

CEMETERY ROAD CORRIDOR



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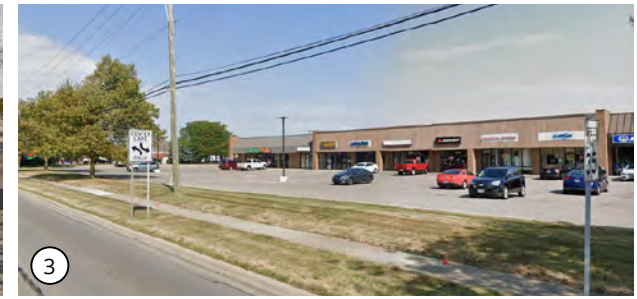
The Cemetery Road focus area is the primary east-west gateway corridor linking Old Hilliard with I-270. This area was not addressed in the 2011 Comprehensive Plan. In 2021, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) prepared a study for the area to help the city begin to re-imagine the corridor as a distinctive place, a regionally-significant economic hub, and an area that could leverage future regional transit opportunities. This area has a huge potential to create a more positive first impression for visitors and strengthen community pride. Recommendations from the MORPC study along with others are included in this section.



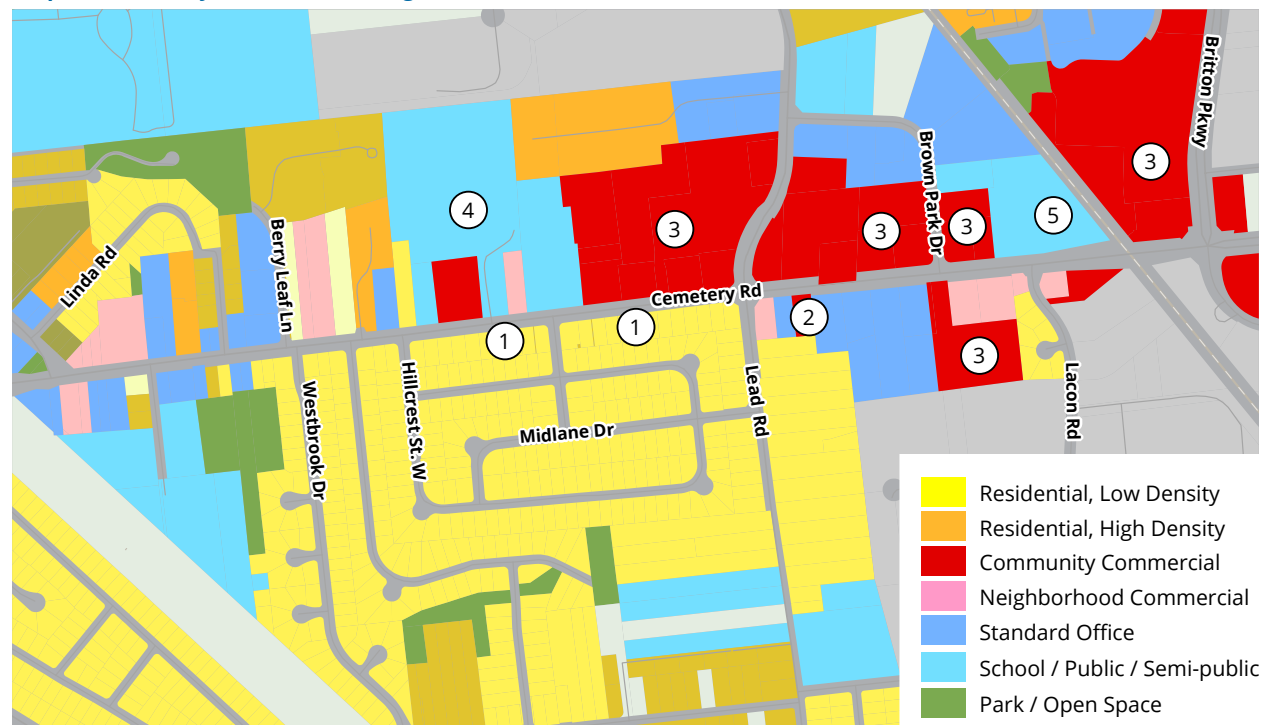
The Area Today

The existing land use and character map represents an assessment of current conditions in 2021 based on parcel data and observation. The land use definitions are detailed in the Snapshot Part 1 Appendix. The numbered locations generally indicate distinct conditions that apply to a site or subarea.

- ① Older ranch style homes with large front yard set-backs and driveway access to the corridor.
- ② Single story office or neighborhood commercial buildings set back from the street. Generally on the south side of Cemetery Road, parking is located to the side or behind buildings.
- ③ Commercial uses in single buildings or within a building strip. Large front building setbacks and large surface parking areas.
- ④ J.W. Reason Elementary School school (this facility is being evaluated for potential reuse or disposition by the school district).
- ⑤ A former commercial warehouse building with a large surface parking lot currently owned and operated by a house of worship.



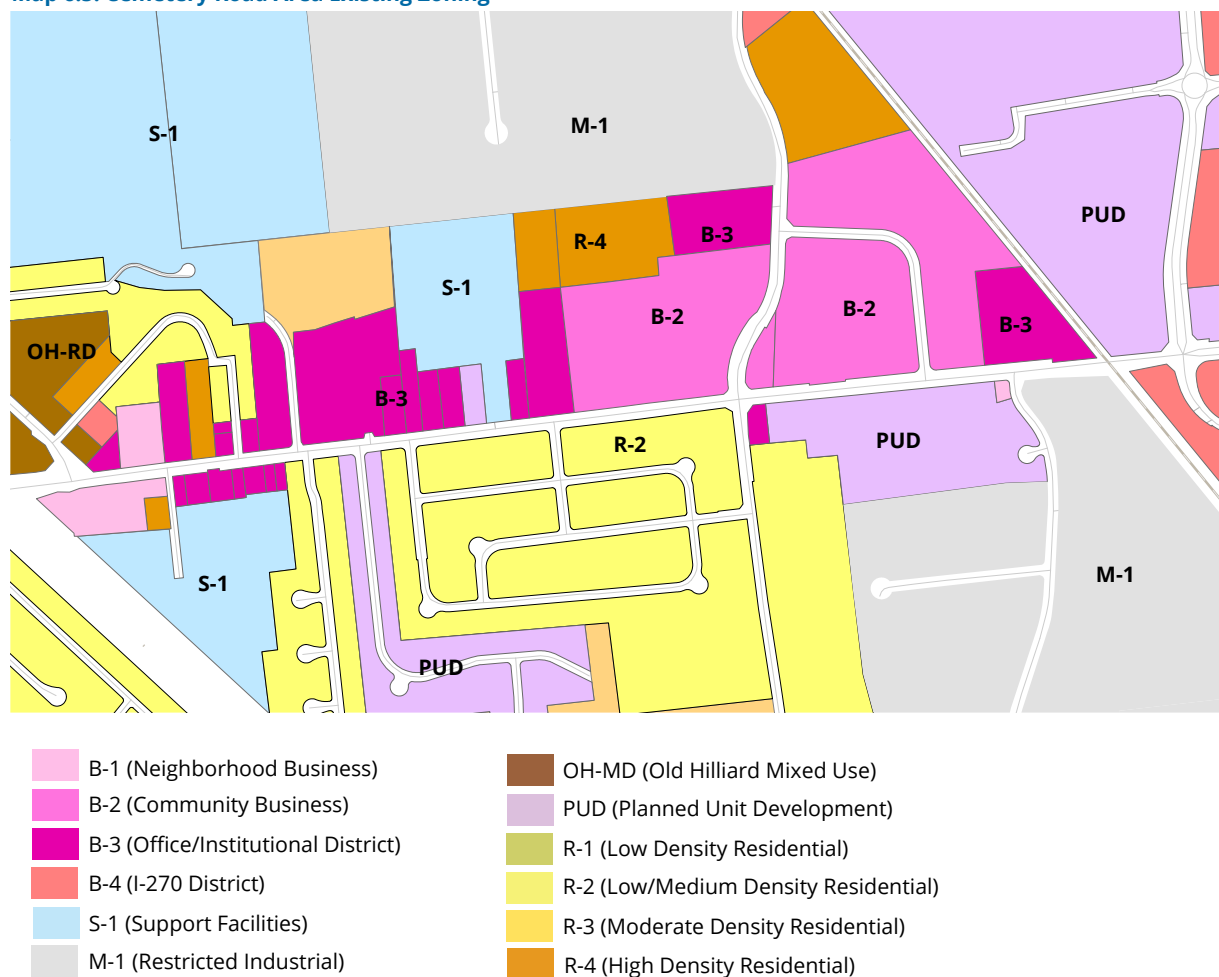
Map 6.4. Cemetery Road Area Existing Land Use



The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) prepared a study for the Cemetery Road Focus Area in 2021. The purpose of the study was to provide a resource to the City of Hilliard as the Cemetery Road Area evolves into a regionally significant economic hub and activity node that is locally and regionally beneficial, due to its proximity to the Northwest Corridor study area. The following opportunities were identified in the MORPC study:

- **Active transportation opportunities** that include bike and walk options.
- **Infill development and redevelopment** that is compact and includes human-scaled building forms that will support the walkable environment
- **Meet shifting community demands** to provide a mix of housing types.
- **Placemaking** initiatives that brand Cemetery Road as a regionally significant corridor. The site could be re-imagined in a way that infuses that social and cultural identities of the city.
- **Equity and representation** is critical so that the area is not just gentrified and displaces workers and residents. Currently, fifty-nine percent of residents in the Cemetery Road Focus Area earn less than forty thousand dollars per year.

Map 6.5. Cemetery Road Area Existing Zoning



Concept Plan

This concept plan illustrates the future land use vision for the Cemetery Road corridor. The numbered concepts are described and illustrated on the following pages. These concepts build upon the general citywide future land use definitions to provide more specific guidance in this area.

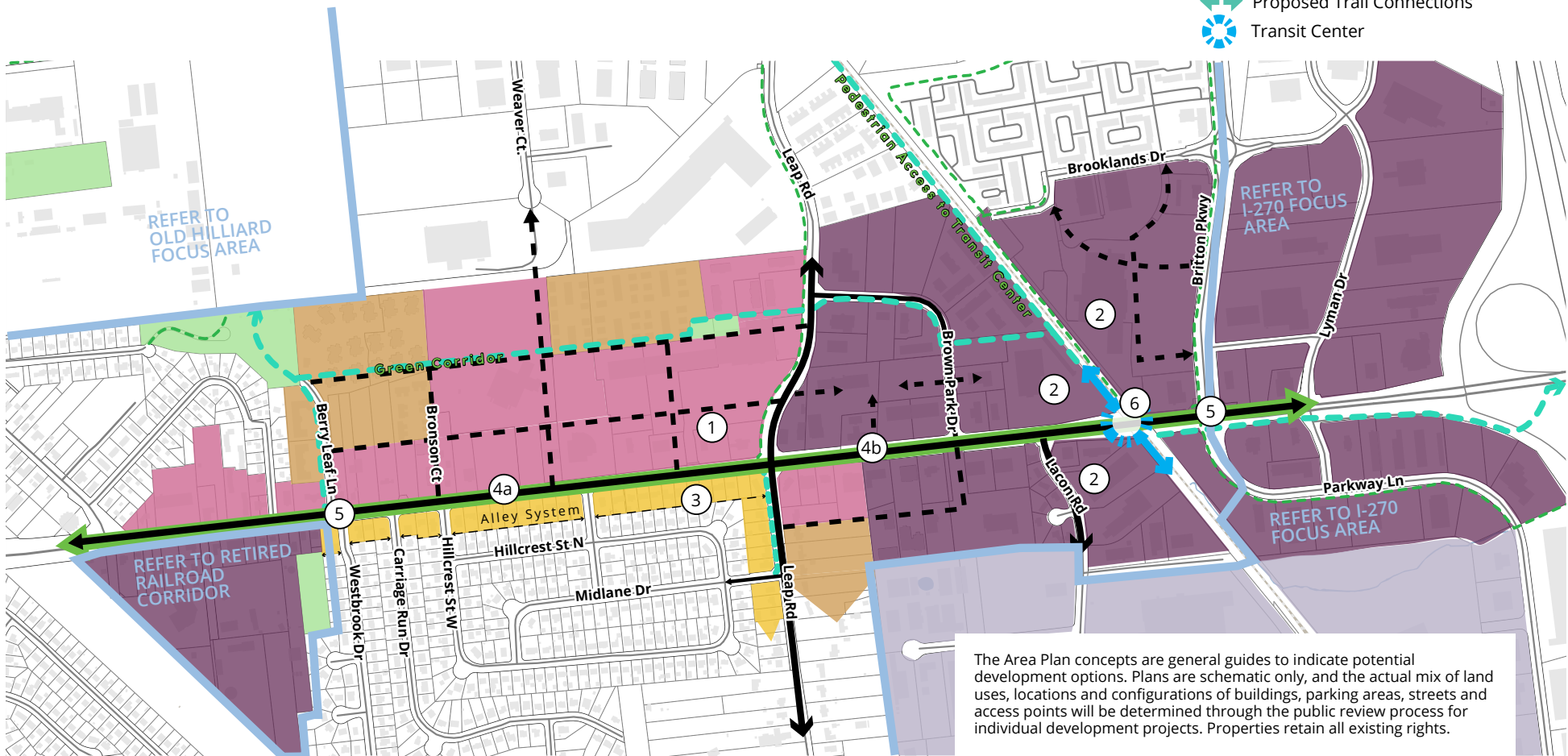
Map 6.6. Cemetery Road Focus Area Concept Plan

Concepts

- ① Village-scale mixed-use with buildings framing the corridor
- ② Urban-scale mixed-use providing opportunity for future transit
- ③ Urban/Village residential fronting Cemetery Road (alley access)
- 4a Streetscape improvements (west of Leap Rd)
- 4b Streetscape improvements (east of Leap Rd)
- ⑤ Shared use path along the corridor
- ⑥ A distinctive gateway at the rail overpass

Future Land Use

- Village Residential (med)
- Urban Residential (high)
- Village Mixed Use
- Urban Mixed Use
- Flex Employment
- Park / Open Space
- Street Connections
- Existing Sidewalks and Trails
- Proposed Trail Connections
- Transit Center



1 Village-scale mixed-use with buildings framing the street

In areas identified as Village Mixed Use, encourage infill and redevelopment with a mix of locally-serving commercial and small office that exhibits characteristics of either Neighborhood Mixed-Use or Village Mixed-Use. Buildings of one-to-four stories should be located near Cemetery Road with parking shared and located behind or to the side of buildings. Building location and design should create comfortable places for pedestrians. Buildings of three or more stories should be encouraged at corners such as Leap Road.

This area is likely to redevelop incrementally so the city should work with developers to plan for and construct new streets that improve connectivity of the overall network, improve access management and traffic flow on Cemetery Road, and create a more walkable network of blocks. The new street connections shown on the concept plan are one option for providing this connectivity.



2 Urban mixed-use providing opportunity for future transit

The active rail line that crosses Cemetery Road between Britton Parkway and Leap Road has been identified as a potential passenger rail route between Columbus and Chicago. By encouraging a more intense urban-scale mix of uses in this area, Hilliard can position itself to become a viable stop along that route. There are several potential sites for a transit center on both the east and west sides of the tracks.

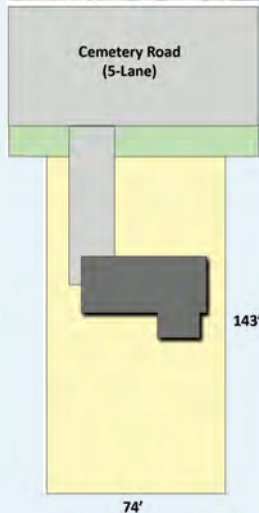
The city should support employment, residential, commercial in a compact and walkable pattern with two-to-five story architecture throughout this area.

An increase in population density is necessary for viable transit. Residential uses should be supported in a mixed-use development that includes commercial and office.

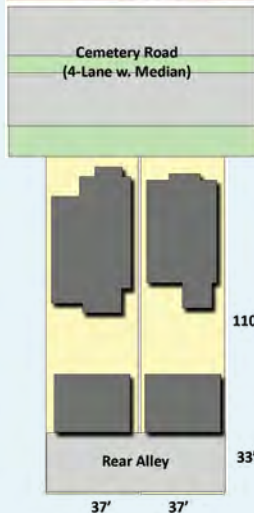


3 Urban residential fronting Cemetery Road (alley access)

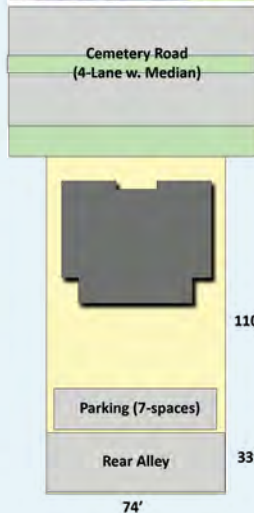
Encourage the redevelopment of existing single family lots along the south side of Cemetery Road with urban small-lot single-family homes, or similar scale commercial or office buildings that have rear alley access. Limiting driveways onto Cemetery Road would improve vehicular and pedestrian safety and allow a center median to be installed. There are several ways these lots could be reconfigured.



Existing Ranch Home
(0.24-acre Lot)



Urban Single-Family
with Lot Split



Mixed Office/Residential
Intensification

Examples of development on similar size lots

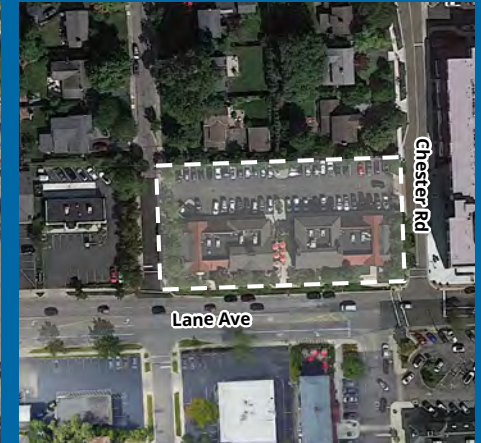
At 145 feet deep, the residential lots along Cemetery Road are smaller than most lots in Hilliard and may present challenges to redevelopment under current zoning standards. Below are two examples in Central Ohio of residential and commercial development within similar contexts. For both examples, existing blocks containing multiple lots were acquired and redeveloped together. For any similar redevelopment to occur along this section of Cemetery Road, existing properties will need to be assembled, which can take time and may require incentives.



Harrison West, Columbus

Lot Depth: 140'

Use: Single family residential and townhomes



Lane Avenue, Upper Arlington

Site size: 145' x 300'

Use: One-story commercial and office with outdoor patio space and surface parking behind building. Approximately fifty parking spaces.

4a Streetscape improvements (west of Leap Road)

Invest in improvements in the right-of-way including a landscaped median, decorative lighting and materials. A median would only be viable if the existing homes with driveway access are redeveloped and an alley system created as described in concept 3.

As redevelopment occurs in the mixed-use areas, consider off-peak on-street parking west of Leap Road.

4b Streetscape improvements (east of Leap Road)

While accommodating greater volumes of traffic, invest in improvements in the right-of-way such as landscaping, lighting, and materials. Landscaped medians east of Leap Road may be intermittent.



High Street Example

North High Street is a particularly relevant and insightful example to reference when considering changes to Cemetery Road. Both thoroughfares have fifty foot roadways, intersect with major interstates, and have four-to-five travel lanes. Given that North High Street extends through the entire length of the region, its design varies considerably across different locations and jurisdictions. Comparing these different designs highlights important features that contribute variably to the pedestrian environment, such as the important effect that street trees have on narrowing the thoroughfare and making sidewalks more comfortable for pedestrians.



High Street in north Clintonville measures fifty feet from curb-to-curb and 120 feet from building face-to-building face. The lack of street trees and the prevalence of street-fronted parking lots makes the roadway feel wider, encouraging fast vehicle speeds.



High Street in central Clintonville improves on its north Clintonville counterpart with the inclusion of street trees between the sidewalk and roadway. Furthermore, it is a good example of outdoor seating in the private realm along a major thoroughfare.



High Street in Worthington also measures fifty feet from curb-to-curb, though with only ninety-five feet between building faces. That said, the presence of large street trees is the main factor that makes this portion of High Street feel narrower. Wider sidewalks and on-street parking makes for a more pleasant pedestrian environment.

5 Shared use path along the corridor.

Construct a ten-to-twelve foot shared use path separated from the vehicle travelway along the south side of Cemetery Road. The path would provide a pedestrian and bike connection between the I-270 area and Old Hilliard. Additional right-of-way will need to be acquired for the path.



6 A distinctive gateway at the rail overpass

The rail overpass has considerable potential for improvement. Its concrete retaining walls provide a canvas for public art that, along with improved lighting and landscaping, could create a more inviting gateway. As development occurs in the surrounding area, there will also be more need to consider pedestrian connectivity under the bridge. The city should examine options for creating a wider sidewalk or shared-use path along one side of Cemetery Road under the bridge.



Conceptual Illustration of overpass gateway art



Conceptual Illustration west of Leap Road (looking southwest)



Mixed-residential and small commercial/office with alley access

Mid-block crossings and intermittent medians

Buildings near the street creating spaces for dining (setbacks may vary)

Conceptual Illustration west of Leap Road (south side looking northwest)



Multi-use path

Building size and style should vary and attempt to preserve existing street trees

Conceptual Illustration east of Leap Road (north side looking southwest)



Spaces for small plazas or pocket parks should be created

Building size and style should vary. While greater height is possible in the Urban Mixed Use area, one or two stories is acceptable, particularly on the south side of Cemetery Road if buildings are located near the street with parking behind.

Conceptual Illustration east of Leap Road (south side looking northwest)



Break up the mass of taller buildings by varying how much of a building's height is allowed at the street edge.

Mid-block crossings and intermittent medians. Buildings should accommodate pedestrian pass-throughs to parking areas.

Cemetery Road Corridor Actions

FA B1 **Update the zoning code and zoning map to encourage redevelopment.**

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In conjunction with a citywide zoning code update, establish zoning standards that address conditions and opportunities in the Cemetery Road corridor (through an overlay or revised districts). Address:

- Transit-oriented mixed-use to apply near the active railroad corridor.
- Village and neighborhood-scale mixed-use in the area on the north side of Cemetery Road west of Leap Road.
- Redevelopment of existing residential on the south side of Cemetery Road west of Leap Road.

FA B2 **Seek opportunities to purchase land along the corridor to create catalyst redevelopment projects.**

Most successful examples of corridor transformations involve three components: zoning changes that create the desired type of development, capital improvements to improve the public space, and catalytic redevelopment projects. To address the latter, the city should identify and seek to purchase sites along the corridor to create a significant redevelopment project. The city could then partner with a developer to create the development.

FA B3 **Install a shared use path along Cemetery Road that connects the east side of I-270 with Old Hilliard.**

Acquire right-of-way along the south side of Cemetery Road over time as redevelopment occurs so that a shared-use path could be constructed efficiently in the future. Establish a funding mechanism for the path that is supported by redevelopment projects on the corridor.

FA B4 **Study options for undertaking streetscape improvements.**

Study the potential for short-term incremental changes and long-term transformational projects within the right-of-way—both aiming to improve safety, multimodal access, and character along the corridor. These improvements include intermittent landscaped medians,

decorative lighting, a shared-use path and expanded sidewalks. Reduce the number of driveways and left turns in the corridor and manage access through alleyways, U-turn movements at designated locations or roundabouts along the corridor.

FA B5 **Develop a financing strategy to provide infrastructure improvements concurrent with development.**

Consider “value capture” strategies such as special assessment districts, impact fees, development agreements, tax increment financing, or other models to generate revenue to build out and maintain public improvements. Value capture schemes attempt to recover a portion of the benefits of public investments.

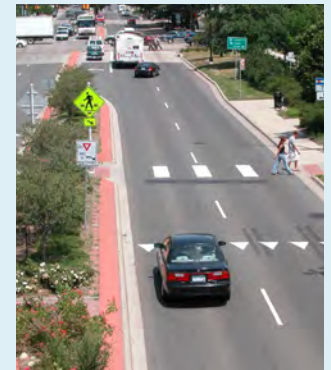
FA B6 **Create a welcoming gateway at the active rail overpass.**

Commission a mural or other public art under or adjacent to the overpass in concert with a citywide art in public spaces program. Install lighting and landscaping in conjunction with the public art to transform the overpass into a more welcoming gateway.

Creating safer streets

Streetscape improvements are not only about aesthetics, but also about safety. As the building form around Cemetery Road redevelops to become denser, more compact and better connected, safe and comfortable crossings along Cemetery Road at intersections and mid-block will become increasingly necessary. Mid-block marked crossings exist between Hillcrest Street West and Hillcrest Street North and between Hillcrest St N and Leap Road. Additional mid-block crossings may be needed east of Leap Road where none currently exist, and where new mixed-use development is proposed.

Other strategies included in The [Safe Streets for Hilliard Action Plan](#) (2022) should be incorporated into the future design of Cemetery Road.



Placemaking along Cemetery Road

Public art, lighting, and amenities for pedestrians and cyclists can be used together to create a sense of place along a corridor like Cemetery Road. The Parks and Public Spaces chapter of this plan includes several examples of placemaking elements. One idea that combines both placemaking and pedestrian safety is Cincinnati's Paint the Streets program. This initiative provides a guidebook that empowers the public to work with the City to create painted pedestrian crossings. While this may not be feasible along directly on Cemetery Road due to high traffic volumes, a similar concept could be appropriate for side streets in the Cemetery Road Focus Area.



FA B7 Continue to collaborate with COTA to advocate for improved transit connections to Hilliard. One of the initiatives of LinkUS involves first-mile, last-mile solutions that would improve connections between destinations and major transit corridors. Cemetery Road is four miles from the Northwest Corridor, one of five major developing transit corridors. The city should continue to advocate for improved transit connections and encourage the concentrations of jobs, population, and activity along Cemetery Road that would make transit viable along the corridor in the future.

FA B8 Continue to participate in regional rail discussions with the MORPC, the Ohio Rail Development Commission and others to lobby for a rail station in Hilliard. There have been several proposals for regional passenger rail to connect Ohio cities with major destinations throughout the Midwest. In 2015, agencies representing nine cities between Chicago and Columbus entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to create the Northern Indiana/Ohio Passenger Rail Initiative. In 2018, the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) undertook a Rapid-Speed Transportation Initiative to analyze the feasibility of passenger rail in the Chicago-Columbus-Pittsburgh corridor. The study is included in the regional long-range transportation plan. In both of these studies, Hilliard would be geographically positioned along the proposed route. The city should remain involved in advocating for these concepts and work to create the conditions for a transit station in the Cemetery Road area.

FA B9 Continue conversations with Hilliard City Schools regarding long-range plans for JW Reason Elementary School Hilliard City Schools is currently undertaking a facilities master plan. In previous studies, J.W. Reason Elementary School and potentially other older facilities had been considered for consolidation or reuse. The Concept Plan indicates recommended land use and improved street and path connectivity if the site were to change in the future.