



OUR  ELYRIA
planning the future together

CITY OF ELYRIA

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

06-03-2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all who were involved and participated in the planning process, including the City of Elyria staff, steering committee, and the residents of Elyria, Ohio.

The Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan is a result of their dedication to the city's future!

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Executive Summary

The Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan is a foundational document adopted by the City that will guide future policy and decision making. Following the adoption of the plan, a zoning code rewrite using the recommendations in the land use chapter will be developed. The strategies found in the implementation chapter should be considered for action steps for the city to reach its vision and goals. Public engagement played a key role in the plan's creation to ensure the plan reflects the goals of the community.

Existing Conditions

The Elyria population decreased between 2010 and 2021 and the median age of residents increased. Household data reflects these trends, as they have become smaller and have fewer children. The city's housing stock is not suited for the future if these trends continue, as nearly two thirds of all housing units are free-standing single-family homes. This type of housing tends to cost more and increase vehicle dependency, which can be unsafe for seniors. A lack of starter homes is also barrier for young professionals and recent college graduates who may consider living in Elyria.

The future land use districts are aimed in part at increasing housing diversity and transit access across the city as well as focusing on Downtown Elyria to reshape it as a vibrant city center with jobs, housing, recreation, and entertainment.

EXISTING CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

54,533

2010 Population

52,816

2021 Population

38.2

2010 Median Age

40.3

2021 Median Age

2.41

2010 Average Household Size

2.25

2021 Average Household Size

33.6%

2010 Households with Children

26.7%

2021 Households with Children

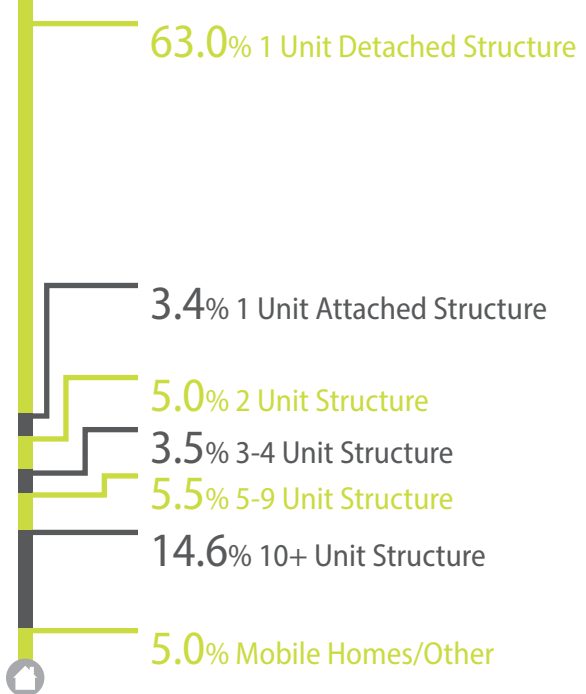
23.7%

2010 Households with a Senior

29.3%

2021 Households with a Senior

 Distribution of Elyria Housing Units by Type



Executive Summary

What We Heard

Public engagement opportunities included open houses, pop-up booths at Elyria events, and neighborhood walking tours with residents. The steering committee was made up of local business owners, non-profit leaders, residents and city officials to guide the planning process. 398 people responded to the community survey, which collected information about their experience visiting downtown Elyria and the existing state of the city.

Downtown revitalization, multi-modal transportation, housing, and safety were common themes found in all forms of engagement. Elyrians want to see a vibrant downtown district, a more diverse and affordable housing stock, and safety improvements city-wide.

Future Land Use Districts

The future land use districts will be used to inform the city's upcoming zoning code rewrite. Traditionally, the creation of a comprehensive plan and new zoning code are conducted independently of one another. The City of Elyria, thinking proactively, secured its zoning consultant in the comprehensive planning process to increase the expediency of the zoning code rewrite

The future land use districts will be used to guide future development decisions following the implementation of the new zoning code. Based on feedback from the community, stakeholders, city officials, and the existing conditions analysis, the plan's future land use districts were created with the following goals in mind:

- » Attracting people to visit downtown Elyria through policies aimed at growing businesses, renovating existing buildings, and encouraging mixed-use infill development.
- » Diversifying Elyria's housing stock with housing types aimed at accommodating the needs of senior citizens and attracting young professionals.
- » Encouraging walkability by permitting small businesses such as coffee shops near neighborhoods to reduce vehicle dependency.
- » Activating vacant land in Elyria by encouraging more types of development besides manufacturing and industrial.

SURVEY RESULTS SNAPSHOT

What are most critical issues facing Elyria?

34% *Of responses included the theme of:*
Safety/Crime

19% *Economy*

12% *Transportation*

What would you improve about transportation in Elyria today?

38% *Of responses included the theme of:*
Transit

20% *Roadway Repairs*

14% *Bicycle Infrastructure*

What do you wish you could do in Elyria?

39% *Of responses included the theme of:*
Dine

39% *Shop*

17% *Entertainment Venues*

FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS SUMMARY

DOWNTOWN

Destination-oriented mixed-use development

COMMERCIAL

Vehicular Oriented Retail, Restaurants, & Services

MAIN ST MIXED-USE

Walkable Mixed-Use Corridors

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

Traditional, single-family housing

COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL

Walkable neighborhoods with a diversity of housing types

EMPLOYMENT CENTER

Office Parks, Manufacturing, & Industrial

INSTITUTIONAL

Civic, Educational, & Religious Facilities

PARKLAND

Present & Potential Future Parks & Natural Areas

TRANSFORMATIONAL MIXED-USE

Catalytic mixed-use development of presently vacant parcels

Executive Summary

Recommended Strategies

Feedback from residents, city officials, and the steering committee came together to inform the plan's recommended strategies, which are divided into six goals, summarized below.

Quality of Life

Public safety, healthcare, food access, and litter are all areas of concern amongst residents. The city's new school buildings are a major strength of Elyria and can be used to attract new residents via promotion by the city and its developers.

Economic Development

Residents, city officials, and stakeholders all indicated local business growth as a priority, and the plan includes strategies to reduce startup costs and renovate the downtown district to create a retailer-friendly area. Workforce development is another important component in improving the city's economic future and can be achieved with local partners like LCCC and others.

Land Use

The land use section includes strategies aimed at reducing the location-related issues for starting local businesses and attracting development of vacant parcels along with completing the zoning code rewrite process.

Housing

Housing strategies are targeted towards improving the city's housing stock and increasing its diversity and affordability to fit the needs of the community.

Parks & Recreation

Elyria residents are very proud of the city's parks and natural areas. They want to see cleaner parks, more recreational programming, more land allocated for parks, and safer access to parks, all of which are addressed by the plan's recommendations.

Transportation

The plan's transportation strategies are focused on diversifying alternative modes of transportation such as walking, biking, and transit while also increasing traffic safety for all roadway users.

Goals & Objectives of the Plan



QUALITY OF LIFE

- » Improve Citywide Safety
- » Create Partnership to Improve Healthcare Access
- » Promote High-Quality Educational Offerings
- » Increase Healthy Food Access
- » Reduce Litter



ECON. DEVELOPMENT

- » Foster Local Business Ownership & Workforce Development
- » Reduce the Startup Costs of Doing Business in the City



LAND USE

- » Re-Purpose Vacant Parcels into More Productive Uses
- » Promote the Growth of Local Retail and Restaurants
- » Codify Desired Zoning and Development Patterns



HOUSING

- » Increase Housing Supply & Diversity
- » Incentivize Homeowners Property Maintenance
- » Increase Support for the Un-housed Population
- » Upgrade Utilities for All Housing Types



PARKS & RECREATION

- » Increase Programming for All Age Groups
- » Improve the Safety & Cleanliness of Park Facilities
- » Activate Vacant Land With Public Green Space
- » Create Safe Routes to Parks & Recreation Facilities



TRANSPORTATION

- » Increase Traffic Safety
- » Increase Public Transit Access
- » Increase Pedestrian Access
- » Increase Bicycle Access



I. INTRODUCTION

» PLAN OVERVIEW

» TIMELINE

PLAN OVERVIEW

The City of Elyria, Ohio is an attractive and unique community located in Lorain County. It offers strong neighborhoods, park facilities for residents, and affordable housing compared to the rest of the county. Downtown Elyria sits on the Black River near the Cascade Park Waterfalls. The Ohio Turnpike and Interstate 90 travel east-west through Elyria and serve as the main commercial corridors. U.S. 20 and Lorain Boulevard also feature a high concentration of commercial uses and run north-south through Elyria. The city has a rich industrial history and manufacturing and industrial uses remain today, mostly on the east side.

In 2022, the City of Elyria recognized the need to create a new comprehensive plan and rewrite its zoning code to reflect the future of growth, development, and quality of life for the Elyria community. This plan is the result of a 21-month planning process, guided by city officials and the project steering committee.

ABOUT THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan is a foundational document adopted by the City of Elyria for the purpose of guiding future policy and decision making. To ensure the strategies and recommendations reflect the wants, needs, and future vision of community members, public outreach was a significant component of the planning process. The comprehensive plan includes a future land use map, which will be used to guide the city's 2024 zoning code rewrite.

The goals of the plan were created to reflect those of the community and to accommodate the present and future needs of Elyria residents. The Our Elyria planning process brought together members of the community to establish goals regarding:

- » Quality of Life,
- » Transportation,
- » Housing,
- » Economic Development,
- » Parks and Recreation, and
- » Land Use.



Figure 1.1 | Elyria, OH
2 | Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan

PLAN OVERVIEW

HOW THE PLAN IS USED

Comprehensive plans are legally-adopted documents used to guide decision-making in a community. Local officials should consult the comprehensive plan when making determinations about policies, projects, and programs, especially those relating to zoning, land use, and development. The Our Elyria Plan allows its readers to understand the local conditions and demographics of Elyria and lays out short, medium, and long-term objectives.

HOW THE PLAN WAS CREATED

An existing conditions analysis was conducted to provide background data on the population, households, economy, parks, transportation, and housing units of the city.

Input gathered from Elyria residents helped determine the community's future vision. This community engagement process took place over the course of 12 months and is summarized in detail in Chapter 3.

Trends in the planning sector and best practices were applied as well, including those that have been successfully implemented in other Northeast Ohio communities.

Plan Components

The existing conditions report, summarized in Chapter 2, was published in April 2023 and summarizes demographics, housing, economic, transportation, parks, and land use data about the city.

The future land use map was developed to guide future zoning decisions in the city, including the upcoming zoning rewrite. Chapter 4 contains the map, districts, and information about the methodology of its creation. Also in the land use chapter are 3 conceptual site plans for potential development areas.

The recommended strategies which will be used to guide future policy and decision-making are found in Chapter 5.



Figure 1.2 | Inputs and components of the plan

I. INTRODUCTION

PLAN OVERVIEW

WHO IS INVOLVED?

The recommended strategies and action steps of the Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan were derived through input received during the public engagement process which involved the following parties:

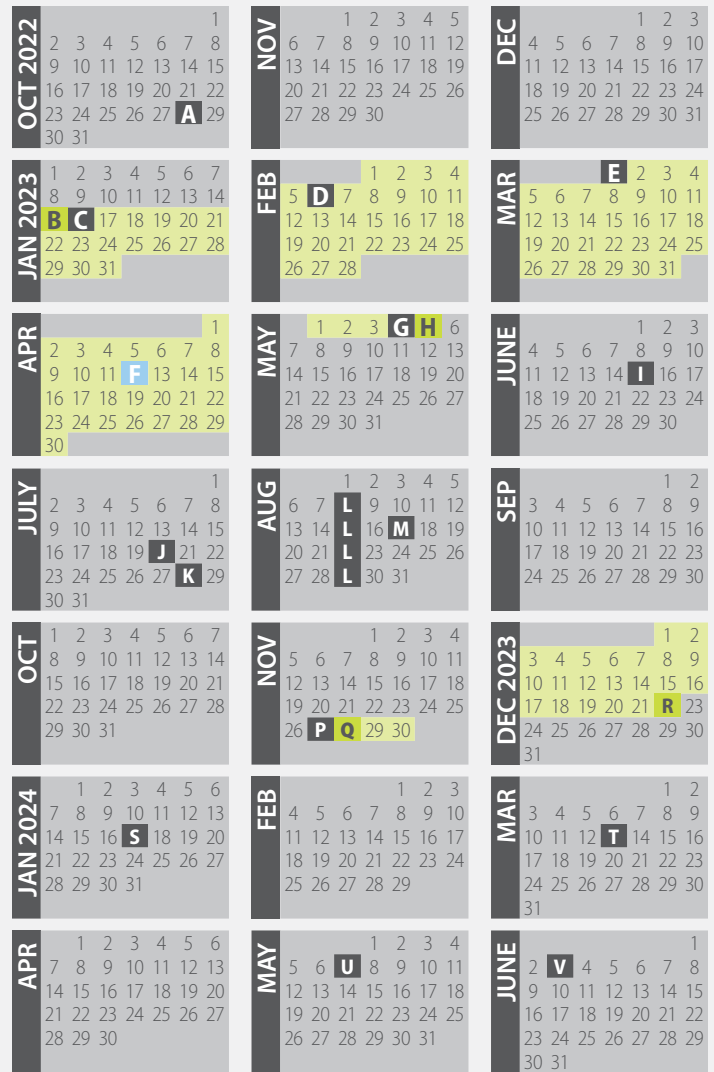
- » Residents,
- » Businesses,
- » Neighborhood and civic groups,
- » Visitors,
- » Employees,
- » Local officials, and
- » Steering Committee.

A Steering Committee of community leaders guided the development of the Plan. Its members met with city officials and the consultant team four times throughout the 21-month planning process. Meetings included discussions about goals for the plan, public engagement opportunities, land use recommendations, and implementation strategies.

PROJECT TIMELINE

The plan took close to 21 months to create as shown in Figure 1.3.

Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan Significant Events	
A	Project Kickoff with City Officials
B	Public Survey Opened for Responses
C	MLK Event Presentation
D	Public Open House #1
E	Steering Committee Meeting #1
F	Existing Conditions Report Published
G	Steering Committee Meeting #2
H	Public Survey Closed
I	June Third Thursday Pop-Up
J	July Third Thursday Pop-Up
K	Stakeholder Interviews
L	Community Walking Tours



Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan Significant Events	
M	August Third Thursday Pop-Up
N	Steering Committee Meeting #3
O	Steering Committee Workbook Due Date
P	City Council Presentation
Q	Public Land Use & Recommendations Online Activity Opened for Responses
R	Public Land Use & Recommendations Online Activity Closed
S	Steering Committee #4
T	City Officials Complete Review of Plan
U	Draft Plan Presented to Planning Commission to council
V	Plan Adopted by City Council
W	Public Open House #2

Figure 1.3 | Public engagement highlights



II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

- » DEMOGRAPHICS
- » ECONOMY
- » HOUSING
- » PARKS & RECREATION
- » TRANSPORTATION

DEMOGRAPHICS

Elyria's population declined 3.1% between 2010 and 2021. The reverse occurred in Lorain County and statewide whose populations grew by 4.7% and 2.0%, respectively, during that time frame.

HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

The number of households in Elyria rose between 2010 and 2021. This number increased, despite the population decrease, likely because there are more people living alone. This is supported by the decrease in family households and increase in households with seniors living alone, as shown in Table 2.2.. Households made up of only senior citizens also rose between 2010 and 2021.

AGE

Elyria's median age is slightly higher than the state and slightly lower than the county and has risen over the past decade. The distribution of age groups is relatively when comparing the three geographies (Figure 2.3).

A 2022 report by the Administration for Community Living found that the percentage of the US population over the age of 65 is expected to rise from 17% to 22% between 2020 and 2040¹. To satisfy the needs of an aging population, investments such as diversifying mobility options, building smaller homes in walkable neighborhoods, and ensuring convenient access to health, recreation, and social amenities should be considered. Other considerations include being cognizant of the fiscal impacts on health and human services and the decreasing pool of working age adults as the population ages. The recommendations of this plan include many strategies that can help Elyria become increasingly senior-friendly while also being attractive to people of all age cohorts.

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

The Elyria population over the age of 25 has lower educational attainment than Lorain County and the state population. The percentage of residents without a high school diploma is 3.1% higher than the county and state, and the combined percentage with a college or graduate degree is only 15.1%, compared to 26.0% and 29.7% in the county and state, respectively (Table 2.4).

¹ Administration for Community Living, "2021 Profile of Older Americans." November 2022. [chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Profile%20of%20OA/2021%20Profile%20of%20OA/2021ProfileOlderAmericans_508.pdf](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/Profile%20of%20OA/2021%20Profile%20of%20OA/2021ProfileOlderAmericans_508.pdf)

Table 2.1 Total population and growth (2010, 2017-2021)

	ELYRIA	COUNTY	OHIO
2010 Population	54,533	301,356	11,536,504
2021 Population	52,816	315,595	11,764,342
Growth (2010-2021)	-3.1%	+4.7%	+2.0%

Source: 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 2.2 Comparison of percent of total households by families and relationships (2006-2010, 2017-2021)

	2010	2021
Total Households	22,335	23,153
% Family Households	66.6	56.1
% Households w/ Children	33.6	26.7
% Households w/ Senior	23.7	29.3
% Households w/ Senior Living Alone	9.2	13.5
Average Household Size	2.41	2.25

Source: 2006-2010, 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 2.3 Percent of total population by age (2006-2010, 2017-2021)

	Elyria	County	Ohio
Under 18 years old	21.1	22.1	22.3
19-24 years old	10.0	8.4	7.2
25-34 years old	13.2	11.3	13.1
35-44 years old	11.9	12.2	12.2
45-54 years old	12.5	13.2	12.5
55-64 years old	14.3	14.3	13.8
Over 65 years old	17.0	18.3	17.0
Median Age (2021)	40.3	41.9	39.4
Median Age (2010)	38.2	39.5	38.3

Source: 2006-2010, 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 2.4 Percent of total population over the age of 25 by highest educational attainment (2017-2021)

	Elyria	County	Ohio
Less than high school diploma	12.2	9.1	9.1
High school diploma (includes equivalency)	34.3	31.2	32.6
Some college, no degree	26.3	23.2	20.0
Associates degree	12.0	10.5	8.8
Bachelor's degree	9.8	16.6	18.4
Graduate or professional degree	5.3	9.4	11.3

Source: 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

ECONOMY

Elyria has a higher share of the population over the age of 16 than the county and state. Of this population, a slightly higher percentage is in the labor force compared to Lorain County but are struggling to find work, as the unemployment rate is nearly 1% higher (Table 2.5).

EARNINGS

The median household income in Elyria is much lower than Lorain County and Ohio. Elyria has much higher shares of the population earning fewer than \$25,000 and between \$25,000-\$49,999 per year and a much lower share of the population earning over \$150,000 per year. The percent of Elyria’s population living in poverty is over 7% higher than the county and state (Table 2.6).

EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Figure 2.1 shows the top employment sectors in Lorain County measured by location quotients (LQs)¹. Manufacturing is Lorain County’s most specialized sector, with an LQ of 2.02. Elyria is a significant contributor to the high share of manufacturing jobs, as 23 of the 52 manufacturers registered with the Lorain County Chamber of Commerce are located in Elyria. The next 2 highest sectors are educational services (1.62) and retail trade (1.31).

¹ Location quotients (LQs) are a measure of a region’s specialization in a given sector relative to the rest of the United States, with an LQ of 1 meaning that sector is equally specialized.

Table 2.5 Percent of households by employment status (2017-2021)

	Elyria	County	Ohio
Workforce population (16 years and older)	81.7	80.7	80.3
Labor force participation rate*	61.6	60.5	63.3
Unemployment rate**	5.6	4.7	5.3

Source: 2006-2010, 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

*Labor Force Participation is the percentage of the population over 16 years old who are employed or seeking employment

**Unemployment Rate is the percentage of the labor force who are unemployed

Table 2.6 Percent of households by income (2017-2021)

	Elyria	County	Ohio
Less than \$25,000	26.5	19.2	19.1
\$25,000-\$49,999	27.8	21.6	21.8
\$50,000-\$74,999	19.7	17.4	18.0
\$75,000-\$99,999	11.5	13.8	13.2
\$100,000-\$149,999	9.8	15.7	15.5
Greater than \$150,000	4.8	12.6	12.5
Median household income	\$46,034	\$62,390	\$61,938
Percent of population in poverty	20.4	13.2	13.4

Source: 2006-2010, 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2.1 Lorain County top sectors by Location Quotient (2021)

Sector	Employees	LQ
Manufacturing	15,526	2.02
Education	3,957	1.62
Retail Trade	13,281	1.31
Health Care	16,059	1.18
Wholesale Trade	4,138	1.05

Source: 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

ECONOMY

LORAIN COUNTY REAL GDP

Lorain County has rebounded from the multiple recessions of the early 21st century. Real GDP peaked at \$10.19 million in 2006 before plummeting during the Great Recession of 2008. GDP did not recover to pre-recession levels but has grown in the latter half of the 2010s before falling again due to the COVID-19-related economic downturn. The most up-to-date data provided by the Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis (FRED) showed significant growth as the county emerged from the pandemic, with a real GDP figure of \$10.16 million (Figure 2.2).

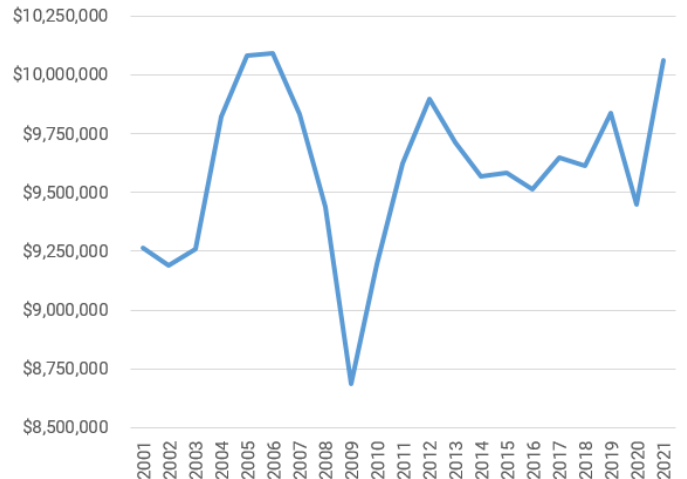
WORKER INFLOW/OUTFLOW

78.5% of people who work in Elyria commute from outside of the city, and 78.7% of Elyria residents who work travel to jobs outside of the city (Figure 2.3). Compared to most other Lorain County cities, a larger share of Elyria's workforce live in the community (Figure 2.4).

These figures could indicate that Elyria residents are choosing to work elsewhere due to higher wages. Cleveland is the largest source of higher paying jobs for Elyria residents (Table 2.7).

Additionally, these figures could indicate that Elyria struggles to attract its higher earning workers to also live in the city. Instead, 46% of these workers are choosing to live in Lorain, North Ridgeville, Amherst, and Avon, all of which are cities inside the county (Table 2.8).

Figure 2.2 21st Century Lorain County Real GDP



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of St Louis (FRED), 2022

Figure 2.3 Elyria worker inflow/outflow (2020)

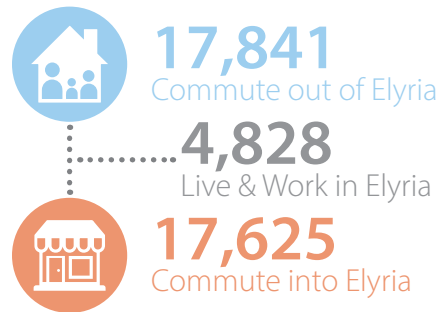


Figure 2.4 Percent of workers who live & work in same city of nearby Lorain County cities

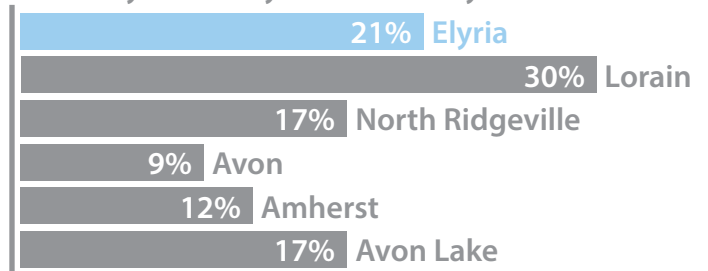


Table 2.7 Elyria-employed residents by city of employment (2020)

#	% Earning Over \$40,000	City
4,828	32	Elyria
1,577	51	Cleveland
1,016	32	Westlake
1,009	30	Lorain
975	31	Avon
893	28	North Ridgeville

Table 2.8 Elyria workers by city of residence (2020)

#	% Earning Over \$40,000	City
4,828	32	Elyria
2,707	31	Lorain
1,012	51	North Ridgeville
654	51	Amherst
607	55	Avon
594	34	Cleveland

Source for Figures 2.3, 2.4 and Tables 2.7, 2.8: US Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (2020)

HOUSING

There were 25,422 housing units in Elyria in 2021. Compared to the county and state, it is cheaper to rent and own a home in Elyria. The lower cost of housing does not offset the lower median income, as a higher proportion of households are considered cost-burdened¹ (Table 2.9).

OCCUPANCY STATUS

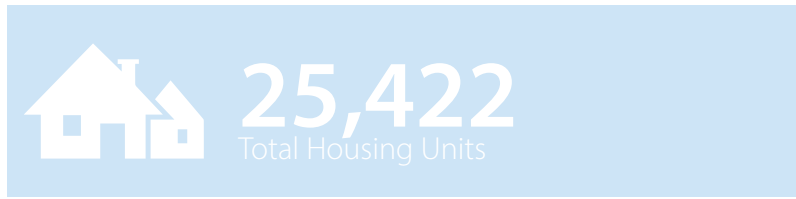
Renting is more common in Elyria than in the rest of the county and state. While there are short term benefits to renting, home ownership tends to be a better long-term investment and can provide a sense of stability. A lower supply of homes for sale could have an influence on higher-earners choosing not to live in Elyria. The city's vacancy rate is comparable to the rest of the state, but nearly 1.5% higher than Lorain County (Figure 2.10).

HOUSING BY TYPE

Elyria has greater housing diversity than the county and state, though single family detached structures make up nearly two-thirds of all housing units (Figure 2.11). These structures are often built on larger lots which contribute to lower density and the inability to access destinations without the use of a vehicle. Increasing the amount of duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes can help improve walkability while preserving existing character, as these structures can easily blend into existing single-family neighborhoods.

¹ A household is considered "cost-burdened" if housing expenditures account for over 30% of annual income. Housing expenditures include rent, mortgages, utilities, and other housing costs.

Table 2.9 Characteristics of total housing units (2017-2021)



	ELYRIA	LORAIN COUNTY	OHIO
Median Housing Value	\$112,200	\$164,600	\$159,900
Median Rent	\$772	\$821	\$870
Cost-Burdened Households (percent)	29.8%	25.5%	24.9%
Median Year Built	1964	1971	1969

Source: 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 2.10 Percent of housing units by owner occupancy (2017-2021)

	Elyria	County	Ohio
Owner-occupied	53.6	67.0	60.5
Renter-occupied	37.5	25.5	30.4
Vacant	8.9	7.5	9.1

Source: 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 2.11 Percent of housing units by number of units in structure (2017-2021)

	Elyria	County	Ohio
1-unit, detached	63.0	75.7	69.0
1-unit, attached	3.4	4.6	4.6
2 units	5.0	3.2	3.9
3 or 4 units	3.5	2.6	4.3
5 to 9 units	5.5	3.0	4.6
10+ units	14.6	8.5	9.9
Mobile home	5.0	2.4	3.6

Source: 2017-2021 ACS 5-Year Estimates

PARKS & RECREATION

PARK FACILITIES

The City of Elyria operates 12 parks with a variety of amenities and Pioneer Plaza, a pocket park in downtown Elyria. Additionally, Black River Reservation, Elywood, and Cascade Parks are located within the city and are operated by Lorain County Metroparks.

The majority of city parks feature a playground and a sports field or court. East, West, and South Parks feature indoor recreation centers, and North and East parks feature outdoor pools (Figure 2.5).

BIKE FACILITIES

The North Coast Inland Trail is operated by Lorain County Metroparks and runs through Elyria providing regional connectivity.

Few on-street bike facilities exist in Elyria, with the majority near downtown. As a result, bicycle connectivity between parks and neighborhoods is poor (Figure 2.5).

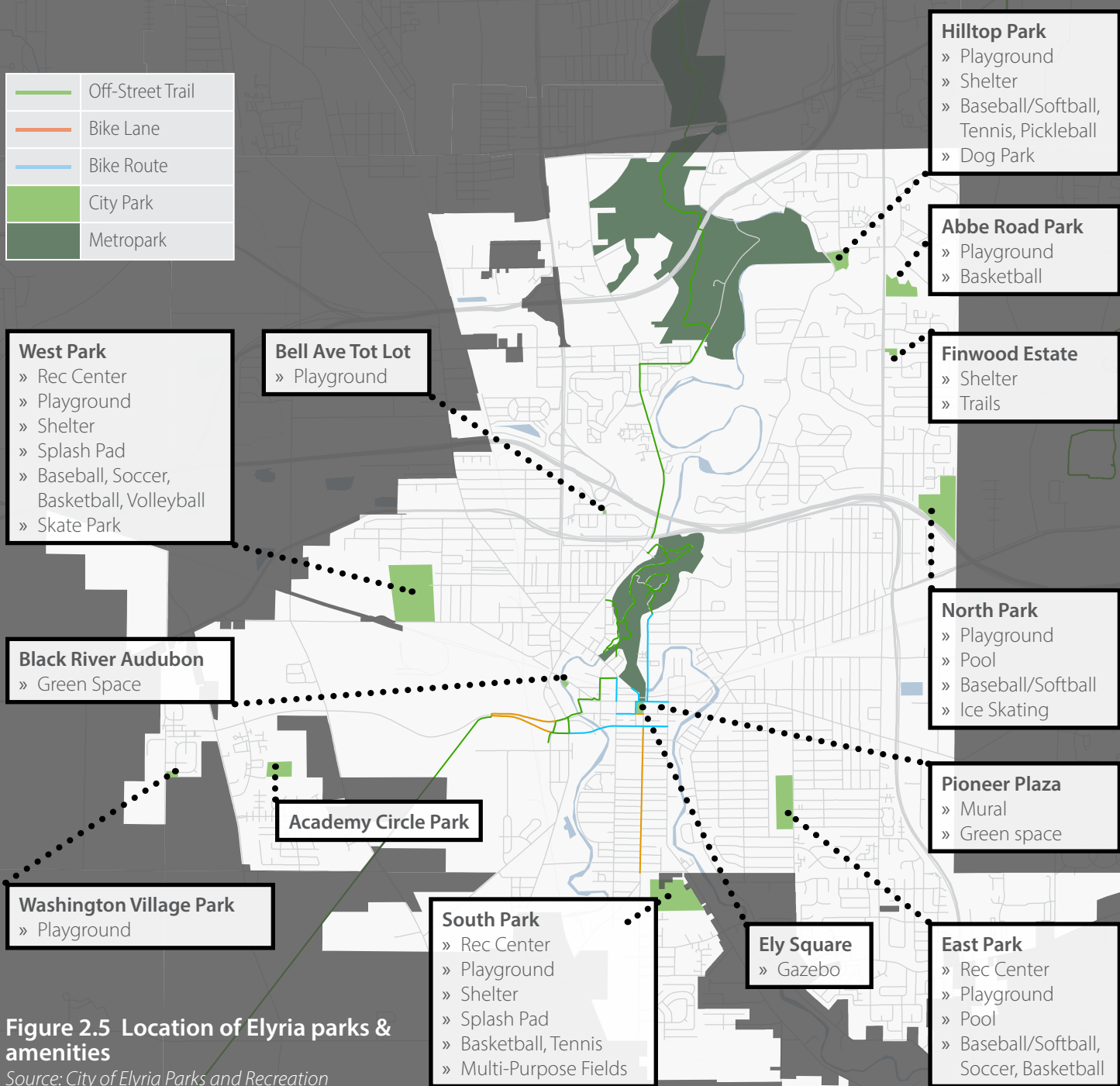


Figure 2.5 Location of Elyria parks & amenities

Source: City of Elyria Parks and Recreation

TRANSPORTATION

ROADS BY FUNCTIONAL CLASS

I-90 and the Ohio Turnpike cross the city from east to west with an exit along Lorain Boulevard. The major arterials through the city are Lorain Boulevard and US-20 and run north to south. These are the city's main commercial corridors and have few crosswalks available, contributing to an unsafe impression for pedestrians. Most of the arterials and major collectors converge in Downtown Elyria, making it easily accessible by vehicle. The rest of the roadway network in Elyria is made up of local roads which can serve as low stress facilities for bicyclists (Figure 2.6).

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Most crashes in the city occur in downtown or at intersections of high volume roads. The exits of both the turnpike and I-90, and intersections along US-20 are among these intersections (Figure 2.7).

Figure 2.7 Elyria crashes by location (2021)

Source: ODOT GCATS (2021)

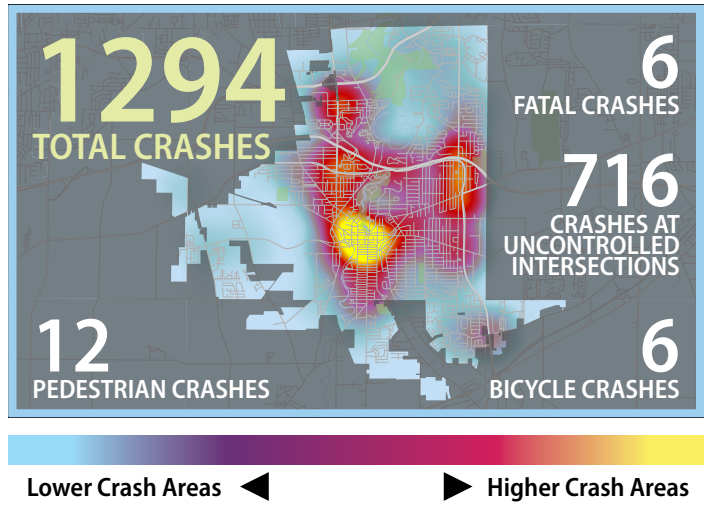
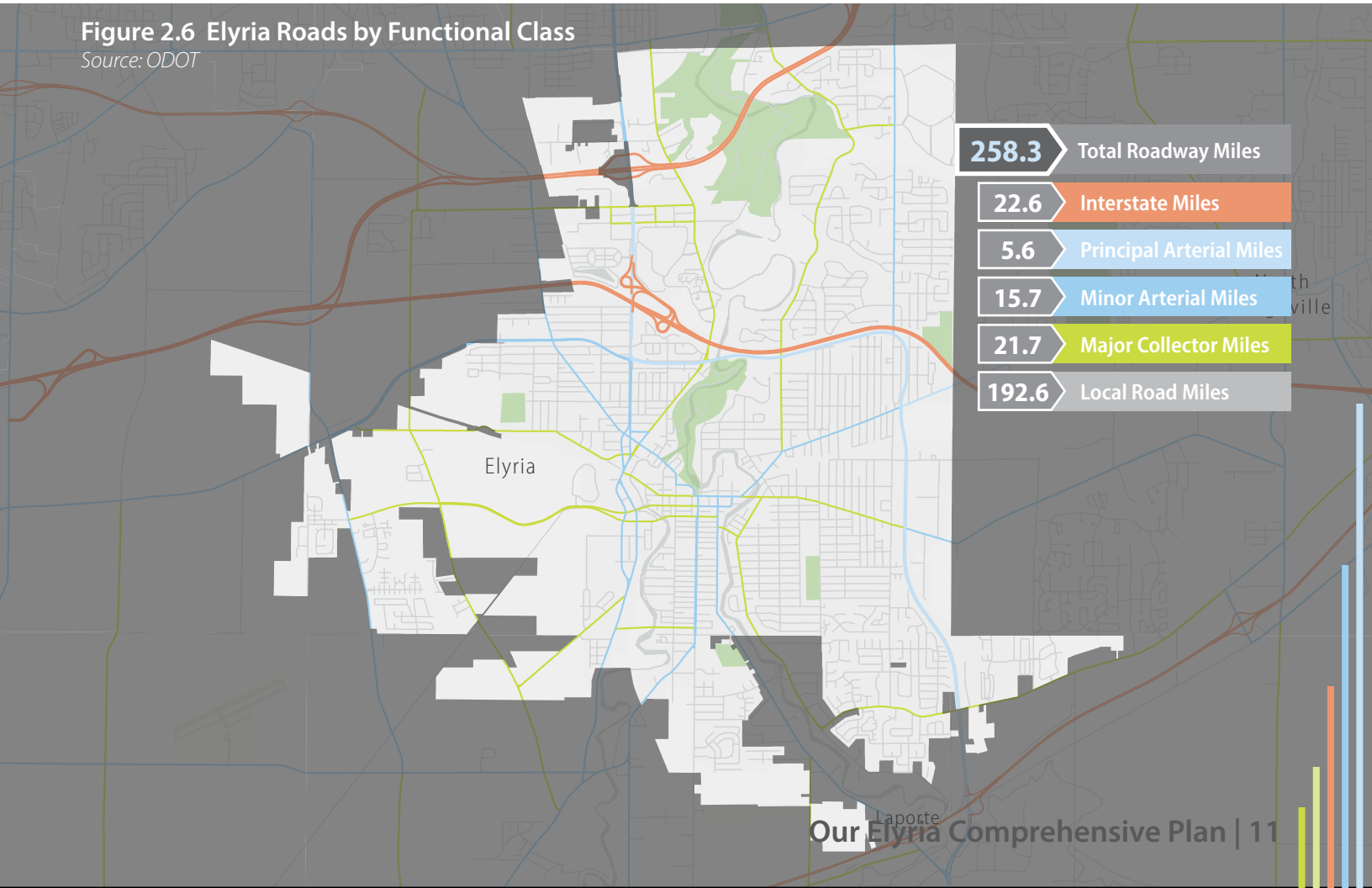


Figure 2.6 Elyria Roads by Functional Class

Source: ODOT



II. EXISTING CONDITIONS

TRANSPORTATION

PUBLIC TRANSIT OPTIONS

LCT Fixed Route Service

All five Lorain County Transit bus routes service Elyria in some capacity. Three of these routes, 51, 52, and the Downtown Elyria Loop, loop around the city. Route 51 and 52 buses arrive once every 2 hours, and the Downtown Elyria loop arrives every 8 minutes.

Routes 1 and 2 service Downtown Lorain and connect to northern Elyria at Lifeskills High School. Buses arrive at stops along these routes every 2 hours. Riders can transfer to Routes 51 and 52 at Elyria Lifeskills HS, to access the rest of Elyria (Figure 2.8).

LCT offers discounted fares to seniors and students, along with free rides for children under the age of 2 and veterans.

LCT Dial-A Ride

So long as the destination is within a 3/4 mile boundary of a fixed route, Lorain County Transit offers origin to destination service. Residents can call the LCT scheduling office with the addresses of the origin and destination to schedule rides between 6am and 6pm

Private Alternatives

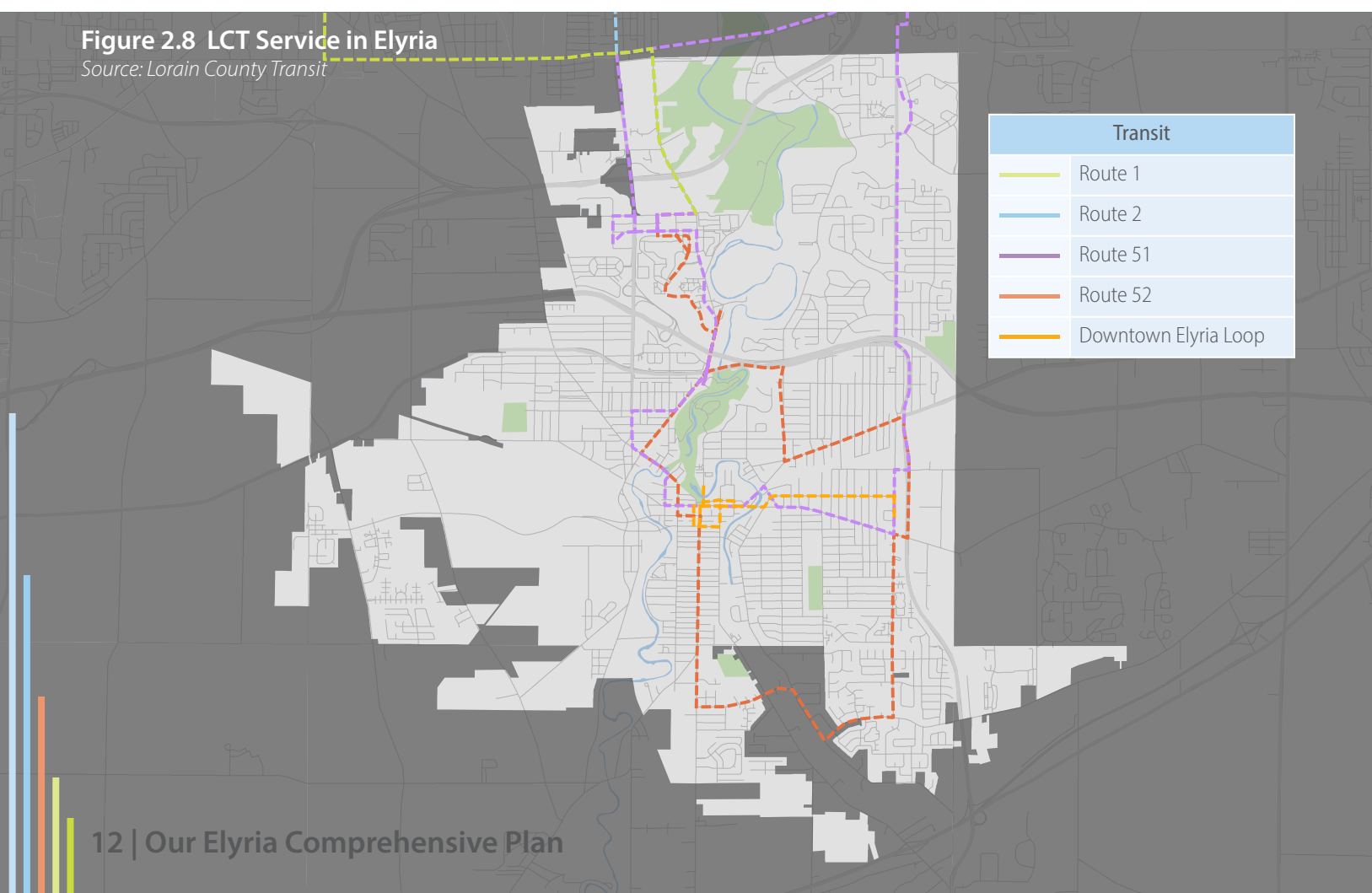
Alongside the services LCT provides, private alternatives exist within Elyria.

AMTRAK services Elyria at the 410 E River Rd Station with its Lake Shore Limited (Chicago to NYC) and Capital Limited (Chicago to Washington DC) routes. Trains arrive daily, though early in the morning.

Greyhound services Elyria at the Lorain County Transportation Center, and can be ridden to destinations both within and outside of Ohio.

Figure 2.8 LCT Service in Elyria

Source: Lorain County Transit





III. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

- » ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW
- » ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE
- » MEETING SUMMARIES
- » PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS



ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Public engagement was a critical component of the plan to ensure the final recommendations aligned with the community’s wants and needs. Engagement phase began in January 2023 and concluded in December 2023 (Figure 3.1). Various forms of engagement were held, both virtually and in-person, which were advertised in print and through the city’s social media accounts.

Steering Committee

The plan’s steering committee was made up of key community stakeholders chosen by City staff. The group met with city officials and the consultant team on four occasions to guide the planning process.

Community Events

The city officials and the consultant team hosted events where residents could learn about the plan and participate in activities to provide their feedback.

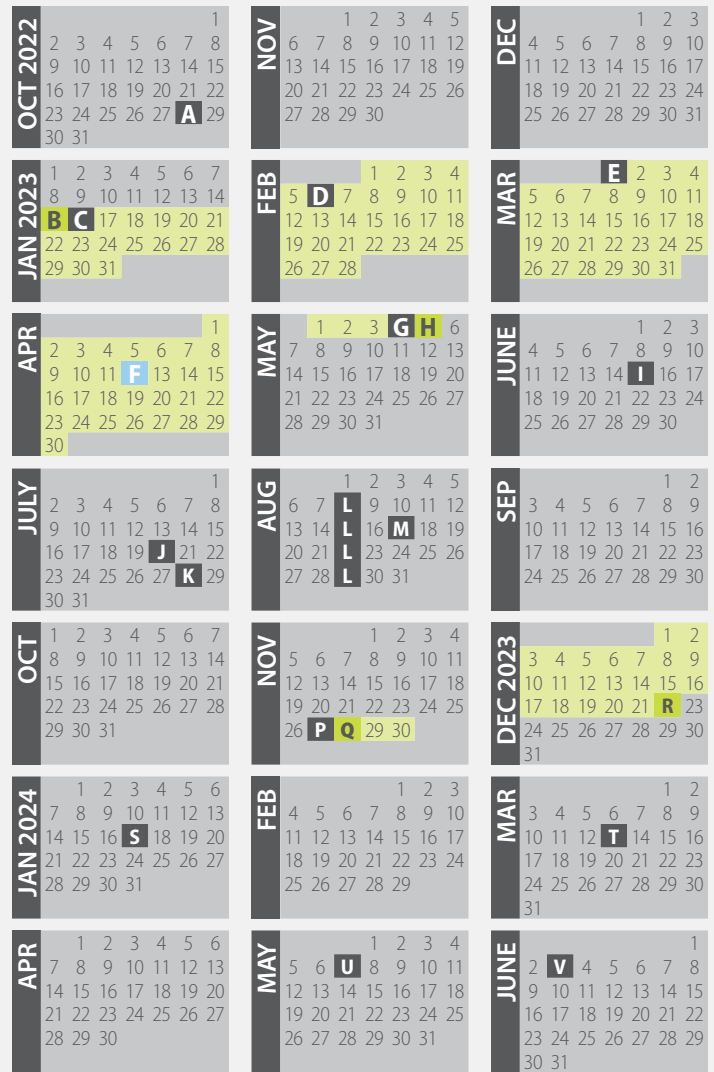
Community Survey

The Our Elyria Community Survey was available from January 2023 to May 2023 and gathered 398 total responses. Survey respondents were asked about the existing conditions in Elyria and what priorities should be addressed by the plan’s recommendations.

Community Walking Tours

City officials and the consultant team hosted four walking tours in different areas of Elyria, where residents were invited to talk about the strengths, issues, and priorities of each neighborhood.

Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan Significant Events	
A	Project Kickoff with City Officials
B	Public Survey Opened for Responses
C	MLK Event Presentation
D	Public Open House #1
E	Steering Committee Meeting #1
F	Existing Conditions Report Published
G	Steering Committee Meeting #2
H	Public Survey Closed
I	June Third Thursday Pop-Up
J	July Third Thursday Pop-Up
K	Stakeholder Interviews
L	Community Walking Tours



Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan Significant Events	
M	August Third Thursday Pop-Up
N	Steering Committee Meeting #3
O	Steering Committee Workbook Due Date
P	City Council Presentation
Q	Public Land Use & Recommendations Online Activity Opened for Responses
R	Public Land Use & Recommendations Online Activity Closed
S	Steering Committee #4
T	City Officials Complete Review of Plan
U	Draft Plan Presented to Planning Commission to council
V	Plan Adopted by City Council
W	Public Open House #2

Figure 3.1 | Public Engagement Timeline

KICKOFF MEETING & TOUR

October 28th, 2022

To kick off the Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan, the consultant team met with city officials, who reviewed the project timeline and discussed the current issues and trends in Elyria that the plan could address. The project’s branding, including logos and the “Our Elyria” tagline were decided upon during the meeting, which concluded with a tour of the community.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The consultant team prepared multiple logo concepts for the meeting. After reviewing the concepts, city officials selected the logo displayed below along with the tagline, “Our Elyria: Planning the Future Together” (Figure 3.2).

During the community tour, city officials showed the consultant team the Shane Furniture Building, a downtown building which was slated for demolition. The lot, which is presently vacant, was mentioned as a potential site for redevelopment. (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.2 | Final Logo

Figure 3.3 | The community tour included a visit to downtown Elyria, including the presently demolished Shane Furniture Building.

MLK DAY PRESENTATION

January 16th, 2023

The city announced the launch of the plan to the public at its Martin Luther King Jr. Day commemorative march. Mayor Whitfield gave a speech which was followed by an introductory presentation from the consultant team about the planning process. Afterwards attendees joined breakout rooms to discuss the important topics in Elyria, including land use, housing, and safety.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

During breakout rooms, three common concerns/topics emerged throughout interaction with residents.

Grocery Store Demand

Residents were concerned about food deserts in Elyria. This issue was especially concerning in southern Elyria, as the Aldi located on Oberlin Rd had recently announced it was closing. The concept for the south side/downtown grocery store as a potential development area emerged as a result of feedback from this event.

Zoning Community Awareness

Many residents did not fully understand the importance of zoning and its impacts. A zoning code rewrite will follow the Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan, meaning that increasing the community's awareness and understanding of zoning and how the re-write of the code can improve quality of life in the city became an important part of the engagement process.

Access to Parks & Recreation

Residents expressed a need for clearer, easier access to the parks Elyria has to offer. The construction of bike facilities, sidewalks, and crosswalks were pieces of physical infrastructure mentioned. Attendees also expressed a demand for more recreational programming and activities hosted at parks.



Figure 3.4 | Commemorative march



Figure 3.5 | Slides from the MLK Day presentation

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

February 6th, 2023

City officials and the consultant team gave a brief presentation which introduced the process and outcomes of a comprehensive plan to the community. Afterwards, attendees were invited to visit different stations in the room, where they could give their feedback on various topics and trends.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Table 3.1 shows the full results of each open house station question. Responses are grouped into categories based on their theme.

Vision for Elyria

Participants expressed a desire for Downtown Elyria to become a destination district with shops, restaurants, and entertainment for all ages. Preserving the historic architecture and increasing access to green space throughout Elyria were other important components of the community's vision.

Critical Issues

Housing was the most prominent issue in Elyria, specifically the lack of enforcement of the city's building and zoning codes and the presence of dilapidated rental properties and out of state investors.

Pride in Elyria

Participants were especially proud of the city's historic architecture. While the past helps make it beautiful, the city's forward thinking nature will help make it great in the future.

Desired Activities & Amenities

Participants want to shop and dine in Elyria, with downtown mentioned as a popular destination. Activities and events for all ages were also mentioned. Most importantly, residents want to be able to do the things they love without feeling unsafe.

What's your vision for the future of Elyria?	
Response Topic	#
Revitalized Downtown	6
Restaurants	5
Entertainment Venues	4
Historic Preservation	4
Education	3
Family-Oriented	3
Tourism	2
Enhanced & More Parks	2
Remove Strip Clubs/Bars	1
Better Job Access	1

What are critical issues in Elyria today?	
Response Topic	#
Building and Zoning Code Enforcement	9
Slum Landlords and Out Of State Investors	4
Violence	1
Traffic Management	1
Aging Population Accommodations	1
Connectivity to Downtown/Neighborhoods	1
Litter	1

What about Elyria makes you proud?	
Response Topic	#
Historic Architecture	6
Cooperation	1
Forward-Thinking	1

What do you wish you could do in Elyria?	
Response Topic	#
Safety	3
Downtown	3
Variety of Restaurants	2
Specialty Retail	2
Cultural Activities	2
Young Adult Activities	2
More Parks	1
Riverfront Access	1
Grocery Store	1

Table 3.1 | Full open house posterboard results

STEERING COMMITTEE #1

March 1st, 2023

The meeting began with a presentation from the consultant team to the steering committee, including introductions and an overview of the comprehensive planning process, the engagement activities, and the implementation process. Following the presentation, the group worked together to complete a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis of the city.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Table 3.2 shows full results of the SWOT analysis, which are summarized below.

Strengths

Elyria residents have a strong sense of pride in their history and parks. The city's rental market was considered a strength due to its diverse housing stock and affordability. Participants considered the accessibility to parks and walkability of Elyria's neighborhoods as a strength, though other engagement events found differing opinions. The school district's five brand new school buildings and the presence of Lorain County Community College are both educational strengths.

Weaknesses

Elyria has struggled to attract businesses, especially to its downtown area which is perceived to be unsafe. The city has also struggled to attract and keep industrial and manufacturing companies, leading to a decreasing job pool. Limited transit access for those without a personal vehicle is another weakness.

Opportunities

The vision for a revitalized Downtown Elyria included adaptive reuse of abandoned buildings and providing modern amenities such as free Wi-Fi. The city's fiber optic connectivity was considered an opportunity to attract remote workers. Economic development tools such as Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDDs) and tax-sharing districts were also cited as opportunities.

Threats

Committee members noted that Elyria does not stand out amongst neighboring cities. Rising crime rates were another concern which could deter prospective residents. Though the city's walkability was considered a strength, declining sidewalk quality threatens that perception.

Strengths	
Access to freeways	Economically diverse
Downtown Square	Housing options
City Pride	Cascade Park
Amazing city history	Strong sense of community
Authenticity	Affordable rental market
Resources – labor pool for industry	Generational connections to historical and cultural knowledge
Lorain County Community College	Five brand new schools
Inviting City Hall	Neighborhood character
Infill lots that can be used for development	Neighborhood watch programs
Access and quality of parks	Housing mix
Weaknesses	
Attraction of Businesses	Not enough small businesses
Brownfields	4 Superfund Sites
Lack of job generation	Closed industrial plants
The city is built out – not much available land No green space	Overall access to healthcare – good in some places but good be better
Lower amount of manufacturing jobs available	Aging infrastructure
Lack of transit options	Declining population
Perception of downtown is not safe	Lack of technology opportunities
Opportunities	
E-Sports arena downtown	Midway Mall
Workforce development	Chestnut Commons
Wifi downtown	Abandoned Buildings
Capitalize on walkability of downtown and other areas	Provide incentives for diverse development
Downtown Square	Create JEDDs
Co-working spaces	Tax sharing districts
Re-use downtown buildings for mixed use	Strong nonprofit realm to partner
Opportunities	
Old trees that break up existing sidewalks	Lack of communication available resources
School grading impacts school funding opportunities	Limited technology access limits growth
Brownfields	Rising crime
Superfund sites	City is built out
Aging infrastructure	
Downtown parking may present an issue for apartment construction	
Needs to be a reason to come to Elyria for businesses and residents - competition with other cities	

Table 3.2 | Full SWOT analysis results

STEERING COMMITTEE #2

May 4th, 2023

The consultant team presented to the steering committee with findings from the existing conditions analysis and an update on the zoning code rewrite process which was in its preliminary stage.

The committee then came up with ideas for the goals of the plan and potential development areas. These are sites upon which redevelopment could occur and will receive a conceptual site plan based on what uses the community wants to see in Elyria.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Goals and Objectives

Land use and zoning, including the idea of annexation, were things the committee felt the plan needed to address, especially due to the upcoming zoning code rewrite.

The steering committee wanted to see increased quality of housing stock through housing improvement programs for residents. Redevelopment of vacant sites would improve the image of the city and also spark economic development.

Transportation access across all modes was a high priority, along with improving quality of life.

The six final goals agreed upon by the steering committee will be used to classify the plan's recommendations and are shown in Figure 3.6.

Potential Development Areas

The sites proposed by the committee are listed in Table 3.3. The Shane Furniture, a recently demolished building in downtown Elyria, was selected in addition to a grocery store in southern Elyria which would address food access concerns after the Aldi located in the area announced its closure. No specific parcel(s) were selected for this location at the time of the meeting.

A third Potential Development Area, the former Bluestar Recycling Center, was chosen by city officials following this meeting.



Figure 3.6 | The 6 goals of the Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan which were developed during the second Steering Committee meeting

Potential Development Area proposed locations	Chosen?
Grocery store in southern Elyria	X
Land along Leo Bullocks Parkway	
Land southwest of Elyria via annexation	
Midway Mall	
Shane Furniture Building in Downtown Elyria	X
Vacant parcels on Fuller Ave	

Table 3.3 | Proposed locations for Potential Development Areas by the Steering Committee

Third Thursday Pop Ups

June 15th & July 20th, 2023

The consultant team hosted a table at the June and July Third-Thursday events. Residents could visit the table to learn about the plan and complete an activity at the interactive boards. Residents left post-it notes with their ideas for the Shane Furniture Building and Bluestar Recycling potential development sites. Additionally, participants were shown nine proposed locations for a grocery store in south Elyria and filled out a ballot to select their favorites.

For those who could not attend, an identical virtual activity was available on the project website.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Shane Furniture Building

Residents want to see uses which attract people to downtown. Restaurants and retail received the first and fourth most amount of votes. Apartments received the third most amount of votes, indicating a demand for mixed-use development in Downtown Elyria.

A grocery store received the second highest number of votes, revealing demand not only on the south side, but also in central Elyria (Table 3.4).

Bluestar Recycling Center

Parks were the top result with a community center receiving the third most amount of votes, which indicates a desire for more recreational facilities in the neighborhood located directly east of downtown (Table 3.5). Retail was the second most popular result, which can be accommodated in the conceptual park site plan by proposing food truck infrastructure.

South Side Grocery Store

Total votes for each proposed location are shown in Figure 3.8 on the following page.

The largest of the sites, B received the most votes, followed by F, the nearest to the location of the Aldi which is relocating. Site G is also located near the former Aldi and received a sizable amount of votes. Site D, closest to downtown, was also popular.

Additionally, the 2 following write-in locations were submitted:

- » Oberlin and Middle Ave: 2
- » Existing Aldi property: 2



Figure 3.7 | Third Thursday pop-up boards

Shane Furniture Building proposed uses	Votes
Restaurant	13
Grocery	9
Apartments	6
Retail	7
Community Center	5
Entertainment	4
Mixed-Use	3
Hotel	2
Office	2
Gym	1

Table 3.4 | Shane Furniture Building proposed use board results

Bluestar Recycling Facility proposed uses	Votes
Park	6
Retail	5
Community Center	3
Entertainment	2
Grocery	1
Restaurant	1
Pool	1
Enhanced Amtrak Station	1
Parking	1

Table 3.5 | Bluestar Recycling Center proposed use board results

Third Thursday Pop Ups

June 15th & July 20th, 2023

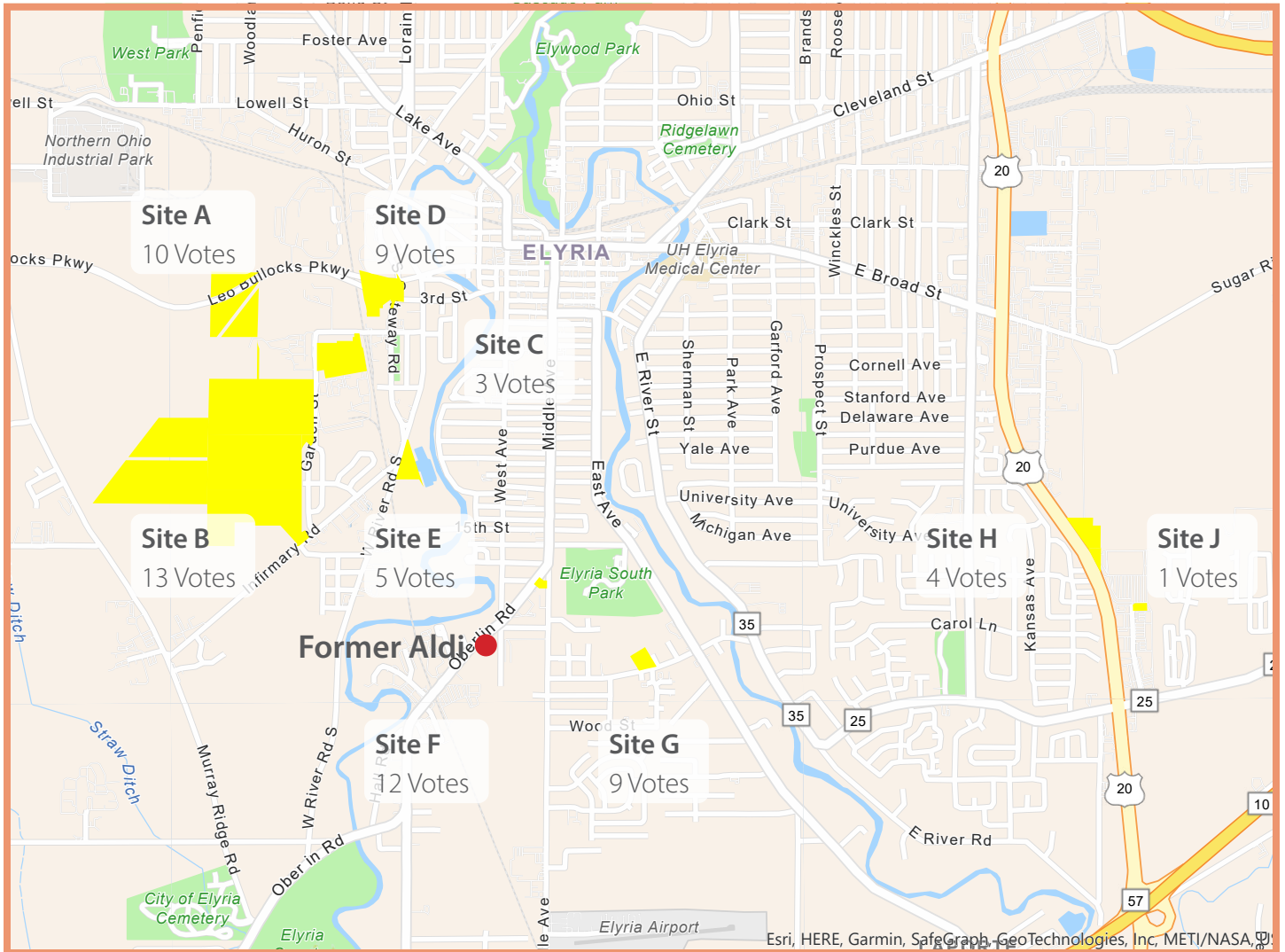


Figure 3.8 | Map of Potential Grocery Store Sites

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

July 28, 2023

The consultant team conducted interviews with community stakeholders associated with organizations who have unique insights based on the work they do in Elyria and can be key partners in implementing the recommendations in this plan. Organizations represented by stakeholders include the City of Elyria, Neighborhood Alliance, Lorain County Urban League, and the Lorain County Metropolitan Housing Authority.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Responses to each interview question are shown in Table 3.4 with key takeaways summarized below.

Transportation Access

Transportation access for those without a vehicle was frequently referenced across different questions. Stakeholders considered it a critical issue that impacted the ability of residents to access parks, jobs, the grocery store, doctors, etc.

Two solutions presented were the formation of a public-private partnership with Lorain County municipalities and the expansion and increased frequency of Lorain County Transit service.

Housing Quality & Affordability

Stakeholders wanted the city to work alongside property owners to improve the quality of the existing housing stock. Building remediation and renovation were among ideas proposed. Increasing housing affordability was another priority heavily emphasized by stakeholders.

Business Attraction & Retention

A major issue highlighted was Elyria's ability to attract and retain businesses and jobs. Training for the unemployed and commercial building remediation were among programs that could be used to attract jobs and businesses.

More Community Events

Stakeholders applauded the pride Elyrians hold for their city, but noted the lack of community events to celebrate Elyria and bring its residents together. A demand for recreational activities for all ages was stressed by stakeholders and could be hosted at city parks.

1) What are Elyria's best assets and strengths?

Residents have pride in the city and school districts

Great and plentiful companies within city limits

Unique rural and urban landscape near to each other

2) What do you believe are the most critical issues facing Elyria today?

Blighted properties

Building and fire approvals for building occupancy

Enforcement (i.e. lawn mowing citations, etc.) adding to issues instead of working with residents to resolve them

Job loss and business retention

Training for unemployed and under-employed

Poverty

Transportation access

Housing

Federal grant application collaboration

3) What is the current state of housing in Elyria?

Not enough landlords accept Section 8 vouchers

Supportive housing developments have poor walkability and transportation connectivity

While supporting housing for the homeless exists, it is not enough

Desperate need for affordable housing

Not enough collaboration and warning when housing or low-cost motels are being shut down

4) What would you improve about transportation in Elyria today? This might include roads, biking or walking, public transit, traffic safety, congestion, etc.

Expand routes and frequency of Lorain County Transit

Form a public-private partnership with municipalities at the table to tackle transportation access countywide

5) Where are the city's most traffic congestions points?

Transportation access is a much bigger issue than congestion

6) Currently, what do you have to travel outside of city limits to do? This can include entertainment, shopping, retail etc.

Grocery shopping

Affordable retail shopping

OB-GYN services

Doctor's appointments

Entertainment

7) What are some of Elyria's environment and recreational assets?

City parks

Bike trails

Farmer's Market

Events in downtown square

Table 3.6 | Stakeholder interview question responses (continued on next page)

8) What are some of Elyria's environment and recreational weaknesses?
Lack of awareness of Elyria's parks and recreation facilities (rec centers are underused)
Not enough youth activities
Need recreation activities for adults (not just seniors)
No public pool
Most parks require a car to access
Baseball team needs indoor practice facilities
9) What are the main issues that you would like to see addressed through this planning process?
Transportation access
Landlord engagement
Business attraction and retention
Public-sector assistance with remediation and rehabilitation of existing buildings
Zoning improvements
Increased collaboration between the city and its partners
10) Name one outcome you would you like to see from this plan?
Make it easier for businesses to come to Elyria by streamlining city approval processes
Strong collaboration between the city and county to address transportation access
Bring vacant building and houses up to code for business development and a diverse housing market

Table 3.6 (con't) | Stakeholder interview question responses

Third Thursday Pop Ups

August 17th, 2023

At the August Third Thursday event, the consultant team hosted an activity booth to gather feedback on the community’s vision for its future land use.

Participants were presented with a variety of different housing types and placed stickers corresponding to the ward in Elyria where they would like to see each type of housing. Stickers were also available for the options of “nowhere” and “everywhere.”

Participants were given a commercial land use map as a handout to highlight areas in the city where they would like to see more local businesses. The handout also asked what type of development they would like to see at the Midway Mall site, as even though it is not a potential development area in the plan.

For those who could not attend, an identical virtual activity was available on the project website.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Preferred Housing Types

The full results are summarized in Table 3.7. Ward 5, which contains downtown, received the most votes, with a preference for mixed-use apartments. Across the city, higher density options were preferred, with mixed use again being the most popular. The senior housing option was added by participants and received the second most votes.

Local Business Locations

The most popular locations were Downtown and Midway Mall, the former of which received comments about receiving riverfront-oriented development.

Ward	Single-Family	ADUs	Townhomes	Apartments	Mixed-Use	Senior Housing	Total
1							0
2	1	1	2	1	2	2	9
3		1	1	1	2		5
4	2	2	2	1	1	3	11
5	1	1	2	3	6	1	14
6			2	1		2	5
7							0
All		1				2	3
None							0
Tot.	4	6	9	7	11	10	47

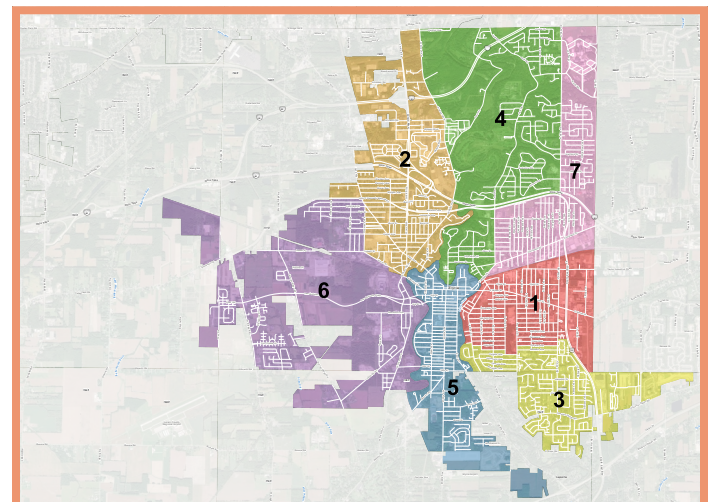
Table 3.7 | Residential activity full results & map of Elyria’s wards

Midway Mall Redevelopment

Residents want to see the Midway Mall site redeveloped to bring more places to shop into Elyria. Recreation was another common theme, which indicates a demand that development should be walkable. Ideas for uses generated were grouped into categories and are shown in Table 3.8.

Midway Mall proposed uses	Votes
Retail	6
Recreation	4
Warehousing/industry	3
Medical center	2
Hotel	2
Small business incubation	2
Transportation hub	1
Homeless shelter	1
Multi-generational residential	1
Restaurant	1

Table 3.8 | Bluestar Recycling Center proposed use board results



STEERING COMMITTEE #3

August 23rd, 2023

The consultant team updated the steering committee about feedback heard from summer engagement activities. During the three month period between steering committee meetings, conceptual designs for the three Potential Development Areas (PDAs) were drafted and were presented to the committee for feedback.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The consultant team proposed a mixed-use apartment building on the site of the demolished Shane Furniture in Downtown Elyria. Based on feedback from the first steering committee, a co-working space was proposed on the second floor for residents to attract younger professionals (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.10 shows the conceptual design for the vacant Bluestar Recycling Center site was a community center and park which includes:

- » A Playground,
- » Skate park,
- » Bicycle pump track,
- » Volleyball and basketball courts,
- » Co-working office space, and
- » Outdoor seating with food truck parking

Both concepts received positive feedback and were given the go-ahead to be included in the plan.

The third PDA - a grocery store - was still in its site selection phase. The two sites proposed to the committee were a vacant parcel at the southwest corner of S Gateway Boulevard and 3rd Street and a group of parcels located along 3rd Street. Due to its proximity to both downtown and south Elyria, the latter option was favored by the steering committee. Due to the size of the site the proposed use for the potential development concept was a mixed-use development including a grocery store on the first floor (Figure 3.11).



Figure 3.9 | Shane Furniture redevelopment front elevation concept featuring first floor retail and apartments above.



Figure 3.10 | Bluestar Recycling Center redevelopment site plan concept featuring a park, coworking space, and community center.



Figure 3.11 | Grocery store proposed sites
Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan | 25

Community Walking Tours

August 8th, 15th, 22nd, & 29th, 2023

The consultant team and city officials hosted four walking tours in different neighborhoods of Elyria throughout the month of August. While a questionnaire was available to guide discussion, the event was intended to be a free-flowing conversation about the strengths or issues in each neighborhood. Some of the topics discussed at all tours were housing, business, recreation, safety, and infrastructure

For those who could not attend, an identical virtual activity was available on the project website.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Key takeaways from each walking tour and the locations of each tour are shown on the following page in figure 3.13.

Walking Tour #1 | August 8th, 2023

The tour began at the Black River Reservation and went out to the Midway Mall before looping back. The tours discussed the kinds of businesses and development residents of the north side hope to see.

Walking Tour #2 | August 15th, 2023

This tour traveled through residential neighborhoods around the closed Oakwood School. The van also circled out to view parcels along Leo Bullocks Parkway. Conversations centered around the current and former industrial land use interwoven with residential areas.

Walking Tour #3 | August 22nd, 2023

The Amtrak Station and Bluestar Recycling facility were focal points of this tour with participants talking about safety in the neighborhood at night and a vision of mixed-use development.

Walking Tour #4 | August 29th, 2023

The South Side tour had the largest attendance of all the tours with lots of engaged residents. The lack of a grocery store and neighborhood-scale businesses were discussed along with housing needs and pedestrian safety concerns along the major thoroughfares.

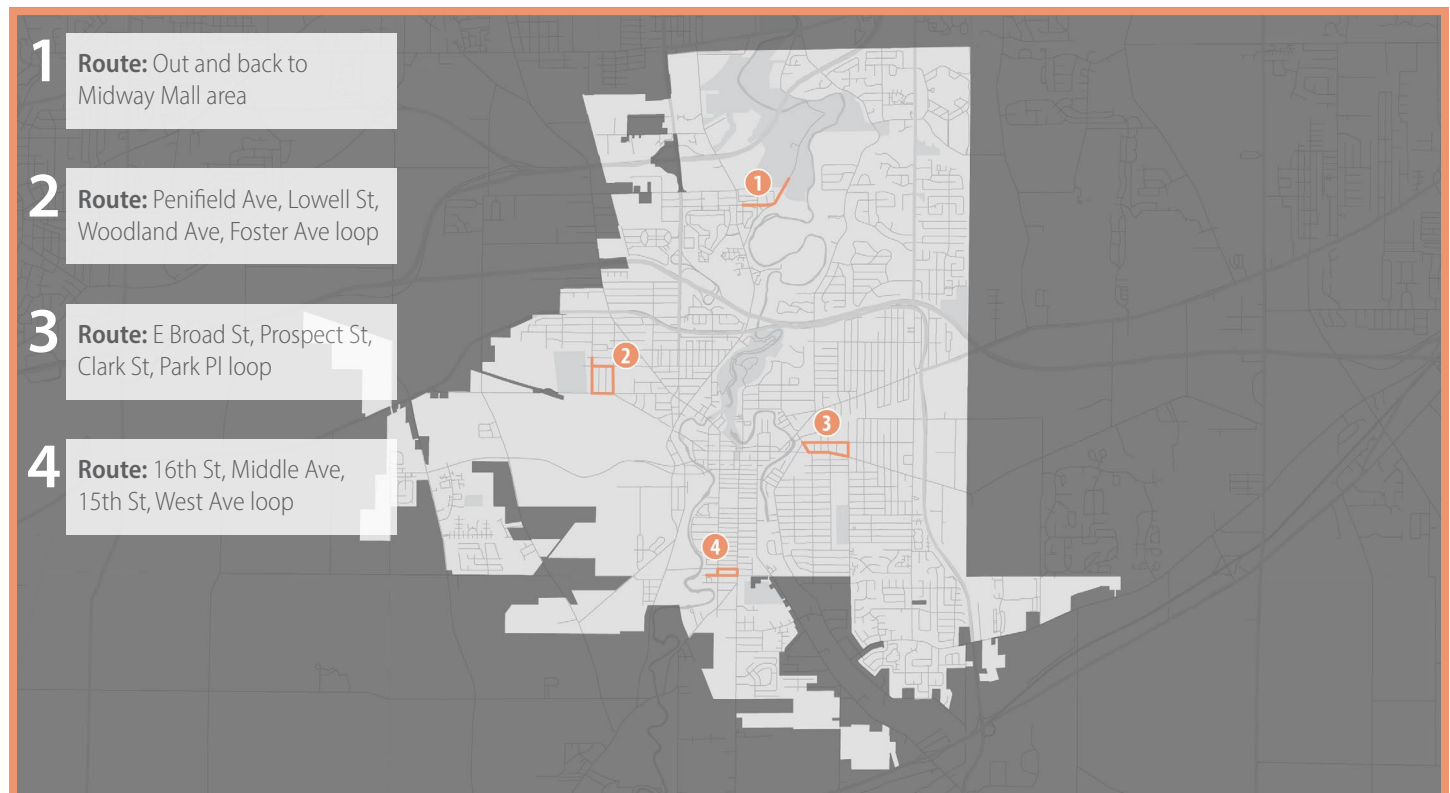


Figure 3.12 | Walking tour locations and route directions

Topic	Tour 1			Tour 2		Tour 3		Tour 4	
Housing									
Existing	Very little housing			Well maintained		Poorly maintained		Out-of state landlords	
Future Vision	Mixed use, townhomes, senior housing			Single-family, townhomes, duplexes		Owner-occupied units of all types		Affordable single family or mixed-use for workforce & seniors	
Business									
Existing	Many vacant storefronts			Retail vacancy, light industrial		Medical, both small and chain businesses		Bar, fast food, liquor store	
Future Vision	Mixed-use, entertainment, restaurants, library			Adaptive reuse of vacant manufacturing, restaurants, grocery		Mixed-use, grocery store, restaurants, jobs		Grocery, pharmacy, coffee shops	
Recreation									
Activities enjoyed during free time	Walking at parks, movies, going to restaurants/ coffee shops			Going to rec-centers & parks		Walking, shopping, going to rec-centers		Going to parks, stores, movies, restaurants	
Are these Possible Here?	2 Yes	3 Idk	2 No	2 Yes	3 Yes	1 No	2 Yes	10 No	
Safety									
Top Concerns	Poor sidewalk conditions			Poor sidewalk conditions		Amtrak station lighting		Sidewalk, lighting, speed	
Transportation									
Future Vision	Improved transit, bike trails/lanes, Midway Blvd repaved			Traffic calming, sidewalks, Lowell St repaired		Improved transit, sidewalks, S Abbe Rd repaired		Improved transit, bike lanes, traffic calming, sidewalks	
Desired Multi-Modal Connections	Downtown & parks via Middle Ave, West Ave, and W River Ave			<i>[None brought up by tour participants]</i>		South side via "main streets"		Downtown, grocery stores via Abbe, Middle, West, East, Lake, E Broad, Cleveland, Wayne, Wood, State, 16th	

Figure 3.13 | Key takeaways by walking tour

STEERING COMMITTEE WORKBOOK

October-Early November, 2023

Instead of a meeting, the steering committee requested and were provided a workbook with questions pertaining to future land use and the plan's draft recommendations to complete.

To gather feedback on the future land use map and districts, the workbooks contained the full map and a table describing each district, its permitted uses, and parking recommendations. Each land use district had its own map in the workbook with a more in-depth description and space to leave district-specific comments and to draw on the map.

To gather feedback on strategies and recommendations, the steering committee was presented with a list of potential strategies developed and prompted to select their level of support for inclusion in the final plan. Strategies were categorized by objectives and were grouped by the plan goals established during the second steering committee meeting.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Future Land Use Districts

Steering committee members had no comments on the permitted uses of the future land use districts but had a few parcel or area-specific comments which are shown in Table 3.9.

District/neighborhood identity was a common theme, as multiple steering committee members wanted to see district branding and wayfinding in the downtown district and historic neighborhoods.

Recommendations & Strategies

Appendix A shows the full results of the level of support for each of the strategies amongst the steering committee members. They also proposed new strategies to be included in the plan which are shown in the table. Some of the strategies were reworded based on steering committee feedback before being included in the Public Land Use and Recommendations Activity in December 2023. Full details of the steering committee feedback can be found in Appendix A.

All strategies were favored by the majority of respondents. Strategies under the objectives of education, reducing startup costs, incentivizing home maintenance, and public transit received the highest levels of support.

Future Land Use Map Comments	District*
Support for Downtown as its own district. Difficult to talk about downtown area due to uncertain boundaries	DT
Want to see more jobs and businesses downtown	DT
Church of the Open Door should be classified as Institutional District	C/I
Parcels near Infirmary & Murray Ridge roads should not be commercial. (No alternative suggested)	C
Support for Main St Mixed-Use corridors and the city to promote mixed-use development	MU
Midway Mall is a good place for affordable housing redevelopment	MU
Some parcels on Main St Mixed-Use corridors are not currently mixed-use**	MU
Lack of identity for Elyria neighborhoods - create historic districts, implement wayfinding signage, create unique district/neighborhood branding	CR/SR
Residential land use districts should encourage affordable housing development	CR/SR
Reduce amount of Employment Center parcels on Broad St and Lowell St	EC
Park areas off Leo Bullocks Parkway are uninviting and lack proper signage	PL
Pioneer plaza needs to be classified as Parkland	PL
Lack of green space in northeast Elyria	PL

Table 3.9 | Future land use map comments and the districts to which each comment is associated

*C = Commercial District, MU = Main St Mixed Use, CR = Community Residential, SR = Suburban Residential, I = Institutional, EC = Employment Center, PL = Parkland

**Future Land Use maps are intended to guide future development in the city and do not impact the current use of each parcel. If a particular parcel is to be redeveloped in the future, the plan's future land use districts should be consulted to determine the type of development.

PUBLIC LAND USE & RECOMMENDATIONS ACTIVITY

December 1st-22nd, 2023

The culmination of the plan’s public engagement process was the launch of an activity to gather feedback on the state of the plan as it transitioned into its final phase. The steering committee workbook was converted to a publicly available online activity on the Our Elyria website and a PDF that could be printed. This allowed residents to view the draft strategies and land use districts. The consultant team reviewed the activity results to make any final changes while drafting the Land Use and Implementation chapters of the Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Future Land Use Districts

Community members had no comments on the permitted uses of the future land use districts. Some residents used the map to report a lack of sidewalks in their neighborhood, specifically on the south side Elyria. The incorporation of sidewalks or multi-use paths was added as an overarching guideline for development in all districts and sidewalk maintenance is a recommended strategy.

Recommendations & Strategies

Residents were asked to select their level of agreement with a strategy’s inclusion in the plan and the results were used to give an average level of support score. This score helped influence the level of priority of each strategy found in Chapter 5. The top ten strategies by average level of support are shown in Table 3.10, with full results found on the following pages. Key takeaways are summarized below.

Quality of Life strategies related to litter and recycling received high support across the board along with creating an online reporting portal for safety concerns.

Respondents requested more specific information about the location of the Economic Development strategies related to the creation of a DORA and SID.

Residents supported allowing businesses near neighborhoods but displayed hesitancy towards allowing in-home businesses, citing uses and traffic.

Residents were very supportive of housing repair and maintenance programs and enforcement, especially for properties owned by private equity firms.

Most Parks and Recreation strategies received high support and a trail to connect Cascade Falls to downtown Elyria was added to the plan based on comments.

Sidewalks and transit are high priorities of the Elyria community based on the high levels of support for related Transportation strategies.

All strategies related to partnerships with Lorain County Community College and the Joint Vocational School received high support. Respondents also supported funding programs and requested informational campaigns to increase resident awareness.

Full results of the activity can be found in Appendix A.

Strategy	Avg. Score*
Create a legible, interactive bus map that can be easily accessed digitally or displayed at bus stops	4.35
Increase funding and awareness of programs to assist residents with sidewalk repair in front of their homes	4.34
Promote LCCC, JVS and other workforce training programs to retrain local labor market	4.32
Evaluate the efficiency of existing transit routes	4.26
Establish and promote home repair assistance programs and partnerships (e.g. CHN Housing Partners, Elyria Community Partnership)	4.25
Install streetlights where needed	4.23
Create an inventory of sidewalk conditions	4.19
Establish a vacant building registration ordinance (Increase the fee the longer the property remains vacant)	4.17
Partner with Lorain County Community College and the Joint Vocational School to communicate and educate their offerings to residents	4.14
Increase enforcement/penalties for littering and dumping	4.14

Table 3.10 | Top 10 plan strategies by average level of support from the community

*Residents were asked to select their level of agreement for each strategy’s inclusion in the plan. Each of the five support options was assigned a point value, shown below.

- » Strongly Agree = 5
- » Agree = 4
- » Neutral = 3
- » Disagree = 2
- » Strongly Disagree = 1

SURVEY RESULTS

The online survey was open from the middle of January 2023 to the beginning of May 2023. 398 responses were received in total. Survey respondents were asked about the existing conditions in Elyria, what topics the comprehensive plan should address, and what they thought the top priorities should be.

Elyria residents are very proud of their history and the natural environment in and around their community. Safety, poor economic conditions, and traffic were the factors which respondents felt were of greatest concern for their city. Downtown is considered both a source of pride and critical issue for Elyria's future, and is addressed in this plan as an area to improve overall quality of life.

While most residents agreed that housing is more affordable relative to surrounding areas, many still feel the burden of high housing expenses. An aging housing stock and resulting lack of quality was another concern amongst residents.

Residents were overwhelmingly supportive of improving alternative modes of transportation within the community. Increasing transit service especially for the elderly, adding bike lanes and trails, and improving walkability all ranked among the top 4 responses.

Safety was a top concern amongst park and downtown visitors, who also cited a need for more recreational facilities such as trails, shelters, and pools alongside more programming.

Survey results displayed a demand for quality shopping and dining options, especially in the downtown and Midway Mall areas. Respondents noted that they traveled to nearby cities such as Lorain and Oberlin to fulfill these needs and desired the ability to do so in Elyria.

The majority of residents visit Downtown Elyria at least once per month. The majority of respondents listed an event as their reason for visiting, which typically occur on a monthly to weekly basis. Few residents cited shopping or dining as a reason for visiting. When expanding events in downtown, residents expressed a desire for those which are food related, further supporting this observation.

Social media and word of mouth were the two most common ways respondents heard about events in downtown, and would prefer to continue to be informed via social media.

Most residents travel to downtown by car and use on-street parking. Roughly a quarter of respondents arrived by walking or biking. Broad Street and Washington Avenue were the two most common routes used by cyclists.

Based on reported demographic information, survey respondents are representative of Elyria's racial demographics, but women are over-represented in the data compared to Elyria as a whole.

A detailed analysis of the survey results are on the following pages.



SURVEY RESULTS

What about Elyria makes you proud?

# of Responses & Top Response Themes	
58	Environment/Parks
42	History
35	Schools/Education
34	Unity
21	Diversity
16	Downtown
7	Dining
7	Sports
6	People
5	Events

Do you feel that the type and price of housing options in Elyria meet your needs? Why or why not?

# of Responses & Top Response Themes	
105	Affordability
51	Quality
18	Management
13	Safety
1	Discrimination

Do you frequent any of Elyria's parks? What would you improve at your favorite park(s) if you could?

# of Responses & Top Response Themes	
65	Safety and Cleanliness
43	Trails
26	Shelters
24	Events/Programming
22	Playground
20	Pool
19	Vegetation
7	Courts (Basketball, Tennis, Pickleball, etc)
7	Pets
5	More Parks

What are most critical issues facing Elyria?

# of Responses & Top Response Themes	
137	Safety/Crime
77	Economy
49	Traffic/Transportation Issues
31	Downtown
27	Jobs
16	Vacancies
13	Shopping
13	Fun Places
11	Environment/Parks
9	Transit

What would you improve about transportation in Elyria today?

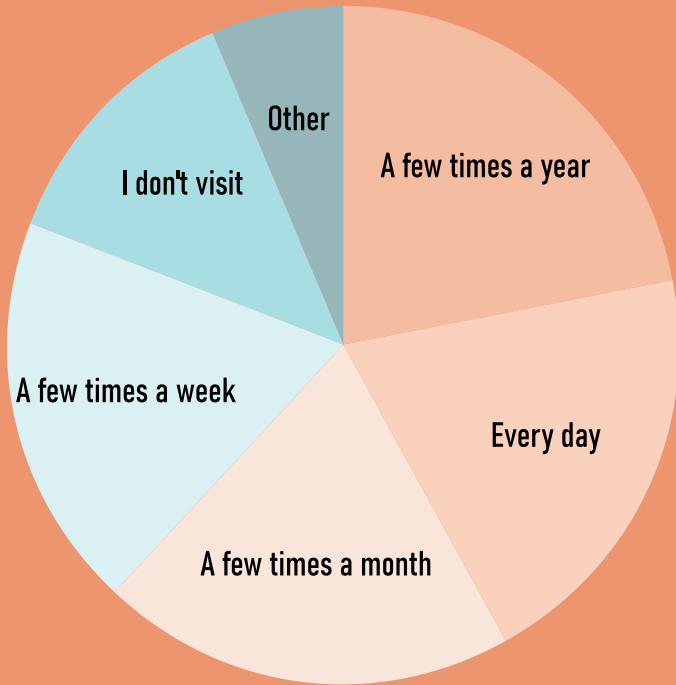
# of Responses & Top Response Themes	
152	Transit
78	Roadway Repairs
55	Bike Lanes/Infrastructure
53	Sidewalks
44	Safety
42	Congestion and Construction
5	Micromobility
3	Crosswalks
2	Parking

What do you wish you could do in Elyria?

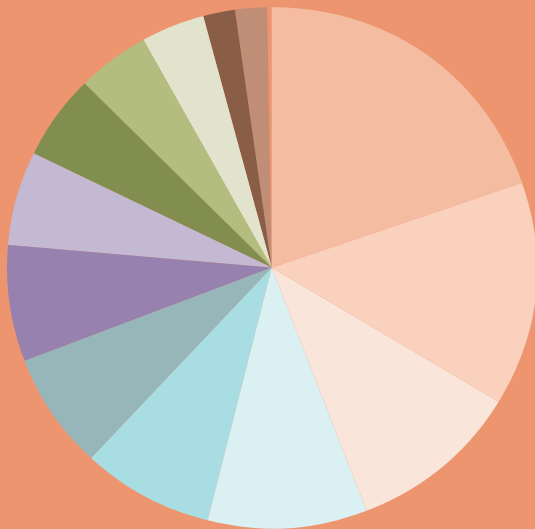
# of Responses & Top Response Themes	
154	Food
154	Retail
68	Entertainment
64	Downtown
37	Parks and Recreation
32	Midway Mall
31	Jobs
30	Safety
24	Events
19	Walkability

SURVEY RESULTS

How Often Do You Visit Downtown Elyria?



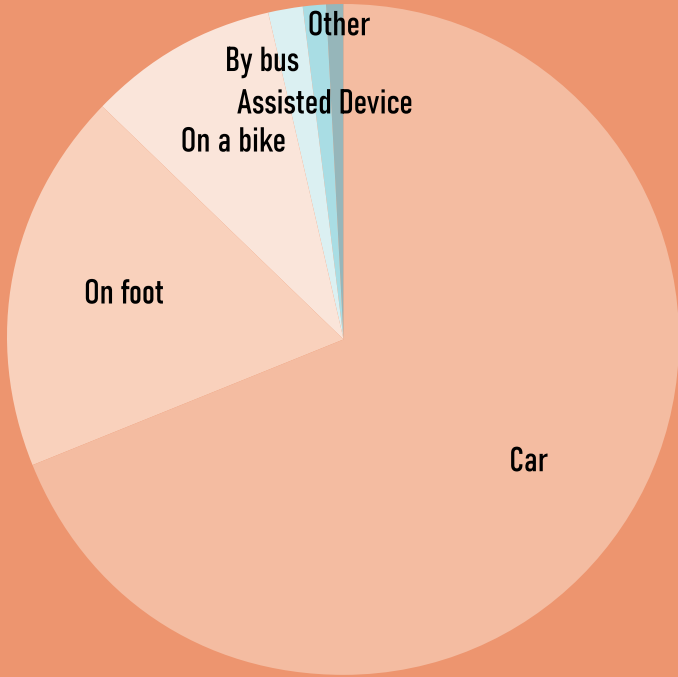
What do people go to Downtown Elyria for?



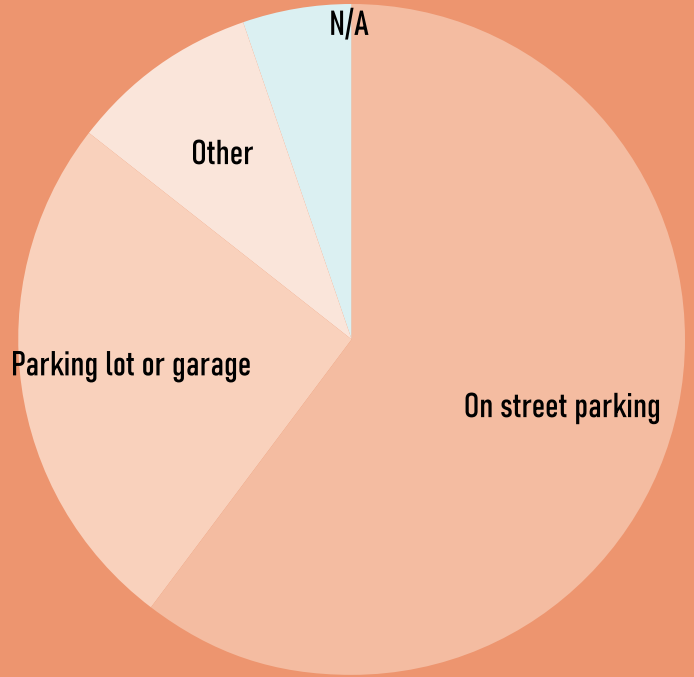
- Keep Lorain County Beautiful Day
- Live
- Fall Festival - Pioneer Plaza
- Shop
- Labor Day Pops Concert
- Work
- Summer Concerts in the Square
- ECP Third Thursday
- Festival of Lights
- Farmer's Market
- Other
- Dining
- Apple Festival

SURVEY RESULTS

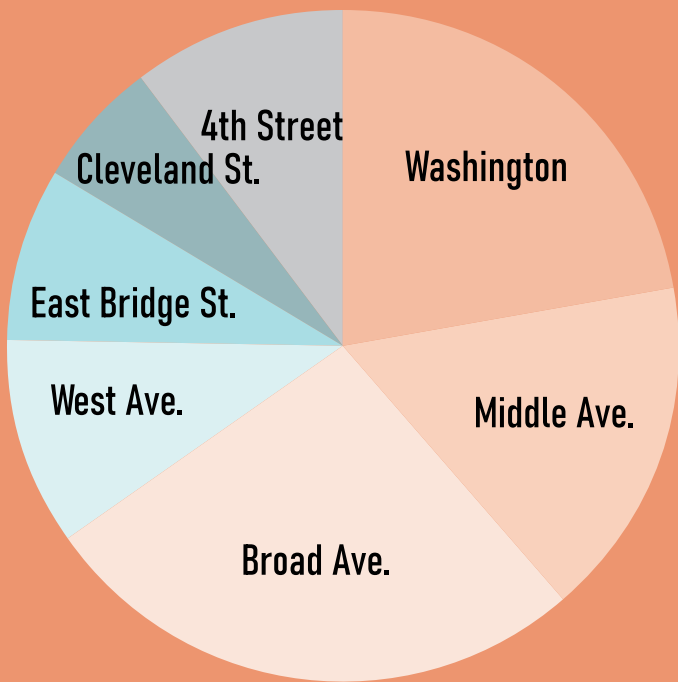
How do you get Downtown?



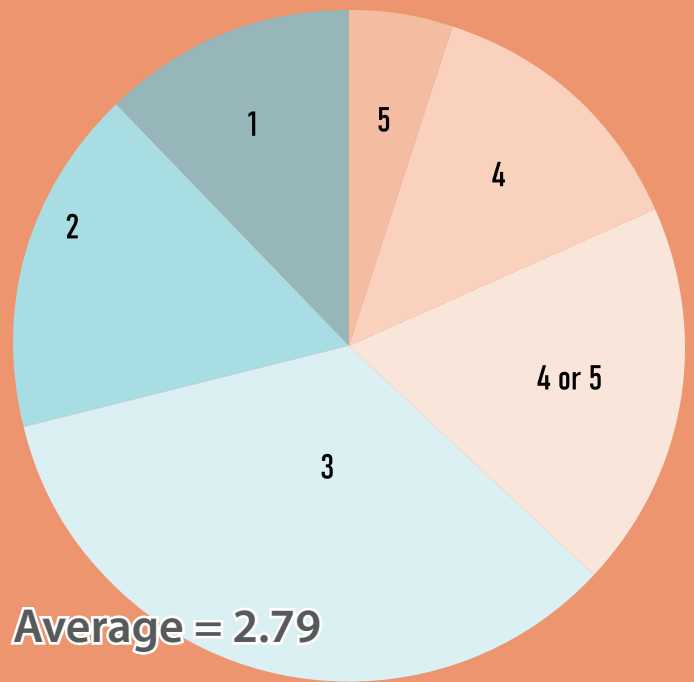
When by car, where do you park?



When traveling by bike or on foot, what route do you take?

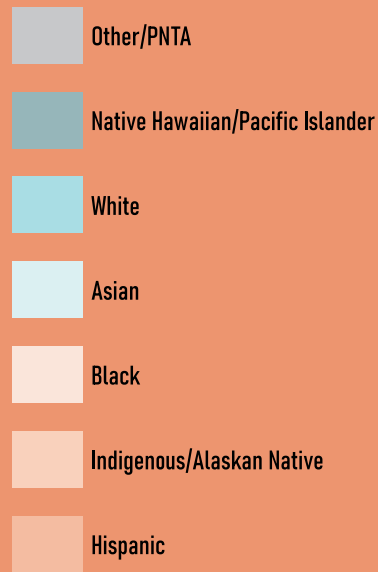
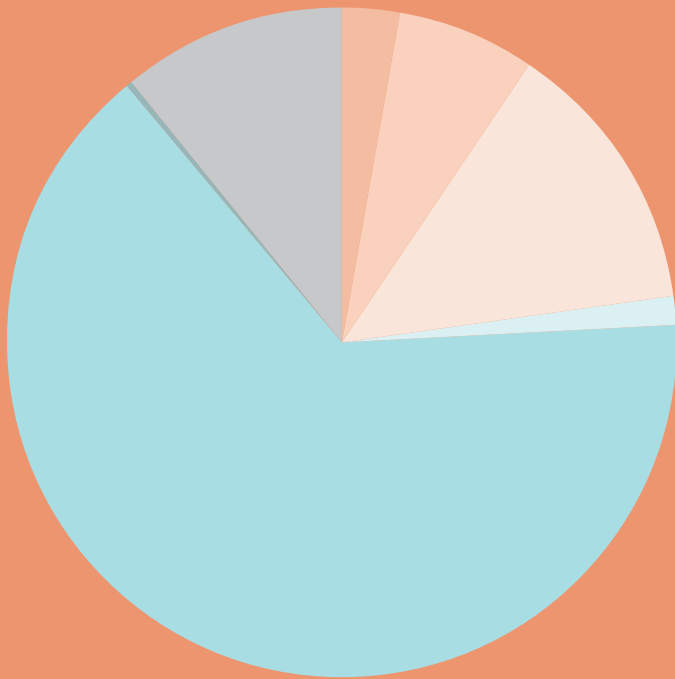


Rate your feeling of safety when you are in Downtown:

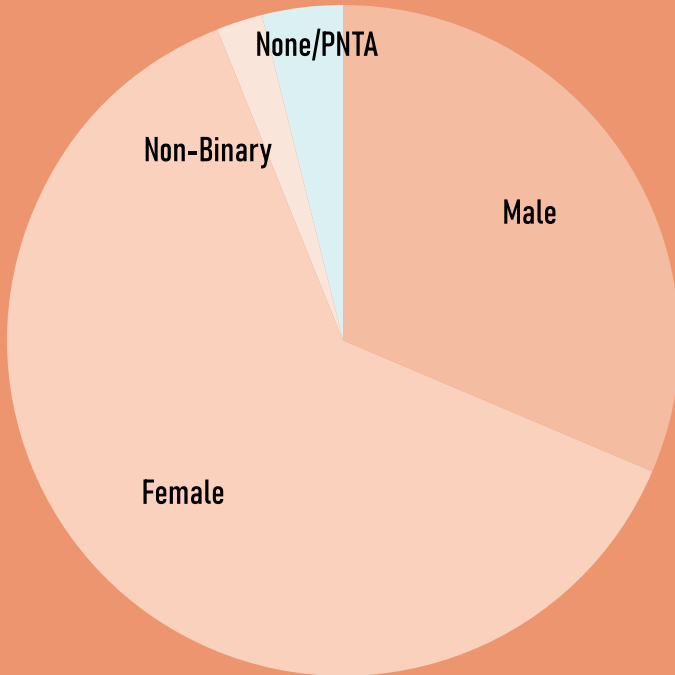


SURVEY RESULTS

Racial Identity



Gender Identity



Where did you graduate high school?



Elyria HS
79 Responses



**Lorain County
Community College**
7 Responses



Elyria Catholic HS
3 Responses

SURVEY RESULTS

Where do you live?

# of Responses & Top Locations	
65	Southern Elyria
97	Northern Elyria
65	Western Elyria
84	Eastern Elyria
13	Lorain
4	Amherst
2	Sheffield
2	North Ridgeville
0	Oberlin
49	Other:

Where do you work?

# of Responses & Top Locations	
26	Southern Elyria
28	Northern Elyria
22	Western Elyria
22	Eastern Elyria
13	Lorain
2	Amherst
3	Sheffield
9	North Ridgeville
5	Oberlin
105	N/A (Not Applicable)
131	Other:
3	Cleveland





IV. LAND USE

- » LAND USE OVERVIEW
- » EXISTING ZONING
- » EXISTING LAND USE
- » FUTURE LAND USE MAP & DISTRICTS
- » POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

OVERVIEW

The future land use districts found in this chapter should be used to **guide future development** in the city. The city's desired vision for its how its land is used in the future are represented by these districts, which are not zoning districts.

This chapter explores the existing zoning code and land use patterns in Elyria and summarizes the community vision for its future land use. The future land use map and districts that follow emerged as a result of community and stakeholder feedback and the analysis of existing land use and zoning. The chapter concludes with recommendations for three potential development areas, which are sites selected by the City of Elyria to spur redevelopment and reinvestment.

The four overarching objectives for future land use are shown in Figure 4.1. Downtown Elyria has potential to become a destination for regional tourists. The district aims to attract small businesses and restaurants. By expanding the downtown boundaries, mixed-use infill development can occur to attract residents to the district.

The majority of Elyria's housing stock is single-family detached residential. Different housing types, such as town homes, are more senior-friendly and attractive to young professionals. The modest density provided by these units can increase the walkability of a neighborhood. The allowance of small businesses in closer proximity to neighborhoods can allow residents to walk to destinations such as grocery stores or coffee shops.

Much of the land in western Elyria sits vacant or is only used for agriculture. The city has struggled to attract development due to the current zoning classification for this land being Heavy-Industrial. The future land use districts broaden the range of permitted uses for this land and can help the city attract catalytic users to bring economic, social, and recreational benefits to Elyrians.

KEY FINDINGS

- » Downtown Elyria lacks the small businesses and restaurants which attracts Northeast Ohioans to visit. The combination of small business-friendly development and the unique natural attraction of Cascade Falls can help the district become a regional tourist destination.
- » Much of Elyria has a large supply of smaller residential lots which are suitable for a wide array of housing types such as townhomes, duplexes, and small apartments. Much of this land is zoned for single-family detached residential.
- » Most of the land along Leo Bullocks Parkway is either agricultural or vacant despite being zoned Heavy-Industrial. Easing zoning restrictions would help reach the city's goal of attracting catalytic users.
- » 20th century industrial and manufacturing companies built workforce housing on non residentially zoned land. Those companies have since left Elyria, but the land is still used for housing.

LAND USE OBJECTIVES

ATTRACT

1 PEOPLE TO DOWNTOWN

DIVERSIFY

2 ELYRIA'S HOUSING STOCK

ENCOURAGE

3 WALKABLE NEIGHBORHOODS

ACTIVATE

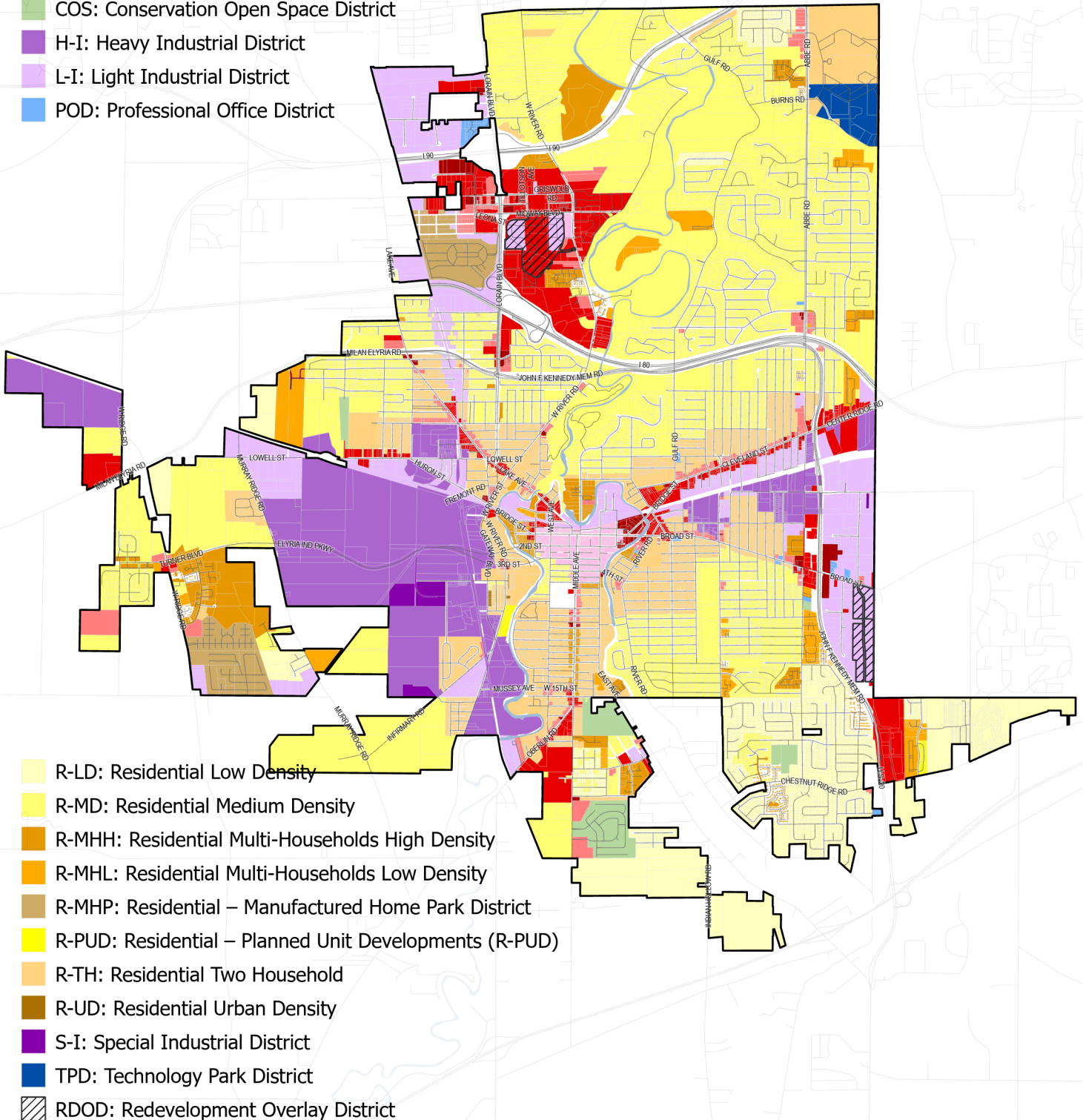
4 WEST ELYRIA

Figure 4.1 | Key findings and objectives of the Our Elyria Future Land Use Map

ELYRIA ZONING MAP



- B-AO: Business Automotive Oriented
- B-D: Business Downtown District
- B-G: Business General District
- B-N: Business Neighborhood District
- COS: Conservation Open Space District
- H-I: Heavy Industrial District
- L-I: Light Industrial District
- POD: Professional Office District



- R-LD: Residential Low Density
- R-MD: Residential Medium Density
- R-MHH: Residential Multi-Households High Density
- R-MHL: Residential Multi-Households Low Density
- R-MHP: Residential – Manufactured Home Park District
- R-PUD: Residential – Planned Unit Developments (R-PUD)
- R-TH: Residential Two Household
- R-UD: Residential Urban Density
- S-I: Special Industrial District
- TPD: Technology Park District
- RDOD: Redevelopment Overlay District



Figure 4.2 | City of Elyria parcels by zoning district (Source: City of Elyria, 2023)

ELYRIA ZONING CODE

The City of Elyria zoning ordinance was codified in August of 1998 and has been amended as needed in the following years. The code follows Euclidean zoning, where parcels are separated into different districts based on permitted uses. Each district also has strict standards governing the type of structures that can be built, including minimum setbacks, building height, and minimum lot coverage. Euclidean zoning has allowed cities to separate incompatible uses such as heavy manufacturing from housing for the purpose of public health, but this approach also has some drawbacks. The mixing of uses has been discouraged, creating distinct areas of the city where housing, retail, offices, etc. are completely removed from each other. This makes it difficult, sometimes impossible, to access essential destinations such as workplaces, grocery stores, and medical offices without the use of a car, which disproportionately impacts seniors, low-income residents, and children. Strict restrictions on setbacks and lot coverage often make the construction of housing types other than single-family detached legally impossible. The resulting lower density has also contributed to longer trips and the need to own a car.

As the city's demographics, housing market, economy, and transportation needs have changed, the city has chosen to develop a new zoning code in line with present-day uses and travel patterns, rather than amend the current code. The code will remain Euclidean but with more flexibility in its permitted requirements. Doing so will allow essential services and small businesses, such as doctor's offices, grocery stores, and small-scale retail to be located within a walkable distance to homes, and allow greater diversity in housing types.

The full draft zoning code will be publicly available online, and the future land use districts are summarized in the following pages.

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

There are eight different residential zoning districts in the current city code and two commercial districts which permit multi-family residential. The majority of the city is zoned Residential Medium Density, which only permits single family detached dwelling units and includes specifications which have restricted the ability to build in a compact manner. Lower density housing development has spurred retail and commercial development that favor vehicles, such as strip malls and drive-thrus. The areas of Elyria where housing is principally permitted to be developed are shown in Table 4.1 on the next page. Figure 4.3 shows the areas of the city in which non-single family detached housing is permitted.

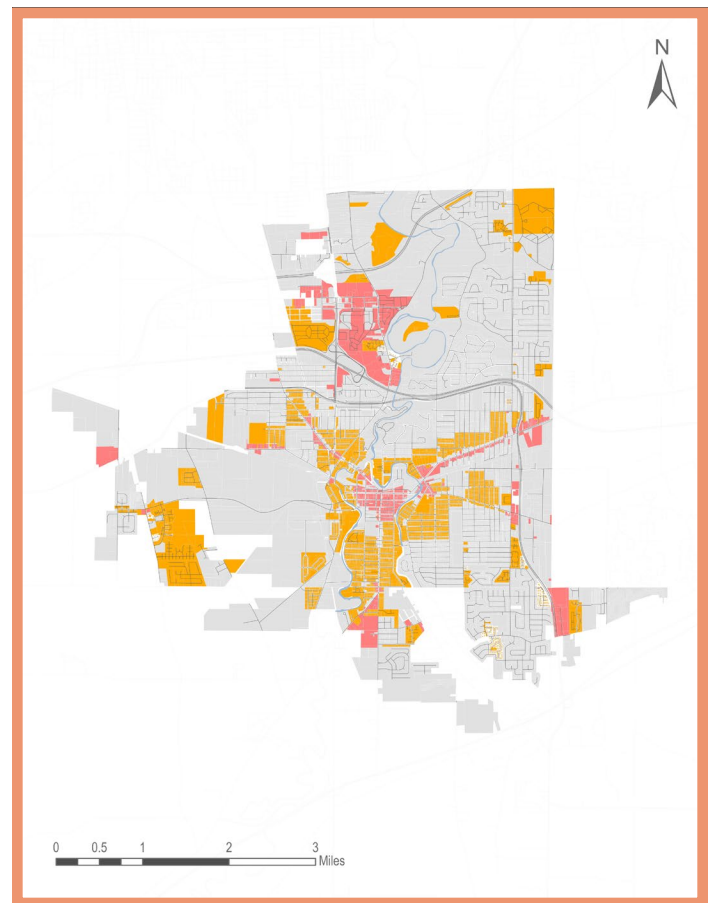


Figure 4.3 | Elyria parcels where single household attached & multi-household housing units are permitted

Orange = Residential Zoned Areas
Red = Commercial Zoned Areas

ELYRIA ZONING CODE

COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

The zoning code has four business districts designed for different types of commercial and office uses. The Business-Downtown district (B-D) encompasses the downtown area and encourages vertical, walkable development in the form of a variety of uses such as commercial, multi-family residential, office, and institutional. The B-D district does not have to comply with the code’s parking space requirements. The Business-Neighborhood district (B-N) district encourages the development of small, convenience businesses located in close proximity to residential areas. Larger, vehicle-oriented commercial, medical, and lodging uses are permitted in the Business-General district (B-G). The Business-Automotive (B-AO) district was created to accommodate highway commercial uses such as gas stations, auto repair, and drive-in fast food.

The B-D, B-G, and B-N districts have minimal setback regulations and no lot coverage, area, or width regulations which would allow for more pedestrian-

friendly development. However, the code’s parking minimums, separation of these districts from residential areas, and lower-density nature of most residential areas have caused most commercial development to be in the form of strip malls and other car-oriented designs.

REDEVELOPMENT OVERLAY DISTRICT

The Redevelopment Overlay District (RDOD) was established to accommodate development, reuse, and redevelopment in certain B-G Business-General and L-I Light Industrial Districts, which are in the public interest and may not be permitted by zoning. The RDOD permits the additional regulations of other use districts (the “Overlying Zone”) in addition to those of the underlying zoning district (the “Base District”).

A B-G Business-General District may be the Base Zone in which a L-I Light Industrial District is the Overlying Zone, or a L-I Light Industrial District may be the Base Zone in which a B-G Business General District is the Overlying Zone.

Table 4.1 Elyria zoning districts where residential uses are principally permitted.

District	Principally Permitted Housing Types	Min. Lot Area of Residential (sq ft)	Min. Lot Coverage (%)	% of City Land
R-LD: Residential Low Density	1-household detached dwellings, group homes**	8,750: 1 household (hh)	30	9.6
R-MD: Residential Medium Density	1 household detached dwellings, group homes	7,500: 1 hh	30***	37.7
R-UD: Residential Urban Density	1 household detached dwellings, group homes	4,000: 1 hh	40	0.01
R-TH: Residential Two Household	1 household detached & 2-household dwellings, group homes	7,500: 1 hh 10,00: 2 hh	30***	9.4
R-MHL: Multi Household Low Density	2 household, 3+ household, group homes	10,000: 2 hh 22,000: 3,4 hh 2 acres: 5+ hh (new development) 1 acre: 5+ hh (redevelopment)	40	2.1
R-MHH: Multi-Household High Density	1 household detached, 2 household dwellings, & 3+ household dwellings, group homes	22,000: 4 hh 2 acres: 5+ hh (new development) 1 acre: 5+ hh (redevelopment)	50 (4 hh) 60 (5+ hh) 30 (all other uses)	3.4
R-MHP: Manufactured Home Park	Manufactured home dwellings, group homes	20 acres	None	2.0
R-PUD: Planned Unit Development	1-household detached & 1-household attached dwellings	4 acres		0.1
B-D: Business Downtown	3+ household dwellings	None	None	0.6
B-G: Business General	3+ household dwellings	None	None	5.8

Source: City of Elyria Planning and Zoning Code

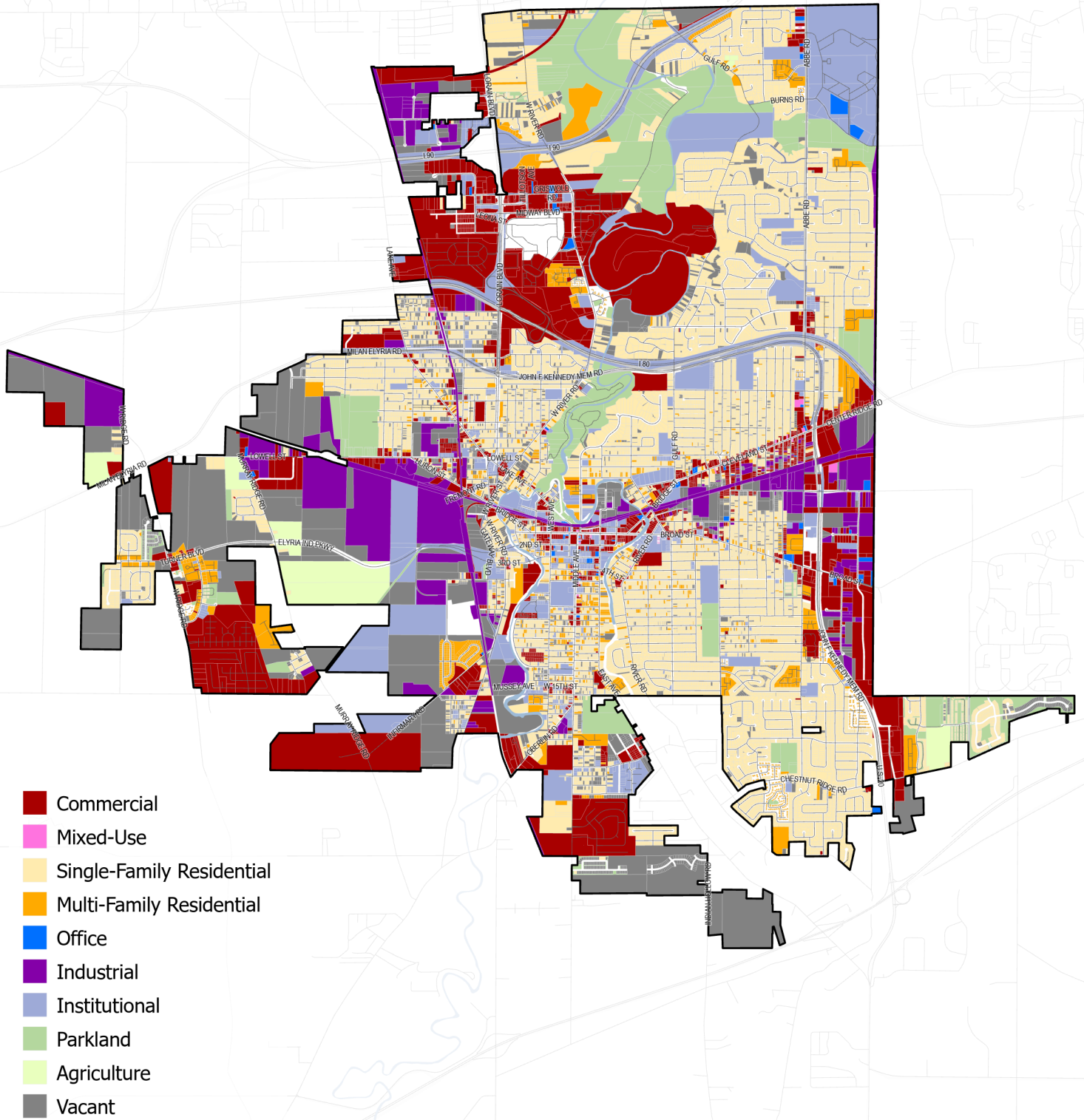
* Maximum height of principal buildings, all accessory buildings have a maximum height of 15'

** Group homes are community residential facilities that provide

rehabilitative and related services. Class 1 Type B group homes are permitted by right in all residential districts. These contain 5 or fewer residents, exclusive of staff.

*** For each 500 square feet of lot area under 7,500 square feet, add 1% to the 30%, not to exceed 35%

EXISTING LAND USE MAP



- Commercial
- Mixed-Use
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Office
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Parkland
- Agriculture
- Vacant



Figure 4.4 | City of Elyria parcels by existing land use (Source: Lorain County Auditor, 2022)

EXISTING LAND USE

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Single family dwellings make up a large majority of land in Elyria, which is a direct result of being zoned using districts which only permit detached homes. Most multi-family housing is located south of downtown, the majority of which are duplexes (Table 4.2). Very few parcels in downtown are used for residential, and this lack of customers within a walkable distance could be a factor preventing retailers and restaurants from choosing to occupy downtown storefronts.

COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Commercial uses in Elyria are located near roads which carry higher traffic volumes, especially the Ohio Turnpike, I-90, and SR-20. Downtown Elyria has a high concentration of commercial uses, but few take the form of shops, restaurants, or cafes, which attract visitors.

Walkability and community living is encouraged by the future land use districts by allowing the areas of the city in which uses such as grocery stores, coffee shops, and doctor’s offices are permitted.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

Land used for industrial and manufacturing activities are primarily located in western Elyria and along the railroad tracks. The city has struggled to maintain its industry and attract new businesses, as nearly a quarter of this land sits vacant today. A goal of the future land use districts is to attract users to these vacant sites by permitting more uses on this land.

Industry has also played a role in impacting Elyria’s neighborhoods. Workforce housing was built near job sites throughout the 20th century. The impact of this trend still lingers, as many of these parcels used for housing are still zoned industrial today. This chapter’s future land use districts solve this issue by correctly classifying homes within residential districts.

Table 4.2 Percent of total residential land use by housing type.

Housing Type	Total Area (sq ft)	% Residential
Single Family Dwelling	148,312,259	84.1
Two Family Dwelling	5,412,524	3.1
Three Family Dwelling	600,188	0.4
Apartments 4+ Units	2,112,824	1.2
Mixed-Use w/ Apartments	373,921	0.2
Condominiums	789,605	0.4
Unplatted Res. Land	2,182,844	1.2
Vacant	16,564,126	9.4
Total	176,357,333	100.0



Figure 4.5 | Existing strip mall commercial at the corner of Abbe Road and Broad Street

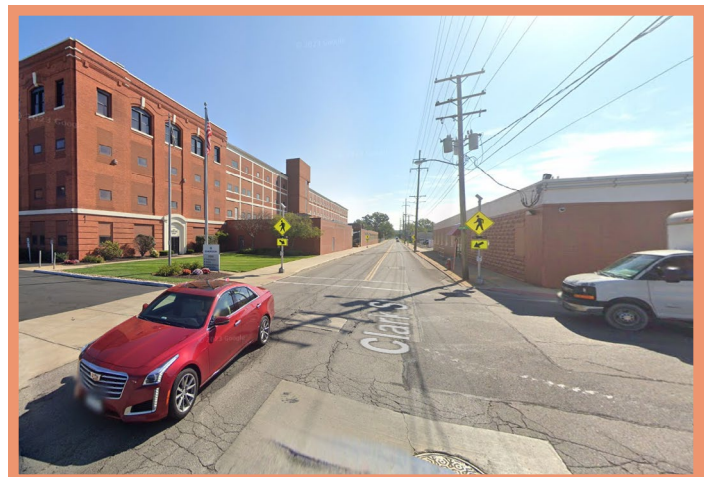


Figure 4.6 | Rigid Tool Company, an existing manufacturer located on Clark Street

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

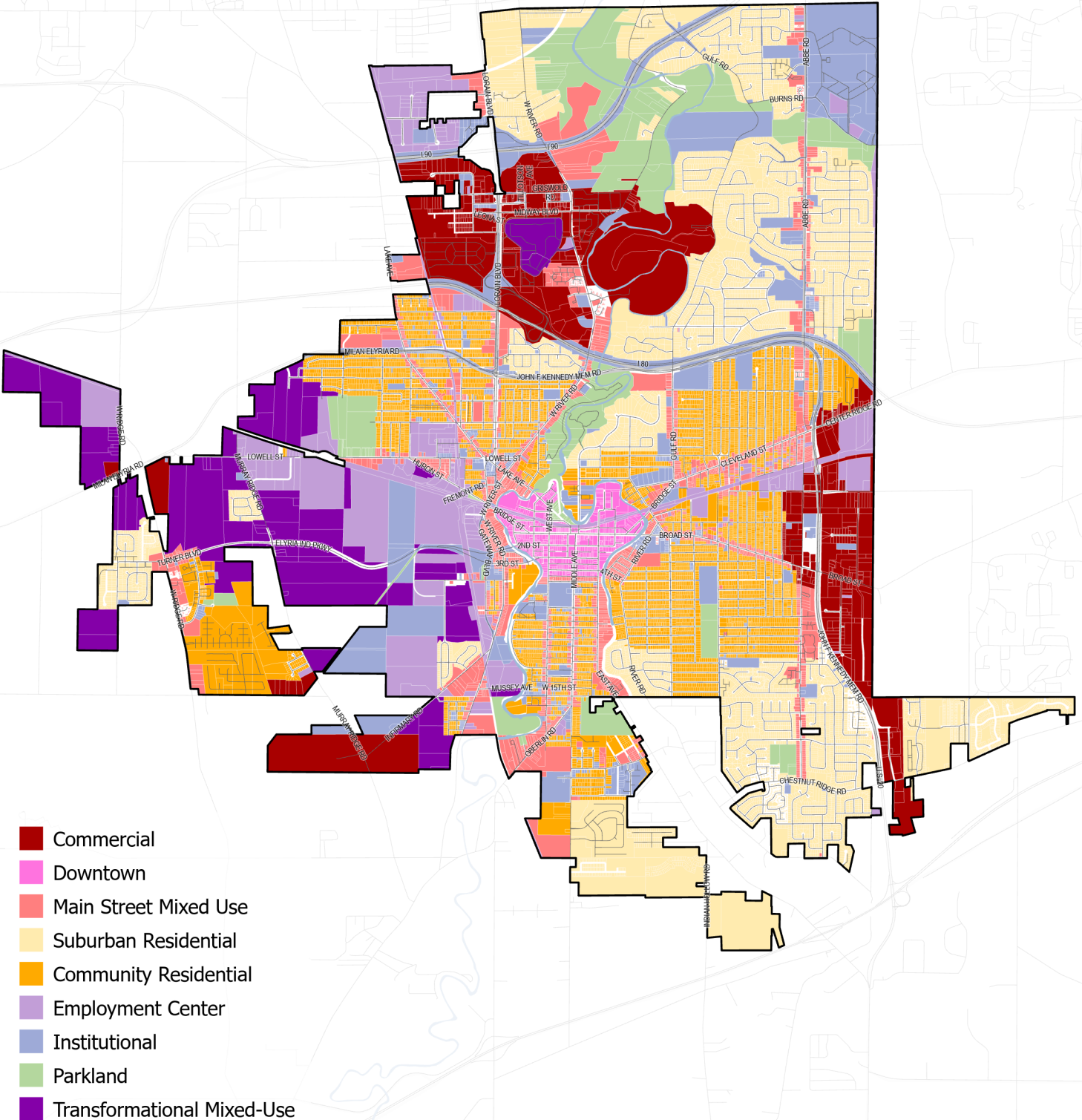


Figure 4.7 | City of Elyria parcels by future land use district

FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use districts reflect the land use trends the city of Elyria and its residents would like to see based on community and stakeholder feedback, including:

- » Small business growth city-wide but especially in downtown Elyria and at Midway Mall
- » Greater ability to walk to destinations such as shops and parks
- » More diversity in housing types, especially those that are senior-friendly and mixed-use

These districts recommend development features and uses for different areas of the city and have no impact on the city's current zoning districts.

Local Business Attraction

Downtown and Midway Mall were popular sites which the public identified as locations for local shops and restaurants. The community's desire for greater walkability prompted creation of the "Main Street Mixed Use" district, which allows small scale commercial development to occur along the main roads surrounding neighborhoods. This concept is not foreign to Elyria, as the B-N zoning district has the same goal. The Main Street Mixed Use district expands the area where this development is permitted and encourages storefronts to be oriented towards sidewalks, rather than parking lots.

Demand-Focused Housing

The development of more compact housing units to meet the needs of serving the senior population and attracting young professionals. These types of units include town homes, duplexes, triplexes, and small apartments and are typically more affordable. These units can be designed to resemble existing single family units and can increase the density to a level where small businesses can be supported by a customer base within a walkable distance.

The future land use map categorizes the eight residential zoning classifications into two districts guide the 2024 zoning code update. In general, the Suburban Residential district consists of existing larger lot, detached single-family home neighborhoods and introduces the ability to construct town homes, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units. The Community Residential district is made up of residential parcels located on more compact lots or areas with a gridded street network, which are easier to navigate as a pedestrian. Land in this district can also conditionally allow the construction of

neighborhood scale businesses upon city approval. The Main Street Mixed Use and Downtown districts also encourages residential unit development.

Vacant Site Activation

Another place for small business growth and housing development to occur is on the undeveloped parcels on the western side of Elyria. Many of these parcels are zoned Heavy Industrial and as such have struggled to attract developers. The Transformational Mixed-Use district expands the permitted uses of these sites to encourage development which could bring catalytic economic growth to the city. Mixed-use development is preferred based on community feedback but uses such as residential, commercial, office, and industrial are permitted.

Accessory Dwelling Unit

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a secondary housing unit located on the same property as a primary residential dwelling. ADUs are typically smaller in size and may have their own kitchen, bathroom, and living space. ADUs can provide sources of rental income, multigenerational living arrangements, and affordable housing options within established residential areas to residents.

Single Family Attached Residential

A single-family attached housing unit shares at least one wall with a neighboring units but stands independently from other buildings. These are typically part of a larger development or complex and may include townhouses, row houses, or duplexes.

DOWNTOWN

The Downtown District encourages mixed-use development in a walkable environment. Mixed use development can occur both vertically with different uses on different floors, or horizontally with different uses located adjacent to one another. The target users for first floor storefronts are retail, residential, and entertainment to attract people to the district.

The Downtown future land use district expands the boundaries of the B-D zoning district to the entire area of the city which is located between the branches of the Black River and north of 3rd St.

All development in this district should be pedestrian oriented with zero-foot setbacks for buildings featuring inviting storefronts. Sidewalks should be well maintained and feature streetscaping such as street trees, benches, and trash cans. Public spaces such as plazas, pocket parks, and outdoor dining areas are encouraged to complement businesses.

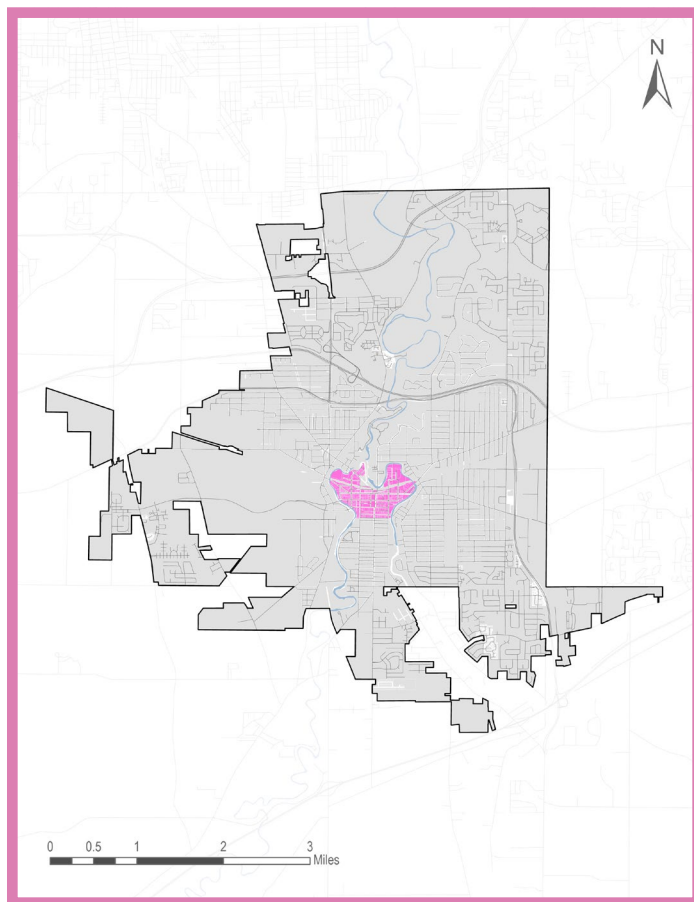


Figure 4.8 | Elyria Downtown District parcels

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Vertical/horizontal mixed-use
- » Multi-family residential
- » Small-medium scale commercial
- » Civic/Institutional
- » Office

Secondary Uses

- » Hotels/Lodging
- » Parks/Open space

Features

- » Mix of architectural styles is desired
- » Minimal front setbacks
- » Front facades facing right-of-way
- » Grid-like street layout, well connected to surrounding parcels
- » Strong internal and external pedestrian and vehicular connectivity
- » Shared surface lots located at the rear of buildings
- » Garages
- » On-street parking



Figure 4.9 | Example of permitted development

Source: Strong Towns

GENERAL COMMERCIAL

The General Commercial district supports businesses, services, and employers who provide jobs and services on a citywide, regional, and even national scale. These uses are those which need to be accessible by vehicle and include big box retail and drive-through restaurants.

These areas are generally located near highways or major arterials and are made up of parcels currently used for commercial, office, and light industrial. Development in the district should also take into consideration the needs of pedestrians, and can be built with minimal setbacks to the sidewalk with parking at the rear. Shared driveways and parking lots are encouraged to reduce vehicle crashes and excess parking spaces.

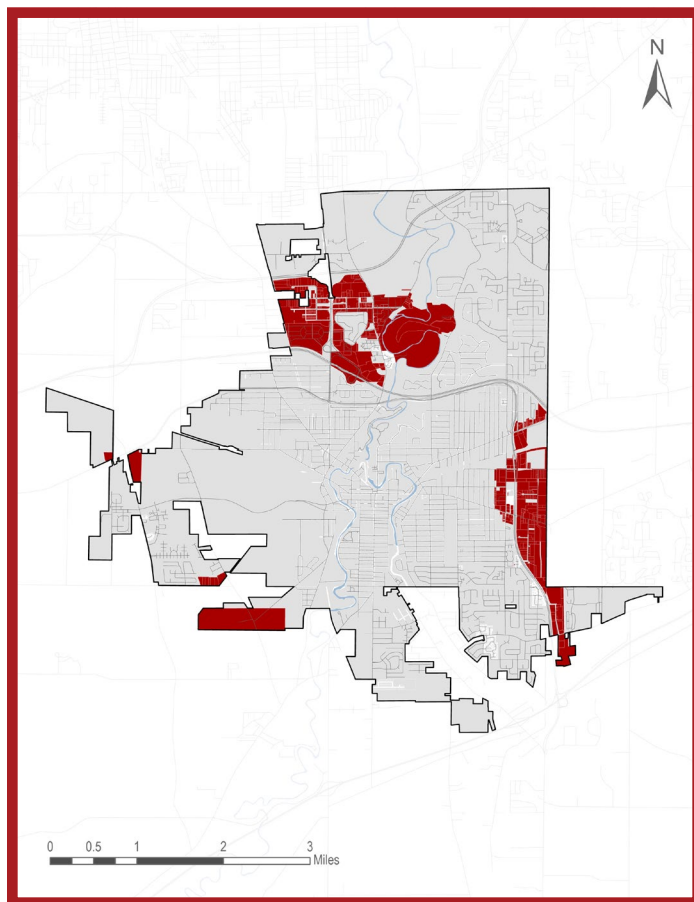


Figure 4.10 | Elyria Commercial District parcels

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Medium-large scale commercial
- » Hotels/Lodging
- » Office

Secondary Uses

- » Multi-family residential
- » Vertical/horizontal mixed-use
- » Light industrial
- » Civic/Institutional
- » Parks/Open space

Features

- » Architecture style and height consistent with nearby residential neighborhoods
- » Buffering of adjacent residential neighborhoods when appropriate
- » Internal and external pedestrian and vehicular connectivity
- » Shared parking encouraged
- » Surface lots located at the rear or sides of buildings encouraged, otherwise properly screened and landscaped



Figure 4.11 | Example of permitted development

Source: Columbus Dispatch

MAIN STREET MIXED USE

The Main Street Mixed Use district supports community living in a walkable setting. Its strategy of allowing businesses to be located near housing is shared with the existing B-N zoning district, but expands the areas of Elyria where this is possible. Additionally, the Main Street Mixed Use district permits mixed-use development.

Main Street Mixed Use parcels are located around the edges of neighborhoods and near main intersections. Development that occurs here is encouraged to be mixed-use with buildings placed near the sidewalk and adequate pedestrian and bicycle connections to and from neighborhoods and parks. The higher density encouraged in these areas can make transit access more feasible and improve the mobility of Elyria's senior citizens.

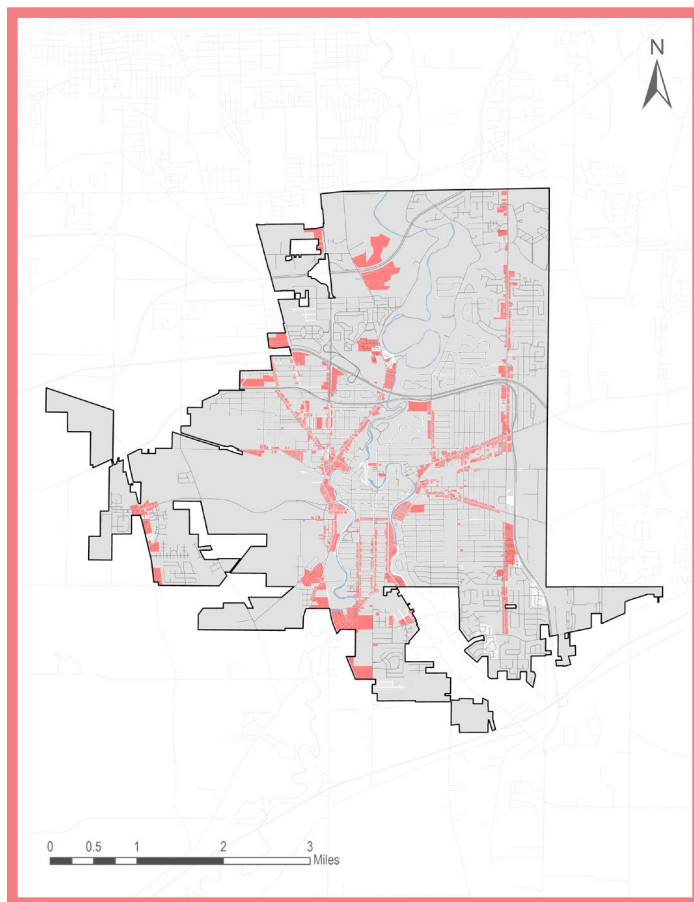


Figure 4.12 | Elyria Main Street Mixed Use District parcels

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Vertical/horizontal mixed-use
- » Multi-family residential
- » Small scale commercial
- » Civic/Institutional/Places of Worship
- » Small offices

Features

- » Front facades facing right-of-way
- » Grid-like street layout, well connected to surrounding parcels
- » Strong internal and external pedestrian and vehicular connectivity
- » Shared parking encouraged
- » Surface lots located at the rear or sides of buildings
- » On-street parking



Figure 4.13 | Example of permitted development

Source: City of Medina

SUBURBAN RESIDENTIAL

The Suburban Residential district preserves the lower density, single family home character of many neighborhoods while also introducing the ability to construct town homes, duplexes, and accessory dwelling units in areas which are primarily single-family detached. The district preserves the existing, lower density lifestyle but allows the construction of smaller, more compact units that are attractive to seniors and smaller households.

The district is primarily made up of existing larger lot, detached single-family home neighborhoods on streets with longer blocks and curvilinear streets. New development should use an architectural style similar to the existing neighborhood and feature setbacks similar to the surrounding buildings.

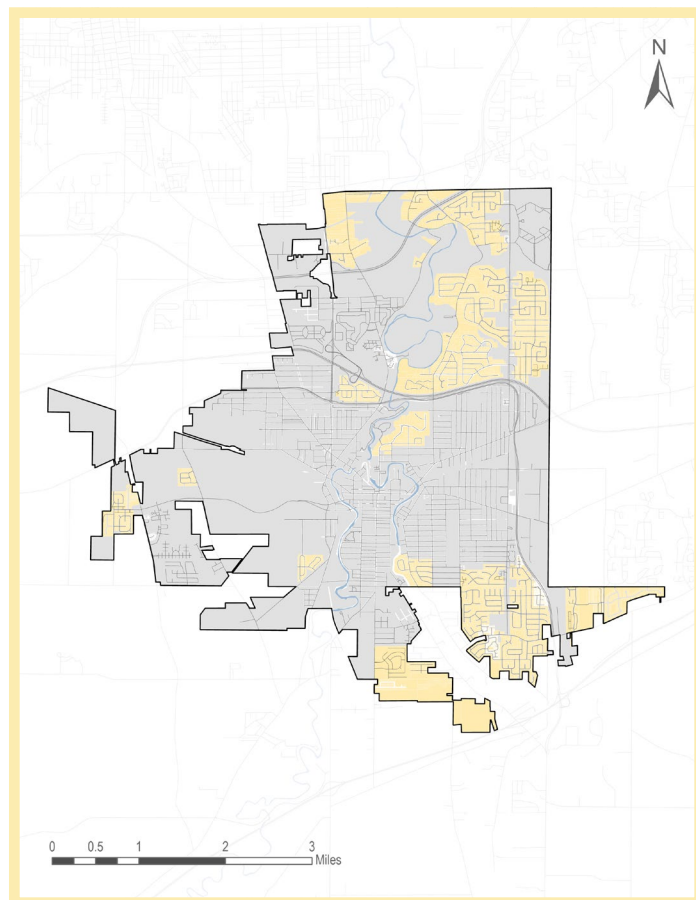


Figure 4.14 | Suburban Residential District parcels

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Single family detached
- » Single family attached

Secondary Uses

- » Agriculture
- » Two family dwelling units
- » Group homes
- » Accessory dwelling units
- » Civic/Institutional/Places of Worship
- » Parks/Open space

Features

- » Mix of housing types and architectural styles is desired.
- » Curvilinear street layout, however grid-like layout is preferred.
- » Strong internal and external pedestrian and vehicular connectivity
- » On-street parking
- » Private, off street driveways



Figure 4.15 | Example of permitted development
Sources: Forest Hill Homeowners Association, Bloomberg

COMMUNITY RESIDENTIAL

The Community Residential District encourages a broader diversity of housing types in Elyria neighborhoods. These areas are intended to be more compact, making them more walkable and affordable for seniors and young professionals. Small scale commercial, such as coffee shops and neighborhood grocery stores may be permitted on corner lots.

This district is located on smaller lots in areas made up of gridded streets and shorter blocks. Development should feature architectural styles which complement the existing, historic character of the neighborhood. Sidewalk and bicycle connectivity is necessary for supporting nearby Main Street Mixed Use areas.

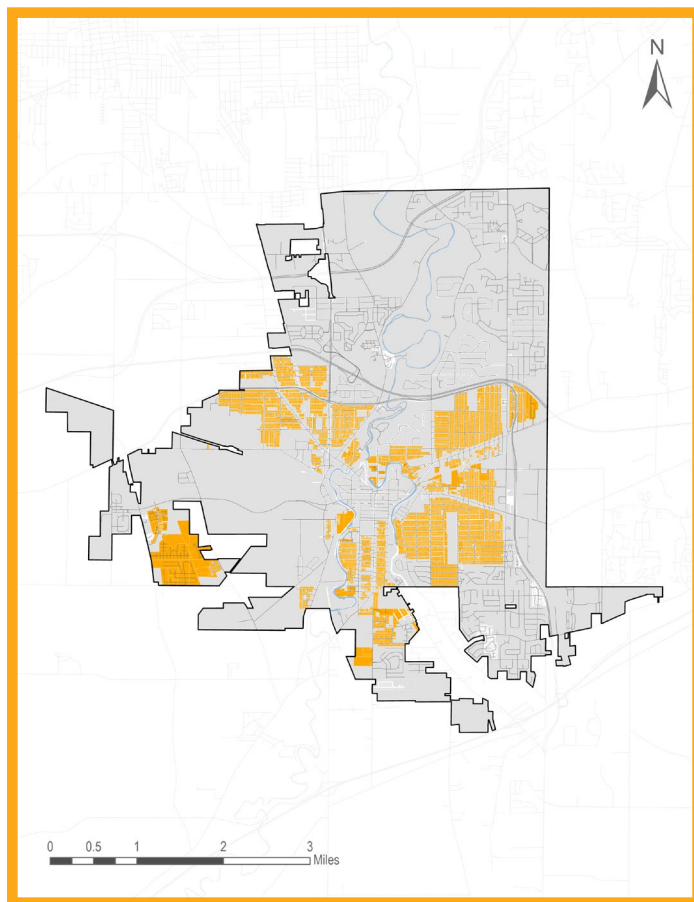


Figure 4.16 | Community Residential District parcels

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Single-family detached
- » Single-family attached
- » Multi-family residential

Secondary Uses

- » Group homes
- » Small scale commercial/office
- » Child care
- » Boarding or lodging house
- » Civic/institutional/Places of Worship
- » Parks/Open space

Development Features

- » Mix of housing types and architectural styles is desired
- » Front facades facing right-of-way
- » Grid-like street layout, well connected to surrounding parcels
- » Strong internal and external pedestrian and vehicular connectivity
- » Shared parking encouraged
- » Surface lots located at the rear or sides of buildings
- » On-street parking



Figure 4.17 | Example of permitted development

Sources: Hessler 113, Harrison West

EMPLOYMENT CENTER

The Employment Center district is suitable for large job centers within Elyria. Office parks, industrial uses, and medical uses are all permitted here to allow developers the flexibility to meet the current and future needs of the community.

These areas are located on existing industrial sites and near Elyria’s railroads. Development should be well connected by walking and biking to attract workers who may not have access to a vehicle. Parking is encouraged to be located at the sides and rear of buildings and should be screened if located in the front.

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Manufacturing
- » Industrial
- » Office
- » Research and development
- » Medical facilities

Secondary Uses

- » Large-scale commercial
- » Civic/Institutional/Places of Worship
- » Parks/Open space
- » Workforce housing

Development Features

- » Buffering of adjacent residential neighborhoods when appropriate
- » Active transportation connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- » Shared parking encouraged
- » Surface lots located at the rear or sides of buildings encouraged, otherwise properly screened and landscaped

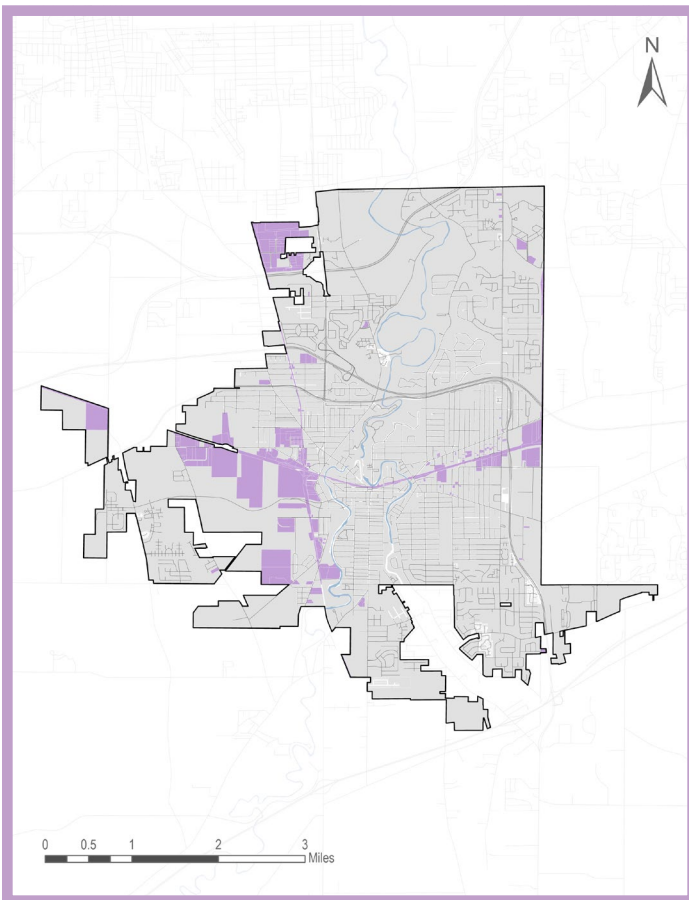


Figure 4.18 | Employment Center District parcels



Figure 4.19 | Example of permitted development

Source: *Crain's Cleveland Business*

INSTITUTIONAL

The Institutional district protects land that is currently being used for civic purposes such as schools, libraries, government-owned land, and religious properties. This district is strictly for existing institutional uses, but these types of buildings are permitted in other districts as secondary uses.

These areas should be well connected by all modes of transportation. Surface parking in the district should be located at the rear or sides of buildings and sectioned off by screening and green infrastructure when located at the front. Public green space and amenities should be incorporated throughout, and city-owned sites should be identifiable with Elyria city branding.

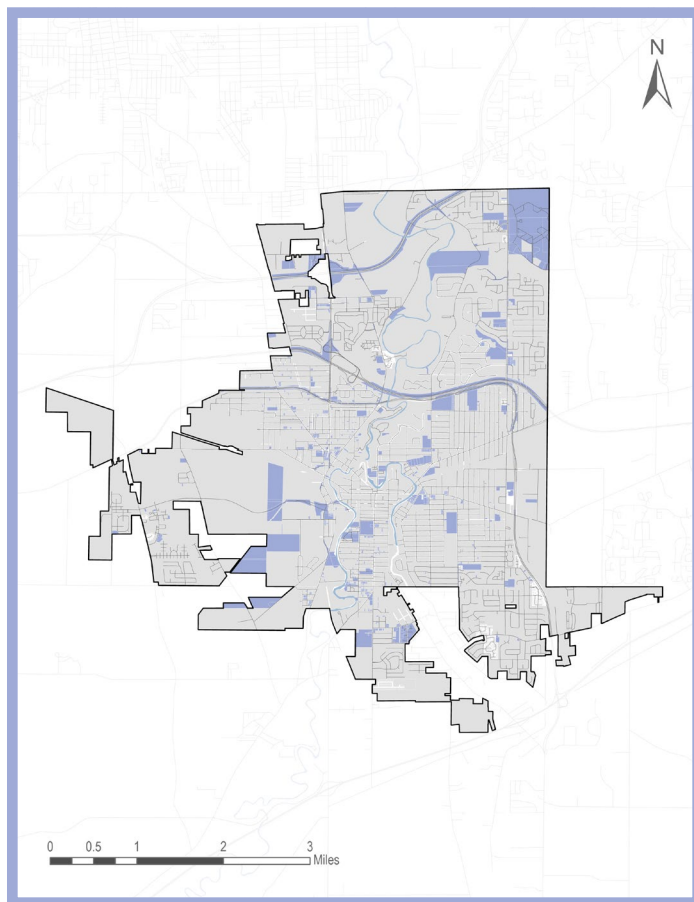


Figure 4.20 | Institutional District parcels

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Government
- » Schools
- » Libraries
- » Religious uses

Secondary Uses

- » Parks/Open space
- » Senior housing

Features

- » Buffering of adjacent residential neighborhoods when appropriate
- » Active transportation connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- » Shared parking encouraged
- » Surface lots located at the rear or sides of buildings encouraged, otherwise properly screened and landscaped
- » On-street parking



Figure 4.21 | Example of permitted development

Source: Homes.com

PARKLAND

The Parkland district includes the existing recreational and natural areas within Elyria. Connecting these areas with other land uses, especially neighborhoods, local businesses, and schools, should be considered with any future improvement or development projects by including robust infrastructure such as sidewalks, transit, trails and other bike facilities.

Amenities within parks should be tailored towards a wide range of ages and abilities with specialty parks such as dog parks, splash pads, or gardens serving as amenities to nearby residential neighborhoods.

Parks are not limited only to this district and are permitted as secondary uses in all other districts.

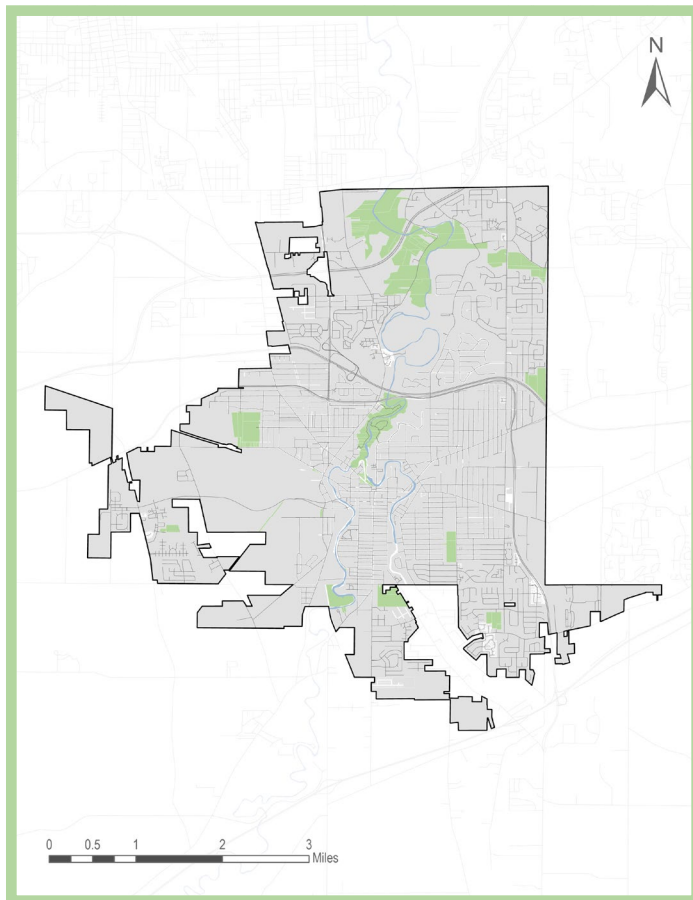


Figure 4.22 | Parkland District parcels

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Parks/Open space

Secondary Uses

- » Government
- » Schools
- » Libraries
- » Religious uses

Features

- » Active transportation connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- » Shared parking encouraged
- » Surface lots located at the rear or sides of buildings encouraged, otherwise properly screened and landscaped
- » On-street parking



Figure 4.23 | Example of permitted development

Source: Lorain County Metroparks

TRANSFORMATIONAL MIXED-USE

The Transformational Mixed-Use district creates a vision for the undeveloped or vacant parcels located on the west side of Elyria. Many of these parcels are zoned for office or industrial and have struggled to attract development. Applying a mixed-use strategy will allow the community to market these parcels to developers looking to build a variety of projects.

Regardless of the type of use, development should be pedestrian-friendly with buildings placed near the sidewalks and adequate sidewalk connectivity. Parking needs will vary based on the scale of development, but should be located at the rear of buildings and away from roads.

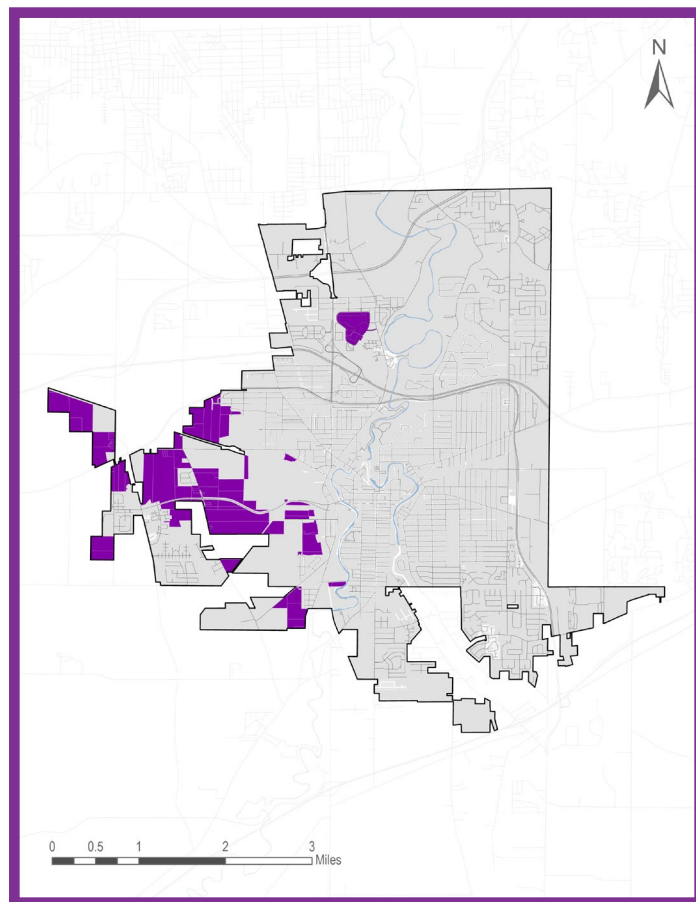


Figure 4.24 | Transformational Mixed Use District parcels

DEVELOPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Primary Uses

- » Residential
- » Retail/restaurant
- » Light industrial
- » Multi-family residential
- » Civic/Institutional
- » Parks/Open space

Features

- » Architecture style and height consistent with nearby residential neighborhoods
- » Buffering of adjacent residential neighborhoods when appropriate
- » Grid-like street layout preferred
- » Active transportation connections to surrounding neighborhoods
- » Strong internal and external pedestrian and vehicular connectivity
- » Shared surface lots located at the rear or sides of buildings
- » Parking garages
- » On-street parking



Figure 4.25 | Example of permitted development

Source: Bridge Park, Dublin Ohio

POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AREAS

Elyria residents, the steering committee, and city staff helped identify different areas which have a strong potential for redevelopment. Three sites were selected to be included in the plan and each received a conceptual rendering of potential uses. Input received from steering committee meetings, public officials, the community survey, and community events influenced the proposed uses (Figure 4.26).

The Shane Furniture Building, which was recently demolished and sits vacant, was selected and is proposed to be redeveloped as a mixed-use apartment building with first floor retail and a co-working space for residents.

The Bluestar Recycling Facility also sits vacant and was selected and proposed to be redeveloped as a park featuring a community center and rent-able co-working space.

A group of parcels on 3rd Street located directly adjacent to the west of the Black River were proposed to be redeveloped as a mixed-use development incorporating a grocery store and riverfront trail.



Figure 4.26 | Community engagement events and activities related to Potential Development Areas
Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan | 55

SHANE FURNITURE

329 Broad Street, Elyria, OH

Downtown revitalization was a common theme heard from community members, stakeholders, and city officials. Presently, the streets of downtown Elyria are fronted by beautiful historic buildings organized in a manner conducive for a walkable, mixed-use district that would attract regional tourists. Many of these storefronts sit vacant and are in a state of disrepair, making them unattractive to prospective tenants who could open shops and restaurants.

One of these structures, the Shane Furniture Building, was recently demolished and the lot currently sits empty. The site is accessible by multiple modes of transportation - the Lorain County Transit Bus Routes run along Broad Street and sharrows create bike connectivity. The surrounding district is pedestrian friendly with wide sidewalks under the shade of street trees and lined with amenities such as benches and trash cans. Crosswalks with enhanced safety features ensure comfortable pedestrian circulation between city blocks. Spaces for sitting, eating, and socializing can be found in Pioneer Plaza and Ely Square, both of which host events. Cascade Falls is located near the district, offering a unique tourist attraction and natural beauty. There is plenty of parking on the streets and in surface lots located at the rear of buildings.

Downtown Elyria has all the pieces to become a top regional shopping and tourist destination except for tenants to occupy the vacant spaces. The proposed redevelopment of the Shane Furniture Building site is a mixed-use building with four floors of apartments above first floor retail. In response to the trend towards hybrid and remote work, the second floor will feature a co-working space for residents. The building could support 17-20 apartments and based on feedback from Elyrians and market trends these should be primarily 1-2 bedroom units from 488-1100 square feet. A rooftop amenity space will be accessible to residents as well. The recommended first floor uses are retail or dining, with a preference towards small businesses. Outdoor dining could be located along the sidewalk or in converted on-street parking spaces.

To match existing architectural styles in the district, the proposed design includes a brick facade with a decorative cornice lining the top.

The site is presently zoned Business-Downtown which does not include parking minimums. However, parking for residents would be available behind the building along Depot Street.



Figure 4.27 | Existing site & Location

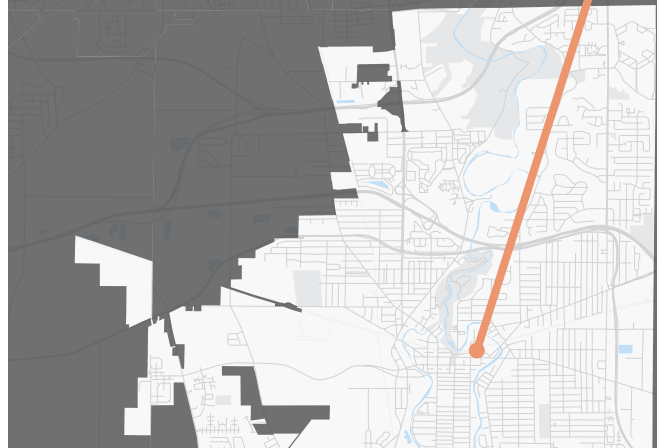
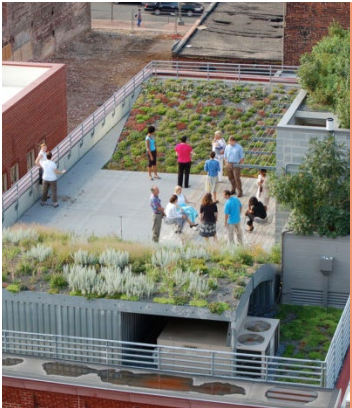


Figure 4.28 | Conceptual front elevation

#	Amenity
1	4,505 sq ft 1st floor retail
2	1,100 sq ft 2 bed 1 bath apartment
3	744 sq ft 1 bed 1 bath apartment
4	488 sq ft studio apartment
5	766 sq ft 1 bed 1 bath apartment
6	717 sq ft 1 bed 1 bath apartment
7	2,688 sq ft 2nd floor co-working space
8	Rooftop Green Space

Table 3.11 | Proposed apartment



Source: Green Building Advisor



Source: Homebase



Source: Columbus Underground

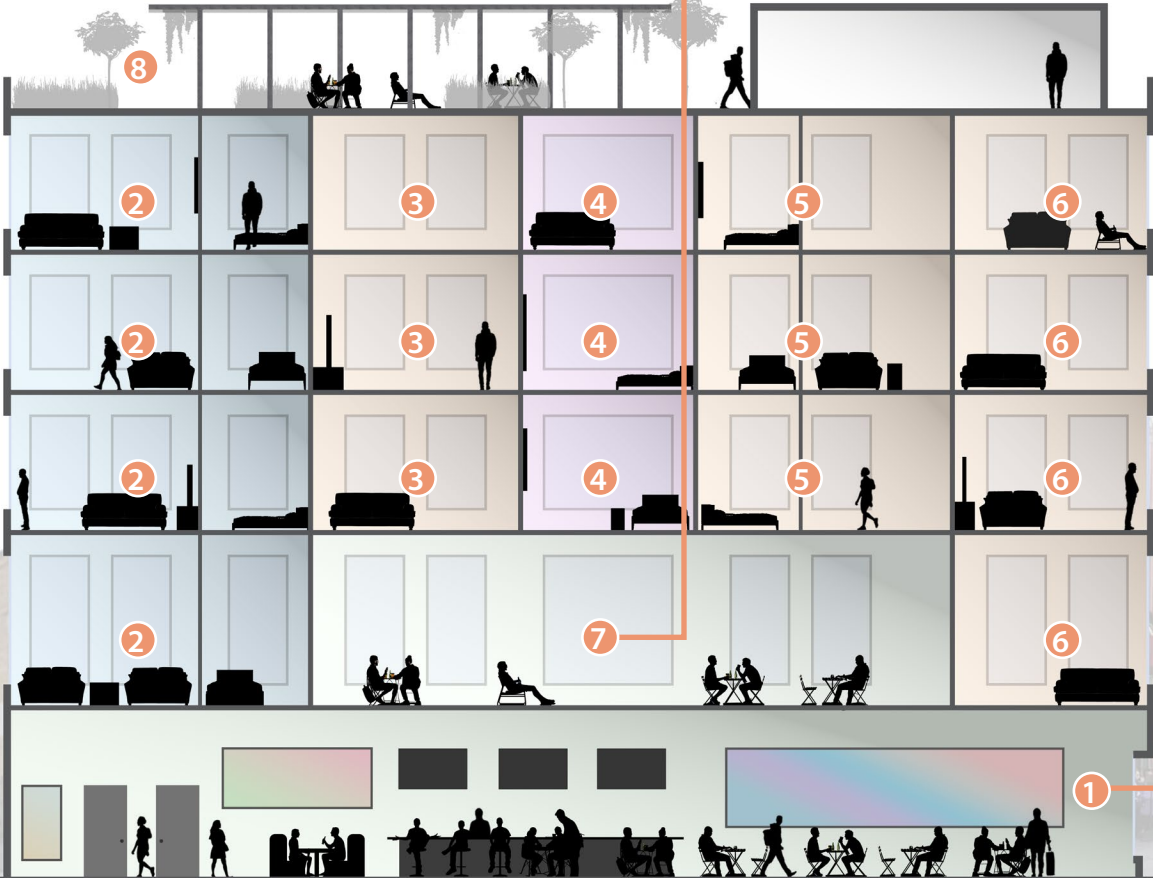


Figure 4.29 | Conceptual building section

BLUESTAR RECYCLING

201 Williams Street, Elyria, OH

Feedback from the survey and other engagement opportunities indicated a demand for more entertainment and recreational programs. The former Bluestar Recycling Facility is a large, vacant site that is centrally located and within walking distance of downtown and East Side residential neighborhoods. Business retention was another issue heard from community engagement. Co-working spaces - rentable offices shared by multiple companies - have become popular as the work environment has shifted toward a hybrid or remote model. The idea for a co-working space was brought up by members of the steering committee.

The proposed site plan for the Bluestar Recycling Facility combines all of the demands mentioned above into a regional recreation park destination. The north side of the park features both a large playground for children and outdoor fitness stations for adults. Basketball and sand volleyball courts offer places to gather for team sports and the skate park and bicycle pump track offer spaces for the adventurous thrills.

The site creates opportunities for many different types of community activities and programs. The aforementioned basketball and volleyball courts could be spaces for seasonal leagues. Clubs and volunteers can tend to the park's community garden spaces. Events and concerts can take place on the flex lawn or large plaza space, the latter of which features parking spaces designated for food trucks. During the winter months, activities can still take place in the park's community center.

The rent-able co-working spaces found in the southeast building can provide the city with a source of revenue and attract hybrid companies or remote workers looking for a fresh workspace to Elyria. Both the community center and co-working space would be adaptive reuse projects of existing buildings on the site.

Under the current zoning code, the site would require re-zoning approval to Business-Neighborhood to allow the co-working space. The site is fully compliant with parking restrictions in the current code.

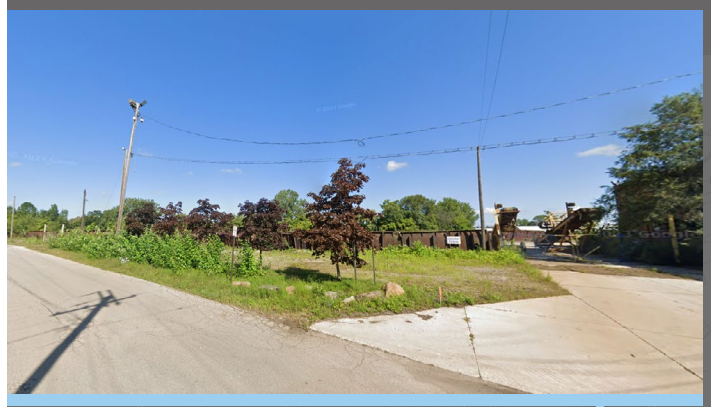


Figure 4.30 | Existing site & Location

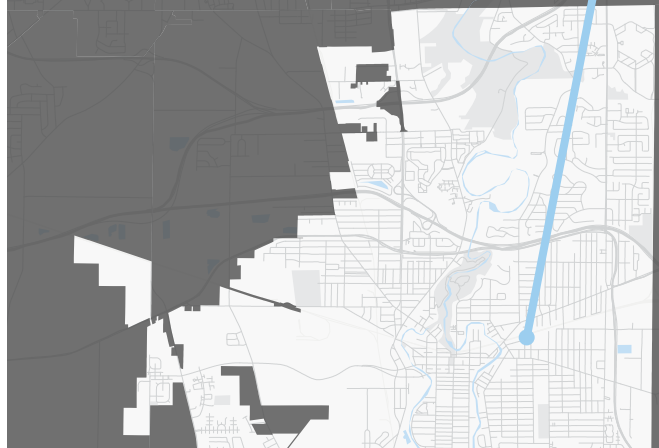


Figure 4.31 | UpCycle co-working space

DESIGN PRECEDENT

The former Balcones Recycling Center in Austin, TX was converted to office space in 2018. The project, known as UpCycle, was less expensive (\$84/sq ft) than new office construction in the area (\$150-250/sq ft).

Sources: ArchDaily, Dror Baldinger (image)



#	Amenity
1	Playground
2	Basketball court
3	Outdoor fitness station
4	Volleyball court
5	Flex lawn
6	Skatepark
7	Bicycle pump track
8	Community Garden
9	Outdoor plaza with seating
10	Interactive history/art boards
11	Co-working space
12	Community center
13	Food truck parking



Table 3.12 | Proposed amenities



Figure 4.32 | Conceptual Site Plan

BLACK RIVER GROCER

500 3rd Street, Elyria, OH

Food insecurity was one of the top concerns heard from Elyria residents in the south, west, and central areas of the city. Nine sites were identified by the consultant team as potential locations for a new grocery store to serve these areas. These are shown in Figure 3.8 in Chapter 3. Multiple rounds of engagement were held to gather feedback on the community's preferred site. The sites near Leo Bullock's Parkway received the highest number of votes but downtown Elyria was another location frequently proposed. A site in between downtown and the parkway was chosen, the former site of the Riverview Mobile Home Park. The site is connected to nearby neighborhoods by sidewalks and bicycle infrastructure.

The proposed mixed-use development features three buildings with first floor retail and three stories of apartments. The grocery store will be located within the first floor of the northwest building. Preferred first floor uses in the remaining buildings are shops, dining, and small offices. 60-80 apartments are proposed for the development ranging from 600-1500 sq ft, and will have access to a rooftop amenity space above the grocery store. Eight townhomes with garages are located to the south of the mixed-use area. Approximately 300 parking spaces are available for grocery store and retail customers and apartment residents. If more parking or additional building development are desired in the future, a parking garage could replace the surface lot. The west side of the site will be screened from the existing neighborhood with fencing.

The remaining open space was designed with the goal of bringing together the community and conserving the Black River ecosystem. Customers and residents can stroll along the site's proposed riverwalk and relax by the fountain pond. A playground, open lawn space, and shelter offer spaces for family recreation. Community events and concerts can take place at the site's amphitheater, located directly off the sidewalk on Third Street for pedestrian access from downtown. The south side of the site is preserved as a natural area, where trees and other native plants will be planted and can thrive.

To accommodate this type of development, a rezoning to Business-Downtown would be necessary. Doing so would expand the boundaries of downtown across the Black River and open up the possibility for more riverfront development.



Figure 4.33 | Existing site & location

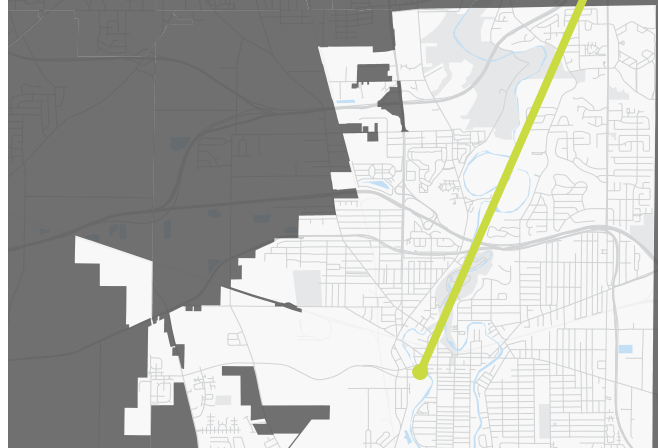
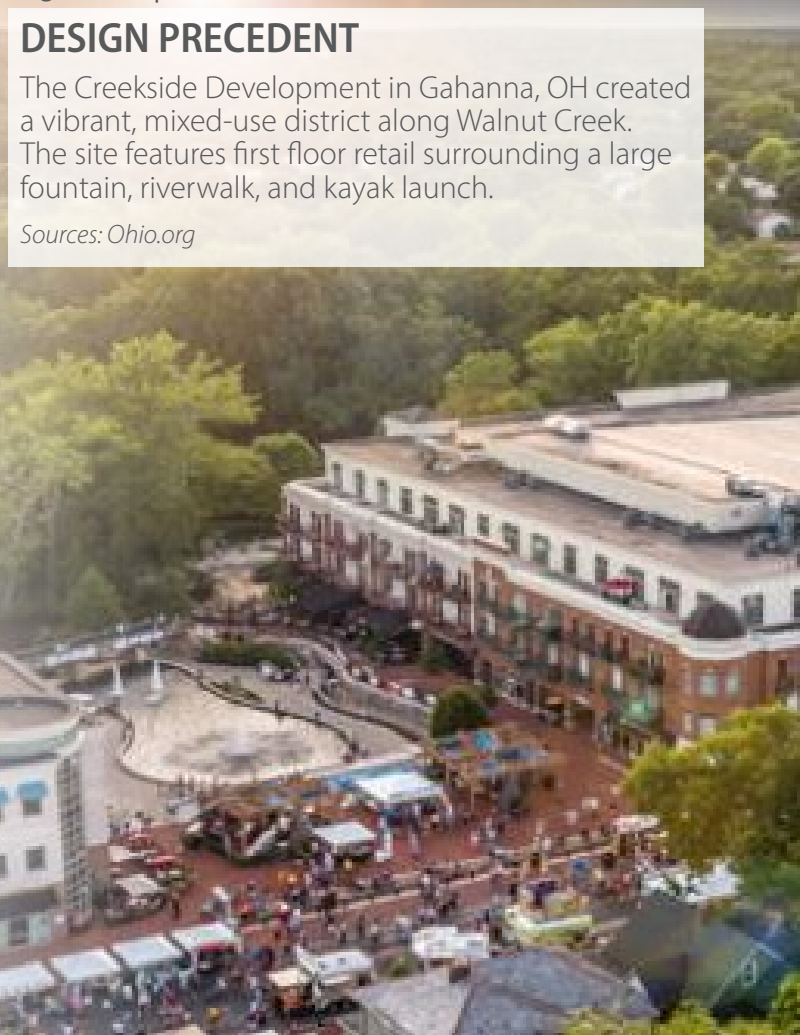


Figure 4.34 | Gahanna Creekside District

DESIGN PRECEDENT

The Creekside Development in Gahanna, OH created a vibrant, mixed-use district along Walnut Creek. The site features first floor retail surrounding a large fountain, riverwalk, and kayak launch.

Sources: Ohio.org



#	Amenity
1	3 story mixed use apartment building with 1st floor grocery store (30-40 apartments)
2	3 story mixed-use apartment building (15-20 apartments/building)
3	2 story town homes (8 total units, 2,500 sq ft each)
4	2nd floor patio with pool & outdoor dining
5	Pond & fountain
6	Amphitheater with lawn seating
7	Outdoor dining area
8	Community gardens
9	Natural playground
10	Shelter
11	Riverfront trail

Table 3.13 | Proposed amenities



Source: Engineering News-Record



Source: ForRent.com



Figure 4.35 | Conceptual Site Plan

V. IMPLEMENTATION

- » OVERVIEW
- » QUALITY OF LIFE
- » ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- » LAND USE
- » HOUSING
- » PARKS & RECREATION
- » TRANSPORTATION

OVERVIEW

Recommended strategies to implement the Our Elyria comprehensive plan are described in this chapter. These were developed based on feedback from the community, city officials, key stakeholders, and the steering committee. The plan's objectives are classified into six overarching goals, which are shown in Figure 5.1. Strategies are then assigned to each objective and are shown in the implementation tables found throughout this chapter.

The section for each goal features a summary page with a description of the existing conditions and community input for that topic. A page is dedicated to each goal's objectives, and at the end of the section, a table can be found with all recommended strategies. Various case studies can be found throughout these pages to provide examples of how some strategies have been successfully implemented in other communities.

The implementation tables at the end of each goal's section contain a full list of recommended strategies and contain the following columns:

- » Objective
- » Strategy
- » Timeline: Estimated time required for implementation
- » Responsible Parties: Estimated parties with which coordination could be used/needed for the strategy's implementation



QUALITY OF LIFE

- » Improve Citywide Safety
- » Create Partnerships to Improve Healthcare Access
- » Promote High-Quality Educational Offerings
- » Increase Healthy Food Access
- » Reduce Litter



ECON. DEVELOPMENT

- » Foster Local Business Ownership & Workforce Development
- » Reduce the Startup Costs of Doing Business in the City



LAND USE

- » Re-Purpose Vacant Parcels into More Productive Uses
- » Promote the Growth of Local Retail and Restaurants
- » Codify Desired Development Patterns



HOUSING

- » Increase Housing Supply & Diversity
- » Incentivize Homeowners Property Maintenance
- » Increase Support for the Un-housed Population
- » Upgrade Utilities for All Housing Types



PARKS & RECREATION

- » Increase Programming for All Age Groups
- » Improve the Safety & Cleanliness of Park Facilities
- » Activate Vacant Land With Public Green Space
- » Create Safe Routes to Parks & Recreation Facilities



TRANSPORTATION

- » Increase Traffic Safety
- » Increase Access by Public Transit
- » Increase Pedestrian Access
- » Increase Access by Bicycle

Figure 5.1 Goals and objectives of the Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan

Quality of Life

EXISTING CONDITIONS

High quality, convenient services can factor into a person's decision to live within a particular community. Elyria has many great services and amenities to attract and retain residents, but there is also room for the City to position itself as the place to live in Northeast Ohio. Presently, the city is perceived as unsafe, which has deterred people from visiting downtown and other areas. Litter has been an issue throughout the city, which has also played a role in the perception of areas as unsafe.

Access to healthcare is important for all Elyrians, and especially seniors who may not have access to a vehicle. The University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center (Figure 5.2) is centrally located east of downtown and the Cleveland Clinic Elyria Family Health and Surgery Center is located in southeast Elyria, but without reliable transportation or options closer to residential neighborhoods, residents without vehicles may struggle to access these services. Food insecurity, the lack of convenient access to healthy foods, plays a role in healthcare as well. Many convenience stores are located throughout the city, but there are not many stores offering fresh produce. This issue will be amplified when the Aldi located on the south side of Elyria closes.

There are also great, attractive things about Elyria that need to be promoted. In 2022, the Elyria City School District opened newly constructed middle and elementary schools, and the high school was rebuilt in 2012 (Figure 5.3). The Black River and Cascade Falls are natural amenities unique in the region and located near downtown, but currently lack connectivity. Other recreational facilities include the 12 city-maintained parks, two Lorain County Metroparks, and the North Coast Inland bike trail.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Safety and grocery store access were two of the most common themes across all forms of engagement. Parks made Elyrians proud according to the community survey, but many felt the parks can be unsafe at night and, at times, dirty. Residents also want to visit downtown more frequently and at later hours but are concerned about safety. The city's history and schools were the second and third highest responses to the question about city pride.

The lack of grocery stores in southern, western, and downtown Elyria was a topic brought up at many engagement events (see Chapter 3).



Figure 5.2 University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center

(Source: US News)



Figure 5.3 New Eastern Heights Middle School cafeteria, opened in 2022

(Source: Elyria City School District)

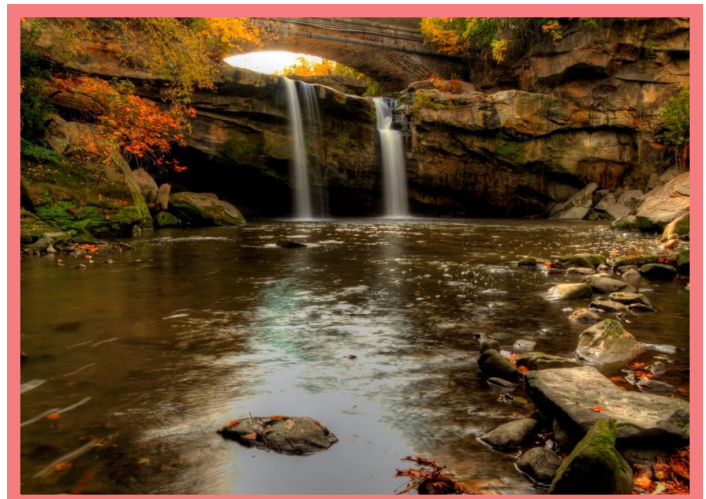


Figure 5.4 Black River & Cascade Falls near downtown Elyria

(Source: City of Elyria)

Quality of Life

IMPROVE CITYWIDE SAFETY

Safety was a top concern among Elyrians according to the community survey. Residents want to feel safe in their neighborhoods along with being able to feel safe when visiting parks and downtown.

CivicPlus 311 CRM

CivicPlus 311 CRM, formerly known as SeeClickFix, is an online tool which allows citizens to communicate non-emergency concerns with local government officials. The app is free for residents, who can report a variety of safety concerns including street light outages, potholes, sidewalk degradation, and graffiti. This service quickly sends alerts to the city for a more timely response and resolution to issues.

Citizen's Policing Class

Citizen's policing classes have been used across the country in order to build relationships and trust between municipal police departments and citizens. Completing the program would give Elyria residents the opportunity to learn about the values and daily operations of the police division and engage in open discussions. The City of Columbus has hosted a Citizen's Police Academy, which is summarized in Figure 5.5.

Neighborhood Ambassador Program

Neighborhood Ambassador Programs strengthen local communities by building a network of community leaders who have a direct line of communication with city officials. Residents who are selected as ambassadors are capable of identifying their neighborhood's problems and threats, alerting the city, and keeping their neighbors informed about beneficial services and programs offered by the city. This type of program has been used successfully in Cuyahoga Falls (Figure 5.6).

CASE STUDY



Figure 5.5 City of Columbus Citizen's Police Academy

(Source: City of Columbus)

The program takes place over 12 weeks with 3-hour courses in the evenings. Applicants must be at least 18 years of age and have ties to Columbus, such as being a local resident, worker, or business owner. Throughout the 12 weeks, participants have the opportunity to tour facilities, learn about the police division's function, internal affairs, laws, and tactics, and engage in open discussion with officers.

CASE STUDY



Figure 5.6 City of Cuyahoga Falls Neighborhood Ambassador Program

(Source: City of Cuyahoga Falls)

The work of the City of Cuyahoga Falls Neighborhood Ambassadors has resulted in the creation of community litter cleanups, garage sales, basketball tournaments, etc.

Alongside these efforts, ambassadors report issues to the city and inform their neighbors about services and programs. The time commitment of ambassadors is flexible, with many choosing to volunteer just a few hours of free time.

Quality of Life

CREATE PARTNERSHIPS TO INCREASE HEALTHCARE ACCESS

Multiple healthcare networks provide services in Elyria, most notably University Health’s Elyria Medical Center and the Cleveland Clinic’s Elyria Family Health and Surgery Center (Figure 5.7). These facilities are found along major roads and are difficult to reach for those without access to a car. This is especially concerning for seniors, who typically need these services more often than the rest of the population.

Mobile Health Units

Mobile health units (MHUs) can help address healthcare accessibility issues in under-served communities by ensuring access to vital services. Examples of services provided by MHUs include early disease detection and prevention through screenings, vaccinations, and responses to emergencies. MHUs can also provide health education to empower individuals to make informed decisions about their healthcare and well-being.

University Hospitals and the Cleveland Clinic have and continue to host mobile health programs which could be expanded to provide services in Elyria. Figure 5.8 lists the mobile health screenings provided by University Hospitals, a series of which could be hosted in Elyria neighborhoods, parks, or community centers.

Expand Partnerships with Healthcare Providers

Working with organizations including University Hospitals, the Cleveland Clinic, Lorain County Health and Dentistry, and Mercy Health can help increase resident access to essential health services. These organizations should be encouraged to locate small offices within a walkable distance to neighborhoods where appropriate, especially those with high senior populations, and also to expand the MHU services described above.



Figure 5.7 Cleveland Clinic Elyria Family Health and Surgery Center

(Source: Cleveland Clinic)

CASE STUDY



Figure 5.8 University Hospitals Mobile Health Screenings

(Source: University Hospitals)

University Hospitals works with corporate and community organizations to host mobile health screenings throughout the region. The University Hospitals program coordinators work directly with organizations to select an optimal date, time, and type of service. Services available at screenings are:

- » 3-D screening mammograms
- » Cholesterol blood tests
- » Diabetes blood tests
- » Blood pressure tests
- » Osteoporosis screenings

Quality of Life

PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Students of the Elyria City School District receive their education in state of the art facilities. All three middle schools and five elementary schools saw the opening of new buildings in 2022, and the outdated Ely Stadium was replaced with a new athletic complex (Figures 5.9-11). The passage of Issue 23 in 2016 made these projects possible by committing over \$140 million dollars. The strong public education system and willingness to invest in the youth can make Elyria a very attractive community for young families.

Promote the New Schools to Developers and Employers

A strong education system is a major factor which many people use to decide where to locate. A 2019 study by Colorado State and Princeton University professors of sociology¹ found that there is great competition among residents for housing units in areas with higher quality schools. These families were willing to pay more for these locations, increasing the price of homes. Promoting the recent investments by the Elyria City School District in its new school buildings is a way the city can market itself to prospective developers, especially those interested in infill development projects.

Promote Educational Resources to Elyria Residents

The Lorain County Community College (LCCC) offers high-quality, affordable programs and career path based education, including high school credit and transfer partnerships with other universities. The City of Elyria should partner with LCCC to increase the awareness of these programs through mediums such as social media, print media, advertising in parks, downtown, and at local businesses, and booths at local events.

High school students who attend the Lorain County Joint Vocational School are taught current job skills on modern equipment and are linked with local businesses to find internships, work-based learning opportunities, and careers after they complete their programs. The school's adult learning center provides career development, a high school diploma program, and other customized programs for businesses and industries of all sizes.

¹ Goldstein, Adam and Hasting, Orestes, "Buying In: Positional Competition, Schools, Income Inequality, and Housing Consumption," May 22, 2019. <https://sociologicalscience.com/articles-v6-16-416/>



Figure 5.9 Hamilton Elementary School building, opened in 2022

(Source: Homes.com)



Figure 5.10 Westwood Middle School building, opened in 2022

(Source: Homes.com)

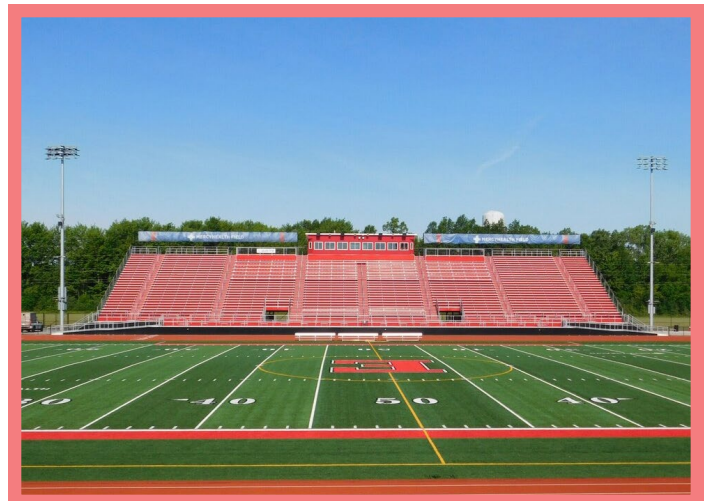


Figure 5.11 Elyria Athletic Complex, opened in 2022

(Source: Behnke Landscape Architecture)

Quality of Life

INCREASE HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

Elyria residents were very concerned about food insecurity, specifically in the south, west, and downtown areas of the city.

Dollar Store Ordinance

The adoption of a dollar store ordinance can be used to attract grocery stores to Elyria. These ordinances require a percentage of shelf space at small box discount stores to be dedicated to fresh foods. They also prohibit the construction of new small box discount stores within 2 miles of existing small box discount stores. These retailers compete with grocery stores, which have a greater variety and often times cheaper, healthier foods.

The implementation of the ordinance would give developers a sense of security that their grocery proposals would not be threatened by a high presence of convenience stores.

Community Food Strategic Plan

An Elyria Food Strategic Plan can include a community food security survey, an audit of retailers to identify the availability and affordability of fresh and healthy foods, a geographic analysis of food access, and analyses of municipal policies and physical infrastructure. The Greater Cleveland Food Bank completed a Strategic Plan in 2022 and could be a partner for a community food strategic plan. The City of Warren, OH completed a similar plan (Figure 5.12).

A strategic food plan should include an analysis of the entire city and surrounding area and create a list of suitable parcels to present to developers. Zoning districts B-D, B-N, and B-G principally permit grocery stores, which are shown in Figure 5.13 along with the locations of existing stores selling fresh produce and meat.

The third potential development area along the Black River (see Chapter 4) is an example of how to identify parcel suitable for new grocery stores. The City identified sites that are publicly owned parcels in the south and west sides of the city and included them in the community engagement to narrow down the best options.

The food strategic plan can be shown to developers to provide evidence for the large demand and low supply.

CASE STUDY



Figure 5.12 Warren, Ohio Community Food Security Strategic Plan

(Source: Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership)

The Trumbull Neighborhood Partnership conducted a food security survey and analyzed existing conditions to generate actionable recommendations for the city of Warren. Not only can the plan be referenced when applying for funding to improve Warren's food system, it identifies strengths and weaknesses in different domains of the food system.

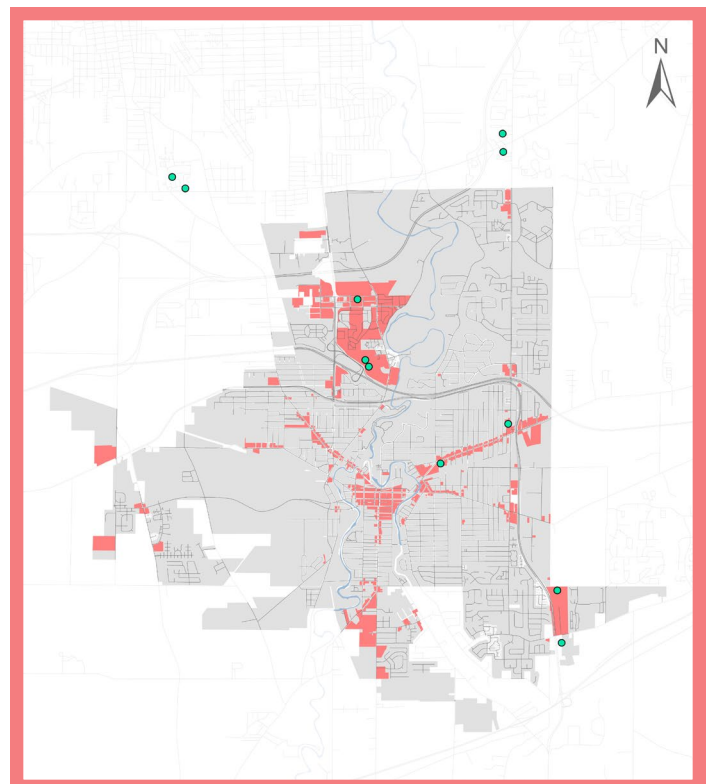


Figure 5.13 Elyria area existing grocery stores (green) & parcels (red) where construction is allowed by zoning

(Sources: Lorain County Auditor, City of Elyria)

Quality of Life

REDUCE LITTER

Elyrians were concerned about the presence of litter and perceived lack of cleanup efforts in their neighborhoods, parks, and public spaces. Adding trash and recycling cans, increasing the enforcement of littering and dumping penalties, and organizing community cleanup days all can help reduce litter in Elyria's neighborhoods.

Expanding Locations of Trash/Recycling Cans

Littering is often rooted in convenience. Adding trash and recycling cans throughout neighborhoods, parks, and public spaces makes it more convenient to throw out trash in designated receptacles. These should be placed near intersections of roads, seating areas in parks and public spaces, and transit stops. Trash and recycling cans can include public art or neighborhood-specific branding to serve an additional purpose of creating a neighborhood identity (Figure 5.14).

Litter and Dumping Enforcement

Another role of the city is the stricter enforcement of penalties for littering. Stakeholders interviewed cited the lack of enforcement of penalties for illegal dumping activities including littering as one of Elyria's weaknesses.

Community Volunteer Cleanup Events

Community cleanup events not only improve the cleanliness of a neighborhood, park, or public space, but also provide an opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate the places in their community. These events can be hosted by the City, the parks department, Lorain County Metroparks, churches, libraries, and other neighborhood organizations, or by grassroots volunteers. Clean Up Elyria is an existing group whose events can be expanded to a broader audience through partnerships with the City and other organizations. The presence of a neighborhood ambassador network can help setup these events and spread the word (Figure 5.15).



Figure 5.14 Examples of trash/recycling cans with art and city branding

(Source: KOIN 6, The Bold Italic)



Figure 5.15 Clean Up Elyria volunteers

(Source: Clean Up Elyria Facebook Group)

Quality of Life

Quality of Life Objectives and Strategies	Priority	Timeline	Resp. Parties
Objective: Improve Citywide Safety			
Boost support for Neighborhood Watch associations	Medium	0-3 years	City of Elyria, neighborhood watch organizations
Establish community policing programs within neighborhoods <i>(ex: LAPD Community Safety Partnership)</i>	Medium	0-5 years	City of Elyria
Use the CivicPlus CRM 311 app and a hotline for residents to submit safety concerns to the city	High	0-1 years	City of Elyria, CivicPlus 311 CRM
Create a Citizens Policing Class for residents to better understand the functions of the Elyria Police Department	Low	0-3 years	City of Elyria Police Department
Implement a neighborhood ambassador program (similar to Cleveland's ambassadors in Downtown, Ohio City, Gordon Square, etc.)	Medium	0-3 years	City of Elyria
Objective: Create Partnerships to Improve Healthcare Access			
Pursue partnerships and funding for mobile health units and improved transportation to healthcare	Medium	0-3 years	City of Elyria, healthcare providers
Expand healthcare services through partnerships with University Hospitals, Lorain County Health & Dentistry, Mercy Health, and the Cleveland Clinic	Medium	0-5 years	City of Elyria, healthcare providers
Partner with non-profits and neighborhood associations to promote healthcare services within the city	Medium	0-3 years	City of Elyria, various organizations
Objective: Promote High-Quality Educational Offerings			
Promote the brand new schools and quality school district to developers and businesses considering Elyria	Medium	Ongoing	City of Elyria
Partner with Lorain County Community College and the Joint Vocational School to communicate and educate their offerings to residents	High	Ongoing	LCCC, JVS, City of Elyria
Objective: Increase Healthy Food Access			
Pass legislation to incentivize neighborhood scale, full-service grocery stores rather than dollar stores (e.g. dollar store ordinance)	High	0-3 years	City of Elyria
Create an Elyria Community Food Strategic Plan including but not limited to neighborhood-scale grocery stores and farmers markets, cooking and healthy eating education, and transportation to food	High	0-3 years	City of Elyria, Cleveland Food Bank, developers
Objective: Reduce Litter			
Increase trash and recycling cans across the city	Medium	Ongoing	City of Elyria, commercial property owners
Organize community clean-up days within each neighborhood	High	0-1 years	City of Elyria, neighborhood organizations, churches, schools, etc
Increase enforcement/penalties for littering and dumping	High	0-1 years	City of Elyria
Add signage with penalties for dumping/littering in areas where trash is illegally dumped	High	0-1 years	City of Elyria
Create a citywide educational campaign about waste management, recycling, and waste-related code enforcement	Medium	0-1 years	City of Elyria

Economic Development

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Commercial offerings in Elyria are mostly limited to big box stores and chain or drive-through restaurants. The closure of Midway Mall removed the only place where people could eat, dine, and gather in a non-strip mall setting. Downtown Elyria, with its human-scale development patterns and building types makes it an ideal candidate for small business incubation to create a walkable, mixed-use district (Figure 5.16). Storefronts are in need of renovation and there are various types of economic development tools that can help attract tenants. The nearby Cascade Falls adds a scenic natural attraction to the area which can be better connected with Downtown to create a regional tourist destination.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Elyria residents want to see small businesses can grow and thrive in their city. When asked about where they would like to see small businesses, Downtown Elyria was the most common suggestion followed by Midway Mall. Suggested uses for downtown storefronts include local retailers, restaurants, cafes, family entertainment, and a grocery store. The majority of survey respondents visited downtown once per month or less and do so for events rather than shopping or dining.



Figure 5.16 Midway Mall and Downtown Elyria are places where residents want to see local economic development
(Sources: Namdar Realty Group, City of Elyria)



Figure 5.17 Recently renovated Downtown storefronts

Economic Development

FOSTER LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Incentive programs can help Elyria residents create small businesses and attract small businesses in surrounding communities to open new locations in Elyria.

Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA)

A DORA is a designated area of the city where visitors are permitted to enjoy alcoholic beverages in public spaces. DORAs create a vibrant atmosphere that can complement local businesses, events, and gatherings. With its walkable sidewalks and public spaces, Downtown Elyria is an ideal location for a DORA, which can attract new restaurants, bars, and breweries. A similar program was created in Cuyahoga Falls, which is summarized in Figure 5.18.

Special Improvement District (SID)

A Special Improvement District is a tool that allows private property owners in a self-defined area to establish a program for services or improvements aimed at the economic enhancement of the area. The SID enables the district to tax itself for specific improvements and services such as lighting, parking lot maintenance, and trash removal as well as marketing and economic development activities. SIDs pay for their programs with assessments on all properties within the district boundaries.

To create a SID, private property owners must make a petition to their City Council who will in turn create the SID. In Ohio, the petition must include signatures from owners that represent at least 60% of the front footage along all public streets of the given district, OR owners representing 75% of the land area. After meeting this criteria, the petition must be approved by City Council. At that point, all eligible property owners will be assessed and provided services. The only exemptions from SID assessments are government-owned properties, railroads, and churches. These properties can however, contribute voluntarily.

The Downtown Akron Partnership is a local example of a SID and is described in Figure 5.19.

CASE STUDY



Figure 5.18 Downtown Cuyahoga Falls DORA

(Source: Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Partnership)

Visitors and residents of Cuyahoga Falls are permitted to leave designated liquor permit holder establishments with drinks after paying the \$1 DORA fee. DORA cups are single-use only and are the only permitted way to consume beverages in public. Non-liquor serving establishments can choose to permit visitors with DORA cups into their storefronts.

Cuyahoga Falls has seen an increase in spending at local businesses and time spent visiting downtown. The \$1 fee is reinvested into the Downtown Cuyahoga Falls Partnership and is used to host events, promote downtown, retain volunteers, fund beautification efforts, and carry out initiatives to improve the district.

CASE STUDY



Figure 5.19 Downtown Akron Partnership (DAP)

(Source: Gordon Square Arts District)

The DAP administers the services plan for the 42-block downtown Akron SID. Since its creation in 1994, it has helped attract businesses, made improvements to public spaces, hosted events, led volunteer efforts, reduced nightlife-associated problems, and more!

Economic Development

REDUCE THE STARTUP COSTS OF DOING BUSINESS IN THE CITY

High startup costs in the city can deter residents from starting a business or existing businesses in Northeast Ohio from opening a location in Elyria. Many buildings and storefronts, especially in Downtown Elyria, are aging and in need of repair before being suitable for occupancy. Additionally, investing in higher speed internet can help attract companies and residents who work remote or hybrid to choose Elyria as their home. Figure 5.20 shows an example of a partnership used by the Cities of Akron and Cleveland to provide fiber optic internet.

Utility Upgrades

Developers of vacant or agricultural land prefer utilities like water, sewer, and electricity to be in place before beginning their projects. Some of the vacant parcels located near Leo Bullock’s Parkway on the west side of Elyria have struggled to attract developers due to a lack of such utilities. Pairing these installations with upgraded internet telecommunications can attract new development to these areas of the city.

Downtown Facade Grant

Attractive storefronts create an inviting atmosphere for residents and visitors of commercial districts. The city’s downtown facade improvement program provides a dollar to dollar reimbursement up to \$10,000 to commercial downtown property owners for exterior improvements to buildings including paint, door, window, and cornice replacements, lighting, fencing, landscaping, sidewalk improvement, etc.

The city should not only consider increasing the amount of annual funding awarded by the program and increasing its awareness by promoting its successful projects via social media and the city’s website. Currently, the city’s website features a list of the economic development programs offered by the city with short descriptions on one page. Each program could receive its own page where successful projects are showcased and links to applications and/or contact are posted.

Historic Building Rehabilitation

Elyrians are very proud of the historic nature of the city. Many historic structures are in need of repairs and renovations and could be eligible for state or federal funding and/or a revolving loan program. The rehabilitation of these buildings can preserve the historic character of Elyria and offer attractive and charming locations for prospective business owners (Figure 5.21).

CASE STUDY



Figure 5.20 SiFi Networks FiberCities Program
(Source: City of Akron, SiFi Networks)

Through its FiberCities program, SiFi Networks constructs citywide 10 gigabit fiber-optic networks servicing every home and business. The network is open access which allows multiple service providers, enterprises, and carriers to connect to the network, broadening competition and choice.

In March 2024, the City of Akron announced its partnership with SiFi Networks to invest over \$200 million to install, maintain and operate an underground fiber optic network throughout Akron at no cost to the city and accessible to every resident.

Nationwide, SiFi has partnered with cities sized similarly to Elyria or smaller, including, Salem, MA, Saratoga Springs, NY, East Hartford, CT, Marysville, CA, and more!



Figure 5.21 Historic, storefronts in downtown Elyria
(Source: Cleveland.com)

Economic Development

Economic Development Objectives and Strategies	Priority	Timeline	Resp. Parties
Objective: Foster Local Business Ownership & Workforce Development			
Create a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) in downtown Elyria	Medium	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria, downtown property owners
Incorporate provisions for consuming alcohol at production locations (e.g. breweries, distilleries) and outdoor cafes into city ordinances	Medium	0-2 yrs	City of Elyria
Create a downtown Special Improvement Districts (SID): <i>Areas where property owners pay a fee to fund public improvements in the district</i>	Low	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria, downtown property owners
Develop a partnership between Lorain County Community College, the Joint Vocational School, the Ohio Small Business Development Center, and the City to educate city residents on starting their own businesses	Medium	Ongoing	City of Elyria, LCCC, JVS, Ohio SBDC
Promote Lorain County Community College, Joint Vocational School and other workforce training programs to retrain local labor market	High	Ongoing	City of Elyria, LCCC, JVS
Objective: Reduce the Startup Costs of Doing Business in the City			
Improve building & fire inspection processes to more efficiently grant occupancy without compromising safety	High	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria
Pursue state and federal funding and/or a revolving loan program to rehabilitate historic retail and commercial buildings	High	Ongoing	City of Elyria, property owners
Incentivize broadband and utility installation for parcels zoned to attract businesses	Medium	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria
Develop a process to check on building renovation projects to ensure completion and support developers through setbacks	High	0-5 yrs	City of Elyria, internet service providers
Create an informational campaign to keep businesses up to date on any building or property renovation programs available by the city, county, state, etc.	Medium	0-5 yrs	City of Elyria
Increase funding and promotion of the Downtown Facade Grant program	Medium	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria

Land Use

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The majority of Elyria is zoned for residential uses which is reflected in the existing land use patterns. However, Elyria is unique in that some residential neighborhoods also contain current and former commercial and industrial sites, pointing back to Elyria’s industrial history, especially on the West and South Sides of the city. Current commercial and industrial uses are concentrated around the former Midway Mall site, the East Side, and the southern outskirts of the city. Parks are distributed evenly across the city with neighborhoods in each cardinal direction having access to a city park or county metropark reservation. The existing zoning and land use maps can be found in Chapter 4 of this plan.

The land surrounding Leo Bullocks Parkway on the west side of the city contains undeveloped parcels and agricultural land. The city and residents on the West Side walking tour expressed a desire to create strategies to spur development in this area (Figure 5.22).

COMMUNITY INPUT

At nearly every engagement opportunity, city residents expressed a desire for more restaurants, shopping, and entertainment - both in Downtown Elyria and within a walkable distance of residential neighborhoods. Concerns were also raised about vacant parcels across the city and how they can be maintained and redeveloped into more productive uses. The steering committee, stakeholders, and city staff also shared concerns about the brownfield and superfund sites around the city as being expensive barriers to redevelopment.

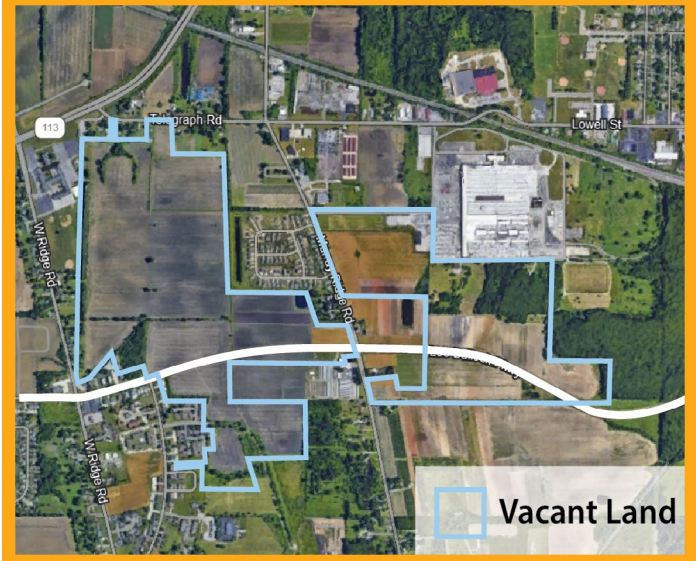
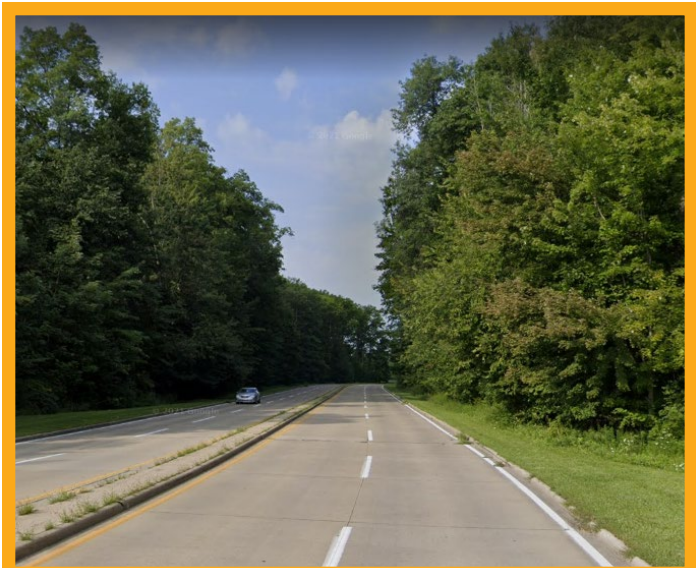


Figure 5.22 Photo and map of vacant land along Leo Bullocks Parkway

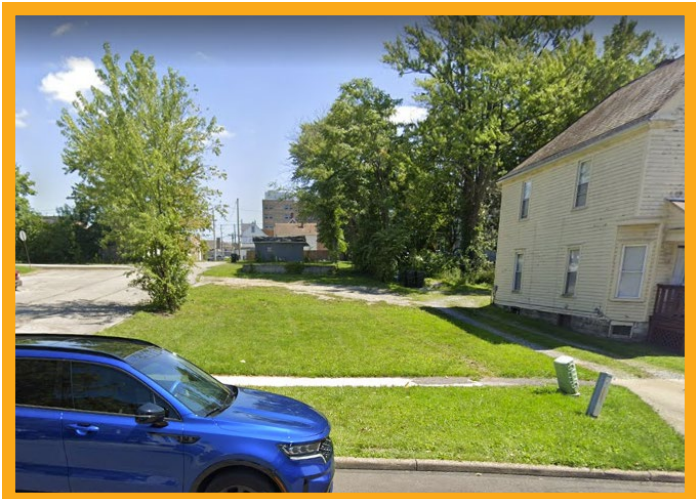


Figure 5.23 A vacant parcel on Chestnut Street just outside of downtown Elyria

Land Use

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT CORPORATIONS (CIC)

CICs are a type of nonprofit or quasi-governmental organization established at the municipal level with the primary purpose of promoting economic development, community revitalization, and overall improvement within the city.

Many of the downtown revitalization programs and projects found throughout this section can be implemented with the help of the Elyria CIC. The following paragraphs describe the roles of CICs across the county, some of which are already done or could begin being offered by the Elyria CIC.

Economic Development

Programs and strategies focused on economic growth and development, to attract new businesses, retain existing ones, create job opportunities, and encourage investments in the community are assisted by the CIC (Figures 5.6-5.7).

Public-Private Partnerships

Collaboration with local government entities, business leaders, community organizations, and residents help implement community improvement initiatives.

Real Estate Development

CICs can acquire and rehabilitate vacant or blighted properties to make them more appealing for businesses and investors.

Tax Incentives and Financing

CICs have the authority to offer tax incentives, grants, and low-interest loans.

Non-Profit Status Benefits

Revenue from various sources, including property rentals, grants, service fees, and public private partnerships can be generated by the CIC.

Funding and Grants

CICs have the authority to seek funding from various sources, such as grants from state and federal agencies and private sector investments.

ELYRIA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The Elyria Community Partnership is a nonprofit organization created to revitalize Elyria's downtown and neighborhoods, respect the history of the city, and improve quality of life for residents. The organization seeks to ensure that Elyria is a thriving, racially equitable, vibrant, economically growing community with quality and affordable housing and a vibrant downtown.

The organization released its strategic plan, which contains strategies that are in line with those found throughout the Our Elyria Comprehensive Plan.



Establish Operational Capacity & Sustainability

- » Recruit Staff Leadership & Build Overall Capacity
- » Maintain Existing Funders & Expand Number of Supporters
- » Create and Promote Independent Organizational Identity, Voice, & Culture
- » Continue Growth, Governance Efforts, & Board Training
- » Involve Key Institutional, Business, and Public Sector Partners
- » Engage Elyria Residents to Build Trust & Organize around Community



Drive Downtown Development & Vibrancy

- » Energize & Activate the District through Ongoing Events
- » Promote the District through Consistent, Compelling Marketing
- » Recruit New & Support Existing Small Businesses
- » Lead Placemaking, Planning, & Beautification Efforts
- » Preserve Historic Buildings & Fabric by Direct Ownership, Partnership, and/or Advocacy
- » Improve Connections to Natural Areas, Residential Areas, & Key Assets



Spur New & Restore Existing Housing

- » Lead or Support Vacant / Distressed Housing Rehab
- » Increase & Diversify Quality Housing Options
- » Generate Private and Nonprofit Sector Interest & Partnerships for New Housing
- » Support Current Homeowner Maintenance and Repairs
- » Team with City / County on Targeted Housing Programs

Figure 5.24 Goals & strategies of the Elyria Community Fund
Source: Elyria Community Fund Strategic Plan

Land Use

CODIFY DESIRED DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Zoning regulations are used to promote the health, safety, and well-being of a community through the built environment. The zoning code enforces restrictions on land use and design to prevent the mixing of incompatible uses and to further the public good. Property owners reference the zoning code to understand guidelines on growth, development, and property maintenance. For developers, review of the zoning regulations is often one of the first steps in determining whether to invest in a particular community. Elyria needs to maintain a clear, comprehensive, and visionary zoning code to achieve the desired development patterns of the community.

Zoning Code Updates

As the comprehensive planning process winds down, Zone Co will begin the process of determining inconsistencies between plan objectives and existing zoning regulations. In Elyria, the demand for greater housing diversity, mixed-use development, local business growth, and downtown revitalization may be more difficult to accommodate with the current zoning ordinance. Throughout 2024, Zone Co will be drafting an updated zoning code, guided by the recommendations in this plan. Specifically, the future land use map in Chapter 4 and recommendations in the table below will influence this process.

Land Use Objectives and Strategies	Priority	Timeline	Resp. Parties
Objective: Repurpose vacant parcels into more productive uses			
Establish a vacant building registration ordinance <i>(Increase the fee the longer the property remains vacant)</i>	High	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria, Lorain County Auditor's Office
Conduct a comprehensive count and condition survey	High	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria
Create infill development guidelines	Medium	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria
Lease city-owned or bank controlled properties to non-profits, developers, or neighboring property owners (side lot sale) with a conditional sale to them if they follow through on developing and maintaining the parcel	Medium	Ongoing	City of Elyria, Lorain County Land Bank
Expand the use of the Elyria Community Partnership and Community Improvement Corporation	Medium	0-5 yrs	City of Elyria
Objective: Promote the growth of local retail and restaurants			
Allow small-scale commercial uses near residential neighborhoods to provide business owners with customers in a walkable distance	High	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria
Relax parking minimums to allow commercial uses on smaller lots	Medium	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria
Allow in-home, low-intensity businesses in residential districts that do not disrupt the character of the neighborhood	Low	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria
Objective: Utilize land use controls to implement desired development patterns			
Adopt an updated zoning code and zoning map	High	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria
Explore annexation of township land where appropriate and feasible on an as-needed basis	Medium	Ongoing	City of Elyria

Housing

EXISTING CONDITIONS

In Elyria, the majority of housing units (63%) are detached single-family homes. 20% of units are in mobilehome parks or apartment building structures with ten or more units, meaning only 17% of units are in structures with moderate density. These housing types, such as townhomes, duplexes, and small mixed-used apartments, are known as the missing middle and tend to be more compact and affordable, which is ideal for young professionals looking for starter homes as well as seniors (Figure 5.25).

While most housing units in Elyria are owner-occupied, renting is more common in the city compared to both the county and the state, with 37% of units being occupied by renters. According to the Lorain County Auditor, 9% of residential land sat vacant as of 2022.

COMMUNITY INPUT

The top housing priorities in Elyria, as identified by the Third Thursday events and the community walking tours, include constructing more sidewalks and improving existing ones to improve walkability, encouraging the development of new housing options, and increasing residential connections to parks and open spaces (Figure 5.26). These priorities align with trends in changing national preferences for walkable neighborhoods. Additionally, there are needs for affordable senior housing and strategies to address the unhoused population which were highlighted in conversations at the public engagement events.



Figure 5.25 Townhomes and mixed-use apartments are types of housing units that can increase housing diversity in Elyria

(Source: *missingmiddle.com*)

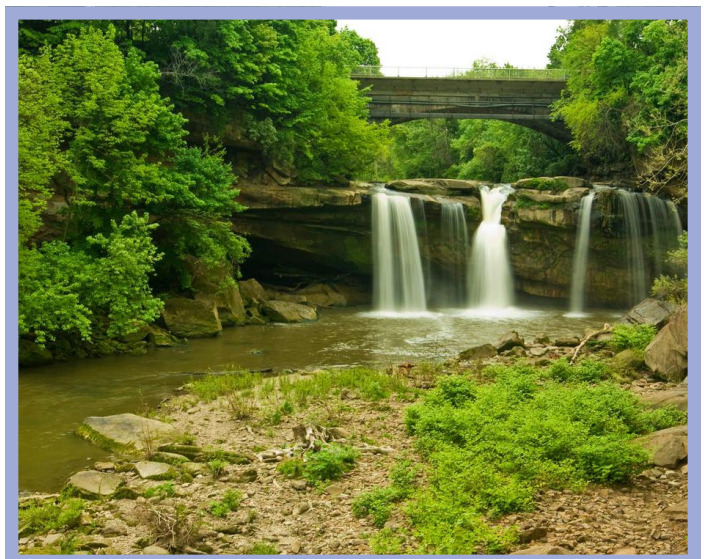


Figure 5.26 Residents want to access green spaces such as Cascade Falls (Source: *City of Elyria*)

Housing

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY PREFERENCE DATA

The National Association of Realtors (NAR) conducted a 2023 Community & Transportation Preferences Survey, which indicates that Americans increasingly value homes located near shops, cafes, and parks, and they are willing to pay more for such properties¹.

The NAR survey assessed various community and transportation traits that influence home buying decisions. The most valued traits included sidewalks for walking, easy access to community amenities, a short commute to work, access to public transit, and proximity to highways.

Around half of survey respondents preferred living in a walkable community with a shorter commute, even if it means living in an attached home or having a smaller yard. Many respondents preferred a smaller yard over a larger one that is farther from amenities.

The survey uncovered generational differences in preferences, with younger generations showing a stronger preference for walkable communities and proximity to amenities (Figure 5.27).

Survey respondents believe that government can play a role in making communities more desirable. They identified priorities for government agencies, including maintaining and repairing infrastructure, expanding public transportation options, reducing traffic congestion, and making it easier to develop walkable communities.

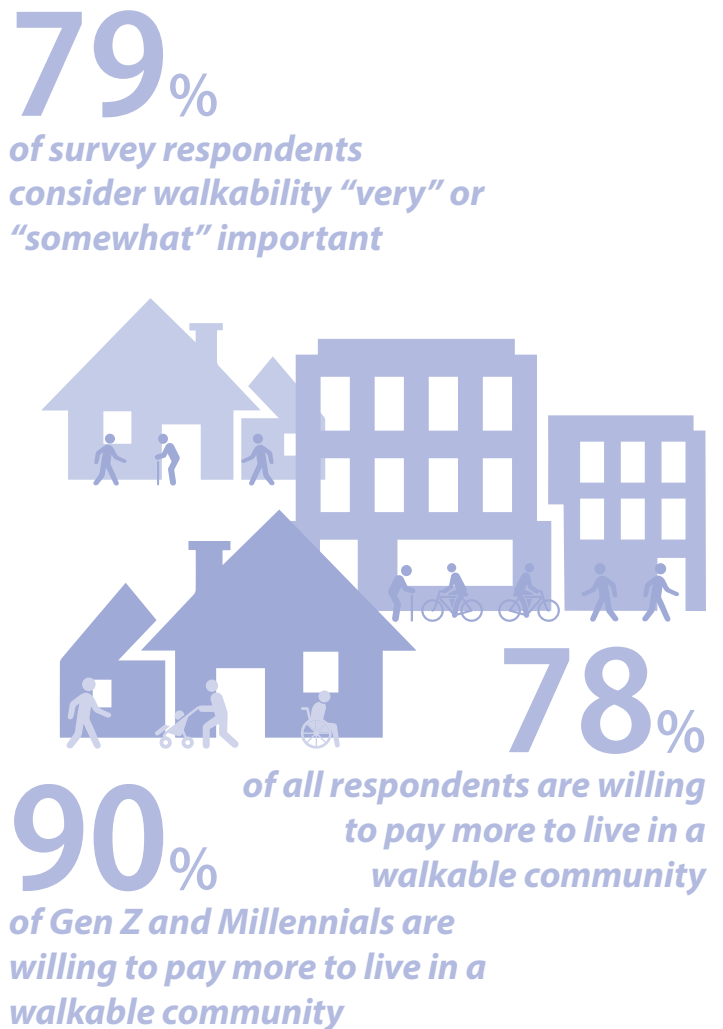


Figure 5.27 Community & Transportation Preferences Survey results

(Source: National Association of Realtors)

¹ National Association of Realtors, “National Smart Growth: Frequencies March 20-April 3, 2023.” April 3, 2023. <https://www.nar.realtor/reports/nar-community-and-transportation-preferences-surveys>

Housing

INCREASE THE HOUSING SUPPLY AND HOUSING DIVERSITY

The City of Elyria's population has grown older over the course of the past decade and the current housing stock is not best suited for senior residents. Smaller units and starter homes are also needed to attract young professionals and families to Elyria. Housing types such as condos, townhomes, quadplexes, and small apartment complexes are more affordable and when located near services and retailers, can support the use of alternative modes of transportation. Figure 5.28 shows parcels where multi-family housing is principally permitted. The B-G and B-D zoning districts allow apartments with three or more units.

Allow & Incentivize Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development in the form of apartments above retail shops or offices promotes a walkable lifestyle by allowing residents to live near services such as grocery stores, doctor's offices, or coffee shops. The presence of a customer base within a walkable distance is also attractive to retailers seeking long-term viability. Providing incentives to prospective developers can encourage this economically sustainable development which can provide long-term economic benefits to the city. These projects have become increasingly popular nationwide and in the greater Cleveland area, an example of which is shown in Figure 5.29.

Assemble Parcels for Larger Development

Larger developments such as garden apartments, mixed-use apartments, and townhome blocks require larger parcels. Currently, much of the city's residentially zoned land is divided into small lots. While these lots are excellent spaces for duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes, the city should conduct a study to identify areas in which parcels can be combined for townhomes and similar developments.

Rent to Own Programs

A rent to own program is where a tenant signs a lease to rent a property for a specified time period with the option or obligation to purchase the unit at the end. In some cases, a percentage of the monthly rent is applied to the purchase price. These programs are attractive to those with a goal of homeownership but without the ability to afford a sizable down payment or to those with a low credit score. The City of Elyria should look into how it can support a program like this with rights and protections for tenants codified into law.

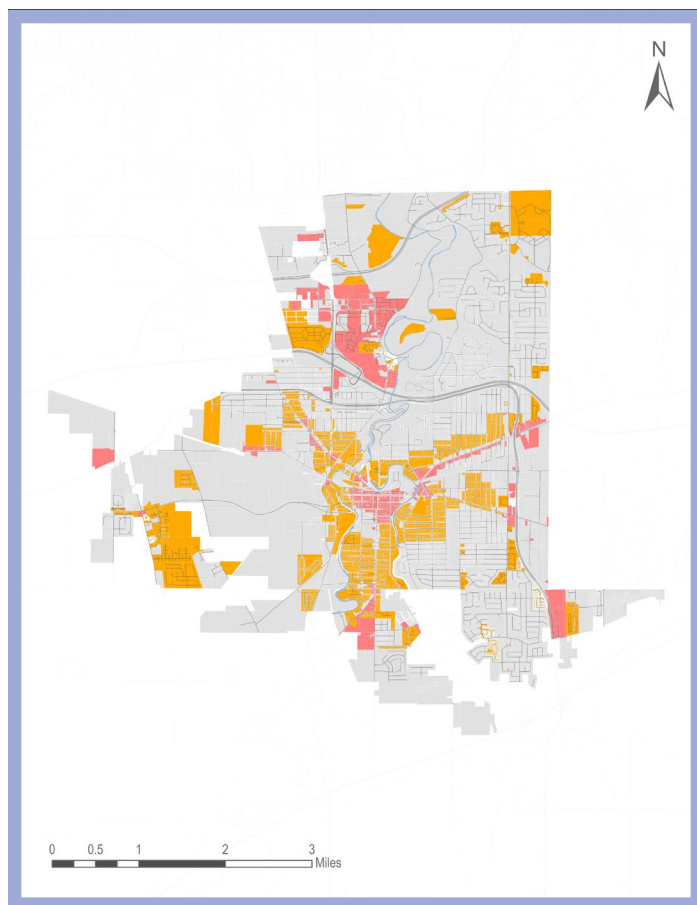


Figure 5.28 Elyria parcels where single-family home attached & multi-household housing units are permitted

*Orange = Residential Zoned Areas
Red = Commercial Zoned Areas*



Figure 5.29 121 Larchmere mixed-use development in Cleveland, constructed in 2021

(Source: Apartments.com)

Housing

INCENTIVIZE HOMEOWNERS TO MAINTAIN THEIR PROPERTY

Neglecting property maintenance can trigger a decline in property values, lead to increased vacancies, and set off a cycle of neighborhood decline. The stability of housing and neighborhoods plays a pivotal role in retaining current residents and attracting new ones. The city should not only combat blight and ensure the proper maintenance of existing housing stock but also facilitate neighborhood density to accommodate future population growth.

According to community feedback, there is a shortage of appealing housing options for many demographics, such as single professionals, families, and senior citizens.

Homeowner Incentives

Introducing incentives aimed at encouraging property owners to maintain their properties can help improve the existing housing stock. Existing home-repair programs are available as well, and run by non-profits with which the city could partner. One such program for owner-occupied homes is the Spruce Up Elyria program offered by the City of Elyria. All efforts are made more effective with proper communication with residents to ensure awareness of such programs.

Elyria's history, which includes its historic architecture, was the second highest source of community pride among community survey respondents. Providing incentives for owners of the city's historic homes to maintain their properties can ensure the preservation of the city's character. Figure 5.30 shows examples of some of the city's historic properties in the West Avenue Historic District.



Figure 5.30 Property maintenance is especially important in preserving the quality of Elyria's historic homes.

(Source: West Avenue Historic District)

Housing

INCREASE SUPPORT FOR THE UNHOUSED POPULATION

The City of Elyria and its residents expressed a desire to help the local unhoused population. There are multiple services available in the county, including Neighborhood Alliance, P2R, Catholic Charities, and United Way of Greater Lorain County who engage with unhoused individuals and families (Figure 5.31-32). However, all are located in the City of Lorain, which creates a transportation barrier for unhoused people in Elyria. On November 27th, 2023, Mayor Whitfield hosted a community meeting where local organizations shared information on their services and how to access them. The meeting also included an open discussion with residents, who reiterated the transportation concerns and expressed a desire for Elyria churches and organizations to provide additional services.

Local Taskforce

Becoming unhoused can manifest in different ways across different geographies. A variety of factors can contribute to becoming unhoused and are impacted by local policies and services available. To best address the needs of its unhoused population, the City of Elyria should organize a task force to understand the main causes of becoming unhoused in Elyria, missing or underfunded services, and successful strategies used by other cities. Figure 5.33 on the following page describes a similar task force assembled in Dallas, TX and the questions addressed by its report submitted to the city.

Private Equity Firm Ordinance

The ownership of properties by out-of-state private equity firms was a major concern amongst many residents across all of the engagement activities. Enacting an ordinance aimed at regulating maintenance, eviction proceedings, and rent-control can help reduce the risk of tenants becoming unhoused by reducing housing instability and controlling affordability.



Figure 5.31 The Neighborhood Alliance’s Haven Center, the only emergency shelter for intact families in Lorain County is undergoing construction on a 9,262 sq ft expansion, estimated to finish in Spring 2024.

(Source: Morning Journal)



Figure 5.32 United Way of Greater Lorain County provides services for the county’s unhoused population

(Source: United Way of Greater Lorain County)



Figure 5.33 HOPE Task Force - Dallas, TX

(Source: City of Dallas, TX)

In February 2023, Dallas mayor Eric Johnson announced the creation of the HOPE task force to identify, develop, and recommend solutions to reduce homelessness. The Mayor requested that the following 12 questions be answered by the report:

1. What should be the baseline for comparison when assessing whether homelessness is increasing or decreasing in Dallas? Now, compared to that baseline, is homelessness increasing or decreasing in Dallas?
2. How do the homelessness population and population trends in Dallas compare to other major cities in Texas and in the United States?
3. If homelessness is increasing in Dallas, what are the root causes driving the increases?
 - » Mental health, and/or substance abuse?
 - » Family issues, such as domestic violence or LGBTQ+ youth?
 - » Economic and financial distress, such as a lost job?
 - » Criminal backgrounds, such as a recent release from jail or prison
 - » Other factors?
4. Who makes up Dallas' population of people experiencing homelessness?
 - » What percentage of the homelessness population is driven by each root cause?
 - » What percentage of the unsheltered homeless population is driven by each root cause?
 - » Where is the city's homeless population coming from? Dallas, or other cities?
5. Which organizations in the continuum-of-care in the Dallas region currently address each type of homelessness based on the various, previously identified root causes?

6. What resources are required to handle each type of homelessness? (For example: shelter beds, mental health beds, and supportive housing).
 - » Are those resources currently available in Dallas?
 - » How are those resources deployed in Dallas?
7. What could and should the following entities be doing to address each type of homelessness based on the various, previously identified root causes?
 - » The City of Dallas
 - » Neighboring cities
 - » Dallas and Collin County and their respective health departments
 - » Medical institutions
 - » Nonprofit organizations
8. What models exist nationally for cooperation between the aforementioned entities?
9. What entities, if any, in the current response system are superfluous, duplicative, or ineffective?
10. What legal tools exist (e.g. city ordinances, City Charter, state or federal laws) to deal with the various types of homelessness, based on the previously identified root causes, and any related public safety and public health challenges?
11. What strategies that are not currently being implemented — or have not been fully implemented — in Dallas have proven effective in other cities across the United States?
12. What opportunities exist to engage and cooperate with the county, state, and federal governments?



Housing

UPGRADE UTILITIES FOR ALL HOUSING TYPES

The average housing unit in Elyria was constructed in 1964, which is seven years older than the Lorain County average and 5 years older than the statewide average. While Elyria's historic homes need to be celebrated, they also need to be upgraded with modern utilities to accommodate the needs of residents. As the office working environment shifts toward a hybrid or remote model, increasing internet speeds and access to broadband citywide is an important piece in attracting new residents and businesses.

Broadband Internet Implementation

Access to fast and reliable internet can improve employment opportunities for residents, access to healthcare and resources, and reduce the cost of goods and services. The National Telecommunications and Information Administration has published its *Planning a Community Broadband Roadmap*¹ toolkit to assist local governments in creating a Broadband deployment strategy. These types of plans contain community goals, an existing conditions analysis of resources and needs, and the identification of potential collaborations. The City of Elyria can follow this toolkit to create its own broadband access plan.

Internet access is a high priority of the Federal and State governments, and grants and funding are often available. One such program is the Ohio Department of Development's Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program.

Figure 5.34 displays a list of some of the sectors that can benefit from improved broadband connectivity².

Residential Utility Upgrades

To improve the quality of existing housing and increase environmental sustainability citywide, the City should encourage the modernization of utilities in Elyria housing units. The City should develop funding partnerships with government and non-profit organizations for energy efficient utility upgrades. The city should also promote Federal, State, or local grants that become available for residents to use.

WHO BENEFITS FROM BROADBAND?



LOCAL ECONOMY

Faster, more reliable internet can attract businesses, increase the efficiency & profitability of in-home businesses, & expand workforce training programs.



GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Government agencies can operate more efficiently at lower costs & increase opportunities for residents to communicate.



PUBLIC SAFETY

Faster internet results in more effective rapid response systems, public alert systems, remote security monitoring, & disaster preparedness.



HEALTHCARE

Residents have easier access to telemedicine services & providers can monitor patients with in-home health devices, both of which reduce costs.



EDUCATION

Teachers & students have easier & faster access to resources & ability participate in remote learning.



ENTERTAINMENT

Both in-person venues & in-home gaming, communication platforms, & activities benefit from faster speeds.

¹ National Telecommunications and Information Administration, "Planning a Community Broadband Roadmap" U.S. Department of Commerce, April 2016. <https://www.ntia.gov/blog/broadbandusa-unveils-six-step-process-building-broadband-roadmap>

² North Carolina Department of Information Technology, "Broadband 101," State of North Carolina, n.d. <https://www.ncbroadband.gov/broadband-101/benefits-broadband>

Figure 5.34 Beneficiaries of broadband internet

(Image sources: U.S. Chamber of Commerce, City of Elyria, Sutphen, Cleveland Clinic, Elyria City School District, Kinzoo)

Housing

Housing Objectives and Strategies	Priority	Timeline	Resp. Parties
Objective: Increase Housing Supply and Diversity			
Identify parcels that can be assembled or combined to attract residential developments with moderate density	Medium	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria, Lorain County Land Bank, local developers
Encourage more diversity in housing types	Medium	3-5 yrs	City of Elyria, local developers
Allow and incentivize mixed-use development in desired locations	Medium	Ongoing	City of Elyria
Create incentives for rent-to-own programs with controls to protect tenants' rights	Medium	Ongoing	City of Elyria
Partner with LCCC and the Joint Vocational School to train contractors and tradespeople for housing construction	High	0-5 yrs	City of Elyria, local landlords & developers, LCCC, JVS
Objective: Incentivize Homeowners' Property Maintenance			
Establish and promote home repair assistance programs and partnerships	High	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria, CHN Housing Partners, Elyria Community Partnership
Develop resident-supportive code enforcement where city staff identify why properties are in violation and how to help change that	Medium	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria
Use the CivicPlus CRM 311 app and a hotline for residents to report blight/code violations	High	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria, CivicPlus
Pursue increased funding for the Spruce Up Elyria program for exterior home improvements	High	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria
Objective: Increase Support for the Unhoused Population			
Strengthen collaboration between all agencies and businesses that support the local unhoused population (<i>e.g. Neighborhood Alliance, Motels, Shelters, County departments</i>)	Medium	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria, various agencies
Establish a taskforce to uncover local causes of becoming unhoused and empower it to develop actionable remedies	Medium	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria
Enact ordinance to stipulate responsibilities for private equity firms purchasing housing in the city (<i>e.g. maintenance, eviction proceedings, rent raises/rent control</i>)	High	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria
Enhance partnership with the Continuum of Care Coordinator at the United Way of Greater Lorain County	Low	0-1 yrs	City of Elyria, United Way of Greater Lorain County
Objective: Upgrade Utilities for All Housing Types			
Develop a Broadband Implementation Plan to increase broadband internet access across the city (<i>Make use of NTIA Toolkit</i>)	High	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria
Develop funding partnerships for residential utility upgrades to more energy-efficient systems	Medium	0-3 yrs	City of Elyria

Parks & Recreation

EXISTING CONDITIONS

There are 12 city-owned and maintained parks in Elyria of varying size and types of amenities. Figure 2.5 in Chapter 2 shows the amenities available at each park, the majority of which feature a playground and a sports field or court. East, West, and South Parks feature indoor recreation centers, and North and East parks feature outdoor pools.

Black River Reservation, Cascade Park, and Elywood Park are operated by Lorain County Metro Parks, who also maintains the North Coast Inland Trail which runs across Elyria (Figures 5.35-37). The former railroad, which connects Lorain, OH to Toledo, OH has four trail-heads with parking in Elyria located at the Black River Reservation, Cascade Park, and along Gateway Boulevard.

Getting to and from parks without a vehicle is difficult due to a lack of bicycle and pedestrian facilities within neighborhoods as well as the presence of higher traffic roads between parks and some residential areas. Lower traffic neighborhood streets allow bicyclists to safely share the road with vehicles, but often lack proper wayfinding signage to parks and other destinations. There are also gaps in the sidewalk network which reduce the ability to safely walk to parks.

Elyria adopted a Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2016 and announced it would begin the process of updating the plan in early 2023.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Survey respondents were quite proud of the parks and natural areas in the city and both the steering committee and open house attendees listed the parks as a strength in a SWOT Analysis. Safety/cleanliness was the top priority among survey respondents for the parks. Respondents also wanted to see more trails, both within and connecting to parks, as well as more shelters for seating and hosting events.

A consistent piece of feedback across all forms of engagement was a demand for more programs and activities at park facilities, especially those for seniors and families with children and teens.

A lack of sidewalks in specific areas of the city was frequently mentioned, especially by residents who attended the neighborhood walking tours.

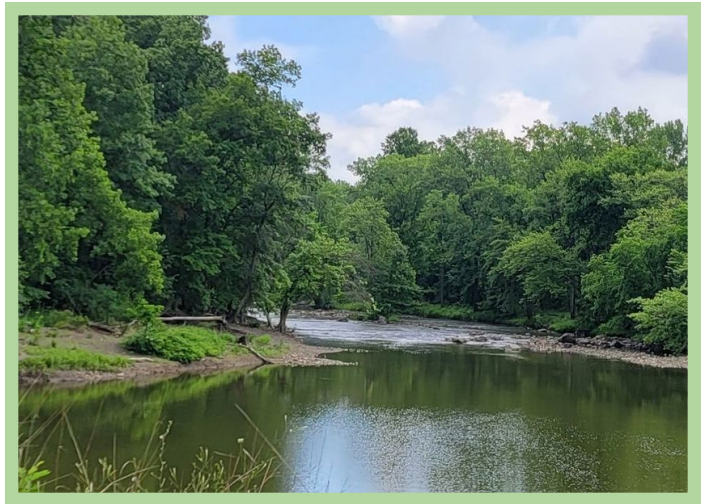


Figure 5.35 Black River Reservation

(Source: alltrails.com)

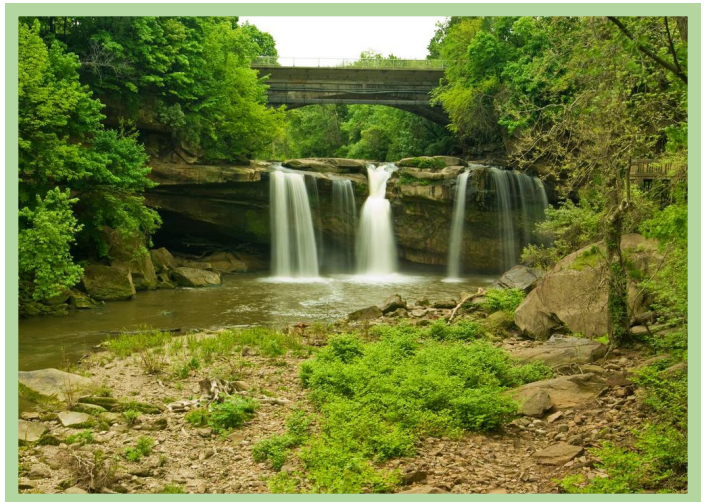


Figure 5.36 Cascade Park

(Source: City of Elyria)



Figure 5.37 North Coast Inland trail-head on Gateway Blvd

(Source: City of Elyria)

Parks & Recreation

INCREASE PROGRAMMING FOR ALL AGE GROUPS

Recreational programs can provide opportunities for community members of all ages to gather, exercise, and meet fellow Elyrians. These programs and activities can be hosted at park facilities, schools, and other public property.

Indoor Aquatic Center

North and East parks feature outdoor pools which operate during the summer, but there is a lack of an indoor pool. A feasibility study of an indoor aquatic center should be conducted either independently or part of the 2023 Parks and Recreation Master Plan update.

The construction of such a facility would provide the opportunity to host more indoor programming during the winter months, such as child swim clinics, and senior aquatic fitness classes. An example of such a facility in Dublin, OH is shown in Figure 5.38.

After-School and Weekend Teen Activities

Providing activities for teenagers during after-school hours and weekends provides opportunities for socialization and exercise, the latter of which is especially important as obesity rates in children aged 12-19 have risen by about 7% between 2000 and 2018¹ (Figure 5.39). These benefits extend to safety as well, as more fun events and activities keep teenagers occupied.

Senior Programs and Activities

Offering activities and programs for senior members of the community can provide physical and mental benefits such as flexibility, strength, memory retention, and cognitive function. Group activities increase socialization which can reduce loneliness and build a sense of community². Examples of these already occur through the Elyria TAPS program and should continue to be supported and expanded. Activities include dancing, gardening, board games, book clubs, music, cooking, and pickleball (Figure 5.40).



Figure 5.38 Indoor aquatic center in Dublin, OH

(Source: City of Dublin)

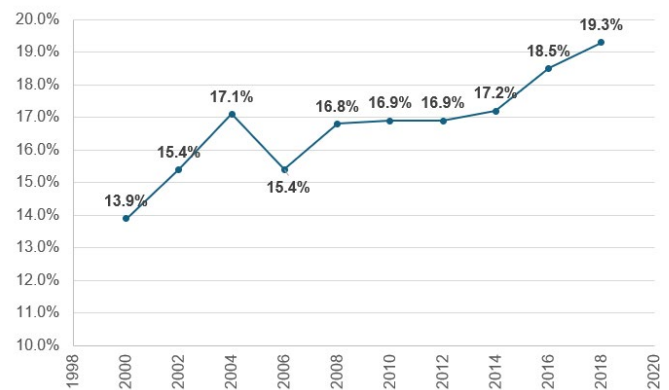


Figure 5.39 Percent of Americans aged 12-19 classified as obese (2000-2018)

Source: Centers for Disease Control



Figure 5.40 Elyria TAPS Pickleball League

¹ National Center for Health Statistics, "Prevalence of Overweight, Obesity, and Severe Obesity Among Children and Adolescents Aged 2–19 Years: United States, 1963–1965 Through 2017–2018," Center for Disease Control, 2018. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity-child-17-18/obesity-child.htm>

² National Institute on Aging, "Participating in Activities You Enjoy As You Age" National Institute on Aging. <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-aging/participating-activities-you-enjoy-you-age#:~:text=Research%20has%20shown%20that%20older,and%20some%20types%20of%20cancer.>

Parks & Recreation

IMPROVE THE SAFETY & CLEANLINESS OF PARK FACILITIES

Safety in parks and the presence of litter were the highest park-related concerns from the Elyria community survey. There is great community pride for the parks and the amenities they offer, but without proper maintenance and security, their full potential as community gathering spaces remain unrealized.

Lighting Improvements

Increasing lighting will improve safety for park users at early or late hours of the day. Doing so can allow people to exercise at parks before sunrise or after dark and allow the City, schools, and community organization to host night activities such as movie nights and tournaments. (Figure 5.41).

Community Cleanup Days

The neighborhood volunteer cleanup opportunities recommended in the Quality of Life goal's section can also include park facilities. Cleanups specific to each park can be organized as well (Figure 5.42).

School Volunteer Cleanup Days

Engaging the student body can help build a sense of civic purpose and pride among students. Volunteer hours are a qualification for induction in the high school National Honors Society, which is beneficial for college applications. An example of such an event is shown in Figure 5.43.



Figure 5.41 Sufficient lighting can increase safety at night
(Source: Bloomberg Philanthropies)



Figure 5.42 A community cleanup day in Columbus, OH
(Source: City of Columbus)



Figure 5.43 Cleanup day at Brooklyn High School
(Source: Cleveland.com)

Parks & Recreation

ACTIVATE VACANT LAND WITH PUBLIC GREEN SPACE

Alongside attracting development at vacant sites, these parcels can be used for community green spaces like pocket parks. Smaller parcels with unusual shapes that may not fit traditional residential development can be ideal candidates for these spaces. All vacant parcels in Elyria are shown in red on the map in Figure 5.44.

Green Space Network

The city should establish a partnership with a non-profit organization to support a network of green spaces in Elyria. The Western Reserve Conservancy, Lorain County Community College, and The Ohio State University Extension are all examples of potential partners.

Publicly Owned Property as Green Space

Parcels owned by the City of Elyria or the Lorain County Land Bank could be used, leased, or purchased for use as public green spaces. A local example of such spaces can be found in University Heights, shown in Figure 5.45. Figure 5.46 shows a vacant parcel in Elyria which could be suited for a pocket park.

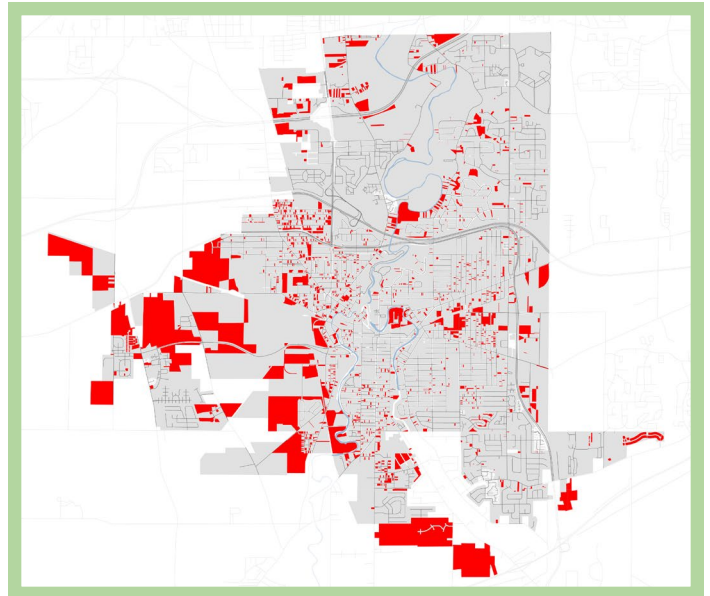


Figure 5.44 Vacant parcels in Elyria (red)
(Source: Lorain County Auditor, 2022)



Figure 5.45 A pocket park in University Heights, OH
(Source: City of University Heights)



Figure 5.46 An underutilized vacant parcel owned by the land bank on Boston Avenue

Parks & Recreation

CREATE SAFE ROUTES TO PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Not all Elyrians have access to a vehicle or always want to use to their vehicle to get to parks and downtown. A network of low-stress roadways should be identified as safe routes to get Elyrians to and from parks and other destinations. Additionally, planning for parks should take into consideration public transit and vice versa.

Wayfinding Signage

The installation of wayfinding signage throughout the city can help residents identify safe routes to access parks by walking or biking as well as other destinations. Signage should be placed at busy locations and direct pedestrians and cyclists to a network of low-volume roads which can be used more safely to reach parks and other significant destinations such as downtown, schools, and the Elyria Medical Center. Figure 5.47 shows an example of low stress bikeway signage.

Lighting Along Low-Stress Bikeways

Low volume roads which are identified for a network of pedestrian and cyclist route should be well-lit to allow Elyrians to access parks and other destinations during late and early morning hours. Doing so will make hosting late night programs and events, such as concerts and movie nights, safer and draw larger crowds (Figure 5.48).

Transit Access to Parks

Public transit is another means of access, especially for the elderly and mobility impaired, by the strategic placement of transit stops near parks. Currently, the only parks located directly along Lorain County Transit routes are Abbe Road Park, Cascade Park, Ely Square, and the Finwood Estate (Figure 5.49).

Micro-transit stations for LCT Dial-A-Ride services can be implemented in parks to provide riders with a convenient space to wait. These also provide drivers a visible and recognizable pick-up point to cut down on the time spent searching for a rider.

Improving park access by transit can increase ridership, making transit more economically viable and lead to further investments in the future.



Figure 5.47 Low stress bikeway destination signage
(Source: Bike Delaware)

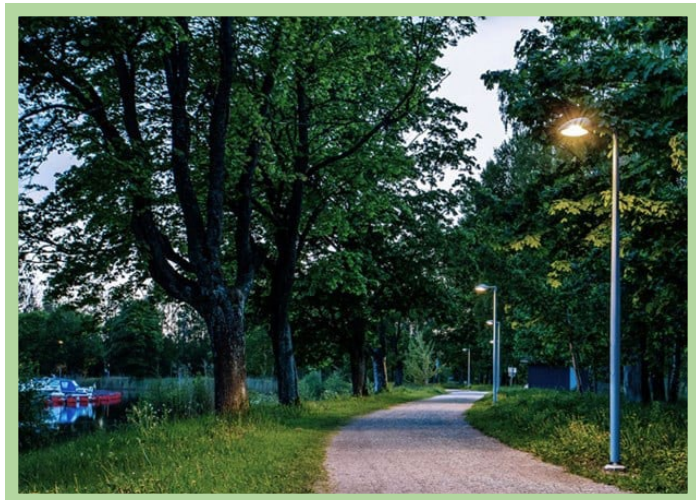


Figure 5.48 Lighting along a shared-use path
(Source: Fagerhult)

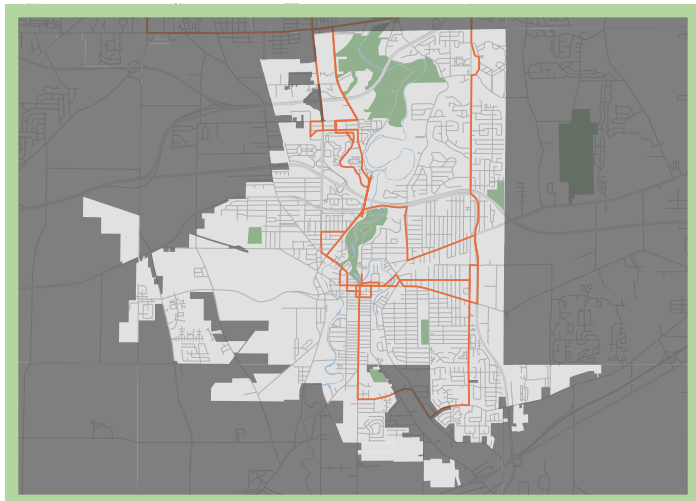


Figure 5.49 Lorain County Transit Routes (orange) in relation to parks (green)

Parks & Recreation

Parks & Recreation Objectives and Strategies	Priority	Timeline	Resp. Parties
Objective: Increase Programming for All Age Groups			
Examine the feasibility and sustainability of constructing an indoor city pool or splash pad area	Medium	0-3 years	City parks department
Increase support for non-profits providing after school & weekend activities for teens and pre-teens	Medium	0-1 years	City parks department, Elyria City School District, Elyria Catholic High School
Develop concurrent adult and childcare activities so families can have recreation time at the same time with local non-profits	Medium	0-3 years	City of Elyria, local non-profits
Build upon senior programming and take inspiration from other Lorain County communities	High	Ongoing	City parks department, Lorain County Office on Aging, senior living communities
Connect downtown to Cascade Falls with a trail	Low	0-3 years	City of Elyria, Lorain County Metroparks
Objective: Improve the Safety & Cleanliness of Park Facilities			
Partner with local schools to organize volunteer cleanup opportunities	High	0-1 year	City park department, Elyria City School District, Elyria Catholic High School
Organize community clean-up days within each neighborhood	Medium	0-1 years	City of Elyria, Clean Up Elyria, neighborhood churches
Objective: Activate Vacant Land With Public Green Space			
Establish a partnership with a non-profit organization that supports a network of green spaces in Elyria (e.g. Western Reserve Conservancy, LCCC, OSU Extension)	Medium	0-3 years	City of Elyria, Western Reserve Conservancy, Lorain County Community College, OSU Extension, etc.
Allow for city-owned or land bank owned property to be used/purchased/leased for green spaces	Medium	0-1 years	City of Elyria, Lorain County Land Bank
Objective: Create Safe Routes to Parks and Recreation Facilities			
Develop unified signage to guide people through neighborhoods to parks on low volume roads	Medium	0-3 years	City of Elyria, ODOT
Enhance lighting on the routes to reach parks and recreation facilities	High	Ongoing	City of Elyria
Establish transit stops and microtransit pick-up points in well-lit areas at park facilities	High	0-3 years	City of Elyria, Lorain County Transit

Transportation

EXISTING CONDITIONS

I-90 and the Ohio Turnpike cross the city and major arterials like Lorain Boulevard carry heavy traffic volumes to and from exit/entrance ramps. Most of the city's commercial uses are clustered along these roads and the other arterials and collector roads which traverse the city.

The rest of Elyria's roadway network is made up of lower volume neighborhood roads which can serve as low stress shared facilities for bicycles. However, there is a considerable lack of bike facilities along major roads to connect between different neighborhoods (Figure 5.50-51).

The gridded street network pattern in many neighborhoods is ideal for pedestrian movement. However, areas of the sidewalk network need repair or are missing entirely (Figure 5.52).

Intersections in downtown Elyria are marked with crosswalks and allow for safe pedestrian movement along the district's wide sidewalks. These physical characteristics make the district hospitable to becoming a pedestrian-oriented mixed-use area.

Lorain County Transit (LCT) buses operate in Elyria, but only arrive at stops once every two hours. Many stops lack proper signage or shelters which results in uncomfortable conditions for riders during inclement weather. LCT does not manage a publicly available real-time system map.

COMMUNITY INPUT

Transportation access was an issue highlighted by residents, stakeholders, and the steering committee alike. Many residents expressed concern about the decrease in transit service over the past several decades. Local non-profit leaders also noted the large amount of time it takes for populations without cars to traverse the city for work, groceries, appointments, and other needs. The city's senior population was especially vocal about this issue.

Traffic safety along major corridors was mentioned by residents across several engagement events. Speeding specifically was a high concern. At each of the community walking tours, sidewalk repairs were among the highest priority items.



Figure 5.50 A neighborhood road in Elyria lacking pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure



Figure 5.51 Uncomfortable crosswalk conditions along West River Road



Figure 5.52 Sidewalks in disrepair along Middle Avenue
(Source: Redfin)

Transportation

TRAFFIC SAFETY

There are 258.3 miles of roads in Elyria, 65.7 of which are classified higher than a local road by ODOT. The safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and other drivers is a concern as indicated by resident feedback.

Traffic Calming

Physical improvements to the built environment can be used to discourage speeding. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Proven Safety Countermeasures¹ initiative lists 28 traffic calming installations which have been proven to reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries, two of which are shown in Figures 5.53-54. Many of these pieces of infrastructure also contribute to increased accessibility for other modes of transportation. The full list can be found on the U.S. Department of Transportation's website and includes methods such as bike lanes, high visibility crosswalks, and medians. This list can be filtered by their effectiveness on different roadway classifications, modes of transportation, traffic volumes, crash types, and problems to be addressed.

The city should consider conducting a transportation safety study to determine the feasibility of these countermeasures across the city.

Transportation Safety Awareness Program

The creation of a citywide transportation safety awareness program can encourage Elyria residents, workers, and visitors to think consciously while driving and inform them about various safety and vehicle maintenance tactics. The program could include informational videos and graphics with tips such as:

- » Safe driving behaviors,
- » Vehicle maintenance and inspection,
- » Local, State, and Federal regulatory compliance,
- » Vehicle safety technology, and
- » Driver fatigue reduction.

Senior Carfit Sessions

The Carfit initiative is a free safety education program for seniors about in-vehicle safety features and adjustments for tall and small drivers. Over 50,000 seniors have benefited from the community, volunteer-run events since 2015. The City of Elyria should work with Lorain County Public Health to organize an event (Figure 5.55).

¹ Federal Highway Administration, "Proven Safety Countermeasures," U.S. Department of Transportation. n.d. <https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures>

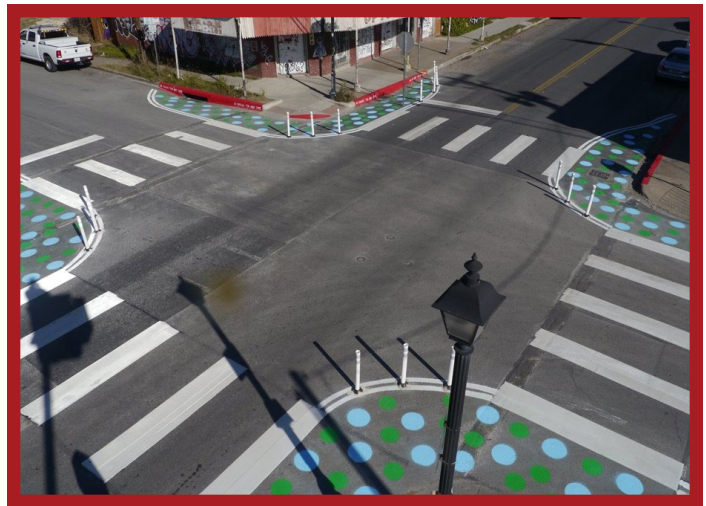


Figure 5.53 Curb extension in Austin, TX

(Source: Bloomberg)



Figure 5.54 High-visibility crosswalk

(Source: ODOT)



Figure 5.55 CarFit event in Vestal, NY

(Source: United Health Services)

Transportation

INCREASE ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSIT

Improved public transit service was a high priority identified by residents, stakeholders, and city officials. All five Lorain County Transit bus routes service Elyria in some capacity. Three of these routes, 51, 52, and the Downtown Elyria Loop, travel around the City. Buses for routes 51 and 52 arrive once every two hours, and the Downtown Elyria loop arrives every eight minutes. Lifeskills High School is a transfer point for routes 51, 52, 1, and 2, the latter two of which travel between Lorain and Elyria. LCT also operates an on-demand transit service called Dial-A-Ride.

Bus Shelters

LCT bus stops lack shelters or properly visible signage (Figure 5.56). Shelters provide comfort and safety for riders in the case of inclement weather, and should include bench seating and trash cans to reduce litter and also accommodate those with mobility impairments. Without proper signage, riders may not know where to wait for the bus. Some bus stops throughout the Cleveland area feature examples of such bus shelters, one of which is shown in Figure 5.57.

Interactive Bus Map

The live, real-time locations of Lorain County Transit buses are not publicly available, which has contributed to the unreliability of transit in Elyria. Without the knowledge of whether a bus is running ahead or behind time, transit riders could miss the bus and be required to wait another two hours for the next bus.

One solution to this issue is to place interactive maps at bus stops, an example of which is shown in Figure 5.58. Another solution that transit agencies such as RTA in Cleveland and COTA in Columbus have implemented is to partner with the Transit App to provide live locations of buses and emergency service updates.

City Transit Study

Improving public transit is one of the highest priorities for Elyrians discovered through this plan. The City should consider conducting a transit study to address these needs. This initiative should analyze the efficiency of existing fixed routes and recommend improvements. The study could also evaluate the feasibility of expanding LCT's on-demand micro-transit service or creating a city-operated service. The plan can be used as evidence to pursue partnerships across the county for increased funding.



Figure 5.56 Existing LCT bus stop on Washington Ave
(Source: Google Streetview)



Figure 5.57 Bus shelter in Cleveland
(Source: Greater Cleveland RTA)



Figure 5.58 Interactive bus signage in Columbus
(Source: COTA)

Transportation

INCREASE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

Gridded streets and small-sized blocks are easier for pedestrians to navigate unlike the curvilinear roads of suburban subdivisions. Many of Elyria's residential neighborhoods have such a grid and block system. However, having a walkable system for pedestrians relies on a connected network of well-maintained sidewalks. Throughout the engagement process, Elyria residents expressed concerns about the maintenance of existing sidewalks and gaps within their neighborhoods (Figure 5.59-60).

Sidewalk maintenance in Elyria is the responsibility of the property owner, but there are strategies the city can take to assist residents and other landowners with sidewalk maintenance.

Sidewalk Inventory

The City can conducting an inventory of sidewalk conditions, to prioritize areas in need of repairs and to uncover gaps in the network that need to be filled. Once a full database of sidewalk information has been compiled, it requires lower effort to maintain as sidewalk conditions change over time.

Property Owner Assistance

In 2022, City Council adopted a program to assist property owners who were given a notice of violation with sidewalk maintenance through a 0% interest five-year deferred loan of up to \$5,000 from the city. The program allocates \$50,000 per year and should be expanded to help even more property owners.

CivicPlus 311 CRM for Sidewalk Reporting

The online public issue reporting platform, described in the Quality of Life section, can also be used to report poor sidewalk conditions or hazards on city streets. Doing so can allow the City to respond quickly by coordinating with property owners by utilizing the sidewalk maintenance loan program. If implemented, it is necessary that the City properly informs residents about the program and how to access and use it, an example of which is shown in Figure 5.61.



Figure 5.59 An uneven sidewalk in Elyria

(Source: *The Municipal*)

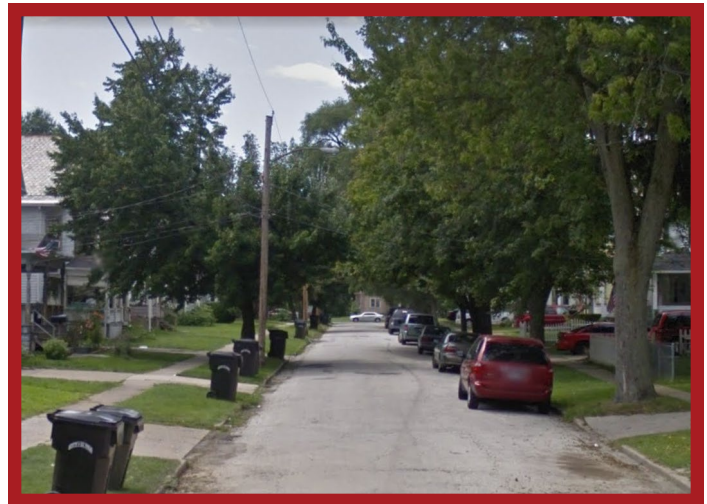


Figure 5.60 George Street south of downtown Elyria

(Source: *Google Streetview*)

Morgantown 311 is the fastest, easiest way for you to submit non-emergency requests to your community, stay updated, and initiate change in your community.

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google play

Powered by SeeClickFix

Figure 5.61 Morgantown, WV informing residents about CivicPlus

(Source: *City of Morgantown*)

Transportation

INCREASE BICYCLE ACCESS

For those without access to a vehicle or those who do not want to use their vehicle for all trips, a bicycle is an excellent alternative. The ability to bike safely to parks, schools, and around their neighborhood is especially important for children. Between 2008 and 2021, the share of Americans aged 6 to 12 who biked decreased by 9%¹ (Figure 5.62) but grew between 2018 and 2021. Improvements to the citywide bike network can help keep children safe and allow more to participate.

Bike Racks

The placement of bike racks near destinations such as downtown, parks, schools, and local businesses encourages people to bike and provides a secure location to configure a lock to prevent theft. The city should prioritize the maintenance of existing bike racks and expand them to new locations. Like the bike rack shown in Figure 5.63 at Elywood Park, these can feature unique shapes, public art, and/or city or local business branding.

Dedicated Bike Signals

Dedicated bike signals at intersections reduce conflict with vehicles at intersections by giving cyclists specific crossing instructions. These signals often feature a leading interval, where cyclists are given the green light ahead of the vehicle, which is especially important for reducing crashes from inattentive drivers turning right or left (Figure 5.64). Signage can also direct cyclists to dismount and follow the pedestrian signals at particularly hazardous intersections.

Active Transportation Plan

The City of Elyria adopted its Active Transportation Plan in June 2021, which includes a planned network of bike routes, policy and infrastructure recommendations complementary to biking and walking, and recommended funding strategies. Segments of the proposed network were given a priority rating based on conditions such as connections, safety, and equity. The city should continue to pursue the implementation and funding of all suggested projects and recommended strategies, especially those given a high priority score.

¹ Statista Research Department, "Share of children aged 6 to 12 who participate in bicycling on a regular basis in the United States from 2008 to 2021," Statista Research Department, November 2, 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/985990/participation-kids-cycling/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20source%2C%2018,from%2018.2%20percent%20in%202020.>

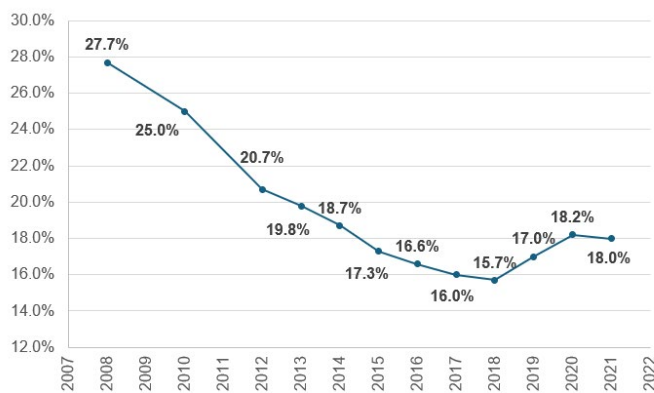


Figure 5.62 Percent of Americans aged 6-12 who participated in bicycling regularly (2008-2021)

Source: Statista Research Department, 2023



Figure 5.63 Bike racks in Elywood Park which double as public art

(Source: City of Elyria Active Transportation Plan)



Figure 5.64 Dedicated bike signal in Hillsboro, OR

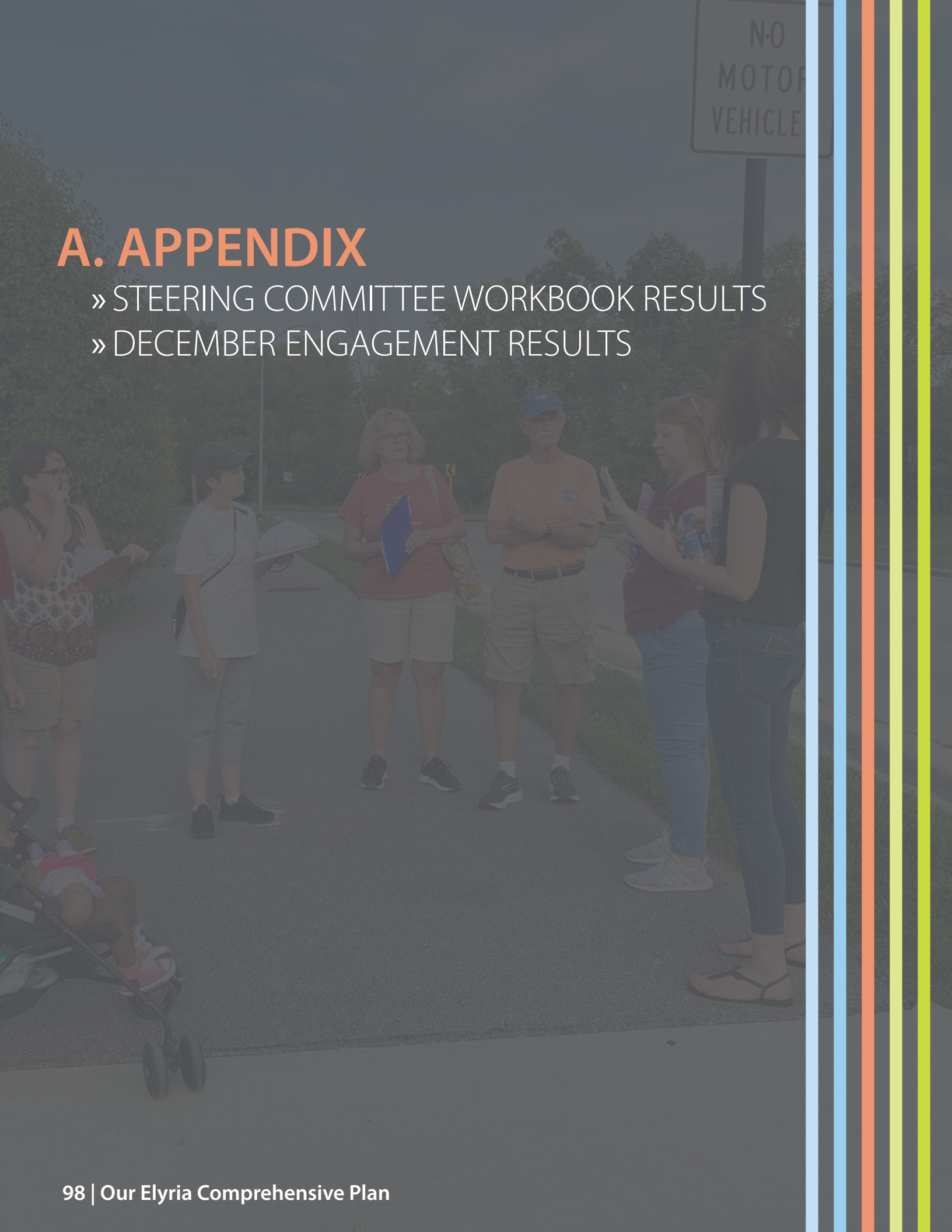
(Source: Bike Portland)

Transportation

Transportation Objectives and Strategies	Priority	Timeline	Resp. Parties
Objective: Increase Traffic Safety			
Pursue traffic calming at feasible and appropriate locations using FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures	Medium	0-5 years	City of Elyria, ODOT
Pursue ODOT programs that install safety improvements for all modes at intersections	Medium	0-5 years	City of Elyria, ODOT
Develop a city-wide transportation safety awareness program	Medium	0-1 years	City of Elyria, Safe Communities Coalition
Host Carfit sessions to assist seniors who drive	Medium	0-1 years	City of Elyria, Lorain County Public Health Dept, Safe Communities Coalition, Carfit
Conduct a safety assessment of railroad crossings and apply for federal and state funds to implement solutions	Medium	0-5 years	City of Elyria, NOACA
Create a citywide safety action plan that identifies locations and funding options for the above strategies	Medium	0-5 years	City of Elyria, NOACA
Objective: Increase Public Transit Access			
Construct proper bus shelters at bus stops to include seating, shade, detailed bus service information and lighting.	High	0-5 years	Lorain County Transit
Evaluate the efficiency of existing transit routes	High	0-3 years	City of Elyria, Lorain County Transit
Create a legible, interactive bus map that can be easily accessed digitally or displayed at bus stops	High	0-1 years	Lorain County Transit
Pursue partnerships across the county to advocate and fund increased transit service	High	0-5 years	City of Elyria, Lorain County Transit
Encourage on-demand microtransit service	Medium	0-3 years	City of Elyria, Lorain County Transit
Conduct a citywide transit study	Medium	0-5 years	City of Elyria, Lorain County Transit, NOACA
Objective: Increase Pedestrian Access			
Create an inventory of sidewalk conditions	High	0-3 years	City of Elyria, ODOT, NOACA
Construct and repair sidewalks on publicly owned property	High	Ongoing	City of Elyria
Install streetlights where needed	High	Ongoing	City of Elyria, ODOT
Use the CivicPlus CRM 311 tool for reporting sidewalk conditions	Medium	Ongoing	City of Elyria
Increase funding and awareness of the sidewalk repair program to assist residents with sidewalk repair in front of their homes	High	Ongoing	City of Elyria, property owners
Objective: Increase Bicycle Access			
Continue the implementation of the recommended and bicycle network of the 2021 Active Transportation Plan	High	Ongoing	City of Elyria, ODOT, Lorain County Metroparks
Clear debris from existing bike lanes regularly	Medium	0-5 years	City of Elyria
Partner with local and national non-profits for education on bicycle use and safety	Low	0-3 years	City of Elyria, non-profits

A. APPENDIX

- » STEERING COMMITTEE WORKBOOK RESULTS
- » DECEMBER ENGAGEMENT RESULTS



STEERING COMMITTEE WORKBOOK

The tables below contain the first draft of the Our Elyria plan recommendations. This version was presented to the Steering Committee as a workbook to collect their feedback asynchronously. Each column tallies how many members of the committee voted for their level of agreement or disagreement with the wording of a strategy. The comments they provided assisted the planning team with adding, removing, or adjusting the recommendations.

Goal: Quality of Life	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Objective: Safety					
Boost support for neighborhood watch associations	5	4		1	
Establish community policing programs within neighborhoods	3	5	1		1
<i>NEW: Use the SeeClickFix app AND a hotline for residents to submit safety concerns to the city</i>					
<i>NEW: Create a Citizens Policing Class for residents to better understand the functions of the Elyria Police Department</i>					
<i>NEW: Implement a neighborhood ambassador program (similar to Cleveland's ambassadors in Downtown, Ohio City, Gordon Square, etc.)</i>					
Objective: Healthcare					
Identify parcels that are well positioned to provide healthcare services to local neighborhoods	2	4	2		2
Pursue service expansion with University Hospitals, Lorain County Health & Dentistry, Mercy Health and the Cleveland Clinic	3	4	3		
Partner with non-profits and neighborhood associations to promote healthcare services within the city	3	5	2		
Objective: Education					
Promote the brand new schools and quality school district to developers and businesses considering Elyria	5	3	2		
Partner with LCCC to communicate and educate their offerings to residents	8	2			
Objective: Trash					
Pass legislation to incentivize grocery stores rather than dollar stores (e.g. dollar store ordinance)	4	1	2		3
Conduct a market-study in the grocery store sector	1	7	1		1
Identify potential sites for a new grocery store	3	4	3		
Create a Elyria Community Food Strategic Plan	2	5	2		1
Add public waste stations in neighborhoods	2	2	5		1
Organize community clean-up days within each neighborhood	3	7			
Increase enforcement/penalties for littering and dumping	4	3	2		1
<i>REMOVED: Add signage with penalties for dumping/littering in areas where trash is illegally dumped</i>	2	4	1		3
Goal: Economic Development					
Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Objective: Local business ownership & workforce development					
Allow for Designated Outdoor Refreshment Areas (DORA)	4	4	2		
Create Special Improvement Districts (SID): Areas where property owners pay a fee to fund public improvements in the district	3	5	1		1
Develop a partnership between LCCC, the Ohio Small Business Development Center, and the city to educate city residents on starting their own businesses	5	3	2		
Promote LCCC and other workforce training programs to retrain local labor market	7	3			

III. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Economic Development					
Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Objective: Reduce startup costs					
Streamline building/fire inspection process to more efficiently grant	7	2	1		
Pursue state and federal funding and/or a revolving loan program to rehabilitate historic retail and commercial buildings	7	1	2		
<i>NEW: Develop a process to check-in on building renovation projects to ensure completion and support developers through setbacks</i>					
Install broadband internet, fast telecommunications, and utility access for parcels zoned to attract businesses	7	3			
<i>NEW: Create a building façade renovation program (similar to the Storefront Renovation Program in Cleveland)</i>					
Goal: Land Use					
Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Objective: Vacant parcels					
Establish a vacant building registration ordinance. (Increase the fee the longer the property remains vacant)	5	4	1		
<i>NEW: Create the Elyria Community Development Corporation</i>					
Conduct a comprehensive count and condition survey	4	5	1		
Objective: Local retail and restaurant growth					
Develop infill development guidelines	5	4			
Sell city-owned/lank bank controlled properties to neighboring property owners (side lot sale)	2	4	4		
Allow small-scale commercial uses near residential neighborhoods to provide business owners with customers in a walkable distance	3	7			
Relax parking minimums to allow commercial uses on smaller lots	3	4	2	1	
Allow in-home businesses in residential districts	3	2	4	1	
Goal: Housing					
Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Objective: Housing supply and diversity growth					
Identify parcels that can be assembled/combined to attract larger development	2	5	3		
Increase density of housing in desired locations	3	2	4		1
<i>NEW: Partner with LCCC and Lorain County Joint Vocation School to train contractors and tradespeople for house construction</i>					
Allow and incentivize mixed-use development in desired locations	4	3	1	2	
Establish rent to own programs	5	1	4		
Objective: Incentivize home maintenance					
Establish home repair assistance programs	7	2			1
Develop resident-supportive enforcement where city staff identify why properties are in violation and how to help change that	5	5			
Create an app where residents can report blight/code violations	3	5	2		
Expand the Spruce Up Elyria program for exterior home improvements	4	4	1		1
Objective: Support for the unhoused population					
Strengthen communication and collaboration between nonprofits, emergency services, city departments, and motels to proactively respond to changes in the local unhoused population	4	4	2		

Goal: Housing					
Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Establish a task force to uncover local causes of becoming unhoused and empower it to develop actionable remedies	1	5	4		
Enact ordinance to stipulate responsibilities for private equity firms purchasing housing in the city	1	5	4		
<i>NEW: Enhance partnership with Continuum of Care Coordinator at the United Way of Greater Lorain County</i>					
Objective: Utility upgrades					
Create an implementation strategy to increase broadband internet access across the city	5	4	1		
Develop funding partnerships to upgrade home HVAC and electrical systems to more efficient models	3	4	3		
Goal: Parks & Recreation					
Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Objective: Increase recreational programming					
Pursue the construction of a city pool facility	1	2	4	2	1
Provide after school & weekend activities for teens and pre-teens	2	8			
Create concurrent adult and childcare activities so families can have recreation time at the same time	2	4	4		
Build upon senior programming and take inspiration from other Lorain County communities	3	6			
Objective: Safety % cleanliness					
Partner with local schools to organize volunteer cleanup opportunities	1	6	2	1	
Host a series of monthly community cleanup events	1	6	3		
<i>NEW: Work with Connect Elyria to expand landscaping groups across the city</i>					
Objective: Use vacant land as green space					
Establish a non-profit organization that supports a network of green spaces in Elyria	1	4	5		
Allow for city-owned or land bank owned property to be utilized/purchased/leased for green spaces	2	6	2		
Objective: Safe route to parks					
Develop unified signage to guide people through neighborhoods to parks on low volume roads	3	5	2		
Enhance lighting on the routes to reach parks and recreation facilities	3	4	3		
Establish transit stops and microtransit pick-up points in well-lit areas at park facilities	4	4	1	1	
Goal: Transportation					
Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Objective: Public Transit					
Construct proper bus shelters at bus stops to include seating, shade, detailed bus service information and lighting.	5	5			
Evaluate the efficiency of existing transit routes	6	4			
Create a legible, interactive bus map that can be easily accessed digitally or displayed at bus stops	5	4	1		
Pursue partnerships across the county to advocate and fund increased transit service	6	3	1		
Encourage on-demand microtransit service	6	3	1		

III. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Transportation Strategy	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Objective: Biking Infrastructure					
Construct protected bike lanes	4	3	2	1	
<i>NEW: Partner with local and national non-profits for education on bicycle use and safety</i>					
Install bike racks near potential biking destinations	4	5	1		
Install dedicated bike signals at intersections	2	3	3	1	1
Clear debris from existing bike lanes regularly	4	2	2	2	
<i>NEW: Develop a citywide active transportation plan to support an interconnect network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities</i>					
Objective: Traffic Safety					
Reduce the speed of vehicle traffic by installing traffic calming infrastructure along main corridors	1	7	1		1
Pursue ODOT programs that install safety improvements for all modes at intersections	4	5	1		
Develop a city-wide transportation safety awareness program	2	4	4		
<i>NEW: Conduct a safety assessment of railroad crossings and apply for federal and state funds to implement solutions</i>					
Host Carfit sessions to assist seniors who drive	1	3	5	1	
Objective: Walkability					
Create an inventory of sidewalk conditions	6	2	1		1
Construct sidewalks where there are none present	5	2	1	1	1
Install streetlights where needed	6	3			1
<i>NEW: Create a program to assist residents with sidewalk repair in front of their homes</i>					
Repair broken sidewalks	7	2			1

PUBLIC LAND USE & RECOMMENDATIONS ACTIVITY

These tables contain the **second** draft of the Our Elyria plan recommendations, published as an online and in-print activity for residents of Elyria that was similar to the steering committee workbook. The level of support was calculated by totaling all the values submitted from 5-Strongly Agree to 1-Strongly Disagree) and taking the average. The results helped to assign priority values (Low-Medium-High) to the recommended strategies and to finalize the language.

Goal: Quality of Life	Avg. Level of Support
Strategy	
Objective: Safety	
Boost support for Neighborhood Watch associations	3.89
Establish community policing programs within neighborhoods (ex: LAPD Community Safety Partnership)	3.82
Use the CivicPlus CRM 311 app and a hotline for residents to submit safety concerns to the city	4.07
Create a Citizens Policing Class for residents to better understand the functions of the Elyria Police Department	3.33
Implement a neighborhood ambassador program (similar to Cleveland's ambassadors in Downtown, Ohio City, Gordon Square, etc.)	3.60
Objective: Healthcare	
Pursue partnerships and funding for mobile health units and improved transportation to healthcare	3.61
Expand healthcare services through partnerships with University Hospitals, Lorain County Health & Dentistry, Mercy Health and the Cleveland Clinic	3.70
Partner with non-profits and neighborhood associations to promote healthcare services within the city	3.74
Objective: Education	
Promote the brand new schools and quality school programs to developers and businesses considering Elyria	3.95
Partner with Lorain County Community College and the Joint Vocational School to communicate and educate their offerings to residents	4.14
Objective: Encourage the construction and operation of a grocery store in a neighborhoods with limited access to food	
Pass legislation to incentivize neighborhood scale, full-service grocery stores rather than dollar stores (e.g. dollar store ordinance)	3.89
Conduct a market-study in the grocery store sector	3.59
Identify potential sites for a new grocery store	3.73
Create an Elyria Community Food Strategic Plan including but not limited to neighborhood-scale grocery stores and farmers markets, cooking and healthy eating education, and transportation to food	3.80
Objective: Trash & Recycling	
Increase trash and recycling cans across the city	3.89
Organize community clean-up days within each neighborhood	4.07
Increase enforcement/penalties for littering and dumping	4.14
Add signage with penalties for dumping/littering in areas where trash is illegally dumped	4.00
Goal: Economic Development	
Strategy	Avg. Level of Support
Objective: Local business ownership & workforce development	
Create a Designated Outdoor Refreshment Area (DORA) in downtown Elyria	3.68
Create a downtown Special Improvement Districts (SID): Areas where property owners pay a fee to fund public improvements in the district	3.15
Develop a partnership between LCCC, JVS, the Ohio Small Business Development Center, and the city to educate city residents on starting their own businesses	3.97
Promote LCCC, JVS and other workforce training programs to retrain local labor market	4.32
Objective: Reduce startup costs	
Improve building/fire inspection process to more efficiently grant occupancy without compromising safety	4.06

III. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Economic Development	Avg. Level of Support
Strategy	
Pursue state and federal funding and/or a revolving loan program to rehabilitate historic retail and commercial buildings	4.06
Incentivize fast telecommunications and utility installation for parcels zoned to attract businesses	3.88
Develop a process to check-in on building renovation projects to ensure completion and support developers through setbacks	4.03
Create a building façade renovation program (similar to the Storefront Renovation Program in Cleveland)	3.78
Goal: Housing	
Strategy	Avg. Level of Support
Objective: Housing supply and diversity growth	
Identify parcels that can be assembled/combined to attract larger development	3.69
Encourage more diversity in housing types	2.94
Allow and incentivize mixed-use development in desired locations	3.53
Create incentives for landlords to offer rent-to-own programs.	3.38
Partner with LCCC and Lorain County Joint Vocational School to train contractors and tradespeople for house construction	4.06
Objective: Incentivize home maintenance	
Establish and promote home repair assistance programs and partnerships (e.g. CHN Housing Partners, Elyria Community Partnership)	4.25
Develop resident-supportive code enforcement where city staff identify why properties are in violation and how to help change that	3.91
Use the CivicPlus CRM 311 app and a hotline for residents to report blight/code violations	4.00
Pursue increased funding for the Spruce Up Elyria program for exterior home improvements	4.13
Objective: Support for the unhoused population	
Strengthen collaboration between all agencies and businesses that support the local unhoused population (e.g. Neighborhood Alliance, Motels, Homeless shelters, County departments)	3.72
Establish taskforce to uncover local causes of becoming unhoused and empower it to develop actionable remedies	3.63
Enact ordinance to stipulate responsibilities for private equity firms purchasing housing in the city (e.g. maintenance, eviction proceedings, rent raises/rent control)	4.03
Enhance partnership with the Continuum of Care Coordinator at the United Way of Greater Lorain County	3.39
Objective: Pursue utility upgrades for all housing types	
Create an implementation strategy to increase broadband internet access across the city	4.03
Develop funding partnerships for residential utility upgrades to more energy-efficient systems	3.94
Goal: Land Use	
Strategy	Avg. Level of Support
Objective: Vacant parcels	
Establish a vacant building registration ordinance (Increase the fee the longer the property remains vacant)	4.17
Conduct a comprehensive count and condition survey	4.13
Develop infill development guidelines	3.69
Lease city-owned/lank bank controlled properties to non-profits, developers, or neighboring property owners (side lot sale) with a conditional sale to them if they follow through on developing and maintaining the parcel.	3.76
Expand the use of the Elyria Community Development Corporation and Community Improvement Corporation	3.68
Objective: Local retail and restaurant growth	
Allow small-scale commercial uses near residential neighborhoods to provide business owners with customers in a walkable distance	4.03
Relax parking minimums to allow commercial uses on smaller lots	3.68
Allow in-home low-intensity businesses in residential districts that do not disrupt the character of the neighborhood.	3.13

Goal: Parks & Recreation	Avg. Level of Support
Strategy	
Objective: Increase recreational programming	
Examine the feasibility and sustainability of constructing a city pool	3.48
Increase support for non-profits providing after school & weekend activities for teens and pre-teens	3.82
Develop concurrent adult and childcare activities so families can have recreation time at the same time with local non-profits	3.79
Build upon senior programming and take inspiration from other Lorain County communities	4.03
Objective: Safety % cleanliness	
Partner with local schools to organize volunteer cleanup opportunities	4.00
Organize community clean-up days within each neighborhood	3.75
Objective: Use vacant land as green space	
Establish a partnership with a non-profit organization that supports a network of green spaces in Elyria (e.g. Western Reserve Conservancy, LCCC, OSU Extension)	3.88
Allow for city-owned or land bank owned property to be used/purchased/leased for green spaces	3.76
Work with Connect Elyria to expand landscaping groups across the city	3.55
Objective: Safe route to parks	
Develop unified signage to guide people through neighborhoods to parks on low volume roads	3.94
Enhance lighting on the routes to reach parks and recreation facilities	4.09
Establish transit stops and microtransit pick-up points in well-lit areas at park facilities	4.03
Goal: Transportation	
Strategy	Avg. Level of Support
Objective: Public Transit	
Construct proper bus shelters at bus stops to include seating, shade, detailed bus service information and lighting.	4.13
Evaluate the efficiency of existing transit routes	4.26
Create a legible, interactive bus map that can be easily accessed digitally or displayed at bus stops	4.35
Pursue partnerships across the county to advocate and fund increased transit service	4.03
Encourage on-demand microtransit service	3.61
Objective: Biking Infrastructure	
Construct protected bike lanes	3.48
Install bike racks near potential biking destinations	4.03
Install dedicated bike signals at intersections	3.29
Clear debris from existing bike lanes regularly	3.90
Partner with local and national non-profits for education on bicycle use and safety	3.38
Continue the implementation of the recommendations of the 2021 Active Transportation Plan	3.97
Objective: Traffic Safety	
Pursue traffic calming at feasible and appropriate locations using FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures	3.55
Pursue ODOT programs that install safety improvements for all modes at intersections	3.93
Develop a city-wide transportation safety awareness program	3.50
Host Carfit sessions to assist seniors who drive	3.50
Conduct a safety assessment of railroad crossings and apply for federal and state funds to implement solutions	3.86
Objective: Walkability	
Create an inventory of sidewalk conditions	4.19
Construct and repair sidewalks on publicly owned property	4.10
Install streetlights where needed	4.23
Increase funding and awareness of [name] program to assist residents with sidewalk repair in front of their homes	4.34