

Lakewood Community Vision Update Working Draft

Revised March 28, 2013

Revised February 25, 2013

January 25, 2013

All Are Welcome



The Department of Planning and Development

12650 Detroit Avenue

Lakewood, Ohio

planning@lakewoodoh.net

216.529.6630

www.onelakewood.com

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the more than 130 residents who regularly participated in the update process from May through December 2012. The ideas, goals and hopes outlined in this draft are a result of all of their contributions and hard work.

Please continue to share ideas and comments by using the contact information on the cover page. To see a more detailed review of the 2012 workshop process please visit the City of Lakewood website – www.onelakewood.com and click on the Community Vision icon.

Mayor Michael P. Summers

Lakewood City Council

Brian Powers, At-large, President
Mary Louise Madigan, Ward 4, Vice-President
David Anderson, Ward 1
Tom Bullock, Ward 2
Shawn Juris, Ward 3
Monique Smith, At-large
Ryan Nowlin, At-large

Planning Commission

Mark Stockman, Chair
Mary Cierebiej, Vice-chair
Hannah Belsito
William Gaydos
Robert Greytak, City Engineer
Tamara Karel
Patrick Metzger

Planning and Development

Dru Siley, Director
Bryce Sylvester, City Planner
Cary White, Intern Planner

A Process for Managing the Living Document

In 1993 when the original Community Vision document was prepared by the community in partnership with the Planning Commission and adopted by City Council the plan did not offer guidance on how and how often the Vision should be updated. This may have contributed, among other factors, to nearly 20 years of use without an update to reflect the ever changing world and the evolution of Lakewood.

The Planning Commission has recommend the following guidelines that outline a process and methodology for regularly updating the Vision so it functions more effectively as a living document and a timely reflection of our community goals and aspirations.

Annual Review and Update

The Commission will review the previous year's progress, projects and initiatives against the goals and objects outlined in the Vision by the end of first quarter of the following year.

- At that time, the Secretary to the Commission will provide a revised draft of the Vision updating the data in the "Where we are today" introduction to each chapter of the document.
- The previous year's data will be added to an appendix at the back of the Vision each year creating a timeline of results, achievements and trends.
- During the annual review process the Secretary and the Commission will make recommendations to City Council regarding any modifications to the Zoning Code that may be beneficial to achieving the goals set forth in the Vision.

Five year Review and Update

The Commission will outline during the fifth annual review a calendar of community workshops to re-evaluate the Vision.

- The initial workshop will provide an overview of the purpose of the Vision, progress in the community over the previous five years, and any trends shown through the five years of data updates.
- Following that initial workshop and with feedback from the community, the Commission at its next regular meeting will determine if additional community workshops should be held to explore revisions and address necessary modifications to the language in the Vision.
- As with the annual review, during the Five year review process the Secretary and the Commission will make recommendations to City Council regarding any modifications to the Vision or the Zoning Code.

Statement of Purpose

The Lakewood Community Vision is an expression of where we stand as a community and where we hope to be in the future. It is motivated by the idea that if we articulate where we are trying to go and then write it down, the likelihood of success increases significantly.

As a living document, it is to be used and updated frequently by all members of our community including, but not limited to, residents, local government, non-profits, institutions and businesses.

A number of other documents and plans have been previously adopted by City Council as supplements to the Community Vision and provide direction and recommend specific actions to meet our community goals and objectives.

These documents are available on the City's website www.onelakewood.com

The Detroit Avenue Streetscape Plan, The Park System Master Plan, The Bicycle Master Plan, The Birdtown Action Plan, The Madison East Plan

Planning Commission and the Community Vision

Article XII: Charter of the City of Lakewood

SECTION 3. POWERS AND DUTIES.

The Planning Commission shall make and adopt a general Plan for the development and improvement of the City, and for any area outside of the City that, in the judgment of the Commission, bears relation to the planning of the City. No general plan or portions thereof or amendments thereto shall be adopted by the Commission until after a public hearing thereon. So much of the general plan as may be established or from time to time amended by ordinance shall constitute the official map of the City. The Commission shall also make plans and proposals for specific improvements and projects that it deems desirable for the City and its surrounding area and recommend them to the appropriate authority. These plans and proposals shall not become a part of the general plan until adopted as such. The Commission may call upon officers and employees of other departments and divisions of the City for assistance in City planning. Each year, the Commission shall, if and to the extent requested by the Mayor, assist the Mayor in the preparation of a capital improvement budget and a comprehensive five-year capital improvement program. The Commission shall take the initiative in planning for the City and surrounding area. It may make such investigations, maps and studies relating to the planning of the community as it may deem desirable. The Planning Commission may recommend to the appropriate public authorities or private agencies programs for the development and improvement of the community, for the enactment of legislation pertaining thereto, for the building of public structures and improvements and for the financing thereof. The Commission, subject to the approval of Council, may enter into agreement with other governmental or private agencies necessary or desirable for carrying forward any of its purposes. In addition to those powers and functions as provided in this Charter, the Planning Commission shall have such other powers and functions as may be provided by Council. The Planning Commission may establish rules and regulations for its own procedure not inconsistent with this Section or any Ordinances of the City.

Document Structure

The updated Community Vision is organized into six (6) focus areas or themes based on resident input that began at the community meeting in May 2012. For each focus area there is a vision statement which illustrates a desired future for Lakewood. Below each vision statement are three goals to achieve that vision. While more focused than the vision statement, the goals express the long term aims of the community. Objectives are actionable items which will help to achieve these goals. The objectives are organized in five (5) categories that appeared in each of the focus areas:

Six Focus Areas:

Commercial Development	– retention, attraction, redevelopment
Community Wellness	– environment, health, activity
Education & Culture	– access, facilities, technology
Housing	– stewardship, options, quality
Mobility	– options, ease of movement, services
Safety	– safety forces, feeling safe, crime

Objective Categories Defined:

Strike a Balance - Balancing competing interests and limited resources is negotiated on a daily basis. We consider the things that we value most and work to understand how to navigate. What are the benefits? What are the costs? How do we share? What is expected? As a community we commit to openly discuss a range of views and possibilities in the context of understanding the whole.

Build Connections – Community is not static. Community is a multitude of changing layers and a web of connections among members. Connections develop as the flow of people and ideas tangle and interweave with a place. Places that invite daily activity and the community cohesion that occurs when we interact will see payoffs measured by things like safer streets, stronger neighborhood, and healthier people.

Create Places for People - Vibrant cities promote and develop places that always put people first by being safe, comfortable, varied, attractive and fun. We understand the link between well-being and the quality of the physical and social environment where we live.

Enhance Existing Assets - Build upon and maintain current assets by focusing on three main themes: 1. Quality of life; 2. Economic and community development potential; 3. Efficiency.

Think about Tomorrow – Continue to grow as a community that invest boldly for the benefit of the future residents by strengthening civic resilience and building up the local capacity for innovation, adaptation and cultural change.

Lakewood Today

Incorporated in 1911, Lakewood is a densely populated city of more than 50,000 residents and is known for its neighborhoods, beautiful architecture and walkable commercial corridors. We are an engaged community that values education in all forms, from our excellent public and private schools, to our libraries, and cultural institutions. In 2012 we welcomed a satellite campus of the University of Akron to our downtown district.

Since we are called The City of Homes, our community is proud of our diverse housing stock, which ranges from century old wood frame houses to modern condominiums. In 2011 the Division of Housing and Building adopted a proactive code enforcement strategy, Housing Forward, which began with comprehensive survey of all 12,661 one and two family homes in Lakewood. With the survey we found that about 86% of our housing stock was in good shape with almost no exterior violations. By focusing on the other 14% we were able to reduce the number of challenged properties by almost 50% in one year. (900 remain as of January 2013). Since that time we have seen a rise in the number of residential building permits issued and appreciate owners working hard to make sure their homes are ready for the next century.

In addition to striving to be good stewards of our exceptional housing, we place a high value on the health of our community including individual health of our residents and the health of our environment. We encourage active lifestyles through the maintenance of our parks and by enhancing our transportation network. As an example, we are working to become more bike and pedestrian friendly in accordance with our 2012 Bike Master Plan.

Located on the shores of Lake Erie and the Rocky River we are constantly aware of the health quality of our waterways; everyone has a role to play. Everything from homeowners being encouraged to disconnect their downspouts and think about using rain barrels to major infrastructure improvements to our sewer system to requiring new commercial development projects to have on site storm detention. Protecting the lake and the river is important to the future of Lakewood.

In recent years our commercial districts has seen significant revitalization with more \$18 million in private investment during 2012 alone. Our success comes from collaboration with all sectors and working with new development to be of the highest quality possible. Most importantly, Lakewood fosters an entrepreneurial spirit that supports local small business and encourages others to grow, improve or relocate in our city.

Lakewood is one of the finest communities in the country because we work together and we work hard to achieve our goals. As you read this community vision document some things you may already know, some things may be new to you, but as those of us who live here understand, in Lakewood there is something for everybody and all are welcome.

Lakewood's Community Vision

The Lakewood Community Vision is a picture of the desired future for the City of Lakewood in terms of broad goals in the six areas of Commercial Development, Community Wellness, Education & Culture, Housing, Mobility, and Safety. To this end:

1. We envision a community that is a great place to live; a community that cares about the environment; a community that:
 - Maintains a high-quality of development
 - Has regular community events such as fairs and festivals and other diverse cultural entertainment facilities;
 - Has efficient and efficient multimodal transportation network;
 - Enables commercial and residential land uses to successfully coexist.
 - Supports diversity.
2. We envision a housing market that is stable and provides for moderate growth in housing values.
3. We envision adequate housing opportunities for the City's economically and culturally diverse residents.
4. We envision a high-quality housing stock that is diverse in style and is well-maintained through proactive code enforcement, and community home improvement programs.
5. We envision a providing the finest variety of educational choices, resources and opportunities
6. We envision a growing and diverse business sector which provides residents with a wide range of products and competitive services.
7. We envision a vibrant and attractive business environment that focuses on the community's accessibility, the availability of business support services, and which has a well-trained work force.
8. We envision a long range economic development strategy that encourages economic growth and supports small businesses.
9. We envision a community which has cooperative, progressive, and responsive, leadership; which provides a high level of service to residents.

Commercial Development – retention, attraction, redevelopment

Vision Statement

Achieve sustainable development practices to ensure long term viability of our commercial corridors

Where we are today:

Lakewood is a robust place to do business, with over 1,900 employers and a labor force of 33,000 people. The top occupation categories include *(1) Educational services, healthcare and social assistance, (2) Sales and office occupations, and (3) Service occupations.*¹ Lakewood has seen over \$65 million invested on Detroit and Madison Avenues from 2007-2012, with one-third of the investment being in the downtown core and over twenty five (25) businesses participating.² The city's popular [Storefront Renovation Program](#) helped more than fifteen (15) Lakewood businesses make façade and building improvements in 2012. The Architectural Board of Review, which considers architectural proposals for commercial and residential properties, reviewed 275 applications in the past two (2) years. Investment from both the private and public sectors, paired with an actively engaged business community, have helped Lakewood realize 91% occupancy along Detroit Avenue and 85% along Madison Avenue.

In 2014, the city will begin infrastructure improvements on Madison Avenue to make a more multi-modal corridor. The improvement will include resurfacing the road, installing new traffic signals and improving sidewalk conditions.

Commercial Development Goals

- Goal 1: **Encourage a mix of development that meets community employment, shopping, and service needs**
- Goal 2: **Require high quality design for all rehab and redevelopment projects**
- Goal 3: **Support local business growth and entrepreneurship**

¹ per the 2010 American Community Survey

Commercial Development Objectives

Building Connections:

- Promote sharing of resources and information amongst local businesses
- Improve public knowledge of development trends and processes
- Provide business plan mentoring and support to all business owners
- Strengthen communication concerning commercial development in Lakewood

Enhancing Existing Assets:

- Repurpose obsolete first floor retail space
- Explore the benefits of a downtown special improvement district
- Build on proactive code enforcement for commercial districts
- Market Lakewood effectively to attract high quality development projects

Creating Places for People:

- Provide architectural design recommendations to small business owners
- Add more public art in commercial districts
- Educate property owners on best practices for commercial building rehabilitation
- Promote mixed uses on upper floors of commercial buildings
- Advocate for building design which fits within the scale of our commercial district

Striking a Balance:

- Enhance requirements for buffers between commercial corridor and neighborhoods
- Minimize the impact of late night commercial activity

Thinking about Tomorrow:

- Preserve and respect historic context in commercial development projects
- Promote the use of storm water management techniques such as bio-swales, rain gardens, and pervious pavements in commercial districts
- Support environmentally sustainable development practices such as energy efficiency
- Strengthen economic development efforts to further support Madison Avenue
- Design and develop commercial districts to provide for a safe and inviting pedestrian experience

Community Wellness – environment, health, activity

Vision Statement

Support healthy living and create a more ecologically sustainable city

Where we are today:

The health of our community is maintained in a number of ways. Lakewood Hospital, supported by the Cleveland Clinic provides world class care in Downtown Lakewood. We are also well served with regard to food access with six (6) grocery stores and two (2) farmers markets. In 2012, the city offered 220 community meals, and two (2) community church's hosted summer lunch programs.

We support active living with 15 dedicated parks totaling approximately 75 acres of greenspace. These include Community Parks (3 or more acres), Neighborhood Parks (up to 3 acres), or Pocket Parks (less than 1 acre). In addition to city greenspace, Lakewood has direct access to the Rocky River Metroparks Reservation, which includes five (5) ball fields, two (2) boat launches, nine (9) designated fishing areas, three (3) golf courses, ten (10) picnic areas, and twenty three (23) trails. Lakewood's Recreation Department takes full advantage of the city's park space by administering twenty two (22) youth summer camps.

With regard to the ecological health of our city, Lakewood was ranked twelfth (12th) of sixty nine (69) Cuyahoga County communities in 2011 with a residential recycling rate of 50%, and a waste reduction rate of 44%. In 2013 the city will begin distributing 18,000 plastic recycling containers to streamline recycling collection, save money over the long run and improve recycling rates.

Below the city lie 166 miles of storm and sanitary sewer mains, with treatment capacity of 40 million gallons per day. In 2012, 85 recorded instances of sewer system overflow occurred, releasing untreated sewage to Lake Erie and the Rocky River.

Community Wellness Goals

- Goal 1: Provide great facilities and programs for active living**
- Goal 2: Advocate for quality healthcare for all residents**
- Goal 3: Adopt environmental best practices**

Community Wellness Objectives

Building Connections:

- Educate about the responsibility of maintaining sewers citywide
- Provide information to residents looking to make “green” renovations
- Provide opportunities for residents to become more health literate

Enhancing Existing Assets:

- Enhance infrastructure to support active lifestyles including sidewalks, bikeways, open space, and parks
- Ensure that Lakewood hospital continues to be an asset in our community
- Build on recreational programming to address community needs
- Ensure that all residents have convenient access to healthy, affordable food

Creating Places for People:

- Expand available green space
- Improve usefulness of parks as year round assets
- Consider small scale community based solutions to help alleviate storm runoff including the use of rain barrels, bio-swales, storm water retention, and permeable pavements

Striking a Balance:

- Provide policy support, such as inclusion in the zoning code, for urban agriculture
- Become a regional leader regarding storm water management
- Understand and proactively address the effects of changing healthcare delivery on community health

Thinking about Tomorrow:

- Grow our strong recycling program by exploring new strategies to improve compliance including container pick-up or fees for refuse collection by volume
- Educate residents on energy efficient options such as compact fluorescent light bulbs, and appropriate home insulation
- Encourage employers to offer health promotion programs to their employees
- Reduce obesity rates by promoting active lifestyles and ensuring that nutritious food options are readily available
- Develop a culture which promotes a sense of personal responsibility for community health & wellness

Education & Culture – access, facilities, technology

Vision Statement

Provide life-long educational opportunities for our residents and promote a community identity rooted in our cultural heritage

Where we are today:

Lakewood Public Schools, with student enrollment totaling 5,800, realized a 91.4% (83.5% “on-time”) graduation rate in the 2009-2010 academic year. The district, designated as Excellent in 2012 by the State, consists of seven K-5 elementary schools, two middle schools, one high school and one alternative school.

In addition to excellent public schools, Lakewood is home to a number of private and parochial schools such as Lakewood Catholic Academy and St. Edward High School, a private International Baccalaureate school. With 830 students, a 17:1 student/teacher ratio, St. Ed’s has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence.

Other community partners offering educational opportunities include:

- University of Akron Lakewood offers degree options in Organization Supervision, Nursing, Social Work and Business Administration
- Beck Center for the Arts serves 50,000 annually through professional theatrical productions, Creative Arts Therapies, and comprehensive curriculum-based arts education in dance, music, theater, visual arts
- Lakewood Recreation offers adult courses in basic computing, personal finance, homecare, arts and languages
- Lakewood Public Library – Main and Madison Branch

From major festivals to block parties, community gatherings are an important part of local culture. The city offers eight (8) Summer Festivals, which include Meet the Trucks, Bike Rodeo, 4th of July Parade and Celebration, Lakewood Street Party, Lakewood Arts Festival, Lakewood Car Culture Show, Lakewood Community Festival. Beyond these city sponsored events, LakewoodAlive hosts a number of downtown gatherings such as the Summer Meltdown, Light Up Lakewood, and the Spooky Pooch Parade.

Education & Culture Goals

- Goal 1: **Support a culture of lifelong learning**
- Goal 2: **Preserve our cultural institutions and assets**
- Goal 3: **Continue to encourage civic engagement**

Education & Culture Objectives

Building Connections:

- Capture and share local history
- Provide high quality education for K-12 students through excellent schools

Enhancing Existing Assets:

- Continue to offer a broad range of community events and festivals
- Preserve and grow the Beck Center
- Understand market and social drivers of Education and Culture, and use those findings to guide decision making
- Leverage existing resources in schools to meet community needs such as access to technology and community meeting spaces

Creating Places for People:

- Promote cultural identity in neighborhoods through design
- Develop spaces for artists to live and work

Striking a Balance:

- Leverage local and regional cultural assets to direct programming in Lakewood
- Work with University of Akron Lakewood to meet local needs in higher education
- Provide great facilities and learning environments that allow access to educational technologies and resources including access to computers in schools and libraries

Thinking about Tomorrow:

- Offer workforce development opportunities in industries that are growing in Northeast Ohio
- Support the libraries

Housing – stewardship, options, quality

Vision Statement

Protect and enhance the quality and character of our residential neighborhoods

Where we are today:

Lakewood has a total of 32,000 housing units citywide including 12,700 one (1) or two (2) family homes. Through research and a comprehensive housing survey, the 2012 Housing Forward initiative has provided the city with more data on these 12,700 homes than ever before. For instance:

- The mean age of Lakewood homes is 94
- 85% of homes are in good exterior condition (meet” or “almost meet” code)
- The average home value is \$143,500
- 182 homes were in active foreclosure in 2012
- 54% of homes are owner occupied
- 125 residential properties are vacant

By using good data in the Building Department, and sharing that data with homeowners, Lakewood has seen the number of residential building permits increase since 2010.

The city has 63 Neighborhood Block Clubs, resident driven entities helping neighbors work with police and other city departments to ensure safety and security in our community. Block Clubs are most active in Wards 1 & 3.

Housing Goals

- Goal 1: **Support a variety of housing options that meet the needs of our diverse community**
- Goal 2: **Proactively maintain and improve our housing stock**
- Goal 3: **Develop a culture of informed and responsible action by all property owners and tenants**

Housing Objectives

Building Connections:

- Educate all landlords through existing training seminars
- Promote the importance and financial benefits of quality repairs and renovations
- Work with Relators to market Lakewood effectively to potential homeowners
- Promote energy efficiency upgrades including the installation of new furnaces, adequate insulation, and energy star appliances

Enhancing Existing Assets:

- Improve lighting in neighborhoods through the use of porch lights
- Educate residents on how to better access services provided by local financial institutions
- Enhance the role of Block Clubs as a social and informational resource

Creating Places for People:

- Provide a variety of housing types that meet the needs of the whole community including seniors, low-moderate income families, and special needs households
- Encourage new and infill development which is complementary to the scale and character of surrounding residential uses

Striking a Balance

- Explore the benefits of point of sale inspections
- Promote development of affordable housing for low - moderate income and special needs households
- Preserve housing quality through proactive code enforcement of residential property including multi-family homes

Thinking about Tomorrow

- Maintain existing trees on residential streets and manage our urban forest
- Preserve the historic character of residential neighborhoods through education and support of quality design
- Manage vacant and abandoned properties using the property maintenance code to ensure that properties are safe, secured, and weatherized
- Seek new funding sources to support middle class households which are ineligible for federally funded housing programs

Mobility – options, ease of movements, services

Vision Statement

Provide safe, convenient, and integrated transportation options throughout the community

Where we are today:

With over 180 miles of sidewalks and 90 miles of streets, Lakewood is recognized as Ohio's most walkable city based on the nationally recognized ranking system *Walk Score*. An estimated 77% of Lakewood residents commute to work by car, while a combined 10% walk or use public transportation. Based on a 2010 traffic analysis, approximately 1,100 pedestrians and 225 cyclists pass through downtown in a typical six (6) hour period.

The city is served by six (6) bus lines (25, 26, 43, 55, 78, and 83), as well as two (2) rapid rail stations (W 117th and Triskett). In 2013 two of these bus routes (55 Clifton, and 25 Madison) are scheduled to receive significant investment in the form of enhanced transit waiting environments.

Lakewood's Bicycle Master Plan was adopted by City Council in 2012 and has led to several significant milestones such as the installation of sixteen (16) bicycle signs, and more than fifty (50) new bicycle racks citywide, including the region's first on-street bicycle corral. Funds have also been allocated to introduce shared lane markings or "sharrows" on Detroit and Madison Avenues by the end of 2014.

Mobility Goals

- Goal 1: **Continue to invest in infrastructure improvements to achieve a balanced multimodal transportation network**
- Goal 2: **Promote transportation safety through education, enforcement, and design**
- Goal 3: **Increase the number of miles travelled using means other than a car**

Mobility Objectives

Building Connections:

- Ensure all streets are well lit
- Encourage employers to develop incentives for employees to use alternative transportation
- Educate motorists and cyclists on rules of the road
- Develop systematic sidewalk replacement program

Enhancing Existing Assets:

- Control Litter and Snow on Sidewalks
- Enhance and expand bike routes citywide
- Increase availability of bicycle parking in commercial districts to meet demand
- Obtain bronze medal designation from League of American Cyclists

Creating Places for People

- Improve consistency of traffic signage to reflect what has already been added on Detroit Ave. and Clifton Blvd.
- Minimize impact of cars and parking in commercial districts
- Expand ADA compliance in public spaces including sidewalks, parks, and facilities
- Enhance transit waiting environments city wide through the addition of shelters, benches, and other necessary amenities
- Establish a consistent approach to providing attractive and functionally well placed pedestrian amenities

Striking a Balance:

- Focus traffic enforcement around schools and destinations
- Explore traffic calming to achieve speeds appropriate to family neighborhoods
- Work with RTA to improve timing of bus routes
- Improve access to public transit facilities
- Pursue creative solutions to meet parking demands

Thinking about Tomorrow:

- Educate resident on ways to reduce carbon emissions
- Explore new transportation options to fill the service gap left in the absence of the Circulator
- Consider multi-use path along train tracks
- Offer downtown pedi-cab service

Safety – safety forces, feeling safe, crime

Vision Statement

Maintain the highest degree of community safety by providing excellent safety services, promoting resident participation, and expanding effective communication

Where we are today:

Lakewood’s safety forces include the Police, Fire, and Public Works Departments, as well as the Division of Housing & Building. Our safety services include (94) ninety-four Police Officers, ## Dispatchers, (75) seventy-five firefighters, (12) paramedics, and (10) ten building inspectors.

In 2011 the Police Department fielded 27,000 phone dispatches, made 15,042 arrests and realized an average response time of 3:20 for crimes in progress. In the same year, the Fire Department responded to 1,386 fire class, 5,399 emergency medical calls and had 20 large-loss fires, while Building Inspectors issued 2,473 permits.

By the numbers, excellent safety services, along with engaged participation from residents and neighborhood block clubs (63 in total) have led to Lakewood becoming a safer place in the last 5 years. Since 2007 Lakewood has seen a 42% decrease in crimes of violence, a 14% decrease in burglaries, a 45% decrease in auto thefts and 47% decrease in robberies since 2007³

Safety Goals

- Goal 1: **Preserve the rapid response time of safety forces**
- Goal 2: **Work with neighborhoods and business owners to improve our physical environment**
- Goal 3: **Decrease the number of crimes of opportunity**

³ Crimes of violence (07': 341, 11':198); Burglary (07': 211, 11':182); Auto Theft (07': 163, 11':89); Robbery (07': 64, 11':34)

Safety Objectives

Building Connections:

- Develop opportunities for neighbors to connect
- Use social media to expand communication citywide including police to residents, and block clubs to businesses
- Raise the level of neighborhood safety through additional trainings for block clubs and residents
- Improve the sharing of alerts, crime data, and information
- Provide crime prevention “best practices” to residents
- Encourage emergency preparedness for all citizens

Enhancing Existing Assets:

- Maintain sufficient professional safety forces
- Promote and enhance bicycle safety through Bike Lakewood, improved signage and infrastructure, and community outreach events such as the Bike Rodeo
- Expand the number of private and city owned cameras
- Leverage advancements in technology to improve effectiveness of policing

Creating Places for People:

- Improve the application of the Safe Routes to School program
- Improve lighting in the neighborhoods, parks and business districts
- Design public spaces that are beautiful, functional, and safe

Striking a Balance:

- Minimize the impact of late night commercial activity such as bars closing
- Ensure linked communication between safety forces

Thinking about Tomorrow:

- Understand emerging trends in public safety in order to respond to those trends effectively
- Have more frequent community beautification events

ALL ARE WELCOME – The Vision Update Process 2012

Updating the 1993 Vision

On April 6, 1993 the Lakewood Community Vision was published. This report was the result of 400 hours of work contributed by members of the Planning Commission, city officials and 80 community volunteers. While it is still relevant and many of the principals are unchanged, the strategies and action items are in need of updating. Many of the priorities are as important today as they were in 1993. In addition to the 1993 Community Vision, the 2005 Grow Lakewood Report holds many observations about Lakewood that are as true today as they were 6 years ago.

In January 2012, City Council requested that the Planning Commission and the Department of Planning and Development begin to evaluate the Community Vision. Through public hearings of the Commission in February and March it was determined that the Vision still has valid content but is due for an update. The Planning Department began developing a community engagement plan in February to begin that work.

While the history of Lakewood, our zoning, our proximity to the Lake, Downtown and the airport, and in many ways the characteristics of our residents have remained the same, the ways that we access information, purchase goods and do business has changed significantly. Lakewood is well positioned to succeed over our next 100 years and to do so we must take stock of where we are today, what we have accomplished to this point, and detail what we need to do to reach our collective goals.

2012 Vision Update Process

138 residents participated in the 2012 Community Vision Update over the course of eight (8) months and twenty (20) community meetings.

May

The first public event was held May 14, 2012 with seventy (70) residents and city officials in attendance. At the first event participants broke into groups to respond to three (3) questions:

1. What do you love about Lakewood?
2. What worries you about Lakewood?
3. What do you hope for Lakewood's future?

In cataloguing those responses it was found that what residents love, worry about and hope all fit into the same general categories: commercial development, community wellness, education and culture, housing, and safety. These categories became the focus areas for each of six sub-committees.

June

The sub-committees met for the first time in June. This meeting was an opportunity for participants to get to know each other and develop a basic understanding about their focus areas through an informed dialogue.

Housing (University of Akron Lakewood - June 27th 2012) - The Housing Subcommittee discussed several of Lakewood's unique qualities that factor in to the city's housing, such as the close proximity of our commercial and residential districts, the concentration of first-time home buyers, and the number of rental properties. Fostering good stewardship among homeowners was determined as essential to maintaining the city's housing stock, including encouraging quality renovations and repairs that will both look better and last longer. The subcommittee identified the need for housing options such as one-floor properties for an aging population. Lastly, the group sees an opportunity to use education and outreach to proactively address housing, by informing homeowners on how to care for old homes, and providing resources to do so.

Mobility (Lakewood Library – June 27th 2012) - Transportation, particularly cycling, is a hot topic in Lakewood right now. The Mobility Subcommittee had a frank discussion on the state of transportation in Lakewood beginning with an exhaustive list of the many ways people move through Lakewood. From this discussion it became apparent that the four most significant themes in mobility are access, options, safety and convenience. Drawing from this the subcommittee crafted the following draft vision statement: "To provide safe convenient passage to all people through a variety of options." Over the coming months the subcommittee will focus on polishing their vision statement and identifying specific goals.

Safety (University of Akron Lakewood - June 27th 2012) - The Safety Subcommittee, joined by representatives of the police and fire departments, discussed the perception and reality of crime in Lakewood and ways to make the city feel safer. The subcommittee was very positive about the responsiveness and visibility of the Lakewood Police, and the presence of neighborhood offices. By using information and education, such as the city-run Citizens' Academy and programs in public schools, the group believes we can increase our emergency preparedness and prevent crimes of opportunity. The physical environment was also identified as an important determinant of perceptions of safety, and building design, lighting, and property maintenance should reflect this.

Education and Culture (Lakewood Library – June 27th 2012) - The subcommittee discussed a range of cultural and educational opportunities available in Lakewood from k-12 schools to arts venues and job readiness training. The group seeks to better understand what cultural and educational resources exist, how those resources are being used, and how we as a community can build on those existing resources. The subcommittee also discussed the role of the Community Vision broadly as well as the value of education. At

the end of the first session the subcommittee has put forth the following draft vision statement: “Enhancing accessibility to community based educational opportunities and cultural activities that provide lifelong learning.”

Community Wellness (University of Akron Lakewood - June 25th 2012) - The Community Wellness Subcommittee seeks to address the health of the community as a whole incorporating physical health, recreation opportunities, and environmental concerns. Many draft vision statements were proposed but the discussion centered on ensuring equitable access to healthy living to all residents. This includes food access, encouragement of active lifestyles and support of community based solutions to environmental challenges. Moving forward the committee is interested to learn about more about the ongoing Lakewood Human Services Summit.

Commercial Development (University of Akron Lakewood - June 25th 2012) - Commercial Development began as the largest subcommittee with thirty two (32) residents in attendance at the first meeting. Two key talking points came out of that meeting. First is concern for the diversity of services offered in Lakewood. A healthy balance of businesses is necessary to meet resident needs and ensure economic sustainability in our community. Second, Lakewood should be proactive in the area of commercial development through resident engagement, and high standards to support quality development.

August

In August 2012 a handful of Community Vision Participants were asked to participate in the Lakewood Look Book by sharing a glimpse of Lakewood in one (1) photo and less than 100 words. These brief snapshots of daily life informed the community vision process by providing insight on daily life. Some of the initial entries included a ride along with a police officer, a walk to the grocery store, being a first time homebuyer, and taking a class at University of Akron – Lakewood.

September

At the September meetings a guest speaker was invited to each sub-committee meeting to share an outside perspective on conditions in Lakewood. These presenters informed the discussion

Community Wellness (Lakewood Library – September 27, 2012) - Louis L. McMahon shared his extensive experience with environmental issues relating to water law, and brownfield redevelopment at the September Community Wellness meeting. Two points were critical to the discussion. First, that brownfield is not necessarily a bad term, merely something that the next developer will have to deal with. Second, that there is a need for greater education about what types of alternative stormwater management strategies are available to homeowners in Lakewood.

Housing (University of Akron Lakewood – September 26, 2012) - Residential rehabber and Lakewoodite of 7 years Jen Morrow spoke to the Housing Committee in September. Morrow explained the strategy for renovating and selling some of Lakewood's worst homes in just three months. Morrow says the reason her properties move so quickly is because she meets the needs of young professionals by providing houses with modern amenities and historic charm.

Mobility (University of Akron Lakewood – September 25, 2012) - The Mobility Committee sat down with Mike Schipper of the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority in September to share his insight on public transportation in Lakewood. The discussion began with an overview of RTA's funding, decision making process, and upcoming projects. The conversation went on to cover a broad range of mobility related topics from ways to incentivize transit use to specific recommendations for Lakewood. Schipper urged the group to remember that "multi-modal is not every mode on every route – it is a couple of modes on each route."

Education & Culture (University of Akron Lakewood – September 19, 2012) - Nelson Beckford joined the Education and Culture Committee last month to lend his perspective on educational and cultural opportunities in the region based on his ongoing work at the Cleveland Foundation. Themes to come out of the evening included the need to build on existing assets, engage diverse partners, and better understand where Lakewood fits in the region with regard to educational offerings.

Commercial Development (University of Akron Lakewood – September 18, 2012) - Mark and Kelley Jablonski of Centermark Development came to the September Commercial Development meeting to share their insights on commercial activity in Lakewood. The Jablonskis walked through their observations and predictions for each of the city's commercial corridors. They recommended that an emphasis be placed on the Madison Corridor as well as the preservation of independent shops along Detroit Ave.

Safety (Lakewood Library – September 12, 2012) - At the September meeting of the Safety Committee Jeff Verespej of Ohio City Inc spoke on the three components of Ohio City's safety strategy including: vibrancy, the special improvement district, and Ohio City Shines (a canvassing effort by residents and the Cleveland Building Department). The question period which followed emphasized the importance of communication between residents and safety forces as well as the benefits of knowing one's neighbors

October

In October, the community vision sub-committees paired off for three sessions at University of Akron Lakewood. Together the combined committees began to give shape to the Vision Update. For each subject area 2-3 dozen statements from previous meetings were categorized into five objective categories:

1. Building Connections - Communicate effectively
2. Enhancing Existing Assets - Grow what we have
3. Creating Places for People - Use good design
4. Striking a Balance - Manage limited resources
5. Thinking about Tomorrow - Support sustainable practices

Once organized, edited and amended these objectives formed the living outline which forms the heart of this document.

December

At the December 12th Community Vision meeting representatives of all six (6) committees presented the first draft of the Community Vision Update including vision statements, goals, and objectives in each subject area. The presentation was followed by a lively discussion on the visioning process.