



# Barberton Master Plan

City of Barberton, Ohio

Prepared by: MSI  
Adopted: June 12, 2006



# Barberton Master Plan

City of Barberton, Ohio

Adopted pursuant to Ordinance No. 91-2006 as passed by the Council of the City of Barberton at its meeting held June 12, 2006.

## City of Barberton

Randy Hart, Mayor



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**DATE ..... GROUP/EVENT**

- 11/23/04 ..... Steering Committee Meeting #1/Project Kick-off
- 01/12/05 ..... Steering Committee Meeting #2  
Economic Development Topic Group  
Housing Topic Group Meeting
- 02/23/05 ..... Downtown Topic Group Meeting  
Barberton Image Topic Group Meeting  
Parks & Open Space Topic Group Meeting
- 03/23/05 ..... Steering Committee Meeting #3  
Economic Development Topic Group Meeting  
Housing Topic Group Meeting
- 04/27/05 ..... Steering Committee Meeting #4  
Barberton Image Topic Group Meeting  
Downtown Topic Group Meeting  
Open Space Topic Group Meeting
- 05/12/05 ..... Public Open House
- 09/16/05 ..... Draft Plan Comments Due
- 10/11/05 ..... Steering Committee Meeting #5
- 03/06/06 ..... Planning Commission Recommendation for Approval
- 04/10/06 ..... City Council Public Hearing
- 05/01/06 ..... Planning Committee of Council Adoption
- 06/13/06 ..... City Council Adoption



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 Prepared for: Barberton City Council  
 June 12, 2006

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	page 1	<b>TARGET DEVELOPMENT AREAS</b>	page 25
Background	page 2	Downtown Core	page 26
Purpose of a Master Plan	page 2	South Downtown Core	page 27
Planning Process	page 3	Tuscarawas Avenue	page 28
Goals of the Plan	page 4	Pedestrian-Oriented Alleys	page 30
Plan Overview	page 4	Wooster Road	page 33
		Parking	page 34
<b>ANALYSIS</b>	page 7	East Downtown Core	page 37
Demographics	page 8	Tuscarawas Trailhead	page 41
Population	page 8	Civic Campus	page 46
Land Use	page 10	Residential Infill	page 46
Residential	page 14	Lake Anna Historic Residential	page 48
Industrial	page 18	Downtown Master Plan	page 49
Economic Development	page 20	South Quarry	page 50
Natural Features & Open Space	page 22	Robinson Avenue	page 52
		<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>	page 55



## LIST OF FIGURES

---

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>page 1</b>		
Master Plan Study Area	page 2	South Downtown Core Development Plan	page 33
<b>ANALYSIS</b>	<b>page 7</b>	Existing Downtown Core Parking	page 34
Proposed Residential Land Use	page 16	Future Downtown Core Parking	page 36
Zoning Districts	page 17	Hopocan Avenue/Wooster Road Intersection Development Plan	page 37
Existing Land Use	page 17	East Downtown Core Development Plan	page 38
Proposed Light Industrial Corridor	page 18	Wooster Road/Hopocan Avenue Development Rendering	page 39
Typical Redeveloped Industrial Parcel	page 19	Proposed Magic City Shopping Center Redevelopment Plan	page 40
Robinson Avenue Viaduct	page 21	Tuscarawas Avenue Pedestrian Bridge Plan	page 41
Targeted Future Open Space Acquisition	page 24	East Downtown Core Block Analysis	page 42
Proposed Bike Path Plan	page 24	East Downtown Core Commercial Development Plan	page 43
<b>TARGET DEVELOPMENT AREAS</b>	<b>page 25</b>	Preferred Middle School Development Plan	page 45
Target Development Areas	page 26	Alternate Middle School Development Plan	page 45
South Downtown Core Development Plan	page 27	Potential Civic Campus Development Plan	page 47
Block #7 Development Rendering	page 29	Alternate Civic Campus Development Plan	page 47
Downtown Pedestrian Alley Development Plan	page 30	Downtown Vision Plan	page 49
Downtown Pedestrian Alley Development Rendering	page 31	Potential South Quarry Development Plan	page 51
		Potential Robinson Avenue Development Plan	page 52



The City of Barberton is at an important crossroad in its history. Since its development in 1891, Barberton has had a long and prosperous industrial and commercial heritage that greatly contributed to its success. As experienced by many towns in northeast Ohio, including Barberton, the reliance on these industries to provide a sustainable future was not realized. While many of Barberton's important industries still survive and function within the community, many have downsized with less demand for industrial products within the region and the emergence of new technologies that have decreased the size of industrial operations. The result is underutilized land that could have great opportunity for redevelopment and continued economic success, but is inhibited as a result of the impacts of heavy industrial use, rendering the land unsuitable for development in the foreseeable future. Working within these constraints, the city must utilize its opportunities to create sustainable industrial, commercial, and residential land use patterns. Capitalizing on Barberton's many historical features such as Lake Anna Park, the historic Barberton Barns, and the historic downtown business core, the City already has a strong base from which to develop additional commercial and residential opportunities.

This plan seeks to define clear redevelopment opportunities within the city. While looking at Barberton from an overall land use perspective, this plan seeks to distill the needs and opportunities of the community into near and long term actions that can have a measurable and marked impact on the city. In order to determine these redevelopment opportunities, the plan establishes target area studies for specific locations throughout Barberton.

In order to determine the needs of the community an inventory and analysis of the existing conditions has been performed. Most notably, Barberton has had a largely stable population over the past several decades, but now shows signs of aging as the "baby boomer" demographic influences the overall population character of the city.

The economic base of the community has been challenged by the continued decline in industry and this has left an unfortunate legacy on the land as well. Many formally industrial areas are now unusable due to effects of those uses, limiting the ability to redevelop the sites or to even use them for open space or recreational purposes.

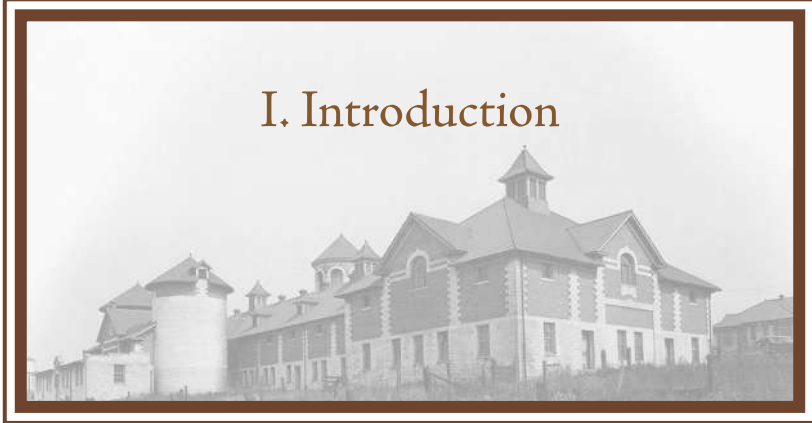
Barberton does possess some strong attributes as well. In particular the character of the historic downtown centered around the fantastic Lake Anna provides great opportunity. In addition, the history of the Anna Dean Farm barns and the successful completion of the new High School are benchmarks to build upon.

This plan seeks to build on these opportunities by creating target area plans throughout the community. A number of sites in and around the downtown areas are investigated in an attempt to establish a vision and a program for reinventing Barberton's downtown. In particular, ideas include improved north-south connections to the Tuscarawas Avenue core, development at Wooster and Hopocan, reinvention of the Magic City Plaza and the establishment of a north downtown Civic Core.

In addition, additional single family development in needed market segments is suggested for the South Quarry Lake area, and the Robinson Avenue commercial corridor is evaluated for improvement.

Finally, a series of implementation strategies are outlined that will lead toward the implementation of the target area plans. While these plans vary in complexity and the need for city involvement, they all seek to reestablish a strong identity for the City of Barberton. This identity will recognize the industrial heritage of the community while looking toward capitalizing on its unique strengths of vital neighborhoods and a great historic fabric.

# I. Introduction



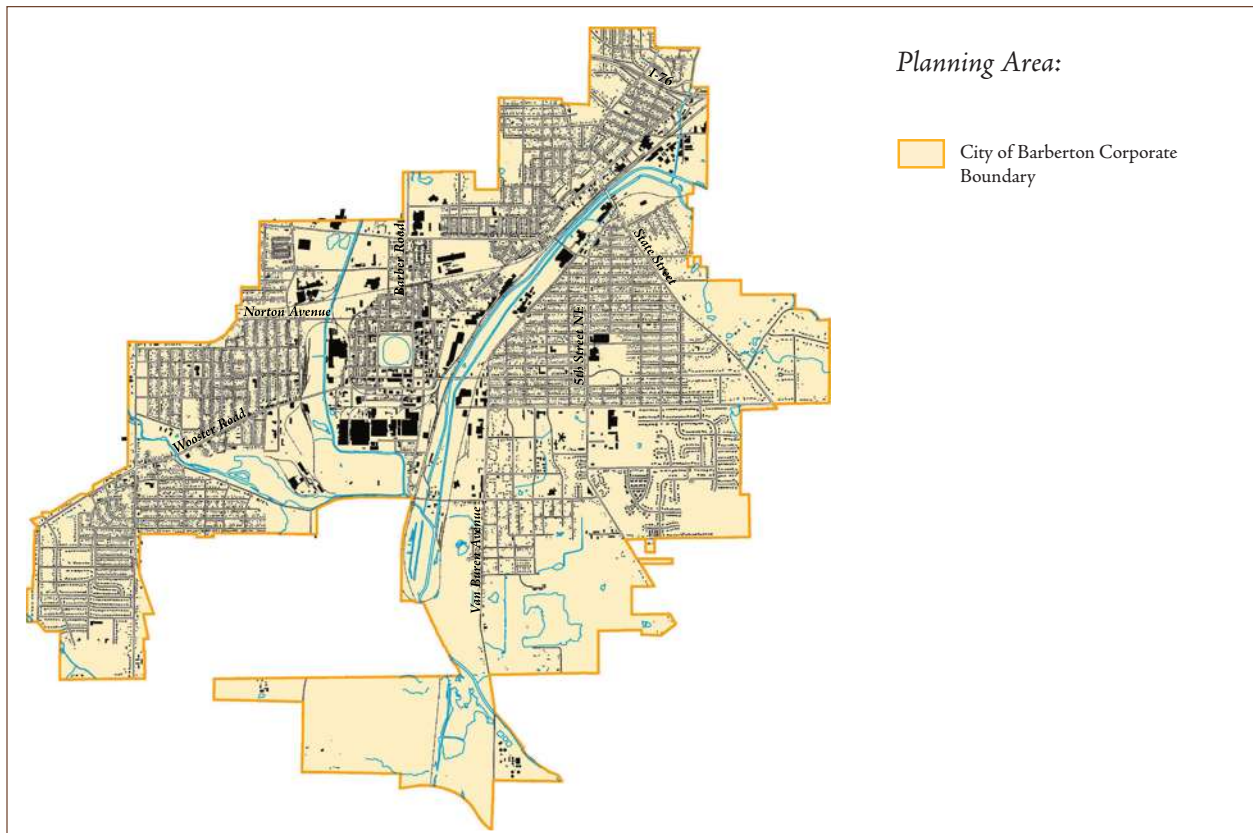


Figure 1 - Master Plan Study Area

## Background

The City of Barberton last adopted the Growth Plan & Analysis for the community in 1994. This plan served as a master guiding document for a number of existing areas within the city that included the Wooster Road Corridor, Downtown, surrounding residential neighborhoods, as well as an analysis of economic development and transportation topics. Since that plan was adopted, the city of Barberton has experienced limited growth in housing development and stagnant growth within economic development. Additionally, the City of Barberton has become a fully established community where the areas of continued growth have become limited and careful consideration of future planning efforts must be initiated. The timing for a new Comprehensive Plan is an effort to build on upcoming changes such as the large public investment in the new Robinson Avenue connector into downtown as well as the many redevelopment opportunities that can be found within the city. This document is intended to outline a strategic approach for the City of Barberton's "re-growth" in order to position it as a strong viable community player within the greater Akron metropolitan area. The City of Barberton has a number of challenges to which creative and strategic land use solutions must be offered. This will allow Barberton to build upon its strong heritage, reinforcing the city as a desirable location to live, to work, and to conduct business.

## Purpose of a Master Plan

In the broadest sense, a master plan is a land use policy document for a city. Because land use policy affects so many aspects of the built environment and thus influences things like local economic conditions and social interaction, a comprehensive plan can cover a wide range of issues. Its primary role is to create a vision for the city and provide recommendations to guide public policy, particularly in terms of land use-related issues. The vision and corresponding recommendations result from an examination of existing conditions and trends as well as challenges and opportunities that face the city. This plan strives to provide a strategic approach for Barberton's redevelopment and reinvention of itself as a premier community. Since much of the city is developed and shaped by the limitations of previous industrial land use decisions, this plan focuses on understanding established trends in the city and determining key locations and approaches that can achieve near-term change and redevelopment with an eye toward the long-term vision of the city.

This plan has been created with input from the community, city staff and city officials and was adopted as an official planning document by City Council. While this plan does not dictate land use or redevelopment for any particular parcel or landowners, it does provide strong legal under-



Colt Barn

pinning when used as a basis for rezoning, capital improvement, and land use-related decisions. It is hoped that this plan will serve as a vital reference to inform city leaders and the community as public policies are developed and decisions made concerning desirable future physical development.

### **Planning Process**

The comprehensive planning process engaged the City's Planning Department, community stakeholders, and the public. The planning process was led by a Steering Committee comprised of key community stakeholders, residents and various public leaders including the Mayor and individuals from City Council, Planning Commission, and the City's Administration. The Steering Committee helped guide the overall process and make recommendations regarding topics found most important to the city in regard to the comprehensive plan. The Steering Committee process began in November of 2004 and concluded in July of 2005. All meetings were open to the public.

The following Topic Subcommittees were determined as important by the Steering Committee and included:

- Housing
- Economic Development
- Downtown Development
- Parks and Open Space
- Image

Topic meetings involved focus groups made up of community members in which comments and recommendations were collected. Topic Subcommittee meetings ran coincident with the Steering Committee process and were also open to the public.

In addition, a public open house displaying the downtown master plan and target area plans was held at Lake Anna Hall on May 12, 2005.

The comments of the steering committee, topic groups, and public meetings were incorporated into a draft Comprehensive Plan for presentation to the Planning Commission and City Council. This plan was discussed by the Planning Commission and was recommended for adoption on March 6, 2006. The plan was subsequently adopted on June 12, 2006 by the City Council. Meeting minutes are available for all of these meetings.



Tuscarawas Avenue Looking East



View Across Lake Anna

## Goals of the Plan

With guidance from the Steering Committee, a number of goals for the outcome of the Comprehensive Plan effort were formulated. These goals are as follows:

- ✦ Use the master plan as a tool to assist the community in defining its future
- ✦ Promote Barberton's strengths and enhance the City's identity in the region
- ✦ Maintain and improve the success and viability of Barberton's downtown core, recognizing that the core is the emotional and practical heart of the city
- ✦ Develop strong neighborhoods based on the principles of interconnectivity, pedestrian orientation, proper scale, high quality architecture and design, and proximity of parks and open space
- ✦ Develop a quality system of parks, trails, open space, and recreational opportunities. Create and improve pedestrian and recreation connections throughout the city, including regional pathway and park connections
- ✦ Improve the viability of the city's economic base to encourage appropriate, quality redevelopment and development
- ✦ Increase the diversity of housing types with a variety of options for various incomes
- ✦ Encourage appropriate redevelopment in key locations throughout the city that enhances and complements the character of the city

This plan is intended to take inventory of existing conditions in order to provide a thoughtful analysis on the state of the City. With this, all areas of opportunities as they are perceived can be identified and evaluated. Long-range strategies for guiding development within the city and the downtown have been determined, including comprehensive land use recommendations, strategic focus area development scenarios, as well as policy guidance for the topics discussed within the plan.

## Plan Overview

Following this Section I: Introduction, the Barberton Comprehensive Plan consists of three additional sections. Section II: Analysis, reviews the state of Barberton as it exists today and makes recommendations regarding broad topics such as land use, housing, and open space. Section III: Target Areas, identifies opportunities arising from these conditions, delineates focus areas, and examines strategies for addressing needs of the City within specific areas. The final chapter, Section IV: Implementation, takes the various concepts established in the previous sections and outlines steps to put them into action.

The plan analysis sets the baseline criteria for the overall plan. This section starts with the existing conditions of the City, which outlines all the variables which will serve as the primary criteria for many of the land use decisions. Coupled with the existing conditions are the assets and constraints, which describe the reinforcing qualities of the city.

At its core, the Barberton Comprehensive Plan is an examination of four traits: assets, constraints, opportunities, and challenges. These traits are provided as an aid and summary of the important points and conclusions made in this plan. What results is a plan of action to direct the City's development future.

The traits are provided throughout the Analysis Section and are defined as follows:

- ✦ Assets are existing features and attributes of the City that are beneficial, reinforcing, and contributing to Barberton's quality of life. Barberton's assets include its top notch educational and sports facilities, Lake Anna Park, its intact historic downtown business district, the remaining Anna Dean Farm historic barns, and the Ohio & Erie Canal and towpath.



St. Augustine's Catholic Church



The Piggery

♦ Constraints are features and attributes of the City and region that limit or impact Barberton's options for improvement. Constraints include the lack of vacant land for new economic growth, inaccessible or environmentally degraded land, dividing natural features, and economic downsizing of current established industrial operations.

Opportunities and challenges are identified in order to formulate strategies for improving the quality of life in the City. These are defined as follows:

♦ Opportunities are areas in which Barberton can effect positive change and improvement. Opportunities are identified in this plan and then strategies are provided for advancing them. The effort necessary to seize these opportunities is often not minimal or easy, but the reward for the community can be great.

♦ Challenges are issues that are very difficult to address or effectively improve. This plan attempts to identify challenges facing the community and offer options for dealing with them. Due to their intractable nature, challenges represent issues that Barberton will need to continue to face and wrestle with across time. There may be no apparent solution at this time, but one may present itself with continued effort or as conditions change with time.

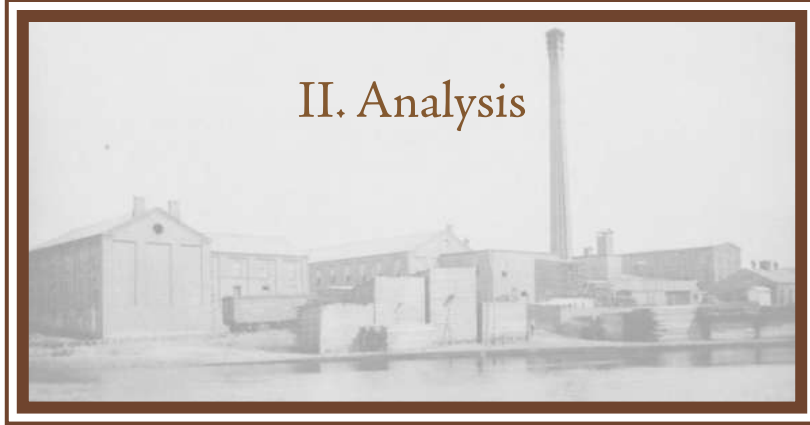
The summary traits throughout the plan provide an overview of the information contained in each section. The strategies that result from the analysis of the traits are then compiled as a plan of action in Section IV, Implementation.



Tuscarawas Avenue Commercial



## II. Analysis



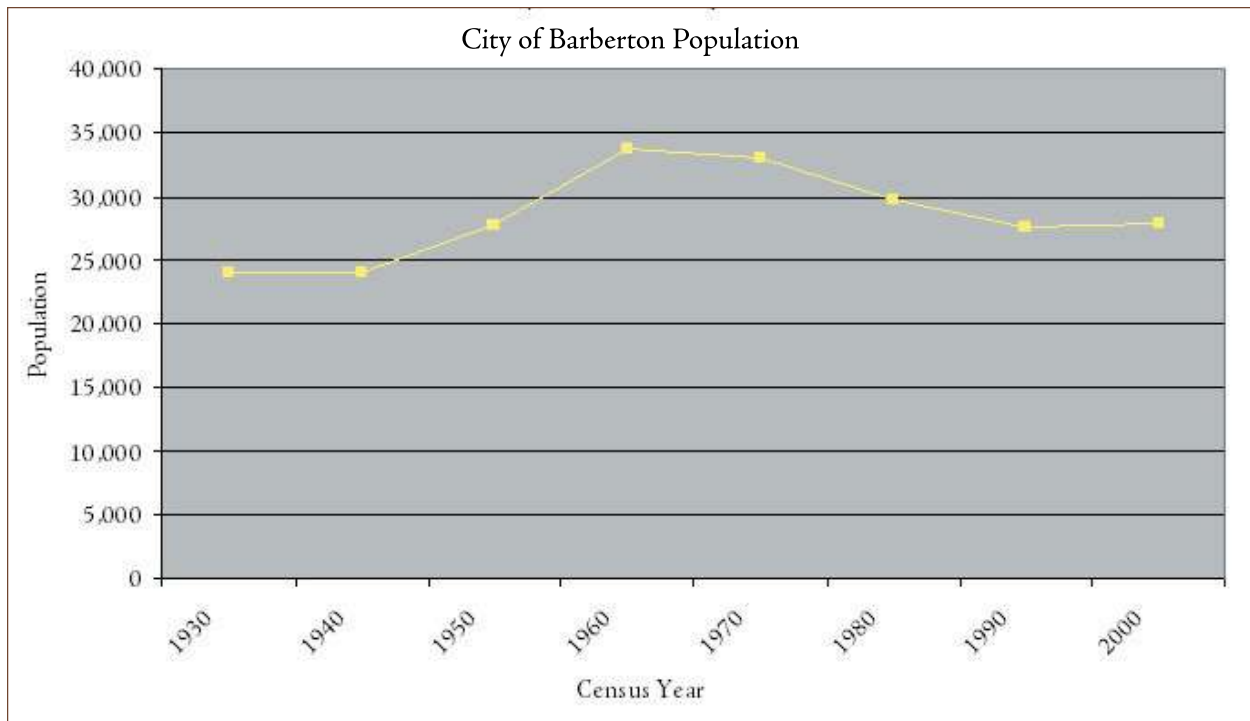


Figure 2 - Barberton Population from 1930 to 2000

Every community is composed of a great number of features that make it unique. When these individual traits are studied and compared, patterns emerge, trends become apparent, and their effects can be considered. This analysis helps to identify attributes that are important to the community, particularly assets that add to the quality of life and constraints that limit improvement options. The resulting framework allows the investigation of challenges and opportunities facing the City. The analysis section provides a snapshot of Barberton as it exists today. It analyzes several physical conditions relating to the City's built environment including residential, commercial, and industrial development patterns, and the transportation network. It also examines the natural environment as it relates to natural features in Barberton such as parks, and open space.

## Demographics

Analysis of the City's demographics can express valuable information that can be applied to land use planning. Much of the information is obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau and contains data involving population, housing, and socio-demographics. The data can then be plotted and graphed, from which trends and indicators can become evident. This information can then be used to provide an analysis of the existing land use and how future land use decisions will best serve the population and economy of the City.

### Population

Historical population counts show Barberton's success between 1940 and 1960 when the City's industries were significantly growing. The City's census year population peaked at 33,805 in 1960 and has since decreased with the loss of jobs associated with the economic downturn of industries in the area. The City continued to lose population until the 1990 census year and has since been steady with a slight increase over the past 15 years. The 2000 Census estimated Barberton's population at 27,889. The steady population numbers that Barberton is currently experiencing can make future land use decisions more practical as population numbers are unlikely to fluctuate dramatically. This means that City will be able to provide best to the current population and react logically to any new incoming populations. The City is primarily an established com-

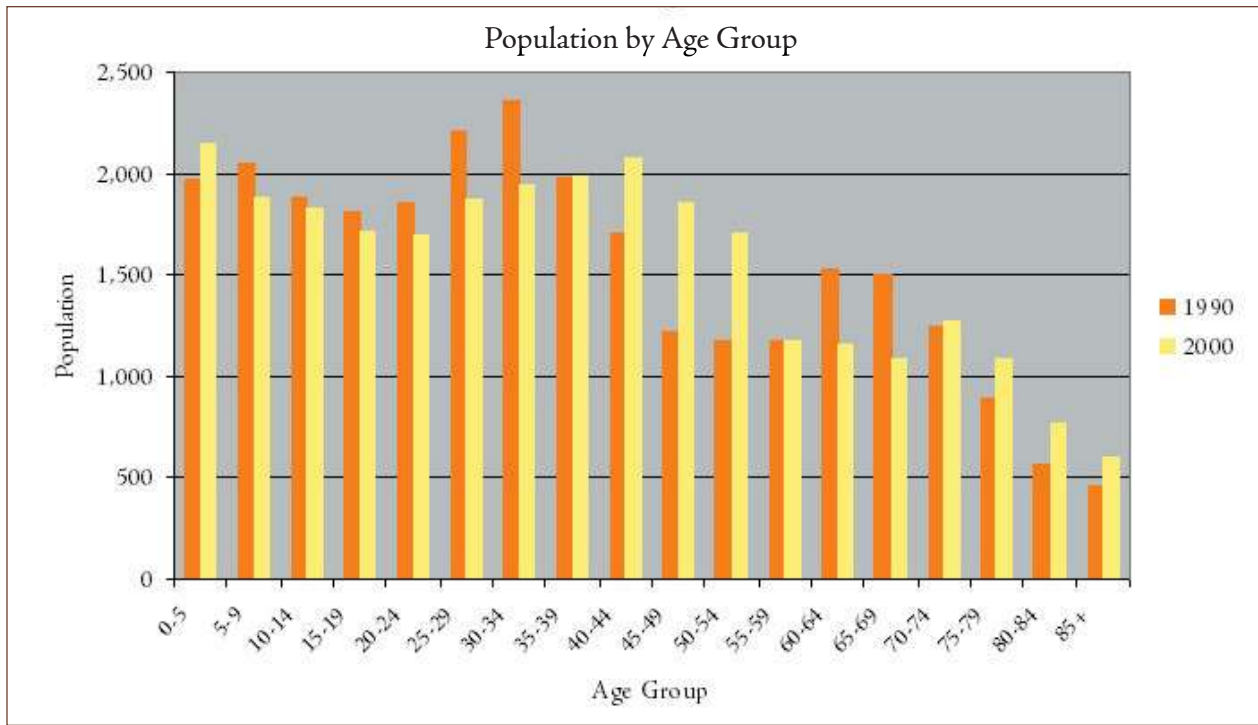


Figure 3 - Population by Age Group from 1990 and 2000 Census years

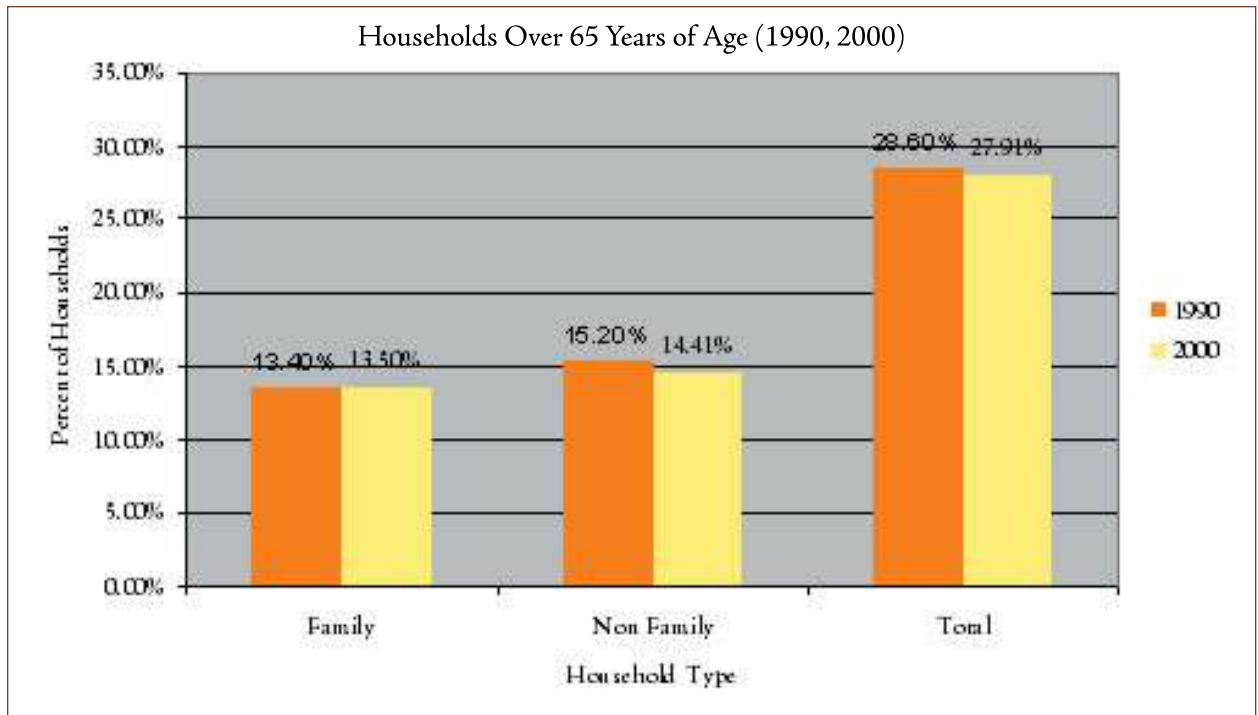
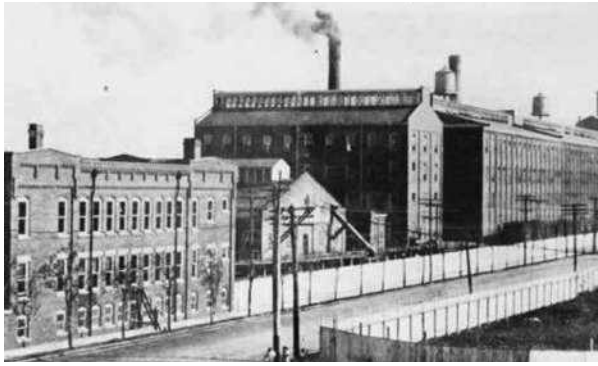


Figure 4 - Percentage of Elderly Households (65 years and older) from 1990 and 2000 Census years



Diamond Match Company 1894



Tuscarawas Avenue 1906 (looking west)

munity with limited vacant land to develop and no means to annex additional lands into the City. Population should continue to increase slightly with a number of new residential development opportunities and the establishment of new businesses or the growth of already established ones within the city.

### Population by Age Group

Census data between 1990 and 2000 shows a shift in the age groups to older population brackets. This is typical for a number of established communities as the “baby-boom” generation begins to age. The overall percentage of households over 65 has not increased between 1990 and 2000, but could have the potential to do so with the large 45-60 age group that is growing older. The age of the population and the percentage of each age bracket that comprises it is important when analyzing the available housing which serves each age bracket. The Steering Committee and the Housing Topic group have expressed the need for additional senior housing that will better serve the current senior population and any larger senior populations that may occur in the future. The types of units serving the senior housing market segment are often typified by low-maintenance, condominium developments. The other type of developments that could occur are mixed-income neighborhoods that contain both subsidized and market rate housing units. Portions of a project of this type could be dedicated toward senior housing.

Census data also shows that there has been a small decrease in the school age population, but an increase in new births. Current data does not reveal trends showing significant fluctuations that would affect school enrollment. It can be expected that with new housing opportunities, the school age population will increase, though these areas of housing development/redevelopment are generally limited.

### Land Use

Land use patterns are in part derived from the zoning classifications of parcels within the city. Much of how the city functions depends on land use, such as the success of the City’s economic development, the formation of neighborhoods, and the decisions on where to create open areas for recreation and parks. This section identifies how Barberton’s land use has been historically established, leading to the existing land use patterns today. Following that description are future land use recommendations and how these changes can better serve the City in creating new housing and economic development opportunities.

### History of Development Pattern

Much of the development pattern of Barberton can be explained through its history. The City was founded in 1891 with Lake Anna, a natural product of glacial activity, as the focal point in the City’s center. Another reason for the location of the town was its ease of access to available transportation in its early days. Eighteen years after Barberton’s creation, the Anna Dean Farm was established as a prominent farm on the high portions of the city east of the present downtown.

The downtown was situated near the Tuscarawas River and Wolf Creek. The Ohio & Erie Canal lies east of downtown and transects the city diagonally from the northeast to the southwest. As the Industrial Era began in the United States, a network of five trunk railroads in Norton Township was established as the dominant transportation method. Lines were built along the former canal routes and spurred off these lines to encircle the growing downtown area. Industrial developments, such as the Diamond Match Factory built in 1894, were directly related to Barberton’s early success. The railroads were the focus of Barberton’s development because they allowed easy transportation of goods and helped attract prospective residents to the new town.



Ohio Erie Canal in Barberton 1898

Residential neighborhoods grew (rather quickly) adjacent to the industrial areas. The earliest residential neighborhoods were developed to the north of downtown, amidst a number of industrial businesses located off of Norton Avenue, and to the west of downtown. Additional neighborhoods became established on the east side of downtown across the Tuscarawas River adjacent to a developing industrial corridor situated along the Ohio & Erie Canal. The development of these residential areas helped create distinct sections of the city, with the distinctions further amplified by physical barriers which separate the areas. A number of barriers are evident such as the Tuscarawas River and Ohio & Erie Canal that transect the city running north and south. The tributaries of the Tuscarawas, Wolf Creek and Hudson Run, also provide a natural physical barrier between Barberton's neighborhoods. Along these natural barriers, railroads were built as well as industrial development that created an additional separation between the different neighborhoods of the city. This has created a challenge for the City from which opportunities to mitigate the effect of these barriers must be considered. One of the biggest challenges is how these barriers have come to surround the downtown including the major business district. Unifying the residential neighborhoods with the downtown area is important in order to establish a cohesive identity and a sense of place for all portions of the city as well as contributing to the success of downtown businesses.



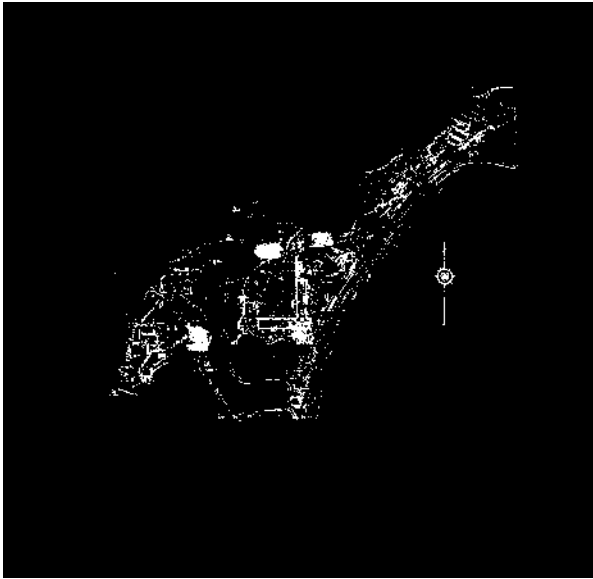
Barn No. 1 1922

### Development Pattern Overview

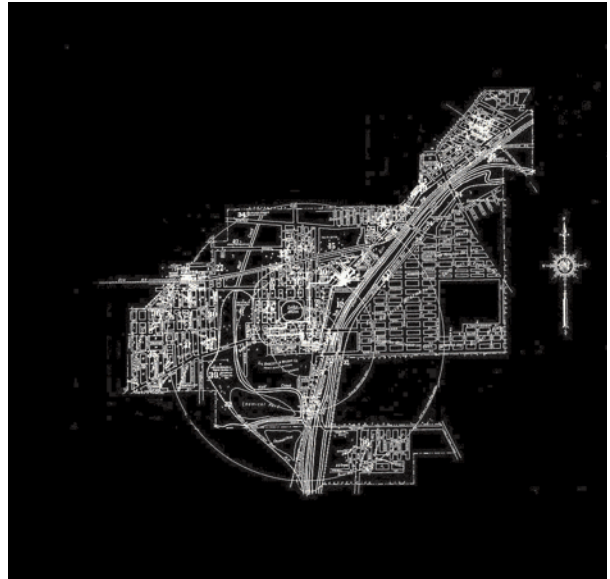
Barberton has developed into an established city within the greater Akron metropolitan region. Its strength comes from the full range of land uses that include a strong downtown commercial core, surrounding residential, and an economic base of industrial land. At the heart of the city is Lake Anna and its surrounding park which provides a unique amenity that is not replicated within any other city in Ohio. This 19.77-acre lake and park provide an excellent civic core and gathering place for the City of Barberton and its residents. On the south end of Lake Anna are municipal uses such as City Hall and the Barberton Public Library.

Directly fronting Lake Anna to the north, east and west are a number of large Victorian homes built by Barberton's prominent residents during its industrial prosperity. Beyond the first development ring around Lake Anna lie the core commercial districts of Barberton's downtown. The more prominent commercial development occurred south of the lake along Tuscarawas Avenue. This commercial area housed most of the city's retailers, financial institutions, and entertainment venues. The majority of building stock along this street remains intact, including the historic Art Deco era Lake Theatre.

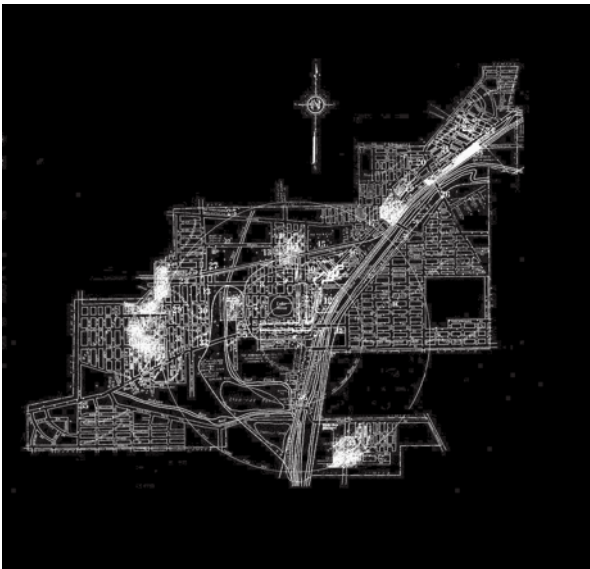
Just east of the lake lies the other historic downtown commercial district along Second Street. This street developed as a home for Barberton's secondary businesses and merchants—though no less in importance to the commercial viability of downtown. Many of the buildings along this secondary commercial street still exist, though a number of them have been demolished because of disrepair. The two commercial districts meet at the blocks located southeast of the lake. These blocks were demolished as a part of an urban renewal project during the late 1960s. The blocks are currently an underutilized part of downtown, providing an excellent opportunity for redevelopment to link the two downtown commercial districts. Additional commercial



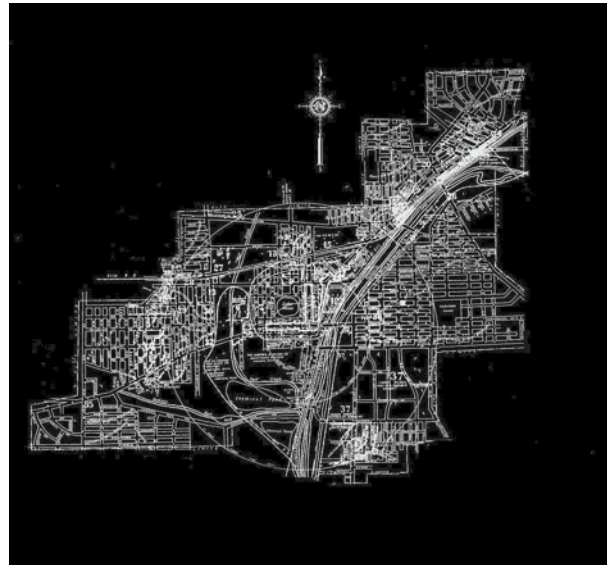
1916



1927



1930



1947

*Barberton is known as the Magic City. This name is attributed the rapid growth and industrial success that was noted by an Akron Beacon Journal reporter after merely three years following its founding. The reporter claimed that “the town seemed to have grown so quickly, that it was if by magic”. The historical Sanborn maps above show Barberton’s continued growth up to 1947 by which the majority of the city was already established.*

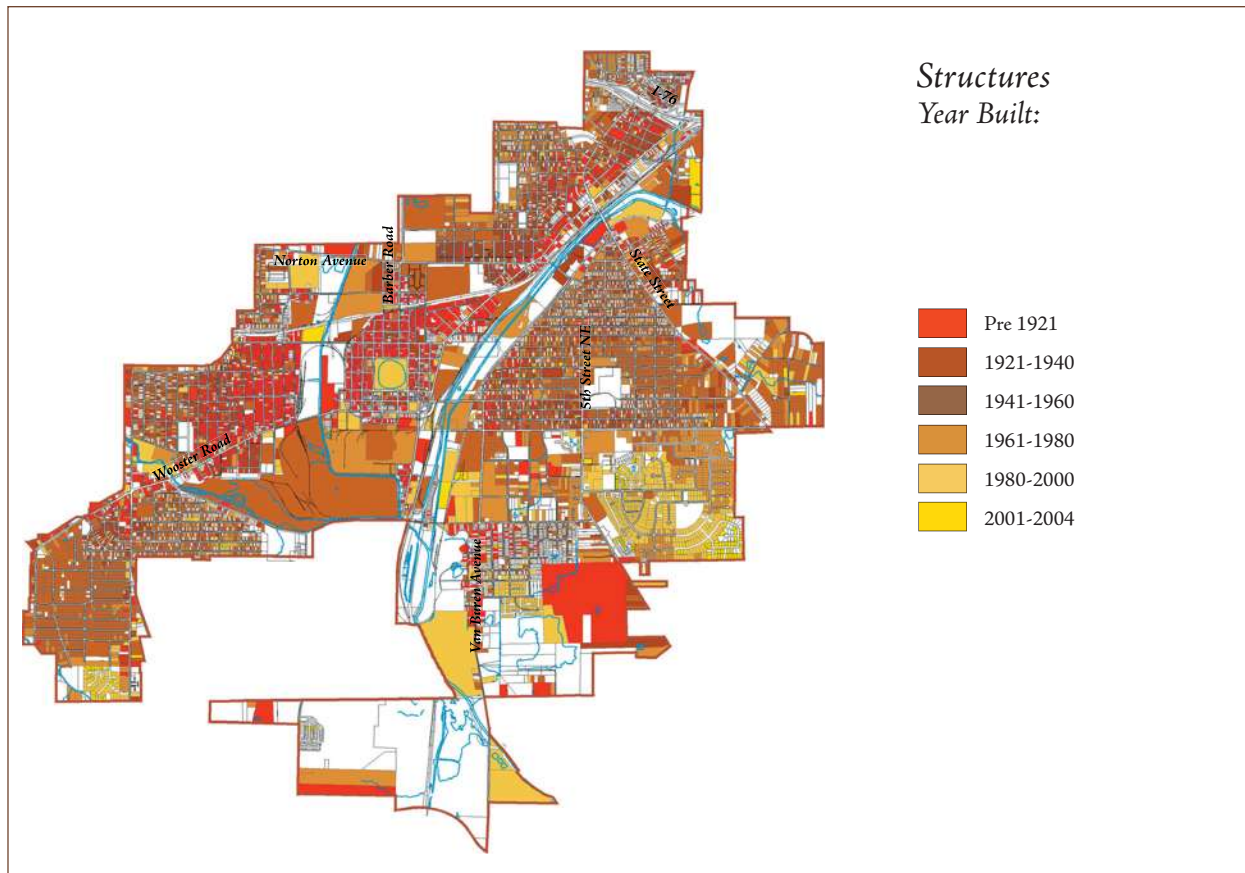


Figure 5 - Year Structures Built

corridors have developed along the city's major thoroughfares, particularly along Wooster Road and Robinson Avenue.

Industrial uses also make up the extents of the downtown proper and are mainly located south of the downtown commercial district and to the west. The industrial uses established an early history of strong prosperity for the city, but have provided major challenges for redevelopment in the present that will most likely continue into the foreseeable future.

Residential uses extend to the north from the downtown area as well as regions of the city to the east and west. Residential areas to the south have been established but have never met with as much success and subsequently have developed sparsely. The older residential housing developed into a grid system extending from an already established grid network. The residential lots are small but standard during the time that they were developed. Because of this style of development in the older portions of the city, opportunities exist for new redevelopment to model the traditional neighborhoods. The newest residential develop-

ment has occurred at the southeast and southwest corners of the city. This development is characterized by large lots and cul-de-sac streets typically found in the suburban style of development.

The amount of usable vacant land for development is limited within the city. Barberton is surrounded by incorporated areas on almost all sides which prohibits any additional lands being added to the city. Creative redevelopment opportunities of underutilized areas must be explored in order for the city to grow within its current boundary constraints.

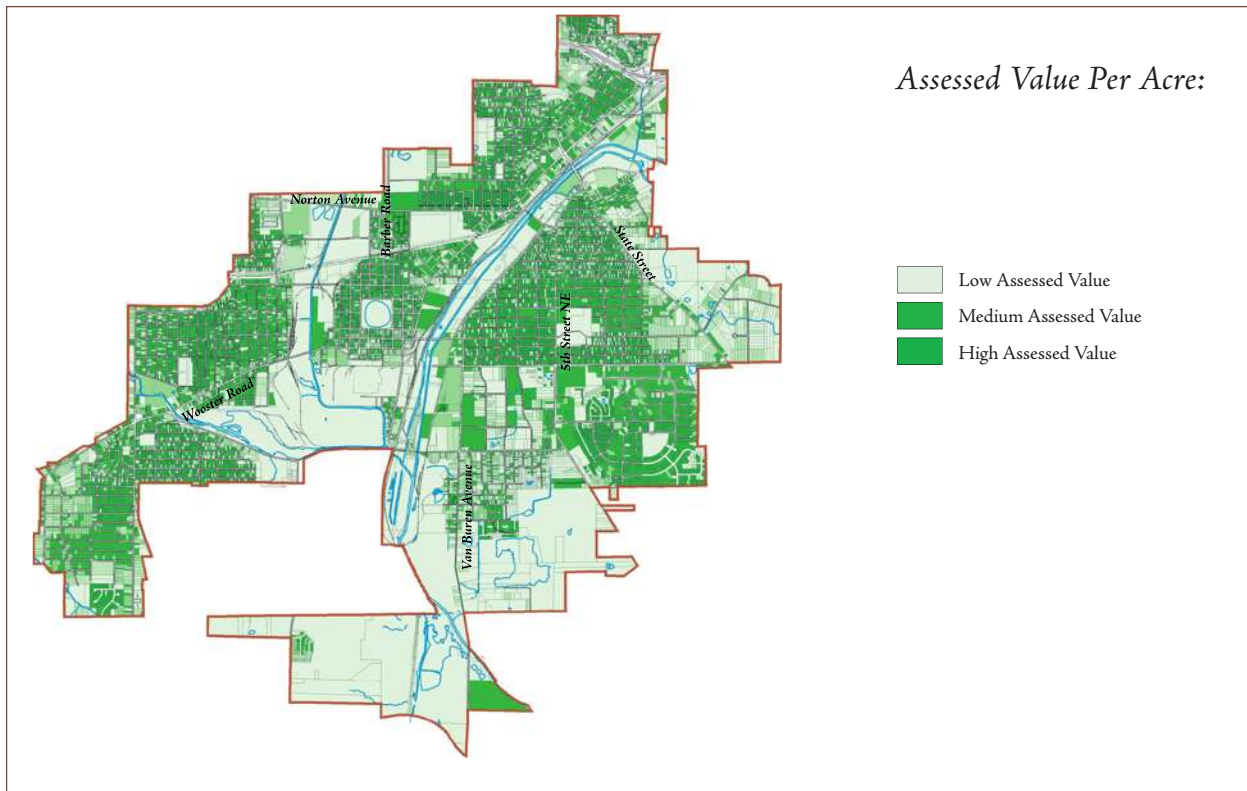


Figure 6 - Assessed Value Per Acre: More interesting is the assessed value per acre that indicates the high per acre value of established residential neighborhoods. Small lot sizes contribute to this effect, but the strength of the traditional neighborhoods is evident in any regard.

## Residential

One of Barberton's greatest assets is its strongly defined residential neighborhoods. This is evident in the land values of the residential portions of the city. The areas with the highest assessed value per acre are located within these residential portions. The older residential neighborhoods have higher assessed values per acre than the newer residential subdivisions, although this is because the density is generally greater in the older neighborhoods. The challenge lies in creating a unifying identity for each one of these neighborhoods within the greater context of the City.

A key topic of the Steering Committee and the Housing topic group was analyzing whether Barberton had a full representation of different housing types and pricepoints. It is also important to consider whether there are enough of each housing type that will sufficiently serve the population of Barberton. The two housing types specifically mentioned as needed, were senior housing and single-family residential in the pricepoint of \$150,000 to \$200,000. Demographic analysis verified these findings. Recent trends in Barberton's population show an increase in the senior population that will likely continue to increase with the aging of the baby-boom generation. Specific senior housing options are

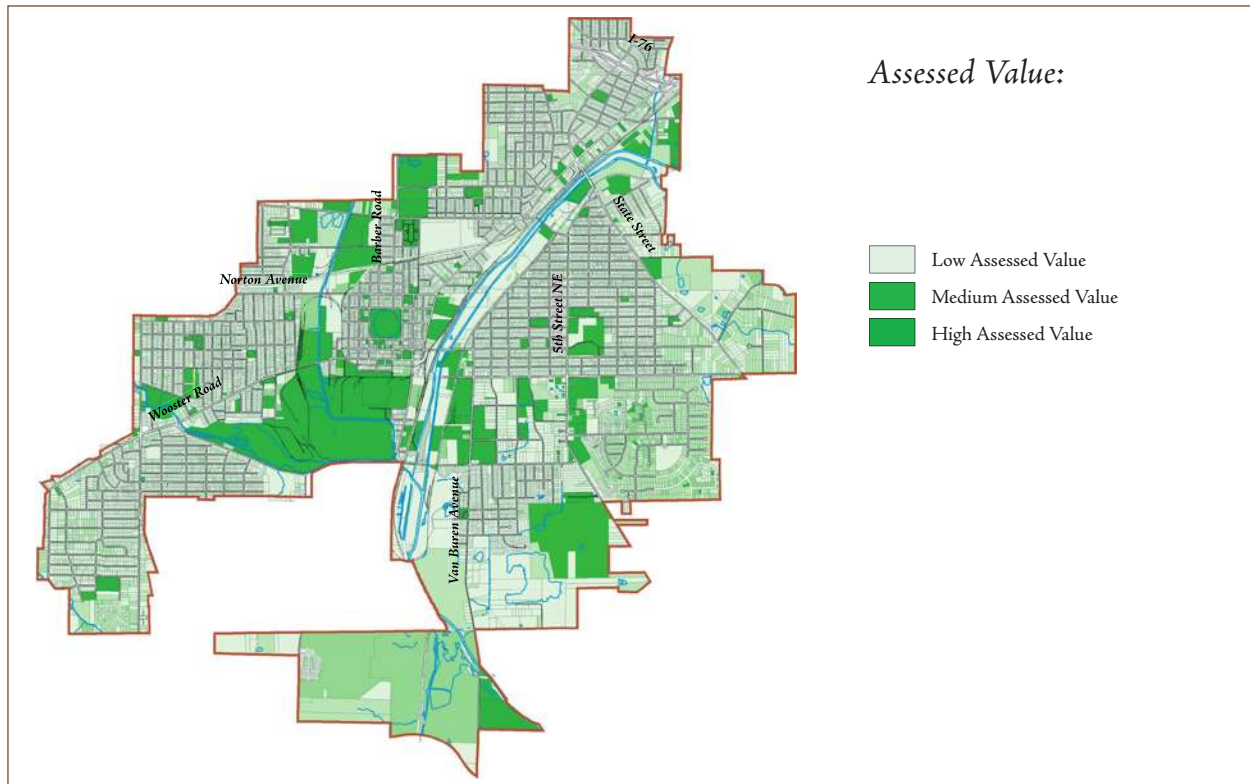


Figure 7 - Assessed Value: The overall assessed value shows that the active industrialized areas are high in valuation. This is not surprising as these serve as the tax base for the community at large.

outlined as part of the downtown target area plans. Housing geared towards senior living are typically detached condominium homes (also known as patio homes), attached multi-family condominium units, and rental housing options. The common feature to all of these housing types is that they are relatively maintenance free and unexpected costs are minimized. This type of housing lends particularly well to redevelopment within the downtown area which has opportunities for higher density.

The other housing type that was identified by the Steering Committee was new single-family housing at a price range between \$150,000 to \$200,000. This is confirmed from data obtained from the U.S. Census which shows the percentage of each housing type. Houses valued above \$150,000 only account for 6.8% of all owner-occupied housing. The notion was that Barberton contains numerous houses available for first-time buyers. As individuals progress throughout their lifetimes and move on to different housing pricepoints, the availability of this type of housing is not as accessible in Barberton and people move out of the City.

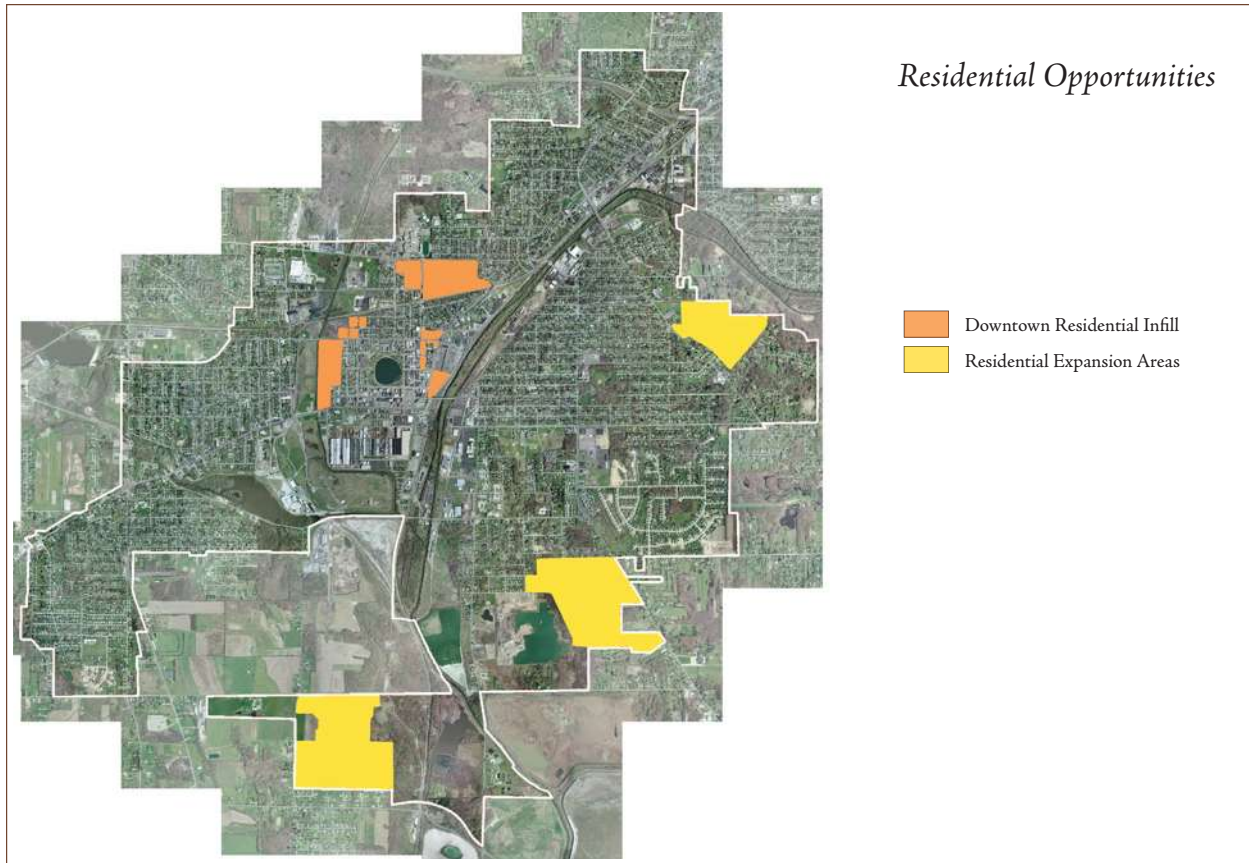


Figure 8 - Recommended location of future residential

### New Single-Family Residential

Opportunities for new housing development have been established with future land use recommendations. The intent is to provide opportunities for both new housing development options in a more suburban style of development as well as redevelopment within the downtown area. Future land use locations for single family neighborhoods could be located east of State Street, on the east side of the quarry lake (see South Quarry Target Area Plan), and extending from the New Haven neighborhood in the south end of Barberton (shown in yellow above). The intent is to develop these neighborhoods within the needed target price range for housing between \$150,000 to \$200,000 and beyond.

### Infill Residential

The primary focus of the redevelopment or infill housing in the downtown area was to provide for more housing options in the near downtown area and create a catalyst for reinvestment of existing downtown homes. By establishing quality housing in existing downtown neighborhoods, this will re-establish and strengthen the downtown neighborhood that has been eroded by commercial and industrial

redevelopment of residential parcels. Infill housing should seamlessly incorporate into the existing neighborhood fabric, preserve architecturally significant houses for renovation, and strive to integrate a variety of housing types that provide for a mixed income neighborhood.

### Census 2000 - Housing Value

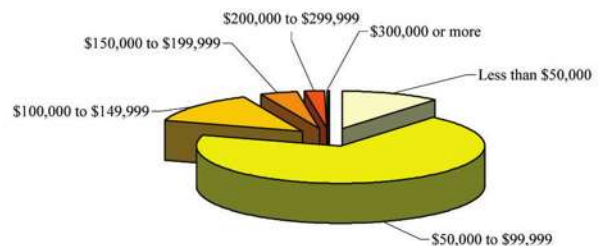


Figure 9 - Housing Value

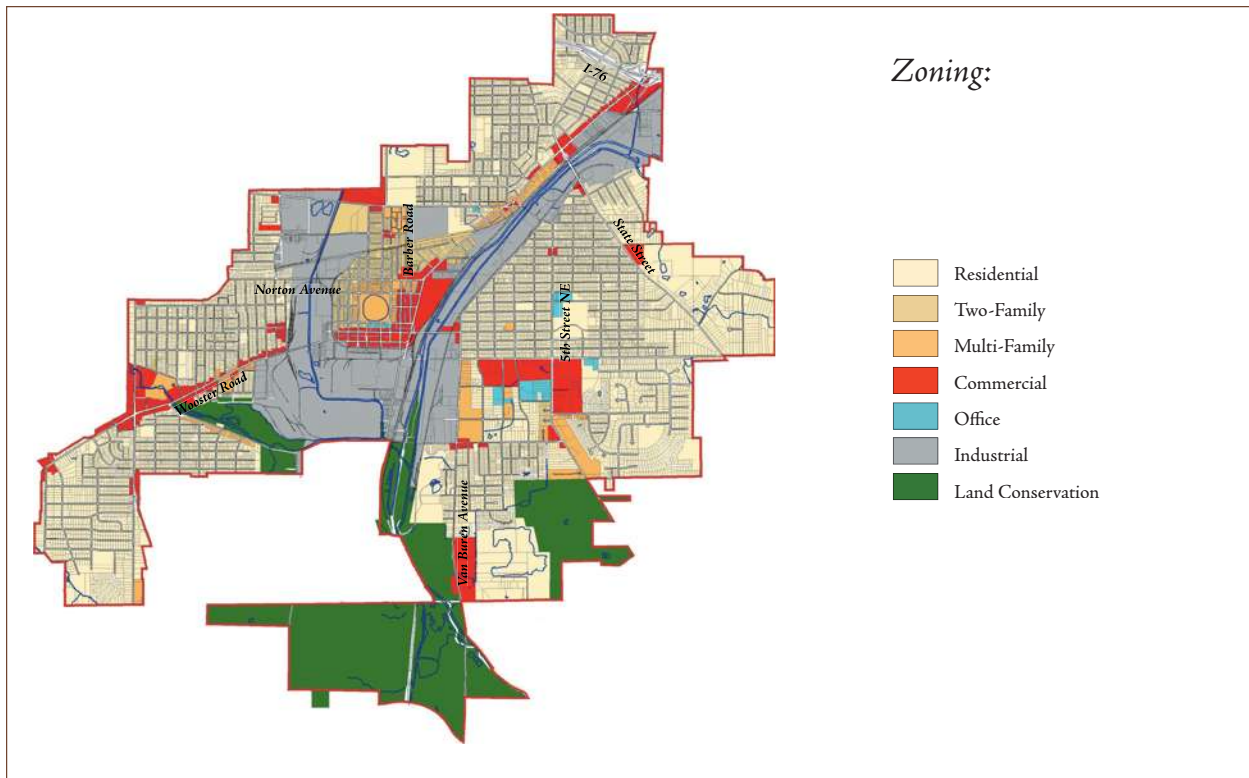


Figure 10 - Zoning Districts: The zoning for Barberton is in a fairly straightforward pattern. The historic downtown consists of a mixed-use core incorporating commercial and various housing uses. The industrial corridors comprise most of the remaining central portion of the city, with residential zoning making up the surrounding neighborhood areas. Commercial zoning districts also occur on Robinson Avenue and along Wooster Road.

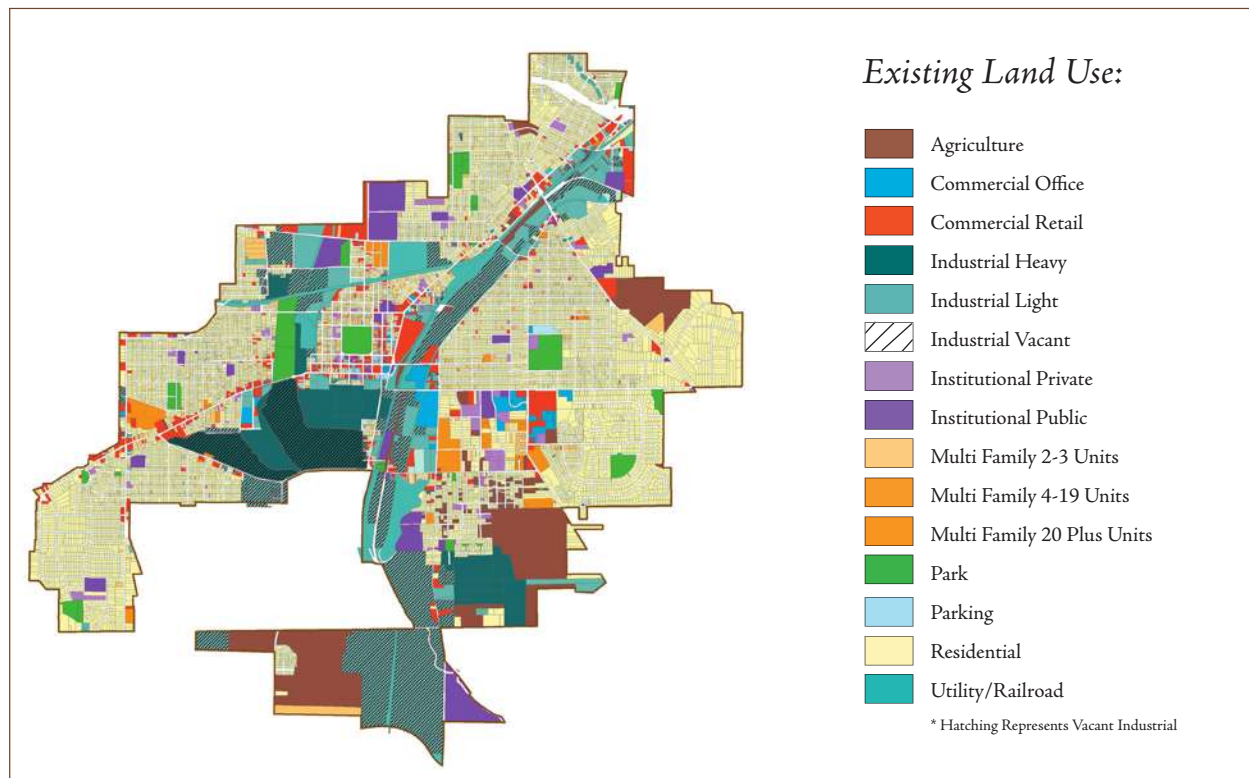


Figure 11 - Existing Land Use: Much of the existing industrial land is vacant and underutilized with areas represented by the diagonal hatching. Some of these lands cannot be disturbed because of prior industrial use. The City should try to consolidate existing industrial uses into smaller footprints and allow for redevelopment of industrial land where appropriate.

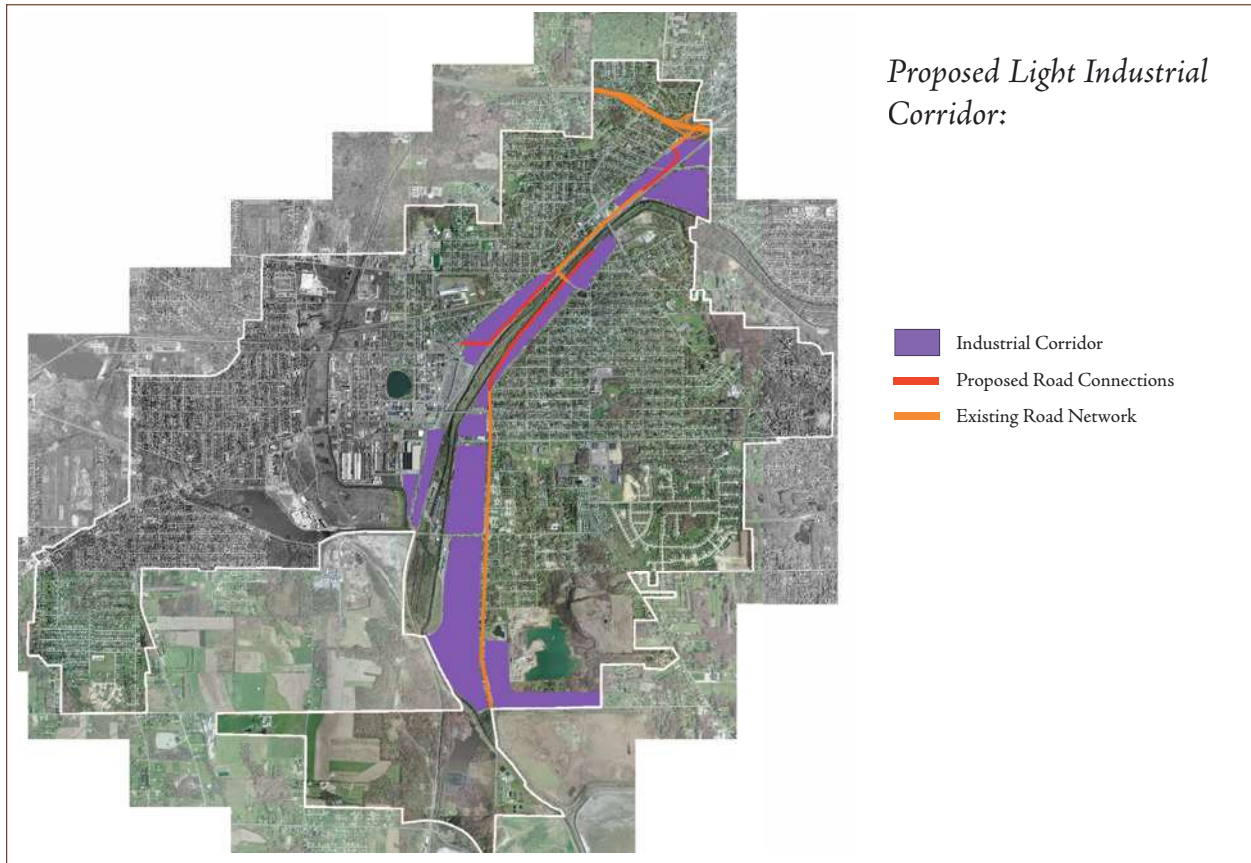


Figure 12 - Proposed Light Industrial Corridor

## Industrial

Industry has long been a part of Barberton's history. Industry was originally attracted to the area because of the entrepreneurship of O.C. Barber and the presence of the railroad system kept the industries here. Due to the location of the canal system and the railroad, the industrial land uses occupied the areas proximate to those transportation routes. This pattern of development has led to industrial uses to be located north, east and south of the downtown area which has effectively created a barrier between the residential neighborhoods and the downtown. This industrial barrier serves as a constraint to the accessibility of downtown.

The location of industrial uses was a direct result of functionality and ability to be serviced by the canal and railroads. Much of the light industry today places greater importance on ease of access and proximity to major highways and interstates. The original location of the large industrial tracts is no longer advantageous for the community. It has dissected the City between the east and the west and is not sustainable amidst residential land uses. A more appropriate industrial land use development pattern with enhanced accessibility to Interstate 76 should be considered. One of the challenges for Barberton is that there is

minimal freeway frontage in the town and it is located in the northern most portions of the City. Future land use recommendations should focus on redeveloping lands to provide areas for new light industrial uses to locate and provide means for greater access to the interstate.

### Redeveloped Industrial Corridor

Proposed as a part of the future land use recommendations is establishing a more appropriate location for existing industrial users in the city and future industrial businesses that could locate within Barberton. The Steering Committee and Economic Development topic group both identified the need for land that would best serve small business light industrial users. Placing industrial users in the perimeter of the City where there is some available vacant land would not be the most practical for ease of highway transportation access. Direction has been provided that many of these users could be located along the Wooster Road corridor and Van Buren Avenue. Currently, land uses within these corridors are a mix of marginal industrial users and residential neighborhoods. A goal with these

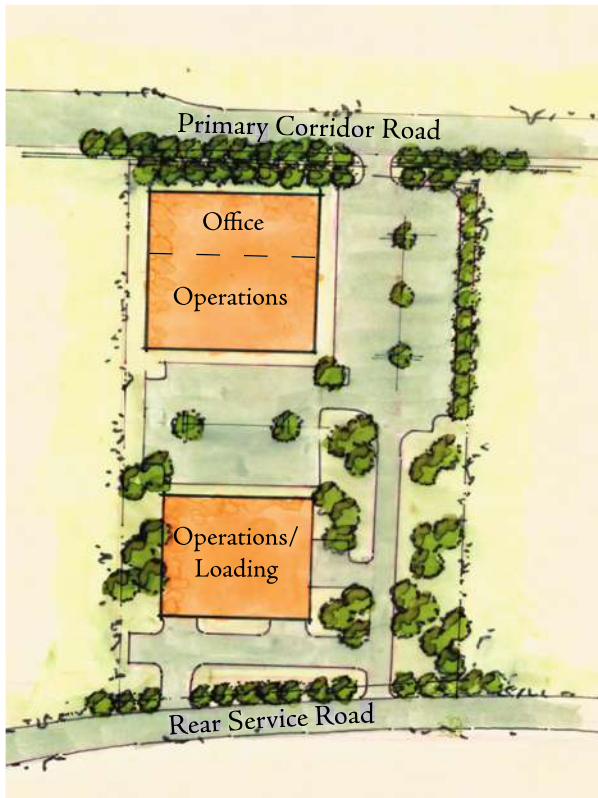


Figure 13 - Typical Redeveloped Industrial Parcel



Light Industrial Corridor Benchmarks



Light Industrial Corridor Benchmarks

land use changes is to make Barberton an ideal location for small, start-up light industrial users. As these businesses grow, they could continue to develop within this corridor and help create a stable economic base for the City.

### Industrial Service Road

At the core of the new light industrial corridor is the creation of an access road that would service the businesses within the new corridor. This road would utilize portions of existing roads (Coventry Road and Van Buren Road) and construct additional roads to provide a better access route to I-76. This would direct heavy truck traffic away from Wooster Road and Van Buren Avenue that have adjacent residential uses. This road would be located to the rear of the light industrial users and provide direct access to I-76 near the interchange.

### Improved Wooster Road Corridor Image

One of the goals for this land use change is to provide a better front door to downtown Barberton along Wooster Road from the I-76 interchange. Much of Wooster Road is a mix of residential, commercial, and some light industrial users. Locating new light industrial businesses along Wooster Road in place of the marginal uses should provide a better cohesive appearance for the road. A higher standard of development control should be established along Wooster Road corridor that would extend to site design and architectural building standards. An example of the ideal light industrial site plan is depicted in the diagram above along with the basic development standards described on the next page. The redeveloped industrial corridor should focus on creating one to three acre parcels for small and developing businesses. Site planning should focus on providing a business presence along the primary fronting roads of Wooster or Van Buren. Business offices should be located on the road and operations to the rear. Building setbacks should be established along the primary fronting road to provide for a wide tree lawn, sidewalks, and site landscaping between the street curb and the front of the building.



Light Industrial Corridor Benchmarks

## Economic Development

The economic health of a city is determined by the balance and breadth of its land uses. It is a balance between services provided by the city and maintaining a stream of revenue to fund those services.

Cities' revenue streams are derived from property taxes and income taxes. This revenue is driven largely by industrial and commercial land uses. Not only do these uses employ individuals in the City to contribute via income taxes, but they also contribute to the property taxes.

Residential land uses in a community do contribute to the revenue of a City through their property tax, however residential land uses are far more reliant on a wide range of city services than other land uses. Therefore it is often the case that residential land uses are more costly than the revenue they are able to contribute to the city. A residential area is more likely to have fire and police runs than a single industrial site. A residential area will have children who need to be educated and a large roadway network that will need to be maintained and plowed in the winter. With new residential development that expands the urban extents, the City should carefully evaluate the services that it will be able to provide for these new areas. New residential which increases the demands of service should focus on the identified residential needs of the City in order to better service the population. One of the benefits of redevelopment of land within the already built areas of Barberton is that the costs of providing services are relatively the same or only marginally greater because they are within the confines of an already serviced area. The initial costs for redevelopment may be greater than in a "green field" or undeveloped site, but the overall sustainability and long-term fiscal impact to the City will be less.

### *Key Target Area Development Standards:*

The following are general standards for development of the light industrial corridor:

- ✦ A 25-50 foot building setback should be established and provide for at least a 6 foot tree lawn, 4 foot sidewalk and site landscaping.
- ✦ Access from the primary corridor road should be limited with primary access established with a rear service road.
- ✦ Office uses should be located toward the primary corridor road and provide a "front door" for business. Business operations should be located to the rear with views screened from the primary corridor road.
- ✦ Storage of materials, utilities, and mechanicals must be screened from the public rights-of-way.
- ✦ All parking should be located to the side or rear of the building and screened from the public rights-of-way.

The City could provide funds to off-set the higher initial costs of development within already urbanized areas of Barberton. This is encouraged if the development will lead to re-establishment of broken neighborhoods or revitalization of key sections of the City.

Due to the cost of services for residential land uses, a city must attain a balance by having adequate industrial and commercial uses to subsidize the services needed for the residential areas. Future land use recommendations are designed to promote the redevelopment of many areas of the city to better serve industrial and commercial uses. Barberton's ability to harbor small start-up businesses will eventually lead to a number of users which will experience success and stay within Barberton to foster their growing business. This would be the ideal for establishing and creating a sustainable economic tax base for the City.

The income tax rate in Barberton is 2% which is typical for many Ohio communities.

## Infrastructure Overview

### Roadways

The City is accessed by three major routes: Interstate 76, State Route 21 and State Route 619. In addition to those access points there are a number of major roads that provide north-south connections and east-west connections within the City: 31st Street NW, Van Buren Avenue, 5th Street NE, State Street, Wooster Road, Robinson Avenue and Norton Avenue.

### Robinson Avenue Connector

Executed by the Summit County Engineer, this project removes the long-standing existing Tuscarawas Avenue bridge and replaces it with a new bridge that will connect Robinson Avenue to a realigned Wooster Road south of the previous location. This project will change a number of factors in the downtown Barberton area by providing a different access route to and from the east. As Tuscarawas Avenue is the true “Main Street” of downtown, this revised access is significant.

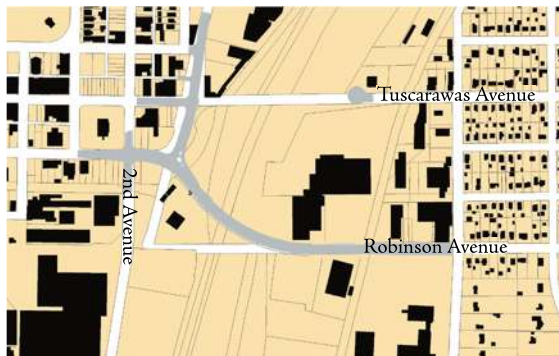


Figure 14 - New Robinson Avenue Bridge Connector



New Barberton High School



Residential character of Barberton



Historic Commercial Center of Barberton

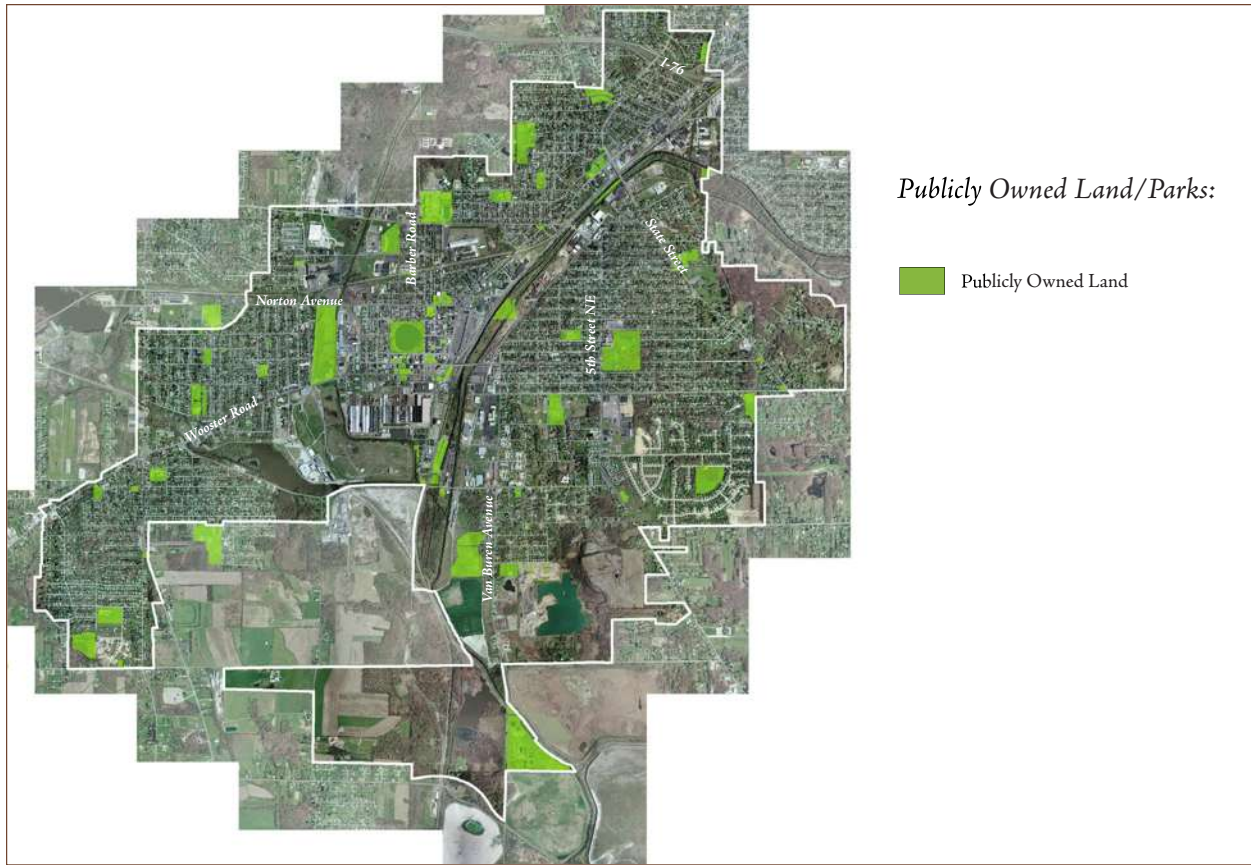


Figure 15 - Location of Publicly Owned Land and Parks

## Natural Features & Open Space

There are several prominent components to the natural environment in Barberton. First is the presence of a number of watercourses in the City. These waterways are natural rivers and one man-made waterway that was part of the canal system. The most prominent natural feature is Lake Anna, the largest kettle lake in Ohio. Created by glacier impacts, it is the centerpiece natural feature of Barberton. Lake Anna is one of the community's greatest assets and was named for O.C. Barber's daughter. It is located in the center of the City's square and provides an attractive and important downtown feature.

The watercourses present in Barberton include the Tuscarawas River which runs through the center of the City, the canal system that runs adjacent to the Tuscarawas River, and Wolf Creek which is located on the western side of the City. The Tuscarawas River is the largest of the three watercourses. It originally made the area attractive to Native Americans because it provided a south-flowing route for travel that required relatively short portage from the north-flowing Cuyahoga River. In this way the continental divide was bridged in the New Portage historical area of Barberton. In 1827, the Ohio & Erie Canal was constructed in Barberton which provided a direct shipping route from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. With these waterways have

always come opportunities and constraints for Barberton.

Another prominent (and negative) feature results from the effects of the previously largest industrial tenant of Barberton. In 1899 the PPG Company began a limestone mining operation in Barberton to recover soda ash to assist in the glass making process. The by-product of this process was white ash which the company disposed of in what is known as the Lime Lakes. This practice has impacted the natural environment in Barberton. The white lime by-product has contaminated the Lime Lakes site and prohibited development in this area and has earned the name "Chemical Lake".

One other man-made water feature is being created by a quarrying operation in the southern portion of the City. This lake will be expanding and future operations will soon cease. The quarrying of this land is relatively clean and should result in a body of water that can be utilized for recreational purposes and present a redevelopment opportunity.

## Parks and Recreation System

The publicly owned parks and open space indicate a strong backbone to the park system. There are a great variety of



Barberton Mums

neighborhood parks located throughout the community as well as larger recreation centers servicing the city as a whole. One major detriment in Barberton is that there is little natural space available that has not been impacted by past industrial practices. Most large open areas that exist are not usable and so present limited opportunity to link the park system to the natural environment in the near term. This makes the trail system even more vital to overall Barberton recreation, allowing residents to access nearby natural park areas within a walk or bike ride.

Barberton is currently home to 16 neighborhood parks. These parks are largely active and house tennis courts, baseball diamonds, and soccer fields. These parks support youth and adult sports leagues and group creative arts activities. An assessment of current city parks finds that the neighborhood orientation of these parks are a major asset to the City. Programming for each of these parks is unique for each neighborhood but still provides the basic fundamental components to service park patrons.

Two park needs were identified from the Parks & Open Space topic group meetings. These were more passive, naturalized park areas and bikepaths/trails. An unfortunate reality for naturalized open spaces in and around Barberton is that much of the available open space is off-limits for public use because of former industrial activities. The City should focus on providing more naturalized open space through parkland requirements for new residential development.

A community recreation center is proposed for construction on city-owned land downtown. This future project is still in the planning stages. A senior center is also underway at the location of the former high school site. This will provide an excellent amenity for downtown and the citizens of Barberton. The facility will also provide another catalyst for locating senior-oriented residential uses around downtown.



Barberton Parks System

Overall, the parks system provides space for the City's annual events like the Mum Festival, summer fireworks and the Lake Anna Arts and Crafts Festival.

### Trails

Trails in a community are an important asset to the residents. The most effective trail system is one connected to the local amenities like parks, schools and other local features. The trails should provide good north-south and east-west pathways to provide access throughout the city and to maximize the destinations for the residents. The greenspace connections diagram also shows a proposed path network for Barberton.

A dedicated path along Wooster Road provides a prominent north-south connection from the north edge of town to Tuscarawas Avenue. The path would then cross the river and continue south along Van Buren Avenue. This would provide a connection to the new green space proposed in the south quarry area. This path provides a north-south connection on the east side of town. On the west side of town the trail should serve to connect the proposed civic campus with the downtown area.

East-west connections will be important as well. Wooster Road from downtown to the western edge of town would provide a possible connection to the regional trail system.

An additional east-west connection would be on the north side of Barberton to connect the civic campus to the Wooster Road trail. This would not only provide a key potential connection to a regional system, but also completes a continuous trail system in Barberton that loops around the downtown core. The overall concept is to take advantage of natural features such as river corridors and floodplain areas while linking the overall parks, schools, and greenspace system. Further, this should provide strong linkages between individual neighborhoods and the downtown core.

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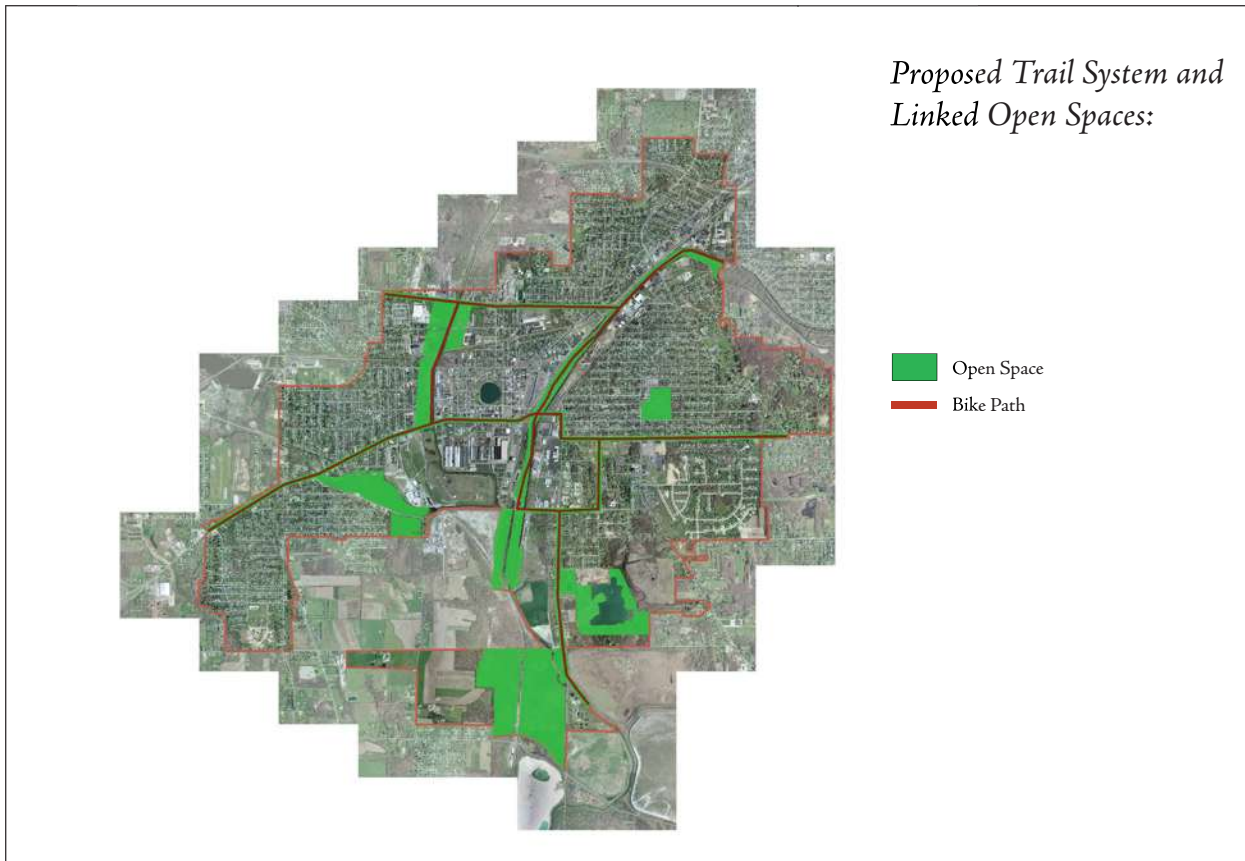


Figure 16 - Targeted Future Open Space Acquisition and Bike Path Plan

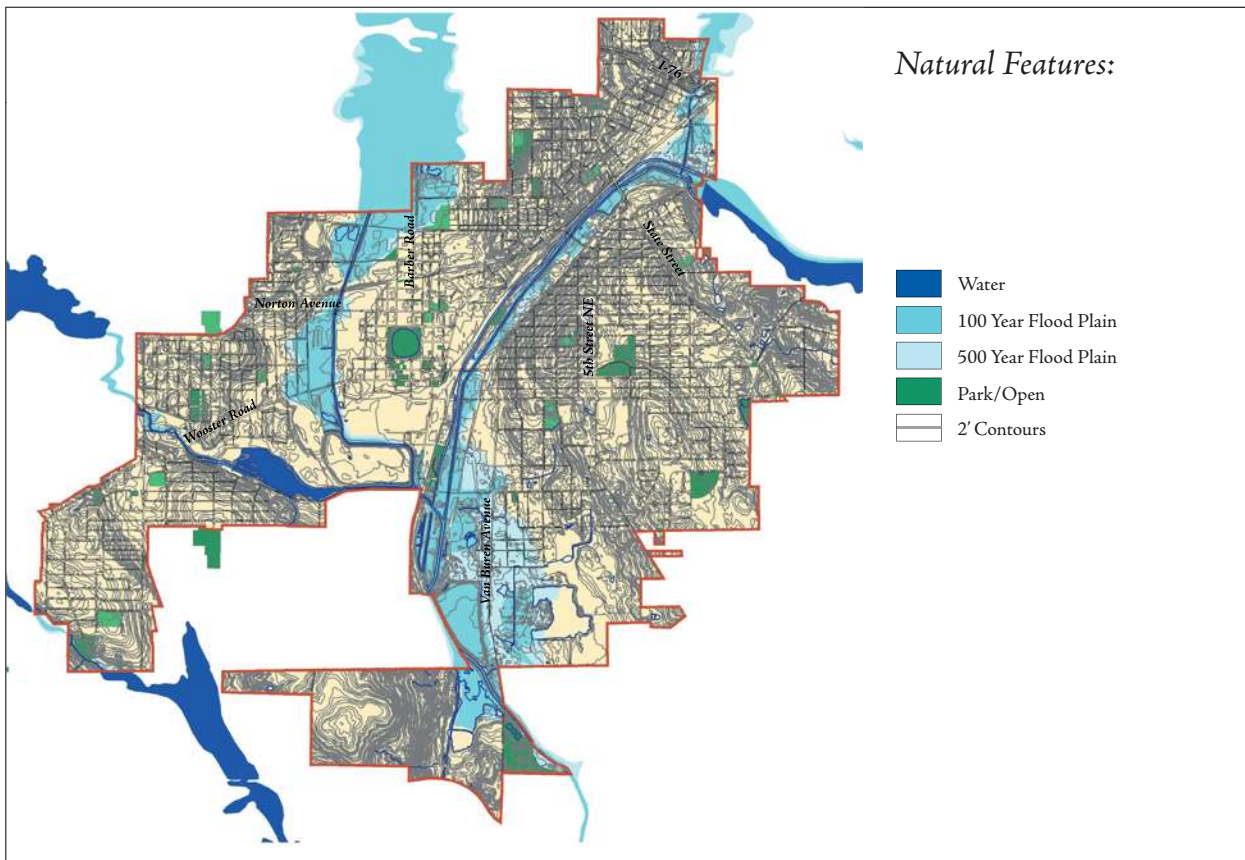


Figure 17 - Natural Features

### III. Target Development Areas



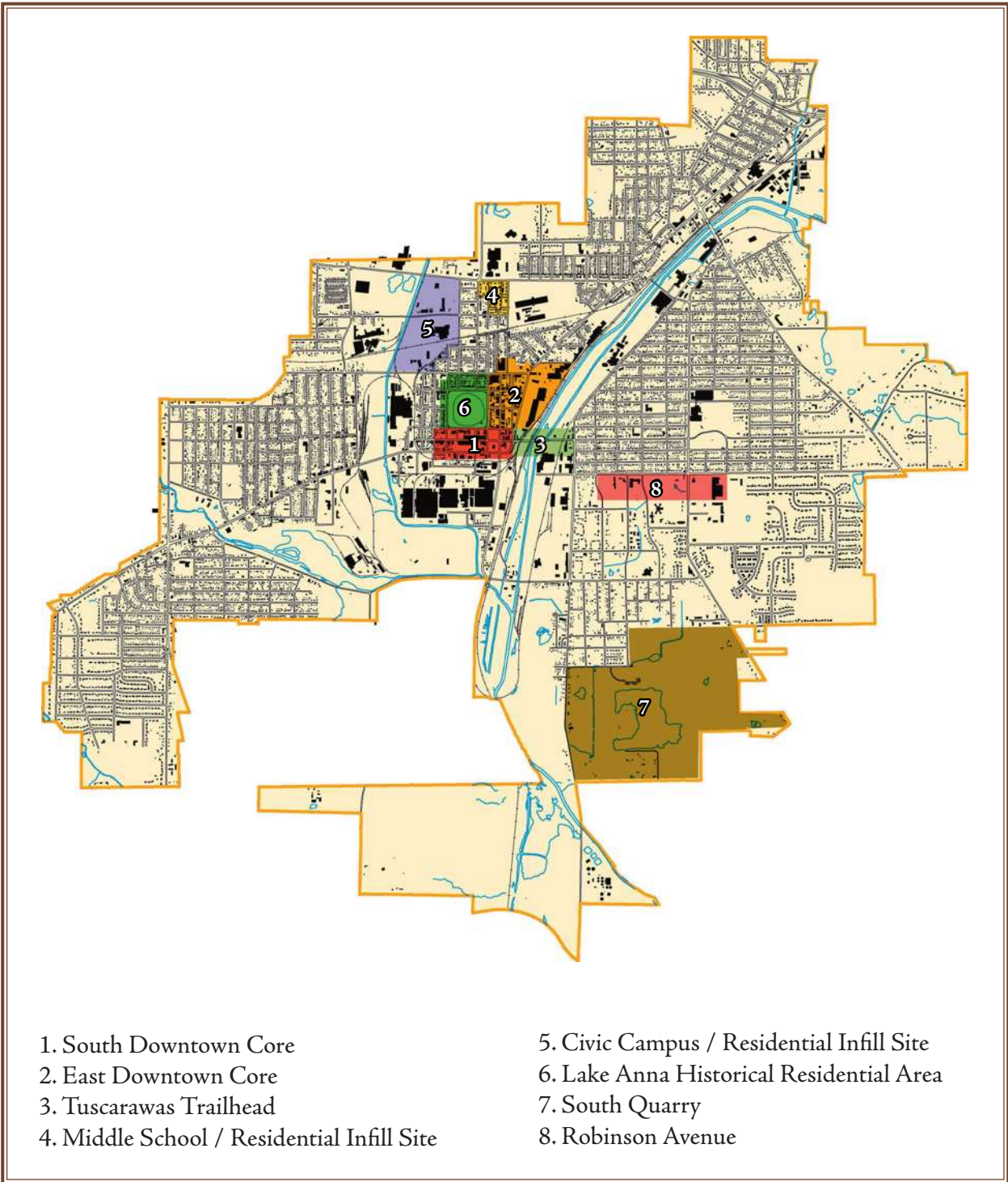


Figure 18 - Target Development Areas

### Target Development Areas

In order to generate specific redevelopment ideas leading toward direct implementation potential for this plan, a series of Target Areas were identified. These areas were selected through a joint process with the planning staff and the steering committee, seeking areas throughout the

city where specific attention would be beneficial. These locations are both prime with redevelopment potential and can serve as examples for future redevelopment efforts based on successful efforts achieved in these Target Area locations.



Downtown Barberton, Tuscarawas Avenue with inviting pedestrian accommodations like well designated crosswalks



Downtown Barberton, Tuscarawas Avenue with buildings of 2 plus stories fronting the sidewalk.

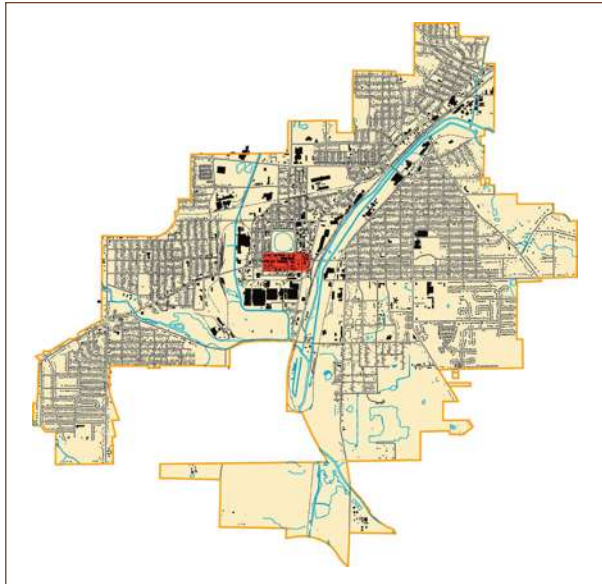


Figure 19 - South Downtown Core Target Development Area

## Downtown

The downtown core of Barberton is an area of opportunity for the community. The historic core surrounds Lake Anna and extends east to the Tuscarawas River, south to Wooster Road and north to Norton Avenue.

This plan advocates a refocusing toward this downtown core and a reinvention of the area as a gathering place that promotes pedestrian activity and fosters an active and vibrant downtown core.

The downtown core of Barberton has been divided into three target areas; south, east and north. These areas have distinct characters that lend themselves to three distinct redevelopment plans. The south side of the city includes the historic center of the old downtown that promotes pedestrian level amenities. The north side of downtown includes opportunities for residential redevelopment in an urban form and the origins of a civic core for the community. The east side downtown core includes three sub areas; Magic City Plaza, the intersection of Wooster & Hopocan, and the area west of Wooster and east of Lake Anna. All of these downtown areas offer unique opportunities to improve the quality of life for the residents in Barberton.

### South Downtown Core

The area south of Lake Anna provides an opportunity for redevelopment that focuses on retail and entertainment activities. Development in this area should reduce the focus on the automobile and provide an environment more comfortable and inviting for the pedestrian.

There are three main considerations in the south core of downtown; Wooster Avenue, Tuscarawas Avenue and the north-south connections between Tuscarawas Avenue and Park Avenue.



Figure 20 - Ariel photograph of South Downtown Core Target Development Area looking to the west.

**Tuscarawas Avenue**

Tuscarawas Avenue is the center of the historic commercial district. The “Main Street” character of Tuscarawas Avenue has maintained a strong presence in Barberton, and will continue to serve as an important guide for any redevelopment in the South Downtown Core.

The tenets of traditional urban design should be preserved in this area to continue the rich history of downtown Barberton. Any development or redevelopment along this street should reflect the character of the historic downtown. The streetscape of Tuscarawas Avenue should be preserved. Any new construction along Tuscarawas should have buildings that span the width of the parcel. The building should front the street and the facade should be at the sidewalk. New buildings should have first floor storefronts with office and/or retail uses on the stories above. Buildings should continue to have no less than 2 stories and should be encouraged to exceed that.

Urban style amenities should be required along Tuscarawas Avenue including pocket parks, benches, seating plazas and outdoor dining spaces. Street trees should be preserved along Tuscarawas Avenue. Any parking should remain on the street or behind the buildings with alley access for



Downtown Barberton, Tuscarawas Avenue showing street trees and on-street parking between the pedestrian sidewalk and the roadway, a tree lawn separating a parking lot from the sidewalk and other amenities like light poles and a brick paver curbwalk with street tree planters.



Figure 21 - Block #7 before and after. Currently dominated by surface parking, there exists a significant gap between the two primary downtown commercial areas. The second image shows potential infill development.

vehicles.

The strongest opportunity for redevelopment in the corridor is vacant “Block 7” which is currently used for downtown parking. This plan strongly encourages development on this site as it serves as the lynchpin between the two commercial districts. The type of use that would be most advantageous would be a single institutional use that could create the beginnings of a cohesive campus at this site. A use such as a branch university campus would be ideal, as it would bring many visitors to the downtown area and serve as a complementary use to the downtown commercial core. In addition, this type of use could feasibly create its own parking supply as part of redevelopment, creating no added parking burden on the downtown area.

In redeveloping this area, the primary concern for downtown businesses will be replacing the existing parking elsewhere. The overall concept for parking in the down-

town core is described further in the *Parking* subsection of the South Downtown Core target development area but it hinges on locating smaller areas of parking closer to destinations rather than a large lot taking up a key development site. The Wooster Road corridor can serve as the automotive spine for development under this concept, creating the vehicular front door to downtown as part of the new roadway network pattern created by the construction of the Robinson Avenue connector.



Figure 22 - Pedestrian alley concept executed on 5th Street. Connections between Park Avenue and Tuscarawas Avenue should be improved to encourage pedestrian movement.

### Pedestrian-Oriented Alleys

Another opportunity in the southern portion of the downtown core are the north-south connector streets, 4th Street and 5th Street. The current pattern does not accommodate pedestrian traffic on these north-south connections. Most users are likely to park on either end of the southern downtown core and walk down Tuscarawas from there. However, if the north-south connections were improved to accommodate pedestrians they could park along Park Avenue or Wooster Road and access the businesses on Tuscarawas via 4th Street or 5th Street.

The figure on the next page shows the current condition of 5th Street without enhanced pedestrian accommodations. Portions of this road have been closed in order to accommodate an expansion to the Lake Theatre and to provide a walkway between the rear parking area and the front of the theatre. Vehicular access to Tuscarawas Avenue from Wooster Road is prohibited from the road closure. Fifth Street north of Tuscarawas Avenue to Park Avenue has been altered to accommodate angled parking along the margins of the road and is one-way heading south. These conditions prevent strong vehicular and pedestrian circulation from Wooster Road up to Park Avenue which is essential with the realignment of Robinson Avenue. Im-

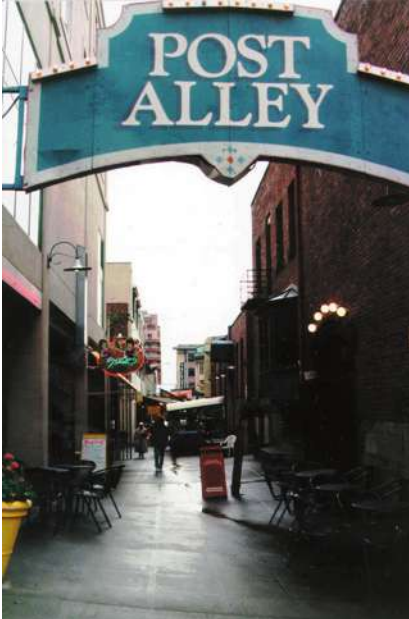
provements on 5th Street should strive to create enhanced pedestrian circulation in order to provide strong links from Wooster Avenue into the downtown business core and to Lake Anna. The before-and-after rendering shows how redevelopment of the area could accommodate pedestrians while still allowing car traffic to use the streets.

The addition of sidewalks on both sides provides a safe location for pedestrian travelers and narrows the roadway, which slows traffic. The street trees and buildings shown where parking lots currently exist add to feelings of security for pedestrians. These amenities and design changes would result in usable north-south connections for pedestrians in downtown Barberton.

While designed with a pedestrian focus, these alleys are contemplated to still allow slow-moving, limited vehicular access as well. Through the use of unique paving materials, narrow street sections and directional bollards, the alleys can still allow on-street parking and north-south access through the historic southern commercial core. This approach has been successfully implemented in a number of locations, some of which are shown in the accompanying benchmark photos.



Figure 23 - 5th Street current and proposed, with infill development and pedestrian passages connecting to Lake Anna



Pedestrian Alley Benchmarks

South Downtown Core Benchmarks



The historic commercial center of Barberton should be preserved by maintaining urban style development in this area. Urban amenities are encouraged; street trees, pocket parks, plaza seating & outdoor dining



Connections should be improved to accommodate pedestrian travel on 4th Street and 5th Street between Park Avenue and Tuscarawas Avenue.



Development along Wooster should reflect its proximity to the urban pattern of Tuscarawas while accommodating automobile traffic along Wooster Road. This is accomplished by encouraging development with small setbacks from the street while providing for parking to the side and rear.



Figure 24 - South Downtown Core development plan with recommended improvements on Wooster Road, 4th, 5th Street and Block 7. Half grey/red blocks indicate the preferred location of auto-oriented uses.

### Wooster Road

The portion of Wooster Road located on the south side of the downtown core will likely see development that is automobile oriented commercial due to the amount of traffic along this roadway. However, its proximity to the historic downtown core lends itself to development that is a mixture of urban and suburban development patterns. The goal is to encourage redevelopment in the downtown area but provide for areas that are automobile-oriented and will not intrude upon the downtown urban fabric.

Wooster Road is a four lane roadway with buildings on either side generally adhering to an urban pattern. Right now there are some pedestrian accommodations along Wooster Road; however it does not function as an inviting, safe street for pedestrians. There is no edge between the sidewalk and the street, such as a tree lawn and street trees, leaving little buffer between pedestrians and fast moving traffic on Wooster.

In order to achieve this mix of patterns the buildings should be oriented toward the street frontage and be located on the front of the site as found in urban areas. However, the building need not extend fully across the site. It can be positioned to one side to allow for on-site parking for the business and access to the site from Wooster Road. This is an effort to introduce stronger urban design elements onto the street while allowing surface parking for the sites and as a reservoir of parking for the south downtown commercial core. It allows for convenience by car but still

reflects the urban character of the adjacent area.

The redevelopment of this street section should refocus the amenities toward the pedestrian. They should function to slow the increasing traffic flow along the road and ensure pedestrian safety and comfort. The sidewalks must be redesigned to include a tree lawn between the pedestrian zone on the sidewalk and the traffic. This provides a needed separation between people and vehicles. This tree lawn should extend along the length of Wooster Road.

This street section is also an appropriate place to locate a bike facility, potentially a bike lane or a grade separated path. This path could run along the south side of Wooster Road and be connected to other areas of the city.

Redevelopment along Wooster Road can be a blend of urban style development and suburban patterns since it is located on the fringe of the downtown core. This blend is achieved by fronting buildings close to the street but not requiring them to place building mass fully across the site. This would allow for access to parking for these retailers off of Wooster Road. This blend should be focused on the south side of Wooster Road and not extend to the north side of the road.

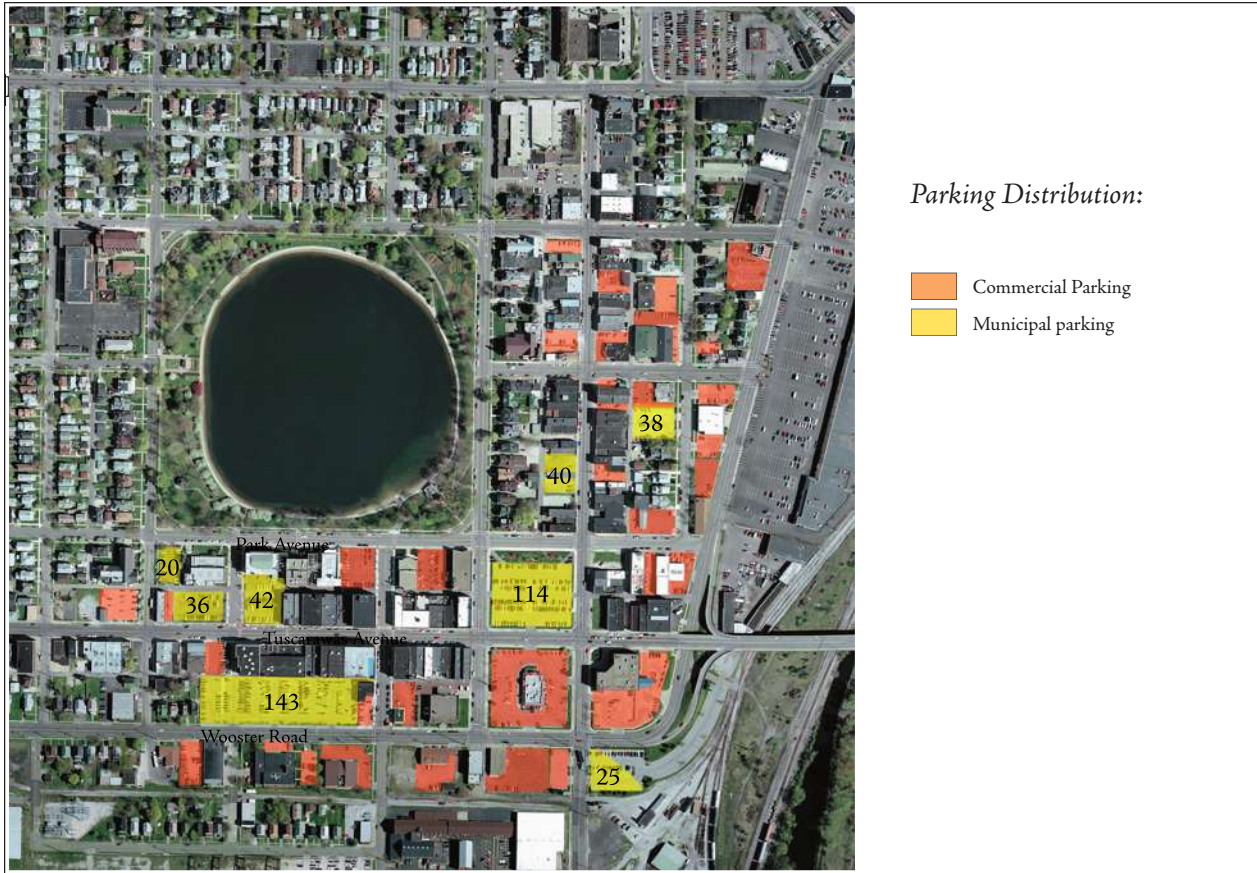


Figure 25 - Distribution of parking within the South and East Downtown Cores highlighting both municipally and privately owned parking areas.

**Parking**

Currently, Barberton has a significant amount of both on-street and off-street parking options located in close proximity to the downtown core blocks. The presence of parking can be viewed as both an attribute and detriment to downtown. Free parking can be a mechanism to bring people in to the downtown business district. However, parking areas can be disruptive to the urban fabric of downtown and can create areas of street inactivity. The goal in providing downtown parking is to strategically locate it in areas within walking distance of downtown blocks and on streets that are more auto-oriented in nature. This helps preserve the downtown urban fabric while providing parking in an accessible location on streets that provide major access to downtown. In order to facilitate this type of parking arrangement, north-south connections to Barberton’s main downtown street (Tuscarawas) need to be improved.

**Existing Parking**

Free public parking is plentiful in lots located directly south of the Lake Theater, Block 7, the library, and a number of small lots located on Second Street. All of these lots are within short walking distance to the center of the downtown. Much of the free municipal parking lots such as Block 7 and the theater are currently utilized by a number of commercial office employees located downtown that already have sufficient parking provided on other sites. Many of the sites with newer commercial redevelopment have been “over-parked” providing too many parking spaces than what is actually required by current parking standards. This constitutes an inefficient use of land where excessive parking degrades the urban fabric of downtown. Generally, for mixed-use areas such as the downtown, parking requirements should not exceed 3 to 3.5 space per 1,000 square feet of commercial use. Future development must implement a strategy of shared parking that efficiently places parking spaces in proximity to the destination uses. There is a good deal of excess surface parking capacity currently underutilized along Wooster Road.



Figure 26 - Roads highlighted in red represent a “walking shed” of 1,500 feet from the center of the South Downtown Core. This is the average comfortable walking distance for an individual which shows the relationship of municipal off-street parking and available on-street parking areas.

There are numerous opportunities for free on-street parking within downtown. However, there is a perceived parking shortage because poor connectivity between available parking areas of on-street parking and Tuscarawas Avenue. On-Street parking is typically the heaviest on Tuscarawas Avenue because it is the destination street for downtown. Many of the adjacent streets north and south of Tuscarawas Avenue have under-utilized on-street parking. Facilitating the use of on-street parking for these adjacent streets can be managed by providing better pedestrian connections to Tuscarawas Avenue. Creating the north-south pedestrian alley pairs with 4th Street and 5th Street will create a better perception of connectivity for on-street parking located to the north and planned parking areas south of Wooster Road.



Figure 27 - Phased Parking Locations in the South Downtown Core area.

## Future Phasing

In order to implement the major components of the South Downtown Core target area plan, parking will have to be phased in order to meet current and future needs. Some of the development opportunities for new buildings adjacent to 4th Street and 5th Street are currently being used for parking of the theatre, library, and municipal building. Short term phasing of displaced parking in these areas can rely on better use of on-street parking along Park Street, 6th Street, and 3rd Street. Temporary surface parking can be coordinated with the auto-oriented redevelopment areas south of Wooster Road. Each block of the auto-oriented use can accommodate about 50 spaces without a building and about 30-35 if future development on these blocks is added at 10,000 s.f. commercial building on the lot. Any parking that is provided above code requirements must be made available for public parking for downtown patrons. As a long-term solution to service both the existing downtown retailers and the new commercial development on the pedestrian alleys, a small parking structure for public use could be developed on the remaining theater parking area. The structure can be limited to a single story which is relatively cost efficient to build. This area can continue to function as a surface parking lot in the near term. Only when development in the southern and central portions of the target area dictate the additional expense would a public single-deck garage be considered.

The South Downtown Core target area plan also included redevelopment of Block 7 which is currently serving as a 114 space, free public parking area. Future redevelopment of the site is targeted towards an institutional use such as a community college or university branch campus. In order to accommodate the parking requirements for such a use, a

Phased Parking	
Downtown South Core Existing Off-Street Municipal Parking	
Surface	355
Planned Off-Street Municipal Parking	
Surface	76
Phased Auto-Oriented Surface	180
One level Garage	230
Public/Institutional Garage (est)	300
Downtown East Core	
Existing Municipal Parking	
Surface	78
On-Street	50
Planned Municipal Parking	
Surface	t.b.d.

parking structure would need to be developed. This could also serve as public parking for the downtown. Initially, parking for the institutional use could be provided by interim surface parking created in the auto-oriented redevelopment areas south of Wooster Road or the single parking deck to be located adjacent to the Lake Theater.

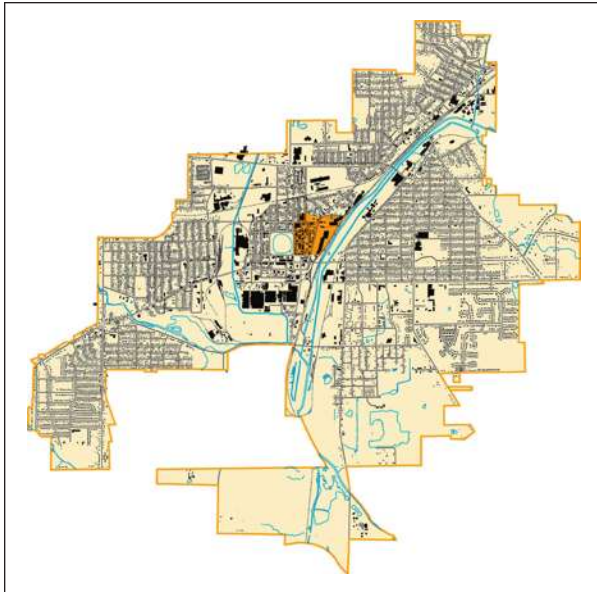


Figure 28 - East Downtown Core Target Development Area



Figure 29 - Aerial photograph looking south onto the East Downtown Core Target Development Area

## East Downtown Core

### Wooster / Hopocan

The Wooster / Hopocan intersection should serve as the primary gateway into downtown. Unfortunately, the overall appearance and usability for both pedestrians and drivers is highly challenged. This location presents an excellent opportunity due to the bend in Wooster Road, setting up a natural view into what ought to be a distinctly designed corridor indicating the unique character of the downtown area. Instead the view southward is of parking lots and a fast food drive-through. The drive northward is impeded by the one building on this portion of the street that is too close to the roadway instead of the more typical problem of an enormous setback and an unscreened parking lot.

Two major factors are addressed in the proposed redevelopment plan for Wooster / Hopocan. The first is a general improvement to the Wooster Corridor. The street is currently dangerous and generally uncomfortable for pedestrians due to the location of the sidewalk adjacent to the curb on this high-traffic arterial. In addition, the lack of any street amenities such as trees or a tree lawn, benches or bus shelters makes it inhospitable at best. The street section indicated shows the preferred approach of a sidewalk at a safe distance from the street, with a tight urban envelope created by regularly spaced street trees and building facades pulled to a proximate, but appropriate distance from the roadway. The section also indicates a median in Wooster, a long term solution for the roadway that would truly distinguish this as a significant portion of the corridor while helping to control traffic speeds and impacts by reducing



Figure 30 - Wooster Road Proposed Cross Section

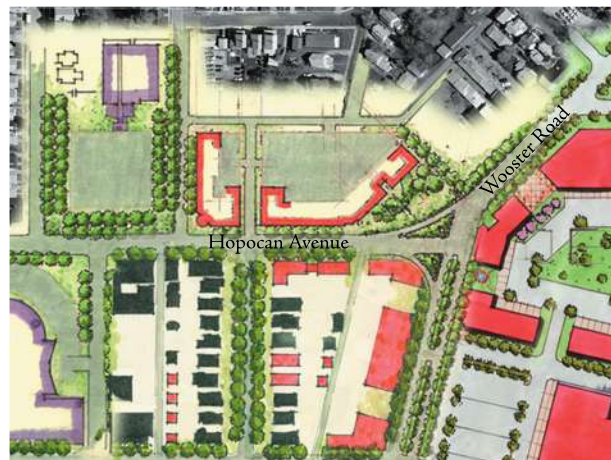


Figure 31 - Hopocan Avenue/Wooster Road Intersection

## Key Target Area Development Standards:

The following are general standards for development of higher-density urban infill residential:

- ✦ Buildings should have four-sided architecture, utilizing the same high-quality finish on all sides of each structure.
- ✦ Mechanical devices are encouraged to be roof mounted or should be located in rear or side yards. All must be completely screened from public rights-of-way.
- ✦ Garage entries are strongly discouraged from facing onto the primary right-of-way.
- ✦ All parking should be located internal to the site and screened from the public rights-of-way.

the overall scale of the roadway. This median would, of course, break at roadway intersections and key curb cuts, allowing proper access in and around the area.

The second major factor addressed is the need for a focal building presence to “hold” the corner for the eye when traveling toward the bend in the road. By redeveloping the eastern side of the street and improving the Wooster streetscape, dramatic results could be achieved. The plan indicates commercial development on the southwest corner. On the northern side of Hopocan, the plan proposes a senior housing development. This location could take advantage of the adjacent senior center and planned natatorium. In addition, it is close enough to walk to downtown merchants and to the Magic City Plaza after upgrades to Wooster Road allow safer pedestrian crossings. This also presents a strong opportunity for redevelopment since the city owns most of the land indicated for redevelopment here, with the exception of the immediate southwest corner of Wooster and Hopocan. That site should be considered for future acquisition, as the “before and after” images indicate the large impact that redevelopment of that particular site would have on the appearance of the street for those entering the downtown area.



Figure 32 - East Downtown Core Target Development Area



Wooster/Hopocan Benchmarks



Figure 33 - Wooster/Hopocan Before and After



Example “green” edge to retail strip center



Potential multi-story residential development



### Magic City Benchmarks

#### Magic City Redevelopment

The Magic City Plaza has had a long and relatively successful life for this type of suburban strip shopping. The location of a smaller “big box” site near downtown is not necessarily a bad thing, providing the opportunity for a grocery location or discount retailer in proximity to downtown residents. The amount of additional retail space is not beneficial to the downtown core as it competes directly with the downtown for a limited number of the small merchants in the area. For that reason, it is not unreasonable to think that the continued challenges of filling large amounts of retail in the area might change the development approach for the site. Should the core downtown areas improve in particular, a portion of the east side of Wooster might become more attractive as a site for residential development.

This plan retains the larger retail anchor on the northern end of the site and a portion of the adjacent retail space. The southern portion of the site has been shown as potential residential development that could be apartments, condominiums, or a combination of both. The city would likely need to offer incentives for redevelopment including the ability to do a relatively high density project of multiple stories in height. In addition, the development should be consistent with an urban infill residential approach as indicated in the photographic examples shown here.

Most importantly, the Wooster Road corridor edge of Magic City must be improved. It can be seen in the aerial photographs that the roadway nearly blends into the parking area for Magic City when seen from above. It feels much the same for a pedestrian attempting to walk along the corridor, with fast moving traffic and paving in all directions. It is vital that a true street edge be established, creating a roadway edge and a buffer to the open parking area. This can be most straightforwardly established through the use of a tree lawn, street trees and landscape screening for areas that will remain open parking areas.



Figure 34 - Proposed Magic City Shopping Center Redevelopment



Figure 35 - Potential redesign for the conversion of the Tuscarawas Avenue Bridge into a pedestrian bridge.

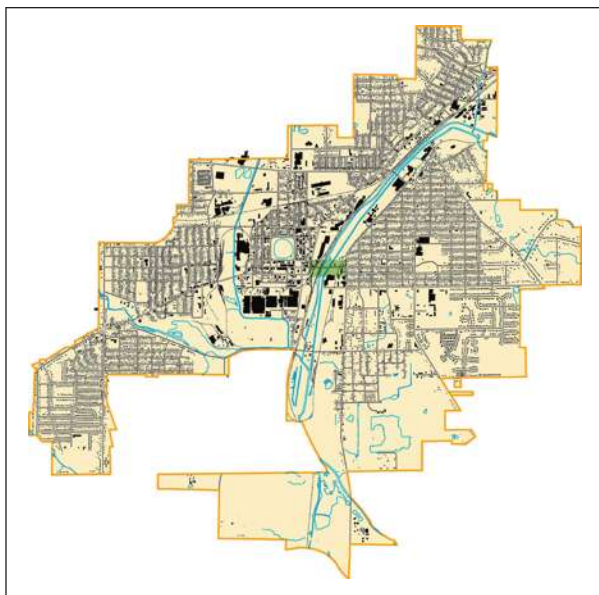


Figure 36 - Tuscarawas Trailhead Target Development Area

### Tuscarawas Trailhead

The Tuscarawas Trailhead will be constructed as an amenity for users of the canal towpath trail on the current site of the Burger King on Tuscarawas Avenue. The city has already acquired the land for this use. The circumstance driving this project is the relocation of the primary access point between downtown and the east. Currently, the Tuscarawas Avenue Bridge serves as the route linking these areas across the canal and the river. Construction has begun on a Robinson Avenue connection south of this site, eliminating the Tuscarawas Avenue Bridge as part of the project. Also as part of this project, the trailhead will be constructed and provide parking and a direct link to the towpath.

This plan had hoped that, instead of demolition, the existing Tuscarawas Avenue Bridge could have been used as a pedestrian connection to provide a direct connection into downtown across the river and canal. This bridge is highly utilized by people walking to the downtown. While the area will be partially served by the new Robinson Avenue connection, Tuscarawas Avenue would still be the most direct pedestrian link into the heart of the downtown commercial district from the east. A number of other cities have converted bridges to pedestrian promenades. Barberton's long term goal should aim to create a pedestrian-only connection across the river. By utilizing the piers on the former bridge structure which are to remain for this reason, a significant portion of costs for a new pedestrian walkway would be saved.



A pedestrian bridge could be used for hosting festivals and highlighting Barberton's canal heritage

## East Downtown Core Block Analysis

A straightforward approach to redevelopment is described for the Downtown East Core based on analysis of the downtown blocks. This area is unusual in character based on the number of “split blocks” that are commercial on one side and residential on the other. This evolved arrangement is a legitimate and sustainable development pattern for these blocks, but must not continue to degenerate into a mishmash of different development patterns on a lot-by-lot basis. This has occurred in the less successful blocks. This redevelopment plan shows infill that would make sense of the block types by following a more traditional pattern.

The residential-scale lots are shown as residential infill with houses at the streets and garages behind. This follows the established pattern for the area, utilizing the alley access available in most areas. The commercial infill is approached in a traditional urban manner, with buildings fronting onto the primary right-of-way and parking located to the rear.

The downtown block configuration diagrams to the right indicate the make-up of the block grid. The first diagram indicates the current condition with a number of “broken” blocks. The second diagram indicates the preferred solution for the downtown grid through infill redevelopment. The intent of this approach is not to segregate uses in the downtown, but to create a long-term framework for integrated uses to succeed. This can be best accomplished by creating strong urban fabric throughout downtown.

In order to understand the current and potential future

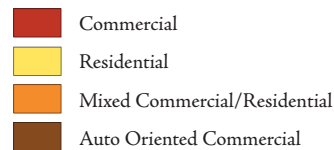
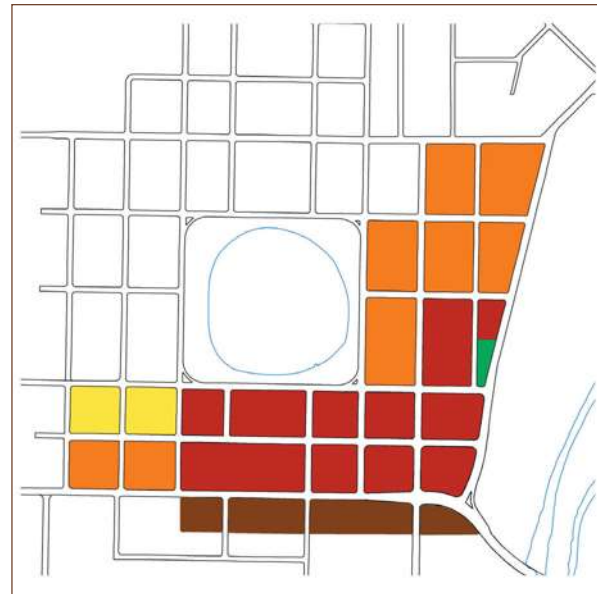
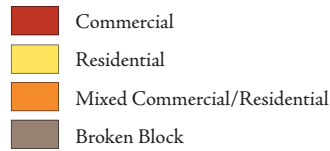
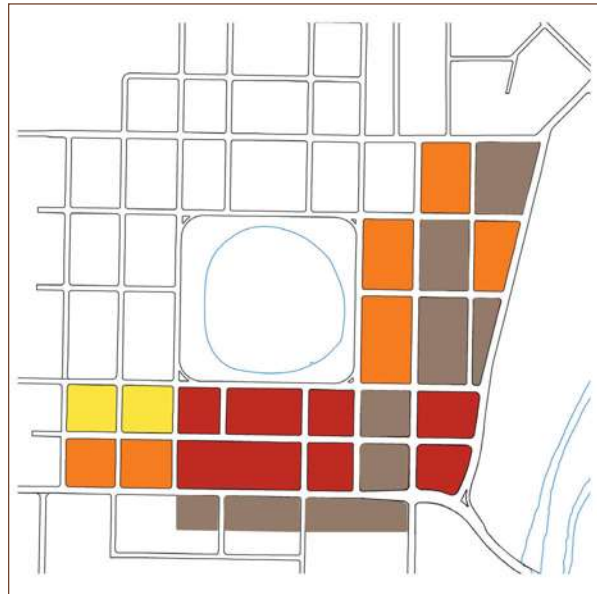


Figure 37 - Existing and Preferred Downtown Blocks:

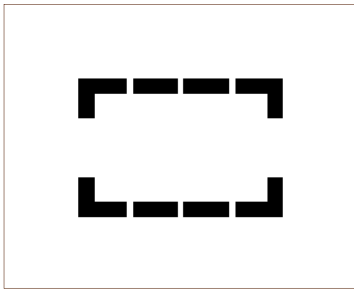


Diagram A: Commercial Block

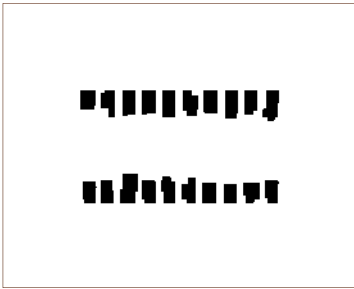


Diagram B: Residential Block

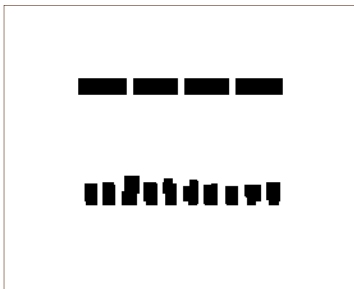


Diagram C: Split Block

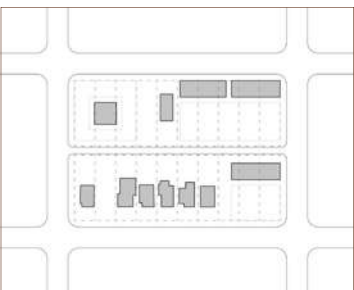


Diagram D: Broken Block

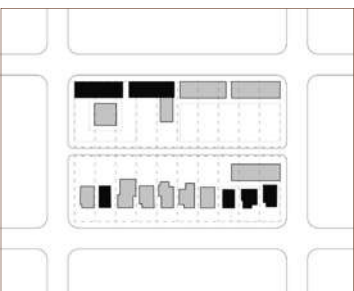


Diagram E: Repaired Block

Figure 38 - Downtown Block Arrangements

of downtown redevelopment it is helpful to look at the character of individual block development patterns. The first three diagrams indicate the different types of blocks in the downtown. For clarification, the building footprints are generalized to indicate the street frontages and don't reflect the exact footprint of buildings on any particular block.

- Diagram A shows a typical commercial development block. This might have a variety of commercial uses on the first floor with the upper floors occupied generally by offices or residential uses.
- Diagram B shows a typical downtown residential block, with small lots, housing fronting streets and garages serviced by alleys to the rear.
- Diagram C is a "split block" with half single-family residential and the other half commercial.

The remaining two diagrams indicate the way a block can be "repaired" where the urban fabric no longer succeeds. The "existing" buildings are shown in grey and the proposed buildings to fix these blocks are shown in black.

- Diagram D indicates a poor evolution of a downtown block where development types are mixed to the overall detriment of the urban condition.
- Diagram E shows how these blocks can be "repaired" by rationalizing the approach to redevelopment.



Figure 39 - East Downtown Core Commercial

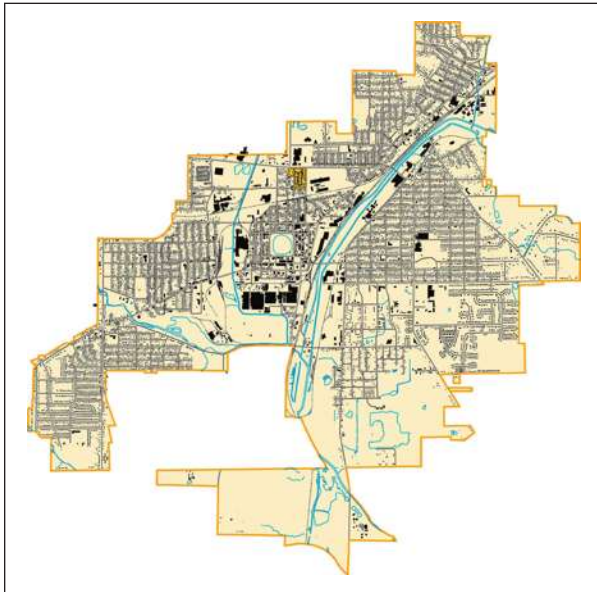


Figure 40 - Middle School / Residential Infill Development Area



## Middle School Site/Residential Infill

Further redevelopment efforts are intended for the Norton/Barber Road area. The current uses include a poorly designed public housing complex and dilapidated, auto-oriented commercial uses focused at the intersection of the roads. New trends in integration of housing types and styles for subsidized units have made the housing complex obsolete, and it is likely that this area will be redeveloped for another use or as a mix of housing types for a wider demographic audience.

This site is being considered as a potential location for the middle school. The location, directly across from the high school, is an advantageous selling point as is the ability to create a significant change to the environment. The school should be located with frontage on Norton Avenue so that pedestrian connectivity can be made easily with the high school. Pulling the building closer to the street will also allow for more outdoor activity in the rear. It could anchor the corner of Norton Avenue and Barber Road as it would provide an excellent opportunity to create a terminal view looking south on Barber Road because of the slight bend in the road alignment. It is recommended that traffic circulation be focused off the primary roads such as Barber Road and Norton Avenue to avoid congestion.

The final challenge in this area is the nature of the commercial uses along Norton Avenue. As an area where many students walk to school along the major street, commercial uses as a part of this target area would be appropriate. The school site development plan shows the opportunity to integrate high quality commercial uses to the school site

at the intersection of Barber Road and Norton Avenue. These commercial uses should complement the location near the school campuses and be oriented toward pedestrian activity and not the automobile. This will create a safer environment for students utilizing the commercial businesses.

The north side of the street creates a bigger challenge, however. Due to the location in the floodplain, large scale redevelopment is unlikely north of Norton Avenue. This plan proposes that this area eventually be allowed to revert back to its floodplain condition, and complete the continuous nature of the civic campus. This would involve public purchase of sites over time and conversion of the area into play fields and green space areas as needed for the demands of the campus and community. This corner does border on a large wooded area that could be allowed to encroach further toward the intersection, forming a natural edge for the northern entry into Barberton.

An alternate development scenario is presented if constraints for the preferred site will not allow for the new middle school at this location. This site seems like an excellent redevelopment location for well done urban single-family housing. The plan also proposes a small green space, with a character more like a formal park. The new single-family residential would serve as an extension to the existing residential neighborhood and help establish quality housing within the northern portion of downtown.



Figure 41 - Preferred site development plan indicating centralized middle school concept and integrated pedestrian-oriented commercial uses.



Figure 42 - Alternate site development plan for single-family residential infill

### *Key Target Area Development Standards:*

The following are basic standards that should also be utilized in the redevelopment of Norton Homes

- ✦ Buildings should be pulled up to the street and have enhanced pedestrian access.
- ✦ Building placement should capitalize on terminating views created by the intersection of Norton Avenue and Barber Road.
- ✦ Automobile access and traffic circulation should be focused off primary road corridors such as Norton Avenue and Barber Road.
- ✦ Residential uses should use rear alley ways for primary vehicular access.

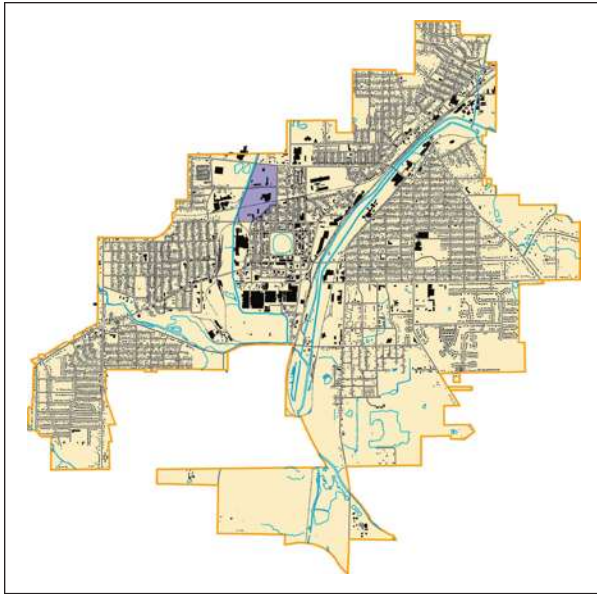


Figure 43 - Civic Campus/Residential Target Development Area



### Civic Campus/Residential Infill

One of the great strengths of Barberton is the new high school and its related campus. This top-notch facility creates a strong impression of Barberton's commitment to its schools as well as a potential anchor for the northern portion of downtown. One of the major detriments of the High School is the poor development pattern that surrounds the location, particularly at Norton and Barber Roads.

If the new middle school cannot be constructed in the preferred site south of the high school, there is an opportunity to integrate it into a new Civic Campus on the northern edge of the downtown district. In order to create a true civic campus in the area, a larger approach to this development could be considered. Nearby the high school campus along Norton Avenue is the location of a public park, the service garage on Brady Avenue, and the previous elementary school for the area. This also includes the current armory site which will be acquired by the city in the near future. With this ground already largely in civic ownership, this area could be expanded to the south side of Brady Avenue, currently an underutilized industrial area. This on-again-off-again site for industrial use could instead become the site of the new middle school. This idea has several advantages. First of all, the site is large enough to accommodate the middle school along with the auxiliary bus drop-offs, playing fields, and parking desired in a modern facility. Secondly, the rear of the site can use floodplain areas for playing fields, maximizing the use of the area. Furthermore, in addition to linking to the northern civic areas, this site is directly across the river from the new baseball complex, setting up a recreational/school/civic campus

edge encircling the west and north edges of downtown. The civic campus would provide an excellent location for an outdoor public swimming pool complex, providing an excellent complement to the proposed natatorium. With the added amenities of water slides and play areas, some Ohio communities are now able to sustain these outdoor pool facilities without a drain on community resources. They can, with a sufficient service population, break even or make money for the operating entity. As the area is not served by other outdoor pool facilities, this is a legitimate possibility here. The location for this swimming pool indicated in the plan is in the center of the proposed civic campus, along Norton near the current armory site.

Negotiations are underway to have the armory site placed under the City's control. It is proposed that this site will be utilized for a new Justice Center which could house the Barberton Police Department, municipal courts and other municipal uses. This use would integrate well with the proposed Civic Campus which aims to concentrate these types of services. Primary municipal offices such as the mayor's office and city services should be retained as a part of the downtown business district. To complete this portion of the civic campus, the service department uses might be relocated to a more traditionally industrial location elsewhere in the city as there are numerous sites that were historically industrial but no longer thrive. This could allow the working-class, yet classic character of the city service building to be put to use as a recreational center for the area.

Overall, the impacts could be tremendous. First of all, this would set up a truly top-rate civic campus serving the en-



Figure 44 - Potential Civic Campus site development plan.



Figure 45 - Alternate Civic Campus site development plan with bordering residential component

tire city. Secondly, redevelopment throughout the northern portion of downtown would be likely, given the proximity to schools and recreational amenities.

If the industrial site is not used for the centralized middle school, it alternately can be used for single-family residential infill. Its proximity to the high school and planned civic amenities such as the pool, recreation facility, and playing fields make it a likely development opportunity. It is important for this northern downtown neighborhood to become re-established with quality housing that will compliment the existing neighborhood and serve as a focal point for other neighborhood housing improvements within the area.

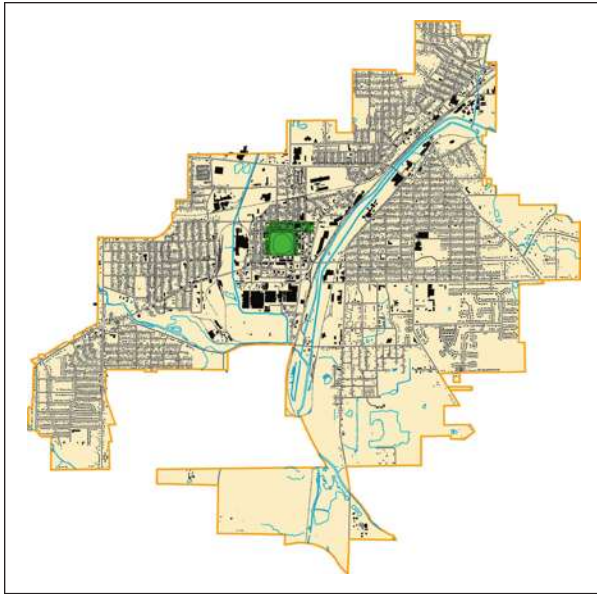


Figure 46 - Lake Anna Historic Residential Target Development Area



## Lake Anna Historic Residential

Barberton's historic housing stock on the streets surrounding Lake Anna can be seen as a great asset to the community because of its historic charm, unique architectural details, and great revitalization potential. Because of current market conditions in the City, the large historic houses are not a viable housing option for many residents because they are expensive to renovate and costly to maintain as single-family residences. Houses have since deteriorated and many have been subdivided and "added onto" in order to make multiple units out of a single structure. This has altered the historic character of the neighborhood as many of the architectural details have been removed or covered. Another condition for some of these houses alongside Lake Anna Park is that they have converted to professional offices and bed and breakfasts. The City wishes to improve the downtown housing and encourage renovations to these structures. The area around the lake has been rezoned to high density multi-family residential which is most likely the cause for many of the multi-family conversions of the single-family structures. However, the zoning category of these properties is not as essential as the form to which any modifications of these structures takes place.

The City should focus on preserving the historic character of the neighborhood by controlling the urban form. It is recommended that the City develop an overlay district for the RM-30 zoning district and other adjacent residential zoning districts which can be considered a part of the downtown housing. The review of the overlay district can be accomplished by extending the purview of the existing downtown review commission. Guidelines should be developed and focus on good architectural practices that have the ability to blend the historic architectural context with modern architectural forms. Inappropriate additions

and renovations to historic structures should be removed and original structures restored to their greatest extent possible.

New construction of buildings could also occur if a contributing building is not compromised. Development patterns should be similar to those in height, massing, and form as single family houses. Further analysis may need to be done to determine acceptable redevelopment patterns. Structures such as townhomes or flats could be successfully integrated and not intrude onto the original single-family character the neighborhood.

Many cities have been quite successful in promoting revitalization of downtown historic residential structures by allowing light commercial and professional office uses in what would traditionally be single-family neighborhoods. The City could alter the zoning category of the historic residential district to promote commercial businesses to renovate the structures, but also permit residential uses. Light commercial uses should only be limited to those properties adjacent to the lake and not allowed to encroach into the residential neighborhoods beyond. A Live-Work zoning category that would allow light commercial uses such as lawyer's offices, accounting offices, and other professional services as well as residential living in the same structure would also be an appropriate. Renovation of structures into partial or full commercial use must follow strict adherence to developed guidelines, which would promote the historic urban form of the area. Any commercial uses must utilize existing on-street parking or rear lot parking which does not require extensive additional paving.

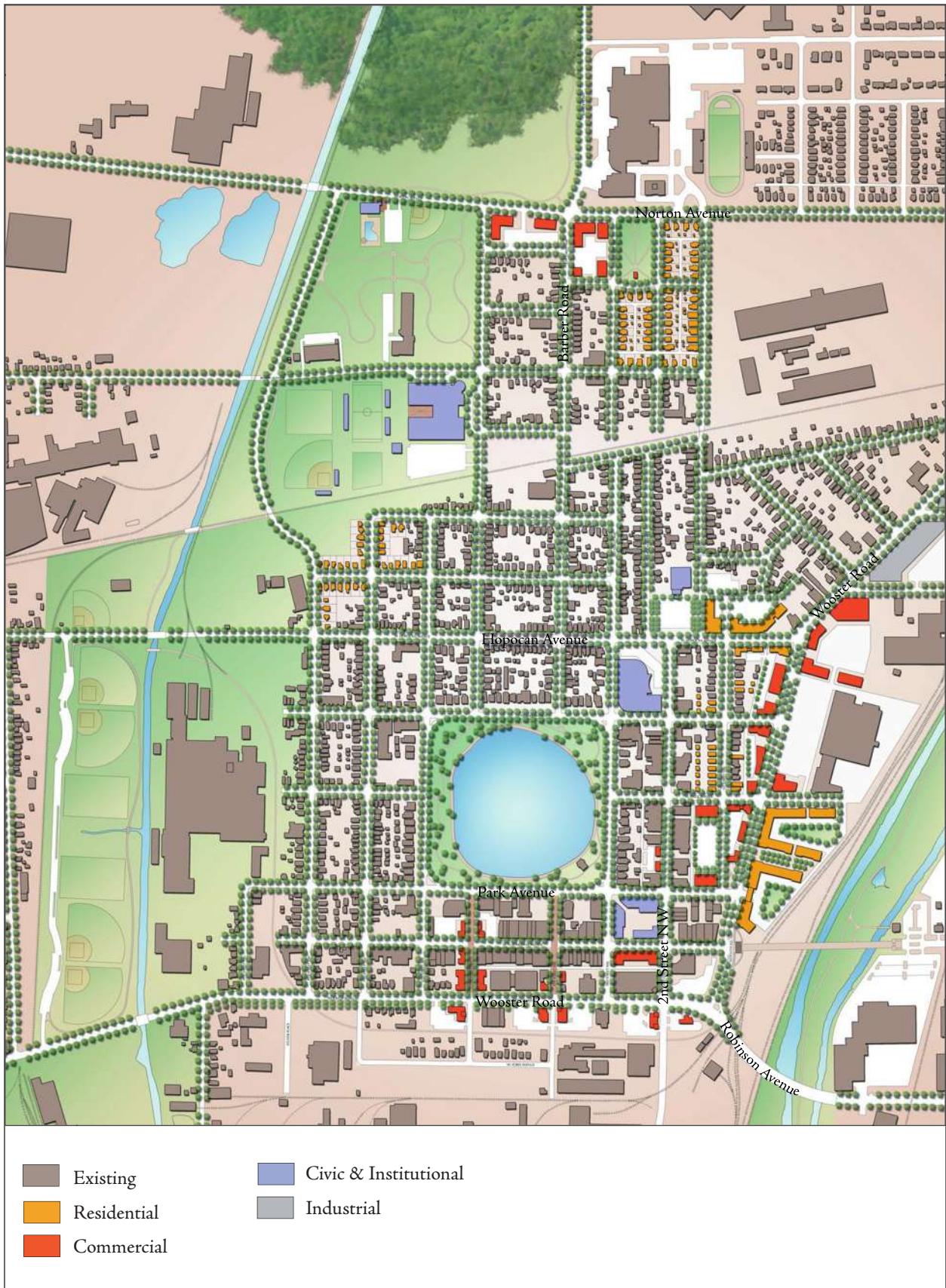


Figure 47 - Downtown Vision Plan. This plan indicates the combination of downtown target area plans into a vision for improvements to the core of Barborton. With the implementation of these incremental steps, overall community improvements to the historic core could lead toward reestablishing Barborton as a destination community.

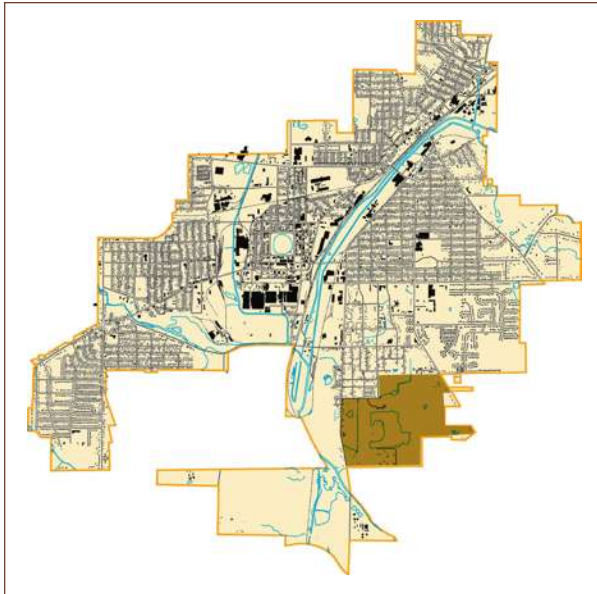


Figure 48 - South Quarry Target Development Area

## South Quarry

The South Quarry redevelopment area is located on the far south side of Barberton and is currently an active quarry facility. However, the quarry operation is expected to end in the near future. As this is a relatively “clean” quarrying operation from an environmental standpoint, this area creates a strong opportunity for redevelopment.

The primary redevelopment use explored is the potential for single-family housing in the \$200,000 price range. This housing would fill a need identified in the community through the comprehensive planning process. There are several sites that have been identified for this type of housing development and the south quarry was chosen for further investigation in this plan due to several factors. As mentioned the site should be available for redevelopment soon. Secondly, the quarry presents an opportunity to create a site amenity for residential uses once it is re-vegetated and allowed to completely fill with water as a sizable quarry lake. Although man-made, this amenity serves as a focal point for this area in the way that other environmentally challenged lakes around the city are unable to do.

This plan indicates one suggested roadway network for the site, but specific design will be determined at the time of development. Important though, is the concept of an interconnected street grid that relies on a hierarchy of roads for vehicular distribution throughout the neighborhood.

The second use indicated for the site is a continuation of light industrial use on the south and west portions of the site. A need throughout Barberton is additional small light-industrial sites located along major roadways. This is already a proven location of industrial use and small-scale,

## Key Target Area Development Standards:

The following are basic standards that should also be utilized in the development of single-family housing in this area:

- ✦ Houses should be traditional in design, utilizing characteristics found in traditional American architecture
- ✦ Houses should have four-sided architecture, utilizing the same high-quality finish on all sides of the structure.
- ✦ Use of natural or hardi-plank quality exterior materials are encouraged.
- ✦ Mechanical devices should be located in rear or side yards and screened from public rights-of-way.
- ✦ Garage doors are encouraged to be side-loaded, not facing onto the primary right-of-way.
- ✦ Where garage doors face the primary right-of-way, they should be recessed a minimum of 3 feet behind the front house facade.
- ✦ Alley access is encouraged, but with sufficient distance between the garage and rear lot line to allow parking off of the alley.

well-designed facilities in this location would be appropriate. The significant size of the quarry lake allows a buffer from the residential use assuming proper re-vegetation of the quarry edge and an adjacent buffer.

Regarding the green vegetated area proposed adjacent to the quarry, this open space could provide a recreational amenity in the southern portion of Barberton. It would also create a destination along future walking/bike trail linkages planned for throughout the community.



South Quarry Residential Benchmarks



Figure 49 - Potential site development plan for the South Quarry Target Development Area



Figure 50 - Potential site development plan for the Robinson Avenue Target Development Area

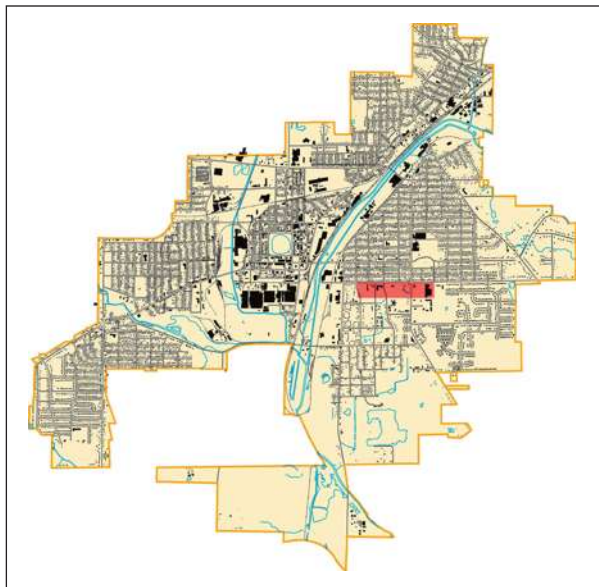


Figure 51 - Robinson Avenue Target Development Area

## Robinson Avenue

The Robinson Avenue target area is located in the eastern portion of Barberton extending east from the Tuscarawas River to the intersection of 5th Street SE. This target area is considered an essential piece in Barberton's land use plan because of the new Robinson Avenue bridge that will create a direct connection between this area and Wooster Avenue. This new bridge will serve as the primary connection between the eastern neighborhoods and downtown Barberton. Vehicles trips will be diverted to Robinson Avenue as the old connection of the Tuscarawas Avenue bridge leading into downtown will be removed. Careful planning must for Robinson Avenue must be established in anticipation of this change.

Robinson Avenue and the intersecting road of 5th Street SE serves as the primary neighborhood commercial and retail center for the eastern neighborhoods of Barberton. This area contains a number of retail services including a grocery store, restaurants, and banks. Also located within the Robinson Avenue corridor are many of the remaining historic Anna Dean Farm barns including the Piggery, Brooder Barn, Barn No. 1, and the Heating House. Development should concentrate on the restoration of these structures and adaptive reuse. Setbacks along Robinson Av-



The Piggery

enue are also a consideration in order to preserve views to these historic structures. Surrounding development should compliment the historic architectural features of the barns such as their double fenestration, and by using high-quality building materials as the remodeled U.L. Light Middle School and the Anna Dean Retail center have done.

New retail should primarily be limited to redevelopment around the shopping center at the southeast corner of Robinson Avenue and 5th Street SE. Excessive parking areas associated with the shopping center can be redeveloped as commercial outlots. Other portions of Robinson Avenue should be designated for commercial office uses such as medical office condominiums or business offices. Corporate presence is already established for this area with the Yoder Brother's Corporate headquarters located in the Anna Dean Farm Barn No. 1. Medical office uses associated with the nearby Barberton Citizen's Hospital could suit Robinson Avenue well and integrate with other established office condominium projects already developing in this area.

Development in the corridor should emphasize pedestrian and bicycle use. Businesses should have easy access from the public sidewalk. Bike paths or six foot wide sidewalks should be established along Robinson Avenue as a part of the Bike and Trail Plan.



Robinson Avenue Benchmarks

### *Key Target Area Development Standards:*

The following are basic standards that should also be utilized in the development of Robinson Avenue commercial corridor:

- ♦ Limit the amount of commercial retail along Robinson Avenue and provide a focus on commercial office uses.
- ♦ Setbacks between 50 and 75 feet from the curb should be established along Robinson Avenue.
- ♦ Curb cuts should be limited along Robinson Avenue, utilizing secondary roads as the primary access points.
- ♦ Buildings should have a definite street presence and have front entrances facing the public road.
- ♦ Parking should be located to the rear of a building and screened from public view.

## IV. Implementation



## Barberton Implementation

- **Update the city's Capital Improvement Plan to reconstruct the north-south connections between Wooster Avenue, South Downtown Core, and Lake Anna.**

With the construction of the Robinson Avenue Bridge reallocating Wooster Road as the primary entrance into downtown from the east, improved north-south connections into the South Downtown Core and Lake Anna are essential. The city should focus first on reconnecting 5th Street which is currently not accessible to through traffic from Wooster Road to Tuscarawas Avenue. The other pedestrian alley pair, 4th Street, should be developed with the same streetscape amenities and quality as 5th Street. Reconstruction of these downtown streets must incorporate a pedestrian friendly design which includes sidewalk bump-outs at street crossings, wide sidewalks, street trees, and on-street parallel parking. Materials should be of a high quality and vary from other streets in order to slow traffic. These streets or pedestrian alleys should make the integration of pedestrians and vehicular traffic safe and comfortable.

- **Capitalize on development opportunities created by the reconstructed north-south connections.**

Much of the developable land on either side of 4th and 5th Streets is owned by the City and is being utilized as parking. The City should capitalize on economic development opportunities that promote downtown redevelopment and revitalization.

- **Establish shared public parking with redevelopment created along Wooster Road.**

The new Robinson Avenue Bridge connecting to Wooster Road will create new redevelopment opportunities on the south side of Wooster Road. This redevelopment should largely be market driven, capitalizing upon the change in traffic patterns along that portion of the road. Redevelopment in this location should be auto-oriented as to locate these uses close to the downtown but not disturb the urban fabric of Tuscarawas Avenue. Because of the nature of these uses and greater parking requirements, the City should require that a portion of the parking be utilized for public parking if the businesses are to develop at maximum parking ratios. This parking can also be used as a phased parking location for parking being lost because of the development of the north-south pedestrian alley connections.



Lake Anna



Historic Anna Dean Farm Dam



The Piggery Restoration

- ♦ **Extend Architectural Review Board jurisdiction for downtown redevelopment to properties adjacent to Wooster Road and historic residential properties around Lake Anna.**

The City should evaluate the area of influence that comprises the downtown, which could have extents as far as Barberton High School to the north, Diamond Match properties to the south of Wooster Road, the BCF Sports Complex to the west, and Magic City Plaza to the east. This will enable a higher level of design review for important redevelopment projects occurring along Wooster Road, ensure historic integrity of many of the houses in surrounding downtown neighborhoods, and provide general guidance to the development strategy for the downtown area.

- ♦ **Establish incentives for residential opportunities which re-establish the historically residential character of downtown neighborhoods, provide specialized housing options for targeted population groups, and developments which integrate a mix of incomes.**

Incentives can include tax abatements, land acquisition assistance, and off-setting costs associated with increased infrastructure expenditures from infill development. Many of the incentives for residential projects should focus on encouraging infill development in order to provide a catalyst for revitalization of existing neighborhoods adjacent to the downtown. Key goals for housing include improvements to the appearance of residential uses in primary gateway corridors into the City and around the downtown core. Infill development of housing in strategic neighborhood places should be used for the beginnings of neighborhood reinvestment for these areas.

Barberton has also experienced a higher placement of low income housing developments. While these developments play an important societal role and housing function, the housing model that they were built upon is outdated. Housing practices now integrate both market-rate and subsidized housing as the preferred practice when providing for low income housing. Special incentives should be made available which specifically target this type of housing need.

- ♦ **Establish commercial development guidelines along major gateway corridors – Wooster Road, State Street, Norton Ave, Barber Road, Van Buren Avenue, and 5th St NE.**

Development located along these corridors should be especially sensitive as they are the major entries into the City. Both commercial and residential development should incorporate proper site design, high quality buildings and architecture, and proper screening. General development standards are incorporated into the Master Plan, but more specific development standards should be developed as a separate enabling document.

Another enforcement measure that the city could enact is the requirement to bury overhead utilities. The visual clutter that many overhead lines create is detrimental to the aesthetics of the major gateway corridors. If a TIF district becomes established in these corridors, burying utilities should be a primary objective that the City facilitates when monies become available.

- ♦ **Establish TIF district for planned light industrial/commercial uses along Wooster Avenue and Van Buren Road.**

One of the major goals for economic development is the notion that Barberton becomes a location to foster smaller start-up companies. If these companies are to become successful, they could grow and occupy the larger industrial sites in the City. Establishing sites for these small start-up companies requires generally flat lots averaging between 1 and 5 acres and adequate access to the interstate. As a future land use recommendation, much of the land between Wooster Road and Coventry Road could serve as the location for redevelopment of these small light industrial lots. This land use recommendation also helps create a defining character for Wooster Road which is a mix of commercial, residential, and light industrial uses. The light industrial uses should be developed with basic design guidelines in place to create an appropriate front door on Wooster Road and could be a part of the commercial development guidelines for major gateway streets. Future land use recommendations for the industrial corridor also include portions of Van Buren. Tax abatements should be considered by the city to initiate this change in land use along Wooster Road. Assistance with parcel acquisition may also be necessary. Rezoning within this future light industrial area should be of a planned district (either a Planned Unit Development or Planned Commercial Development) type of zoning.



The Heating House



Lake Anna Park



Tuscarawas Avenue Commercial

- ♦ **Make improved road connections along Coventry Road and extend it towards I-71 and downtown. Build service road linkages connecting Coventry Road with Van Buren Road.**

Providing a more appropriate transit route for vehicles associated with the light industrial corridor along Wooster Road will be important for promoting economic redevelopment. Level of service upgrades for Coventry and Van Buren Roads should be prioritized. A connection of the service road should be made as close as possible to the interchange of Wooster Road and I-71.

- ♦ **Implement streetscape improvement projects along Wooster Road (street trees, sidewalk improvements, gateway features)**

Streetscape improvements should be made along a signature roadway like Wooster Road. This gateway into the community of Barberton should reflect the quality of the community. By adding elements like sidewalk improvements, street trees and other amenities, the roadway will become a walkable, inviting streetscape that will draw people into the downtown business district.

These improvements can be achieved through individual developments, provided an overall streetscape improvement plan is in place. This streetscape plan should identify the amenities to be added to the streetscape as well as a prescriptive approach to where amenities are located and the dimensions and style of any improvements made to the sidewalk zone.

Additionally, the City could implement a streetscape improvement plan for the corridor. This would require a streetscape plan prescribing the amenities and the organization of the proposed streetscape improvements. Money could be allocated to improve the Wooster Road Corridor within the right-of-way.

- ♦ **Encourage redevelopment of Block 7 with an institutional use that brings long-term, daily trips into downtown Barberton**

Locating institutional or civic uses within a downtown core will ensure a base of users for that business district. This is a key component to a successful downtown for the City of Barberton. These users would provide a market for restaurants, coffee shops and other uses that would locate in the downtown core. With users making frequent daily trips in to the downtown they not only become customers for the downtown businesses they also provide a vibrant ele-

ment of people on the street. An institutional or civic use in the downtown core provides a stable, regular base of users that provides a good platform on which to improve the entire downtown core.

The City should encourage the location of an institutional use in Block 7. An appropriate institutional use for downtown Barberton could be a community college. If this type of user is found, the city should coordinate with institutional users to build a parking structure.

- ♦ **City could provide incentives to incorporate public parking for downtown users.**

Parking within a downtown fabric is often not conducive to the desired development pattern. Accommodating parking is more difficult in an urban setting. With limited land area and priority for a quality streetscape it is often much more complicated to adequately provide parking for each user. Therefore innovative parking techniques must be employed so that the urban character of the downtown is preserved and enhanced.

One such technique is to pool the parking needs of the downtown in accessible locations. This is currently done with public parking at the Block 7 site. This plan encourages locating parking north and south of the main commercial core with shared parking along Wooster Road, and better access to current underutilized spaces to the north and south.

Surface parking is likely to be adequate for the foreseeable future in the downtown core, however the City could examine the potential for constructing a parking garage as part of the long term evolution of the area. A likely potential location would be between 4th and 5th streets behind the Lake Theater.

- ♦ **Establish an interconnected, looping bikepath system along Wooster Avenue, Robinson Avenue, Van Buren Road. Link bikepath with Ohio & Erie Canal trail system.**

An important component of a successful bike trail system is its connections within a community and the connections outside the community. By creating a loop around the core area of Barberton, the system provides access via bike for commuters and recreational cyclists alike. Secondly, a connection made to the Ohio & Erie Canal Trail System will expand the bike system of Barberton. This connection would allow users to join an impressive regional trail system. Additionally, this connection to the regional bikeway

system will bring users from other areas of northeast Ohio into Barberton.

The establishment of bikepaths will most likely be done through a piecemeal approach and could take several to create complete connectivity. Bike paths should be a standard requirement along targeted roadways when sites are being developed even if an immediate connection cannot be made. Through this persistent requirement, the pieces of the bikepath will come together to form a fully connected path system

Assistance from the City to make any final connections may be necessary. There are a number of grants and funding sources available to assist with the costs of establishing a bikepath system. These include the Clean Ohio Trails Fund from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Transportation Enhancement funds distributed from the Ohio Department of Transportation, and SAFETEA-LU funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

- ♦ **Establish TIF district encouraging mixed-use redevelopment (including residential) for the Magic City shopping plaza**

The prominent location of the Magic City Shopping Plaza provides a site conducive for redevelopment in an urban mixed use pattern. It is located along the primary corridor of Wooster Road and it is close to the downtown core of Barberton. This site could become an asset to the community of Barberton by redeveloping with mixed uses including residential with high quality architecture and a site design that promotes walkability and accessibility. The development should include office, retail and residential uses. The city should encourage such a development by establishing a TIF (Tax Incremental Financing) District to stimulate redevelopment of the property and possible tax abatements to include a mix of uses on the site. Revenue produced from the TIF fund could go towards public investment such as streetscape improvements, gateway features, and the burying of powerlines in the public rights-of-way.



## COMPLETE LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE #	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
1.	Master Plan Study Area	page 2
2.	Barberton Population 1930 to 2000	page 8
3.	Population by Age Group 1990 and 2000	page 9
4.	Percentage of Elderly Households (65 years and older) 1990 and 2000	page 9
5.	Year Structures Built	page 13
6.	Assessed Value Per Acre	page 14
7.	Assessed Value	page 15
8.	Recommnd Location of Future Residential	page 16
9.	Housing Value	page 16
10.	Zoning Districts	page 17
11.	Existing Land Use	page 17
12.	Proposed Light Industrial Corridor	page 18
13.	Typical Redeveloped Industrial Parcel	page 19
14.	New Robinson Avenue Bridge Connector	page 21
15.	Location of Publicly Owned Land and Parks	page 22
16.	Targeted Future Open Space Acquisition and Bike Path Plan	page 24
17.	Natural Features	page 24
18.	Target Development Areas	page 26
19.	South Downtown Core	page 27
20.	Aerial photograph of South Downtown Core Target Development Area	page 28
21.	Block #7 Before and After	page 29
22.	Pedestrian alley concept on 5th Street	page 30
23.	5th Street - Current and Proposed	page 31
24.	South Downtown Core Development Plan	page 33
25.	South and East Downtown Core Parking	page 34
26.	Areas within Walking Distance of South Downtown Core	page 35
27.	Phased Parking Locations in South Downtown Core	page 36
28.	East Downtown Core	page 37
29.	Aerial photograph of East Downtown Core Target Development Area	page 37
30.	Wooster Road Proposed Cross Section	page 37
31.	Hopocan Avenue/Wooster Road Intersection	page 37
32.	East Downtown Core Target Development Area	page 38
33.	Wooster/Hopocan Before and After	page 39
34.	Proposed Magic City Shopping Center Redevelopment	page 40
35.	Potential pedestrian bridge conversion of the Tuscarawas Avenue Bridge	page 41
36.	Tuscarawas Trailhead	page 41
37.	Existing and Preferred Downtown Blocks	page 42
38.	Downtown Block Arrangements	page 43
39.	East Downtown Core Commercial	page 43
40.	Middle School / Residential Infill Development Area	page 44
41.	Preferred Middle School Site Plan	page 45
42.	Alternate Middle School Site Plan	page 45
43.	Civic Campus / Residential Infill	page 46
44.	Potential Civic Campus Development Site Plan	page 47
45.	Alternate Civic Campus Development Site Plan	page 47
46.	Lake Anna Historic Residential	page 48
47.	Downtown Vision Plan	page 49
48.	South Quarry	page 50
49.	Potential South Quarry Development Site Plan	page 51
50.	Potential Robinson Avenue Development Site Plan	page 52
51.	Robinson Avenue	page 52