

# Gates Mills Comprehensive Plan

Rev 11/14/22

## EXPANSION OF OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES FOR ADVISORY COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

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

Please remember, this set of Vision, Goals and Objectives is a work-in-progress. These statements will continue to be expanded and refined after each Advisory Committee meeting.



## 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 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

## Draft 2032 Goals

- A. **RURAL VILLAGE CHARACTER.** Preserve/retain the rural character of Gates Mills, characterized by extensive tree canopy; rural views and views of Chagrin River from public roadways; and quiet atmosphere.
- B. **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.
- C. **COMMUNITY PRIDE & ENGAGEMENT.** Promote/foster a sense of community pride and, appreciation and increase engagement among all residents.
- D. **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 in order to attract new wage-earning residents and provide options for existing residents.
- E. **ACCESS & CONNECTIONS.** Promote a safe and convenient transportation system that facilitates local travel, promotes walking and biking, and fosters physical well-being.
- F. **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.
- G. **SENSIBLE FISCAL POLICIES.** Maintain fiscal prudence to ensure long-term achievement of the Village's vision while allowing for adaptability with changing priorities.

## 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.

### Goal A. RURAL VILLAGE CHARACTER

Preserve/retain the rural character of Gates Mills, characterized by extensive tree canopy; rural views and views of Chagrin River from public roadways; and quiet atmosphere. Objectives/strategies include:

#### A.1. Preserve, protect and enhance large expanses of natural areas.

##### A.1.1. Continue to support the Gates Mills Land Conservancy (GMLC) as the chief mechanism for land conservation.

The Gates Mills Land Conservancy (GMLC) was established as a non-profit tax-exempt organization in 1988. To date, GMLC has preserved /protected nearly 700 acres of natural areas in Gates Mills. Gates Mills residents recently voted to continue to support the organization through property taxes.

- a. Continue to fund the GMLC via the property tax levy.
- b. Promote the benefits of conservation easements on home sites to encourage residents to explore possible conservation options with the GMLC.

##### A.1.2. Update the Village's Conservation Development Regulations (Ch 1160) to make it a viable mechanism for land preservation.

In 1997, the Village commissioned the Gates Mills Growth Management Plan. At that time, Gates Mills was "experiencing increasing residential growth pressures..." which had "begun to strain municipal services and infrastructure..." and "as residential development has scattered throughout the Village, open space, woodlands, scenic views and other characteristic elements of the rural setting have disappeared." Based on the Plan's recommendation for establishing "open space subdivision design standards," the Village adopted Chapter 1160 Conservation Development Regulations, a development option for large properties (25 acres and larger) that provided more flexible development options in exchange for the permanent preservation of 50% or more of the development site through conservation easements. However, since its adoption, new house lots have only occurred via lot splits along existing streets and no new subdivision has been developed in the Village.

Recognizing that land preservation/conservation in the Village has occurred primarily through the Gates Mills Land Conservancy's land acquisitions and purchase of conservation easements funded by property tax revenue, it is desirable to encourage land preservation via Conservation Development.

To make the regulations more viable for property owners, while still providing important community benefits, consider updating the regulations as outlined below:

- a. Make Conservation Development an option in the U1 A1 District rather than a separate zoning district:
  - Permit by-right when the development has the density of one unit per five acres.
  - 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.
- b. Make the regulations it easier to administer and more attractive to property owners.
  - Reduce or eliminate the minimum 25 acre project size.
  - 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).
- c. Enhance the regulations to ensure the required open space is sufficient in its natural state or enhanced to provide ample dense screening from the existing street and adjoining properties and require the density of screening to be maintained in perpetuity.

## A.2. Protect important scenic viewsheds and natural landscaping along major roads.

Roads throughout Gates Mills are known for historic fence lines and walls, open fields and wooded areas and these scenic views from the road are significant community resources that reflects the Village's character. Protection of these scenic resources is a significant component of maintaining the quality of life of the Village, both for natural resource conservation and view shed protection. Recognizing, preserving, and enhancing or improving the view from the road is a critical element in sustaining Gates Mill's unique character-defining features and sense of place.

### A.2.1. Inventory and catalog the scenic areas of the Village in order to identify scenic viewsheds that should be protected.

A viewshed is defined as the view of an area from a specific vantage point; a computer model of this; and the area that comprises this view. An inventory and cataloging of scenic resources utilizing GIS mapping and data analysis is the first step for identifying, prioritizing and mapping scenic views and developing suitable protections.

### A.2.2. Explore the potential of adopting a Viewshed Protection ordinance that would protect the scenic viewsheds.

- a. Require a minimum amount of vegetative screening along the roadway to maintain the natural character that existed prior to development. Ensure it provides ample dense screening from the existing street and adjoining properties, and require the density of screening to be maintained in perpetuity.
- b. Encourage new homes to be located on the parcel in such a way that they are not visible from the public right-of-way, wherever possible. This is consistent with the 1997 Growth Management Plan recommendation that with the exception of removing trees for a driveway, vegetation located within 200 feet of the public right-of-way should remain natural to eliminate view of a structure from the road.

**A.2.3. 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.**

Includes areas with views of attractive features such as ridge lines, steep slopes, woodlands, streams, lakes, historic features and landmarks.)

**A.3. Preserve, protect and increase the tree canopy in the Village.**

Gates Mills has the second highest percentage of tree canopy (defined as the amount of ground covered by leaves when viewed from above) in Cuyahoga County. The extensively wooded areas throughout the Village significantly contribute to the rural natural character. However, between 2011 and 2017, the Village experienced a 5% loss in tree canopy due to tree blight and land clearing for new housing construction.

**A.3.1. Continue to enforce the tree protection regulations.**

- a. Continue to require a permit for tree cutting within the Village in compliance with Chapter 1173. The Village adopted Chapter 1173 Tree Cutting regulations in 1993 to order to “preserve the woodland nature and vegetational aesthetics for which the Village is known”, in addition to numerous environmental benefits. This chapter requires a developer or property owner to obtain a permit before tree cutting can occur as part of new construction or any other earth-disturbing activity.
- b. Continue to enforce the Protected Hillside Zone regulations which were adopted in 1992 in order to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of hillsides in the Village by encouraging the maximum retention of natural features including trees and other natural plant formations, which help to retain the sense of identity and rural image for which the Village is known.

**A.3.2. Maintain existing trees and systematically plant new trees.**

According to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry, maintaining existing tree health is, over time, more cost effective than planting new trees. Consider incorporating the recommendations from the Cuyahoga County Greenprint for maintaining and planting new trees as part of the Village’s policies for village property.

- a. Adopt a Village tree plan that includes tree planting, maintenance, and tree removal standards, guidelines and policies.
- b. Adopt a tree replacement policy to ensure that whenever a tree is removed by the Village, it will be replaced.

## Goal B. 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:

### B.1. Encourage/facilitate the use of alternative and clean energy systems.

#### B.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.

The current regulations permit solar panels on the roof of a residential structure, but do not permit ground mounted panels. Given the large lot size and wooded nature of the community, consider allowing ground mounted panels for flexibility.

#### B.1.2. Adopt zoning regulations for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations as accessory structure in parking lots.

### B.2. Ensure protected/conserved public and privately-owned open spaces are well-maintained through best management practices to protect both public and private investments.

#### B.2.1. Review the existing resource protection regulations for effectiveness and revise/update if necessary

#### B.2.2. Diligently enforce existing (updated) resource protection regulations including stormwater management and hillside protection regulations.

### B.3. Ensure Star-filled Skies for Future Generations

#### B.3.1. Adopt an Outdoor Lighting Ordinance to establish a standard for night sky friendly practices.

Adopting an outdoor lighting ordinance helps to preserve the night sky, improve visibility on village streets, reduce energy waste and protect the quality of life within the Village

#### B.3.2. Become a designated IDA Dark Sky Place.

Investigate the possibility of the Village becoming a designated Dark Sky Place through the International Dark Sky Association Dark Sky Places Program or similar program. Night sky designation programs allow residents and local leaders to get involved in night sky preservation through responsible lighting policies and public education.

## Goal C. COMMUNITY PRIDE & ENGAGEMENT

Promote/foster a sense of community pride and appreciation and increase engagement among all residents. Objectives/strategies include:

### C.1. Maintain and enhance the Village Center as a place for active community interaction.

Gates Mills residents place a high value on the sense of community created by the concentration of government, business and recreation facilities anchored by the Community House, Post Office, Library and Town Hall. This area also enjoys a concentration of historic structures in and surrounding the central area.

This plan envisions an enhanced Village Center with a small collection of shops that cater to Village residents and encourage people to come "downtown" and linger, as well as limited expansion in housing and more river-oriented spaces. As the place where most community events are held, the Village Center is a key contributor to the Village's good quality of life. Build on ongoing investments by developing a long term strategy coupled with short-term tactical improvements that show ongoing progress.

See attached map with draft Objectives/Strategies for Village Center area.

#### C.1.1. Recognize the center of the village as a "place"

- a. 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.
- b. 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.
- c. Identify the boundaries of the Village Center, which could extend northward to the Chagrin Valley Nursery and south to the southern boundary of the Hunt Club property.

#### C.1.2. Explore opportunities for limited additional retail/service uses in the Village Center area.

- a. Expand business uses on vacant land north of the Library on the east side of the Chagrin River Road, while making sure to preserve the existing establishments, i.e. the Library, the Post Office, Sara's, Cindy Halle's, etc. because they are already the backbone of the Center and should continue to be an important part of the Center development.
- b. 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.

- c. Conduct a feasibility study to determine the optimal configuration and amount of retail/service uses in the area, as well as relocating any public uses, and seek advice from a qualified developer before any type of new commercial construction takes place.
- d. As part of the feasibility study, evaluate the pros and cons of relocating the Service Department facilities to free up this location for a more river-oriented public use.

**C.1.3. Identify ways to create more themed events to support retail activities.**

- a. Utilize the Community House to hold a monthly or periodic "market day" similar to seasonal markets held at Shaker Square and similar places throughout Cuyahoga County. The 'market' could be aimed at popup small specialty food and crafter establishments. It could attract people on a regular basis if the offerings were unique and local, with special themed markets for the holidays, e.g. a European Christmas Market, summer picnicking supplies tied to Village Center concerts, a Fall Harvest market, etc.
- b. Support the creation of a Village Center business organization. All non-residential Center establishments and organizations would be asked to join a business organization to support activities and marketing of the Village Center. This would be in addition to the Village's annual roster of activities with the goal of creating more events to bring residents to the center more frequently in order to make it a true social center for the Village.
- c. Encourage the Village Center business organization (described above) to establish regular events sponsored by the Village Center establishments such as weekend shopping, evening offerings, or the special markets listed above. It is possible the Hunt Club, St. Christopher's, the Garden Club, the Historical Society, the Library etc. would be interested in participating in these special offerings.

**C.1.4. Expand community use of the Gates Mills Elementary School to ensure it remains a valued community resource.**

The property is currently owned and operated a by the Mayfield City School District. Explore options with the school district on ways to maximize use of the building such as for expanded day-care/after-school care facility.

Work with the district to prepare a reuse strategy in the event the District determines it no longer needs the building.

**C.1.5. Encourage more housing consistent with the density of housing currently existing on Colvin Road, Main Street and Old Mill Road, and compatible with the Village Center.**

Additional housing in this area would increase the population of the Village Center, which in turn would better ensure the success of the new Center as a commercial hub of small stores, and as a gathering place for Village residents.

See Goal D for a discussion of housing in the Village Center area.

**C.1.6. Provide more access to the Chagrin River in the Village Center area.**

Increase access to the Chagrin River via a walking trail along the river for the length of the Village Center area (from Chagrin Valley Nursery to the Hunt Club). Connect to the Arboretum Trail, and provide amenities such as a benches, etc. to entice visitors to linger.



C.1.7. Ensure there are adequate parking spaces to accommodate any increase in activities in the Village Center.

Consider a two-pronged approach to parking to ensure there is a sufficient amount on a regular basis and identify additional locations and parking strategies to accommodate larger crowds that come for special events.

C.2. Foster a welcoming environment for all residents.

C.2.1. Expand and facilitate new-resident activities to introduce newcomers to current residents and village activities, etc.

C.2.2. Encourage neighborhood get-togethers.

The Neighborhood Meetings conducted in August 2022 as part of the comprehensive plan were noted by some as a great way to meet their neighbors. Most of these meetings were held at the Community House, and could be continued on an annual basis.

C.3. Increase awareness of local events, committees and other ways that foster community interaction.

C.3.1. Expand and update communication methods, including utilizing contemporary social networking platforms to reach a larger number and wider range of residents.

C.4. Preserve and celebrate the history of Gates Mills via historic preservation including retaining the historic town patterns.

C.4.1. Continue to promote preservation of historic structures, especially ones that are easily visible from public places (e.g. within the Village Center and along the primary roads).

C.4.2. Utilize conservation easements to protect important aspects of the historic town pattern in private ownership.

## Goal D. 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 in order to attract new wage-earning residents and provide options for existing residents. Objectives/strategies include:

### D.1. Encourage investment in the existing housing stock (housing updates, remodels, etc.)

#### D.1.1. Review, update and streamline the architectural review process for housing renovations and additions, and new housing construction.

Building permit applications for new house construction and additions are reviewed by the Architectural Board of Review and, for properties in the historic district, by the Historic District Subcommittee. The process can take multiple meetings before an application is approved, depending on the size and complexity of the project, and even longer for houses in the expansive historic district because of additional review by the Historic District Subcommittee.

Considerations for streamlining the process include:

- a. Consider eliminating the Historic District Subcommittee to make the process more efficient for historic district properties. The two boards have the same number and composition of members, including three non-voting practicing registered architects who provide expert guidance to the resident members.
- b. Create a set of design guidelines to supplement the one-page list of 10 design standards established in Section 1313.091 so that applicants and their architect can prepare acceptable applications that meet the Village's expectations. The guidelines should address both historic district properties and nonhistoric district properties, and should be posted on the Village's website so they are easily available to applicants.
- c. Make the process more user-friendly by enabling staff to guide applicants through the process and to review applications to ensure all needed items are submitted by the applicant before being forwarded to the Board.

#### D.1.2. Reevaluate the Historic District regulations and boundary to ensure it encompasses historic properties that contribute to the character of the Village without burdening undeveloped and noncontributing properties.

The current boundary of the Village's Historic District was established in the early 1990s when the area was designated as a National Register Historic District. The goal of the nomination was to nominate the largest and most cohesive contiguous area of historic Gates Mills to the National Register in a single district. At the time, the district included 200 contributing properties (built prior to 1940) and encompassed a "large amount of open space [which] was carefully selected because of its role in providing a sympathetic environment for proper interpretation of the buildings which occupy the large estates which exist in parts of the district."

Since the historic designation took effect, some structures have been demolished and replaced by new construction and new houses have been built on vacant parcels. Due to such changes, it is prudent to reevaluate the district boundaries and revise if warranted. Otherwise, being in the historic district can increase the cost of maintenance and make it difficult to make energy-saving improvements which can lead to deferred maintenance, lack of updates and ultimately reduced demand for older properties.

In addition, the 1990 nomination notes the importance of estate homes situated on very large parcels, and how the large amount of open space is an essential element contributing to the cohesive contiguous area. Yet, the historic district regulations do not prevent a large estate from being carved into a modern subdivision with five acre lots, which would essentially eliminate the historic landscape.

**D.1.3. Explore the potential of adopting a Community Reinvestment Area designation in those parts of the Village where investment is needed.**

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. See CRA factsheet.

**D.1.4. Increase awareness among residents that Gates Mills participates in the Heritage Home 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. See Heritage Home Program factsheet.

**D.2. Provide housing choices that are consistent/compatible with the density of the surrounding housing.**

The Gates Mills Comprehensive Plan takes a character/density-based approach to identifying future housing options based on defensible regulations that achieve a balance between private and public benefits and burdens.

See attached map with draft Objectives/Strategies for Housing Discussion.

**D.2.1. Establish a redevelopment policy for lots in the Class A1 District that allows the same number of units to be rebuilt (no loss in units) if several parcels are consolidated into one development site.**

The 1997 Growth Management Plan recommended that the Class A1 residential zoning district be divided into two sub-districts, "Class A-1 (a) would be the Developed Properties existing at the time of the Zoning Amendment and Class A-1 (b) would be the existing Vacant Properties." As a result, Section 1163.01 LOT AREA PER SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING, subsection (a) was amended to read:

- (a) In the Class A1 District, no future division of land will be approved unless the minimum lot size for such new division of land is five acres in area for each new parcel created after the effective date of this section (December 31, 1998)...  
 One single-family dwelling may be erected on any lot separately owned at the time of the passage of this section or on any numbered lot in a recorded

subdivision that was on record in the office of the County Recorder before the effective date of this section (December 31, 1998).

In addition, the Zoning Map notes that the minimum lot size required for lots established prior to 12/31/1998 is 2.5 acres. There are some areas in the Class A1 District where a number of the lots are less than 2.5 acres, such as Riverview Road and Robinwood Lane and may have a number of nonconforming lot conditions.

Establish nonconforming lot regulations that provide guidance for home additions in all districts. There are a number of reasons beyond lot size that can cause a parcel to be nonconforming, including noncompliance with the minimum lot width (increased to 200 feet) and minimum front, side and rear yard setbacks.

**D.2.2. Encourage use of the Conservation Development regulations as a mechanism to building single-family homes as well as 2 and 3 dwelling units attached in one building.**

The flexibility to develop three different unit types enables less land to be disturbed for housing construction and makes it easier to preserve a greater amount of land.

See also A.1.2

**D.2.3. 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.**

There are approximately 16 acres in the Village Center zoned Class A-4, which has a minimum lot size of 7,500 square feet. However, the median density is approximately 2 units per acre.

**D.2.4. Proactively consider adaptive reuse regulations for nonresidential 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) including historic structures 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 and various nonresidential buildings such as the Gates Mills Elementary School and various buildings associated with the Hunt Club. Reuse options could include residential with minimum unit sizes similar to current regulations.

**D.3. Expand housing options for older and retired(ing) residents.**

AARP research shows that more than 80% of people want to be able to age in their home, rather than in a long-term care facility.

**D.3.1. Consider allowing Accessory Dwelling Units.**

The Gates Mills Zoning Code currently allows homeowners to rent out up to two rooms to not more than four persons. An updated alternative to this allowance is an accessory dwelling unit. Accessory dwelling units can be 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), regulating the configuration (e.g. must be attached to or located within the main house), specifying whether or not an entrance from the exterior is permitted, and requiring a minimum lot size, etc. This is a common solution to allowing older residents to transition to a small apartment on their same property.

**D.3.2. Encourage all new housing and remodeling projects to include universal design features that make it easier for a person to age in place.**

Universal Design is “a design process that enables and empowers a diverse population by improving human performance, health and wellness, and social participation” (Steinfeld and Maisel, 2012).

Universal design features such as lever door knobs instead of standard round ones and wider doorways can help a person stay independent and eliminates the need to remodel in the event of injury or illness. They can also make it easier to sell a house as these features improve marketability.

**D.3.3. Provide/promote senior oriented services to help seniors “age in place.” See potential services listed in Goal F. Quality Amenities and Services.**

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## Goal E. ACCESS & CONNECTIONS

Promote a safe and convenient transportation and trails system that facilitates local travel, promotes walking and biking, and fosters physical well-being.

Objectives/strategies include:

### E.1. Maintain quality road infrastructure.

- E.1.1. **Continue to monitor traffic speeds along major roads such as Chagrin River and Sherman Road.**  
Concerns were raised about safety concerns due to speeding traffic along Chagrin River Road and other roads in the Village. Conduct a traffic analysis of streets with known issues to verify the issues.
- E.1.2. **Review and update the Village’s strategy for road construction and maintenance.**  
Road maintenance and repair was a common issue cited on the Community Survey.

### E.2. Increase pedestrian and biking facilities throughout the Village.

- E.2.1. **Provide sidewalks along Chagrin River Road and Old Mill Road in the Village Center with a connection to the Gates Mills Elementary School.**
- E.2.2. **Provide family-friendly trail/access connections to the Village Center and North Chagrin Reservation, and between neighborhoods.**  
Based on the 2022 Community Survey, residents were most dissatisfied with the existing roadway conditions as they related to pedestrian and bicycle safety.
  - a. Identify locations where connectivity is desired, such as connecting surrounding neighborhoods to the Village Center, and where sidewalks are needed. Prioritize locations where potential bike lanes and walking paths are possible without creating traffic problems or undermining the privacy of nearby home owners.
  - b. Identify locations where pedestrian and biking bridges exist over the Chagrin River, creeks and roads, and suitable locations for additional bridges.

### E.2.3. Create a trail system on land owned by the Gates Mills Land Conservancy and the Village of Gates Mills.

The Gates Mills Land Conservancy has acquired approximately 285 acres of vacant land in the Village and another 98 acres of Village-owned land are restricted through conservation easements. Currently, the Land Conservancy holds periodic events such as the naturalist walks and talks at the Sherman Road Preserve and have granted access to various school districts for educational programs. However, due to funding and manpower limitations and safety issues, unrestricted access to GMLC properties is not possible.

In the event additional funding is obtained, consider creating trails on additional large parcels for use by residents, designed in a way that protects adjacent private property.

## Goal F. 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/strategies include:

F.1. Continue to provide excellent safety services that foster a sense of security throughout the Village.

F.2. Design community amenities and services to increase residents' ability to age-in-place, including ways to stay engaged with neighbors and the wider community.

F.2.1. Consider the needs of older residents when making improvements to community facilities and programming in order to be an age-friendly village.

Gates Mills has a higher proportion of residents 65 or older than most other communities in Cuyahoga County, Ohio and the country. A growing trend in community development is making a commitment to be more livable, especially for older residents, e.g. more age-friendly.

According to AARP, people of all ages benefit from the adoption of policies and programs that make neighborhoods more walkable, feature transportation options, enable access to key services, provide opportunities to participate in community activities, and support housing that's affordable and adaptable.

a. Investigate and consider joining AARP's Network of Age-Friendly Communities. Learn more about what it means to be an age-friendly community at [AARP.org/AgeFriendly](http://AARP.org/AgeFriendly).

b. Consider applying for an AARP Community Challenge Grant to implement a "quick-action" project supported by this Plan.

Community Challenge grants can be used to support a range of projects, including permanent physical improvements in the community, temporary demonstration projects that lead to long-term change, and new, innovative programming or service



Grants to make communities livable for people of all ages  
[aarp.org/CommunityChallenge](http://aarp.org/CommunityChallenge)

F.2.2. Investigate the potential of establishing a community-based program to support older adults remaining in their own homes and neighborhoods.

Gates Mills has a tremendous history of community-based programs, and establishing a program to assist older adults to remain in Gates Mills is a natural evolution in community programming. Engage residents to determine interest and support for establishing such a program, and solicit ideas regarding the type of support desired and how the program could be designed and implemented.

One model to consider is the Village concept, a neighborhood-based program created in Boston that takes advantage of residents' strengths to meet the practical needs of the elder community who continue to reside in their own homes. They developed a system whereby members of the Village could ask for and provide help with transportation, light household repairs, technology use, or other tasks. Older adult members were also volunteers; a younger member might provide transportation to older members needing assistance getting to medical appointments, whereas an older member might help in other ways such as babysitting.

While each Village is designed to meet the needs of its community members, most include three core components: 1) volunteer services; 2) social programming; and 3) referrals to reliable professional providers for services the volunteers can't provide. Villages are sustained through membership dues, donations, and grants.

- F.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)
  - F.3.1. Widely promote the activities and services to potential home buyers, realtors, etc.
- F.4. Continue to work with the Mayfield City School District and communities within the District to provide value to Gates Mills residents.
  - F.4.1. Continue to support the School Liaison Committee
  - F.4.2. Explore ways to support and promote the school district's offerings, successes, etc.
- F.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.
- F.6. Explore ways to improve electric service to residents.
  - F.6.1. In areas where overhead electric power lines are often damaged by existing trees, develop a plan in concert with the electric company to systematically bury the power lines.
- F.7. Improve phone and internet service to ensure all areas of the Village are suitable for remote work-from-home.



## Goal G. SENSIBLE FISCAL POLICIES

Maintain fiscal prudence to ensure long-term achievement of the Village's vision while allowing for adaptability with changing priorities. Objectives/strategies include:

- G.1. Maintain a healthy balance between making strategic public investments that enhance quality of life, while generating enough revenue for fiscal solvency.
- G.2. Ensure continued community and resident investment that leads to increased real estate values and tax revenue.

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