

Amherst Township Comprehensive Zoning Plan

**Prepared for the Citizens for Economic
Growth**

January 5, 1995

AMHERST TOWNSHIP

**COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN
1995**

**Recommended by the Citizens for
Economic Growth:**

December 1, 1994

Accepted by the Zoning Commission:

December 6, 1994

Accepted by the Township Trustees:

December 13, 1994

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Introduction

Purpose of the Comprehensive Zoning Plan

This Comprehensive Zoning Plan is Amherst Township's statement of goals, objectives and policies in text and maps to guide public and private development within the Township. The Comprehensive Zoning Plan provides policy statements to guide development decisions in a manner consistent with the stated goals. While the Comprehensive Zoning Plan itself does not change any laws or ordinances of the Township, it does establish the framework against which future zoning map and text changes will be evaluated.

The essential characteristics of this Plan are that it is comprehensive, general and long range: comprehensive because policy statements are formulated in light of the needs and desires of the entire community; general because the Plan summarizes policies and proposals which are aimed at a broad spectrum of development issues; and long range because the Plan looks beyond the current development pressures to the issues and concerns anticipated over a longer period of time.

This is the first comprehensive plan that has ever been developed for Amherst Township. While a zoning resolution was adopted in 1978, it has not been significantly updated recently and, therefore, does not accurately meet the needs of the Township.

This Comprehensive Zoning Plan was initially formulated by the non-profit citizen group, Citizens for Economic Growth (CEG). During its preparation, public forums were held at which Township residents were invited to comment on the preliminary recommendations. The Plan was established through a process of formulating goals for the Township and developing policies and strategies to achieve these goals. These strategies form the basis of the Plan's recommendations and implementation measures.

It is expected that certain policies contained in this Plan will need to be regularly re-evaluated to determine their continued applicability as development occurs and new issues arise that are not addressed in the Plan.

I. CONTEXT FOR THE PLAN

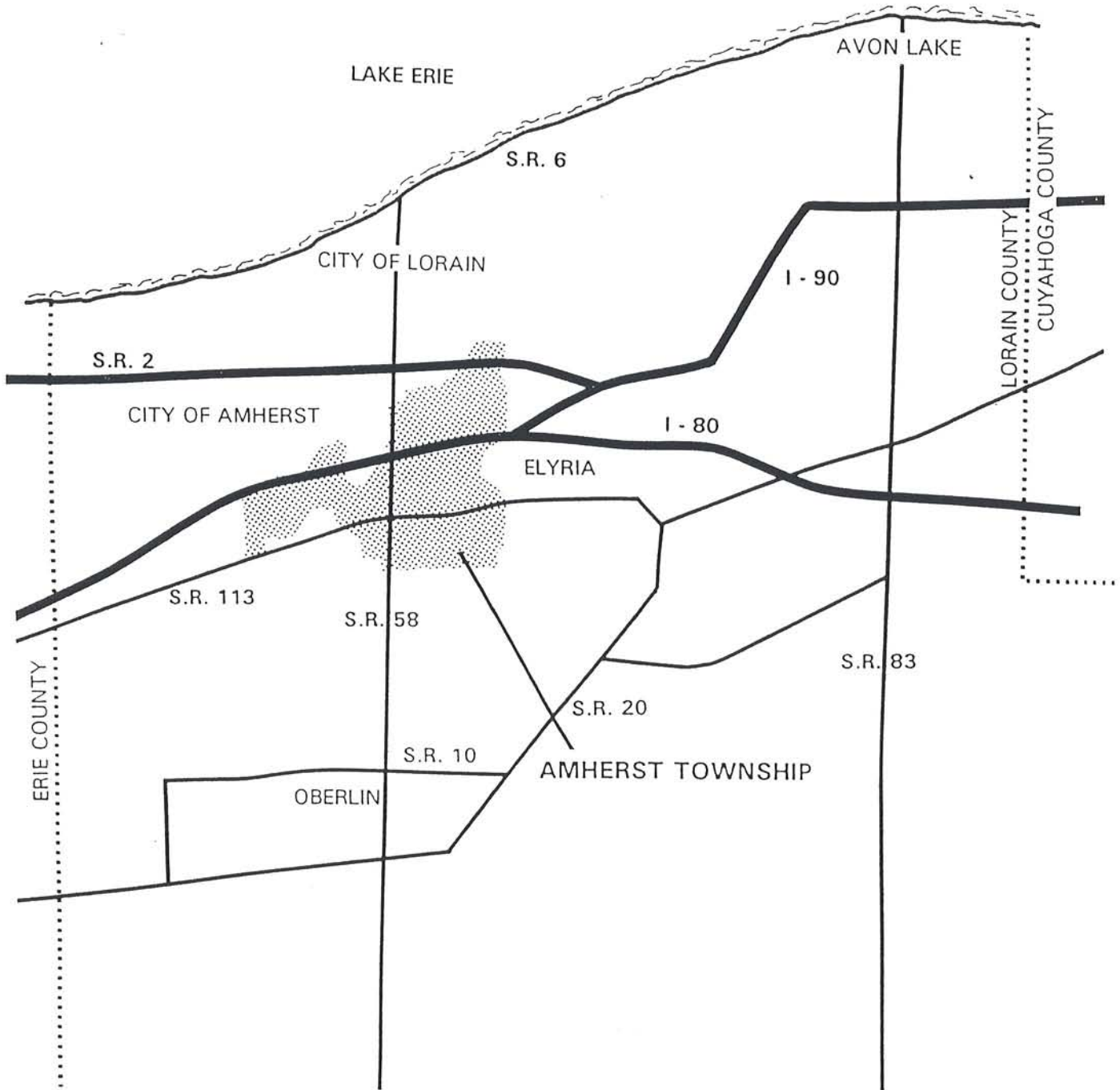
A. REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Amherst Township is located in northern Lorain County and is bordered by the cities of Amherst to the west, Lorain to the north and Elyria to the east. The Ohio Turnpike (I-80) traverses the Township from east to west, and State Route 58 from north to south. State Route 2 is located just north of the Township and provides easy access to Cuyahoga County via I-90 (see Regional Location, Map 1).

Currently, there is only one freeway interchange located in the Township (at Route 2 and Middle Ridge Road) and one immediately north of the Township (at Route 2 and Route 58). There are no interchanges for the Ohio Turnpike in the Township, although one has been proposed at Route 58 and another less than a mile west of Amherst Township at Baumhart Road.

Amherst Township is situated in a largely rural county, but the Township accounts for less than 3% of tillable cropland in Lorain County. The Township is surrounded by the "edge" of urban development formed by Amherst, Lorain and Elyria. The land south and west of the Township is generally utilized for agricultural purposes.

The population of these adjacent cities has remained fairly constant between 1980 - 1990. However, rapid growth is occurring in the extreme northeastern portion of Lorain County and the northwest corner of Cuyahoga County. Avon Lake has experienced the most dramatic increase in recent years, as the number of dwelling units increased by 25.7% between 1980 and 1990 and an additional 6% in just the last three years. As these communities become more fully developed and regional highway access is improved, it is probable that the rate of development will likely increase in Central Lorain County -- including Amherst Township.



REGIONAL LOCATION
MAP 1

B. POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Table 1 shows the population of Amherst Township and adjacent Lorain County communities between 1980 and 1990.

The population of Amherst Township has remained fairly stable in the last ten years as the total increased by just 1.6% from 5,786 in 1980 to 5,879 in 1990. This is consistent with the trend in most Lorain County communities which have either decreased or increased only slightly between 1980 and 1990 (see Table 1). The city of Avon Lake is the exception, showing a 13.9% increase during the same period.

TABLE 1
TOTAL POPULATION
LORAIN COUNTY & SELECTED COMMUNITIES 1980-1990

	1980	1990	CHANGE 1980-1990	PERCENT CHANGE
LORAIN COUNTY	274,909	271,126	-3,783	-1.4%
AMHERST CITY	10,638	10,332	-306	-2.9%
AMHERST TWP.	5,786	5,879	93	1.6%
AVON CITY	7,241	7,337	96	1.3%
AVON LAKE CITY	13,222	15,066	1,844	13.9%
ELYRIA CITY	57,538	56,746	-792	-1.4%
LORAIN CITY	75,416	71,245	-4,171	-5.5%
N. RIDGEVILLE	21,522	21,564	42	.2%
S. AMHERST VILLAGE	1,848	1,765	-83	-4.5%

SOURCES: U.S. Bureau of the Census
Lorain County Planning Commission

However, the change in the number of dwelling units is more indicative of the growth in a community. Table 2 shows that Amherst Township's growth rate is slightly higher than the County as a whole. Between 1980 and 1990, the number of dwelling units in the Township increased by 6.1%, while Lorain County as a whole increased by only 4.2%. Further, while the Township and the City of Amherst have showed modest gains between 1980-1990, the other surrounding communities have actually decreased or experienced a minimal increase in their housing stock. Elyria's housing stock increased by only 2.4% while Lorain and South Amherst Village both had slight declines in dwelling units in the last ten years.

TABLE 2
TOTAL DWELLING UNITS
LORAIN COUNTY & SELECTED COMMUNITIES 1980-1990

	1980	1990	CHANGE 1980-1990	PERCENT CHANGE
LORAIN COUNTY	95,953	99,937	3,984	4.2%
AMHERST CITY	3,609	3,864	255	7.1%
AMHERST TWP.	2,062	2,187	125	6.1%
AVON CITY	2,158	2,425	267	12.4%
AVON LAKE CITY	4,446	5,588	1,142	25.7%
ELYRIA CITY	22,010	22,544	534	2.4%
LORAIN CITY	27,594	27,544	-50	-0.2%
N. RIDGEVILLE	6,777	7,305	528	7.8%
S. AMHERST VILLAGE	626	617	-9	-1.4%

SOURCES: U.S. Bureau of the Census
Lorain County Planning Commission

Table 3 indicates the nature of housing in Amherst Township which generally consists of owner occupied single-family homes on individual lots. The top portion of the table shows that the majority, or 85.3% of the total 2,178 units were owner occupied and 70.9% were single-family units. Mobile homes represent the next largest housing type in the Township, accounting for 23.4% of the total. Multi-family units account for less than 6% of the total.

TABLE 3
CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSING
AMHERST TOWNSHIP 1990

	UNITS	PERCENT OF TOTAL
OWNER OCCUPIED	2,228	85.3%
RENTAL	311	11.9%
VACANT	73	2.8%
	NUMBER	PERCENT OF TOTAL
1-UNIT	1,851	70.9%
2-4	98	3.8%
5+	51	2.0%
MOBILE HOME, TRAILER, OTHER	612	23.4%
TOTAL	2,612⁽¹⁾	100.0%

(1) CENSUS TRACT 504 CONTAINS THE SOUTHEAST PORTION OF THE CITY OF AMHERST
 SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census

By analyzing records of recent building permits issued, it is possible to gauge the trend of housing development in a community. The number of building permits issued for Amherst Township between 1991 and 1993 has averaged 35 dwelling units/year. As Table 4 shows, this rate is somewhat lower when compared to some of the adjacent communities in Lorain County -- on a percentage basis. The Township however, has recently experienced development rates which compare more favorably with other communities in the region. For example, Elyria has over ten times more dwelling units than Amherst Township, yet Elyria's yearly average is just over twice that of the Township's rate.

TABLE 4
RATES OF HOUSING CONSTRUCTION
LORAIN COUNTY & SELECTED COMMUNITIES 1991-1993

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED FOR LORAIN COUNTY & SELECTED COMMUNITIES 1991-93		PERCENT OF TOTAL HOUSING UNITS BUILT IN THE COUNTY	UNITS/YEAR
LORAIN COUNTY	2,557	100.0%	852
AMHERST CITY(1)	134	5.2%	67
AMHERST TWP.	106	4.1%	35
AVON CITY	250	9.8%	83
AVON LAKE CITY	367	14.4%	122
ELYRIA CITY	239	9.3%	80
LORAIN CITY	154	6.0%	51
N. RIDGEVILLE	403	15.8%	134
S. AMHERST VILLAGE	3	.1%	1

(1) Includes 1991,1992; 1993 unavailable.

SOURCE: Lorain County Planning Commission

Although the housing building rate in Amherst Township has been modest between 1980 and 1990, it has recently increased. The Township's average of 35 dwelling units per year between 1991 - 1993 is nearly three times the rate for the Township between 1980 - 1990 when there was an average of only 12.5 per year (See Table 5). Almost one-half of all the new residential units between 1980 - 1993 were constructed during the last four years -- less than 30% of the time period. Also, the majority of the residential development in the Township during the past fourteen years has occurred in the northeast portion of the Township commonly known as the "Hidden Valley" area.

TABLE 5
RATES OF HOUSING CONSTRUCTION
AMHERST TOWNSHIP

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF UNITS	UNIT INCREASE	
		TOTAL	PER YEAR AVG
1970	1,427	-	-
1980	2,062	635	63.5
1990	2,187	125	12.5
1993	2,293	106(1)	35.3

(1) UNITS BASED ON NUMBER OF BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED 1991-1993.
SOURCES: U.S. Bureau of the Census
Lorain County Planning Commission

C. PATTERN OF EXISTING LAND USE

Table 6 shows the land allocation by zoning district for Amherst Township. Most of the land in the Township is zoned for residential uses (79.6%). The vast majority, (79.5%), is zoned in two single-family categories, R1-1 and R1-2. Only .1% is zoned for multi-family uses. The R1-1 district is predominant throughout the Township as Map 2 on the following page illustrates. The R1-2 is generally limited to the "Hidden Valley" area north of Middle Ridge Road while small areas of R1-2 also exist in two other locations. The Mobile Home district (MHPD-1) located north of S.R. 113 has recently been expanded.

Commercial zoning, accounting for 9.1% of the Township, is concentrated mainly at the intersection of S.R. 113 and S.R. 58 and extends south to the Township line. The industrial zoning is located in two large districts: one in the southwest quadrant of the Township and another north of the Turnpike, east of S.R. 58.

TABLE 6
LAND AREA BY ZONING DISTRICT
AMHERST TOWNSHIP

	ACRES	PERCENT OF TOTAL
INDUSTRIAL	1,090	11.3%
COMMERCIAL	878	9.1%
MS-1	71	.7%
GB-1	807	8.4%
RESIDENTIAL	7,696	79.6%
R1-1	7,609	78.7%
R1-2	75	.8%
MR-1	4	.04%
MHPD-1	8	.08%
TOTAL ACREAGE	9,664(1)	100.0%

(1) SOURCE: LORAIN COUNTY ENGINEER'S OFFICE (15.1 SQ. MI.)

- R1-1 Agricultural Residential
- R1-2 Low Density Residential
- R2-1 Two Family Medium Density Residential
- MR-1 Multiple Family Residential
- MHPD-1 Mobile Home Park
- GB-1 General Business
- MS-1 Motorist Service
- LI-1 Light Industrial

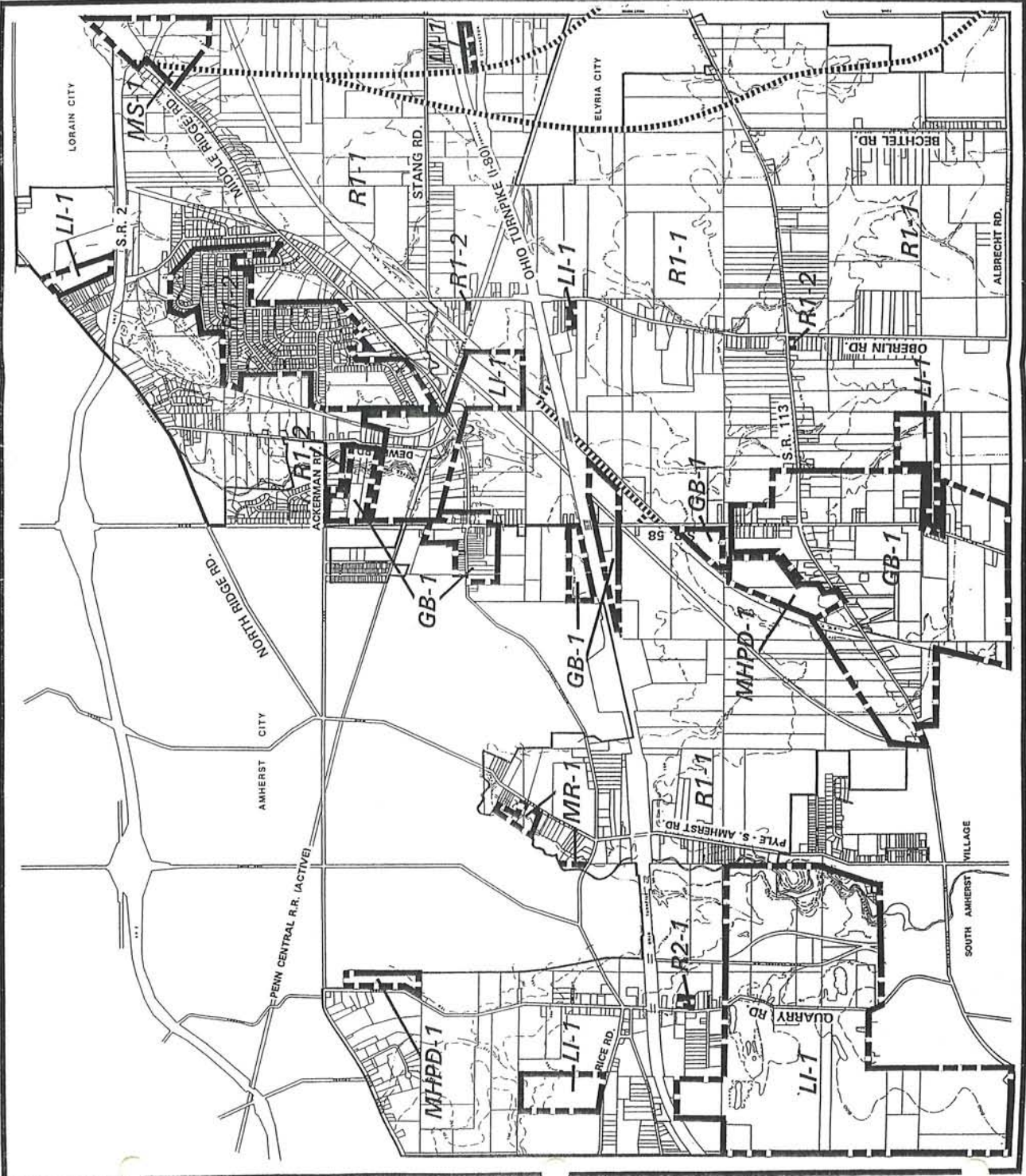
CURRENT ZONING MAP 2

AMHERST TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN

NOVEMBER 1994



D.B. FURTEL, INC. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS



The allocation of the Township's land area by use (Table 7) indicates that the majority of the land in Amherst Township remains undeveloped. Of the 9,664 total acres in the Township, 3,116 acres or 31.3% is currently developed. The majority, or 85.4%, of the developed land consists of residential uses, with the largest concentration occurring in the northwest portion of the Township between Middle Ridge Road and North Ridge Road east of Dewey Road (see Map 3). Most of this residential land consists of single-family homes on 1/2 to 1 acre lots. Mobile homes represent the second largest housing type. They are concentrated in two parks -- one located on the east side of Quarry Road north of Rice Road and the other on S.R. 113 west of S.R. 58 which was recently approved for expansion.

Industrially developed land constitutes the next largest category of land use in the Township. This is primarily found in the area known as Cleveland Quarries which is located in the southwestern portion of the Township.

The commercial development occurs mainly on S.R. 58 at the intersections of S.R. 113, the Ohio Turnpike (I-80) and Middle Ridge Road.

TABLE 7
DEVELOPED ACRES
AMHERST TOWNSHIP

GENERAL ZONING CLASSIFICATION	EXISTING	% OF DEVELOPED LAND	AT CAPACITY	% OF DEVELOPED LAND
RESIDENTIAL	2,661	85.4%	7,601	78.7%
COMMERCIAL	128	4.0%	878	9.1%
INDUSTRIAL	232	7.6%	1,090	11.3%
OPEN SPACE/ RECREATION	95	3.0%	95	0.1%
TOTAL DEVELOPED	3,116		9,664	
TOTAL TOWNSHIP ACRES	9,664		9,664	
% DEVELOPED	31.3%		100.0%	

**CENTRAL LORAIN
CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES**

- A WESTERN ROUTE
- B EASTERN ROUTE
- C WEST RIDGE WIDENING



OHIO TURNPIKE



EXISTING RETAIL AREAS



COMMERCIAL &
INDUSTRIAL ZONING



EXISTING EDGE OF
DEVELOPED AREA

EXISTING CONDITIONS

MAP 3

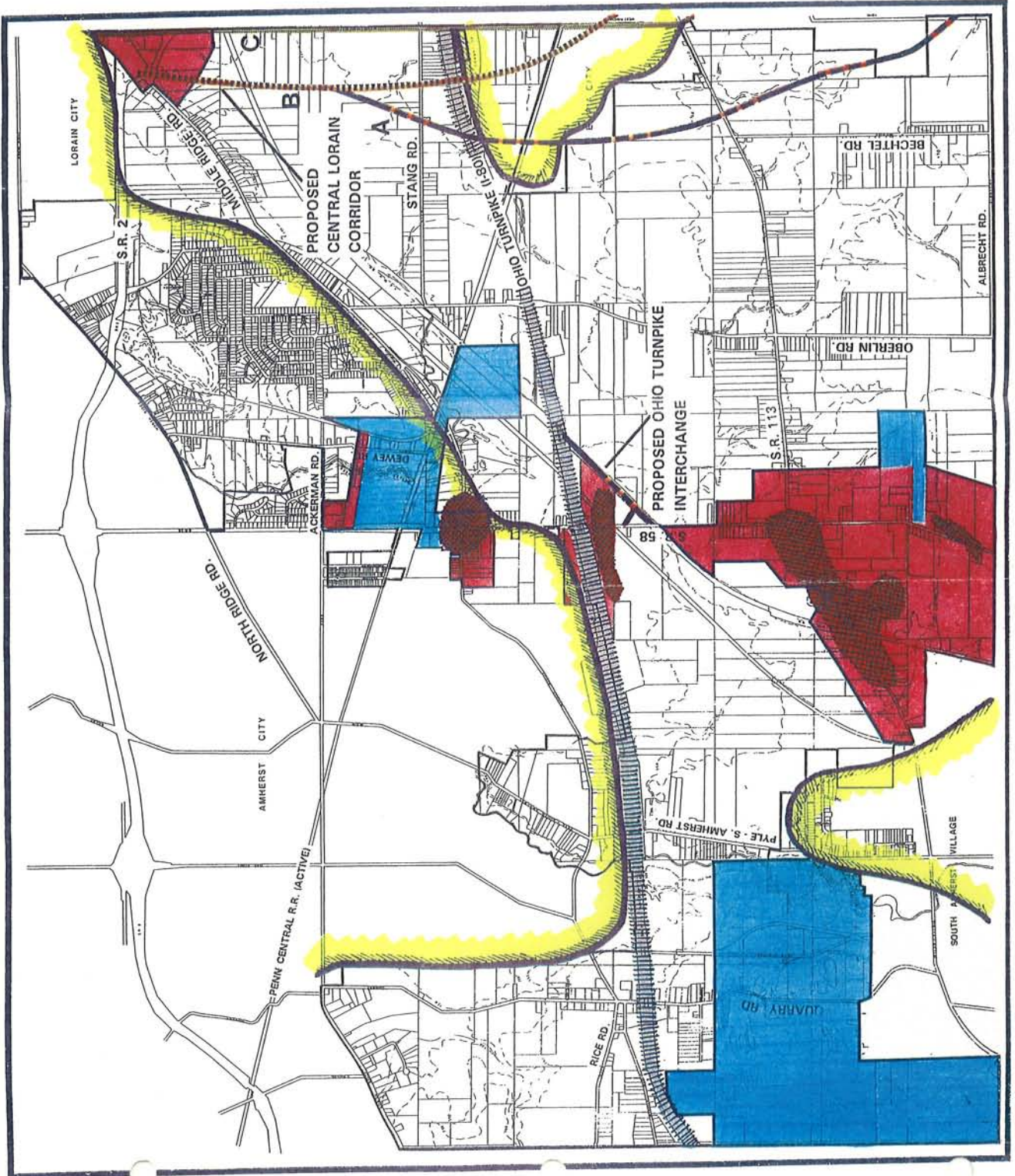
**AMHERST TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN**

OCTOBER 1994



D.B. HUBBARD, INC.

PLANNING AND LAND DEVELOPMENT



Residentially zoned land not only represents the largest category of developed land in the Township, but also the greatest amount of vacant land (5,035 acres). Most of this land (5,000 acres) is zoned R1-1, which requires a one-acre building lot. Table 8 summarizes the existing residential development and the maximum potential residential development. This potential was estimated by using all of the vacant residential land by zoning district. A typical yield for a standard subdivision is determined by: assuming a minimum lot area and width for each district; adding a standard road allowance; and using an 80% efficiency "factor" which acknowledges that not all subdivided lots will be the minimum size permitted. It should be stressed that all vacant residential land was considered and that this projection reflects the absolute maximum potential capacity of the land under the current zoning.

This method results in a potential of 3,934 additional dwelling units that could be developed. Considering the current average household size of 2.6 persons per unit, this would result in an additional 10,228 residents, or a "build out" population of 16,107.

TABLE 8
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY - CURRENT ZONING

ESTIMATED DWELLING UNITS		
	ACRES	UNITS
(1) Existing Development	2,566	2,187
(2) Future Development (a)	5,035	3,934
(3) Total Residential Development	7,601	6,121
ESTIMATED POPULATION		
Existing Population	5,879	
Projected Additional Based on line 2: 3,934 units @ 2.6 persons/d. u.	10,228	
TOTAL POPULATION AT BUILDOUT	16,107	

(a) Includes 5,000 acres available in R1-1 classification and 35 acres in R1-2 classification. Using the minimum lot area and width for each zoning district, a standard road allowance and an 80% efficiency, the average density was .77 units/acre in the R1-1 district and 2.46 units/acre in the R1-2 district.

D. COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Currently, there are few public facilities in the Township. The Township has just 10 acres of public park land -- the soccer field. Unlike many other communities, there are no schools located in the Township to supplement this total with recreation fields.

Portions of four school districts are located within the Township: Amherst, Elyria, Firelands and Oberlin (see Map 4). The majority of Amherst Township residents are served by the Amherst District. The South Amherst School District encompasses most of the Township west of S.R. 58, but this is largely non-residential land including the quarry area. Elyria's district occupies the Township's eastern boundary while a small section in the southeast is served by the Oberlin School District.

The Fall 1994 enrollment for the Amherst School District is 3,378, which is the highest in ten years and represents a 7% increase from the 1991 total of 3,143. This trend appears to be continuing as the 1995 enrollment is estimated to be 3,467 -- an increase of 89 students from the previous year.

E. HIGHWAY NETWORK

The Ohio Turnpike (I-80) and S.R. 2 are the two limited access highways located in the Township. Middle Ridge Road is the only exit from S.R. 2. Currently, there are no interchanges for the Turnpike located in Amherst Township. State Route 58 is the major north-south arterial in the Township and Oberlin Road, a secondary connector. Middle Ridge Road serves as the east-west collector in the northern portion of the Township and S.R. 113 is the major east-west connector through the southern portion.

There are plans, which have been in existence for several years, for a Central Lorain Corridor to connect S.R. 2 with S.R. 10, east of Oberlin. There are three alternative routes to complete the section between S.R. 2 and S.R. 20 being considered for this Route, all of which are located in the Township (Map 3). The western alternative (A) would potentially have the most significant impact on and would require the most property acquisition within the Township. The impact would be felt at the proposed surface exits: Middle Ridge Road and S.R. 113. Alternative B would include a surface exit at Middle Ridge and a direct connection to the Ohio Turnpike with no surface exit. This would require significant land acquisition in the Stang Road area. The other alternative (C) proposes to widen West Ridge Road which would require minimal land acquisition in the Township and would affect only the intersection at Stang Road. This project, however, is at least 7-10 years from being constructed.

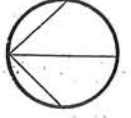
Closer to reality, an interchange for the Ohio Turnpike is planned for S.R. 58. This would be only the second interchange in Lorain County and construction is scheduled to begin in 1995. This interchange has the potential to stimulate commercial development on S.R. 58 adjacent to the entry/exit location.

SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOUNDARIES / TRAFFIC
VOLUMES

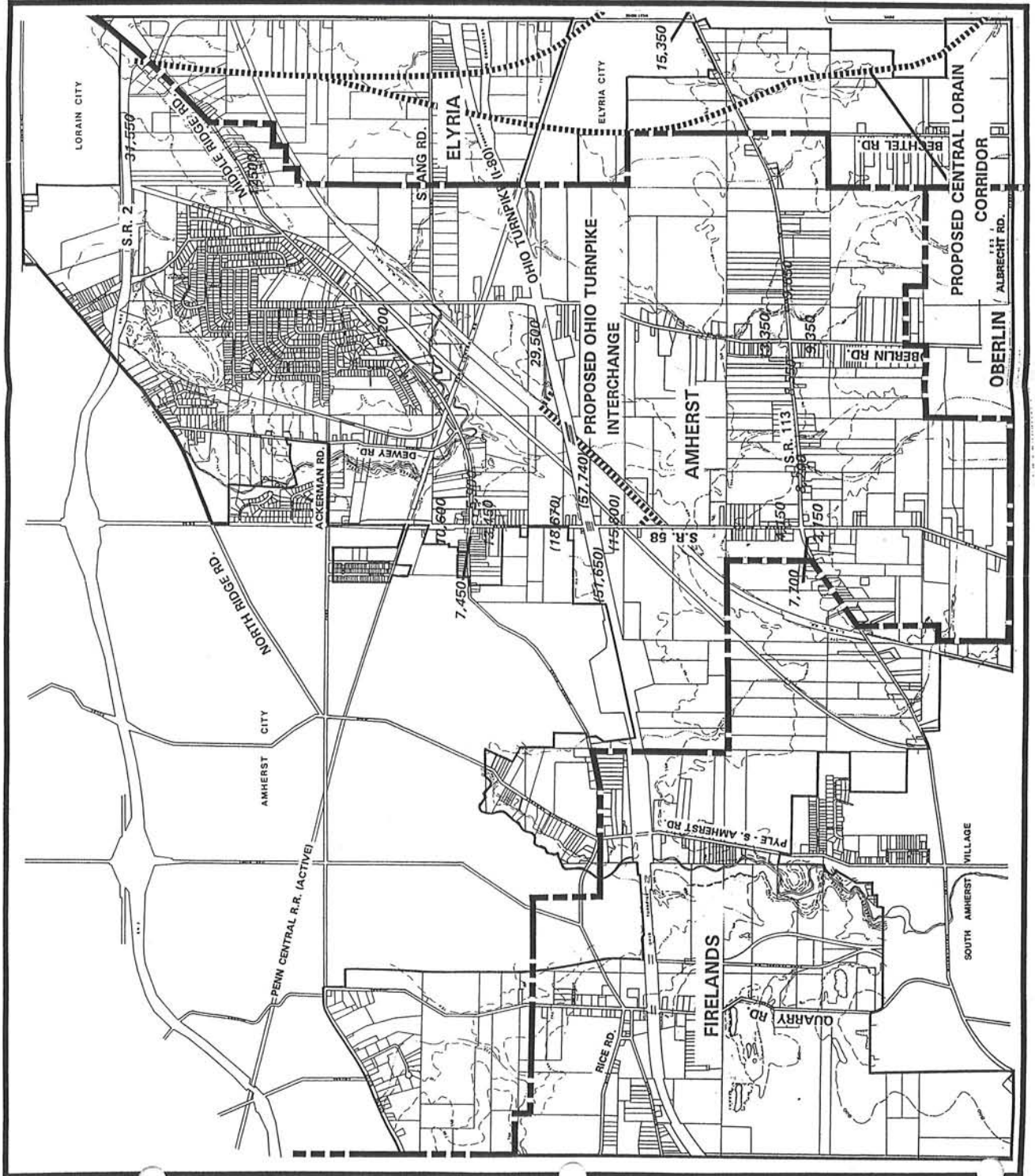
MAP 4

AMHERST TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN

NOVEMBER 1994



D.B. FICHTL, INC.
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS



F. LOCATION CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPMENT

If the Township seeks to attract its fair share of economic development, it must be sensitive to:

1. The criteria used by the private sector in selecting appropriate locations for industrial, office or retail land uses; and
2. The extent to which neighboring communities, (with similar economic development goals), have equal or more suitable sites.

All of these sites are competing for the region's finite amount of expected development. Competitive sites influence the amount of economic development Amherst can expect.

To be competitive, industrial uses require relatively flat sites, central water and sewer service, and good highway access and visibility. The existing industrially zoned land in the Township meets very few of these criteria. The Quarry area, which contains approximately 800 acres of industrially zoned land, has poor highway access, minimal visibility and uneven terrain. The other major industrial area, located north and south of the intersection of Middle Ridge Road and the Penn Central Railroad, while adjacent to Route 58, has some difficult topographic conditions. Unfortunately for Amherst Township, there is a significant amount of industrially zoned land in neighboring eastern Lorain County communities which does meet most of these criteria.

There are three major anticipated public improvements which will enhance the viability for industrial land uses in the Township. First, the proposed Ohio Turnpike interchange at S.R. 58 will create potential industrial or commercial land with highway visibility and convenient access. Secondly, the Lorain County Engineer is planning a 10" sanitary sewer line along S.R. 58 throughout the Township. Finally, the Rural Lorain County Water Authority is constructing a 24" water main along the right-of-way of the Lorain and West Virginia Railroad. These infrastructure improvements will provide the utilities required for industrial or commercial development.

II. GOALS

The goals of this Plan were established after reviewing current conditions in the Township and the region. They were formulated through public forums and discussions with the Citizens for Economic Growth (CEG). The following goals form the basis for the development policies and objectives included in this Plan:

A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Increase opportunities for economic development so that Amherst Township is in a position to attract its "fair share" of the development that is expected in the region.
2. Assure quality development standards and manage traffic circulation within areas designated for economic development.

B. RESIDENTIAL

1. Establish a residential development pattern which recognizes the influences from surrounding non-residential land uses, existing and proposed highways, and utilities.
2. Preserve the "open environment" found in the Township by utilizing flexible residential zoning techniques to create open space areas.
3. Provide opportunities for a variety of housing types which offer choices to residents in all phases of the life cycle.

C. RECREATION

1. Establish an extensive and active recreation/open space system in the Township which preserves natural areas along streams and creeks and utilizes utility corridors for recreation trails.
2. Develop a formalized land acquisition program which assures reasonable distribution of parks and recreation throughout the Township to meet the active recreation needs of the Township residents.

D. TRANSPORTATION

1. Improve the transportation network to facilitate the economic development objectives while adequately managing increased traffic in a manner which minimizes traffic concentration and congestion.
2. Assure that new internal streets have appropriate inter-connections among adjacent parcels with similar expected uses.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE

1. Provide a full range of municipal services for Township residents and businesses.
2. Minimize the tax burden on residential properties by pursuing reasonable economic development objectives.

III. DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

A. RESIDENTIAL POLICIES

One of the fundamental goals of this Plan is to prepare for and control the economic development which the Township seeks and which will likely be enhanced when the proposed infrastructure improvements (Turnpike interchange, Central Lorain Corridor and Route 58 sanitary sewer) are in place. In light of this goal, it becomes particularly important, through the housing policy, to adequately recognize and manage these as well as other surrounding influences: non-residential land uses, railroads and existing major highways, and other public utilities in place. The current residential zoning districts do not allow land owners to adequately address these conditions, nor do they provide any incentives for preserving open space. Further, it would be difficult to preserve the Township's current open environment by standard residential subdivision development.

Another goal is to provide a variety of housing types which offer choices to residents in all phases of the life cycle: single persons, young married, empty nesters, seniors, etc.

The following policies are intended to achieve these goals. The locations where these policies are to be applied are illustrated on Map 5.

1. Establish a residential development plan which reflects existing housing trends, current and proposed utilities and non-residential land uses by:
 - a. Permitting 12,500 sq. ft. lot sizes for all designated residential areas north of the Turnpike and east of Route 58. This is the permissible and prevailing density in Hidden Valley. This policy would permit this pattern of development to be extended into other areas in this portion of the Township which have similar location characteristics.
 - b. Permitting ½ acre lots south of the Turnpike and east of Route 58. This contrasts with the 1 acre lot size which is currently permitted. However, when the north-south corridor is constructed and the economic development policies are implemented along Route 58, the area available for single-family residential will be substantially reduced compared to the current residential area. Additionally, sanitary sewers are available in this portion of the Township. This area, in the long run, cannot be expected to retain its rural characteristics.

POTENTIAL ALBRECHT RD.
EXTENSION

POTENTIAL WIDENING

PROPOSED OHIO TURNPIKE
INTERCHANGE

EXISTING NON-RESIDENTIAL

FUTURE NON-RESIDENTIAL

EXISTING COMMERCIAL/
INDUSTRIAL ZONING

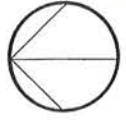
ISOLATED INDUSTRIAL
PARCELS

GENERAL
LAND USE POLICY

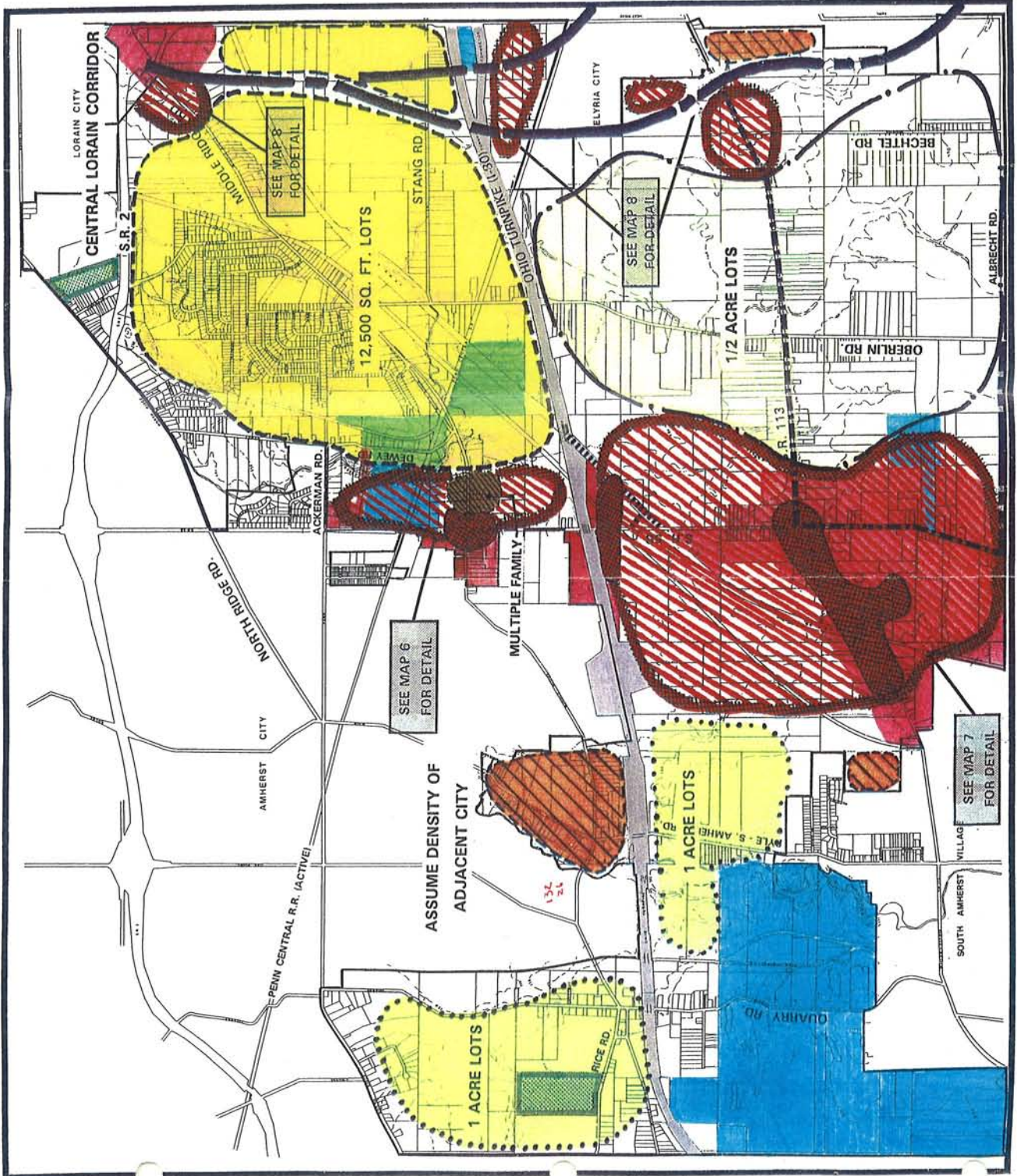
MAP 5

AMHERST TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN

OCTOBER 1994



D.B. HUBBELL, INC. PLANNING AND LAND MANAGEMENT



- c. Permitting, in those "isolated land areas" surrounded by either South Amherst or Amherst, residential development at densities comparable to those in the adjacent incorporated areas.
 - d. Preserving, generally, the rural residential densities (one acre minimum lot size) in the western portion of the Township.
 - e. Permitting higher density residential development in suitable locations adjacent to businesses, existing or proposed, on the east side of Route 58 north of the Turnpike to provide a buffer for the single-family residential land to the east.
2. Encouraging the application of flexible zoning which would permit, in addition to the standard single-family, cluster single-family or townhouses (single-family attached) as part of a planned unit development (P.U.D.). The requirements for the P.U.D.'s, depending on surrounding characteristics, would allow:
- a. The statistical density permitted by conventional zoning to be applied with flexibility on a site which is eligible for a P.U.D. because the site has:
 - Unique natural features;
 - Limited road access;
 - Irregular size or shape; or
 - Significant easements/rights-of-way traversing the site.

Any of these conditions, individually or in combination, may make the site difficult to develop with standard single-family subdivisions.
 - b. An additional two units/acre above the standard statistical density on sites or portions of sites which are adjacent to and, therefore, impacted by either:
 - A major existing or proposed highway;
 - An active railroad track; or
 - Existing or expected non-residential zoning.

The Plan does not designate the specific areas for P.U.D.'s. Planned unit developments would be considered a conditional use subject to an acceptable

plan being approved by the Township. The units may be distributed in any reasonable manner throughout the site and the unit types would always be limited to standard single-family, clusters or townhouses.

Slightly higher density than the single-family density otherwise permitted is established to encourage the application of planned development in the areas eligible for them. The following illustrates how this may be applied on two 100-acre parcels. It is assumed in this example that the Planned Development is east of Route 58 and south of the Turnpike. The permitted single-family density is proposed to be two units per acre. The density permitted in the areas eligible for P.U.D. is assumed to be four units per acre.

On one of the sites, 20% of the property is eligible for a P.U.D. Therefore, 80 acres are permitted two units per acre and 20 acres are permitted four units per acre. In total, 240 units are permitted resulting in an overall density of 2.4 units per acre ($20 \times 4 + 80 \times 2 = 240$).

On the other site, 80% of the property is eligible for a P.U.D. Therefore, 20 acres are permitted two units per acre and 80 acres are permitted four units per acre. In this option, a total of 360 units are permitted resulting in an overall density of 3.6 units per acre ($80 \times 4 + 20 \times 2 = 360$).

3. Rezoning in appropriate and isolated industrial areas which are currently a potentially adverse intrusion on otherwise residential areas.

One such parcel is located in a predominantly residential/rural area north of Rice Road and west of Quarry Road. The second isolated district is located in the northeast quadrant of the Township between S.R. 2 and North Ridge Road adjacent to a residential neighborhood.

Considering these residential policies and the areas of higher densities proposed, the residential development capacity/population estimate (Table 8) in Section I, Part C should be revised. This revised capacity is found in Appendix A.

The same cautions noted for Table 8 also apply to this revised potential capacity. At the current growth rate, the ultimate capacities will not be reached for generations. More realistically, in twenty years the population of the Township is likely to be between 8,000 and 11,000. Table A-2 in Appendix A projects the length of time required to reach the maximum buildout population at various growth rates.

B. GENERAL COMMERCIAL POLICIES

Appropriate locations for retail and industrial development will play an important role in the economic vitality of the Township. Currently, 1,968 acres, or 20.4%, of all the land in the Township is zoned for industrial or commercial uses. Of this total, only 360 acres are developed, which represents less than 12% of all the developed land in Amherst Township. A significant amount of the vacant industrially zoned land is located in the southwestern quadrant of the Township near the Cleveland Quarries site. There are also smaller isolated parcels throughout the Township.

Although there is an abundance of vacant industrially and commercially zoned land, it is unlikely that the land will be developed in a timely manner considering it does not meet the location criteria for today's competitive market. If this land continues underutilized, it is likely that the residentially developed property will bear a disproportionate tax burden. Therefore, to meet the goal of attracting its "fair share" of economic development, Amherst Township must provide better opportunities for private enterprise by considering their location preferences, while protecting residential areas. This can be accomplished by:

1. Providing competitive locations for retail and industrial development.

The most probable location for retail, office and industrial expansion or development is along S.R. 58. In addition to its being centrally located and having direct access to S.R. 2, the proposed Ohio Turnpike (I-80) interchange and sanitary sewer project will enhance its viability for economic development. Since much of this land is already zoned for commercial uses, the expansion of non-residential zoning would occur south of the Turnpike east and west of S.R. 58 and north of S.R. 113.

2. Providing limited commercial expansion at interchanges along the Central Lorain Corridor.

The other areas targeted for potential commercial development are the at-grade intersections of the proposed Central Lorain Corridor when it is constructed; Middle Ridge Road and S.R. 113. Although this project may be several years from construction, it is important to confine non-residential development in small areas at these intersections so as to prevent strip commercial construction along S.R. 113 and Middle Ridge Road and to minimize commercial intrusion in otherwise residential areas.

C. ROUTE 58 CORRIDOR POLICIES

The infrastructure improvements planned for the Ohio Turnpike (I-80) and S.R. 58 help create a "corridor" which is the focus of economic development in Amherst Township. The following policies are described below and illustrated on Map 6 and Map 7:

Map 6

1. Retain the existing general business district at the southeast corner of S.R. 58 and Ackerman Road, as Map 6 shows, with the following modifications:
 - a. Adding more complete parking setback and landscape standards; and
 - b. Establishing location, maximum coverage and screening criteria for bulk storage.

Access for commercial properties should, however, be limited to S.R. 58. Any additional commercial access on Ackerman Road should be discouraged.

2. Establish an office/industrial district south of the existing commercial area on the east side of S.R. 58 and extending east to Beaver Creek. This area, which is bisected by the Penn Central Railroad tracks, is largely vacant and offers both visibility and convenient access. It is important to orient this office/industrial to S.R. 58 only. The southern boundary should not extend to Middle Ridge Road. The southern limit is flexible, however, and depends on the northern extent of the multiple-family residential area proposed in this area on both the north and south sides of Middle Ridge Road. This higher density residential district (12 dwelling units per acre) provides a buffer between the commercial uses along S.R. 58 and the residential land to the east.
3. Maintain the existing general business district located at Middle Ridge Road and S.R. 58 and extending west to the Township line. Improved development standards, (as previously described in Number 1 above), are required to assure quality construction and properly managed traffic circulation. Government facilities for the Township could be located in this area. It offers a centralized location, reinforces the retail objectives along S.R. 58, and helps create a Township focal point.
4. Establish an office/retail district northeast of I-80 and S.R. 58, to capitalize on the visibility from I-80. Access to Route 58 would be controlled to minimize turning movements and to help maintain traffic flow on Route 58.

REFER TO SECTION III, PART C FOR DESCRIPTION

MODIFIED GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

OFFICE/RETAIL

OFFICE/INDUSTRIAL

MODIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT

S.R. 58 CORRIDOR POLICY NORTH

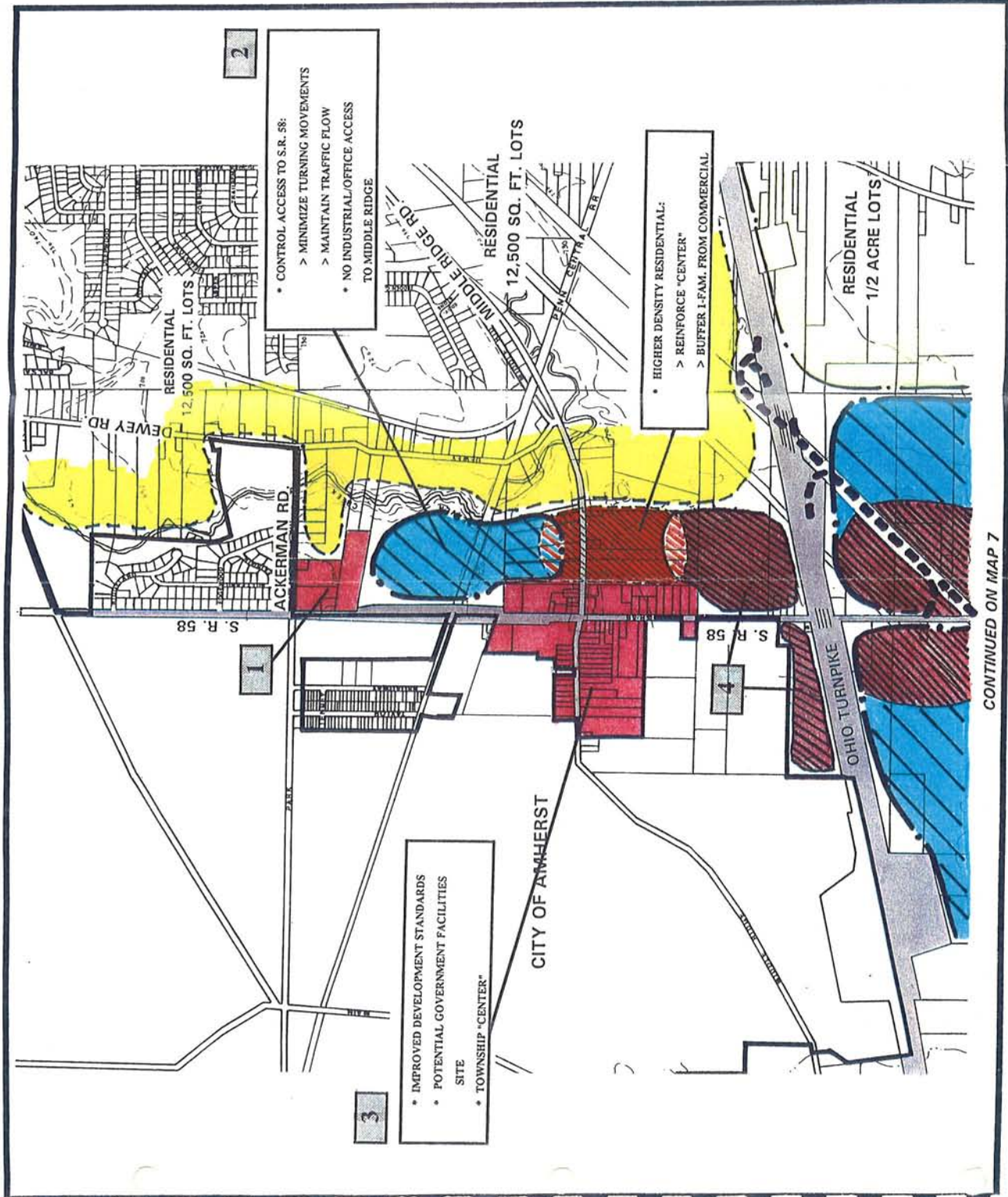
MAP 6

AMHERST TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN

NOVEMBER 1994



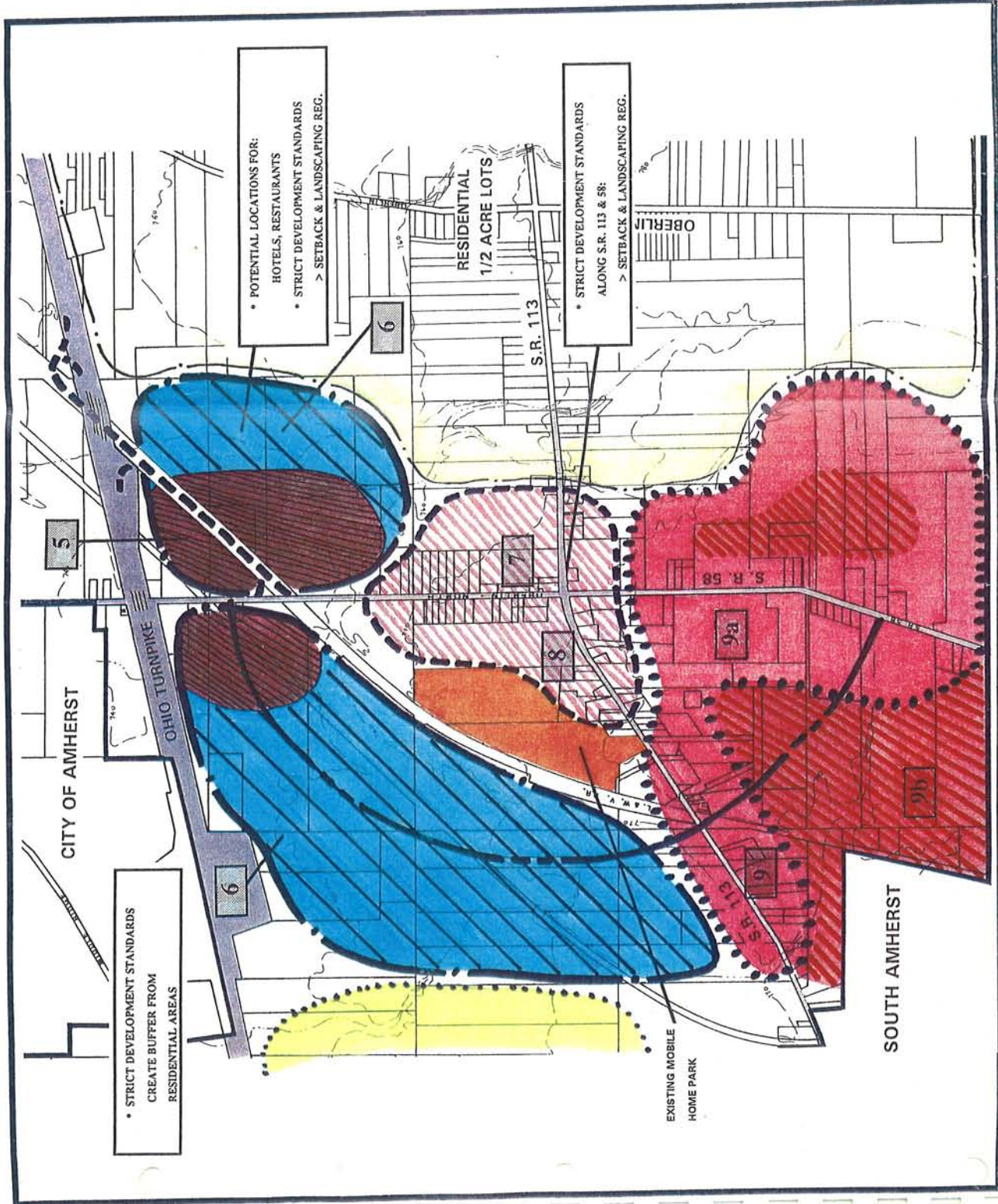
D.B. HEITZ, INC. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS



CONTINUED ON MAP 7

Map 7

5. The southeast corner of I-80 and S.R. 58, because of its visibility and highway access, has the greatest potential to become the focus of economic development in the Township. Appropriate zoning, particularly in these areas adjacent to the at-grade entrance/exit points, is crucial to assure development which will benefit the Township. Since development is obviously dependent upon the private market, it is important to permit a variety of uses.
6. Apply a mixed use retail/office/industrial district along the S.R. 58 Corridor. In addition to the basic uses, this district would permit hotels, restaurants and automotive dealerships. To maintain a high quality image along S.R. 58, outdoor storage should be limited by strict site development and landscape standards.
7. Apply the existing neighborhood business district, with some modifications, along S.R. 58 south of the mixed use district and extending south through the S.R. 113 intersection. This district should be amended by:
 - a. Adding a broader range of retail stores;
 - b. Adding administrative offices as permitted uses;
 - c. Permitting automotive sales and services as a conditional use; and
 - d. Establishing more definitive parking setback and landscaping standards.
8. The new mixed use and modified neighborhood business districts would also apply to the west side of S.R. 58. Strict rear setback standards are particularly important to protect the Mobile Home park and the single-family residential land west of the proposed office/industrial district.
9. Modify the general business district along S.R. 58, south of S.R. 113 by establishing:
 - a. More complete parking setback and landscape standards; and
 - b. Location, maximum coverage and screening criteria for bulk storage.



REFER TO SECTION III, PART C FOR DESCRIPTION

#

POSSIBLE STREET CONNECTION

EXISTING GENERAL BUSINESS (Bulk Storage with Standards)

OFFICE/RETAIL

OFFICE/INDUSTRIAL

MODIFIED GENERAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

MODIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT

S.R. 58 CORRIDOR POLICY SOUTH

MAP 7

AMHERST TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN

NOVEMBER 1994

0 1200

OB&H CONSULTANTS

D. CENTRAL LORAIN CORRIDOR POLICIES

In addition to the I-80 interchange and S.R. 58 sewer project, the proposed Central Lorain Corridor will potentially have a significant impact on the eastern portion of the Township. However, it is important to remember that this project may be several years from construction. Therefore, the policies described below and illustrated on Map 8 would only apply if and when the proposed Central Lorain Corridor is constructed. (Note: Until the road is constructed, the residential policies that apply north and south of the Turnpike, respectively, would apply to this corridor area as well. See Section III, A.)

1. The modified neighborhood district, with more complete landscaping/setback requirements and other modifications, as described in Section C, should be applied at the Middle Ridge Road intersection. It is important to limit this district to avoid unregulated "strip" commercial development along Middle Ridge Road and to minimize the adverse impact on an otherwise residential area.
2. The 12,500 square foot lots proposed for the northeast quadrant, described in Section III, A, would also apply to the area between the Central Lorain Corridor and the eastern Township line. If the West Ridge Road alternative is chosen, then the 12,500 square foot lot density would occupy the entire area north of the Ohio Turnpike and east of S.R. 58.
3. The triangular shaped area between the Ohio Turnpike and the Elyria border is adjacent to industrial uses to the north and has land zoned for heavy industry to the south. If the Central Lorain Corridor is constructed, either the east or west alternative, the land would be further isolated from the Township and more oriented toward Elyria. Access to this area is from West Ridge Road. With the Corridor construction, this property with significant highway visibility and its isolation from the Township would be appropriate for office/industrial use.
4. The area north of the proposed S.R. 113 intersection between the Central Lorain Corridor and the Elyria border offers opportunities for possible office, industrial and retail uses.
5. South of the Turnpike, only the proposed western alternative would significantly impact the Township. The at-grade intersection at S.R. 113 makes this area appropriate for the same policy as the Middle Ridge Road intersection. The modified neighborhood business district as previously described should be applied to this intersection and limited to prevent the proliferation of commercial development along S.R. 113.

REFER TO SECTION III, PART D FOR DESCRIPTION OF AREA

#

A WESTERN ROUTE

B EASTERN ROUTE

C WEST RIDGE WIDENING

OFFICE/RETAIL

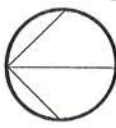

OFFICE/INDUSTRIAL

MODIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD BUSINESS DISTRICT

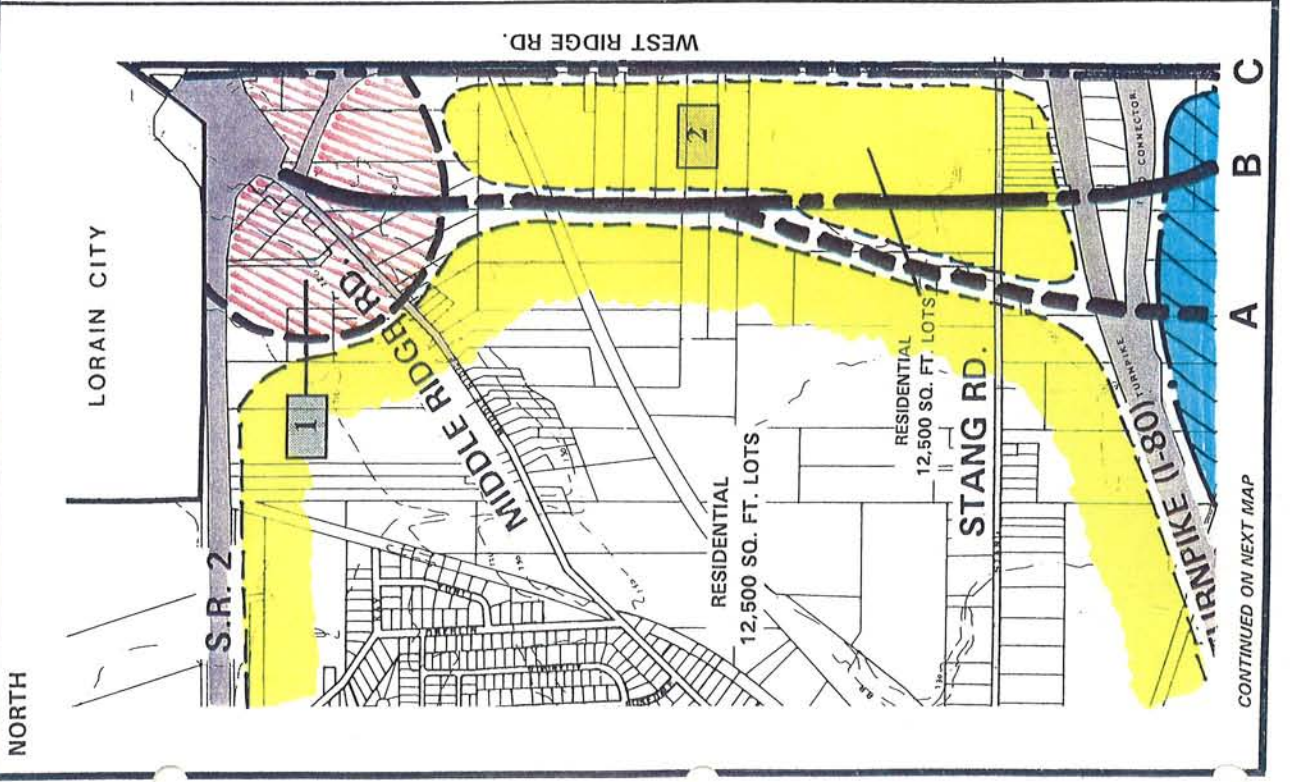
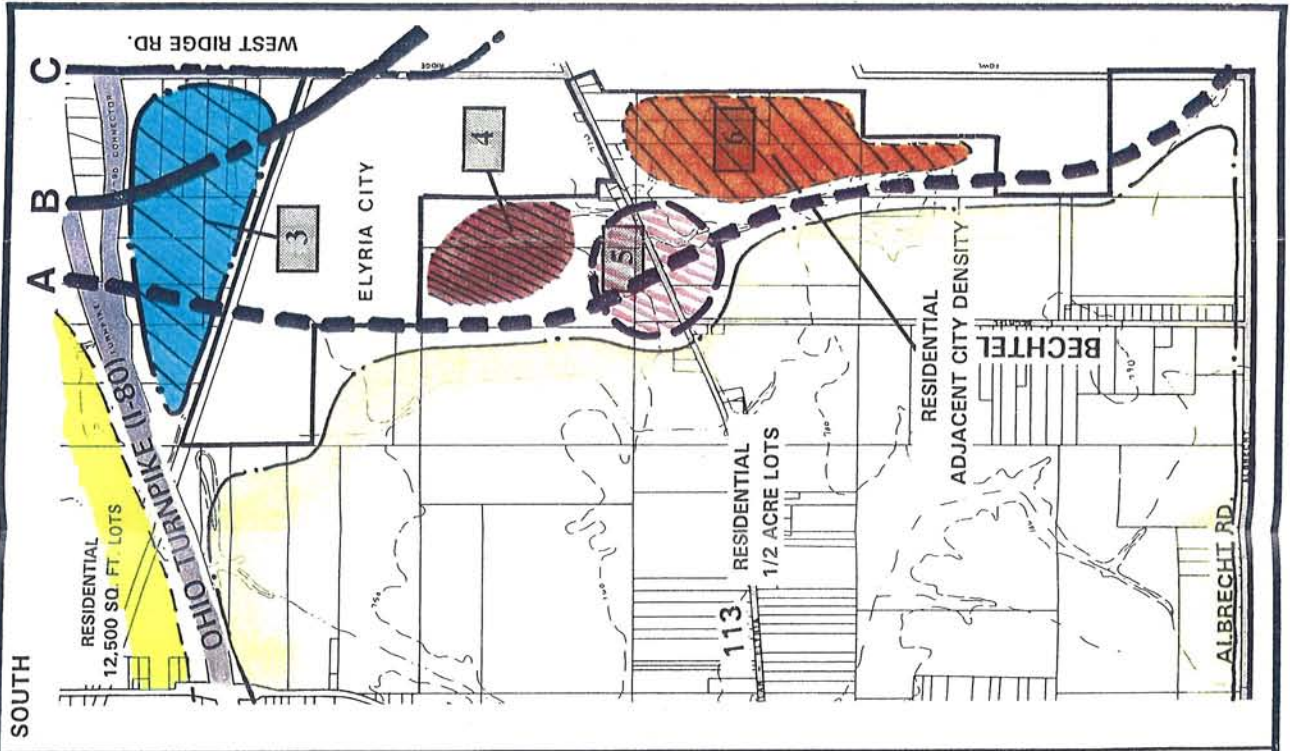
CENTRAL LORAIN CORRIDOR POLICY

MAP 8

AMHERST TOWNSHIP COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN

PLAN AND DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANTS
D.B. HART, INC.



CONTINUED ON NEXT MAP

6. The area south of S.R. 113 bordered by the Corridor on the west and the Elyria line to the east would be isolated from the Township and appropriate for the residential density permitted in the adjacent city of Elyria. Both residential land uses and vacant residentially zoned land occupy the area along the Elyria border.

E. RECREATION/OPEN SPACE POLICIES

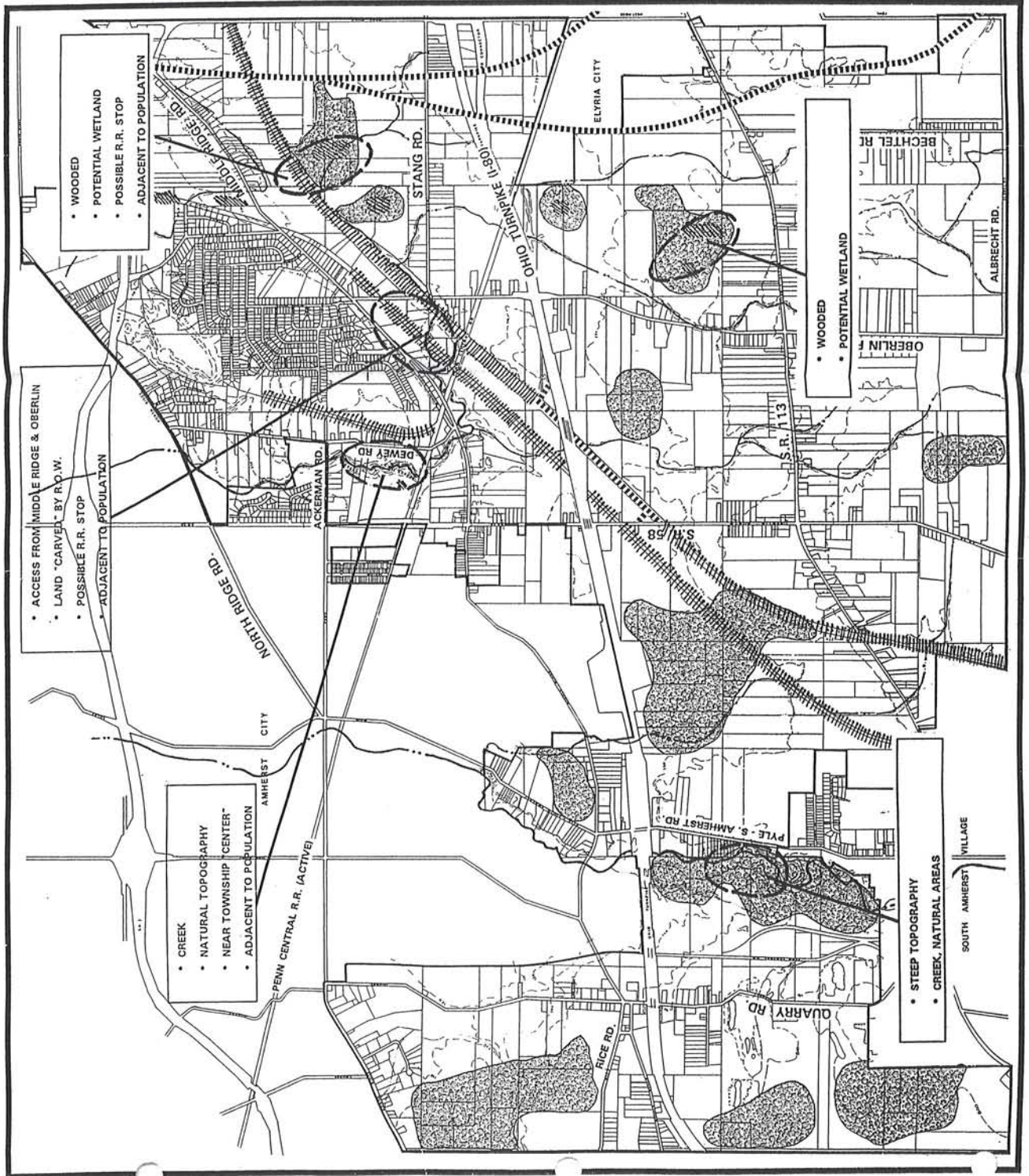
National standards suggest that at least 6 to 10 acres of active recreation areas are appropriate for every 1,000 residents. Based on the estimated population resulting from this Plan, a minimum of 150 to 250 acres of park land would be required at buildout.

1. With only the existing 10 acres, the Township is currently deficient by approximately 25 acres. To meet these standards, the Township should develop and formalize a land acquisition program to provide active recreation land. After the 25 acres are purchased to at least meet the 6 acres per 1,000 residents standard, an additional .78 to 1.3 acres per year would be required to keep pace with a growth rate of 130 persons per year. Sites should be selected which:
 - a. Assure reasonable distribution of parks throughout the Township;
 - b. May not be the most suitable sites for residential development because of size, shape or surrounding impacts.

Below is an example of the parks by type and size that may be required to meet minimum active recreation standards:

TYPE	SIZE (ACRES)
Community Park	80
Neighborhood 3 @ 15 acres	45
Mini Park 5 @ 1 acre	5
Conservancy Area	20
TOTAL	150

Map 9 illustrates areas of significant natural features and indicates potential locations for large community parks. The sites north of the Turnpike should be the highest priority because of the current population distribution. Second priority should be applied to the area north of S.R. 113 and east of Oberlin Road. The area adjacent to the Quarries should be the third priority.



- WOODED
- POTENTIAL WETLAND
- POSSIBLE R.R. STOP
- ADJACENT TO POPULATION

- ACCESS FROM MIDDLE RIDGE & OBERLIN LAND "CARVED" BY R.O.W.
- POSSIBLE R.R. STOP
- ADJACENT TO POPULATION

- CREEK
- NATURAL TOPOGRAPHY
- NEAR TOWNSHIP "CENTER"
- ADJACENT TO POPULATION

- WOODED
- POTENTIAL WETLAND

- STEEP TOPOGRAPHY
- CREEK, NATURAL AREAS

UTILITY R.O.W.
(POTENTIAL RECREATION
CORRIDOR)

WOODED AREA

POTENTIAL WETLAND

CREEK / DRAINAGE PATTERN

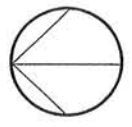
POTENTIAL PARK SITE

POTENTIAL RECREATION
SITES

MAP 9

AMHERST TOWNSHIP
COMPREHENSIVE ZONING PLAN

NOVEMBER 1994



2. In addition to typical public recreation land, open space should be reserved to maintain the natural atmosphere of the Township. This could be accomplished, in part, by:
 - a. Developing, to the extent possible, a trail system on existing utility corridors -- gas lines, abandoned rails, electric lines, etc.;
 - b. Requiring that in Planned developments (as described in Section III, A):
 - a portion of the property is reserved for open space and recreation; and
 - open space and trails between adjacent projects are interconnected;
 - c. Establishing reasonable development standards in the Zoning Resolution to assure preservation of natural areas along streams and creeks, regardless of the adjacent uses.

F. TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

In order to facilitate the Township's economic development goals while adequately managing the increased traffic, the following policies are recommended:

1. Supporting the proposed Turnpike Interchanges at Route 58;
2. Supporting the proposed north-south Central Lorain Corridor;
3. Assuring that new internal streets have appropriate inter-connections among adjacent parcels with similar expected uses so that more than a single access is available to existing streets; Specific connections (refer to Map 7) include:
 - a. A road from S.R. 58 to S.R. 113 in the northwest quadrant;
 - b. A road from S.R. 58 to S.R. 113 in the southwest quadrant.
4. Avoiding new street connections which would adversely affect residential areas;
5. Assuring that adequate alternative roads and capacities are available to minimize increased "regional" traffic on Middle Ridge and Oberlin Roads;

6. Recognizing that existing state routes may need to be widened, at least at intersections (either with existing streets or new streets), to facilitate traffic flow. The streets most likely to need such improvements are:
 - a. S.R. 113 east of S.R. 58; and
 - b. S.R. 58 south of S.R. 113 to the southern Township line.
7. Considering the extension of Albrecht west to S.R. 58.

G. DEVELOPMENT QUALITY/IMAGE POLICIES

The image of the Township is determined by the quality of its development. The visual quality and image influences the Township's ability to meet the economic development goals in this Plan. Therefore, the following are some of the administrative means to ensure this quality is developed and maintained:

1. Revising zoning standards which apply to existing non-residential development areas to establish -- adequate landscaping, buffering, more limited access and other suitable development controls;
2. Working with the Lorain and West Virginia Railroad (if a recreation/industrial line is reestablished in Amherst Township) by creating train "stops" with supporting facilities (parking, exhibitions, etc.) along the rail line. Depending on the need and function of the "stop", these could be located in either residential/recreational or business locations; and
3. Developing Township governmental facilities, as they are needed, in a central location which:
 - a. Reinforces the Township's business (retail) objectives; and
 - b. Helps create a Township center or focal point.

H. POTENTIAL IMPACTS FOR SCHOOLS

Considering the current school district boundaries within the Township and the new development policies, the Amherst School District will likely receive the largest share of any increased student population. Based on a growth rate in the Township of 50 households per year and assuming a continuation of the current household size and the proportion of the population that is of school age¹, an additional 28 students per year could be generated. Within 20 years, at that rate, an additional 560 students would be generated.

¹This was derived by dividing the number of persons between the ages of 5 and 17 by the number of households in the surrounding communities and determining the median.

IV. OUTLINE OF IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

A. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ZONING RESOLUTION

1. Create new zoning districts and amend the permitted uses in the following ways:

- a. Establish a new Mixed Use Office/Retail/Industrial District to be applied along the Route 58 Corridor. In addition to the basic uses, this district would permit hotels, restaurants and automotive dealerships. Outdoor storage, if permitted, would be limited and could be established as a conditional use. This district will also include appropriate site development and landscape standards.
- b. Establish a new Industrial/Office district to be applied along Route 58, near the Penn Central railroad track.
- c. Establish a new single-family residential district, possibly called R1-3, which permits minimum lot sizes of ½ acre and which would be applied south of the Turnpike and east of Route 58.
- d. Amend the Neighborhood Business District to better reflect current market needs and permit uses with similar characteristics and impacts. This would be accomplished by:
 - Adding a broader range of retail stores;
 - Adding administrative offices as permitted uses;
 - Permitting automotive sales and services as a conditional use; and
 - Establishing more definitive parking setback and landscaping standards.

This district would be applied at the Route 113/58 intersection, the Route 58 and Middle Ridge Road intersection. It could also be applied at the intersection of the new north-south corridor and Route 113 if it is constructed within the Township.

2. Improve the overall standards for development in the Township by amending the General Business District to establish:
 - a. More complete parking setback and landscape standards; and
 - b. Location, maximum coverage and screening criteria for bulk storage.
3. Add Planned Unit Developments (P.U.D.) as a Conditional Use in both the existing R1-1 and R1-2 Districts and the new R1-3 District. Planned unit developments would permit standard single-family lots, cluster housing and attached single-family units, often called townhouses. To be eligible for planned development considerations, at least a 50 acre parcel would be required and a minimum of 20% of the land area must be common open space.

Two different densities for planned developments would be permitted:

- a. The statistical density permitted under the conventional zoning would be applied when the site has either:
 - Unique natural features;
 - Limited road access;
 - Irregular size or shape; or
 - Significant easements/rights-of-way traversing the site.
- b. An additional two units/acre above the standard statistical density would be applied on sites or portions of sites which are adjacent to or impacted by:
 - A major existing or proposed highway;
 - An active railroad track; or
 - Existing or expected non-residential zoning.

When an application is submitted for approval, the Board of Zoning Appeals shall determine the portion of a property, if any, which is entitled to planned development considerations.

Alternatively, the Township could predetermine those eligible areas and designate these areas as an amendment to the zoning map when the text regulations for planned developments are adopted.

4. Make additional changes in the Resolution to:
- a. Separate the general category "government buildings" into specific types of uses, e.g., offices, safety facilities, industrial-type service yards, etc. These categories of uses have different development characteristics and should be regulated separately.
 - b. Establish site plan review procedures for all Planned Unit Developments. This would be similar to the process Amherst Township now requires for all non-residential uses.
 - c. Establish review criteria which provide the basis for the Zoning Board of Appeals to make the qualitative judgments as to the acceptability of the proposed plan. This criteria would include guidelines with respect to:
 - The suitable placement of buildings in relation to the natural topography of the site and surrounding conditions;
 - Adequate landscaping to enhance the appearance of the site, screen objectionable features and/or control storm water runoff;
 - Safe and efficient access throughout the site to allow for emergency/loading/rubbish collection vehicles;
 - Each property being provided with vehicular access from an abutting public or private street;
 - Adequate lighting for safe and convenient use of the property.
 - d. Clarify the responsibility between the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Zoning Commission. The term "Board" is now used interchangeably and refers to both bodies.
 - e. Amend the zoning map to:
 - Apply the new commercial or industrial districts along the S.R. 58 corridor in the appropriate locations advocated in this Plan;
 - Eliminate the isolated industrial zones from otherwise residential areas.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES

1. Utilize the Citizens for Economic Growth, on a continuing basis, to be responsible for:
 - a. Promoting new businesses in the Township by:
 - Instituting a general public relations campaign that would include regular interaction with regional business organizations, and local commercial real estate brokers, existing business representatives, the Chamber of Commerce, etc.
 - Preparing marketing brochures, advertising slogans, etc.
 - Preparing site plan sketches for property owners or the Township illustrating the intended layout and character for the expanded economic development corridor along S.R. 58.
 - b. Identifying steps the Township can take (and, perhaps, financial incentives which can be offered) to facilitate business expansion.
 - c. Explaining the merits of this Plan to the community during and following the adoption process as zoning amendments are being contemplated to implement this Plan.
 - d. Evaluating the current administrative procedures to assure a comprehensive, fair, yet, "user friendly" process for zoning permits, licenses, inspections, fees, etc.
2. The Township should establish a program for the systematic acquisition of park and open space land as the community develops. This should include:
 - a. Raising or reserving money annually for such purposes.
 - b. Determining priority sites for future parks.
 - c. Determining the feasibility of using existing utility corridors as part of a Township open space system.
3. The Township Trustees should evaluate, in detail, the merits and feasibility of developing a civic/community center, including Township administrative offices, on the east side of S.R. 58 north of Middle Ridge Road.

4. The Zoning Commission should reevaluate this Plan once a year to:
 - a. Refine the policies as appropriate.
 - b. Evaluate progress being made to implement the Plan.
 - c. Set forth a revised list of actions that should be pursued in the ensuing year to continue implementation of the Plan.

The Zoning Commission may ask the Citizens for Economic Growth to reconvene to establish revised policies for difficult issues which may have emerged. As necessary, addendums to this Plan should be prepared.

APPENDIX A DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES -- NEW POLICIES

A maximum residential development potential was estimated by considering all available residential land under the new policies and using the same assumptions about typical subdivisions noted in Section I, Part C.

Compared to existing zoning, the residential development capacity at buildout is increased under the new policy. Table A-1, on the following page, shows that the maximum number of units that could be built under the new policy would be 7,602 compared to 3,934, according to current zoning, or an additional 3,668 dwelling units. The actual land available for residential development, however, would be reduced from 7,601 to 6,243 acres. This is due to the land required for the Central Lorain corridor, the Ohio Turnpike Interchange and the additional land designated for commercial use.

If the current persons/household average is maintained, the estimated total population at "buildout" using the new policy would be 25,644, an increase of 9,537 over the projected population under the current zoning. It should be stressed that these are ultimate capacities which will not be achieved for generations. Table A-2 illustrates the time required to reach the capacity assuming various growth rates.

**TABLE A-1
MAXIMUM RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY**

	EXISTING ZONING		NEW POLICY	
	ACRES	UNITS	ACRES	UNITS
1. Existing Development	2,566	2,187	2,566	2,187
2. Future Development	5,035	3,934	3,677	7,602
3. Total Residential Development	7,601	6,121	6,243	9,789
ESTIMATED POPULATION				
	EXISTING ZONING		NEW POLICY	
Existing Population	5,879		5,879	
Projected Additional	10,228		19,765	
Total Population at Buildout	16,107		25,644	

NOTE: The following assumptions were used for Table A-1:

AREA/ZONING DISTRICT	VACANT ACRES	DENSITY	UNITS
N.E. (12,500 SQ. FT.)	889	3.5	3,112
S.E. (½ ACRE)	1,697	2.0	3,394
WEST (1 ACRE)	967	.75	725
MULTI-FAMILY	15	12	180
ADJACENT CITY	109	1.75	191
			7,602

(2) The additional population was projected using the 1990 U.S. Census average household density of 2.6 persons/household.

TABLE A-2
TIME IN YEARS TO REACH MAXIMUM POPULATION POTENTIAL

GROWTH RATE		YEARS NEEDED TO REACH 25,000
Households/Year	Persons/Year ⁽¹⁾	
35 ⁽²⁾	91	210
50	130	147
100	260	74

- (1) Assumes 2.6 persons/household average.
(2) This is the annual rate of construction from 1990-1993.

APPENDIX B
CITIZENS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Allen Ahlgrim

Howard Akin

Don Bischoff

Harry Fior

Lee Myers

Joe Sarnovsky

Pete Sliman

Mike Witte

Ron Yacobozzi