City of Oberlin, Ohio

RESOLUTION No. R11- 10 CMS

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE CITY OF OBERLIN 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

WHEREAS, in 1990-91, the Oberlin City Council adopted its last strategic plan, and since then new department plans or subject-specific plans have been prepared, but while many changes affecting the community have occurred, no subsequent strategic plan has been prepared; and

WHEREAS, with the concurrence of the City Council and under the direction of the City Manager a strategic planning process began in November 2010 that included stakeholder interviews and 43 "Community Conversations" with 548 residents representing a diverse cross section of our community; and

WHEREAS, this Strategic Plan sets out an envisioned future for the community and the goals and strategies needed to achieve that future, as determined by its residents; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the Strategic Plan and endorses the Mission and Vision Statements, the Core Values and the Strategic Priorities as a collective Strategic Plan that presents a sound and workable approach to achieving that future we envision; and

WHEREAS, the City Council has determined that it is in the best interest of our residents, the community and the City to do all things necessary and appropriate to implement the Strategic Plan, calling upon future City Councils to support this plan and update it when necessary.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Oberlin, County of Lorain, State of Ohio, a majority of all members elected thereto concurring:

SECTION 1. That the Council of the City of Oberlin hereby adopts the Oberlin 2025 Strategic Plan, that includes the following Mission Statement, Vision Statement and Core Values:

Our Mission: The City of Oberlin is dedicated to maintaining our safe, family-friendly, historic, unique small town atmosphere.

Our Vision: Oberlin will continue to be a proactive, trend-setting leader in social and racial justice and economic and environmental sustainability. We will continue to encourage an environment where diverse and innovative ideas flourish.

Core Values:

Open and Honest Communication
Being Innovative
Excellent and Effective Services
Respect for Diversity
Leading by Example
Integrity in the Stewardship of Oberlin's Resources
Neighborly Attitude and Friendliness

SECTION 2.   The Oberlin City Council commends the Public Services Institute (PSI) of Lorain County Community College and Management Assistance for Nonprofit Agencies (MANA) for the work they did in developing this Strategic Plan and thanks the many residents and City staff for their participation, time commitment and thoughtful considerations that resulted in formulation and presentation of the Strategic Plan.

SECTION 3. The City Manager shall report to the City Council on a periodic basis, but no less frequently than once during each year on the progress made to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan.

SECTION 4. It is found and determined that all formal actions of this Council concerning or relating to the adoption of this Resolution were adopted in an open meeting of this Council and that all deliberations of this Council and of any of its committees that resulted in such formal action, were in meetings open to the public in compliance with all legal requirements, including Section 121.22 of the Ohio Revised Code.
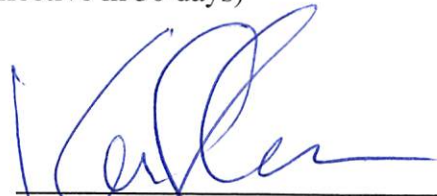
SECTION 5.   That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

PASSED: 1st Reading – October 3, 2011
             2nd Reading – October 17, 2011
             3rd Reading – November 7, 2011 (Effective in 30 days)

ATTEST:

BELINDA B. ANDERSON, CMC
CLERK OF COUNCIL

KENNETH SLOANE
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

POSTED: 11/08/2011

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/07/2011

Oberlin 2025
Strategic Plan
Final Report

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INTRODUCTION

The Public Services Institute (PSI) of Lorain County Community College with the support of Management Assistance for Nonprofit Agencies (MANA) of Kendal at Oberlin, provided strategic planning assistance to Oberlin City government. The overall intent of the project was to develop a long term strategic plan which was informed by input from key stakeholders and citizens throughout the city. The strategic planning process consisted of five overall phases of work.

Phase I: *In-depth-interviews (IDI's):* Personal interviews with Oberlin administrative staff/department heads and City Council members were conducted to assess individual expectations for the visioning and planning process. Also discussed were city assets, accomplishments in recent years, challenges, and future opportunities – all of which were intended to inform the development of community conversation materials. All interviews were conducted in person by PSI staff at Oberlin City Hall. A copy of the discussion guide is contained in Appendix A.

Phase II: Analysis of present conditions: Personnel from the information arm of the Public Services Institute worked closely Oberlin staff to collect and package information about current conditions in Oberlin. The integration of data and information into the strategic planning process was intended to both educate the public on current conditions and to stimulate thinking about the future. Selected data and information resulting from the secondary analysis was incorporated into the community conversation guide used for civic and leadership engagement throughout Oberlin.

Phase III. Civic and leadership engagement: Rather than hosting large meetings similar to the traditional public "hearing" approach frequently utilized by governmental entities, PSI and MANA hosted a series of small group discussions throughout the community. The intent was to go to residents and leaders in places they normally gather and congregate. In doing so, we hoped to engage a cross section of residents instead of those who are more active in the community and tend to frequent city council and other public meetings. This approach entailed the following:

- PSI developed a comprehensive guide to help frame the community conversations. A copy of this guide is included in Appendix B.
- MANA conducted outreach with existing organizations and networks such as local PTAs in the schools, church groups, local clubs, targeted classes of high school students, and other venues to ensure a good cross section of participation throughout the engagement process. Concerted effort was also made by MANA to secure time on the agendas of local nonprofit board meetings, ministerial alliances, and others to ensure broad-based leadership engagement.
- PSI facilitated each of the community conversations. Ideas and suggestions were carefully recorded to allow for in-depth content analysis. PSI also monitored participation throughout the engagement process to ensure an adequate mix of residents from different socio-economic backgrounds and neighborhoods throughout the community.
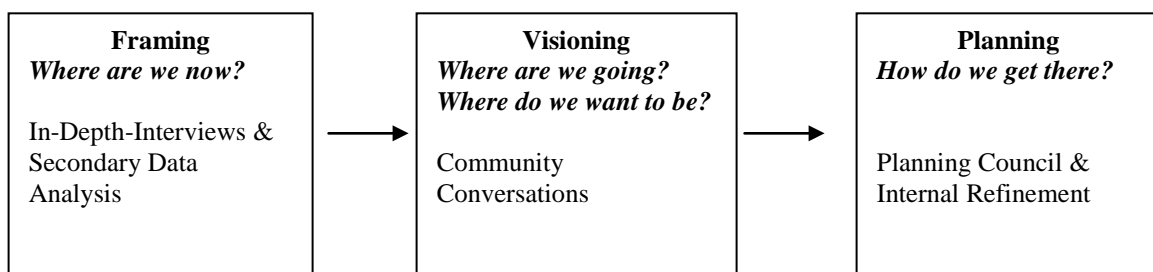
Because people are more supportive of that which they help to create, the goal was to engage approximately 500 residents and community leaders in in-depth discussion about the future of their city government.

Phase IV: Formation of a Planning Council: Once the community conversations were completed, PSI formed a "Planning Council" comprised of key stakeholders including government, business, faith-based, nonprofit, agricultural, education, and organized labor leaders along with citizens. During session one, information gleaned from the engagement process was shared including language and key phrases that could be integrated into a mission and vision statement for Oberlin. Participants were also given the opportunity to discuss these themes and phrases at round tables. The essence of these conversations were captured through groupware technology and channeled to a "theme team". The team performed a real-time assessment of the conversations and used this information to create key pad polling slides. All participants then had the opportunity to prioritize themes and phrases using key pad polling. This process maintains and respects individual confidentiality, yet creates a very transparent process since everyone in the room can see the results of the voting at the same time. These tools are intended to help reach common ground among large groups of people.

Session two focused on the development and prioritization of a set of strategic priorities or goals (also informed by the engagement process) along with a set of initiatives for each strategic priority area. The process was similar to session one using a combination of small and large group discussions followed by prioritization using key pad polling.

Phase V: Internal refinement of the Strategic Plan: Almost any strategic plan requires final refinement by a smaller and committed group of individuals. PSI worked with city administration to refine the strategic plan so that it could be realistically balanced with financial resources. PSI also provided consultation on organization of effort around the plan, ensuring accountability for initiatives/strategic priorities, and monitoring/measurement of progress towards overall goals. An additional goal of the refinement stage was to ensure the strategic plan was broad enough to "live" from one City Council to another (given the 2 year terms that Council members serve). At the same time, the final plan was developed to include specific initiatives for each of the identified strategic priorities (or goals) so that the City could monitor annual progress towards initiatives (and ultimate progress towards overarching goals). The intent was to create a flexible document which could also be tied to annual budget processes.

Summary of Strategic Planning Process

Framing		**Visioning**		**Planning**
Where are we now?		*Where are we going?* *Where do we want to be?*		*How do we get there?*
In-Depth-Interviews & Secondary Data Analysis	→	Community Conversations	→	Planning Council & Internal Refinement

PHASE I: IN-DEPTH-INTERVIEWS

A series of in-depth interviews were conducted with members of city council and city government supervisors/department administrators. The overall intent was to assess expectations for the planning process and to identify assets to build upon in the future, challenges to overcome, and strategic priorities going forward. In November of 2010, a total of 22 internal leaders were interviewed.

A. Desired Outcomes of the Planning Process: When asked about desired outcomes of the strategic planning process, most department managers and council members talked about a "shared" vision and the need to "get everyone on the same page" about the future of city government. Similarly, others talked about the need to establish some long term "priorities" or "clear goals" for the city. The need for a "relevant", "realistic", and "actionable" plan for the future surfaced during the discussions as well. A couple of individuals also talked about the 1991 strategic plan and their desire for something more "readable" and "useable" than that plan had produced. Key themes were as follows:

Department Managers/Supervisors:
- More efficient delivery of public services ("trim personnel, expenditures")
- All city leadership "on the same page"; "Shared vision 10-15 years out among city departments, staff, city council, and the community"
- Sense of "direction"; "blueprint of where we are and where we are headed"
- "A long term vision and goals for city government"
- A "plan tied to financial planning"
- A "planned future"; "Managed growth"
- Better understanding of the courts and how they benefit the community
- A "plan that can be implemented"
- A "realistic plan"
- "Community buy-in"
- "Focus on basic city services only"
- "Avoid mission and service creep"
- Identification of possible restrictions/barriers to future police work
- The southeast quadrant to be considered more than in the past

> *"We need a blueprint of where we are and where we are headed"*

City Council Members:
- "A stronger working relationship with Oberlin College and a plan that incorporates the goals of the Oberlin Project"; "Alignment with Oberlin Project"
- "Everyone on the same page"
- "Setting of priorities"
- "Very clear goals for the city"
- "Establish 3-4 clear goals for the city without too much detail"
- "Consensus on goals and strategies for success"; "Identification of areas of mutual concern"; "Wide acceptance of the plan"; "A realistic plan"
- "An actionable and relevant plan"
- Incorporate an "energy plan that includes a signed contract with waste management to use as an economic engine"
- A "crisp document that is very readable and useable unlike the 1991 strategic plan"
- A plan that incorporates the goals of the comprehensive plan

> *"A long term vision and goals for City government"*

B. SWOT Analysis
1. Greatest Accomplishments of City Government in Recent Years: Business expansion and sustainable/renewable energy were among the greatest accomplishments discussed by most city and administrators and city council members. Detailed comments were as follows:

Department Managers/Supervisors:
- Stronger relationships with business, Oberlin College and the school district
- Negotiations and end of disputes with Lorain County Rural Water Authority
- Pittsfield Township annexation
- Good fiscal management; Economic stability (budget issues exist like most local governments but not as extensive and we are stable financially)
- All levies approved since 1990
- "Path to a green future"; "good environmental stewards"; Land fill program participation; Sustainable living emphasis
- Oberlin city government does home energy audits (unlike other city governments)
- Commitment to green buildings in Oberlin (including Fire Station / East College Street Project)
- The Oberlin Project and partnership with Oberlin College (to remain ahead of other communities and limit reliance on fossil fuels)
- Pittsfield annexation/JEDD whereby Oberlin provides infrastructure support
- Retaining and rehabilitating old architecture in downtown area
- Public works (development of general service department, new modern facility, "general maintenance complex"; reconstruction of water treatment plant)
- Strong relationship with Metro Parks (Splash Zone)
- Branding of city government – a log with a tag line
- Adoption of a comprehensive land use plan by city council; desired location of business and housing is known
- Street lighting improvements
- Traffic control
- Wal Mart development
- Establishment of Human Resources department within city government
- Progress on the Underground Railroad Center

> *"Path to a green future"*

City Council Members:
- The Clinton Climate Initiative to put Oberlin on the map as a sustainable community (international initiative to be carbon neutral and appropriation of funds to determine feasibility of land fill methane gas usage); commitment to an alternative energy portfolio for electricity needs
- City opting out of new Power Plant (i.e., coal plant) development and focus on sustainable energy
- Oberlin at forefront of green technology; ("ensure predictable energy prices"; "lock in prices"; "lower cost to consumers"; slash carbon emissions, etc.)
- Hamilton St. recreation complex and partnership with Metro Parks on Splash Zone
- Preservation of Allen Hospital (Mercy) for ER treatment with helicopter access; good employment opportunities
- Oberlin city coordination of assistance programs with Oberlin Community Services to provide food, energy, transportation assistance to citizens in need (i.e., the "Oberlin version of United Way)
- Major upgrades to City services (General Maintenance Division, water treatment facility, fire station, waste water treatment plant)
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF) of the East College Street development (public/private partnerships)
- Parking at Oberlin College (minimize cars among students)
- Progress on the Underground Railroad Center (securing NOACA funds)
- Sidewalks (1000 feet of sidewalks through Safe Route to School Initiative)
- Southern business expansion (Wal Mart)
- Hiring of a new City Manager (strong, hard working leadership for the city)
- Level of citizen engagement is strong (e.g., participation on numerous city commissions)

> *"Commitment to an alternative energy portfolio"*

2. Areas of Opportunity for City Government into the Future: Similar to recent accomplishments, environmental and economic sustainability were among the primary opportunities cited for city government into the future.

Department Managers/Supervisors:
- "Self sustainable power production with landfill gas for the next 30 years"
- Better community relations in the city
- "People think of Oberlin as homogenous" ("less divisiveness between poor segment of population and Oberlin College; no one wants to talk about racism; there is a socio-economic divide in the city")
- Human resource development ("a compensation plan for city personnel; work out budgetary issues through a negotiation process; think about further negotiations with the union and how to work together")
- Enhanced collaboration with schools and College
- Drawing more tourists to Oberlin
- Outdoor dining
- Filling second story spaces downtown (possibly apartments)
- "Building a resilient community" (having weathered the economic situation with funds into savings and reserves; need to continue into the future; "not talking about stocking up on food and water but we need to be resilient to natural disasters, economic downturns, utility grid problems – city government, residents, businesses need to be prepared and support each other in times of emergency")
- "Fulfilling our plan for a sustainable economy; a new green economy"
- "Move toward social equity"
- "Building on our assets" including diversity environmental awareness and the Underground Railroad Center
- "Approach ideas with open-mindedness, more receptive to modern technology. Sometimes we go to slowly"
- Build on recent success of small industrial park
- Continue with branding of city
- "Be free thinking and creative"
- Become a center for green jobs dedicated to more efficient use of energy
- Bring in new revenue (half of Oberlin is tax exempt)
- Grow the Wal Mart development
- Meet the city's environmental goals by 2013; be a "building ground for renewal technologies"
- Encourage leadership development
- Annex the JVS
- Focus on basic city services since the cost of service delivery continues to rise while we have flat revenues; stay away from non-essential "pet" projects
- The Green Arts District

City Council Members:
- Oberlin as a tourist destination including the Underground Railroad Center and the Oberlin Project
- Be a model for other communities around the country
- Marketing our arts and culture
- More commitment of Oberlin city government to residential concerns/greater responsiveness when issues arise (e.g., West side residents); change city attitudes to be more responsive instead of "brushing off" residents
- More formal cooperation between the city and the College
- New leadership ("same ole people that everyone defers to when making decisions")
- Transition entirely to local renewable energy
- Renovate housing energy efficiency to mitigate rising energy prices
- Preserve/restore an agrarian economy to promote for regional food self-sufficiency (get Oberlin reclassified as agrarian by USDA)
- Increase support services for an aging baby boom generation for those who can't afford Kendall
- Expand post secondary education in trades certification and graduate level degrees
- Better signage (change sign ordinance to update signage)
- Parking (at Oberlin College/downtown; rethink meter use)

- Building on industrial park success (Greenfield Solar, Kevin Flanigan expansion of General Plug, Agronomics, Express Seed, Division of Green Circle Growers is good start)
- Live simpler lives; don't add layers of bureaucracy
- Regional cooperation (Lorain, Elyria, Amherst partnerships)
- Greater cooperation with other mayors; school district (more open communication)
- Focus more on low income neighborhoods (poverty, foreclosures, joblessness) through neighborhood stabilization programs
- "Improve housing stock – especially the Southeast Quadrant"
- Downtown preservation is an opportunity
- New ways to facilitate job growth to the extent possible for city government

3. Greatest Assets to Build Upon: Assets to preserve and build upon going forward were numerous. The emphasis on people of Oberlin was well heard including an active and engaged citizenry. Additionally, city administrators expressed strong value for the small town charm and character of the community. Oberlin College was also identified as a significant community asset.

Department Managers/Supervisors:
(Greatest assets of Oberlin)
- Oberlin College
- City personnel (institutional knowledge, well qualified, dedicated, hardworking)
- Historic buildings, museums
- Downtown area (local shops)
- Splash Zone
- Diversity of views (but is difficult to come to consensus in Oberlin)
- "loud, resounding voice"
- Strong volunteer base
- "Engaged citizenry"; "Spirited debates"
- FAA (supports economic base, stable tax base)
- Environmental awareness
- Small town/charm, relative rural setting
- Strong school system
- Strong community service organizations/non profits
- Entrepreneurs
- "Nice little college town"
- Reputation of always moving forward (progressive)
- City operated utility systems
- Churches

(Greatest strengths of city government)
- Good public works department
- Collaborative spirit
- Finance director (would be difficult to replace)
- City Manager system/form of government (charter is strength)
- City Manager and Assistant City Manager are "top notch" and dedicated
- "We operate as our own community with authority and autonomy"
- Set of checks and balances between city manager, finance director, law director, clerk of courts)
- Council not elected on partisan system (all focused on community; not republican or democratic)
- Longevity among department heads (professional, capable and have been here for more than ten years – provides institutional knowledge)
- City staff/personnel; Satisfied employees
- "Commitment to include the community in decision making processes"

(Greatest assets of Oberlin; What makes Oberlin unique)
- Active and diverse citizenry – participation on city commissions
- City and College relationship (employment, education, arts)
- City and College commitment to sustainability
- Vibrant, attractive` downtown; Shops (clerks and shop owners know their customers; connect with people)
- Small community feel/neighborly people
- Safe community
- Oberlin College speaker series and other opportunities
- Racial integration and history of equality
- Pedestrian friendly
- Green space; open space; recreation
- Arts/cultural emphasis
- Public support for tax issues

4. *Challenges & Threats to Progress:* The economy and resulting loss of revenue for city government was among the key challenges and threats to progress expressed widely by city administrators. However, new thoughts surfaced at this point in the conversations including issues of racism, poverty, and quality of housing stock.

Department Managers/Supervisors:
(Threats to progress)
- Impending collapse of the dollar (would cause capital investment to cease)
- Silos within city government: Solicitor and law director are detached and don't have an office in city hall; Finance director has 5 employees who report to city council; Lack of standardized performance evaluations; Parks and recs are separate departments
- Loss of local business
- General loss of revenue/poor economy
- Politics; individual agendas get in the way of progress
- Council turnover every 2 years
- Procrastination; diversity can be a draw back; Things take long to accomplish because everyone has a different opinion
- Unfunded mandates (federal and state government)
- Fewer homeowners; lower tax revenue
- Need more concise legislation without so much room for interpretation
- Divisions between some members of government and the community
- Big box retailers and fear of losing small businesses
- Race issues; "is a small group who think they speak for the entire minority community and they are mean spirited"
- Apathy
- Making sure council stays on the same page with the community – has best interest of community in mind.

(Areas Requiring More Attention)
- Union negotiations
- Bringing hire paying jobs into city (not just any jobs)
- Courting graduates from LCCC and Oberlin College
- IT within city government
- Dedicated parking for city businesses
- Public transportation in and out of city
- Finance department building is old
- Storm water control and utility
- Race relations
- Prioritization – we can't do everything
- Focus on recreation

- Mandatory training for management and staff
- Underground utilities (no grants available; city should do more long term planning to fund basic infrastructure)
- Antiquated sewer system
- Records retention and disposal
- Controlling growth of city government without increasing city personnel
- Relationship with College

City Council Members:
(Greatest Challenges)
- Significant amount of residents living below poverty; foreclosures; joblessness
- Parking issues
- Communication between City and College; building trust; need to change attitudes
- Infill development of City's south side (need to attract more in ways that doesn't hurt downtown)
- Attracting business/industry in general
- Downtown preservation
- Lack of city contracts with minority owned firms
- Retaining population; keeping people in town (especially high school grads)
- Managed growth
- Difficult for Oberlin to maintain a middle class and middle aged individuals
- City viewed as unfriendly business environment
- Declining tax revenues (commercial & residential)
- No non-degree jobs
- Fiscal issues (is it worth having a savings account if it buys less each year)
- Global energy pricing/availability
- Getting 4-way stop signs (e.g., Professor street becoming a speedway)
- Enforcement of all current laws (speeding, cross walks, etc.)
- Need stronger Main Street organization
- Housing stock (need more active housing renewal commission)
- Completion of the Underground Railroad Center
- Improving recreational opportunities
- Lack of minority hiring

(Areas Requiring More Attention)
- Plum Creek in downtown area
- Sidewalks (Safe Route to School)
- Marketing our city
- Passive recreation in all quadrants
- More green space
- Upkeep of old housing stock especially on main City gateway routes
- Responsiveness to residents; Making it easier for residents to interface with government offices
- Storm water management
- Progressive building regulations ("we can and should do better but it would require first, that we accept that type of development is detrimental to the community and promotes urban sprawl and second, that policies are implemented to guide socially and environmentally desirable development")
- Existing comprehensive plan doesn't work in this environment (adopted in 2005-05)
- Neighborhood stabilization
- Improved housing stock

PHASE II: SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

OBERLIN CITY SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic Profile

Population Change: Oberlin City Compared to Lorain County, Ohio, & U.S.

	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 1990-2000	% Change 1990-2010
Oberlin City	8,660	8,191	8,195	8,286	0.0%	1.2%
Lorain County	274,909	271,126	284,664	301,356	5.0%	11.1%
Ohio	10,797,630	10,847,115	11,353,140	11,536,504	4.7%	6.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980, 1990, 2000, & 2010 Decennial Census

Over the past couple of decades, the total population of Oberlin city has increased slightly by 1.2 percent from 8,191 in 1990 to 8,286 in 2010. Since Oberlin city's population has remained stable between 1990 and 2010, the population growth rate for Oberlin city is lower than those of Lorain County (11.1 percent) and the state of Ohio (6.4 percent).

The population changes for surrounding minor civil divisions (MCDs) between 1990 and 2010 are shown in the table below. Two surrounding townships have had populations of between approximately 1,500 and 2,500.

	1990 population	2000 population	2010 population
New Russia Township	NA	2,357	2,515
Pittsfield Township	1,545	1,549	1,581

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, & 2010 Decennial Census

Race and Ethnicity: Oberlin City

Population by Race, Oberlin City, 2010

Population by Race, Oberlin City, 2010
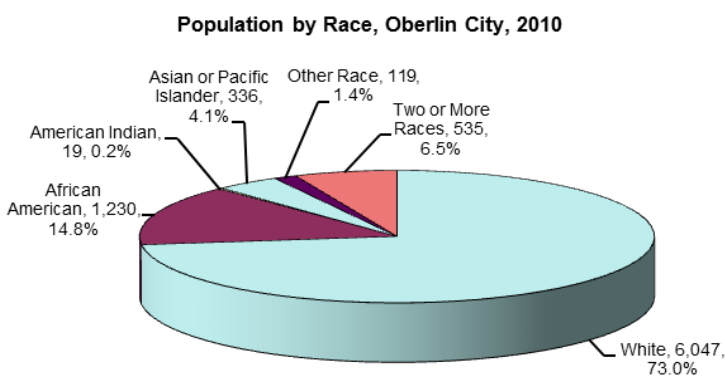
According to the 2010 Census, Whites constituted 73 percent of the total population of Oberlin city, and 15 percent of the population were African American. Also, 7 percent were multi-racial, 4 percent of the residents were Asian or Pacific Islander, and the city had small proportions of other races (1.4 percent) and American Indians (0.2 percent). Individuals of Hispanic origin (who can be of any race) make up 5.1 percent of the total

Oberlin city population.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Decennial Census

## Population Change by Race and Ethnicity, Oberlin City, 1990-2010

In spite of the U.S. Census Bureau's introduction of anther race category (Two or more races) in 2000, the percentage of the Oberlin city's White population to the total population continues to grow slightly from 70.9 percent in 1990, 71.9 percent in 2000, and 73.0 percent in 2010. Also, in absolute numbers, the White population has increased from 5,805 in 1990 to 6,047 in 2010 (4.2 percent). The Hispanic population in Oberlin City has increased sharply by 164.4 percent from 160 in 1990 to 423 in 2010. However, the proportion of the African American population has decreased significantly for the last two decades, from 23.6 percent in 1990, 18.5 percent in 2000, and 14.8 percent in 2010. In actual numbers, there were 1,934 African Americans in Oberlin city in 1990, but, the number dropped to 1,230 individuals by 2010 (a decrease of 36.4 percent).

	1990		2000		2010		Change 1990-2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	8,191	100.0%	8,195	100.0%	8,286	100.0%	95	1.2%
White	5,805	70.9%	5,894	71.9%	6,047	73.0%	242	4.2%
African American	1,934	23.6%	1,520	18.5%	1,230	14.8%	-704	-36.4%
American Indian	36	0.4%	40	0.5%	19	0.2%	-17	-47.2%
Asian or Pacific Islander	329	4.0%	293	3.6%	336	4.1%	7	2.1%
Other Race	87	1.1%	99	1.2%	119	1.4%	32	36.8%
Two or More Races	NA	NA	349	4.3%	535	6.5%	NA	NA
Hispanic Origin (Of any race)	160	2.0%	249	3.0%	423	5.1%	263	164.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000, & 2010 Decennial Census

Population by Age: Oberlin City

Population by Age, Oberlin City, 2000
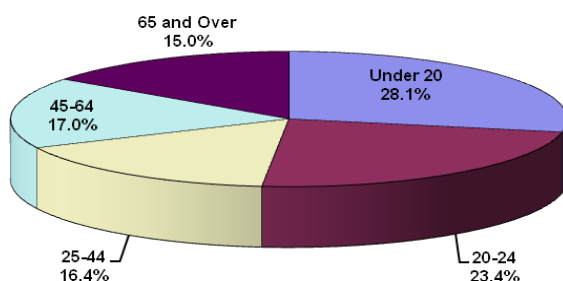
Given the fact that Oberlin city is a college town, the proportion of the age group of 20-24 remained stable between 1990 and 2000. This trend may require confirmation by the 2010 decennial census data at a later date.

	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under 20	2,544	31.1%	2,304	28.1%
20-24	1,900	23.2%	1,918	23.4%
25-44	1,646	20.1%	1,348	16.4%
45-64	1,120	13.7%	1,392	17.0%
65 and over	981	12.0%	1,233	15.0%
Median/Average Age	33.1 (Average)		23.6 (Median)	

Note: The 2010 decennial census data was not available at time of analysis.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000 Decennial Census

Household Structure: Oberlin City

	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Households	**2,444**	**100.0%**	**2,687**	**100.0%**
Married Couple Families	1,036	42.4%	1,126	41.9%
Female-Headed Households	309	12.6%	250	9.3%
Male-Headed Households	60	2.5%	71	2.6%
Living Alone	772	31.6%	935	34.8%
65+ living alone	356	14.6%	504	18.8%

Note: The 2010 decennial census data was not available at time of analysis.

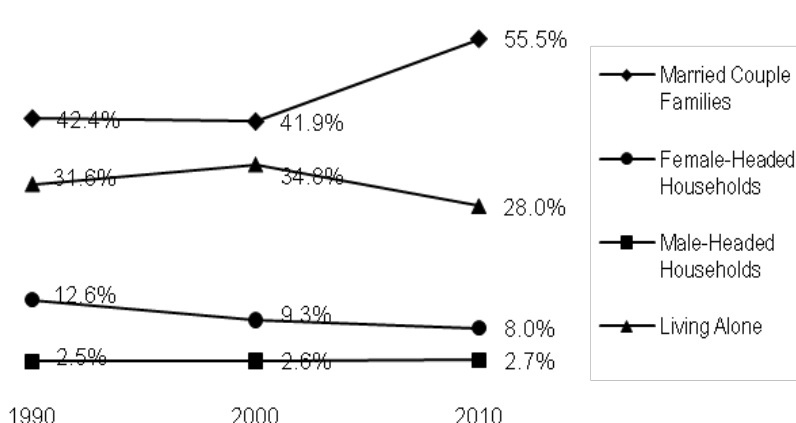Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000 Decennial Census

Change in Household Structure, 1990-2010

Like other college towns in the United States, Oberlin city has a very high percentage of persons living alone. About three out of ten Oberlin residents have lived alone for the last two decades. The percentage of married couple families in Oberlin city remained almost unchanged between 1990 (42.4 percent) and 2000 (41.9 percent). The proportion of female-headed households has decreased slightly but steadily from 12.6 percent in 1990, 9.3 percent in 2000, to 8.0 percent in 2010, while the percentage of male-headed households has remained stable for the past twenty years.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000 Decennial Census; GeoLytics, 2010 Estimates

Grandparents as Caregivers

In Oberlin city, about half of the all grandparents (47.4 percent) who were living in a household with one or more of their own grandchildren under 18 years identified themselves in the role of primary caregiver to their grandchildren.

Grandparents as Caregivers	2000	
	Number	Percent
Grandparent living in household with one or more own grandchildren under 18 years	76	100.0
Grandparent responsible for grandchildren	36	47.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census; 2010 data was not available at the tine of analysis

Educational Attainment: Oberlin City

	1990		2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No High School Diploma	573	15.3%	543	13.6%	Not Available Yet	13.4%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	882	23.6%	836	21.0%	Not Available Yet	26.5%
Some College, No Degree	633	16.9%	850	21.3%	Not Available Yet	22.0%
Associate Degree	218	5.8%	113	2.8%	Not Available Yet	4.1%
Bachelor's Degree	604	16.1%	683	17.1%	Not Available Yet	14.7%
Graduate or Professional Degree	835	22.3%	960	24.1%	Not Available Yet	19.4%
Percent High School Graduate or Higher	84.7		86.4		86.6	
Percent Some College or Higher	61.1		65.4		60.2	
Percent Bachelor's Degree or Higher	38.4		41.2		34.1	

Note: For 2010 data, estimates from GeoLytics were used because 2010 decennial census data was not available at time of analysis.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000 Decennial Census; GeoLytics, 2010 Estimates

In general, Oberlin city has a very high level of adult (25 years or older) educational attainment. This pattern is also commonly found in other college towns. For example, the 1990 and 2000 census data indicated that about 40 percent of Oberlin city's adult residents had a bachelor's degree or higher, and these figures were significantly higher than the county, state, and national average.

For comparison, the table below displays adult educational attainment for Lorain County, Ohio, and the United States in 2009. Although the comparisons are made between two different data sources, 2009 American Community Survey and 2010 estimates from GeoLytics, it is still obvious today that Oberlin city has a higher adult educational achievement than the county, state, and nation (see the table below). However, interestingly, the percentage of Oberlin city adults who do not have a high school diploma (13-15 percent for the past few decades) also exceeds the county (11.7 percent) and state (12.4 percent) average.

	Lorain County		Ohio		U.S.	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
No High School Diploma	24,085	11.7%	957,753	12.4%	29,785,248	14.8%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency)	75,908	36.9%	2,726,971	35.2%	57,551,671	28.5%
Some College, No Degree	47,730	23.2%	1,622,573	21.0%	43,087,484	21.3%
Associate Degree	16,458	8.0%	564,275	7.3%	15,192,326	7.5%
Bachelor's Degree	26,390	12.8%	1,183,146	15.3%	35,494,367	17.6%
Graduate Degree	15,277	7.4%	683,630	8.8%	20,841,287	10.3%

Note: The 2009 American Community Survey data are currently available at the county or higher levels of geography, but the data is not available for Oberlin city. Please, see 2010 GeoLytics data for Oberlin City.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2009 American Community Survey

Income Status

The 2010 "Per Capita Income" for Oberlin City ($20,033) is projected to be just a little below the county, state, and national average, and Oberlin City's "Median Household Income" ($45,417) is expected to be slightly lower than the county average but similar to the state and national average. However, the "Median Family Income" for Oberlin City ($59,604) is estimated to be significantly higher than the county, state, and national average, which may result from the exclusion of college-age single households in this income measure.

2010 Income: Oberlin City, Lorain County, Ohio & U.S.
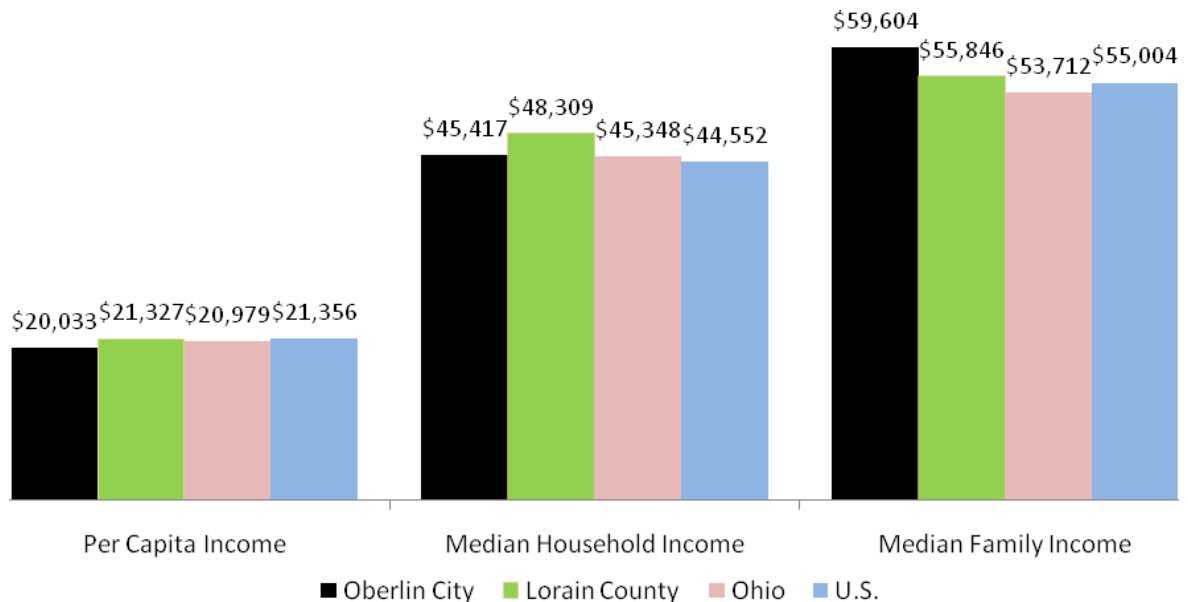
Note: The 2010 decennial census data was not available at time of analysis.
Source: GeoLytics, 2010-2015 Estimates

Median Household Income for Householders Under 25 years

In Oberlin city, young people represent a large percentage of the total population. For example, according to the 2000 census, more than half of all Oberlin city residents (51.5 percent) were under 25 years of age. GeoLytics estimates that the 2010 median household income for young householders (under 25 years of age) will be $16,063, which is almost $30,000 less than the amount for all households in the city. This is explained by the significant proportion of householders in this age group who are still in school (i.e., college students).

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Poverty Status

In general, the poverty status for both *individuals* and *families* in Oberlin city had improved between 1990 and 2000. For example, the personal poverty rate had declined from 25.7 percent in 1990 to 19.4 percent in 2000, and the family poverty rate had also decreased from 11.5 percent to 6.7 percent during the same period. However, among different types of family households, the highest poverty rate had been observed in female-headed households, and the rate had climbed from 27.6 percent in 1990 to 31.2 percent in 2000. Finally, the 2010 poverty statistics are not available for Oberlin city at the time of this analysis.

Oberlin City	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Families below poverty	165	11.5%	97	6.7%
Female headed	92	27.6%	78	31.2%
Individuals below poverty	1,606	25.7%	1,206	19.4%
Children under 5 years below poverty	72	23.9%	44	16.5%
Children under 18 years below poverty	330	25.7%	146	12.2%
Persons 65 years and over	116	12.7%	80	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000 Decennial Census

**Change in Personal Poverty, 1990-2000**
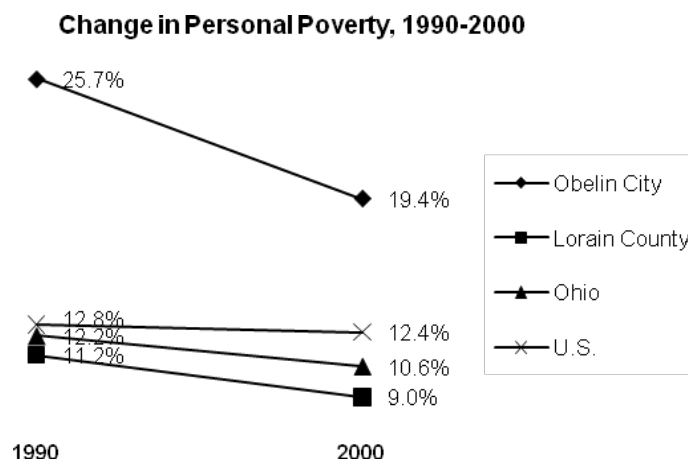
Although the individual (personal) poverty rate for Oberlin city had significantly dropped between 1990 and 2000 from 25.7 percent to 19.4 percent, Oberlin city still had a much higher personal poverty rate than the county, state and nation.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 & 2000 Decennial Census

15

Housing Profile

Total Housing Units

The total number of housing units in Oberlin city has shifted from 2,580 in 1990, 2,836 in 2000, to 2,984 in 2010. The 2010 decennial census data revealed that Oberlin city has experienced a slower growth in the total number of housing units (an increase of 148 housing units or 5.2 percent) between 2000 and 2010, compared to an increase of 256 housing units or 9.9 percent between 1990 and 2000.
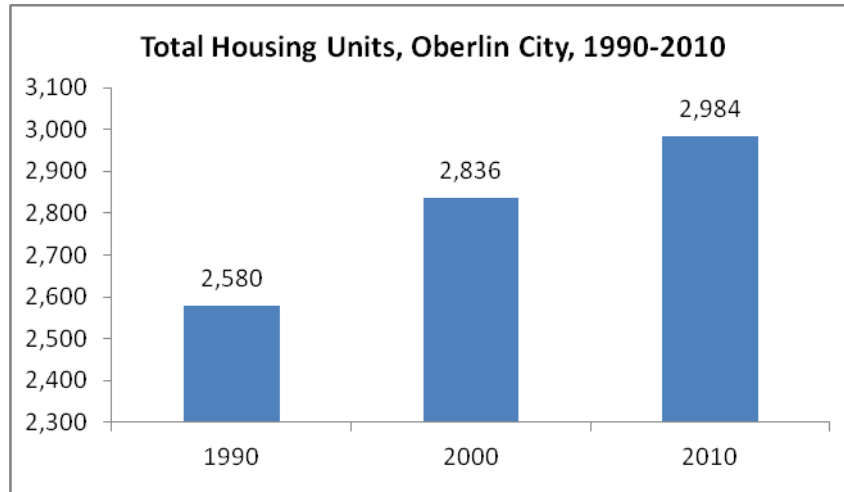
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990, 2000, & 2010 Decennial Census

Housing Occupancy
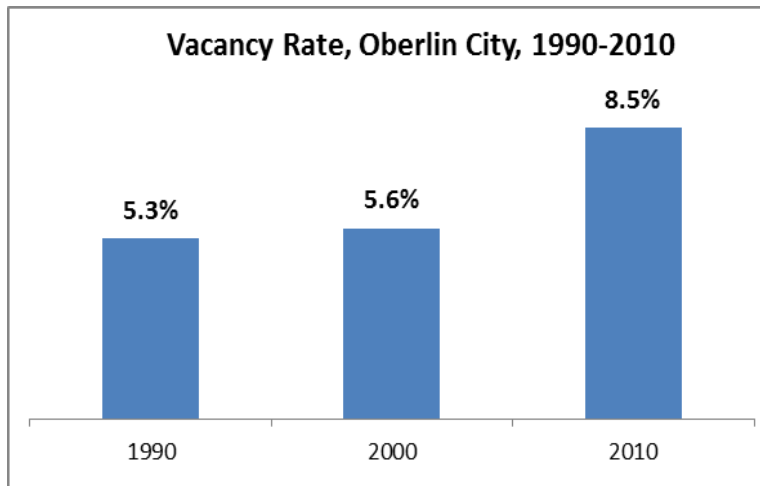
Between 1990 and 2000, the housing vacancy rate for Oberlin city had been slightly above five percent. For example, 5.6 percent of total housing units (or 158 out of 2,836) in the city were vacant in 2000, and 5.3 percent (136 out of 2,580) were vacant in 1990. However, the vacancy rate has increased dramatically to 8.5 percent (254 out of 2,984) in 2010 probably due to the recent economic downturn. For geographical comparison, Oberlin city's rate was higher than the county average of 5.0 percent and the state average of 7.1 percent, but it was slightly lower than the national average of 9.0 percent.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990, 2000, & 2010 Decennial Census

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Housing Tenure

In 2000, about half of all occupied housing units in Oberlin city were occupied by owners, and the other half were occupied by renters. The homeownership rate in Oberlin city was significantly lower than the county (74.2 percent), state (69.1 percent), and nation (66.2 percent).
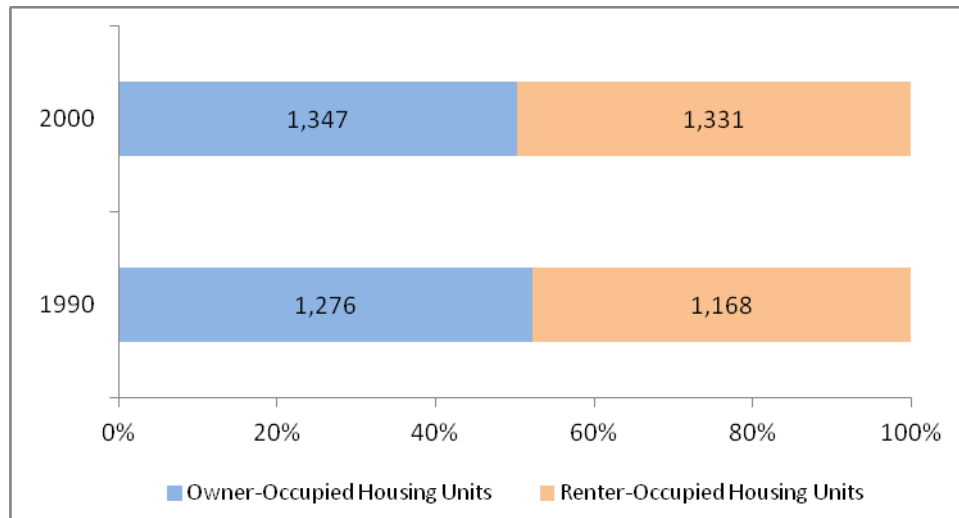
Note: The 2010 decennial census data was not available at time of analysis.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 1990 & 2000

Housing Values

The median housing value of Oberlin City was $118,500 in 2000, which is similar to the median home value of Lorain county ($115,100) and the nation ($119,600) but higher than the Ohio's median housing value ($103,700). The 2010 statistics for this indicator are not available yet.
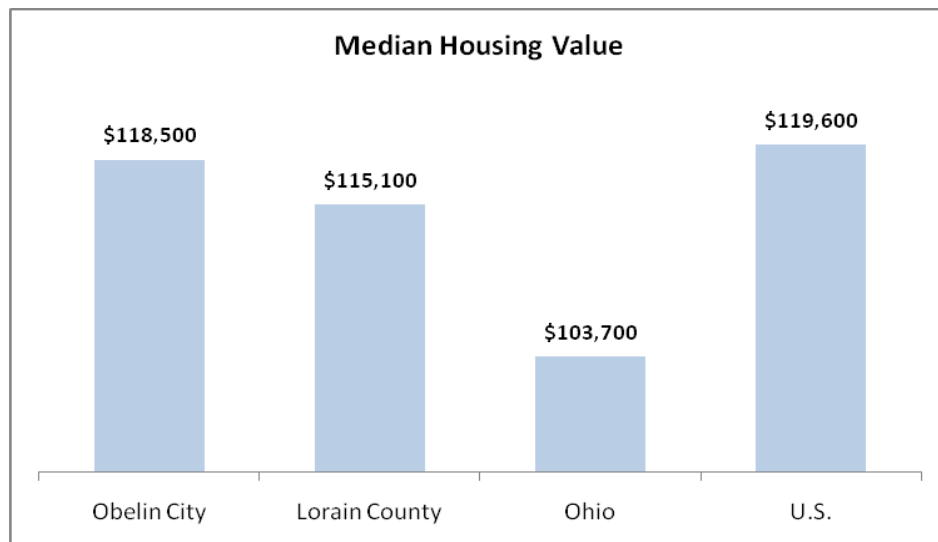
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 2000

Mortgage Status & Monthly Owner Costs

A majority of homeowners in Oberlin City had a mortgage (63.5 percent in 1990 and 75.1 percent in 2000), and the median monthly housing costs for homeowners <u>with</u> a mortgage had increased from $728 in 1990 to $997 in 2000. The monthly housing costs for homeowners <u>without</u> a mortgage were considerably lower than those of their counterpart. The 2010 figures for this indicator are not available yet.

	1990			2000		
	Number	Percent	Median Monthly Costs	Number	Percent	Median Monthly Costs
Total Owner-Occupied Housing Units	1,160	100.0%		1,304	100.0%	
With a Mortgage	737	63.5%	$728	979	75.1%	$997
Not Mortgaged	423	36.5%	$238	325	24.9%	$320

Note: The 2010 decennial census data was not available at time of analysis.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 1990 & 2000

Monthly Owner Costs as a Percentage of Household Income
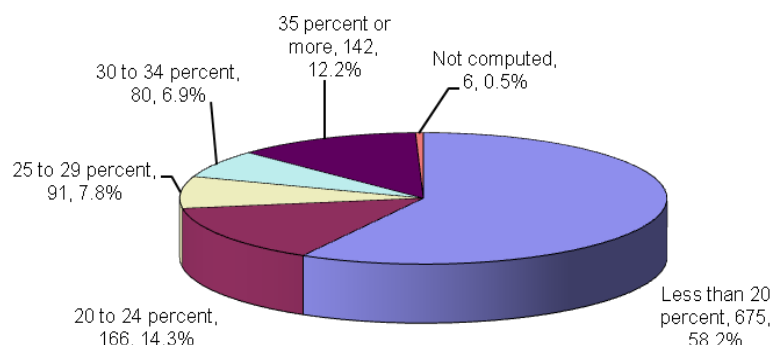
Oberlin City, 1990

The majority of Oberlin city's homeowners (58.2 percent) spent less than 20 percent of their income on housing in 1990; however, about twenty percent of homeowners (19.1 percent) spent more than 30 percent of their income, which is generally considered the threshold for "severe housing cost burden", for their homes.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 1990
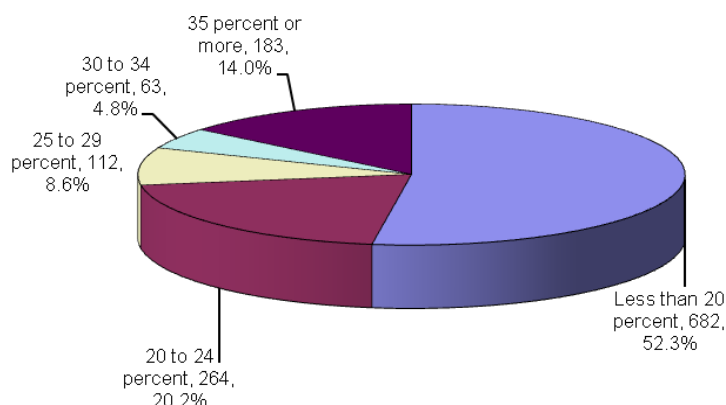
Oberlin City, 2000

Data from the 2000 census shows a similar pattern. More than half of all homeowners (52.3 percent) in Oberlin city spend less than 20 percent of their income on housing, and about twenty percent (18.8 percent) spent more than 30 percent of their income on housing in 2000.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 2000

Gross Rent

Approximately half (48.8 percent) of Oberlin City renters paid *between $300 and $499* per month in 1990; however, in 2000, about the same percentage of renters (52.9 percent) paid *between $300 and $749*. The median monthly rent had also increased from $366 in 1990 to $505 in 2000. The 2010 statistics for this indicator are not available yet.

	1990		2000	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Renter-Occupied Housing Units	**1,168**	**100.0%**	**1,339**	**100.0%**
Less than $200	213	18.2%	126	9.4%
$200 to $299	153	13.1%	70	5.2%
$300 to $499	570	48.8%	362	27.0%
$500 to $749	163	14.0%	347	25.9%
$749 to $999	27	2.3%	98	7.3%
$1,000 or more	22	1.9%	128	9.6%
No cash rent	20	1.7%	208	15.5%
Median Monthly Rent	$366		$505	

Note: The 2010 decennial census data was not available at time of analysis.
Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 1990 & 2000

Gross Rent as a Percentage of Household Income
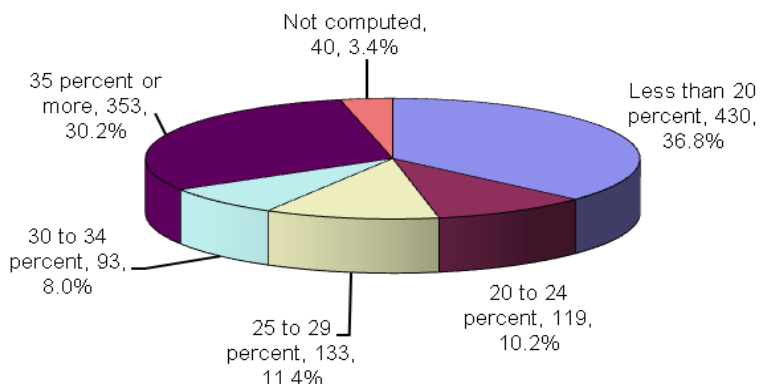
Oberlin City, 1990

About forty percent of all renters (38.2 percent) in Oberlin city spent more than 30 percent of their income for rent in 1990.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 1990
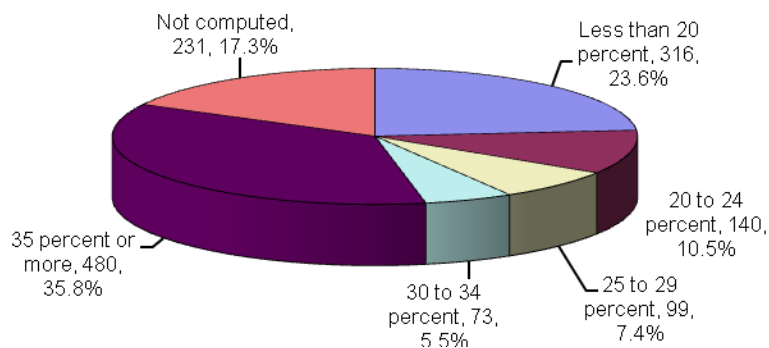
Oberlin City, 2000

Similarly, 41.3 percent Oberlin city renters had experienced a severe housing cost burden by spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent in 2000.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, Census 2000

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Land Use

Land Use Plan

The map below illustrates the comprehensive land use plan developed by Oberlin city.

Source: Oberlin City, Planning and Development Department

PHASE III: CIVIC & LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

One of the goals of the planning project was to create a strategic plan with input and buy-in from the community. As a result, a total of 548 individuals were engaged in 43 different community conversations. The average group size was 13, allowing for small, in-depth conversations. Additionally, a separate on-line process garnered 394 page reviews and 12 responses. Careful attempts were made to engage people from all walks of life in the community conversations. The following is illustrative of the demographic composition of participants:

Gender

Legend: ■ Male ■ Female ■ No Response

- Male: 40%
- Female: 57%
- No Response: 3%

Race

Legend: ■ African American ■ Asian ■ Caucasian ■ Native American ■ Other

- African American: 17%
- Asian: 2%
- Caucasian: 66%
- Native American: 1%
- Other: 3%

Age

Legend: ■ 15-19 ■ 20-34 ■ 35-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65 plus ■ No Response

- 15-19: 18%
- 20-34: 10%
- 35-54: 16%
- 55-64: 12%
- 65 plus: 36%
- No Response: 8%
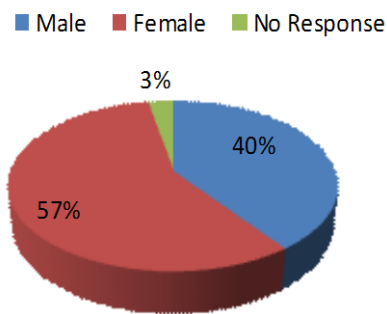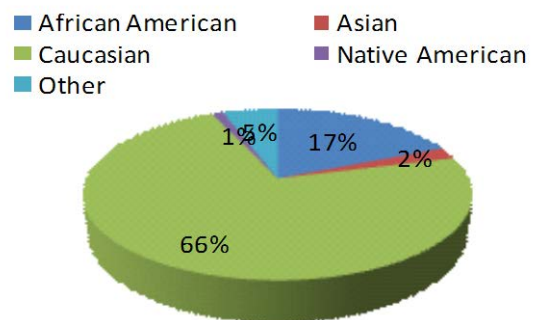
What is going well in the City of Oberlin that we should build upon?

- City wide emphasis on renewable/sustainable energy
- Our people
    - Diverse cultures, races, backgrounds
    - "Committed", "active", "engaged", "invested", "caring" residents
    - Strong volunteerism
    - Active older adult population
    - Strong values
- Strong city government
    - Current structure is more "professional" (i.e., City Manager and Council at large)
    - "Accessible", "respectful" City Manager
    - "Talented", "hard working" city personnel
    - Improved city and Oberlin College relations
    - Good relations with businesses and schools
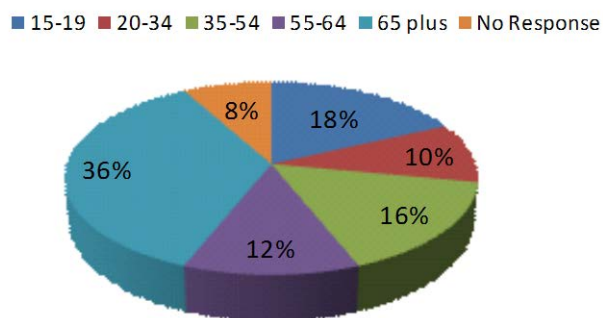   - Quality service delivery (snow removal, police, fire, parks, infrastructure improvements)
- Small town atmosphere ("welcoming", "friendly", "nurturing", "family-oriented" place)
- Quality education (Oberlin College, excellent public schools, Retaining more college graduates)
- Diverse/affordable housing
- Accessible city; geographic proximity to Cleveland and Lorain County airports
- Diverse economic base
    - "Vibrant downtown"
    - "Unusual" "specialty" shops
    - Industrial park
    - Set up to attract green energy jobs
- Cultural amenities (art museum, music conservatory, parades, festivals)
- Walkable city; bike paths
- Community services
    - Libraries
    - The Bridge program
    - Boys & Girls Club
    - Splash Zone
    - Farmers Market
    - Local hospital
    - JVS
- Free parking – no meters
- The Oberlin Project

Think about how you would like our City to be 10-15 years from now – what kind of City is that? (why are these things important? What would these things look like? What difference would these things make?)

- Expanded Economic Base/Jobs
    - Expand "mom & pop" stores; "unique" retail ("stay different")
    - More clothing stores
    - Expand Wal Mart development (Taco Bell, Wendy's, drug store, American Eagle, Old Navy, other commercial stores)
    - Fill empty stores
    - Fill industrial park
    - Promote/incent minority owned businesses
    - More jobs for people of all income levels
    - Merchant mentoring program (help business sustainability)
- Expanded Bike Paths/Bike friendly city
- Park land/green space
- Quality youth programs
- Vibrant Downtown
    - Replace Oberlin Inn with full service hotel & conference center
    - More outdoor eating areas
    - Complete walk able downtown
    - Off street parking
    - Refurbish old homes (theme/blend into community)
    - Refurbish public housing
    - Keep stores open later (during events)
    - Offer incentives to fix store fronts

- o Larger, updated municipal complex
- o Expand downtown south on Rt 58 (more merchants)
- o Bike lanes
- Partnerships/Collaboration
  - o "Do more with less"
  - o "Think more regionally"
  - o Encourage consolidation/collaboration of school districts (Oberlin, Wellington, Firelands)
  - o Assist school district with new building – possibly one campus
  - o Work more with Lorain County Metro Parks
  - o Partner with Historical Society (home improvements)
  - o Partner with JVS
  - o Continue to strengthen relationships with College
  - o Develop regional land use plan for Oberlin and surrounding communities
- Controlled/Managed Growth
- Transportation
  - o Improved public transportation
  - o Consider bypass for Rt 58
  - o Local shuttle bus
  - o Public transportation or light rail to Cleveland/neighboring areas
  - o Better transportation to and from L. Co. airport
  - o Consider a train (rails to trails)
  - o Need transportation for older adults
  - o A Tram
  - o An electric Trolley
- Infrastructure Upgrades
  - o Sanitary sewers
  - o Storm Water Management Plan
  - o Wi-Fi in all public places
  - o Fiber to support knowledge based society
  - o More city sidewalks
- Reduce Disparities/ Address Inequalities
  - o Class
  - o Race (address candidly)
  - o Neighborhoods; "quadrants"
  - o Reduce poverty
- Sustainable Agriculture
  - o "Model for nation in locally grown food"
  - o Expand farmers market
  - o More community gardens
  - o Support local farmers
- Maintain "quaint", small town "charm"
- Housing rehabilitation (balance preservation of historical buildings with demolition of useless buildings)
- Continue to strive for carbon neutrality and green city
- City Government
  - o New municipal complex
  - o Ward representation for council; staggered council terms
  - o City go paperless
  - o More business friendly (building regulations/permits)
  - o Market – sell the City as a destination place
  - o Maintain/expand self sufficiency (currently city owned water, electricity)
  - o Install parking meters
  - o More engaged citizens in local decision making
  - o Make Underground Railroad Center (Gasholder Building/grounds) fully functional
- Oberlin College
  - o Strengthened relationships with City
  - o Separate parking deck for faculty/ staff
  - o More students perform community service
  - o Greater financial investment in City
  - o Greater interaction with broader community (not just affluent)
- Other
  - o More night life (e.g., jazz club)
  - o Arcade
  - o Fewer cars; provide discounts for people coming downtown to shop without a car
  - o Skateboard park
  - o Skating rink
  - o Community Center
  - o Homeless Shelter

Given the kind of community we want, what do we want our local government to do? (why these things?)

- Safety First: Maintain quality safety forces (police/fire)
  - Police to have better understanding of youth culture
  - Provide diversity training to police officers to eliminate racial profiling
  - Stronger relationships between police and young African American men
  - Police to partner with churches /clergy for domestic calls and troubled kids (communication regarding young people at risk)
  - Create a bike and foot patrol
- Manage budgets (fiscal responsibility)
  - Seek funding from different sources
  - Make people more aware of cost savings
  - Create projects to attract donors and foundation $
- Outreach & Engagement
  - City employees engage with community (e.g., monthly town meetings between employees and residents in a semi social manner)
  - City Council engage with community (other than formal council meetings); "More direct contact with constituents"
  - Show "willingness to listen to multiple ideas and stakeholders to reach common ground and facilitate change"
  - Advertise/publicize community meetings
  - Reach out to youth in middle & hs to involve them in public policy/have a voice in government
  - Work more directly with African American groups "to have them connected to the city/educate them about city affairs"
  - City officials meet with groups to hear and see concerns of residents
  - Increased conversation with residents will improve attachment to community
  - Form a committee of citizens to help refine and implement strategic plan
  - This type of outreach should continue
  - Reach out to state officials; apply political pressure to get things done
- Become more business friendly:
  - Streamline paper work for new business (permits, inspections, etc.) Eliminate red tape
  - Info packet for new businesses
  - Encourage mid level industry and retail
  - Offer incentives for new businesses (especially downtown)
  - Help community grow more entrepreneurs
- Maintain roads
- Add bike lanes throughout city
- Provide utilities; promote sustainable/green energy
- Expand recycling programs
- Improve storm water management
- Provide more recreational programs
- Develop a long term plan for city facilities
- Fix up abandoned homes; upgrade housing stock before code violations occur
- Partnerships:
  - Engage in shared purchasing with College, Kendal and others
  - Strengthen communications and cooperation with College
  - More cooperation with surrounding communities
  - Actively work with Chamber to attract new business
  - Stronger partnership with local newspaper
  - Collaborate on Oberlin Project; (e.g., zoning applications)
  - Downsize government through partnerships (versus creating new positions each year)
  - Get more involved in County and regional affairs ("Oberlin cannot survive in isolation")
  - Partner with CDC; city more actively assist with community garden and home rehabilitation
  - Partner more with City of Lorain
  - Partner more with FAA (disconnect since most employees don't live in Oberlin)
  - Partner with local school district
- Communications
  - Stronger communications about issues/decisions city government is grappling with
  - Greater newspaper coverage of city government
  - Keep website current
  - Publish city calendar in new ways (some don't have computers)
  - Use magazines to make citizens more aware of government activities
  - Use WOBL/WCLV
- Strong planning & building codes
  - Develop/follow comprehensive land use plan
  - Planning Commission should secure more input from community using door-to-door approach
  - Align zoning with strategic plan and Oberlin Project
- Market the city

- More signage downtown and on bike trail
- Structure of Government:
  - Minimize city government boards/ commissions- pressure to do too many things
  - Maintain non-partisan city council
  - Revisit Council/Ward/Quadrant system so elected officials know and can represent their constituents
  - Consider longer terms for city council members
- Help improve relations between high and low income residents
- Help address issues of racism
- Assist with transportation for residents
  - In town (local)
  - Out of town (regional)
- Bring Underground Railroad Center to fruition
- More stop signs at intersections versus traffic lights
- Provide Leadership:
  - "visionary", "capable" administrators
  - Lead by example (e.g. police bike patrols; walk to work days)
  - "Move from enforcement model to leadership model"
- Carefully consider impact of decisions on all people of Oberlin (including poor)
- Follow through on strategic plan

Of all these things we have talked about, which are the most important to have for our City?
- Economic development
  - More business in industrial park
  - More job opportunities to reduce poverty
  - Downtown development
  - Business friendly policies and processes
  - Business retention
- Making Oberlin a destination place
- Visionary leadership
- Infrastructure upgrades (sanitary and storm sewers – storm water management plan)
- Transportation
- Education: work with state to secure funding for new school buildings (possibly one campus)
- Address parking issues
- More middle class housing
- Managed growth (land use plan)
- Safety; police presence
- Citizen engagement
  - City Council more actively engaged in community
- More recreation programs and activities for youth
- Tackling racism
- Underground Railroad Center
- Work with Zion CDC and Historical Society to improve housing stock
- Green initiatives
- Locally grown food; community gardens, home gardens, food storage

To what extent are all of the things we want for our City possible?
- All possible
- Change attitudes: "we can't do this because"
- Not only possible, but a necessity
- With creative and innovative funding
- Through partnerships/collaboration (region wide)
- Setting priorities

In the year 2025, what should the City of Oberlin be known for?
- Good government
- Small town appeal, family oriented
- Good place to live, work, and retire
- Quality education
- Well known destination place
    - Cultural events
    - Architecture
    - Dining/restaurants
    - Unusual/specialty shopping
- Racial diversity and harmony
- Vibrant economy, low poverty
- Leader in green energy, environmentally conscious, sustainable/renewable energy, carbon neutral
- Model for collaborative relationships
- Leadership
- Rich history; Underground Railroad Road
- "Progressive", "proactive", "trend setting", "innovation", "forward looking", "imagination", "fearlessness"
- Pedestrian friendly
- Clean, safe city
- Biking
- Public friendly transportation
- Successful implementation of strategic plan by 2025

PHASE IV: PLANNING COUNCIL

Key stakeholders and citizens were invited to participate on a Planning Council. The overall intent of the Planning Council was to establish some common ground around strategic priorities and mission and vision phrases. A total of two Planning Council sessions were held on June 23, 2011 and June 30, 2011 in the evening at Mt. Zion Fellowship Hall in Oberlin.

Session I Results: During session one, results from the interviews, secondary data analysis, and community conversations were presented. Using round table discussions and keypad polling technology, participants discussed:

- What, if anything should be added to the list of potential strategic priorities?
- What, if anything they would change or modify in how draft priorities were languaged or written?
- What, if anything, they would delete from the list of draft strategic priorities?

They then voted on a draft set of strategic priorities which were carefully developed using information derived from the city interviews and community conversations. Voting results were as follows:

Select ONE from Three
- A. Make Infrastructure Upgrades & Building Improvements — 30%
- B. Keep Our City Safe — 27%
- Preserve Green Space & Expand Recreational Programs — 43%

Select ONE from Three
- A. Focus on Economic Development/Tourism — 27%
- B. Help Establish a Green City — 33%
- Help Make Multi-Modal Transportation a Reality — 40%

Top Strategic Priority (ONE)

- **3%** A. Focus on Economic Development/Tourism
- **17%** B. Help Establish a Green City
- **17%** C. Make Infrastructure Upgrades & Building Improvements
- **10%** D. Help Make Multi-Modal Transportation a Reality
- **7%** E. Keep Our City Safe
- **17%** F. Preserve Green Space & Expand Recreational Programs
- **13%** G. Address Racism & Reduce Disparities
- **7%** H. Actively Engage Residents in City Planning & Decisions
- **3%** I. Expand Partnerships
- **7%** Increase Government Efficiency and City Financial Stability

Top TWO Strategic Priorities

- A. Focus on Economic Development/ Tourism
- B. Help Establish a Green City
- C. Make Infrastructure Upgrades & Building Improvements
- D. Help Make Multi-Modal Transportation a Reality
- E. Keep Our City Safe
- F. Preserve Green Space & Expand Recreational Programs
- G. Address Racism & Reduce Disparities
- H. Actively Engage Residents In City Planning & Decision Making
- I. Expand Partnerships
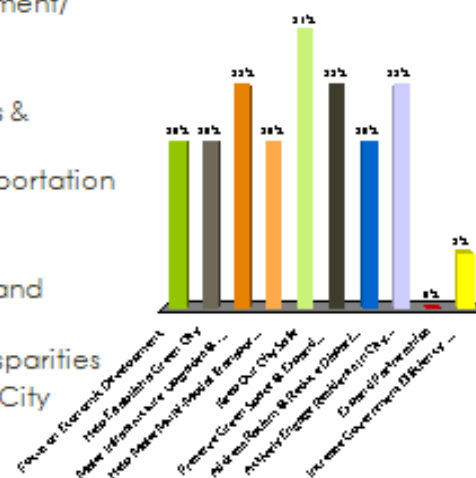- J. Increase Government Efficiency and City Financial Stability

Top THREE Strategic Priorities

A. Focus on Economic Development/ Tourism
B. Help Establish a Green City
C. Make Infrastructure Upgrades & Building Improvements
D. Help Make Multi-Modal Transportation a Reality
E. Keep Our City Safe
F. Preserve Green Space & Expand Recreational Programs
G. Address Racism & Reduce Disparities
H. Actively Engage Residents In City Planning & Decisions
I. Expand Partnerships
J. Increase Government Efficiency and City Financial Stability

After participants considered and ranked possible strategic priorities, they were reminded of the overall purpose of a vision statement:

- Futuristic in nature (desired/preferred future)
- Conveys long-term intent
- Expresses what you want to achieve
- Should be inspirational/convey aspirations
- Identifies what the city wants to become
- Expresses how the future will look if mission and strategic priorities (i.e., goals) are achieved

Participants were then asked to consider a set of draft vision phrases. Specifically, they were asked to discuss:

- Which of the phrases resonated well and why?
- What modifications or additions were necessary

Vision phrases considered during the first Planning Council session were as follows:

- A green community with advanced sources of renewable and sustainable energy
- The first post carbon city in the world
- Model for social justice and race relations
- Great diversity in people
- Strong leaders, vibrant and engaged citizens, where diverse and innovative ideas flourish
- A progressive, proactive, innovative, trend-setting community

- Prosperous, business-friendly community
- Preserving rich history, heritage, and culture
- A cultural destination and welcoming place for the theater, arts, and dining
- Pedestrian and bike friendly community
- Safe, clean, family-friendly town
- Educational excellence at all levels
- Model for collaborative relationships

Session II Results: At the second Planning Council session, participants had the opportunity to refine strategic priorities and re-prioritize them using key pad polling.

City administrators then presented information about current and planned initiatives in four areas:

- Planning & Economic Development
- Public Works/Utilities
- Public Safety
- Parks & Recreation

Participants discussed the kind of initiatives that should be added for each strategic priority and how the draft set of initiatives might be refined. Upon completion of the discussion around strategic initiatives, participants were provided the opportunity to prioritize draft vision and mission phrases.

The City of Oberlin is dedicated to . . .

A. Delivery of efficient, responsive municipal services
B. Supporting economic and environmental preservation and innovation
C. Use of sustainable practices to advance economic, environmental, and social health
D. Maintaining a safe, family-friendly, small town atmosphere
E. Consistent with our rich history, culture, and unique character
F. Wise use of all resources, sound fiscal management, and overall financial stability
G. Cultivating an environment where diverse backgrounds and cultures are respected
H. Through partnerships with our community, other local governments, and the region
I. Affording all residents, workers, and visitors unique and productive opportunities
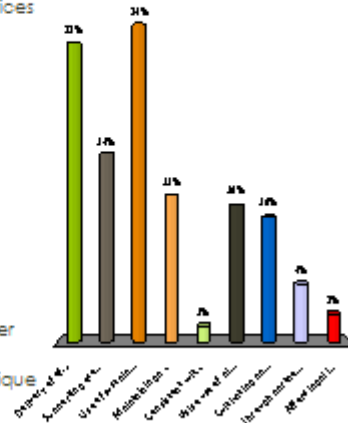
What Oberlin Should Be Known For / As

A. Model for social justice and race relations
B. Strong leaders, vibrant and engaged citizens, where diverse and innovative ideas flourish
C. A progressive, proactive, innovative, trend-setting community
D. Economically and environmentally sustainable community
E. Preserving rich history, heritage, and culture
F. A cultural destination and welcoming place for the theater, arts, and dining
G. Safe, clean, family-friendly town
H. Educational excellence at all levels
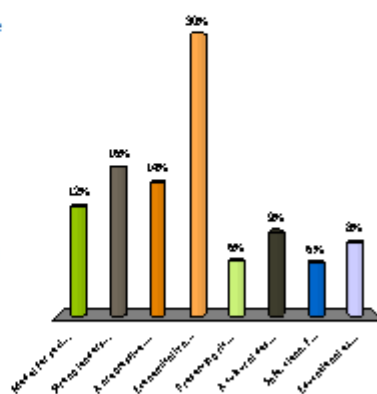
Information gleaned from the two Planning Council sessions was used to draft a strategic plan which was then presented by PSI to city administrators for internal refinement.

OBERLIN 2025

Our Mission
The City of Oberlin is dedicated to maintaining our safe, family-friendly, historic, unique small town atmosphere.

Our Vision
Oberlin will continue to be a proactive, trend-setting leader in social and racial justice and economic and environmental sustainability. We will continue to encourage an environment where diverse and innovative ideas flourish.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO THE YEAR 2025

A. Keep Our City Safe
1. Maintain and enhance current levels of public safety services, including:
   - Bike and foot patrols downtown and in neighborhoods.
   - Regular training for police officers and firefighters.
   - Regular technology upgrades and equipment replacement.
   - Support staff development and succession planning to provide for future leadership.
2. Form partnerships with clergy and other non-profits in Oberlin and Lorain County to enhance communication, aid at-risk youth and strengthen the social safety net.
3. Maximize effectiveness through regular internal and external communications with stakeholders.

B. Focus on Economic Development/Tourism
1. Continue City Government support for the local business community, including:
   - Business-friendly services (permitting, inspections, etc.)
   - Support local business by making local purchases when possible
   - Work with the Oberlin Main Street Chamber and business owners to retain merchants downtown and attract new businesses.
   - Support completion of commercial and retail development in the Rt. 58/20 area.
2. Continue working with regional economic development organizations to attract employment and support entrepreneurship.
   - Support retention and expansion companies in the Oberlin Industrial Park.
   - Attract new companies to the Oberlin Industrial Park.
   - Attract more green companies/jobs.
3. Support agriculture in and around Oberlin to preserve and restore an agrarian community.
4. Promote the City as a tourist destination
   - Support Oberlin College's plans to renovate/rebuild the Oberlin Inn.
   - Support other investment in expanded hotel accommodations and conferencing facilities.
5. Make the Underground Railroad Center/Park and Ride fully operational.

C. Lead With Sustainable Practices
1. Continue and expand Sustainable Practices:
   - Preserve green, open space and develop new park land that is easily accessible by all residents.
   - Actively participate in the Oberlin Project.
   - Continue/expand policies that promote and encourage implementation of energy efficiency measures and alternative/renewable/sustainable energy sources.
   - Maintain/expand recycling program.

Our Values

Open and Honest
     Communication

Being Innovative

Excellent and Effective Services

Respect for Diversity

Leading by Example

Integrity in the Stewardship of
     Oberlin's Resources

Neighborly Attitude and
     Friendliness

C. Lead With Sustainable Practices (continued)
2. Adopt code changes to encourage more green buildings.
3. Set goals to end carbon emissions and the mechanisms to achieve those goals.
4. Expand and improve safe pedestrian travel:
   - Complete SRTS sidewalk expansion project
   - Restart sidewalk maintenance and repair program
5. Support expansion of farmer's market, community gardens, local food production, and food storage.
6. Increase Multi-Modal Transportation Options
   - Explore local transportation to support tourism/visitors.
   - Work with County and regional partners to restore transportation links to other areas of Lorain County and Northeast Ohio, including airports.
   - Sustain transportation for older adult and disabled populations.
   - Expand bike lanes throughout the city.
   - Support development of bike storage in downtown and other destinations.
   - Make Park and Ride portion of the Underground Railroad Center fully operational to encourage and facilitate bicycle travel on the Don J. Pease Memorial Bike Path/North Coast Inland Trail.

D. Partner with Residents, Businesses and Other Governments
1. Actively Engage Residents in planning & decision making.
   - Identify stakeholder groups to help carry out this strategic plan
   - Develop volunteer program to support the work of municipal government
   - Periodically survey residents or host town hall meetings
   - Continue to expand dissemination of city information using multiple communication channels
   - Continue to coordinate planning activities with key stakeholders
2. Increase Government Efficiency and City Financial Stability.
   - Explore additional cost savings and fee increases to support current service levels
   - Examine services that can be reduced or eliminated to stay within current revenues
   - Continue to explore opportunities to partner with neighboring townships and other cities in Lorain County to consolidate or jointly provide services
   - Expand joint purchasing and procurement
   - As last resort, evaluate tax increases to support current levels of services or improved services requested by the community

E. Make Infrastructure Upgrades & Building Improvements
1. Regularly upgrade and expand City utility infrastructure, including:
   - Fully implement the storm water management plan; develop and implement a storm water utility.
   - Continue to make sanitary sewer upgrades and the necessary improvements to the Water Environment Protection Facility to maintain compliance with NPDES permit limits and to protect water quality in Plum Creek and the Black River watershed.
   - Continue to make water distribution system upgrades and the necessary improvements to the Water Treatment Plant to comply with Safe Drinking Water Act requirements.
   - Continue to plan for utility and infrastructure improvements to support future development in the US20/SR58 corridor.
2. Continue pavement maintenance program and prioritized repaving and/or reconstruction of city streets.
3. Work with downtown stakeholders to provide parking for visitors/patrons.
4. Expand and/or upgrade city facilities to address space needs and efficiency.
5. Support restoration of downtown buildings.
6. Support the work of Zion CDC and other partners to rehabilitate homes.

F. Create One Oberlin that is a Model for Social Justice and Race Relations
1. Support more interaction across neighborhoods/quadrants.
2. Strengthen diversity training within city government.
3. Offer diversity training for residents.
4. Help link low income residents to job opportunities.

G. Expand Recreational Programs
1. Continue and expand partnerships with regional and community organizations to provide a variety of recreational opportunities for youth and older adults.
2. Evaluate the creation of an ice skating rink in the downtown vicinity.
3. Evaluate partnerships to provide facilities for indoor recreational programming.

APPENDIX A: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW GUIDES

City of Oberlin Strategic Planning Project
City Department Head Interview Guide

I. Desired Outcomes of Planning Process
1. What do you hope to accomplish as a result of the strategic planning process (i.e., what kind of outcomes do you expect)?

II. Trends in City Government/Public Administration
2. What kind of trends in city government, public administration, or urban affairs have you witnessed in recent years and what factors or influences do you attribute these trends to? (e.g.: public apathy, urban renewal, government collaboration/consolidation, etc.)

Trends	Factors/Influences Contributing to Trend
a.	
b.	
c.	
d.	
e.	

3. What kind of trends do you anticipate into the future?

III. SWOT Analysis
4. What would you describe as the greatest assets of Oberlin?

5. What would you describe as the greatest strengths of your city government?

6. What have been the greatest accomplishments of Oberlin city government in recent years?

7. What areas do you feel require more attention than the city has been able to provide in the past (due to limited resources or other factors)?

8. What are some areas of opportunity for the city of Oberlin into the near future?

9. Other than limited resources, what is likely to threaten progress in the city of Oberlin?

IV. Envisioning the Ideal Future
10. If Oberlin could be like any city in the U.S., what city would you choose and why?

11. What about any city in Ohio – what city would you choose and why?

12. What are the TWO MOST important things Oberlin would need to do to become more like these cities?

13. How could the work of your department contribute to achieving this vision for Oberlin?

14. Ten years from now, what one thing would you like the city of Oberlin to be known for?

V. City Government Priorities
15. What kind of major initiatives is your department engaged in right now?

16. Which of these initiatives is the SINGLE MOST important to continue into the future? [IF MOST IMPORTANT INITIATIVE IS NOT CURRENTLY UNDERWAY; DESCRIBE WHAT SHOULD BE DONE BY YOUR DEPARTMENT VERSUS WHAT IS BEING DONE CURRENTLY]

17. If or when accomplished, what difference would this initiative make for the city of Oberlin?

City of Oberlin Strategic Planning Project
City Council Interview Guide

I. Desired Outcomes of Planning Process

1. What do you hope to accomplish as a result of the strategic planning process (i.e., what kind of outcomes do you expect)?

II. Assets

2. From your perspective, what makes Oberlin unique and what would you describe as Oberlin's greatest assets?

3. Thinking specifically about your city government . . .

a. What have been the greatest accomplishments of Oberlin city government in recent years?	b. What difference has each made for Oberlin?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

4. What are some areas of opportunity for the city of Oberlin into the future?

III. Challenges

5. Let's shift gears a bit and talk about challenges . . .

a. What would you say are Oberlin's greatest challenges (examples might include declining population, housing challenges, aging infrastructure, budgetary challenges, etc.)	b. Why do these things matter? (or why are they important?)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

6. What areas do you feel require more attention than the city has been able to provide (due to limited resources or other factors)?

IV. Strategic Direction

7. Thinking about the assets Oberlin has to build upon along with the challenges facing this city . . .

a. What should be the THREE MOST important strategic priorities or goals for the city over the next ten years?	b. If these priorities were addressed, what difference would this make for Oberlin?
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

8. What one thing should Oberlin be known for 10 years from now?

City Council Member: _____

Best Contact for Outreach Efforts:

APPENDIX B: COMMUNITY CONVERSATION GUIDE

OBERLIN
2025

Community Conversation Guide

Winter 2011

ABOUT THIS PLANNING PROCESS

Oberlin City administrators together with Oberlin City Council want to create a plan to ensure that the City, its residents, and businesses grow and prosper into the future. Your City government wants future priorities for the City of Oberlin to be shaped by the people who live and work here. The City Council and City management would like for you to have a say in the future direction of your community!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is a strategic plan important?

- There is much for city governments to do these days with fewer resources available to accomplish service demands. Without a plan it is difficult to maintain focus on long-term goals.
- A strategic plan provides direction. It establishes strategic priorities and initiatives to guide the city into the future.
- Community-driven strategic plans create a shared vision for the future of the community.
- A strategic plan provides a platform from which to monitor and measure progress and success.
- Planning experts agree, a community that doesn't plan for its future cannot adapt to change.

How much is the strategic planning project costing the City of Oberlin?

- The development of a community-driven strategic plan is very involved and typically costs upwards of $50,000 - $75,000.
- The City of Oberlin has commissioned The Public Services Institute (PSI) of Lorain County Community College and Management Assistance for Nonprofit Agencies (MANA) of Kendal to assist us with the development of our strategic plan. The total cost is only $21,855. We are fortunate to have local experts to assist us.

Why does the City of Oberlin need a consultant to help with this work?

- PSI and MANA have expertise in these kinds of strategic planning processes.
- They will provide us with consultation and facilitate community conversations to help develop the plan.
- City residents can feel comfortable voicing their opinions and viewpoints to neutral, unbiased entities like PSI and MANA.
- Given the diversity and talents of our community, many ideas are likely to be expressed throughout the planning process. PSI and MANA will help us build some consensus around strategic priorities for our city.

How can I be assured my ideas will matter?

- Your ideas and suggestions will be carefully documented throughout the planning process.
- Careful attempts will be made to share what is heard from the community back to the City and to residents.
- Not only will we create a plan, we will organize our efforts around the plan and monitor our progress over the next 10-15 years.

"What we have to do today is be ready for an uncertain tomorrow."
Peter F. Drucker

GETTING STARTED

THIS WORKBOOK WILL:

- Encourage you to think about where our community stands today and what our priorities should be for the future.
- Focus on some of Oberlin's greatest assets.
- Highlight some important work and initiatives taking place now in our community.
- Help you consider some of our greatest challenges going forward.
- Provide an opportunity for you to help shape the future direction of your city government.
- Ensure the final plan is tailored to the needs, hopes, desires, and aspirations of its citizens and leaders.

HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK:

- This workbook is not meant to be something you complete on your own like you would a community survey.
- It is intended to be a guide for conversations with your family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues.
- The Public Services Institute and MANA will be pleased to facilitate a conversation with you. Just give us a call at the number listed below. If you would like to host and facilitate a conversation yourself, make sure you choose a recorder who can write very clearly so all ideas shared by the group are captured. Either send the material to PSI or we will pick up the material from you.

SOME IDEAS:

- Share this workbook with your closest friends and ask them to join you in discussing the ideal future for Oberlin.
- Share this workbook during a staff meeting or in the lunch room at your place of work.
- Think about all the organizations you are associated with like church groups, membership clubs, or neighborhood groups and ask your acquaintances to provide their ideas.

We want to hear from as many people as possible!

**Call us at 800-995-5222
Extension 7928**

**Or visit the Oberlin City website at
www.cityofoberlin.com**

II OUR ASSETS

Some strengths to build upon for tomorrow

Arts, Cultural, Recreational Amenities

- Allen Memorial Art Museum, Firelands Association for the Visual Arts (FAVA), MAD* Factory, Choristers, local galleries, and many other groups and institutions
- An ongoing array of lectures, plays, recitals, concerts and convocations
- Conservatory of Music at Oberlin College
- The Oberlin Heritage Center and its museum complex including three preserved historical buildings: the Monroe House (1866), Jewett House (1884), and Schoolhouse (1836).
- The Apollo Theater
- Splash Zone Aquatic Center with indoor and outdoor pools, water slides, a field house, fitness center, aerobics room, party room and myriad of classes and programs
- Annual local events including Juneteenth Freedom Celebration, Chalk Walk, summer theater festival, summer concert series, lecture series, Outdoor Basketball Festival, and family fun fairs
- Parks and biking paths

Oberlin College

- Long commitment to progressive causes and social justice
- Significant place in history as the first college to grant bachelor degrees to women in a co-educational environment
- Historical leadership in the education of African Americans
- Known for musical excellence and commitment to sustainability
- Tappan Square

Small Town Charm/Appeal and Safe Community

- Tree-lined streets forming quiet, friendly neighborhoods
- Variety of housing types
- Compact, walkable community
- Rich architectural history
- Cultural amenities abound
- Many parks and open spaces
- Wide variety of unique shops and restaurants
- Quality, community-based fire/rescue services with excellent response time
- Professional and well-trained staff

Significance of African Americans & the Underground Railroad

- Historical home to freedom seekers, anti-slavery leaders, and civil war heroes
- Preservation of houses used for harboring fugitive slaves
- Awareness, appreciation, and respect for the anti-slavery movement within the community
- Preservation of African American heritage and Underground Railroad history to be passed on to new generations through walking tours and other educational events

Economic Base Sustained Over Time

- The Federal Aviation Administration
- Downtown merchants, shops, and locally-owned restaurants
- Oberlin Industrial Park
- Oberlin College
- Entrepreneurial spirit
- Oberlin Community Improvement Corporation and City support for economic development through loans and assistance

Environmentally Consciousness Community

- Sustainability Resolution adopted in 2001
- One of 18 Climate Positive Development cities worldwide
- Member of the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives
- Rapid transition from fossil-fuel power portfolio to renewable resource power portfolio for the community
- Sustainable Reserve Program to fund local greenhouse gas reduction initiatives

City Operated Utilities

- Local operation and control
- Reliability
- Affordable rates

Charter Form of City Government

- Professional city management
- City Council members not elected on partisan basis; all at-large members of Council
- Longevity of city government department administrators
- Commitment to include the community in planning and decision making processes

Diverse and Active Citizenry

- Diverse community. Caucasian population constitutes 71% of population, African Americans 18% (significantly above the state average), persons of two or more races 4%, and the Asian population 3%
- Ongoing public support for tax issues
- Active engagement of citizens on numerous City boards, commissions and committees

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III RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS & NEW INITIATIVES

Some opportunities for our City going forward

Ohio Business Targets

- Advanced Energy & Environmental Technologies
- New and expanded manufacturing in the Industrial Park, including General Plug
- GreenField Solar and other advanced energy firms in the Industrial Park
- Synapse Biomedical
- Wal-Mart and other commercial development on the south side of town
- New businesses open in the East College Street Project
- Available land for retail, commercial and industrial development

Energy Efficiency

- City government home energy audits
- Investigating additional sources of electricity from landfill methane gas to further increase our green energy portfolio
- Commitment to green buildings (LEED Silver or better) including the new, energy efficient fire station
- Efficiency Smart Power Plant program

City Government Collaboration

- Partnership with Lorain County Metro Parks to establish Splash Zone
- Annexation/Revenue Sharing Agreement with Pittsfield Township
- Service area agreement with Lorain County Rural Water Authority
- Fire protection contract for New Russia Township
- Strengthened relationships between City government and Oberlin College, the Oberlin City Schools, and local businesses

City Government Enhancements

- Development of service center for Public Works Department including new modern fleet maintenance facility
- Reconstruction of water treatment plant
- Expanded/renovated fire station
- Establishment of Human Resources Department
- Street lighting improvements
- 1,000 new feet of sidewalks planned through the Safe Route to School initiative
- Rehabilitation of old architecture in downtown

Progress on Underground Railroad Center

- Community-driven strategic plan completed for the Underground Railroad Center
- Funding from Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) re-secured
- Communitywide update at Gasholder Building as the future site of the Underground Railroad Center

OBERLIN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD CENTER

OBERLIN UNDERGROUND RAILROAD CENTER

A New Initiative called "The Oberlin Project"

- A collaborative venture that includes Oberlin College, the City of Oberlin, Oberlin City Schools, and other public sector, private sector and non-profit organizations

- Focus is on sustainability including:
  - Economic development
  - Development of a Green Arts District
  - Advanced energy technology
  - Local foods/sustainable agriculture
  - Green jobs
  - Education for the new economy
  - Carbon reduction

- **3 Major Goals:**
- Develop a 13-acre downtown block to be known as "The Green Arts District" that will be powered by renewable energy sources, possibly discharge no waste products, meet or exceed building and neighborhood design standards by the U.S. Green Building Council and others.

- As 1 of 18 Clinton Climate Positive Development cities worldwide, the plan is to transition Oberlin from dependence on fossil fuel to use of renewable energy for the City and College.

- A greenbelt of up to 20,000 acres maybe used for:
  - Profitable agricultural, local food production and re-establishment of profitable farms serving local needs
  - Carbon sequestration
  - Biomass production for both liquid fuels and chipped woody materials
  - Improved aesthetics and property values

IV REAL CHALLENGES
Some things we need to overcome

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

Doing the same or more with less: Almost every city, every county, and every state in America is facing budget issues due to the nation's economic downturn.
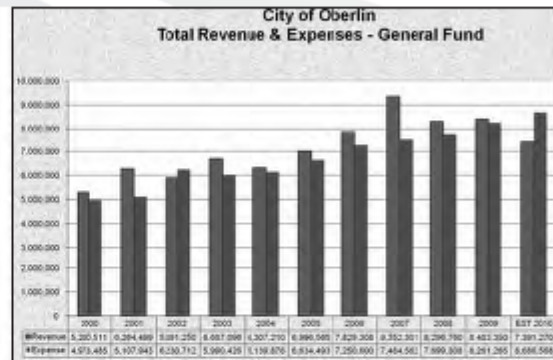
- The City of Oberlin has witnessed inflationary increases in expenses and more recently, revenues are declining as well. This means the general fund cannot support all governmental and taxpayer needs in the future.
- New approaches to reduce government expenses, such as encouraging new development to increase the tax base, expanding opportunities to share resources with other governments, recruiting volunteers to assist with the work of our City, and increasing revenues and minimizing cost of service delivery without jeopardizing quality of services, will be expected in the future.

Retention of Downtown Businesses

While many communities are concerned about loss of small businesses, especially in downtowns, due to big box retailers and shopping malls, downtown Oberlin continues to thrive. However, the stores and restaurants in Oberlin need our continued support. New strategies to bring people and customers to Oberlin during College breaks are needed.

Attraction of New Business and Industry

Attraction of new businesses and jobs that will thrive in the new economy and provide a good source of income for residents in Oberlin, throughout Lorain County and the Northeast Ohio region are important. New business and industry are also an important source of tax revenue for local governments. However, growth and attraction of new business is a competitive process and requires tax incentives, dedicated time and effort, and other things that local governments cannot provide alone.

City of Oberlin
Total Revenue & Expenses - General Fund

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	EST 2010
Revenue	5,280,511	6,284,489	5,991,250	6,687,098	4,307,210	6,996,585	7,829,308	9,352,301	8,296,780	8,483,350	7,391,270
Expense	4,973,485	6,107,945	6,230,712	5,980,429	6,159,876	6,634,493	7,250,600	7,464,567	7,699,308	8,281,265	8,686,568

Poverty

Residents with income below the poverty level in 2009

Oberlin	31.6%
Ohio	15.2%

Residents with income below 50% of the poverty level in 2009

Oberlin	21.1%
Ohio	7.0%

U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Community Survey, 2009

V YOUR THOUGHTS

1. What is going well in the City of Oberlin that we should build upon?
   a. Why are these things important?

Talked about most by your group: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Think about how you would like our City to be 10 to 15 years from now– what kind of City is that?
   a. Why are these things important?
   b. What would these things look like?
   c. What difference would these things make?

Talked about most by your group: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Given the kind of community we want, what do we want our local government to do?
   a. Why these things?

Talked about most by your group: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. Of all of these things we have talked about, which are the most important to have for our City?

Talked about most by your group: _____

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. To what extent are all of the things we want for our City possible?

Talked about most by your group: _____

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. In the year 2025, what should the City of Oberlin be known for?

Talked about most by your group: _____

_____

7. What challenges do we face in getting the kind of City we want?
    a. Why is that a challenge?
    b. How does it affect our community?

Talked about most by your group: _____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

All photos courtesy of Visit Lorain County

APPENDIX C: PLANNING COUNCIL AGENDAS

Oberlin City Government Strategic Planning
Planning Council Session #1
June 23, 2011

Zion Fellowship Hall
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

A   G   E   N   D   A

I. Welcome & Introductions	[Dinner Buffet] A. Welcome B. Participant Introductions C. Rationale for Strategic Planning	Eric Norenberg Oberlin City Manager	6:00 – 6:15 pm
II. Process Overview	A. City Government Interviews B. Secondary Data Analysis C. Community Conversations D. Planning Council E. Internal Refinement	Shara L. Davis, Dean of Research, Institutional Effectiveness, & Public Services LCCC	6:15 – 6:30 pm
III. Results of Visioning Process	A. City Government B. Community Conversations	Shara L. Davis	6:30 – 7:00 pm

IV. Identification of Strategic Priorities	A. Draft Strategic Priorities
	B. Roundtable Discussion:
	  1. What, if anything should be added to the list of potential strategic priorities?
	  2. What, if anything would you change or modify in how draft priorities are languaged or written?
	  3. What, if anything, would you delete from the list of draft strategic priorities
		All Participants	7:00 – 7:30 pm

V. Creating a Vision Statement	A. Draft Key Phrases
	B. Roundtable Discussion:
	  1. Which of these phrases resonate well and why?
	  2. What modifications/additions are necessary?
		All Participants	7:30 – 7:50 pm

VI. Prioritization of Goals	A. Theme Team Report B. Key Pad Polling	All Participants	7:50 – 8:15 pm
VII. Next Steps	Planning Council Session #2	Shara L. Davis	8:15 – 8:30 pm

Oberlin City Government Strategic Planning
Planning Council Session #2
June 30, 2011

Zion Fellowship Hall
6:00-8:30 p.m.

A   G   E   N   D   A

I. Welcome & Introductions	[Dinner Buffet] A. Welcome B. Participant Introductions	Eric Norenberg Oberlin City Manager	6:00 – 6:15 pm
II. Refinement of Strategic Priorities	A. Key Pad Polling: Sector Representation B. Session 1 Re-Cap C. Refined Strategic Priorities (per Session 1 round table discussions) D. Key Pad Polling: Strategic Priorities	Dr. Jeffrey K. Lange Senior Research Project Manager LCCC	6:15 – 6:45 pm

III. Initiative Development	A. Presentation of Current & Planned Initiatives
	  1. Planning & Economic Development
	  2. Public Works/Utilities
	  3. Public Safety
	  4. Parks & Recreation
	
	B. Breakout Sessions
	  1. Based on community input and the presentations, what initiatives should be added for strategic priorities?
	  2. How might existing initiatives be refined?
	
	C. Session Report Outs
		City Manager & Department Managers
		
		All Participants
		
		Department Managers
			6:45 – 7:20 pm
			
			7:20 – 8:00 pm
			
			8:00 – 8:15 pm

IV. Mission & Vision Statement Refinement	A. Revised Vision Statements (resulting from Session 1 round table discussions) B. Draft Mission Phrases C. Key Pad Polling: Vision & Mission Statements	Jeffrey K. Lange	8:15 – 8:30 pm