A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE CITY OF LANCASTER CEDAR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN

WHEREAS,   the City of Lancaster Planning and Zoning Department, in conjunction with other community partners, has created the 2024 Cedar Hill Neighborhood Area Plan; and

WHEREAS,   the City intends to use this plan as a guide to help revitalize a historic and vital part of the community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LANCASTER, STATE OF OHIO:

SECTION 1.   That the City of Lancaster hereby approves the Cedar Hill Neighborhood Area Plan, attached hereto as Exhibit A.

SECTION 2.   That this resolution shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

Passed:_____ after _____ reading. Vote: Yeas_____ Nays_____

Date Approved:_____

Clerk:_____

_____
President of Council

_____
Mayor

Offered by:_____

Second by:_____

Requested by Code Enforcement & Zoning Committee

The City of Lancaster

CEDAR HILL NEIGHBORHOOD AREA PLAN 2024

CROSSROADS COMMUNITY PLANNING

ZONING
PLANNING

LANCASTER, OH

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LANCASTER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan was conducted with the goal of identifying neighborhood assets that were highly valued, as well as assets in need of improvement to create solutions that would support the residents of the Cedar Hill neighborhood and the City of Lancaster as a whole.

As unprecedented growth is expected throughout Central Ohio and within the City of Lancaster, there is an opportunity to prepare for potential change in a way that serves the existing residents of the neighborhood and improves housing, recreation, transportation, mobility, accessibility, and more.

This plan was prepared with Crossroads Community Planning, a Steering Committee, City and County agencies, business owners, and residents of the Cedar Hill neighborhood and the City of Lancaster. A public survey was conducted as well as one public community meeting and one public information session/open house to facilitate resident feedback. This plan is envisioned to serve as a guide for the City of Lancaster when making decisions related to the Cedar Hill neighborhood and for residents, businesses, and community organizations within the neighborhood to utilize as a comprehensive resource and jumping off point to enhance neighborhood vibrancy.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Lynda Berge Disser - Lancaster Community Development

Benjamin Boyer - ODOT District 5

Chasilyn Carter - Former Director of Lancaster Fairfield Transit - Current City Planner

Phylicia Faieta - Former City Planner

Tim Deitz - Lancaster Department of Transportation

Amanda Everitt - Destination Downtown Lancaster

Paul Martin - Former Service Director

Charles Mullett - Lancaster Department of Transportation

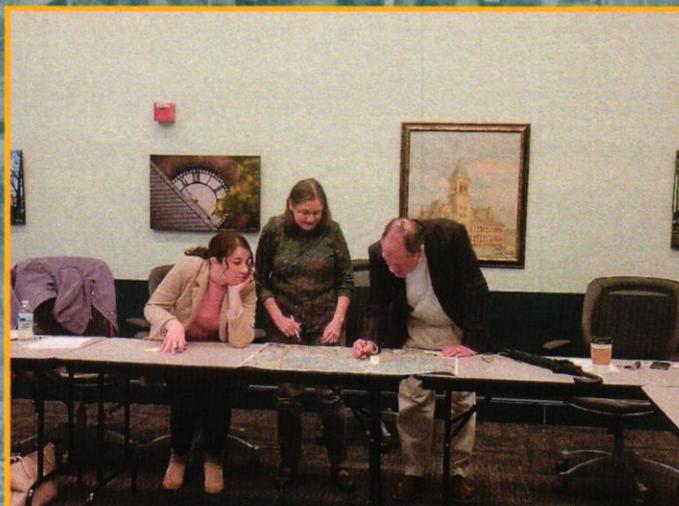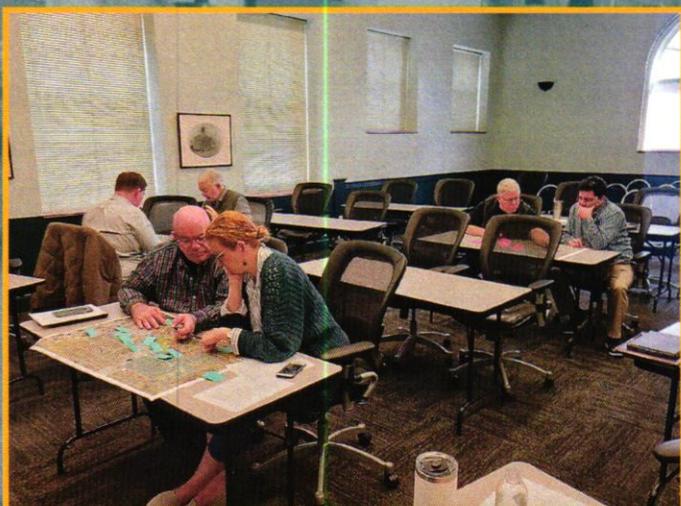David Scheffler - Former Mayor

Curt Shonk - City Engineer
Jason Smith - Resident

Anna Tobin - Meals on Wheals

Pete Vail - Zoning Administrator

Patti Wasem - Resident

Brad Woltz - Business Owner

STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION & PHYSICAL FEATURES

The Study Area for the Cedar Hill Neighborhood Area Plan focuses on portions of State Road (S.R.) 188 (Cedar Hill Road) and U.S. 22. These two main roads for the west end of Lancaster intersect in the Study Area, with S.R. 188 dead-ending into U.S. 22 in the southeast portion of the area. Additionally, a CSX railroad line runs through the neighborhood from the northwest to the southeast. Memorial Drive, the main north-south road through Lancaster, runs on the western end of downtown and lies a block east of the Study Area. However, a number of large parcels bordering Memorial Drive, including the Lancaster Water Plant/Miller Park and the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office, create a barrier to downtown from the Study Area, with only Wheeling Street and U.S. 22 (Main Steet/Lincoln Ave) running into downtown. S.R. 188 runs west to U.S. 33 and the Rock Mill and Ruble Industrial Parks that lie along U.S. 33. This corridor serves as a major entry to the City of Lancaster. Figure 1 shows the study area boundaries for this Plan.

Cedar Hill Neighborhood Planning Area Base Map

KEY
—— Study Area Boundaries

¼ Mile

N

Figure 1: Base Map

The neighborhood has commercial and light industrial uses running along both U.S. 22 and S.R. 188. There are also a few small industrial buildings along the west side of the CSX track. Anchor Hocking, a large glass manufacturing plant, lies to the northwest of the Study Area along the CSX track, and likely provides a number of jobs for residents in the area. Much of the remainder of the neighborhood consists of primarily pre-war housing stock.

The neighborhood has one large park, Martens Park, in the southern area of the neighborhood. It has baseball fields and open areas. The Fairfield Heritage Trail runs along the west end of the park and merges into the neighborhood sidewalks at the S.R. 188 and Pierce Road intersection. This trail is paved and is good for biking and walking/jogging. The Study Area is bordered by the Hocking River on the eastern end of the area. Hunter's Run loops up along S.R. 188 and runs through the center of the Study Area, before looping south and exiting west of Martens Park. Figure 2 shows notable businesses, organizations, and features within and around the Cedar Hill neighborhood.

Figure 2: Neighborhood Features

FLOODPLAIN & FLOODING

The entire Cedar Hill Neighborhood is within the Hunter's Run Conservancy District area. The Conservancy District was created in 1952 in response to continued major flooding events in the Hunter's Run and Upper Hocking Watershed. The Conservancy District manages and maintains the 28 dams that protect residents from catastrophic flooding, which includes many homes in the neighborhood. There are 2,353 properties that currently pay a special assessment tax for the operation and maintenance of the dams, as these

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properties were affected by the major 1948 flood which was the impetus for dam development. Currently, additional funding is needed for increased maintenance of these 60+ year old dams. This funding is essential to prevent flooding that would cut off residences from roads and emergency services and could cause damage to properties. Since the dams also prevent flooding events, they assist in keeping property values up. All property owners within the district will pay a $41.00 assessment for dam maintenance and improvement if the assessment is approved and would begin to be charged on 2025 taxes.

A significant portion of the Study Area lies within the floodplain for the Hocking River and Hunter's Run. As seen in Figure 3 below, most of the eastern half, as well as much of the southern portion, are in the floodplain. The neighborhood slopes from lower elevation to the east to higher to the west, which corresponds to the floodplain. This floodplain incorporates most of the commercial areas along U.S. 22/ S.R. 188, which will impact the values of the property in the area. Additionally, the increased risk of flooding may impact residents without flood insurance. Given the income levels of much of the neighborhood (see demographics), a flood could severely impact families who may not have the resources to repair their homes and replace valuables.

Cedar Hill Neighborhood Study Area Floodplains Map

KEY

100 Year Floodplain   Regulatory Floodway   ¼ Mile   N
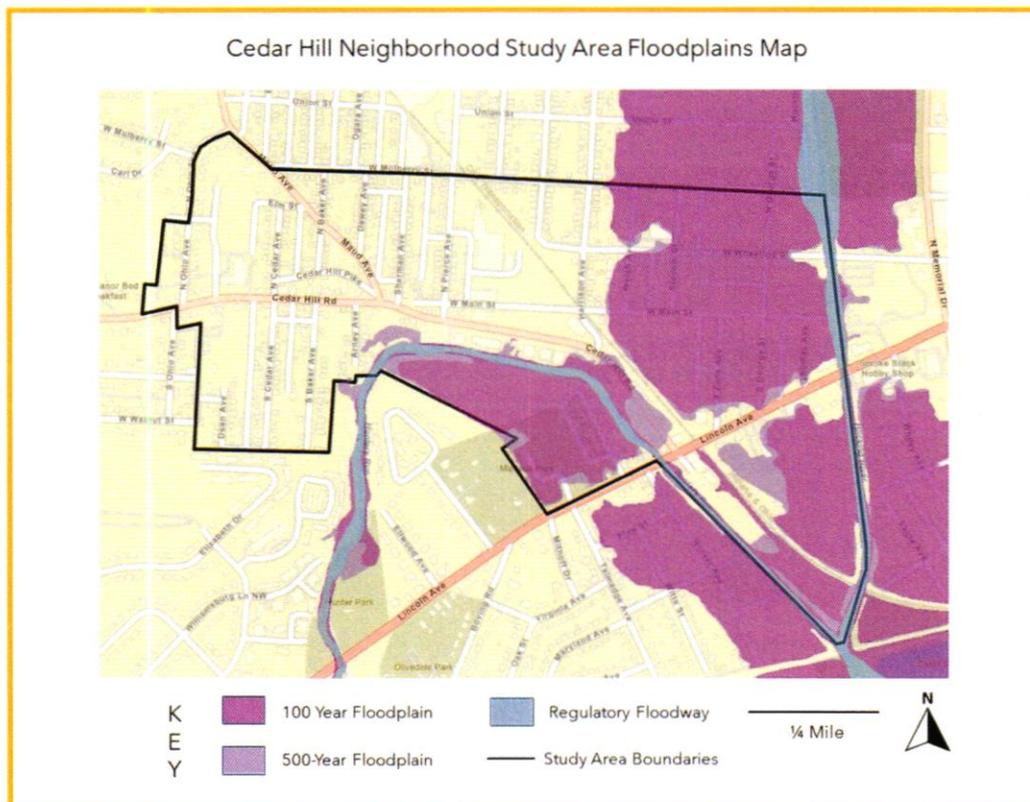
500-Year Floodplain   Study Area Boundaries

Figure 3: Floodplain

NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITION

The overall age of buildings in the neighborhood dates mostly from pre-1950, particularly the housing. Some of the commercial and industrial date from the 50's -70's, although are a few examples of newer

buildings particularly along U.S. 22. However, as noted in the demographics section below, only about 8% of the housing stock was constructed post 1980, and this is likely similar for the commercial areas as well.

The square footage of the housing stock overall is average to a moderately small, with some pockets of 60's era smaller bungalow homes that trend towards the 1,000 sq. ft. range. However, most of the pre-war housing which makes up a significant portion of the stock is in the 1,500-2,000 sq. ft. range, which is typical of that era. The architecture overall is standard but pleasant, as these homes were likely built to serve workers at the Anchor Hocking and other plants in the area. The condition overall could be summarized as fair to good, with some homes in need of some repairs or aesthetic improvements. There are very few dilapidated or boarded homes in the area, which is a good sign for the health of the neighborhood. There are also very few large or ornate homes.

Most of the neighborhood is designed with alleys to the rear of the lots, allowing for off-street parking. Many homes have garages, although these are in varying condition, with a number of them in poor shape. The alleys themselves are in varying condition, with a wide range from somewhat well-paved to gravel to deteriorating alleyways.

Although the Study Area is made up of primarily single-family homes, about 15% of the units are multi-family 2–4-unit buildings. These are scattered throughout the area and are in a varied condition but tend to be in worse condition than the single-family homes overall.

The commercial and industrial corridors, while functional and primarily in fair condition, have aesthetic challenges. Much of the stock is quite aged. The area along 188 was originally constructed as either pre-war cinder block or post-way prefab warehouse-style buildings. Some are still used as warehouses or small storage or workshops, but much of it has been converted to commercial. These are primarily independent or small businesses, such as auto-oriented services, thrift/pawn shops and various personal services. U.S. 22 is a more intensely commercial strip, with larger, primarily post-war suburban business uses. These include a mix of larger operations, such as several gas station chains, as well as independent commercial retailers. There is also an abundance of auto-oriented business here, a few small supplier/manufacturing businesses and some discount retail. While much of the commercial appears to be occupied, there are a few older buildings that are vacant, some of which are in poor condition.

SIDEWALKS

As discussed, the Cedar Hill neighborhood contains a mix of business, residential, and industrial uses. Due to this, there is a mix of sidewalk presence within the neighborhood. Many residential areas contain sidewalks on both sides of the street, with just a few areas containing gaps. Additionally, most of the areas along S.R. 188 have sidewalks, with the exception of the farthest eastern and western portions of the road within the Study Area. The industrial areas of the neighborhood as well as residential streets bordering these areas, such as Main St. lack sidewalk or

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other pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure. Figures 4 and 5 highlight the existing sidewalks and missing links within the neighborhood.

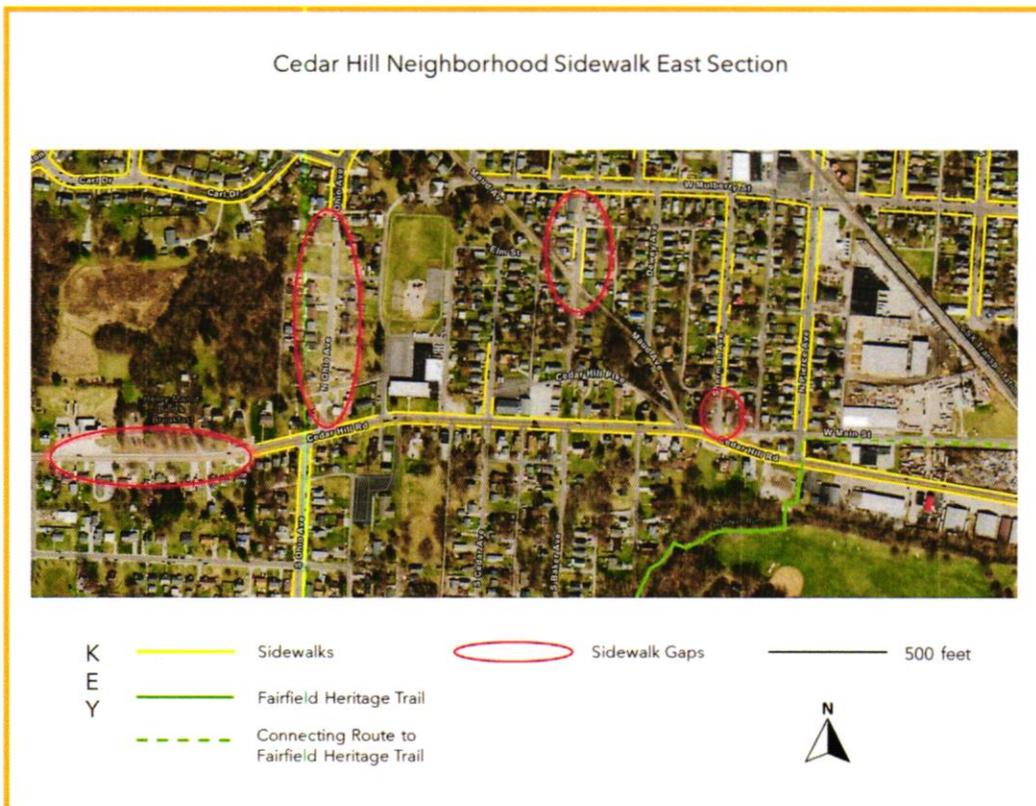Figure 4: Missing Sidewalks (West)

Figure 5: Missing Sidewalks (East)

The connecting route to the Fairfield Heritage Trail along Main St. is shown in both Figures 4 and 36. While this serves as a passageway for cyclists and pedestrians, this route lacks sidewalk or a paved path. Additionally, multiple areas circled in red highlight strips of streets that lack sidewalk and inhibit connectivity within and just beyond the Study Area.

ACCESS TO SERVICES AND RETAIL

While there is not a significant amount of retail in the neighborhood, residents are only a mile away from the Kroger Marketplace and Target on Memorial Drive and Pierce Ave. Pierce Ave. runs through the center of the Study Area north to Memorial and is a quick trip for residents to access shopping. The River Valley Mall is just west of the Target. Other retail, including Wal-Mart, Kohls and Giant Eagle, are about ½ mile farther along Memorial to the west. Additionally, there are several discount retailers to the east of the Kroger along Memorial, about a mile from the area. Finally, there are also a few restaurants and pharmacies along Memorial.

The neighborhood is also centrally located just west of Downtown Lancaster. Downtown has a large concentration of City and County services for residents. Fairfield Medial Center is 2.6 miles away from the center of the Study Area, east of Downtown via Main Street. The area also has good access to transportation routes. Besides S.R. 188 and U.S. 22, Memorial Drive, the main North-South route in the City, is just east, and the U.S. 33 bypass, a limited-access highway, is to the west of the Study Area, just under 3 miles down either road.

Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit provides bus service in the area. They have an on-demand service, as well as 5 fixed routes that allow short-distance deviations from their assigned routes. They use small shuttle buses for the service and runs every hour on the hour weekdays. The West Route runs during the hour from 7 A.M. to 9 P.M. It starts downtown and moves into the Study Area over West Wheeling Street. It then runs north out of the neighborhood and comes back in via Pierce Avenue, goes west on 188 and loops around and back down 188 to 22, and then runs south of the neighborhood before finishing back downtown, as shown in Figure 6.
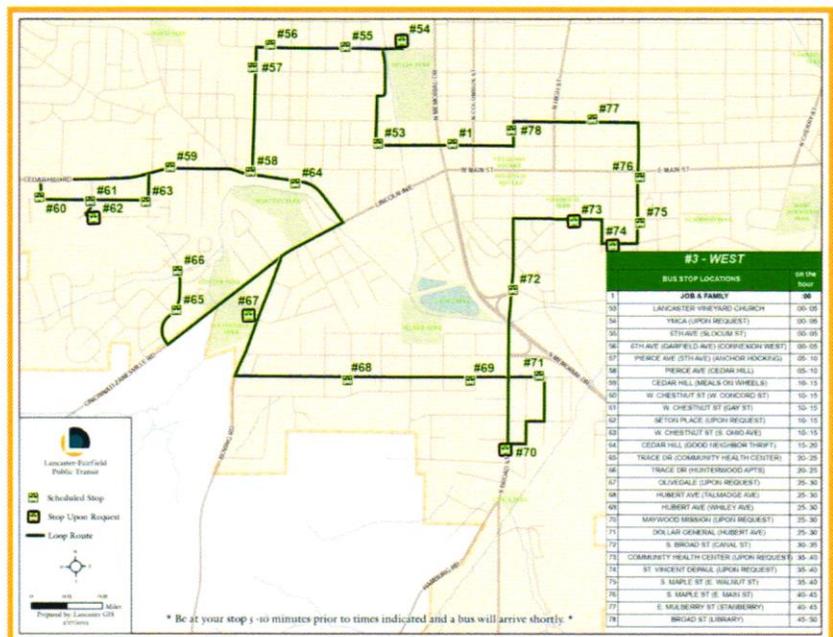

Figure 6; West Bus Route

DEMOGRAPHICS

Below is an analysis of the demographic composition of the Study Area. Demographics are important because they describe the population of the area and provide a basis for decision-making. Demographics factors should be considered during the planning process and as recommendations are implemented.

POPULATION

While Lancaster's population has increased since 2000, the Study Area has stagnated, see Figures 7 and 8. The population of Lancaster in 2000 was 36,025, and the population in 2020 was 40,576. Meanwhile, the population of the study area in 2000 was 1,478, and the population in 2020 was 1,428. While this lack of growth may not be surprising since this area is mostly built out, the lower-income profile of the population (as described below) along with the lack of population growth may indicate some stress on neighborhood economic fundamentals in the long run.

Lancaster's population density is 2,125.3 persons per square mile, whereas the Study Area's density is almost double: 3,994.5 persons per square mile. This is a fairly high density for a mid-sized city and provides the area with a more urban lifestyle than other parts of the community.
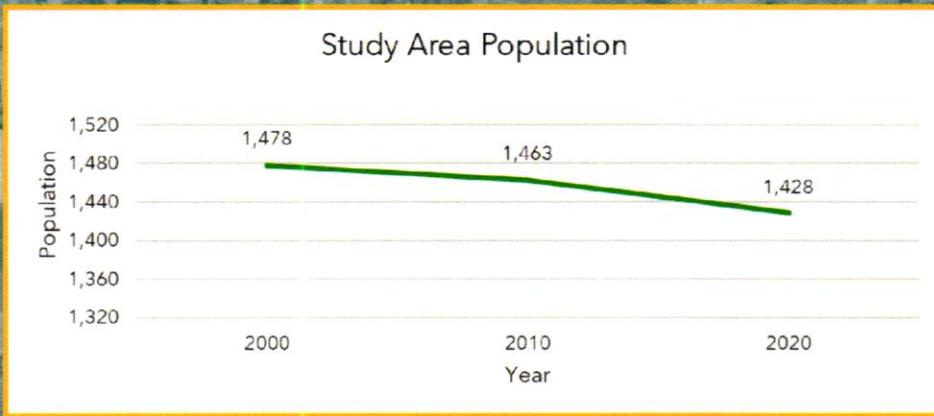

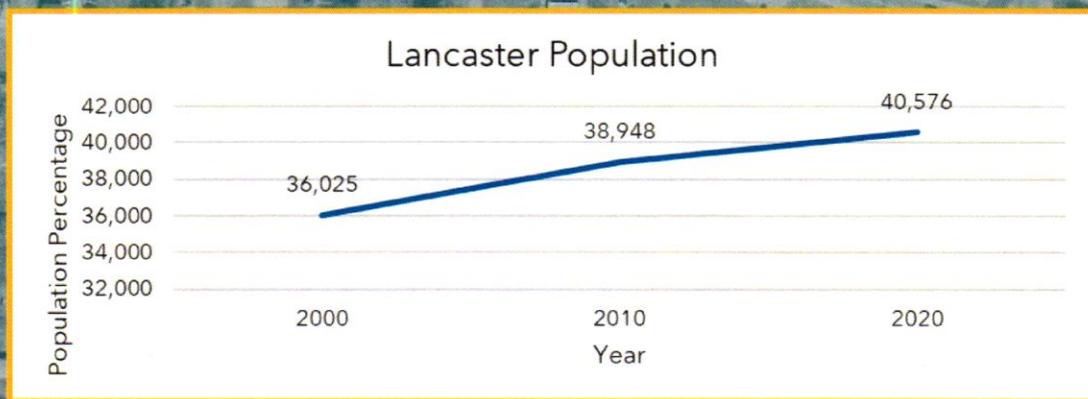Figure 7: Cedar Hill Neighborhood Population

Figure 8: Lancaster Population

Source: U.S. Census

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AGE

The City of Lancaster's age distribution is relatively even, whereas the Study Area has a younger population with fewer senior residents, see Figure 9. Even though the 20-39 range is the largest age bracket for the Study Area and the City of Lancaster, the Study Area's is more pronounced. 39.44% of the Study Area's age distribution is between 20-39, whereas only 27.01% of Lancaster's age distribution lies within that range. In addition, Lancaster has a much larger senior population than the Study Area - nearly a quarter of Lancaster, while the Study Area has less than 10%.
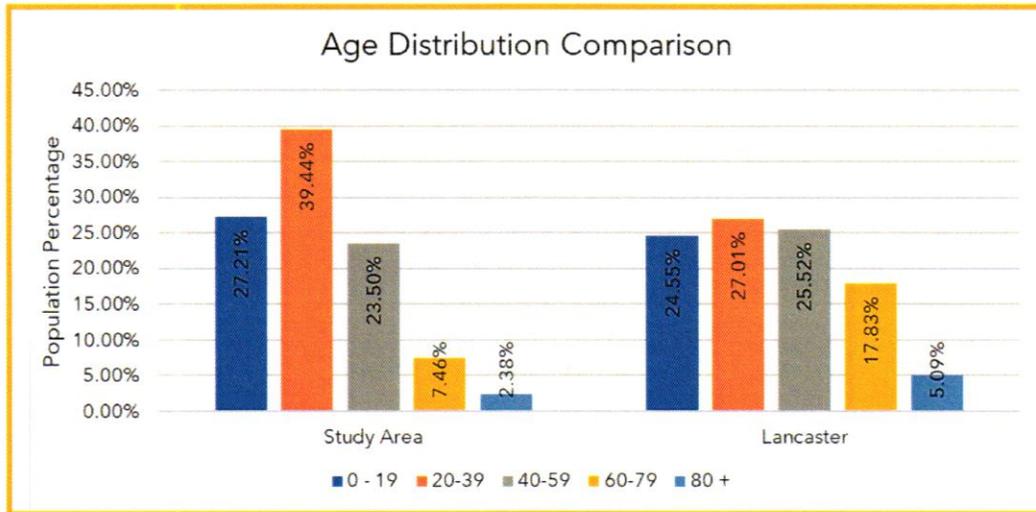
Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey

Figure 9: Age

Clearly the study area trends younger than the City a whole. This may partly be to the higher percentage of rental single-family housing units in the area (discussed below), which tend towards a younger population.

RACIAL DISTRIBUTION

The Study Area and Lancaster as a whole have similar racial distributions as shown in Figure 10. Both have a significant majority (around 90%) identifying as "white alone." The Study Area differs from Lancaster for having slighter larger populations of people identifying as "two or more races" (6.02% vs. 5.14%) and "black or African American alone" (2.24% vs. 1.98%).

Racial Distribution Comparison	Study Area	Lancaster
Two or More Races	6.02%	5.14%
Some Other Race alone	0.91%	0.74%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0.00%	0.01%
Asian alone	0.42%	0.58%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0.14%	0.24%
Black or African American alone	2.24%	1.98%
White alone	90.27%	91.31%
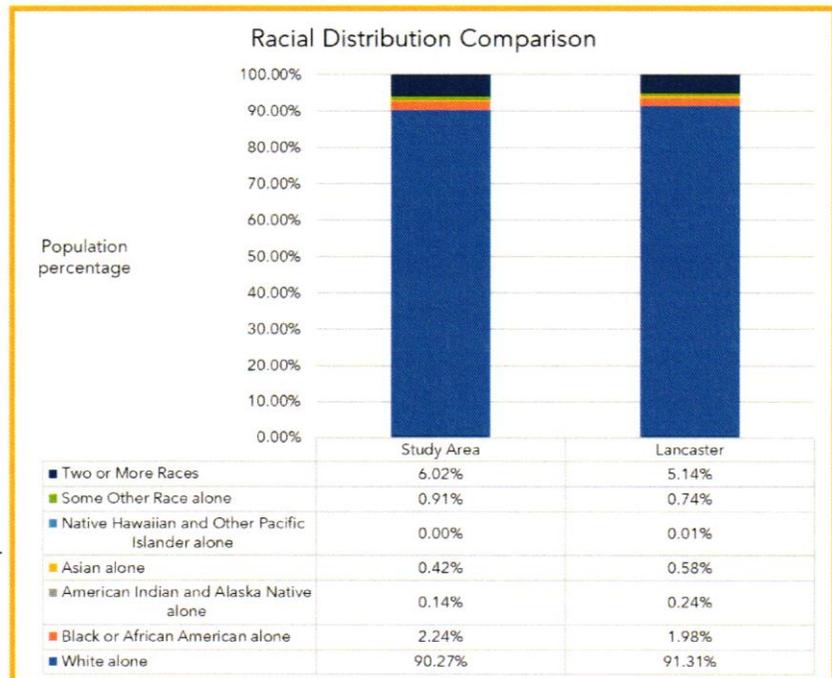
Source: U.S. Census

Figure 10: Race

OCCUPATIONS

Transport/Material Moving and Office/Administrative Support are the two most common occupations in Lancaster, at 12% of the population each. In the Study Area, the most common occupation is Food Preparation/Serving Related at 24%, a much higher proportion. Though several occupations, such as Sales/Related and Office/Administrative Support have similar rates for both areas, the Study Area's significant plurality in Food Preparation/Serving Related shows that the occupations in the neighborhood are less varied than the city as a whole. Additionally, Food Preparation/Serving Related tends to include many jobs with lower pay on average than some of the other categories. Additionally, the other predominant categories in the Study Area – Transportation/Moving Materials, Sales/Related, Office/Administrative Support and Building & Grounds – make up nearly 75% of the employment in the area and tend to have more jobs on the lower end of the income spectrum. The result is a higher concentration of families in the lower and lower-middle income bands. This is in contrast to Lancaster, where the 4th largest category is Management, which tends to have a higher-income profile and provides for a wider range of incomes to the City. This is reflected in the income charts in Figures 11 and 12.
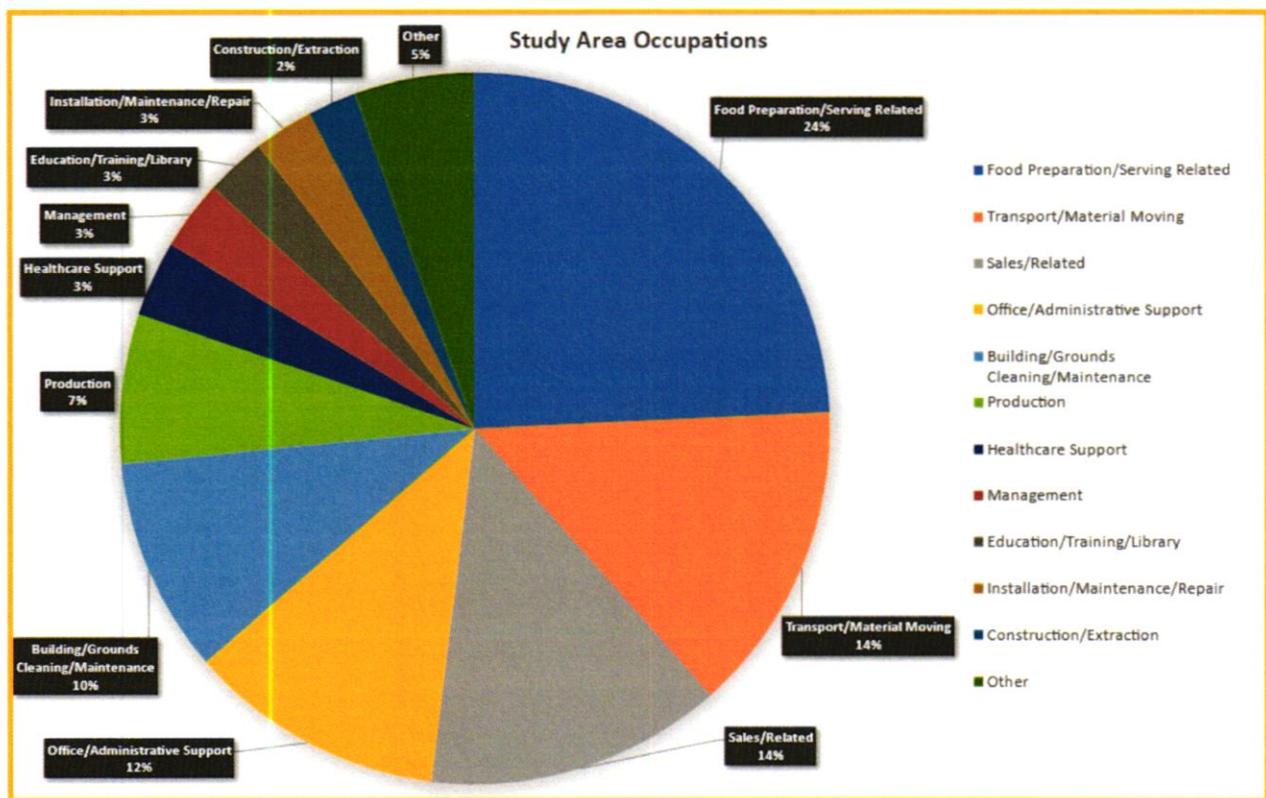
Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey

Figure 11: Study Area Occupations
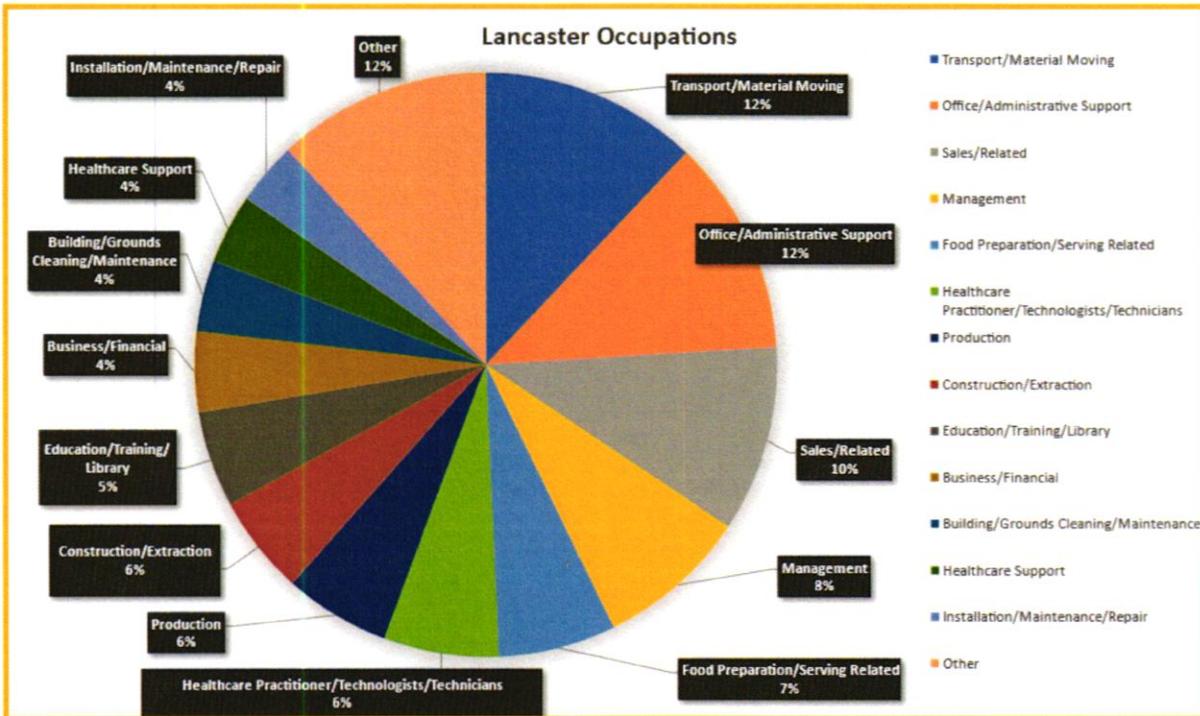
Lancaster Occupations

Figure 12: Lancaster Occupations

ECONOMICS

The $50,000-99,999 range is the largest household income bracket for the Study Area and City of Lancaster, at around 33% each, as shown in Figure 13. However, more households in the Study Area have an income of less than $50,00 when compared to the whole City. In fact, about 58% of the households in the Study Area have incomes below $50,000. Virtually no households in the study area have an income above $150,000, while Lancaster has about 6.5% over $150,000. The Study area also has almost 10% more households (32.16% vs 24.17%) in the $25,000-$49,000 category, which would correspond to the large proportion of service jobs in the area.

The median income data backs up these conclusions. The per capita income of the Study Area is $21,305, and Lancaster's is $29,225, and the median house-hold income of the Study Area is $41,312, and Lancaster's is $52,159. This lines up with the employment data above, which shows a larger proportion of the Study Area population in lower-wage jobs.
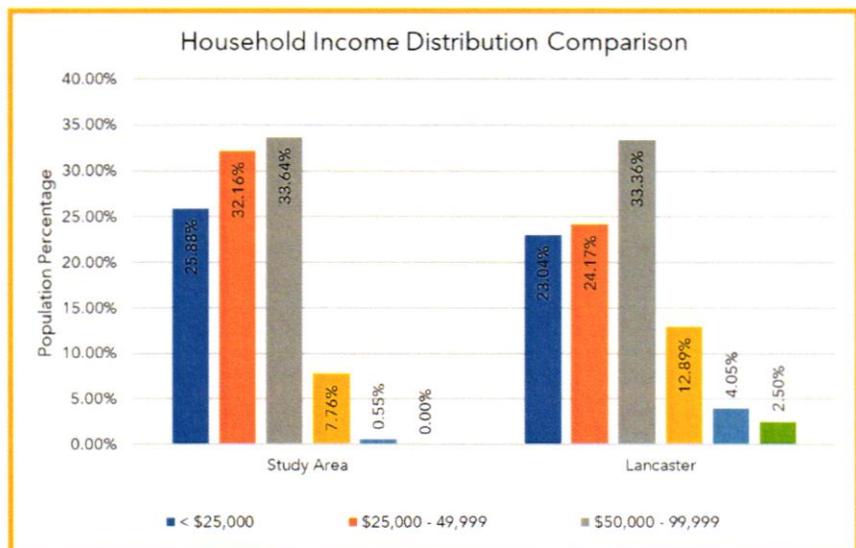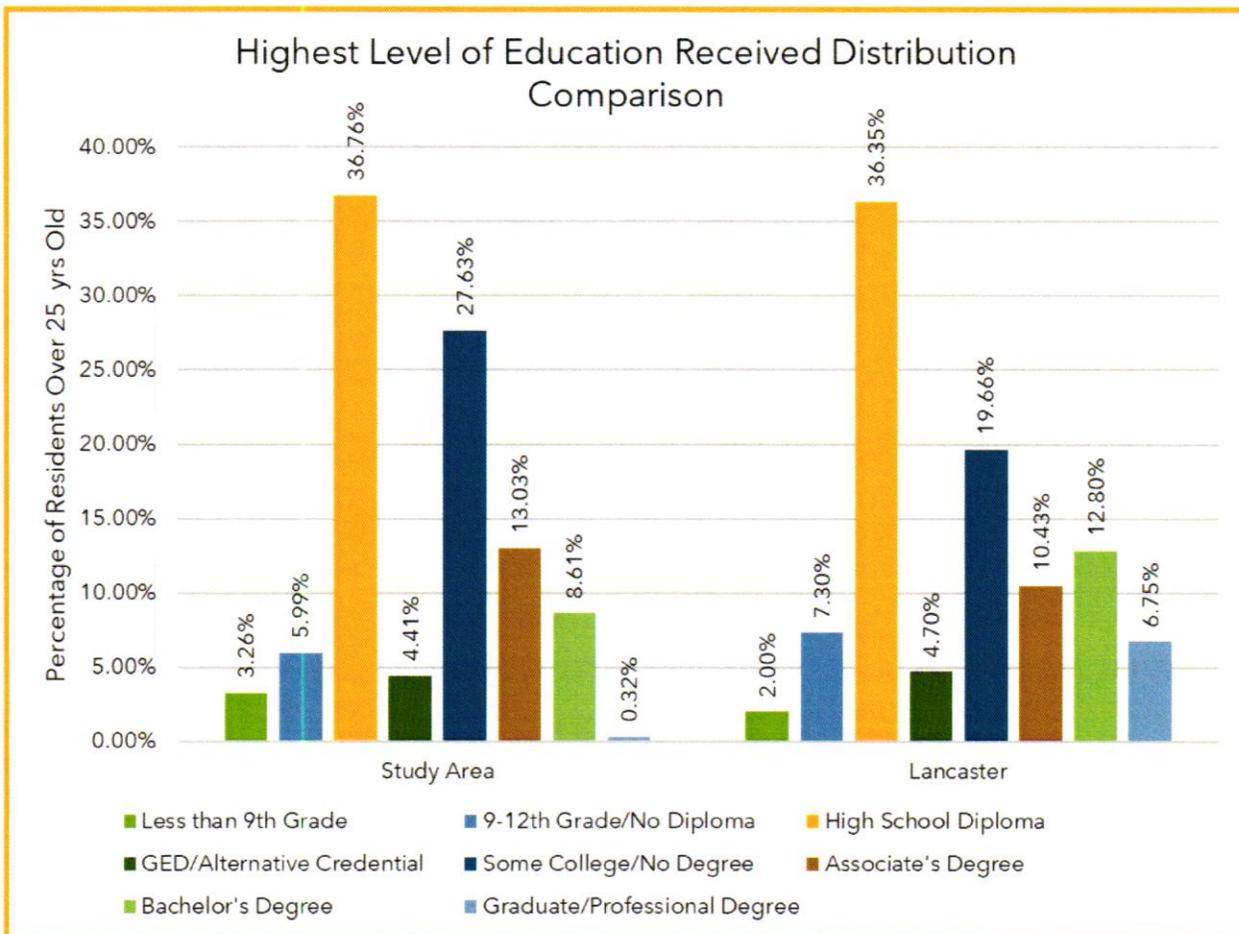

Figure 13: Income Distribution

EDUCATION

The City of Lancaster and the Study Area have similar education distributions, see Figure 14. The most common highest level of education received for both the City and Study Area is a high school diploma, at around 36%. The Study Area has slightly more residents with an associate degree than Lancaster. However, the Study Area has fewer residents with bachelor's and graduate degrees than the city as a whole. Also of note is that the Study Area has a larger population of residents with some college but no degree (27.63%) than Lancaster (19.66%). These data points line up with the income profile and employment data above.

Highest Level of Education Received Distribution Comparison

Study Area values: 3.26%, 5.99%, 36.76%, 4.41%, 27.63%, 13.03%, 8.61%, 0.32%

Lancaster values: 2.00%, 7.30%, 36.35%, 4.70%, 19.66%, 10.43%, 12.80%, 6.75%

Legend:
- Less than 9th Grade
- 9-12th Grade/No Diploma
- High School Diploma
- GED/Alternative Credential
- Some College/No Degree
- Associate's Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Graduate/Professional Degree

Source: ESRI

Figure 14: Education Distribution

The results above indicate that the City should consider linking residents with training and education in trades and for additional skills that can leverage additional income over time. There is currently a shortage of skilled tradespeople in the U.S. and the Columbus region, which is likely to be exacerbated by the growth of high-skill trades for businesses like Intel, Honda and Google. Additionally, creating linkages with major employers to help funnel people into these higher-paying jobs can help residents increase their incomes.

HOUSING

On average, housing in the Study Area is significantly older than across all of Lancaster. At 40.1%, a significant plurality of the Study Area's housing was built before 1939. Lancaster also has a plurality of its housing built before 1939, but only at 24.17%. These homes are typically called "pre-war" housing and were often designed with smaller lots in a more urban configuration on a grid street network, with more variety of uses (i.e., residential, commercial, industrial) close together. The neighborhood's design reflects this overall grid pattern, smaller residential lot sizes and adjacency of uses.

There has been very little newer construction in the area, as only 1.24% of the Study Area's houses were built after 2000, and less than 8% since 1980, as described in Figure 15.
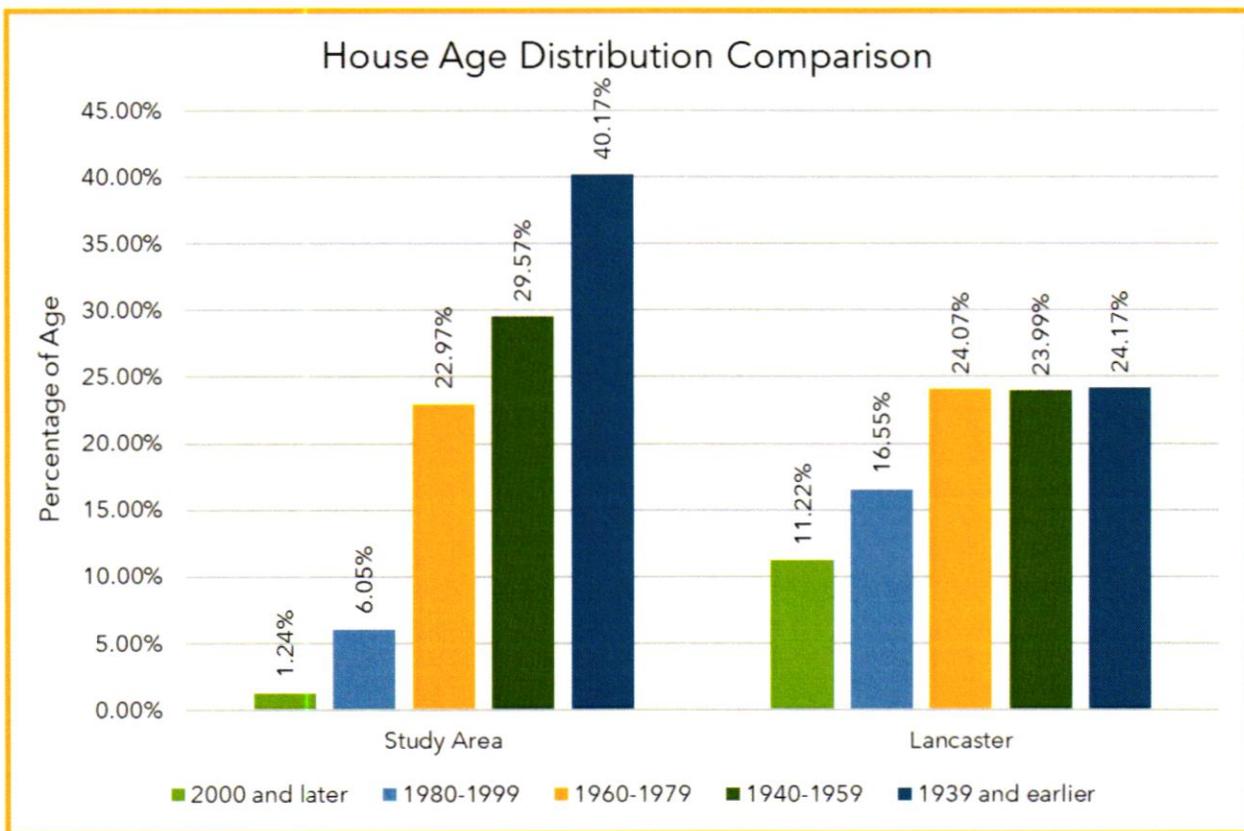
Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey

Figure 15: Housing Age Distribution

In terms of home value for year-end 2022, the Study Area's home prices are, on average, less than Lancaster's. 56.09% of the Study Area's homes are valued at less than $100,000, while only 19.05% of Lancaster's housing is less than $100,000. Additionally, when adding in homes between $100,000 and $199,000, this percentage jumps to 83% for the Study Area, vs. only about 60% for Lancaster. This is a significant number of houses valued at less than $200,000, especially considering the recent price increases in the Central Ohio housing market. Figure 16 highlights the home price distribution of the Study Area and the City of Lancaster.

According to a report by the Columbus Realtors[1], the median home sales price in the Lancaster Consolidated School District (which includes Lancaster and some of the surrounding areas), the median sales price in 2022 was $200,000 and increased 9.1% from the year before, even in an environment of rising interest rates. This demonstrates the continued pressure on pricing in the housing market.
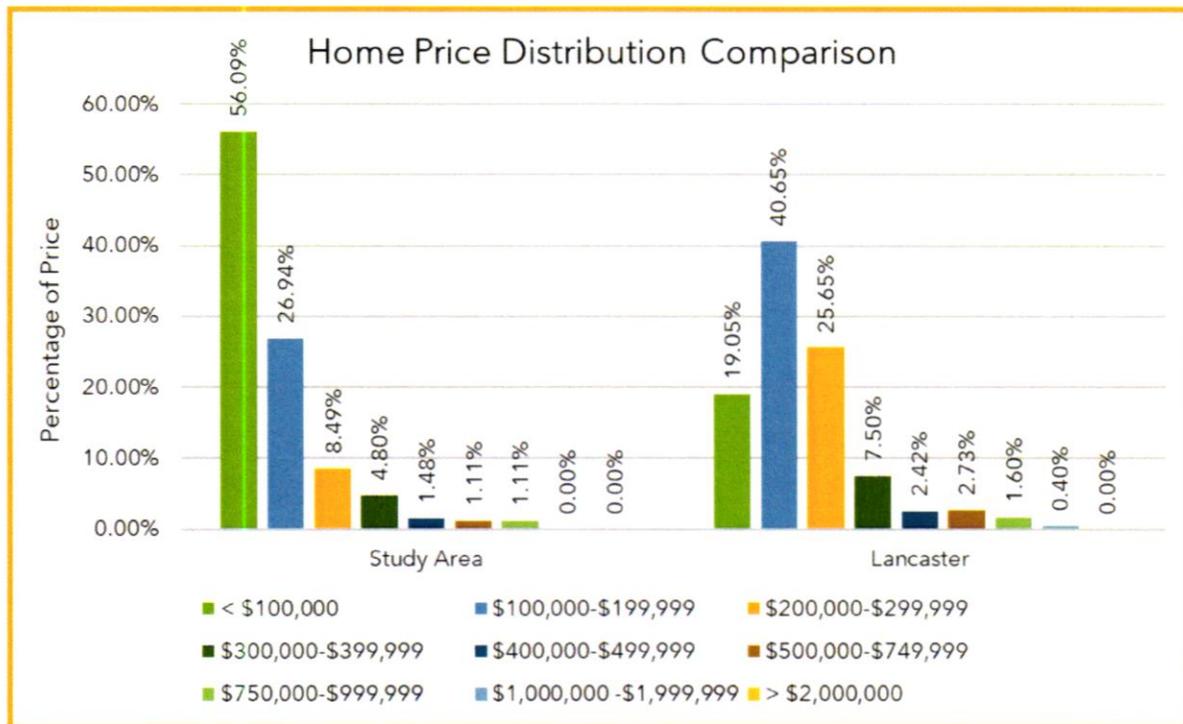
Source: ESRI

Figure 16: Housing Price Distribution

Finally, the charts below, Figures 17 and 18, show the breakdown of owner-occupied, rental, and vacant units in both the Study Area and Lancaster, as well as the type of housing. The Study Area is unique in that it has a nearly equal proportion of housing that is owner-occupied and rental. Only a small percentage of the housing in the study area (about 21%) is multifamily, indicating that many single-family homes in the neighborhood are rental homes. Neighborhoods with a significant number of single-family rentals tend to be more transitional, and tend to correspond to lower incomes, as seen prior.

Housing Type	Study Area	Lancaster
Single-Family Detached	76.24%	70.16%
Single Family Attached	0.00%	3.20%
2-4 Units	15.93%	11.96%
5-19 Units	6.32%	8.93%
20+ Units	0.69%	4.09%
Mobile Home/RV	0.82%	1.66%

Figure 17: Housing Type   Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey

Occupancy	Study Area	Lancaster
Owner	44.07%	55.10%
Rental	43.74%	37.77%
Vacant	12.03%	7.13%

Source: ESRI   Figure 18: Occupancy Rates

[1] https://www.columbusrealtors.com/clientuploads/HousingStats/EOY/2022EOY_Report-CentralOH.pdf

Additionally, the number of vacant units in the Study Area is just over 12%. This is higher than the City of Lancaster at 7.13% and indicates some weakness in the housing market. However, a survey of the area does not show many dilapidated or blighted housing, which is a positive sign for the neighborhood. Despite this, the higher-than-average vacancy is a situation that should be closely monitored, as long-term vacant units tend to become dilapidated over time.

The low housing prices in the area have several influences on the community. First, on a positive note, the area provides residents with low-cost housing. The neighborhood has a fairly stable housing supply, with few truly dilapidated buildings, at an affordable price. Considering the fact that many residents have incomes below the City's average and many are not employed in highly educated or high-paying skilled jobs, it's understandable that the survey results come back indicating residents are happy with their neighborhood overall.

The lower price points are a cause for concern as well. When neighborhoods reach a certain price point below the rest of the area market, these areas can often spiral into a cycle of disinvestment. The incomes of the purchasers and renters must be able to support continued investment into maintenance and upkeep, and once this threshold is crossed, homes tend to fall into disrepair. This lowers the value of nearby homes, perpetuating the cycle and eventually leading to abandonment. The good news currently is that housing prices generally are rising, and in this type of environment lower-cost neighborhoods tend to see trickle-down investment as the homes become more valuable. However, maintenance and material costs are also higher in recent years, and this could make rehabilitation and maintenance of units infeasible despite the increased housing demand.

Finally, increased housing demand tends to lift up neighborhoods by injecting higher-income residents into the area. This could impact the existing resident population by raising prices to the point where they are not able to afford the higher cost of a mortgage or rent. Combine this with higher mortgage rates and there is a possible threat that residents could be priced out of their own neighborhood with few good options for similar housing.

BEHAVIOR MAPPING AND DATA COUNTS

Staff and volunteers conducted surveillance to count usage and behavior mapping for the neighborhood. The following information highlights the results.

COUNTING

For counting, participants were stationed in several areas of the neighborhood and counted the number of pedestrians and bikers for a specified period of time. These counts were conducted on both the weekday and weekend from April through June of 2023.

Overall patterns indicate that Pierce is the most significant pedestrian and biking route for residents. The highest counts were on the weekends at the corner of Mulberry and Pierce, as well as at Pierce and S.R. 188. There was also one very high count at Main St. and Harrison. Despite these numbers, the highest count was 17 pedestrians/bikers in an hour at Main & Harrison, which is still not very high overall. This indicates that, while the neighborhood has some pedestrian activity, it is not a pedestrian-heavy area. It should be noted that there is a bike path that runs just west of Martens Park and terminates at S.R. 188 near the intersection with Pierce Ave. This is used, but a bridge was closed for maintenance, blocking its use during most of the counting period. This likely impacted the results.

BEHAVIOR MAPPING

The Behavior Mapping exercise revealed low levels of behavior tracking overall. The one exception was at Martens Park on a weekday evening between 5:20 and 6:30. At this time there were baseball teams at the park. This drew many families and children to watch the game/practice, and others that were walking through the neighborhood. The total count was 76, and most were either playing/ practicing, watching or walking.

Materns Park. Photo Credit: Visit Fairfield County

Otherwise, the behavior counts were minimal. The next busiest count was midday on a Saturday in June. 5 people were recorded patronizing the shops on 188. Overall, these low activity levels lead us to conclude that most residents leave the neighborhood for much of their activities. This would seem to match the low-intensity commercial uses in the area, which do not draw significant traffic.

TRAFFIC COUNTS

The City of Lancaster provided traffic counts for the corners of U.S. 22, Lincoln Ave, and S.R. 188, Cedar Hill Road, as well as at Cedar Hill and Pierce Ave.

U.S. 22 and S.R. 188:

This is the largest intersection in the study area, and a significant one for the City as a whole, as it merges two major arterials into one. The following is a summary of weekday data:

- Traffic is busiest during weekdays in the afternoons.
- Traffic volumes range from 1,561 cars per hour to 170 cars per hour. However, traffic for any specific maneuver (shown below) tends to vary by about 50% (i.e., 50% more cars do the maneuver at peak times vs slowest times).
- Listed below are the maneuvers through this intersection in order of frequency from most heavily to least heavily used during the weekdays:
  - A. Westbound on U.S. 22 turning onto S.R. 188
  - B. Southbound on S.R. 188 turning right onto U.S. 22 westbound
  - C. Southbound on S.R. 188 turning left onto U.S. 22 eastbound
  - D. Westbound on U.S. 22 straight through the intersection
  - E. Eastbound on U.S. 22 straight through the intersection
  - F. Eastbound on U.S. 22 turning left onto S.R. 188

The data is similar for weekends, however with much lower traffic volume, and with B above slightly higher than A.

The conclusion from this data is that the most traffic is moving along U.S. 22 to turn onto S.R. 188, and more traffic at S.R. 188 is turning right to go west on U.S. 22 than to go east, although not by a significant margin. It is interesting that while many cars on U.S. 22 are traveling westbound and turning on S.R. 188, there are not very many cars completing the reverse, that is turning eastbound on U.S. 22 from S.R. 188. It is unclear why this is the case, but it is possible that residents have found a better side route to return to U.S. 22.

Additionally, the busiest times of the day are just before and during the evening rush hour times, from 3:30 -5:30, with morning rush hour coming in second from 7:30-8:30. This is expected traffic behavior overall.

This intersection is a significant one in the City, with both the railroad tracks and the intersection creating a pinch point. The City may need to look into improvements in this area to ease the flow of traffic. However, more feedback from residents and the City of Lancaster.

S.R. 188 and Pierce Ave:

This is likely the second most significant intersection in the Study Area, as Pierce is a major north-south road through the west side of Lancaster. Pierce dead-ends into S.R. 188 at a traffic light. The following is a summary of weekday data:

- Traffic patterns here show an increasing level of business throughout the day in general, with the afternoon rush hour being the busiest.
- Traffic volumes range from 600 to 2,705. However, traffic for any specific maneuver (shown below) tends to vary by about 50% (i.e., 50% more cars do the maneuver at peak times vs slowest times).
- Listed below are the maneuvers through this intersection in order of frequency from most heavily to least heavily used during the weekdays:
  - A. Eastbound on S.R. 188 through the intersection (towards U.S. 22)
  - B. Westbound on S.R. 188 through the intersection
  - C. Eastbound on S.R. 188 turning left onto Pierce Avenue
  - D. Southbound on Pierce Avenue turning either right or left. The counts did not distinguish turning direction. If these were broken up, it's likely each would fall lower on the list.
  - E. Westbound on S.R. 188 turning right onto Pierce Avenue

The data for weekends is similar to the pattern above, with the exception that traffic volumes tended to be steadier throughout the day with less variation between times.

The conclusion from this data is that most people are using S.R. 188 as a through-road to get further most frequently to U.S. 22. Since S.R. 188 has an interchange with U.S. 33 farther west, it is likely that people are exiting there and using S.R. 188 to get into downtown or nearby neighborhoods. Additionally, the fact that more people are turning right on S.R. 188 than onto U.S. 22 westbound may indicate that residents in that area find it easier to get off of U.S. 33 eastbound and take S.R. 188 to U.S. 22 instead of continuing on U.S. 33 to U.S.22. There are no roads connecting U.S. 22 and S. R. 188 prior to their intersection until you reach Becks Knobs Road, which is virtually adjacent to U.S. 33 and not a good alternative. While Pierce Avenue is a fairly well-traveled road, it would appear that not many people use it to reach this area of town. It's more likely that travelers on Pierce Avenue use it to access Anchor Hocking or to drive north to the shopping options on Memorial Drive.

CRIME

Crime Indices were pulled for both the Study Area and the overall City of Lancaster for comparison. Figure 19 below shows the data for both:

Site		Study Area	Lancaster	Ohio
2023 Total Population		1,428	41,455	11,849,286
2023 Total Crime Index		110	118	95
2023 Personal Crime Index		82	89	76
2023 Property Crime Index		115	123	110

Source ESRI Business Analyst   Figure 19: Crime

Overall, the crime index for the neighborhood is just slightly lower than the City of Lancaster as a whole. Both Lancaster and the Study Area have crime rates that are somewhat higher than the State of Ohio overall. Additionally, the personal crime and property crime were lower overall in the Study Area than Lancaster, by percentage, indicating that that the Study Area is not a particularly dangerous neighborhood in the City, but might be seen as less safe by those from other locations in Ohio. The city should pay attention to trends to ensure that crime does not become a destabilizing issue for the neighborhood.

AREA PLAN SURVEY

A survey was developed that asked questions specifically targeted to the Study Area. This survey was conducted using SurveyMonkey and was open to both neighborhood residents and those outside the neighborhood. The data was then sorted and analyzed to see if there were any variances in opinions of the neighborhood from those within the area vs. outside. A mailer was sent to individual residents and property owners in the Study Area in order to advertise the survey. Additionally, the survey was pushed out through City social media in order to generate responses.

The survey, which received 137 responses, asked the respondents about their age, where they live, their opinions on the neighborhood, and what they would like to see in the future for the community. The following summarizes the findings and offers some suggestions for the next steps in the planning process for this area plan.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDENTS

Almost half of the respondents (49%) live within the Study Area. The remaining respondents live elsewhere in Lancaster (33%) or outside the city (18%). The survey also requested to specify whether

the respondents work within the neighborhood. Only 7% of them live and work in the neighborhood. 5% work in the community but do not live there. These responses can be seen in Figure 20.

Which of the following statements best describes you?
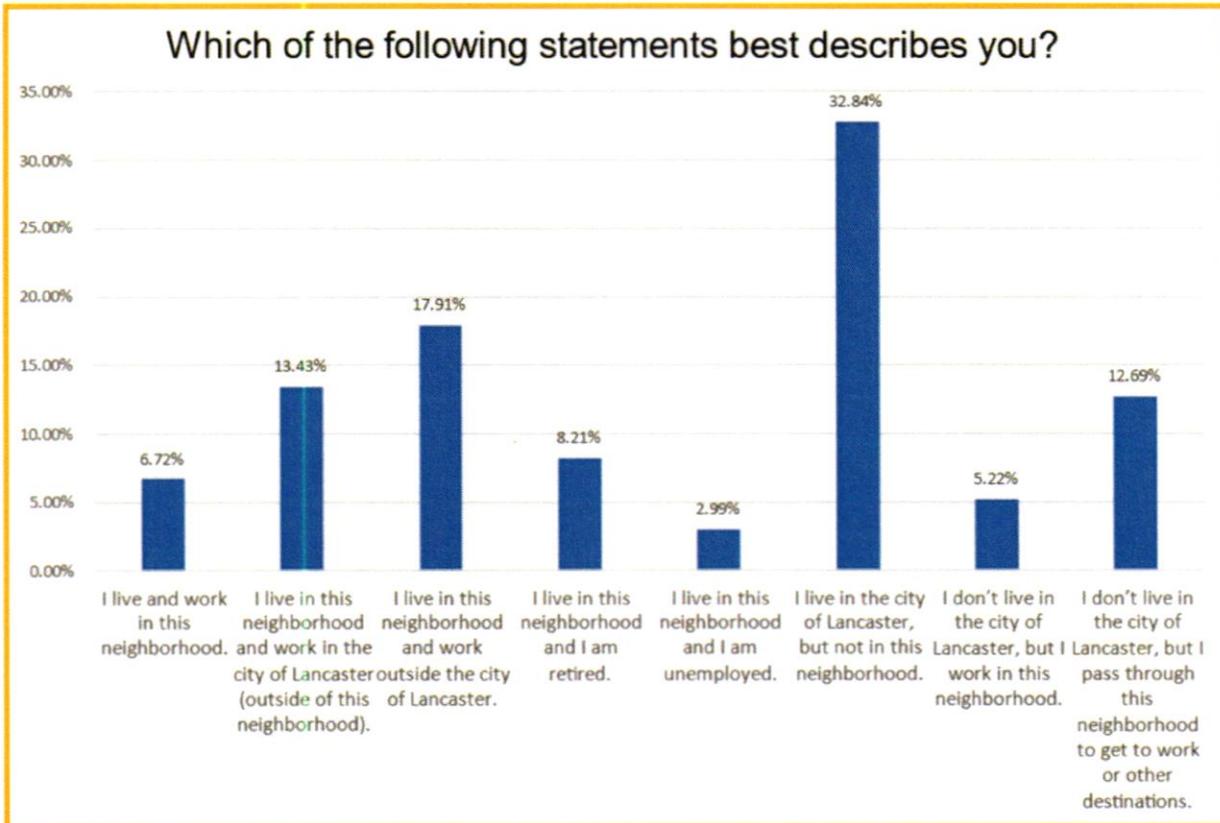
Figure 20: Relation to Study Area

Even though only half of the respondents live or work within the neighborhood, many residents of the city or the greater metropolitan area have interests in the Study Area, especially since S.R. 188 is a common connection between U.S. 33 and downtown Lancaster for commuters. This report will also show how residents and non-residents responded differently to certain questions.

The largest age cohort from the survey is 35-54, as shown in Figure 21. 19% of the respondents are younger than 35, but almost half are older than 54. This distribution is, overall, older than the census data for the neighborhood and the City of Lancaster as a whole.
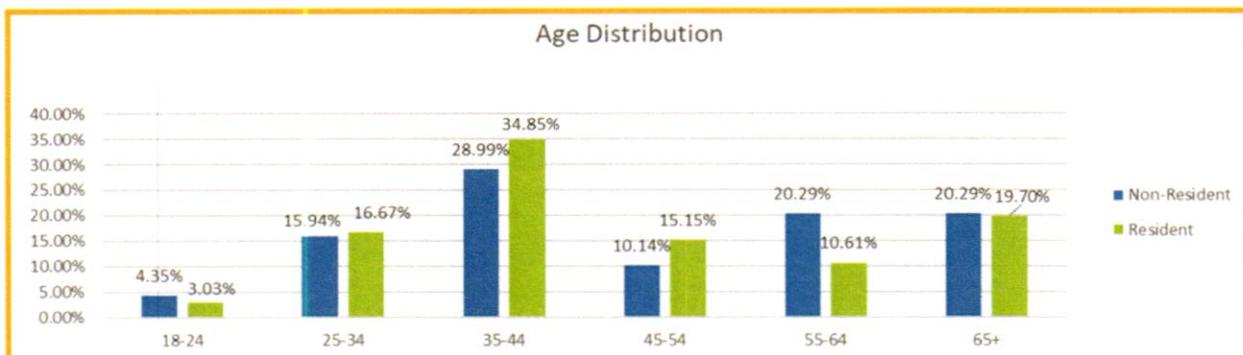
Figure 21: Respondent Age

CURRENT HABITS

A majority of the respondents own their homes instead of renting a unit, Figure 22. A majority also have a personal vehicle as their primary form of transportation, with only two respondents listing "bike" as their primary method. These factors do not change when separating Study Area residents from non-residents, Figure 23. However, the demographics show that about half of the residents in the neighborhood rent, indicating more interest in the survey from Study Area homeowners.
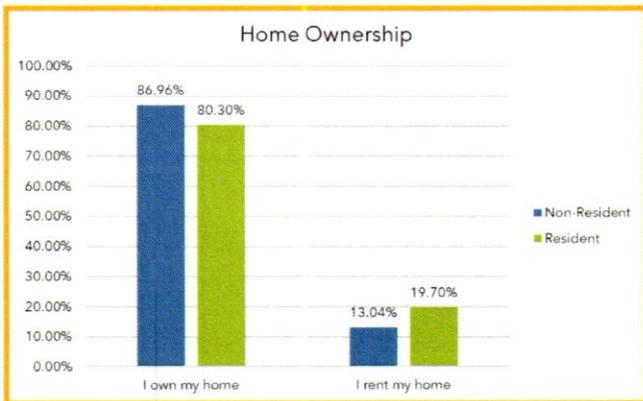
Figure 22: Home Ownership
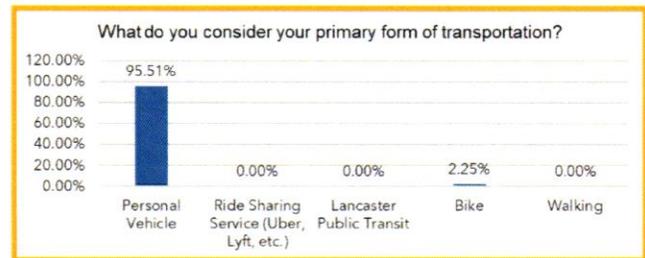
Figure 23: Transportation

When asked about their walking and biking habits in the neighborhood, most Study Area resident respondents stated they walk or bike in the neighborhood for exercise, leisure, and recreational purposes, as described by Figure 24. Only a total of 3 resident respondents walk or bike in the neighborhood for services such as grocery shopping. 11 non-resident respondents indicated they walk or bike in the Study Area, while 27 indicated they do not walk or bike in the area.
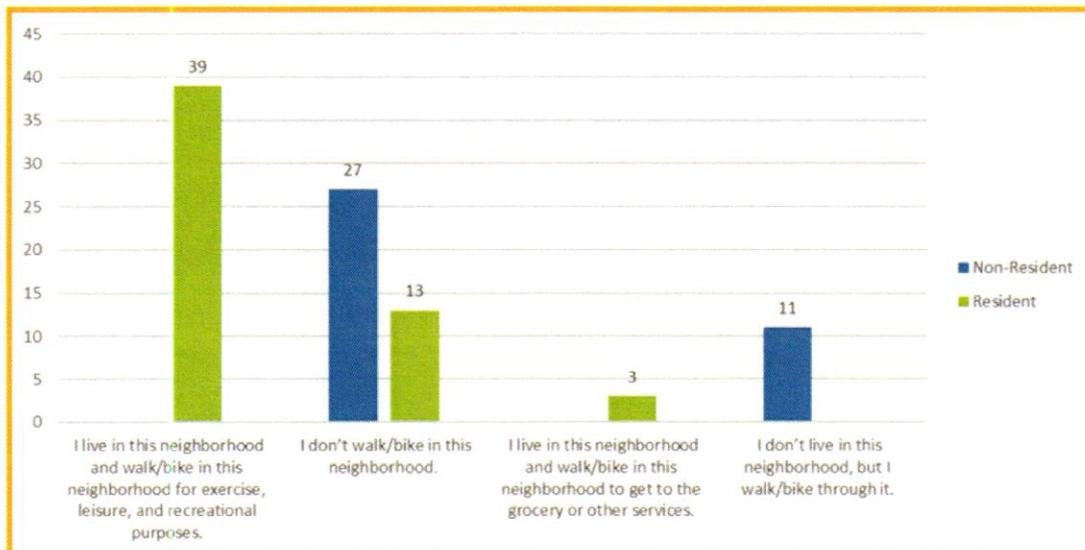
Figure 24: Walking and Biking

OPINIONS ON THE NEIGHBORHOOD'S CURRENT STATE

As seen in Figure 25, 79% of the Study Area resident respondents believe the neighborhood is safe, while only 61% of non-residents respondents agree. This represents about a 20% variation in views between these two groups.

Between 75 – 80% of the respondents feel the Study Area's housing is relatively affordable , see Figure 26. Unlike the safety question, residents and non-residents did not drastically differ in their responses here.

A slim majority of the resident respondents from the Study Area (56%) believe the neighborhood's residential areas are average in quality, while non-residents are slightly lower at 46%, as shown in Figure 27. Additionally, a much higher percentage of non-residents respondents (just over 51%) rated the housing in the two lowest ratings vs. the Study Area where just over 20% rated it in the lowest two categories. When adding numerals with the five choices (i.e., excellent = 5 and not good = 1), non-resident respondents rate the residential areas as 2.24, while

Do you feel safe in this neighborhood?

Figure 25: Safety

Do you consider the housing in this neighborhood to be reasonably priced?

Figure 26: Price Perception

How would you rate the quality of the residential areas within this neighborhood?
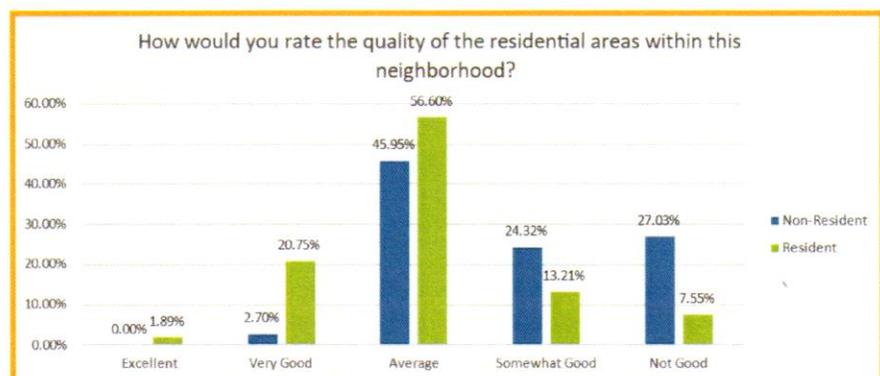
Figure 27: Residential Quality

resident respondents rate it as 2.96. This demonstrates that Study Area resident respondents have a somewhat better view of the neighborhood than those passing through.

Overall, a significant number of respondents rated the commercial areas as average quality, as highlighted in Figure 28. The answers trended towards Study Area residents seeing the commercial offerings in a slightly better light than the non-resident respondents. Still, significant portions of both respondent sets saw the commercial areas as "somewhat good" or "poor", with many fewer responding "very good" or "excellent", indicating an overall negative skew to the data.

How would you rate the quality of the commercial areas within this neighborhood?

Rating	Non-Resident	Resident
Excellent	2.70%	0.00%
Very Good	5.41%	9.43%
Average	43.24%	52.83%
Somewhat Good	27.03%	20.75%
Not Good	21.62%	16.98%
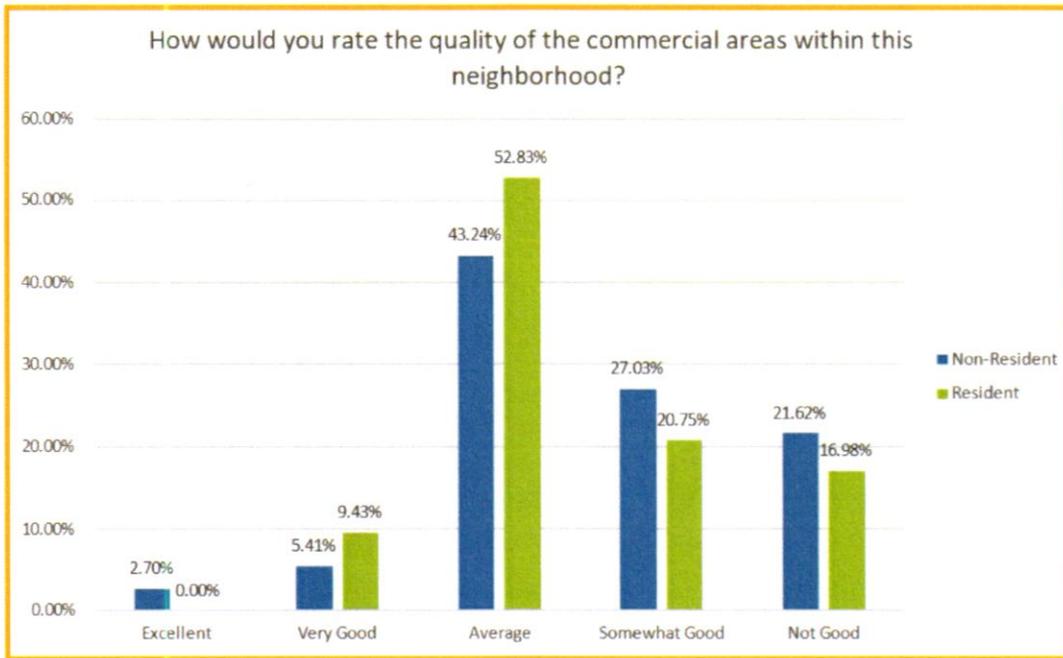
Figure 28: Commercial Quality

A plurality of respondents ranked the neighborhood's roads as average in quality, with residents and non-residents responding similarly, shown in Figure 29. More respondents rated the quality as somewhat good or not good than excellent or very good.

How would you rate the quality of the roads within this neighborhood?

Rating	Non-Resident	Resident
Excellent	0.00%	1.89%
Very Good	5.41%	16.98%
Average	48.65%	43.40%
Somewhat Good	27.03%	15.09%
Not Good	18.92%	22.64%

Figure 29: Road Quality

VISION FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The survey asked the respondents which amenities they would like to see in the Study Area, as described by Figure 30. The amenity that received the most support from the respondents was "more sidewalks and areas of the bike path." Community gardens and open spaces also received support. Athletic fields and picnic shelters received much less support. Marten's Park, which is within the Study Area, is a likely explanation for these results because it already has several baseball fields and a picnic shelter; most respondents did not see the need for more. Residents and non-residents responded similarly to this question.

The survey also asked what types of uses the respondents would like to see on Cedar Hill Road, as seen in Figure 31. By far current resident respondents do not see the need for additional uses along Cedar Hill, with restaurants and grocery stores the next most popular choices. Non-resident respondents selected restaurants as their top pick, followed by grocery stores. Many fewer non-resident respondents selected no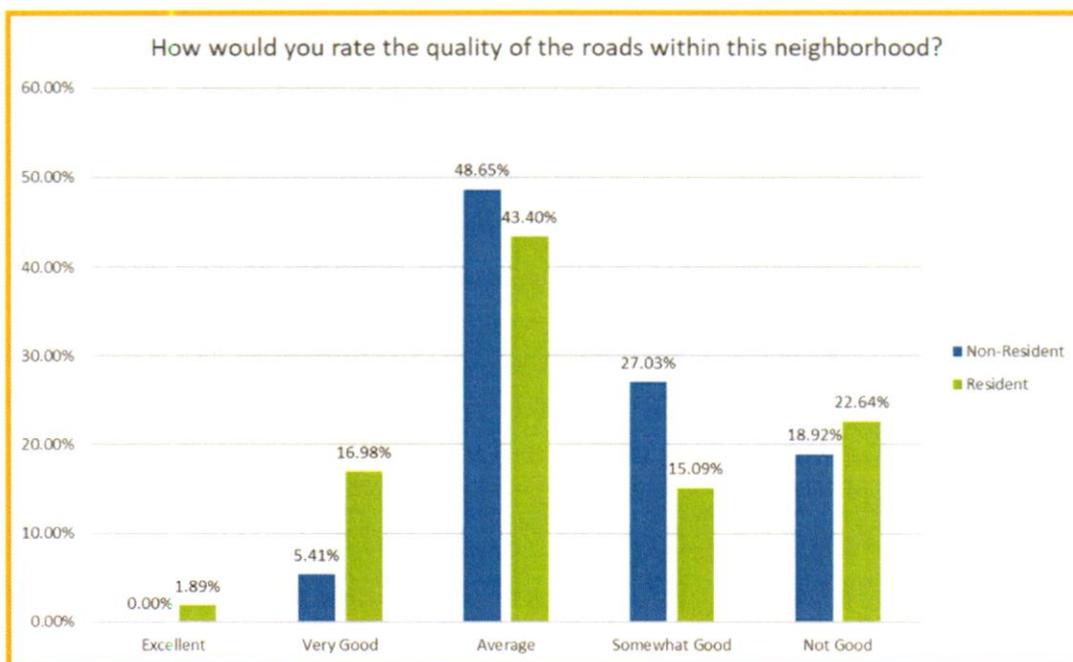 change. Again, this illustrates that those outside the neighborhood may see the area as having more needs than those in the neighborhood. Additionally, the commercial area on Memorial Drive is just north of the area, providing

Figure 30: Amenities

Figure 31: Cedar Hill Land Uses

numerous shopping and dining options. This may have muted the response for additional options for those in the neighborhood (they have close access to these uses already), vs those commuting into town (they may not want to divert to Memorial Drive to pick up breakfast on their way to work, for example). The lowest selection for both was more contractor's offices, equipment repair and other similar uses.

The final question asked whether the respondents would be willing to attend a public meeting to provide additional feedback regarding the neighborhood and its future, as seen in Figure 32. Half of the Study Area resident respondents (25 respondents) indicated that they would be willing to attend a meeting, a significant percentage. A much smaller percentage of respondents living outside the neighborhood (21%, or 7 respondents) indicated they would be willing to attend a meeting, which is expected. The number of willing respondents would still make a sizable audience for public participation in the planning process for this area plan.
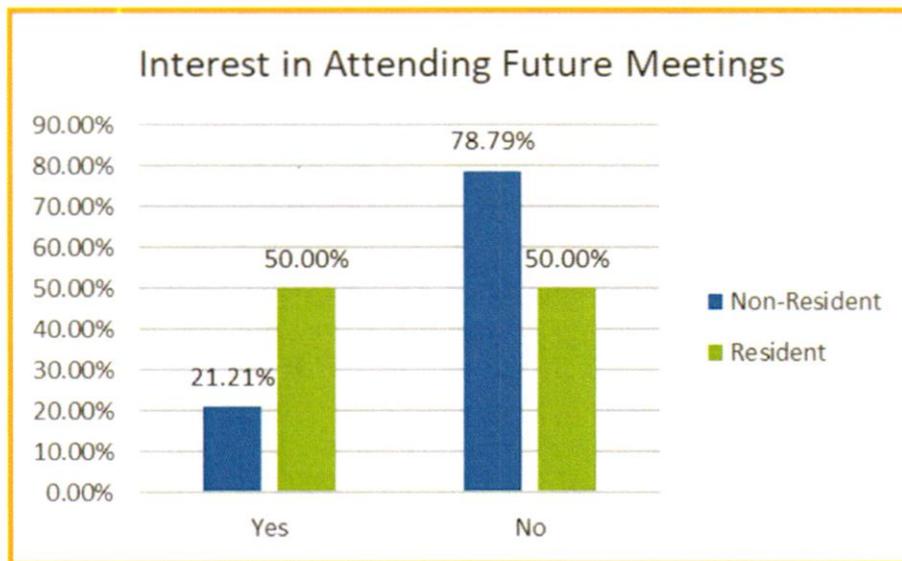
Figure 32: Future Meetings

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Respondents were given the opportunity to state what they liked and disliked most about the neighborhood. These were open-ended questions. The results from these questions ranged widely.

A word cloud was created that shows the most common responses to the question about what respondents like the most about the neighborhood, shown in Figure 33.
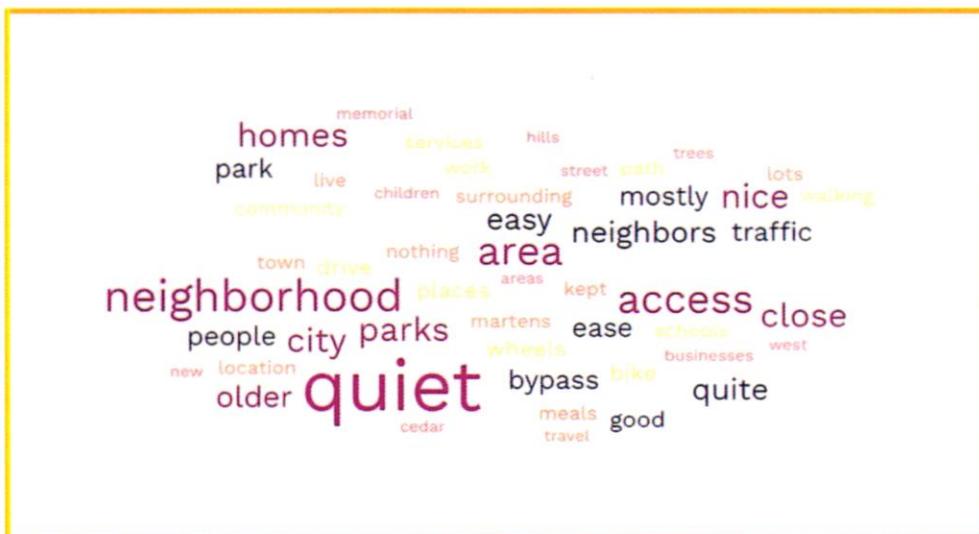
Figure 33: What Residents Like About the Neighborhood

As shown by the word cloud, many residents noted the area is quiet, and also noted the location and ease of access to 33, Memorial Drive and downtown. In reading through the responses, many also stated their neighbors and sense of community were strong, although they used differing descriptions for this which don't show up as strongly in the word cloud. Several also mentioned natural features such as the parks, rolling hills and trees. Finally, a number of people noted the older housing stock and lack of a "cookie cutter" aesthetic were positives.

A word cloud was also developed showing the most frequent answers for what respondents disliked about the neighborhood, as seen in Figure 34:

Figure 34: What Residents Dislike About the Neighborhood

As seen in Figure 34, traffic was a major concern. Many respondents stated that traffic made getting onto S.R. 188 and U.S. 22 very difficult, and that drivers speed through these areas. Although not as evident in the word cloud, several people noted unaesthetic uses in the area, particularly some commercial along S.R. 188. A number of respondents also noted they believed that crime, drugs and homelessness were issues. A number of people also mentioned rundown homes and businesses.

These results are interesting, given that the objective survey rankings showed that most people overall felt the neighborhood was in decent condition. It may be that certain locations have some issues, or that there are specific properties within the area that are concerns for the residents. The City should look more closely at the neighborhood to determine if there are problem areas that can be targeted.

SUMMARY

The following provides a summary of information gathered and learned through the survey.

1. Overall, Study Area residents expressed a positive outlook for their neighborhood in terms of safety and quality of the residential and commercial areas. While there was not a strong opinion that the neighborhood was excellent, residents rate the neighborhood as good to average with opportunities and options for residents.

2. Reinforcing the result above, a significant number of residents in the study area do not see the need for changes to the neighborhood. If they do want changes, it tends to be more restaurants or commercial along S.R. 188.

3. On the other hand, non-residents tended to have a less favorable view of the neighborhood overall. While their view was not substantially bad, there seemed to be more desire for changes in the neighborhood, particularly the commercial corridor along 188/Cedar Hill Road. This is not surprising, as this is the main "point of contact" for the neighborhood for many non-residents. Additionally, those passing through may desire more commercial options along 188, while neighborhood residents are very close to Memorial Drive, which has numerous commercial options.

4. The one area where residents saw their neighborhood in a worse light than non-residents was in the condition of the roads. While a plurality of residents saw them as average, far more residents indicated they were below average vs. non-residents. This may be due to their use of side roads much more frequently than those passing through.

5. The variableness of objective vs. subjective answers shows that while overall most think this Study Area is a stable neighborhood, it does struggle with some issues. There is a perception that the area has issues with some dilapidated properties, crime, drug use and homelessness. While these clearly are not strong enough to cause most people to have a negative view of the area, these are threats that could result in worse living standards for residents.

6. If changes are made, residents indicated they desire more sidewalks, bike paths and better roads. Additionally, adding open space and community gardens were popular options. These were also popular for non-residents, although their responses on the residential and commercial questions seem to indicate they are more interested in changes to these areas as well.

7. Virtually all survey participants use a car as the main form of transportation, with a few noting bikes. This is not surprising. While the residential areas of the neighborhood are suitable for biking overall, the main roads of S.R. 188, U.S. 22 and Memorial Drive to the north are not very amenable to biking. This indicates that most likely bike or walk short distances to visit others or for exercise and entertainment. However, the desire for more bike paths and sidewalks may increase the share of these modes over time.

8. A fair number of respondents indicated interest in participating in follow-up meetings for the planning process. The City should consider ways to reach out to these respondents. Many provided e-mail addresses in the response, which is a good first step.

GUIDING VISION

A vision statement was created from resident and Steering Committee input. The vision statement is a key tool for creating goals and action steps. It serves as a guiding statement throughout the planning process. All goals and action steps should align with the vision for the Study Area. The established vision statement is shown below.

"The vision for this Neighborhood Area Plan is to activate and beautify this important corridor through creative multimodal improvements, strategic land uses, and landscaping that will result in vibrant public spaces, increased economic opportunity, enhanced walkability, and a welcoming neighborhood balanced with efficient flow of traffic."

This vision statement highlights many of the broad goals of this plan. Improving multimodal transportation options, including biking and walking, are central to the aim of this plan to assist in vehicular traffic management and increase resident comfort and safety when cycling or walking. Identifying and implementing strategic land uses will help support existing residential, commercial, and industrial uses in the neighborhood to create a well blended neighborhood that enhances accessibility, economic potential, and quality of life for neighborhood residents. Landscaping, streetscaping, and public art are also essential to this plan to assist in placemaking and aesthetic enhancement. Landscaping and streetscaping such as planting street trees may also help increase perceived walkability, by improving the conditions of the streets and sidewalks. Once this vision was established, goals were then established that each promoted a piece of this vision. Following this, specific recommendations and action steps were laid out to achieve each goal, which in turn helps achieve the vision which will be discussed in the following section.
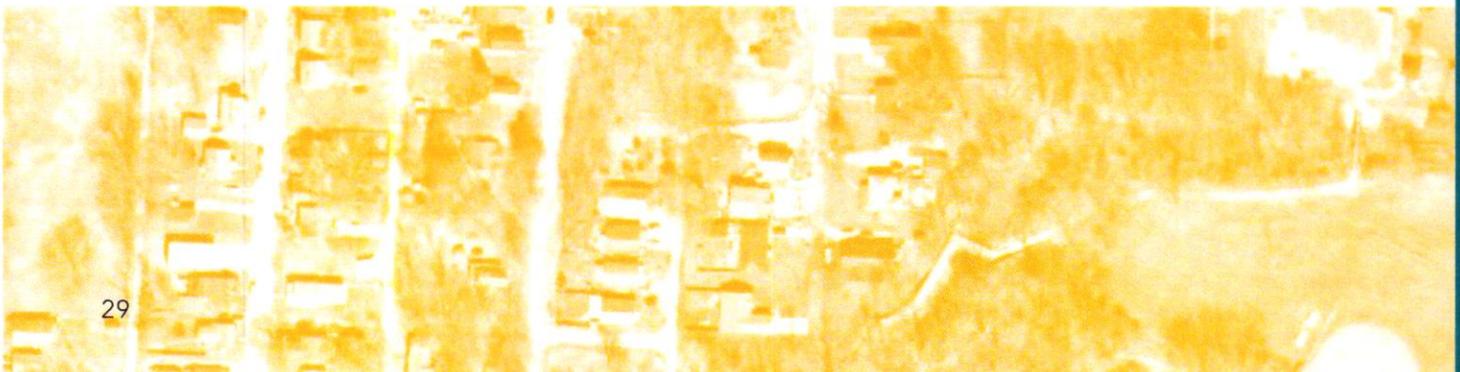
GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Steering Committee developed 10 goals for this Plan. These goals were then presented to the public and revised based on feedback. The final goals and recommendations for each are discussed throughout the following pages.

GOAL #1: Increase connectivity throughout the Study Area by filling sidewalk gaps and adding pedestrian crossings to make active transportation a more safe and desirable option for residents and visitors alike.

The Cedar Hill neighborhood contains a portion of the Fairfield Heritage Trail as well as a sidewalk network throughout the neighborhood. However, there are important links missing within this active transportation network, such as missing sidewalks, limited or no bike lanes, and a lack of high-quality pedestrian infrastructure such as crossings, signage, and bridges. Several recommendations have been identified through this planning process with the goal of increasing connectivity.

A map showing existing sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, bike infrastructure, and subsequent gaps would increase understanding of the needs of the multimodal transportation network in the neighborhood. This baseline knowledge would then allow the city to create and implement improvement plans in phases, ultimately resulting in fully connected sidewalks, bike infrastructure, and crossings.

There are multiple funding avenues which may be utilized to fund sidewalk improvement projects such as Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) funding. SRTS projects must fall into at least one of five categories: engineering, encouragement, education, enforcement, and evaluation. SRTS may reimburse up to 100% of costs for all infrastructure-based project phases including preliminary engineering, design, right-of-way, construction engineering, and construction with a limit of $500,000 per project. This funding applies for projects within two miles of schools serving K-12 students. The entire neighborhood lies within two miles of both Gorsuch West Elementary and Tallmadge Elementary School. There are also funding opportunities for non-infrastructure-based projects such as education, evaluation, and enforcement of safety. These projects are eligible for up to 100% reimbursement for costs relating to training and materials, safety and education incentives, public awareness programs, and program supplies.

While projects in these categories would not improve infrastructure directly, these projects would assist in making existing pedestrian and bike infrastructure safer for students within the Cedar Hill neighborhood. The project limit is $60,000 for one year or $120,000 for a two-year project.

Another funding source for sidewalk and bikeway improvements may be through the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (CORPO). The CORPO Dedicated Funds program committed over $1.1 million of funding for member-selected, eligible projects within the CORPO region, which includes the City of Lancaster. CORPO Dedicated Funds may be used for improvement or preservation of roads and bridges on any public road, capital costs for public transit and bus terminal, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other transportation-related activities.

Repairing and improving the pedestrian bridge connecting the neighborhood and the northern section of the Fairfield Heritage Trail to Marten's Park is of high priority for the City. This improvement would increase residents' ability to access recreation opportunities and multi-use trails. Additionally, there is an opportunity to create a trailhead and improve parking of the northside gravel lots owned by the City of Lancaster. Previously, these lots have been used for overflow parking for events at Marten's Park. However, there are no marked spaces and little organization to the parking. Figure 35 shows a rendering of a potential parking orientation for this space, with two parking bays separated by landscaping and incorporating a picnic/trailhead pavilion to serve as a resting point for walkers and bicyclists along the Fairfield Heritage Trail. Additionally, this space could contain bench space and bike parking facilities to further support active transportation in the neighborhood. The implementation of this project is also recommended to branch out beyond these lots to include signage along Cedar Hill Rd, Bank St, and Main St to guide cyclists and walkers to the trailhead.

Figure 35: Trailhead Concept

Funding sources for this project could include the Clean Ohio Trail Fund, ODNR Recreational Trails Program, and Rails to Trails grants.

Recreational Trails Program (ODNR and Federal Highway Administration)

⇒ Projects for development of urban trail linkages, trailhead facilities, trail restoration, accessibility, development of new trails, purchase of trail maintenance equipment, and more are eligible.

⇒ Maximum project award of $150,000 with a 20% match required from applicant required.

⇒ Cities and villages, counties, townships, special districts, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations are eligible.

Clean Ohio Trail Fund (ODNR)

⇒ Projects for land acquisition for a trail or new trail or connector trail development projects are eligible.

⇒ Maximum project award of $500,000 with required match of 25%.

⇒ Local governments, park and joint recreation districts, conservancy districts, soil and water conservation districts, and non-profit organizations are eligible.

Rails to Trails Grants

⇒ Projects for trail development, equitable trail access, land acquisition for trails, trail mapping, community engagement, and more are eligible.

⇒ Non-profit organizations; state, regional, local or tribal government agencies; and other organizations are eligible.

As previously discussed, the Fairfield Heritage Trail runs through the Cedar Hill Neighborhood. This 9.5 mile trail runs through a large part of the City of Lancaster and has connections to multiple schools, shopping and dining amenities, and numerous parks. However, within the Cedar Hill Neighborhood, there is a gap in the trail, requiring walkers and riders to travel along Main St from Marten's Park and reconnect to the trail at Bank St. The areas of Main St to the east of the railroad tracks have a designated bike lane while the areas to the east, which are largely more industrial, do not. Additionally, there is minimal sidewalk or signage along Main St. The cross-streets such as Harrison Ave, Baker Ave, S George St, and others do not have any indication for vehicular travelers to be on the lookout for cyclists or pedestrians that may be crossing to connect to the Fairfield Heritage Trail, potentially creating unsafe situations for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

Figure 36 shows the infrastructure of the Fairfield Heritage Trail through the Cedar Hill neighborhood. To improve this trail and recreational access within the neighborhood, the potential to add a bike lane along Main St from Pierce Ave to Harrison Ave should be evaluated. If a bike lane is unable to be added to this portion of Main St, shared lane markings, often referred to as "sharrows" should be evaluated to denote the presence of bicycles along the road. Additionally, improved signage should be designed and strategically placed along the Main St corridor and intersecting streets to highlight the route to connect the Fairfield Heritage Trail as well as improve awareness of pedestrian and cyclists moving through the area.
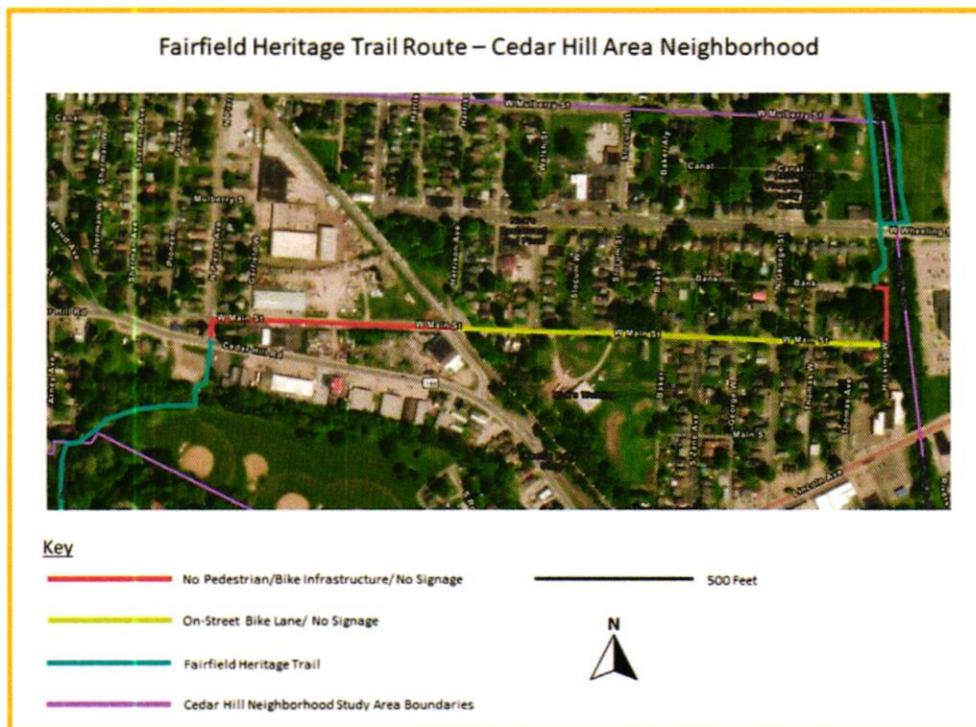

Figure 36: Fairfield Heritage Trail Infrastructure

The Cedar Hill neighborhood is a very walkable neighborhood in theory due to proximity to parks, restaurants, bars, commercial buildings, and Downtown Lancaster. However, due to the lack of sidewalks in key areas, lack of street trees, and bicycle infrastructure, the neighborhood becomes unfavorable for walking to reach different amenities. The City should place an increased emphasis on closing the loop on missing sidewalks and implement a plan to add street streets to roads such as Lincoln Ave and Cedar Hill Road. Additionally, protected bike lanes are needed to promote cycling activity and improve the safety of cyclists and drivers.

GOAL #2: Bring additional restaurant and food truck options to the Cedar Hill Road corridor making it a destination and activating the space.

The Steering Committee initially identified the goal of bringing additional restaurant and food truck options to the Cedar Hill neighborhood to activate spaces that are not currently utilized or are underutilized. Neighborhood residents had wide differing opinions of this goal, ranging from fully

supportive to completely against. Residents who did not agree with this goal felt there was limited space to achieve this goal and the potential to cause more traffic. Supporters of the goal believed more restaurants and food trucks would be a good addition to the neighborhood to expand dining options. However, there was also an emphasis on the desire to bring more events and activities to the neighborhood, and not just dining options. The City of Lancaster should further conversations with residents to further understand what the community desires in relation to dining and activities.

GOAL #3: Improve aesthetics and drive prosperity in such a way that maintains the affordability that residents within the Study Area currently appreciate about their neighborhood.

Throughout the planning process, there was feedback regarding improving the aesthetics of the neighborhood yet a need to maintain the affordability of the neighborhood, thus creating a need to identify low-cost improvements that involve the community. One recommendation is to evaluate locations along Cedar Hill Rd for potential murals along blank walls or to replace existing fencing and enhance the streetscape. Mural development could include Lancaster High School where students could design and create a plan for the mural that reflects the character and unique features of the Cedar Hill neighborhood.

Additional streetscape improvements could include additions to landscaping, street trees, bike lanes, and sidewalks. Figure 37 highlights different streetscape configurations that could be applied in strategic areas of the Cedar Hill neighborhood. Additionally, improved screening such as fencing and landscaping could work to improve aesthetics from the street view. An aspirational design guide, containing different screening configurations, types, and colors could serve as a resource for business owners or residents who are looking to make improvements to their properties and could assist in the creation of a cohesive aesthetic look.
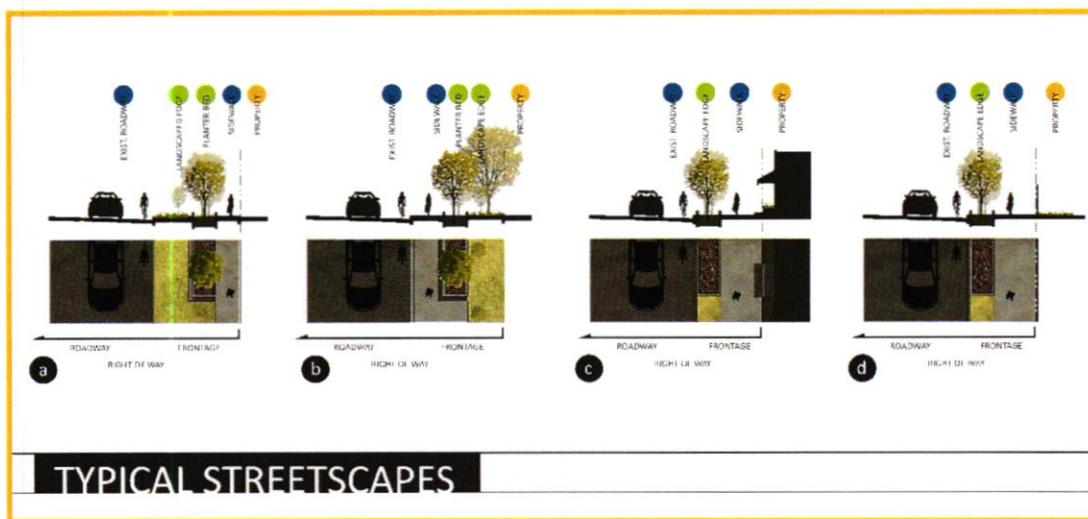

Figure 37: Streetscapes

The implementation of a community garden could also serve to increase the aesthetic appeal of the neighborhood, and would actively include community members, building community bonds and connections.

As briefly described, maintaining affordability in the Cedar Hill neighborhood is key. The City of Lancaster should investigate creating a fund that provides financial assistance to homeowners to improve their properties through avenues such as landscaping, decorative fencing, paving driveways, and other minor home improvements and beautification measures. Similarly, the City of Whitehall runs a Home Reinvestment Program to assist residents with front-facing exterior home projects.[2] Qualifying residents may receive a 50% reimbursement of up to $7,500 for these projects. The City of Lancaster may consider administering a program similar to the City of Whitehall to support the goal of improving aesthetics of the Cedar Hill Neighborhood while maintaining affordability.

GOAL #4: Sustain and even amplify the residents' sense of pride in their neighborhood.

The Cedar Hill neighborhood has a vibrant history, contains many lifelong residents, and continues to grow and bring new residents to the area, making it a well-loved community. This plan and its recommendations should aim to retain and increase the residents' sense of pride in their neighborhood. The first step is to continue to engage with neighborhood residents, businesses, and organizations to further education about this neighborhood area plan and its goals. The City of Lancaster should assist neighborhood residents, with the assistance of key neighborhood stakeholders to capitalize on existing community bonds to tackle initiatives such as developing and expanding neighborhood watch groups or publishing a community newsletter or social media page to highlight events in the area, local businesses, and create neighborhood communication.

Opportunities for residents to become actively engaged in their neighborhood should be identified. Public feedback noted that there is a lack of activities within the neighborhood which could be improved. The City of Lancaster should work to identify parcels within the neighborhood where community events could occur. Additionally, many of the activities, festivals, and celebrations happen in downtown Lancaster. There may be potential for additional events to be located within the Cedar Hill neighborhood. Projects such as murals or public art should involve neighborhood residents in art selection and even painting volunteers . The City should collaborate with and utilize Destination Downtown Lancaster's extensive experience highlighting and improving the Downtown area to provide insights and recommendations for events in the Cedar Hill neighborhood.

Attention should be given to improving infrastructure within the neighborhood, to make it a safe and desirable place to be. Repairing the Marten's Park bridge is a major step towards completing this goal. Other infrastructure projects should center around sidewalks and bike lanes as

[2] https://www.whitehall-oh.us/414/Home-Reinvestment-Programs

discussed but should also evaluate and study vehicular traffic issues and identify necessary improvements.

The Cedar Hill neighborhood is a distinct area of Lancaster and sees a large amount of traffic passing through to and from US 33. Therefore, there is an opportunity to define the Cedar Hill neighborhood more clearly. Developing branding and signage would assist in creating a distinct community feel and would help differentiate the neighborhood from the whole of the City of Lancaster. In order to achieve this, strategic locations should be identified along major corridors and other locations such as where the Fairfield Heritage Trail enters the neighborhood for sign placement. Design options for signage should be discussed at future public meetings to receive resident feedback. The design of these signs could tie in with the recommended signs denoting the Fairfield Heritage Trail route down Main St to create aesthetic cohesiveness throughout the neighborhood. The images below showcase different examples of neighborhood signs.
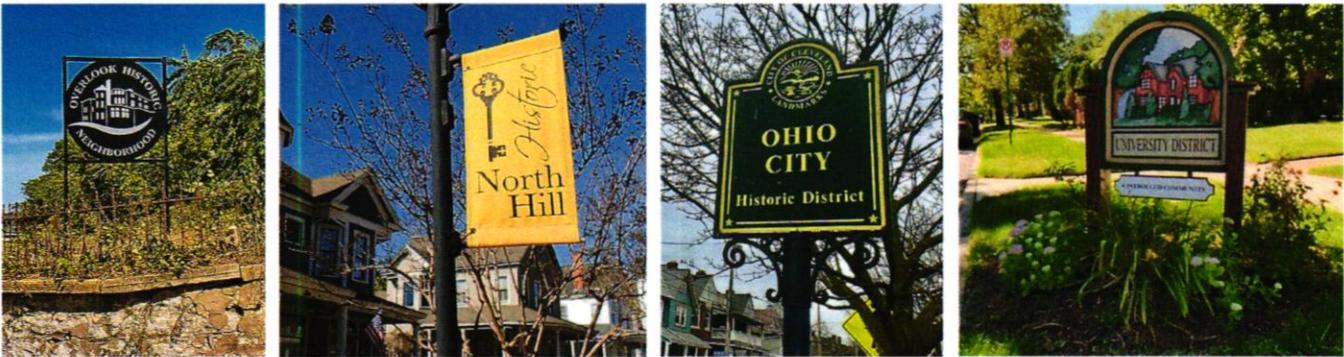

Photo Credits: Moline Community Development Corporation, The City of Pensacola FL, Cleveland Signal, University District Community Association (Detroit)

GOAL #5: Provide more variety of housing options and add to Lancasters' housing supply.

Goal #3 of the plan focused on improving the aesthetics of the exterior of structures in the neighborhood, attention should also be placed on opportunities for homeowners within the Cedar Hill neighborhood to make improvements and repairs to the interiors of their homes. There are a variety of financial assistance programs residents may explore if interested in making improvements. The program list below shows multiple options of such statewide and federal programs.

- Ohio Department of Development Home Weatherization Assistance Program, Home Energy Assistance Summer Crisis & Winter Crisis Programs, Electric Partnership Plan
- Ohio Department of Development Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program
- USDA Rural Development Section 504 Home Repair Program
- Ohio Department of Health Lead Abatement Tax Credit Program
- HUD Property Improvement Loan & HOME Program

Additionally, financial assistance programs exist on a more local level.

- CHIP through the Lancaster Fairfield Community Action Agency (LFCAA).
- Lancaster Department of Community Development has several programs:
  ⇒ Lead hazard control grant.
  ⇒ Housing rehabilitation grant.
  ⇒ Sidewalk improvement program.
  ⇒ Foreclosure prevention program.

Regarding home purchases, the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) has programs such as the Homebuyer Program which offer favorable loans to help residents achieve home ownership.

While many financial assistance programs exist, understanding the requirements and options can be difficult. The City of Lancaster should host semiannual open houses with the Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency, Lancaster Department of Community Development, Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority, and others at well known locations in the neighborhood such as the Meals on Wheels building on Cedar Hill Rd. These open houses would serve to educate residents on a variety of housing programs as well as offer a space to ask questions and receive assistance during the application process.

Housing is in high demand in the City of Lancaster especially within the Cedar Hill neighborhood. Resident feedback has shown that retaining affordability is a high priority of the community. The City of Lancaster has recently established an updated zoning code containing   more housing-friendly regulations in order to promote housing development where the need exists. The City of Lancaster should continue to implement and improve their housing policies to promote high-quality and attainable homes for current and future residents.

There are many different types of housing that are needed within the community ranging from market rate to low income. The construction of market rate housing should be promoted to produce high quality, highly desired homes to increase the housing supply in the area. Additionally, workforce level and attainable housing is needed to house lower and moderate-income individuals and families who value the affordable character of the Cedar Hill neighborhood.

While there is a defined need for additional housing, existing residential structures that have fallen into blight should be rehabilitated for use. The City of Lancaster should develop a closer partnership with the Fairfield County Landbank and encourage the utilization of the Welcome Home Ohio programs that assist in funding the purchase and rehabilitation or construction of

residential properties. The City of Lancaster should engage with the Fairfield County Landbank regarding the potential to acquire and construct attainably priced for-sale homes in the neighborhood.

Welcome Home Ohio – Purchasing (WHO-P)

- Grant funds to cover the cost of purchasing a qualifying residential property.
- Land banks, land reutilization corporations, and electing subdivisions are eligible.
- Funded with $25 million in each fiscal year with the ability to roll funds forward into the next fiscal year.

Welcome Home Ohio – Rehab/Construction (WHO-RC)

- Grant funds to cover the cost of rehabilitation or construction of a qualifying residential property.
- Land banks, land reutilization corporations, and electing subdivisions are eligible.
- A maximum of $30,000 can be applied to each qualified residential property.
- Funded with $25 million in each fiscal year with the ability to roll funds forward into the next fiscal year.

Welcome Home Ohio – Tax Credits (WHO-TC)

- Tax credit issued once the qualifying residential property is sold to a qualifying individual.
- Land banks, land reutilization corporations, electing subdivisions, and eligible developers are eligible.
- A maximum of $90,000 or one-third the cost of rehab/construction, whichever is less.
- Funded with $25 million in each fiscal year, with no funds expended after June 30, 2025.

Additionally, the City should encourage the Fairfield County Land Bank to study the Central Ohio Community Improvement Corporation and Central Ohio Community Land Trust to develop a similar model. The land trust model allows affordability of a dwelling to be preserved in perpetuity. This is possible because the land trust will own the land, build a home, lease it to a homeowner, who then can buy the home while the land is still owned by the land trust. When the house is sold to the next owner, the lease will include a calculation of how much the seller can sell it for and who they can sell it to. The buyers must qualify by income and may only sell to other buyers in a set income range. Under a land bank model, the land is sold at an affordable rate, but the new landowner may sell to anyone at market rate following their purchase, which does not preserve affordability long term.

The City of Lancaster also has a city-wide Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) which provides tax exemptions for property owners to renovate existing structures or construct new buildings. Utilizing this program helps promote the revitalization and rehabilitation of existing housing stock and also promotes the development of new needed housing.

GOAL #6: Collaborate and communicate with commercial property landowners to develop community benefiting recommendations and ideas for future land uses.

The Steering Committee of this Neighborhood Area Plan developed a few draft ideas for future re/development within the Cedar Hill neighborhood. These ideas were presented for feedback at the community open house on November 15, 2023, as are shown in Figures 38 and 39. Figure 38 shows a two-fold concept for a redevelopment project along Cedar Hill Road. Firstly, an initial recommendation would be to implement a public art piece along the existing screening. The long-term recommendation is to provide a vision for redevelopment into a commercial or light industrial building. This site is currently zoned as advanced manufacturing (AM) and the layout shown in Figure 38 complies with the requirements of this zoning district,. which would include organized parking, greenspaces, pedestrian connections, and a commercial space. The amount of necessary parking may be able to be reduced if pedestrian infrastructure and protected bicycle lanes are implemented. These recommendations set a vision for both the short- and long-term redevelopment of the area and implementation would require the city to engage with the landowner. Ultimately, the property owner is the ultimate decider of what takes place on the property, the City's role would be to provide the landowner with this vision as an option if and when the landowner decides to sell or redevelop.

Figure 38: Land Use Concept 1

Figure 39 highlights an idea for re/development of a property along Main St which envisions the development of attainable housing in the form of condominiums. This layout allows for multiple buildings, a dog park, and open space to be built into the plan.

Figure 39: Land Use Concept 2

Additionally, the original Lancaster location of Gay Fad glass studios manufacturing building is located within the Cedar Hill neighborhood, with a portion of the site and original building currently unused. Ideas for the potential redevelopment of this site could include a commercial space with a Gay Fad glass museum, outdoor seating and open space. The City of Lancaster should evaluate this location and open communication channels with the landowners in this area to understand their future goals for their properties. Sample layouts should be developed showing redevelopment ideas for these discussions.

It is important to clarify that in all cases, the City of Lancaster would not be taking or purchasing any private landowners' property to achieve this goal. The City of Lancaster would instead have established communication channels with interested property owners and developers in order to communicate with them the vision and subsequent desired land uses that have been identified by this Neighborhood Area Plan and the residents of the Cedar Hill neighborhood.

GOAL #7: Maintain the existing character of the residential neighborhoods while enhancing the commercial corridor.

The City should coordinate with the Fairfield County landbank to identify sites that could be utilized for a myriad of different uses, such as commercial, residential, or community focused such as community gardens or dog parks. This coordination effort could help identify sites for infill housing, where structures have been previously demolished, or where blight makes a structure a candidate for demolition. The City should then also work to engage with developers who specialize in infill development, to introduce a high-quality product. Once developers and landowners/sites have been identified, the City should work to bring the gap between the parties are connect interested landowners with potential housing developers. A similar method should be followed for the development or redevelopment of commercial properties. These new developments should add quality jobs to the neighborhood.

In order to achieve high-quality redevelopment, the City must first understand what the goals and long-term plans of current landowners are. Communication and relationship building should be a key goal for the City moving forward with landowners, developers, and residents.

There are numerous funding sources which could assist landowners and redevelopment partners with development in the Cedar Hill neighborhood. These include the Ohio Brownfield Remediation Program, the Ohio Site Demolition and Revitalization Program, and the Transformational Mixed-Use Development Program.

Ohio Brownfield Remediation Program

⇒ Grants for cleanup of brownfield sites, including acquisition of sites, demolition, and upgrades to infrastructure.

⇒ $175 million available in 2024, $175 million available in 2025, with 2024 rollover.

Ohio Site Demolition and Revitalization Program

⇒ Applies for blighted, vacant, or abandoned commercial and residential buildings.

⇒ Funding for pre-demolition, demolition, and post-demolition related expenses.

Transformational Mixed-Use Development Program

⇒ Tax credit against development costs incurred during the construction of a project that will serve to promote development in an area.

⇒ Buildings must be a combination of retail, office, residential, recreation, parking, or other mix.

GOAL #8: Manage traffic while utilizing a multimodal approach.

Throughout the planning process, residents provided feedback regarding the difficulty of the Cedar Hill Rd/Pierce Ave intersection. The City of Lancaster should investigate funding a feasibility study of this intersection to identify needed improvements to enhance efficiency and safety. Preliminary engineering costs for identified improvements could potentially be addressed through CORPO funding or state funds through the Fairfield County Transportation Improvement District (TID). Additionally, the City should engage with the TID to develop a better understanding of how the TIF can work to help implement multijurisdictional projects.

The City of Lancaster should also evaluate the existing public transportation network within the Cedar Hill neighborhood, with the goal of improving convenience and desirability to ride. The West Loop currently runs through the Cedar Hill neighborhood to connect residents to destinations within the area and provides connections to farther destinations, as shown in Figure 40. The West Loops should be evaluated to understand where additional connections are needed, what additions would improve ridership, and what prevents residents in the Cedar Hill area from utilizing public bus transportation. Additionally, as the Rock Mill Business Park and other employment centers grow, public transportation connections should be discussed with employers as well as analyzed on a city level. The Lancaster-Fairfield Transportation System will soon become a County Department. Currently, there is a Transit Development Plan (TDP) in the works to develop an understanding of the mobility needs of the community and evaluating what transit improvements are needed.

While outside of the Study Area, he City of Lancaster has also discussed a Ewing St connector project to connect Ewing to Logan-Lancaster Road/ Memorial Drive/Old US 33. This would provide a new connection to the east side of the City.
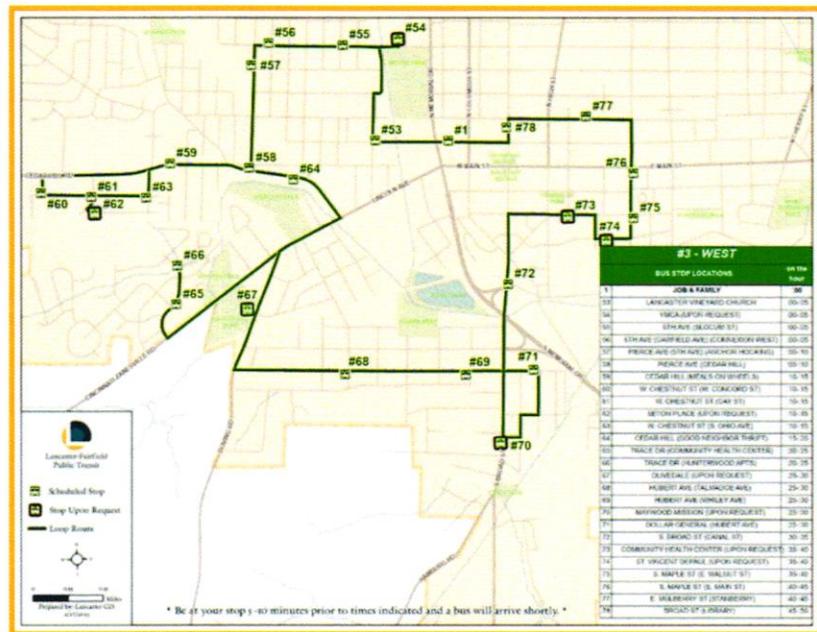

Figure 40: West Bus Route

GOAL #9: Create additional open space and green space where the flood plain currently impedes building development.

There are multiple flood plain areas within the Cedar Hill neighborhood. Often, development can occur within floodplains if correct engineering practices are implemented to remove an area from the flood plain and mitigate downstream impacts. However, some areas of the floodplain are best suited to remain undeveloped. The City of Lancaster should evaluate the floodplains within the Cedar Hill neighborhood that are unsuited for development and preserve them as greenspace. These areas could serve as public greenspaces and conversations should be had with the Lancaster Parks and Recreation department to evaluate the potential for additional parks to be developed within these areas and the greater Cedar Hill neighborhood. Funding through ODNR NatureWorks Program could assist the City in the acquisition and development of recreational areas for residents of the neighborhood.

Additionally, this identified open space may be able to be used for impermanent or "soft" uses such as an outdoor seasonal farmers or crafts market. Depending on the rate and frequency of flooding events, some of these spaces should be evaluated for the creation of a community garden.

Photo Credit: Urban Harvest

The City of Lancaster should continue to engage with residents to understand where/if a community garden is of interest as well as develop an understanding what types of open space and green spaces would be attractive as well as what types are not desired.

Goal #10: Effectively communicate the vision and goals in such a way that wins the support of residents and local businesses within the Study Area.

In order to have and implement a successful plan, the residents and businesses of the Cedar Hill neighborhood must be at the center of the process and voice support. Even once the plan is adopted, the City of Lancaster should continue to engage the neighborhood through open houses, newsletters, and social media to provide updates on action items that come from the plan and receive feedback and input that will shape the implementation process. The creation of a civic organization focused on the Cedar Hill neighborhood which could help disseminate information

about this plan by residents to residents would be an excellent way to gain crucial feedback and increase community involvement.

As these action steps within this plan are implemented, the City should host an annual community improvement workshop to discuss progress, gain feedback, as well as discuss home improvement grants and financing options with residents. Additionally, an informational packet could be created and distributed at this workshop, via social media, the City of Lancaster website, or be available at City Hall.

HOUSING

One general goal of this plan is to improve properties in the neighborhood without gentrification. Gentrification is the displacement of current residents, typically lower- and middle-income, by higher-income residents and businesses as a result of improvements to or an increased interest in an area or neighborhood.

The question for Lancaster is how to allow improvements in the neighborhood without causing displacement. First, we need to clarify that displacement does not need to occur as the neighborhood improves. There are several strategies that the community can use to accomplish this goal:

1. Build More Market Rate Housing
2. Build Affordable Housing
3. Build Workforce Housing
4. Improve Existing Housing

BUILD MORE MARKET RATE HOUSING

The first idea is that rising housing prices are at least partly due to a shortage in housing. Under this framework, if demand for housing is greater than supply, prices will rise, which could price out current residents as new, wealthier families move in. Therefore, if new housing supply and construction meets demand, it would help prevent price increases to allow current residents to remain in the neighborhood. Various case studies, of which a few are listed in this footnote, show evidence that constructing housing can keep prices down and deter displacement.[3]

Based on current projections for Lancaster, it is likely that new housing will be built in the area. New housing is a useful tool to allow current residents to remain in Lancaster while accommodating future homebuyers and tenants without fierce competition.

[3]Does Building New Housing Cause Displacement? The Supply and Demand Effects of Construction in San Francisco by Kate Pennington. Oakland, CA Rent Decline Biggest in US Because City Built More Houses (businessinsider.com).

BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Even with building housing and a link with relatively cheap home prices, the community needs more to accommodate everyone in the housing market. This is why affordable housing is relevant to the discussion. According to HUD, affordable housing is housing that makes up less than 30% of the occupants' gross income.[4] Affordable housing could be provided in several ways: nonprofits who construct affordable housing on their own or through government assistance with public housing or vouchers.

Building affordable housing is not inherently opposed to "Build More Market Rate Housing." Allowing market rate development alongside affordable housing provisions allows for a healthy environment that can accommodate all residents.

There are several available tools and ideas that Lancaster can utilize for affordable housing. The first is the Fairfield County Land Reutilization Corporation, a land bank that can revitalize properties for productive uses to achieve communities' goals.[5] Lancaster and the Fairfield County Land Reutilization Corporation should consider looking to the Central Ohio Community Improvement Corporation (COCIC) for inspiration. The COCIC formed the Central Ohio Community Land Trust (COCLT) as an affiliate that can develop lots in the land bank.[6] COCLT's strategy is to partner with developers to develop and sell affordable houses, but it retains ownership of the land. The land is leased to the owner at a low rate but includes resale restrictions on the amount of profit the owner can claim upon sale. Keeping ownership of the land ensures that the property is sold to future buyers at a discounted rate, ensuring affordability is maintained for future buyers. Studying the COCLT and their methods of constructing affordable housing should benefit Lancaster's plans.

Additionally, the State has recently enacted the Welcome Home Ohio program, which provides grants to land banks to acquire and construct/renovate properties, as well as a new tax credit program upon sale of a unit to a qualifying individual. This program can provide additional resources for the construction and preservation of workforce homeownership housing in the area.

A second option is to use existing subsidies to build affordable housing. Many of these programs encourage larger-scale developments, although a few can develop smaller parcels as well. The Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, HUD's most extensive affordable housing program, encourages affordability at or below 80% of the HUD Area Median Income (AMI).[7] The following is a list of

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[4]HUD Archives: Glossary of Terms to Affordable Housing - HUD.
[5]https://www.fairfieldcountyland.com/.
[6]https://www.coclt.org.
[7]https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/briefing-book/what-low-income-housing-tax-credit-and-how-does-it-work.

potential programs that could be used to construct affordable housing (or workforce housing; see "3. Build Workforce Housing"):

A. Tax abatements and infrastructure subsidies to encourage housing for affordable and workforce housing incomes.

    - Currently Lancaster has a city-wide CRA that encourages the development of housing in the City. This action should continue, as it helps ensure that the market can meet the demand for housing, taking pressure off of the planning area, and can lead to lower rents and sales prices.

B. Tax Credit Programs – The City of Lancaster should seek out partners to encourage use of the following programs in the study area:

    - The Federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program can subsidize the construction of affordable and workforce housing by providing developers with a 9% or 4% tax credit.

    - Additionally, the State has recently enacted an Ohio Affordable Housing Tax Credit that pairs with the LIHTC and can further finance affordable developments.

    - Recently, the State enacted a new Single-Family Tax Credit program, that subsidizes the construction of for-sale homes to qualifying individuals.

C. The HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME)

    - HUD grants for municipalities to provide affordable housing through construction or rental assistance.

D. Community Development Block Grants

    - A collection of grants related to housing, economic, and community development.

    - Some possible grants for Lancaster include the CDBG Entitlement Program, State Program, and Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

E. Housing Choice Vouchers (HCV) from the Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority

    - These vouchers would be for affordable housing, not workforce housing.

BUILD WORKFORCE HOUSING

An adjacent strategy to affordable housing is workforce housing. Workforce housing rents generally fall between affordable and market rate values, or between 80-120% of an area's median income (AMI), according to HUD.[8] As noted above, tools such as tax abatements and infrastructure subsidies may encourage the construction of workforce housing in the area.

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[8] https://www.hud.loans/hud-loans-blog/workforce-housing-why-is-it-so-important/#:~:text=the%20United%20States.-,What%20Is%20Workforce%20Housing%3F,qualify%20for%20programs%20under%20HUD.

As shown in Figure 39 in Goal #6 and again here, one recommendation for this plan is to develop workforce housing on a currently underutilized site in the neighborhood. This can be accomplished with the tools listed under the affordable housing section above. For developments serving an AMI of 80% or more, it is likely that the city could only use tax abatements or infrastructure subsidies. However, if the community desires a more varied approach, the affordable housing programs listed above could also be used, provided that some units are targeted at below 80% AMI. Finally, given the current market conditions in the neighborhood, it is possible that new workforce housing could be constructed without the need for subsidies. The City of Lancaster should work with a developer or consultant to determine the feasibility of various types of developments on the site.

IMPROVE EXISTING HOUSING

Improving existing housing without requiring the sale of a home will go a long way to helping avoid gentrification while improving the community. Several agencies currently offer programs to improve existing housing in the area. The goals of these programs revolve around funding improvements that will benefit residents, and consequently neighborhoods. The City can focus marketing efforts in the area to make residents aware of the various resources available to fund improvements. Some of these programs are listed below:

CHIP Program – The Lancaster Fairfield Community Action Agency (LFCAA) offers funding through the State's Community Housing Impact and Preservation (CHIP) program to local residents. These funds can be used for repairs and renovations geared towards improving health and safety, as well as improving energy efficiency.

Lancaster Department of Community Development – The Community Development Department for the City offers several programs, including:

Lead Hazard Control – Any homes built before 1978, when lead paint was banned, may have high levels of lead-based paint in them. Lead-based paint is the primary cause of lead

poisoning among children, which can lead to significant cognitive disabilities. This program provides funds to residents to remediate lead-based paint in residences.

Housing Rehabilitation – similar to LFCAA's program, this program provides funds to rehabilitate structures meeting the Residential Rehabilitation Standards and address safety for occupants.

Sidewalk Improvement Program - This program can fund sidewalk repairs in certain areas, which can benefit the owner of a home.

Foreclosure Prevention – This program can provide assistance to residents that might be in danger of foreclosure.

Lead abatement Tax Credit Program – The State of Ohio has implemented a tax credit for up to $10,000 to help fund lead abatement work in structures. Those owning their own homes or landlords are eligible to receive this credit. Currently the credit must be claimed on taxes, and therefore is not valuable if a resident does not have adequate State tax liability to claim the credit. However, there is a proposal to make the Credit refundable, meaning it could be claimed as a refund regardless of tax status of the resident/owner.

It will be crucial for the City of Lancaster to engage neighborhood residents regarding future development and improvements in their neighborhood while preventing displacement through the following actions.

1. Inform. The City of Lancaster needs to inform their residents of current plans, their justifications for these actions, and background research and articles that helped them arrive at their points. This plan recognizes that not all residents will agree with the plan's recommendations. However, Lancaster and Crossroads should allow residents to be aware of these topics to enhance their capability and influence within the planning process.

2. Affordable and Workforce Housing policies. Residents can voice their experiences and opinions regarding affordable housing. They can explain their background and offer possible solutions. If residents are not pleased with the current state of affordable housing in Lancaster, city officials need to know to inform their decisions on solving these issues and assisting residents.

3. Conversations between stakeholders. Residents should be encouraged to discuss these matters between themselves. They also should be able to speak to city officials, developers, and nonprofits regarding matters of housing and displacement.

4. Community Projects. Even though amenities are often cited as a cause of gentrification/ displacement, it is hard for a community to live without them. Otherwise, the community is at risk of losing its character, which could lead to a decline in amenity quality and population loss. Therefore, citizen involvement within community affairs and public spaces would be a benefit.

S.R. 188 CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS

Another goal of the City is to improve the aesthetics of the S.R. 188 corridor. This is a major gateway into the community and is the "main street" of the neighborhood. While the corridor brings valuable services and jobs to the area, much of the area has aged and is inconsistent in quality. Improving this area would provide immediate benefits to the neighborhood and the City of Lancaster as a whole. The following is a collection of ideas to improve the S.R. 188 corridor:

1. Widen and improve sidewalks.
2. Install protected bike lanes.
3. Connect sidewalks to recreational trails.
4. Engage in media and public outreach projects.
5. Develop public art projects.
6. Work with the community and local schools to develop local gardens.
7. Restore Urban Canopy and street trees.

Funding for projects that may help to improve the aesthetics and functionality of the S.R. 188 corridor include programs described in this plan such as Safe Routes to Schools, Brownfield Remediation Program, Recreational Trails Program, CORPO Funding, and HUD Choice Neighborhoods Implementation Grants.

HISTORIC CONNECTIONS

Gay Fad studios original home in the City of Lancaster was located within the Cedar Hill neighborhood along Pierce Ave. Additionally, Gay Fad's founder, Fran Taylor, purchased an apartment building for her family and Gay Fad artists to live in that acted as the headquarters where she could oversee the creation of the production facility while running the business. Taylor designed her own 35,000+ square foot building that still exists to this day. Figure 41 shows the original facility. In this facility, Taylor and her team developed original state-of-the-art methods for decorating glass with ceramic paint that were picked up by numerous other mid-century glass companies. Taylor was an innovator who built a multimillion-dollar business with thousands of
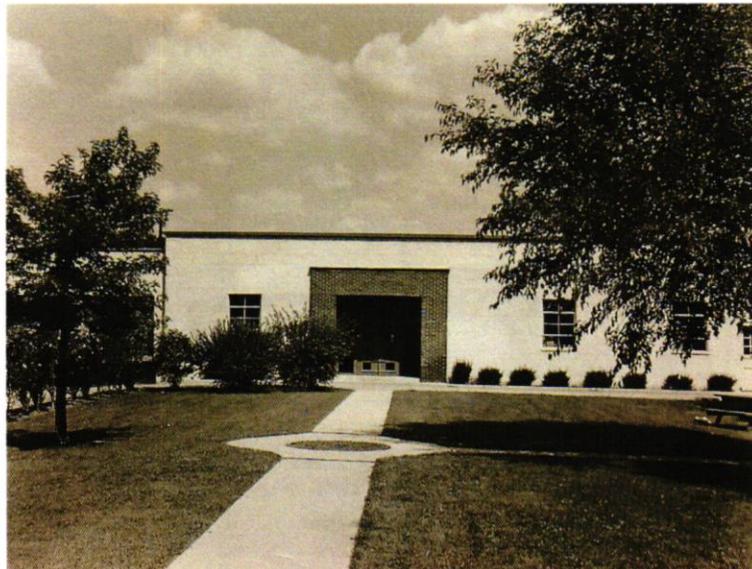

Figure 41: Original Lancaster Gay Fad Facility

glass designs and an international presence before the business's closure in the early 1960s. For decades, Taylor's Gay Fad legacy was largely forgotten despite her unique start as a woman-owned business and contribution to Lancaster's "glass town" identity. Gay Fad studios was resurrected in 2022 in Downtown Lancaster and continues producing glass with Fran Taylor's initial methods. The Gay Fad story highlight Cedar Hill's history of being a working-class neighborhood filled with innovative and creative residents. However, this important piece of Cedar Hill history is not currently showcased within the neighborhood.

There are multiple ways to resurrect the Gay Fad story in the Cedar Hill neighborhood. Firstly, historical markers could be placed at the original facility where Gay Fad was housed. Taylor also owned multiple properties in and around the Cedar Hill neighborhood and Lancaster and markers could be placed in these locations to create a network of Gay Fad history and create an educational opportunity for residents.

Additionally, just as the Cedar Hill neighborhood leads into Downtown Lancaster, the Gay Fad story connects the two neighborhoods. The City should investigate opportunities to further connect the neighborhoods through an art festival, bringing the Cedar Hill neighborhood into the fold for the Lancaster Festival, or other community events that would help highlight the Cedar Hill neighborhood and the rich artistic history.

As discussed previously in the plan, the original Gay Fad production facility sits largely unused. This could be a location for redevelopment in partnership with the current owner. However, the City must first open communication with the property owner to understand their goals. If open to redevelopment, a Gay Fad glass museum, commercial, or community spaces could be developed to bring the Gay Fad legacy to life in a new way.
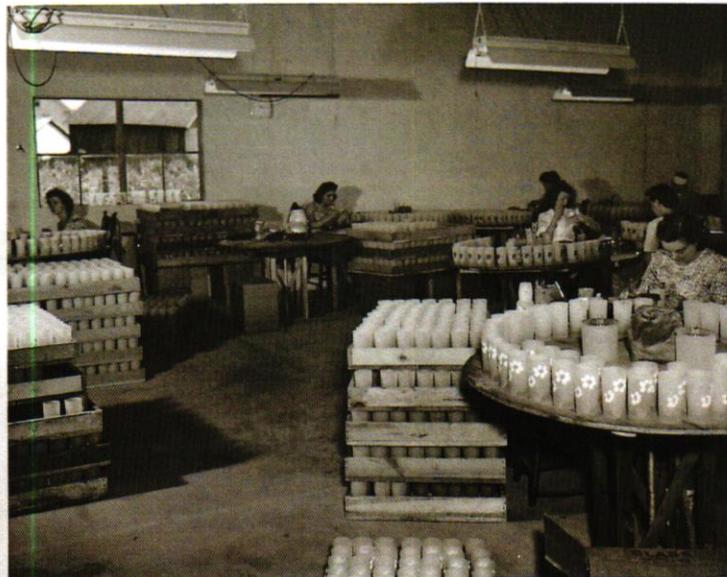

Figure 42: Glass Painting and Production

GOALS SUMMARY

Goal 1: Increase connectivity throughout the Study Area by filling sidewalk gaps and adding pedestrian crossings to make active transportation a more safe and desirable option for residents and visitors alike.

- Create a map showing existing sidewalks, gaps in sidewalks, and pedestrian crossings.
- Utilize sidewalk gap map to prioritize which sidewalks to target for filling in first.
  - ⇒ Utilize grant funding, such as Safe Routes to Schools, CORPO, etc. to fund this initiative.
- Analyze existing bike paths to understand existing needs and potential improvements regarding connectivity and functionality.
- Improve the parking lot along the south side of Cedar Hill Road to connect to Marten's Park including repairing the bridge to connect the Cedar Hill Road community to bike paths and recreation opportunities. This could include a shelter house, bicycle parking, benching, improved vehicle parking, so that the cycling community has a place to stop and rest.
  - ⇒ Utilize OPWC funding such as the Clean Ohio Trail Fund, ODNR Recreational Trail Program, Rails to Trails grants, and others to improve this lot and bridge.
- Develop signage in this new trailhead to highlight the Fairfield Heritage Trail as well as signage along Bank St., Main St., and Cedar Hill Road to guide walkers and cyclists to path infrastructure.
- Identify funding to complete the missing links in the existing Fairfield Heritage Trail.
- Repave and add bike lane striping along W. Main St. from Harrison Ave to Pierce Ave.
- Assess feasibility of protected bike lanes throughout the Study Area.

Goal 2: Bring additional restaurant and food truck options to the Cedar Hill Road corridor making it a destination and activating the space.

- Largely mixed feedback on this goal – some very supportive, some very against, some saying they want more activities and not just a food truck. Concern about parking.
- The City should continue to engage with residents to understand the desire and needs of the community regarding restaurants and food trucks.

Goal 3: Improve aesthetics and drive prosperity in such a way that maintains the affordability that residents within the Study Area currently appreciate about their neighborhood.

- Identify potential locations for murals along Cedar Hill Road.
  - ⇒ Include Lancaster High School students to develop mural designs.
- Improve streetscapes to include landscaping, sidewalks, and bike paths where appropriate.
  - ⇒ Utilize funding such as Community Impact Fund from the Fairfield Foundation, etc.
- Identify potential locations for community gardens.

- Identify a specific screening design that could be utilized in key locations to improve aesthetics from the street view.
- Create a fund that provides funding options to homeowners to improve their homes such as landscaping, decorative fencing, paving driveways, and other minor home improvements and other beautification measures.

Goal 4: Sustain and even amplify the residents' sense of pride in their neighborhood.

- Continue to engage with residents, civic organizations, and businesses to create a cohesive understanding of the goals of the plan.
- Gauge interest in developing or expanding a neighborhood watch group.
- Gauge interest in developing a community newsletter to highlight events, plans, and businesses within the area.
- Identify opportunities for residents to become actively engaged in their neighborhood.
    - ⇒ Identify parcels where community events could occur.
    - ⇒ Target community focused events to this neighborhood.
    - ⇒ Public art.
- Improve infrastructure within the community such as the Martin's Park bridge and general sidewalk improvements.
- Create branding/signage for the neighborhood to create a distinct community feel and differentiate the neighborhood from the whole of the City of Lancaster.

Goal 5: Provide more variety of housing options and add to Lancasters' housing supply.

- Educate residents on existing programs that they can tap into for home repairs.
- Promote the building of market rate housing – increasing housing supply, ensuring housing meets current and future demand for this type.
- Ensure the City of Lancaster continues to implement and improve their housing-friendly policies.
- Continue to promote utilization of city wide CRA for housing development.
- Promote the construction of workforce and affordable housing.
- Encourage the Fairfield County Land Bank to study the Central Ohio Community Improvement Corporation and Central Ohio Community Land Trust to create a similar model.
- Encourage the Fairfield County Land Bank to apply to the Welcome Home Program to fund acquisition and construction of affordable for-sale homes in the Cedar Hill neighborhood.

- Explore local partnerships to take advantage of the following programs.
    - ⇒ Low-income housing tax credit program.
    - ⇒ State affordable housing, tax credit, and single-family housing tax credit program.
    - ⇒ HOME investment partnership program.
    - ⇒ Community Development Block Grant (CDBG).
    - ⇒ Housing Choice vouchers in partnership with the Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority.
- Improve existing housing stock. Encourage residents to take advantage of the following programs.
    - ⇒ CHIP through the Lancaster Fairfield Community Action Agency (LFCAA).
    - ⇒ Lancaster Department of Community Development has several programs:
        a. Lead hazard control grant.
        b. Housing rehabilitation grant.
        c. Sidewalk improvement program.
        d. Foreclosure prevention program.
- Encourage residents to investigate the State of Ohio lead abatement tax credit program.
- Engage the Cedar Hill community in education and discussion around these housing programs.
    - ⇒ This would include semiannual open houses with agencies such as LFCAA, Department of Community Development, Fairfield Metropolitan Housing Authority, and Fairfield Foundation, etc. at a well-known location such as Meals on Wheels.

Goal 6: Collaborate and communicate with commercial property landowners to develop community benefiting recommendations and ideas for future land uses.

- Ensure there is wide understanding across the community that the City of Lancaster would NOT take residents properties.
- Develop communication channels with landowners to understand their plans for their properties and future goals.
- Create a catalog of potential land uses/options for interested landowners based on resident feedback and goals of the neighborhood area plan.
- Develop sample lot layouts.
- Develop sample aesthetics.
- Engage with developers who are interested in the types of mutually beneficial developments identified by this plan.

Goal 7: Maintain the existing character of the residential neighborhoods while enhancing the commercial corridor.

- Coordinate with the Fairfield County landbank to identify sites that could potentially be utilized for community uses such as community gardens, dog parks, or other similar uses.
- Coordinate with the Fairfield County landbank to identify sites for infill housing.
- Identify sites for potential workforce and affordable housing such as the area between Cedar Hill Rd, Lincoln Ave, S Zane Ave, and W Main St.
    - ⇒ Connect interested landowners with potential housing development partners.
- Identify sites to encourage future redevelopment to add jobs to the Cedar Hill Neighborhood, such as the area between Cedar Hill Road, Pierce Ave, and the railroad tracks.
    - ⇒ Engage landowners to understand their long-term plan.
    - ⇒ Connect interested landowners with potential business redevelopment partners.
- Link landowners and redevelopment partners with funding sources such as:
    - ⇒ Ohio Brownfield Remediation program.
    - ⇒ Ohio Site Demolition and Revitalization program.
    - ⇒ Transformational Mixed-Use Development program.
    - ⇒ Community Investment Fund.

Goal 8: Manage traffic while utilizing a multimodal approach.

- Fund and create a feasibility study of the Cedar Hill Road and Pierce Ave intersection to identify needed improvements.
    - ⇒ Preliminary Engineering costs for identified improvements could be addressed through:
        - a. CORPO funding.
        - b. State funding through the Fairfield County TID.
- Engage Fairfield County TID to better understand how it can be utilized to implement multijurisdictional projects within this corridor.
- Connect the Cedar Hill Neighborhood to the east side of the City of Lancaster through the Ewing St. connector project.
- Connect transit to employment centers both within the neighborhood and nearby employers.
    - ⇒ Analyze existing West loop to better connect the Cedar Hill Neighborhood within and beyond neighborhood boundaries such as the Rock Mill industrial park.

Goal 9: Create additional open space and green space where the flood plain currently impedes building development.

- Determine areas where flood plains prevent development and identify any environmentally sensitive areas that should be protected as open space.
- Ensure open/green space is accessible to the public.
  - ⇒ Initiate discussions with the parks department to determine if additional parks could be established in this area utilizing this land.
- Develop communication channels with landowners to identify their goals and future plans for their properties.
- Identify potential soft uses that can occur on this land without permanent structures.
  - ⇒ Evaluate resident interest and funding sources for establishing a community garden.
  - ⇒ Evaluate interest in small seasonal farmers/crafts market.
- Continue communications with residents to understand what types of open/green spaces are of interest, versus what types would not be utilized by residents.

Goal 10: To effectively communicate the vision and goals in such a way that wins the support of residents and local businesses within the Study Area.

- Coordinate with local employers and service agencies (Fairfield County workforce center, local action, job training organizations, Ohio University - Lancaster, Eastland Fairfield Career Center) to encourage job training and placement of residents in local jobs.
- Continue to engage the Cedar Hill Road community through open houses, newsletters, and social media to provide updates on the project and receive feedback.
- Create a civic association to continue to promote the vision and goals of this plan.
- Develop a newsletter or social media channels to distribute information.
- The City of Lancaster should create an annual community improvement workshop that discusses all permits, and necessary steps that need to be taken to improve a property.
- Create an informational packet to be distributed at the workshop, through social media, on the City of Lancaster website, and be available at City Hall.