

PARMA SDAT



WELCOME TO

PARMA

MAYOR DEAN DEPIERO

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Introduction

In November 2007, Parma, Ohio submitted a proposal to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for a Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) to assist the city and its citizens in addressing key issues facing the community. The issues included planning and land use, economic development, historic preservation, and transportation. The AIA accepted the proposal and, after a preliminary visit by a small group in August 2008, recruited a multi-disciplinary group of volunteers to serve on the SDAT Team. In October 2008, the SDAT Team members worked closely with local officials, community leaders, technical experts, and citizens to study the community and its concerns. The team used its expertise to frame a wide range of recommendations, which were presented to the community in a public meeting. This report represents a narrative summary of the findings and recommendations that were presented to the community.

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) Program

The Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT) program focuses on the importance of developing sustainable communities through design. The mission of the SDAT program is to provide technical assistance and process expertise to help communities develop a vision and framework for a sustainable future. The SDAT program brings together multidisciplinary teams of professionals to work with community stakeholders and decision-makers in an intensive planning process. Teams are composed of volunteer professionals representing a range of disciplines, including architects, urban design professionals, economic development experts, land use attorneys, and others.

Today, communities face a host of challenges to long-term planning for sustainability, including limited resources and technical capacity, ineffective public processes and poor participation. The SDAT approach is designed to address many of the common challenges communities face by producing long-term sustainability plans that are realistic and reflect each community's unique context. Key features of the SDAT approach include the following:

- Customized Design Assistance. The SDAT is designed as a customized approach to community assistance which incorporates local realities and the unique challenges and assets of each community.
- A Systems Approach to Sustainability. The SDAT applies a systems-based approach to community sustainability, examining cross-cutting issues and relationships between issues. In order to accomplish this task, the SDAT forms multi-disciplinary teams that combine a range of disciplines and professions in an integrated assessment and design process.

- **Inclusive and Participatory Processes.** Public participation is the foundation of good community design. The SDAT involves a wide range of stakeholder viewpoints and utilizes short feedback loops, resulting in sustainable decision-making that has broad public support and ownership.
- **Objective Technical Expertise.** The SDAT Team is assembled to include a range of technical experts (planners, architects, economists and others) from across the country. Team Members do not accept payment for services in an SDAT. They serve in a volunteer capacity on behalf of the AIA and the partner community. As a result, the SDAT Team has enhanced credibility with local stakeholders and can provide unencumbered technical advice.
- **Cost Effectiveness.** By employing the SDAT approach, communities are able to take advantage of leveraged resources for their planning efforts. The AIA contributes up to \$15,000 in financial assistance for each project by covering the team's expenses. The SDAT team members volunteer their labor and expertise, allowing communities to gain immediate access to the combined technical knowledge of top-notch professionals from varied fields. Finally, the SDAT process employs a compressed schedule and the application of innovative public participation techniques to leverage resources effectively and produce timely results.
- **Results.** Many communities want to become more sustainable but are immobilized by conflicting agendas, politics, personalities, or even the overabundance of opportunity. Further, many communities have not yet taken stock of their current practices and policies within a sustainability framework; others have identified issues of concern but desire assistance in laying out a plan of action to increase sustainability. The intense SDAT process and compressed schedule allows a community to capitalize on SDAT information quickly and build momentum for implementation of its plan.





What Is the SDAT Program?

Communities that have participated in the SDAT program include the following:

Alexandria Township, NJ	Syracuse, NY	Windsor, CA
Oklahoma City, OK	Northeast Michigan	Tampa, FL
Northampton, MA	Lawrence, KS	Detroit, MI
Pittsfield, MA	Hagerstown, MD	Fort Worth, TX
Forest City, NC	Tucson, AZ	Leon Valley, TX
Cache Valley, UT	Englishtown, NJ	Morristown, NJ
Reno-Tahoe-Carson Region, NV	Dubuque, IA	Parma, OH
New Orleans, LA	Culver City, CA	Kauai, Hawaii
Longview, WA	Central City, LA	Fellsmere, FL
Guemes Island, WA	Albany, NY	

The SDAT program is modeled on the Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) program, one of AIA's longest-running success stories. While the R/UDAT program was developed to provide communities with specific design solutions, the SDAT program provides broad assessments to help frame future policies or design solutions in the context of sustainability and help communities plan the first steps of implementation. Through the Design Assistance Team (DAT) program, over 500 professionals from 30 disciplines have provided millions of dollars in professional pro bono services to more than 150 communities across the country. The SDAT program leverages the pivotal role of the architectural community in the creation and support of sustainable and livable communities.

The following report includes a narrative account of the Parma, Ohio SDAT project recommendations, with summaries concerning several principle areas of investigation. The recommendations are made within the broad framework of sustainability, and are designed to form an integrated approach to future sustainability efforts in the city.



SUSTAINABILITY AS THE VEHICLE TO THE CITY'S FUTURE

Many definitions of sustainability exist, and the definitions are frequently conceptionally different. One that is in wide use has been adopted by several governments including the US EPA:

“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

-UN Brundtland Commission et. al.

This definition captures the common feel for future thinking in most definitions while recognizing current generation needs. Other definitions exist that capture other facets of modern connotations of the definition:

“of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged”

-Merriam Webster Dictionary

While dry, this definition is important if only to focus on some of the historical significance of the idea. Indeed, if we imagine only using resources that are not diminished with our use, the available consumption is significantly narrowed.

“America’s challenge is to create a life-sustaining Earth, a future in which prosperity and opportunity increase while life flourishes and pressures on the oceans, Earth and atmosphere diminish.”

- President’s council on Sustainable Development

Diminishing current levels of pressure certainly seems more attainable, but is it the definition we want to use for the word ‘sustainable’?

“Sustainability is an economic state where the demands placed upon the environment by people and commerce can be met without reducing the capacity of the environment to provide for future generations. It can also be expressed in the simple terms of an economic golden rule for the restorative economy: leave the world better than you found it, take no more than you need, try not to harm the life of the environment, make amends if you do.”

-Paul Hawkins – The Ecology of Commerce

This definition puts sustainability through the lens of an economic state. This is highly useful when we are envisioning business models, government incentives or maybe city economies.

Why Have a Common Vision or Definition?

A common vision can frequently give a community some beneficial early tools enabling a shared path forward. A common language is necessary for any conversation on sustainability to break down any real or perceived barriers to progress. Context is an important component of any definition of sustainability. In the context of Parma, the definition may encompass several key areas around which the city's future viability and the community's livability depend. The SDAT team believes it is important to view sustainability as a lens through which the community will continue to thrive into the future.



BACKGROUND AND IMPRESSIONS

The first impression that the City of Parma communicates is “Progress through Partnerships”. The phrase “Progress through Partnerships” was first coined by the late Mayor Michael Ries, and this visionary statement serves as the foundation for the city’s future. Mayor DePiero says, “I believe ‘Progress through Partnerships’ is more than a slogan, but a vision of the City’s future success, and the way I have asked my administration to conduct business everyday.” During the American Institute of Architects Sustainable Design Assessment Team visits time was spent with the leaders of Parma, from both the public and private sector, and that simple yet powerful message was demonstrated as the foundation for a city that is not only changing but redefining its future based on a strong history.

What would Parma’s postcard’s look like today? What did Parma’s postcard’s look like in 1980? The two questions at first sound contrary to the following narrative based on addressing the regulatory model but it is that very quality of life that an effective regulatory model conveys. The progress realized in the city’s future will be part of a regulatory model that addresses the quality of life in the built environment for all living, working and recreating in Parma through that partnership.

Diane Georgopulos, FAIA, in the AIA publication “Livability 101” speaks to managing change by stating: “By being aware of the specific attributes that create a sense of a place in their community, civic leaders can better determine what efforts will enhance livability in both the near and long term.”

In the spirit of that message we realize that redefining Parma should not be slowed by the heavy hand of bureaucracy or regulation. Rather, we must explore and evaluate regulations that promote growth and development as Parma charts its course into the future. The cornerstones for developing that road to Parma’s future through tempered regulation should focus on consistency and the positive changes brought on by redefining Parma’s postcard.

Parma is a city in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and is the largest suburb of Cleveland. As of the 2000 census, the city had a total population of 85,655. The 2003 estimate put the population at 83,861. Parma was originally part of Parma Township, created in 1826. The first settlers were the Benaiah Fay family from New York State, who settled along the Cleveland-Columbus Road in 1816. The name was taken from Parma, New York, where it was probably derived from the early-19th century fascination with classical Italy. During the 19th century, Parma remained largely agricultural. In 1912, a portion of the township seceded to form the village of Parma Heights. In 1924, Parma was incorporated as a village, and in 1926 it adopted the mayor-council form of government. In 1931 a proposition to annex it to the city of Cleveland was defeated, and Parma became a city.

Parma's tremendous growth came after World War II as young families began moving from Cleveland into the Suburbs. During the Cold War, Parma's Nike Site Park housed Nike missiles located in underground silos. Between 1950 and 1980, Parma's population soared from less than 20,000 to more than 110,000. More recently, the population has declined to well below 90,000. It is important to trace the history of Parma to fully understand its future.

The housing market in Parma continues to evolve and fortunately provides a variety of models that can meet needs ranging from single professionals to young couples to families with older children, while still providing a sense of place and home for the empty nesters and retired community. Revitalizing older "original" neighborhoods through an aggressive and effective property maintenance program, the city can offer a housing product that satisfies contributes to community livability. The new urbanism movement of the 1980's and 1990's recognized the benefits of complete neighborhoods. New urbanist neighborhoods are designed to contain a diverse range of housing and jobs, and to be walkable. Projects located throughout the United States have been modeled and constructed to reflect these qualities; qualities that Parma already has. Lot size, building setbacks, parks and local shopping districts all within walking distance are positive aspects of Parma's neighborhoods that must be recognized as assets. On the other hand, in 2006, 41 new homes were built in Walter's Grove and the site of the old police station at W. 54th Street and Snow Road. In the southern end of the city, the new Arlington Place and Juniper Cove developments offer new homes that range in price from \$200,000 to \$300,000. Meeting the needs of new home building can be attributed to the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission that was made up of members of government, academia and the local business community. This commission in 2006 worked together to develop recommendations to make Parma even better. One of its recommendations was to pursue high-end housing in the community. Mayor DePiero was quoted saying that "Construction of vibrant new neighborhoods is a key to attracting new families to the city".



Working with the stakeholders in the community Parma has demonstrated success in the housing market through a variety of programs as well as an effective regulatory model. The success of new construction is demonstrated by the buildings department that not only administers but educates owners and builders on codes exercised through review, permitting and inspection. Property maintenance continues to capture and revitalize older neighborhoods making what was once old, new again. Finally, Parma is in an extraordinary position during this time of economic challenge with less than two hundred and fifty (250) foreclosures. Working with the First Suburbs consortium Parma continues to aggressively address this potentially challenging problem. Those foreclosed properties are tracked and monitored regarding lawn and maintenance concerns while in foreclosure in an effort to maintain neighborhood value and avoid any blighted property issues.

A comprehensive approach has been adopted by the leadership, working with the community. It has resulted in the redefining of Parma through safety, infrastructure and recreation. In 2008, a program was introduced to address a police focus on neighborhood clean up beyond the built environment. Law enforcement was included in promoting the community's quality of life by addressing nuisance concerns of noise, abandoned motor vehicles and related concerns. The Crisis Intervention Team works together on unusual cases involving properties that may be unfit for human habitation due to building safety/health issues. Team members work together in trying to get the parties living in these properties the help they need to address their situation and have the property retuned to a positive condition for themselves and the community.



CHANGING COMMUNITY:

Changing Administrative Tools

Zoning

The City of Parma is shaped and defined by its strong demographic and cultural foundation. This diversity reaches beyond the typical American city when we consider how the built environment is affected and influenced by those individuals living and even visiting the city. The theoretical reasoning behind zoning is to separate uses that are thought to be incompatible. In practice its application is very academic. Zoning is used to prevent new development from interfering with existing residential or business use and to preserve the “character” of a community. Ironically, in 1926 the constitutionality of zoning ordinances was upheld in Euclid, Ohio. There, a property owner challenged in court the argument that restricting use of property violated the fourteenth amendment of the United States Constitution. Though initially ruled unconstitutional by lower courts, the zoning ordinance was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. In doing so, the Court accepted the arguments of zoning defenders that it met two essential needs. First, zoning extended and improved on nuisance law, providing advanced notice that certain types of uses were incompatible with other uses in a particular district. The second argument was that zoning was a necessary municipal-planning instrument. By the late 1920s most of the nation had developed a set of zoning regulations that met the needs of the locality.

Zoning rules must be evaluated and updated to meet the current development to sustain a harmonious growth. According to James A. Moore, mixed-use developments are now making a comeback across the nation. Individuals and communities are trying to reclaim these sorely missed advantages. The concept of incorporating a wide range of land uses into a single enclave is once again taking shape, whether in the form of a compact urban-infill residential development with ground-floor shops and restaurants or a multi-acre, neo-traditional neighborhood incorporating a range of residential types as well as retail, restaurant, hospitality and even office types.



Taking into consideration all of the regulatory tools that shape and affect our built environment, planning and zoning ordinances must be continuously evaluated and at times amended to recognize the continuous changes within the community. We must recognize that our cities are living organisms, constantly changing and responding to a variety of environmental changes. Unlike the static resolve found in individual buildings that we regulate regarding health, safety and welfare, the zoning ordinances of the past most likely will not translate to the lifestyle of the community today. Parma's planning and zoning ordinance was last updated under resolution 187-93 which passed on July 19, 1993. One of the most significant concerns with the current zoning regulations is that mixed uses are not permitted. We must recognize that the dynamic result of Parma's success highlighted from 1950 through 1980 had little to do with strict onerous zoning regulation. The success in Parma's future can be found in its rich diverse neighborhoods; those very components that are recognized in the field today as key ingredients to the sustainable city that our current generation desires.

We must move forward cautiously with the understanding that the safe and conventional wisdom of "more is better" when developing regulations does not guarantee successful neighborhoods or communities with regard to zoning rules. When evaluating the current zoning regulatory model for Parma, restraint should be exercised specific to the depth and breadth of its purpose. The challenge of defining compatibility with respect to sustainable neighborhoods is one component. The criteria addressing height, setback and lot coverage focuses on the physical built dynamics of the community. Balance must be achieved between both of these dynamics.

The health of the community can be affected through careful planning and design standards. In a report written by David Allison, AIA and Dian Battisto, PhD, they present the following argument. "It is incumbent on civic leaders to encourage their respective communities to be planned and designed in ways that provide incentives for spending more time walking and less time in automobiles". Implementing planning guidelines and zoning regulations that promote the close proximity of daily-living activities, services, and settings so that walking to work, school, shopping, and recreation is both possible and convenient should be a city imperative. Mixed-use development enhances human health because it locates the various activities of daily living within closer proximity to each other, thus providing greater incentives for people to walk or bike to them. Planners and designers can locate small-scale civic uses (such as libraries, recreation centers, parks and greenways) in ways that appropriately buffer residential development from large-scale, higher density commercial elements.

Streamlining

The most effective approach to regulation is based on the model of Inform – Educate – Enforce. Recognizing the benefits of this model gives the regulator the confidence that he or she will be working with an individual knowledgeable in the process. Not only will the end user and stakeholder understand the regulations but alleviate the burden of enforcement in the end.

Administrative barriers lead to a number of negative results for communities including companies that relocate their businesses to other communities and thousands of dollars per day added to construction cost. Coupled with economic loss is the potential that communities are unprepared for natural disasters and extremely slow to recover from them. Maintaining updated and contemporary codes as well as streamlining the administrative and regulatory process is one of the keys to building a successful community that does not present barriers to economic development. Detailed and involved planning is not only a long but continual process, but it has results. Those results and changes to the future of any community must be addressed by revisiting the citizen-driven process and plan that provides policy and strategic direction.

So what is streamlining and how can Parma benefit from this new philosophy? The following text is taken from a recent comprehensive document prepared for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Office of Policy Development and Research, prepared by the Alliance Affordable Housing Task Force and National Conference of States on Building Codes and Standards, addressing streamlining.



Demands on elected officials and on the government agencies they oversee have increased significantly over the past decade. Both the public and private sectors are demanding that governments provide services more effectively, efficiently and at a lower cost. Moreover, they are demanding that their state or community be able to provide more affordable housing, stimulate economic competitiveness and urban revitalization, and be able to better prepare for, respond to, and rapidly recover from natural and man-made disasters. New construction and renovation of existing buildings are vital components of our nation's economy and are critical to ensuring the welfare and safety of the American public. In this time of heightened security and increased construction, building departments are faced with a growing workload and daunting new challenges of meeting the raised expectations of the public and the construction industry for timely and effective service. Faced with such pressures and often with diminishing budgets and staff shortages, building departments have increasingly evaluated and, where necessary, restructured their programs to make effective use of information technology tools to improve both the timeliness and quality of their services. These tools have included online permitting, electronic plan submittals, plans tracking and review, GIS (Geographic Information Systems), licensing of contractors, and scheduling and conducting field inspections. Streamlining means identifying and removing barriers to effective and efficient delivery of services to the public. Streamlining modifies or restructures the day-to-day operations of an agency. This is to eliminate, or significantly reduce areas of duplicative work, overlapping and conflicting rules, regulations, processes and procedures that might be confusing or that add unnecessary time and cost to the delivery of services to the community. Streamlining looks at both public purpose and process of agencies. For building departments, the objective is more effective and efficient administration and enforcement of the building codes and standards adopted. Streamlining is not regulatory abandonment.

This consistent and effective process can be realized by simple, direct, documented regulation and codes; if it doesn't work then immediately revisit the policy through the same process that established the regulation. The City of Parma under the leadership of Mayor DePiero has taken great steps in realigning the focus of the building department. This new focus that clearly works closely with the Community Service and Economic Development Department and the Safety Department must continue and the relationships must mature over time resulting in a comprehensive approach to the success of Parma as a community. Developing simple descriptive brochures that can be made available both on line and at the buildings department counter and are an effective way to educate and inform any stakeholder in Parma. From residential and commercial submittal and permit processes, to sign regulations and fence permits, everything can be addressed efficiently and save the staff time addressing these redundant concerns.

DEFINING THE SUCCESSFUL NEIGHBORHOOD

The first impression of any community is the key to its success. The general terms of living, working and recreating are summarized by the quality of life found in any community. Attraction of services that satisfy consumer needs and expectations follow stable neighborhoods and employment. The regulatory model must be understood as one of the positive tools along with the conventional methods of community service and economic development. Growth and economic development can not be achieved at a pace that will counter the forces of decline without this key element. Parma has the unique advantage of demographic and cultural diversity, an existing variety of building options and proximity to the 40th largest city in the United States and the largest city in Ohio. Parma is part of Greater Cleveland, the largest metropolitan area in Ohio, which spans several counties and is defined in several different ways by the Census Bureau. In 2000, the Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor Metropolitan Statistical Area ranked as the 23rd largest in the United States with 2,250,871 people. Sustainable housing stock, green space, reduced commuter distance and the continued potential for not only research and development but green and sustainable industry are all found in Parma. Each of the aforementioned pieces are further supported and promoted through effective building, environmental, health and safety regulatory models.

Parma's current property maintenance program has made great strides in maintaining and redefining its neighborhoods. The diversity of those neighborhoods is a key element to growth. That growth can be measured based on population as well as property value through the simple formula of supply and demand. Parma's neighborhoods already have essential services and existing storefronts that can meet the needs of residents. Shops and businesses also can contribute to Parma's employment base. This is a key element where the City of Parma receives a majority of its operating money from municipal income tax. Miscellaneous income includes interest earned, licenses, permits & fees. Currently Parma's operating budget reports 64.67% from municipal income tax, 13.26% from State Shared Taxes, 10.58% from property tax and 11.49% from miscellaneous. This is balanced against the fact that the City of Parma has one of the lowest municipal portions of property tax rates in Cuyahoga County. Parma is the seventh largest city in Ohio and has the lowest budget of all major cities in Ohio. Easy access and proximity to one of the country's major cities, quality of life and a sustainable model all are dependent on an effective and reasonable regulatory model. This regulatory model must recognize the needs and lifestyles of singles, couples, families and seniors by growing neighborhoods, schools, recreation and entertainment



What Can Parma's Leadership do?

The successful regulatory model strives to establish, educate and then enforce the rules designed to meet the ever changing needs of the community. The existing ordinances and rules that were effective ten, twenty or even thirty years prior can not be expected to work effectively today. The current zoning ordinance must be restructured to recognize changes not only in how we live but how we conduct business. Segregation of uses is far too academic an approach when considering the sustainable neighborhood. The sign ordinance which was last updated in October 1985, intended to regulate the individual components, has resulted in a visually cluttered experience as you move around the city. Working with the police department and property maintenance program a graffiti ordinance can be established before the city is faced with a problem. Architectural review must be included as part of Parma's regulatory model - not to dictate but to serve the city comprehensively when addressing any individual project and its contextual fit.

All of these initiatives should not be taken on as city council or departmental action. The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission should serve as the model for all such initiatives where the stakeholders contribute to shaping their community. The mayor, council and departments are well suited to facilitate this process by bringing together the advocates of the vision through promotion and facilitation of community engagement. This process then returns the stewardship back to the city to act as the steward of the vision through education and enforcement.



Leveraging Existing Models

The City of Parma has a proven model in place through the Rental Property Maintenance program that addresses both apartment buildings as well as homes. This systematic approach to property maintenance inspections requires property maintenance inspectors to inspect all rental properties every year, which includes commercial as well as one and two family homes. Along with occupied property maintenance every Wednesday, vacant foreclosure properties are looked at as well. Those foreclosed properties are then maintained when necessary to maintain the integrity of the neighborhood while the cost of that maintenance is charged back to the current title holder. The property maintenance program also relies on the community by responding to complaints. In only 4 years, inspectors have worked systematically through the city performing residential inspections street to street. Those inspectors are now close to completing the first pass through the city - 2 wards out of 9 are left in 2009.

For the last 2 years, a focus on commercial and business property has also been working in commercial districts starting on Brookpark Road to the north and working south on Broadview Road, State Road, Pearl Road and Ridge Road. The Crisis Intervention Team has demonstrated successful cooperation between various departments breaking down the institutional municipal government business model barriers. Today, Parma's success in reinventing neighborhoods translates from the built environment to its citizens by meeting the needs of a variety of residents. Finally, continued contact and participation with the First Suburbs Consortium has opened the lines of communication on concerns facing the inner ring suburbs around Cleveland, including community and economic issues and the foreclosure problem facing all of our cities.

An effective Vacant and Foreclosure Program, along with Rental Property Registration, clearly is one piece of the safety model. Parma still ranks as one of the safest cities in the United States with a population between 60,000 and 100,000. Unfortunately, Parma's ranking has declined in recent years from 17th safest to 19th safest and as of November 2006, the rank has fallen further to 32nd. Recent programs with the police department have brought new focus to the issue. Coupling that initiative with the focus on the built environment will continue to reverse that concern.

Mayor DePiero recently stated that "Safe neighborhoods attract and keep young families, and new neighborhoods do too." He went on to explain that "We are beginning to hear demand for more high-end housing in our community and we will continue to work to meet the demand." "Construction of vibrant new neighborhoods is a key to attracting new families to the city." The Blue Ribbon Report also stated that the City should institute point-of-sale inspections in order to better promote and maintain the quality of homes. The Cities of Cleveland Heights and Euclid currently conduct effective point-of-sale programs. Parma should adopt similar inspections. The City should also improve its rental unit inspections, which are currently limited to external, walk-by inspections. The City should institute fees for point-of-sale inspections and increase the present fees for rental unit inspections. These programs should function as self-funding services and enable the Building Department to increase its staff of inspectors. Ultimately, this will create a more stringent inspection program that effectively serves the community by addressing the quality of its housing stock. These initiatives can not be lost; rather they should be followed through and initiated with stakeholder input.

Property Benefits

Beyond service to the community through positive growth and continued development the individual property owners benefit based on Parma's Insurance Services Organization (ISO) rating. The Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ranks both the Building Department and Fire Department. That ranking is directly related to the insurance rates property owners are faced with. Here a balance must be addressed as well specific to the cost of regulation and protection vs. the insurance rates tolerated by each property owner in the City of Parma. This overall insurance rating is important to residents as it relates to fire insurance costs and the overall attractiveness of Parma as a quality service community. Parma should make every effort to maintain a current ISO rating and should be updated regularly. The rating process not only rates the community but results in a self evaluation while identifying building program and fire protection improvements. Balance becomes the question based on the ISO ranking and the property owners tolerance and will to balance risk against taxation. Stakeholder engagement again determines if they are willing to pay for additional services.

Continued Support of Expanded Property Maintenance in Commercial Districts

The City of Parma's most recent directives published by the Blue Ribbon Commission remain an effective path to the City's future success.

Blue Ribbon Report: Previous City Plans

The City has two previously completed plans, including a 1996 study by the Urban Center of Cleveland State University and a 2004 Master Plan created by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission. The 1996 Plan identified a number of specific economic development initiatives to be considered, including guidelines and time frames for implementation. The City has successfully implemented several of the strategies identified in the 1996 Plan, including the new RTA Community Circulator and the new industrial park in the City's northwest quadrant. The 2004 Plan was very comprehensive in terms of demographic data, statistics and observations; the recommendations included therein were more general in nature.

The Commission believes that an updated Master Plan could be more effective if there were annual monitoring and evaluation. It was also noted that voter approval of a Master Plan, as has been done in Hudson and North Royalton, would give the Plan the greatest credibility and provide the City with the necessary ability to enforce the Plan's provisions. Given the limitations of both staffing and funding resources, the updated Plan needs to identify several specific high-priority, high impact initiatives that could provide immediate successes to build upon.

The following two recommendations should be pursued based on Blue Ribbon Commission recommendation.

The City should institute point of sale inspections and more stringent inspections on rental properties.

The objective is to maintain the integrity of the City's housing stock. Inspections should include interior and exterior items. Fees charged should cover 100% of the cost of the inspection programs, including the hiring of new inspectors.

The City's Community Development Department should develop a comprehensive design for commercial properties.

The staff should be given a certain time limit to bring the program back to City Council for approval and implementation. It should emphasize the entrance into Parma and the City's main corridors, particularly Ridge Road.

Landlord/Tenant Education

The City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin has successfully implemented a landlord training program for a number of years. The award winning landlord training program operates out of the Department of Neighborhood Services. The goal is to teach landlords fundamental ways to keep illegal activity out of their property. A number of potentially damaging neighborhood problems have been avoided through the landlord education program. The decline in property value, especially when activity affects the reputation of the neighborhood, can be avoided when property managers are better informed and educated. Property damage resulting from abuse, neglect and even retaliation works for the property owner and the city's property management program. Fires resulting from manufacturing or growing operations typically associated with drug activity can be avoided. Civil penalties including temporary closing of property, or even seizure, prevents the loss of rent during eviction or repair periods. The neighborhoods benefit when the fear and frustration of dealing with dangerous or threatening tenants is reduced if not eliminated. This in turn leads to decreased resentment between neighbors and property owners. Finally, any potential loss of other valued tenants is reduced as well.

In the spirit of "educate then enforce," the key is active management of the property. Landlords are educated on how their commitment to having rental agreements that meet their responsibilities also holds tenants accountable for meeting theirs. Key components to the landlord and property manager training include prevention and application screening, how code compliance (preparing the property) can protect their rights as a landlord, benefits of application screening and how to become a proactive property manager.





PLACEMAKING

Place making is a term that refers to the process of creating plazas, parks, streets and today even commercial areas that attract people because they are interesting or bring pleasure. Everyone seems to appreciate and enjoy great places even if we cannot always describe why we think they are great. To talk about place making, one must begin by talking about design. The Urban Land Institute, the national developer's organization, produces a great magazine on development trends and ideas called Urban Land. In the 2006 Nov/Dec issue, an article, "The Design Dividend", recounted a panel discussion among developers about how one defines good design.

"The panelists pointed out that cities today face a great deal of competition for residents and economic development from neighboring cities, cities across the country, and cities around the world. Urban design elements – such as human-scale development, parks, and walkability – are what make cities more attractive as places to live...The elements of high-quality design give cities an edge on the competition."

Call it one's comparative advantage or the term used in Main Street, competitive differentiation. In economic terms, the differentiated product commands a monetary premium. Simply put, people will pay more for the unique, special or authentic, that which stands out from the rest.



What can we do to give our communities a comparative advantage in this global marketplace? Writers from Richard Florida to Jeremy Rifkin have given us plenty of ideas: first class schools, visible and aggressive investment in the arts, a highly trained and educated workforce, an open and diverse populace, to name a few. Others have written at length on this topic and one can find many sources for thoughtful consideration.

Among the many ideas available there is one aspect that is well within our control and worthy of our consideration, the importance of good community design, and how the decisions we make, in both the public and private sector, contribute to creating either a place of distinction or a place to be avoided. This is a discussion worthy of a whole workshop but here are a few of the key points.

1) Good urban design reflects and respects context. It draws on its surroundings for inspiration and is indigenous, reflecting local history and culture, honestly. It does this by respecting local materials and techniques and respecting its surroundings by honoring scale, height, mass, set-back and materials.

2) Good urban design respects the local community, reflecting community desires and being driven by a local vision. Effort should be made to include local opinion in development and design decisions. Ideally this is developed in concert with design professionals who can tap into local wisdom and blend in their own expertise.

3) Good urban design is human scale. People are most comfortable in places with visual variety (but not visual chaos), a rhythm of elements, and materials that create comfort, along with buildings that do not overwhelm them in height or mass. Large buildings, well placed and with thoughtful attention to visual detail, can be used of course, as long as consideration is given to the street level experience.





4) Good urban design considers pedestrians first. Contrary to public policy of the past 50 years which has been auto oriented and auto first, good urban design gives pedestrians priority. Cities and towns should make streets and sidewalks physically and psychologically comfortable for people, with attention towards being both safe and attractive. People will walk when there is somewhere they want to go as long as it is safe, accessible and not too difficult.

5) Good urban design pays attention to streets and sidewalks and their impact on the community. Streets and their rights of way (ROW) typically occupy 25-35% of land in a community. By paying attention to this area a great deal can be done to establish a positive design foundation in a community. And good urban streets, especially in the central shopping areas, should be retail conscious. This means that there should be an awareness of retail and its need to attract customers with attention on storefronts, window displays, and the careful placement of design amenities (trees, benches, lights, etc.) to complement and not compete with or detract from shops. Parma has a great network of grid streets and sidewalks which is the basis for becoming a very walkable community. More will be said about this in a later section of this report.

6) Good urban design recognizes parking is an issue but treats it like an asset. Parking is a resource and like all resources, it needs to be managed. There are three keys to success in parking: management, regulation, and enforcement. Management begins with knowing one's inventory of spaces, both public and private and where they are relative to demand. Regulation speaks to the issue of time and cost of each space. Should some spaces be free and all day while others time-limited? Where should the all day parking be and where should the short-term parking be? The third and often overlooked key is enforcement of the rules. Unless parking rules are enforced and spaces are "turned" on a regular basis, there will be parking "shortages" and people will believe that there is parking problem. If the inventory truly does not meet the demand, another strategy to consider is to look for ways to add spaces where space is not efficiently being used such as by restriping streets and lots, or by using space behind and beside buildings. Too often when parking is perceived to be in short supply the first strategy is to propose demolishing buildings; but do not tear down structures to create parking. To do so only dilutes the shopping options and reduces the chance for creating real shopping districts. Quality structures are in short supply and there are always alternative strategies to expand the supply of spaces.

7) Good urban design provides alternatives to the car such as walking, biking and transit. Increasingly communities are looking for ways to increase mobility options for their citizens. A community that supports alternatives will be increasingly desirable. Vancouver, BC has had a twenty year strategy to attract residents to downtown and to do so, public officials there have placed emphasis on all new developments to design for five transportation modes – walking, cycling, taxis, transit, and cars, and in that order of focus.

8) Good urban design provides connectivity, connecting activity centers and places of interest. This is more than assuring street and road connections; it means thinking about sidewalks, trails, greenways, and other safe and healthy means to get from one activity center to another. By making it easy and safe for children to walk from schools to parks the likelihood of increased activity can result in healthier kids. If adults can safely and conveniently walk from home to shops, they will not only reduce their vehicle miles traveled (with all of the environmental benefits that brings) but also improve their exercise options.

9) Good urban design respects transitions between uses. This is especially important in Parma where the edge between residential and commercial is often blurred. Parma needs to protect its residential stock and not let it be turned into commercial uses. When homes are turned into commercial use, two things happen. First, the next residential space becomes less desirable and more likely to decline in value for residential use, and second, commercial activity spreads out even more and becomes even more car-dependent. While some blending of residential and commercial is desirable, such as apartments or condos over shops, business and commercial activity should be clustered in nodes to provide more of a shopping district experience and allow for more modes of transportation to apply. Independent retail is least successful when it is a destination location, independent of neighboring businesses. It is most successful when it is part of a cluster of comparable businesses or when co-located businesses can draw on similar customers. By concentrating business in districts, there is a better economic impact for all.

10) Good urban design incorporates entryways and gateways. Entryways and gateways announce that one is arriving at a special place. They are more than welcome signs, although that may be a part of the design. Entryways and gateways, thoughtfully designed and artfully placed, will reinforce Parma's unique identity and prepare visitors for a special experience. They set the tone and create the expectation for what follows. Which means that what follows must be as thoughtfully designed as the gateways themselves.





11) Good urban design recognizes that not everyone knows where to go or how to get there. Increasingly communities are turning to “wayfinding” to help people find their way around a community. At its most basic, a wayfinding system gives people information in a timely manner so that they can make decisions. At entries, key intersections, and activity centers people need to be provided with sufficient information to know where essential services are to be found, where to park, where to enter and exit, and how to find one’s way around. Smart communities help citizens and visitors alike feel comfortable navigating their way around and through town.

12) Good urban design – all good design – includes provisions for on-going maintenance. Don’t plant it, install it, or introduce it, if you can’t maintain it. Maintenance is not as exciting or fun as planting something new, but nothing creates a negative image quicker than poorly maintained planters, street furnishings, buildings or parking lots.

13) Good urban design today is green! This means incorporating the latest thinking, knowledge and best management practices regarding energy efficiency, Stormwater management, conservation and preservation into new construction as well as in-fill and rehabilitation. Some say that the ultimate recycling is historic preservation, so the reuse of existing buildings is in itself a “green” thing to do. (See section on Historic Preservation below.)

14) Good urban design is an investment! It’s about designing for a better future, designing to create a comparative advantage, but mostly designing to give people value in their daily lives. The best design adds value.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION

To more fully understand some of Parma's urban design assets, consider a focus on historic preservation. Parma has a wonderful mix of older residential properties and a few commercial properties as well that speak to the special history of this place. To help explain why this is significant, look at the Main Street program.

The Main Street program came from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a national non-profit organization. After a three-year demonstration program in the mid-west, in 1980 they created the National Main Street Center (NMSC) to work with states interested in helping their communities revive their downtowns. From an initial six states, the program grew to over 44 states in over 1900 communities across the nation. While these local programs vary in many ways, they all share the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to revitalization: organization, promotion, design, economic restructuring. The NMSC defines each of these points as follows: (see www.mainstreet.org)

“Organization involves getting everyone working toward the same goal and assembling the appropriate human and financial resources to implement a Main Street revitalization program.

“Promotion sells a positive image of the commercial district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play and invest in the Main Street district. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners, and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, retail promotional activity, special events, and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.

“Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets — such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets — is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, street lights, and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices in the commercial district, enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems, and long-term planning.

“Economic Restructuring strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Main Street program helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumers' needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district.”

Together, these four points present a compelling way to assess a community's downtown and a framework for creating goals and strategies for improvement. And this approach can also be applied to almost any community development situation; it is not limited to downtown.

Without going into a detailed explanation of Main Street - after all, Ohio has a state program and one can learn more from them (www.heritageohio.org) - it should be stressed that one of Main Street's early realizations was that if one could find an economic argument for reusing older buildings, then one would be able to save them. The Main Street philosophy that grew out of that became economic development within the context of historic preservation. But more than wanting a vehicle for preserving the past, it was learned that there are real economic impacts with historic preservation.

For example, from The Economics of Historic Preservation, we learn that "the U.S. Department of Commerce measures the impact of production within a given industry three ways: the number of jobs created, the increase in local household incomes, and the impact on all other industries. Building rehabilitation outperforms new construction in every case." (The Economics of Historic Preservation, p. 12) Due to the greater emphasis on using local materials and labor than new construction, rehabbing buildings keeps more money in the local economy where it can circulate to more people. So saving and reusing older buildings can have an even greater economic impact in the community than building new.

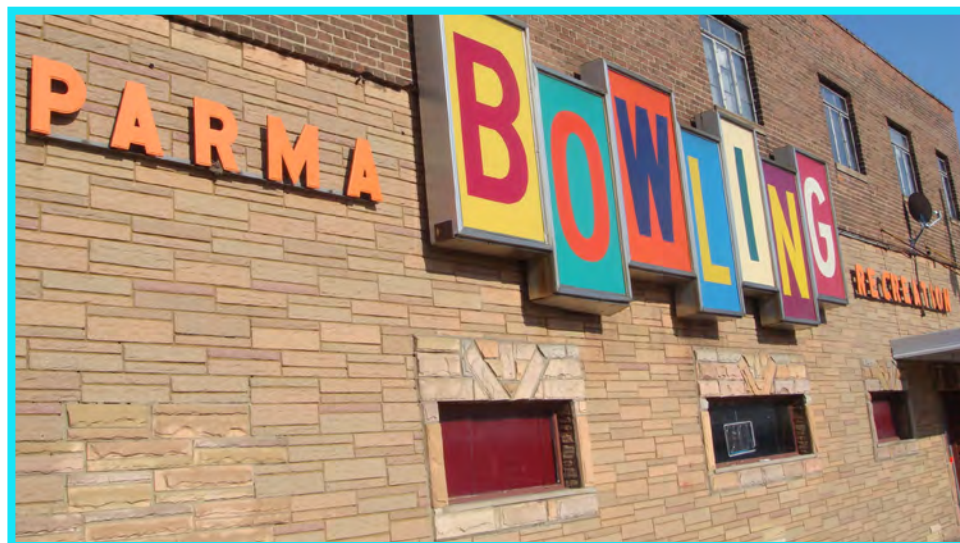


Donovan Rypkema is the author of *The Economics of Historic Preservation* and a nationally noted real estate development consultant. Mr. Rypkema has spoken and written frequently about the economic impact of historic preservation as well as its application to sustainable living. In a speech to Preservation North Carolina (<http://www.presnc.org/content/view/229/265/>) he asks, "How does historic preservation contribute to the environmental responsibility component of sustainable development?" He answers with this: consider solid waste disposal. "In the United States we collect almost one ton of solid waste per person annually. Around a fourth of the material in solid waste facilities is construction debris, much of that from the demolition of older and historic buildings."

He goes on to say many of us diligently recycle our soda cans because it's good for the environment. By comparison, a typical building in an American downtown is 25 feet wide and 120 feet deep. When we tear down one small building like this in a downtown "we have now wiped out the entire environmental benefit from the last 1,344,000 aluminum cans that were recycled. We've not only wasted an historic building, we've wasted months of diligent recycling by the people of your community." With talk in Parma and Cuyahoga County of wanting to be the green capital, any policies that incorporate demolition of historic properties should be revisited and quite honestly, eliminated.

There are many more arguments for sustainability and the economy that could be presented. (See www.preservationnation.org for additional ideas on sustainability and preservation.) But there is one more component that seems to be especially meaningful for Parma, the importance of memory. Don Rypkema has presented some thoughtful guidance on this as well. Think for a moment about something that is personally significant to you. It may be your home, your family, your church, a favorite tree. Now take away your memory; is that item still significant? Of course not, because there can be no significance without memory. And if memory is necessary for significance, it is also necessary for both meaning and value. Without memory nothing has significance, nothing has meaning, nothing has value.

A city tells its own past, transfers its own memory, largely through the fabric of the built environment. Historic buildings are the physical manifestation of memory – it is memory that makes places significant. And with Parma's rich history, it is imperative to preserve its built environment to maintain that great memory for the future and to maintain and provide the foundation for place making.







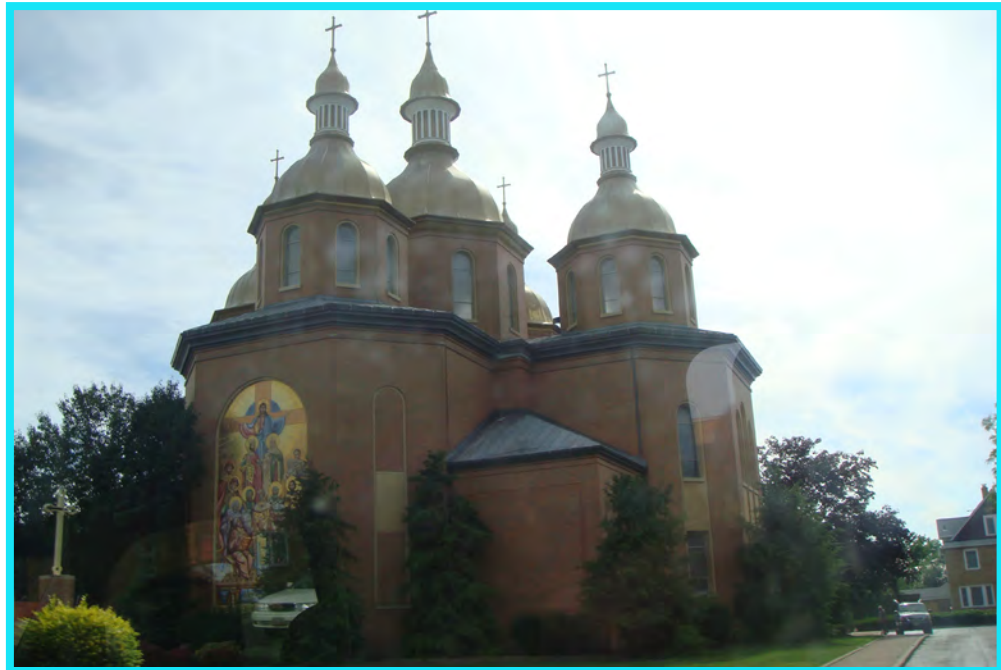
DIMITRI'S
TUESDAYS @ NOON
NEW ROAD

Civic and Community Leadership

The third issue to be addressed has to do with Parma's capability and capacity to carry out these ideas being presented. Ultimately, communities grow and prosper based on the quality and consistency of their leadership. And ideally strong leadership can be found in city hall, among the business community and civic organizations, within the churches and schools, and in every institution that is typical to a well-rounded city.

Again, consider Main Street. The critical point of its four-point approach is organization. And central to organization is the notion of public private partnership, which over time also came to include non-profits as the third leg of the organizational stool. Each has capacity to achieve goals. The city or public sector can regulate, enforce rules, collect fees and taxes to support services, but must move deliberately in the interest of the whole community. The private sector traditionally can make decisions more quickly, take on tasks that are of immediate need and at times with a narrow focus, but do everything with a bottom-line consideration. And the non-profit sector has the ability to take on projects that do not meet either the public or private tests, yet are of such importance that in the absence of their action, great loss may occur. They are able to take risks that make no sense to the public sector or the private sector.

Together the three sectors have amazing capacity and strength to protect, guide and direct the community forward. But to do so, they must work together. There must be true partnership. That means having clear and frequent communications, an open sharing of ideas and a big picture view that recognizes the role each has to play. Parma has the basis for strong civic and community leadership but to be the strength that it should be, it needs to be improved. Quite honestly it also means that each sector needs to be nurtured in the community and encouraged in its development.



Placemaking Assets

- PARMA HAS A GOOD COMMUNITY LAYOUT, ESPECIALLY IN THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE CITY.
- THERE IS VISIBLE HISTORY AS SEEN IN PARMA'S ARCHITECTURE, PARKS, AND STREETS.
- PARMA HAS A STRONG CULTURAL HERITAGE AND IDENTITY WHICH CONTRIBUTES TO COMMUNITY MEMORY.
- PARMA HAS THE BASIS FOR A VERY WALKABLE COMMUNITY.
- FROM AN URBAN DESIGN VIEW, PARMA HAS A GOOD CONTEXT FOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT GIVEN THE CHANGING INTERESTS OF THE PUBLIC (NEW ENERGY AWARENESS, DESIRE FOR AUTHENTICITY, DESIRE FOR COMMUNITY) AND ITS PROXIMITY TO A MAJOR METRO AREA.

Opportunities & Priorities

- ACKNOWLEDGE AND PRESERVE CULTURAL AND BUILT HISTORY. DO NOT CONTINUE TO DEMOLISH BUILDINGS.
- BEGIN TO FOCUS ON THE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE AND WAYS TO MAKE THAT EASIER, SAFER, AND AN OVERALL HIGHER PRIORITY.
- ASSESS PARMA'S CURRENT DESIGN IMAGE AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD A BETTER AND MORE POSITIVE URBAN DESIGN IDENTITY.
- INVEST IN DESIGN STRATEGIES THAT BUILD QUALITY AND VALUE THAT RESPECTS PARMA WHILE ADDING TO ITS APPEAL. BUILD ON THIS TEAM EFFORT WITH ADDITIONAL DESIGN EVENTS.



Historic Preservation Assets

- PARMA STILL HAS VIABLE ARCHITECTURE, BOTH RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL.
- PARMA'S NORTHERN HALF IS ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY FOR ITS PREVAILING BUNGALOW STYLE AND THE OPPORTUNITY IT PRESENTS FOR FIRST-TIME BUYERS OR THOSE SEEKING UNIQUE LIVING EXPERIENCES.
- THE CHURCHES ARE ICONIC AND CREATE A SPECIAL SENSE OF VALUE AND IDENTITY TO PARMA.
- PARMA IS DESIGNATED UNDER THE STATE OF OHIO AS A CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT GIVING THE CITY ACCESS TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUNDS AND SUPPORT.
- OHIO HAS A STATE WIDE TAX CREDIT FOR THE REHABILITATION OF CERTIFIED HISTORIC PROPERTIES THAT WHEN COMBINED WITH THE FEDERAL TAX CREDITS EQUALS 45% OF ELIGIBLE REHAB EXPENSES WHEN APPLIED TO INCOME PRODUCING PROPERTIES.

Opportunities & Priorities

- INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS ALONG COMMERCIAL CORRIDORS WHERE POSSIBLE SO THAT PROPERTY OWNERS MIGHT BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INVESTMENT TAX CREDITS AS THEY REHABILITATE THEIR PROPERTIES.
- INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS IN PARMA'S RESIDENTIAL AREAS TO SUSTAIN HOME VALUES AND CELEBRATE THE GREAT HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF PARMA'S DEVELOPMENT AND TO STIMULATE PRIDE IN THIS GREAT HISTORIC SETTING.
- PROTECT OLDER PROPERTIES FROM DEMOLITION TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE AVAILABLE FOR REHAB AND FOR ADAPTIVE DEVELOPMENT.
- HOST A PRESERVATION WORKSHOP AND INVITE PROPERTY OWNERS TO LEARN ABOUT THE MERITS OF HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION AS WELL AS TAX CREDITS THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR REHABILITATION.
- CELEBRATE PARMA'S UNIQUE ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE THROUGH SOME KIND OF ANNUAL EVENT SUCH AS A HISTORY WALK, HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR, OR PRESERVATION WEEK ACTIVITY.



Civic Capacity Assets

- **PARMA HAS AN ENERGIZED CITY ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF READY AND EAGER TO MOVE FORWARD.**
- **THERE ARE POCKETS OF PRIVATE AND NON-PROFIT CAPACITY, ESPECIALLY AMONG THE CHURCHES, THAT CAN BE THE BASIS FOR BUILDING GREATER NETWORKS.**

Opportunities & Priorities

- **CONSIDER CREATING AN INTERFAITH COUNCIL TO FOSTER ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION, COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP AMONG THE CHURCHES.**
- **INVESTIGATE CREATING NON-PROFITS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND EXTEND CAPACITY.**
- **DEVELOP A LEADERSHIP PARMA PROGRAM TO EDUCATE AND INFORM POTENTIAL COMMUNITY LEADERS ABOUT PARMA'S NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES. THIS NEEDS TO GO BEYOND THE USUAL "FAMILIARITY" TRAINING AND REALLY ADDRESS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS SKILL BUILDING.**
- **BUILD OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO BECOME ENGAGED IN CIVIC LEADERSHIP THROUGH THE CHAMBER, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS AND OTHER AVENUES.**

Design matters; culture and history matter; but it takes leadership to make a difference. Invest in your civic capacity, take advantage of your historical and cultural assets and create a great place for your residents, businesses and visitors.



Retail Development

An Over Abundance of Retail

The retail environment in Parma is generally characterized by an oversupply of retail space. Retail offerings include a series of suburban strip mall centers, a traditional shopping mall, and a few blocks of retail space with more urban character and a main street sensibility. Due to the glut of retail in the community, current retail amenities include many discount and budget offerings. The team heard repeated input from citizen stakeholders concerning the lack of desired amenities in the community, as well as complaints about the number of lower-end retail and discount retailers, and a lack of other retailers that were considered more desirable or met specific needs.



During the SDAT community meetings, there was an intense focus surrounding the potential future for Parmatown Mall and the community's central commercial district. The team heard a lot of input concerning the mall's current retail, and a general narrative concerning a perceived decline in the quality of the mall over time. Stakeholders complained about the mall catering more to shoppers from outside the community than the residents and neighborhoods who shop there most frequently. There were also perceived safety issues regarding crime and loitering that were raised during the dialogues. The team did visit and tour the Parmatown Mall and its vicinity, and found that the mall features traditional department stores such as Macy's and JC Penny, as well as some destination tenants like Walmart. The mall is also home to several municipal offices. The mall also featured new interior finishes and a food court. The team concluded that the mall provides a comparable customer experience to other retail centers, though its size and age limited the number and mix of retail choices.



PARMATOWN

alltel
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Parmatown Mall and Day Drive Development

The case of Parmatown Mall is not unique. It faces the same issues that aging suburban commercial districts are facing nationwide. The team concluded that the Mall and commercial district represent a gigantic redevelopment opportunity for the future. The location of the commercial district represents a potential town center of the future. The team felt that the opportunity to explore future redevelopment of the district was too important to rush or apply a “quick fix” mentality from which to move forward. Proper redevelopment will require extensive planning and partnership identification, which will take years in a down economy and will necessitate extensive labor.



Commercial District Revitalization Goals

As a result, the team recommends that the city establish a series of broad goals to guide a long-term planning process for the area. The team believes that a well-articulated strategy for the future redevelopment of the area should include the following components:

- **UPDATED MARKET RESEARCH. HAVING REALISTIC MARKET ANALYSIS OF THE POTENTIAL FOR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT REVITALIZATION IS A NECESSARY STARTING POINT FOR ANY CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT REDEVELOPMENT AND WILL SET CLEAR PARAMETERS FOR FEASIBILITY AND NECESSARY PARTNERS AND FINANCING.**
- **MERCHANDISING PLAN. PUTTING IN PLACE AN EFFECTIVE MERCHANDISING PLAN WILL BRING COHERENCE TO FUTURE REDEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND SET CLEAR OBJECTIVES FOR DEFINING THE CHARACTER OF THE DISTRICT WITHIN A REALISTIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK.**
- **INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN. AN INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN AND REQUIREMENTS ANALYSIS WILL FURTHER DEFINE THE PHYSICAL PLANNING AND REGULATORY MECHANISMS THAT MAY BE NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE A NEW VISION FOR THE DISTRICT.**
- **DEVELOPMENT PROFORMA. HAVING PROFORMA IN PLACE WILL HELP CLARIFY THE REDEVELOPMENT SCALE FURTHER, ESTABLISH IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT CRITERIA, AND FACILITATE INITIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH POTENTIAL PARTNERS.**
- **POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS. GIVEN THE SCALE OF POTENTIAL REDEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY INTEREST IN A NEW VISION FOR THE AREA, IT WILL REQUIRE AN EXTENSIVE DIALOGUE WITH A RANGE OF POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO BRING TO FRUITION.**
- **SUSTAINABLE DESIGN OBJECTIVES. THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THIS DISTRICT ALSO POSES A TRANSFORMATIVE OPPORTUNITY TO DEFINE A NEW CHARACTER FOR THE AREA BY INCORPORATING AND INTEGRATING SUSTAINABLE DESIGN PRINCIPLES INTO ANY NEW PLANS.**

Retail Opportunities

The team believes Parma has some clear retail opportunities for the future in its older, more established commercial corridors. These corridors are home to retail and businesses that primarily serve adjacent neighborhoods and the broader community. They have historical building stock, street frontage in many cases, with a more pedestrian-friendly retail experience. Many of the businesses in these corridors are culturally significant establishments, offering authentic retail experiences and representing a unique offering for potential customers. Finally, the team believes they are well positioned to have the greatest impact on Parma's future sustainability with strategic investment and focused revitalization efforts.

The team identified two key strategic nodes that meet the criteria best, at the intersections of major corridors. The first node is located in the radius surrounding the intersection of Ridge and Snow. The second node is located at the radius surrounding State and Snow. The team believes these areas are prime locations for strategic investments in revitalization and retail development. They both have the following key characteristics:

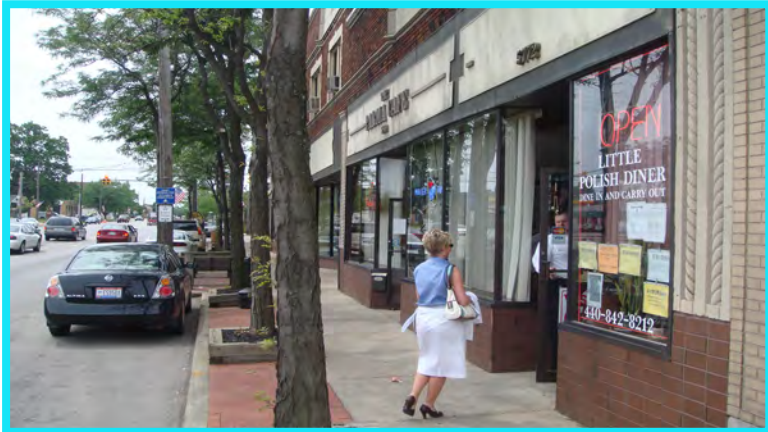
Assets

- **SERVE AREA NEIGHBORHOODS**
- **ARE UNIQUE AND CULTURALLY DISTINCT**
- **LOCALLY OR REGIONALLY OWNED**
- **STOREFRONT PARKING**
- **POTENTIALLY PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY**



Opportunities: Ridge & Snow, State & Snow

The SDAT Team believes these two strategic nodes should be the focal point for strategic investments in revitalization and retail development.



Revitalization Toolbox

The team believes that the city should work with stakeholders in these strategic corridors to build a collaborative strategy for revitalization incorporating the following tools:

Identify Retail Categories. The city should work to establish the appropriate desired retail categories in these districts and conduct an inventory of existing assets from which to build upon and establish more concentration.

Develop a Merchandising Strategy. The city should work with area stakeholders to develop a merchandising strategy that is based on the initial assessment, taking into account strengths and weaknesses, and an analysis of what kinds of retail establishments would contribute to the unique character of each district. Build from existing assets that can be leveraged with additional complementary retailers taking up residence in advantageous positions of adjacency

Business Recruitment. A focused effort should be made to engage in business recruitment to fill available retail space in these districts with tenants that represent unique local offerings and contribute to the sense of place that exists in each area.

Build Upon the Façade Improvement Program. The Façade Improvement Program represents an important first step in making modest but important investments in the area that have tangible impacts on the retail experience and sense of place. The program should be expanded to consider streetscapes and other enhancements that continue to improve the pedestrian experience in these areas.



Give Neighborhood Centers a Visual Identity. There is already some excitement around the unofficial 'Ukrainian Village' district. Each neighborhood center should seek to develop a unique visual identity that contributes to sense of place and authenticity.

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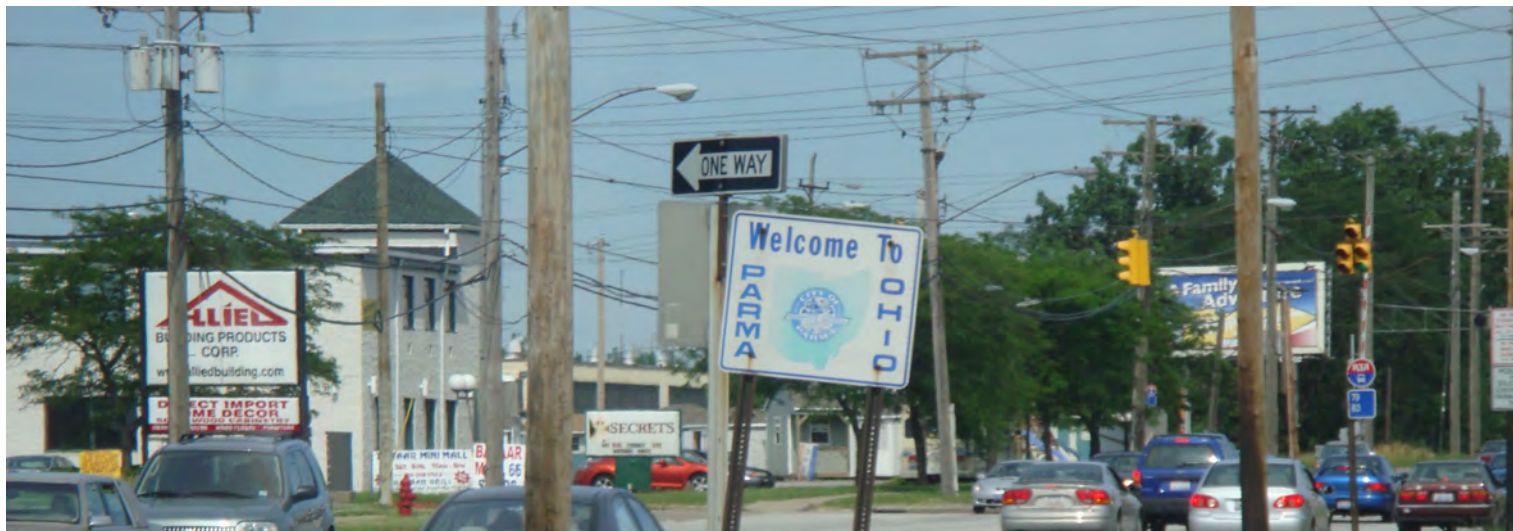
Ukraine Village

Transportation, Mobility and Sustainability

The team found that Parma is blessed with many assets on which to build a sustainable community that facilitates mobility and efficient transportation.

Assets

- NARROW RESIDENTIAL STREETS
- SMALL LOT DENSITY
- RIPARIAN CORRIDORS, GREEN SPACE
- TREE CANOPY
- SIDEWALK NETWORK
- RESIDUAL ROADWAY CAPACITY
- LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION





Mobility Advantages

The team believes that the city's assets give it several existing advantages to leverage in building a sustainable transportation network.

Narrow Streets. Parma's narrow streets, particularly on the northern, older end of the city, provide a pedestrian friendly framework for community mobility that is unusual compared to many suburban communities.

Small Lot Density. The small lot density in this section of town contributes to healthy neighborhoods and a walkability that is advantageous compared to more contemporary standards.

Riparian Corridors. Parma has wonderful riparian corridors that serve as tremendous natural assets to the community and provide significant green space for a community of its size and population.

Sidewalk Network and Tree Canopy. Parma also boasts a healthy sidewalk network, and many of its neighborhoods have maintained a healthy tree canopy that enhances the pedestrian experience.

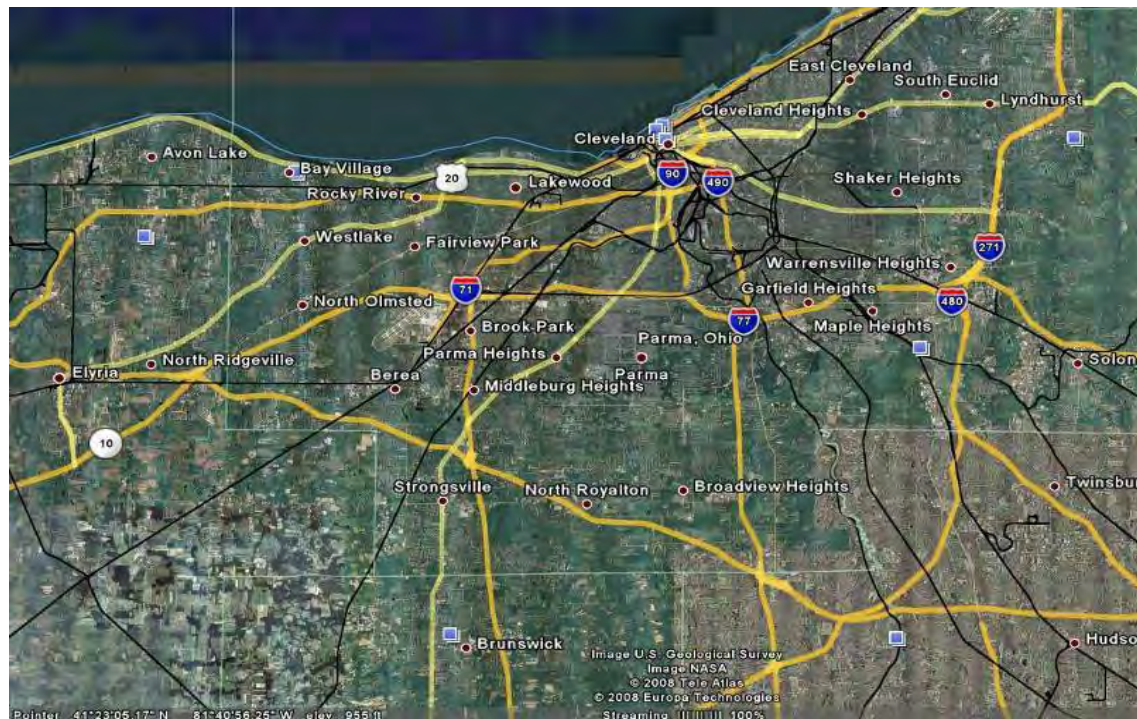
Residential Roadway Capacity. The team believes that Parma exhibits excess roadway capacity than can be utilized and repurposed to further enhance pedestrian mobility and alternative transportation choices to the automobile.





Location, Location, Location

Finally, Parma is in an enviable position given its physical proximity to downtown Cleveland. Within its regional context, Parma residents have a significant advantage based on location, and with enhancements to the local infrastructure and framework for mobility, the community could become a regional leader in how it addresses mobility.



Opportunities

The team identified several opportunities for the city to consider moving forward:

Reallocation of Street Space. The team believes that many of Parma's streets are suitable for a 'Road Diet', in which lanes are narrowed or repurposed to accommodate a range of transportation choices, including bicycling, wider sidewalks for pedestrians, or dedicated transit lanes. The objectives of a road diet include enhancing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as automobiles, and to create additional space for on-street parking, bike lanes, or pedestrian facilities. Traffic counts at strategic locations support the idea for a successful road diet program.



One example of a 'road diet' application to an existing corridor.

Burying Utilities. As Parma proceeds with infrastructure work, where possible, a phased program to bury above ground utilities should be considered. This will increase the opportunity to make streetscape investments that enhance the environment, including street trees and pedestrian facilities.

Protecting Commercial Alleys. Parma has a good network of commercial alleys, which should be conserved. Having an alley network is a critical advantage to producing a successful business district that allows deliveries and other services to take place off the main street, where pedestrians are present.

Encouraging Pedestrians. Parma should undertake a focused program to encourage a more vibrant pedestrian life in strategic zones where other revitalization initiatives are taking place. Contemporary research on vital pedestrian districts identifies several key ingredients that pedestrians require. Security – lighting, activity, and law enforcement presence are essential to make people feel safe and comfortable. Safety - a number of pedestrian facilities, including frequent street crossings and comfortable sidewalks, set the stage for more pedestrian life. Destinations - the presence of unique amenities and places that reinforce local identity create an atmosphere where people want to get out of their cars. And finally, People - pedestrians are drawn to lively and vibrant areas where other people are present, and the opportunities to observe civic life are plentiful through street side cafes, patio seating, pocket parks and other amenities. Parma can begin by making strategic choices in high-value pedestrian investments, which include narrower streets, more on street parking, and additional crosswalks. These are low cost enhancements to existing infrastructure that will have a big impact.

Developing Networks. In the longer term, Parma can begin to develop the first layers of a network of mobility. Effective networks produce numerous choices for mobility, where all modes of transportation are available, including pedestrian facilities, automobiles, bicycling, and transit systems. These networks are characterized by high connectivity, a redundancy of facilities and options, and an overall capacity to make a range of mobility options efficient.



Encouraging Green Density. Parma should build in a green density strategy to its redevelopment planning, taking advantage of its tradition of small lot sizes as it develops new housing choices. This investment will combat sprawl, lower public costs in the long-term, and help to build a more vital, sustainable community.

Neighborhood Commercial Centers. The city should work to focus its investments around strategic commercial centers, packaging scarce public resources and facilitating private investment in neighborhood serving nodes. The city has existing nodes that are prime candidates for investment, and should focus on those areas to make tangible progress in the short and medium term.

Setting the Stage for Transit. Finally, Parma should make the modest investments today that can set the stage for future transit development. The city has a tradition using transit, including a former street car line to Cleveland and its current bus lines. It can begin to plan today for future investments in higher capacity transit by focusing on connectivity and building the beginnings of a rich mobility network.



Parma's Mobility Priorities: Do These

- IDENTIFY A SMALL NUMBER OF NEIGHBORHOOD COMMERCIAL CENTERS
- CREATE 1/4 PEDESTRIAN DISTRICTS
- CREATE ON-STREET PARKING
- DEVELOP A BICYCLE SYSTEM PLAN TO LEVERAGE THE CITY'S TRAIL NETWORK



Parma's Mobility Priorities: Don't Do These

- LOSE COMMERCIAL ALLEYS
- CLOSE STREETS, LOSE CONNECTIVITY
- LOSE DENSITY
- LOSE STREET TREES

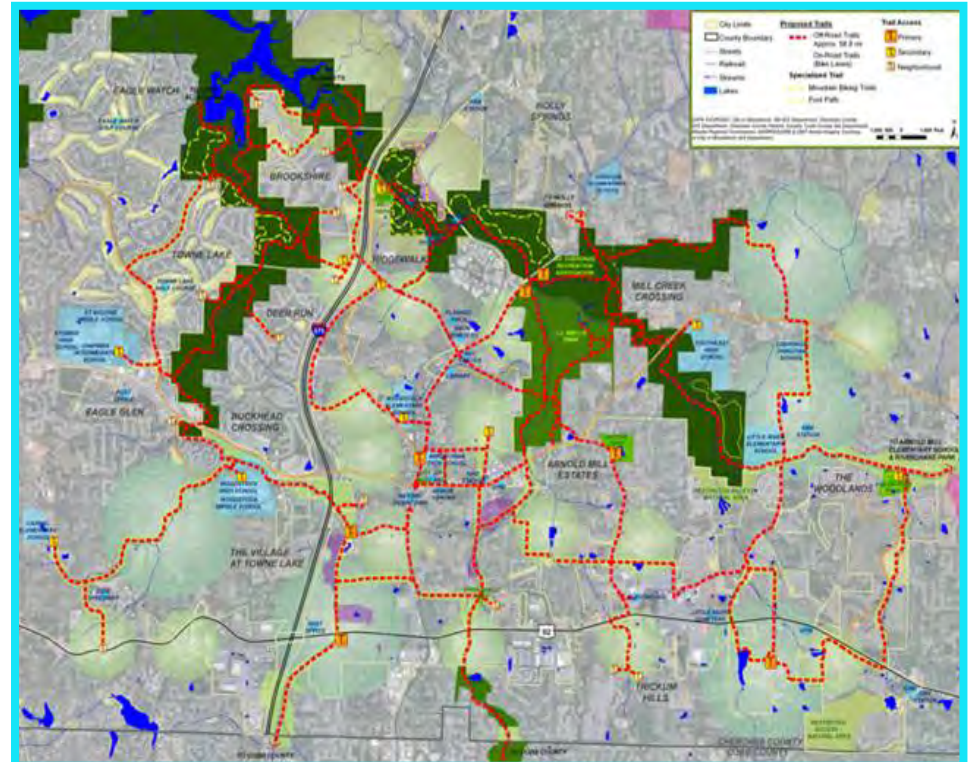


Green Infrastructure

The SDAT Team identified several important assets that Parma has regarding its green infrastructure.

Assets

- OVER 690-ACRES OF PARKS
- MILES OF RIPARIAN CORRIDORS
- WEST CREEK PRESERVATION COMMITTEE & THE COUNTY SWCD
- TREE CANOPY STILL EXISTS
- BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR WATER QUALITY AND STORMWATER
- PLANNED AND PROPOSED MULTI-USE TRAILS



Green Infrastructure Recommendations

Provide for Green Spaces- Now and Later. Tools for providing, enhancing and conserving appropriate open spaces include parks, plazas, squares, recreational areas, greens, and other public spaces. Parma should engage in public education around the importance of conserving sensitive and critical natural areas, especially riparian ways.

Improve Water Quality & Drainage. As the city moves forward with new infrastructure investments, it should apply sustainable design mechanisms to new streets to improve water retention, lessen runoff, and improve natural drainage.

Plant More Trees. The team recommends that the city consider a strategic initiative to increase its tree canopy through a focused tree planting campaign.

Build Trails. The city has great assets to work from with its existing green infrastructure. It should move forward with implementation of the West Creek & Cuyahoga County Trail Master Plans.

Connect the Trails. As plans move forward for new trails, a connectivity strategy should be implemented to create an effective, linked network of trails throughout Parma and its vicinity.

Celebrate Green. Through education programs and events, the city can begin to articulate a culture and spirit of sustainable living. It should consider culinary events, ecotourism, environmental and heritage festivals, and other promotional activities.

Formalize the city's commitment. Parma should create an official Green Infrastructure Committee to serve as a leadership and coordinating body as it works toward implementation of its key priorities.



CONCLUSION

Parma has many qualities that make it a special community. It has authentic and interesting cultural districts, friendly neighborhoods, outstanding green spaces, and a great location. Its greatest resource is its committed and passionate residents. In a time of scarce public resources, every jurisdiction is more reliant than ever on resources outside of local government. Successful communities are those that have the ability to form novel collaborations and partnerships to accomplish their boldest goals, using a broad array of resources from within government and across the community. Parma has a great untapped resource in its community, and it is upon this resource that its future success is most dependent. By working together, and building upon great “Partnerships through People,” the SDAT Team believes that Parma can achieve its residents’ aspirations to become a more livable, sustainable place. It will take a long-term vision, effective and sometimes unconventional partnerships, but the resources exist within Parma to take on significant public work and achieve great things. The SDAT Team was impressed by Parma’s public leadership, its enthusiasm for taking on new initiatives, and is optimistic that the community will have a great story to tell in the years to come.





THE SDAT TEAM



Henry Kosarzycki, AIA, Team Leader

Henry has been involved in all aspects of commercial building construction. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning and has continued to take graduate structural engineering courses at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. His career began in the design build industry before it was known as design-build, working for a major construction company in Wisconsin. Having spent a number of very enriching years both at the computer and in the field Henry joined a large Midwest architectural firm which lead to a number of years working as an architect in a traditional setting. Following a career in traditional practice Henry began a professional career in public service with the City of Milwaukee. With the City of Milwaukee Henry was introduced to the regulatory side of the construction industry, that encounter left him a plan reviewer for the City of Milwaukee.

Henry later joined the State of Wisconsin Department of Commerce, Safety and Buildings Division where he has worked as a commercial building inspector, an engineering consultant and in his current position as program manager. In his role as program manager Henry's primary function is to represent the department as commercial building program auditor, liaison and training coordinator for the entire state of Wisconsin working with all municipalities and regulators as well as planning and development departments.

Henry is also an active member of the American Institute of Architects serving on the State Board of Directors since 1998 and is the 2001 President of the AIA's Southeast Chapter, he served the AIA-Wisconsin board as a director at large. Henry has been a member of the American Institute of Architects Codes and Standards Committee since 2005 and in 2007 and 2008 serves as the Chair of the Codes and Standards Committee. Henry is also a member of the International Building Code Council and the Interoperability Task Force.

These experiences help him to understand all aspects of Wisconsin's building industry from design and engineering principals to construction and regulatory concerns. He uses these skills to help the State administer Wisconsin's building code as well as strive for an efficient and consistent regulatory model from one municipality to the next.

Thomas W. Rounds, AICP

Thom Rounds is the Manager of Community Planning and Urban Design, leading a group of 13 planners, landscape architects, urban designers, and architects for URS in Colorado. He is also the Business Line Leader for the Development Services practice for URS in Colorado. In this role he is responsible for business development and coordinating the delivery of planning and engineering services development and redevelopment projects for public and private sector clients.

Mr. Rounds has 30 years experience in public sector and consulting planning. He has worked directly for municipal and county government planning departments. He has consulted to local governments, state and federal agencies, and private sector clients. Mr. Rounds' project experience includes operation of local government planning and engineering functions, land use planning, design and regulation, capital improvement planning, programming, and finance, and integration of land use and transportation.

Mr. Rounds has extensive experience in working with citizen groups to identify issues and concerns affecting land use and transportation decisions. He has received training in "Choosing By Advantages" and is certified by the National Charrette Institute as a Certified Charrette Planner. Mr. Rounds is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners.



Shannon Kettering, AICP, ASLA

Shannon Garvey Kettering is a registered landscape architect and certified planner with a Bachelor Degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Georgia School of Environmental Design and a Master Degree in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia.

Ms. Kettering supervises the Planning studio at Ecos Environmental Design, where she manages urban and rural planning projects and community visioning projects. She conducts numerous charrettes and community facilitation efforts, speaks at conferences and provides expertise on local zoning codes and regulations, innovative smart growth and traditional neighborhood development practices, housing and community development, rural planning, environmental and urban design concepts and sustainable practices.

She is a certified National Charrette Planner by the National Charrette Institute. Ms. Kettering's award-winning projects utilize ARCView GIS, AutoCAD, Sketch Up and Adobe Photoshop and PowerPoint to produce analysis and design solutions that are environmentally sound and comprehensive.

Ms. Kettering also provides client management services and project supervision on greenway, land use and mobility and recreational master planning projects.





James Charlier, AICP

Jim Charlier is the founder and owner of Charlier Associates, Inc., a transportation planning firm based in Boulder, Colorado. Mr. Charlier's career began in 1973 at Iowa Department of Transportation, where he worked part time while attending graduate school at Iowa State University (BS – 1972, MS – 1975), taking a full time position in the transportation planning division after finishing graduate school. Over the next ten years, he was centrally involved in the transformation of Iowa DOT from a highway department into a multimodal transportation agency.

In 1985 he was recruited by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to lead its work program and program finance bureau. Two years later he became Policy Director at FDOT and in that role oversaw the implementation of some of the key transportation components of the Florida Growth Management Act (passed in 1986). Mr. Charlier guided development of rules and procedures governing "concurrency" and participated in the State's review of the transportation elements of the first 350 local comprehensive plans prepared under the GMA.

In the late 1980s he served on the Florida Governor's Task Force on Urban Growth Patterns, chairing the transportation committee and writing the transportation chapter and recommendations. The Task Force recommendations later became the basis for several states' growth management acts. Since leaving the Florida DOT in 1989 to go into private practice, Mr. Charlier and his firm have provided transportation consulting services to clients throughout the U.S., including federal agencies (National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Federal Transit Administration) and state DOTs (Florida, Colorado, Arizona, Hawaii, Minnesota, Wyoming) as well as many cities and counties, transit agencies, and MPOs. Charlier Associates has been involved in the development of the City of Boulder's transportation program since the early 1990s. Over the past ten years, the firm has been increasingly active in guiding development projects for private sector clients, including cutting edge sustainable design projects in Colorado, Hawaii and elsewhere.

Charlier was on the faculty of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy during 1989 through 1992, teaching classes in "land use and transportation" and "transportation and state growth management systems." He is a regular lecturer in undergraduate and graduate classes at University of Colorado in transportation planning and in sustainable tourism and is in demand as a speaker at transportation, growth management, smart growth, and sustainable development conferences and meetings throughout the country. Charlier is currently serving on the faculty of the Mayors' Institute on Community Design and the Governors' Institute on Community Design. Mr. Charlier is part of a consulting team in the Environmental Protection Agency's "Smart Growth Implementation Assistance" program, providing smart growth/transportation planning expertise to governmental agencies and other groups around the U.S. Charlier has also been involved in developing the Congress for New Urbanism's Transportation Group. Charlier Associates is co-hosting (with the City of Boulder) the annual CNU Transportation Summit this year in Boulder in November. Charlier is an active member of the American Planning Association, the Institute of Transportation Engineers and the Urban Land Institute. He and his wife, Sandra Fish, live in Boulder, Colorado.



Danelle Baldwin Smith

Danelle Smith serves as Associate General Manager for General Growth Properties at The Parks at Arlington a 1.6 million s.f. super regional shopping center in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex. The Parks has recently undergone an entertainment wing expansion and an innovative redevelopment of a vacant anchor store pad. She is a Certified Marketing Director with the International Council of Shopping Centers with fourteen years of industry experience including positions with the Simon Property Group and the Rouse Company.

Her career began with the Texas Main Street program as Economic Development Director for the City of Lampasas winning the Governor's Award for excellence in downtown revitalization. She later served as Vice President and Chief of Staff for Downtown Fort Worth, Inc. (DFWI). At DFWI, she was integrally involved in the planning of a Public Market, residential market research and strategic plan, and a team member in disaster recovery plans after a tornado swept through the center city.

Danelle was a three term Board of Director for Preservation Texas a statewide partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and led committees for the Texas Most Endangered List of historic places, Statewide Preservation Awards, and successfully team lobbied for the Courthouse Restoration Program now funded by the State of Texas. She volunteers for numerous organizations including the International Downtown Association, the Texas Historical Commission, and Leadership Texas. She is a graduate of the University of Texas with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Art History.

Rodney Swink, FASLA

Rodney L. Swink, FASLA, is a past president of the American Society of Landscape Architects. A registered landscape architect, he directed the North Carolina Main Street Center and later the Office of Urban Development in the Department of Commerce from 1984 until his retirement in 2008. Mr. Swink is a past president of and serves on the board of the North Carolina Partners of the Americas. Through this tie he has traveled to Bolivia to present workshops and assist local officials with strategic planning and development concerns.

A former chairman of the Raleigh Appearance Commission, he currently serves as an advisor to Preservation North Carolina and is on the board of the North Carolina Downtown Development Association. He was named the Distinguished Alumnus of the NCSU College of Design for 2004. Mr. Swink has a B.A. in economics and an M.A. in landscape architecture, both from North Carolina State University.



AIA Center for Communities By Design Staff

Joel Mills, Director, Center for Communities by Design

Joel Mills provides process expertise, facilitation and support for the Center's Sustainable Design Assistance Team (SDAT) and Regional and Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) programs. In this capacity, he works with AIA components, members and partner organizations to provide technical assistance to communities across the country on sustainability and urban design.

His experience includes community-based technical assistance, process design, facilitation and training across a number of fields including juvenile justice reform, local government, education, family strengthening, civic media and emergency management. During the 1990s, Mr. Mills spent several years supporting international democratization initiatives by providing technical assistance to parliaments, political parties, local governments, civic and international organizations. His scope of work included constitutional design and governing systems, voter and civic education, election monitoring and administration, political party training and campaign strategy, collaborative governance, human rights and civil society capacity building. He maintains active memberships in the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2), and the Mid-Atlantic Facilitators Network. He also serves on several public and private boards.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The SDAT Team has considered it an honor to work with the citizens of Parma during this process. We hope to have contributed in a modest way to the community's dialogue about its future. We would like to thank the Mayor for his enthusiastic support of the process, the city staff who assisted this process, the business representatives and non-profit organizations who took time to meet with our team, and the numerous citizens who participated in the process. We would also like to thank the volunteers from local firms, universities and design centers that assisted the SDAT team during its studio sessions. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to Dan Kulchytsky, the Plans Examiner and lead city staff person on this project. Dan authored the SDAT application, and spent innumerable hours coordinating the teams meeting and supporting the process from start to finish.



I ♥ PARMA