SECTION 1
Greenwood Farm is a historic farm property located at 264 Richmond Road in Richmond Heights, Ohio. The family estate of Maude and George W. Phyper is significant in the local history of Richmond Heights. Built in 1917, there are 17 acres of sprawling green trees, open space, a historic barn, and a three-story brick house. A creek dug out of the landscape with steep slopes runs through the property, and it is home to many deer and raccoon. The Property, now owned by the City, is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Photograph modified by the Cuyahoga County Planning Commission; original from Cleveland.com, “Talk of bats in the air at Richmond Heights’ Greenwood Farm; Scouts tell of how to build bat houses”.
Welcome to the 2016 Richmond Heights Master Plan. The Master Plan was completed over the course of a year and included input from City leaders, institutions, businesses, and residents.

The Master Plan document outlines opportunities for growth and change in Richmond Heights over the next decade. The document records current conditions, lays out the community's vision, goals and policies, and outlines the parties responsible for action.

HOW DO I USE THIS SECTION?

The Introduction section is a general overview. It should be used to understand the City's geography from a local and regional perspective, and to understand how previous studies and related plans fit into the current Master Plan.

WHAT'S IN THIS SECTION?

The Introduction section includes an overview of the City's history, provides local and regional context mapping, and highlights the findings of regional plans and studies that affect the City. It also includes a summary of the planning process and public involvement components.
CITY HISTORY

What is now the City of Richmond Heights was as established in 1796 by surveyors employed by Moses Cleaveland as Euclid Township. Originally a farming community, the settlement developed an agricultural economy as vineyards, fruit orchards, cider mills, maple production, and granaries opened.

EARLY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The settlement's earliest form of industry was charcoal production to feed the industrial growth in downtown Cleveland. These charcoal pits remained until the end of the Civil War as the settlement was slow growing. Log cabins and unpaved forest paths were the norm until the early 20th century.

CLARIBEL TO RICHMOND HEIGHTS

On November 17, 1917, the settlement incorporated as the Village of Claribel. The following year on November 27, 1918, residents deemed “Claribel” too feminine a name for a municipality, and renamed it the Village Richmond Heights after Edmund Richmond, an early settler from Massachusetts.

THE FIRST SCHOOL

Built in 1858, the first one room brick school sat on the present site of the Richmond Heights Fire Station. The school was officially called Maple Grove, but since it was located on the northeast corner of Highland and Richmond Roads, an area then called Claribel Corners, the school was referred to as the Claribel School.

AVIATION HISTORY

In the 1920’s Curtiss-Wright, Inc. purchased 274 acres of land on Richmond Road and built the hangar which still serves as the main hangar for the present airport which was later purchased by Cuyahoga County.

1950-1960 EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

Richmond Heights quickly transformed from a small agrarian community to an active modern suburb. Between 1950 and 1960, the City’s population increased by 4,177 people (468%), see Figure 1. Richmond Heights became a city in 1960, when the U.S. Census determined the population to be greater than 5,000. These high growth rates continued through the end of the 20th century.

POST WORLD WAR II DEVELOPMENT

The rapid population growth, housing boom, and road and retail development was fueled by the installation of gas lines and water mains in 1953. The improvement and expansion of City services made the area ideal for the new style of suburban developments that were emerging throughout the county following World War II.

The 1960s also brought zoning to permit the development of the City’s first apartment complexes and malls. Major development also included the Richmond Heights General Hospital, now University Hospitals Medical Center.

POPULATION DECLINE

Like many inner-ring Cleveland suburbs, Richmond Heights experienced a population decline in the latter half of the 20th century. The population reached its peak population in 2000.

RICHMOND HEIGHTS TODAY

Today Richmond Heights is a vibrant suburban community that offers a family friendly environment with municipal parks featuring recreation and outdoor amenities, and a number of community cultural and civic sponsored events. The City also boast the Cuyahoga County Airport and University Hospitals Richmond Medical Center.
Richmond Heights has a history of being current with national movements in planning and development. In 1921, Richmond Heights Council passed a resolution to be part of the creation of the Metropolitan Planning Commission, one of the earliest groups to take on regional planning issues in Northeast Ohio. Richmond Heights developed its first zoning map in 1929 on the heels of the 1926 case of Village of Euclid, Ohio v. Ambler Realty Co., where the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of zoning. Richmond Heights commissioned its first Master Plan in 1964, updated in 1972.

In 2007, the City worked with the planning firm Northstar Planning and Design on a Master Plan Update. The 2007 update focused on: the north end of Richmond at Chardon; the community and commercial corridors of Richmond at Highland and Richmond at Wilson Mills; and the Cuyahoga County Airport.

The City's current zoning map appears to have been last updated August 28, 2007.

*Action Chart resulting from the 2007 Master Plan Update prepared by Northstar Planning and Design, and adopted by the Richmond Heights City Council by Resolution No. 133-2007 on December 18, 2007.*
Located in the eastern part of Cuyahoga County, the City of Richmond Heights is an inner-ring suburb bordered by the cities of Euclid, South Euclid, Lyndhurst, Highland Heights and Willoughby Hills in Lake County.

The First Suburbs cities share common histories characteristics and development patterns. The Map also highlights complimentary cities that are similar to Richmond Heights in size and population.

Map 1 highlights the City of Cleveland and the First Suburbs Consortium, a group of communities largely built prior to 1960 that border the City of Cleveland.
REGIONAL PLANS

Since 2007, there have been several plans developed that potentially have some affect on the City of Richmond Heights.

CUYAHOGA COUNTYWIDE HOUSING STUDY, 2016

This study addresses population loss in Cuyahoga County, analyzes options (i.e. construction, rehabilitation, and demolition) and suggests best practices, strategies, and policies to address the housing crisis countywide. The Housing Study considers current and projected demographic trends and housing needs, housing stock, market strength, and neighborhood specific housing issues. This project was a partnership between County Planning and Cleveland State University.

NEW DAY 2015-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN OF RICHMOND HEIGHTS LOCAL SCHOOLS

This five-year strategic plan provides well defined and measurable steps to transform the Richmond Heights Local Schools into a “First Choice School District.” The plan acknowledges the challenges presented by declining enrollment, changes in student demographics, and management and legal hurdles. It outlines five strategic priorities design to not only improve the school district, but to transform it into a 21st Century leader in educational excellence.
COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR NORTHEAST OHIO – FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2015-2018

The plan specifies existing transportation options for older adults and individuals with disabilities or low income. The plan also identifies unmet transportation needs, and highlights opportunities for improvement with strategies to increase funding and programming for transportation tailored to these target groups countywide.

EUCLID CREEK RESERVATION MASTER PLAN CLEVELAND METROPARKS, 2015

This plan details necessary improvements within the Euclid Creek Reservation, parts of which lie in the western edges of Richmond Heights. Improvements within City limits include the redevelopment of the Georgetown Area. These upgrades include a new trail connection between Old Highland Road and the Georgetown Area, and improved erosion management.

EASTSIDE GREENWAY, 2015

The Eastside Greenway is a transportation study covering eastern Cuyahoga County. The Plan examines existing and potential greenways that can better connect residents to jobs, recreation, services, commercial centers, and natural resources by enhancing and creating multimodal transportation facilities. The intention of the plan is to create a regional network of interconnected greenways that bring communities in the planning region together, while celebrating their individual character.
CUYAHOGA COUNTY AIRPORT RUNWAY 6/24 SAFETY AREA IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM, 2015

This multi-year plan, produced by CHA Companies, describes necessary improvements to one of the runways at the Cuyahoga County Airport. Changes are necessary to ensure that the runway is safe and compliant with Federal Aviation Administration standards. The project is expected to be completed by 2018, and would improve safety for airport users as well as pedestrians and drivers traveling in areas surrounding the airport.

NORTHEAST OHIO AREAWIDE COORDINATING AGENCY (NOACA) REGIONAL BICYCLE PLAN UPDATE 2013

This plan maps the requirements for making northeast Ohio more bicycle friendly. The plan is an update to the 2008 Regional Bicycle Transportation Plan, and compliments NOACA’s more comprehensive 2035 Connections Transportation (All modes) Plan. The plan addresses the benefits of bicycling, as well as provides bicycling usage and demand data to assist with development of funding strategies and implementation and design guidelines.
NOACA PAVEMENT CONDITIONS AND SCENARIOS FOR THE CITY OF RICHMOND HEIGHTS 2012

In 2012, NOACA assessed approximately seven roads and eighteen road segments in the City of Richmond Heights to determine their pavement condition using a comprehensive Transportation Asset Management Program. Transportation Asset Management is a strategic and systematic process of operating, maintaining, upgrading, and expanding physical assets such as roads and bridges. The process involves engineering and economic analyses to determine the state of the road over its lifecycle and the cost of maintenance, preservation, repair, rehabilitation, and/or replacement. Richmond Heights Roads were rated good, fair, and fair to poor.

NORTHEAST OHIO REGIONAL SEWER DISTRICT (NEORSD) CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE PROJECTS 2010

In 2010, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District identified over $200 million in construction and maintenance projects throughout its service area. Two of the projects identified are in Richmond Heights.
PLANNING PROCESS

Richmond Heights is a “City with a Forward Look.” As the City prepared to celebrate its centennial, it was also re-imagining itself. In 2016, the City received a grant from the Cuyahoga County Department of Development to update its 2007 Master Plan. As a result, County Planning began the master planning process in late summer. The 2016-2017 Master Plan process included input from a Project Team and Steering Committee. In addition, there were numerous occasions for public involvement to ensure that the plan reflected the concerns, ideas, and priorities of residents and businesses, municipal staff and community groups.

PROJECT TEAM AND STEERING COMMITTEE

The Project Team was a 15-member committee made up of City staff and elected officials with an in-depth knowledge of the City and its day-to-day operations. The Steering Committee was a 22-member committee made up of Richmond Heights residents, corporate representatives, school board executives and board members, private businesses, residents, and other community leaders. The Steering Committee also included the City government and staff.

Throughout the process, approximately twenty-nine meetings were held, eight for the Project Team, six for the Steering Committee, 12 stakeholder meetings, and three public meetings.

PROJECT PHASES

The City of Richmond Heights Master Plan was constructed over the course of a year, and included five phases.

Phase 1: Introduction – Planning 101: Why We Plan and Current Conditions

County Planning’s master plan process encourages constant conversation, input, feedback, and engagement from City officials, residents, corporations, business owners, and community stakeholders at all levels. The Planning 101: Why We Plan component seeks to introduce and inform participants about the process, and the importance of their role in the process.

Current Conditions

The Current Conditions phase involves accumulating and analyzing baseline data such as population changes, ethnicity, housing, employment, income, transportation, community assets, land use, environmental features, and City services to understand Richmond Heights now.

Phase 2: Community Vision

The Community Vision phase outlines the major topic areas for the Master Plan such as community assets—focal points for the community, and vision statements—broad themes and descriptions of how the community would like to look and function in five to ten years. The vision statements also describe the City’s desired future.
Phase 3: Policy Development

The Policy Development phase proposes action steps to help the community reach its desired future. Action steps specifically address issues, concerns, and desires identified in project team, steering committee, stakeholder and public meetings, as well as those identified in the Current Conditions and Community Vision analyses.

Phase 4: Implementation

Facilitated by County Planning, the Richmond Heights Master Plan focuses on Richmond Heights’ future as a Welcoming City with healthy environments and beautiful landscapes, connected by public transit and active walkable streets, strong vibrant neighborhoods, and robust mixed-use developments. The Master Plan also highlights Richmond Heights’s future as a Diverse and Business-Friendly City celebrating its rich arts and cultural assets, and developing economic engines focused on the aero technology and logistics as well as medical services and technology.

The Implementation phase addresses how to accomplish specific goals and actions, and includes identifying responsible parties, timelines, and priorities.

Phase 5: Final Plan

The Final Master Plan for Richmond Heights is released to the project team, steering committees for final review and to elected city officials final review and adoption.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

There were three public meetings held throughout the master planning process to allow residents, community leaders and other stakeholders to provide input into the process and plan recommendations. All three public meetings were held at the Kiwanis Lodge, and advertised on the City of Richmond Heights and Cuyahoga County Planning Commission websites as well as through fliers and the City newsletter. Each meeting consisted of an afternoon and evening presentation to provide convenient options or attendance and participation.

Public Meeting #1

The first public meeting was held on November 17, 2016. At this meeting, representatives of County Planning reviewed the planning process, existing conditions, and the identified strengths and weaknesses found in the analysis of the City’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), as well as introduced community visioning outlining the focal points for the community and the development of vision statements.

Public Meeting #2

The second public meeting was held on March 29, 2017. This meeting outlined the results of the first public meeting, and the development of goals and actions to help the community accomplish their vision. Participants were asked to work through a workbook to give their preferences for proposed goals and actions.
Public Meeting #3

The final public meeting was held on May 25, 2017. County Planning presented a review of the goals and actions and then focused on Implementation and Resource Development. Participants were asked to prioritize the goals and actions as well as provide comment on renderings of specific concepts developed for the geographical focus areas.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

County Planning staff also participated in two Community Conversations presented by the City of Richmond Heights at both the beginning and end of the master planning process to provide a more intimate one-on-one setting within which planning staff could engage in specific conversations and address questions regarding various components of the Master Plan.

STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

The twelve Stakeholder meetings were conducted with Richmond Heights’ Mayor, Economic Development Director, Finance Director, Engineer, Recreation Director, Service Director, Fire Chief, and Police Chief, as well as the President of University Hospital’s Richmond Medical Center, the Manager of Richmond Town Square Mall, and the General Manager of the Cleveland Jet Center.