

Boardman Township Strategic Planning & Zoning Action Plan 2017



Purpose of this Plan

This plan was created to be utilized by the Planning and Zoning Department as a guide for the future Planning activities of the Township.

Vision for the Boardman Township Trustees for Department direction

To engage the Trustees about the various projects the planning and zoning staff believe are necessary and why the department believes these are important to retain Boardman Township as “A Nice Place to Call Home”.

Internal Guide for the Future

This document serves as an internal guide for the next 3-5 years for projects the Township plans to accomplish.

Address Boardman Townships 2021 Initiatives for the Zoning Department

- Continue the neighborhood rezoning program to protect each neighborhoods integrity.
- Evaluate staffing to ensure proper customer service response.
- Update the Township Zoning Ordinance to improve regulations and enhance customer service.

Drafted by Boardman Township Zoning Department

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Introduction

The Boardman Township Planning and Zoning Department is at an exciting point. The Department has a new direction that is focused on continuing to keep our neighborhoods strong and our business corridors competitive. Increasing transparency and efficiency throughout the permitting and property maintenance programs will help residents and business continue to grow and see progress being made. The Department is also working on community and neighborhood planning efforts to provide direction and strategies for continuing to make Boardman a nice place to call home.

Overarching Planning and Zoning Goals

1. Preserve and improve the quality of the Neighborhoods

- Proactive Code Enforcement

- Neighborhood Plans

- Community Engagement

2. Retain Strong and Vibrant Retail Corridors

- Promote Competitive Commercial Types

- Retain the Historic character of the North Market Street Corridor

- Provide multimodal access to commercial retail properties

3. Promote a healthy community by encouraging active modes of transportation

- Active Transportation Plan

 - School Travel Plan

 - Safe Routes to Schools as funding source

 - Sidewalks

 - Multi use trails/paths

 - Bikeways/bike lanes

Modernizing Processes

Move to a digitalized permitting system and property maintenance

Currently, any requests for permits older than a few years old requires a tedious amount of staff time. We look through old books for the property address in search of any permit numbers and write them down. The staff member then must go to another building to search through boxes to try to find that particular case number and pull it.

Moving to a digitalized permitting system and property maintenance that allows citizen access to property complaints and the ability for them to track progress should reduce the number of phone calls received checking on the status of code enforcement cases. The current system has no transparency and citizens have no way of knowing what action has been taken in response to their complaints without calling the office. This often leads citizens to think that no action has been taken in response to their complaints and issues. This takes up valuable staff time that could be spent on other projects if citizens can access all this information on their own.

Secondly, this helps everyone inside and outside of the office with the ability to quickly look up the status of a property in code enforcement as well as permits. This cuts down on the amount of paper and reduces that time staff spends looking for documents.

The Township has chose to move forward with MyGov software that will be launching publicly in January. After launch the Township will be hosting public meetings to teach the general public about accessing MyGov and how it works.



Key Benefits

- Ability for citizens to track progress online
- Ability for minor permits to be applied for through online process
- Ability for permitting fees to be paid online and potentially rental registration fees



Modernizing Processes

Zoning Code Update

The current zoning code has not been re-written since it was approved in November 17, 1948. It has been revised 16 times since it's initial passage, an average of once every 4 and a half years. The current zoning code does not allow for flexibility in different types of commercial districts. If new construction were take place in the Historic North Market Street Corridor the set back requirements would not allow for it to fit in with the current character of the district. Creating different zones where development can match the current existing fabric of the corridor or neighborhood is something that has become increasingly important to Boardman Township.

Selection Schedule timeline for Consultant

Posting	September 18 th 2017
Proposals Due	October 13 th 2017
Proposal Review	November 2017
Trustee Approval	December 2017
Estimated Start Date	Spring 2018

Process

- Request for Proposals to Evaluate Cost
- Pick a firm to Re-write Code
- Community Engagement for code revisions
- Release Updated Zoning Code
- Update Software system with new zoning code references as needed

Future Land Use Plan

Mahoning County creates a future land plan that aligns with the Townships initiatives. Currently the Township rezoning initiatives from R-2 to R-1 of single family homes aligns with the Future Land Use Map created by the county.

Common Issues with Current Zoning Code

- Frequent cases in Board of Zoning Appeals because people want to build garages larger than allowed by current code.
- No limits on the number of domestic animals people can have.
- Vague language on agriculture and livestock
- Electronic signs not addressed.
- No mixed-use zoning, but mixed-use structures exist.



Complaint Driven

Currently all code enforcement is complaint driven in Boardman Township. Boardman will retain the current complaint system to address community concerns. The Township also realizes the benefit of having a proactive approach to property maintenance in order to preserve the quality and integrity of our neighborhoods. Inspecting all properties creates a fair system rather than being a system that can be used when there are neighbor disputes.

Comprehensive Code Enforcement

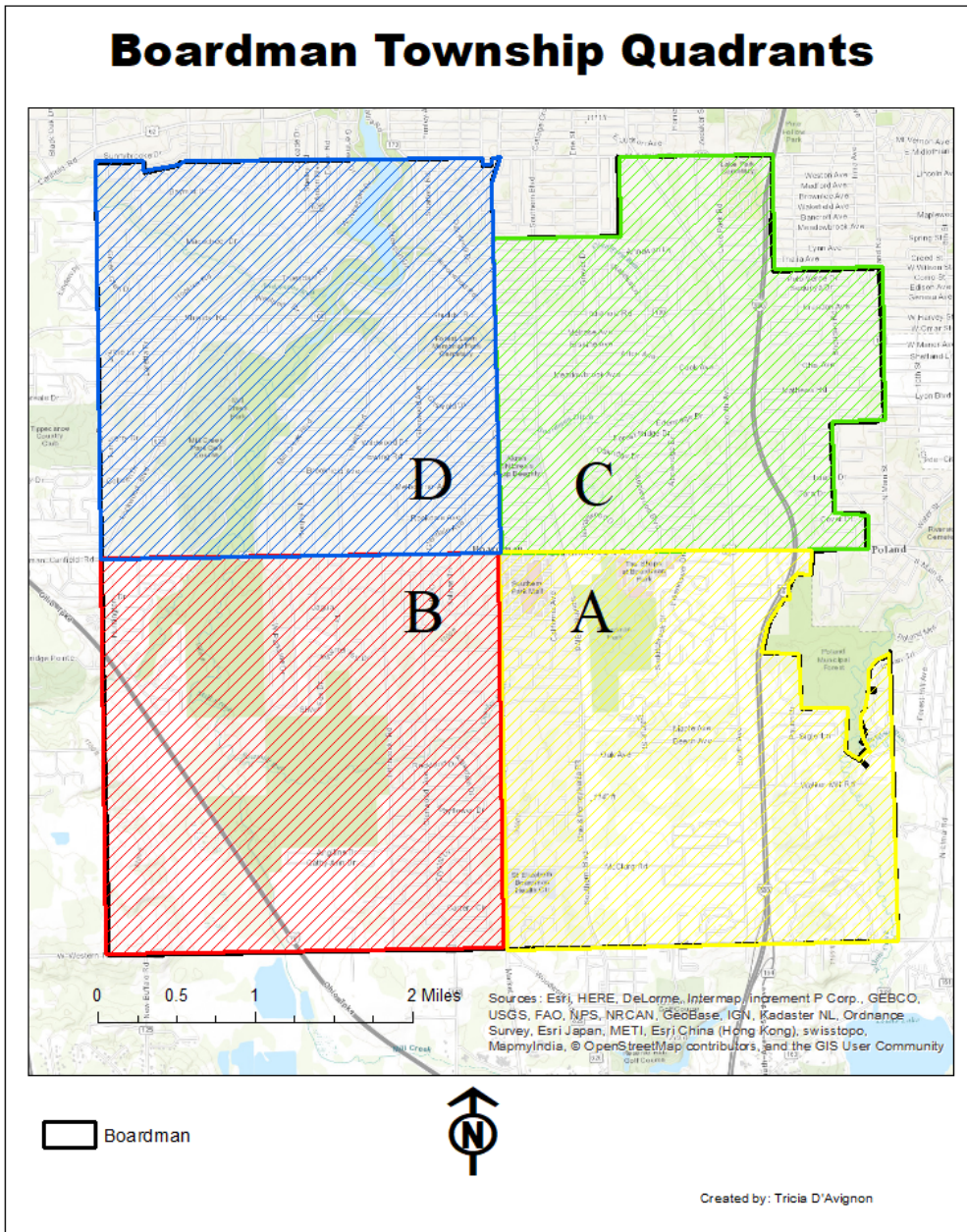
A Comprehensive code enforcement strategy involves not only responding to citizen complaints, but developing a strategy in which all residential properties in the township are inspected on a rolling basis. This assures that problem properties are not being missed due to the fact that no complaints have been received and home values are being retained to the best of our ability.

This will also allow the Township to collect a large amount of property data and keep an updated inventory of vacant properties and properties with code violations. On-going data collection and maintenance provides us with an overall picture of the community in order to make informed and strategic decisions for the Township. Data also provides hard evidence of the existing conditions within the Township.

Proactive Code Enforcement

Proactive Code Enforcement will allow the Township to make sure areas are not declining just because complaints are not being filed with the Zoning Department. The proactive code enforcement strategy will help to maintain the overall quality of the neighborhoods. It will also alleviate the fear some neighbors may have with reporting property issues in their neighborhood because they believe they may experience retaliation.

Determining how many properties the department can proactively inspect on a yearly basis is key to creating a proactive code enforcement strategy that works. The creation of zones where all properties are inspected on a 4-year cycle would be the first step to our proactive code enforcement strategy. Once this strategy is tested we can determine how well it is working. If properties can be inspected more frequently, or broken out into different inspection zones and adjust as necessary.



Breaking the Township into four quadrants makes the most sense initially as the major commercial corridors split the Township up into almost equal sections spatially. The Department is aware that this may not be the best long term inspection strategy as quadrant D (Northwest quadrant) is far more densely populated than quadrants A & B. Therefore quadrant D would take longer to inspect than quadrants A & B.

Strategic Planning Initiatives

Why Plan?

We have created this plan to start organizing the activities required to achieve our goals in the Township. Traditionally the zoning department has been the permitting and enforcement arm for the Township, but has realized that a more proactive approach to planning for the future is necessary to preserve the vibrant community that exists within the neighborhoods and commercial corridors.

We want to make sure that all of our retail in the Township remains competitive including our older retail areas that have faced disinvestment. Current trends show that people continue to move to more walkable mixed-use communities and downtowns. Boardman does not have many areas that cater to this type of activity, which is why it's important to protect these older areas for the overall health of the Township. The Market Street Historic District is one of the few areas in the township that could build upon the existing mixed-use walkable environment and create a downtown feel.

Create a North Market Street Corridor Plan

Market Street is a primary north-south corridor which divides the communities of Youngstown and Boardman due to high traffic speeds, the sheer width of the street and very few safe places to cross. It currently has two travel lanes in either direction with a center turn lane. The overall right-of-way is approximately 100' and has excess capacity which could be allocated to active transportation. Studies have shown that if the right conditions exist and people feel safe they are more likely to engage in active transportation and recreation. Performing a multimodal feasibility study is a critical first step in creating a Market Street that is safe and inviting for pedestrians and cyclists and to increase users of active modes of transportation.

Commercial property evaluation from Midlothian to Erskine- Target properties that are not up to Zoning code for code compliance where necessary.

Sections

Due to the length of the corridor breaking the corridor into sections and working on initiatives in the different sections makes the most sense as different parts of the corridor also maintain a different character. Some evaluations of the conditions in the Market Street Historic District have already been underway for an event focused on activating many of the spaces that have been vacant for years.

Market Street Historic District (Midlothian-Maple Dr.)

Market Street Park North (Maple Dr.-Erskine)

Create a North Market Street Corridor Plan

Multimodal Feasibility Study

Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) requires a traffic study in order to approve a road diet for Market Street since it is a state route. The Planning and Zoning Department is exploring options for paying for a traffic study. Boardman Township will use this study to work with ODOT when re-striping and resurfacing of Market Street occurs in order to reduce the number of travel lanes, add bike lanes, pedestrian refuge islands, and on street parking along the road. Boardman's future plans to create a Township wide Active Transportation Plan, as well as a Market Street Corridor Plan aim to bridge the communities. This feasibility study will help to expedite the rate at which we can transform our community into a people focused community as the automobile has dominated for so long.

Road Diet

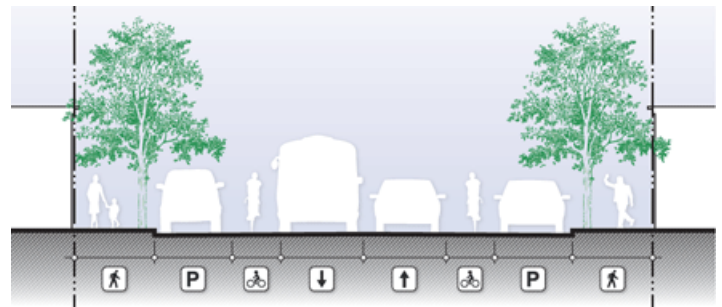
A road diet on Market Street is a great strategy to help encourage active transportation and business development. The township performing a traffic study would be necessary to accomplishing this goal since it is a state route. According to a study performed by Eastgate Regional Council of Governments between 2012-2016 this section of Market Street sees 15,510 vehicles a day. Eastgate recommends consideration of any road with 4 or more lanes that sees less than 20,000 Average Daily Traffic for a potential road diet.

Market Street Section



D'Avignon, 2017

Example of alternative road design



PACE Street Network Design

Boardman Road Diets Candidates

**Four or more lanes with under 20,000
Average Daily Traffic**

(recommended in Eastgates Road Diet Analysis)

- Glenwood between West Blvd & Devonshire
- Glenwood between Western Reserve & Forest Park
- South Ave between Western Reserve & Moyer Ave
- Market SR 7 between Middletown Rd & SR 170 Midlothian

(Eastgate Regional Council of Governments)

MARKET STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

PARTNER WITH CITY OF YOUNGSTOWN
OR YOUNGSTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION SINCE
MARKETS EAST SIDE IS IN YOUNGSTOWN



- TRAFFIC STUDY
- ROAD DIET



PEOPLE ALREADY USE FOR RUNNING & DOG WALKING



BOARDMAN TOWNSHIP PLANNING DOCUMENT

Strategic Planning Initiatives

Create A Comprehensive Plan to support Zoning Code Update

Will assess overall conditions of the Township and set priorities for future planning activities based on community feedback. Initial data collection and analysis have already begun in anticipation for community meetings beginning in early 2018.

General Plan outline as follows:

- **Existing Conditions**—neighborhood/corridor conditions
- **Community Input**—meetings, surveys, etc.
- **Future Planning Activities**– Based on community feedback and Township goals come up with different planning activities and events to build a stronger community.

Create Neighborhood Plans

Smaller more targeted plans such as neighborhood scale plans and corridor plans are a way to implement the goals and priorities of the Comprehensive Plan. Staff will determine which neighborhoods planning efforts could be most impactful based on trends and findings from the Comprehensive Plan.

The Township will work with neighborhoods that have active neighborhood groups to help build capacity as far as outreach to community members and leveraging skillsets of residents. Involving residents from the beginning of the planning efforts and engaging them about specific issues that are effecting their neighborhoods and working with them to resolve these issues.

The city of Youngstown has seen great success with their Neighborhood Action Plans and the formation of Neighborhood Action teams that work on addressing issues in their specific neighborhood. The Township should consider adopting a similar approach to small scale neighborhood planning activities.

Strategic Planning Initiatives

Community Engagement

Comprehensive Plan & Zoning Code Input Meetings

Identify existing Neighborhood Groups and look for potential formation of new groups

Better Block/Open Streets- Create events to test ideas for redesigning the public realm, get community feedback, and create spaces for neighbors to interact with one another.

Bike Rides/Walks- Create community building exercises around active transportation to build up support for sidewalk and bike infrastructure.

Provide Educational opportunities to engage and empower residents- Community trainings on how to use new code enforcement software system. Host Tree Steward Trainings in Mahoning County to educate citizens on the benefits of trees and how to take care of them.



Akron, Ohio Better Block event

Better Block focuses on reinvigorating older commercial areas by creating a people friendly environment



Cleveland, Ohio Slow Roll Event Flyer

Slow Roll is an event where people get together to go on a slow bicycle ride through a part of the city and get to know each other

Public Outreach

Social Media Presence- In order to get out information to those active on social media (Instagram)

Mailers/Postcards- To notify residents of any major changes updates and events happening in the community.

Website Update- Make the website more user friendly by adding more applications that can be accessed by the public, link to citizen access to new code enforcement software.

FAQ Page- That provides information to residents about commonly asked questions

Active Transportation Plan

Context:

Boardman Township is an inner-ring suburb of the city of Youngstown with many diverse neighborhood and retail types. Initial early development adjacent to Youngstown contains traditional neighborhoods with smaller lots, historic homes and neighborhood scale retail. Later development within the last sixty years was largely auto-centric and suburban in nature with little thought for bicycle or pedestrian accommodations.

Overhill facing East

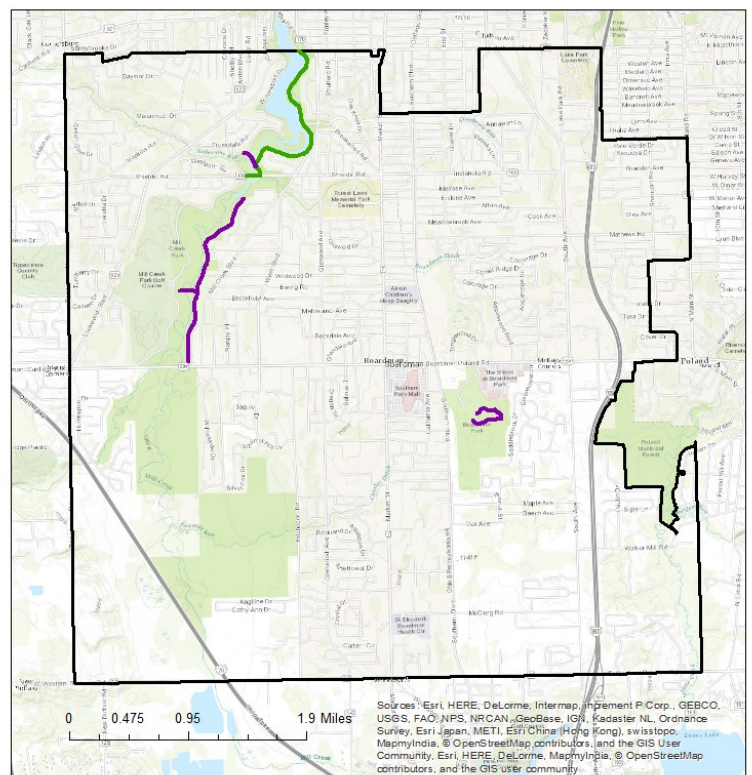


D'Avignon, 2017

Create a bicycle network plan for Boardman

Focus on some easily convertible streets such as Overhill that already have space and are less heavily trafficked and continue to build a network throughout the Township. Work with Eastgate Regional Council of Governments and the Ohio Department of Transportation to incorporate road diets where possible to add bicycle infrastructure.

Bike Paths in Boardman Township



— Bike Paths
— Bike Lanes
□ Boardman



Created by: Tricia D'Avignon
Source: Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, 2017

Active Transportation Plan

Connect existing park trails to neighborhoods and retail areas

Potential easy ideas are to turn Southern Boulevards existing rail line into a multi-use path- partner with City of Youngstown and other municipalities that rail line runs through for a connected network. Also make any obvious connections to the Park from the neighborhoods or through neighborhood streets.

Create Complete Streets plan

Identify areas that could easily be converted into complete streets to increase accessibility. Figure out where sidewalks, crosswalks, and pedestrian amenities could be most impactful in the community.

Create a School Travel Plan

In order to pursue Safe Routes to School Funding for sidewalks, crosswalks, etc. around elementary schools to help fill in any existing sidewalk gaps. A School Travel Plan is required to apply for funding.

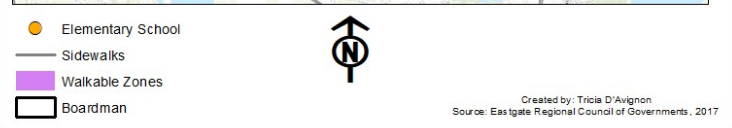
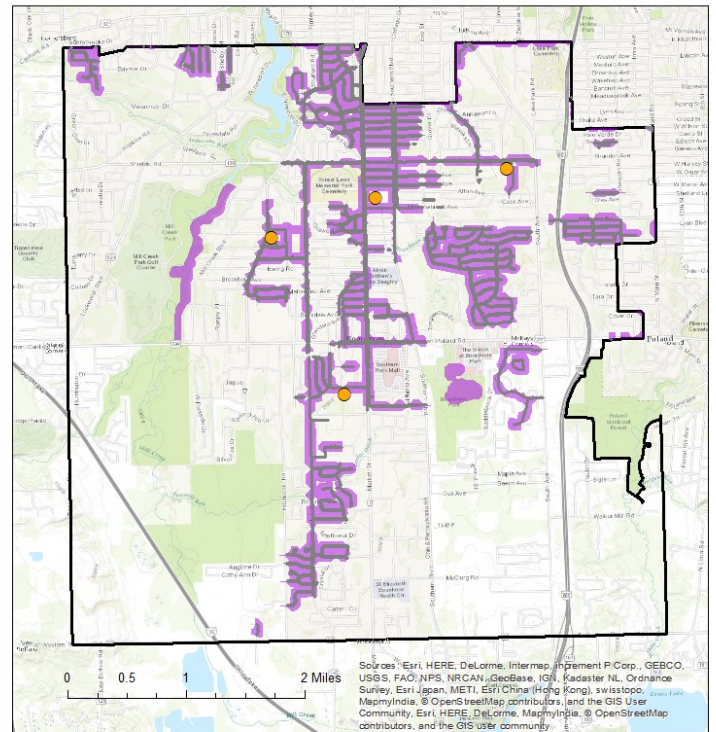
Form a partnership with the school board to help make this happen. School will have to help distribute parent surveys in order to collect data needed for a comprehensive School Travel Plan.

What are complete streets?

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. **Complete Streets** make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work.

-Smart Growth America

Walkable Areas in Boardman Township



Boardman Land Bank

The Boardman Township Land Reutilization Program was established on May 29, 2012 in an effort to control how vacant property is returned to the tax duplicate within Boardman Township and to ensure that the property is purchased by local citizens.

The Township Zoning Department and Mahoning County Prosecutor help to determine which properties should be filed for tax foreclosure. If the property is not sold after two Sheriff Sales, the land bank will seek to obtain the property. Consideration will be used to determine where demolition funding is available before the property is transferred to the land bank.

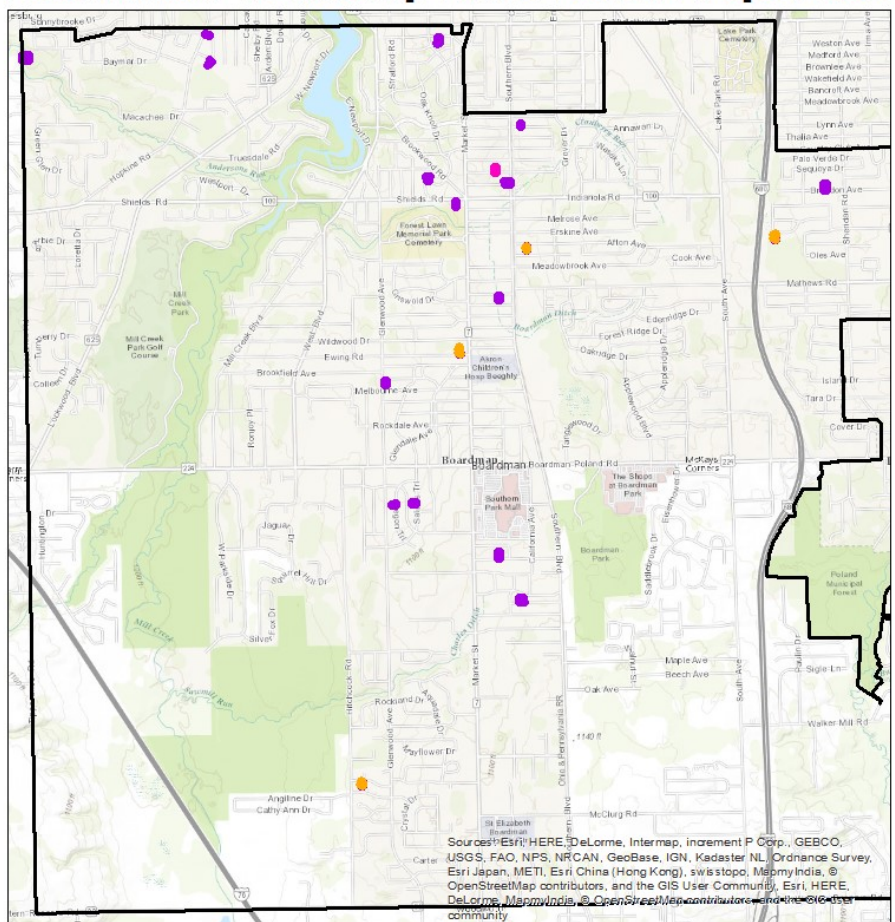
BOARDMAN TOWNSHIP LAND BANK EXPENSES AND INCOME

Attached are simple balance sheets showing income and expenses for the land bank in year 2016 and 2017. As you can see from the attached, the land bank expenses are far more than the land bank income. The net loss for 2016 is \$11,983.00 and for 2017 is \$19,453.84. The 2017 and 2018 Land Bank Plan are the same and, if implemented, will reduce the cost of maintaining the land bank properties.

2018 LAND BANK PLAN

- Use township road department part time employees to mow and maintain land bank properties
- Aggressively market land bank properties to adjacent property owners through mailing and personal contacts
- Continue to pursue CDBG funding for demolition
- Work with Mahoning County Land Bank to seek funding for demolition services
- Transfer ownership of properties which have riparian areas and/or flood zones to Boardman Park
- Make an effort to accept only vacant parcels

Boardman Township Land Bank Properties



- Boardman
- Sold 2017 (4)
- Sold 2016 (1)
- Landbank Owned (18)



0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles

Created by: Tricia D'Avignon
Source: Boardman Township, 2017

Grant Funding Opportunities

Introduction

Pursuing grant funding allows for the Township to accomplish more projects or projects that might otherwise not take place. Many grants require a match of in-kind or monetary means, but allow the Township to leverage additional funds for projects and events.

PeopleforBikes- General grant

Potential funding for bike infrastructure such as bike racks, trails, bike repair facilities, etc.

Amount Requested \$10,000; LOI submitted; not invited for full proposal submission

National Endowment for the Arts—Our Town

Funds Planning for the Arts and Art Project Implementation

Amount Requested \$25,000 Submitted; Response to funding request April 2018; 100% match

Western Reserve Health Foundation- Community Health Grants Program

Health Improvement Plan Priorities include: Healthy Eating/Active Living, Infant Mortality and Birth Outcome Inequality, Chronic Disease, Substance Abuse Disorders - Targeted for Multimodal Feasibility Study for Market Street to increase active modes of transportation.

Amount Requested \$5,000; LOI Submitted; Invited to submit full proposal due Oct.27th 2017; 100% match

America Walks

Amount Requested \$1,500; Due Nov.10th 2017

Eastgate Regional Council of Governments—Moving Communities Forward

For planning—targeting for use for Market Street Corridor Planning and/or Active Transportation Plan

Community Foundation of Mahoning Valley- General Grant, cycle 3 times a year

Tree Steward Training, Market Street Better Block Event

Safe Routes to School

Can be used to pedestrian improvements such as crosswalks, signs/signals, curb ramps, sidewalks, and bike racks around schools to improve conditions for children to walk to school. This ties into the active transportation plan.

Board Development

Length of Terms

Qualifications/Background

Currently there is no established set of background or skills that Board members are required to have in order to be appointed to Board positions. The Zoning Department would like to see a set of requirements put in place for the various board positions. Currently board members serve a term of 1-5 years, but professional experience working in a field related to the board is not a requirement. Current members would fulfill terms regardless of whether they meet the qualifications, but may not be reappointed after completion of term.

The Zoning Department recommends a initial 1 year appointment to Boards before serving any full terms. This is to determine Board members commitment to the position. It is also recommended that board members attend at least one educational session, conference, or webinar per year related to planning and zoning in order to stay up-to-date on current trends, to be paid for by the Township.

Board of Zoning Appeals

The Board of Appeals has jurisdiction over all use and area variances, including requests for conditional use permits and appeals challenging a decision or determination of the Zoning Inspector.

All decisions of the Board of Appeals are final within Boardman Township. A citizen who is aggrieved with the Board's decision has 30 days from the date of decision to file an appeal with the Mahoning County Common Pleas Court.

A legal notice is published at least 10 days before the hearing of the Board of Appeals. All hearings are open to the public.

The Board consists of five members and two alternate members appointed by the Boardman Township Trustees. The five members serve **five-year terms** and the alternates serve two-year terms.

Current Members

John Shultz, Chairman—January 1, 2018

Keith Boone, Vice Chairman—January 1, 2020

Patricia Brozik—December 31, 2021

Marilyn Scheetz—January 1, 2018

Raymond Cmil—January 1, 2018

Kenneth Tirpack (alternate) - December 31, 2021

The board members can serve unlimited terms if they are reappointed

Site Plan Review

The Site Plan Review Committee consists of five members appointed by the Board of Trustees. There is one three-year term, two two-year terms, and two one-year terms. The Site Plan Review Committee forwards recommendations to the Board of Appeals regarding reductions and required green space and plant material as stipulated under ARTICLE XV, Site Plan Review Ordinance.

Reference the Board of Appeals for submission requirements for variance.

Issues– Board make up

Businesses initial introduction to the Township

Submission requirements need to be more clear and easily digestible

Some Standards need work

Example: uniform landscape setback, shouldn't be based on lot depth

Tree Requirements need adjustment

If able to meet required tree counts create alternative system with in-lieu of fees to use for planting trees elsewhere in the Township.

Create Recommended Tree Planting Guide

To assist the site plan review board in recommending types of trees and shrubs for development and redevelopment projects that go through the site plan review. This will also assist

Zoning Commission

The Boardman Zoning Commission is a recommending body consisting of five members appointed to **five-year terms** by the Boardman Township Trustees.

The Zoning Commission acts upon recommendations of the Mahoning County Planning Commission and forwards recommendations to the Board of Trustees regarding text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance and rezone requests from property owners. Once a recommendation is forwarded to the Trustees, it can only be modified or overturned by unanimous vote of the Board.

A legal notice is published at least 10 days before the hearing of the Zoning Commission. All hearings are open to the public.

- Currently meet as needed for Re-zonings (Zone changes)
- Prioritize re-zonings of R-2 to R-1 for denser single family areas

Current Members

Michael Fagan, Chairman—November 10, 2017

Margret Wellington—November 15, 2017

Edwin Beach—December 31, 2019

Mark Delisio—December 31, 2018

The board members can serve unlimited terms if they are reappointed

Current Members

Peter Lymber, Chairman—January 31, 2019

Frank Centofanti , Vice Chairman— January 1, 2021

John Burgan—January 1, 2018

Joseph Ohr—December 31, 2021

Nancy Terlesky—January 1, 2020

The board members can serve unlimited terms if they are reappointed

Staffing

Current staffing levels

Currently the Zoning Department has 5 staff members

Secretary, Zoning Officer, Property Maintenance Manager, Assistant Director, Director

Reorganization

Staff Evaluations

Create Staff Evaluation criteria

Biannually review staff member performance in order to create open communication about processes that may or may not be working. This allows us to continually improve systems that we use and provide services to residents as efficiently as possible.

Create an Intern Position to assist with Summer work load pick up and special projects

Potential creation of additional position for Rental Registration & Inspections

Planning Item	Sep-17	Oct-17	Nov-17	Dec-17	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18
Move to Digital Permitting System	Select Software Company				Software						
Zoning Code Re-write RFP	Post RFP	Review Applications	Interview	Final Decision							
Zoning Code Re-write								Consultant Start	Start Public meetings		
Community Engagement					First Comprehensive Plan community meeting				Zoning meetings		
Comprehensive Plan		Data Collection Begins									
North Market Street Plan		Data Collection Begins									
Neighborhood Plans		Data Collection Begins									
Grants	Continuously	Our Town & WRHF	America Walks		Eastgate						
Start	On-going	End									