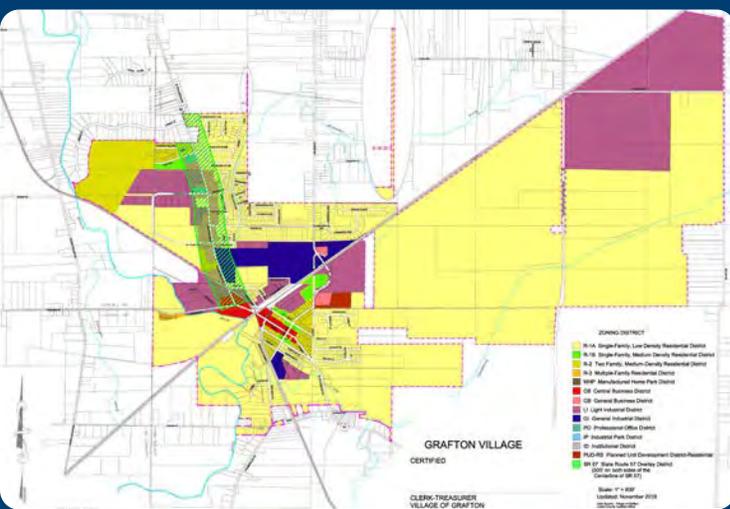


# GRAFTON TOMORROW

## VILLAGE OF GRAFTON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## **Mayor**

David DiVencenzo

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## **Administration**

Joe Price, Administrator

Amy Barnhart, Clerk-Treasurer

Linda Bales, Special Projects

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## **Village Council**

Matthew Dukles, President, Ward 1

Elizabeth (Liz) Sauer, Ward 2

Tim Strah, Council-at-Large

Rick Logue, Ward 3

Lynette Kitts, Ward 4

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## **Planning & Zoning Commission**

Mayor David DiVencenzo

Matt Dukles

William Baldwin

Brian Logan

Paul Justy

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## **Board of Zoning Appeals**

Joseph T. Filipiak Jr.

Clete Johnson

Richard Paul

Richard Smith

Tim Biranowski

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## **Planning Consultants**

Poggemeyer Design Group (PDG), Inc.

Boulevard Studios LLC

## Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Members & Meeting Participants

Adele Infante, Grafton-Midview Public Library	Joe DiVencenzo, Fire Department
Alice Baldwin, Resident	Joe J. Filipiak, Local Artist
Amy Barnhart, Clerk-Treasurer	Joe T. Filipiak, Jr. Board of Zoning Appeals
Amy Richards, Grafton Township	Joe Knechtges, Resident
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A special thank you is extended to all Steering

**Committee Members and members of the public who gave freely of their time to attend meetings, visioning sessions, and workshops. Their input was critical to the development of this plan and is deeply appreciated.**

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION





# INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Village of Grafton hired Poggemeyer Design Group, a Kleinfelder Company, to work with the Village and a Village-appointed Steering Committee to complete a Comprehensive Plan. A Comprehensive Plan is a document and process that determines community goals and aspirations in terms of community development. It can guide public policy in terms of transportation, utilities, land use, recreation, housing, economic development, and downtown development.

### Comprehensive Plan Guiding Principles

- Visionary
- Inclusive
- Strategic
- Transparent
- Community-oriented
- Accessible
- Systems-based
- Accountable
- Consensus-focused
- Action-oriented
- Data-driven



The Steering Committee included citizens, local business and building owners, local elected officials/administration/board members, public school officials, and local/county non-profit members. This group of individuals included approximately twenty-two people who met with the consultant and village administration/elected officials for four Steering Committee meetings, one Public Visioning meeting, and four Public Planning workshops.

The Steering Committee was surveyed early in the process for their hopes and expectations of the planning process. Many participants wanted to see a thriving downtown with events, businesses, and organization. Participants also mentioned needing connections within the village and parks, additional housing options, active transportation, infrastructure improvements, better communication between and connection of north and south Grafton, and a dog park/walk. All documentation from each meeting and public event was forwarded to the Steering Committee for comments. The Steering Committee was instrumental in reviewing the final report and recommendations.



## Process

Comprehensive plans typically follow a phased approach ensuring a look back to the past and forward to the future with public input included in between. The following phases were used for Grafton's comprehensive planning process:

**Phase 1- Discovery:** This was a time to learn and gather information necessary to gain a shared understanding of the community. This understanding included both current conditions and trends shaping the future.

**Phase 2- Collaborative/ Visioning:** Armed with the key information about community characteristics and trends, more informed conversations about the future were undertaken. These conversations occurred in many ways and in many settings to provide residents with opportunities to share thoughts and exchange ideas.

**Phase 3- Plan Development:** Here, local leaders began to build on previous steps and assembled the components of a new Comprehensive Plan. The Plan format followed steps taken over the planning process and incorporated all aspects of public input.

**Phase 4- Public Review & Final Adoption:** Once completed and found to be ready for public review by the Steering Committee, the Plan was presented to the general public. Formal adoption by the Village Council was completed in December 2021. It should be noted that the majority of the members of the Planning & Zoning Commission were instrumental in the creation and review of this Comprehensive Plan.

## Pandemic & Planning

As the public input portion of the planning process was being undertaken, the United States was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. As the virus spread across the country, Governor DeWine declared a State of emergency in Ohio on March 9, 2020. On March 12 and 16th, the governor closed all schools and all non-essential businesses, bars, and restaurants. Mass gatherings of people were also prohibited. On March 22nd, the Governor issued a stay-at-home order for all non-essential workers. After a month to regroup and rethink the public input process, the village and Steering Committee decided to put the public input process on hold. The project started up again in Spring 2021 with the Steering Committee meeting again for the first time on May 13, 2021, and the public input events were scheduled for summer and early fall of 2021.

## General Guiding Principles

1. Grafton has a unique sense of character and community, a true "hometown."
2. Grafton's connections for all modes of transportation (vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian) are very important to residents and visitors.
3. Grafton's historic downtown is the living room of the community and attention must be given to existing buildings, businesses, and management.
4. Grafton's parks, recreation, and greenspaces are very important to residents and visitors and should be preserved and expanded to meet the needs of existing and future residents and visitors.
5. Grafton's existing industrial and commercial developments are very important and should be expanded to meet increasing demands of residents and visitors.
6. Grafton's residential stock is varied but needs to be more age and price diverse to attract people in different stages of their lives.
7. Grafton is one community with no north/south divide and all planning elements will recognize this.

## CHAPTER 2: DATA COMPARISON & TRENDS





# DATA COMPARISONS & TRENDS

## CHAPTER 2: DATA COMPARISONS & TRENDS

### Population & Housing

Grafton's population has decreased slightly since 2010 by just over 6% if comparing to 2017 data. This data is collected from the American Community Survey (ACS), which is the most recent complete data available. The only 2020 Census figure that is available for Grafton is total population, which is 5,895 people (a decrease of almost 4% from 2017 ACS figures). It should be noted that the prison population is included in the U.S. Census Data and accounts for about 3,337 people of the total population figure. The village plans to further review this data for any discrepancies. Housing units have also decreased by almost 17%. Population and housing units have seen a slight increase in Lorain County overall.

Population and Household Changes		
	% change In Pop. Between 2010 & 2017	% change In hshlds Between 2010 & 2017
<b>Grafton</b>	<b>-6.2%</b>	<b>-16.7%</b>
Lorain County	+1.9%	+3.6%
Ohio	+0.63	+0.65
United States	+3.97	+1.81

Source: 2010 U.S. Census Data and 2013-2017

### General Demographics

	Grafton				Lorain Co.				Ohio			
	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017
Total Population	2,302	6,636	6,090	6,109								
Median Age	35	36.2	41.1	42.8	36.5	40	41	41.5	36.2	38.8	39.2	39.3
18 Years & Over	1,653	6,033	5,601	5,666	210,114	229,278	233,290	236,268	8,464,801	8,805,753	8,919,958	8,982,588
65 Years & Over	230	182	437	519	35,583	43,131	47,833	51,341	1,507,757	1,622,015	1,747,281	1,844,642
White	2,252	4,315	3,743	4,029	243,514	255,410	258,620	260,322	9,645,453	9,539,437	9,538,328	9,503,779
Black	12	2,171	1,903	1,790	24,203	25,799	25,362	25,708	1,301,307	1,407,681	1,412,045	1,428,230
Hispanic	17	151	246	254	19,676	25,290	27,411	29,089	217,123	354,674	390,970	414,490
Households	832	965	822	815	105,836	116,274	117,298	118,594	4,445,773	4,603,435	4,585,084	4,663,145
W/Children under 18	318	330	219	232	35,606	33,993	32,777	33,269	1,409,912	1,293,126	1,242,604	1,381,829
Female Head W/ Children under 18	57	68	29	36	8,114	9,080	9,674	10,041	323,095	344,799	394,408	333,458
Households 65 & Over	72	227	235	211	25,190	30,650	33,661	35,933	1,058,224	1,163,804	1,674,124	1,303,418
Average Household Size	2.77	2.68	2.55	2.48	2.61	2.51	2.50	2.50	2.49	2.44	2.46	2.44

Sources: U.S. Census Data for 2000 & 2010 SF1 & 2011-2015 and 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates **2 | 1**

Grafton’s residential areas comprise about 72% of the village’s land use area. Its residential neighborhoods are predominantly located along the entire borders of the village. The downtown is bordered by residential areas in all directions.

The housing stock in Grafton consists predominantly of single-family detached units (over 78% of the total number of units). Of the occupied units, 74% are owner-occupied and 26% renter occupied. The 74% owner-occupied units exceeds the state’s and the US’s percentages of 66% and 63% respectively.

### Household Characteristics, Income, Housing Values and Housing Tenure

	Average Hshld Size	Median Age	% Pop. Over 65	% Pop Under 18	% pop with a disability	Median Hshld Income	Median Value of O/O home	% owner Occupied homes	% renter Occupied homes
Grafton	2.48	42.8	8.5	7.3	13.3	\$55,150	\$138,800	74.1	25.9
Lorain County	2.50	41.5	16.8	22.6	15.3	\$54,987	\$140,300	71.4	28.6
Ohio	2.44	39.3	15.9	22.6	13.8	\$52,407	\$135,100	66.1	33.9
United States	2.63	37.8	14.9	22.9	12.6	\$57,652	\$193,500	63.8	36.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates.

### Total Housing Units and Unit Type

	Total Housing Units	One Unit detached	One Unit attached	2 units	3-4 units	5-9 units	10-19 Units	20 + units	Mobile homes
<b>Grafton</b>	<b>884</b>	<b>696 (78.7%)</b>	<b>67 (7.6%)</b>	<b>45 (5.1%)</b>	<b>31 (3.5%)</b>	<b>23 (2.6%)</b>	<b>22 (2.5%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>0</b>
Lorain County	129,717	97,270 (75%)	7,984 (6.2%)	4,046 (3.1%)	3,419 (2.6%)	3,358 (2.6%)	5,529 (4.3%)	5,276 (4.1%)	2,788 (2.1%)
Ohio	5,174,838	3,552,698 (68.7%)	231,390 (4.5%)	225,839 (4.4%)	229,148 (4.4%)	251,423 (4.9%)	207,190 (4.0%)	278,979 (5.4%)	196,586 (3.8%)
United States	135,393,564	83,547,309 (61.7%)	7,903,046 (5.8%)	4,948,642 (3.7%)	5,950,261 (4.4%)	6,440,975 (4.8%)	6,053,982 (4.5%)	11,924,671 (8.8%)	8,509,712 (6.3%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey (ACS) 5 year estimates.

### Educational Attainment

### Commuting

	% of Pop 25 yrs+ with a Bachelor’s degree	% of Pop 25 yrs+ with a Graduate/ Prof degree	% workers 16 yrs + Drove alone	% carpooled	% Took Public transit	% Walked	% Worked At home	Mean travel Time in minutes
<b>Grafton</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>89.7</b>	<b>6.3</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>24.7</b>
Lorain County	14.9	8.8	83.9	7.5	0.6	2.4	3.3	24.2
Ohio	17.0	10.2	83.4	7.7	1.6	2.2	3.9	23.4
United States	19.1	11.8	76.4	9.2	5.1	2.7	4.7	26.4

Source: U.S Census Bureau, 2013-2017 ACS 5 year estimates.

## Computers and Internet Use

	Total Households	With Computers	With Broad band Internet Subscription
Grafton	815	705 (86.5%)	673 (82.6%)
Lorain County	118,594	102,786 (86.7%)	92,272 (77.8%)
Ohio	4,633,145	3,974,014 (85.8%)	3,573,310 (77.1%)
United States	118,825,921	103,614,074 (87.2%)	92,813,615 (78.1%)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 ACS 5 year Estimates.

## Housing

	Grafton				Lorain Co.				Ohio			
	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017
# Units	853	1,008	875	884	111,368	127,036	128,268	129,717	4,783,051	5,127,508	5,140,902	5,174,838
Occupied	832	965	822	815	105,836	116,274	117,298	118,594	4,445,773	4,603,435	4,585,084	4,633,145
Vacant	21	43	53	69	5,532	10,762	10,970	11,123	337,278	524,073	555,818	541,693
Owner/ Occupied	686	767	658	604	78,481	84,746	83,591	84,684	3,072,522	3,111,054	3,040,444	3,060,473
Renter/ Occupied	151	198	164	211	27,355	31,528	33,707	33,910	1,373,251	1,492,381		1,572,672
1 Unit Detached	753 <sup>1</sup>	827	715	696	87,221 <sup>1</sup>	95,070	95,759	97,270	3,221,505	3,504,154*	3,520,412	3,552,698
3 to 4 Units	--	38	24	31	--	3,536	3,385	3,419	228,116	232,942*	228,803	229,148
20+ Units	0	0	0	0	4,739 <sup>1</sup>	5,114	5,149	5,276	260,818	268,185*	274,261	278,979
Mobile Homes	0	0	0	0	3,470 <sup>1</sup>	2,839	3,008	2,788	220,213	202,097*	198,887	196,586

Sources: 2000 & 2010 U.S. Census Data, Missouri Data Center<sup>1</sup>; 2006-2010 ACS 5-year Estimates, 2011-2015 and 2013-2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates, and \* 2009-2011 ACS 3-Year Estimates

## Age of Housing

	Grafton				Lorain Co.				Ohio			
	2000	2010*	2015	2017	2000	2010*	2015	2017	2000	2010*	2015	2017
Built 1970-1979	--	257	210	218	--	20,388	19,801	20,719	757,116	724,530	731,422	737,431
Built 1960-1969	--	107	63	63	--	17,220	16,899	16,723	684,305	639,588	637,730	632,437
Built 1950-1959*	--	103	88	94	--	21,148	19,744	19,346		750,091	738,799	736,327
Built 1940-1949*	227 <sup>1</sup> incl. 1939 & earlier	85	44	31	20,013 <sup>1</sup> Incl. 1939 & earlier	7,935	8,306	7,662	1,175,325	351,913	330,406	325,052
Built 1939 or Earlier	--	197	202	205	--	21,060	20,420	20,254	1,075,805	1,089,358	1,068,939	1,061,319

Sources: 2000 & 2010 U.S. Census Data, Missouri Data Center<sup>1</sup> 2011-2015 and 2013-2017 ACS 5-year estimates \* 2009-2011 ACS 3-Year Estimates

## Housing Affordability

	Grafton				Lorain Co.				Ohio			
Monthly Owner Cost as Percentage of Household Income	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017
30-34%	--	50	30	24	--	4,890	3,531	3,430	142,946	178,352	136,320	119,476
35% or more	--	182	80	56	--	13,985	10,510	9,074	344,853	485,720	386,314	334,946
Monthly Renter Units as Percentage of Household Income	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017
30-34%	--	0	16	29	--	2,637	3,114	3,098	92,808	113,682	122,041	123,938
35% or more	--	53	63	55	--	11,280	12,924	12,994	370,754	545,721	573,006	554,163

## Household Income

	Grafton				Lorain Co.				Ohio			
	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017
Median Household Income	\$52,446 <sup>1</sup>	\$62,500	\$52,946	\$55,150	\$45,042 <sup>1</sup>	\$52,066	\$52,457	\$54,987	\$40,956	\$46,563	\$49,429	\$52,407

## Poverty Status

	Grafton				Lorain Co.				Ohio			
	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017	2000	2010	2015	2017
Families	4 <sup>1</sup>	33	45	35	5,127 <sup>1</sup>	8,263	8,695	8,015	235,026	308,137	337,823	319,295
Individuals	53 <sup>1</sup>	345	639	574	24,809 <sup>1</sup>	39,477	43,654	41,840	1,170,698	1,638,183	1,775,836	1,683,890

\*2012, 2017 ACS Data, Missouri Data Center<sup>1</sup>

## Foreclosures

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Lorain Co.	2,376	2,442	2,696	2,385	1,742	1,859	1,326	1,079	1,079	1,095	998
State of Ohio	82,230	85,773	89,061	85,483	71,556	70,469	53,163	43,728	40,479	38,963	35,169

Source: Ohio Supreme Court Annual Statistical reports for 2007-2017

## Housing Costs

Grafton				Lorain Co.				Ohio			
2000	2010*	2015	2017	2000	2010*	2015	2017	2000	2010*	2015	2017
Median Value Owner Occupied Units											
\$119,400 <sup>1</sup>	\$150,300	\$139,800	\$138,800	\$115,100 <sup>1</sup>	\$147,400	\$137,400	\$140,300	\$103,700	\$133,200	\$129,900	\$135,100
Median Mortgage											
--	\$1,431	\$1,225	\$1,233	--	\$1,366	\$1,279	\$1,278	\$963	\$1,284	\$1,246	\$1,247
Median Rent											
\$520 <sup>1</sup>	\$760	\$653	\$672	\$541 <sup>1</sup>	\$681	\$741	\$751	\$515	\$699	\$730	\$764

Sources: 2000 & 2010 U.S. Census Data, Missouri Data Center<sup>1</sup>; 2011-2015 and 2013-2017 ACS 5-year estimates, and \* 2009-2011 ACS 3-Year Estimates

## HOUSING NATIONAL TRENDS

- The US population is aging. The US 65+ population increased by 26% between 2010 and 2018. Ohio's increased by 16%, both Lorain County and Grafton's 65+ population increased significantly.
- Due to the high cost of housing and low inventory of units, many communities are changing their zoning regulations to encourage the development of more multi-family units. Some communities like Minneapolis are eliminating their single-family zoning districts and other cities are considering it (Berkley, Charlotte, Portland, and Seattle). Some cities have opted to promote the construction of low-rise multi-family units within single family subdivisions and neighborhoods. These new units blend better architecturally with the single-family structures and meet a growing demand for such housing by empty nesters and young professionals.
- Again, due to the high cost of housing, many communities are amending their zoning codes to allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) also called mother-in-law apartments or granny flats. This allows owners of single-family homes to add a small apartment within their home with a separate entrance.
- With our growing elderly and disabled population, many builders are constructing clusters of senior villas,

small, one-story units that are ADA accessible and built using universal design elements. Many of these villas are part of senior housing developments for individuals aged 55 and over.

- AARP has been advocating the new construction of "age-friendly" housing units using universal design and the modification of existing housing into "aging-in-place" units whereby such homes are renovated to accommodate elderly and disabled households. This allows many seniors, some with assistance, the opportunity to remain in their homes for a much longer period of time.



## CHAPTER 3: EXISTING CONDITIONS





# EXISTING CONDITIONS

## CHAPTER 3: EXISTING CONDITIONS

Grafton is located southwest of Cleveland in Lorain County, Ohio. Grafton is surrounded by Carlisle, Eaton, LaGrange, and Grafton Townships. Maps outlining village limits, floodplains, wetlands, soils, contours, community facilities, transportation, and zoning are included in the Appendix A.

The village is approximately 4.74 square miles, with 4.71 square miles being land and .03 square miles being water. The village is 804' above sea level.

### Natural Areas

- Lorain County Metro Parks' Indian Hollow Reservation Park and Sheldon Woods are located just west of the village. Sheldon Woods contains 180 acres of mostly wooded land and is bisected by the eastern branch of the Black River.
- Royal Oaks Metro Park is within the southwestern portion of the village. This property is a former golf course turned into a hiking and fitness trail and includes a .3-mile loop with 15 workout stations. The property also includes a crushed limestone trail, 3 catch and release fishing ponds, and a doggy drinking fountain.
- The East Branch of the Black River traverses the village along the northwestern boundaries and then comes into the village in the southwest quadrant. There are freshwater emergent wetlands, freshwater forested/shrub wetlands, and freshwater ponds throughout the village.
- There are 29 different soil types within the village. 17 have poor drainage qualities and 12 have moderate to well-draining attributes.

### Land Use

The village has five main types of land uses: residential, business, industrial, office, and park space. The predominant land use is residential with over 2,500 acres.

The residential areas are located mostly around the edges of the village corporation boundaries. The commercial areas include the downtown and a commercial corridor from downtown north along SR 57 to the corporation limits. The majority of the industrial areas include the

industrial park off of SR 57 on Commerce Drive and the property bordering the prisons in the northeast quadrant of the village.

Uses	Acres	Percentage	Map Color
Residential	+/- 2,575	72%	Yellow
Business	+/- 68	2%	Red
Industrial	+/- 660	19%	Blue
Office	+/- 5	.14%	Green
Park Space	+/-251	7%	Not Marked
<b>Total</b>	<b>+/- 3,559</b>	<b>100%</b>	

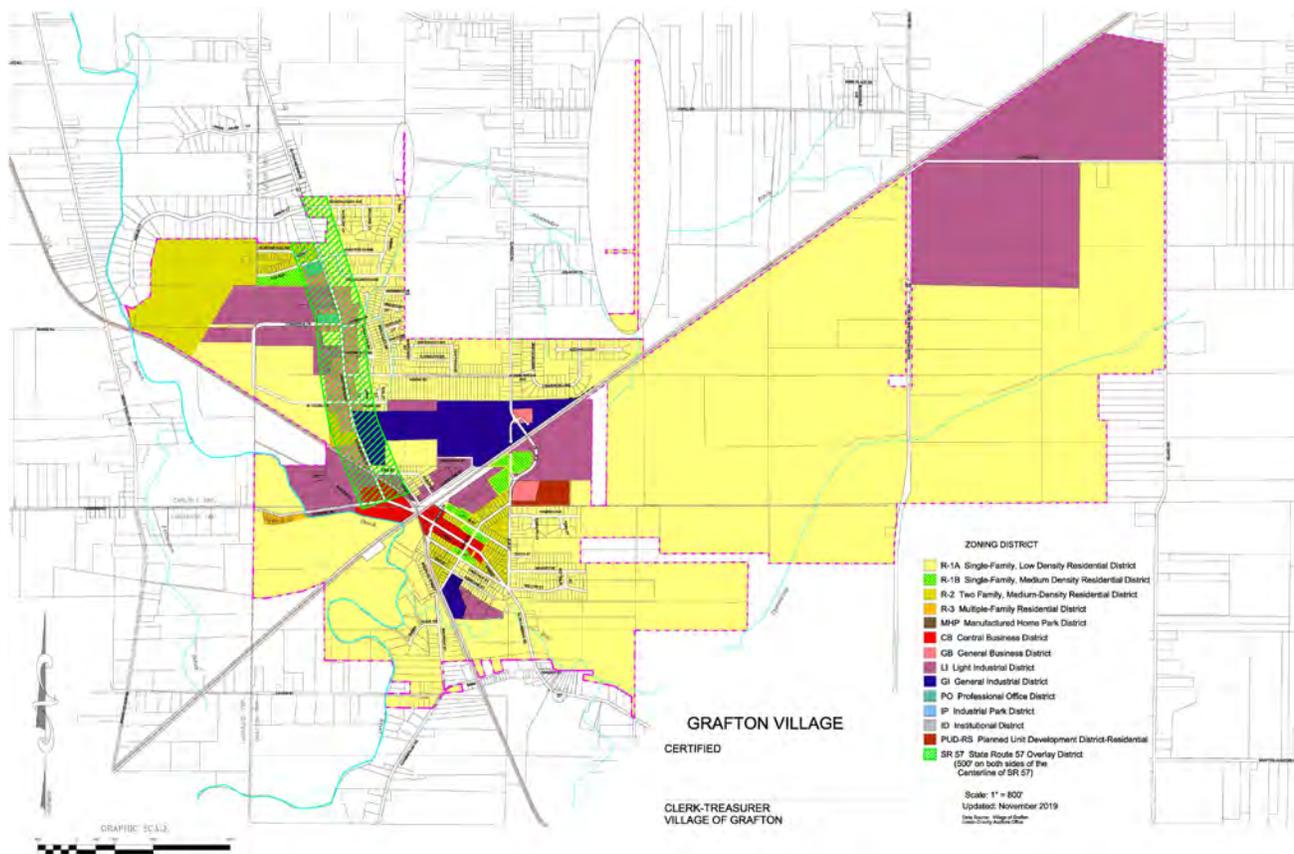
Zoning	Acres
R-1A Residential	+/-2,400
R-1B Residential	+/- 20
R-2 Residential	+/- 138
R-3 Residential	+/- 8
CB Central Business	+/- 23
GB General Business	+/- 42
LI Light Industrial	+/- 569
GI General Industrial	+/- 89
PO	+/- 4
PUD-RS	+/- 9
MHP	0
IP	0
ID	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>+3,302</b>



## Zoning

Grafton has 14 zoning districts: five residential (R-1A, R-1B, R-2, R-3, MHP), three commercial (CB, GB, PO), three industrial (LI, GI, IP), an institutional district (ID), a planned unit development district with residential (PUD-RS) and planned unit development mixed-use (PUD-MX), and an overlay district (SR 57 Overlay District). This overlay includes 500' on both sides of the centerline of SR 57 from the village limits to the north to Parsons Road intersection.

The need to update the village's zoning code was discussed during the planning process to include new land uses and additional regulations and specifically to address design review for the historic buildings in the downtown. Many communities have instituted architectural design standards in their zoning code to promote aesthetically appealing buildings constructed with quality materials. These regulations could apply to downtowns, commercial districts, and multifamily structures.



## CHAPTER 4: RELEVANT PLANNING EFFORTS





# RELEVANT PLANNING EFFORTS

## CHAPTER 4: RELEVANT PLANNING EFFORTS

### Planning History

#### Land Use Plan (1990)

The village's last major comprehensive planning effort was completed with a Land Use Plan in 1990. The plan addressed the issue of orderly and planned future growth so that existing infrastructure and services are not overtaxed. The village was interested in retaining the small-town atmosphere and controlling strip

development. The goal was to maintain a balance between the new developments occurring in the northern part of the community and neighboring townships, and the older sections of the community to the south, including the downtown. The

planning process utilized

Planning Team meetings and key person interviews to acquire input from residents, community leaders and government officials. The Planning Team consisted of representatives of the Village Council and Planning Commission, businessmen, developers, property owners, and residents.

#### Corridor Plan (2000)

A Corridor Plan was prepared for SR 57, starting at the northern corporate limits to the Parsons Road intersection. The study was to consider the impact of the plan on the downtown and southern sections of SR 57. A steering committee was appointed to work with the consultant throughout the process. It consisted of the Mayor, Council members, Planning Commission

members, Village Administration, representatives from businesses along SR 57 and residents and/or other property owners in the study area.

The village's zoning code was updated in 2001 after the Corridor Plan completion.

Classifications were added and renamed, and procedures were updated. The village is considering another update after this planning process is completed.

#### DART (2008)

A Downtown Assessment Resource Team (DART) plan was completed by Heritage Ohio to assess the downtown's revitalization needs and opportunities. The team from Heritage Ohio formed its comments, observations, recommendations based on documents, personal interviews, meetings with community leaders, walking/driving tours and the team's past experiences in other parts of the state. It is based on the Four Point Main Street Approach and includes Organization, Promotions, Economic Restructuring and Design.

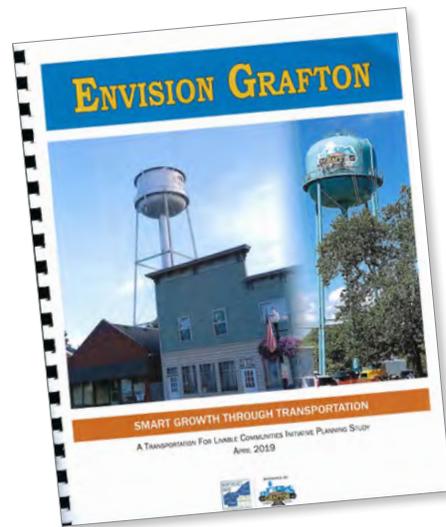
#### Envision Grafton (2019)

Most recently, the village completed a Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) Plan to look at ways to best increase public access and enjoyment of all village resources by linking existing commercial, recreational, historic, and natural areas. The existing



planning documents and their recommendations were incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan.

A complete summary of these planning documents is included in Appendix B and each planning element chapter contains information on the relevant previous planning effort.



## CHAPTER 5: PHASE V VISIONING





# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT/ VISIONING

## CHAPTER 5 : PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The village worked with different forms of outreach to invite residents to participate in the planning process. All meetings and the public surveys were advertised in the Rural Urban local newspaper and on the local cable channel. A custom meeting flyer was developed, advertising all meetings. This was publicized on the village's website and Facebook Page, as well as included in a village-wide utility billing. The village sent the invitation flyer to over 100 local businesses. All meetings were posted on the village's electronic signage. The Grafton-Midview Library and Lorain County Metro Parks also assisted by sending the invitation flyer out to their email distribution lists and placing it on their respective websites.



## VISIONING

Community visioning is a technique that offers communities a way to promote greater awareness of change, deepened citizen involvement and a stronger sense of control over a community's destiny. Some benefits to visioning include the opportunity to:

1. Bring the community together in unique context to consider the future
2. Explore new ideas and possibilities and enrich public involvement
3. Create a shared sense of direction
4. Produce shared goals and strategies
5. Encourage new civic leadership and promote partnerships
6. Strengthen community partnerships

Activity	Number of Activities	People Engaged
Steering Committee Meetings	4	54
Workshops	4	64
Public Survey	1	188
Parks Survey	1	160
Press Releases	5	+/-5,000
Utility Billings	4	+/-4,800

The Village of Grafton has many great assets and through this process the Steering Committee hoped to learn more about residents and their visions for the future of the village. Public engagement activities became unique opportunities for residents to add their voice and ideas to the efforts to build a better community for the future.



A Visioning Session was held on January 18, 2020, at the North Park Community Room. Approximately 22 attendees were present, and the consultant reviewed a power point about comprehensive planning, past planning documents, data collection, and visioning. The group reviewed the following key planning issues and worked on visioning in each category:



## Transportation

1. Develop cut thru to 83 through Reservoir Park, add bike/walking
2. Provide vehicle charging station
3. Provide additional crosswalks throughout the village, using Hawk, RFB signals to protect pedestrians and get the attention of drivers
4. Provide public transportation for SR 57 loop from Main to Midview Schools for both students and seniors
5. Review Main and Mechanic Street turning (SW Corner Grain Trucks example) for traffic congestion issues
6. Review keeping light at Main & Mechanic
7. Install sidewalks everywhere and make sure all sidewalks are clear of parked cars, snow, etc. for better access
8. Limit on-street parking when driveways are available, keep right of way clear (Center Street example)

## Commercial/Industrial

1. Make sure assisted living is able to build in Grafton, check zoning codes
2. Look at Old Foundry, off of Cleveland Street, for potential development
3. Enforce overlay district along SR 57, so businesses are looking how they should look and doing what they should do
4. Provide incentives for businesses coming to Grafton
5. Finish Commerce Drive
6. Extend Water Street

## Recreation/Green Space

1. Construct connections to Lorain County Metro Parks and Royal Oaks
2. Add green space by requiring buffers with new development (setbacks, trails), “fingers of green” in neighborhoods (set aside land), and preserve
3. Create potential recreation/green space area at Old Water Tower Park, working with library (Note: while this vision came out of the public visioning session, the village and library have met but not come to agreement on this potential park.)
4. Need trails at Reservoir, Willow Park and Bicentennial Park
5. Integrate pathways to connect recreation/green space, connections throughout the village
6. Add access and wayfinding signage to village for recreation/green space (for residents and visitors)
7. Preserve and expand green space
8. Look at fishing opportunities at recreation/green space areas
9. New developments should have new trails as requirement to develop

## Economic Development

1. Develop Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts to pay for necessary infrastructure improvements
2. Look at creation of Community Improvement Corp (CIC) for economic development purposes
3. Make sure not requesting increase through residents' income taxes to complete any infrastructure improvements
4. Work with Team NEO and Lorain County Economic Development Partners
5. Utilize better marketing of what have to offer existing and new businesses in Grafton
6. Connect industrial/commercial areas with SR 83
7. Balance development so as not to turn into Chestnut Commons, keep Grafton quaint
8. Work with grocery store to provide more options or attract a store that will provide more options
9. Provide more internet options for residents and businesses

## Downtown

1. Work towards revitalization of buildings and infrastructure
2. Fill vacant buildings, examine a vacant building tax/fee
3. Improve the look of the downtown
4. Look at implementing the National Four Point Main Street Approach (through Heritage Ohio)
  - a. Consultant's note: this involves creating committees for Design, Promotions, Organization, Economic Restructuring
5. Look at implementing Design Review to protect historic buildings
6. Bring more promotional events into the downtown (or re-instate former events)
7. Add more marketing efforts with storefront window display contests and decorating storefronts for the season
8. Recruit more volunteers to assist in downtown revitalization efforts

## Housing

1. Need more housing options for seniors (55+ communities and assisted living)
2. Need more housing options for apartments, condos, duplexes. Replace apartments lost in Downtown fire. Housing options should be suitable for all ages (families, kids, elderly)
3. Promote favorable options for people to work and live downtown, promote safe, tight-knit community
4. Do not use first floors of downtown buildings for residential, keep first floors commercial
5. Look at development of space behind State Street and Chesapeake Crossing. Note from village: some of this property is owned by the State

## Land Use/Zoning

1. Concentrate on what do with open land to control destiny, development
2. Buffer areas, especially property by prison and property to the south and east of village limits
3. Utilize land use to determine what want, protect with zoning and regulate development

4. Promote large lot sizes
5. Keep rustic atmosphere
6. Look at zoning to ensure can do condos/townhomes to offer varied housing choices to existing and new residents
7. Utilize special planning districts
8. Look at development behind 111 Elm Street (Old Elementary School) and adjacent properties to the north near overpass for future zoning classification
9. Look at institutional zoning classification
10. Make sure assisted living facilities can locate here, check zoning classifications
11. Enforce zoning and property maintenance
12. Retain residential in neighborhoods, examine in-home businesses and zoning

## Infrastructure/Utilities

1. Make sure aware of EPA water/sewer requirements so continue in compliance as requirements change
2. New electric substation
3. Continue with solar power
4. Remove or screen unsightly cable boxes
5. Continue to enhance roadways
6. Promote new sidewalks and replace deteriorated sidewalks to loop the village
7. Look at taking Grafton back to supplying own water (1996)
  - a. Note from village: looked at it, regulations, and costs too high, need another reservoir
8. Utilize green spaces for storm water management (have developer use wetlands, ditches in subdivisions, “mother nature’s kidneys” with rain gardens, etc.)
9. Examine storm water drainage at Center and Elm
10. Replace sewer at old Foundry
11. Upgrade cable for better access, service

## PUBLIC SURVEY

A public survey was developed with input from the village and Steering Committee. The survey was open from February 2020 to June 2021, an extended time frame due to Covid-19. Responses were collected through Survey Monkey from 188 community members. The survey was publicized through the village and library websites, village-wide utility billings, newspaper articles in the Rural Urban, and social media posts. Steering Committee members also sent the Survey Monkey link to

their email contacts. A summary follows with entire survey found in Appendix C.

The majority of respondents were residents and lived north of Novak Road. Almost half of the non-resident respondents worked in the village, so this should give them a good feel for the village. General survey results are outlined below, while specific survey results are included in the planning element chapters.

## Survey Says:

### Respondents...

- Use cars to get around the village, however, non-residents were walking more to get around the village than residents
- Want crosswalks on Main Street, at Novak Road and on Main Street at Willow and Reservoir Parks
- Want Design Review standards (specific guidelines to promote continuity for improvements)
- Say sidewalks are necessary in the entire village, but specifically the length of Novak and Parsons Roads, across the railroad tracks, connecting parks to downtown, and access to the schools
- Say industrial/commercial efforts should be focused in the downtown, Commerce Drive, SR 57 between northern village limits and Erie Street
- Want recreational/greenspace/trails to be developed in connection with Lorain County Metro Parks, connection through the entire village, in existing parks, and quarry at Willow Park
- Want to see trails, bike paths, additional greenspace through Metro Parks
- Say village should assist existing businesses and new businesses with low interest loans from county/state, tax incentives, and work with existing economic development partners at the county/state
- Describe the downtown as vacant, historic, and dilapidated
- Want additional promotion events, removal of vacancies, design review, streetscape in the downtown
- Need new housing such as single-family homes, housing options for seniors, downtown second floor housing
- New housing should be east of Willow/Hickory, east of Wabash Avenue, Vivian Drive extension west
- Would support enforcement of property maintenance, buffers between commercial/industrial and residential uses, and design review in the downtown
- Want future infrastructure improvements to include road, bike paths, and sidewalks
- Want future utility improvements to include internet, electric, and cable
- Would support levy/assessment to support potential improvements

Respondents were asked about their future visions for Grafton. Overall themes included the revitalization of the downtown, addition of commercial businesses, maintenance of small and quaint feeling, addition of recreation and greenspace, expansion of utilities, increased walkability, increased range of housing, vibrant

thriving community, creation of more events/bring back past events, and maintenance of area/enforcement of property maintenance.

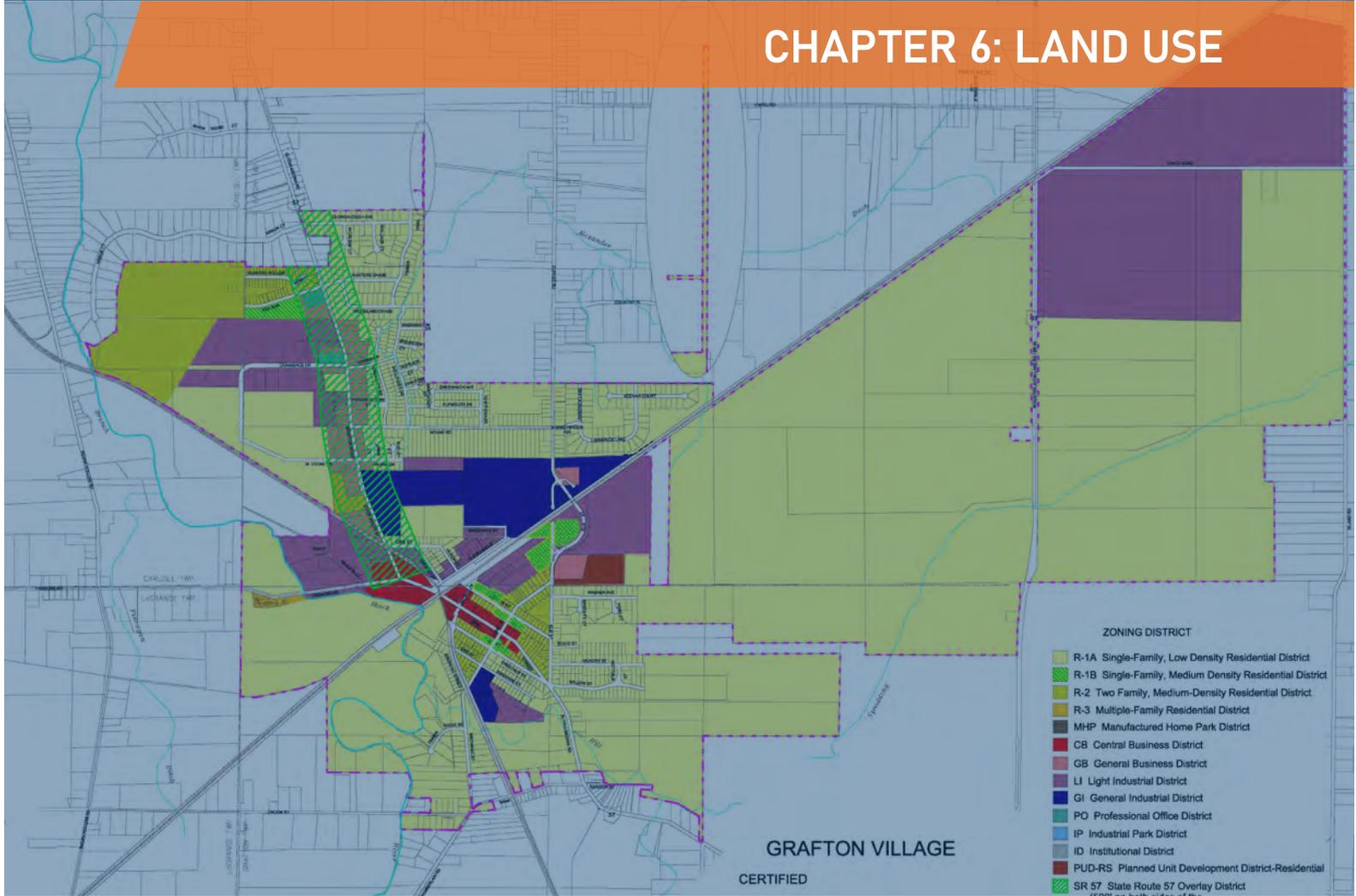


## PLANNING WORKSHOPS

Four workshops were held during 2021, one a month from June-September, for a deeper dive on the issues from the Visioning Session. The four workshops included Land Use, Economic Development, Downtown Redevelopment, and Parks/Recreation and will be reviewed in detail in the following chapters. Due to

Covid-19 the majority of the workshops were scheduled to be held outside, with the village parks making an excellent location to hold the evening meetings. Due to inclement weather, one workshop moved inside to the Community Room at North Park.

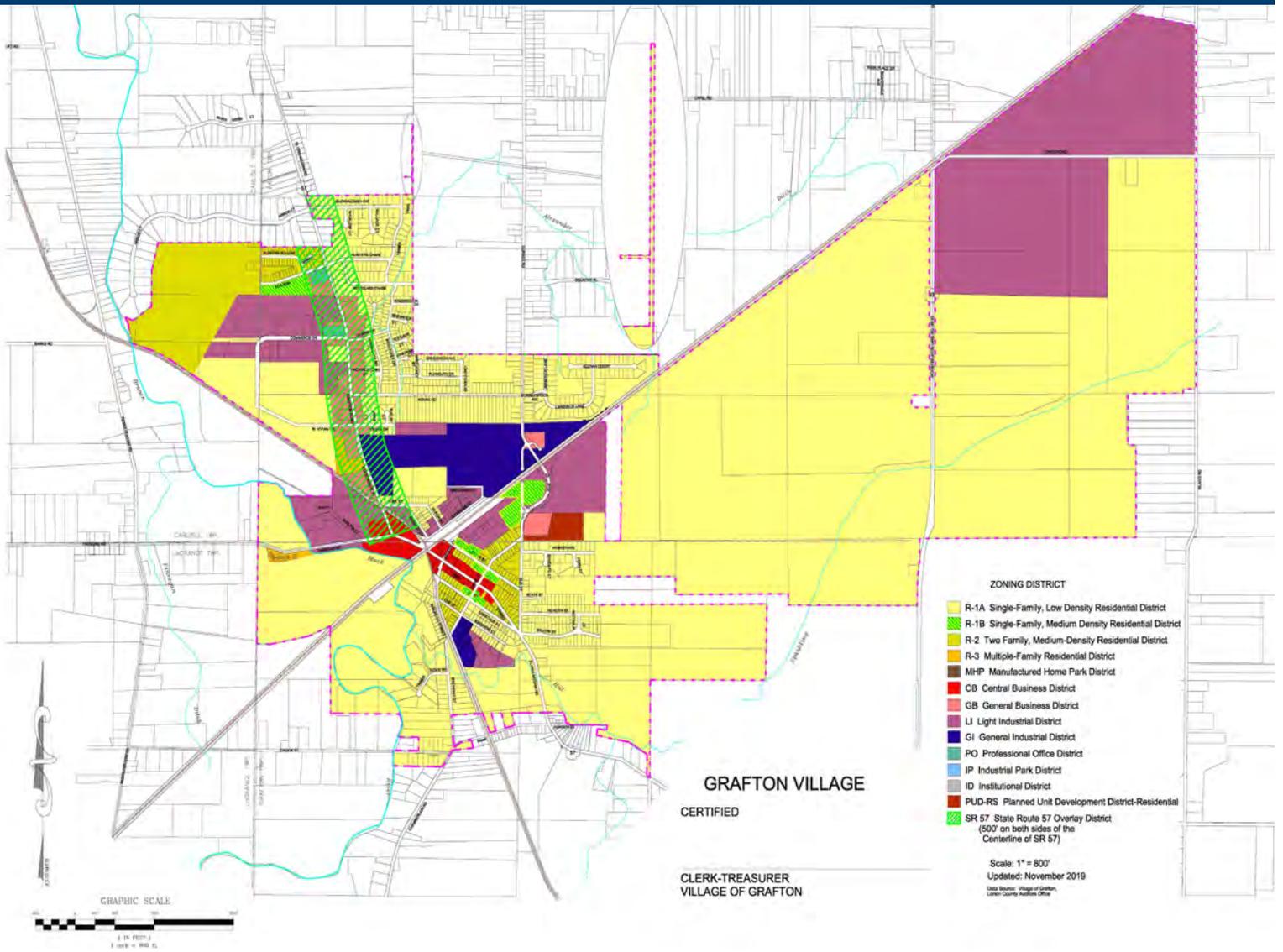
# CHAPTER 6: LAND USE







# 2019 ZONING MAP



## PREVIOUS REPORTS

### Ten Overall Goals/Recommendations from 1990 Land Use Plan

1. Maintain a balance between new growth in the northern part of the community and the older part of the community including the downtown.
2. Control future growth in a manner which complements and enhances the rural character of the village.
3. Buffer existing incompatible land uses from each other and prevent similar conflicts from occurring in the future.
4. Encourage a balance of residential, commercial, and industrial development in order to preserve and enhance the tax base.
5. Upgrade the village water and wastewater systems to meet current standards, as well as meeting the needs of residents and businesses with the community.
6. Promote efficient movement of traffic through the community, both for residents and for travelers passing through the village.
7. Maintain a current set of zoning, subdivision, and other development regulations which protect the best interests of the community.
8. Provide a level of municipal services which meets the reasonable expectations of residents.
9. Maintain the viability of the downtown as a commercial center in the village.
10. Restrict industrial land uses to designated areas in the community, and adequately buffer these areas from other land uses.



### Redevelopment opportunities from the 2019 Envision Grafton included:

1. Former Foundry Site
2. Myles Knechtges Subdivision
3. Nagel Property on Elm Street
4. Demby Property on Main Street
5. Former Grafton Elementary School (already being redeveloped)

### Public Input Workshop

A Land Use Workshop was held at the Willow Park Pavilion on Tuesday, June 8th and had approximately 20 people in attendance. Land use planning goals by planning elements were discussed and reviewed below. Additional discussion from this meeting can be found in the following economic development, downtown, and parks and recreation chapters.



## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation connects residents and visitors to economic opportunity, social activity, and community services. Connectivity is important for all modes of transportation. Participants want to see better ability to get from one side of the village to the other whether walking, biking, or driving.



### Previous Reports

The 2000 Corridor Plan focused on SR 57 and then 2019 TLCI Envision Grafton focused on overall village connections for vehicles and pedestrians.

#### Recommendations from the 2000 Corridor Plan include:

- Rerouting truck traffic
- Improve intersections\*
- Limit curb cuts\*
- Acquire widest right-of-way possible
- Add left turn lanes\*
- Add third lane entire length
- Add new zoning classifications\*
- Develop/enforce streetscaping plan \*
- Work with ODOT/NOACA for funding\*

\*Completed during the SR 57 Widening.

#### Recommendations from the 2019 Envision Grafton include:

- Separate Main & Elm Streets into series of 3 tee intersections \*
- Upgrade or remove outdated signal at Main & Mechanic\*
- Utilize pavement markings on Main & Novak to alleviate left turn confusion

\*A number of these projects have been completed or are planned to be completed as part of Main Street Improvements.

### Survey Says

The majority of respondents are using a car and non-residents were walking more in the village than residents. This was confirmed during public input with participants describing non-residents driving to the village to park and walk around.

### Transportation “Big Ideas”

- Add sidewalks to Novak Road, widen sidewalks where can and ensure clear of parked cars and snow
- Examine transportation for SR 57 loop from Main to Schools for students and seniors
- Provide additional crosswalks throughout the village (especially Main Street) using Hawk and RFB signals
- Review Main and Mechanic Street turning for traffic congestion issues
- Institute a “Walkabout Grafton” program, promoting accessibility and Grafton businesses
- Create Metro Park/Grafton loop for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Connect Willow and Reservoir Parks
- Create safe space for train watching
- Create bike loops that make Grafton a destination
  - Indian Hollow to Carlisle Reservoir or to Wellington Reservoir
  - Coordinate with bike clubs
  - Trails that utilize area quarries
- Add wayfinding signage
- Facilitate vehicular access for neighborhoods along SR 57

The village currently has multiple connections planned or underway. Initial discussions are underway for improvements to sidewalks on Elm Street and on Novak Road. Funds will need to be secured in order to put sidewalks on Novak Road, which is estimated to be a \$5-6 million dollar project. The village is putting a rapid beacon crossing on Main Street between Willow and Reservoir Park, as recommended in the 2019 Envision Grafton Plan. The village is also in discussions with CSX for replacement of the sidewalk across the railroad tracks. Until these projects are completed, residents and visitors can utilize the multiple trails and connections within the village and Metro Parks.



## HOUSING

A variety of housing at different price points is important to allow current and future residents to call Grafton home. While the village has experienced additional housing types since the last Land Use Plan, more diversity may be necessary in order to meet the housing needs of all ages and incomes. Fox Run just opened 35 parcels and has plans for another 40 parcels, as there has been demand from people moving to the area from Medina and Cuyahoga Counties. Developers want to locate in areas close to services, like hospitals and grocery stores.



### Previous Reports

## 2019 Envision Grafton recommendations include:

- Install multi-purpose trail that connects residential neighborhoods to schools
- Extend continuous sidewalks on Main Street, south of five points intersection to Willow Park\*
- Create formalized crosswalk between Reservoir and Willow Park\*

\*A number of these projects have been completed or are planned to be completed as part of Main Street Improvements.

### Survey Says

The majority of respondents would like to see new single-family housing, then housing options for seniors, and downtown second story units. The majority responded that new housing should be east of Willow and Hickory Streets, then east of Wabash Avenue, and at Vivian Drive extension west.



## Housing “Big Ideas”

- Add more housing types, price points and diversity in building materials
- More apartments, possibly in the second story of downtown buildings
- More affordable housing for seniors, include assisted living and senior group homes
- Complex for 55+ single-family homes with amenities (pool, exercise, social gathering)
- Restore vacant single-family historic homes into duplexes (zoning must be verified first)
- Finish existing developments and fix up the older homes/streets in the area
- New housing should be located at
  - Vivian Drive extension west/ South of Commerce, West of SR 57 (zoning must be verified first)
  - Examine acquisition of old foundry
- Do not add more housing
- Limit on-street parking in residential neighborhoods when driveways are available



- Enforce property maintenance
  - Balance with education
  - Use village official to enforce other than police
- Use diversity in housing building materials
- Add more connections for pedestrians
- Ensure preserving greenspace with any developments, balance greenspace and lower density
- Require minimum lot acre (.40 acre)
- Start a landlord registry

## INDUSTRIAL & COMMERCIAL BUSINESSES

Industrial and commercial businesses are important in comprehensive planning in that these businesses provide important tax revenue for the village and important services for residents and visitors. A strong industrial and commercial tax base can lead to enhanced services.

### Previous Reports

While previous reports did not address industrial and commercial businesses specifically, the overall themes include enhancing the vehicular experience along SR 57 for industrial/commercial vehicle traffic and making sure that pedestrian traffic has the necessary space when interacting with industrial/commercial vehicle traffic.

### Survey Says

Survey respondents stated that they wanted the village to focus its industrial/commercial efforts in the downtown, then Commerce Drive, and then SR 57 between the northern village limits and Erie Street. The support the community has for the downtown area is impressive.



## Industrial and Commercial “Big ideas”

- Add new retail businesses
  - Bakery, coffee shop, brewery, winery, updated grocery store
  - Additional variety of restaurants including sports bar, downtown restaurant, deli
  - Create “City Walk” with restaurants and retail
- Create DORA (Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Area) to allow alcohol in designated area
- Create “Sportsplex” with mini golf, batting cages, recreational activities
- Add murals to buildings

## INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES

Infrastructure and utilities are important to everyone who lives, works, and plays in the village. Participants agree that the majority of the infrastructure and utilities in the village serve the residents and visitors well. Cable and internet were the utilities that participants mentioned the most as needing improvement. Infrastructure and utilities are also important when reviewing land use to ensure they can support existing and proposed land uses.



### Previous Reports

The 2000 Corridor Plan’s focus was ensuring the infrastructure on SR 57 is sound. 2019 Envision Grafton recommendations include:

- Install new sidewalks on both sides of the Main Street
- Re-establish pedestrian connections across the railroad tracks were removed
- Create protected bike lane or off-road multi-purpose trail
- Extend trails
- Create formalized crosswalks

### Survey Says

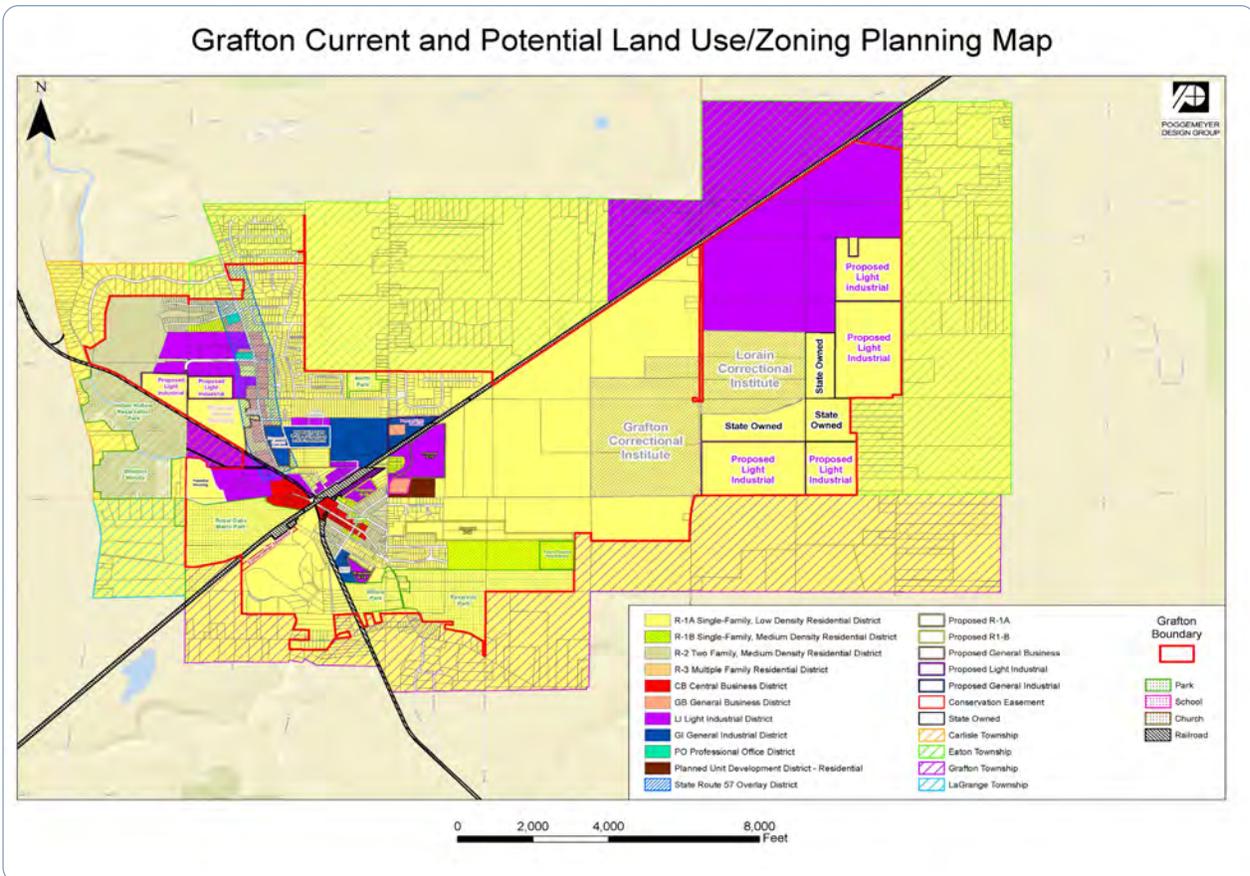
Respondents ranked sidewalks, crosswalks, bike paths/lanes, and trails the highest and in this order for future infrastructure needs. Future utility needs were ranked highest as internet, electric, cable, solar, and storm water management. Participants stated over and over again the need for reliable and fast internet.

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

Participants were asked to utilize a coloring exercise to examine areas for development and redevelopment in the village. The existing land use map was distributed to village staff and elected officials as well as the public at the various workshop meeting. Participants were given the background that the village does have some vacant areas next to the sewage plant, between Vivian Drive and Erie Street, behind Wabash, and west of the Vivian Drive extension. There is also residentially zoned land southeast of Royal Oaks Metro Parks that



will stay green space as a private reserve. There is also state-owned land near Lorain County Correctional Institute. Typically, communities want heavier uses separated from lighter uses (think industrial to residential) and buffered or screened when they cannot be separated. Based on the feedback from these participants, the following future land use map was developed.



## Recommended Substantial Proposed Zoning Changes

- Proposed Light Industrial south of Commerce Drive (currently zoned Residential)
- Proposed General Business south of above area (currently zoned Residential)
- Proposed Light Industrial around prisons (currently zoned Residential)
- Proposed Residential south of railroad tracks off of Elm (currently zoned Light Industrial)
- Proposed Residential north of Willow Park (currently zoned Light Industrial)
- Proposed General Business along SR 57, north of Erie Street (currently zoned Heavy Industrial)
- Proposed Light Industrial east of Elm Street, northeast of railroad tracks (currently zoned Heavy Industrial)
- Proposed General Business/Institutional south of Vivian, north of Erie (currently zoned Heavy Industrial)

## LAND USE TOOLS

Once land use is agreed upon, certain legislation can be adopted and can include zoning, overlay districts, and design review standards. Updates to all three of these land use tools were discussed during the planning process in order to arrive at the vision for Grafton Tomorrow.

**The municipal zoning code** is the single most important tool available to shape the form and character of future development. The village has been proactive in years with its zoning and SR 57 Overlay District, but additional work is needed to put this plan’s vision into reality. The existing Zoning Code was last updated in 2000. A complete Zoning Code Audit is recommended to review potential refinement to existing language, removal of ambiguities, clarification of processes and procedures and general overall updates to code requirements.

Zoning	Overlay Districts	Design Review Standards
A local law that defines how buildings can be constructed on a lot and how land can be used.	A tool that is layered over the top of another zoning district that usually introduces an additional standard or regulation along some feature.	A tool of local land-use regulation for the evaluation of the design of a proposed development or building, utilizing legislatively adopted design standards and guidelines, considering comments by the affected public.

### Survey Says

Enforcement of property maintenance was also reviewed, and participants were in support of this tool. The majority of survey respondents support property maintenance, buffers between commercial/industrial uses, and design review in this order.

## CHAPTER 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## CHAPTER 7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic development is a required element in most comprehensive planning efforts. Economic development can be described as progress in an economy, qualitative measure of this progress, and enhancement of factors of productive capacity (land, labor, capital, technology). Simply stated, economic development helps pay the bills. Nationally, communities are constantly working to increase tax base to help fund services and programs as well as provide goods and services residents need. Economic development is important for job creation, industry diversification, business retention/expansion, economy fortification, tax revenue, and quality of life.

The village has been very proactive with economic development, working to balance downtown commercial, highway commercial, office commercial, and industrial uses to bolster the tax base of the village and provide the desired services for residents and visitors. An industrial park was created in the northwest quadrant of the village off of Main Street/ SR 57 in the 1990s and is called Commerce Drive Industrial Park. It has approximately 40 acres. The village also has established 35 acres at the northeast corner of Avon Belden and Capel Roads for industrial development in 2019. Most recently, the village has developed a 4 MW solar generation facility in the northeast quadrant of the village. Safari Energy has been operating the facility. Additional land here has been designated for future industrial/commercial development.



### Previous Reports

The 1990 Land Use Plan called for balanced development, controlled growth with buffers between different land uses, and infrastructure/municipal services to support this growth. The Plan also called for the efficient movement of traffic through the village, maintenance of the commercial downtown core, restricting industrial to certain areas of the community, and maintaining zoning regulations to support the best interest of the community. The 2000 Corridor Plan focused on specific recommendations to move traffic through the village on SR 57. Many of these recommendations have been implemented.

## Public Input Workshop

An Economic Development Workshop was held on July 13, 2021, at the North Park Pavilion with approximately 20 people in attendance. The main topic discussed was ensuring other planning elements were ready to support expanded existing businesses and new businesses. These elements include infrastructure, utilities, housing, and transportation. Many of the “big ideas” listed below came out of this workshop, as well as the survey. In addition, workshop participants identified the following vacant land areas for future economic development activity:



## Vacant Land Area for Future Economic Development

- Willow & Hickory
- Downtown empty lots
- Old Foundry site
- Near 1111 Elm Street
- Demby property (across from Dollar General)
- Underutilized property off of Cleveland & Barchard (near Old Foundry)
- Behind Rite Aid/ off of Commerce Drive
- Empty bank building (at Hyannis & SR 57) when two banks consolidate

## Survey Says

Survey respondents were asked where the village should focus its industrial/commercial efforts. The majority of respondents felt efforts should be focused downtown, then Commerce Drive and then SR 57 between the village northern limits and Erie Street.

Survey respondents also provided the following information related to infrastructure and utilities, which are necessary for existing and expanded economic development:



### Future Infrastructure Needs

- #1 Sidewalks
- #2 Crosswalks
- #3 Bike Paths/Lanes
- #4 Trails, Roads, Wayfinding Signage, Other

### Future Utility Needs

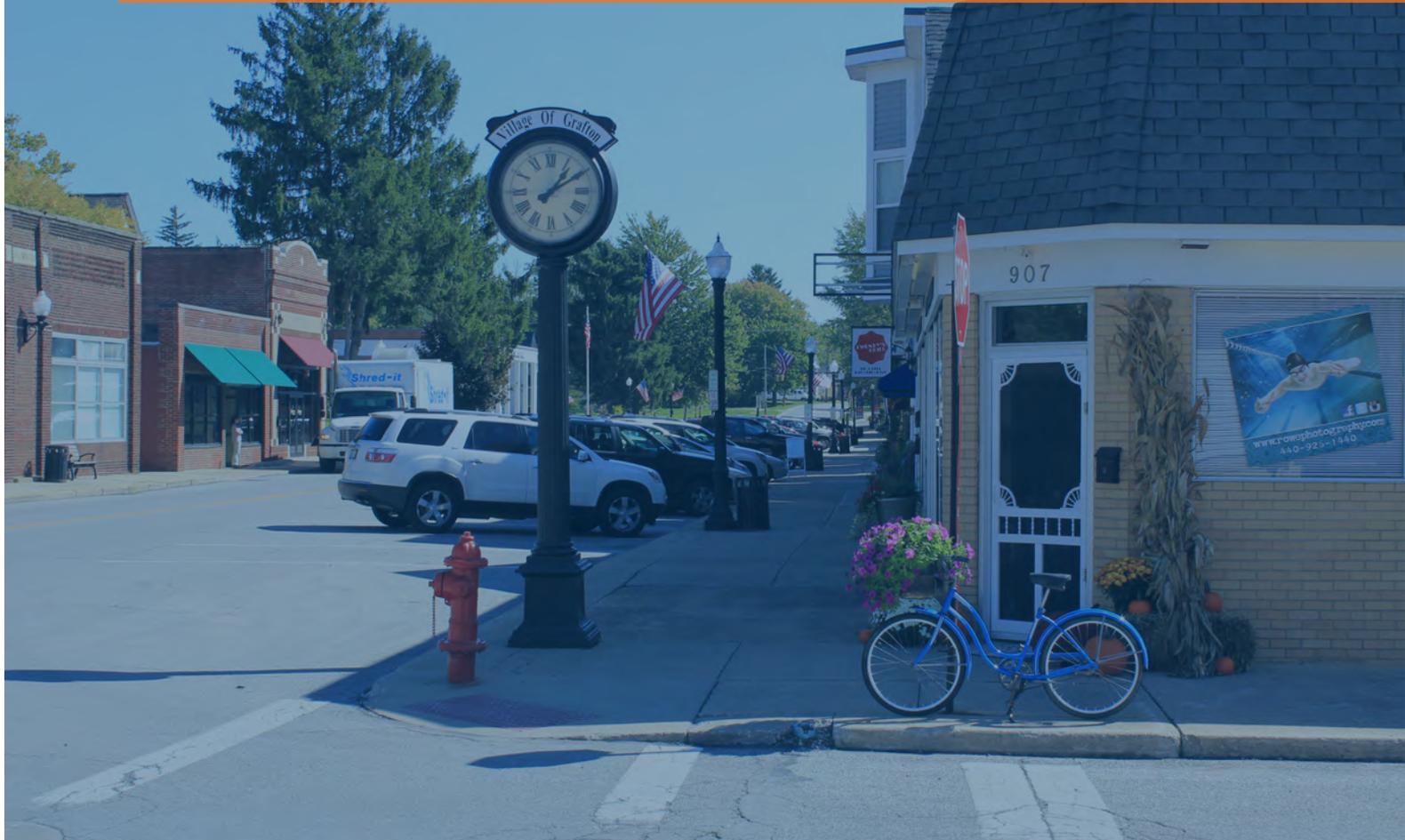
- #1 Internet (overwhelming)
- #2 Electric
- #3 Cable
- #4 Solar, Storm Water Management, Gas, Sanitary Sewer, Water, Other

## Economic Development “Big Ideas”

- Add wayfinding to include business signage, directional signage, welcome signage
- Add professional office, second story housing into downtown
- Provide varied housing for all ages
- Add and/or repair sidewalks (remove gaps near Willow and loop through Elm, Novak, Main) and crosswalks
- Provide more reliable and faster internet
- Create more events (car show, farmers market, recreational opportunities), utilize existing parking lots, vacant land and gathering places for events
- Add office building complexes for small business office space to assist with small retail development, increasing foot traffic
- Revitalize dilapidated and vacant industrial buildings and outdoor storage
- Support new and existing business with funding and technical support
- Provide village dedicated marketing and social media staff to promote the entire village
- Provide better utilities, infrastructure for businesses, lower utility rates
- Focus on wind and solar, provide tax breaks for residential solar
- Update emergency services to support new businesses and existing residents
- Attract new businesses, actively review successful businesses in neighboring communities to see what missing here, focus on small local businesses, not chains
  - Bakery/coffee shop
  - Brewery/winery
  - Updated grocery and/or new market-type store
  - Restaurants/bars
  - Package hub
  - Bike, scooter, e-bike rentals
  - Recreational amenities (with Metro Parks), utilize quarry
  - Dog Park, pet-friendly eateries
  - Arts/entertainment
  - Transit-oriented tourism
  - Add DORA
- Implement village-wide business registration, documentation



## CHAPTER 8: DOWNTOWN





# DOWNTOWN

## CHAPTER 8: DOWNTOWN

Communities across the country take steps every day to preserve and protect their historic downtowns. A downtown is important because it is the heart and soul of a community. It is the preservation of the past, an indicator of larger social and economic trends, a community gathering place, and an economic development generator. A downtown is considered the living room of a community or “third place” where residents and visitors gather besides their homes or places of work. In fact, many communities who have lost their downtowns look to replicate them by building outdoor lifestyle centers.



The Village of Grafton has an historic downtown located along State Route 57, Main Street. This downtown has been described as a charming commercial district that serves as the heart of the village. The majority of the historic buildings are intact and front the street on both sides, with the exception a few areas where a fire or asphalt driveways for vehicles have disrupted the streetscape. The village is fortunate in that the downtown contains a number of traffic generators including the Grafton-Midview Public Library, the Post Office, and Village Hall. The downtown does lack that sense of arrival and the village is working on some projects that would address this. Parking is available both on-street (mostly head-in angled), as well as off-street public and private parking lots.

The village has discussed the idea of design review within the historic downtown and this would include an overlay to protect the historic character of the buildings following the Secretary of Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings.

### Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings Introduction to the Guidelines



The Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings were initially developed in 1977 to help property owners, developers, and Federal managers apply the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation during the project planning stage by providing general design and technical recommendations. Unlike the Standards, the Guidelines are not codified as program requirements.

Together with the Standards for Rehabilitation they provide a model process for owners, developers, and Federal agency managers to follow.

The Guidelines are intended to assist in applying the Standards to projects generally; consequently, they are not meant to give case-specific advice or address exceptions or rare instances. For example, they cannot tell owners or developers which features of their own historic building are important in defining the historic character and must be preserved—although examples are provided in each section—or which features could be altered, if necessary, for the new use. This kind of careful case-by-case decision-making is best accomplished by seeking assistance from qualified historic preservation professionals in the planning stage of the project. Such professionals include architects, architectural historians, historians, archeologists, and others who are skilled in the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of the historic properties.

The Guidelines pertain to historic buildings of all sizes, materials, occupancy, and construction types; and apply to interior and exterior work as well as new exterior additions. Those approaches, treatments, and techniques that are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for Rehabilitation" are listed in **bold-face type** under the "

**Recommended**" section in each topic area; those approaches, treatments, and techniques which could adversely affect a building's historic character are listed in the "Not Recommended" section in each topic area.

To provide clear and consistent guidance for owners, developers, and Federal agency managers to follow, the "Recommended" courses of action in each section are listed in order of historic preservation concerns so that a rehabilitation project may be successfully planned and completed—one that, first, assures the preservation of a building's important or "character-defining" architectural materials and features and, second, makes possible an efficient contemporary use. Rehabilitation guidance in each section begins with protection and maintenance, that work which should be maximized in every project to enhance overall preservation goals. Next, where some deterioration is present, repair of the building's historic materials and features is recommended. Finally, when deterioration is so extensive that repair is not possible, the most problematic area of work is considered, replacement of historic materials and features with new materials.

To further guide the owner and developer in planning a successful rehabilitation project, those complex design issues dealing with new use requirements such as alterations and additions are highlighted at the end of each section to underscore the need for particular sensitivity in these areas.

They have also discussed a new Main Street Overlay to dictate landscaping and ingress/egress issues. Public input received during the planning process indicates these endeavors would be supported.

## Previous Reports

The village and its business owners have worked on downtown redevelopment over the years, working toward implementing the National Main Street Approach. A DART (Downtown Assessment Resource Team) Report was completed by Heritage Ohio in 2008. In addition, the downtown was reviewed in the 1990 Land Use Plan and 2019 Envision Grafton Smart Growth Through Transportation reports.

The big vision in the 1990 Land Use Plan was to maintain the viability of the downtown as the commercial center of the village, provide additional parking, provide support to the business association, and add banners and flowers.

Heritage Ohio, Inc., Ohio's Main Street Organization, completed a Downtown Assessment Resource Team



visit. The goal was to identify major challenges in the downtown and provide information on the Four Point Main Street Approach.

## Observations included:

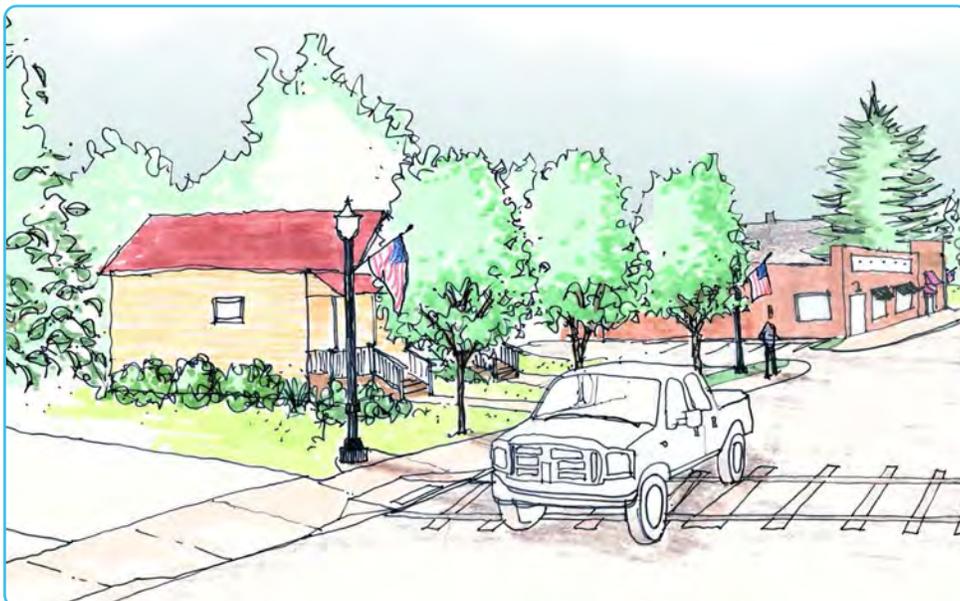
- Maintain traffic generators
- Utilize larger vacant buildings
- Strengthen business association
- Continue partnership between business association, business owners, village
- End north/south divide
- Continue events/festivals
- Train history is just one direction for theme
- Trailhead is underutilized
- Need more retail events
- Build on residential population and proximity to Cleveland
- Know your businesses, what they need (from existing to start ups and make process streamlined)
- Opportunities to improve streetscape appeal
- Gathering area at water tower
- Protect small town atmosphere with overlay zoning and new infill should be compatible with existing, protect wood frame buildings (part of character)
- Better signage necessary for parking



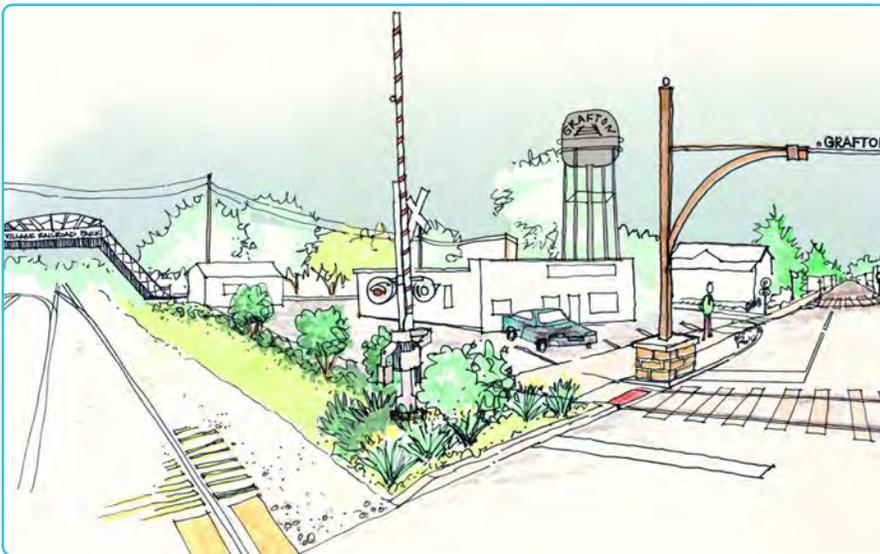
The **2019 Envision Grafton report** focused on improvements to make the downtown the showcase of the community with improved connections. These connectivity recommendations included adding sidewalks, re-establishing pedestrian connection across railroad tracks, and creating new trailhead connection in downtown connecting to the Metro Parks. Signage, business frontage, railroad track inspired paving for crosswalks, corner curb bump outs, unified street furniture elements, reconfiguration of parking, addition of street trees, and a railroad heritage park were also discussed.



1. Reconfigure parking (parallel or reverse angle) to calm traffic, increase safety
2. Special "railroad track" paving at all downtown crosswalks to increase pedestrian safety and visibility while highlighting arrival to center of town
3. Encourage planting of street trees on private property where public ROW is unavailable
4. Create corner curb bumpouts to calm traffic and shorten crossing distances for pedestrians
5. Adopt "Downtown Amenities Package" standard to unify elements (benches, bike racks, trash / recycling receptacles, etc.)



1. Reestablish pedestrian connection across tracks on southwest side of Main St. that was removed
2. Signage standards - Pole banner program, sign types, wayfinding
3. Study opportunity site for gateway arch / pillars to frame view of downtown
4. Develop Railroad Heritage Park for train-watching enthusiasts. Integrate observation platform near signal tower w/ designated parking area
5. Study frontage options for Marathon property to formalize pedestrian zone and facilitate business operations



### 2019 Envision Grafton Report



## PUBLIC INPUT WORKSHOP

A Downtown Workshop was held on August 13th and approximately 11 people attended. A walking tour of the downtown was completed so attendees could get a better feel at sidewalk/street level for the downtown infrastructure and buildings. Participants were asked to pay special attention to sidewalk connectivity and building materials, shape, and size. Participants were also asked what they liked and did not like in the downtown.



### Downtown: What I Like....

- B- Spa
- Banners
- Benches (2)
- Farmers Insurance
- Flags
- Flowers (2)
- Inviting businesses, proper curb appeal (2)
- Library
- Light poles
- Lou's patio seating
- Lou's Pizza
- More public parking
- Nicely kept buildings
- Parking on Main Street
- Quaint feeling
- Size of the downtown
- Trains/railroad/railroad features (2)
- Trees

Workshop conversation focused on ways to improve the downtown. A blend of new and old should be the goal, retaining the historic look with a mix of vibrant businesses. The downtown should connect the north and south portions of Grafton. The flowers are a wonderful addition and participants would like to see more greenspace and small trees. The village has plans for major streetscape improvements by 2023. Participants

### Downtown: What I Don't Like....

- Broken sidewalks/ cracked & uneven sidewalks (2)
- Disrepair of businesses
- Empty buildings (2)
- Lack of diversity of business
- Lack of treescaping, landscaping
- Narrow sidewalks on north side of street
- Potholes
- Safety of crosswalks (2)
- Size of signage (too small, not in correct places)
- SR 57 traffic speeds
- Vacant lots
- Weeds

would like to see this pride in the streetscape continued to the building owners in the maintenance of their buildings. Fun businesses should be added, along with additional promotional events, to bring residents and visitors to the downtown. Parking was discussed, but participants felt that there are a lot of spaces available. However, better signage is needed to find these spaces. Additional bike parking is necessary to encourage riders to park their

bikes downtown and walk to their destinations. Benches are well used in the downtown and there may be a need for additional benches. Street furniture (benches, planters, trash receptacles) should match and follow a streetscape theme. Sidewalks should be continuous and even to encourage walking. Many of the big ideas listed below came from this workshop.

## DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATION

When reviewing a downtown, it is also important to discuss the actual organization of the downtown. A non-profit group is typically formed that “makes it all happen” in a downtown. The Greater Grafton Partnership (GGP) has assumed this role and continues to work to promote the downtown. It is recommended that the GGP implements the National Main Street (MS) Approach™. It is centered around transformational strategies to give communities a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing/strengthening historic downtowns. The Four Points™ to the Main Street Approach include Economic Vitality,



Design, Promotion, and Organization. Each point should have a committee chair and committee working towards implementing each point. This format also includes an executive director and a board, working with the committees to implement each point.



## The Four Point Main Street Approach™ and related committee work has been summarized well by Heritage Ohio and includes the following:

**Economic Vitality** (“Sense of Vibrancy”) can be defined as giving good incentives to existing customers. This committee works to help existing businesses with the end goal of expanding within the downtown. A secondary goal would be to recruit from the outside, small businesses within other communities, working to have them expand to your community.

**Design** (“Sense of Place”) can be defined as the aesthetics of the downtown. This committee works to create the place people want to live, work, and play. Historic preservation is at the core, but also includes sidewalks, street furniture, open flags, and sidewalk signage that make a downtown pedestrian friendly.

**Organization** (“Sense of Ownership”) can be defined as the undercurrent of everything that happens in the downtown organization. This committee is responsible for membership, budgeting, and by-law revisions.

**Promotions** (“Sense of Community”) can be defined as the events and activities of the downtown. This committee is responsible for the “party planning” and typically gets lots of volunteers because the events are so visible. This committee is an excellent resource to retrain committee members to come back to other events. Examples of typical events would be First Fridays, chocolate/wine walks, sidewalks chalk festivals, ice carving festivals, and farmers markets. Events should be held continuously all year long.

Another important part of the Main Street (MS)™ process is developing a work plan for the organization. A strong work plan allows the board and committees to stay focused and also allows them to never say no to any idea.

The work plan can also include a business inventory, event inventory, mentorship program, and even design standards. Everything a Main Street organization does should be in the work plan and approved by the board. The work plan should be approved on the following five criteria: mission, transformation strategy, goals, funding, and people. A transformational strategy should be succinct with only 1-3 overall goals to ensure success.

After a work plan is approved, it should be evaluated as to what worked, what did not work, and how much time each activity actually took.

### Work Plan Process

1. Transformation Strategy Identification
2. Strategy Development
3. Strategy Implementation
4. Board Review & Approval of Work Plans
5. Board Approval of Annual Budget
6. Board Submits Annual Budget to Funding Sources

### Survey Says

As mentioned in the Economic Development Chapter, the majority of survey respondents wanted the village to focus its industrial/commercial efforts in the downtown. Adjectives used to describe the downtown included vacant, historic, quaint, and dilapidated. Survey respondents felt necessary improvements included removal of vacancies, additional promotional events, design review, streetscape, and updated buildings. These line up with the public input heard at the various workshops. After further discussion of the vacant adjective, participants thought this may be more of a perception issue. The village confirmed that vacancy rates in the downtown are actually low and workshop participants agreed that not all businesses in the downtown are open every day. Education may be necessary to assist building and business owners to update their storefront windows to look occupied, using window treatments and window displays.

## Downtown “Big Ideas”

- Make internet available for entire downtown
- Implement village-wide community calendar, start with library calendar as base
- Bring more promotional events to the downtown, bring back previous events
- Revitalize buildings and infrastructure, fill vacant buildings
- Add upper floor housing units
- Improve look of the downtown, implement design review standards to assist with building design and maintenance, focus on aesthetics
- Clean up residential and commercial properties and landscaping at gateways
  - Implement screening of businesses and junk yards
- Add more marketing efforts with storefront window display contests and decorating storefronts for the season
- Revisit angle parking to make more easily available for both directions and safer, enforce restrictions on parking
- Implement streetscaping program
  - Add new banners in Midview Schools colors and change out with seasonal (like snowflakes)
  - Add streetscape, including street trees
- Add “fun” businesses to attract residents and visitors, be selective in types of businesses so as not to duplicate services
  - Bakery, coffee shop, winery, brewery, outdoor dining, more retail, more restaurants, small businesses
  - Live music
  - Senior center
- Limit building developments
- Inventory building, assets, types of businesses
- Offer incentives like store front renovation grants, advertising dollars, aid in lowering rent to encourage occupancy assisting small marquee businesses
- Implement Four Point Main Street Approach™, educate property owners, developers, business owners and recruit volunteers
- Emphasize and advertise Grafton’s railroad history
- Build on existing assets (parks, historic buildings, Old School, proximity to other Lorain Co Main Streets) and traffic generators (Library, Village Hall, Post Office, Parks/ Baseball Leagues)
- Advertise public parking, especially lot behind Village Hall

## CHAPTER 9: PARKS & RECREATION





# PARKS & RECREATION

## CHAPTER 9: PARKS & RECREATION

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), encouraging healthy physical activity is directly related to providing access to nearby parks, trails, and open spaces. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) has documented that property values tend to increase the closer a parcel is to trails and parks. Providing parks, trails, and open space is a win-win for a community as it encourages physical activity keeping residents healthy and happy and increases the community's tax base.

The Village of Grafton has doubled its parks since its last comprehensive plan, encompassing approximately 251 acres of the village. According to the NRPA, communities should have at least 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents and the village far exceeds this standard. Current parks include Reservoir Park, Willow Park, North Park, and Bicentennial Park. A new pocket park (a Veterans Memorial) is being proposed between Elm and Willow Streets off of SR 57 (Main Street).

These parks/trails are a tourist draw and can become a greater economic development generator. Connections between these parks and the County Metro Parks to the historic district, commercial district, and neighborhoods will be important and should be encouraged as funding becomes available.

During the comprehensive planning process, the village determined that an update to the existing 1996 and 2001 Park Plans was necessary. These documents have been used to guide the many improvements made to the parks over the last 25 years. As part of the planning process, a park inventory outlining what is currently in each park and what was planned and completed in each park was completed. The parks inventory is located in Appendix E. While completing the inventory, it was noted that all parks were very clean and peaceful with a good balance of active and passive uses and natural greenspace. The village held a planning workshop and completed a parks and recreation specific community survey to solicit public input on the existing parks and recreation and planned future. Public input showed that residents and visitors seemed to agree on the parks' existing assets, opportunities, challenges, and potential future improvements. The parks survey results are included in Appendix F. A landscape architect was also included on the consulting team to attend the park and recreation workshop and sketch out big ideas for park improvements to guide the village over the next 10-20 years.

### Previous Reports

The 1990 Land Use Plan called for proper development of recreation areas and green space to preserve the community's character and contribute to the quality of life. Other specific recommendations included acquisition of additional park land, greater use of reservoir area, greater connections between the Metro Parks and the Black River and the Black River and the downtown, dedication of park lands by residential developers, preservation of trees, wetlands, floodplains or other environmentally sensitive areas, creation of a recreation district, and adding buffers between incompatible uses that could be used as park space.

The 1996 and 2001 Parks Plan had a number of big ideas related to each of the three parks located in Grafton at the time. Many were inspirational while others were implemented through planning and grant funding.



## Willow Park Big Ideas 1996

- Pedestrian Walk
- Overflow Parking
- Service Buildings
- Dug Out/Grandstand
- Horseshoe
- Concessions
- Fitness Trail
- Pedestrian Bridges
- Amphitheater



## North Park Big Ideas 1996

- Roller Sport Surface
- Sand Volleyball Courts
- Ice Skating
- Bumblebee Soccer
- Entry Island
- Basketball Courts
- Memorial Trees
- Toddler Play Area
- Children's Play Area
- Grills
- Courtyard
- Pavilion
- Meeting Pavilion
- Community Room



## Reservoir Park Big Ideas 2001

- Tennis
- Youth Golf
- Soccer Fields
- Soccer Stadium
- 4 Ball Fields
- BMX Track
- In-line Hockey
- Skateboard Park
- Basketball Courts
- Fitness Trail
- Aquatic Center
- Fishing Deck
- Ice Skating Rink
- Fitness Stations
- Toboggan Hill



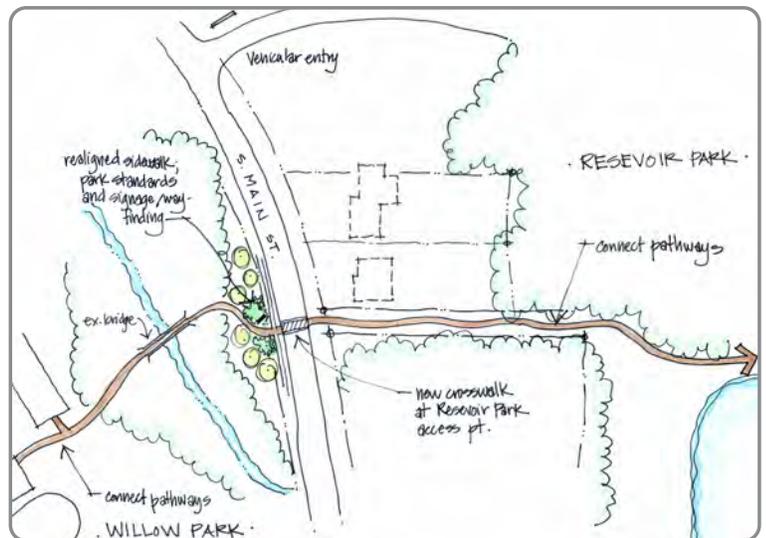
The other existing planning reports offered the following related to park development and redevelopment. The 2008 DART Report stated that the Metro Parks Trailhead is underutilized and that a gathering area at the water tower could be developed. The 2019 Envision Grafton Report offered more recommendations related to connectivity and park development/redevelopment. Specific recommendations included: install footbridge,

path, trailhead, and light fixtures to access Metro Parks from the downtown; extend Metro Parks trail along easement (former bowling alley) toward Main Street; install multi-purpose trail along north side of tracks from railroad crosswalk to Erie St/Main St; install multi-purpose trail that connects residential neighborhoods to schools; and create formalized crosswalk between Reservoir Park and Willow Park.

## Public Input Workshop

A Parks and Recreation Workshop was held on September 9, 2021, and approximately 25 people attended. The presentation started at the pavilion in North Park, but inclement weather moved participants to the Community Room at North Park. Participants

appreciated using the parks as a backdrop for the planning workshop. Ideas discussed included existing parks and recreational space, public input to date on parks and recreation, and planned parks/recreation improvements. Many of the “big ideas” listed below came out of this workshop.



## Survey Says

The overall Comprehensive Plan Community Survey had a few general parks and recreation questions and there were 188 responses to this survey. From the overall Comprehensive Plan Community Survey, as far as the types of recreational improvements necessary, the majority of respondents wanted to see trails, bike paths, additional Metro Parks greenspace, and exercise paths. These additional recreational/greenspace should be developed in conjunction with the Metro Parks, in existing parks, with connections throughout entire village and at the Quarry in Willow Park. Respondents were very positive about the parks in their open-ended comments.

The village had 160 respondents to the Parks & Recreation Survey, which was open from the end of July

through the end of September 2021. The majority of respondents were residents between the ages of 35-54. The majority of respondents were using Willow Park, then North Park, then Reservoir Park, then Bicentennial Park. Parks & recreation was rated “very important” by the majority of respondents and only 2% rated parks & recreation “not important.” The majority of respondents are using the Indian Hollow Trail Head at Erie and Main Streets. The majority also felt that all parks did not have enough amenities (quantity), but felt all parks had good amenities (quality). The parks in Grafton are being used with almost half of respondents visiting monthly and almost a quarter of respondents visiting weekly or multiple times a week.

Comprehensive Plan Most Important Overall Park Amenities	Comprehensive Plan Least Important Overall Park Amenities
Restrooms	Stage Area
Playground Areas	Basketball Courts
Recreational Paths	Baseball Diamonds
Nature Areas	Game Concession Stand
Pavilion	Drinking Fountains
Benches	
Splash Pad	
Picnic Tables	



### Survey Says - Willow Park

Most Important Willow Park Amenities	Least Important Willow Park Amenities
Walking Path	Hockey
Multi-Purpose Path School Connection	Football
Water Play	Stakeboard Park
Bike Trails	Bump Track/BMX Track
Signage	Batting Cages
Fishing/Fishing Deck	Soccer
Sledding	Horseshoe
Dog Park	Ice Skating



### Survey Says - North Park

Most Important North Park Amenities	Least Important North Park Amenities
Multi-Purpose Path School Connection	Hockey
Walking Path	Football
Entrance Lighting	Bump Track/BMX Track
Signage	Skateboard Park
Dog Park	Soccer
Sledding	Batting Cages
	Shuffleboard
	Ice Skating



## Survey Says - Reservoir Park

Most Important Reservoir Park Amenities	Least Important Reservoir Park Amenities
Multi-Purpose Path School Connection	Hockey
Walking Path	Football
Entrance Lighting	Skateboard Park
Paved Parking	Bump Track/BMX
Playground	Soccer
Baseball Field Lighting	Horseshoe
Signage	Volleyball
Fishing/Fishing Deck	Shuffleboard



## Survey Says - Where Should New Parks, Greenspace, Recreation Areas Be Located

<b>#1</b>	Reservoir Park
<b>#2</b>	North Park
<b>#3</b>	Old School
<b>#4</b>	Old Bowling Alley

<b>#5</b>	Downtown
<b>#6</b>	Near School Campus
<b>#7</b>	Willow Park



## PARKS & RECREATION “BIG IDEAS”

### Overall Parks and Recreation “Big Ideas”

- Add wayfinding signage including QR codes
- Add more interactive activities like bigger splash pad, water area/pool, fishing, tennis, skate park, rope course/zip line, bike rental, quarry improvements, as well as more activities for people of any age including younger and older children
- Add street furniture like recycling containers and bike racks
- Add connections like Metro Parks/Grafton loop and Willow/Reservoir connector, south to north
- Add or improve walkable, bikeable, safer crossings at streets to access parks
- Do cross-promotion of activities between village and Metro Parks and the downtown
- Add recreational amenities businesses to the village
- Add fenced dog parks
- Move gazebo to Bowling Alley lot
- Examine a second community room elsewhere in village for larger events

## NORTH PARK

### North Park Is All About Kids Play

The village is currently in discussions or planning for renovation of the existing pavilion and restroom, adding a second pavilion, and a trail.



### North Park “Big Ideas”

- Create a Storybook/Learning Trail, a walking path with interactive reading activities located near activities, not on the park perimeter
- Add sidewalks to entrance road, along Novak, Elm, and park driveway
- Shore up ground/grass around playset
- Add memorial trees around playground or start perimeter tree line
- Add more beautification, like landscaping, flowering trees
- Expand community room to include outdoor patio
- Add designated youth football field, community pool and/or expanded water play, archery, ice rink, new benches, fencing around playground
- Add speed bumps to slow traffic



## WILLOW PARK

### Willow Park is All About Nature, Community, Events & Kids

The village is currently in discussions or planning for a new 10' wide multi-purpose path, a new footbridge, and a future trail to Reservoir Park.



### Willow Park “Big Ideas”

- Activate quarry for a dedicated green space: clean underbrush, add aeration/fountains and new floating docks, designate fishing area
- Make entrance more appealing and include signage, making it easier for park to be seen from the road, add a mural to existing building
- Add grilling areas, serving areas in pavilions
- Add more kid activities, including toddler-friendly play set and nature play area
- Preserve open space for community events
- Build and connect new trailheads and parking



## BICENTENNIAL PARK

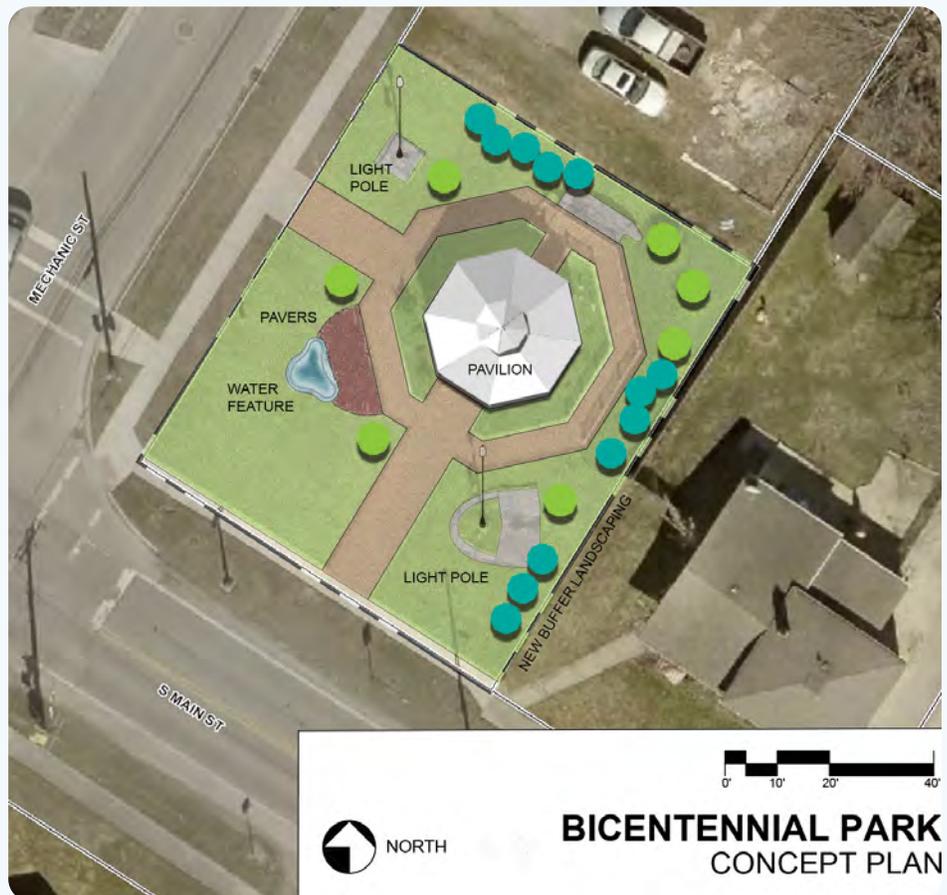
### Bicentennial Park Is All About A Place To Gather

The village is currently in discussions or planning for a water feature, memorial bricks, and fencing for neighborhood screening.



### Bicentennial Park “Big Ideas”

- Continue to promote location as photo opportunity for residents/visitors
- Examine development of lot diagonal from park, next to the Library to compliment park
- Add memorial bricks, flowers, and water feature (or even a dry fountain)
- Add evergreen trees to buffer park from adjacent properties



## RESERVOIR PARK

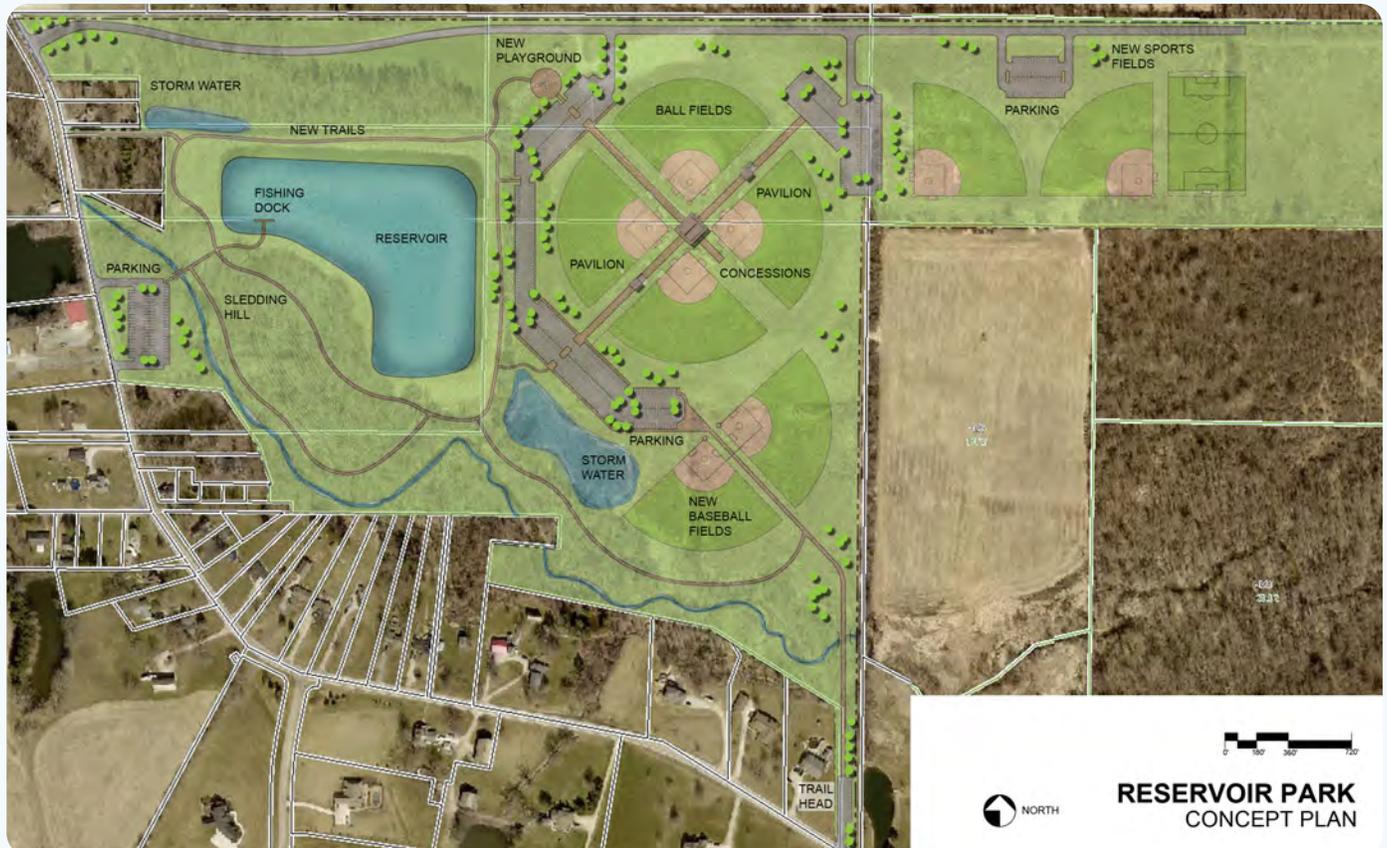
### Reservoir Park Is All About Sports

The village is currently in discussions or planning for parking lot improvements, park entrance drive improvements, trail, connection with Willow Park, and addition of ball diamonds.



### Reservoir Park “Big Ideas”

- Add walking, nature trails, and nature trailheads/connectors
- Improve roadway, parking lot with paving and sidewalks
- Add new, paved parking
- Add path and dock for fishing
- Add signage for reservoir
- Add lights within concession area
- Add additional sport opportunities like soccer and football fields
- Add small enclosed, netted playground within baseball complex
- Widen sidewalks from parking lot to concession stand
- Improve baseball fields with night lighting, deeper fencing for adult leagues and additional diamonds
- Add sledding hill



### In addition, Grafton Hot Stove (Baseball Organization) had some specific requests for Reservoir Park:

- Repaint and move signs to other side of road
- Add parking to right between present parking in front of ditch and to end of present parking to the right between drainage area and the fence of field A
- Place planking on lower part of backstops on all fields behind home plate
- Install permanent covers on all dugouts
- Put signage to prohibit dogs from baseball fields and install doggy stands around park to help with clean up
- Install security cameras
- Plant more trees between fields and remove dead trees
- Remove brush between fields and reservoir
- Add more baseball and softball fields

### New Park Spaces

There was consensus at the Parks & Recreation Workshop that the village has a sufficient number of designated parks and greenspace, especially if including Lorain County Metro Parks space. While dog parks were brought up by the public in the community surveys, those attending the workshops expressed more challenges than opportunities to creating a dog park. Overall, the public was interested in making sure any new spaces are easily accessible and well-connected, but first verifying that all existing spaces are utilized to best and highest use and are connected.

### New Park Spaces “Big Ideas”

- Everywhere
- North side of the village
  - South of Commerce Drive, north of the Vivian Drive extension
  - Main Street between Vivian Drive and Erie Street
  - Off of Fox Run
  - Near corner of Parsons and Main
- Downtown
  - Near or on the Black River
  - Near Main Street
- Area across from trailhead at Indian Hollow at the corner of Main and Erie Streets
- Former bowling alley property for a visitor’s center or pavilion
- Trail, path connection to schools, even though process is difficult
- New housing developments, parks/greenspace included in developers’ plans
- Additional playgrounds for younger children
- Additional activities for older children and teenagers
- Undeveloped space at North and Reservoir Parks
- Connections to Metro Parks
- Near Willow Park



## CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION





# IMPLEMENTATION

## CHAPTER 10: IMPLEMENTATION

Building a highly livable and desirable community is hard work. It takes vision, commitment, partnerships, and civic leadership. Community-building efforts must be sustained over the long-term. Without exception, all highly desirable and successful communities share the common trait of making conscious choices about community development, and then executing steps toward goals, bridging planning with results.

This concluding chapter identifies the major action items from the Comprehensive Plan and identifies timeframes (short term, mid-term, and long term) and responsible parties to move forward in implementing the plan’s vision and recommendations. These action items will guide Village Council and administration as they prioritize finite financial and human resources.

**“Plans are only good intentions unless they immediately degenerate into hard work.”**

- Peter Drucker

To address the plans implementation and the prioritization of projects, we recommend that the mayor and village administration review the plan’s action items and develop an annual work plan based on current available resources, manpower, cost, and project timeframe. This work plan should be reviewed and updated on a yearly basis delineating the items that have been completed, the items that are no longer applicable, and the actions that have not yet been started. Reviewing and updating this work plan on a yearly basis ensures that the village will be continuously working on implementing the vision and action items of this plan.

ACTIVITY/STRATEGY	TIME FRAME S=1-2 yrs M=3-4 yrs L=5+ yrs	RESPONSIBLE PARTY V=Village NP=Nonprofit B=Business D=Developers R=Residents S=Schools C=County MP=Metroparks L=Library	FUNDING
<b>Land Use</b>			
Implement Future Land Use Map	S	V	NA
Complete Zoning Code Audit and update zoning code to reflect proposed, desired land uses	S	V	CDBG
Enforce property maintenance in all residential, commercial, and industrial uses	S-M	V	NA
Enforce SR 57 Overlay Zone for uniform look	S	V	
Encourage buffering between residential and other uses	S	V, D	NA
Encourage residential development on infill lots and in areas adjacent to residential neighborhoods	M	V, D	NA
Add small/slow-growing trees to neighborhood tree lawns	M	V, R, D	NA

ACTIVITY/STRATEGY	TIME FRAME S=1-2 yrs M=3-4 yrs L=5+ yrs	RESPONSIBLE PARTY V=Village NP=Nonprofit B=Business D=Developers R=Residents S=Schools C=County MP=Metroparks L=Library	FUNDING
<b>Transportation</b>			
Add sidewalks (including widening existing) everywhere (specifically Novak Road, Elm Street) and ensure stay clear of parked cars and snow	S-L	V	Budget, TLCI
Provide additional crosswalks throughout Village (especially Main Street), using Hawk and RFB signals	S	V	Budget, ODOT, TLCI
Review streets for congestion issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Main and Mechanic Street turning traffic</li> <li>▪ Neighborhood access along SR 57</li> </ul>	S, M-L	V	Budget, ODOT
Create recreational and tourist experiences related to transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Start a “Walkabout Grafton” program, promoting accessibility and Grafton businesses</li> <li>▪ Highlight a Metro Park/Grafton loop so entire Village is connected</li> <li>▪ Identify bike loops with local bike clubs that make Grafton a destination (Indian Hollow to Carlisle Reservoir or Wellington Reservoir, area quarries)</li> <li>▪ Create a safe space for train watching</li> <li>▪ Connect Willow and Reservoir Parks</li> </ul>	M	V, NP, B, MP	Budget, Community Foundation, ODNR
Add wayfinding signage system for entire Village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilize logo, tagline</li> <li>▪ Add entrance, kiosks, parking, wayfinding signage</li> </ul>	S-M	V, B	Budget
Examine transportation/access for SR 57 loop from Main to Schools for students and seniors	L	V, NP, S, C	County, State, Non-Profits

## Housing

<p>Examine addition of more variety in housing types, price points, materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Add houses for all ages</li> <li>▪ Revitalize existing housing stock</li> <li>▪ New housing at Vivian Drive and south if old foundry becomes available</li> </ul>	S-L	V, D	NA
<p>Limit on-street parking in existing and future residential neighborhoods when driveways are available</p>	S	V	NA
<p>Examine additional regulations with new residential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Add connections for pedestrians in neighborhoods</li> <li>▪ Ensure greenspace with any residential developments</li> <li>▪ Require minimum lot acre size (.40 acres)</li> </ul>	S-L	V, D	NA
<p>Start a landlord registry</p>	S-M	V	NA

## Industrial / Commercial

<p>Add new retail/restaurant businesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bakery, coffee shop, brewery, winery, updated grocery store, sports bar, downtown restaurant, deli, package hub, recreational rentals/amenities, pet friendly eateries, arts/entertainment</li> <li>▪ Examine creation of a “City Walk” featuring retail and restaurants</li> </ul>	S-L	V, B	CDBG, CRA
<p>Create experiences for residents and visitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create DORA (Downtown Outdoor Refreshment Area)</li> <li>▪ Create “Sportsplex” with indoor and outdoor recreational activities</li> <li>▪ Transit oriented tourism</li> </ul>	M-L	V, B, NP	Private Funding
<p>Add murals to buildings</p>	M	B	Private Funding, Ohio Arts Council

## Infrastructure

<p>Address top ranked public input future infrastructure and utilities needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sidewalks, crosswalks, bike paths/lanes, trails</li> <li>▪ Internet, electric, cable, solar</li> </ul>	M-L	V	Budget, ODOT, ODNR, OPWC, CDBG
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ACTIVITY/STRATEGY	TIME FRAME S=1-2 yrs M=3-4 yrs L=5+ yrs	RESPONSIBLE PARTY V=Village NP=Nonprofit B=Business D=Developers R=Residents S=Schools C=County MP=Metroparks L=Library	FUNDING
<b>Economic Development</b>			
<p>Maintain a sound economic base on which to finance future public improvements by ensuring a mix of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus industrial/commercial development in the downtown, on Commerce Drive, and on SR 57 (between village northern limits and Erie Street)</li> <li>Add office building complexes for small business office space to assist with small retail development, increasing foot traffic</li> <li>Identify suitable sites for residential development and market sites to area developers and homebuilders</li> </ul>	S-L	V, D, B, NP, C	Budget, Private Funding
<p>Become an active participant in region's various economic development organizations (Lorain County Community Development, Team NEO, etc.) and pursue available local, state, and federal funding resources for economic development</p>	S	V	Budget
<p>Develop and pursue an economic development strategy that includes supporting existing businesses, growing small local businesses (especially those in the downtown), and utilize incentives when necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Market new companies to locate in the village offering incentives, focus on those businesses listed for commercial and retail services</li> </ul>	S-L	V, NP, C	Budget, CDBG, Non-Profit Funding
<p>Continue to develop and maintain a data base of inventory of all village businesses, contacts, types of businesses, number of employees, products, and services; add vacant buildings to inventory and include building owner name, contact information, square footage, utilities, and zoning</p>	S-M	V, B	NA

<p>Identify and maintain a list of potential locations for development, redevelopment, and infill development for commercial and industrial uses, targeting vacant and underutilized spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Downtown empty lots</li> <li>▪ Old Foundry site</li> <li>▪ Near 1111 Elm Street</li> <li>▪ Demby property</li> <li>▪ Underutilized property off of Cleveland &amp; Barchard</li> <li>▪ Behind Rite Aid/off of Commerce Drive</li> <li>▪ Empty bank building (at Hyanis &amp; SR 57) after bank consolidation</li> <li>▪ Finish Commerce Drive and extending Vivian Drive West</li> </ul>	S-L	V, D	NA
<p>Review and revise internal policies and procedures to ensure that the development review process is clear and efficient</p>	S	V	NA
<p>Ensure adequacy and capacity of water, sewer services, utilities, and public safety for existing and new businesses; continue to utilize solar and examine wind power</p>	M	V	NA
<p>Continue to beautify industrial/commercial areas with flowering baskets, banners, consolidation of signage, and burying of utility lines</p>	S-M	V, B, D, NP	Budget, Donations, CDBG
<p>Adopt voluntary business registry and offer incentives for registering; turn registry into directory for residents/visitors</p>	S-M	V, B	NA
<p>Continue to utilize existing and pursue new incentives for existing and new business development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tax Increment Financing to fund infrastructure improvements</li> <li>▪ CRA Tax Abatement</li> <li>▪ CDBG grants/loans</li> <li>▪ SBA for grants/loans/small business planning</li> <li>▪ Reduced utility rates</li> <li>▪ Incentives for residential solar development</li> </ul>	S-L	V, C	NA
<p>Work with Midview Schools and local businesses to develop internship and apprentice programs to cultivate local workforce</p>	M-L	B, S, NP	NA
<p>Develop strong Grafton brand that appeals to people and draw investment, has feel of old west, rustic, and railroad; commercial construction could follow this brand</p>	S-M	V	CDBG, Non-Profit Funding
<p>Spur economic development through tourism and marketing the area as a recreational/naturalist niche</p>	M-L	V, MP, B	NA

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<b>Downtown</b>			
Maintain and enhance all downtown infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine internet availability to entire downtown</li> <li>▪ Update all sidewalks in entire downtown for seamless transition from one end to the other on both sides of the street</li> <li>▪ Add mid-block crossing on Main Street between Mechanic and Railroad Streets</li> </ul>	S-M	V, B, NP, C	CDBG, Nn-Profit Funding, County, ODOT
Implement streetscape program, upgrading to matching street furniture, new banners, seasonal decorations, and street trees	S-M	V, B, NP, C	CDBG, ODOT, Non-Profit Funding, County
Revisit angle parking in the downtown, enforce restrictions on parking, and advertise public parking lots	S	V	Budget
Brand Historic Grafton with a logo and tagline and utilize wayfinding signage program, examine using railroad history	S-M	V, B, NP, C	CDBG, ODOT, Non-Profit Funding, County
Add architectural design standards to zoning ordinance to promote good design and use of quality materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Screen, buffer land uses and differing uses</li> </ul>	S	V, NP, B	Budget
Work to implement Four Point Main Street (MS) Approach™ with creation of a board, committees, and recruitment of volunteers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilize fundraising and grant writing to secure a MS director</li> </ul>	S	V, NP, B	Heritage Ohio, Non-Profit Funding
Focus on Promotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Add more promotional events to the downtown and community events as a whole with new events and reviving of old successful events</li> <li>▪ Create community-wide calendar of events</li> </ul>	S-M	NP, L	Budget
Update business inventory with square footage, utilities, availability, property owner contact information, etc.	S-M	V, NP, B	NA

<p>Recruit “fun” businesses (retail, restaurant, small businesses), those that draw residents and visitors to the downtown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Focus more on unique small businesses, shops, and restaurants</li> <li>▪ Grow Downtown Grafton into employment and destination center with expansion of existing businesses and attraction of new businesses</li> </ul>	S-L	V, NP	Budget
Promote mixed-use buildings in downtown, retail on first floor and residential and/or office on upper floors	S-M	V, NP, D, B	NA
<p>Work to fill vacant spaces and buildings, examine vacant building fee/tax</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with property owners to have vacant buildings look occupied and occupied buildings look less vacant with the addition of window treatments and window displays</li> </ul>	M-L	V, NP, B, D	NA
Offer incentives to building and business owners for building improvements, business practices, rent payments, and advertising	M-L	V, NP, B	SBA, CRA, Heritage Ohio
Upgrade façade and code issues in downtown buildings, working with local and out-of-town property owners to take pride in their buildings	S-M	V, NP, B, D	CDBG, County, Heritage Ohio, Non-Profit Budget
<p>Maintain traffic generators in the downtown and examine new ones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community event center, senior center, live music venue, sporting events, old school, parks</li> </ul>	L	V, NP, B, D	NA

## Parks and Recreation

Add wayfinding signage system outlining all of the amenities and connections for parks, recreation, trails, and Metro Parks; QR codes were mentioned as a way to have the signage be more interactive	S-M	V, NP	Budget, CDBG
Upgrade connections including sidewalk network, crosswalks, paths, trails in, to, and around parks to improve access and connectivity for pedestrians, with Metro Parks, north to south Grafton, schools, and downtown	S-L	V, S, B, MP	Budget, ODNR, OPWC, ODOT
Increase fixtures at parks, suggestions included recycling containers and additional bike racks, benches, fencing	S-M	V	Budget, ODNR
Add more interactive activities like bigger splashpad, pool, swimming area, fishing, tennis, skate park, rope course/zip line, bike rental, quarry improvements, as well as activities for people of any age including younger and older children	M-L	V	Budget, ODNR, ODOT

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<p>Focus on recreational events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine second community room for larger events</li> <li>▪ Consider having more community events at the park (car shows, farmers markets, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Consider joint events and/or cross promotions with downtown events and Metro Parks events</li> <li>▪ Consider development or redevelopment at old bowling alley property</li> </ul>	L	V, B, NP, L, MP	Budget
<p>Attract new businesses to Grafton specializing in recreational uses such as bike rentals, zip line/courses, quarry and reservoir usage</p>	L	V	NA
<p><b>Implement “Big Ideas” at North Park</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Storybook Trail</li> <li>▪ Sidewalks to and from</li> <li>▪ Shore up ground/grass around playset</li> <li>▪ Memorial Trees</li> <li>▪ Landscaping, flowering trees</li> <li>▪ Expand community room with patio</li> <li>▪ Designated young football fields, water play, pond, archery, ice rink, new benches, fencing around playground</li> <li>▪ Add speed bumps</li> </ul>	S-L	V	Budget, ODNR, CDBG
<p><b>Implement “Big Ideas” at Willow Park</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quarry development for fishing</li> <li>▪ Entrance improvements</li> <li>▪ Grilling, serving areas at pavilions</li> <li>▪ Kid activities, toddler-friendly</li> <li>▪ Preserve open space</li> <li>▪ Build and connect new trailheads and parking</li> </ul>	S-L	V	Budget, ODNR, CDBG

<p><b>Implement “Big Ideas” at Bicentennial Park</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Photo opportunity for residents/visitors</li> <li>▪ Development of lot diagonal from park, next to the Library to compliment park</li> <li>▪ Memorial bricks, flowers, evergreen tree buffer and water feature (or even a dry fountain)</li> </ul>	S-L	V	Budget, ODNR, CDBG
<p><b>Implement “Big Ideas” at Reservoir Park</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Walking, nature trail</li> <li>▪ Improve roadway, parking lot with paving and sidewalks</li> <li>▪ New paved parking</li> <li>▪ Path and dock for fishing</li> <li>▪ Signage for reservoir</li> <li>▪ Lights within concession area</li> <li>▪ Additional sport opportunities (soccer and football fields)</li> <li>▪ Small enclosed, netted playground within baseball complex</li> <li>▪ Widen sidewalks from parking lot to concession stand</li> <li>▪ Improve baseball fields with night lighting, deeper fencing for adult leagues and additional diamonds</li> <li>▪ Add sledding hill</li> <li>▪ Review Hot Stove yearly requested improvements</li> </ul>	S-L	V	Budget, ODNR, CDBG
<p><b>Implement “Big Ideas” for new parks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Everywhere, north side, downtown, across from trailhead at Indian Hollow, former bowling alley property, connections to schools, undeveloped space at North, Reservoir, and Willow Parks, connections with Metro Parks, new housing developments</li> <li>▪ Additional playgrounds for younger children</li> <li>▪ Additional activities for older children and teenagers</li> </ul>	M-L	V	Budget, ODNR, CDBG