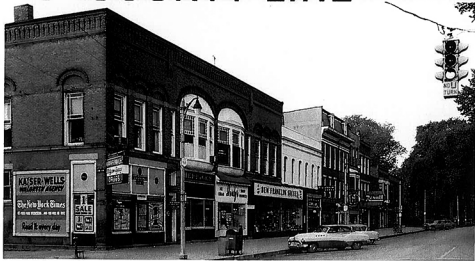


COUNTY LINE



Main Street Lorain County

⋈
This image from 1954 shows West College Street and the Ben Franklin store. Oberlin's Main Street area has maintained its energetic appeal as stores have adapted to today's residents' needs.

Main Streets are synonymous with a simpler time and pace. In today's urban-sprawl society those places sometimes feel like a lost way of life. Fortunately, there are still towns throughout Lorain County that beckon us back to a time of everyday people, hometown values and a close-knit community.

Oberlin

The intersection of Main and College streets has been Oberlin's economic hub for more than 175 years. Founded in 1833 by two Presbyterian ministers, the city's heart is a prominent thoroughfare of commerce, entertainment and social gathering venues.

Many of Main Street's buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and date back to the 1860s. A series of fires in the late 19th century destroyed many of the building's original wood frames — which is why many of the structures are now brick.

Eric Norenberg, city manager, credits Main Street's longevity to its ability to evolve and meet the needs of the city's residents and visitors. For example, a storefront that was once

a dry cleaner is now becoming a bicycle shop, which caters to the local hot topics of sustainability and outdoor activity, he says.

The bike shop will be a welcome addition as cyclists travel the rail-trail — a bicycle trail built along the abandoned railroad right-of-way that once linked Toledo, Norwalk and Cleveland to such booming cities to the west as Chicago. Where the bikeway reaches Main Street in Oberlin, it passes alongside an old train depot, a great spot to stop for water or a quick bite from one of the quaint restaurants that dot the strip. While designated trail parking is not yet available, a park-n-ride project will transform Oberlin's historic Gasholder Building into a transportation hub. — Renee Dugan