

Gates Mills Comprehensive Plan

Revisions to Gates Mills Vision & Goals Worksheet based on Community Feedback, August, 2022



The following text represents CT's expansion of the Draft Visions, Goals and Objectives, based on previous discussions and observations from the community feedback from the Town Hall and Neighborhood Meetings.

Please remember, the Vision and Goals (with objectives in some places) is a work-in-progress. These statements will continue to be expanded and refined after each Advisory Committee meeting.

Distributed 9/27/22

Definitions:

Vision Statement. A community's vision is a statement embraced by residents and other stakeholders that describes how the community should look and feel in years to come.

Aspirational Goals. Aspirational goals, sometimes called stretch goals, are ambitious outcomes that seek to support and help achieve the community vision. They provide an over-arching framework for thinking holistically about the Village. While typically broadly written, goals should be stated specifically enough so that it is possible to assess whether progress has been made in achieving them.

Objectives. Objectives relate to and support a specific goal. If an objective does not fit under a goal and it is considered important, then there is a good chance the objective may actually be more appropriately written as a goal.

Revised "First Cut" 2032 Vision Statement

Continue to be a highly desirable community that preserves and enhances the natural environment and other attributes that make the Village truly special, fosters a deep appreciation among residents, and attracts younger-new wage-earning residents and retains existing residents who are committed to the Village's continued success as a community with an overall high quality of life.

Attributes that make Gates Mills special include:

- Visual character that creates the Village's unique identity
- Outstanding serene rural natural environment
- Historic houses, architecture and character
- Small town values
- Easy access to nearby amenities
- Desirable neighborhoods and housing stock
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Draft 2032 Goals and Objectives

The following draft goals and related objectives support the above overall vision. Strikethroughs indicate deletions to the July version, and red unlined text indicates additions.

1. **RURAL VILLAGE CHARACTER.** Preserve/retain the rural, ~~bucolic~~ character of Gates Mills, characterized by extensive tree canopy; rural views and views of Chagrin River from public roadways; and quiet, ~~private~~ atmosphere. Objectives/~~strategies~~ include:
 - 1.1. Continue to preserve, protect and plant new trees
 - 1.2. Continue to preserve land via either purchases by Gates Mills Land Conservancy (GMLC) or with easements.
 - 1.2.1. Continue to fund the GMLC via the property tax levy.
 - 1.2.2. Promote the benefits of conservation easements on home sites to encourage residents to explore possible options with
 - 1.3. Update the Village's Conservation Development regulations (Ch 1160) to make the development option with the preservation of 50% or more of a development site more likely to be viable for property owners, while still providing important community benefits. Options to investigate include:
 - 1.3.1. Make Conservation Development an option in the U1 A1 District rather than a separate zoning district:
 - 1.3.1.1. Permit by-right when the development has the density of one unit per five acres.
 - 1.3.1.2. Permit as a conditional use whenever an incentive is permitted such as an increase in density in exchange for a greater percentage of the development site preserved, and/or if attached units are proposed.
 - 1.3.2. Reduce or eliminate the minimum 25 ac. project size.
 - 1.3.3. Simplify or eliminate the requirements for a Yield Plan, with some exceptions (e.g. if sensitive natural areas, steep slopes, floodplain, etc. impact more than 50% of the site).
 - 1.3.4. Ensure the required open space provides ample dense screening from the existing street and adjoining properties, and require the density of screening to be maintained in perpetuity.

- 1.4. Protect important scenic viewsheds and natural landscaping along major roads.
 - 1.4.1. Explore the potential of adopting a View Protection ordinance that would identify and protect the scenic viewsheds.
 - 1.4.1.1. Work with the GMLC to acquire property/easements to ensure the most important scenic viewsheds are protected/preserved.
 - 1.4.1.2. Update the Village’s Conservation Development regulations (Ch 1160) to include scenic viewsheds as an important resource to be protected as part of the restricted open space requirement.

2. **HARMONY WITH NATURE.** Protect/preserve the natural environment and habitat of the Chagrin River Valley in order to reduce environmental damage, address climate change, and encourage low-impact/green infrastructure strategies, as well as to provide opportunities to enjoy nature. Objectives/strategies include:

- 2.1. Encourage/facilitate the use of alternative and clean energy systems.
 - 2.1.1. Establish zoning regulations that permit alternative and clean energy options such as solar panels, etc. with appropriate requirements/limitations to ensure there are no negative impacts on adjacent property.
- 2.2. Ensure protected/conserved public and privately-owned open spaces are well-maintained through best management practices to protect both public and private investments.
 - 2.2.1. Review the existing resource protection regulations for effectiveness and revise/update if necessary
 - 2.2.2. Diligently enforce existing (updated) resource protection regulations including stormwater management and hillside protection regulations.

3. **COMMUNITY PRIDE & ENGAGEMENT.** Promote/foster a sense of community pride and, appreciation and increase engagement among all residents. Objectives include:
 - 3.1. Maintain and enhance the Village Center as a place for active community interaction, through community events, and other opportunities to meet neighbors, etc., including tasteful and limited additions to town center.
 - 3.1.1. Recognize the center of the village as a “place”
 - 3.1.1.1. Adopt an official name for the village center/town center area. There are a variety of terms currently used; some residents (especially those who live on large lots to the north and east) refer to this area as “the village”, or as the town center.
 - 3.1.1.2. Consider creating a Village Center Mixed-Use zoning district that would address the range of uses currently in this area – government, commercial, housing, etc. with appropriate regulations to ensure the area retains its historic character, while allowing for limited new construction and adaptive reuse of historic properties.
 - 3.1.1.3. Identify the boundaries of the Village Center.
 - 3.1.2. Explore opportunities for **limited** additional retail/service uses in the village center area.
 - 3.1.2.1. A first step could include allowing/encouraging temporary uses to “test” the viability. Options include “pop-up” retail in existing underutilized space, food trucks that come during scheduled events or specific times.
 - 3.1.2.2. Conduct a feasibility study before any type of new commercial construction is encouraged.
 - 3.2. Increase awareness of local events, committees and other ways that foster community interaction.
 - 3.3. Preserve and celebrate the history of Gates Mills via historic preservation including retaining the historic town patterns.
 - 3.4. Continue to find ways to make connections with Gates Mills Elementary School to expand the facility as a community resource.

4. **DESIRABLE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS.** Promote and preserve the variety and value of existing housing and neighborhoods, while carefully managing the limited allowance for new housing that preserves the Village's character and quality, ~~privacy, etc...~~ in order to attract new wage-earning residents and provide options for existing residents.

Objectives/strategies include:

- 4.1. Encourage investment in the existing housing stock (housing updates, remodels, etc.)

4.1.1. Explore the potential of adopting a Community Reinvestment Area designation in those parts of the Village where investment is needed. older homes prevail and are shown to

A Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) is an area of land designated by a local government on which property owners can receive tax incentives for constructing new or renovating existing buildings. Ohio's CRA Program permits Gates Mills to identify and designate areas where investment has been lagging to encourage revitalization of the existing housing stock and the development of new structures.

4.1.2. Increase awareness among residents that Gates Mills participates in the Heritage Home Loan program. The Heritage Home Program assists the owners of older homes in maintaining and improving their properties. As a participating community, Gates Mills homeowners that have eligible properties can utilize the Heritage Home Program's free Technical Assistance and apply for a fixed interest rate loan.

4.1.3. Evaluate the Historic District regulations and boundaries to ensure they adequately protect historic properties that contribute to the character of the Village without being a disincentive to renovations and remodeling efforts.

- 4.2. Facilitate redevelopment of non-historic properties.

4.2.1. Evaluate the Historic District regulations and boundaries to ensure they do not burden non-historic properties.

- 4.3. Provide housing choices that are consistent/compatible with the density of the surrounding housing.

4.3.1. Encourage use of the Conservation Development regulations, which permits 2 and 3 dwelling units to be attached in one building, typically marketed as owner-occupied condominiums.

- 4.3.2. Identify potential development areas within and surrounding the Village Center and determine appropriate density that will contribute to the continued success of the Village Center.
- 4.3.3. Proactively consider adaptive reuse regulations for nonresidential historic structures that contribute to the character of the Village. A number of Cuyahoga County communities have adopted regulations that permit a nonresidential structure (i.e. church or school) to be converted to residential while retaining the exterior of the structure. This is most suitable for the Village center area, which is characterized by smaller house lots.
- 4.4. Expand housing options for older and retired(ing) residents.
 - 4.4.1. Consider allowing Accessory Dwelling Units – regulated in a way that enables existing/new residences to have a secondary unit that is clearly accessory to the main single-family dwelling. Options include limiting the size of the unit (often to less than 1,000 sq ft or maximum of one bedroom), configuration (e.g. must be attached to the main house), whether or not an entrance from the exterior is permitted, requiring a minimum lot size, etc.
 - 4.4.2. Provide/promote senior oriented services to help seniors “age in place.” See potential services listed in #6.
 - 4.4.3. Encourage all new housing and remodeling projects to include universal design features that make it easier for a person to age in place.

5. **ACCESS & CONNECTIONS.** Promote a safe and convenient transportation system that facilitates local travel, promotes walking and biking, and fosters physical well-being. Objectives include:

- 5.1. Maintain quality road infrastructure.
- 5.2. Provide family-friendly trail/access connections to the Village Center and North Chagrin Reservation, and between neighborhoods.

5.2.1. Increase pedestrian and biking facilities throughout the Village.

5.2.1.1. Identify locations where connectivity is desired, such as connecting surrounding neighborhoods to the Village Center, and where sidewalks. Prioritize locations where potential bike lanes and walking paths are possible without creating traffic problems or undermining the privacy of nearby home owners.

5.2.1.2. Identify locations where pedestrian and biking bridges exist over the Chagrin River, creeks and roads, and suitable locations for additional bridges.

6. **QUALITY AMENITIES & SERVICES.** Continue to maintain and enhance community amenities/services that support a high quality of life with the right balance of community services for taxes paid, while respecting residents' desire to protect and enhance the natural environment. Objectives include:
 - 6.1. Continue to provide excellent safety services that foster a sense of security throughout the Village.
 - 6.2. Provide services that increase residents' ability to age-in-place, including ways to stay engaged with neighbors and the wider community.
 - 6.3. Provide more community activities and services to meet the needs of residents with young children. (e.g. early child care, after school child care)
 - 6.3.1. Widely promote the activities and services to potential home buyers, realtors, etc.
 - 6.4. Continue to work with the Mayfield City School District and communities within the District to provide value to Gates Mills residents.
 - 6.4.1. Explore ways to support and promote the school district's offerings, successes, etc.
 - 6.5. Continue to permit and regulate non-residential uses in limited locations to meet the needs of the community and contribute to the Village tax base.
 - 6.6. Explore ways to improve electric service to residents.
 - 6.6.1. In areas where overhead electric power lines are often damaged by exiting trees, develop a plan in concert with the electric company to systematically bury the power lines.
 - 6.7. Improve phone and internet service to ensure all areas of the Village are suitable for remote work-from-home.

7. **SENSIBLE FISCAL POLICIES.** Maintain fiscal prudence to ensure long-term achievement of the Village’s vision while allowing adaptability with changing priorities. Objectives include:
- 7.1. Maintain a healthy balance between making strategic public investments that enhance quality of life, while generating enough revenue for fiscal solvency.
 - 7.2. Ensure continued community and resident investment that leads to increased real estate values and tax revenue.
 - 7.3.