

City of Conneaut  
2017 Comprehensive Plan Update

# Advisory Committee Packet of Materials Meeting #4 August 29, 2017, New Leaf Church

Distributed 8/28/17

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# Meeting #3 Summary

## Advisory Committee Meeting, June 27, 2017

### Attendance

- 13 Advisory Committee members (based on sign-in sheet)
 

|              |                |               |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| Bob Best,    | Michael Legeza | Joe Raisain   |
| Nick Church  | Lembit Napp    | Nick Sanford  |
| Becky Gaugh  | Tim Neal       | Paul Sedmak   |
| Bill Kennedy | Cris Newcomb   | Diana Spencer |
| Tim Kennedy  | John C. Palo   |               |
- Jack Polchosky, Snug Harbor
- Jim Hockaday, Conneaut City Manager
- Representatives from CT: Kristin Hopkins, Dana Cohen, Sarah Jammal, Shawn Aiken

### Summary

#### Review of 2002 Goals

The meeting opened with a summarized review of the main goals from the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. The goals are pared down to 17 main points which CT has recognized as significant. The Committee agreed to retain the summarized goals from the 2002 plan and present them at the public forum, as they remain relevant and it is appropriate to incorporate them in this update.

The following summarizes the conversation about the 2017 Plan Update and the 2002 Plan.

- The list of 17 goals seems like a long visionary wish list, and hard to quantify. Based on these statements, it looks like the City has not accomplished any of the 2002 goals.
  - » These goals are visionary statements, the action plan will be created based on these goals and will include specific implementation steps and prioritization.
  - » This plan will provide guidance for more specific studies and zoning amendments (i.e. a downtown plan which will focus on the specifics but will use the comprehensive plan as the foundation and overall vision). The land use plan will be a basis for zoning and a legal foundation.
  - » The Comprehensive Plan will be a guiding document and a leverage document and will serve as justification for grant applications. Most grant programs require evidence that projects for which funding is requested have been vetted and are supported by the community. The City will not allocate resources to something that is not in the plan. Therefore, there should be a direct relatable impact.
- How much should the Committee actually consider what is happening in the community today? There has been organic growth on the West Side, shouldn't this be mentioned in the plan rather

than focus on industrial which is not working. Shouldn't we be asking the people who know what they need what we should put in the plan?

- » We are still at the "visionary" step in the process. After we identify the broad goals, then we will identify strategies and action steps.
- » The focus groups and public forum will allow us to get feedback from stakeholders and the public.
- This Plan was paid for using an ODNR Coastal Management Access Grant. Shouldn't we concentrate on the lakefront?
  - » The grant is for the completion of a comprehensive plan for the entire city. This is not just a lakefront plan, however the lakefront is one of the key focus areas of the plan. In the past few years there have been a number of plans prepared for the lakefront/harbor area. This document will take all of the plans and incorporate all of the relevant recommendations into this Comprehensive Plan Update.
- What did we do wrong in 2014 (with the internal update plan)?
  - » The 2014 update simply removed what had been accomplished since 2002. This Update will retain the relevant sections of the 2002 plan AND will include much more detail regarding implementation. This plan will outline the key action steps the city (and its partners) need to take to carry out the policies and strategies we determine are the priorities for the next five to 10 years, including identifying specific zoning recommendations. At the end of this effort there will be a process and mechanisms in place to push the planning process forward with prioritization and measurable outcomes.
  - » One of the reasons for the limited success was consistent change in government administration during the time period.
  - » The goals and vision might seem generic, but they are important because these goals provide the framework for discussing more specific policies, always asking: Is this advancing our goal? For example, when a developer comes to the City with an idea, the plan will help determine if their request to rezone property is compatible with the goals of the City.

### Updated/Revised Draft Vision

The committee agreed upon the updated vision statement presented as well as the revised bullet points under "Prosperous and Vibrant Means...": It was agreed these statements would be presented at the Public Forum in July

### Broad Planning Policies/Priorities

#### **Industrial Economic Development.**

One strategy the city has talked about is purchasing the wetlands and giving manufacturers the ability to buy only useable land so they do not have to deal with wetland remediation.

Development at the Rt 7/1-90 Interchange was discussed. It is possible to make Route 7 more flexible to include light industrial as well as retail and services. The Committee pointed to Tyler Boulevard in Mentor

as a great example. Light industrial could occupy the plaza if it were allowed. The committee agreed that it is most important to create jobs and raise incomes, and retail will follow.

The visual appearance/image of the interchange area is an important concern because it is the entrance to the City. While all agree that the community cannot afford to be too strict. Industry does not have to be an eyesore either. Things that may be important are a clean parking lot, a sufficient number of trees and front lawn. Examples include: Saybrook Industrial Park and Coffee Creek. It is important to note that the MetroParks is also looking at conserving land around Route 7 corridor.

There were several ideas on locations to expand industrial zoning.

- The question was raised if it would be suitable to expand the area to encompass Gateway Ave. and expanding business side.
- Area between I-90 and Underridge Rd (currently agriculture) Flexibility would be appropriate but the city would need to invest in infrastructure expansion
- Flexibility along 20 for manufacturing: Only appropriate in target areas because a lot is residential;
- Thomson Road: Could be suitable but there are access problems. The interchange that was proposed in the 2002 plan is unlikely to happen, but the Committee agreed it would be appropriate to remain in the plan for potential in the future.

Basic zoning requirements were agreed to be important for Route 7 and the Route 20 Corridors i.e. landscaping, tree, and building setback from the street. Coffey Creek is a good example.

#### **Downtown Economic Development.**

Is a distinction between Main Street and Route 20 Corridor important in terms of design standards? While it makes sense to keep the distinction between the two areas, Route 20 still needs to have more pleasing design standards. The Committee was unhappy about the aesthetics of Dollar General- it should face 20 and building entrances and orientations should face the road. However, it should not be too strict where it drives away development.

#### **Lakefront Economic Development.**

Lakefront should use Bridge St. in Ashtabula as an example. Mixed use development could be appropriate, as well as condo development and a new marina. Studies done by the Port Authority advocated for condo development. Qualitative housing will drive retail. This will bring in people who will spend money. Some committee members believe that the lake is the most important and fisherman are more important than another industrial park. There was concern that the plan will not be implemented if there is change in leadership. It is important that the Committee gain traction and advocate for the plan and that they all champion the vision.

#### **Next Steps and Other Notes....**

- CT will be available for Committee Member Interviews July 7<sup>th</sup> at City Hall
- Public Forum July 25
- Focus Groups to be held in mid-August
- Next Steering Committee Meeting: August 29

# Public Forum #1 Summary

The first community-wide public forum took place on **July 25, 2017** from 6 PM to 8PM at the Conneaut Human Resources Center. Forty-five people signed-in including sixteen committee members. Conneaut City Manager James Hockaday and CT Consultant's Kristin Hopkins, David Hartt, Dana Cohen, Shawn Aiken and intern Sarah Jammal were also in attendance.

The meeting began with a 45-minute presentation. First Jim Hockaday explained the purpose and process of the Comprehensive Plan. Afterwards, Kris Hopkins presented the existing conditions and trends that shape and influence the future of Conneaut. Next, committee member Diana Spencer summarized the draft vision and city-wide goals, while committee members Michael Legeza and Nick Sandford highlighted existing conditions and draft policies for five focus areas/topics: the State Route 7/Interstate 90 Interchange, Downtown, the Lakefront/Harbor Area, Green Space Preservation and Management, and Community Character. The presentation provided the foundation to then begin the discussion of how the city can build on its strengths and overcome its challenges.

Afterward, attendees had a chance to express their opinions. There were seven tables representing the draft goals and focus areas/topics, with a committee or staff member stationed at each. People were invited to answer open ended questions and place stickers on specific actions that they felt were "important" or "not so important" (see examples below). The response seemed positive and citizens actively participated and discussed concerns and ideas with each other and the table attendants while viewing the displays and sharing their opinions. The results of survey sheets are attached in the Appendix.



**GREENSPACE PRESERVATION / MANAGEMENT**

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

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

**COMMENTS:**

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

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

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

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

3. Other Comments, Changes, Additions?

Post-it notes and handwritten comments are visible on the survey sheet.



## Focus Group Summaries

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

### Lakeshore/Harbor Area Focus Group

#### Attendees:

|                                                            |                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shane Gelfer, owner of Sparky's Restaurant                 | Joe Raisain, Conneaut Port Authority                                     |
| Penny Armeni, former executive director of the Arts Center | Joe Palo, formerly with both the Conneaut and Ashtabula Port Authorities |
| Gary Coxon, Township Park Board                            | Tom Schmidt                                                              |
| Tim Kennedy, resident                                      | Bob Best, Ashtabula Metroparks                                           |
| Jack Polchosky, Snug Harbor Bait & Tackle                  |                                                                          |

#### Potential

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

- Wind turbines on Bluff- now Metroparks
- Marketing – beef up tourism that generates more money, social media
- Ashtabula Harbor success model

### Obstacles

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

### Actions

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

## **Downtown Focus Group Session**

### **Attendees:**

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

### **Obstacles**

- Few empty buildings or buildable lots for new development
- Vacant lots tend to be small lots, multiple lots needed for redevelopment, lot assembly can be difficult
- Building conditions – most of the buildings that are vacant require major repairs
- Some landowners are reluctant to sell, high asking prices, may be due to being underwater
- Weak market
- Parking quantity and location – not enough in the right places
- Lack of restaurants
- Events held downtown are not always beneficial for local businesses
- Handicap accessibility – large number of crosswalks are not ADA compliant, lack of ramps, crosswalk signals.

### **Downtown Potential**

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

### **Strategies**

- Bring more people downtown
  - Conduct a parking utilization study to determine parking supply and demand
  - Conduct more events downtown, building on D-Day
  - Prepare a branding marketing campaign to increase visitors and patrons to downtown
- Update the Zoning Code and Zoning Map to help achieve the goals for downtown
  - Revise the B-3 zoning boundaries:
    - Integrate State St and Broad St into Downtown, change M-1 zoning to B-3 zoning
    - Rezone predominately residential area (south of Madison and west of Mill St properties) to R-4

- Adjust parking standards to reflect contemporary standards, compact nature of downtown, and density of surrounding area
- Update the permitted uses and development standards to address apartments on upper floors of commercial buildings
- Establish appropriate design guidelines to ensure that new development is compatible with the historic downtown character – with buildings close to the street, parking next to or behind the building, a minimum amount of window display area on the first floor façade:
  - Establish a maximum building setback along Main Street to make sure new construction fits in
  - Require new construction along Liberty Street and the western end of Main Street where houses are still the dominate building form to respect the current building setback
- Improve site plan review procedures
- Improve the appearance of downtown
  - Enliven blank walls on downtown buildings with colorful murals
  - Reinvigorate the trees downtown
  - Create more green space, such as a pocket park in the vacant lot next to Orlandos
- Improve accessibility, outline infrastructure needs, identify locations for crosswalk ramp and signal improvements
- Create a fiber optics–supported, high-speed, broadband infrastructure to ensure connectivity for all businesses in downtown as well as for residents and businesses in the rest of the city
- Identify a location for a Veterans Memorial
- Implement the Civic Commons recommendations from the UDC 2014 Report shown below in order to extend the Downtown environment northward and improve the underpass area along Broad Street:
  - Creates better connections between downtown and the Library
  - Extends the Downtown environment north along Broad Street
  - Creates a public open space with tower element to help anchor the Broad/State street intersection
  - Improves the appearance of the hillside near the underpass with terraced landscaping, which can double as seating for the Soap Box Derby events.



Financing Efforts:

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

## Green Space Focus Group Session

### Attendees:

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

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

### Potential

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

### Partners include:

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

**Actions:**

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

- Dean Ave park – basketball court
  - Malek Park, needs significant improvements, identify primary purpose for park
- Create an improvement plan for the Sand Bar:
  - Dredge the area north of Naylor Drive (see also Harbor Focus Group discussion) to create more boat slips
  - Retain a portion of Sand Bar for a bird sanctuary
- Develop a strategy for using dredged material; Conduct a cost analysis of establishing a dewatering location

# Updated Vision/Goals

## Vision

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

- **Natural resources** (namely –Lake Erie, the river and streams); and,
- **Small town attributes and charm** (namely – size, historical context, location).

**Prosperous and vibrant means:**

1. Robust Businesses, Industry & Jobs
2. Stores, Restaurants and Other Services, With Bustling Downtown and Attractive Harbor Area
3. Good Stewards of Lake Erie, Conneaut Creek, Turkey Creek Etc.
4. Quality Recreation Activities - City Parks, Public Spaces, and Other Community Facilities
5. Clean And Well Maintained Properties (Both Renovation And New Construction.
6. Quality Services to Residents and Businesses
7. The Right Zoning, Funding and Incentives in Place

To achieve this vision, a **two-pronged approach is important to pursue simultaneously:**

- Stimulating **direct economic investment**; e.g. new construction and redevelopment
- Fostering **high standards of maintenance for existing buildings (which would also apply to new development)** – for residential and non-residential development alike.

In order to ensure that the **quality and amount of new investment is sustained** it is essential to also – and equally - sustain the **quality of the existing environment** in which the investments are being made. We are unlikely to achieve one without the other.

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

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## GOALS

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

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

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3. Preserve and enhance the positive qualities of Conneaut.

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

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

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

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

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

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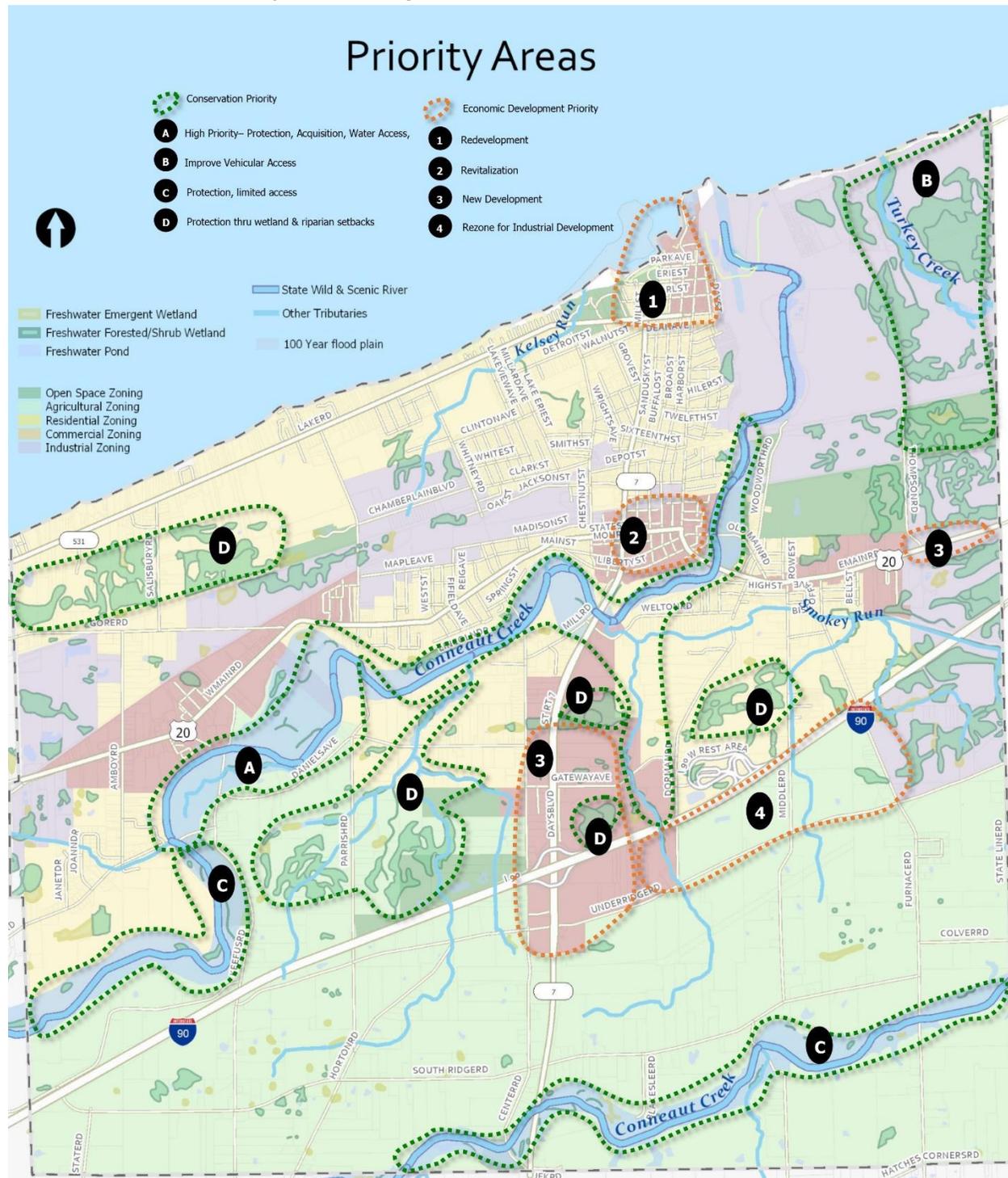
### Build on Our Strengths:

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

### Overcome the Challenges:

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

# “First Cut” Priority Development and Conservation Areas



**For Discussion:** This map reflects the discussions so far regarding areas that are priorities for encouraging and facilitating new development and for preserving/conserving natural areas. This does not preclude economic development outside the priority areas, which would continue to remain as currently zoned.

# Appendices

## Public Forum Responses

- Vision and Goals
- Fundamental Objectives
- Rt 7/I-90 Interchange
- Downtown
- Lakefront/Harbor
- Green Space
- City Character and Image

## Public Forum Responses

### Vision and Goals

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

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

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

## Fundamental Objectives “Responses

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

| Overcome Challenges                                                 | Important | Comments                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transportation Limitations                                          | 5         |                                                                                            |
| Waterfront Issues                                                   | 3         |                                                                                            |
| Economic Development:                                               |           |                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited Locations</li> </ul> | 3         | Make more building business ready (internet electrical, renovated)                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited Resources</li> </ul> | 1         |                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vacant Buildings</li> </ul>  | 5         |                                                                                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Zoning</li> </ul>            | 1         | Expand zoning, diversify building materials allowance (cobb/straw bale/shipping container) |
| Need To Expand Sewer Service                                        | 4         |                                                                                            |
| Maintain Housing Stock                                              | 5         |                                                                                            |
| Managing Green Space                                                | 5         |                                                                                            |
| Tourism Needs:                                                      |           |                                                                                            |
| Services/ Accommodations                                            | 3         |                                                                                            |
| Impact On Residential                                               | 1         |                                                                                            |
| Seasonality                                                         | 7         | Snowmobilers can't access downtown area due to city and state limitations                  |

### Other Challenges Added By Attendees:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We need city to be more walking and biking friendly. Trim the trees around sidewalks bike awareness signs throughout the city</li> <li>Targeted training for open roles- adult education</li> <li>Make I-90 exit “pretty”</li> <li>Need out of town landlords of retail space to set realistic rents</li> <li>Attract college/education facility</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First need a plan and budget for development that includes more connects port authority</li> <li>Community seems divided on change. It might have to some what comes from outside. We need family friendly for example miniature golf course and boat rides.</li> <li>Street parking getting out of control! Two points on RT 20 are becoming hazardous; you can't see oncoming traffic</li> <li>Tourist attraction features year round</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## RT 7/ I 90 Interchange Responses

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

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

- Adult stores
- trucking storage/equipment storage

### 2. Other comments, changes, additions?

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

## Downtown Responses

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

## Supplemental Questions

### 1. What would most improve downtown?

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

### 2. What types of businesses are needed downtown?

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

### 3. What are downtown's strengths?

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

### 4. Other comments, changes, additions?

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

## Lakefront/Harbor Responses

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

### Supplemental Questions

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

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

**2. Who should the harbor and lakefront cater to?**

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

**3. Other comments, changes, additions?**

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

## Green Space Responses

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

### Supplemental Questions

#### 1. What are your priorities for the City Parks?

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

#### 2. Which recreation facilities do you use most often?

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

| Facility           | Responses |
|--------------------|-----------|
| CYLO fields/Sparks | 0         |
| Other              | 0         |

#### 3. Other comments, changes, additions?

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

## City Character and Image Responses

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

### 1. What should Conneaut be known for?

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

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

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

### 3. Other comments, changes, additions?

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