inviting neighborhoods that promote civic pride and additional investment in Conneaut.</p>
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Sec. 3. Policies & Strategies

1. Encourage new housing construction in key locations to strengthen the neighborhoods:
 - 1.1 Revise the zoning regulations to encourage new housing including:
 - (a) Higher density – and higher value - housing construction in the Harbor area (see Sec. 1A. Lakefront and Harbor PEDAs) to attract residents who want to be near the Lake.
 - (b) Encourage infill housing in and around the downtown as well as in other areas of the city where water and sanitary sewer service already exists.
 - (c) Encourage construction of a variety of housing types to be attractive to wider market.
 - 1.2 Provide utility improvements to foster new housing development in areas west of Parrish Road north of the railroad tracks and in the Dorman Rd area near the schools.
 - 1.3 Market the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) tax abatement benefits and develop other incentive programs to entice new housing construction in key locations in the Harbor area and Downtown.

Sec. 3. Improving Our Neighborhoods

2. **Enhance and revitalize older neighborhoods and preserve homes and buildings with architectural or historical value.** The goal is to decrease city-wide vacancies to no more than 5% (excluding seasonal units) by working with homes owners, landlords and local realtors.
 - 2.1 Target the area between the Downtown and the Harbor for historic preservation, rehab and demolition of deteriorated housing – conduct a detailed study of this target area to develop a data base of housing conditions and housing vacancies.
 - 2.2 Continue to keep track of and monitor vacant properties City-wide through the City's vacant property registration. Annually, create a map of vacant properties to determine if any concentrations or other patterns are evident.
 - 2.3 Continue to work with the landbank to acquire and assemble properties for redevelopment.
 - (a) Utilize the City-wide vacant property monitoring system to identify areas for property assembly.
 - (b) Identify vacant lots that may be suitable for community gardens or side yards; develop programs to encourage adjoining property owners to acquire the side yards.
 - 2.4 Continue the rehabilitation assistance programs for low-moderate income homeowners such as CDBG and HOME funds.
 - (a) Aggressively promote the City's CHIP grant/loan programs and educate residents, especially in the neighborhoods surrounding the harbor. This encourages property maintenance and home renovations for those who otherwise cannot afford it and will bring homes up to code. High quality and stable neighborhoods are essential to attracting new investment.
 - (b) Document the results of the programs, and advertise the results. For example, as part of the 2015 CHIP/HOME program, needed repairs were made on 11 houses (averaging \$6,570 in construction costs) and 5 houses received major rehab work averaging \$37,850.
 - 2.5 Create a Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvement Plan to identify neighborhoods where public infrastructure upgrades are needed to make them more walkable, bikeable, and ADA-friendly. Pedestrian accessibility improvements are beneficial for families with young children and also help seniors to age-in-place. Conduct an inventory to identify locations where sidewalks or sidewalk maintenance and cross walks are needed.
 - 2.6 Rezone the two neighborhoods within the B-3 General Business to residential to protect from commercial encroachment in order to preserve the primarily residential areas in the downtown area. (See also Sec 1B. Downtown Revitalization PEDDA). As trends for walkable neighborhoods and living close to downtown continue, and given the amount of redevelopment sites scattered among the existing downtown commercial development, these neighborhoods are likely to stay residential, and even become highly desirable for renovation and rehabilitation.
3. **Promote and regulate seasonal rentals to increase the variety of lodging available.** Seasonal rentals are an important facet of a tourist economy and are already occurring in Conneaut. It

Sec. 3. Improving Our Neighborhoods

is essential to ensure that they also remain compatible with their surrounding neighborhoods.

- 3.1 Add zoning regulations for Bed and Breakfast establishments as a conditional use in residential districts: Adopt specific development requirements such as required parking, screening, maximum number of rooms to rent, and performance standards for property maintenance and noise and other nuisances.
- 3.2 Formulate an agreement with Airbnb, Vacation Rental by Owner (VRBO) and other home sharing entities to collect an "occupancy tax" from guests as part of their reservation. Airbnb has made agreements with a number of local governments (including Cleveland and Cuyahoga County) to collect and remit local taxes on behalf of hosts. Airbnb calculates applicable local taxes and collects those taxes from guests at the time of booking. Airbnb then takes care of remitting collected taxes to the applicable tax authority on the hosts' behalf. Partner with the County Convention and Visitors Bureau to investigate further.

4. Continue Code Updates and Code Enforcement to ensure new development is compatible and properties are maintained.

- 4.1 Enforce rental registrations so that there is a good data base on the location and status of rental housing. (See Sec. 4. Enhancing Our Community Character and Image).
- 4.2 Consider conducting systematic yearly or quarterly enforcement sweeps in strategic areas. Carefully weigh the pros and cons. While possibly contentious, this will help to identify common violations which may help to guide future city program funding.
- 4.3 Offer a maintenance checklist and workshops to homeowners and new homeowners to educate on the importance of housing maintenance and the programs available to help fund.
- 4.4 Amend the zoning code to make it more development and redevelopment friendly:
 - (a) Ensure the minimum lot size requirements for each district are consistent with the existing development pattern, and either adjust the minimum requirements or rezone specific areas to reduce the number of variances needed for additions, and new development. For example, up to 45% of lots in the R-2 District and 56% of lots in the R-3 could be nonconforming (have a smaller lot size than required by zoning)
 - (b) Establish development standards for unsewered areas that are consistent with the County Health Department's rules for septic systems – minimum 2 acre lot size and minimum 200 feet of lot frontage.
 - (c) Create regulations for bed and breakfast lodging in residential neighborhoods to ensure that the neighborhood character is not negatively impacted by them.
 - (d) Adopt zoning regulations which facilitate aging in place including allowing converting a garage or basement into apartment space for a caregiver.
 - (e) Evaluate the regulations for multi-family development: consider reducing the density in the R-3 District, and develop specific design standards for multi-family in both the R-3 and R-4 Districts to ensure new construction is compatible with the neighborhood.

SEC. 4. ENHANCING OUR COMMUNITY CHARACTER & IMAGE

Existing Conditions

Conneaut enjoys a rich and varied history, first as an Indian Village, then as a township formed during the Connecticut Western Reserve period, and later as the Village of Salem when commerce and housing developed near the mouth of Conneaut Creek. In the mid 1960's, the original Conneaut city merged with surrounding Lakeville, though some long-time residents still refer to these parts of Conneaut as Lakeville, Farnham and Amboy.



Given the community's long history as well as its location on Lake Erie at Conneaut Creek, it is not surprising that there are a number of visitor attractions.

- Award-winning wineries
- Historic covered bridges
- Conneaut Train Museum
- Conneaut Historical Society Museum
- Conneaut Township Park Beach and Boardwalk
- Port of Conneaut Marina, Light House
- Bird Observatories
- Malek Park & Dorothy Shumake Arboretum
- Conneaut Community Center for the Arts



Yet, there is more we can do to improve our image, and enhance our community character.

Sec. 4. Enhancing our Community Character and Image

Guiding Objectives

The theme of Enhancing Our Community Character and Image has been a common thread throughout this planning process. We will capitalize on our unique character and sense of place to maintain a high quality of life for our residents while becoming a regionally recognized tourist destination known for our charming Harbor, Downtown and extensive greenspace and park system.

Guiding Objectives **Preserve and Enhance Historic Features and Small Town Charm:** Enhance Conneaut's distinctive identity through historic preservation and façade improvements. Encourage streetscape beautification and property maintenance. Engaging in these placemaking efforts will help ensure a positive image and pride in the community.

Educate Visitors and Highlight Conneaut's Assets: Install legible wayfinding and distinctive landmarks, and education materials. These improvements help educate visitors on all of the attractions to discover to utilize them to their full capacity.

Promote a Tourism Destination: Capture Conneaut's greatest assets in a comprehensive branding campaign to stimulate regional recognition. Focus on a cohesive theme to provide tourists with a unique agritourist experience.

Sec. 4. Policies & Strategies

1. **Preserve Historic Features and Small Town Charm.** Historic, agricultural, and scenic resources all contribute to our cultural heritage and their preservation and protection is an important component of enhancing our sense of place and individual character.
 - 1.1 Continue and increase efforts to preserve/protect historic sites and structures in Conneaut:
 - (a) Create an inventory of historic sites and structures and record details of their historic significance so they are documented for future generations. Work with the historical society to create a robust database.
 - (b) Evaluate and prioritize the important structures that contribute most to the City's cultural heritage.
 - (c) Establish and enforce regulations to encourage protection of historical sites.
 - (d) Establish a community education and outreach program, and make resources available to property owners to help learn about proper care of historical structures.
 - (e) Investigate the benefits of becoming a Certified Local Government.
 - (f) More clearly delineate the preservation district in the Downtown Conneaut Area, and determine if additional districts are warranted. Add the boundaries to the Zoning Map and develop design guidelines for the Design Review Board. (See also Sec 1B. Downtown Revitalization PEDAs.)

Sec. 4. Enhancing our Community Character and Image

- 1.2 Develop design standards and guidelines that apply to new construction and major renovation of existing buildings that are not in a preservation district to ensure that new investment is aesthetically pleasing and contributes to our overall community character.
 - 1.3 Adopt standards for demolition of historic structures.
 - 1.4 Consider better integrating the Design Review process with the zoning approval process, and revise the regulations to make it easier to conduct design review in Conneaut. The current regulations (Chapter 1357 of the Building Code) requires members to be residents, but the expertise needed to serve on the board can be difficult to find locally.
- 2. Improve the appearance of infrastructure and create a welcoming atmosphere.** Specific areas are noted in the Priority Economic Development Areas, while this subsection includes a city-wide list.
- 2.1 Develop attractive gateways and streetscape improvements around key entry points and thoroughfares in the City, including:
 - (a) Broad Street between Downtown and Harbor, to create a distinctive connection between two main tourist attractions.
 - (b) Along US 20 Corridor, especially at the east and west gateways into Downtown.
 - (c) Main Street from State St (west) to Harbor St. (east) to create an attractive downtown and improve the pedestrian experience.
 - (d) Harbor Area (Park Ave, Erie St, Lake Rd)
 - 2.2 Continue to implement consistent and legible wayfinding improvements that help people maneuver through the City, but which also contribute to our brand and foster a sense of place.
 - 2.3 Make improvements to sidewalks throughout the City. Increase promotion of the existing Sidewalk Reimbursement Program.
- 3. Encourage increased property maintenance and investment in both residential and commercial properties.** Enforcement of the city's Property Maintenance Code is crucial to maintaining a quality environment for residents and sustaining a healthy business climate. Currently, the City uses the International Property Maintenance Code. (See also Sec. 3. Improving our Neighborhoods.)
- 3.1 Continue to implement the vacant property/building registration. Hire local interns for the Planning and Zoning Department. In addition to increasing staff capacity, the City will engage in important workforce development and engagement with students.
 - 3.2 Increase the capacity to conduct code enforcement and training.
 - (a) Due to limited staffing, continue to rely on citizen reporting. Encourage citizens to actively participate by displaying the process and relevant information clearly on the city's website. Consider an online reporting system.
 - (b) Pursue CDBG funding to pay for code enforcement operations, if the need occurs.
 - (c) Provide owners with information on possible funding opportunities for property maintenance and building code improvements (i.e. Ashtabula County Community Action programs, Commercial Façade Improvement, when implemented, Community

Sec. 4. Enhancing our Community Character and Image

Housing Improvement Funding (CHIP). Publish links to these programs on the city's website.

- 3.3 Continue to customize the Property Maintenance Code (and simplify as needed) with a focus on priority concerns. These revisions will ensure more manageable and effective code enforcement. Strategic provisions will also reduce the concern of selective enforcement. Partner with the Health Department to eliminate any duplication in code enforcement.

4. Preserve and Encourage our Agricultural Economy.

- 4.1 As noted earlier, establish development standards for unsewered areas that are consistent with the County Health Department's rules for septic systems: a minimum 2-acre lot size and minimum 200 feet of lot frontage – compared to the current A-1 Zoning District minimum 1-acre lot size requirement.
- 4.2 Carefully evaluate the extension of "City" type improvements in the A-1 District to ensure the improvements are desired by residents and can be done in a manner that preserves/conserves the lower density, rural character. Such improvements include:
- (a) Bringing unpaved roads up to a higher standard.
 - (b) Extending water and sewer further into the A-1 District. This would not apply to improvements that are warranted to protect current investments and the integrity of areas where the utilities already exist.
- 4.3 Carefully evaluate any requests for rezoning from the A-1 Agricultural District to another district, except as otherwise outlined in this Plan. For example, this Plan discusses in an earlier section the potential for nonresidential development south of I-90, east of the B-1 District along R 7 and extending eastward to Furnace Road. Rezoning to allow nonresidential development in this area north of Underridge Road could be appropriate (if demand exists) because these parcels are large, fewer houses exist in the area, and the hillside on the south side of Underridge Road provides a natural edge/boundary and buffer. In contrast, a request to rezone the area along Underridge Road west of the current B-1 District at the I-90/SR 7 interchange area would not be supported.
- 4.4 Support and promote the local farmers market to provide local farmers a venue for sales. Post flyers at area businesses in key areas (i.e. the Harbor and Downtown) to target tourists and the regional population.

5. Conduct public outreach and engagement campaigns to increase residents' awareness, pride and involvement in civic life and neighborhood concerns.

- 5.1 Increase promotion and awareness of city and county offered programs:
- (a) Consider a newsletter, partner with the library.
 - (b) Ensure collaboration among local entities.
- 5.2 Establish neighborhood and community groups to increase cooperation and pride:
- (a) Groups could be formed through ward boundaries.
 - (b) Work with the Conneaut Human Resources Center to continue senior services and programming.

SEC. 5. ENSURING OUR PUBLIC UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS

Existing Conditions

The City places a high emphasis on infrastructure improvements and in recent years has successfully applied for a number of grants to help fund the improvements, including grants from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), Jobs Ohio, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), and the Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC). Projects undertaken in 2015 and 2016 include:

Year	Project	Description	Estimated Cost	Funding
2016	Orange Street Water Line Replacement:	Replaced 1,050 linear feet of water line, fire hydrants, water valves and service connections, as well as repairs to curbs, asphalt, sidewalks, and driveway aprons.	\$238,000	\$130,000 Ohio Public Works Commission \$50,000 CDBG funding \$58,000 in cash contributions by the City's water fund
2016	U.S. Route 20 Waterline Project:	Phase 1 to replace deteriorating transite water lines underneath US 20.	\$360,000	\$130,000 grant from OPWC \$50,000, 0 percent loan from OPWC cash match of \$180,000.
2016	Parrish Road Sewer Project:	Major improvement to sanitary sewer lines along northern half of Parrish Road. New sanitary lines and lift stations installed to help one of City's largest employers, and improve sanitary system for future development.	\$1,056,600	\$556,600 OWDA and Revolving Loan Fund grants \$500,000 through CDBG.
2016	Road Paving Improvements:	Pavement replacement and overlays for 17 streets and roads, totaling 16,075 linear feet of roadway.	\$421,809	All of the paving and road maintenance has been paid for with tax dollars provided by the 2.75 mill street improvement levy.
2015	Chestnut Street Infrastructure Project:	Replaced collapsing headwall storm outlet; replaced existing 24" VCP storm sewer & corresponding manholes & inlet basins, as well as replacement of pavement affected by construction of the new sewer.	\$292,655	\$143,401 Ohio Public Works Commission \$107,000 CDBG funding \$38,106 in-kind labor, \$4,148 cash contribution.
2015	Center Road Bridge Project:	Emergency repair/improvement to an existing City bridge that spans Conneaut Creek along Center Road. Project consisted of removing a failing sandstone block wing wall and installing a much stronger and larger cast in place concrete wing wall. The wall that was removed and replaced was approximately 25 feet in height by 24 feet long. A significant portion of the roadway behind the wall	\$300,000+	\$150,000 emergency OPWC grant and City issued a \$150,000 construction note to complete the project.

Sec. 5. Ensuring Our Public Utilities & Infrastructure Meet Community Needs

Year	Project	Description	Estimated Cost	Funding
		needed to be removed and replaced, as well as the drainage along the road.		
2015	Road Paving Improvements:	Pavement replacement and overlays for 21 streets and roads, totaling 17,935 linear feet of roadway.	\$500,000+	All of the paving and road maintenance has been paid for with tax dollars provided by the 2.75 mill street improvement levy.

GUIDING OBJECTIVES

The City will continue to emphasize public works revitalization and ensure that our public utilities and infrastructure meet community needs and modernize Conneaut to stay competitive for businesses and an attractive neighborhood for residents.

Guiding Objectives **Modernize Infrastructure:** Conneaut is an old city and infrastructure deteriorates with age. Conneaut needs to remain competitive by investing in the upkeep of infrastructure and utilities like water, sewer, and roads.

Increase mobility: In addition to paving roads when needed, the City should also find ways to accommodate multi-modal transportation initiatives.

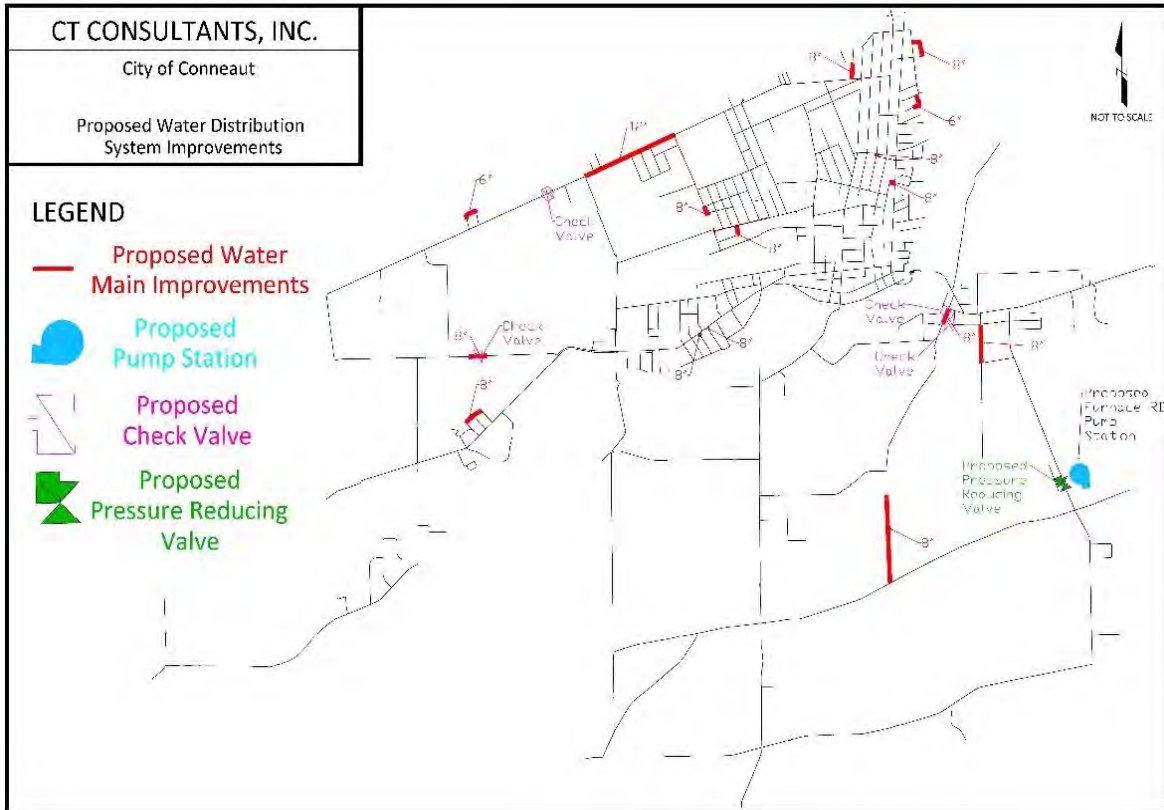
Sec. 5. Policies & Strategies

- 1 **Maintain & Improve existing water & wastewater treatment/distribution systems.** The City received a Coastal Management Assistance Grant (CMAG) as part of the Ohio Coastal Management Program from Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) to complete plans for the City’s existing water and waste water facilities. The goals for each of the plans was to maintain the existing footprint of each of the plants, while balancing the necessity for plant rehabilitation and future upgrades.
 - 1.1 Upgrade the existing wastewater treatment plant as recommended in the updated Facilities Plan in order to maintain current operations. The Facilities Plan, completed in 2017, identifies a number of upgrades to the existing treatment plant, along with a detailed cost estimate.
 - 1.2 Upgrade the existing water treatment plant as recommended in the updated Facilities Plan in order to maintain current operations. The Water Treatment Plan Facilities Plan, completed in 2017, identifies a number of upgrades to the existing plant, along with a detailed cost estimate.
 - 1.3 Create an inventory of all utility lines, televise all sanitary sewer lines, and evaluate their condition.

Sec. 5. Ensuring Our Public Utilities & Infrastructure Meet Community Needs

- 1.4 Annually replace a specific amount of sanitary sewer lines based on their condition, coordinate with a pavement replacement program, as specified in the Facilities Plan.
- 1.5 Make water main improvements recommended in the Water Distribution Plan, see Map 21.

Map 21. Water Distribution Plan Proposed



- 1.6 Finalize and maintain GIS maps of the City’s utilities. Maintaining a robust inventory with accurate data enables the City to be more efficient with its services and assist with future planning.
- 1.7 Encourage the use of green infrastructure best practices to help with storm water management.
- 1.8 Create a point-of-sale program to require seller/buyer to televise lateral sewer connection from house to main sewer and replace if needed.

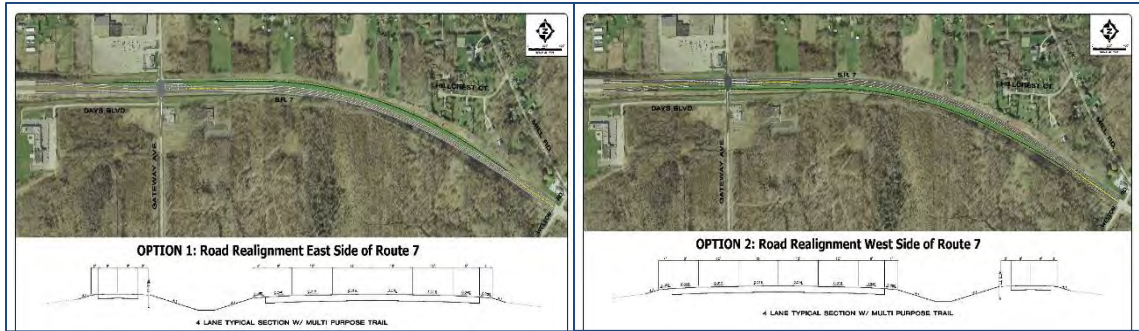
2. Make roadway improvements to facilitate Economic Development in key locations in the City.

- 2.1 Continue to work with ODOT on getting the Limited Access restrictions along SR 7 relaxed or eliminated. See also Sec. 1C.

Sec. 5. Ensuring Our Public Utilities & Infrastructure Meet Community Needs

2.2 Reconfigure SR 7 to eliminate the existing median and install a bike path. Two options are available, one that would place the bike path on the east side of SR 7 and a second that shows the bike path on the west side. (See Map 22)

Map 22. Route 7 Realignment Options



2.3 Evaluate the benefits and feasibility of a marginal road south of interchange / I-90 from SR 7 eastward to expand the development potential of the properties in the south east quadrant of the interchange.

2.4 Construct intersection improvements (e.g. Broad & State Street and at Mill & Main Street).

2.5 Install integrated signalization system at selected intersections. The goal is to replace 14 intersections with coordinated systems.

2.6 Create an inventory and condition rating of all streets as part of the overall GIS inventory of utilities and infrastructure, and keep track of improvements and upgrades.

3 **Encourage alternative transportation modes.** Bike travel could and should provide an alternative transportation mode. More emphasis on non-motorized travel in Conneaut includes steps to not only develop bike lanes and bike paths—but also to accommodate bike usage by installing bike racks in private and public spaces.

3.1 Adopt a complete streets policy to accommodate various modes of transit. Alternative methods will combat seasonal traffic congestion. Additionally, it will improve residents’ health, expand recreation opportunities, and reduce environmental impacts.

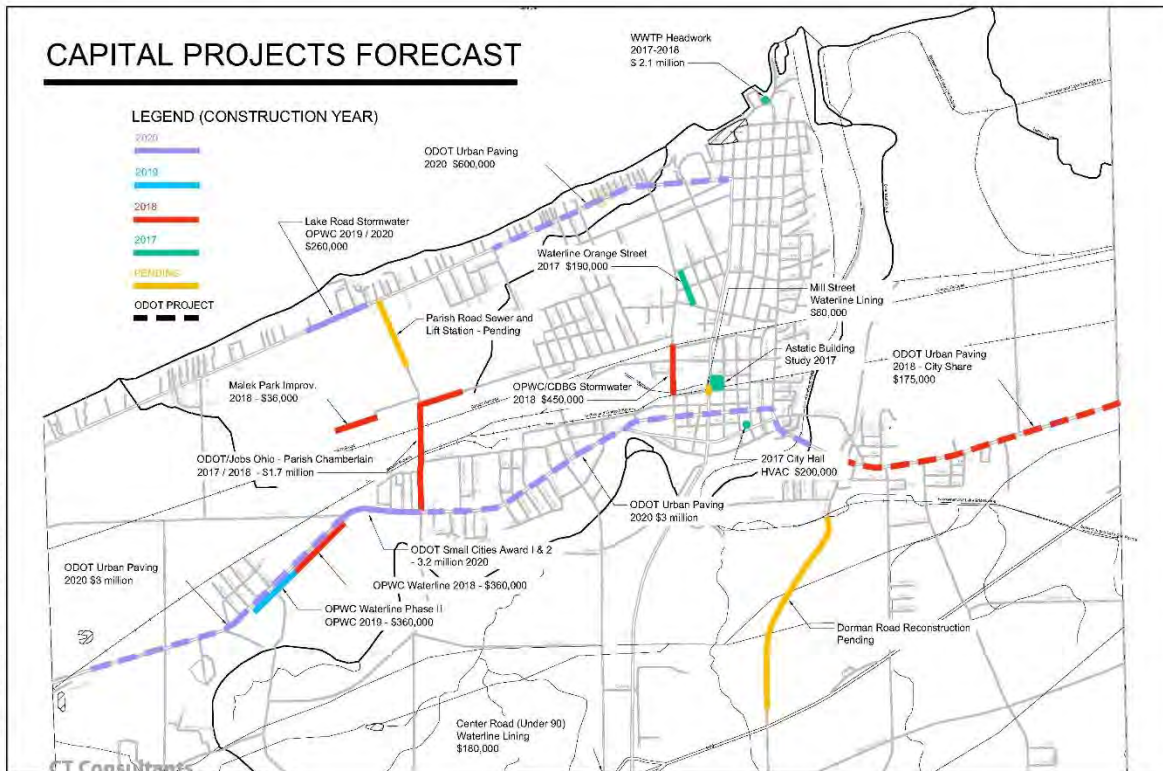
3.2 Add bike lanes and bike sharing stations in the locations identified in Sec. 2B. Parks and Recreation Improvements.

4 **Continue to prepare a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan.** The City completes a Capital Improvement Report as part of their Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) applications, which could be upgraded to a formal 5-year capital improvement plan completed every year. The plan should be consistent with the priorities identified in this comprehensive plan. Entities that depend on the capital budget should be involved annually, or at least informed of the future plans.

Sec. 5. Ensuring Our Public Utilities & Infrastructure Meet Community Needs

- 5 **Develop Access Management Plans for US 20 and SR 7.** Access Management regulations address the number and spacing of driveways, signals, medians and intersections. Such regulations help to reduce vehicular conflicts and accidents and help maintain the capacity of roadways to support efficient traffic flow. The current parking section of the Conneaut Zoning Code includes a few requirements related to access management. Additional considerations include:
 - 5.1 Add standards for minimum aisle widths, apron widths and driveway spacing, including distance from intersections, to ensure that parking lots and driveways are safely designed to adequately manage circulation onto and throughout the development site.
 - 5.2 Require joint easements between adjacent commercial uses to allow internal traffic circulation and encourage shared access between adjoining commercial frontages.
 - 5.3 Minimum lot frontage width requirements should be adequate for conforming lots to support desirable access spacing.
 - 5.4 Subdivisions occurring along an arterial should provide access to lots by an internal road system.
 - 5.5 Add the ability of the Planning Commission to require a Traffic Impact Study for any large scale project that has the potential to significantly change traffic volumes or traffic patterns.

Map 23. Map of Capital Projects with Timeline and Approved or Pending Funding



PART III. OUR ACTION PLAN

Now that we have identified our Vision for the Future, and the Policies and Strategies we will pursue to accomplish our goals, we must also create a concrete action plan to hold ourselves and our committed partners accountable. For indeed, the success of this Comprehensive Plan will be measured by how well we abide by the policies and carry out the strategies recommended to achieve the goals. In order to truly put this plan into action, the implementation strategy requires civic engagement and a strategy to monitor progress. This plan recommends that an annual public meeting be held with an accompanying status report and yearly updated action plan.

This chapter includes action items that are the responsibility of the City either as the lead agency or in partnership with other entities, such as the Conneaut Port Authority, the Conneaut Tourism Board, and the Ashtabula Metroparks. They are organized in the same order as the discussion of the goals and policies; though any repeated action steps will simply be cross-referenced as appropriate. The action steps are outlined on Tables 6 and 7 and generally fall into three categories:

Regulatory Control: Zoning and subdivision regulations are the most important tools the City has to implement the land use policies in the plan. During the course of this planning process, a number of zoning and land development items were discussed. This chapter identifies potential new zoning districts and suggested modifications to existing zoning and subdivision regulations that will help ensure that policies are implemented as anticipated.

A general list of suggested zoning text amendments are in Table 6 with more details in Table 7. The detailed list is intended to serve as a **guide** for further investigation as a more detailed zoning evaluation will be required by the City. Furthermore, any amendments to the Conneaut Zoning Code are governed by the amendment procedures spelled out in the City's Planning and Zoning Code and must follow specific procedures for public review and hearings by the City Planning Commission and City Council, a process that is separate from the completion of this Comprehensive Plan.

Administrative Actions, Including Programs and Funding for Improvements: These types of strategies are identified in Table 6, following in the same order as Part II. These strategies do not include adopting or modifying laws, but rather establishing or redirecting City administrative efforts. Some require additional studies that go beyond the scope of this comprehensive planning process, which are identified for future consideration. Please see Appendix D Funding Toolbox for potential funding sources.

Partnerships and Collaboration: The City is responsible for a large share of the implementation strategies. However, in this age of public budget constraints, many actions will require the coordinated efforts of individuals and organizations representing the public, private, and civic sectors. According to the Urban Land Institute, public/private partnerships are "the most effective means to intervene in an uncertain market."¹ From an economic development perspective, partnerships share the financial risks between public and private entities. While the use of public funds in private development is nearly always controversial, research indicates that communities that invest in strategic projects receive returns in jobs and recurring tax revenues. The most important positive impact public/private partnerships can have is catalyzing more development, which leads to even higher tax revenues.

¹ Reaching for the Future: Creative Finance for Smaller Communities. Urban Land Institute, Washington, DC, (2016).

Priority Implementation

This section identifies the action steps to be pursued over the next 10 years based on when the action should be started:

I - Immediate – an action that should be started within 1 year.

S - Short-term – an action that should be started in 2 to 4 years.

L - Long-term – an action that should be started in 5 to 10 years.

O - On-going – an action that is currently underway and should be continued, or a new action that once started should remain ongoing.

Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
Update the Zoning Code, Map and Subdivision regulations	Table 7		I			City and CPC		
Sec 1. Strengthening Our Economy								
1. Create/market shovel ready sites and move-in ready buildings								
1.1. Provide utilities to priority development sites				S		City		Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA), Economic Development Administration (EDA)
1.2. Identify, evaluate, prioritize and develop adaptive reuse strategies for brownfield sites					L	City, CPA, ACCSP, ACPA		US EPA, OEPA Targeted Brownfield Assessment Program
1.3. Install city-wide broadband				S		Businesses, CPL		Appalachia Regional Commission (ARC), United States Dept. of Agriculture (USDA)
1.4. Create a wetland mitigation bank on City-owned land	Sec 1D #4			S		City, ACM, WRLC		Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources (ODNR), US Fish & Wildlife (USFW)
1.5. Assist property owners with building upgrades	Sec 1A #3.6 Sec 1B #4.1	O				City; BA, COSE		ODSA, EDA
2. Attract and retain businesses								
2.1. Survey business owners			I			CCC		Local
2.2. Conduct a market analysis			I			City	\$12,000	Foundations
2.3. Provide financial incentives	Sec 1 #5	O	I			City, BA, CCC, CPA, GPAC		Local, Special Improvement District (SID), Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD), Jobs Ohio
2.4. Host regular business networking events		O				CCC		Local

O - On-going –action is/would be ongoing
I - Immediate – started in the next 12 months

S - Short-term – started in 2 to 4 years.
L - Long-term – started in 5 to 10 years

Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
2.5. Expand/promote employment readiness to enhance local workforce		O				City, CSD, CPL, GPAC		Ohio Dept. Of Job & Family Services (ODJFS), Office of Workforce Transformation (OWT)
2.6. Provide support through Business Association/ strengthen chamber		O				City, CPA		Local
3. Code Amendments: update building & site design zoning requirements	See Table 7							
4. Embrace and promote tourism								
4.1. Educate business owners about benefits of tourism		O				CTB, CCC, ACCVB		ODSA, TourismOhio
4.2. Develop support facilities such as restaurants, stores, restrooms			I			City, CTB, ACCVB		Local, Ohio Finance Fund
4.3. Expand lodging facilities	Sec 1A #3.4			S		City, CPA, ACCVB		Local
4.4. Develop the City's local story, history, etc. (also marketing)	Sec 4 #4		I			CTB, CPL, ACCVB		Ohio History Connection
4.5. Improve and maintain the Tourism Board's online presence			I			CTB, CPA, ACCVB, CCC		Local
4.6. Install wayfinding signs in strategic locations	Sec 2B #4.2 Sec 4 #2.2		I			City, CTB, ACCVB, Penn		ARC, ODSA, Foundations, Local
4.7. Establish a physical location for a Welcome Center				S		City, CTB, CPA, ACCVB, CCC	Requires staff	Local
4.8. Expand event programming	Sec 1B #6			S		CTB, CPA, ACCVB, CCC, BA, CAC		Local, ARC, Foundations,
4.9. Develop benchmarks/metrics system			I			CTB, City, CPA, ACCVB, CCC		Local, TourismOhio
4.10. Increase Conneaut Tourism Board's capacity (add staff, partnerships, collaboration)				S		CTB, CPA, ACCVB, CCC		Local, ARC, Foundations
5. Increase capacity to conduct local economic development								
5.1. Coordinate economic dev projects and incentives with allied economic development groups		O				City, CPA, GPAC		Local, ARC, Foundations
5.2. Work with and encourage CPA to promote funding/financing for and management of economic development projects			I			City, CPA		Local, ARC, Foundations
5.3. Hire staff to promote/manage economic development activities				S/O		City, CPA	\$75,000	Local, ARC, Foundations
5.4. Create/maintain website with up-to-date inventory of available properties			I/O			City, EDS, CPA, GPAC, BA, COSE		Local, ARC, Foundations
6. Identify and pursue funding opportunities								
6.1. Research any and all potential revenue streams for City and Port and develop financing strategies for public improvements		O	I			City, CPA		

O - On-going –action is/would be ongoing
I - Immediate – started in the next 12 months

S - Short-term – started in 2 to 4 years.
L - Long-term – started in 5 to 10 years

Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
6.2. Continue to pursue grant funding for streetscape and sidewalk improvements	Sec 1A #3.7 Sec 1B #4.5 Sec 1B #5 Sec 4 #2.1 Sec 4 #2.3		I			City		Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), ODSA, Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC)
6.3. Consider creating special districts for financing - Downtown Redevelopment District, Tax Increment Financing District or Business Improvement District					L	City, CPA, Prop Owners, Bus Owners, CCC		Local
Sec 1A. Lakefront /Harbor Area PDA								
1. Expand the marina								
1.1. Dredge the lagoon north of Naylor Dr.			I			City, CPA		ODNR, National Fish & Wildlife Federation (NFWF)
1.2. Develop a Sediment Management and Use Plan				S		City, CPA		OEPA
1.3. Provide amenities for boaters such as showers & transportation	Sec 1 #4.2		I			City, CPA		ODNR, Local
2. Increase/improve public access & recreational use of lakeshore								
2.1. Promote diverse uses of the Sandbar	Sec 2B #2		I			CPA		TourismOhio, Local, ARC
2.2. Improve Naylor Drive with utilities and multi-purpose path	Sec 1 #1.1 Sec 2B #3.2			S		City, CPA		ODNR
2.3. Build public pier/boardwalk over break wall				S		City, CPA		ODNR, State Capital Budget,
2.4. Investigate rental facilities for bicycles, kayaks, etc.			I			CPA		ODOT -Active Transportation
2.5. Create multi-modal path between Harbor and Downtown	Sec 2B #3.1			S		City		ODOT, ODNR
2.6. Investigate need for more parking in Harbor area				S		City, CPA		Local
3. Redevelop the Harbor area								
3.1. Pursue redevelopment of 10 ac City-owned land	Sec 2B #1.4	O				City, CPA	\$20M	EDA, ARC, OPWC, ODNR
3.2. Build new housing				S		Developers, City, CPA		Ohio Housing Finance Agency, ODSA, Ohio Finance Fund
3.3. Attract new businesses - retail and restaurants				S		City, EDS, CPA		Local, Special Improvement District (SID), Downtown Redevelopment District (DRD), Ohio Finance Fund
3.4. Continue to investigate opportunities for hotel accommodations	Sec 1 #4.3		I			City, EDS, CPA		Local, (SID), (DRD)
3.5. Create development sites through land assembly		O				City, ACLRC, EDS, CPA		Land Bank

O - On-going –action is/would be ongoing
I - Immediate – started in the next 12 months

S - Short-term – started in 2 to 4 years.
L - Long-term – started in 5 to 10 years

Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
3.6. Renovate existing commercial & residential buildings	Sec 1 #1.5	O				City, BA, Prop Owners, CPA		ODSA, 503 Corporation,
3.7. Upgrade infrastructure and streetscape appearance in Harbor area	Sec 1 #6.2			S		City, CPA		OPWC, ODSA
4. Work with Canadian National to increase dock use		O				City, CPA, CN		
5. Revise zoning and design standards to foster and enhance development	See Table 7							
6. Increase collaboration								
6.1. Conduct regular stakeholder meetings		O				CCC, BA		
6.2. Cultivate a relationship with Canadian National		O				City, CPA, ACPA, GPAC, CCC, BA		
6.3. Increase regional collaboration with PA and neighboring communities				S		ERCGP, ERPC		Ohio Finance Fund
6.4. Collaborate with Township Park Board on park improvements	Sec 2B #1.5	O				City, CTPB		
Sec 1B. Downtown PDA								
1. Enhance/protect the traditional Downtown & surrounding neighborhood								ODSA, Ohio History Connection
1.1. Code updates to preserve traditional character	See Table 7							
1.2. Conduct a downtown parking supply & utilization study				S		City	\$25,000	
2. Code changes to manage/promote development along US 20 in Downtown through zoning	See Table 7							
3. Encourage community facilities to locate downtown		O				City		
4. Improve the appearance of downtown								ODSA
4.1. Develop façade improvement program	Sec 1 #1.5		I			City	\$400,000	ODSA, ARC, EDA
4.2. Add public art/murals				S		City, BA, CSD, CAC		Ohio Arts Council, Foundations, Local
4.3. Add, replace and maintain trees, trim bushes				S		City		ODNR
4.4. Expand / improve green space and public gathering spaces					L	City, BA, Prop Owners		ODSA, OPWC-NRAC, ODNR
4.5. Install streetscape improvements and pedestrian features	Sec 1 #6.2			S		City		ODOT, ODSA, OPWC
4.6. Create a public open space and/or landmark at Broad/State intersection					L	City		ODSA, ODNR
4.7. Improve appearance of hillside at Broad St. underpass					L	City		ODOT
5. Improve accessibility with sidewalk/crosswalk improvements	Sec 1 #6.2			S		City		ODSA, ODOT
6. Conduct more events downtown	Sec 1 #4.8			S		BA, CCC, CTB		Local, Foundations

O - On-going –action is/would be ongoing
I - Immediate – started in the next 12 months

S - Short-term – started in 2 to 4 years.
L - Long-term – started in 5 to 10 years

Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
Sec 1C. I-90/SR 7 PDA								
1. Zoning updates to attract new businesses to the interchange/corridor	See Table 7							
2. Pursue reuse of Gateway Plaza			I			City, EDS		
3. Promote an attractive and welcoming atmosphere								
3.1. Add lighting along SR 7 (similar to SR 11)				S		ODOT, City		
3.2. Install signs and a landmark at interchange to increase travelers' awareness of Conneaut's destinations			I			City, CTB		Local, Foundations, ODOT TOGS
3.3. Zoning updates to require more landscaping and limit outdoor storage	See Table 7							
4. Install a bike path to connect the Gateway to Downtown	Sec 2B #3.3 Sec 5 #2.2				L	City, ACM		
Sec 1D. East Side Industrial Park PDA								
1. Work with Conneaut Leather on their expansion needs			I			City		
2. Market the East Side Industrial Park		O				City		
3. Access management and safety improvements	Sec 5 #5			S		City	\$5M	ODOT, OPWC, HSIP, ARC, EDA
4. Create a Wetlands Mitigation Bank on City-owned land	Sec 1 #1.4			S		City		Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, OEPA
Sec 2. Preserving, Conserving, & Managing Our Greenspace								
Sec 2A Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs)								
1. Conneaut Creek conservation/protection, acquisition and public access								
1.1. Create a map of larger Conneaut Creek region to show context			I			ACM, City		
1.2. Build a trail along Conneaut Creek from Camp Peet to Downtown and along North-South Smokey Run					L	ACM, City, CSD		ODNR
1.3. Identify/create additional sites for river access and parking				S		ACM, City		ODNR
1.4. Identify locations for rental businesses (i.e. kayak/canoe)				S		ACM, City		
1.5. Expand camping along Conneaut Creek				S		ACM, City		ODNR
1.6. Pursue designation as a National Water Trail				S		ACM, City		
1.7. Establish criteria to guide future land acquisition/conservation				S		City, ACM, ODNR, WRLC		
1.8. Install interpretive signage along the trails				S		ACM, City, CSD		ODNR

O - On-going –action is/would be ongoing
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L - Long-term – started in 5 to 10 years

Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
2. Make Improvements to Turkey Creek Metroparks								
2.1. Partner with PA to establish interstate connections					L	City, ACM, Penn		
2.2. Create a Turkey Creek master plan to guide park improvements				S		City, ACM		
2.3. Establish recreational trail within the new Metropark					L	City, ACM	\$700,000	ODNR, OPWC
3. Protect the remaining portion of Conneaut Creek by educating and promoting private donations of land through conservation easements		O				City, ACM, ODNR, WRLC, CSD, CPL CSD		
4. Adopt zoning & subdivision regulations that protect sensitive natural areas	See Table 7							
Sec 2B Parks and Recreation Improvements								
1. Develop a City Parks Improvement Plan				S		City, CSD, YMCA		
1.1. Conduct a survey of residents and evaluate the parks to determine most appropriate park improvements and locations for facilities				S		City, CSD, YMCA		
1.2. Explore possibility for indoor recreation facility					L	Recreation Board		
1.3. Maintain and improve Malek Park Arboretum		O				City		ODNR, Foundations
1.4. Redevelop Lakeview Park for Economic Development – retain a portion for open space	Sec 1A #3.1				L	City, CPA		Ohio Finance Fund
1.5. Partner with Twp Park for park improvements, grant applications and other funding opportunities	Sec 1A #6.4	O				City, CTPB		
2. Create an improvement plan for the sandbar	Sec 1A #2.1		I			City, CPA		
3. Create bike paths and hike/bike trails								
3.1. Add a multi-modal path to connect the Harbor with Downtown	Sec 1A #2.5			S		City		ODNR, ODOT
3.2. Connect Township Park to the Marina and sandbar via a multi-purpose trail	Sec 1A #2.2			S		City		ODNR
3.3. Develop north/south route via SR 7	Sec 1C #4 Sec 5 #2.2			S		City	\$1M	ODOT
3.4. Create bikeway along Lake Road (SR 531) as part of the Lake Erie Coastal Trail Scenic Byway					L	City		ODOT
3.5. Add bike accommodations to US 20				S		City		ODOT
4. Market the recreation/natural areas								
4.1. Develop public education plan				S		City, ACM, CTB, CSD, CPL		
4.2. Install wayfinding signs	Sec 1 #4.6			S		City, CTB, ACCVB		
4.3. Contact the Adventure Cycling Association and similar entities to be added to their list of resources			I			CTB, ACCVB		

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Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
4.4. Promote and create outdoor recreation events				S		CTB; CSD		
4.5. Investigate ways to increase winter recreation activities		O				CTB, bus owners		
5. Educate hunters about new hunting laws and add warning signs			I			City, CSD		
Sec 3. Improving Our Neighborhoods								
1. Encourage new housing construction in key locations								
1.1. Revise the zoning regulations foster/encourage new housing	See Table 7							
1.2. Provide utility improvements to foster new housing development west of Parrish Road north of the railroad tracks and Dorman Rd. area near schools					L	City		ARC, ODSA
1.3. Market CRA incentives and develop other incentive programs		O				City		
2. Enhance and revitalize older neighborhoods and houses in order to improve property values and decrease vacancies								
2.1. Conduct a detailed housing condition/vacancy study of Downtown/Harbor target area				S		City		
2.2. Continue vacant property registration		O				City		
2.3. Work with landbank for property assembly				S		City, ACLRC		
(a) Identify priority areas for assembly			I			City		
(b) Encourage side yard program and community gardens				S		City, ACLRC, CHRC		
2.4. Continue to provide/encourage use of rehab assistance programs such as the CHIP & CRA programs		O				City		ODSA, Ohio Housing Finance Agency
2.5. Create a Neighborhood Infrastructure Improvement Program				S		City		
3. Promote and regulate seasonal transient lodging rentals								
3.1. Add Bed and Breakfast zoning regulations	See Table 7							
3.2. Formulate agreement with Airbnb and others to collect bed tax			I			City, County, ACCVB		
4. Continue code enforcement/property maintenance								
4.1. Enforce rental registrations		O				City		
4.2. Consider systematic property maintenance enforcement sweeps				S		City		
4.3. Create housing maintenance educational materials, maintenance checklist and workshops				S		City		ODSA

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Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
Sec 4. Enhancing Community Character & Image								
1. Preserve Historic Features and Small Town Charm								
1.1. Preserve/protect historic sites and structures in Conneaut, with an inventory, education and enforcement					L	City, CHS		Ohio History Connection
1.2. Develop design standards & guidelines for nonresidential properties outside the Preservation district				S		PC, CC		
2. Improve the appearance of infrastructure and create a welcoming atmosphere in key locations (beyond focus areas)								
2.1. Develop attractive gateways and streetscape improvements	Sec 1 #6.2				L	City		ODOT, ODSA, OPWC
2.2. Install more wayfinding signs and landmarks	Sec 1 #4.6	O				City		ODSA
2.3. Improve sidewalks throughout the City	Sec 1 #6.2	O				City		OPWC, ODSA, ODOT
3. Increase property maintenance								
3.1. Continue vacant property/building registration		O				City		
3.2. Increase staffing for and improve record keeping			I			City		
3.3. Customize the Property Maintenance Code				S		City		
4. Develop city-wide branding campaign								
4.1. Create a new slogan or reinstitute old “sharpest corner” slogan	Sec 1 #4.4			S		CTB, City		
4.2. Encourage innovative and unique “place-based” services and activities that leverage Conneaut’s history and assets – such as creating a scenic railroad experience	Sec 1 #4.4			S		CTB, CHC, ACCVB, Canadian National		
5. Preserve and encourage agricultural economy								
5.1. Increase lot size in A-1 district to match Health Dept for onsite septic systems	See Table 7							
5.2. Evaluate effect of road & utility improvements/ extensions in A-1 whenever improvements are being considered		O				City		
5.3. Carefully evaluate any request for rezoning A-1 area to a higher density residential or nonresidential district		O				PC, CC		
5.4. Support/promote the local farmers market		O				City		ARC
6. Conduct public outreach/ engagement campaign to engage residents								
6.1. Increase promotion/awareness of city and county offered programs				S		City, CPL, CCC		
6.2. Establish neighborhood and community groups to increase cooperation and pride				S		City, CPL, CCC		

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Table 6. Prioritized Action Steps

Key Action Steps	See also	Time frame				Responsible Entity/Partners(s)	Cost/ Resources	Potential Funding
		O	I	S	L			
Sec 5. Public Utilities & Infrastructure								
1. Maintain & improve existing water & wastewater treatment/distribution systems								
1.1. Upgrade the existing wastewater treatment plant as recommended in the updated Facilities Plan in order to maintain current operations				S		City	\$3M	OEPA, OWDA
1.2. Upgrade the existing water treatment plant as recommended in the updated Facilities Plan in order to maintain current operations				S		City	\$2.97M	OEPA, OWDA
1.3. Create an inventory of all utility lines, televise all sanitary sewer lines, and evaluate their condition			I			City, Consultant		OEPA, OWDA
1.4. Annually replace a specific amount of sanitary sewer lines based on their condition, coordinate with a pavement replacement program		O		S		City		OEPA, OWDA
1.5. Make water main improvements recommended in the Water Distribution Plan				S		City		OEPA, OWDA
1.6. Finalize and maintain GIS map of utilities		O	I			City		OEPA, OWDA
1.7. Encourage use of green infrastructure for storm water management			I			City, Prop Owners, Developers		OEPA, OWDA
1.8. Create a point-of-sale program to require seller/buyer to televise lateral sewer connection from house to main sewer and replace if needed		O		S		City		
2. Make roadway improvements to encourage Economic Development								
2.1. Continue work with Ohio Dept. of Transportation (ODOT) on SR 7 Limited Access designation				S		City, ODOT		
2.2. Reconfigure SR 7 to eliminate median and install bike path	Sec 1C #4 Sec 2B #3.3				L	City, ODOT		ODOT
2.3. Evaluate marginal road from SR 7 east and south of I-90					L	City		
2.4. Construct intersection improvements (i.e. Broad & State Street)					L	City, ODOT		ODOT
2.5. Install integrated signalization system at selected intersections					L	City	\$2.5M	ODOT, OPWC
2.6. Create an inventory and condition rating of all streets			I			City, Consultant		
3. Encourage alternative transportation modes								
3.1. Adopt a complete streets policy				S		City		
3.2. Add bike lanes and bike sharing stations in locations throughout the city					L	City		ODOT
4. Continue to prepare a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan								
4.1. Develop an Access Management Plan for US 20 and SR 7	Sec 1D#3		I			City, ODOT, Consultant		

Glossary of Agencies

ACCSP – Ashtabula Community Services & Planning
ACCVB - Ashtabula County Convention and Visitors Bureau
ACLRC - Ashtabula County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank)
ACM - Ashtabula County Metroparks
ACPA - Ashtabula County Port Authority
BA – Business Associations (if created)
Bus Owners – Business Owners
CAC – Conneaut Arts Center
CC – Conneaut City Council
CCC - Conneaut Chamber of Commerce
CHC - Conneaut Historical Society
CHRC - Conneaut Human Resources Center
City – City of Conneaut
COSE – Council of Smaller Enterprises
CPA – Conneaut Port Authority
CPL – Conneaut Public Library
CSD - Conneaut School District
CTB - Conneaut Tourism Board
CTPB - Conneaut Township Park Board
EDS- Economic Development Staff (if hired)
ERCGP - Erie Regional Chamber and Growth Partnership
ERPC - Erie Regional Planning Commission
GPAC - Growth Partnership for Ashtabula County
ODNR – Ohio Department of Natural Resources
ODOT - Ohio Department of Transportation
PC – Conneaut Planning Commission
Penn – State of Pennsylvania
Prop Owners – Property Owners
WRLC - Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Table 7. Summary of Zoning Text Changes To Be Considered

The amendments below are described in Part II and listed in order of appearance in Zoning Code. A comprehensive evaluation of the zoning code will be required to further refine as well as to identify other related amendments that may be needed as a result of these recommendations.

TEXT AMENDMENTS			
Code Section	Location	Proposed Amendment	Description
1113.01	Agricultural Areas	Revise A-1 Agricultural District lot size standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase lot requirements to 2 acre minimum and minimum 200 feet of lot frontage to match Health Dept for onsite septic systems
1117	Residential Districts	Revise list of permitted uses and related development standards in R Districts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulate Bed and Breakfast Establishments in R Districts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Consider appropriate regulations for Bed and Breakfast establishments: Determine appropriate districts where they should be either permitted by right or as a conditional use. ◦ Adopt specific requirements such as required parking, screening, maximum number of rooms to rent, and performance standards for property maintenance and noise and other nuisances. • Add alternative housing types to allow older residents to “age in place”, allowing converting a garage or basement into apartment space for a caregiver. • Add recreation-related businesses as a conditional use in relevant residential districts restricted to properties near Conneaut Creek.
1117	Residential Districts	Update the Residential Districts lot size requirements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the minimum lot size requirements for each district are consistent with the existing development pattern, and either adjust the minimum requirements or rezone specific areas to reduce the number of variances needed for additions, and new development. • For example, up to 45% of lots in the R-2 District and 56% of lots in the R-3 could be smaller than required by zoning
1117.03	Older residential areas	Revised multi-family standards in R-3 Urban Residential District regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider reducing the allowable density for conditionally permitted multi-family in the R-3 District • Develop specific design standards for MF to ensure new construction is compatible with the neighborhood
1117.04	Harbor Area	R-4 Urban Residential District regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise the development standards to encourage higher density housing • Develop specific design standards for MF to ensure new construction is compatible with the neighborhood • Specifically address outdoor boat storage on residential lots, including landscaping & screening requirements, minimum setbacks.
1121.01	I-90/Rt 7 Area	Revise the B-1 Highway Service Business District Use regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a wider range of permitted uses, such as restaurants • Allow offices as a permitted use with a minimum 2 acre lot size • Consider adding warehousing & other distribution/truck related uses as a conditional use • Limit industrial uses to light industrial
1121.01	I-90/Rt 7 Area	Revise the B-1 District development standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider increasing the minimum lot size for conditionally permitted industrial uses from 1 acre to 2 acres • Increase the parking setback from the street from 5 feet to 20 feet, and require appropriate landscaping in this setback area • For lots adjacent to residential districts, increase minimum parking setback from the rear and side lot line from 5 feet to 20 feet. • Add a maximum percentage for lot coverage (the % of the lot that can be covered by building and parking) or a minimum percentage of open space (including the land within the setbacks) • Specifically regulate outdoor storage – require it to be located in the rear yard, behind the building and adequately screened

Table 7. Summary of Zoning Text Changes To Be Considered

The amendments below are described in Part II and listed in order of appearance in Zoning Code. A comprehensive evaluation of the zoning code will be required to further refine as well as to identify other related amendments that may be needed as a result of these recommendations.

TEXT AMENDMENTS			
Code Section	Location	Proposed Amendment	Description
1121.02	SR 7 and US 20	Revise the B-2 Highway and Community Business District uses to better suit the development along US 20	<p>Consider adding the following as permitted uses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General commercial uses such as contractors' facilities • Auto repair, boat storage and warehousing as conditional uses • Day care centers, hospitals and nursing homes as conditional uses with specific development requirements
1121.02	SR 7 and US 20	Revise the B-2 Highway and Community Business District Development Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a minimum 10-foot parking setback from the street, and require appropriate landscaping in this setback area • For lots adjacent to residential districts, add a minimum 10 to 20-foot parking setback from the rear and side lot line. • Specifically regulate outdoor storage – require it to be located in the rear yard, behind the building and adequately screened • Add a maximum percentage for lot coverage (the % of the lot that can be covered by building and parking) or a minimum percentage of open space (including the land within the setbacks)
1121.03	Main Street Downtown	Establish downtown preservation district design guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish appropriate design guidelines to ensure that new development is compatible with the historic downtown character • Adopt standards for demolition of historic structures.
1121.03	Main Street Downtown	Create a Traditional Downtown Overlay District for the area of downtown where buildings are typically located at the street in the traditional main street form.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These overlay districts would retain the list of permitted uses, but establish development standards and design guidelines that preserve the existing character. • Establish a maximum building setback along Main Street • Limit parking to areas next to or behind the building • Require a minimum amount of window display area on the first floor façade • Require new buildings to be at least 2 stories or have a façade that is at least 20 feet tall to give the appearance of a 2 story building. • Specifically permit apartments on upper floors of commercial buildings, with appropriate development standards
1121.03	Liberty Street Downtown	Create a Liberty Street Overlay District that applies to Liberty Street and ensure that any new construction has the same prevailing setback of the existing houses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the permitted uses and development standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Consider limiting the range of permitted uses to those that can utilize existing house floor plans. ◦ Specifically permit apartments on upper floors of commercial buildings, with appropriate development standards ◦ Consider making auto repair a conditional use (instead of a permitted use) • Require new construction along Liberty Street and the western end of Main Street where houses are still the dominate building form to respect the current building setback
1121.03	US 20 Downtown	Revise the B-3 Development Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require a 5-foot parking setback in the front yard and require the area to be landscaped with shrubs and/or a decorative fence/wall. • Require building entrances to face the primary street (primarily US 20) and have highly visible and well defined building entrances.
1121.04	Harbor Area	Revise the B-4 Coastal Business District permitted use list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider making auto repair and boat storage conditional uses (instead of permitted uses), and consider restricting their location within the district.

Table 7. Summary of Zoning Text Changes To Be Considered

The amendments below are described in Part II and listed in order of appearance in Zoning Code. A comprehensive evaluation of the zoning code will be required to further refine as well as to identify other related amendments that may be needed as a result of these recommendations.

TEXT AMENDMENTS			
Code Section	Location	Proposed Amendment	Description
1121.04	Harbor Area	Revise the B-4 Coastal Business District development standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifically address outdoor boat storage on residential lots, including landscaping and screening requirements, and minimum setbacks, etc.
1125.01	Industrial Districts	Revise the M-1 Industrial District development standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a minimum lot size of 1 acre to 2 acres for industrial uses. Add a minimum 20-foot parking setback from the street, and require appropriate landscaping in this setback area. For lots adjacent to residential districts, require a minimum 20-foot parking setback from the rear and side lot line and require the area to be adequately screened. Limit outdoor storage to behind building, or screened from view from street.
1129.03	Harbor Area	Create a new Planned Mixed Use Development Overlay District (PUDs are considered a Special District in Section 1129.03)	<p>Revise/Update the Planned Unit Development Overlay Regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose– to enable creative mixed use projects, with standards and review process that provides flexibility; rezone Harbor District for PUD Overlay (see map) Adopt design standards such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit residential height to 2-3 stories Promote development that “brings in the lake” – Design guidelines should be flexible enough to facilitate a wide range of development but complement the character of the area.
1129.03	In Rural Areas	Create Conservation Subdivision PUD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create conservation subdivision regulations that encourage the preservation of natural features without reducing the development potential, with a larger percentage of land preserved as open space (larger than the 20% required in the existing PUD regulations). Include woodland preservation as part of the open space criteria
New Section	Natural Areas	Low Impact Development Regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt riparian and wetland setbacks – Chagrin River Watershed Partners have model legislation, with recommended setback based on drainage area of waterway Restrict tree clearing in designated areas in setback area.
New Section	Natural Areas	Consider a preservation/conservation overlay district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify wooded areas for overlay - apply to residentially zoned land (not A-1) and restrict tree removal in areas that are heavily wooded. Require developers to get approval of a woodland preservation plan prior to clearing property for proposed residential subdivision.
1133.06	Business Districts	Update the Parking Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the number of parking spaces required for specific uses (where appropriate) in order to better align with the typical number needed and to avoid too much area devoted to pavement. Consider further reducing the parking requirements for compact / walkable areas such as the Harbor and Downtown areas. Add standards for minimum aisle widths, apron widths and driveway spacing to ensure adequate and safe circulation. Consider whether there should be a more specific requirement for paved parking, at least in the developed areas of the city.
1133.06	Business and Industrial Districts	Establish access management standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require joint easements between adjacent commercial uses to allow internal traffic circulation and encourage shared access between adjoining commercial frontages – for access management

Table 7. Summary of Zoning Text Changes To Be Considered

The amendments below are described in Part II and listed in order of appearance in Zoning Code. A comprehensive evaluation of the zoning code will be required to further refine as well as to identify other related amendments that may be needed as a result of these recommendations.

TEXT AMENDMENTS			
Code Section	Location	Proposed Amendment	Description
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review minimum lot frontage width requirements to be sure they are adequate for conforming lots to support desirable access spacing.
1137.xx	Procedures	Design Standards/ Design Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate the design review process as part of the review of development plans. Consider expanding design review for larger area of city – beyond downtown, such as for the Harbor Area. Develop context sensitive appropriate design standards and guidelines based on area characteristics. Revise the requirements for design review board membership to enable a wider range of design experts (including nonresidents) to be eligible to serve.
1137.02	Procedures	Update the Site Plan Review Section	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More clearly spell out the site plan review process, when it is required, criteria for approval, etc. Revise the site plan review requirements – require detailed inventory of natural features on the development site (such as location of wetlands, streams, steep slopes, and wooded areas) Require developers to protect trees during construction so that existing trees that are intended to remain on the site actually survive. Add allowance for the Planning Commission to require a traffic study if warranted.

Table 8. Summary of Zoning District Boundaries/Map Amendments, By Area

Comments

Sec 1.A. Lakefront /Harbor Area PDA

Create a Planned Mixed Use Development Overlay District	
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Sec 1B. Downtown PDA

Add Downtown Preservation District boundary	
Add Traditional Downtown Overlay District	
Add Liberty Street Overlay District	
Rezone residential neighborhoods from B-3 to residential	Maintain existing density of the area
Expand downtown B-3 by rezoning M-1 area	

Sec 1.C. I-90/SR 7 PDA

Expand the boundary of the B-1 Zone	
Consider rezoning area between Underridge Road and I-90 from the B-1 district boundary to Furnace Road from A-1 to a nonresidential zoning district	

Greenspace

Rezone the Metroparks to O-1 Open Space from M-1 Industrial	
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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Best Planning Practices Summaries:

- Smart Growth
- Place Making Fact Sheet
- Natural Resource Protection Fact Sheet
- Aging in Place Fact Sheet
- Healthy Communities Fact Sheet

Appendix B – Summary of Existing Zoning Districts

Appendix C – Summary of Public Forum Results

Appendix D – Market Assessment & Economic Development Toolbox

Appendix E – Park Inventory

Appendix F – Housing Assessment

Appendix A - Best Planning Practices Summaries

Smart Growth

SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES	SMART GROWTH COASTAL AND WATERFRONT ELEMENTS
1. Mix land uses	1. Mix land uses, including water-dependent uses
2. Take advantage of compact building design	2. Take advantage of compact community design that enhances, preserves, and provides access to waterfront resources
3. Create a range of housing opportunities and choices	3. Provide a range of housing opportunities and choices to meet the needs of both seasonal and permanent residents
4. Create walkable communities	4. Create walkable communities with physical and visual access to and along the waterfront for public use
5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place	5. Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place that capitalizes on the waterfront’s heritage
6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and critical environmental areas	6. Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty, and the critical environmental areas that characterize and support coastal and waterfront communities
7. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities	7. Strengthen and direct development toward existing communities and encourage waterfront revitalization
8. Provide a variety of transportation options	8. Provide a variety of land- and water-based transportation options
9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective	9. Make development decisions predictable, fair, and cost effective through consistent policies and coordinated permitting processes
10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions	10. Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions, ensuring that public interests in and rights of access to the waterfront and coastal waters are upheld

Place Making Fact Sheet

A community centered approach to planning that allows citizens to play a role in the creation and management of public places, voicing their values, concerns and aspirations in order to maximize the shared value of a location, while highlighting key community assets.

Community Involvement:

- Citizens must identify a place's strengths, physically, culturally or otherwise and work to build and support these positive aspects of their community
- This collaborative approach builds social connections while also enhancing community through improving physical spaces and enhancing public activity

Reimagine:

- Place making encourages citizens to think creatively about the potential recreation of everyday spaces
- Parking lots can become public markets, waterfronts developed, parks built or improved

Design:

- Focus on building cities for people
- Emphasize cultural importance of lively neighborhoods and public spaces
- Avoid cities created only for cars and/or strip malls

Keys to a Great Place:

- Places should be safe, clean and easily accessible
- The best activities are social and community oriented, they often emphasize a unique aspect of the place and usually generate community pride (public concerts, art shows, etc.)
- Easy to interact with friends and neighbors, always building on a sense of attachment to community

Benefits:

- The creation of spaces where diverse groups of people meet
- Improved economic and community development
- Shared community vision or goal
- Great volunteer opportunities, especially to improve youth engagement

Natural Resource Protection Fact Sheet

Every day natural resources are put at risk as demands for food, land, energy and water grow.

Natural resource protection:

- Reduce total waste footprint
- Prevent soil and groundwater contamination
- Slow deforestation, plant additional trees and bushes
- Protect endangered and at risk species
- Use renewable energy sources
- Educate landowners about sustainable use

Benefits to natural resources protection:

- Lower risk of environmental disasters and natural hazards like floods and/or climate change
- Provide locations for outdoor recreation
- Support the local economy; property values are affected by the ecosystem and may influence local finances, some local economies rely on ecotourism
- Guarantee a future for sustainable agriculture, fishing and forestry

—Additionally—

Strive for Low Impact Development:

Low impact development (LID) is a site design approach, which seeks to integrate functional design with pollution prevention measures to compensate for land development impacts on hydrology and water quality.

Key benefits of LID techniques:

- Reduces impervious cover
- Manages stormwater onsite
- Minimizes downstream flooding
- Maintains predevelopment runoff concentrations through innovative best management practices

Establish riparian setback regulations:

Riparian setback regulations declare an established distance from water resources where building and other activities that may disrupt the ecosystem cannot occur without special permission from the local community.

Purpose of setbacks regulation:

- Reduces streambank erosion and flooding
- Filters and settles pollutants
- Protects aquatic habitats

Aging in Place Fact Sheet

As a person ages, the ability to live in the place and home of their choice for as long as they are able.

Properly aging in place means that an elderly person can have the things and assistance they need to maintain their quality of life.

The Facts:

- The majority of seniors (persons over age 65) live in their own home
- More than 14% of the American population is above the age of 65
- By 2030 approximately 7.5 million Americans will be 65+
- At least 80% of seniors are living with one or more chronic health conditions; 50% have two or more
- 41% of adults age 65+ have limitations that inhibit personal care or detract from quality of life
- 55% of federal rental assistance recipients are elderly or disabled
- Only 33% of communities ask for input from older people when making planning decisions or policies

A positive aging in place community:

- Sufficient medical facilities, including but not limited to, inpatient and outpatient care, emergency care, in-home care companies, assisted living options
- Clubs for social activities or volunteering
- Places to learn, community colleges, libraries, community organizations or other places to expand the mind
- Faith-based institutions
- Shopping close to home
- Transportation for those who no longer drive
- Services that help with home care like maintenance, law care, cleaning, cooking or meal delivery etc.

The Benefits:

- Easier aging process
- Safer seniors
- Longer independence for the elderly
- Minimized social isolation
- Increased community involvement of the elderly
- Proper care for those in need

Healthy Communities Fact Sheet

Features:

- Adequate housing
- Quality health care
- Sufficient public transportation
- Alternative transportation options (sidewalks and/or bike lanes)
- Safe places to play and exercise
- Access to nutritious food
- Clean air and water
- Strong community
- Fair access to resources

Facts:

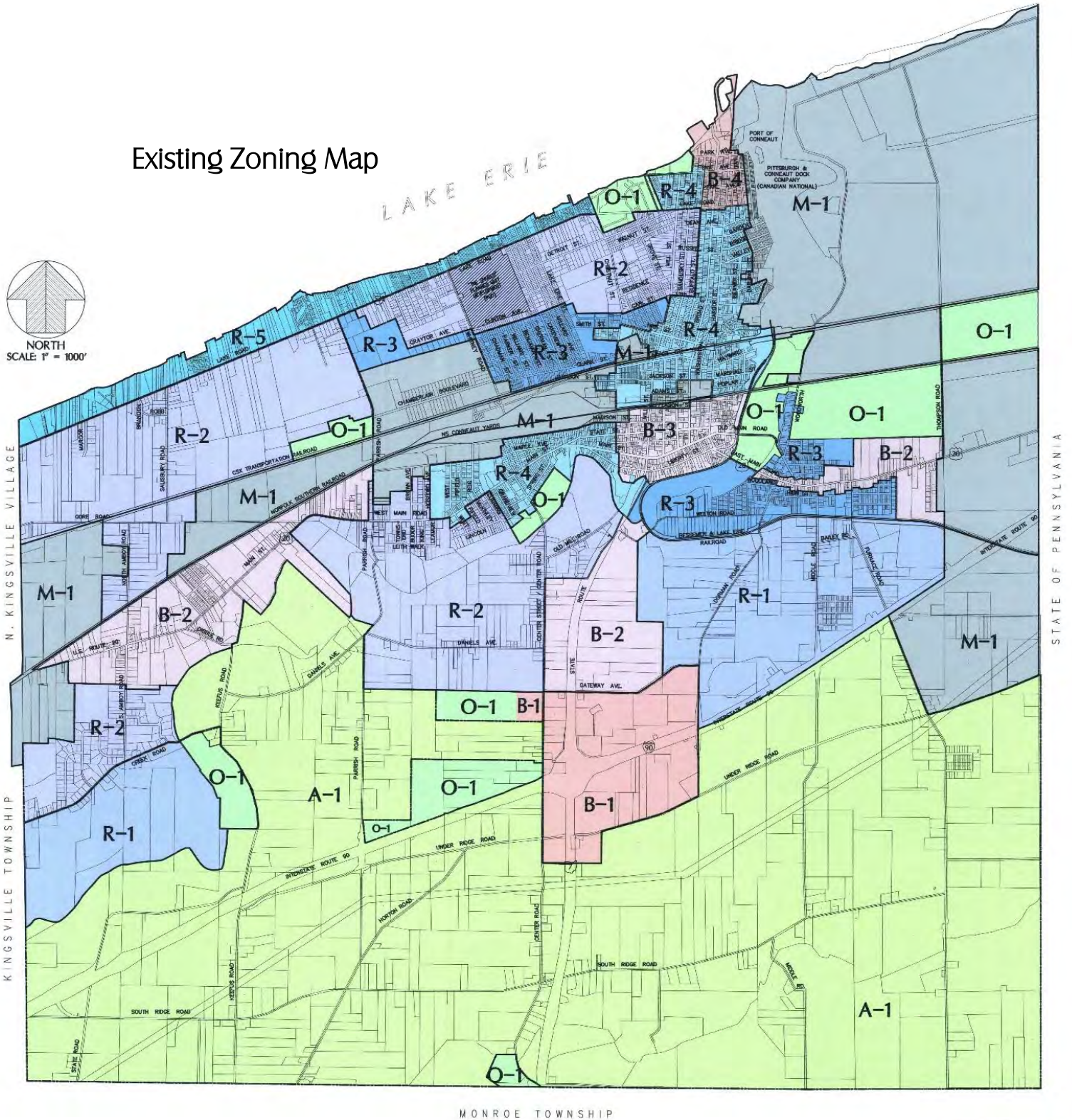
- Chronic diseases account for 7 of 10 leading causes of death in the United States
 - Some diseases include: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, obesity
- Risk for chronic disease increases with:
 - Tobacco use or exposure
 - Lack of physical activity
 - Poor nutrition
- The percentage of children walking or biking to schools has declined from 50% in 1969 to 13% today
- 6 in 10 people do not live within 1/2 mile of a park

How to create healthy communities:

- Promote and pass policies that incentivize or make it easier to live a healthy lifestyle
- Create programs that connect people in need with services for health care, transportation, housing, etc.
- Ensure educational opportunities for all ages, helping citizens support themselves and their families
- Preserve natural land and cultural resources
- Perform a walkability audit

Appendix B – Summary of Existing Zoning Districts

Existing Zoning Map



SUMMARY OF EXISTING ZONING DISTRICTS, USES AND STANDARDS

Existing Zoning Districts

- A-1 Agricultural District
- R-1 Suburban Residential District
- R-2 Urban Residential District
- R-3 Urban Residential District
- R-4 Urban Residential District
- R-5 Coastal Residential District
- B-1 Highway Service Business District
- B-2 Highway and Community Business District
- B-3 General Business District
- B-4 Coastal Business District
- M-1 Industrial District
- O-1 Open Space District
- F-1 Flood Plain District*
- Planned Unit Development District

*Not Mapped

Residential, Ag and Open Space Districts

Permitted Uses							
	O-1	A-1	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5
	Open Space	Agricultural	Suburban	Urban	Urban	Urban	Coastal
Outdoor/Open Space							
Agriculture		P	P				
Cemeteries		P					
Forest, wildlife reservations	P						
Golf Courses		C	C	C	C	C	
Parks, recreation	P						
Private Campground	C						
Resource/Mineral Extraction	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Marinas	P						
Residential							
Single-Family		P	P	P	P	P	P
Single-family for Owners/Operators	P						
Two-Family					P	P	
Multi-Family					C	P	
Institutional/Cultural							
Churches/Places of Worship		P	P	P	P	P	
Day care centers			C	C	C	C	
Hospitals				C	C	C	
Rest Homes/Nursing Homes					C	C	
Public Uses		P	P	P	P	P	P
Schools		C	P	P	P	P	
Other							
Solid waste facilities		C					

Residential Lot Requirements											
	O-1	A-1	R-1	R-2	R-3			R-4			R-5
	Single-Fam	Agricultural	Suburban	Urban	Urban			Urban			Coastal
					Single-Fam	Two-Fam	Multi-Fam	Single-Fam	Two-Fam	Multi-Fam	
Effective Density	1.3	0.8	2.6	2.6	4.1	2.5	17.4	6.1	3.4	17.4	6.1
Minimum Lot Size	24,000*	43,560*									
PU water-no san sewer			24,000*	15,000*							7,500
PU water & san sewer (per unit)			12,600	12,600	7,500	6,000	2,500	5,000	4,500	2,500	5,000
Minimum Lot Frontage	120	150			75	120	120	50	90	120	
PU water-no san sewer			120	100							75
PU water & san sewer			90	90							50
Yard Requirements											
Minimum Front Yard	50	50									
PU water-no san sewer			50	40							30
PU water & PU san sewer			40	40	30	30	25	25	25	25	25
Minimum Side yard	20	30			10 (25 total both)	10 (25 total both)	15	10	10	15	
PU water-no san sewer			20	15							10 (25 total both)
PU water & PU san sewer			15	15							10
Minimum Rear yard	50	50	50	30	40	40	30	30	30	30	30
Maximum Building Height	35	35	35	35	35	35	none	35	35	none	35

PU = Public

*County Bd of Health requires 2 ac lot.

Business and Industrial Districts

Permitted Uses					
	B-1	B-2	B-3	B-4	M-1
	Highway Service (I-90 Exit Ramp)	Highway/Community Business	General Business (Downtown)	Coastal Business (Harbor)	Industrial
Outdoor/Open Space					
Commercial Recreation		P			
Parks, recreation				C	
Resource/Mineral Extraction		C	C		C
Marinas				P	
Residential					
Single-Family, Two-Family and Multi-Family		p*	p*	p*	
Institutional/Cultural					
Churches/Places of Worship		p*	p*	p*	
Public Uses	P	P	P	P	P
Schools		p*	p*	p*	
Fraternal lodges/Private clubs		C	P	P	
Offices 1137.07(g)	C				P
Retail, Service					
Sales, service, and business enterprises	P	P	P	P	
Shopping centers	P	C			
Motels / Hotels	P		P	P	
Restaurants		P	P	P	
Funeral Homes		P	P	P	
Animal hospitals		C			
Bait and Fish Cleaning Shops				P	
Auto/Transportation Related					
Passenger-transport terminal	P				
Automotive service stations	P	C	P	P	
Automotive repair	P		P	P	
Auto, RV, Farm Eq. Sales		C			
Indoor Boat Storage, Sales and Repair				P	
Outdoor Boat Parking Temporary & Year-Round				C	
Industrial - Storage/Distribution					
Industrial/Manufacturing, Warehousing & Wholesale	C				P
Automotive Wrecking, Salvage, Junk Yards					C
Building Materials sales/storage yards		C			P
Mini Warehouse & Storage				C	
Solid waste facilities					C
Other					
R-4 Principal Uses (noted above with *)		P	P	P	

Nonresidential Lot Requirements and Other Development Standards							
	B-1			B-2	B-3	B-4	M-1
	Highway Service			Highway and Community Business*	General Business*	Coastal Business*	Industrial
	Typical Retail/Services	Shopping centers / Motels	Industrial, Warehouses, Wholesale				
Lot Size	43,560	87,120	43,560	10,000	None	None	None
Min Frontage	90	90	120	80	None	None	None
Max Bldg Cov (as % of Lot)	None	None	None	None	None	None	50%
Minimum Yards							
Front	50	50	75	30	None	None	50
Front yd when adj to R district							75
Side	20	20	20	30	None	None	20
Side yd when adj to R district**	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	40
Rear	30	30	30	30	None	None	50
Rear yd when adj to R district**	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	20 ft w/ scrng 40 ft w/out scrng	100
Min Floor Area							
			5,000				
Max Height	45	45	50	45	None	None	None
Parking Setback							
Front***	5	5	5	None	None	None	None
Side and Rear***	5	5	5	None	None	None	None

*Generally All Uses (w/exceptions)

**Sect 1133.01(l) side and rear yard requirements

***Must be landscaped.

Appendix C - Summary of Public Forum Results

Focus Group Summaries

On **August 22 and 23**, CT conducted three focus group sessions, each devoted to a specific topic: the Lakeshore/Harbor area; the Downtown area; and Green Space Preservation, Management and Recreation. The following notes summarize the conversations at these meetings.

Lakeshore/Harbor Area Focus Group

Attendees:

Shane Gelfer, owner of Sparky's Restaurant
 Penny Armeni, former executive director of the Arts Center
 Gary Coxon, Township Park Board
 Tim Kennedy, resident
 Jack Polchosky, Snug Harbor Bait & Tackle

Joe Raisain, Conneaut Port Authority
 Joe Palo, formerly with both the Conneaut and Ashtabula Port Authorities
 Tom Schmidt
 Bob Best, Ashtabula Metroparks

Potential

- Maximize marina and Lake Erie access;
 - the breakwall creates a safe harbor for swimming
 - consider clean sand as a commodity
 - Best fishing - Fisherman are large part of newcomers
 - Take advantage of sunsets
 - Let the lake into the buildings – buildings should have lots of windows to maximize the views
- Activate the docks
 - (4 docks, 1000 ft length)
 - Container activity
- Boat slips
 - Improve to attract more boaters, increase boating traffic
 - Add 100 Slips for 50 Ft boats – current slips for 26 feet and longer boats are at capacity
- Use the Hilltop for development:
 - Condos (housing) needed first to attract more residents,
 - Restaurants, retail and hotel will follow
 - Lakeview Park- should let the developer determine what's best
- Housing in Conneaut is affordable
- Sand Bar:
 - Continue use for recreation facilities, helps keep the federal channel open
 - Bird sanctuary
- Transportation for boaters – who arrive in Conneaut by boat, can't get anywhere else in the city
- Regenerate harbor area to be like Bridge Street harbor area
 - More shops
 - Add more restaurants like Breakwall
 - Wine and cheese
 - Dinner cruises- family friendly
- Wind turbines on Bluff- now Metroparks
- Marketing – beef up tourism that generates more money, social media
- Ashtabula Harbor success model

Obstacles

- Canadian National is a large property owner
 - 100 year lease for 35 acre parcel
 - Property lines are hazy
 - Has control of the Port
 - Access to land, shore, bridge
- Sand Bar needs to be dredged, water adjacent to Naylor
- Declining residential, need to attract residents
- Some buildings should be demolished
- Blue building needs renovation
- Zoning, see map of PUD, other City regulations, ban on golf cars
- Decisions take too long, too many meetings
- Fear of loss of control (Council)
- Council needs to invest more in Tourism Board
- Changing marketing methods, difficult to continually adapt
- Activities at the Harbor need to be year round

Actions

- Start at lake and move south
- Hire an Economic Development Director, need leadership to tackle redevelopment
 - Needs to be a dedicated person to coordinate redevelopment
 - City/Port need to spend more money on leadership
 - Need legal advisor
 - Hire a harbor master
 - Ask Bridge Street how they did it
- Obtain funding, leverage assets consider levy
- Take active approach dealing with Canadian National- create a dialogue
 - Need to get them interested in Conneaut’s Future
 - Need support of Council, County Commissioners, State of Ohio
 - Investigate ways of generating money through fees/tax
- Dredge area next to Naylor to build new slips that can accommodate larger boats (100 50-ft long slips for larger boats)
- City/Port could land bank properties, work with County Land bank (Port has authority for economic development)
- Invite outside investors to participate in redevelopment activities
- Help improve existing hotel
- Coordinate/collaborate City, City Manager, Port and County Tourism Board to keep momentum going; keep everyone - City Council, County Commissioners and State representatives, etc. - in the loop

Downtown Focus Group Session

Attendees:

Cindy Prather, Conneaut Library	Kerry Gerdes
Chris Brecht	Tim Kraus
Kori Campbell	Jim Hockaday

Obstacles

- Few empty buildings or buildable lots for new development
- Vacant lots tend to be small lots, multiple lots needed for redevelopment, lot assembly can be difficult
- Building conditions – most of the buildings that are vacant require major repairs
- Some landowners are reluctant to sell, high asking prices, may be due to being underwater
- Weak market
- Parking quantity and location – not enough in the right places

- Lack of restaurants
- Events held downtown are not always beneficial for local businesses
- Handicap accessibility – large number of crosswalks are not ADA compliant, lack of ramps, crosswalk signals.

Downtown Potential

- Downtown has a large number of businesses, and a wide variety of retail and service uses. Expand / build on niche businesses: Brewery, smaller eateries, retail, multi-family
- Apartments on upper stories – helps make buildings more valuable. A number of buildings already have apartments, but there is potential for more buildings to be renovated.
- Retain the downtown atmosphere in the
- Downtown Business Association
- Build on D-Day event, cater to the reenactors who are in town for a longer period beyond just the event days

Strategies

- Bring more people downtown
 - Conduct a parking utilization study to determine parking supply and demand
 - Conduct more events downtown, building on D-Day
 - Prepare a branding marketing campaign to increase visitors and patrons to downtown
- Update the Zoning Code and Zoning Map to help achieve the goals for downtown
 - Revise the B-3 zoning boundaries:
 - Integrate State St and Broad St into Downtown, change M-1 zoning to B-3 zoning
 - Rezone predominately residential area (south of Madison and west of Mill St properties) to R-4
 - Adjust parking standards to reflect contemporary standards, compact nature of downtown, and density of surrounding area
 - Update the permitted uses and development standards to address apartments on upper floors of commercial buildings
 - Establish appropriate design guidelines to ensure that new development is compatible with the historic downtown character – with buildings close to the street, parking next to or behind the building, a minimum amount of window display area on the first floor façade:
 - Establish a maximum building setback along Main Street to make sure new construction fits in
 - Require new construction along Liberty Street and the western end of Main Street where houses are still the dominate building form to respect the current building setback
 - Improve site plan review procedures
- Improve the appearance of downtown
 - Enliven blank walls on downtown buildings with colorful murals
 - Reinvigorate the trees downtown
 - Create more green space, such as a pocket park in the vacant lot next to Orlando's
- Improve accessibility, outline infrastructure needs, identify locations for crosswalk ramp and signal improvements
- Create a fiber optics–supported, high-speed, broadband infrastructure to ensure connectivity for all businesses in downtown as well as for residents and businesses in the rest of the city
- Identify a location for a Veterans Memorial
- Implement the Civic Commons recommendations from the UDC 2014 Report shown below in order to extend the Downtown environment northward and improve the underpass area along Broad Street:
 - Creates better connections between downtown and the Library
 - Extends the Downtown environment north along Broad Street
 - Creates a public open space with tower element to help anchor the Broad/State street intersection

- Improves the appearance of the hillside near the underpass with terraced landscaping, which can double as seating for the Soap Box Derby events.

Financing Efforts:

- Engage the Port Authority to assist with redevelopment financing
- Identify and apply for grant funding to the extent possible to assist in downtown revitalization activities, including façade improvements, public open space creation and improvements, critical infrastructure improvements, neighborhood revitalization efforts.
- Explore the potential to establish a special improvement district (SID), also known as a business improvement district (BID). SIDs are a private sector initiative where property owners in a defined district seek funding for a variety of services. They are typically funded by an additional tax assessment, managed by a nonprofit organization, provide services such as cleaning and maintenance, non-governmental services such as marketing and promotion or beautification, and the implementation of capital investments.
- Explore the potential for using Tax Increment Financing in conjunction with a major downtown development project to finance downtown public infrastructure improvements. This funding mechanism redirects all new real property tax revenue resulting from the development project into a special fund to finance the construction of public infrastructure defined within the TIF legislation. Local communities administer these tax incentive programs, working directly with businesses on proposed projects to enter into agreements prior to construction

Green Space Focus Group Session

Attendees:

Larry Frimerman, Ashtabula Co Metroparks
 Matthew Smith, ODNR
 Brett Rodstrom, Western Reserve Land Conservancy

Bob Best, Ashtabula Metroparks
 Jack Polchosky, Snug Harbor Bait & Tackle
 Gary Coxon, Township Park Board
 Jim Hockaday

Potential

- Lake Erie access, beaches, marinas – larger in comparison to other Ashtabula County communities
- High quality steel head fishing - recreation feature that makes Conneaut unique. Conneaut Creek is #1 priority for preservation and public access
- Not able to preserve everything, need to identify the priorities; this entails collaboration among the various entities that seek to conserve land in the city so that there is a balance between land conservation, public access and economic development initiatives.
- Three ways to address conservation of important natural areas:
 - Acquire land for public access – such as has been done with the new Turkey Creek Metropark, Camp Peet
 - Obtain conservation easements from land owners – the land remains in private ownership (and generally does not allow public access), but the easement preserves the land in its natural state
 - Rely on regulations – such as the Army Corps of Engineers wetland regulations, can also adopt local riparian and wetland setback requirements as part of the zoning code
- Preserved open space and trails are documented to increase the value of adjacent and nearby properties, which offsets the loss of development potential on conserved land
- Lakeview Park is underutilized, increase the economic value of the area while preserving public access and open space
- Dredge material from the harbor and federal channel can be a marketable commodity

Partners include:

- City of Conneaut
- Conneaut Port Authority
- Township Park Commission
- Ashtabula County Metroparks
- Western Reserve Land Conservancy
- Persons who own property along the Creek
- Businesses who seek to develop parcels that have significant natural features on the land

Actions:

- Raise money (levy) to hire leadership that will be responsible for achieving the following actions
- Identify priorities for preservation/conservation, as well as appropriate recreation related development improvements
 - Create a map that shows a larger area to understand the context for open space preservation – include all of Conneaut Creek to the west, and PA gamelands /existing access to the east
 - Identify priority locations for trails (provide trail along Conneaut Creek to connect Camp Peet to Gateway Schools and Downtown)
 - Identify and create additional sites for access to the river, parking for the hike/bike trails
 - Identify potential locations for recreation business related uses such as kayak/canoe rentals
 - Install interpretive signage along the trails
 - Establish criteria to guide future land acquisition/conservation, such as land adjacent to existing park
- Create access to Turkey Creek Metroparks; Partner with PA to establish interstate connections with adjacent PA game lands
- Revise the Zoning Code:
 - Establish riparian and wetland setback regulations – Chagrin River Watershed Partners have model legislation, with recommended setback based on drainage area of waterway
 - Create conservation subdivision regulations that encourages the preservation of natural features without reducing the development potential, with a percentage of land preserved as open space
 - Restrict tree clearing in designated areas:
 - Important in riparian and wetland setback areas
 - Consider an conservation overlay district that would apply primarily to residential land and restrict tree removal
 - Revise the site plan review requirements – require detailed inventory of natural features on the development site (location of wetlands, streams, steep slopes, etc)
- Create a wetlands mitigation bank area that can assist in economic development of commercial/industrial properties that are impacted by wetlands
- Market the recreation/natural areas with:
 - Create map and develop a branding campaign through Strategic partnership with Ashtabula County Tourism Bureau
 - Install appropriate way-finding signs, to guide people from I-90, SR 7, US 20, the Circle Lake Route, etc.
 - Establish metrics to quantify attendees, especially at Township Park
- Promote/create events that showcase the area’s natural features and amenities
- Continue to update/fine tune the City’s ordinance for hunting on public land
- Establish a City Parks improvement plan so that each park has a primary focus, in order to eliminate redundancy and be more sustainable:
 - Relocate ball diamond on Lakeview Park
 - Liberty Ave park – tennis courts recently rehabbed, make Liberty Ave Park the one place for tennis courts
 - Dean Ave park – basketball court
 - Malek Park, needs significant improvements, identify primary purpose for park
- Create an improvement plan for the Sand Bar:
 - Dredge the area north of Naylor Drive (see also Harbor Focus Group discussion) to create more boat slips
 - Retain a portion of Sand Bar for a bird sanctuary
- Develop a strategy for using dredged material; Conduct a cost analysis of establishing a dewatering location

Public Forum Responses

VISION AND GOALS		
Prosperous and Vibrant Means:	Keep It	Change it Like This
Robust Businesses, Industry & Jobs	11	
Stores, Restaurants And Other Services, With Bustling Downtown And Attractive Harbor Area	11	
Good Stewards Of Lake Erie, Conneaut Creek, Turkey Creek, Etc.	10	Old Mill Street near Conneaut Creek needs cleaned up, remove brush and litter Kayak & Paddleboard Launch Area
Quality Recreation Activities - City Parks, Public Spaces, And Other Community Facilities	9	
Clean And Well Maintained Properties (Both Renovation And New Construction.)	9	
Quality Services For Residents And Businesses (Streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, etc)	9	improve sidewalks and trim trees so people don't have to duck when they are walking
The Right Zoning, Funding And Incentives In Place	10	Rezone Rt 20 Broad Street to Business

NOTE: The public comment period was set up as an open house with tables stationed around the room. Attendees were not required to each table, so the number of attendees who visited each table and participated in the surveys varies.

Goals	Keep It	Change it Like This
Attract more businesses and industry, for a diverse economic base and variety of retail, more residents, employees and tourists to support them.	7	Promote outside of the area to bring in enthusiastic, motivated people looking to relocate. Can store fronts downtown be rented during summer months for businesses to come in seasonally to provide guests' and locals places to shop?
Properly manage growth and development we hope to attract so it occurs in suitable locations.	6	
Preserve and enhance the positive qualities of Conneaut.	9	Historical society has plans to enlarge the lot and building. (518 Mill)
Enhance our image, with quality development (good site design, landscaping, etc.) and property maintenance.	9	
Ensure infrastructure supports our land use and economic development objectives	7	
Preserve the natural environment in Conneaut, and provide opportunities for recreational activities	12	Biking and Hiking! Want to hike Here! And bike Here! No safe roads to bike until PA Biking- The State is trying to change the bike route away from the lake to go through Columbus. Why?
Promote a variety of housing types and enhance and revitalize older neighborhoods.	9	
Promote community facilities to contribute to high quality of life.	7	

FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES “RESPONSES		
Build On Strengths	Important	Comments
Lake Erie	13	
Conneaut Creek & Other Natural Areas	10	
Tourism	8	
Agricultural Community	4	Promote smaller farms & more housing development with these farms with new concepts of construction materials (Zoning?)
Quality Of Life	7	Increase urban gardening in open lots in town
Potential For Economic Development	6	
Top Notch Public Services	3	
Partnerships	5	Promote more partnerships among civic minded organizations Connect with nearby communities “lessons learned”
Variety of Housing Stock	0	
Other Strengths:	0	

Overcome Challenges	Important	Comments
Transportation Limitations	5	
Waterfront Issues	3	
Economic Development:		
• Limited Locations	3	Make more building business ready (internet electrical, renovated)
• Limited Resources	1	
• Vacant Buildings	5	
• Zoning	1	Expand zoning, diversify building materials allowance (cobb/straw bale/shipping container)
Need To Expand Sewer Service	4	
Maintain Housing Stock	5	
Managing Green Space	5	
Tourism Needs:		
Services/ Accommodations	3	
Impact On Residential	1	
Seasonality	7	Snowmobilers can’t access downtown area due to city and state limitations

Other Challenges Added By Attendees:

- We need city to be more walking and biking friendly. Trim the trees around sidewalks bike awareness signs throughout the city
- Targeted training for open roles- adult education
- Make I-90 exit “pretty”
- Need out of town landlords of retail space to set realistic rents
- Attract college/education facility
- First need a plan and budget for development that includes more connects port authority
- Community seems divided on change. It might have to some what comes from outside. We need family friendly for example miniature golf course and boat rides.
- Street parking getting out of control! Two points on RT 20 are becoming hazardous; you can’t see oncoming traffic
- Tourist attraction features year round

RT 7/ I 90 INTERCHANGE RESPONSES			
Potential Action Step	Important	Not so important	Not sure
Allow / attract range of uses:	4	0	0
A) Manufacturing & Light Industry	6	3	1
B) Outdoor Storage	0	9	0
C) Retail and Restaurants	13	0	0
D) Hotels	8	3	1
E) Big Box Commercial (e.g. sporting goods store)	4	3	1
Improve wayfinding signs directing travelers to downtown and Lake Erie	10	0	0
Require high quality development (building design, site design & landscaping standards	8	1	0
Preserve agriculture in the southern end of the City (see map	11	0	1
Expand industrial zone west along Under Ridge Rd. from Dorman Rd to Furnace Rd	4	2	2
Reoccupy / redevelop the former K-Mart Plaza	15	0	0

1. What type of uses or development should NOT be allowed at the interchange?

- Adult stores
- trucking storage/equipment storage

2. Other comments, changes, additions?

- Investigate utilization of K-mart and grocery buildings as satellite hubs for mailing-delivery (for example Costco which is opening mailing service)
- Keep promoting outdoor learning center
- Additional attraction signs on I-90 directing individuals to stores, restaurants, attractions; both directions
- New Leaf Event Center is here- could promote better use of it for events
- Need to remove litter along Rt. 7
- There needs to be a spot in Conneaut where you can eat and shop for essentials, campers/tourists would go here to get things. No need for preservation go modern here.
- Big box stores may take away from what local businesses we have left
- Current way finding signs while attractive are difficult to read unless you are stopped for a light or you make an effort to pull into a nearby parking lot
- Need to slow travelers coming into Conneaut on Rt. 7. Put rumble strips starting at Welton Rd. to slow traffic

DOWNTOWN RESPONSES			
Potential Action Step	Important	Not so important	Not sure
Fill Vacant Stores	14	0	0
Preserve Main Street “Traditional” Form i.e. buildings close to street, parking “behind”	11	0	0
Keep Main Street for Window Shopping, Retail, and Restaurants	12	1	0
Restrict Liberty Street to Housing and Offices	0	10	0
Retain US 20 Highway Corridor for Auto-Oriented Retail with convenient parking	8	4	1
Foster Building Renovation and Property Maintenance	12	0	0
Increase Parking	6	4	0
Provide Connections to Harbor (i.e. bike, trolley, etc.)	13	1	0
Preserve Historic Residential Areas	6	0	1

Supplemental Questions

1. What would most improve downtown?

- No more junk stores, more retail
- Interesting retail- high interest to tourist. Like Niagara on the lake. This area needs basics too though.
- West side retail desperately needs sidewalks as pedestrian traffic is very dangerous from Dollar General or Save-A-Lot to the apartments for those in wheelchairs, etc.

2. What types of businesses are needed downtown?

- Attractive to tourists (antiques, restaurants)
- Shopping
- Rent out unused buildings for seasonal retail

3. What are downtown’s strengths?

- Small town feeling
- Love the older buildings
- keep the old buildings! Take Bridge Street for example, what would the Ashtabula harbor be without them?

4. Other comments, changes, additions?

- It appears that many buildings are owned by outside Conneaut residents. What can be done to make them fix their buildings?
- The historical residential area near the harbor is the oldest part of town (Axis Sally’s home 145, Grant St.)
- Subsidize Ohio logo attraction signs on I-90 for smaller businesses
- “auto-oriented retail” is confusing- take results of that question w/ a grain of salt. Retail that caters to auto stuff (like new O’Reilly’s) or retail easily accessible by car?
- Traffic coming in and driving out of Conneaut at 7 and Liberty St. need to slow down. Suggesting rumble strips starting near Welton Rd.
- Need more lighting between I-90 and 7 coming into Conneaut. It is dark and people do u-turns because they think there is nothing ahead.

LAKEFRONT/HARBOR RESPONSES			
Potential Action Step	Important	Not so important	Not Sure
Bring in a hotel	9	2	
Add more boat slips	5		2
Improve amenities for boaters	7	1	1
Add a multipurpose path Connecting Township Park, beach, marina and sandbar	14	0	0
Add a sandbar trail system	2	3	3
Add low impact camping sites on sandbar	1	9	1
Add more stores	13	0	0
Add more restaurants	9	0	0
Add kayak, bike, canoe, etc. Rentals	12	0	0
Add new housing (single-family, townhouses, condominiums, apartments)	4	4	2
Build a public pier/boardwalk over existing breakwall	6	4	2

Supplemental Questions

1. What does the harbor and lakefront need the most to increase its success?

- Need kayaking launching area at harbor and Old Main Street, plus parking
- Camping area for cyclists traveling across country (+1 ditto)
- Activities besides fishing and transient boaters
- We need an upscale lake front hotel that people from all over can come to visit. Every lake front hotel in Erie, Geneva, etc. is full year round. The people will come.
- Repurpose existing homes for tourist rentals, like Lakeside near Sandusky, OH
- Hotel, winter activities, restaurant

2. Who should the harbor and lakefront cater to?

Locals	4
Day Trippers (i.e. fisherman, boaters)	4
Tourists (Multi-day)	7

3. Other comments, changes, additions?

- Hotel/Lake front motel built into hill below Moose
- Need to make it a year round destination. Winery or brewery with fire pit, ice skating, winter carnival
- Attract people other than fisherman
- Have owners clean up Park Ave.
- Clean up existing city property and roads, Lakeview Park, terraced hills. Clear brush encroaching on street by sandbar
- Some cohesive theme needs to be set up to make old harbor a “Bridge Street”
- Recreate Park Ave. to be more charming and inviting
- Concerned about jet ski rentals and safety near sandbar

GREEN SPACE RESPONSES			
Potential Action Step	Important	Not so important	Not sure
Add Walking Trail Along Conneaut Creek Connecting Camp Peet To City Schools And North To Downtown	13	1	0
Add Bike Trails (see map)	13	0	0
Convert "Old Mill Rd" to a Bike and Pedestrian Only Trail	7	3	0
Provide Access to the new Turkey Creek Metropark (see map)	13	0	0
Develop Sandbar for Recreation (i.e. Walking Paths, Camping, Birding etc.)	5	8	0
Connect Conneaut Township Park to Marina and Sandbar via Multi-purpose Trail	12	0	0
Provide Cabins / Camping Areas along Creek and/or in new Metropark	12	1	0
Provide More Public Access Points for Fishing, Kayak and Canoe Entry	12	0	0
Add a Dog Park	6	5	0

Supplemental Questions

1. What are your priorities for the City Parks?

Action	Responses	Comments
Fewer Parks \$	0	
Improve Malek Park \$\$	10	-Continue the development of Malek Park arboretum. Don't lose what has been developed thus far. -Improve and maintain Lake View Park. There is no "lake view."
Create More Parks \$\$\$	3	-Add walking/bike trail along creek, add kayak launching area near Old Main St. -Skate park

2. Which recreation facilities do you use most often?

Facility	Responses
City Parks	4
Lakefront/ Township Park	11
Conneaut Creek	6

Facility	Responses
CYLO fields/Sparks	0
Other	0

3. Other comments, changes, additions?

- Get with Adventure Cycling Association & get on their bicycle registry- bicycle camping, food, showers, repair
- Mill St. for bike path?
- Develop canoe access at Fordham Park
- Signage for kayak, canoe and tube launching
- More bike lanes and bike races
- Definitely signage and trash receptacles
- Connections to Township Park exists on city property. Lakeview Park and terraced hill on North.
- There is another park more convenient in town: Lake View Park
- Camping area along Conneaut Creek
- Best access for me to the lake by bike is Chestnut but it's awful!

CITY CHARACTER AND IMAGE RESPONSES			
Potential Action Step	Important	Not so important	Not Sure
Create a more Consistent “Brand”	11	2	0
Improve Wayfinding and Signage	8	2	0
Improve Services for tourists at the Harbor and Downtown	13	0	0
Improve property maintenance	14	0	0
Retain small town character and charm of older/ historic buildings	8	0	0
Enhance streetscape and improve facades in select locations:	6	0	0
• Along US 20 Corridor	7	2	0
• Broad Street between downtown and harbor	12	0	0
• Main Street from State St (west) to Harbor St (east)	9	0	0
• Harbor Area—Park Ave, Erie St, Lake Rd, etc.	11	0	0

1. What should Conneaut be known for?

- Recreation and amenities for tourists
- easy going, stress free recreation and shopping
- Kindness

2. What actions/projects could most improve the City’s image?

- The main street through town should be most attractive, not the most ramshackle. Incentives along these corridors.
- Continue to explore a little house community near the harbor for affordable small business opportunities.
- Better downtown with viable shopping and restaurants

3. Other comments, changes, additions?

- Sidewalk repair
- Improve park and clean up businesses
- Rezone Rt 20 and Broad
- The “Hamptons of Ohio”
- Reinstate old “sharpest corner” slogan-incredible description and unique. We are the only location in the state that could claim that! I don’t even remember our newest/recent one because I didn’t care for it.
- Housing maintenance

Appendix D – Market Assessment & Economic Development Toolbox

RETAIL METRICS

- Trade Area**
 - Area where majority of customers will come from
- Purchasing Power**
 - Spending potential of population in the trade area (residents and employees)
- Site Availability**
 - Is suitable land appropriately zoned
 - Is there sufficient traffic along street



DETERMINING TRADE AREA

- Population:** larger the population, the bigger the trade area is.
- Proximity of other competing business districts:** people travel to the nearest location (generally, all things being equal).
- Mix of businesses:** critical mass / variety = people will travel from longer distance - more reasons to shop.
- Destination attractions:** people will travel farther for one-of-kind attractions.
- Traffic patterns:** traffic patterns are impacted by street and highway network, as well as major landforms such as rivers and lakes.




PRIMARY TRADE AREA GENERAL GUIDELINES

BASED ON TYPE OF RETAIL CENTER

Type of Retail Center	Minimum Population Supported	Trade Area Radius*	Driving Time*
Neighborhood	3,000 - 40,000	1.5 miles	5-10 minutes
Community	40,000 - 150,000	3 - 5 miles	10-20 minutes
Regional	Over 150,000	10 miles	+20 minutes
Super Regional**	300,000 and over	+15 miles	+30 minutes

*Also based on location of competition
 ** Places such as Grocker Park draw from 30+ miles




RETAIL DEMOGRAPHICS (**2016 AND **2017)

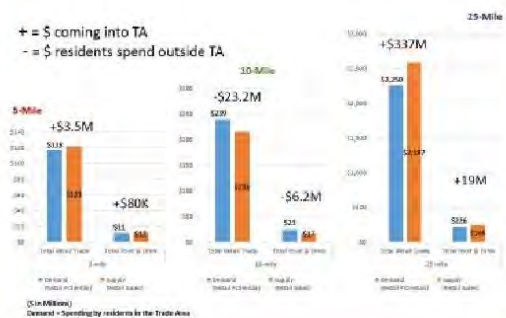
	5-Mile Radius [±]	10-Mile Radius [±]	25-Mile Radius [±]	50-Mile Radius [±]	OHIO ^{**}	USA ^{**}
Population	14,035	25,101	192,744	853,589	11,614,373	323,127,513
Households	5,220	9,363	76,468	337,334	4,585,084	116,926,305
Median Disposable Income	\$33,222	\$37,235	\$41,037	\$42,158	\$39,875	\$41,071
Per Capita Income	\$19,270	\$21,540	\$26,632	\$27,174	\$26,953	\$28,930
Median Age	40.0	42.5	43.3	42.4	39.2	37.6
Daytime Population	10,863	19,932	180,364	779,003		

SUPPORTABLE RETAIL & FOOD/DRINK

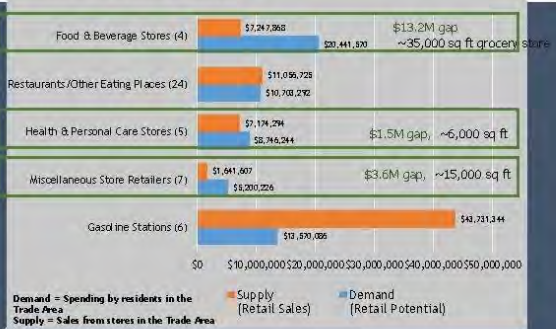
	5-Mile	10-Mile	25-Mile
Total Sales	\$132,790,937	\$233,099,643	\$2,831,863,395
Residential Expenditures	\$129,125,912	\$262,492,248	\$2,475,769,327
Estimated Sq Ft (based on sales)	483,000	848,000	10,298,000
Needed Acreage	48	85	1,030

Current Commercial Acres:
 Zoned: 1,530
 Vacant: 530 (includes area in wetlands)

RETAIL PROFILE BY TRADE AREA



CONVENIENCE RETAIL/RESTAURANT PROFILE 5-MILE TRADE AREA



COMPARISON RETAIL PROFILE 10-MILE TRADE AREA



RETAIL MARKET PLACE PROFILE 190/SR7 INTERCHANGE 1-MILE TRADE AREA



Project Assistance and Funding information for Conneaut

1. Engage the Port Authority to assist with redevelopment financing.
2. Continue to identify and apply for grant funding to the extent possible to assist in downtown revitalization activities, including façade improvements, public open space creation and improvements, critical infrastructure improvements, neighborhood revitalization efforts.
3. Explore the potential to establish a Special Improvement District (SID), also known as a business improvement district (BID). SIDs are a private sector initiative where property owners in a defined district seek funding for a variety of services. They are typically funded by an additional tax assessment, managed by a nonprofit organization, provide services such as cleaning and maintenance, non-governmental services such as marketing and promotion or beautification, and the implementation of capital investments.
4. Explore the potential for using Tax Increment Financing in conjunction with a major downtown development project to finance downtown public infrastructure improvements. This funding mechanism redirects all new real property tax revenue resulting from the development project into a special fund to finance the construction of public infrastructure defined within the TIF legislation. Local communities administer these tax incentive programs, working directly with businesses on proposed projects to enter into agreements prior to construction.
5. Downtown Redevelopment Districts and Innovation Districts. Ohio's Amended Substitute House Bill 233 (HB 233), which became effective Aug. 5, 2016, established the procedure for designating so called downtown redevelopment districts (DRDs) and innovation districts in the state. These districts operate much like tax increment financing (TIF) areas, except that the collected service payments generally can be utilized for a wider range of uses than TIF service payments.

Purpose: Ohio DRDs must be created for the purpose of promoting the rehabilitation of historic buildings, creating jobs and encouraging economic development in commercial and mixed-use commercial and residential areas. DRDs may not include any areas used exclusively for residential purposes or any areas exempted from taxation under an existing TIF.

Must develop an economic development plan

Scope of a DRD Exemption: In general, a DRD exemption may be for:

- o up to 10 years, 70% without approval of the affected local school district.
- o With school district approval or with the inclusion of “non-school” language in the municipal legislation, the exemption may be for up to 30 years, 100%.
- o There are other requirements applicable to certain TIFs that also apply to DRDs (e.g., levy carve-outs, county sharing requirements).

Service Payments in Lieu of Taxes: As with TIFs, the DRD exemption is not a true real property tax exemption. Rather, property owners within the DRD make service payments in lieu of taxes on the increase in the assessed value of real property within the DRD in the same amount and at the same time as the real property taxes that otherwise would be due on that increase in assessed value. Those service payments are deposited into a special municipal fund and used for designated purposes. In general, the eligible uses of service payments within a DRD are broader than the eligible uses for TIFs, and include the following:

- a. To finance public infrastructure improvements within the DRD. The DRD economic development plan, described more fully herein, must identify specific projects that are being or will be undertaken within the DRD and describe how they will assist with the additional demands on the infrastructure within the DRD.
- b. To finance or support loans or grants to owners of historic buildings within the DRD. These loans or grants must be tracked pursuant to a plan developed by the municipal corporation awarding the amounts, and the progress of the recipient’s rehabilitation project must be monitored.

- c. To finance or support loans, but not grants, to owners of buildings located within the DRD that do not qualify as historic buildings. These loans can only be utilized to assist the owner in making repairs and improvements to the building or buildings. As before, these loans must be tracked and monitored by the municipal corporation that awarded them.
- d. To make contributions to a special improvement district, a community improvement corporation, or a nonprofit corporation, the primary purpose of which is to redevelop historic buildings or otherwise promote or enhance the district.
- e. Contributions to nonprofit corporations must be used primarily to rehabilitate a building or buildings within the DRD or otherwise promote and enhance the DRD. Revenues for such purposes cannot exceed the property tax revenue that would have been generated by 20 percent of the assessed value of the exempted improvements in the DRD.
- f. Within an innovation district - to finance or support loans or grants to qualified businesses (defined herein) or incubators and accelerators that support qualified businesses within the innovation district. These loans and grants must also be tracked and monitored by the appropriate municipal corporation.

Redevelopment Charges: In addition to service payments, owners of property within a DRD may enter into agreements with the municipality to impose a redevelopment charge on the property. This redevelopment charge may be a fixed dollar amount or a variable amount based on the assessed value of the property or all or part of the profits, gross receipts or other revenues of a business operating on the property. The terms regarding the establishment and operation of the community development charge are similar to the terms for charges levied within a new community authority under current Ohio law. The redevelopment charge revenues are used in the same manner as the payments in lieu of taxes generated within the DRD.

- 6. City of Conneaut Community Reinvestment Area. In 1981, Conneaut first established a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA). In 2005, it was amended to apply city-wide. The CRA provides a tax reduction on the increase in taxable value of a property for the renovation of existing and the construction of new structures. The City of Conneaut offers up to 100% real estate tax abatement for 15 years for new commercial or industrial facilities and up to 100% real estate tax abatement for 12 years for the renovation of an existing commercial or industrial facility. The City has an agreement with the Conneaut Area City Schools for revenue sharing on projects over \$500,000. The City also offers up to 50% real estate tax abatement for five (5) years for new residential dwelling construction or remodeling of dwelling units upon which the cost of the remodeling is at least \$5,000. Accessory structures are exempt (i.e., garages, sheds, pools, landscaping, etc.).
- 7. City of Conneaut Revolving Loan Fund. The City of Conneaut operates a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF). To be eligible for these monies, a business must be established in the City of Conneaut. These loaned monies may only provide up to 40% of a project's needs. Bank and equity participation is required. Funds may be used for a fixed asset purchase, working capital or real estate acquisition. Funds are limited at this time so please call for more information. The County of Ashtabula also has a RLF for any entity doing business in Ashtabula County. Legal Fees are the only fees a business will pay for these services.
- 8. Ashtabula County Enterprise Zone Tax Incentives. In an effort to spur revitalization of Ashtabula County's industrial base, Ashtabula County has designed an Enterprise Zone to encourage investment and job creation. Within the enterprise zone, which covers 80% of the County, special tax incentives are offered to businesses that invest in capital improvements and create and/or retain jobs. State law permits up to 60% reduction of new real and personal property taxes for a period of up to 15 years in an unincorporated area; up to 75% reduction for a period of up to 15 years in an incorporated area.
- 9. Conneaut Foundation. The foundation provides approximately \$70,000 per year in grants, partners with civic institutions throughout Conneaut and Ashtabula County. Grants are awarded to area non-profits.

Appendix E – Park Inventory

INVENTORY OF SELECT PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN CONNEAUT									
	City Parks					Other Rec Facilities			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Dean Avenue Park	Hayward Park	Liberty Street Park	Lakeview Park	Malek Park/ Arboretum	Township Park	Sandbar	CLYO Conneaut Local Youth Org.	SPARC
Acres	1.5	1	1.4	8.2 (8.7?)	41	60	41	20	20
Amenities									
Children’s Playground Equipment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Tennis Courts	✓		✓			✓			✓
Baseball Field				✓	✓	✓		✓	
Basketball Courts	✓			✓		✓			
Soccer Field						✓		✓	✓
Football Field								✓	✓
Volleyball Court						✓			
Bocce Court						✓			
Horseshoe Court						✓			
Shuffleboard Court						✓			
Fishing						✓			
Beach/Swimming						✓	✓		
Observation/Birding					✓		✓		
Track/Field									✓
Weight/Fitness Room									✓
Trail/Walking Path					✓	✓	✓		
Boardwalk						✓			
Gazebo					?	✓			
Picnic Area				✓	✓	✓			
Concession Stand						✓			✓
Views of Lake Erie/ Sunset viewing				✓		✓			
Monuments				✓					
Parking Lot					✓	✓	✓		✓
Restroom						✓			
Characteristics/ Comments				mostly mowed-grass green space with a few clusters of deciduous trees	Malek Park is the largest city-owned park, but is not very accessible to residents				

Appendix F – Housing Assessment Data

# of Units in Structure	Units	%
Single-family detached houses	4,281	76%
Single-family attached (condos)	42	1%
2 to 4 units in a building	582	10%
5 to 19 units in a building	144	3%
20 or more units in a building	260	5%
Mobile Home	359	6%
Total Housing Units	5,668	100%

Source: 2015 American Community Survey Data

Annual Household Income	Affordable Monthly Housing Cost	House Purchase Affordability Range (2)	Number of Units Demanded	Number Supplied		Net Demand
				Owner-Occupied	Renter-Occupied	
less than \$24,999	Less than \$625	less than \$67,499	1,673	1,044	921	-292
\$25,000 to \$34,999	\$625 to \$875	\$67,500 to \$94,499	835	723	444	-332
\$35,000 to \$44,999	\$875 to \$1,125	\$94,500 to \$121,499	615	519	183	-87
\$45,000 to \$49,999	\$1,125 to \$1,250	\$121,500 to \$134,999	233	182	51	0
\$50,000 to \$59,999	\$1,250 to \$1,500	\$135,000 to \$161,999	432	270	23	139
\$60,000 to \$74,999	\$1,500 to \$1,875	\$162,000 to \$202,499	450	177	11	262
\$75,000 to \$99,999	\$1,875 to \$2,500	\$202,500 to \$269,999	271	94	3	174
\$100,000 to \$124,999	\$2,500 to \$3,125	\$270,000 to \$337,499	117	85	0	32
\$125,000 to \$149,999	\$3,125 to \$3,750	\$337,500 to \$404,999	57	21	0	36
\$150,000 and more	\$3,750 and more	\$405,000 and over	79	10	0	69
Total			4,762	3,125	1,637	0

Data Sources: 2015 American Community Survey Data; Analysis by CT Consultants.

Zoning District	Total Vacant Acres	Unsewered Areas		Sewered Areas		Potential New Housing Units	
		Estimated Vacant Acres*	Potential units at 0.4 units per acre	Estimated Vacant Acres	Max Density for Single-Family	Potential Low	Potential High (For R-3 and R-4 where Apt are permitted)
A-1	2,464	2,464	986	0	N/A	986	986
R-1	538	269	108	269	2.6	807	807
R-2	1,065	532.5	213	533	2.6	1,598	1,598
R-3	254	0	0	254	4.1	1,041	4,420
R-4	202	0	0	202	6.1	1,232	3,515
R-5	188	0	0	188	6.1	1,147	699
Total	4,711	3,266	1,306	1,446		6,811	12,024

*Assumes 100% of A-1 area and 50% of R-1 and R-2

	Potential Low	Potential High
Additional population at 2.4 persons per household	16,345	28,857
If only sewerred areas have housing development		
New housing units	5,504	10,718
Additional population at 2.4 persons per household	13,210	25,722