

DRAFT

Village of Walton Hills



MASTER PLAN

2004

Prepared by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission

COVER: Walton Hills Village Hall complex at 7595 Walton Road. "The Village of Walton Hills is a semi-rural planned community. It is a community that provides its residents with the necessary services and affords them the opportunity of participating in planned recreational, social, business, and civic organizations. The Village of Walton Hills is a friendly community where residents live in harmony as good neighbors and concerned citizens." (from Village of Walton Hills Directory).

VILLAGE OF WALTON HILLS MASTER PLAN

DRAFT

December 2004

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Marlene B. Anielski

Village Council Members:

Dave Knapp, President

William L. Allen

George Main

Kevin Hurst

Jackie Vlk-Maire

Don Kolograf

Past Members:

Mary T. Dodeci

John Kuska

Charlene J. Silvestro

Appointed Master Plan Committee Members:

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VILLAGE OF WALTON HILLS MASTER PLAN

DRAFT

December 2004

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Comprehensive Community Planning

... and the Public Interest

The planning process exists to serve the public interest. While the public interest is a question of continuous debate, both in its general principles and in its case-by-case applications, it requires a conscientiously held view of the policies and actions that best serve the entire community.

American Planning Association
1992

... and its Value

Planning helps local officials and citizens to shape future development and re-development of the community. Its identification of major trends and issues helps lead to realistic and effective strategies. Planning determines community values, a vision and goals, and future direction. The process assures broad-based citizen participation, thereby creating a constituency for implementing plans. It positions the community to attract high quality development demanded by increasingly sophisticated residents and businesses. Planning increases the efficiency and quality of public utilities and services. Planning enhances economic development and employment opportunities, and helps protect the finite natural resources.

Gunnar Isberg, *Creating Successful Communities*
1997

CHAPTER 1

COMMUNITY GOALS



Village Hall and Community Hall buildings.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important elements in the development of a master plan is the formulation of community goals. Goals are general statements that reflect the broad ideals and desires of residents, stakeholders and elected officials with respect to their collective “vision” of their community’s future.

Community planning goals serve as a broad guide for master plan preparation. They form the framework within which recommendations and policy decisions set forth in the master plan must be structured. Goals also serve as a guide for master plan implementation and, ultimately, for the courts in determining whether such decisions involving land use and zoning matters are fair and equitable.

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY GOALS

In order to formulate goals that accurately reflect all viewpoints of the Walton Hills population, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission conducted a three-pronged strategy, which included:

- Working with the 17 members of the Master Plan Committee, appointed by the Mayor and Council. Identification and ranking of community strengths and weaknesses were conducted during meetings held during August and September of 2002;
- Interviewing key Village officials, including the six Councilpersons and Mayor during the August - October, 2002 period; and
- Conducting a *Community Attitudes Survey* of 200 randomly selected Walton Hills households to derive public perceptions of the Village.

A comprehensive report summarizing these three methods and derived findings can be found in *Appendix A*.

Based on the information assembled from the above activities, community planning goals were prepared, discussed and subsequently adopted by the Master Plan Committee at its January 22, 2003 meeting. The following goals, grouped by subject, are general statements which served as a guide throughout Master Plan preparation. The goals will also help direct the Village as it addresses future development issues and proposals.

COMMUNITY GOALS

“COUNTRY” LIFESTYLE

- ✓ Preserve and enhance the safe, rural/small town environment and character typifying Walton Hills that is favored by the overwhelming majority of Village residents and officials.
- ✓ Identify environmentally sensitive ways to preserve the benefits derived from wildlife while reducing conflicts – especially regarding deer.

COMMUNITY IMAGE, PROMOTION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

- ✓ Work to improve and promote the Village’s image to current and potential residents and businesses and improve the quality of life for all residents.

LOCAL ECONOMY AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS

- ✓ Assess the potential for new, quality commercial office/industrial developments within the Village and redevelopment of underutilized and marginal land and buildings.
- ✓ Work to retain existing businesses and promote the strategic regional locational advantages of the Village for future quality developments, particularly those that generate the highest revenues for the Village.
- ✓ Identify opportunities to maintain and expand the Village’s tax base and reduce the tax burden on existing homeowners.
- ✓ Assess the development potential for selected retail businesses, including restaurants, pharmacies/drug stores and supermarket/grocery stores.
- ✓ Identify and leverage public funds to the maximum extent possible to attract private investment for commercial expansion and redevelopment.
- ✓ Improve the appearance of the Northfield Road Corridor, including gateways and associated industrial areas.

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

- ✓ Leave the Bedford School system and aggressively pursue other options for providing a safe and effective education for the Village’s school-age children.

PUBLIC FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

- ✓ Continue to maintain the high-quality level of municipal services.
- ✓ Identify opportunities to improve public facilities and provision of services, particularly in areas of fire protection, emergency medical services, recreation, and senior services. Investigate the benefits of maintaining existing and forming new intergovernmental partnerships with nearby communities.
- ✓ Improve the Village’s ability to plan, manage and conduct infrastructure improvements, particularly for its roadways and water distribution system.
- ✓ Identify opportunities for a centralized, public assembly location, including improvements and expansion of the Village’s Community Room in the Community Hall building.
- ✓ Improve the Village’s financial accounting and reporting methods.
- ✓ Investigate improvements to public transportation (including Village provided transportation) that best meets residents’ and workers’ needs.
- ✓ Maintain existing, and develop new, services to enable residents to remain in their homes as they age, if they desire.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND FACILITIES

- ✓ Investigate and reevaluate the feasibility of completing the recommendations of the *T.G. Young Park Master Plan (2001)*.
- ✓ Improve and expand community recreational opportunities, particularly for adults and teens.
- ✓ Identify opportunities to partner with nearby communities in the provision of recreation to Village residents and/or to build our own affordable recreational and/or multi-use facilities.

HOUSING

- ✓ Work to maintain and improve residential market values.
- ✓ Assess the potential and feasibility of creating upscale senior housing (age 55 and older).
- ✓ Continue to maintain and improve the condition of the Village’s housing stock through improved enforcement of existing regulations.

CHAPTER 2

DEMOGRAPHICS

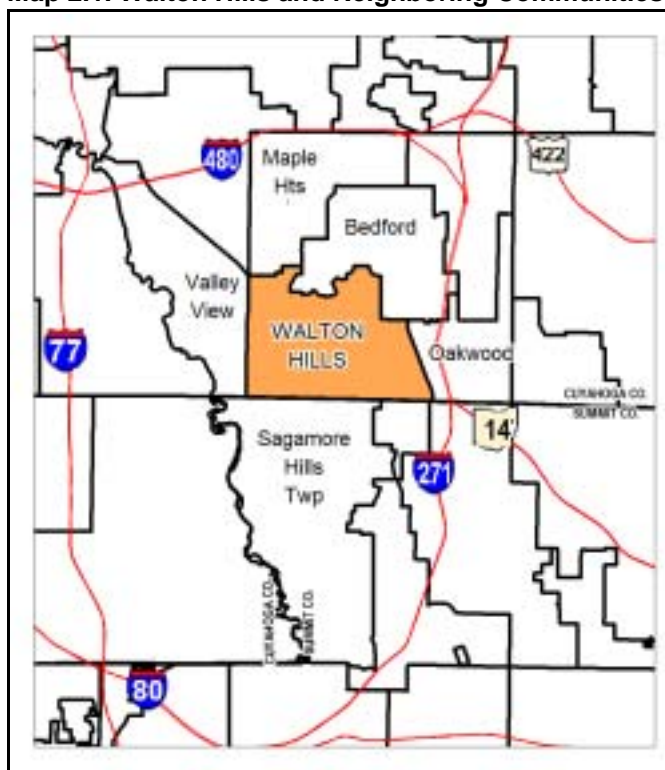


INTRODUCTION

A demographic analysis provides important insights about a community and serves, along with other findings, as a basis for the formulation of Master Plan recommendations and strategies. Provided in this chapter is a review of aspects of the Village's population, including age composition, household characteristics, income, employment and education. Also presented are overviews of the public school district, housing and the Village's tax base and finances. Current estimates, historic trends and future projections are presented when available. For comparison, the demographic characteristics of five selected neighboring (also referred to as "nearby" or "comparison") communities (*Map 2.1*) and Cuyahoga County are provided. Comparison communities are located in Cuyahoga County, except for Sagamore Hills Township which is in adjacent Summit County.

Unless otherwise noted, the data provided throughout this chapter are derived from the 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing, released in 2001 and 2002. Also included here and throughout the Master Plan are relevant findings from the *Community Attitudes Survey* which was mailed to a random sample of residents in September, 2002, as well as information collected from the Master Plan Committee, the six members of Village Council, the Mayor, and other Village officials. These referenced findings can be examined further in *Appendix A*.

Map 2.1. Walton Hills and Neighboring Communities

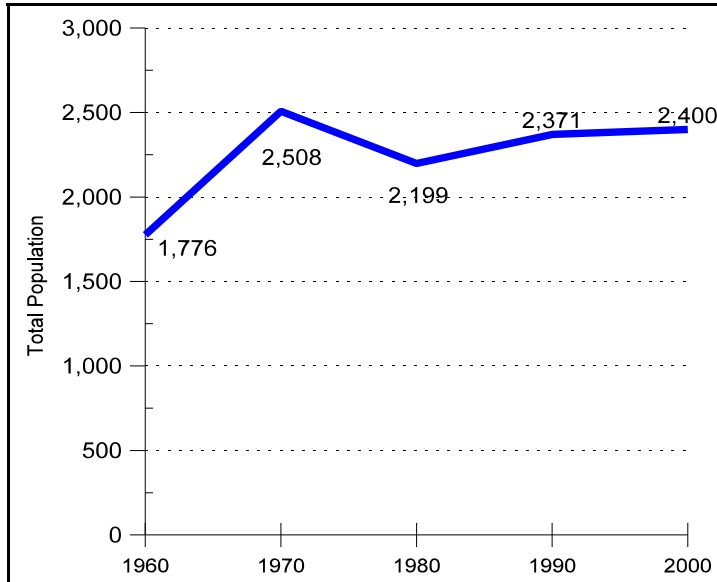


POPULATION

Population change in the Village of Walton Hills since 1960 is illustrated in *Figure 2.1*. Residential population in the Village peaked at 2,508 persons in 1970, following a steady growth period following World War II. During the past three decades, its population dropped slightly, recovered, and grew modestly to 2,400 persons in 2000. The 2003 population for the Village was 2,391 persons, according to the latest U.S. Census Bureau estimate.

Village population change over the past 40 years is compared with neighboring communities and Cuyahoga County in *Table 2.1*. The table demonstrates that the more populated neighbor-

Figure 2.1 Population Change, 1960-2000, Walton Hills



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960-2000.

ing communities located in the “inner ring” of Cuyahoga County (i.e., Bedford and Maple Heights) experienced notable population declines since 1970, while the more rural communities witnessed relative stability (Walton Hills) – even growth (Sagamore Hills and Valley View). See **Figure 2.2** for a graphic depiction of population change since the 1970 peak. A national phenomenon, inner ring population decline was prompted by the growing availability of autos and the rapid development of the interstate highway system following World War II. The result was migration of families from Cleveland and adjacent

suburbs to the large undeveloped tracts in the outer suburbs and beyond. Also contributing to population loss has been the steady decline in household size.

Table 2.1. Population Change, 1960-2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1960-2000
Bedford	15,223	17,552	15,056	14,822	14,214	-6.6%
Maple Heights	31,667	34,093	29,735	27,089	26,156	-17.4%
Oakwood	3,283	3,127	3,786	3,392	3,667	11.7%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	3,848	6,756	7,189	6,503	9,340	142.7%
Valley View	1,221	1,422	1,576	2,137	2,179	78.5%
WALTON HILLS	1,776	2,508	2,199	2,371	2,400	35.1%
Cuyahoga County*	1,647,895	1,721,300	1,498,400	1,412,140	1,393,845	-15.4%

*Revised 2000 Census count.

SOURCE: 1960-2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

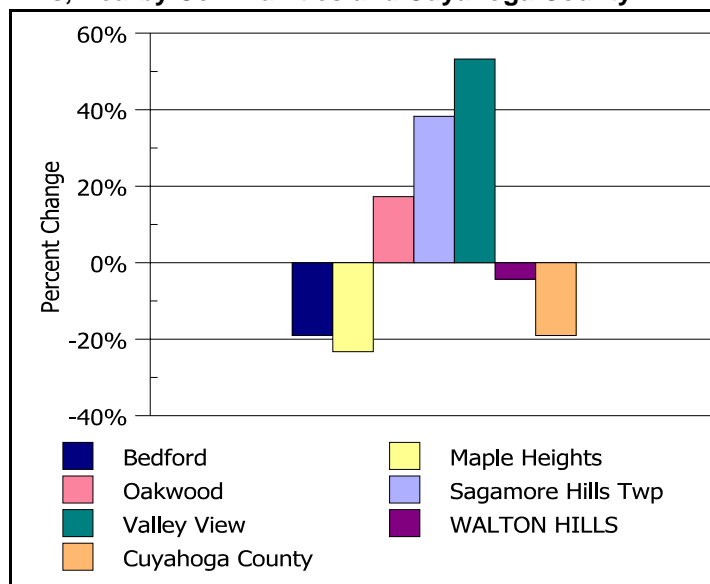
Population density can be calculated by dividing the total population of a jurisdiction by its land area. At less than one person/acre (0.54), the Village’s residential density is significantly lower than that found across Cuyahoga County (4.74 persons/acre). It is even notably lower than that found in four of the five neighboring communities (**Table 2.2**). Only Valley View demonstrates a similar density (0.60 persons/acre). Just a handful of communities located in Cuyahoga County host low population concentrations similar to that found in Walton Hills. *Community Attitudes Survey* findings reveal that almost 78% of responding residents moved

into the community for a *larger lot*. Appendix A findings clearly indicate that a majority of residents, Master Plan Committee members, and key Village officials highly value and wish to preserve the community’s “country” lifestyle. (For a related discussion of the evolution of the Village, land area and land use patterns, see Chapter 3).

Population projections are especially useful to indicate future needs for public facilities such as schools and police and fire stations. Numerous factors such as fertility and death rates, population migration, household size, and regional trends interact

to contribute to the formulation of projections. Other important considerations such as vacant land availability, zoning, and the economy also play important roles influencing the location and rate of new housing construction.

Figure 2.2. Percent Population Change, 1970-2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970-2000.

Table 2.2. Population Density, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	2000 Population Total	Total Area		Population Density (people/acre)
		Square Miles	Acres	
Bedford	14,214	5.35	3,424	4.15
Maple Heights	26,156	5.18	3,315	7.89
Oakwood	3,667	3.46	2,214	1.66
Sagamore Hills Twp.	9,340	11.31	7,238	1.29
Valley View	2,179	5.63	3,603	0.60
WALTON HILLS	2,400	6.90	4,416	0.54
Cuyahoga County*	1,393,845	459.25	293,920	4.75

*Revised 2000 Census count.

SOURCE: 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

One preliminary source of community population projections, the Northeast Areawide Coordinating Agency (*April, 2004*), identifies a peak Walton Hills population of 2,359 in year 2020 (and 2,330 in year 2030.) For comparison, a simple extrapolation of the Village’s modest population growth trend during the past ten years would indicate a peak population of

about 2,500 persons in Year 2020 (a five percent increase over today's residential population). Considering the community's desire to maintain its country lifestyle, coupled with these projection estimates, the Village's total residential population can be expected to change little during the upcoming ten years covered by this Master Plan.

Age composition of a population also plays a role in the identification of a community's current and future public facility and programming needs. The future age profile of a community is greatly influenced by powerful and broad trends occurring beyond its borders.

Because of advances in healthcare, healthier lifestyles and declining birth rates, the nation is quickly nearing a time when the proportion of older adults will surpass youth. The fastest growing sector of our population is persons aged 85 and older. Today, nationally, Cuyahoga County is one of the "oldest" counties in the United States, second only to counties located in the Sunbelt states. Across the nation and in Cuyahoga County, the greatest increases in **elderly population** are occurring in the suburbs. As baby boomers are absorbed into the ranks of the elderly, our older population will "explode over the next 30 years" (*A Plan for Successful Aging in Greater Cleveland, The Cleveland Foundation, March 8, 2002*). "Baby boomers" is the large bulge in the U.S. population (born between 1946 and 1964) resulting from the deferral of childbearing during World War II (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging*).

The national and regional trends described above are greatly magnified in Walton Hills. The number of adults over the age of 45 years in the Village surpassed those under 45 years of age in the 1980's. Remarkably, among Cuyahoga County's 59 communities, the Village has the second highest proportion of older residents! According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the percentage of Village residents over the age of 60 years (33.8%) is second only to Beachwood (40.3%). The **median age** of Village residents has increased from 39.5 years in 1980, to 44.3 years in 1990, to almost 49 years in 2000. This increase is consistent with the national trend of baby boomers growing older. (For comparison, the median age across Cuyahoga County today is 37.3 years) The aging phenomenon is very evident in **Table 2.3**, where the largest age cohorts in the Village in 2000 are those over 35 years of age (about 71% of the total population). Since 1980, those age groups within the Village experiencing the greatest growth include *75+ years* (from 50 to 342 residents), followed by *65-74 years* (from 150 to 372 residents). Since 1980, the largest decline occurred in the age band *under 24 years* (**Figure 2.3**).

The implications for a community with a large and growing elder population are many. The proportional increase in older residents will place considerable stress on family members, friends, neighbors, and on the resources and delivery of municipal services. Local governments have already and increasingly will be facing even greater challenges creating physical and social environments as well as services which support the needs of older adults.

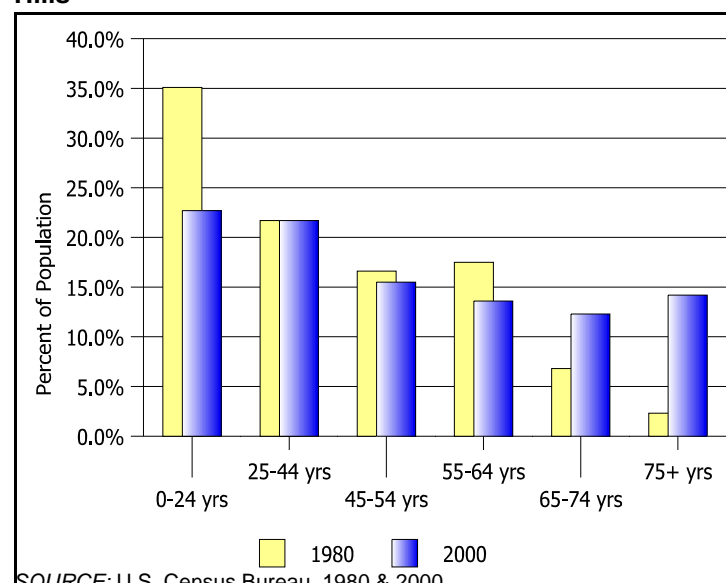
Table 2.3. Age Composition, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	Total Pop	0-9 yrs	10-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-44 yrs	45-54 yrs	55-64 yrs	65-74 yrs	75+ yrs
Bedford	14,214	11.8%	10.5%	5.0%	15.7%	17.2%	12.5%	8.4%	8.4%	10.3%
Maple Heights	26,156	13.9%	14.1%	4.4%	13.5%	17.4%	12.6%	7.5%	7.9%	8.6%
Oakwood	3,667	10.8%	12.9%	5.2%	10.1%	13.5%	16.0%	10.8%	9.1%	11.7%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	9,340	11.6%	9.8%	3.5%	14.1%	17.7%	15.6%	13.0%	8.2%	6.6%
Valley View	2,179	10.9%	15.7%	5.0%	7.0%	16.8%	20.4%	10.2%	9.1%	4.8%
WALTON HILLS	2,400	8.2%	10.6%	3.9%	6.3%	15.4%	15.5%	13.6%	12.3%	14.2%
Cuyahoga County*	1,393,978	13.8%	11.2%	8.0%	13.5%	15.7%	13.5%	8.7%	7.7%	7.9%

*Revised 2000 Census count.

SOURCE: 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 2.3. Age Composition Change, 1980-2000, Walton Hills



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980 & 2000

The leading **ancestral groups** in Walton Hills, according to the 2000 U.S. Census, include German (22.1%), followed closely by Italian (20.0%) and Polish (18.3%). Smaller groups include Irish (10.0%), Slovak (9.2%), and English (8.9%). Combined, these five ancestral classifications represent almost 89% of the Village’s population. Only a small portion (2.9%) of the Village’s residents identified their **racial composition** as other than “White”.

The **number of households** in Walton Hills today (903) is about 32% higher than in 1970 (682).

Table 2.4 illustrates that each of

the neighboring communities experienced increases during the past 30 years, from a low of almost 4% in Maple Heights, to a high of almost 98% in Valley View. Overall, Cuyahoga County witnessed a lower rate of growth (3.1%) in number of households.

Table 2.4. Households and Household Size, 1970-2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	Total Households		Average HH Size		Percent Change	
	1970	2000	1970	2000	Total Households	Average HH Size
Bedford	5,444	6,659	3.21	2.13	22.3%	-33.6%
Maple Heights	10,104	10,489	3.36	2.47	3.8%	-26.5%
Oakwood	925	1,416	3.36	2.43	53.1%	-27.7%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	2,943	3,818	3.65	2.37	29.7%	-35.1%
Valley View	394	779	3.61	2.80	97.7%	-22.4%
WALTON HILLS	682	903	3.68	2.53	32.4%	-31.3%
Cuyahoga County*	554,239	571,437	3.06	2.39	3.1%	-21.9%

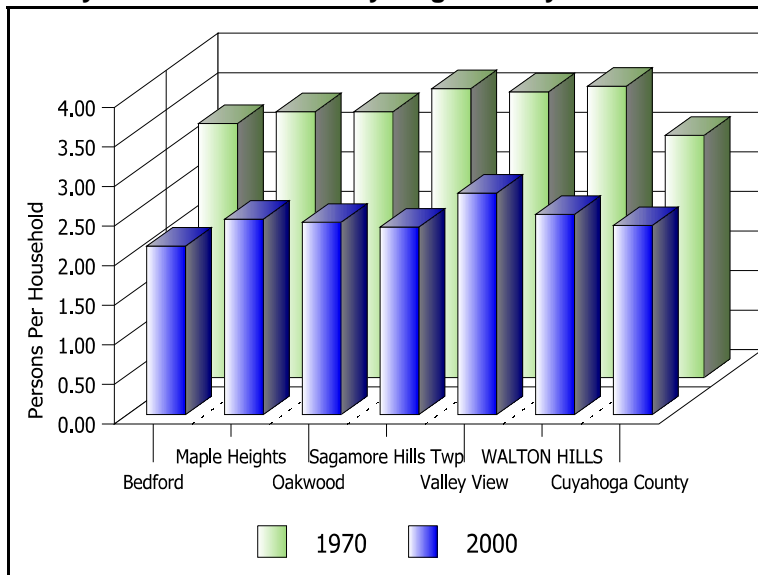
*Revised 2000 Census count.

SOURCE: 1970 and 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

Reflecting national trends, the Village, nearby communities and Cuyahoga County have notably smaller **household sizes** today than during the peak population era of the 1970's. In Walton Hills, while the number of households grew by 221, the size of the average household shrunk significantly, from 3.68 to 2.53 persons (resulting in a net population loss of about 108 persons). The Village's drop in household size (31.3%) appears somewhat typical when viewed in the context of the neighboring communities, whose declines range from 22.4% (Valley View) to 35.1% (Sagamore Hills Township). A graphic depiction of the changes in household size is provided in *Figure 2.4*. More single-person households, higher divorce

rates, fewer children per family, and other factors combine to prompt smaller household sizes which, in turn, contribute to the lower populations residing in many communities today.

Figure 2.4. Change in Household Size, 1970-2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 1970 & 2000.

While it was demonstrated earlier that elder households predominate in Walton Hills (leading all other County communities except Beachwood), Village **householders over the age of 65 living alone** (10.0%) is slightly below the level found across Cuyahoga County (12.1%) and within most neighboring communities (see

Table 2.5). This indicates that a large majority of older Village residents are aging with a spouse or with younger family members.

Table 2.5. Householders 65 Years of Age and Over Living Alone, 1990-2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County.

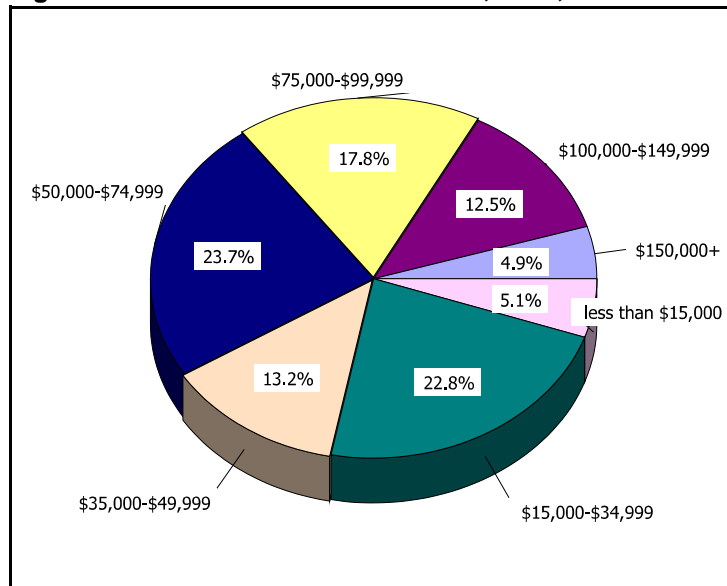
Community	Householder 65 or over Living Alone			
	1990	2000		% Change 1990-2000
		Number	%	
Bedford	894	1,082	16.2%	21.0%
Maple Heights	1,356	1,309	12.5%	-3.5%
Oakwood	161	202	14.3%	25.5%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	189	305	8.0%	61.4%
Valley View	25	53	6.8%	112.0%
WALTON HILLS	88	90	10.0%	2.3%
Cuyahoga County	68,539	68,888	12.1%	0.5%

SOURCE: 1990 and 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

The **median household income** in Walton Hills in 2000 was \$62,321. For comparison, the median income across Cuyahoga County was much lower at \$39,168. Among neighboring communities, only median household incomes in Valley View (\$64,063) and Sagamore Hills Township (\$67,401) exceeded that of the Village. Estimated **household income ranges** in Walton Hills in 2000 are provided in **Figure 2.5**. In line with the Village’s high elder population, a significant portion of Village households receive their annual earnings from **retirement (26.7%) and social security (35.6%) income**. These percentages exceed those for Cuyahoga County overall and those found in all nearby communities.

Compared to the Cuyahoga County average and neighboring communities, Walton Hills demonstrates a relatively low proportion of residents over 16 years of age who are in the **labor**

Figure 2.5. Household Annual Income, 2000, Walton Hills



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

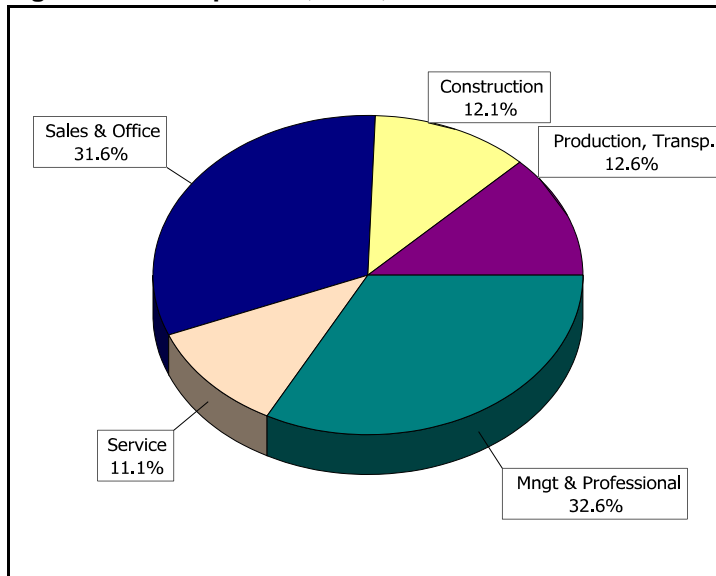
force (53.4%), reported in **Table 2.6** – A higher elder population indicates a higher number of retired workers. For comparison, across Cuyahoga County and among nearby communities, employed persons represent higher percentages of the work-eligible labor force (ranging from 58.6% for the County to 70.1% in Sagamore Hills Township). Walton Hills and neighboring communities’ **unemployment rates**, at the time of the U.S. Census (April, 2000), were calculated at 2.7%, lower than that of the County rate at that time. This fluctuating statistic and labor trends are discussed further in *Chapter 5: Economic Development and Market Analysis*.

Table 2.6. Labor Force Characteristics, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	Persons 16 years and over					
	Total	In Labor Force	Civilian Labor Force			
			Employed	%	Unemployed	%
Bedford	11,535	7,226	6,979	60.5%	247	2.1%
Maple Heights	20,114	12,985	12,304	61.2%	670	3.3%
Oakwood	2,879	1,742	1,695	58.9%	47	1.6%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	7,701	5,493	5,396	70.1%	97	1.3%
Valley View	1,718	1,130	1,105	64.3%	25	1.5%
WALTON HILLS	2,059	1,155	1,099	53.4%	56	2.7%
Cuyahoga County	1,083,541	676,874	634,419	58.6%	41,778	3.9%

SOURCE: 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

Figure 2.6. Occupations, 2000, Walton Hills



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Table 2.7 details occupational data for Walton Hills, neighboring communities and Cuyahoga County. **Figure 2.6** illustrates that the highest percentage of the Village work force is employed in *Management/Professional* (32.6%) and *Sales/Office* (31.6%) positions. The Village’s occupational profile is not unlike its neighbors and the County as a whole. Perhaps the most notable departure is a somewhat higher reported percentage (12.1%) of workers engaged in *Construction/Extraction/Maintenance* – almost double the County rate of 6.7%.

Table 2.7. Occupations, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

	Management & Professional	Service	Sales & Office	Farming, Fishing, Forestry	Construction, Extraction, Maintenance	Production, Transportation, Material moving
Bedford	27.1%	14.2%	30.2%	0.0%	9.9%	18.7%
Maple Heights	25.2%	14.8%	30.6%	0.2%	7.2%	21.9%
Oakwood	28.9%	11.9%	26.1%	0.0%	10.3%	22.9%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	45.1%	8.8%	31.2%	0.0%	5.8%	9.1%
Valley View	37.9%	13.1%	28.9%	0.4%	9.9%	9.9%
WALTON HILLS	32.6%	11.1%	31.6%	0.0%	12.1%	12.6%
Cuyahoga County	34.8%	14.9%	28.7%	0.1%	6.7%	14.9%

SOURCE: 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

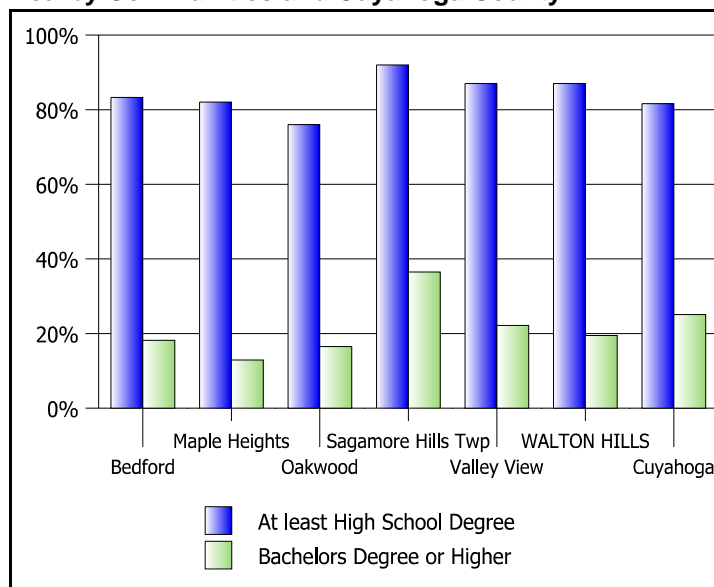
Not unlike other Cuyahoga County suburbs, the Village of Walton Hills has numerous employment opportunities, but most residents work outside the Village. The most recent and comprehensive **journey-to-work** data for the Village is derived from the 2000 U.S. Census. Census results indicate an increase in mean travel time for Village workers, from 21.7 minutes in 1990 to 24.6 minutes in 2000 (one-way). This modest increase in commute time since 1990 is not unlike that experienced by neighboring communities, where trip times now range from 20.9 minutes (Valley View) to 25.9 minutes (Oakwood). Today, most Walton Hills workers commute alone in a private vehicle (87.6%) or carpool with others (8.7%) to the job. About 3.5% of Village residents work at home, not unlike that found elsewhere in the region. Census-reported Village workers' use of public transportation to commute to and from employment locations is insignificant (0.2%). Public transportation is discussed further in *Chapter 4: Public Facilities and Infrastructure*.

Working households responding to the *Community Attitudes Survey* indicated that their most common employment location is in Cleveland (27). The next most common destinations include Bedford (13), Solon (12), and Walton Hills (11). The balance of reporting Walton Hills workers have employment destinations which are widely scattered throughout the region. Walton Hills continues to be an important employment destination, attracting non-resident workers from throughout northeastern Ohio. Presently, roughly 130 businesses employ almost 4,300 workers in the Village. The well developed regional highway system and its proximity serve to greatly enhance access to the Village as well as reduce its workforce's travel time to distant employment destinations (also see *Chapter 3: Land Use* and *Chapter 5: Economic Development and Market Analysis*).

EDUCATION

Figure 2.7 displays the **levels of education achieved** by residents in the Village, nearby communities and Cuyahoga County. In all neighboring communities except Oakwood, at least 82.2% of the residents possess a high school diploma (Oakwood's rate is 76.6%). The communities with the greatest proportion of residents who completed high school include Sagamore Hills Township (91.5%), followed by Walton Hills (87.1%) and Valley View (86.8%). The County average is 81.6%. In terms of higher education, the same three communities lead with persons

Figure 2.7. Educational Attainment, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

enrolled students totaled 3,810 (**Table 2.8**). Among the four school districts servicing Walton Hills and its neighboring communities, both the Nordonia Hills School District and Cuyahoga Heights School District demonstrated an enrollment increase during the 1998/1999 through 2003/2004 school years (7.5% and 2.5% respectively).

Illustrated in **Figure 2.8**, the majority of students enrolled in the Bedford City School District during the 2003/2004 school year lived in the cities of Bedford and Bedford Heights (85.1%), followed by Oakwood (13.5%) and Walton Hills (1.5%). **Table 2.9** demonstrates that just 56 students from Walton Hills were enrolled in the District in the 2003/2004 school year, down a significant 50.9% over the last seven years. For comparison, the U.S. Census estimated that 329 K-12th grade school-eligible children were enrolled in public and private schools (excluding home-schooled children) at the end of the 1999/2000 school year. This rough comparison of different school years suggests that only about 17% of Walton Hills' school-age children (about

who have earned a Bachelor's degree or higher. However, only the percent of higher education degrees earned by Sagamore Hills Township residents (36.5%) exceeds the proportion earned across Cuyahoga County (25.1%). For comparison, the 2000 Census reported all-time highs in the nation's educational attainment over previous censuses; 84% (High School diploma) and 26% (Bachelor's degree or higher).

Walton Hills is served by the **Bedford City (Public) School District**. The District also encompasses Oakwood, Bedford and Bedford Heights. Based on official reporting by the District for the 2003/2004 school year,

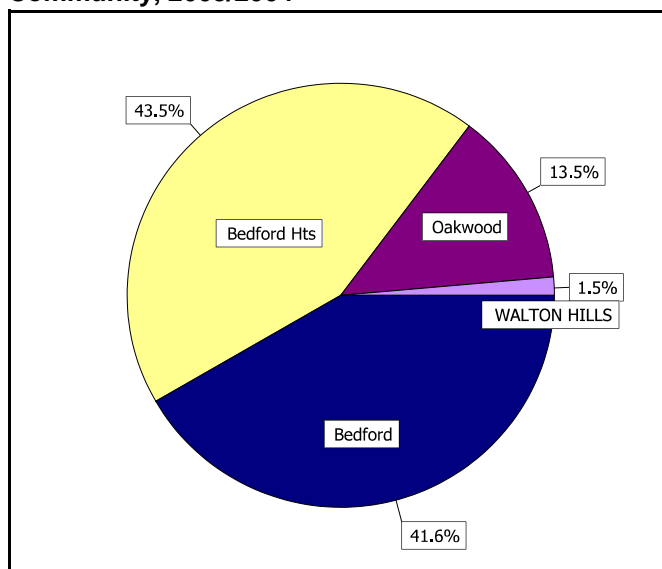
1 in 6) are enrolled in the public schools of the Bedford City School District. A similar comparison of all nearby communities reveals enrollment rates exceeding 80%!

Table 2.8. Public School Enrollment, 1998/1999-2003/2004, Walton Hills and Nearby Communities

Community	1998/ 1999	1999/ 2000	2000/ 2001	2001/ 2002	2002/ 2003	2003/ 2004	% Change 1998-2003
Bedford School District <i>Bedford</i> Bedford Heights <i>Oakwood</i> WALTON HILLS	4,115	4,025	4,013	3,925	3,903	3,810	-7.4%
Maple Heights School District <i>Maple Heights</i>	3,936	3,882	3,932	3,774	3,721	3,650	-7.3%
Nordonia Hills School District Boston Heights Northfield Center Northfield Village Macedonia Sagamore Hills Twp.	3,563	3,608	3,595	3,674	3,687	3,831	7.5%
Cuyahoga Hts School District Brooklyn Heights Cuyahoga Heights Valley View	836	819	834	821	806	857	2.5%

SOURCE: Ohio Department of Education.

Figure 2.8. Bedford School District Enrollment by Community, 2003/2004



According to the latest information provided by the Ohio Department of Education, the Bedford City School District expended approximately \$11,158 per pupil during the 2003/2004 school year. Countywide, the average annual spending per pupil is similar. While the District approximates the State's 94.5% student attendance rate (at 94.9%), the Bedford City School District had a 78.6% graduation rate, lower than the State average of 84.3%. Additional District profile information can be found at www.ode.state.oh.us.

Table 2.9. Enrollment Change in Bedford School District by Community, 1997/1998-2003/2004.

	1997/1998	2003/2004	% Change 1997-2003
Bedford	1,531	1,584	3.5%
Bedford Heights	1,838	1,657	-9.8%
Oakwood	582	513	-11.9%
WALTON HILLS	114	56	-50.9%
Total	4,065	3,810	-6.3%

SOURCE: The Bedford City School District.

Proficiency tests are mandated by the State of Ohio and are required for grades 3, 4, 6, and 9. Each school district is challenged to meet 18 performance indicators. According to the 2003/2004 District Report Card, the Bedford City School District met just 7 Ohio performance standards and was rated in a state of “Continuous Improvement”. While the number of standards decreased from 27 to 18 since the 2000/2001 Report Card, this rating represents an improvement from “Academic Watch” for the previous school year. Most of the unmet standards are demonstrated by students taking the grades 4 and 6 proficiency tests, but all grade levels scored low in math proficiency.

Bedford City School District **enrollment projections** through 2010 are shown in *Table 2.10*. The District anticipates that enrollment systemwide will continue to decrease throughout this period. Each of the grade level groupings are projected to experience enrollment declines except the aggregated high school years, which demonstrate a modest increase. District wide, the projected 8% drop in enrollment from the 2003/2004 school year, if realized, will have adverse impacts on the school system.

Table 2.10. Enrollment Projections By Grade Level, Bedford School District, 2003/2004 through 2009/2010

Grade Level	Projected Enrollment		
	2003/2004	2006/2007	2009/2010
Pre-School & Kindergarten	265	265	265
Elementary/Grades 1-4	1,033	931	931
Intermediate/Grades 5-6	637	553	487
Middle/Grades 7-8	657	608	533
High/Grades 9-12	1,195	1,310	1,249
TOTAL	3,787	3,667	3,465

SOURCE: Bedford City School District Treasurer, March 2003.

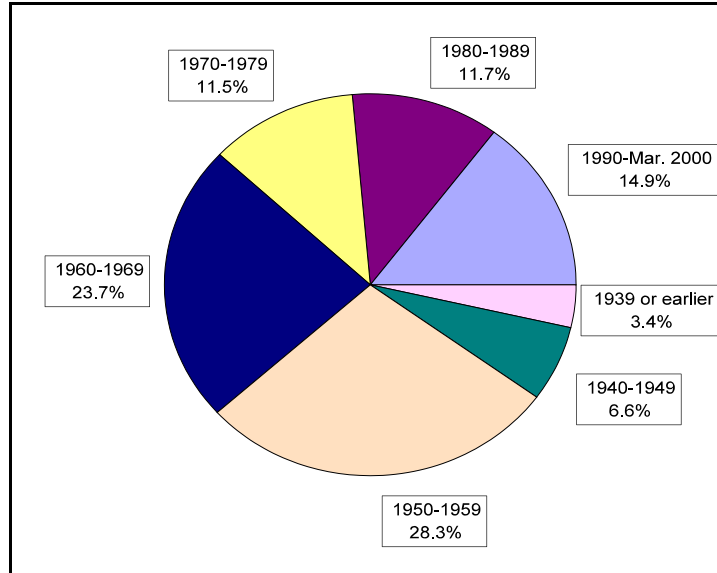
Additional information pertaining to the school district’s facilities is found in *Chapter 4: Public Facilities and Infrastructure*.

Demographics 2.12

HOUSING

Most housing construction in Walton Hills occurred during the 1950-1969 period, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (*Figure 2.9*). Over half of all Village housing was built during the decades of the 1950's and 1960's. Only about three of every 100 homes pre-date World War II. In each decade since 1970, between 101 (1970's) and 131 (1990's) new homes were constructed. On an annual basis, this translates to an average of about 10-13 new homes per year. See *Table 2.11* for a historic comparison of Village home-building to neighboring communities and Cuyahoga County.

Figure 2.9. Year Residential Structure Built, Walton Hills



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

Table 2.11. Year Residential Structure Built, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	1939 or earlier	1940-1949	1950-1959	1960-1969	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-Mar. 2000
Bedford	1,467	770	1,858	1,136	833	761	237
Maple Heights	1,461	1,958	4,167	2,131	943	173	102
Oakwood	134	249	233	288	222	120	192
Sagamore Hills Twp.	117	375	312	778	884	322	1,546
Valley View	108	86	97	115	73	192	115
WALTON HILLS	30	65	257	224	101	103	131
Cuyahoga County	177,746	83,139	128,497	94,706	64,007	33,571	35,237

SOURCE: 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

Duration of householder residency is presented in *Table 2.12* for Walton Hills, neighboring communities and Cuyahoga County. According to U.S. Census findings, a larger portion of Village residents have lived in their homes longer than those residing in nearby communities and across the County. Almost 38% of Village families moved into their homes over 20 years ago.

Findings from the *Community Attitudes Survey* indicate that a somewhat higher percentage (47.4%) of Village residents have lived in the community for more than 20 years (accounts for moves within the Village). Thus, a high proportion of the Village's elder residents have "aged in place" as they raised their families and neared retirement (compared to the balance of the region).

Table 2.12. Year Householder Moved Into Residence, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	Total Occupied Units	1969 or earlier	1970-1979	1980-1989	1990-1998	1999-Mar. 2000
Bedford	6,659	15.2%	8.6%	13.8%	43.8%	18.7%
Maple Heights	10,489	21.8%	10.9%	14.6%	41.6%	11.1%
Oakwood	1,372	14.0%	17.1%	13.7%	40.9%	14.3%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	3,818	6.0%	10.9%	15.0%	51.0%	17.1%
Valley View	771	20.1%	14.3%	27.8%	33.3%	4.5%
WALTON HILLS	895	24.4%	13.5%	23.4%	35.1%	3.7%
Cuyahoga County	571,457	14.6%	11.3%	15.4%	41.5%	17.2%

SOURCE: 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

While the U.S. Census Bureau does not typically report on the **exterior physical condition** of housing, a study conducted by the Cuyahoga County Department of Development and the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission is helpful in assessing condition. In order to assist in the implementation of various Department of Development housing revitalization programs, the CPC developed a methodology of comprehensive and standardized field surveys and mathematical standards to identify "blighted" residential (and other) areas. The methodology was approved by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in 1984, and reaffirmed in 1991 and 2002.

Although some 20 residential properties scattered throughout the Village were identified in 1998 demonstrating roof, exterior wall, windows/doors, and grounds repair needs, no blight concentrations were identified. In 2002, another field survey was conducted in the Village to assess the exterior condition of homes. Approximately 18 residential properties were identified demonstrating exterior wall, garage, window/doors, porch/steps, and building grounds repair needs. No blight concentrations were identified.

The number of **housing units** and associated occupancy information for Walton Hills, nearby communities and Cuyahoga County are summarized in *Table 2.13*. The number of housing units available in Walton Hills (911) grew 9.5% between 1990 and 2000. At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census, just 16 of those units were vacant (including unoccupied homes for sale), demonstrating the highest occupancy rate (98.2%) among the five communities in the immediate vicinity. Among the comparison communities, Sagamore Hills Township demon-

strated the greatest gain in housing units since 1990 (61.5%), reflecting notable new home construction activity. The lowest net gains in housing units during the 1990-2000 period were realized by Bedford and Maple Heights, the two most densely developed comparison communities.

Table 2.13. Housing Units and Occupancy, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	Total Housing Units	Occupied Housing Units		Vacant Units	% Change 1990-2000 Total Housing Units
		Number	%	Number	
Bedford	7,062	6,659	94.3%	403	-0.2%
Maple Heights	10,935	10,489	95.9%	446	1.3%
Oakwood	1,480	1,416	95.7%	64	9.3%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	4,022	3,818	94.9%	204	61.5%
Valley View	794	779	98.1%	15	14.9%
WALTON HILLS	911	895	98.2%	16	9.5%
Cuyahoga County*	616,876	571,457	92.6%	45,446	2.0%

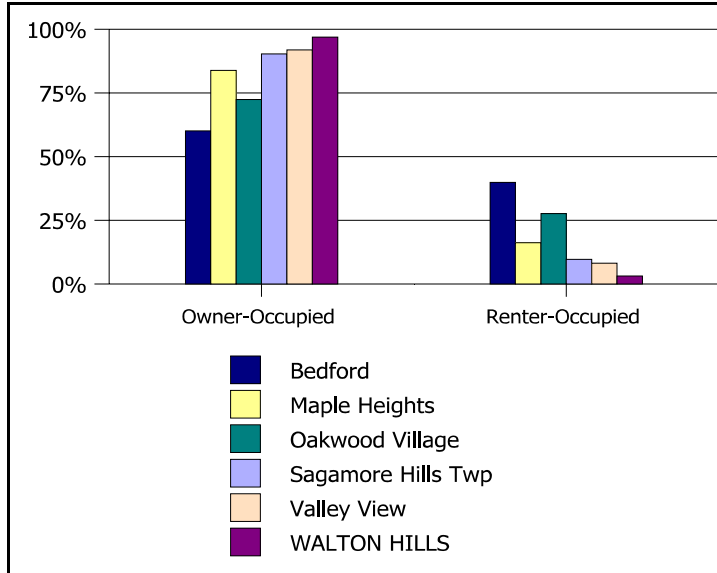
*Revised 2000 Census count.

SOURCE: Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

Housing tenure refers to owner- or renter-occupied status. *Figure 2.10* illustrates that, in 2000, about 97% (875) of the Village's 895 occupied housing units were occupied by the property owner(s). According the U.S. Census in 2000, the remaining 3% of Village housing units (28) were occupied by renters. For comparison, 36.8% of all housing units in Cuyahoga County were rentals. Among the 59 communities in Cuyahoga County, only two (Bentleyville and Highland Heights) have higher rates of owner-occupancy than Walton Hills. This is a somewhat less surprising statistic when considering that the overwhelming majority of housing units in the Village (except two) are single-family, detached structures. *NOTE: Group quarters such as the Walton Manor Health Care Center are not included here.* Among neighboring communities, the highest rates for renter-occupied housing are found in Bedford and Oakwood Village. Since 1990, the rates of owner-vs-renter occupancy in Walton Hills and among the nearby communities have changed little.

Housing vacancy rates for communities in the vicinity of Walton Hills at the time of the 2000 U.S. Census were higher for rental units than for owner-occupied units, as would be expected (*Table 2.14*). For owner-occupied units, vacancy rates ranged from 0.3% in Valley View to 1.8% in Maple Heights. The Walton Hills vacancy rate was 0.7%. Rental vacancy rates ranged from 2.5% in Valley View to 19.5% in Sagamore Hills Township. During the same period, Cuyahoga County owner- and renter-occupied housing unit vacancy rates averaged 1.4% and 9.4%, respectively.

Figure 2.10. Housing Tenure: Owner/Renter Occupancy, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

The value of *specified owner-occupied housing* in Walton Hills, nearby communities and Cuyahoga County is summarized in **Table 2.15**. (According to the U.S. Census Bureau - see www.census.gov). In early 2000, the majority of housing units in Walton Hills were valued between \$150,000 and \$199,999. The median value of homes in the Village in 2000 was \$179,900, slightly lower than in Sagamore Hills Township (\$187,400) and Valley View (\$190,400), but considerably higher than found in other nearby communities and across Cuyahoga County. A graphic depiction of median housing values is provided in **Figure 2.11**.

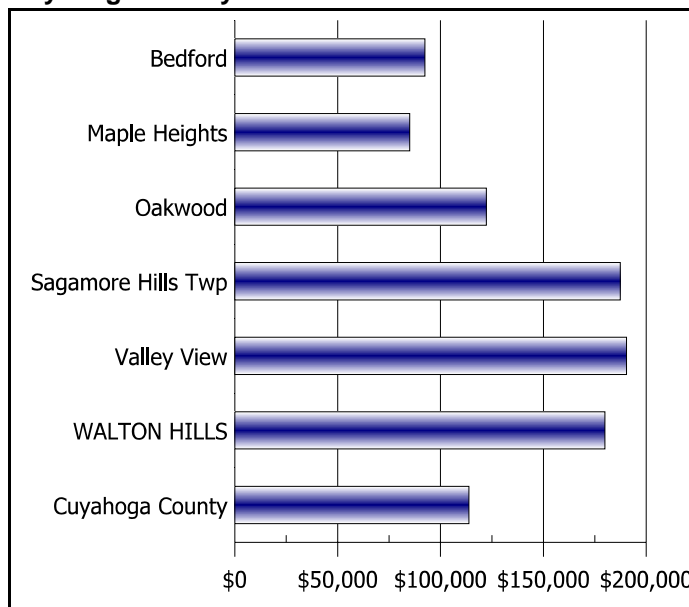
Table 2.14. Housing Vacancy Rates Change, 1990-2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	2000 Homeowner Vacancy Rate	2000 Rental Vacancy Rate	% Change 1990-2000	
			Homeowner Vacancy Rate	Rental Vacancy Rate
Bedford	1.4%	8.1%	180.0%	-38.2%
Maple Heights	1.8%	5.7%	80.0%	35.7%
Oakwood	1.1%	4.9%	57.1%	-27.9%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	1.5%	19.5%	-28.6%	550.0%
Valley View	0.3%	4.5%	-40.0%	136.8%
WALTON HILLS	0.7%	6.7%	75.0%	-13.0%
Cuyahoga County	1.4%	9.4%	27.3%	2.2%

SOURCE: 1990 and 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

The fluctuating **median sale prices of single-family homes sold** (existing and newly constructed) in Walton Hills, neighboring communities and Cuyahoga County during the 1999-2003 period are provided in **Table 2.16**. Not surprisingly, prices have trended upward during the past five years. However, median home sale price increases in Walton Hills (13.1%) have trailed the County increase (19.6%) and those realized by most of the other nearby communities. For a discussion of Village home market values, see *Appendix B*.

Figure 2.11. Median Value of Owner-Occupied Housing, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Community Communities and Cuyahoga County



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

The reported **number of sales** of existing and newly constructed units for the past five years is presented in **Table 2.17**. Sales vary considerably among neighboring

Table 2.15. Value* of Specified Owner-Occupied Housing Units, 2000, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,000	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 or more	Median Value
Bedford	62	2,337	1,186	142	-	27	\$92,400
Maple Heights	171	7,014	1,153	39	27	7	\$85,000
Oakwood	63	243	362	145	63	-	\$122,300
Sagamore Hills Twp.	-	129	581	986	1,113	150	\$187,400
Valley View	4	87	138	145	289	18	\$190,400
WALTON HILLS	-	26	138	421	255	17	\$179,900
Cuyahoga County	17,487	112,004	96,988	46,133	29,903	17,471	\$113,800

*Not adjusted for inflation.

SOURCE: 2000 Census of Population & Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

communities because of the variety and volume of existing housing stock offered. The lowest level of new construction sales during this period took place in Valley View, with just ten sales. Walton Hills tallied 22 new construction sales during the same period. (Note: More homes may have been constructed than were sold during the annual periods reported here).

Almost 160 **residential building permits** were issued by the Village during 2003. In addition to new homes (7), permits were issued for additions (10), accessory buildings (11), and miscellaneous improvements (122). Construction value totalled \$2,445,565 (*Building Department Manager, January 12, 2004*).

Table 2.16. Median Single-Family Home Sales Price* Change, 1999-2003, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	% Change 1999-2003
Bedford	\$89,500	\$88,000	\$95,000	\$102,500	\$107,900	20.6%
Maple Heights	\$80,500	\$83,250	\$87,000	\$90,000	\$92,000	14.3%
Oakwood	\$79,950	\$96,000	\$115,000	\$109,000	\$90,688	13.4%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Valley View	\$183,500	\$153,000	\$229,000	\$232,500	\$225,000	22.6%
WALTON HILLS	\$170,000	\$180,450	\$189,200	\$194,250	\$192,225	13.1%
Cuyahoga County	\$102,000	\$107,500	\$111,000	\$116,000	\$122,000	19.6%

*Not adjusted for inflation.

SOURCE: Sale Price Summary, Cleveland State University NODIS and Housing Policy Research Program.

Table 2.17. Number of Single-Family and New Construction Home Sales, 1999-2003, Walton Hills, Nearby Communities and Cuyahoga County

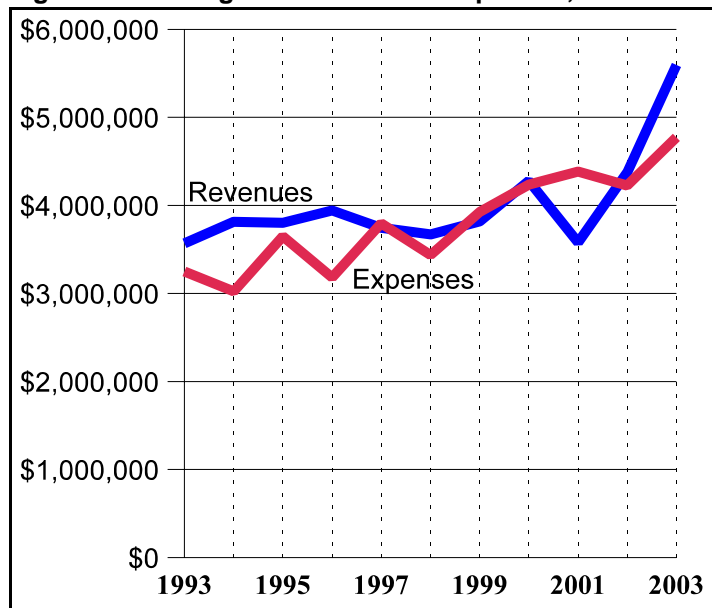
Community	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Single-Family	New	Single-Family	New	Single-Family	New	Single-Family	New	Single-Family	New
Bedford	249	4	213	8	178	6	213	1	233	10
Maple Heights	545	7	526	7	459	11	528	6	527	10
Oakwood	42	5	33	3	41	7	35	6	34	7
Sagamore Hills Twp.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Valley View	15	5	17	1	13	0	16	0	19	4
WALTON HILLS	21	3	20	1	22	2	14	6	46	10
Cuyahoga County	18,113	478	16,753	379	16,805	382	17,755	995	17,911	1,298

SOURCE: Sale Price Summary, Cleveland State University NODIS and Housing Policy Research Program.

TAXES AND VILLAGE FINANCES

A municipality's fiscal situation is an important determinant of its ability to provide quality levels of public services and sufficiently maintain its infrastructure. This section examines Walton Hills' financial profile in terms of revenues and expenditures. A review of the Village's revenue sources, expenditures by category, and historical trends – in combination with other derived indicators – reveals both strengths and weaknesses within Walton Hill's fiscal situation.

Figure 2.12. Village Revenues and Expenses, 1993-2003



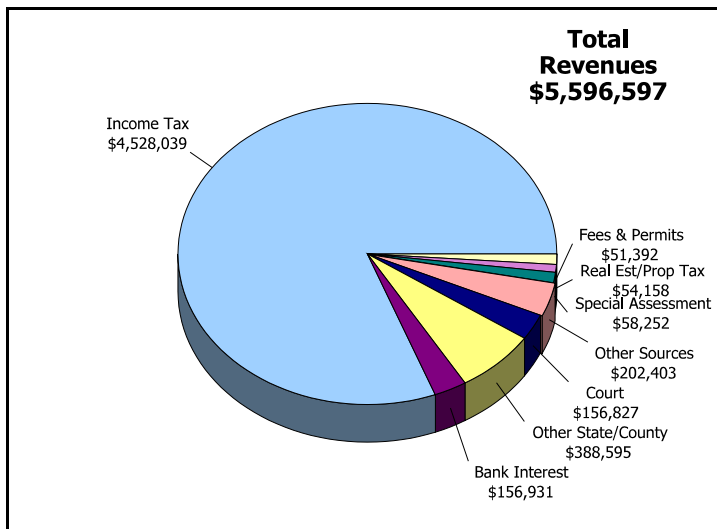
SOURCE: Village of Walton Hills Annual Financial Reports.

Figure 2.12 illustrates the historical trends in revenues and expenditures in Walton Hills between the years 1993 and 2003. As shown, the Village has been in relatively good fiscal condition with revenues exceeding expenditures during eight out of the eleven years. Budget deficits occurred in 1997 (-\$51,575), 1999 (-\$107,278), and 2001 (-\$804,078). In 2003, the latest year available, Village revenues were significantly higher than the previous year, and have trended upwards since 2001.

Over the years, the Village has maintained a seemingly large unreserved cash fund, averaging between \$9.6 million and \$13.1 million. Income tax collections have been the primary source of this fund with contributions from both individuals and businesses. Additional dollars to this surplus can also be attributed to an increase in the payroll (income) tax from 1% to 2% that was legislated by Village Council and approved by voters in August of 2002. This income tax increase went into effect the following month on September 1st. As of January 1, 2004, the balance of this unreserved cash fund was reported to be \$10.8 million.

Communities are encouraged to maintain an unreserved fund balance in their general fund of no less than five to 15 percent of regular general fund operation revenues, or no less than one to two months of regular general fund operating expenditures. (*Government Finance Officers Association @ www.gfoa.org*). Funds in excess of minimum levels may be required, but the maximum limit should be set by adoption of a formal policy (according to the GFOA).

Figure 2.13. Revenues by Category, 2003, Walton Hills



SOURCE: Village of Walton Hills Annual Financial Report, 2003.

Figure 2.13 illustrates the sources of Walton Hills’ revenues for the year 2003. Income taxes accounted for the largest proportion, almost 81%, of all revenues collected during that year. *Other State/County* revenue accounted for second largest proportion, comprising roughly 7% of total collected revenues. Since 1999 *Income Taxes*, *Bank Interest*, and *Other State/County* revenues have consistently provided the Village with approximately 90% of its total revenues.

Walton Hills’ annual financial reports for the past five years (1999 through 2003) reveal that the Village has a heavy reliance upon income taxes. Since 2001, the Village’s income tax collections had averaged between 60% and 65% of total revenues, but have increased significantly as the Village’s income tax rate increased from 1% to 2%. In 2002, income taxes accounted for more than 71% and in 2003, they accounted for approximately 81% of total Village revenue. Municipal income tax collections are an “elastic” revenue source which can be greatly impacted by fluctuating economic conditions. A more “inelastic” revenue source such as property taxes is preferred by municipalities because this revenue source is generally less affected by changes in the local, regional and national economies. *Real Estate/Property Tax* collections in the Village have averaged between 1.0% and 1.7% since 1993.

Controlling for inflation allows for a more accurate examination of the historical trend in budget revenues. **Table 2.18** presents the Village’s revenues for the years 1999 through 2003

Table 2.18. Budget Revenues and Expenditures, 1999-2003, Nominal and Adjusted for Inflation, Walton Hills

Year	Revenues		Expenditures	
	Nominal	Adjusted	Nominal	Adjusted
1999	\$3,820,567	\$4,187,341	\$3,927,845	\$4,304,918
2000	\$4,279,231	\$4,531,906	\$4,237,954	\$4,487,993
2001	\$3,581,095	\$3,695,690	\$4,385,173	\$4,525,499
2002	\$4,373,378	\$4,458,395	\$4,227,057	\$4,307,371
2003	\$5,596,597	-	\$4,774,947	-

in nominal dollars and in dollars adjusted for inflation. As shown, since 1999 Walton Hills' total revenues increased slightly, then decreased, and increased again between 2001 and 2003.

Given the important role that income tax revenues plays in Walton Hills' budget, consideration of the Village's income tax *rate* in comparison with other communities provides some context on its ability to generate these revenues. **Table 2.19** presents these tax rates. Similar, or "comparable", communities have been selected for comparison in this table and later in this section. These communities generally resemble Walton Hills in terms of total population, number of households, median home sales price, and the proportion of the community with detached, single-family homes (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2000*).

Until September 1, 2002, Walton Hills' income tax rate was significantly lower than that of neighboring and comparable communities. While Walton Hills has historically had a 1% income tax rate, almost all comparison communities have income tax rates of at least 2%, with the exception of Mayfield Village which has a tax rate of 1.5%. Given the higher rates in other communities, one might infer that Walton Hills was underutilizing the ability of its income tax mechanism to generate revenues. However, as discussed above, Walton Hills recently increased its tax rate to 2%, placing the Village in a more favorable and comparable (with similar communities) situation in terms of tax revenue generation.

Comparative income tax rates in other communities, combined with Walton Hills' advantage of excellent highway access should help to diminish any negative effect that the increase in the rate will have on existing and potential future businesses in Walton Hills. Additionally, the impact on residents working in other communities is practically eliminated by Walton Hills' maintaining the 100% credit it offers for income taxes paid to other communities.

Table 2.19. Municipal Income Tax Rates and Credits, 2003, Walton Hills, Neighboring and Comparable Communities

Community	Taxing Authority	Work Rate	Residence Credit
Neighboring			
Bedford	SELF	2.25%	75%
Maple Heights	RITA	2.00%	80%
Oakwood	RITA	2.00%	100%
Sagamore Hills Twp*	-	-	-
Comparable			
Brooklyn Heights	RITA	2.00%	100%
Independence	RITA	2.00%	100%
Mayfield Village	RITA	1.50%	100%
Seven Hills	RITA	2.00%	100%
Valley View**	RITA	2.00%	100%
WALTON HILLS	RITA	2.00%	100%

* Township does not have taxing authority.

** Valley View is also a neighboring community. RITA = Regional Income Tax Agency

SOURCE: Municipal Income Tax Collection Agencies

Expenditures for 2003 are illustrated in *Figure 2.14*. As shown, *Police & Fire* services account for the largest proportion, or 36.5%, of total expenditures. *General Government*, *Service Department*, and *Capital Outlay* also accounted for significant proportions of expenses, generating 23.2%, 15.1%, and 11.2%, respectively (of the Village's total expenditures in 2003).

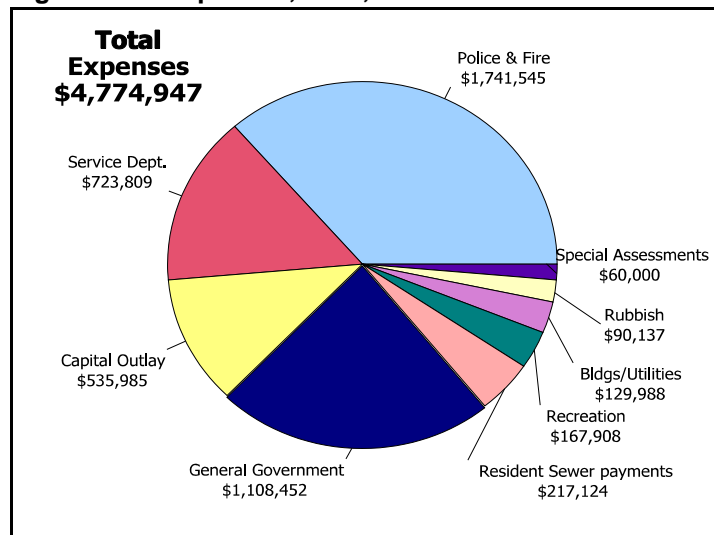
While the Walton Hills' total annual budget expenditures have increased since 1999, the composition of the expenditures

has remained relatively constant. Data contained in past annual financial reports prepared by the Village demonstrates that since 1999, *Police & Fire* services have accounted for between 35% and 40% of Walton Hills' total annual expenditures. Data also shows that during this same time period, the *Service Department*, *Capital Outlay* and *General Government* accounted for the other major proportions of Walton Hills' total expenditures. The only exception occurred in 2003 when the *General Government* share of expenditures increased to 23.2%. When adjusted for inflation, it is shown in *Table 2.18* that Walton Hills' total annual expenditures increased slightly since 1999, decreased in 2002 and increased again in 2003.

One indicator of a community's financial condition is the change in its revenues and expenditures with respect to its population over time. This change can be measured by examining the historical trend in per capita revenues and expenditures. An increase in per capita revenues is a favorable condition, as it indicates an increase in the available revenues per person (and per household). An increase in per capita expenditures, on the other hand, can be indicative of inefficiency. One of three things could be occurring in such a situation: 1) expenses are growing while population has remained stable; 2) expenses have increased while population has decreased; or 3) expenses are increasing at a rate much faster than the rate of growth in the population. In Walton Hills, when adjusted for inflation, per capita revenues increased from roughly \$2,180 to \$2,340 between 1990 and 2003, while per capita expenditures also increased from roughly \$1,910 to \$2,000, but at a slower pace.

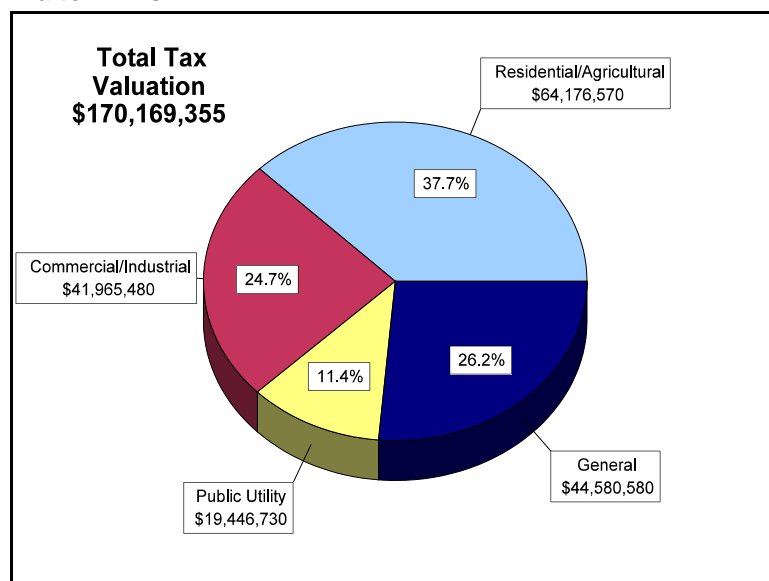
Noted earlier, in comparison to other communities, property taxes play a relatively minor role in the Village's revenues. On average, during the past five years, real estate/property taxes have accounted for just 1.4% of total annual revenues. The largest contributor to real estate tax revenues in Walton Hills is that of *Residential/Agricultural* property, which accounts for 37.7%, or \$64.2 million of the Village's total assessed property valuation (*Figure 2.15*).

Figure 2.14. Expenses, 2003, Walton Hills



SOURCE: Village of Walton Hills Annual Financial Report, 2003.

Figure 2.15. Assessed Property Valuation by Category, 2003, Walton Hills



SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office, 2004.

General property accounts for 26.2%, or \$44.6 million of total property valuation. Commercial/Industrial property accounts for the third-highest proportion of assessed property valuation, comprising 24.7% of the total valuation, with the remainder accounted for by Public Utility properties.

Property tax rates are often an important consideration to households and businesses when selecting a community in which to live or locate a store, office or industry. **Table 2.20** presents a comparison of real estate tax

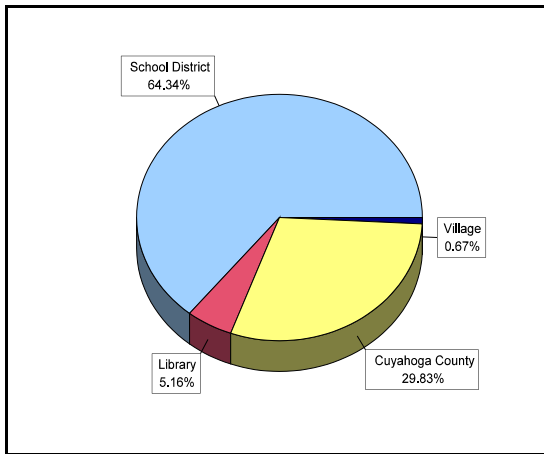
rates and estimated annual taxes on two common types of properties for Walton Hills and some comparison communities.

Among 80 taxing jurisdictions in Cuyahoga County during 2003, Walton Hills has the second lowest effective tax rate for residential/agricultural land, according to the Cuyahoga County Treasurer's Office records. Only the city of Independence is lower. For commercial/industrial properties, the Village's effective tax rate is similar to those found in neighboring and comparable communities.

Real estate taxes have been an important source of financing public schools in the State of Ohio. In addition, Cuyahoga County, its libraries, and the Metroparks receive funding from real estate taxes. A portion of tax collections also goes to the host municipality. **Figure 2.16** displays the allocation of residential property taxes, revealing that the majority of 2003 collections was destined for the Bedford City School District (64%). **Figure 2.17** shows the distribution of commercial/industrial property taxes. Approximately 69% of property taxes paid by commercial and industrial businesses go towards the Bedford City School District. Each source contributes less than 1% to the Village.

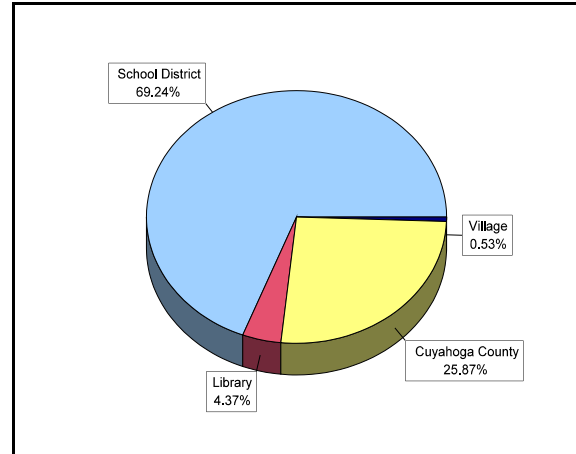
According to the Village in 2004, a total of \$7,319,079 collected Village property taxes (from 2003) was paid to the Bedford City School District. Residential sources accounted for \$1,824,438 of that total. Commercial/Industrial sources accounted for \$1,467,521 of the total. Public utilities and tangible personal property sources accounted for the balance.

Figure 2.16. Residential Real Estate Revenue Distribution, 2003, Walton Hills



SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Treasurer's Office, 2004.

Figure 2.17. Commercial/Industrial Real Estate Revenue Distribution, 2003, Walton Hills



SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Treasurer's Office, 2004.

Table 2.19. Rates of Property Valuation, 2003, Walton Hills, Neighboring and Comparable Communities

Community	2003 (Collected in 2004)					
	Residential/Agricultural			Commercial/Industrial		
	Effective Tax Rate*	Tax as a Percentage of Market Value	Annual Estimated Taxes on a \$200,000 Property	Effective Tax Rate*	Tax as a Percentage of Market Value	Annual Estimated Taxes on a \$500,000 Property
Neighboring						
Bedford	57.56	1.76%	\$3,520	69.47	2.19%	\$10,950
Maple Heights	69.39	2.13%	\$4,260	75.94	2.39%	\$11,950
Oakwood	48.56	1.49%	\$2,980	60.47	1.90%	\$9,500
Sagamore Hills Twp	47.64	n/a	n/a	50.42	n/a	n/a
Comparable						
Brooklyn Heights	46.51	1.42%	\$2,840	49.03	1.54%	\$7,700
Independence	43.41	1.33%	\$2,660	45.08	1.42%	\$6,900
Mayfield Village	48.45	1.48%	\$2,960	55.11	1.74%	\$8,700
Seven Hills	59.23	1.81%	\$3,620	63.34	2.00%	\$10,000
Valley View**	47.55	1.46%	\$2,920	50.33	1.59%	\$7,950
WALTON HILLS	45.06	1.38%	\$2,760	56.97	1.79%	\$8,950

* Rates expressed in dollars and cents on each one thousand dollars of tax valuation.

**Valley View is also a neighboring community.

SOURCE: Tax Year 2003 Rates of Taxation, Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office.

CHAPTER 3

LAND USE



Walton Hills Village
Source: AirPhoto USA, 2002

INTRODUCTION

The existing land use patterns in the Village have evolved over many years in response to early settlement patterns, environmental challenges and zoning, among other influences. Understanding land development patterns and their relationship to established regulations (e.g., zoning) is critical in determining how to formulate future development and redevelopment policies.

This chapter presents the findings of the detailed land use inventory conducted by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission during the summer of 2003. It also provides overviews of the Village's natural and man-made features and zoning. Combined, these considerations will impact the evolution of future individual land uses and the overall Village development pattern.

LAND USE EVOLUTION

The Village of Walton Hills is located near the southeast corner of Cuyahoga County at the rim of the Cuyahoga River valley. The rugged gorge of Tinkers Creek, a major tributary of the Cuyahoga River spanning the Village's northern and western borders, was home to the Western Reserve's earliest pioneers in the early 1800's. Originally part of Bedford Township, which was formed in 1823, Walton Hills was incorporated as a Village in 1951.

In the early 1900's the Village's current area was primarily rural with few roads and farmsteads. During the 1918-1930 period, over 10,000 acres of lands throughout Cuyahoga County were purchased for Cleveland's metropolitan park system ("Emerald Necklace"), including the Bedford Reservation in today's Walton Hills. This major parkland encompassing Tinker's Creek Gorge, in combination with the adjacent more recently developed Cuyahoga Valley National Park, covers over one-third of the Village's total land area (also see *Chapter 4*).

In the late 1930's, Ludwig S. Conelly, a Village resident, bought the J. C. Walton farm. Over the next several decades his growing realty firm also bought, sold or brokered the sale of hundreds of properties and homes dispersed along the few Village roads following the natural contours of the land. The new Walton Road with its isolated farmsteads led to the development of a community zoned today for country homes on large lots. By the early 1960's, Conelly had developed over a dozen subdivisions with one acre lots. By 1970, the Village's population had peaked at 2,508. Its population has remained relatively stable since (2,400 residents in 2000).

The groundwork for today's industrial pattern along the Northfield Road corridor at the eastern boundary of the Village was laid during the 1950's with the development of Krick (Road) Industrial Park and the Ford Motor Company Stamping Plant.

Walton Hills, today, has evolved into a semi-rural community where its residents and elected officials value its “country” image and lifestyle. The Village encompasses almost seven square miles, or almost 4,500 acres, and is comprised of roughly 1,300 individual properties. In terms of land area, the Village is the 21st largest of 59 communities in Cuyahoga County. Its irregular border is bounded on the north by the densely developed cities of Maple Heights and Bedford, on the east by the Village of Oakwood, on the south by Sagamore Hills Township, Village of Northfield and City of Macedonia (both in Summit County), and on the west by the Village of Valley View.

Since Village incorporation in 1951, the Regional Planning Commission (now Cuyahoga County Planning Commission) has regularly conducted land use inventories of Cuyahoga County, including Walton Hills. A summary of generalized survey findings for selected years is shown in *Table 3.1*.

Few communities in Cuyahoga County host residential population densities as low as Walton Hills’, where just 0.54 persons can be found per acre (2000). The County’s average population density is 4.75 persons per acre.

Since incorporation, the Village’s developed acreage (including parks dedicated to public recreational use) has doubled from about 1,954 acres in 1959 to 3,862 acres in 2003. Yet, an

estimated 541 acres (12%) still remain undeveloped. This vacant total for 2003 increases to about 734 acres when considering the additional undeveloped portions of properties owned by *Institutions and Utilities*. This larger proportion of vacant land in Walton Hills potentially available for development (17%) exceeds percentages of vacant land remaining in most neighboring communities and Cuyahoga County overall.

Table 3.1. Generalized Land Use, 1959-2003, Walton Hills

Land Use	1959	1977	2003
	Acres	Acres	Acres
DEVELOPED	1,953.8	2,802.5	3,861.8
<i>Residential</i>	430.8	1,211.4	1,262.7
<i>Retail/Office</i>	4.8	4.3	52.0
<i>Industrial</i>	163.5	282.0	322.8
<i>Utility/R-O-W</i>	1,338.7	1,164.3	1,798.0
<i>incl.</i>	incl.	140.5	426.2
VACANT	2,876.2	1,598.5	541.2
TOTAL	4,814.0	4,401.0	4,403.0

NOTES: Vacant (1959) includes utilities, R-O-W (highways, local streets and rail) and agriculture. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
 SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.

EXISTING LAND USE

The Village’s detailed land use breakdown is shown in *Table 3.2*. Land use patterns community-wide are displayed in *Map 3.1*. Existing land uses were initially determined from Cuyahoga County Auditor records, with subsequent verification achieved via aerial photograph review and interpretation, and comprehensive field investigations. Due to the refined inventory and mapping approaches used, current acreage calculations (including Village area) should be

Land Use 3.2

considered more accurate than those figures derived for earlier years.

Table 3.2. Existing Detailed Land Use, 2003, Walton Hills

Land Use	Acres	Percent of Total Land	Percent of Developed Land
Parks and Playgrounds	1,686.9	38.3%	43.7%
Residential - Single Family	1,262.7	28.7%	32.7%
Vacant	541.2	12.3%	n/a
Industrial	322.8	7.3%	8.4%
(Mixed)	2.4	- -	- -
Rights-of-Way (streets/rail)	252.3	5.7%	6.5%
Utilities	173.9	4.0%	4.5%
(Vacant)	138.3	- -	- -
Institutional/Government	111.1	2.5%	2.9%
(Vacant)	54.2	- -	- -
Retail	50.8	1.2%	1.3%
(Mixed)	2.8	- -	- -
Office	1.2	0.0%	0.0%
TOTAL	4,403.0	100.0%	100.0%
DEVELOPED	3,861.8	87.7%	
UNDEVELOPED	541.2	12.3%	

NOTES: () denotes that figure is included in preceding total. Acreage consumed by waterbodies is included in surrounding classified land use. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
 SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, August, 2003.

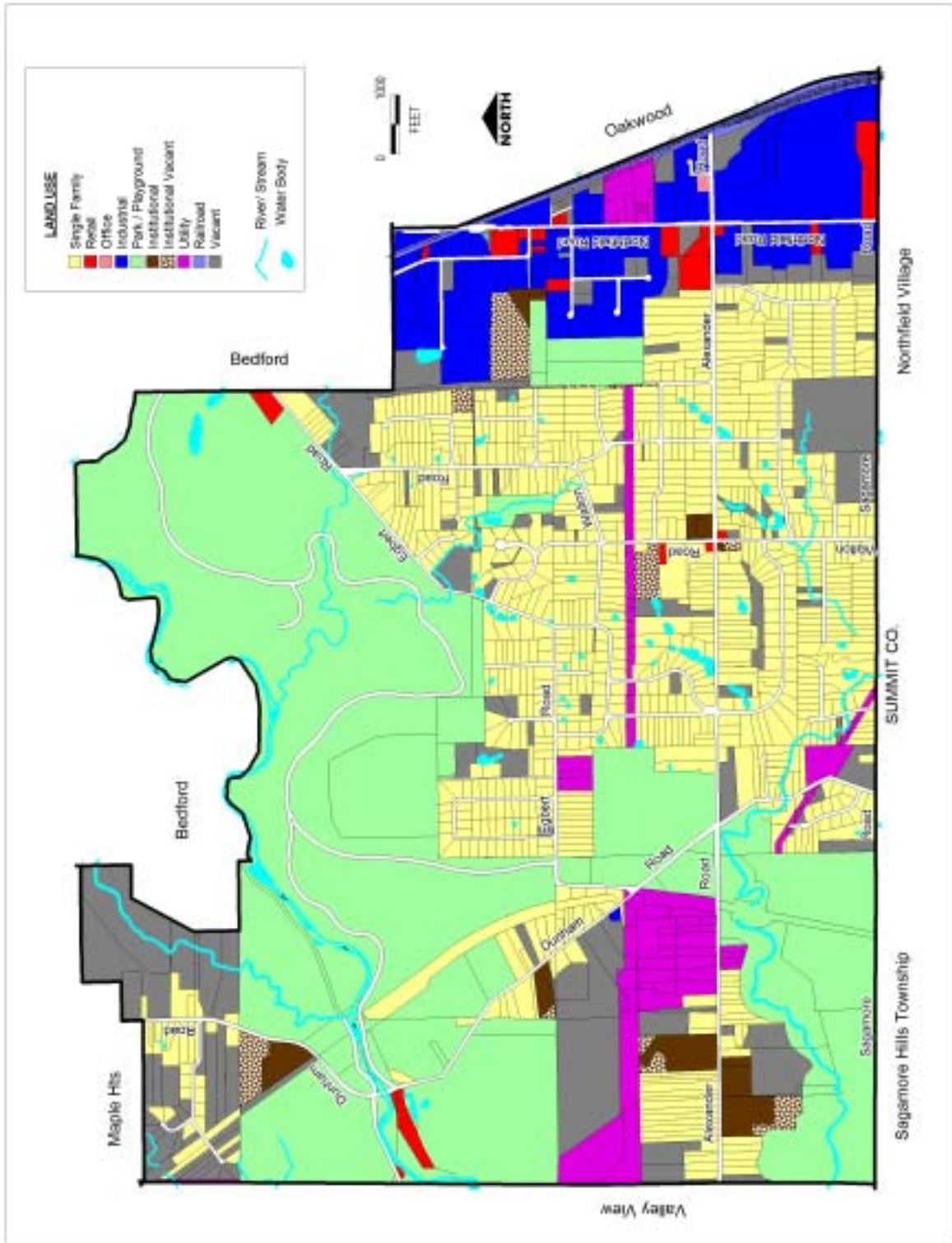
The following discussion of Village land uses is based on August, 2003 inventory findings prepared by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.

Parks and Playgrounds comprise about 1,687 acres, or 38.3%, of all land in Walton Hills. The vast majority of these properties are dedicated to existing and future recreational use by the Cleveland Metroparks (Bedford Reservation) and Cuyahoga Valley National Park. These major regional park systems encompass most of the northern and eastern portions of the community. The Village’s T.G. Young Park and Lake Park, a quasi-public facility, are also included in this land use category.



Metroparks’ Bedford Reservation is a major link in the region’s “emerald necklace”.

Map 3.1 Existing Land Use



Residential development constitutes the second largest land use category in the Village (28.7%). The Village's 1,263 acres of residential land is comprised exclusively of single-family homes. No apartment buildings are located in Walton Hills. The map illustrates that most homes are situated on roughly one-acre lots in defined neighborhoods along streets curving through rolling terrain. With the exception of some homes fronting Alexander Road at the western end of the Village and within two "islands" along Dunham Road, the residential neighborhoods are contiguous and clustered at the center of the community.

Vacant privately-owned land, the third-largest land use category, occupies about 12.3% (541 acres) of the Village's total area. This total excludes undeveloped, potentially available land associated with institutions and utilities (*see discussion below*). Lacking physical improvements which would preclude certain forms of development, these additional potentially developable lands total about 193 acres, or 4.4% of the Village's total land area. When combined with *Vacant*, these areas potentially available for development increase to about 734 acres, or 16.7% of the Village's total land area. However, it should be recognized that physical constraints associated with these vacant lands reduce the total land which is feasible for new development. This larger, aggregated sum represents a proportion which is higher than vacant land areas found in most surrounding communities. Blocks of vacant properties are scattered throughout the Village. Many of the larger contiguous vacant parcels are analyzed for their development potential in *Chapter 6: Focus Areas*.

Industrial land, the next largest land use class, consumes 7.3% (323 acres) of the Village. Virtually all of these properties are located along the broad Northfield Road corridor at the eastern end of Walton Hills. Some of these properties also host retail uses but are primarily industrial in terms of total floor space use. Such "mixed" industrial land uses constitute about 2.4 acres.



Ford's Walton Hills Stamping Plant, a major industry, moved to the Village in 1954.

Rights-of-way, including streets and rail lines, consume about 5.7%, or 252 acres, of the Village. A rail line corridor is located along the eastern border of the Village. Private roadways and rail sidings on industrial properties are excluded from this total.

Utilities comprise at least 174 acres (4.0%) of the Village. Electric substations, high tension electric power lines corridors (except where electric lines pass over park lands and industrial developments) and natural gas substations are delineated on the map. The miles of natural gas line easements are not shown (pipes are buried underground). A portion of the lands within the utility classification (138 acres) is considered "vacant", or free of facilities or physical improvements which would preclude some less intensive forms of development (e.g., outdoor storage, vehicle parking, recreational trails). The map illustrates that an electric utility corridor extends across the Village from its western to eastern borders.

Institutional/Governmental uses, including the Village’s Municipal Complex, the Thellman Service Center, Village-owned vacant lands, other governmental operations situated within Walton Hills, and churches, total about 111 acres (2.5%). Portions of these properties which are free of improvements total about 54 acres. Such areas are depicted on the map and should also be considered to offer potential development opportunities in the future.



Built in 1971, today's Municipal Complex is located at the site of the original Village Hall.

Retail uses comprise just 1.2% (51 acres) of Walton Hills. One of these properties (a residence on Walton Road) operates a business from the home and is classified here as a “mixed” retail use. The few retail uses are scattered throughout the Village, with most located within the broad Northfield Road corridor.

Office uses are found at two properties within the Village. Just 1.2 acres, less than 1% of the Village, are dedicated to this land use classification. The largest use, a bank, is located on Alexander Road across from the Ford Stamping Plant.

Additional information pertaining to institutional land uses, outdoor parks and recreation, and public rights-of-way can be found in *Chapter 4: Public Facilities and Infrastructure*. For an expanded discussion of properties classified as retail, office and industrial uses, see *Chapter 5: Economic Development and Market Analysis*. See *Chapter 6: Focus Areas* and subsequent chapters for additional information regarding alternative uses proposed for some Village properties.

ZONING

Considering the evolution of Walton Hills as a community that embraces a “country” lifestyle, it is not surprising that just four broad zoning districts have been established: *Country Homes*, *Business*, *Industrial*, and *Office Building*.

The overwhelming majority of the Village is zoned for *Country Homes*. The *Business* district is restricted to the few properties at the intersection of Alexander and Walton Roads and a portion of Bedford’s Ben Venue company parking lot area located at the extreme northern limit of the Village’s segment of Northfield Road. The *Industrial* district essentially mirrors the limits of existing industrial development along the broad Northfield Road corridor. *Office Building* zoning is limited to the Walton Manor Healthcare Center property on Alexander Road near its intersection with Northfield Road.

For discussions pertaining to these existing zoning districts, permitted uses, development regulations, and future regulations, see *Chapter 6: Focus Areas* and subsequent chapters.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

In any community there exists a variety of natural and man-made features which impact the future community-wide development pattern as well as the development and redevelopment of individual properties. A discussion of selected environmental characteristics, or “constraints”, to development/redevelopment identified in Walton Hills follows. While Village-wide patterns are discussed here in general terms, *Chapter 6: Focus Areas* offers detailed discussions of such challenges to developers which exist for particular properties.

NOTE: For those properties demonstrating the presence of potentially limiting physical constraints, there is no substitute for on-site investigations before development in order to accurately determine the presence, extent and severity of the limitations discussed here and the costs associated with overcoming them if development is pursued. Further investigations are particularly important when considering the potential for nature’s and man’s actions to alter conditions with the passage of time.

Steep slopes present special challenges for land developers. Slopes in excess of 18% (drop of 18 feet in 100 feet of horizontal surface) are generally prohibitive for new building construction without added investments in site design and building construction. Slopes from 12% to 18% are considered marginal depending on the type of new development. Most properties in the Village have slopes less than 12%. Terrain with slopes in excess of 12% is found primarily within the gorges of Tinkers and Sagamore Creeks and along tributaries which flow into both. Most of these areas are located within public park lands. Remaining steeply sloped areas are found on residential properties, to the rear of existing homes, or on residentially zoned properties which are currently vacant.

Soils possess unique properties which are influential in land use planning. The detailed information contained in the *Soil Survey of Cuyahoga County, Ohio (USDA, 1981)* can be used to plan the use of sites for residential and commercial buildings, sanitary facilities, roadways, recreation facilities, and wildlife habitat, among numerous other uses. Importantly, this information can be used to identify the potentials and limitations of each soil for specific land uses and to help prevent costly construction failures due to unfavorable soil conditions.

Two major soils associations comprise most of the Village (less the area covered by two major park systems). The *Mahoning-Ellsworth* association is the predominant soil found in the residential areas and portions of the industrial districts of Walton Hills. The main land use limitations associated with these soils are the slow permeability of both, the seasonal wetness of the Mahoning soils, and the steep slopes of some of the Ellsworth soils. Generally, these soils can accommodate buildings, but additional more costly measures are required during construction to prevent wet basements and address the slope challenges. Common throughout most of the Northfield Road corridor’s industrial area, *Urban land-Mahoning* association soils have low potential for building site development unless artificially drained (e.g., sewers, gutters, and subsurface drains). The “urban land” classification is an area covered by streets, parking lots and buildings that so obscure the soil that identification is not possible.

Waterways, including Tinkers Creek, Sagamore Creek, and their numerous tributaries play important roles by creating positive visual images, providing surface drainage efficiencies, supporting recreational activities, and maintaining sensitive natural habitats for plant and animal life. Dozens of scattered private **ponds** and **marshlands** also comprise the Village's broader hydrological system. Each of these water features are situated within one of three separate watersheds which drain surface water from the Village westward to the Cuyahoga River.

Disruption of drainage patterns can result in erosion, siltation, and damage to buildings and grounds, whereas land mismanagement and human carelessness can pollute or destroy our complex, interconnected surface and ground water systems.

Flooding has been experienced during times of heavy rainfall along the length of Tinkers Creek, the upper reaches of Sagamore Creek, sections of an unnamed tributary that drains northward to Tinkers Creek at the Egbert/Walton Roads intersection, and at numerous other locations in the Village (*Ohio Department of Natural Resources*). Flood plains (flat, low-lying areas along rivers and other drainage courses where rainwater accumulates) are integral elements of the stormwater management system because they hold water that may otherwise flood nearby developed areas during storm events. Altering the configuration of a flood plain, even to a seemingly insignificant degree, can drastically impact stormwater flow and prompt new flooding damage up- or down-stream. Compounding the frequency and magnitude of flooding is the increased runoff prompted by the development of additional hard surfaces (e.g., roads, parking lots and building roofs) which slow or prohibit the infiltration of rainwater.

Environmental hazards prompted by man's past or current practices on some properties can interfere with the development and redevelopment of land because of costs associated with hazard clean-up, removal or management. Such hazards, discussed below, have the potential to pollute surface and ground water or soil. They may also pose life-threatening dangers to nearby residents, workplace employees, and the safety forces who must respond to incidents. There are also potential current and future costs to owners of such properties due to associated legal liabilities.

It is not unusual for a community to have retail and industrial properties characterized by operations which are potentially hazardous. Such properties can be a source of future concern if the operation is abandoned, old waste burials are present, old spills or leaks are present, new leaks or spills occur and are not properly managed, or materials are not properly managed in the course of conducting manufacturing or other activities. These properties possess documented site features which have the capacity to present current or future potential hurdles to development/redevelopment.

Storage tanks (many underground with some documented as leaking), dumpsites and facilities which manufacture, treat, store, release into the environment, or dispose of hazardous materials and wastes are scattered throughout Walton Hills. The overwhelming majority of the roughly five dozen sites demonstrating these hazards are found in clusters within the Northfield Road industrial corridor. The largest concentration of potential hazards is situated on properties

along Krick Road. Mapped and classified locations identified by state and federal regulators and other sources can be viewed by going to the “Brownfields GIS” maps and related information presented on the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission’s website (<http://cpc.cuyahoga.oh.us/cpc/>).

Detailed discussions of environmental hazards found at selected Village properties can be reviewed in *Chapter 6: Focus Areas*.

CHAPTER 4

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE



Walton Hills' Thellman Service Center is located on Dunham Road.

INTRODUCTION

Crucial to the functioning and growth of a community is the scope and condition of its public facilities, infrastructure and associated services. Public facilities such as a city hall, police and fire stations, service garage, and parks are needed to sustain industries, stores and neighborhoods. Other public facilities such as schools, hospitals, libraries, and places of worship are also important. Basic improvements such as roads, water distribution and sewer lines, and public transit services are often taken for granted but are key elements of the infrastructure. Overall, public amenities play a critical role by contributing to the fiscal health of a community's government, the viability of its businesses, and the quality of life for its residents.

In order to understand the extent, existing condition and value of Walton Hills' public facilities and infrastructure, inventories and research were initially conducted by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission during late 2002. Most department heads and the Business Manager were interviewed via written surveys and/or in person. Elected Village officials were also interviewed about aspects of public facilities and services. Selected updates were conducted during the summer and fall of 2004. The following inventory and analysis findings will assist in assessing the adequacy of public facilities, infrastructure and services to meet the current and future needs of the residents and businesses in the Village.

PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES AND ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS

VILLAGE BUILDINGS AND PROPERTIES

Village-owned properties encompass about 81 acres (See *Map 4.1* and *Table 4.1*). Those properties dedicated to the Village's governmental and recreational functions, excluding vacant properties lacking structures, total about 63 acres (about 1 % of Village land area). The total useable building floor space provided for all Village administrative operations and public activities is located in six structures encompassing an estimated 37,671 square feet (excluding Oakwood's Service Building). Of this total, primary Village governmental activities are conducted in three buildings totaling just 31,606 square feet of floor space (i.e., Village Hall, Community Hall and Thellman Service Center).

The **Village Hall and Community Hall** buildings, dedicated in 1972, are located adjacent to one another on almost five acres at the northeast corner of the intersection of Alexander and Walton Roads, also the site of the earlier town halls. Most surrounding properties are developed with single-family homes. Both buildings are of concrete and brick construction and are separated by a narrow, open concrete patio/courtyard area. Both the buildings and the landscaped grounds project a coordinated, well-maintained image to passers-by. Combined useable floor space in the two buildings totals almost 15,000 square feet. Vehicular parking capacity in two paved lots totals 111 spaces. Public parking capacity in the upper lot totals 89 spaces (with two designated handicapped spaces). Employee-designated parking in the lower lot includes 22 spaces. The only sidewalks in the Village are found around these buildings

Walton Hills Village Master Plan

DRAFT

Map 4.1. Village-Owned Properties and Other Selected Public Properties, Walton Hills

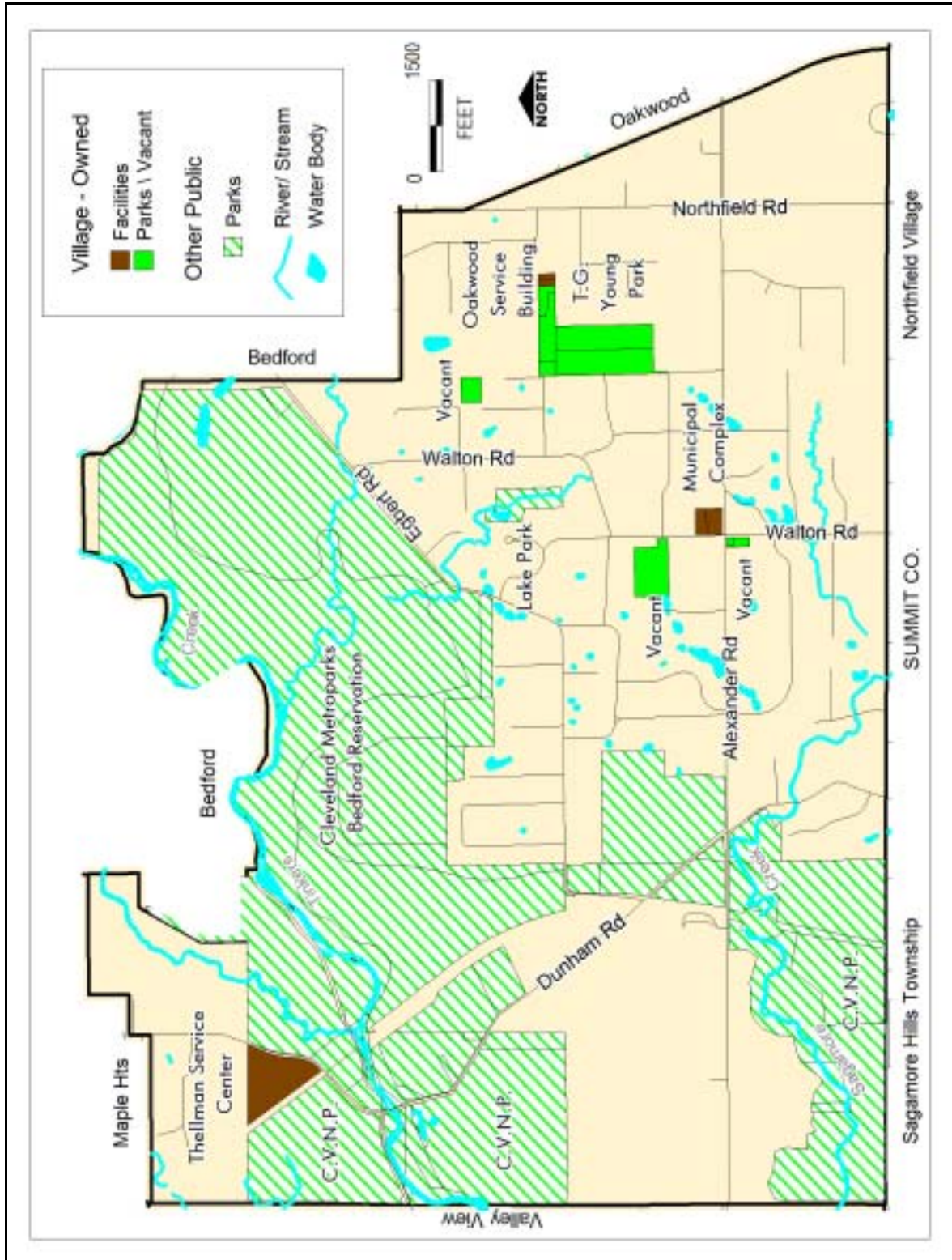


Table 4.1. Village Buildings and Properties, 2004, Walton Hills

Name	Address	Property (Acres)	Building(s) (Sq. Ft.)	Built (Year)
Buildings				
Village Hall	7595 Walton Road	4.86	1 (11,096)	1971
Community Hall	7595 Walton Road	incl.	1 (3,760)	1971
Thellman Service Center	6800 Dunham Road	18.79	1 (16,750)	1969
Other Buildings				
Thomas G. Young Park	18860 Dellwood Drive	39.02	3 (6,065)*	n.a.
Oakwood Service Building	Krick Road (extension)	1.28	1 (8,820)	1973
Vacant Land				
Former Bedford Board of Education property	Walton Road (opposite Jefferson Boulevard)	10.57	0	--
Former Refueling Station property	17988 Alexander Road	1.20	0	--
---	Shaner Dr. and Allen Rd. (between)	4.30	0	--
Public R-O-W (part)	Morningside Road	0.95	0	--
TOTAL		80.97	8 (46,491)	

*Includes open-air pavilion with enclosed public restrooms, two-bay storage garage and storage shed.
 SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission

fronting Alexander and Walton Roads, extending up Walton Road about 1,900 feet to its juncture with Hicks Road.

The **Village Hall** building houses the offices associated with the administrative functions of Village government, Council Chambers, a small conference room, the Police Department, a lower level garage, some storage space, and public restrooms. Public meeting space is provided in Council Chambers (capacity-rated by the fire department for 75 people). In addition to regular meetings of Council, Planning Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals, the Chambers also hosts Mayors Court and periodic public hearings and meetings. On occasion, public meetings and hearings with overflow attendance have moved next door to the Community Hall’s larger “Community Room”.

Office space is provided for the Mayor, the Building Department Manager and Inspectors, and for the following administrative positions: Mayor’s Assistant, Village Fiscal Officer, Mayors Court Clerk, Finance Clerk, Business Manager, Recreation Director, and Fire Department Inspector. With the exception of the Building Department Manager, Mayor’s Assistant, and Village Fiscal Officer positions, all administrative functions are conducted by part-time employees. No office space is provided for a number of part-time employees, including Councilpersons, the Law Director, and visiting Magistrate (Mayors Court, Walton Hills), among others.



The municipal complex includes the Village Hall, the center of Walton Hills' administrative operations.

While the physical condition of the Village Hall building is judged “good” (*Business Manager, 2003*) and inventory findings indicate that the building generally meets current needs, some improvements are needed. The emergency electric generator located in the basement of Village Hall, which also serves the Community Hall building, needs to be upgraded (*Village Engineer*). A portable replacement emergency generator was stationed adjacent to the parking lot during 2004. A permanent replacement has been authorized and is expected to be installed outside the Village Hall building in October, 2004.

Other inventory findings indicate that existing utilities should be evaluated to determine whether any further upgrades are required. With further study of existing space, administrative functions, and department/staff interrelationships, improved building efficiencies could be realized. Some shared office space could be eliminated or reduced with the addition or reconfiguration of floor space. To partially satisfy this need, some additional offices were created within existing space in early 2004. Some uncertainties have been expressed about the degree to which the building complies with American Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. A comprehensive architectural review would prove useful in resolving many of these potential issues.

Public meeting space in the Village Hall building is generally judged adequate. However, Council Chambers seating (and standing room) has proven insufficient to accommodate an interested public on occasions. In some instances, public meetings have spontaneously moved across the courtyard to the Community Hall building to accommodate overflow attendance.

Early interviews with Village officials and the Business Manager indicated the need to expand the inspection activities of the Building Department. Interviews and *Community Attitudes Survey* findings (see *Appendix A*) revealed widespread dissatisfaction with the appearance of the industrial district in particular and a need for stepped-up inspection and code enforcement activities. While the Village’s Building Department Manager position has been full-time, inspectors have served part-time. In mid-2004, the Village entered into a short-term Agreement with the City of Maple Heights’ state-certified Building Department for part-time inspection services. Village investigations continue in order to identify and select the preferred alternatives to organize and staff an inspection and code enforcement program which is efficient, cost-effective and state-certified. Village officials and the Business Manager also revealed in mid-2004 varying levels of community interest in creating an Economic Development Director position and hiring some part-time clerks to assist with administrative functions.

The **Community Hall** provides a public meeting room, a kitchen, public restrooms, and some storage space on a single level. Since no office space is provided, employees do not regularly work in the building. The Community Room is capacity-rated by the Fire Department for 260 people (about one-ninth of the Village's population). Often reserved for weeks in advance, the popular Community Room is available at no charge to community residents, civic/non-profit organizations, and businesses, in addition to Village-sponsored activities. Uses range from luncheons and dinners to exercise classes to meetings to a variety of other activities of community interest. The state-licensed, non-profit Walton Hills Cooperative Nursery School operates in the building three days each week. Now in its 45th year of publication, the non-profit *Walton Hills Owl* newspaper uses some storage space.

Community Hall expansion was recommended by several local officials during interviews (see *Appendix A*). Some event organizers cannot consider the use of the Community Room due to its legal capacity limit or features. Use of the Community Room for public meetings and hearings, which exceed the capacity of Council Chambers, provides some relief. However, the room proves to be less than efficient due to set-up needs, public address system limitations, meeting audio recording requirements, and the inefficiencies associated with no video/audio connection between the two buildings. The Business Manager indicated the potential value in investigating remote video hookup alternatives so as to link the two rooms in such circumstances. For some of the Village's indoor events of community-wide interest, local church facilities have been utilized.

The Mayor indicated the importance of providing a community located, indoor Village-owned facility large enough to accommodate public gatherings year round. While building condition is rated "good" (*Village Engineer, 2002*), the Community Hall demonstrates floor space deficiencies in the course of the wide range of demands placed upon it.

A more in-depth evaluation of this building by qualified personnel with an eye to broader Village facility needs would best identify building expansion needs and options. (See the upcoming *Public Recreation* section for a related discussion).

The **Police Department** occupies about one-third of the Village Hall building's total floor space. Located on both floors, it includes the dispatch center, offices, jail, a lower level garage for police vehicles, and some storage space. The facility is in "good" condition according to the Village Police Chief (2003). Outdoor designated police vehicle parking is also available.

Jail space can accommodate up to six prisoners in three cells for up to five days. Prisoner movements are accomplished at a lower level entrance, separate from the upper level public entrance and public parking area. For longer term incarcerations, the Cuyahoga County and Bedford Heights jail facilities are used. Due to chronic overcrowding at the County Jail, municipalities such as Walton Hills increasingly are called upon to absorb their own overflows (*Bedford Sun Banner, 12/26/02*). According to the Police Chief (2003), managing the jail in times of full capacity draws police officers away from patrols and their other regular duties.

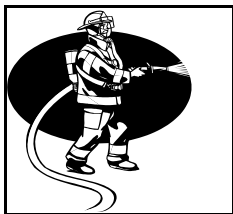
The Police Department employs 12 full-time and four part-time uniformed officers, including the Chief (2004). Civilian dispatchers total three full-time and two part-time. The department includes a detective bureau, a juvenile bureau, and a crime prevention department in addition to the broader community oriented policing program. Selected department officers participate in the seven area communities Southeast Area Law Enforcement (SEALE) organization. These officers are trained to respond and provide specialized assistance, as needed, throughout the SEALE region.

The public perception of crime in the Village is low and the Police Department is rated highly by the residents, Village elected officials and members of the Master Plan Committee (see *Appendix A*). The Police Department responded to 6,385 calls during 2003 (down 350 from 2002) and residents “are very pleased with the response time”, according to the Mayor.



Fire protection and emergency medical services are provided to the Village by the City of Maple Heights and Village of Oakwood by Agreement. Fire incidents require a response by both departments. The “primary responder”, however, is designated based on the portion of the Village in which the incident is located. Maple Heights services the west, while Oakwood services the east end of the Village (division at Walton Road). Maple Heights also provides a Fire Inspector who works out of Village Hall office space on a part-time basis. For rescue squad calls, the Village division at Walton Road designates which department responds. If needed, the other department responds with back-up service. According to the Maple Heights Fire Chief, the Village’s hydrants provide an adequate water supply at suitable pressures to meet firefighting needs. The Fire Chief indicates that the Village’s fire insurance rating, based on a 1999 evaluation, is average (“4”).

In 2003, Maple Heights and Oakwood fire departments responded to 112 fire calls and made 348 medical runs. Fire calls in 2003 were down from the previous year (138) and rescue squad runs were up slightly from 2002 (331). Common throughout northeastern Ohio, most communities have established “mutual aid” agreements (which extend even beyond the Agreement described above). Such arrangements have proven extremely beneficial on numerous occasions. For example, a major fire at an industrial property in Walton Hills in late 2002 was promptly managed and contained by not only Maple Heights and Oakwood personnel and equipment, but dozens of additional firefighters from nine other surrounding community fire departments. The Maple Heights Fire Inspector also conducted 279 fire inspections and re-inspections of business and residences in 2003.



Residents and Village officials indicated satisfaction with fire and rescue services. However, some Master Plan Committee members indicated that rescue squad response times are “slow”. The Maple Heights Fire Chief indicates that the “acceptable” response times for metropolitan areas such as suburban Cuyahoga County are three to four minutes. In practice, however, actual response times vary from “two to six to ten minutes”, depending on incident location.

While the Maple Heights Fire Chief indicates that the City-provided facilities, equipment and expertise are suitable at present for Village protection, he recommends that a fire station be situated within the Village. He indicates that, since at least 1995, occasional discussions have taken place among community officials exploring the potential development of a small fire station in the Village. Discussions considered various alternatives, including possible construction responsibility resting with the Village, and equipment and personnel provided by Maple Heights via a cooperative agreement. Among Village Councilpersons interviewed in 2002 who acknowledged the possibility of developing such a facility, all believed that it would be cost prohibitive.

The **Thellman Service Center** is located on almost 19 acres in the northwest corner of the Village on Dunham Road. The property is encircled by parkland with a 120 foot wide right-of-way (previously occupied by a rail line) along its southern and western property lines. Formerly a Cuyahoga County Engineer Yard used for road maintenance and storage, the 35 year old building and expansive grounds serve as a staging area for Service Department activities community-wide. The Village purchased the property in 1997. The facility is surrounded by a fence and has an entrance gate which can be secured. In addition to housing over one dozen vehicles and assorted equipment, the building provides garage/maintenance space, some office space and storage areas. A salt storage shed is to the rear of the side parking area (which is ample for employees and public visitors). One designated handicapped parking space is available. A telecommunications tower is found to the rear of the building.

The building and grounds are judged to be “adequate for their intended use” (*Village Engineer, 2003*). Both project a well-maintained image and, while the yard area is quite sufficient for storage of equipment and vehicles, little is evident to passers-by. The condition of the concrete/brick/steel structure is classified as “good” (*Business Manager, 2003*). While no building/property component was identified by the Village Engineer as requiring repair or replacement, he did indicate the need to replace some trucks and equipment.



Service Department operations are staged from the Thellman Service Center, a 19-acre facility.

Service Department duties primarily include rights-of-way maintenance, grass cutting, brush chipping, leaf pick-up, some road maintenance, building maintenance, vehicle maintenance, storm sewer repair/installation, roadway/parking lot snow removal, traffic signs placement and repair, tree trimming, and landscaping (*Village Engineer, 2003*). Special services provided by the Department include driveway snow plowing for disabled and senior resident households who register (\$1 fee). A private contractor provides 24-hour plowing service when snowfalls exceed four inches. The cost to the Village is \$9.50 per plow visit at the roughly 180 participating homes. Some recent discussions have explored the possibility of providing limited lawn care services to senior and disabled households as well. Some additional special Village services provided to residents are described in following sections.

Full-time personnel working out of the Service Center total eight, including: Streets Commissioner, Assistant Streets Commissioner, a mechanic and five general laborers/operators. Two to six additional temporary, seasonal employees are hired every summer to assist with grass-cutting/landscaping needs. No additional staff or actions are needed to ease/improve Department responsibilities, according to the Engineer (2003).

High levels of satisfaction with the Village's Service Department were expressed by residents, elected Village officials and Master Plan Committee members. *Community Attitudes Survey* results indicated the highest municipal service ratings were awarded for leaf/yard waste removal followed by trash removal, snow removal, and recyclables removal. In addition to the snow removal services, leaf and yard waste removal services are provided by Service Department employees using Village vehicles and equipment. Mulch from chipped branches and leaf humus have been provided to residents at no charge in the past (120 truckloads in 2003). Historically, Walton Hills's residential solid waste recycling rates have exceeded the 21.8% average for Cuyahoga County's 58 suburban communities and Cleveland by a significant measure. In 2003, the Village's residential recycling rate was 45.9%.

Residential trash and recyclables removal are accomplished via an agreement entered into with a consortium of nearby communities (currently also including Bedford, Bedford Heights, and Orange). The cost savings and efficiencies provided by this partnership makes the arrangement worthwhile for these communities. Currently, the service-provider is Waste Management. The Village regularly and actively participates in elective collection programs sponsored by the Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District (i.e., household hazardous waste, used telephone books, scrap tires, used computers). Walton Hills also participates in a consortium of nearby communities to secure advantageous pricing for road salt.

See the upcoming section pertaining to *Infrastructure* for additional discussions of responsibilities and functions provided by the Village's Service Department.

Thomas G. Young Park (aka Recreation Center), the largest property in the Village's inventory, is located at the end of Dellwood Drive, a residential street at the eastern end of the Village. The property is abutted by residences to the west, industries to the east, and some undeveloped wooded acreage to the north and south. Bisecting the southern undeveloped end of the Park is an east-west running, 100-foot wide Cleveland Electric Illuminating (CEI) high tension overhead electric power line easement. The 39-acre facility provides a variety of active outdoor facilities (e.g., playgrounds, tennis courts, ballfields) and public parking areas on the roughly level, middle 15 acres of the property. An outdoor pavilion with restrooms and two storage buildings are also situated in this area. The undeveloped portions of the property to the north and south are mostly wooded with some steep slopes and streams.

See the upcoming *Public Recreation* section for a description and assessment of T.G. Young Park, community recreational services and programming, staffing, and an overview of other recreational facilities located in the Village.

The **Village of Oakwood Service Building**, owned by Walton Hills, is located at the end of Krick Road in Walton Hills' industrial district. The property is leased to neighboring Oakwood Village for \$1 per year. The term of the current lease agreement is ten years (from October 3, 1997). Oakwood is responsible for property maintenance and repairs, remodeling, construction of any additions, structural improvements, and payment of utility and insurance expenses, among other duties outlined in the lease agreement.

The 30 year old building is constructed of concrete and steel. The property is partially encircled by fencing and has a gate which can be secured. While the access drive is surfaced with asphalt, the parking area is comprised of gravel. The modest size of the structure necessitates some outdoor storage of equipment and vehicles. A salt storage shed and telecommunications tower are also located on the property. According to the Oakwood Service Director (2003), the building is demonstrating much deterioration about the bottom of the structure and above two bay doors. The garage door system is reportedly weak and floor drains do not work well. At Oakwood's expense, the salt bin was repaired in 2002. Eleven Oakwood employees work at the Service Center (six full-time, one part-time, one temporary). There are no plans to alter the use of the property or the number of employees who work out of the facility.

Walton Hills has no formalized plans for the future use of this property when the current lease agreement terminates at the end of 2007.

Undeveloped properties are also owned by the Village. Three of these vacant properties are of notable size. The first, an 11-acre property located on the west side of Walton Road, is just 500 feet to the north of the Municipal Complex. Strategically located at the center of Walton Hills, it is surrounded by single-family residences and traversed along its northern border by the east-west running 150 foot wide CEI easement for high-tension overhead electric power lines. Most of the property is forested with some grassy scrub acreage fronting Walton Road. The property is relatively flat and slopes to the southwest with a minor gully in that corner. A wetland area is situated at the center of the property. The property was purchased from the Bedford Board of Education for \$110,000 in 1995. In earlier years, the BOE had considered this site for future school development. At the time of purchase, Village officials were discussing its possible future use as a civic center site. At present, the Village has no formalized plans for the property's use.

The second Village-owned property, at just over four acres, is situated in the east-central area of the Village between the industrial district to the east and residential neighborhoods on the other three sides. No portion of the wooded, level property fronts an existing roadway.

The last vacant property, the smallest of the three, is situated across from the Municipal Complex on 1.2 acres at the southwest corner of the Alexander and Walton Roads intersection. Until early 2004, the property hosted the Village's "Refueling Station", a former gas station which had been purchased by the Village in 1994. The 1,280 square foot building, fuel tanks and contaminated soil were removed from the property in early 2004. By mid 2004, the remediated frontage portion of the site had been graded and vegetated with an eye to its even-

tual conversion to a Village use.

PUBLIC RECREATION

Public recreation opportunities within a community are widely considered to be valued amenities. Located in Walton Hills are three public facilities oriented primarily to outdoor recreation – the Cleveland Metroparks’ Bedford Reservation, the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Village owned and operated Thomas G. Young Park. Walton Hills Lake Park, chartered as a not-for-profit corporation, is also available for residents’ use via annually renewable memberships. Combined, these four facilities, shown on *Map 4.1* encompass roughly 1,687 acres, or almost 40% of the Village’s total area (4,403 acres).

Presented in this section for each of these important community recreation amenities are overviews of features and facilities, activities and programming, and improvement and expansion plans. Also provided is a discussion of some partnerships which have been formed with nearby communities and facilities, and developing facility and regional plans and concepts which may impact the Village in the future.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Cleveland Metroparks Bedford Reservation

The Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) encompasses almost 33,000 acres and extends from Akron to Cleveland. The CVNP was first designated a National Recreation Area in 1974 before becoming a National Park in 2000. The portion of the CVNP located within Walton Hills encompasses an area which includes the Cleveland Metroparks Bedford Reservation (See *Map 4.1*). Both park systems provide a diverse range of natural, cultural and historical resources. Visitors enjoy a variety of outdoor activities and programming. Village officials and residents alike agree that these park systems are readily accessible, well-maintained and serve as valued amenities for Walton Hills residents (See *Appendix A*).

Encircling Cleveland, the Cleveland Metroparks’ “Emerald Necklace” was established in 1917. It consists of more than 19,000 acres of land in 14 reservations, their 100 miles of connecting parkways, and Cleveland Metroparks Zoo. The Bedford Reservation’s 2,154 acres are located in portions of Bedford, Bedford Heights, Oakwood, Valley View, and Walton Hills. The portion of the Bedford Reservation located in Walton Hills provides hiking and bridle trails, picnic areas, and scenic overlooks. Other popular activities include bicycling, driving for pleasure, fishing, and golf at Shawnee Hills Golf Course. Additional outdoor activities include golf at the 18-hole Astorhurst Golf Course and the Bike and Hike Trail that extends some 20 miles into Summit County.

During 2001, over 3.3 million public visits were made to the CVNP. Over 40 million vehicles carrying over 56 million people entered the 14 reservations of Cleveland Metroparks (*2001 Park District Visitation, Cleveland Metroparks*). Almost 725,000 of this total were made to the Bedford Reservation, making it the ninth most popular destination in the entire park system. Visits in 2001 were up slightly from 2000. Among Metroparks’ six public golf courses, the 27-hole Shawnee Hills Golf Course received the second highest attendance in 2001 (114,636 visits).

Tinkers Creek descends a dramatic 220 feet along its two-mile course through the Bedford Reservation, carving a steep-walled gorge which was designated a National Natural Landmark in 1968. The habitat of the two park systems in Walton Hills includes mature forest interspersed with small pockets of grassy areas and open scrub. Parklands support about 35 acres of sensitive wetland areas, most over one acre in size. In addition to Tinkers Creek, Sagamore Creek and tributaries of each run through the parklands and through the Village. Both waterways experience flooding during times of heavy rainfall. The entire length of Tinkers Creek, most of Sagamore Creek and a section of “Tributary No. 1” (flowing into Tinkers Creek under Walton and Egbert Roads near their juncture) are designated as within the 100-year flood boundary (*Flood Insurance Rate Map, FEMA, 1981*). Other sources, such as the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (1994) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service (*Soil Survey of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, 1980*) suggest that floodplain areas subject to inundation are more extensive.

Ohio EPA is expected to designate **Sagamore Creek** as a “cold-water habitat” Such environments support salamander species, macroinvertebrates, trout, and other cold-water fish and are extremely sensitive to disturbances such as those caused by land development. Riparian forests along Sagamore Creek provide suitable habitat for many bat species. Two large wetlands along the creek possess potential roosting habitat for the federally-endangered Indiana bat, according to a survey conducted in 2002 (*Supervisory Landscape Architect, CVNP*).

The heavily forested Tinkers Creek Gorge’s “most significant feature, its isolation, has enabled a unique biological community to be reestablished which, as time goes by, will more closely resemble that present in pre-settlement times” (*Planning Director, Cleveland Metroparks, 2003*). Considered a “botanist’s paradise”, the Bedford Reservation supports stands of 29 different native trees species and diverse displays of spring wildflowers, ferns, mosses, lichens, and liverworts.



Bedford Reservations’s most significant feature, Tinkers Creek Gorge, supports a unique biological habitat.

According to representatives of both park systems, **native and migratory wildlife** populations are significantly threatened by several leading wildlife issues, including: deer overpopulation, mosquitos carrying West Nile virus, gypsy moth caterpillars defoliation, growing coyote populations, and spread of alien plant species. Park visitors are affected as well. Of course, these issues are not the only wildlife concerns. Nor are these issues confined to the park systems alone. Areas in Walton Hills beyond the parks’ boundaries are also impacted. Village residents indicated in the returned *Community Attitudes Survey* that the leading change they would like to see instituted in their neighborhood is *increased wild animal control*, followed by *increased insect control*. While certainly many residents enjoy the presence of wildlife, including white-tailed deer, in the community, a significant one-half of all responding households indicated the desire for increased control of them. Almost 40% of survey respondents indicated the need for heightened mosquito control.

Deer overpopulation poses threats to other natural resources in an ecosystem. Acceptable white-tailed deer density in all Metroparks reservations is 15 to 30 deer per square mile. Since the Bedford Reservation's deer culling (i.e., shooting) program began in 1997, the number of deer per square mile has dropped from 115 to 30 in 2000. Harvested venison is immediately provided to the Cleveland Food Bank. Natural deer rebounds occur rapidly with any cessation of the Park's management program and lack of culling in communities surrounding the park system. Bedford Reservation is especially vulnerable to deer overpopulation. Because of the severe terrain and prevalence of feeding on neighboring private lands, herd size reduction within the Reservation is extremely difficult. The Cleveland Metroparks is approaching its fifth year of costly research into deer birth control. Annual program expenses approach \$100,000. Captured does are treated with alternative vaccines at the Ohio & Erie Canal Reservation (*Bedford Sun Banner, November 21, 2002*).

While the CVNP presently is not managing deer populations due to court challenges, it continues to monitor population trends and deer-related impacts on natural resources (now in its seventh year). Walton Hills officials and residents have expressed rising concerns about the steady increase in auto collisions with deer; 31 of 126 total vehicle accidents reported to Walton Hills Police in 2003. In addition to this safety issue, residents have lodged a variety of complaints with Village officials, ranging from the decimation of costly ornamental landscaping and gardens by hungry deer to neighbors attracting deer with private feeding stations. Previous Village attempts to control the skyrocketing deer population included the use of deer traps, followed by euthanization of trapped deer.

During the past three years, **West Nile virus** has spread across the region via infected mosquitos. Potentially deadly to animals and people, the main carriers are mosquitos and infected birds. Since the virus first appeared in the U.S. almost five years ago, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed hundreds of human cases, with dozens of deaths. By the end of 2002, Cuyahoga County had 218 probable or confirmed cases of the virus, including nine deaths (*The Plain Dealer, March 14, 2003*). The virus was determined to be present in Walton Hills during 2002, based on findings from tests of dead birds. Mosquito trapping and mobile spraying in targeted areas of the Village were conducted in response to the test findings documenting the growing problem. Throughout 2003 and 2004, reported cases of West Nile virus in Ohio declined significantly, perhaps due in part to changes in local weather.

According to the CVNP, it regularly monitors and reports dead and dying birds throughout its parklands to the regional and local boards of health. It may conduct limited mosquito surveillance and testing in the future. The CVNP mosquito management plan undergoing development in 2003 does not yet call for the application of sprays for mosquito control within park boundaries except under emergency situations.

Outbreak levels of **gypsy moth caterpillars** in 1999 resulted in more than 4,000 acres of defoliation in the Cuyahoga Valley area, according to the CVNP. During that year, Walton Hills defoliation totaled 50 acres, followed by 35 acres in 2000. Suppression programs employing aerial pesticide applications to treat all federal forests (in coordination with the Ohio Department of Agriculture) have been employed when outbreaks appear imminent. Wal-

Walton Hills residents and the Cleveland Metroparks asked the State to apply pesticides during 2000 (1,200 acres) and in 2001 (1,475 acres). Populations have since been reduced to low levels. Advanced public notice is provided to all property owners in areas designated for spraying consideration, and residents may “opt-out” if they do not want their property sprayed. Now established throughout the area, this exotic pest cannot be eradicated, according to the CVNP and experts. Outbreaks will continue in response to natural cycles and the weather.

Coyote populations have increased throughout Ohio during the past decade, according to the CVNP. Based on “howl response surveys” at two locations in the vicinity of Walton Hills, coyote activity in the Village has been judged to be relatively high. Sightings are occasionally reported. Neither the CVNP or the Cleveland Metroparks actively manage coyote populations at present.

A number of **non-native plant species** are spreading throughout the park systems and private properties, replacing native vegetation and adversely altering the balance of our natural wildlife systems. Alien plants imported by accident or on purpose, such as garlic mustard, European buckthorn, several honeysuckle species, and Japanese knotweed, pose a growing threat because wildlife “does not recognize and thus does not make use of the introduced species” (*Emerald Necklace newsletter, March, 2001*). For years, the Cleveland Metroparks staff and volunteers have been attempting to control the further spread of such exotic plants through active weeding and targeted application of herbicides. Habitat restoration is then attempted through the planting and monitoring of native species.

Poor **water quality** in Tinkers Creek and its tributaries continues to limit the return of a high quality aquatic environment. Illicit industrial discharges and runoff from urban areas are especially problematic. This is particularly troubling because, while the terrestrial habitat of the Gorge is very high in quality, the creek that runs through it is not. Potentially serious human health risks are associated with this condition in that people, especially children, continue to wade in the creek near Dunham Road. Aggressive investigation and associated legal remedies are needed to address this condition in Walton Hills and elsewhere in the watershed (*Planning Director, Cleveland Metroparks, 2003*).

The preservation and restoration of the natural habitats so valued by the public throughout these two major park systems can be attained only through regional solutions developed and coordinated with affected neighboring jurisdictions.

According to the Metroparks’ Planning Director, active **park expansion plans in the Village** do not exist at this time (2003). Nor are any **capital improvements** planned, with the exception of continued trail rehabilitation and the ongoing replacement of outmoded restrooms with modern vault toilets. The CVNP is, however, exploring the possible development of a new trail linking the Bike and Hike Trail (administered by the Cleveland Metroparks in partnership with Summit County’s Metro Parks) and the Towpath Trail along the Sagamore Road corridor. Also undergoing conceptual review are options to improve public access to the Towpath Trail and Valley Railway, which is considered an alternative transportation system for the park. These and other local and regional conceptual plans undergoing development

are found in the upcoming section entitled Cuyahoga County *Greenspace Plan* and *Greenprint*.

Thomas G. Young Park and Village Recreation Programs

The 39-acre Thomas G. Young Park (aka Recreation Center) is located at the end of Dellwood Drive, a short residential street, at the eastern end of the Village (see *Map 4.1*). Until 1976, the Park was known as Dellwood Park. A focal point for a variety of recreational activities every summer, the property is surrounded by industrial development to the east, residential to the west, and undeveloped lands to the north and south. The facility is screened from adjacent residences by wood fencing, landscaping and a line of trees of varying maturities. Adjacent industries are partially screened from park visitors' view by a line of trees and shrubs. As the sole "community" park in the Village, open to all residents, its facilities double as a "neighborhood" park for those nearby residents within walking distance.

An **inventory of facilities and equipment** is provided in *Table 4.2*. Existing facility locations and some important site features are depicted on a recently taken aerial photograph presented in *Map 4.2* and in *Appendix C*. About 15 acres (38%) of the park's 39 acres, situated on reasonably level land in a contiguous block at the center of the property, are developed with a variety of active recreation facilities and vehicle parking lots. The north and south ends of the property are undeveloped, each characterized by forest cover and some brush, some slopes of varying steepness, and winding streams. Some surface debris from former dumping is evident at the north end of the property. The streams are subject to occasional flooding. Bisecting the southern undeveloped end of the Park is an east-west running 100-foot wide CEI high tension overhead electric power line easement.

During 2001, the *Walton Hills T.G. Young Park Master Plan* was prepared and presented to the Recreation Committee of Council. While not officially adopted by the Village, the plan presents recommended facility improvements. The plan also explores the suitability of the site for an indoor recreation center. A copy of the plan can be found in *Appendix C*. For additional discussion, also see *Chapter 6*.



Thomas G. Young Park provides residents with a host of outdoor activities and programs.

Since 2001, the Park has undergone numerous facility renovations and improvements, many with the assistance of an Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks grant. The Village also hired a year-round, part-time Recreation Director, and recreation activities programming has since grown, particularly during the summer months. Children's activities include golf, tennis, ice skating, bowling, movies, field trips, and swimming (at Lake Park). The nine-week Junior Parker and Parker programs include transportation for participating children to and from activities (and their homes)

each day. A summary of the wide range of recreation activities and events hosted by the Village for different age groups is provided in the *Village of Walton Hills Annual Report*, available from the Village Hall (updated every 12 months). Recreation activities and events are also described

Walton Hills Village Master Plan

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in the *Walton Hills Owl*, a monthly publication of the Walton Hills Owl Association.

Peak Recreation Department employment is realized during the summer with the addition of over one-dozen seasonal workers and volunteers who maintain the facility and conduct the various programs.

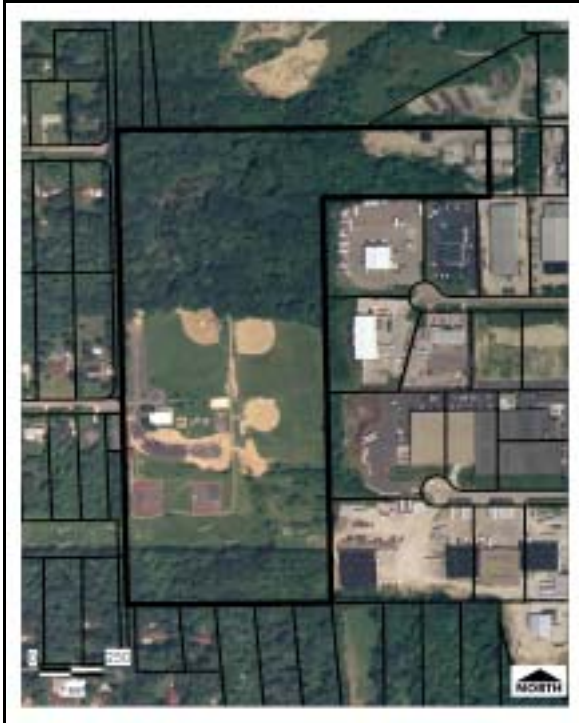
Table 4.2. Thomas G. Young Park Facilities Inventory, 2004, Walton Hills

Facilities / Equipment	No.	Description/Comments	Condition
Pavilion with Restrooms and Storage	1	Mostly recycled plastic picnic tables on concrete pad; 5,015 square feet roof coverage; water fountains; pay phone; estimated capacity to 300 people	Good
Parking Areas	4	Paved with landscaped islands; striped for 159 spaces with curb stops, (6 handi-capped)	Good
Entrance Turnaround with Flagpole	1	Paved; landscaped	Good
Baseball Fields (shared use for soccer)	3	Earthen infield with grass outfield; fenced backstop and perimeter fencing; metal bleacher seating; soccer goals	Good
Tennis Courts	2	Fenced pair with permanent benches	Good/Fair
Skate Park and Batting Cages	1	Fenced; former tennis courts	Good/Fair
Basketball Court	1	Asphalt surface; 2 pole hoops	Fair
Volleyball Court	1	Sand base	Fair
Horseshoe pits	2	2 pair	Fair
Playground	1	Misc. structures and equipment; mulch and sand base; targeted to 2-12 yr olds	Good(new)/ Fair
Picnic Sites with grills	2	Grass base with tables; grills on metal ground post	Good
Walking/Exercise path	--	Asphalt	Good
Storage Garage	1	2 bays with some storage, 768 sq.ft.	Good
Storage Shed	1	280 sq.ft.	Fair
Benches	4	Recycled plastic lumber; permanent	Good(new)
Litter Receptacles	9	Removable bins	Good
Bike Racks	6	Recycled plastic lumber; portable	Good(new)
Dumpsters (waste)	2	Waste Management service (unscreened)	Good
Porta-john	1	Rental unit	Good

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, October 2004.

For those who desire to participate in indoor fitness/recreation activities, the Village recently developed an association with nearby Macedonia, whereby Walton Hills residents may utilize

Map 4.2. Thomas G. Young Park and Vicinity, Walton Hills



SOURCES: Copyright Airphoto USA, July 2002 (with permission); Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.

the City's Recreation Center for the cost of a daily pass or an annual membership fee. In response to a growing operating deficit, the facility, constructed in 2000, was opened in early 2003 to residents of neighboring communities. The center provides a variety of facilities and activities.

Another Village partnership has been established with the neighboring Golden Age Center of Greater Cleveland, located in neighboring Oakwood Village. Aside from servicing Oakwood and Walton Hills seniors, this facility also is available for those residing in nearby Bedford, Bedford Heights and Glenwillow. Walton Hills' senior van is used for regular trips to the center as well as to meet shopping and medical needs.

Some of the concerns about an undersupply of recreational programming for residents expressed by respondents to the *Community Attitudes Survey (2002)* and Master Plan Committee members have been at least

partially addressed by the new activities and programs and above associations implemented over recent years.

Walton Hills Lake Park

Centrally located at 7157 Rotary Drive, the private ten-acre Walton Hills Lake Park is open to all Village home owners and property owners holding a paid membership donation (see *Map 4.1*). The focal point of this family-oriented recreational facility is a one-half acre, filtered and chlorinated lake with swimming, water attractions and a sandy beach area. The grounds also include a pavilion with a fireplace, picnic sites with tables and grills, a playground, beach volleyball area, a bathhouse, restrooms, and a concession stand. While Lake Park activities are oriented primarily around the summer months, some events also take place in the spring and fall.

The partially wooded property is nestled in a small valley, surrounded by residences. Given to be held in trust by and for Walton Hills residents over 50 years ago, the Park is chartered as a not-for-profit corporation. Aside from the revenue collected from the modest membership donations, operations are supported by volunteers' contributions of time and energy. Additional financial and material donations are also provided. The Village regularly provides a financial subsidy to the Park to assist with operations. In return, the facility is utilized for periodic events which are open to all Village residents, regardless of membership status. Park facilities are also available for private use for a rental fee.

Cuyahoga County Greenspace Plan and Greenprint

Cuyahoga County is at an important point in its history. It will soon become the first “built-out” county within Ohio. While nearly 26% of the county’s land was developed in 1948, over 90% is presently developed. Of course, the remaining vacant acreage continues to be consumed by development.

Undergoing preparation since 2000, the **Draft Cuyahoga County Greenspace Plan** promotes a broad, comprehensive vision for greenspace protection and restoration within the County. Working with greenspace professionals, community leaders, and residents during a series of public workshops, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission has developed a greenspace vision for the County that, among other initiatives:

- builds off of the county’s unique geography and natural history,
- emphasizes the environmental, community, and economic importance of greenspaces,
- intends to inspire decision makers to make greenspaces a priority in the community,
- promotes connecting neighborhoods to greenspaces and natural resources, and
- encourages the “regreening” of the more urban portions of the County to make them more desirable places to live.

Basic elements of the Plan include the creation of a system of natural corridors (See **Map 4.3**), a countywide trail network, the preservation of scenic views, and the protection and restoration of critical natural areas. Opportunities for open space protection and trail connections are identified in the **Draft Cuyahoga County Greenprint**. It delineates such opportunities countywide, with detail provided at the community level. While the Village of Walton Hills undeniably hosts a notable quantity of greenspaces with a diversity of outdoor recreation resources and opportunities for residents and workers,

Map 4.3. Cuyahoga County Greenspace Plan, Natural Corridor Concept



the potential community and economic benefits to be realized by improved and expanded connections linking residential neighborhoods, civic centers, employment concentrations, and parks are numerous.

In the vicinity of Walton Hills, various **new trail connections** have been proposed during recent years and are undergoing consideration. One such connection being explored by the CVNP is the possible development of a new trail along Sagamore Road, linking the Bike and Hike Trail with the Towpath Trail (Noted in the previous section). Another potential connection derived from public input and research extends along the major

east-west running electric power line corridor which traverses the Village. Such an alignment could directly connect neighborhoods to the Thomas G. Young Park, the Cleveland Metroparks Bedford Reservation, and beyond. With minor extensions, the Municipal Complex and industrial district could also be connected to this potential new trail. See *Chapter 6, Focus Area E* for related discussions.

In addition to input provided during the public workshop conducted early in 2002 covering the Walton Hills area, community support for development of hike and bike trails is also evident in the findings from the *Community Attitudes Survey (Appendix A)*. Almost 25% of respondents indicated that they would like to see *hike/bike trails development* in the vicinity of their home. A slightly greater number (about 30%) expressed a desire for *additional recreational facilities and programs* in their neighborhoods.

For additional information on the *Cuyahoga County Greenspace Plan*, go the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission Website at <http://planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us>.

Cuyahoga Valley Initiative

The Cuyahoga Valley is the setting for one of the most interesting and significant examples of blended industry, neighborhoods, recreation, nature, and preservation in America. The Cuyahoga Valley Initiative (CVI) is an effort to regenerate and marry the industry, neighborhoods and restored habitat of the Valley to make it a unifying element for the region.

Today, the Valley, and indeed the entire county, is faced with questions of how to foster economic growth and attract new investment while creating a high quality of life for residents and workers. The core economy struggles to be globally competitive while at the same time the county is not yet a progressive place for emerging economy businesses. Just as the region's economic foundation began in the Valley, so too can its renewal.

The purpose of the CVI is to create a sustainable future for the Valley. The CVI will focus on the needs of the Cuyahoga River and rely on an understanding of the Valley's complex economic, social and ecological systems. The CVI will define a "vision" for the Valley and offer tools to implement this vision. These tools, in the form of model codes (e.g., zoning and environmental ordinances), eco-friendly building regulations, design guidelines, and sustainable practices are intended to foster day-to-day improvements to create lasting change in the character and function of the Valley. CVI success will require the involvement and commitment of individual municipalities, regional groups, local residents, businesses, and other stakeholders.

Walton Hills is one of ten communities comprising the 17-mile long CVI project area. Located at the outer geographic edge of the Valley, Walton Hills will be a beneficiary of the tools developed for the Initiative. Research and data collection, followed by public meetings, will precede the release of preliminary project outcomes in 2005 or 2006.

For additional information on the CVI, go the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission Website at <http://planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us>.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Bedford City (Public) School District **school buildings** are located in the cities of Bedford and Bedford Heights (*Table 4.3*). Servicing the four District communities are two primary schools, three intermediate schools, one middle school, and one high school. School District offices are located in the Bedford Board of Education building in Bedford. All buildings were constructed in the 1950's and 1960's with the exception of Central Primary School, which was constructed in 1905. Reflecting the growing enrollment in earlier years, all but one building (Heskett Middle School) has witnessed building additions. According to the District, all structures are in *good* condition.

Table 4.3. School Buildings, Bedford City School District

Name	Grade(s)	Prop. size (Ac.)	Building(s) (Sq. Ft.)	Year Built/ Addition	Building Condition
Pre-School & Elementary					
Central Primary School 799 Washington St, Bedford	K-2	5.5	57,427	1905 1959 1965	Good
Glendale Primary School 400 West Glendale Ave, Bedford	Pre-2	4.5	52,267	1953 1959 1965	Good
Intermediate School					
Carylwood Intermediate School 1387 Caryl Dr, Bedford	3-5	9.0	45,837	1955 1965	Good
Columbus Intermediate School 23600 Columbus Rd, Bedford Hts	3-5	9.0	55,121	1962 1965 2002	Good
Upper Intermediate School					
Aurora Upper Intermediate School 24200 Aurora Rd, Bedford Hts	6	8.4	41,956	1952 1955 1959	Good
Middle School					
Heskett Middle School 5771 Perkins Rd, Bedford Hts	7-8	21.0	109,362	1968	Good
High School					
Bedford High School 481 Northfield Rd, Bedford	9-12	58.0	296,368	1954 1955 1958 1971 1994	Good
Other					
Board of Education 475 Northfield Rd, Bedford	N/A	2.0	6,800	1960	Good

SOURCE: Bedford City School District, 2003.

Capital improvements to Bedford City School District facilities and system operating improvements have been ongoing over the years and voters have been generally supportive. School levies have been placed on the ballot about every four years during recent decades. The last school levy passed in 1999 (*Bedford Sun Banner, March 6, 2003*). A 4.9-mill operating levy is likely to be placed on the November, 2004 general election ballot.

In 2003, the newly formed Strategic Planning Committee had identified a number of priorities, including: a new maintenance building on Solon Road; window replacement and masonry repairs at the High School; site improvements at Central School including parking, landscaping, and a new playground; and the installation of a digital surveillance camera system at the High School to improve safety and security (*District Business Manager, March 13, 2003*). Each project will be funded by the District's Permanent Improvement Fund, with the exception of the new maintenance building which is being financed through the District's General Fund.

Aspects of the Bedford City School District are of growing concern to Village residents and officials, as corroborated by findings from the *Community Attitudes Survey*, input from the Master Plan Committee and interviews of key Village officials (*Appendix A*). Steady Village public school enrollment declines (See *Chapter 2*) over recent years suggest the depth of concern held by parents of school-age children. These declines, coupled with the broader negative perceptions of school system quality (as partially reflected by District Report Card findings summarized in *Chapter 2*), adversely impact Walton Hills and its residents in a variety of ways. Negative community impacts and perceptions cited repeatedly by most Master Plan Committee members during the plan preparation process include: slowed home sales, diminished home value appreciation, a departure of residents to nearby communities with superior school districts, and a declining community image, among other impacts. Also of concern to Committee members and Village officials is Walton Hills' disproportionate tax contribution to the District (relative to the number of enrolled Village residents). For a discussion of these and other concerns including some associated findings derived from CPC investigations prompted by the Master Plan Committee, see *Appendix B*.

In July of 2003, the Bedford Board of Education unveiled strategies as elements of a District Strategic Plan. The plan is in response to the need to: achieve unity among the four district communities; improve communications between the district and the communities; and continue improvements to the district's scores on its *Report Card* issued annually by the Ohio Department of Education. Identified programs shall be developed and carried out over the next five to seven years (*Bedford Sun Banner, March 6 and July 10, 2003*).

For the second time in six years, the Village during 2004 negotiated the procedure required by Ohio law to exit the Bedford City School District and transfer to the nearby Cuyahoga Heights Local School District. An Ohio Department of Education Hearing, scheduled for October 28, 2004, is expected to precede the state's final decision.

OTHER PUBLIC PROPERTIES, FACILITIES AND SERVICES

A variety of additional public services not previously discussed are available to Village residents, but are not located on Village-owned properties. Some are based outside of Walton Hills. These, and some additional properties owned by public entities, are discussed below. Located in the City of Bedford, the **Bedford Medical Center** (University Hospitals Health System) is a 110-bed, acute care facility servicing most of southeastern Cuyahoga County, including Walton Hills. The hospital's 24-hour emergency room is the destination for the Village's rescue squad calls. The **Walton Manor Healthcare Center**, a privately operated, quasi-public, skilled nursing facility with 150 beds, is located on Alexander Road (at Northfield Road).

The Cuyahoga County **Library** System's Southeast Branch, located in Bedford, services the communities of Bedford, Oakwood, Bedford Heights, and Walton Hills. Public libraries are also available in other nearby communities. Almost one-third (29.3%) of all households responding to the Community Attitudes Survey rated *convenience of/access to the public library* as "Fair" or "Poor" (*Appendix A*).

The closest **Post Office** is also located in adjacent Bedford. Walton Hills shares its zip code (44146) with Bedford, Bedford Heights, and Oakwood.

Other public properties located in the Village include **Places of Worship**. Almost one-half dozen church properties are clustered at the western end of the Village along Alexander and Dunham Roads. The **Bedford Compost Facility** is situated on a city-owned property at the end of Krick Road (extension) adjacent to Oakwood's Service Garage.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

The **components of the infrastructure** for which the Village has maintenance and replacement responsibilities are identified in *Table 4.4*. Detailed information submitted by the Village Engineer to the Ohio Public Works Commission (*September 19, 2003*) is presented. Included is a measure of each component (e.g., miles, feet, number of units), its physical condition, and estimated replacement or repair costs. The Village Engineer estimates that the total system replacement/repair costs, based on the reported condition of all components, approaches \$94 million. The definitions of terms used to evaluate condition follow (*District One Public Works Integrating Committee*).

Excellent: Little or no rehabilitation or maintenance is required.

Good: Requires extensive maintenance to maintain integrity

Fair: Requires minor rehabilitation to maintain integrity

Poor: Requires standard rehabilitation to maintain integrity.

Critical: Requires complete reconstruction - no part of the existing facility is salvageable or requires extensive rehabilitation to maintain integrity.

A summary of the top priority capital improvement projects in Walton Hills, completed during 2001-2002 and planned for the 2004-2008 period, is presented in **Table 4.5**. The project descriptions, schedule and costs are provided here as reported to the Ohio Public Works Commission by the Village Engineer (*September 19, 2003*).

Table 4.4. Infrastructure Inventory, 2003, Walton Hills

Infrastructure	Total Units	Units/Physical Condition					Replace Cost (x1000)	Repair Cost (x1000)
		Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Critical		
Roads	27 miles	10	10	4	3	-	\$52,054	\$1,932
Bridges	2	1	1	-	-	-	\$3,746	\$1,184
Culverts	16	-	14	2	-	-	\$1,346	\$420
Water Supply	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Water Distribution	106 linear ft (x1000)	-	79	9	5	13	\$14,539	\$1,331
Wastewater Systems	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wastewater Collection	101 linear ft (x1000)	6	85	10	-	-	\$13,896	\$333
Stormwater Collection	10 linear ft (x1000)	-	9	1	-	-	\$2,227	\$410
Solid Waste Disposal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTALS							\$87,808	\$5,610

SOURCE: Village Engineer, Ohio Public Works Commission Capital Improvement Report, September 19, 2003.

ROADS, BRIDGES AND TRAFFIC

The Village maintains about 27 miles of **roads** (excluding those maintained by Cleveland Metroparks in the Bedford Reservation). About 74% (20 miles) of the Village-maintained portion is judged to be in *excellent* or *good* condition (up from the previous year). Of the remaining seven miles of roadways, four miles are rated in *fair* condition and three miles are rated in *poor* condition. While the three miles of roadway segments rated *poor* are scattered throughout the community, a relatively long segment extends along Dunham Road between Alexander Road and Astorhurst Golf Course. According to the Village Engineer, this Dunham Road segment is a reconstruction priority, with work to be conducted in spring of 2005.

Some concerns regarding the deteriorating condition of roads have been expressed by residents and Village officials (see *Appendix A*). All interviewed officials agree that some type of long-term preventative maintenance program needs to be implemented community-wide, as opposed to a “spot fixing” approach (2002).

Road program activities in 2003 included the resurfacing of Hicks Road, Spangehurst Drive, North Meadow Park Drive, Fern Lane, Dunham Lane, and crack sealing of numerous Village roadways. Along several segments of County roads, raised pavement markers were installed

Walton Hills Village Master Plan

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and edge line painting was completed. By 2004, the Village’s annually updated Five Year Road Program was providing up to roughly \$346,000 annually to cover prioritized road improvements, ranging from crack-sealing and striping to resurfacing and reconstruction activities.

Table 4.5. Five Year Capital Improvement Plan, 2004-2008, Walton Hills

Project Name/Description	Funding Source	Status (A)ctive (C)omplete	Total Cost	Two-Year Effort	
				2002	2003
Annual Sewer Maintenance Program	Local	C	\$58,180	\$28,660	\$29,520
Annual Sewer Maintenance	Local	A	\$167,906		
Annual Resurfacing Program	Local	A	\$361,367	\$224,800	\$136,567
Annual Resurfacing Program	Local	A	\$1,208,810		
Dunham Road/Tinkers Creek	Cuyahoga/ City & Local	C	\$214,080	\$71,360	\$71,360
Dunham Road Water Main	OPWC/ Local	A	\$1,124,004	\$40,000	\$1,084,004
Street Pavement Marking	Local	C	\$64,799	\$26,263	\$38,536
Annual Pavement Marking	Local	A	\$124,655		
Project Name/Description Cont.	Five Year Effort				
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Annual Sewer Maintenance Program					
Annual Sewer Maintenance	\$31,000	\$32,240	\$33,530	\$34,871	\$36,265
Annual Resurfacing Program					
Annual Resurfacing Program	\$215,050	\$222,950	\$226,550	\$232,000	\$132,260
Dunham Road / Tinkers Creek	\$71,360				
Dunham Road Water Main					
Street Pavement Marking					
Annual Pavement Marking	\$28,365	\$15,660	\$30,633	\$16,913	\$33,084

OPWC = Ohio Public Works Commission
 SOURCE: Village Engineer, September 19, 2003.

While some interest in widening Northfield Road through the Village was expressed by some Master Plan Committee members and Village officials, the feasibility of such an improvement may not be supported by demonstrated traffic volumes and limitations imposed by existing right-of-way width (*Village Engineer*). At present, there are no plans to extend the recent Northfield Road widening projects taking place in nearby communities into Walton Hills.



The Northfield Road bridge, a key Village “gateway” underwent major reconstruction during 2004.

While there are a number of **bridges** in Walton Hills, the Village is responsible for maintaining just two, according to the Village Engineer. Rated in *critical* condition prior to 2003, Northfield Road bridge, over the Norfolk Southern rail lines (also see upcoming *Rail* discussion), underwent major reconstruction in 2003 and 2004. At a cost of over \$6 million, the bridge deck was widened by six feet to accommodate slightly wider driving lanes. The sidewalk on the west side of the bridge has been retained, with one added to the east side. Reconstruction of Northfield Road from Bedford’s corporate limit south to Krick Road was conducted in coordination with the bridge

work. Following the completion of bridge work, the balance of Northfield Road in the Village is scheduled for resurfacing.

Most Village officials have observed that **traffic** flows relatively well throughout the Village, with the exception of light congestion at main intersections during peak hour travel times (see *Appendix A*). Reflecting the community’s low density residential and concentrated industrial development, Walton Hills has just a handful of major intersections. Yet its main roadways carry relatively high levels of through traffic. Of the eleven main intersections in Walton Hills, six have average daily traffic counts in the vicinity of 10,000 vehicle counts or more during a 24-hour period (see *Table 4.6*).

According to the Cuyahoga County Engineer’s Office, which conducts traffic volume surveys on a rotating annual basis, the most heavily traveled intersection in Walton Hills is at Northfield and Alexander Roads. As of the latest survey in 2001, approximately 26,449 average daily trips (ADTs) were made at this intersection, with most traffic originating south of Alexander Road. Of the total vehicular traffic at this intersection, 3% was truck traffic. The second highest volume intersection, with 19,579 ADTs, is at Northfield and Forbes Roads. However, the last survey at this intersection was conducted in 1994, suggesting even higher traffic counts today. Not surprisingly, most truck traffic in the Village was observed along Northfield Road in the industrial district to the north of Alexander Road. During 2002, in response to concerns pertaining to growing pavement damage and public safety, trucks exceeding Alexander Road weight limits were barred from traveling west through the Village from the industrial district.

The Village’s Police Department compiles annual traffic accident data by location. Since 1996, between 82 (2002) and 144 (2000) motor vehicle accidents have occurred annually in the Village, with the greatest number taking place along Alexander Road (excluding the Alexander and Northfield Roads intersection). The next highest number of incidents occurred at the Alexander and Northfield Roads intersection. Both congestion and accidents could be greatly reduced at this intersection with the installation of left turn lanes on Northfield Road, according to the Police Chief (2003). (*The Village Engineer indicates that recent traffic counts may not justify this improvement and the right-of-way width may not be sufficient to add turning lanes*) Because 31 of the 126 vehicular accidents (25%) occurring in 2003 involved

collisions with deer, any herd reductions would have a notable effect on lowering accidents overall.

Table 4.6. Vehicle Count Summary, Walton Hills

Intersection	Date of Count	24-hour ADT	Percent Trucks
Alexander and Northfield Roads	07/26/01	26,449	3.0%
Northfield and Forbes Roads	07/25/94	19,579	11.0%
Dunham and Alexander Roads	07/27/01	16,446	4.0%
Northfield and Sagamore Roads	07/27/01	16,076	5.0%
Northfield Rd and Hannan Pkwy	03/24/91	13,079	8.0%
Alexander and Walton Roads	07/27/01	9,668	3.0%

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Engineer Office.

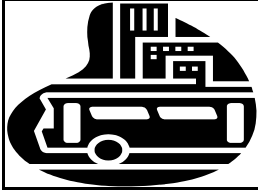
RAIL

CSX/Norfolk Southern owns and operates a double rail line at the eastern border of Walton Hills. According to a Norfolk Southern representative, approximately 50 trains a day travel along this track section, connecting to Chicago and Pittsburgh and beyond. While the majority of trains pass through the Village, some local stops are occasionally made at Village and nearby industries via numerous sidings. Train traffic has remained constant over recent years and is expected to continue at its current rate. No significant infrastructure improvements are scheduled for the rail line. Maintenance of the tracks and signals is ongoing.

While train traffic volume is relatively high, this rail line is situated within an industrial area, is over 1,800 feet from the nearest Village residence, and has no grade crossings within the community. Responses to the *Community Attitudes Survey* did not indicate the existence of any problems or issues associated with the rail line or train traffic. Consequently, any negative community impacts prompted by the existence of this rail line are judged to be minimal or nonexistent.

PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) provides public bus and passenger rail services throughout Cuyahoga County. While bus lines directly service most nearby communities in southeastern Cuyahoga County, none extend through the heart of Walton Hills. In June of 2004, the RTA combined the #90X and #97X service to create the #90F (Flyer) with operates between Cleveland and the County line (at Broadway Avenue). In the Village, it loops up and down Northfield Road and east along Alexander Road to Broadway. The intent of this routing is to bring (and return) workers from the City of Cleveland and neighboring communities to “first shift” industrial jobs in Walton Hills and neighboring communities. However, the #90F offers extremely limited service, with just two southbound trips (before



am) and three northbound trips (after 3 pm) on weekdays only. Many Walton Hills workers who use this service must walk up to 1.5 miles (without the benefit of any sidewalks) in order to reach the most distant employment locations in the Village's industrial district along Northfield Road.

Over the past decade, Cuyahoga County's public transit lost one-fifth of its commuters. The only other large U.S. county with a bigger drop was Wayne County (Detroit), Michigan (*The Plain Dealer, August 26, 2002*). Much of the decline has been attributed to the availability of more affordable automobiles, growing incomes and inability of mass transit systems to quickly adjust to the changing geographic patterns of employment. Late in 2001, in the face of "staggering losses in sales tax revenues that make up the bulk of RTA's budget", the RTA began to consider raising fares, cutting employees, and reducing service (*The Plain Dealer, November 14, 2001*). Early in 2002, RTA rerouted and discontinued marginally productive bus lines. Walton Hills' only bus service was terminated in March of 2002 when the #97F, which offered limited service along Northfield and Alexander Roads (including a residential loop), was discontinued due to low ridership. Today, Village residents seeking to utilize RTA's bus services would be required to rely on private auto to reach a distant bus line and board only after identifying a convenient, legal parking space.

Based on *Community Attitudes Survey* results, just over one-in-four responding households (28.4%) indicated that transit changes could prompt them to begin to use, or increase their present use of public transportation services with Walton Hills. It is also interesting to note that about 75% of the Village's working residents are employed in Cleveland, Bedford and Solon (See *Chapter 2*). Presently, convenient public transportation links to these communities (which have RTA services) do not exist. Most Village officials believe that the Village's industrial district businesses would benefit from improved public transportation service for their employees (See *Appendix A*).

The Village of Walton Hills operates a van program which provides transportation access for senior and disabled residents. In 1999, the Village received a grant to purchase a ten-passenger handicap accessible van from the Cuyahoga County Commissioners. The van service is operated by part-time paid staff and volunteers and travels within a ten-mile radius of the Village. Residents must register with the Village Recreation Department and schedule appointments in advance. Medical appointments are given priority, but trips may be granted for other reasonable requests. Presently, on average, the van makes about 12 trips per month, including a weekly shopping trip every Thursday. Approximately 20 seniors are registered to use the van. The Village owns and operates two additional 15-person vans which are used periodically to conduct bus trips to area cultural and sporting events and provide transportation for children's summer recreational programs.

RTA provides a door-to-door Community Responsive Transit (CRT) on a priority and reservation basis. To take advantage of CRT service, one must be at least 65 years of age and/or disabled (according to guidelines provided in the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act). An application is required and must be partly completed by a doctor or health care provider to verify disability status. Income is not a defining eligibility criteria.

However, there are Paratransit restrictions which may impact service in Walton Hills. RTA is mandated by federal law to provide CRT/Paratransit services only within one-quarter mile of an existing RTA bus route, and service is limited to a destination within five miles of service origin. Therefore, if a community has no bus routes, RTA is not mandated to provide CRT/paratransit services in that area.

There are three categories of eligibility for Paratransit service. One may qualify for special RTA service under ADA if:

- ▶ Unable, without special assistance, as the result of physical or mental impairment, to get on, ride, or get off an accessible vehicle on the public transit system.
- ▶ Requiring the assistance of a wheelchair lift or other boarding device to get on, ride, and get off an accessible vehicle (but such a vehicle is not available on the route when you are planning to travel).
- ▶ Demonstrating a specific impairment-related condition which prevents him/her from traveling to or from a station or stop on the transit system.

WATER DISTRIBUTION

The City of Cleveland owns and maintains the public water supply and distribution systems. Water comes from Lake Erie. After treatment, it is pumped to the Village's 995 customers (1999). Approximately 20.1 miles of **water lines** are located with the Village. About 75% of the entire system is judged by the Village Engineer to be in *good* condition. About 13% of the system is rated *fair* or *poor*, with the remaining 12% (2.5 miles) judged to be in *critical* condition.

Water line segments in *critical* condition are located along Dunham Road (2003). These 38-year-old lines experience "a high break rate" and "residents continue to experience water quality problems" (*Cleveland Division of Water, September 27, 2001*). The service area is estimated to include 45 households and 60 recreational business employees in the Village. This water main also serves as a primary redundant feed line to a hospital in neighboring Sagamore Hills Township.

In suburban communities served directly by the Cleveland Division of Water, such as Walton Hills, rehabilitating or replacing small water mains (16 inches in diameter and smaller) is the responsibility of the suburb. For a number of years, the Village had unsuccessfully sought outside funding to support the replacement of Dunham Road's eight-inch water main (including fire hydrants, line valves and appurtenances) and cleaning and relining of a 12-inch section. Total project cost was estimated at \$1.124 million (*Village Engineer, September 24, 2002*). The water distribution system is repaired and upgraded as breaks and other problems are identified.

Following years of funding investigations, replacement and restoration of the Dunham Road water lines and fire hydrants began in January of 2004. A project objective has been to improve water purity and capacity. During the summer of 2004, the project was expected to

be concluded by the following October (*Village Engineer*).

Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBOH) records indicate that at least four potentially operating **water wells** are located in the Village, each situated on residential properties. Only one property, located on Dunham Road, continues to receive its water supply from the well. The other properties are connected to the public water distribution system.

SANITARY AND STORM SEWERS, SEPTIC TANKS, AND CULVERTS

Sanitary sewer lines extend about 19 miles throughout the Village, while **storm sewer lines** total just under two miles in length. Most storm water drainage is accommodated by open, roadside surface ditches and swales, some of which are concrete-lined. While the Village is responsible for the systems, it contracts with Cuyahoga County Sanitary Engineer to maintain portions of them. Preventive maintenance includes high pressure flushing system-wide and video televising to identify breaks and other problems. Sanitary sewer lift stations are inspected bimonthly. The many miles of open ditches require periodic dredging and other maintenance in order to maintain effective drainage and prevent erosion. Storm water run-off captured by this network of surface ditches drains to the many miles of creeks and tributaries and dozens of privately owned ponds which dot the landscape in Walton Hills. Numerous primary waterways within several watersheds drain surface water from the Village. All surface storm water drains to the Cuyahoga River, most via the Tinkers Creek (lower) watershed.

As with the water distribution system, many wastewater and storm water system repairs and upgrades are often performed as problems occur. For the most part, Village officials (including the Village Engineer) indicated that the sanitary and storm sewer systems are in relatively good condition. About 90% of the wastewater system is judged to be in *good* to *excellent* condition. Approximately 10%, or almost two miles in length, is considered to be in *fair* condition. The buried portion of the storm water management system is judged to be in *fair to good* condition. In coordination with the Northfield Road bridge reconstruction and resurfacing projects described above, some catch basins along the roadway were reconstructed.

Residential sewer service is provided by the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (NEORS). Its construction of large interceptors through the Village in the early 1980's stimulated the development of today's sewer network, enabling property owners to discontinue their reliance on septic tanks. Systemwide, the District assesses its customers quarterly for service. However, in Walton Hills, residential sewer service accounts have been paid by the Village since the sewer system was built.

According to the CCBOH, which permits **septic tanks** annually, 18 residential properties continue to rely on septic tank systems throughout the Village. All but two of these systems are located along Dunham Road. Since most of these systems exceed their standard 20-year life expectancy and are "antiquated" (CCBOH), they are considered to be failing, according to the CCBOH. Records indicate that commercial/institutional septic systems number eight, with five additional holding tanks. These septic systems are also judged to be in poor condition due to their age. Only one, serving the Metroparks Maintenance Building is considered to be in excellent working condition, as it was installed in 2002. The holding tanks

are concrete-lined pits effectively serving as public bathrooms in the Metroparks Bedford Reservation. While there is no law that requires these aging non-institutional septic systems to be replaced, the Mayor has indicated that, in the interest of public health, it would be desirable to connect the private systems to the central sewer system.

The recent replacement and rehabilitation of the sanitary sewer along Dunham Road will facilitate the connection of properties which have historically relied on failing individual septic systems to treat their household wastewater.

Walton Hills, along with thousands of other municipalities nationwide, was required by March 10, 2003 to develop and submit a storm water management plan to protect water quality, in accordance with USEPA regulations. The Village's submitted *Phase II Storm Water Management Plan*, adopted by Council on March 4, 2003, outlines water quality monitoring activities and discharge restriction measures to be employed in industrial areas, among other activities. Early in 2004, the Village adopted some companion stormwater-related ordinances to maintain Village compliance with state regulations.

The Village maintains 16 **culverts**. Culvert sizes range from about one foot to six feet in diameter. Most pass under streets in residential neighborhoods. All have been determined to be in *fair to good* condition.

SIDEWALKS AND STREET LIGHTS

Sidewalks in Walton Hills are not common. Only one segment, about 2,300 feet in length, extends around the Village/Community Hall complex and up Walton Road to its juncture with Hicks Road. Village officials agree that sidewalks are not desired in the Village's neighborhoods, indicating during interviews that the lack of sidewalks and street lights contribute to the "rural atmosphere" that is highly valued by the residents. Less than one-in-ten residents, via their responses to the *Community Attitudes Survey*, indicated a desire for additional sidewalks or streetlights.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Opportunities for improved telecommunications exist within Village government. Presently, while personal **computers** are utilized by most Village employees, they are not linked via a network (except within the Police Department). For employees and elected officials, **internet access and email** use is accomplished only on an individual, case by case basis. While regular local **cable television** outreach could be established, it has not been. Several unofficial Village web pages exist, but a single endorsed Village site does not.

Following months of investigations, discussions and coordination, a network of 20 **outdoor warning sirens** will be installed across nine communities in southeast Cuyahoga County during late 2004. Three sirens, to be mounted on poles, are planned for Walton Hills. Program components include public awareness/education and scheduled Saturday testing. The consortium of communities developed the system in coordination in an effort to reduce the

high costs associated with individual installation. The program has been developed in response to a number of major natural and manmade disasters which have occurred during recent years.

CHAPTER 5

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MARKET ANALYSIS



Transtar Industries is one of the Village's top five employers.

INTRODUCTION

Community goals expressed early in the planning process focus on aspects of the Village's commercial development and economy. The future "vision" for Walton Hills, collectively expressed by residents, stakeholders and community officials participating in the planning process, is one of economic strength and improved health (see *Chapter 1*). However, it is agreed that future economic gains must not adversely impact the Village's "country" character and the residents' quality of life.

This chapter begins with a description and inventory of the Village's commercial retail, office and industrial areas and activities, followed by a discussion of conditions and issues identified during field investigations and associated research. Inventories were initially conducted by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC) in spring of 2003, with an update completed during September and October of 2004. Inventory findings serve as a "snapshot" image of Village's commercial market. The reader should recognize that the economic profile of the community is not static. It is continually changing.

The next component, the market analysis, relies on the data derived from the inventories, coupled with some additional research, to assess the development potential for particular types of retail businesses. An examination of office and industrial activities was also conducted. Local and regional development trends have also been determined for each of the major commercial sectors.

The balance of the chapter addresses the Village's future commercial retail, office and industrial development and redevelopment potential, followed by a discussion of economic development incentive and "adaptive reuse" (of buildings and space) strategies that could be considered for implementation by the Village.

Based on findings provided in this and previous chapters, some conclusions have been formulated and are presented at the end of the chapter in the form of general recommendations. The recommendations are provided to assist Walton Hills to achieve its vision of a stable, expanded tax base and an improved appearance for the Northfield Road Business Corridor, including gateways and contiguous industrial areas.

DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL RETAIL, OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS

The bulk of the Village's commercial retail, office and industrial land uses are concentrated along a broad north-south corridor extending along the Village's eastern border with the Village of Oakwood (See *Map 3.1*). This location and concentration of most of the Village's businesses, in proximity to heavily traveled Northfield Road and the readily-accessed Interstate 271 in neighboring Oakwood, serves the Village extremely well. Less than one-dozen businesses are scattered at a handful of locations elsewhere in the Village.

The typical negative impacts (e.g., increased auto and truck traffic, noise, visual blight, and night-time security lighting glare) so often experienced by residents living among and adjacent to generally incompatible industrial land uses are greatly reduced in Walton Hills due to the geographic concentration and relative isolation of its industries. Essentially, the district is an “island” clearly connected to the community, but whose negative characteristics are effectively separated from most residential neighborhoods and most public activity centers.

Direct business district access to I-271 further benefits Walton Hills in that the majority of auto and truck traffic destined for these companies does not pass through the Village – which is predominantly comprised of residential neighborhoods. The heavily traveled rail line traversing the border of the Village provides additional benefits via its numerous siding connections to Village industries (also see *Chapter 4: Public Facilities and Infrastructure*).

Walton Hills encompasses almost seven square miles, or almost 4,500 acres. The Village is among the larger suburbs in Cuyahoga County, the 21st largest in land area of the County’s 59 communities. Among roughly 1,300 individual properties located within Walton Hills, an estimated 163 host retail, office or industrial activities.

Village-wide, an estimated 4,250 workers were employed by the end of 2003, according to the Regional Income Tax Agency (as revised by CPC). Based on additional CPC research, an estimated 92%, or about 3,900-3,950 workers, are employed in industrial-related activities, with roughly 8% (300-350) employed in commercial retail/office activities. According to RITA, the top five ranked employers in Walton Hills during 2003 included: Ford Motor Company, Edge Seals Technologies, Ferro Corporation, Transtar Industries, and Homeworks, Inc. (Arhaus).

Vacant, privately-owned lands within the defined business areas comprise almost 100 acres across portions of several dozen individual properties. This vacant acreage is situated within areas zoned for *Business*, *Office Building* and *Industrial* uses and should be considered potentially available for future new development (and existing business expansion) – subject to additional findings and limitations discussed elsewhere in this plan.

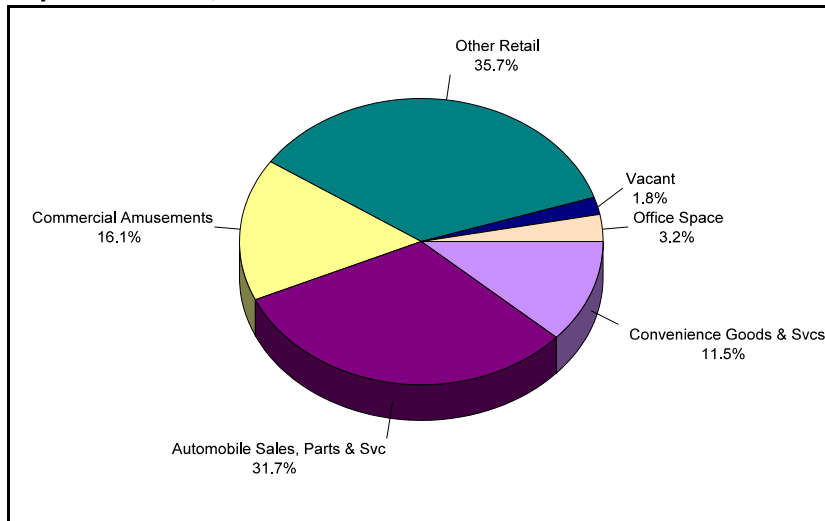
INVENTORY OF COMMERCIAL RETAIL AND OFFICE FLOOR SPACE AND ACTIVITIES

A CPC inventory of the commercial retail and office uses, buildings and properties throughout Walton Hills, originally compiled during the spring of 2003, was updated in September and October of 2004. For each identified business, a variety of descriptive information was assembled, including business name, address, activity/use classification, and employment, among other information. The primary sources utilized to compile this information included a listing of Village businesses compiled by the Walton Hills Fire Inspector and Building Department (dated 7/13/2004), current Cuyahoga County Auditor’s property records, and the CPC (including field investigations, aerial photograph analysis and research).

CPC’s comprehensive field work over several days allowed for identification of recent new construction, tenant changes, and estimating of business floor space where unavailable using traditional sources. Additional research conducted by the CPC included the use of a variety of proprietary business directories and telephone calls made directly to companies and public sources. The commercial retail and office classification scheme and detailed inventory findings are provided in *Appendix D*.

A simplified, graphic view of the commercial retail and office inventory findings is presented in **Figure 5.1**. A detailed sector listing is provided in **Table 5.2**. Each commercial activity classification is based on the businesses’ *primary* business function determined by applying the above described methodology. In the case of a multi-tenant building or property, the *primary*, or leading, function (based on floor space) determined its classification.

Figure 5.1. Commercial Retail and Office Floor Space Inventory, September 2004, Walton Hills



The entire commercial retail and office inventory is classified within seven major categories, consuming just 175,690 square feet of building floor space at 33 individual firms. Illustrated in the pie chart, the category containing the largest amount of floor space is *Other Retail*, comprising 62,650 square feet of the sector’s total floor area (35.7%) at just three establishments. The

lion’s share of the floor space, 55,300 square feet, is located at the Walton Manor Health Care Center, a quasi-public, commercially operated enterprise.

Automobile Sales, Parts and Service, the second largest floor area grouping, represents 31.7% (55,660 square feet) of the total. Among the six major categories, this one demonstrates the greatest number of individual firms (14). *Auto repair* (40,825 square feet) comprises close to two-thirds of the total floor area.

The third largest amount of floor space is found at indoor *Commercial Amusements* (16.1%) where three businesses have been identified. *Banquet/Social Halls* account for these businesses, with Astorhurst Country Place comprising about one-half (14,792 square feet) of the category’s total floor space.

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Table 5.2. Commercial Retail & Office Floor Space and Firms, September 2004, Walton Hills

Code	Type of Establishment	Floor Area (S.F.)	% of Total	# of Firms
A	CONVENIENCE GOODS AND SERVICES			
A1	Supermarkets	-0-		
A2	Other Food	2,000		
A3	Food Service	18,180		
A4	Drugs	-0-		
A5	Other Convenience Goods	-0-		
A6	Convenience Services	-0-		
	Subtotal for A	20,180	11.5%	8
B	SHOPPING GOODS AND SERVICES			
B1/B2	Department Stores, Other General Merchandise	-0-		
B3	Clothing and Shoes	-0-		
B4	Other Shopping Goods	-0-		
B5	Furniture/Home Furnishings	-0-		
	Subtotal for B	-0-	0.0%	-0-
C	AUTOMOBILE SALES, PARTS AND SERVICE			
C1/C2	New /Used Auto Sales	-0-		
C3	Auto Parts Sales	5,300		
C4	Auto Repair	40,825		
C5	Gas Stations	2,285		
C6	Auto Transportation	7,250		
	Subtotal for C	55,660	31.7%	14
D	COMMERCIAL AMUSEMENTS			
D1	Enclosed Amusements	N/A		
D2	Banquet/Social Halls	28,290		
	Subtotal for D	28,290	16.1%	3
E	OTHER RETAIL			
E1/E2/E3	Hotels, Funeral Homes, Animal Hospitals	-0-		
E4	Training Schools	-0-		
E5	Nursing Homes	55,300		
E6	Business Services	2,400		
E7	Miscellaneous	4,950		
	Subtotal for E	62,650	35.7%	3
F	VACANT			
F1	Existing Vacant	3,210		
	Subtotal for F	3,210	1.8%	3
G	OFFICE SPACE			
G1	Banks/ Financial Institutions	5,700		
G2	Local and Regional Office	-0-		
	Subtotal for G	5,700	3.2%	2
	TOTAL	175,690	100%	33

Convenience Goods and Services is the fourth largest category (11.5%, or 20,180 square feet). This classification includes businesses such as restaurants and convenience stores, among others (e.g., supermarkets, drug stores and gift shops). This grouping includes eight modestly-sized businesses scattered throughout the Village.

Office Space is the fifth largest category (3.2%). Two firms in Walton Hills has been judged to fall within the commercial office category definition. Best Employees Credit Union, classified in the *Banks/Financial Institutions* sub-category, occupies 4,100 square feet (72%) of the 5,700 square foot total.

The sixth largest grouping, based on square feet of floor space, is *Vacant*. At the time of the most recent inventory, building space at two locations was identified as unoccupied – the former Marathon gas station at 7620 Northfield Road and some floor space in a retail building at the Village Center. Based on the aggregated 3,210 square foot vacant floor space total, the Village’s overall retail/office vacancy rate is just 1.8%.

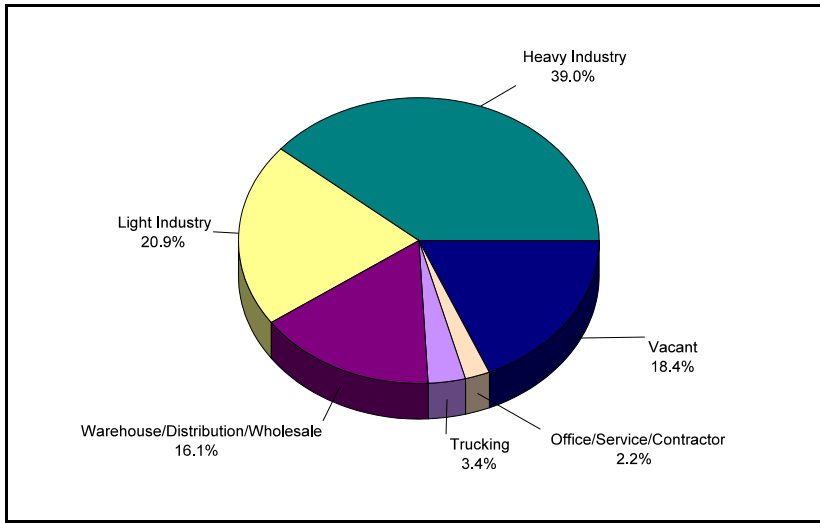
The seventh, and last, category, *Shopping Goods and Services*, registered no floor area within Walton Hills. This grouping contains such uses as department stores, and clothing, sporting goods, and furniture stores.

INVENTORY OF INDUSTRIAL FLOOR SPACE AND ACTIVITIES

A CPC inventory of the industrial uses, building and properties throughout Walton Hills, originally compiled in spring of 2003, was updated during September and October of 2004. For each identified business, a variety of descriptive information, similar to that compiled for commercial retail and office properties, was compiled. Findings were derived by applying the same methods and sources described for the retail/office properties. Detailed inventory findings are provided in *Appendix D*.

A graphic summary of the industrial inventory findings is presented in **Figure 5.2**. A description of the classification scheme and a detailed breakdown of floor space is provided in **Table 5.3**. As for the retail/office sector, each industrial activity classification is based on the businesses’ *primary* function. In the case of a multi-tenant building or property, the *primary*, or leading, function (based on floor space) determined its classification here. Another determinant for how a business activity was classified rests with the numerous directory services to which an industry reports its primary business function. For example, a *Warehouse/Distribution/Wholesaler* classification in the Village’s inventory could indicate a warehouse industry type (e.g., furniture warehouse) but would not consider the “office” component (or quantify the office’s floor space) that surely exists in the building. Another common example could include a *Light Industry* (e.g. tool assembler) that also includes office space but self-reports its lead function (and floor space) as *Light Industry* only. Yet another firm engaged in *Trucking* (e.g., a trucking terminal) may be housed within a warehouse-style space (for repairs and trailer loading), but conducts operations classified as “trucking” (not “warehousing”).

Figure 5.2. Industrial Floor Space Inventory, September 2004, Walton Hills



Village-wide, 102 firms occupy 4.9 million square feet of industrial floor space. The leading classification, *Heavy Industry*, represents over one-third (39.0%) of the total floor area at buildings occupied by just 15 firms. Ford’s Walton Hills Stamping Plant, consuming the southeast quadrant of the intersection at Northfield and Alexander Roads, occupies the overwhelming majority

of floor space within this important industrial category with production operations (66.6%, or 1,276,690 square feet). At a distant second place, Ferro Corporation (Chemical Division) consumes 141,860 square feet of floor area. Most heavy industrial floor space is found at businesses located on Krick and Northfield Roads.

The *Light Industry* category consumes the second largest portion of the Village’s industrial floor space (20.9%, or 1,024,510 square feet) in buildings occupied by 25 firms. These firms, which are engaged in less intensive manufacturing activities, are dispersed throughout the Village’s business corridor.

The third largest grouping, *Warehouse/Distribution/Wholesale*, consumes 790,865 square feet of floor space, or 16.1% of the industrially classified building stock. Like the *Warehouse* category, these firms (15) are scattered throughout the business/industrial area. Compared to other communities, Walton Hills has a high number of warehouse and distribution facilities.

Dispersed throughout the industrial area, the fourth ranked *Trucking* and related activities (14 firms) category constitutes 3.4% of the sector’s total floor space (168,100 square feet). (Of note, the many acres of outside truck storage are not included in this building space measure).

Vacant industrial floor space comprised about 18.4% (903,380 square feet) of total available industrial floor area at nine locations during September of 2004. Most of that vacant space (772,755 square feet) is located at the Ford Motor Company Stamping Plant. This facility’s operations, including recent changes in floor space use, are discussed at length in *Chapter 6*.

Table 5.3. Industrial Floor Space and Firms, September 2004, Walton Hills

Code	Type of Establishment	Floor Area (S.F.)	% of Total	# of Firms
	HEAVY INDUSTRY			
I1.	Manufacturing of Chemicals & Allied Products, Petroleum & Coal, Stone, Clay, and Glass Products, Primary Metal Industries, and Fabricated Metal Products	1,916,330	39.0%	15
	LIGHT INDUSTRY			
I2.	Manufacturing of Food & Kindred Products, Textile Mill Products, Lumber and Wood Products, Paper & Allied Products, Printing & Publishing, Industrial Machinery & Equipment	1,024,510	20.9%	25
	WAREHOUSE/DISTRIBUTION/WHOLESALE			
I3.	Wholesale Trade of Durable and Nondurable Goods, General and Special Warehousing and Storage, Distribution Centers	790,865	16.1%	15
	TRUCKING			
I4.	Trucking and Transportation, Vehicle, Truck & Trailer Repair and Service, Truck & Equipment Rental	168,100	3.4%	14
	OFFICE/SERVICE/CONTRACTOR			
I5.	General Contractors, Special Trade Contractors including Landscaping, and Delivery Services	107,000	2.2%	24
	VACANT			
V1.	Existing Industrial Vacant	903,380	18.4%	9
	TOTAL	4,910,185	100%	102

EXISTING CONDITIONS, CONSIDERATIONS AND ISSUES BY LOCATION

Early during the preparation phase of this Master Plan, a variety of concerns were voiced pertaining to the negative impressions projected by the Village's business areas. Findings derived from interviews conducted with Village officials, input from the Master Plan Committee members, and *Community Attitudes Survey* results indicate a strong community desire to make improvements to the appearance of the Northfield Road Corridor, its "gateway" entrances and nearby industrial parks (also see *Appendix A*). These desires are manifested in specific community planning goals presented in *Chapter 1*.

Field investigations and research conducted by the CPC reveal a variety of conditions and issues throughout the Village's business areas. Both positive and negative characteristics were

observed during numerous visits to each area during two periods (spring of 2003 and September/October of 2004). In combination, the observed conditions contribute to the overall character of these areas and the Village of Walton Hills as a whole. The identified positive attributes and negative features also serve to contribute to the formulation of appropriate Village economic development, redevelopment and revitalization strategies. Eight sub-areas have been delineated within which major findings are organized and reported below, including:

- Northfield Road Corridor (North of Alexander Road)
- Northfield Road Corridor (South of Alexander Road)
- Alexander Road Corridor
- Krick (Road) Industrial Park
- Hannan (Parkway) Industrial Park
- Independence (Road) Industrial Park
- Village Center
- Other locations

NORTHFIELD ROAD CORRIDOR (NORTH OF ALEXANDER ROAD)

Positive Features

Drivers and pedestrians entering this Village gateway entrance from Bedford to the north are greeted by a tasteful and well-maintained **Village sign**. (As of October, 2004 the sign had not yet been returned following the recent reconstruction of Northfield Road bridge). Reconstruction of the bridge (see *Chapter 4*) prompted a number of associated improvement which are generally positive (e.g., additional sidewalk, new guard rails, new pavement, curbing and grassy shoulders).

This entrance to the corridor witnesses a **high volume of vehicle traffic**, greater than any other roadway segment in Walton Hills. This factor, combined with the corridor's **ready access** from the region and beyond via State Route 8 (Northfield Road), Interstate 271 and a major rail line corridor, suggests **high visibility** for the commercial retail businesses and industries located there. For those additional area businesses and industries linked to the corridor, but not fronting Northfield Road, **coordinated, identifying industrial park signage** enhances access.

South of the Hannan (Parkway) Industrial Park entrance at Northfield Road, most properties display **deeper building and parking setbacks** with some **landscaped front yards**. Low profile, ground-mounted **signs** enhance the **streetscape** along this segment of the corridor.

Negative Features

The few positive attributes of the Northfield Road Corridor segment north of Alexander Road are significantly diluted by a range of negative conditions which are prevalent throughout its extent, particularly to the north of the Hannan Parkway intersection.

This corridor's heavily traveled, highly visible north “**gateway**” area is clearly the least inviting of all Village entrances, conveying **numerous immediate negative images** to approaching drivers and pedestrians. The immediate image is dominated by a narrowing right-of-way rising over a bridge bordered by looping utility lines on towering wooden poles, many noticeably tilted out of vertical alignment. Crossing over these lines is another set of high tension electric power lines on tall towers. Landscaping is not provided likely due to the narrowness of the road shoulder.

Upon reaching the crest of the bridge, one perceives a host of more negative **secondary gateway images**. The southbound driver's unobstructed right hand view is of a sea of flat commercial building roofs and a large outdoor auto salvage yard, followed at the foot of the bridge by a gravel/dirt parking lot with a continuous curb cut and parked vehicles encroaching the right-of-way. The southbound driver's left hand view from the top of the bridge is dominated by high-tension power lines, mounds of earthen materials and a towering conveyor-loader structure. At the foot of the bridge is a large dirt-covered (but improved) parking lot/loading area with a continuous curb cut, and both parked and loading heavy construction vehicles. During more than one site visit, dust was observed blowing from this site westward across Northfield Road. Both sides of the right-of-way at the foot of the bridge are devoid of any landscaping. Some of these identified negative images are partially screened during the five or six warmer months when bordering deciduous trees have complete foliage.

The condition and appearance of buildings at this entrance to the Village vary. Some have recently received new facades and maintenance. Others, however, are in severe need of repair and maintenance. Some require major upgrades (or replacement).

The corridor's designated public **right-of-way**, at a width of 60 feet, is relatively narrow to accommodate this major four-lane regional arterial (It is 20 feet narrower than Alexander Road's right-of-way). The narrow asphalt-surfaced lanes can be difficult to navigate during times of heavier traffic, especially while large commercial vehicles are present. Traffic flow efficiency along Northfield Road is severely hindered by an excessive number of **access drives** and **continuous fronting parking lots** for businesses and industries – extending along the segment of the corridor from the foot of the bridge to Hannan Parkway. Additionally, numerous **driveway aprons** are merely **continuous curb cuts** which lack definition (curb over-driving is common) and contribute to vehicular conflicts and dangers for pedestrians, who are further tested because of the area's **absence of sidewalks**. Some worn pathways along bare roadway shoulders demonstrate the need for sidewalks.

Corridor **traffic flow**, particularly during “rush hour”, demonstrates some reduced efficiencies. The restrictive right-of-way severely limits the implementation of any roadway widening and turning lane options (e.g., at Alexander Road intersection) and thwarts the development of safe sidewalks. At the Alexander Road intersection, just two southbound lanes are designated for through traffic. Overhead signalization indicates a left turn arrow, however. (This is the only side of the four-way signalized intersection which does not provide three lanes, two for turning).



Northfield Road entrance from Bedford (east side).

At different locations throughout the corridor's right-of-way, concentrations of **overhead electric utility lines, towers and poles** detract from the visual landscape to varying degrees.

A dearth of **roadway curbing**, combined with numerous bordering **unimproved access drives and fronting parking/storage areas**, results in excessive dirt and gravel being tracked onto the roadway by commercial and private vehicles, or washed onto the roadway surface and gutters during times of rain. (Numerous other **side and rear parking area** surfaces are also comprised of

dirt and/or gravel). **Unscreened outdoor storage** of commercial vehicles, equipment and materials on several properties along the corridor convey negative images to passers-by.

While most **buildings** are one-story in height and solidly constructed of cinder block with brick facades, several (comprised of various construction materials) are in notably *poor* physical condition, requiring maintenance and/or upgrades. One new building (recently replaced following a major 2002 fire), while it presents positive images, still retains the temporary gravel parking area at a prominent location in the midst of the newly landscaped grounds.

While most **business signs** are mounted on buildings or on the ground, a couple of pole signs (which most communities are attempting to phase out) are located along the corridor. Some commercial retail businesses display excessive signage and **advertising** in windows and on the building or grounds.



Northfield Road gateway entrance from Bedford (west side).

In combination, these **streetscape and other property conditions project an overall negative impression** of this important corridor for visitors and passers-by, particularly for the 1,700 foot segment between the Village's gateway entrance and Hannan Parkway.

NORTHFIELD ROAD CORRIDOR (SOUTH OF ALEXANDER ROAD)

Positive Features

Gateway images greeting drivers entering Walton Hills from adjacent Northfield to the south are generally favorable – much more welcoming than the scene confronting drivers at the north end of the corridor. The **Village sign** is attractive, welcoming and well maintained. A relatively **open, uncluttered view** greets visitors. Most **front lawns** are broad and well main-

tained with undamaged, grassed shoulders and a variety of **landscaping**.

Generally efficient traffic flow along this corridor is provided for vehicles traveling this four-lane asphalt roadway (two lanes in each direction, with three turning lanes at the intersection with Alexander Road). **Curbing and drive aprons** are generally in *good* condition.

Most **buildings and facades** are in *good* to *excellent* condition, with structures set back from the roadway, behind low ground-mounted business **signs**. Most **parking and warehouse doors/loading docks** are favorably situated to the side and rear of buildings. Most **access drives and parking lots** are in *good* condition.

Negative Features

While generally acceptable, further opportunities to **enhance the gateway area** could be realized with the strategic placement of some **additional landscaping** in proximity to open sections of the perimeter fence fronting the Ford Stamping Plant in order to better soften views of a continuous sea of parked vehicles.

In spite of generally wide and well-defined driveway aprons, **curb over-driving** by longer trailer trucks is evident at numerous business entrances.

A currently vacant **former gas station** (along with an adjacent industrial structure), located at the southwest corner of the intersection with Alexander Road, offers development opportunities. However, in its current state of disrepair, the building and grounds continue to project negative **images of abandonment**.

While **some vacant acreage** exists throughout the corridor, limited opportunities exist to expand business activities due to the corridor's proximity to adjacent residential neighborhoods. Most rear yards of businesses are currently vegetated and undeveloped, serving effectively as buffers between these unlike land uses.

ALEXANDER ROAD CORRIDOR

Positive Features

Generally favorable images, beginning with the **Village sign** immediately after the railroad bridge, greet drivers entering the Village's **gateway** along Alexander Road from Oakwood to the east. The entrance area presents an **open uncluttered view** which is enhanced by the **wide roadway right-of-way** (80 feet), the **broad fronting lawns**, and the relatively **deep setbacks** for buildings and parking lots.



The Village's entrance signs are well maintained and present a favorable image (Alexander Road entrance from east).

Generally efficient vehicular traffic flow along this corridor is provided (east of the Northfield Road intersection) by the divided four-lane asphalt roadway (two lanes in each direction) and the designated left and right turning lanes provided at Northfield Road for west- and east-bound traffic (enhanced by a signalized left turn arrow). With the exception of the two retail businesses on the west corners of the intersection, the spacing and limited number of business access drives along the roadway also contribute to reasonably efficient corridor traffic flow.

Natural buffers comprised of vegetation are present between incompatible land uses at the west end of the corridor, where a major quasi-retail activity (Walton Manor Health Care Centre) and an industrial operation abut single-family homes.

The presence of some **vacant land** at the northeast corner of the Ford Stamping Plant property should be viewed as a potential future development opportunity.

Negative Features

Further opportunities to **enhance the generally positive gateway images** could be realized with the strategic placement of some additional **landscaping** to screen some unsightly outdoor storage on the north side and parked/stored vehicles in fronting parking lots on both sides of the corridor. The addition of some suitable low profile **plantings** along the median could also enhance this Village entranceway. Straddling the corporate border of the Village, the stark image conveyed by the aging **railroad overpass** could be improved with shielding of the side-mounted utilities.

Roadway, curbing and shoulder area condition are variable along the corridor. Some pavement areas require repair, with some **broken curbing** and **shoulder damage** from “over-driving” by long trailer trucks evident, particularly at the Northfield Road intersection. Other shoulder and median areas require minor maintenance. Some curbing in proximity to the intersection is ineffective due to its low profile (because of the buildup of the roadway surface over the years). The shoulder area along the **northwest segment of roadway lacks definition** due to its uneven, downward sloping bordering gravel/dirt shoulder.

Some access drive aprons are undersized and lack curbing or some other form of definition, resulting in regular over-driving by vehicles and damage to landscaping. **Access drive and parking lots** surface materials vary throughout the corridor. Most are comprised of generally more durable concrete. Others are surfaced with asphalt. Most parking areas lack any curbing, while some provide no curb stops or space markings. Some asphalt parking lot/access drive surfaces are in *poor* condition, particularly those that support continuous and/or heavy commercial vehicle traffic. Some vehicle parking areas are comprised of loose gravel, others of dirt, or a blend of the two. One such expansive area, beyond the sight of passers-by, is situated behind the Ford Stamping Plant.

Some access drive aprons are oversized. The former gas service stations located on the northwest (now an auto parts retailer) and southwest corners (vacant), provide continuous curb

cuts with an excessive number of ingress/egress points which are situated too close to the intersection. Combined, these wide, ill-defined drive aprons serve to confuse drivers and increase the potential for vehicular conflicts.

Some **negative streetscape images** are conveyed by large **fronting warehouse bay doors and loading docks**, many regularly left open to expose stored materials and commercial vehicles/equipment undergoing maintenance. **Unscreened commercial vehicles, equipment and trash dumpsters** also present unsightly images. At some businesses, these features are mildly objectionable and easily remedied.



Over-driving of undersized access drive aprons is common throughout the Village's industrial district.

KRICK (ROAD) INDUSTRIAL PARK

The following overview includes most of the extent of Krick Road (which terminates beyond the Village's corporate limit in neighboring Bedford), Krick Road Extension (a short private roadway) and Treat Road (also known as "Walton Hills Industrial Park" and designated by a sign positioned at the road's entrance which is not coordinated with the other sign-designated industrial parks).

Positive Features

The industrial park's **gateway** entrance is announced with a low, ground-mounted **sign** positioned on the east shoulder of Northfield Road, opposite the entrance. The reasonably well maintained sign is coordinated in appearance with those located at several other industrial parks in the business/industrial district. A **traffic light** helps control vehicle movements at this busy three-way intersection.

Some **vacant acreage** of varying sizes and configurations remain within the Krick Road Industrial Park, offering potential development and business expansion opportunities.

Negative Features

While the Krick Industrial Park **gateway sign** provides notice to visitors, its ground-hugging profile, coupled with its neutral, earth tone coloration, situated opposite the roadway's busy entrance, result in signage that goes largely unnoticed.

Part of the Village's Northfield Road Corridor gateway area, the Krick Road **gateway entrance** shares some of the negative features prevalent at the corridor's north entrance. Negative **streetscape images** at and near the roadway's entrance include: **parked and stored vehicles encroaching the right-of-way** (some damaged and inoperable); dangerous **contin-**

uous curb cuts; minimal landscaping; and unscreened trash dumpsters. Generally projected throughout this busy entrance area are images of **congestion** and **encroachment**.

Traffic flow is heavy along Krick Road. Efficient traffic movement is hindered primarily because of the high traffic **volume**, numerous and broad **continuous curb cuts** for fronting parking lots and drive aprons, and **the width and configuration of the roadway**, particularly at points where a change in direction is required for trucks pulling long trailers. Because **no outlets** exist, all the vehicular traffic generated by a **large and diverse number of commercial retail and industrial enterprises** located throughout the industrial park must utilize the **congested lone Krick Road entrance** at Northfield Road. Additional vehicular conflicts confront through-traffic that occasionally stops for long trailer trucks that must back into some businesses (from the roadway) because access drives and loading/parking areas do not provide “turn-around” capability on the property.

The condition of **roadway surfaces, curbing, and drive aprons** throughout the industrial park is highly variable, as are the construction materials used. Krick and Treat roadways are surfaced with concrete, where condition ranges from *fair* to *good*. Curbing is also variable in both condition and extent. Broken curbing is evident at locations, particularly along sections where heavy trailer truck over-driving onto shoulders occurs repeatedly. A number of access drive aprons are comprised of gravel or dirt. Because many are narrow and lack definition, they are also regularly over-driven, resulting in further shoulder damage. Private Krick Road Extension is surfaced with asphalt, judged to be in *fair/poor* condition, and lacks any curbing. Shoulders are comprised of dirt/gravel and lack definition.



Broken and over-driven curbing with damaged shoulders convey negative images.



Parking lots fronting roadways which lack defined entrances present dangers for drivers and pedestrians.

Access drives and parking lots throughout the industrial park are surfaced with materials ranging from concrete to asphalt to gravel to compacted dirt. While some areas are surfaced with concrete and are in favorable condition, the prevalence of broken and cracked asphalt, gravel, and dirt drives and lots presents extremely negative images and results in a significant amount of debris tracked and washed onto the roadways.

Blighting images at numerous locations along each of the three roadways in this industrial park are projected at visitors from an excessive amount of **outdoor storage** of commercial and private

vehicles (some damaged and inoperable, others appearing junked), storage tanks, equipment, building materials and trash containers of varying sizes. Most of these views are ineffectively screened, or lack screening altogether.

Buildings and associated accessory structures throughout this industrial park demonstrate a range of construction materials and conditions. A number are in disrepair, whereas some are newer and do not demonstrate deficiencies. At some locations, unattractive building accessory structures and utilities/”mechanicals” are exposed, presenting stark, uncoordinated images. **Building setbacks** vary throughout the area. Most buildings are consistently aligned along the roadways, with the exception of some commercial retail structures at the Northfield Road entrance and some structures to the north of the Krick Road rail siding crossing which have shallow setbacks. Most **signs** are positioned on building facades, while some are ground-mounted. Some examples of poorly designed and incompatible (i.e., uncoordinated in appearance) signs are scattered throughout the district.

Few examples of coordinated, aesthetically attractive **landscaping** exist within this industrial park. A number of lawn areas lack any vegetative cover, with evidence of soil erosion present. Numerous examples of damaged and poorly maintained **fencing** exist.

HANNAN (PARKWAY) INDUSTRIAL PARK

This industrial park includes Hannan Parkway, Young Drive and Tower Drive. Each roadway terminates at a cul-de-sac.

Positive Features

A low profile **sign** announcing this industrial park’s **gateway** is mounted next to the entrance. The reasonably well maintained sign is coordinated in appearance with those located at the other area industrial parks. Because of deeper building and parking setbacks, an image of **openness** is conveyed, permitting visitors to better notice this entrance sign.

Larger lots and fewer businesses than found at the Krick Road area translate into lower traffic volumes here, hence relatively efficient **traffic flow**, with much less congestion observed. (There is no traffic light at its intersection with Northfield Road).

Building setbacks are generally consistent throughout this industrial park, with the building line somewhat deeper than witnessed in Krick Road and Independence Road Industrial Parks. Consequently, an open, somewhat less congested view is provided for visitors. The only exception to this perception is at the southwest corner of Tower and Young Drives, where outside truck storage abuts the rights-of-way.

Most **buildings** within this industrial park are newer, reflecting its more recent development. Consequently, most buildings are in generally favorable condition, free of major upgrade/maintenance needs.

Some examples of superior **landscaping** exist within this industrial park. Landscaped front and side lawns encircle a number of buildings. Other properties provide raised vegetated earthen berms to screen unsightly outside truck trailer storage and other equipment.



Well maintained, natural plantings enhance the appearance of an industrial district.

Vacant acreage, at several locations within this industrial park, offers future development opportunities.

Negative Features

Projecting an image inconsistent with that found at **gateway** entrances to other nearby industrial parks, two support posts for a **private business sign** (which was present during the 2003 survey) curiously remain positioned immediately adjacent to the **gateway sign**. This sign matches those found at the other two main industrial parks (which are free of competing signage). Prevailing streetscape images at the entrance include some **shoulder debris**, unscreened **outdoor storage**, fronting warehouse **bay/dock doors** (left open), and a lack of some softening border **landscaping** to screen some of these features and large fronting parking lots/loading areas.

While most of the concrete **roadway surfaces**, **curbing** and drive **aprons** throughout this district are in *good/fair* condition, some examples of road patching (primarily at the cul-de-sacs) and broken curbing exist. Damaged curbing and lawn shoulder areas are present at a number of locations, particularly adjacent to drive aprons where over-driving by commercial vehicles occurs.



Access drives and parking lots lacking improved surfaces are unstable and present drainage problems.

Access drives and **parking lots** for the most part are constructed of concrete and are in favorable condition. Exceptions exist where newer industrial construction has occurred on Tower Drive and at the end of Young Drive. Development of some of the newer parking areas and grounds in proximity to these businesses appears to be incomplete, conveying negative appearances. Other parking lot surfaces, while effectively screened from the vision of passers-by with vegetation and berms, clearly are surfaced with gravel or dirt (evident on aerial photographs). Throughout the industrial park (where access drives are finished and defined by curbing and landscaping), additional signs of over-driving exist.

Scattered throughout the district are numerous examples of exposed **outdoor storage** (e.g., trash dumpsters, equipment, and materials) and truck trailers. Minor screening improvements would greatly improve area aesthetics.

While the area demonstrates a number of favorable examples of industry **signage** (coordinated ground and building signs), some instances exist where signs for neighboring businesses at adjacent structures are uncoordinated in appearance. Some signs are makeshift and appear temporary.

The addition of some strategically placed **landscaping** at the perimeter of some parking areas, particularly those at the front of industries, would visually soften areas that project stark images.

Traversing the Tower Drive area at Young Drive, in an east-west alignment, are overhead high tension electric power lines and towers. This **utility corridor**, which existed prior to the development of these properties, conveys negative images and detracts somewhat from area aesthetics.

Some open **vacant properties** demonstrate erosion and loss of grassy cover. Others contain some litter.

INDEPENDENCE (ROAD) INDUSTRIAL PARK

Positive Features

Among the various Village industrial area entrances, this **gateway** area projects relatively positive images to visitors and passers-by. With just five businesses along its 400-foot length, concrete-surfaced Independence Road does not witness the heavier volumes of **traffic** characterizing some of the other roadways in the Village's industrial districts. This industrial park further benefits from a four-way **traffic control light** at the entrance on Alexander Road. A well maintained, fairly visible, ground-mounted **sign** (with some nearby landscaping) announcing the industrial park is positioned at the entrance (and coordinated in appearance with three of the other four industrial park area signs in the industrial district).



Village industrial park entrances are designated by standardized signs.

Negative Features

Evidence of trucks (primarily those with longer trailers) **over-driving** the **gateway entrance curbing** and various commercial **apron entrances** and **access drives** predominates throughout

this small industrial park.

The configuration of properties along the short looping roadway results in a **congested development pattern** characterized by **drives, aprons and vehicle parking areas that dominate a visitor's view**. Due to the alignment of buildings relative to Independence and Alexander Roads, three and four sides of some buildings are readily exposed to view, with **little land area remaining for landscaping** to screen unflattering views. The result, **exposed warehouse doors/loading docks, unscreened commercial vehicles, equipment, materials, and trash dumpsters**, project negative images.

While most structures are in good physical condition, some **building facades and minor appurtenances** demonstrate the need for relatively minor maintenance.

VILLAGE CENTER

Positive Features

Two commercial retail properties located at the intersection of Alexander and Walton Roads present mixed images. One, a small commercial retail building on the southeast corner, is discussed in the next section. The other, a **gas station** on the northwest corner, while situated on a small lot, utilizes the space well and presents an extremely well-coordinated and overall positive image to passers-by – quite unlike the images commonly projected by a typical gas service station. The clean well maintained building and grounds (with a limited number of parked vehicles), bordered by curbed and landscaped islands, encircled by a country-style painted white fence and appropriate vegetative screening (buffering it from adjacent residences), combine to project a favorable look to this quadrant. The gas station's identifying ground sign is low-profile and attractive. Window signs and advertising clutter are nonexistent. No trash dumpsters are visible.

Vacant land areas are situated on two of the intersection's four quadrants, offering potential development opportunities. One abuts the small retail building on the southeast corner. The other property, on the southwest corner is owned by the Village of Walton Hills. This intersection is zoned for *Business* uses.

Negative Features

The **commercial retail building** situated on the southeast corner of the intersection houses several activities associated with the provision of food and convenience goods and services. While the restaurant and the goods and services are likely welcomed in a community otherwise devoid of such basics, and the building style and condition are generally positive, numerous site features project negative images. It is difficult for drivers to read business name signs because each is mounted flat on two sides of the building. Parts of the facade and most windows are cluttered with additional neon signs and flyers/advertising. During the October 2004 field survey, a crudely prepared temporary sign anchored by cinder blocks, positioned on the Walton Road side of the property, was observed. The composition and style of the building's awnings are uncoordinated.

While the building's setback is consistent with the gas station across the street, two vehicular parking areas consume the entire front corners of the property (except for a sidewalk passing through an island lacking landscaping) and are poorly configured. Wide, poorly defined driveway aprons are merely continuous curb cuts posing extremely dangerous conditions for vehicles and pedestrians entering, exiting and navigating the lot areas. Side angle parking along the east side of the building compounds the *poor* circulation pattern because drivers must back out when exiting. The lot surface is mostly asphalt, but is in *poor* condition with severe cracking and potholes. Parking space designations are difficult to determine due to the fading of painted lines.



Commercial retail building at the Village Center.

The east side of the building, which is visible from the roadway has an unfinished appearance dominated by peeling paint, wires, pipes, utility meters, and some weeds. Unscreened trash dumpsters, located to the building's rear, are visible from both Walton and Alexander Roads.

While a vegetative **buffer** is present between the retail building and the residence to the east, it has some gaps and offers only seasonal screening (deciduous plantings). Landscaping improvements on the grounds of the subject property are lacking. Those few improvements that exist are poorly maintained.

Since the initial CPC field investigations during 2003, the Village-owned Refueling Station (a former gas station) on the southwest corner has been removed, with associated site hazards remediated. While it had projected some negative visual images previously, the site today is graded and suitably vegetated – reserved for a future public use by Walton Hills (Also see *Chapters 4 and 6*)

Since the **Municipal Complex**, the center of the community's governmental functions, is located at this relatively heavily traveled, visible intersection, a coordinated and well maintained area appearance is critical so as to project an overall positive community image to all who visit or pass by this important civic center.

OTHER LOCATIONS

Scattered throughout the balance of Walton Hills are several additional retail businesses and a single industry.

Tinkers Creek Tavern, situated along a somewhat isolated stretch of Tinkers Creek Road surrounded by parklands, abuts the Village's boundary with Valley View. A local lounge, its most negative features include an unimproved dirt parking lot with a continuous curb cut and

two structures and grounds in need of some upgrades and maintenance. The Tavern building is in *poor* physical condition and the facade is aesthetically uncoordinated. This property is the sole remaining privately-owned commercial use in the Village not connected to the central sewer system, according to Cuyahoga County Board of Health Records (See *Chapter 3*).

Dunham Products, located on Dunham Road, is a small light manufacturing firm situated in a predominantly residential neighborhood. Partially screened from the asphalt-surfaced roadway by vegetation, the small garage-style structure and grounds would benefit from some basic maintenance and other improvements. However, while this land use is certainly judged dissimilar from the adjacent low density residential development, field investigation findings suggest that its activities cause minimal neighborhood impacts. This segment of Dunham Road has been identified by the Village Engineer as a pavement reconstruction priority (See *Chapter 4*).

Two public golf courses are located in the Village. While considered to be outdoor public recreational activities, both host some associated commercial retail functions and witness peak public use on a seasonal basis. The Shawnee Hills Golf Course property includes a clubhouse building situated on Egbert Road (accessed from a parking area straddling the Village's corporate limit with Bedford). The clubhouse provides food services and sells golfing equipment, clothing and associated supplies and services. Likewise, Astorhurst Golf Course's clubhouse, located on the inside bend of Tinkers Creek at Dunham Road provides similar goods and services. Additionally, it provides ice cream and associated fast foods at a concession stand ("Park Place") in a separate building which fronts Dunham Road. Astorhurst also provides a Party Center which can be rented for events.

To the casual passer-by, both golf course public entrances and nearby grounds project images of attractive landscaping and reasonable signage. The windshield survey of each site revealed some additional positive attributes as well as some deficiencies. While each facility's parking capacity and circulation appear adequate, Astorhurst's public parking areas are comprised predominantly of an uneven gravel surface. Most curbstops are missing. The asphalt/gravel parking area serving the Party Center, in particular, is in poor condition and in need of reconstruction. Astorhurst's buildings appear to be in generally *good* condition, but some appurtenances are not. Negative images are presented by unscreened service entrances, dumpsters and a low decorative cinder block wall.

While Shawnee Hills generally presents more favorable site images, fronting Egbert Road would benefit from some right-of-way improvements, including asphalt resurfacing and shoulder improvements.

A remaining identified business is found operating out of a home in a predominantly residential neighborhood, located on Walton Road; a landscaper/snowplower. Most passers-by would not be aware of the existence of this home-based occu-



Village's gateway entrance from Bedford (Egbert Road).

pation (excluded from CPC's retail business inventory).

SUMMARY OF MAJOR CONDITIONS & ISSUES WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on field investigations conducted throughout the Village's eight defined business areas, where the character and condition of public rights-of-way, buildings and grounds were observed, documented and assessed, those **districts demonstrating the greatest need for corrective actions** include, in declining order of importance:

- ✓ **Northfield Road Corridor**
(particularly north of Hannan Parkway)
- ✓ **Krick (Road) Industrial Park**
- ✓ **Village Center**

The first two predominantly industrial areas demonstrate the greatest number and most severe measure of negative conditions among the examined areas. The Northfield Road Corridor is also an area of high visibility due to geographic location, orientation and traffic volumes. The third area, the Village Center, hosts a modest mix of retail and government activities. While the number and degree of observed negative conditions are significantly less at the Village Center than observed throughout the two identified industrial areas, this heavily traveled intersection is extremely important because it also hosts the civic center of Walton Hills. Any area impressions absorbed by visitors to the Municipal Complex (and passers-by) are influential and lasting. Observed negative conditions or issues at this important location, the "heart" of the Village, would typically be assigned to the community at large.

While **many positive conditions and attributes** exist throughout the business areas of Walton Hills, a number of negative conditions and issues have been observed, documented and assessed. These area characteristics, if left uncorrected, will interfere with the successful attainment of adopted community planning goals. While the targeted negative features vary in severity by location, taken as a whole, the Village's commercial areas demonstrate common conditions and issues that, if corrected in a staged manner, could result in a range of spin-off benefits for Walton Hills.

Corrective actions which the Village should undertake throughout its business areas, using a coordinated strategy, include the following:

- ✓ **Roadway widening (strategic) and repair; shoulder repair; curb construction and repair**
- ✓ **Access drive surface repair/replacement, apron widening and reduction of curb cuts**

- ✓ **Parking lot resurfacing and strategic re-orientation**
- ✓ **Landscaping maintenance and enhancements**
- ✓ **Outdoor storage clean-up, re-orientation, and screening**
- ✓ **Sidewalk construction (strategic) and delineation**
- ✓ **Building upgrades and maintenance (including some attention to signage)**

Recommended strategies to implement the above actions are provided throughout the balance of the Master Plan.

MARKET ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT TRENDS

Walton Hills is poised to be economically competitive for a number of reasons – its proximity to the interstate highway system, railroad access, adequate warehouse space, and remaining undeveloped land. However, Walton Hills is not immune to larger economic forces such as a sluggish national economy and high unemployment rates which also affect Greater Cleveland, the Southeast* submarket in Northeast Ohio and the nation as a whole.

**According to CB Richard Ellis and other real estate research firms, Walton Hills is considered to be part of Greater Cleveland's Southeast real estate submarket. Depending on the land use, office or industrial, neighboring communities in Cuyahoga County, and nearby communities in Summit County are included as part of this submarket.*

Communities such as Oakwood, Solon and Valley View and those with direct interstate highway access are Walton Hills' biggest industry competitors. A large concentration of new construction, and steady sales and leasing activity in Northeast Ohio is occurring at the I-77/I-480 interchange in Independence. Other hot spots in the region include the area surrounding the I-71 and I-480 interchange in Brook Park and Cleveland, and the I-271 and I-480 interchanges in Bedford Heights and Warrensville Heights. Northern Summit County is also experiencing high construction and sales activity. Macedonia and Twinsburg enjoy direct highway access and have been attracting both commercial and industrial development near their interchanges as new development extends outside of Cuyahoga County's borders.

SALES TRENDS

Retail and Office

In terms of retail activity, Walton Hills is home to small, local neighborhood businesses rather than national retail chains. The comprehensive inventory of businesses, originally conducted in April, 2003 and later updated in September, 2004 by the CPC, documented close to 170,000 square feet of commercial retail space (excluding office space) in the Village. Of that total,

approximately 3,200 square feet of retail space was available for sale or lease (2%).

In Greater Cleveland and elsewhere throughout the state, the construction and sales of retail buildings is currently slow, compounded by the weak economy. Many developers are cautious to move ahead without pre-leasing commitments. Additionally, interest rates have begun to trend upwards. As well, rising fuel prices tend to curb retail sales. However, the retail portion of two lifestyle centers (mixed use development that incorporates housing, retail, restaurants and/or offices) have recently opened in the Cleveland area – Legacy Village in Lyndhurst and Crocker Park in Westlake which include large national retailers, and residential and office components.

In terms of offices, very little floor space is dedicated exclusively to offices in Walton Hills, and no new office construction is slated for development in the near future. Construction activity in the Southeast suburban office submarket has been modest with an additional 70,000 square feet recently built in Warrensville Heights as part of the Chagrin Highlands. This new office complex, named Highland Business Park, is Class B office space and represents 18.3% of the total office activity in the region. More than 80% of all new office construction is occurring in the West office submarket and consists of Class A office space. In general though, new office construction activity is slow due to a sluggish national economy, loss of companies, and trends of downsizing, consolidations and mergers.

In terms of new office construction, local real estate development firms refer to the ‘Big Four’ office developments occurring in the region: the Chagrin Highlands, Rockside Road office center, KinRoss Lakes Corporate Park in Richfield, and the Emerald Office Park near the Cleveland International Airport. Canyon Falls Office Park being constructed now in Twinsburg is poised to be a significantly large development over the next ten years. While each of these large office developments offer superb interstate highway access and nearby retail/commercial amenities, they are still struggling to attract office tenants in an slow office market.

Industrial

Like the City of Cleveland, Walton Hills has a strong industrial base and is home to major industrial businesses. Walton Hills accounts for more than 4.9 million square feet of industrial floor space, comprising almost 10% of the entire Southeast submarket. One new industrial construction project was recently completed in Walton Hills (25,400 square feet), as compared to 830,000 square feet presently under construction in the Southeast industrial submarket, with 650,000 square feet being built as a distribution facility for L’Oreal. Communities such as Twinsburg, Solon, Streetsboro, and Aurora are experiencing the largest gains in industrial floor space.

During 2003, the last full reporting year, six industrial building permits were issued by the Village. One was for the rebuilding of a business on Northfield Road destroyed by a fire in 2002 (noted above). The remaining five were for miscellaneous improvements. Construction value totaled \$1,093,227 (*Building Department Manager, January 10, 2004*).

In terms of recent industrial sales and leasing activity, relatively little has occurred in Walton Hills. A significant amount of activity occurred in the Southeast industrial submarket, however, which experienced the second highest amount of sale and leasing activity in recent quarters. Of the total 2.6 million square feet which changed ownership or tenants in Greater Cleveland, approximately 27% occurred in the Southeast industrial submarket during Second Quarter, 2004. The greatest industrial sale and leasing activity occurred in the Lake County West submarket, with over 765,200 square feet of industrial floor space for sale or lease (29%).

RENTAL TRENDS

Retail and Office

In general, national and regional retail rents have remained stable, and businesses have been resilient despite lowered consumer spending. Shopping venues with a grocery store anchor have the greatest leasing success, and relatively low interest rates have kept consumers shopping (the housing market is an important catalyst for retail spending). Because Walton Hills has limited retail, there are fewer rental venues, less sales opportunities, and very limited data with which to compare the Village.

Less detail is known about the office market in the Village because Walton Hills has limited floor space dedicated solely to offices – most office space is a function of industrial businesses. As of September, 2004, a total of only about 5,700 square feet was used exclusively for office (*CPC*). The Southeast suburban office submarket compares with more than 693,860 square feet of office space! As of the second quarter of 2004, the average asking lease rates for Class A and Class B office space was \$19.47 and \$15.58 per square foot respectively, and have decreased in recent quarters as property owners continue to lower rents and offer flexible pricing in order to attract tenants. The average asking lease rate in the Southeast office submarket compares at \$16.54 and mirrors the same decreasing price trend over recent quarters. If Walton Hills was to attract new office buildings/tenants, they could expect the average asking lease rates to hover around the average for the Southeast office submarket, which was ranked the third highest of the six suburban office submarkets during the second quarter, 2004.

Industrial

The Southeast industrial submarket comprises more than 54 million square feet, of which more than 7,1706,500 square feet was available for sale or lease (*Second Quarter, 2004, C.B. Richard Ellis*). At 13.2%, the Southeast industrial submarket had the third highest availability rate of the seven main industrial submarkets in Greater Cleveland and the average asking lease rate for this submarket was \$4.51 per square foot. In general, leasing rates for industrial properties has been rising slowly since early 2003. Walton Hills compares to Greater Cleveland's average asking lease rate with a rate of \$3.77, but varies from a low of \$3.15 to \$7.00 per square foot depending on the property (*Second Quarter, 2004*) which is a marked difference from early 2003 at rates ranging between \$2.00 and \$5.00 per square foot.

Similar to communities locally and nationwide, industrial properties in Walton Hills are typically on the market for six-to-nine months or more in past quarters, up from two-to-three months. Another common trend is that large industrial buildings (more than 50,000 square feet) are more difficult to sell or lease – a mix of smaller properties, between 5,000 to 20,000 square feet is more competitive in today’s market, of which Walton Hills has a high number. However, much of Walton Hills’ industrial space is described as “functionally obsolete” – old, outdated and not equipped with current or new technology for today’s global market reach. Upgrades and improvements could be made to existing buildings, but would be an added expense for business and property owners. See *Appendix E* for a brief discussion of “adaptive reuse”.

VACANCY TRENDS

Retail and Office

Walton Hills has a favorable 2% retail vacancy rate. Some retail vacancies in the Village Center and the former Marathon gas station at Northfield and Alexander Roads were the only retail vacancies noted in the Village during CPC’s September, 2004 survey. According to Grubb & Ellis, national and regional retail vacancy rates have remained flat, but the rising price of gasoline is projected to have a negative impact on consumer spending.

In terms of office vacancies, the Southeast suburban office submarket had a 14.7% vacancy rate, the lowest of the six suburban office submarkets, as of the second quarter of 2004. The vacancy rate for the Greater Cleveland office market compares at 20.1%, with Class A office space having the highest vacancy rate at 21.2%. The Village currently experiences no vacant office floor space. However, Walton Hills’ office space tally is much lower than that found in most neighboring communities. In general, suburban office vacancy rates have improved over the past eight quarters. But the office market recovery is forecasted to be sluggish, especially as companies try to boost productivity by substituting investment in technology instead of labor.

Industrial

Walton Hills also had an unfavorably high industrial vacancy rate of 18.4% during late 2004 (CPC). This compares to the Southeast industrial submarket which had a vacancy rate of 12.1% (C.B. Richard Ellis, *Second Quarter, 2004*). In general, industrial vacancy rates in Northeast Ohio have remained stable over the past eight quarters, hovering around 12.5% and 13.7%. Rising interest rates and fuel prices, high unemployment, and the cost and availability of raw materials discourage new build-to-suit projects, thus lowering vacancy rates. Subtracting Ford’s vacant floor space (i.e., 772,755 square feet) from the Village’s total vacant industrial floor space results in a favorable 2.7% vacancy rate for the Village’s industrial sector. The submarket with the lowest industrial vacancy rate was the West submarket had a rate of 4.6% as of the second quarter, 2004.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

There are numerous features developers and companies look for when considering to locate in a given community. Site selection is a complex process which caters to the unique needs of a business or property owner. Rarely do businesses look for a specific community, but are primarily driven by space needs and transportation access, with interstate highway access overwhelmingly cited as an important location factor. Proximity to customers and clients is also a key location factor to business and industry. Site characteristics such as dock space, real estate and utility costs, building and lot configuration are also important factors which developers and builders consider. Some businesses choose to locate to a certain community or neighborhood because of various financial incentives such as tax credits and tax abatement. Interestingly, cultural and recreational facilities, among others, are also considered important site selection criteria. Demographic considerations, compatible zoning, visibility, low labor costs, climate, environmental quality, market competition, and/or the availability of raw materials, among other individual preferences, may also determine where a company locates.

A national survey of corporate real estate executives identified numerous site selection features to consider when working to attract economic development. The survey, conducted by Conway Data (*Site Selection, 1994*) ranked major location factors. The top five factors include:

- access to an interstate highway,
- proximity to clients/customers,
- reasonable real estate costs,
- availability of skilled workers, and
- pro-business governmental officials.

In a survey of municipal economic development officials, the findings were significantly different (as compared to the real estate executives). With the exception of transportation access, the municipal economic development officials tended to “value the community advantages that are more illusive to define and are more abstract in nature.” (*Site Selection, 2001*). The top community factors that municipal economic development officials rated as highly important to site selection included quality of life, quality workforce, work ethic and good schools – factors which are very difficult to quantify. Corporate real estate executives were “more concrete in defining community characteristics and corporate cost factors” (*Site Selection, 2001*) such as business taxes, reasonable wage rates and utility costs, and availability of skilled workers.

Site selection factors cited by both real estate executives and municipal officials include *interstate highway access* and *access to suburban areas*. Although Walton Hills does not have direct highway access running through the community, Interstates 271 and 480 are easily reached from neighboring Oakwood. State Route 8, Northfield Road, is a major regional arterial which accommodates heavy truck and automobile traffic. Access to suburban areas is also an important site selection factor because it allows skilled workers to readily commute to jobs. Many Walton Hills households work outside of the Village and use Interstates 271 and 77 to reach their work destinations. Leading destinations include Cleveland, Bedford and

Solon. Businesses strive to recruit the best and most qualified employees and want to be accessible to its workforce and client base. Service businesses and manufacturers in particular, pay close attention to proximity to the labor force.

Strong surrounding commercial/retail amenities is another important site selection feature. Just having commercial and industrial businesses is not enough, however. Successful office developments have strong retail and service amenities located nearby, such as restaurants, coffee shops, banks, and business services. In Walton Hills, additional service-oriented enterprises could cater to nearby businesses and attract new companies (which helps to support a larger economic base).

Village residents have expressed only lukewarm interest in developing new retail activities to meet their needs for goods and services, with perhaps the exception of a new quality family restaurant. The overwhelming majority of residents prefer to continue to conduct their shopping beyond the Village's borders in neighboring communities. Preservation of the Village's small town lifestyle and "county" atmosphere appear to be the leading desire of residents, as indicated in the findings of the *Community Attitudes Survey*, reported in *Appendix A*.

Technology capacity, including *high-speed internet access*, is another important site selection criterion in today's fast-paced, high-tech business climate. Providing the latest technology available such as T-1 lines/high-speed internet access to potential business and property owners is a strategic incentive for prospective new developments. Walton Hills could better appeal to office tenants, research and development firms and other industrial businesses with a stepped-up investment in such technology-oriented infrastructure.

Communities which offer attractive economic packages and *tax incentives* such as tax abatement or grant dollars are more successful in attracting and retaining business owners. Walton Hills' recently created Enterprise Zone is a competitive measure which grants a tax abatement to local businesses - up to a 75% exemption of the value of real property improvements and/or real tangible personal property. However, there are a number of other economic development programs the Village could promote to existing and prospective businesses. See *Appendix E* for a description of additional economic development incentives.

Suitable zoning is also an important site selection criteria. Although changes in zoning are often prompted by a developer's proposal, communities which already have land appropriately zoned will be more competitive. For instance, should Walton Hills want to attract quality office development, the Village should create an appropriate zoning classification which caters specifically to offices. This new zoning classification should also include provisions for retail/commercial amenities noted above which are essential companions to a successful office development.

CONCLUSIONS

In a weak national economy, there are challenges as well as opportunities for a competitively positioned community such as Walton Hills. In terms of attracting offices, such development is primarily a tenant-driven endeavor. Both locally and nationwide, new offices are being built only when the building is fully or mostly leased (before construction). Another trend occurring presently is the success being realized by smaller office building projects. Such secondary or tertiary office markets do not cater to large corporate tenants of multi-story office buildings, but are functional, single-story buildings associated with local office tenants such as accountants, attorneys, or medical professionals. A number of these successful small offices have been built locally in Solon, Twinsburg, Stow, and Hudson. Walton Hills may be successful in supporting such a tertiary office market, but must actively promote itself for these developments.

Walton Hills must aggressively promote itself as a desirable office destination in order to compete with the “Big Four” and the region’s broader office market. Because the Village is not typically viewed as an office community, it will have to formulate a strong outreach campaign in order to successfully compete within the Greater Cleveland region. The Village should also foster partnerships with real estate development companies and local chambers of commerce to publicize potential locations within the Village and to work collaboratively to attract tenants.

CHAPTER 6

**FOCUS AREAS
AND
DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES**



T.G. Young Park, an area of special interest, is poised for the development of additional recreational amenities.

INTRODUCTION

As indicated in *Chapter 3*, up to 17% (734 acres) of the land area in the Village of Walton Hills is presently vacant and potentially available for development (12% if undeveloped lands owned by governments and institutions are excluded). This proportion exceeds that of a number of the Village's neighboring communities. Some of the Village's vacant properties encompass contiguous, readily developable acreage which offers potential fiscal benefits to the Village in the future.

Some developed areas in the Village have unoccupied industrial buildings with notable amounts of useable floor space. Other developed areas host uses which are judged marginal, prime for redevelopment and revitalization. Yet other developed areas present some negative images which could benefit greatly from some aesthetic improvements.

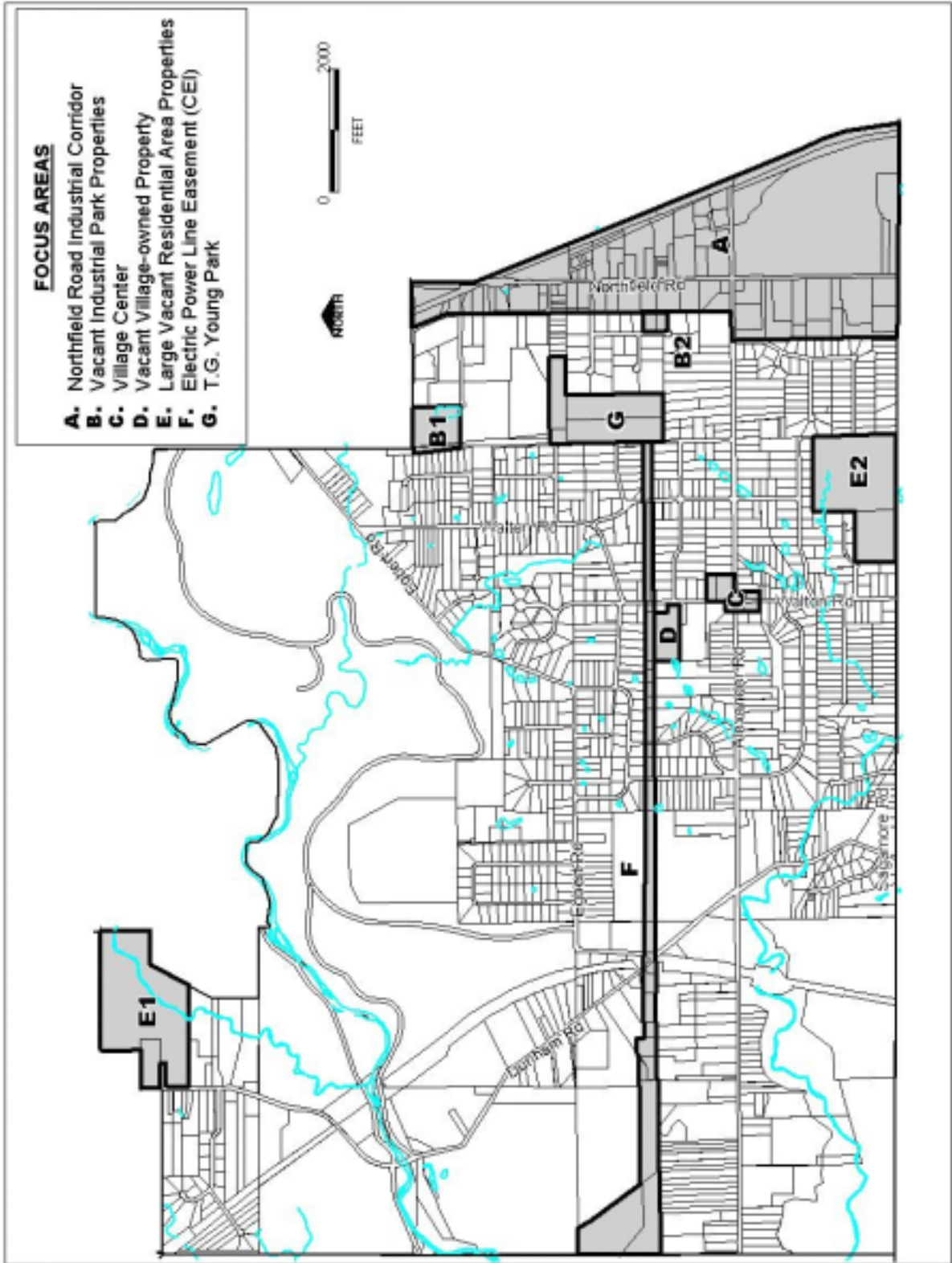
With the above in mind, various geographic areas within the Village have been identified by the Master Plan Committee members and Village officials to be of special interest and worthy of additional study by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC). This chapter includes a description of the selected "focus areas" (*Map 6.1*), a discussion of conditions identified in each, an analysis of the alternative development scenarios recommended by the Committee and the Village, and a discussion of factors impacting final recommendations. Field investigations documenting existing focus area conditions and subsequent research and analysis were primarily conducted during the first six months of 2004.

The framework within which the alternative development scenarios are judged in this chapter is a *Development Impact Analysis*, where both physical and fiscal impacts are measured and compared. The calculations are prepared based on general planning standards. The associated assumptions remain consistent throughout each analysis with predictable impacts the result of each. However, it is noted here that each development is unique and, once constructed, may not strictly follow "planning standards".

While a *development impact analysis* provides insights into the positive and negative impacts and relationships among the alternatives, findings should not serve as the only basis for future decision-making. While quantitative elements are the focus of this form of analysis, other factors such as quality of life issues play a significant role in the decision-making process. For example, an alternative development's capacity to generate revenue for the Village must be balanced against the community's strong desire to preserve its small-town atmosphere and "country" lifestyle.

For findings presented in this chapter for which sources are not cited, see *Environmental Constraints, Chapter 3: Land Use*.

Map 6.1 Focus Areas, Walton Hills



FOCUS AREA A: NORTHFIELD ROAD INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Focus Area A encompasses many of the Village's industries and commercial retail businesses and its only office uses (2) in a wide north-south wedge abutting a major rail line along Walton Hills' eastern border. With the exception of Independence Industrial Park off of Alexander Road, all of these uses front on a 1.6 mile long segment of heavily traveled Northfield Road.

The Northfield Road Corridor is bordered by the City of Bedford to the north, the Village of Oakwood to the east, and the City of Macedonia and Village of Northfield to the south. Its western side abuts the balance of the Village's industries and some commercial retail properties (north of Alexander Road) and residential properties (south of Alexander Road).

All properties within the Corridor are zoned *Industrial*, with the exception of a sliver of Ben Venue's parking lot (*Business*) which extends into Walton Hills from Bedford along Northfield Road.

Map 6.2 depicts the broader area encompassed by Focus Area A and the type and distribution of area land uses. Five sub-areas identified for further analysis are also shown. A summary of property characteristics of each is presented in *Table 6.1*.

Table 6.1. Focus Area A Sub-Areas Property Summary

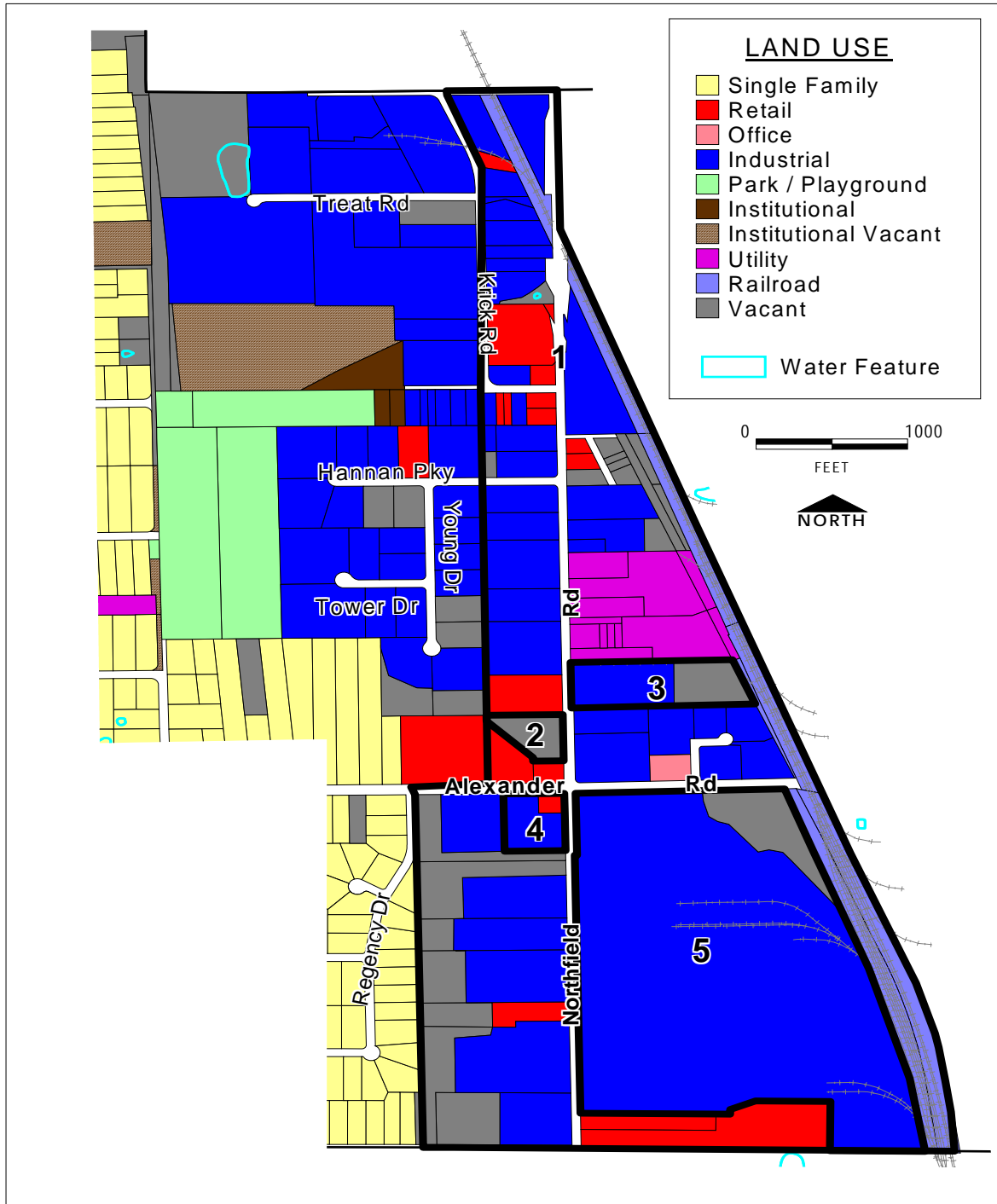
Sub-Area	Address(es)	Parcel Number(s)	Owner(s)	Occupant(s)	Acres	Estimated Market Value
A-1	Village Gateway Area (See Text)					
A-2	Northfield Rd.	794-27-019	Dean Penix	Vacant land	2.91	\$124,200
A-3	7515 Northfield Rd.	794-34-013	Rin-Lee Dev Co.	Industrial building (vacant) and land	9.07	\$2,010,600
A-4	7620 Northfield Rd., 7676 Northfield Rd.	794-27-005, 794-27-001	Three-M Energy, Thomas Wigglesworth	Gas station (vacant), T.R. Wigglesworth Machinery (vacant/part)	4.05	\$980,700
A-5	7845 Northfield Rd.	794-38-001	Ford Motor Co.	Ford Stamping Plant	111.23	\$32,396,100
Total					127.26	\$35,511,600

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office, January, 2004.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES IN FOCUS AREA A AND SUB-AREAS

A broad discussion of conditions and issues present throughout the Northfield Road Corridor, which potentially impact the development/redevelopment or revitalization of existing properties, is provided in *Chapter 5*. Some additional considerations associated with the sub-area properties follow.

Map 6.2. Focus Area A and Sub-Areas, Existing Land Use



Sub-Area A-1 Conditions and Issues

The northern entrance, or “gateway”, to Walton Hills along Northfield Road from Bedford is the most heavily traveled segment of roadway in the Village. While some positive images greet motorists and pedestrians entering the community, they are significantly diluted by a host of negative conditions. These negative images combine to make this important, highly visible north gateway to the community the least inviting of all the Villages entrances.

The newly rebuilt Northfield Road bridge incorporates some enhancements which certainly project a more welcoming image to those visiting or passing through the community (See *Chapters 4 and 5*). However, upon cresting the bridge and approaching the traffic light at Krick Road at the base of the bridge, a succession of negative impressions bombard the motorist and pedestrian until they reach Hannan Parkway, about 1,600 feet to the south of the bridge’s highest point.

Based on CPC field investigations during 2003 and 2004, where area conditions were observed, documented and assessed, the Northfield Road gateway entrance location has been targeted as demonstrating the greatest need for corrective actions among all of the Village entrances. Village-wide, negative conditions identified in business/industrial districts have been prioritized for the most aggressive corrective actions. Many of those priorities also apply to Sub-Area A-1 and are listed here:

- Roadway widening (strategic) and repair; shoulder repair; curb construction and repair
- Access drive surface repair/replacement; apron widening; reduction of curb cuts
- Parking lot resurfacing and strategic re-orientation
- Landscaping maintenance and enhancements
- Outdoor storage clean-up, re-orientation and screening
- Sidewalk construction (strategic) and delineation
- Building upgrades and maintenance (including some attention to signage)

For a complete discussion of the numerous challenges present throughout this important gateway to Walton Hills, see *Existing Conditions, Considerations and Issues by Location, Northfield Road Corridor*, in *Chapter 5*.

Sub-Area A-2 Conditions and Issues

Located on the west side of Northfield Road, just north of its intersection with Alexander Road, wedge-shaped Sub-Area A-2 encompasses almost three acres. The level, graded parcel, with about 350 feet of frontage, is currently advertised for sale. It is bordered by retail land uses, including the Birchwood Banquet and Party Center and an auto battery retailer (in a former gas station) to each side, and a skilled nursing care facility to the rear (accessed off of Alexander Road). Industrial developments on the east side of Northfield Road face the subject property.

A relatively deep, steep-sided drainage ditch extends along the inside of the southern property line to the rear of the parcel. Based on a review of available records, the property appears to be free of serious environmental limitations which would preclude development.

Sub-Area A-2 is zoned *Industrial*.

Sub-Area A-3 Conditions and Issues

Sub-Area A-3 encompasses a nine-acre, rectangular property with an industrial building which is presently vacant. Owned by Rin-Lee Development Co, a partnership of local and out-of-town owners, it was vacated by America's Body Equipment at the end of May, 2003.

The structure includes floor space totaling 79,260 square feet. Of that total, the office component encompasses about 9,080 square feet, with the industrial/warehouse portion totaling about 70,180 square feet. In addition to a visitors parking lot at the front of the building, a large surface parking lot/outdoor storage area is positioned behind the building. A portion of the property is partially wooded and remains undeveloped (to the rear of the parking lot), suggesting that future building expansion is possible.

The subject property is bordered by a vacant utility-owned property to the north, the rail line to the east, and industrial land uses to the south.

Preliminary investigations indicate the presence of an underground storage tank (leaking) and potentially hazardous materials in the building, on the property, or associated with the previously operating industry and possibly removed (see <http://cpc.cuyahoga.oh.us/cpc/map.asp>). Further investigations are required to clarify the presence and magnitude of these potential constraints and their possible impacts on property reuse or redevelopment.

Sub-Area A-3 is zoned *Industrial*.

Sub-Area A-4 Conditions and Issues

Sub-Area A-4 includes a long-vacant gas station on the southwest corner of the Alexander/Northfield Roads intersection and a partially vacant industrial building which wraps around it. Combined, these two properties (different owners) form a four-acre, roughly square property, with frontages extending about 400 feet from the corner along each leg.

Research has uncovered no serious environmental constraints which would preclude redevelopment of this site. The study area is bordered by industries to the south and west. Sub-Area zoning is *Industrial*.

Sub-Area A-5 Conditions and Issues

Ford Motor Company's Walton Hills Stamping Plant, located in the southeastern quadrant of the Alexander and Northfield Roads intersection, has been manufacturing vehicle body panels and parts at this site since 1954, when the plant was constructed. Finished parts are shipped to other Ford facilities, where vehicles are then assembled.

Situated on about 111 acres, the plant's operations are contained within numerous buildings. Total floor space is reported at about 2.2 million square feet, according to readily available Ford publications. (The Cuyahoga County Auditor reports total floor space at 2,049,444 square feet) Since the 1950's, the plant has undergone a half dozen major expansions requiring the investment of millions of dollars.

Most recently, a major restructuring at the plant has been underway. According to the plant's Controller (*Douds, January 27, 2004*), over the past several years tens of millions of dollars have been invested in the plant with an eye to modernization. Published media sources indicate that, among numerous other improvements, stamping press lines and various automation systems have been upgraded, robot control systems have been refurbished, additional technologically advanced production equipment has been incorporated, and operations have been more efficiently reconfigured and consolidated into less floor space.

The resulting consolidation of operations using less floor space, or "right-sizing" according to Ford, has prompted the removal of some floor area from active use for an indeterminate time. As of early 2004, most of the 772,755 square feet of targeted floor space had been partitioned off from the balance of operations. This total represents roughly 38% of the plant's total floor area (based on the County Auditor's floor space total). Among other benefits to be derived from this action, the energy cost and maintenance savings are anticipated to be substantial.

In addition to the reduced demand on building floor space, some of the plant's grounds are vacant, other areas are marginally used for outdoor storage of trailers and equipment, and the expansive parking lot, originally built to accommodate thousands of workers, is only partly used today. Complete documentation of any environmental hazards present at the facility, which could potentially affect any future building expansion or property redevelopment, is not available. It is assumed, however, that over its five decades of operation the plant has utilized a variety of potentially hazardous substances in its manufacturing processes.

As for many industries, technological advances such as those incorporated into auto manufacturing have resulted in faster and more streamlined production, reduced plant downtime when product changes necessitate retooling, improved product quality, and numerous other impacts. One such byproduct is shifts in the number and types and skills of the employees required to conduct the manufacturing activity. The employment level at any particular company or facility can fluctuate greatly over time, due to the influences from the complex mix formed when combining the forces of the national and world economies, corporate policy, aspects of product supply and demand, the desires/needs of the consumer and labor.

Beyond the forces potentially impacting a company's employment levels cited above, *A Wake-up Call for Economic Development in Northeast Ohio: How to Get the Job Done*, authored by Kent State University, Center for Public Administration and Public Policy (*Crains' Cleveland Business, January 5, 2004*) identifies eight key economic issues facing Northeast Ohio.

One of the cited factors is the region's "adversarial workforce" which fosters an image of "poor labor-management relations". The implication of this and the other findings is that some new businesses are reluctant to locate in the area and existing firms experience challenges when attempting to redefine or expand operations.

Employment levels at Ford's Walton Hills Stamping Plant have steadily declined over its decades of operation in response to a complex blend of factors, some of which may be touched on above. Presently, the plant employs (i.e., pays) 933 hourly and salaried workers. Of those 933 workers, 850 (91%) are hourly, whereas 83 (9%) are salaried employees. With "right-sizing", the lowest future anticipated employment level to be reached (which is expected to remain stable at least through 2007 when the current four-year United Auto Workers contract expires) will approximate 788 total workers. For comparison, plant employment, according to Ford, was 2,969 in 1980, 2,036 in 1990, and 1,444 in 2000.

A notable concern stated numerous times during the Master Plan preparation process by members of the Master Plan Committee and Village officials pertained to the potential future impacts of Ford's Walton Hills Stamping Plant on the Village's revenue stream and resident workers if the facility continues to reduce employment, or should cease operations altogether.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA A, SUB-AREA 1

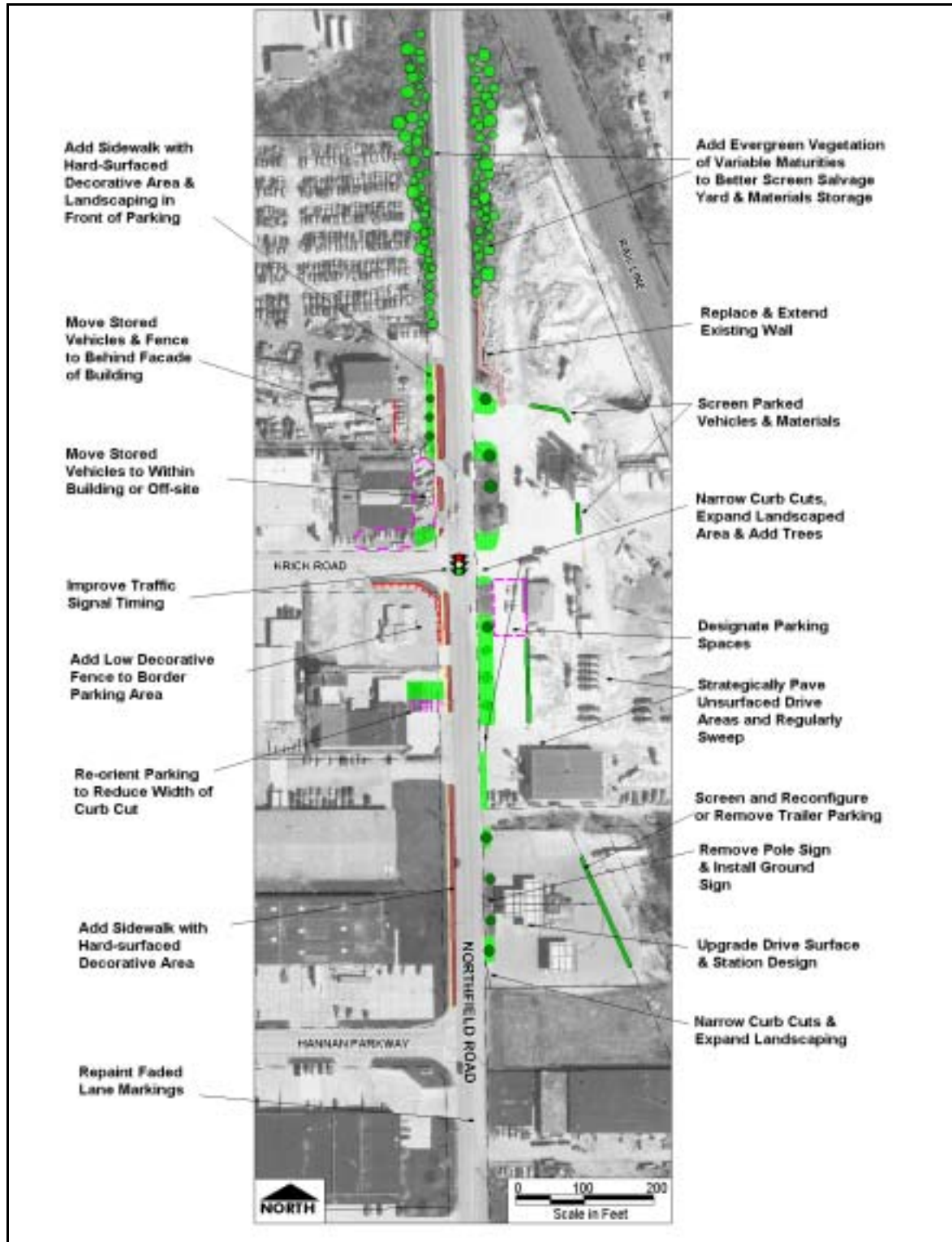
Based on previously reported field investigation findings and associated discussions and input from various stakeholders, it was recommended that existing land uses within this important gateway to Walton Hills be examined with an eye to comprehensive Corridor revitalization. One intended result, an improved community image, could be derived via some strategic improvements to area appearance.

While cosmetic improvements to the physical elements of business/industrial districts alone do not directly ensure an expanded community tax base, they are highly influential in improving business leaders' and residents' perceptions and preserving/improving community character and kick-starting some other benefits. Spin-offs from such basic physical upgrades can attract shoppers, lure prospective property buyers more quickly and, ultimately, boost area investment and property values with the area becoming "the place to be".

Since potential land use changes within the gateway area are not the focus of the analysis here, a *development impact analysis* has not been conducted. Some recommendations pertaining to gateway area redevelopment are provided later in this document.

Map 6.3 illustrates a variety of recommendations for possible implementation to enhance this important north gateway entrance to Walton Hills. Collectively, in concert with some land use changes for "marginal" properties, the depicted changes, if implemented, could greatly improve the overall appearance of the Corridor segment north of the Hannan Parkway intersection.

Map 6.3. Focus Area A, Sub-Area 1, Northfield Road Corridor Improvements



**DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA A,
SUB-AREA 2**

Numerous different development needs for the Northfield Corridor have been advanced by the Master Plan Committee and some Village officials. To best reflect the diverse proposals, four development schemes have been formulated and analyzed for this vacant property.

Alternative 1 considers site development with a three-story office building approximating almost 62,000 total square feet (20,500 square feet per floor). New office development alternatives have been recommended by Master Plan Committee members for consideration at the few remaining vacant properties along Northfield Road. Alternative 2 proposes the development of about 64,000 square feet of basic light industrial floor space which would include manufacturing space, an office area and an attached warehouse. The property could also be developed to include a small strip retail shopping center (Alternative 3) accommodating two to four tenants covering floor space totaling about 42,000 square feet. Examples of potentially viable retail businesses at this location include business support services (e.g., printer/copier), a coffee shop, an independent video rental/sales store, speciality shops (e.g. florist), a drycleaner, or a fast food/carry-out, among other possible uses benefitting residents and area workers. Alternative 4 proposes a large drug store with a drive-up service window covering just 16,000 square feet of the parcel. A small number of *Community Attitudes Survey* respondents identified a drug store as a Village need. The drugstore nearest to Walton Hills residents (a CVS) is located on Northfield Road in the Village of Northfield.

The range of comparative findings derived from the *development impact analysis* performed for these four scenarios is presented in **Table 6.2**. With maximum permitted site utilization, potential site valuation and employment are calculated highest for the office building scenario. Not unexpectedly, the lowest estimated number of new jobs and the lowest site valuation is estimated for the drug store alternative.

Environmental impacts prompted by the alternatives vary significantly. Not surprisingly, traffic generation would be highest for the two retail options. Demands placed on sewer and water services would be significantly higher for the industrial development scheme. Industries, by the nature of their activity, also generate comparatively higher volumes of solid waste (prior to recycling/reduction activities).

In terms of the greatest potential fiscal gains (i.e., net fiscal impact) for Walton Hills Village, the office scenario would generate the most revenue, in spite of the high calculated cost to provide necessary municipal services. Calculated net fiscal benefits for the Village with the light industry scheme are not far behind.

It is judged that, while any one of the proposed alternatives would be generally compatible with adjacent land uses, the office and retail alternatives would benefit best from the visibility and/or high vehicular traffic volumes offered at this Northfield Road location.

Table 6.2 Focus Area A, Sub-Area 2, Development Impact Analysis

Vacant Land, Northfield Road	Alternative 1: Offices	Alternative 2: Light Industry	Alternative 3: Retail Center	Alternative 4: Drugstore
SITE CHARACTERISTICS				
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	2.91 (126,760)	2.91 (126,760)	2.91 (126,760)	2.91 (126,760)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	2.91 (126,760)	2.91 (126,760)	2.91 (126,760)	2.91 (126,760)
Building Footprint (Square Feet)	20,500	63,380	41,830	16,000
Stories (No.)	3	1	1	1
Employees (No.)	202	137	76	16
Potential Value of site	\$5,325,900	\$3,614,339	\$2,767,286	\$2,203,679
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS				
Vehicle Trips (per weekday)	677	442	1,701	1,411
Sewage Flow (gallons/day)	4,919	17,673	3,813	1,459
Water Consumption (gallons/day)	5,720	20,550	4,434	1,696
Solid Waste Generation (tons/day)	0.141	2.562	0.296	0.062
REVENUES				
Employee Income (Est. Avg. Annual)	\$43,464	\$45,126	\$22,456	\$22,456
Income Tax - Village	\$175,595	\$123,645	\$34,133	\$7,186
Property Tax - Village	\$563	\$382	\$292	\$233
TOTAL - Village	\$176,158	\$124,027	\$34,425	\$7,419
Property Tax - Schools	\$73,530	\$49,900	\$38,205	\$30,424
EXPENDITURES				
Cost to Village (Services)	\$60,049	\$19,851	\$22,593	\$4,756
NET FISCAL IMPACT FOR VILLAGE	\$116,109	\$104,176	\$11,832	\$2,663

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003; Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1991 and 1997; Urban Land Institute Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994; Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor's Offices, 2004; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; Fiscal Impact Handbook, Burchell, 1980.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA A, SUB-AREA 3

The desire to examine this vacant industrial building's (and property's) full range of reuse and redevelopment potential, given expressed community needs, resulted in the formulation of three different scenarios: light industry, industry/research and office uses. Also to be considered with these options was an examination of the existing structure's feasibility for adaptation to a "higher" use (e.g., existing warehouse space conversion to manufacturing or office activities which may generate increased wages for workers and revenue for the Village). Throughout the planning process, concerns had been expressed by some Master Plan Committee members and Village officials that warehouse space within the community represents an undesirably high proportion of the total business/industrial floor space.

During the CPC's focus area analysis early in 2004, it was learned that this vacant property had been fully leased by Edge Seal Technologies over the winter of 2003/04. Subsequently, it was determined that the intended analysis would not be beneficial. See Appendix E for an associated discussion of "adaptive reuse."

**DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA A,
SUB-AREA 4**

In response to recommendations advanced by the Master Plan Committee, some Village officials and residents via the *Community Attitudes Survey*, three development scenarios have been formulated and analyzed for this vacant property: offices, an offices/limited retail mix and a restaurant use. For this underutilized sub-area, the selected alternatives reflect the community's strong desire to achieve maximum redevelopment potential given the high volumes of drive-by traffic and the intersection's high visibility.

Alternative 1 considers site redevelopment with a three-story office building encompassing about 86,000 square feet (28,500 square feet per floor). Alternative 2 proposes the same form of development, but with 9,500 square feet of the ground floor area hosting retail uses (about 1/3 of the building's footprint). Examples of retail uses which could complement the office function include a small café, a coffee shop, or a small convenience-type store (or a blend of all three). Alternative 3 considers a sit-down "family restaurant" which would serve area residents as well as the nearby business community. Just two sit-down restaurants are located in the Village, with most nearby restaurants of the "fast food" variety (along Northfield Road in Northfield Village). While numerous popular family style restaurants exist throughout the region, several examples considered here (to establish parameters for the *development impact analysis*) include Olive Garden, Bob Evans and Applebee's restaurants.

Results of the analysis for these three development alternatives are presented in **Table 6.3**. With maximum allowed site utilization (for the office options), potential site valuation and employment are calculated highest for the two office building scenarios. A restaurant alternative such as the above would likely not utilize the entire four-acre site. Not unexpectedly, the lowest estimated number of new jobs and the lowest site valuation is estimated for the restaurant scheme.

Environmental impacts prompted by the alternatives vary. Traffic generation would be highest for the two options which include retail uses. Demands on sewer and water services would be notably increased with the office building schemes. Due to the nature of most restaurant operations, solid waste generation rates exceed those anticipated with the office options.

In terms of the estimated fiscal gains for the Village under these three alternative development scenarios, the office options would be expected to generate significantly more benefit (i.e., revenue) than a restaurant option. In fact, a restaurant option would be a break-even proposition for the Village. However, it should be recalled that *Community Attitudes Survey* findings indicate a segment of the population would like to see improved dining options in the Village. Input from some members of the Master Plan Committee echoed this need.

Table 6.3 Focus Area A, Sub-Area 4, Development Impact Analysis

Vacant Gas Station and Vacant Industry (part), SW Corner of Northfield and Alexander Roads	Alternative 1: Offices	Alternative 2: Office/Retail	Alternative 3: Restaurant
SITE CHARACTERISTICS			
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	4.05 (176,418)	4.05 (176,418)	4.05 (176,418)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	4.05 (176,418)	4.05 (176,418)	4.05 (176,418)
Building Footprint (Square Feet)	28,500	28,500	8,500
Stories (No.)	3	3	1
Employees (No.)	281	267	84
Potential Value of site	\$7,404,764	\$7,199,849	\$2,746,630
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS			
Vehicle Trips (per weekday)	941	1,223	1,108
Sewage Flow (gallons/day)	6,838	6,945	775
Water Consumption (gallons/day)	7,952	8,075	901
Solid Waste Generation (tons/day)	0.197	0.276	0.714
REVENUES			
Employee Income (Est. Avg. Annual)	\$43,464	\$43,464/\$22,456	\$15,402
Income Tax - Village	\$244,268	\$228,997	\$25,875
Property Tax - Village	\$783	\$761	\$290
TOTAL - Village	\$245,051	\$229,758	\$26,165
Property Tax - Schools	\$102,231	\$99,402	\$37,920
EXPENDITURES			
Cost to Village (Services)	\$83,533	\$79,372	\$24,971
NET FISCAL IMPACT FOR VILLAGE	\$161,518	\$150,386	\$1,194

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003; Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1991 and 1997; Urban Land Institute Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994; Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor's Offices, 2004; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; Fiscal Impact Handbook, Burchell, 1980.

Given the high visibility of this intersection and the study site's current underutilization, either of the contemplated development alternatives would be favored over the current uses. It is judged that each of the considered alternatives would be generally compatible with adjacent land uses and would benefit greatly from the visibility and high traffic volumes at this major Village intersection.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA A, SUB-AREA 5

During recent years in response to shrinking employment, Village concerns regarding the future of Ford's Walton Hills Stamping Plant have grown. Of primary concern to the Village officials, in the context of the recent employment trends, is the role that this major industry will continue to play as an important revenue-generator for the Village and as an employer for many of its residents.

While numerous alternative sub-area redevelopment and re-use scenarios have been recommended for professional analysis here, their final selection must be tempered against the following considerations, among others:

- P Master Plan period extends roughly through the 2008-2013 period;
- P Ford has invested millions of dollars in recent years in facility modernization;
- P Facility employment can be expected to remain stable at least through 2007;

- P The facility's massive physical infrastructure is a significant impediment to change for Ford as well as any other owner/operator; and
- P The facility's longtime heavy manufacturing function may have associated environmental hazards characterized by liabilities requiring remediation prior to facility conversion to a like use or redevelopment to another use.

To best accommodate current Village concerns, balanced against the above five considerations, two principal alternative scenarios have been formulated: offices redevelopment (part) and light industry redevelopment (part). Both schemes are discussed below, as are two additional re-use/redevelopment scenarios which are predicated on circumstances that may develop as time goes on.

Originally, four scenarios were formulated for the Ford property in the event that it ceases operations, becomes severely underutilized, or displays blighting influences through full or partial facility abandonment. One option involved facility re-use by another automaker or facility modification to accommodate some other form of heavy manufacturing. A second alternative involved site clearing followed by development of a modern industrial park. Given subsequent investigations, associated findings and the considerations noted above, it is judged that the Ford Stamping Plant can be expected to continue to serve as an asset to the Village, its residents and the local economy for the near future. Therefore, it is recommended that the above two rather radical scenarios be considered only in the event that the existing stable situation at the Stamping Plant deteriorates significantly. Such a need would trigger a Master Plan Update or Amendment.

Alternatives 1 and 2 include the redevelopment of a roughly 19-acre portion of the Ford property fronting Alexander Road which is presently underutilized. A portion of this area accommodates outdoor storage (vehicles, truck trailers, material, and equipment). The balance of the area is vacant (see *Map 6.4*). Redevelopment could be accomplished by relocating the stored items to an unused area of the expansive employee parking lot (which is severely underutilized due to reduced plant employment), incorporating appropriate visual screening/buffering, and implementing one of several development approaches:

- P Ford develops and leases the space but retains ownership control, or
- P Ford sells the subdivided property to a developer for improvements.

Alternative 1 proposes the development of a three-story office building totaling about 400,000 square feet in size. Alternative 2 considers a one-story light industry (*Table 6.4*). At maximum allowed site build-out, potential site valuation and employment are calculated highest for the office building scenario. Interestingly, this relatively small site, at full development for office use, could support almost two times Ford's current total projected near-term employment (with "right-sizing"). A light industry, with an estimated 702 employees, could employ almost that total.

Map 6.4. Focus Area A, Sub-Area 5, Ford Walton Hills Stamping Plant



Calculated environmental and fiscal impacts are also provided in the table. While municipal investments (cost to provide services) are significant under both alternatives, those expenses are notably outweighed by the total revenue generation.

Both considered alternative developments would be generally compatible with adjacent land uses.

Table 6.4 Focus Area, Sub-Area 5, Development Impact Analysis

Ford Motor Company	Alternative 1: Redevelop with Offices (part)	Alternative 2: Redevelop with Light Industry (part)
SITE CHARACTERISTICS		
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	111.23 (4,845,179)	111.23 (4,845,179)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	18.85 (821,106)	18.85 (821,106)
Building Footprint (Square Feet)	132,000	325,000
Stories (No.)	3	1
Employees (No.)	1,303	702
Potential Value of site	\$34,305,480	\$18,729,230
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS		
Vehicle Trips (per weekday)	4,360	2,265
Sewage Flow (gallons/day)	31,672	90,558
Water Consumption (gallons/day)	36,828	105,300
Solid Waste Generation (tons/day)	0.912	13.127
REVENUES		
Employee Income (Est. Avg. Annual)	\$43,464	\$45,126
Income Tax - Village	\$1,132,672	\$633,569
Property Tax - Village	\$3,625	\$1,979
TOTAL - Village	\$1,136,297	\$635,548
Property Tax - Schools	\$473,625	\$258,578
EXPENDITURES		
Cost to Village (Services)	\$387,345	\$101,724
NET FISCAL IMPACT FOR VILLAGE	\$748,952	\$533,824

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003; Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1991 and 1997; Urban Land Institute Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994; Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor's Offices, 2004; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; Fiscal Impact Handbook, Burchell, 1980.

FOCUS AREA B: VACANT INDUSTRIAL PARK PROPERTIES

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Within two industrial parks accessed from Northfield Road are two vacant properties (See *Map 6.1*). Sub-Area B-1, at the western end of Treat Road in Krick (Road) Industrial Park, encompasses almost 14 acres. Sub-Area B-2, near the southern end of Young Drive in Hannan (Parkway) Industrial Park, covers almost three acres. Both sub-areas are zoned *Industrial*.

The classification and distribution of area land uses are shown in *Map 6.2* (west of Focus Area A). Profiles of the two properties are provided in *Table 6.5*.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES IN FOCUS AREA B SUB-AREAS

A broad discussion of conditions and issues present throughout the Krick and Hannan Industrial Parks, generally defined (but not mapped) here as Focus Area B, is provided in *Chapter 5*. Some additional property-specific observations are provided below.

Table 6.5. Focus Area B Sub-Areas Property Summary

Sub-Area	Address(es)	Parcel Number(s)	Owner(s)	Occupant(s)	Acres	Estimated Market Value
B-1	Treat Rd. (end)	794-30-002	Krick Road Realty Co.	Vacant land	11.48	n.a.
B-2	Young Dr.(end)	794-27-014 794-29-032	Krick Road Building Co.	Vacant land	2.91	\$158,500
Total					14.39	\$158,500+

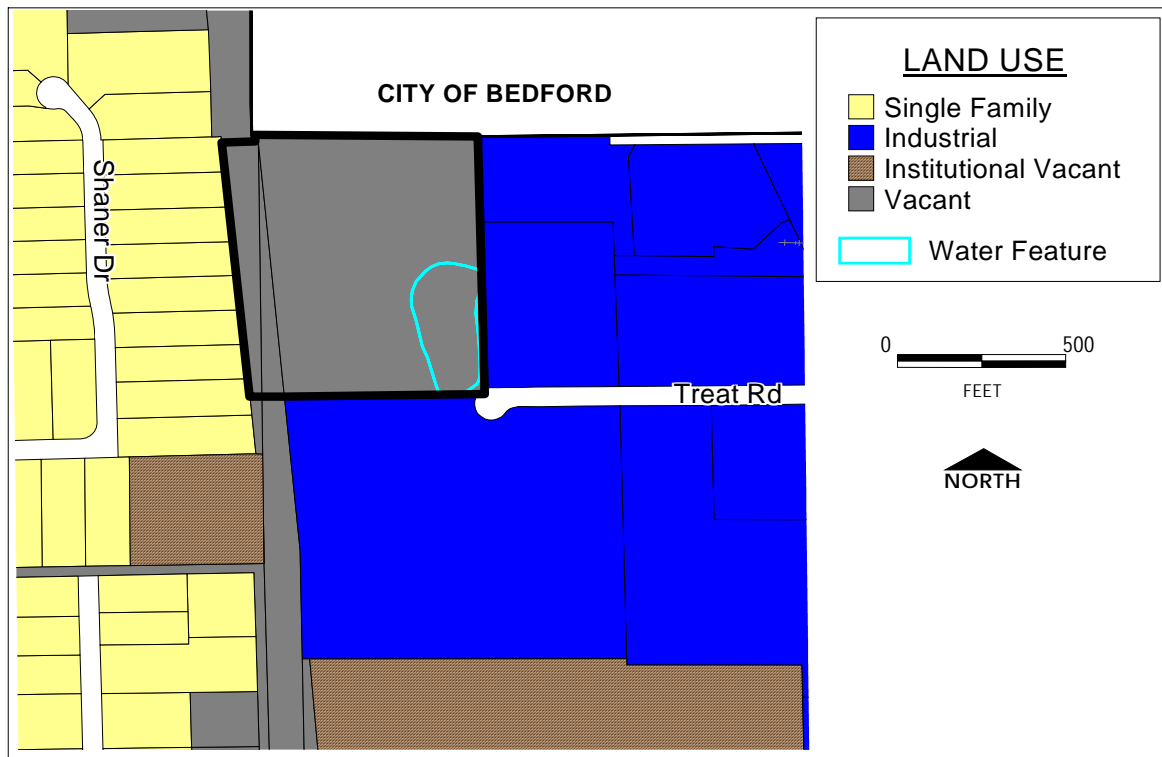
SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office, January, 2004.

Sub-Area B-1 Conditions and Issues

Sub-Area B-1 is bounded by industrial development on the north, east and south sides, with single-family homes along its western border (see *Map 6.5*).

The property is accessed from Treat Road, which was extended to its front corner several years ago. Fronting acreage, almost two-thirds of the property (7.4 acres), is primarily grass/scrub-covered and relatively level. A storm water retention basin (continually filled pond), enlarged when the road was extended, is situated against the southeastern corner with a 10-15 foot mound of fill material centered on the balance. According to the Village Engineer (*February, 2004*), the fill is “clean”, a byproduct of construction activity across Treat Road. The rear one-

Map 6.5. Focus Area B, Sub-Area 1, Existing Land Use



third of the property is wooded, dropping steeply (in excess of 18%) about 30 feet to the floor of a ravine. The ravine hosts a wetland area and a watercourse in the northwestern corner which are subject to occasional flooding.

The only portion of this property which abuts the roadway contains the retention pond. If the property owner of this vacant sub-area and the abutting development to the south (Handl-It, BenVenue warehouse) were not the same, access to this undeveloped corner would be challenging (i.e., requires an access easement) or costly (i.e., requires pond reconfiguration).

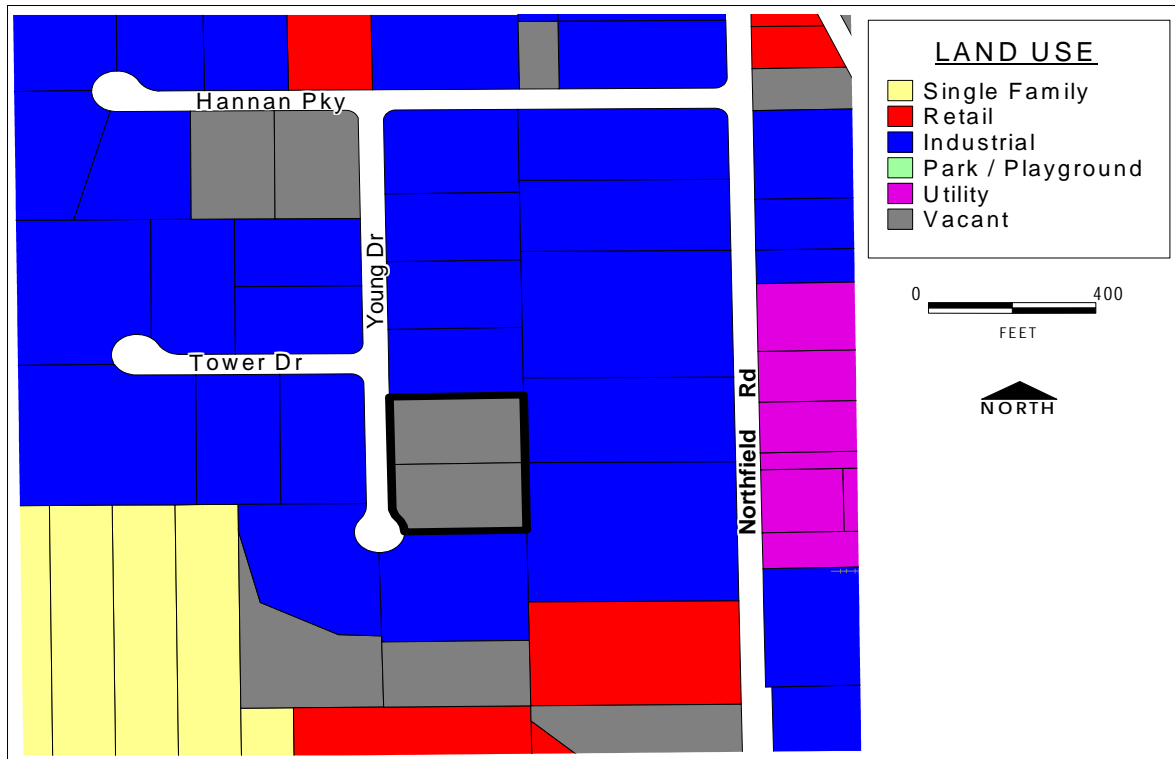
CPC files document the presence of a former dump for waste materials across the entire property to the rim of the ravine. The age, source, composition and depth of the waste, and the measure of any associated hazards present at this site are unknown. Research has failed to determine whether any investigatory soil samples/borings have been taken at this property.

According to the Village Engineer, the subject property's owner committed several years ago via an agreement to not develop the parcel. Further investigation of Village and other records may reveal the details of this arrangement.

Sub-Area B-2 Conditions and Issues

Sub-Area B-2 is comprised of two parcels (same owner). Combined, the rectangle-shaped property has about 400 feet of frontage along Young Drive. The subject area is bordered by industrial development on all four sides (*Map 6.6*).

Map 6.6. Focus Area B, Sub-Area 2, Existing Land Use



The grassy site is level, with roughly 40 feet of the northern end traversed by an easement for high-tension overhead electric power lines. Based on review of available records, the property appears to be free of serious environmental constraints.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA B, SUB-AREA 1

Considering the current surrounding land uses and expressed community development needs, several potential land uses have been identified as possible future uses for this sub-area: offices, light industry or industry/research. Based on the existence of notable environmental challenges (i.e., retention pond, slopes and wetland) to developing this site, just a little over one-half (7.4 acres) of the property's total area (13.5 acres) is judged feasible for consideration under these development scenarios.

Alternative 1 incorporates an office building. Under this option, it is recommended that the structure be limited to two floors due its proximity to adjacent homes. Because this site is removed from the high-traffic Northfield Road corridor, it is further suggested that this scheme be restricted to office activities which are not associated with heavy client/customer visits (e.g., insurance forms processing, telemarketing, business service/support center) or dependent on a "marquee" location. With two floors, at maximum site utilization (7.4 acres), the total floorspace would equal about 141,000 square feet. Alternative 2 proposes the development of about 128,000 square feet of basic light industrial floor space including manufacturing, office and warehouse space. Alternative 3, the last option, considers a primarily light industry function with a research/lab component.

Findings derived from the *development impact analysis* performed for these three scenarios are presented in **Table 6.6**. With maximum permitted site utilization, potential employment is rated highest for Alternative 1, whereas estimated site valuation is highest for Alternative 3, followed closely by Alternative 1.

Estimated environmental impacts associated with these alternatives vary notably. Traffic generation would be highest for the office building scenario, with the balance of environmental impacts greatest for the two industry options.

In terms of fiscal benefits, the net fiscal impact for the Village is attractive under all scenarios. However, the office building alternative offers the greatest net benefit to Walton Hills.

While Sub-Area B-1 demonstrates some environmental limitations which effectively reduce the property's buildable area, its status as a probable former dumpsite for waste materials poses potentially severe limitations on its future development for the considered uses. Subject to thorough investigations to ascertain the nature and extent of waste deposition and possible associated hazards, this property may be unsuitable for any use – absent costly remediation.

Because single-family homes are situated at the same grade level along this property’s western boundary, any future site development alternative must incorporate measures to eliminate or reduce any negative impacts associated with this dissimilar use.

Table 6.6 Focus Area B-1, Development Impact Analysis

Vacant Land, Treat Road	Alternative 1: Offices	Alternative 2: Light Industry	Alternative 3: Light Industry/Research
SITE CHARACTERISTICS			
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	13.48 (587,189)	13.48 (587,189)	13.48 (587,189)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	7.36 (320,602)	7.36 (320,602)	7.36 (320,602)
Building Footprint (Square Feet)	70,500	127,500	127,500
Stories (No.)	2	1	1
Employees (No.)	464	275	275
Potential Value of site	\$12,930,032	\$7,838,430	\$13,394,023
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS			
Vehicle Trips (per weekday)	1,552	889	1,034
Sewage Flow (gallons/day)	11,277	35,475	35,475
Water Consumption (gallons/day)	13,113	41,250	41,250
Solid Waste Generation (tons/day)	0.325	5.143	2.668
REVENUES			
Employee Income (Est. Avg. Annual)	\$43,464	\$45,126	\$46,292
Income Tax - Village	\$403,346	\$248,193	\$254,606
Property Tax - Village	\$1,366	\$828	\$1,415
TOTAL - Village	\$404,712	\$249,021	\$256,021
Property Tax - Schools	\$178,513	\$108,218	\$184,919
EXPENDITURES			
Cost to Village (Services)	\$137,934	\$39,849	\$39,849
NET FISCAL IMPACT FOR VILLAGE	\$266,778	\$209,172	\$216,172

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003; Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1991 and 1997; Urban Land Institute Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994; Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor’s Offices, 2004; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; Fiscal Impact Handbook, Burchell, 1980.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA B, SUB-AREA 2

Based on previously identified community development needs and this sub-area’s surrounding predominantly industrial land uses, the same three development scenarios proposed for Sub-Area B-1 have been considered for analysis here: offices, light industry or industry/research.

Alternative 1 considers site development with an office building approximating 56,000 square feet of floor space. To blend with nearby buildings, a two-story structure is considered here. As in the case of Sub-Area B-1, this site is somewhat removed from the visible, high-traffic Northfield Road. As for that property, potential office uses which are most suitable for this site would not depend on a prominent, easily accessed location for a large drive-in customer base. Alternative 2 proposes the development of about 50,000 square feet of basic light industrial floor space which would include a manufacturing area, office space and an attached warehouse. Alternative 3, the final development scheme, includes a light industrial use with a research/lab

component which also encompasses about 50,000 square feet of space. For each development scenario, maximum allowed site development is assumed (per the Zoning Code). It is not anticipated that any development restrictions associated with the adjacent overhead electric power lines would significantly reduce the property’s development potential since it traverses the side yard area only (conforming roughly with the Village’s existing side yard setback requirements).

Findings derived from applying a *development impact analysis* to these three scenarios are presented in **Table 6.7**. At the allowed maximum site utilization, potential employment is calculated highest for Alternative 1, with potential site valuation rated highest for Alternative 3, followed closely by Alternative 1 (similar to Sub-Area B-1 findings).

Table 6.7 Focus Area B-2, Development Impact Analysis

Vacant Land, Young Drive	Alternative 1: Offices	Alternative 2: Light Industry	Alternative 3: Light Industry/Research
SITE CHARACTERISTICS			
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	2.91 (126,760)	2.91 (126,760)	2.91 (126,760)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	2.62 (113,960)	2.62 (113,960)	2.62 (113,960)
Building Footprint (Square Feet)	28,000	50,000	50,000
Stories (No.)	2	1	1
Employees (No.)	184	108	108
Potential Value of site	\$4,877,100	\$2,922,454	\$5,127,566
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS			
Vehicle Trips (per weekday)	617	349	406
Sewage Flow (gallons/day)	4,479	13,932	13,932
Water Consumption (gallons/day)	5,208	16,200	16,200
Solid Waste Generation (tons/day)	0.129	2.020	1.048
REVENUES			
Employee Income (Est. Avg. Annual)	\$43,464	\$45,126	\$46,292
Income Tax - Village	\$159,948	\$97,472	\$99,991
Property Tax - Village	\$515	\$309	\$542
TOTAL - Village	\$160,463	\$97,781	\$100,533
Property Tax - Schools	\$67,334	\$40,348	\$70,792
EXPENDITURES			
Cost to Village (Services)	\$54,698	\$15,649	\$15,649
NET FISCAL IMPACT FOR VILLAGE	\$105,765	\$82,132	\$84,884

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003; Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1991 and 1997; Urban Land Institute Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994; Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor’s Offices, 2004; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; Fiscal Impact Handbook, Burchell, 1980.

Environmental impacts prompted by the alternatives vary significantly. Not unexpectedly, the greatest potential fiscal benefits (i.e., net fiscal impact) for Walton Hills Village would be realized with Alternative 1, the office scenario. Because the office scenario is restricted to two floors, the differences in fiscal benefits are not great among the three considered development options.

While not targeted for an impact analysis exercise, a vacant property at the southwest corner of Treat and Krick Roads would likely realize similar relative findings following an analysis of the alternative land uses considered for Sub-Areas B-1 and B-2. However, a challenge to this property’s ultimate development potential is the reduced building site prompted by front yard setback requirements associated with a corner parcel fronting on two streets.

FOCUS AREA C: VILLAGE CENTER

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Focus Area C is located at the intersection of Alexander and Walton Roads which is at the geographic heart of the Village. Aside from the Village’s Municipal Complex on the northeast quadrant, this focus area hosts retail properties on the southeast and northwest corners (one on each), and a Village-owned property (a former gas station) on the southwest corner.

This focus area is surrounded by single-family residential development on all four sides. Each corner property is totally or partially zoned *Business*.

Map 6.7 illustrates the area encompassed by Focus Area C and the existing land uses. Three sub-areas have been identified for further analysis within Focus Area C and are also shown. *Table 6.8* provides a property information summary for each sub-area.

Table 6.8. Focus Area C Sub-Areas Property Summary

Sub-Area	Address(es)	Parcel Number(s)	Owner(s)	Occupant(s)	Acres	Estimated Market Value
C-1	7595 Walton Rd.	794-11-003 794-11-008	Village of Walton Hills	Village Municipal Complex	4.86	\$1,148,500
C-2	18000 Alexander Rd.	794-20-004, 794-20-052	Ken Kraft Ltd., Janet Dean	Bob’s Villager, Mini Mart, and G & C Donuts (vacant)	1.26	\$301,900
C-3	17988 Alexander Rd.	794-20-044 794-20-053	Village of Walton Hills	Village Refueling Station	1.20	\$106,600
N/A	17975 Alexander Rd.	794-11-017	Richard Wolinski Trustee	Walton Hills Auto Service (Marathon)	0.45	\$171,800
Total					7.77	\$1,728,800

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor’s Office, January, 2004.

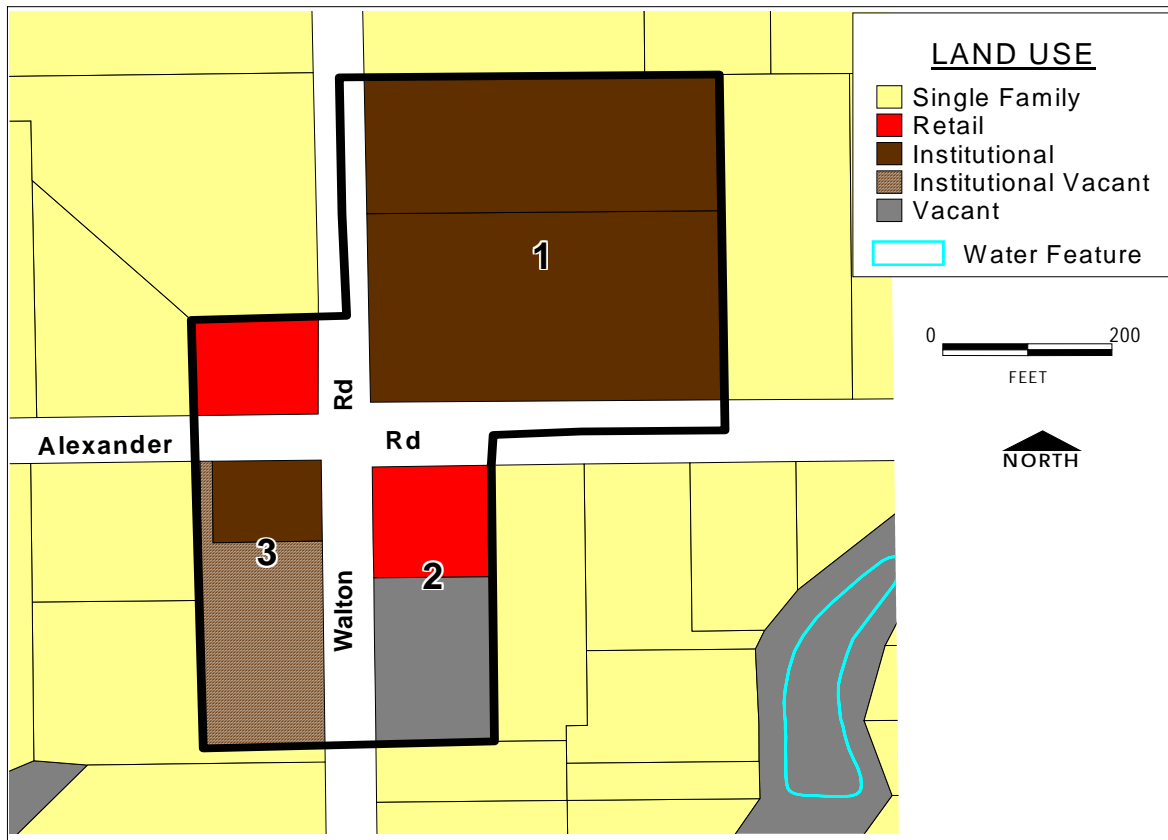
EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES IN FOCUS AREA C AND SUB-AREAS

Because the Municipal Complex, the heart of the community’s governmental functions and a symbol of the Village, is located at this relatively heavily-traveled, visible intersection, a coor-

minated and well-maintained area appearance is critical so as to project an overall positive community image to all who visit or pass by.

Some conditions and issues observed in the Village Center area which may potentially impact development/redevelopment or revitalization of properties in this focus area are provided in *Chapters 4 and 5*. A summary of those considerations, including some additional ones, follow. Included in Focus Area C, but not designated here as a sub-area, is the Marathon gas station on the northeast corner of the intersection. This facility conveys generally positive images. It projects some images which, if adopted by facing developments, could help visually tie the intersection together (e.g., simple white country fence design with landscaping). Consequently, the gas station property does not demonstrate features that prompt it to be considered here as an area for special attention.

Map 6.7. Focus Area C and Sub-Areas, Existing Land Use



Sub-Area C-1 Conditions and Issues

The Village Municipal Complex, Sub-Area C-1, is positioned on a rectangular property at the corner of Alexander and Walton Roads. The complex hosts two buildings – the Village and Community Halls – housing the majority of Village government office space. Most of the property is developed with buildings and associated infrastructure. For a description of the buildings, grounds and government functions that take place at this location, see *Chapter 4*.

While the physical condition of the Village Hall and Community Hall buildings is judged *good*, some documented utility/infrastructure needs and additional concerns have been identified. Most critically, the leading identified facility deficiencies center on the need for more office and storage space to support existing and additional needed staff, and additional floor area to better accommodate community meetings, events and recreational activities.

Based on review of available records, the property appears to be free of serious environmental constraints.

Single-family homes abut the property. The inside corner of the property is zoned *Business*, whereas the outer perimeter is zoned *Country Homes*.

Sub-Area C-2 Conditions and Issues

Opposite the Village Municipal Complex, on the intersection's southeast corner, is a 5,017 square foot, one-story retail building hosting a small restaurant, a convenience store, and a donut shop (presently closed/vacant and used for wholesaling). The single parcel covers just 0.48 acres with about 140 feet of frontage on Alexander Road's wide 80-foot right-of-way and Walton Road. To the immediate south is a larger vacant, level parcel (different owner). Combined, these two properties comprise the sub-area – almost 1.3 acres.

It is reported in *Chapter 5* that the restaurant and goods and services provided at these businesses fill a community need. While the building style and condition convey generally positive images, numerous site conditions do not project positive impressions and, in some cases, present problems that are function- and safety-related. Some access and parking improvements, coupled with some physical upgrades and basic maintenance would go a long way toward a greatly improved appearance at this corner. For a discussion of these and related issues, see *Village Center, Chapter 5*.

Single-family homes abut this sub-area on the east and south sides. The entire corner parcel and most of the adjacent vacant parcel are zoned *Business*. The southernmost end of the vacant parcel is zoned *Country Homes*.

Sub-Area C-2 appears to be free of serious environmental constraints, based on a review of available records.

Sub-Area C-3 Conditions and Issues

The Village-owned "Refueling Station property", a former gas station, was purchased by the Village in 1994. Since that time, the facility had been used to fuel, and occasionally store, Village vehicles. The small 1,280 square foot, one-story building had provided some limited storage space (location depicted on *Map 6.7* on the inside corner of the intersection). The Village owns both the small corner and larger rear parcel, totaling about 1.2 acres. These parcels, together, mirror the size and configuration of the retail/vacant property across Walton Road (Sub-Area C-2).

This fronting parcel and the adjacent northern end of the abutting larger vacant parcel are level. To the rear, the property is wooded, scrub-covered and bisected by a small gully and subject to wet conditions. Some slopes rimming this depression exceed 18%.

In late 2003, Village Council authorized an agreement with a firm to remove the station's underground fuel storage tanks and raze the old gas station building. Site remediation began in March of 2004 and was completed by summer of 2004.

Single-family homes border the south and west sides of this sub-area. As in the case of Sub-Area C-2, the entire corner parcel and most of the adjacent vacant parcel are zoned *Business*. The southernmost end of the vacant parcel is zoned *Country Homes*.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA C, SUB-AREA 1

Based on input from the Master Plan Committee, Village officials and residents (via the *Community Attitudes Survey*), three alternative development scenarios have been formulated for the Village's Municipal Complex property, including:

- P Expansion of Village offices;
- P Expansion of Village offices with development of a new Village Multi-Purpose Recreation Center; and
- P Expansion of Village offices with development of a new Village Fire Station (including rescue squad services).

Table 6.9 presents a comparative summary of some features characterizing each of the three basic development alternatives considered for the Municipal Complex site. Due to the tax-exempt status of this property, the part-time status of many Village employees and future staffing uncertainties, the preparation of a *development impact analysis* comparing Focus Area C, Sub-Area 1 alternatives is not possible.

Alternative 1: Village Offices

The expansion of existing Village government office and storage space is warranted. A principal question concerns the preferred location for that additional needed space. This scenario considers the development of 2,775 - 3,675 square feet of additional floor space at the Village Hall building site. This represents a 25% to 33% expansion of the building's existing estimated 11,096 square feet of floor area.

The principal options available for contiguous expansion of the Village Hall building include horizontal (probably to the north) and vertical. Since the structure was not constructed with an eye to its future expansion, it was not originally designed to accommodate the weight of a vertical expansion (*R.C.U. Architects, N. Casini, 1/16/04*). According to R.C.U., a vertical expansion is possible but would require special measures to reinforce the existing structure's roof area and foundation (*Also see box on page 6.29*). Adding another floor would also require

Table 6.9 Focus Area C, Sub-Area 1

Village Municipal Complex	Alternative 1: Expanded Village Government Offices	Alternative 2: Expanded Village Government Offices / New Village Recreation Facilities	Alternative 3: Expanded Village Government Offices / New Fire Station
SITE CHARACTERISTICS			
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	4.86 (211,702)	4.86 (211,702)	4.86 (211,702)
Building Floor Area (Square Feet)	2,775-3,675	8,775-26,675	6,275-7,175
Stories (No.)	1-2	1-2	1-2
Employees Est. (No.)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Construction Cost Est. (\$)	\$290-\$385,000	\$900,000 - \$2.9M	\$650-\$750,000

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003, Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor's Offices, 2004, Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.

incorporating an elevator and stairwells into the design. These and other considerations associated with a vertical expansion translate into added design and construction costs. Another concern centers on the character of this important civic center and the potentially altered image projected to passers-by and visitors by a taller structure (*See related discussion for Alternative 2*).

A horizontal expansion, while certainly less costly than adding another floor, prompts concerns about the reduction in land area needed for additional parking, among other potential issues discussed below.

Another alternative potentially available to the Village to gain additional needed office and storage floor space at this central location includes the conversion of the Community Hall building to office use. Of course, this scenario would require the development of a multi-purpose recreation facility elsewhere.

The Municipal Complex's existing layout, coupled with some site features, prompts special attention regardless of which development scenario is ultimately implemented. Some special challenges include: the proximity of the Village Hall and Community Hall buildings to one another and their position on the property; the buildings' relatively deep (but favored) set-back from the intersection; the grade change across the property; the structure's original exterior building materials, design and aesthetics; and the critical need to maintain efficient traffic flow and properly configured and sufficient parking areas. Additionally, any future property alterations and improvements must recognize and accommodate for the special needs of the police department, including the secure transfer of prisoners and public safety. These factors, in combination, place severe limitations on the formulation of suitable development alternatives for this property. Of course, the preferred development alternatives and designs are best formulated by a licensed architect in collaboration with key Village representatives.

Estimated construction costs, including a contractor's overhead and profit, associated with a horizontal expansion of the Village Hall building, range roughly from \$290,000-\$385,000. This estimate is based on the median square footage construction cost derived from reviewing thousands of similar projects nationwide, adjusted for the Cleveland building market (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*). This estimate is useful only at the conceptual stage of facility definition. It excludes the additional costs associated with pre-planning, architectural fees, furniture, office equipment, decorating, and landscaping, among other considerations. Of course, a vertical expansion would incur higher total construction costs.

Alternative 2: Village Offices/Recreation Facility

In conjunction with government office expansion at the Municipal Complex (Alternative 1), this development scenario considers several different indoor multi-purpose recreational facility schemes: 1) Full Service Village Recreation Center, 2) Partial Service Village Recreation Center, and 3) Expanded Community Hall Building. A description and discussion of considerations for each development scheme follow.

Full Service Village Recreation Center (20,000-23,000 square feet): Includes a gymnasium, elevated track, fitness center, aerobics center, senior activity rooms, community conference/meeting rooms, youth game room, a kitchen, offices, locker rooms/showers, restrooms, storage space, and maintenance rooms. The floor space and amenities characterizing this alternative are found at the nearby Valley View Community Center, a \$2 million, 23,000 square foot facility which opened in 1997. A recent Phase 1 expansion included an additional 5,500 square feet at a cost of \$750,000.

The development of a full service recreational facility at the existing Village Hall site, as described above, is not feasible. Almost 70% of the 4.9-acre property's buildable area is presently covered by the Village and Community Hall buildings, two associated parking lots (with 111 spaces) and two access drives – leaving insufficient space for office space expansion, a new full service recreation facility and the required additional employee and public parking (roughly matching the existing 111 spaces).

For comparison, the Valley View Community Center, a facility this development scheme is generally modeled after, is situated on a 3.4-acre parcel dedicated exclusively to this single use. The facility also provides about 100 vehicle parking spaces solely for the use of Community Center visitors. Occasional overflow parking need is met by additional parking lots situated on the adjacent, but separate, Village Hall property (2.9 acres).

Findings reported in the *T.G. Young Park Master Plan (D.B.Hartt, 2001)* also reached the conclusion that a full service facility developed at the Municipal Complex site is not feasible. The consultant examined the development of a 17,000-20,000 square foot activity/recreation center possessing amenities similar to those described in the above scenario (See *Appendix C and box*). According to Hartt, such a facility and associated vehicle parking would require up to 2.5 acres. The Plan further states that “it appears that the activity/recreation center ultimately desired by Walton Hills should be located on a site with a minimum of 4 acres.”

This higher total allows for future facility expansion to include features such as a swimming pool, indoor track and dance floor.

Estimated construction costs (including a contractor's overhead and profit) associated with developing a full service, multi-purpose Village recreation Center, range from \$2-\$2.3 million (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*). This estimate excludes the costs associated with new furniture, needed equipment, and the numerous other considerations noted above for Alternative 1.

Successful development of a full service community recreation facility at this site would require Village acquisition of one or more of the adjacent, presently developed residential properties.

Partial Service Village Recreation Center (10,000-12,500 square feet): Includes a multi-purpose gymnasium/convertible meeting room(s), elevated track, exercise room, kitchen, office, locker rooms/showers, restrooms, storage space, and maintenance rooms. The floor area and features described here are reflected in the R.C.U. Architects' historic proposals to the Village (*See box*).

The development of a partial service recreational facility in conjunction with some limited added office and storage space at the existing Municipal Complex, as described above, *may* be feasible. However, the space requirements of the facility and the requisite employee and public parking would likely preclude the development of the property for any other future purpose (e.g., additional office, storage or police station space, outbuildings, a pocket park), including the expansion of the recreation facility, itself.

A potential location for the facility could include the open area between the two existing parking lots, to the north of the Village Hall building. Estimated construction costs associated with developing a partial service, multi-purpose Village Recreation Center, range from \$1-\$1.2 million (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*). This estimate excludes the additional costs noted above for the full service scenario.

Expanded Community Hall building (6,000 square feet): Includes a multi-purpose gymnasium/meeting rooms addition, coordinated with the renovation and reconfiguration of existing space and amenities.

A modest expansion of the existing Community Hall building to incorporate a gymnasium which can be readily converted to one large (or two smaller) meeting rooms could certainly host a variety of recreation activities, meeting functions and special event needs which are currently not being satisfied. It is judged that the property could accommodate this additional floor space and the associated additional parking in conjunction with Village Hall office space expansion. However, it is highly likely that these modest improvements would eventually fall short of satisfying the community's indoor recreation facility and programming needs.

Development of a Village Indoor Recreation Facility: Historic Perspective

The Village has considered developing a community recreation center at numerous times during recent years. In 1993, over one-half of Village households responded to a survey to assess community interest in building a facility. While findings were preliminary and inconclusive (*Bedford Sun Banner, 9/23/93*), Council discussions centered on investigations to develop a \$2-\$3 million facility at one of two potential locations: Village Hall or T.G. Young Park.

In 1994, the first of several reports prepared by R.C.U. Architects examined potential sites, floor plans and desired amenities for a “Multi-Purpose Recreation Hall”. Sites considered included the Municipal Complex, T.G. Young Park, and two vacant properties (former Bedford Board of Education property on Walton Road and the southeast corner of Walton and Egbert Roads). Floor plan alternatives ranged from 10,280-10,400 square feet in size, all with a multi-purpose gymnasium, meeting room and kitchen serving as the centerpieces of the building.

In 1995, a variation of the above was prepared encompassing about 11,300 square feet. This design also included a small exercise room but delineated a future outdoor pool. The former BOE property was also purchased by the Village during this year with an eye to possible future recreation facility development at that location.

In 1997, a third set of plans was prepared by R.C.U. including the same amenities presented in the previous version, but total floor area was increased to 12,300-12,630 square feet.

In 1998, the Village conducted another survey to derive input from residents regarding possible recreation center development. Four alternatives were included: 1) No additional building necessary; 2) Building on a separate site from the Village Hall; 3) Adding a multi-purpose room to the Community Room; and 4) Adding to the Community Room (without a multi-purpose room). Survey response was low and findings were inconclusive (*Bedford Sun Banner, 6/25/98*).

In 2001, The *T.G. Young Park Master Plan* (D.B.Hartt) included a feasibility analysis of an “activity / recreation center” at the Municipal Complex and T.G. Young Park (*Appendix C*).

In recent years, newspaper and other sources have documented continuing interest on the part of elected Village officials to develop a new indoor community recreation center or to expand the existing Community Room to satisfy the community’s growing need for additional floor space to conduct recreational, social and other public activities and events.

The cost to construct a multi-purpose gymnasium addition to the Community Room building is estimated at about \$570,000 (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*). Of course, this estimate excludes the additional costs associated with any renovations made to the existing facility. It also excludes those added potential costs noted in the Alternative 1 discussion.

While it may be physically possible to develop either a partial service recreational facility or expand the existing Community Hall building to accommodate a modest multi-purpose addition, neither approach may satisfy broader community needs. The recreational facility option, if developed along with more office space, will severely limit or preclude future improvements at the Village Hall site, including other Village government operations. The Community Hall building expansion may meet some of the Village’s recreation/social needs, but for the short-term only. Furthermore, the Municipal Complex site demonstrates some inherent characteristics described in the previous section (*Alternative 1*) which must be considered, measured and evaluated.

In conjunction with the examination of any future development scenarios at this property, careful consideration should also be given to preserving the character of the grounds and buildings of this civic center. The Municipal Complex is set back from the intersection, the buildings are low-profile and blend well with the natural environment, and the grounds are open and attractively landscaped. Essentially, the physical image conveyed by this center of Village government symbolizes the community at large – a low-density community with expanses of open green spaces. To overly intensify development at the Village Hall site, or to build toward the intersection would significantly alter the aesthetics or “look” of this important community symbol and convey an image contrary to the lifestyle the Village is attempting to project and preserve.

Community public facility development requires long and focused investigations of countless factors prior to actual construction. In the case of a multi-purpose, indoor community recreation center, some of those many factors have been explored above (and later in Focus Area D). A couple of additional important considerations involve regional recreation development trends and long-term operating costs.

Two major northeast Ohio newspapers recently investigated the seemingly accelerating trend in the region to develop new municipal recreation centers in spite of the documented growing financial drain on municipal budgets witnessed in the operations of virtually all public centers in the area (*The Beacon Journal*, 2/2/04 and *The Plain Dealer*, 4/4/04). Among the two dozen facilities investigated by *The Plain Dealer*, only one, Solon, appeared to make money in 2003. From the published information and additional research, a sampling of fiscal operations among the area’s smaller facilities constructed since 1992 has been prepared (See **Table 6.10**).

Table 6.10. Area Recreation Center Annual Operating Costs Comparison

Community	Pop. (2000)	Center Size (S.F.)	Opened	2003 Revenues	2003 Expenses	Net Costs (Balance)
Berea	18,970	45,000	1995	\$255,975	\$1,031,112	-\$775,137
Brecksville	13,382	47,680	1992	\$694,407	\$1,600,000	-\$905,593
Independence	7,109	78,000	1992	\$278,642	\$1,532,769	-\$1,254,127
Macedonia	9,274	55,000	2000	\$660,170	\$903,958	-\$243,788
Middleburg Hts	15,542	83,000	2000	\$936,595	\$2,483,729	-\$1,547,134
Seven Hills	12,080	50,000	2002	\$538,186	\$715,712	-\$177,526
Twinsburg	17,006	90,000	1999	\$880,885	\$1,142,251	-\$261,366
Valley View	2,179	28,500	1997	\$90,415	\$625,215	-\$534,800

SOURCES: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission, 2004; *The Plain Dealer*, 4/4/04; U.S. Census Bureau, 2000; Valley View Recreation Department, 4/5/04.

About two dozen municipal recreation centers are operating in Cuyahoga County’s 58 suburban communities. Among the County’s 19 villages, only one, Valley View, hosts a center. For comparison, the operations profile of the Valley View Community Center has been

acquired and included in the above table.

Most communities consider recreation centers a public service, a quality of life benefit, not a “profit center”. Tax dollars from the community’s general fund and/or membership fees to offset the cost of operations support most public facilities. Other cost-offsetting alternatives available to communities include the manipulation of membership fees or opening up the facility to paying nonresidents. A last resort for some is to cut other municipal costs/programs, whereas a handful have considered regionalizing their facilities by crafting creative joint-use agreements with neighboring communities.

Alternative 3: Village Offices/Fire Station

In conjunction with an expansion of Village offices described above, this alternative scenario incorporates a new fire station building.

Based on community input throughout the plan preparation process, a planning goal was adopted that targets the identification of opportunities to improve public services, particularly in the provision of fire protection and rescue squad services. At the heart of this need is the widespread community-expressed concern regarding the current fire and rescue squads’ response times, which have been judged to be substandard by industry benchmarks (also see *Chapter 4*). Due to the lack of a community-based fire station, these critical services have historically been provided via agreement with nearby communities whose facilities, equipment and personnel are located beyond the Village’s borders.

Discussions with the Maple Heights Fire Chief, who coordinates the provision of fire/rescue squad services for the Village at present via agreement, determined that since the 1990’s at least three formal proposals to develop a fire station in the Village have been submitted by his office to Walton Hills. Each of the three proposals was based on some basic parameters outlined by the Village.

The following fire station scenario devised for Sub-Area C-1 is based on information derived from the Fire Chief’s November 7, 2000 *Proposal for Walton Hills: Fire Station* (the second of three reports). This report was prepared with the Village’s former Refueling Station site located across the street in mind (see Sub-Area C-3, Alternative 1). CPC discussions with the Chief (January 15, 2004) and additional research also contributed to establishing the characteristics and limits of this development option on the site of the Municipal Complex.

Alternative 3 involves the development of a fire station at the Village’s Municipal Complex in conjunction with the construction of an addition to the Village Hall building to accommodate additional needed government office and storage space. With a recommended floor area of about 3,500 square feet, the one-story fire station would include an apparatus room housing a pumper truck, a rescue squad vehicle and miscellaneous associated equipment. The station would also include a dormitory, day room, office and storage space, restrooms with a shower, and space for building utilities. Such a facility should be designed with full consideration given to accommodating for future building expansion as community needs

change. The Chief recommends that 24-hour, continuous staffing for this station would include four firefighter/paramedics (including one Fire Safety Inspector).

From the standpoint of optimal facility location offering the highest level of community-wide fire/rescue services, the Fire Chief judges that either of the three sites considered in this Master Plan are adequate (Also see Focus Area C, Sub-Area 2 and Focus Area D). The slight variations in response times among the three sites are insignificant. An added benefit to be derived from the presence of a highly visible, centrally-located fire station in the Village would include the opportunity for residents and business representatives to visit the facility to more readily acquire fire safety education and awareness information.

The cost to construct a fire station at the Municipal Complex site is estimated at about \$360,000 (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*). In combination with an expansion of government office space, total construction costs are estimated to approach \$800,000. Of course, additional initial expenses and long-term costs must be considered with any of the fire station scenarios.

Past proposals by the Maple Heights Fire Chief recommended that the Village of Walton Hills provide the fire station building, equipment, and facility maintenance and upkeep. The City of Maple Heights would provide the vehicles, the associated equipment and personnel. (The Chief notes that the needed vehicles and associated equipment presently exist, whereas the personnel would need to be hired). Of course, a service agreement would need to be factored in here, as well. Other fire/rescue alternatives for the Village include maintaining the current arrangements with an outside service provider (at the expense of response times) or independently constructing, staffing and operating its own fire station.

The current Walton Hills/Maple Heights fire protection agreement expires December 31, 2004.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA C, SUB-AREA 2

No land use changes at this business-zoned property have been recommended during the course of plan preparation, consequently a *development impact analysis* is not needed. Based on field investigations, and discussions with Village officials, the CPC determined that an examination of this property, with an eye to Village Center revitalization, would be most beneficial.

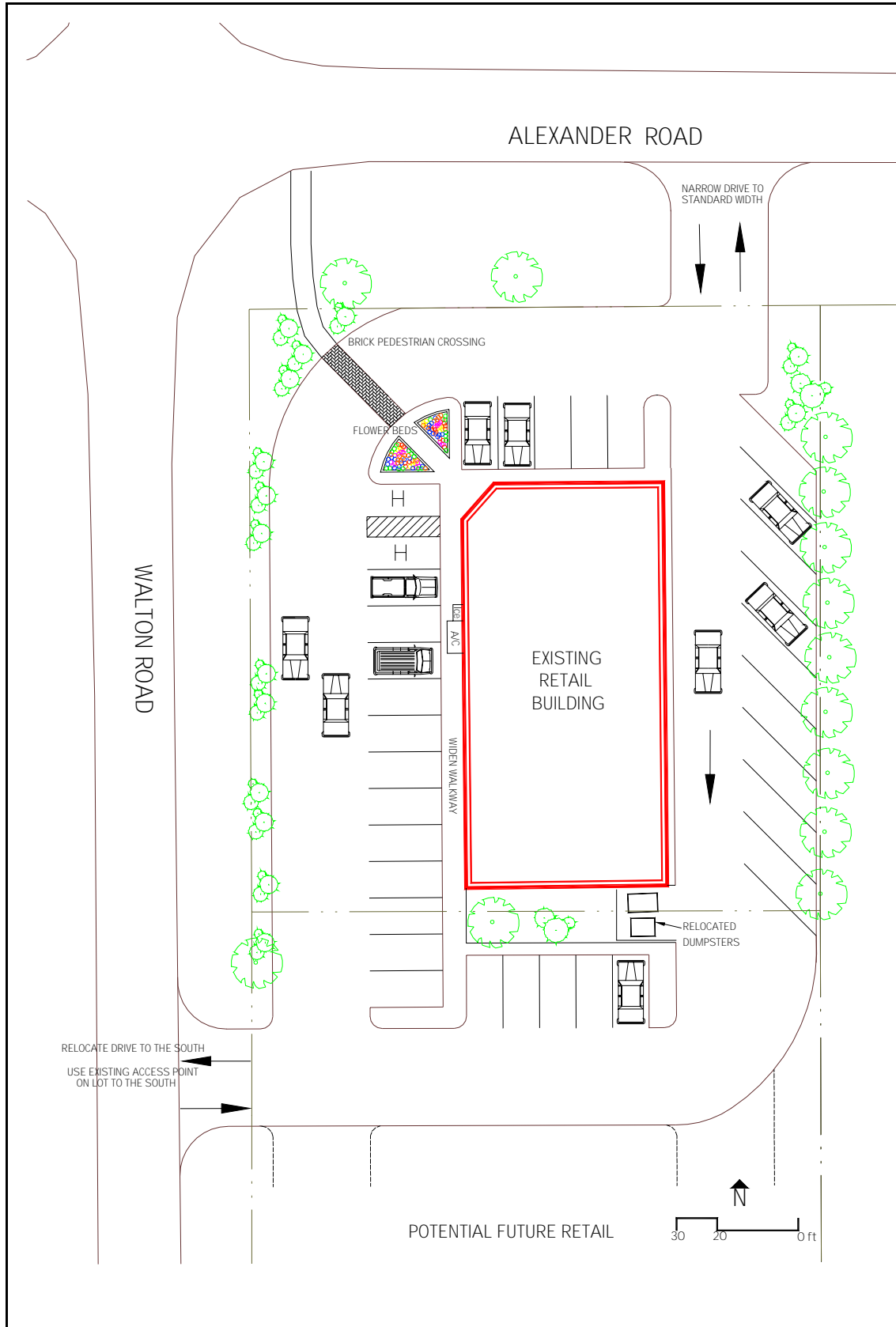
While aesthetic improvements to a retail property alone do not directly guarantee the enhancement of a community's tax base, they are certainly influential in improving perceptions and preserving/improving neighborhood and community character. Such improvements can also prompt some additional spin-off benefits (See *Focus Area A, Sub-Area 1* discussion). The following recommendations are suggested to improve some functional elements and the appearance of this small retail center. Illustrations offer some remedies for the building and site issues identified earlier.

Figure 6.1 incorporates suggested changes to the retail property located on the southeast corner of the Alexander/Walton Roads intersection which, if implemented, would eliminate or greatly reduce some deficiencies associated with public safety, parking lot function and property appearance.

- ✓ Improve traffic flow with a new around-building drive. Presently, customers and service-providers (e.g., delivery and garbage trucks) must back up to exit the rear area of the building.
- ✓ Expand site to a portion of the undeveloped adjacent lot to the south (different owner) to accommodate a new drive and to provide additional needed parking. Use the existing rough curb cut on the adjacent lot for the access point. Design parking in a manner that allows the access point and aisle to be integrated into the site design for potential future retail use on the abutting south property.
- ✓ Move access drives away from the corner to lessen conflicts with traffic near the intersection and traffic signal. Also narrow access drives to provide a more directed traffic flow and to reduce potential on-site vehicular and vehicle-pedestrian conflicts.
- ✓ Eliminate the parking area that is currently within the right-of-way of Alexander Road. Provide required handicapped designated spaces near the building.
- ✓ Maintain a pedestrian walkway in the vicinity of the existing walkway from the corner. Designate a crosswalk using pavers across the new parking aisle and create a landscaped island, integrating the walkway, closer to the building. Expand the walkway along the west side of the building so pedestrians can navigate around the air conditioner and ice machine without parked cars blocking the route (as at present).
- ✓ Move the trash dumpsters to the south side of the building, away from the adjacent residence to the east. Enclose dumpsters so as to screen them from view.
- ✓ Landscape a portion of the right-of-way along Alexander Road in front of the parking. Consider additional landscaping along the property line with the residence to the east to further screen parking, service access and building mechanicals.

Figure 6.3 offers some additional design elements which would greatly improve the overall look of the existing subject building and grounds (depicted in **Figure 6.2**). Some of the property feature improvements discussed earlier are also depicted.

Figure 6.1 Focus Area C, Sub-Area 2, Retail Building Schematic Site Plan



✓ **Building Design/Appurtenances:** Suggested building design improvements include adding awnings of a consistent design to all windows lacking them. Using a style similar to that used for the window awnings, add awnings above doorways to mark entrances. Consider awnings with straight lines to complement the angled roof line of the building. With color or design, create more consistency among the doors of the various establishments. Paint the downspouts in the front of the building a color that will better blend in with the brickwork behind them.

✓ **Signs/Advertising:** Center business signs over windows for consistency and so that they relate physically better to the features of the building (i.e., ensure a relationship between the outline of the sign and outline of the window). Reduce the number and consolidate advertising signs outside of the door of the mini-mart. Consider placing a graphic design in the second floor side gable facing Alexander Road to create visual balance (not shown on drawing).

✓ **Landscaping/Grounds:** Use a limited amount of fencing similar to, or the same as, that used at the gas station across the street as an element that visually ties the intersection together. Such simple fencing, painted white, helps to subtly convey a country setting. Plant shrubs between the parking areas and street to soften and partially screen the parked vehicles. This vegetation helps to convey an edge to the parking and defines the space better. Plant flowers (and shrubs if desired) in planting beds in front of the doors to the mini-mart to soften the building and parking and to add contrast through color to the overall site.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA C, SUB-AREA 3

Three alternative development schemes have been formulated for this strategically located, Village-owned property, based on input provided by the Master Plan Committee, Village officials and the community's residents, including:

- P New Village Fire Station (including rescue services);
- P New Village Fire Station with expanded Village offices; and
- P Expanded Village offices (Village Hall "Annex").

The following analysis has been conducted without the comparative findings derived from a *development impact analysis*. Such an analysis is impossible given the tax exempt status of the property, the part-time status of numerous Village workers and uncertainties regarding future staffing. **Table 6.11** presents an abbreviated summary of some features characterizing each of the three alternative developments considered for Sub-Area 3.

Figure 6.2. Focus Area C, Sub-Area 2, Retail Building (Existing)



Figure 6.3. Focus Area C, Sub-Area 2, Retail Building (Proposed)



Alternative 1: Village Fire Station

The following fire station scenario developed for Sub-Area C-3 is based on information derived from the Fire Chief’s November 7, 2000 *Proposal for Walton Hills: Fire Station* (referenced above) and CPC discussions with the Chief (January 15, 2004), as modified by CPC’s findings and recommendations following further research.

Table 6.11. Focus Area C, Sub-Area 3

Vacant Village-owned Property (Former Refueling Station)	Alternative 1: Fire Station	Alternative 2: Fire Station and Village Government Offices	Alternative 3: Village Government Offices
SITE CHARACTERISTICS			
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	1.20 (52,272)	1.20 (52,272)	1.20 (52,272)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	.80 (34,838)	.80 (34,838)	1.00 (43,560)
Building Floor Area (Square Feet)	3,500	4,100	3,000-4,000
Stories (No.)	1	1	1
Employees Est. (No.)	4	7	6
Construction Cost Est. (\$)	\$360,000	\$425,000	\$320-\$385,000

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.

Alternative 1 involves the construction of a fire station on the Village’s former Refueling Station site. As outlined for the Municipal Complex site above (Sub-Area 1, Alternative 3), the proposed fire station building would be a one-story structure with a floor area of about 3,500 square feet. It would include an apparatus room and living quarters. As in the case of the Municipal Complex site, this facility should be designed with full consideration to possible future facility expansion needs. The Chief recommends that 24-hour, continuous staffing for this station would include four firefighter/paramedics (including one Fire Safety Inspector).

The configuration and size of the property are sufficient to meet facility needs. The station’s proposed entrance for responding to emergency calls would be off Alexander Road. With signalization and signage improvements on fronting streets, emergency ingress/egress could be efficiently and safely accomplished at this corner lot. An added benefit is the ingress/egress opportunity afforded by Walton Road. With less than full property build-out, ample opportunities exist to provide landscaping improvements which would serve to soften the corner and screen the facility from adjacent residences.

The cost to construct a Village Fire Station at this location is estimated at about \$360,000 (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*). This estimate does not consider the additional initial and long term operating costs discussed earlier (*See Focus Area C, Sub-Area 1, Alternative 3*).

Alternative 2: Village Fire Station/Government Offices

Alternative 2 incorporates all of the elements of the fire station scenario outlined above. Under this slightly modified scheme, however, some additional general government office space

would be developed in coordination with the fire station. Based on the close working relationship that exists in the Village between the Building Department inspectors and the Fire Department's safety inspector, it has been recommended that consideration be given to locating these complementary functions at a single location.

In this development scenario, the additional 600 square feet of contiguous space on one floor would include offices, a meeting room, restrooms, and some storage space intended to serve the Building Department and some overflow needs demonstrated previously in the Village Hall building. The proposed floor space would accommodate existing and any additional Building Department staff, as well as provide a couple of additional offices to meet the Village's future general space needs. This additional floor area, designated initially for three employees, could accommodate up to five staffers simultaneously (more if space is shared among part-time staff). The building's initial employee count, including fire and general government personnel, would total seven.

Site configuration and size are sufficient to accommodate this development scheme with enough property remaining to provide necessary parking space for employees and visitors.

In the absence of the needed Village Hall building expansion, the above proposed additional unassigned surplus space could serve in the short-term to relieve some congestion in the Village Hall. Lacking an expansion of Village Hall floor space (See Sub-Area 1 discussion and analysis), consideration could also be given to the construction of more than this recommended additional 600 square feet of general government space in conjunction with the new fire station. Furthermore, a basement area could be considered to satisfy the storage needs, providing more ground floor area for needed government office, storage and related space.

The cost to construct a fire station with additional Village government office space at Sub-Area C-3 is estimated at about \$425,000 (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*). Again, additional initial expenses, a long term service agreement and operating costs must also be considered with any of the fire station scenarios.

Alternative 3: Village Government Offices

Alternative 3, development of a new Village Hall "Annex", has been formulated in order to offer a viable alternative to Village Hall expansion in proximity to existing government operations. Under this development scenario, a one-story, 3,000-4,000 square foot government office building would be built to house existing and additional needed Village employees anticipated through (and likely beyond) the five-to-ten year time span of this Master Plan.

The proposed floor area would include many of the features which currently exist in the Village Hall (e.g., lobby, offices, meeting rooms, kitchen, restrooms, storage area, and space for building utilities). Some additional common spaces would be required (e.g., lobby, kitchen) that are not needed in the Sub-Area 1, Alternative 1 example. Consequently, total

required floor space is slightly higher here. The parking lot may need to be slightly larger here than under the previous two development schemes to accommodate public visitors. Thus, slightly more of the site (than under Alternatives 1 and 2) may be required for the project.

The cost to construct a Village Hall Annex at this location is estimated at about \$320,000 to \$385,000, depending on the total floor space involved (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*).

FOCUS AREA D: VACANT VILLAGE-OWNED PROPERTY

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Focus Area D is located on the west side of Walton Road, just 500 feet north of the Village’s Municipal Complex opposite Jefferson Drive (*Map 6.8*). Purchased by the Village from the Bedford City School District in 1995 for \$110,000, the property has remained undeveloped (*Table 6.12*). Almost three acres along the northern perimeter of the 11-acre parcel are situated within a 150-foot wide corridor under high-tension electric power lines (Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company) which traverse the Village.

With the exception of an abutting vacant parcel to the west of Focus Area D, the subject property is surrounded by residential land uses (an unobtrusive home-based business is located on the south side). The property is zoned *Country Homes*.

Table 6.12. Focus Area D Property Summary

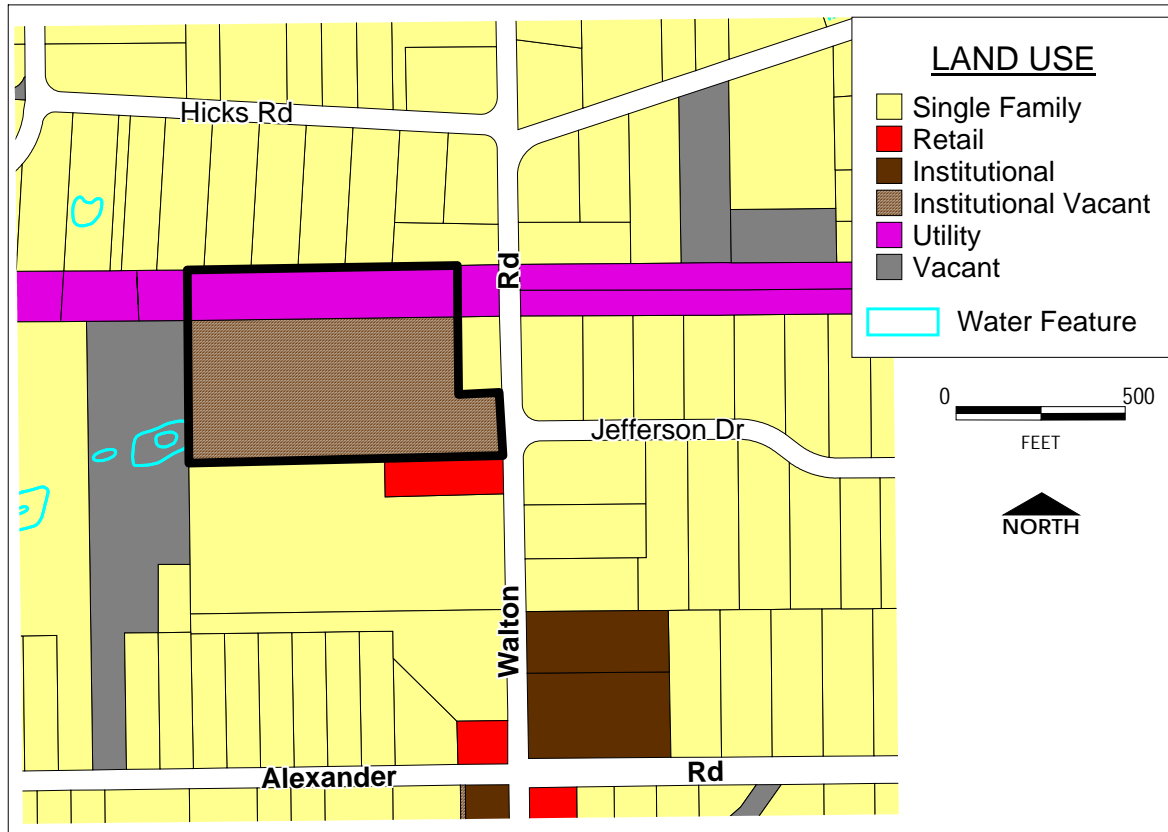
Address(es)	Parcel Number(s)	Owner(s)	Occupant(s)	Acres	Estimated Market Value
Walton Rd (at Jefferson Dr.)	794-11-016	Village of Walton Hills	Vacant land	10.57	n.a.

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor’s Office, January, 2004.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES IN FOCUS AREA D

Focus Area D is a relatively level property with woods covering the rear two-thirds and grassy scrub covering the remaining frontage area on Walton Road. A shallow gully is situated in the property’s northwest corner (with some 12%-18%+ slopes). A narrow lense-shaped intermittent wetland area extends from the center of the property southwesterly to the corner of the property. A small pond on the adjacent property receives surface water from this property.

Map 6.8. Focus Area D, Existing Land Use



DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA D

Three uniquely different development alternatives identified by the numerous community stakeholders have been defined and analyzed for Village-owned Focus Area D, including:

- P Village Recreation Center;
- P Village Fire Station (including rescue squad services); and
- P Upscale seniors-only cluster housing (Two alternatives)

The results of the *development impact analysis* are presented in **Table 6.13**.

Alternative 1: Village Recreation Center

The recreation center development scenario considered for Focus Area D replicates the basic parameters and amenities outlined earlier for a “partial service” recreation facility at the Municipal Complex (See *Focus Area C-1, Sub-Area 1, Alternative 2*).

Under this scenario, a modest multi-purpose facility, similar to a proposal previously advanced by R.C.U. Architects (1997), could be considered here for development with an eye to its future expansion as community needs grow and change. This development scheme considers a new 12,500 square foot, single-story building with a field house (gymnasium) possessing conversion capability to a range of functions (e.g., sports, dance floor, dinner event, exhibit hall, public meeting), an elevated track, an exercise room, several meeting rooms, kitchen, office, locker rooms/showers, restrooms, storage space, and maintenance rooms.

With careful attention to siting so as to allow for the future expansion of the building and of some potential future complementary activities (e.g., playground, walking trail, picnic/sitting areas, community garden, etc), the initial structure could be positioned at several suitable locations on the property. The initial footprint of the building and the immediate grounds could encompass 2.5 to 3.5 acres, less than one-third of the entire property. The associated access drive should incorporate a turn-around in conjunction with a drop-off canopy on the building. The parking areas for the facility's visitors and employees should accommodate enough space for about 100 vehicles and associated drive aisles.

This site does not demonstrate the number and degree of development challenges present at the Municipal Complex site. Placement of the initial structure (including the area targeted for any future building expansions) at a distance from surrounding properties, coupled with liberal application of earthen berms, vegetation and other landscaping treatments, could serve to efficiently screen this facility from abutting residences. To satisfy traffic management considerations, the access drive should be positioned directly across from Jefferson Drive. The presence of a wetlands indicates a need for further investigations to determine its possible impacts on site development.

This development alternative has been formulated with attention given to a number of considerations which, in combination, help to keep initial development costs low, including:

- P Village owns the land, eliminating land acquisition costs;
- P The property is reasonably level, free of major constraints, and regularly configured;
- P Proposed facility size and features are modest with a capacity for future expansion as community recreation needs change and funding permits.

Some additional factors combine to make Focus Area D a particularly attractive property for Village recreation center use, including:

- P The property is located at the geographic center of the Village in the heart of the residential neighborhoods;
- P The property is connected by a 500-foot sidewalk to the Village Municipal Complex where complementary civic and recreational activities are regularly conducted; and
- P The adjacent electric utility corridor demonstrates some potential to be developed for a complementary use – a hike and bike trail (See Focus Area F later in this chapter).

While the above factors, in combination, lend weight to the feasibility of developing a scaled-down, multi-purpose recreation center at this location, these considerations must be balanced against other factors such as residents' desires, future trends, projected development and operating costs (discussed earlier) and their impacts long-term, among others.

Estimated construction costs associated with developing a 12,500 square foot partial service Village Recreation Center, approximate \$1.2 million (*Building Construction Cost Data, RS Means, 2003*). Of course, this estimate excludes any additional costs associated with an architect's services, equipment, furniture, decorating, and landscaping, among others. Additional grounds features, such as an outdoor playground, patios, picnic areas, or walking paths, would also raise initial cost estimates.

Alternative 2: Village Fire Station

The fire station development scenario considered for Focus Area D replicates the basic parameters outlined earlier for a proposed fire station at the Village's former Refueling Station property (Focus Area C, Sub-Area 3, Alternative 1).

The configuration and size of the property vastly exceed the facility's anticipated space needs. For perspective, even if the building, access drive, parking and associated landscaped grounds of a new fire station totaled about 35,000 square feet (ten times the 3,500 square foot building footprint), almost 8.5 acres would remain available for another use. Up to roughly 9.3 acres of this property are potentially eligible for development if one-half of the power line corridor's width were used for a less intensive, associated use (e.g., parking). With the potential for the future development of a hike/bike trail along this corridor, it would be advisable to reserve the remainder of the easement for its use.

Since this property is situated within a residential neighborhood, special attention would need to be given to building and site design if a fire station were developed at this site.

The construction cost for a new fire station here is roughly estimated at about \$360,000.

Alternatives 3 and 4: Seniors-only Cluster Homes

During the early stages of Master Plan preparation, it was recognized that Walton Hills has a significant and growing elderly population when compared with area communities. It has been determined via the *Community Attitudes Survey* that a portion of them wish to remain in the Village as they age, but lack housing choices (*Appendix A*). While many studies have demonstrated that most seniors wish to remain in their homes as they age, for most it becomes increasingly challenging to maintain the home and yard. Survey results indicate that sufficient need exists to investigate such housing options for Walton Hills. One of several possible alternatives for the Village would be to develop Focus Area D or Focus Area E properties (See next section) with single-family cluster housing restricted to an "active adult" market (*See box, Focus Area E* for a description).

Local examples of active adult housing developments have been identified. Combined, they serve as useful models upon which the Village's two senior housing alternatives have been based (See *Appendix F*).

The parameters established for the Alternatives 3 and 4 seniors-only housing scenarios considered here in Focus Area D (and later in Focus Area E) have been shaped by several factors, including:

- P Village's low-density residential development and country lifestyle;
- P Responses to the *Community Attitudes Survey* indicating a preference for "cluster home/condominium" style housing;
- P Local examples of cluster housing developed expressly for older persons; and
- P Prevailing home market prices in the Village

Alternative 3 considers attached (in pairs with a common wall) single-family homes on one floor. Offered floor plans range from roughly 1,600 to 2,500 square feet in size with most units possessing floor space near the lower end of the range. Each home includes two bedrooms, two baths and an attached two-car garage. This living option is priced at about \$180,000.

Alternative 4 includes detached (freestanding) single family homes with a small second floor area. Offered floor plans range from 1,600 to 2,500 square feet with most units' floor space closer to the upper end. Each home includes up to three bedrooms, two baths and an attached two-car garage. Homes would be priced at about \$230,000.

The sales prices established for these two scenarios (as well as those provided later for Focus Area E) have been set in order to enable a comparative analysis. They are merely benchmarks from which refinements can be made based on desired building and property features and amenities. Numerous examples of quality senior housing (with features similar to those found here) priced lower and higher than these can be found throughout the region.

The property area recommended for these two development scenarios excludes the acreage consumed by the overhead power lines. With full utilization of the available eight acres, Alternatives 3 and 4 would yield about 38 or 30 homes, respectively. Densities range from about four to five housing units per acre under the parameters established for these development options.

Both alternatives include interconnecting sidewalks and individual porches/patios to encourage interaction among residents. The development includes a modest "Community Building" with a floor area approximating 3,200 square feet. This building includes a large and a small event room, a kitchen and restrooms for social activities geared to residents. Grounds include a "pocket park" with a sitting area. These amenities combine to help make this a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood.

At a selling price close to the benchmarks set here, a cluster home purchase would be within reach of many older Village residents, whose existing homes are market-valued similarly. For

many targeted senior households, the proceeds from the sale of their current home could cover a cluster home purchase with little or no need for additional alternative financing. Under both scenarios, a management company would be responsible for property and exterior building maintenance year-round for a modest fee.

Findings determined from the *development impact analysis* performed for these two senior housing alternatives are also presented in **Table 6.13**. Of course, any customization of the parameters, including pricing, to better meet potential buyers' needs will modify the outcomes of this analysis.

Table 6.13. Focus Area D, Development Impact Analysis

Vacant Village-owned Land, Walton Road	Alternative 1: Village Recreation Center	Alternative 2: Fire Station with EMS	Alternative 3: Seniors-Only Cluster Homes (Paired) \$180,000	Alternative 4: Seniors-Only Cluster Homes (Detached) \$230,000
SITE CHARACTERISTICS				
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	10.57 (460,429)	10.57 (460,429)	10.57 (460,429)	10.57 (460,429)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	9.30 (405,108)	9.30 (405,108)	7.90 (344,124)	7.90 (344,124)
Building Footprint (Sq. Ft.)	12,500	3,500	-	-
Stories (No.)	1	1	1	2
Employees (No.)	6	4	0	0
Residents (No.)	-	0	76	60
Dwelling Units (No.)	-	0	38	30
School-Aged Children (No.)	-	-	0	0
Potential Value of site	n.a.	n.a.	\$6,840,000+	\$6,900,000+
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS				
Vehicle Trips (per weekday)	n.a.	n.a.	84	67
Sewage Flow (gallons/day)	n.a.	n.a.	2,470	3,900
Water Consumption (gallons/day)	n.a.	n.a.	7,600	6,000
Solid Waste Generation (tons/day)	n.a.	0.006	0.167	0.132
REVENUES				
Employee Income (Est. Avg. Annual)	\$20,211	\$40,655	-	-
Household Income (Est. Med. Annual)	-	-	\$41,280	\$41,280
Income Tax - Village	\$2,425	\$3,252	\$731	\$577
Property Tax - Village	N/A.	N/A.	\$267	808
TOTAL - Village	\$2,425	\$3,252	\$998	\$1,385
Property Tax - Schools	n.a.	n.a.	\$25,642	\$77,625
EXPENDITURES				
Cost to Village (Services)	n.a.	n.a.	\$73,230	\$57,813
NET FISCAL IMPACT FOR VILLAGE	n.a.	n.a.	(\$72,232)	(\$56,428)

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003; Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1991 and 1997; Urban Land Institute Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994; Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor's Offices, 2004; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; Fiscal Impact Handbook, Burchell, 1980.

Anticipated overall impacts on adjacent residential properties under these three basic development scenarios would vary significantly. Negative impacts experienced with a senior cluster housing scenario (which is most similar to the neighborhood's existing single-family use) would be expected to be minimal. Those prompted by the development of a new Village Recreation Center would be expected to be greatest, due to increased vehicle traffic, night time

property illumination and the visual impacts associated with this dissimilar use, among other impacts.

FOCUS AREA E: LARGE VACANT RESIDENTIAL AREA PROPERTIES

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Situated at opposite ends of the community are two large undeveloped sub-areas surrounded by predominantly residential neighborhoods. These two sub-areas are among several Village areas offering the greatest amount of remaining contiguous undeveloped acreage in the community. Sub-Area E-1, at the northern end of Dunham Road at the Village’s corporate limit, encompasses almost 66 acres. Located at the Village’s southern corporate limit on Sagamore Road, Sub-Area E-2 covers about 53 acres. Property summaries are presented in *Table 6.14*.

Table 6.14. Focus Area E Sub-Areas Property Summary

Sub-Area	Address(es)	Parcel Number(s)	Owner(s)	Occupant(s)	Acres	Estimated Market Value
E-1	Dunham Rd	793-04-001 793-04-002	Dean Svec Trustee	Vacant land	65.80	\$247,400
E-2	Sagamore Rd	794-23-001, 794-23-002	Marilyn Donahoe and Jane Tripp, Bishop of Cleveland and Clarence Issenmann	Vacant land	53.25	\$316,000
Total					119.05	\$563,400

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor’s Office, January, 2004.

Sub-Area E-1 (*Map 6.9*) is bounded by vacant and residential land uses to the north (Maple Heights), parkland on the east (Bedford), vacant and single-family residential properties to the south, and single-family residences across Dunham Road to the west. Sub-Area E-2 (*Map 6.10*) is bordered by single-family residences on the north, east and west sides (in Walton Hills). Single-family residences and some vacant parcels face Sagamore Road to the south of the property (in Sagamore Hills Township). An apartment complex is situated on the south side of Sagamore Road at the extreme southeastern corner of Sub-Area E-2 (in Northfield Village).

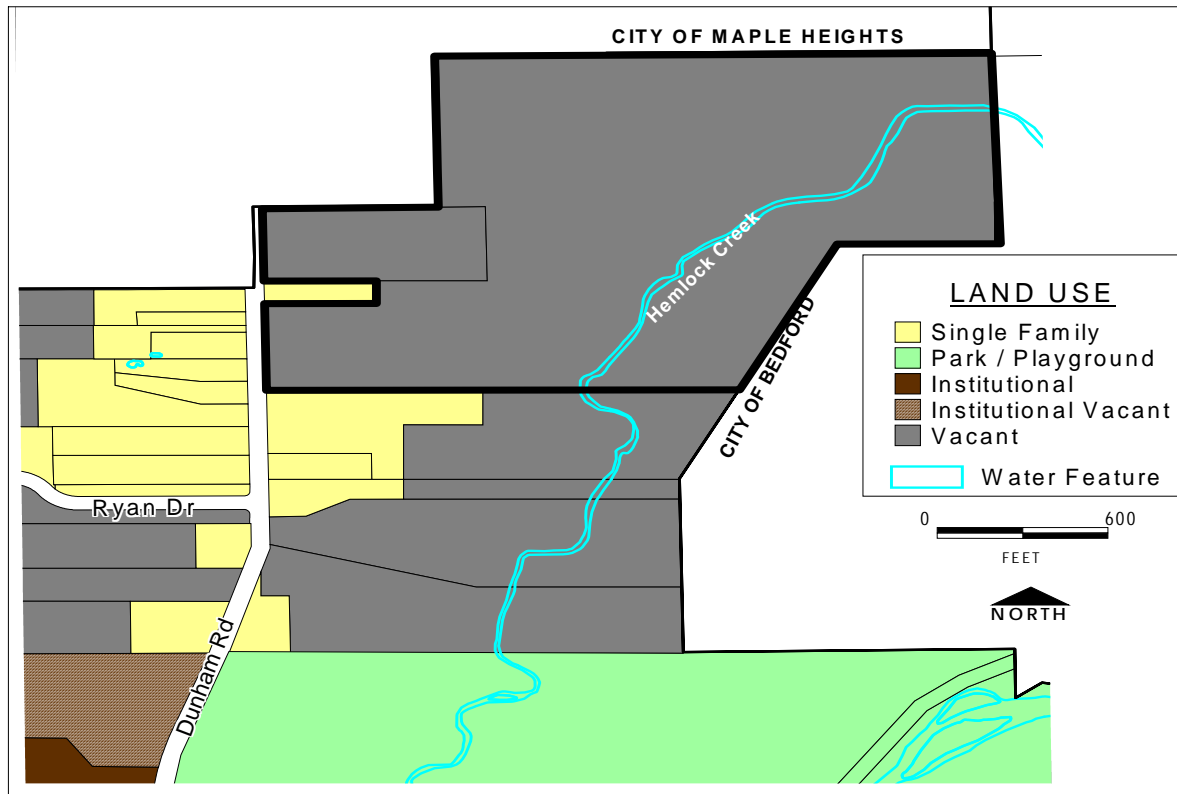
Sub-Areas E-1 and E-2 are zoned *Country Homes*.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES IN FOCUS AREA E SUB-AREAS

Sub-Area E-1 Conditions and Issues

Sub-Area E-1 is located on the rim of the Hemlock Creek gorge which empties to Tinkers

Map 6.9. Focus Area E, Sub-Area 1, Existing Land Use



Creek. Two parcels (one owner) comprise this site. Approximately 48% (31 acres) of the wooded site is level before dropping precipitously to the floor of the gorge about 150 feet below. Striking valley vistas are offered to the east from the edge of this gorge.

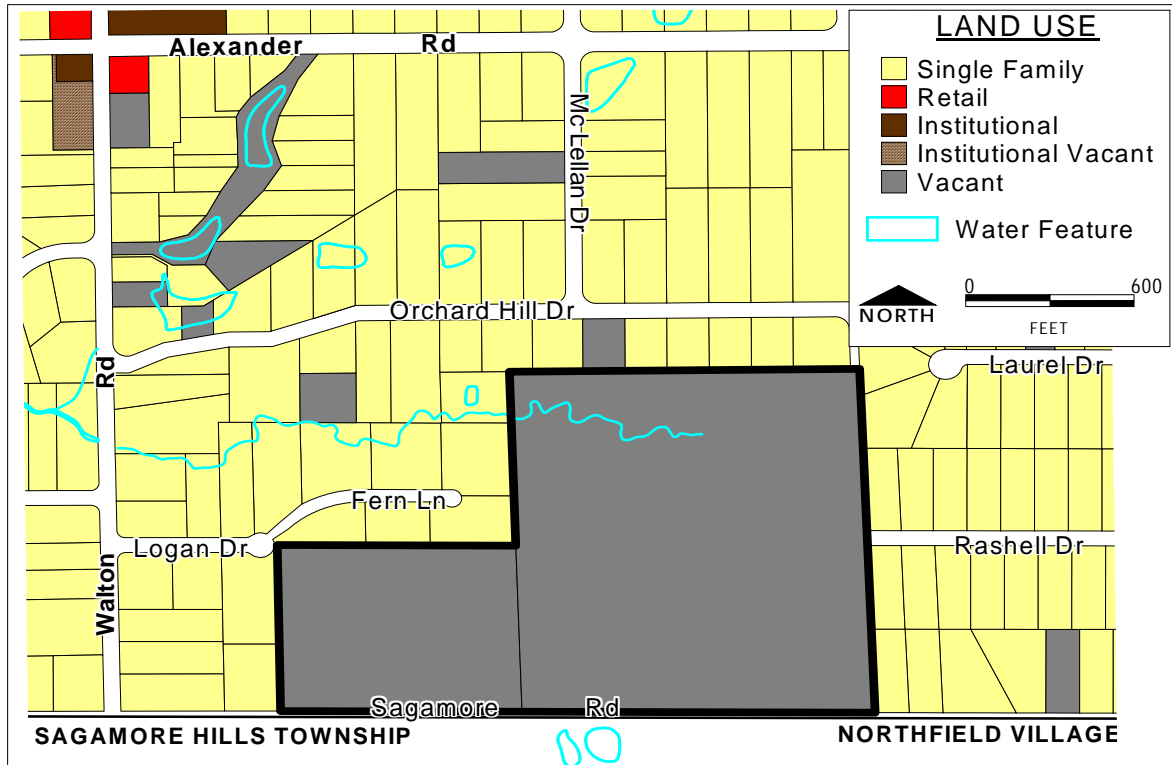
The steep side walls of this major valley preclude any development. Slope angles significantly exceed 18%, a common planning standard beyond which development is impossible or prohibitively costly.

Sub-Area E-2 Conditions and Issues

This sub-area is comprised of two properties (two owners) in an area of rolling terrain dissected by creeks. A neighborhood street, Rashell Drive, terminates at a cul-de-sac on the eastern border of the sub-area. No obstacles (e.g. dwellings) or conditions appear to prohibit a potential future roadway connection to the subject area.

The smaller property encompasses about 13 acres and is primarily wooded. It slopes gradually downward to the west from a high ridge point just to the east of the property line on the abutting study area parcel. The difference in elevation across the property from east to west (860 feet) is roughly 70 feet, with some of the more severe slopes in the range of 12% and some interspersed areas slightly exceeding 18%.

Map 6.10. Focus Area E, Sub-Area 2, Existing Land Use



The larger 40-acre property is characterized by two broad north-south ridge lines which terminate as they near its center. The property is primarily wooded with broad grass/scrub areas about the crowns of the two ridges. Both ridges drop off gradually to the north, where a flat-bottomed ravine receives two creeks (which are oriented on each side of the easternmost ridge), converging in a wetland area where a single creek further drains the larger property westward. The property's elevation extremes range about 80 feet across the variable terrain, with a 25-35 foot rise characterizing the shorter, steeper slopes. These steeper slopes encircle the base of the two ridges adjacent to the broad ravine situated at the rear of the property. The angle of these steeper slopes exceeds 18%.

Environmental constraints potentially impacting the development feasibility of this sub-area are most severe on the larger parcel where steep slopes, a wetland and potential flooding constitute notable challenges to future development.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA E, SUB-AREA 1

Based on expressed community needs, several development alternatives incorporating new housing have been identified for analysis at this location, including:

- P Upscale seniors-only cluster housing (paired);
- P Upscale seniors-only cluster housing (detached); and
- P Single-family housing.

Alternatives 1 and 2: Seniors-only Cluster Homes

Housing can be not only oriented, but restricted, to people based on their age. “Active adult living”, the common real estate marketing term for such housing geared to persons age 55 and over, is regulated by the *Housing for Older Person Act of 1995* (See box).

Numerous factors and assumptions, which are briefly discussed in Focus Area D (Alternatives 3 and 4), shape the parameters set for these two housing scenarios. With some minor modifications, these housing options replicate those previously described.

Alternative 1 considers attached (in pairs with a common wall) single-family homes on one floor. Offered floor plans range from roughly 1,600 to 2,500 square feet in size with most units possessing floor area near the lower end of the range. Each home includes two bedrooms, two baths and an attached two-car garage. This living option is priced at about \$180,000.

Alternative 2 includes detached (freestanding) single-family homes with a small second floor area. Offered floor plans range from 1,600 to 2,500 square feet with most units’ floor space closer to the upper end. Each home includes up to three bedrooms, two baths and an attached two-car garage. Homes would be priced at about \$230,000.

The results of the *development impact analysis* are provided in **Table 6.15**. Any customizing of the parameters of these scenarios, including pricing, to better meet potential buyers’ needs will modify the outcomes of this analysis.

With full utilization of the 31-acre portion of the focus area that is free of severe development constraints (i.e., steep-walled valley), Alternatives 1 and 2 would yield about 149 or 119 homes, respectively. Housing densities across this portion of the property range from about

Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of familial status. The Act lists three exemptions in which housing may legally exclude families with children: 1) State and federal elderly housing programs; 2) Housing solely occupied by persons age 62 and over; and 3) Housing for persons age 55 and over.

The Fair Housing Act definition of housing for persons age 55 and over was amended by the Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995. Housing intended, and operated, for occupancy by persons age 55 and over is exempt from the familial status provisions of the Fair Housing Act if:

1. At least 80% of the occupied units are occupied by at least one person age 55 years or older;
2. The housing development publishes and adhere to policies and procedures that demonstrate the intent to offer housing for persons age 55 years and older; and
3. The housing development complies with rules issued by the federal government for verification of occupancy.

Active Adult Housing

The real estate marketing name for cluster housing intended for persons age 55 and over (no children permitted) is “Active Adult”.

four to five units per acre, under the assumptions considered for these development options. The natural features present at this location (e.g., woods, stream, valley terrain and vista) offer benefits which should be preserved in the course of any future site development.

Both senior housing alternatives incorporate the amenities described in the Focus Area D scenarios, with some modifications due to this scheme's larger scale. Each alternative includes interconnecting sidewalks and porches or patios to encourage a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood and interaction among the residents. The development also includes a 4,000 square foot "Community Building", with kitchen facilities, an outdoor pavilion and outdoor spaces for recreational activities. The development of interconnecting walkways, overlooks and strategically placed gardens/seating areas at the wooded valley rim would maximize the benefits provided by the undeveloped balance of the property. Of course, any feature development in proximity to the steep-walled valley must incorporate special design considerations to ensure the safety of residents and their visitors.

Discussed in the Focus Area D analysis, a cluster home purchase could be within the reach of many older Village residents with proper pricing. As noted earlier, the sales prices set in these scenarios are merely benchmarks to enable comparison and analysis. Numerous examples of quality senior cluster housing priced lower (and higher) than these defined development alternatives can be found throughout Northeast Ohio. Under both scenarios, a management company would be responsible for property and exterior building maintenance year-round for a modest fee.

Notably larger in scale than the senior housing scenario considered in Focus Area D, this scheme would likely attract and rely on prospective residents from beyond Walton Hills in order to realize full development.

Alternative 3: Single-Family Homes

Very little new single-family construction has occurred in the Village in recent years to provide prospective buyers with a housing option reflecting the middle price range of the existing housing stock. Alternative 3 is included here to provide an affordable move-up option to current residents and others who may desire a newly constructed home priced closer to the community's estimated current median housing price.

This single-family housing alternative is market-priced at about \$240,000. This scheme considers units with about 2,100-2,500 square feet of floor space. Proposed lot sizes would approximate those typically found throughout the Village.

With full utilization of the portion of the focus area judged feasible for development (37 acres) at this density (about 0.9 dwelling per acre), roughly 32 units could be built. Since these lot sizes are larger than under the senior housing schemes, some properties would wrap over the valley rim. With the development of a modest neighborhood park/picnic area/playground, the total potential housing count would be reduced to about 30 or 31 units.

Table 6.15 presents *development impact analysis* findings derived from the study of this single-family housing alternative based on the above assumptions and site characteristics. As noted earlier, any customizing of the scenario's parameters, including pricing, to better meet potential buyers' needs, will modify the outcomes of this analysis.

Table 6.15. Focus Area E-1, Development Impact Analysis

Vacant Land, Dunham Road	Alternative 1: Seniors-Only Cluster Homes (Paired) \$180,000	Alternative 2: Seniors-Only Cluster Homes (Detached) \$230,000	Alternative 3: Single-Family Homes \$240,000
SITE CHARACTERISTICS			
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	65.80 (2,866,248)	65.80 (2,866,248)	65.80 (2,866,248)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	31.31 (1,363,864)	31.31 (1,363,864)	36.9 (1,607,364)
Stories (No.)	1	2	2
Dwelling Units (No.)	149	119	32
Residents (No.)	298	238	81
School-Aged Children (No.)	0	0	11
Potential Value of site	\$26,820,000+	\$27,370,000+	\$7,680,000+
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS			
Vehicle Trips (per weekday)	331	264	306
Sewage Flow (gallons/day)	19,370	15,470	5,265
Water Consumption (gallons/day)	29,800	23,800	8,100
Solid Waste Generation (tons/day)	0.656	0.524	0.178
REVENUES			
Household Income (Est. Median Annual)	\$41,280	\$41,280	\$68,802
Income Tax - Village	\$2,866	\$2,289	\$12,729
Property Tax - Village	\$2,834+	\$2,892+	\$812+
TOTAL - Village	\$5,700+	\$5,181+	\$13,540+
Property Tax - Schools	\$272,144+	\$277,725+	\$77,929+
EXPENDITURES			
Cost to Village (Services)	\$287,138	\$229,325	\$78,048
NET FISCAL IMPACT FOR VILLAGE	(\$281,438)	(\$224,144)	(\$64,508)

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003; Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1991 and 1997; Urban Land Institute Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994; Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor's Offices, 2004; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; Fiscal Impact Handbook, Burchell, 1980.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA E, SUB-AREA 2

Expressed community needs, discussed in a previous section (*Focus Area D*), have prompted the formulation of several development alternatives incorporating new housing at this location, including:

- P Upscale seniors-only cluster housing (paired);
- P Upscale seniors-only cluster housing (detached); and
- P Single-family housing.

The results of the *development impact analysis* are provided in **Table 6.16**.

Alternatives 1 and 2: Seniors-only Cluster Homes

Numerous factors and assumptions, previously discussed, shape the parameters set for these two housing scenarios. These schemes are similar to those described in Focus Area D and Focus Area E, Sub-Area 1.

Alternative 1 incorporates single-family homes on one floor that are attached (in pairs with a common wall). Available floor plans range from about 1,600 to 2,500 square feet in area, with most units possessing floor space closer to 1,600 square feet. Each home includes two baths, two bedrooms and an attached two-car garage. Homes would be priced at about \$180,000.

Alternative 2 includes detached (freestanding) single-family homes with a modest second floor area. Offered floor plans range from 1,600 to 2,500 square feet with most units' floor space closer to the upper end. Each home includes up to three bedrooms, two baths and an attached two-car garage. This living option is priced at about \$230,000.

At full development of the 34-acre portion of the focus area that is free of severe development constraints (steep slopes, wetlands, waterways and zones of flooding), Alternatives 1 and 2 could yield about 172 or 138 homes, respectively. Housing densities across this portion of the property range from about four to five housing units per acre under the considered assumptions. The natural features present at this location (e.g., woods, terrain variation, streams) offer benefits which should be preserved in the course of any future site development.

Both senior housing alternatives incorporate the basic amenities described in the Focus Areas D and E-1 scenarios, with some modifications. Each alternative includes features to encourage interaction among the residents and a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood. The development also includes a "Community Building" and associated open spaces, described earlier. The development of interconnecting walkways, overlooks and seating areas throughout the areas demonstrating severe development constraints would provide residents and visitors with additional benefits. As with the previous senior housing development scenarios, a management company would provide residents with maintenance services for a fee.

Due to this development scheme's relatively large scale, this scenario would probably attract and rely on prospective residents from beyond Walton Hills in order to realize full development.

Table 6.16 presents *development impact analysis* findings derived from a study of these two senior housing alternatives, based on the above assumptions and characteristics. As discussed in the sections pertaining to Focus Areas D and Focus Area E, Sub-Area 1, altering the parameters of these defined scenarios to best meet potential buyers' needs (including the following Alternative 3) will modify outcomes of these analyses.

Another option potentially available under this development scenario would be partial development of the subject area to include the smaller, westernmost, 13-acre property only. This property is generally free of major development constraints. Of course, with this option,

a more modest senior housing development would occur -- similar to the scheme considered at Focus Area D.

Alternative 3: Single-Family Homes

As under the Focus Area E, Sub-Area 1, Alternative 3 development scheme, this scenario has been formulated in order to provide existing residents and others who desire a new home with an affordable move-up option at a market price close to the community’s median housing price.

This housing alternative is priced at roughly \$240,000, with units totaling about 2,100 - 2,500 square feet of floor space. Proposed lot sizes would approximate those typically found throughout the Village.

With full utilization of the portion of the focus area judged feasible for development at this density, roughly 36 units could be developed. With the development of a small neighborhood

Table 6.16. Focus Area E-2, Development Impact Analysis

Vacant Land, Sagamore Road	Alternative 1: Seniors-Only Cluster Homes (Paired) \$180,000	Alternative 2: Seniors-Only Cluster Homes (Detached) \$230,000	Alternative 3: Single-Family Homes \$240,000
SITE CHARACTERISTICS			
Total Acreage (Square Feet)	53.25 (2,319,570)	53.25 (2,319,570)	53.25 (2,319,570)
Site Acreage (Square Feet)	34.42 (1,499,335)	34.42 (1,499,335)	42.15 (1,836,054)
Stories (No.)	1	2	2
Dwelling Units (No.)	172	138	36
Residents (No.)	374	276	91
School-Aged Children (No.)	0	0	12
Potential Value of site	\$30,960,000+	\$31,740,000+	\$8,640,000+
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS			
Vehicle Trips (per weekday)	382	306	345
Sewage Flow (gallons/day)	24,310	17,940	5,915
Water Consumption (gallons/day)	37,400	27,600	9,100
Solid Waste Generation (tons/day)	0.8228	0.6072	0.2002
REVENUES			
Household Income (Est. Median Annual)	\$41,280	\$41,280	\$68,802
Income Tax - Village	\$3,597	\$2,654	\$14,300
Property Tax - Village	\$3,271+	\$3,354+	\$913+
TOTAL - Village	\$6,868+	\$6,008+	\$15,213+
Property Tax - Schools	\$314,153+	\$322,068+	\$87,671+
EXPENDITURES			
Cost to Village (Services)	\$360,368	\$265,940	\$87,683
NET FISCAL IMPACT FOR VILLAGE	(\$353,500)	(\$259,932)	(\$72,470)

SOURCES: RS Means Construction Cost Data, 2003; Trip Generation, Institute of Traffic Engineers, 1991 and 1997; Urban Land Institute Development Impact Assessment Handbook, 1994; Cuyahoga County Treasurer and Auditor’s Offices, 2004; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003; Fiscal Impact Handbook, Burchell, 1980.

park/picnic area/playground, the total potential housing count would be reduced to about 34 or 35 units.

FOCUS AREA F: ELECTRIC POWER LINE EASEMENT

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A major high-tension overhead electric power lines corridor extends about 3.2 miles across the center of the Village from its eastern to western borders. Focus Area F encompasses all but the easternmost 2,900 feet (just over one-half mile) of its length. The area of the corridor contained within the focus area approximates 83 acres, with widths varying from about 100 to 150 feet (*Table 6.17*). Two associated electric power substations are situated along its route; the larger of the two just to the west of Dunham Road (accessed from Alexander Road) within the focus area. The second substation is located outside of the focus area on Northfield Road at the Village’s eastern border.

West of T.G. Young Park, the eastern limit of the focus area, residential neighborhoods and parklands are traversed by the power lines (*Map 6.11*). This segment is free of any significant physical development within the limits of the corridor. Outside of the focus area, to the east of T.G. Young Park, the power lines extend over outdoor vehicle and equipment storage, access drives and parking lots found along its route within the industrial district.

Zoning within Focus Area F is classified as *Country Homes*.

Table 6.17. Focus Area F Property Summary

Address(es)	Parcel Number(s)	Owner(s)	Occupant(s)	Acres	Estimated Market Value
T.G. Young Park west to Valley View	multiple	Cleveland Electric Illuminating Co.	High tension electric power lines/towers	82.54	n.a.

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor’s Office, January, 2004.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES IN FOCUS AREA F

While the corridor does not host physical improvements along its route to the east of the Dunham/Egbert Roads intersection, a portion of the fenced Juniper substation (just to the west of the intersection) broaches the corridor. Six north-south roadways, primarily residential neighborhood streets, cross under the overhead lines.

Property ownership circumstances vary across the length of this utility corridor. To the east of the Dunham/Egbert Roads intersection, easements traverse primarily residentially owned properties. To the west, some portions adjacent to the corridor are owned outright (“fee

Map 6.11. Focus Area F, CEI Power Line Corridor



simple”) by the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company (CEI). The specific terms and conditions of any property agreements associated with access, use and development of this utility corridor, established many years ago, are unknown.

Terrain along the easement to the east of the Dunham/Egbert Roads intersection is rolling, with some slopes exceeding 18% – but for short distances. Vegetative cover along this segment is generally low profile, comprised mostly of grass/scrub with some clusters of trimmed trees. Parklands to the immediate east of the intersection, however, are more heavily vegetated, particularly to the immediate east of the intersection.

West of the Dunham/Egbert Roads intersection, the corridor widens and is relatively level except for two adjacent steep-sided (in excess of 18% slopes) ravines traversing it perpendicularly just to the west of the Juniper Substation. Vegetative cover along this segment is closely trimmed for the most part. At the corporation limit with Valley View, the overhead lines pass over a parking lot/access drive of an industrial property (Hub Parkway) before continuing westward a short distance to the rear of other industries. Within a short distance the power lines drop down to the Tinkers Creek valley and, just beyond, pass over the Towpath Trail in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park (just south of the Canal/Tinkers Creek Roads intersection).

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA F

Based primarily on responses to the *Community Attitudes Survey*, coupled with further discussions among Master Plan Committee members and Village officials, a hike/bike trail development option has been defined for consideration along the utility corridor. Residents indicated via the *Survey* their desire for additional recreational facilities and programs, to improve neighborhood connections to those opportunities, and the development of hike/bike trails.

Essentially, two scenarios are considered here: (1) hike/bike trail and (2) no change. Due to the complexities associated with land ownership, valuation and access along this corridor (coupled with this lone development option), a *development impact analysis* is not feasible here.

In the course of conducting investigations to determine the feasibility of, and challenges associated with, developing hike/bike trails beneath high-tension electric power lines in Walton Hills, a number of findings resulted.

One finding revealed that most area trails development along electric utility corridors has been eased where utilities own the property outright (“fee simple”). This is the case in Summit County, where an estimated 33 miles of trails have been developed since 1972, according to Summit Metro Parks (*D. Whited, 2/18/04*). As discussed above, in Focus Area F, these conditions exist in Walton Hills only to the west of the Dunham/Egbert Roads intersection.

Trails development is most problematic where utility easements traverse privately owned land, as is the situation to the east of the intersection. Further investigations would be required to determine corridor access and development limitations that could pose challenges to potential future trails development along this segment.

Another finding pertains to future new trails development priorities formulated by the nearby Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP). One such potential nearby connector, the “Sagamore Creek” Trail, is highlighted in a study prepared for the CVNP (URS, 4/12/02). This highly rated potential link would connect the existing Summit Metro Parks Bike and Hike Trail in Sagamore Hills Township to the Towpath Trail, which is located to the west near the intersection of Sagamore Road in adjacent Valley View. The proposed trail would cross the former State of Ohio Department of Mental Health’s Northcoast Behavioral Healthcare system campus. This facility is located on the south side of Sagamore Road, opposite Walton Hills in Sagamore Hills Township.

The “Sagamore Creek” trail link rated third among 11 potential trails evaluated in the CVNP study. Cost estimates for this new 7,200-foot asphalt trail are estimated at about \$664,000. While the project is not funded, it nevertheless remains a high CVNP priority as a future trail link.

This proposed trail segment, if developed, would provide Walton Hills residents with a reasonably direct connection to the Towpath Trail and a multitude of other regional destinations when completed. It also offers a less direct, but suitable, alternative to the western leg of the Walton Hills trail connection (to the west of the Dunham/Egbert Roads intersection) discussed above. In combination with the Village’s potential trail development along the eastern leg of this utility corridor, T.G. Young Park, numerous neighborhoods, the Municipal Complex, and the future development at Focus Area D would have ready access to a host of recreational amenities throughout the Cuyahoga Valley, Cuyahoga County and beyond.

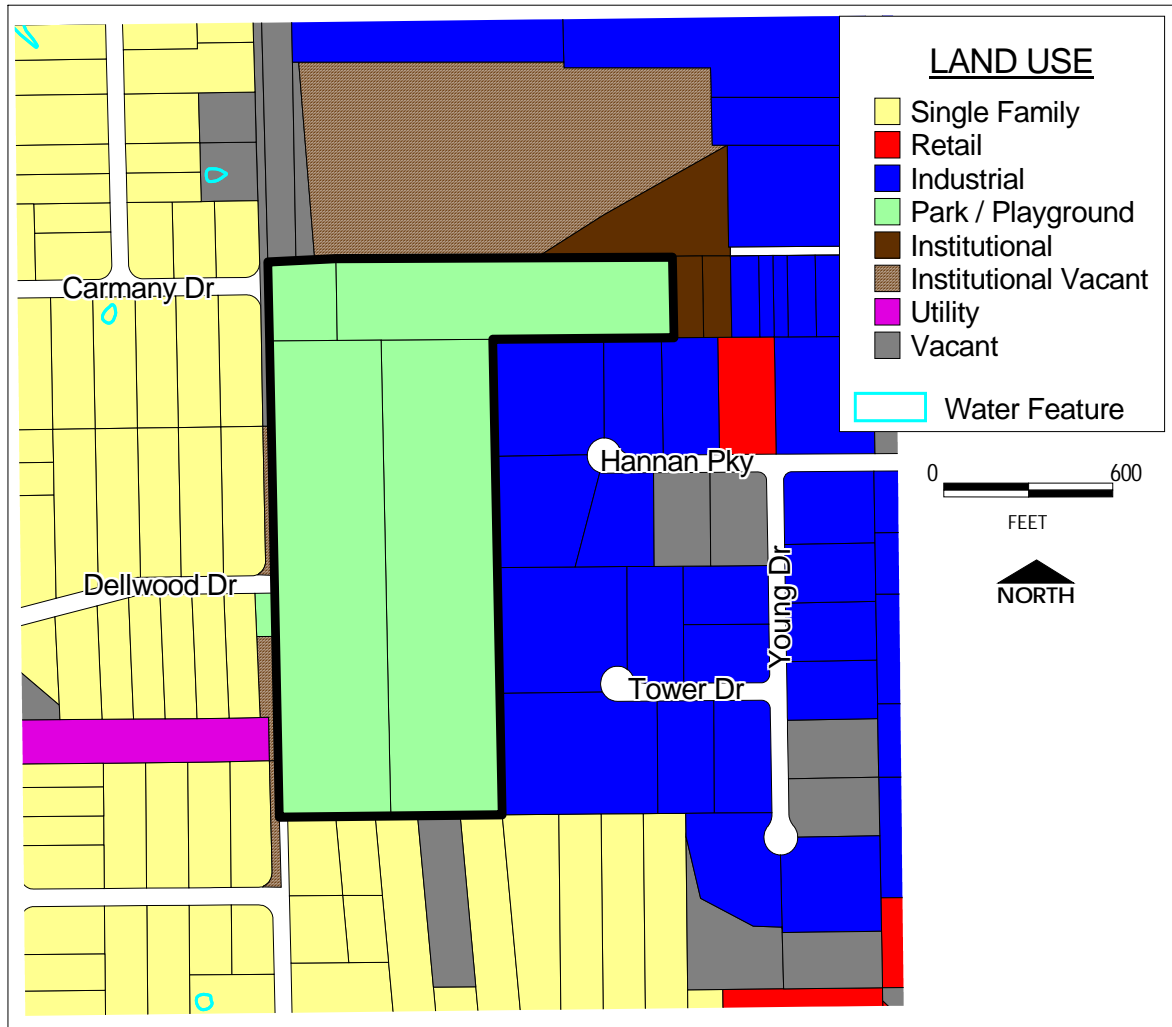
Undergoing development since 2000, the Draft Cuyahoga County *Greenspace Plan*, a collaboration among the CPC, the Greenspace Working Group and community/local stakeholders, envisions a county where nature is an integral part of daily life and natural processes are visible and instructional. Among other principles and concepts, the Plan promotes connecting people to land, water and history. It also promotes a comprehensive trail network connecting under-served neighborhoods, for instance connecting Walton Hills neighborhoods to T.G. Young Park, the Municipal Center, and other area parks and greenspaces. A summary of the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission’s *Greenspace Plan* (discussed in *Chapter 4*) is available on its website (<http://www.planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us>).

FOCUS AREA G: T.G. YOUNG PARK

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

T.G. Young Park, Focus Area G, is the largest property in the inventory of Village-owned lands. Located at the end of Dellwood Drive, the public park encompasses almost 40 acres (*Map 6.12*). Some property information is presented in *Table 6.18*.

Map 6.12. Focus Area G, Existing Land Use



Located at the end of a residential street, the Park is bordered on the north by a Bedford-owned property used to compost and process yard wastes and a narrow strip of vacant land extending northward. To the east is industrial development in the Hannan Parkway Industrial Park. Single-family residences border the Park to the south and east. Traversing its southern end is the east-west running 100-foot CEI electric high tension overhead power line corridor described in Focus Area F.

Table 6.18. Focus Area G Property Summary

Address(es)	Parcel Number(s)	Owner(s)	Occupant(s)	Acres	Estimated Market Value
18860 Dellwood Drive	794-28-001 794-28-002 794-28-003	Village of Walton Hills	T.G. Young Park	39.02	\$1,208,000

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office, January, 2004.

The eastern half, and most of the northern leg, of the park is zoned *Industrial*, whereas the western portion is zoned *Country Homes*.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ISSUES IN FOCUS AREA G

While numerous public and quasi-public park systems and facilities are located within, and in proximity to Walton Hills, Village residents rely heavily on T.G. Young Park to satisfy many of their recreation and community/social needs. For a detailed description of the grounds, offered facilities and programming, see *Chapter 4*.

In June of 2001, the *Walton Hills T. G. Young Park Master Plan*, prepared by D.B.Hartt, Inc., a local planning and development consultant, was completed and presented to the Village (*Appendix C*). The Plan was prepared to “provide guidance to the Village in the overall long range planning for the Park” prior to construction of some targeted facilities improvements funded by an Ohio Department of Natural Resources NatureWorks grant.

Since 2001, the Village has hired a year-round, part-time Recreation Director, the Park has undergone numerous facility renovations and improvements and activities programming changes and additions have been implemented to better address identified needs of the resident park goers. While many of the recommendations provided in the 2001 Plan have been implemented within the “developed” portion of the Park, some have not, and none of the proposed improvements to the undeveloped areas have been implemented.

Today, roughly 38%, or about 15 contiguous acres at the center of the property, is developed with a variety of active recreation facilities and vehicular parking, while the north and south ends remain undeveloped.

The undeveloped north end of the Park remains wooded and brush-covered. Slopes, some in excess of 18%, rim two small streams which converge in a low-lying wetland area at the northwestern corner of the property. These stream corridors are subjected to occasional flooding. Some scattered surface debris from former dumping is also evident across the area.

The southern undeveloped end of the Park is bisected by the electric utility easement. A wooded, isolated “island” remains to the south of the power lines. A small drainage-way parallels the corridor in a gully at the base of some slopes which exceed 18%.

The Park abuts residential and industrial development on all but the north and a portion of the south side. The facility is screened from adjacent homes by wood fencing, landscaping and a row of trees of varying maturities. Adjacent industries are partially screened from park visitors' view by a line of trees and shrubs. Since most of the vegetation bordering the property is deciduous, only seasonal screening from adjacent uses is provided.

Since Park ingress/egress is accommodated by a single entrance in a residential neighborhood, it is assumed that well attended community events may generate enough noise, traffic of sufficient volumes, and other associated impacts to negatively affect nearby residents for the duration of an event.

DEVELOPMENT ALTERNATIVES AND CONSIDERATIONS IN FOCUS AREA G

Working closely with Village representatives in 2001, D.B. Hartt, Inc., a local planning consultant, prepared the *Walton Hills T.G. Young Park Master Plan*. The purpose of the report was "to provide guidance to the Village in the overall long range planning for the Park..." As previously reported, numerous recommendations were advanced in the Plan for the "active recreation area", which constitutes about 15 acres of the property's 39 acres. Many of those recommendations have since been implemented, some have not, and others have been modified. Additional facility improvements and modifications, reflecting the desires of Village decision-makers, are presently underway or are at different stages of discussion and consideration, including

- P Pavilion expansion and improvements or replacement
- P Existing equipment upgrades
- P Equipment/feature additions (including climbing boulders and a water activity)

This section is restricted to a review and discussion of the *T.G. Young Park Master Plan* recommendations advanced for the "restricted area". This area, at the north and south ends of the Park, remain undeveloped and comprise the bulk (24 acres, 62%) of the Park's overall area. Plan recommendations include numerous facility improvements that are depicted on *Map 3* in *Appendix C*. The four recommendations are reproduced here:

1. Add a small parking area and a trailhead at the Carmany Drive turnaround, which abuts the Park at its northwestern corner. Due to its isolated location, only minimal improvements should be made at this location. The primary entrance into the Park will remain the existing entrance off Dellwood Drive
2. Utilize the wooded areas for the following passive activities. Some thinning of the trees will be required to install such facilities, however. The installation should be conducted in a manner that best preserves the natural features of the site. Those activities include:
 - ✓ Hiking/walking trails
 - ✓ Cross country ski trails

- ✓ Sledding areas
- ✓ Picnic/shelter areas
- ✓ Natural areas

3. The pedestrian hiking trail could follow multiple routes throughout the wooded areas. In order to connect the primary activity center with the Carmany Drive parking area, as well as hiking trails in the southern wooded area, bridges will need to be provided in locations where the path crosses streams.

4. Utilize the CEI easement for:

- ✓ Hiking/walking trails
- ✓ Expanded picnic areas
- ✓ Natural open space/play area
- ✓ Overflow parking

In addition to the above Plan-recommended features, some improvements have been advanced by Village officials for possible incorporation, including:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| “Life Trail”- | A trail with interspersed exercise stations designed for older residents. |
| Dog park - | A fenced dog exercise/socialization area for residents’ use in proximity to the power line easement. |

CHAPTER 7

FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



Ford Motor Company is expected to continue to play a major role in the Village's economic future.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the recommended action steps to be implemented in order to achieve the collective “vision” of Walton Hills’ future formulated by the community during the plan preparation process.

This chapter has been organized in three sections. The first section provides the steps to be implemented to achieve the adopted community-wide goals provided in *Chapter 1*. The recommendations presented in the second section address the findings derived from the analysis of focus areas (*Chapter 6*). The final section contains a map depicting future Village land uses which would evolve following the implementation of the recommendations provided in this chapter.

The recommendations provided on the following pages have been formulated by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC) based on collected data and information, analyses, and findings derived in the course of preparing the previous chapters. The recommendations have been prepared with thoughtful consideration of the comments, opinions and recommendations expressed by the residents, Master Plan Committee members, and elected and appointed Village officials who have been engaged throughout the plan preparation process.

The final chapter, *Chapter 8*, addresses the implementation of the Plan, including many of the administrative steps necessary to carry out the recommended actions.

COMMUNITY GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy was conducted by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission in order to ensure that all viewpoints of the Village’s residents and other stakeholders were identified in the course of plan preparation. The strategy, described in *Chapter 1* and *Appendix A*, resulted in the formulation of community planning goals which served as a roadmap to follow while preparing the Master Plan. The adopted goals also serve as a framework within which the recommendations and policy decisions advanced in this section are organized.

Following each stated community planning goal below are listed the recommended action steps to be implemented to achieve that particular goal.

“COUNTRY” LIFESTYLE

- ☛ **Preserve and enhance the safe, rural/small town environment and character typifying Walton Hills that is favored by the overwhelming majority of Village residents and officials.**

- ✓ Maintain the existing 40,000 square foot minimum lot area restriction provided in the *Country Home* zoning district.
- ✓ Encourage developers of new residential subdivisions to incorporate entranceways which are designed with an open and rural flavor.
- ✓ Preserve open space and protect natural features (e.g., wildlife habitats, mature tree stands, steep slopes, wetlands, flood prone areas, streams, and ponds) through the strategic development of conservation easements.
- ✓ Work to visually link open spaces with developed areas through the development of sensitive transitions which incorporate elements of landscaping, lighting, outdoor furniture, and other amenities.
- ✓ Place utilities underground, whenever possible.
- ✓ Consider incorporating “country”-oriented amenities such as coordinated fencing, lighting fixtures, landscaping, and other elements designed to subtly project a rural flavor throughout the community, but particularly in the Village Center.
- ✓ Consider strengthening the existing regulations intended to prompt developments which recognize the natural topography so as to result in attractive and interesting building sites.
- ✓ Consider setting aside a reserve fund for the strategic acquisition of open space.
- ✓ Consider the establishment of a local land conservation trust.

P A land trust is a nonprofit organization that works to protect open space, often in cooperation with local government. It strives to undertake or assist in coordinating land transactions – primarily the purchase/acceptance of donations of land or easements.

☛ Identify environmentally sensitive ways to preserve the benefits derived from wildlife while reducing conflicts – especially regarding deer.

- ✓ Work with officials from the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, the Cleveland Metroparks and the Cuyahoga Valley Communities Council who are monitoring changes in the local deer population and documenting impacts on the local natural environment, residential property owners and vehicular traffic. Explore alternative methods available to help control local deer population levels so as to reduce the negative impacts prompted when their numbers exceed the support capacity of their natural habitat. In partnership with these organizations, identify and implement selected action steps.

COMMUNITY IMAGE, PROMOTION AND QUALITY OF LIFE

- ☛ **Work to improve and promote the Village’s image to current and potential residents and businesses and improve the quality of life for all residents.**
 - ✓ Organize a simple, “no-frills” marketing program, including a periodically updated brochure, to promote the Village to prospective businesses and residents. Also consider additional tools, such as ads, mailings and other outreach methods. Coordinate the campaign with the local chamber of commerce and other organizations. Emphasize community and area features and benefits that make it a desirable place to live, work and operate a business.
 - ✓ Establish an official Village web site which promotes the Village, serves as a resource for upcoming community events and ongoing community programs and services, provides contact information for Village elected officials and department heads, and contains elements of the above marketing program.
 - ✓ Encourage all newly elected and key appointed Village officials to attend selected education/training opportunities associated with the position’s duties and responsibilities. Programs such as Cleveland State University’s Leadership Program (Levin College) offer training in a variety of topic areas, including: how to work with other officials and staff, citizens and the media and citizens; team-building; dispute resolution; and running effective meetings, among others. Consider providing a stipend to prospective attendees to cover or defray tuition costs associated with approved programs.
 - ✓ Continue to maintain current successful programs and explore opportunities to develop new municipal programs and facilities which enhance the lives of residents (e.g., municipal services, new Seniors Home Services Program, new fire station with rescue services, new recreation center and programming, new housing) and workers (e.g., RTA bus routing and frequency, new restaurant). These and other new recommended facilities and programs are discussed later in this chapter.
 - ✓ Continue to host ongoing, successful Village events and activities that are enjoyable and promote a sense of “community” among residents. Continue to collaborate with local organizations and institutions to sponsor additional events and activities that draw residents and showcase the Village to prospective residents.
 - ✓ Upgrade the appearance of the Village Center and business districts, particularly in the gateway area along Northfield Road (north of Hannan Parkway) by aggressively implementing the various actions provided in this and other chapters of the Plan.

- ✓ Consider the implementation of programs which encourage homeowners to maintain and upgrade the condition and appearance of their homes and grounds (discussed later in this chapter). Coordinate these efforts with the proposed Seniors Home Services Program.
- ✓ Continually and actively strive to implement the many strategies provided in this and the next chapter which have been formulated to resolve or ameliorate identified community issues and concerns. In particular, work to remedy those challenges associated with the public school system, local “politics”, and other leading concerns documented in the earlier chapters of the Master Plan (Also see *Appendix A*).

LOCAL ECONOMY AND INDUSTRIAL AREAS

- ☛ **Assess the potential for new, quality commercial office/industrial developments within the Village and redevelopment of underutilized and marginal land and buildings.**
 - ✓ Provided in the second section of this chapter are the key recommendations formulated for the numerous Village locations of special interest targeted by the Master Plan Committee and Village officials for CPC analysis. Detailed supporting documentation for the individual focus area studies is provided in *Chapter 6*.
 - ✓ Continually monitor the changes occurring with building and land utilization throughout the Village. Identify and evaluate those properties presenting new opportunities for development/redevelopment and revitalization.
- ☛ **Work to retain existing businesses and promote the strategic regional locational advantages of the Village for future quality developments, particularly those that generate the highest revenues for the Village.**
 - ✓ Maintain awareness of the Village’s retail, office and industrial businesses composition by maintaining and regularly updating the floor space inventories (See *Appendix D*). The inventories and accompanying analyses (See *Chapter 5*) are useful in a number of ways to the Village, as well as to potential entrepreneurs and developers, including:
 - P Provides up-to-date contact information to assist the Village with its business outreach and retention activities.
 - P Documents business types which are under-represented or lacking.
 - P Identifies building vacancies and total available floor space.

- ✓ Develop a “no frills” cooperative business marketing program which promotes the Village as a prime business location, as well as a desirable place to live and work. Consider promotional tools such as brochures, ads, mailings, and outreach via a newly developed official Village web site. Coordinate the preparation of strategies and materials with the local chamber of commerce.
 - P Regularly evaluate the benefits of continuing Village membership and participation in the Cuyahoga Valley Chamber of Commerce (CVCC).
- ✓ Collaborate and coordinate regularly with the local chamber of commerce and other organizations to disseminate topical and timely information to local businesses in order to foster cooperation, enhance viability and maintain competitiveness.
- ✓ In conjunction with the new business marketing program and in coordination with the local chamber of commerce, develop a business retention component which includes liaison and technical assistance services.
 - P The liaison component would provide advice, determine expansion needs and solicit input on needed improvements to Village services.
 - P The technical assistance component would include the provision of information and special support to businesses in areas such as financial assistance availability, design ideas and advertising concepts.
- ✓ Coordinate business retention and promotion efforts with the implementation of commercial revitalization strategies targeted to the Village Center and broad Northfield Road business corridor area.
- ✓ Acquire specialized economic development and architectural design expertise on occasion by retaining consultants. Hire a zoning inspector to maximize the administration and enforcement of existing Village zoning and other regulations. (For elaboration, see entries under the first goal following the next section heading, *Public Facilities, Infrastructure and Services*.)
- ✓ Continue to utilize the annual Public-Private Partnership Business Expo as a mechanism to provide and share business information, and interact with public officials and area businesses.
- ✓ Continue to utilize the Village’s Employment Passport program to match residents’ employment needs with available local job opportunities.
- ✓ Improve the promotion and general awareness of the Village’s Enterprise Zone designation. Maximize the benefits of the program by continuing to strategic-

ally offer tax abatements and other benefits to recruit new industries to the Village.

- ✓ Partner with local real estate and market research organizations to actively recruit businesses to the Village, especially offices.
- ✓ Maintain, promote and regularly update a listing of currently available commercial and industrial real estate properties. Outreach can be accomplished in a number of ways, including via the new, official Village web site.

☛ **Identify opportunities to maintain and expand the Village’s tax base and reduce the tax burden on existing homeowners.**

- ✓ Work to attract new quality office and industrial developments that demonstrate the likelihood to generate the highest income and property tax revenues. Highly paid workers and quality developments translate into higher collections.
- ✓ Stabilize and diversify the Village’s overall revenue stream in order to enable it to better withstand disruptive future changes in the economy. Especially work to increase property tax collections by attracting new quality office and industrial developments. Identify and consider implementing other methods to increase property tax revenues.

P Collected property taxes comprise less than 2% of the Village’s annual revenue, whereas income taxes constitute over 60%. Increasing the Village’s more predictable property tax portion will help stabilize the Village’s future revenue stream to enable it to better weather disruptive, unanticipated changes in the economy – which can often result in cutbacks of (tax-paying) workers.

- ✓ Encourage the conversion of existing underutilized industrial buildings’ floor space (including warehouses), where feasible, to more intensive land uses, such as manufacturing, research laboratories and offices. (*See Appendix E, Adaptive Reuse Strategies*)
- ✓ Ensure the economic strength and viability of existing businesses by employing the retention strategies noted under the previous goal.

☛ **Assess the development potential for selected retail businesses, including restaurants, pharmacies/drug stores and supermarket/grocery stores.**

- ✓ Promote the development of a quality restaurant oriented to the dining needs of local families and businesses at the southwest corner of the Northfield and Alexander Roads intersection. Summary recommendations are provided later in this chapter (*See Focus Area A, Sub-Area 3*). Additional supporting detail is provided in *Chapter 6*.

P CPC’s assessment of the development potential for the above three new businesses, based on an economic market analysis, research, residential survey findings and input from the Master Plan Committee and Village officials, reveals that a restaurant is the only new retail development judged viable at this time.

☛ Identify and leverage public funds to the maximum extent possible to attract private investment for commercial expansion and redevelopment.

✓ Inform existing and potential businesses about the availability of local, county, state, and federal programs that provide financing and technical support for business start-up, expansion, physical improvements, and training.

P A listing (with descriptions) of potentially applicable programs which provide grants, tax incentives, low interest loans and other forms of assistance is provided in *Appendix E*.

✓ Continue to identify and promote new mechanisms for funding and technical support as they become available.

✓ Provide (or facilitate the provision of) guidance and application preparation assistance to businesses seeking technical and funding support.

☛ Improve the appearance of the Northfield Road Corridor, including gateways and associated industrial areas.

✓ A variety of recommended action steps for implementation are detailed in the next section. See FOCUS AREA A: NORTHFIELD ROAD INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR and *Focus Area A, Sub-Area 1, Northfield Road Gateway* later in this chapter.

PUBLIC FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

☛ Continue to maintain the high-quality level of municipal services.

✓ Continue to maintain and upgrade all existing municipal buildings and properties as necessary in order to enhance government operations, improve efficiencies and promote cost-effectiveness. Consider incorporating “green building design” into all future additions and new buildings.

✓ Develop new municipal facilities, programs and services by strategically expanding existing floor space and through the construction of new municipal facilities. These new buildings and programs, including additional recommended services not noted here, are discussed in greater detail through-

out the balance of this chapter.

- P Village Hall Building - Expansion of the existing floor spaces will relieve current congestion, enhance existing operations, and support new proposed administrative functions. The continued centralization of Village administrative operations will be ensured through the construction of a modestly-sized building addition.
- P Village Fire Station - New construction will centralize and enhance existing fire protection and rescue services by providing significantly improved emergency response times, a major ongoing community concern. It will also provide needed floor space for the Building Department, whose operations must be closely coordinated with the inspection role of the Fire Department.
- P Village Recreation Center - New construction will permit the provision of new services, an expansion of existing programs, and will greatly reduce reliance on the popular Community Room at the Municipal Complex (which is undersized and continually subjected to the pressures of “over-booking”).
- ✓ Continually assess the utilization of existing space in all Village-owned buildings, determine anticipated future needs, identify associated costs to address those needs, and explore funding alternatives.
- ✓ Investigate future potential Village needs relative to its Krick Road property, currently operated as a service building by the Village of Oakwood via an agreement which terminates in 2007.
- ✓ Continue to evaluate personnel levels and training needs by department. Prioritize needs and invest as necessary.
- ✓ Work aggressively to maximize the inspection enforcement of existing Village building regulations through the development of a full-service Village Building Department or via the quality services provided by a nearby community under an agreement. Such services should be “certified” by the State of Ohio.
- ✓ Work to maximize the administration and enforcement of existing Village zoning regulations. Hire a permanent, full- or part-time qualified individual to serve as a zoning inspector.
- ✓ Work to streamline the Village’s permitting process for new development and redevelopment activities.
- ✓ Acquire specialized economic development and architectural design expertise on occasion to address identified economic development/redevelopment and

design needs, and to conduct special projects and studies. Retain a skilled consultant to fulfill either of these future needs as they arise.

- ✓ Continue to modernize the work environment of all Village workers, including the integration of proven technologies and techniques to heighten the quality and delivery of municipal services.

Identify opportunities to improve public facilities and provision of services, particularly in areas of fire protection, emergency medical services, recreation, and senior services. Investigate the benefits of maintaining existing and forming new intergovernmental partnerships with nearby communities.

- ✓ Expand the Village Hall Building by constructing additional offices. See *Focus Area C, Sub-Area 1* in the next section for details.
- ✓ Develop a new Village Fire Station, including fire protection and rescue squad services. See *Focus Area C, Sub-Area 3* in the next section for details.
- ✓ Develop an indoor, multi-purpose Village Recreation Center. See *Focus Areas C and D* in the next section for details.

NOTE: Thorough consideration of Village priorities, project costs, financing, sequencing, and a variety of other considerations must take place before constructing any of the above recommended major capital improvements. Among the numerous considerations should be an examination of the unreserved fund balance, its potential uses and the development of a formal policy to establish its maximum limit. Consider conducting an optional, professionally directed residents' survey to help determine project prioritization and phasing, as well as opinions about siting, features, and funding, among other important information.

- ✓ Develop the Seniors Home Services Program, a new Village-sponsored program providing a range of services to enable residents to remain in their homes as they age if they desire (Program details are provided later in this section).
- ✓ Regularly monitor the benefits and costs associated with maintaining current intergovernmental relationships and strive to maximize the efficiencies of these associations so as to heighten benefits.
- ✓ Identify and establish new associations and partnerships with nearby communities and other entities in order to satisfy needs not addressed by facility and program additions and other changes recommended in the Master Plan.

P Through regional cooperation and other public/private associations, enhanced public services quality, delivery and cost savings can be realized.

- ✓ In conjunction with the anticipated placement of the three new outdoor warning sirens in Walton Hills in 2004 (part of the new regional advanced warning system facilitated by FirstEnergy), develop and implement a comprehensive community education/awareness program for residents and workers.
- ✓ In conjunction with the recommended development of a Village Fire Station, investigate continuing with a modified version of the Village's current service agreement for fire protection, emergency rescue and inspections services with the City of Maple Heights beyond the end of the current term.

Improve the Village's ability to plan, manage and conduct infrastructure improvements, particularly for its roadways and water distribution system.

- ✓ Continue to develop, implement and annually update the comprehensive five-year capital improvements plan which inventories Village infrastructure components, assesses their physical condition, and identifies replacement and repair priorities and associated estimated costs.
- ✓ Continue to maintain and upgrade all components of the Village's infrastructure, especially roads, sewers and water lines. Continually monitor and assess the condition of these and other key elements, prioritize their repair and replacement, and work to identify and seek all potential funding opportunities in order to carry out the needed improvements.
- ✓ Coordinate future Village infrastructure improvements with the implementation of the recommended streetscape improvements throughout the broad Northfield Road area and Village Center business districts (See recommended actions provided in *Focus Areas A* and *C* in the next section).
- ✓ Conduct discussions with the City of Bedford to identify potential alternative linkages to Krick Road and its extension (Industry Drive) which terminate in Bedford. For reasons pertaining to safety and access, this heavily-traveled 4,000-foot extension into Bedford should have more than its lone access point at Northfield Road.

P Several alternative road extension plans associated with the future development of the Wellman property were proposed in the *City of Bedford Master Plan (April, 1999)*.

- ✓ Encourage the few remaining residents and businesses which rely on septic/holding tanks and water wells (for drinking water) to connect to the available central sewer and water systems.

- ✓ Develop regular communications with the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company in anticipation of the Village's future utility corridor trail development planning activities. Also explore associated utility policies pertaining to the development and maintenance of natural vegetation for corridor enhancement and buffering/screening.

☛ **Identify opportunities for a centralized, public assembly location, including improvements and expansion of the Village's Community Room in the Community Hall building.**

- ✓ Develop an indoor, multi-purpose Village Recreation Center to accommodate demonstrated public meeting/social demands (in addition to recreation activities). See related goals here and *Focus Areas C* and *D* in the next section for details.
- ✓ Consider the expansion of the Community Building to accommodate demonstrated public assembly demands provided that prescribed conditions are met. See *Focus Area C* in the next section for details.
- ✓ Until the development of a Village Recreation Center or an expansion of the Community Hall building occurs, continue to utilize local churches and other nearby public/private facilities for public assemblies and social functions in instances where the Community Room is unavailable or its capacity is insufficient to meet event demands.

☛ **Improve the Village's financial accounting and reporting methods.**

- ✓ Continue to closely monitor, document, and report the Village's financial condition according to General Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).
 - P The recent hiring of a professional full-time Village Fiscal Officer demonstrates the community's commitment to ensuring financial responsibility and integrity. Duties for this newly created post include technical assistance, advice and guidance of finance and budgetary matters and a blend of previous responsibilities from both the Village clerk and treasurer positions.
- ✓ Provide the Fiscal Officer and staff with sufficient time allowances and Village resources including technology, software updates, and access to training.
 - P Because of the dynamic nature of accounting laws and practices, the Village should provide the needed tools to enable staff to effectively carry out the requisite job tasks, as well as opportunities for training and education in order to remain abreast of important changes as they occur.

- ✓ Exercise caution to reduce instances of noncompliance.
 - P Previous financial audits have noted the need for the Village to better allocate and closely monitor expenditures.
- ✓ Consider the establishment of an Audit Committee.
 - P An Audit Committee, when comprised of knowledgeable staff and volunteers, can help to evaluate the reliability of records, the accuracy of transactions, and to monitor compliance.

☛ Investigate improvements to public transportation (including Village-provided transportation) that best meets residents' and workers' needs.

- ✓ Conduct discussions with major employers in Walton Hills to determine if workers are adequately served by local GCRTA bus services. If findings indicate the need for improvements, work with GCRTA to implement area bus system changes.
- ✓ Consider conducting discussions with GCRTA officials to reevaluate the discontinuation of previous Village bus services and explore opportunities to reinstate services for Village residents; particularly for those who work in Cleveland, Bedford and Solon.
- ✓ Investigate and assess the mobility needs of older Village residents in conjunction with the development of the Village's new Seniors Home Services Program. If mobility needs are not being satisfactorily met by existing area transportation services (including the Village's van service), work to bring about the needed changes.

☛ Maintain existing, and develop new, services to enable residents to remain in their homes as they age, if they desire.

- ✓ Form a Community Task Force: Identify and evaluate the community's features, facilities, and services/programs presently provided by the Village and others which help older residents remain in the community and their homes as they age.
 - P The Task Force should reflect the composition of the community and consider other participants, including: residents (with consideration to age); elected Village officials and select department heads; local service providers; and experts in the various aspects of aging.
 - P Consider a targeted survey of aging and senior Village households to solicit additional feedback, gauge support for ideas and to buttress Task Force findings.

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- ✓ Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Village’s “elder-friendliness”: Identify deficiencies in existing programs and additional needs.
 - P Consider developing a set of indicators with which to evaluate the community or use an existing assessment tool such as AARP’s *Liveable Communities* or The Cleveland Foundations’s *Elder-Friendly Assessment* tool (part of its *Successful Aging Initiative* program) to gauge the community.

- ✓ Develop the Plan: Identify and adopt Program goals. Evaluate needs identified via the assessment process, formulate alternative solutions to address those needs, and prepare action steps for Village adoption and implementation. The comprehensive Village-sponsored Program will likely include a continuation of existing viable programs, modified versions of current programs, and the introduction of new services. Key components of the Program could include services such as:
 - P Regular weekly to seasonal property maintenance and services including snow shoveling and removal, leaf raking and removal, lawn mowing, a trash-to-curbside program, and other yard maintenance assistance.
 - P Exterior home maintenance projects and assistance including painting, roofing and repairs.
 - P Home and health support services such as delivered meals and nutrition counseling, medical equipment loan program, companionship, and adult day care.
 - P Transportation services and programs customized to identified needs and destinations such as the grocery store, medical care and library.
 - P Shopping assistance and errand services to satisfy individual grocery, banking, and medical/pharmacy needs.
 - P Recreation facilities and programs specifically geared to seniors’ needs.
 - P Social/cultural opportunities such as group travel and special events.

- ✓ Implement the Seniors Home Services Program.
 - P Adjust capital and operating budgets to accommodate program needs.
 - P Identify and seek supplemental outside funding support.

- P Assign Program development, implementation and operational responsibilities to existing Village departments. Consider hiring a Program Coordinator. Partner with outside organizations whenever possible.
- P Continually evaluate the effectiveness of the program and institute changes as necessary.

EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN

☛ **Leave the Bedford School system and aggressively pursue other options for providing a safe and effective education for the Village's school-age children.**

- ✓ In the event of a negative response by the Ohio Department of Education to the Village of Walton Hills' petition request to leave the Bedford City School District and merge with the Cuyahoga Heights Local School District:

- P Appeal the ruling through the court system with professional assistance, or

- P Accept the negative ruling of the state.

If the Village decides to accept the negative ruling of the state:

- P Seek to identify all feasible alternatives available to the Village to address the previously documented and any new concerns of residents. Develop and implement the selected strategy(ies), or

- P Work to participate in and improve the Bedford School System.

NOTE: Depending on the alternative strategies selected, it may be possible to pursue both of these approaches.

- ✓ In the event of a positive response by the Ohio Department of Education to the Village of Walton Hills' petition request to leave the Bedford City School District:

- P Advance through the next stages of the process to merge with the Cuyahoga Heights Local School District.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND FACILITIES

☛ Investigate and reevaluate the feasibility of completing the recommendations of the *T.G. Young Park Master Plan (2001)*.

- ✓ Develop the Park's vacant 24 acres ("restricted area") in accordance with the recommendations provided in the *T.G. Young Park Master Plan*.

P Summary recommendations are provided later in this chapter (*Focus Area G*). See *Appendix C* for the complete Plan.

☛ Improve and expand community recreational opportunities, particularly for adults and teens.

- ✓ Develop an indoor, multi-purpose Village Recreation Center for the use of residents. See related goals in this section and *Focus Areas C* and *D* in the next section for additional details.
- ✓ Develop a hike and bike trail along a section of the CEI utility corridor for the use of residents (Details are provided in the next section, *Focus Area E*)
- ✓ Consider implementing new and expanded year-round recreational programming, especially for teens and adults, recommended by the Village's Recreation Director.

☛ Identify opportunities to partner with nearby communities in the provision of recreation to Village residents and/or to build our own, affordable recreational and/or multi-use facilities.

- ✓ Develop an indoor, multi-purpose Village Recreation Center. See previously stated action steps for additional information and *Focus Areas C* and *D* in the next section.
- ✓ Continue to explore opportunities and develop favorable arrangements with nearby communities and other entities to provide the components constituting a comprehensive recreation program through the shared use of their facilities and programs (until such a time that a Village Recreation Center is constructed).

HOUSING

☛ Work to maintain and improve residential market values.

- ✓ Promote housing maintenance, rehabilitation and preservation programs that are available for qualifying homeowners.

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- P Housing rehabilitation and weatherization programs, low interest loan programs, and property tax reduction programs are offered by the Cuyahoga County Department of Development, the Cuyahoga County Treasurer's Office, the Cuyahoga County Auditor's Office, and the Cleveland Water Department.
- ✓ Work aggressively to maximize the inspection and enforcement of existing Village building regulations through the development of a full-service Village Building Department or via the quality services provided by a nearby community via Agreement. Such services should be "certified" by the State of Ohio.
- ✓ Work to maximize the administration and enforcement of existing Village zoning regulations. Hire a permanent, full- or part-time qualified individual to serve as a zoning inspector.
- ✓ Protect residential neighborhoods from commercial encroachment by strengthening Village zoning regulations which deal with setbacks, landscaping, buffering and screening.
- ✓ Continue Village public infrastructure improvements, including road resurfacing, water and sewer line upgrades, and roadway shoulder vegetation grooming (among others) to complement and encourage property owners to continue to invest in their homes.
- ✓ Promote housing accessibility and "universal design" in conjunction with the Seniors Home Services Program.
- P Universal design is the design of products and environments to be used by all people, regardless of their age, size or abilities, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.
- ✓ Conduct a review of existing Village Codes and compare with available model regulations and other local codes to determine their suitability. Revise as necessary.
- ✓ Consider instituting a point-of-sale inspection program (exterior-only) for residential properties.
- P Such programs necessitate new legislation and require that every property sold undergoes an inspection. Identified code violations must be corrected before the title can be transferred. In practice, the responsibility and cost of violation corrections could be a negotiated outcome between the buyer and seller.
- ✓ Consider promoting housing maintenance and repair by conducting classes and workshops, or partner with others (e.g., schools, adjacent communities, nearby

home improvement stores) to sponsor learning opportunities for property owners who wish to reduce their costs by making their own repairs and improvements.

- ✓ Consider recognizing individual homeowner’s maintenance and beautification efforts via an annual or seasonal publicly visible, Village-sponsored awards program.
- ✓ Continually and actively strive to implement the numerous strategies provided in this and the next chapter which are intended to resolve or ameliorate identified community issues and concerns and work to enhance the overall appeal of the community to existing and prospective residents.

☛ **Assess the potential and feasibility of creating upscale senior housing (age 55 and older).**

- ✓ Consider the development of new seniors-only housing to complement the Seniors Home Services Program strategy at a future date ONLY following an evaluation period and re-assessment of community need for alternative housing options (via a detailed community-wide survey of older residents).

P While CPC’s assessment revealed that development sites and seniors-only housing options are available, and some community support has been demonstrated for such housing, the Master Plan Committee encourages this staged strategy in order to continue to preserve the Village’s image and lifestyle (i.e., low density residential development with open spaces).

☛ **Continue to maintain and improve the condition of the Village’s housing stock through improved enforcement of existing regulations.**

- ✓ Conduct strict housing code inspections.
- ✓ Step up the current level of enforcement to ensure that housing quality continues to be maintained Village-wide.

P Identify and acquire the resources necessary to enable the Village to increase enforcement activity.

FOCUS AREA RECOMMENDATIONS

Presented in this section are the key recommendations pertaining to the numerous Village areas and properties of special interest identified by the Master Plan Committee and Village officials. For supporting background information and additional details, see *Chapter 6*.

FOCUS AREA A: NORTHFIELD ROAD INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR

The Northfield Road Corridor encompasses the lion’s share of the Village’s businesses, most characterized as heavy and light manufacturers. The success of the individual businesses within this district, as well as those located in the contiguous industrial parks, ensures the continued economic health and stability of the Village. In the future, the focus of the Village’s economic strategies must be directed to ensuring the continued success of existing viable enterprises, as well as towards attracting new quality businesses to the community.

While the following recommended actions are intended to address issues identified within the Northfield Road Corridor Focus Area, many of these strategies should be considered for application within the adjacent industrial areas, particularly in the Krick (Road) Industrial Park (including Treat Road). Some of the following recommendations are also worthy of consideration for application in the Village Center.

Recommendations:

- Implement the specific development, redevelopment and revitalization recommendations provided for the various sub-areas located within this focus area. Related details are provided later in this section and in *Chapter 6*.
- Develop and implement a phased Commercial Streetscape Improvement Program to enhance and coordinate the physical appearance of the corridor and install needed infrastructure to address the need for functional improvements. The “streetscape” includes those features comprising the right-of-way area and fronting grounds of contiguous properties. Such elements typically include the roadway berm, lighting, trees/landscaping, sidewalks, street furniture, and signage, among others.

Program components include:

- ✓ Act to correct streetscape deficiencies within the Corridor (including adjacent Village industrial parks) which demonstrate the greatest need for aggressive corrective measures, including:
 - P Roadways (strategic widening, particularly at intersections)
 - P Curbs (reconstruction and repair)
 - P Driveway aprons (widths and surfaces)
 - P Landscaping (road shoulder repair)
 - P Sidewalks (strategic development)

Note: See Chapter 5: Economic Development and Market Analysis for additional details regarding these conditions.

- Develop a comprehensive Building and Property Improvement and Renovation Program, including the coordinated implementation of the following:

- ✓ Act to correct buildings and grounds deficiencies within the Corridor (including adjacent Village industrial parks) which demonstrate the greatest need for aggressive corrective measures, including:

- P Access drives (surfaces)
- P Parking lots (surfaces and orientation to building)
- P Landscaping (grounds maintenance and enhancements)
- P Outdoor storage (reduction and screening)
- P Buildings (repair and maintenance)

Note: See Chapter 5: Economic Development and Market Analysis for additional details regarding these conditions.

- ✓ Step-up enforcement of applicable Village regulations pertaining to zoning, exterior maintenance and safety, among others. Some associated concerns include:

- P Parking areas: Code requires surfaces to be smoothly graded, stabilized and dustless. Parking areas must be adequately screened.
- P Buildings: Code requires that exterior of any main or accessory building consist of finished materials and be kept in good repair.
- P On-site storage: Code requires that all machinery, equipment, raw or other material and all operations be enclosed within a structure and not visible from the street or nearest residential district line.

- ✓ Comprehensively update the Village Zoning Code and other regulations. Some preliminarily identified actions are discussed below under a separate heading.

- ✓ Encourage the development of high quality, unifying and compatible designs for all existing and new retail, office and industrial developments. Work with businesses and property owners to embrace new design and development concepts.

- ✓ Collaborate with and encourage business owners to make investments to improve their buildings, grounds and streetscape areas, particularly those leading deficiencies noted above.

- ✓ Actively participate, and encourage business participation, in available improvement programs which are judged beneficial (discussed elsewhere in this chapter and provided in *Appendix E*).

- ✓ Implement and coordinate the Program with the assistance of the local chamber of commerce.
- Investigate, identify and provide financing opportunities to assist the Village and building and property owners to implement recommended actions and improvements.
- Consider the creation of an *Industrial Service* zoning district for properties which front on Northfield Road (excluding the Northfield/Alexander Roads intersection) to allow the development of professional offices and supportive retail uses. Reasons for the new district include, but are not limited to:
 - ✓ Restaurants, retail and mercantile uses are prohibited in the Village's industrial district (which is the overwhelmingly predominant zoning classification within the Village's broad business area).
 - ✓ Aesthetics of the corridor is important because it is a heavily travelled, visible area. Alternative developments can provide visual diversity and interest via new designs.
 - ✓ The Northfield Road Corridor, primarily its southern end, offers a different character than the gateway segment and the remaining adjacent industrial parks. Images of openness are projected by the expansive landscaped front yards, tasteful ground signs and set back buildings.
- Improve and strengthen numerous sections of the Zoning Code, including, but not limited to:
 - ✓ Signage: Enhance requirements/limits pertaining to size, design, material layout, and location for temporary and permanent signs. Require ground signs and/or attractive wall-mounted or fascia signs. Prohibit and phase out pole signs.
 - ✓ Parking: Establish stricter requirements by limiting the number of spaces located in the front of buildings, requiring truck turnaround areas, vegetated islands, maximum parking aisle widths, and other improvements.
 - ✓ Landscaping and Screening: Require stronger standards regarding opacity, height, screening of dumpsters, and other elements.
 - ✓ Loading Docks: Specify appropriate locations, size and designs.
 - ✓ Utilities: Those serving the buildings and site should be placed underground or within the main building.
 - ✓ Penalties: This section should be strengthened to address specific issues such as the lack building maintenance the lack of appropriate screening, among others.

- ✓ Adult-oriented businesses and gambling/slot machines: Limit their activities and locations (*undergoing development during Plan finalization*).

Note: Many of the above recommendations are prompted by needs demonstrated in other areas of the Village beyond this particular focus area. While they are not repeated in each of the following sections, they should be considered relevant and applicable in those focus areas as well.

Focus Area A, Sub-Area 1 Northfield Road Gateway

A host of negative images greet motorists and pedestrians entering the Village from the north along this heavily traveled entrance to the Village's broad business corridor. Targeted improvements to identified functional and aesthetic challenges could strengthen existing business performance, enhance the draw of the corridor for new economic activity, and significantly improve the Village's overall image.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Evaluate and determine optimal gateway sign placement location and additional associated improvements. While gateway signs community-wide are attractive, well maintained and consistent in appearance and design, some enhancements should be considered at this important visible entrance. Recent bridge improvements offer new opportunities.
 - ✓ Consider the installation of a modified, more prominent sign to set this entrance apart from the others. Consider adding banners to light poles, a strip of tinted concrete or brick pavers at the entrance, and other features to visually highlight the boundary change from the City of Bedford.
- ☛ Strongly encourage current property and business owners in the gateway area (north of Hannan Parkway) to upgrade the appearance of their buildings and properties where needed in order to provide improved, inviting images for visitors, residents and those passing through the Village.
 - ✓ This initial outreach approach, emphasizing progress through cooperation and collaboration in the form of a new Village-owner partnership, if unsuccessful, should be buttressed by enforcement of existing regulations and other strategies, as judged feasible, in order to accomplish objectives.



- ☛ Implement the specific revitalization recommendations for this sub-area which are provided in *Chapter 6*.
- ☛ Explore, consider and implement the host of recommendations which have been detailed in the previous section (*Focus Area A*), including:
 - ✓ Develop and implement the Commercial Streetscape Improvement Program.
 - ✓ Develop and implement the Building and Property Improvement and Renovation Program.
 - ✓ Step-up enforcement of applicable Village Codes.
 - ✓ Update, improve and strengthen the Village Zoning Code and other regulations.
 - ✓ Encourage the development of high quality designs for existing and new developments.
 - ✓ Collaborate with owners to make investments and improve their properties.
 - ✓ Participate in available improvement programs and identify all funding opportunities for property and business owners.
 - ✓ Consider the creation of an *Industrial Service* zoning district.

**Focus Area A, Sub-Area 2
Vacant Properties,
Northfield Road**

One of the few remaining vacant properties along Northfield Road, this three-acre parcel offers additional revenue potential for the Village. This segment of State Route 8, a major regional artery, offers high visibility and traffic volumes for fronting businesses.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Develop offices as the preferred land use for the site.
 - ✓ The high visibility and traffic volumes offered along busy State Route 8 support office uses.
 - ✓ New office development would complement and be compatible with this primarily industrial corridor which lacks office uses.
 - ✓ A three-story, 62,000 square foot building could support up to 200 office workers.
 - ✓ At maximum permitted site utilization, potential site valuation and net fiscal benefit to the Village are greatest (among the feasible development alternatives).
- ☛ Rezone the property to an enhanced *Office Building* district and extend it to properties which are concentrated around the Northfield/Alexander Roads intersection. Reasons for this action, among others, include:
 - ✓ There is a concentration of both existing and proposed office uses in proximity to this intersection (also see *Sub-Area 3* next).
 - ✓ An enhanced zoning classification would allow associated business support services such as a restaurant, coffee shop, copier/printer, and specialty shops.
 - ✓ Access to nearby highway interstates is favorable and area traffic volumes are highest here.

- Reduce the number of parking spaces required for office uses in Village Code. The existing parking standards are outdated and excessive. Update this standard here and others throughout the Code. For example, restrict front yard parking, prohibit drives and parking within setbacks, designate maximum aisle widths, require vegetated islands to reduce stormwater run-off, and designate the maximum number of spaces allowed before interruptions by islands.
- Strengthen Village regulations associated with landscaping, screening and signage, among others.

**Focus Area A, Sub-Area 3
Vacant Buildings, Southwest Corner
of Northfield/Alexander Roads**

This intersection demonstrates the highest traffic volumes of any in the Village. Redeveloping these four underutilized acres with a mixed office/restaurant use would satisfy a need demonstrated by residents and support the business community (restaurant) and contribute to the Village's revenue stream (offices).



Recommendations:

- Develop offices with a ground floor restaurant as the preferred land use for the site. Continue to work with property owners to explore opportunities to coordinate the redevelopment of these two properties.
 - ✓ The high visibility, traffic volumes and favorable regional access offered at this major intersection support office and retail over other uses.
 - ✓ A community need has been demonstrated for a new, quality sit-down family style restaurant to serve area residents and the nearby business community.
 - ✓ New office/restaurant development would complement and be compatible with adjacent land uses.
 - ✓ A three-story, 86,000 square foot building could support roughly 300 office and restaurant workers.
 - ✓ At maximum permitted site utilization, potential site valuation and net fiscal benefit to the Village are high, second only to a full office use.

- ☛ Facilitate the remediation of the corner gas station property relative to environmental hazards that may be present. Coordinate with the property owner and others to conduct investigations and address potential contamination of the building and soil (tanks were reportedly removed previously) and identify potential funding assistance for any associated property clean-up. Facilitate the acquisition of funding.
- ☛ Reduce the anticipated increases in traffic congestion at the intersection with consideration given to appropriate site layout, development of multiple drive entrances and additional traffic control signage approaching the intersection's signal light.
- ☛ Rezone the properties to an enhanced *Office Building* District and extend the district to properties which are concentrated around the Northfield/Alexander Roads intersection for the reasons discussed in *Sub-Area 2*, above. (The preferred land uses for this location, professional offices with a restaurant, would not be permitted under the Village's current *Industrial* zoning for the area).
- ☛ Reduce the number of parking spaces required for office uses and update other parking requirements, as discussed earlier in this section. In addition, consider the need to require a minimum distance that traffic ingress/egress drives must be set back from roadway intersections.
- ☛ Strengthen Village regulations associated with landscaping, screening and signage, among others.

Focus Area A, Sub-Area 4
Ford Motor Company's
Walton Hills Stamping Plant

For five decades, this major manufacturer has served as an important anchor for the local and regional economy. Recent company "right-sizing", in coordination with significant equipment investments and plant modernization activities, offers opportunities for redevelopment of an underutilized portion of the facility's expansive 111 acres at the Village's busiest intersection.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Redevelop an underutilized roughly 19-acre portion of the 111-acre property for offices (preferred). A favored secondary use includes light industry.
 - ✓ Maximizes the use of a portion of this major employer's property which is either vacant or underutilized, due primarily to the gradual contraction of the physical plant across the expansive property in the course of modernization and other

changes in operations.

- ✓ The high visibility and traffic volumes offered along Alexander Road support office uses.
- ✓ New office development would complement and be compatible with this primarily industrial corridor which lacks office uses.
- ✓ A three-story, 400,000 square foot building could support as many as 1,300 office workers.
- ✓ At maximum permitted site utilization, potential site valuation and net fiscal benefit to the Village are greatest (compared to a light industry development scenario and other alternatives).
- ☛ In conjunction with the recommended redevelopment activity, establish a dialogue with Plant representatives to identify and explore shared needs and possible actions (Also see related discussion in *Chapter 6*).
- ☛ Conduct site investigations to determine the presence of any environmental hazards throughout the grounds and existing structures which comprise the proposed redevelopment site.
 - ✓ It is assumed that over its five decades of operations the plant has utilized a variety of potentially hazardous substances in its manufacturing processes.
- ☛ Rezone the subject site to an enhanced *Office Building* district as part of the extended district (discussed for the two previous sub-areas).
- ☛ Improve and strengthen Village regulations associated with parking, setbacks, landscaping, screening, and signage, among other elements via a comprehensive Zoning Code update.
- ☛ Amend this Master Plan promptly in the event that the future anticipated stability of Ford's Walton Hills Stamping Plant changes significantly for any reason, thereby adversely impacting the Village's future anticipated revenue or other aspects of the Village's well-being.
 - ✓ Identify and assess impacts, develop potential strategies and implement the selected action step(s) in conjunction with a formal Master Plan amendment.

FOCUS AREA B: VACANT INDUSTRIAL PARK PROPERTIES

Among the half dozen vacant industrially zoned properties potentially available for development within the several industrial parks off of Northfield Road, two have been identified by the Village for study. Removed from the high traffic volumes and visibility offered along Northfield Road, these two sub-areas (and the other properties not analyzed) should be targeted for industrial, rather than office, uses.

Focus Area B, Sub-Area 1 Vacant Property, Treat Road

Encompassing almost 12 vacant acres of a larger property at the end of Treat Road, this site's future development potential is in question.



Recommendations:

- ☛ While the preferred development for this site is a light industry or industry/research use, a host of conditions have been identified which will thwart the likelihood of any future development occurring, including:
 - ✓ Potential physical constraints are posed by a prominent storm water retention basin fronting a potential entrance at the street and a steeply-sloped ravine to the rear, which includes a wetland and stream that occasionally flood. Most of the property is underlain by dump materials of an unknown type and the land surface is covered with a mound of fill material. Further investigations are required to assess the magnitude of these challenges, particularly any potential hazards and remediation costs and other challenges associated with the extensive area designated as a former dumpsite.
 - ✓ Potential zoning-related agreements entered into by the property owner with the Village in the past appear to prohibit the future development of the vacant 12 acres at this site. Further investigation of Village records is required to reveal the details of this arrangement.

NOTE: Subject to thorough investigations to ascertain the nature and extent of waste disposition and Village-property owner agreements pertaining to zoning and associated future development restrictions, this site may be “un-developable”.

**Vacant Property, Young Drive
Sub-Area B, Sub-Area 2**

Bordered by industrial properties on all sides, this three-acre rectangular property offers potential for a similar industrial use.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Develop this site with light industry or industry/research, the preferred uses.
 - ✓ The two properties (one owner) are level and regularly configured.
 - ✓ These uses would be compatible with adjacent and area properties, which are all industrial in nature.
 - ✓ A one-story, 50,000 square foot building could support about 100 workers.
 - ✓ Such uses would add to the tax base of the Village.

- ☛ The preferred industrial uses are allowed under the property's existing *Industrial* district classification. However, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter, an update of the current Village Zoning Code is needed in order to correct deficiencies and improve the quality of new developments.

FOCUS AREA C: VILLAGE CENTER

The geographic center and civic heart of the Village are located at the intersection of Alexander and Walton Roads, encircled by residential neighborhoods. Because the Municipal Complex, the concentration of government and symbol of the Village, is located at this relatively heavily-traveled intersection, a coordinated and well-maintained area appearance is critical so as to project an overall positive community image to all who visit or pass by (including current Villagers and business representatives).

Future needed government building expansion, vacant land development and retail property revitalization efforts proposed at this highly visible Village Center focus area must be comprehensive and coordinated, with thoughtful consideration given to the desired community lifestyle and image reflected in the adopted planning goals.

**Focus Area C, Sub-Area 1
Village Municipal Complex**

Many of the positive features and images characterizing this five-acre property, which are important to preserve, combine to present challenges. The addition of new functions, requiring major expansions or additional buildings, is discouraged due to a range of obstacles and the need to preserve the integrity of the current site and buildings.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Continue to maintain and upgrade the existing buildings and grounds as judged necessary in order to enhance government operations, improve efficiencies, preserve public investment, and promote a positive community image.
- ☛ Expand the Village Hall building by constructing additional government offices, a priority action.
 - ✓ A modest horizontal (rather than vertical) building addition is recommended in order to preserve the many positive images conveyed by the grounds and buildings and to keep costs down.
 - ✓ Add up to roughly 4,000 square feet of additional floor space connected to the existing 11,096 square foot structure.
 - ✓ Associated challenges, considerations and recommendations are provided in *Chapter 6*.
 - ✓ The development of additional needed office, storage and other floor space is contingent upon a professional needs and space assessment, followed by the preparation of design alternatives by a licensed architect.
- ☛ Consider the development of a partial-service, indoor, multi-purpose Village Recreation Center (in coordination with, or subsequent to, expansion of government offices) **ONLY** if and when contiguous residential properties become available for Village purchase.
 - ✓ Such additional adjacent acreage would be required in order to accommodate the space needs of the new structure and associated additional vehicle parking.

- ✓ Consider conducting a professionally managed written or telephone survey of Village households (or a statistically valid random sample) to derive key information needed to enable Village officials to confirm project needs and to assess its feasibility (See *Focus Area D* below).
- ☛ Consider the expansion of the Community Hall Building to accommodate demonstrated public recreation, meeting/social demands ONLY in conjunction with discussions regarding the broader community needs relative to the potential development of an indoor, multi-purpose Village Recreation Center.
- ☛ Consider the benefits derived by utilizing matching/complementary construction materials with any future building additions or new construction. Preserve the pleasing images projected by the openness, design and overall aesthetics of the site.
- ☛ Consider rezoning adjacent residential properties for *Business* in the future if they are purchased by the Village for existing facility expansion or new developments. In conjunction, consider rezoning the *Country Home* portion of the Municipal Complex property to *Business*.
- ✓ The Municipal Complex property is partially zoned for *Business*, whereas the balance is zoned *Country Home*. The existing and potential new public buildings are permitted within both. Rezoning is recommended to maintain consistency.
- ☛ Increase the rear and sideyard *setback* requirements for nonresidential land uses (such as an expanded Municipal Complex) to better buffer unlike neighboring land uses. The current code requires just 20 feet. Also conduct a comprehensive review and strengthening of all current standards, particularly in regard to *area, landscaping/screening, and parking* requirements in the *Business* district.

**Focus Area C, Sub-Area 2
Mixed Retail Property**

Facing the Village's Municipal Complex at the heart of the Village is this small retail center. While the retail businesses provide important community goods and services, some conditions present at the site project negative images and function-and safety-related problems which should be comprehensively addressed.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Meet with the property owner to discuss the deficiencies (including potential remedies) associated with public safety, vehicle access and parking lot functions, and aspects of

building and grounds appearance which were identified during Master Plan preparation. Issues and associated recommended actions, including schematics, are detailed in *Chapter 6*. Some additional applicable actions can be found in the new proposed Commercial Streetscape Improvement Program, detailed earlier in this section (*Focus Area A*).

- ✓ Work proactively with the property owner, as a partner, to identify and remove the obstacles to implementing the recommended property and building improvements.
- ✓ In the absence of satisfactory progress with the above outreach strategy, consider aggressive enforcement of existing applicable regulations and other actions, as judged feasible, to work toward the desired results.
- ☛ Rezone the focus area's vacant southerly property to *Business*.
- ✓ Recommended fire station development (with the rear access drive) on the opposite, facing side of Walton Road reduces the desirability of this undeveloped property for future residential use (See following *Sub-Area 3* discussion).
- ✓ With the proposed shared entrance drive, appropriate site layout and building design, including strategically positioned landscaping for screening, any potential negative impacts of the project on contiguous residential properties would be greatly minimized.
- ☛ Improve the *Business* district regulations, particularly in regard to *signs* (in addition to the need for the strengthening of *parking, area and landscaping/screening* regulations, previously noted).

**Focus Area C, Sub-Area 3
Vacant Village-Owned Property
(Former Refueling Station)**

The removal of the former station and tanks early in 2004 provides an exciting new development opportunity at this strategically located 1.2 acre property situated directly across from the Village's Municipal Complex. Development of a new fire station with some government office space at this location is favored.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Develop a new Village Fire Station in combination with some additional government office space, the preferred use for the property. The proposed Fire Station building includes 24-hour continuous fire protection and rescue services with some general government administrative functions.
 - ✓ The 4,100 square foot, one-story building, associated drives and parking and immediate grounds would occupy about 0.8 acres of the 1.2-acre property.
 - ✓ Building features include an apparatus room with living quarters and other associated space (3,500 square feet) and additional general government offices (600 square feet).
 - ✓ Fire station staffing would include four firefighter/paramedics (including one Fire Safety Inspector). Administrative offices would be staffed by up to three Building Department employees initially, and up to five total Village workers simultaneously at full design capacity.
 - ✓ The preferred active, emergency entrance drive is at Alexander Road. An additional ingress/egress opportunity for maneuvering fire apparatus and employee/visitor parking access is offered at the rear of the building off of Walton Road.
- ☛ Prepare and execute a formal fire/rescue intergovernmental services *Agreement* with the City of Maple Heights.
 - ✓ Building, equipment, and facility maintenance and upkeep would be provided by Walton Hills.
 - ✓ Personnel and vehicles (including associate equipment) would be provided by the City of Maple Heights.
- ☛ Incorporate traffic signalization and signage improvements as needed in order to accommodate efficient and safe exit of vehicles during emergency calls.
- ☛ Visually screen the facility from adjacent residences and soften the intersection with thoughtful site layout and building design, and landscaping improvements.
- ☛ Develop the facility with full consideration given to providing for future building expansion (which the site affords) as community needs change.
- ☛ Consider the utilization of the facility's additional unassigned government office space as temporary relief of some congestion in the Village Hall building.

- ✓ Absent the recommended expansion of the Village Hall building’s floor space in a timely manner, consideration should be given to construction of basement space here in order to satisfy broader Village storage needs (which would provide floor space in the Village Hall building for additional office-only functions).
- ☛ Coordinate the appearance of the building and grounds with the Municipal Complex across the street. As in the event of new construction at the Municipal Complex, integrate matching/complementary building materials and site design elements to the extent possible to foster a unifying image for Village government at this central, highly visible heart of the Village.
- ☛ Consider rezoning the rear *Country Home* district portion of the focus area to *Business* to match the recommended action at the retail corner on the opposite side of Walton Road in order to maintain consistency.
- ☛ Conduct a comprehensive review and update of the regulations contained in the Village Zoning Code, particularly in those topic areas noted above for the Municipal Complex site (*Sub-Area 1*).

FOCUS AREA D: VACANT VILLAGE-OWNED PROPERTY

Surrounded by residences, this property was initially purchased by the Village a decade ago with an eye to its future use as an indoor public recreation/civic center. Since that time, numerous proposals have been advanced, considered and dismissed by Village officials.

Because of the proximity of this site to the Municipal Complex and geographic center of the Village, property size and other features, and evolving community needs, this property should continue to be held by the Village. It should be reserved for a complementary future public use

or to satisfy a demonstrated community need. One such publicly beneficial use, identified during the planning process and explored in earlier chapters, includes a Village indoor Recreation Center.

**Focus Area D
Vacant Property, Walton Road**

Strategically positioned within just 500 feet of the Municipal Complex at the geographic heart of the Village, this 11-acre Village-owned property should be reserved to satisfy a demonstrated future public need.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Develop the site with a partial-service, indoor, multi-purpose Village Recreation Center, the preferred use.
 - ✓ A modestly sized (and priced) facility sets the stage for potential future expansion (which the site affords) as community needs change and grow.
 - ✓ With careful attention to siting so as to recognize wet soil conditions and allow for the potential future expansion of the building and development of some complementary activities (e.g., playground, walking trail, picnic/sitting areas, community garden, fishing pond, etc), the initial structure could be positioned at several alternative suitable locations.
 - ✓ The roughly 12,500 square foot, one-story building, associated drives, parking (including about 75-100 spaces) and immediate grounds would occupy just 3.5 acres of the almost 11-acre property.
 - ✓ Features include a field house (convertible to a range of functions), an indoor running track, exercise and meeting rooms, a kitchen, and other amenities (described in *Chapter 6*).
 - ✓ The level, regularly configured site is set back from Walton Road. The property provides ample area to accommodate a range of potentially desirable facility layout designs, with liberal application of strategically positioned natural features and other landscaping treatments to provide the needed year-round screening desired by neighboring residents.
 - ✓ In addition to the numerous site characteristics and area features discussed in *Chapter 6* which favor this location for the proposed use, the recommended development of the adjacent electric utility corridor with a hike and bike trail serves as a highly complementary use.
 - ✓ Consider conducting a professional written or telephone survey of a representative sample of Village residents to determine: 1) the level of public support for a Village Recreation Center, 2) the preferred funding mechanisms, 3) the preferred level of family/individual membership fees, and other key information needed to enable Village officials to assess project feasibility.
- ☛ The proposed Village Recreation Center development is permitted at this site under its present zoning for *Country Home*.
- ☛ Conduct a comprehensive review and update of the current Village zoning regulations in the context of the proposed public building use.

FOCUS AREA E: LARGE VACANT RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

Among the handful of large vacant properties in the Village potentially available for future development are two situated at opposite ends of the community. Considering the Village's adopted goal to preserve its country way of life and image, coupled with the properties' numerous physical development constraints and the character of the abutting land uses (i.e., single-family residential), the range of development scenarios judged feasible for these two sub-areas is limited.

Focus Area E, Sub-Area 1 Vacant Property, Dunham Road

Located at the edge of the Village adjacent to Maple Heights, the relatively level fronting 31 acres of this property offer striking valley vistas to the east. The development of single-family homes would be compatible with surrounding uses and could provide added benefits for prospective residents because of the wooded setting and commanding views.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Develop the buildable 31-acre portion of the site with single-family homes, the preferred use.
 - ✓ Provides a move-up option to residents who may desire a newly constructed, affordable home priced close to the community's current median housing price.
 - ✓ The site's natural features (e.g., mature trees, variable valley terrain, distant stream, and vista) offer benefits and potential hazards (steep valley wall) which should be incorporated into the site layout and unit design.
 - ✓ Roughly 32 homes could be built.
- ☛ Consider the development of seniors-only cluster homes on the buildable portion of the site at a future date **ONLY** in the event that the property continues to remain vacant **AND** the proposed Village-sponsored Seniors Home Services Program is judged at a future date to require the addition of a new housing alternative for older Village residents.
 - ✓ Compliance with the Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995 is required under this development scenario.
 - ✓ Up to about 149 units could be constructed.

- ✓ The site's natural features (e.g., mature trees, variable valley terrain, distant stream, and vista) offer benefits and potential hazards (steep valley wall) which should be incorporated into the site layout and unit design.
- ✓ Transportation services would be required to enable non-driving residents to access distant shopping, medical and other services.
- ☛ The recommended development of single-family homes is permitted at this site; it is zoned *Country Home*. Rezoning would be required with the seniors-only housing development scenario.
- ☛ Conduct a comprehensive review and update of the current zoning regulations in the context of seniors-only housing, the proposed secondary use.

**Focus Area E, Sub-Area 2
Vacant Properties, Sagamore Road**

Fronting Sagamore Hills Township, these two abutting properties total 53 acres. The site is encircled by residences and features wooded, rolling terrain, with some steep slopes and dissected by creeks. While the site offers numerous development challenges, it is perhaps best suited for limited future residential use.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Develop the buildable 34-acre portion of the site with single-family homes, the preferred use.
 - ✓ Provides a move-up option to residents who may desire a newly constructed, affordable home priced close to the community's current median housing price.
 - ✓ The site's variable terrain and streams should be incorporated into the site layout and unit design.
 - ✓ About 36 homes could be constructed.
- ☛ Consider the development of seniors-only cluster homes on the buildable portion of the site at a future date **ONLY** in the event that the property continues to remain vacant **AND** the proposed Village-sponsored Seniors Home Services Program (See *Chapter 8*) is judged at a future date to require the addition of a new housing alternative for older Village residents.

- ✓ Compliance with the Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995 is required under this development scenario.
- ✓ Up to about 172 units could be built.
- ✓ The site's variable terrain and streams should be incorporated into the site layout and unit design.
- ✓ Transportation services would be required to enable non-driving residents to access distant shopping, medical and other services.
- ☛ The recommended development, single-family homes, is permitted under the site's current *Country Home* zoning. Rezoning would be required with the seniors-only housing development scenario.
- ☛ Conduct a comprehensive review and update of the current zoning regulations in the context of the potential development of seniors-only housing, the proposed secondary use.

FOCUS AREA F: ELECTRIC POWER LINE CORRIDOR

Public utility corridors are ubiquitous within Walton Hills and the region. They are often viewed as physical barriers dividing neighborhoods and communities. However, numerous examples exist locally and beyond where alternative developments successfully coexist in the shadow of high tension power lines. Perhaps one of the most common shared uses includes public trails for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Electric utilities are generally supportive of hike and bike trail developments within their corridors, provided public safety and infrastructure access can be assured and vandalism is not anticipated. Many examples of such trail developments exist throughout the region (including the Summit Metro Parks Bike and Hike Trail entering Walton Hills from the south).

Both demonstrated community needs and regional recreation/open space goals and objectives (many advanced in the Cuyahoga County *Greenspace Plan* which is undergoing preparation) can be satisfied with the development of a network of interconnecting trails utilizing selected segments of the many miles of utility corridors blanketing the area.

Focus Area F
CEI Utility Easement

Traversing the Village, the wide CEI utility corridor offers a unique opportunity to satisfy residents' expressed desire to link the neighborhoods to Village and regional recreation opportunities via a new hike and bike trail.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Develop a hike and bike trail along the eastern leg of the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company's (FirstEnergy) high tension electric power line corridor, extending from the Village's T.G. Young Park to the existing trail at the intersection of Dunham and Egbert Roads.
- ✓ This corridor segment extends about 1.6 miles through rolling terrain with widths varying from 100 to 150 feet. While the corridor's power lines pass over four neighborhood streets, the corridor is free of substations, physical improvements and natural challenges, or barriers, which would pose obstacles to trail development. Vegetation is primarily low-profile grass/scrub.
- ✓ The corridor traverses about four dozen, developed, single-family residential properties, which are each roughly one-acre (or larger) in size. Easements are delineated across the individual properties to accommodate the power lines and towers.
- ✓ Most homes are situated at the ends of the properties opposite the lines, whose rear yards are typically wooded to varying degrees. While some homes are positioned roughly 100 feet from the edge of the utility corridor, most are over 200 feet distant, whereas some situated at the four cross streets have narrow yards abutting the unscreened lines.
- ✓ Trail development satisfies a demonstrated need to better link Village neighborhoods to T.G. Young Park and a host of regional recreational opportunities.

Prior to trail development:

- ☛ Investigate and identify legal considerations and challenges associated with corridor easements access and development, preparatory to advancing to preliminary trail planning activities.
- ☛ Foster the development of regular communications with the CEI in anticipation of the Village's future utility corridor trail development planning activities and associated needs relative to corridor enhancement and buffering with natural vegetation.

- ☛ Meet with and coordinate preliminary trail planning activities with the affected residential property owners, CEI, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Cleveland Metroparks, and Summit Metro Parks, among other interested parties.
- ☛ Present the results of preliminary trail planning activities, including funding alternatives, in a Village forum to solicit public comments and recommendations.

FOCUS AREA G: T. G. YOUNG PARK

T.G. Young Park, with its variety of recently expanded and upgraded facilities and Village-sponsored recreational programming, offers a range of organized and self-directed outdoor recreational activities for its residents. However, additional opportunities exist to develop new complementary facilities and activities on portions of the 39-acre property which are presently under-utilized or vacant.

T.G. Young Park

Many recommendations provided in the T.G. Young Park Master Plan, prepared in 2001, remain valid today and are worthy of endorsement here.



Recommendations:

- ☛ Develop the Park's "restricted area" (vacant 24 acres) as outlined in the *T.G. Young Park Master Plan (2001)*, including:
 - ✓ Add a trailhead with a small parking area at the turnaround at the end of Carmany Drive.
 - ✓ Develop new recreation features in the wooded areas, including:
 - P Hiking/walking trails
 - P Cross country ski trails
 - P Sledding areas
 - P Picnic/shelter areas
 - P Natural areas
 - ✓ Route the hiking trail through the wooded areas to maximize the benefits offered by the variable terrain. Bridges crossing existing streams would be required to connect the Carmany Drive parking area to the "Active Area" (mostly developed central 15 acres) and to the proposed trails at the south end of the property.

- ✓ Develop CEI's high tension power line corridor and the adjacent isolated and unused southerly acreage with:
 - P Hiking/walking trails
 - P Picnic areas
 - P Natural open space/play area
 - P Parking (overflow)

Note: Details of these and associated recommendations are provided in The T.G. Young Park Master Plan, reproduced in Appendix C.

- Within the Park's central 15-acre "active area", continue to maintain, upgrade and modify the existing facilities and grounds as judged necessary in order to satisfy identified community needs for diversified recreation experiences and ensure the safety of the public. While a number of facility improvements have been made during recent years, others are underway at present. In addition, other changes at various stages of consideration and discussion are worthy of consideration for possible future development/implementation, including:
 - ✓ Pavillion replacement (or expansion and improvements)
 - ✓ Existing equipment upgrades
 - ✓ Feature/equipment additions (including climbing boulders and water activity)
 - ✓ "Life trail" with interspersed exercise stations designed for older residents.

PROPOSED FUTURE LAND USE

Changes to the Village's land use pattern which would result during the planning period, based on the recommendations presented in this chapter, are illustrated in **Map 7.1**. This map is to be used as a graphic representation of those land use changes and as a general guide for future land use decisions.

The associated increases and decreases in the Village's acreage tallies by land use classification, ranked by percent change, are provided in **Table 7.1**. Based on the recommended land use changes, roughly 108.4 vacant acres, just 20 % of total currently vacant land areas, will convert to some form of new development.

Table 7.1. Existing and Future Land Use Compared, Walton Hills

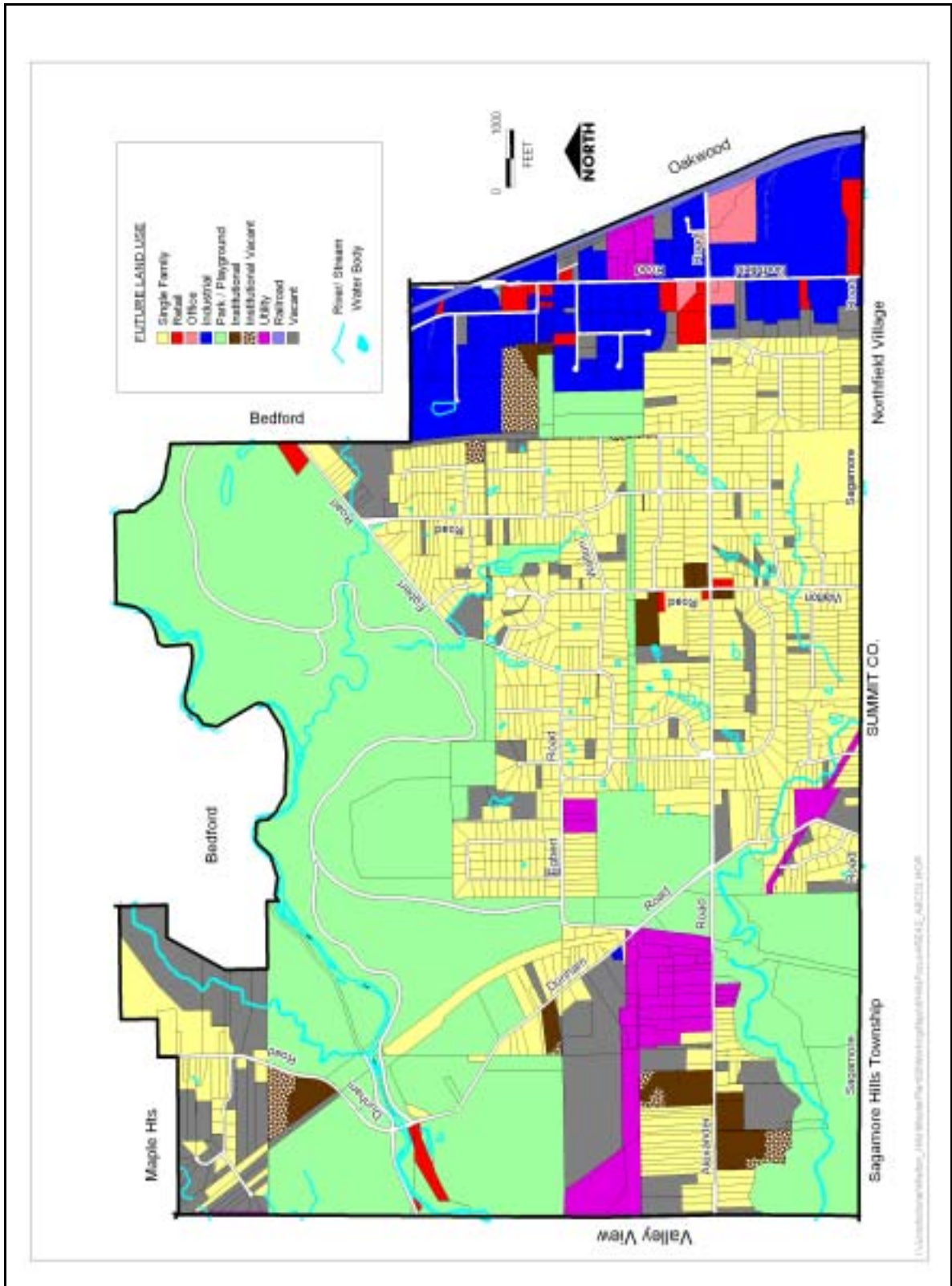
Land Use Categories (Change)	Present Acres	Future Acres (Development Plan)	Percent Change
Office	1.2	27.1	97.7%
Residential - Single Family	1,262.7	1,346.6	6.6%
Parks and Playgrounds	1,686.9	1,706.9	1.2%
Industry	322.8	320.7	-0.6%
Utilities	173.9	154.7	-11.0%
Vacant	541.2	432.8	-20.0%

NOTE: Vacant Institutional (Village-owned *Focus Area D*) converts to *developed* Institutional property but is not depicted here.

Based on the Village’s desire to maintain its small town image characterized by a country lifestyle and large residential lots and open spaces, coupled with the limited remaining vacant acreage suitable for future development, few changes are expected to occur in the Village’s total residential population and overall land development pattern during the next five to ten years.

It is anticipated that the bulk of the remaining acreage depicted as *vacant* will eventually experience infill by converting to a residential use. A fair amount will continue to remain undeveloped, however, due to the presence of severe environmental challenges to development (e.g., steep slopes, flood zones, wetlands). The geographic extent of the current business development pattern in the Village is not expected to change.

Map 7.1. Proposed Future Land Use, Walton Hills



CHAPTER 8

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PLAN



The coordinated efforts of Walton Hills' elected officials in collaboration with residents and other stakeholders will define the path to achieve tomorrow's vision of the community.

INTRODUCTION

This final chapter of the Village of Walton Hills Master Plan discusses how to best achieve the broad community goals outlined in the first chapter and carry out the recommendations detailed throughout the Plan.

Successful implementation of the numerous recommendations provided in the Master Plan will be realized only through the concerted and coordinated efforts of the Village elected officials and staff, the business community and the residents.

The following Strategic Management Plan is comprised of key action steps that must be spearheaded by the Village's leadership in order to achieve success. These strategies, which are primarily administrative in nature, are not intended to be all-inclusive. Nor does the listing include all of the successful programs, activities and institutional arrangements already underway. For details about the following new programs, activities and associated information, see *Chapter 7* and previous chapters.

STRATEGIES FOR MASTER PLAN ADOPTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The timely adoption of the Master Plan conveys its importance and legitimacy to the public. This formal action also institutionalizes the Master Plan by providing an official roadmap for the Village's elected officials, staff, board members, residents, and other stakeholders to follow in order to guide their decisions relative to the development, redevelopment and revitalization of the Village in the future.

☛ Create Public Awareness and Conduct Local Review of the Master Plan

Widespread awareness of the Master Plan's goals, recommendations and strategies can help foster critical support for it throughout the adoption and implementation period. The Plan's effectiveness depends upon the extent to which it is seen, read, understood, embraced, and respected. Some methods for creating public awareness include, but are not limited to:

✓ Circulate and Promote the Master Plan

Copies of the *Draft* Plan should be made available for public review at the Village Hall (or Community Hall) building and possibly at other local public location(s). It should also be distributed to elected Village officials, key board representatives and department heads for their study and review. (The Cuyahoga County Planning Commission will initially make the document available on its website: <http://planning.co.cuyahoga.oh.us>).

✓ Host a Public Meeting

A public meeting provides an opportunity for residents and others to comment on *Draft* Plan content prior to finalization and adoption.

- ✓ **Publish and Circulate a Special Newsletter**
A newsletter distributed Village-wide to residents (and possibly businesses) can inform and update all stakeholders regarding the *Draft Plan* content and upcoming activities and events associated with its adoption.
- ✓ **Issue Press Releases**
Newspaper notices and articles offer yet another means of heightening public awareness of the Master Plan and the public meeting.

☛ **Adopt the Master Plan**

The Village’s timely formal adoption of the Master Plan is a critical initial step to the successful implementation of its policies and recommendations. Adoption enables the Village’s Administration, Council, Planning Commission and other boards and commissions to make decisions on issues based on goals and policies that have been formally embraced by the community. A sample ordinance for Village adoption is provided in *Appendix G*.

☛ **Establish a Master Plan Implementation Committee**

A committee should be formed to meet regularly to help coordinate and ensure Plan implementation. Responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- ✓ Prioritize and further define action steps.
- ✓ Recommend the assignment of implementation responsibilities.
- ✓ Identify needed resources and funding mechanisms.
- ✓ Develop an implementation schedule.
- ✓ Develop “benchmarks” with which to measure progress and community impacts.



☛ **Appoint a Plan Implementation Coordinator**

Identify and designate an existing staffperson to oversee the ongoing management of all activities associated with Master Plan implementation.

☛ **Commit Staff and Financial Resources**

The Village must designate and commit all resources that ensure the successful implementation of the Master Plan.

☛ **Review the Master Plan Periodically**

The Master Plan is part of a continuous and dynamic comprehensive planning process that must be continually responsive to the Village’s changing circumstances and needs. The Plan is not a static document, or absolute, which is exempt from future change.

A comprehensive review of the Village of Walton Hills Master Plan should be conducted at least every three to five years. The review should consider input of all stakeholders and it should be conducted in a public fashion.

STRATEGIES FOR CODIFIED ORDINANCES AND ZONING MAP

☛ **Update and Amend the Village Zoning Code and Map**

The Zoning Code (*Title Six of the Planning and Zoning Code*) and Map provide the legal framework for regulating current and future development. A well written, comprehensive and modern Code expedites zoning administration, clarifies development issues and should result in the desired higher quality development and redevelopment reflected in the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan.

Following Master Plan adoption, publication and general distribution, the Village should follow through with its intention to comprehensively review and update the Zoning Code and Map. Most sections of the Code were adopted prior to the 1980's. A number of sections were written and adopted in 1951. Since then, state planning laws, community planning principles and the Village have undergone numerous dynamic changes. While numerous revisions have certainly been made on occasion to sections of the Zoning Code and Map since then, a comprehensive review, assessment and update are required at this time. Many examples of existing regulations demonstrating the need for strengthening were provided in the last three chapters of the Plan.

Importantly, the Code must also be made consistent with the many new goals and recommendations (including zoning changes summarized next) found in *Chapter 7*.

☛ **Implement Recommended Zoning Changes and Consider Other Zoning Changes for the Focus Areas and Community**

- ✓ Rezone Focus Area A, Sub-Areas 2, 3 and 4 to an enhanced *Office Building* district and extend the district to properties which are concentrated around the Northfield/Alexander Roads intersection.
- ✓ Rezone the vacant portion of Focus Area C, Sub-Area 2 to *Business*.

- ✓ Consider the creation of an *Industrial Service* zoning district for Focus Area A properties which front on Northfield Road (excluding the Northfield/Alexander Roads intersection) to allow the development of professional offices and supportive retail uses.
- ✓ Consider the creation of an *Active Adult Overlay* district or an alternative approach in Focus Areas E, Sub-Areas 1 or 2, providing stated conditions are met in the future (See *Chapter 7*).
- ☛ Update the Village Planning Commission Ordinance (No. 2004-13)
 - ✓ In accordance with the adopted ordinance, develop architectural design standards. Or, consider amending the ordinance to include “guidelines”.
 - ✓ Revise the ordinance to incorporate language recognizing the Master Plan and providing for coordination of Commission duties and actions with the initiatives included in the Master Plan.

☛ **Review and Consider Updating Other Sections of the Codified Ordinances**

Successful implementation of the many actions recommended in the Master Plan requires comprehensive consideration of all regulations which relate to the Village’s future development, redevelopment and revitalization. Review the Exterior Property Maintenance and Safety, Sanitation and Health Codes, among others.

STRATEGIES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

☛ **Implement the Recommended Development, Redevelopment and Revitalization Actions in Focus Areas**

- ✓ Designate the staff and identify and implement the actions necessary to carry out the recommendations associated with all Focus Areas.

☛ **Design and Launch the Official Village Website**

☛ **Hire (or Consider Hiring) Staff and Retain Professional Outside Assistance, as needed, to Implement Recommendations**

- ✓ Hire a Zoning Inspector.
- ✓ Consider hiring Building Department staff (contingent upon the alternative development of an agreement with a nearby community for the provision of “certified” inspection and enforcement services).

- ✓ Retain economic development and architectural design expertise when needed.

☛ **Develop New Programs and Activities, including:**

- ✓ Fire protection and rescue services (Agreement modifications required).
- ✓ Village Promotion/Marketing Program.
- ✓ Business Marketing and Retention Program.
- ✓ Seniors Home Services Program.
- ✓ Commercial Streetscape Improvement Program.
- ✓ Building and Property Improvement and Renovation Program.
- ✓ Northfield Road Gateway improvements outreach and coordination.
- ✓ Early warning sirens public education/awareness program.
- ✓ Village officials and staff training.

☛ **Consider Developing or Facilitating the Development of New Programs and Approaches, such as:**

- ✓ A Land Conservation Trust
- ✓ A Financial Audit Committee
- ✓ Point of Sale Home Inspection (Exterior only) Program
- ✓ Home maintenance and repair education/training
- ✓ Homeowner Beautification Awards Program

☛ **Step-up Enforcement of Village Codes**

- ✓ Applicable codified ordinances include the Planning and Zoning Code, Exterior Property Maintenance and Safety, Sanitation and Health Codes, among others.

APPENDICES

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

BASIS FOR FORMULATING
WALTON HILLS PLANNING GOALS

P MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE
P KEY VILLAGE OFFICIALS
P COMMUNITY ATTITUDES
SURVEY

The Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (CPC) was retained to prepare a Master Plan for the Village of Walton Hills. Services included the preparation of community planning goals. Goals are essentially general statements which reflect the broad ideals and desires of residents, stakeholders, and elected officials with respect to their collective “vision” of the community’s future.

Community planning goals serve as the framework within which recommendations and policies set forth in a master plan should be structured. Ultimately, the final goals will serve as a guide for policy makers as they consider future development and redevelopment decisions, and for the courts in determining whether such decisions involving land use and zoning matters are fair and equitable.

In order to formulate representative goals, the CPC conducted a three-pronged strategy, which included:

- 1) Working with the 17 appointed members of the **Master Plan Committee** to identify and rank community assets (“strengths”) and liabilities (“weaknesses”). Membership on the Committee was reduced to 16 on August 27th and 15 on October 5th, 2002, following the resignation of two members.
- 2) Interviewing key **Village officials**, including the Mayor and six Councilpersons.
- 3) Conducting a **Community Attitudes Survey** of 200 randomly selected Walton Hills households to derive public perceptions of the Village.

Presented in this report is an overview of the principal findings derived from the application of these three approaches. Findings are provided in the form of summary narratives, data tables and/or graphic depictions of collected and analyzed data.

METHOD**MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE**

During August and September, 2002, the CPC facilitated two meetings of the Master Plan Committee using the “nominal group technique” to identify community assets (“strengths”) and liabilities (“weaknesses”). At the September meeting, each of the ten Committee members in attendance was asked to anonymously rank in writing his/her top eight selections within each of the two categories. The most important was to be designated an “8”, while the least important was to be designated a “1”. Materials were mailed to the six members unable to attend the September meeting to enable them to anonymously provide their rankings (two of six responded). The resulting weighted scores, properly recorded by 11 of the 12 members, were then tallied.

INTERVIEW OF KEY VILLAGE OFFICIALS

At the request of the Mayor, the CPC staff conducted individual interviews of the Councilpersons and Mayor in order to derive information to help formulate planning goals and priorities for Walton Hills. Interviews ranged from one to several hours each and were conducted during late August/early September (Councilpersons) and late October (Mayor) of 2002. Ten broad topic areas were used to

frame the discussions, including:

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- ✓ Public Services and Safety
- ✓ Public Transportation
- ✓ Local Economy
- ✓ Senior Services
- ✓ Village Finances
- ✓ Infrastructure
- ✓ Housing
- ✓ Parks and Recreation
- ✓ Public School System
- ✓ Village Strengths and Challenges/Weaknesses

Note: Additional Village officials received written questionnaires and were interviewed by CPC staff during the preparation of other sections of the Master Plan.

COMMUNITY ATTITUDES SURVEY

On August 31st, 2002, a survey was mailed to 200 households in Walton Hills selected at random using a CPC list of mailing addresses for the Village. Randomness was ensured by using a random number generator provided with SPSS (*Statistical Package for the Social Sciences*) computer software. The survey was mailed to about 22% of Village households (one in every five). Provided with each six-page form was an explanatory letter signed by the Mayor and a postage-paid, pre-addressed, return envelope. Respondents were asked to complete their forms anonymously and return them within ten days. An original draft survey form containing 21 questions and a cover letter were prepared by the CPC. The form and letter were refined following work sessions during the July-August period involving input from the Master Plan Committee and the CPC. Comments were also provided by the Mayor and the Business Manager, the Village's designated contact person for the Master Plan project.

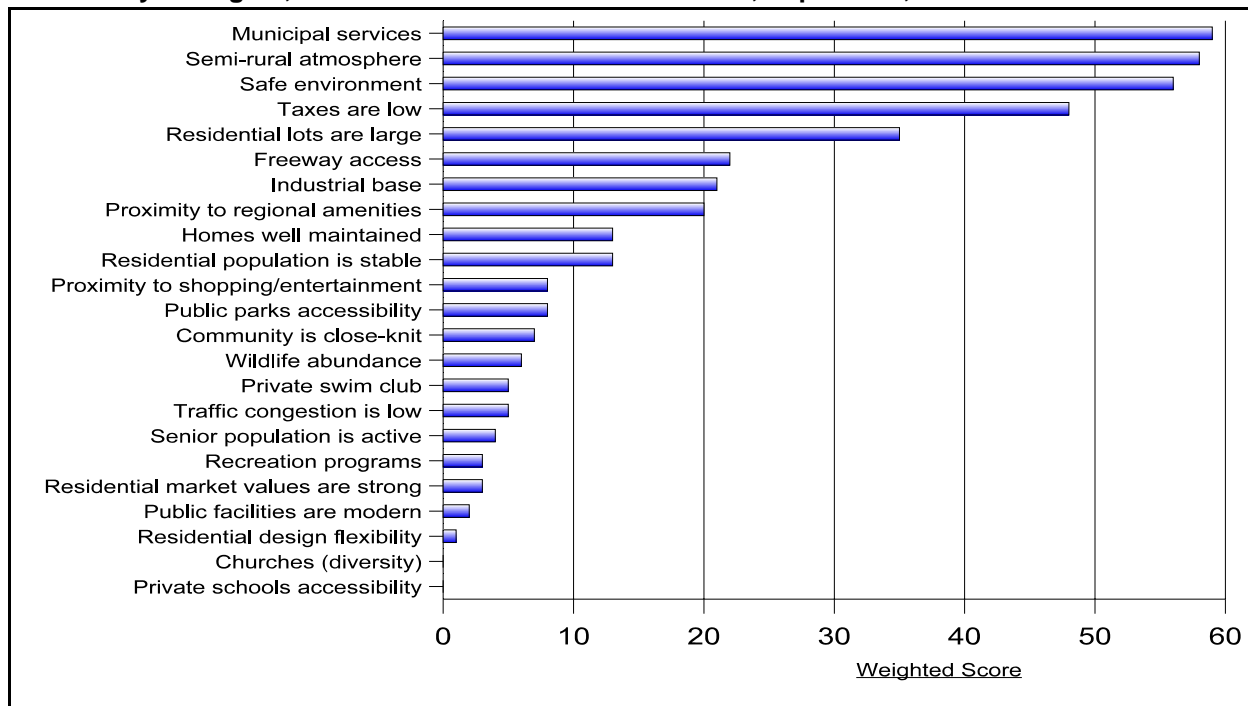
The final survey contained 19 questions designed to elicit responses from which to gauge public opinions on how residents perceive a variety of issues related to public facilities and services, land use, their home and neighborhood, shopping, and public transportation. Ample opportunity for respondents to provide additional comments and recommendations was provided. Key household demographic information was also requested from which to profile respondents, classify responses and compare with recent U.S. Census statistics to ensure the community-wide representativeness of the sampled population. Survey recipients were also asked to identify the Village's strengths and weaknesses. The final question provided space for residents to comment about any aspect of the Village they desired.

Survey findings have been prepared based on the review of basic statistics generated by SPSS, a common computer software package. In some instances, the number of responses to a particular question is provided, with non-responses noted. For some questions, simple percentage breakdowns of the full range of responses are presented. For others, individual responses are grouped to simplify review. Questions had varying numbers of total responses for several reasons. Some questions were left blank because they were either not applicable to the respondent, because of oversight, or for a variety of other reasons known only to the respondent. In some instances, questions were improperly answered, thereby voiding those responses. For the few questions that prompted narrative responses, computer-assisted analysis was not feasible. For these questions, CPC staff reviewed and classified responses based on interpretation and judgement, with an eye to consistency.

MASTER PLAN COMMITTEE

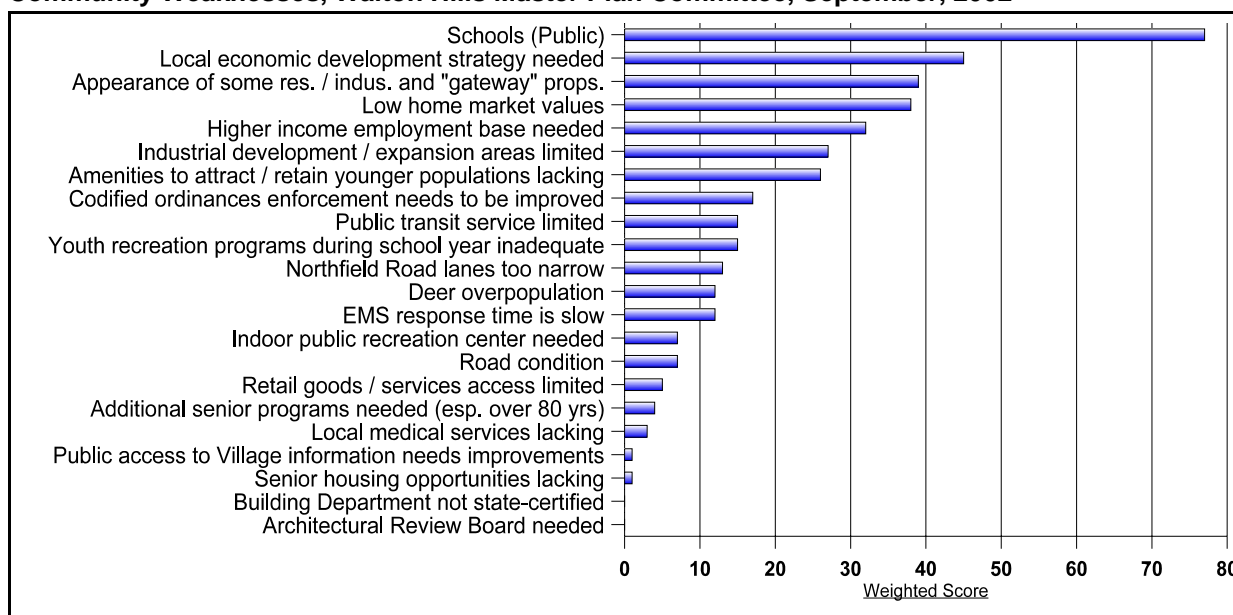
Results of the ranking exercise for **community strengths** are illustrated below. Among the 23 identified strengths, all but two received votes. The highest scoring strength, *Municipal services* (59) just edged out *Semi-rural atmosphere* (58) and *Safe environment* (56). The fourth highest weighted score was received by *Taxes are low* (48), found alone in the second tier. *Residential lots are large* (35) is found in the third tier. In the fourth tier of strengths is found *Freeway access* (22), *Industrial base* (21) and *Proximity to regional amenities* (20). The single community strength identified by all responding Committee members as one of their top eight choices was *Municipal services*.

Community Strengths, Walton Hills Master Plan Committee, September, 2002



Results of the **community weaknesses** ranking are shown below. Among the 22 identified weaknesses, all but two received at least one vote. The top scoring weakness, *Schools (Public)*, ranked noticeably higher than the others (77), demonstrating the high measure of concern regarding this public service held by Committee members. The next highest weighted score was received by *Local economic development strategy needed* (45). Closely following are *Appearance of some residential, industrial and “gateway” properties* (39) and *Low home market values* (38). The next tier of weaknesses includes *Industrial development/expansion areas limited* (27) and *Amenities to attract and retain younger populations lacking* (26). No single community weakness was identified by all voting Committee members.

Community Weaknesses, Walton Hills Master Plan Committee, September, 2002



INTERVIEWS OF KEY VILLAGE OFFICIALS

Following is an overview of the interview responses provided by Village Councilpersons and the Mayor. Comments provided by these representatives of two branches of Village government are summarized within ten broad categories.

Public Services and Safety:

There is agreement among Councilpersons and the Mayor that the Village is providing its residents with a high-quality level of public services. Each agreed that the Police Department is doing an excellent job and crime in the Village is minimal. Police officers were described as compassionate, caring professionals who often perform tasks for residents—especially senior citizens—which are outside the typical scope of duties of a police officer. The only criticism expressed about the Police Department pertained to a perception on the part of some residents that the Village may employ more officers than are necessary.

Councilpersons and the Mayor expressed the belief that the Village's fire protection (including EMS) services are very good. While there is an observed perception among some of the Villagers that the response times are often too high, none of the Councilpersons or the Mayor strongly agreed with this assertion. Of those Councilpersons who commented on the possibility of Walton Hills establishing its own fire "mini" fire station within the community's boundaries, all agreed that such an option would be cost prohibitive. Stronger support was expressed for further regionalizing the fire protection services by adding the Bedford Fire Department to the consortium. Waste Collection Services were also observed to be very good.

Infrastructure:

Councilpersons and the Mayor indicated that the Village is experiencing a critical problem with its water distribution system along Dunham Road. There are frequent breaks in the aging water line at

this location. While the Village has applied for Issue 2 funding support several times in the past to help finance line replacement, monies were not awarded. Officials agree that the replacement of the water line on Dunham Road is a critical need, and will probably soon be a major expense for the Village.

Opinions varied among officials on the condition of the Village's roads. While some judged that they are in good condition, others noted that there are some areas, such as Barclay Estates, Wood Lake, North and South Meadow Park, and the eastern end of Alexander, which are in need of repair. All officials agreed that the Village needs to implement some type of long-term preventative maintenance program community-wide, as opposed to the "spot fixing" which typically occurs. One Councilperson also suggested that the Village establish a "road fund" to meet current and future repair needs. According to the Mayor, she has requested that the Roads Committee develop a maintenance plan for the years 2003-2007. Based on the observations of the Mayor and Councilpersons, traffic flows relatively well throughout the Village, with the exception of light congestion at the main intersections during peak hour travel times. Only a few Councilpersons indicated a need to widen Northfield Road, while the Mayor noted that she believes the expense of doing so is not yet justified by the need.

With regard to sidewalks, elected officials agreed for the most part that they are not needed. They indicated that the lack of sidewalks and street lights contribute to the "rural atmosphere" that is highly valued by the residents of Walton Hills.

Officials indicated that the storm and sanitary sewer systems are in relatively good condition. A small number of properties continue to be served by septic tanks. According to the Mayor, it would be desirable to tie these homes and businesses in to the central sewer system. One Councilperson commented about the costs incurred by the Village to regularly dredge the many open roadside storm sewers, questioning whether replacing the open sewers with buried sewer pipes might be more cost-effective in the long run.

Public Transportation:

Interviewed Village officials indicated that they believe there exists little residential demand for public transit services. They indicated that most households use personal automobiles as their primary mode of transportation, and the seniors have access to the Village's van service. Additionally, they felt that RTA's Community Circulator services would not work well in Walton Hills given the lack of destinations within the community. While most of the Councilpersons believe that the businesses would benefit greatly from improved public transportation service to industrial areas, the Mayor noted that there has not been a strong need expressed by the business community for such services.

Housing:

All elected officials noted that while most homes are in relatively good condition, a number are demonstrating visible signs of deterioration. Most attributed a large part of the problem to some seniors who are no longer able to physically and/or financially keep pace with their homes' maintenance requirements. Officials provided a range of recommendations to improve the exterior condition of homes, including: implementing exterior point-of-sale inspections; participating in housing improvement programs offered by Cuyahoga County; forming a volunteer partnership with

the school system (e.g., student maintenance/repair assistance); making the building inspector position full-time; imposing fines/court appearances; and improving building regulations enforcement.

Almost all elected officials believe that the types of homes currently supplied within the Village are sufficient. Most believe there is no need to encourage the development of town homes or cluster homes. Only several officials suggested that consideration of alternative types of housing might help the Village to retain existing residents—especially seniors—and attract new residents. Correspondingly, for the most part, the Mayor and Councilpersons support the continued enforcement of the one-acre minimum lot standard for residential properties. They believe it is an important component of maintaining the Villages desirable rural atmosphere.

While several officials agreed that the Village should encourage the development of housing alternatives for its senior population, opinions varied on the type of housing which should be provided. Responses were split between town homes and assisted living/nursing facilities. Rather than provide new housing options for seniors, one official expressed the desire to expand existing services/programs for seniors to enable them to remain in their homes longer.

Local Economy:

Interviewed officials indicated very little support for encouraging the development of retail businesses in the Village. All agreed that there is sufficient accessibility to retail goods and services in nearby communities. Some, however, suggested that the development of certain types of retail, including a grocery store and a restaurant, would be beneficial. Overall, strong opposition was expressed to developing any type of medium- or large-scale retail such as strip/enclosed malls or “big box” stores.

All officials agreed that the Village should work to attract research and development and office establishments. Such businesses typically employ workers with higher average salaries, which would boost the Village’s tax revenues. Some expressed disappointment with the proliferation of warehouse establishments in the community. It is believed that such businesses consume large amounts of land but generate very little tax revenue. All agreed on the need to work with and retain existing businesses. Differing opinions were offered on strategies that the Village should employ to attract new businesses. While one official spoke of the need for implementation of an enterprise zone in order to compete with neighboring communities, another cautioned that this strategy can carry risks, and suggested that there are equally effective ways to stimulate commercial development that do not necessitate the use of tax abatement. Most expressed a concern over the future of Ford Motor Company in the community. Past production and employment reductions have adversely impacted the Village, and potential future cutbacks impact it even more. A couple of officials stated that the Village needs to be prepared for future reductions, should they occur.

Many officials suggested that improvements are needed in the appearance of the industrial areas, especially around the Village’s “entryways.” Recommendations included upgrading the building codes, stronger code enforcement, hiring a building inspector, hiring an economic development director, expanding the Planning Commission’s role, and creating an Architectural Board of Review.

Some officials also expressed concern over the lack of available land for new commercial development. It was felt by some that redevelopment of certain areas could be very challenging, given potential site contamination caused by previous industrial land owners/tenants.

Parks and Recreation:

All elected officials agreed that the recreational programs provided by the Village are relatively good. Some commented that the Village does not have a large enough population to sustain additional programming. Opinions on the condition and supply of provided recreational facilities differed, however. While many agreed that some type of renovation needs to occur at Young Park, some expressed concern over the Village's ability to finance such improvements. Most agreed that the Village cannot financially support the construction or operation of a community center. Several suggested forming a partnership with another community, such as Macedonia, in order to gain access to a facility. A couple of officials commented on the importance of implementing the action steps contained in the *Walton Hills T.G. Young Park Master Plan* (2001).

Finally, a few officials commented on the need to expand the Community Hall building adjacent to Village Hall. Demand for the Community Room (in Community Hall building) constantly exceeds its availability. The Mayor expressed the need for analysis of the Village's buildings and the importance of creating a place where residents can come together socially, year-round. Although the popular Lake Club is frequented by many of the Village's families, there are administrative obstacles within the property's deed which prevent its conversion to a publicly-owned facility.

Senior Services:

The Village provides many valued services for its senior population, including van transportation, snow plowing, and the Careline personal emergency response system. Seniors (as well as all Village homeowners) also benefit from free sewer service. Recommendations for expanding/improving senior services expressed by officials included: implementing a meals-on-wheels program; creating a volunteer senior assistance program; hiring a senior services coordinator; getting involved in the growing prescription drug affordability issue; assisting with home maintenance; increasing awareness of the availability of the Village's van service and the accessibility that senior residents have to the nearby Oakwood Senior Center's numerous programs; and focusing more on the needs of the wheelchair-bound population.

Public School System:

During the interviews, all elected officials expressed grave concerns pertaining to the performance of the Bedford City School District. Opinions varied somewhat on the exact nature of the problem, however. Some officials emphasized the problem of security within the schools, while others cited issues pertaining to the District's failings relative to administrative leadership. Underlying all opinions was a clearly expressed concern regarding the District's "academic watch" rating, and the large amount of property tax revenues which are directed to the District from Walton Hills for what most feel is a substandard level of education. In spite of the District problems identified by officials, one noted that the Village's students typically perform very well. Additionally, all interviewed officials agreed that the District's rating and corresponding negative reputation in the region hurt Walton Hills' residential property values and the Village's ability to retain and attract residents.

All officials acknowledged that withdrawal from the Bedford City School District presents a tremendous administrative challenge. At the time of the interviews, all Councilpersons expressed a preference for remaining in the District while working with its leadership to remedy problems. Some expressed support for implementing additional programs such as a local tuition voucher for Village households. The Mayor expressed support for continuing the effort to withdraw from the Bedford City School System and merge with another school district, while continually reviewing other options.

Village Finances:

All interviewed officials agreed the Village is in relatively good financial health. The community currently has approximately \$10 million saved in its reserve account which most feel should be protected for the future. The savings could potentially be used by the Village as leverage to obtain state infrastructure support, and in maintaining the Village's favorable bond rating. Some expressed the need for greater control of expenditures. Several officials commented that the Village needs to improve its financial accounting and reporting methods. Most agreed that the Village needs to be proactive in attracting additional office and industrial development in order to boost and diversify the community's tax base.

Strengths and Challenges/Weaknesses

Conversations with the Mayor and Councilpersons to derive Village strengths and challenges prompted a wide range of responses. The seven officials identified 15 community strengths, or assets. Challenges totaled 28.

Six features were cited most frequently by local officials as community strengths. The strengths identified most often (by at least two officials), listed in descending order of frequency, include:

- Rural atmosphere
- Large lot size
- Municipal services
- Low taxes
- Park system
- Highway access

Four of the noted 28 challenges/weaknesses were identified by officials as top priorities. Those shared by two or more officials, listed in descending order of frequency cited, include:

- School system
- Market Village regionally
- Improve Northfield Road Corridor and associated industrial areas
- Complete Master Plan and establish process for ongoing planning

Leading strengths identified during private interviews of officials resemble those targeted by the Master Plan Committee during facilitated group sessions. However, leading Village weaknesses derived from the interviews, while similar to those identified via the Committee's group process, vary somewhat with less agreement on shared priorities. The latter phenomenon could be due to a myriad of reasons, including the use of different information collection methods (i.e., the group discussion dynamic and consensus-building prior to ranking versus the private interview approach).

All mailed surveys were successfully delivered to each intended recipient. A total of **116 completed surveys** were returned, **representing 58% of the 200 mailed** – an extremely favorable rate of return! These responding households represent about one in eight families living in the Village – judged to be a representative sampling of public opinion. This superior return rate demonstrates a high level of engagement in Village affairs – and the Master Plan preparation process – by residents. (Historically, the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission has not earned a response rate over 49% for its many mailed surveys)

A summary of the survey responses and major findings organized by question number follows (e.g., “*Q.1*”). Specific areas are identified where findings indicate opportunities for the Village to improve its delivery of public services, the provision of housing and lifestyle preferences, and the overall quality of life for its residents. **The survey form is included at the end of this report.**

Q.1. How do you rate the following public services community-wide?

In general, survey respondents were very satisfied with public services – particularly those services over which the Village has the most direct responsibility. Ten of the 14 designated public services were considered either *Excellent* or *Good* by the majority (57% or more) of responding households. Among those services that rated the highest was *Leaf and Yard Waste Removal*, followed closely by a three-way tie among *Garbage Removal*, *Police Protection* and *Snow Removal*. These top four services were viewed favorably by at least nine of every ten responding households. Not even one respondent rated *Garbage Removal* as *Poor*. The next highest rated service, *Recyclables Removal*, also followed closely, with *Fire Protection* and *Emergency Medical Service* registering next.

While most public services were viewed positively, just *Public School System* stood apart with almost 85% of all respondents rating it as *Poor* or *Fair*. No respondents rated the public schools as *Excellent*. Some public services were not rated by all respondents because the services are unavailable or limited within the Village, the respondent is unfamiliar with them, or the respondent has not used the service. For example, *Senior Services*, *Public Transit Access/Convenience* and *Availability of Cultural Activities* were the leading services designated *N/A* (43.1%, 42.2% and 32.8% respectively).

Q.1. How do you rate the following public services community-wide?

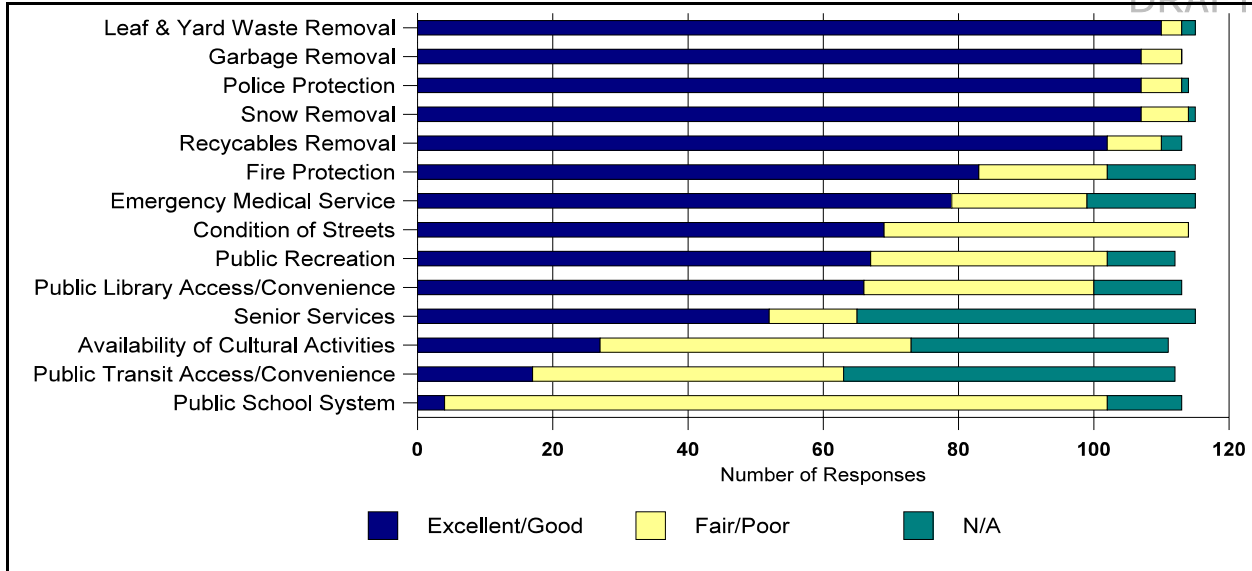
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Public Services	Total Response	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		N/A*	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Police Protection	114	79	68.1%	28	24.1%	5	4.3%	1	0.9%	1	0.9%
Fire Protection	115	34	29.3%	49	42.2%	15	12.9%	4	3.4%	13	11.2%
Emergency Medical Service	115	37	31.9%	42	36.2%	16	13.8%	4	3.4%	16	13.8%
Public Transit Access/Conven.	112	3	2.6%	14	12.1%	20	17.2%	26	22.4%	49	42.2%
Public School System	113	--	--	4	3.4%	16	13.8%	82	70.7%	11	9.5%
Public Library Access/Conven.	113	12	10.3%	54	46.6%	20	17.2%	14	12.1%	13	11.2%
Public Recreation	112	12	10.3%	55	47.4%	19	16.4%	16	13.8%	10	8.6%
Garbage Removal	113	63	54.3%	44	37.9%	6	5.2%	--	--	--	--
Recyclables Removal	113	58	50.0%	44	37.9%	7	6.0%	1	0.9%	3	2.6%
Leaf & Yard Waste Removal	115	74	63.8%	36	31.0%	2	1.7%	1	0.9%	2	1.7%
Snow Removal (on public roads)	115	73	62.9%	34	29.3%	6	5.2%	1	0.9%	1	0.9%
Condition of Streets	114	17	14.7%	52	44.8%	40	34.5%	5	4.3%	--	--
Availability of Cult. Activities	111	4	3.4%	23	19.8%	31	26.7%	15	12.9%	38	32.8%
Senior Services	115	15	12.9%	37	31.9%	10	8.6%	3	2.6%	50	43.1%

*N/A = Not Applicable – Service unavailable within Village/Not familiar with/Have not used.

Public Services

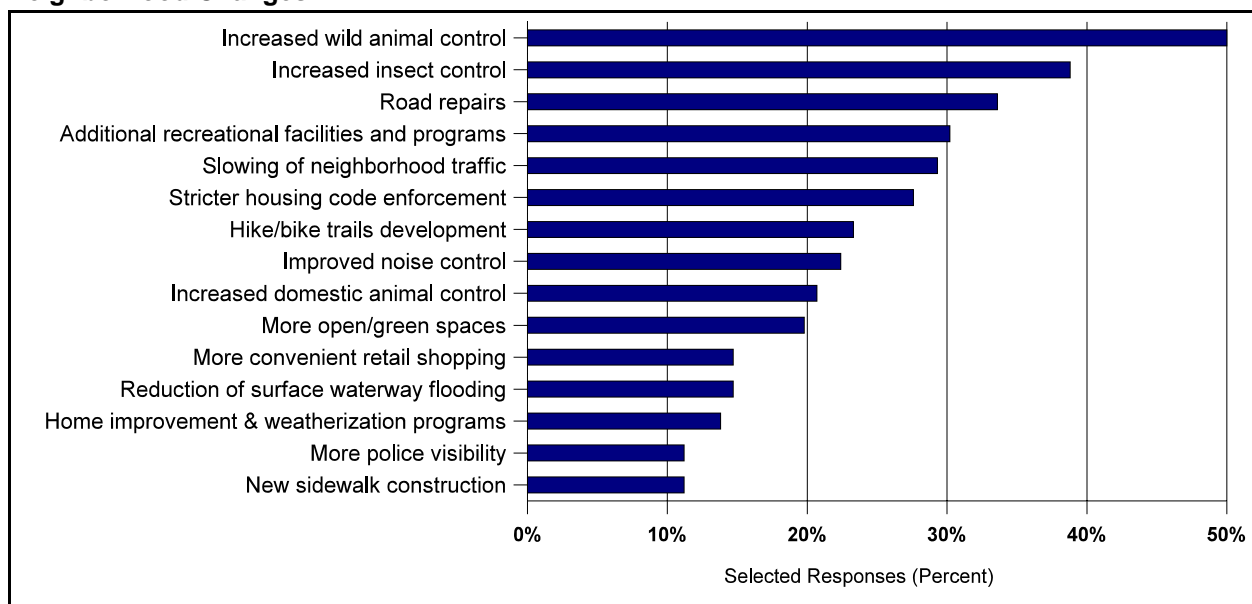
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Q.2. What types of changes or programs would you like to see instituted in your neighborhood in the vicinity of your home?

Among the 19 listed potential neighborhood changes or programs, *Increased wild animal control* was identified by one-half of all responding households (116) as the leading choice. This selection was followed by *Increased insect control* and *Road repairs*. Each of these top three changes was supported by three to five of every ten responding households. The remaining noted changes were identified by one to three of every ten responding households. Not illustrated in the following chart

Neighborhood Changes



are three changes or programs which received very little support (from less than one in every ten households): *Street light installation*, *Existing sidewalk improvements*, and *Architectural review for alternation/additions and demolitions of historic homes*.

Respondents were also provided with the opportunity to write in additional desired neighborhood changes or programs not already listed. Only ten handwritten entries were provided. Most were merely elaborations on the above selections.

Q.3. Please rate the following as it relates to home and neighborhood features.

With perhaps several exceptions, Walton Hills residents are generally well satisfied with the features associated with their home and neighborhood. Those characteristics most often rated *Excellent* included *Size of your yard* (selected by 52.6% of respondents), followed by *Safety of neighborhood* and *Condition of your home* (both with 44%). Other highly rated features included *Access to interstate highway system* (37.9%) and *Size of your home* (34.5%). This high ranking of neighborhood safety is consistent with the relatively ratings residents provided in **Q.1** for public safety services.

Broadening the top tier to those features classified as *Excellent* or *Good* reveals that the top rated feature was *Size of your yard* (97.4%), followed closely by *Condition of your home* (96.6%), *Access to interstate highway system* (96.5%), *Safety and Appearance of neighborhood* (both with 93.1%), and *Condition of homes* (90.6%). Over 85% of all responding households rated eight of the 13 listed features as *Excellent* or *Good*. Over 63% of respondents ranked 11 of the 13 features similarly.

The home and neighborhood feature most frequently rated *Poor* was *Access to public transportation* (21.6%). This observation buttresses the findings of **Q.1**. Broadening the lower tier to include those features also ranked *Fair* results in the repeated lead ranking of *Access to public transportation* (37.1%), followed by *Housing values* (31.9%), *Shopping convenience* (27.6%), and *Access to schools* (22.4%).

Some neighborhood features were not rated by all respondents because they did not apply to the responding household. The leading features designated *N/A* included *Access to public transportation* (43.3%), followed by *Time of commute to work* (25.9%) and *Access to schools* (25.0%).

Q.3. Please rate the following as it relates to home and neighborhood features.

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Feature / Issues	Total Response	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		N/A*	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Condition of your home	116	51	44.0%	61	52.6%	3	2.6%	1	0.9%	--	--
Size of your home	113	40	34.5%	63	54.3%	8	6.9%	2	1.7%	--	--
Size of your yard	114	61	52.6%	52	44.8%	1	0.9%			--	--
Condition of homes	116	30	25.9%	75	64.7%	9	7.8%	2	1.7%	--	--
Appearance of neighborhood	115	30	25.9%	78	67.2%	6	5.2%	1	0.9%	--	--
Housing values	113	12	10.3%	63	54.3%	29	25.0%	8	6.9%	1	0.9%
Safety of neighborhood	116	51	44.0%	57	49.1%	6	5.2%	--	--	2	1.7%
Access to schools	114	4	3.4%	55	47.4%	14	12.1%	12	10.3%	29	25.0%
Access to parks & playgrounds	114	33	28.4%	66	56.9%	7	6.0%	3	2.6%	5	4.3%
Time of commute to work	110	20	17.2%	53	45.7%	4	3.4%	3	2.6%	30	25.9%
Access to interstate	115	44	37.9%	68	58.6%	1	0.9%	1	0.9%	1	0.9%
Access to public transportation	112	3	2.6%	16	13.8%	18	15.5%	25	21.6%	50	43.1%
Shopping convenience	111	10	8.6%	65	56.0%	24	20.7%	8	6.9%	4	3.4%

*N/A = Not applicable – does not apply to me or my household.

Q.4. Where do you USUALLY (most often) purchase the following goods and services?

Because Walton Hills has limited commercial retail opportunities, residents must travel outside of the Village to obtain the overwhelming majority of their needed shopping goods and services, as is evident upon review of the following table summarizing survey responses. Total responses fluctuated notably among the listed goods and services due to the variation in shopping needs of households. For example, 107 (of 116) respondents indicated that they purchase *Hardware/Home Improvement* goods/services, while just 16 indicated the need for *Day Care* services.

Among respondents indicating that they purchase the goods or services, the leading purchases IN Walton Hills included those associated with *Gas/Auto Repair and Parts* (34 respondents, or about one-third of the 106 buyers). The number of additional purchases in the Village are low and infrequent. Findings indicate that for all retail goods and services categories (even *Day Care*), purchases IN are exceeded by those made OUTSIDE of the Village.

Q.4. Where do you USUALLY (most often) purchase the following goods and services?

Goods and Services Types	Total Response*	Purchase**		OUTSIDE Communities in which Purchased MOST OFTEN
		INSIDE Village	OUTSIDE Village	
Supermarket/Grocery	113	0	101	Macedonia (48), Bedford (33)
Doctor/Dentist/ Optometrist	111	1	88	Bedford (14), Garfield Hts (14)
Attorney	72	3	47	Cleveland (19), Solon (3)
Accountant	64	1	45	Cleveland (5), Bedford (4)
Bank/Credit Union	107	6	81	Northfield (21), Macedonia (16)
Day Care	16	4	5	(varies)
Veterinarian Care	59	1	47	Northfield (19), Bedford (4)
Pet Supplies	63	0	50	Maple Hts (14), Garfield Hts (10)
Beautician/Barber	93	0	91	Bedford (24), Garfield Hts (8)
Gas/Auto Repair & Parts	106	34	54	Northfield (18), Bedford (16)
New/Used Autos	88	0	60	Bedford (38), Independence (3), Northfield (3)
Dry Cleaners/Laundromat	83	0	61	Bedford (27), Macedonia (8), Maple Hts (8)
Hardware/Home Improve.	107	0	84	Macedonia (70), Oakwood (5)
Lawn/Garden Supplies	103	1	78	Macedonia (46), Oakwood (17)
Prescriptions/Drug Store	106	1	80	Bedford (30), Northfield (25)
Furniture/Housewares	79	0	48	Macedonia (11), Maple Hts (8)
Sporting Goods	69	0	43	Macedonia (15), Maple Hts (6)
Clothing & Shoes	99	0	64	Macedonia (28), Beachwood (7), Parma (7)
Movie Theater	82	0	59	Macedonia (27), Valley View (27)
Banquet/Social Hall	41	2	13	Bedford (5), Cleveland (2), Macedonia (2)
Restaurant (Dine-in)	94	4	51	Macedonia (24), Northfield (6)
Restaurant (Carry out/Fast)	91	1	54	Northfield (30), Macedonia (12)

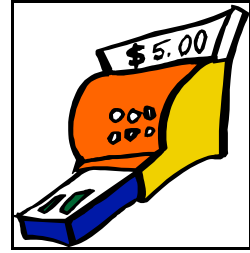
* Number of respondents who indicated purchase of goods or services.

** Will not sum to "Total Response" because some respondents did not indicate OUTSIDE community(ies) in which purchased.

Purchases OUTSIDE of Walton Hills vary significantly depending on the good or service, as would be expected. Listed in the preceding table for each type of good and service are the top two communities in which respondents indicated they shop MOST OFTEN. Survey responses indicate that *Macedonia* is the most popular shopping destination for the greatest range of retail goods and services among those households shopping beyond the Village border. The next most common shopping destinations include *Bedford* and *Northfield*. Further examination of survey results will reveal additional findings beyond the scope of this report.

Q.5. Which top four (4) goods and services NOT presently provided IN Walton Hills SHOULD be provided IN the Village?

Only 36 of 116 survey respondents (31%) identified any retail goods and services which should be made available within the Village (that presently are not provided). The leading additional desired goods or service types identified by responding households included *Restaurant* (18 entries), split evenly between *Dine-in* and *Carry out/Fast*. The next most frequent designation was for *Prescriptions/Drug Store* (15), followed by *Supermarket/Groceries* (12). Other types that respondents indicated should be provided included *Hardware/Home Improvement* (9), *Bank/Credit Union*, *Doctor/Dentist/Optometrlist*, and *Dry Cleaners/Laundromat* (7 each).

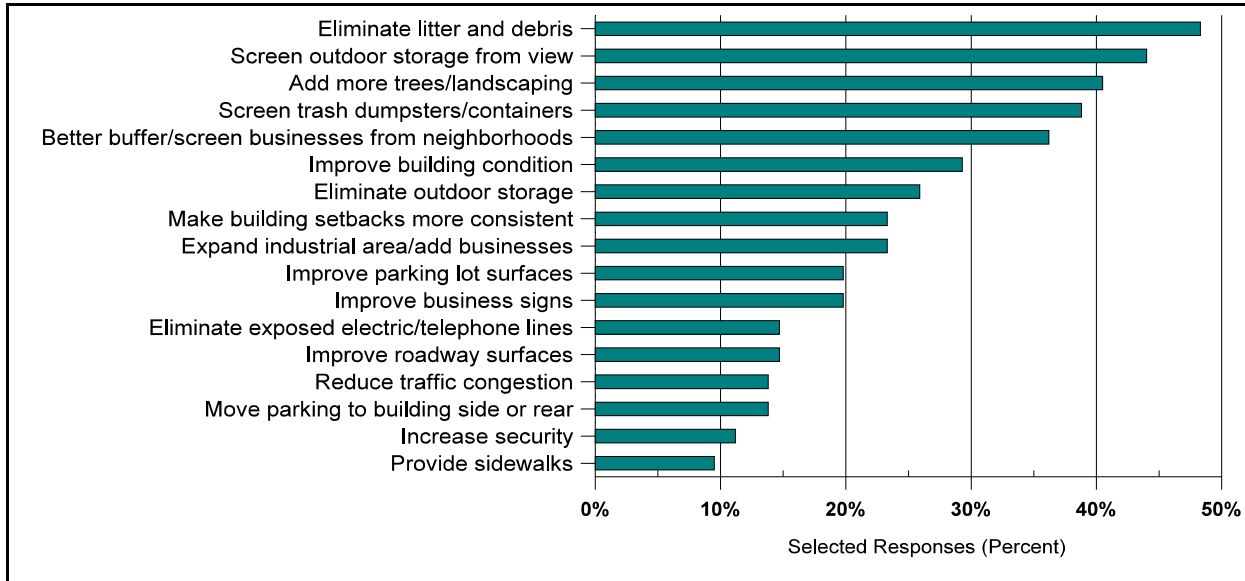


The level of interest in new goods and services within the Village expressed by respondents is not significant. However, it is a measurable response that reflects the desires of a segment of the residential population (also see *Q.1* and *Q.2* responses).

Q.6. What changes to the existing Walton Hills Industrial/Commercial Districts should be made to make them more attractive?

Among the 18 listed potential industrial/commercial district changes, *Eliminate litter and debris* was identified by almost one-half (48.3%) of respondents as the leading choice. This selection was followed by *Screen outdoor storage from view*, *Add more trees/landscaping*, *Screen trash dumpsters/containers*, and *Better buffer/screen businesses from neighborhoods*. Additional considerations associated with “appearance” follow. Generally, respondents appear more concerned with area aesthetics than aspects of the infrastructure. For example, changes associated with roadways, sidewalks and parking were rated lower by respondents.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to write in any additional desired industrial/commercial district changes not already listed. Among the 12 handwritten responses, all were single entries or elaborations on their above selections, except for two entries each pertaining to *noise reduction* and improving the appearance/redevelopment of the *vacant gas station* on the corner of Northfield/Alexander Roads.



Q.7. Please rate the following PUBLIC recreation facilities and services Village-wide.

Survey respondents rated public recreation facilities *Condition and Accessibility* more favorably than recreational *Activities*. More than seven in every ten respondents rated condition and access as *Excellent* or *Good*. Only six of 113 respondents rated condition as *Poor*, whereas just one respondent indicated access was *Poor*.

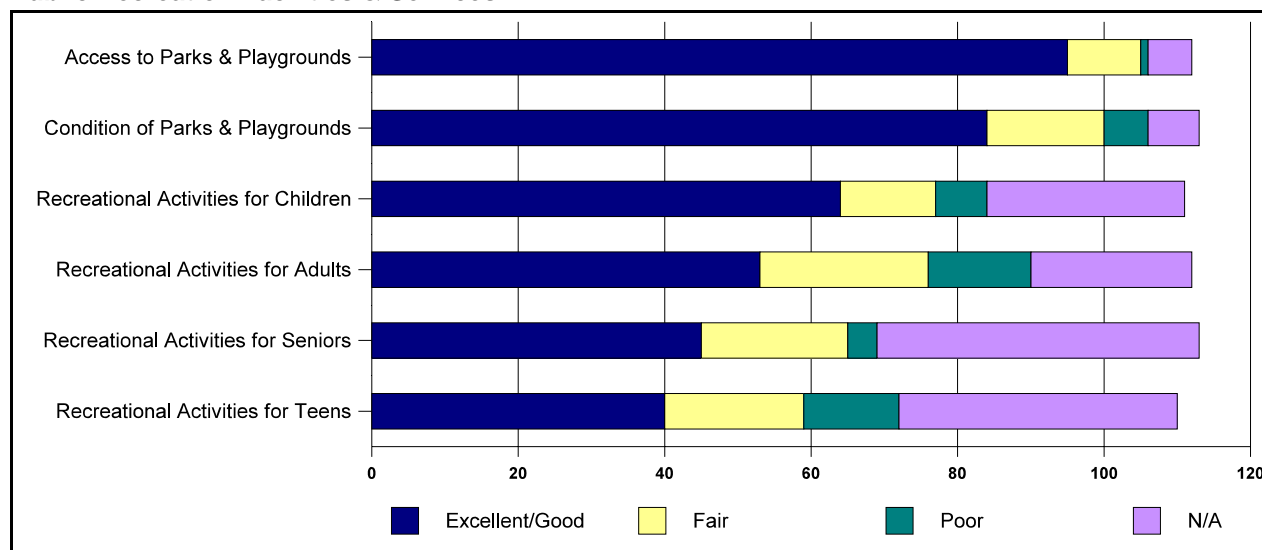
Available recreational activities for the various designated age groups, however, were viewed less favorably. Opportunities exist for varying levels of improvements to existing recreational programming. Almost one-third (31.9%) of responding households indicated that available activities for *Adults* are just *Fair* or *Poor*, closely followed by 27.6% of respondents classifying activities for *Teens* as *Fair/Poor*. However, about three of every ten respondents (32.8%) indicated a *N/A* for this question regarding *Teens*, suggesting that respondents were not familiar with/have not used these activities. About 20.6% (two of every ten) respondents judged that available activities for *Seniors* are *Fair/Poor* (37.9% indicated a *N/A* to this question). Activities for *Children* were rated *Fair/Poor* by 17.2% of respondents.

Twenty survey respondents provided a wide range of additional handwritten comments pertaining to this question. Because many of the comments are elaborations on the information provided above and are not related to the other comments, they cannot be readily quantified.

Q.7. Please rate the following PUBLIC recreation facilities and services Village-wide.

Village-wide Public Recreation	Total Response	Excellent		Good		Fair		Poor		N/A	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Condition of Parks & Playgrounds	113	29	25.0%	55	47.4%	16	13.8%	6	5.2%	7	6.0%
Access to Parks & Playgrounds	112	34	29.3%	61	52.6%	10	8.6%	1	0.9%	6	5.2%
Recreational Activities for Children	111	18	15.5%	46	39.7%	13	11.2%	7	6.0%	27	23.3%
Recreational Activities for Teens	110	9	7.8%	31	26.7%	19	16.4%	13	11.2%	38	32.8%
Recreational Activities for Adults	112	11	9.5%	42	36.2%	23	19.8%	14	12.1%	22	19.0%
Recreational Activities for Seniors	113	15	12.9%	30	25.9%	20	17.2%	4	3.4%	44	37.9%

Public Recreation Facilities & Services



*N/A = Not applicable – Not familiar with/Have not used.

8. In which community(ies) do employed household members work?

Responding households indicating their work community totaled 69 (out of 116 survey responses). It is presumed that the 47 non-respondents are retired, unemployed or chose not to divulge this information. Most responding households identified only one community where household members are employed, whereas a number of households listed two and three work communities. Obviously, numerous households/families have more than one working member.

Working households indicated that their most common employment location is in Cleveland. Almost 40%, or four in every ten Village workers (within the responding households) are employed in Cleveland. The next most common destinations include Bedford (13), Solon (12), and Walton Hills (12). The balance of reporting Village workers have employment destinations widely scattered throughout the region, some as distant as Akron and Canton. Two respondents indicated that they are self-employed and work out of their homes.

Work Community*	Count	Percent
Cleveland	27	39.1%
Bedford	13	18.8%
Solon	12	17.4%
Walton Hills	12	17.4%
Twinsburg	7	10.1%
Oakwood	6	8.7%
Beachwood	5	7.3%
Brecksville	3	4.4%
Garfield Heights	3	4.4%
Northfield Village	3	4.4%
Warrensville Heights	3	4.4%
Broadview Heights	2	2.9%

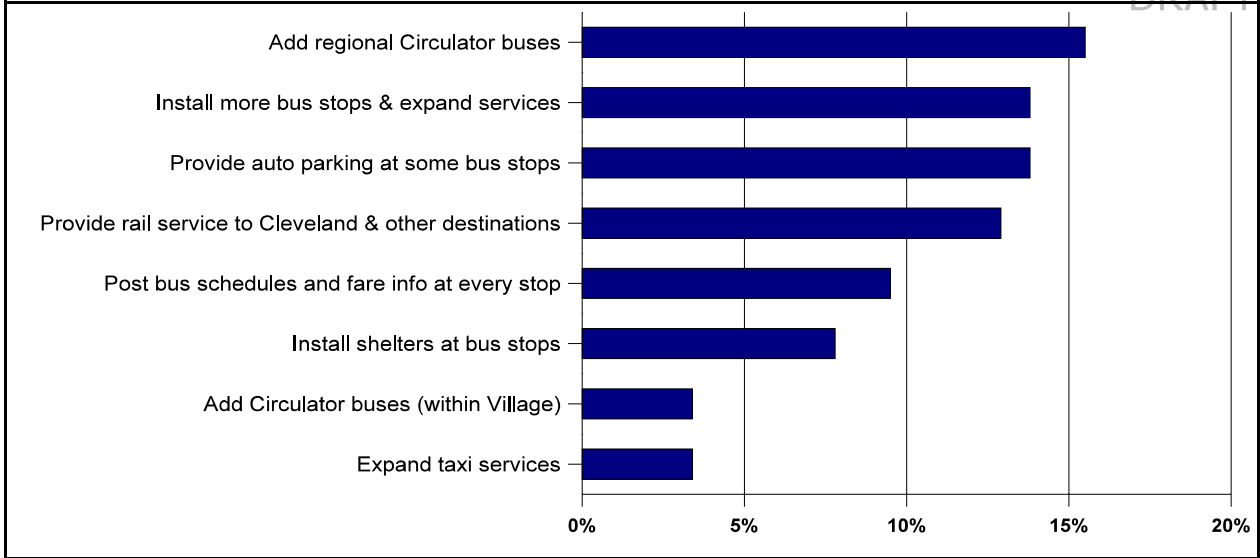
*Excludes those work destinations cited only once.

Q.9. If the following public transit changes were made, would you begin to use, or increase your present use of, public transportation services within Walton Hills?

The majority of the 116 survey respondents (83, or 71.6%) *do not use and do not plan to begin using public transportation*. The balance of survey respondents (33) designated a number of preferred transit changes which could prompt them to *begin to use, or increase their present use of public transportation services within Walton Hills*. The leading recommended change, cited by 18 of those responding 33 households (just under 16% of all 116 survey respondents), is to *Add regional Circulator buses*. Additional system changes are illustrated in the following chart.

Public Transit Changes

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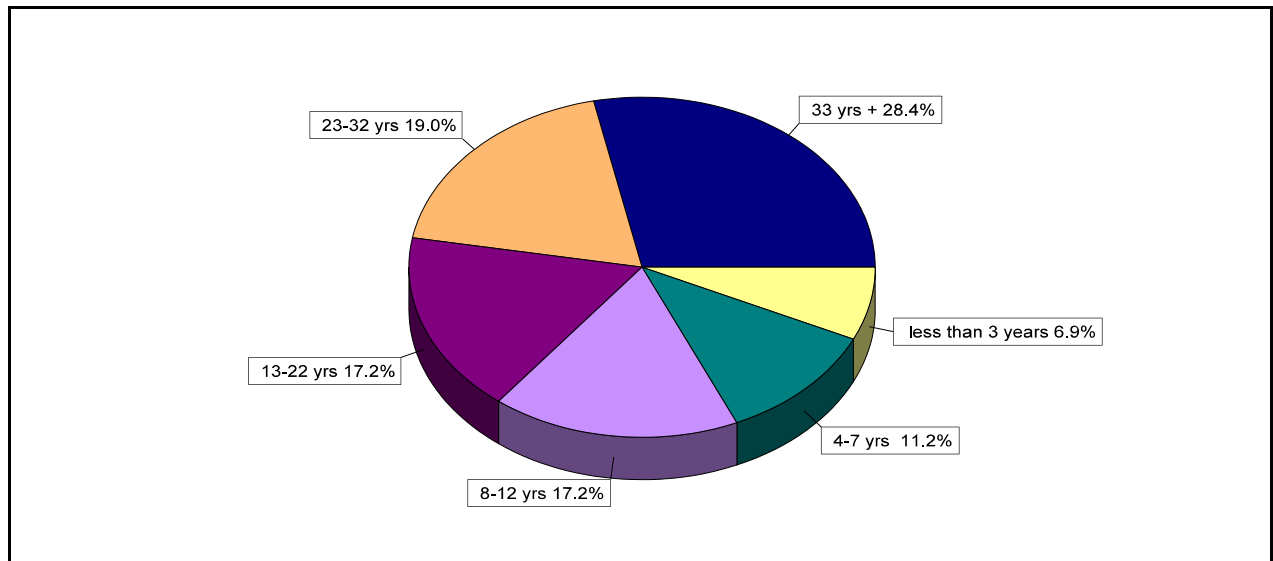


Q.10. How many years have you lived in Walton Hills?

The majority of the 116 households responding to this question are deeply rooted in the Village. Almost one-half (47.4%) indicated that they have resided in Walton Hills for 23 or more years (includes moves within the Village). Remarkably, over one-quarter (28.4%) of respondents reported that they have lived in the Community for 33 years or more.

These findings are roughly reflected by recent U.S. Census Bureau findings. Year 2000 Census results report that almost 38% of Village families moved into their homes over 20 years ago. Year 2002 survey results show that a somewhat higher 47% have lived in the community (accounts for moves within) for 23 years or more.

Years Lived in Walton Hills



Q.11. Do you rent or own your Walton Hills residence?

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Among the sampled households reporting their housing tenure (116), all but one indicated that they own their residence (99.1%). This high ownership profile of the sampled portion of the Village very closely approximates the community-wide rate reported in the latest U.S. Census (2000). According to the Census, owner-occupied housing represents 97% of the community’s total housing units, whereas 3% are rentals.

Q.12. How many people in each of the following age groups reside in your household? What is the number of people in your household?

The profile of the ages of members of households providing survey responses (116) mirrors recent U.S. Census Bureau findings for the entire Village quite closely (following table).

The most commonly reported household size among survey respondents, *2 persons*, represents 43% (50) of the 116 responding households. The next largest response was from those households containing *three persons* (25, or 22%). Respondents indicated household sizes ranging from *1 person* (14 households) to *6 persons* (1 household). The calculated average household size of the sampled population (survey) is virtually identical to the U.S. Census findings for the community overall; i.e., 2.60 persons/household compared to 2.53 persons/household, respectively.

Age Group	Survey (2002)	U.S. Census (2002)
0 - 9 years	9.9%	8.2%
10 - 19 years	10.6%	10.6%
20 - 34 years	10.6%	10.2%
35 - 59 years	36.4%	37.2%
60 - 64 years	9.3%	7.3%
65 - 74 years	14.9%	12.3%
75 - 84 years	7.0%	10.9%
85 + years	1.3%	3.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

NOTE: This and the two preceding questions (Q.10, Q.11 and Q.12) were included in the survey primarily to derive data which could be compared to that provided by the U.S. Census Bureau – whose report findings are universally held to be highly representative of community populations. Based on the notable similarity of findings associated with these three questions (the sampled population) with the U.S. Census findings (the community population), it is suggested that survey methodology (pertaining to sampling, randomness and mailing approach) was sound. Most importantly, it also suggests that the results derived from the other 16 questions do indeed closely reflect, or represent, those findings that would be derived if a 100% community-wide survey were conducted.

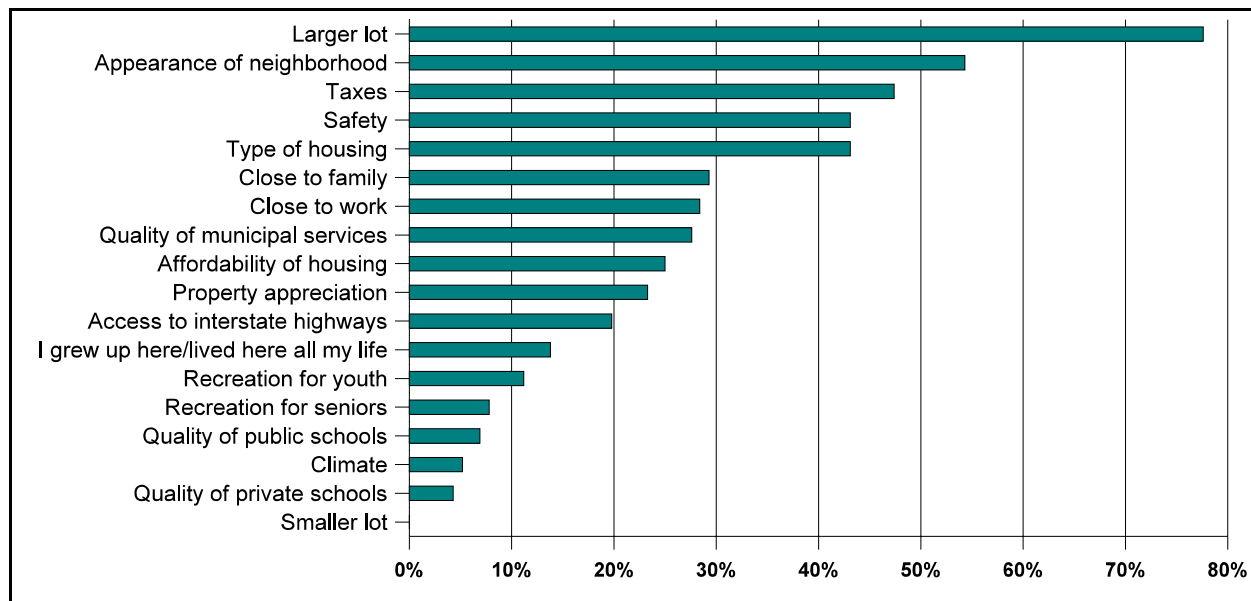
Q.13. Why did you move into Walton Hills?

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Overwhelmingly, the primary reason cited by respondents for their move into the Village was *Larger lot* (78%, 90 respondents). Other stated reasons for moving into the Village included *Appearance of neighborhood* (54.3%), *Taxes* (47.4%), *Safety* (43.1%), and *Type of housing* (43.1%). Similarly, *Residential lots are large*, *Safe environment*, and *Taxes are low* were identified and ranked by the Master Plan Committee members among their top five community strengths.

Almost 14% (16) of 116 respondents indicated that *I grew up here/lived here all my life*. Twenty *Other* handwritten reasons for moving into the Village were also provided. However, most of these entries simply reiterated the above responses. An exception, the only duplicated response, pertained to the appeal of the Village’s *Country atmosphere*.

Reasons Moved INTO Walton Hills



Q.14. Are you considering moving OUT of Walton Hills in the next 5 years?

Over one-third of responding households (38%, 44 respondents) indicated that they are considering a move out of the Village within the next five years (almost four of every ten households). Butressing previous findings, the most-cited reasons to move included *Quality of public schools* (56.8%), followed by *Property appreciation* (34.1%), *Recreation for youth* (20.5%), *Taxes* (15.9%), and *Smaller lot* (11.4%). Interestingly, *Taxes* was also one of the top reasons stated for moving INTO the Village.

Additional choices for moving were also cited, including:

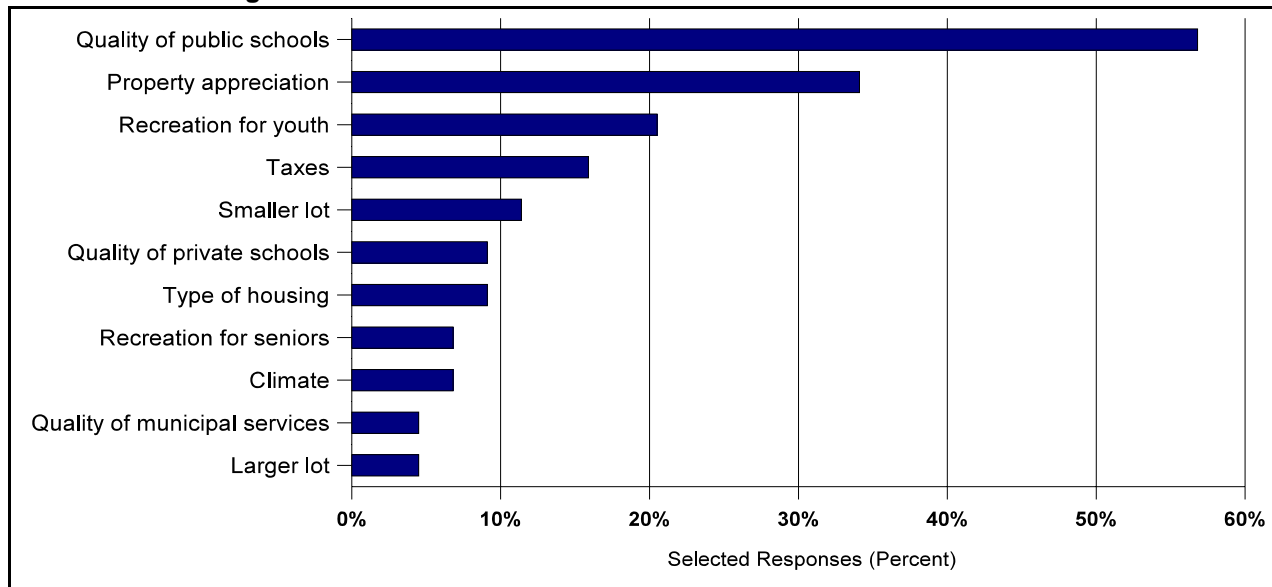
- P Access to interstate
- P Safety
- P Close to family
- P Affordability of housing
- P Close to work
- P Appearance of neighborhood

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Other handwritten reasons for moving provided by respondents (12) varied greatly and were merely elaborations of previous entries or unique to the responding household.

For comparison, in four area suburbs where this question was also asked via recent written CPC surveys, the response rates were lower. Those communities and rates include: Bay Village (31%), Fairview Park (35%), Parma (32%), and Solon (29%).

Reasons for Moving OUT of Walton Hills



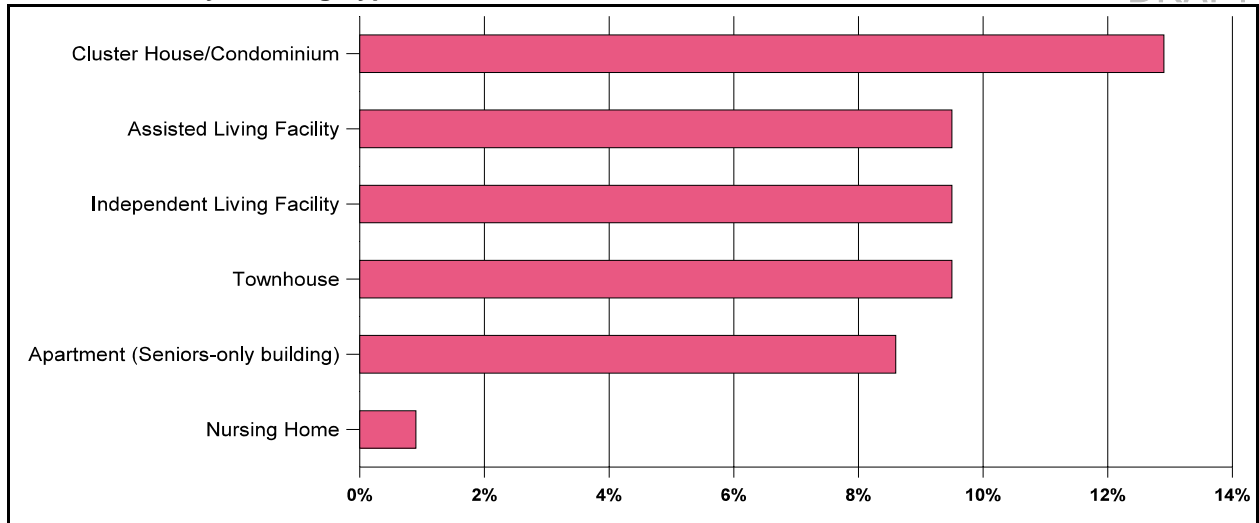
Q.15. Are you interested in elderly housing opportunities within Walton Hills for yourself or an immediate family member? If “yes”, what housing types are of interest?

Given the high proportion of Walton Hills households that include seniors, it is somewhat surprising that only 25 survey respondents (21.6% of 116 respondents) indicated that they are interested in elderly housing opportunities within the Village. Among those 25 respondents, the most common housing type designated was *Cluster House/Condominium* (15, or 12.9% of 116 responding households). Each of the remaining five housing type options were identified by ten or 11 of the 25 respondents, except *Nursing Home* (one respondent). Just 19 respondents indicated a preferred price range for elderly housing. Of those 19, 15 selected the \$80,000 to \$150,000 price range.

The level of interest in senior housing opportunities within the Village expressed by respondents is low, particularly considering the current lack of housing alternatives within the Village and the large portion of the community’s population which is within the oldest age bracket. Nevertheless, it is a

Preferred Elderly Housing Types

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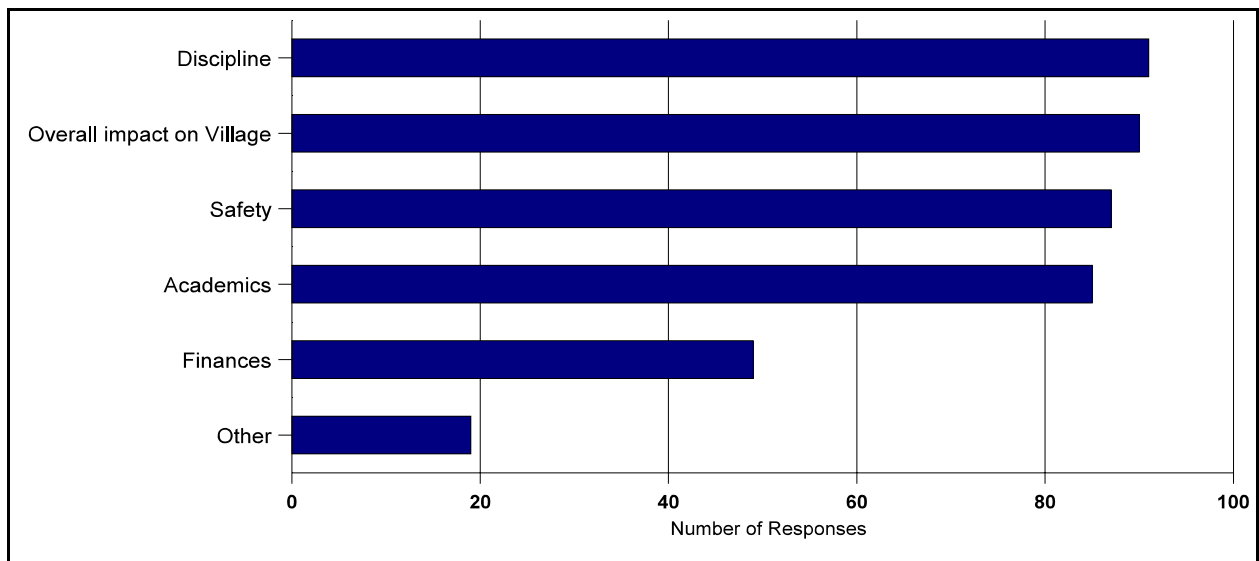
measurable response that reflects the interests of a segment of the broader residential population.

Q.16. Which of the following are of concern to you regarding the public schools?

This question, with its six discrete selections, was developed by the Master Plan Committee during focused survey preparation discussions. Among the five features pertaining to public schools available for respondent selection (excluding *Other*), four were identified by the overwhelming majority of responding households as concerns. In other words, at least seven of every 10 respondents expressed concerns pertaining to *Discipline* (78.4%), *Overall impact on Village* (77.6%), *Safety* (75.0%), and *Academics* (73.3%). *Finances* was identified as a concern by 42.2% of respondents.

Other handwritten entries were provided by 19 respondents. The most common additional concern (seven respondents) pertained to the impact the public schools have on *property values* in the Village.

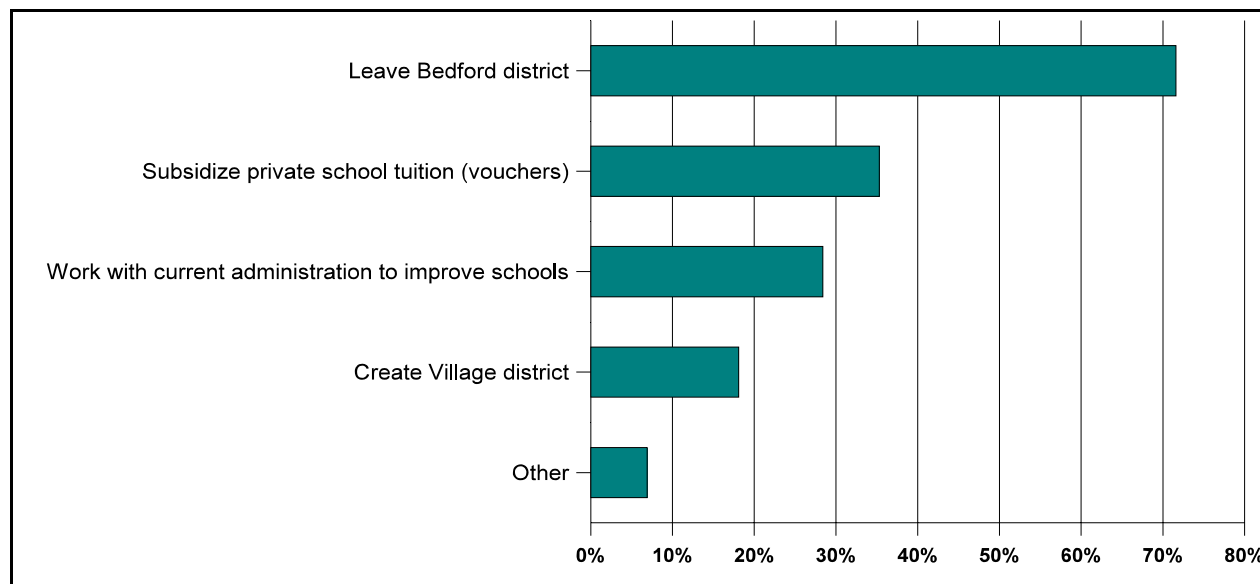
Public School Concerns



Q.17. What solutions to your concerns regarding the public schools checked in Q.16. above would you support if they were possible?

The overwhelming number of responding households indicated that the solution to their concerns regarding the public schools is to *Leave Bedford district* (71.6%, 83 responses). Other identified solutions included *Subsidize private school tuition (Village voucher program)* (35.3%), *Work with current school administration to improve schools* (28.4%), and *Create Village district* (18.1%). Just seven additional *Other* handwritten entries were provided. The most common entry (6) reiterated the

Solution to Public School Concerns



respondents' desire to leave the Bedford School District via a merger with another school district.

Q.18. What do you consider Walton Hills' six (6) top-ranked community Strengths/Assets and Weaknesses/Needs?

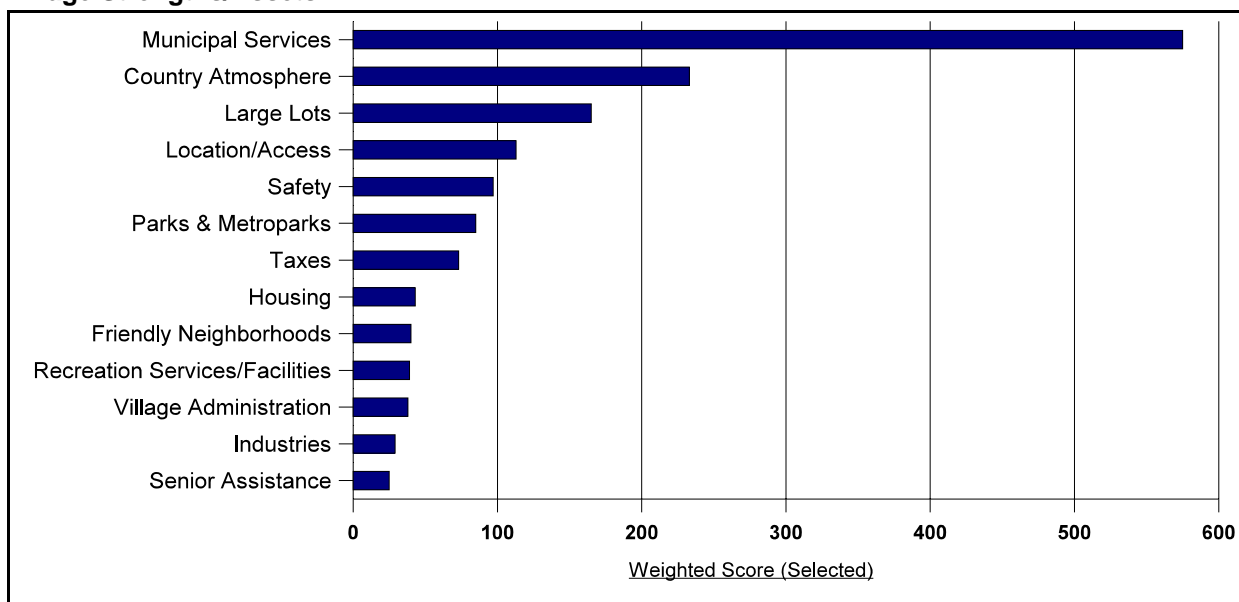
Each of the 200 survey recipients was afforded an opportunity to provide the Village's top six strengths and top six weaknesses (using their own words). Almost 80% (92) of the 116 responding households provided input. Respondents were asked to rank their entries in declining order of importance. Each individual handwritten entry was then interpreted, keyed into the computer and weighted to reflect its order of entry on the survey form. Duplicated and similarly worded responses were then grouped by topic and tabulated, resulting in final weighted scores.

Note on "weighting": The same approach was employed here as in the Master Plan Committee ranking exercise (see page 1). Strengths (and weaknesses) listed near the top were awarded a higher score than those listed toward the bottom, thereby assigning more importance to those entries that a respondent entered/thought of first (than last). For the six possible entries, the first listed strength (and weakness) in Q. 18 received a score of "6", whereas the lowest/last listed received a "1". Those in between received either a "5, 4, 3," or "2". Thus, rather than merely reporting a count of the similar responses, a weighted ranking (or score showing relative importance) is also provided.

STRENGTHS: The number of individual survey entries under community strengths totaled 408. Among reported community strengths, the highest calculated weighted score, by a significant measure, was registered for *Municipal Services* (575). Among the seven individually recognized Village services contributing to this score, the *Police Department* received 41% of the total, notably more than the others. Following this stand-out lead strength is the distant *Country Atmosphere* (233), followed by *Large Lots*, *Location/Access*, *Safety*, *Parks and Metroparks*, and *Taxes*. Six additional leading strengths (with weighted scores between 43 and 25) are portrayed on the following chart. One dozen additional strengths, not depicted here, were also identified but recorded even lower weighted scores (below 15).

Notably, the top-rated Village strengths are shared by Village residents (survey), key Village officials and the Master Plan Committee.

Village Strengths/Assets



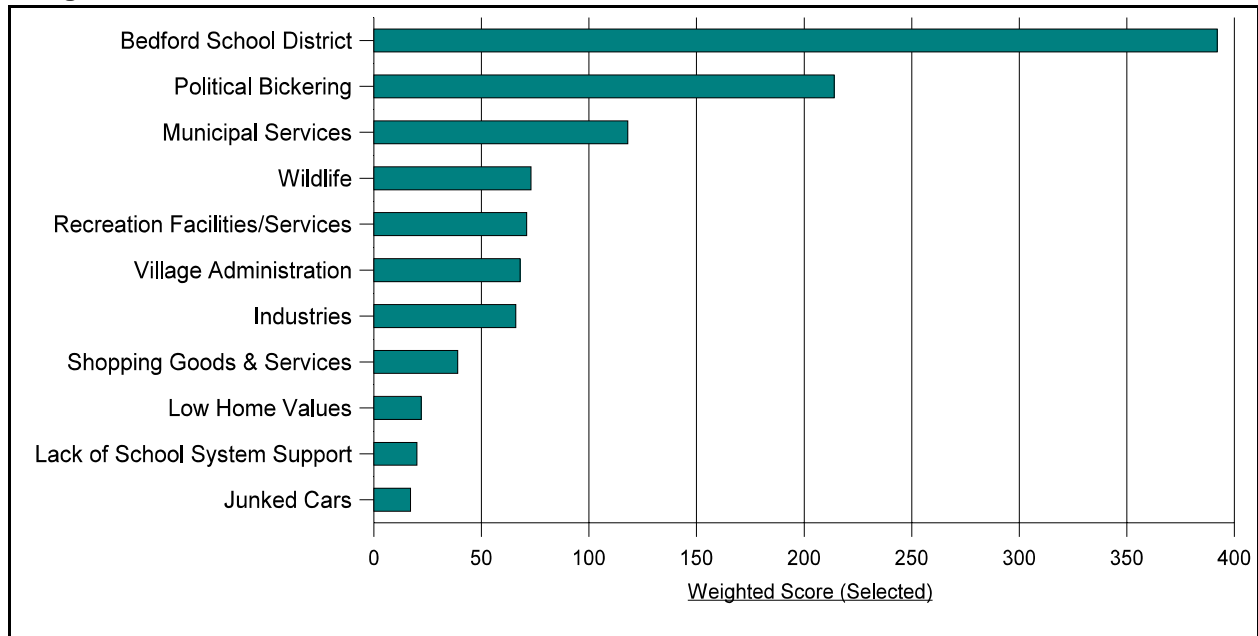
WEAKNESSES: The number of individual survey entries under community weaknesses totaled 299 (notably less than 408 entries under strengths).

Overwhelmingly, the community weakness receiving the highest weighted score was *Bedford School District* (392). This weighted score represents actual survey entries provided by 73 households (of the 116 total responding households). Described another way, about six of every ten survey respondents indicated a weakness/need pertaining to the school district.

The second highest scoring weakness, at a distant 214, was “*Political Bickering*”. Exactly one-half of this weighted score, 107, can be attributed to entries generally referring negatively to aspects of Village “politics”. In terms of raw, unadjusted responses, 49 responding households (of 116 possible) indicated that aspects of politics is a community weakness. In other words, about four in ten responding households indicated that Village politics is a community weakness.

Village Weaknesses/Needs

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The third highest scoring Village weakness pertains to *Municipal Services* (118 weighted score). Among the four individually recognized Village services contributing to this score, the *Fire Department* and *Roads/Road Repairs* each represented the highest percentage (34% each). In terms of unadjusted responses, 27 respondents indicated a weakness with municipal services. Of those, ten cited “roads/road repairs” and nine referenced the “Fire Department” (three additional respondents indicated “EMS”).

The above top scoring weaknesses were followed by four similarly scoring (with weighting) weaknesses: *Wildlife* (73), *Recreation Facilities/Services* (71), *Village Administration* (69), and *Industries* (66).

Four additional leading weaknesses (with weighted scores between 39 and 17) are portrayed on the following chart. Three dozen additional weaknesses, not illustrated here, were also identified (weighted scores between 12 and one).

***Public Schools* clearly is the shared lead Village weakness reported by Village residents (survey), key Village officials and the Master Plan Committee. Lower ranked weaknesses identified by the three sources varied, but should also be viewed as highly valued indicators for consideration by community decision-makers.**

Q.19. Please provide below ANY additional comments or concerns you have about any aspect of the Village of Walton Hills.

About 71% (34) of respondents provided additional handwritten comments about a wide range of subjects. For the most part, expressed concerns were simply reiterations of previous entries, particularly those pertaining to stated community strengths and weaknesses (*Q.18*). The leading comments were elaborations on the respondents' concerns pertaining to the *Bedford School District* and the *political bickering* among community officials. Respondents expressed concerns about the combined effect of these two issues as they relate to attracting new families, retaining residents, and business retention and expansion.

Not unexpectedly, some responding households used this questions as an opportunity to complain about a variety of somewhat more individualized issues, ranging from traffic violations to bow hunting restrictions to junked cars in the neighborhood. Other respondents, however, wrote that they “love” Walton Hills as it is and do not wish to change it.

FURTHER ANALYSIS

A more in-depth analysis of Community Attitudes Survey findings by the Village of Walton Hills is feasible, considering the high quality and quantity of data provided by an interested populace clearly engaged in community affairs. While beyond the work scope for this Master Plan, such analysis could contribute yet further to the identification of opportunities for the Village to improve its delivery of public services, the provision of housing and shopping preferences, the overall quality of life for its residents, and the fulfillment of additional community needs.

DRAFT

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IMPACTS ON WALTON HILLS

PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IMPACTS ON WALTON HILLS

SCHOOL SYSTEM “QUALITY”

Because of the great public interest nationwide to develop superior educational systems for our children, large volumes of descriptive information pertaining to schools, curricula, teachers, and students are collected and disseminated regularly. While there are many aspects of an educational system which can be examined to characterize it, measures focusing on “**educational quality**” are of perhaps greatest interest to the public at large, particularly to parents of school age children.

According to a number of researchers, **school system quality** is best determined by measuring the demonstrated performance of its students, not the varying levels of resources provided to the schools (which may influence students’ academic performance). For example, one researcher, Eric Hanushek, reviewed 90 published studies on the effect of various measures of school resources on student performance (1996) and determined that “there is no consistent relationship between the key resources to schools and student performance” (*Business Review, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, September/October 1998*). He examined resources such as “expenditures per pupil and more specific measures like student-teacher ratios; the education, experience, and salaries of teachers; and the condition of the school’s physical facilities.” He determined that, in most cases, the estimated effects of these resources on student performance were not statistically significant.

Another researcher, Jay Greene, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research in New York, declares that the best (but not foolproof) gauges of school district performance include, “graduation rate, the percentage of students who go to college, standardized test results, and the number of students taking advanced placement tests” (*The Plain Dealer, April 28, 2002*). Of course, experts acknowledge that other factors also play critical roles in impacting a student’s academic performance, such as family characteristics, peer group influences, among others.

Some insights pertaining to the quality of the Bedford City School District may be gained by examining just several of the above recommended performance measures of the achievements of the school system’s students, including:

- P Graduation rate:
- P Standardized test results; and
- P Advanced placement test results.

According to the *2004 State of Ohio District Report Card* (using 2003/2004 data), the **graduation rate** for District students is 78.6%, up slightly from the year before. Most of Cuyahoga County’s 31 school districts had higher graduation rates. The state standard is 90%.

Proficiency tests are mandated by the State of Ohio and are required for grades 3, 4, 6, and 9. Each school district is challenged to meet 18 performance indicators. (The twelfth grade proficiency test was eliminated in 2002 and 27 indicators have since been reduced). According to the *2004 Report Card*, the Bedford City School District met just 7 performance standards and was rated in a state of

“Continuous Improvement”. This rating represents an improvement over the previous year’s results, when only ten standards were met and the District was rated under “Academic Watch”. Additional measures of District performance may be found at the Ohio Department of Education Website (www.ode.state.oh.us).

Other standardized tests, such as the SAT and ACT, must be taken by high school students to satisfy college admissions criteria and gain admittance to advanced academic programs. During the 2001/2002 school year, 22 of Cuyahoga County’s 29 reporting school districts (of 31 total school systems) demonstrated higher average student SAT and ACT scores than did students in the Bedford City School District. Among Cuyahoga County’s 29 reporting school districts, the number of National Merit finalists during the 2000-2001 school year ranged from 0 to 20. The Bedford City School District was among 11 districts which did not have any finalists during that period (*The Plain Dealer*, April 28, 2002).

VILLAGE EDUCATION GOAL

Aspects of the Bedford City School System have been of steadily growing concern to residents for a number of years. In the course of preparing this Master Plan, most residents who returned the *Community Attitudes Survey*, most Master Plan Committee members, and some interviewed Village officials declared that aspects pertaining to the diminished “quality” of the Bedford City School District’s public schools negatively impact Walton Hills. The associated community planning goal, formulated and adopted by the Master Plan Committee in January of 2003 states:

GOAL:

Leave the Bedford School System and aggressively pursue other options for providing a safe and effective education for the Village’s school age children.

DECLARED COMMUNITY IMPACTS

In addition to the findings provided above and in *Chapters 2 and 4* and *Appendix A*, historical print media news accounts and Village Council meeting minutes document the development of a host of issues and concerns during recent years revolving around the public school system. Numerous negative community impacts prompted by the perceived substandard quality of the public schools have been cited and reiterated by most Master Plan Committee members during the Plan preparation process. Among those concerns, **eight primary negative community impacts** have been identified and are listed here (in no particular order):

1. Stimulus for residents to move out of the community;
2. Slow home sales;
3. Inability to sell homes at desired price;
4. Low home sales prices / Lack of appreciation;
5. Declining community image;
6. Declining student discipline and school safety adversely impact school children;

7. Diminished quality of academics reduces the ability of resident public school children to gain college admission and/or succeed in college and life; and
8. Disproportional Village tax contribution to the public school system is out of step with the return to the community.

Among the above eight declared impacts, some are more readily researched and analyzed than others. Some impacts are readily quantified, whereas others are not. Some are commonly addressed within a typical community master (or “land use, guide” or “comprehensive”) plan, while others are not. While this avenue of research is not articulated in the approved work scope for the Walton Hills Master Plan, the results of some investigations are provided here nevertheless in response to requests from Master Plan Committee members.

ANALYSIS FINDINGS

Based on the challenges noted in the preceding section, only the first four stated impacts are addressed here. The following information is provided in order to help establish some baseline information through some analysis in order to serve the community’s interest while it works toward a satisfactory resolution of this public school “quality” issue in the future.

1) **Stimulus for residents to move out of the community**

Reported in *Appendix A*, almost four of every ten (38%) of *Community Attitudes Survey* respondents indicated that they were “**considering moving out of Walton Hills in the next five years**”. The most frequently cited reason for moving out of Walton Hills, by a clear margin, was *quality of public schools*. Almost six of every ten respondents (57%) designated this selection. Examining these responses closer reveals that the overwhelming majority are families with school-aged children. Among those communities for whom the CPC has conducted similar resident surveys, notably smaller percentages of sampled households responded similarly when asked the same question (See *Table B.1*).

Table B.1. Residents’ Considering a Move From Community in Next Five Years

Community (Year)	“Yes” (Percent)	Leading Reason
Bay Village (1998)	32%	Less house maintenance
Fairview Park (1998)	17%	Lower taxes
Parma (2001)	32%	Bigger house
Solon (2001)	29%	Lower taxes
WALTON HILLS (2002)	38%	Better public schools

SOURCE: Cuyahoga County Planning Commission (from surveys of residents during preparation of community master plans).

A review of the **movements of Walton Hills’ homeowners who sold their home** during three time periods since 1987 is also revealing (**Table B.2**). During the two time periods prior to 1997, the most consistently cited destination communities included Bedford and Walton Hills. In terms of percent of moves, Bedford, Garfield Heights and Walton Hills received the greatest number of Village households via a move. Two of these communities are located within the Bedford City School District. During the two earlier time periods, the top three destination communities received just 23.6% (1987-1991) and 30.8% (1991-1996) of all Village home sellers.

After 1996, the top three destinations included communities which are all located outside of the Bedford City School District (and at notably higher percentages). Almost one-half (46.1%) of all moves during the 1997-2001 time period occurred within just three communities, two of which comprise a single school system – Brecksville-Broadview Heights School District. Almost one-third (30.7%) of all moves were to this nearby school system which has repeatedly earned an “Excellent” rating on recent *Annual Report Cards on Educational Progress*.

This observed shift in the pattern of home purchases is perhaps not coincidental when one considers that the Ohio Department of Education began the school district performance reporting system in 1997, with the first “trial run” district report cards issued in 1998 and 1999. Some associated student proficiency testing and reporting was initiated prior to this period.

Table B.2. Home Buyer Origin and Home Seller Destination, Walton Hills, 1987-2001

Community (Percent of Moves)		
1987-1991	1991-1996	1997-2001
Garfield Heights (11.8)	Bedford (15.4)	Brecksville (19.2)
Bedford (5.9)	Aurora (7.7)	Sagamore Hills Twp. (15.4)
Broadview Heights (5.9)	Walton Hills (7.7)	Broadview Heights (11.5)
Gates Mills (5.9)	Garfield Heights (7.7)	N/A
Others (71.5)	Others (61.5)	Others (53.8)

SOURCE: Cleveland State University, NODIS.

2) **Slow home sales**

The reported **number of sales of existing and newly constructed housing units** during the 1999-2003 period in Walton Hills, neighboring communities, and other selected area communities which are judged to be similar to Walton Hills are presented in **Table B.3**. Sales vary considerably among these communities because of the variety and volume of existing housing stock available, personal housing preferences, and a host of other factors which influence buyers to purchase a home in a particular community or neighborhood.

Similar, or “comparable”, communities have been selected for comparison purposes here. These communities generally resemble Walton Hills in terms of total population, number of households, median home sales price, and the proportion of the community with detached, single family homes (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). “Comparable”, as it is used here, should not be confused with its application in the real estate industry for deriving home market values by “comparing” like homes.

Table B.3. Number of Single-Family and New Construction Home Sales, 1998-2002, Walton Hills, Neighboring and Selected Comparable Communities, and Cuyahoga County

Community	1999		2000		2001		2002		2003	
	Single-Family	New	Single-Family	New	Single-Family	New	Single-Family	New	Single-Family	New
Neighboring										
Bedford	249	4	213	8	178	6	213	1	233	10
Maple Heights	545	7	526	7	459	11	528	6	527	10
Oakwood	42	5	33	3	41	7	35	6	34	7
Sagamore Hills Twp	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comparable										
Brooklyn Hts	18	0	15	0	15	0	16	7	18	3
Independence	78	19	80	8	73	10	66	14	103	11
Mayfield Village	33	1	45	2	44	0	50	2	41	2
Seven Hills	177	0	148	4	168	6	176	21	172	13
Valley View*	15	5	17	1	13	0	16	0	19	4
WALTON HILLS	21	3	20	1	22	2	14	6	46	10
Cuyahoga County	18,113	478	16,753	379	16,805	400	17,755	995	17,911	1,298

* Valley View is also a neighboring community.

SOURCE: Sale Price Summary, NODIS and Housing Policy Research Program, Cleveland State University.

The **length of time that homes were listed on the market before they were sold** is one indicator of the strength of the home sales market in a community. *Table B.4* presents the listing time for homes that sold through Realtors (who used the Northern Ohio Regional Multiple Listing Service) in Walton Hills, and neighboring and comparable communities during each year of the 1998-2000 time period. NORMLS has not compiled and released data in this format since 2000.

Table B.4 demonstrates that homes which were sold in Walton Hills through Realtors were on the market an average of 89 days in 1998, 99 days in 1999 and 95 days in 2000. With only several exceptions, homes in neighboring and comparable communities sold much more quickly than they did in Walton Hills. Of course, homes sold by the owner (not a Realtor using NORMLS), taken off the market, or listed with another Realtor after the initial listing period, are not included in this table (*see following discussion*).

3) Inability to sell homes at desired price

Another indicator of the strength of a community's home sales market is the **ratio between the price that homes sold for and the original listing price** (*Table B.4*). Between 1998 and 2000, the sales prices realized for homes sold in Walton Hills ranged from 93.9% to 95.9% of the listing price for those homes. The Village's rate over the three year period is at the low end of the range of ratios demonstrated for the neighboring and comparable communities over the same period (93.9% - 98.5%). In other words, Walton Hills home sellers have been realizing somewhat less of their asking price than have sellers in neighboring and comparable communities.

Table B.4. Market Characteristics of Single-Family Homes Sold Through Real Estate Brokers, 1998-2000, Walton Hills, Neighboring and Comparable Communities

Homes Sold in 1998							
Community	Number of S-F Housing Units	Number Sold	Percent of Units	Average List Price	Average Sale Price	Ratio Sale to List Price	Average Days on Market
NEIGHBORING							
Bedford	N/A	158	N/A	\$93,449	\$89,575	95.8	64
Maple Heights	N/A	369	N/A	\$81,108	\$78,558	96.8	85
Oakwood	N/A	16	N/A	\$124,728	\$120,515	96.6	78
Sagamore Hills Twp.	N/A	103	N/A	\$215,193	\$211,803	98.4	96
COMPARABLE							
Brooklyn Heights	N/A	10	N/A	\$116,000	\$111,155	95.8	29
Independence	N/A	44	N/A	\$222,239	\$210,504	94.7	325
Mayfield Village	N/A	28	N/A	\$249,335	\$238,439	95.6	53
Seven Hills	N/A	109	N/A	\$162,665	\$155,690	95.7	66
Valley View*	N/A	4	N/A	\$190,400	\$179,500	94.2	96
WALTON HILLS	N/A	14	N/A	\$193,507	\$185,564	95.9	89
Homes Sold in 1999							
Community	Number of S-F Housing Units	Number Sold	Percent of Units	Average List Price	Average Sale Price	Ratio Sale to List	Average Days on Market
NEIGHBORING							
Bedford	N/A	141	N/A	\$96,112	\$92,643	96.3	69
Maple Heights	N/A	353	N/A	\$84,912	\$82,551	97.2	70
Oakwood	N/A	18	N/A	\$123,991	\$117,572	94.8	78
Sagamore Hills Twp.	N/A	103	N/A	\$220,578	\$217,399	98.5	78
COMPARABLE							
Brooklyn Heights	N/A	6	N/A	\$145,100	\$141,900	97.7	35
Independence	N/A	36	N/A	\$217,947	\$207,602	95.2	50
Mayfield Village	N/A	14	N/A	\$237,214	\$226,457	95.4	119
Seven Hills	N/A	109	N/A	\$164,779	\$158,861	96.4	55
Valley View*	N/A	7	N/A	\$199,728	\$188,785	94.5	75
WALTON HILLS	N/A	11	N/A	\$199,036	\$186,936	93.9	99
Homes Sold in 2000							
Community	Number of S-F Housing Units	Number Sold	Percent of Units	Average List Price	Average Sale Price	Ratio Sale to List	Average Days on Market
NEIGHBORING							
Bedford	4,005	140	3.5%	\$94,089	\$91,089	96.8	61
Maple Heights	9,336	360	3.9%	\$85,816	\$83,825	97.6	66
Oakwood	1,058	21	2.0%	\$121,609	\$116,416	95.7	71
Sagamore Hills Twp.	2,544	141	5.5%	\$227,570	\$223,326	98.1	114
COMPARABLE							
Brooklyn Heights	615	5	0.8%	\$158,900	\$153,780	96.7	44
Independence	2,729	31	1.1%	\$208,651	\$198,645	95.2	42
Mayfield Village	1,176	27	2.3%	\$258,591	\$245,937	95.1	61
Seven Hills	4,667	102	2.2%	\$173,568	\$166,582	95.9	42
Valley View*	753	6	0.8%	\$199,600	\$188,500	94.4	69
WALTON HILLS	909	14	1.5%	\$201,971	\$193,528	95.8	95

* Valley View is also a neighboring community

N/A: Not Available

SOURCES: NORML, Year End Summary of Sales Activity, 1998, 1999, 2000 (through December 15); 2000 Census of Population and Housing, U.S. Census Bureau.

Comparing the number of existing and newly constructed homes sold in Walton Hills between 1998 and 2000, as reported by Cleveland State University Housing Policy Research Program (*Table B.3*), with the number of homes sold by Realtors using NORMLS (*Table B.4*), demonstrates that about

49% of sellers used the listing service during the 1998-2000 period. This rate is roughly “average” when compared to the eight neighboring and comparable communities (excluding Sagamore Hills Township), where the rates ranged from 37% (Valley View) to 66% (Maple Heights). It can be assumed that the balance of homes sold during this period within these communities, 34% to 63%, were sold by the home owners or a Realtor who did not utilize NORMLS.

Comparing the total stock of single family housing units located in Walton Hills (909) with the proportion sold during 2000 (14) reveals that 1.5% were placed on the market and sold (*Table B.4*). This rate is below average when compared with the nine neighboring and comparable communities, where rates ranged from 0.8% (Brooklyn Heights and Valley View) to 5.5% (Sagamore Hills Township). The somewhat lower rate of turnover in Walton Hills could indicate residents’ higher levels of satisfaction with their current residence (as reflected in the *Community Attitudes Survey* findings). Conversely, low turnover could indicate that residents simply do not sell their homes because offers are not presented or asking prices are not obtained. In either instance, data are not available to corroborate the claims. Possible factors influencing the placement of a home on the market and its eventual sale (at or near the seller’s preferred price) are numerous and complex – certainly beyond the scope of this Master Plan.

4) Low home sales prices / Lack of appreciation

The fluctuating **median sale prices of single-family homes** actually sold (excluding new construction) in Walton Hills, neighboring and comparable communities, and Cuyahoga County during the 1998-2003 period are provided in *Table B.5*.

Not surprisingly, sales prices have generally trended upward during the past six years. Compared to the median sales price of homes sold county-wide during 2003 (i.e., \$122,000), the median price of existing single-family homes purchased in Walton Hills during the same year (i.e., \$192,225) was almost 64% higher. This places the Village’s median sales price in the upper tier of the County’s 59 communities.

Village home appreciation during the 1998-2003 period (14.4%), as measured by median sales prices, was lower than the appreciation realized in Cuyahoga County overall (22.0%) and most neighboring and comparable communities (except Oakwood Village at -23.1% and Brooklyn Heights at -7.6%).

During the more recent 2001-2003 period, all except Oakwood (-21.1%) and Valley View (-1.7%) realized a larger increase than did Walton Hills (1.6%). For comparison, the County median sales price during this period increased by 9.9%.

During the earlier 1998-2001 period, the Walton Hills median sales price (7.4%) was comparable to the County’s (7.5%).

Trends are best analyzed by examining longer time periods (i.e., 1998-2003).

Perhaps providing some perspective for the above findings, the average selling price of a home in January, 2004 increased 18.5% nationally between January, 2000 and that month. In Ohio, the average selling price dropped 2.6%. In Cuyahoga and the four surrounding counties, the average sale price dropped 1% (*The Plain Dealer, October 21, 2004*).

Table B.5. Median Single-Family Home Sales Price* Change, 1998-2003, Walton Hills, Neighboring and Comparable Communities and Cuyahoga County

Community	1998	1999	2000	% Change 1998-2000
Neighboring				
Bedford	\$86,000	\$89,500	\$88,000	2.3%
Maple Heights	\$76,000	\$80,500	\$83,250	9.5%
Oakwood	\$118,000	\$79,950	\$96,000	-18.6%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comparable				
Brooklyn Heights	\$109,900	\$116,950	\$128,500	16.9%
Independence	\$165,000	\$178,000	\$179,450	8.8%
Mayfield Village	\$195,000	\$190,000	\$195,000	0.0%
Seven Hills	\$149,500	\$150,000	\$160,000	7.0%
Valley View***	\$186,500	\$183,500	\$153,000	-18.0%
WALTON HILLS	\$168,000	\$170,000	\$180,450	7.4%
Cuyahoga County	\$100,000	\$102,000	\$107,500	7.5%

	2001	2002	2003	% Change 2001-2003	% Change 1998-2003
Neighboring					
Bedford	\$95,000	\$102,500	\$107,900	13.6%	25.5%
Maple Heights	\$87,000	\$90,000	\$92,000	5.7%	21.1%
Oakwood	\$115,000	\$109,000	\$90,688	-21.1%	-23.1%
Sagamore Hills Twp.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Comparable					
Brooklyn Heights	\$122,000	\$138,500	\$165,500	35.7%	-7.6%
Independence	\$191,500	\$193,500	\$205,000	7.1%	24.2%
Mayfield Village	\$177,000	\$212,500	\$245,000	38.4%	25.6%
Seven Hills	\$165,000	\$164,500	\$175,000	6.1%	17.1%
Valley View**	\$229,000	\$232,500	\$225,000	-1.7%	20.6%
WALTON HILLS	\$189,200	\$194,250	\$192,225	1.6%	14.4%
Cuyahoga County	\$111,000	\$116,000	\$122,000	9.9%	22.0%

* Not adjusted for inflation.

** Valley View is also a neighboring community.

SOURCE: Sale Price Summary, Cleveland State University NODIS and Housing Policy Research Program.

“Sales”, or market “price”, what a property actually sells for, is not the same as market “value” – an alternative way to look at home appreciation. Market value is an abstract term indicating the estimated price of a property based on an analysis of comparable sales and a host of other pertinent market data. Examining **assessed residential property values** (major tax appraisals are conducted every six years) on a community basis countywide for the longer 1990-2001 time period reveals that

Walton Hills homeowners have realized a 41.6% increase overall, positioning slightly ahead of the countywide average (36.3%) and 48 (of 59) other communities in Cuyahoga County. These and the following findings have been determined by NODIS, the housing research arm of Cleveland State University using historic data from the Cuyahoga County Auditor.

For comparison, residential property value appreciation realized by the County's 59 communities during this period ranged from lows of 1.5% (Highland Hills) and 6.5% (Warrensville Heights) to a high of 124.5% (Hunting Valley). Among the eight comparison communities (excluding Sagamore Hills Township), only two demonstrated greater appreciation than did Walton Hills (Oakwood at 59.8% and Independence at 61.4%). The others trailed behind Walton Hills' and the County's average, except for Brooklyn Heights Village (39.4%). According to NODIS, Walton Hills' inflation-adjusted increase positions it at the threshold of the top one-third of all Cuyahoga County's communities in terms of residential property value increases over this recent 11 year period.

Further investigations are warranted in order to fully understand the position that Walton Hills maintains among its neighboring communities, the County and region in terms of housing sales and market values as well as the complex local, regional and national forces and trends that influence them.

NEXT STEPS

Before Master Plan preparation began in 2002, numerous **alternative strategies** had been advanced by Village officials, citizens and other stakeholders to eliminate or reduce the steadily growing community concerns pertaining to the public schools "quality" issue. After openly reviewing and discussing the many options considered over the years, and following careful consideration of the recent findings derived from the *Community Attitudes Survey*, the majority of Master Plan Committee adopted the Master Plan Education Goal stated earlier.

Perhaps due to the renewed and focused discussions at the outset of the community planning process, the Village set aside funding to retain some outside professional assistance to address the matter. The effort culminated in the development of a petition request to the Ohio Department of Education to leave the Bedford City School District to merge with the Cuyahoga Heights Local School District. This is the second time the petition process has been attempted within the past six years. The public hearing, originally scheduled for October 28, 2004, has been postponed by the Ohio Department of Education (as of this writing in November of 2004).

Contingent upon the nature of the final decision of the Ohio Department of Education, alternative responses by the Village are proposed in *Chapter 7*.

DRAFT

APPENDIX C

T.G. YOUNG PARK MASTER PLAN

Walton Hills T.G. Young Park Master Plan

Prepared for the
Recreation Committee of Council

June 4, 2001

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

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Letter of Transmittal

June 4, 2001

David Washtock, Chair
Village of Walton Hills Recreation Committee of Council
Municipal Building
7595 Walton Road,
Walton Hills, Ohio 44146

Dear Mr. Washtock:

We are pleased to submit to the Village this Master Plan for T.G. Young Park. This Master Plan incorporates the desired recreation facilities that best fit with the existing character of the Park and ensures that the improvements to be undertaken with the NatureWorks grant will enable future development of the Park.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these services to the Village. If you have any questions or if we can be of any further service, please do not hesitate to call.

Yours truly,
D.B. Hartt, Inc.

David B. Hartt
President

Kristin M. Hopkins, AICP
Principal Planner

c Mayor Anielski
Fred Tufts, Village Engineer

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, the Village has contemplated numerous improvements to T. G. Young Park. In 2000, the Village applied for and received a \$73,687 grant for improvements to the Park, which must be constructed by the end of year 2001. The purpose of this report is to provide guidance to the Village in the overall long range planning for the Park prior to construction of the improvements funded by the NatureWorks grant to ensure that these improvements are properly placed on the site to maximize the Park's development potential.

To prepare the plan, D.B. Hartt conducted the following:

- Visited the Park to more fully understand existing conditions, site constraints and important natural resources.
- Reviewed the site's constraints and surrounding residential and industrial development.
- Reviewed the Village's list of desired facilities and activities for the Park including a multi-purpose indoor activity center.
- Evaluated the land area requirements for the various desired facilities.
- Outlined principles to guide the overall development of the Park.
- Reviewed and assessed the advantages and disadvantages of alternative development and site plan arrangements.
- Presented preliminary plans and status report to the Mayor and Village Engineer on April 2 and to the Recreation Committee of Council on April 10, 2001.

This Master Plan has been revised to incorporate the comments and recommendations made during the review meetings.

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

II. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

A. Village Statistics

Based on the 2000 Census, there are 2,400 people in Walton Hills living in an estimated 900 households. This is a slight increase from the 1990 statistics of 2,371 people in 832 households indicating that the Village population has stabilized.

The arterial streets within the Village include Northfield Road (Rt 8), which is an industrial corridor and north-south commuter route, and Alexander Road, an east-west commuter route. Other major collector streets include Dunham Road, Egbert Road, and Walton Road.

There are 6.91 square miles (4,421 acres) within the Village boundaries. Of that, approximately 40% are devoted to public open space: the Cleveland Metroparks' Bedford Reservation (including the Shawnee Hills Golf Course) is in the northern portion of the Village, Astorhurst Golf Course is along the Village's western boundary and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park is located in the southwestern corner of the Village, see Map 1. These regional park facilities offer numerous acres for passive recreation including picnic areas and miles of hiking and bridle trails.

In addition to these regional public open spaces, the Village owns 5 parcels, the largest being the T. G. Young Park site.

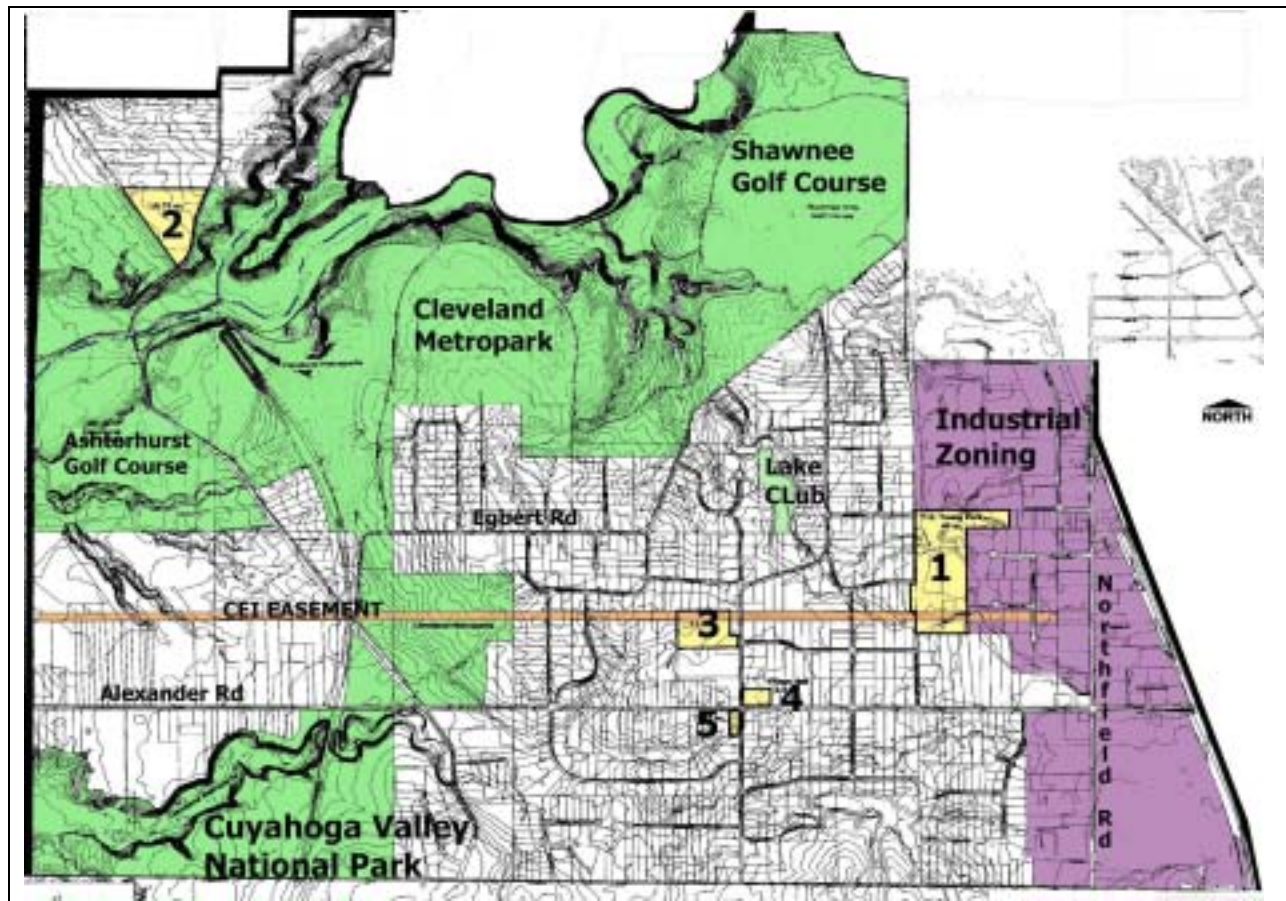
Table 1 Village-Owned Parcels		
<u>Site</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Location</u>
1. T.G. Young Park	40.00 acres	Dellwood Road
2. Village Service Center	18.75 acres	Dunham Road
3. Former Bd. of Education –owned Site	11.00 acres	Walton Road
4. Village Hall Site	2.50 acres	Alexander Road
5. Former Gas Station Site	1.25 acres	Alexander Road

See Map 1 for locations of Village-owned parcels.

Each of these sites except T.G. Young Park is located on a major street. In contrast, the entrance to T.G. Young Park is located at the end of Dellwood Drive, a short residential street, with the potential for future access at the end of Carmany Drive, also a residential street.

In addition to the above public recreation facilities, the Walton Hills Lake Club, a private swimming facility, is located off Rotary Drive. The Lake Club is subsidized by the Village and in exchange holds periodic summer events that are open to all Village residents.

T.G. Young Park Master Plan



Map 1
Public Open Space and Village-Owned Parcels
Numbers correspond to Table 1

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

B. Existing Conditions/Facilities at T.G. Young Park

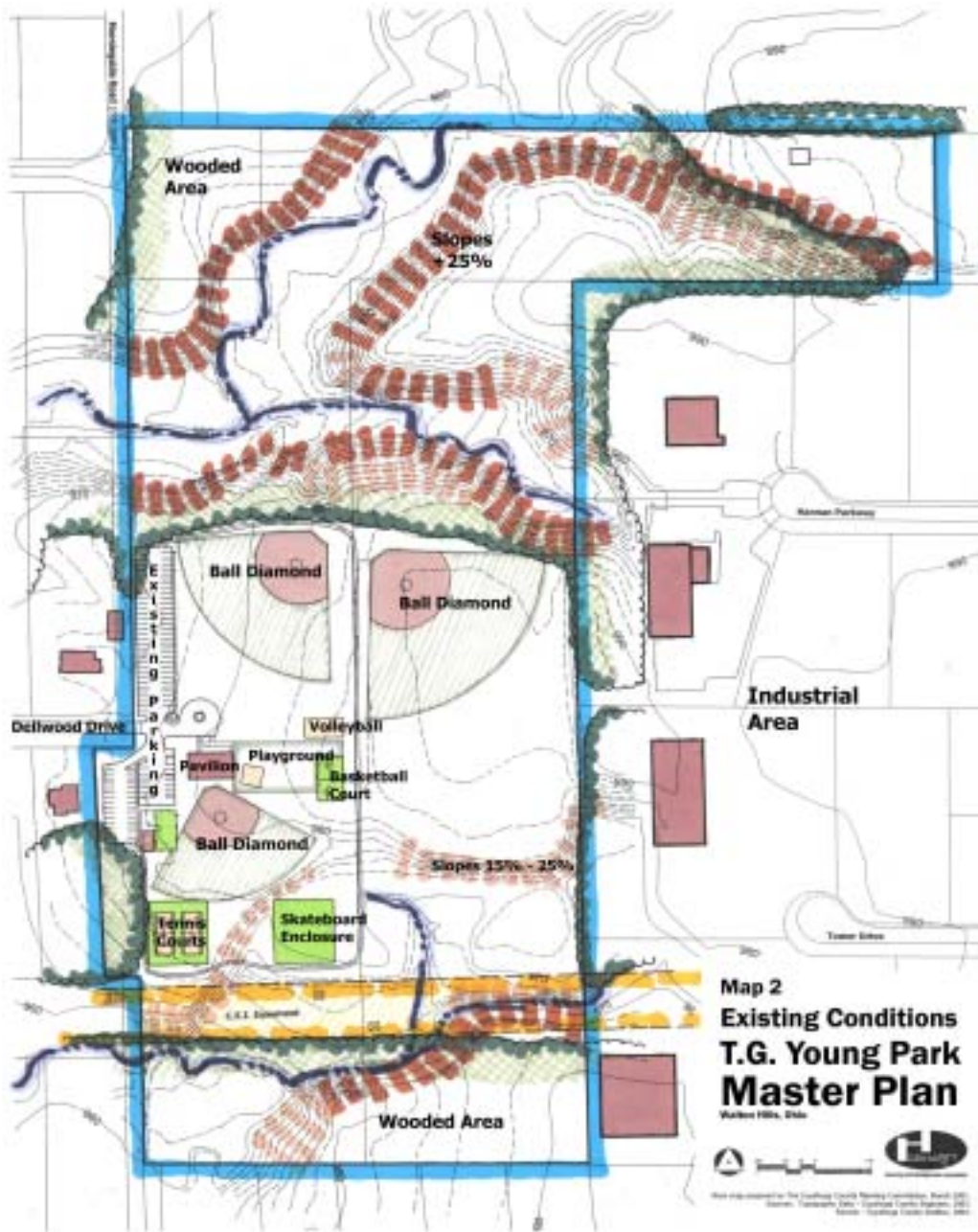
T.G. Young Park is comprised of 40 acres and is characterized by two distinct environments, which are quantified in Table 2. The flat, middle portion of the Park is currently developed with various active recreation facilities such as a playground, ballfields, tennis courts, and parking areas. Wooded areas with slopes ranging up to 30% and traversed by streams are located to the north and south of the flat, developed area. In addition, a 100-foot wide CEI easement with high-tension overhead power lines bounds the southern edge of the flat portion of the Park.

Table 2 T.G. Young Park Statistics	
Total Park Area:	40.0 acres
Restricted Area:	24.3 acres
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North - steep slopes/heavily wooded area (17.7 acres) • South - steep slopes/heavily wooded area (4.8 acres) • CEI easement corridor (1.8 acres) 	
Flat Area Suitable For “Active” Recreation Facilities:	15.7 acres
Portion of Flat Area Devoted to Existing Facilities (see below):	11.0 acres
Area Available for Additional “Active” Recreation Facilities:	4.7 acres

Approximately 11 acres of the flat portion of the park are currently “developed” with the following facilities. The location of these facilities as well as pertinent natural features are depicted on Map 2.

- Pavilion with restrooms, picnic tables and storage space;
- Striped, paved parking area for approximately 110 vehicles;
- Two large baseball fields (250 feet and 290 feet);
- One smaller little league field (200 feet);
- Two tennis courts – fenced;
- One skateboard enclosure – fenced (previously two tennis courts);
- Batting machine/cage;
- Sand volley ball court;
- Various playground equipment, including wooden climbing structure, swing sets, and slides;
- Paved walking/exercise path;
- Storage barn (20 ft. by 30 ft.), tool shed;
- Landscaped entrance with turn-around and flagpole.

T.G. Young Park Master Plan



T.G. Young Park Master Plan

C. Additional Planned/Desired Facilities

Prior to the preparation of this Master Plan, the Village had prepared a “wish” list of improvements for T.G. Young Park. Table 3 summarizes the area requirements for these various facilities.

Table 3 Area Requirements for Additional Facilities	
	<u>Required Area</u>
1. Activities Funded by NatureWorks Grant (required completion 12/01):	
• Expanded parking - 56+ additional spaces	0.5 acres
• New baseball field	2.8 acres
• Wheelchair accessible path with protective fencing	--
2. Activity/ Recreation Center: 17,000 - 20,000 sq. ft., 80+ parking spaces	2 – 2.5 acres
• Gymnasium for basketball, volleyball, ping pong, badminton (min 95 feet x 70 feet)	
• Community meeting room	
• Seniors activity room for crafts, games and instructional classes	
• Kitchen	
• Locker room/showers	
• Exercise room	
• Bathrooms	
3. Expanded Activity/ Recreation Center (later phase): 8,000 – 12,000 sq. ft., 40 – 50 parking spaces:	1 – 2 acres
• Swimming pool	
• Indoor track	
• Dance floor	
4. Expanded Pavilion:	--
• Upgrade/expand bathrooms	
• Expand pavilion, add fireplace for extended use	
5. Additional Outdoor Active Recreation Facilities:	
• Trails	*
• Sledding and tobogganing	*
• Soccer field(s) (possible joint use with baseball fields)	1.7 – 2.1 acres
• Outdoor passive area for socializing, with benches	--
• Picnic shelters with grills/ cooking facilities	0.5 – 1 acre
6. Consolidated Service Area:	--
7. Total	8.5 – 11 acres

-- no additional land required

* not part of the “active” area

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

D. Conclusions

The primary goal of park development is to utilize the site in an efficient manner that preserves the natural character of the site. Therefore, given the configuration of T.G. Young Park, the objectives are two-fold:

- Active play areas/park functions should be located on the flat and more “usable” portion of the site.
- Passive recreation facilities and natural resource protection are suitable for the hillier, wooded areas.

Most of the improvements noted in Table 3 (which in total require 8.5 to 11 acres) should be located on the 15.7 acres of flat land and would need to be located in a manner that fits with the general configuration of the existing recreation facilities. Since the existing facilities already consume approximately 11 acres (as noted in Table 2) there are less than five (5) acres available at T.G. Young Park on which to situate facilities that require nearly double that amount. Therefore, only the facilities that are most suitable for and compatible with the existing facilities should be included in the Master Plan for T.G. Young Park.

Based on D.B.Hartt’s determination of the square footage required to accommodate all of the program needs listed for a new activity/recreation center, the activity/recreation center would require a minimum of four acres in order to be adequately designed and located to fit in with the lower density character of the park. A four-acre site would also ensure the ability to expand in the event the Village wanted to increase the recreation and/or parking facilities.

Given the above requirements for an activity/recreation center, this major indoor recreation facility is not appropriate for the T.G. Young Park because it:

- Preempts and overpowers the more conventional park uses because of its building size and required parking. This building would effectively change the character of the park.
- Uses all of the available land and leaves no flexibility to expand or include any of the other desired facilities that are more consistent with the current and future multiple activities expected.
- Draws significant traffic volumes onto a local residential street. Conversely, because of the amount of traffic generated, this facility should be located on a more major street.
- Is “unrelated” to and has little overlap with other park functions; therefore is more easily located on a separate site.

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

III. DEVELOPMENT PARAMETERS - PRINCIPLES TO GUIDE MASTER PLAN

Because of the Park's natural features, the Park should include a variety of active and passive recreational facilities. The portion of the Park that is relatively flat and already utilized for active recreation should continue to be the location for more intensive development and activities. In contrast, the wooded areas where the land is steeper, with slopes up to 25-30 %, are suitable for more passive recreation areas that require little or no alteration to the land.

Consistent with the above overriding concept, the Park should be designed to:

- A. Preserve the existing wooded areas to the maximum extent possible, and minimize regrading.
- B. Provide parking areas that are convenient to the primary activity facilities.
- C. Provide reasonable separation (by distance, orientation of activities and landscaping) between:
 - formal ballfields;
 - active play areas; and
 - passive areas.
- D. Provide area(s) for informal games.
- E. Design the facilities to enable convenient surveillance.
- F. Provide areas that encourage opportunities for socializing, visiting and relaxing.
- G. Minimize the impact of development on the Park's residential neighbors.
- H. Overlap soccer field with baseball fields to maximize utilization of the land.
- I. Provide minimal access and activities near Carmany Drive.

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

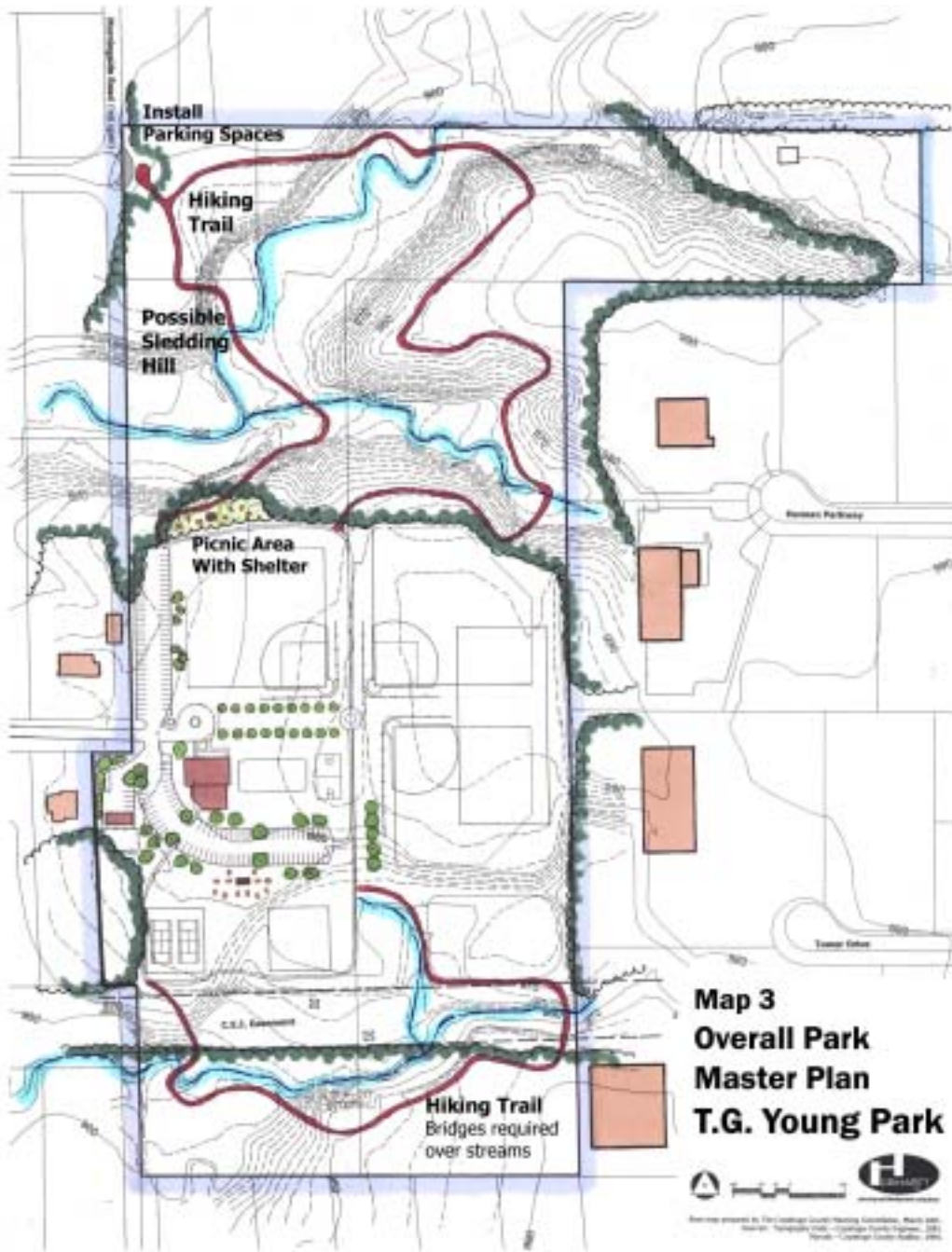
IV. T.G. YOUNG MASTER PLAN

Given the previously stated development parameters, the Master Plan for T.G. Young Park is depicted on two maps. Map 3 illustrates the overall park plan for the entire 40-acre site. Map 4 is an enlarged area describing the active recreation facilities on the 15.7-acre flat area.

A. Recreation Elements in the Restricted Area (See Map 3)

1. Add a small parking area and a trailhead at the Carmony Drive turnaround, which abuts the Park at its northwestern corner. Due to its isolated location, only minimal improvements should be made at this location. The primary entrance into the Park will remain the existing entrance off Dellwood Drive.
2. Utilize the wooded areas the following passive activities. Some thinning of the trees will be required to install such facilities, however, the installation should be conducted in a manner that best preserves the natural features of the site.
 - ✓ hiking/walking trails
 - ✓ cross country ski trails
 - ✓ sledding areas
 - ✓ picnic/shelter areas
 - ✓ natural areas
3. The pedestrian hiking trail could follow multiple routes throughout the wooded areas. In order to connect the primary activity center with the Carmony Drive parking area, as well as hiking trails in the southern wooded area, bridges will need to be provided in locations where the path crosses streams.
4. Utilize the CEI easement for:
 - ✓ hiking/walking trails
 - ✓ expanded picnic areas
 - ✓ natural open space/play area
 - ✓ overflow parking

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

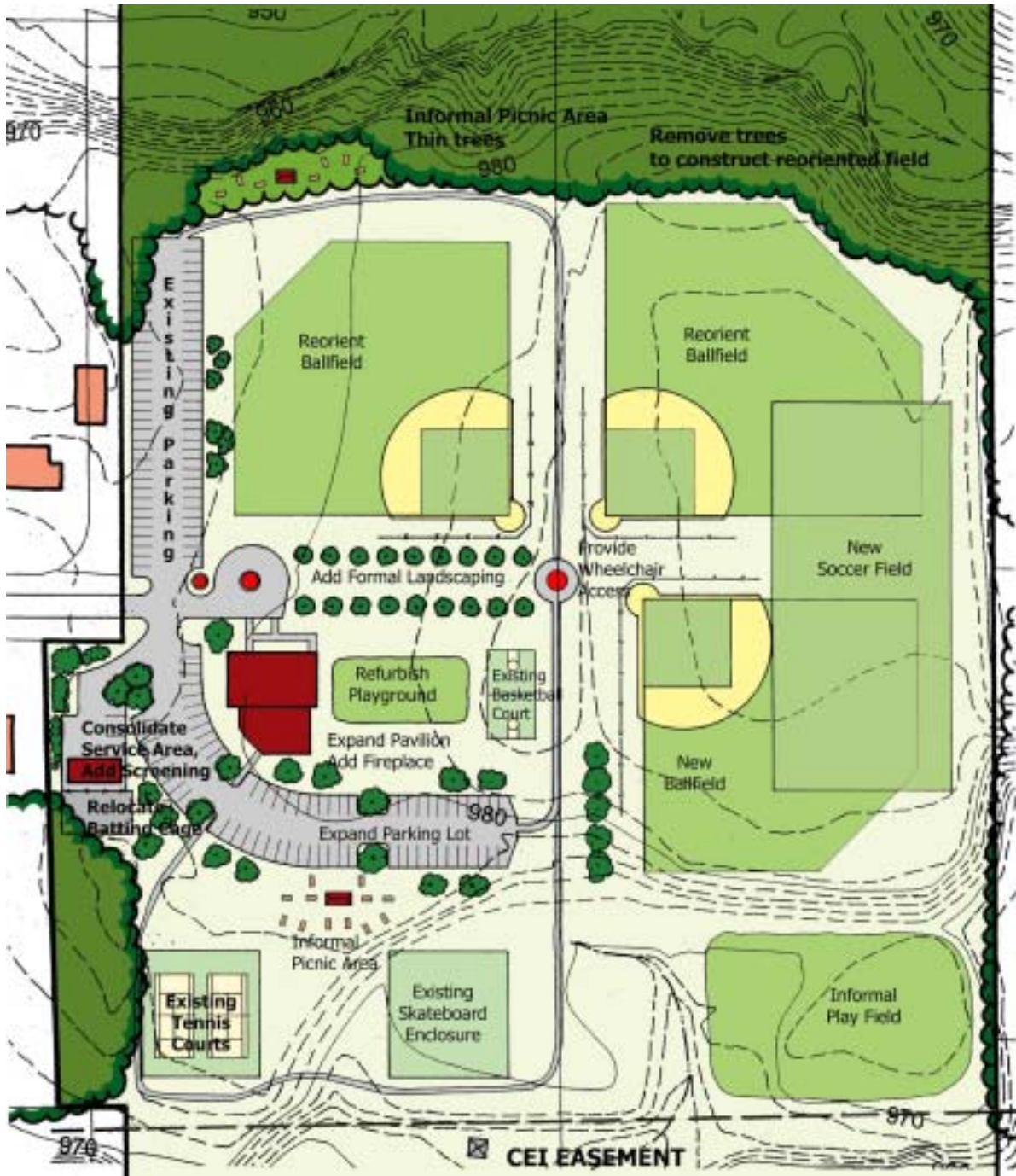


T.G. Young Park Master Plan

B. Facilities in the Active Recreation Area (See Map 4)

1. Reorient the ballfields in a traditional pinwheel fashion so that main activity areas around home plate are centralized. This way the active areas of the ballfields are moved closer to pavilion which gives parents the ability watch children playing on the ballfields while trying to monitor younger children on the playground. A small amount of trees may need to be removed in the northeast corner of the developed area to ensure proper sizing of the eastern reoriented ballfield.
2. Add a new soccer field that overlaps with the new and reoriented ballfields.
3. Mow and maintain the area in the southeastern portion to enable its use as an informal play field.
4. Redesign and expand the south parking lot to reduce the distance for wheelchair access to the ballfields. Overflow parking could be accommodated immediately south of the expanded parking area as well as further south within the CEI easement. The redesign of the parking area along with the reorientation of the ballfields enables greater and more efficient surveillance for the Park.
5. Consolidate the service/storage facilities in an area immediately south of the Dellwood Drive entrance and within the existing parking lot. Relocate the storage shed so that it and any associated service parking are placed behind building line of the adjacent residence. Add sufficient screening and landscaping to obscure the view of and any noise from the service area.
6. Expand and upgrade the pavilion. The expanded area accommodates a fireplace, which will enable greater use of the pavilion throughout the colder months. The expanded area could also be walled to provide greater protection from the elements.
7. Refurbish and reorient the playground area. Orient benches so that parents can watch children on the ballfields as well as children in the playground area. Consider replacing the older playground equipment which new which are bettered designed for safety and comfort.
8. Add formal landscaping to create a vista as one enters the Park. Given the sewer easement to the industrial area east of the Park, more intensive development is not permitted.
9. Add picnic areas and shelters in convenient locations near the parking lots. Add grills and/or other cooking facilities to enable greater use of the picnic areas. Thin the trees north of the parking lot to build the shelter and better enable grass to grow in the picnic area.

T.G. Young Park Master Plan



Map 4

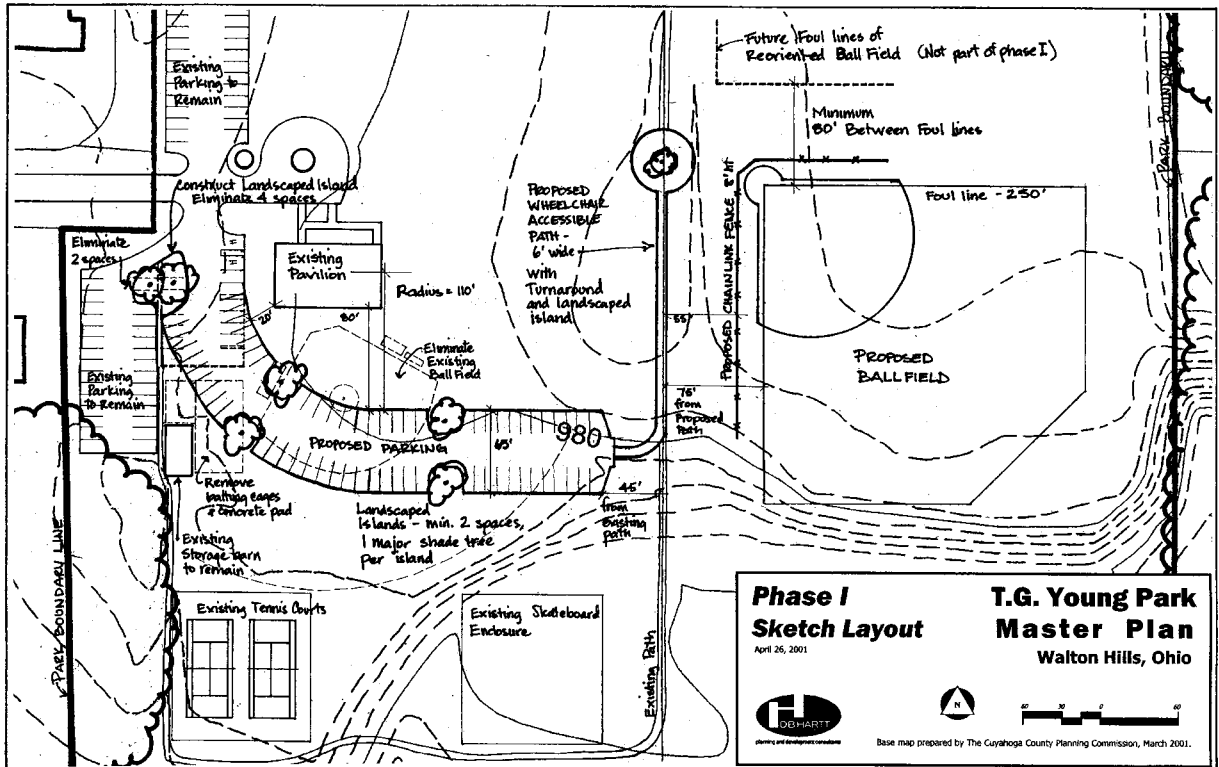
A. Active Recreation Area Enlarged Map

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

Nature Works Grant Implementation

At the time this project was begun, the Village had already secured a NatureWorks grant to construct specific improvements at T.G. Young Park. Map 5 illustrates the proposed facilities funded by the NatureWorks grant, which include:

- ✓ Expanded parking with appropriately landscaped islands.
- ✓ New baseball field.
- ✓ Wheelchair accessible path to the new ballfield/playground, with protective fencing.



Map 5

T.G. Young Park Master Plan

V. ACTIVITY/RECREATION CENTER CONSIDERATIONS

At the start of this planning process, a new Village community center was identified as an important facility needed to meet the recreational and leisure-time needs of Walton Hills' residents and was considered as a possible facility at T.G. Young Park. However, as stated in Section II. D, it is believed, for numerous reasons, that the T.G. Young Park site is not a suitable location for this intensity of development.

While it is beyond the scope of this project to thoroughly evaluate alternative possibilities, nevertheless, it has been suggested that the community center could be located on the Village Hall site, north of Village Hall, between the upper and lower level parking lots.

However, based on D.B.Hartt's cursory review of the desired features and program requirements of a proposed community center, it appears that the activity/recreation center ultimately desired by Walton Hills should be located on a site with a minimum of 4 acres. Though it is possible that a smaller site, including sharing the Village Hall site, could accommodate a multipurpose building D.B.Hartt cautions that the Village Hall site might not be adequate for the following reasons:

- A. In order to fit on the site, the building would need to be smaller than the square footage estimated by D.B.Hartt as necessary to include all of the amenities desired.
- B. Adding another building to the Village Hall site will intensify the development on the site to the extent that the "level of development" would be significantly "out of character" with the intersection and other developments in the residential portions of the Village.
- C. Such a building would preclude any future expansion of the Village Hall or using the property for any other Village purposes.

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APPENDIX D

INVENTORY OF COMMERCIAL RETAIL, OFFICE AND INDUSTRIAL ESTABLISHMENTS

Appendix D. Classification System for Retail and Office Establishments

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Category	Type Code	Classification	Typical Establishments
(A) Convenience Goods and Services	A1	Supermarkets	Supermarket
	A2	Other Food	Delicatessen; convenient foods; meat, poultry, fish, produce markets; bakers; candy, nut stores; dairy product stores; beverage stores
	A3	Food Service	Restaurants; cafeterias; sandwich, donut shops; taverns; liquor; catering halls
	A4	Drugs	Drug, discount drug stores
	A5	Other Convenience Goods	Hardware, paint, wallpaper stores; garden, flower shops; record, video stores; key, card, gift shops; bookstores; stationary shops; beauty supply stores
	A6	Convenience Services	Beauty, barber shops; watch, shoe repair stores; dry cleaners, laundries, laundromats; photo studios; appliance and household repair; travel agencies
(B) Shopping Goods and Services	B1	Department Stores	Department stores
	B2	Other General Merchandise	Discount, junior department, variety stores
	B3	Clothing and Shoes	Men's, ladies', children's wear stores; shoe stores; millinery, fur and bridal shops
	B4	Other Shopping Goods	Yard goods, sporting goods, photo equipment, musical instruments, jewelry stores; pet shops; toy stores
	B5	Furniture	Furniture, appliance, carpeting, radio, TV, stereo stores; kitchen, bath accessories, lamp stores, computer sales and accessories
(C) Automobile Sales, Parts and Service	C1	New Auto Sales	New car dealerships' used car lots directly adjacent to and part of new car dealerships
	C2	Used Auto Sales	Used car lots
	C3	Auto Parts Sales	Auto parts stores tires, batteries and accessories
	C4	Auto Repair	Auto repair garage other than gasoline service stations
	C5	Gas Stations	Gasoline service stations, with or without repair facilities; car washes
(D) Commercial Amusements	D1	Enclosed Amusements	Indoor movie theater, auditoriums; bowling alleys; billiard parlors; roller/ice skating rinks; racquet clubs; health clubs
	D2	Social Halls	Dance halls, private; semi-private social halls
(E) Other Retail	E1	Hotels, etc.	Hotels, motels, tourist courts
	E2	Funeral Homes	Funeral homes
	E3	Animal Hospitals	Animal hospitals, kennels
	E4	Training Schools	Dance studios, music stores' beautician, barber shops
	E5	Business Services	Photocopying, addressing stores; linen, uniform supply stores
	E6	Miscellaneous & Unidentified	Miscellaneous businesses and retail establishments of an unidentifiable use
(F) Vacant Retail	F1	Existing Vacant	Vacant stores and offices
	F2	Incomplete Vacant	Retail structures under construction
(G) Office Space	G1	Local Office	Banks, cash advance, finance companies, insurance, real estate, medical, health services; legal, engineering, management consultant offices
	G2	Regional Office	Office space used by regionally or nationally-oriented firms or utilities

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Commercial Retail and Office FLOOR SPACE INVENTORY

WALTON HILLS COMMERCIAL RETAIL & OFFICE BUSINESSES:

BUSINESS NAME	SITE ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	SIC	NAICS	CODE	TOTAL S.F.*
1 Walton Hills Deli & Mini Mart	7601 Walton Rd	Deli	5812	445	A2	1,500
2 G & C Donuts (wholesale only)	7625 Walton Rd	Doughnuts	5461	445	A2	500
3 Bob's Villager	18000 Alexander Rd	Restaurants	5812	722	A3	2,000
4 Park Place at Astorhurst	6980 Dunham Rd	Concession stand/restaurant	5812	722	A3	1,000
5 Astorhurst Club House	7000 Dunham Rd	ProShop/Club House	7992	713	A3	2,685
6 Shawnee Hills Club House	18753 Egbert Road	Club House	7992	713	A3	4,700
7 Penelope's Bistro	7190 Northfield Rd	Restaurants	5812	722	A3	2,925
8 Tink's Tavern	14000 Tinkers Creek Rd	Bar/Tavern	5813	722	A3	2,220
9 Intercity Auto Foreign Car Used Parts	7140 Northfield Rd	Auto Wrecking-Wholesale	5015	441	C3	4,650
10 Western Reserve Battery Corp.	7580 Northfield Rd	Battery Supply/Storage	5531	335	C3	18,180
11 Bedford Transmission Service	20437 Hannan Pkwy	Auto Transmissions	7537	811	C4	7,500
12 Perfect Converter Company	20437 Hannan Pkwy	Auto Transmissions/Parts	7357	811	C4	5,000
13 Bedford Auto Trim Company	7045 Krick Rd	Glass-Auto Plate/Upholstery	5321	811	C4	2,400
14 Perfection Automotive Repairs	20570 Krick Rd	Auto Body-Repairing	7532	811	C4	4,850
15 Classic Antique Repair	20604 Krick Rd	Auto Restoration	7532	811	C4	2,625
16 Fred's Auto Body	7172 Northfield Rd	Auto Body-Repairing	7532	811	C4	3,350
17 Welsh's Auto Body	7196 Northfield Rd	Auto Body-Repairing	7532	811	C4	10,900
18 Rick's Auto Service	21000 Treat Road	Auto Body-Repairing	7532	811	C4	4,200
19 Walton Hills Marathon/Auto Center	17975 Alexander Rd	Gas/Service Station	5541	447	C5	40,825
20 Fuel Mart	7225 Northfield Rd	Service station-Gas	5411	447	C5	1,900
21 Maple Hts Cab Co./Transportation	20437 Hannan Pkwy	Taxi Cab service	4121	485	C6	2,285
22 Town Car Services	20437 Hannan Pkwy	Limosine service	4119	485	C6	4,750
23 Astorhurst Country Place	7000 Dunham Rd	Party Center	5812	722	D2	2,500
24 Birchwood Banquet & Party Center	7540 Northfield Rd	Caterer/Banquet Center	5812	722	D2	7,250
25 UAW Stout-Smith Hall	7800 Northfield Rd	Labor Organizations	8631	531	D2	14,792
26 Walton Manor Health Care Center	19859 Alexander Rd	Nursing Home	8051	623	E5	8,290
27 Unifirst Uniforms Corp.	7595 Independence Dr	Uniforms Apparel & Clothing	5699	315	E6	5,208
28 Advanced Satellite Communications	7985 Northfield Rd	Satellite Equip/Systems at Northfield Pk	4841	237	E7	28,290
29 Vacant (Marathon)	7620 Northfield Rd	Vacant			F1	55,300
30 Vacant	7627 Walton Road	Vacant			F1	55,300
31 Vacant	7631 Walton Road	Vacant			F1	2,400
32 Best Employees Credit Union	21375 Alexander Rd	Credit Union/Bank	6061	522	G1	2,400
33 Northfield Park Racetrack	10333 Northfield Rd	Offices	0752	711	G1	4,950
						1,210
						1,000
						1,000
						3,210
						4,100
						1,600
						TOTAL
						175,690

*SF: Square feet. Some measurements have been estimated by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.
 Sources: Cuyahoga County Auditor's records; Phone Disc 3rd Edition; Village of Walton Hills list of local businesses, July, 2004; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.
 SIC: Standard Industrial Code NAICS: North American Industrial Classification System
 Revised FINAL 10.18.04

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INDUSTRIAL FLOOR SPACE INVENTORY

WALTON HILLS INDUSTRIAL BUSINESSES:

BUSINESS NAME	SITE ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	SIC	NAICS	CODE	TOTAL S.F.*
11.						
1 Walton Plastics Inc.	20493 Hannan Pkwy	Plastics Packaging & Filling Mfg	3296	326	11	40,000
2 Bedford Anodizing Co. Inc	7010 Krick Rd	Electroplating/Anodizing	3471	331	11	64,225
3 Great Lakes Polish & Buffing	7010 Krick Rd	Electroplating/Plating/Polishing	3471	331	11	
4 Great Lakes Etching & Finishing	7010 Krick Rd	Electroplating/Plating/Polishing	5099	323	11	
5 T.J. Tool Works	7010 Krick Rd	Iron & Steel Forgings	3462	331	11	141,860
6 Ferro Corp Chemical Division	7050 Krick Rd	Basic Organic Chemical Mfg	5162	325	11	18,000
7 National Rolled Thread Die Co	7051 Krick Rd	Mfg of Rolled Thread/Die	3452	333	11	55,940
8 Mantua Manufacturing	7075 Krick Rd	Furniture Manufacturer	5021	337	11	20,230
9 Add-A-Nickel Plating Service	7105 Krick Rd	Electroplating/Plating/Polishing	3471	331	11	19,975
- Add-A-Nickel Plating Service	7115 Krick Rd	Electroplating/Plating/Polishing	3471	331	11	14,510
10 Cair Brothers Inc	7177 Northfield Rd	Concrete Mfg/Bldg Materials	5211	423	11	28,740
11 Empire Glass Co.	7230 Northfield Rd	Glass Products Mfg	3210	327	11	73,130
12 Mason Structural Steel Inc	7800 Northfield Rd	Fabricated Structural Steel Mfg	3441	331	11	1,276,690
13 Ford W.H. Stamping Plant	7845 Northfield Rd	Motor Vehicle Metal Stamping	3465	336	11	103,030
14 Edge Seal Technologies	7850 Northfield Rd	Glass/Window Manufacturer	3231	327	11	60,000
15 Leading Edge Distribution	7850 Northfield Rd	Glass/Window Manufacturer/Distributor	3231	327	11	
- Mason Structural Steel-Building 2	7500 Young Dr	Fabricated Structural Steel Mfg	3441	331	11	Total 1,916,330
12.						
16 United Packaging/Overseas Packing Co.	19800 Alexander Rd	Container Manufacturer	5113	332	12	26,850
17 Controllix Corp	21415 Alexander Rd	Relay & Industrial Control Mfg	3625	335	12	24,310
18 Dunham Products, Inc.	7350 Dunham Rd	Screw products, thread grinding	3545	333	12	1,485
19 The Home City Ice Company	20282 Hannan Pkwy	Ice Manufacturer	2097	312	12	15,945
20 Protectoplas Co.	20395 Hannan Pkwy	Tank Lining & Coating	7699	238	12	11,000
21 Venture Grinding	20437 Hannan Pkwy	Precision/Production Grinding	3479	331	12	2,250
22 NPK Construction Equipment	7550 Independence Dr	Mining Machinery/Equip Mfg	3532	333	12	28,975
- NPK Construction Equipment	7560 Independence Dr	Mining Machinery/Equip Mfg	3532	333	12	22,200
23 Gas Consultants/Burner Technology Unlimited	7570 Independence Dr	Heating Equipment	3569	333	12	16,800
24 McKinley Machinery	7045 Krick Rd	Machinery parts & processes	5084	332	12	1,200
25 Hand-It Inc.	7120 Krick Rd	Warehousing and operations	7389	322	12	399,000
26 THEM of Ohio	7120 Krick Rd	Corrugated box Mfg	2653	322	12	50,000
27 Commonwealth Aluminum/Bedford Coil Coating	7130 Krick Rd	Aluminum Coatings Mfg	3479	332	12	158,000
28 Saveco Surplus Supply	7160 Krick Rd	Salvage & surplus merch./heavy equip. handler	3595	333	12	9,500
29 All-Tech Manufacturing Ltd	7160 Krick Rd	Machine Shop	3541	333	12	28,000
30 Paragon Machine Co.	20430 Krick Rd West	Machine Shop	3599	332	12	5,630
31 Arcon Equipment	20468 Krick Rd West	Mfg Batteries/Storage	3691	335	12	2,195
32 Tru-Grinding	20502 Krick Rd West	Grinding Machines & Equipment	5082	333	12	12,400
33 Commercial Honing of Ohio	20637 Krick Rd West	Machine Shops	3479	332	12	34,700
34 Great Lakes Textiles	7200 Northfield Rd	Insulation Materials	5211	326	12	34,000
35 Ohio Flock Cote Co	7200 Northfield Rd	Manufacturers and Processors	2261	313	12	15,500
36 Fransaco Inc.	7250 Northfield Rd	Printed Circuit Board Mfg	3672	334	12	28,450
37 Todd Industries (PullLift Corp. & Green Line)	7300 Northfield Rd	Machine Tool Mfg (Metal Cutting)	3591	332	12	29,280
38 Ace Metal Stamping	7311 Northfield Rd	Metal Stamping	3544	332	12	16,000
39 TR Wigglesworth Machinery	7676 Northfield Rd	Wholesale Machinery	5085	333	12	8,200
- Great Lakes Textiles	7676 Northfield Rd	Insulation Materials & Mfr	5211	326	12	
40 Diamond Northern	7390 Young Dr	Generators-Electric Mfg	5063	333	12	Total 1,024,510
13.						
41 Cost Enterprises	7015 Krick Rd	Building Materials Wholesaler	5211	444	13	5,600
42 Ohio Materials Handling Inc. (Yale Industrial	7100 Krick Rd	Wholesale Industrial Trucks/Equip	5084	423	13	29,100
43 AGE Aurora Group Enterprises (Div. of Hand-It)	7120 Krick Rd	Pails & Container Sales/Wholesaler	5085	423	13	40,000
44 The Gas House Inc.	7125 Krick Rd	Wholesale Barbecue Equip/Supplies	5172	424	13	3,000
- Edge Seal Technologies	7515 Northfield Rd	Storage and inventory overflow	3231	327	13	79,400
45 Alternative Fuels Equipment	20638 Krick Rd West	Wholesale Fuel Oils	5172	422	13	8,715
46 CloPlay Building Products	7230 Northfield Rd	Wholesale Garage Doors/Framing	5211	444	13	27,900

BUSINESS NAME	SITE ADDRESS	DESCRIPTION	SIC	NAICS	CODE	TOTAL S.F.*
V1						
94 Vacant	7160 Krick Rd	Industrial Vacant			V1	2,500
95 Vacant	20080 West Krick Rd	Industrial Vacant			V1	500
96 Vacant	7250 Northfield Rd	Industrial Vacant			V1	4,500
97 Vacant (Hy-Ko Products Co.)	7370 Northfield Rd	Industrial Vacant			V1	80,000
98 Vacant (Ford Motor Co.)	7845 Northfield Rd	Industrial Vacant (Abandoned)			V1	772,755
99 Vacant (former Aim Nationalease)	20360 Tower Dr	Industrial Vacant			V1	14,000
100 Vacant	20400 Tower Dr	Industrial Vacant			V1	14,400
101 Vacant	21000 Treat Rd	Industrial Vacant			V1	10,500
102 Vacant	7307 Young Dr	Industrial Vacant			V1	4,225
					Total	903,380
					TOTAL	4,910,185

*SF: Square feet. Some measurements have been estimated by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.
Sources: Cuyahoga County Auditor's records; Phone Disc 3rd Edition; Village of Walton Hills list of local businesses, July, 2004; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission.
SIC: Standard Industrial Code NAICS: North American Industrial Classification System
Revised FINAL 10.18.04

APPENDIX E

- I. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES**
- II. ADAPTIVE REUSE STRATEGIES**

PART I: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

There are a number of business incentives and programs sponsored by Cuyahoga County and the State of Ohio in which Walton Hills has participated during recent years. Awarded funds have been used to improve infrastructure and maintain and attract businesses. Dozens of available programs offer additional opportunities for the Village. Among them, the following programs appear to demonstrate the greatest potential benefits at this time (excluding those in which the Village currently participates, such as the Issue 2 and Enterprise Zone designation programs).

Further investigations are necessary in order to determine applicability to identified needs and Village eligibility. The Village and/or its businesses are clearly ineligible for some of the following programs at present (but may qualify for participation in the future).

CUYAHOGA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Brownfield Redevelopment Fund (BRF)

The BRF is designed to overcome environmental barriers to reuse and obtain full use of underutilized commercial/industrial properties within Cuyahoga County. The primary focus is directed toward “first-ring” suburban communities. Job creation and/or retention is an expected outcome of cleanup and redevelopment. Eligible applicants include Cuyahoga County municipal corporations, non-profit community development corporations, and private developers and businesses.

The County can fund up to \$1 million directly per project. All project financing should be committed or secured.

Competitive Municipal Grant Program

Up to \$150,000 for one year is awarded on a competitive basis for activities such as infrastructure improvements and accessibility modifications to communities in the *Cuyahoga Urban County*, of which Walton Hills is a member. The program is administered by the Community and Economic Development Division, and is funded through Community Development Block Grant funds aimed at promoting innovative development activities among the communities comprising the Urban County.

Economic Development Loan Fund

The Economic Development Loan Fund provides businesses with financial assistance to support the retention and creation of jobs for County residents. The fund provides long term, fixed-rate financing at interest rates lower than conventional financing (typically 3.5%). The fund is intended to fill a financing gap beyond the amount of private participation and equity investment that can be raised. Loans can be used to finance the acquisition of land, buildings, machinery and equipment as well as for new construction, renovation, expansion and/or conversion of facilities. Loans cannot be used to refinance debt, purchase inventory, pay other non-capital costs or on speculative projects. Loans generally range from a minimum of \$35,000 to a maximum of \$350,000, up to 40% of total project cost.

Loan terms are typically seven (7) years on equipment and up to fifteen (15) years on land and building. Businesses must provide a minimum of 10% equity and are required to create one new, full-time, permanent job for every \$35,000 loaned within three (3) years of loan closing. Other business requirements apply, including a \$150 non-refundable application fee.

Industrial Revenue Bonds

Industrial Revenue Bonds (IRB's) are interest bearing certificates issued to raise money. They are generally tax-exempt and are also known as municipal bonds or qualified mortgage revenue bonds. The principle purpose is to assist new and expanding industry while providing employment opportunities. IRB's may be used for the purchase of land or equipment or for the expansion, construction and relocation of manufacturing facilities. Two basic types of IRB's exist: taxable and nontaxable.

Manufacturing Assistance, Development and Expansion Program (MADE)

The MADE in Cuyahoga County Program provides manufacturing businesses with financial assistance to support the retention and creation of jobs for County residents. The fund provides long term, fixed-rate financing at interest rates lower than conventional financing, currently two percent (2.00%). The fund is intended to fill a financing gap beyond the amount of private participation and equity investment that can be raised. Loans generally range from a minimum of \$35,000 to a maximum of \$200,000, up to 40% of total project cost. Loan terms are typically seven (7) years on equipment and up to fifteen (15) years on land and building.

Loans can be used to finance the acquisition of land, buildings, machinery and equipment as well as for new construction, renovation, expansion and/or conversion of facilities. Loans cannot be used to refinance debt, purchase inventory, pay other non-capital costs or on speculative projects. Other business requirements apply.

Strategic Initiatives Fund

This program is limited to for-profit commercial, industrial or service businesses that expand or move to Cuyahoga County. Economic Development projects that are larger in scale, that have compelling needs, and will have a significant or catalytic impact on the community, particularly in terms of job creation, private investment and the elimination of major blighting influences will be given top priority.

This program is funded through the HUD Section 108 Program and provides below market, fixed rate loans and loan guarantees in amounts that range from \$500,000 up to \$1.5 million for terms up to fifteen (15) years. Businesses must provide a minimum of 10% equity and must create one new, full time, permanent job for every \$35,000 loaned within three (3) years of loan closing. A majority (fifty one percent (51%)) of the jobs created must be made available to low and moderate income persons as defined by the federal government. Other business requirements apply including a \$500 non-refundable application fee.

Storefront Renovation Program

The Storefront Renovation Program assists businesses and property owners with interior and exterior improvements to their buildings and repair interior code violations. Low interest loans are available as well as grants for architectural services. Commercial buildings must be located in designated Improvement Target Areas (ITA's) within the Cuyahoga Urban County. The program is funded through Federal Community Development Block Grant Funds.

Eligible exterior improvements include brick re-pointing and cleaning, painting, roof replacement, window and door replacement, and awning installation. The cost for signage may be included when the signage is affixed to the structure and building code improvements are made. Up to 20% of total project costs can be applied to parking lots and sidewalks. Interior improvements that may be funded include code items such as electrical, plumbing, heating, and structural repairs. Projects are subject to Ohio prevailing wage and reporting requirements.

Grants for architectural services are not to exceed \$2,000, or 8% of material and labor cost. Loans of up to \$75,000 per parcel are provided at below prime, fixed interest rates for up to fifteen (15) years with monthly payment beginning three (3) months after closing. Other business requirements apply.

STATE OF OHIO PROGRAMS AND INCENTIVES

LOANS AND GRANTS:

166 Direct Loan

This program provides loans to companies for land and building acquisition, expansion or renovation, and equipment purchases. Preference is given to industrial projects. This program is administered by the Office of Business Development of the Ohio Department of Development. Businesses may receive up to 30% of total eligible fixed costs (\$1 million maximum, \$350,000 minimum), although a higher loan amount or modified loan terms may be granted in distressed areas of the state. Companies receive two-thirds of the prime rate, fixed for five (5) to fifteen (15) years. In order to be eligible, companies must show repayment and management capabilities, and must create or retain one job for every \$15,000 received, more in Priority Investment Areas. The Ohio prevailing wage rate applies.

166 Regional Loan

Similar to the Direct Loan Program, the 166 Regional Loan Program provides loans to companies for land and building acquisition, expansion or renovation and equipment purchases, as well as for other project-related soft costs. The program targets state financial assistance to industrial companies for smaller projects and is administered by the Office of Business Development of the Ohio Department of Development. The regional program funds up to 40% of total eligible fixed costs (maximum \$350,000) and features a negotiable

rate for a term of five (5) to fifteen (15) years. As in the 166 Direct Loan Program, companies must show repayment and management capabilities, but must create or retain one job for every \$35,000 received. Other business requirements apply.

Business Development (412) Account

This grant program provides limited dollars for job creation and retention to induce companies to move forward with a project in a community where the investment would not otherwise have occurred. All other public and private sources of financing must be used before the use of 412 funding is considered. The program is administered by the Office of Business Development of the Ohio Department of Development, and companies must coordinate with a Business Development Representative to apply for this funding. Other business requirements apply.

Capital Access Program

The Capital Access Program makes loans to for-profit and non-profit small businesses that are having difficulty obtaining business loans through conventional underwriting standards. The program encourages lending by establishing a unique loan “guarantee” reserve pool at a participating lending institution. The state, the lender and the borrower each pay a small fee contribution into the reserve pool. The reserve pool is then available to the participating lender for recovery of any losses on any loan they have enrolled in the Capital Access Program. Borrowers must be small businesses with annual sales of less than \$10 million AND have its principal place of business in Ohio. The program is administered by the Office of Minority Financial Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development.

Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund/Clean Ohio Assistance Fund

This program provides grants for various projects such as remediating brownfields, preserving farmland, building hiking trails or bikeways, and other environmental projects in Ohio. Approximately \$200 million for conservation projects and \$200 million to clean up brownfields is available statewide on a competitive basis. Dollars are distributed to each county in the state and further among the state’s 19 public works districts. Conservation projects are administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources after a selection by a local committee, while brownfields projects are governed by the respective Ohio Public Works Commission’s local Public Works Integrating Committee. Local communities, counties, and non-profit organizations are eligible to apply.

Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund

This program provides financing for fixed assets related to qualified commercial and industrial businesses and institutions to implement an energy efficiency or renewable energy project. The goal of the loan program is to reduce energy costs, manage energy use, and/or install renewable energy technologies. The Energy Loan Fund will purchase a certificate of deposit at zero (0%) percent interest and will link this deposit to the borrower's bank loan for either an interest rate reduction over a period of five (5) years or an interest rate savings over the life of the bank loan (maximum contribution is \$250,000). Each project must meet energy efficiency performance standards. The Office of Energy Efficiency of the Ohio

Department of Development oversees the program.

Mini Loan Guarantee Program

This program provides loan guarantees for fixed assets and equipment to be used to start up or expand existing small businesses. It is administered by the Office of Minority Business Financial Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development. This program helps to increase the work force and encourages business development and/or growth through low interest rates. Companies must have fewer than 25 employees to be eligible for this program, and businesses owned by minorities and women are targeted. Projects of \$100,000 or less can be financed through this program for up to ten (10) years.

Minority Direct Loan

This program provides loans for the purchase or improvement of fixed assets for state-certified minority-owned businesses. This program is administered by the Office of Minority Business Financial Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development. It encourages growth of both small, minority- and women-owned businesses in Ohio. This program provides loans of up to 40% of the total project cost at a fixed rate of 4.5% for up to fifteen (15) years. Companies must be state certified as a minority business, have equity, and demonstrate repayment ability and management capacity. Businesses must also create one job for every \$35,000 received and must use Ohio prevailing wages.

Ohio Enterprise Bond Fund

This program provides long-term fixed rate (up to 20 years), tax-exempt and taxable bonds for financially healthy commercial and industrial businesses which are creating jobs in Ohio. This program is administered by the Office of Business Development of the Ohio Department of Development. Up to 90% of the project cost may be used for acquiring land and buildings, new construction, expansion or renovation, and equipment purchases for commercial or industrial projects. Companies must also submit an application, show repayment and management capacity and be able to document job creation or retention.

Ohio Investment in Training Program (OITP)

This program provides financial assistance and technical resources for customized training involving employees of new and expanding Ohio businesses. OITP provides up to 50% reimbursement for orientation, training for new or current workers and instructors, management techniques training, statistical process control training, and linkage with related programs. This program works to improve labor/management relations, create job and retain an better educated workforce. Businesses must be a manufacturing or manufacturing-related company and must apply through one of the twelve statewide offices in order to become eligible for this highly competitive program. The program is administered by the Office of Investment in Training of the Ohio Department of Development.

Ohio Qualified Small-Issue Bond Program

This program provides low-interest financing for small manufacturing facilities locating or

expanding in Ohio which have or can obtain allocations of volume cap. The Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development oversees the program. Qualified small-issue bonds can finance up to 100% of the cost of land, buildings, and equipment in new construction, expansion or rehabilitation of industrial facilities. Total capital expenditure of the company and related parties cannot exceed \$10 million in any one political subdivision. A maximum of 25% of bond proceeds may be used for facilities ancillary to core manufacturing or to acquire land.

Research Park Roadwork Infrastructure Assistance Fund

This grant program is part of Ohio's Third Frontier Project and geared towards communities developing research or technology parks. The program provides up to 80% of a project's total roadwork cost, with a maximum grant of \$500,000. Grant dollars are administered by the Ohio Department of Development and awarded on a competitive basis to municipalities, counties, and non-profit economic development organizations.

Roadwork Development Account (629)

This program provides financing for public roadway improvements associated with companies primarily engaged in manufacturing, research and development, high technology, corporate headquarters and distribution. While the grant amount varies on a project by project basis, up to 50% of the total project costs may be refunded. Funds should act as a catalyst for additional development and revitalization of affected communities and create or retain local jobs. This program is administered by the Office of Business Development of the Ohio Department of Development. Local governments must coordinate with a Business Development Representative and all other public and private sources of financing must be considered before the use of 629 funding is considered.

Urban & Rural Initiative

This program provides grants in distressed areas for land acquisition, infrastructure improvements, renovation of existing buildings, and for brownfield site remediation. Counties, municipalities, and townships, as well as nonprofit economic development organizations are eligible to apply. A \$500 non-refundable application fee is required at the time of application and grantees must comply with Ohio's prevailing wage rates for construction, renovation, and installation as determined by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services. A 25% local match is required. Elected officials of the eligible area must by ordinance or resolution, designate the applicant, specify applicant's financial participation in the project, include a marketing strategy and identify a management plan. The program is administered by the Office of Business Development of the Ohio Department of Development.

Volume Cap Program

Businesses interested in using tax-exempt bonds, at interest rates below prime can participate in the Volume Cap program. The term “volume cap” refers to the restrictions placed on the amount of tax-free bonds that may be issued by state and local governments for privately owned assets. The Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development oversees the program. While the amount of assistance varies depending upon the purpose for which the authority is sought. The project must involve mortgage loans for construction or improvement of certain types of manufacturing facilities or for solid waste treatment equipment or pollution abatement facilities, among others. A \$1,000 application fee and deposit is required.

Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF)

This program provides financial and technical assistance to protect and improve the quality of Ohio’s rivers, streams, lakes, and other water resources. The WPCLF offers below-market interest rate loans including long-term loans (up to 20 years) at the standard rate, short term loans (up to five (5) years) at a reduced rate for small construction projects, loans for planning and design, and a minimum interest rate loan for communities of high economic need. The WPCLF program also offers interest rate discounts for special activities such as municipal compliance maintenance, water conservation, and construction of non-conventional technologies.

The Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance (DEFA), within the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, manages the program. To be considered for WPCLF financing, the proposed activity must result in a water quality benefit. Up to \$3 million of assistance is available for projects which increase surface water and/or ground water quality.

TAX INCENTIVES

Ohio Community Reinvestment Area Program

Not to be confused with the federal Community Reinvestment Act, the Ohio CRA Program was created to promote the revitalization of areas where investment has been discouraged by offering property tax exemption for any increased property valuation from the renovation of existing structures or new construction activity within an area. The program provides up to 100% exemption of the improved real property tax value for up to fifteen years depending on the project. Real property investment incentives are available for residential, commercial, and/or industrial projects involving remodeling or new construction. The Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development administers the program. Other business requirements apply.

Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit Program

The Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit Program provides a refundable tax credit against a company's corporate franchise or income tax based on the state income tax withheld from new, full-time employees. This program is administered by the Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development. Businesses are required to create at least 25 new,

full-time jobs within three (3) years and pay a minimum of 150% of federal minimum wage. For each new, full-time employee, businesses receive a refundable tax credit against its corporation franchise/income tax withheld. The Ohio Job Creation Tax Credit Authority determines eligibility and terms of the credit.

Ohio Job Retention Tax Credit Program

This program was created to foster the retention of full-time jobs in Ohio. The program makes available non-refundable tax credits to reduce the corporate franchise or state income tax liabilities of companies operating in Ohio. The Job Retention Tax Credit program is similar to the Job Creation Tax Credit in its program structure, requirements, and conditions for participation. A tax credit equal up to 75% of the state income taxes may be withheld from the taxpayer's full-time employees, per a period of up to ten years under this program.

Businesses that currently employ at least 1,000 full-time employees and make a fixed investment of at least \$200 million are eligible. The Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development administers the program.

Ohio Manufacturing Machinery & Equipment Investment Tax Credit

Companies may receive a non-refundable corporate franchise tax credit or state income tax credit on purchases of qualified new or retooled machinery and equipment used in manufacturing. This program encourages expansion of existing business operations and supports additional investment in the state, and is administered by the Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development. Businesses may receive a 7.5% tax credit on machinery and equipment investment, upwards of 13.5% in a designated "Priority Investment Area". Purchases must be made by the end of Year 1 and be installed by the end of Year 2.

Ohio Manufacturing Machinery & Equipment Investment Sales Tax Exemption

This sales tax exemption program provides significant tax savings for businesses and individuals involved in manufacturing in Ohio. The program exempts businesses from state and county sales tax on purchases of machinery and equipment used primarily in manufacturing. Machinery, supplies and fuel used in manufacturing activities are eligible. Both the Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development and the Sales Tax Division of the Ohio Department of Taxation oversee the program. A blanket exemption certificate is required for the vendor.

Research and Development Sales Tax Exemption

This program provides an exemption from the usual state and county sales tax for companies that purchase machinery and equipment used in research and development. Both the Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development and the Sales Tax Division of the Ohio Department of Taxation oversee the program. Companies are encouraged through this financial incentive to produce and perfect the technologies and products of the future. Qualified research includes "pure" research (scientific or technological inquiry and experimentation in the physical sciences) and "directed" research (research conducted to

design, create, or formulate new or better products, equipment or manufacturing processes.) A blanket exemption certificate is required for the vendor.

Scrap Tire Loan & Grant Program

This program is designed to stimulate markets for scrap rubber and to reduce the quantity of scrap tires stored in Ohio. The program provides dollars for the acquisition of land and buildings, new construction, renovation of existing buildings, and acquisition or renovation of machinery and/or equipment with a focus on the recycling of scrap tires. This program is administered by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

Companies may receive from \$50,000 to \$250,000, up to 30% of eligible costs for projects, although applicants that meet certain criteria may be eligible for limited grant funding. A private lender is required and 10% owner equity is mandatory to participate in the loan program.

Technology Investment Tax Credit Program

This program offers a variety of benefits to Ohio taxpayers who invest in small, research and development and technology-oriented firms. The investment for which the tax credit is claimed must be a purchase of common stock, preferred stock, membership interest, partnership or other equity position which does not exceed \$250,000. Investors may reduce their state taxes by 25% of the amount. A maximum credit of \$37,500 per investment may be applied to person income tax, corporation franchise tax or tax on dealers' intangibles. The Ohio Thomas Edison Program and the Technology Division of the Ohio Department of Development oversee the program. Other business requirements apply including a \$200 application fee.

Warehouse Inventory Tax Exemption

This tax exemption program provides significant tax saving for companies that have substantial amounts of inventory held in Ohio. A personal tangible property tax exemption is made on qualifying inventory, ie... inventory brought into Ohio from out of state and held for storage only with no further processing. Both the Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development and the Sales Tax Division of the Ohio Department of Taxation oversee the program.

Warehouse Machinery & Equipment Sales Tax Exemption

Businesses may receive an exemption from state and county sales tax on eligible warehousing equipment purchases. The exemption includes machinery and equipment used primarily in storing, transporting, mailing, or handling inventory in a warehouse, distribution center or similar facility if the inventory is primarily distributed outside Ohio to retail stores owned by the business or affiliated group that owns the Ohio facility. Both the Office of Tax Incentives of the Ohio Department of Development and the Sales Tax Division of the Ohio Department of Taxation oversee the program. A blanket exemption certificate is required for the vendor.

OTHER RESOURCES

Small Business Linked Deposit Program

This program is a mechanism for financing housing and other projects. A private lending institution provides the dollars for improvements and helps to create and retain jobs by providing fixed assets and working capita for small businesses. The program is administered by the Public Affairs Office, Treasurer of the State. Property owners and businesses enjoy a reduced and fixed rate of 3% below the current lending rate for two (2) years, with a possible extended term granted by the bank. Businesses must have an Ohio headquarters and no divisions out of state; must create one job for every \$25,000 received in the projects, have 150 or less employees, and be operating a non-franchised company. The borrowing entity must also be the same entity saving and/or creating jobs.

Small Business Association Basic 7(a) Loan Guarantee

The goal of this loan program is to help qualified small businesses obtain financing when they might not be eligible for business loans through normal lending channels. Financing can be guaranteed for a variety of general business purposes including working capital, machinery and equipment, furniture and fixtures, land and building (including purchase, renovation, and new construction), leasehold improvements, and debt refinancing (under special conditions). Loan maturity is up to ten (10) years for working capital and generally up to 25 years for fixed assets.

Small Business Association Certified Development Company, a 504 Loan Program

This loan program provides long-term, fixed-rate financing to small businesses to acquire real estate, machinery or equipment for expansion or modernization. Businesses must secure a loan from either a private-sector lender with a senior lien or a loan secured from a CDC (funded by a 100 percent SBA-guaranteed debenture) with a junior lien covering up to 40 percent of the total cost, and a contribution of at least 10 percent equity from the borrower. Certain requirements apply. The program is coordinated by the Cleveland Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Small Business Association Microloan, a 7(m) Loan Program

This program provides short-term loans of up to \$35,000 to small businesses and not-for-profit childcare centers for working capital or the purchase of inventory, supplies, furniture, fixtures, machinery and/or equipment. The SBA makes or guarantees a loan to an intermediary, who in turn, makes the microloan to the applicant. The program is coordinated by the Cleveland Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration.

Tax Increment Financing

This funding option allows local governments to permit payments-in-lieu of real property taxes in order to finance public infrastructure improvements. Typically, notes or bonds are used to finance the specified project so as to stimulate future private investment. Up to 75% of the value of real property taxes can be exempted for up to ten years. However, the payment-in-lieu of taxes cannot exceed the annual debt service of the notes or bonds used to finance the specified project. The redevelopment must also meet a public purpose.

Voluntary Action Program Tax Abatement

This program encourages redevelopment of contaminated sites by providing substantial real and/or personal tangible property tax incentives to businesses and property owners. The program is administered by the State of Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and allows companies to investigate possible environmental contamination and clean it up if necessary without absorbing the immense liability and clean up costs associated with such sites.

Business or property owners may be granted a property tax exemption of up to 100% for a maximum of ten (10) years on the increase in the assessed value of real and/or personal tangible property improvements after agreeing to a “covenant not to sue”. Other business requirements apply.

The First Stop Business Connection

The 1st Stop Business Connection is a service of the Ohio Department of Development's Small Business Development Centers of Ohio program and provides free, comprehensive business information kits about state-level business regulations as well as licensing and permit requirements. Each kit is tailored to the specific type of business (retail, business service, manufacturing, etc.).

Ohio Labor Management Cooperation Program

The Ohio Labor Management Cooperation Program (OLMCP) enhances the relationship between labor and management through regular meetings, seminars conferences and work site labor/management training programs. The OLMCP's matching grants support community-based area labor/management committees, regional centers for the advancement of labor/management cooperation, and an employee stock assistance program.

PART II: ADAPTIVE REUSE STRATEGIES

INTRODUCTION

During Master Plan preparation, concerns were expressed by some Village officials and Master Plan Committee members that the community hosts an abnormally high amount of warehouse floor space. A leading concern focused on the perception that these businesses do not contribute efficiently to the Village's collected income tax revenue stream due to the relatively low number of workers employed per square foot (compared to land uses such as manufacturing or offices).

The Cuyahoga County Planning Commission's (CPC) Master Plan preparation service agreement includes the identification of potential adaptive reuse strategies for warehouse properties to be considered by the Village for possible future implementation.

ADAPTIVE REUSE DEFINED

The term, "adaptive reuse," has numerous definitions within the various sectors of the professional planning field. In its broadest context, however, planners define the term to mean:

*The rehabilitation or renovation of existing building(s)
or structures for any use other than the present use(s).*

More specifically, in this instance, the concept of adaptive reuse pertains to the conversion of a land use which is exclusively, or partially, a warehousing function, to more intensive (or "higher") uses, including offices, offices/research laboratories and certain forms of manufacturing.

BACKGROUND AND CONSIDERATIONS

Many successful examples of industry/warehouse conversion to new uses can be found throughout the United States. Close to home, the CPC's offices are located in a 80-year old, four-story building formerly used for clothing manufacturing. It was converted to modern office use in the late 1980's. In this instance, a vacant outmoded building was made more attractive via its conversion to a new use in the heart of a changing downtown business district.

Among the many reasons for developers to convert existing structures to new uses are two:

- P Cost effectiveness. Generally, complete building rehabilitation costs less than new construction; and
- P Tax benefits. Such conversions may be eligible for tax deductions and credits, particularly if the building has historical value.

These fiscal rewards can be realized due to a number of reasons:

- P Conversion is faster than new construction;
- P The structure's shell exists;
- P Construction is fast;
- P Needed utility infrastructure/services are already present;
- P Design flexibility is enhanced; and
- P Conversion is most acceptable within a district already developed with like uses.

In general terms, perhaps the most significant factors impacting the feasibility of a building conversion, including the speed of the conversion and associated cost savings, include the 1) physical characteristics of the structure and 2) regulatory considerations.

Physical characteristics of a structure include its location. In many older cities, pressures are exerted on long-vacant, but soundly constructed, industrial buildings at prime downtown locations to convert to retail or office uses (as was the case at CPC's new location). Such centrally located buildings have reached the end of their life cycle and are prime for revitalization. Downtown centers often offer nearby business support functions which are not found at many suburban locations. Also, the rising rents in central downtown locations make such adaptive reuse scenarios viable from a cost perspective.

In addition to location, the historical significance of a structure influences its longevity and convertibility to another use. The beauty and architectural details of many older buildings appeal to prospective lessees. The desire to recognize a local landmark may ensure its preservation and sensitive conversion to a new use.

Many older industrial building were soundly constructed. Most were also designed to support heavy loads. Concrete and steel construction ensured the support required for heavy machinery and storage. Tall ceilings offer flexibility.

Older industrial structures do offer physical challenges to conversion, however. Exterior and interior support column spacing can present difficulties and limit options. The size and configuration of office modules may be significantly impacted. While the taller ceilings offer character and a feeling of openness, they may need to be dropped to accommodate mechanicals (e.g., heating/ventilation/air conditioning, sewage and water supply systems) and electricals (e.g., lighting, power supply). Older buildings lack restrooms, often have smaller (than desired) windows, and present challenges relative to access under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Newer industrial structures, including warehouses, offer open floor plans with few defined spaces and a flexible lightweight (compared to older concrete/steel buildings) structural framework. Generally, the open arrangement of space, coupled with a steel frame, is a preferred structure type offering high potential for building reuse.

However, newer warehouses often lack windows. Commonly constructed on a concrete pad, they often have a poorly insulated, continuous metal skin over a steel frame designed to support the roof, but not necessarily additional floors.

Physical characteristics of a structure, such as a warehouse, influence the feasibility of its conversion to another use (and its ultimate success). Numerous physical aspects of a building and its grounds must be considered when exploring its adaptation to another use. While the complete list is extensive, the following partial checklist of considerations is offered to illustrate the depth of required investigations.

- ✓ Location/Site
 - PAccess
 - PVisibility
 - PVehicular parking needs and capacity
 - PArea and property amenities
 - PCompatibility of adjacent land uses

- ✓ Space
 - PSize (floor space area, number of stories, building footprint, etc.)
 - PConfiguration (width, depth, etc.)
 - PConnections (entrances, common walls, hallways, etc.)

- ✓ Materials and structural elements
 - PType (frame, outer facade, interior)
 - PStrength/Integrity (foundation, structure, floor)
 - PDimensions (levels, ceilings, loading docks)

- ✓ Services
 - PUilities
 - PMechanicals
 - PElectricals

- ✓ Hazards
 - PAbestos
 - PUnderground tanks
 - PBuried hazardous wastes

Regulatory considerations also play an important role in the adaptive reuse of an industrial building such as a warehouse. Among the numerous considerations are the following.

- P Zoning. Exclusive industrial districts may not allow a new proposed use;
- P Building codes. Outdated codes may need to be modernized;
- P Deed restrictions. Some use limitations may transfer with the title;
- P Parking regulations. The grounds must accommodate the parking capacity required for a higher use such as offices;
- P Environmental constraints. Challenges such as underground hazardous wastes, underground tanks and building asbestos will be revealed during a Phase I audit;
- P Stormwater/wetlands regulations. Compliance requirements have become more restrictive in recent years; and
- P Americans with Disabilities Act compliance. Accessibility must be ensured for entrances, hallways and restrooms.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGY

In coordination with the implementation of the recommended strategies provided in *Chapter 7* and the activities of the new Master Plan Implementation Committee (*Chapter 8*), the Village should consider utilizing the following (or a version of this) approach to implement land use change in industrial areas hosting warehouses.

1. Utilizing Master Plan industrial floor space inventory findings (*Appendix D*), in conjunction with the above introductory information, and buttressed by additional research by Village staff on the subject of adaptive reuse of warehouse structures to other uses, identify a preliminary list of target properties.
2. Prepare a preliminary draft report.
3. Based on the report, with the additional assistance of a qualified architect, the Village Solicitor and a knowledgeable commercial real estate professional, explore the feasibility of pursuing an adaptive reuse strategy for the targeted properties.
4. Prepare a report incorporating the findings to date, including a staged methodology to conduct the reuse strategy. (Note: Report may include the recommendation that the implementation of an adaptive reuse strategy is unreasonable and should be abandoned).
5. Based on the content of the Master Plan, this report and findings to date, prepare a staged methodology to carry out the adaptive reuse strategy.

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APPENDIX F

DRAFT

ACTIVE ADULT HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS IN NORTHEAST OHIO

Numerous examples of housing developments restricted (and one oriented) to older persons exist throughout the area, including:

GREENBRIAR AT RIVER VALLEY, NORTH ROYALTON, OHIO

U.S. Home Corporation, part of the Lennar Family of Builders, built this gated community of over 100 lots on Bennett Road, near the Rocky River. Greenbriar offers detached single-family homes in the \$179,450 to \$258,000 price range. The homes have up to four bedrooms, two baths and two-car garages. A half-dozen floor plans range from about 1,300 to 2,200 square feet in size. Amenities include a 7,000 square foot clubhouse, a fitness center, swimming pool, tennis courts, trails, 24-hour manned security, and a maintenance-free lifestyle, among other features. The development has been rated in the top 100 Best Master-Planned Communities (*Where to Retire* magazine). Additional information, including floor plans and exterior images, can be found on their website (www.lennar.com) or telephone 440-230-0675.

ATHENIAN VILLAGE, NORTH ROYALTON, OHIO

Developed by Gaitanaros Healthcare Enterprises, this 30-acre campus is located on West 130th Street, just south of Sprague Road. The Village offers independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing options. Purchase and lease options are available. The independent living alternative offers attached two-unit buildings joined by the garages. Different models offer floor plan variations and a range of prices. Amenities include the new Community Center which has a spa, game room, fitness area, indoor walking track, large screen television, and a banquet dining room. The facility also boasts a maintenance-free lifestyle. Additional information can be found on their website (www.athenianvillage.com) or telephone 440-582-2357.

AVENBURY LAKES, AVON, OHIO

Built by Scaletta Development Corporation, this 146-acre development offers hundreds of cluster homes, with about 70 acres of the development devoted to open space comprised of lakes, wetlands, and natural areas. Single-family paired and detached homes, with six floor plans options, are priced in the \$169,900 to \$269,900 range. Units range from 1,480 to 2,123 square feet in size. A basement option is available. Features include a clubhouse, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, tennis courts, community garden, and golf putting green, among other amenities. Natural areas include walking and bike trails, bridges, observation decks, a fishing pier on a stocked lake, and various small boating activities. The development has received numerous awards, including the best condominium or cluster home community in Northern Ohio from both the Home Builders Association of Greater Cleveland and North Coast Building Industry. Additional information, including floor plans, can be found on their website (www.scalettadevelopment.com) or telephone 440-889-3990.

INDEPENDENCE COMMONS (PROPOSED), INDEPENDENCE, OHIO

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Presently, there are no senior housing alternatives in Independence, a city of about 7,100 residents. This proposed development is targeted for the heart of downtown on a 15-acre middle school site (after the school is vacated in 2004). The development is designed and reserved for Independence residents aged 55 and over. Under the proposal, the City may choose to retain ownership of the land, thereby maintaining significant control over the nature and operation of the project. Funding for its construction and operation will be the responsibility of the private developer chosen by the City. The proposed development consists of approximately 48 attached and detached single-family homes and 70 independent living units within a low-rise building. Preliminary pricing of the homes ranges from \$175,500 to \$203,000, with floor areas between 1,250 and 1,450 square feet. Housing options will include different floor plans and two bedrooms. The independent living alternative will encompass 550 to 950 square feet of floor space and provide one or two bedrooms within each apartment-style unit. The independent housing units will be leased.

A March 2, 2004 ballot issue (#9) to rezone the middle school property prior to this proposed property redevelopment failed. For additional information, telephone the Economic Development Director, City of Independence at 216-524-4131.

HILLBROOK ESTATES, BRECKSVILLE, OHIO

Located near downtown Brecksville, this 9.1-acre development was built in 1996. It hosts 36 detached and attached cluster homes which are connected by sidewalks to the city's downtown retail and civic center. While not restricted to seniors, this modest development provides cluster-style living which includes many of the features available in the above examples of active adult housing. Interestingly, absent such restrictions, the majority of the homes are nevertheless occupied by older residents, about 20% of whom formerly resided within Brecksville (Association President, March 1, 2004). Recently sold units have had purchase prices ranging from \$195,000 to \$250,000. The two-three bedroom units range from about 1,600 to 2,500 square feet in size. All homes include an attached two-car garage. Most units include a small finished second floor. The amenities associated with the previous active living housing examples are not found at this development. However, most of those features, including the shopping district, parklands, the community recreation center, and a new senior center (undergoing development) are within a short walk. Hillbrook Estates is located on a bus line with regular service. Additional information can be acquired by telephoning the Association at 440-717-0338.

NOTE:

In addition to the *Housing for Older Persons Act of 1995*, numerous other mechanisms can be implemented which also restrict residency of developments to persons based on age, including deed restrictions and other property ownership controls, among others. These and other creative alternatives warrant further investigation if the Village opts to implement a seniors-only cluster housing development scenario in the future.

APPENDIX G

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SAMPLE ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE WALTON HILLS MASTER PLAN

ADOPTING THE WALTON HILLS MASTER PLAN, PROVIDING FOR THE PERIODIC REVIEW THEREOF, AND PROVIDING FOR THE INTEGRATION OF THE PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE VILLAGE THEREWITH.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Village of Walton Hills as follows:

WHEREAS, the Walton Hills Master Plan Committee and the Planning Commission of the Village of Walton Hills after careful study have both recommended to this Council a Master Plan for the Village of Walton Hills;

WHEREAS, this Council has carefully considered the Master Plan and has held a public hearing thereon and finds that said plan constitutes a suitable, logical and timely plan for the future development of the Village of Walton Hills over the ensuing five to ten years;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED, that the document, consisting of text, maps, figures and charts entitled “*Village of Walton Hills Master Plan*” and dated 2004, is hereby adopted as the official Master Plan of the Village of Walton Hills.

ORDAINED, FURTHER, that in order that the “*Village of Walton Hills Master Plan*” shall be at all times be current with the needs of the Village of Walton Hills, and shall represent the best thinking of the Council, Planning Commission, and the other boards, commissions and departments of the Village in light of changing conditions, the Planning Commission shall periodically review the Master Plan and recommend to the Council, extensions, changes or additions to the Plan which the Commission considers necessary. Should the Commission find that no changes are necessary, this finding shall also be reported to the Council.

ORDAINED, FURTHER, that all matters affecting the physical development of the Village shall be submitted to the Planning Commission for a report to the Village Council as to conformity to the “*Village of Walton Hills Master Plan*”. Such a report shall be made to the Council within sixty (60) days after presentation of the matter to the Planning Commission, provided that said time may be extended by Council.