



Minutes of the Oberlin City Council Work Session
 Held in Council Chambers, 85 South Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio
 Meeting time: 6:15 p.m.

A public hearing of the Oberlin City Council was held on September 2, 2025, at Oberlin City Hall in Council Chambers, located at 85 S. Main Street, Oberlin, Ohio. The meeting was called to order at 6:18 p.m. by Presiding Officer Eboni Johnson.

Roll Call was taken as follows:

Council Members:	Present	Absent
Eboni Johnson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Michael McFarlin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ray English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Libni Lopez	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jessa New	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Joseph Waltzer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kristin Peterson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appointees:

- Belinda Anderson, Clerk of Council
- Jon Clark, Interim City Manager/Law Director
- Marin Fowley, Finance Director

Others Present:

- Carrie Porter, Planning and Development Director
- Gerard Neugebauer and Jennifer Syx, Environmental Design Group Consultants

Presentation and Q & A:

Environmental Design Group Consultants, Gerard Neugebauer and Jennifer Syx, provided a presentation on the benefits of using Community Reinvestment Areas (CRAs) and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) Districts as economic development tools to support development and redevelopment on the City’s west side, particularly for residential projects.

Following the presentation, a Q & A session took place with the Council. In response to questions, the consultants noted:

- TIFs do not affect County revenue; the County’s role is limited to distributing funds.
- Combining the Oberlin Commons and the Clarkwood Subdivision TIF districts would allow the City to invest in improvements along West Lorain Street, but separate TIF districts would also be considered.
- Overlapping Community (CRAs) and TIFs can maximize available funding.
- TIF revenue may be used to reimburse developers for eligible costs through negotiated contracts; however, state law prohibits developers from profiting from TIFs.
- The process for generating and distributing tax revenues through TIFs was outlined.
- State Law allows the City to exempt up to 75% of the property value for 15 years without the school board's approval; exemptions above this threshold require a negotiated agreement with the schools.
- Zoning codes may limit how TIFs can be applied (e.g., Clarkwood development may want to include affordable housing).
- Other County organizations, such as the Mental Health Board, could be impacted by revenue losses.

Members of Council thanked the presenters for the information.

Adjournment: Since no additional information was presented to the Council, the work session adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Attest:



BELINDA B. ANDERSON, MMC
CLERK OF COUNCIL

APPROVED: 09/15/2025



EBONI A. JOHNSON
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

POSTED: 09/16/2025



WEST LORAIN STREET CORRIDOR TIF INCENTIVE DISTRICT

Presented by
Carrie Porter, City of Oberlin

Gerard Neugebauer, Environmental Design Group

Jennifer Syx, Environmental Design Group

TIF ● OVERVIEW

TERMINOLOGY

TIF stands for Tax Increment Financing.

HOW IT WORKS

When a property is improved and its value increases, the extra taxes from that increase get redirected to the city. The city then pays the school district their share and keeps the rest to fund local improvements.

WHAT IS IT?

An economic development tool that lets Ohio cities use the extra property taxes from new development projects to pay for public improvements like roads, utilities, or infrastructure in that area.

WHY TIF

Creates a long-term revenue source, outside of income tax revenue, for constructing and maintaining public infrastructure.





TIF DISTRICTS

WHAT IS A TIF DISTRICT?

- Collection of contiguous parcels not exceeding 300 acres
- Comprised of residential/commercial/industrial zoning uses
- Established with a set percentage and term

WEST LORAIN STREET CORRIDOR TIF DISTRICT

- ✓ 119 contiguous acres
- ✓ Proposed zoning in the new Future Land Use Map and Comprehensive Master Plan will suburban residential, traditional neighborhood, neighborhood mixed use and institutional
- ✓ 100% for 30 years
- ✓ Comprised of single family homes, institutional and commercial uses

WEST LORAIN ● CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

⇒ PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The district will add single-family residential homes, extending the suburban residential land use described in the Comprehensive Plan. Development along the West Lorain St. Corridor is envisioned to be neighborhood mixed use.

⇒ DEVELOPMENT MIX

The district will address two types of residential living, both neighborhood single-family living in detached homes, and more integrated, walkable neighborhood with open gathering spaces, mixing neighborhood businesses with integrated residential living.

⇒ LAND USE CONTROLS

Existing zoning in the proposed TIF District is R-1A, R-1B, R-2, C-2/General Commercial District and PDOD/Planned Development Overlay District. The Comprehensive plan envisions Suburban Residential Subdivision with Neighborhood Mixed Use Development along the W. Lorain St. Corridor.

⇒ INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure serving the area is limited and negatively impacts current and future development. New residential streets are needed to develop attractive subdivisions, and W. Lorain St. will need to be transformed to complete streets.



INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE TIF DISTRICT

ROADWAY


Subdivision streets within single family districts will provide families with an attractive, safe environment to raise a family. Enhancements to W. Lorain St. will provide complete streets to support pedestrian and non-vehicular travel, provide opens spaces and places, and provide convenient access to the neighborhood businesses.

HOUSING

Single Family Residential housing should be expanded within the district. Housing within the Neighborhood Mixed Use corridor will appeal to college students, young professionals and more senior residents looking to scale down.

MULTIPURPOSE TRAILS AND SIDEWALKS

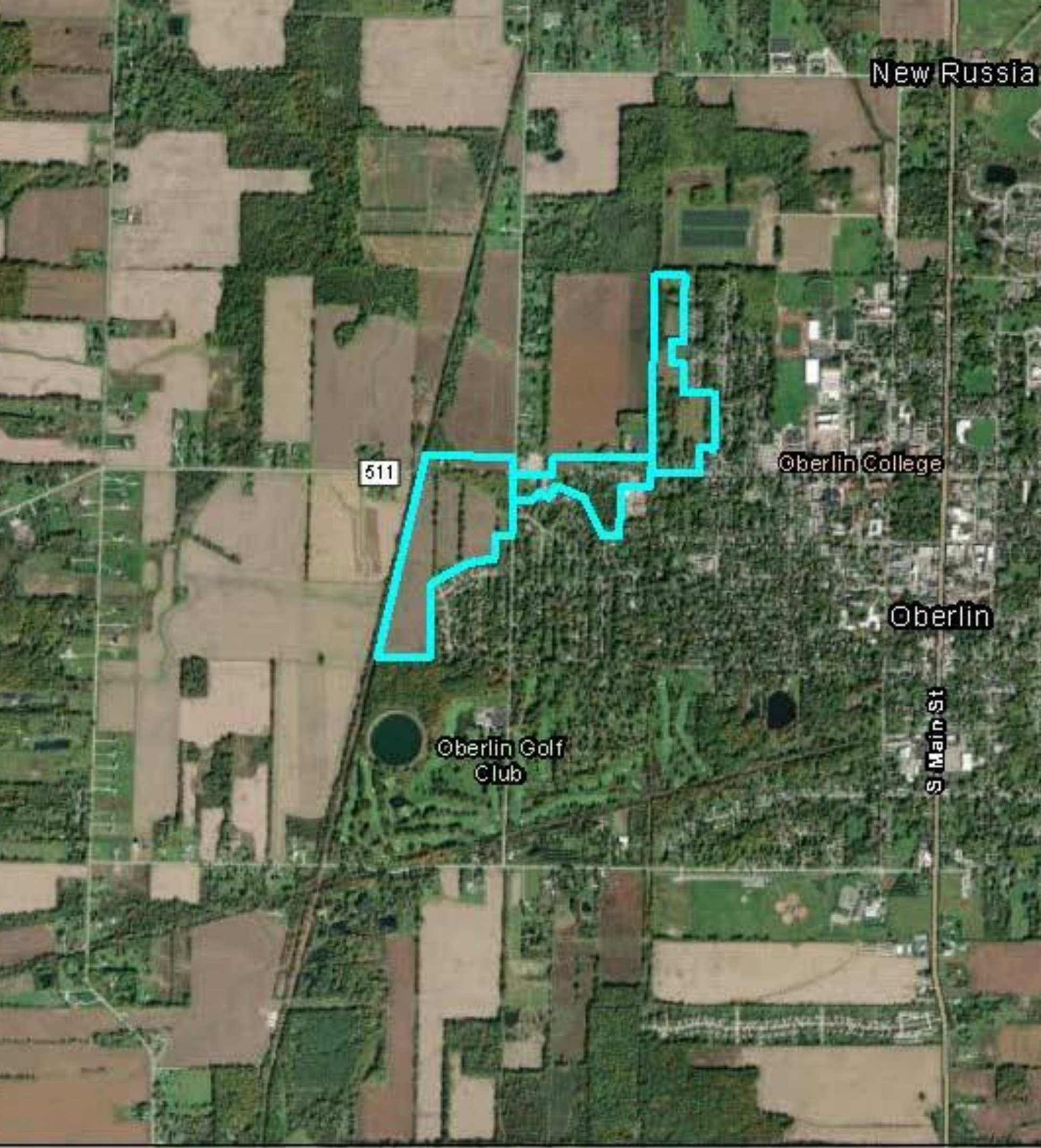
Multipurpose trails and sidewalks will connect neighborhoods and provide non-vehicular access to downtown businesses, parks, colleges, and other attractions.



WHY CREATE THE TIF DISTRICT?

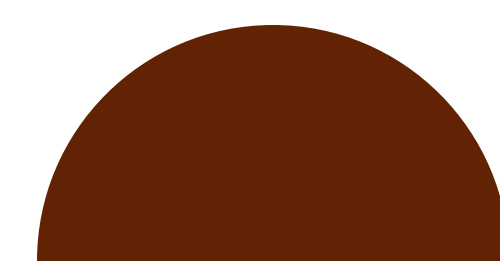
- It can be used to secure long-term financing for the construction of public facilities, including the construction and extension of residential streets.
- Utilizes the expansion of the property tax base to enhance public infrastructure, including roads, multi-purpose paths, sidewalks, public utilities, and stormwater controls.
- A TIF is not a new tax, nor does a TIF exempt property owners from paying property taxes.
- Alleviates the burden of financing public infrastructure improvements solely with income tax revenues, freeing up general fund dollars to enhance other community assets and services.
- Strengthens workforce, tax base, property values, and provides an economic boost to surrounding businesses.





PROPOSED TIF BOUNDARY ●

NORTHWEST OBERLIN





QUESTIONS?

 cporter@cityofoberlin.com

 gneugebauer@envdesigngroup.com

 jsyx@envdesigngroup.com



COMMUNITY REINVESTMENT AREA (CRA)

Oberlin Place CRA

CRA OVERVIEW

CRAs are frequently used for redevelopment where the costs are typically higher due to:

» **LOSS OF VALUE**

» **DEMOLITION COSTS**

» **INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS**

» **DENSE, MIXED-USE
REDEVELOPMENT**





BENEFITS OF A CRA

The Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) program offers a powerful incentive for property owners and developers by providing real estate tax incentives in designated areas as approved by City Council. **Key benefits of CRA Tax Abatement include:**

⇒ FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

- Up to **100% property tax abatement** on the increased value from renovations or new construction
- Terms typically range from **10 to 15 years**, depending on the municipality and project type
- Applies to **residential, commercial, and industrial** properties, making it versatile

⇒ ENCOURAGES DEVELOPMENT

- Promotes **revitalization of underinvested areas**, helping communities attract new residents and businesses
- Supports both **new construction and renovation**

⇒ LOCAL CONTROL & FLEXIBILITY

- Municipalities can tailor the program to support specific types of development (e.g., housing, commercial, manufacturing)
- Local governments decide eligibility criteria, so programs can be customized to meet community goals

BENEFITS OF A CRA TO THE CITY ●

INCENTIVE

Provides an incentive to property owners to make meaningful investments (through new construction and expansions) to their property.

“BUT FOR CLAUSE”

Redevelopment not likely without this and other incentives proposed.

CITY’S PREVIOUS USE OF CRA:

DOWNTOWN CRA

The City of Oberlin established a (CRA) in 2003. The CRA has no expiration date although the City Council reserves the right to re-evaluate the CRA on an annual basis. Terms of abatement for commercial and industrial projects are negotiated on a case-by-case basis. To date, the CRA has not been utilized.

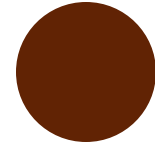
ENTERPRISE ZONE

The City of Oberlin established an Enterprise Zone in 1991. The City has two Enterprise Zone tax exemption agreements in place for the same company that exempt 75% of the property taxes for 10 years.

OHIO REVISED CODE

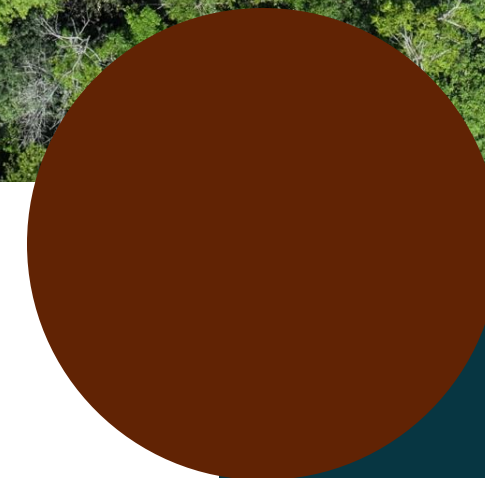
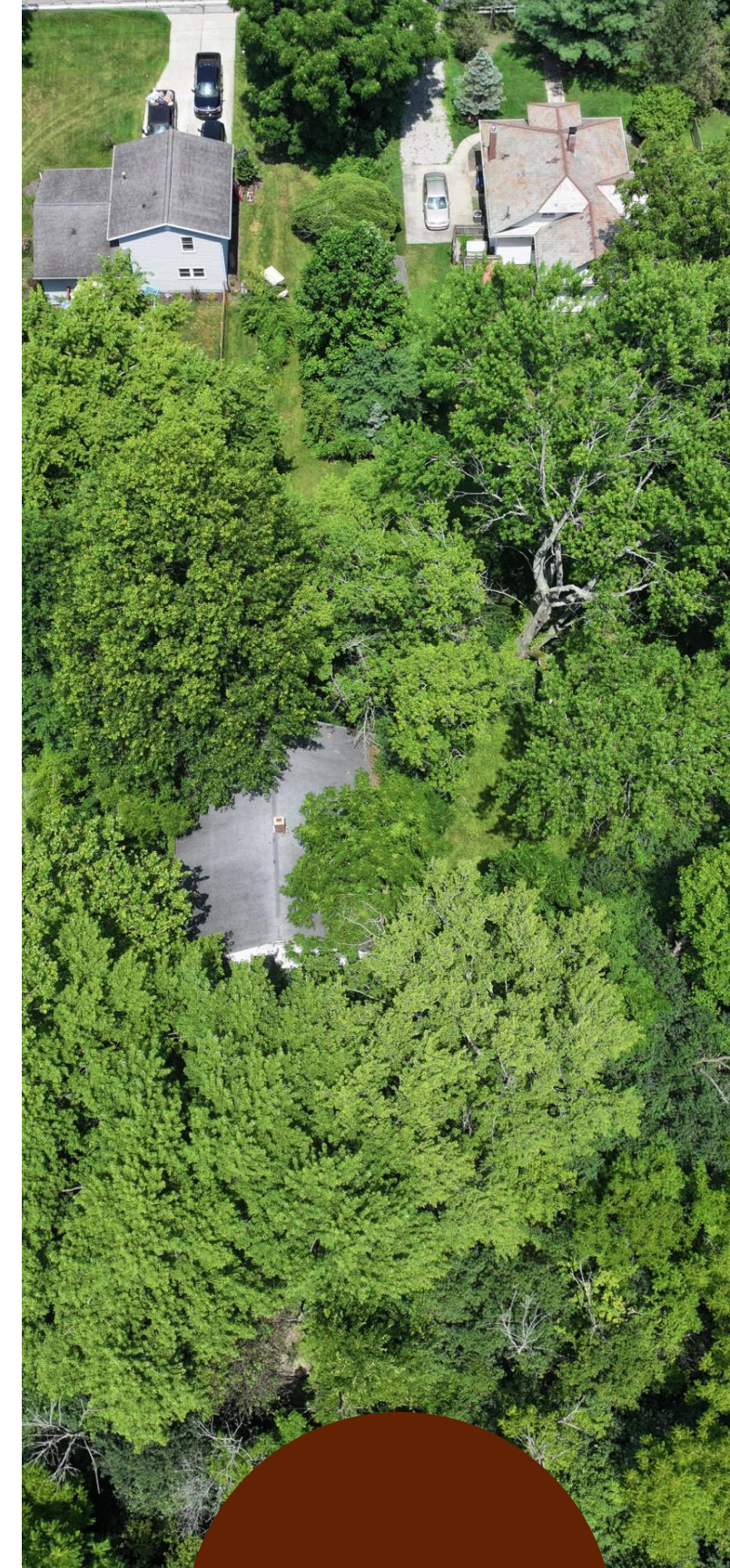
The state of Ohio limits real property tax incentives to 100% for 15 years. Each project is weighed by the City of Oberlin on it’s merits.

CRA CREATION PROCESS

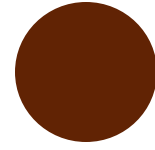


- Local government conducts a **housing survey**
- Area is one in which housing facilities or structures of historical significance are located and new housing construction and repair of existing facilities or structures are discouraged
- The purpose of the housing survey is to:
 - Ensure the selected geographical area that is to comprise the CRA meets the statutory requirements
 - Inform Council, as the voting authority, of the composition and condition of the housing stock in the CRA along with other demographic and statistical data that establishes a context upon which the CRA area is needed or will be useful

Oberlin Status: Draft housing survey completed by EDG/Oberlin staff

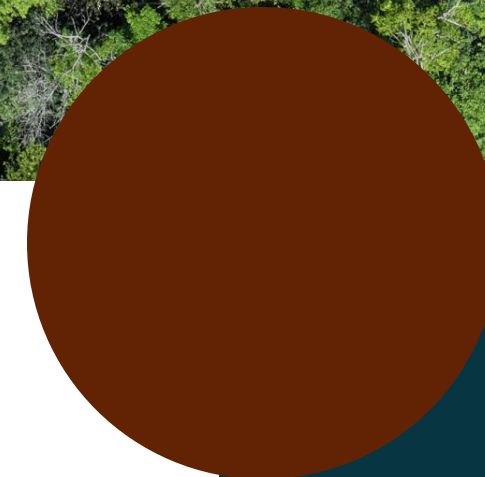
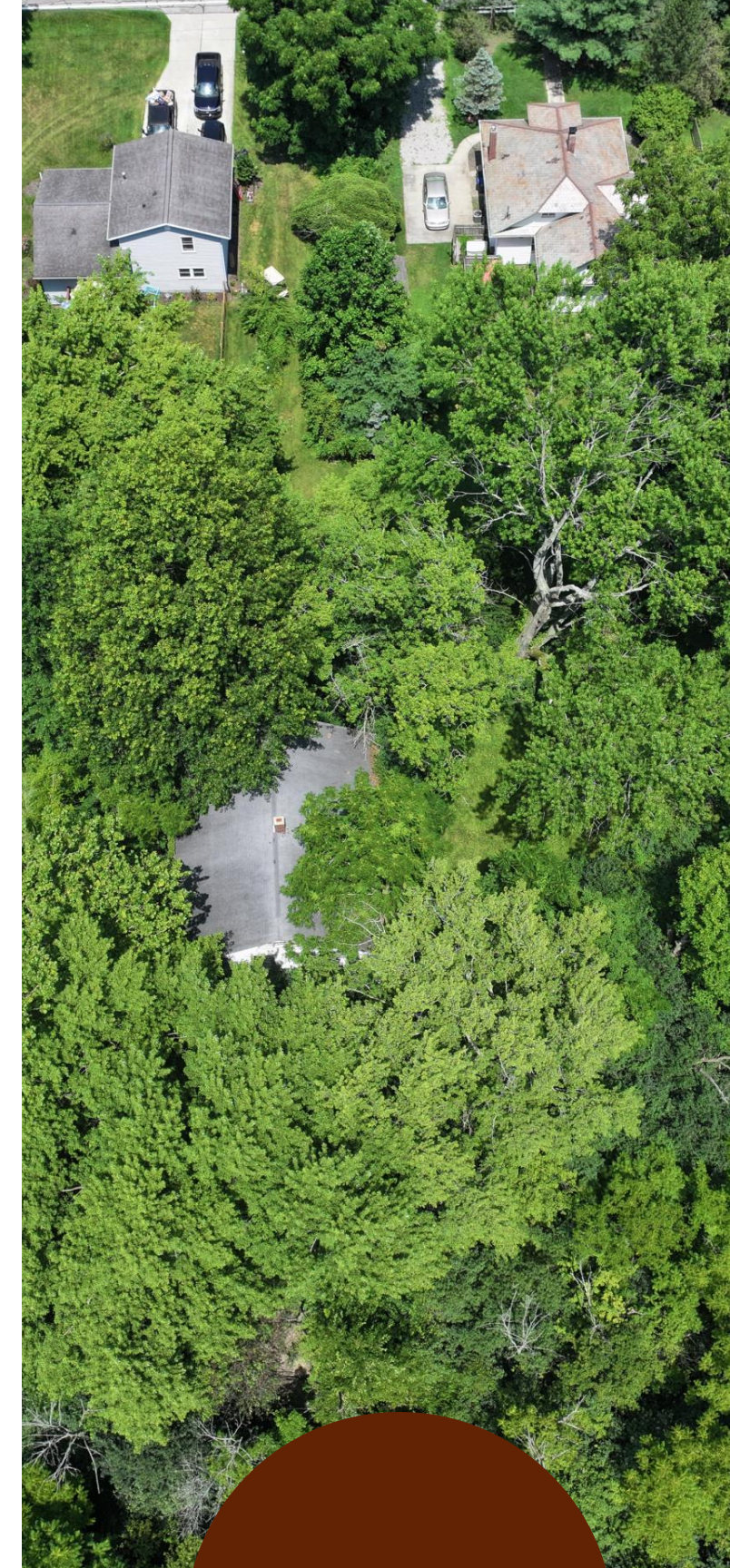


SCHOOL DISTRICT NOTIFICATION TIMELINE

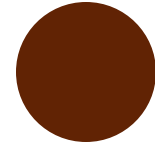


WHEN NOTIFICATION IS REQUIRED

- All CRA agreements must include **written notice** to:
 - Every **affected school district**
 - Any **joint vocational school district (JVSD)** impacted by the exemption
- **Timing of Notification**
 - If **school board approval is required** (e.g., exemption >75% or >10 years):
 - Notice must be sent **at least 45 business days** before the local government takes formal action
 - If **school board approval is not required**:
 - Notice must be sent **at least 14 calendar days** before formal action
- **No advance notice is required** for:
 - Residential abatements
- **What the Notice Includes**
 - A description of the proposed CRA agreement
 - The percentage and duration of the tax exemption
 - Whether school board approval is being requested
 - Any anticipated compensation or income tax sharing arrangements
- **School Board Options**
 - **Approve or reject** the exemption by resolution (if required)
 - **Waive their right** to receive notice or approve certain projects
 - **Negotiate compensation**, especially if the project generates **\$2 million+ in payroll**, which triggers mandatory negotiation efforts

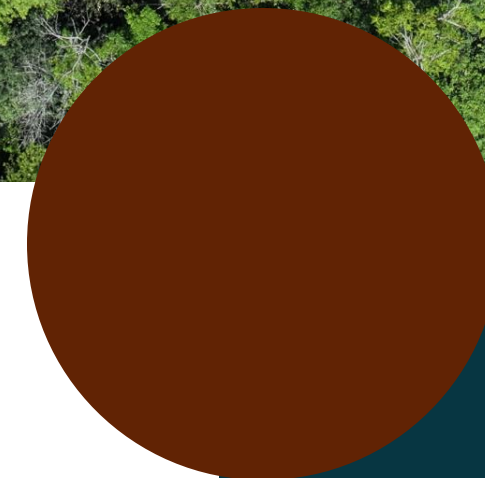
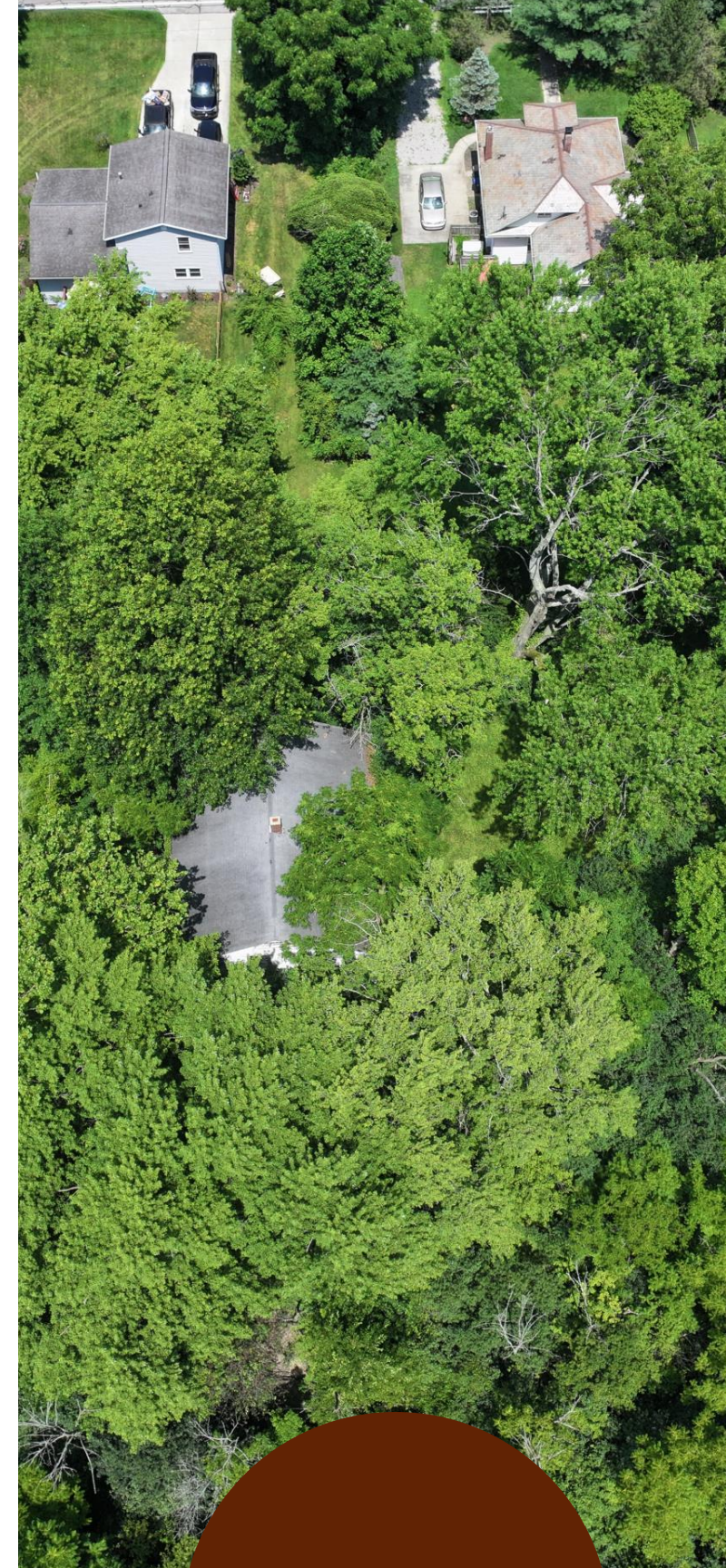


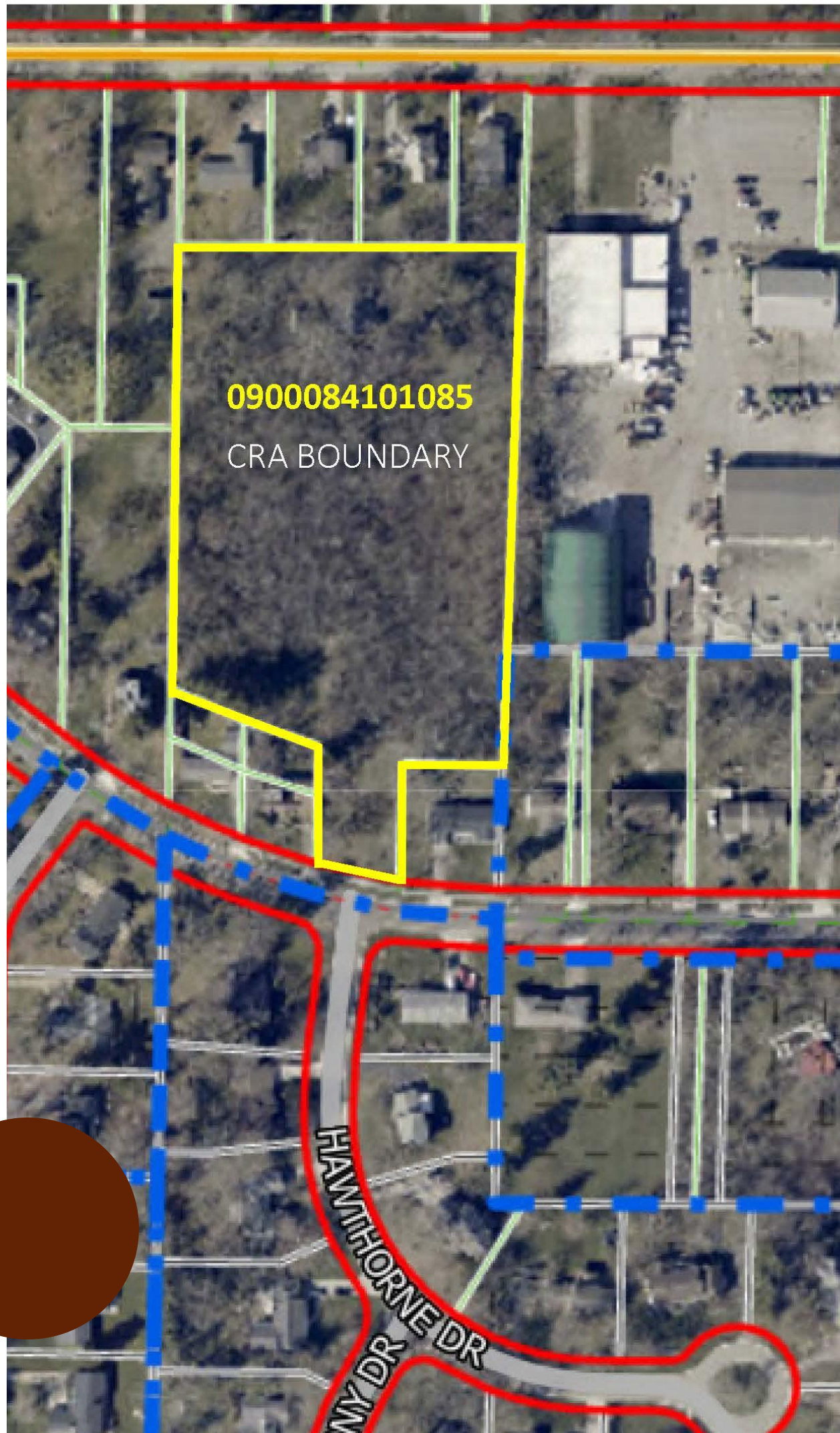
CRA CREATION PROCESS



- Local newspaper publication once a week for two consecutive weeks after passage of the area ordinance
- Submit a Petition to the Ohio Department of Development for filing of the CRA
- Hereafter, each CRA agreement is subject to City Council approval

* A separate, detailed CRA Agreement must be executed between the City and the property owner in order for the property owner to receive the incentive. These CRA Agreements would be brought forward for Council consideration at a public meeting.





PROPOSED CRA BOUNDARY ● WEST COLLEGE STREET

- Parcel on West College that currently houses a vacant and abandoned structure
- New multi-family commercial building proposed
- Development cannot occur without incentives
- New senior housing is needed and desired in the City
- Creates affordable housing within a walkable neighborhood



QUESTIONS?



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