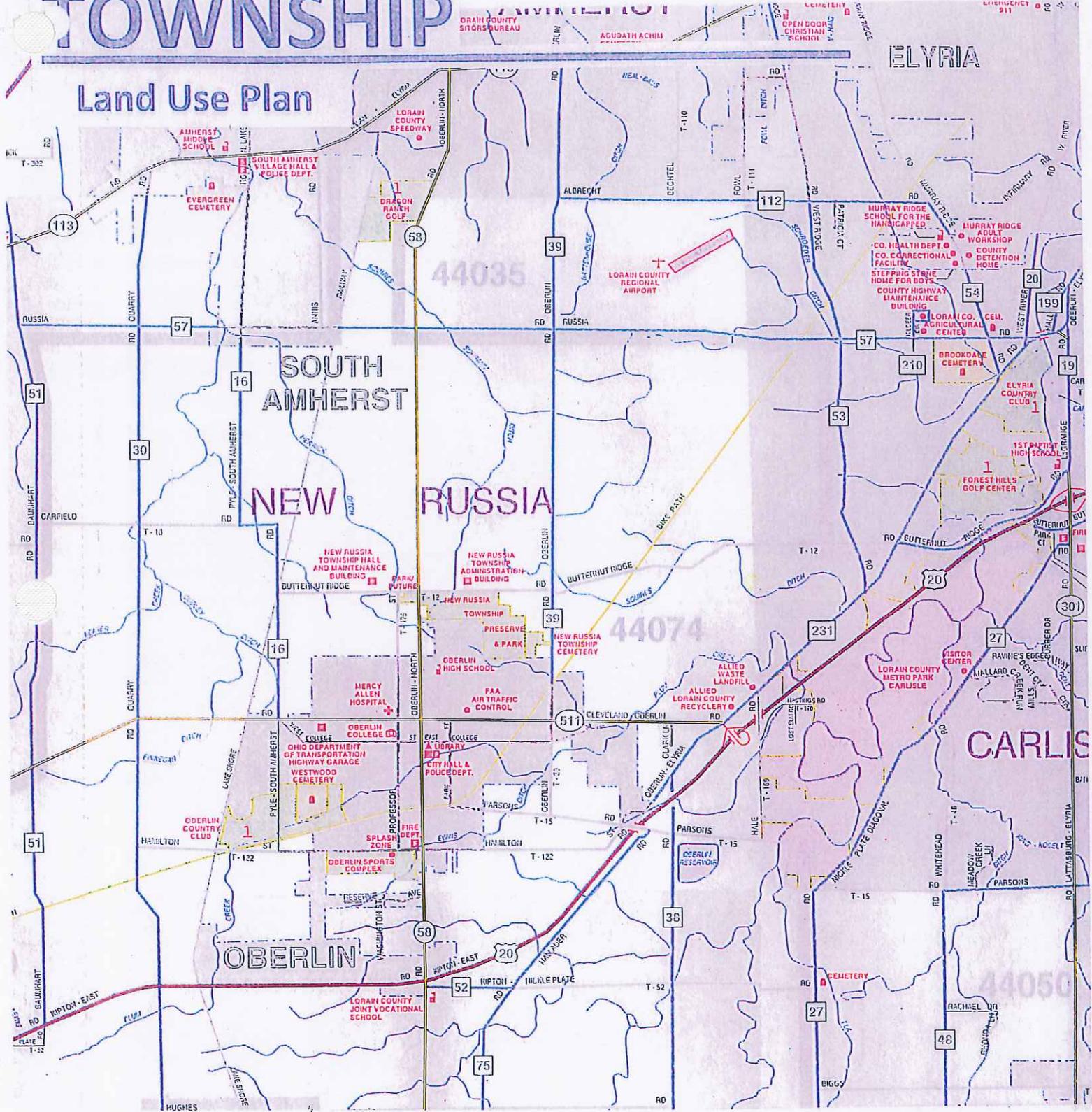


# NEW RUSSIA

# TOWNSHIP

## Land Use Plan



October 2013

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

New Russia Township (formerly known as Russia Township) is located in the heart of Lorain County, five miles south of the City of Lorain and less than two miles southwest of the City of Elyria. Within New Russia Township are the municipalities of the City of Oberlin, which is now separated from the Township, and part of the Village of South Amherst. The City of Oberlin is located along the south border of the Township, and the Village of South Amherst is located along the northwest border.

The flatness of the Township was caused by erosion due to the Wisconsinian glacier 15,000 years ago, which deposited the glacial sediment that enriched the soil and made the area suitable for agriculture. An earlier version of Lake Erie extended as far south as the northern border of the City of Oberlin. The ridges, which were formed by the ancient shorelines, served as slightly raised higher ground sites for early settlement and the first roads, including Butternut Ridge Road and State Route 113 in New Russia Township. The Township is drained by a number of streams and ditches which are part of the Beaver Creek and the Plum Creek/Black River systems.

After 1795, the Connecticut Western Reserve area, as northern Ohio was called then, was surveyed into five mile square townships. Settlers slowly began to move to the area west of Oberlin, which is known as the "Firelands" because many of the settlers were New Englanders whose homes and towns were burned during the Revolutionary War. Ohio became a state in 1803, and due to the influence of Herman Ely (who founded the town of Elyria), Lorain became a county in 1822. Russia Township was created in 1825. Missionary John Shipherd, seeking to establish a school away from the "sinful influences of cities," chose the remote, wooded, and swampy area of Russia Township to found the Colony of Oberlin in 1833.

The natural riches of the area included the trees and wild game in the forest, clean water and fish in the streams, and stone, clay, natural gas, and rich soil. The clearing of trees, which occurred throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century to support the ship-building industries along Lake Erie, also enabled the development of agriculture. Railroad lines, such as the Norfolk and Southern Railroad (which runs north-south through New Russia Township), were built after the Civil War to bring coal from West Virginia and provided a means to ship agricultural products from the area.

By 1991, Russia Township residents acted on concerns due to the ever-growing municipality of Oberlin. After nearly 90 percent of Township residents signed petitions, the trustees filed for a separation of the Township from the City with the Lorain County Commissioners. The request was granted effective on January 1, 1992. However, one of the requirements of such an action was the renaming of the township; thus, Russia Township officials adopted the name "New Russia Township." The reason for the original name of the Township has not been found in the archives. The portion of the Village of South Amherst within New Russia Township was not separated from the Township. (Note: Although prior to 1992 the name was Russia Township, for the purposes of this report, the name New Russia Township is used even when depicting and discussing data prior to 1992)

The New Russia Township Complex is located at 45440 Butternut Ridge Road, Oberlin, OH 44074. Trustees meet regularly twice each month. Township trustees at the time this Plan was prepared

(1999) were John Piwinski, Fred A. Swanson, and Richard S. Williams. Township officials were Elaine R. King, Clerk, and Daniel P. Jarven, Zoning Inspector.

The New Russia Township Trustees have recognized the fact that the township has become a prime target for major residential and industrial development. The Township's proximity to the western suburbs of the Cleveland metropolitan area make it a prime area for suburban flight to the more rural areas. Many people want to live "in the country," and New Russia Township provides that atmosphere.

When the county began its own process to develop a Land Use Plan, the Trustees quickly recognized the need to define a vision and develop goals that will guide New Russia Township for the next 10 to 20 years, well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Township trustees appointed a committee to begin the planning process. In November 1998, the Trustees retained the services of Poggemeyer Design Group, Inc. (PDG) to develop a Land Use Plan which would formalize the vision and goals for the community into a plan of action.

The purpose of this Land Use Plan is to provide a guide which will assist New Russia Township officials in decision-making issues related to land use, transportation, and community facilities. The current community setting of the Township is described with respect to the human, physical, and built environment. Opportunities and issues are identified which affect the Township and its future.

In 2011, at the time of this revision, the trustees were Jack Hoyt, Patti Brubaker, and John Piwinski. Township officials were Lisa Gregory, Fiscal Officer, and Daniel P. Jarven, Zoning Inspector (retired 2012), and Kimberly Annable as successor. A new committee was appointed to update the Land Use Plan.

## **Approach**

The Land Use Planning Committee is comprised of township residents, farmers, business and other professionals, and a Township Trustee. Meetings began in 2011 to discuss the revision of the Land Use Plan that was adopted in October of 2001.

<b>TABLE 1-1 New Russia Township Land Use Planning Committee</b>	
Wayne Prechtel Resident	Stacy Goetz Resident
John Emerich, Sr. Retired Businessman	Donna Forbush Resident
Lester Morris Farmer	Carl Pfenninger Resident
Andy Gulish Teacher	Patti Brubaker Township Trustee
Edie Taylor Committee Secretary	

The primary function of the Land Use Planning Committee is to revise the current plan.

## Major Issues

The Land Use Planning Committee met throughout the comprehensive planning process to identify the major land use issues to be addressed by the Land Use Plan and to establish goals for New Russia Township. Continuing concerns identified by the Land Use Planning Committee include the following:

- Preserving farmland.
- Promoting cluster residential development instead of minor lot splits fronting directly onto a road.
- Offering a variety of housing types for all age and income ranges.
- Designating areas for specific types of land use development, such as commercial, industrial, and residential.
- Providing additional park and recreation opportunities to Township residents.
- Providing public sanitary sewer service to Township residents.
- Providing a quality school system to Township residents.

## Original Vision Statement

An important part in the development of this Plan is the identification of the long-term vision for the New Russia Township community. This is an expression of where New Russia Township wants to be in the next 50 years. The development of this vision is based on discussion the Land Use Planning Committee held during the development of this Plan.

The Land Use Planning Committee's goal was to capture the desires of future New Russia Township residents. It is the hope that this vision, with on ongoing commitment of keeping goals current and relevant, will enable a future resident to say...

"New Russia Township is an excellent place to live and work. The Township has retained its rural character and protected prime agricultural farmland while allowing growth to occur in specific areas. The growth that has occurred over the last 15 years has been well-planned and represents positive additions to the community.

Economic growth has occurred in tandem with residential development. By using cluster residential development, the township has been able to preserve farmland and open spaces, while also dedicating land for parks and recreation.

The new county sanitary sewer system extends to all residences of the township allowing residential growth, while a Township Trail system that connects all township owned land will offer another recreational opportunity to township residents.

The cooperative effort among various jurisdictions is evident in the development of the land-use plan."

## Chapter 2: Demographics

### Population Characteristics

The physical development of a community over time is directly related to the changing population. Typically, changes in the local population influence the local demand for types of housing, commercial space, and employment opportunities, as well as demand for recreational and cultural facilities. The changing population also influences the demand for public facilities and infrastructure. The most basic questions about population characteristics in a community are how much has the Township grown or declined in recent years and in what age groups, and how do these changes compare to neighboring communities.

**TABLE 2-1** Historical Population Information

Community	1950	1960	1970	'50-'70	1980	1990	'80-'90	2000	2010	'00-'10	1950-2010
				%change			%change			%change	%change
Lorain County	148,162	217,500	256,843	73.35%	274,909	271,126	-1.38%	284,664	301,356	5.86%	103.00%
New Russia	1,417	1,776	1,830	29.10%	2,030	2,039	0.44%	2,301	2,347	1.95%	65.63%
Oberlin	7,062	8,198	8,761	24.06%	8,798	8,191	-6.90%	8,268	8,440	2.03%	19.51%
Amherst	3,542	6,750	9,902	179.56%	10,638	10,332	-2.88%	11,797	11,738	-0.51%	231.39%
South Amherst	1,020	1,657	2,913	185.59%	1,848	1,765	-4.49%	1,863	1,745	-6.33%	71.07%
Lorain	51,202	68,932	78,185	52.70%	75,416	71,245	-5.53%	68,656	70,260	2.33%	37.22%

This growth coincides with the national trend at that time. With the continued construction of major highways and interstates throughout the country, people began moving from the cities to the suburbs, relying on automobiles to take them to work or run errands. Migration of people from the City of Cleveland and Cuyahoga County is evidenced by the growth experienced by all communities studied and shown in **TABLE 2-1**. The improvement in roadways allowed for quicker commutes to the larger employment centers, making it easier to live further from work.

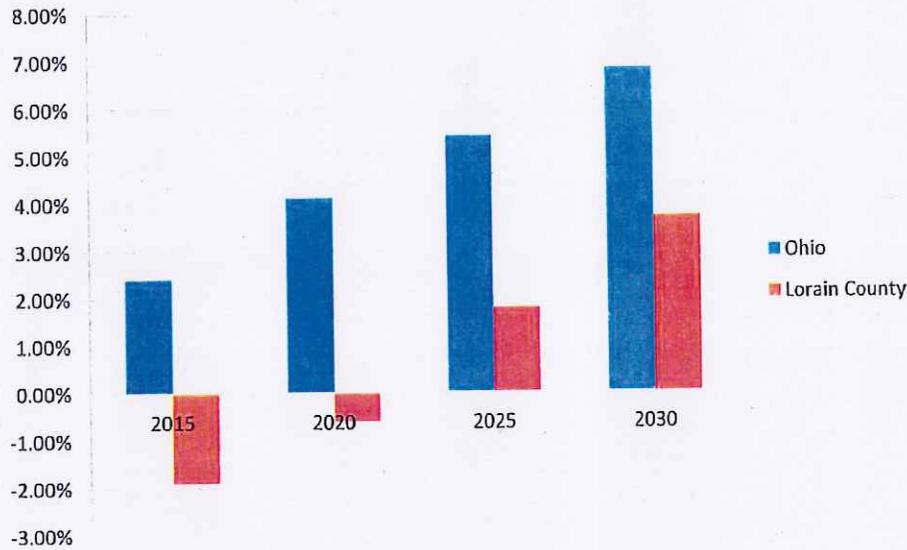
The communities of Oberlin, South Amherst, and Lorain experienced declines in population from 1980 to 1990. Amherst and New Russia Township experienced a slight increase in population from 1980 to 2010. The Land Use Committee noticed that any decline in population may be due to numerous large industries downsizing.

Between 1990 and 2001, Lorain County and most communities around New Russia Township experienced a decrease in population, while once again, New Russia Township had a modest increase (6.62%).

## Population Forecast to 2030

Population projections for Lorain County and Ohio are indicated below in **Figure 2-2**.

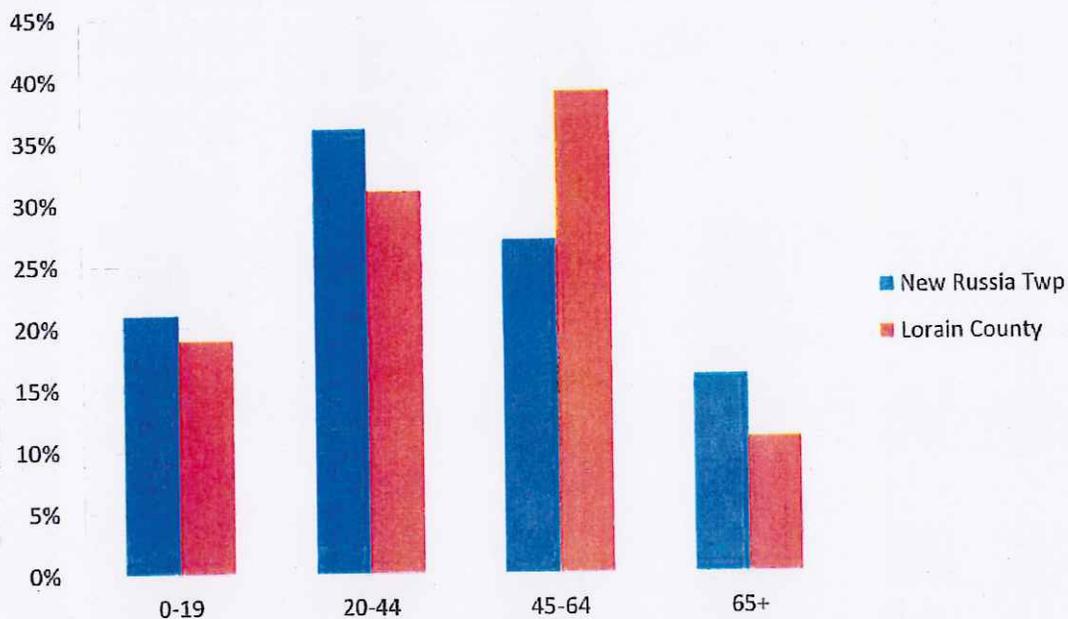
**Figure 2-2 Projected Population Change**



## Age Groups

Information concerning the age structure of the population for New Russia Township and Lorain County is illustrated in **Figure 2-3**.

**Figure 2-3 Population Age Brackets**



## Population Projections for Age Group

Although population projections are not readily available for townships, some insight into the age composition of an area can be gained by examining projections for the County. **Page 2-2** illustrates the following projections:

- The Dependent Group (those persons between ages 0 and 19) will remain steady through 2030.
- The Family Group (age 20-44) will decline slightly through 2030.
- The Empty Nester Group (age 45-64) will increase slightly to the year 2010, then decline by approximately 4% by 2030.
- The Senior population (those above the age of 65) will remain steady until 2010, when a slight increase is anticipated between 2010 and 2030.

## Households

In 1990, there were 700 households in New Russia Township. By 2010, there were 983. The number of persons per household is decreasing in New Russia Township, as it is in most other communities across the United States. There are several factors that could contribute to this decrease in household size. More people are choosing single life over marriage, and married couples are delaying having children until their careers are well established. More couples have chosen not to have children at all. Increased longevity also contributes to decreased household size as Senior citizens often live in small households containing only one or two people. As a result of this decrease in per household population, additional dwellings are needed to house the same number of people. In the period between 2000 and 2010, New Russia Township's average household size decreased from 2.8 persons per household to 2.6.

## Economic Characteristics

The economic base of New Russia Township contains a mixture of agricultural operations, some industries, and services. The Township's proximity to Oberlin, South Amherst and Lorain, as well as nearby townships, provides additional employment opportunities for persons willing to commute.

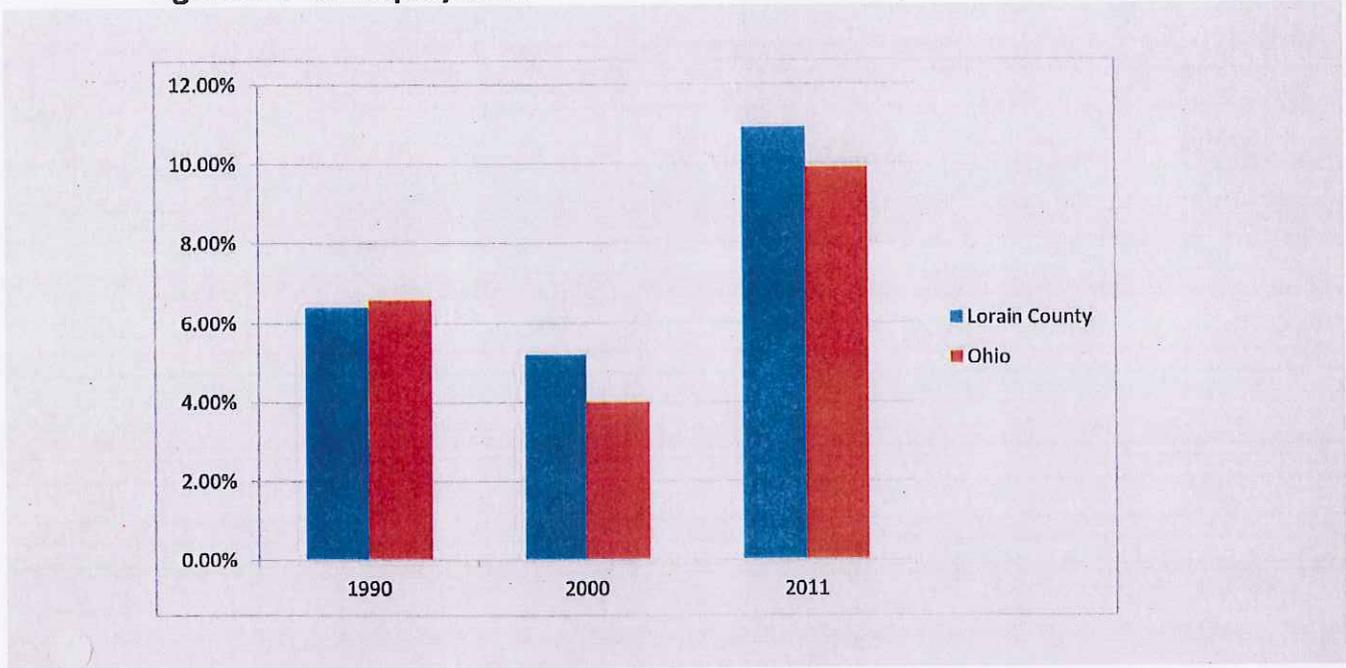
### Local Employment

The major employer in New Russia Township is Republic Waste.

### Unemployment

Unemployment rates for Lorain County and the State of Ohio are illustrated in **Figure 2-4**. From 1990 to January 1999, Lorain County's unemployment rate dropped from 6.4% to 5.2%, compared with the State's, which declined from 6.6% to 4.0%. In January 1999, Lorain County's unemployment rate exceeded the State's by 1.2%. From 2000 to 2011, unemployment climbed to 11% in Lorain County and 9.9% in Ohio indicating the need for improved economic development efforts in the County which could emphasize the existence of a more readily available labor pool.

**Figure 2-4 Unemployment**



**Median Household Income**

Between 2004 and 2009, the median household income in Lorain County (increased/decreased more/less) than the median household incomes for Ohio. (Table 2-5).

**Table 2-5 Change in Median Income 1990-2009**

Community	1990	2009	% Change
Lorain County	\$31,098	\$32,514	4.55%
Ohio	\$28,706	\$35,408	23.33%

**Average Education Level**

Among adults 25 years and older, the percentage of high school graduates in New Russia Township in 1990 was 68.4% compared to the percentage of high school graduates in Lorain County (75%), and the State of Ohio (76%). The percentage of college graduates in New Russia Township (12.2%) is less than the State average of 17% but about the same as all of Lorain County.

## **Housing Characteristics**

The dominant non-agricultural land use throughout New Russia Township is residential. Characteristics of the existing housing stock help to predict the demand for new housing development in the future. These characteristics include the age of existing homes, the type of housing (single-family versus multi-family), and location in relation to services and employment centers.

### **Recent Housing Construction**

From 1992 through 1998, 95 building permits were issued in New Russia Township and 99 minor lot-split applications were approved. From 2000 to September 2012, there were 80 new home permits issued but 74 were actually built. There were minor lot-splits granted from 2000 to September 2012. Minor lot-splits, which consist of five acres or less, are typically split from agricultural land and usually have direct access to a township/county road or major thoroughfare. Since there are no major residential subdivisions within New Russia Township, a majority of the residential development in the Township has occurred along road frontage. If the Township continues to allow single-family development along township and county roads, increasing traffic flow conflicts will occur.

There were approximately 983 housing units in New Russia Township in 2010. Of these units, 940 were occupied while 43 were vacant. Of the occupied units, approximately 818 were occupied by the owner, and 122 were occupied by renters.

### **Housing Types**

New Russia Township housing units consist primarily of single-family homes located on minor lot-splits. The Township and Oberlin have very few manufactured housing units. For multi-family housing, Oberlin offers a higher percentage to its residents. It may be in New Russia Township's best interest to offer a wider variety of housing opportunities that would entice both the younger generation, who may be interested in apartments or townhouses, and senior citizens, who may require assisted living facilities and condominiums, to live in the Township.

### **Age of Homes**

Some insight into the history of residential development in New Russia Township can be gained by examining the age of the housing units. In 1990, approximately 50% of the homes in New Russia Township, as well as in Ohio, were built before 1960. From 2000 to September 2012, 80 new home permits were issued but 74 were actually built. Reviewing the age of housing units gives the Township an insight into historical development trends and indicates the number of housing units that are older and will most likely require significant maintenance or replacement.

## Chapter 3: Natural Environment

Another part of the land use planning process is the review of the natural environment in New Russia Township and the effect that different types of land uses have on the environment. This section reviews watersheds, floodplains, and wetlands and identifies prime agricultural soils in New Russia Township.

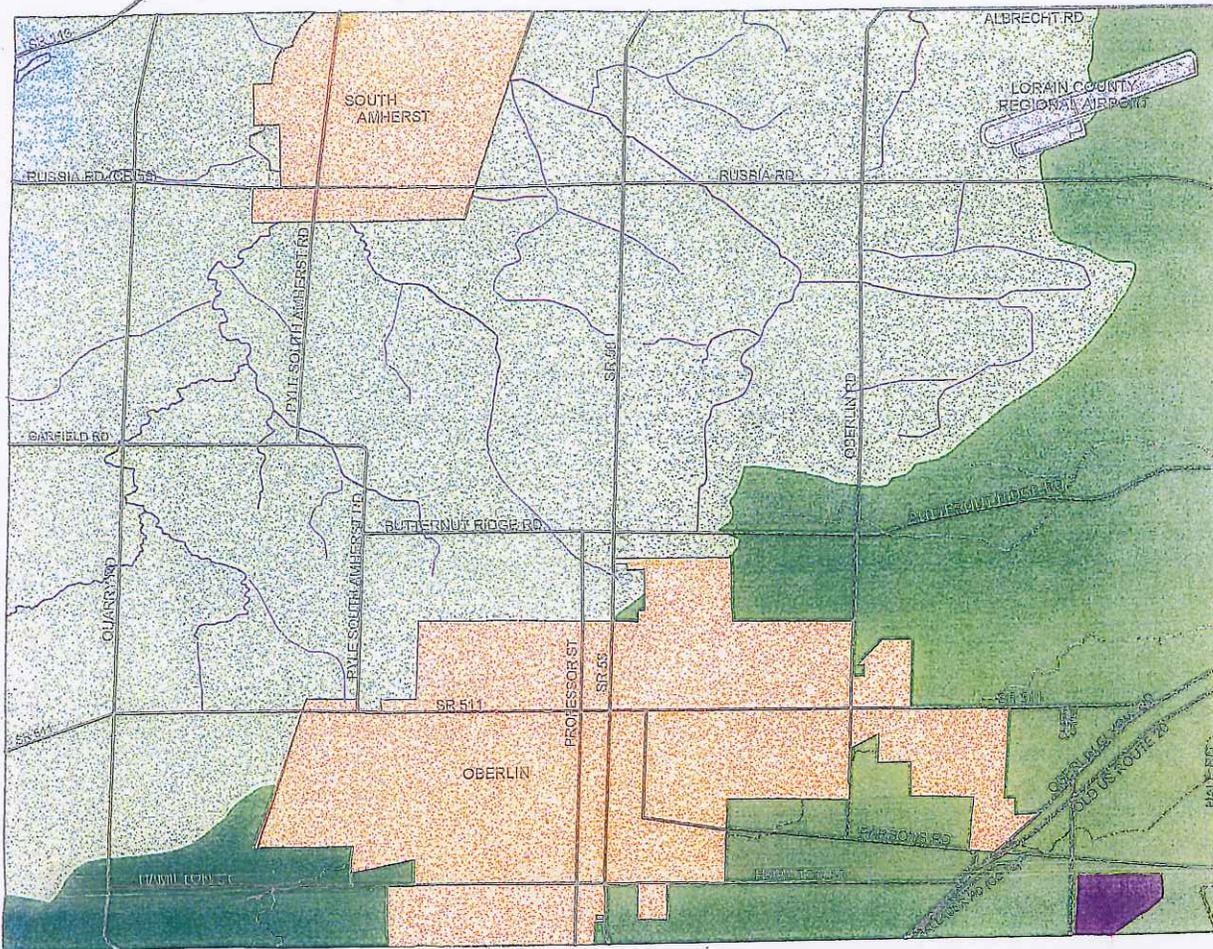
### Watersheds

The Beaver Creek and Black River Watersheds are the major watersheds in New Russia Township. A small portion of the Vermilion River Watershed is located in the northwest portion of the Township. These watersheds are illustrated on **Map 3-1**.

The quality of water in a stream is a direct result of the activities that take place on the land that drains into it. Water quality within the watersheds is impacted by two potential sources of pollution. These are referred to as “point” and “non-point” sources. Over the past two decades, improvements in treating point sources of pollution, such as municipal and industrial wastes, have led to major improvements in water quality. However, increases in intensive land uses (development, urbanization, agriculture, and deforestation) have created non-point source pollution, where the definitive origin of the pollution is not easily identified. Agricultural and lawn pesticides, eroded sediment from developing areas, increased impervious surfaces, and urban runoff are examples of non-point pollution that are generally considered greater threats to water quality today than point source pollution such as industrial and municipal waste.

Non-point sources of pollution can arise miles away from water and are more difficult to identify, manage, and quantify than point sources of pollution. There are no pipes or outflow sources to monitor, and it can be difficult to locate sources of pollutants and the pathways they travel to reach downstream receiving waters. Because non-point source pollution can arise anywhere in a watershed and is a direct result of land use activity and practices, there is a growing trend to address water quality issues from a watershed perspective. This approach treats streams and rivers as a part of a larger ecosystem. Water quality is reflective of the surrounding landscape, and any efforts to preserve, protect, or improve the integrity of rivers, streams, and lakes should address the long-term management of watersheds.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency has published a report that details the environmental conditions of the nation’s major watersheds (U.S. EPA, 1997). This report indicates that in the Black River and Vermilion River Watersheds, more than 25% of the waters exceed the recommended levels for ammonia, dissolved oxygen, phosphorus, and pH, which may be related to the agrarian nature of the area. Both Watersheds harbor species that are known to be at risk and may soon be eliminated. The report also indicates that there is some concern of contaminated drinking water within certain areas of these Watersheds.



**NEW RUSSIA TOWNSHIP  
WATERSHEDS**

**MAP 3-1**

**Legend**

-  Beaver Creek Watershed
-  Black River Watershed
-  Vermilion River Watershed
-  Municipalities
-  Oberlin Reservoir
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Roads

On the positive side, the report indicates that the streams within the Black River and Vermilion River Watersheds have only been moderately confined (impounded), and less than 1% of the Watersheds are covered by impervious surface. Dams and other types of impoundments restrict natural fish movements and lower overall water quality. Some of the streams in New Russia Township have been dredged and channelized over a period of many years to drain adjacent wetlands and make the soils suitable for farming.

Sources of surface water pollution in New Russia Township include sediment runoff from residential development, construction sites, and agricultural lands, activities which are considered non-point sources of pollution. Traditionally, this type of pollution has been considered secondary to point sources of pollution such as effluent discharge from wastewater treatment plants and industrial facilities. While point sources of water pollution are still a problem, water quality standards enacted over the past few decades have done much to alleviate impacts from these sources. Improvements in managing point sources of pollution, coupled with increased development in the Township, have shifted the major emphasis to non-point sources of pollution.

Sanitary wastes from non-point sources are one of the prime pollutants of Ohio streams, and if not properly controlled, these wastes may threaten groundwater supplies. The ecological impacts of sanitary treatment using on-site sewage disposal systems tend to worsen with an increasing population and with a greater occurrence of poorly maintained systems. Properly sited and maintained sewage disposal systems can treat wastewater effectively and not significantly threaten water quality; however, their effectiveness strongly depends upon on-site conditions and regular inspection and maintenance. Since on-site sewage disposal systems are the primary means of sanitary treatment in New Russia Township at this time, the Township should support responsible maintenance of the systems by its residents through the County health department.

Growth and the availability of municipal wastewater collection and treatment systems can have both positive and negative effects on water quality. As an area connects with wastewater systems and failing septic systems are abandoned, there is usually an immediate improvement in water quality. However, the availability of wastewater systems often encourages rapid growth in areas experiencing development pressure. If growth occurs in an uncontrolled manner, the initial water quality improvements associated with wastewater systems can be quickly lost. Developments that encroach on the riparian zones of streams, as well as increases in the amount of impervious surfaces, stormwater runoff, and siltation can all impact water quality.

### **Floodplains and Riparian Corridors**

Floodplains are the areas adjacent to rivers and streams that are subject to frequent or regular flooding. They are defined by designated recurrence intervals at which a flood of a given magnitude could occur. For example, the 100-year flood has a one in one hundred chance of occurring in any given year. The 500-year flood has a one in five hundred chance of occurring in any given year. Floodplains are generally unstable and potentially dangerous areas for development. However, they provide a unique ecological niche and support plant and animal communities that have adapted to occasional inundation. Floodplain wetlands absorb large volumes of water during high flows, reducing local flooding and delaying the release of water downstream.

Floodplains often support a diverse collection of plant and animal life. In addition, they serve an important role in water quality protection since streambank vegetation filters pollutants from runoff before they enter a waterway. In some instances, the established riparian zone (land adjacent to the stream), extends beyond the floodplain or does not have a mapped 100-year floodplain boundary.

According to the Lorain County Auditor floodplain map (**Map 3-2**), approximately 454 acres (3% of the Township), lies within flood zones. Due to increased development within the Watersheds since the inception of this map, it may not accurately reflect current conditions, and flooding may occur in areas not identified as floodplains on the map. Since the FEMA map is only a modest representation of where flooding is likely to occur, it is important to protect all lands adjacent to watercourses. All the major streams within New Russia Township have associated floodplains. Many of the floodplains are not wetlands (defined later) and, in fact, are better drained than surrounding areas due to their sandy alluvial soils. Flooding in these areas occurs very infrequently; however, when it does occur it is typically in early spring when the ice melts.

Riparian corridors help protect surface water; thus, their preservation is important. Natural vegetation in riparian areas serves as filters that remove pollutants from runoff, reducing negative impacts to water resources. Riparian corridors also possess significant economic value, in that they provide for recreational opportunities, health benefits, and cultural enhancement, thus increasing property values and improving the quality of life in an area. Part of the total economic value of New Russia Township's natural resources results from riparian corridors.

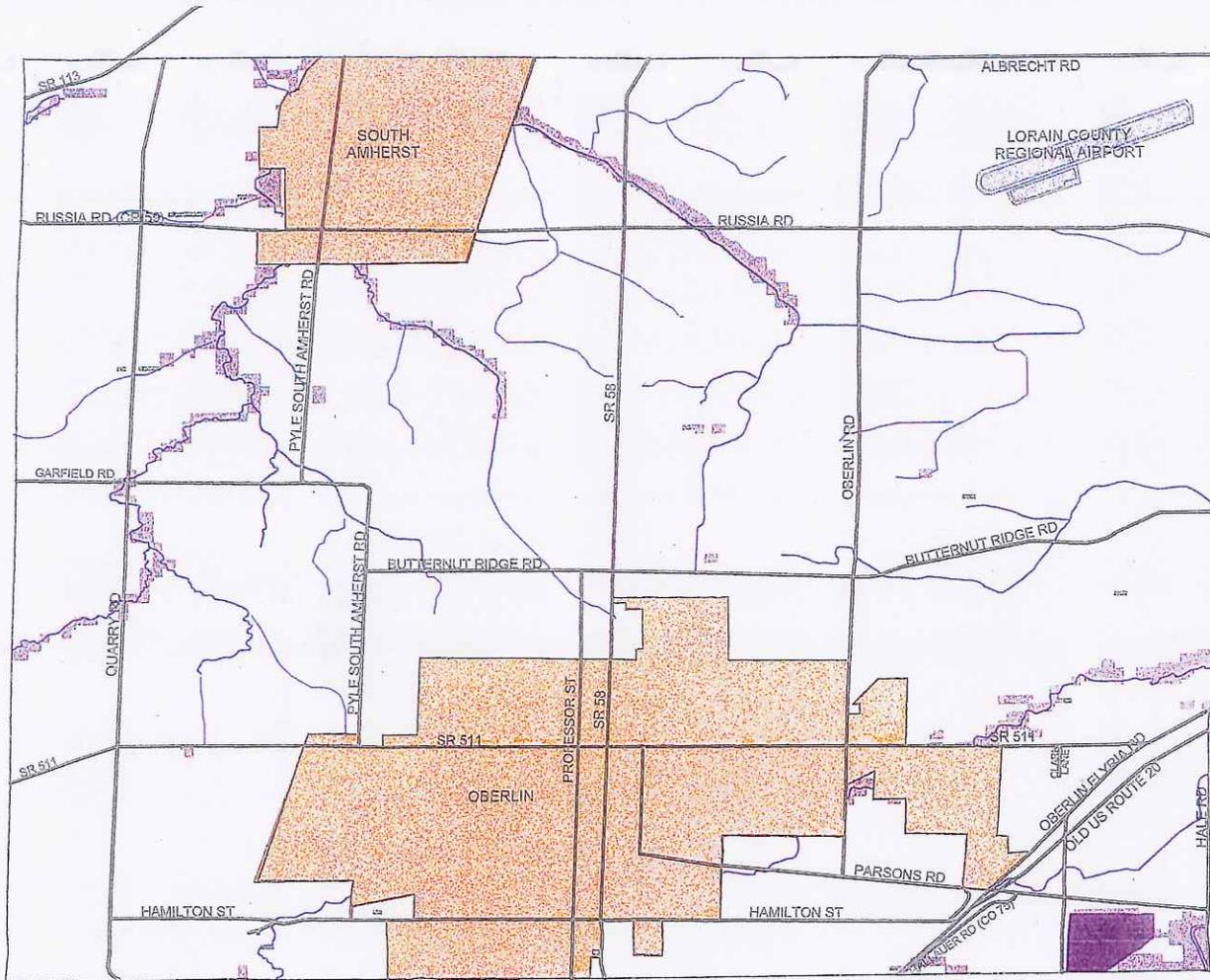
While land use regulations prohibit construction within the 100-year floodplain, riparian areas outside the floodplain are often left unprotected. Acquiring these valuable strips of green space along stream or river corridors, or protecting them with conservation easements, would help maintain and improve the water quality of New Russia Township streams. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry recommends that a minimum buffer of 120 feet be established along all streams and rivers to protect water quality and provide adequate habitat for wildlife.

Existing development with floodplains and riparian corridors should be managed to minimize impacts to these important natural resources. Mowing and removal of woody vegetation should be discouraged. Maintaining riparian corridors and wetlands in a natural state protects surface water quality. When a riparian area is developed, water quality degradation usually occurs. The use of hazardous chemicals such as herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers should be banned in these areas.

## **Wetlands**

Wetlands are areas that have standing water and/or saturated soils for a sufficient period of time that plants are found to have adapted to these conditions. Wetlands are dynamic natural systems where water levels fluctuate throughout the year. Many wetlands will have standing water and/or saturated soils during the late winter and spring and will dry out completely during the summer and fall. This is particularly true of the wetlands in New Russia Township, most of which rely on precipitation for water input.



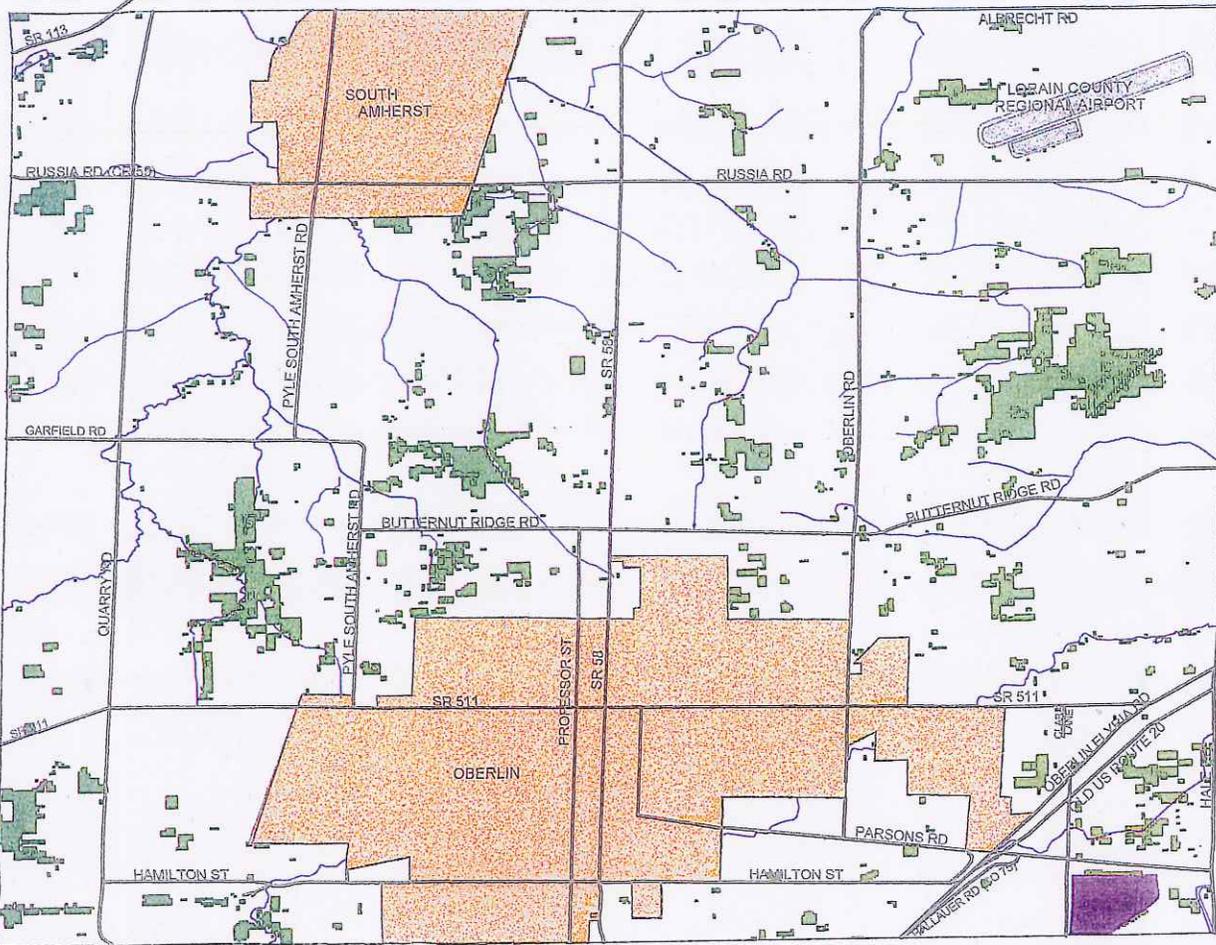


**NEW RUSSIA TOWNSHIP  
FLOODPLAINS**

**MAP 3-2**

**Legend**

-  Floodplains
-  Municipalities
-  Oberlin Reservoir
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Roads



**NEW RUSSIA TOWNSHIP  
WETLANDS**

**MAP 3-3**

**Legend**

- Wetlands
- Municipalities
- Oberlin Reservoir
- Rivers and Streams
- Roads

Wetlands hold significant ecological value and deserve maximum protection. They provide diverse habitats to a variety of species, including a significant number of rare, threatened, and endangered species. Wetlands are important in flood mitigation and storm water abatement. They function as natural sponges that absorb water, delaying its downstream release, and they serve as biological filters by purifying water before it proceeds downstream. Wetlands are also important for aquifer recharge and for streambank stabilization during periods of high flow. Wetlands also provide aesthetic and recreational value and are significant factors in the global cycles of nitrogen, sulfur and carbon.

In pre-settlement times, much of the Township consisted of wetlands. From the middle 1800s through the 1940s, most of these areas were drained. Streams and drainageways were dredged and channelized, new drainage ditches were created, and large networks of drainage tiles were installed to make the land suitable for agricultural use.

Flat topography combined with extensive areas of hydric soils (soils which are very moist) create the perfect conditions for wetlands. The clay soils that exist throughout much of the Township tend to cause water to pond and have a high water table in the early spring. Vegetation occurring in these wetlands is adapted to periods of flooding and saturated soils in the winter and spring, along with periods of very dry conditions in late summer and fall.

The Ohio Wetlands Inventory (OWI) map shows that wetlands in New Russia Township (**Map 3-3**) comprise about 1,110 acres, or approximately 8% of the Township. The OWI data also indicates that there are 90 acres of open water in New Russia Township. The Ohio Wetlands Inventory is based on analysis of satellite data and existence of hydric soils. Many wetlands may not have been indicated, and the accuracy of these maps is dependent on the quality of the resource materials used to create them. These maps should be used to show general locations and concentrations of wetlands, not to identify individual wetlands on specific properties.

Despite the measurable environmental, social, and economic benefits of wetlands, more than 50% of the wetlands in the continental United States and 90% of the wetlands in Ohio have been destroyed as a result of conversion to agriculture, mining, forestry, and urban uses during the past 200 years. Because wetlands hold exceptional environmental value, there is existing Federal law that regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands (Section 404 of the Clean Water Act). In Ohio, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers oversees the wetlands regulatory program. The Buffalo, New York district of the Corps has jurisdiction over wetlands in Lorain County.

Before development can occur, Section 404 requires that wetlands on the site be identified and delineated. Destruction of wetlands will usually require mitigation or replacement by creation of new wetlands in a nearby area. In general, up to one-third acre of isolated wetlands can be filled with no mitigation requirements. The amount of mitigation required varies with the type of wetlands being destroyed but is usually greater than the wetland area lost.

To effectively protect New Russia Township's wetlands through regulation, a full inventory of these resources should be completed. The resultant inventory, in map form, would document current

conditions so that future or proposed changes to the wetlands can be evaluated. Because the Ohio Wetlands Inventory does not accurately identify every wetland, remote sensing with stereoscopic aerial photographs and a field assessment should be conducted to properly complete this inventory.

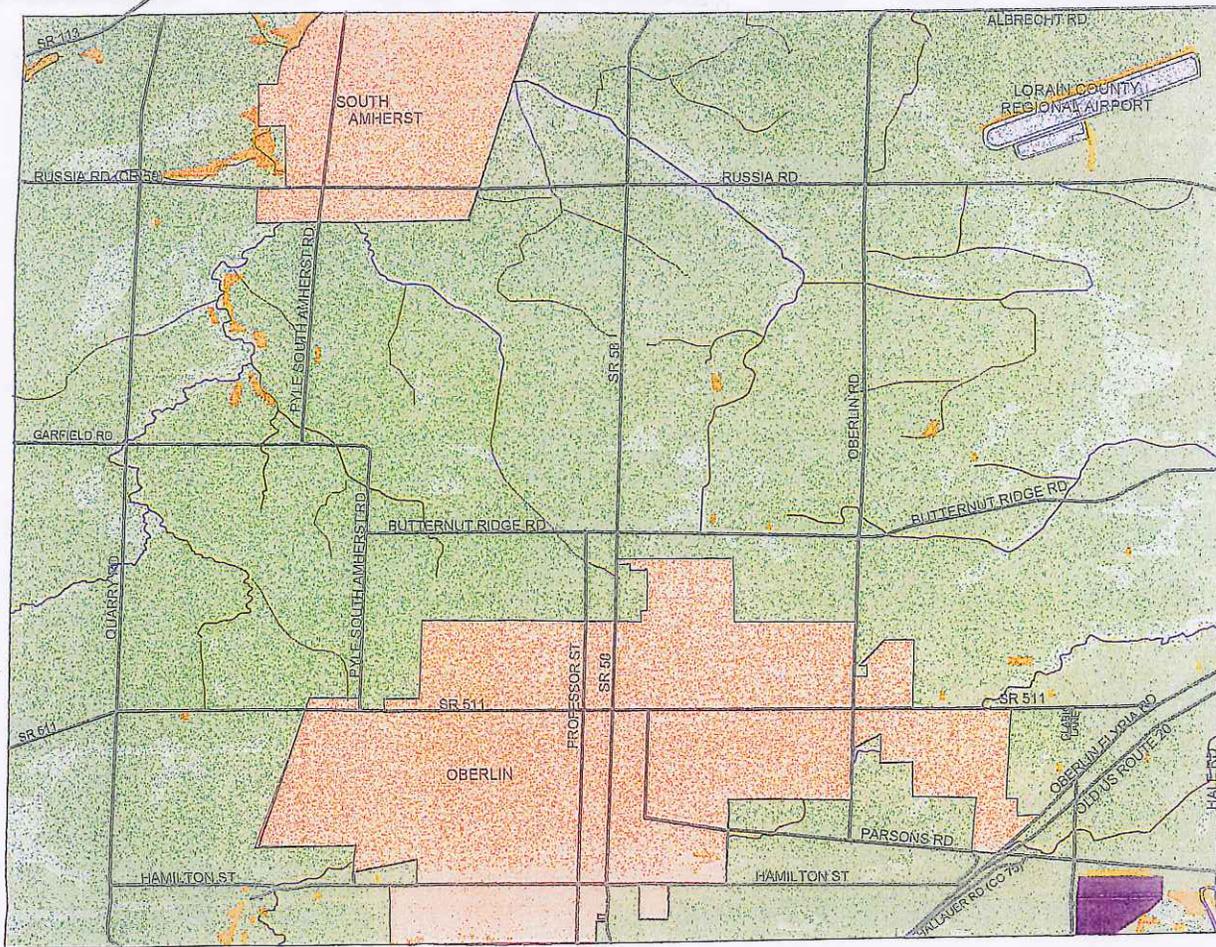
With an inventory in place, the Township can develop regulations to prohibit the alteration or loss of its wetlands. If the wetlands are assessed and ranked according to their value, the resultant map could be used as a planning tool to identify areas where development should be avoided or for which special restrictions could be developed.

### **Prime Agricultural Soils**

Ohio is one of only four states with more than 50% of its soils being classified as "prime farmland," defined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as "land having the best combination of physical and chemical properties to produce sustained high yields, when managed according to the acceptable farming methods." It is farmland that is best suited to the production of row, forage, and fiber crops. This determination is based upon inherent natural characteristics such as level topography, good drainage, adequate moisture supply, favorable soil depth, and favorable soil texture. Due to the presence of these characteristics, prime farmland consistently produces the most food and fiber with the least fertilizer, labor, and energy requirements. Moreover, prime farmland tends to be most resistant to erosion and run-off.

According to information provided by the Lorain Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), about 95% of land utilized for cropland in the County in 1986 was prime farmland. In addition, 88% of all rural land at that time was classified as prime farmland. The County has 230,600 acres of prime farmland and New Russia Township has approximately 12,854 acres of prime farmland (**Map 3-4**).

The USDA has developed criteria for identifying land with the best combination of physical and chemical properties to produce sustained high yields when managed according to acceptable farming methods. In addition to the listed criteria, some soils may be designated non-prime farmland because of other unfavorable conditions. The prime farmland list has been coordinated across state and regional boundaries to ensure that all areas of a specified soil match in their designation as prime or non-prime farmland.



**NEW RUSSIA TOWNSHIP  
AGRICULTURAL SOILS**

**MAP 3-4**

**Legend**

**Agriculture Soil Types**

-  Prime farmland-more productive
-  Prime farmland-less productive
-  Non prime or not rated
-  Municipalities
-  Oberlin Reservoir
-  Rivers and Streams
-  Roads

## Chapter 4: Existing and Future Land Use

### Goals

The Land Use Planning Committee developed specific goals for New Russia Township. The goals for New Russia Township include the following:

#### Township-wide

- Identify areas for growth and provide for orderly and planned development within the Township, so as to minimize existing and future land use conflicts within the Township, as well as conflicts with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Educate the public of the importance of preserving economically viable parcels of land for agricultural productions.
- Discourage development in floodplains, on wetlands, along riparian corridors, and on prime farmland.
- Maintain and add to the Township's tax base through a balance of residential, commercial, and industrial development.
- Provide organized, relevant, and up-to-date information on the Township's land resources to local officials and to the public.
- Update the New Russia Township Land Use Plan on a regular basis. The Zoning Resolution and Map should also be updated to reflect the Township's goals and policies stated in the Land Use Plan.

#### Land Use

- Retain agriculture as a viable land use and industry.
- Preserve and protect New Russia Township's natural, scenic, cultural, and historic resources.
- Effectively guide overall development according to this land use plan and basic principles of wise land use.
- Establish areas for residential growth throughout New Russia Township in a manner consistent with the desires to preserve farmland and rural character and minimize existing and future land use conflicts.
- Promote conservation development and connection of greenways and open space.

- Provide buffer areas between existing and planned residential development and more intense land uses.
- Develop attractive, accessible, and viable commercial areas to serve the needs of New Russia Township residents.
- Identify and develop areas especially suitable for industrial development and provide adequate industrial sites for future employment needs.

### **Infrastructure**

- Provide a public sanitary sewer system to Township residents. Objectives toward this goal include appointing a representative to the Infrastructure Committee and working with the Committee on the creation of a Joint Economic Development District (JEDD) to extend and provide access to a sewage treatment facility to all Township residents without annexation.

### **Transportation**

- Enhance and protect the positive traveling experience in New Russia Township.
- Maximize the capacity and function of existing roadways and provide for the safe and efficient movement of traffic between local and regional destinations.
- Work with the County in developing a county thoroughfare or transportation plan that encourages strategic transportation improvements for the redevelopment of urbanized areas of Lorain County.

### **Quality of Life**

- Preserve, enhance, and increase the total amount of outdoor recreation space.

## Zoning

- Update the New Russia Township Zoning Code to:
  - Promote cluster residential and conservation development.
  - Restrict development along road frontage.
  - Require park/open space dedication (or monetary donations in lieu of land dedication) of all major residential subdivision developments.
  - Eliminate archaic permitted uses and unused zoning districts.
  - Add new zoning districts as recommended in this Land Use Plan.
  - Better reflect today's commercial office and industrial businesses.

## Agricultural Land Use

### History

Agriculture has been a main industry in Lorain County since its settlement. Just after the Civil War, it was discovered that the sandy soil and temperate climate in the northern portion of the County along the lake were conducive to growing grapes perfect for making wine. The lower portion of the County had a much harder clay soil and was more fit for pastureland. This led to the interest in dairy based products such as milk and cheese production, which required less outlay than was needed to produce grain crops.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has provided sub-County data from the 1987 and 1992 Census of Agriculture for the area served by the Zip Code 44074, which includes portions of New Russia Township in addition to Henrietta, Camden, Pittsfield, LaGrange, and Carlisle Townships. Between 1987 and 1992, the number of farms decreased by 17%, from 88 farms to 73 farms. However, the number of farms smaller than 1,000 acres increased from three to seven farms (+133%). Four new farms which sold agricultural products with market value between \$10,000 and \$100,000 and one new farm having sales greater than \$100,000.

By 1997, over 130,000 acres in Lorain County were devoted to production agriculture with nearly 98,000 acres harvested. Although the amount of acreage devoted to agriculture has continued to decrease since 1982, the decline experienced between 1982 and 1992 was less than the decline experienced between 1992 and 1997. The amount of cropland harvested per acre was 6.4% less in 1997 than in 1992. However, this trend is similar to levels posted between 1982 and 1987.

The average size of Lorain County farms is 168 acres. In 1997, Lorain County had 778 farms but only 343 full-time farms. Farmland and the number of farms have decreased about 8% over the decade, but the number of full-time farmers has decreased 18%. This trend may indicate the consolidation of farmland or the loss of land to urban sprawl. Many smaller farms are becoming less profitable to operate or have had a tendency to transition into hobby farms. Larger farms are typically operated by more business-minded farmers who are able to compete in the marketplace and/or purchase additional land. However, farmers are often unable to successfully compete for acreage against a developer who proposes to purchase land at a much higher price.

The trend in the decreasing number of farms has slowed over the last two decades. The number of farms in all farm size categories, except those over 1,000 acres, decreased in the 1997 Census. It is interesting to note that despite a decline in farms that are 999 acres or less, the number of farms which are 1,000 or more acres in size has remained steady.

In 1997, crop sales accounted for 83% and livestock sales accounted for 17% of the 1997 market value of agricultural products sold. A variety of livestock is produced in the County. More bushels of soybeans are harvested than any other crop, in part because of the proximity of the Township to a major soybean processor in Bellevue.

The trend of reduction in farm size while production increases, may be attributed to the advances in mechanization of farm equipment and improvements in seed quality as well as to herbicides and fertilizer. Compared to 50 years ago, farmers today are capable of producing more food on less acreage, thus feeding more people. In the past, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has offered programs to farmers that provided monetary incentives to have their farmland lie fallow. More than ample quantities of crops and food are still available to feed American residents as well as export to other nations.

### **Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program**

Lorain County participates in the State-administered Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program, which is a State-wide taxation program that permits land in agricultural use to receive a tax savings. The County assesses agricultural land at its value for agriculture rather than its full market value, which is generally higher. This program helps ensure the economic viability of agriculture and protects the land base as high taxes reduce profits. The lack of profitability is one of the major motivators for farmers to sell land for development.

To qualify for the program, a minimum of 10 acres must be devoted exclusively to agriculture or, if less than 10 acres, the gross annual income of the property per year must equal a minimum of \$2,500 (annual inspections ensure continuing qualification in the program). The landowner must apply for the program, even if the land is rented to another individual who currently farms the acreage. Enrollment in the CAUV Program follows the landowner. Regardless of the zoning, if the land use changes from agricultural to another use, the landowner is required to pay back the tax savings from the previous three years.

According to the Lorain County Auditor's Office, there are approximately 148,137 acres of County land enrolled in the CAUV Program. This property has a CAUV value of almost \$20 million and a market value of approximately \$238 million.

### **Agricultural Development Activities**

The Ohio State University Extension Office has instituted four "Community Development" endeavors in Lorain County: Comprehensive Land Use Planning, Farmland Retention Planning, Land Use Surveys, and Composting. During 1999, meetings were conducted on farmland and comprehensive land use plans in cooperation with the Lorain County Planning Commission and PKG Consultants. A land use survey conducted in southern Lorain County in October 1998 by the Southern Lorain County Steering Committee resulted in the following conclusions:

- Respondents considered land use to be an important issue;
- Respondents were quite happy with their quality of life in southern Lorain County;
- Respondents prefer residential growth to commercial or industrial growth;
- Respondents prefer single-family homes to other types of housing (e.g. duplexes/apartments);
- Respondents felt it is important to preserve historic/archaeological resources, rural character, agriculture, farmland, woodlands, and open spaces; and
- Opinions were split concerning whether new development is being properly handled.

### **Future**

Preserving farmland in New Russia Township is very important. The New Russia Township Land Use Planning Committee identified several farmland areas that should be preserved within the Township. These areas, as indicated on **Map 4-1**, are the primary undeveloped areas between South Amherst and the airport to the north and Oberlin and the landfill to the south. Unfortunately, housing and some small businesses have developed along Township, County and State roads in these areas. More specifically, these areas are:

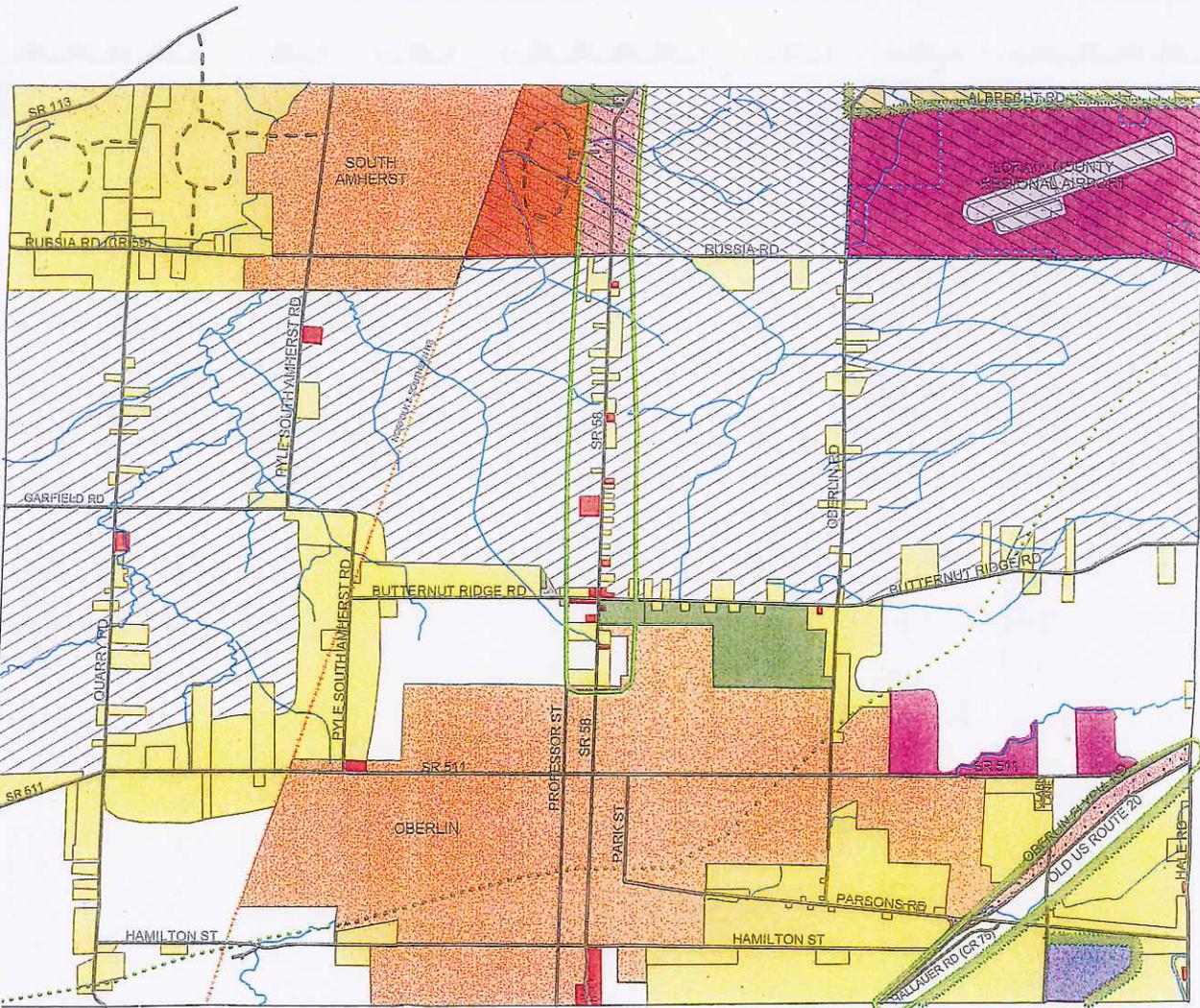
- Most of the land from the western Township line to the eastern Township line, between Russia Road on the north and Garfield and Butternut Ridge Roads on the south.
- Most of the land between the western Township line and Pyle-South Amherst Road, from Garfield Road on the north to SR 511 on the south.

## Standards for Agriculture

- To preserve farmland, the Township recognizes the landowners choice to establish an Agricultural District.
- **Planned Unit Development in Agricultural District:** Under Ohio Revised Code ORC519.021 the Board of Trustees may adopt planned-unit development regulations that do not automatically apply to any property in the township but establish standards that will apply to property that becomes part of a planned-unit development as provided in this division. Property owners who wish to have planned-unit development regulations apply to their property may apply to have the zoning map amended pursuant to Section 519.12 of the Ohio Revised Code to rezone their property as a planned-unit development and no longer subject to any previously applicable zoning regulations. Once property has been rezoned as a planned-unit development, subsequent development on that property shall comply with the planned-unit development regulations as determined by the board of trustees or township zoning commission, as applicable.
- A Planned Unit Development (PUD) will not be permitted in a wetlands or 100 year or 500 hundred year floodplain. The township recognizes the standard that is established by the Federal agencies of Wetland/Floodplains.
- New Russia Township recognizes other agencies on local, State and Federal levels that provide regulations and programs to preserve and protect agricultural districts.
- The township recognizes some tools that may be utilized are surveys, levies and education to preserve agricultural districts.

### Definition of Agricultural District:

- An agricultural district provides protection against nuisance suits over farm operations, deferment of tax assessments on land to build sewer and water lines, and allows for additional review if land is taken by eminent domain for a public purpose. ([ohioline.ag.ohio-state.edu](http://ohioline.ag.ohio-state.edu)) *link to information, news and education from Ohio State University Extension*
- Residential Construction in Agricultural District: the Township recognizes the Lorain County General Health District as the standard for establishing home sanitary systems.
- Minor Sub-division Lot-split: shall have an approved home sanitary system and the lot size shall follow the 3 ½ to 1 lot-split ratio up to five (5) acres.
- New Russia Township officials should continue to follow the development of County and State legislation regarding preserving farmland. Participation in the Lorain County Task Force on Farmland Preservation is important



**NEW RUSSIA TOWNSHIP  
FUTURE LAND USE (2000)**

**MAP 4-1**

**Legend**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
|  Single Family Residential              |  Overlay Zone                         |
|  Mixed-Use Residential                  |  Buffers                              |
|  Commercial                             |  Lorain County Regional Airport       |
|  Mixed-Use-Office/Gen. Bus./Residential |  Oberlin Reservoir                    |
|  Enterprise Zone                        |  Municipalities                       |
|  Institutional                          |  Bike Path - North Coast Inland Trail |
|  Light Industrial                       |  Rivers and Streams                   |
|  Farmland Preservation Areas            |  Proposed Roads (Conceptual Only)     |
|  Agriculture/Open Space                 |  |
|  Parks                                  |  |

## Residential Land Use

### History

Residential development in New Russia Township consists primarily of farmsteads and single-family homes located on land split from original agricultural acreage (also called minor lot-splits). Since there are no major residential subdivisions within the Township, homes are built to front onto State, Township, and County roads. Some of these roads have been identified in Chapter 7 as "Arterials," or roads designed to move large volumes of traffic within a region at moderate to high speeds. These arterials include US 20, SR 58, SR 113, SR 511, Russia Road, and Oberlin-Elyria Road.

Residential development in New Russia Township has been relatively slow with only 95 building permits issued between 1992 and 1998 (as discussed in Chapter 2). This trend appears to be continuing as approximately 14 building permits (which are valid for an eighteen month period) have been issued through September 1999. The new homes being constructed have direct primary access to these arterial roads (as opposed to accessing interior streets within subdivisions). Thus, traffic volumes and problems currently being experienced throughout the Township will be exacerbated as additional curb cuts are approved for new homes in the future.

The majority of the dwellings in New Russia Township are serviced by public water provided by the Rural Lorain County Water Authority (RLCWA), which services most of New Russia Township, or by the City of Oberlin, which services the area around the City. However, RLCWA does not require homeowners to tap into waterlines installed in the rights-of-way fronting their homes. It is a matter of the homeowners' choice to do so.

The homes in New Russia Township utilize private sanitary septic systems. There is no public sanitary sewer system available at this time, although there has been some discussion of a new authority to provide this service in the rural parts of Lorain County.

Several duplexes are located throughout the Township, as well as single-family residential units which have been converted to two-family residential units. Currently, there are no condominium developments located anywhere in the Township (outside the City and Village) nor are there any mobile homes parks.

### Future

The primary source of future residential growth in New Russia Township is the anticipated migration of people moving from Cleveland to the more rural lifestyle of the Township. The *Summary of Impacts of Residential Build-Out in New Russia Township*, developed by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA), presented the number of households that could potentially reside in New Russia Township at full build-out. There are four residential zoning classifications in the Township, each requiring a different minimum acreage. These are as follows:

- R1-1 1 acre minimum
- R1-2 1 acre minimum
- R1-3 .5 acre minimum
- R2-1 .25 acre minimum

Within these categories, NOACA calculated the following number of acres zoned for residential development in each of the four residential zoning categories. These numbers exclude any land that might be zoned residential but is used for other uses, such as the landfill and the airport. They also exclude 30% of the total acreage, as it is assumed that 30% of the land will be used for rights-of way, easements, and/or open space as part of the development process. The resulting residential acreage is as follows:

- R1-1 8,961 acres
- R1-2 2,208 acres
- R1-3 1,062 acres
- R2-1 45 acres

If the land zoned residential in the Township today were to develop as zoned, the following numbers of households would exist in the Township:

- R1-1 6,273 households
- R1-2 1,546 households
- R1-3 1,487 households
- R2-1 125 households

This equals a total of 9,431 households. There are approximately 900 households in the Township. Therefore, full build-out would result in 8,531 new households in the Township, an increase of approximately 1200% according to NOACA. The NOACA study also calculated the number of persons that these new households would add to the population. Using estimates of household sizes based on assumptions of numbers of bedrooms per housing unit, a population estimate of 36,424 additional people was calculated. This assumes the development of farmland that has been designated in this plan for preservation, since current zoning permits residential construction in agricultural areas. Results of the survey conducted in 2001 indicated that nearly two-thirds of the respondents would not like to see additional residential development in New Russia Township. However, it was also noted by respondents that several types of new residential development are needed, including starter homes and housing for seniors. For example, as the population ages, many people are opting to replace their large homes with smaller homes, condominiums, or assisted-living facilities that offer amenities such as lawn maintenance, health care, and social activities.

In order to preserve the rural character of the Township, while accommodating the growing demand for new housing and alternative housing opportunities, the Land Use Planning Committee felt that new residential development should be restricted to specific areas during the next 15 to 20 years. Full build-out, as discussed in the NOACA study, is not an acceptable growth scenario for the Township

within the planning period of this land use plan. Areas identified by the Township as acceptable for residential growth, for a variety of reasons, are listed below and are indicated on the Future Land Use Map (**Map 4-1**). It should be noted that this plan is not intended to encourage growth. However, if growth occurs, the Township desires that it grow in a manner consistent with this Plan. Owners of land in areas designated for a use other than its current use can maintain the existing land use forever. However, if the landowner decides to sell the land for a different use, it should be consistent with this Plan.

- Additional single-family residential development would be acceptable in the area between the western township line and the western boundary of the Village of South Amherst, from the northern Township line to just south of Russia Road, and east to Pyle South Amherst Road. The proximity of this area to the Village of South Amherst would allow for extension of utilities and provision of commercial and other services, as evidenced by the preponderance of new housing already being constructed in this area. Concentrating housing in an area already being developed as such provides for many economies of scale.
- Additional single-family residential development would be acceptable along both sides of SR 511, from Quarry Road to the western boundary of the City of Oberlin and along both sides of Pyle-South Amherst Road from SR 511 to Garfield Road.
- A mixed-use residential area, which could include multi-family dwellings, single-family housing and alternative housing choices, would be acceptable between SR 58 (including the mixed use office, general business, and residential area in the overlay zone) and the Village of South Amherst, from the northern Township line to Russia Road. Land uses in this area could include apartments, condominiums, assisted living and/or nursing home facilities. The Committee felt that this mixed-use area would serve as a transition area between office and light industrial land uses proposed for east of SR 58 and the existing residential areas within the Village of South Amherst. Of special interest could be the development of condominiums around the golf course at the northern Township limits. This area would be developed best if one proposal were prepared for the entire area so that step-down land uses and buffers could be properly incorporated into the plan.
- The land between the northwestern limits of the City of Oberlin and Butternut Ridge Road is owned by Oberlin College. The intention of the College at this time is to maintain the land in its current use. Thus, this land is shown as agricultural/open space on the Future Land Use Map. The Township should continue to coordinate with the College, so that if the College's intentions change, future plans would be consistent with, and complimentary to, neighboring land uses in the City of Oberlin as well as those planned in the Township.
- There are two areas where residential housing exists in or near areas zoned for either general business or light industrial uses. A more detailed analysis of these areas may be required. They are:

- The area in the overlay zone north of Russia Road along SR 58.
- The area between and around US 20 and Oberlin Elyria Road.

It is recommended that the Township consider a new zoning classification for a mixed use area for office, general business, and residential. Requirements should be included for buffering around existing residential land uses and the types of businesses permitted should be selective. This zoning classification should then be applied to the areas identified above.

Where necessary, buffers should be provided between residential land uses and adjacent non-compatible land uses such as commercial or industrial. A buffer can be described as a landscaped area, open space, mounded green area, or similar amenity intended to separate or partially obstruct the view between two adjacent non-compatible land uses. Generally, development is not permitted in a buffer area. However, land uses which could be considered within buffer areas include recreation, open space, jogging/walking or biking trails, and/or natural areas. Mounding, landscaping, reforestation, etc. could also be encouraged in buffer areas. One specific area where a buffer should be required is between the Lorain County Airport property and the homes which front on Albrecht Road.

Other areas where buffers should be required include around the landfill, where buffers are currently required by zoning and exist around most of the landfill, although other areas could become issues as well; and around the proposed mixed use area at US 20 and Oberlin-Elyria Road. Proposed locations for the buffers are indicated on the Future Land Use Map.

The Township may also want to consider requiring "cluster development" or "conservation subdivisions" in those areas designated for residential land use in an effort to preserve and enhance the rural environment of the Township. The newer concepts of cluster development and conservation subdivisions involve designing homes on smaller lots and clustering these homes on those portions of the site which are best suited for development. Common or public open space or conservation areas would be designated on the remaining portions of the site. These concepts may include allowing for smaller setbacks or zero-lot lines in exchange for the open space/conservation areas. As a result of the clustering, infrastructure costs are reduced because the lengths of streets and utility lines are minimized.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made regarding future residential land uses in New Russia Township:

- Residential growth should be restricted to those areas identified on the Future Land Use Map (Map 4-1) and discussed above, for the duration of the planning period (15-20 years) or until this Plan is updated. This will help the Township maintain a well-planned, high-quality residential environment; preserve those areas identified as key farmland areas; preserve and

enhance the rural character of the Township; provide for well-planned, orderly growth; and provide the opportunity for future service and utility extensions at a cost effective price.

- The Township should be willing to work with developers and/or property owners who may be interested in providing alternative, affordable, residential housing opportunities such as retirement housing, condominiums, and/or apartments.

The Trustees should amend and update the New Russia Township Zoning Code to implement recommendations made in the Plan regarding residential development. Changes should be made to:

- Consider changing the GB-1 zoning to better reflect the desire for a transportation area along SR 58 including mixed residential uses. New zoning classifications may be required.
- Include provisions for cluster development, conservation subdivisions, and other innovative techniques. This will require close coordination with the Lorain County Planning Commission.
- Prevent conversion of farmland preservation areas into residential or other uses. It may be necessary to adopt an agricultural zoning classification and apply that agricultural zoning classification to those areas designated as farmland preservation areas on the Future Land Use Map. This will require cooperation with property owners and determining which farmland owners are interested in preservation of their acreage as farmland. Other techniques to preserve farmland are found in the Agricultural Land Use section of this chapter.
- Allow for a mixed-use residential zoning classification.
- Include a new mixed-use zoning classification which would accommodate office, general businesses, and residential development, as recommended for the area around US 20/Oberlin Elyria Road and the overlay zone along SR 58 (north of Russia Road).
- Possibly rezone areas designated for single-family residential land uses in this Plan, or at least be prepared to render decisions regarding future zoning changes based on the recommendations of the Land Use Plan.

Future development decisions should assure that existing residential dwellings are preserved and protected from future non-compatible land uses. The township should continue to require buffer areas between residential land uses and more intense, non-compatible land uses.

The Township should work with appropriate agencies and governments to provide public water and sanitary sewer services to those areas of the township designated for residential, commercial, or industrial development. Continued development without public water and sanitary sewer services should be discouraged.

## Commercial Land Use

### History

Most of the commercial needs of the residents of New Russia Township are provided within the City of Oberlin and the Village of South Amherst as well as within other communities in Lorain County. A few commercial land uses exist in New Russia Township. Commercial land uses are primarily located in the following areas:

- Along SR 58, north and south of the Oberlin city limits, with a small concentration of commercial uses at the intersection of SR 58 and Butternut Ridge Road.
- Along the north side of SR 511 between the City of Oberlin corporate limits and Oberlin-Elyria Road. (This area is zoned agricultural residential.)
- Between and around US 20 and Oberlin Elyria Road in the southeast corner of the Township. (Much of this area is zoned general business.)
- Along Pyle-South Amherst Road, just south of the Village of South Amherst and at the northeast intersection with SR 511.
- On other scattered sites throughout the Township.

There is a rather large area in the north central part of the Township which is zoned general business (GB-1). This area is located north of Russia Road, from the Village of South Amherst to the east side of SR 58. This area is included in the Township's existing Enterprise Zone. However, little to no commercial development currently exists in this area.

Other areas zoned commercial include the areas northeast and northwest of the intersection of SR 58 and Butternut Ridge Road (general business) and the southeast corner of this same intersection, which is zoned neighborhood business.

The area between US 20 and Oberlin Elyria Road is zoned general business, as are other select sites adjacent to this area. One site in this area (which has since been discontinued) is zoned motorist service (MS-1). Today, there is scattered commercial development existing in this area, surrounded primarily with residential development.

### Future

Additional demand for retail commercial and professional services is not likely to occur unless there is an increase in residential development. Since the Township is beginning to feel the pressure for continued development, and in fact is zoned to accommodate a considerable amount of new residential development (as discussed in the NOACA report), it is in the Township's best interest to

identify preferred locations for such development and to adopt the policies needed to restrict such development accordingly.

Concentrating commercial land uses in this SR 58 overlay zone area would accomplish several objectives:

- Concentration of development in a specific area allows for more cost-effective servicing of the area with utilities. An agreement could possibly be reached with either the City of Oberlin or RLCWA to provide utilities, as needed.
- Concentrating commercial land uses in this area provides developers and businesses with the opportunity to develop with the Township, while eliminating the proliferation of scattered commercial uses throughout the Township.
- Residents would have access to several services and products in one area, close to their homes.
- New jobs could be created in the Township as well as new business opportunities for entrepreneurs.
- Farmland preservation efforts will be more effective if commercial uses are prohibited except in designated areas, such as the SR 58 area.

A second area that is slowly developing as commercial, but has a substantial amount of housing interspersed, is the area between and around US 20 and Oberlin-Elyria Road. Most of this area is zoned general business (GB-1). Given the access to major transportation routes, it makes sense that this area be permitted to continue to develop commercially, including office development. However, adequate buffering from existing and future residential land uses east of US 20 and west of Oberlin Elyria Road should be required. Possibly the proposed new zoning classification for mixed office, business, residential would serve this area well.

This area would benefit from a conceptual plan for its future development, as well as consideration of an overlay zone to provide access management controls. As this area continues to develop, congestion will result without proper planning and controls.

### **Recommendations**

- Direct developers and entrepreneurs expressing an interest in New Russia Township to locate new businesses along SR 58 or old U.S. 20.
- Reconsider the existing GB-1 zoning classification along SR 58 between the northern Township limit and Russia Road. Given the desire for some mixed-use residential development to serve

as a transition area, a different zoning classification (mixed-use residential) may be needed west of the proposed overlay zone.

- Prepare a conceptual development plan for the area between and around US 20 and Oberlin Elyria Road, as well as an overlay zone for access management.
- Consider developing a new mixed use office, general business, residential zoning classification that could serve the area around and between US 20 and Oberlin-Elyria Road and the area along SR 58 (north of Russia Road) in the overlay zone.

## Industrial Land Use

### Existing

A joint enterprise zone between New Russia Township, Amherst, and Amherst Township was created in 1995. In New Russia Township, the enterprise zone encompasses an area from the eastern Township boundary to the Village of South Amherst, between Russia Road and the northern Township line. This area is zoned primarily Agricultural Residential (R1-1), with General Business zoning (GB-1) along SR 58.

The Lorain County Airport is located within this enterprise zone. In addition to offering tax incentives to qualifying companies, the enterprise zone allows New Russia Township the opportunity to review potential companies that are interested in locating in the Township. Since the establishment of the enterprise zone, however, there has been no new commercial or industrial development within the New Russia Township portion of the enterprise zone.

The Lorain County Airport is one of the two major industries within the Township. Historically, the airport, which once served Ford with its just-in-time inventory system for its Lorain plant, was managed by the Lorain County Airport Authority. With economic problems at Ford and other local companies, the airport has suffered and has been operating at a deficit. In the fall of 1999, this organization was replaced with the new Lorain County Airport and Development Authority, whose main purpose is to promote economic development and jobs.

Land around the airport has been designated on the Future Land Use Map as light industrial to accommodate potential new businesses that rely on air transportation for transferred goods or people as part of their routine business. There has been discussion about the extension of the runway and further development of the airport. Since final plans have not been developed and/or released to the public, this Land Use Plan retains the light industrial land use around the airport for future industrial development. This would open up a significant amount of land in the Township for light industrial development, which should be adequate to meet the needs of the Township for the duration of the planning period.

As mentioned briefly above, the entire airport and the land around it is currently zoned Agricultural Residential (R1-1). If the township is serious about developing light industrial land uses in this area, the zoning should be changed to light industrial. This will make it easier for companies desiring to locate around the airport to do so expeditiously, and it will prevent unsuspecting homeowners from building houses in an area designated for light industrial development.

It is imperative that the Township encourage the County to develop a conceptual plan identifying how the land around the airport can develop in a well-planned, aesthetically-pleasing manner. The County could develop architectural design standards for the airport area as well as an architectural review process and committee, which would require additional standards. Landscaped mounds could be required along Oberlin Road and Russia Road, so that very little of the buildings, and even less of the parking areas and truck docks, are visible from the roads. Outside storage could be prohibited or required to be screened from public view. Signage could be required to conform to an acceptable standard, be designed low to the ground, and be lit by ground lighting only.

The goal is to develop and enforce requirements that will restrict the type of development that occurs in this area in such a manner as to preserve and enhance the rural environment as much as possible. There are a variety of ways to accomplish this goal. It should be noted that most companies today, including industries, are very concerned about maintaining the value of their investments. A well-planned and controlled industrial park, often with strict design standards, is one way to assure companies that their investments will be protected in New Russia Township.

To protect investments made by property owners in single-family residences, buffers should be required around future office, commercial, and industrial developments that are adjacent to any existing residential units. Residential units, however, should also be restricted to those areas identified on the future Land Use Map and discussed above.

In addition to the Lorain County Regional Airport, the other major existing industrial land use within the Township is the Lorain County Landfill II, located south of Butternut Ridge Road between the eastern Township limits and Oberlin Road. Lorain County Landfill II also owns land on the north side of Butternut Ridge Road. The landfill is a conditional use in the R1-1 zoning classification.

The Township should consider analyzing the allowable uses in its different zoning classifications, specifically its industrial classifications. With the exception of the landfill, chances are there are no other uses that would be desirable in the Township that would fit the "heavy" industrial definition today. Many of the heavy industrial permitted uses in the current zoning resolution are archaic, while some of the newer industries (especially hi-tech) are not included in even the light industrial district. Permitted uses can be described in a much more general way, rather than trying to be all-inclusive with the lists of permitted uses stated in the zoning code.

## **Future**

As noted on the Future Land Use Map (**Map 4-1**), the area from the eastern Township limits to Oberlin Road, north of Russia Road, has been designated for light industrial uses. Proposed future

development and expansion of the Lorain County Regional Airport, as noted in the Master Plan Report (1989), indicated several proposed improvements at the airport, including the following:

- An extension of the runway by 7,000 feet. This could require the closing of Oberlin Road, north of Russia Road.
- Development of a commercial/industrial airpark to attract aviation-related businesses to the airport and expansion of these facilities as needed.
- Construction of a new public terminal including a restaurant.
- Improvements and expansion to existing hangars, apron areas, motor vehicle parking, and other ancillary features.

As these improvements are actually implemented, along with the enterprise zone and foreign trade zone designations, the Lorain County Regional Airport will be in a tremendous position to attract first class industries to the area. New Russia Township needs to be prepared to assist in that effort as it would provide a significant increase to the Township and School District tax bases, while at the same time protecting its interests.

### **Recommended Industrial Standards**

Direct light industrial and office development in the enterprise zone (and foreign trade zone, if implemented) from the eastern Township limits (around the Lorain County Airport) west to Oberlin Road between Russia Road and the northern Township limit. A buffer between the existing residential land uses that front onto Albrecht Road and this industrial area should be required.

- See Section 419 *Engineering Study standard to follow in establishing development for Heavy and Light Industry* in the New Russia Township Zoning Resolution.
- Plan and zone an office/light industrial transition area between the light industrial area west of the airport area and Oberlin Road.
- Require buffers around all office and light industrial land uses adjacent to residential areas.
- Update the heavy industrial zoning classification, specifically the permitted uses.
- Support development efforts at the airport, provided that they are consistent with the recommendations of this use plan.

## Chapter 5 Quality of Life Factors

This section of the Plan discusses those factors that significantly impact the quality of life in New Russia Township. Educational facilities, fire protection, law enforcement, medical facilities, cultural facilities, and parks and recreation are discussed in this chapter.

### Educational Facilities

Residents of New Russia Township live within one of three school districts: the Oberlin City School District, the Firelands Local School District, or the Keystone School District. The Firelands Local School District encompasses the northwest portion of the Township. One residence in the southeast corner of the township is in the Keystone School District, and the remainder of the Township residents are in the Oberlin School District. Additional K-12 schooling opportunities are located near the Township and include the Lorain County Joint Vocational School, parochial schools, Christian schools, and the Murray Ridge School for the Handicapped for developmentally disabled and physically handicapped children. Oberlin College is located in the heart of the City of Oberlin, and portions of the campus are located in New Russia Township.

### Oberlin City School District

The Oberlin City School District includes the City of Oberlin, portions of New Russia Township, and Carlisle, Pittsfield, and Amherst Townships – an area of 47 square miles. The four facilities of the Oberlin City School District are located in the City of Oberlin and include Oberlin High School (Grades 9-12), Langston Middle School (Grades 6-8), Prospect Elementary School (Grades 3-5) and Eastwood Elementary School (Grades K-2).

Approximately 1,100 students are enrolled in the school district with approximately 60 of those students being non-residents attending through the Open Enrollment Program. In contrast, approximately 90 residents of the Oberlin School District attend non-district schools through the Open Enrollment Program. The school has 90 certified teachers.

The Oberlin City School District is the first school district in the State of Ohio certified K-12 International Baccalaureate. The high school offers no vocational classes other than Home Economics due to the proximity of the Lorain County Joint Vocational School. Approximately 60 residents of the school district attend LCJVS. Oberlin High School offers excellent sports programs as well as top rated music and art programs.

A Boys and Girls Club of America, located in the previous school administration building, now provides after-hours supervised recreation. The proximity of Oberlin College allows opportunities for participation in additional sports and recreation programs.

The District expends approximately \$12,218.00 per student overall. Website for statistics: [www.stateimpact.npr.org/ohio/2012/01/17](http://www.stateimpact.npr.org/ohio/2012/01/17).

### **Firelands Local School District**

The northwest portion of New Russia Township and South Amherst is included in the Firelands Local School District. The district encompasses 94 square miles. The school facilities include Firelands Elementary School and Firelands High School, located on Vermilion Road, and South Amherst Middle School, located on SR 113. Approximately 1,800 students attend these schools. Further information can be obtained by contacting the superintendent's office.

### **Lorain County Joint Vocational School**

The Lorain County JVS offers job training and preparation in a variety of career fields for high school juniors and seniors from the following school districts: Amherst, Avon, Avon Lake, Clearview, Columbia, Elyria, Firelands, Keystone, Midview, North Ridgeville, Oberlin, Sheffield-Sheffield Lake, and Wellington. All residents of New Russia Township are serviced by the school. The JVS philosophy is to provide individualized, hands-on job skills on modern equipment in the student's chosen career field, emphasizing work ethics and job placement linkages with the business and industrial community. The JVS concept is enriched through a well-balanced program of academics, technical experiences, and youth club activities.

### **Private Schools**

There are no parochial schools located in New Russia Township; however, Elyria Catholic High School and Open Door Christian School, both located in Elyria, and Lake Ridge Academy, located in North Ridgeville, are a few other schools available to interested residents.

### **Schools for the Cognitive and Physical Exceptionalities**

In Elyria, the Murray Ridge School offers specialized curriculum focusing on children with special needs due to cognitive and physical exceptionalities. Funding for Murray Ridge is provided through a tax levy and donations to the school.

### **Oberlin College**

Oberlin College is among the leading liberal arts colleges in the United States and is noted for its top-ranked science program and world-famous Conservatory of Music. Oberlin College is recognized as one of the first in the U.S. to admit African Americans and to grant degrees to women. Oberlin sponsors varsity sports for men and women and offers different club teams and activities.

### **Fire Protection and Law Enforcement Facilities**

Fire service is provided on a contract basis with the Oberlin Fire Department and the South Amherst Fire Department. The Township purchased a pumper-tanker which it leases to the Oberlin Fire Department. The Oberlin Fire Department has its primary responsibility to the citizens of Oberlin, with contracted fire protection to a large portion of New Russia Township, Oberlin College, and a mutual aid agreement with all other Lorain County fire agencies. The fire protection area of 25 square miles is predominately residential but includes Oberlin College, the FAA Air Traffic Control Center, Mercy Allen Hospital, and the Lorain County Regional Airport. Oberlin Fire Department's service area does not

include the north and northwestern portions of the Township. The Oberlin Fire Department provides continuous training for all personnel so that they are qualified to use all state-of-the-art equipment in case of any emergency.

Central Lorain County Ambulance District, which receives its medical direction from Mercy Allen Hospital, is an active member on the Lorain County 9-1-1 Council.

The Oberlin Fire Department is responsible for hazardous material mitigation as a result of an accident or through neglect of a containment system. Oberlin fire personnel maintain Hazmat Certifications as First Responder-Operational. The department works closely with the Lorain County Emergency Management Agency to mitigate hazardous incidents.

The Oberlin Fire Department offers a variety of fire, safety, and public education programs, including fire safety training for children, fire safety assistance in the workplace, and general public awareness activities. For children, it offers elementary school training on the basics of "Stop, Drop, and Roll" and "Exit Drills in the Home" (EDITH) fire safety programs in preschools. To promote fire safety in the workplace, the department assists businesses in preparing emergency evacuation plans, provides lectures and/or practical fire extinguisher training for employees, and undertakes business fire safety inspections to assure fire code compliance. Public awareness campaigns include: escape planning, smoke detector installation, home safety inspections, burn prevention, juvenile fire-setting problems, fire safety for babysitters, personal safety tips for college residents, and fire safety for the elderly. The department maintains fire prevention affiliations with the State Fire Marshal's Office, the National Fire Prevention Association, and the Building Officials and Code Administrators.

### **South Amherst Fire Department**

New Russia Township has contracted with the South Amherst Fire Department to provide fire service to the area located north of Russia Road, from west of the Lorain County Airport southwest to include Pyle and Garfield Roads. Residents will receive a faster response time than if Oberlin Fire Department provided service to the area. The South Amherst Fire Department is a part-time and volunteer force and has the ability to make First Responder service calls for accidents and other emergencies.

### **Law Enforcement**

Law enforcement agencies operating in New Russia Township include the Lorain County Sheriff's Department and the State Highway Patrol Department. The Village of South Amherst has a part-time police department with residents calling the Sheriff's Department after hours. The Sheriff's Department is required to notify the State Highway Patrol whenever a traffic accident results in an injury or fatality. The Oberlin Police Department does not have jurisdiction in the Township; however, Oberlin provides assistance to the Sheriff's Department upon request when the Sheriff does not have an officer in the vicinity of the service request. At this time, the Lorain County Sheriff's Office provides law enforcement services for the residents of New Russia Township. A sub-station is also provided at the township maintenance facility at 46268 Butternut Ridge Road for the deputy sheriffs to use.

Specialized crime units available to residents of New Russia Township through the Sheriff's Office include: The Lorain County SWAT Team, K-9 units (for drugs, crowd control and tracking), the Lorain County Drug Force, and a dedicated Auxiliary Corps.

## **Medical Facilities**

Residents of New Russia Township have many opportunities to receive high quality hospital and medical care. Hospitals in the area include Mercy Allen Hospital in Oberlin, EMH Regional Health Care System in Elyria, and Mercy Regional Medical Center in Lorain. Hospitals located outside of Lorain County include the Cleveland Clinic of Cleveland, Cleveland University Hospital, and Metro in Cleveland.

## **Cultural Facilities**

New Russia Township has access to a number of well-known cultural facilities and historic places. These facilities are located either within the County or close to the Township.

### **Cultural and Arts Opportunities**

The **Allen Memorial Art Museum**, located in the City of Oberlin, contains one of the finest college art collections in the nation with over 14,000 works of art. The buildings that house the Allen Memorial Art Museum were designed by Cass Gilbert in 1917 and represent an eclectic dialogue between Tuscan Renaissance and Midwestern Vernacular architectural styles. The 1977 addition designed by Venturi, Scott Brown, and Associates reflects both respect and irony, on that blend of styles, and poses an early critique of the orthodox modernist architecture of the day.

The **Apollo Movie Theater** is an Art Deco style building in the City of Oberlin featuring bright neon lights on its marquee. Recently released films are shown in this theater.

**Firelands Association for the Visual Arts (FAVA)** is Northeast Ohio's nationally known arts organization, offering art exhibitions, classes, and outreach programs.

**New Union Center for the Arts**, located on the campus of Oberlin College, houses seven arts organizations including the Firelands Association for the Visual Arts, Uncommon Objects Gallery and Museum Store, Coral Spectrum, the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra, Music Arts & Drama (MAD) Factory, the Ohio Dance Theatre, and the Oberlin Choristers (a 200 plus-voice children's choir).

**Oberlin College, Hall Auditorium, and Finney Chapel.** Among the leading liberal arts colleges in the U.S., Oberlin College is noted for its top-ranked science program and world famous Conservatory of Music. Over 1,500 performing/visual arts events are performed annually in the Hall Auditorium and Finney Chapel. Hall Auditorium is home to the Oberlin Opera Theatre as well as dance and theatrical productions. Classical, jazz, blues, and rock concerts are presented at Finney Chapel.

**Tappan Square** is the 13-acre center of both the City of Oberlin and the college. A diverse variety of quality concert entertainment can be heard during the summer at the **Clark Bandstand** in Tappan Square.

The **Stocker Humanities and Fine Arts Center**, located on the Lorain County Community College campus, offers a 1,000 seat theater featuring the Performing Artists Series, Student Matinee Series, and Film Series, plus numerous college and community events. The Stocker Center is also known as one of Ohio's largest children's performance venues with more than 20 performances per year, including the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra which has involved many young people from New Russia Township households. The **Stocker Center Art Gallery** is used for professional touring exhibitions, professional local artists, students' shows, and community exhibitions.

The **Lorain Palace Civic Center** is a richly restored Gothic theater built as a "movie palace" in 1928 in Lorain. The Center showcases professional drama, music, dance, and civic events. The Palace's mighty Wurlitzer pipe organ has been used since 1928 when vaudeville shows played on the theater's stage. The Palace was the first talking motion picture theater in Ohio. The hand-painted frescoes in the lobby and the jewel-like, three-quarter-ton crystal chandelier help make this facility a point of Lorain County pride.

#### **Historic Places**

New Russia Township and southern Lorain County have an exceptional variety of historical experiences available to residents and visitors, including quaint towns with historic homes and businesses in original storefronts lining the streets. Oberlin has several antique and collectible stores. Many of the homes and buildings are in the area's historic registry and were original stops on the Underground Railroad. Oberlin was known as "Stop 99" on the Underground Railroad, and this is where John Price, a runaway slave, was captured by slave hunters and freed by the townspeople of Oberlin and Wellington. The Oberlin College campus has one of the greatest collections of buildings with historical significance.

The historic **First Church** in Oberlin, built in 1842, served as the meeting site for the Oberlin Anti-Slavery Society. It was the funeral site of a four-year old fugitive slave child and the site of memorial services for participants in John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry.

The **Benjamin Bacon Museum**, located in Brownhelm Township, is a stately Greek Revival style historic home built in 1845 by Benjamin Bacon in the small community of Brownhelm Mills, in the Vermilion River Reservation. The house is now a museum honoring the Bacon Family and early pioneers who settled in this hollow and is open to visitors.

The **Moore House** is a yellow brick, Neoclassical revival-style house built in 1906 by Leonard Moore, a banker and Lorain Mayor. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the house is now a museum for the **Black River Historical Society** and houses exhibits depicting Lorain County's history.

The **Herrick Memorial Library, Archibald Willard Monument, and Spirit of '76 Museum** are all located in Wellington. Within the Library hangs the original "Spirit of '76" painting plus 11 other paintings

completed by Wellington native, Archibald Willard. The monument is located on the town square adjacent to the library. The building housing the Spirit of '76 Museum was one of Wellington's early cheese warehouses. The museum now contains more than a dozen original Willard paintings and Revolutionary/Civil War artifacts and items detailing local history.

In Elyria, the **Lorain County Historical Society's the Hickories** contains collections of Lorain County history in a stately turn-of-the-century mansion built by industrialist Arthur Lovett Garford, the inventor of the padded bicycle seat and the Garford automobile. The opulent mansion is a combination of Richardsonian Romanesque and Shingle styles and features intricately carved woodwork, Tiffany windows, and a Gothic chapel.

The **Port of Lorain Lighthouse**, known as the "Jewel of the Port," is a charming and unusual lighthouse constructed of reinforced concrete with shutters and a red pitched roof, standing at the end of a mile-long break wall. The lighthouse was decommissioned in 1986, but upkeep is provided by the **Port of Lorain Foundation** through a celebration and fund-raising festival held the second weekend in June.

The **Wellington Town Hall** is a mixture of Byzantine, Greek, Gothic, and Spanish architecture.

#### **Other Facilities**

The **Lorain County Speedway** in Amherst Township holds stock car races throughout the summer.

The **Lorain County Fair** is held in Wellington each summer and is one of Ohio's largest county fairs.

#### **Parks and Recreation**

##### **New Russia Township Facilities**

The current Service Complex at 46268 Butternut Ridge Road is situated on a 9 acre area that includes the rental hall, the maintenance garage, Sheriff's sub-station, picnic pavilion, public restroom, playground, and baseball field.

In 2014 a beautiful new township complex featuring the township business offices and rental hall with a seating capacity of 500 will be completed just west of the original site at 46300 Butternut Ridge Road. The township purchased approximately 130 acres of land located at the southeast corner of SR 58 and Butternut Ridge Road for the Nature Park and Preserve. This area has paved biking/walking trails, wildlife area, equestrian ring, fishing lake, basketball court, playground, tennis courts, and sandlot basketball area.

##### **New Russia Township Cemetery**

Located north of Oberlin City limits at 12528 Oberlin Road, New Russia Township Cemetery features 40 acres of serene landscaped lawns with a reflecting pond and over 4,000 spaces available. The Cemetery Service Building won the Lorain County Beautiful award in 2008. It also has Columbarium space.

### **Lorain County Metro Parks**

In 1957, the Lorain County Metropolitan Park District was created by the Lorain County Probate Court. The park is governed by a Board of Commissioners. The mission of the Park District is to acquire land to promote and demonstrate the wise use of the County's natural resources. The Park District also strives to preserve and create a diversity of ecosystems while providing educational and recreational opportunities that are compatible with and promote conservation of these resources. For more information, visit [www.metroparks.cc](http://www.metroparks.cc)

### **North Coast Inland Trail**

Rails-to-trails are trail systems built primarily within railroad rights-of-way where service has been abandoned. There are more than 800 national rails-to-trails projects totaling more than 7,000 miles. Rails-to-trails are typically constructed by local, state, and federal public agencies with assistance from non-profit groups and volunteers

The North Coast Inland Trail is a rails-to-trails program which, upon completion, will run from Cleveland to the Indiana state line. Seven park districts, including the Lorain County Metro Parks District, agreed in 1992 to develop this system of connecting trails in northwest Ohio from Elyria to Toledo, for a total of 65 miles. All trail segments are in some phase of development, each managed by the local jurisdiction.

In Lorain County, the North Coast Inland Trail is located along 14 miles of the Toledo, Norwalk, and Cleveland Railway, which abandoned service in 1975. The segment of the trail in Lorain County runs from just west of Kipton to Elyria. Oberlin owns and manages the 3.1 miles within its corporate boundaries, and the Lorain County Metro Parks District owns and manages the remaining 10 miles. The Trail is a multi-use, 12-foot wide asphalt path for non-motorized vehicles (bicycles and in-line skates), walkers, runners, and wheelchairs. Connections are available to the Black River Reservation and its Bridgeway Trail, a 3.5 mile, 12-foot wide asphalt path which leads to the City of Lorain.

The portion of the North Coast Inland Trail in New Russia Township enters at the southwest Township corner, turning northeasterly in Oberlin, and exiting the township south of Russia Road (CR57). This trail affords New Russia Township officials the opportunity to develop a Township trail system which could connect with the North Coast Inland Trail, providing township residents access to a statewide trail system.

## Chapter 6: Transportation

New Russia Township is located in the west central portion of Lorain County, in northern Ohio, approximately 25 miles southwest of Cleveland, 87 miles east of Toledo, 110 miles northeast of Columbus, and 210 miles northeast of Cincinnati.

### Road Classifications

In an effort to evaluate the roadways in New Russia Township, a standard classification system was applied, identifying the hierarchy of roads within the Township. This hierarchy is based on a number of elements including the length and purpose of trips, access to properties, and the amount of traffic on the roads. Designating the function of each road within the Township allows better management of the entire network as a whole. The roads in New Russia Township are classified by the Lorain County engineer as follows:

#### Interstate Highways

Interstate highways are federally-designated thoroughfares designed to move large volumes of traffic between regions at high speeds. These highways also provide local businesses and industries with access to national markets. Access to these roads is usually from arterials and is generally limited to interchanges.

The Ohio Turnpike (I-80/90), which is the busiest east-west highway in the county, is the closest interstate highway to New Russia Township. In north central Lorain County, I-80 and I-90 split (or join). In the western part of the County, I-80 and I-90 are combined. In the eastern part of the County, I-90 splits from I-80 and heads northeast along Lake Erie into Pennsylvania and New York. I-80 continues eastward as the Turnpike (a toll road) to the Ohio/Pennsylvania line. I-80 connects with I-76 at the State line, with I-76 becoming the toll road in southern Pennsylvania and I-80 becoming a toll-free interstate through central Pennsylvania.

Access to the turnpike from New Russia Township is available via Baumhart Road on the west, via SR 58 to the north, and via SR 57 to the east.

#### Arterials

Arterials are US routes, State routes, and sometimes County roads designed to move large volumes of traffic within a region at moderate to high speeds. The function of an arterial is to carry traffic from collectors to regional destinations and interstate highways, providing local businesses and industries with access to regional markets. The access points permitted on arterials are more frequent than those on interstate highways and are typically limited to at-grade intersections.

Arterials have a higher design capacity than most other roads inside a Township. Due to higher traffic capacity, arterials may attract new highway business, thus, development standards with wider

setbacks should be considered. It is important to keep arterials unencumbered, allowing traffic to move efficiently through the Township.

The following six arterials pass through New Russia Township:

- US 20, which travels through the very southeast portion of the Township in a southwest/northeast direction, providing easy access to the northeastern area of the County and connections to the Cleveland metropolitan area.
- SR 58 is a direct north-south route providing access to SR 113 and I-80/90 to the north of the Township and to US 20 south of the Township.
- Milan-Elyria Road (SR 113), of which only a very small portion is located in New Russia Township (the northwestern corner). SR 113 is a direct east-west route connecting Milan in Huron County to Elyria in Lorain County.
- SR 511 is an east-west route located in the southern part of New Russia Township, traveling through the City of Oberlin. West of the Township, SR 511 turns south providing access to the City of Ashland in Ashland County. SR 511 also intersects US 20 at the eastern edge of the Township.
- Russia Road (CR 57) is an east-west route through the northern portion of the Township.
- Oberlin-Elyria Road (CR 231) parallels US 20, providing access to the southern portion of Elyria, northeast of the Township.

### **Collectors**

Collectors are streets which are designed to perform the intermediate function of connecting local areas with arterials. Collector streets function primarily to provide circulation within certain areas of the Township and secondarily to provide access to adjacent property. Collectors in New Russia Township include the following County and Township roads:

- Albrecht Road (CR 112)
- Butternut Ridge Road (T-12)
- Garfield Road (T-18)
- Hallauer Road (CR 75)
- Hamilton Road (T-122)
- Oberlin Road (CR 39)
- Parsons Road (T-15)
- Professor Street (T-175)
- Pyle-South Amherst Road (CR 16)
- Quarry Road (CR 30)

## **Local Roads**

Local roads provide access to individual properties, serving short destination trips only. Local roads primarily serve as access to residential properties for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles, and provide for traffic movement between other local streets and collectors. The few remaining roads not otherwise designated, as well as numerous streets and roads in the Village of South Amherst and the City of Oberlin, are considered local roads.

## **Proposed Roadway Improvements**

The Township Trustees are responsible for identifying needed roadway improvement projects on specific township roads throughout the Township, as well as for scheduling improvements and funding for these projects. Township Trustees have scheduled several township roads in New Russia Township for improvements. Improvements to these roads could include resurfacing and berm stabilization. All township roads, as follows, are reviewed periodically for improvements, including:

- North Professor Road (T-175)
- Oberlin Road (CR 39)
- Pyle-South Amherst Road (CR 16)
- Hale Road (T-169)
- Parsons Road (T-15)
- Hamilton Road (T-122)
- Butternut Ridge Road
- Clark Lane
- Garfield Road

## **Access Management**

A major challenge facing many communities, including New Russia Township, is the ability to maintain the capacity of roadways and demands on the roadways as the area develops. Today, motor vehicles account for nearly 90 percent of all travel. Building new roads is expensive; therefore, it is important to preserve and improve upon existing roadway capacity.

In many areas of Ohio, a lack of access management control has reduced the capacity of roadways to accommodate traffic. Residential and commercial strip developments along existing roadways have sacrificed mobility for access, causing congestion along major corridors. Each new driveway represents a point of conflict between traffic moving through an area and traffic trying to enter or exit adjacent property. These conflict points reduce highway safety and mobility and create delays, which may further contribute to excess air pollution.

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has developed an aggressive approach to control access along State routes. The State Highway Access Management Manual was developed and adopted in 1997. The manual provides statewide, uniform permit procedures, which establish when,

where and how access to State highways would be permitted, balancing the competing demands for traffic mobility, safety and land access. For further information, visit [www.dot.state.ohio.us](http://www.dot.state.ohio.us).

One way to increase the capacity and function of existing roads is to develop access management standards for County-maintained roads, similar to ODOT's standards. These standards are implemented based on the classification of the roadway. For example, the higher the class of roadway, the more restrictive the access. To develop and enforce this in Lorain County will require a partnership between several agencies, including the County Engineer's Office, ODOT, townships, and municipalities. Identifying major roadways in New Russia Township by classification allows better management of the road network if/when an access management program is initiated. When access management standards are utilized, motorists may experience fewer accidents, less congestion, and improved travel time on roads.

### **Lorain County Regional Airport**

The Lorain County Regional Airport is located in the northeast portion of New Russia Township, surrounded by approximately 1,200 acres of County-owned land, which is currently being farmed. The airport has a 5,000 foot runway. Currently, Lorain County subsidizes the airport with funding. The main goal of the Lorain County Regional Airport is to make the airport self-sufficient. Another goal is to attract small to medium-sized industries to locate around the airport, which would increase the employment base in the Township. The airport is currently being managed by MRK Aviation.

### **Recommendations**

In order to implement the land use recommendations made in earlier chapters of the Land Use Plan, roadway improvements will be required. Not all of these improvements are the responsibility of New Russia Township. However, without consensus and proactive actions on the part of the township, improvements within the township by other entities will not be prioritized. In an effort to identify and prioritize needed improvements, New Russia Township should work with the County, other townships, and municipalities to develop and adopt access management standards. These standards could be adopted as part of the County Subdivision Regulations, and implemented as the best plan for future development and the resultant traffic.

## **Chapter 7: Infrastructure**

### **Water Systems**

Drinking water for New Russia Township residents is supplied by the Rural Lorain County Water Authority (RLCWA). The RLCWA is a privately-held company identified as a special district under Ohio Revised Code Section 6199. The agency began operation in 1973 and today serves the majority of customers in New Russia Township.

### **Wastewater Systems**

Currently, a majority of New Russia Township residents are served by individual septic systems. A group of township and unincorporated villages comprise a group known as LORCO, a rural wastewater district, to provide centralized sewers to 13 townships without the threat of annexation. Initial plans called for a collection system that would pipe wastewater to an existing wastewater facility or construct a treatment plant that would access a centralized system within 10 years.

### **Recommendations**

- Continue to work with LORCO in the development of a County-wide sanitary sewer system to benefit all residents in the unincorporated area of the County.
- Require developers to extend water and sanitary sewers for new development. As projects and subdivisions are constructed, developers should be required to provide the infrastructure needed to service their respective developments, including off-site extensions and improvements to the trunk main.

## Chapter 8: Review Process

The New Russia Township Land Use Plan is the result of the effort and dedication of a Land Use Planning Committee, the administrative staff, Zoning Commission and the Board of Trustees, who spent many hours preparing the Plan to assure that the ideas, concerns, and the future of Township residents were appropriately addressed. Many reviews, and adjustments were made prior to final approval of the Plan.

The New Russia Township Land Use Plan is a viable tool for directing and managing future growth and will assure that the Township's concerns are adequately addressed at relevant county planning sessions. Issues regarding future roadway projects, County airport development, economic development projects, recreational projects, and/or any other community activities or developments that affect New Russia Township will continue to be addressed through the planning process.

As such, the Township Trustees intend to review and update the Land Use Plan a minimum of every five years. Should a major event or activity potentially affect the Township, the Trustees will review the Plan and make the necessary changes.

Future reviews and updates of the Plan will undergo the same process of plan development which may include input, public meetings, surveys, and formal approvals as the original Plan. This revised Plan will become the official document of the Township as of the date of approval.