

CITY OF CHILLICOTHE

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT 2023

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



CITY OF
CHILLICOTHE
LUKE M. FEENEY, MAYOR



OVERVIEW

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: The Choose Chillicothe process set to create, with the community, a new, modern comprehensive plan for the City of Chillicothe. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission on January 18, 2023 and passed by City Council on March 15, 2023, through Resolution 13-23.

ROSS COUNTY LAND BANK: A separate entity from the city, the Land Bank was active in 2024, led by the Planning Department and Chaired by Mayor Feeney, to improve the quality of neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: The Planning Department has continued to lead efforts with community engagement across all departments which has improved communication and feedback from residents.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING: Chillicothe received \$2.2 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. The Planning Department led development of the spending plan based on community input.

GRANTS: The Planning Department applied for over \$64M in grants to support citywide operations.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Yoctangee Park (South) Proposed Rendering



Chillicothe's last comprehensive plan was completed in 1948. Since then, the City has experienced significant growth and change. The Choose Chillicothe process set to create, a new, modern comprehensive plan for the City of Chillicothe. Public input was fundamental in the 12-month process. A 38-person Steering Committee representing the diversity of the community was selected to drive the process and hundreds of residents, stakeholders, and community leaders contributed their energy and ideas throughout 2022 at more than 10 engagement opportunities. The result is a collaborative vision for the city, a set of seven goals and 73 plan actions, and three concept site plans to be completed over the next 10 years.

Some of the Priority Action Items focused on throughout 2023 include:

4.9 - Improve Yoctangee Park with outdoor event space: The City Planning Department along with the Ross County Planning Department and our State assigned procured planner, worked to prepare and finalize the Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP).

Our application, titled, "Appalachian History Heritage and Culture", contained 50 projects across 16 counties. The primary project within our application was the Yoctangee Park and Riverside District project which totaled approximately \$40 million. The City and County will be notified if awarded during the 1st quarter of 2024.

1.1 - Update to zoning and land use: Funds were appropriated in 2023 for a zoning rewrite. Through a competitive selection process, a firm was awarded the task which will take place throughout 2024. Several other actions items related to zoning cannot take place until the completion of 1.1.

6.10 - Obtain Bicycle Friendly Community Status: By applying and striving for designation, the city is committing to improving engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation efforts. Extensive preparation has taken place with Community Partners to have an application ready by the June 2024 due date.

ROSS COUNTY LAND BANK

The Ross County Land Bank works to improve the quality of neighborhoods, increase land values, create diverse housing opportunities, and return properties to the tax rolls. While a separate entity from the City, the Land Bank is led by the City Planning Department and the Board is chaired by Mayor Feeney.

The Land Bank currently operates directly from two State grant funds awarded in 2022 for **Demolition and Revialization and Brownfield Remediation**. The original list included 28 vacant and blighted properties to be demolished. To date, nine have been demolished and the properties seeded and greened including the Westerly Wastewater Treatment Plant. The remaining 19 properties are seeing renewed efforts towards making repairs and meeting City code. Eventually allowing funds to be dedicated towards additional blighted properties.

Through the Brownfield Remediation grant, four Brownfield projects successfully received proper Environmental Assessments and remediation.

The State announced renewal of both grant programs for fiscal year 2024 and the Land Bank will apply for additional funding to continue the productive work seen throughout Chillicothe neighborhoods.

Additionally, the Land Bank sold three properties in 2023 including one to Scioto Valley Habitat for Humanity which will become a new home for a family in need. The Land Bank also purchased one property and at the end of 2023 had eight vacant lots available for public purchase.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



The Planning and Development and IT Departments made a greater effort in 2023 to increase the City's presence and reach online. Through continuous updates on **social media**, **ChillicotheOH.gov** and the **Engage platform**, the City was able to obtain Community Engagement unlike any other year before. Creating an engagement strategy, implementing a branding guide, consistent strategic posting, creating resourceful graphics, obtaining feedback from the community and monitoring analytics are a few of the accomplishments and tools used in 2023.

Since launching the **Engage platform** in 2022, the Engage platform has gained over 400 enrolled users and almost 1,000 unique visitors. This platform is a great way to share larger projects happening throughout the City and gain valuable feedback.

The **Curb & Sidewalk Repair Program** was a pilot program shared with residents for an opportunity to invest in more walkable neighborhoods. The community latched on quickly and, in total, 67 projects were completed and over \$200,000 was returned to the local economy.

The City took a comprehensive approach to slowing traffic and increasing safety through several **traffic calming demonstrations**. These included speed signs, speed humps, a pedestrian safety island, and targeted area enforcement by the police. The project enhanced pedestrian safety and aimed to increase road equity. Community survey results showed 85% felt the demonstrations were educational and 100% agreed traffic calming measures are important for neighborhoods.

A **new neighborhood park opened** in October of 2023 thanks to several partnerships across the City including the Ross County Health Department, AARP and local organizations. The playground design was chosen by the community. The City collected 550 votes from visits with the Chillicothe Pre-K and Primary Schools, YMCA Latchkey Program, Public Library Bookworm groups, the Earth Day Celebration, and an ice cream social event held at the park site. A grand opening event was held to celebrate with the Patrick Family, the parks namesake.

SEE. CLICK. FIX.

Fastest, easiest way to submit non-emergent requests for your community

Download the Chillicothe Fix It! App today!

Status Update!

- 3 Months In Use
- 32+ Users
- 200 Issues Reported

64% Issues Resolved!

CURB & SIDEWALK REPAIR PROGRAM UPDATE

Application Window	3 Months
Total Approved Projects	67
Local Economic Impact	\$200,000+
Residential Sidewalk Repairs	3,862 ft

69% Percent of projects already completed

5,944 ft

Additional City Sidewalk Repairs

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Thanks to the Engage platform and social media, 2023 was the first time the City was able to effectively share the summer **Paving Project** and schedule with the public. The public was able to see what streets were on the list to receive work in advance as well as view before and after photos of the work completed, which was very popular. Overall, the City completed the milling and repaving of 30 streets and, for the first time in many years, 7 public parking lots, including a new lot off Riverside Dr. In 2024, this lot will also receive updates including an access point to the floodwall bike trail, bike racks, and kiosks for the Book-a-Bike program. The social media engagement on these specific posts garnered over 1,000 likes and 56 shares.

The “**Chillicothe Fix It!**” application, launched in Summer 2023, allows Chillicothe residents who notice City repair or service needs to submit photos, location information, and details directly to Chillicothe City staff.

The platform provides Chillicothe officials with a centralized system to manage issues from creation to resolution, engaging residents throughout the process. This application has also taken over as the City’s internal work order system, keeping all requests in one organized, visible, and trackable location.

In addition to allowing the public to report on problems, users can view, comment on, and follow issues submitted by their neighbors. Residents can even create their own “watch areas” to receive notifications about all the reports in their community, enabling them to follow the progress of all service requests—not just the ones they submit.


The software also enables duplicate detection so that if a resident begins to submit a request already in the system, it will promptly notify them and enable them to follow the existing request.

To date, the program has **over 200 tickets** submitted by **45 enrolled users** with **98% of tickets closed**.

**NEW
PARK
BENCHES**

IT'S TIME FOR
AN UPGRADE.

Yocum Park



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**Sidewalk
Repair
Program!**

This program will provide supporting funds to share the costs of sidewalk maintenance and repair with property owners.

Read more about this program and the application process at: tinyurl.com/2apnyzfz

Applications Due Oct. 1st

Questions? Call 740-773-9708 | Program Application: tinyurl.com/2apnyzfz



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AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT

In 2023 City administration set forth implementation of the projects selected through the 2022 engagement efforts and City Council approvals. The ARPA spending deadline is not until 2026, however, Chillicothe's strategic planning efforts were proven helpful in getting many projects up and running quickly.

The first phase of the **Sidewalk Repair Program** was a huge success! Our City parks saw many necessary upgrades throughout the year including new equipment and ball court refurbishing. The **Armory** entryway and bathrooms were refurbished. The City was able to contribute to the purchase of permanent site for the **Homeless Shelter and Resource Center**. Additionally, a much needed upgrade to the **Fire Department radio system** was completed.

Projects in the planning stages and still to come include:

- **Stormwater improvements and additional targeted sidewalk repairs**
- **Improved lighting in parks and public spaces including the flood wall**

Updates to the following areas happening in conjunction with additional State grant funding opportunities:

- **Amphitheatre/Armory**
- **Home Repair**
- **Affordable Housing**
- **Basic Life Skills**

GRANT SUPPORT

The City applied for over **\$64M** in grant funds through the Planning & Development Department in 2023.

Congressionally Directed Spending \$24 M: Four projects were submitted in March 2023 and we are awaiting final project selections and awards from Congress. The projects submitted include: Housing (HUD), Marietta Lift Station, Wastewater Treatment Plant , and Yoctangee Park Improvements

Community Development Block Grant - \$150,000: Projects selected through input via public hearings and officials' assessment of City needs include:

- Pump House Center for the Arts restoration and repairs to the ebrick and facade.
- Yoctangee Park - Replacing all remaining older benches and picnic tables with the new model.

AARP Community Challenge - \$12,500: Chillicothe was one of 310 grantees selected out of 3,600+ applications from across the United States. With this quick-action grant we were able to install ADA compliant walkways within the new Sixth Ward Park.

ACGP-Yoctangee Park & Riverside Improvements \$40M: This project will holistically transform Yoctangee Park through three major components:

- Reorganizing the physical space within the park such as roadways and parking to improve the accommodation of new outdoor assets identified in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Restoration of the currently underutilized Armory so it may house the new Ross County UNESCO World Heritage Sites Visitor's Center.
- Upgrade the surrounding roadway network in a way that will help organize the flow of traffic downtown and throughout the park, but also catalyze new economic development around the park such as the Riverside District.

EPA Ohio - \$75,000 - Applied to build a new, permanent salt storage facility which will be maintained and utilized by the Service Department in their efforts to best serve the entire municipality. Grant writing efforts began in 2023 and were officially submitted in January 2024.





Chillicothe.com

Engage.ChillicotheOH.gov