



Gates Mills Comprehensive Plan

Initial Report, Poster Feedback from Town Hall/Neighborhood Meetings

Conducted August 15 through August 23, 2022

9/21/22

Attendance (based on Sign-In Sheets) compiled by Neighborhood Team member, Chuck Spear

Event	Date	Location	Total signed in
Town Hall Forum	Mon, 8/15/22	Community House	76
Neighborhood Meetings			
Nghds 1 & 2	Sat, 8/20/22	Community House	52
Nghds 3 & 4	Thurs, 8/18/22	Community House	37
Nghds 5 & 6	Wed, 8/17/22	Fedeli's, 820 Village Trail	57
Nghds 7	Tues, 8/23/22	Gilmour Academy, GM	49
Nghds 8	Mon, 8/22/22	Community House	47
Nghds 9 & 10	Thurs, 8/25/22	Community House	43
Total Neighborhood Mtgs Attendance			285
Total Attendance*			361

* Some people may have attended more than one event.

Event	Total signed in	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 plus	no age given
Town Hall Forum	76	0	0	5	11	16	31	13
% by age	100%	--	--	7%	14%	21%	41%	17%
Neighborhood Meetings								
Nghds 1 & 2	52	0	2	4	6	4	22	14
Nghds 3 & 4	37	0	0	0	4	4	25	4
Nghds 5 & 6	57	0	0	2	4	12	16	23
Nghds 7	49	0	2	5	3	8	20	11
Nghds 8	47	0	0	5	3	5	23	11
Nghds 9 & 10	43	0	0	4	5	1	7	26
Total Neighborhood Mtgs	285	0	4	20	25	34	113	89
% by age	100%	--	1%	7%	9%	12%	40%	31%
Total Attendance	361	0	4	25	36	50	144	102
	100%	--	1%	7%	10%	14%	40%	28%

The list of Posters, including maps/data presented on the posters and resident comments are provided below.

1. Live, Work, Play Map

Poster Details: Included an aerial photo of the Village. Attendees asked to use colored dots to indicate where they live, work, and/or play in Gates Mills.

Additional Post-It Note Comments:

- The two most popular places to ‘Play’ were Village Center and North Chagrin Reservation
- Many community groups feel ‘closed’, so I don’t play here

2. Assets (Additional Assets added with Post-It notes)

Poster Details: Included an aerial photo of the Village, blow-up of the Village Center, photos of existing places in Gates Mills, and the list of identified assets, see below. Attendees were asked to list additional assets.

IDENTIFIED ASSETS <i>[with related comments listed]</i>
Chagrin River Valley natural environment and its beauty <i>[The river, passive green spaces]</i>
Privacy, Peaceful, Charm <i>[Quiet; safe]</i>
Character/History of Village <i>[Character of River Road; Unique (not like Shaker Hts, Cleveland Hts, Pepper Pike, etc). Some bit of history is still left, keep it that way]</i>
Trees, Bird Sanctuary <i>[Animal habitats; bird watching/star gazing]</i>
Community Events (e.g. Easter Egg Hunt, July 4th parade, Summer Band Concerts, Christmas Eve Bonfire) <i>[Movie night in the park; yoga in the park]</i>
Location of Nearby Amenities <i>[Close to park system; Lack of development, but proximity to services, retail]</i>
Village Services: Police, Fire, Service Department <i>[Extraordinary]</i>
Village Center Area <i>[Playground, park, tennis/Pickleball courts/bocce ball; Open spaces such as the polo field]</i>
Private Institutions: Library, Post Office, Gilmour Academy, Our Lady Chapel at Gilmour Academy, St. Christopher’s-By-The-River, St. Francis of Assisi Church, The Little Church in the Vale
Gates Mills Elementary School <i>[We moved here for the school and its connections to Mayfield. We love Gates Mills Elementary. Love this school, our kids are having an amazing experience there. The Elementary School and Mayfield are great neighbors! Gates Mills Elementary is a lifeline to the community for our family, we love Gates Mills and teachers!]</i>
Village Communications: Pink Sheet

Additional Assets listed:

- Picnic Areas
- Community groups (2) – garden club, players, historic society, etc
- Minimal sidewalks, minimal bike trails – less runoff. Less light pollution (2)

Recommendations:

- Leverage what we have to connect the community
 - School
 - Community House
 - Downtown park
 - Polo field

- Programming:
 - Just enough community activity
 - Should be expanded
 - Would like outdoor activities for older kids (corn hole, croquet) (2)
 - Encourage interaction at village events (e.g. “ice breakers”)
- Accessibility should be expanded
- Provide food trucks (monthly with music) (2)
- Please change color of lights to protect birds
- Riverfront lot owned by Village on Chagrin River Road that used to be a landfill, wasted space
- Coffee shop in center
- Encourage volunteerism to develop a better sense of community

3. Natural Features Poster

Poster Details: Included the Natural Features Map of the Village, a summary of the Village’s current environmental protection regulations, and table indicating change in tree canopy for Gates Mills and various communities. Attendees were asked to use the Post-It Notes to provide additional comments and concerns related to the environmental protection, green infrastructure renewable energy, etc.

Summary of Environmental Protection Regulations Adopted by Village

2007	Chap 1160 Conservation Development District: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum project size 25 acres • Permits SF, and 2-3 units Attached • Same Density as the underlying district • Minimum 50% of site to be preserved as open space • Requires rezoning
1993	Chap 1173 – Tree Cutting: 2018, adopted Sec 1173.06 – Logging for Economic Gain Prohibited
2016	Chap 1174 – Comprehensive Stormwater Management
2016	Chap 1171 – Erosion and Sediment Control
1992	Chap 1175 - Protected Hillside Zone: 2014, adopted additional permitting requirements
2020	Chapter 1176 – Riparian Setbacks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 120 ft setback on each side of watercourses draining area greater than 20 sq miles and up to 300 sq miles; • Minimum 75 ft on each side of watercourses draining area greater than ½ sq mile to 20 sq miles; and • Minimum 25 ft on each side of watercourses draining area less than ½ sq mile and having a defined bed and bank as determined the village.

Question: What additional comments/concerns do you have regarding environmental protection, green infrastructure, renewable energy, etc.?

- Renewable energy:
 - Enable promote groups that provide renewable energy options for residents.
 - Are there any plans for the Village center to use renewable energy?
 - What is the viability of solar in the valley?
 - Approval process for solar on roofs should be made easier
 - Provide rebates for solar panel installation
 - Provide electric car charging station in Village Center
- Address aging septic systems, lead paint

- Tree Canopy:
 - Need more effective enforcement of tree cutting and hillside ordinances
 - Tree canopy is being impacted by Beech tree disease – residents looking for suggestions on how to combat tree loss
 - Plant more trees – replace elms.
 - Plan to replace canopy lost to death and infestation?
 - Create a policy – cut a tree, plant a tree
 - Why have so many trees been lost?
- Encourage/support environmentally responsible landscaping
 - Reduce/eliminate use of pesticides and artificial fertilizer
 - Reduce lawn areas throughout Village
- Encourage / start programs to enable composting, recycling, sustainable waste pickup,
- Address flooding issues:
 - SOM Center across for Acacia – 4 homes in big trouble. Create floodplain retention area at creek behind Gates Mills Boulevard on GMLC property?
 - Fix infrastructure – storm sewers
- Concerned that light pollution will be increased, more pavement will lead to increased runoff

4. Protected and Conserved Land

Poster Details: Included the updated Conserved/Protected Land Map of the Village and a summary of the Conserved/Protected Land statistics regarding ownership and acres. Attendees were asked to use dots to indicate their preference on preserving additional land. Post-It Notes were provided for any additional comments.

Question: Should additional land be preserved/protected?

	Total	
Yes, via additional land to be purchased by GM Land Conservancy	35	39%
Yes, via conservation easements/deed restrictions on private property	29	33%
No	4	4%
It Depends/Unsure/Need more information	14	16%
Total	82	92%

Additional Comments

- Protect land via conservation easements/deed restrictions on private property was #1 choice at the public forum
- Protect land via additional land purchased by GMLC was #1 choice during neighborhood meetings.

5. Land Use and Vacant Land

Poster Details: Included the updated Existing Land Use Map and Vacant Land/Large Parcel Map, and the updated table of existing land uses by acres and % of Village. Attendees were asked to use Post-It Notes to provide any additional comments.

Question: Do you have any comments regarding existing development and/or remaining vacant land?

Redevelopment/teardowns

- Make it easier to buy and rebuild on existing residential property
- Protect housing stock from tear downs

New Development by Type

- More development in Village Center for community
- No more retail development – too much traffic
- Cluster, multi-unit housing
 - Cluster homes are OK but maintain 3-acre minimum per home so the parcel must be large enough (2)
 - Use land to build multi-family housing
 - Tasteful townhomes or cluster housing could bring new residents and provide a place for older residents
 - No multi-family cluster homes
- Young Families: How do we attract young families if all we are focused on is development for seniors?
- Senior Housing:
 - Seniors deserve a place to live in Gates Mills that is right sized
 - No cluster housing, but build something for seniors to downsize
 - Development only for old people
 - Can Land Conservancy-owned land be developed for Gates Mills residents' senior living?
- Maintain 5 acre minimum – no cluster homes

Services

- Instead of only development for seniors, how about providing/improving services for seniors like transportation to MD appointments, food purchases, etc.

Greenspace concerns

- Gates Mills should stay green
- Keep land undeveloped – keep green space as is (3)
- Need to maintain and protect hillside
 - Concern about vacant undeveloped – specifically property b/w hillside and overlook – Building will destroy tree canopy and density for smaller properties surrounding it. Complete destruction of privacy and nature.
 - Houses/properties above Chagrin River should protect the waterways/streams from bank deterioration
- Stormwater runoff
- Taking down trees and natural environment for development
- Loss of tree canopy; too much water due to impervious surfaces
- Harm brought to wildlife

Questions about Existing Land Use Map

- What does “Other Residential” mean
- Who owns the vacant land?

6. Zoning Districts and Residential Lot Size Poster

Poster Details: Included the Existing Zoning Map, with inset map showing Figure 5. Existing Lots Larger than 25 Acres from 1997 Growth Management Plan and notation that in 2000, Gates Mills adopted the minimum 5-acre lot size for the U-1, H-1 District, which applies to ~93% of Gates Mills. Much of Gates Mills had already been subdivided, as indicated in the map from the 1997 Growth Management Plan.

Also included was the updated Lot Size Analysis Map and an Analysis of Residential House Lots by Zoning District (see table below). Attendees were asked to use Post-It Notes to provide comments.

Table. Analysis of Residential House Lots ^[1] By Zoning District				
	U-1 A-1	U-1 A-2	U-1 A-3	U-1 A-4
# of House Lots	836	44	18	27
Acres of House Lots	3,278	101	6	17
Minimum Lot Size per Zoning	5 acres (2.5 ac prior to 12/31/98)	85,000 sq ft (1.95 ac)	15,000 sq ft	7,500 sq ft
Median Lot Size ^[2]	2.8 acres	2.15 acres	15,000 sq ft	22,540 sq ft
Median Value per acre	\$169,432	\$161,020	\$592,279	\$716,395
Lot size Range with highest value per acre	<5 ac	2.5 to <5 ac	15,000 to 19,000 sq ft	7,500 to 21,300 sq ft
Median Value for lot size noted above	\$450,900	\$179,880	\$592,279	\$1,223,208
<p>[1] A “residential house lot” is a property that is (1) classified by the Cuyahoga County Fiscal Office as residential for property tax purposes, (2) developed with at least one housing unit, and (3) does not have a conservation easement or deed restriction. For the purposes of this analysis, whenever a homeowner owned an adjacent vacant unbuildable parcel, the area and valuation of the two parcels was combined and treated as one “residential house lot”.</p> <p>[2] This reflects the fact that 76% of the lots in the U1 A-1 District are nonconforming lots that predate the minimum 5-acre requirement that took effect 12/31/99.</p>				

Question: Noting that small lots in the Village Center have the highest per acre value, what other factors do you think influence housing/property values in Gates Mills?

- Housing Characteristics:
 - Age, size, and historic character key ingredients in establishing desirability and value.
 - House condition, house size, location to Village Center, and resources outside Village
 - Low inventory of homes
 - Pleasing consistency, architecture of street/neighborhood; similar complimentary. Same goes for property upkeep and landscape
 - Maintaining zoning regulations, ability to update homes (approvals)
 - Updated interior/exterior
- Community Characteristics/Features
 - Small town feel, 4th of July parade, Christmas bonfire
 - Recreation events and facilities
 - Low population density (2)
 - Well-maintained village
- Location:
 - Small homes in historic towns always are most desirable. Value of land and uniqueness of houses influence value.
 - The houses “downtown” are the only ones with sidewalks
 - Small town feel but close to amenities
- Privacy(4), nature, keep large lots(2)

- The Mayfield School System; Promoting quality of Mayfield school system
- There is no walking path on Gates Mills Blvd and road is one-way. Inconvenient for developing a neighborhood feeling.

7. Challenges (Additional Challenges added with Post-It notes)

Poster Details: Included an aerial photo of the Village, blow-up of the Village Center, photos of existing places in Gates Mills, and the list of identified challenges, see below. Attendees were asked to use dots to identify their top 3 challenges, and to use the Post-It-Notes to list additional challenges.

IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES	Total	
Utility Concerns: Electrical power: frequent, prolonged outages, broadband/cell service, safety, trash pickup, septic systems	30	18%
Housing: Values, maintenance, attract younger families, options for older adults	19	11%
Environmental Concerns: Slope erosion, stormwater management issues, flooding, stream bank protection	18	11%
Bike/walking accessibility	17	10%
Uncertain Future: Post Office, Gates Mills Elementary School	14	8%
Roads/Traffic: Mayfield/Chagrin River Road, speeding, noise, walkability on streets/paths, road maintenance	14	8%
Communication/Engagement: Perception, tension between tradition and progress, some residents do not feel connected to the Village, engage younger families, events and neighborhood events	14	8%
Balance between amount of preserved versus developed land in order to maintain natural beauty	13	8%
Village Center: Destination for residents, more places to gather desired, more recreation opportunities	10	6%
Tax Base/ Financial State of Village	8	5%
Property maintenance, zoning, historic district and other regulations: Enforcement, application, review processes	5	3%
More Development in Village Center: Parking issue, attracts outsiders	4	2%
Village Government: Communication from Village	3	2%
Continuity of Service Concerns: Future interest in serving on Council, Boards, Commissions	1	1%
	170	100%

Any other Challenges to Add?

- Zoning/subdivision of lots & losing the feel of Gates Mills
- Keeping our community organizations & clubs relevant and vibrant
- As word spreads that cell service in village has deteriorated recently, housing prices will suffer
- Use our unique environment and wealth to LEAD on everything CLIMATE; use green technology & policies to move forward
- Major Challenge: the negative vibe of a few vocal residents
- Civic engagement – need more people running for public office
- Speeding problem
 - Battle Road
 - Berkshire and Woodstock Roads (speed limits not enforced)
 - Woodstock Road (dangerous for bikes, walkers – consider speed study? Speed bumps/speed plate?)
- Sidewalks/bike lanes on major roads – Gates Mills Blvd, River Rd, Cedar Rd, Old Mill Rd
- Flooding at SOM Center across from Acacia entrance – 4 homes losing rear yards

8. Goals and Vision Poster

Poster Details: Included the Draft Vision and Draft Goals (updated from Advisory Committee’s 7/19/22 meeting). Attendees were asked to use dots to note whether to keep or change the statement, and to use the Post-It-Notes to note potential changes.

	Keep it	Change it like this
Draft Vision:		
Continue to be a highly desirable community that preserves and enhances the attributes that make the Village truly special, fosters a deep appreciation among residents, and attracts younger wage-earning residents who are committed to the Village’s continued success as a community with an overall high quality of life.	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swap “new” for “younger” (expand, given the aging demographic). • Highlight natural environment specifically in vision statement.
Draft Goals:		
RURAL VILLAGE CHARACTER. Preserve/retain the rural, bucolic character of Gates Mills, characterized by extensive tree canopy; rural views and views of Chagrin River from public roadways; and quiet, private atmosphere.	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bucolic is nice, but get real. This is 2022. • “Private” is problematic. Gates Mills is not a private club. • Tree canopy is not dependent upon rural views.
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.	30	
COMMUNITY PRIDE & ENGAGEMENT. Promote/foster a sense of community pride, appreciation and engagement among all residents.	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue finding ways to make connections with Gates Mills Elementary. • Improve engagement among residents beyond “promote and foster”.
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 Village character, quality, privacy, etc... in order to attract new wage-earning residents and provide options for existing residents.	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider more housing options for older retiring adults. • More interested in preserving and repairing existing homes than new construction. • Promote school to attract young working families. • More activities for younger families.
ACCESS & CONNECTIONS. Promote a safe and convenient transportation system that facilitates local travel, promotes walking and biking, and fosters physical well-being.	23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify where pedestrian/biking bridges are over rivers, creeks and roads. • Sidewalks & bike lanes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Along Old Mill, River Rd, County Line Rd. ○ On Village roads ○ To protect walkers (3) • It depends on what “promotes walking & biking”
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.	31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let’s improve phone and internet service.
SENSIBLE FISCAL POLICIES. Maintain fiscal prudence to ensure long-term achievement of the Village’s vision.	21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add: “...while allowing adaptability with changing priorities.” • Define meaning of “sensible” fiscal policy.