

FINAL REPORT

City of Cheviot

ULI Cincinnati Technical Assistance Panel

TAP – November 8, 2019

Report Presented– February 12, 2020



Photo by Jeff Raser



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Cheviot is well positioned to revitalize its business district in a way that is distinctively Cheviot. With strategic choices in streetscaping, business district investment, development, and relationship-building, Cheviot can build upon the community that is already perceived by its residents as a family-oriented place to live. Emphasizing that family-friendly brand/personality is a way to capture an existing market and expand upon it.

Cheviot is an older suburban community located in Hamilton County. Cheviot became a Village on July 19, 1901 and became a City on January 1, 1932. The community is often recognized by locals as “The Heart of The West Side”. The city is about seven miles northwest of downtown Cincinnati and has a total of 1.17 square miles of land. The primarily residential community, with an older core of retail and office space, has an estimated population of 8,280. The city is within the Cincinnati Public School District.

Cheviot is a community of modest homes that is suffering the fate of many “First Ring Suburbs” in Ohio with loss of population and earnings tax revenues, decreased property tax values and related taxes, increasing city expenses, and declining rates of home ownership. During the long-range planning process begun in 2007, Cheviot identified home ownership as a key goal and initiatives continue today. Unfortunately, the housing recession hit in 2009, which negatively affected Cheviot both in homeownership rates and an increase in poverty from 7.5% to >20% over the past 10 years. Approximately 49% of housing units are owner-occupied and 51% are rental units. Most recently, the Urban Land Institute Cincinnati Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) was asked to consider key questions related to the vitality of its business district - the key driver of its overall health as a community.

The overarching aim will be to turn the business district into a weekday destination, with consideration to families and residents of Cheviot and other nearby west-side neighborhoods as the primary market. The Cincinnati Public Cheviot School and Cincinnati Gifted Academy West offers an essential connection point and portal into the market, as do already-successful events like the Harvest Home Fair and Parade.

Cheviot should aim to bring people into the business district and to keep them there for multiple stops per trip by focusing its investment area into one prominent block, ideally one of the main intersections along Harrison Avenue (either Glenmore or North Bend). For new businesses, the city should look to “grow their own,” seeking out residents and/or current business owners who are capable of becoming stakeholders in the commercial corridor. These businesses will, by nature of their ownership, be uniquely Cheviot—and bring neighborhood buy-in.

A summary of the six key strategies determined by the TAP are:

Strategy 1: Define Your Brand

The goal is not to be “hip and trendy”—what is trendy is only trendy until it’s not. The goal is to be Cheviot, just a refreshed version of Cheviot. Branding can become part of a community redevelopment strategy, economic development process or other such visioning process. Identify the unique authentic character of Cheviot, for example its recognition as, “The Heart of the West Side”, through community engagement, and develop a clear, concise vision for the community that will raise its profile.

Strategy 2: Forge a Family-Focused Community

Cheviot is already a family-focused community. It’s in the city’s DNA. New homebuyers in Cheviot are likely to be young families. When making choices for the business district, Cheviot should keep this target population in mind—and the growth opportunities they offer.

Strategy 3: Grow Your Own

Cheviot’s best bet is to engage residents and/or current business owners to identify new proprietors. Bring in those with demonstrable success and those with ties to community. Owners will be neighbors and stakeholders and authentically Cheviot.

Strategy 4: Invest, Develop, Gain Site Control

Redevelopment will not be successful if it is scattershot. There must be a clear, unmistakable focus point. It should be an intersection or block that will become synonymous with Cheviot. In necessary cases, the city should pursue site control to manage these essential areas. Key intersections in the business district and the former Frank’s Nursery site should be a part of a strategic planning process for investment and development. Cheviot can work with local public/private partners to gain site control of strategic sites to protect and develop the agreed plan.

Strategy 5: Activate Harrison Avenue

Harrison Avenue is Cheviot’s front door, and as such, it needs beautification efforts and investment. There is a *feeling* of vacancy on Harrison Avenue that leads those passing through to believe the business district is in more dire shape than it is. This work can be broken down into:

- Lively, Visible Signage
- Façade Improvement
- Street Trees and Greenspace
- Relationship Building

Strategy 6: Build on Already Available Assets

Cheviot has a building inventory and layout/environment that other neighborhoods would have to spend years building to approach the same level. The Cheviot School (preschool–grade 6) which also houses the Cincinnati Gifted Academy West (grades 3-6) is an essential asset for Cheviot, made more so with its recent successes and positioning for growth. Likewise, St. Martin School and commercial places that carry history and community pride, offer opportunity.

Detail on all of these strategies, as well as the current conditions and potential funding mechanisms as discussed by the Urban Land Institute Cincinnati Technical Assistance Panel on November 8, 2019 can be found in the following report.

SECTION ONE: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL

On Friday, November 8, 2019, Urban Land Institute Cincinnati assembled a Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) to address redevelopment and revitalization questions facing the City of Cheviot. After presentations and deliberation, the Panel of local real estate industry experts provided the city with strategies to move forward. See **Appendix C** to learn more about the ULI Technical Assistance Panel.

The Panel included:

- Jeff McElravy, Finance Director, Colerain Township
- Kathleen Norris, Principal and Managing Director, Urban Fast Forward
- Jason Chamlee, Developer, The Model Group and President, Pleasant Ridge Development Corporation
- Mike St. John, President and CEO, Cincinnati Savings and Loan
- Liz Blume, Executive Director, Community Building Institute
- Jeff Raser, Owner, CUDA Studio
- Mike Smith, Vice President of Commercial Development, The Port
- Eric Haberthier, Executive Director, The Rhine Group
- Eileen Borgmann, Owner, Fogarty's and Dean's Hops and Vines
- Joe Huber, Chief Lending Officer/Chief Operating Officer, Cincinnati Development Fund
- Tom Carroll, Village Manager, Village of Silverton
- Bob Carbon, Project Manager, New Republic Architecture
- Dean Fulmer, President, Cheviot Westwood Community Association
- Jim Zentmeyer, Vice President, Civil and Environmental Consultants

ULI Cincinnati

- Alyssa Konermann, TAP Writer, ULI Cincinnati
- Lydia Jacobs-Horton, Executive Director, ULI Cincinnati
- Kim Fantaci, District Council Coordinator, ULI Cincinnati

City of Cheviot and Guests

- Caroline Statkus, Economic Development Director, City of Cheviot
- Sam Keller, Mayor, City of Cheviot
- Tom Braun, Safety Service Director, City of Cheviot
- Kathleen Zech, At-Large, Council Member, City of Cheviot
- Sarah Kastner, Administrative Assistant/Recreation Commissioner, City of Cheviot

- Adam Goetzman, Assistant Administrator/Director of Planning & Development, Green Township
- Greg Kissel, Member of Westwood Historical Society
- Bonnie Perino, Owner, Angel's Touch Nursing Care

Hamilton County

- Joy Pierson, Community Development Administrator, Hamilton County Planning + Development
- Dave Spatholt, Program Manager, Hamilton County Planning + Development
- Steve Johns, Planning Services Administrator, Hamilton County Planning + Development

Mayor Samuel Keller and Economic Development Director Caroline Statkus welcomed the Panel and provided an overview of Cheviot—past, present, and their goals for the future, including taking the Panel on an informational walking tour along Harrison Avenue. The city's primary aim is to (re)develop a thriving business district, and the TAP came into the conversation with a set of working questions:

- How should Cheviot marshal the resources and expertise to position its business district to thrive for the next 20 years?
- What can be done today? In the next five years? In the next 10–15 years?
- Should the mix of uses in the district change?
- Should the district primarily serve local residents, or should it aspire to draw visitors from throughout the region?
- Can the district be oriented toward both pedestrians and vehicles, or must the city choose?

TAP leader Jeff McElravy, broke the discussion down into three primary segments with the initial questions of:

1. Defining the Market

Who should the district serve? What is the market? How can the district compete with the big boxes? What is missing? Who is missing? What types of tenants should the community recruit into the district? Are non-traditional tenancies, such as pop-up shops, appealing? How is this district different from the rest of the Harrison commercial corridor? How does housing fit into this?

2. Placemaking and Programming

What can we do beyond the Westside Market and Harvest Home Fair and Parade?

3. Redefining the Space

Should the district be pedestrian or auto-oriented? Can it be both? What physical improvements can the City/ODOT make? Should the City actively seek to acquire properties? Are there properties with environmental issues? What about the gateways? How should the challenges with absentee landlords/owners be addressed? What physical improvements can other stakeholders make? Again, what about the gateways?

From here, the Panel considered sequencing, funding sources, and top priorities for Cheviot to accomplish the selected major strategies. The TAP focused its attention to the key half-mile stretch of Harrison Avenue running along the traditional business district, where there is a zoning overlay district (green portion on the map on the following page).



SECTION TWO: CURRENT CONDITIONS AND PRIMARY GOALS

The City of Cheviot occupies 1.2 square miles on the west side of Greater Cincinnati. It is situated adjacent to the Westwood neighborhood of Cincinnati and Green Township. Westwood's placement makes it a gateway to Cheviot; Cheviot acts as a gateway to Green Township. Cheviot can and should consider changes in those communities (and how it can capitalize on them) as it moves forward in revitalization.

Demographics

Sources: U.S. Census; U.S. Census ACS 5-year Estimates – 2014-2018

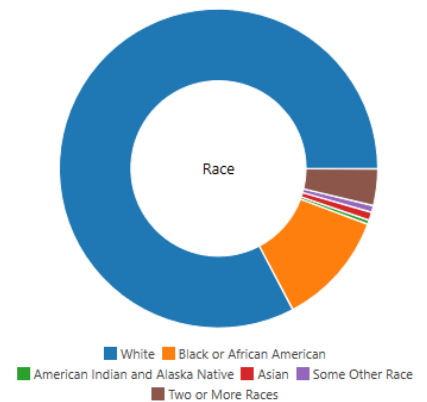
<http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/cheviot-oh-population/>

Estimated Total Population

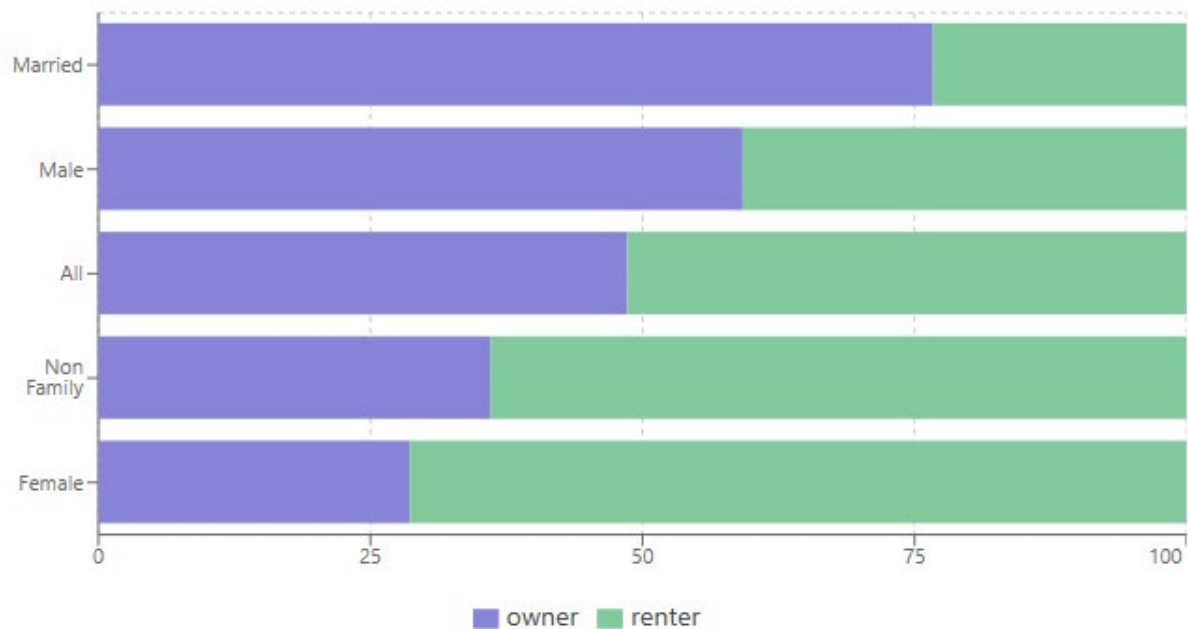
8,280 people

Population by Race

Race	Population	Percentage
White	7,001	84.17%
Black or African American	955	11.48%
American Indian and Alaska Native	6	0.07%
Asian	41	0.49%
Some Other Race	29	0.35%
Two or More Races	286	3.44%



Renter vs Owner Occupied by Household Type

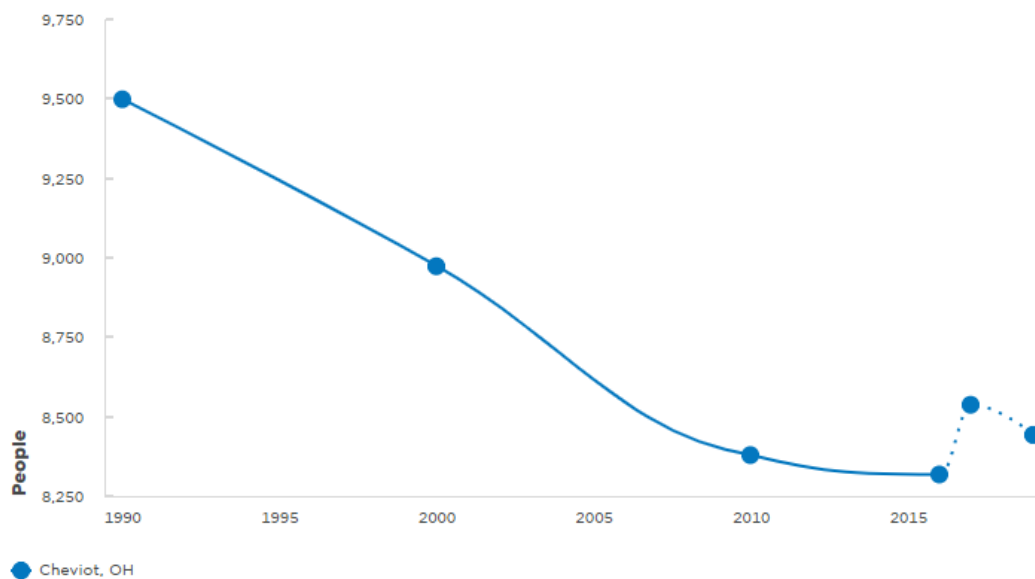


Demographics - continued

Sources: Hamilton County Planning + Development, mySidewalk Platform

<https://reports.mysidewalk.com/965675b7b6>

Total Population Change



Sources: US Census 1990, 2000, 2010; US Census 2000; US Census 2010; US Census ACS 5-year

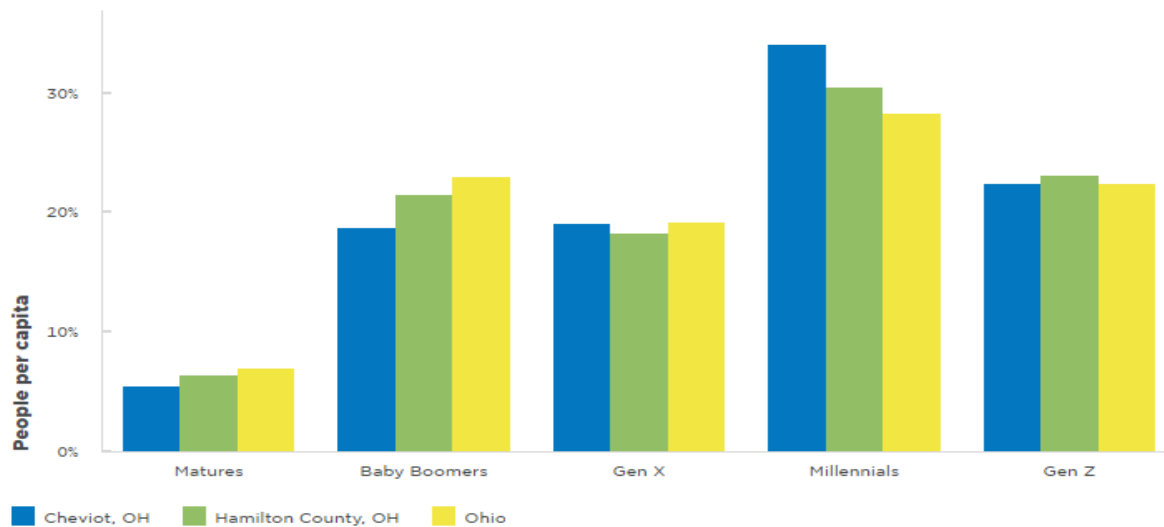
Median Age

35 years (Cheviot)

36.8 years (Hamilton County)

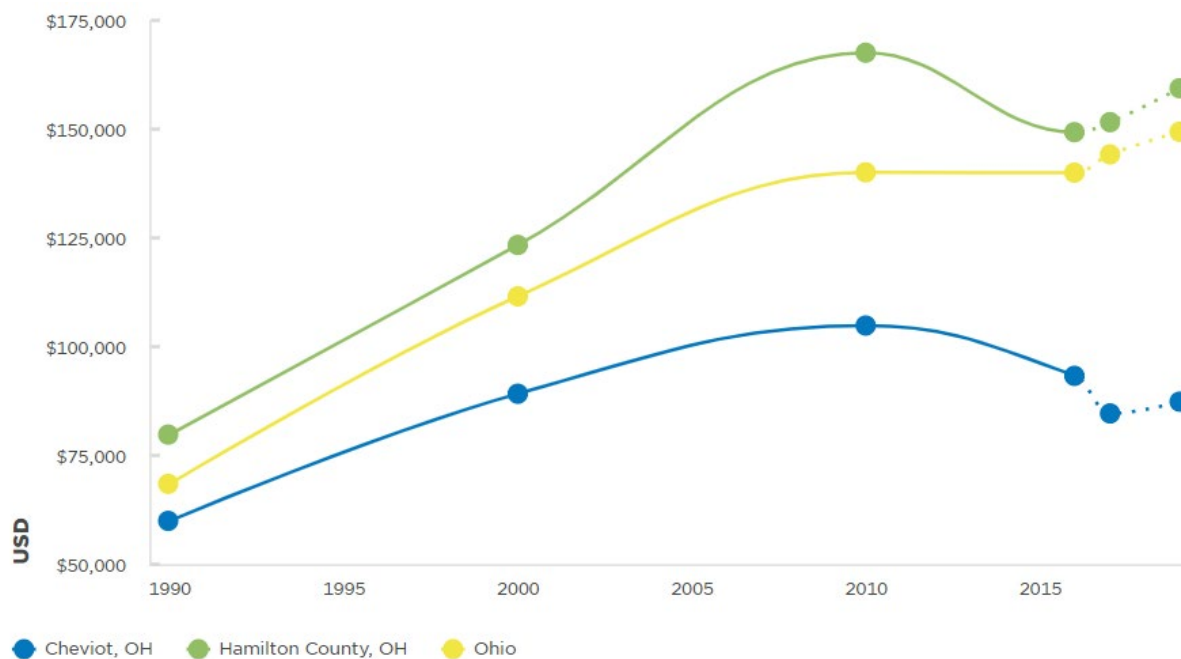
39.3 years (Ohio)

Generations

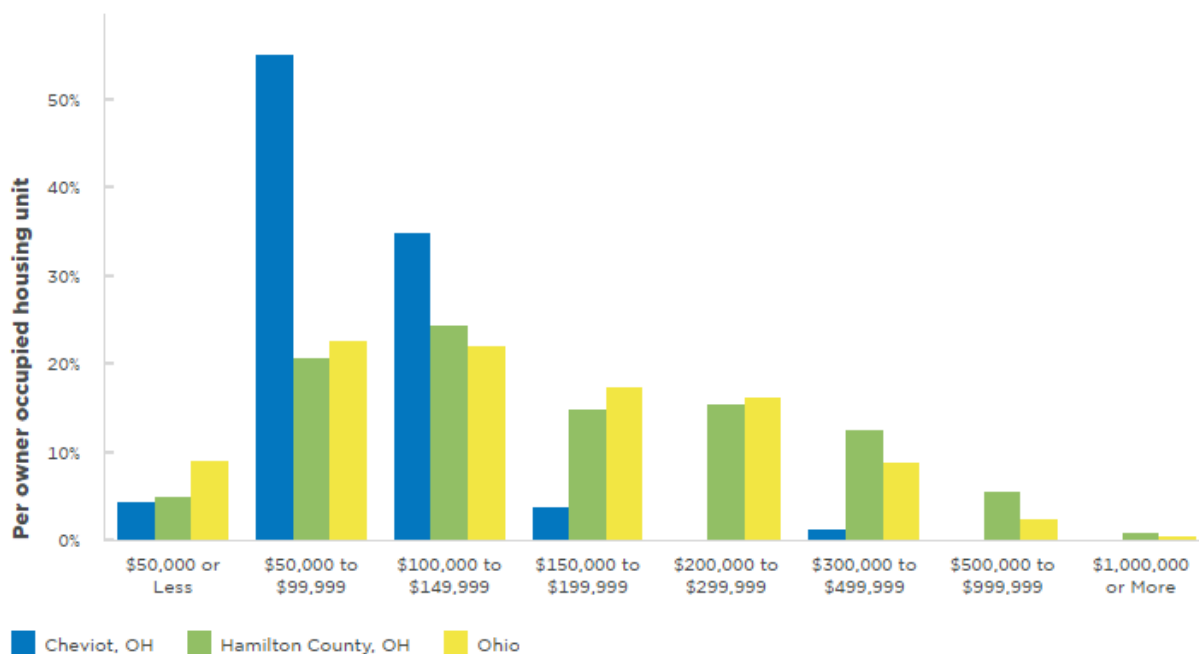


Sources: US Census ACS 5-year

Median Home Values



Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units



Sources: US Census ACS 5-year

On an anecdotal front, the general consensus of residents is that Cheviot is about family and a sense of community. Cheviot should consider the general loyalty of west side residents and its housing stock as it develops its plans.

Business District

Harrison Avenue is the primary artery through Cheviot and was once home to a thriving commercial district. However, economic activity has dwindled in the area, exacerbated by the loss of the IGA (in 2009) and Cappels (in 2019), which were both major business and social anchors. There is also a vacant lot at the former Frank's Nursery, and at the time of the TAP there was no plan for the plot. As a result, Harrison Avenue in Cheviot today is experiencing commercial vacancy and a *feeling* of emptiness even where there are open businesses. The majority of business activity comes from locally-owned bars, family-owned restaurants, as well as a busy US post office, Kroner's Dry Cleaners, several mechanics and auto parts stores and Wood's hardware.

Two main intersections define the business district: Glenmore Avenue and Harrison Avenue, and North Bend Road and Harrison Avenue. At present, neither entry point (particularly when entering from North Bend) provides a satisfactory gateway to the

neighborhood/business district. Throughout the entire strip, signage is lacking, making it difficult for residents and visitors—particularly those in cars—to notice or find businesses.

Most of the dining/entertainment options in the business district are weekend/evening destinations. There is not a coffee shop to function as a morning/afternoon community gathering space, which hinders the area's ability to draw or retain daytime visitors such as parents of students at the neighborhood schools. The district does not have strong anchors, particularly at its essential intersections.

Despite current vacancies and challenges, Cheviot already possesses many desirable traits that other neighborhoods would have to work for years to develop, including its housing stock, walkability, commercial buildings and the layout of its business district. As such, Cheviot has significant assets to build upon.

In 2019, Cheviot passed a zoning overlay district for the business district that specifies a maximum setback from the street, appropriate building materials, and requires 50-percent of a first-floor façade to be windows. Additionally, the city recently eliminated parking requirements and developed allowances for outdoor/sidewalk restaurant seating.

Currently there is no business organization, chamber of commerce or Community Development Corporation (CDC) in Cheviot; however, the Cheviot Westwood Kiwanis Club is active and manages the Harvest Home Fair and Parade. Businesses and other destinations are not listed on the city website, and there is a general lacking of online, media, and promotional presence by many older business owners. Likewise, little is pushed out on social media, and increasingly small turnouts at events like pub crawls suggest this is a problem.

Events

Cheviot actively works on festivals and cultural events, such the family day picnic and the Harvest Home Fair and Parade. Attendance at the Harvest Home Fair ranges from 15,000-25,000. The park is also rented for church festivals and family reunions for weekends throughout the spring, summer and fall.

In 2018, the city partnered with a new nonprofit to start the West Side Market - The WestSide Market is a small business pop-up market that takes place monthly from June to September as well as a holiday market in November in Downtown Cheviot. Showcasing over 100 local vendors, food trucks and offers family fun activities that brings thousands of visitors to the City. The West Side Market have been successful for drawing visitors to and activating the business district.

Safety

Crime rates in Cheviot are low. Still despite its safety, there is, among some, an impression that Cheviot (and Westwood) are not safe. Much of this perception has to do with the vacancy and opacity in the business district. The speed of traffic moving on Harrison Avenue and absence of pedestrian-friendly elements also exacerbates a feeling of unsafety. The Harrison Avenue Safety Survey completed in May 2019 should be reviewed once published by ODOT, particularly with current and upcoming traffic calming (speed limit reductions and bump-outs) occurring in the Westwood Business District.

Education

The neighborhood Cincinnati Public School (CPS), Cheviot Elementary School, has drastically improved in recent years, adding a gifted academy which serves the west side of Cincinnati. The principal is energetic and widely respected, and the school is becoming increasingly sought after. At the time of the Panel the school was nearly at capacity and looking to expand.

At present, the school community, including St. Martin School, has not been actively engaged by the city about what they are looking for or would want to see in Cheviot. These institutions and population hold much promise for the changes Cheviot seeks. While the city doesn't currently have data on who is sending their children outside of Cheviot for education, who is staying, and who is coming in, CPS should be able to help provide this information.

Churches

Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist churches are community anchors – they draw families back to Cheviot who moved outside the city. Cheviot needs more restaurants and coffee shops with brunch - places to keep parishioners on weekends – just as they need these establishments to keep parents in Cheviot on weekdays. Westwood has brunch offered at Muse Café and will have two new restaurants with brunch by June 2020 (Ivory House and Nation Bar & Restaurant). The church-going population have the potential of keeping eateries busy in Cheviot on weekends.

Funding

Cheviot offers 50-percent commercial and 100-percent residential Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) property tax incentives. At the time of the TAP, no one had used the residential CRA.

As a city entity, Cheviot has been effective in successfully applying for a variety of grants, receiving \$3.5 million in grant money over the past eight years that has been used for a splash park, a fitness trail, a playground, new trash canisters, a park, and street improvements and streetscaping.

The city's annual budget is \$5 million in general operating, and \$4 million on the capital side. The city has six joint economic development districts (JEDDs) with Green Township and one JEDD with Colerain Township that provides roughly \$160,000–200,000 each year in earnings tax for the city's general operating fund.

There is no specific line item for marketing in the city's budget, but there is internal support for marketing efforts.

Housing

Cheviot has enviable housing stock, particularly for young families. According to Zillow.com, today's median home value in Cheviot is \$113,200, whereas nearby Green Township's median home value is \$159,400.

There is a good stock of mixed-use properties along the commercial corridor, opening the possibility for nice, renovated apartments without building new complexes or changing the feeling (or perceived density) of the area. Cheviot would benefit from a masterplan of the former Frank's Nursery site. A mixed-use, senior development similar to College Hill's – Marlowe court would allow residents to age in place. <https://chcurc.com/marlowe-court/>

See Appendix A for the City of Cheviot, Ohio Residential Community Reinvestment Area Housing Survey 2016.

Infrastructure

Two major infrastructure projects—the Western Hills Viaduct and Lick Run Greenway—are in-process and will be very positive for Cheviot and the entire west side when they are completed. The Viaduct will help west side neighborhoods stay connected to downtown Cincinnati, and the Lick Run project through the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) will drastically change the Queen City Avenue gateway to the west side. Both Cheviot and Westwood should work with the North Fairmount and South Fairmount communities to improve the Harrison Avenue and Queen City Avenues corridors leading to the west side.

Goals

Cheviot's primary goal is to revitalize its business district and expand its reach, population retention/growth, and the overall economic and civic health of the community. Such outcomes have been substantiated in other communities, and transformation of the business district will also spur investment in housing. Connecting the business district to the housing stock will bring in young families and encourage them to stay.

Cheviot wants to determine the personality/brand of the city, consider how its business district fits into adjacent commercial corridors, and make the city a destination, particularly for nearby families, throughout the week.

The city leadership is focused, energetic, and eager to move forward.

SECTION THREE: TAP RECOMMENDATIONS

The TAP resolutions from its discussion about Cheviot can be distilled to four primary queries:

- What can we do from a physical standpoint to make these changes happen?
- In what order do we approach them?
- What falls on the public side and what on the private side?
- How do we pay for it?

In its analysis of Cheviot's goals and in consideration of the city's existing conditions, the panelists collectively agreed upon the following six essential strategies for Cheviot to pursue to kickstart its revitalization. (Note: these strategies intersect and support each other and should be pursued simultaneously. Neighborhood redevelopment is not linear, it is opportunity driven, and Cheviot should not let obstacles in one area hold them back from moving forward in others. And it *does* build: the homeowner becomes a business owner, a business owner invests in a second space, the person renting a renovated apartment becomes a homeowner, on and on, etc.)

Strategy 1: Define Your Brand

The goal is not to be “hip and trendy”—what is trendy is only trendy until it's not. The goal is to *be Cheviot*, just a refreshed version of Cheviot. The city has a lot going for it already, it just needs “to take the plastic covers off the couch and repaint the front door” to showcase what exists. The city will be more successful if its growth pursuits keep in mind Cheviot's authentic self: It does not, and should not, look like somewhere else. It should look and feel like Cheviot, but a more active, energized version than the present case. If it is not uniquely Cheviot, success will not be sustainable.

Branding is an opportunity to succinctly tell a story through properly building an identity. Branding can become part of a community redevelopment strategy, economic development process or other such visioning process. Identify the unique authentic character of the Village through community engagement. It is important to engage the public in this process to delve deep into their sense of place and hope for the future of the community where they live, work and play. Develop a clear, concise vision for the community that will raise its profile. Consider consulting with a branding expert to facilitate this process.

So, decide: Who is Cheviot? If the answer remains, as it was during the TAP, that Cheviot is about family and wants to appeal to more families, it should keep that personality in mind as it makes appeals in person and on social media. Relatedly, social media does not mean

trendy: it means getting information out there. A branding campaign should be made clear to Cheviot businesses and organizations, as well as the need for them to consistently communicate with the public.

This district should serve residents in and slightly beyond Cheviot, but it should not strive to be a regional destination. It does not matter if people are not driving over from the east side: *they are not the market*. Look to Cheviot, Green Township, Westwood, Bridgetown, White Oak, Delhi, Montford Heights—a zone of people who are familiar and comfortable with the area. This is Cheviot's captive, loyal west side market, and this is the population the city and its business should work to attract. Those who attend Harvest Home *are your market*. It's a matter of getting them to come to Cheviot once per week, rather than once per year.

Once Cheviot has a strong business district, others will over time notice and start coming. Cheviot must build an active business district from those nearby, with improvements to lighting, signage, gateways, and façades to draw people in. Use the resulting brand statements or visualizations consistently at gateways, on business and public web sites, and through marketing campaigns.

Strategy 2: Forge a Family-Focused Community

Cheviot is already a family-focused community. It's in the city's DNA, and this DNA should not be changed. The city should use and expand upon this identity in its redevelopment.

New homebuyers in Cheviot are likely to be young families. When making choices for the business district, Cheviot should keep this target population in mind—and the growth opportunities they offer. For example: Cheviot has many family focused destinations; gym, ballet, excellent schools, etc. Local Cheviot leaders and business owners should consider what would bring or keep the parents in for one or more other stops during drop-offs. What would draw families into the city that doesn't yet exist? What synergy can be created between these destinations?

With children and young families around, pedestrian-safe streets are also very important. Harrison Avenue needs to become a street where parents would walk with a stroller or young child, whether walking them to school, the park, a restaurant, or to run errands. Street trees, pocket parks, bump outs, etc. all work to accomplish this aim.

Concrete bump-outs (as intended with the 2019 Harrison Avenue Safety Study) should be a priority for traffic calming, and attention should be paid to the entire corridor in this regard. Bump-outs will boost outdoor seating and sidewalk life—and, critically, will create street

friction to make clear that Harrison Avenue is a two-lane street with parking lanes, *not four lanes of moving traffic*.

Beyond bump-outs, speed tables/elevated crosswalks (*not speed bumps or speed humps* see examples at the end of **Appendix B**) and signalized crosswalks with pedestrian-crossing paddles should be inserted between the two main intersections. In its present state, there are not currently pedestrian connections or opportunities outside of main crossings. Speed tables should be installed in conjunction with the concrete bump-outs for financial and logistical ease.

In businesses and built environment, these choices strategically fit with the personality/brand of Cheviot.

Strategy 3: Grow Your Own

Cheviot's—and any local government's —best bet is to engage residents and/or current business owners to identify new proprietors. Bring in those with demonstrable success, and those with ties to community. This ensures that anything opening will be authentically Cheviot because its owners will be neighbors and stakeholders. They will not need to be sold on “why Cheviot,” as they already live/do business there.

This tactic has the added bonus of emphasizing the family-focused community aspect of Cheviot, in that it's the “city's family” that is making these new things happen. Word of mouth is the most effective PR/marketing, and this should happen much more naturally when the owners are also neighbors. With homegrown businesses come a homegrown market.

In order to be sustainable, Cheviot needs to be a neighborhood *and* a business district; it needs Monday through Thursday activity, not just weekend. This will protect the business district from “peaks and valleys” by allowing Cheviot itself to lift the valley, and still inviting peaks through visitors, without overly relying on a large outside draw for survival.

Neighborhood gathering places are essential to this strategy, beginning with a coffee shop, brunch or similar gathering spot.

Cheviot should look to its West Side Market vendors—already established successes—as a recruiting pool for potential business owners. The city already has this base and needs to start having conversations about moving mobile/weekend business into full-time bricks-and-mortar shops or a cooperative shop.

Find someone who is already baking or doing something out of their home and help get them into a storefront space or help a current business owner—someone already invested in Cheviot—become the owner of an additional business. For example, could a bar owner also be a coffee shop owner? Find these people and figure out what obstacles or impediments are in their way and work together to find a way forward.

Strategy 4: Invest, Develop, Gain Site Control

Redevelopment will not be successful if it is scattershot. There must be a clear, unmistakable focus point. It should be an intersection or block that will become synonymous with Cheviot—a small, defined area that when someone is visiting, they know they are *in Cheviot*. Before taking further steps in investment/development, identify the most important geographic place to target (most likely one of the business district's two key intersections and the former Frank's Nursery site) and get to work there with a strategic plan for potential site control, investment, development

It is only by thinking and investing in specific “nodes” that the city can reach a critical mass of movement and change. Success will come from people being about to bounce around in a one-block radius, particularly in early stages. People must see that there is good stuff going on, and package it together. That *only* happens if there is concentration of investment. Cheviot is fortunate to have the layout and architectural bones to make this work well without years of building.

Visibility is critical to instigate a sense of energy and forward momentum. Visibility is lighting, signage and plentiful windows, but also a *coherent critical mass of new activity, and bringing it to the “front door” of Harrison Avenue*. On this note: Be comfortable with the idea of the “10-year overnight success”—but also recognize that Cheviot is already well along that path.

The Panel recognized that, in some circumstances, it may become necessary for the City of Cheviot to publicly intervene to take control of certain properties in order to accomplish the aims set forth here. The goal of public site acquisition is to control the destiny of strategic properties—particularly at key corners—and improve available properties rather than building brand new. In such situations, entities such as The Port, HCD, Hamilton County Planning + Development and Cincinnati Development Fund (CDF) may be of assistance to the city to protect and develop against a strategic plan.

The same strategy can be applied to housing. The Port has 46 properties in the Landbank in Cheviot, and 42 of them are single family homes or duplexes. The city can take ownership of these homes, solicit bids for redevelopment and new ownership like Green Township is doing - <https://greentwp.org/download/RFQ-Woodhaven-Extension.pdf>. Hamilton County Planning + Development can help with this process.

For example, The Port provided a \$3,000 price tag and CDF provided a low interest loan for a six-unit apartment building with commercial space at Glenmore and Montana. With Hamilton County's help, this can be replicated in Cheviot.

Hamilton County P+D has both Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and HOME funds that can be used for property acquisition. Hamilton County P+D and HCDC run the Community and Economic Development Assistance Program (CEDAP) with up to \$300,000 in loans or grant for projects. HOME can be used for rental or homeownership projects.

Strategy 5: Activate Harrison Avenue

Harrison Avenue is Cheviot's front door, and as such, it needs beautification efforts and investment. There is a *feeling* of vacancy on Harrison Avenue that leads those passing through to believe the business district is in more dire shape than it is. This contributes both to a sense that nothing is happening (and thus ignoring the existing businesses), and for some, a feeling that the neighborhood is not safe. But there are not safety problems, there is a vacancy problem. Once empty storefronts are filled and the streets/sidewalks are activated, there will be a perception of *care*, and negative views about safety will change. Further, the more things can be *brought to the street*, as detailed below, the more welcoming and energized the city's "front door" will become.

There have been a number of businesses close in Cheviot over the past couple of years including Auctions by Maggie, Stone's Restaurant, City on a Hill Church, and Vitor's Restaurant. However, 10 new businesses opened in 2019 including Salon on the Bend, Ideal Furniture of Cincinnati, My Junk Your Treasure, Crown's Kitchen, Brengelman Mortgage, The Thairepy Room, Foot and Ankle Specialist, Michael Allen and Associates, Ashton Financial and Precious Little Ones.

There are also residential opportunities in the business district. There are unique apartments on the upper stories of buildings along the commercial corridor. Bringing in residents provides an immediate, captive audience for businesses. The city does not need to direct the conversation to be about density, particularly if that word stokes fear in residents: it's about bringing vacant assets back to life and putting fresh energy into the business district. It will be the Cheviot they know, but a more life-filled version. This will help the city increase population to grow earnings tax revenues.

Abundant storefront windows, improved code enforcement, cleaned up facades, things that suggest life (light, brightness, plants, etc.) are essential in accomplishing this. Businesses old and new should improve lighting, signage, and street/sidewalk presence to make themselves known and welcome in customers. These efforts will increase public attention

and feet on the sidewalks, which will in turn exponentially improve the perception and activation of the business district. See **Appendix B** as a complement to the following:

1. Lively, Visible Signage

Cheviot should prioritize a signage code that facilitates the most lively, visible signage possible. Specifically, it should be *projecting and illuminated* (exterior, focused lighting works just as successfully as interior illumination). The retail corridor hosts fast traffic, and it's essential for the signage to be readable from a car. But, as stated, traffic should be slowed down. It may be necessary to enact a sign ordinance to grandfather some in and ensure new ones fit the design intent of the business district.

While it must be tailored to Cheviot's personality, the CoSign program implemented in Northside provides a good model. In brief: Northside completed two rounds of CoSign to have new logos developed and signage created for its businesses, which included a walking street party on a Saturday afternoon. Designers and artists rebranded/gave a well-defined personality the streetscape, introducing everyone to the neighborhood's offerings—particularly to longstanding businesses that tended to fade into the background or be passed over—and creating a clear, powerful welcome. Cheviot could apply to for CDBG (up to \$40,000) mini-grant for this purpose through Hamilton County P+D.

2. Street Trees and Greenspace

Cheviot should place trees in any and all possible places. Look for places to eliminate two parking spaces and put in trees and a small street plaza (this will bring life to the streets and simultaneously help with street calming and pedestrian safety.)

Cheviot needs a civic square or "living room"-type gathering space—and it needs to be brought out to Harrison Avenue. Find an empty lot and activate it. Temporary activity brings awareness to an area and leads to permanent activity. Look for grants to do so. Or if you don't know where one can go, look for a large, unsightly, character-less building that is somewhat centrally located (ideally between Glenmore and North Bend) and knock it down to create central, civic greenspace. Consider adding trees in the public parking lot where West Side Market is held.

Look for one or more places to put in a pocket park or a dog park, the latter of which is the best way to draw people to a particular place outdoors 365 days per year.

It is of utmost importance in creating this space to *ensure it has Cheviot's own, distinct personality*. Do not just do what other neighborhoods have done; create a current version of

Cheviot. Spend the time asking residents what they would like to see, and tailor it to the neighborhood. The more markedly Cheviot the space is, the more successful of a draw it will be.

And finally, *activate the space*. Think concerts, farmers markets, etc. Activation is what moves the needle and brings people to these spaces. Building upon the West Side Market <https://www.westsidemarketcincy.com/> success is key – including getting local vendors to open a brick and mortar and/or cooperative shop in the city for year-round business. Cheviot is already doing some activation; build on that in new civic greenspaces.

3. Façade Improvement

The City of Cheviot's new overlay district requiring 50-percent glass first-floor façades is a major, positive step for the business district, and the allowance for outdoor seating has already greatly improved the sense of activity. To ensure this is sustainable, Cheviot needs professional, consistent, proactive code and property maintenance enforcement.

Cheviot must also find ways to open up already-occupied storefronts, and relationships with business owners and landlords is essential to that pursuit. While the CBDG façade improvement program was not successful in 2012, it is worth revisiting, whether through this mechanism or another variation. For context: Lack of interest in a comparable program was a problem for two rounds in Walnut Hills before finding success. Although Walnut Hills may not be a direct comparison since it is a gentrifying community with subsidized development, Cheviot's small family owned businesses can be provided examples and apply for grants for façade and building improvements. Hamilton County P+D developed a program in Harrison and provided \$20,000 for each for three businesses. Cheviot's \$10,000 loan program can be supplemented with important CDBG grant funds.

Once transformation begins to take root, it will become easier to encourage other improvements, but the city needs to work with a handful of owners in key, visible locations to make changes to begin this.

4. Relationship Building

Adding to the above, relationships with property owners are essential beyond façade appearances. The city should invest energy in building one-on-one relationships and contacts with these people. It's a long march—these relationships are not easy to build, but they are crucial to the city's success.

Ask these owners: *What changes do you want to see? How can we help you?* Or, in certain cases where necessary, seek to answer: *What will it take to get them to sell?*

Engage groups of business owners together instead of one-on-one to have some peer pressure. In building these relationships and encouraging improvements, use one to nudge the next. Owners may be more responsive to other owners, and once one owner makes tangible improvements, others will naturally follow suit and/or it will be easier to encourage them to do the same.

Beyond relationships with owners, Cheviot should be asking “What do you want to see?” to as many groups as possible; for starters, people connected to St. Martin and Cheviot Schools, the Harvest Home Fair and Parade, farmers’ market and West Side Market vendors. This is essential market information for the city and business owners of Cheviot *to solve for the existing market demand*.

Strategy 6: Build on Already Available Assets

Schools - The elementary schools are essential assets for Cheviot, made more so with its recent successes and positioning for growth. It is a key place to connect with families and tap into a broader community-driven strategy for improvement. And since the addition of the gifted academy that draws from many west side neighborhoods, there is significantly increased energy, enrollment, and opportunity.

At the time of the TAP, the school was actively looking in the business district for a building to house their preschool, kindergarten, and possibly first grade. They had been looking at the 14,000 square foot former Cappel’s building, but it had been purchased. However, it was not entirely out of contention, and the TAP suggested pursuing possible routes to make that location possible, as the school is a strong anchor that checks every one of the boxes for an ideal major business district tenant. The old four-story Cheviot Bank could be an option, but regardless of the ultimate property selected, it is great for Cheviot that the school wants a site in the core of the city. The city should stay actively engaged with CPS to make this happen.

Built Environment - Cheviot has an inventory of properties that other neighborhoods, including Westwood, would have to spend years building to approach the same level. Partner with Westwood to share learnings and development plans. There may be undiscovered synergies that could lift both communities.

Iconic places, such as Maury’s, Kroner’s Dry Cleaners, the former Small’s Hardware now owned by the Wood’s family who live nearby, are important to the fabric and identity of

Cheviot. Maury's has experienced a rebirth, and other icons can and should be ushered along the same path. These spots are major, uniquely Cheviot assets; improve them and *let people know*.

Housing - The Community Wide Housing Strategy is under development for all Hamilton County local governments and will be released in March 2020. As a participating local government in the County's HUD programs, the City of Cheviot can receive technical assistance and creation of a Cheviot Housing Plan. The plan will address all housing needs such as increasing homeownership, improving property maintenance and code enforcement, assisting homeowners with repairs, and building new housing such as senior housing at the former Frank's Nursery site.

In terms of housing, the Panel suggested that Cheviot host a series of "Housing Days." Note: Cincinnati Savings and Loan could help coordinate, and First Financial Bank should also be involved since they are in the neighborhood. Hamilton County has down payment assistance programs with Working in Neighborhoods and the Greater Cincinnati Homeownership Center each provide 3% of the housing price or max of \$4,500 as well as the home inspection fee up to \$500 to aid homebuyers. The program is open to first-time homebuyers earning up to 80% of Area Median Income – for single person this is \$42,000.

No one has used the residential CRA, and it is likely because people are not aware of how to make use of it. If possible, a "model" home could be used to show what \$10,000 - \$25,000 can do—an added bedroom, bathroom, a family room, with no taxes on improvements because of the CRA—and start the virtuous cycle. Realtors are the best people to get the word out about residential CRAs. The city should meet with local realtors who sell in and around Cheviot to educate them. Westwood housing marketing is on fire – Cheviot can benefit from this too.

At such a Housing Day, banks and relevant agencies and businesses (Woods Hardware, Working in Neighborhoods, Greater Cincinnati Home Ownership Center, Hader HVAC/Roofing, Hader Plumbing, and other Cheviot businesses) could be present to let people know the resources available.

A second Housing Day should be held 90-days after the first, as word of mouth will get out and more people will be drawn to the second occurrence, and all involved entities should actively pursue conversations, go to meetings, talk neighbor-to-neighbor, to build awareness and interest.

Hamilton County P+D is available to organize homebuyer training in Cheviot at least twice a year. Cheviot should partner with organizations that are already meeting – Kiwanis,

churches, schools, Harvest Home Fair group, etc. – to efficiently organize business and housing programs.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT

The city's primary development role is in infrastructure, specifically streets, trees, and parks. The overlay district is also an important city tool, and other such mechanisms that facilitate activity close to Harrison can and should be pursued as needed. Implementation of findings from the 2019 Harrison Avenue Safety Study are also within the city's purview. Well planned improvements can be funded with Hamilton County CDBG funds.

Cheviot has control over Harrison Avenue, which is a big deal. Changes to the streetscape that can make an outsized difference in the quality of the district. Cincinnati is installing traffic calming in Westwood business district where the speed limit is now 25 mph and bump outs are coming.

Trees, as mentioned previously, are of paramount importance. They slow cars, create a pedestrian environment, provide shade, and more. If it's not logistically feasible to put them in bokes along the sidewalk, *find places to put trees*. They can go in the cemetery, in vacant lots, in parking lots, in the Wendy's lot, by the schools, in any existing or forthcoming park space—on and on. Parking lots could be stepped back six or seven feet to create plenty of space to rework the streetscape. Encourage property owners to plant trees, as well. This will quickly change an environment—just look at the difference made by the handful of trees in Pioneer Park. Again, these well-planned improvements can be funded with Hamilton County CDBG funds.

In the long run, overhead electric could be buried or rear-loaded to side or back streets to further beautify and open up the business district.

PRIVATE INVESTMENT

Private investment will primarily be evidenced in housing and business growth, and there is much the city can do to encourage it.

In the case of properties with code violations, the city can use these as opportunities to start conversations. They should approach property owners in a manner that shows they're willing to work with them and giving them sufficient runway to make improvements (e.g., making a 2-3-year plan). There should be a carrot and a stick, with the main appeal being apolitical and about bettering the neighborhood and moving forward together. Business owners can be offered the Hamilton County CDBG funds to facilitate code enforcement and

eliminate housing violations. Hamilton County is currently funding code enforcement in Golf Manor and Lincoln Heights and also helping with home repairs in Forest Park, Springdale, Greenhills, Lincoln Heights.

It's not entirely about fixing violations; it's about building a relationship that moves forward into something bigger.

PAYING FOR IT ALL

Financing is always a challenge, but multiple programs, entities, and examples exist that can help Cheviot negotiate financing hurdles and be successful in redevelopment.

For public investment, some key potential funding sources are:

- **Hamilton County P+D** - Cheviot is one of 41 local governments that participate in Hamilton County's HUD grant programs. The city has access to Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds in three ways: up to \$270,000 every 3 years for projects of the city's choice; up to \$40,000 through the annual mini-grant planning program; and up to \$300,000 through the annual the Community and Economic Development Assistance Program. Hamilton County's HOME Investment Partnership Program is also available for funding housing projects for renters and homeowners. The annual amount awarded is \$1.3 million with a maximum of \$300,000 per project.
- **Ohio Market Access Program (OMAP)** - This program offers local governments and school districts the option to use the State of Ohio's high credit rating for short term bond issuance to get lower interest rates for capital projects. Silverton Village Manager, Tom Carroll, has information and experience with this that he is happy to share.
- **HCDC** – HCDC helps build businesses and promote job creation by: businesses incubation, business lending, and economic development services.
- **Landbank and The Port** - Cultivating relationships with this team would be time well spent. The Landbank developed a set of powerful tools and would be an asset to Cheviot as a partner on a housing strategy, particularly in their ability to buy and hold empty property, offset holding/carrying costs, clean titles quickly, and work on Cheviot's behalf. The Port can offer similar guidance for strategic master planning and commercial property site control such as the former Frank's Nursery site.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District** - A TIF District takes property tax resources and *redirects them toward local uses*. It is *not* an increase; it's a capture. You're already paying this tax, but with a TIF it goes to specific community improvements. The former

Frank's Nursery could be first site to apply this. Cheviot should pace their plan based on the 30-year program duration. Use strategic boundary drawings to capture healthy growing parts while creating resources to put elsewhere in the district a few years later.

- **Special Improvement District** – A SID is an economic development tool that allows private property owners in a self-defined area to establish a program for services or improvements aimed at the economic enhancement of the area. The area can be any size, as long as it is contiguous.
- **State of Ohio** – Continue to tap State resources for infrastructure and road safety.
- **Interact for Health Grants** – Research these grants offered to non-profit and governmental organizations for programs and activities that improve health in Cincinnati and 20 surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Duke Energy Grants** – Use these grants for soft costs, to run models and plan programs. A 2017 grant was provided to HCDC for small business assistance.
- **Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance – Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Financing** – This is a means of financing energy efficiency upgrades, disaster resiliency improvements, water conservation measures, or renewable energy installations of residential, commercial, and industrial property owners. Seek advice during your strategic planning process to fully understand application of PACE.
- **Scatter-Site Federal Historic Tax Credits (HTC)** – Explore the possibility of locally designating an historic district to qualify for state designation and to apply for the federal registry. Federal registration is a longer process, but the designation automatically gets state and local approval. Cheviot would create boundaries and then decide *which* buildings will contribute/qualify. Historic Tax Credits can offset/subsidize 25%–40% of total project cost and may provide essential gap funding and project viability. HTCs are a tool with major cost-benefit, but they do come with their own set of limitations related to how projects are completed. Hamilton County P+D can provide additional information about this process and local historic preservation professionals. Again, seek advice during your strategic planning process to fully understand application of HTC.
- **Foundations and Philanthropies** – Research local foundations and philanthropies for grants that may apply to the recommendations provided here. Greater Cincinnati has a surprising number of generous sources.

For private investment, the number one impediment here—and in any business district—is return on investment.

Cheviot's current \$10,000 loan program with First Financial Bank is probably not enough, but it is a start. It would likely be more effective if it could be coupled with a grant program to make the funding pools larger and a better incentive.

One potential way to raise awareness and instigate change would be *the city choosing four or five easy wins*—people they know, with skin in the game, in a concentrated location—and ensure that any loan or grant money makes visible change. This will motivate and invite others join. For example: The Panel suggested working with Woods Hardware to install more sidewalk-facing windows consistent with the TAP recommendation to activate the street scape.

Other potential partners:

- **Cincinnati Savings and Loan** has roots in the area and is a resource for real estate, and potentially for business.
- **Cincinnati Development Fund** has the ability to stretch the bounds of traditional underwriting, for viable ventures.
- **Business owners** interested in also being commercial property owners can be more easily helped through construction financing than new business financing.

CONCLUSION

The City of Cheviot is well-positioned for redevelopment, and the energy Cheviot's leaders have for its future bodes well for the actualization of positive changes. There are public and private investments that must happen, and Cheviot has concrete steps to move forward.

It is essential that Cheviot pursue these strategies simultaneously, recognizing that development is not a linear process. Likewise, their efforts must be concentrated, not scattered, for a clear sense of change that will be readily noticeable and built upon.

With attention to the strategies laid out by ULI Cincinnati's Technical Assistance Panel, Cheviot's built environment, business district, and public perception all stand to improve—while defining and overlaying what makes it *uniquely Cheviot*.

APPENDIX A: CITY OF CHEVIOT, OHIO RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA HOUSING SURVEY 2016

[Housing Survey 2016](#)

APPENDIX B: STREET CORRIDOR RECOMMENDATIONS AND EXAMPLE PHOTOS

(Images provided by Jeff Raser, Owner, CUDA Studio)

Cheviot may benefit from a concerted effort to make their street corridor a more inviting place for visiting, pride, and investment. Some aspects include:

Signage

Businesses are right to avoid internally illuminated signs, especially those that do not advertise the business but only products sold (e.g., Pepsi-sponsored signs). However, signs need to be visible at night so externally illuminated, projecting or “blade” signs are both easily read by drivers as well as pedestrians. Another good element to incorporate would be sidewalk sandwich board signs. **See photos below.**



Awnings

One fairly fast way to demonstrate visible change to a business district is by having an awning program. Awnings can add invigorating color to a streetscape and provide protection for pedestrians on rainy or snowy days. They can also advertise the business inside and help the aesthetics of modest or underwhelming buildings. **See photo below.**



Storefront Glass

As Jane Jacobs said, there need to be “eyes on the street,” and these eyes come from the prospect of having people looking out of windows. Storefront glass is crucial to offering comfort. They allow people to see out of—and into—businesses. They make a place feel safe and vibrant. Even buildings that house grocery stores and hardware stores can have storefronts. **See photo below.**



Scale

Some communities believe they need large (three-to-five story) buildings along their neighborhood business district to have a sense of vibrancy. While four-story buildings can be helpful because they can host residents, a neighborhood business district doesn't have to have more than the one-and-two story buildings which are prevalent in Cheviot to be bustling. **See photo below.**



Street Trees

Cheviot appears barren and lifeless. This is mostly due to a lack of street trees. Even in winter, street trees soften the urban-harshness of street corridors, add color, do wonders for the environment, and add “street friction,” which helps slow down cars. Narrow sidewalks and the issue of overhead power lines are solvable. Someone should do a street tree plan (in concert with a new curb alignment plan) to reveal all of the places where street trees could be thoughtfully placed. **See photos below.**



Traffic Calming

It is crucial that Cheviot does not let up on this, and that it is not undermined by traffic engineers during implementation. Cheviot could adopt the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) standards and follow those standards to create a more pedestrian-friendly place. Bump-outs (NACTO calls them “curb extensions”) throughout the district and “speed tables” at key intersections can change the behavior of drivers and make the business district friendlier. **See photo and images below.**



STREETS

Neighborhood Main Street



Neighborhood main streets are a nexus of neighborhood life, with high pedestrian volumes, frequent parking turnover, key transit routes, and bicyclists all vying for limited space. Main-street design should limit traffic speeds and create a narrower profile with frequent, high-quality pedestrian crossings. In recent years, many main streets have been significantly improved through road diets and the conversion from 4 to 3 (or 6 to 5) lanes of travel with bike lanes and a center turning lane or median.

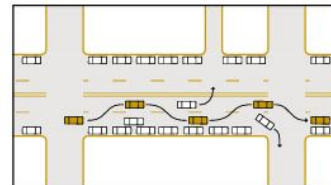
EXISTING CONDITIONS

The illustration above depicts a main street with 4 lanes of traffic. With medium traffic volumes and high pedestrian activity, the street has significant potential for regeneration as a retail district, yet currently underperforms for those who shop, eat, and walk there. Frequent destinations have resulted in multiple turning and weaving conflicts along the street.

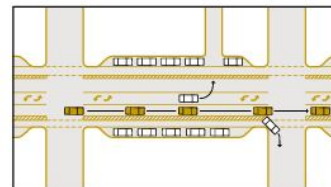
- 1 4-lane configurations have been shown to increase rear-end and sideswipe vehicle crashes and pose a higher pedestrian crash risk.¹

RECOMMENDATIONS

While road diets are not appropriate on all 4-lane cross sections, streets carrying up to 25,000 vehicles per day function effectively with 3 lanes, depending on the traffic volumes of nearby adjacent streets.²



The weaving line in the 4-lane configuration shows the pattern of a driver avoiding double-parked vehicles and drivers turning left and right.



In a 3-lane configuration, the weaving and conflicts are eliminated.

STREET DESIGN ELEMENTS



APPLICATION

Curb extension is an umbrella term that encompasses several different treatments and applications. These include:

- Midblock curb extensions, known as pinchpoints or chokers, which may include cut-throughs for bicyclists.
- Curb extensions used as gateways to minor streets known as neckdowns.
- Offset curb extensions that force vehicles to move laterally, known as chicanes.
- Curb extensions at bus (or transit) stops, also known as bus bulbs.
- Conventional curb extensions, which are a recommended feature where there is on-street parking.

BENEFITS & CONSIDERATIONS

Curb extensions decrease the overall width of the roadway and can serve as a visual cue to drivers that they are entering a neighborhood street or area.

Curb extensions increase the overall visibility of pedestrians by aligning them with the parking lane and reducing the crossing distance for pedestrians, creating more time for preferential treatments, such as leading pedestrian interval and transit signal priority.¹

Curb extensions tighten intersection curb radii and encourage slower turning speeds.

Installation of curb extensions may require moving a fire hydrant to maintain adequate curbside access in case of a fire. In such cases, a curb extension may incur additional expense or be reoriented to avoid conflict with the hydrant.²

Used as a bus bulb, curb extensions may improve bus travel times by reducing the amount of time a bus takes to merge with traffic after boarding. Bus bulbs also help to prevent motorists from double parking in the bus stop.³

Where application of a curb extension adversely impacts drainage, curb extensions may be designed as edge islands with a 1–2-foot gap from the curb or a trench drain.

Curb extensions can be implemented using low-cost, interim materials. In such cases, curb extensions should be demarcated from the existing roadbed using temporary curbs, bollards, planters, or striping.

Illustration credit to NATCO.

STREET DESIGN ELEMENTS

Speed Table

Speed tables are midblock traffic calming devices that raise the entire wheelbase of a vehicle to reduce its traffic speed. Speed tables are longer than speed humps and flat-topped, with a height of 3–3.5 inches and a length of 22 feet. Vehicle operating speeds for streets with speed tables range from 25–45 mph, depending on the spacing.³ Speed tables may be used on collector streets and/or transit and emergency response routes. Where applied, speed tables may be designed as raised midblock crossings, often in conjunction with curb extensions.



CRITICAL

Speed tables shall be accompanied by a sign warning drivers (MUTCD W17-1).

RECOMMENDED

Speed tables should be designed to the following criteria:

- Slopes should not exceed 1:10 or be less steep than 1:25.
- Side slopes on tapers should be no greater than 1:6.
- The vertical lip should be no more than a quarter-inch high.

Speed tables should not be applied on streets wider than 50 feet. On 2-way streets, speed tables may be applied in both directions.

Where a speed table coincides with a crossing or crosswalk, it should be designed as a raised crosswalk.



Locate vertical speed control elements where there is sufficient visibility and available lighting.

SOMERVILLE, MA

This speed table has been designed as a raised crossing.

OPTIONAL

Speed tables are often designed using unit pavers or other distinctive materials. Distinctive materials may require additional maintenance responsibilities but help to highlight and define the speed table for both bicyclists and pedestrians.

Illustration credit to NATCO.

APPENDIX C: ULI TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PANEL

ULI Cincinnati is the local District Council of the Urban Land Institute (ULI), the premiere research and education organization, with nearly 42,000 members worldwide representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. ULI is the world's thought leader in promoting sustainable, thriving communities. With approximately 270 members throughout the region, ULI Cincinnati pursues its vision by:

- Engaging people through active dialogue;
- Delivering unique experiences to a diverse membership;
- Capitalizing on ULI's global resources; and
- Building strategic relationships with regional stakeholders and leaders.

ULI Cincinnati's Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) brings expertise in real estate, urban planning, design, engineering and finance to provide analysis and recommendations to overcome land use planning and development challenges. For a TAP, ULI Cincinnati assembles an interdisciplinary team of established local and area professionals for a site/project review and brainstorming session. This team of experts meets with stakeholders, visits a site, and examines the challenge from all angles. After a TAP session, ULI presents its findings to the client to illustrate potential responses to project challenges with a focus on practical and feasible options often driven by market demand/conditions. For this advisory service, a fee is customarily charged, though Panel members are not compensated for their time.

The sponsor of the TAP will typically request the services of ULI to address a specific issue that may be evaluated using the expertise of a Panel of experts over the course of a day or two. After working with the appropriate District Council to refine the scope of the TAP, the Panel is selected, and a date is set. Next, the sponsor works within ULI guidelines to assemble appropriate background information and disseminate it to the panelists in advance of the site visit and review session. Depending on the nature of the TAP topic, the Panel may convene in advance of the working session in order to visit the subject site, possibly led by the sponsor to provide background and commentary. The Panel will then convene. Depending on resources, availability and the nature of the project, a TAP may meet for a number of hours for discussion and brainstorming, or up to a couple of days on a charette-style convening. At the conclusion of the TAP, a report is prepared, either written and/or oral, and presented to the sponsor as a take-away deliverable. In some instances, the reporting can be augmented with visuals, renderings or preliminary concept plans to support the discussion findings.