



RIVERWOOD

Briefing

“

Vision-driven, community-focused development is not just the right thing to do, it's also good business. My hope in the coming years, as we take this more inclusive approach to development, is that our residents find increased economic opportunity for themselves and their families and an overall improved quality of life.

DANIEL HARRIGAN, MAYOR OF AKRON

”

PC-2020-29-CU

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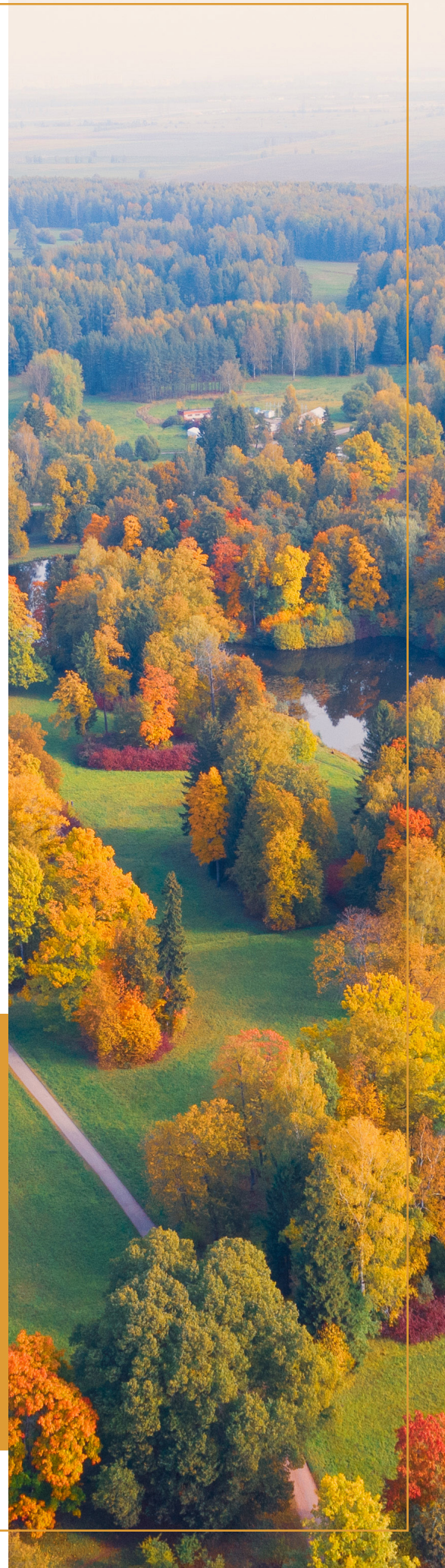
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WE COULD BE THE ARCHITECTS
IN PRESERVING THIS HERITAGE
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.
IT GOES FAR BEYOND TODAY
IN TERMS OF THE POTENTIAL.

RALPH REGULA, OHIO CONGRESSMAN





HISTORY OF RIVERWOOD PARCEL

Riverwood (1870 Akron Peninsula Road) is a parcel of property located in the Merriman Valley along the Cuyahoga River. It is a former golf course (Riverwood Golf Course and Pine Valley Sports) comprised of 76 acres with approximately 6,750 feet of Cuyahoga River frontage. A significant portion of the property bordering the river is identified by FEMA as floodplain. This area has experienced previous flooding events.

The land was purchased in a non-contingent contract in late November 2020 by Broadview Heights-based developer Petros Development Group, after working with the City of Akron's Planning Department to develop plans for a residential development catering to young families and seniors. Plans call for the construction of 197 townhome and ranch-style units. Of the units, 28 would be owner-occupied, selling at or above \$230K. The rest would be high-end rental units, renting at a rate of \$1,500-\$2,000 per month. The school district serving this development would be Woodridge Local School District, not Akron Public Schools. Petros is set to benefit from a 15-year tax abatement through the city of Akron.

Petros has stated that 45 acres of riverfront land would be given to West Creek Conservancy as public land to "restore to its natural state." Access points for a "possible" pedestrian bridge across the Cuyahoga and public access path from Akron Peninsula Road have been mentioned by the City of Akron and Petros, with no funding or planning attached. Riverwood is currently zoned Light Commercial/Recreational and needs City Council's approval to be conditionally rezoned for Residential.

POSITION ON RIVERWOOD REZONING

We are requesting postponement of the approval of this development, until a Master Plan is completed. We understand that the conditional use permit process is a precursor for the required rezoning of the property prior to development. If a decision is made to move forward without consideration of the master planning process, we ask that members of the Akron City Council consider the following in their rezoning deliberations.

Preserve the Valley

✓ REMOVE THE CRA ABATEMENT

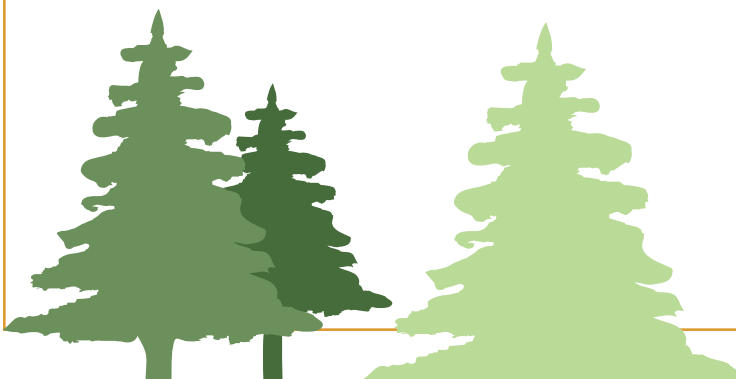
Remove the CRA (Community Reinvestment Area) abatement, as it is an unnecessary benefit due to the success of the Merriman Valley real estate market, where the housing stock has a value of roughly double the Akron average. **When used in this market, the abatement program is effectively asking less affluent Akronites to subsidize a developer and purchasers of high-end real estate. This is inequitable and inconsistent with one of the city's goals of bridging disparities in investments across Akron's neighborhoods.**

- Petros has clearly displayed an understanding of the lucrative value of this market since they have launched three developments within this market in the past three years and are seeking two additional developments. Based upon other developers' responses to the City of Akron's Theiss Road RFP, this area of the Valley is highly competitive and of high interest to developers. Because of this, **an abatement program to drive interest in development here is unnecessary.**

✓ ADD TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

We recommend that the abatement is NOT extended to the Riverwood Development and that a tax increment finance (TIF) instrument is considered instead. It would fund investments into the Akron community and benefit Akron citizens. The proceeds from a TIF could be used to fund the following infrastructure ideas, mentioned by Petros and Akron citizens:

- **Community Connectivity:**
The City of Akron and the Merriman Valley would benefit from connecting the current isolated developments to the community with sidewalks, public access to the Cuyahoga River, and a bridge to connect the Riverwood Development to the Towpath Trail. This infrastructure has been mentioned by Petros, but the initial planning documents for PC-2020-29-CU are not clear about who will fund or complete these projects.
- **Cuyahoga River Floodplain Restoration:**
45 of the 76 acres will be deeded to West Creek Conservancy. We applaud the transfer of the floodplain land to a conservation-minded steward, but we are concerned about the proper funding of a large reclamation project. The use of TIF funds to complete this project would be another significant investment in Akron and the Merriman Valley and would take important steps in floodplain mitigation for the development and surrounding areas.



PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT IMPLICATIONS

What to know

The City of Akron's residential property tax abatement program exempts 100% of the added property value on any new home construction or home renovation (valued at approximately \$5,000+) for a period of 15 years. We estimate **the tax abatement for Riverwood will result in a loss of \$13.7 million in property tax revenue over 15 years.*** Broadview Heights-based **Petros will benefit the most from the abatement**, due to the majority of the units, 169 out of 197, being rentals. We estimate they will receive \$11.75 million of the total abatement benefits, if they retain ownership of the rentals for 15 years. Around \$2 million will be lost from the future high-income residents predicted to purchase the 28 units for sale.

Institutions that rely on property tax revenue include the Akron City Schools, Summit Metro Parks, Akron Summit Library, Akron Zoo, Summit County Children Services, Mental Health Board (ADM), Board of Developmental Disabilities, Summit County, and the City of Akron. **Woodridge Local School District will face a significant loss of tax revenue proportional to the influx of students, underfunding their district as their enrollment increases, due to the development.** Woodridge was not consulted before the city-wide abatement was implemented, nor were they notified about the proposed Riverwood project.

\$11.75 MILLION ESTIMATED AMOUNT
PETROS WILL RECEIVE
FROM TAX ABATEMENT
SUBSIDY WILL GO TO PETROS OR FUTURE LANDOWNER

* Based on 197 units at median price of \$245K per unit, with an average lot value of \$57K.
Also based on Akron/ Woodridge effective residential tax rate of 78.66 mill over a 15 year period.



Our Questions

PROPERTY TAX ABATEMENT IMPLICATIONS

1

Why is this tax abatement necessary for this area of Akron, which has a strong housing market?

City planner Mr. Jason Segedy said, "If the real estate market takes off in certain neighborhoods, the city could remove those areas from the program to attempt to spur growth in other parts of Akron." Per the article in The Devil Strip, new homes being built with the abatement have largely been concentrated in the Merriman Valley and Highland Square, areas with average home values among the highest in the city. Prices for the 28 owner-occupied homes at Riverwood will be listed at \$230K-\$260K, according to Crain's. Other high-priced developments in the Merriman Valley have sold quickly: Woodland Preserves & Villas (\$284K-\$437K), Sycamore (\$225K-\$291K), and Heron Crest (\$225K-\$357K).

A local realtor, Heather Sletten of RE/MAX, provided the following empirical data showing the success of the Merriman Valley market in the last 180 days (noted on 12.3.20).

- Merriman Valley Sales: **78 Sales**
- Average Time on the Market For Sold Properties: **48 Days**
- Amount of Time Homes are Going Under Contract: **24-48 Hours**
- Average Sale Price: **\$225,711**
- Percentage of Sale/List Price: **100.19%** (the average home is selling above listing price)
- Active Listings: **39 Listings**

2

Why is the tax abatement being offered for a rental development that will have 169 high-rent units?

According to the investigative feature in The Devil Strip by reporter Abbey Marshall, "Previous abatements for apartment construction have been in Akron neighborhoods where housing markets aren't already stable. They are almost exclusively tied to Habitat for Humanity, the Urban Neighborhood Development Corporation and the East Akron Neighborhood Development Corporation." In this case, Petros, or the future rental property owner, will receive the benefits of the \$11.75 million subsidy. Apartment developers could theoretically offer "lower rent costs from the property tax savings." However, rent for Riverwood units is \$1,500 - \$2,000 per month, a high-end rental option.

3

Why are out-of-town developers getting multi-million dollar tax benefits as local schools suffer?

Students in this proposed development would attend Woodridge Local Schools, which is heavily dependent on property taxes for funding. Woodridge spends roughly \$11,000 per student annually, but only receives approximately \$680 per student from the state, placing them in the **bottom 20 school districts across Ohio for the amount of state funding per pupil**. The new elementary school is already at 90% capacity. The Riverwood development would neglect the Woodridge Schools through abated property taxes, which would only bring in an estimated 23% of the funding needed to accompany the new students. Akron (Woodridge district) residents in Wards 1 and 8, who already **pay property taxes at a rate higher than 85% of the rest of Summit County**, could see property tax increases through new levies and/or decreased property values, as the **Woodridge School District becomes adversely affected by underfunding**. Valley businesses could also be negatively impacted.

thedevilstrip.com/2020/08/27/is-akrons-tax-abatement-program-working-heres-who-is-using-it-and-why/
www.crainscleveland.com/real-estate/akron-weigh-40-million-housing-development-merriman-valley
www.crainscleveland.com/real-estate/akron-planning-commission-approves-merriman-valley-development

PLANNING & COSTS FOR CONSERVATION

What to know

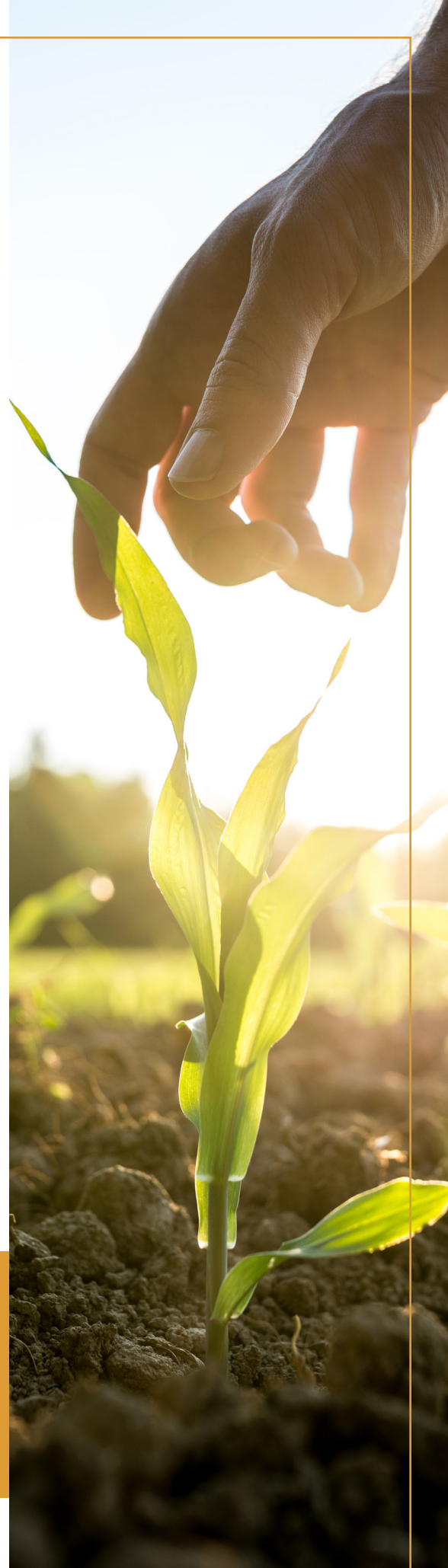
According to Mr. Greg Modic with Petros, “The biggest thing...is the conservation aspect of this project. Through collaboration with Derek [West Creek Conservancy], as well as with Akron, I think we’ve come up with a great plan” (Akron City Planning Commission Meeting, 11.20.20). Petros has stated that they would donate 45 acres of riverfront land to West Creek Conservancy for restoration to its “natural state” and “replanting the floodplain.” However, **FEMA maps show that most of the donated acreage is floodplain land.** It is also important to note that the city of Akron has **no ordinances that regulate the protection and preservation of the riparian setback, as Summit County and most other surrounding communities have put into place.**

West Creek Conservancy is a land acquisition non-profit that partners with cities, parks, and foundations to facilitate restoration and conservation projects. Their [2018 Annual Report](#) shows that they spend 67% of their budget on land acquisition, but only 7% on habitat restoration. For 2018, their restoration budget was under \$200,000.

7%

PORTION OF BUDGET USED BY
WEST CREEK CONSERVANCY ON
HABITAT RESTORATION IN 2019

MOST PROJECTS COMPLETED WITH PARTNERSHIPS & GRANTS



Our Questions

PLANNING & COSTS FOR CONSERVATION

1

Given the proximity to the Cuyahoga River's floodplain, should the future flooding danger to Riverwood residences and apartments be a consideration for the city of Akron, considering the recent Wilbeth Wetlands mitigation costs (Ward 7)? If the city approves the residential rezoning, who would be responsible for flood mitigation in the absence of a riparian setback ordinance?

Rainfall is increasing in our region. This part of the Cuyahoga has experienced significant flooding events in the past decade. [Akron City Council](#) recently accepted a \$1.2 million grant for the removal of homes in the Wilbeth Wetlands area due to repeated flooding.

2

Where are the site maps and planning documents detailing the following promises by Petros? How can City Council hold Petros accountable for these promises, which make this property seem more appealing for re-zoning?

"Some of the things we're looking at conservation-wise: replanting the flood plain...providing public access with the potential to include a canoe launch point...the possibility of a future pedestrian bridge..." – Greg Modic, Petros (Akron City Planning Commission Meeting, 11.20.20).

3

Where are the funding sources and partners needed to coordinate the large-scale restoration and reclamation projects described by the City of Akron planners and Petros?

For comparison, Summit Metro Parks/Valley View Golf Course restoration phase one, which included all land restoration costs, was paid for with a \$1.14 million grant. River restoration will be completed with a \$2.5 million award from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and Great Lakes Commission Regional Partnership. This funding is in addition to a previously granted \$500,000 award for site design and engineering. The project garnered 600 volunteers to plant trees.

Two recent projects in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park: Stanford Run stream restoration, bridge work, and wetland restoration cost \$611,000 and 300 volunteers were involved in restoration efforts. The 2020 budgeted cost to restore approximately 18,000 linear feet of the Cuyahoga River at Station Road and the reforestation of 3 acres of surrounding floodplain was \$650,000.

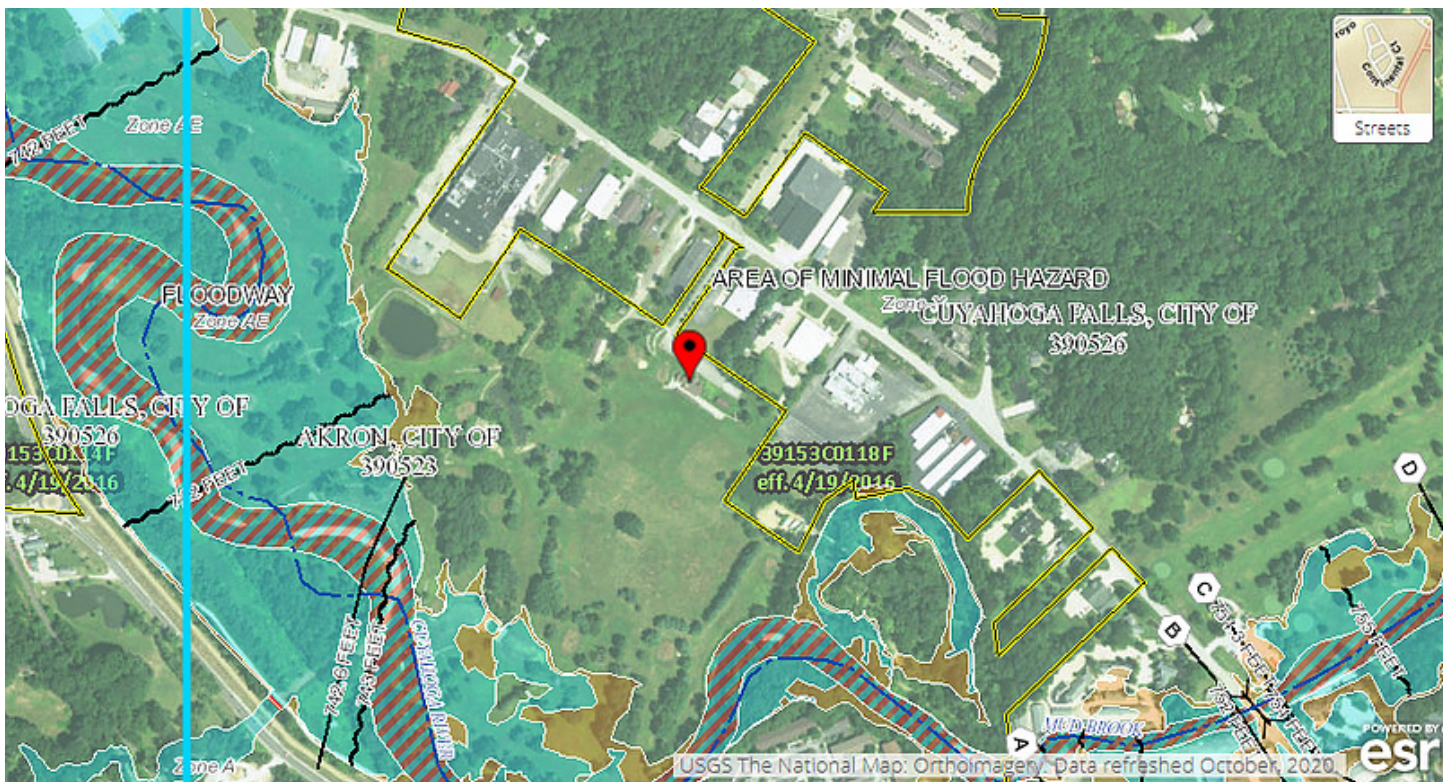
4

Is Petros donating 45 acres of the Riverwood property because it is floodplain land, according to FEMA floodplain maps, and not suitable for a housing development?

Please refer to comparative maps on next page.



RIVERWOOD PROPOSAL VS FEMA FLOODPLAIN MAP



PIN Approximate location based on user input and does not represent an authoritative property location

Selected FloodMap Boundary

SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARD AREAS

- Without Base Flood Elevation (BFE) Zone A, V, A99
- With BFE or Depth
- Regulatory Floodway Zone AE, AO, AH, VE, AR

B 20.2 Cross Sections with 1% Annual Chance Water Surface Elevation

C --- Coastal Transect

--- 17.5 Base Flood Elevation Line (BFE)

--- Limit of Study

ACCESSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC & WALKABILITY

What to know

Although marketing materials tout the benefits of living in the Cuyahoga Valley, the proposed Riverwood development represents a local trend of **creating isolated housing developments and rental complexes without connectivity or walkability** to these highly-touted local and national park areas. Currently, this area has a Walk Score of 4 (**Car Dependent**) and a Bike Score of 1 (**Minimal Bike Infrastructure**), based on a scale of 100. The plans provided by Petros call for two points of entry from Akron Peninsula Road, which are car access only – **there are NO sidewalks or dedicated bike lanes here.**



**4 WALK
SCORE**

CAR-DEPENDENT
MOST ERRANDS
REQUIRE A CAR

The Merriman Valley



**1 BIKE
SCORE**

SOMEWHAT BIKEABLE
MINIMAL BIKE
INFRASTRUCTURE

BASED ON A SCALE OF 100. AKRON USES THE TRADEMARKED
BIKE SCORE & WALK SCORE ON THEIR OLD SUCCESS MEASURES



Our Questions

ACCESSIBILITY TO THE PUBLIC & WALKABILITY

1

How would residents safely reach Merriman Valley businesses or the Towpath Trail by bike or on foot? As Mr. Modic stated, "I think this is one of the challenges. How do we get folks from one side of the river over to the Towpath more safely so they can enjoy the entire Towpath system?"

There are currently no sidewalks or dedicated bike lanes along Akron Peninsula Road for Riverwood residents to use in reaching Merriman Valley businesses or recreation opportunities. Similarly, visitors entering the property by the public access road would need to arrive by car or bike along Akron Peninsula Road, which currently doesn't have a dedicated bike lane. Mr. Modic used the term "walkable" to describe the development in the November 20, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting. However, that term seems to only refer to the ability of future residents to walk within their own neighborhood, with no connectivity to local businesses, amenities, or public transportation.

2

With a stated goal of appealing to seniors (owner-occupied ranch homes) and young families (townhomes), how does Riverwood meet the walkability and accessibility needs of these target groups? Given these stated goals, wouldn't this area benefit from the use of a TIF?

TIF proceeds could be used to fund the following infrastructure ideas, mentioned by Petros:

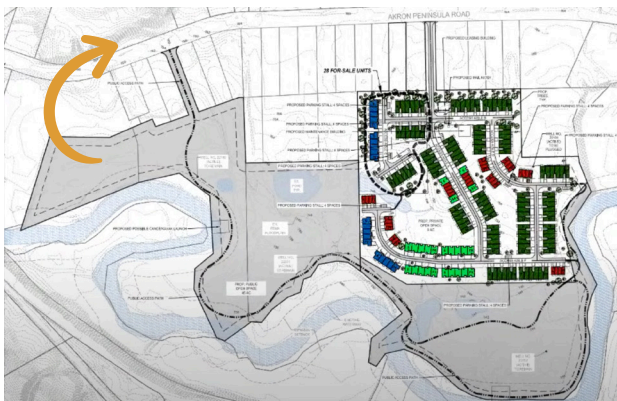
- **Community Connectivity:** The City of Akron and the Merriman Valley would benefit from connecting the current isolated developments to the community with sidewalks, public access to the Cuyahoga River, and a bridge to connect the Riverwood development to the Towpath Trail. This infrastructure has been mentioned by the developer, but the initial planning documents for PC-2020-29-CU are not clear about who will fund or complete these projects.

3

Where is the pedestrian bridge located in the Petros architectural plans for this Riverwood development? Is Petros providing the easement, or the bridge, or both?

4

Plans for the West Creek Conservancy portion of the development show a trail connecting directly to Akron Peninsula Road. How will residents access this area? On site maps, there is no berm, parking, or pull off area that would make this accessible or safe. Will a city bus stop here?



**THIS PROPOSED WALKING
PATH LEADS DIRECTLY TO
AKRON PENINSULA ROAD**

**A 35 MILE AN HOUR
ROAD WITH BLIND
SPOTS, HIGH-TRAFFIC,
AND NO SIDEWALKS**

ALIGNMENT WITH AKRON'S GOAL OF EQUITY

What to know

"While equity is called out as a core value for OID (Office of Integrated Development), it's important to note that it is foundational to every aspect of this strategy. OID will work to both identify and eliminate the barriers and root causes that prevent the full participation of some groups in Akron's growth and prosperity. OID understands that to improve equity there must be increased fairness within its own systems, processes and procedures, as well as justice in the distribution of resources."

City of Akron, Ohio Office of Integrated Development
Five Year Strategic Framework, 2019-2024.

1 OUT OF 4 AKRON RESIDENTS LIVE IN POVERTY

46,450 AKRON RESIDENTS
REPORTED INCOME LEVELS
BELOW THE POVERTY LINE
OVER THE LAST YEAR



Our Observations

ALIGNMENT WITH AKRON'S GOAL OF EQUITY

1

Using the CRA abatement for Riverwood is inconsistent with Akron's goal of bridging disparities in investments across Akron's neighborhoods.

If the CRA abatement program is used in a high-income area like the Merriman Valley for a high-end development, it is effectively asking **less affluent Akronites in less affluent areas to subsidize the developers** and purchasers of high-end real estate.

2

It contributes to geographic inequity and diminishes the use of the city's core resources.

This development's location on the outer edges of Akron – along with other new developments nearby – **further exacerbates outward migration trends** and the hollowing out of the city's core, which further increases disparities and disconnections across Akron's neighborhoods and bypasses Akron's redeveloped city center.

3

Rental units do not grow Akron's population in sustainable ways that lead to stable residency, economic prosperity, and future home ownership in Akron.

The majority of the Riverwood Development will be rental units for “families with young children,” according to Mr. Modic, so these will not be stable populations for Akron. As families grow, they often move elsewhere. **The Merriman Valley currently has more than 2,900 rental units.** Rental communities increase economic disparities. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2000 and 2018, median rent in Akron jumped 48%, while incomes rose just 29%. **Adjusting for inflation, renters have lost \$4,074 in purchasing power** as rent has kept pace with the annual cost of living. Unfortunately, the proportion of Akronites who are renting is rising. In 2000, 40.6% of the roughly 90,000 housing units in Akron were rentals, compared to 49.4% of the 85,000 units in 2018. People who own their homes have done much better, financially, than renters. The median income of owner-occupied homes is up 41%, from \$41,679 in 2000 to \$58,586 in 2018.

Specifically, when examining the city's goal to grow their population, The Office of Integrated Development published a [5 Year Strategic Framework](#). In that framework explicit success measures were outlined. The use of a property tax abatement is to grow homeowners, not rental residents as this development would do.

Residential Tax Abatement Applications:

This measure tracks participation in the residential tax abatement program as a proxy for resident commitment to staying in Akron and retaining ownership.

GEOGRAPHIC *Inequity*

The proposed high-end Riverwood Townhome Development does not align with Akron's core value of equity. This location is on the outermost edges of Akron, further contributing to the already existing imbalances the city faces between its neighborhoods.

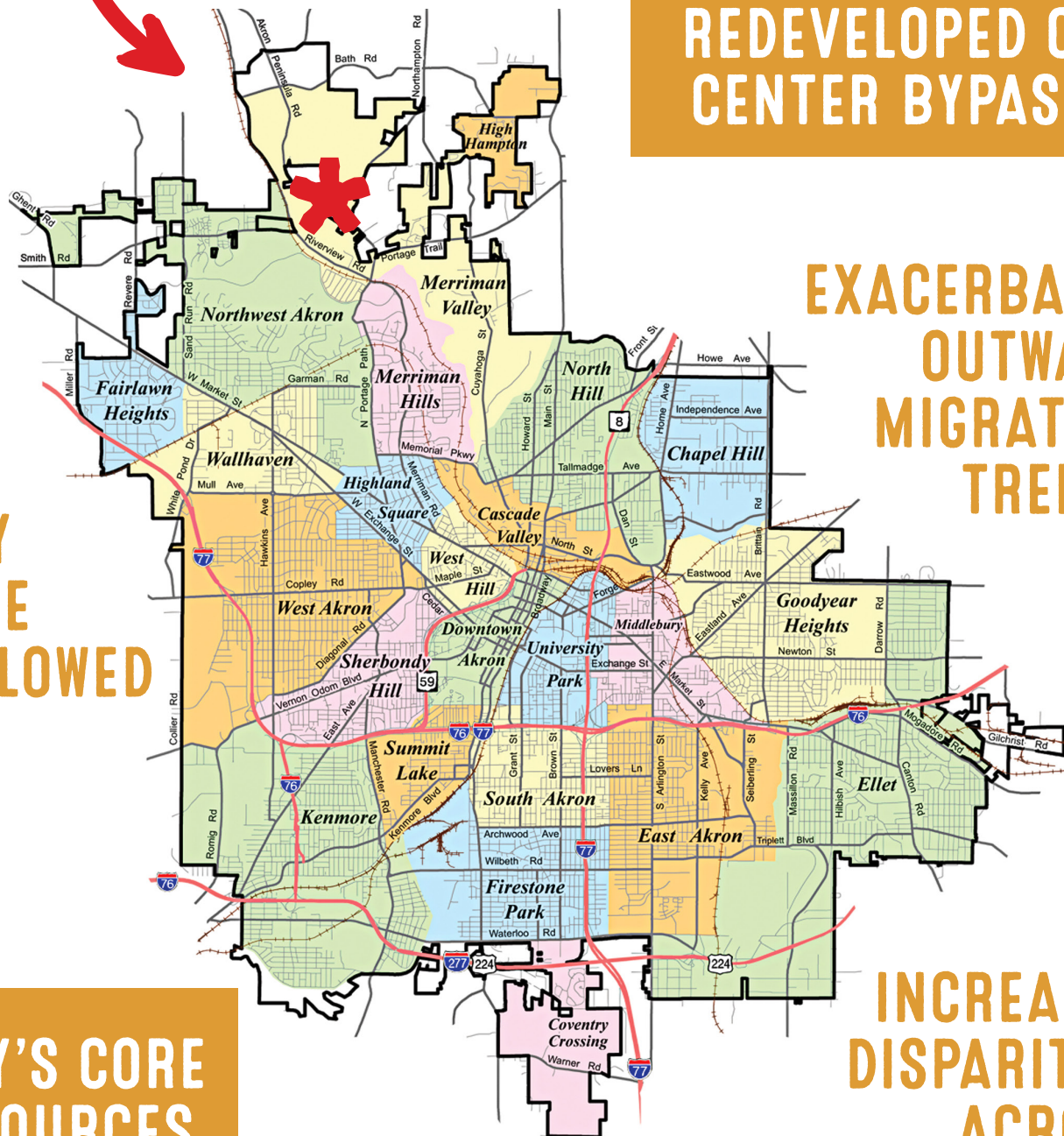
**REDEVELOPED CITY
CENTER BYPASSED**

**EXACERBATED
OUTWARD
MIGRATION
TRENDS**

**CITY
CORE
HOLLOWED**

**CITY'S CORE
RESOURCES
DIMINISHED**

**INCREASED
DISPARITIES
ACROSS
NEIGHBORHOODS**



THE VALUE OF RIVERWOOD'S TOURISM & RECREATION POTENTIAL

What to know

The Riverwood property is located at the southern end of the National Park, close to several Summit Metro Parks, the Towpath Trail, and the Scenic Railroad. Its centralized location and proximity to so many valuable resources means that it has a high degree of recreation and tourism potential and could bring higher economic benefits to Akron as a recreation/tourism site than as a site of limited residential and rental housing. The applicant's desire to seek Residential rezoning suggests that there are no better uses for this land. **Are there economically viable ways to benefit the city and use this property under its current zoning?**

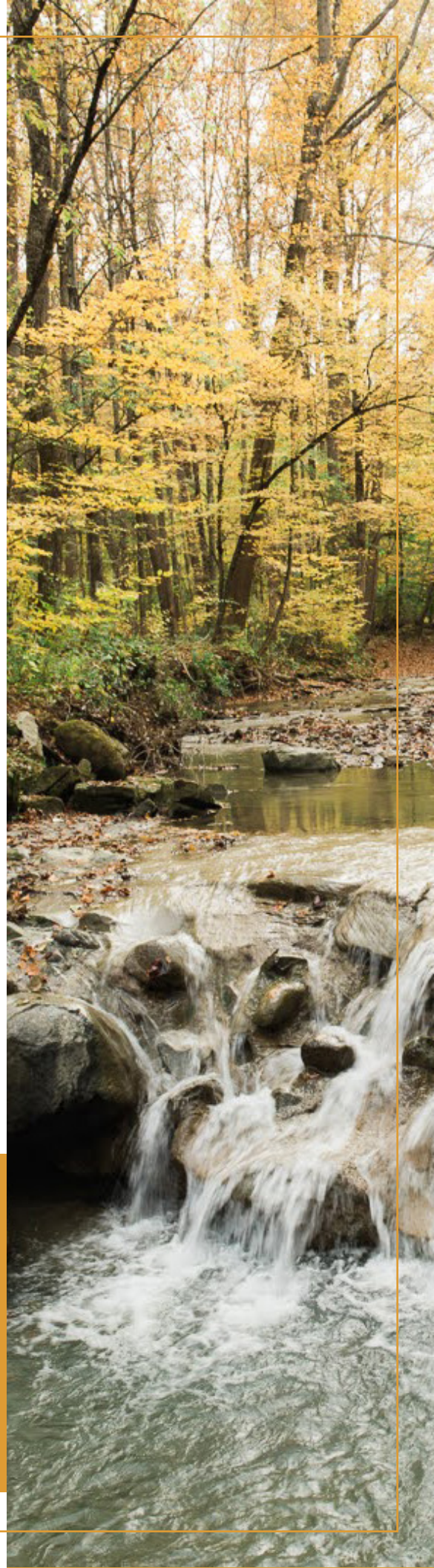
620,000 VISITORS SPENT
AN AVERAGE OF \$124 WHEN
THEY LODGED OVERNIGHT

\$76.88 MILLION

*Yearly
Revenue*



SURVEY OF GREAT ALLEGHENY PASSAGE USERS



Our Questions

RIVERWOOD'S TOURISM & RECREATION POTENTIAL

1

Could the use of Riverwood as a tourism/visitor site draw more people and have a bigger economic impact than its use as a residential site?

At full occupancy, this site would meet the housing needs of 600 people or fewer (at 3 individuals per unit). However, as a recreation/tourism property with amenities to draw locals and visitors, this site could see well over a million visitors a year. Just a short distance away, Summit Metro Parks' new recreation area at the Valley View Golf Course is expected to draw more than 2 million visitors a year. Summit Metro Parks' Executive Director Lisa King said, "This work [at Valley View Golf Course] also sets the stage for an incredible new park area that will welcome over 2 million visits a year and result in an estimated \$2.8 million in annual tourism spending for our local economy."

2

Has the City of Akron compared the value of the increased income tax benefits from this development as a residential site vs. the economic value of tourism/recreational use of Riverwood? Which would have more long-term benefits?

The Cuyahoga Valley National Park brings an estimated **\$50 - \$80 million per year** to surrounding communities. The Valley View Golf Course is estimated to increase local spending by \$2.8 million. It is also **well documented** that the presence of parks and recreation-oriented sites increase surrounding property value, thus increasing the city's revenue through property tax-paying residents.

3

Has the City of Akron or Petros looked at how this property could be used to meet current tourism/recreation needs in the Merriman Valley, as well as the needs of current residents?

A Rails to Trails analysis of ballot measures in the November election shows that citizens across the country are voting for trails, parks, transit, bike lanes, and sidewalks. Below are some of our local needs.

Fresh Food/Valley Produce Grocer: This part of the Merriman Valley is a food desert for individuals without car transportation. Citizens are frequently seen making the perilous walk in the roadway to bus stops or the Portage Crossing area. There is no grocery store within a safe walking distance of this area's 2,900 rental units.

Tourism Support Services: Short-term lodging for visitors, coffee shops, a deli, community gathering space, ADA - accessible art walk area, canoe livery, bike rentals – all of these services and features could be provided on the Riverwood site, which would serve as an economic engine and tourism driver for the entire Merriman Valley.

Connectivity: This area has no sidewalks and no easy access to Valley businesses, the Towpath, or the park by foot or on bike. Riverwood could provide that serious safety need and expand recreational opportunities for residents of all economic levels. With a bridge, Riverwood could be a primary link in the tourism chain.

Visitor/Tourism Information Site: Currently, there is no local visitor center to promote the southern end of the Merriman Valley and Akron, as there is in the National Park – despite the high number of visitors who travel through here. With the sprawling land and riverfront acreage, Riverwood could provide these amenities.

www.cleveland.com/akron/2020/01/summit-metro-parks-completes-first-phase-of-restoring-former-valley-view-golf-course-to-connect-three-parks-on-akrons-north-side.html
www.beaconjournal.com/story/news/local/2020/07/21/work-continues-to-transform-former-akron-golf-course-into-park/42337295/
www.akron.com/articles/metro-parks-bringing-former-golf-course-back-to-natural-life/
www.wksu.org/community/2017-04-25/cuyahoga-valley-national-park-report-finds-87-million-economic-impact-in-2016
www.railstotrails.org/trailblog/2020/november/13/no-ticket-splitting-here-voters-resoundingly-approve-local-ballot-initiatives-for-trails-biking-and-walking/
www.mksstudios.com/projects?category=%5Bc%5D%20Parks%20%26%20Recreation
www.railstotrails.org/resourcehandler.ashx?id=4618
www.trailtowns.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/2015-General-Trail-User-Report-1.pdf

WE NEED A MASTER *plan*

Pause approvals of new developments
in the Cuyahoga Valley until the 2021
Master Planning process is completed.

REIMAGINE RIVERWOOD

Enjoy our video illustrating the many ways that Riverwood
could be reimagined to benefit Akron and the entire Valley



 *Play Video*

The Master PLANNING PROCESS

The Merriman Valley is divided by odd shaped, zig-zagging boundary lines between the Cities of Akron and Cuyahoga Falls. There are even islands of one city surrounded by the other!

In the 1970s and 80s, Akron expanded north and annexed large portions of the former Northampton Township in and around the Merriman Valley. In 1985, the remaining residents of Northampton voted to merge their township with the City of Cuyahoga Falls.

The two cities' zoning codes for the valley were never harmonized, and development occurred in a way that many would call random. There are still people living on large rural parcels without public water, sewer, or gas service. Nearby are apartment complexes, shopping centers, construction & landscaping supply yards, and manufacturing plants.

In early 2018, a development was proposed along Sourek Trail, an area of Cuyahoga Falls on the west side of the valley. Citizens from Akron and Cuyahoga Falls packed the planning meetings to voice their opposition to the plans for 88 houses to be built on 65 acres above the valley. In 2019, the same developer applied for rezoning from Cuyahoga Falls to build 140 townhouse units on the former 28 acre Sycamore Golf Course, which had been zoned commercial.

Although both developments were approved, city officials realized that the city planning meetings failed to provide a proper forum to discuss alternative options for Valley developments and future planning needs.

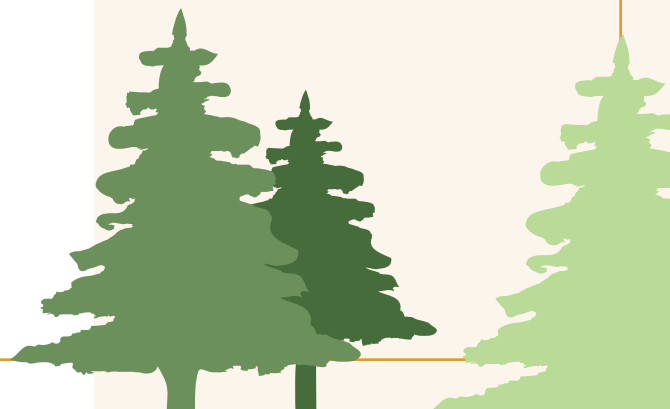
From Fall 2019 to early 2020, the Cuyahoga Falls Planning Department met with a core group of citizens to discuss the framework for a master planning process for the Merriman Valley that would include citizen input to imagine what the valley should look like in the future. Akron and Cuyahoga Falls agreed to collaborate on the plan and seek to harmonize their zoning for the area. **Cuyahoga Falls budgeted \$90K and Akron allocated \$50K with the option to increase funding for the planning process. A consulting firm will be hired in early 2021 and meetings to solicit citizen input will tentatively be held in mid 2021.**

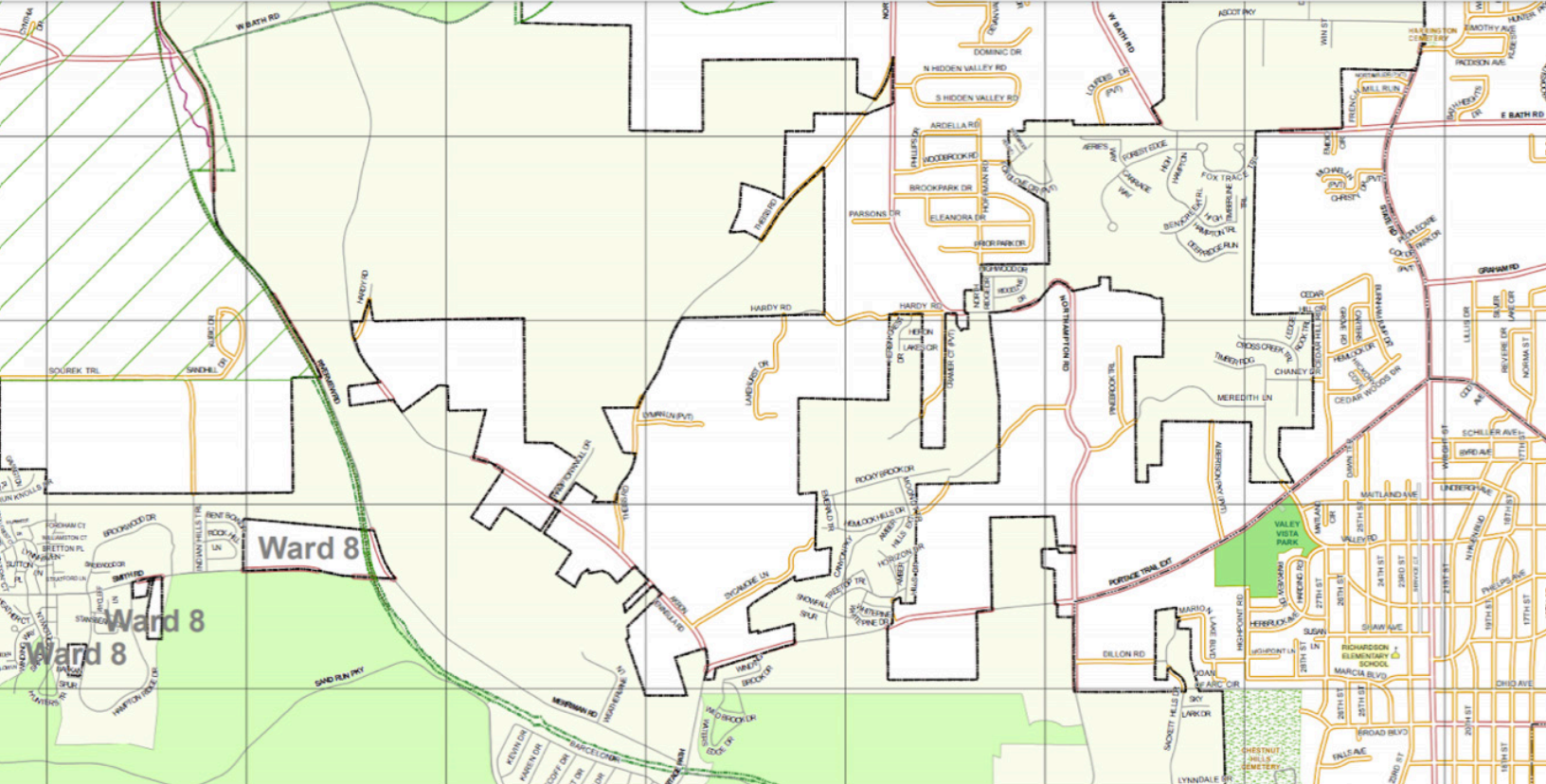
OUR ASK

We are asking for a pause in development in the Cuyahoga Valley until the Master Planning process is completed. Other communities have recently adopted similar stances, including Broadview Heights, which placed a 6-month moratorium on development as it creates a city plan to guide future projects. Recently, a planned townhome/apartment development on the Scranton Peninsula near Cleveland's Flats has also been paused to look at long-term options and master planning, including recreation and Towpath connections.

www.scripotype.com/2020/11/19/broadview-heights-council-imposes-six-month-moratorium-on-new-residential-development/

www.newsbreak.com/ohio/cleveland/news/2117152580316/scranton-peninsula-greater-cleveland-partnership-head-wants-landowners-to-plan-future-of-citys-prime-riverfront-real-estate





IT'S A ZONING *Nightmare* “

Jason Segedy, Akron's Director of Planning and Urban Development, has joked that he "needs a map to know which properties belong in which city" in the Valley.

ABOUT PRESERVE THE VALLEY

What to know

Formed in 2020 as a response to the potential sale of the Theiss Road property to housing developers, this is a group of impassioned Akron and Cuyahoga Falls citizens. Our goal is simple and straightforward; we want citizens to have a voice in the process of planning and developing the unique and valuable areas in the Cuyahoga Valley. We live here, raise families here, hike here, shop here, work here, and want to see this place have a vibrant and thriving future. Preserve the Valley truly believes that a master planning process that includes cities, citizens, developers, local businesses, and experts on ecology and tourism will result in a future where this region is an attractive place to visit and live for generations to come!

PTV STATS

7,902

PETITIONERS CALLING
FOR MORE GREENSPACE

1,200+

VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGGED

280

NEWSLETTER RECIPIENTS

162

FOLLOWERS ON FACEBOOK

16

PROUD RESIDENTS
DISPLAYING BANNERS

1

GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION
DEDICATED TO ENGAGING &
AMPLIFYING CITIZEN VOICES

RECORDED DECEMBER 2020



PRESERVETHEVALLEY.COM
CITIZEN ACTION GROUP



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