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# North Lima Poised for Future Development

MidDecember 2022 | Dan O'Brien | Matthes://www.facebook.com/sharer/sharer.php?u=https://businessjournaldaily.com/article/ <u>north-lima-poised-for-future-development/</u>) <u> "(http://www.twitter.com/intent/tweet?</u> text=North+Lima+Poised+for+Future+Development&url=https%3A%2F%2Fbusinessjournaldaily.com%2Farticle%2Fnorth-lima-poisedfor-future-development&via=TheBizJournal) (https://www.linkedin.com/sharing/share-offsite/?url=https:// <u>businessjournaldaily.com/article/north-lima-poised-for-future-development/</u>). <u>■ (mailto:?subject=North Lima Poised for Future</u> Development&body=Check out this article https://businessjournaldaily.com/article/north-lima-poised-for-future-development/)

NORTH LIMA, Ohio - Murray Davis gazes north along Market Street not far from the Ohio Turnpike interchange in Beaver Township. On the west side of the thoroughfare stands a decrepit, abandoned truck stop with weeds choking the parking lot.

Directly across the road, just south of the on-ramp, is a vacant lot surrendered to dense scrub brush. Along its front is a for-sale sign, advertising 15 acres of industrial-zoned land for the taking.

"When I was a kid, there were four 24/7 restaurants here at one time," says Davis, owner of the Davis Motel along Market Street. The roadside inn has been in his family for 62 years and Davis has witnessed it all - from the bustling business during the heyday of the Mahoning Valley's steel industry in the 1960s and 1970s through patches of struggle and prosperity since that industry collapsed.



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"When I was 18 or 19 years old, I would look out the window and notice all of the lights shutting off across the street," Davis recalls. A major truck stop closed. Other businesses and restaurants followed. "I didn't think our family would make it," he says.

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# PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

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Recent developments have elicited hope that North Lima and Beaver Township will emerge as a thriving hub of new travel plazas, restaurants, lodging and distribution activity.

Love's Travel Stops is performing its due diligence on the 15 acres for sale near the interchange and is said to have plans to develop a new travel center there. In addition, officials confirm that Travel Centers of America has also expressed interest in sites in the vicinity, which would inject millions more dollars in investment and the creation of additional jobs.

These potential projects, coupled with a massive sanitary sewer project underway along Western Reserve Road and an overhaul of the Eastgate toll plaza on the Ohio Turnpike, point to better days ahead for this part of Beaver Township, Davis says.

"I haven't been this excited in a long time," he says. "I feel that there's a renaissance of sorts happening. Land is relatively inexpensive. The new turnpike configuration is helpful. And the police are good here."

Beaver Township Zoning Inspector Richard Martin says his office has been in contact with representatives from Love's Travel Stops and was assured that the project remains on track. "They're still working through their wetlands permits," he says.





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In February, the Beaver Township zoning board approved the project. Typical investment for these projects is between \$12 million and \$15 million, a company representative told the zoning board. The new Love's development would include a Hardee's restaurant and drive-thru, a dog park, a tire replacement and repair center and fueling operation.

Martin also confirmed that an entity representing Travel Centers of America has expressed interest in developing a site near the interchange. One potential location is the shuttered Penn Ohio Truck Stop, just north of the Davis Motel.

"There's possibility for that area and we sent them some ideas for potential sites for new development in North Lima," Martin says.

This section of North Lima is especially attractive because it's home to the first turnpike interchange in Ohio when entering from Pennsylvania, says Pamela Simmons, Beaver Township trustee. The first exit off I-680 north is to South Avenue in North Lima, which was completed three years ago.

A second turnpike interchange - the Willow Crest Interchange - curls onto Market Street where officials have eyed development.

Work is underway to turn the Eastgate toll plaza seven miles to the east of the Market Street exit into a toll-free station for eastbound motorists traveling from milepost 211 in Braceville Township in Trumbull County. Tolls would still be collected from westbound passengers entering Eastgate from Pennsylvania, but an E-Z Pass lane would be included that allows drivers to travel non-stop at reduced speeds.

"We definitely have the traffic," Simmons says.

According to traffic data provided by the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Market Street corridor in North Lima is heavily traveled. Annual average daily traffic along Market Street just north of the turnpike interchange stands at 16,090 vehicles, data from 2021 show. South of the interchange, the traffic stands at 13,112 per day.

According to data provided by the Ohio Turnpike, the Eastgate toll plaza in October recorded 403,803 vehicles entering and 368,211 exiting for a count of 772,014 cars and trucks. Through October, 7,558,924

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Venture Plastics Adds New Molding Machine (https:// businessjournaldaily.com/article/venture-plastics-adds-new-molding-machine/) vehicles have passed through Eastgate, a 2.1% increase from the same period the previous year.

The addition of two new travel centers in Beaver Township could help to alleviate truck backup and refueling at existing stations near the Willow Crest interchange, such as a the Pilot and Speedway retailers along Market Street, Simmons says.

She's also confident that the Love's project will move forward and is optimistic about the prospects to redevelop the former Penn Ohio site. "There's been interest in it but there's nothing definite yet," Simmons says of the abandoned truck stop.

Moreover, this section of Beaver Township has a significant amount of open land zoned industrial near the turnpike interchange, Simmons says. For-sale signs advertising prime industrial land are visible along East Calla Road on the northern side of the turnpike and along Woodworth Road to the east.

"We've had people come in and they have inquiries about all kinds of things. It could be great for a warehouse or distribution hub," she says. "It's in an area that's zoned industrial. It would be great for Beaver Township and the Mahoning Valley."

And there are other factors and projects that could help to spur development in this part of the township, Simmons says. The area near the interchange and roundabout at South Avenue off I-680, for example, could draw interest from hotels and restaurants. Much of this growth, however, is limited because the area lacks sanitary sewer service, she says.

This issue could be resolved in the near future because the Mahoning County Sanitary Engineer's office is spearheading one of its most ambitious projects in decades. This project entails constructing new sanitary sewer service along Western Reserve Road, a section of which serves as the border between Boardman and Beaver townships.

"Once there's sanitary sewer, there might be potential for development along South Avenue, on the north side of the roundabout," Simmons says.

The entire sanitary sewer project will extend along Western Reserve, beginning at the Hitchcock Road intersection and run east to Unity Road in Poland and Springfield townships, says Mahoning County Engineer Patrick Ginnetti.

"We're in Phase II of the project," Ginnetti says. This particular leg, estimated at \$18 million, will extend from Hitchcock to Five Points in Poland Township, making it possible for Beaver Township developments to tap into the line with a north-south connection along Market Street or South Avenue. Work is underway between Hitchcock and East Market Street.

Phase III is projected to cost another \$6 million and would extend from Five Points to Unity Road.

"It's probably going to help spur development," Ginnetti says. "It will add sewer where there's no sewer right now." The project also includes widening Western Reserve Road from Hitchcock to South Avenue.

Work on the sewer line began in October, Ginnetti says. "It's a three-year project. So we're looking at 2025 when it's completed," he says.

The project is not tied to any specific development, Ginnetti says. Rather it's an effort to address congestion along Western Reserve, which is among the Mahoning Valley's most traveled corridors. "We went after this money about five or six years ago," he says. "This is one of the largest projects in quite some time."

Beaver Township's Simmons says that all of these projects stand to have nothing but a positive impact on the North Lima area.

"On the other hand, with new development, you've got to provide more services – police, fire, traffic. But we want those projects to move forward," she says. "Beaver Township is positioned great for economic

growth."

For longtime business owners such as Murray Davis, any new development is worth the wait.

"What you learn is: You learn to be patient," he says as he muses on the boom and bust years of the Mahoning Valley.

"We've seen the busy times and the bad times," Davis reflects. "Now, I can envision this whole area lit up again. It's exciting."

Pictured at top: Murray Davis and his family have seen the good times come and go in North Lima.





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