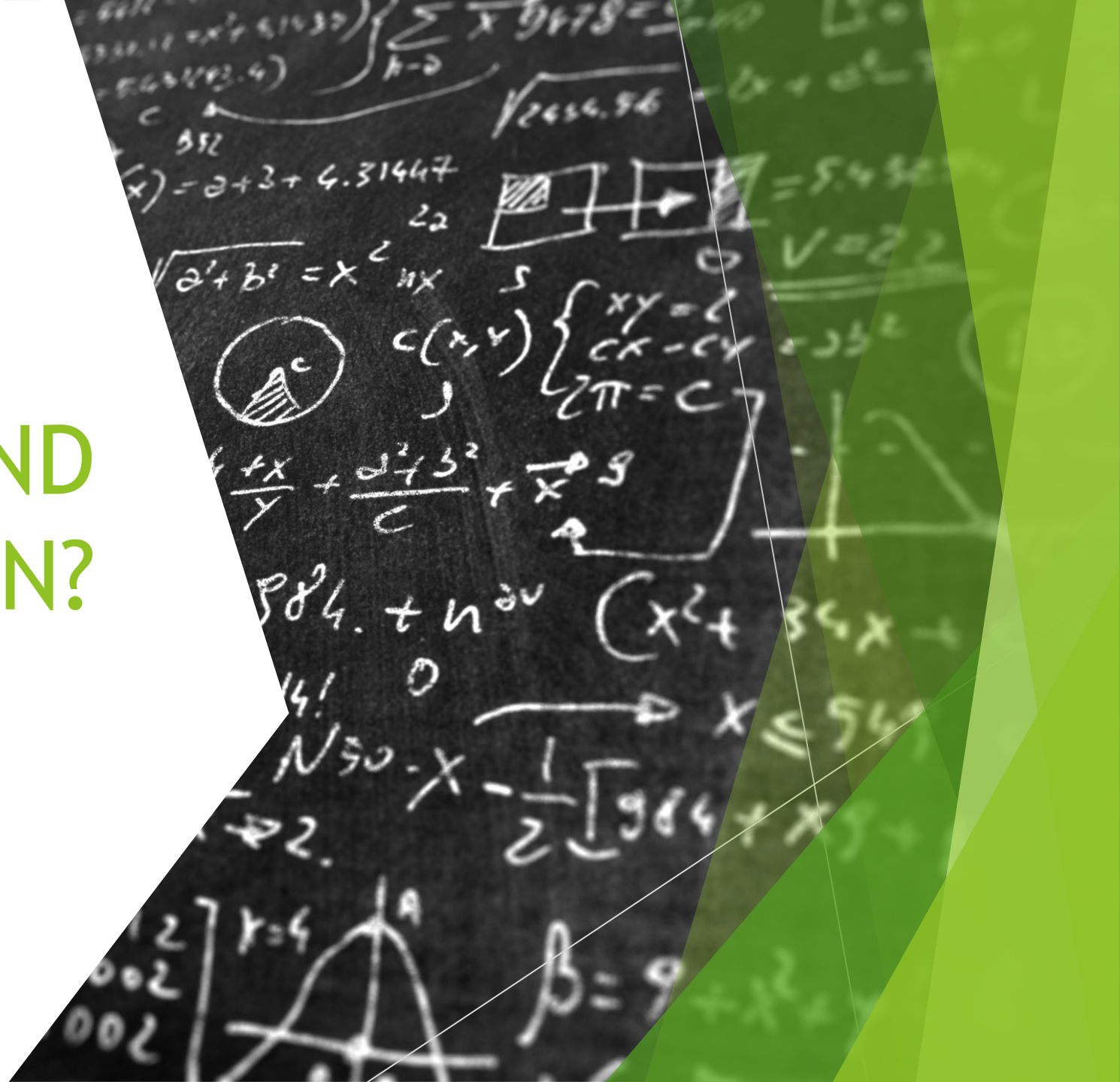



LAND USE PLAN UPDATE

2025

WHAT IS A LAND USE PLAN?





A land use plan is a document designed to guide the future actions, development, growth and direction of a community. It is created with the input of residents, business owners and stakeholders to reflect a vision for the future of the township. The plan is designed to provide continuity between boards, make informed changes to zoning regulations, and provide reference and informed decision-making on large scale projects. An up-to-date plan is an important tool in ensuring that future growth or change reflects the will of the community at-large.

How do we Create the Land Use Plan?

- ▶ The land use plan already exists, but it was last updated in 1999 and last revised in 2008, it is best practice to completely update every 10 years
- ▶ The first step is for the Board of Trustees to move to create a Land Use Plan Update Committee
- ▶ Once the Board moves to create the Committee, letters of interest are accepted from members of the community.
- ▶ The Board selects the members of the Committee and the Committee begins to meet on a regular basis
- ▶ The Committee seeks on-going public input while gathering data and research to make recommendations to include in the Plan
- ▶ The Plan is presented to the Board for adoption

Is the Land Use Plan Legally Binding?

No, the Land Use Plan does not legally bind the Board to carry out any of the recommendations it contains, it is merely a guide that should reflect the will of the public whose input was sought in the creation of the goals and recommendations listed therein. The Plan is ideally used as a reference by the Zoning Commission when looking to amend the Zoning Resolution as well as by the Board of Trustees when considering projects in areas covered by the plan, such as transportation, recreation or community facilities. It can also be used by the Board of Zoning Appeals when reviewing a use variance.

How Long Does the Land Use Plan Update Take?

The plan will take roughly 18-24 months to complete, and this will include multiple opportunities for public input, including a community survey, open meetings and several public forums as the update progresses. It will also be prudent for the committee to create focus groups to engage members of the public in areas they are most passionate about.

How Much \$\$\$\$ is this Going to Cost the Township??

As recently as 2019 Chester sought proposals for a Land Use Plan Update from professional planning firms and were given a cost estimate between 70 and 90 thousand dollars. The price for this service has undoubtedly increased dramatically in the last 5 years. With a full-time Zoning Inspector with the ability to facilitate the Update Committee along with technical assistance from the Geauga County Planning Commission, the cost to do this in-house will be relegated to the cost of printing and mailing post cards and other incidental costs related to disseminating information to the public; a fraction of the cost of outsourcing the plan. An added benefit to this approach is the plan will be made by Chester and for Chester, rather than a vision created by a large planning firm in Downtown Cleveland or elsewhere with no ties to the community. This represents active involvement of the community in creating the Plan, rather than passive involvement of approving a plan created by someone else.

What does the plan cover?

It can cover whatever the Committee decides, but typically the following subjects are included:

- ▶ History
- ▶ Background Information
- ▶ Survey Results
- ▶ Demographics
- ▶ Natural Resources
- ▶ Zoning Information
- ▶ Community Facilities
- ▶ S.W.O.T Analysis
- ▶ Transportation Information
- ▶ Recreation
- ▶ Agricultural Information
- ▶ Education Opportunities
- ▶ Recommendations
- ▶ Community Goals
- ▶ Future Development

Who Will be on the Committee?

That is up to the Trustees, but in an effort to gain an accurate representation of the community, you want a good mix including: Township Officials, long-time residents, newer residents, business owners, civic leaders. In addition, it is ideal to have members with specialized knowledge, such as: architects or engineers, real estate, water resources, public safety, logistics, finance, etc.

In short, a well-rounded group with a wide range of ideas and experiences that represents the varied interests and perspectives of the community as a whole. This is not to mention the ongoing solicitation of input from the general public to inform the direction of the Committee, especially as they get closer to making recommendations to include in the final draft of the plan.

Questions?