

Neighborhood Action Plan – East Hill

Neighborhood Action Plan Created July 2026

Finalized <<DATE>>

Adopted <<DATE>>

Acknowledgements

The East Hill Neighborhood Action Plan was made possible through the support of residents, the City of Sharon, Sharon Community Development Corporation, Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, and the feedback of several local nonprofits, community agencies, and places of worship.



Contents

Section I: Overview

<u>Purpose of the Neighborhood Action Plan</u>	4
<u>History</u>	6
<u>Demographics</u>	8
<u>Assets</u>	10
<u>Housing</u>	11
<u>Priorities</u>	12

Section II: Property Conditions and Strategies

<u>Property Conditions</u>	14
<u>Property Strategies</u>	16
<u>Neighborhood-Wide Strategies</u>	20

Section III: Measuring Progress

Section VI: Neighborhood Action Team.....

Appendix: Community Input & Supporting Documentation

<u>Community Input</u>	27
<u>The Elm Street Approach</u>	35
<u>Funding Sources</u>	36
<u>Supporting Documentation</u>	41
<u>Plan Feedback</u>	52

Section I: Overview

Purpose of the East Hill Neighborhood Action Plan

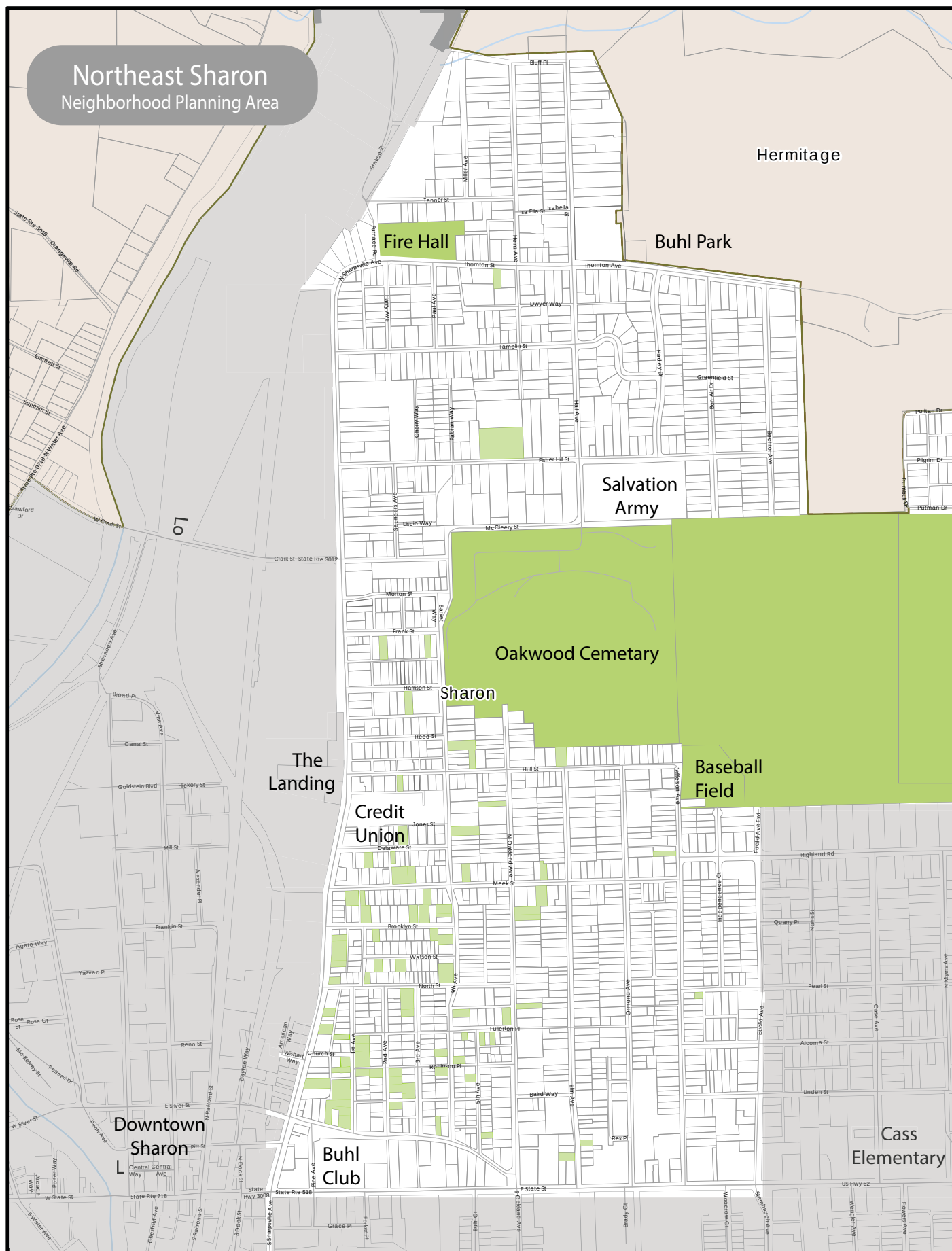
Although the East Hill faces visible challenges, it is precisely the kind of neighborhood many households want: affordable, close to jobs and services, and well located. With reinvestment and community attention, it will continue to be a highly desirable place to live.

This Neighborhood Action Plan is designed to implement the City of Sharon's adopted Comprehensive Plan. Developed with input from residents, the City, and other stakeholders including business owners, service providers, and the faith community, this Neighborhood Action Plan identifies neighborhood distress, inventories local assets, and recommends priority projects for revitalization over a five-year period.

A 2026 resident survey and follow-up conversations refined this Neighborhood Action Plan so that the strategy more directly reflects what residents identified as the neighborhood's most urgent needs. Across the survey responses, three issues emerged most clearly:

- 1). Stronger accountability for landlords and rental housing conditions;
- 2). More support for long-time homeowners and older adults to remain in their homes;
- 3). Repair of streets, sidewalks, drainage, and related infrastructure.

For the purposes of this Neighborhood Action Plan, East Hill is comprised of the neighborhoods east of Downtown Sharon and west of Buhl Park. Residents may identify as belonging to historic districts, or neighborhoods within this area, including North Sharon and "The Avenues."



History

Northeast Sharon was gradually incorporated into the City of Sharon in the early twentieth century. The hillside along North Sharpsville Avenue was part of a farm owned by George McCleery, who received the land through a federal land grant program that awarded parcels to Revolutionary War soldiers. Beginning in the mid-1860s, this farmland was subdivided for residential use and the formation of the Oakwood Cemetery. The development of streetcar lines along North Sharpsville Avenue to Sharpsville and along East State Street to Buhl Farm spurred further residential growth throughout the area.

At the turn of the twentieth century, many of Sharon's civic and business leaders lived along East State Street. The neighborhood's grandeur is still evident today in the several remaining mansions and landmarks, including the Buhl Club, which opened in 1903. Before the construction of nearby freeways, East State Street served as one of the city's busiest thoroughfares. As automobile traffic increased in the 1920s, many large property owners sold off portions of their lots for commercial development, leading to a proliferation of gas stations and small businesses along the corridor. By the 1970s, many of the original estates had either been demolished, converted to group homes or medical offices, or developed in relation to Sharon Regional Medical Center.

Up through the 1940s, the hillsides along North Sharpsville Avenue were a hub of worker housing serving Sharon's growing industrial base. Much of this housing stock was later cleared to accommodate roadway expansions and parking for Westinghouse Electric, once the largest electrical transformer manufacturing plant in the world. At its peak, Westinghouse employed over 10,000 workers. During this period, the surrounding neighborhood remained a lively commercial and residential district, anchored by first-floor restaurants, retail shops, and dense blocks of workers commuting to and from nearby factories.

Westinghouse Plant Today – The Landing





1920s Worker Housing - Hull Street

In the post–World War II era, new subdivisions were built in the northern portion of Sharon and to the south of Buhl Park. North Sharon became a local recreation center, home to ballfields and Thorton’s Bowling Alley. Sharon’s population reached its peak of 26,445 residents in the 1950s and remained above 20,000 until the economic transitions of the 1980s, marked by major industrial closures, including the Westinghouse shutdown in 1985. Significant reinvestment has occurred in Sharon’s industrial districts in the last twenty years. The former Westinghouse site has been repurposed for several manufacturers, including NLMK, as well as office and studio space. Environmental cleanup efforts were completed in 2023.

Like many neighborhoods in legacy industrial cities, Northeast Sharon has faced mounting challenges in the decades following deindustrialization. The neighborhood experienced accelerated disinvestment and blight after the 2008 housing crisis, as long-term economic decline, population loss, and inequitable lending practices left many homes vulnerable to foreclosure and abandonment. Historically, the neighborhood was built on stable, owner-occupied housing. Following the crisis, however, a wave of distressed properties entered the market at deeply discounted prices, attracting out-of-town investor buyers who often approached these homes as short-term rental investments. As a result, the neighborhood saw a rapid conversion from homeownership to rental housing as older residents sold their properties to out-of-town buyers.

Today, Northeast Sharon stands at a crossroads. Decades of disinvestment have created significant challenges, but they have also opened opportunities for proactive neighborhood stabilization. Strategic action to address vacancy and blight can help restore confidence, attract reinvestment, and strengthen the identity of this historically significant community.

Demographics

For consistency and data analysis, this plan focuses on Census Tract 303, which encompasses much of the target neighborhoods, though boundaries do not align perfectly. According to the 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, the tract has a population of approximately 3,049 residents across 1,456 households, with a median household income of \$53,160, which is about 90% of the median income for Mercer County. Resident comments add important context to these indicators. Many survey respondents were long-time owners, including a significant number of older adults and residents who have lived in the neighborhood for more than twenty years.

Neighborhood Demographics

Category	Indicator	Value
Population & Households	Population	3,097
	Households	1,456
	Average Household Size	2.1
	Density (per sq. mile)	4,450
Demographics	Median Age	41.4
	Sex	52% Female / 48% Male
	Race	73% White / 16% Black / 10% Two or More
Economic Indicators	Per Capita Income	\$28,822 (~80% of Mercer Co.)
	Median Household Income	\$53,160 (~90% of Mercer Co.)

2024 ACS 5-Year

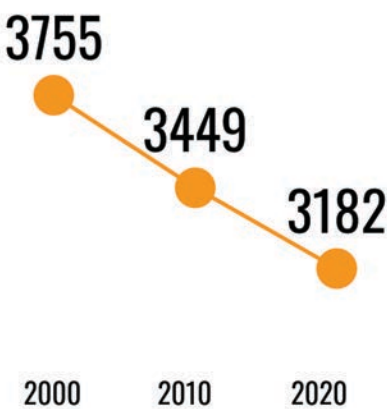
Brooklyn Avenue



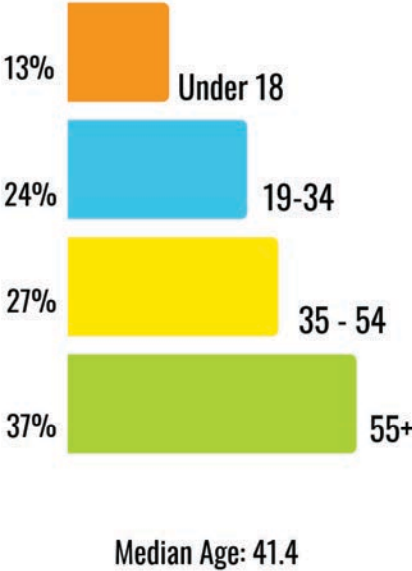
Neighborhood Data

All figures from the 2024-Year American Community Survey Estimates.

Population

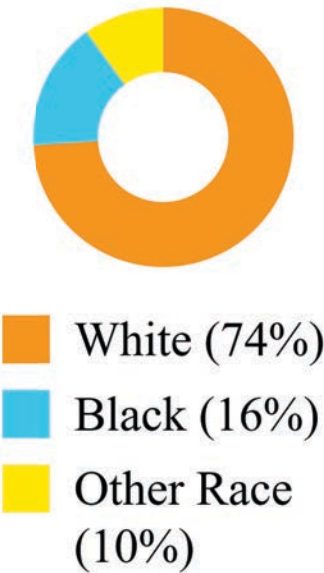


Age

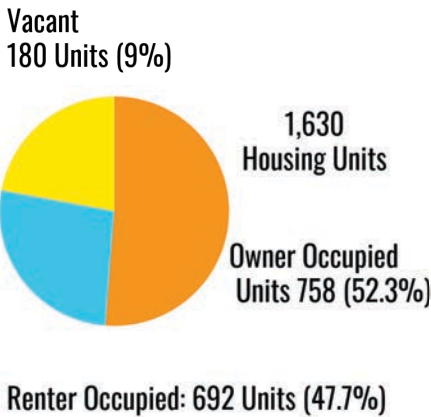


Race

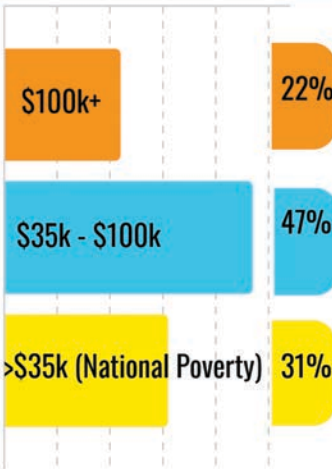
3,097 People



Housing



Household Income



Median Household Income:

\$53,160

Number of Households:

1,456

Average Household Size:

2.1

Assets

The neighborhood benefits from a rich mix of assets within walking distance, including employment centers, schools, and recreational spaces. Businesses located Downtown, regional employers along East State Street, and manufacturers on North Sharpsville Avenue drive local investment interest, while residents benefit from proximity to Cass Avenue Elementary and Sharon High School, and amenities like the Buhl Club and Buhl Park.

Residents also pointed to the neighborhood's convenience, older housing stock, established blocks, and proximity to schools, Downtown, and parks as strengths worth building on. At the same time, many respondents said these assets are undermined by declining rental conditions, visible blight, poor sidewalks, and the loss of neighborhood-serving retail.

Community Assets

Cultural & Faith Community

Buhl Mansion
Covenant Presbyterian Church
First Presbyterian Church
Oakwood Cemetery
Redeemed Sanctuary
Sharon Alliance Church
St. John's Ukrainian Church
Wallis Mansion History Center

Educational

Buhl Club Child Development Center
Sharon City School District - Cass
Elementary School and Sharon High School
Sharon School of Nursing

Economic

Applegate Building
Tenants
Daffin's Candies
Ellwood
JCL Development
The Landing
Mercer County Federal Credit Union
Sharon Coating
Sharon Regional Medical Center

Recreational

Baseball Field
Buhl Club
Buhl Park
Thorton Hall

Social & Services

Clepper Manor
Community Library of the Shenango Valley
Mercer County Housing Authority
North Sharon Volunteer Fire Hall
Salvation Army
Sharon WIC Office
ROAR Center
VFW Post No. 1338

Housing

Housing conditions reflect both legacy character and opportunity for reinvestment. The area includes roughly 1,630 housing units, 89% of which are occupied, and 52.3% owner-occupied. Most of the housing stock consists of single-unit structures (79.5%), and the median home value is \$64,300, well below regional averages, suggesting affordability but also potential need for repair. More information on housing conditions are in this plan under Property Conditions and Strategies.

Neighborhood Housing

Total Housing Units	1,630
Occupied Units	89%
Owner vs. Renter	52.3% rental
Single-Unit Structures	79.5%
Median Home Value	\$64,300

2024 ACS 5-Year

Resident survey responses suggest that the nearly fifty- percent rental share is highly visible in how people experience neighborhood change. Respondents repeatedly connected neighborhood decline to poorly maintained rentals, absentee landlords, and tenant turnover, while also emphasizing that many long-time owners need help with major repairs, weatherization, and accessibility improvements in order to stay

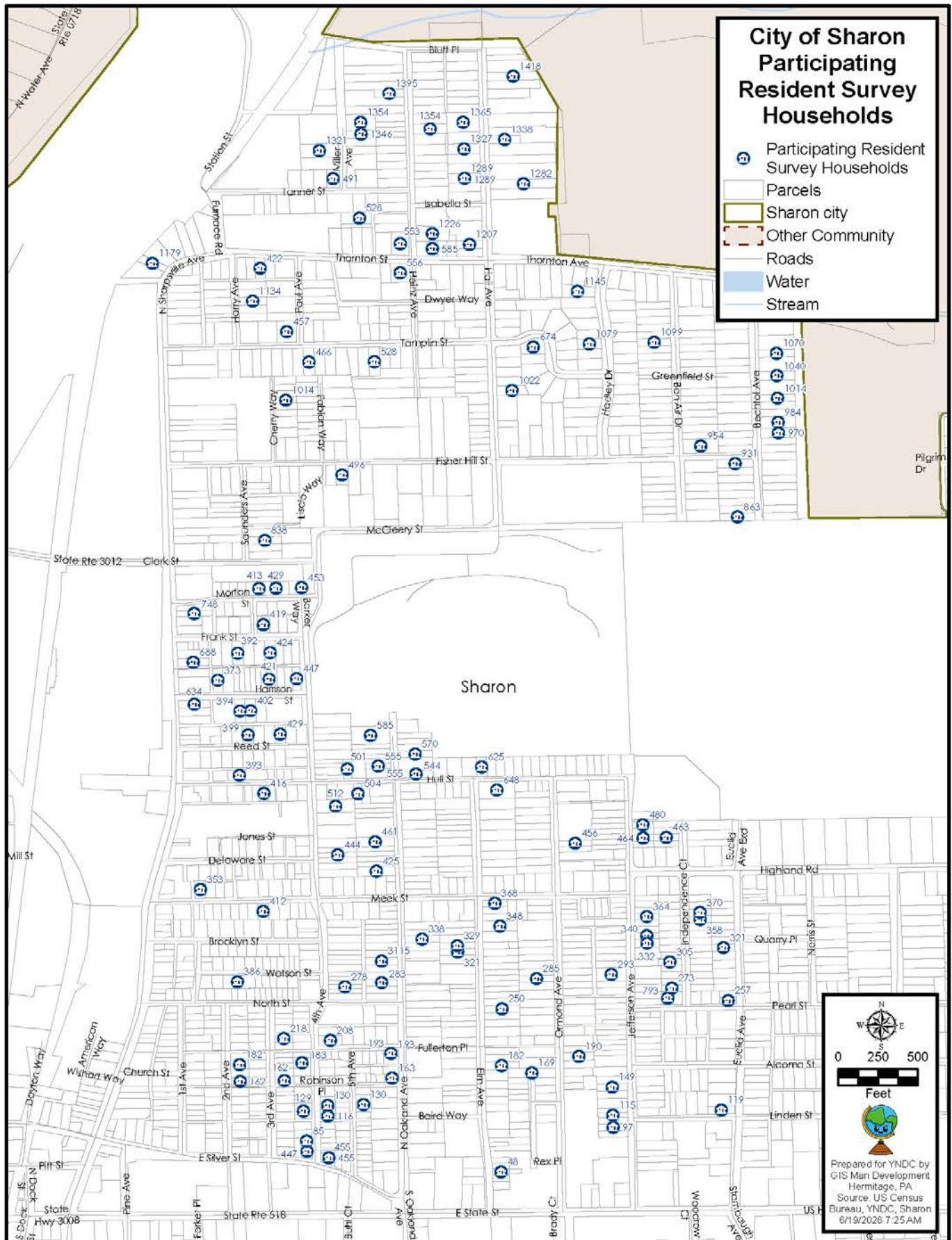


Priorities

The overall goal for this neighborhood action plan is the stabilization and revitalization of this area, building on its walkability and proximity to Downtown and Buhl Park. Neighborhood priorities are determined by combining findings from canvassing over 1,025 households, a comprehensive property conditions survey, a review of plans and studies, and guidance from residents and stakeholders on what is needed most. The 2026 resident survey and feedback makes clear the order of priorities, which are the following:

Neighborhood Priorities:

1. **Strengthen rental housing quality and landlord accountability.** Residents repeatedly identified slumlords, neglected rentals, poor tenant screening, unsafe conditions, trash, and chronic turnover as the neighborhood's most pressing issue.
2. **Preserve existing housing through homeowner support.** Residents, especially long-time owners and older adults, emphasized the need for home repair assistance, weatherization, accessibility improvements, and better communication about available programs.
3. **Maintain safe and functional streets, sidewalks, drainage, and lighting.** Residents frequently described potholes, poor road conditions, unsafe sidewalks, speeding, drainage issues, and inadequate public maintenance as top concerns. Residents also want safer walking conditions by addressing speeding and motorized bikes, the maintenance of sidewalks, and lighting.
4. **Address vacant and blighted structures and problem lots.** Residents generally supported demolition of the worst properties but want faster, more consistent action on vacant structures. Unaddressed dumping, tall grass, and chronic nuisance conditions affect neighborhood morale.
5. **Develop new affordable and attainable housing carefully.** New housing should respond to neighborhood context and demand. Large, multi-unit development and development that concentrates low-income households is not supported.
6. **Revive underutilized commercial buildings and strengthen neighborhood-serving business activity and community pride.** Residents want more practical businesses and fewer nuisance-oriented uses, like skilled games or gambling machines and vape stores.



Section II: Property Conditions and Strategies

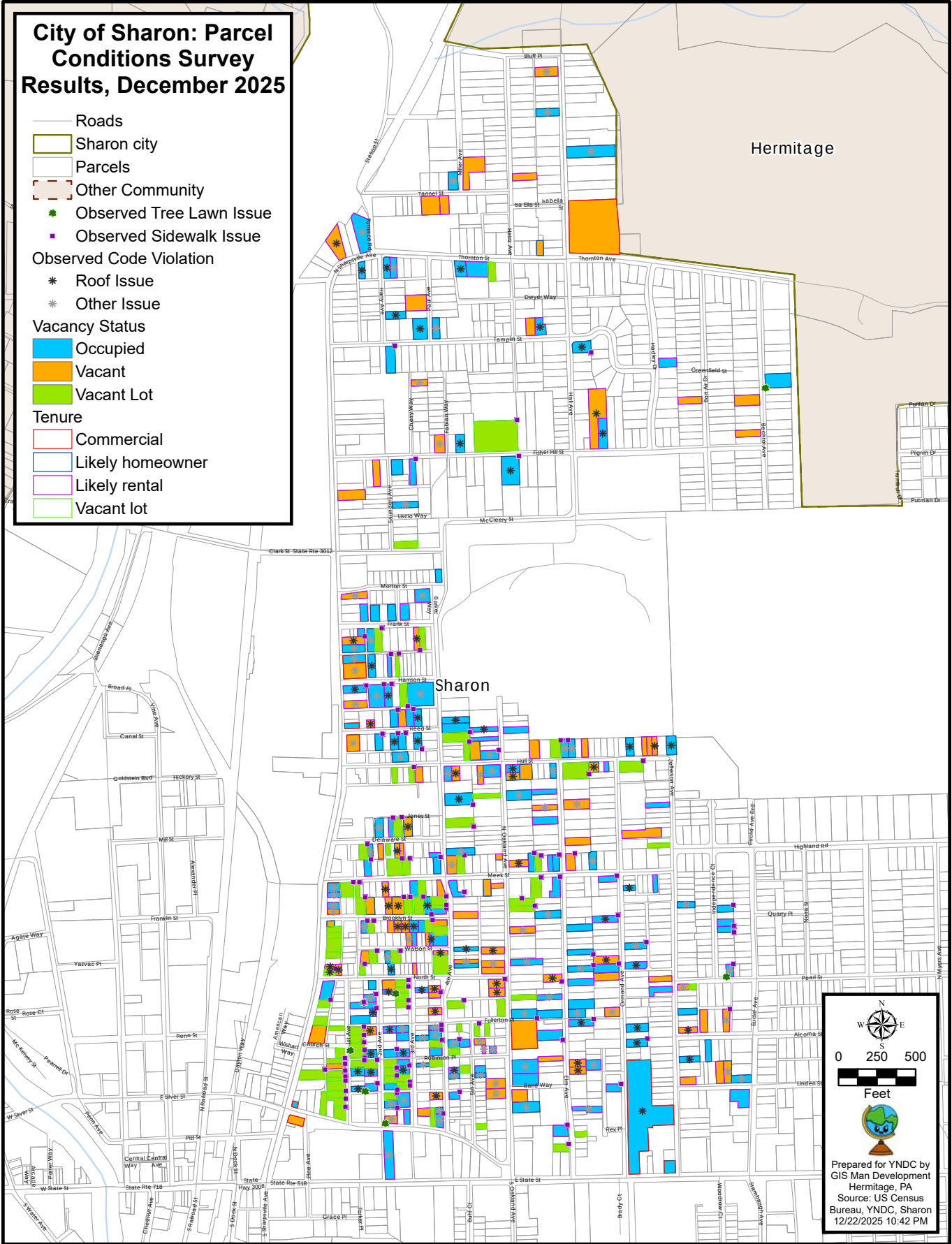
Property Conditions

A detailed survey of all East Hill properties was conducted by YNDC in 2025 to document conditions that hinder neighborhood reinvestment, excluding industrial land uses. YNDC evaluated every property's exterior condition from the public right-of-way, noting any visible code violations, vacant or blighted structures, and unmaintained vacant lots. Vacancy was determined using multiple indicators, such as the U.S. Postal Service and City of Sharon's vacancy registrations, non-operating electric meters, and other observable signs. This survey represents a point-in-time snapshot and conditions are continually changing. At the time of the survey, there were 101 vacant properties and 163 properties with exterior issues (ex. deteriorating roof, peeling paint). Properties may have more than one unit, which is one reason the survey findings differ from the American Community Survey.

Property Conditions Survey Findings

Streetscape Conditions	Properties with broken or missing sidewalks	133
	Street corners with failing or missing accessible curb ramps	36
	Storm catch basins that are clogged or in disrepair	3
	Street trees that are dead or have significant decay	7
Surrounding Property Conditions	Properties with overgrown grass	7
	Properties with significant dumping and/or visible hoarding	11
	Abandoned vehicles	7
Property Conditions	Vacant residential properties	103
	Vacant commercial properties	6
	Properties with exterior issues	153
	Owner-occupied properties with exterior issues	62

Resident survey responses reinforce the property survey findings by indicating that residents experience blight and decline most acutely through rental neglect, unsafe or poorly maintained homes, and poor public infrastructure that surround their homes. At the same time, many residents credited the City for proactive measures in recent years. Namely, demolition of the worst structures and improving safety by reducing tolerance to nuisance activity at hotspots.



Property Strategies

There are a variety of strategies property owners, the City, and partners can utilize to improve neighborhood conditions. The following table creates pathways to address the Neighborhood Action Plan priorities:

Property Strategies

	Near Term (Immediate)	Midterm (2-3 Years)	Longterm (5+ Years)
Vacant Lot	Clean / Green, High Grass Enforcement, Lots to Love	Side Lot Transfer, Sharon Redevelopment Authority Transfer / Land Bank	Open Space Maintenance, Infill Readiness
Vacant Commercial Property	Clean-Up, Board-Up, Code Enforcement	Sharon Redevelopment Authority Transfer / Land Bank, Property Stabilization	Adaptive Reuse or Demolition
Occupied Commercial Property	Clean-Up, Code Enforcement	Lighting and Façade Improvements, Technical Assistance	Adaptive Modernization/Maintenance
Vacant Residential Property	Clean-Up, Board-Up, Code Enforcement	Demolition or Acquisition, Rehab Pipeline	Rehab or Resale
Owner-Occupied Residential	Targeted Outreach, Code Support, Repair Referrals	Home Repair	Long-Term Preservation, Continued Owner Occupancy
Tenant – Occupied Residential	Registration and Inspection, Code Enforcement, Nuisance Enforcement, Local Agent Requirement	Escalated Compliance Action, Potential License Sanctions for Chronic Violators	Stabilized Code-Compliant Rentals, Ownership Transition

The City and Neighborhood Action Team should create a first-tier implementation focus on rental properties with repeated violations, visible deterioration, chronic nuisance issues, or evidence of noncompliance with rental licensing requirements. It should also create a first-tier support list for owner-occupied homes where long-time residents face major repair barriers but the property remains viable for preservation.

Recommended Implementation Priorities for Properties:**Code Enforcement, Registration, and Inspection**

In partnership with the City, the Neighborhood Action Team should build a ranked list of likely rental properties by combining property survey findings, visible issues, and resident reports. By cross-referencing the likely rental properties list with the City's rental registration software, non-compliant properties can be identified. Properties with repeated complaints should be prioritized. See Table 1: Code Enforcement, Registration, and Inspection Priority Properties.

Maintenance, Board-Up, and Cleanup

Prioritize vacant or unsecured structures that create immediate safety concerns to neighbors and those that directly impact nearby stable blocks. In coordination with the City, the Neighborhood Action Team and YNDC should develop a regular maintenance strategy for immediately addressing the safety of vacant properties. See Table 2: Maintenance, board-up, and Cleanup Priority Properties.

Demolition

The City maintains a demolition list. The Neighborhood Action Team can assist in prioritizing removal near stable blocks. See Table 3: Demolition Priority Properties.

Acquisition

The Sharon Redevelopment Authority in coordination with the City and the Neighborhood Action Team should maintain a list of tax-delinquent properties and work with Mercer County to identify ways of removing fees from judicial and repository sales.

Repair

YNDC will maintain a waitlist of owner-occupied homes referred through the City and Code Enforcement that may qualify for available programs.

Rehabilitation

Support entities leading major home rehabilitation for owner-occupied sale. There are no active acquisition targets.

New Construction

Prioritize and control sites that improve neighborhood confidence and long-term reinvestment goals through acquisition. A target new construction site is 681 Hull Street. To further the potential for new construction, the other actions should be prioritized, which will help improve market conditions.

Draft Table for Neighborhood Action Team's Development of Priority Properties

Following review, additional information for each property will be added.

Table 1 Code Enforcement, Registration, and Inspection Priority Properties

The following is from February 2026, recommended priority properties based on property conditions survey and review of City's enforcement portal and not having active registrations:

Address	Owner
329 Ormond Ave	Brucker, Shawn M & Antoinette
270 Ormond Ave	Shenango Valley Homes
145 Rex Place	Shardy, Diane L
198 Elm St	Property Merchants, LLC
88 Elm Ave	Kandrac, Ken
831 Pearl St	Snizek, Margaret
603 Tamplin St	Sikora, Stefan & Esther

Table 2: Maintenance, board-up, and Cleanup Priority Properties

The following is from February 2026, recommended priority properties based on the property not being secured and severity of issues:

Address	Owner
289 Fourth Avenue	Hometown Community Rentals
365 Brooklyn St	Koi, Bradley A
145 First Ave	Sharbutt, Donald E & Brenda
507 Robinson Pl	Reignbrook, LLC
672 Sharpsville Ave	Moss, Khaylen
192 Second Ave	Harakal Alvan F & Erin E
389 Brooklyn St	Reignbrook, LLC
398 Brooklyn St	Rabold, Daniel

Table 3: Demolition Priority Properties

The following is from February 2026, recommended priority properties based on severity of issues. Tax information not reviewed.

Address	Owner
241 Fourth Ave	Hometown Community Rentals
400 Delaware	Harrison, Michael S Jr.
397 Brooklyn St	Vakasy, Kenneth James Jr.
274 Sharpsville Ave	Beers, Corey E Jr.
266 Sharpsville Ave	Beers, Corey E Jr.
174 Fifth	Madison CFD

Neighborhood-Wide Strategies

To complement property-specific recommendations included in this strategy, this section is an overview of actions that will improve neighborhood conditions and support the City's vision statement, *"Where Sharon is dedicated to fostering a community where economic revitalization and neighborhood renewal intersect, creating unique quality of life improvements through a blend of history, innovation, and creativity, to benefit all residents, workers, and visitors alike."*

Based on resident feedback during the neighborhood survey, the following strategies give particular emphasis on landlord accountability, homeowner support, and infrastructure repair.

1. Strengthen rental housing quality and landlord accountability.

What Needs to Happen:

Rental properties need to be safe, well-kept, and managed by responsible landlords. The City should make sure problem owners face consequences when they repeatedly ignore property maintenance, tenant-related issues, or basic safety standards.

How this Can Happen:

- Revisit rental rules to strengthen enforcement around chronic nuisance properties, repeat violations, and proof of insurance. Namely, build resources for enforcement.
- Require local property contacts be in place as part of the license application so tenants, neighbors, and the City can reach someone quickly when problems come up. Do not renew licenses that are not in compliance.
- Revisit rules that would prevent negligent or tax-delinquent owners from buying additional properties at sale, as adopted in Delaware County.
- Provide tenant education on renter rights, choosing housing carefully, and where to go for legal or housing support.
- Support responsible landlords with a low interest renovation loan fund or a matching grant program.

2. Preserve existing housing through homeowner support.

What Needs to Happen:

Long-time homeowners, older adults, and other residents need help staying in their homes safely and affordably. Neighborhood stabilization depends not only on addressing properties that are visibly blighted or cause a public nuisance, but also on helping occupied homes stay in good condition.

How this Can Happen:

- Prioritize owner-occupied home repair, accessibility improvements, weatherization, and basic safety upgrades as a neighborhood stabilization strategy that the City prioritizes for state and federal funding.
- Consider a matching grant program for exterior facade improvements.
- Conduct regular, easy-to-understand outreach on repair programs offered through YNDC and other partners through mail and door-to-door canvassing.

- Explore support for households facing hoarding-related conditions when health, safety, or housing stability is at risk.

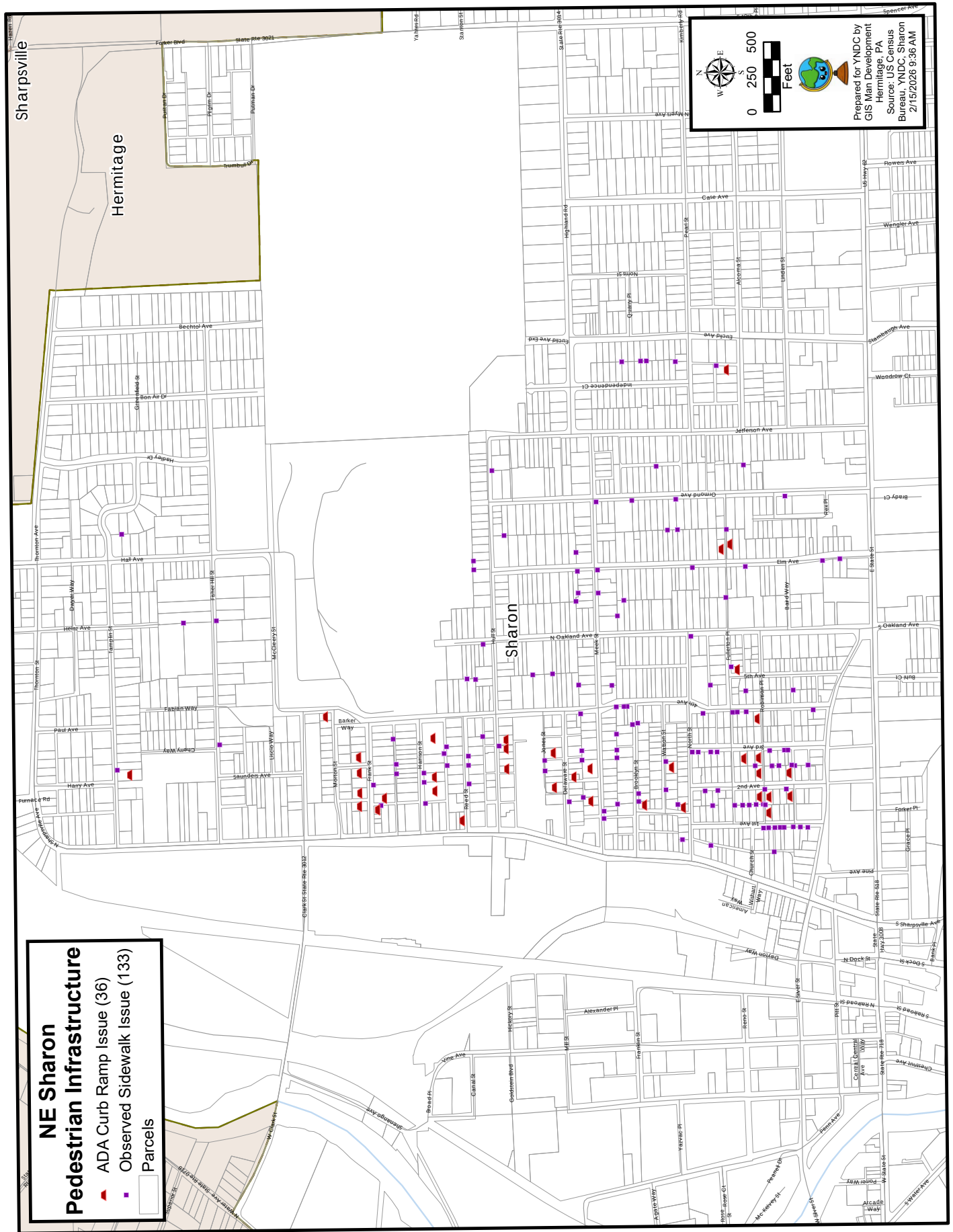
3. Maintain safe and functional streets, sidewalks, drainage, and lighting.

What Needs to Happen:

Basic infrastructure should be treated as essential to a neighborhood's quality of life. Streets, sidewalks, stormwater systems, and lighting all effect safety, walkability, and whether residents feel that the neighborhood is being cared for. Electric-assist bike behavior is also a concern.

How this Can Happen:

- Coordinate capital planning around resident concerns, especially along common walking routes and key neighborhood streets such as Hull and Meek streets and North Oakland Avenue that are a part of the fixed-transit route and school walking routes.
- Conduct an annual streetlight review and report outages to Penn Power. Work with property owners where additional lighting would improve safety along fixed-transit and school walking routes through a community safety program.
- Prepare Safe Routes to School and Safe Routes to Recreation plans and use those recommendations to guide future improvements and capital planning as shown in the NE Sharon Pedestrian Infrastructure map.
- Increase attention to speeding and other unsafe driving behavior in neighborhood streets, particularly on Meek, Hull and Fisher Hill streets, Highland Road, and Bechtol Avenue. Coordinate with the City of Hermitage Police Department, which utilizes neighborhood streets to access Patagonia.
- Identify partners for a public education campaign on electric assist, or e-bike rider requirements and safety rules, including that the minimum age is 16 years old and e-bikes must follow all bicycle and general traffic laws.
- Determine long-term strategies for addressing hillside runoff along Thorton Street, including the clean-up of the wooded area to the east of Bechtol Avenue.
- Determine long-term strategies for addressing hillside runoff on Sharpville Avenue that limits the use of the dedicated bike lane, including removing cement and hard surfaces on vacant lots along the hillside.



4. Address vacant and blighted structures and problem lots.

What Needs to Happen:

Vacant houses, dumping, overgrown lots, and nuisance properties need faster and more consistent attention. Residents want visible progress on the worst properties and better upkeep of lots that remain empty. In surveying residents, there was little interest or commitment to forming a neighborhood association. However, through developing a Neighborhood Action Team as the starting point, an association may form.

How this Can Happen:

- Utilize the Neighborhood Action Team to better prioritize demolitions, land banking, rehab opportunities, and property disposition.
- Use clear decision-making tools to sort which properties should be demolished, rehabilitated, held, or transferred. Expand land holding authority and responsibility through partnerships.
- Implement side lot policies that do not allow one adjacent owner to acquire more than two adjacent lots.
- Continue Lots to Love approach in specific locations.
- Strengthen cleanup efforts, dumping enforcement, grass-cutting compliance, and vacant-lot maintenance by partnering with YNDC to pilot on a vacant lot management system in the neighborhood.
- Review ordinances to identify any opportunities to collect fees for any mitigation activities for negligent property owners.
- Determine feasibility for public green space to serve residents near “the Avenues,” which is more than a quarter of a mile from recreational green space.

5. Develop new affordable and attainable housing carefully.

What Needs to Happen:

New housing should address need without repeating the problems residents already see in poor-quality rentals. Future housing should blend into the neighborhood form and respond to the local demand for affordable, workforce housing.

How this Can Happen:

- Encourage housing that is affordable to working households, older adults, and small families while still meeting good design and maintenance expectations.
- Implement local rules related to transitional housing adopted in the 2026 Zoning Code.
- Develop an inventory of development-ready lots.
- Utilize redevelopment tools, financing, and tax incentives for renovating and constructing homes in the neighborhood with development partners.
- Continue to assess public and non-profit models to support quality, rental property management.

6. Revive underutilized commercial buildings and strengthen neighborhood-serving business activity and pride.

What Needs to Happen:

Residents want more useful businesses and fewer properties or uses that drag down nearby blocks.

How this Can Happen:

- Coordinate with regional economic development partners and the Sharon Community Development Corporation to support redevelopment of the former Rite Aid site and other underused commercial properties.
- Focus recruitment and reuse efforts on neighborhood-serving businesses and practical services as identified by the Sharon Community Development Corporation.
- Engage property owners and local institutions to participate in the Facade Improvement Program through direct outreach.
- Proceed with the Comprehensive Plan recommendation of creating a unified identity, supported through thoughtful branding, signage, and placemaking elements such as public art and wayfinding.



Section III: Measuring Progress

To assess the progress of this strategy and implementation of the City's comprehensive plan, the following performance benchmarks will be reviewed by the Planning Commission and Neighborhood Action Team routinely. These benchmarks support implementation of the Neighborhood / Community Revitalization focus area.

Neighborhood / Community Revitalization

- Decrease in the number of unregistered rental properties
- Decrease in the number of rentals not in compliance with code
- Increase in the number of properties boarded up or cleaned up
- Increase in the number of vacant lots receiving regular maintenance
- Decrease in the number of properties with broken or missing sidewalks
- Increase in the number of homes repaired
- Increase in the number of homes rehabilitated
- Increase in the number of homes constructed

Upon adoption of the Neighborhood Action Plan, a baseline will be set.



Section VI: Neighborhood Action Team

The Neighborhood Action Team should function as a coordinating body with the City that helps keep the plan active, measurable, and responsive to changing conditions. It should continue to review resident priorities, track progress, identify implementation barriers, seek funding, and coordinate and educate among agencies and partners.

In addition to residents, landlords, and business owners, entities that should be included in the implementation process include:

Public:

- o City – Manager, Council, Community Development, Code, Police, Fire, City Planning Commission, Beautification Commission, Sanitary Authority
- o Community Library of the Shenango Valley, Mercer County, Mercer County Housing Authority, Mercer County Housing Coalition, Mercer County Regional Planning Commission, PA Department of Community and Economic Development, Sharon City School District, Western PA Conservancy

Faith, Non-Profit and Philanthropic:

- o Buhl Club, Buhl Regional Health Foundation, Church of Latter-Day Saints – 494 Elm, Community Action Partnership of Mercer County, Community Foundation WPEO, Covenant Presbyterian Church, Redeemed Sanctuary, Saint John's Ukrainian, Salvation Army, Sharon CDC, Shenango Valley Urban League, VFW Post No 1338, YNDC

Business:

- o JCL Development , Keel Infrastructure, The Landing / Valley Shenango Economic Development Company, Mercer County Federal Credit Union, Sharon Regional Medical Center, UPMC Health, Local Realtors and Landlords

Appendix: Community Input & Supporting Documentation

Community Input

Community input for this plan should be understood as including the resident survey, follow-up conversations, stakeholder interviews, and public review process. The 2026 resident survey particularly strengthened this draft by clarifying the relative weight residents place on landlord accountability, homeowner support, infrastructure repair, demolition of the worst properties, and neighborhood-serving business development. Additional engagement included stakeholder meetings with public, non-profit, business, and institutional partners. Interviews with city staff on software, tracking capacity, enforcement, and infrastructure projects. Interviews with community development partners on redevelopment priorities and small business support.

Northeast Sharon Neighborhood Survey

2026 Publication

Overview

In the spring of 2026, Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC) conducted a resident survey in Northeast Sharon to better understand how neighbors perceive housing conditions, safety, and quality of life, and to identify the most important priorities for future investment to incorporate into a neighborhood plan. The survey builds on similar efforts in Youngstown neighborhoods and provides a point-in-time snapshot of how residents experience changes on the northeast side of Sharon.

Northeast Sharon is composed of several small neighborhoods that were built over several generations. Collectively, they have weathered major economic shifts over the past half century, from the rise and fall of Westinghouse to the 2008 housing crisis. Residents today balance strong attachment to their forever homes and neighbors with growing concern about aging housing, slumlords and unstable rentals, and the conditions of streets and sidewalks. Resident feedback will shape the alignment of programs, code enforcement, and capital improvements to help the City of Sharon, Sharon Community Development Corporation (SCDC), YNDC, and community partners address what residents say matters most.

This report summarizes key findings from the Northeast Sharon resident survey, including who responded, how they feel about neighborhood change and safety, which priorities they rated highest, and what kinds of housing and business conditions they want to see in the future.

Neighborhoods

The survey focuses on Northeast Sharon, bounded by East State Street and Downtown Sharon to the south, Sharpsville and Buhl Park to the north, North Sharpsville Avenue to the west, and residential streets up to Euclid Avenue to the east. These boundaries align closely, though not perfectly, with Census Tract 303, which provides the demographic and housing context for this report.

Northeast Sharon developed in stages over more than a century. Early growth clustered around North Sharpsville Avenue and Oakwood Cemetery on land originally granted to Revolutionary War veterans, followed by the construction of streetcar lines along North Sharpsville and East State Street. By the early 1900s, East State Street was home to many of Sharon's civic and business leaders, and the neighborhood's landmarks, including the Buhl Club, reflect that prominence. Later waves of development filled in worker housing near Westinghouse and post-war subdivisions near Buhl Park.

Today, the neighborhood's housing stock ranges from mixed-use mansions and long-time owner-occupied homes and rental properties in varying condition. Residents benefit from proximity to Downtown Sharon, Sharon's school system, Buhl Club, and Buhl Park. At the same time, vacant lots, disinvested rentals, and aging infrastructure pose visible challenges on many blocks.



Methodology

Survey questions were adopted from YNDC’s Greater Glenwood resident survey to allow for consistent tracking of neighborhood priorities while reflecting Sharon’s expressed interests through discussion with community leaders and the recent adoption of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan. The Northeast Sharon survey asked about neighborhood change, safety, housing, satisfaction and repair needs, priorities such as home repair and streets, and desired and undesired businesses and land uses. Beginning in April of 2026, YNDC staff canvassed all accessible, occupied households within the target area. Staff knocked on doors, introduced themselves, and requested permission to ask a short series of questions about how residents feel about their neighborhood and home. If not one answered or was unavailable at the time, staff left a flier with information about the survey and instructions for completing it online or by phone.

In total, approximately 1,025 doors were knocked, and 81 households completed the full survey, resulting in a response rate of about 7.9 percent. Staff also had more than 40 informal conversations with residents who did not complete the full survey but shared qualitative feedback about neighborhood issues, priorities, and lived experience. These conversations were recorded as field notes and are used in this report to illustrate findings. Given YNDC’s newer presence in the community and apprehension towards unfamiliar organizations and interests by residents, the combined feedback from both the completed surveys and informal conversations represents nearly fifteen percent of households engaging in this outreach.

Demographics

To understand who lives in Northeast Sharon and how respondents compare to the broader neighborhoods, this report uses 2023 5-Year American Community Survey estimates for Census Tract 303, which closely matches the target area. The tract has an estimated population of 3,246 residents in 1,414 households, with an average household size of 2.3. Population density is approximately 4,458 residents per square mile, reflecting a compact, walkable residential fabric with a mix of single-family homes and small, multi-unit buildings.

East Hill Neighborhood Action Plan

The median age in the tract is 42.1 years, with a slight majority of women (51%) compared to men (49%). The neighborhood is 74% White, 15% Black, and 9% two or more races, with the remaining share made up of other racial and ethnic groups. The median household income is \$54,156, about 90% of the Mercer County median, and per-capita income is \$27,377, roughly 80% of the county figure. The poverty rate is 11.9%, which is significantly lower than the 21.3% poverty rate for Sharon as a whole, though many long-time residents still report financial strain, especially those on fixed incomes.

Survey respondents broadly reflect this context but skew older, long-term homeowners. Of the 81 households that completed the full survey, 63 are owners and 18 are renters. Thirty-five respondents have lived at their address for 21 years or more, another 18 for 11-20 years, and 24 for 6-10 years. Respondents include 44 men and 39 women, with ages ranging from youth to over 85 years of age. Seventy-one respondents identify as White, 5 as Black or African American, and 6 as some other race. This profile indicates that the survey captured especially strong input from older, long-term homeowners, many of whom have deep knowledge of how the neighborhood has changed over decades and strong opinions about housing, taxes, and city services. Future engagement efforts can build on this base while seeking additional input from renters and younger families. Surveyors canvassed during business hours, which may have led to lower engagement from these stakeholders.

Neighborhood Stability and Safety

Residents were first asked how the neighborhood has changed over time, framing the question in relation to the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, or the last five years. Among the 83 responses to this question, opinions were mixed but leaned towards steady change rather than dramatic swings, with 34 residents saying that it had stayed the same, 8 residents saying that it had gotten better, 31 saying it had gotten worse, and 9 not being sure.

Those who felt the neighborhood has improved pointed to the demolition of slum or abandoned houses, fewer visible drug dealers or “riff raff,” reliable trash removal service, new cameras or surveillance, some infrastructure and road work, and neighbors who are keeping up their homes. Residents who said it has stayed the same often described quiet streets, knowing their neighbors, and a sense that good and bad changes balance each other out.

Residents who felt the neighborhood has gotten worse focused on the spread of slumlords and unstable rentals, poorly maintained properties, trash and dumping, and vacant or condemned houses. They also cited deteriorating streets, mistrust of or conflict with police, loss of nearby businesses such as pharmacies, and the growing difficulty of keeping up with repairs on fixed incomes.

On a scale of 1 (not at all safe) to 5 (very safe), residents rated overall neighborhood safety at an average 4.0. In other words, most respondents feel generally safe in Northeast Sharon. Residents who feel safe (4-5) emphasized strong relationships with neighbors, long tenure, and the sense that “nothing happens here,” combined with home-level measures such as security cameras. Those who feel unsafe (1-2) described a combination of unstable rentals and unknown neighbors, condemned and derelict houses, visible homelessness and criminal activity, unsafe traffic, and distrust of city enforcement and the justice system. Respondents who chose 3 typically said they feel safe most of the time but worry about specific issues such as speeding, late-night activity, or changes in who is occupying nearby rentals. Together, these responses suggest that social stability and well-kept homes anchor feelings of safety.

"Nothing has occurred in six years of living in the neighborhood. Neighbors look out for one another and keep an eye on any strange activity."

"Keep tearing down bad homes."

"It's quiet, low cost of living, uneventful, and close enough to things I'm interested in. All positive."

Priorities

Residents rated a series of neighborhood priorities on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important). Overall, responses show a strong emphasis on housing quality and basic infrastructure, with secondary attention to safety, walking conditions, and beautification. Average scores (with 5 – most important) were:

1. Home Repair – 4.32
2. Streets – 4.15
3. Slumlords (rental accountability) – 4.04
4. Walking (sidewalks, crossings, lighting) – 3.86
5. Demolition – 3.85
6. Crime – 3.79
7. Beautification – 3.78
8. Greenspace (parks and recreation) – 3.38
9. Business – 3.32
10. Community (events, organizations, pride) – 3.02

Home repair is the clearest top priority. It received an average score of 4.32, with 55 residents rating it a 5 and only 3 rating it a 1 or 2. Residents described aging roofs, basements, windows, steps, wiring; fixed-income homeowners and older adults said they want to stay but cannot afford needed work. Many asked for help with weatherization, accessibility, and basic safety repairs to remain in their homes. Home repair as the top priority reflects who completed the survey. Additional conversations with younger families and tenants may soften this priority.

Streets and slumlords followed closely. Residents called for repaving and patching streets, improving drainage and basement flooding, and addressing speeding and cut-through traffic on key routes. At the same time, they repeatedly emphasized the need to "be hard on landlords" who allow homes to deteriorate, raise rents without making repairs, or rent to tenants who create unsafe conditions for neighbors. Residents want stronger rental standards, inspections, and consequences for repeat offenders.

East Hill Neighborhood Action Plan

Priorities related to walking, demolition, and crime also scored high. Residents highlighted broken and missing sidewalks, unsafe crossings, limited street lighting, and lack of “children at play” signs; they see these as direct safety issues for kids, older adults, and people with disabilities. Demolition is viewed as critical for removing the worst properties, but residents also stressed the need to follow demolition with mowing, lot maintenance, and eventual reuse. Crime-related comments focused on drugs and a mix of concerns about police presence and conduct.

Priorities with somewhat lower average scores, including beautification, greenspace, business, and community, are still important. In conversations, residents mentioned the need for better maintained lots, especially backyards with rodents and debris, and more events and communication to rebuild trust and pride. Their comments make clear that these quality-of-life improvements will be most effective once core housing and street issues are addressed.

“Too many scooters and people walking in the street because of horrible sidewalks. Cars speed down the street and do not stop at stop signs. (They) do not pay attention.”

“Do we feel safe and protected by the local police? Absolutely not. They will stop (and search) anyone walking down the street minding their own business.”

“I have lived here for twenty years, and my road has not been repaved except for a small strip by Aqua when they replaced part of the water line.”

Housing Conditions

Residents also rated their satisfaction with their current living situation on a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). The average satisfaction score is 4.1, with 45 respondents rating their housing a 5. This suggests that most respondents are generally satisfied with their homes and want to remain in the neighborhood, even as they identify serious repair and neighborhood concerns. Residents who are satisfied or very satisfied (4-5) with their living situation most often cited strong social ties and a sense of place, location advantages, and pride in home improvements. Strong social ties and a sense of place comments focused on knowing and liking neighbors. Location advantages include being close to schools, work and feeling that the neighborhood is still convenient compared to other places they have lived. Residents took pride in maintaining their yards and completing recent repairs. At the same time, even most satisfied residents described specific unmet housing needs. Common requests include roof replacement, basement waterproofing, replacing windows, porch and step repair, electrical and plumbing work, and driveway or accessibility improvements.

Residents who rated satisfaction lower (1-3) often reported serious deficiencies in their own homes or in nearby properties. Some described mold, trip hazards, exposed wiring, and going without heat while landlords refused to make repairs or demanded that tenants pay for them. Others felt unsafe in their homes because of neighbor behavior, harassment, or persistent nuisance activity, even if the structure itself was sound. Many worried that growing numbers of rentals and slumlords are slowly eroding what made the neighborhood a perfect location.

Taken together, responses pointed to a neighborhood of residents who are satisfied but worried. They value their homes and neighbors and want to stay, but deferred maintenance on aging houses and the spread of poorly managed rentals, especially with unsupervised children and/or drug activity, are steadily undermining their sense of security.

“Build new homes, not mini mansions, on lots that previously had a home. It’s either not allowed in this city or no one is attempting this. There are entire blocks vacant that can be homes built for local residents to purchase.”

“Because of the home repair needs I have, I cannot handle living along physically or financially.”

“When I got my home, I was told it was inspected, but required repairs weren’t made. I am struggling to address them.”

Neighborhood Services

To better understand what kinds of businesses and amenities would support everyday life in Northeast Sharon, residents were asked what they would like to see more of in the neighborhood and what they would prefer not to see at all. Family-friendly businesses that meet daily needs and support youth and older adults are sought, whereas vice uses and types of neighbors are not desired.

The most frequently requested businesses and amenities fall into three categories. First, residents want better access to everyday, affordable food and basic goods. Many asked for a neighborhood-scale grocery store or small market with fresh produce, basic groceries, and household items, along with a nearby pharmacy or clinic. Residents described having to travel to Hermitage or farther for full-service options and expressed concern about limited choices and higher prices when only one or two stores are available. Older adults and people without cars stressed that closer groceries and pharmacies are essential. While many were apprehensive about Dollar General locating in the northern end of the neighborhood, those within a quarter mile of the store mentioned using it frequently and seeing their neighbors walking to it. With a few exceptions, most that mentioned the Dollar General expressed how the neighborhood had benefited from it. Second, residents emphasized the need for family-friendly places and youth activities. They described a lack of places for kids and teens to go that are safe, supervised, and affordable. It should be noted that this comment mainly came from individuals without youth in the home. Conversations with parents and teens are needed to better understand the issue, as a need was less clearly expressed by these stakeholders. The third request is for small, local restaurants and basic neighborhood retail, or modest, take-out options. They expressed support for mom-and-pop businesses and locally owned establishments that keep dollars in the community and provide jobs. Many noted that they currently travel to Niles and Hermitage, or other commercial corridors for dining and shopping and would like more reasons to support Sharon.

When asked what they do not want, residents sternly opposed additional slum rentals and large multifamily complexes. Many comments distinguished between responsible landlords and slumlords and stressed that existing rentals should be brought up to code before new ones are added. Residents are also opposed to more vice or nuisance businesses, including skilled games, cannabis dispensaries, and smoke and vape shops. They worry these uses bring loitering, nuisance activity, and crime and contribute to a “cheapened” image of the neighborhood. Finally, residents expressed skepticism and concern about the proposed data center. Concerns include noise, environmental impacts, and the possibility of tax abatements or subsidies that provide limited direct benefit to nearby homeowners while utility rates rise. In general, residents want future land-use decisions to prioritize homes and neighborhood-serving businesses.

"I don't want to be so car dependent."

"Although I am only 54, I am in dire need of surgery and have lost most of my mobility. I've had a horrible crash course in what it is like to feel forgotten."

"The existing amenities help make the neighborhood convenient, enjoyable, and a good place to live."

Conclusion

The Northeast Sharon resident survey established priorities around housing quality, safe and walkable streets, and access to basic services, while adding detailed insight into how residents experience rentals, code enforcement, and everyday costs. Most respondents feel generally safe and satisfied with their current living situation and want to remain in the neighborhood, but they are increasingly concerned about aging homes, slumlords and unstable rentals, deteriorated streets and sidewalks, and rising burdens on fixed-income homeowners.

The City of Sharon and its partners can use these findings to shape code enforcement strategies, home-repair and weatherization programs, capital improvements, and business development efforts that allow for a clean, safe, and affordable neighborhood where long-term residents can remain. Findings from this survey will be incorporated into a neighborhood plan.

"I love my neighborhood, but feel like we are slowly losing what used to make it the perfect location."

"I like being back in the area, it's a good place to retire. I just wish we could do something about speeding and drivers not caring about our neighborhood."

"The most important priority is maintaining clean, well-kept priorities and neighborhood pride. The city and code enforcement are already very responsive. After that, landlord accountability, preventing drug-related activity, and reducing transient nuisance and scam activity would have the greatest positive impact on the neighborhood."

The Elm Street Approach

The Elm Street Program was created to strengthen the older historic neighborhoods that characterize many of the Commonwealth's communities and offers resources and technical assistance. The Elm Street Program is structured around simultaneous actions in five focus areas that are integrated through a community-based strategic planning process. The elements of the so-called "five-point approach" include:

- Clean, Safe and Green
- Neighbors and Economy
- Design
- Image and Identity
- Sustainable Organization

This model was incorporated and will continue to guide the development and implementation of the East Hill Neighborhood Action Plan. Each of the components is reflected in the recommendations. The neighborhood action team will organize around implementing the five-point approach. This action team will lead towards a sustainable organization model led by neighborhood residents and stakeholders.

Funding Sources

Foundations:

- Buhl Regional Health Foundation
- Citizens Bank / Foundation
- Community Foundation of Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio
- Constellation Energy
- Essential Foundation (Aqua)
- Huntington Foundation / Bank
- Farmers National Bank
- First National Bank Foundation / Bank
- NexTier Bank / Foundation
- Northwest Bank / Foundation
- PNC Foundation / Bank
- People's Natural Gas
- Penn Power
- Primary Health Network Foundation
- University of Pittsburgh Medical Center
- WesBanco Foundation / Bank

Funds:

- Federal Home Loan Bank – Pittsburgh
- Federal Home Loan Bank – New York
- Mercer County Affordable Housing Fund
- Mercer County Community FCU / National Credit Union Administration
- Sharon Economic Development Fund
- United Way of Mercer County

Public Resources:

In addition to the state and federal resources included in the Comprehensive Plan funding page that follows, other public opportunities include:

- City of Sharon
 - Community Development Block Grants
 - HOME
- Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
 - Department of Community and Economic Development
 - Building PA
 - Business in Our Sites Grants
 - Business Opportunities Fund
 - Community Planning Technical Assistance Program
 - Elm Street and Main Street Matters
 - Keystone Community Program
 - Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program (GTRP)
 - Mixed-Use Revitalization Program
 - Multimodal Transportation Fund
 - Municipal Assistance Program

- Neighborhood Assistance Program
- Public School Facility Improvement Grant Program
- Solar Energy Program
- Solar for Schools
- Department of Health
 - WalkWorks
- Department of Transportation
- Governor’s Office of the Budget
 - Redevelopment Capital Assistance Program
- Pennsylvania Housing Finance Authority
 - Community Revitalization Fund Program
 - PHARE
- Mercer County
 - Act 137 Optional Affordable Housing Funds Act
 - Act 152 Demolition Funds
 - CDBG and HOME Funds
- Mercer County Area Agency of Aging
 - Elder Cottage Housing Opportunity
- Mercer County Regional Planning Commission and Metropolitan Planning Organization
 - Surface Transportation Block Grant Program
 - Transportation Alternatives Set-aside
- Mercer Community Action Partnership
 - Energy Weatherization
 - Lots to Love
- Mercer County Housing Agency
 - capital funds and specialized supportive housing programs
- Federal
 - Appalachian Regional Commission
 - Economic Development Administration
 - Environmental Protection Agency - Brownfield Assessment and Cleanup
 - Housing and Urban Development - Healthy Homes, Older Adults Home Modification Program (OAHMP)

Private Entities to Partner with to seek tax credits and other funding sources:

- Black, Bashor, and Porsch
- Hemlock Wealth Management
- JCL Development, LLC
- Keel Infrastructure
- NLMK
- Mercer County State Bank
- Wheatland Tube Co.
- Other businesses adjacent to the neighborhood that seek tax credits.

Land Bank Funding Sources

Common Funding Sources Used by Land Banks in Pennsylvania

Funding	Project Type	Funding Source	Availability	Award Type	Are Land Banks Eligible?	Award Size	Application Due Date	More Information
Act 137 Optional Affordable Housing Funds Act	Affordable housing	County	County specific	Grant	Determined by county	Determined by county	N/A	Link
Act 152 Demolition Funds	Demolition	County	County specific	Grant	Determined by county	Determined by county	N/A	Recent Report
Blight Remediation Program	Remediation planning, remediation	State - CFA	Competitive	Grant	Land banks eligible, unique benefit of higher administrative cost allowance	Up to \$25,000 for planning, up to \$300,000 for remediation	2020 - July	Link
Community Development Block Grants	Housing rehabilitation, public services, community facilities, infrastructure improvement, development and planning	State - DCED, Federal - HUD (for CDBG entitlement jurisdictions)	DCED program has entitlement component and competitive component	Grant	Municipalities and counties (land banks must partner with funded jurisdictions)	DCED competitive program has a minimum request of \$100,000 and has no ceiling limit; Formulaic funding to entitlement communities		Link
Community Revitalization Fund Program	Affordable housing in commercial corridors	State - PHFA	Competitive	Grant	Land banks eligible	Between \$500,000 and \$1 million	2020 - December	Link
EPA Brownfield Grant	Assessment and cleanup of brownfields	Federal - EPA	Competitive	Grant	Localities, Local public authorities, agencies or instrumentalities of local government, COGs, RDAs, nonprofits	Assessment grants: \$200,000-\$600,000; Cleanup grants: up to \$500,000; Multipurpose grants: up to \$800,000	Deadline for FY2021 was Oct 28, 2020	Link
HOME Investment Partnerships Program	Affordable housing	State - DCED, Federal - HUD	Competitive (DCED allocations)	Grant	Units of local government (may also apply on behalf of others)	Maximum funding availability varies by eligible activity.		Link
Interest Income	Land bank specific	Land bank investments	Land bank specific	Interest income	Land bank eligible	Related to investment size	N/A	

Summary of Land Bank and Partner Funding Sources

as of January 12, 2021





as of January 12, 2021

Funding	Project Type	Funding Source	Availability	Award Type	Are Land Banks Eligible?	Award Size	Application Due Date	More Information
Keystone Communities Program	Community and economic development projects	State - DCED	Competitive	Multiple types of grants	Land banks eligible	Specific to the grant and program		Link
Local Share Account (Gaming Funds)	County Specific	County	County specific	Grant	Determined by county	Determined by county	N/A	Link
Member Contributions	Land bank specific	Land bank member jurisdiction(s)	Land bank specific - based on ICAs with municipalities or a direct general fund allocation to the land bank	Agreed upon amount	Land bank specific	Based on ICA or other agreement	N/A	
PHARE (RTT and Marcellus Shale)	Demolition, affordable housing, rehabilitation, community development, homelessness prevention, housing services	State - PHFA	Competitive; county specific for Marcellus Shale funding	Grant	Land banks eligible	Up to \$500,000 for most projects; up to \$1 million for LIHTC projects	2020 - November	Link
Philanthropic Funds/ Private Donations	Funder specific	Philanthropies, other funders	Funder specific	Grants	Determined by funder	Determined by funder	N/A	
Property Sales	Re-investment into Land Bank	Sales of properties by Land Banks	Land bank specific		Land bank specific			
Tax Revenue Sharing	Redeveloped properties	Land Bank member taxing authorities	Land bank specific - Based on ICAs with municipalities	5 years of sharing 50 % of increased property taxes with taxing jurisdictions	State authority granted only to land banks	Based on ICA	N/A	Link

Acronyms:

CFA - Pennsylvania Commonwealth Finance Agency
 DCED - Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development
 HUD - U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development
 ICA - Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, example agreements can be found [here](#)
 M - Million
 PHARE - Pennsylvania Housing Affordability Fund, the state housing trust fund
 PHFA - Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency
 RTT - Realty Transfer Tax, imposed by the state and local taxing authorities

Summary of Land Bank and Partner Funding Sources

Other Potential Funding Sources for Land Banks and/or Their Partner Organizations

Funding	Project Type	Funding Source	Availability	Award Type	Applicant Type	Award Size	Application Due Date	More Information
Business in Our Sites	Acquisition and development, including demolition and rehabilitation	DCED, CFA	Competitive	Loan, Combined Grant and Loan	Municipalities, RDAs, municipal authorities, IDAs, private developers (construction loans only)	No limit for loans, maximum \$4M or 40% of total combined award (whichever is less) for grants	Contact CFA	Link
Industrial Sites Reuse Program	Environmental site assessment and industrial site remediation	DCED	Competitive	Grant, Loan	Public entities, private nonprofit economic development entities, companies	Grants and loans up to \$200,000 for environmental assessments; Grants and loans up to \$1 million for remediation	Rolling submissions	Link
Low Income Housing Tax Credit, 9%	Construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing	IRS, PHFA	Competitive	Tax Credit	Developers	\$800,000 - \$1.25M (range of awards in 2020)	March 5, 2021	Link
Mixed-Use Incentive Program Tax Abatement	Construction and rehabilitation	Taxing authorities	Taxing authority specific	Tax Abatement	Property owners	Depends on value of improvements	New program, waiting for guidelines	Link
Neighborhood Assistance Program	Affordable housing, blight mitigation, other investments in distressed neighborhoods	DCED	Competitive	Tax Credit	Nonprofit community organizations and businesses	Tax credits of 55%-80% of business contributions	2020 - August	Link
Public Works; Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs	Economic development	EDA	Competitive	Grant	Municipalities, nonprofits	\$100,000 - \$30M	Rolling submissions	Link
Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP, RCAP)	Acquisition and construction	PA Office of the Budget	Competitive	Grant	Any entity with an eligible project	\$250,000 - \$10M (range of awards in 2020)	2020 - August	Link
Section 108 Loan Guarantee	Economic development, housing, and infrastructure projects	HUD, DCED	Noncompetitive	Loan Guarantee	Municipalities			Link

Summary of Land Bank and Partner Funding Sources

as of January 12, 2021



Supporting Documentation

- City:
 - o [Comprehensive Plan \(2025\)](#)
 - o Revitalization Plan for Downtown (2022)
 - o Visioning Retreat Summary (2022)
 - o [Consolidated Plan \(2020-2024\)](#)
 - o [Comprehensive Blight Strategy Plan \(2020\)](#)
 - o [Neighborhood Revitalization Plan \(2017\)](#)
 - o [Vision Plan \(2011\)](#)
 - o [Joint Comprehensive Plan \(2007\)](#)
 - o [Recreation, Park, & Open Space Plan \(2002\)](#)
- County/Regional
 - o Mercer County Community Development Plan
 - o [Mercer County Comprehensive Plan \(2026\)](#)
 - o Community Needs Assessment - [CAPMC](#)
 - o Pennsylvania Downtown Center - [Elm Street Manager's Playbook](#)

CITY OF SHARON

FINAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

OCTOBER

2025



NEIGHBORHOOD / COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

The City of Sharon is committed to enhancing community vitality by ensuring access to quality housing, investing in infrastructure, and revitalizing neighborhoods. Over the years, the City has undertaken a variety of initiatives aimed at improving the built environment and overall livability of its neighborhoods. These efforts include the demolition of unsafe and blighted structures, strengthened code enforcement, and the transformation of vacant lots into community assets. Together, these actions have improved the appearance, safety, and functionality of many parts of the City—making Sharon a more attractive place to live, work, and invest.

However, revitalization is not a one-time achievement—it is a continuous process that must evolve with the community. Sharon faces ongoing challenges related to aging infrastructure, housing affordability, and disinvestment in certain areas. As the City continues to grow and change, it must remain proactive and flexible in addressing these needs through thoughtful planning and strategic partnerships.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHARON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP.

FOCUS AREA

2

NEIGHBORHOOD /
COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

OBJECTIVE 1
OBJECTIVE 2

	ACTION	PARTNERS	BUDGET	FUNDING	TIMELINE
OBJECTIVE 1	Develop City Housing Plan with Priorities Based on Each Neighborhood	City of Sharon; Sharon Blight Task Force; Sharon Beautification Commission; Mercer County; Mercer County Housing Authority; Sharon City School District; Local Churches; Local Nonprofits; YNDC; Private Developers; Landlords; Local Financial Institutions; Local Realtors; Community Organizations; SCDC	Dependent on Projects	DCED; CDBG; PHARE; BRP; FHLB; HOME; YNDC	2025-2026: Continue cleanups and beautification efforts. 2026-2027: create prioritization strategy for neighborhoods.
	Strengthen Code Enforcement	City of Sharon Code Dept; Sharon Blight Task Force; Non-profits; Mercer County; Sharon City School District; YNDC; DCED	Solicitor and other Staff Time	Code Funding Source, including technical assistance	2025-2027: Review codified ordinance. 2028+: Implement code strategy.
	Support Neighborhood Organizations	Local Churches/Non-profits/Organizations (Neighborhood Anchor); SCDC; Local Businesses; Educational Institutions; YNDC; PDC;	Dependent on Projects	CDBG; Community Heart and Soul	2026-2027: Engage local anchors to outreach. 2027+: Implement neighborhood strategies.
OBJECTIVE 2	Preserve and Improve Affordable Housing	RDA; Planning Commission; Mercer County Housing Authority; Mercer County Housing Coalition; YNDC; Mercer County; Landlords; Local Non-profits	Dependent on Projects	DCED; CDBG; YNDC	2025+: continue housing rehab program and apply for other programs.
	Modernize Zoning for Housing Diversity	Planning Commission; RDA; Local Financial Institutions; Mercer County; Developers; Realtors	Staff and Solicitor Time	N/A	2025-2026: Update zoning ordinance. 2026-2027: Determine models for neighborhoods.
	Incentivize Mixed-Income Development	Planning Commission; RDA; Elected Officials; Realtors; YNDC; Private Developers; MCRPC; Local Financial Institutions,	Dependent on Projects	LERTA abatements; LIHTC; DCED; FHLB; PHARE	2026-2027: Engage housing developers
	Support Opportunities for New Construction	Planning Commission; RDA; MCRPC; Real Estate Developers; Local Financial Institutions; Local Realtors; Property Owners; YNDC; Penn Northwest; Elected Officials	Primarily private investment – City infrastructure upgrades \$100k+ as needed (assumed)	CDBG; DCED; Private Financing	2028-2035: Implement housing plan

TIMELINE

Activate the Land Bank Program	RDA; Planning Commission; Elected Officials; MCRPC; CAPMC; Local Legal/Title professionals; Local Realtors; Developers; Non-profits; Penn Northwest	75k-\$150k annually	DCED; CDBG; PHARE; Federal HOME/ ARPA; Penn Northwest; Land Bank Funding Sources (See <i>Appendices</i>)	2025-2026: Engage taxing bodies to activate land bank. 2027-2028: Implement funding plan to go with or without County. 2028+: Implement land bank plan.
Expand Housing Rehabilitation Efforts	City of Sharon; CAPMC; LCCAP; Mercer County; YNDC; Local Financial Institutions; Real Estate Developers	\$20k-\$70k per home	DCED MAP; CDBG; PHARE; BRP; YNDC; Penn Northwest; HOME; FHLB; NAP	2025-2026: continue and expand housing rehab programs. 2027+: implement additional housing rehab programs.
Offer Incentives for Private / Resident Investment	City of Sharon; Mercer County; Local Financial Institutions; Developers; Realtors; Residents; Sharon City School District	Dependent on Projects	DCED; CDBG; PHARE; Federal HOME Funds; Penn Northwest; Private/Resident funding; DCNR; Local Sponsors	2026-2027: Plan for small-scale residential projects. 2027+: Begin to implement small-scale residential projects. 2028-2035: Plan and implement larger residential projects
Transform Vacant Lots into Assets	Planning Commission; Sharon Beautification Commission; CAPMC/ L2L; Western PA Conservancy; Educational Institutions; YNDC; RDA; Realtors; Developers; Trails associations; Sharon Recreation Commission	Pocket Parks - \$10k-\$50k; Urban Gardens - \$5k-\$10k	CDBG; EPA; DCNR; NFWF; NRPA; Penn Northwest; Safe Routes to School (SRTS)	2026: Identify locations. 2027+: Start first project.

FOCUS AREA

2

NEIGHBORHOOD /
COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

OBJECTIVE 4

ACTION	PARTNERS	BUDGET	FUNDING	TIMELINE
Develop a Street and Alley Maintenance Program	City of Sharon; Sharon Street Dept; PennDOT; Elected Officials	Dependent on Projects	PennDOT; PIB; SRTS; MTF; CDBG	2026-2027: Inventory of streets and alleys with funding strategy. 2027-2028: Implement strategy.
Utilize Green Infrastructure to Support Sustainability	Mercer County Conservation District; PA DEP; Western PA Conservancy	Dependent on Projects	DEP; DCNR; PennVEST; EPA; CDBG	2028+: Expand tree/landscaping program. 2028-2029: Develop green infrastructure education with partners. 2029+: Implement small-scale projects. 2032+: Implement large-scale projects
Modernize Public Services and Infrastructure	City of Sharon; Sharon Sanitary Authority; Mercer County; PA DEP; PennVEST	Dependent on Projects	PennVEST; EPA; CDBG; DCED	2026-2027: Inventory stormwater and sewer infrastructure. 2027-2028: determine implementation of stormwater fee.
Strengthen City Maintenance Operations and Communication	SCDC; Mercer County; Local Business; Residents	\$50-\$75k for consultant	CDBG; EPA; DCNR; NFWF; NRPA; Penn Northwest; Safe Routes to School (SRTS)	2026: Hire Consultant. 2027+ Implement suggestions.

FOCUS AREA

2

NEIGHBORHOOD /
COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION

OBJECTIVE 5

ACTION	PARTNERS	BUDGET	FUNDING	TIMELINE
Develop an Active Transportation Plan	MCCOG; MCRPC; Surrounding Municipalities; PennDOT; Shenango Valley Shuttle Service	\$40k-\$50k for consultant	DCED; PennDOT MTF; RTP	2025-2026: Support updated plan of SVSS. 2026-2028: Develop active transportation plan. 2028-2032: Implement active transportation plan.
Repair and Complete Sidewalk Networks	City of Sharon; Property Owners; PennDOT	Costs vary by extent: est. \$250+ per linear foot of sidewalk	DCED; CDBG; PennDOT; MTF; SRTS; RTP	2026-2028: Inventory sidewalks. 2028-2029: Outreach/ research of sidewalk repair program. 2029+: Implement sidewalk repair program
Enhance Bicycle Route and Trail Connectivity	Shenango Valley Trail Organizations; PennDOT; Surrounding Municipalities; MCRPC; Planning Commission	Dependent on Projects	DCNR; PennDOT; MTF; NFWF; SRTS; RTP	2028-2032: Implement active transportation plan
Reroute Truck Traffic	City of Sharon; MCRPC; Northwest Commission; PennDOT; Surrounding Municipalities	Dependent on Projects	PennDOT; Federal Transportation Funds	2026-2028: Begin discussions with partners. 2028+: Implement strategies.

INVESTMENT PRIORITY MAP

This section outlines the City of Sharon's key Investment Priority Areas (or future land use). These areas, indicated on the Map 2, represent strategic opportunities to advance the City's vision by focusing redevelopment, housing, and recreational enhancements where they can have the greatest impact. This map highlights key areas identified as catalysts for positive change, along with the existing land use patterns in the City. Unlike regulatory tools such as zoning ordinances, the Investment Priority Map focuses on areas identified through the planning process as prime candidates for redevelopment or enhancements. These sites have been selected based on their potential for transformative projects that align with the City's goals.

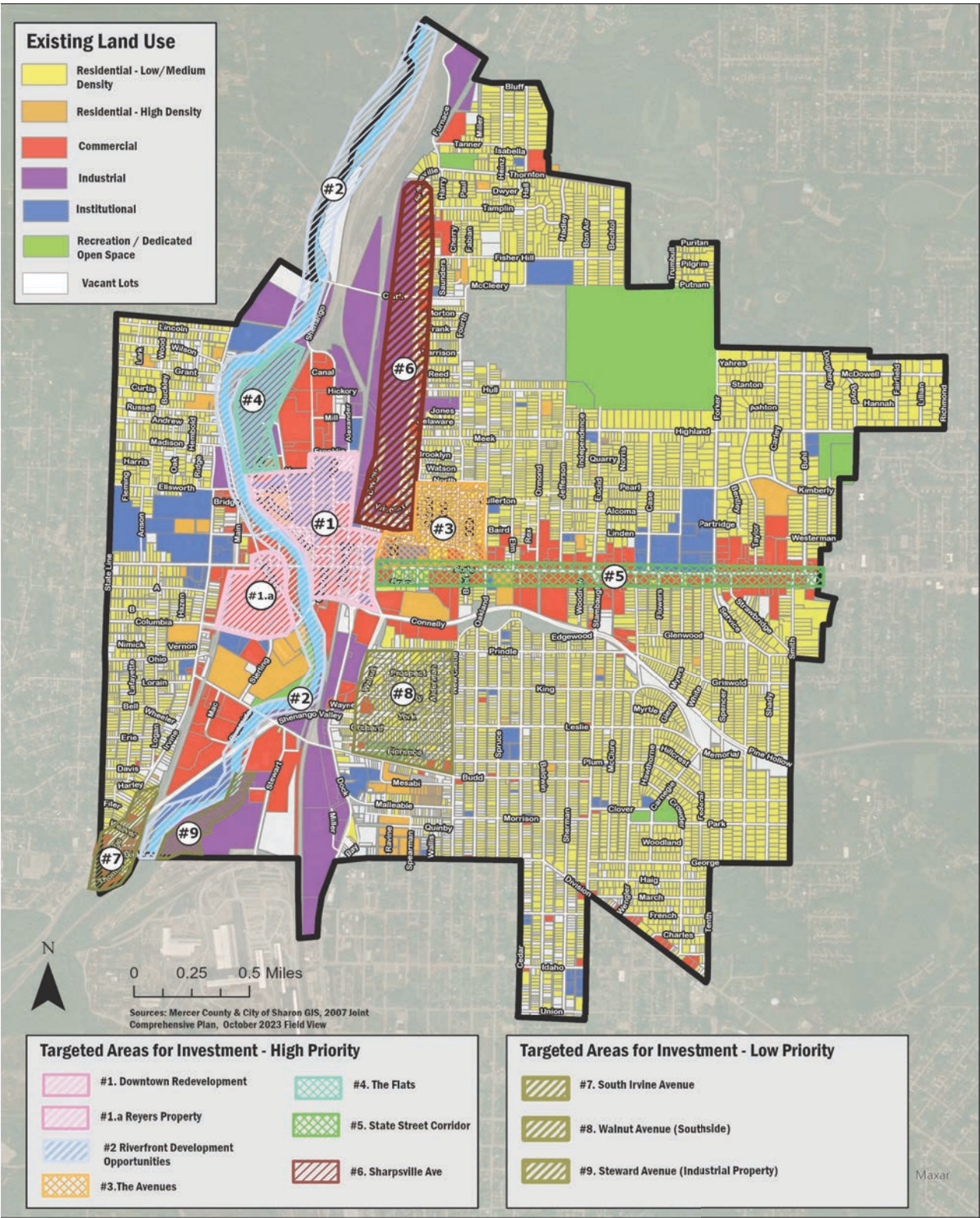
Since the City is mostly built out, achieving the vision outlined in the plan will be a gradual process, especially where current development does not align with future aspirations. Changes will need to be phased in over time as opportunities arise, and existing patterns slowly shift to reflect the desired future state. Patience and strategic planning will be essential in guiding change and redevelopment. The Investment Priority Map provides a strategic framework for local leaders, illustrating a direction for channeling market interest and investment towards these priority areas. By focusing efforts and collaborating with partner agencies, the City can effectively direct funding and resources to areas most likely to yield significant improvements, paving the way for a gradual realization of the vision.

Following this framework, eight target areas have been prioritized for investment. Each area is categorized by its primary opportunity type – Redevelopment, Housing, or Riverfront – reflecting the focus of potential improvements. The sections on the following pages detail each area's current conditions, envisioned future, and strategic importance to Sharon's overall revitalization strategy.



PHOTO CREDIT: CITY OF SHARON

Map 2: Investment Priority Map



#3. The Avenues

Current Conditions: The East Hill neighborhood, situated between Buhl Park and downtown Sharon, holds strong potential for targeted residential reinvestment. According to a 2024 housing inventory study conducted by the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC) and the City's Beautification Commission, the areas closest to Buhl Park exhibit some of the city's highest levels of housing stability. However, as one moves downhill toward the downtown core, housing conditions show signs of modest disinvestment, though not to the extent of the city's most distressed areas.

In recent years, the City of Sharon has prioritized the demolition of blighted properties, removing over 400 structures citywide. Within this neighborhood, a high concentration of demolitions have created vacant lots, now positioned for infill development and housing rehabilitation. As a result, the area is shifting from a focus on demolition to one centered on rebuilding and reinvestment.

Opportunities: The residential areas of 'The Avenues' are well-positioned for continued growth and revitalization through targeted investment in housing, infrastructure, and community partnerships. Reinvestment in this area should focus on a multi-faceted strategy centered around housing, infrastructure, community engagement, and neighborhood identity. The City should prioritize housing rehabilitation and infill development by leveraging cleared lots from recent demolitions for context-sensitive new construction and supporting the revitalization of aging but structurally sound homes through grant programs, tax incentives, and affordable financing.

Collaboration with organizations such as the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation (YNDC) can help shape a targeted housing strategy and secure outside funding. In tandem with housing efforts, public infrastructure should be enhanced to improve livability, including street resurfacing, sidewalk repairs, ADA accessibility upgrades, modernized lighting, and consistent signage—all contributing to a walkable, cohesive streetscape. Community partnerships will be critical, with opportunities to deepen relationships with anchor institutions like the Buhl Club and Covenant Presbyterian Church, while also encouraging the formation of a neighborhood association to give residents a stronger voice in future planning. Finally, the neighborhood would benefit from a clear and unified identity, supported through thoughtful branding, signage, and placemaking elements such as public art and wayfinding, to celebrate its assets and build a renewed sense of place.



#5. State Street Corridor

Current Conditions: The State Street Corridor, stretching from Dock Street to the Hermitage border, serves as a key gateway into Sharon and one of the region’s busiest commercial routes. It features a mix of institutional, medical, commercial, and residential uses, anchored by landmarks like Sharon High School, Diehl Automotive, Buhl Mansion, Sharon Regional Medical Center, and several historic churches.

Despite these assets, the corridor struggles with vacant properties—including former Walgreens, Rite Aid, and an unused apartment building—that disrupt its continuity and visual appeal. Inconsistent design, limited pedestrian infrastructure, and underused parcels create a fragmented environment that underperforms its potential as a prominent entry into the City.

Opportunities: The State Street Corridor holds strong potential as a gateway into Sharon, offering opportunities for reinvestment, placemaking, and economic development. A coordinated strategy can enhance its identity and functionality through the following priorities:

1. **Gateway Branding:** Create a unified entrance to the city with branded signage, landscaping, decorative lighting, and entry treatments—especially near the Hermitage border—to establish a clear sense of arrival.
2. **Redevelopment of Vacant Sites:** Prioritize adaptive reuse of vacant buildings like the former Walgreens, Rite Aid, and apartment complex for retail, medical office, or affordable housing, supported by site readiness and institutional partnerships.
3. **Streetscape & Mobility Enhancements:** Implement complete streets improvements with sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, lighting, and transit amenities to improve safety and accessibility.
4. **Institutional Frontage Improvements:** Partner with schools and Sharon Regional Medical Center to enhance the visual and pedestrian experience along their frontages, including public art or shared amenities.
5. **Support for Small Businesses:** Activate underused storefronts through pop-ups, incubators, and flexible zoning to attract local entrepreneurs and new retail models.
6. **Zoning & Land Use Updates:** Align zoning to support mixed-use, higher-density residential, and institutional growth. Consider parcel consolidation and form-based codes to ensure cohesive development.



#6. Sharpsville Avenue

Current Conditions: Sharpsville Avenue is a historically industrial corridor with a mix of large-scale industrial, commercial, and residential uses. It borders The Avenues neighborhood and plays a key role in Sharon's economic landscape. The corridor is anchored by the former Westinghouse Electric facility—nearly 1 million square feet—now partially redeveloped as The Landing, home to WestWin Urban Ag, artist studios, and community spaces, with plans for a year-round public market. A dedicated bike lane runs from Buhl Park to downtown but faces safety issues due to hillside runoff. Heavy truck traffic further conflicts with growing pedestrian and retail activity, especially near East State Street. The City has secured some funding to reroute truck traffic around more pedestrian-sensitive areas.

Opportunities: The Sharpsville Avenue Corridor is actively transitioning from a hybrid residential-industrial zone into a more defined employment and innovation district, with strategic opportunities to improve safety, leverage adaptive reuse, and align with broader economic development goals.

- 1. Adaptive Reuse & Innovation District:** Leverage the Westinghouse site for green tech, light manufacturing, food systems, and creative industries. Support reuse through zoning, incentives, and infrastructure upgrades.
- 2. Truck Traffic Management:** Implement the City's truck rerouting plan to reduce conflicts with downtown foot traffic. Explore long-term street redesign to better balance industrial and pedestrian needs.
- 3. Bike Lane & Green Infrastructure:** Improve bike lane safety by addressing stormwater runoff with green infrastructure. Enhance markings, signage, and separation to increase ridership.
- 4. Employment-Focused Land Use:** Support the corridor's shift toward commercial and employment uses through updated zoning and appropriate residential buffers.
- 5. Placemaking at The Landing:** Partner with The Landing to expand indoor market space and cultural programming, creating a regional draw and linking the corridor to downtown.
- 6. Streetscape & Infrastructure Improvements:** Invest in sidewalks, lighting, intersections, and wayfinding to improve access and reinforce the corridor's evolving mixed-use identity.

By focusing on adaptive reuse, corridor safety, and economic clustering, the Sharpsville Avenue Corridor can evolve into a model for post-industrial regeneration, blending innovation with historic identity and regional connectivity.



PHOTO CREDIT: THE LANDING

Plan Feedback

