

Draft 2032 Goals

- A. **RURAL VILLAGE CHARACTER.** Preserve/retain the history-steeped rural character of Gates Mills, including its extensive wooded hillsides, the beautiful Chagrin River, vast expanses of natural green space and the Village's numerous homesteads and well-tended historic estates.
- B. **HARMONY WITH NATURE.** Aspire to be a leading sustainable municipality in the Chagrin River Valley committed to reducing environmental damage, addressing climate change, and encouraging low-impact/green infrastructure strategies to improve Gates Mills' resilience.
- C. **COMMUNITY PRIDE & ENGAGEMENT.** Promote/foster a sense of community pride and, appreciation and increase engagement among residents.
- D. **DESIRABLE HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOODS.** Promote and preserve the variety and value of existing housing and neighborhoods, while carefully managing the limited allowance for new housing that preserves the Village's character and quality in order to attract new wage-earning residents and provide options for existing residents.
- E. **ACCESS & CONNECTIONS.** Promote a safe and convenient transportation system that facilitates local travel, promotes walking and biking, and fosters physical well-being.
- F. **QUALITY AMENITIES & SERVICES.** Continue to maintain and enhance community amenities/services that support a high quality of life with the right balance of community services for taxes paid, while respecting residents' desire to protect and enhance the natural environment.
- G. **SENSIBLE FISCAL POLICIES.** Maintain fiscal prudence to ensure long-term achievement of the Village's vision while allowing for adaptability with changing priorities.

Draft 2032 Goals and Objectives

The following draft goals and related objectives support the above overall vision.

Goal A. RURAL VILLAGE CHARACTER

Preserve/retain the history-steeped rural character of Gates Mills, including its extensive wooded hillsides, the beautiful Chagrin River, vast expanses of natural green space and the Village's numerous homesteads* and well-tended historic estates. Objectives/strategies include:

Objective A.1. Preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment and habitat of the Chagrin River Valley.

Much of the Village's rural character is due to the hundreds of acres of "unspoiled" natural beauty of wooded areas and open spaces in and surrounding the Chagrin River valley. While over 25% of land in the Village is publicly preserved/conserved open space, including nearly 700 acres owned or conserved by the Gates Mills Land Conservancy (GMLC), 400+ acres owned by the Cleveland Metroparks and nearly 200 acres owned by the Village of Gates, the low housing density also contributes to the Village's rural character. In addition, large expanses of preserved/conserved natural areas also provide important environmental services such as reducing damages from flooding and erosion thereby protecting the Chagrin River and its watershed.

Strategy A.1.1. Continue to support land conservation efforts through partnership with the Gates Mills Land Conservancy (GMLC) and strategic collaboration with the Metroparks while also recognizing the need to maintain a stable tax base.¹

- a. Utilize the Conservation Levy proceeds to fund land conservation efforts. The current Conservation Levy revenue sharing agreement between the Village and GMLC essentially commits GMLC's 50% share of the levy proceeds to the establishment of a \$700k GMLC cash reserve to fund its stewardship function in perpetuity. Over the five year levy period, GMLS is projected to have an additional \$350,000 to spend on conservation efforts. Consider utilizing some or all of the Village's remaining 50% share of the Conservation Levy proceeds to fund enhancement activities such as replenishment and expansion of the tree canopy, removal of invasive plants and necessary erosion control plantings on Village- and GMLC-owned properties in accordance with the Stormwater Management Master Plan.

¹ Village residents have continuously supported the Land Conservancy since 1991. Voters have renewed the 1-mill tax levy on four occasions in 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, which resulted in an operating agreement where 95% of the funds collected went to GMLC. The other 5% of the funds were segregated into a special Village Land Conservation Fund to be used consistent with the levy's conservation purposes. In 2021, after the levy was approved by voters, the Village an-amended the Operating Agreement between the Village and the Land Conservancy ~~was approved by voters~~, which resulted in an operating agreement where 50% of the funds collected went to the GMLC and the other 50% to the Village's Land Conservation Fund. Levy Funds are restricted and are used only for purchase of land, expenses associated with acquisition of deed restrictions or conservation easements and stewardship expenses associated with such land and conservation easements. *Source:* <https://www.gatesmillslandconservancy.org/funding>

* "Homestead" needs to be defined to ensure compliance with the existing Village ordinances and zoning regulations, and to distinguish it from the state of Ohio's real estate tax provision called the homestead exemption.

Revisions to 1/9/23 Draft are indicated by underline for text added and deleted text shown with strikethrough.



- b. Promote the benefits of conservation easements on home sites to encourage residents to explore possible conservation options in coordination with the Village and GMLC. For example, donating a qualified easement is a charitable deduction which can result in income tax and property tax reductions.
- c. Explore creative options to incentivize conservation easements and/or lower the density of development on available properties based on the Village's determined optimal balance of tax exempt preserved land vs. privately held conserved land.
- d. Investigate additional funding opportunities to support land conservation efforts.

DRAFT

Objective A.2. Protect important scenic views and natural landscaping along roadway corridors.

~~Nearly all in the community survey, (99%)~~ Gates Mills residents who responded to the 2022 Community Survey noted they highly value the Village's historic ambiance and rural/natural environment, including views of the Chagrin River, extensive wooded hillsides and meadows. In ~~addition~~deed, roadway corridors throughout Gates Mills are known for cultural resources such as historic fence lines and stone walls, as well as natural resources such as open fields, high quality forests, and hemlock ravines and natural wooded areas. Points along some roadways also offer ~~more~~ expansive panoramic vistas over the scenic Chagrin River Valley. These scenic views from the road are significant community resources that reflect the Village's character and are highly valued by residents.

Protection of these scenic resources is a significant component of maintaining the rural character and quality of life of the Village, both for natural resource conservation and ~~view shed~~scenic resource protection. ~~Scenic views may be negatively impacted by new housing construction, other man-made structures or other alteration of the natural environment.~~ Recognizing, preserving, and enhancing or improving the view from the road is a critical element in sustaining Gates Mill's unique character-defining features and sense of place.



Scenic view along Berkshire Road. CT Consultants.

Strategy A.2.1. Identify, inventory and catalog the scenic areas of the Village in order to determine important gateways, scenic corridors and/or scenic views that should be protected.

Identifying and mapping the entryways and visual qualities of Gates Mills' most valued by residents (which could be as simple as photographing existing places and then ranking them based on agreed upon criteria) helps to then determine suitable ways to protect them. See sidebar below for example of criteria used by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for designating a scenic river.

Examples of characteristics that could be included are shown below: An inventory and cataloging scenic resources (which could include utilizing GIS mapping and data analysis) is the first step for identifying, prioritizing and mapping scenic views and developing suitable protections.

a. Roadways:

- The natural landscape on the edge of the roadway consists of dense forest edge.
- The road has a narrow, winding quality linking it with the Village's rural past.

b. Open fields and meadows.

- The open field or meadow provides a visual link to the agricultural history of the Village.
- The open field provides an important visual focus for stands of trees, stone walls or fences.

c. Cultural places.

- Settings and locations, including buildings, walls, fences, markers, other structures and the surrounding areas that provide a visual link to the culture and history of the Village.

Strategy A.2.2. Explore the potential of adopting regulations and/or design guidelines that would protect the identified scenic roadway corridors. To ensure that the rural scenic character as seen from the roadway is not negatively impacted by new housing construction, cell towers, other man-made structures or other alteration of the natural environment, regulations and/or design guidelines such as noted below could be considered for specific roadways that are determined to be scenic corridors.

- a. Explore the possibility of creating a scenic corridor overlay district, applied in the same manner as the Village's Historic District, where the overlay district would be in addition to the standard use and lot regulations. The overlay district could impose additional requirements (such as limiting the type of fence that can be constructed along the roadway and/or requiring that any proposed subdivision or housing construction coordinate early with the Planning and Zoning Commission to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate negative scenic impacts) or could be a set of voluntary guidelines. For example, Liberty Township, Delaware County, OH adopted a set of guidelines for the Olentangy Heritage Corridor (OHC) as

SCENIC CHAGRIN RIVER

The Chagrin River, from US Route 6 to the confluence with the Aurora Branch, was designated as a State Scenic River in 1979. Scenic river designation is representative of a waterway that retains much of its natural character for the majority of its length. Shorelines are, for the most part, undeveloped, but the river may exhibit signs of disturbance by human activities. The adjacent corridor must be forested to a minimum depth of 300 feet for 25 percent of the stream's length.

SCENIC VIEWSHED

A viewshed is defined as the view of an area from a specific vantage point; a computer model of this; and the area that comprises this view. The National Scenic Byways Program, a voluntary, community-based program, provides resources (including potential funding) to assist local communities in identifying and protecting scenic areas.

recommended by the Township's Comprehensive Plan.

(<https://www.libertytwp.org/DocumentCenter/View/172/Olentangy-Heritage-Corridor-State-Scenic-Byway-PDF>)

~~a.—Whenever a new house is proposed in a designated scenic corridor, require a minimum amount of vegetative screening along the road to maintain the natural character that currently exists. Ensure it provides ample dense screening of the new house from the existing street and adjoining properties, and require the density of screening to be maintained in perpetuity.~~

b. Along identified scenic roadways, encourage new homes to be located on the parcel in such a way that minimizes their visibility from the public right-of-way, wherever possible, while seeking to limit the expansion of additional hardscaping and the number of trees being cut down, as part of the site plan review process for new housing construction. This is consistent with the 1997 Growth Management Plan recommendation that with the exception of removing trees for a driveway, vegetation located within 200 feet of the public right-of-way should remain natural to eliminate view of a structure from the road. And, the Village's 1991 National Historic District Nomination Form highlights how efforts to maximize the retention of trees on wooded lots helped reduce the visibility of new houses. This provision would not apply in the Village Center area and other historic areas where the existing character is created by the historic houses visible from the street.

Excerpt from Gates Mills 1991 National Historic District Nomination Form.

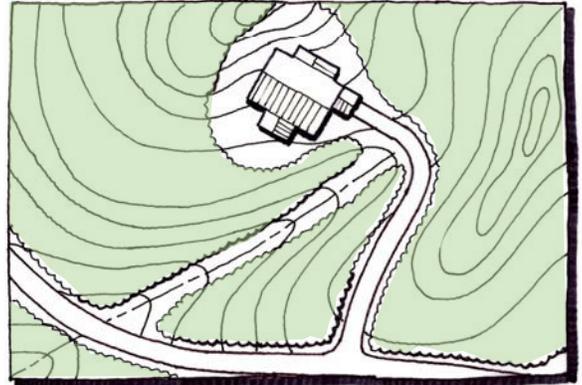
“[The] newer housing developments off of Mayfield Road are not generally visible from the road. Care has been taken to locate these large newer residences on spacious, generally wooded lots which are of a fairly large size. The houses may be seen from their small streets but are usually shielded from traffic and each other by large stands of trees. While these developments have changed the character of their surroundings and therefore have been kept outside the district boundaries, they are not an intrusive presence because of their relative lack of visibility.”

Example from Canandaigua, NY

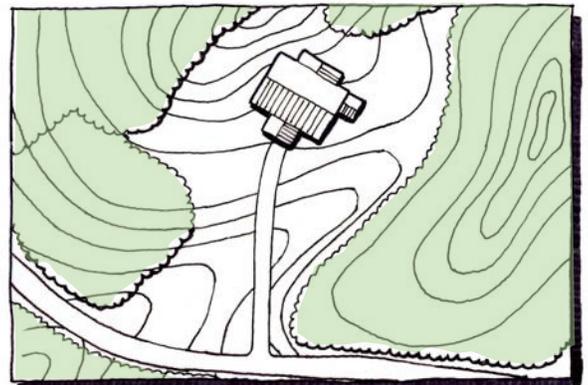
Building and Lot Design

Buildings should be laid out to reduce the visual impact of the structures. This should include designing buildings to conform to the contours of the site, and arranging driveways and patio areas to be compatible with the slopes and building design. The illustrations below show examples of possible guidelines on

This...



Not This...



Source: Ridgeline Development Guidelines, Town of Canandaigua, NY.
www.townofcanandaigua.org

Strategy A.2.3. Update the Village’s Conservation Development District regulations (Ch 1160) to include designated scenic corridors as one of the important resources to be protected as part of the restricted open space requirement.

The Conservation Development District regulations already stipulate that the “Restricted Open Space”² conserve a development site’s significant natural features such as steep slopes, floodplains, wetlands, and woodlands. This strategy recommends adding consideration of scenic views from the road of attractive natural features such as ridge lines, steep slopes, woodlands, streams, and lakes, as well as views of historic features and landmarks (which may or may not be along scenic corridors).

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

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

Strategy A.3.1. Strictly enforce tree protection regulations.

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

Strategy A.3.2. On Village property, maintain existing trees and systematically plant new trees that will thrive in a warming climate.

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

- a. Adopt a Village tree plan that includes tree planting, maintenance, and tree removal standards, guidelines and policies. This includes developing strategies to maintain the existing forests on Village-owned land such as occasionally removing dominant trees so that smaller trees may thrive and removing vines.

² In a Conservation Development, a minimum of 50% of the development site must be designated and preserved as open space in perpetuity (1160.06(b)).

- b. Adopt a tree replacement policy to ensure that whenever a tree is removed by the Village, it will be replaced.
- c. Consider establishing a Village Tree Commission to assist in creating and implementing a Village Tree Plan. If a Tree Commission is established, the Village may wish to become a Tree City USA (Arbor Day Foundation), which would provide recognition and possibly some assistance to the Commission through the Foundation's local Service Forester representative.

More information is available at:

<https://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/index.cfm#becomeSection>

Annual Tree City recognition is achieved by meeting four overarching standards:

1. Maintaining a tree board or department
2. Having a community tree ordinance
3. Spending at least \$2 per capita on urban forestry
4. Celebrating Arbor Day

Strategy A.3.3.

Consider providing educational resources for residents to help them choose the right tree for the right place.

Potential resources range from providing website links to information about tree species that thrive in NEO trees to more specific information about the Village's Forest and the benefits and care of trees that could be spearheaded by a Village Tree Commission, noted in Strategy A.3.2. In addition, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry has a Service Forester for Cuyahoga County. On their Landowner Assistance page, there are links for the list of Service Foresters and private arborists, etc. if the Village wanted to seek professional assistance.

See also their website: <https://ohiodnr.gov/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-odnr/forestry/landowner-assistance>

Objective A.4. Ensure Dark, Star-filled Skies for Future Generations.

Dark Sky lighting is lighting provided only where it is needed, while reducing unnecessary scattered light and glare. Dark Sky efforts focus on only using as much light as is needed and when it is needed.

Strategy A.4.1. Adopt an Outdoor Lighting Ordinance to establish a standard for night sky friendly practices, while maintaining visibility for pedestrians.

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

Strategy A.4.2. Investigate becoming a designated Dark Sky Place.

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

- a. Educate residents on the importance of dark skies to ecosystems.

Goal B. HARMONY WITH NATURE

Aspire to be a leading sustainable municipality in the Chagrin River Valley committed to reducing environmental damage, addressing climate change, and encouraging low-impact/green infrastructure strategies to improve Gates Mills' resilience. Objectives/strategies include:

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

Strategy B.1.1. Consider revising the zoning regulations to permit additional alternative and clean energy options such as ground mounted solar panels, etc. with appropriate requirements/limitations to encourage use of alternative energy options while ensuring there are minimal negative impacts on adjacent property.

The current regulations permit solar panels on the roof of a residential structure provided the panel does not extend above the ridge line, nor is visible from the street. Solar panels may also be attached to an accessory structure in the rear yard. Ground mounted panels are not permitted. Given the large lot size and wooded nature of the community, consider allowing more flexibility in the location of both roof-mounted and ground mounted panels for flexibility, and evaluating their suitability and impacts based on a comparison of impacts of other structures that are permitted on the property (i.e. solar panels on a storage shed in the rear yard).

Wind turbines are currently not permitted anywhere in the Village, which is appropriate based on the unlikelihood of suitable sites due to the extensive tree cover.

Strategy B.1.2. Adopt zoning regulations for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) and investigate the feasibility of installing stations in the Village Center.

By proactively addressing EVCS in the zoning code, especially for nonresidential uses such as Gilmour Academy, the Village facilitates their installation because property owners know the rules when planning improvements.

Objective B.2. Ensure all properties are well-maintained through environmentally responsible best practices in compliance with Village ordinances to protect both public and private investments.

Strategy B.2.1. Review the existing resource protection regulations for effectiveness (including stormwater management, erosion and sediment control, hillside protection, and riparian setback regulations), revise/update if necessary, and diligently enforce.

While the Village has a number of regulations for resource protection, some were adopted 25 or more years ago and may not be as effective as they could be in protecting the natural environment. (See summary of resource protection regulations on following page.)

- a. Review and strengthen the floodplain regulations and riparian regulations. The current floodplain regulations allow construction within the floodplain as long as the first floor elevation of the building is at or above the flood protection elevation. However, most

riparian setback regulations do not permit construction within the designated riparian setback, and note that where the 100-year floodplain is wider than the minimum riparian setback, the riparian setback restrictions are extended to the outer edge of the 100-year floodplain. This is not the case in Chapter 1176 Riparian Setbacks, which does not extend the no build restriction throughout the adjacent 100-year floodplain.

- b. Review and update the Hillside Protection regulations (adopted in 1992) to ensure they are as effective as possible at minimizing hillside erosion.

Strategy B.2.2. Lead by example~~Diligently enforce existing (updated) resource protection regulations including stormwater management, riparian setback regulations and hillside protection regulations.~~

Leadership is a process in which an individual/entity influences the behavior and attitudes of other people, often by modeling the desired behavior in a way that inspires others to follow. In this regard, the Village government can be an example for residents by staying current with best management practices and highlighting its compliance with resource protection regulations whenever projects are undertaken.

- e.a. Invest in a Stormwater Management Master Plan (SMMP) for the Village. As part of the plan preparation, review changes in topography, etc. to understand the past impacts of extreme weather events and newer developments on topography throughout the Village. Consider using Conservation Levy proceeds to help fund such a project. As part of the SMMP, identify actions and infrastructure investments necessary to improve stormwater management to protect existing houses, particularly those at lower elevations near the Chagrin River.

Objective B.3. Promote composting, recycling and diversion opportunities to reduce the amount of material going to landfills.

Strategy B.3.1. Explore ways to promote yard waste and food waste composting. Composting is nature's way of recycling. It is an easy and economical way to both reduce trash going to landfills and build healthy soil. Composted material, when reapplied as part of a soil or fertilizer replenishment program, results in fewer emissions of Green House Gases and small amounts of carbon storage.

- a. Consider ways to provide educational materials and programming to increase participation.
- b. Explore creating an in-house composting program.

Strategy B.3.2. Review and improve the Village's waste reduction and recycling programs.

Currently, Rumpke Waste & Recycling is the waste hauler for households in the Village. The company provides weekly curbside recycling for residents.

- e.a. Benchmark against neighboring communities. The Cuyahoga County Solid Waste District prepares a Solid Waste Management Plan every five years, as mandated by the State of Ohio. The last update, ratified in May 2019, includes a wealth of information at the local community level that the Village could use to gauge how community efforts compare to other Cuyahoga County municipalities. For example, according to the Plan, in 2016, curbside recycling efforts by Gates Mills residents resulted in an average of 296 pounds per household per year, and

ranked 41 out of 59 communities. In comparison, Moreland Hills, ranked number 2, reported an average of 712 pounds per household per year.

- d.b. Explore ways that Village government can increase opportunities to reduce, reuse and recycle. For example, make subscription to the Pink Sheet optional and encourage digital distribution to promote sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Objective B.4. Explore additional ways the Village can be more sustainable. Consider seeking LEED for Cities [municipalities] certification.

LEED for Cities helps leaders of local governments (cities and villages) create and operationalize Becoming a sustainable community requires planning, implementing, and promoting sustainable practices that will benefit residents, the community, and the environment. Sustainable practices can address a wide range of factors, such as responsible, sustainable and specific plans for natural systems, energy, water, waste, transportation and many others, that contribute to residents' quality of life, create healthier places for people, and enhance resilience, and increases overall sustainability. The Village has already adopted a number of natural resource protection regulations to increase resiliency. Given Gates Mills unique characteristics compared to most other communities in Cuyahoga County, it is essential to define what sustainability means for Gates Mills and what additional actions can and should be pursued.

Strategy B.4.1. Investigate tools and strategies other NEO communities have adopted to encourage property owners to incorporate sustainable practices.

One local example is the Village of Orange, which adopted the Village's own locally created Green Certification Program patterned after the LEED³ certification program. The Village drafted guidelines and standards for new construction and also established a certificate of recognition that is awarded to applicants who meet a certain level of the certification requirements.

Strategy B.4.2. Investigate ways to update Village practices to be more environmentally-responsible and ecosystem-sustaining in ways that are within its control.

Examples include:

- a. Consider creating a plant-based erosion control plan for Village properties, especially those on hillsides.
- b. Update the Village Service Department landscaping and land management practices to be more eco-friendly, such as restricting the use of pesticides to invasive-species removal only, reducing the amount of tended lawn area on Village-owned property and turf mowing along roads.
- c. Consider other ways in which the Village can set the example of following eco-friendly practices, such as identifying ways to transition away from fossil fuel dependent vehicles and tools over a 5 year period, and strengthening, complying with and enforcing compliance with the Village's environmental protection regulations.
- a.d. Investigate the US Green Building Council's LEED for Cities criteria for additional ideas on ways to improve the environmental sustainability of its own actions as an entity.

(<https://build.usgbc.org/lfcexistingbeta41> from here <https://www.usgbc.org/leed/rating-systems/leed-for-cities-communities>)

³ LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, created by the U.S. Green Building Council.

Environmental Protection Regulations, by date Adopted by Village

1992 **Chap 1175 - Protected Hillside Zone**

Intent: To ensure that development in Protected Hillside Zone minimizes problems due to water runoff and soil erosion that results from changes to topography. Review process is intended to encourage the maximum retention of natural topographical features such as natural drainage swales, streams, slope ridge lines, rock outcropping, vistas from and of the hillside, trees and other natural plant formations, and to retain the sense of identity and image that the Protected Hillside Zone areas now impart to the Village, along with additional statements in Section 1175.01.

Protected Hillside Zone: Zone map prepared by village engineer. Zone includes areas of unstable soil and generally hillsides having a slope of 12% or greater.

Permit required to do any earth-disturbing activity. Requires a grading plan, geotechnical report, vegetation inventory and management plan, and landscape plan. (additional permitting requirements added in 2014)

1993 **Chap 1173 – Tree Cutting**

Intent: To preserve the woodland nature of the Village, stabilize sloped grades, reduce surface runoff, erosion and downstream flooding, retain areas of rainfall percolation into the water table, ameliorate climatic and weather extremes, support wildlife and preserve the vegetational aesthetics for which the Village is known, along with additional statements in Section 1173.01.

Regulations apply when development requires the removal or reduction of trees and vegetation, and seek to reduce the number of potentially hazardous or otherwise undesirable trees and vegetation, to select more beneficial trees and vegetation as opposed to less beneficial, and to promote a mixture of ages and species of vegetation where it naturally may occur.

Permit required for homeowners cutting down **three or more trees per year** that are larger than 9” caliper. (additional limitations apply)

In 2018, added Sec 1173.06 – Logging for Economic Gain Prohibited.

2007 **Chap 1160 Conservation Development District:**

- 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

2010 **Chapter 1341 – Flood Damage Reduction**

Intent: to minimize the impact of development on adjacent properties within and near flood prone areas.

Permit required for any filling, grading or construction activity within the floodplain.

New construction is permitted, but must be designed so that lowest floor, including basement, is elevated to or above the flood protection elevation.

2016 **Chap 1174 – Comprehensive Stormwater Management**

Intent: To “control the volume, rate, and quality of stormwater runoff originating from property being developed so that surface water and groundwater are protected and flooding and erosion potential are not increased”; “maintain predevelopment hydrology and groundwater recharge on as much of the site as practicable”; and limit the installation of “new impervious surfaces and compact soils where necessary to support the future land use;” along with additional statements noted in 1174.01.

Requirement: All soil disturbing activities that **disturb one (1) or more acres of land** (with some exceptions) must submit a “comprehensive stormwater management plan” prepared by a professional engineer.

2016 **Chap 1171 – Erosion and Sediment Control**

Intent: To ensure that when development occurs, protective measures are taken to minimize damage to property and degradation of water resources.

Requirement: All soil disturbing activities that **disturb one (1) or more acres of land** (with some exceptions) must submit a “stormwater pollution prevention plan” prepared by a professional engineer that complies with state and federal requirements.

2020 **Chap 1176 – Riparian Setbacks**

Prohibits development and most soil disturbing activity within the riparian area based on the drainage area of the watercourse.

- Minimum 120 ft setback on each side of watercourses draining an area greater than 20 sq miles and up to 300 sq miles;
- Minimum 75 ft on each side of watercourses draining an area greater than ½ sq mile to 20 sq miles; and
- Minimum 25 ft on each side of watercourses draining an area less than ½ sq mile and having a defined bed and bank as determined the village.

Where the 100-year floodplain is wider than the riparian setback, Chapter 1341 governs use of the area between the riparian setback and 100-year floodplain limit;

Goal E. ACCESS & CONNECTIONS

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

Objectives/strategies include:

Objective E.1. Maintain quality road infrastructure.

Strategy E.1.1. Continue to monitor and enforce speed limits within the Village, such as but not limited to along major roads such as Chagrin River and Sherman Road.

Concerns were raised about safety concerns due to speeding traffic along Chagrin River Road and other roads in the Village.

- a. Conduct a traffic analysis of streets with known issues to verify and quantify the issues.
- b. Identify ways to reduce the amount of Geauga County commuter traffic that cuts through the Village on secondary roads. A prime example is how morning and evening rush hour traffic cuts thru on Old Mill Road to avoid traffic lights on Mayfield Road. Speed and volume are both issues. Find ways to restrict cut-thru traffic similar to how Shaker Heights has addressed cut-through traffic at Fairhill Road and S Park Boulevard near Shaker Square.
- c. Work with state representatives to reduce the speed limit on Chagrin River Road north of the Village Center from 40 mph to 35 mph.
- d. Utilize proceeds from Mayfield Road traffic camera enforcement to fund additional speed limit enforcement efforts.

Strategy E.1.2. Review and update the Village's strategy for road construction and maintenance.

Road maintenance and repair was a common issue cited on the Community Survey.

Objective E.2. Increase pedestrian, biking and other trail facilities throughout the Village.

Based on the results of the community survey, a significant percentage of residents support increasing walking, biking and trails throughout the Village. However, there are a number of factors that need to be considered, such as topography and roadway conditions, when determining the best locations for new connections. In addition, wherever sidewalks or other types of paths are installed, it is important to make sure they do not encroach on the fences.

Strategy E.2.1. Expand the Add sidewalks where needed network within the Village Center as part of an overall Village Center Master Plan.

The historic Village Center is where numerous community amenities are located and the primary gathering place for Village events. Sidewalks already exist in some parts of the Village Center: narrow brick walkways are found along both sides of Old Mill Road, a segment of concrete sidewalk exists along Epping Road extending from Old Mill Road, and a new sidewalk was recently installed

from the interurban bridge to the Gates Mills Post Office. The Village is completing plans to extend the sidewalk on the east side of Chagrin River Road from the Library to Gates Mills Elementary School. Improving walkability in this area where there already are large concentrations of pedestrians for special events makes sense.

a. Expand the network by installing ~~the remaining~~ short missing linkages between destinations within the Village Center such as:

- Complete the sidewalk along Epping to connect from Old Mill Road From the interurban bridge to the Dan Collister polo field on Epping from Southwick House along Epping to the Hunt Club riding arena.
- Along Chagrin River Road from the Old Livery Tavern south to Old Mill Road.
- Establish a designated path (crosswalk) on Chagrin River Road with painted pavement markings for Gates Mills Elementary School students and children attending the summer Nature Camp at the school so they can cross the road to get to the Community House and Arboretum.
- Extend the walkway on the north side of Old Mill Road to Founders Park.

b. Any sidewalk installed in the Village Center on the west side of Chagrin River should keep the same 'look' of the older sidewalks, same width and material (brick). Whenever new sidewalks are installed, it is important to make sure they do not encroach on the existing fences.

a-c. Encourage homeowners to properly maintain and repair the brick sidewalks to retain their historic appearance.



EagleView imagery of Village Center, 11/14/20 Cuyahoga County GIS.

Revisions to 1/9/23 Draft are indicated by underline for text added and deleted text shown with strikethrough.



Historic brick sidewalks along Old Mill Road, 11/14/20 Cuyahoga County GIS.

Strategy E.2.2. Establish a dedicated bike lane along Gates Mills Boulevard.

An overwhelming 72% of residents who responded to the community survey supported creating a marked bike lane along Gates Mills Boulevard. The boulevard is marked as being only one travel lane north of SOM Center Road. Given the wide pavement width, it may be possible to simply restripe the surface, paint bike symbols and install signage. The suggested bike lane would connect to a proposed recreational multi-purpose trail along Gates Mills Boulevard in Mayfield Heights, which is to be constructed within the grassy median.



Gates Mills Boulevard in Gates Mills Village is 20 feet wide on each side with signage noting it is only one lane in each direction. Google Earth 9/22.

Strategy E.2.3. Provide Explore opportunities to create family-friendly trail/access-connections within the Village Center, to North Chagrin Reservation, and between neighborhoods.

Based on the 2022 Community Survey, residents were most dissatisfied with the existing roadway conditions as they related to pedestrian and bicycle safety. Yet, while there is support for more safe places to walk and bike throughout the Village, there are a number of challenges that need further study to determine “how” and identify “where” sidewalks/paths may be more important, necessary and/or easier to install than in other areas of the Village.

- a. Consider establishing a committee to analyze and identify actual “neighborhoods” within the Village. Once the neighborhoods are defined, facilitate neighborhood meetings for residents to get together and decide for themselves where they think sidewalks/paths are needed and why. This would also give residents the chance to discuss if/why they feel unsafe using the roads in their neighborhood for walking and cycling and to determine if there are other ways to make walking and cycling safer, such as widening the shoulder and/or improving berms so they are smoother and firmer for cyclists.
- b. Identify locations where connectivity is desired, such as connecting surrounding neighborhoods to the Village Center, and where sidewalks are needed. –Prioritize locations where potential bike lanes and/or walking paths are important for safety reasons, such as along County Line Road to provide a connection between the cul-de-sac streets possible without creating traffic problems or undermining the privacy of nearby home owners and other locations where pedestrian safety needs to be enhanced. For example, 72% of residents who responded to the community survey supported creating a marked bike lane along Gates Mills Boulevard.
- c. Explore the possibility of installing a crossing signal at the Mayfield Road/Chagrin River Road intersection. With the installation of traffic cameras at this intersection it is
- d. Identify where pedestrian and biking bridges exist over the Chagrin River, creeks and roads. If there are inadequate existing crossings, identify/evaluate suitable locations for additional bridges.
- e. Identify and pursue outside grant funding for increasing pedestrian and bicycling connectivity.

Strategy E.2.4. Explore the idea of creating a trail system on land owned by the Gates Mills Land Conservancy and the Village of Gates Mills, with limited connection to the Metroparks.

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

According to the 2022 Community Survey, two out of three residents support re-establishing the bridle paths, especially noting that possible bridle trails within Gates Mills are also suitable as walking trails, particularly on land that is owned by the Village and GMLC. In many cases, the

highest use of these trails would be by Village residents who desire a safe place to take their children and dogs on easily accessible walks in nature.”

- a. Explore the opportunity to, where possible, re-create the bridle trail system within the Village on property owned by the Gates Mills Land Conservancy and the Village of Gates Mills. Consider establishing a committee to identify existing trails that are already being used and maintained (mowed), and other historic trail locations to determine where bridle trails previously existed and/or are appropriate. There is an existing and maintained trail located on the Wick Preserve along Chagrin River Road on GMLC property. It used to extend to the Hunt Club barn, and could be re-extended. There is a former trail from County Line Road down to the Wick property that could be re-developed. There is also a partially developed trail that runs along the Chagrin River from the Village Arboretum to Mayfield Road that could potentially be established with cooperation from the nursery. There may be other potential old trails that could be reactivated, but more research is needed. There may also be segments where existing trails traverse private property, in which case arrangements for public access would need to be negotiated with the owner.
- b. In the event additional funding is obtained, consider creating trails on ~~additional large Village-owned~~ parcels along the Chagrin River for use by residents, designed in a way that protects adjacent private property.