

City of North Olmsted Blueprint

November 5, 2015



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October 29, 2015

Kim Wenger, Director of Planning and Development
City of North Olmsted
5200 Dover Center Road
North Olmsted, OH 44070

Subject: **Zoning Ordinance Technical Review and Blueprint**

Dear Ms. Wenger:

We have reviewed the City's current zoning code with respect to the business districts and related provisions. Enclosed with this Blueprint are the technical audit and other materials that will serve as the basis for revising the code. The Blueprint document includes the following information:

- 1 **Introduction.** A review of the update process and blueprint contents.
- 2 **Technical Audit.** A summary of comments and recommended changes to the relevant parts of the code.
- 3 **Stakeholder Input.** A summary of the significant comments and observations derived from the meetings with staff, city officials and other stakeholders.
- 4 **Use and Regulation Tables.** A table that compares the allowed uses in the two business districts and a table that compares the dimensional requirements of those districts.
- 5 **Recommendations.** Many very specific recommendations are included in the Technical Audit. However, broader recommendations for new districts and procedures are highlighted in this section of the report.
- 6 **Sample Layout.** While the overall format of the zoning code is not addressed, a modified format is suggested for the proposed business districts. Please note that this is an example to illustrate format and layout, not content.

We look forward to discussing this information with you and gaining consensus regarding the structure of the new ordinance. Once you have had the opportunity to review our recommendations, we should conference call to discuss them and the process and schedule for moving forward.

Sincerely,
LSL PLANNING/A SAFEBUILT COMPANY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul M. LeBlanc".

Paul M. LeBlanc, AICP
Planning Manager

I. Introduction

Project Scope

LSL was retained to evaluate the current business district regulations in the City's Planning and Zoning Code. While there are only two such districts, General Retail and Motorist Service, there are several other code provisions, e.g. parking and signs, that are integral components of business development that required review, as well. In addition to the code, itself, the review considered the recently adopted Master Plan and the ability of the current Code to implement the Plan recommendations.

Input was also sought from a variety of stakeholders, including staff, City officials, Lorain Road business representatives and developers. These meetings allowed us to gain further insight into the various zoning review procedures and identify those things that work well and those that merit closer attention.

What's in the Blueprint?

This Blueprint contains the technical audit of the zoning regulations and specific findings and recommendations for change. It also contains a suggested outline for the proposed new business districts and a sample format.

The technical review provides a range of recommendations intended to clarify, streamline and otherwise improve the regulations. Even with such amendments, the changes would be made within an existing Code structure that would benefit from reorganization and a more user-friendly format.

In addition to the detailed technical review, the Blueprint also provides some analytical tools – a table of uses and a table of dimensional requirements – of the current regulations that enable a quick review of the uses allowed and the minimum requirements applicable to each of the two business districts.

While the technical review contains many suggestions to improve the clarity and readability of the regulations, more far-reaching recommendations are offered in a separate section of this document. Many of these will likely require discussion and policy decisions.

A sample layout is also provided to illustrate how new recommended business districts might be formatted.

II. Technical Review

General Issues and Comments	
Provision or Issue	Comment
<p>General Commercial- Character Segments and New Zoning Districts</p>	<p>The General Retail Business District is too broad and does not give the City the ability to control the placement of specific business uses in relation to the established patterns and desired character of individual segments of the Lorain Road corridor. Therefore, the current business zoning districts should be replaced with more discrete, narrowly focused districts based on the location and unique character of each segment of the corridor. It appears that the corridor exhibits several fairly distinct segments, based on type of land use, age of development, natural features and adjacent uses. While each segment may not warrant its own zoning district, the variation in character should be considered with regard to future regulation.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. West Segment (Industrial area to Sterns): Predominantly residential and residential conversions with smaller offices, limited commercial use and institutions. Large trees along both sides of the street frame the segment and create the impression of a narrower corridor. 2. West/Central (Sterns to Dover Center): Suburban character with new intense retail, offices, auto dealerships and other vehicle-related businesses (car wash, tire sales, auto body, service stations, car rental). Parking lots line the street and driveways are spaced fairly close together. Most businesses are freestanding. Landscaping is intermittent, depending on the age of the development. 3. Town Center Mixed Use (SW quadrant of Lorain /Dover Center): Governmental offices, public uses, residential, retail, offices and services. Nicely landscaped, parking set back from street, quality building materials. This is somewhat of an island amidst the commercial strip development and is not as prominent as it might otherwise be due to the traffic and myriad of business uses competing for attention along the Lorain Road frontage. 4. East/Central (Dover Center to Great Northern): Newer development, continued suburban character, front yard parking, intense retail/commercial uses and many shallow lots. Poor driveway spacing and intermittent landscaping. Large shopping centers, strip centers and big box uses dominate. Commercial extends further south beyond Lorain due to Great Northern Mall and surrounding development. 5. East (Great Northern to eastern city limit): More traditional, mature urban character, several dated strip centers, less intense retail and commercial uses, parking in the front yard, minimal landscaping, some scattered single family homes and single family conversions. Several vacancies and a mix of marginal uses with higher likely turnover rate.
<p>Amount of Commercially Zoned Property and Low End Uses</p>	<p>The extensive amount of commercially zoned land in one, very broad, zoning classification has resulted in a surplus of leasable space, lower lease rates and an inability to control the location of desired uses. If more tailored business districts were created, the city would have the ability to manage the type, scale, intensity and character of development within defined locations.</p>

General Issues and Comments	
Provision or Issue	Comment
Landscaping	Many of the frontages are currently "landscaped" with lawn and shrubbery. This is ineffective along an arterial corridor carrying high volumes of traffic at significant speed. Landscaping should be visible and create a defined edge that unifies the corridor. Vertical elements (street trees) are needed to accomplish this.
Town Center	The City's Master Plan envisions a town center near Lorain and Dover Center Roads, but the current regulations do not contain any provisions to support this recommendation. There is no mixed use district nor any provision that distinguishes the town center area from the rest of the commercial corridor.

Zoning Ordinance Technical Review					
Section	Provision	Comment	Type of Change		
			Policy	Major	House-keeping
Chapter 1115 Definitions					
1115.09 (g)	Streets, Marginal Access Street	Eliminate use of the term "marginal access." The use of this term may lead to challenges of the "reasonable access" required by Ohio law.			X
Chapter 1118 Conditional Use Permit					
118.02 (c)	Procedure, Approval.	Revise City Council "confirmation" of a project to "approval."			X
1118.03 (d)	General Criteria and Standards	This standard should be rewritten to be more descriptive. There should be distinct and separate standards related to traffic generation and access.			
1118.03 (g)	General Criteria and Standards	Conditions of approval should be related closely to the intent of the zoning ordinance and applicable requirements.	X		
1118.04	Special Conditions and Standards	It is unclear why public facilities and vehicle repair establishments have been singled out for separate special requirements. Special requirements for all conditional and special uses should be consolidated into this chapter.		X	
1118.04 (b)	Vehicle Repair Establishments	<p>A distinction should be made between major and minor vehicle repair. Major vehicle repair should be restricted to heavier commercial or light industrial areas or could be subject to additional, stricter requirements. Generally, Lorain Road and the business districts are likely inappropriate areas for major vehicle repair businesses.</p> <p>§ Major: Includes, but is not limited to powertrain and suspension repair or rebuilding, body work, frame alignment and other vehicle repair work creating noise, glare, fumes or smoke; but not including vehicle wrecking, junking or salvaging or fuel sales.</p> <p>§ Minor: The sale and delivery of oil and other fluids (other than fuel), tires, batteries and other components that are manufactured elsewhere and other repairs of a minor nature.</p>			X

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1118.04 (b)	Vehicle Repair Establishments	<p>Additional conditions could be incorporated, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Where feasible, service bays shall not face adjacent streets and residential uses. § An outdoor storage area shall not exceed the ground floor area of the principal building on the same lot, nor shall it be located within a required yard. § Stored items shall not be stacked above the height of a screen wall or fence. § Hours of operation may be limited. § Aboveground storage tanks are prohibited. 		X	
Chapter 1119 Building Permit and Certificates of Occupancy					
1119.02	Certificate of Occupancy Required	Typically, a Certificate of Occupancy does not reference the zoning code. A certificate of zoning compliance or zoning permit should be issued by the Director of Planning prior to the issuance of a building permit. In general, permit terminology should be consistent and appropriate.			X
1119.02 (c)	Change of Use	A certificate of zoning compliance or zoning permit should be issued by the Director of Planning prior to the issuance of Certificate of Occupancy for a change of use.			X
Chapter 1126 Commercial and Other Building Permits					
1126.01	Development Plans Required	This section states that the plans shall be submitted for "review and approval by the Planning and Design Commission" but later sections state that the City Council is responsible for approval. This should be clarified.			X
1126.02	Submittal of Preliminary Plans and Presubmission Conference	The "designer" user group members indicated that the presubmission meeting was encouraged but not required. This section states that the applicant "shall" submit plans, a mandatory requirement. It is unclear whether or not all applicants are required to attend this meeting. This should be clarified.			X

Zoning Ordinance Technical Review					
Section	Provision	Comment	Type of Change		
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1126.03	Development Plan Requirements	<p>In general, more specificity could be requested concerning site information, description and identification data, site data, building/structure details, access and circulation, and information concerning utilities and stormwater management.</p> <p>§ (b) <i>Proposed and existing</i> buildings and structures should be shown. Additionally, a minimum distance should be specified for showing buildings and structures on adjacent properties, such as 100 to 250 feet.</p> <p>§ (h) Landscape plan requirements should be expanded upon, but not within the checklist.</p> <p>§ (i) Lighting plan specifics should be included in the lighting Section 1161.12.</p> <p>§ A statement should be added to authorize the Planning and Design Commission to require additional information relevant to the project and/or location such as traffic impact studies.</p> <p>§ Site plans should be required to include information on the driveways on the site, the nearest access points to the east and west, and across the street (the site frontage and the first driveway east and west of that opposite frontage).</p>		X	
1126.03 1126.05	Development Plan Requirements Submittal of Final Development Plan	There does not seem to be a difference between the plan requirements of a preliminary and final development plan. It is typical for a preliminary plan to include less site, landscaping and engineering detail than a final development plan. It seems that an applicant must prepare a plan to a "final" level for a cursory, presubmission review. We suggest that presubmission requirements be amended.	X		
1126.03 1126.05	Development Plan Requirements Submittal of Final Development Plan	The "design" user group suggested that 100% engineered plans not be required for final development plan review. Detailed and final engineering plans could be reviewed administratively as a condition of approval.	X		

Zoning Ordinance Technical Review					
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1126.05 (b)	Submittal of Final Development Plan	It is unclear why the Building Official carries out the "completeness review." This is typically completed by planning staff. While incomplete applications are returned to applicants as an administrative action, it is not typical that staff would reject and return an application based on a violation of a zoning requirement. Staff does not have approval authority and a rejection is essentially a denial. After an application is deemed complete, a formal staff review should be prepared and deficiencies, such as zoning compliance issues, should be noted and reported to the Planning and Design Commission.		X	
1126.05 (d)	Submittal of Final Development Plan	It is uncommon that a site plan that necessitates a variance must be reviewed by the Planning and Design Commission prior to the Board of Zoning Appeals. This step should be eliminated, unless the need for the variance is discovered during Planning and Design Commission review. The BZA decision should only be based on specific standards stated in the ordinance that related to conditions of the property that pose a practical difficulty or unnecessary hardship for complying with the ordinance requirements.	X		
1126	Submittal of Final Development Plan	Access management standards are too general and weak. Specific standards are necessary for spacing between other access points and, minimum offsets from access across the street, and access placement. The ODOT standards are not realistic for this type of retrofit corridor.		X	
1126.07 (a)	Scope of Review	An "improper" referral or processing of an application should only be the case of an incomplete submittal or application.			X
1126.07 (a)(1)	Conformance with adopted land use policy	While this is an appropriate standard, our review of the P&DC minutes does not indicate that the adopted Master Plan is ever referenced as a consideration.		X	
1126.07 (b)	Determination of Significant Adverse Impact	Many of the criteria for determination of significant adverse impact are highly subjective, especially as related to signage, landscaping, color and materials. Requirements should be in the ordinance, not left to subjective opinion. In addition, the last sentence of the fourth (unnumbered) paragraph relates to negative effect on market value. This is totally subjective and should not be in the ordinance. There is no empirical data that supports such a finding that "use X" next to "use Y" will result in a diminution of property values.		X	

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1126.07 (c)	Authority of Commission to Change Proposal	The authority to “change” a proposal should be referred to as the authority to recommend conditions of approval to the City Council. However, should the City Council delegate approval authority, the Planning and Design Commission should have similar purview to conditionally approve plans. It is not, however, the City’s role to change or redesign site plans. The applicant should be made aware of concerns, based on the review standards, and either given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the plans to address those concerns; or the plan can be approved with conditions; or it can be denied for failure to meet the review standards.	X		
1126.08	Referral by Planning and Design Commission to Council	The review for a commercial permit is very lengthy and involves multiple reviewing bodies. Many of the participants in our user group meetings expressed concern with the time and expense associated with this process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presubmission meeting and preliminary plan review. 2. Administrative Completeness review, compliance review. 3. Planning and Design Commission review (60 days). 4. Board of Zoning Appeals review (if applicable). 5. Building, Zoning and Development (BZD) review. 6. City Council decision. 	X		
1126.08	Referral by Planning and Design Commission to Council	This section appears to be inconsistent with Section 1126.10, that states the applicant shall take all necessary legal requirements to timely obtain a building permit. This section reads as if the Building Official automatically issues a Building Permit without any additional action of the applicant. This process should be clarified.			X

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1126.09 (a)	Procedure for Minor Changes, Definition	<p>Minor changes can simply be defined, instead of referring to "slight changes." Minor changes can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> § Those that do not alter the basic design of the approved development. § Those that do not affect any specified conditions imposed as part of the original approval. A change to a condition of approval by approving body should only be accepted by the approving body. § A reduction in building size or increase in building size up to a certain percentage of the total approved floor area. § Movement of buildings or other structures by a maximum number of feet. § The replacement of plant material specified in the landscape plan with comparable materials of an equal or greater size. § Changes in building materials to a comparable or higher quality. § Building additions, of up to a maximum percentage and not to exceed a certain square footage. § Changes required or requested by county, state or federal regulatory agencies in order to conform to other laws or regulations. 		X	
1126.09 (c)(2)	Review and Approval Procedures	It does not seem appropriate to include a mandatory requirement ("shall") for the Director of Planning to forward the application on to other authorities for review and comment of a minor plan amendment. The Director of Planning should have the discretion to forward a proposed change to the chairs of the BZD Committee of Council and the Planning and Design Commission to determine the classification of the change.	X		
1126.10	Expiration of Approval and Extension of Time	Instead of "timely application" for an extension, the ordinance should state that a request should be submitted in writing prior to the expiration of the initial one year period.			X
Other	Major Changes	There is no mention of the necessary process for consideration of a major change to a development plan. Typically, a major change would be required to follow the same approval process as a new application. A new section outlining these requirements should be included in the chapter.			X

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Chapter 1139 Business Districts					
1139.01	General Retail District	This is a one-size-fits-all district that does not focus on the distinct character, needs and predominant uses of the disparate segments of the Lorain Road corridor. The district should be revised and other specialized districts should be adopted to provide better land use control and support for the City's Master Plan.	X		
1139.01 (b)	General Retail Business District, Permitted Buildings and Uses	There are a number of uses listed that include specific use requirements (sale of food and beverages, automobile supply store, retail sale of pets, animal hospital/clinics, gasoline service stations, entertainment uses). It is recommended that additional requirements related to a specific use be included in a separate "Conditional Use" chapter, as recommended earlier.		X	
1139.01 (b)	General Retail Business District, Permitted Buildings and Uses	Permitted buildings and uses should be categorized: § Accessory Buildings/Uses § Accommodations, Hospitality and Entertainment § Automotive Related Uses § Institutional/Civic § Infrastructure, Transportation and Communications § Residential § Offices and Services § Personal Services § Retail § Other			X
1139.01 (b)(1)	General Retail Business District, Permitted Buildings and Uses, Residential	This is an archaic transitional use provision. It should be deleted but, if retained, should be reworded to clarify what is permitted and under what circumstances.			X
1139.01 (b)(2)	General Retail Business District, Permitted Buildings and Uses, Single Family	Single family dwellings are not consistent with the stated intent of this district and should not be a permitted use. If the intent is to protect those homes that already exist along the corridor and avoid classifying them as nonconforming, there are more appropriate ways of addressing that situation.		X	

Zoning Ordinance Technical Review					
Section	Provision	Comment	Type of Change		
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1139.01 (b)(3)	General Retail Business District, Permitted Buildings and Uses, Retail Businesses	The list of retail uses is very specific and should be generalized. Generally, with this level of specificity, a use is not permitted if not specifically listed. This presents a problem if an unmentioned retail use is proposed. Retail should be generalized and defined accordingly. Certain specific uses can be listed, but only if they are regulated differently than "general" retail uses.			X
1139.01 (b)(3)E.	Sale of Food and Beverages	This is very broad. There is no distinction between sit-down restaurants and drive-through restaurants. Typically, drive-through restaurants would be subject to conditional or special use approval and include specific site design requirements.			X
1139.01 (b)(5)	Religious Uses	Why are churches singled out as a use, but not schools, municipal facilities or other types of institutional uses?			X
1139.01 (c)	General Retail Business District, Other Retail Service	<p>Typically, a "similar use provision" is included in zoning ordinances. Since not every potential use can be anticipated, each district may accommodate similar uses without review by the Board of Zoning Appeals. For instance, a use not specifically addressed in a zoning district could be submitted to the Director of Planning for review and a decision, based on established criteria. The Director should have the discretion to forward a similar land use determination to the Board of Zoning Appeals (Section 1123.10).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Director of Planning shall first find that the proposed use is not listed as a permitted or special land use in any other district. 2. If the use is not permitted elsewhere, the Director of Planning shall review the district purpose, permitted uses and special land uses in the zoning district to determine if the proposed use is consistent with the district purpose; is similar to other allowed uses relative to its character, scale and overall compatibility; or can reasonably be expected to create objectionable impacts on public health, safety and welfare. 3. The use would not be more appropriate within a different zoning district. 	X		

Zoning Ordinance Technical Review					
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1139.01 (d)	General Retail Business District, Permitted Buildings and Uses by Conditional Use Permit	It is unclear why the specific use requirements for animal training facilities, recycling collection centers and entertainment device arcades are not included in Section 1118.04. However, as previously recommended, all specific use requirements should be consolidated into a Conditional Use chapter.			X
1139.01 (e)	Definitions	All definitions should be in Section 1115.02 with the other definitions			X
1139.02	Motorist Service District	While the City has several freeway interchanges within its corporate limits, this district has not been used except for one parcel containing a sports facility. The need for this zoning category should be reconsidered. If retained, the district should be revised, as noted below, and actually applied to relevant properties in the city.	X		
1139.02 (b)(1)	Motorist Service District, Permitted Uses, Main Uses	A "main use" subcategory is unnecessary.			X
1139.02 (b)(1)C	Food and Beverages	This permits restaurants where food is "consumed in an enclosed building". In light of the intent of the district to provide motorist service, it is assumed that drive-through restaurants would be an allowed use. However, this provision would seem to preclude such drive-through facilities and subsection (2)F reinforces that by only allowing drive-in banking facilities. This should be corrected.			X
1139.02 (b)(2)	Motorist Service District, Permitted Uses, Accessory Uses	Several accessory uses are normally considered incidental to the principal uses to which they refer. While drive-in banking facilities are allowed as permitted accessory uses, banks and similar financial institutions are not.			X
1139.03	Outdoor Telephone Pay Stations	Is this a phone booth? If so, this section should be deleted as unnecessary and archaic.			X
1139.05	Lot Coverage	A total building coverage (including accessory structures) of 25 percent is strict, especially for smaller lots. A sliding scale should be considered.		X	
1139.06	Lot Area and Width	Lot area and width requirements are typically specific to a zoning district, not land use. The intent of this specificity may be because the General Business District must accommodate a significant sized corridor and a number of potential development scenarios. We recommend that the specific lot and width requirements for specific uses be regulated separately than for the entire district (separate specific use chapter).		X	

Zoning Ordinance Technical Review					
Section	Provision	Comment	Type of Change		
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1139.06 **	Restaurant	Several different terms are used here for various types of restaurants but none of those terms are used in either of the business districts. If a distinction is to be made regarding the types of restaurants, the ordinance should identify in which district(s) these types are permitted and under what conditions.		X	
1139.07	Yard Regulations	Setback requirements are typically specific to a zoning district, not land use.		X	
1139.07	Yard Regulations	There were several comments during our focus group meetings relating to the application of the 75-foot setback “merchandise displayed” to cars. Cars for sale within parking lots and display areas were not considered to be general merchandise by the group.			X
1139.08 (b)	Supplementary Yard Regulations, Variable Setback	When parking is located behind structures, a front setback should be less than 50 feet in more traditional commercial areas. A lesser front setback may be more appropriate east of Great Northern Boulevard.		X	
1139.08 (c)	Side Yard Regulations for Business Buildings	The section reference should be changed to 1139.07.			X
1139.08 (e)	Supplementary Yard Regulations, Off-street Parking Areas	It is unclear why these sections are outside of Chapter 1161, Off-street Parking and Loading. All parking requirements should be consolidated in Chapter 1161.			X
1139.08 (e)(4)	Buffer or screening	This is a very open-ended provision. The ordinance should contain specific requirements for parking lot screening rather than leaving each situation to the discretion of the Commission.		X	
1139.08 (g)	Supplementary Yard Regulations, Rear Yard Abutting Streets	Any yard fronting a street may also be regulated as a front yard. This paragraph should be clarified. Is this requiring a 50 foot rear yard setback in addition to the 75 foot front yard setback? What is the purpose?			X
1139.10	Development Plans	Similar to the comment for 1126.07, access management standards are very weak.		X	
1139.10 (a)	Development Plans	It is unclear why there are additional and inconsistent development plan submittal requirements. These requirements should be consolidated in Chapter 1126.			X

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1139.10 (a)(7)	Developments Plan, Traffic Impact Analysis	A minimum threshold should be determined for a TIA based on anticipated peak hour volumes, number of lots, daily traffic volumes, etc. A TIA should be required in all cases when a project hits such thresholds. The content requirements and level of analysis for a TIA should also be specified, along with a requirement that it be prepared by a registered transportation engineer approved by the City. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations could also be assessed in this analysis.		X	
1139.10 (a)(7)	Developments Plan, Traffic Impact Analysis	This section should require the review of access with any change in use, especially to a higher traffic generating use, and expansions or changes to a business. Existing driveways should become non-conforming. This review should be qualitative and should strive to remove or modify the driveways that likely cause the biggest problems (those nearest signalized intersections, those with poor offsets, and those with insufficient spacing on the same side of the street). Standards would allow closing driveways, changing their geometries to improve radii, narrowing them, deepening throat lengths, and creating shared access systems. This should be flexible to allow modifications and decision-maker discretion without triggering the need for variances.		X	
1139.11	Regulation of Superstores	This provision should be revised and put in the appropriate business district as conditions for retail uses of 100,000 square feet or more.			X
1139.11 (c)	Regulation of Superstores, Traffic Control Report	A TIA and traffic control report should not be tied specifically to a 100k square foot superstore. Traffic reports and any necessary mitigation should be based on impact and projected traffic volumes. See above comment.		X	
1139.12	Regulation of Free-standing Industrialized Units	This use should be inserted into the General Retail District list of allowed uses and the conditions should be moved to a Conditional Use chapter, as previously recommended.			X
1139.13	Storage of Motor Vehicles	Definitions should be in the Definitions chapter. There isn't a significant difference in the length of time a vehicle can be stored in the open. It would be appropriate to require all outdoor vehicle storage to be screened. Again, such conditions should be attached to the use and incorporated into a Conditional Use chapter.		X	
1139.13	Irrigation of Landscaped Areas	Move to a new Landscaping chapter.			X

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Section	Provision	Comment	Type of Change		
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1139	General- Pedestrian Design	This chapter should have standards for pedestrian design including clear connections from the public sidewalk to the building entrance.		X	
Chapter 1161 Off-street Parking and Loading					
1161.05	Schedule of Required Parking Spaces	Parking requirements for business and offices may lead to a surplus of parking spaces and unnecessary paved areas. Retail requirements could reasonably be reduced from five (5) spaces per 1,000 square feet to four (4) and office parking could be reduced from three and a half (3 ½) to three (3) spaces per 1,000 square feet. Additionally, restaurant parking appears to be excessive and almost twice the amount compared to commonly required.			
1161.11 (b)	Improvements of Parking Areas; Landscaping	There should be a specific landscaping requirement for parking areas to ensure predictability and consistent treatment of applicants.		X	
Chapter 1163 Signs					
1163.01	Purpose and Intent	Additional purpose statements should be added to strengthen the regulatory purpose, such as: to minimize distractions and to promote safety for vehicles and pedestrians.			X
1163.02	Definitions	Additional recommended definitions include: abandoned sign, air dancer sign (inflatable sign), construction sign, electronic changeable message (ECM) sign, embedded electronic message device, feather sign, fence sign, freestanding sign, human directional sign, incidental sign, inflatable sign, menu board sign, mural (art), obsolete sign, projecting sign, real estate sign, roof sign, sandwich board sign, and standard (base of a ground sign).			X
1163.02 (c)	Definitions, Ground sign	This definition is more appropriately defining a "freestanding sign." Ground and Pole signs are freestanding signs and can be defined and regulated separately.			X

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1163.02 (m)	Definitions, "Facing, or Surface or Sign Face Area"	Typically, this term is simply "display area." While the method of measurement is common, many ordinances consider both sides of a double-faced sign together, if separated by more than 2-3 feet. For instance: "Where a sign has two or more faces, the area of all faces shall be included in determining the area of the sign; except that where two such faces are placed back to back and are at no point more than three (3) feet from one another, the area of the sign shall be taken as the area of one face if the two faces are of equal area, or as the area of the larger face if the two faces are of unequal area."			X
1163.04	Exemptions to Permit Requirement	Additional sign types that are typically exempt from permitting include: barber pole signs, incidental signs, construction signs, public art or murals (not containing logos or commercial messages), directional signs (internal to sites), menu boards, religious symbols, and scoreboards/athletic field sponsorship signs (internally faced or not oriented toward the ROW).			X
1163.10 (a)	Nonconforming Signs, Changes	"Legal" nonconforming signs are commonly allowed to be painted, cleaned, maintained and repaired, as long as the sign does not become more nonconforming. Additionally, messages, graphics and face changes are commonly allowed.	X		
1163.10 (b)	Nonconforming Signs, Voluntary Discontinued	This sub-section should reference Section 1163.15, as voluntary discontinuance is defined.			X

Zoning Ordinance Technical Review					
Section	Provision	Comment	Type of Change		
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	Prohibited Signs	<p>All prohibited signs should be listed in one section:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obsolete signs 2. Abandoned signs 3. Obstructing signs 4. Signs causing traffic hazards 5. Unsafe signs 6. Obscene signs 7. Vehicular signs 8. Moving signs 9. Flashing signs 10. Windblown signs 			X
1163.14	Outdated Signs Prohibited	"Obsolete sign" is a more appropriate term. This section should be clarified. A reasonable requirement could be to remove the sign face and/or texts and images, but allow the sign structure to exist with a blank face until a new business is established.		X	
1163.19	Illuminated Signs	A separate section addressing illumination should be created. While signs that cause objectionable brightness or glare should be prohibited, there should be maximum lighting levels to ensure an objective review by the Building Commissioner.		X	
1163.19	Illuminated Signs	The sign regulations do not address electronic changeable message signs, embedded electronic message devices, internally lit and externally lit signs. Regulations concerning lighting levels and specifications should be included in this section.		X	

Zoning Ordinance Technical Review					
Section	Provision	Comment	Type of Change		
			Policy	Major	House-keeping
1163.20	Obscene Signs	<p>This section does not include objective guidance for the Building Commissioner to classify a message or image as obscene. The following guidance is suggested as a consideration:</p> <p>“Any sign displaying images of nudity, semi-nudity, specified anatomical areas or specified sexual activity, or using obscene material or words. The Building Commissioner shall also consider the following criteria when providing a determination:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An average person, applying contemporary community standards, must find that the material, as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest, is offensive or profane; 2. The material must depict or describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law; and 3. The material, taken as a whole, must lack serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.” 		X	
1163.20	Vehicular Signs	Vehicular signs should be prohibited, but only when located in required parking areas and when purposely located to draw attention to a business or cause.			X
1163.25	Maximum Sign Face Area	These requirements would be better suited in a table format.			X
1163.25 (a)(b)	Maximum Sign Face Area	It is common to include a “not to exceed” square footage requirement.			X

III. Stakeholder Input

On September 2, 2015, a series of interviews and meetings was conducted with various stakeholders identified by City staff including members of city council, planning and design commission, property owners, business representatives and advisors. Four focus groups representing the business community, GO North Olmsted planning committee, design professionals and developers, and a group of community leaders were also included in the process. The following summarizes the comments received during the discussions. Numbers in () refer to the number of persons expressing the same view.

Individual Interviews

Most Frequently Heard Comments:

- Town center concept is good, but too abstract or unattainable (5).
- Review procedures should be streamlined (5).
- Ordinance needs more specific standards re: landscaping, building materials, and aesthetic considerations to ensure consistent, fair treatment (5).
- Staff is excellent, helpful and cooperative (4).
- Incentives needed to attract desired uses and stimulate redevelopment (3).
- Master Plan should be carefully considered to guide zoning decisions (3).
- Development quality needs to improve (3).
- Ordinance and decisions are not predictable (2).
- Parking requirements are excessive (2).
- Sign ordinance needs to be revised (2).

Other Interview Comments:

- Mixed use development is needed.
- Covered outdoor storage requirement in Industrial District is onerous.
- Zoning compliance considered costly and unnecessary by small (marginal) businesses.
- Procedures are confusing.
- More distinct districts are needed along Lorain Road.
- Split-lot zoning needs to be addressed.
- Uses and image along east end of Lorain Road. Needs improvement.
- Marginal/low-end uses need to be controlled.
- Too many variances and conditional uses are being granted.
- Best management practices for stormwater need to be promoted.
- Long-range vision is needed for the city.

Small Group Comments

- Positives for local businesses
 - Strong working relationships with city staff and elected officials. There is an overall feeling of support for business and economic development. When

- there are issues, city staff encourages open communication and facilitates discussion.
- City's location, access to 480 and proximity to the airport are attractive to business.
- Appreciation for storefront upgrade grant project.
- Strong Chamber of Commerce presence and involvement.
- Healthy mix of restaurants.
- Access to 480.
- Location.
- Housing densities.
- Stable economy.
- Strong buyers.
- Community positives
 - City has all goods and services within its limits.
 - Commercial district impacts are tightly constrained to Lorain Road, commercial developments and mall area. Therefore, residential areas are relatively protected from high traffic volumes and cut-through movements.
 - Strong commercial district.
 - Easy access to 480.
- Negatives for local businesses
 - Storefront vacancies, surplus of empty space, surplus of commercial zoned land.
 - Gateways to city should be beautified – also the gateway to Cleveland and NE Ohio.
 - Lack of higher-end accommodations.
 - Property upkeep and code enforcement must be a priority.
- Community negatives
 - Timing of lights on Lorain Road.
 - Lack of housing diversity (newer attached housing and apartments).
 - Too many low-end retail and service establishments (check cashing, loans, tattoo parlors, etc.) as lease rates are low, resulting from a surplus of available space and commercial zoned land.
- Master plan
 - Very little involvement or knowledge of recommendations.
 - An overall consistent vision is necessary.
 - You cannot fake a town center; character cannot be created from scratch.
 - Lorain Road should be recognized as a typical suburban commercial area.
 - Focus on priorities first, such as Lorain Road.
- Town Center
 - Golden triangle location (schools, city hall, grocery, stadium). Tie this entire area together with new development requirements and design standards.
 - Incremental improvement and implementation.
 - Allow for diversity in design, but require common themes.

- Reviewed examples in Gahanna and New Albany. Infill development is the focus over creating from scratch (Crocker Park).
- Consistent, quality architecture and design is encouraged.
- Improve landscaping

- Challenges
 - Keeping track of the market trends, especially as they relates to millennials (live, work, play).

- Perception of Zoning Ordinance
 - Variances are typically necessary.
 - Sign code does not anticipate newer technology and industry standards.
 - Older code provisions do not anticipate infill development.
 - Prohibiting franchise colors can sometimes be “deal killers.”
 - Variances are typically necessary.
 - Sign code does not consider branding requirements.
 - Sign code does not consider multiple businesses or brands on single sites.
 - Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS) can be applied correctly and can have a long lifespan.
 - Major issues with interpretation. The ordinance must be reviewed for usability to ensure clear and consistent interpretations.
 - Assess the impact of skewed and shallow lots along Lorain Road. There are impacts, especially concerning setbacks and building placement. Consider average setbacks on sites.
 - Vehicle “display” setback of 75 feet is unreasonable.

- Development review
 - Staff provides clear guidance.
 - Overall process is too lengthy. Consider delegation of duties for all types of reviews. Assess methods to expedite processes.
 - Reconsider requiring formal engineering details during site plan review. Allow engineering details to be finalized as a condition of approval.
 - As long as site plans meet requirements and pre-application conferences occur, the general impression is that the Planning and Design Commission has a “light touch” and does not unreasonably require redesign or revisions.

- Recommendations
 - Strive for reasonable uniformity and improvement along Lorain Road.
 - Determine the character and strive for long-term conformance (especially setbacks and building design).
 - Requirements should consider NE Ohio climate (landscaping, materials, finishes, snow storage, salt use, pervious pavement).
 - Strive for reasonable uniformity and improvement along Lorain Road.
 - Design and architectural standards should be flexible. There is no “Western Reserve Style” of architecture.
 - Streetscaping and access management should be assessed and incorporated into the code.
 - Raise the bar and increase the quality of new development.

- Prohibit Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems (EIFS).
- Limit scale/intensity of commercial use by dividing Lorain Road into character segments.
- Strategically place bike racks on commercial sites.
- Plan internal sidewalks and connectivity in commercial developments.

IV. Combined Use Table & Dimensional Requirements

Table X-X Schedule of Uses: Business Districts (Chapter 1139)

Use	General Retail Business	Motorist Service District
Retail Businesses		
Apparel of all kinds	P	
Automobile supply stores, automobile showrooms and lots for the sale of new motor vehicles; in addition, show rooms and lots for the sale of used cars are permitted accessory uses in this district, provided that such accessory uses shall be located either on a parcel of land upon which is located an existing automobile show room and lot for the sale of new motor vehicles, or upon a parcel of land which is physically contiguous to a parcel of land containing an existing automobile show room and lot for the sale of new motor vehicles	P	
Baked goods, confectionery, dairy products, delicatessen, fruits, vegetables, groceries, meats and beverages	P	
Books, magazines, newspapers, tobacco products, drugs, flowers, gifts, music, photographic equipment, sporting goods and stationery	P	
Dry goods and variety merchandise	P	
Food and beverages of all kinds including sale for consumption on the premises, provided, however, no establishment engaged in the business of selling spirituous, vinous or malt beverages shall be located nearer than 500 feet from the lot occupied by an existing church, public or private school, playground, park, library or public building	P	
Food and beverages offered in restaurants and eating places where food is consumed in an enclosed building		P
Furniture, china, floor coverings and household goods	P	
General merchandise including sales in a department store	P	
Hardware, household appliances, television and radio, paint, wallpaper, materials and objects for interior decorating	P	
Motor vehicle fuel provided that no alcoholic beverages are dispensed or sold on the same lot	P	
Pet supplies and domestic animals, such as dogs, cats, fish, birds, and reptiles, excluding exotic animals and farm animals, provided that animal noise and odor must be effectively confined to any such building so used	P	
Retail sale of other goods and merchandise as determined similar in accordance with the provisions of <i>Section 1123.10 Request for Ruling on Proposed Use; Standards</i>	P	P
Service Establishments		
Animal hospitals/clinics and animal grooming facilities, provided that animal noise and odor must be effectively confined to any such building so used	P	
Banks, loan and finance companies, and other financial institutions	P	
Barber shops, beauty shops, custom tailors, laundry or dry cleaning agencies, self-service laundries and dry cleaning and shoe repair shops	P	
Bowling alleys, dance halls, pool and billiard parlors, skating rinks, indoor theatres, assembly halls or other sport or recreation centers, provided the buildings in which they operate are sufficiently sound insulated to confine effectively the noise to within the building so used	P	
Business offices for architects, clergymen, engineers, lawyers, dentists, doctors or other established recognized professionals	P	

Table X-X Schedule of Uses: Business Districts (Chapter 1139)

Use	General Retail Business	Motorist Service District
Business offices for real estate, insurance, financial, sales and other business purposes	P	
Dance, voice and music studios.	P	
Gasoline service stations and automobile wash, provided that no part of the lot upon which the same is located is within 500 feet of any lot occupied by an existing church, public or private school, playground, park, library, public building or building of institutional occupancy, except where the distance is intersected by a street at least sixty feet in width and no alcoholic beverages are dispensed or sold on the same lot	P	
Hotels and motels	P	
Lodging facilities such as motels, and extended stay facilities		P
Mortuaries, crematoriums and funeral homes	P	
Printing shops and graphic arts facilities	P	
Research and testing laboratories; radio and television stations; telephone exchanges; pay stations and transformer stations.	P	
Retail printing duplicating and wire communications, such as fax transmissions, e-mail and internet services		P
Vehicle Service		
Automotive facilities for the sale of gasoline, fuel and oils, auto accessories and automobile maintenance work, including lubrication and washing, and minor repairs within enclosed buildings, provided no alcoholic beverages are dispensed or sold on the same lot		P
Bus passenger station, repair and storage garages within enclosed buildings		P
Car, truck and trailer sales and rental agencies		P
Religious Uses		
Facilities for religious worship and incidental religious education, recreation and assembly buildings	P	
Accessory Uses		
Accessory uses customarily incident to a primary use described in this section	P	
Drive-in banking facilities		P
Restaurant and assembly rooms in connection with hotels and motels		P
Swimming pools and other recreational facilities in connection with hotels and motels		P
Personal and other services which are necessary and incidental to the usual operation of any main use set forth above		P
Residential		
Any use permitted in least restrictive Residence District adjacent to any part of such General Retail Business District subject to requirements of such Residence District	P	
Single family cluster dwellings	P	
Public / Quasi-Public, Recreation, Institutional		
Recreational and sports facilities providing organized, league and open team play in indoor or outdoor facilities		P
Convention facilities including trade shows, meeting facilities, and other organized events associated with business promotion and display		P

Dimensional Requirements

Business Districts	Lot Area	Lot Width	Yard Setbacks				Max. Height (stories)	Max. Coverage
			Front	Rear	Side			
General Retail Business		100	75	25 ¹	10 ¹		5 ²	25%
Motorist Service District		none	²	none	none		5	25%

¹ 50 feet when abutting residential district.

² Maximum 3 stories when adjacent to any One and Two Family Residence and Single Family Cluster District.

V. Recommendations

Summary Observations

Single Business District

As noted in the Technical Audit, the current business district zoning is essentially a single district, General Retail Business, which encompasses virtually the entire length of Lorain Road. As a result of this single-purpose zoning district, the existing development pattern is random and vulnerable to the intrusion of uses in some areas in which they may not be desirable or compatible.

For example, the extreme west end of the corridor (from I-480 to Stearns Road) is a tree lined segment that predominantly contains benign commercial uses that don't generate significant volumes of traffic, are located in converted single family homes and are generally compatible with the abutting neighborhoods. In many cases, parking areas are located behind or on the side of the business use, rather than in the front yard. However, this area is blanketed by the same zoning district that allows Great Northern Mall, Wal-Mart, and the many auto dealerships that line other segments of the corridor. There is nothing in the current regulations that would prevent the conversion of this end of the corridor to the much more intense development pattern found elsewhere along Lorain Road.

Likewise, the east end of Lorain Road (approximately Columbia to the east city limits) is a mature business district exhibiting signs of potential decline (vacancies, marginal uses, frequent turn-over, etc.). Setbacks vary along the street and there is no discernable rhythm or pattern to building placement or scale. This area, too, is painted with the same General Retail brush as the balance of the corridor, yet many of the lots are too small or too shallow to meet the minimum requirements of the district and the area itself is less suited to the intense retail development that the zoning district permits.

One of the most apparent incongruities is at the Dover Center Road intersection which the recently adopted Master Plan targets as a desired town center. While the nucleus for such a concept is in place (library, city offices, park), the broad General Retail zoning along the Lorain Road frontage does not afford the controls needed to realize the Plan's vision and prevent the intrusion of incompatible uses. Even the Residential B zoning that encompasses the balance of the triangle occupied by the municipal uses is inappropriate as a means of promoting the desired town center concept.

Procedures

While the one size-fits-all business district inhibits fulfillment of the Master Plan vision for the corridor, review procedures also pose potential threats to the development and redevelopment of the area. Many decisions require multiple steps through various bodies which adds time and expense to the process. In some cases, such as development plan review, decisions that are routinely delegated to staff or planning commissions in other communities require the approval of the City Council in North Olmsted. Some communities that are reluctant to delegate authority are often more receptive as ordinance requirements and standards become more objective, clear and concise.

Standards

Many requirements are being imposed upon applicants regarding landscaping, building materials, design, even color without benefit of specific standards to guide and support those decisions. Essentially, this amounts to a "we'll know it when we see it" approach which is neither fair to the

applicants nor defensible if challenged. While aesthetics and development quality are well within the regulatory purview of the City, making such decisions based on subjective feelings and individual preferences is arbitrary and totally inappropriate.

Even in those instances where decision-making standards are provided (e.g., variances and development plan review), they do not appear, based on meeting minutes, to be considered much less serve as the sole basis for decisions. Board of Zoning Appeals minutes are rife with comments by members about their “feelings” toward requests. There is a clear disconnect between the overwhelming desire to improve the quality of development and the ease with which variances from the Code requirements are obtained. If frequent variances are needed to make a project feasible, the requirements should be revised so variances aren’t needed. Variances should be the exceptions, rather than the norm.

Access Management

Traffic congestion, delays and crashes are not solely the consequence of high volumes of vehicles sharing the road. In the case of Lorain Road, there are many design and regulatory flaws that contribute significantly to the traffic issues along the corridor.

- Poor driveway spacing: The number of driveways greatly exceeds the recommended spacing for a 35 mph street. For example, the ODOT Access Management code has a standard of one driveway every 250 feet. But along Lorain, driveways are typically 50-100 feet apart. Many businesses that should, at most, have one access point have two full movement driveways or two one-way driveways (McDonalds, KFC). Additionally, many narrow residential parcels appear to have been converted to business use without shared access arrangements between neighboring properties, further intensifying the problem.
- Contradictory requirements: The current code establishes requirements that are entirely contradictory to sound access management standards. Section 1161.10(a) states that “parking areas having a capacity of twenty spaces or less shall have at least one two-lane driveway; those having a capacity of more than twenty vehicles shall have at least two two-lane driveways”. The requirement should be that no more than one driveway per street frontage should be permitted for any business, unless a traffic study demonstrates that additional ingress/egress is needed and there is sufficient frontage available to achieve the desired separation distances between those driveways and from neighboring drives or street intersections. Ideally, shared, rather than individual, driveways should be the norm.
- Poor driveway offsets (alignment or spacing from access across the street): There are many cases where the placement of driveways across the street from one another causes left turn lock-up in the center turn lane. This occurs when the opposing drives are not aligned directly opposite one another.
- Driveways too close to signalized intersections: There are many driveways that are too close to signalized intersections, creating turning movements that conflict with the traffic flow. Insufficient separation leads to traffic congestion and a higher crash potential. Additionally, access to corner businesses is often blocked during the peak hours because of these conflicts, especially as few of these businesses have alternate means of access. A notable exception is the shared access between adjacent properties at the Wendy’s site from Sparky Lane.
- Poor driveway radii: Many of the commercial driveways have a very tight or no entry or exit turning radii. As a result, drivers must slow significantly to enter a driveway, causing back-ups and an increased potential for rear end collisions. The narrow right-of-way width along Lorain Road is one factor that limits adequate turning radii.
- Other related issues:

- There are few cross-access connections between uses which results in unnecessary right and left turns along the corridor to go between neighboring properties.
- Some driveways are excessively wide which can add confusion.
- The excessive number of driveways results in the loss of potential parking spaces in the front.
- Parking Lots: There are several overbuilt parking lots, i.e., too much parking, excessive pavement, loss of potential landscaping and green space.

Recommendations

The following substantive recommendations, in addition to those cited in the technical audit, are offered as a result of the audit, stakeholder input, meeting minutes and site observations along the corridor.

Zoning Districts:

- **Revise Existing Business Districts –**
While the General Retail District is needed and is applicable to a large segment of the Lorain Road corridor, it should be overhauled. The range of permitted uses should be reevaluated, along with the dimensional requirements (lot size, setbacks, etc.). The Motorist Service District has, for the most part, not been used. However, given the proximity of I-480, this district may still have value, especially on the west end of the corridor. If it is retained, the district's uses and dimensional requirements should be revised to more closely reflect its stated purpose.
- **Create New Business Districts –**
At least two additional business districts are needed to address the distinctive character of the east and west ends of the corridor from the general retail core extending out in both directions from Great Northern Mall. On the west end a less intense district would be appropriate, allowing offices, service uses and possibly multiple family residential but limiting the scale of retail that might be located there. A more commercially focused district would be appropriate on the east end, but still restricting the scale of commercial uses, in order to respect the established scale of development and prevent the dispersal of larger general retail outside the core area where it is currently found.
- **Revise Mixed Use District –**
The current mixed use district is overly complicated. A mixed use district should be retained, but greatly simplified, to allow more flexibility coupled with incentives to allow both the city and developer to achieve their goals. If the town center concept is to be actively pursued, mixed use zoning would be the appropriate vehicle to support it. In any case, the existing General Retail zoning along the south side of Lorain Road between Dover Center and Butternut Ridge should be removed and replaced with mixed use or office zoning.

Procedures:

- **Review Standards –**
Decisions by the Planning and Design Commission and City Council are not predictable because there are few, if any, objective standards to guide those decisions. Even where standards are specified, there is no evidence that they are used as the basis for decisions. While the city's concern for quality development and improved aesthetics is understandable and laudable, decisions should not be based on feelings, perceptions and individual

preferences. Specific and quantifiable standards/criteria should be included in the ordinance for landscaping, fences, building materials and signs.

- **Variations –**
A large percentage of projects require variations either because the ordinance requirements can't be met or because owners simply want to do something contrary to what the ordinance allows. The former is evidence of the need for different districts and requirements to fit the varying conditions along the corridor. The latter reason suggests that the BZA is not adhering to the ordinance standards in considering variance requests and has become a vehicle for allowing owners to ignore the requirements. A training program should be conducted for the BZA to inform the members of their narrowly defined role and reinforce the importance of adhering to the standards in the ordinance.
- **Delegation –**
A common thread throughout most of the stakeholder interviews and group discussions was the desire to streamline review procedures and delegate decision-making responsibility. By law, only certain decisions (ordinance amendments and zoning map changes/rezonings) must be made by the City Council. Review of development plans, and conditional use approvals, etc. should be delegated to staff or the Planning and Design Commission.
- **Different Levels of Development Plan Review –**
The process for getting a development plan reviewed and approved can be lengthy and onerous. As noted above, authority for plan review and approval should be delegated to the Planning and Design Commission. In addition, a distinction should be made between major and minor projects. Such a distinction would allow for less detailed and costly plans to be submitted for minor projects (small additions, parking expansion, landscape alterations, etc.) that could be reviewed by staff. Projects not defined as "minor" would have to be reviewed by the Commission and a much more detailed set of plans would be required.

Other:

- **Adopt Access Management Standards –**
The proliferation of driveways along Lorain Road contributes to confusion, congestion and clutter. Requirements for driveway spacing, number of driveways, shared drives and alternate access should be incorporated into the ordinance. One set of access management standards should be developed for the suburban road segments and another set developed for the more urban segments that allows tighter spacing and separation. Additionally, an overall access management plan for Lorain Road is recommended.
- **Establish Landscaping and Buffering Requirements –**
Landscaping and buffering are routinely required as part of new developments or major changes to existing sites. However, the lack of defined standards, in addition to leading to arbitrary decisions, results in inconsistency and a haphazard appearance along the corridor. Specific requirements should be added to the ordinance for front yard, parking lot and buffer yard landscaping.
- **Adopt Building Material Standards –**
Aesthetics are difficult to regulate in the absence of specific criteria. While building appearance is a significant consideration for the Planning and Design Commission as they review development plans, decisions regarding materials, color and architectural elements are made without any regulatory support. Defined requirements are needed in the ordinance so both the applicant and decision-makers know, in advance, what is expected.
- **Revise the Sign Regulations –**

The entire sign chapter should be revised to address issues identified in the Technical Audit. Sign sizes should be reevaluated. Provisions related to message content should be removed. Definitions need to be clarified. Regulations for electronic message signs, if permitted, should be added. The format for the allowed signs should be put in table form for ease of use.

- **Provide Incentives –**

Clearly, it is a major objective of the City and even many of the stakeholders that were interviewed to improve the image and quality of development along Lorain Road. Most of the Lorain Road corridor is built-out; so, the predominant development in the future will be infill and redevelopment. While the ordinance's minimum requirements should be more clearly defined and strengthened, some incentives could be added, as well, to promote infill and redevelopment of existing sites. Allowing the Planning and Design Commission the ability to modify some requirements, such as parking; permitting greater lot coverage; or allowing taller buildings or increased residential density are among the many ways to encourage better use of existing sites and attract otherwise reluctant developers to invest in the community.

- **Control of Some "Marginal" Uses –**

Another issue raised during the stakeholder sessions was related to the arrival of certain businesses, especially on the east end of the corridor. The potential concentration of uses such as pay-day check cashing, hookah lounges, massage parlors and others may attract similar businesses and impact property values; lead to the loss of other, more stable, establishments; or negatively impact nearby residential neighborhoods. While zoning cannot exclude these, or any legitimate use of property, within the community, conditions can be placed on them, such as separation distances to avoid concentrations in any one area and criteria to ensure that they are in appropriate locations.

- **Better Definition of Town Center Concept –**

The creation of a town center was one of the key recommendations in the GO North Olmsted Master Plan, yet there seems to be a great deal of ambivalence about it. Clearly, there is a desire to improve the quality of development and create a more defined image for the City. A town center in some form, as many communities have discovered, can be a significant catalyst for such change. However, the current zoning ordinance does not offer a suitable mechanism to achieve a mixed use town center. If the City is committed to this concept, a district should be created that allows for an appropriate mix of uses (business, office and residential), defines the desired character to create a cohesive and unified image, determines the desired location and boundaries and incorporates a variety of incentives to entice developers to contribute to the realization of that vision.

While not creating and building a town center from scratch, similar to Crocker Park, the new zoning district could help to ensure future development within this area is more traditional in design to meet the intent of the Master Plan. The existing "preferred" character of commercial buildings and dwellings can be documented and the code can be written specifically to ensure compatible development. Zoning requirements could include:

- Drawing commercial buildings to the front lot line.
- Requiring buildings to have a minimum frontage width along the front building line.
- Prohibiting parking in front of principal buildings.
- Requiring a minimum percentage of windows and doors on facades to require traditional "storefronts."
- Requiring minimum and maximum building heights (two to four stories).
- Providing a vertical mix of uses with ground-floor retail, or service uses and upper-floor service, or residential uses.

- **Consolidation of Specific Land Use Requirements –**
One consolidated chapter is recommended in which specific conditions required for individual uses would be stated. Currently, the Conditional Use Permit Chapter only contains conditions and standards for public facilities and vehicle repair establishments. However, there are a number of other uses listed in the General Retail district (such as animal training/boarding, recycling collection centers and arcades) that require conditional use permits and have special conditions attached. Throughout the ordinance, other requirements are also listed for permitted uses. No matter if a use is permitted by-right or by a conditional use approval, restructuring to consolidate these requirements in one place will create a more user-friendly and streamlined ordinance.
- **Urban and Architectural Design –**
General design guidelines are recommended for the unique segments of Lorain Road listed in the Technical Review. A more traditional commercial design and architectural theme is recommended for the East segment while the residential character should be embraced along the West segment. Development within the East/Central and West/Central segments would more appropriately follow a suburban and modern set of architectural design guidelines.

VI. Sample

Note this is an example of a possible format. Specific provisions are not recommendations for North Olmsted. District names, uses, dimensional requirements and all other specifics are for illustrative purposes only.

Format Example

Section 1139.01 Purpose

- A. **“B-1”, Office/Service District.** The Office/Service zoning district is intended to provide a location for lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.
- B. **“B-2”, Community Business District.** The Community Business zoning district is intended to accommodate lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.
- C. **“B-3”, General Retail District.** The General Retail zoning district is intended primarily to lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.
- D. **“B-4”, Motorist Service District.** The Motorist Service zoning district is a specialized district intended to lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

Section 1139.02 Schedule of Uses

Buildings or land shall not be used and buildings shall not be erected except for one (1) or more of the following specified uses, unless otherwise provided for in this code. Land and/or buildings in the districts indicated at the top of *Table 1139-2* may be used for the purposes denoted by the following abbreviations:

- A. **Permitted Use (P).** Land and/or buildings in this district may be used by right.
- B. **Conditional Use (C).** Land and/or buildings in this district may be used by right, provided the specific conditions related to that use, as found in Chapter *** are met.
- C. **Specific Conditions.** Indicates requirements or conditions applicable to conditional uses, as listed in Chapter ***, Conditional Use Requirements.

Table 1139-2 Schedule of Uses: Business Districts					
Use	B-1	B-2	B-3	B-4	Specific Conditions
Personal services					
Barber shop	P	P	P	--	
Beauty shop	P	P	P	--	
Health spa, fitness club	--	P	P	--	
Laundry pickup station	P	P	P	--	
Laundry, self-service	C	C	P	--	Section **
Photography studio		P	P	--	
Shoe repair	P	P	P	--	
Tailor	P	P	P	--	
Watch repair	P	P	P	--	
Retail uses					
Appliance sales and repair	--	P	P	--	
Art studio	--	P	P	--	
Auction gallery	--	P	P	--	
Building and lumber supply, fence material, rental and related construction oriented retail establishments	--	--	C	--	Section **
Clothing and dry goods store, variety store, department store; new or used, all sales activity shall be conducted indoors and there shall be no outdoor displays or storage	--	P	P	--	
Drug store	P	P	P	--	
Feed store	--	P	P	--	
Florist and gift shop	P	P	P	--	
Jewelry shop	--	P	P	--	
Novelty shop	P	P	P	--	
Package store	P	P	P	--	
Planned shopping centers	--	--	P	--	
Retail less than 10,000 square feet	P	P	P	--	
Retail 10,000 square feet or more	--	P	P	--	
Office, financial and business services					
Animal hospital, commercial kennel, veterinary clinic or animal boarding place	--	--	C	--	Section **
Bank	P	P	P	C	Section **
Dental office	--	P	P	--	
Financial institution	P	P	P	C	Section **
Gunsmith	--	C	C	--	Section **
Laboratory serving professional requirements, e.g. medical, dental, etc	--	P	P	--	
Locksmith	--	P	P	--	
Medical office	--	P	P	--	
Messenger service	--	P	P	--	
Office equipment sales and service	--	P	P	--	
Professional and office buildings	--	P	P	--	
Taxi service	--	P	P	--	
Vehicle sales, service and related					
Auto and trailer sales	--	--	C	C	Section **
Auto parts and tire store, retail	--	C	P	--	Section **
Auto repair garage (minor repair)	--	--	C	C	Section **
Auto repair garage (major repair)	--	--	C	C	Section **
Automobile, car, truck, farm equipment or motorcycle sales	--	--	C	C	Section **
Boat sales and repair	--	--	C	C	Section **
Drive-through window, accessory to principal use	--	C	C	C	Section **

Table 1139-2 Schedule of Uses: Business Districts

Use	B-1	B-2	B-3	B-4	Specific Conditions
Gasoline stations (gasoline stations dispensing, selling, or offering for sale at retail any motor vehicle fuels, oils or accessories and in connection with which is performed general motor vehicle servicing)	--	--	C	C	Section **
Parking garage or lot, commercial	--	C	C	C	Section **
Parking garage or lot, private	--	P	P	P	
Tire retreading establishments	--	--	C	C	Section **
Institutional uses					
Ambulance service	--	C	P	P	Section **
Business school	--	P	P	--	
Churches and their customary related uses	C	P	P	--	Section **
Club or lodge, private	--	C	C	--	Section **
Congregate child caring institutions	C	C	--	--	Section **
Congregate personal care homes	C	C	--	--	Section **
Group child caring institutions	C	C	--	--	Section **
Group personal care homes	C	C	--	--	Section **
Hospital, care home and personal care home	--	--	C	--	Section **
Library	P	P	P	--	
Nursery schools/day care	C	C	P	--	Section **
Museum, cultural facility	--	P	P	--	
Publicly owned recreation center or other similar charitable institution	--	P	P	--	
Food, drink, entertainment and hospitality					
Amusement enterprises, outdoor	--	--	C	--	Section **
Amusement facility indoor	--	P	P	--	
Bakery	P	P	P	--	
Dance school or studio	--	P	P	--	
Food catering service	--	P	P	--	
Hotel	--	--	--	P	
Music teaching studio	--	P	P	--	
Pool rooms (billiard parlors) and game rooms enclosed in a building	--	C	C	--	Section **
Radio studio	--	P	P	--	
Restaurant (sit down)	C	P	P	P	Section **
Restaurant (drive-through)	--	--	C	C	Section **
Restaurant (alcohol and entertainment)	--	C	C	C	Section **
Tavern	--	C	C	C	Section **
Television studio	--	P	P	--	
Theaters and recreational facilities enclosed in a building	--	C	C	C	Section **
Other Uses					
Mini-warehouses	--	--	--	C	Section **
Dry cleaning plant, neighborhood	--	C	C	--	Section **
Public utility structures and lands	C	C	C	C	Section **
Taxidermist	--	P	P	--	
Trade shops	--	--	C	--	Section **

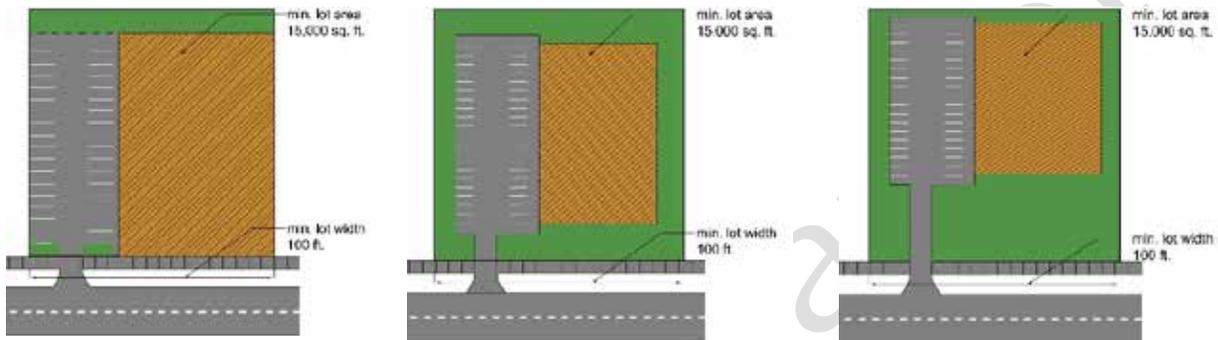
Section 1139.03 Spatial Requirements

A. All lots and buildings shall meet the minimum area and width requirements of Table 1139-3. New

lots shall not be created, except in conformance with these requirements.

Table 1139-3. Lot and Width Requirements, Business Districts

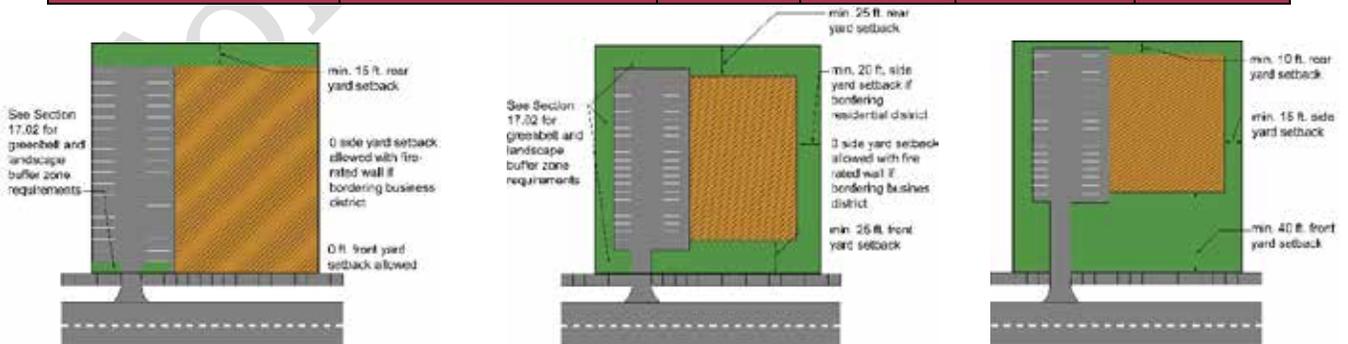
Zoning District	Minimum Lot Area (sq. Ft.)	Minimum Lot Width (ft.)
C-1, Office/Service	10,500	70
C-2, Community Business	20,000	100
C-3, General Retail	20,000	100
C-4, Motorist Service	20,000	100



B. All structures and their placement on a lot shall conform to the minimum dimensional requirements listed in Table 1139-3a.

Table 1139-3a. Dimensional Requirements, Business Districts

Zoning District	Maximum Building Height (ft./stories)	Minimum Yard Setbacks (ft.)			Lot Coverage (%)
		Front	Side	Rear	
C-1	25/2	5	10	20	70
C-2					
C-3	25/2	50	20	20	60
C-4	70/5	65	20	20	60



Examples

Section 1139.04 Site Development Requirements

In addition to the requirements of this chapter, all development in the business districts shall meet the applicable requirements as listed elsewhere in this ordinance:

- A. General Provisions, see Chapter ***
- B. Conditional Use Requirements, see Chapter ***
- C. Parking and Loading, see Chapter ***
- D. Signs, see Chapter ***
- E. Landscaping and Buffering Requirements, see Chapter ***
- F. Building Design and Material Requirements, see Chapter ***
- G. Development Plan Review Requirements, see Chapter ***

Format Example