

Rocky River Master Plan



September, 2005

Respecting our past.....planning for our future.

City of Rocky River

Prepared by:
City Architecture

Introduction / Project Background

The City of Rocky River

The City of Rocky River holds a reputation of great respect within Cleveland's western suburbs. The city's proximity to downtown Cleveland, accessibility, and high quality of life have allowed Rocky River to maintain a stable population throughout the years, and become a highly sought-after community for people of all ages and backgrounds. Bordered by spectacular natural resources (Lake Erie to the north, the Rocky River and Metroparks to the east), recognized for its quality housing stock, amenities and public services, Rocky River must take a proactive role in maintaining its unique environment to remain competitive within the region.

Rocky River is a city that has been continually taking shape and defining itself since its inception as a village in 1903. Development in Rocky River represents a balance between the distinctly urban fabric of Lakewood and Cleveland to its east, and the more suburban style developments in Westlake and Bay Village to the west. Over the years a very diverse range of housing and retail options have been built within the city's boundaries. Housing choices range from single-family bungalows and stately homes on the lakeshore to duplexes, apartments, and new townhome and cluster home developments.

The commercial opportunities within the city are also similarly varied. The historic downtown area, located in the northeastern quadrant of the city near the mouth of the river, has a mix of shops and restaurants arranged in a smaller village-scaled

configuration. To the south, larger suburban shopping centers and retail outlets have emerged along Center Ridge Road to further diversify the mix of commercial options. Strong neighborhoods surround each of these districts, with a focus on community schools, parks, and churches.

With its combination of both natural and man-made attributes Rocky River has maintained itself as a strong and vibrant community. However, with this comes a greater demand for real estate investment and growth within the city. New development can become particularly challenging to accomplish due to the fact that Rocky River is an established community, landlocked between other cities, with little developable land left.

In response to the continued decentralization of the greater Cleveland area, and Cuyahoga County, the City of Rocky River has recognized the need to plan for its future. This master planning process was conceived to ensure that as new development throughout the region continues, Rocky River will maintain a strong, stable population, continued growth within its commercial and business sectors, and a strong tax base for its continued economic success. This plan assesses the current development trends within the city and its neighboring communities in an effort to predict the future impacts they will have on Rocky River, and provides a series of recommendations and suggested implementation strategies that will serve as a guide to govern future development, public investments, land-use and zoning patterns.



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The Process

With the understanding that the City of Rocky River must take a proactive role in planning its future, a decision was made to update the City's Master Plan. The Department of Economic and Community Development established a Task Force of Rocky River residents to oversee the development of a strategic master plan intended to address nine focus areas identified as having the greatest potential for change. This working group is comprised of seven volunteers with backgrounds in a variety of fields including architecture, law, real estate, physics, and urban planning.

The City of Rocky River commissioned City Architecture to assist the Task Force in the planning process. A series of task force meetings have been held in which a critical analysis of the current physical and social conditions of the city has taken place. As a part of this analysis a report was prepared by Dr. Thomas Bier of the Cleveland State University Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs in which the demographics of Rocky River were studied to understand the City's evolution over the past decade and social and regional trends that will continue to impact its future.

An in depth study of the existing conditions of each of the nine focus areas was undertaken, and a series of meetings were held with various city officials, businessmen, and community members. Based on these discussions a series of development recommendations were established for each of the nine focus

areas, along with citywide recommendations. The concepts produced by the Task Force were presented in a series of three community meetings in which the public was invited to review the development proposals and given the opportunity to offer their opinions on what they liked, disliked, or what they felt should be included in the final plan.

Based on input gained from the community meetings, the Task Force refined the development proposals put forth within this master plan and established a list of priorities for the implementation of initial portions of the plan. The final recommendations addressed in the following pages will be presented to the Rocky River City Council for formal adoption.

It is the intent of the Task Force that this plan serve as a strong and powerful guide for the city. However, it is also understood that the recommendations put forth are based on current conditions and assumptions of future trends. This is intended to serve as a working document that will evolve to meet changes within the community. The City of Rocky River should continually refer to and periodically reevaluate the master plan to reflect changing conditions and ensure that it remains a useful document for governing key decisions.



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Participants

The planning team would like to thank those individuals who have contributed to the development of this master plan including:

Mayor William F. Knoble

David J. Matty – Law Director

City Council

- Pamela Bobst – President
- Robert S. Frost
- Earl W. Potterfield
- Frank B. Gollinger
- Brian F. Hagan
- Linda S. Bartolozzi
- Brian A. Hurtuk
- James J. Bartolozzi
- Thomas A. Malling
- Misao Kurokawa – Clerk of Council

Kory Koran – Director of Economic and Community Development

Heather Wagner – Department of Economic and Community Development

James Linden – Director of Public Safety Service

Richard Lesiecki – Director of Building Department and City Engineer

Mike Patterson – Director of Recreation

Kevin Beirne – Building Commissioner

Rocky River Planning Commission

- Michael Harvey – Chairperson
- Beth Martin – Vice Chairman
- Anjanette Arabian
- Bill Bishop
- Trisha Brown
- Charles Gustafson
- Thomas Long

The citizens of Rocky River who participated in community meetings

The Master Plan Task Force

- Trisha Brown
- Kevin Collins
- Michael Fruchey
- Thomas Long
- Eric Pempus
- John Selby
- Craig Wright

Mark Rantala – Economic and Community Development Advisory Board

Bobbie VanAtta – Board of Zoning Appeals, Rocky River Historical Society

City Architecture

- Paul Volpe
- Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris
- Matt Schmidt

Dr. Tom Bier – Cleveland State University



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Summary of Community Involvement

Where have we been?

The following represents the range of interactions that have taken place as part of the planning process:

- May 2003 – Signed the contract to begin work
- June 4, 2003 – Task Force Meeting #1
- July 1, 2003 – Task Force Meeting #2
- August 27, 2003 – Task Force Meeting #3
- September 15, 2003 – Progress presentation to Rocky River City Council
- November 19, 2003 – Task Force Meeting #4
- A series of three Community Meetings.....with 154 attendants and 22 survey respondents
 - January 16, 2004 – Center Ridge East and West Stakeholders Meeting
 - January 22, 2004 – Hilliard, Wooster, and Detroit Stakeholders Meeting
 - February 6, 2004 – Old Detroit, Middle Detroit, Linda Street and Yacht Club Basin Stakeholders Meeting
- Meetings with City leaders and departments including.....
 - Mayor William F. Knoble
 - Richard Lesiecki – Director of Building Department and City Engineer
 - Kevin Beirne – Building Commissioner
- Discussion with Mark Rantala regarding commercial activities in Rocky River
- Multiple progress meetings with Kory Koran – Director of Economic and Community Development
- April 28, 2004 – Task Force Meeting #5
- June 2, 2004 – Task Force Meeting #6
- Presentation of Master Plan to Rocky River City Council for adoption
- Final Community Meeting to present the Rocky River Master Plan
- Planning Commission Master Plan Review Meetings
 - October 19, 2004 / November 16, 2004 / December 21, 2004 / January 18, 2005 / February 15, 2005 / March 1, 2005 / March 15, 2005 / April 18, 2005 / May 24, 2005
- Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Meetings
 - January 18, 2005 / February 22, 2005 / March 10, 2005 / June 27, 2005 / July 25, 2005



Rocky River Master Plan

Introduction / Project Background

Understanding the City.....

Thinking on Multiple Levels



Street Neighborhood City Community Region State Country World



Understanding Our City



Rocky River should not be studied in isolation, but must be considered within its greater regional context. A second-ring suburb with the characteristics of an inner-ring community, the city is positioned between the cities of Lakewood, Fairview Park, Westlake, and Bay Village with Lake Erie forming its northern boundary. Each of these exerts their own influence on Rocky River from both a physical and economic standpoint. Interstate 90 bisects the city in an east-west direction, linking it to such regional amenities as Downtown Cleveland, Hopkins International Airport, and the rest of the greater Cleveland area, enhancing the city's connectedness and accessibility. Despite a compact size, greater mobility and these broader connections and influences, Rocky River has maintained a strong regional identity.



The physical configuration of Rocky River is representative of the traditional approach to town planning and urban design developed in pre-war America. The majority of the city fabric is composed of single-family homes broken down into a variety of different house styles, ages, and sizes representative of the specific time period in which they were built. The homes have been laid out in fairly compact arrangements with a greater quantity of smaller lots in comparison to newer communities to the west. This has been a factor as the regional population follows the national trend of outward migration, but it has also been recognized that from a social standpoint, this has resulted in the creation of extremely close-knit neighborhoods and a stronger sense of community.



Pockets of higher density housing are scattered throughout the city, primarily along major roads. These range in size and type from duplexes to townhome conversions, to medium density three- and four-story apartment buildings. High-rise apartment buildings offer yet another housing option, and include apartments and condominiums. These are found throughout the city, adjacent to commercial corridors. Much of the new residential development that is occurring throughout the city is in the form of cluster housing that is targeting the growing empty nester demographic in Rocky River. The city is unique to the region in the range of housing types available and the percentage of multi-family units located here. It should be noted, however, that many of the smaller, medium-density buildings represent outdated residential units lacking in the amenities desired in today's residential market. Competitiveness within the regional housing market must be considered as the City plans for a sustainable future.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels



The importance of a strong institutional base within a community can be noted in Rocky River. A significant number of large churches are located throughout the community, drawing members of their congregations from Rocky River and many of the surrounding communities. Likewise, the public and private school systems in Rocky River are very good, and represent a major attraction for families with children. Rocky River's commitment to its school system can be demonstrated by the newly constructed middle school and surrounding campus with its ties to the public library. The various schools are scattered throughout the city, providing valuable open recreation space within many of Rocky River's neighborhoods.



The city's main municipal campus is located centrally at the intersection of Hilliard Boulevard and Wagar Road. This complex houses a number of civic uses including City Hall, the Police Department, the newly constructed Courthouse, a Senior Center, an ice rink, an outdoor swimming pool and the Don Umerley Community Center. Currently, plans are underway for the expansion of the community center to create a recreation center with expanded offerings including an indoor pool and workout rooms to supplement the existing public and recreational facilities. This will provide yet another amenity for the residents of Rocky River, and increase the marketability of the city for future residents.



Commercial development within Rocky River, although located in various forms throughout the city, has primarily occurred along the city's two commercial corridors – Detroit Road and Center Ridge Road. Along these corridors distinct districts exist. The historic downtown area, located in the northeast quadrant of the city, is a pedestrian oriented, mixed-use district. Much of the building fabric within the Old Detroit area has historic significance, creating a unique environment that has become a symbol of Rocky River. The majority of the retailers that locate in Old Detroit are smaller, neighborhood-oriented businesses. The downtown district is of particular importance for Rocky River because of the sense of place that it offers. Many newer suburban communities are trying to replicate the type of environment and feeling that existing downtown areas like this have. However, the success of a true downtown area, like Rocky River's, cannot be replicated simply by building a series of commercial buildings along a main street. What sets Old Detroit apart from its suburban competitors is the unique character and charm that can only result from continued development over a long period of time.



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Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels



The second major commercial area within the city is located along the length of Center Ridge Road. Unlike Old Detroit, this area is very auto dominant, and the mixture of buildings include older office complexes, stand-alone retail establishments (both old and new) and newer suburban style strip malls. Retailers within this portion of the city range from smaller neighborhood businesses like those in Old Detroit to large 'big-box' national retailers. The Center Ridge commercial district is an important asset for Rocky River in that it draws a great many shoppers into the city, resulting in an economic benefit. Physically and aesthetically, however, these commercial corridors tend to detract from the greater community character.



A unique amenity that Rocky River offers its residents and visitors is its ties to nature and local waterways. Lake Erie forms the northern boundary of the city, while the Rocky River and Metroparks system line its eastern side. The majority of the development along the lakeshore is privately owned, but a series of parks such as Bradstreet's Landing, provide important opportunities to open the lakefront to public use. Similarly, along the eastern boundary of the city, the Rocky River Reservation follows the river valley between Rocky River and Lakewood. The existence of this park system provides a series of recreational amenities for residents and visitors.



By virtue of its location and configuration, Rocky River serves as somewhat of a crossroads with a distinct hierarchy of public streets. This includes streets that serve the broader community, streets that serve as connectors within the neighborhoods, and the quiet residential streets that form the heart of the city. When understood and respected, the nature of these streets is critical to the enhancement of safe, walkable, pedestrian neighborhoods and the types of connections required to link them.



Taken as a whole the community is characterized by its high-quality, dense and tightly-knit neighborhoods, successful commercial centers, and unique ties to Lake Erie and the Rocky River. The community facilities and institutions that are distributed throughout create identifiable neighborhood focal points. The resultant feeling of identity that this creates for the neighborhood residents plays a key role in the high quality of life that Rocky River offers.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels



As a result of the analysis phase of this master plan, the Task Force has identified a series of strengths and challenges that face Rocky River, and future growth within the city.

The **strengths** of the community as determined by the Task Force include:

- Rocky River is a stable community with high-quality residential offerings.
- A broad range of community amenities are offered to residents.
- Rocky River is easily accessible to people from all over the greater Cleveland region.
- The Rocky River public school district is very strong.
- Tremendous natural assets surround the city, including Lake Erie to the north, the Rocky River to the east, and the Metroparks system.



The **challenges** that face the community as determined by the Task Force include:

- Little undeveloped land is left within the city limits for future growth
- Like many other suburbs of its type, Rocky River faces the constant threat of the out-migration of its residents to newly developing suburban cities.
- The character of the commercial districts does not live up to the quality of the surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- New commercial development in surrounding suburbs may have a negative impact on Rocky River's commercial districts.
- Due to the number and age of the apartments in the community they must be regularly inspected by the City.



The following maps demonstrate a physical analysis of the city, demonstrating its location within the greater region, a comparison with surrounding communities and land use and development patterns.

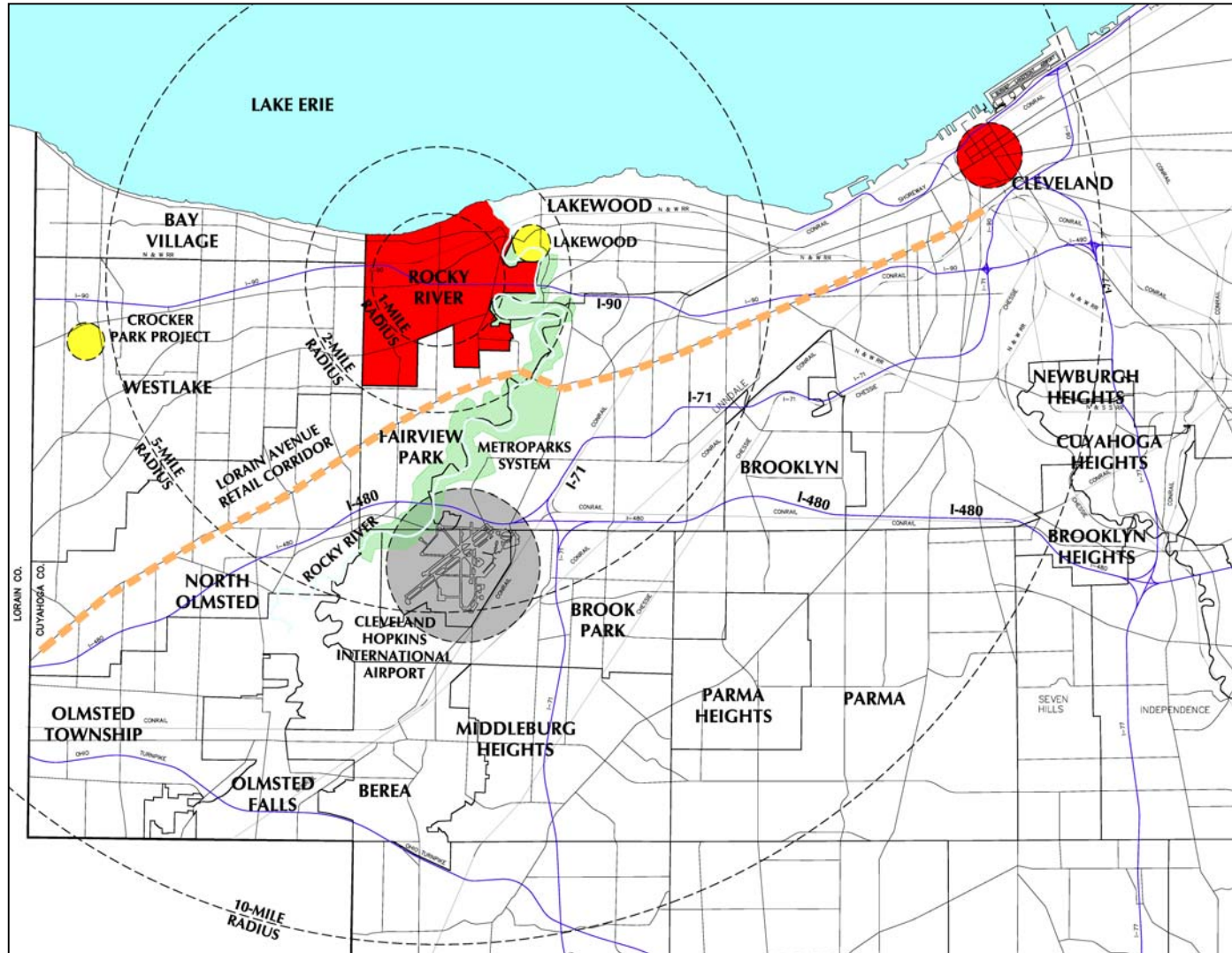


Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels

Regional Context

Key Influences



- The City is compact in nature and lies within a two mile radius
- A major interstate connects the City directly to downtown Cleveland, a 10 minute drive
- A Metropark, the Rocky River Reservation, makes up the eastern border of the City
- The major regional airport lies within a five mile radius of the center of Rocky River
- Lake Erie and the Rocky River provide unique linkages to the natural features of the region
- Planned large-scale commercial developments in nearby communities have the potential to negatively impact the City's commercial areas

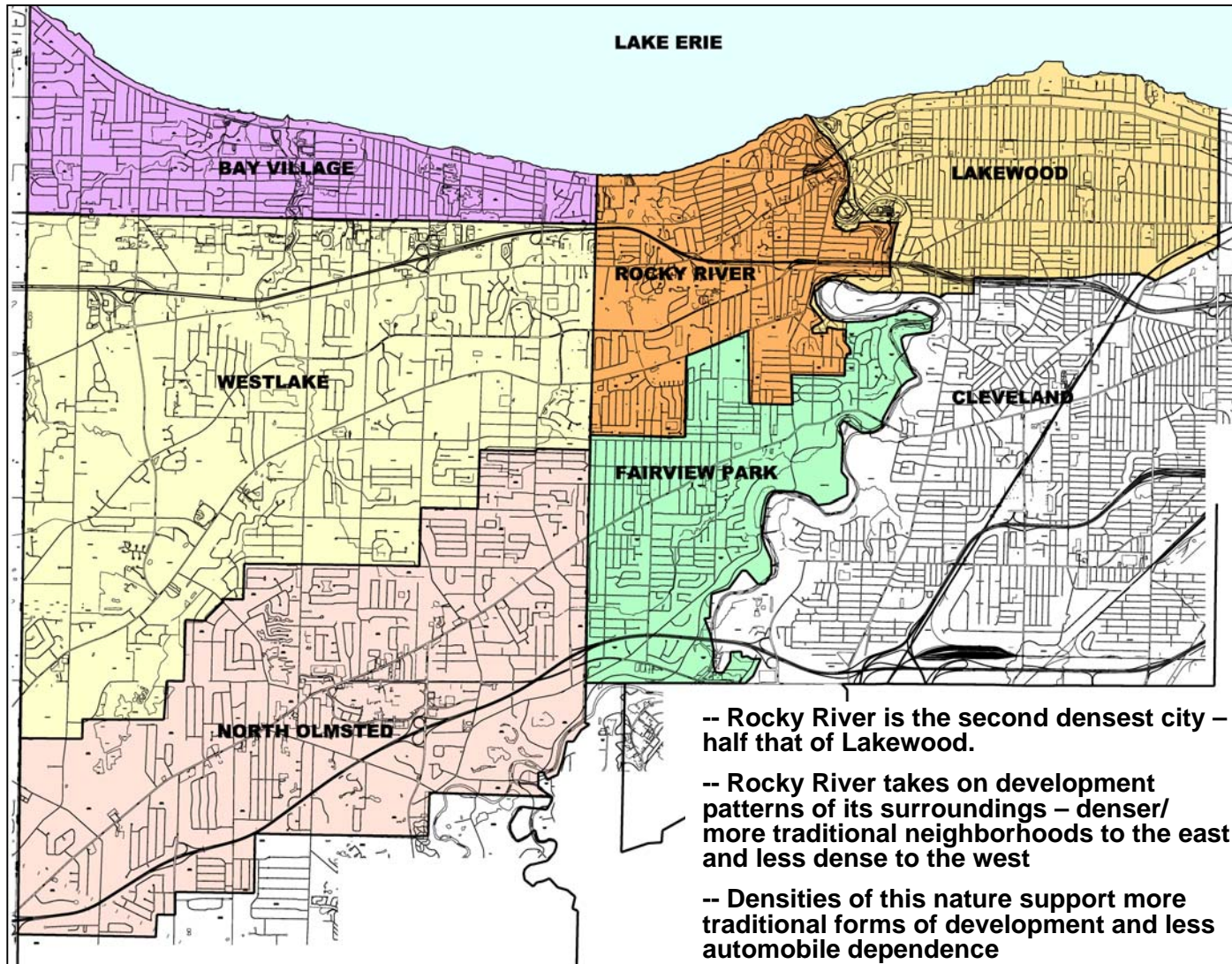


Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels

Demographic Comparison

Surrounding Communities



Rocky River

Population – 20,735
 Land Area – 4.7 sq miles
 (2,999 Acres)
 Perimeter – 12.4 miles
 Density – 4,412 people/sq mile

Bay Village

Population – 16,087
 Land Area – 4.5 sq. miles
 (2,868 Acres)
 Perimeter – 12.9 miles
 Density – 3,575 people/sq mile

Westlake

Population – 31,719
 Land Area – 15.7 sq. miles
 (10,155 Acres)
 Perimeter – 18.9 miles
 Density – 2,020 people/sq mile

North Olmsted

Population – 34,113
 Land Area – 11.6 sq. miles
 (7,428 Acres)
 Perimeter – 18.5 miles
 Density – 2,940 people/sq mile

Fairview Park

Population – 17,572
 Land Area – 4.7 sq. miles
 (2,982 Acres)
 Perimeter – 14.8 miles
 Density – 3,738 people/sq mile

Lakewood

Population – 56,646
 Land Area – 5.5 sq. miles
 (3,501 Acres)
 Perimeter – 13.2 miles
 Density – 10,299 people/sq mile



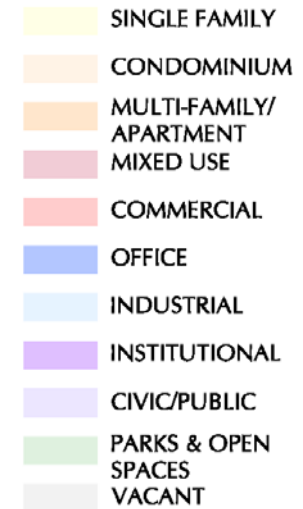
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Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels

Land-Use Analysis



- Single-family residential development constitutes the majority of the city's land use
- Commercial uses are focused along the two primary commercial corridors
- Major institutional and civic uses are interspersed throughout the city.



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Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels

Demographic Information Summary

Community demographics and current market conditions in Rocky River were studied to develop an understanding of how the city compares with its surrounding communities as well as how conditions within Rocky River have been changing throughout the last decade. This information was generated for the purposes of this master plan study by the Center for Housing Research and Policy headed by Dr. Thomas Bier of Cleveland State University. The data collected for use within the study was obtained from the U.S. Census of 1990 and 2000 and Cuyahoga County Auditor property, deed transfer and tax records. The following summary details some of the most important points of the research that have been considered throughout the planning process. The full report is provided as a separate appendix.

POPULATION

- Between 1990 and 2000 the population of Rocky River rose by 325 persons to 20,735 (2% increase).
- Average household size shrunk from 2.2 persons in 1990 to 2.1 in 2000.
- Median age of residents increased from 42 to 44 years.
- 22% of households in Rocky River have children.

Rocky River's population is numerically stable.

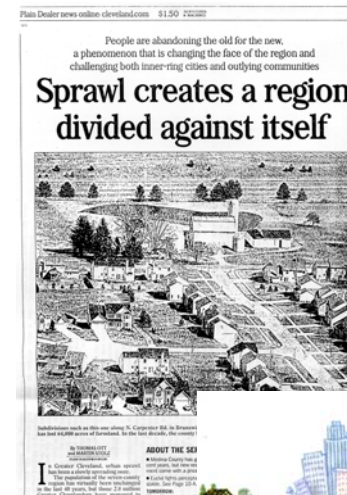
- Cuyahoga County is the only non-growth county in the region.
- The population is moving outward.
- There is little undeveloped land in Cuyahoga County.

Rocky River's population is growing older.

- 40-59 year-olds are the largest age group within the city.
- The over 60 age group will increase dramatically in the near future.

INCOME

- Between 1990 and 2000 Rocky River's *average* income rose 73% to \$74,008.
- The *median* income increased by 28%.



**Excerpts of articles from The Plain Dealer*



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Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels

HOUSEHOLDS

- 71% of households are owner-occupied
- 56% of housing units in Rocky River are single-family detached homes.
- 34% of housing units in Rocky River are in buildings with 5 or more units.

HOUSING

- The average home in Rocky River is 44 years old.
Major upkeep begins to be serious after 50 years.
- The median home value is \$188,700 – 37% higher than in the other western suburbs.
- The median rent in Rocky River is \$671. It increased 29%, smaller than the other western suburbs at 33%.
- During the 1990s Rocky River's rent levels, single-family home prices, and incomes appreciated less than in all other western suburbs as a group.

Between 2000-2002:

- 63% of home sellers who purchased a home went to another community.
- 37% of home sellers who purchased a home stayed in Rocky River.
- Most people left for Westlake, Avon Lake, and Avon.

The departure rate is low compared with other communities in Cuyahoga County (80% average departure rate).

- Sellers staying in Rocky River purchased homes with an average of 475 sq. ft. of additional living space, that are 4 years newer, with an 808 sq. ft. larger lot.
- Sellers moving out of Rocky River purchased homes with an average of 614 sq. ft. of additional living space, that are 26 years newer, with a 6,858 sq. ft. larger lot.
- Rocky River is a move-up destination for households selling their first home in Cleveland, Lakewood and other surrounding communities.



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Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels

Demographic Information Implications

As a result of the demographic information provided by Dr. Bier, the following considerations were raised as important to the planning process:

- As the population ages, the need for empty-nester and elderly housing increases. Should Rocky River pursue options to provide more of this?
- The ability to maintain this population and, as a result, take advantage of associated estate taxes is an important financial consideration.
- Should the City try to impact anticipated trends?
- While major upkeep is not yet needed on average Rocky River homes, it may be advantageous to pursue code enforcement to ensure that homes maintain their high quality. While average home values are higher than surrounding communities, the percentage increase in value fell behind in the 1990-2000 period.
- The current zoning code poses challenges for the development of new additions on the city's smaller housing lots.
- The desire for larger homes and different amenities than provided by much of the older housing stock has resulted in many families moving out of Rocky River to newer communities to the west. Can this trend be addressed by new approaches to the city's housing stock? The development of what has been referred to as the "Beachcliff Addition" by many homeowners is one such approach. This is generally a two-story addition that includes a master suite and family room space.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding the City.....thinking on multiple levels



Discovering Our Planning Values.....

Determining what's important together

Successful strategic planning identifies the goals and values of the community as critical to the planning process. In the generation of this plan significant effort was placed on identifying the priorities of the city as reflected in the following planning values. These have served to guide the process and represent a solid foundation upon which to base future decision-making efforts. These values place a strong emphasis on enhancing the sense of place and unique attributes that set Rocky River apart. It is with these issues in mind that we have been able to test ideas, assess options and identify appropriate solutions in the creation of a value-driven approach to redevelopment.

Upon identification of the following values, or guiding principles, the following questions were asked about each of the nine focus areas of the plan:

- Which values apply to each focus area?
- Which approaches should be considered for inclusion?
- How do we set our priorities?
- How do we determine changes in land use?
- Are there development standards that can be utilized?
- Will mixed-use and higher density development require zoning modifications?
- What is the city's policy towards development?
- How do we regulate development within the district?

The values are as follows.....

The Creation of a Town Center – *A gathering place for Rocky River*



As historic centers of commerce and public life, the town center plays an important role in forging a community's identity. It can be a symbol of the characteristics and attributes that a city wishes to project, providing residents and visitors with a place of civic pride, social interaction and engagement. These images represent examples of thriving town centers that portray the following characteristics important within a successful district:

- A mixture of uses and programmed activities
- Walkability
- Neighborhood scale retail
- Activity nodes
- Places to sit



Rocky River Master Plan

Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together

Quality Housing – *Maintaining high residential standards*



Quality housing standards are becoming increasingly important for our cities within the recent past. The continued decentralization of our society from core cities is resulting in an extremely competitive housing market. For inner ring suburbs quality housing standards must be maintained to retain existing residents and continually attract new ones. These standards must be applied to not only the individual housing unit, but the way in which groups of housing units come together to create the neighborhoods that define the character of the city. These images represent various housing units and neighborhoods that have demonstrated the characteristics required to maintain high residential standards listed below:

- New infill housing solutions
- Renovation strategies
- Design Guidelines
- Code enforcement



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Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together

Housing Diversity – Accommodating a broad range of lifestyles



Successful, exciting urban neighborhoods and thriving communities cater to the needs of a diverse population. Therefore, it is essential that the make up of a city's neighborhoods contain a broad range of housing options, both in terms of unit types and price points. Housing options must meet the needs of every demographic ranging from families looking for a single-family home with a large yard to the young professional or empty-nester who does not want the responsibility of continued upkeep and maintenance. The example images shown represent a broad range of housing options to supplement the single-family home such as:

- Condominiums
- Lofts and apartments
- Retirement communities
- Townhomes
- Cluster homes



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Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together

Commercial Sustainability – *Planning for the long-term*



A strong commercial base is important to a community's long-term health. In addition to providing services and goods that meet the daily needs of residents, it provides jobs and an important commercial tax base. Business growth within a community must be carefully balanced to ensure that quality local businesses have an environment in which to thrive alongside larger, national chains. It is local businesses and companies that contribute to the uniqueness of a city. Business growth must be carefully planned to not only complement existing businesses, but accommodate the needs of the residents and the city into the future. The following images represent the characteristics of successful commercial development:

- A supportive environment for existing businesses
- A combination of service and destination retail
- Neighborhood scale retail and business centers
- Commercial centers that serve as destinations
- A supportive environment for business expansion and growth



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Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together

Parks & Public Space – *Enhancing our quality of life*



Public parks and open space are critical to the long-term health of cities. They provide places for social interaction, exercise, community identity, as well as an appreciation of nature and a community's natural features. Parks and open space can be grouped into two categories - passive and active spaces – and a range of sizes and types is important to provide. The example images represent successful public spaces that provide many of the following amenities for a wide variety of users:

- Active recreation spaces (athletic fields, courts, etc.)
- Outdoor dining
- Playgrounds
- Seating opportunities
- Places to interact with nature
- Bike and walking paths



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Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together

Parking Solutions – *Dealing with the automobile*



In commercial areas it is essential to incorporate a series of parking strategies to minimize the effects of the automobile on the built environment. Many times, in the name of convenience, this concept is not addressed and we are left with a sterile, auto dominant environment that does not provide for the needs of the pedestrian. Parking considerations are often viewed within the context of an individual development as opposed to a solution that fills the needs of an overall commercial district. This results in an excess of parking spaces and surface lots. The following parking strategies represent methods of reducing the negative effect that parking can have on the character of a successful commercial district:

- On-street parking
- Screening surface lots
- Parking in the rear
- Structured parking



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Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together

Infrastructure Improvements – *Creating great streets*



More than just a zone for transportation, streets represent a city's front doors, its public living room. They can say a great deal about a community's character and values. As such, a city's streets can enhance the overall environment of the community. Successful street layouts work to balance the needs of both the pedestrian and the automobile in terms of safety, aesthetics, and ease of use. The example images demonstrate successful streets that have employed the following techniques:

- Road narrowing
- Widened sidewalks
- Pedestrian amenities
- Street trees and landscaping
- Boulevards with center medians
- Simplified traffic patterns



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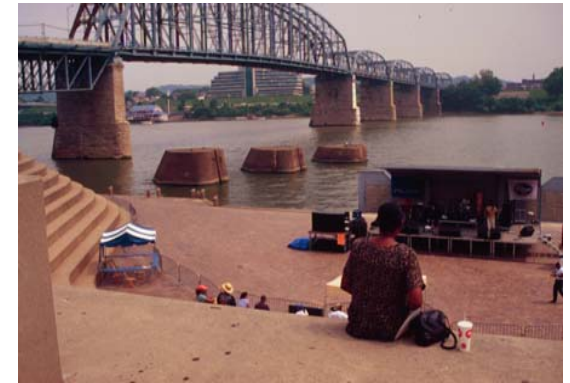
Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together

Connectivity – *Creating a cohesive environment*



Great cities incorporate a series of activity nodes. The connections and pathways that link these various points together play just as important a role in their overall success. In a well-connected community residents will take better advantage of the many offerings that make a place great. When improving the connectivity of an area it is essential to focus on both the connections that exist within a specific district or neighborhood as well as those that link one end of the city to the other. The following represent important linkages that must exist within a city:

- Between neighborhoods
- Between new developments and existing city fabric
- Connections to natural resources
- Access to civic, commercial, and recreational areas



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Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together

Community Identity – *Communicating the spirit of Rocky River*



Promoting the individuality of a place is what enables it to maintain and build upon the characteristics that have come to define it over time. Individuality and history provide an aura of excitement and pride for residents and visitors, and give the city what it needs to stand above an ever increasing amount of regional competition for residents, businesses, and institutional stability. The spirit of a place is an important promotional tool and an important way to strengthen ties within the community. The following represent ways in which a city can promote its individuality:

- Signage and historical markers
- Gateways
- Public art
- Celebration of historic and natural resources



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Discovering Our Planning Values.....Determining what's important together



Understanding Our Neighborhoods...

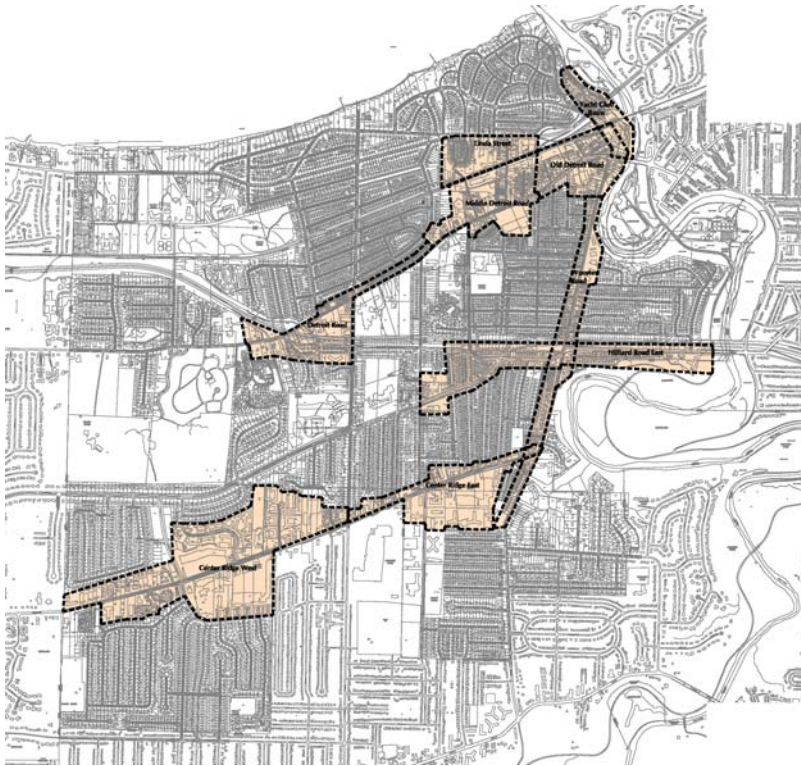
*Analyzing the nine
focus areas*

**Old Detroit
Middle Detroit
Linda Street**

**Yacht Club Basin
Detroit Road
Wooster Road**

**Hilliard Boulevard
Center Ridge East
Center Ridge West**

Focus Area Analysis



Prior to the start of the master planning process nine districts were chosen to provide a more focused and strategic study. The existing conditions of each focus area were analyzed in depth by the Task Force in terms of land-use, businesses, building types, physical form, connectedness to the greater city, connections within the focus area, the social demographic of both residents and uses, aesthetics, as well as the sense of place and character that the district provides to its user. Each focus area was then scrutinized in terms of its ability to live up to the planning values established by the Task Force.

The focus areas tend to follow primary transportation routes and commercial districts through and around the city including Detroit Road, Wooster Road, Hilliard Boulevard, and Center Ridge Road, as well as distinct neighborhoods such as Linda Street and the Yacht Club Basin. Throughout the various districts a diverse range of housing, retail, and institutional uses exist. When viewed together the nine focus areas provide a network of connections that link the various neighborhoods of the city. They must be viewed as unique places that create important linkages throughout the city and embody the ideals laid out in the nine planning values. Each of these areas must represent the unique character that is Rocky River.

A series of individual goals has been created for each focus area that would allow development to occur in such a way as to benefit both the district as well as the City of Rocky River. Finally, for each individual focus area directives have been established to guide future redevelopment opportunities as they arise. Improvements that may take place in each of the individual focus areas become extremely important for Rocky River when viewing the city as whole. Any improvements that might take place in an individual focus area will help to maintain the vitality of Rocky River, maintain high quality-of-life standards, and create a series of unique and intriguing places throughout the city.

The following pages contain a physical description of each focus area, existing conditions photos, land-use maps, a list of goals, and directives.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street

The fabric of an authentic town center – currently dominated by the automobile.

A mixture of commercial uses.

An engaging village atmosphere.

It was determined early in the planning process that the Old Detroit, Middle Detroit, and Linda Street focus areas should be studied as one area. Each of the three districts has its own unique character, and when combined they create a larger, more meaningful district. By studying the area as a whole new possibilities for connections within the district and to the surrounding neighborhoods become apparent, and what currently feels like a disjointed grouping of places and activities has the potential to become a thriving historic downtown district.

Rocky River's historic downtown is located in the Old Detroit focus area. Downtown Rocky River is a destination oriented shopping experience with a strong pedestrian atmosphere. It contains a series of historic mixed-use buildings as well as the Westlake Hotel apartments. However, the automobile, parking lots, and a series of confusing one-way and dead end streets detract from the potential character if the area. Street front retail shops continue along Detroit Road as one moves west away from downtown. Small, unique retailers and restaurants fill these shops, along with the former Beachcliff Theatre building.

Within the Middle Detroit focus area commercial development remains dominant, although some residential uses exist. Middle Detroit is home to a mixture of smaller, local businesses, regional commerce and national chain stores. These are located



Old Detroit Focus Area



Middle Detroit Focus Area



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street



in a series of commercial structures ranging from historic, pedestrian-oriented buildings to newer shopping centers catering to the convenience-oriented experience accompanied by the automobile.

Linda Street runs perpendicular to Detroit Road and contains a variety of light industrial, office, commercial and residential properties. A series of historic cottages, most of which have been converted to businesses, line a section of Linda Street. When viewed in the context of Smith and Allen Courts, the streets to the east and west of Linda, one gets the feeling of strolling through a historic village. New development, primarily residential, is occurring north of the railroad tracks in the Linda Street District. Astor Place, a new townhome development is currently under construction.



An elevated freeway ramp that connects Detroit and Lake Roads, the Marion Ramp, bisects the three districts resulting in a disjointed series of relationships. When studied as a whole the Old Detroit, Middle Detroit, and Linda Street focus areas demonstrate the potential to become a true urban center focused on the pedestrian, as well as a link between the neighborhoods north to the lake and south of Detroit.

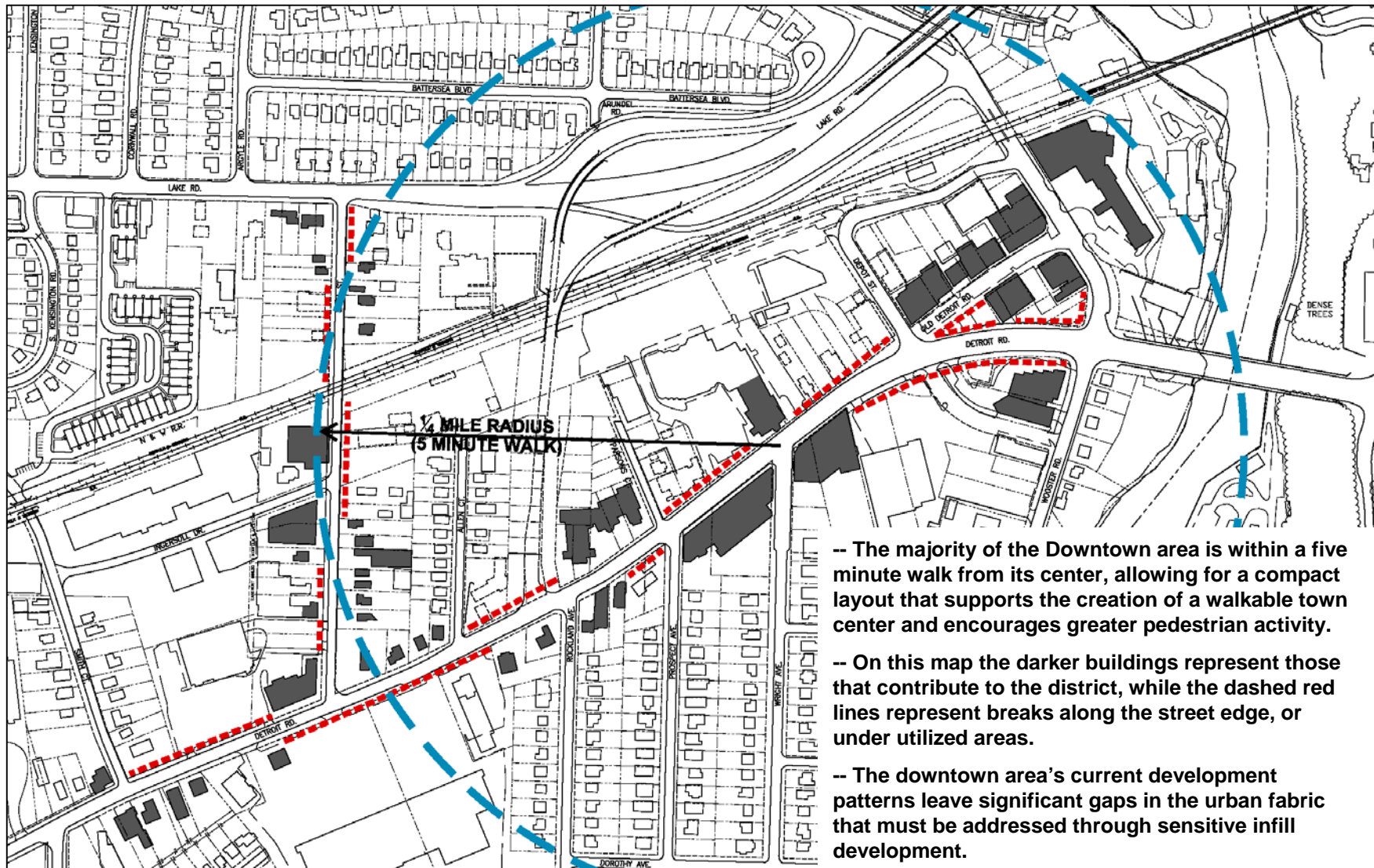


Linda Street Focus Area



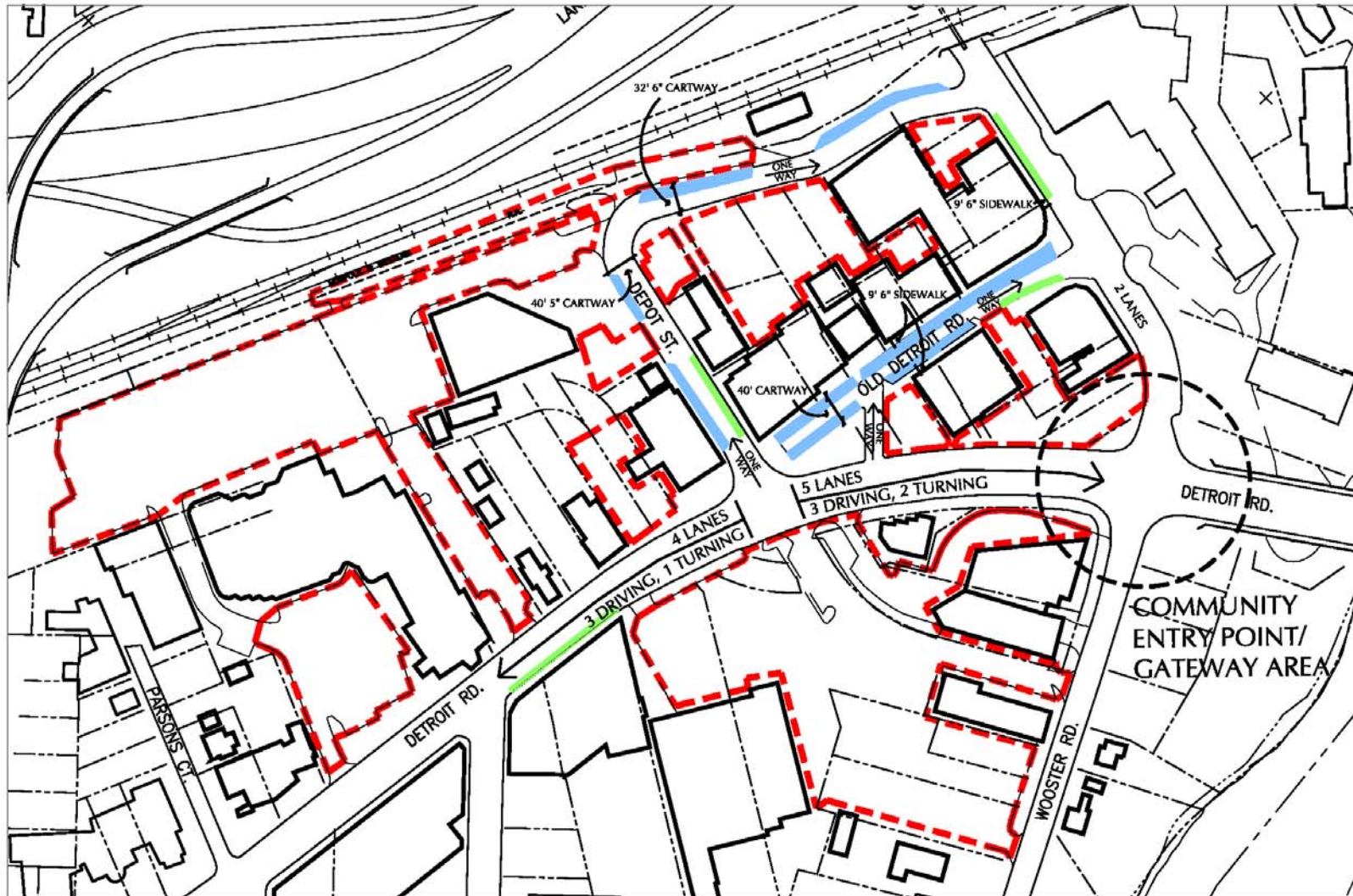
Old Detroit Focus Area





Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



OLD DETROIT FOCUS AREA ANALYSIS

- SURFACE PARKING
- HEAD-IN PARKING
- PARALLEL PARKING

-- A significant amount of surface parking areas exist within Old Detroit.

-- A more organized, space saving approach is necessary to deal with the automobile, while meeting parking needs.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

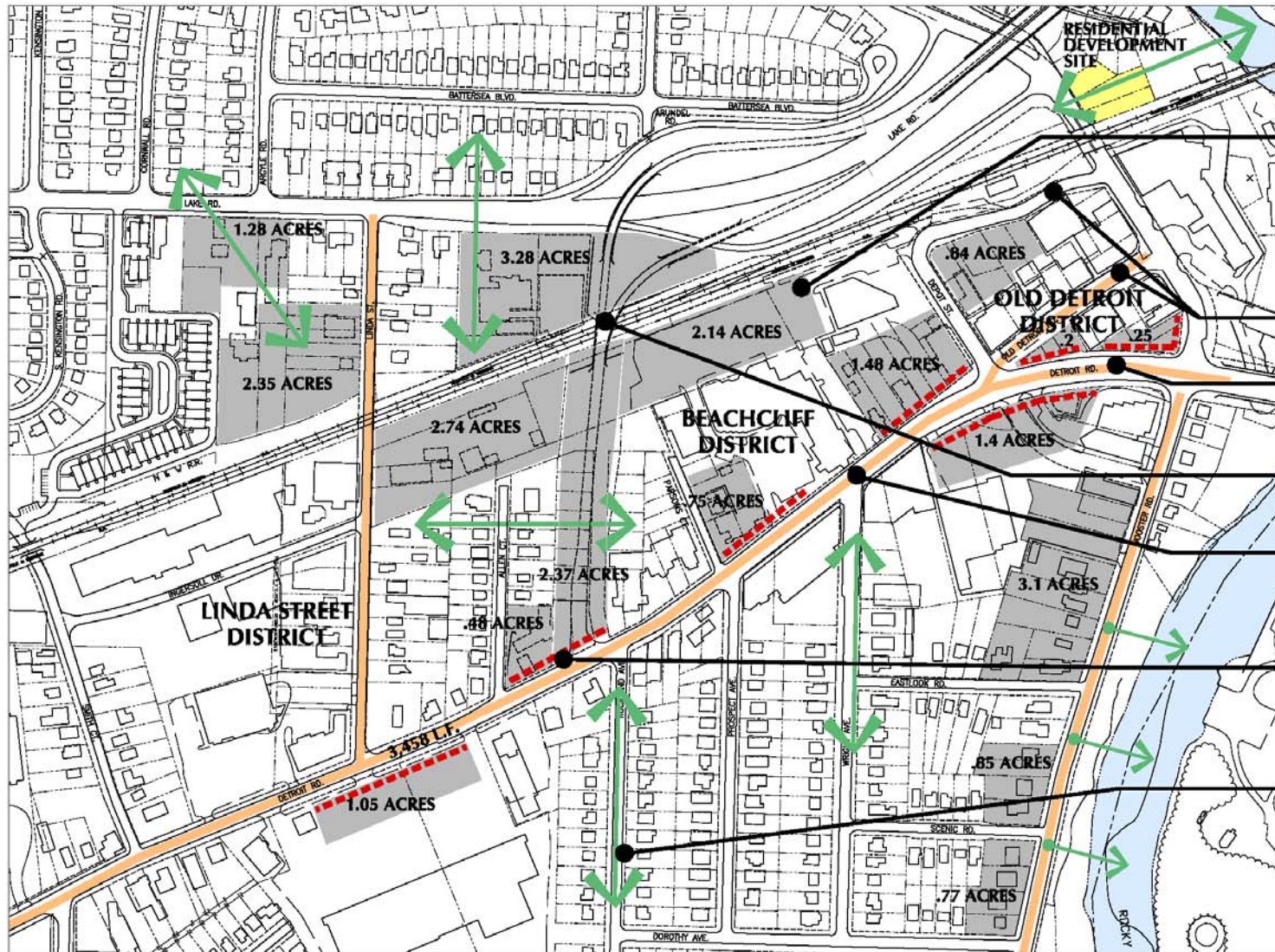
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- CREATE A COHESIVE, WELL-CONNECTED AND WALKABLE MIXED-USE NEIGHBORHOOD
- CREATE AN ACTIVE AND ENGAGING PEDESTRIAN-ORIENTED TOWN CENTER
- ENHANCE THE SENSE OF PLACE AND UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES OF THE AREA – BUILD UPON ITS STRENGTHS
- ADDRESS EXISTING BARRIERS THAT SEPARATE THE NEIGHBORHOOD FROM ITS SURROUNDINGS
- CREATE A GREATER SENSE OF IDENTITY AT ENTRANCE POINTS
- PROVIDE STRONGER LINKAGES TO SURROUNDING RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS
- ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONALITY OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD FROM BOTH A DESTINATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES STANDPOINT
- DEVELOP PARKING SOLUTIONS THAT ADDRESS CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS
- PROVIDE NEW COMMERCIAL, RESIDENTIAL, OFFICE AND PUBLIC USES



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



**DIRECTIVES-
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR GETTING IT DONE**

**REDEVELOP
VACANT AND
UNDER-UTILIZED
PROPERTIES AND
PROPERTIES WITH
INCOMPATIBLE
USES**

**IMPROVE TRAFFIC
PATTERNS**

**REWORK DETROIT
ROAD AND KEY
INTERSECTIONS**

**REMOVE LAKE
ROAD RAMP**

**ENHANCE DETROIT
ROAD AND LINDA
STREET
STREETSCAPES**

**PROVIDE
STRONGER
BUILDING
FRONTAGE**

**CREATE STRONGER
CONNECTIONS
WITHIN
NEIGHBORHOOD
AND TO
SURROUNDING
NEIGHBORHOODS**



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Yacht Club Basin

A truly unique place.

The Yacht Club Basin, one of the most intriguing sections of Rocky River, is a unique neighborhood for both the City and the region. Located at the bottom of the hillside along the mouth of the Rocky River at the city's northeastern edge, the Yacht Club Basin is the only neighborhood that has direct contact with the river from which the city gets its name. The basin is characterized by a series of new and old houses of many different sizes. A dynamic relationship is established between the river, the small, tightly knit scale of the neighborhood abutted against the hillside and the railroad, Lake Road, and Detroit Road bridges that tower above it.



The Yacht Club Basin is accessed either through the parking lot of the Westlake Hotel or a series of narrow roads leading to the Cleveland Yacht Club. The infrastructure that runs through this district is some of the oldest within Rocky River, and is desperately in need of upgrading. However, a great deal of the property that the infrastructure runs along is owned by private landowners, and hard to obtain access to. During the summer months traffic along Yacht Club Drive can be quite heavy as boaters and residents come in and out of the neighborhood with a much greater frequency. For safety reasons a desperate need for public infrastructure such as curbs, sidewalks, and relocated fire hydrants exists within the district.



Due to the tight configuration and steep grade change, the intersection half way down this hill must be studied from a safety perspective. The point at which Yacht Club Drive and Riverdale



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Yacht Club Basin



Drive converge is extremely tight and difficult to manage even for small cars. Any emergency vehicles that must access the lower portion of the Basin must negotiate a series of difficult turns before entering the area.

An increasing amount of new development is occurring in the Yacht Club Basin. It is becoming more common for a property owner to demolish one or two of the older homes within the neighborhood and replace it with a much larger, more expensive one. The private nature of new development within the district has resulted in few opportunities for improved public access to the waterfront.

The city's tie with the river is of great importance to its heritage, and there is a strong desire to improve access for all residents of the city. If one was not aware that the neighborhood existed, there is little to signify that such a unique and charming place abuts downtown Rocky River. In an effort to increase public access to both the neighborhood and the river a direct connection must be made between the downtown and the Yacht Club Basin, including improved gateway elements at the current entrance points.

The following pages demonstrate the existing conditions and land-use patterns within the focus area, as well as the goals and directives for guiding redevelopment within the district.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



- | | | | | | |
|---|------------------------|---|---------------|---|---------------------|
|  | SINGLE FAMILY |  | COMMERCIAL |  | CIVIC/PUBLIC |
|  | CONDOMINIUM |  | OFFICE |  | PARKS & OPEN SPACES |
|  | MULTI-FAMILY/APARTMENT |  | INDUSTRIAL |  | VACANT |
|  | MIXED USE |  | INSTITUTIONAL | | |



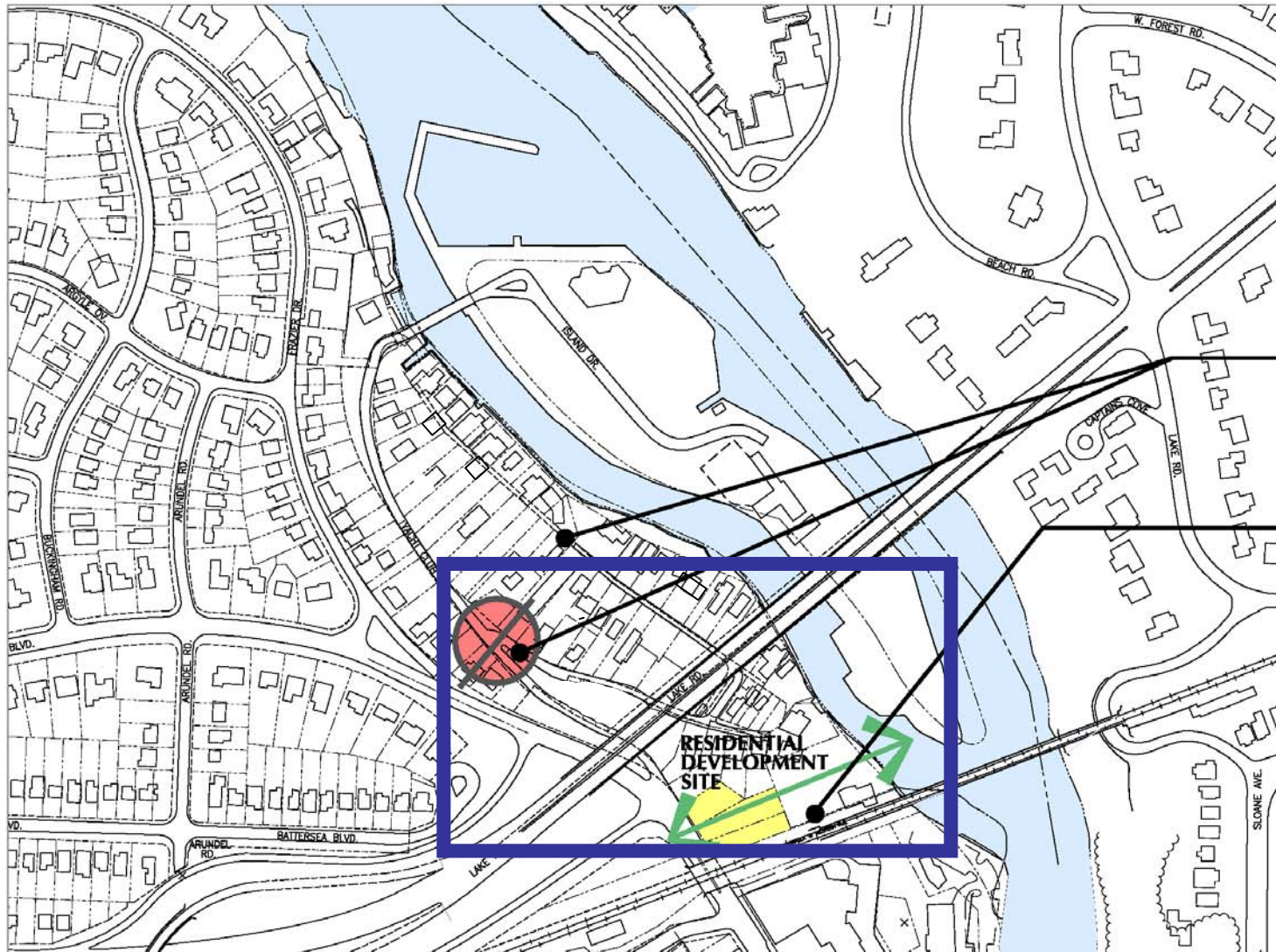
Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT EXISTING RESIDENTS
- STRENGTHEN CONNECTIONS TO THE REST OF THE CITY
- MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE ECLECTIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD
- INCREASE PUBLIC AMENITIES AND TIES TO THE WATERFRONT
- IMPLEMENT DESIGN STANDARDS TO BALANCE THE HISTORIC NATURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT





DIRECTIVES-
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GETTING IT DONE

DEVELOP DESIGN GUIDELINES THAT SUPPORT AND ENHANCE THE UNIQUE SENSE OF PLACE WITHIN THE DISTRICT

REWORK ROADWAY NETWORK FOR IMPROVED ACCESS

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR VIEWS AND GREATER PUBLIC ACCESS TO RIVER



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Detroit Road

Strong institutional focus.

The Detroit Road focus area is composed of a unique blend of residential and institutional structures as it transitions from the primarily commercial base of the Middle Detroit area. Large apartment towers flank the eastern edge of this district, as the retail buildings are replaced by a series of churches and smaller residential structures. Wagar Road, a major north-south connector street for the city, bisects Detroit Road midway through the district.

A major topography change plays a big part in the development of the north side of the street, to the east of Wagar Road. The property has been developed with residential uses, and includes a series of townhomes, small-scale apartment buildings, and a few single-family homes. However, because of the steep hillside that begins at the edge of the sidewalk, these buildings have very little street presence along Detroit Road. The residential buildings are set lower than the road surface, and in most cases do not have a connection with the street itself. Although the housing along Detroit Road begins to diversify the offerings within this section of the city, some of the developments do little to express the charm of the neighborhoods that surround them. The use of code enforcement on many of the properties would do a great deal to rectify this problem.

To the southeast of the intersection of Detroit and Wagar Roads lie the Rocky River High School and football stadium. The school itself is set back from the street edge, and like the residential buildings to its north could benefit from improved presence along the road.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Detroit Road



To the west of Wagar Road, residential properties continue to line the north side of the street until they reach the Interstate 90 interchange. The south side of Detroit Road is home to two churches, a private school, and a series of apartment buildings. The creation of the Interstate 90 interchange has split the neighborhood in two, and left a variety of different building types on either side of the interchange.

The Detroit Road focus area occupies an important place in the makeup of the City of Rocky River. The district is a crucial link between the neighborhoods to the north and south, the neighborhood to the west of the interchange, and the major commercial area to the east. The I-90 interchange also provides linkages with the Greater Cleveland community.

Due to the disparate, but important, group of land-uses and the lack of street frontage there is little sense of place within the focus area. As a major gateway from both the communities to the west and I-90, the focus area is in need of elements that will increase the character of the district. A great deal of this can be accomplished through infrastructure improvements and the creation of meaningful public space.

The following pages demonstrate the existing conditions and land-use patterns within the focus area, as well as the goals and directives for guiding redevelopment opportunities.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| SINGLE FAMILY | COMMERCIAL | CIVIC/PUBLIC |
| CONDOMINIUM | OFFICE | PARKS & OPEN SPACES |
| MULTI-FAMILY/ APARTMENT | INDUSTRIAL | VACANT |
| MIXED USE | INSTITUTIONAL | |



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- CREATE A MORE COHESIVE, WALKABLE ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL USES IN THE AREA AND CONNECTS THEM TO THEIR GREATER NEIGHBORHOOD SURROUNDINGS.
- PROVIDE IMPROVED RESIDENTIAL OFFERINGS
- PROVIDE A UNIQUE IDENTITY FOR THE DISTRICT
- CREATE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT INTO THE CITY
- PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RECREATIONAL AMENITIES
- UTILIZE DESIGN STANDARDS TO CREATE A MORE VISUALLY APPEALING GATEWAY INTO THE COMMUNITY



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



**DIRECTIVES-
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR GETTING IT DONE**

**DEVELOP NEW
MULTI-FAMILY
RESIDENTIAL
BUILDINGS TO
REPLACE
OUTDATED
APARTMENTS**

**ENHANCE DETROIT
ROAD STREETScape
TO STRENGTHEN
IDENTITY**

**IMPROVE WAGAR
ROAD
INTERSECTION**

**CREATE STRONGER
STREET FRONTAGE**



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Wooster Road

A strong neighborhood street.

The Wooster Road focus area provides a crucial link between all of the other focus areas, as the only district to run in a north-south orientation. The importance of this becomes clear when studying the land-use maps and finding that Wooster Road provides a connection between the two major commercial areas of Rocky River. The northern end of the Wooster Road district lies in the heart of the historic downtown, the Center Ridge focus area is at the southern end, and the Hilliard Boulevard focus area is midway between the two. This interconnectedness makes Wooster Road extremely important within the street fabric of Rocky River, with the highway interchange at Hilliard Boulevard only adding to its connectivity.

The development that has occurred along the length of Wooster Road has been very diverse. Residential development between the major cross streets (Detroit, Hilliard, and Center Ridge) has integrated many different typologies and styles. These have ranged from single-family homes to townhomes and high rise apartment buildings. A small neighborhood commercial node has developed in the northern half of Wooster Road where the cross streets tie into the property that the new middle school and library occupy. This area provides a small center for the surrounding neighborhoods, and provides a crucial piece of public space within the neighborhoods to act as a community gathering place for residents.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Wooster Road



Sections of the eastern portion of Wooster Road have open vistas leading into the Rocky River valley and park system below. Although these are some of the best viewing points within the city, there are no sidewalks that run along this side of the roadway, making it dangerous for a pedestrian to take advantage of these extraordinary views. A physical, but mainly undistinguishable, linkage does exist to the park system to the south of Hilliard Boulevard at Rockcliff Drive. The river valley and Rocky River Reservation are an important asset and recreational amenity for the city. The connection to them must be strengthened.

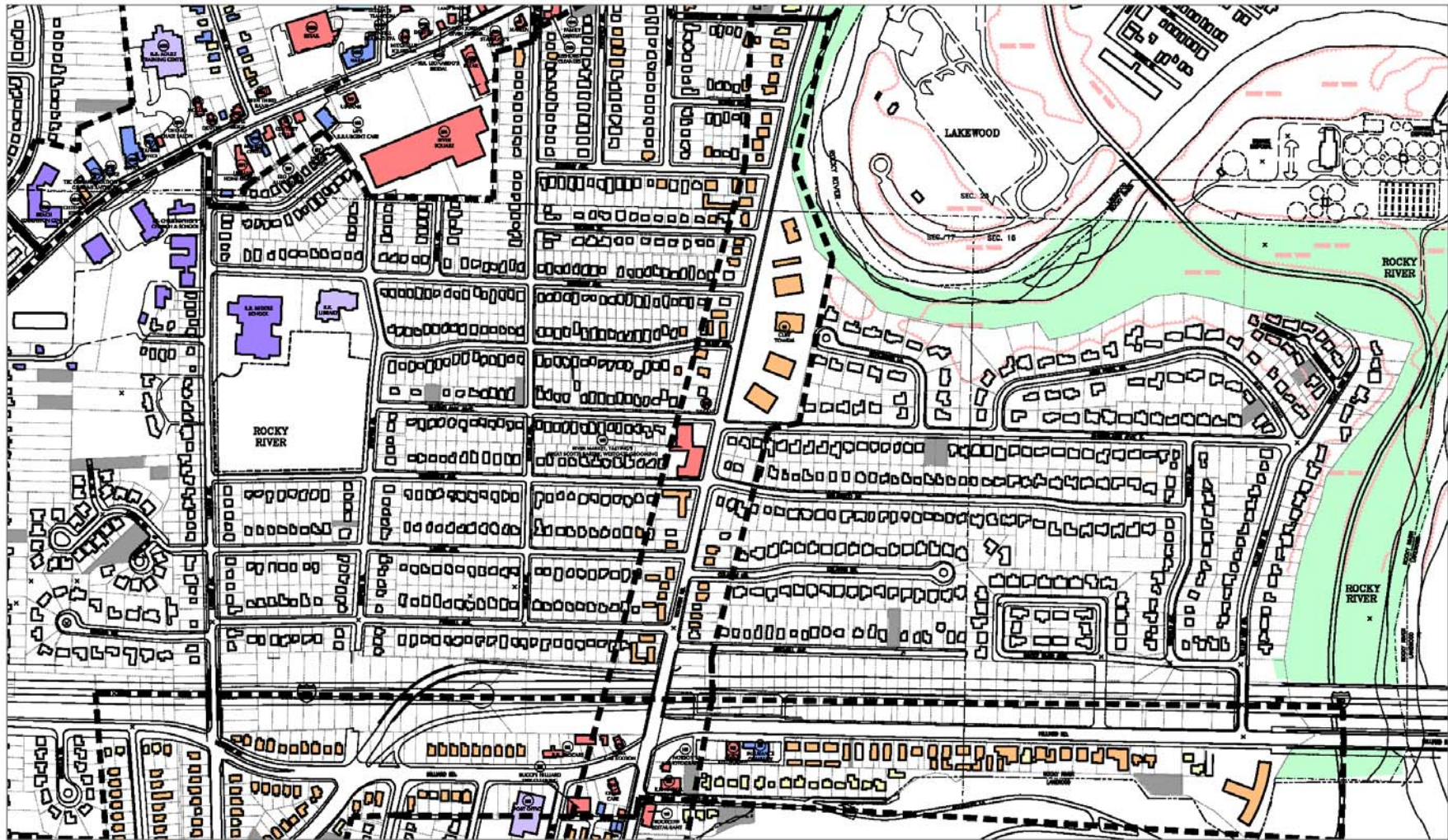
Pockets of unique residential character exist along Wooster Road that must continue to be strengthened through a combination of public and private investments. These individual areas should be unified to ensure that the focus area acts as its own successful district and maintains an identity of its own. Streetscape improvements could begin to unify the district.

The following pages demonstrate the existing conditions and land-use patterns within the focus area, as well as the goals and directives for guiding redevelopment in the focus area.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

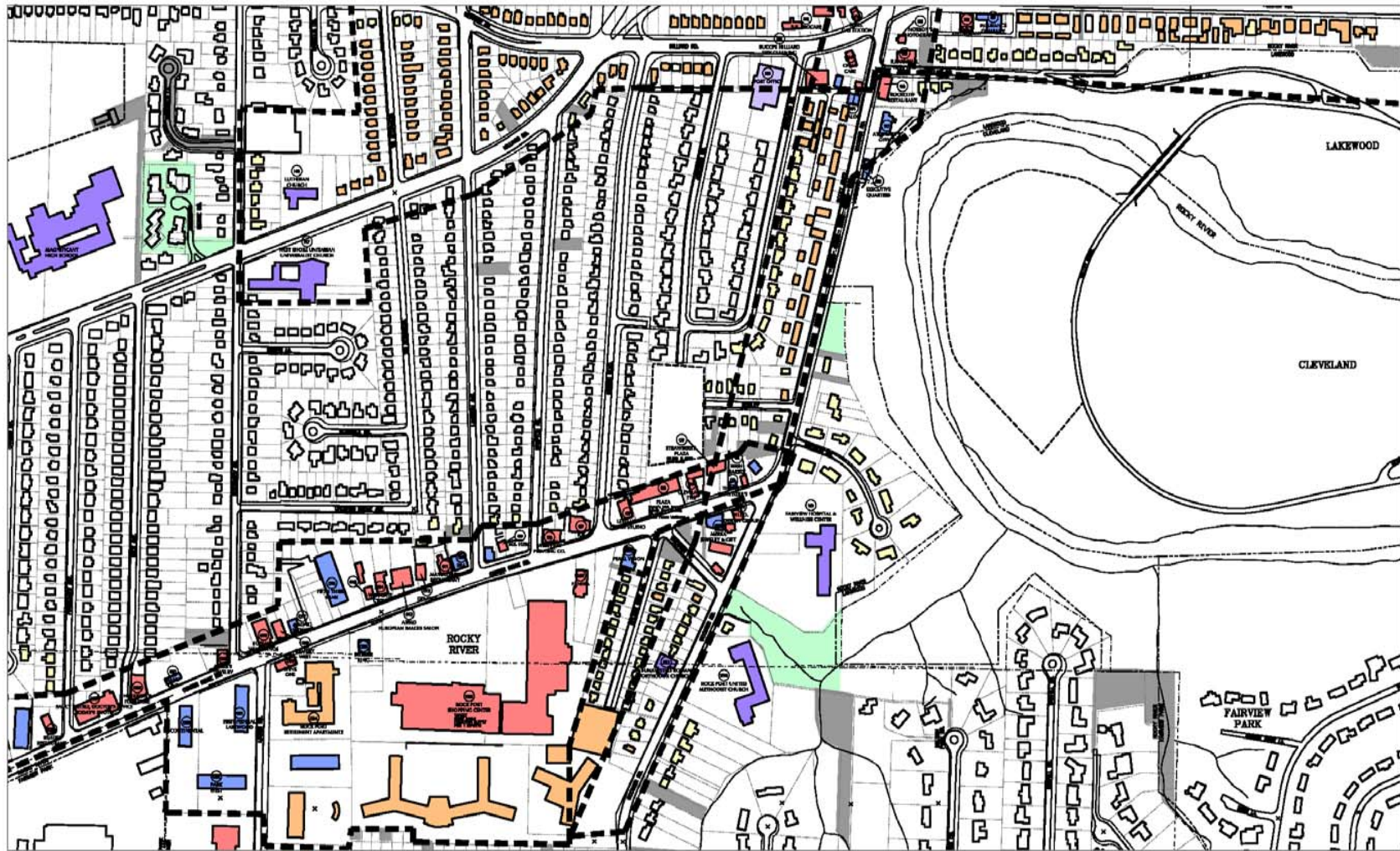


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|---|---|---|
|  SINGLE FAMILY |  COMMERCIAL |  CIVIC/PUBLIC |
|  CONDOMINIUM |  OFFICE |  PARKS & OPEN SPACES |
|  MULTI-FAMILY/ APARTMENT |  INDUSTRIAL |  VACANT |
|  MIXED USE |  INSTITUTIONAL | |



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



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|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| SINGLE FAMILY | COMMERCIAL | CIVIC/PUBLIC |
| CONDOMINIUM | OFFICE | PARKS & OPEN SPACES |
| MULTI-FAMILY/ APARTMENT | INDUSTRIAL | VACANT |
| MIXED USE | INSTITUTIONAL | |



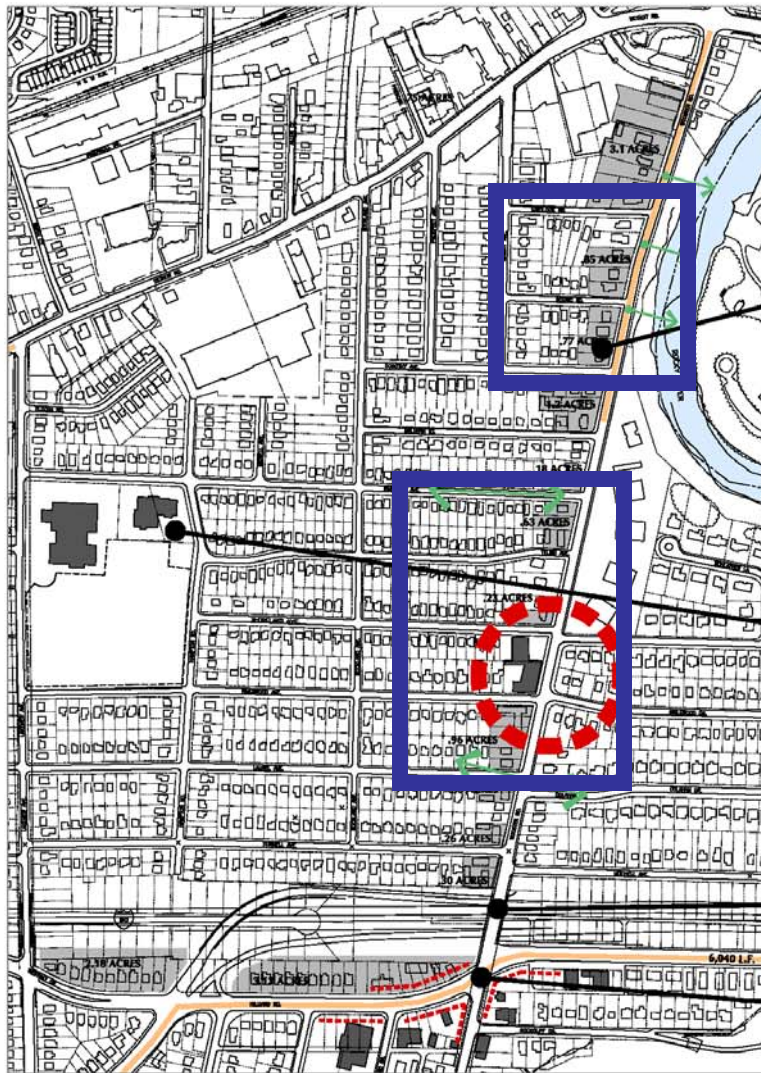
Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

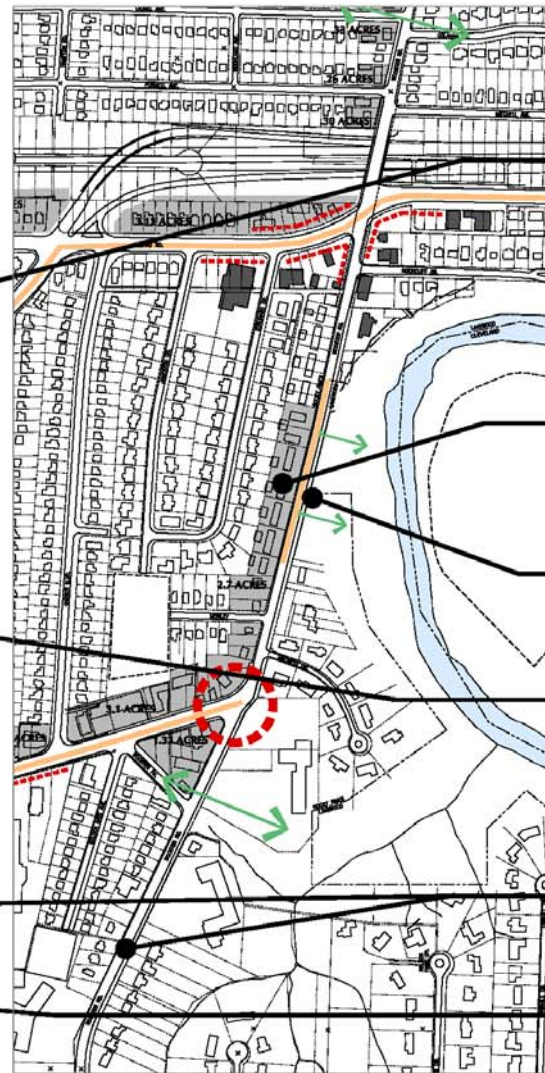
WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- CREATE A MORE COHESIVE NEIGHBORHOOD ENVIRONMENT
- TAKE GREATER ADVANTAGE OF VIEWS TO THE RIVER VALLEY
- IMPROVE THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY
- SUPPORT AND BUILD UPON THE NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL NODE NORTH OF HILLIARD
- IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND AMENITIES THAT SURROUND THE AREA





WOOSTER ROAD FOCUS AREA north



DIRECTIVES- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GETTING IT DONE

REDEVELOP
EXISTING
APARTMENT
BUILDINGS THAT
DETRACT FROM
THE
SURROUNDING
NEIGHBORHOODS

RENOVATE
EXISTING
TOWNHOUSE
STYLE APARTMENTS

TAKE GREATER
ADVANTAGE OF
VIEW TO RIVER

CREATE STRONGER
CONNECTIONS TO
SURROUNDING
NEIGHBORHOOD,
SCHOOLS, AND
LIBRARY

ENHANCE
WOOSTER ROAD
STREETScape

IMPROVE TRAFFIC
PATTERNS



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Hilliard Boulevard

A primary gateway and a mixture of uses – commercial and multi-family.

The Hilliard Boulevard focus area is characterized by a range of uses. Single-family residential, civic and institutional uses form its western end, while multi-family housing and commercial uses dominate its eastern end. Hilliard Boulevard is unique in that it is one of the only roads within the City of Rocky River to incorporate a median. This median occurs on the western end of the street, outside of the study area.

The eastern end of the focus area represents a primary gateway into Rocky River from Lakewood. After crossing the bridge over the Rocky River Valley and entering the city, a stronger feeling of arrival and place is needed. A series of older multi-family buildings along the south side of the street, combined with I-90 running along the north side, have left the area with a disjointed feeling. A more welcoming gateway environment is necessary.

The residential properties located along this eastern edge are interesting in that the back of the sites open to the river valley with spectacular viewing opportunities. The potential views from these older residential sites should be taken advantage of, but the narrow depth of the properties, the presence of the interstate and the one-sided nature of the street make it economically challenging for significant redevelopment to occur.

A small commercial node occurs at the intersection of Hilliard and Wooster Roads. As this is a primary freeway exit and entrance location for the City of Rocky River the area has



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Hilliard Boulevard



become very auto-dominant. A series of gas stations line one portion of the district and the main branch of the Rocky River Post Office is located in an old grocery store on the south side of the street. The intersection itself is fairly large and unwieldy. Steps must be taken to calm traffic through this area and increase the importance of the pedestrian. The lackluster street frontage of the commercial properties has added to the impression of disjointedness that exists. This is an extremely important commercial node that should not be neglected. The presence of the highway interchange can act as a catalyst for development that can provide an economic benefit for Rocky River.

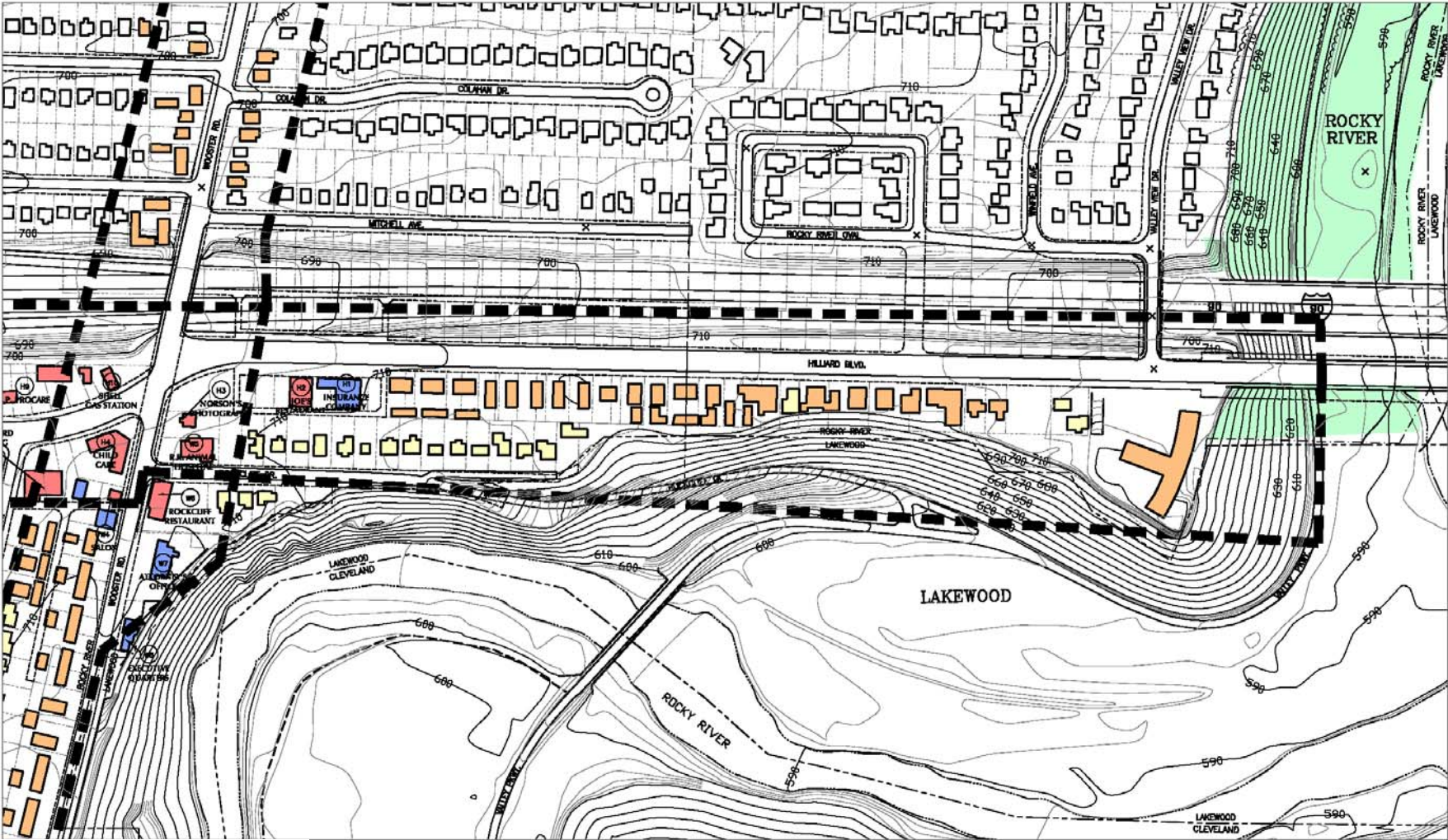
The western portion of this district is composed of about two and a half blocks of duplexes, the highway exit and entrance ramps and a few institutional uses. This portion of the district could benefit from stronger definition and a more distinctive sense of entry.

The following pages demonstrate the existing conditions and land-use patterns within the focus area, as well as the goals and directives for guiding opportunities for redevelopment.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



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|------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| SINGLE FAMILY | COMMERCIAL | CIVIC/PUBLIC |
| CONDOMINIUM | OFFICE | PARKS & OPEN SPACES |
| MULTI-FAMILY/APARTMENT | INDUSTRIAL | VACANT |
| MIXED USE | INSTITUTIONAL | |

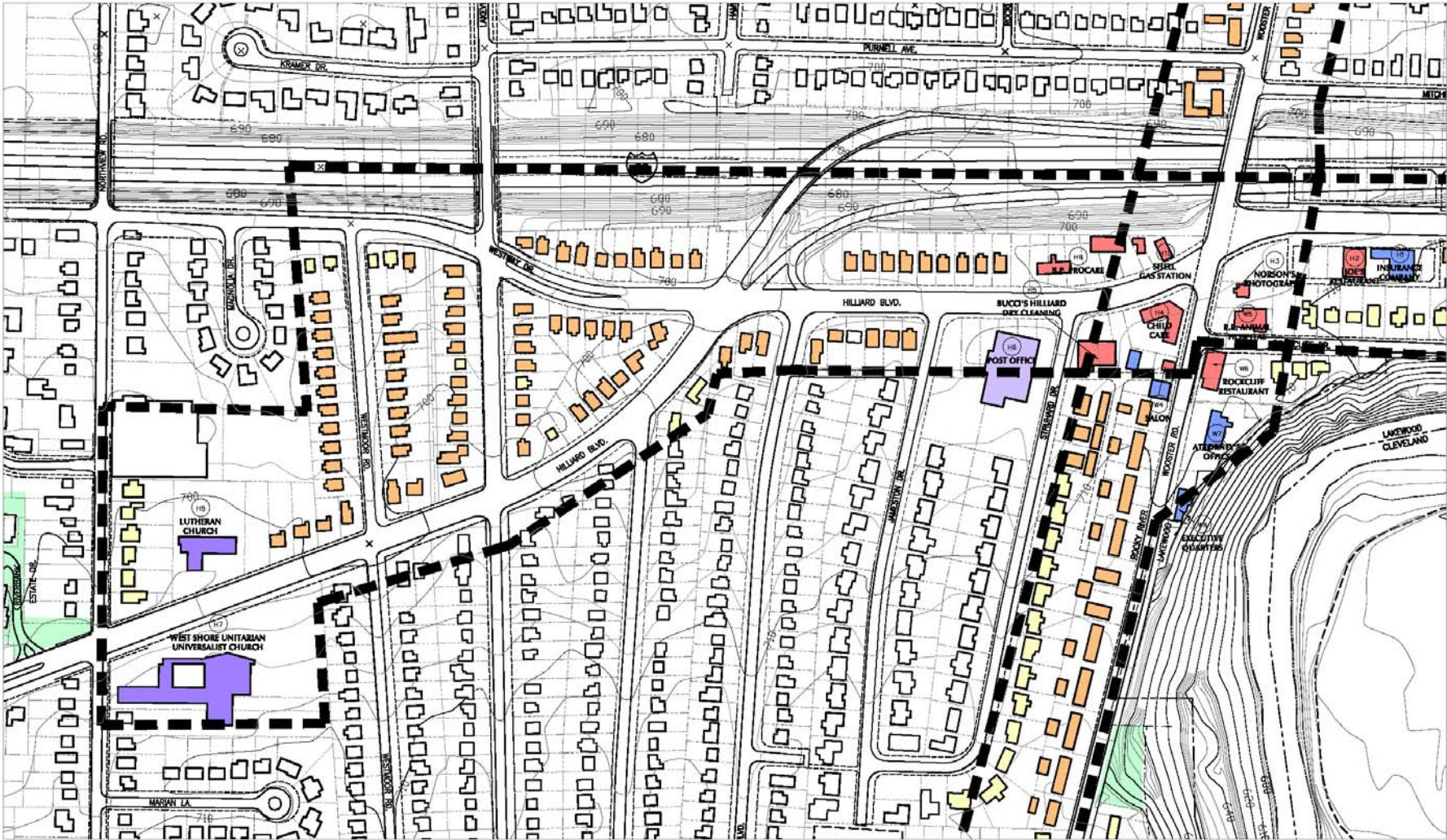


Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Hilliard Boulevard

Land-Use Plan (West)



- | | | |
|---|---|---|
|  SINGLE FAMILY |  COMMERCIAL |  CIVIC/PUBLIC |
|  CONDOMINIUM |  OFFICE |  PARKS & OPEN SPACES |
|  MULTI-FAMILY/ APARTMENT |  INDUSTRIAL |  VACANT |
|  MIXED USE |  INSTITUTIONAL | |



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- IMPROVE THE OVERALL APPEARANCE AND THE SENSE OF IDENTITY
- PROVIDE IMPROVED COMMERCIAL, OFFICE AND RESIDENTIAL USES
- TAKE GREATER ADVANTAGE OF VIEWS TO THE RIVER VALLEY
- CREATE A STRONGER SENSE OF ENTRY AT HIGHWAY RAMP
- IMPROVE ACCESS INTO THE METROPARKS FROM THE DISTRICT

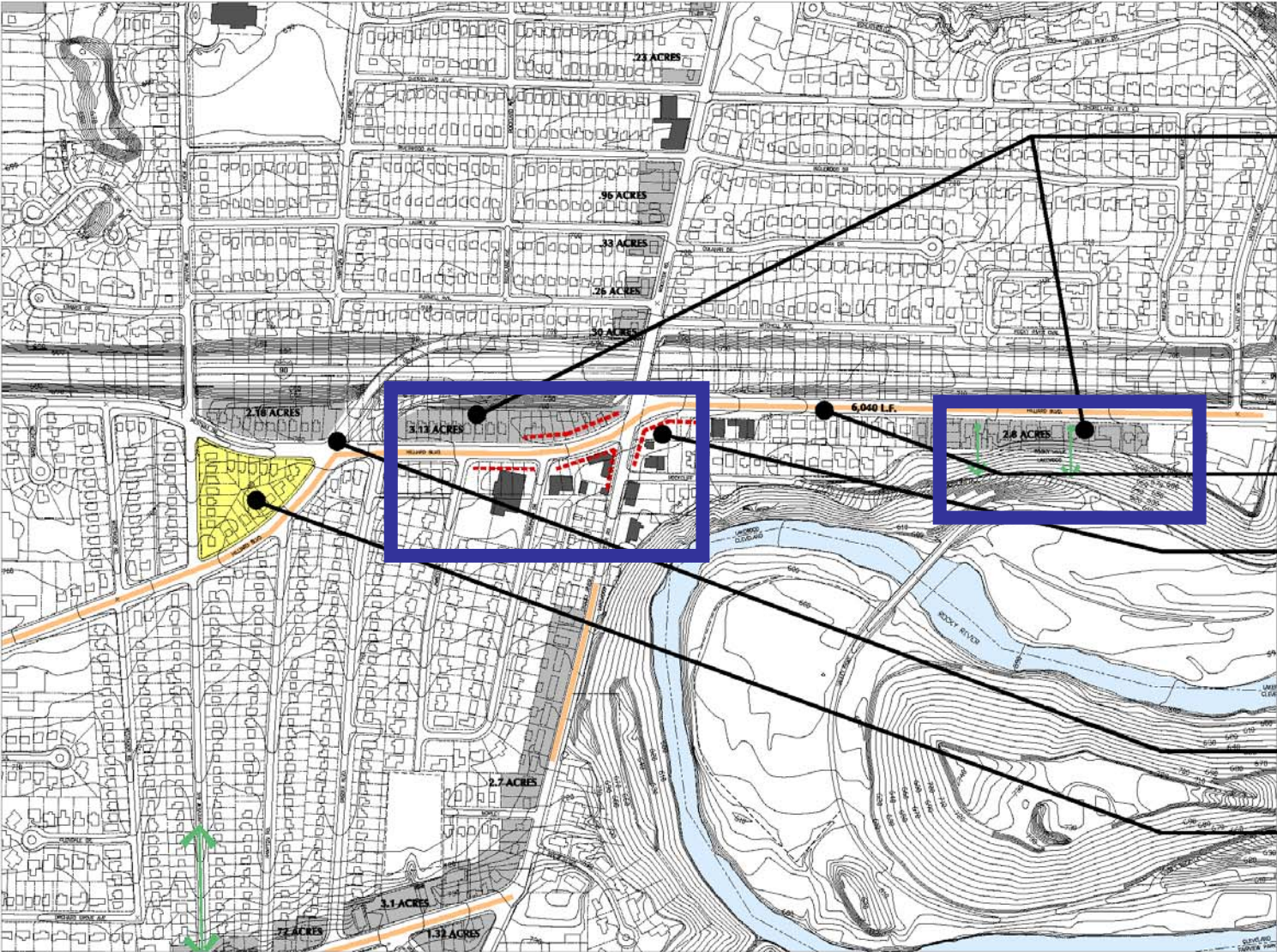


Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Hilliard Boulevard

Directives



**DIRECTIVES-
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR GETTING IT DONE**

**REDEVELOP
EXISTING
APARTMENT
BUILDINGS AND
DUPLEXES**

**ENHANCE HILLIARD
BLVD. STREETScape**

**CREATE STRONGER
STREET FRONTAGE
AT INTERSECTION**

**IMPROVE SENSE OF
ENTRY**

**CONSIDER AS
COMMERCIAL
DEVELOPMENT
BLOCK**



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Center Ridge Road East

A combination of small and large retail uses.

The Center Ridge East focus area runs along the length of Center Ridge Road between Wooster and Wagar Roads. It is bordered to the north and south by single-family neighborhoods with large apartment buildings as a buffer to the south, and the river valley and the Fairview Hospital Wellness Center to the east. This area can be characterized as an auto-dominated retail district, with little emphasis placed on creating a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.

The Rockport Shopping Center dominates the south side of Center Ridge Road. A large parking lot fronts the street, bordered by a planted tree lawn, one of the few within the district. Adjacent to the shopping center are the Rockport Retirement Apartments, the only residential use along this portion of Center Ridge Road. An office park is located just before the south side of Center Ridge Road becomes a part of the City of Fairview Park. The two cities must work together to create a more cohesive atmosphere within the Center Ridge District. The success of the retail in one city is directly dependant on that of the other.

The north side of the Center Ridge East district is made up of a series of small one- and two-story retail buildings of various ages and styles. These are home to many smaller chain stores, as well as an abundance of small independent businesses. Like the south side of the street there are very few, if any, pedestrian amenities offered to act as a buffer between the sidewalk and street.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Center Ridge Road East



While the automobile is truly dominant within the district, pedestrian accessibility is of particular importance to this area due to the increased diversity of the population that the surrounding residential neighborhoods add. An ideal mixture of convenience and service retail uses exists within the focus area for easy access by the elderly residents of the neighborhood, but virtually nothing exists to allow them to walk to the various destinations easily or safely.

The Center Ridge East focus area does not have a cohesive atmosphere. However, there is little to no vacancy in any of the retail locations, making it a very successful area. With a series of modifications Center Ridge East can be transformed to create a stronger feeling of unity and place, while retaining the commercial base that has developed. The use of design guidelines for both the architecture of the buildings and more importantly for the treatment of parking lots could be of a particular benefit to the district. Infrastructure improvements, parking solutions, increased public space and stronger design guidelines are necessary to balance the use of the automobile with the importance of the pedestrian.

The following pages demonstrate the existing conditions and land-use patterns within the focus area, as well as the goals and directives for guiding redevelopment in the focus area.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Center Ridge Road East

Land-Use Plan (West)



- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| SINGLE FAMILY | COMMERCIAL | CIVIC/PUBLIC |
| CONDOMINIUM | OFFICE | PARKS & OPEN SPACES |
| MULTI-FAMILY/ APARTMENT | INDUSTRIAL | VACANT |
| MIXED USE | INSTITUTIONAL | |



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- PROVIDE A MORE COHESIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT BETTER ORGANIZES A MIXTURE OF RESIDENTIAL, RETAIL AND OFFICE USES
- ENHANCE THE OVERALL APPEARANCE OF THE DISTRICT
- PROVIDE A STRONGER SENSE OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY AT THE DISTRICT GATEWAY AREAS
- ENHANCE COMMERCIAL USES ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF THE STREET
- IMPROVE LINKAGES TO THE METROPARK
- WORK WITH THE CITY OF FAIRVIEW PARK TO CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE RETAILING STRATEGY FOR THE DISTRICT

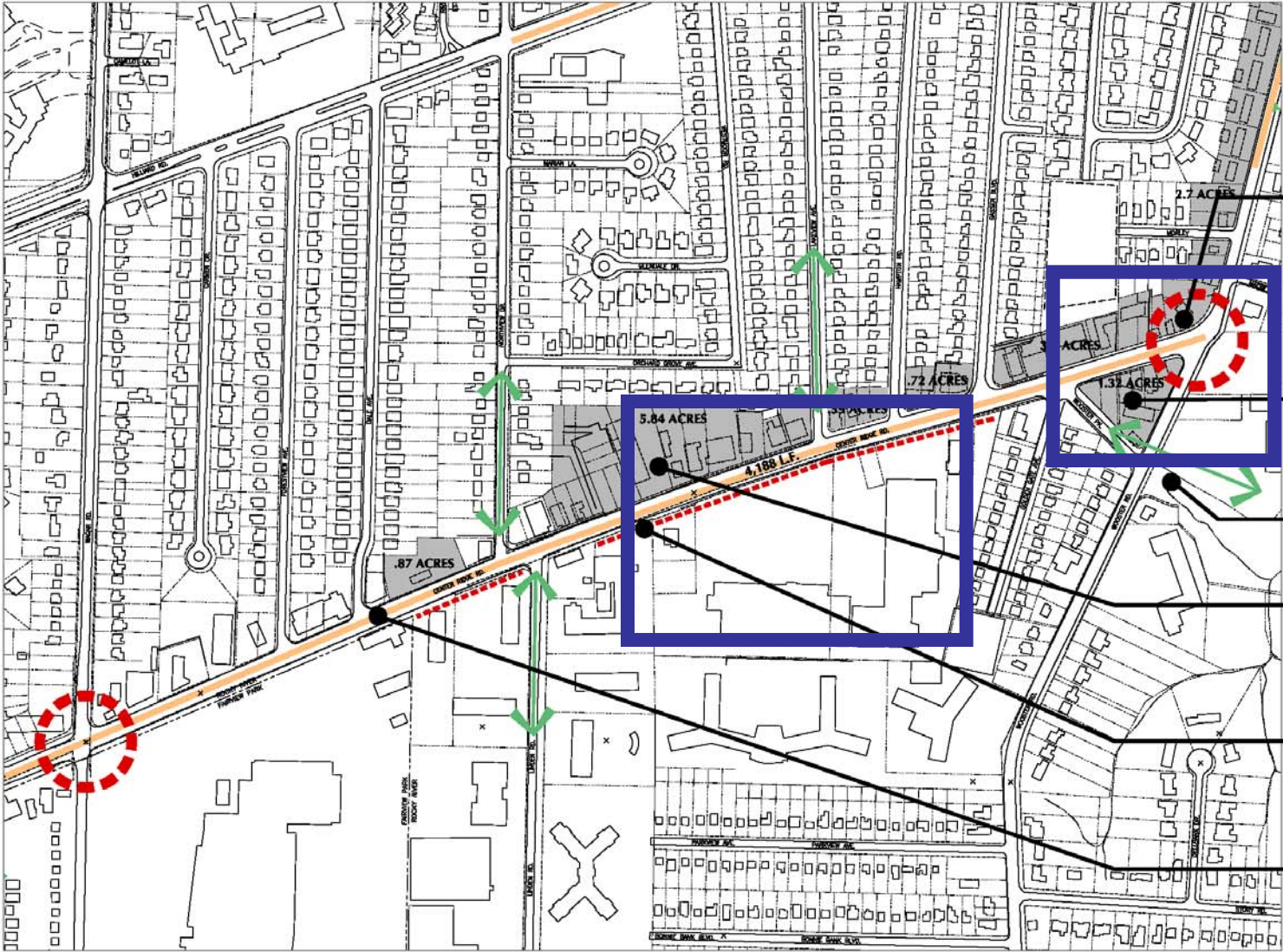


Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Center Ridge Road East

Directives



**DIRECTIVES-
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR GETTING IT DONE**

**PROVIDE A
STRONGER SENSE
OF COMMUNITY
IDENTITY AT
DISTRICT
GATEWAYS**

**REDEVELOP POINT
AREA AT CENTER
RIDGE AND
WOOSTER**

**IMPROVE LINKAGES
TO METROPARK**

**ENHANCE
COMMERCIAL USES
ALONG NORTH
SIDE OF ROAD**

**DEVELOP DESIGN
GUIDELINES FOR
PARKING LOT
SCREENING**

**ENHANCE CENTER
RIDGE ROAD
STREETSCAPE**



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Center Ridge Road West

Dominated by larger commercial and multi-family housing.

The Center Ridge West focus area begins at Wagar Road and continues west through the city until it reaches the border of Rocky River and Westlake. In many ways Center Ridge West maintains a similar feeling as its eastern counterpart. Two major shopping centers exist within the district, Westwood Town Center on the south and River Plaza on the north. Smaller retail buildings continue along the north side of Center Ridge Road, with some located to the south as out parcels of Westwood Town Center.

There are some important differences to be noted between the east and west portions of the Center Ridge Road focus areas. In this district residential uses play a stronger role along the street. Two major groups of apartment buildings are accessed along the north side of this district. To the south the Welsh Home occupies a wooded lot set back from the street. Dividing the two apartment complexes is the Goldwood Primary School, and the city's Little League baseball fields. The River Oaks Racquet Club and River Oaks Fitness Center are two recreational amenities located along the north side of Center Ridge Road that are both highly utilized by the citizens of Rocky River. These uses represent some very important pieces of active public open space within the community. However, due to the fact that the fields are located behind the school and a primary entrance is located along Hilliard Boulevard, they have very little presence within the district.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

Center Ridge Road West



West of Spencer Road the focus area takes on a new character, and in many ways feels similar in character to the development patterns of Westlake. The street becomes residentially dominant, and has much more to offer in terms of vegetation and green space. The residential projects that have been built are all fairly new, inward facing townhome and cluster home developments. A few single-family homes line a portion of the north side of the street, but are slowly being replaced with new developments. Apartment buildings and senior housing / assisted living facilities are mixed in with the cluster developments.

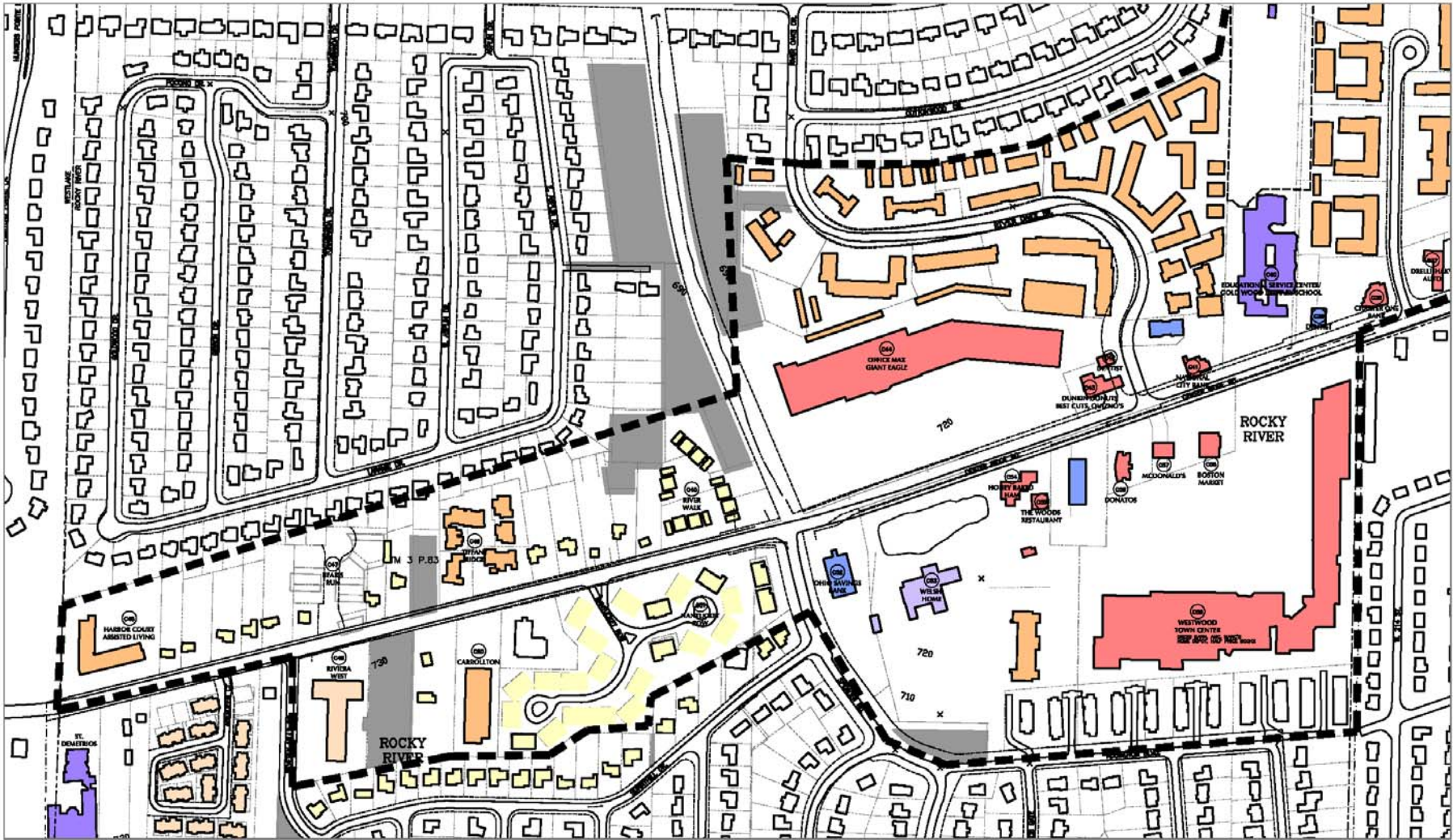
The Center Ridge West focus area is characterized by a series of individual projects that do very little to interact with their neighbors. This has resulted in a somewhat disjointed atmosphere, with little attention paid to the needs of the pedestrian user or the general presence of the district. A sense of unity and place must be brought to this district. As with Center Ridge East, a series of guidelines would be useful for this focus area to allow it to work like a true district as opposed to a series of individual entities.

The following pages demonstrate the existing conditions and land-use patterns within the focus area, as well as the goals and directives for guiding redevelopment in the focus area.



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



	SINGLE FAMILY		COMMERCIAL		CIVIC/PUBLIC
	CONDOMINIUM		OFFICE		PARKS & OPEN SPACES
	MULTI-FAMILY/APARTMENT		INDUSTRIAL		VACANT
	MIXED USE		INSTITUTIONAL		



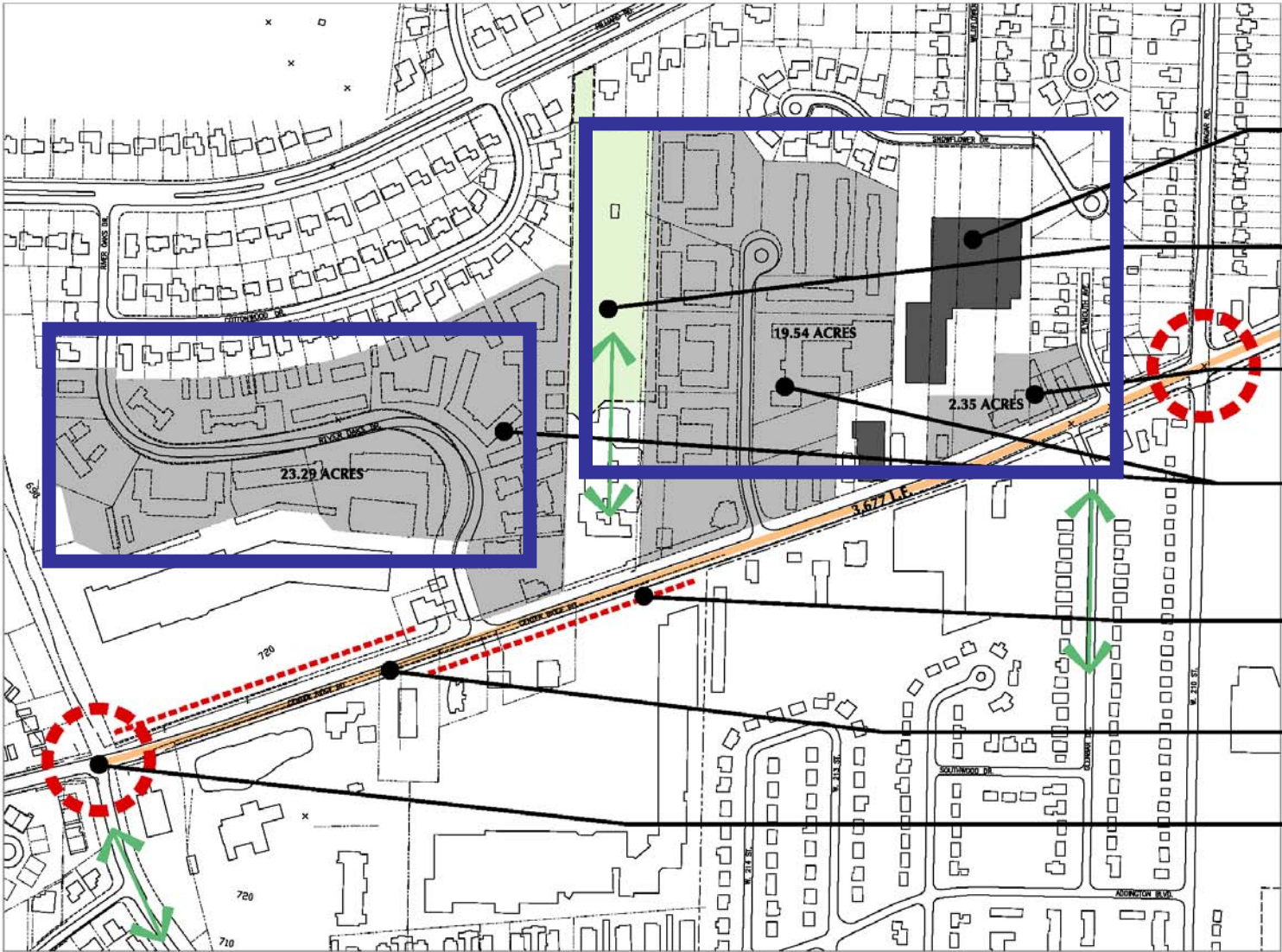
Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE

- CREATE A STRONGER SENSE OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY AT DISTRICT GATEWAY AREAS
- PROVIDE A MORE COHESIVE ENVIRONMENT THAT BETTER ORGANIZES A MIXTURE OF RESIDENTIAL, RETAIL AND OFFICE USES
- ENHANCE THE OVERALL APPEARANCE OF THE DISTRICT
- IMPROVE BLIGHTED PROPERTIES
- SUPPORT AND ENHANCE EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES





**DIRECTIVES-
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR GETTING IT DONE**

- SUPPORT AND ENHANCE EXISTING RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
- CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPANDED PARK SPACE
- ENHANCE COMMERCIAL USES ALONG NORTH SIDE OF ROAD
- REDEVELOP APARTMENTS WITH NEW RESIDENTIAL & RECREATIONAL USES
- DEVELOP DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR PARKING LOT SCREENING
- ENHANCE CENTER RIDGE ROAD STREETSCAPE
- PROVIDE A STRONGER SENSE OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY AT DISTRICT GATEWAYS



Rocky River Master Plan

Understanding our neighborhoods.....analyzing the nine focus areas



Envisioning Our City.....

A shared vision for the future

A series of planning recommendations for the nine focus areas have been developed based on the information obtained from the physical and demographic analysis of the city, as well as feedback provided by the Task Force, the City of Rocky River, and the community.

Statements such as the following made by Task Force members have guided the planning team in the generation of potential redevelopment strategies:

- “take a proactive approach to new development,”*
- “develop a diversified housing stock,”*
- “propose an aggressive plan to build support and begin to demonstrate the values that it represents,”*
- “set a formal direction for future development of Rocky River to know where we’re going”*
- “formal adoption of the plan by City Council is necessary”*
- “use the master plan as a cornerstone for an overall marketing plan for the city”*
- “focus on opportunities to implement the plan and not the barriers that stand in its way...”*

The Task Force recognizes that continued development within the city is inevitable, and wants to ensure that when a development opportunity arises, it works within parameters that best fit the needs of the entire city. In order to protect and retain the characteristics that define Rocky River, the decision was made to analyze redevelopment schemes in terms of what they will mean to the city in the long-term, as opposed to developing recommendations that may solve an immediate need but that may fail to stand the test of time.

The following redevelopment concepts are intended to reflect the goals and initiatives addressed previously. They represent basic approaches to redevelopment, and the demonstration of development potential should the opportunity for change arise at any of these sites.

The redevelopment initiatives proposed within this master plan are as follows.....

Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street

The opportunity exists within the downtown to create a cohesive, walkable district if the assets of the Old Detroit, Middle Detroit, and Linda Street focus areas can be conceived in a way that allows them to work together. One of the biggest problems that exist within the three areas is their lack of connectedness both physically and perceptually. By combining the focus areas into one larger study area it becomes possible to tie these areas together in a more meaningful way.

Why should we create this downtown? The potential is there with so many of the critical pieces already in place. A comprehensive approach to the redevelopment of this area will add to the city's viability and will provide a chance for it to mature as a truly established place. As surrounding communities attempt to create new town centers, Rocky River has the benefit of being able to build upon a recognized and authentic downtown. It's a matter of tying the existing fabric together with sensitive development and special details.

Redevelopment plans within the newly expanded downtown district emphasize the careful combination of historic resources and new opportunities. Such historic buildings as those found in the Old Detroit business district, the historic houses along Linda Street and Allen Court, as well as the historic Pickle Factory, Basket Factory and Barrett Creamery buildings are important to the community's character and history and must be part of any redevelopment scenario.

The creation of a stronger town center for Rocky River entails implementing a number of principles that create successful urban form. Such ideas as placing new infill buildings at the street and the creation of a mixture of uses within a single district help to enliven the pedestrian experience and create a vibrant, energetic town center. By adding a mixture of office and residential uses to the retail core of Downtown Rocky River, the area becomes inhabited at all times of the day. Besides benefiting the businesses within the district, this creates a sense of security for visitors. The creation of a continuous, uninterrupted street edge also strengthens the retail base that exists within the area by giving the shopper a reason to continue from one block to the next.

A key component to the success of the expansion of Downtown Rocky River is the idea of connections. The opportunities created by the removal of the Marion Ramp are critical to the area's connectivity. This is a top priority. Recognizing that this is a significant undertaking, options have also been explored that leave the ramp in place. Additionally, within the plan a series of new and extended streets have been added between and through the three focus areas. Not only does this benefit the focus areas themselves, but connects the neighborhoods to the north and south to Downtown Rocky River.

The integration of green space within the plan promotes the idea of connectivity by providing a recognizable path through the neighborhood as well as creating a series of destinations for public gathering.



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Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street

Single-family infill lots have been created to supplement the existing homes along Allen Court, but the majority of new housing opportunities within this part of the plan focus primarily on medium density mixed-use, loft, and townhome buildings. The use of these particular building typologies is important in the creation of a town center to distinguish it as a unique neighborhood within the city, and provide an appropriate density. Rocky River is composed mostly of single-family homes, making the creation of a variety of new unit types within downtown a viable option to attract a wide variety of residents as well as keep residents that no longer want a single-family house within the city.

Key features of the plans include:

- The removal of the Marion Ramp
- The creation of a town square/public plaza along Detroit Road
- Streetscape improvements along Detroit Road to include increased on-street parking, wider sidewalks and pedestrian amenities
- New streets, bike paths and pedestrian connections
- Parking garages
- Mixed-use development to include parking, commercial, office and residential uses
- New residential development along Eastlook Road

- A reconfiguration of Heinen's property to accommodate a central plaza, parking and potential mixed-use garage structure
- New commercial and residential development along Linda Street
- The renovation of historic properties along Linda Street and throughout the district
- The creation of new mixed-use buildings along Depot Street
- Streetscape improvements along Old Detroit including a curbless configuration to provide the opportunity to close the street for special events
- Additional commercial, office and residential uses adjacent to Beachcliff to improve viability
- Outparcel buildings at existing shopping centers
- New residential uses along Lake Road (includes Astor Place development)

The following plans and associated development statistics demonstrate the potential of a newly expanded downtown district, as well as potential infrastructure improvements.



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Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street

Proposed Development Plan - A



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Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street Potential Development Statistics - A

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT AREA	Approx. 108 ACRES
NEW RETAIL / COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	172,000 SF +/-
NEW OFFICE DEVELOPMENT	115,000 SF +/-
NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:	360 - 500 UNITS
SINGLE-FAMILY INFILL	12 UNITS
TOWNHOMES	45-60 UNITS
ASTOR PLACE DEVELOPMENT	35 UNITS
LOFTS / CONDOS	175 - 400 UNITS
NEW PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE	3.05 ACRES
INFRASTRUCTURE:	
NEW STREETS	5,380 LF
PARKING (NEW OR RECONFIGURED LOTS):	1,597 SPACES
STRUCTURED	400 SPACES
SURFACE LOTS	788 SPACES
ON-STREET – HEAD-IN	299 SPACES
ON-STREET – PARALLEL	110 SPACES



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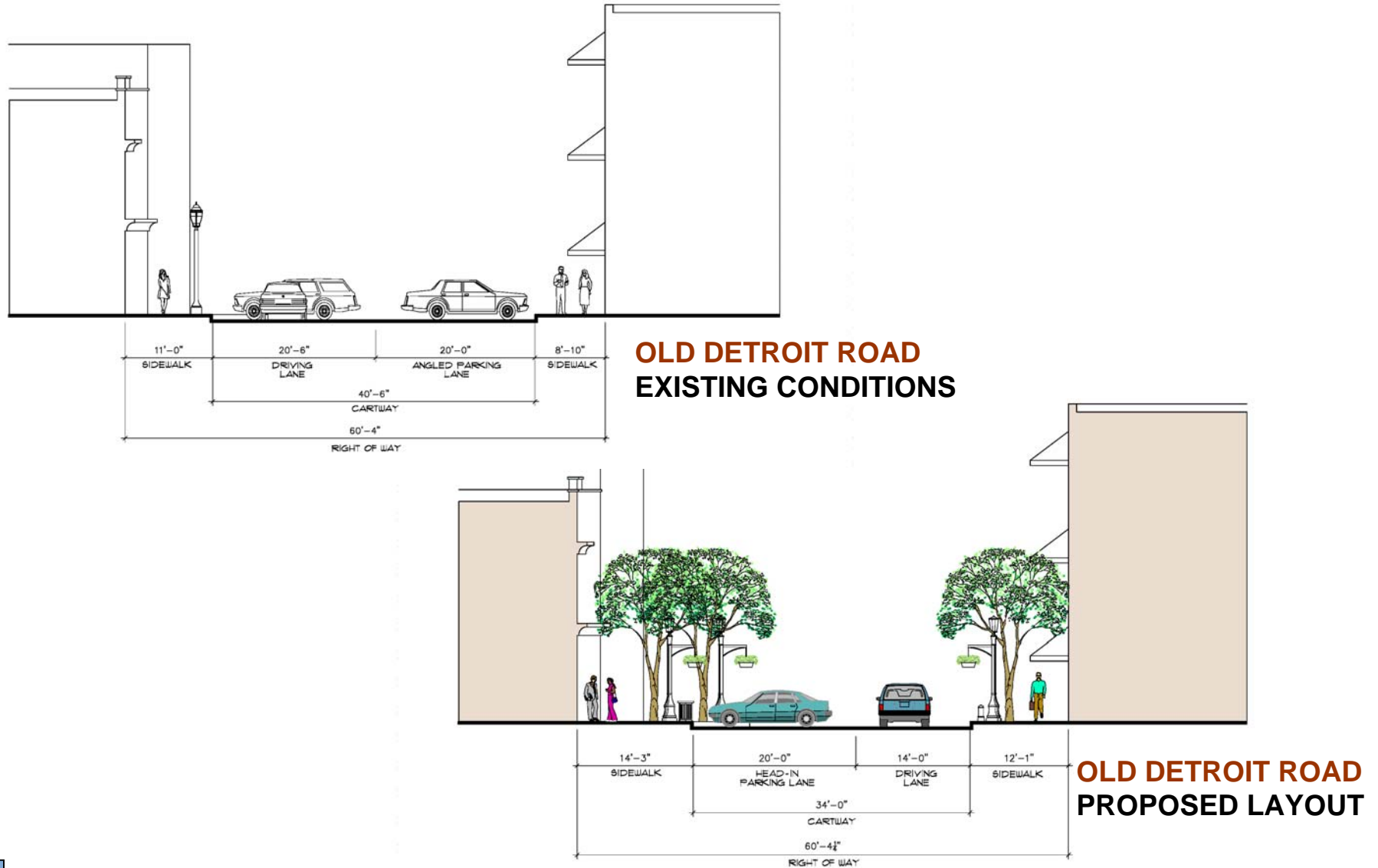
Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street Potential Development Statistics - B

GENERAL DEVELOPMENT AREA	Approx. 108 ACRES
NEW RETAIL / COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT	158,000 SF +/-
NEW OFFICE DEVELOPMENT	130,000 SF +/-
NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT:	290 - 500 UNITS
SINGLE-FAMILY INFILL	5 UNITS
TOWNHOMES	21 UNITS
ASTOR PLACE DEVELOPMENT	35 UNITS
KELLEY DEVELOPMENT	27 UNITS
LOFTS / CONDOS	200 - 400 UNITS
NEW PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACE	2.96 ACRES
INFRASTRUCTURE:	
NEW STREETS	4,230 LF
PARKING (NEW OR RECONFIGURED LOTS):	1,690 SPACES
STRUCTURED	300 SPACES
SURFACE LOTS	1,050 SPACES
ON-STREET – HEAD-IN	230 SPACES
ON-STREET – PARALLEL	110 SPACES



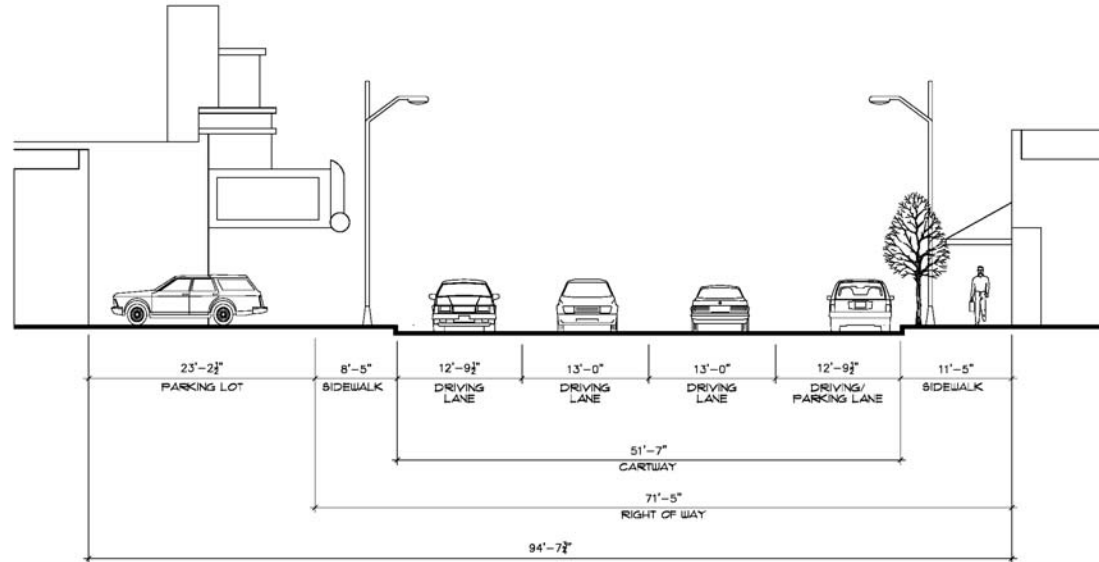
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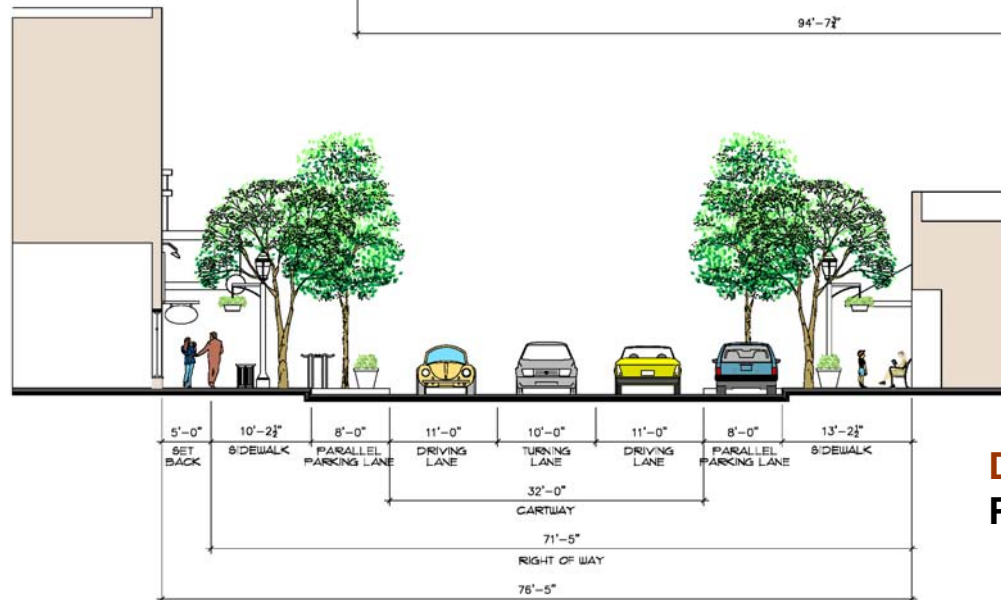


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**DETROIT ROAD
EXISTING CONDITIONS**



**DETROIT ROAD
PROPOSED LAYOUT**



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Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street

Sample Development Images

The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- A mixture of uses
- A vibrant public realm
- A combination of historic and modern buildings
- Development built to the sidewalk / right-of-way line
- Provision of pedestrian amenities
- Well designed storefronts and signage



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Old Detroit / Middle Detroit / Linda Street

Sample Development Images



The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- Mixed-use commercial and loft / apartment / condo buildings
- New owner-occupied townhome and cluster developments
- New single-family homes on narrow lots
- Garden seating areas that enhance the public realm and provide community gathering points



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Yacht Club Basin

The two major issues that must be addressed through development within the Yacht Club Basin are its aging infrastructure and the provision of greater public access to the riverfront. In addition to updating the public utilities that lead into the Yacht Club Basin, infrastructure improvements are a necessity. The roadways that travel through the basin are in need of a great deal of work. Curbing along many of the roadways is crumbling or nonexistent and very few sidewalks exist.

The major intersection of Yacht Club Drive and Riverdale Drive is not easily traversed by safety and emergency personnel and very difficult to negotiate in a car due to poor visibility, making it particularly dangerous if there is a great deal of traffic. In order to improve the flow of traffic in, out, and through the Yacht Club Basin it is necessary to expand this intersection in order to create a greater turning radius and enhanced visibility of oncoming traffic. The difficulty in this arises in that the city's right-of-way is very narrow at this intersection and any roadway widening would have to take place on what is currently private property.

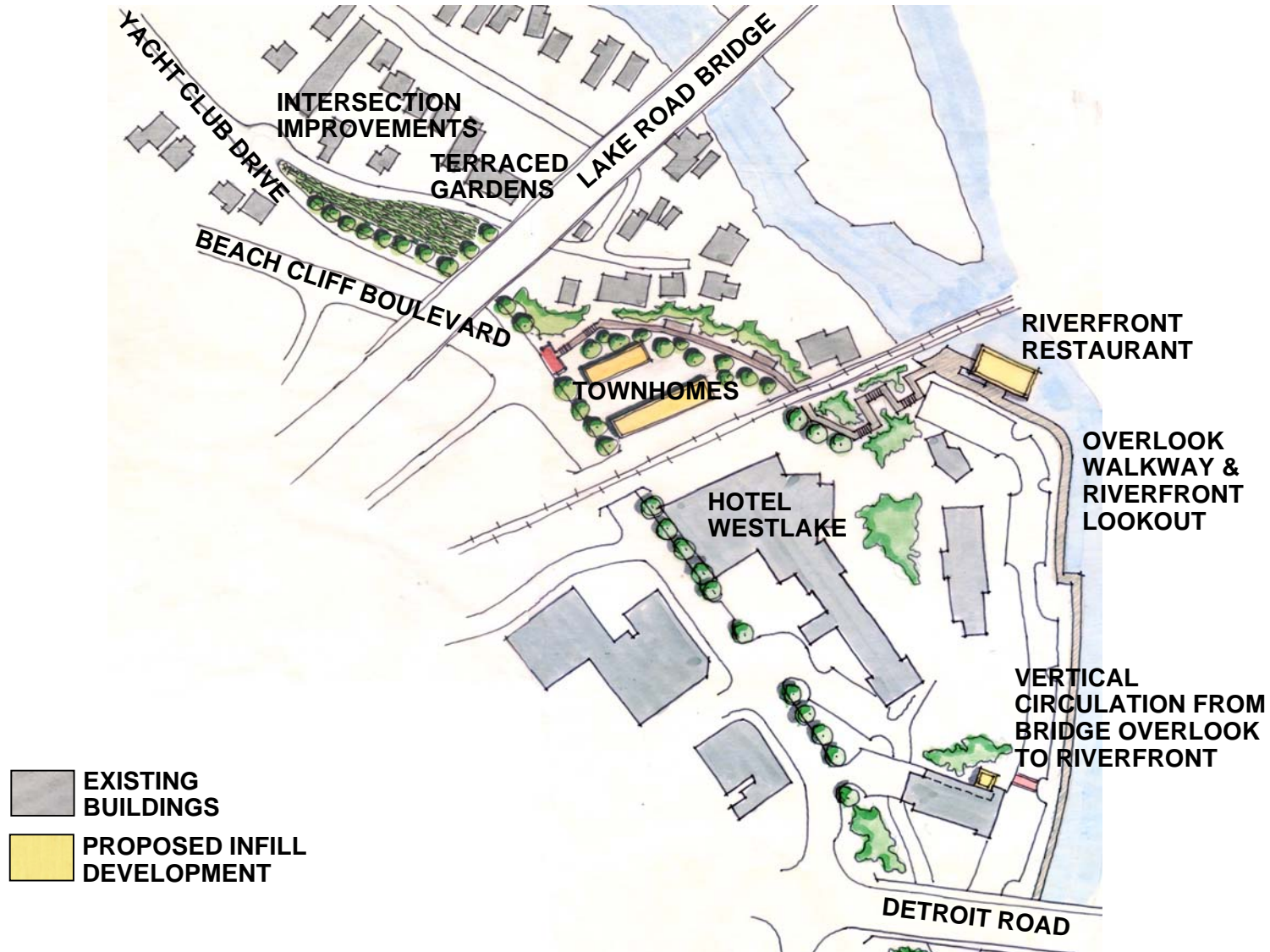
From an aesthetic standpoint, the City of Rocky River owns a tract of land along the hillside coming into the Yacht Club Basin that should be redeveloped as a terraced garden. This would improve the visual quality of the neighborhood while providing the potential for improved pedestrian access.

Public access to the riverfront is a key element that is missing within Rocky River. Because of the Yacht Club Basin's adjacency to Downtown Rocky River, the two must begin to work together to create a linkage that residents and visitors to the city could use to access viewing platforms, hillside paths and improved waterfront features. A floating restaurant or plaza could address the need for additional amenities while working with limited land resources at the water's edge.



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Yacht Club Basin

Sample Development Images

The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- Public access to waterfronts
- A variety of seating and viewing opportunities along pathways to enhance the pedestrian experience
- Public marinas
- Attractive and functional infrastructure improvements
- Waterfront art opportunities
- Waterfront dining



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Detroit Road

A wide variety of uses exist along the length of the Detroit Road focus area with limited physical presence along the street edge. This is a transitional area that lacks a strong feeling of place. The recommendations made within this Master Plan focus primarily on infill development and opportunities to create a stronger street edge within the district.

Infill development opportunities within the plan focus on new senior and affordable apartment or condominium options. Access to public transportation, churches and institutional uses and nearby commercial areas create an excellent environment for the creation of new types of senior housing. Vacant and outdated properties along the north edge of the street present an opportunity to add modest 3-4 story residential buildings. The buildings take advantage of an existing grade change north of Detroit Road to provide indoor parking accessed from the lower level. A main entrance from each of the buildings will access Detroit Road directly. This type of building can be developed along the street as vacancies and redevelopment opportunities permit.

In addition to the opportunities for new infill housing along the north side of Detroit Road, the potential exists to replace aging multi-family housing along Wagar Road, south of Detroit. A new series of apartment buildings or cluster homes can help to expand the city's residential offerings.

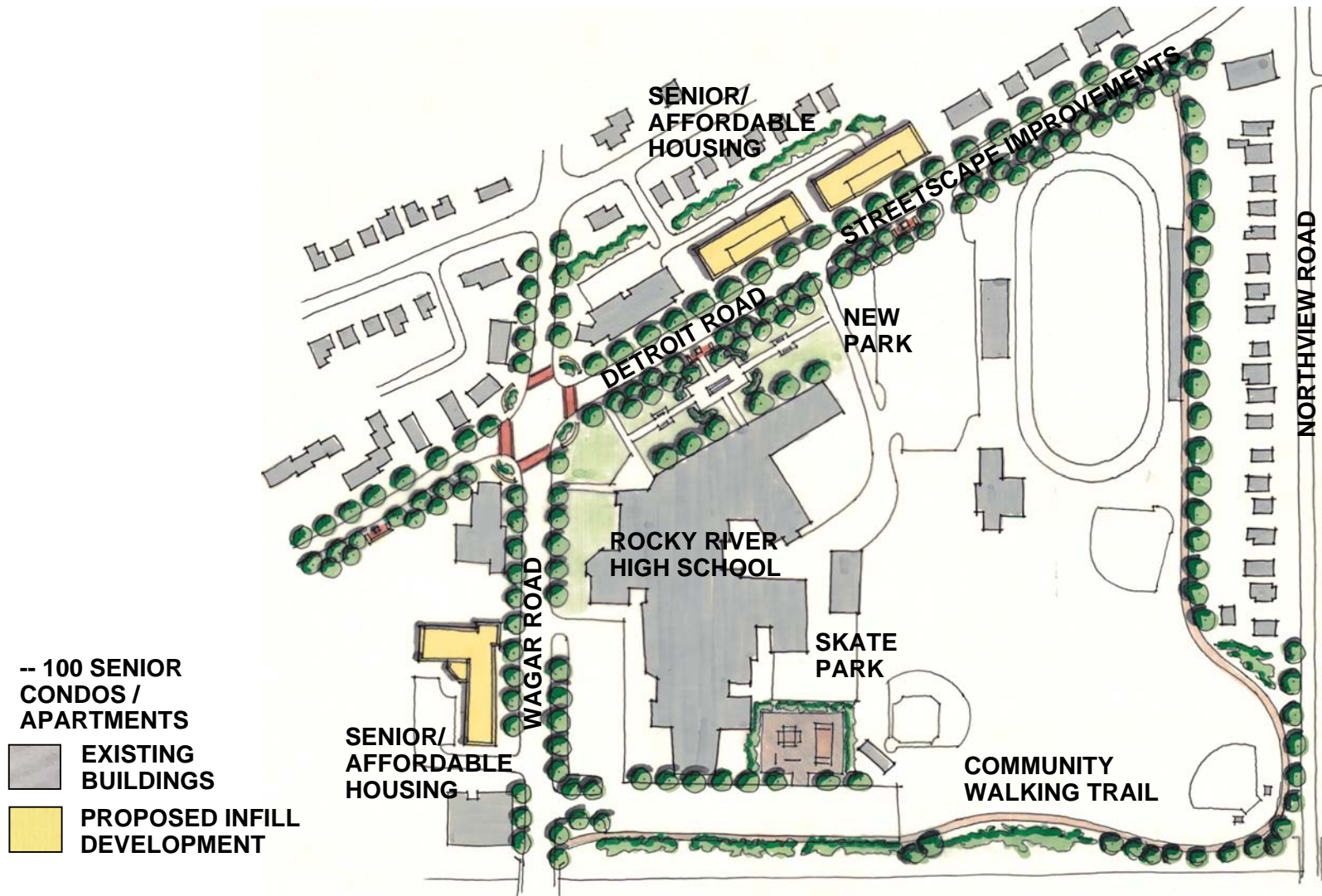
This portion of Detroit Road has a rather wide series of tree lawns that run between the outer edge of the sidewalks and the street. Many of these do not have trees. An immediate, and short term, method of creating a street edge for Detroit Road would be to undertake a comprehensive street tree-planting program. Along the north side of the street this can be handled in a traditional way. Along the south side of the street where more land exists in front of the High School a grander gesture could be made. The opportunity exists to create a park-like setting with the high school facilities as a back drop. In this location, and many others throughout the city, a row of street trees could be planted on both sides of the sidewalk creating a double row of trees. To further beautify and enhance the pedestrian experience, a series of seating and garden spaces can be created for students and local residents to enjoy. Planting beds within these nodes can be landscaped to evoke the rich history of the many greenhouses that once thrived in Rocky River.

Expanded recreational offerings can be incorporated into the high school area including enhanced athletic fields, walking trails and a skate park in the location of the former tennis courts.



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Detroit Road

Sample Development Images



The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- Streetscape and infrastructure improvements
- Senior housing / apartment buildings
- Garden nodes and park space that enliven their surroundings
- Expanded recreational offerings



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Wooster Road

The proposed redevelopment scenarios along Wooster Road are intended to enhance the neighborhood character of the street while taking greater advantage of its natural resources – namely, views to the river valley.

Residential development along the Wooster Road corridor is quite varied. Redevelopment scenarios for outdated or underutilized rental properties along the street involve their replacement with new higher-end housing. These homes could take greater advantage of potential views of the river valley, and should be developed in a manner that complements their existing residential context. Owner-occupied housing will provide greater stability along the street, while filling an anticipated highly-marketable niche. Townhomes are the recommended housing type for these sites, but consideration could be given to larger single-family homes with more sizeable lots.

In the area that immediately surrounds the neighborhood commercial hub located at the Shoreland and Riverwood intersections, redevelopment options should be tailored to strengthen this important part of the neighborhood. In this location older apartment buildings, such as those to the south of Riverwood, could be replaced with new mixed-use buildings that provide additional commercial space while replacing the existing residential offerings with newer, more marketable units.

New public space in the form of pocket parks is envisioned for this area across from the commercial buildings. These can act as community gathering spaces for the neighborhoods that border either side of Wooster Road. Finally, the creation of a sidewalk promenade along the eastern portion of the street where the valley curves to abut the roadway will provide viewing opportunities into the river valley . To further enhance the new walkway, the garden node concept included in the Detroit Road focus area can once again be implemented. In this location the new river overlook areas can be located to act as focal points at the end of the neighborhood streets to the west.



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Wooster Road

Sample Development Images

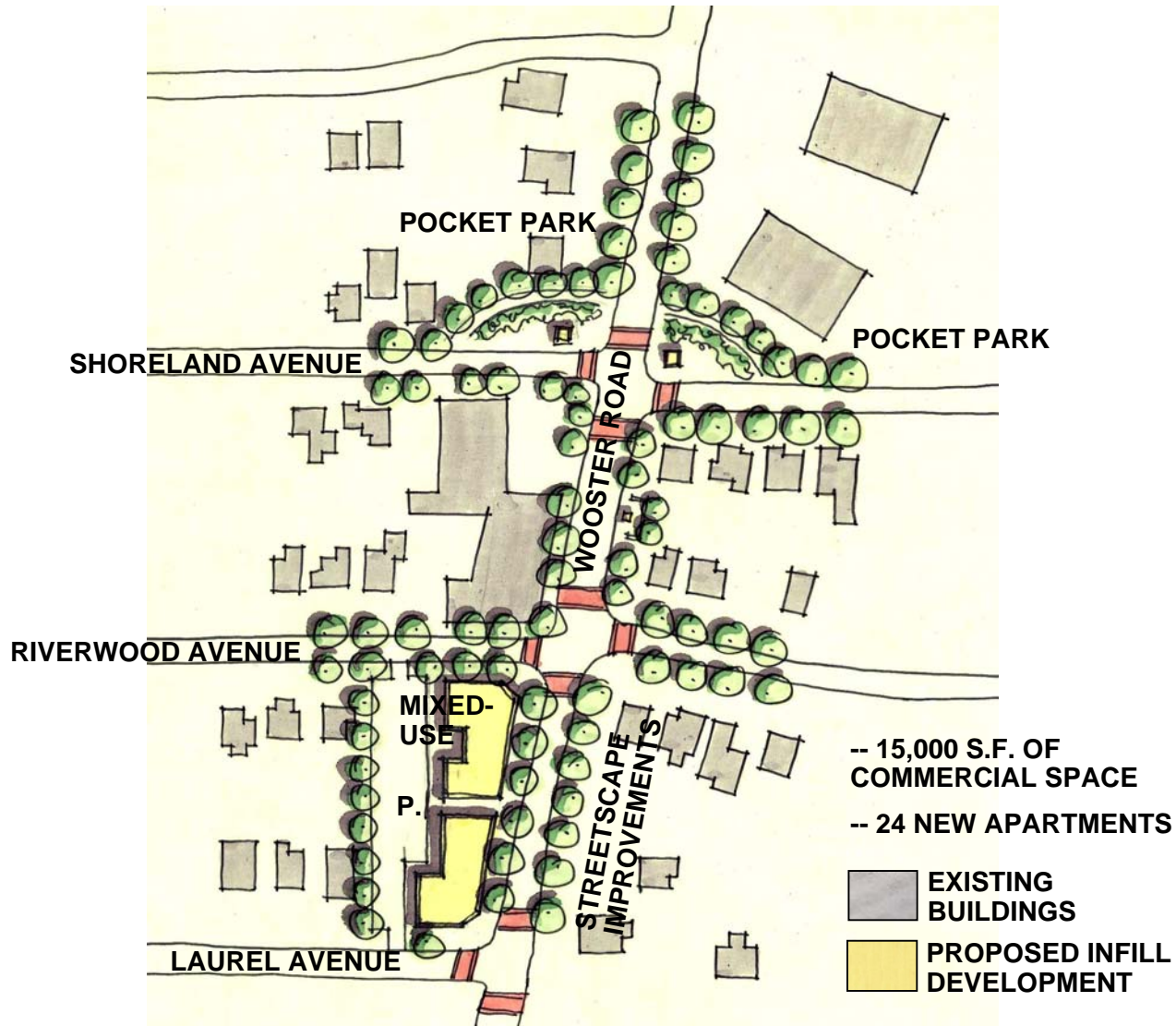
The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- Multi-story, owner-occupied townhome development
- Housing opportunities that would open views to the river valley
- Bike paths and connections to a larger park system
- Seating areas acting as public gathering points



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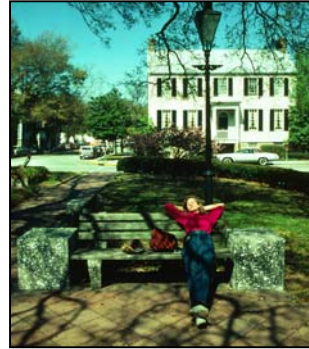


Rocky River Master Plan

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Wooster Road

Sample Development Images



The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- Neighborhood commercial nodes featuring mixed-use buildings
- Storefront signage providing individual character
- Public open space giving identity to a district



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Hilliard Boulevard

Concepts for the Hilliard Boulevard focus area are intended to provide new types of commercial, office and residential uses within the district and significant infrastructure enhancements. The Hilliard Boulevard focus area contains a series of important gateway locations leading into the City of Rocky River. These include the Interstate 90 interchange and the eastern end of Hilliard Boulevard at the Lakewood border. In an effort to create a welcoming environment within the focus area, this master plan proposes the replacement of the gas stations, commercial strip buildings, and duplexes within this area with a series of new office and commercial uses to the west of the Wooster Road intersection. New office uses in this district would benefit the economy of the city through the addition of new income taxes, and would take advantage of the easy accessibility and high-visibility that the site provides.

Commercial buildings are reoriented along the intersection of Hilliard and Wooster to provide a stronger sense of arrival and enclosure. The gas stations have been replaced with new service and neighborhood-oriented retail to complement surrounding uses and provide a more meaningful transition between adjacent neighborhoods. An expanded and more visible Metroparks entrance is proposed for Rockcliff Drive. Significant signage and landscaping are intended to draw greater attention to this important resource. The park's bike trail that currently ends at the top of Rockcliff Drive just east of Wooster, is proposed to be extended along Wooster to tie into future City bike routes. This will increase connections between the community and the park.

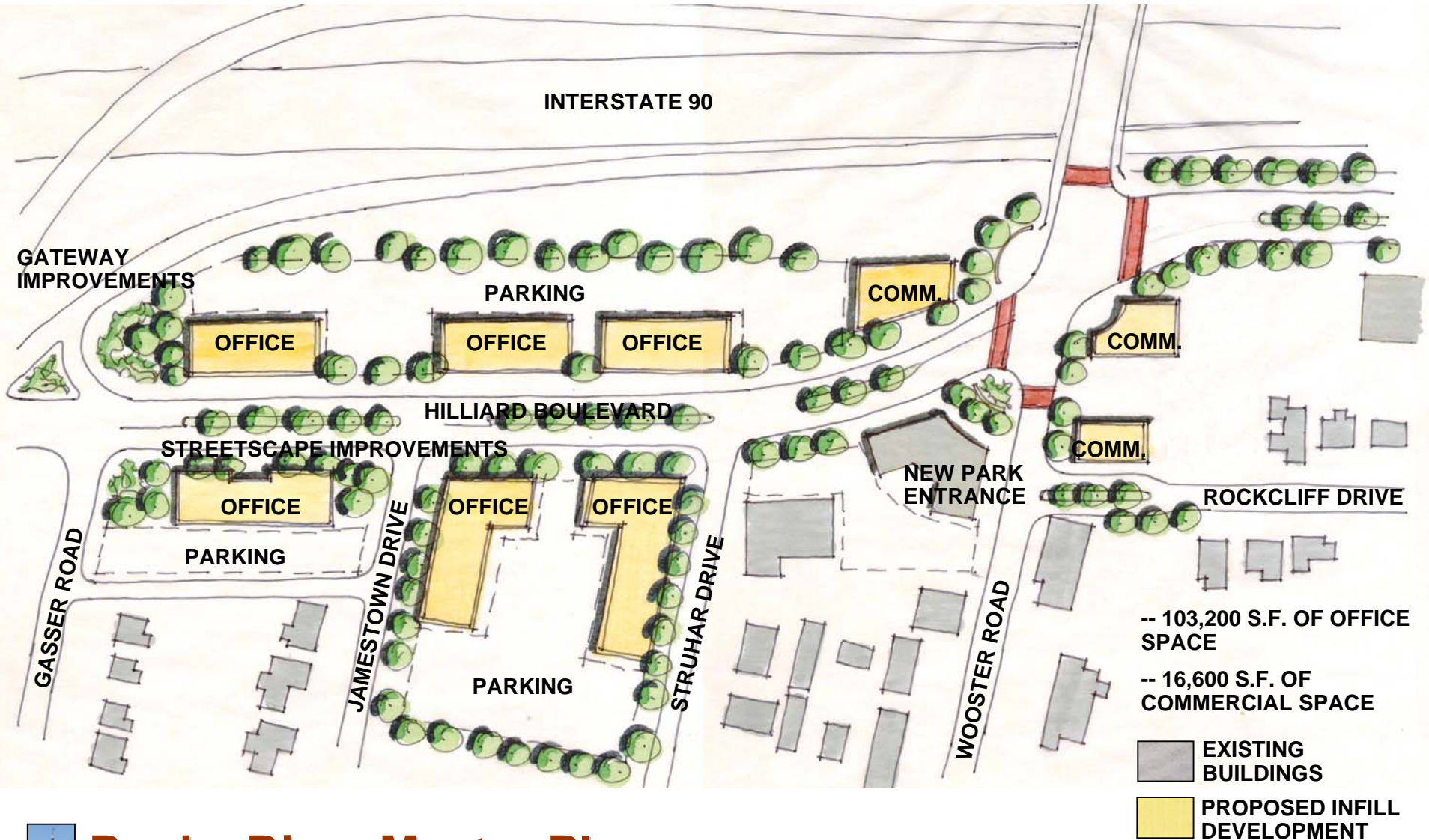
East of the Wooster Road intersection, redevelopment scenarios have been provided for the aging apartment buildings on the south side of the street. Opportunities for new townhomes, loft buildings and condominiums have been explored as viable redevelopment options that take advantage of the spectacular views into the river valley and park system.

From an infrastructure standpoint, this plan recommends the continuation of a central median along Hilliard – an effort currently underway by the City. Consideration should also be given to narrowing Hilliard east of Wooster to reduce unnecessary roadway widths and provide additional depth to the shallow residential properties along the south side of the street. Special landscaping, identification signage and pocket parks are proposed throughout the district to enhance the appearance of important gateway areas.



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Hilliard Boulevard

Sample Development Images

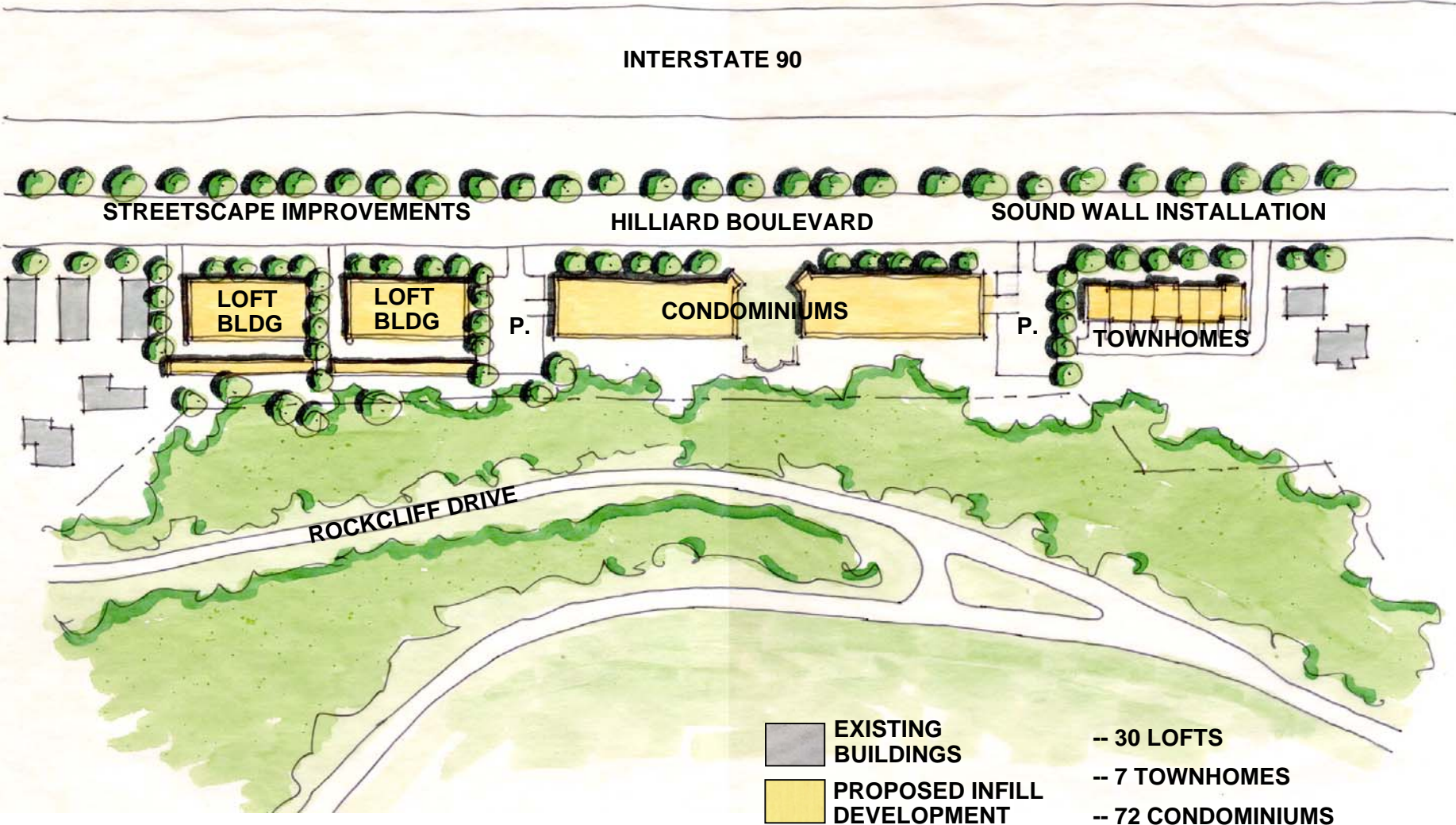
The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- New mixed-use / office buildings providing a street edge
- Commercial developments that provide for the automobile and add to the character of their environment



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Hilliard Boulevard

Sample Development Images



The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- Residential developments with the opportunity to provide units in a variety of price points
- New townhome developments
- Loft / condominium buildings that would provide views into the river valley
- A residential street with a tree-lined median

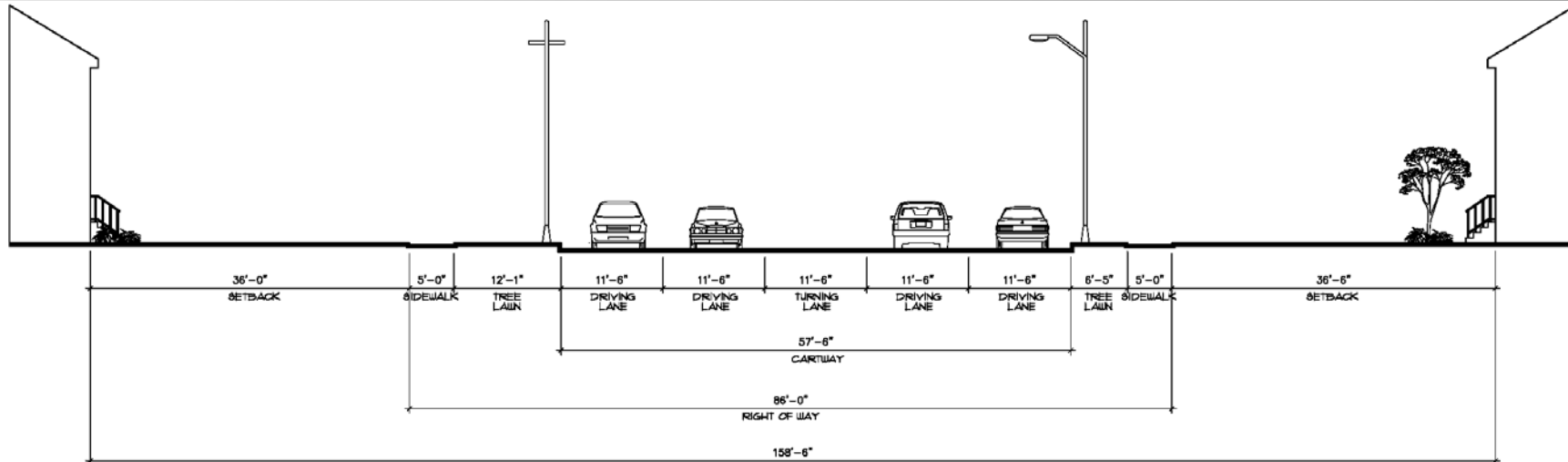


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Hilliard Boulevard

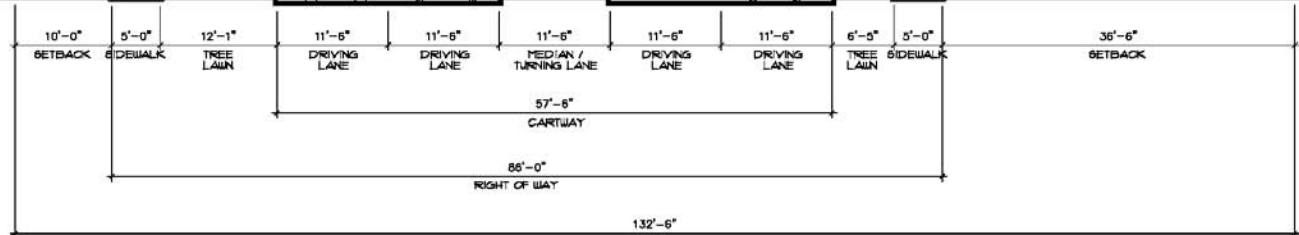
Street Sections



HILLIARD BOULEVARD EXISTING CONDITIONS



HILLIARD BOULEVARD PROPOSED LAYOUT



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Center Ridge Road East

A highly auto-oriented environment, the Center Ridge Road East focus area provides an important opportunity for visual and functional improvement. As described previously, the focus area is characterized by a wide variety of large-scale and neighborhood-scale commercial and office uses. While many feel that these uses are configured in such a way that detracts from their surroundings, they provide important resources for the community. Design and development proposals are intended to create a more visually-appealing environment while addressing opportunities for complementary infill development.

In response to community comments that the street needs significant aesthetic enhancement, a key component of the plan for this focus area involves the reconfiguration of Center Ridge Road. The roadway is of an appropriate width to allow the addition of a landscaped center median and wider sidewalk areas while accommodating two lanes of traffic in each direction and turning lanes where necessary. This will provide an important visual break to offset the large expanses of asphalt throughout the area. To further enhance the streetscape a widened pedestrian zone along either side of the roadway is proposed. A double row of trees is incorporated to screen parking lots and soften the appearance of large commercial properties. In conjunction with the landscaped median, these trees will create the appearance of a more 'green' corridor. At key points along the street the trees would be interrupted to allow for low retail signage and garden areas/seating nodes as proposed for other areas within the City. In addition to creating a more positive pedestrian environment, these improvements are

intended to create a stronger sense of presence for the street, greater visual cohesiveness, and a more positive image for the overall district.

To support the smaller, local businesses along the north side of Center Ridge Road, consideration has been given to the creation of a rear parking zone along the backs of these properties. This would provide additional parking for existing businesses while allowing the opportunity for streetscape enhancements along their front edge.

From an infill development standpoint, two potential redevelopment areas lie within the Center Ridge East district. The first is the triangular block located at the corner of Wooster and Center Ridge Roads. This area represents a key gateway into the Center Ridge commercial area and has been reconfigured with a series of commercial/mixed-use buildings centered around a gateway plaza at the tip of the block. The second is the plot of land currently occupied by the Wellness Center. This plan is proposing the relocation of the Center and redevelopment of the bluff for residential use. This would be an appropriate site for the construction of townhomes that incorporate first floor master suites, a detail of considerable appeal to empty-nester home buyers. Based on the demographic analysis of the city, this is a group of residents that will be increasing in number, but have limited new housing options within Rocky River. These units can take advantage of views to the Metropark, and the opportunity exists to create a new pedestrian path into the park from this location.



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Center Ridge Road East

Sample Development Images

The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- New townhome developments with the opportunities for first-floor master suites
- Single story cluster house developments
- Residential development focused around a common green space
- Pathways / linkages into the into park systems



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Center Ridge Road East

Proposed Development Plan



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Center Ridge Road East

Sample Development Images



The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- Regional / big-box commercial development built with a high standard of design
- Commercial out-parcels that enliven the street edge and shelter surface parking lots beyond
- Landscaped buffers to surface parking lots
- Dynamic commercial signage opportunities that promote commercial businesses beyond and provide character to the district

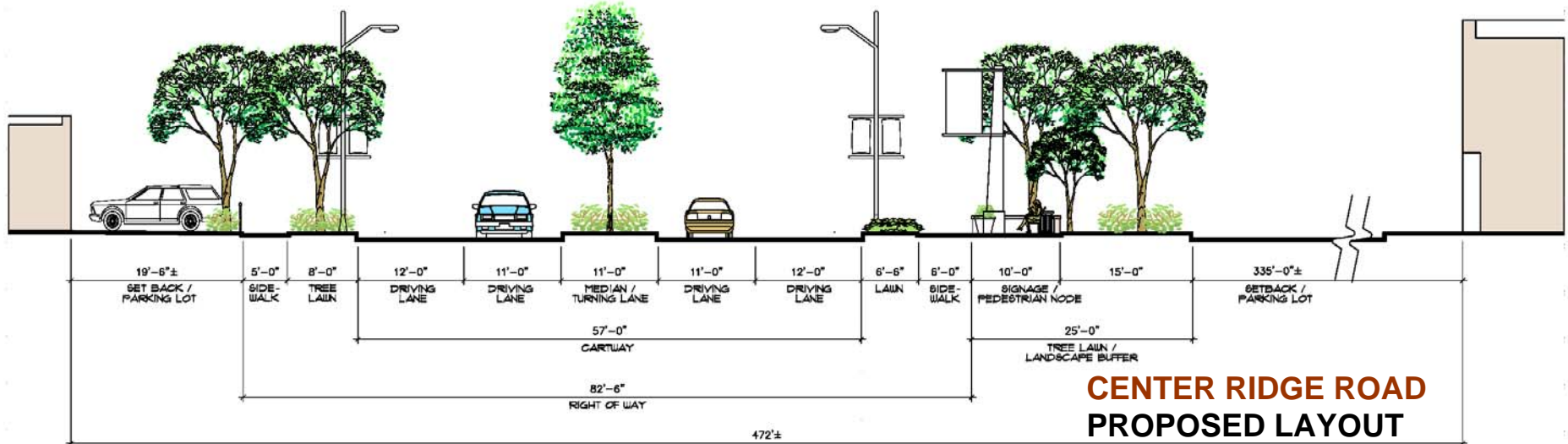
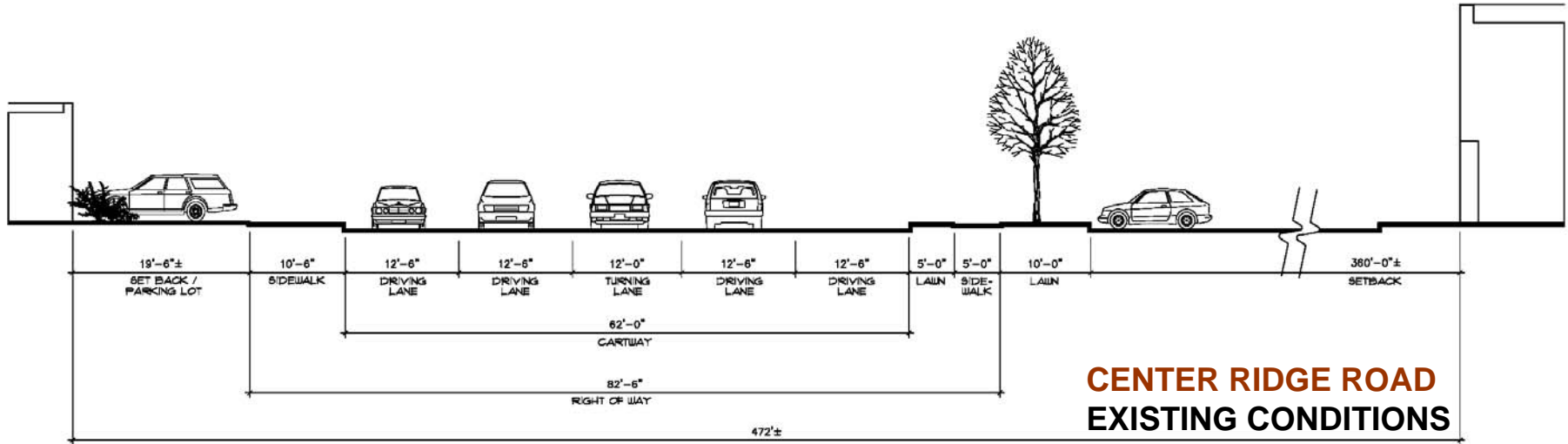


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Center Ridge Road East

Street Sections



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Center Ridge Road West

The Center Ridge West focus area has many of the same characteristics as the eastern portion of the street when considering the auto-dominant environment. It is therefore the recommendation of this plan to continue streetscape enhancements along the commercial strip through this portion of Center Ridge Road. Within this western portion of the street, the right-of-way is no longer wide enough to accommodate the inclusion of a central median. The planting of the double row of trees where space permits is even more critical for this section of street and the creation of nodes for retail signage, seating and garden areas will generate a stronger sense of identity along the street.

As with the plan for the eastern section of the street, commercial outparcel buildings are proposed at larger shopping plazas to provide a stronger street edge. These buildings should follow strict design guidelines to ensure that their implementation is consistent with the anticipated character of the street.

Redevelopment sites within this focus area are located off of the main street. The apartment buildings that line River Oaks Drive represent key locations for the creation of new housing sites for the City of Rocky River. Many of the older apartment buildings could be replaced with new townhome or loft buildings. Once again, these sites offer the ability to create first floor master suites in the townhome designs and the loft buildings create the possibility of single floor living for the increasing empty-nester segment of the population.

A primary area of focus within this district is the expansion of recreational offerings. Building upon the highly-utilized athletic facilities at Goldwood Primary School and the River Oaks Racquet Club, the opportunity exists to increase the facilities and create a recreational center for the community. This is made possible through the redevelopment of existing apartment and condominium buildings adjacent to the school property. A soccer field, tennis courts and an additional baseball field have been added as well as additional parking to support them. The property is extended to the north to create a more formal entrance to the facilities from Hilliard Boulevard. Additional recreational facilities are proposed east of the racquet club with a jogging/walking path connecting the greater area.

A limited amount of new, affordable housing has been proposed for the area behind the school and adjacent to the main playing fields, as it was felt that the “eyes on the park” provided by nearby residents would increase a sense of safety and security. It may be determined, however that additional athletic fields or facilities are preferred and represent the best use for this area based on the City’s long-term needs.



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Center Ridge Road West

Proposed Development Plan



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Center Ridge Road West

Sample Development Images



The sample development images demonstrate the following characteristics relevant to the focus area:

- New townhome / cluster home development with the opportunity for first-floor master suites
- Expanded public recreation space designed to meet current and future recreational needs
- Redeveloped multi-story housing that provides a backdrop for community recreation facilities

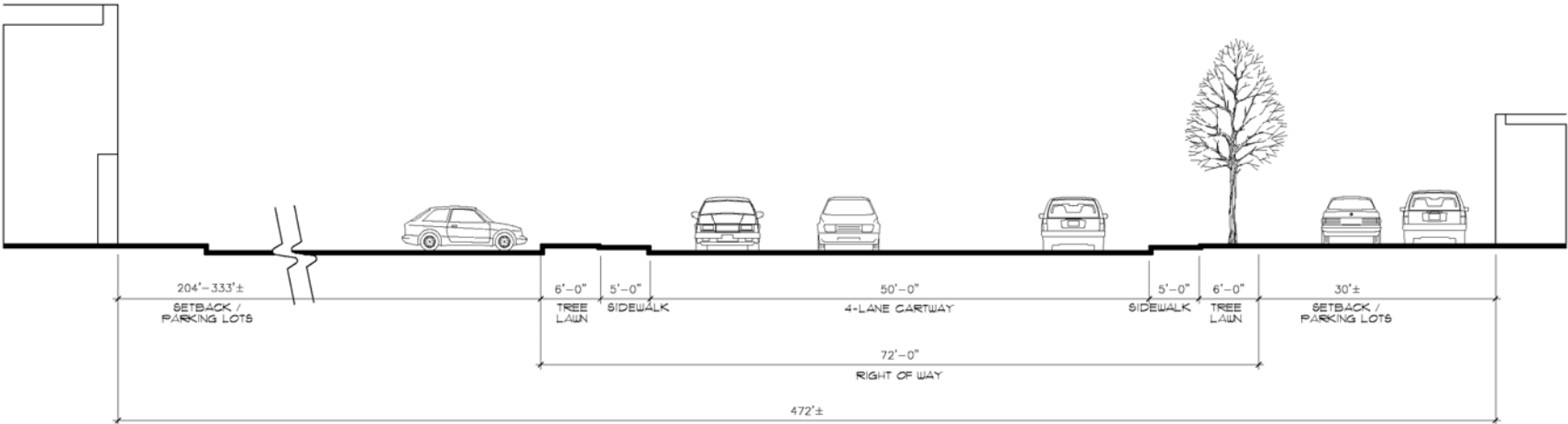


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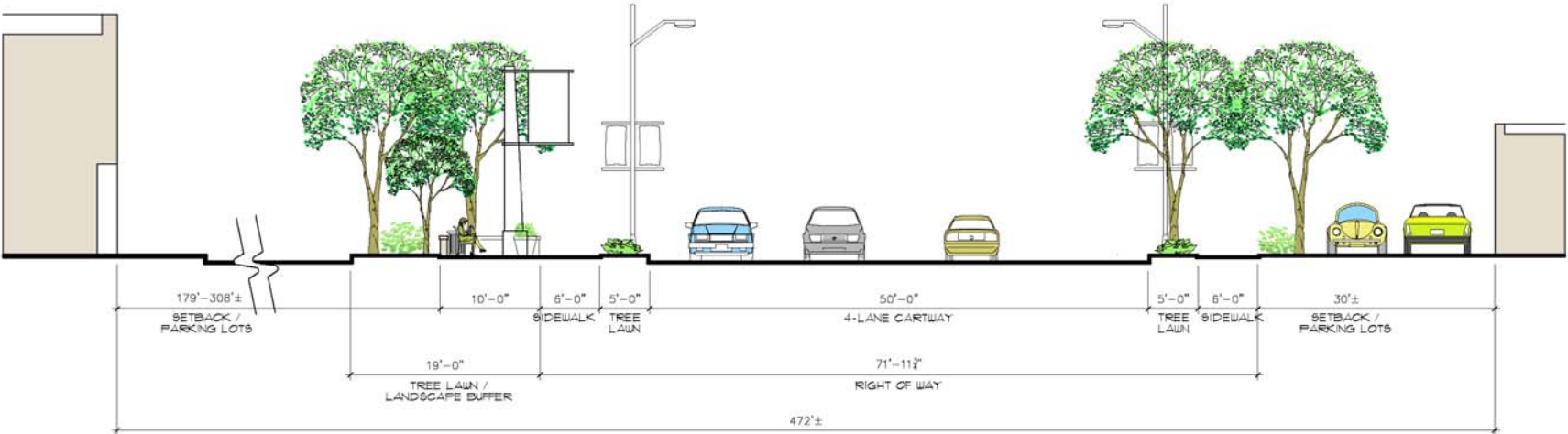
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Center Ridge Road West

Street Sections



**CENTER RIDGE ROAD
EXISTING CONDITIONS**



**CENTER RIDGE ROAD
PROPOSED LAYOUT**



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City-wide Recommendations

Parks and Public Space Recommendations:

In a well populated and compact city like Rocky River, public open space is an extremely important part of the community. Public open space can be classified into two categories, active and passive, reflecting the type and intensity of use. Active open space is park space that is programmed for a specific, usually athletic function, such as tennis courts, baseball fields, and soccer fields. Passive open space, on the other hand, consists of such things as neighborhood pocket parks and public plazas where one can read a book, walk a dog, eat outdoors, or play a game of catch. In the case of Rocky River a third type of public park space is available to residents, the larger regional park system.

An abundance of accessible and proximate public open space is important for many different reasons. Public spaces serve as important places for social interaction and fostering a stronger sense of community. Rocky River is well served when it comes to public open space. Parks and public spaces are sprinkled throughout the city, and include such amenities as; ballfields at the local schools, the track and football field at the high school, open lawn areas in neighborhood parks, pocket parks along the lake, the beach and fishing pier at Bradstreet's Landing, as well as all that the Rocky River Reservation and Metroparks have to offer.

There are, however, some areas in which the City of Rocky River falls short. When considering passive open space needs for the city, Rocky River would benefit from a greater variety of this type of public space. A main civic space or town square is important for the city to develop. Properly configured and detailed, this has the potential to become the true heart of the community and a location for special events such as art fairs, farmers markets and cultural festivals as well as day-to-day activities of meeting friends and people-watching. Additional pocket parks with a range of programmed and non-programmed uses such as outdoor amphitheaters, tot lots and dining opportunities can benefit commercial districts and neighborhoods alike.

An analysis of active public space shows there are certain areas in which Rocky River could improve on its offerings for residents and schools. Additional baseball fields are a necessity, and the provision of soccer fields would prevent local teams from having to rent field time from surrounding communities. Additionally, the Metroparks provide residents with an unique expansion of active open space, with such amenities as biking, running, and walking trails. Connections, both visual and physical, to the Rocky River Reservation must be improved as an important part of the community's recreational offerings.



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City-wide Recommendations

Infrastructure Priorities:

Streetscape Improvements

Many of the neighborhoods within Rocky River are characterized by the quality of the homes, commercial, and civic buildings that have been constructed there. It is not just a single building that gives the city its charm, it is the collection of these buildings and their surroundings that all work together to create the neighborhoods that have been so highly praised throughout the development of this master plan. The appearance and upkeep of the City's major thoroughfares plays a strong role in the perception of the overall community.

The City's primary commercial streets are relatively unfriendly to pedestrians and convey a general disregard for pedestrian activity. Streets such as Center Ridge Road and Detroit Road have been widened over the years, exacerbating this problem. As proposed within many of the focus areas, an emphasis on street and infrastructure improvements can do much to convey the true character and quality of this community. Street trees, special lighting, furniture and public art can work with existing buildings to generate an exciting and engaging environment that accommodates the automobile while celebrating the pedestrian.

Some of these improvements are already underway, and the opportunity exists to address them on an incremental basis through a wide range of funding sources to work toward a cohesive community-wide improvement strategy.

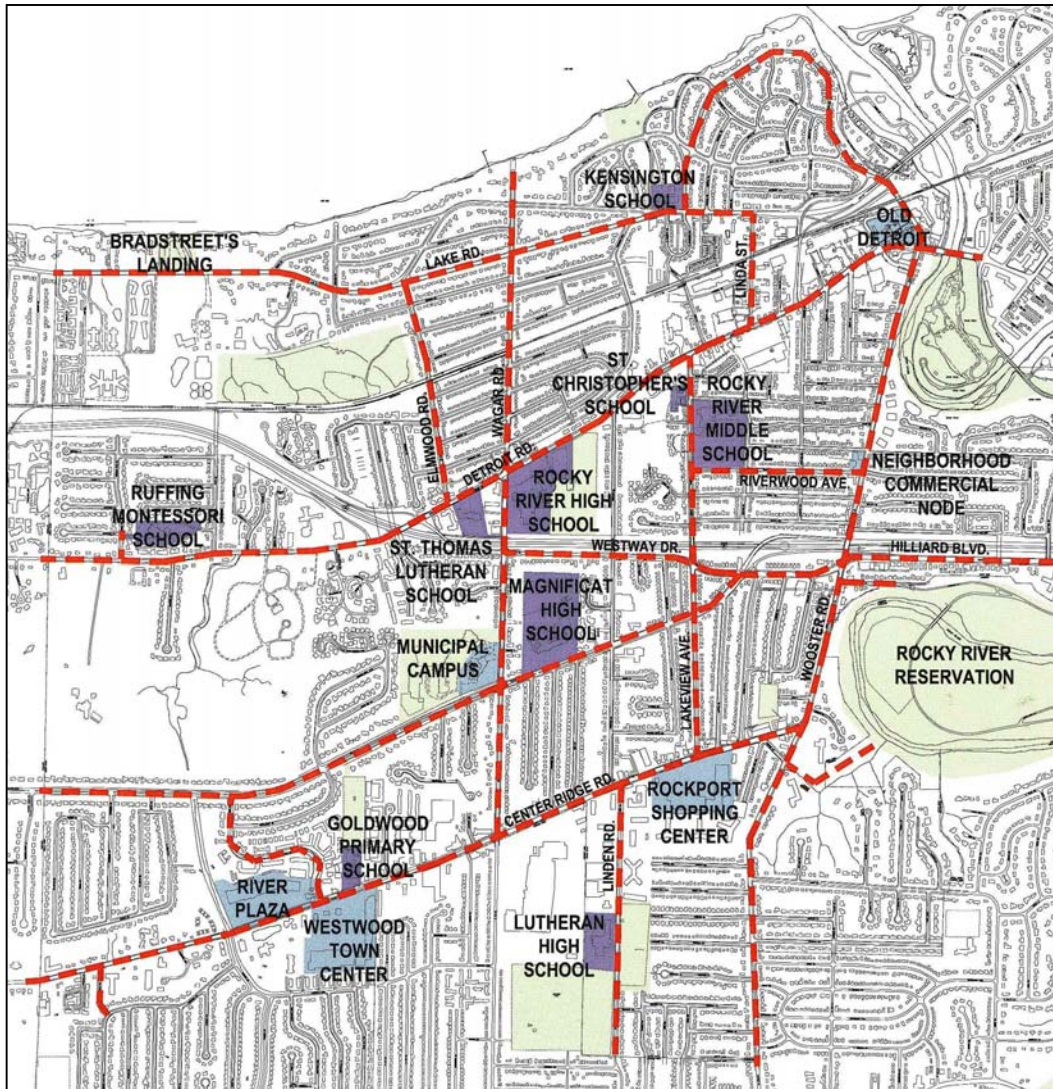


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City-wide Recommendations

Potential Bike Route Plan



Inner-city Bike Routes

This master plan has had a direct focus on improving pedestrian access within and between the city's neighborhoods. Therefore, it seems appropriate to supplement this with a series of safe, easily accessible bike routes that can link the different amenities that the city has to offer with all of its neighborhoods. Due to the compact, interconnected nature of the city, each destination is within a short bicycle ride of one another, allowing the paths to be used for both recreational as well as daily use. Additional bike lanes added to the city's infrastructure must provide a direct connection to the bike trail that runs through the Rocky River Reservation, up Rockcliff Drive, and ends at the intersection of Rockcliff and Wooster Road.

It is recommended that the City of Rocky River take a number of steps to begin implementation of this potential community resource. These could include:

- Determine a series of areas and sites within the city that should be connected to a bike path
- Meet with transportation planners to discuss potential bikeway designs
- Identify the nature of the bike route (i.e. separate lanes, signage, etc.)
- Determine which roads within the City make the most sense for the inclusion of bike lanes

The following map suggests points throughout the city that should be connected to the bike route, as well as potential routes.



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City-wide Recommendations

Zoning Code Analysis:

Throughout this planning process a range of issues regarding the limitations of the City's current zoning code have been raised. The zoning code is one of the most important and powerful tools that the City has to ensure that development meets certain standards. An out-of-date code can prevent the types of development that a city may be trying to encourage. While this effort does not include a comprehensive analysis of the code, we have provided a preliminary assessment of key elements that must be considered in a code update process.

P.U.D. Overlay Zoning

When a redevelopment project arises it may, depending upon its size and scope, require a series of project specific zoning regulations. In some cases this may entail a set of variances granted to a phased project, or a group of special regulations placed on development within a district. When this is the case the establishment of a set of Planned Urban Development (P.U.D.) guidelines would be recommended to govern the project. By establishing a section in the code for the P.U.D. overlay zoning, legal and binding restrictions are placed on the land to ensure that it will be developed as deemed appropriate by city officials and planners. P.U.D. districts are often established for medium to high-density residential and mixed-use neighborhoods. In Rocky River the expansion of the downtown neighborhood may be an appropriate place to establish a site-specific group of zoning regulations to ensure that development abides by the guidelines established within this master plan, and is deemed appropriate by the city.

Mixed-Use Districts

The Rocky River zoning code has a series of guidelines to govern development within Public Facilities Districts (Title Seven), Residential Districts (Title Nine), and Business and Service Districts (Title Eleven). However, it does not specifically address the concept of a Mixed-Use District. This type of development currently exists within Rocky River, specifically in the downtown area, and should be included in the zoning code. The master plan promotes the idea of mixed-use development, and the inclusion of this chapter within the code will give the Zoning Review Board additional powers to ensure that the master plan remains an enforceable document that informs how the city will deal with growth. Within this section of the code such things as height restrictions, parking requirements, build-to-lines, density regulations, and allowable areas for mixed-use districts must be addressed.

Commercial Parking Requirements

Chapter 1161 of the Rocky River zoning code establishes parking and loading regulations. Within section 1161.05 a series of guidelines have been created to regulate the number of parking spaces required based on different uses. However, when defining the number of spaces needed the calculations are all based on a minimum number of spaces.

Current zoning trends are altering parking calculations to refer to a maximum number of spaces permitted for a specific use. When dealing with commercial parking regulations, defining the maximum number of spaces permitted is of primary importance to the creation of a successful neighborhood that balances the



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City-wide Recommendations

needs of the pedestrian and the automobile. By keeping the size of commercial parking lots to a code-regulated size, the buildable area within a commercial district can be maximized, benefiting both the retailer and the shopper.

Section 1161.05h of the code addresses parking areas from individual buildings or property owners that are connected together. This section gives the city the power to regulate the layout of the parking lots to work in conjunction with one another. However, it should be expanded to deal with the concept of shared parking for an entire district. The code should include provisions for commercial businesses to not provide additional parking spaces within an individual site if sufficient public parking is provided within a reasonable distance from the property under discussion. On-street parking spaces should be encouraged where appropriate and calculated into the total number of available parking spaces for a commercial use.

Parking Lot Screening

In addition to regulations regarding the maximum number of parking spaces allowed, provisions should be included within the zoning code for appropriate screening of parking areas. Section 1161.09 calls for dense landscaping or a 4' wall be constructed along the edge of a parking area where a commercial or multi-family lot is adjacent to one and two-family zoned properties. Additional regulations must be written within the code to address the screening of parking lots from the street edge.

Regulated setbacks from the right-of-way lines must be established, and in many of the commercial districts could even be determined on a street-by-street basis, if not by block. This text should include regulations for landscape materials and fencing to screen the view of the parking lot from the pedestrian zone and the street. These regulations will improve the conditions found in various places throughout the city where parking lots are immediately adjacent to the sidewalk while enlivening the pedestrian experience and creating a more welcoming atmosphere.



City-wide Recommendations

Special Use Districts:

Designating an area within the city as a special use district provides an opportunity for implementing more specific design and development controls while addressing a district's unique character.

Historic Districts

The designation of an area as a historic district allows for the preservation of the character of a specific portion of the city. Regulations can be made to control and stop any demolition of structures within the district. Furthermore, the design of building renovations, additions, and new structures must be reviewed by an appointed panel to ensure that they do not compromise the integrity of the historic district. Design regulations can be written to ensure that buildings within the district meet such criteria as setback regulations, height restrictions, storefront guidelines, and material restrictions.

Business Improvement or Special Improvements Districts

A Business Improvement District (BID) or Special Improvements District (SID) is established to provide management strategies and financing tools for a neighborhood commercial district. These non-profit organizations are established within a specifically defined geographic region in which property owners agree on an additional assessment to their property taxes. The additional funds collected by the city are used for improvements within the established district in addition to those traditionally offered by the city. The BID establishes a budget to direct the allocation of the funds into such things as district management services, maintenance and security, business services and

recruitment, marketing, or physical improvements. By running the neighborhood commercial district as a corporation it allows the district to become more competitive with shopping centers and malls.

Public Review Boards:

This master plan must give the City of Rocky River the tools necessary to handle development issues in a more efficient and organized manner. In order to accomplish this, updates must be made to both the Board of Zoning Appeals, the Planning Commission and the Design Review Board. The city's ordinances are somewhat outdated and some cases are in conflict with the values that were established to guide this master plan. The policies that these regulatory bodies use to guide their decisions must be carefully reviewed, analyzed, and edited in the context of this plan to ensure that they provide the legal grounds for the City to control new development to the level deemed necessary and appropriate.

These policies should address a number of issues as discussed previously in terms of zoning regulations, parking lot maximums, and screening. However, they should also include such ideas as how a building type addresses the street. For example, at this time mandatory setbacks are required for new construction. These regulations can be rewritten to use build-to-lines to govern a building's relationship to the street, insuring that new development plays a positive role in establishing the character of a street or neighborhood. Updated architectural guidelines are also an important part of this formula.



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Next Steps.....

Turning the vision to reality

“The sense of control that adopting the plan will bring to future development within the city is exciting.”

“We need to understand the community’s capacity to accommodate the new development.”

“Priorities need to build momentum for the plan. A series of small, accomplishable, meaningful successes must be undertaken to demonstrate to the community that the plan is working to build credibility for the larger, more difficult projects to be implemented.”

“There is already a great deal of momentum for implementation of sections of the plan, and we must build upon that quickly.”

“The initial priorities must not be cheapened so that they yield the greatest impact.”

-- Task Force member comments from meeting minutes

City / Community Priorities

While numerous initiatives make up the visions presented within this Master Plan, it is important to prioritize these initiatives to ensure that their potential benefits are maximized. This approach allows the City to undertake projects and pursue efforts that can demonstrate early successes and create a sense of momentum. These efforts will not happen overnight, and some may never come to fruition. The development of priorities with which to guide implementation of the plan, however, provides an opportunity to approach the city's growth in a focused and strategic manner.

Short-term initiatives are identified to address immediate concerns, issues or opportunities identified through the course of this plan. Long-term initiatives reflect on-going activities that will build toward the creation of a more comprehensive implementation of key plan elements. Following the development of short-term and long-term initiatives a series of five priorities have been highlighted for the City of Rocky River.

Short-term Initiatives:

- Address infrastructure issues within the Yacht Club Basin that impact public safety.
- Identify and apply special use district designations within the city. Work with the Planning Commission and Design Review Boards to determine appropriate guidelines for these areas.
- Increase connections to the City's natural resources such as the Rocky River, Lake Erie, the Metroparks, etc.
- Work with the City Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Design Review Board to unify the strategies with which each can integrate the concepts demonstrated within this master plan into their decision making processes.
- Strengthen the City's residential building inspection program to ensure older homes and apartments receive required maintenance and upkeep.

Long-term Initiatives:

- Promote the continued creation of high quality senior and empty-nester residential offerings to retain this important segment of the population.



Rocky River Master Plan

Next Steps.....Turning the vision to reality

-Continue to seek funding and hire a design consultant for the reconfiguration and reconstruction of key streets, specifically in the commercial districts and along major through routes. Designs should focus on creating a balance between needs of the automobile and the pedestrian, as well as the addition of street trees, pedestrian amenities, and other elements that will promote a unique sense of character. Detroit Road represents the highest priority, however, Center Ridge Road and Wooster Road should also be targeted for improvements.

- Continue to promote the development of a broad range of residential unit types to ensure a diverse and stable population.

- Generate a marketing plan for the City to attract the types of investment, both commercial and residential, that will ensure the future economic and social success that Rocky River has become known for.

City Priorities for Master Plan Implementation:

- Hire a consultant to thoroughly analyze the City of Rocky River Zoning Code in terms of its relevancy to current development trends, determine if any new sections should be added to the existing code, and undertake a complete update of the code based on their findings.

- Continue discussion with the Ohio Department of Transportation to determine the specific steps required to remove the Marion Ramp to open land for future growth of the downtown district. Begin this process immediately.

- Work with land owners, stakeholders and developers to identify and initiate a comprehensive approach to the creation of a cohesive downtown district environment.

- Seek funding to hire design consultants and for the reconstruction of Detroit Road to represent an appropriate downtown neighborhood main street, balance the needs of the pedestrian and the automobile, and provide an environment that embodies the true character of Rocky River.

- Expand the City's recreation offerings through the creation of new athletic facilities and public open space as demonstrated in the proposed plans for the Center Ridge West Focus Area.



Rocky River Master Plan

Next Steps.....Turning the vision to reality

Conclusion

Through this process and this plan, the planning team has attempted to identify a range of reality-based strategic initiatives with which to guide the City of Rocky River's growth in a sustainable manner. Redevelopment concepts and recommendations have been generated in a manner consistent with the planning values determined at the outset of the process. These values can be applied to physical change, policy-making, public investment planning and pursuit of an improved quality-of-life within the community.

Why are these values and concepts important? As the City of Rocky River faces challenges of rising competition from nearby communities, continued patterns of sprawl and outward migration, and a zero-growth region, strategic investment in the community can minimize the impact of these concerns. Rocky River's potential lies in the unique sense of place that exists here. The foundations of an urban village that other communities are trying to recreate are already here and must be identified, preserved and expanded upon.

Rocky River is an extremely diverse and valuable community in the region. Typical short-term approaches to development as found elsewhere are not good enough for this city. Opportunities for change must continue to be addressed proactively, and with an eye toward long-term results and benefits. The city must continue to market itself in the context of plan recommendations to ensure the highest quality of redevelopment occurs here.

The Rocky River Master Plan is a tool for current and future community leaders. While the recommendations are specific, the plan is intended to provide flexibility and continue to evolve with the community. Its true potential resonates from the care and creativity with which all involved approached its creation.



Rocky River Master Plan

Next Steps.....Turning the vision to reality



Appendix

A: Community Meeting Summary

B: Notes / Minutes from Task Force Meetings

C: Detroit Road Streetscape Study

D: Funding Sources

E: City of Rocky River Master Plan Community Demographics Report

- Thomas Bier and Charlie Post – Center for Housing Research and Policy

Upon completion of the preliminary planning recommendations for each of the focus areas, the City of Rocky River hosted a series of three community meetings to gain input from the neighborhood residents and business owners. Although the entire planning process was presented at each of the meetings the first meeting focused mainly on Center Ridge East and West, the second on Detroit Road, Wooster Road, and Hilliard Boulevard, and the third Old Detroit, Middle Detroit, Linda Street, and the Yacht Club Basin.

At the conclusion of each meeting the audience was given the opportunity to comment on the preliminary development concepts that had been presented. Additionally, all attendants were given a survey to fill out and mail to the Department of Community Development. The information from the comments and surveys were gathered, tallied, and used as a guide in the determination of the final development proposals included within this document. The comments from the meetings and the survey feedback are as follows:

MEETING FEEDBACK

Center Ridge East and West:

- The commercial strips are unattractive.
- Center Ridge needs stronger aesthetic guidelines.

- Truck traffic must be buffered.
- Work with the Fairview Park neighborhood.
- The district has fragmented architecture (style and layout).
- Standards for greater uniformity are in order.
- Center Ridge needs better sidewalks and crosswalks to improve the walkability of the district.
- Additional residential should be included within the area.
- Excessive amounts of multi-family units would not be desirable
- Single-level housing would be a good residential addition.
- More neighborhood nodes would allow the commercial to connect more with the housing.
- Families and seniors in the area need an increase in services.
- Bike paths would be beneficial to the families.
- Tax incentives for commercial expansion could be a possibility.
- The connection between Center Ridge commercial and adjacent residential uses must be strengthened.
- There is concern over losing the Giant Eagle at Rockport Shopping Center.
- Changing/rotating retail stores along the street have brought about concerns.



- Streetscape enhancements (street lights) would make the district more attractive.
- A revamping of the zoning code could help the district aesthetically.
- Overall, the commercial experience along Center Ridge must be more inviting.

Overall, the commercial experience along Center Ridge must be more inviting.

SURVEY FEEDBACK

Center Ridge East and West:

What sort of changes would you like to see in your area?

- More pedestrian friendly
- “Small town style” streets – wide sidewalks, large trees, hidden parking
- Divide blocks into small commercial divisions with stores, small restaurants, seating, and park features

Are there other types of businesses/organizations that would be beneficial to have in your area?

- Keep Westgate Mall
- Moderate priced restaurants

Are there things you’ve seen in other neighborhoods or cities that you would like to see in Rocky River? If yes, please describe.

- Wide, tree-lined sidewalks
- Decorative railings protecting sidewalks
- Bike lanes in streets

What does Rocky River need to be a better place to live and work?

- Bike paths



MEETING FEEDBACK

Hilliard Boulevard:

- The intersections at Valley View must be lit – turn around.
- Hilliard Road needs streetscape beautification enhancements.
- There is concern with the removal of trees along the length of the road with the implementation of ODOT sound barriers.

Wooster Road:

- Vacant apartments along Wooster need to be dealt with.
- Wooster Road should be considered for narrowing, the tree lawns are too small.
- Pocket parks should be placed along the street to provide public access to the views.

Detroit Road:

- There is not enough parking along Detroit for some businesses. Other areas should be considered.
- Properties along Detroit need variances.

General:

- There is the concern with the use of eminent domain as it pertains to redevelopment.
- Are there opportunities for tax abatement incentives?
- There is concern with the City using blight designations. (The City has no officially designated blighted areas.)
- Ways to screen parking must be explored.
- It is felt that this is an aggressive plan, and wonder if implementation costs have been discussed.
- What will the phasing and implementation of the plan be?
- Codes should be revised; the maintenance issue elements of the code are out of date.

Is there money available for small property owners?
(Heritage Home Loan, programs for seniors)



SURVEY FEEDBACK

Hilliard Boulevard, Wooster Road, and Detroit Road:

What sort of changes would you like to see in your area?

- No more unsightly apartment buildings (RiverWalk on Center Ridge)
- No more “Lower class companies like Target”
- Redevelop Wooster Road
- Less traffic on Wooster Road
- More parking for Heinen’s
- Convert the unused school buildings into upscale condos or ten story apartment buildings
- Keep a tight control on airport traffic from the N/S runway (noise is bothersome)
- Do not expand Detroit Avenue
- Add median, tree lawns, and other streetscaping to Hilliard East

Are there other types of businesses/organizations that would be beneficial to have in your area?

- Mustard Seed Market

Are there things you’ve seen in other neighborhoods or cities that you would like to see in Rocky River? If yes, please describe.

- No comments

What does Rocky River need to be a better place to live and work?

- A well-designed streetscape
- Reduce rental property
- Better housing enforcement, especially trash policy
- Attract and keep large families
- Allow residents to buy two lots on which to build a larger house.

Respond positively to participants in community programs (i.e., garden competitions)



MEETING FEEDBACK

Old Detroit, Middle Detroit, and Linda Street:

- Pocket parks should be placed along Wooster and in the Yacht Club Basin to provide public access to the beautiful spots in Rocky River.
- There is concern over reducing the streets while increasing the number of businesses and residents.
- The area is in need of new sewers.
- The question came up of how much office space will be integrated within the plan and if it will be mixed with other uses.
- The point was made that the planning process should be sure to incorporate historic preservation.
- The possibility of commuter use along the rail lines was suggested.
- It was questioned whether or not Linda Street is regarded as blighted. (No, there are no officially designated blighted areas within the City of Rocky River.)
- There is a concern with adding too much density to the community.
- No large, national chains are wanted.
- It is believed that there is an over-emphasis on condos and multi-family housing. We should not over-develop the area, but maintain a proper balance between downtown and the neighborhoods.

- There is a concern with having aggressive design guidelines in commercial districts.
- It is believed that a mixed-use downtown is a positive direction for the City to head in.
- Underground utilities would improve the appearance of the district.

The Yacht Club Basin:

- The intersection of Yacht Club Drive and Riverdale must be fixed.
- The City's property in the Yacht Club Basin is in a state of neglect and is unacceptable.
- Drainage and infrastructure improvements are necessary.
- There is concern with the new homes being constructed in the Basin destroying the character that makes the area unique.

General:

- There is concern over the financing of the plan, and the hope that it will be privately financed.
- What is the tax impact of different developments?



- A question was raised wondering if changes to zoning and the granting of variances would be a public process in regards to the planning.
- Will there be a public vote on the final master plan?
- There is tension building over the desire to increase the tax base through increasingly large residential homes verses maintaining neighborhood character. (the “mansionization”of the neighborhoods)
- It is felt that as people move out of the City they are being replaced with new homeowners, therefore balancing out the housing value.
- Some would like to see the zoning allow for the combination of two houses into one larger home and yard.
- The retail vacancy rates within the City were in question with regards to adding a great deal of new retail. (Rocky River currently has a very low retail vacancy rate.)
- A dog park is needed somewhere within the City.
- It is believed that “urban” is not a bad word, and that the City must continue to move forward.

SURVEY FEEDBACK

What sort of changes would you like to see in your area?

- Improve the city-owned property in the Yacht Club Basin.
- More care and attention paid to the historic areas
- Beautification (and maintenance) of roads common to passers-by.
- Eliminate the cab company, development of the “old depot,” new building adjacent to the mall.
- Better development of Linda Street Area
- More support for retail establishments.
- Opportunity for private ownership of single office building sites
- More accessibility/safety for pedestrians (minimize and slow down traffic on Detroit Road and Old Lake Road)
- More office buildings in Beachcliff District (between Lake and Detroit)
- Yacht Club – Repaved streets with curbs, landscaping, and sidewalks
- Visible “Entrance” to Yacht Club
- Zoning code improvement



- City enforcement of code violations, illegal electrical lines, nuisance laws, parking violations
- Remove fencing/foundations of demolished houses
- Improve infrastructure
- More and Better parking
- More parking on S Kensington and S Falmouth
- Workout rooms & indoor pool in civic center
- Historic preservation, enforced architectural guidelines
- Trees and open spaces

Are there other types of businesses/organizations that would be beneficial to have in your area?

- Additional retail development
- Stronger retail support
- Specialty shops – NO national chains
- Crafts shops
- Cafés, restaurants
- More offices (to generate income tax) instead of housing and retail (putting demand on public services)
- The “West Channel Property Owners Association”
- Neighborhood home owners associations

- The Historical Society
- Bookshops, gardening shops, kitchen store
- Walmart/Kmart, large inexpensive store (from same person who asked for support of small hardware store over Home Depot)

Are there things you've seen in other neighborhoods or cities that you would like to see in Rocky River? If yes, please describe.

- The concept of tying areas of the city together (Chagrin Falls)
- More places to visit within walking distance, such as shops and art galleries (Chagrin Falls)
- Emphasis on the view of the valley (Chagrin Falls' view of the waterfalls)
- The neighborhood feel of commercial streets (Murray Hill, Tremont)
- Hanging flower baskets/flags (Burlington, Ontario, Canada)
- Medina Town Center
- Olmsted Falls Arts and Crafts Center
- Niagara Falls
- Semi-attached condos (Cinnamon Woods in N. Olmsted)



What does Rocky River need to be a better place to live and work?

- Take better care of city-owned property.
- Update older buildings (apartments)
- Develop retail while retaining “small unique feel” of businesses
- Attract younger professionals to support growth
- Better recreational/fitness facilities
- New sewers on S Kensington and S Falmouth
- Better access to the river, utilization of lake and park
- Continued good city services
- A good Master Plan
- Cohesiveness
- Strict architectural design and review regulations
- Commuter rail service on the N/S line utilizing the Old Depot
- Affordable elderly housing – but not condos.



Rocky River Master Plan

Envisioning Our City.....a shared vision for the future

A series of six Task Force meetings were held throughout the master planning process. Within each of these meetings materials were presented to the Task Force, city officials, and additional audience members by City Architecture and Dr. Tom Bier. The materials presented were discussed by the Task Force, and a series of steps were determined on how to proceed with the process. The Task Force meetings were held on the following dates:

- Task Force Meeting #1 – June 4, 2003
- Task Force Meeting #2 – July 1, 2003
- Task Force Meeting #3 – August 27, 2003
- Task Force Meeting #4 – November 19, 2003
- Task Force Meeting #5 – April 28, 2004
- Task Force Meeting #6 – June 2, 2004

Meeting minutes from each of the meetings were prepared and distributed by the City of Rocky River. The minutes from each of these meeting is included on the following pages.



**Master Plan Working Group
Meeting Minutes
June 4, 2003
8:30 AM – 10:30 AM**

Attendance: Eric Pempus
Kevin Collins
John Selby
Trisha Brown
Michael Fruchey
Craig Wright
Tom Long
Kory Koran
Paul Volpe
Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris

The meeting began with some general comments from Kory Koran. He explained the purpose of the Master Plan and his goal to make sure that the final product is a useful plan and one that will guide the City into the future. He then introduced Paul Volpe and Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris from City Architecture. Since most of the task force members are long time Rocky River residents, Kory stressed the importance of Paul and Michelle viewing the City with a fresh set of eyes thereby providing a new perspective.

Kory asked each of the members to introduce themselves and explain their background and how it relates to their position on this task force. The consensus was that this is an impressive group of long time Rocky River residents who have a lot to contribute to the process of preparing the City's Master Plan. The group contains members with architectural, legal, real estate, physics, and urban planning backgrounds. Each member is a volunteer who has agreed to lend their time and expertise.

The meeting was then turned over to Paul Volpe and Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris. Paul explained the role of City Architecture in the planning process. He explained that city planning is about choices and taking control of the future. Paul and Michelle will facilitate and present opportunities based upon their analysis of the issues brought forth by each task force member during future meetings. Paul was very enthusiastic about this project since he believes that there is a lot of potential in Rocky River. They consider working on this project and working with such a professional group a privilege.

Michelle then took the floor to review two handouts. The first is titled Rocky River Master Plan Key Questions/Consideration and is attached as Exhibit "A". She explained that this list of questions would be addressed at the next meeting. Task force members were invited to review the questions and think about how they would answer them.

Michelle's second handout is titled Rocky River Master Plan Proposed Tasks, Timeline, and Deliverables and is attached as Exhibit "B". Michelle reviewed the handout and explained that there are two main phases in this process. The first phase is primarily about fact finding and truly understanding all aspects of the City. The second phase will result from the analysis of information gathered during the first phase. The deliverables involve the final product. Future meetings will follow this basic outline and members were encouraged to participate as Paul and Michelle lead them through their format. As a side note, Paul invited members to read City Comforts – How to Build an Urban Village by David Sucher. He thought that the book could provide a basic understanding of urban planning that would help future member participation throughout the planning process.

Paul stressed that reinvestment is the key to success in Cuyahoga County. He explained that the old philosophy of don't fix something until it is broke is no longer the best way to proceed into the future. Paul explained that Rocky River is a true suburb with a center of town that brings charm and character to its residents. His experience with other cities led him to point out repeatedly how lucky we are to live in such a City rich with history. He watches other suburbs try to create what we already have. Paul expressed the benefit of working with an aggressive Economic and Community Development Director such as Kory Koran when funding issues arise. In the past, affluent communities have not gone after available funds. However, it is imperative that we use all available resources now to avoid losing businesses, residents, and valuable tax dollars to surrounding newer cities.

To conclude, the group decided that future meetings should be held in the evenings. It was suggested that the Civic Center meetings rooms would be a better location for the task force to meet. The next meeting will be in 3 – 5 weeks.

**Master Plan Working Group
Meeting Minutes
July 1, 2003
5:00 PM – 7:45 PM**

Attendance: Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris
Tom Bier
Trisha Brown
Kevin Collins
Zachary Dzurick – Westlife Reporter
Michael Fruchey
Mayor Knoble
Kory Koran
Tom Long
Eric Pempus
Matt Schmidt
John Selby
Paul Volpe
Heather Wagner
Craig Wright

The meeting began with some general comments from Kory Koran. He then thanked the members for their commitment and dedication to this planning process. Upon conclusion, Kory turned the meeting over to City Architecture. Each member received a handout titled “Rocky River Master Plan - Strategy Workshop Agenda” and is attached as Exhibit “A”. Paul Volpe then started by reviewing three basic questions: Why we Plan?, How we Plan?, and What we Plan For?. Paul explained that these key questions and the points that followed are the basis of how we will move through the process of creating a Master Plan for the City of Rocky River.

Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris then presented an informative analysis of Rocky River through the use of a variety of large-scale maps. The maps showed the importance of understanding that Rocky River does not operate as a sole entity, but is impacted by the surrounding suburbs and features of Cuyahoga County. The City can boast that it is bordered by Lake Erie to the North, the Rocky River MetroParks to the East, the highway infrastructure make the location easily accessible, Cleveland Hopkins Airport is close by, and it is not too far from downtown Cleveland. Michelle was quick to point out, that Rocky River does not rely on these features alone, but that the City has still managed to maintain its own unique character and charm. Michelle also touched on the importance of the surrounding suburbs and how their characteristics affect Rocky River. She cautioned that the surrounding areas’ development plans should be monitored closely, and that their impact on our City should be taken into consideration. Two such projects to watch are the West End in Lakewood and Crocker Park in Westlake. The last map that Michelle presented was of an outline of the nine focus areas. It was interesting to see, when plotted all together in this fashion, how they were all connected.

The meeting was then turned over to Tom Bier who is the Director of the Center for Housing Research at Cleveland State University. Tom has worked diligently at preparing a draft document of population and housing statistics for the City of Rocky River. A final copy will become an important part of the Master Plan package and copies will be available for each member in the future. Tom’s analysis is based on the delta between the 1990 and 2000 Census demographics.

Tom presented a summary using numerical data and explained how the data could be used to monitor and predict trends for the City. His data was presented and was used as a stimulus for conversation between City Architecture Planners and the Master Plan Working Group members. Tom explained that we are residing in a “no growth region”. He said that Cuyahoga County is the only county in this area that is not growing by leaps and bounds. Tom was quick to mention that this is not a bad thing. He explained that our population is simply shifting or moving outward instead of increasing. The main reason for this is that there is very little undeveloped land in Cuyahoga County. This trend does create competition in housing between neighboring communities. Tom also discussed the shifts in population in certain age groups. One of the most surprising facts presented was that only 22% of the households in Rocky River have children. Some members thought this percentage would have been much higher. The age 40-59 group has the largest number of people. This means that the over 60 crowd will increase dramatically over the next 20 years. A conversation about how to handle an increasing aging population with regards to housing stemmed from this statistic. Paul Volpe interjected that this was a topic to think about and it is always an issue when planning on whether to allow trends and their consequences to happen naturally or to interject, plan and steer a trend in a certain direction. When Tom discussed income levels he said that there are a small number of household in the North end of our City whose incomes have increased dramatically and have inflated the average and median incomes for Rocky River. Tom said the average home age was 44 years old and explained that it is when homes reach the 75 year old mark that there becomes an element of concern. Since our housing base is getting older, we need to understand that homeowners must not only be able to afford older homes, but must be able to afford the necessary maintenance involved with their ownership. The most critical data that raised quite a lot of discussion was that although Rocky River has a good range of housing values, the main choices for people upgrading are to suburbs to our West. Westlake, Avon Lake, and Avon were in the top three. The reasons people are migrating tend to be for a larger home, a newer home, and for a much bigger lot size. Members took turns exchanging comments on how real the draw is to these newer suburbs, but their love for Rocky River kept steering the conversation back to the uniqueness of our City and all of its charm and character. The main question then became, “Can we provide housing alternatives to satisfy residents who want to upgrade, but also want to stay in Rocky River?”

The last part of the evening was spent reviewing a pictorial presentation of the nine focus areas. Matt Schmidt from City Architecture presented a slide show which was used to gauge reactions from the Master Plan Working Group. The pictures generated conversation between City Architecture and the board members. The group was extremely enthusiastic and their pride and connection to Rocky River were more than evident. It was also obvious that each members’ background was invaluable to this combined effort. It was determined that Linda Street and the Downtown area (Old Detroit Road) are probably the two biggest areas to make dramatic improvements. One of the most interesting ideas was to consider removing lanes of traffic on Detroit Road. It was agreed that some areas, like Lake Road, just need a way to connect a collection of great small sections, to make the whole street appear cohesive and desirable. Paul was amazed at the tear down phenomenon we are seeing throughout the City. He believes the fact that people are paying top dollar to purchase homes and then tearing them down to build bigger and better homes speaks wonders on how much people are willing to reinvest just to live in Rocky River. This only confirms that this truly is a unique and desirable location. As a last topic, Kory asked the board members for their opinions on how to proceed with current proposed development and their relation to the Master Plan. It was decided that Kory would present to Council on Monday July 7th a request to study very carefully any requests for rezoning for a period of time while the Master Plan is being prepared. It was agreed by all members that it was better to hold off on rezonings for a while rather than to act hastily and allow development to proceed without consideration of the Master Plan.

The Mayor was able to attend the first portion of this meeting. His presence was important to display how City Officials are in support of this Master Planning process. The Mayor took a moment to personally thank the Master Plan Working Group members for volunteering their time and effort. He then asked Tom Bier whether he had any statistics on how many residents are using Rocky River as a second residence. Tom said he was unaware of this point, but that he would see what he could find out. The Mayor also briefly discussed the aging population and their affect on the planning process.

To conclude, Paul requested that another meeting be set in three weeks. Kory said that he and his assistant would make the arrangements. Paul asked members to think about things that they wish to see changed or enhanced in Rocky River and also to look outside the City and see if there are ideas from neighboring communities worth working into a plan for Rocky River.

Appendix B

Task Force Meeting #3 – August 27, 2003

**Master Plan Working Group
Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2003
5:00 PM – 8:20 PM**

Attendance

Working Group Members

Kevin Collins
Michael Fruchey
Trisha Brown
Eric Pempus
Tom Long
John Selby
Craig Wright

City

Mayor William Knoble
Pam Bobst – Council President
Kory Koran
Heather Wagner

City Architecture

Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris
Matt Schmidt
Paul Volpe

Guests

Richard Batt – King James Group
Adriene Elliot – King James Group
Paul Gallagher – Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv. Bd.
Joyce Gray – Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv. Bd.
Gloria Hardington – Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv. Bd.
Mark Rantala – Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv. Bd.

The meeting began with some general comments and introductions made by Kory Koran. Council President, Pam Bobst, was able to attend this meeting and her presence was a positive addition to the group. Several Rocky River residents were also present in the audience. Kory explained that the City Architecture group had meetings with Mayor Knoble and the City Directors earlier that day. The meetings served to gather their comments and insights and will be incorporated into the Master Plan preparation process.

Paul Volpe then started by reviewing the handout titled *Task Force Workshop #3*, which is attached as Exhibit "A". This basically was a quick review and a preview of how the meeting would proceed. Two more handouts followed which served as a good recap of prior meetings. Exhibit "B" is titled *Focus Area Discussion* and Exhibit "C" is titled *Discovering our Planning Values*. The last handout is titled *Focus Area/Development District Analysis* and is attached as Exhibit "D". This handout was used as a guide for the meeting and members were able to follow along as Paul showed drafts of their proposed ideas for each focus area.

The working group members voted to cover the Old Detroit/Middle Detroit/Linda Street focus area first. Paul was able to obtain aerial photos of the location and he used these photos to explain that Rocky River has something of real value and that City Architecture's goal is to exploit that to make the area into something wonderful. Kory explained that Mayor Knoble was already in the process of creating some short term solutions for this area. The administration is currently working to make Depot Street a two way street and to add on-street parking along Detroit Road. Paul was pleased with these ideas and considered this a great start.

Paul then presented some maps that proved his point that the current Old Detroit/Middle Detroit/Linda Street focus area is the optimal size area for a downtown location. The map showed the perfect ¼ radii that they look for to encompass when downtown district planning. His next map showed buildings that were darkened to reflect those that they consider worthy of staying. Paul also showed the West End Lakewood project and discussed some of the issues they thought were worth mentioning. Paul explained that the West End Project is far more connected to Rocky River than to Lakewood, and the success of the improvements we make to Rocky River's downtown area will aid in the success of Lakewood's project. This is not to imply a competition, but to note that our plan will work best if we work in coordination with the West End Project. Our Master Plan proposal is different from the West End Project, in that we are not looking to clear land and start over, but to build upon current status with strong City involvement.

Paul and Michelle then put up their presentation slides of their proposed ideas for the downtown area. Paul stressed that this plan is a draft and that there are many different ways of reaching the desired result. Their plan contained parking garages, new housing, pocket parks, an elimination of the Marion Ramp, new mixed use buildings, new streets, streetscape improvements, and a town square. Paul then summed up the plan by presenting the following Potential Development Statistics:

General Development Area = 108 Acres
New Retail/Commercial = 172,000 sq. ft. +/-
New Office Development = 115,000 sq. ft. +/-
New Residential Development = 360-500 Units
New Parks & Public Space = 3.05 Acres
New Streets = 5,380 LF
Parking = 1,597 Spaces

Paul explained that their proposed plan must make sense from both the City and private side in order for it to become a reality. After the presentation, Paul requested some information from the working group members. He wanted to know if the plan was too aggressive or not aggressive enough and whether the plan served the values and goals determined to be important in this area. The group liked the fact that City Architecture was trying to work with a lot of what was already in the area. Some buildings that may make the area a bit quirky were determined to be part of what added charm and character. The group felt that the plan allowed for a natural progression of changes which would lead to a better end result than clearing land and starting from scratch. The response to the proposed changes was very positive. Some main concerns brought forth were the high cost of land acquisition, could the Marion Ramp be eliminated, and the need for a phase-in plan since there would be no way of tackling such an ambitious project overnight. Kory asked if there is a market for the statistics Paul presented. Paul agreed that market studies would be required. Adriene Elliot of the King James group felt that there was a market for housing in the area as long as it was comprised of a mixture of types and price points. Adriene also would like to see relocation plans for merchants within the area and members agreed that this would be a positive strategy to keep current businesses within our City. Pam Bobst was impressed with the proposal, and thought that the location would be a great gathering spot for our residents. She also felt that the improvements would have a ripple effect throughout the community raising property values regardless of a neighborhood's proximity to the downtown area. The group pointed out some overlooked opportunities and Paul and Michelle said they would do their best to take

all comments into consideration and rework their proposal to look at all the alternatives. They also explained that they would be meeting with area merchants, City Council, and Mayor Knoble. The comments gathered at these upcoming meetings will be used along with the Working Group's opinions to take this plan to the next level.

Center Ridge West and East were the next areas of discussion. A planted median and streetscape improvements were among the proposed ideas for improvement. Paul suggested that the first thing to focus on with Center Ridge is beautification. The second thing to focus on would be for the City to implement development and design standards to improve dated infrastructure in the area. Paul stressed that the City needs a user friendly Architectural Design and Review Board as well as the staffing necessary to put an end to the blight we are currently experiencing. He feels that incentives and code enforcement will be the recipe for success. Members pointed out that this area presents many challenges and although it is not as exciting as the downtown focus area, it is an area that really needs some assistance.

The Hilliard Blvd. proposal suggested highlighting Rocky River entry points, streetscape improvements, replacing worn duplexes with attractive office buildings, and possibly relocating the Post Office. Paul was pleased to see that the current plans for Hilliard Blvd. already include continuing the median since this was one of their suggestions for improvement.

The Wooster Road proposal mainly focused on streetscape improvements. Paul suggested that we consider whether the apartment buildings are truly serving a purpose. He thinks the street has a lot of little surprises along the way which add to its character. Some thought that the addition of more small shops could create a secondary downtown feeling. Members pointed out that their proposal omitted the redevelopment of the Fairview Wellness Center land and requested that they look further into that parcel.

The Detroit Road West proposal simply focused on improving housing, streetscape improvements, and making a more natural transition between the east and west ends of the street.

Working Group members were able to come up with some interesting suggestions for the Yacht Club Basin area. Everyone agreed that infrastructure improvement in the Yacht Club Basin is a necessity. Design guidelines are required to steer development and redevelopment efforts in that area. Members suggested creating a way for residents to easily access and spend time by the Rocky River, our City's namesake.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m. City Architecture will attend the Rocky River City Council meeting on September 15th at 8:00 p.m. Master Plan Working Group members were encouraged to attend.

Appendix B

Task Force Meeting #4 – November 19, 2003

**Master Plan Working Group
Meeting Minutes
November 19, 2003
5:00 PM – 6:05 PM**

Attendance

Working Group Members	City
Kevin Collins	Linda Bartolozzi – Council at Large
Trisha Brown	Frank Gollinger – Ward 3 Councilman
Eric Pempus	Kory Koran
Tom Long	Heather Wagner
John Selby	
Craig Wright	

Guests

Paul Gallagher – Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv. Bd.
Tim Simon – Beautification Committee
Thomas Stafford – Econ & Com. Dev. Adv. Bd.
Bobbie Van Atta – Board of Zoning Appeals

Kory began the meeting by commenting and answering questions regarding the Lake/Linda Connelly property that is currently under consideration for redevelopment. A handout titled “Master Plan Project Outline,” which is attached as Exhibit “A”, was then passed out. The outline was prepared by City Architecture and it demonstrates where they are in the planning process in relation to services that were contracted by the City of Rocky River.

Kory requested that the Master Plan Working Group focus on the details regarding the completion of the stakeholder meetings. Our contract with City Architecture states that we will have three meetings with property owners within the focus areas. It has been agreed that focus areas will be combined in order to condense the process into only three meetings. Kory requested that the working group come up with a plan on how to tackle the meetings. It was agreed that everyone in the focus areas should receive a notice of the meetings and that there should be an ad placed in the paper to notify any other interested parties. The consensus was to make every effort possible to get the word out in order to garner as much public input as possible. Kory made it clear that although there would be a presentation by City Architecture at each meeting, the goal was to gather as much stakeholder input as possible. He stressed that the residents’, property owners’, and tenants’ input is extremely valuable, and their suggestions would become a final part of the Master Plan. It was also discussed that we begin with a location other than the downtown focus area in order to start with the simpler of plans. This way the group would have the stakeholder meeting process perfected by the time the downtown

meeting takes place. One last suggestion was to have the local newspapers continue coverage of the Master Plan process. The newspaper involvement would be another method to notify residents of the stakeholder meetings and could serve as a way to dispel some of the misconceptions of the intentions of the City of Rocky River and its creation and use of a Master Plan.

Kory took the next opportunity to share the completed Streetscape Improvement Grant Application with the group. Each member was given an opportunity to review the final package and to see first hand how the Economic and Community Development Department is trying to implement some of the the suggestions of City Architecture. The City hopes to receive grant funding sometime during March or April of 2004.

Kory reported that he has recently met with the Madison Marquette group, the owners of BeachCliff Market Square, to discuss expansion possibilities. BeachCliff Market Square has been losing tenants and its owners are seeking a way to protect their investment. They are particularly interested in the possible elimination of the Marion Ramp and the expansion possibilities that could create. Kory also reported that the defeat of Lakewood’s West End Project has stirred up interest among business owners to create something similar in Rocky River. These reports demonstrate how the Master Plan has already begun to work for our City even though its completion is still months away.

The last part of the meeting was a short discussion on the implementation of the new sound barriers. There was an explanation of the phases of completion and of the materials that will be used. The Master Plan Working Group requested that if it were possible, they would like to see the walls softened with landscaping to make their presence blend with the other changes expected to take place in Rocky River in the future.

Kory concluded by letting the members know that they should look for some information regarding the first stakeholder meeting soon. He also explained that each member will receive a CD of the City Architecture presentation along with a copy of this meeting’s minutes.

**Master Plan Working Group
Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2004
5:00 PM – 7:30 PM**

Attendance

Working Group Members

Kevin Collins
Trisha Brown
Eric Pempus
Tom Long
John Selby

City

Mayor William Knoble
Council President Pamela Bobst
Council Member Linda Bartolozzi
Kory Koran
Heather Wagner

City Architecture

Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris
Matt Schmidt
Paul Volpe

Guests

Adrien Elliott – King James Group
Tom Gable – Local Developer and Resident
Paul Gallagher – Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv. Bd.
Gloria Hardington – Realty One, Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv.
Lori Inks – Beautification Committee
Carol Pedit – Rocky River Resident
Jack Seelie – Rocky River Business Owner
Thomas Stafford – Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv. Bd.
Bobbie Van Atta – BZA, RR Historical Society

The meeting began with a short recap of the Master Plan process by Kory Koran. He explained are about 3/4th of the way through this process. Upon completion of the Master Plan, there will meeting date set for the entire community to have a chance to view the finished project.

Paul Volpe began the presentation by summarizing the process to date. He explained that City Architecture has held numerous task force meetings, stakeholder meetings, meetings with City and conducted formal surveys of the community. All of this input has been factored into their proposals for the nine focus areas. City Architecture has also taken into consideration the local projects and initiatives that impact our Master Plan. Kory took the time to explain each of the 1 redevelopment projects that are currently in the works or already under construction. The topic covered included:

- Residential Development at Lake and Linda – 27 Town Homes
- Basket Factory Building – Being Redeveloped for Mixed-Use
- Beachcliff Redesign with Expansion
- Zappis/Coral Company Development – 40 Single Floor Residential Units
- Chandler Development at River Oaks
- David DeCapua's Town Home Development
- Town Home Development at East End of Hilliard
- Detroit Road Store Front Renovations
- River Plaza Renovation Nearly Complete

Kory then touched on some of the numerous infrastructure projects currently under way in our City. He also explained how the City will proceed with the \$380K Streetscape Grant Funding. Paul was impressed with all of the progress and plans for Rocky River. He commended the City for moving forward and for taking each step with the Master Plan in mind.

Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris then began her explanation of City Architecture's revised plans for the nine focus areas. Hard copies of the plans as well as the computer file will be provided to the Master Plan Working Group Members. Some of the highlights are as follows;

- 1) Center Ridge East
 - Make street more cohesive by fixing the visual aspects.
 - Make street pedestrian and auto friendly.
 - Create a median along Center Ridge.
 - Treat the merge of Wooster into Center Ridge as a gateway.
 - Create pocket parks.
 - Create a new entry into the Cleveland MetroParks.
 - Replace the Wellness Center (former Wooster School) with new town homes.
- 2) Center Ridge West
 - Reduce the setback for buildings.
 - Create landscape buffers.
 - Widen walkways.
 - Create a median along Center Ridge.
 - Consider replacement options for structures that are no longer viable.
 - Use streetscape improvements to tie street together.
 - Expand or rework recreational facilities.
- 3) Hilliard Boulevard
 - Redevelop the Rocky River Post Office.
 - Create a new entrance into the Cleveland MetroParks.
 - Improve gateway appearances.
 - Create new office and commercial spaces.
 - Create new town homes, lofts, and condominiums.
- 4) Wooster Road
 - Redevelop sites with vacant apartment units.
 - Build in a manner that takes advantage of the views.
 - Add river overlooks.
 - Add bike trails and extend walkways.
 - Create 15 new town homes and 2 new single family homes.
 - Create streetscape improvements.
 - Create pocket parks.
- 5) Detroit Road – West
 - Treat area as an important gateway entrance into Rocky River.
 - Replace outdated buildings with 90 senior apartments.
 - Continue streetscape improvements.
 - Improve landscaping on Rocky River High School property.
 - Place drop-in seated areas for residential enjoyment.

- 6) Yacht Club Basin
 - Rework infrastructure to make more pedestrian and auto friendly.
 - Add town homes.
 - Enhance viewing of the river – build new walkways and lookouts.

- 7) Old Detroit 8) Middle Detroit 9) Linda Street
 - Downtown Rocky River – Combined last 3 Focus Areas
 - Recommend removal of Marion Ramp.
 - Create functional and pedestrian friendly neighborhoods.
 - Vary the scale of streets.
 - Create new streets.
 - Create pocket parks.
 - Add more dense style housing units.

The discussion regarding downtown Rocky River continued. City Architecture still recommends removal of the Marion Ramp, but their plans did include reworked drawings on how to proceed if ramp had to stay. At which point, Mayor Knoble explained that he had received the good news that City of Rocky River could purchase the ramp land from ODOT. City Administration and City Council will be working the figures and giving this issue a lot of thought in the near future. The Beachcliff situation was also addressed and it was explained that this possible expansion could be close to becoming a reality. Paul used this as a great example of how the Master Plan process creates a reality. It is already evident that people/investors are thinking their proposals through and taking into account their position within the City's Master Plan.

The next step involved Implementation Strategies. This basically involves how to get things done. Architecture's list included;

- Land Acquisition Strategy
- Marketing Plan
- Updated Zoning
- Economic Analysis
- Investigate Funding/Financing Sources
- Finalizing Specific Development Strategies

Kory's response to the overall plan was extremely positive. He agreed that some aspects of the plan may be aggressive for those with a more conservative mindset, but he was glad to see everything laid out on paper so we can move forward and fine tune the document. The other members of the Master Plan Working Group were also impressed with City Architecture's vision. Some commented on the positive shift that this process has brought forth, in that Rocky River is starting to drive development that developers are beginning to approach us. It was of unanimous opinion that our zoning code is out of date and that the codes need to be changed in order to help implement the Master Plan.

The Master Plan Working Group asked Paul for his advice on how to make sure that the Master Plan utilized as a working document. They also asked for suggestions on how to avoid pitfalls that other cities may have encountered. Paul explained that to date, North East Ohio has not made planning a priority. However, today planning is imperative due to competition. He explained that by having a Master Plan, a city establishes a competitive edge that will assist in sustaining a higher quality of life for its residents. Paul also explained the need for our public officials to be very pro-active to make sure the Master Plan is used to its fullest potential. Since it was agreed that each focus area is unique and

each would have its own set of implementation strategies, Kory requested that City Architecture prepare specific steps for making each focus area a reality.

The audience was then asked for their input and comments. Council President Pamela Bobst took the opportunity to thank City Architecture for all of their hard work. She expressed that the Master Plan to date is a wonderful work in progress that doesn't focus on barriers, but instead on opportunities. Pamela stated that she likes to see us driving development and she will make sure that boards have the tools to do their jobs effectively.

Jack Seelie commented that the current zoning code is antiquated and will need to be reworked in order to see this plan through.

Bobbie Van Atta explained that she still believes that the plan contains too much dense style living. She is interested in seeing more single family homes. She is concerned as to whether or not the plan can support the addition of so many new office buildings. Bobbie is also a member of the Rocky River Historical Society. She expressed an interest in finding a favorable and appropriate location for the Historical Society to relocate.

Carol Pedit, a Rocky River resident, is concerned with the addition of so much dense style housing and its effects on an already over-taxed sewer system.

Gloria Hardington of Realty One, felt the plan was meeting the needs of an aging and changing population in Rocky River. She explained that empty nesters need homes with less maintenance and planning for this trend will help us keep current residents and allow younger families to fill the single family homes that they move out of.

Thomas Stafford of the Economic and Community Development Advisory Board strongly urged that the plan focus on early success to create the necessary momentum to keep the process moving forward. Many others were in agreement. Kevin Collins of the Master Plan Working Group added that we should focus on the high visibility projects that are less controversial. Once success is gained in that arena, we can move forward from there and public support should flow more easily. Lori Inks of the Beautification Committee added that in order to keep the momentum going, whatever is done first should be executed to the fullest.

Upon conclusion, Kory requested that the materials presented at the meeting be provided to the Master Plan Working Group so that they could pencil in any comments or suggested changes to be discussed at one last meeting before the final document is compiled. Paul agreed that City Architecture would take the evening's comments and work them into the plan before the next meeting. From that point, the final document will be presented to the community, administration/boards, and then finally council for their acceptance and approval. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

**Master Plan Working Group
Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2004
5:00 PM – 7:30 PM**

Attendance

Working Group Members

Trisha Brown
Kevin Collins
Michael Fruchey
Tom Long
Craig Wright

City

Council President Pamela Bobst
Kory Koran
Heather Wagner

City Architecture

Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris
Paul Volpe

Guests

Mark Rantala – Econ. & Com. Dev. Adv. Board
Jack Seelie – Rocky River Business Owner
Bobbie Van Atta – BZA, RR Historical Society

As we began Task Force Workshop #6, Kory Koran explained to the Master Plan Working Group that this would be our last meeting before the presentation of the Master Plan to the citizens of Rocky River. He commended City Architecture for their excellent plan to date, and thanked them for the opportunity to hold one last meeting to review and fine-tune the document. Since Kory, Mayor Knoble, and John Selby had prepared their comments and suggestions prior to this scheduled last meeting, their information was forwarded in advance to City Architecture for their review and consideration.

Michelle and Paul began the meeting by explaining that a draft form of the entire Rocky River Master Plan is almost ready for submission. Michelle continued by reviewing the abridged presentation, slide by slide, in order to give the Master Plan Working Group members one last chance to make any necessary changes. City Architecture also passed out their proposed table of contents and is attached as Exhibit "A".

The first slide dealt with the Center Ridge Road East Focus Area. Overall, the Working Group liked the inclusion of a rear parking zone. Taking Mayor Knoble's comments into consideration, there was some discussion regarding the limited amount of property owned by the City of Rocky River. The consensus of the Working Group was that the proposed first-floor master town homes were consistent with Tom Bier's census data regarding an up-and-coming aging population and that our focus needs to be on retaining our current population as we move into the future.

The next slide focused mainly on the Rockport Shopping Plaza on Center Ridge Road. Some suggested that tearing down the old Family Toy Warehouse should be a prime consideration. The lack of parking and odd placement of the parcel were mentioned as two possible reasons that the property has remained vacant for so long. It was also suggested that City Architecture include ways for the City to encourage commonalities between the disjointed buildings along Center Ridge Road.

Moving even farther west along Center Ridge, Kory pointed out that Plymouth Avenue would be a prime area for redevelopment. John Selby wanted to see the plan be more aggressive by setting aside more athletic facilities and green spaces for the Board of Education. He was not in favor of any more

apartment buildings. The apartment topic sparked further conversation. Many agreed that they were not in favor of the proposed apartments. City Architecture explained that the reason for their inclusion was to appeal to a group of people just starting out who would then go on to invest in Rocky River's housing stock. Trisha Brown agreed with City Architecture and explained that there are currently a lack of quality apartments available for rent in Rocky River.

The Hilliard Boulevard slides were next. Kory explained that Joe's Deli has purchased land and is planning an expansion where City Architecture has planned for a new roadway. This will need to be changed in their final draft. The Mayor's comments included concern over the Wooster and Hilliard intersection. Everyone was in agreement that there are traffic problems in that area. Kory mentioned that there has been some discussion about offering some form of City incentives in order to alter some of the rental properties along Hilliard. John Selby suggested the eastern portion of Hilliard Boulevard roadway be narrowed in order to create additional depth for the proposed buildings along the valley's edge. Overall the Working Group was in agreement with John's suggestion.

The Wooster Road discussion brought forth many positive comments regarding City Architecture's vision. The proposed river overlooks and bike trails were popular among the Working Group. It was mentioned that Wooster should be treated like a gateway to the City of Rocky River since it is the first turn off the Lakewood Bridge. Eliminating the numerous "For Rent" signs should be a top priority. The Mayor suggested setting up a pocket park for the northwest corner of Shoreland and Wooster Road. The Working Group liked the proposed mixed-use buildings and requested that they be expanded further down Wooster Road. Bobbie Van Atta commended Steve Dever for all of the work he did to preserve and expand his Wooster Road residence. Ms. Van Atta felt that this area of Wooster Rd. would be a great place to encourage buyers to purchase two parcels and build larger homes. It was pointed out that from an economic standpoint, City Architecture's proposed denser housing styles would make more sense, but Kory agreed that Ms. Van Atta's idea could possibly work in this section of Rocky River.

The discussion then turned to Detroit Road. John Selby proposed that the High School purchase the homes that abut their property along Northview Road. After some input, it was agreed that John's proposal could have some merit and should receive further attention. City Architecture included Senior Housing along Detroit Road, however, the Working Group felt that their plan should be expanded to include portions of Wagar Road. It was decided that since senior housing is going to be a necessity in the future, the area on Wagar Road across from the Rocky River High School would be a perfect location for senior citizen housing. In addition to improving that area, it would allow seniors to be next to churches, across from a school, close to the Rocky River Senior Center, and to be on a bus route.

It was requested that the Yacht Club Basin plan include a public restaurant for another way in which residents could enjoy the scenic views. It was also requested that there be more suggestions on ways to tie the Yacht Club Basin into the downtown area.

The downtown slide started with a discussion on the Marion Ramp removal. The group voted unanimously that the ramp be removed, however, it was requested that the final plan show two versions depicting the ramp staying and the ramp going. The group felt that removing the ramp should be a top priority and that this bold dramatic change would be a symbol of the Master Plan working to improve the City of Rocky River. The topic of the Beachcliff Market Square expansion was also addressed. Paul explained that Crocker Park in Westlake will have a negative affect if our downtown doesn't improve and take advantage of the new tenants trying to relocate in Rocky River. He stressed that if we do not improve our downtown area that competition will surely lead to its demise. His advice was to focus on the fact that we have a real downtown and to keep improvements along a village scale rather than an oversized main street fabrication.

Bobbie Van Atta asked that City Architecture review historical locations in the downtown area closely and make sure that their survival is a top priority. Paul agreed with Ms. Van Atta and explained that historical buildings are valuable assets for a city and definitely worth protecting. The next topic was Heinen's grocery store. Some members were initially concerned with the park located in Heinen's parking lot along Detroit Road. Paul and Michelle explained that Heinen's could expand more towards Wooster Road and that by adding their proposed green space, the value of real estate in that area would be positively affected. A few more creative ways to maximize Heinen's limited space were suggested and it was mentioned that Rocky River is one of Heinen's top sales locations.

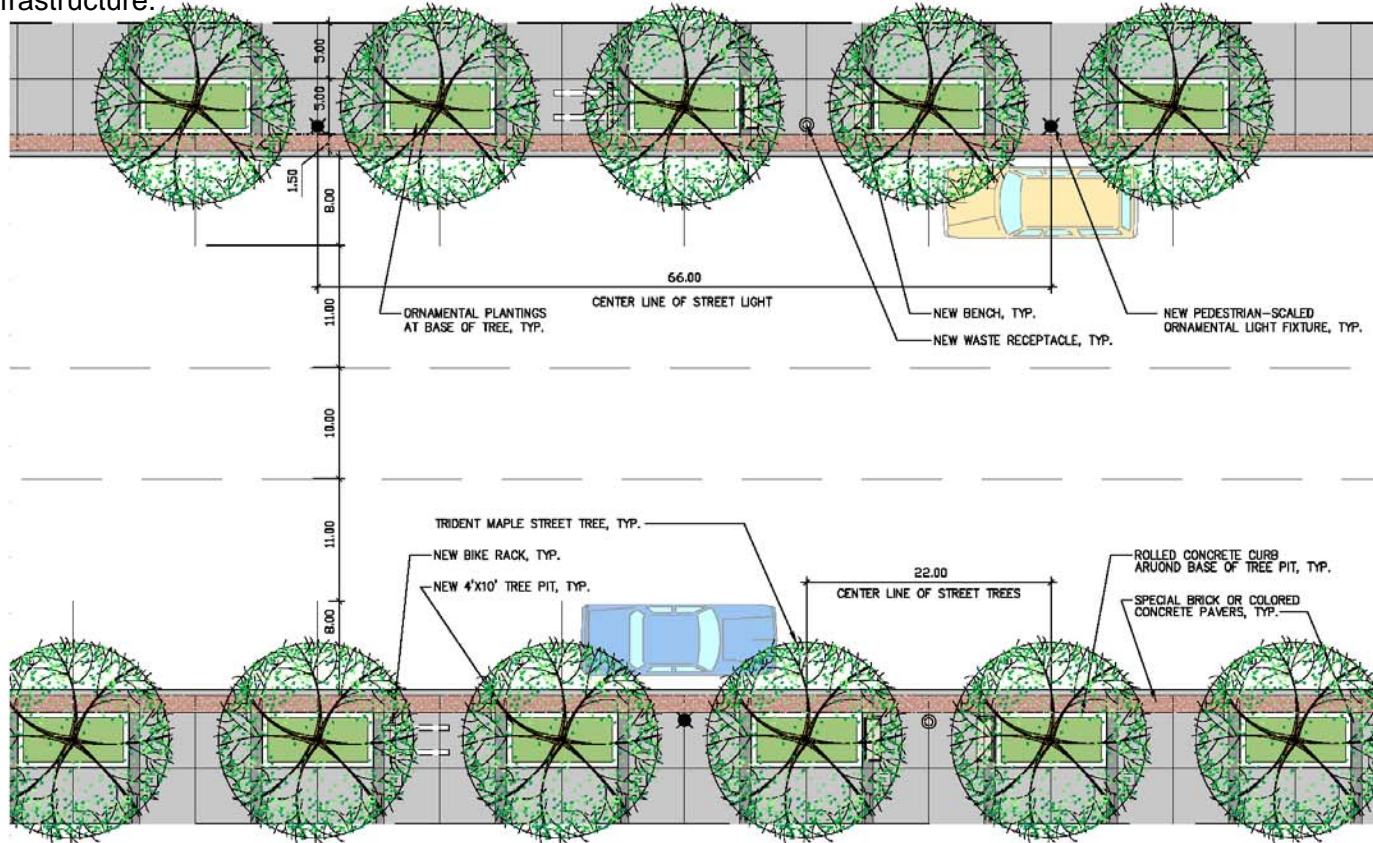
In conclusion, the group agreed that the City Architecture suggested Table of Contents was satisfactory. The group also wanted each focus area plan to include alternative written suggestions since it was agreed that there were several alternatives that would be equally appealing, but that may depend on the time of implementation as to which one would be most suitable. As far as implementation, the group agreed unanimously that the zoning codes must be changed. They also requested that the document be laid out with very definitive language, so as to be up-front with the public, and ensure its usage in the future. The group requested a priority list that would include the top five items for the City to pursue and work on. This list should include an explanation of why the completion of each priority item is necessary. It is the Working Group's hope that this list will not only help keep the City on track, but that it will create the necessary momentum to keep the process alive and working. Overall, it was agreed that Kory will use this document as a sales tool when he meets with investors, city officials, and residents. He needs something concrete and worthy of his sales pitch.

The final draft proposal should arrive from City Architecture in about two weeks. A public meeting will be set up in the near future. As a last step, the package will go to council for their approval and acceptance. The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Appendix C

Proposed Detroit Road Streetscape Plan

In conjunction with the master planning process the City of Rocky River prepared a grant application to obtain a Community Development Block Grant from Cuyahoga County for streetscape improvements along Detroit Road. The following designs were developed to accompany the grant application. The City of Rocky River was subsequently awarded funding for the updating of the Detroit Road infrastructure.

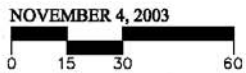
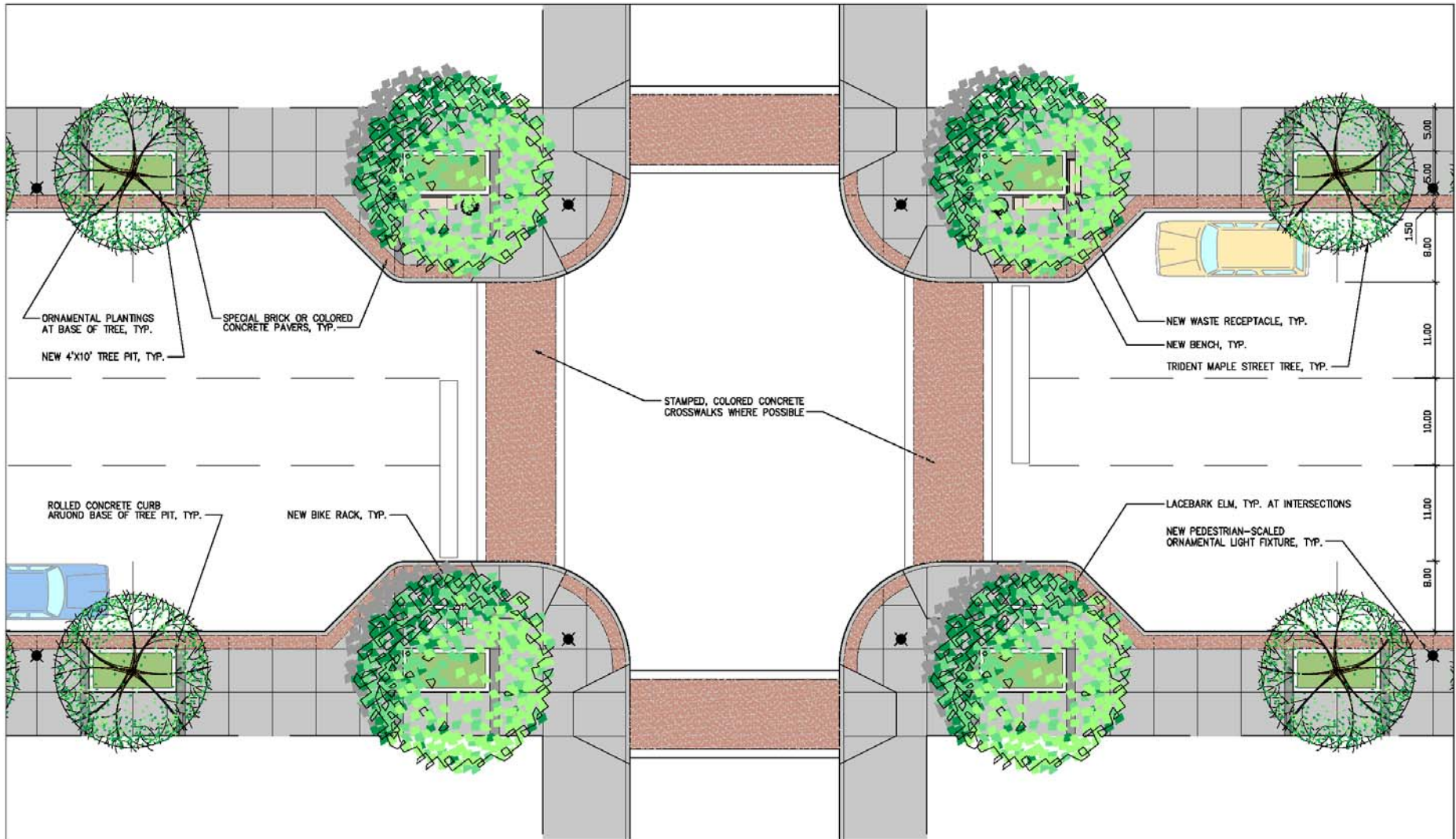


ROCKY RIVER MASTER PLAN
 DETROIT ROAD PROTOTYPICAL STREET LAYOUT
 PROPOSED RECONFIGURATION
 cityarchitecture

NOVEMBER 4, 2003
 0 15 30 60

Appendix C

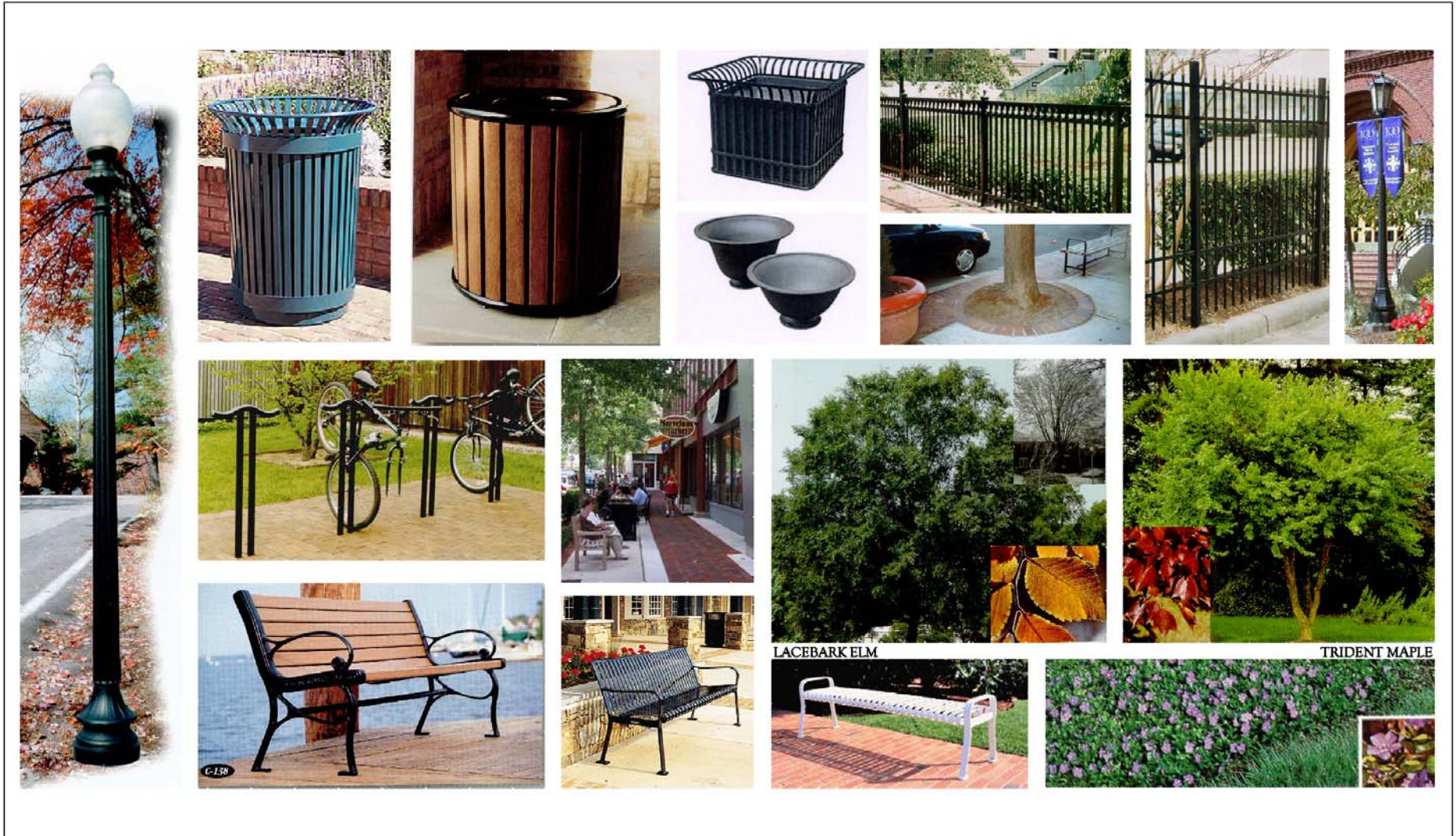
Proposed Detroit Road Streetscape Plan



ROCKY RIVER MASTER PLAN
 DETROIT ROAD PROTOTYPICAL INTERSECTION LAYOUT
 PROPOSED RECONFIGURATION
 cityarchitecture

Appendix C

Proposed Detroit Road Streetscape Plan



ROCKY RIVER MASTER PLAN
SAMPLE STREET FURNISHINGS AND PLANTINGS
PROPOSED RECONFIGURATION
cityarchitecture

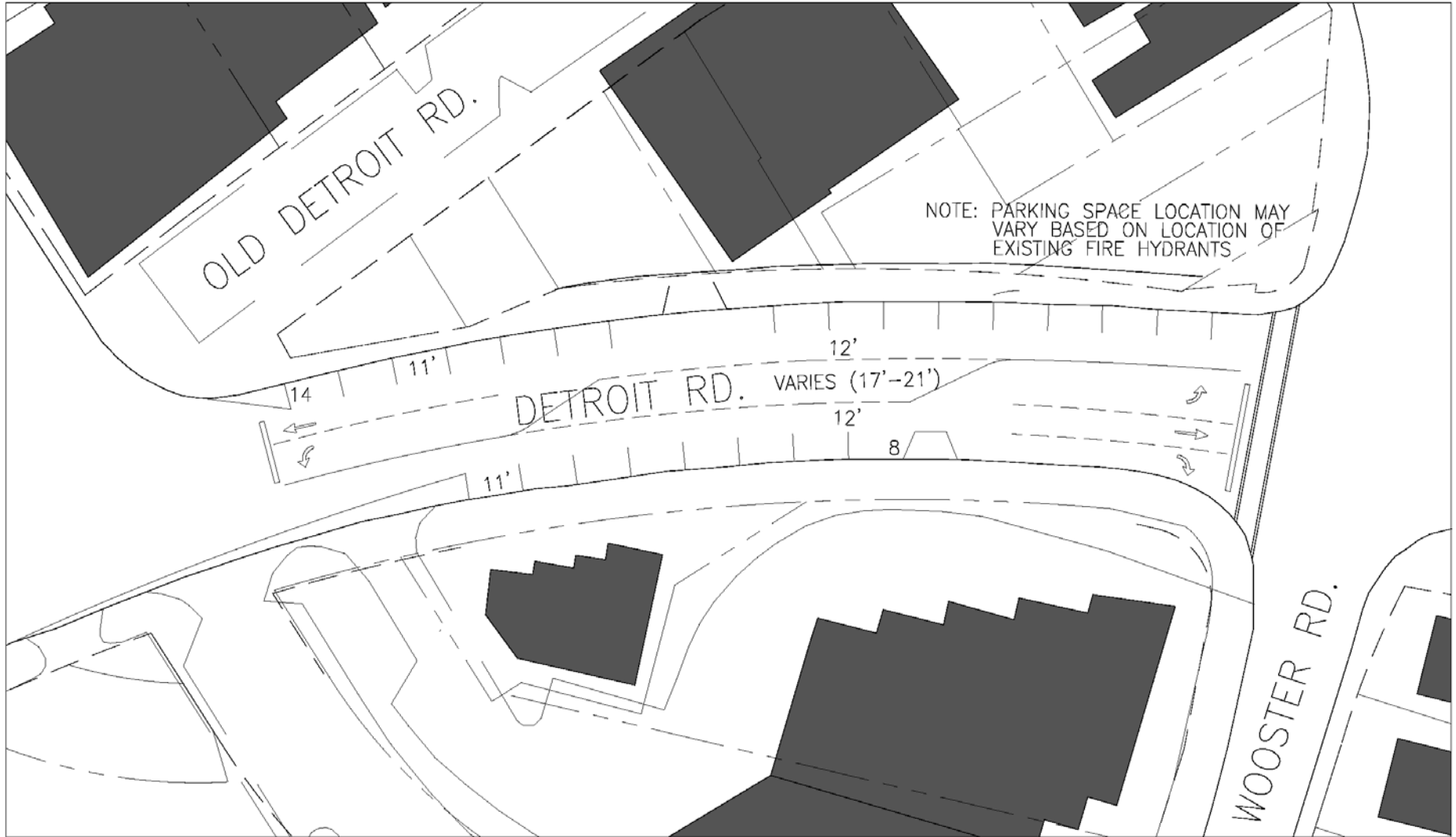
Appendix C

Proposed Detroit Road Streetscape Plan



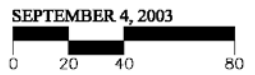
OCTOBER 6, 2003
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ROCKY RIVER MASTER PLAN
W. 192 STREET / DEPOT STREET
PROPOSED PARKING LAYOUT
CITY OF ROCKY RIVER cityarchitecture



NOTE: PARKING SPACE LOCATION MAY VARY BASED ON LOCATION OF EXISTING FIRE HYDRANTS

DETROIT RD. VARIES (17'-21')



ROCKY RIVER MASTER PLAN
DETROIT ROAD STRIPING
OPTION A - WITH CENTER TURNING LANE
cityarchitecture



SEPTEMBER 4, 2003

ROCKY RIVER MASTER PLAN
DETROIT ROAD STRIPING
OPTION B - WITH CENTER MEDIAN
cityarchitecture

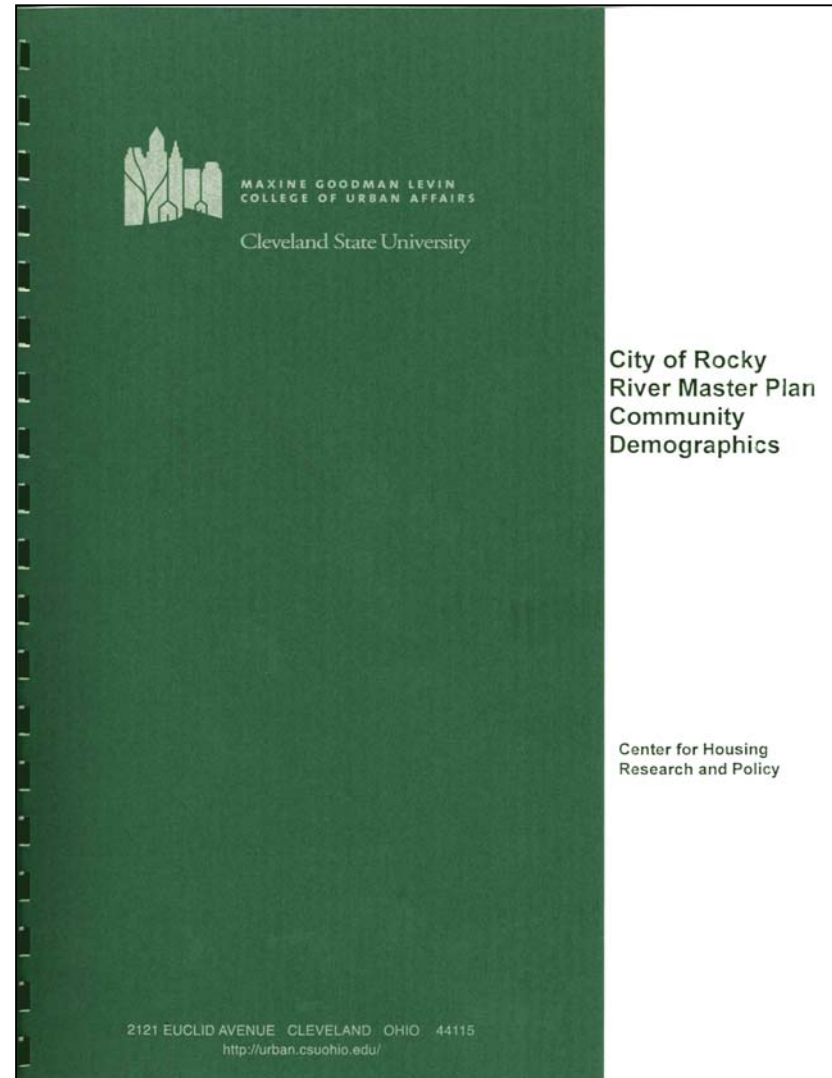
With any redevelopment project it is essential to determine a series of potential funding sources. Many different agencies and organizations exist from which it possible to obtain grants, low-interest loans, and other economic benefits. Some of these sources include:

- City, county, state grants
- City, county, state low-interest loans
- Brownfield Redevelopment Funds
- Clean Ohio fund
- Tax-increment financing (TIF)
- Tax abatement
- Low-income tax credit funding (seniors & families)
- Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP)
- Enterprise Zone Tax Incentive Program (EZ)
- Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT)
- Community Reinvestment Area (CRA)
- Storefront Renovation Programs (County and local)
- State Capital Improvements Program (Issue 2)
- Water and Sewer Rotary Commission Loans
- Ohio Water Development Authority Loans
- Business Improvement District (BID)
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)
- Charitable foundation grants
- Conventional financing
- Private developer equity



In addition to this master plan a study was completed by Dr. Thomas Bier and Charlie Post of the Center for Housing Research and Policy entitled "City of Rocky River Master Plan Community Demographics." Data was collected for the report from the U.S. Census of 1990 and 2000 and Cuyahoga County Auditor property, deed transfers and tax records.

A synopsis of the report was included earlier in this master plan. The full report is provided separately as a supplement to this document for further review.



Rocky River Master Plan

Envisioning Our City.....a shared vision for the future

Appendix F

Minutes of Planning Commission Master Plan Review and Minutes of Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Committee Review

Appendix F Minutes of Planning Commission Master Plan Review & Minutes of Planning Zoning and Economic Development Committee Review

October 19, 2004

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting

CITY ARCHITECTURE – PRESENTATION – City of Rocky River Master Plan. Mr. Kory Koran, Community Economic Development Director, Mr. Paul Volpe and Mrs. Michelle Bandy-Zalatoris, City Architecture, came forward to explain the Master Plan.

Mr. Koran said that the Commission Members have all received a hard copy of the Master Plan Report. He said that the Master Plan is a culmination of about a 2 year process. He said that in the last election the Rocky River voters asked for a Master Plan update every 10 years. He said that began the process for the City of Rocky River hiring a consultant to prepare a Master Plan.

Mr. Koran said that the last time the City of Rocky River had a Master Plan was in 1968. He said obviously we were due for an update. Mr. Koran gave an overview of how they proceeded with the Master Plan Project.

Mr. Koran said that some of the members of the Master Plan Working Group were here this evening. He said that he wanted to introduce them. Mr. Koran said that Trisha Brown is an Alternate Member of the Planning Commission, Kevin Collins is a Member of the Master Plan Task Force, as well as Michael Fruchey, Tom Long a Member of the Planning Commission, Eric Pempus who is Chairman of the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals, John Selby a local Architect, and Craig Wright a Member of the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals. Mr. Koran said that they were volunteers and most of the Members have Masters Degrees in either Urban Planning or Architecture, all employed in the Cleveland area.

Mr. Koran said that there was also a regular group of interested residents that attended these Master Plan meetings, Mark Rantala, Bobbie Van Atta, and many others who provided a lot of input and were treated as peers throughout the meetings. He said that all of the meetings were open to the public and all residents were able to speak.

Mr. Harvey said that he read the minutes on the public participation and they were very good. He asked Mr. Koran if the Working Group Members voted during this process. Mr. Koran said that they did not vote. He said that it was a very informal group and they did not make motions or take votes. Mr. Koran said that the Master Plan was a group opinion. He said that there were no really contentious points where the Group was divided.

Mr. Koran spoke about the 3 Community meetings that looked at the focus areas with the residents, meetings with the City Administration, meetings with City Council, etc. Mr. Koran turned the meeting over to Mr. Paul Volpe for the presentation of the Master Plan.

Mr. Volpe said that this was one of the most participatory plans that they have ever done. He said that they are constantly working in Community settings and this was one of the finest Task Forces of citizenry that they have ever worked with. He said that this is not City Architecture's plan. He said that it is a plan that you deem appropriate as it is relative to the City, but relative to its configuration. He said that this is a plan that emanated from this Task Force with great guidance of the Community Economic Development Director, with the participation of various Council people, and great participation on the part of the Mayor. He said that it does not always

happen this way, many times Master Plans are standard documents produced by people like City Architecture that end up sitting on a shelf. He said that they are thrilled to say that this Plan grew from real collaboration and communication.

Mr. Volpe said that they like to think of the Master Plan as an illustrative guide and a flexible tool that Rocky River can utilize. Mr. Volpe and Mrs. Bandy-Zalatoris proceeded with the Power Point Presentation of the Master Plan.

Mr. Volpe concluded the presentation.

Mr. Harvey said that since Tom Long and Trisha Brown are members of the Master Plan Working Group he would be concerned that there may be a conflict if they sit in on the discussions and/or votes taken regarding the Master Plan.

Mrs. Martin said that she would have no problem with Tom and Trisha being involved in the discussions of the Master Plan. She said that she feels that they may enlighten the Commission on some questions that may come up, but she feels that the Commission should get a legal opinion if they should be voting on it. Ms. Arabian said that she would agree that Tom and Trisha would be helpful giving the Commission a little more insight as to how the decisions were made in the Working Group. She said that she feels that they would be looking at this huge document in detail and it would be very helpful to have some behind the scenes information. Mr. Harvey agreed.

Mr. Gustafson said that he would not have a problem with Trisha and Tom participating in the discussions. He said that these are the people that helped to develop these ideas and it would be safe to say that they would have a vested interest to some degree. He said that the other Commission Members may be a little more open minded because they were not instrumental in developing the Master Plan. He said that he felt that would be a minor issue compared to their contribution. Mr. Harvey said that he would welcome Tom's and Trisha's participation in the discussions.

Mr. Harvey said that he understands that the Working Group had meaningful input in developing the Master Plan, but he would like to know if they should vote.

Mr. Matty said that he would give his legal opinion as part of the record. He said that the Commission has, as with all other matters that come before it, the discretion to run procedurally the meeting as they see fit. He said that if the Commission would like to call upon the two Master Plan Task Force committee members or others for information and he said as your Law Director he would not have a problem with that. Mr. Matty said that they may do that as they sometimes do with the public, even though it would not be required. He said that it would be open to the public at a Council level. He said that he has tried personally to initiate the Council Members along that line, because we do have 20,000 people in this Community.

Mr. Matty said that he does feel it important that as many of those people know about this plan and its content as possible, because the Planning Commission will be the ones that will be receiving the plans in concert with this, and if people come to the Commission with no background it won't do us any good.

Mr. Matty said that since two of your Members' ideas have been thought of and participated in, and since the Charter indicates that the Planning Commission is the independent review and

Appendix F

Minutes of Planning Commission Master Plan Review and Minutes of Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Committee Review

reporting committee, it is his opinion that the two Members shall not participate in a vote. Mr. Matty said that he has indicated that to Council and he will indicate that to this Commission this evening.

Mr. Matty said that the two Members of this Commission, as far as he is concerned, should not vote on any part of what the Commission does here to make this independent. He said that there is going to be, at some point in time, litigation over some part of this plan, which the Commission either approves or denies. He said that the litigation may be on the Commission's behalf or on the behalf of residents and he does not want in any way, shape, or form any part of this tainted by people who have participated in the process.

Mr. Matty said that Mr. Gustafson makes a good point, that when you participate in producing an idea or producing a concept, the general approach of an individual is to protect that. Mr. Matty said that he would rather have 5 independent people taking a look at this for the first time and be the voting members. He said that he believes that is what the Charter charges you as a Planning Commission to do. He said not to forget that the Planning Commission Members are just reporting and recommending. He said that it will be Council's final say as to what will go in the final document and what will not go in this document because that is what is attached to their Ordinance as Exhibit "A". He said that they will certainly take the Planning Commission's report and recommendations, or they should take them seriously in the process, but they have the final say.

Mr. Harvey asked the Commission how they wanted to proceed. Mr. Harvey said that there are no procedures in place because this is their first Master Plan. Mrs. Martin said that this Master Plan is a new process for this Commission. Mr. Harvey said that the Commission welcomes the participation of Tom Long and Trisha Brown in the Master Plan discussions.

Mrs. Martin made a motion that Trisha Brown and Tom Long participate in the discussions regarding the Master Plan, but do not vote on any recommendations from the Commission Members. Mr. Bishop seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays

Mr. Harvey said that in a brief discussion with the Mayor he asked if the Planning Commission would like to consider having a special meeting to review the Master Plan. Mr. Harvey asked the Commission Members if they would like to put some constraints on the reviewing process of the Master Plan because there is a lot to discuss and this Commission does have a lot of responsibility.

Mr. Harvey said that a lot of people that he considers good people have looked at this Master Plan. He said that in his view the Plan has already been bedded, if you will, but ultimately this Commission is the one charged with the responsibility of recommending the Master Plan to City Council.

Mr. Harvey said in his view, also a little bit broader than that under the City Charter the Planning Commission has a planning responsibility in general, maybe not with this particular document but for long range planning for the City.

Mrs. Martin asked the Members if anyone would have any problem with limiting discussions to 1 hour at the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meetings starting in November and

ending in April or possibly May. Ms. Arabian said that she thinks that would be fine. She said that when she was going through the document she broke it up by the 9 categories. She said that she feels that would work well for her.

Mr. Gustafson said that he would like to spend a short time looking at this plan as a whole rather than looking at the specifics. He said that he feels that the plan gets lost as a whole if they look at the specifics. He said that there were certain things that have "jumped out at him" in looking at the whole plan. He said that there are some things he would like discussed before the Commission gets into the specifics. Mr. Harvey asked when they should have the discussion regarding the whole plan. Mrs. Martin suggested having that discussion at the beginning and at the end of the review. Mr. Harvey agreed that was a good idea. The Commission discussed the possibility of special meetings and the length of time that should be allotted for the Master Plan at the regularly scheduled meetings, etc.

Mrs. Martin made a motion to start the review of the Master Plan as a whole at the November, 2004 meeting, followed by the next 7 months of discussion on each one of the categories as listed, and ending with the review of the Master Plan as a whole at the June, 2005 meeting. Mr. Harvey seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays

Mr. Harvey said that the Planning Commission typically recommends legislation to City Council. He said that usually City Council proposes legislation and it comes to this Commission for recommendation. Mr. Harvey asked the Commission if they should have the public participate in the discussions regarding the Master Plan since the regular meetings are open to the public. Mrs. Martin said that there would be public participation at the City Council meetings and they probably would not want to rehash everything 2, 3 4 times. She said that there may be Administration, Board Members, Task Force Members, etc. that would like to speak with the Planning Commission regarding this Plan. She said that participation in these discussions is a complicated issue.

Mr. Harvey said that there are a whole host of folks on those Boards including the target groups. Mr. Harvey suggested that they may want some limitations on the discussions. Ms. Arabian suggested possibly having a chance to discuss the Plan among themselves and then opening the meeting up for public comment, for a reasonable period of time, so that there would be some uniformity in what the Commission is doing. Mr. Bishop suggested possibly aligning the Planning Commission agendas with City Council agendas regarding the Master Plan to benefit from each others input.

Mr. Gustafson asked what level the Members of the Planning Commission would be concentrating on when reviewing the Master Plan. The Commission Members agreed that they would decide that at the first review meeting. Mrs. Arabian said that she feels that they would be looking at concepts because it would not be feasible to look at each individual detail. She said that if there was something that stood out glaring they could maybe discuss that particular detail.

Mr. Harvey made a motion to open the meeting for public participation for a reasonable amount of time following the Planning Commission Members discussion. Mrs. Martin seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays

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Mrs. Martin said that the Commission should be open to holding special Planning Commission meetings if needed. She said that she feels that they should leave further presentation from City Architecture open too. Ms. Arabian said that if there is something that the Commission is specifically hung up on, does not understand, or does not get enough information on, then she feels that it would be appropriate to contact City Architecture and ask them to come back to explain it.

Mrs. Martin made a motion for the Master Plan to follow the regularly scheduled agenda as the last Item on the agenda for each month until the review is completed. Ms. Arabian seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays

Mr. Harvey asked Mrs. Van Atta, in the audience if she had an observation or comment for the Commission Members. Mrs. Van Atta said that she had a thought regarding what role the Planning Commission would want to play with regard to how much of a detailed analysis they would want to make of the Master Plan. She said that she would like to point out that when the Plan was presented to City Council a few weeks ago, Director Koran had stated that he would use this Plan to sell to businesses to convince them to come into the City. She said that even if the current zoning had not been changed yet with the ideas of the plan he intends to sell the Plan to developers.

Mrs. Van Atta said that she feels that the Master Plan would be used in terms of a goal, for Developers to know that their project would be in accordance with the Master Plan that has been accepted by City Council in theory. She said change the zoning so a developer would come in and consider using this area in that regard, etc. She said that she feels that it would be important to consider specific uses and the possible changes in land uses that would be appropriate for the City and the area.

Mrs. Van Atta said that as a member of the Community she would hope that the Planning Commission would consider the best land use for future projects and take a look at the specific areas where zoning changes are being suggested. Mr. Harvey asked that the record reflect that Mrs. Van Atta has attended many of the Master Plan meetings and she is also an Alternate Member of the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals.

November 16, 2004

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting

PLANNING COMMISSION - DISCUSSION – City of Rocky River Master Plan – topic: Old Detroit Road, Middle Detroit Road, and Linda Street.

Mr. Harvey said that the Commission would like to discuss this evening the Old Detroit, Middle Detroit, and Linda Street aspect of the Master Plan. Mr. Harvey discussed how the Commission would make their recommendations. Mr. Gustafson said that the more he thinks about this the more he is convinced that the Commission should only consider the generalities of this plan and not the specific areas. He said that there are themes that run through every area and to him that is what would warrant discussion rather than looking at the specific areas. He said that he thinks that this Commission should look at the overall concept of this plan. He said that he feels that the Commission should look at the overall plan along with the themes that run through every area.

Mr. Harvey said that the Commission has already decided that they would handle the Master Plan section by section. Mr. Harvey asked if the Commission wanted to discuss each section and

make a recommendation to City Council, or hold off and make their recommendation after the entire Plan has been reviewed. Mrs. Martin said that she would have no problem making recommendations at the end of each of the meetings. Ms. Arabian agreed with Mrs. Martin and said that they would not want to hold up the whole Plan. She said that she feels that the Commission should give City Council some kind of recommendation after they review each section whether it be an interim recommendation or a final recommendation for each part, so that they would not hold up City Council from their review of the Plan.

Mrs. Martin asked how the Commission wanted to handle the recommendation of zoning issues. Mr. Bishop said that zoning is really the bigger question.

Ms. Brown said that she and Mr. Long are more familiar with the Master Plan because they worked on the Plan for so long. She said that she agrees with Mr. Gustafson that there are themes throughout the Plan that she feels the Commission will pick up on. She said that the ultimate extension of this would be the zoning. She said that if the Commission takes a look at the Master Plan in terms of zoning that would be where the recommendations come in.

Ms. Brown said that she feels that this Commission should be looking at the zoning not whether they feel that Old Detroit or Linda Street makes sense or not. She said that she feels that the Commission should decide if the concurrence of it makes sense, if they feel that this is what they would like their City to look like, and if this is something that the Commission should recommend to the residents of Rocky River. She said that she feels that it would be arduous to go through the Plan, section by section, from now until May to try to find out whether this should be recommended or not.

Mr. Harvey suggested that the Commission could discuss the directives in each section. Mr. Bishop said that he did not feel that the Commission had any intention of going building by building. Mr. Long said that this is a plan and by the very nature a plan is a starting point.

Ms. Arabian discussed themes throughout the plan that she felt should be discussed, otherwise the Commission would be here forever. Mr. Long said that he felt that the Commission should take the Plan and see how well they feel it fits in with what they envision the City to be. Ms. Brown said that she feels that taking the directives in each section would be a very good idea to use as a guide. Mr. Harvey asked if the directives were a group consensus. Ms. Brown and Mr. Long said that the directives were a group consensus and they discussed how the Task Force came up with the directives.

The Commission discussed the timeframe of the Master Plan. Mr. Long said that it is revisited every 10 years according to the Charter. Ms. Brown said that the Master Plan is an expression of an idea of what they would like the City to look like. Mr. Harvey said that he feels that eventually at sometime this could become some type of legislation. He said that aside from the zoning issues that would have to go through Council he cannot envision how the legislative process would actually impact some of the directives and so forth. He said that he feels that it is a great document but he does not know how it will actually play out.

Ms. Brown and Mr. Harvey discussed zoning, what the market would call for, private developers, etc. Mrs. Martin and Ms. Brown discussed the value of Planning as it relates to the Master Plan. Mrs. Martin discussed the Planning Commission's role in recommendation to City Council with regard to the Master Plan.

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Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that the Master Plan suggests almost all multi-family housing. He said that the plan only shows a few new single family residences. He said that he feels that is an important concept of this Plan. He asked if that is a concept that the Planning Commission would want.

Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that there would also have to be significant public investment with this Plan. He asked if the Commission feels that narrowing of roads and bike paths throughout the whole City is what they would want as a Community. He said that he feels that these are the concepts that need debating. He said that he feels that somebody should be considering these overall concepts and he feels that is the meat of this plan.

Mr. Bishop said that the Master Plan is in total conflict with the current zoning codes in almost every way. He said that he feels that the real question is when this Master Plan goes into effect it becomes in conflict with everything else and where do those pieces walk with it down the path. He said that it seems to him that those are way behind and how good is the document without the other pieces. He said that he feels that there will be legal issues if the zoning is in conflict with the Master Plan.

Mr. Harvey, Mr. Bishop, and Ms. Brown discussed the issue of more density in the types of developments that are being proposed lately. They discussed density, traffic, taxation, demographics, etc. as these issues relate to the type of future development in the City of Rocky River. Ms. Brown said that the City should get their zoning in line with their Master Plan so that they would not always be rezoning for the individual project.

The Commission discussed increased density in the future projects for the City. They discussed the number of variances required for many of the proposed and future multi-family projects throughout the City.

Mr. Matty said that he feels that the City Administration, Board Members, and City Council all have some sophisticated staff that could do rezoning ordinances, etc. He said that there is a lot happening throughout the City, mixed use, growth management. He said that some cities are limiting their building permits by year because they do not want to be dense, or buying up property because they don't want to be dense. He said that all of these theories are happening. He said that he thinks that whatever recommendations the Planning Commission makes in their report/review he would urge the Commission to make what they feel is proper, what the Commission thinks would be good planning for the City, and then it would be up to City Council to address those recommendations and/or instruct the City Administration including himself in the implementation of those, if they wish to change the Code. He discussed the members of the Boards, Commissions and City Council that have a number of years of expertise in planning. He said that he feels that the process starts with the Planning Commission. He said that the Planning Commission's job is to report and review and he would worry about any legal issues.

Mrs. Martin asked if they should wait until the entire Master Plan has been reviewed before they recommend any zoning changes. Mr. Matty said that if a zoning change relates to a certain area the Commission should make the recommendation as they go and then it would be up to City Council to digest it and if they wish to start on it, they can. Mr. Matty said that a zoning change can start from an applicant, it could start from the Planning Commission, or it could start from City Council. He said that the Planning Commission could start a rezoning request if they wish. He said that it could be part of this Master Plan or it does not have to be part of this Master Plan, the Commission has that right.

The Commission further discussed multi-family housing vs. a single family Community. They discussed the Community and how they would like to see it change and/or if they would like to see it change. They discussed the issues of public investment and long term maintenance as it relates to the Master Plan.

Mr. Harvey said that he wanted to discuss re-development. The Commission discussed their views regarding re-developing some of the areas. Mr. Bishop discussed the private sector, properties highest and best use, vacant and under utilized properties. Ms. Brown discussed a lack of cohesive and connected areas. Ms. Arabian and Mr. Long discussed the possibility of people wanting to walk along Detroit Rd. making it pedestrian friendly. Mr. Long said he felt that it would be possible if the City created the experience and made it desirable.

The Commission discussed how realistic the downtown area would be as a walking area as opposed to what is there now. They discussed re-development, traffic patterns, parking situation, streetscapes, and stronger connections between areas. Mr. Bishop said that he likes re-development with or without a Master Plan. He said that without a Master Plan re-development would be done as it is being done now, fragmented, not cohesive, and doesn't follow any path. Ms. Brown said that it is reactionary.

Mr. Bishop said that it does not matter if re-development is wanted or not wanted, if an opportunity exists someone will come and take the opportunity. He said that no one really has that much control over it. Mr. Bishop and Ms. Brown said that the Master Plan helps to stimulate re-development. Ms. Brown said that there is a synergy that comes from the types of projects like Beachcliff Market Square, etc.

The Commission discussed how the City of Rocky River has grown over the years without a Master Plan. They discussed potential development in relation to what the market dictates, office buildings, single family, town homes, etc.

Mr. Harvey said that Rocky River is a single family Community and he is very unhappy that there are multi-family projects going in next to single family residences. Mr. Harvey and Mr. Gustafson discussed the market for multi-family, zoning changes, etc. Mr. Harvey said that the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals could say no to multi-family projects and the variances they require with the current Code, unless they were in the correct zoning area for it, and that would be the end of it. Mr. Matty discussed his views against more density. He said that the market forces are very strong with regards to the density issue. Mr. Bishop said that the benchmark for density is not clear. He said that the market force would not be the developer, it would be the end user, and people are demanding the product. He said that the developer will go forward with a project if there is a demand, and the demographics are causing this evolution. The Commission further discussed new zoning requirements, etc.

Mr. Beirne discussed different aspects of the Master Plan with the Commission Members. Ms. Arabian asked for a zoning map for each of the Members to compare with the Master Plan. The Commission discussed the Marian Ramp, its background, current function, and the issues of emergency vehicle access, traffic flow, etc. Ms. Arabian suggested closing the Ramp for 2 weeks to do a traffic study. Mr. Beirne reminded the Commission that the Ramp is used by the Police and Fire Departments and closing it may present a problem for them.

The Commission Members further discussed their views as they relate to the zoning issue.

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Mr. Long moved to adjourn the meeting and suggested that the Commission continue the discussion next month. Mr. Bishop seconded.

December 21, 2004

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting

PLANNING COMMISSION - DISCUSSION – City of Rocky River Master Plan – topic: Old Detroit Road, Middle Detroit Road, and Linda Street.

Mr. Harvey asked the Commission Members how they wanted to proceed with the Master Plan discussions. Ms. Brown said that it was her understanding that the Commission Members decided last month that they would like to try to use the directives as the framework from which to discuss the Plan. Ms. Arabian said that she feels that the directives do a very good job of summarizing each section.

Ms. Brown said that she feels that Old Detroit, Middle Detroit and Linda Street is really a complicated area. She said that she feels that they should start with something a lot more straight-forward, like Hilliard Blvd. or Center Ridge until the Commission gets into a groove. Mr. Harvey said that the Commission cannot change the area being discussed because it is on the agenda for Old Detroit, Middle Detroit and Linda St. Mr. Gustafson said that this is the most complicated of all the sections in the Master Plan, but the Commission was asked to prepare for this section and some members have made notes and are prepared to discuss the Detroit Linda Section.

Mrs. Martin asked if it is the City's intention to use eminent domain to implement the Master Plan. Mr. Hotz said that he has attended many Council meetings and the Master Plan has received a whole lot of attention at those meetings. He said that he has attended Committee of the Whole sessions and participated in discussions by Council. He said that he has also seen presentations by City Architecture and that particular term, eminent domain, has never been raised. Mr. Hotz said that eminent domain has not been raised in terms of a planning tool. Mr. Long said that he knows for a fact that eminent domain was never raised at any of the Master Plan meetings.

Mrs. Martin asked what vehicle the City intended use to procure the land for the Master Plan. Ms. Arabian and Ms. Brown said that it would be procured by private developers. Ms. Brown said that once the Master Plan is in place and the developers know what the City's intentions are, the developers will do it. Mr. Gustafson said that would be providing the zoning changes accompany the Master Plan and favor it.

Mr. Harvey said that he thinks that some type of tax incentive would also promote private development. Ms. Brown said that Kory Koran said that Rocky River has never had to offer tax incentives in the past. The Commission further discussed tax incentives.

The Commission discussed the possible connection between areas. Ms. Brown said that the connections would not have to be physical, they could be a visual connection or a synergy connection. She said that the connections are a planning tool, nothing specific or direct.

Mr. Harvey asked the Commission Members how they wanted to proceed. Ms. Arabian asked if they should make motions on each of the directives. Mr. Harvey said that he felt that they should make a motion on each directive to keep things organized for City Council. Mr. Long suggested

that the Commission look at all of the directives and make a general recommendation on them, and if they find one of them that the Commission does not particularly find necessary or amenable they could say that they do not recommend that one.

Mr. Hotz said that he would like to make a suggestion to the Commission. He said that Mr. Long's suggestion made sense. He said that he had seen some confusion on the part of the participants throughout the process of the development of the Master Plan as far as what was really trying to be decided. He said that he believes what is being looked at, is concepts in general as to the direction that the City would like to move in terms of development, as opposed to necessarily specific items. Mrs. Martin said that she would like to see the directives taken individually. Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that it makes more sense to look at the exceptions rather than take each directive and all agree with everything that they are talking about. He said that he felt that the Commission should discuss only the exceptions, the things that they do not agree with.

Mrs. Martin said that Mr. Hotz, Ms. Brown and Mr. Long all said that the use of eminent domain had never been discussed in the Master Plan meetings. Mrs. Martin said that Mr. Harvey said that eminent domain had been brought up. Mr. Harvey said that it was not brought up at any formal meetings and it was not part of this process. He said that it was part of an informal discussion not part of the Master Plan discussions.

Ms. Arabian said that there is a lot of land that is parking right now behind Beachcliff Market Square and she said that to develop the vacant land is a good idea. She said that if a developer would be interested in doing something with that land conducive to the new Beachcliff Market Square that would be great. She said that she believes that redevelopment would be a good thing. Mrs. Martin asked who owns the property between Beachcliff Market Square and the railroad tracks. Mr. Beirne said that Beachcliff Market Square owns that land and they are already planning to develop it.

Mr. Harvey discussed the cost of building a parking garage, etc. He said that he agrees that vacant property should go away and more businesses should be created if Mr. Koran and the rest of the team can get businesses to come in.

Ms. Arabian, Mrs. Martin, and Mr. Gustafson further discussed the areas affected by the redevelopment directive. Mr. Beirne said that the Master Plan only shows conceptually what could be done. He said that if someone comes in and tries to build, make zoning changes, etc., according to that directive they still have to come before this Commission. He said that this Master Plan is basically just a guide to give a developer an idea for a good way to develop a property. He said that the Master Plan makes suggestions that may lure a developer into the City with their projects. Ms. Arabian said that this is not a plan that says exactly what should be done with every piece of property in the City. She said that it is just a concept that shows if a piece of vacant property could be redeveloped, and the zoning is appropriate, a developer who wants to come in and propose something would have that opportunity. Mr. Beirne said that the Master Plan is just an idea of what the City would like to see.

Mr. Harvey asked Mr. Gustafson if there was anything in the Master Plan that really concerned him. Mr. Gustafson said if the Commission agrees that a certain acreage should be developed is that where they should really end, and anything that comes out of that should be considered case by case, because it will still come to the Planning Commission, so they would not have to go any deeper.

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Ms. Brown said that really the only thing that the Members are agreeing with is the concept of the directive. Mr. Gustafson said that all the Members know that, but the directive would be one of the ideal solutions. Ms. Brown said that it is one of many ideal solutions. Mr. Long said that the concept was used as an illustration of what could happen. Ms. Arabian said that there are many details in the plan that she does not agree with, but she knows that the plan is not set in stone that a developer would have to choose either Plan "A" or "B". She said that if land is vacant and could be either developed or redeveloped there would be an opportunity to do that. Mr. Gustafson said that the whole Plan says something about density though. Ms. Arabian said that the Planning Commission would not be approving a specific Density Plan. Mr. Gustafson said that it may lead to that, would it not. Ms. Arabian said that she does not think so.

Mr. Harvey asked what City Council would be passing in legislation regarding this Master Plan, would it be the directives or the entire Master Plan. Mrs. Martin said that it is her understanding that City Council will be passing a section at a time. She said that originally Council wanted the Planning Commission to pass this whole thing at once. Mr. Beime said that City Council has already agreed to refer this Master Plan to Planning for your recommendation. Mr. Long said that the Planning Commission is referring a section at a time so that the City Council can departmentalize this, so that they can see what the Planning Commission had to say about each section rather than trying to digest the whole Master Plan at one time.

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street to redevelop vacant and under-utilized properties and properties with incompatible uses. Ms. Arabian seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

Ms. Arabian said that the next directive would be to improve traffic patterns. She said that a lot of traffic patterns in that area have already been done. She asked if it has all been done. Ms. Arabian asked Mr. Beime what existing traffic patterns are being looked at to be improved. Mr. Beime said that Depot St. has been made a two-way street with parking on it. He said that Detroit Rd. at the far east end now has parking on both sides of the street. He said that according to the Master Plan it looks like there may be some potential landscape beautification in the center of the intersection, some tree plantings, lighting, etc. Ms. Arabian said that a lot has been done already but there is always room for improvement.

Mr. Harvey made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street to improve traffic patterns. Mrs. Martin seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street to rework Detroit Rd. and key intersections. Ms. Arabian seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

Mr. Harvey and Mr. Gustafson discussed concept, density, and concentration in the Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street area. They discussed compatibility with the whole Master Plan. Mr. Gustafson said that density has to be a major guideline. Mr. Harvey discussed

changing the Code and density issues. He said that the Code would have to be altered after the Master Plan is approved by City Council. Mr. Harvey said that he thought that the Commission was going to stay with generalizations so the Commission, as a body, could get the conceptual issues out of the way. He said that they will get back to specifics as they come before the Commission. Ms. Arabian said that she agrees that they cannot look at every detail and every number of parking spaces, etc. Ms. Arabian said that the Commission can make recommendations within a directive.

Mr. Gustafson further discussed density. He said that higher density would be more revenue for the City but is higher density what the Commission really wants. He discussed multi-family vs. single family homes with regard to taxes, density, etc.

Ms. Arabian said that the next directive is remove Lake Road Ramp. She said that she does not know if she would want to recommend that. Mr. Harvey said that he would not recommend it. Mrs. Martin said that the Ramp is owned by the State of Ohio and the justification to remove it was that only approximately 3,000 cars a day use it. Mr. Long said that it was reduced traffic volume. Ms. Brown and Mr. Long said that in this case this would be a specific directive. They said that this would be something that the Commission could decide if they wanted it or not. Mr. Long said that the rationale behind it is that it would free up a significant space that could be built on. Ms. Brown said that it would eliminate a huge barrier from one of the surrounding neighborhoods to what would hopefully become a walk-able downtown area.

Mrs. Martin asked if the City knows if taking down the Ramp could even be done. Ms. Brown and Mr. Long said that Mr. Koran has had discussions with the State regarding the Ramp. Ms. Brown said that ODOT told Mr. Koran that if the City pays for the land and does a traffic study that would support it, then it could be done. Mr. Gustafson said that those 3,000 cars would then be on Linda St. to get to Detroit or Wooster.

The Commission discussed the history of the Ramp and the surrounding area. They discussed what optional traffic patterns could be used if the Ramp would be removed.

Mr. Harvey said that he gets the conceptual issue of tying in the neighborhoods but he would like to understand in his mind what would happen if something he thinks is useful, like the Ramp, would go away. He said that he is trying to figure out what is really behind pushing a project to remove a useful piece of road. He said that the Commission should weigh the benefits. He said to recommend Mr. Koran's plan to get rid of a road in a vacuum does not make any sense. He said that the Ramp has been there for 40 some years and it is an established piece of concrete.

Ms. Arabian said that the Commission may want to reword the directive. She suggested that it could be changed to *The Possibility of Removing the Lake Road Ramp*. She said that she would feel more comfortable voting yes to recommend a possibility, even though she knows that the whole Master Plan is a possibility. Mr. Beime suggested instead of a possibility it could be recommended conditioned upon further study. The Commission agreed with a further study condition.

Ms. Arabian made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street to consider the removal of the Lake Road Ramp pending further investigation and study of the implications of the removal. Mr. Harvey seconded.

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2 Ayes – 2 Nays (Martin, Harvey) - *Not Recommended* -

Mrs. Martin said that the next directive is to enhance Detroit and Linda streetscapes. Mr. Harvey said that he believes that is underway now. Mr. Beirne said that Ed Hom's building on Detroit, where Ingersol Hardware is located, has had a complete exterior renovation. He said that the back of the Rimi building has been renovated. He said that Beachcliff Market Square has a project pending. He said that several old houses have been taken down and 2 new office buildings have been constructed on Linda Street.

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street to encourage property owners, commercial, private, and residential owners, and the City to continue enhancing the streetscape at Detroit Rd. and Linda St. Ms. Arabian seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

Ms. Brown said that the next directive is to provide stronger building frontage. Mr. Long said that this was brought out to reverse the trend that has been happening over the last 20 years to move the buildings back from Detroit Rd. not bringing them closer to the walkways. He said that any kind of renovation would be encouraged to move the structures away from the street and put parking behind the buildings.

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street to encourage stronger building frontage where appropriate. Ms. Arabian seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

Ms. Brown discussed segregating and integrating the neighborhoods. She said that the overall intention is to encourage walking traffic by making connections to Downtown and the surrounding homes. The Commission discussed different ways to make connections within the City. Mr. Gustafson discussed the European concept that people gravitate to those districts where the brick streets are closed off, where there are all kinds of things going on drawing people from all over. He discussed that concept for Old Detroit Rd., he said that there is nothing like it to create connections.

Mr. Harvey made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street to create stronger connections within neighborhood and to surrounding neighborhoods. Mrs. Martin seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

January 18, 2005

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting

PLANNING COMMISSION - DISCUSSION – City of Rocky River Master Plan – topic: Yacht Club Basin

Ms. Arabian said that she feels that the 1st directive in the Yacht Club Basin section of the Master Plan is incredibly vague. Ms. Brown said that one of the Task Force Members made the

astute comment that while living in Rocky River you rarely see the River. She said that she believes that the directive meant that they would like to find a way to make it more integral and easier access to the River, to actually see the River. Ms. Brown said that they did not want to put in a development guideline, they wanted it to be more of a goal. Ms. Arabian said that Directives 1 and 3 are very similar. Ms. Brown said that the infrastructure of the Yacht Club Basin could be improved. Mr. Beirne said that the sidewalks and streets could definitely be improved. He said that the City would like to correct the "hair-pin" turn on Riverdale. He said that they may need to acquire more land to take care of that situation.

Mrs. Martin and Mr. Harvey discussed the small and unique parcels in the Yacht Club area. They discussed the private walkways near the Bridge Building. Mr. Gustafson said that it sounds like everyone is assuming that public access to the River is a good thing and he disagrees with that. He said that he feels that the Yacht Club area is under the general topic of water. He said that in Rocky River we have 2 priceless assets, Bradstreets Landing and Rocky River Park that he feels are more desirable than the River.

Mr. Gustafson discussed cost benefit in putting the incremental dollar in Rocky River in regards to water. He said that he would put the dollars into the 2 assets that we already own, and probably it would be Bradstreets Landing, because it is so much more desirable than the River. He said that the River is noisy and it smells. He said that he has a problem with a greater access to the River concept.

Mr. Gustafson said that he is not referring to the property above the River area, the vantage looking out over the River. He said that is vastly different than giving people access down to the River. Mrs. Martin said that the view is great from 40' above the River.

Mr. Gustafson said that the Yacht Club Basin is the worst infrastructure in Rocky River. He said that the hair-pin turn is the worst roadway in the City. He said that he feels that is a high priority. Mrs. Martin said that the City is doing another feasibility study. Mr. Gustafson said that a restaurant in that area would create traffic that could not be accommodated by the roadways down there. Ms. Arabian agreed that a restaurant would not be a good idea.

Mr. DeCapua and Mr. Aron, Representatives of the Homeowners Association for the Yacht Club Basin were present. Mr. DeCapua said that they both live in the Yacht Club Basin and they have put in a lot of time talking with the Mayor and the City Administration regarding improvements for this area. He said that the City has invested about \$19,000 or \$20,000 in a feasibility study to correct the roadways in the basin for fire equipment & school bus access.

Mr. DeCapua gave a brief history of the River Valley for the Commission and discussed different issues as they relate to this unique area. He also discussed future redevelopment of the area with the Members. Mr. DeCapua said that as far as access to the general public, that should have happened 50 years ago because now it is all privately owned. He said that Rocky River already has a lot of parks throughout the City.

Mr. DeCapua said that the Yacht Club Basin is an area with great promise, and they have seen some of it happen already, and it will continue if the City goes forward with their plans regarding access. Mrs. Martin said that she is concerned that the City would have to use eminent domain to turn this area into anything greater than the residential area that it is. Mr. DeCapua said that the issue of eminent domain has not come up yet, but if providing a safer environment or at least the same safe environment that exists throughout the other parts of Rocky River, then that may

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have to be done. He said that there are some properties in the Yacht Club Basin that are old and have seen better days, and possibly should be replaced so that better services could be provided in that area.

Ms. Brown and Mr. DeCapua discussed what would be needed from the City to improve the infrastructure. Mr. DeCapua said that he feels that the private sector would be taking care of improving the area once the infrastructure is in place. He discussed the discouragements that exist currently in the area, no sidewalks, the narrow roads, etc. Mrs. Martin said that once they pave the streets the neighborhoods seem to follow with additional improvements.

Ms. Brown asked how long the feasibility study would take. Mr. DeCapua said that McKay Engineering is working on the study right now. He said that he knows that the survey work has been done. The Commission Members and Mr. DeCapua discussed the improvements that the City is intending to make regarding the roadway. They discussed the roadways that would be involved. Mr. DeCapua said that the residents on South Island Dr. do not want their area touched.

Mr. Bishop and Ms. Brown discussed the infrastructure as it relates to the Master Plan. The Commission Members further discussed the possibility of grant money, safety and welfare issues, etc. as they relate to roadways in the Yacht Club Basin.

Mrs. Martins said that if an individual had the ability to put parcels together in the proposed area, then she feels that the City should encourage the redevelopment of the land. Mr. Harvey asked if the Commission felt that they could support Directive #3, *Provide Opportunities for Views and Greater Public Access to the River*. Mrs. Martin said that she does not feel that she could support that at this time.

Mr. Gustafson said that there are 2 different issues, views and access. He said that the City owns 2 lots located on the west side of Yacht Club Dr., on the bank above the hair pin turn. He suggested that the City could perhaps do something with that land to satisfy the view concept. Ms. Brown suggested that they make it a priority with the feasibility study if a little bit of land could be freed up the City could turn it into a view, a connection to this area. She said that the City should take advantage of opportunities when they are presented. Mr. Harvey suggested that the Commission consider recommending views and not greater public access to the River.

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Master Plan regarding the Yacht Club Basin if the opportunity materializes, based upon the results of the feasibility study that includes Yacht Club Dr. and Riverdale Dr. as it relates to development and re-working improvements of the current infrastructure by McKay Engineering as authorized by City Council in December, 2004, address the opportunities for increased public view and accessibility of the River utilizing existing City property. Ms. Arabian seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

February 15, 2005
Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting
Master Plan Discussion Prior Minutes' Clarification

Mr. Harvey opened the February 15, 2005 Meeting of the Planning Commission and called the meeting to order. Mr. Harvey asked if anyone had any corrections, additions or deletions regarding the January 18, 2005 minutes.

Mr. Gustafson said that he would like to refer to the last paragraph, the motion for the Master Plan discussion regarding the Yacht Club Basin. He said that he is not sure that what it says in the motion reflected in the minutes agrees with the Commission's intention.

Mr. Gustafson moved to **hold** the January 18, 2005 minutes until next months meeting. He requested that Mrs. Martin clarify the motion and amend it as she feels the motion was intended. Ms. Arabian seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Abstain (Long)

March 1, 2005 at the Special Planning Commission meeting Mrs. Martin amended the original motion referred to above as follows:

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Section of the Master Plan regarding the Yacht Club Basin based on the results of the feasibility study and the re-working improvements of the current infrastructure by McKay Engineering as authorized by City Council in December, 2004, and address the opportunities for increased public view and accessibility to the River utilizing existing City property. Ms. Arabian seconded.

Mr. Gustafson moved to **approve** the January 18, 2005 minutes as amended. Mrs. Martin seconded.

6 Ayes – 0 Nays

February 15, 2005
Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting
PLANNING COMMISSION - DISCUSSION – City of Rocky River Master Plan – topic: Detroit Rd.

Ms. Arabian asked what the statement on page 40, *the use of Code enforcement on many of the properties would do a great deal to rectify these problems*, is referring to. Mr. Beirme said that it is referring to the Property Maintenance Code.

Mr. Beirme said that City Council has recently passed more stringent penalties for those property owners that are in violation of the Property Maintenance Code. He said that they have increased the inspection of rental properties from every 2 years to annually. Mr. Bishop asked if the rental inspections are just the outside. Mr. Beirme said that rental inspections are inside and outside inspections.

Mr. Gustafson asked if the units on the North side of Detroit, East of Wagar are all rental units. Mr. Bishop said that there are both owner occupied and rental units in that area. Mr. Gustafson said that the Master Plan suggests the replacement of outdated apartments. He said that he has never been in the apartments on the North side of Detroit, but in driving by the area he did not see a problem. He said that he has a problem with talking about where people live as being substandard, which he interprets this to be. He said that if he went inside the apartments, maybe he would agree whole heartedly, but from the outside it did not seem to be a problem. Mr.

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Beirne said that the apartments in that area are pretty well maintained on the inside. Mr. Bishop said that the word “substandard” in the real estate business can be taken slightly differently. He said that it can mean up to today’s standard, as far as what the market demands, ADA compliance, etc. He said that they could be referring to the amenities that are substandard.

He said that the market would be looking at what would drive the rental rate, so they may be looking at this differently. He said that in this context he thinks that is what they are trying to say.

Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that the market would drive this if they are really talking about substandard units. He said that the rent would be low and the owner would profit by selling this to be developed, and he guesses that would automatically occur if that was the case. Mr. Bishop said that it is pretty much always market driven. Mr. Gustafson said that maybe it is justified to replace outdated apartments, but in driving by them it did not strike him that way. Mr. Bishop said that there are a lot of “For Rent” signs out. Mrs. Martin said that with the interest rates as low as they are a lot of people buy property. Mr. Bishop said that the newer apartments farther west are also competition for older units. Ms. Arabian said that there are a lot more amenities in the newer apartments, as well. Ms. Arabian asked when the apartments on Detroit near Wagar were built. Mr. Beirne said that they were built in the early 50’s. Mr. Bishop said that the homes in Rocky River with the new room additions are being done because the house is no longer everything they wanted. He said, in this case, with the apartments there is not the same flexibility.

Ms. Martin and Mr. Long discussed the different gateways to the Community.

Ms. Arabian said that the Master Plan mentions improving the intersection at Detroit and Wagar. She said that she does not see how that could be done because there is not much room on the North side of the street. Ms. Arabian said that maybe on the South side it would be more feasible. The Commission Members discussed the Church that is close to the street, the 5 lanes of traffic at that corner, etc. Ms. Arabian said that the bricking on the corner is nice for the aesthetics of it and would dress it up, if that is what the Plan means by improvement. Mrs. Martin said that it is a nice concept. Ms. Arabian said that the curbing on that corner could be improved and she agrees with the overall concept of improving the intersection.

Mrs. Martin and Ms. Arabian said that they agree with the concept of improving the streetscape on Detroit. Mr. Gustafson said that he also agrees with improving the streetscape.

Mr. Bishop made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the section of the Master Plan that refers to the Detroit Rd. area. Ms. Martin seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

March 1, 2005

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting

Master Plan Discussion Prior Minutes’ Clarification

Mr. Harvey opened the March 1, 2005 Special Meeting of the Planning Commission and called the meeting to order. Mr. Harvey asked if Mrs. Martin had clarified the motion in the January 18, 2005 minutes that Mr. Gustafson asked to have clarified.

Mrs. Martin said that she has amended the original motion as follows:

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council the Section of the Master Plan regarding the Yacht Club Basin based on the results of the feasibility study and the re-working improvements of the current infrastructure by McKay Engineering as authorized by City Council in December, 2004, and address the opportunities for increased public view and accessibility to the River utilizing existing City property. Ms. Arabian seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Abstain (Long)

Mr. Gustafson made a motion to **approve** the January 18, 2005 minutes as amended. Mrs. Martin seconded.

6 Ayes – 0 Nays

March 1, 2005

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting

PLANNING COMMISSION - DISCUSSION – City of Rocky River Master Plan – topic:
Wooster Rd., Hilliard Blvd., Center Ridge Rd. East, and Center Ridge Rd. West

Mrs. Martin said that the Planning Commission is looking at the Master Plan as a guideline and will use it as a concept. She said that there will be some rezoning that would have to be done in some cases. She said that Council may be asked to consider making some changes in the Codified Ordinances with regards to future redevelopment throughout the City, density issues, height issues, etc.

Mr. Gustafson said that he drove the entire route today, Wooster, Hilliard and Center Ridge. He said that he feels that the primary thrust of this whole Plan is to convert multi-family rental housing to multi-family owned housing. He said that is his perception of the Master Plan. He said that is not solely what it is doing, but he feels that is the primary focus.

Mr. Bishop said that there are a lot of things that are not accurate in the Master Plan. He said, for example, the Plan calls out multi-family apartments and they are already condominiums. Mr. Bishop said that Pease Dr. is almost 100% condominium. He said that River Oaks is about 75% condominium. The Commission discussed the owner occupied status of the different areas.

Mr. Gustafson discussed the difference in how rental homes are viewed today from when he was young. Mr. Harvey said that he is a proponent of owner occupied housing. Mr. Gustafson said that most people buy homes today, but there are some young people starting out that do not have the equity and renting may be a viable option for them.

Mrs. Martin discussed rental property. She said that interior and exterior maintenance on owner occupied properties is obviously a lot better than it is on rental property. She said that she feels that the City should continue to welcome people who have a need to rent homes in Rocky River. The Commission discussed inflation, interest rates, etc.

Mr. Bishop said that 82% is the maximum that the Country would ever get to for homeownership. He said that right now the Country is at 67% and that is the highest percentage ever in the history of the Country. The Commission discussed rental vs. owner occupied and reasons why some people chose to rent rather than own with regard to a commitment factor, etc.

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Ms. Arabian discussed the current townhomes being constructed in Rocky River. She suggested that more affordable townhomes would be good for young people, or single people buying in Rocky River for the first time. She said that most of the people that come into Rocky River stay in Rocky River. She said that they may start out in an affordable townhome and once they start having a family etc., they move into a larger single family home, but they usually stay in Rocky River. She said that she feels that the Community should not raise the bar so high that the Community cannot attract the younger generation, with soon to be families, that will be attending the Rocky River Schools and paying the property taxes, etc. Mr. Bishop said that the economics for what Ms. Arabian is looking for do not exist in this market. He said that the economics won't work.

Mr. Bishop said that he feels that Rocky River does not have enough product for those who want to stay here. He said that a large percentage of those people will leave because Rocky River does not have enough product to reach the demographic of the "baby boomer" age group.

The Commission discussed the lack of first floor master suites currently available in Rocky River. Mrs. Martin said that she was only able to find 6 condominiums with first floor master suites and that the available units all needed work. Ms. Brown said that she believes the City's goal should be to keep a nice mix of housing. Mrs. Martin asked Ms. Brown if the Master Plan Committee felt that they would like to cut back on the number of rental units in the City, or did they have some concerns about the rental properties. Ms. Brown said that for a Community like Rocky River there are a lot of rental units. Mr. Bishop and Mrs. Martin discussed a number of apartment buildings in the City that have been converted to condominiums. Ms. Brown said that the trend over the years, given what Mr. Bishop and Mrs. Martin are saying, is to go from rental to condominium.

Ms. Brown discussed mandates regarding a Community providing affordable housing. Mrs. Martin said that Rocky River already has affordable housing. Ms. Brown said that the Commission should look long term about these issues.

Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that rental property does not get renovated like owner occupied property does. Mr. Bishop said that in Rocky River the rents that a property owner can get for a property would support the investment. Mr. Bishop discussed the need to have someone driving the City to maintain and preserve the rental properties, tax abatement on improvements or whatever it is. He said that there are a lot of ways to make an economic investment in rental property but right now he feels that it is very fragmented. He said that with all of the little property owners there is no one driving the financing and there is no incentive to renovate the properties.

Mr. Harvey asked if the Commission feels that it would be more advantageous for the City to have the current level of apparently high rental units or encourage more owner occupied condos, townhouses, or other types of dwelling units. He asked the Commission Members which would be better for the City to have. Mr. Harvey said that if the apartment building owners do not keep them up people will not rent them. Mrs. Martin said that the City has inspections on rental units every two years and a now with a recent ordinance change they will be done every year. Mr. Harvey asked if the inspections are outside and inside inspections. Mrs. Martin said that the rental properties are inspected inside and outside. The Commission discussed Point of Sale inspections that are done in other Communities. Mrs. Martin said that by doing the rental inspections the City keeps the aesthetic value of the Community up.

Ms. Brown said that she feels that the rental rates are pretty low in Rocky River compared to other areas. Ms. Arabian said that it would depend on where you are looking. She said that in Westlake a lot of the rental properties are newer and have a lot more amenities.

Ms. Brown said that she is wondering how lucrative it is for these rental property owners to improve their properties when they have an aged product, particularly the buildings along Wooster Rd. She said that she feels that they would not command very high rents in that area and another thing going against them is the low interest rate.

Mrs. Martin said that for example there are times that people take a job transfer to Cleveland and they know that it is temporary so they do not want to buy a house they want to rent, etc. She said that she feels that rental property is lucrative here. She said that she feels that it draws another diverse population that the City would not otherwise have. She said that the City also needs to give the young couples and singles a reason to stay here.

Mr. Gustafson asked if the buildings on Wooster Rd. have been converted to condominiums. Mr. Bishop said that the buildings have all been renovated and sold as individual condominiums. The Commission Members discussed the price, condition and amenities, age of the buildings, etc., of the renovated condominiums along Wooster Rd.

The Commission discussed enhancing the view to the River from Wooster Rd. They discussed the possibility of overlooks, changing traffic patterns, etc. along Wooster Rd.

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council all of the directives in the Master Plan that refer to Wooster Rd. as a guideline and to encourage redevelopment of existing parcels with consideration for future re-zoning and also to enhance Wooster Rd. streetscape and improve traffic patterns. Ms. Arabian seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays

The Commission discussed considering incorporating a commercial area on Hilliard Blvd. Mr. Gustafson said that most of Hilliard is residential and he asked if they really wanted to see office buildings there. He said that the Master Plan may be suggesting commercial since some of Hilliard borders the highway. Ms. Arabian said that commercial office buildings on Hilliard along the highway would remind her of the office buildings at Cedar and Brainard in Beachwood that border 271 and they do not look that attractive. Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that the existing gas stations on Hilliard near Wooster are unappealing.

Ms. Arabian said that she does agree with improving the sense of entry to the City. She asked if the Commission felt that it would be better to remove the residential aspect and put commercial in, or just enhance what is already there east of Wooster on Hilliard. Ms. Brown and Ms. Arabian discussed the existing commercial buildings west of Wooster.

Mrs. Martin said that the Master Plan suggests that the area just west of Wooster could be an office park. Ms. Brown said that it would be a good place for an office park with the access to I-90. Mr. Bishop said that there are no other amenities in that area. Ms. Brown said that there are a couple of commercial restaurants there. She said that it is just something that makes sense looking into the future. She said that it may make a nice entry/gateway to the City. Mr. Bishop

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said that economically he does not feel that would ever happen. The Commission further discussed their views of an office park on Hilliard.

Mr. Harvey said that he feels that an office park may be a good idea. He said that the important thing would be to improve the sense of entry. He said that Hilliard looks very bad coming in from Lakewood. Mrs. Martin said that the wall gives the feeling of being in a tunnel. Mr. Bishop said that the properties from Lakewood to Wooster Rd. are the least maintained properties in the City. He said that he feels that area should be revitalized. Ms. Brown discussed the wide road along Hilliard. Mrs. Martin said that she was under the impression that there was going to be a median put in at that location. The Commission discussed the existing bus stops, sidewalks, etc. along Hilliard east of Wooster and the possible changes that have been proposed for that area. Mr. Gustafson further discussed the possibility of commercial office buildings replacing the gas stations and duplexes west of Wooster.

Mrs. Martin made a motion to **recommend** to City Council all of the directives in the Master Plan that refer to Hilliard Blvd. to consider redevelopment of existing apartment buildings and duplexes east of Wooster Rd., consider the revitalization and/or redevelopment of existing apartments and duplexes with the consideration of alternative uses west of Wooster Rd., revitalize and further develop the Hilliard Blvd. streetscape, create stronger street frontage at the intersection, and improve the sense of entry. Mr. Gustafson seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays

Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that the businesses along Center Ridge are disjointed. He said that nothing flows on the northeast side of Center Ridge. Mrs. Martin said that she is disappointed with the way Center Ridge Rd. looks. She said that she would like to see the City incorporate some type of program to encourage these businesses. She said that one of the businesses up on Center Ridge just put over \$200,000. into the front of their building and it looks fabulous. She said that if more of that type of renovation could be done the aesthetics of that would be unbelievable. Ms. Brown said that it is a really good precedent for that street. Mrs. Martin said that she would like the City to see if there would be any type of incentive program that could be put together for Center Ridge.

Mrs. Martin discussed the vacancies in the Rockport Shopping Center. The Commission discussed the current zoning on Center Ridge, the mix of General Business and Local Business, etc. Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that the businesses in the entire area from Wooster to Wagar should be enhanced and coordinated.

Mr. Bishop said that Mr. Koran did a report to City Council that the offices on Center Ridge Rd. are 90% occupied. Mr. Bishop said that percentage was shocking. Mr. Harvey said that he did not realize that the office space was that heavily occupied. He said that he would like to see the office buildings spruced up along Center Ridge.

Mr. Gustafson said that he did not see a big difference between the buildings east and west of Wagar. He said that he did not see anything that great west of Wagar and it was all the same as far as he was concerned. Ms. Brown said that there was some talk about turning some of the buildings along Center Ridge into loft apartments, but considering the tax base they decided that would not be a good idea.

Mr. Bishop, Ms. Brown, and Mr. Gustafson discussed the parking situation and the drainage issues for many of the businesses along the north side of Center Ridge. Mrs. Martin suggested that there may be some way that the City could encourage the renovation of some of the properties along Center Ridge. Mr. Bishop said that Lakewood had a storefront renovation program that was pretty successful.

Mr. Gustafson made a suggestion that the Fairview Wellness Center at Wooster and Center Ridge be converted to townhouses overlooking the Metro Park. He said that he thought that would be a dynamite project. Mrs. Martin said that in her opinion the Fairview Wellness Center along with Beach School would both need extensive renovation.

Mrs. Martin, Ms. Arabian, and Ms. Brown discussed improved access to the Metro Parks. Mr. Gustafson and Mr. Bishop discussed the access to the Park on Rockcliff. The Commission discussed the pedestrian walking paths, bike paths, etc. Ms. Arabian said that there are some good walking paths but the Commission all agreed that the access could still be improved.

Mrs. Martin said that there is a lot of commercial focus in the Master Plan. She said that she does realize the tax base for commercial property, but what ever happened to the idea that Rocky River is considered a small quaint bedroom community. She said that in every Section of the Master Plan there is a promo of commercial and she is not sure that is the direction the City really wants to go. Mr. Bishop said that the tax base would actually depend upon income levels.

The Commission discussed the importance of zoning. They all agreed that the City's zoning should be in line with the Master Plan. They discussed the process of rezoning, spot zoning, etc.

Mrs. Martin moved to **recommend** the concept of the directives in the Master Plan referring to Center Ridge Rd. East with the following guidelines; coordinating the redevelopment and revitalization of Center Ridge Road from Wooster Road west to Wagar Rd. by offering assistance to current stakeholders to enhance commercial uses. Provide a stronger sense of community identity at district gateways. Redevelop the point area at Center Ridge Rd. and Wooster Rd. Improve the linkages to Metropark. Develop design guidelines for parking lot screening. Enhance Center Ridge Road streetscape. She said, in addition to the directives, consider the property located on Wooster Rd. known as Fairview Wellness Center for possible residential development. Mr. Gustafson seconded.

5 Ayes – 0 Nays

The Commission discussed the different townhouse, condominium and apartment dwellings along Center Ridge Rd. They discussed the excellent condition of many of the buildings on Pease Dr., etc. They discussed the Board of Education property on Center Ridge. Mr. Bishop said that his first question would be how the City could support and enhance any recreational facilities that are privately owned.

Ms. Brown said that the two very doable things that she sees on the West side of Center Ridge that are very similar to Center Ridge East are the cohesiveness and upgrading the businesses on the North side of the street, and the redevelopment on River Oaks Dr. which is already happening. Mr. Bishop said that it is going to be tough to get it done because of the condos on River Oaks.

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Mrs. Martin moved to **recommend** the concept of the directives in the Master Plan referring to Center Ridge Rd. West from Wagar Rd. west to the Westlake City Line with the following guidelines. Enhance commercial uses along North side of Center Ridge Rd. Enhance Center Ridge Rd. streetscape and parking lot screening where possible. Provide stronger sense of community identity at district gateways. Consider renovation and/or redevelopment of apartment buildings on River Oaks Dr. She said that the Commission would like to exclude the directive to support and enhance existing recreational facilities. Exclude create opportunities for expanded park space. Exclude Pease Dr. for renovation and/or redevelopment. Mr. Bishop seconded.

5 Ayes - 0 Nays

March 15, 2005

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting

PLANNING COMMISSION - DISCUSSION – City of Rocky River Master Plan – topic:
Summary and Conclusion.

Mr. Harvey said that City Council would like a clarification on the Planning Commission's recommendation for the Yacht Club Basin section of the Master Plan with regards to public access. Mr. Gustafson said that this Commission's recommendation was to encourage increasing the visual overlook to the River. He said that they did not intend to encourage public access to the River, just opportunities for increased views of the River. The Commission agreed that they did not want to increase the physical access to the River, because the majority of the Yacht Club Basin is private property so it would not be practical or desirable. Mr. Harvey and Ms. Arabian said that the Planning Commission was not suggesting the acquisition or purchase of private property. They said that their intention would be to only utilize existing City property.

Mr. Harvey said that he hopes that this would clarify the Planning Commission's recommendation for City Council. He said that he wanted this issue clarified this evening so that City Council could move forward with the Master Plan. He said that if Council had any further questions regarding the matter they could attend the April Planning Commission meeting and the Commission would be happy to answer any question.

Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that there are 3 major things in the Master Plan that the Planning Commission does not agree with. He said that it was his understanding that the Planning Commission did not want to recommend greater public access to the Rocky River, the elimination of the Marion Ramp, and replacement of multi-family housing surrounding Pease Dr. Mr. Gustafson said that there may have been other little things that have been mentioned but he feels that those are the 3 major items that the Commission does not want to support.

Mr. Harvey said that the Planning Commission has discussed all of the different sections of the Master Plan and they are at the conclusion of their discussions. The Members discussed how they wanted to proceed with the conclusion. Several of the Members submitted a draft of their own synopsis of the discussions regarding the Master Plan.

Ms. Arabian said that the Planning Commission has recommended most of the directives in the Master Plan. She said that they have altered some of them and some they have excluded. She said that she feels that they should specifically address only the altered and excluded directives in their conclusion. She said that she did not feel that they needed to go into detail about the directives that they agreed with. The Commission Members agreed with her.

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Ms. Brown asked if the Planning Commission's decision not to recommend the removal of the Marion Ramp was unanimous. Mr. Gustafson said that it was unanimous. Ms. Arabian said that they would like to go back over the meeting minutes to see which directives the Commission altered or excluded to be sure that they do not miss any of them when they summarize their conclusion of the Master Plan.

The Planning Commission Members discussed the importance of proper re-zoning with regards to the Master Plan. The Members all agreed that the zoning issue is a key issue. Ms. Brown said that the Plan really cannot be implemented unless zoning is addressed. Ms. Brown and Mr. Bishop said that they feel that proper zoning is imperative and they would like City Council to know that this Commission is aware of the zoning issues and supports and understands rezoning with regards to the Master Plan.

The Commission discussed spot zoning, mixed use zoning, etc. Ms. Brown said that the Codified Ordinances need to be reviewed, but they do not have to be totally revamped to fit the Master Plan. The Commission Members discussed the last time the Codified Ordinances were revised. Mrs. Martin said that the City revised the Codifieds in-house in the 80's. She said that it was reviewed a section at a time, each section was reviewed by the Law Department and went before Council for their approval, and the process took about a year.

The Commission discussed residential single family housing, multi-family housing, commercial development, tax base, economics, different development opportunities, etc. They suggested that they could summarize the conclusion of their Master Plan discussions at next months meeting. All of the Members agreed that would be a good idea.

Ms. Arabian said that the Commission would submit their conclusion next month.

April 19, 2005

Minutes of Planning Commission Meeting

PLANNING COMMISSION - DISCUSSION – City of Rocky River Master Plan – topic:
Summary and Conclusion.

Ms. Arabian submitted a draft of the summary of the Planning Commission's review of the Master Plan. Mr. Long said that the summary was very nicely done, concise and to the point.

Mr. Harvey said that the summary that Ms. Arabian has submitted is an excellent document but he would like to table it until next month because two of the Planning Commission Members are absent this evening and he would like all of the members present for the conclusion. The Commission Members agreed.

Mr. Harvey moved to **table** the discussion of the conclusion and summary of the Master Plan review. He said that along with the minutes a draft copy of the summary that was submitted by Ms. Arabian will be provided to be reviewed by this Commission pending a final approval when the Planning Commission Members are all present at the next meeting. Mr. Bishop seconded.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays – 1 Abstain (Long)

May 24, 2005

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PLANNING COMMISSION - DISCUSSION – City of Rocky River Master Plan – topic: Summary and Conclusion.

Mr. Harvey said that the summary and conclusion that Ms. Arabian drafted is very well done. He said that he had one concern with regard to the last page of the draft under Ancillary Recommendations, he would like to make sure that any zoning changes are done by the Law Director, at the advise of Council and the Economic Development Director, as opposed to an outside source. He said that other than that, he felt the draft was concise and very well done.

Mr. Gustafson said that he feels that the Summary and Conclusion should be more in the form of an Executive Summary with bullets, and they should be as simple as possible, as few words as possible to simplify it. Mr. Gustafson gave the Commission Members a handout of the Executive Summary that he drafted for their review. He said that the Members agreed that they would discuss what they would not recommend or the directives they would like to change in the Master Plan. He said that a lot of the same language in the directives is repeated in the motions, so he felt that they should simplify it to only include recommended changes or the directives that the Commission did not want to recommend.

Mr. Matty said that the Commission should use the draft that tracks the actual motions that were made. Ms. Arabian said that she went over the minutes from all of the meetings regarding the Master Plan and followed the motions so that everything would be consistent. Mr. Matty said that if Ms. Arabian's draft follows the motions that were made during the meetings, that should be the document they submit to summarize and conclude the Master Plan recommendation from the Planning Commission.

Mr. Harvey said that Mr. Gustafson put a lot of work into his summary. The Commission Members discussed the drafts that have been submitted. They agreed to include Ms. Arabian's draft with the minutes.

Ms. Arabian moved to **recommend** the Master Plan as summarized in the attached statement that she has prepared and to include Mr. Bishop's following statements to further explain the purpose of the Master Plan. Mr. Bishop said that the Master Plan shall serve in part as a catalyst for future economic development. He said that it shall act to sustain and promote the economic vitality of the Community. He said that it shall serve to leverage public participation with the private sector. Mr. Bishop seconded the motion.

4 Ayes – 0 Nays

January 18, 2005

Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Committee

Mr. Potterfield introduced the first topic of discussion, **Planning Commission recommendations concerning the proposed Master Plan.** He explained that the Plan is large and detailed, and by general consent, the Planning Commission has decided to review it by sections. At the November meeting, their intent was a general overview and discussion of the Detroit-Linda St. area.

Mr. Potterfield commented that there is a great deal involved, and he agrees with the approach taken by the commission, to review section by section. His committee will try to keep up with the speed of the review. He believes in looking at the concept as opposed to specific details, i.e. as a package of ideas that could be done. Rocky River has never had a Master Plan per se, and

because the City is 99+% developed, changes and growth will come about through redevelopment. The Plan has focused basically on nine areas, most of which are commercial in nature with some residential, or multi-family residential. Mr. Potterfield sees nothing that addresses changes increasing single-family properties. In reviewing the minutes, he noted that the Planning Commission has as many opinions as Council. All these different viewpoints have a commonality in wishing for what is the best for the City and its long-term goals. He then turned to the City's Economic and Community Development Director, Mr. Koran for his comments.

Mr. Koran agreed with all the comments made by Mr. Potterfield. The Planning Commission is reviewing the Plan chapter by chapter. The November meeting did not look at many specifics, but in December, they started with the focus areas. Mr. Koran agreed that everyone may be coming from a different direction, but all had a common goal of improving the City in the long run.

Mr. Gollinger agreed that there is no question that this is a complex work being addressed. He views this Plan as a "road map rather than a Bible", a direction that the City would be interested in taking. He commented that bringing development to fruition is basically an issue of price and profitability. Things are happening on an on-going basis to upgrade properties within the areas studied.

Mrs. Bartolozzi commented that the Planning Commission is doing an excellent job of narrowing the focus, noting their discussions of zoning ordinances. She looks forward to further specific recommendations. She agreed that it is an evaluation of ideas, and that each body thinks of what is best for the City.

Mrs. Bobst is following the review of the Master Plan document. Using a set of assumptions, it creates a function for plans in each of nine focus areas. This is based upon sound information with which Council agrees. Ahead, documentation will be needed that supports that in terms of rezoning or redevelopment, based upon salient information. Noting that density may be an issue, she feels that density is driven by the market place—not the developer, but the end user. As to zoning, she indicated that she does not feel everything should be rezoned now, but as projects are presented, if Council feels they are still in the best interests of the City, rezoning may be considered.

Mr. Potterfield voiced two concerns:

(1) In looking at the Plan, he noticed that some major changes were proposed on major streets, e.g. a reduction of traffic lanes on Detroit, Wooster and Center Ridge. He asked the Administration, at some point in the next two months, to request comments from the Police Chief and the Fire Chief as to the impact of those changes on traffic and fire safety. Removal of turning lanes on Center Ridge and on Wooster could create challenges. Changing the density and type of structures found in the City could affect fire safety with existing equipment.

(2) A number of developers, whose interest is appreciated by Mr. Potterfield, are referencing the Master Plan in justifying and promoting their plans. He needs to remind them that the Plan is being reviewed, and when adopted, is not "etched in stone".

Mrs. Bobst asked if the Plan can be reviewed in the context of infrastructure and its ability to support such development. There could be desirable development where the cost exceeds the benefit to the community in terms of infrastructure considerations, e.g. storm and sanitary sewers.

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Mrs. Bartolozzi agreed, but noted that some areas are or will be in need of improvement anyway and improvements may be made in conjunction with proposed projects.

- Mr. Koran reported that the Mayor had asked him to explore a new grant program of NOACA regarding transportation studies. One good idea may be a study of the impact of the removal of the Marion ramp on traffic in the area. Should the City decide to proceed, a traffic analysis would be required. It may also be possible to ask NOACA to study the impact of the Master Plan on the infrastructure. He reminded Council that this was a Master Plan group and their visions. Center Ridge may never have a median, but the concept is the need to beautify our streets. It might be a good idea to ask NOACA to look at the impact of these proposals to level the enthusiasm generated by the proposals.

As to Mr. Potterfield's concern of developers referencing the Master Plan, Mr. Koran assured him that once the Plan is adopted, developers will continue to reference their consistency with the Plan, even if the plan is to have a park on property where they propose construction. It will be the job of the City and Council to determine whether or not any given proposal is in the best interests of the City.

Regarding Mrs. Bobst's concern, he recalled that she had posed the question earlier, and that his answer is that City Architecture does not have the capability of assessing the ability of the infrastructure to support given projects. They formulated a wish list of everyone's dream.

Mrs. Bobst recalled posing the question and thought perhaps such assessments could be done in-house. Mr. Koran agreed that it could be done, on a case-by-case basis.

Mr. Potterfield reiterated the importance of his comments and the need to make it clear to the public

Mr. Gollinger agreed that the Plan should be a guideline; if a developer comes forward with a plan that would enhance and accomplish the objectives of the Plan, even if not specifically suggested, it should be given serious consideration. The Plan should be flexible because ideas and times change.

February 22, 2005

Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Committee

The final topic was **Planning Commission recommendations on the Master Plan**. Mr. Potterfield indicated that the Planning Commission discussion in question would be the meeting of December 21, the last approved minutes available. He expressed his intention to review the Plan in general terms rather than minute details. Since the Commission has reviewed section by section, the committee decided to follow suit and look at their recommendations point by point. Mr. Potterfield was hopeful that the Committee can keep pace with the Planning Commission, deciding to agree or disagree with their conclusions.

The first area to be reviewed is the Old Detroit, Middle Detroit and Linda Street area, and specifically the point was redevelopment of vacant and under-utilized properties.

- Mr. Gollinger agreed with Mr. Beime who is quoted in the minutes of the Planning Commission as saying that "the Master Plan is basically just a guide to give a developer an idea for a good way to develop a property." Noting that this is one of the City's major commercial areas, ideas for development are very important.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mr. Gollinger, that the committee recommend to Council the first recommendation of the Planning Commission, the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd., Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street, to redevelop vacant and under-utilized properties with incompatible uses.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye
3 ayes 0 nays PASSED

The second point was improvement of traffic patterns in the area. Mr. Potterfield expressed reservations because under the Master Plan, there has not been a traffic study by traffic engineers or comments by the Police and Fire Departments. He has no problem with beautification of the area, but he feels that adequate traffic flow is necessary.

Mrs. Bartolozzi feels that the recommendation can move forward without a study and that it is not necessary prior to approval or recommendation.

Mr. Gollinger agreed, saying that at this point, a study may be premature. This is part of the Plan, and he does not feel there is a time frame. Beautification is the initial step, and he has no problem supporting the those recommendations with discussion of future traffic studies, when necessary, upon implementation of development plans.

Mr. Potterfield has concerns, but does not wish to slow the process.

- Mrs. Bobst commented that she understands Mr. Potterfield's concerns, but pointed out that rather than move traffic through quickly, it may be the intent to slow it down so that the public can see the area and take advantage of accessible parking. A future study may be important, but development is something unknown at present.
- Mr. Potterfield agreed that some may want to experience the environment, but others may wish to get to their destination and move on.
- Mrs. Bartolozzi felt that people do not mind moving slowly as long as traffic is not bogged down and at a standstill.
- Mr. Potterfield agreed, noting that such a situation leads to impatience and shortcuts which impact secondary streets by diverting traffic into non-development areas.
- Mr. Gollinger also agreed. He feels that ultimately, it is necessary to look at the area when changes have been completed. He recommended a close watch to be sure that the area is not losing appeal during the process.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mrs. Bartolozzi, that, as recommended by the Planning Commission, the Master Plan regarding Old Detroit Rd, Middle Detroit Rd., and Linda Street to improve traffic patterns, as well as the plan to rework Detroit Road and key intersections be recommended to Council.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye
3 ayes 0 nays PASSED

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The third point, removal of the Lake Road Ramp, was not recommended by the Commission. Mr. Potterfield summarized by saying that additional studies of requirements, the impact of removing it, and safety considerations in Police and Fire entry and egress. He noted there was a 2-2 stalemate.

- Mr. Gollinger agreed with the non-recommendation until the impact of the new shopping area is seen in the Detroit corridor. To be successful, this area must pull more traffic from Lakewood. The State of Ohio would have no problem with the removal, but he recommended that we “cross that bridge” when it comes.
- Mrs. Bartolozzi remarked that even if removal is not recommended, that does not mean that it cannot be considered in the future. As circumstances change, the issue can be reconsidered.
- Mr. Potterfield felt there were too many questions for the Planning Commission to recommend the removal of the ramp at this time.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mr. Gollinger, that, concurring with the Planning Commission, the removal of the Lake Road ramp be not recommended for the Master Plan.
Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye
3 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

At this point, Mr. Potterfield asked for a break and that the last three issues be reserved for discussion at the next meeting. He suggested a meeting within the next two weeks to keep abreast of the considerations of the Planning Commission. Committee members agreed.

March 10, 2005

Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Committee

Mr. Potterfield then opened the discussion of the **Planning Commission recommendations on the Master Plan** which he noted was a continuation of the previous meeting. Referring to the motions recorded on page 18 of the minutes of the Commission of December 21, 2004, Mr. Potterfield raised the next point, which was a recommendation in the Old Detroit, Middle Detroit and Linda St. to encourage property owners, commercial, private, and residential owners, and the City to continue enhancing the streetscape.

- Mr. Potterfield explained briefly that this referred to the area at Detroit and Linda.
- Mr. Gollinger noted that this is a benign issue when the funds are in place to develop the streetscape, it will be beneficial to businesses and residents to maintain it.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mr. Gollinger, that the committee recommend to Council the recommendation of the Planning Commission to encourage property owners to continue enhancing the streetscape.
Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye
4 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

The second directive considered was to encourage stronger building frontage where appropriate which was recommended by the Planning Commission. Mr. Potterfield commented that for the last 20 years, businesses have been moving back from Detroit. This would encourage future

renovations or construction to move toward the front of the lot with parking behind. This would only be done where feasible.

- Mrs. Bobst pointed out that it could occur with banks, as in River Square Shopping Center, and other outbuildings being closer to the street.
- Mr. Gollinger indicated that new buildings could be repositioned and old ones grandfathered.

Mr. Potterfield commented that this is for new structures as opposed to renovations.

- Mr. Hurtuk cited the example of Taylor Motors which was for sale for some time before the Beachcliff Market Square project. If someone had bought it and wanted to build another type of business on the lot, with current setback regulations, that small lot would have been unbuildable without many variances. Each case must be considered separately
- Mr. Gollinger proposed the possibility of not recommending this for the entire area, leaving out Linda St.

Mrs. Bartolozzi felt that it could be encouraged where appropriate, and that the directive leaves room. At the time of a proposal, the case could be reconsidered.
- Mr. Potterfield reminded the committee that this Plan gives only general guidelines, not specific details.
- Mrs. Bobst explained that the Master Plan Working Group (MPWG) was opposed to all the visible asphalt in commercial areas. It would enhance any area if the business were more visible.

Mr. Koran came forward to explore the subject in more depth. He maintained that this is an important concept and questions the enforcement of setbacks which the City has pursued for a long time. The MPWG questioned by such regulations were enforced in the case of Mitchell's Ice Cream, for example. He suggested that their aim was that the City rethink setback rules. Outbuildings, for example, were not permitted. Since they work, the question is why not allow them. This does not apply to residential areas but to commercial areas where businesses like to be up front. Instead of setback lines, some cities have “build to” lines.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mrs. Bartolozzi, that the committee recommend the Planning Commission's approval of stronger building frontage where appropriate.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye
4 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

The last topic from that meeting was approval of the directive to create stronger connections within neighborhood and to surrounding neighborhoods.

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to Cliff Towers which is not buildable, but could be a viewing area.

- Mrs. Bobst pointed out the many points along Wooster down to Yacht Club with great views
- Mrs. Bartolozzi observed that there are many people in River who walk for various reasons and who would appreciate a tiny destination such as a passive park with a great view. People would be encouraged to walk, rest and view nature. She sees nothing wrong with creating green space to encourage this activity. As to requests, most residents just haven't thought of it.

Mr. Koran added that Mrs. Bartolozzi's comment is what the MPWG was envisioning if an opportunity arises to build a passive pocket park to take advantage of the view. He also agrees with Mr. Hurtuk.

Mr. Potterfield reiterated that the Master Plan is conceptual only.

Mr. Hurtuk agreed, saying that some believe that the Master Plan will become the Code. He said that by having this document, the Administration is being given a tool for the next five or ten years to encourage future investment.

Mrs. Bartolozzi felt that the recommendation of the Commission deals with two different issues which should not be combined.

Mrs. Bobst indicated they may want to look at various sections. Along Wooster there is also viewing access and they may wish to view the whole issue in the Plan in each of those sections.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mr. Hurtuk, that this issue be referred back to the Planning Commission with a request for further review of the Yacht Club Basin. Mr. Potterfield will attend the meeting to ask for further clarification.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye
4 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

Mr. Potterfield then asked Mr. Matty about the process. When the committee recommends or does not recommend to Council, he asked about the process of making changes. He wondered if it should be forwarded to Council as a whole or if modifications should be made during the process.

Mr. Matty said that the timing was up to Council. The procedure is that the Planning Commission recommendations should be discussed, and Council should decide what it wishes to do on any particular recommendation. There is an ordinance with exhibit on the agenda, and by a majority vote, the exhibit can be changed, kept the same, or additions or deletions made, so that Council would pass the document as a whole. The Committee will make recommendations, and Council as a whole may accept those or do something else, but changes need to go into the document as a whole.

Mr. Potterfield confirmed that it is Council as a whole which decides on any changes, if desired. Mr. Matty confirmed that, but noted that the committee has four members which is a majority of Council, if they all agree. He suggested that a Public Hearing be held before modifications are made to allow resident input and then changes, if any, be communicated to the consultant. He noted that the Planning Commission will not re-review the Yacht Club issue until April.

Mrs. Bobst noted that the Commission has focused on the directives, with which she concurs. She thought it possible that they will also focus also on the city-wide recommendations. Their meeting is next Tuesday evening.

June 27, 2005

Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Committee

The final topic for discussion was Ordinance No. 133-04, adoption of the proposed Master Plan. Mr. Potterfield recalled that at the last meeting of the committee to discuss the Master Plan, members had requested that the Planning Commission clarify their opinion on the Plan section discussing the Yacht Club Basin. The revised wording explaining their position on public access and viewing clarified their position for Mr. Potterfield, and he agreed with their position.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mr. Hurtuk, that the committee recommend the position of the Planning Commission to Council for adoption.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye
4 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

Mr. Hurtuk asked about a timeline for discussion and passage of this ordinance.

- Mr. Potterfield responded that after the committee recommendation, Council will review it and set a time for a public hearing.
- Mrs. Bobst asked if public hearings would be held on each separate section, or whether the Plan as a whole would be considered. It was decided that changes would be made and amendments proposed before considering the Plan in its entirety. Then public input could be taken. Mrs. Bobst suggested that Mr. Volpe could be part of this process.

Mr. Potterfield remarked that he appreciated what the Planning Commission had done in discussing the Plan item by item with an overall conclusion. He proposed that the committee follow the their format as shown in the summary report of April 19.

The next topic to be considered was #5, Wooster Road. Mr. Potterfield indicated that he felt that the Planning Commission made some very good comments, suggesting revisions to encourage redevelopment.

- The Mayor noted that Wooster Road is interesting because it is a federal and state highway north of Center Ridge and a county highway south. It encompasses residential, commercial and living spaces above commercial and offices—a true mixed use. He thinks they have done a good job. Two big questions remain: what will happen to the school board property and additional access to the Metroparks. The Mayor indicated that if development of Westgate proceeds as it appears that it will, it will once more be a viable retail entity, and Wooster between Center Ridge and Hilliard should be reviewed for traffic issues. He further suggested that the street should be widened at Hilliard because traffic stacks up northbound. He pointed out once more that this document is not “cast in stone”, but rather is a guideline.
- Mr. Hurtuk added that he sees the Master Plan as a vision, not a study to collect dust, but a document to be used often to encourage development and redevelopment. He added that this type of document is long overdue.
- Mrs. Bobst reminded committee members that two of the nine focus areas involve Wooster: from Shoreland to the north and south from there to the school board building. This recommendation is for the north section.

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- Mrs. Bartolozzi commented that the Commission's recommendations do not recommend dramatic changes. Their suggestions are aimed toward enhancing and maintaining, and improving the traffic flow.
- The Mayor indicated that the State has plans to repave Center Ridge from Wooster to Wagar Roads, doing a "mill and fill". In conjunction with that, the City will attempt to add some streetscaping to the area.

Moved by Mrs. Bartolozzi, seconded by Mr. Potterfield, that the Planning Commission recommendations regarding Item 5, Wooster Road be approved by the committee.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye
4 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

The next area was #6, Hilliard Boulevard.

- Mr. Hurtuk agreed with the Commission's recommendation of encouraging revitalization or redevelopment of existing apartment buildings and duplexes to the east of Wooster Road.
- Mr. Gollinger has had positive feedback and support for the landscaping on Hilliard and for the crossover for the bus stop.
- Mr. Potterfield noted that residents have called to request restoration of crossovers and turnarounds on both east and west Hilliard. The Mayor pointed out that this is not the decision of the City, but because this is a county project with federal standards, they have mandated that there be no crossovers without an intersection. He also noted that the "no parking" signs have been reposted on Hilliard east of Cottonwood on the south side of the street where parking is often heavy because of Little League. These signs will insure that the turnaround is safe.
- Mayor Knoble also indicated that the City is receiving final quotes for what will appear to be paver bricks (but will be stamped concrete) to be installed at the intersection of Hilliard and Wooster. Large planter boxes will also be added to enhance the appearance of the area. Joe's Deli has had ideas for improvement of their property, but final plans have not yet been submitted.
- Mr. Gollinger suggested that from Joe's Deli east would be a good area for redevelopment.
- Mr. Hurtuk suggested the possibility of the City assisting in land assemblage. The Mayor responded that at present, his first priority is to assist anyone who wishes to convert rental property to non-rental property. He does, however, suggest the area to developers when he has the opportunity.
- Mr. Potterfield asked if it is possible to smooth the roadway which connects Hilliard to I-90. The Mayor said that ODOT will look at widening the turning radius on westbound Hilliard to the I-90 eastbound ramp to make tractor-trailer turns safer.

- In response to Mrs. Bartolozzi's question of a completion date, the Mayor indicated that the original date was October 1, and he sees no reason that it will not be met.

Moved by Mr. Hurtuk, seconded by Mrs. Bartolozzi, that the Committee accept the Planning Commission recommendation of Item 6, Hilliard Boulevard as outlined in their memo of 4/19/05.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye
4 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

The next topic was #7, Center Ridge Road East.

- Mr. Hurtuk asked about a traffic study for Center Ridge Road done some time ago. The Mayor indicated that in the upcoming development, the developer will be obliged to perform a traffic study. Although only preliminary plans have been seen, the Mayor indicated that the main entrance of Westgate will be across from Forestview; there will be two entrances on W. 210 as well, but the other entrance on Center Ridge will be eliminated. He will ask Mr. Koran to be check with Fairview Park to be sure that the traffic situation has been considered and is under control. It might be well to look some years back when the Mall was more active and generated more traffic for a better idea of what traffic will be like after redevelopment.
- Mr. Potterfield recalled some studies done when Target was approved.

Moved by Mr. Gollinger, seconded by Mr. Hurtuk, that the Committee accept the recommendation set forth by the Planning Commission for Item 7, Center Ridge Road, the east portion, of the Master Plan as enumerated in the summary of 4/19/05.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye
4 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

The final topic was #8, Center Ridge Road West.

Mr. Potterfield pointed out that the Planning Commission took note of excluding Pease Drive. Their recommendation was to support and enhance recreational facilities. Of continuing interest is River Oaks and how that area will be redeveloped.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mr. Hurtuk, that the recommendation of the Planning Commission for Item #8, Center Ridge Road West be accepted by the Committee and recommended to Council.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye
4 ayes 0 nays **PASSED**

Mr. Potterfield concluded by noting that by following the Planning Commission, all sections of the proposed Master Plan had been covered. He now proposed that the Committee meet again to formulate an overview or summary, similar to that prepared by the Planning Commission to conclude study of the topic. Because of summer schedules, he will set the date for the meeting after the holiday.

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July 25, 2005

Planning, Zoning and Economic Development Committee

The meeting was being recorded by a resident. Mr. Potterfield indicated that three items were on the agenda and began with the proposed Master Plan. He noted the presence of Mr. Koran, the City's Economic and Community Development Director, and asked for his comments. Mr. Koran briefly reviewed the process which had brought the discussion to this point, including the discussion and summary by the Planning Commission. He added that the next step is up to Council.

Mr. Potterfield remarked that in spite of numerous meetings held by Council and the Planning Commission, there has not been a great deal of public comment. After his committee completes its review, the plan will return to Council as a whole with a Public Hearing scheduled for September 6 at 7:00 p.m.

- Mr. Gollinger agreed, saying that although there were a number of residents present during the presentation, there has been little public comment following that period. He observed that this may also indicate a lack of major dissent, and noted that it is important to have the plan in place. He felt that the Planning Commission did a fine job and put a lot of thought and effort into its review.
- Mrs. Bartolozzi agreed that the Planning Commission did a good job, working through the process and evaluating each section. She said that she favors moving the process forward.
- Mr. Potterfield added that the Planning Commission held lengthy proceedings on all aspects, recommending some changes. He thought the most telling part of their review was the conclusion and summary in which they expressed their view that the plan is an idea, a group of ideas, or a starting point. Everything in the plan will not be done; it should be flexible. He feels this is their most important point. The City is a little more than 100 years old. In another hundred years, he wondered what the City would be like, adding that he hopes that Rocky River will retain its identity as a good community in which to raise a family, a community helpful to residents of all ages with good recreation and senior programs and a provider of good City services. Questions remain as to whether or not the City can support all the recommended development through its infrastructure, i.e. roads, water, sewer, safety services etc. It is not in the scope of this study, however, to conduct traffic studies or any of these specific assessments.
- Mr. Hurtuk suggested that the Committee might be ready to move forward and refer the plan back to Council as a whole.
- Mrs. Bartolozzi agreed with Mr. Hurtuk, saying that all may have reservations because the Master Plan is not "set in stone", but is rather a guideline, and it is not relevant to resolve every problem at this point. When projects come up, they can be evaluated with more information. This document can point in the direction of where the City thinks it wants to

go. As life changes, things may need readjustment and can be discussed then at a later date. All considerations need not be answered before moving forward.

- Mr. Gollinger agreed with Mr. Potterfield about the nature of our community. He indicated that the plan may stimulate developers to think about projects which are economical for them and good for the City. He feels that the plan is diverse enough for everyone. He would like to see the general concept in place so that the City, through its Economic and Community Development Director, can move forward. He agrees that it is time to bring the plan before Council as a whole.

Moved by Mr. Potterfield, seconded by Mr. Hurtuk, that the Master Plan be forwarded to Council as a whole for consideration and passage.

Discussion: Mr. Potterfield wondered if adopting the Master Plan would lock in and codify its recommendations.

- Mr. Hurtuk commented that he sees the plan as a vision, not a document to be codified.
- Mr. Hagan felt that this motion would only move the legislation out of committee and back to Council. This will give all seven Council persons an opportunity to discuss it and move forward.
- Mrs. Bartolozzi felt that the committee has already discussed the plan thoroughly and that it is time to turn it over to Council to evaluate. If there is a question, the Law Director can be consulted.
- Mr. Gollinger pointed out that in order to implement the plan, zoning must, in many cases, be changed. Council will have further input at that time.
- Mr. Frost noted that Council will have further discussion opportunities, and he recommended that the Committee return it to Council as a whole.

Vote: Potterfield - aye Bartolozzi - aye Gollinger - aye Hurtuk - aye

4 ayes

0 nays

PASSED

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ROCKY RIVER PLANNING COMMISSION

To: Rocky River City Council

From: Michael Harvey, Chairperson
Beth Martin, Vice Chairperson
Anjanette Arabian
Bill Bishop
Trisha Brown
Charles Gustafson
Thomas Long

Date: April 19, 2005

Re: Summary Report and Final Recommendation of the Master Plan

Introduction

On October 19, 2004, City Architecture along with Kory Koran, Community Economic Development Director, presented to the Rocky River Planning Commission (hereafter, the "Commission") the Master Plan (hereafter, the "Plan") for the City which has been completed as an update to the last Master Plan in existence which dated in 1968. The voters of Rocky River recently asked for the Plan to be updated every ten years.

The task at hand for the Commission was to review the Plan and give a final recommendation to City Council. The result of the final and overall recommendations of the Commission would allow City Council to proceed with accepting the Plan as created or revising it.

The Process

The Commission decided to view the Plan by addressing each of the seven categories separately and making recommendations based upon the directives in each category. These categories and their respective directives were discussed keeping in mind that the Plan is a guide with common themes and concepts that run throughout the document. The Commission recognized that the Plan is a working document and a tool intended to provide the City with a vision of the future. Hence, the Plan is just what is stated in its title, a plan. The details provided within the document were viewed as illustrations to the concepts presented, not as mandatory actions needed for the implementation of these concepts. In turn, the recommendations regarding the Plan voted on and presented by the Commission to City Council also are considered to be an acknowledgement of how the Plan can offer the City a vision of future

development and redevelopment and be used as a tool to transform the vision into reality as is appropriate for the ever-changing times and needs of the City.

Two housekeeping items were discussed in regard to properly discuss the items. The first issue involved two of the Commission members, Trisha Brown and Tom Long. Both of these members were a part of the Master Plan Task Force. The Commission voted and decided that these two Commission members could participate in the discussion but would not vote on any recommendation made by the Commission in order to avoid any conflicts of interest. This decision proved to be a beneficial one throughout the process because these two members provided great insight as to the intent behind the statements, themes, concepts and directives exhibited in the Plan. This insight helped the Commission to make more informed decisions regarding the recommendations.

The second issue was how to allow for public participation and comment when discussing the Plan. The Commission voted and decided to open the meeting for public participation for a reasonable amount of time following the discussion by the Commission. While few members of the public chose to participate in the discussions, those who did provided valuable perspectives on the items discussed.

The Recommendation

The overall consensus of the Commission is to recommend that City Council accept the Master Plan as a guideline for the future development and redevelopment of the City. This recommendation was made by voting to recommend acceptance of the directives listed individually in each section of the Plan as written, to recommend acceptance of the directives listed individually in each section of the Plan with modifications or reject a directive either as written or with a suggested modification. All of the directives listed in the Plan were recommended as written except for the following:

1. Old Detroit/Middle Detroit/Linda Street: The removal of the Lake Road Ramp even with a modification of the directive to allow for further investigation and study of the implications of such a removal was NOT recommended.
2. Old Detroit/Middle Detroit/Linda Street: Instead of enhancing Detroit Road and Linda Streetscapes, the Commission recommended that the directive state to encourage property owners, commercial, private and residential owners, and the City to continue enhancing the streetscape.

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3. Old Detroit/Middle Detroit/Linda Street: Instead of providing stronger building frontage, the Commission recommended that stronger building frontage be encouraged where appropriate.
4. Yacht Club Basin: Instead of providing opportunities for views and greater public access to the river, the Commission recommended that based on the results of the feasibility study and the re-working improvements of the current infrastructure by McKay Engineering as authorized by City Council in December, 2004, address the opportunities for increased public view and accessibility to the river utilizing existing City property.
5. Wooster Road: While the Commission recommended that all of the directives referring to Wooster Road should be accepted as guidelines, that some revisions be made to read that redevelopment should be encouraged by focusing on existing parcels with consideration for future re-zoning and also to enhance Wooster Road streetscape and improve traffic patterns.
6. Hilliard Boulevard: While the Commission recommended that all of the directives referring to Hilliard Boulevard be accepted, that additionally some revisions be made so the Plan reads by considering redevelopment of existing apartment buildings and duplexes east of Wooster Road, considering the revitalization and/or redevelopment of existing apartments and duplexes with the consideration of alternative uses west of Wooster Road and revitalize and further develop the Hilliard Boulevard streetscape.
7. Center Ridge Road East: All directives were recommended with supplemental guidelines that include coordinating the redevelopment and revitalization of Center Ridge Road from Wooster Road west to Wagar Road by offering assistance to current stakeholders to enhance commercial uses and to consider the property located on Wooster Road known as Fairview Wellness Center for possible residential development.
8. Center Ridge Road West: The Commission recommended the acceptance of the concepts presented by the directives for Center Ridge Road West with two whole exclusions and one partial exclusion. The whole exclusions include the directives to support and enhance existing recreational facilities and the directive to create opportunities for expanded park space. The partial exclusion involves accepting the directive of renovation and/or development except not applying this directive to Pease Drive.

Ancillary recommendation:

One topic that was recurring throughout the Commission's discussions regarding the Plan was that of zoning. Especially when a more substantial change was introduced by the Plan to a section of the City, the Commission would raise the question of what the Zoning Code would allow as it stands presently. In several instances, the suggestion by the Plan required a change in zoning or a possible variance to be granted. Since this appeared to be a common theme throughout the discussions of the entire Plan, the Commission believes that the Plan cannot truly be implemented without changes to the current Zoning Code to support it. Therefore, the Commission encourages Council to study the Zoning Code as it exists now and how it may need to change in order to work more fluidly with the concepts presented in the Plan.

Conclusion

The Commission votes to recommend the Plan as a guideline and concept to assist the City with its vision for the future. This recommendation was made by discussing in detail the directives as presented in the Plan for each of the geographical sections outlined in the Plan. While the majority of the directives were accepted by the Commission as written, some were modified for full recommendation and only a few were not recommended. The rejection of some of the directives as presented in the Plan do not cause the Commission to accept and recommend the Plan as a whole. Any alterations made to the directives or rejections made of the directives are intended to clarify further the Commission's analysis of the document as one which is a "working" document to help the City meet the ever-changing needs and demands of the community. While these needs and demands will continue to change, so should the City's perspective.

The Master Plan as presented should not be considered the only way in which the City should grow, but rather it should be accepted as guide to help steer the City for what is to come. With these concepts in mind, the Rocky River Planning Commission recommends the Master Plan as presented as a guideline for the future development and redevelopment of the City.

Drafted by:
Anjanette Arabian, Rocky River Planning Commission Member