

Mayor Don Walters  
2310 Second Street  
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio 44221



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## Merriman Valley – Schumacher Code FAQ's

The City of Cuyahoga Falls, along with the City of Akron, hired a consultant to prepare a Master Plan and create a form-based code for the Merriman Valley-Schumacher Area. Some residents have voiced concern about this project and have asked city administration to provide answers to frequently asked questions. Based on those concerns we have prepared the following FAQ responses. Further inquiries may be submitted to: [publiccomments@cityofcf.com](mailto:publiccomments@cityofcf.com) and/or by calling: 330-971-8135.

- 1. Why is the city making these changes?** *The city undertook the planning process as a joint venture with the City of Akron due to the unique nature of the municipal borders and proximity to the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, and in response to public concern over recent development activity in the area. The proposed form-based code is the legal document for land use and design standards necessary to guide more sustainable development and implement the public's vision for the master plan.*
- 2. What is a form-based Code?** *While the Master Plan is aspirational in nature, the form-based code is the rule book on how to achieve the Master Plan's goals. Typically, a form-based code provides illustrative and visual examples, graphs, maps and charts, and not simply text, thereby making it more user-friendly. It is also proactive and provides the very vision we want developers to follow.*
- 3. Does adoption of the MVS Code require a property owner to sell or develop their property?** *No. The code does not require property owners to sell or develop their property. The MVS Code provides new standards intended to enhance the appearance of the planning area and provide regulations that are more sensitive to the environment if new development is proposed.*
- 4. Will the new code change the "rural feel" of the area?** *It will in fact enhance it. The new code requires more preservation of open space than any code since the 1986 merger. In addition, the new scenic buffer will provide a much more rural look from the roadway.*
- 5. Will the new code allow for high density apartments?** *No, the code allows detached single-family dwellings and attached single family dwellings (i.e. townhomes). The maximum height of a structure is 2.5 stories. The minimum open space requirement in the CN district is 60% and 20% in the N District.*



6. **How will the new code enhance residential development standards?** *The new code will require developers to install a connectivity system, meaning projects must contain a system of sidewalks and/or paths that connect to adjacent streets and/or existing trail systems. It will also require 40% of lots to be adjacent to open space. CN neighborhoods will be required to have 60% of open space and N neighborhoods will be required to have 20% open space.*
7. **How will the new code enhance MX-F development?** *The new code will enhance building design standards, primarily along Akron-Peninsula Road.*
8. **How will the new code modify permitted uses along Akron-Peninsula Road?** *The new code will allow maker space, lodging, eating, and drinking and will eliminate personal storage and auto dealerships from this area.*
9. **How will the new code modify personal storage in E-1 and C-1 Districts?** *The new code will modify personal storage to a “limited use” in these districts which will significantly increase the design standards.*
10. **What can I do if I want to protect my land from ever being developed?** *One option is to have a conservation easement placed on your property. Several non-profits do this kind of work (i.e. West Creek Conservancy ([www.westcreek.org](http://www.westcreek.org)), Western Reserve Land Conservancy ([www.wrlandconservancy.org](http://www.wrlandconservancy.org)), and the Nature Conservancy ([www.nature.org](http://www.nature.org))).*
11. **Do I have to preserve my property as open space?** *This code does not mandate changes to existing uses or site features. Newly or redeveloped properties will be required to comply with the regulations of their respective zoning district.*
12. **Where will the scenic buffer be required for new development?** *Scenic buffers will be required for new development along Portage Trail and Akron-Peninsula Road.*
13. **How will the scenic buffer be measured?** *It is measured 50 feet from the edge of the road surface.*
14. **How does the Scenic Buffer apply to existing dwellings?** *It is not required unless a new development is proposed. However, property owners are encouraged to participate.*
15. **Will a trail be built through my property?** *No, there is no obligation for a property owner to develop their property for any purpose. Plans previously viewed in public forums were conceptual.*
16. **If there is a fire and my home is damaged, can I re-build my house as it was whether or not it meets the new code?** *Yes. Repair of a structure due to fire is considered “maintenance and repair” 2.12 G, and you would not be subject to these new standards.*
17. **I live on Portage Trail Ext., and I want to construct a building addition. Will the new code apply?** *Yes. Building additions which increase the square feet would be subject to the CN or N Site & Buildings Standards.*

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- 18. I live on Portage Trail Ext., and I want to add a shed to my property. What are the restrictions?** For existing lots, the existing code standards in Table 1132-2 would apply - i.e. for a ½-acre lot the shed must be located 6 feet behind the principal dwelling and 10 feet from any other property line.
- 19. What about storm water management regulations in the new code?** Storm water management regulations are covered in the existing Cuyahoga Falls Development Code and will also apply to the MVS District. The existing storm water management regulations utilized by the Cuyahoga Falls Engineering Department are among the strictest in the County.
- 20. Are there any riparian setback regulations in the proposed Code?** Riparian setback regulations are covered in the existing Cuyahoga Falls Development Code and will also apply to the MVS District.

### **Benefits of Adopting the new Merriman Valley – Schumacher Code**

- ✓ Approximately 119 acres of green space will be preserved in the target area.
- ✓ It protects the habitat, wildlife, and the Cuyahoga River.
- ✓ It promotes a new, recreational, and eco-tourism district.

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