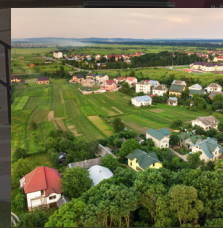


# *Comprehensive Plan*

MADISON COUNTY, OHIO | FALL 2022



# Acknowledgments

Thank you to all those community members and stakeholders who participated in the Madison County comprehensive planning process. We would also like to specifically thank the following individuals for their guidance and direction throughout the planning process.

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# Letter from the Commissioners



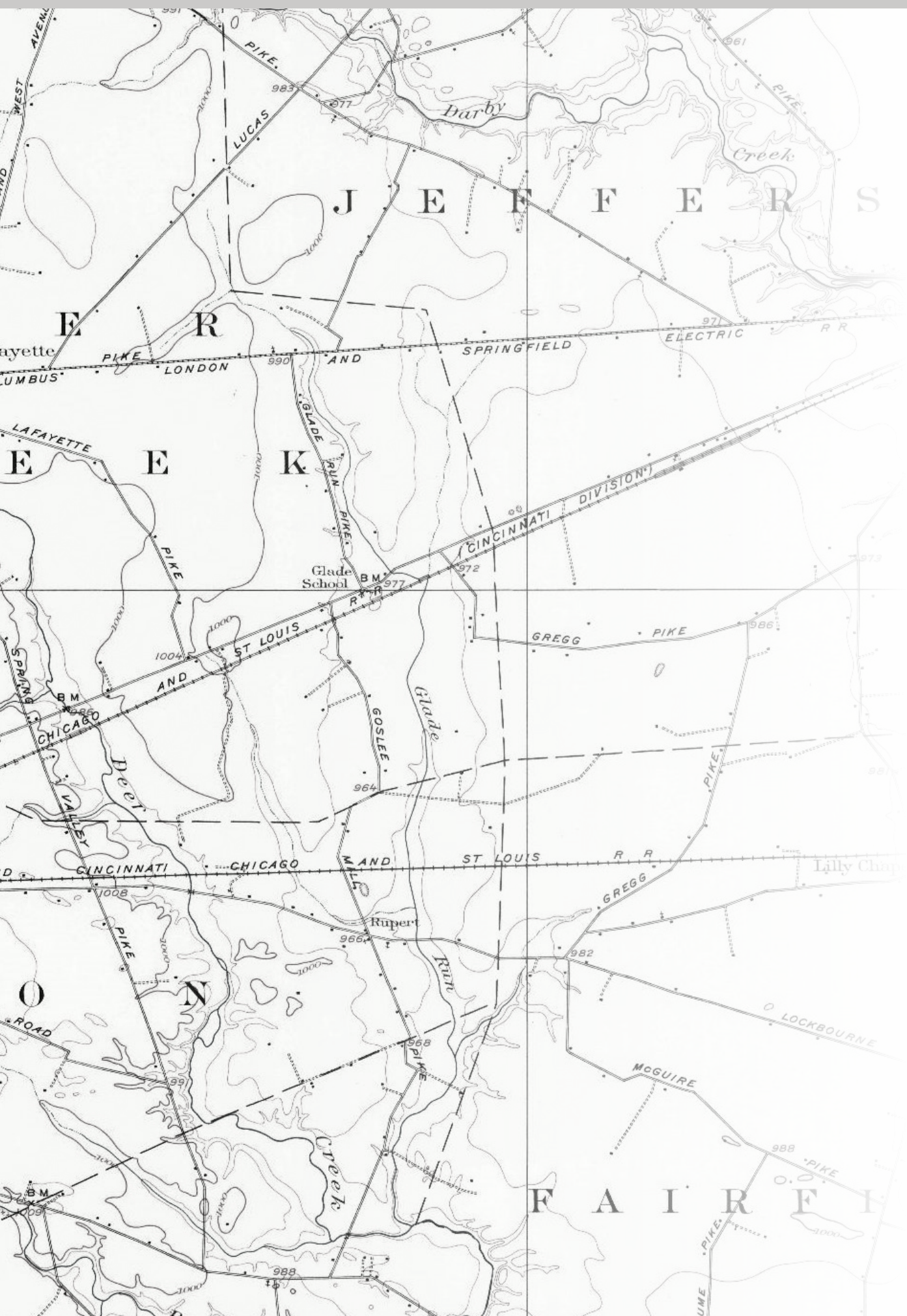
Our comprehensive land use plan is a tool that is used for the development of unincorporated land in Madison County. Madison County is located in central Ohio and is bordered by seven counties; its physical location is both one of Madison County's greatest assets for future development. Madison County is part of the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Delaware, Fairfield, Franklin, Licking, Pickaway, Union, Hocking, Perry and Morrow Counties.

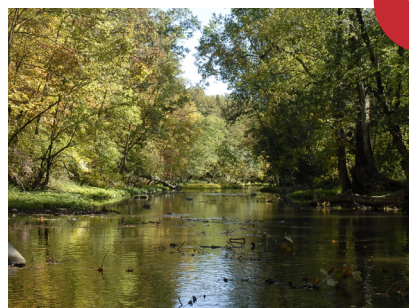
The growth of the Columbus MSA will significantly influence the development pattern of Madison County over the next two decades. Suburban continues to expanded the urbanized area of Columbus close to the into Madison County. Additional expansion of the urbanized area is already filtering into Madison County by those wishing to escape the congestion of the urban area for a and lower cost of living. The impact of urbanization can have a profound impact on the rural character of Madison County unless managed properly. Strategically planned development can contribute positively and enhance the quality of life for Madison County residents, while limiting the loss of prime agricultural land, increased congestion, depletion of natural resources and increased demand for County services.

The comprehensive land use plan is a tool that will be used by developers and public officials when making land use decisions. Areas have been identified within the county as being the most appropriate for agricultural, commercial, industrial, public and residential uses. The areas were determined based on the issues and opportunities identified by local officials and citizens during the planning process. By developing in a rational growth pattern, future generations will be able to enjoy the same quality of life as today's families. The plan will be reviewed every 3-5 years to ensure that the plan is properly addressing the goals and objectives for the citizens of Madison County.



**Honorable Dr. Tony Xenikis, Chris Wallace, and Mark Forest**  
Commissioners, Madison County, Ohio





## ***Welcome to Madison County!***

The many generations of Madison County residents have long-maintained a special relationship with their land and their resources. Families across the county have continually invested in their property and into the network of communities that enable them to thrive. This comprehensive plan is a reinforcement of that investment and a promise – from the leaders of Madison County to its residents – that their values will be reflected in future decisions.

This is a critical moment for the communities of Madison County. The central Ohio region is poised to grow by more than 650,000 residents by 2050. Major employers are flocking to the area and joining the growing competition for workers and utilities. Housing development – once closely tied to population growth – has fallen behind and driven sales prices to their highest levels ever. Communities once seen as “too far” from major jobs centers are watching their homes sell for higher prices and receiving ongoing inquiries from eager developers. Last, after hitting record usages numbers during the COVID-19 Pandemic and related economic shutdowns, parks and trail amenities are in high demand, with new investments and initiatives rolling out regularly.

What does this mean for Madison County? Opportunity. Despite sharing a border with one of the fastest growing counties in the Midwest, Madison grew slowly through the previous decade. Economically, however, the story was the opposite. Through these same ten years, the county’s gross domestic output rose 133% or by over one billion dollars. Even with slow population growth, the county’s housing market posted its highest year-on-year average sales growth in history, increasing 14% from 2019 to 2020. The latent demand demonstrated by these numbers show a county on brink of a major transition. Now is the time to time to plan and prepare for this growth and in so doing, ensure the central value of residents – the county’s rural heritage – is preserved for generations to come.

## BACKGROUND

A comprehensive plan is both an end and a beginning to a broad community conversation. This plan was built alongside the public and leaders who will be charged with implementing its recommendations. The process is iterative and ongoing. This section provides a background on this document, its use, focus, and context.

Starting in 2019, County leadership began the process of developing a new comprehensive plan for Madison. This process would involve in-depth technical analysis and an ongoing conversation with the public and key community stakeholders. As the two parallel paths began to merge, key themes were revealed in the qualitative and quantitative data. First, there is a clear interest in preserving the rural character and heritage of the county in perpetuity. This is a regular theme throughout the plan and reflects the primacy with which respondents ranked the value. Second, growth and investment should occur but in a manner that adds economically, aesthetically, or functionally to the lives of current residents and business owners. Last, the county can and should invest in new park and trail amenities that fully leverage the unique environmental aspects of the place.



Lafayette, Ohio



The principles for growth, development, and conservation – highlighted later in this chapter – articulate these values and, collectively, establish the vision for the future of Madison County. This plan seeks to act on those principles and establish a policy agenda to move communities continually toward this vision.

### *What is a comprehensive plan?*

A comprehensive plan is the broadest policy statement a community can develop. It seeks to find consensus around major issues and establish a pathway for future decision makers. The plan is not a parcel-by-parcel master strategy to govern all future land decisions. Rather, the work provides a framework around which small and large community decisions can be attached. It presents the community's broad goals and more specific planned actions relating to a "comprehensive" list of topics. These include land use, development, economic and fiscal opportunities, parks and trails, conservation, transportation, utilities, services, and more. The plan serves several purposes:

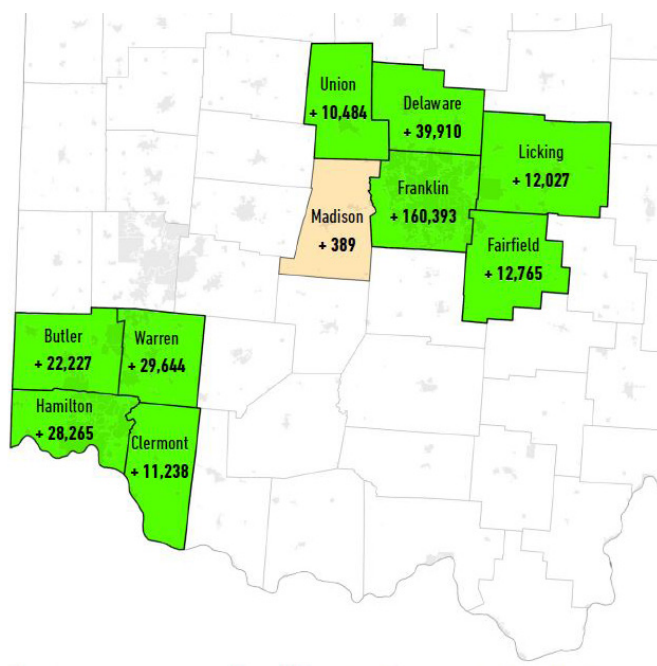
### PLAN COMPONENTS

- ★ Consolidate findings and recommendations from past plans. The County has a strong planning history of and has participated in pertinent regional efforts.

- ★ Conduct research and provide recommendations on relevant topics. Exploring issues related to land use, transportation, housing, economics, and others.
- ★ Create a user-friendly document. Present key information and recommendations clearly.
- ★ Provide an accessible tool for elected leaders, the public and potential developers of Madison County. Send a clear message about the priorities and vision of the county and its residents.

### *Why does the County need a plan?*

Great communities start as prepared communities. Madison County sits within a dynamic regional environment where change is constant and growth is the rule. To get the best out of this energy and also maintain the heritage and character of the county's rural environment, leaders need the vision, the strategies, and the tools to operate. This plan is a backstop and provides the first response the question, "What does Madison County want to become?". Even if the answer looks a lot like the county today, it will take deliberate action on the part of leaders to ensure that is the case.



### *Why now?*

Since the completion of the County's previous plan in 2014, the regional trends around growth and development have only accelerated. Spurred on by major economic investments and a strong housing market, land is the most valuable resources in central Ohio. Of Madison County's 467 square miles, 420 or 90% of the land mass is agricultural or in some form of conservation. Of the counties bordering Franklin County, Madison has seen the slowest population growth, slowest housing growth, and smallest extensions of its enabling utilities.

**+650,000**

The central Ohio region is projected to grow significantly by 2050

At the same time, interstates 70 and 71 provide direct access to downtown Columbus and connections to the greater metropolitan area that are on par with, or faster than, other bordering counties. This access has already leveraged in the phenomenal growth in distribution centers. Taken alone, the transportation and warehousing sector added \$250 million to the county's GDP from 2000 to 2020.

The County is poised to attract new and more intense development interest through the next decade. With relatively cheaper land, a growing jobs base, and access to the larger, regional employment market, the communities of the county must be prepared to direct, refine, or reject the types of investment their community is looking for. As relative late comers to the trend (with respect to population not jobs) the county

**420**  
SQ MI

With close to 90% of the county still used for agriculture development pressure will continue to increase

can learn from the mistakes of other communities and clearly articulate the "what, where, and how" with respect to future development. This is an ideal position but also requires preparation and alignment. This plan is the first step.

## *Previous Plans & Studies*

While this new comprehensive plan is separate from the previous plan, there are many sources from which the new plan is built upon. A number of additional plans and studies focus on Madison County and have been leveraged by this process. Some of these relevant plans include:

- ★ County Comprehensive Water Plan, 2022
- ★ County 208 Water Quality Management Plan, 2005
- ★ Draft Madison County Trails Framework Plan, 2020
- ★ Prepared Communities Win – Madison County, 2017
- ★ ODOT Transit Needs Study, 2013
- ★ ODOT US-42 Access Management Study, 2015
- ★ CORPO Transportation Plan, 2018
- ★ Competitive Advantages Program, 2018
- ★ Strategic Plan for Madison County Future, 2018
- ★ County Planned Water Main Project, 2019
- ★ Design Development Standards US-40, US-42, OH-29, and I-70, 2022

These past plans and studies are all valuable tools in determining where the County is coming from, and where it is heading in the future. As a result, the actions included in this comprehensive plan may include some of the actions recommended by the previous plan, and also may have adapted actions based on the goals of these other relevant plans and studies.

## *Planning context*

The study area for this plan includes all land outside of the County's municipalities. Madison County is significantly less urbanized than other counties in the region. Because of this, the unincorporated land area is also larger. Development, however, can occur outside of cities or villages. Depending on available services, the county can accept all manner of land uses from residential to industrial. And this has indeed been the case. It is important, then, to carefully plan for this area and develop a future land use map that protects the public welfare and enables additive growth.

### AREAS OF FOCUS

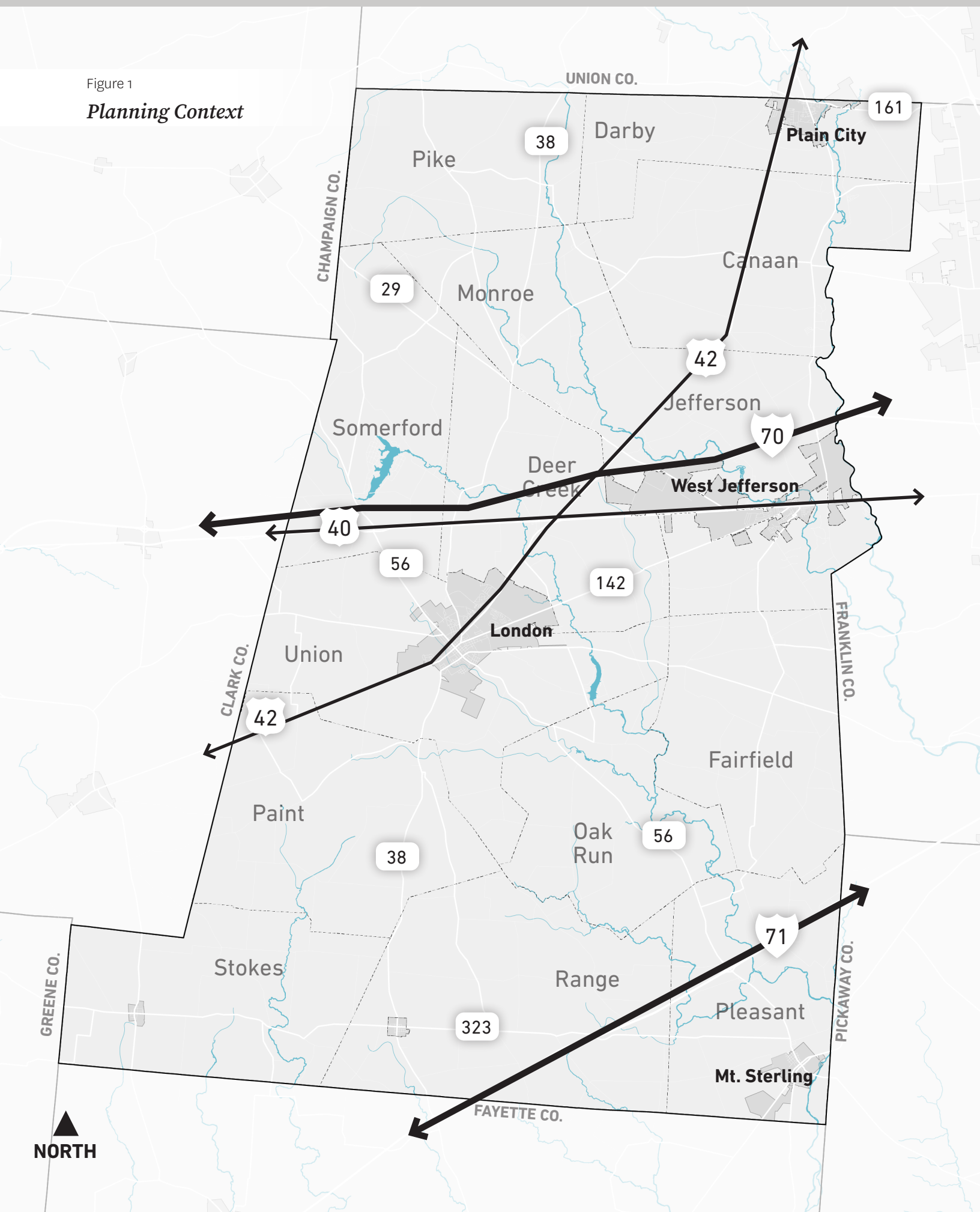
Despite this large, unincorporated area considered as this plan's "study area", only a small portion of the overall land mass has been identified as susceptible to change. These sites are called Focus Areas in the plan. They share characteristics that enhance their developability. This includes access to major transportation routes, existing or planned utility service, and/or adjacent development. The Land Use chapter presents each of the five areas and offers a future land use plan to guide and direct future development or conservation decisions.

### JURISDICTIONS & ANNEXATION

While this plan does not make recommendations on top of the County's cities and villages, it does consider the individual plans of these places. Plain City and London each have their own comprehensive plan. In the areas where Madison County's Focus Areas meet on these jurisdictions those plans have been taken into account. Additionally, the county's study area may shrink through the planning horizon through annexation by these jurisdictions. In Ohio, properties may seek annexation into a neighboring municipality. This process, known as Expedited Type II Annexation, is laid out in Ohio Revised Code §709.023 and allows for an expedient and annexation into a neighboring city.

Figure 1

*Planning Context*



## THE PROCESS

The process to develop the county's new comprehensive plan began in 2019 with the circulation of a community survey to county residents. Since then, numerous groups have contributed to the process and the final product. This section highlights those actors and their respective contributions.

### *Community Survey*

In the spring of 2019, a total of 384 Madison County residents completed a survey on land use. The survey asked for the opinions of respondents on a wide range of land use issues. The results show that strong majorities of residents wish to maintain a county with a rural character and a strong agricultural industry. They favor using regulations like zoning if that is required to achieve that end.

### *Stakeholder Sessions*

Two work sessions were held in 2022 with Township Trustees, business leaders, County Staff, and other community stakeholders. During the sessions participants received information on key findings from the process and shared their ideas related to key issues and opportunities that ought to be confronted by the plan.

### *Working Group*

A Working Group was established to guide day-to-day progress and decision making through the process. This group was made-up of County leadership and Commissioners.

## THEMES FROM ENGAGEMENT

Throughout the community conversations, a series of resonant themes emerged. Highlighted below, these topics represent the most frequently raised issues.



**Preserve the agricultural character and heritage.** Ensure that even as investments are made into the County, the vast majority of the land areas remains rural.



**Expand formally conserved lands and develop new parks.**

Continue the legacy of environmental stewardship and expand the county's park and open space offerings.



**Allow development that meets the community's values and is collected in growth areas.**

The county should tap into the opportunity presented by regional growth, but strategically.



**Connect communities and greenspaces with new trails and agricultural corridors.**

Better connect the county through a network of multi-use trails, agricultural corridors, and equestrian trails.



**Provide more opportunities for workers to live in the county.**

Address the county's demographic challenges by finding more room for local workers to live locally.



**Expand housing options.** Address the housing gap through holistic neighborhood developments and avoid copycat subdivisions.

## ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The planning process uncovered a series of critical issues and trends through a process of research and discovery. These opportunities and challenges are the primary targets of the comprehensive plan's policy agenda. Collectively, these points underscore the importance of this moment-in-time for the County.

### *Issues & Challenges*

**The county's workforce is being sourced from farther away each year and competition is increasing.** Madison County is an older community compared to the region. By 2030, one in every five residents will be over the age of 65. At the same time, jobs have increased significantly through the past decade. To find this workforce, employers are looking further and further afield. In 2019, 75% of the county's labor needs were met by individuals living outside of the county. With major projects like Intel taking root around the region, the competition for these individuals will only increase.

**Housing development has not kept pace with the region.** Tied to the labor shortage, housing development in the county has fallen behind. Permits for new housing units barely averaged 100 per year from 2016 to 2020, the slowest growth of counties bordering Franklin County. While the pace of development did increase in 2021 and 22, it still trails the region.

**Cross-jurisdictional cooperation and communication can improve.** The rising tide of growth pressure is affecting all communities in the county. Decisions made by one community can impact another. There is a need to foster stronger collaboration between places and achieve greater synchronization in land planning and economic strategic planning.

**Growing development pressure will require more graduated development management.** Projects around the region are scaling larger as the development community works to meet growing demand. Especially true for the housing market, local leaders need to be prepared to review, refine, or reject plans that do not meet the vision for the county.

### *Opportunities*

**Madison County is an affordable option within an increasingly un-affordable region.** Land prices have increased markedly throughout central Ohio with increasing jobs, population, and employment. Madison County's light urbanization has preserved hundreds of acres with access to the broader region. If this land is served by major utility extensions, the combination of price, location, and the market will drive demand and allow leaders to dictate the pace, use, and form of any proposed development.

**Interstates 70 and 71 provide direct access to downtown Columbus, the broader region, and the country.** The proliferation of distributions centers along the US 40 corridor provides a clear example of the county's tremendous access to the regional economic market. This also presents an opportunity for residential development similar the growth experienced in Delaware County through the 2000's.

**The county has added 4,000 jobs and \$1 billion in economic output from 2000.** Outpacing the region, Madison County has been tremendously successful in attracting and growing businesses over the last 20 years. The 47% increase in private primary jobs is one of the fastest rates in the region. This growth in employment was matched with a doubling in productivity. GDP rose 135% over the same period, climbing beyond \$2 billion for the first time in 2020.

**Rural and green, Madison County has avoided scattered, sprawling development.** Despite its proximity to the Columbus metropolitan area, the County has been able to maintain its rural character and boasts access to nationally-recognized resource in the Big Darby Creek Accord.

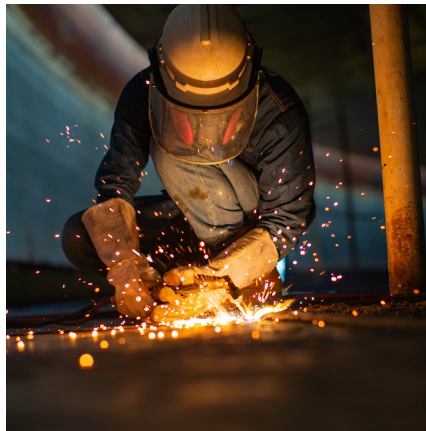
# PRINCIPLES FOR GROWTH, DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION

The growth principles describe the intent about “how” (general character) and “where” (conceptual location) growth and development in Madison County should occur. They reflect a variety of themes that are mutually reinforcing, including the quality, appearance, pattern, character, and organization of development, environmental quality, efficient use of infrastructure, and expanding connectivity and mobility choices for residents and employees. The growth principles are supported by the five-focus area conceptual development diagrams (or land use framework) and the broader comprehensive plan.



## ***Conserve the County’s rural character, agricultural heritage, and productivity***

There is a clear, shared desire by residents to conserve the rural character of the communities of Madison County in perpetuity. Balancing between individual rights and this vision, the county should direct growth to focus areas, carefully manage site development, and preserve rural views. The County will protect the activities of the farming community and ensure growth does not interrupt their productivity.



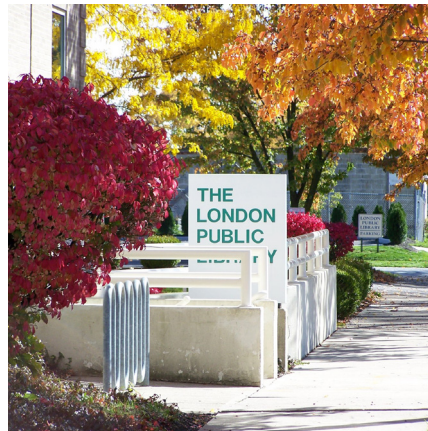
## ***Tap into growing regional economic opportunities***

With a fast-rising regional tide there are primary opportunities for the county to tap into this growing energy and direct it toward community priorities. The County has a demonstrated locational advantage and significant “pipelined” development. Thinking long-term leaders can use this opportunity to achieve greater economic balance and select projects that “fit” the community’s priorities.



## ***Demand additive development***

The process of reviewing development proposals and refining based on the community’s vision is the most important ongoing action the County can take. The incremental practice of releasing additive projects in the correct locations slowly builds the community residents envisioned. Creating this “culture of consideration” is the first step in getting the right investment.



### ***Grow the local workforce***

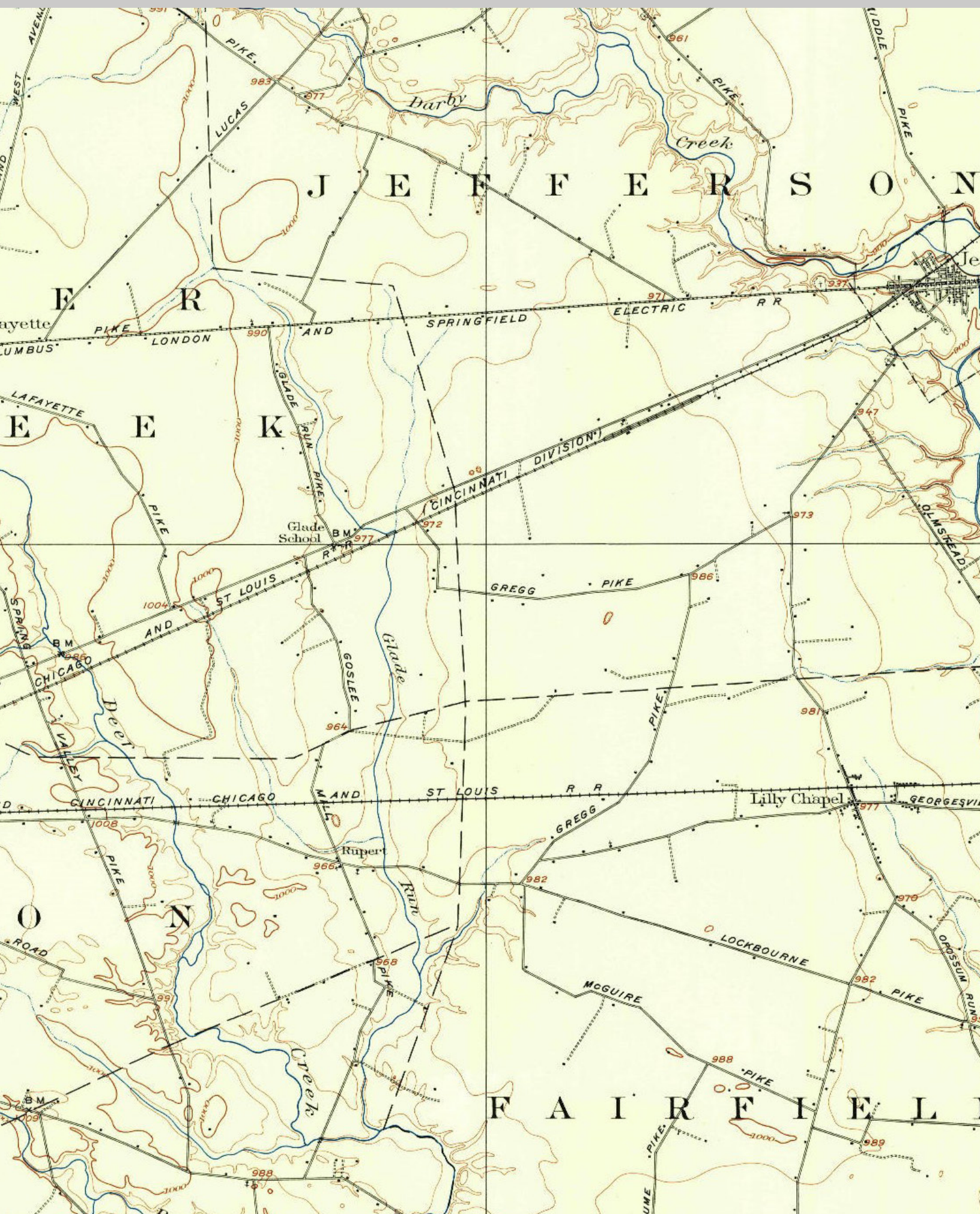
Slow population and housing growth threaten to exacerbate the County's access to labor. With three out of every four workers commuting from outside and growing competition, now is the time to take strong steps in securing a reliable and skilled local workforce for the next round of economic investment.

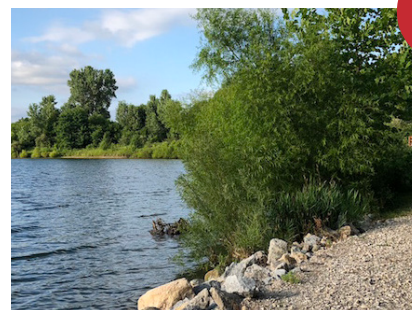
### ***Work on behalf of the Cities and Towns to achieve a balance***

The communities of the County exist in a networked relationship where a decision by one affects all. There is an opportunity - through ongoing communication and collaboration - to better synchronize the County's overall land use system and ensure a symbiosis between conserved and developed portions of the community.

### ***Improve connections between places through greenways, agricultural corridors, and parks***

Madison County is green. In a fast urbanizing region, this is a important value proposition for current and future residents. There are, however, opportunities to better leverage these natural assets and tap into regional efforts to connect places and amenities through new trails projects.





## Land Use

One of the base functions of a county is to plan for and regulate land use to ensure a harmonious built environment. The Land Use chapter identifies key findings related to current trends, ongoing development patterns, land uses, community character, and open space. Analysis of these findings result in recommended actions, presented at the end of this chapter.

Land use planning is an essential component of a Comprehensive Plan. It is the foundation on which the built environment is constructed. Land Use planning is more than merely assigning a parcel of land with a designated use (e.g. residential, commercial, industrial, etc.). There are numerous factors that contribute to how land use and development are experienced by residents and visitors, and how it meets their daily needs. This section includes analysis of data, trends, and existing land uses that will generate the development principals, land use character areas, and a future land use plan. Based on the analysis of current data and the principles of how the county wants to develop, a list of action items will establish a road map create a Madison County residents desire.

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ Water and sewer service is only in isolated areas of Madison County, limiting growth opportunities
- ★ Intergovernmental coordination for planning efforts in the County are limited
- ★ Maps illustrating lands protected by perpetual agricultural or conservation easements are not publicly available
- ★ Ohio State land holdings/demonstration farms are unique assets to the central Ohio region
- ★ The areas able to accept growth do not have the zoning to support increased development
- ★ Lack of adopted standards for solar generation facilities limits the ability of Madison County to regulate these uses

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section includes analysis of data, trends, and a documentation of existing land uses within Madison County. It highlights facts and figures that have implications upon land uses, while touching on physical constraints that influence land within the County.

## Breakdown of existing land uses

When looking at the County in its entirety, agricultural land makes up close to 88% of the existing land use. Focusing on the unincorporated County, agriculture makes up an even larger portion at 90%, as most of the non-agricultural uses are within the cities and villages. The largest concentrations of commercial land are located along major roadways, particularly State Route 42 and along the US-40 and I-70 corridors.

Considering the jurisdictions, Plain City has the greatest percentage of residential land (54%), with London (20%) and Mount Sterling (18%) coming in second and third, respectively. West Jefferson has more than double the percentage of both Commercial and Industrial land than the next closest community. London, which is the county seat, has the largest percentage of Public/Semi-Public Land at 13%. Public/Semi Public land totals four percent for unincorporated Madison County. That four percent equates to more than 10,000 acres due to the sheer size of the unincorporated

467 sq MI

Madison County land area, the vast majority of which, 420 square miles, is used for farming and agriculture



portion of the County.

Figure 2  
*Land Use by Jurisdiction*

	Agriculture	Residential	Commercial	Public & Semi Public	Industrial
Madison County (unincorporated)	90%	5%	<1%	4%	<1%
City of London	51%	20%	11%	13%	5%
Village of West Jefferson	35%	8%	29%	6%	22%
Village of Plain City	27%	54%	11%	6%	2%
Village of Mount Sterling	56%	18%	8%	7%	11%

Figure 3

## Existing Land Use

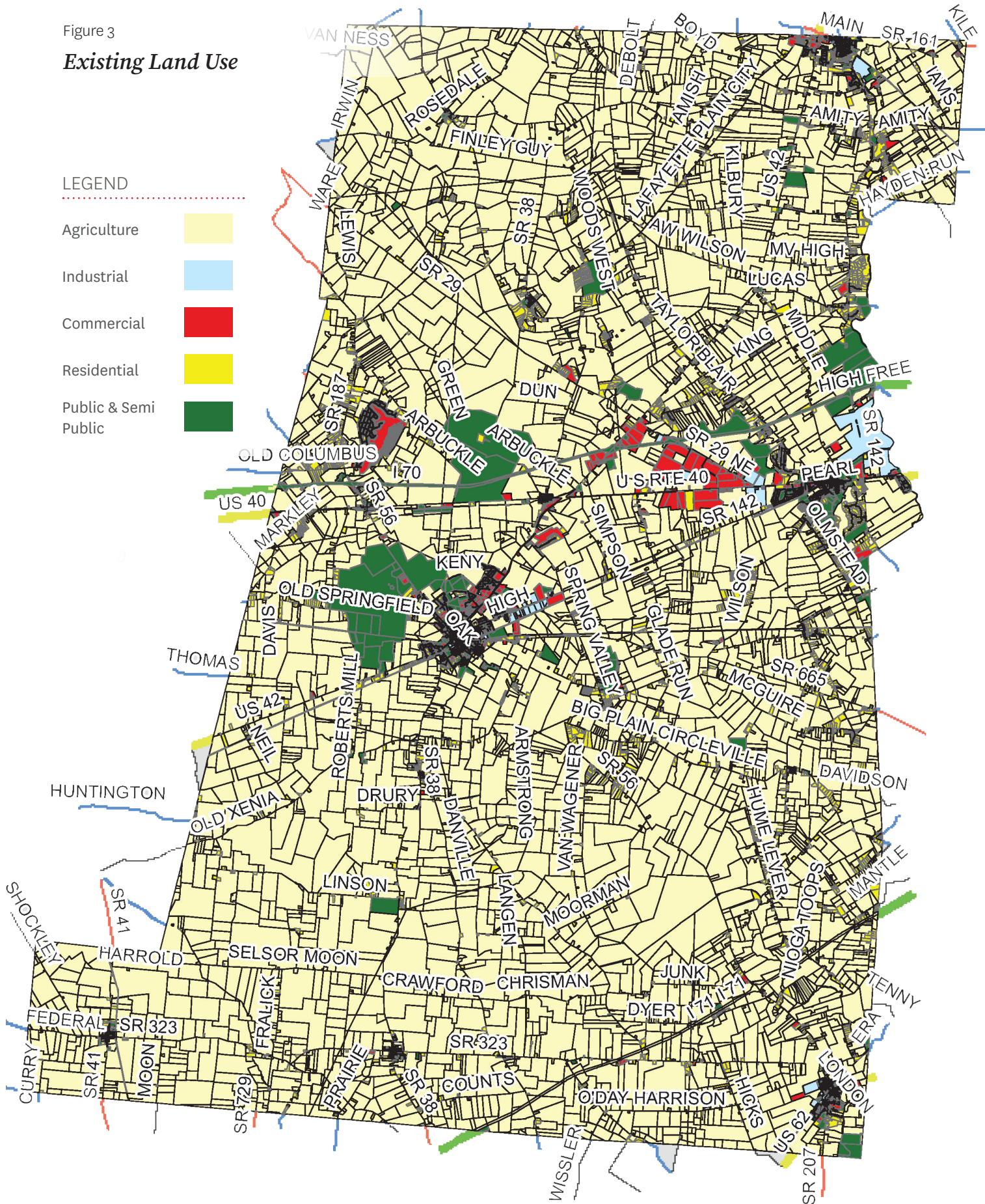
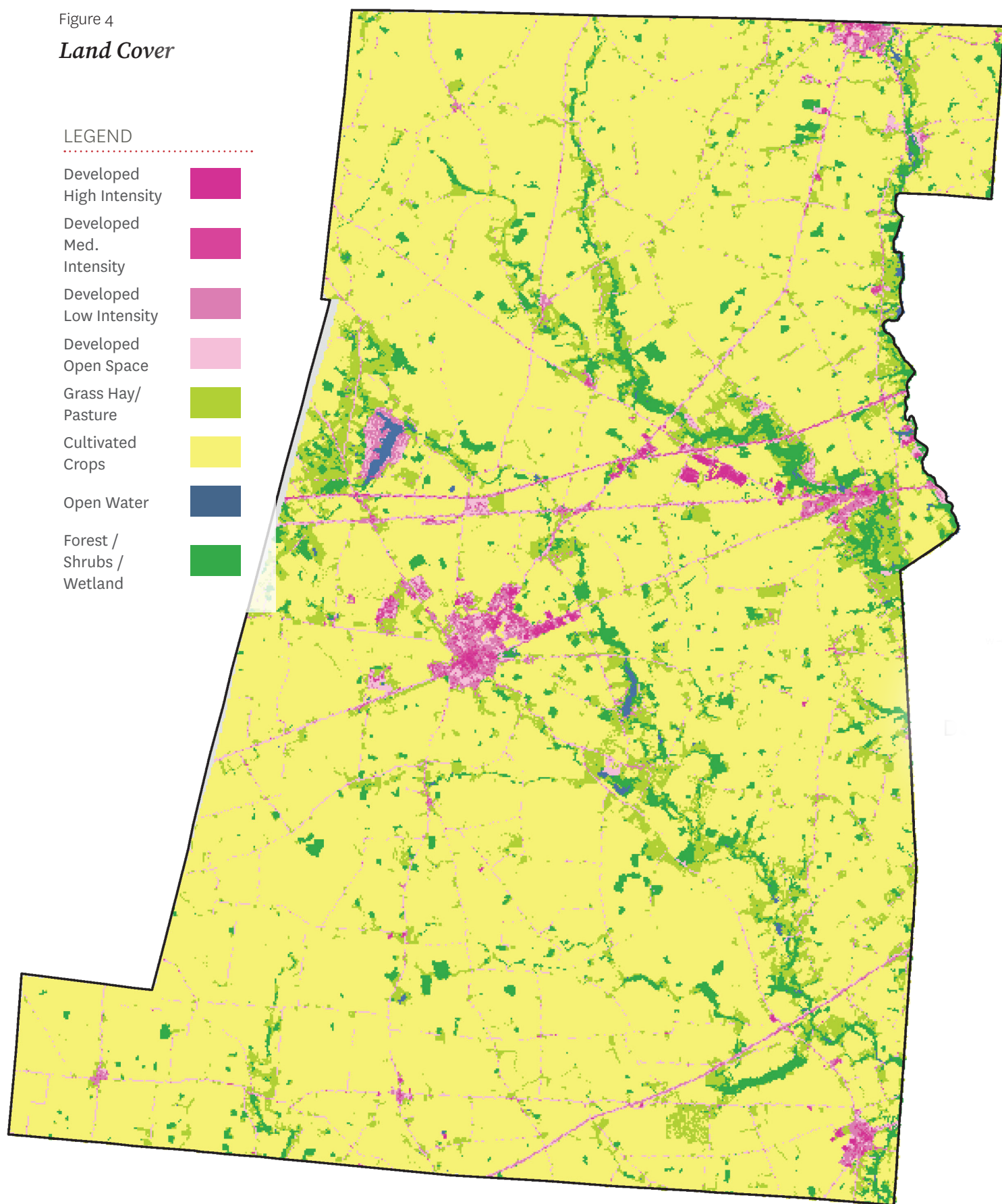


Figure 4

## *Land Cover*



## *A rich agricultural heritage*

The 2017 Census of Agriculture reports the total number of farms in the County to be 789, with about half of farms between 1-49 acres, and the remainder 50 acres or larger. Approximately 20% of farms in the County are 500 acres or larger. The primary use of most farms is for growing crops, accounting for roughly 79% of farm sales. Livestock, poultry and other products account for the remaining 19%. Agriculture plays an important role in the economic, cultural, and social framework of Madison County. According to the 2017 Ohio Agricultural Statistics, 15,064,738 bushels of corn, 6,639,853 bushels of soybeans, and 612,999 bushels of wheat were grown on approximately 252,392 acres. The rest of the land has been used for other crops, pastures, and woodland areas. The major limitation of the flat areas is poor natural drainage, while sloping areas are faced with erosion. Most of the land is very productive if it is managed well. However, once agricultural land is used for other purposes, it cannot be effectively returned to agricultural use. Figure 2.4 shows those areas within Madison County considered to be prime agricultural land. These areas include naturally prime farmland which is level or nearly level, not highly erodible, and, during growing season, typically well drained and not frequently flooded. Additionally, prime farmland can include areas that require artificial drainage but have the otherwise necessary soil characteristics.

Madison County highly regards its agricultural land, heritage, and values. The County has adopted a Farmland Preservation Plan. This lays out the importance of farmland in providing national food security and supporting regional economic opportunity. It also recognizes major threats to modern agriculture, particularly the loss of agricultural lands, and provides tools and considerations for how the County can work towards the protection and promotion of agricultural heritage and practice.

Figure 5

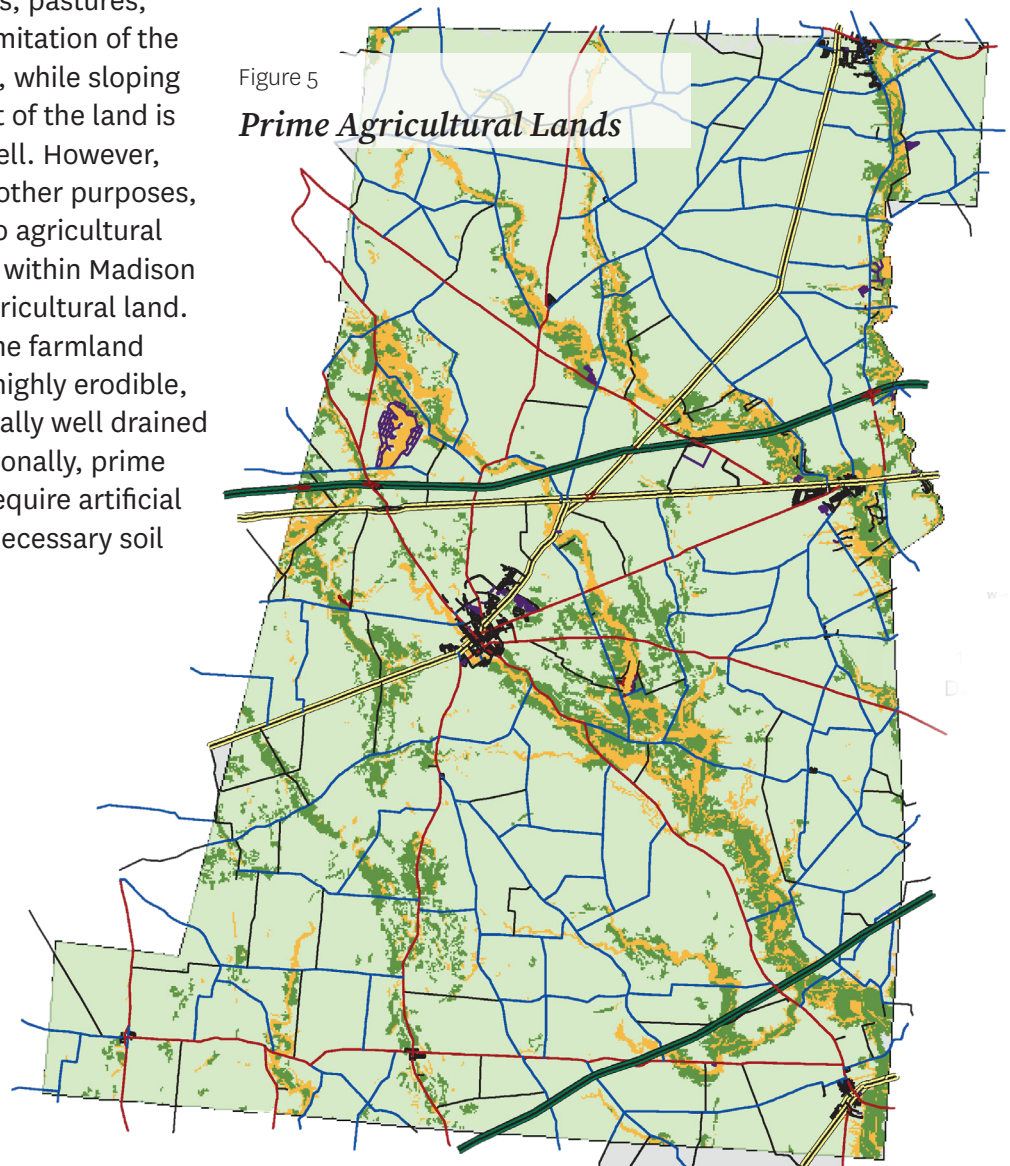
### *Prime Agricultural Lands*

#### LEGEND

Prime Farmland

Prime if Drained

Not Prime



## *Constraints to development*

While there are significant amounts of undeveloped land within Madison County, not all of these lands can support increased development. Agricultural and conservation easements, unsuitable soils, flood plains, and lack of sewer service are all constraints to development within the county.



## FLOODING

At a national level, flooding is America's most frequent and expensive natural disaster. Its effects have cost US taxpayers more than \$850 billion since 2000, shouldering 2/3 of the cost of all natural disasters. At a local level, a 2019 survey of Madison County residents found that 88% of respondents are either somewhat or very concerned about flooding. A recent study by the American Association for Geographers found that development in flood zones in inland communities was occurring to a greater degree than those on the coast, who are often most acutely aware of flooding risk. The study highlighted the need for more awareness, education, and communication about flood risk in inland communities. Effective planning is one of the most crucial tools in alleviating such risk.

Madison County has taken proactive measures to mitigate flood hazards, particularly with the 2007 Zoning Amendment prohibiting construction of structures within the 100-Year Floodplain. Also known as the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA), the 100-Year floodplain is designated and regulated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is defined as the floodplain associated with a flood that has a 1% chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year.

The 100-Year floodplain makes up approximately four percent of the total land area of Madison County. It directly touches 10% of the properties in the County (2,354 properties). This exposes the property to greater risk in a major storm event, particularly those that hit the 100 or 500-year storm threshold. It renders portions

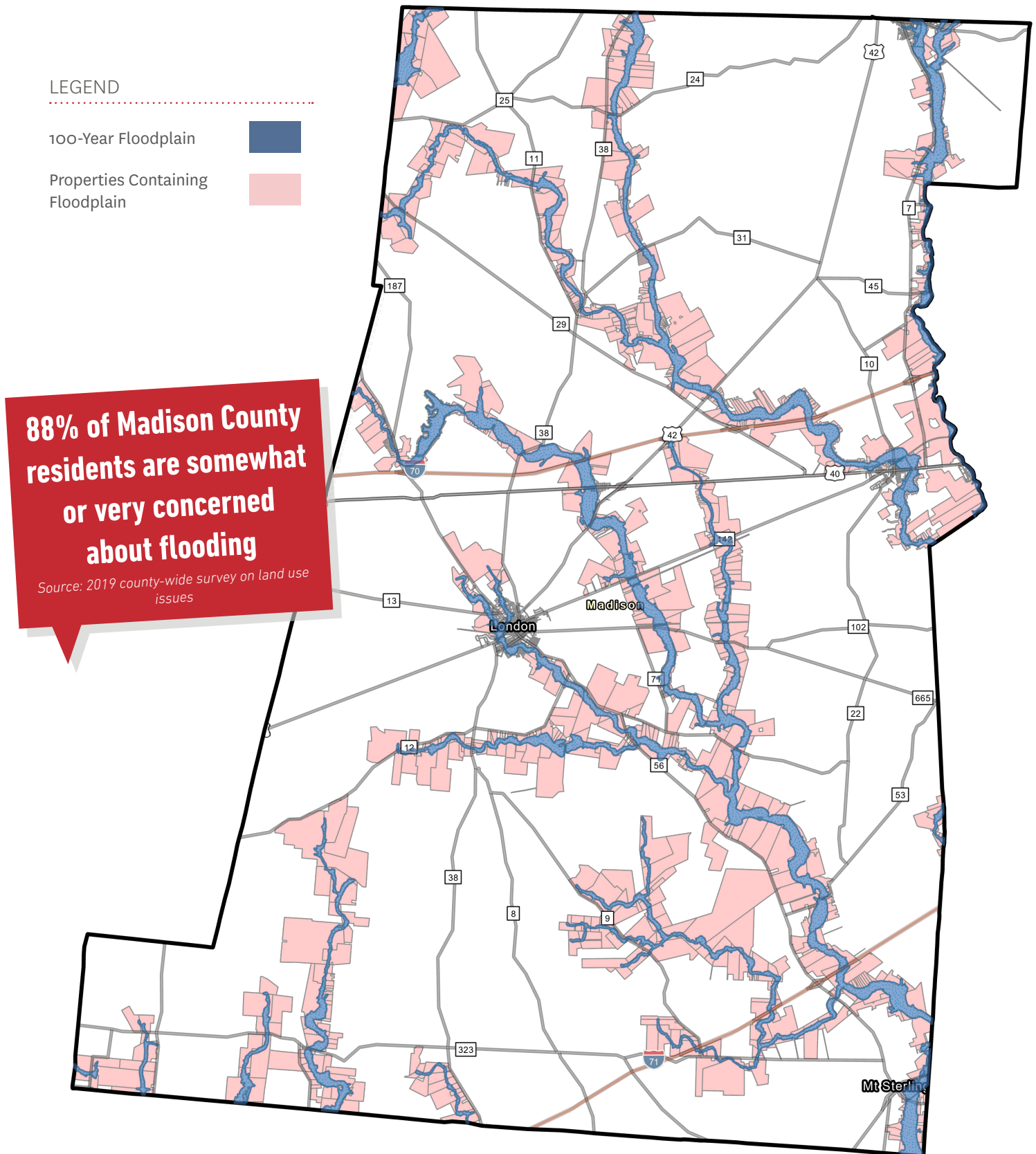
of the property where the floodplain exists undevelopable. These 100 and 500-year storms, contrary to their names, have been occurring more frequently in recent years and that trend is expected to continue as global temperatures steadily increase. On top of the physical risk a floodplain imposes on property it also increases insurance costs and may influence its marketability, in both residential and commercial markets.

Another tool the County utilizes for mitigation against flooding and facilitating adequate drainage is the Madison County Ditch Maintenance Program. Administered by the Madison County Engineer, the program includes 164 ditches totaling 180 miles. This network of publicly established drainage ditches requires that all buildings, structures, fences, and plantings be setback 75 feet from the bank of the ditch.

Madison County's level landscape, like a flat roof, can exhibit drainage issues and swampy conditions. This 'flat roof' is made up of over 25 different sub-types of soil each with varying degrees of porosity, chemical makeup, and slope.

Figure 6

## *Floodplain and Flood-prone Land*



## SOILS

Soil characteristics are important factors in the development process. Soil types affect building design and location. Soils having a low bearing strength are not recommended for development due to inadequate foundation support caused by the settlement of underlying organic matter. Structures require special engineering to minimize foundation cracks. Shrink/swell is another factor to consider. It occurs on fine-textured soils having high silt and clay content. Again, special engineering is required to minimize heaving effects on foundations. However, shrink/swell is not a large factor in limiting development patterns.

Soils having poor natural drainage can cause problems and constraints regarding development. These areas require attention to stormwater runoff to ensure that structures and wastewater disposal systems are not harmed by ponding water. High water tables in association with poorly drained soils can cause foundation heaving during freezing and thawing, water leakage into basements, and septic problems. Areas with poorer draining soil do not prohibit development, but they do require careful thought and possibly greater investment in preparation of a site for construction. If development occurs in areas of poor natural drainage, tiles and artificial ditches can aid in draining water. The associated soils map shows areas that have better soil-related drainage characteristics compared to those that do not.

OCAP/ODNR Assessment - An assessment prepared by the Ohio Capability Analysis Program (OCAP) shows about 85% (253,608.6 acres) of the County has drainage problems either “very poorly drained”, “poorly drained” or “somewhat poorly drained” soils. The balance (15%) has good drainage and of that only 7% is considered “well drained” soil based upon this assessment.

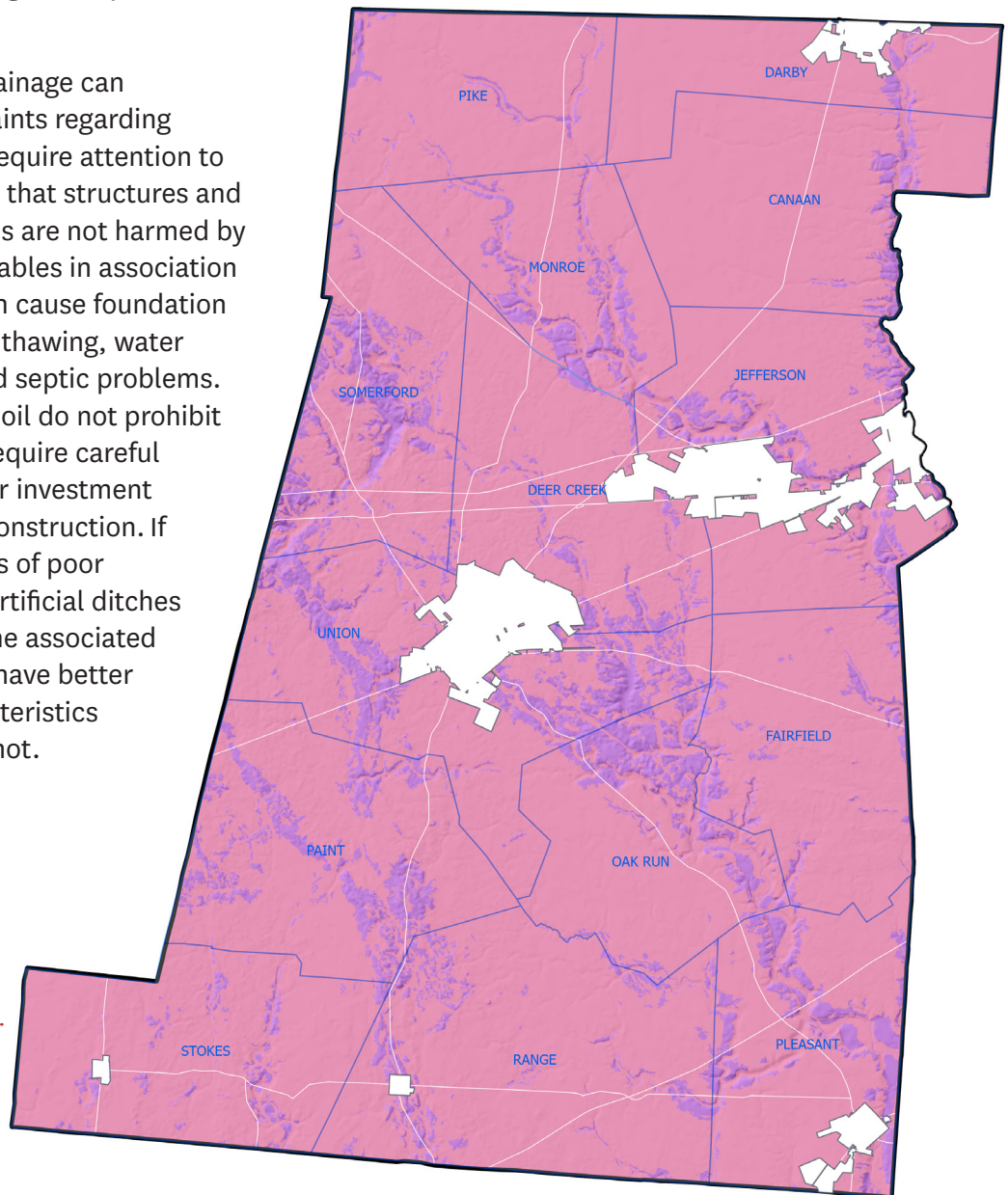
Figure 7

### *Soil Drainage*

#### LEGEND

Soils with Better  
Natural Drainage

Soils with Poorer  
Natural Drainage



## SEPTIC SYSTEM & DRAINAGE LIMITATIONS

The analysis of soils can indicate limitations for on-site septic systems based upon such characteristics as slow percolation, soil wetness, flooding and slope. Assessments performed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources through their Ohio Capability Analysis Program indicate that approximately 99.95 percent of Madison County's land contains characteristics that severely limit septic system operations.

Given the poor quality of soils, a minimum of one and a half acres will be required for the initial leach field placement, with enough area for a

replacement leach field. All lots, regardless of size, shall be required to provide a subsurface drainage outlet with documented easements to the approved outlet as approved by the County Engineer.

Several areas of Madison County are under development restrictions because of soil limitation for on-site septic systems. All existing lots under 1.5 acres in size may be subject to additional requirements. These areas may have limitations for use of septic tank systems.

## MINERAL RESOURCES

Like other watersheds within the glaciated portions of Ohio, the Darby Creeks have provided resources of sand and gravel. The deposits follow the stream areas and vary in composition relating to the conditions of formation. Caution must be

taken when extracting these resources to ensure that underlying groundwater is not contaminated in the process. Limestone is also found in Madison County, but quarrying of this resource has not been a significant economic factor.

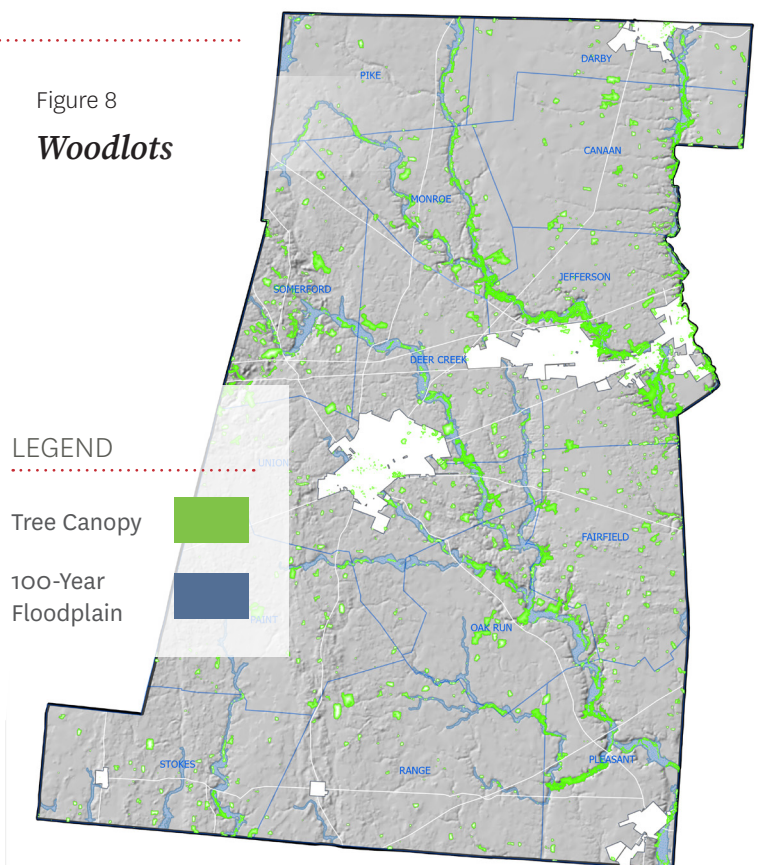
## TREES & PROTECTED LANDS

Woodlots make up 15,218 acres, or five percent of the County land area. 25% are found within the 100-Year Floodplain. Because trees play a big role in flood management through their ability to absorb and retain stormwater, they are critical pieces to the County's effort to mitigate drainage issues and flooding risk. They also play an important role in stabilization of farmland. The history of the Midwest has seen the clear-cutting of forested land for agriculture become a contributor to soil erosion that not only disturbs ecological habitat, but also threatens food production.

Most woodlots within the County are found along the Big and Little Darby Creeks. The areas where these creeks flow through unincorporated areas of Madison County have been designated as State Scenic Rivers, per the County's zoning code. A natural buffer of 120 feet is maintained along both sides of the waterway.

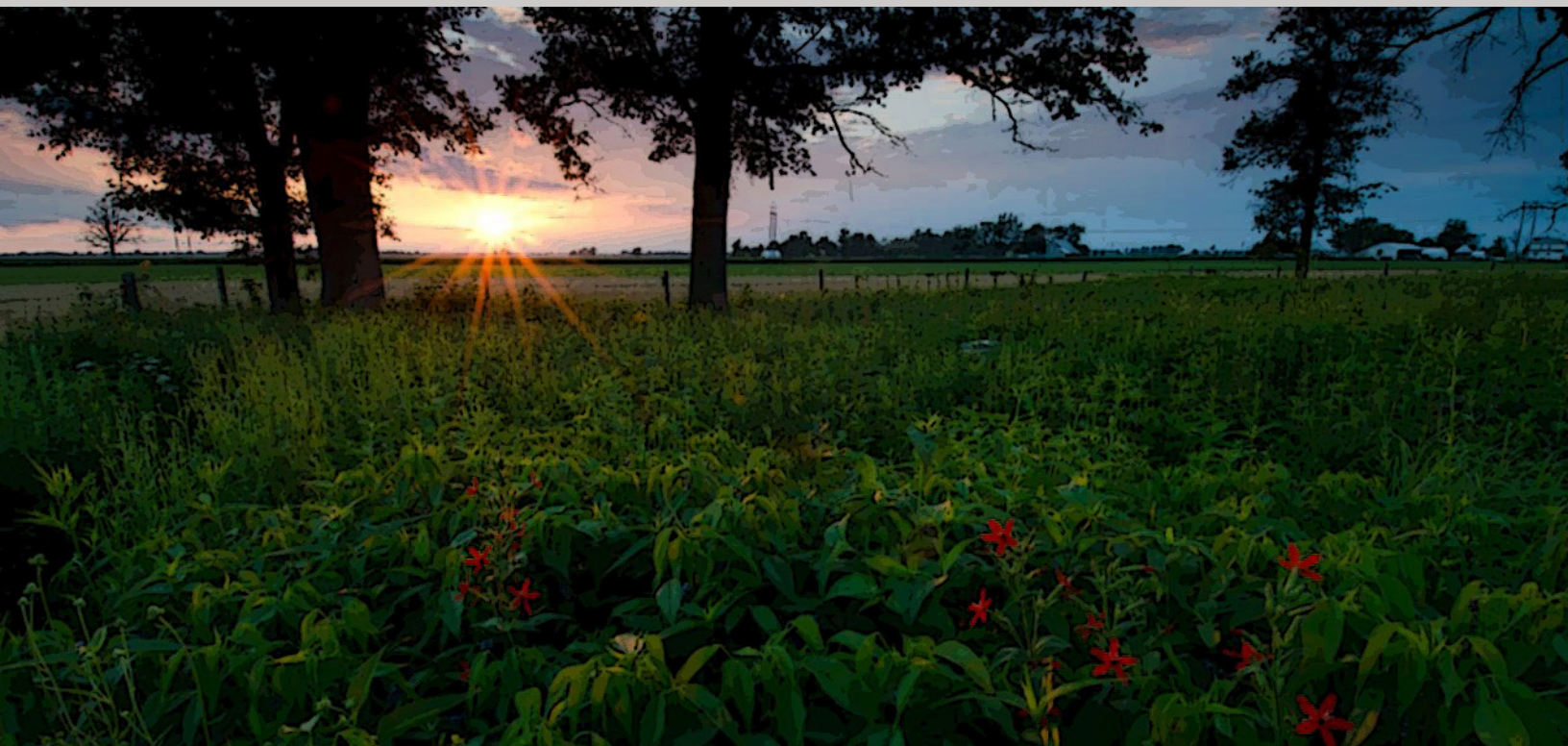
Figure 8

### Woodlots



**This page has been removed in accordance with the Solar Restriction Resolution adopted by the Madison County Board of Commissioners on September 12, 2023.**

**This page has been removed in accordance with the Solar Restriction Resolution adopted by the Madison County Board of Commissioners on September 12, 2023.**



# FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

**The Future Land Use Plan illustrates the major concepts for where and how Madison County should guide future physical development. The intent is to preserve the existing agricultural heritage and character which has made the County distinct, while accommodating growth within areas that can support additional development.**

The Future Land Use Plan is a graphical representation of the development principles established in this chapter. These development principles are the guiding factors of future development and suggest land appropriate for development, the general form physical development should follow, and how differing land uses should interact with one-another.

The Conceptual Development Plan is not a Future Land Use Map. The boundaries of the character areas are intentionally blurred to allow flexibility on behalf of County leadership. The underlying zoning districts provide parcel-specific regulations for physical development. This Conceptual Development Plan should be consulted when determining appropriate zoning designations for property when rezoning requests are evaluated by Madison County.








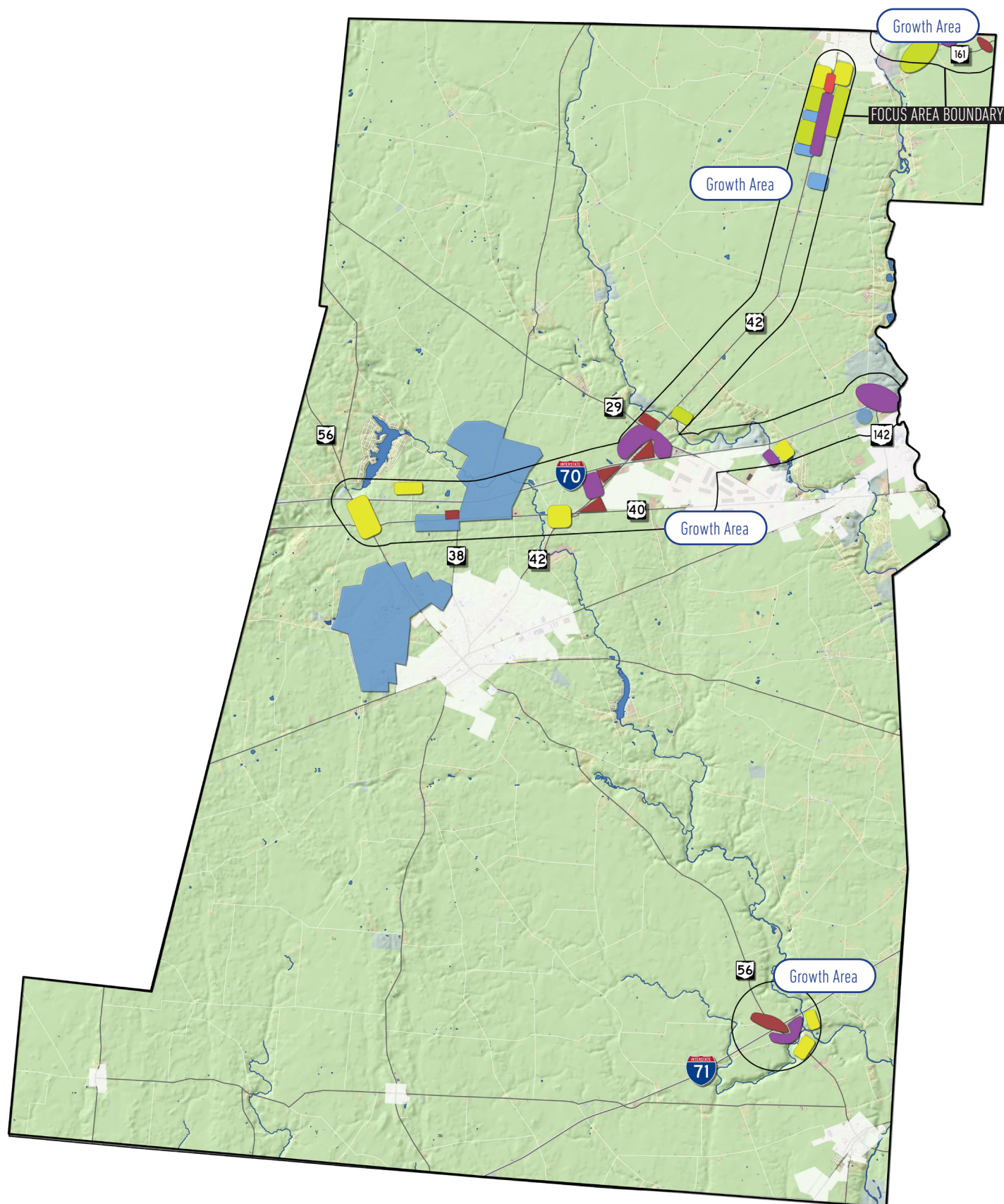
	<b>Conservation Residential</b> Clustered single-family homes with significant preservation areas
	<b>Traditional Residential</b> Single-family homes on individual lots arranged in a typical urban pattern
	<b>Flex Employment</b> Warehousing, assembly, or research uses that do not include outdoor components
	<b>Regional Commercial</b> Retail sales and services leveraging regional access routes and traffic volumes
	<b>Neighborhood Commercial</b> Retail sales serving a local populous, often in close proximity to residential uses
	<b>Special Use</b> Uses that serve a specific purpose not encompassed in standard districts
	<b>Agricultural</b> Lands dedicated to agricultural production

Figure 10

*Future Land Use Plan*



## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

# Conservation Residential

**The Conservation Residential Development Character Area is designed to provide needed housing in a pattern that creates an intentional transition between rural and urbanized areas within Madison County. This development pattern consists of detached single-family homes clustered among preserved natural open space and passive recreation amenities.**

Preservation of rural character lies at the very heart of the intent of conservation residential. Whereas conventional residential subdivisions devote all or nearly all of their buildable land to individual lots and streets, conservation residential subdivisions devote large amounts of space (sometimes more than half of their potential buildable area) to undivided, permanently protected open space. Extra attention is given to respecting and designing around the unique, naturally occurring features of a site. In Madison County, the Conservation Residential model is important as it behaves as the connective tissue between more standard residential neighborhoods within the Cities/Villages and the more pastoral nature of rural farming residences. These developments must take on natural characteristics of each and blend them in a compatible and visually agreeable manner.

### INTENT

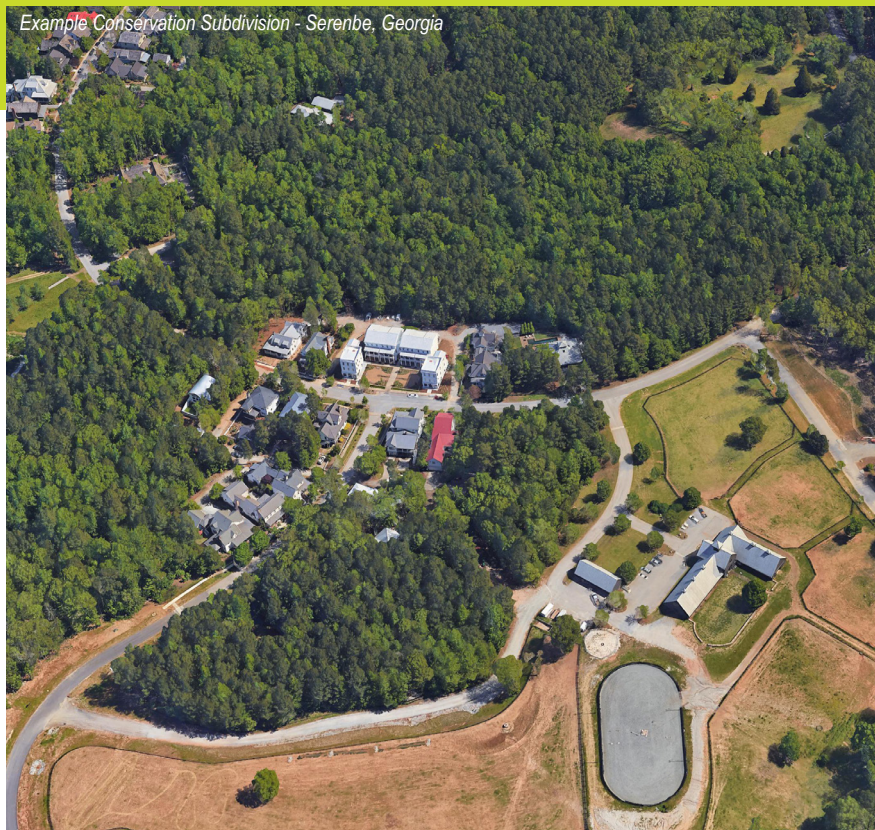
- ★ Place a strong emphasis on site design that considers the major view corridors through which the project will be seen, namely nearby roads, crossroads, and from adjacent properties.
- ★ Limit mass grading during development, making effort to preserve naturally occurring woodlots, scenic meadows, and natural sloping of the topography.
- ★ Stormwater management ponds should be organically shaped and fit within the natural context, mimicking pond look and feel on nearby farmland.
- ★ Low impact trails (mulch, dirt, gravel) are encouraged, particularly adjacent to streams and riparian corridors.

### PRIMARY USES

- ★ Single Family Residences
- ★ Preserve areas

### SECONDARY USES

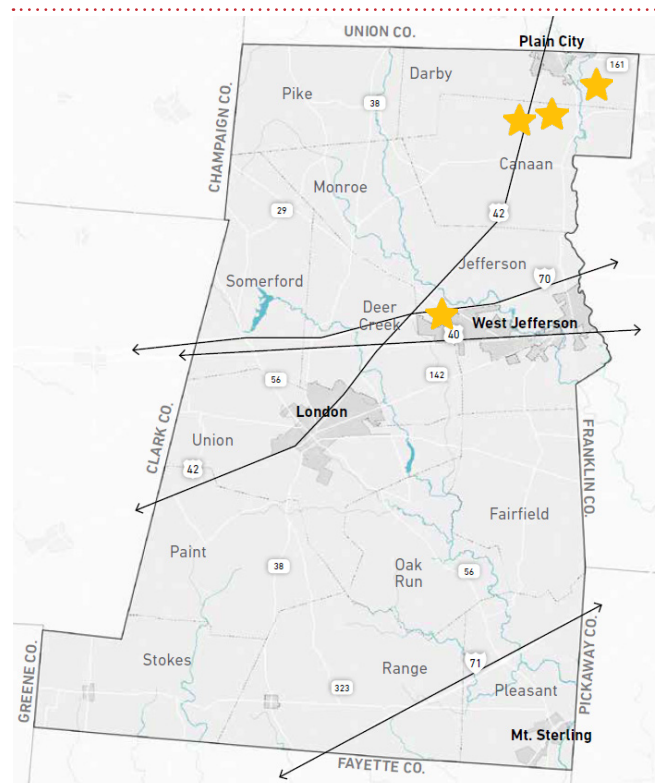
- ★ Parks
- ★ Schools
- ★ Senior Living Establishments at a scale that complements the neighborhood



## MARKET

- ★ The 11 county central Ohio region is projected to grow by 650,000 residents by 2050 according to the regional Metropolitan Transportation Organization, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission.
- ★ Based on the 2020 Census, a total of 400 residents were added to Madison County since 2010.
- ★ Housing unit permits and delivery averaged 106 units per year from 2016 to present, which is lower than other central Ohio counties.
- ★ Of the existing housing stock in Madison County, approximately 60% was constructed prior to 1980.
- ★ There are a total of approximately 16,000 housing units within the county, roughly 77% of all units are single-family detached products

## APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS



# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

## Conservation Residential

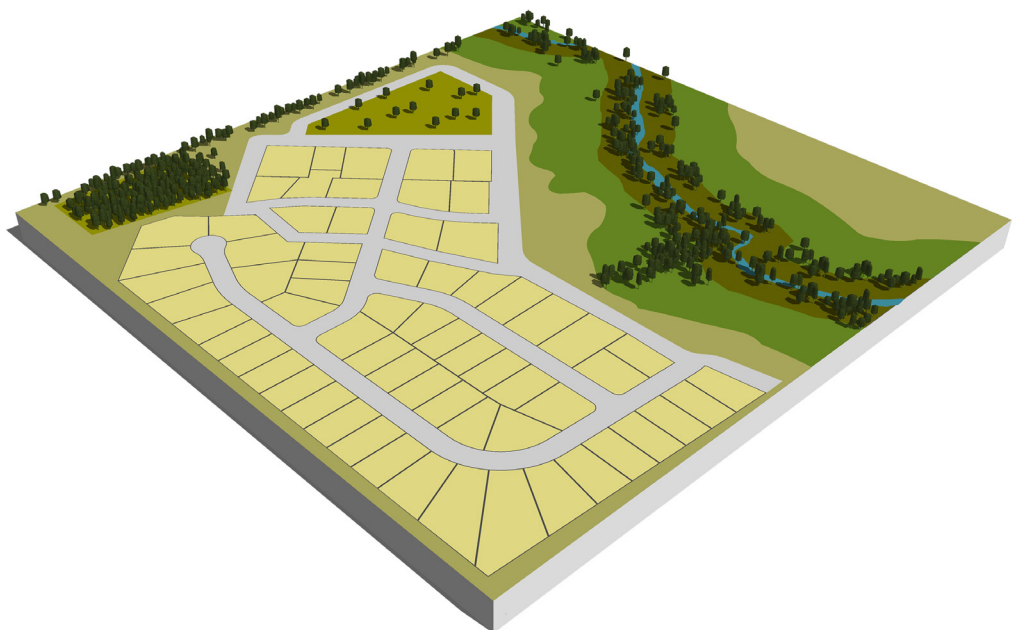
### BUILDING BLOCKS

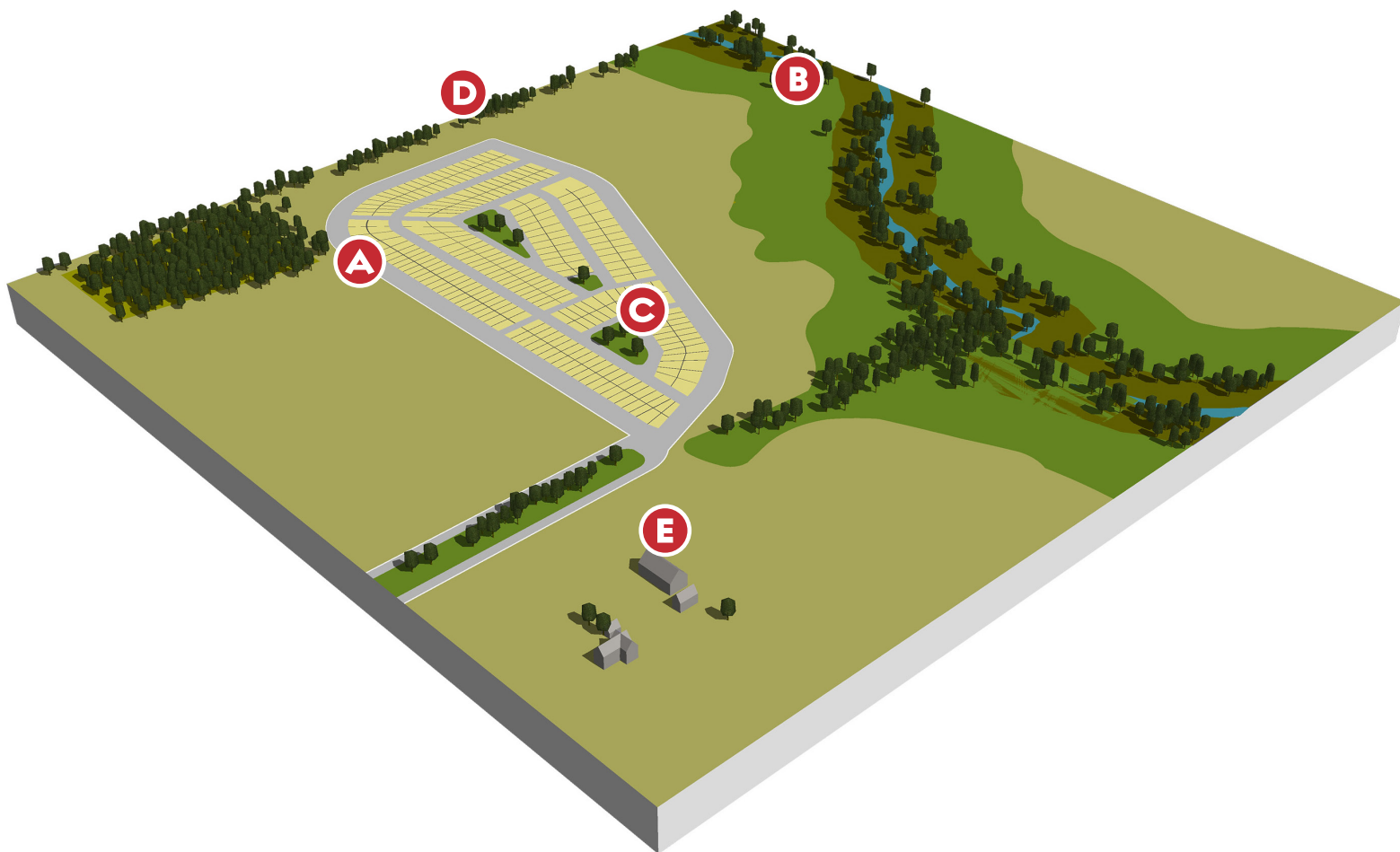
The standards below provide guidance as to the look and feel of new development within Madison County. These standards should be used when updating zoning regulations within the County. These standards create predictability for residents and prospective developers as to the expectations of the County.

HEIGHT	1-2.5 stories	ACCESS	Primarily vehicular from rural roadways; potential for bicycle path connections
BUILDING FORM	Residential structures and accessory buildings	PARKING	Private off-street (driveways and garages)
SETBACK	Clusters have large setback from roadways, residential setbacks within clusters should be 15 - 20 feet	OPEN SPACES	On-site preserve areas of natural open space
STREETS	Low-traffic rural roadways with minimal connectivity serving residential uses	LANDSCAPE	Preservation of natural features, and complement to rural/agricultural characteristics

### Typical Residential Development Pattern

The typical development pattern of contemporary residential subdivisions consist of clear-cutting and grading of land, consumptive lots, and similar home styles/configurations that lack character. This development pattern often utilizes cul-de-sacs, wide roadways and limited connectivity to the surrounding community for pedestrians and automobiles. Individual lots make up almost the entirety of the site, with very little and often poorly designed communal open space.





## SITE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

- A** Minimal land disturbance. Preserving existing vegetative communities, topography, and natural features of the site allows new development to seamlessly integrate with existing patterns of development and create intentional transitions between rural and urbanized areas within Madison County.
- B** Preservation of natural features and environmentally sensitive areas. The purpose of conservation-focused development is to preserve unique natural features of land in order to create diverse housing options and blend natural landscapes with developed areas.
- C** Clustered primary uses. Clustering uses allows for additional land preservation and creates opportunities for unique recreational amenities to be integrated into the development pattern.
- D** Inclusion of passive recreation uses. Utilizing clustered lots allows for passive recreation (walking trails, nature preserves, park spaces) to be included for the enjoyment of residents within the neighborhood.
- E** Preservation of rural character. Utilizing conservation development principles allows for primary uses to be clustered and natural features and open spaces to be preserved, protecting the rural character of Madison County.

## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

# Traditional Residential

**The Traditional Residential Development Character Area is designed to provide needed housing in a pattern typical to traditional, American neighborhoods. This development pattern consists of detached single-family homes served by potable water and sanitary sewer, and integrated into a village or city's existing development grid. This character type is intended to be located adjacent to or within urbanized areas within Madison County.**

Construction of additional housing is of high priority for Madison County. To enable development of additional residential units for sale and for rent, expectations for appropriate scale and layout of residential units must be established. Complementing existing residential patterns and providing additional community amenities are necessary to ensure harmony between existing and new developments. The Traditional Residential category provides new housing opportunities utilizing context-appropriate designs that respond to existing character throughout Madison County. Density and overall street layout and connections should respond to existing patterns while providing new connections and amenities to differentiate new development from existing developments within the county. Generally, these areas should be focused around the outer edges of existing cities / villages and allow measured expansion of these entities. Multifamily and Missing Middle housing is encouraged as part of master planned developments to diversify the existing housing offerings within Madison County.

### INTENT

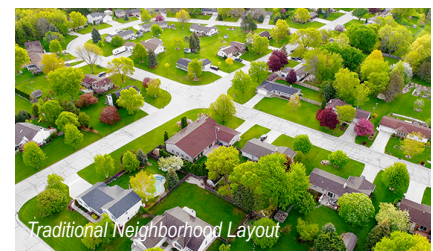
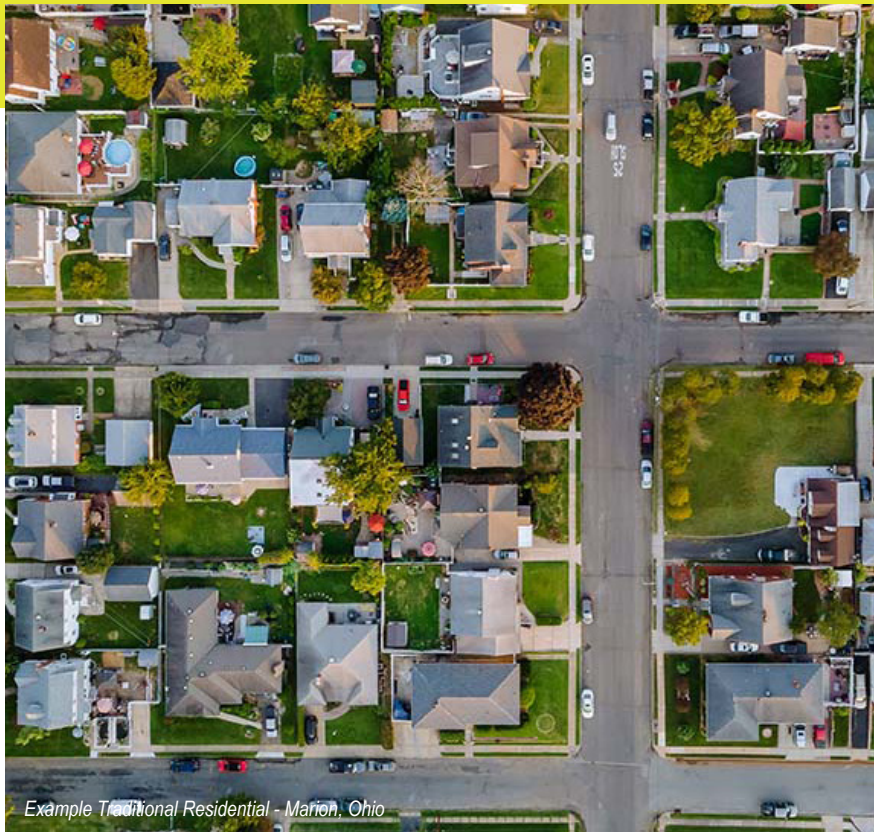
- ★ Provide additional housing in a style and layout that complements existing residential patterns within the area.
- ★ Enhance connectivity to surrounding residential land use patterns.
- ★ Stormwater management ponds should be strategically designed and placed to enhance aesthetics and complement surrounding development patterns.
- ★ Connection to or extension of existing trails systems are integrated into the community.
- ★ Encourage a mix of residential housing types at appropriate densities to complement established neighborhoods.

### PRIMARY USES

- ★ Single-Family Residences
- ★ “Missing Middle” housing (as part of a planned development that includes single-family)

### SECONDARY USES

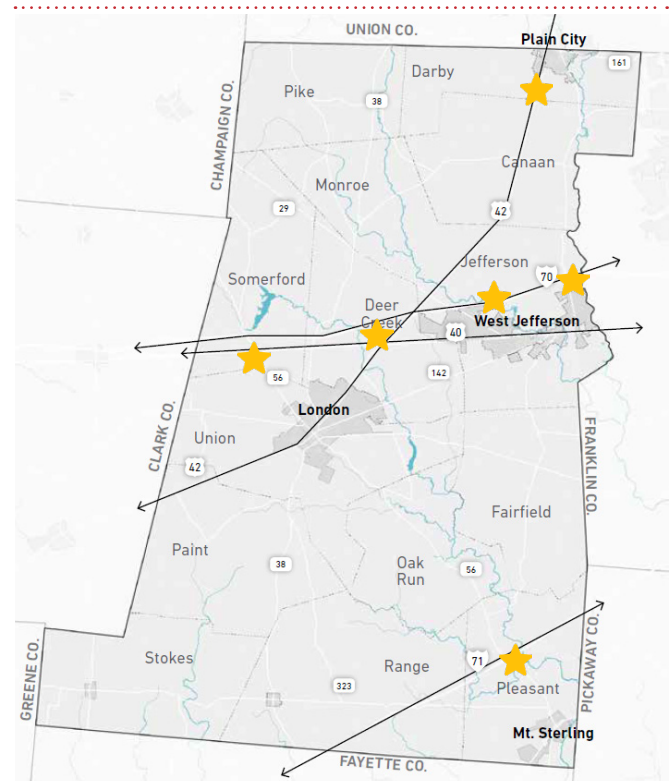
- ★ Schools / Civic / Institutional
- ★ Parks and Open Space
- ★ Religious Facilities



## MARKET

- ★ Home values within Madison County are rapidly increasing. Between 2010 and 2020, home values increased by 76%. Values have increased an additional 24% between 2020 and 2022.
- ★ Population within Madison County is projected to increase to 49,000 residents by 2040 based on linear population growth, an increase of 5,176 residents over 2020 Census counts.
- ★ Based on current housing absorption rates of approximately 106 per year, significant housing demand will continue through 2040 at current delivery pace.
- ★ Madison County is overall older than other counties in the central Ohio region. Median age of Madison County residents is 41, the median age of the region is 37 years of age.
- ★ Madison County has low levels of housing cost-burdening. Less than ten percent of mortgages cost homeowners 35% or more of monthly income.

## APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS



# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

## Traditional Residential

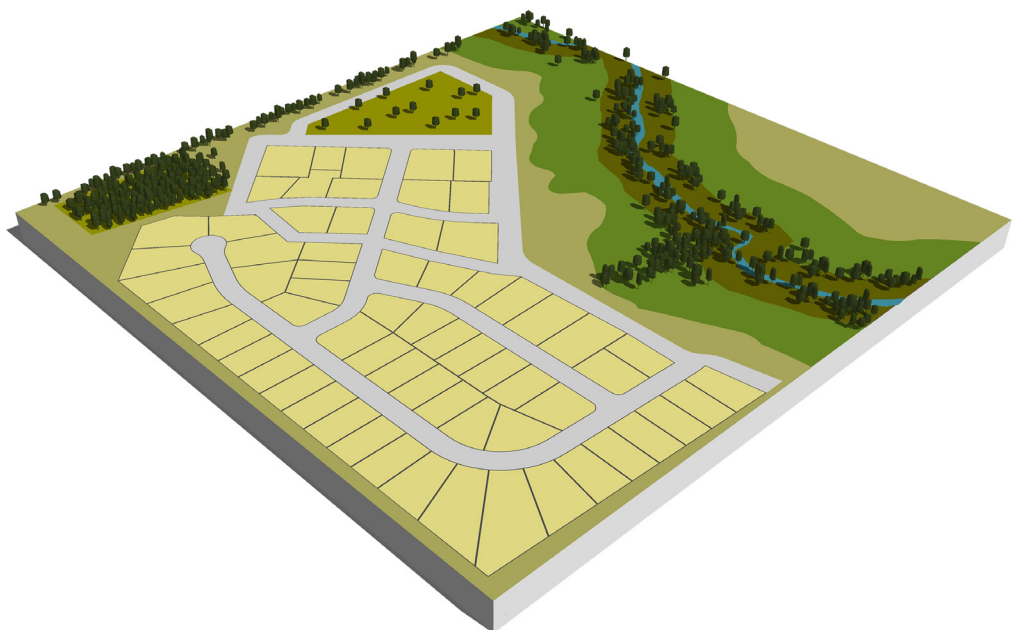
### BUILDING BLOCKS

The standards below provide guidance as to how new development within Madison County should look and feel. These standards should be used when updating zoning regulations within the County. These standards create predictability for residents and prospective developers as to the expectations of the County.

HEIGHT	1-2.5 stories	ACCESS	Multiple access points connected to larger street network
BUILDING FORM	Variety of building types and sizes, attached and freestanding	PARKING	On-street and private off-street (alley-loaded and front-loaded driveways/garages)
SETBACK	10 - 30 feet (generally consistent within a block)	OPEN SPACES	Pocket parks within neighborhoods, connections to schools and community parks
STREETS	Grid-like blocks with enhanced street connectivity	LANDSCAPE	Entryway features and perimeter buffers between differing land uses

### TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The typical development pattern of contemporary residential subdivisions consist of clear-cutting and grading of land, consumptive lots, and similar home styles/configurations that lack character. This development pattern often utilizes cul-de-sacs, wide roadways and limited connectivity to the surrounding community for pedestrians and automobiles. Individual lots make up almost the entirety of the site, with very little and often poorly designed communal open space.





## SITE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

- A** Block-based street network. Creating blocks within new development increases walkability and enhances sense of community through enhanced internal connectivity.
- B** Enhanced street connectivity. Extension of existing street networks into new development intentionally expands the overall grid in a logical manner.
- C** Inclusion of parks and open space within the development. Spaces to play and relax should be integrated throughout the community. These spaces offer opportunities for residents to play and connect with the neighbors within walking distance to their home.
- D** Connections to community facilities such as schools. Creating safe routes to schools encourages students to walk to school, and better connects residents to their community resources.
- E** Cohesive aesthetic standards building orientation, setbacks, and overall design. Developing with clear, consistent guidelines produces predictable results and a cohesive community that are desirable for current and prospective residents.

## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

# Flex Employment

**The Flex Employment Development Character Area is designed to respond to the increased demand for employment uses such as low-impact industrial and commercial. These land uses are best located along highly accessible regional transportation routes, and proximal to population centers that provide convenient access for employees and an expanded labor pool for employers.**

There is latent demand within Madison County for scalable, flexible facilities to support expanding industrial operations within the region. These businesses complete value-added operations and have significant logistics components to fulfill customer orders. These uses benefit from proximity to similar uses to take advantage of shared infrastructure, labor pools, and other resources. Facilities within this character area should be designed to grow and accommodate changing uses as production techniques and technology change over time. Scalability is a key focus to respond to changing market demands and accommodation of multiple users. These areas may include commercial and residential uses, but generally at a smaller scale than comparable commercial or mixed-use areas.

### INTENT

- ★ Promote continued expansion of industrial areas leveraging regional connectors.
- ★ Support operations of expanding industry within the central Ohio region through complementary flex space for light industrial or research and development requirements.
- ★ Encourage consolidation of low-impact industrial uses to strategic opportunity areas with access to regional connectors and rail (as applicable)

### PRIMARY USES

- ★ Low-Impact, Light Industrial
- ★ Commercial Office
- ★ Warehousing / Distribution

### SECONDARY USES

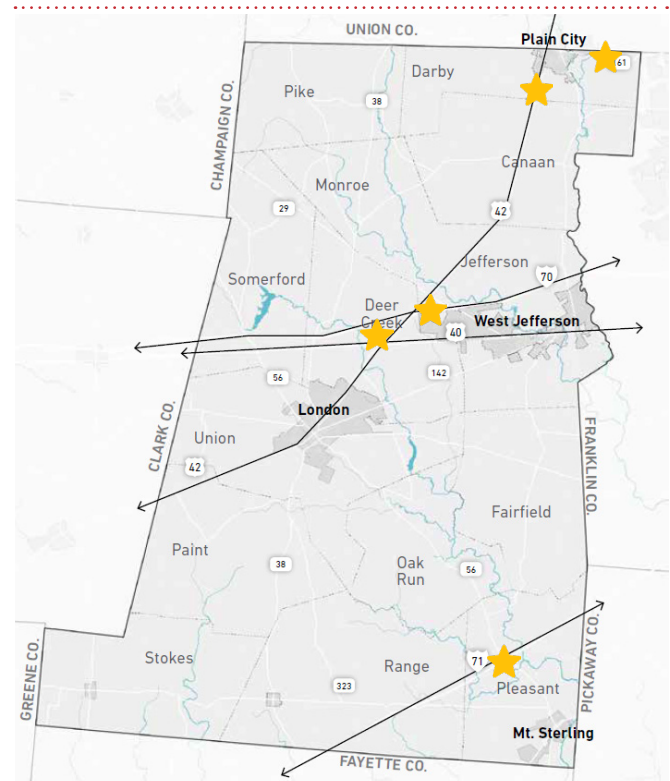
- ★ Mixed-Use
- ★ Multi-family Residential
- ★ Civic / Institutional



## MARKET

- ★ There are a total of approximately 16,500 jobs within Madison County, an increase of 3,000 since 2002.
- ★ Madison County has over 17 million square feet (SF) of Flex Employment space, with 2.6 million SF added in 2021.
- ★ There is currently a three percent vacancy rate among the 17 million SF of the Flex Employment space within Madison County
- ★ Manufacturing, Transportation, and Warehousing account for 40% of all Madison County jobs.
- ★ Approximately 25% of workers in Madison County are over 55 years of age.
- ★ 73% of the Madison County workforce commutes from surrounding counties, an increased from 57% in 2002. One-third of these workers commute more than 25 minutes one-way.

## APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS



# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

## Flex Employment

### BUILDING BLOCKS

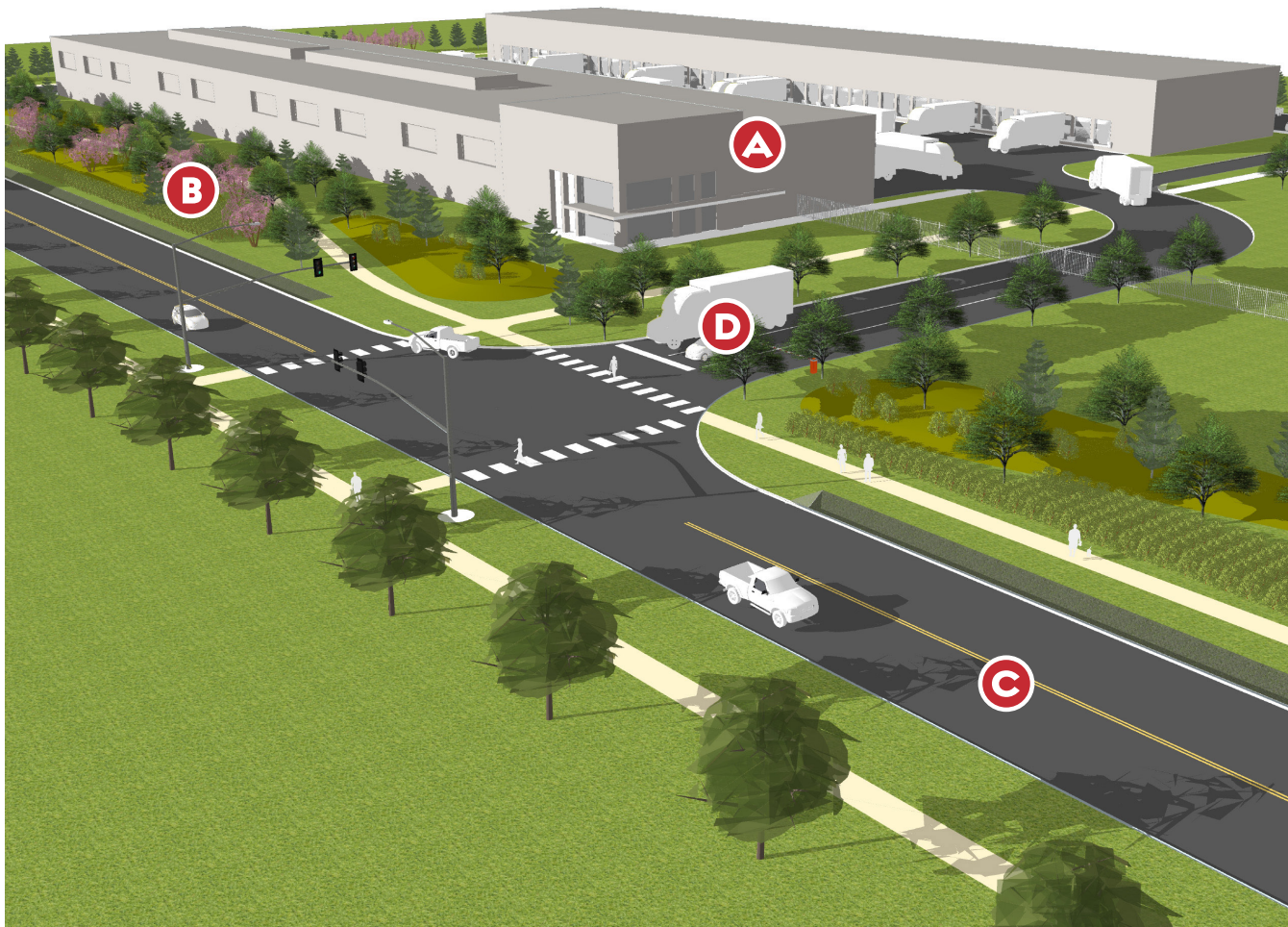
The standards below provide guidance as to how new development within Madison County should look and feel. These standards should be used when updating zoning regulations within the County. These standards create predictability for residents and prospective developers as to the expectations of the County.

HEIGHT	1-3 stories	ACCESS	Convenient access to roadways and regional connectors, limited pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure
BUILDING FORM	Medium to very-large footprint structures, flexible space to accommodate various uses	PARKING	Private, off-street parking lots
SETBACK	30 - 50 feet (varies from lot to lot)	OPEN SPACES	Natural buffers between adjacent development, Green infrastructure incorporated into overall site design
STREETS	Must accommodate a mix of truck and personal automobile traffic	LANDSCAPE	Focused along roadways and between adjacent lower intensity uses as opposed to between similar uses

### TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

In a typical configuration, Flex Employment can be visually harsh, as a mixture of vehicles, asphalt parking lots and large, monotonous building facades dominate the sight-line from public roadway to the business itself. Parking is located between public roadway and commercial building, with minimal plantings or simply a small, required landscape strip acting as the delineator between public and private space. Building orientation and signage are not directed toward public streets but face internal users upon entry to the site. Sites can feel as if they exist in a vacuum, with little regard or cohesion with the surrounding context or district.





## SITE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

- A** Properties arranged to accommodate scaling of facilities and expansions that respond to changing market demands. As businesses and employers expand or change market focus, varying sizes of facilities and lots are required to accommodate these needs.
- B** Landscaping and open space is focused around the perimeter of the character areas to soften the appearance of large industrial structures. Focusing screening along roadways and perimeters creates aesthetically pleasing character while accommodating needed Flex Employment spaces.
- C** Locate Flex Employment uses adjacent to major regional connector routes and / or rail if needed. Locating these uses proximal to required transportation routes reduces demand on local streets not intended to support large-truck traffic.
- D** Roadways designed to support significant large-truck traffic and personal automobiles. Utilizing clear signage, appropriately sized lanes, and properly configured intersections create safe routes for both personal automobiles and large-truck traffic within these areas.

## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

# Regional Commercial

**The Regional Commercial Development Character Area is designed to provide local retail options for residents, employees, and visitors to Madison County. This development pattern consists of roadway-oriented commercial establishments at or near intersections of primary roadways in the county.**

Access to commercial services and retail outlets is key to creating a holistic community. Within Madison County these areas are primarily focused around interstate interchanges and highway intersections. Developments within this district are additive in nature and provide opportunities to provide services currently lacking within Madison County. This Development Character Area provides a transition between Flex Employment areas and lower-intensity uses within the county. Pedestrian and bicycle interfaces between the Regional Commercial areas and surrounding land uses are encouraged to expand transportation options within the county, create meaningful connections between various land uses, and further existing bicycle and trail networks. Development within this character area is supportive of and responsive to surrounding development patterns and uses.

### INTENT

- ★ Emphasize strategic development opportunities for smaller, key intersections and highway corridors.
- ★ Improve pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between nearby residential neighborhoods and adjacent non-residential uses.
- ★ Utilize consolidated access points between developments to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- ★ Promote design for various modes of transportation (walk, bicycle, automobile) with connectivity to neighboring employment centers and neighborhoods.

### PRIMARY USES

- ★ Highway oriented commercial uses
- ★ Small-format commercial
- ★ Office

### SECONDARY USES

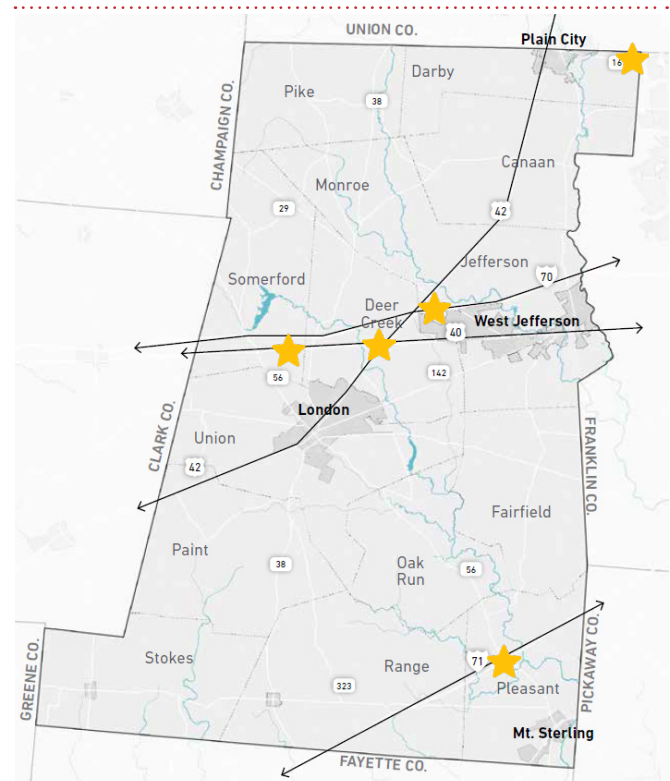
- ★ Multifamily residential
- ★ Civic / Institutional



## MARKET

- ★ Total retail sales for Madison County are approximately \$1.75 billion (2017)
- ★ Accommodation and food service sales comprise approximately \$51.8 million (2017)
- ★ Total retail sales per capita for 2017 (most recent year available) is \$39,612
- ★ The county experienced a four and one-half percent growth in Gross Domestic Product between 2019 and 2020, with the largest sector, Transportation and Warehousing, up 12% to \$244 million.

## APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS



# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

## Regional Commercial

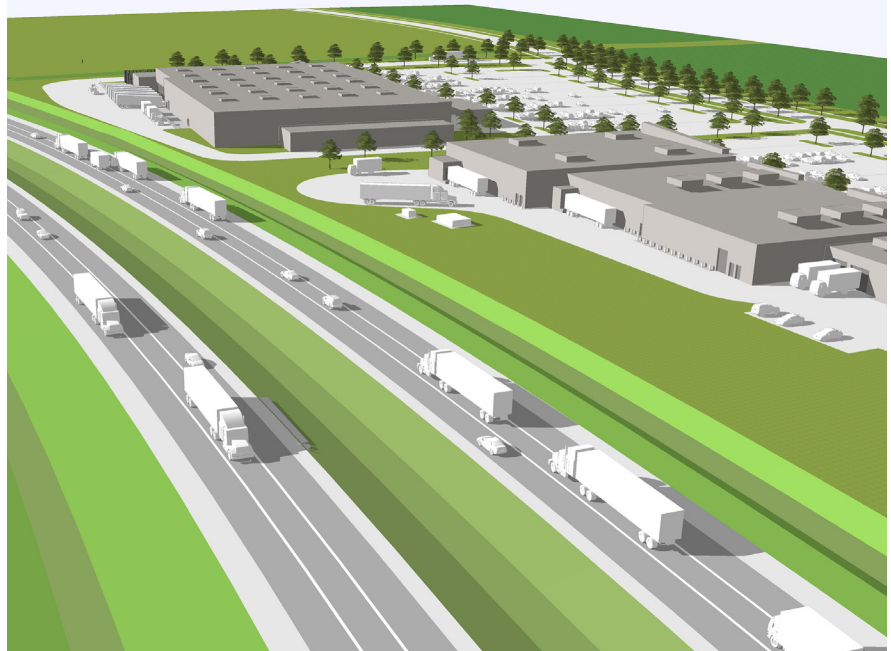
### BUILDING BLOCKS

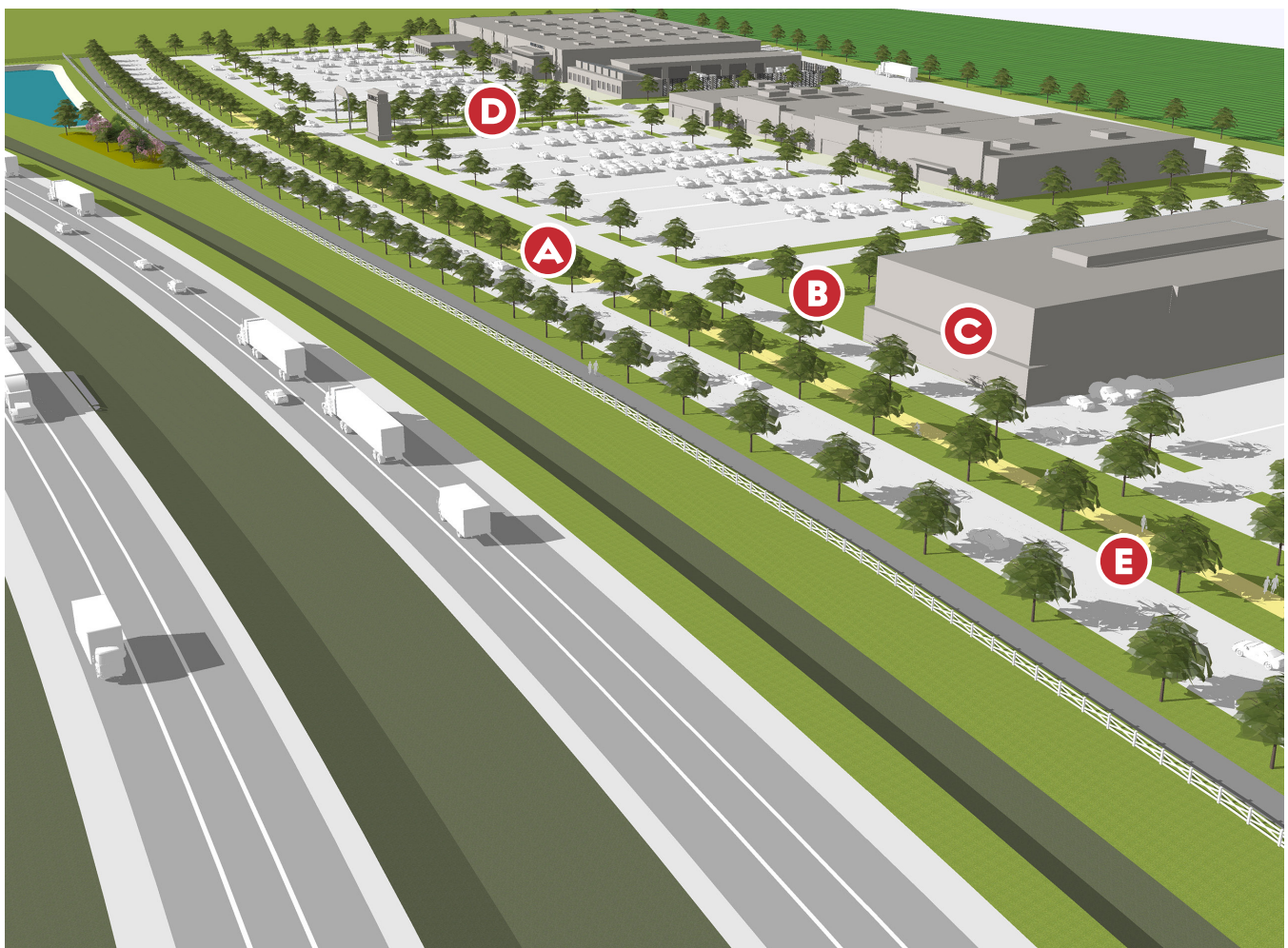
The standards below provide guidance as to how new development within Madison County should look and feel. These standards should be used when updating zoning regulations within the County. These standards create predictability for residents and prospective developers as to the expectations of the County.

HEIGHT	1-2 stories	ACCESS	Consolidated roadway access points with individual developments connected with cross-access points, potential for walking and biking
BUILDING FORM	Small footprint buildings that may be occupied by a single or multiple tenants, attached or freestanding	PARKING	Shared parking areas located in off-street parking lots
SETBACK	30 - 50 feet	OPEN SPACES	Integrated pocket-parks and plazas
STREETS	Along primary corridors with shared access points connecting individual developments	LANDSCAPE	Increased landscaping, entryway features, and “green infrastructure” elements

### TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The typical development pattern for Regional Commercial areas are Big-box buildings that often have sparse landscaping where “back of house” operations (dumpsters, service doors) are often visible from high traffic roadways. These are typically heavily auto-oriented, often without sidewalk or trail accommodations and minimal landscaping. Large open sites consist of vast and visually apparent parking lots, not accommodating to pedestrian scale activity.





## SITE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

- A** Consolidated vehicular access points. Utilizing shared access increases pedestrian safety and reduces impedances to vehicular traffic for better flow.
- B** Cross-access points between neighboring developments. Sharing access between commercial properties reduces need for vehicles to utilize adjacent roadways when visiting neighboring commercial uses.
- C** Commercial office or retail structures occupied by single or multiple tenants. Commercial structures that allow flexibility of tenant and use endure over time to meet changing market needs.
- D** Enhanced landscaping and green infrastructure with distinct entry features. Creating aesthetically pleasing entryway features reinforces identity of these development types. Utilization of green infrastructure minimizes environmental impacts and reduces demand on stormwater and utility systems.
- E** Pedestrian and bicycle connections as appropriate. Accommodating non-motorized transportation options better connects commercial uses to nearby residents and affords the ability to walk or bike to nearby commercial services.

## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

# Neighborhood Commercial

**The Neighborhood Commercial Development Character Area is designed to provide appropriately scaled commercial uses proximal to residential neighborhoods. This development pattern consists of neighborhood scale commercial buildings and uses adjacent to or mixed with existing residential uses.**

Communities thrive when appropriately scaled and easily accessible commercial and retail uses are interspersed among residential uses. These small-scale commercial opportunities afford residents the opportunity to address their daily needs within their neighborhood. Within this Development Character Area new development should reflect the scale and style of existing development and be additive in nature. Generally, development should be pedestrian in orientation and scale while accommodating vehicular traffic. This Development Character Area should not be utilized for traditional big-box retailers, but rather small, locally-owned purveyors of goods and restaurateurs that have vested interest in the long-term vitality of Madison County.

### INTENT

- ★ Allow commercial retail infill that is compatible in scale and design to existing neighborhoods while maintaining existing neighborhood character.
- ★ Improve pedestrian and vehicular connectivity between residential neighborhoods and non-residential developments.
- ★ Focus on creating holistic neighborhoods that provide daily needs within walking distance of residents
- ★ Inclusion of sidewalks and other pedestrian paths are encouraged with new development.

### PRIMARY USES

- ★ Small-format commercial
- ★ Restaurants / Retail

### SECONDARY USES

- ★ Multifamily residential
- ★ ‘Missing Middle’ housing (i.e. Duplex, Triplex, flats, etc.)
- ★ Parks and open space



Neighborhood-Scale Commercial



Pedestrian-Friendly Storefront



Accommodation of Vehicles and Pedestrians



Market Spaces



Opportunities for Outdoor Seating

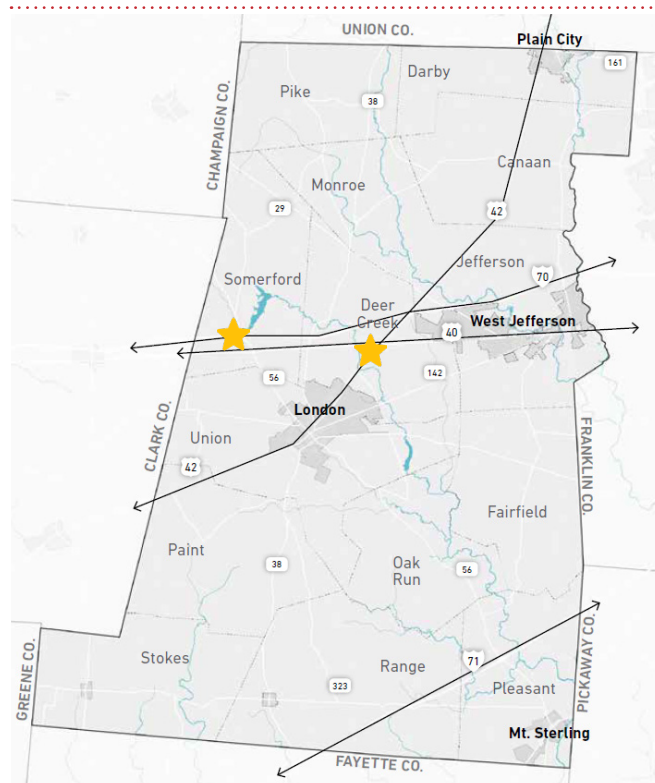


Small Footprint Commercial Buildings

## MARKET

- ★ Generally, employment sectors outside of Manufacturing, Transportation, and Warehousing have experienced declines in employment numbers from 2004 through 2019.
- ★ Retail trade accounted for 12.6% of employment in 2004, but in 2019 accounted for nine and one-tenth percent of total employment in Madison County.
- ★ While overall percentage of Retail Trade declined from 2004 through 2019, this employment category was second in the number of online job postings for 2020 with 699 postings. Transportation and Warehousing was first with 703 postings.

## APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS



# DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

## Neighborhood Commercial

### BUILDING BLOCKS

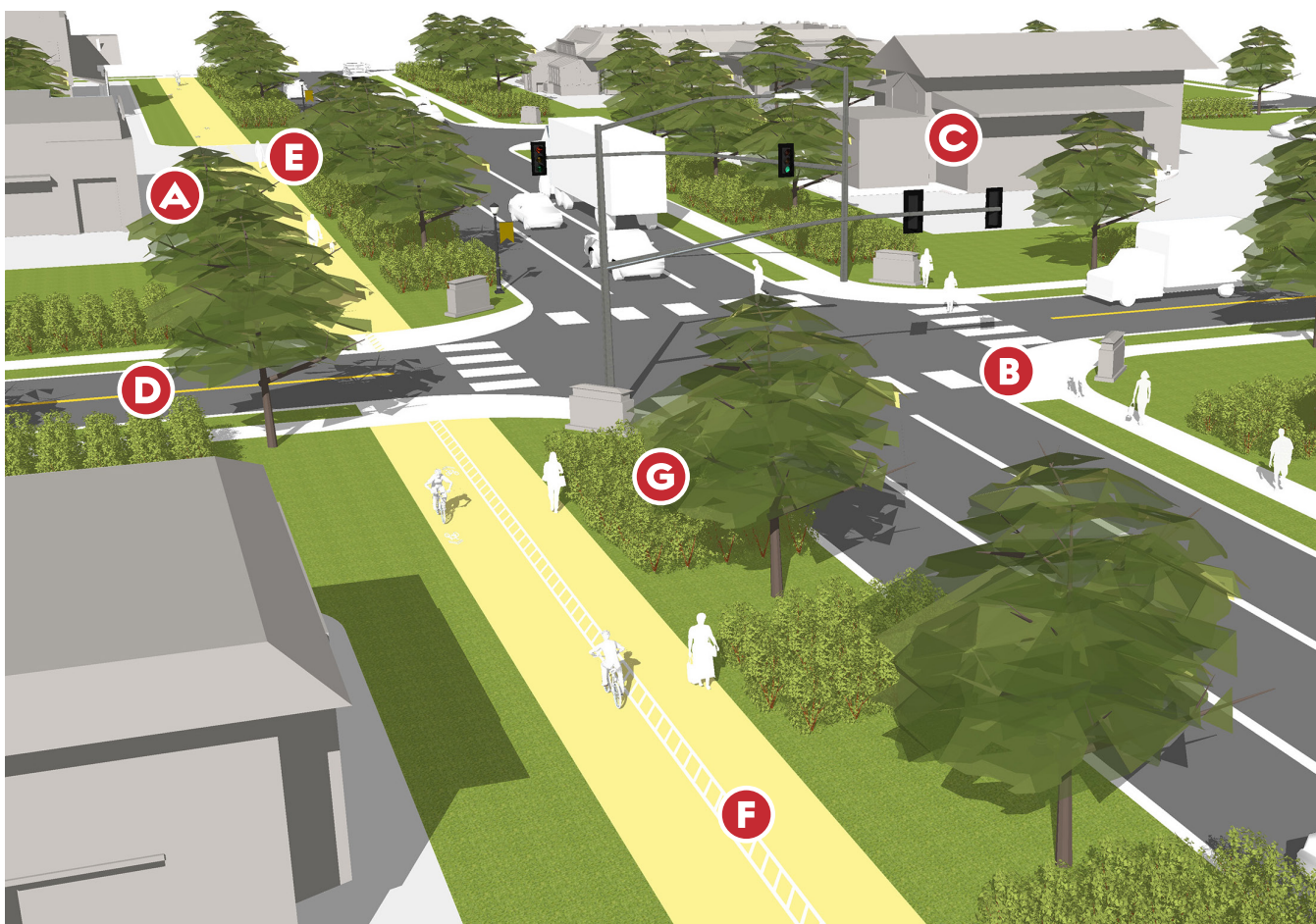
The standards below provide guidance as to how new development within Madison County should look and feel. These standards should be used when updating zoning regulations within the County. These standards create predictability for residents and prospective developers as to the expectations of the County.

HEIGHT	1-3 stories	ACCESS	Variety of building types and sizes attached and freestanding
BUILDING FORM	Small-footprint buildings that may be occupied by a single or multiple tenants, attached or freestanding	PARKING	On-street and private off-street parking lots (primarily rear parking lots)
SETBACK	15 - 20 feet	OPEN SPACES	Plaza spaces and pocket parks
STREETS	Along neighborhood serving streets and collector roadways	LANDSCAPE	Streetscape elements, perimeter buffers where necessary adjacent to differing land uses

### TYPICAL DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Typical neighborhood commercial can resemble piecemeal streetscapes as individual properties develop or transition from residential and install unconnected sidewalk segments. There is often not cohesive landscaping/right-of-way plantings and parking is usually between the roadway and the commercial building, visible to passing traffic. Commercial establishments are accessed via individual curb cuts in front of businesses. Pedestrian infrastructure such as clearly marked crosswalks and wide sidewalks is usually not cohesive across distances or may be totally absent.





## SITE DEVELOPMENT CHARACTERISTICS

- A** Buildings address the street. Shallow setbacks to the street, doorways face the street, windows along the front of the building.
- B** Accommodate both pedestrians and automobiles. Provide connections to sidewalks and parking areas. Include outdoor seating where possible.
- C** Building scale and design is additive to existing character. Scale of new buildings and overall design elements are complementary to existing buildings in the area.
- D** Integration into existing street network. Where possible, expand the existing street network and connect to the street grid at appropriate locations, primarily at intersections.
- E** Consolidated and shared vehicular access points. Reduce curb cuts to minimize vehicular/pedestrian conflict points and create a more aesthetically pleasing environment.
- F** Intentional interfaces with pedestrian routes and existing trails. Connecting pedestrians to the front door of buildings from the street. Providing bicycle and non-motorized parking on-site.
- G** Enhanced streetscape including street trees and ground-level vegetation that is aesthetically pleasing.

## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

# Special Use

**The Special Use Development Character Area is reserved for those sites or uses which are unique to Madison County. Uses within this district are typically civic or institutional uses that serve the entirety of Madison County or other similar entity.**

There are multiple land uses within Madison County which are unique or specifically civic / institutional in nature. While these uses are generally appropriate within most character areas, there are multiple instances of property uses with Madison County that benefit from specific designation. The properties within this designation are of significant scale and provide unique services within Madison County. Typically, these are land and / or buildings occupied by municipal and other governmental agencies for the exercise of their functions. These could include major libraries, airports, public schools, and safety facilities.

### INTENT

- ★ Encourage integration of institutional uses with adjacent land uses, neighborhoods, transportation corridors, and open spaces.
- ★ Provide appropriate connectivity to nearby uses through roadways, sidewalks, and paths.



## DEVELOPMENT CHARACTER AREA

# Agricultural

**The Agricultural Development Character Area identifies and protects the primary land use pattern within Madison County. Over 90% of the land within the county is agricultural in nature. The intent of this designation is to ensure the long-term ability of Madison County farms to continue to produce agricultural goods.**

Agricultural land uses are the predominant land use of Madison County. Over 90% of the lands within the county are utilized for some form of agricultural uses. Continuing these land uses is key to preserving the rural character of Madison County, a primary focus of this plan. Development patterns within this character are very large parcels utilized for growing crops and raising animals. Homesteads of property owners and accessory structures supporting farming operations are the primary development patterns within this designation.

### INTENT

- ★ Preserve the predominantly agricultural and rural nature of Madison County.
- ★ Limit uses other than agricultural related operations within the Development Character Area
- ★ Focus growth within areas of Madison County that can support additional density and intensities.



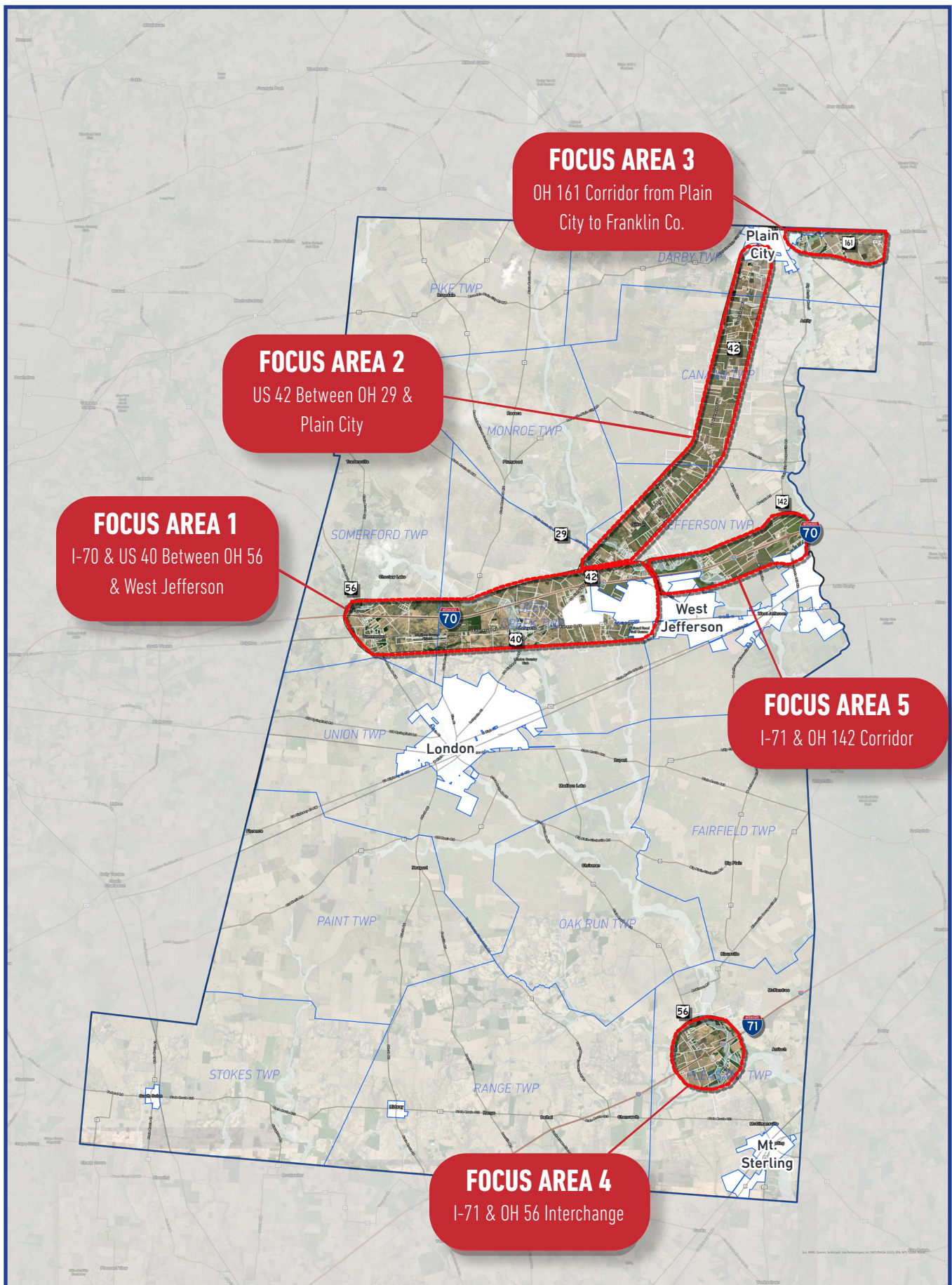


# FOCUS AREAS

Madison County will remain an agriculturally-focused community. But the County also sits within a fast growing central Ohio region. Development pressure will intensify through the next decade. To maintain the county's rural heritage and tap into the benefits of regional growth, five focus areas were identified. These areas account for less than ten percent of the overall land area of the county, but share special opportunities for development. Collectively, these areas are an opportunity for the county to guide thoughtful and additive developments that collectively enhance the community's quality of life, place, and opportunity.

When examining the principles for growth, development, and conservation, there is a need to delineate physical locations where land use change is allowed or encouraged. This allows for a mutual balance between growth and conservation. These also create very understandable expectations around the physical boundaries where growth and development can

and should occur. The boundaries themselves are based on distances from major road corridors or interchanges, therefore their extents don't need to be viewed as absolutely rigid, but with discretion on a case by case basis. The main point they portray are the general areas of focus, indicating in broad strokes where development is encouraged and where it is not.



### FOCUS AREA 3

OH 161 Corridor from Plain City to Franklin Co.

### FOCUS AREA 2

US 42 Between OH 29 & Plain City

### FOCUS AREA 1

I-70 & US 40 Between OH 56 & West Jefferson

### FOCUS AREA 5

I-71 & OH 142 Corridor

### FOCUS AREA 4

I-71 & OH 56 Interchange

## FOCUS AREA 1:

# I-70 & US 40 Between OH 56 & West Jefferson

**Representing the geographic heart of Madison County, this swath of land contains the parallel spines of US 40 and Interstate 70. Existing sewer utilities are present along the east and west portions of the focus area and a recently constructed water line runs north from London, following OH 38, US 40, & US 42, increasing development potential of multiple properties along these major transportation corridors.**

Focus Area 1 has a land area of 16 square miles. The entire city of Upper Arlington, by comparison, is less than 10 square miles. Development along these key corridors is a mix of new and old. US 40, once referred to as the Main Street of America, is a major east-west corridor through the area. US 40 bisects the historic communities of Summerford and Lafayette, both dating back to the early 1800s. The emergence of interstate 70, more than a century later, has led to a wide variety of contemporary development patterns.

The most common of these patterns are large format warehousing and distribution centers. I-70's three interchanges (OH 56, OH 29, and US 42) offer immense benefits to companies that engage in interstate commerce and the proximity to the Columbus metro. The County Airport, Farm Science Review, and investments in a new water line along OH 36, US 40 & US 42 keep attention on the center of this focus area and increase possibility for future investments within this focus area.



## FOCUS AREA STATISTICS

# 16

*square miles total  
land area*

# 27

*miles of road frontage along  
major roadway corridors*

# 2

*existing sewer districts  
within the area*

# 100K

*estimated annual attendance  
of the Farm Science Review*

# +42

*population growth of  
Lafayette since 1875*



I-70 Corridor Length: 5 +/- Miles Total Land Area: 10,477 AC (16.4 Sq Mi)



## FOCUS AREA 1:

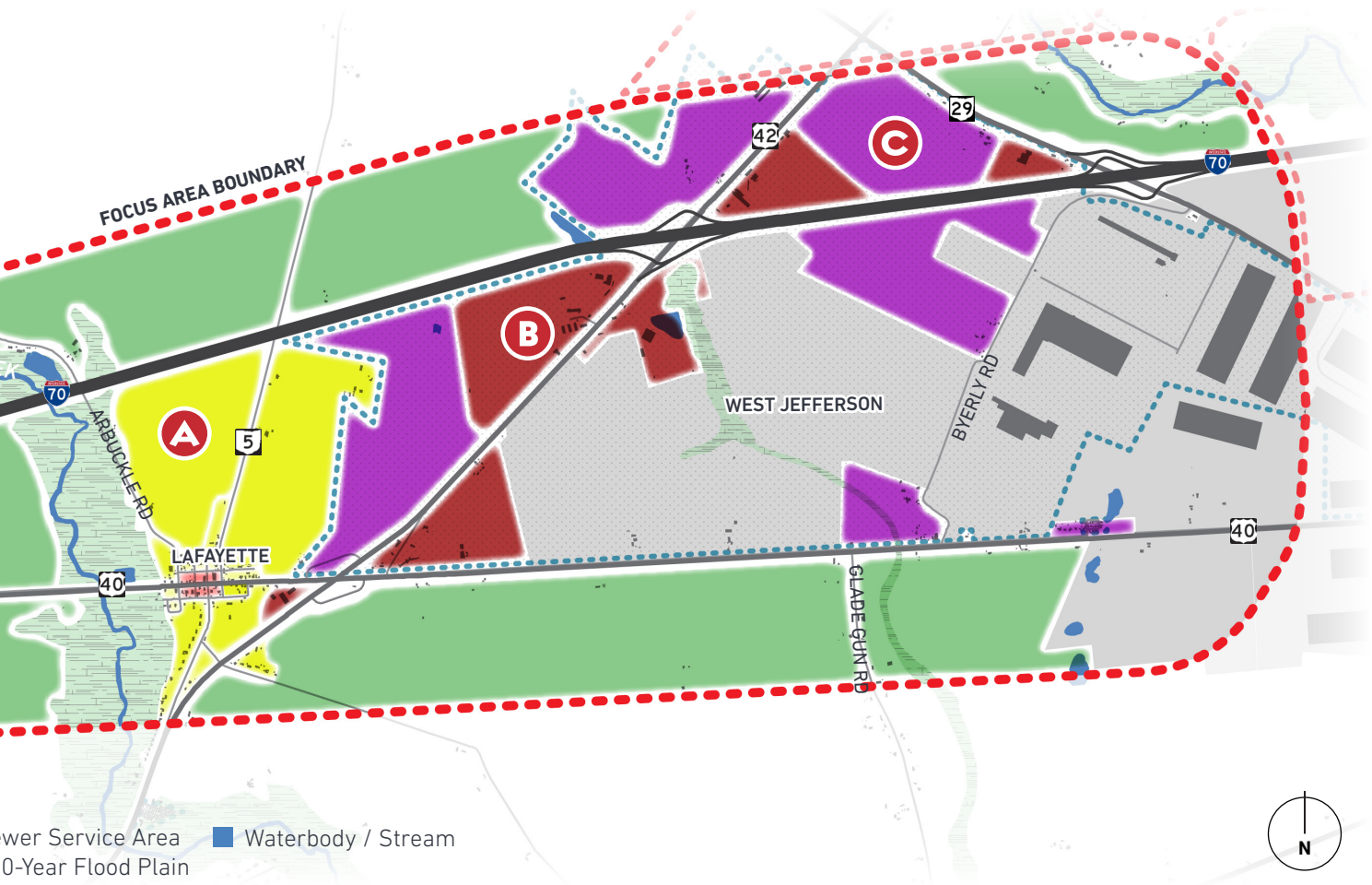
# I-70 & US 40 Between OH 56 & West Jefferson



## CHARACTER AREAS

Flex Employment	Regional Commercial	Neighborhood Commercial	Traditional Residential
<p>Leverage proximity to similar uses, highway access, and current facility demand.</p> <p>Concentrate uses within existing or planned water and sewer service areas within Madison County.</p> <p>Capitalize on existing access points to regional connectors.</p>	<p>Create opportunities for Flex Employment support uses.</p> <p>Concentrate uses within existing or planned water and sewer service areas within Madison County.</p> <p>Introduce new commercial services at strategic locations within Madison County</p>	<p>Create opportunities to establish third places that serve residents in adjacent neighborhoods.</p> <p>Focus on attracting small-scale local restaurants and retail establishments.</p> <p>Scale and design complements surrounding neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Expand opportunities for additional residential to meet latent housing demand.</p> <p>New residences are located on well-connected streets that enhance the local street network.</p> <p>Primarily single-family with limited multi-unit structures.</p>

I-70 Corridor Length: 5 +/- Miles Total Land Area: 3,797 AC (5.9 Sq Mi)



## OPPORTUNITIES AND INTENT

- A** There is significant demand for residential units within Madison County. Expanding areas that can transition from lower-intensity uses to residential development is key to addressing demand.
- B** Identify lands that can accommodate uses that support the expanding distribution center land uses around West Jefferson. These uses benefit from proximity to Flex Employment land uses and convenient access to regional connectors.
- C** Continue the Flex Employment land uses predominant around the western municipal limits of West Jefferson. These lands are planned to be served by water and sewer and are adjacent to major roadways that connect to other cities within the central Ohio region.
- D** Encourage and support emerging neighborhood-serving commercial areas for residents in the more rural portions of Madison County. Size and scale should reflect adjacent developments.
- E** Identify and protect lands used for special purposes unique to Madison County.
- F** Explore options for adding complementary uses to the special use node near the intersection of Ohio 38 and US 40.

## FOCUS AREA 2:

# US 42 Between OH 29 & Plain City

**Focus Area 2 aligns with the 10-mile corridor along US 42, stretching from OH 29 to Plain City. The corridor crosses through Jefferson and Canaan Townships and is very rural in nature.**

Focus Area 2 has a land area of 11 square miles. By comparison, the village of West Jefferson has a land area of 10 square miles. Outside of its connection to OH 29 and I-70 to the south, this corridor is accessed exclusively via local roads. At each point where the corridor is bisected by an east-west road, a concentration of smaller lots (typically 1-3 acres) are clustered around the crossroads. This behavior gives the corridor a mixed feel of large agricultural expanses, interspersed with pockets of smaller residential groupings. Within the northernmost third of this corridor, approaching Plain City, multiple institutional facilities emerge along US 42. Tolles

Career Technical Center lies along the corridor and serves as a regional training/educational resource serving 223,000 students annually. Also along the corridor is Canaan Middle School, Jonathan Alder Junior High and High Schools.

Several large residential projects have emerged in recent years along the southern boundary of Plain City, including the 400+ unit Madison Meadows, which is being developed on approximately 100 acres of previously unincorporated County land.



## FOCUS AREA STATISTICS

11

square miles total  
land area

9

east-west roadways feed into  
this corridor

4

significant educational  
institutions

1,300+

students within focus area  
during school

5.4

units per acre of Madison  
Meadows subdivision

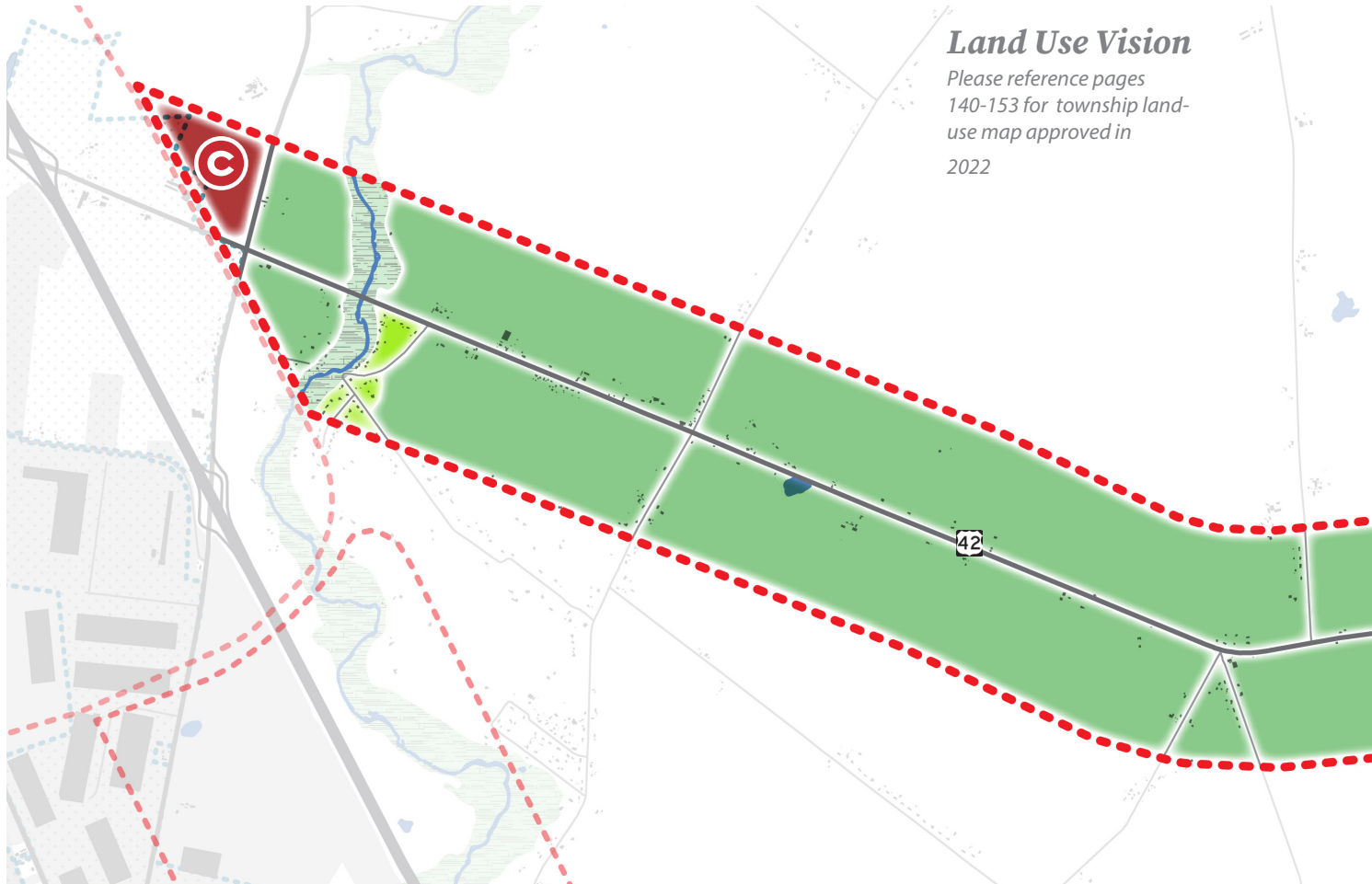


I-42 Corridor Length: 11 +/- Miles Total Land Area: 7,309 AC (11.4 Sq Mi)



## FOCUS AREA 2:

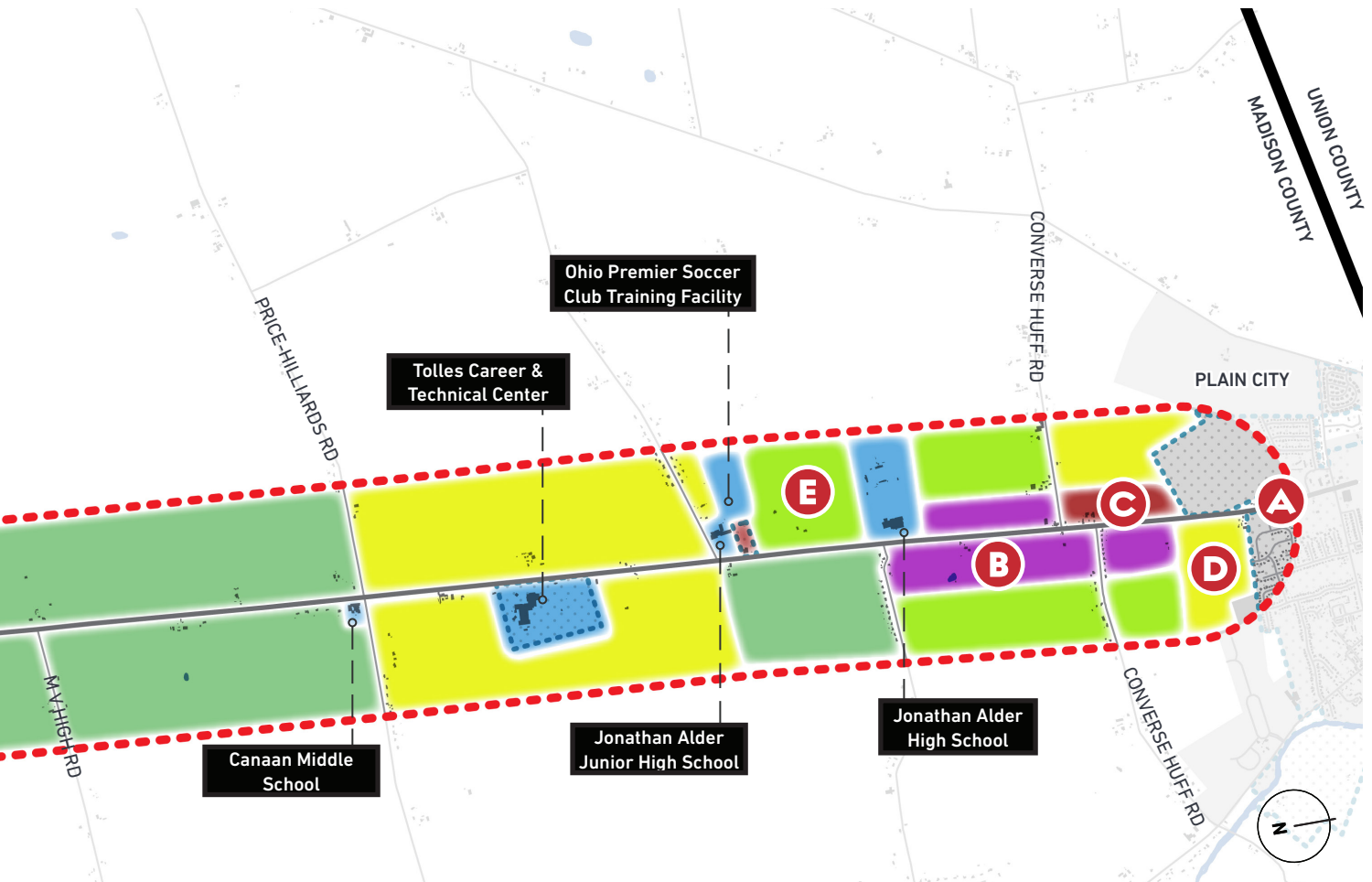
# US 42 Between OH 29 & Plain City



## CHARACTER AREAS

Flex Employment	Regional Commercial	Traditional Residential	Conservation Residential
<p>Leverage proximity to similar uses, highway access, and current facility demand.</p> <p>Concentrate uses within existing or planned water and sewer service areas within Madison County.</p> <p>Capitalize on existing access points to regional connectors.</p>	<p>Create opportunities for Flex Employment support uses.</p> <p>Concentrate uses within existing or planned water and sewer service areas within Madison County.</p> <p>Introduce new commercial services at strategic locations within Madison County</p>	<p>Expand opportunities for additional residential to meet latent housing demand.</p> <p>New residences are located on well-connected streets that enhance the local street network.</p> <p>Primarily single-family with limited multi-unit structures.</p>	<p>Expand opportunities for additional residential to meet latent housing demand.</p> <p>Create gradual transitions between urbanized and agrarian areas of Madison County.</p> <p>Single-family uses with large preservation areas and passive recreation.</p>

I-42 Corridor Length: 11 +/- Miles Total Land Area: 7,309 AC (11.4 Sq Mi)



## OPPORTUNITIES AND INTENT

- A** Create logical growth corridors extending from Plain City.
- B** Identify lands to support employers looking to expand within Madison County. These land uses are intended to be campus-style developments with shared access and landscape elements that complement the rural to urbanized transition.
- C** Establish areas of regional serving retail uses near the Plain City municipal boundaries and along US 42 in the southern portion of the focus area. These areas are best suited to support these uses because of proximity to utility service areas and adjacency of transportation routes.
- D** Recognize and expand on-going residential developments to the south of the existing Plain City municipal boundaries to address the latent housing demand within Madison County.
- E** Utilize conservation residential development patterns to create a desirable transition from rural to urban land use patterns. Conservation subdivisions often permanently preserve 50% or more of total land area while clustering residential uses on portions of property best suited to support development.

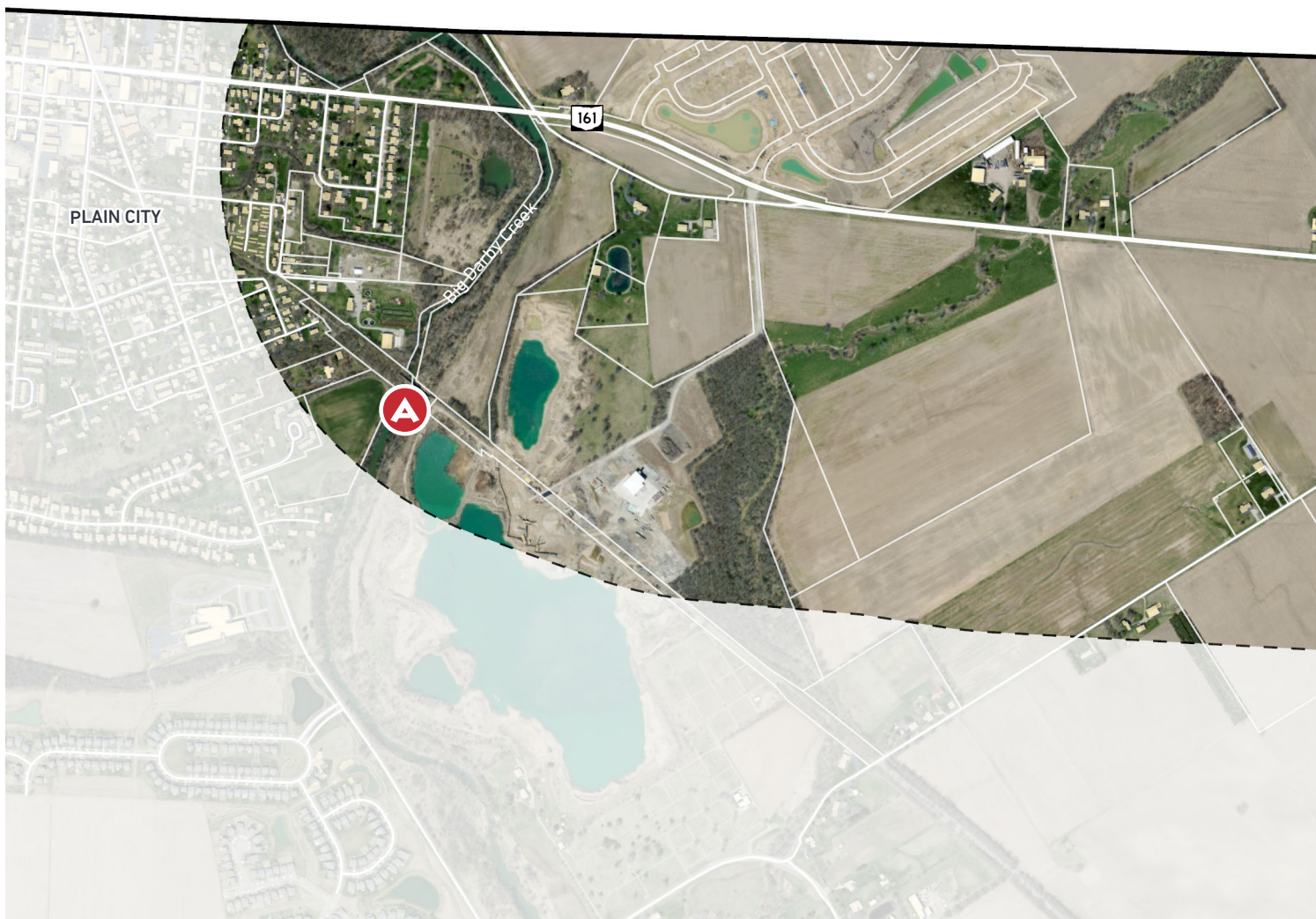
## FOCUS AREA 3:

# OH 161 Corridor from Plain City to Franklin Co.

**Located in the far northeast of the County, this corridor represents a key gateway between Franklin County and Madison County, with just three miles separating Plain City from the bustling employment center on Dublin's western border.**

Focus Area 3 has a land area of 2.4 square miles, roughly the same footprint of Plain City. This focus area is likely to experience the most development pressure within Madison County due to its proximity to the expanding Columbus metropolitan area. The entirety of this corridor is examined in great detail in the 2018 Plain City Comprehensive Plan. It calls attention to OH 161 as a part of the Big Darby Scenic Byway, striving to maintain rural and scenic character in the face of growing developer interest, particularly if central sewer is extended.

The plan states that if residential development occurs, it should follow a conservation design pattern, with large residential cluster setbacks from adjacent roadways, positioned behind large open space preserves. If commercial development takes place, traditional big-box anchored centers are discouraged in favor of large-format, campus-style business uses, which create opportunity for site designs that preserve large setbacks and integrate a rural landscape aesthetic.



## FOCUS AREA STATISTICS

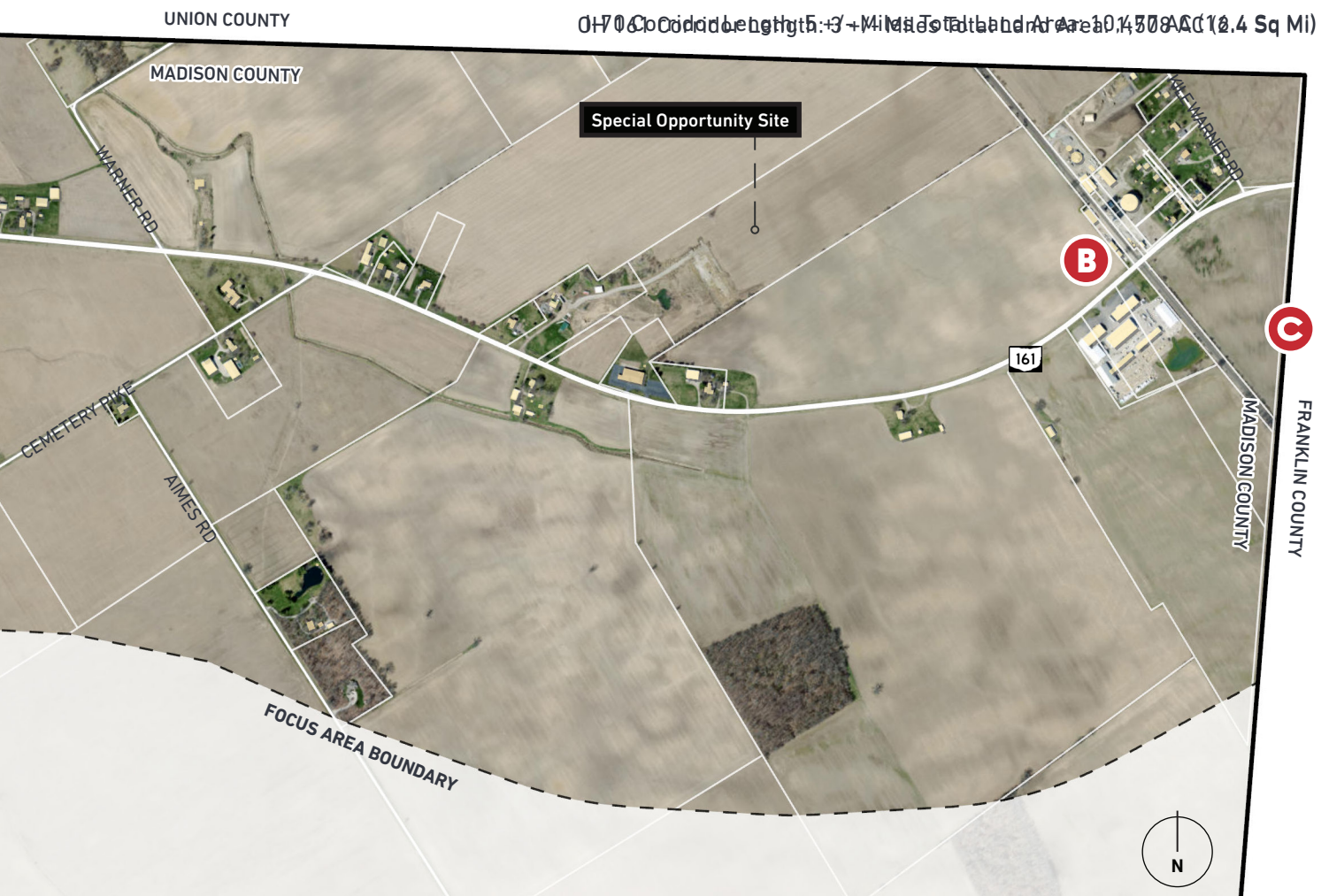
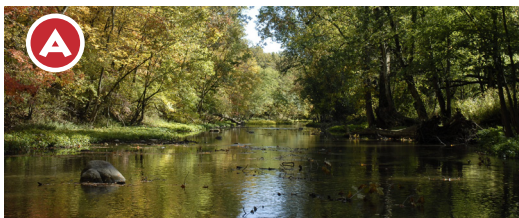
**2.4**  
square miles total  
land area

**5**  
miles to the Scioto River in  
Downtown Dublin

**9,177**  
average daily traffic count along  
OH 161 at Big Darby Creek

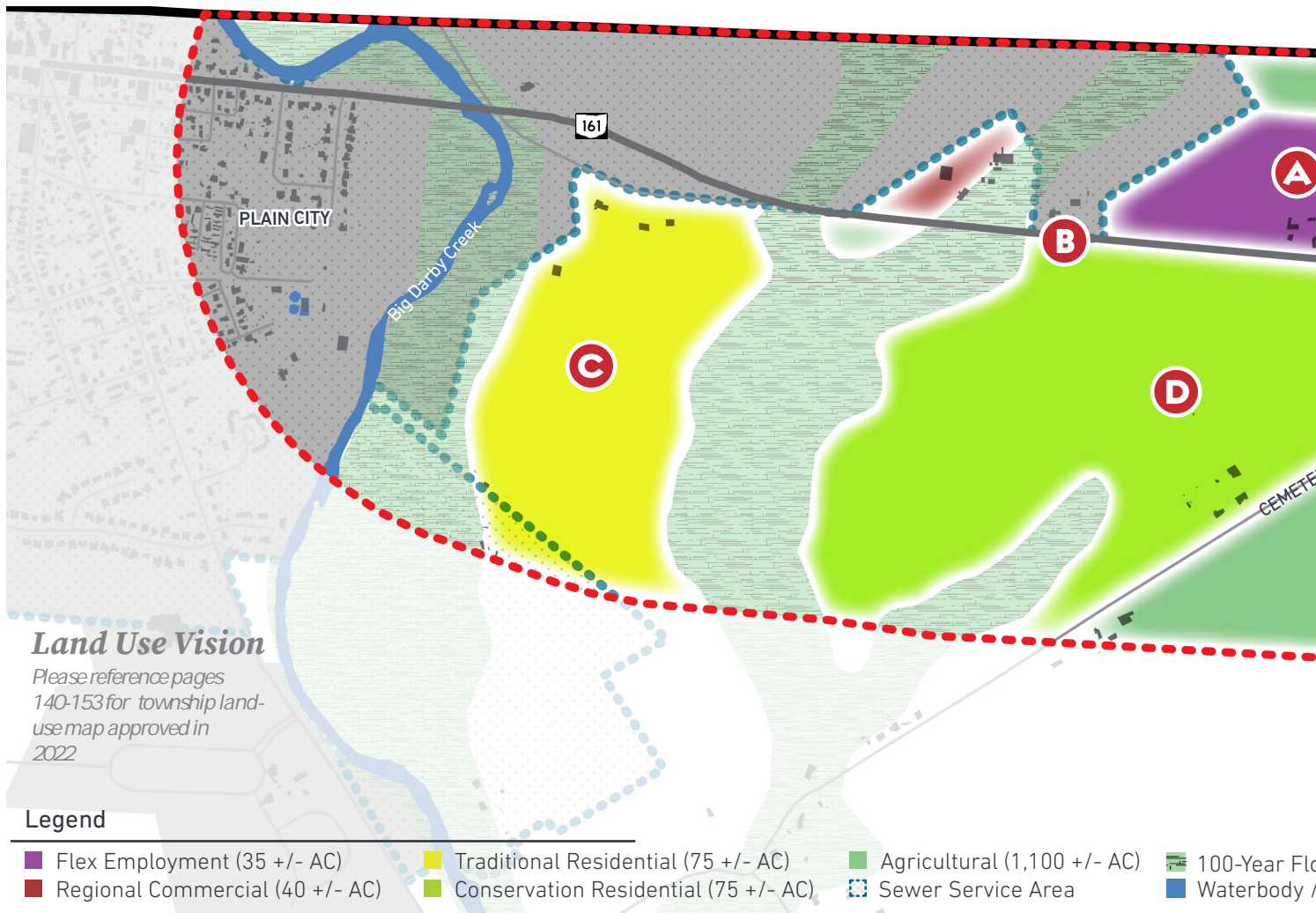
**637K**  
warehouse square footage on  
property bordering Madison County

**6.1**  
miles of the Heritage Rail  
Trail



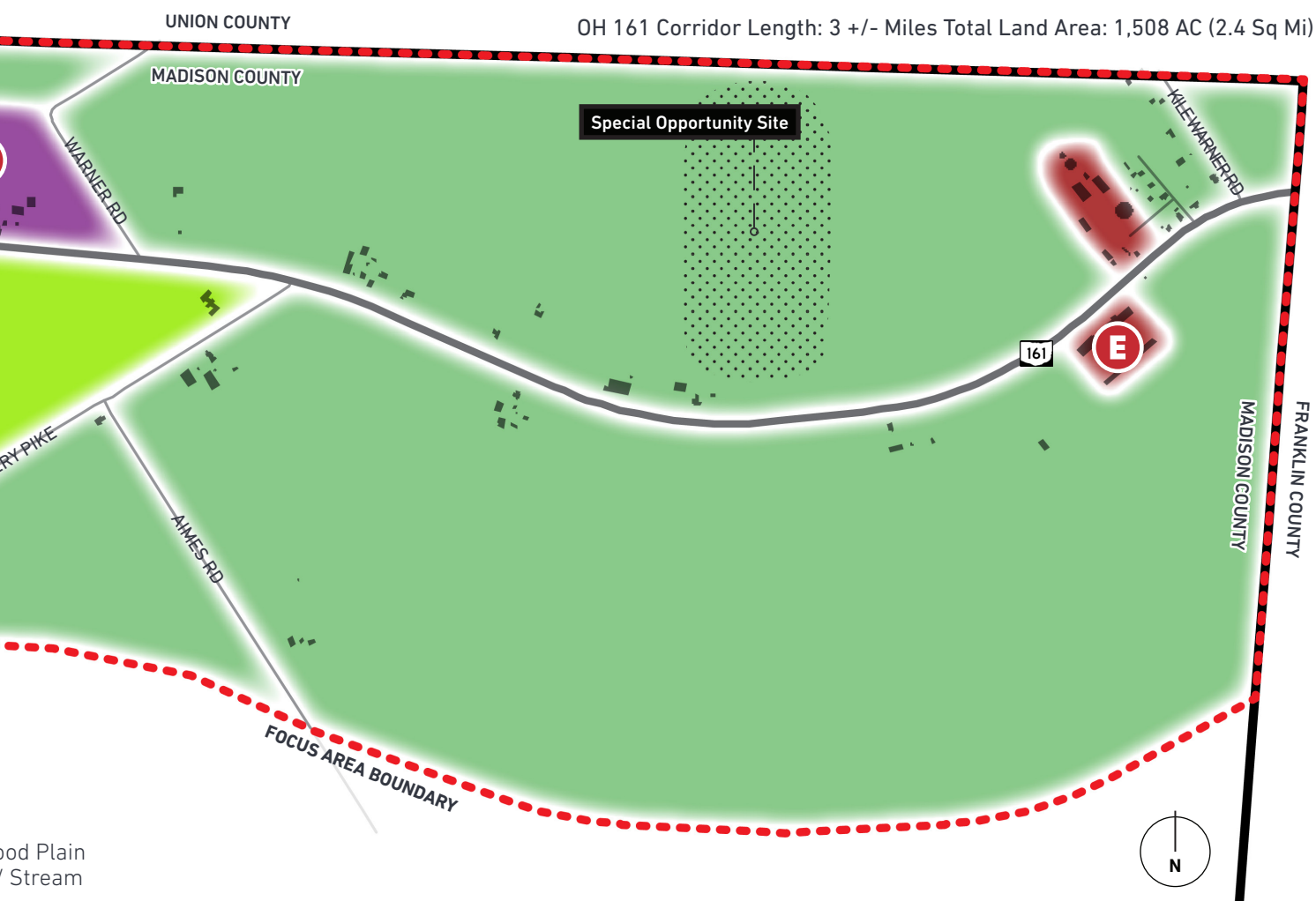
## FOCUS AREA 3:

# OH 161 Corridor from Plain City to Franklin Co.



## CHARACTER AREAS

Flex Employment	Regional Commercial	Traditional Residential	Conservation Residential
<p>Create opportunities for additional employers to locate within Madison County along primary transportation routes.</p> <p>Identify lands large enough to support a campus-style development pattern and expand employment options and create a gateway feature to Plain City</p>	<p>Identify and acknowledge existing regional serving commercial uses.</p> <p>Focus these land uses near employment centers and along major regional connectors.</p> <p>Introduce new commercial services at strategic locations within Madison County</p>	<p>Expand opportunities for additional residential to meet latent housing demand.</p> <p>New residences are located on well-connected streets that enhance the local street network.</p> <p>Primarily single-family with limited multi-unit structures.</p>	<p>Expand opportunities for additional residential to meet latent housing demand.</p> <p>Create gradual transitions between urbanized and agrarian areas of Madison County.</p> <p>Single-family uses with large preservation areas and passive recreation.</p>



## OPPORTUNITIES AND INTENT

- A** Identify lands to support employers looking to expand within Madison County. These land uses are intended to be developed in a campus style with consolidated access and landscape elements that complement the rural to urbanized transition.
- B** Facilitate a gradual transition from agrarian to urbanized development patterns entering Plain City along the Ohio 161 corridor.
- C** Create opportunities for traditional residential land use expansion within or near existing or planned water and sewer service areas that can be connected to existing street networks.
- D** Utilize conservation residential development patterns to add residential capacity and diversify available housing products within Madison County.
- E** Acknowledge and support existing regional commercial operations and explore areas for possible expansion of these land use character areas.

## FOCUS AREA 4:

# I-71 & OH 56 Interchange

**Focus Area 4 is located in the southeast portion of the County, situated at the convergence of Interstate 71 and State Route 56, about 2.5 miles north of the Village of Mount Sterling.**

Focus Area 4 has a land area of 3.7 square miles, more than double the land area of nearby Mt. Sterling. This focus area is generally enveloped to the east, south, and west by Sugar Run Creek, Bradford Creek, and their associated floodplains. The primary driver for this focus area is I-71. I-71 is a major regional thoroughfare, connecting Columbus to Cincinnati, and this is the sole exit along the corridor within Madison County.

In 2021, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) reported average daily traffic along this portion of I-71 to be in excess of 40,000 vehicles daily, including

12,000 trucks. ODOT is programming approximately \$100 million on reconstruction and addition of a third lane along this segment of I-71. This investment by ODOT is likely to drastically increase private investment in this area in future years. Interestingly, the roadway distance between this exit and neighboring interchanges along I-71 is nearly 10 miles in either direction, making this the only stopping point for about a 20-mile stretch of the heavily trafficked roadway.

## FOCUS AREA STATISTICS

**3.7**

*square miles total  
land area*

**40K+**

*vehicles passing this  
interchange daily along I-71*

**22**

*miles to Downtown  
Columbus*

**>9**

*miles on I-71 to the next interstate  
exits, north and south, respectively*

**200**

*acres of undeveloped  
commercially zoned land*



I-71 Corridor Length: 2 +/- Miles Total Land Area: 2,368 AC (3.7 Sq Mi)



## FOCUS AREA 4: I-71 & OH 56 Interchange

### Land Use Vision

Please reference pages  
140-153 for township  
land-use map approved in  
2022



### Legend

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: purple; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Flex Employment (100 +/- AC) | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: yellow; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Traditional Residential (200 +/- AC) |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: red; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Regional Commercial (45 +/- AC) | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: green; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Agricultural (2,000 +/- AC)           |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; border: 1px dashed blue; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Sewer Service Area                                     | <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: blue; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Waterbody / Stream                     |
| <span style="display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 15px; background-color: lightblue; border: 1px solid black; margin-right: 5px;"></span> 100-Year Flood Plain      |  |

I-71 Corridor Length: 2 +/- Miles Total Land Area: 2,368 AC (3.7 Sq Mi)

## CHARACTER AREAS

Flex Employment	Regional Commercial	Traditional Residential	Agricultural
<p>Create opportunities for additional employers to locate within Madison County along primary transportation routes.</p> <p>Identify lands within or near existing or planned water and sewer service areas to support distribution and other employment facilities.</p> <p>Leverage the sole I-71 interchange in Madison County to serve central Ohio Cities.</p>	<p>Acknowledge existing and encourage redevelopment of underutilized commercial uses serving the motoring public and truck traffic.</p> <p>Focus these land uses near employment centers and along major regional connectors.</p> <p>Introduce new commercial services at strategic locations within Madison County near existing or planned water and sewer service areas</p>	<p>Expand opportunities for additional residential to meet latent housing demand.</p> <p>New residences are located on well-connected streets that enhance the local street network.</p> <p>Primarily single-family with limited multi-unit structures.</p>	<p>The predominant land use within Madison County. Lands used for growing and harvesting of various crops at a commercial scale.</p>

## OPPORTUNITIES AND INTENT

- A** Leverage the sole interchange along I-71 within Madison County to support additional flex employment uses including distribution, assembly, and logistics uses. These land uses should provide additional buffering and screening between differing land uses.
- B** Acknowledge existing regional serving commercial uses and opportunities for underutilized lots within and adjacent to the existing sewer service district at the southeast corner of the I-71 interchange.
- C** Expand areas suitable for residential development to provide options for addressing the latent housing demand within Madison County. Based on the limited availability of water and sewer in this area, density may be limited as compared to other areas within Madison County.
- D** Maintain the predominantly agricultural land use patterns of this area. Re-evaluate land use guidance over time as market demands change over the planning horizon of this plan.
- E** Continue to protect the stream corridors and floodways within Madison County to preserve overall environmental health of the county.

## FOCUS AREA 5:

# I-70 & OH 142 Interchange

**Located in the eastern portion of the County along I-70, Focus Area 5 is a roughly 5-mile corridor stretching from the Little Darby Creek/West Jefferson east to the border of Franklin County, near the interchange at I-70 & OH 142.**

Focus Area 5 has a land area of 5.9 square miles, approximately half of the land area of West Jefferson. The interchange at I-70 and State Route 142 is a major gateway into central Ohio (18 minute drive to downtown Columbus), and therefore at the center of this focus area study.

Metro Parks owns close to 800 acres of land at the northeast quadrant of the interchange, as part of the regionally significant and scenic Prairie Oaks metro Park. The institutional/public land ownership trend

continues at the southwest corner of the interchange, with the 133 acre Finley Farm, owned by Ohio State University.

In 2021 Fyda Freightline Columbus, a commercial trucking service center, constructed a 150,000 square foot facility at the northwest corner of the I-70 and OH 142 interchange. The project, covering approximately 88 acres, brings over 130 employees to the site and offers amenities like walking trails and an on-site pond for fishing.



## FOCUS AREA STATISTICS

# 5.9

*square miles total  
land area*

# 18

*minute drive to downtown  
Columbus*

# 200K+

*number of people living  
within a 15-minute drive*

# 19+

*miles of trails offered within  
Prarie Oaks Metro Park*

# 88

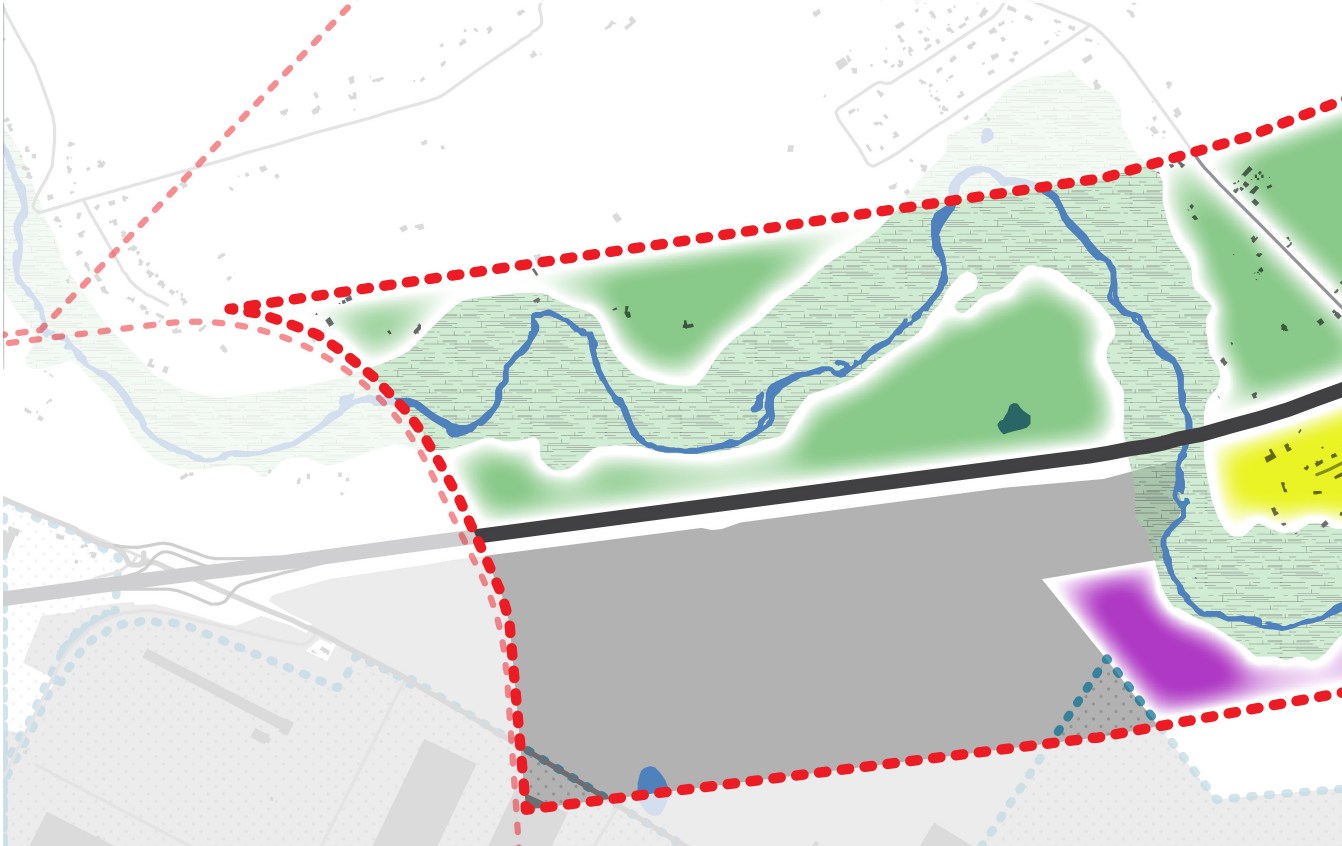
*acreage of the site for the  
new Fyda Freightliner facility*



## FOCUS AREA 5: I-70 & OH 142 Interchange

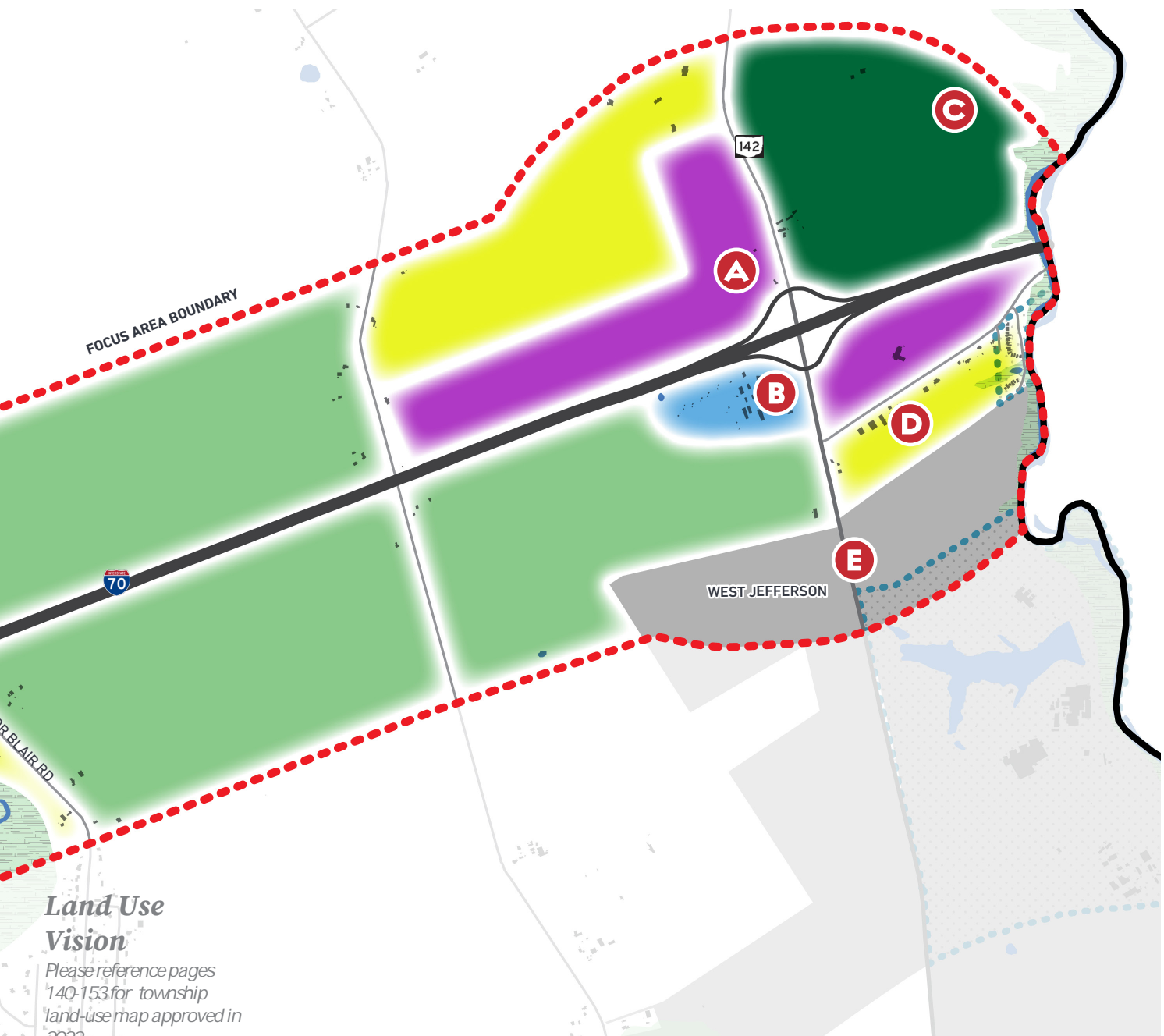
### CHARACTER AREAS

Flex Employment	Special Use	Traditional Residential	Park
<p>Create opportunities for additional employers to locate within Madison County along primary transportation routes.</p> <p>Identify lands within or near existing or planned water and sewer service areas to support distribution and other employment facilities.</p> <p>Leverage the I-70 interchange to provide additional land area to establish Flex Employment uses.</p>	<p>Finley Farm is an extension of the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine focusing on large farm animals.</p> <p>The farm was originally donated in 1976 and serves as a research farm for horses, cattle and camelids</p>	<p>Expand opportunities for additional residential to meet latent housing demand.</p> <p>New residences are located on well-connected streets that enhance the local street network.</p> <p>Primarily single-family with limited multi-unit structures.</p>	<p>The Prairie Oaks Metro Park is located in the northeastern portion of the focus area.</p> <p>The park features nearly 500 acres of lush flowering prairies and grasslands. As a regional attraction for central Ohio residents, this land should continue to be preserved for continued enjoyment.</p>



## OPPORTUNITIES AND INTENT

- A** Leverage the existing I-70 interchange to support additional distribution center uses and employment opportunities proximal to West Jefferson and the Columbus metro area.
- B** Acknowledge and preserve the ongoing use of Finley Farm as a research center supporting the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine.
- C** Protect the Prairie Oaks Metro Park to ensure long-term access to this regional destination within Madison County.
- D** Continue existing land use patterns within West Jefferson consistent with current patterns.
- E** As West Jefferson continues to expand, re-evaluate land use recommendations to ensure a harmonious development pattern as lands are annexed into the municipality when water and sewer services become available.



# POLICY AGENDA

**Goal:** It shall be the goal of Madison County to achieve a high-quality life for its residents through thoughtful land use patterns, and to respect the integrity of the natural environment while encouraging community development that meets the social and economic needs of residents.

## OBJECTIVES

- ★ To protect agricultural lands
- ★ To preserve streams, wooded areas, and environmentally sensitive land
- ★ To encourage a rational pattern of expansion that considers costly suburban “sprawl” while protecting the natural assets and scenic qualities of the rural landscape. Webster’s New World College Dictionary defines sprawl as spreading out in an awkward way “so as to take up more space than is necessary.”
- ★ To guide the development of residential areas so that urban community services can be efficient while providing a wide range of living accommodations for a variety of family types and income levels
- ★ To encourage the development and preservation of commercial and professional services that will serve the county
- ★ To encourage the development of new industry and the expansion of existing industry that brings about economic growth and employment opportunities in Madison County
- ★ To achieve public service and recreational facilities and areas that can equally serve respective segments of the county

## ACTIONS & POLICIES

The following recommendations are policy objective statements surrounding land use. They are intended to inform next steps as the County carries out its Future Land Use vision by offering ideas for accomplishing objectives laid out in the Land Use section of the Comprehensive Plan.

**LU1 Limit Growth Primarily to the Five Strategic Focus Areas.** One of the best ways to protect agrarian heritage while positioning the County to capitalize on future economic opportunities and changing demographic tides is to have an open door to growth and land use transition, but within the confines of the five focus areas. These areas, which make up less than 10% of the County area, already represent physical locations of major transportation, commerce and high susceptibility to land use change.

**LU2 Increase Coordination Between Municipalities with respect to Future Land Use Planning.** Thousands of acres of land have been annexed from unincorporated Madison County into the cities and villages within the past 10 years, a trend that has continued steadily from prior decades. This has largely shifted some of the regulation of land use from County to the cities/villages. Because of this, extra effort must be applied to cohesive planning and understanding around appropriate land uses, particularly in

fringe areas, where jurisdictional government may change in upcoming years through annexation. A ‘rising tide lifts all ships’ approach is important thinking when viewing these dynamics in land governance, knowing the county can support the cities/villages and the cities/villages can rely on the county for certain provisions, while being able to provide more concentrated services and attention to newly annexed land.

**LU 3 Initiate a project to map permanently protected County Lands.** Many acres of property within the County are under permanent agricultural easement or conservation easements, with the list growing annually as more property is added through various local, federal and state programs. Because easements are an invisible entity, a helpful resource would be a living, visual (map-based) application, showing all the permanently protected lands in County. This would be helpful in informing public opinion about land use/farmland conservation and what’s being done as well as provide targeted geographic areas where future conservation efforts could focus, based on current conservation inventory or lack thereof. One option for engaging in this effort could be to solicit the project to university GIS/planning programs, who could engage in the work for little to no fee, while providing a rich practical experience for eager students looking to solve-real world issues with the skills they are learning.

**LU4 Continue to Value/Encourage Ohio State Land Holdings/Demonstration Farms within the County.** Recognize its proximity and access and creative educational possibilities. Molly Karen is the most well-known example of this relationship, with nearly 2000 acres of a former family farm becoming and education center owned by Ohio State University, playing host to the Annual Farm Science Review as well as

experimental agricultural fields near Don Scott Airport in Columbus. It’s a unique recipe to have one of the largest research universities in the nation, which brings eyes and minds from all over the world, in such close physical proximity to a bucolic farming community like Madison County. OSU’s agricultural programs act as a gateway, educating up-and-coming future farmers of the Midwest, giving many of them exposure to Madison County in the process. The County can view this as an opportunity to usher in new generations of farmers, working with the University to make students aware of opportunities within the County and cultivating connections and facilitating apprenticeships strengthen the farms, provide hands-on education, and connect farm practitioners in a way that continues strong agricultural heritage into the future.

**LU5 Explore Zoning Code Update or a Focus Area Overlay District.** In recent years much work has gone into establishing Character Areas and Design Standards for several portions of the County. In addition to this plan, other recent efforts have included the US-40 and US-42 Corridor Study, the Madison County Corridor Design Standards, and the Madison County Multi-Use Trail Corridor Study. As the zoning code is the official regulatory device for land development, its important to consider how the zoning code reflects the design and character recommendations of these studies. One possibility is the creation of an overlay district with an associated zoning code that would supersede the existing zoning code applied to properties within the overlay. The overlay district boundaries should be based on the five focus area boundaries, incorporating character and design standards from the several recently completed plans and studies.

**LU6 Amend the (A-1) Agricultural Zoning District to establish Small-Scale Solar Projects (Under 50 MW) as a Conditional Use.** Ohio Senate Bill 52, effective October 11, 2021, placed new requirements on renewable energy development in Ohio and changes to the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) Process. The average size of a farm in Madison County is 320 acres, below the generation threshold of a Large Solar Facility (50 MW or more) regulated by Ohio Senate Bill 52. Based on the changes to the OPSB process, it is likely that Madison County will experience an increase in requests to establish solar generation facilities below the 50 MW generation threshold that will not require OPSB approval but will require local (county) level approvals. In addition to the average farm size (320 acres) within Madison County that fall below the 500 acres needed to meet a Large Solar Facility production capacity, solar generation yields more predictable revenue than traditional agricultural production and allows aging farm owners to either sell or lease their land long-term to solar producers.

Solar generation facilities are typically sited on large, continuous tracts of land with minimal topographical changes that have been previously cleared. As farmland generally fits this description, and farmland comprises approximately 88% of land use within Madison County, it is likely that requests to establish these power generation facilities will be common. To allow public input and review of minimum standards to ensure compliance, this use should be added as a Conditional Use within the Madison County zoning regulations within the (A-1) Agricultural Zoning District. Primary concerns related to these solar facilities are ensuring compatibility between uses, appropriate screening/buffers, and preserving the rural character of Madison County.

At a minimum, the Conditional Use requirements should establish standards for:

- ★ Buffers and screening along adjacent roadways and property perimeters (use of berms, natural vegetation, planted vegetation)
- ★ Setbacks of panels, electrical transformer equipment, and buildings (minimum distance from roadways and adjacent property boundaries)
- ★ Preservation or restoration of natural features such as tree stands, water courses, and wetlands (minimizing additional land clearing, restoring waterways, protecting environmentally sensitive areas)
- ★ Proximity and access to high-voltage transmission lines (maximum distance from existing transmission lines, maximum allowable distance to expand for connection)
- ★ Roadway access (ensuring construction traffic can be accommodated and not impact existing traffic volumes)

## ADDITIONAL POLICIES

### **LU7 To guide and direct future growth decisions the county will do the following.**

- ★ Confine urban development to the areas designated as urban services on the Future Land Use Plan. In so doing, the community can avoid sprawl and minimize the cost of providing public services and conserve land.
- ★ Unincorporated areas shown on the Land Use Plan as “growth areas” may infill with appropriate development but may not expand into rural areas.
- ★ Land uses which are potentially incompatible, because of the type of use or intensity of use, shall be buffered from one another. This will be accomplished through the provision of open space, landscaping berms or other appropriate means.

**LU10 Madison County will discourage the conversion of prime agriculture lands to non-agricultural uses.** The County will guide land development to those areas that are shown as urban services areas on the Future Land Use Map. To achieve the vision the county will:

- ★ Only extend Urban Service Boundaries where the resulting benefits from economic development can be clearly shown to exceed the land's value as agricultural use.
- ★ Existing agricultural uses shall be protected from conflicting development. Efforts shall be made to minimize the negative impacts of development in rural areas including building impacts on field drainage, especially during the initial stages of transition from rural to urban areas.
- ★ The county will encourage farmers to use best management practices and embrace green technology in their daily operations for environmental stewardship.
- ★ The county will support the permanent preservation of farmland through the purchase of agricultural easements in areas of preferred agriculture.

**LU8 Madison County will encourage residential platting in those areas shown as urban service areas on the Future Land Use Plan.** In order to infill the existing urban areas and discourage development in prime agricultural areas the County will:

- ★ Residential land use proposals will be evaluated on the physical capability and characteristics of the land including soil conditions, drainage, the compatibility with surrounding land uses and the objectives of the Land Use Plan.
- ★ Madison County will encourage the location of new residential developments within the urban service boundary where

central water and sewer services are available or can be extended in order to promote the efficient extension of services and to infill existing urban areas. Due to soil and drainage limitations Madison County will discourage the expansion of residential development in rural areas not capable of being served by the central water and sewer facilities.

- ★ Develop conservation development zoning to apply within specially designated areas of the county. Conservation developments allow for flexibility to reduce individual lot sizes in order to cluster housing and maximize the preservation of green space and natural resources. This design can reduce runoff and impacts to water quality as well as preserve rural character.

**LU9 Commercial land use proposals shall be evaluated with reference to key criteria.** This includes the physical capabilities and characteristics, the overall need and desirability for a proposed use at a particular location the compatibility of a proposed development with surrounding and proposed land uses, and the specific site design to accommodate proposed activities. In addition the county will:

- ★ Discourage the lot-by-lot conversion of sites to commercial uses along thoroughfares in order to prevent commercial strip development. The County will favor the unified grouping of commercial and other nonresidential land uses and the locating of individual businesses at appropriate sites.
- ★ Support larger scale, general commercial developments in locations which are bordered by one or more major arterial thoroughfares, compatible with established residential neighborhoods

and presenting a marketable area for such intensive activity, and if the area can be serviced by county or municipal sanitary sewer plants. In short, all new commercial and industrial development should only be considered if the area can be serviced by a county or municipal sewer system.

- ★ Highway service activities shall be planned as a unified site design with particular attention to minimizing traffic congestion through the use of access roads and effective interior circulation.


**LU10 Industrial land use proposals shall be evaluated based on clear criteria.**

This includes the physical capability and characteristics of the land including areas which are relatively flat, well drained and capable of being served by central water and sewer facilities, the overall need and desirability of a proposed use at a particular location, compatibility of a proposed development with surrounding existing and proposed land uses, the existence of sufficient capacity utility systems including central water and sewer facilities, and the specific site design proposals to accommodate intensive uses including adequate buffering, access and circulation, drainage and storage and loading facilities. In addition the county will:

- ★ Encourage industrial activity to concentrate in industrial parks rather than in individual sites.
- ★ Give consideration to vacant property in proximity to major highway interchanges, which represent the greatest potential for light industrial activity.
- ★ Support the use of available development incentives to attract industrial growth at appropriate locations.





 **MITSUBISHI EDMLASER**



## Economy

The economy of Madison County ranges from agriculture to large-scale distribution centers. The purpose of this chapter is to identify economic development initiatives currently underway, establish tools that can be used by business owners to expand opportunities, and provide guidance to create a more prosperous Madison County.

Economic vitality is important for all cities and counties. While agricultural uses comprise a large part of the Madison County economy, other sectors such as warehousing, assembly, and freight services are rapidly expanding in parts of the county. Creating policies and programs that support existing and prospective business owners is of top priority to ensure long-term health of the employment base within Madison County. Capitalizing on the expanding solar power generation market and preparing for continued logistics and distributions sector expansion will likely be a key focus of the county for the foreseeable future. Agriculture will continue to be the predominant land use and market sector, and specialty facilities such as the Molly Caren Agricultural Center are key to continued success.

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ Significant opportunity exists for Madison County to fully ingrain itself into The Columbus Region for economic development purposes
- ★ Solar energy presents opportunity to establish collaborative partnerships with Ohio State University.
- ★ The ability to leverage the Solar Supply Chain based on roadway and airport access is unique to Madison County in central Ohio.
- ★ The Ohio to Erie Trail is an opportunity to expand tourism within the county.

# EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section includes analysis of data, trends, and a documentation of existing economics and demographics within Madison County. It highlights facts and figures that have implications that influence the dynamics in the county.

## Demographics as destiny?

The population in Madison County increased modestly between 2010 and 2020, adding 400 new residents on one percent growth. This compares to 13 percent in the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area, and two percent in the State overall. The surprising slow down occurred following three decades of ten percent average growth. Forecasts to 2040 (provided by the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission) set the County just below 49,000 residents. Given the tremendous growth in the region, this projection would only see the county absorb one percent of the overall region's growth. The increase in housing permits from 2018 onward, however, show this period of stagnation may be abating. The 400 new permits over this period could double the last decade's increase, adding more than 1,000 new residents across the county.

41

Median Age in the County is two years older than the state, and four years older than the region

The county is older on average than the surrounding metropolitan area and the state of Ohio.

The median age of forty-one is two years older than the state and increasing at a faster rate. The segment of the population over forty-five is 43% and increased from 2010.

The county is relatively homogeneous with respect to race and ethnicity, with a small recent increase in the Hispanic and Latino share. In 2020, the



White population comprised 90% of the overall community, with Black or African American the largest minority group at six percent. The Hispanic community grew from 2010, and now accounts for 2.4 percent of the population.

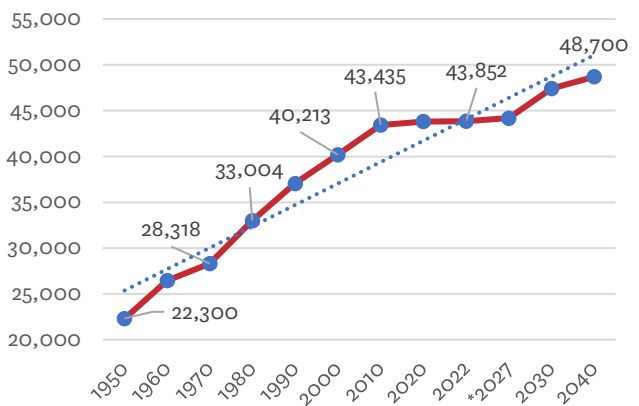
Figure 12

## Demographic Information

	Madison County	Ohio
Population Change (2010 -20)	+<1%	+2%
Median Age	41	39
Share over 65	15%	16%
Median Income	\$68,663	\$58,116
Poverty Rate	9.4%	13.6%

Figure 13

## County Population from 1950



## Jobs, industry, and investment

In 2020 there were just over 16,500 total jobs counted in the County. Ten percent of these in the public sector. Total private sector primary jobs (jobs making up an individuals primary income) increased ten times faster than population from 2000, increasing by 4,000, or 47%.

# \$2.1B

County GDP increased by 133% from 2000-20 led by major gains in trade, manufacturing, and construction

This rise in employment was met with a rise in productivity. The county's total GDP doubled from 2000 to 2020, increasing from \$878 million in 2001 to \$2.1 billion. Transportation and Warehousing, which made up \$60M in the overall share in 2005,

accounted for \$225 Million in 2020. This three-fold increase was the highest across industry sectors. Manufacturing has modest increase, but a decrease in its overall share of total Madison County GDP. The sector still far outperforms the Columbus MSA, with a 23% higher share.

## Growing challenges with workforce

Regionally, the competition for workers intensified through the 2010's. With strong jobs growth the demand for skilled and unskilled workers increased broadly. Locally, Madison County's labor needs are being met from further and further afield. In 2019, only one in every four

# 3 in 4

Local workers are from outside the county, 30% commute further than 25 miles one way

workers in the county also live in the county, with 30% driving more than twenty-five miles one way each day. County workers are majority male and older

on average, with 23 percent over fifty-five. This is two points higher than the Columbus MSA. Stakeholder interviews with local human resources directors point to a growing competition for eligible employees and difficulty in managing turnover.

Figure 14

## Change in GDP (2001-20)

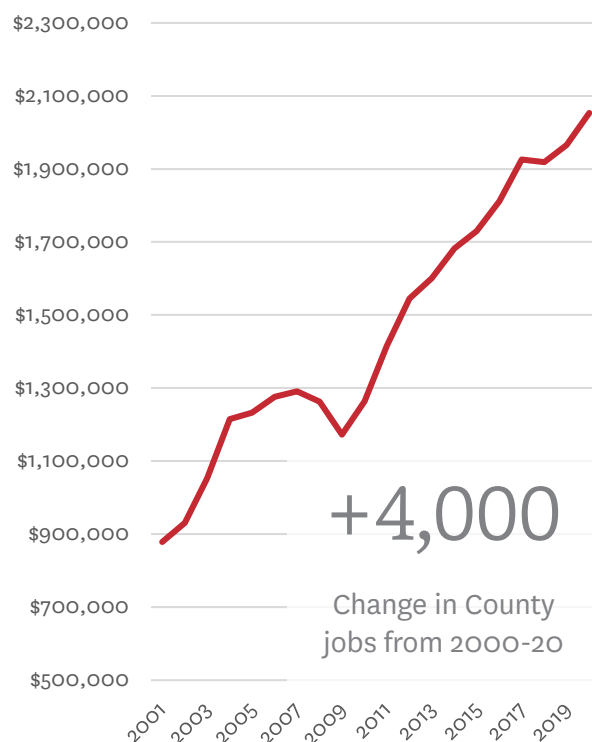
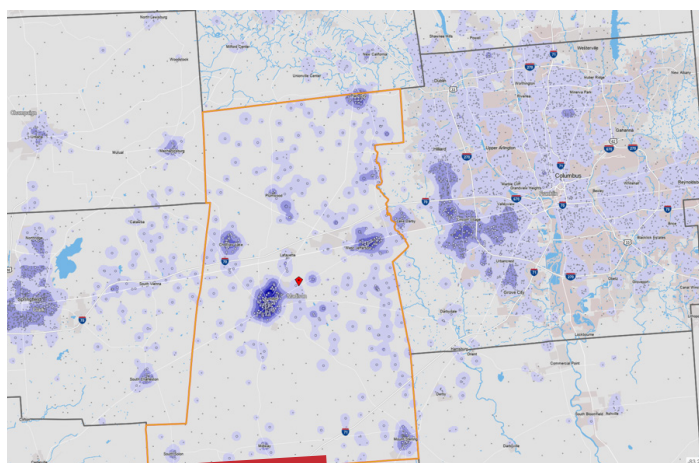


Figure 15

## Where County Workers Live



"Our biggest challenge relates to finding qualified employees ... More partnerships between the schools and other workforce development type programs may be beneficial to both the employers and schools."

Source: HR Director working for a local manufacturer

### LEGEND

250 to 400 homes

50 to 250 homes

Less than 50 homes

## *Growth in the Logistics and Just-in-Time Economy*

The Columbus Ohio region is being marketed as a global gateway serving the most robust freight catchment area in the United States. With one of the few cargo-focused airports in the world in Rickenbacker International, a one-day drive radius covers nearly half of the US population and 1/3 of the Canadian population, providing warehousing and logistics operations with incredibly fertile soil.

An excerpt from CoStar's 2022 Industrial Market Report for Columbus Market furthers this point in stating: Columbus' growing consumer base and central location are a major draw for logistics users, with around 50% of U.S. households located within a one-day drive. The logistics sector already represents 82% of industrial inventory in Columbus, compared to 67% for the U.S. overall. Around 24 million SF is underway in Columbus, representing 7.2% of total market inventory, well above the national average of 3.6%. At nearly 80%, speculative development represents a significant share of space underway and continues to draw the attention of investors.

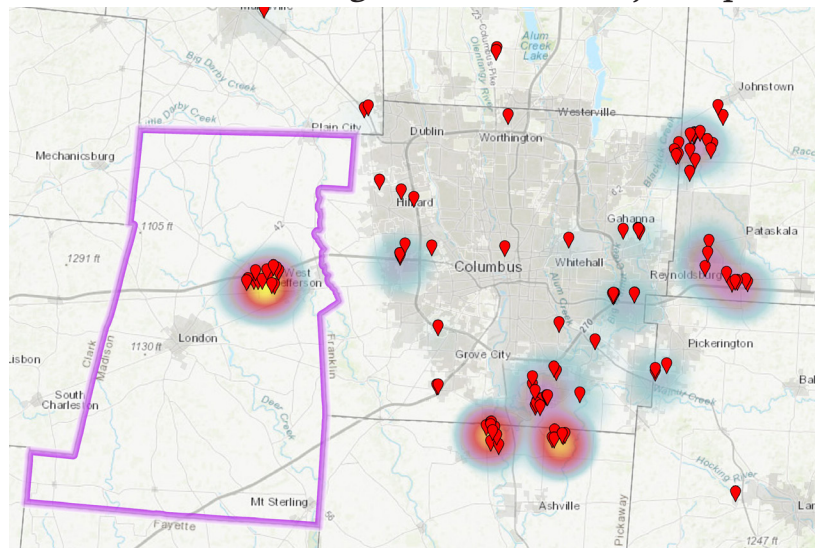
## *The Industrial Project Pipeline*

Logistics and warehousing operations fall under the industrial classification of land use, which has seen a marked increase within Madison County in the past decade. The County currently has 17.3 million square feet of industrial space in use, with a healthy vacancy rate of only three percent. Madison County also has 10.5 million square feet of pipeline industrial (projects proposed or under construction), making the County a clear point of gravity for industrial economic activity within the entire Columbus region. The access to major transportation infrastructure is one big reason the County has experienced such growth in this sector. Transportation accounts for 45%-70% of cost in a supply chain, making proximity

**Madison County has 5% of the existing Columbus Metro industrial space. The County contains 19% of the metro's future industrial space (pipeline projects under development & proposed)**

Figure 16

## *Columbus Region Industrial Project Pipeline*



the largest deciding factor from an investment standpoint.

## *The Farming Economy*

Agriculture may not constitute as much of the overall County GDP as it did in the mid-1900s, it's clear that industry still has tremendous impact on the County's economic landscape. The Ohio Agricultural Statistics Annual Bulletins show that Madison County continually ranks in the top 10 in the State of Ohio for corn and soybean production, with a strong output of milk and hog production as well. When equating the cost of running a farm, government subsidies, and market

**\$69,116**

The average net annual income for farms in Madison County

value of products sold, the average net annual income for farms in the county is \$69,116. Of the 789 farms in the county, 96 of them (or 9%) are classified as family farms. About 1/3 of farm operators in the county are 65 years or older according to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.

**About 1/3 of Farm Operators  
in Madison County are 65  
Years or Older**

*Source: 2017 Census of Agriculture*

This signals a generational shift on the horizon for farms and their management, with questions to be asked about what the transitions of these lands and their operations will look like.

# POLICY AGENDA

**Goal:** It shall be the goal of Madison County to support the growth of a thriving economy through strengthening existing businesses, supporting new industries, attracting and retaining a modern workforce, while continuing to preserve and protect the agricultural underpinnings of the county's economic history.

## OBJECTIVES

- ★ To support the modern agricultural economy of the county, including the emerging opportunities with the farming of solar energy
- ★ To highlight the county as a key gateway into the Mid-Ohio region, positioned conveniently along major transportation corridors
- ★ To diversify industry offerings within the county and create a balanced share of different employment sectors
- ★ To cultivate a modern workforce that allows for employee training, retention and career growth within the county
- ★ To promote cooperation and effective communication with the Madison County Chamber of Commerce and regional entities like the Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission and One Columbus
- ★ To value and promote the role that higher educational institutions have on a local economy

## ACTIONS & POLICIES

The following recommendations are policy objective statements surrounding land use. They are intended to inform next steps as the County carries out it's Future Land Use vision by offering ideas for accomplishing objectives laid out in the Land Use section of the Comprehensive Plan.

**E1 Support and actively communicate with existing major employers.** The retention and satisfaction of companies that have already invested in Madison County is important to the longevity of the local economy. The climate of corporate tax incentives make it so companies can easily relocate to new geographies, leaving it an imperative to keep current employers satisfied with their situation within the County, feeling like a part of the thriving community.

**E2 Continue to build off the industrial momentum present within the county.** This industry presents a growing share of the county's economic engine and should be cultivated through continued promotion of the county at a regional/national level. Leveraging One Columbus' role in macro-marketing (marketing of the greater Columbus region to world-wide companies) is important as they can communicate the county's assets, unique geographic positioning, and desire to attract innovative companies. Being top-of-mind within that regional agency can lead to Madison County being funneled unique business opportunities or development proposals.

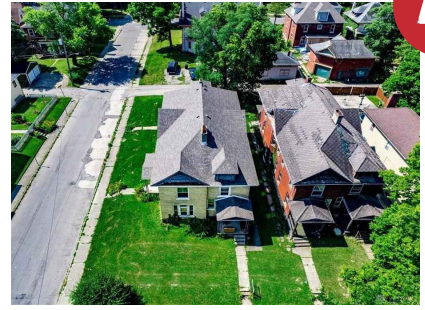
**E3 Seek to diversify the industry mix within the County.** While having dominant industries like Agriculture and Industrial/Warehousing is very important, equally as important is continuing to cultivate a wide portfolio of economic sectors within the county. This will allow for greater resiliency and balance, especially in regard to long-term timelines, as history demonstrates that industries that are very strong in a certain geography one day, may not be nearly as strong in that community 20 years later. Continued diversification of industries will help the county avoid an “all eggs in one basket” approach that can be a long-term economic risk.

**E4 Explore economic opportunities related to the solar energy supply chain and solar partnerships.** The State of Ohio's support of solar energy and Madison County's proximity to the interstate and Rickenbacker Airport present opportunity to be a player in the solar supply chain. This is made up of the physical components needed to create and maintain solar farms, as well as the infrastructure to transport these parts. There is opportunity to build off the existing industrial/warehousing momentum within the county by supporting the development of solar supply chain facilities and infrastructure. There is also opportunity to leverage proximity to Ohio State University by exploring partnerships with their Photovoltaics program. The county could act as a living laboratory for research into the modern convergence of traditional farming and solar harvesting. Both the pros and cons of engagement in this emerging field should be considered in light of the county's long-term vision and priorities.

**E5 Stick to the Comprehensive Plan and utilize a full suite of tools in its implementation.** Close adherence to the Comprehensive Plan will grant confidence to the investment/business community as it gives them a clarity of expectation and process, which is a major priority in making a business investment. Madison County should encourage the use of specific programs and projects to facilitate compliance with the objectives and policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan. These include the use of Federal and State programs, utility expansion plans, the administration of subdivision, zoning and other codes, and the programming of capital improvements.

**E6 Continue to support and collaborate with workforce development providers and higher educational institutions.** It is important for Madison County to keep a finger on the pulse of workforce challenges, opportunities, and future horizon. Programs like those offered at Tolles Career Technical Center are multifaceted and serve the needs of a wide range of ages and demographics. Madison County should support the continued expansion of these programs and work to connect key players in the arena of workforce development and employment opportunity. Institutions of higher education are by nature environments of workforce development and their physical campus locations often present various employment opportunities to non-students within the community, in addition to augmenting the local tax base. Madison County should seek to support and establish additional workforce development programs and higher educational campus' within its geographic footprint.





# Housing

A key component of supporting a robust workforce is plentiful and diverse housing options. Presently, a significant portion of the workforce of Madison County commutes from surrounding counties to work. Increasing the number and type of available units will afford the county the ability to capture additional employees seeking to reside near their employer or simply enjoy the rural character of Madison County.

Diverse and plentiful housing options are key to supporting a multi-generational population. Current options within the county are primarily single-family residences in both rural and urban settings. Supporting construction of additional residential developments and types of units is important to meet increasing housing demand as the central Ohio region grows in the coming decades. Focusing these development types within existing or planned sewer service areas is key to supporting the densities required to meet current and projected demands.

## Key Findings

- ★ Owner-occupied units comprise approximately 71.3% of the total housing stock within the county
- ★ Detached housing product accounts for 77.3% of total housing units present in the county
- ★ Multifamily makes up 8% of Madison County's housing stock, compared to 19% of the Columbus Metro housing stock
- ★ If Madison County absorbs just 1% of 2040 Central Ohio Population Growth forecasts, that 1% would equal close to 5,000 new residents

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section includes an inventory of Madison County's current housing stock, housing market dynamics and affordability, regional trends in housing demand and location, and exploration of the recent of residential projects that have been permitted or proposed within the county.

### *Madison County Housing Inventory*

Providing a diverse offering of housing options is an important component to a community's sustainable maturation. As individuals pass through various stages of their lives, their housing needs, as well as what they can afford, vary. Young adults, families, and retired people all need different types of housing, but because of the way housing is built in many communities, they may not be able to stay in the same neighborhood as their needs and income levels change. Providing a diverse and adequate inventory of housing stock can be a challenging subject for communities to address as it is heavily driven by market forces, federal government decisions, and shifting living preferences. Housing affordability and attainability is also a regional challenge, and therefore it can't be solved solely on a local level.

In terms of its current housing stock, more than three quarters of Madison County is made up of single-family detached homes (12,480 units). The next most prevalent housing type is multi-family, with the 1,230 units making up 8% of the county's overall housing stock. Several mobile home parks add up to five percent of the county's

77%

of county housing stock is single-family detached homes



Single-Family Subdivision Near Plain City

housing stock, comprising 818 units. Triplexes, duplexes and townhomes collectively make up the remaining 1,615 housing units, each representing over 3% of the total inventory.

**21% of Madison County housing stock was built before 1940, while 4% has been built since 2010**

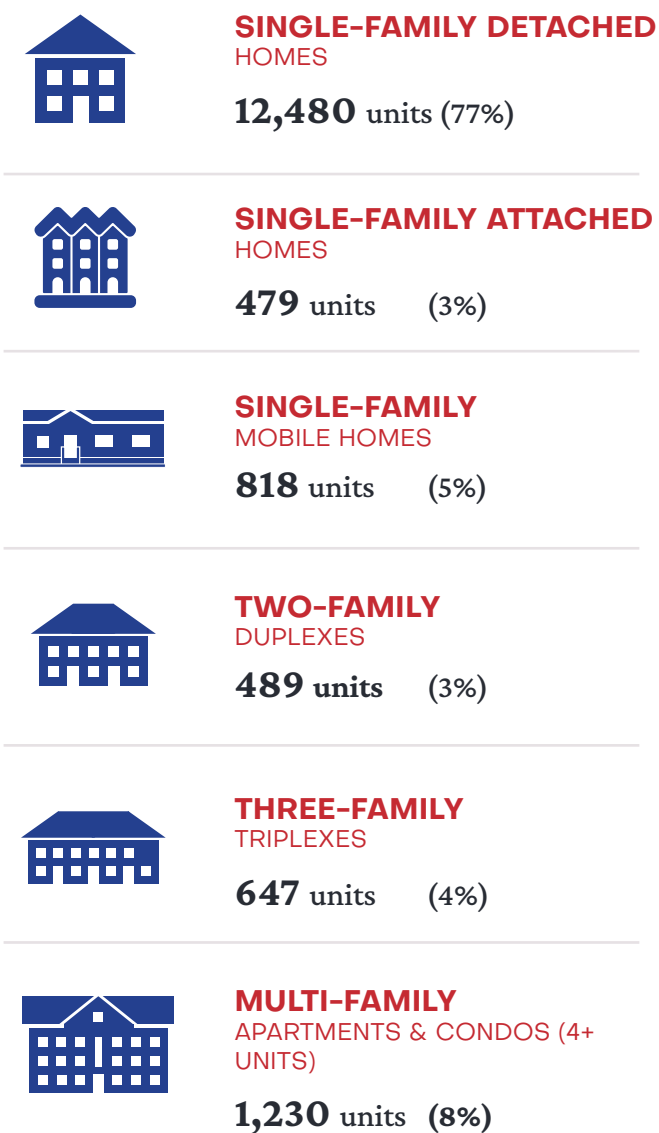
Source: 2020 American Community Survey

When looking at housing inventory across the entire Columbus metro area, Madison County has a higher percentage of duplexes and mobile homes than the metro. The county has a higher proportion of single-family detached (77%) than both the Columbus metro (62%) and the State of Ohio as a whole (69%). The county, however, has significantly less of an offering of multifamily residential (8%), than the average across the Columbus metro, which is 19%.

The age of Madison County's housing stock imitates, to some degree, its population trajectory through the years. Over one fifth of the county's housing stock was built in 1939 or earlier, compared to just 12% for the Columbus metro. This aligns with some of the county's most significant periods of population growth, which occurred in the late 1800s. The county witnessed controlled and steady growth through the twentieth century, particularly from 1960-2000, before slowing down to very little growth over the last decade. The period between 2010-2020 produced 4% of Madison County's current existing housing stock.

Figure 18

### Housing Units by Type



### Owner/Renter Occupancy and Housing Affordability

74% of housing units within the county are owner-occupied, leaving the remaining 26% occupied by renters. The median monthly mortgage in the County is \$1,334, with the median gross rent at \$856.

Figure 17

### Occupancy Status of Housing Stock

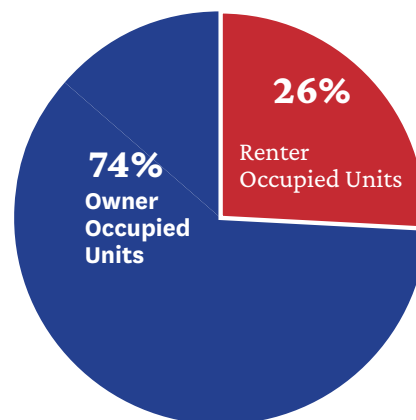
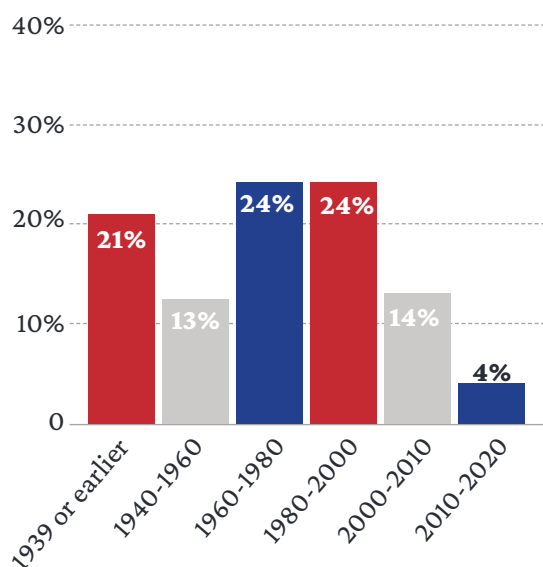


Figure 19

### Year Built - Housing Stock



A common measure of affordability is to look at the number of households in a community that spend more than 30% of their monthly income on housing-related costs. In Madison County, just under 19% of homeowners with a mortgage spend over 30% of their income on housing costs. 75% commit less than 25% of their income to housing expenses, while 58% commit less than 20% of their income. 29% of renters in Madison County spend at least 30% of their income on housing. That is better than Columbus metro average of 42% of renters, and the national average of 46% of renters who find themselves cost-burdened, committing in excess of 30% of their monthly income on housing.

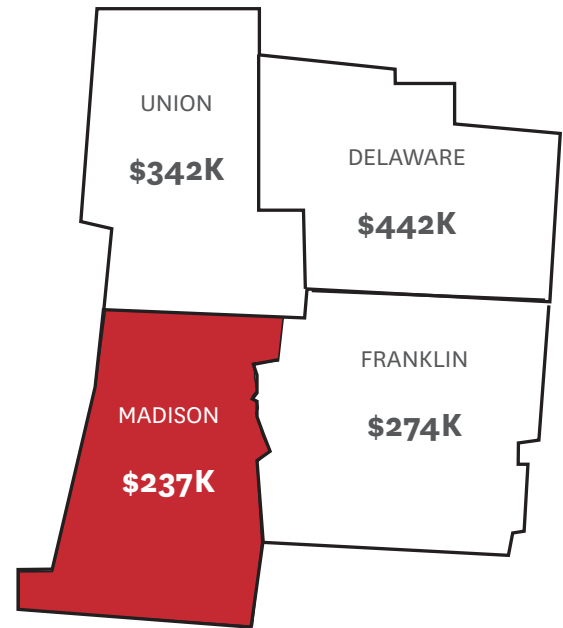
### Housing Market Trends

When looking at the housing market trends since 2000, its evident there is a regional (and national) phenomena occurring. If a community is viewed

**\$118,00**

Amount of increase in home values in Madison County between 2000-2022 (per Zillow)

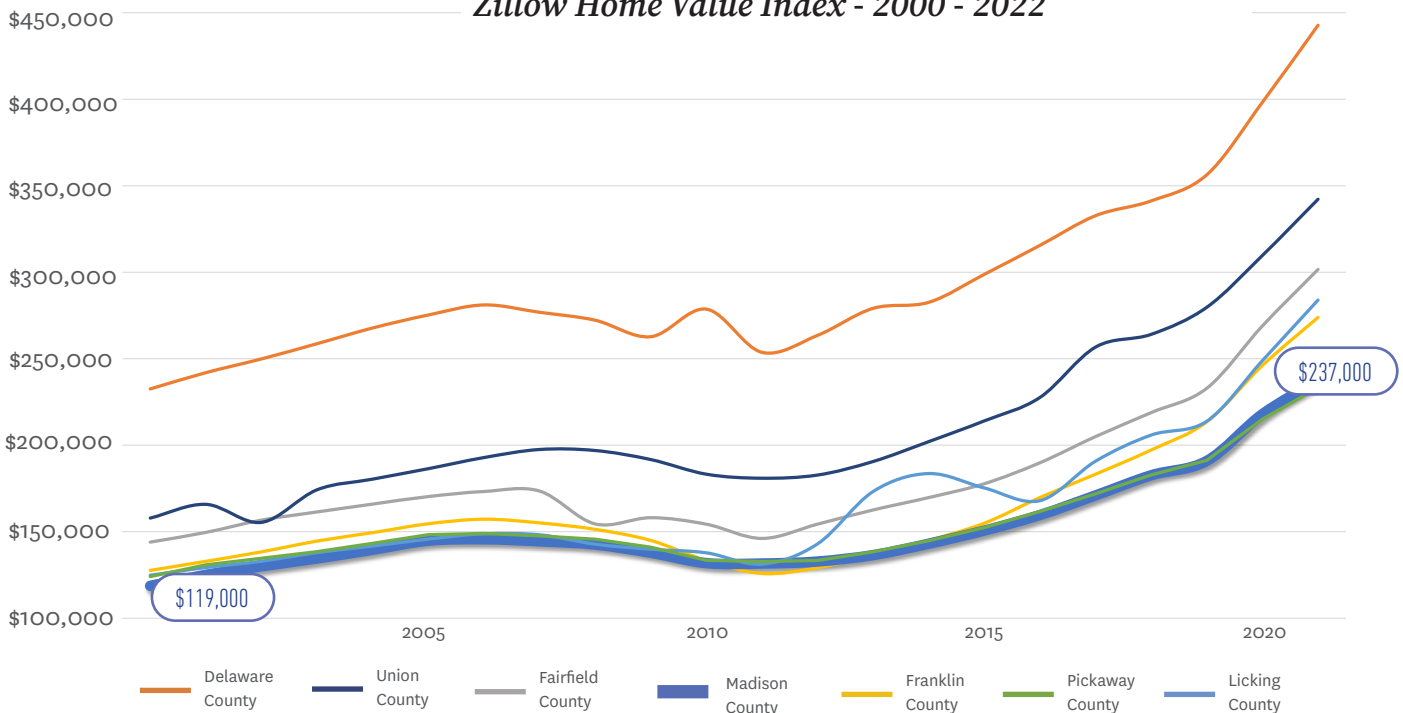
Figure 20  
**Median Home Value - Northeast Counties**



Source: Zillow Home Value Index (2022)

Figure 21

### Zillow Home Value Index - 2000 - 2022



in isolation it may be difficult to understand the broader sweeping context within which the housing market has seen unprecedented numerical growth. Madison County, for example, witnessed a jump in median home value from \$119,000 in 2000 to \$237,000 in 2022. That is an increase of 118,000, or 99%. But that substantial increase is seen across the entirety of the Central Ohio region. The uptick of home values in every county in Figure 4.5 means that much of Central Ohio is dealing with the effects of rising housing prices, which often outpace wage growth and contribute to community instability in the form of financial burden or even displacement.

To the northeast, Madison County is surrounded by not only the fastest growing counties in the region, but also some of the most increasingly expensive. Union County and Delaware County have median home values that are \$105,000 and \$205,000 more than that of Madison County. By sheer proximity, land in Madison County,

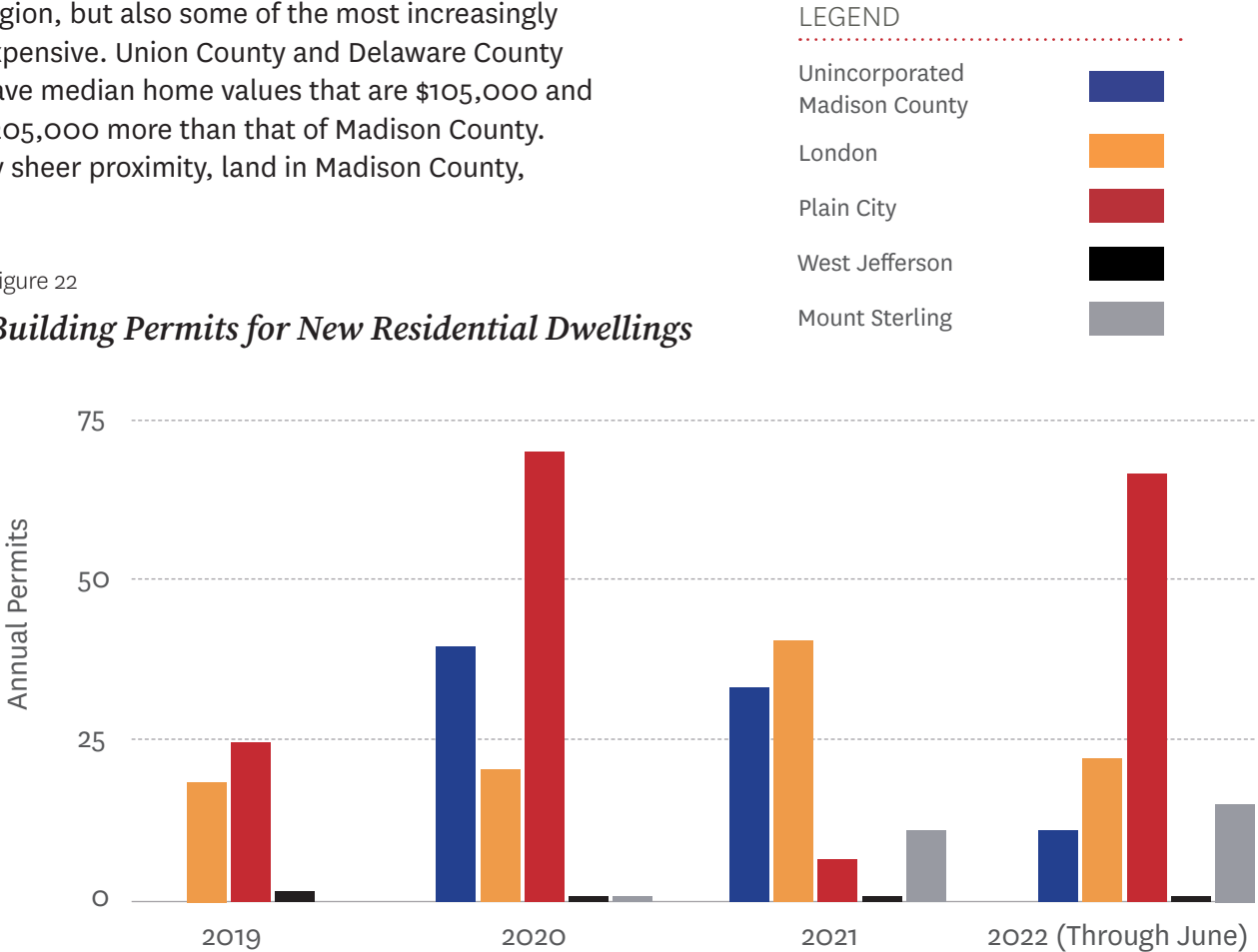
particularly the northeast portion, will feel development pressure and increasing housing prices. The flip side of this that this portion of the county also has the opportunity and demand to supply new housing stock, and a diversity of housing types, to the county's inventory.

### County Building Permit Trends and Residential Project Pipeline

County building permit data indicates that between 2019 and July of 2022 there have been 389 permits issued for new dwellings county-wide. Close to half of the total new dwelling permits for the entire county were issued in the Village of Plain City. The average home value of new dwellings in Plain City is also the highest of the county jurisdictions with an average value of \$317,000, with London a close second, averaging \$282,000 for each new build.

43%  
of new dwellings  
permitted since 2019  
have been in Plain City

Figure 22  
**Building Permits for New Residential Dwellings**



While there has been some new housing growth in the unincorporated portions of the county, the incorporated areas are where most new housing growth has occurred and will continue to occur. The tentative pipeline of future residential projects points to over a handful of projects across London and the villages, totaling more than 1,000 possible units over the next several years. More than a third of these projected new units are multifamily, with multifamily projects in the pipeline in London, West Jefferson and Plain City.

Since the beginning of 2020, a total of 85 new homes have been permitted in unincorporated Madison County, averaging roughly 34 annually. More than a quarter of these fall within Somerford Township, with most of those being close to Choctaw Lake. Canaan Township, just south of Plain City, has the next highest amount of growth with about 15% of the permits for new builds in unincorporated Madison County.

### Migration Patterns

The region's migration patterns may be leading to the explosive growth in home prices and may also be the result of them, with people forced to move to where they can afford to live.

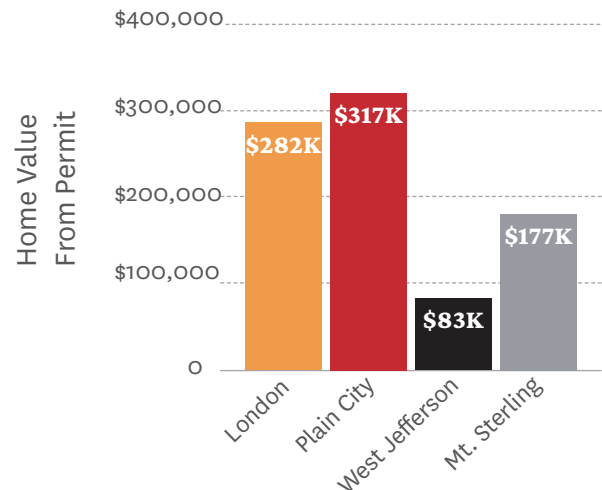
More than 37% of residents within the broader Columbus metro moved to their current place of residence after 2014, where that number is only 29% for Madison County, indicating a greater proportion of county residents have lived longer in their place of residence than the regional average.

**More than 1/3 of the 1,000 Residential Units in the County's Future Housing Pipeline are Multifamily**

*Source: Madison County*

Figure 23

### Home Value for New Dwellings 2019-2022



Generally, there is very little turnover with owner-occupied housing within Madison County. When looking at residential relocations from Madison County to somewhere else in the county, 2010 data found that only 2% of homeowners had made that type of move the prior year, while 21% of renters within the county had done so. 2020 data, however, pointed to a greater sense of balance in relocations within the county as 4.7% of homeowners had made that move within the prior year, to 9.6% of renters.

According to the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS), over 12% of renters in the county had moved from a different county in Ohio within the prior year. Within the same period only one point two percent of renters had moved to Madison County from a different state, indicating Intra-Ohio migration patterns when looking at renter movement to Madison County. For reference, in that same time period, only four percent of renters in Franklin County had moved from a different county within Ohio over the prior year, but they also experienced four percent of renters move in from out of state. This suggests Franklin County may be a type of “landing zone” for renters relocating from out of state, who then

eventually relocate within state, to places like Madison County.

With Columbus' expanding gravity as a regional job center and emerging tech hub, the upcoming

12% of Madison County renters in 2020 had moved from a different County in Ohio within the prior year

years may see a greater proportion of people looking to live in Madison County and commute into Franklin

County for work. The proximity of the county (particularly its eastern side) to the Central Business District of Columbus makes a very attractive proximity-based living location that is still very affordable compared to the surrounding counties.

*The Importance of Character*

Everything surrounding housing within Madison County is ultimately tied back to character and the context within which housing development occurs. The conversation around housing can be often put a heavy emphasis on to sheer number of units, density per acreage, and housing product type. While these are important, equally as important is how new units and housing types integrate into the desired community character and fit cohesively within the broader community context. This ultimately relies on careful consideration of case-by-case proposals for housing development, with attention to site design, look and feel, and attention to elements that contribute to neighborhood character and community distinction. A major point of emphasis for community distinction in Madison County is the differentiations between town and country. This is advocated for by the five focus areas and should be reinforced by the defining characteristics of future housing developments.

# POLICY AGENDA

**Goal:** It shall be the goal of Madison County to promote housing options that support the diverse needs of all residents within the County, while considering the current housing options and future opportunities to add balance and character to the residential offerings found within Madison County.

## OBJECTIVES

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- ★ To facilitate access and attainability of housing for the County's current and future residents
- ★ To keep active inventory of the County's housing stock offerings
- ★ To seek balance in the types and price-points of new housing stock added within the County. To guide the development of residential areas so that urban community services can be efficient while providing a wide range of living accommodations for a variety of family types and income levels
- ★ To think creatively about housing provision, understanding there are many ingredients that make up an effective housing landscape within a community.
- ★ To manage growth of Madison County by a commitment to planning principles and policies
- ★ To promote cooperative efforts to address housing issues within Madison County by engaging the County's municipalities as well as other organizations

## ACTIONS & POLICIES

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The following recommendations are policy objective statements surrounding land use. They are intended to inform next steps as the County carries out its Future Land Use vision by offering ideas for accomplishing objectives laid out in the Land Use section of the Comprehensive Plan.

**H1 Expand the diversity of housing stock.** This is important for retaining long-term residents and attracting new residents by providing options for different lifestyles, income levels and stages of life. With more than 77% of the County's housing stock made up by single-family detached, it would be beneficial to add attached and multifamily product where geographically appropriate. Encouraging individual projects to offer multiple housing types within the project (like Madison Meadows in Plain City) is one way to increase the diversity of housing stock within the County.

**H2 Identify infill sites (already served by utilities) that could be purchased by the County Land Bank and utilized for housing provision.** Infill sites within the cities/villages provide a "low-hanging fruit" opportunity for new housing in that they are already enabled by water/sewer connection and add new housing options to the county without land disturbance of greenfield sites. This would also add rooftops and disposable income in close proximity to established commercial retailers, which would have economic benefit by providing support to the existing businesses.

**H3 Create a task force that explores housing availability & affordability as it pertains to Madison County.** There is a large amount of quantitative data available through the Central Ohio Regional Housing Strategy and MORPC, so this task force would do well to provide qualitative efforts that specific highlight housing issues and opportunities within Madison County. This could include testimonials from current and prospective residents, employer observations on workforce and housing issues for employees, or surveys on housing preferences and price points. The task force could also operate as a local advocacy arm, fostering partnerships that lead to developing attainable housing that fits the context of Madison County.

**H4 Adopt design guidelines as part of possible focus area zoning overlay.** Design Guidelines can help ensure high-quality developments and cohesive architecture. They are also great tools for establishing and retaining the specific character of an area or district. Because the Five Focus Areas will absorb the County's new housing growth and are generally areas of transition between rural and more urban, design guidelines tailored to these areas of transition can do a lot to make new housing palatable and desirable, blending in with the existing physical form.

**H5 Explore programs that assist with existing home rehabilitation.** With close to one quarter of homes in Madison County 80 years old or more, it could be beneficial to explore ways the county can help homeowners with repairs and updates to older homes. Many programs already exist at national and state levels, so simply providing a centralized resource or communication campaigns on relevant programs could be beneficial. The maintenance and upkeep of older homes is a matter public safety, a contributor to historic character and charm, and a promoter of economic investment.

**H6 Value and build off of the county's "Missing Middle" housing stock.** Missing Middle Housing Types refer to housing stock that falls between single-family detached housing and larger apartment buildings. This entails townhomes, duplexes, tri- and quadplexes, and cottage courts among others. Many of these were typically built pre-WWII and they provide a diverse array of both housing options as well as price-points. Because some of the most significant periods of growth for Madison County were before WWII, some unique and historic offerings of missing middle housing can be found in the cities/villages in Madison County. It's important for the county to work with the various municipalities to support these assets, some of which are aging or have fallen into disrepair, understanding they play an important role in the regional housing solution. They are an attractive housing choice for both the younger generation and empty-nester's as they often provide an affordable living option and an opportunity to live within a type of housing that possesses a uniqueness of character and style that is different from typical single-family detached or large apartment buildings.

**H7 Demand "additive residential development" in the northeast portion of the county.** Because of the nature of the housing market and the development pressure and housing price increases occurring in the counties directly north and east of Madison County, the county possesses the leverage to demand future residential development within the northeast part of the county meet strict character standards. In much of that area the question has shifted from "if" to "when" in regard to homebuilder interest in site development, especially in light of a regionalized water/sewer district. In light of that reality, an approach should be taken to not simply accept homogeneous, cookie-cutter housing development, but rather push for elements that reflect Madison County character and heritage to be present and prominent in every housing development.





## Utilities & Transportation

The utilities of a community provide the physical framework for life and growth to occur. A community's transportation network is the foundation of mobility for both people and goods. This chapter examines the current utility and transportation landscape within the county, while considering future improvements. Analysis and considerations result in recommended actions, presented at the end of this chapter.

Utilities allow communities to function properly, and their availability is essential for Madison County to provide quality of life functions to its residents and workforce, while also setting the framework for future growth and development. These enabling factors of service and growth include the administration of wastewater, drinking water, electricity, natural gas, internet, and solar energy. Transportation networks act as pseudo large-scale utility, providing a physical service framework for the movement of goods and people across space. Both have immeasurable impact on day-to-day life across the County.

### Key Findings

- ★ I-70 & I-71 have seen their average daily traffic within Madison County double in the past 30 years.
- ★ Approximately 40% of single-family homes within the County are on septic systems.
- ★ Madison County Water Comprehensive Plan is currently underway (as of October 2022).
- ★ Madison County has a current remaining waste treatment capacity of 225,000 gallons/day (GPD)
- ★ Lack of adopted standards for solar generation facilities limits the ability of Madison County to regulate these uses

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section includes analysis of data, trends, and a documentation of utility and transportation infrastructure. It takes into consideration current efforts the county is working towards along these fronts and how those efforts inform long-range planning.

### *Wastewater (Sewer & Septic)*

Wastewater contains pathogenic microorganisms considered as potential health hazards. To ensure public health, environmentally safe methods of wastewater collection, treatment and disposal are required. In low-density rural areas such as Madison County, an on-site waste water disposal system such as septic tanks or aerations systems are acceptable if the site has a percolation rate and a depth to seasonable high ground water or bedrock to filter the wastewater before it surfaces or reaches groundwater. The collection and treatment of wastewater is more desirable and efficient through the use of a central system where concentrations of homes exist. The communities of London, Plain City, West Jefferson and Mt. Sterling each have their own centralized waste water treatment facilities. In addition, there are a number of individual developments that maintain small package treatment facilities.

Madison County does not have a centralized wastewater collection,

40%

Approximate percentage of single family homes in the County are on Septic (Outside of a Sewer District)



treatment, and disposal system in its unincorporated areas, except for at the intersection of US Highway 42 and Interstate 70 (Sewer District 1) and the Lake Choctaw area (Sewer District 2). Madison County also operates two additional treatment systems, one at Camp Wissalohican (along High Free Pike off OH 142) and another at the Burr Oak Subdivision, located outside the city limits of Mount Sterling.

Sewer District 1 has a designed capacity to treat 150,000 gallons of wastewater daily, with a current daily use of approximately 68,000 GPD according to the Madison County Sewer District. For reference, the TA travel Center, which is located at the SW corner of I-70 and US 42, is a 27-acre site that uses approximately 18,000 GPD (per Madison County). Some of the large warehousing buildings in the I-70 corridor, although bigger than the TA Travel Center, have outputs of less wastewater, generally around 10,000 GPD. Sewer District 2 has a design capacity of 300,000 GPD with a current use rate of 158,000 GPD. Both of these districts contain land at Interstate 70 interchanges. Sewer District 2 abuts the exit 72 interchange, where I-70 is bisected by OH 29.

Figure 24

## Sewer & Septic

### LEGEND

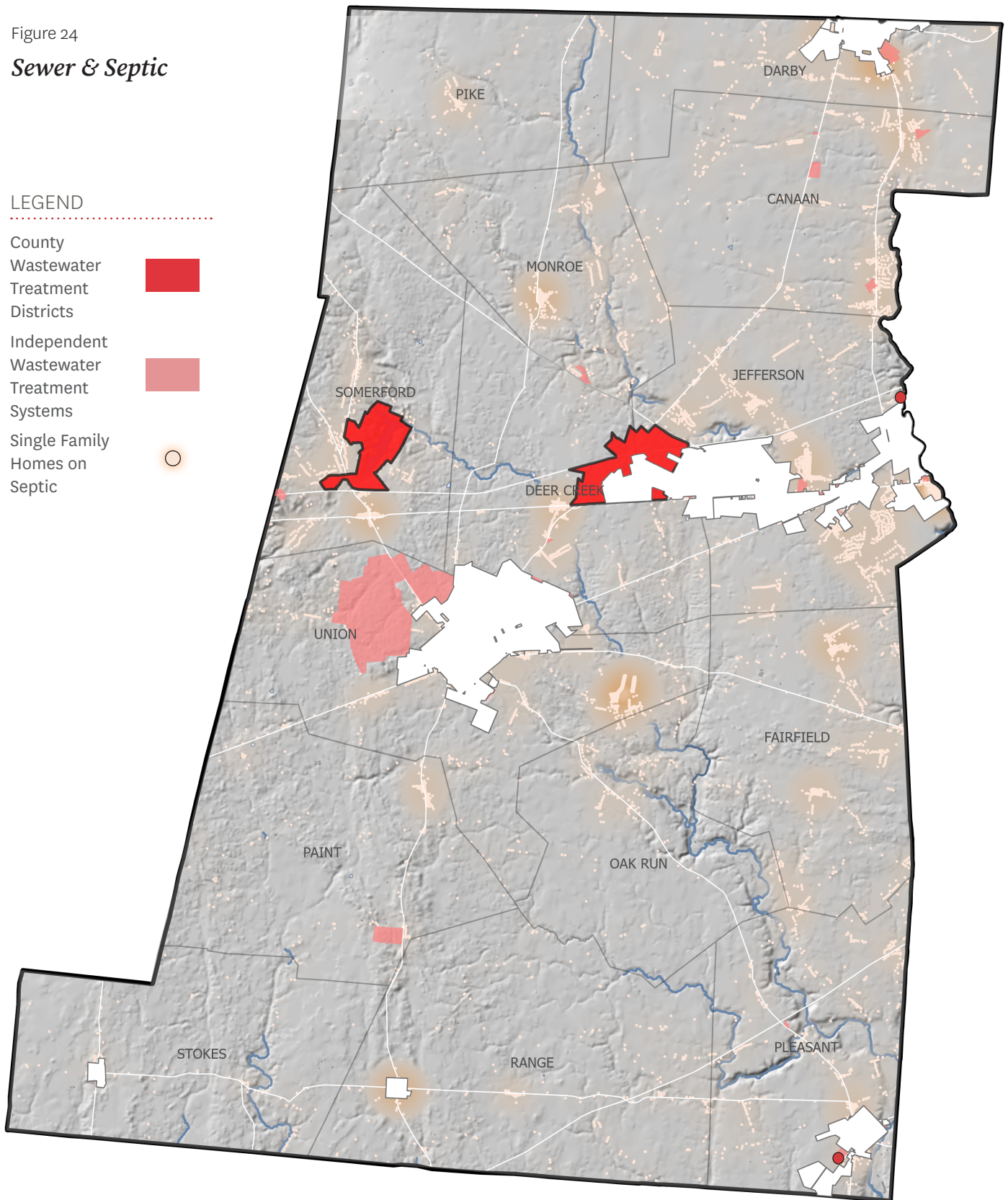
County  
Wastewater  
Treatment  
Districts



Independent  
Wastewater  
Treatment  
Systems



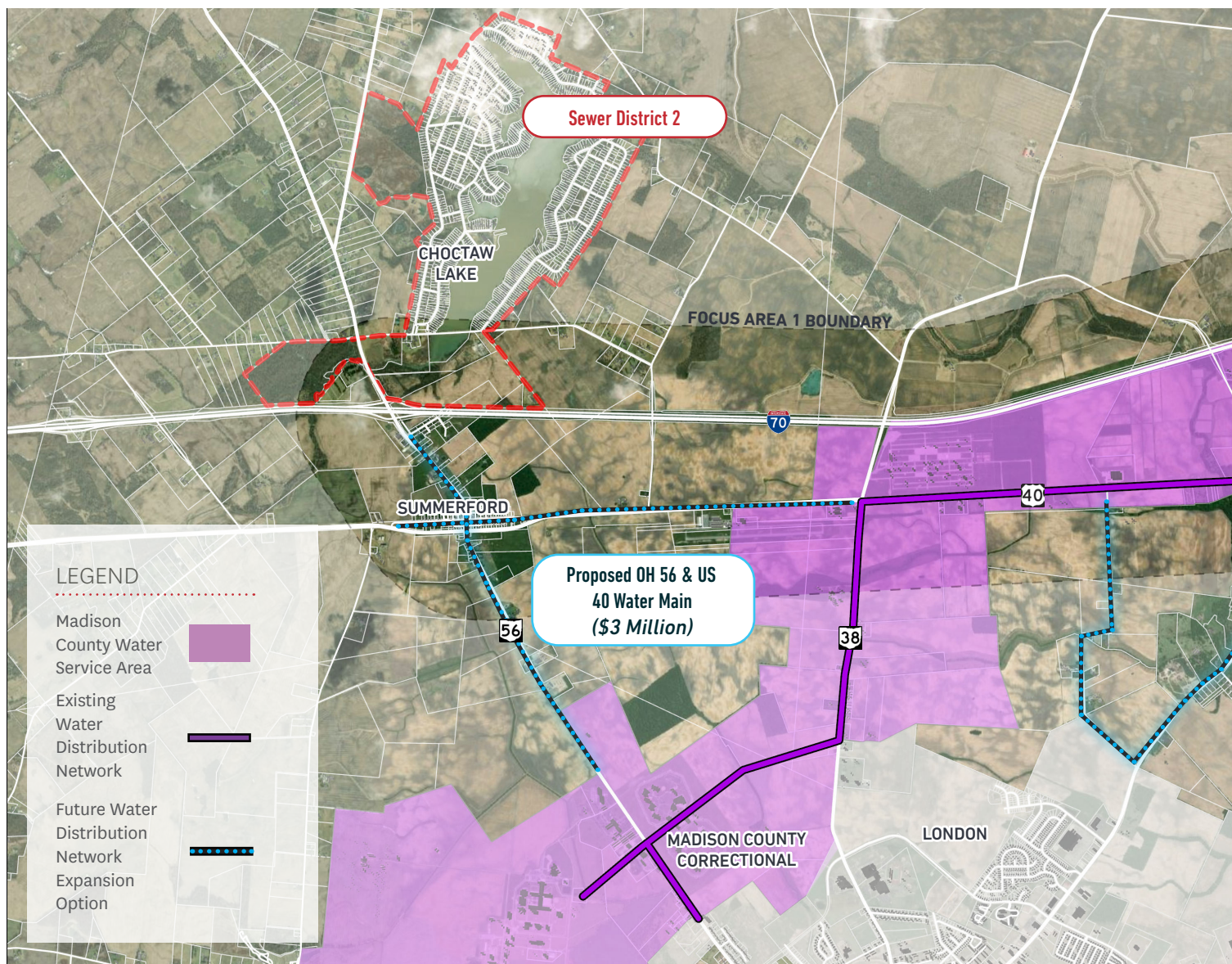
Single Family  
Homes on  
Septic



According to the Madison County Sewer District, grant funding has been secured to extend Sewer District 2 south across I-70 to Summerford, where current capacity would allow for an additional 200 homes to be added to the district.

Household sewage treatment systems are used to service residential development in the unincorporated areas of Madison County. Soil characteristics and lot sizes in Madison County dictate the ability to install sewage treatment systems and guide the selection of the type of system installed. Roughly 40% of residential lots within the County as a whole fall outside the boundaries of established sewer districts,

therefore operating on a septic/aeration system. Madison County's wastewater regulations cover both multi-user wastewater treatment systems as well as individual wastewater treatment systems (septic). These regulations cover permitting procedures, system design and maintenance, inspection procedures and minimum separation distances to water resources. The first Madison County regulations governing septic systems came into effect October 15, 1991, meaning systems installed before that time are grandfathered in and not governed by the current regulations and requirements.



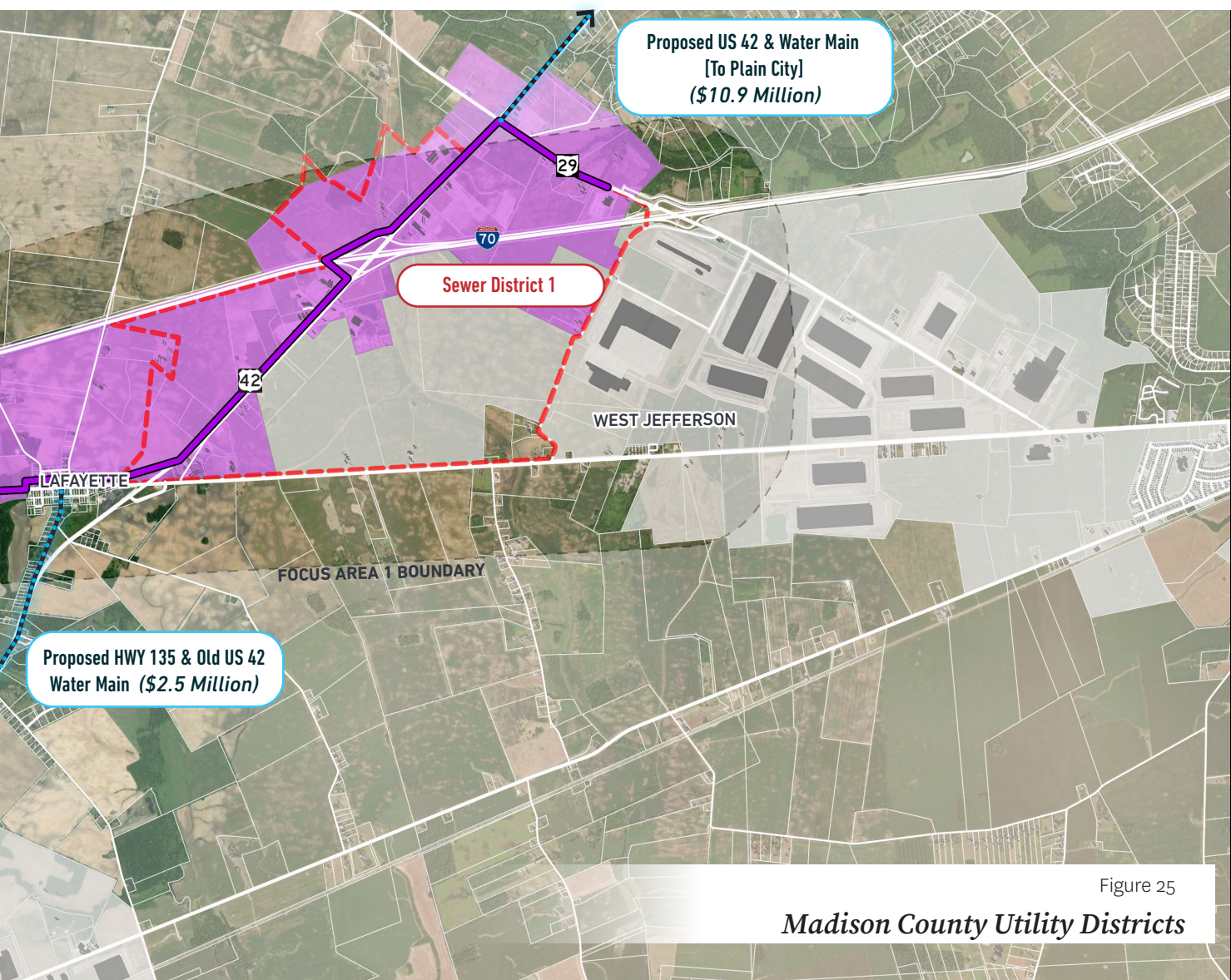
## Centralized Water

Safe, potable water is an essential component of community life and health. Historically, much of unincorporated Madison County has relied on wells to provide water to rural farmland and low-density residential areas. Centralized water systems, which provide reliable potable water supply, as well as community fire protection, exist within the cities/villages within Madison County.

In 2022, the County has expanded centralized water service into certain unincorporated portions of the County, extending water mains from the current water treatment plant (WTP) at the Madison Correctional Institute north along

OH 38, along US 40 and US 42, culminating along OH 29 north of Interstate 70. This investment in water infrastructure was completed in August 2022, establishing what is known as the Madison County Water Service Area. Service lines for industrial, commercial and residential users along the transmission lines are being constructed and connected into the water distribution system. When construction of these connections is complete, which is expected to be January 2023, the immediate demand for water will be approximately 600,000 GPD.

The existing water treatment plant includes a well field with five operational wells, draft aeration, three lime softening basins, a 4-cell gravity filter,



and four distribution pumps. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards give the current water treatment facility a capacity of treating 1.5 million GPD. The distribution system, however, has a design capacity to provide 2.16 million GPD according to the 2022 Madison County Water Comprehensive Plan.

## REGIONALIZATION OF UTILITIES

In addition to anticipated growth, Madison County, as well as the Ohio EPA, have expressed an increased interest in regionalization – both in water/wastewater infrastructure and treatment. Regionalization and utility consolidation of multiple communities provides potential cost-saving benefits in both short- and long-term capital costs, end user costs based on economies of scale, as well as the potential to streamline services under one operation. Based on proximity and necessary upgrades, the Comprehensive Water Plan investigates the feasibility of water consolidation and supplemental demand with two nearby communities – Plain City and London. As costs to operate, maintain, and expand existing treatment plants and distribution systems



continues to increase, detailed planning of infrastructure is needed to support anticipated growth and development within the respective areas.

As of October 2022, preliminary agreements have been reached between Madison County and Plain City to establish the Mid-Ohio Water and Sewer District, a quasi-governmental organization that will monitor, regulate and collect fees for water usage and tap fees, as well as constructing and operating central water and sewer lines running down the US 42 corridor from Plain City to West Jefferson.

## EXPANDING WATER DISTRIBUTION OPTIONS

Madison County's existing water distribution system ends north of I-70 at US 42 and OH 29. The Water Comprehensive Plan proposed three future expansion possibilities to extend the reach of the current network.

One expansion potential before the County is the extension of water distribution up the US 42 corridor to Plain City. This would entail over 10 miles of new water line and cost \$10.9 million dollars. The projected flow rate to add this water service would be 67,000 GPD, with an anticipated 5-year projection of 72,000 GPD.

A second expansion potential would extend water transmission lines up OH 56 and east along US

40, providing water service to the community of Summerford. This extension would stabilize flow within the existing network and increase service pressure to the homes and businesses in the Lafayette area. The immediate projected flow rate of this extension would be 3,600 GPD. The 5-year projection, however, increases to 249,000 GPD, in large part because of currently undeveloped acreage along this busy corridor that could be built out in the near future.

The third expansion option would follow OH 135 and the Old US 42 Corridor. This expansion would provide additional water flow to the City of London and provide redundancy to the network, alleviating heavy reliance on the emergency

interconnect that was constructed along SR 38. Having two sources of connection to supply the City of London with water adds a layer of resiliency to the growing water network. The immediate water demand for this scenario would be only 900 GPD, with projections growing to near 200,000 GPD at the 5-year projected demand. The cost of this expansion is estimated at \$2.5 million.

### ***Implication For Focus Areas***

As the five focus areas have been established as key geographic areas of future growth and development within the County, it's important to understand how the utility terrain relates to the focus areas.

Focus Area 1 - The largest focus area in the County also has the greatest current degree of centralized utility coverage. The Madison County Water Service Area covers almost 1/3 of the area of Focus Area 1, giving over 3,100 acres of largely undeveloped land access to the centralized water service. The water distribution expansion proposal # 2 (north along OH 56 and east along US 40,) would make it so almost half the land area within Focus Area 1 has access to centralized water. Sewer Districts are currently present on both the east and west sides of the Focus Area, with plans to extend Sewer District 2 to the Summerford community.

Focus Areas 2 & 3 - Both of these deal largely with the periphery of Plain City and are therefore influenced profoundly by the notion of a waterline extending the length of the US 42 corridor from West Jefferson to Plain City. Even more impactful upon these two focus areas would be the combined water sewer district that is currently in motion in the form of the Mid-Ohio Water and Sewer District. This would not only regionalize water in those two focus areas, but sewer as well. Since current development pressure and home-buyer interest is already strongest in the northeastern portions of the County, regional utility service provision would capture the existing momentum and continue to drive development

interest forward in these two focus areas. Because of this, Madison County may find itself in the position of getting to be very selective with what gets developed within these focus areas, being able to 'demand additive development' and turn down development proposals that don't align with desired community character and vision.

Focus Areas 4 & 5 - Both of these lie outside of established water service/sewer districts. Focus Area 4 may see development interest increase after the I-71 corridor project adds another lane, but even then water and wastewater need to be individually managed on-site via wells and package plants. Focus Area 5 is positioned along interstate 70, and while it is very proximate to downtown Columbus, it is within the Big Darby Watershed, adjacent to Big Darby creek itself, and therefore limited in its development capacity. That, along with lack of centralized water and sewer, make this focus area more a of long term development potential, with impediments from both an environmental as well as utility provision standpoint.

**In October 2022, first legal steps were taken to establish the Mid-Ohio Water and Sewer District**

*Source: Union County Daily Digital*

# The Transportation Network

Transportation is important as it enables the movement of people and goods throughout the county. The following information provides a thematic overview of transportation modes and characteristics throughout Madison County.

## AIR & RAIL

Air - Madison County has a small airport located in Somerford Township. It consists of 148 acres and is located at the corner of US 40 and State Route 38.

Rail - Madison County's railroad needs are served by Norfolk Southern. Tracks go through London and include an east-west line from Dayton to Pennsylvania.

## ROAD NETWORK

Madison County's location along two major interstates (I-70 & I-71) allow for easy access to Columbus to the east (approx. 20 miles), Springfield and Dayton to the west (20 & 50 miles, respectively), and Cincinnati to the Southwest (approx. 90 miles).

On a macro level, Madison County sits in the geographic heart of much of the nation's population and business centers with 45% of the country's total population and 48% of its headquarters operations within a day's drive (Columbusregion.com). From the geographic center of the county, it's 30 interstate miles to Rickenbacker International Airport, one of the world's only cargo-dedicated airports.

45%

Of the Country's  
population is within a  
day's drive of Madison  
County

On a local level, Madison County uses a thoroughfare planning process for grouping roadways into functional categories. These categories classify roadways with respect to the intensity of use, continuity of travel movement, and requirements for adjacent land access. Traffic volumes, the proportion of through traffic to local traffic and the number of necessary access points all play key roles in design of each segment of the thoroughfare network. The Functional Classification system used for the Madison County Thoroughfare Plan is as follows (hierarchy from most intense user to least intense user):

Interstate, Principle Arterial, Minor Arterial, Major Collector, Minor Collector, Local Streets.

## AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES

Average Daily Traffic Counts have been taken across the County from all across the road system. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 measure traffic counts at all major County roadways for the 35 year period between 1982 & 2017.

The two interstate corridors that pass through the

county, I-70 and I-71, carry the highest volume of traffic, each with an Annual Average Daily Traffic count of over 50,000 vehicles, with over 15,000 of that accounted for by truck traffic. There are four interchanges along I-70 within Madison County, with the interstate running parallel to US Route 40 for the length of the County, separated by one-half

Table 5.1 - Average Daily Traffic Volumes (US & State Routes)

		Intersection	1982	1990	2004	2017
Expressways	Interstate 70	SR 56	28,020	32,330	50,300	53,187
		SR 38	28,020	32,330	50,300	---
		SR 42	29,560	33,460	54,030	59,409
		SR 29	30,620	35,140	56,910	63,105
		SR 142	34,920	40,560	62,540	67,700
	Interstate 71	SR 323	18,430	23,260	36,680	---
		SR 56	18,950	23,460	37,860	45,814
Minor Arterials	US 62	SR 207 (Yankeetown Road)	5,520	7,520	7,870	6,691
		SR 56 (London St.)	3,570	4,850	5,480	4,688
	SR 161	US 42 (Chillicothe St.)	5,120	7,230	7,370	8,467
	US 42	SR 38 (Main St.)	9,520	12,810	12,690	13,519
		US 40	4,500	7,420	9,300	9,262
		IR 70	3,900	5,760	13,290	10,679
		SR 161 Ent. Chillicothe St.	5,400	6,730	7,640	11,624
Major Collectors	SR 29	SR 38	2,050	2,620	2,900	2,593
		US 42	1,870	3,020	3,460	4,766
		IR 70	1,150	1,840	1,970	2,311
	SR 41	SR 323 (Main St.)	1,100	1,130	1,470	1,316
	SR 56	SR 187	980	1,650	2,700	2,882
		IR 70	3,000	3,510	5,950	5,029
		US 40	3,900	5,220	7,380	5,837
		SR 38 (Center St.)	2,770	4,280	3,680	7,432
		Big Plain Circleville Rd.	1,370	1,640	---	1,760
		IR 71	2,850	3,650	4,520	4,256
		SR 323	3,330	3,850	5,490	4,946
		US 62 (Columbus St.)	2,540	2,820	2,430	4,278
	US 142	US 42 (Elm St.)	3,310	4,780	---	4,812
		US 40	4,400	5,070	---	3,942
	US 40	SR 56	1,170	2,260	2,160	4,097
		SR 38	1,720	2,290	2,840	3,228
		US 42	2,150	3,080	2,980	3,010
		SR 142 (Columbus-Cincinnati Rd.)	12,600	15,470	12,120	13,751
		SR 142	9,000	10,480	9,270	14,435
	SR 38	SR 323	1,580	1,940	2,270	2,559
		SR 56 Enter Main St.	3,720	6,020	6,080	3,855
		US 42 (Lafayette St.) Enter Elm St.	5,100	6,440	7,590	9,418
		US 40	870	840	1,240	3,072
		IR 70	870	1,040	1,240	---
		SR 29	1,040	1,580	1,730	1,261
		Rosedale-Milford Center Rd.	880	1,490	---	1,950
		Arthur Bradley Rd.	450	780	910	---

Table 5.1 - Average Daily Traffic Volumes (US & State Routes) Continued

		Intersection	1982	1990	2004	2017
Major Collectors	SR 323	SR 41 (Washington St.)	730	540	440	410
		SR 729	530	500	440	---
		SR 38 (Main St.)	670	800	820	363
		IR 71	500	530	820	---
	SR 665	SR 38 (Enter Center St.)	2,740	4,600	3,500	2,356
		Spring Valley Rd.	620	1,570	---	---
Minor Collectors	SR 187	SR 56	320	620	920	706

Table 5.2 - Average Daily Traffic Volumes (Madison County Roads)

		Intersection	1985-1991	2000	2017
Major Collectors	Federal	South Solon	525	410	410
		Greene Co. Line	412	405	390
	Old Springfield	Roberts Mill	767	1,025	923
		Brighton	331	1,050	---
	Plain City - Georgesville Rd	I-70	4,650	3,725	---
		Franklin Co.	2,988	1,525	1,473
Minor Collectors	Price Hilliards Rd.	US 42	1,733	3,025	---
		Plain-City Georgesville	2,091	5,050	4,513
	Amity Pike	Plain-City Georgesville	1,264	1,550	1,793
		Franklin Co. Line	1,393	1,425	1,876
	Big Plain - Cir- cleville	Spring Valley	740	1,050	548
		W.J. Kiousville	350	525	---
	Cemetery Pike	Plain-City Georgesville	1,243	1,500	2,254
		S R 161	982	1,325	2,254
	Converse-Huff Rd	SR 42	840	1,700	1,687
		Plain-City Georgesville	953	1,700	2,096
	Hayden Run Rd	Franklin Co. Line (E)	728	1,250	1,788
		Franklin Co. Line (W)	526	1,425	1,997
	High Free Pike	S R 142	803	1,575	2,494
		Franklin Co. Line	888	1,575	2,095
	Lilly Chapel -Georgesville	S R 665	547	1,500	784
		Olmsted Rd	913	1,500	1,230
	Prairie Pike	Fayette Co. Line	104	300	247
		S R 323	177	300	284
	Spring Valley Rd	SR 142	1,167	950	2,180
		Big Plain Circleville	422	850	1,133

mile for most of the corridor. I-70 is also bisected by US Route 42, which connects London and Plain City and carries more than 13,000 vehicles daily. The intersection of I-70 and US 42 is the most significant intersection of roadway in the County in terms of vehicle volume. This intersection is also at the geographic center of the County and currently falls within unincorporated Madison County.

The other major interstate within the County, I-71, has one interchange within Madison County. Its Annual Average Daily Traffic consists of over 40,000 vehicles, with over 12,000 of that being truck traffic.

## PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

The Ohio Department of Transportation has improvements planned for the Interstate 71 corridor within Madison County. \$40 million in state gas tax will provide funds for reconstruction of I-71 from State Route 56 to the Franklin County Line and the addition of a third travel lane in either direction.



### CASE STUDY

#### COLUMBUS RIVERWALK | COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

The highly popular trail system began in 1987 as public works project to respond to federally mandated sewage and water upgrades. Water works of Columbus along other civic leaders and the local government began a partnership that has resulted in one of the city's premier tourist attractions to this day. They saw the opportunity presented by the needed utility installations along the banks of the Chattahoochee River, and developed a trail system that would be established over top of the sewer and water utilities. This allowed for capitalizing on existing construction activity and wrapping multiple public improvements into a single, over-arching effort.

## Electric Service Provision

While a handful of utility providers offer electricity service within Madison County, Ohio Edison is the largest provider by residential customer count, servicing an estimated 13,162 county customers (findenergy.com). Their Electric Certified Territory (ECT) grants them the obligation and exclusive right to provide electric service within that territory, which covers a majority of Madison

County. The next largest providers are AES Ohio (4,132 customers) who services the southern portion of the County, and AEP Ohio (2,717 customers) who covers eastern portions of Madison County. Energy Sage, who offers national energy consumption research, reports the average monthly electricity bill of \$159/month for residential customers of Madison County.

## Natural Gas

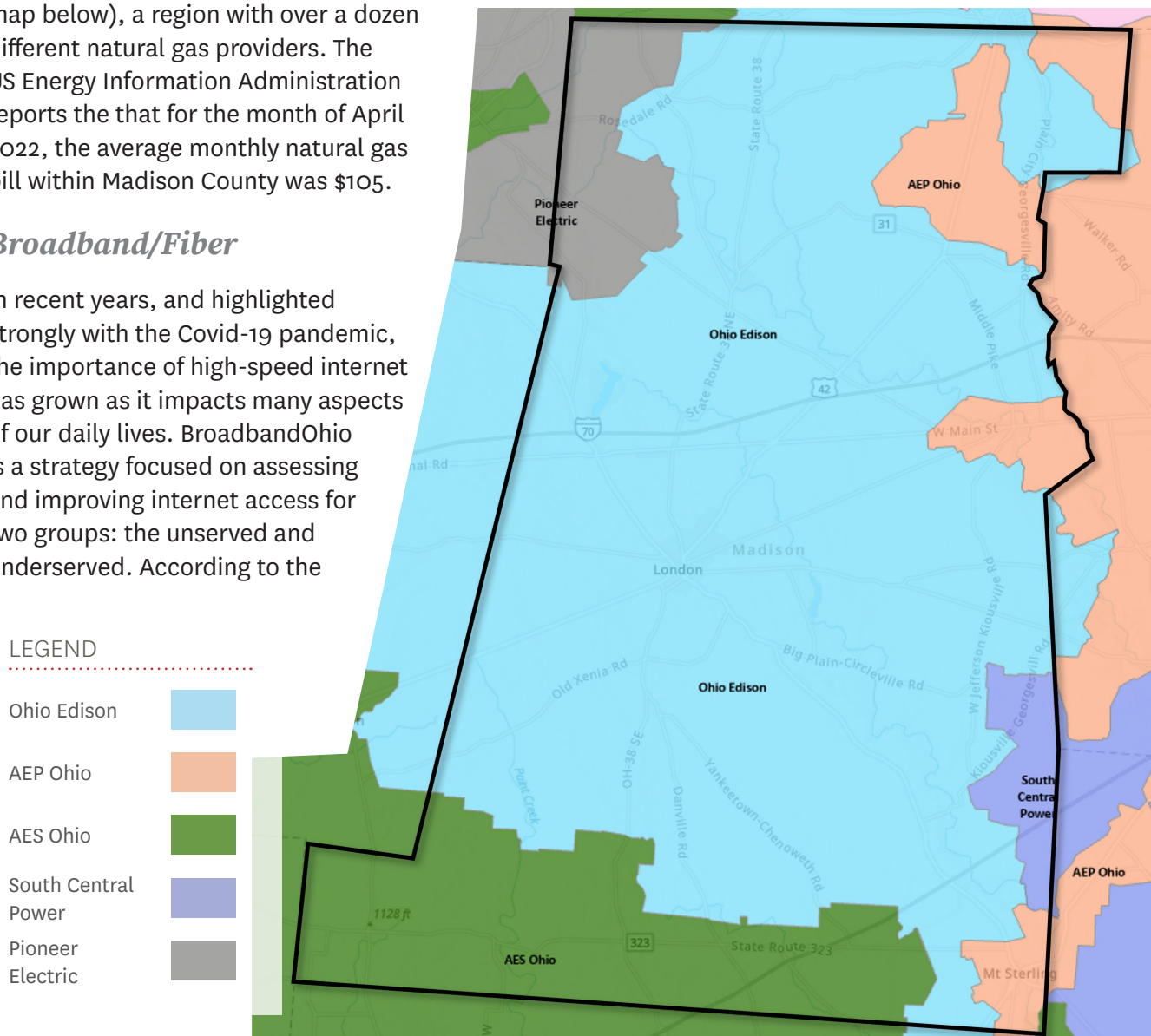
Madison County's positioning in Central Ohio allows access to a rich web of natural gas provision. The County is on the western edge of Region 1 (see map below), a region with over a dozen different natural gas providers. The US Energy Information Administration reports the that for the month of April 2022, the average monthly natural gas bill within Madison County was \$105.

## Broadband/Fiber

In recent years, and highlighted strongly with the Covid-19 pandemic, the importance of high-speed internet has grown as it impacts many aspects of our daily lives. BroadbandOhio is a strategy focused on assessing and improving internet access for two groups: the unserved and underserved. According to the

Figure 26

### Electric Service Territories



Federal Communications Commission, unserved areas are those that do not have any high-speed internet access or only have access to service at speeds of at least 10 megabits per second downstream and 1 megabit per second upstream. Underserved areas are those which have service but at a speed less than the FCC's definition of high-speed internet at 25 megabits per second downstream and three megabits per second upstream.

There is good broadband coverage in the densest areas of the county, with London, Plain City, West Jefferson and Mount Sterling all benefiting from good internet speeds. The rural areas, however, have a mixture of internet speeds, which is to be expected in a agricultural community of this size. In total, about a quarter of households in the county qualify as underserved households, meaning they have internet speeds below the 25/3 Mbps threshold set by the FCC. That means that about 3/4 of Madison County residents do have access to high-speed internet.

3/4

Of Madison County residents have high-speed internet (>25/3 Mbps)

## Solar Integration

Installed solar photovoltaic (PV) capacity has grown rapidly in the United States over the past decade, reaching nearly 74 gigawatts-AC as of the end of 2020. Approximately one-third of this capacity (28 gigawatts) is distributed solar PV, including residential, community, and commercial solar installations (per the Office of

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy). A combination of technology cost declines, federal incentives, and state policy support have driven increased deployment and enabled more communities to access the benefits of solar energy. Solar increasingly playing a more important role in resilience and sustainability planning, while also increasing its presence within the realm of public utility administration.

The US Department of Energy has released a 2022 guidebook called *Solar Power in Your Community*, with the intent of providing local governments more resources for managing solar deployment in their respective communities.

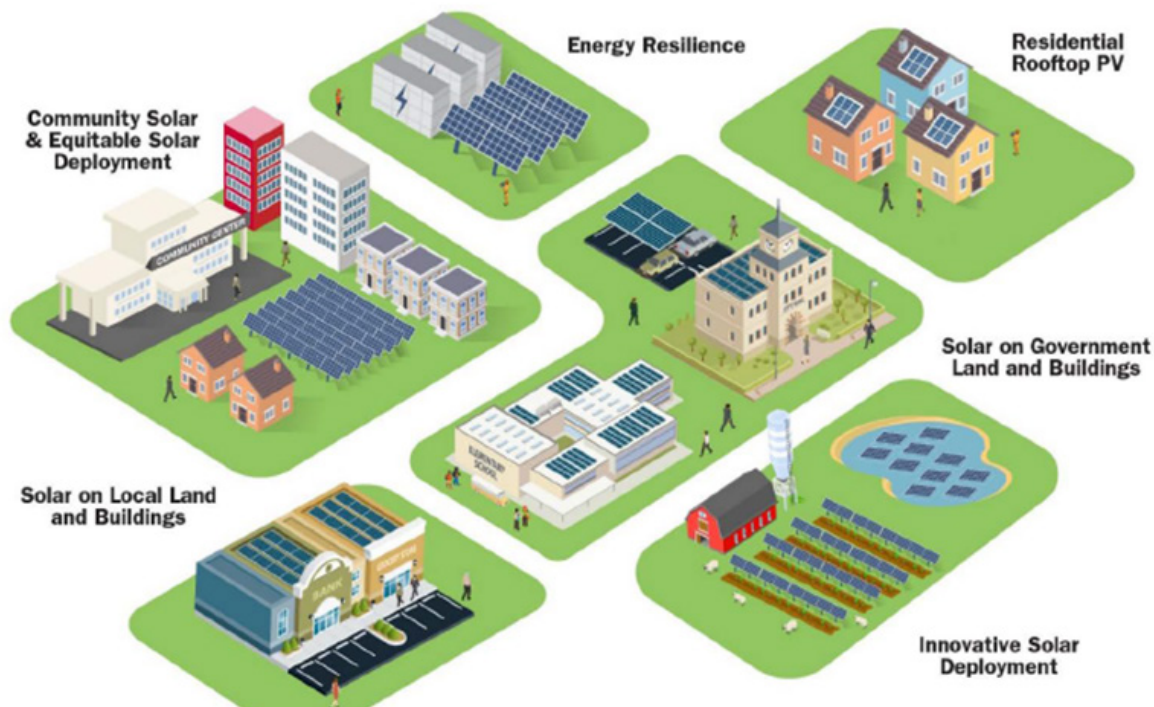


Figure 27

## Solar Power in Your Community Guidebook Topics

guidebook

The guidebook highlights strategies to maximize the benefits of solar within a community, one such strategy being the combination of solar with energy storage as a means to improve local resiliency. It also emphasizes improving equity and workforce aspects of solar development at the local level, highlighting the clear overlap between this emerging resource/utility and future economic opportunity and adaptability. The guidebook also discusses technical topics such as utility interconnection standards and electricity rate structures, which are two vital pieces of solar integration with public utility provision.

Various forms of support are available to local governments as they organize their solar efforts. Figure 28 contains a listing of technical assistance resources and programs that provide assistance to communities as they adapt to the emerging field of solar energy and its role in energy provision.

Figure 28

*Solar Development Technical Assistance Programs*

Technical Assistance	Description
SolSmart Technical Assistance	All cities, counties, and regional organizations are eligible for no-cost technical assistance to meet SolSmart criteria and achieve solar goals.
Energy Transitions Initiative Partnership Project (ETIPP)	DOE national laboratories provide technical assistance to remote, island, and islanded communities to help increase local energy resilience
Directory of State Low- and Moderate- Income Clean Energy Programs	CESA maintains a directory of state clean energy programs, including technical assistance programs, for LMI residents and communities.
National Community Solar Partnership (NCSP)	NCSP is a coalition of community solar stakeholders working to have community solar projects provide 26GW of power and create US\$1 billion in bill savings by 2025.
Solar Energy Innovation Network (SEIN)	NREL provides technical assistance to diverse teams of stakeholders to develop and test solutions to real-world challenges associated with solar energy adoption.
Communities LEAP	The DOE Communities LEAP program (Communities: Local Energy Action Program) is a new competitive technical assistance program specifically designed to support low-income, energy-burdened communities across the United States that are also experiencing either direct environmental justice impacts, or direct economic impacts from a shift away from historical reliance on fossil fuels.

# POLICY AGENDA

**Goal:** It shall be the goal of Madison County to develop and maintain transportation and utility systems to support the residents and businesses of the county which align with land use plans; provide safe, convenient, and efficient travel; and serve all users within and around the county.

## OBJECTIVES

- ★ To maintain a sensible thoroughfare system that will meet future, as well as current traffic needs
- ★ To align the transportation system in Madison County with adopted future land use plans
- ★ To promote an efficient and economical transportation system that serves all users
- ★ To conserve water as a valuable resource
- ★ To guarantee that potable water is consistently of high quality
- ★ To make available sufficient quantities of potable water in order to serve the needs of Madison County residents.

## ACTIONS & POLICIES

The following recommendations are policy objective statements surrounding utilities and transportation. They are intended to inform next steps as the county carries out its Future Land Use vision by offering ideas for accomplishing objectives laid out in the Utilities and Transportation section of the Comprehensive Plan.

**TU1 Create a roadway hierarchy to identify and program improvements within Madison County.** Creating a roadway classification hierarchy and assigning roadways these classifications allows the county to identify major corridors, allows improvements to be programmed accordingly, and provides general information as to current traffic volumes and use. Madison County roads and highways shall be organized into a functional system with the following roadway categories:

- ★ Local: provide access to abutting property and are used only by local traffic
- ★ Collector: gather traffic from local roads and channel it to an arterial thoroughfare

- ★ Arterial: thoroughfares carry traffic from collectors to destinations or expressways
- ★ Expressways: limited-access corridors that carry high traffic volumes between major points

**TU2 Ensure proper drainage infrastructure adjacent to roadways within Madison County.** The county recognizes roadways have significant impacts on natural drainage patterns and shall encourage provisions to address existing and potential drainage problems through proper design, construction, and continued maintenance of storm drainage facilities. This specifically applies to the adequacy of the storm drainage systems along rural roadways as they relate to field and ditch drainage and within urban areas.

**TU3 Secure necessary right of way in accordance with the Madison County Thoroughfare Plan.** The county will require rights of way reservations compatible with the respective widths recommended by the Thoroughfare Plan. The county will review the official Thoroughfare Plan at least every two (2) years.

**TU4 Develop impact costs that are assessed during the development process.** The County will develop appropriate standards, criteria, and fees to equitably define the developers' obligations and costs associated with the construction and/or dedication of necessary on-site and off-site road improvements.

**TU5 Ensure future development equitably contributes to the Madison County transportation network.** Because the major thoroughfare system is required to serve new development, land developers shall dedicate and/or construct roadways designated in the County Thoroughfare Plan as described below:

- ★ In all instances, right-of-way necessary to implement the County Thoroughfare Plan shall be dedicated to the County at the time of property development.
- ★ In cases where there are missing segments in the traffic circulation system, or no thoroughfare constructed, a land developer shall construct and dedicate to Madison County that portion of the thoroughfare that lies within or abuts the boundary lines of the development.
- ★ If for reasons of safety or system continuity, the County Engineer deems the improvement of the thoroughfare unfeasible at the time of development, the developer shall provide funds or other security for this share of the cost in lieu of undertaking construction at that time.

**TU6 Adopt regulations to achieve the transportation goals of this plan.** The above requirements shall be implemented through appropriate land development regulations providing for exemptions and for waiver, modification or variance where the existing road capacity in the area of the development is judged adequate to provide for traffic generated by the development.

**TU7 Preserve sufficient land area within the county to allow groundwater recharge.** Identify and protect local recharge areas, as well as groundwater and surface water resources.

**TU8 Focus development in those areas of the county with existing or planned centralized infrastructure to support increased density/intensity.** Utilize land use plans, zoning laws, and regulating bodies to guide the location and intensity of development to minimize the impact on existing and proposed water resources.

**TU9 Increase intergovernmental coordination between Madison County and municipalities in the County.** Cooperate with municipalities located within Madison County to ensure optimum utilization and protection of the County's water resources.







## *Natural Resources & Conservation*

The agrarian character of Madison County is indisputable. Adding to this serene, natural character are multiple streams, preserves, and the Prairie Oaks Metro Park. The county actively pursues conservation and agricultural easements on property to preserve this rural character for generations to come.

Preserving natural resources and conserving lands for open space is key to protecting the existing character of Madison County. The continued pursuit of agricultural and conservation easements sets aside lands best suited to be preserved while not impacting ongoing agricultural activities prevalent throughout Madison County. These easements protect property in perpetuity, providing long-term assurance that the existing character of the county is carried forward. The Prairie Oaks Metro Park is a natural park with passive recreation trails and includes more than 850 acres of land within Madison County. Multiple trails link various preserve and recreation lands, forming an active transportation network that can be expanded over time.

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ All levels of government (federal, state & local) have been involved in recent initiatives to secure land for conservation
- ★ Close to 30,000 acres of land in the county is registered to an agricultural district
- ★ 235 farms have set aside portions of their property for wildlife habitat
- ★ Farmland encumbered by an agricultural easement typically sells for 1/3 less per acre than farmland unencumbered by an easement

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section includes an inventory of unique natural resources present within the county. It also explores momentum around conservation, particularly the 2011 Farmland Preservation Plan, as well as opportunities for connecting green spaces via trails.

### *Inventory of Natural Resources*

Madison County has a mixture of natural resources and greenspace offerings as well as multiple regionally significant trail systems. Community parks are nearly all found within the municipalities, while public park space within unincorporated portions of the County is predominantly a state-managed resource. Madison County's main natural assets are:

**Prarie Oaks Metro Park** - Owned and operated by Metro Parks, this 2,000+ acre area features extensive meadows and woodlots, miles of trails, and direct access to Big Darby Creek and multiple lakes with fishing and boating access. The park boasts over 500 acres of flowering prairies and grasslands that were restored using seeds native to the Darby Plains. This park is located north of interstate 70 and straddles both Madison and Franklin County.

**Batelle Darby Creek Metro Park**  
- features more than 7,000 acres of forest, prairies and wetlands and stretches along 13 miles of the Big and Little Darby creeks, both State and National

43%

of residents feel Madison County needs more public space for recreation (according to 2019 Land Use survey)



**Scenic Rivers.** Besides the areas surrounding the creeks, there are also over 1,600 acres of restored wetlands and prairies. Bison have been reintroduced to the park and roam freely within two enclosed pastures.

**Madison Lake State Park** - Located four miles east of London, the state park includes a 106-acre lake and 76 acres of surrounding land. The lake was formed in 1947 when Madison Lake Dam was constructed, with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources taking over the site for use as a state park in 1950.

**Deer Creek State Park** - Located south of Mount Sterling, this regional natural attraction boasts 3,100 acres of lush hilly woodlands oriented around a scenic reservoir. The park features a modern lodge, cottages, campground, golf course, swimming beach and boating opportunities.

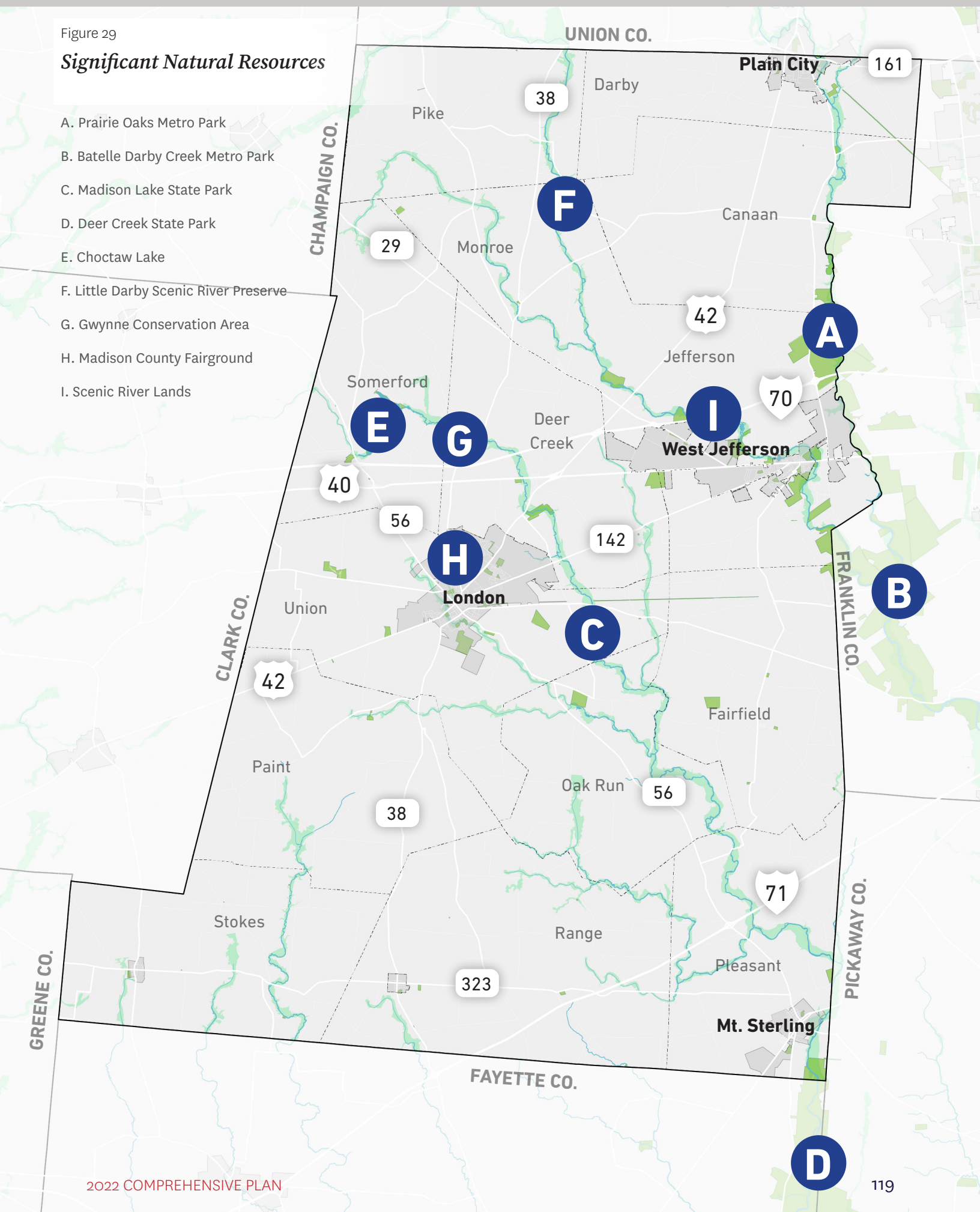
**Choctaw Lake** - A 285 acre private access lake located in Somerford Township between Old Columbus and Arbuckle Roads.

**Little Darby Scenic River Preserve** - Established in 2011, the 214-acre property in Monroe Township offers residents close to 2 miles in grassy trails and views of Little Darby Creek. Madison County

Figure 29

## Significant Natural Resources

- A. Prairie Oaks Metro Park
- B. Batelle Darby Creek Metro Park
- C. Madison Lake State Park
- D. Deer Creek State Park
- E. Choctaw Lake
- F. Little Darby Scenic River Preserve
- G. Gwynne Conservation Area
- H. Madison County Fairground
- I. Scenic River Lands



manages the parkland under a lease with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

**Gwynne Conservation Area** - Located at the Ohio State University's Molly Caren Agricultural Center north of London, Gwynne Conservation Area is a 67-acre demonstration and education space for agriculture and natural resources management practices. A committee of resource professionals from Ohio's natural resource agencies oversees educational programming and policy at the conservation area. The conservation area is open to the public during daily hours, offering opportunities for hiking, dog-walking, photography, and wildlife observation.

**Madison County Fairground** - Located near the south corner of Elm Street and Garfield Avenue, this is a 40-acre complex which includes a racetrack and many exhibit halls. Not only is it the home of the Madison County Fair, but many other events, such as meetings, weddings, charity events, and concerts are held at this location.

**Scenic River Lands** - The Ohio Scenic Rivers Program within of Ohio Department of Natural Resources has purchased more than 1,000 acres of land and 90 acres of conservation easements along Big and Little Darby Creek in order to protect the exceptional natural diversity and water quality of these rivers. While purchased lands are open to the public for recreational activities such as hiking, bird watching and fishing, access and trails have not been developed at most sites. Ohio Department of Natural Resources has also obtained a minimal number of easements through private property along stream banks to provide public access for fishing.

## ***Inventory of Trails***

Madison County has three regionally significant trail offerings:

**Heritage Trail** - a 6.1-mile paved trail connecting Main Street Hilliard with Cemetery Pike in Plain City. The trail is flat and has direct access into Homestead Metro Park (within Franklin County), where there are restroom provisions.

**Darby Creek Trail** - Approximately two miles of the trail exists within the Madison County portion of Prairie Oaks Metro Park, but this ties into several additional miles of trail within Franklin County.

The Ohio to Erie trail is a 326-mile trail that links Cincinnati to Cleveland via legacy rail and canal corridors. The trail passes through Madison County and is broken out into different locally named segments:

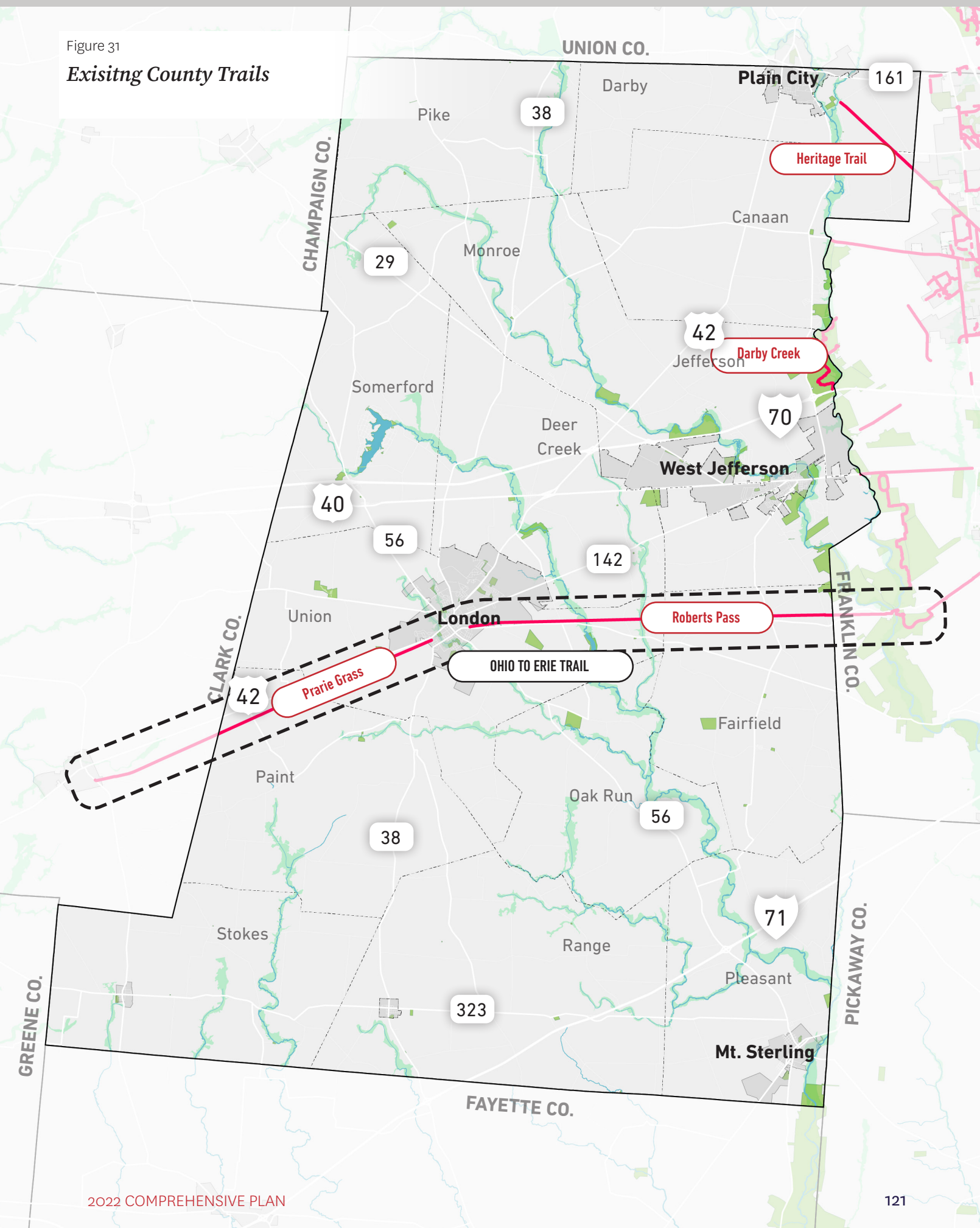
- The **Prairie Grass Trail** is a 29.8 mile stretch of the Ohio to Erie Trail connecting Xenia to London. The trail has food and facilities located at Cedarville, Xenia, South Charleston, and London. In London, you will find a newly opened and one-of-a-kind trailside campground behind the Madison County Senior Center.
- The **Roberts Pass Trail** stretches 6.5 miles from Downtown London to beautiful and rural Fairfield Township. After visiting shops in Downtown London, head east on the trail towards Columbus. During this stretch of the

**The Ohio Department of  
Natural Resources has spent  
\$3 million to preserve 1,100  
acres of land within the Little  
Darby Creek Corridor**

*Source: Ohio DNR*

Figure 31

*Existing County Trails*



trail, you will see magnificent farmland and at the same time experience stretches of tree-covered trails.

- The Camp Chase Trail is a 16-mile stretch of the Ohio to Erie Trail stretching through eastern Madison County from Lily Chapel to Southwest Columbus. This trail connects directly into Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, and its 7,000 acres of prairies and forests.



Trailside Campsite - Prairie Grass Trailhead - London Ohio

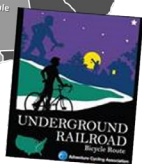
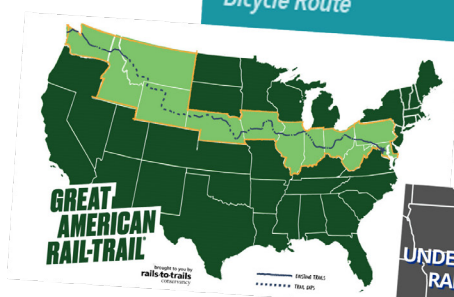
## Regional Impact of the Ohio to Erie Trail

The Ohio to Erie connects four major cities, dozens of small towns and offers access to miles of pastoral countryside. 17 miles of the system run directly through the Madison County, passing even more directly through the heart of London. The portion of this Ohio to Erie Trail that passes through the Madison County is used in several other regional and national trail networks as well, such as the Great American Rail Trail (east coast to west coast), the Chicago to New York Adventure Cycling trail, the Underground Railroad Bicycle Route, and US Bicycle Routes 21 & 50.

In 2016, due to demand from regional bikers, a primitive trailside campsite was established on the west side of the City of London. Recent surveys of campers at the Prairie Grass Trailhead found respondent representation from 43 US States and 19 Countries. The bottleneck of major bike routes into London provides a true gateway to the world of people coming into the county eager to experience local culture, history, cuisine, and lodging. There has also been an uptick in more local tourism, with bikers from Columbus riding out into Madison County for a day trip or out and back, one-night camping experience.

43

States represented at  
Prairie Grass Trailhead  
Camp Site since opening



## Continuing Connectivity Momentum

Madison County has recently been involved in two significant trail planning efforts. The first is the 2020 Madison County Multi-Use Trail Framework Plan. The second is the 2022 Central Ohio Trail Town Framework. Both plans look to better facilitate active community connections via trail use by aligning with broader, regional

long-term vision and exploring high-impact local connections that enhance quality of life and mobility options within the county. Both plans also strive toward consolidating trail planning efforts to create a shared vision for future multi-use trails in both the County as well as the Central Ohio region.

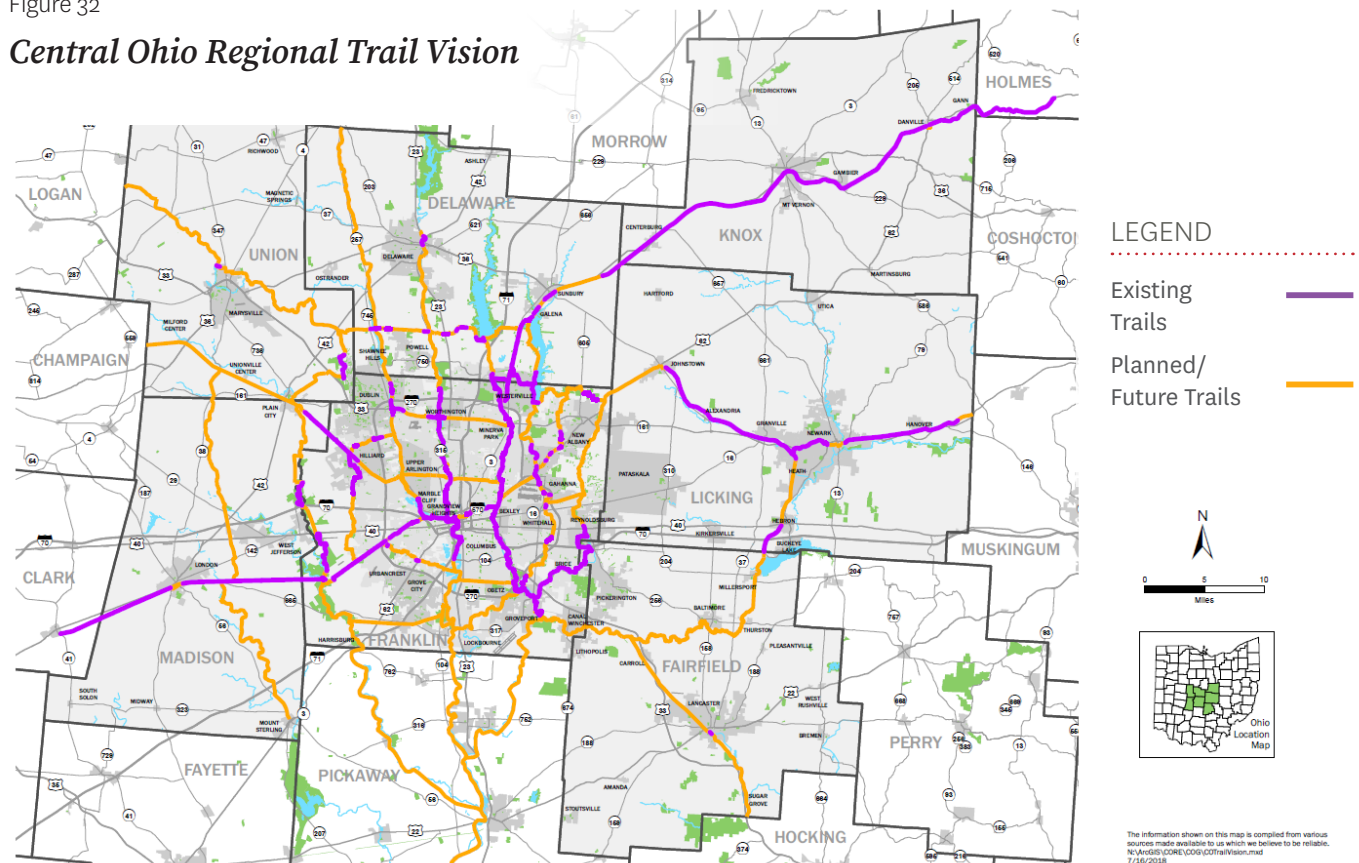
## CENTRAL OHIO TRAIL TOWN FRAMEWORK

The Central Ohio Trail Town framework defines communities with trail town potential as those who pay attention to their trail network and invest in it, facilitating physical connectivity as well as feelings of connection to place. The trail town model, at its core, values community preservation through critical infrastructure improvements that allow access to unique natural and cultural resources within a community. It also understands the value of trails as a conservation tool. With Central Ohio expected to be a region of three million people by 2050, trails offer a physical framework for walkable neighborhoods and

multiple transportation options, two things which are typically synonymous with less consumptive land development practices. The program is geared toward assisting communities located along a Central Ohio Trail of Regional Significance, and thus far four communities along the Ohio to Erie Trail have invested in the planning stages of this emerging framework. Along with Centerburg, Mount Vernon and Sunbury, London is one of the Trail Town communities, with Friends of Madison County Parks and Trails acting as local representative and liaison to the emerging effort.

Figure 32

### Central Ohio Regional Trail Vision



## MADISON COUNTY MULTI-USE TRAIL FRAMEWORK PLAN

In 2020, Madison County conducted an effort to develop a Trails Framework Plan, to act as a high-level document to guide future trail development across Madison County. The effort included a map of where trail corridors could better connect the county, typologies of what different kinds of trails could look like, and strategies, or action items to guide how the trails could get built. Furthering conservation energy within the county is also an aim of this plan, with one major motivation being how to better connect the 2,100+ acres of preserved community open along the Little Darby Creek. Another idea presented is building upon existing trail facilities at Gwynne Conservation Area, expanding them throughout the adjacent Molly Caren Agricultural Center.

The Framework Plan emphasizes that trails be thought about robustly, in a truly multi-use sense, not constrained to simply walkers or bikers. This emphasis includes planning for horse trails as well as tractor trails, making a conscious effort to preserve agrarian identity and practice within the future trail experience offered by the county. Also of importance is the consideration of future utility expansion initiatives, and how opportunity for new trails can be woven into the planning and construction of an existing project within County Right-of-Way. One such opportunity is along OH 56, connecting two of the county's most populous communities (London and Choctaw Lake). Future water and sewer projects have been planned or proposed along the OH 56 corridor, creating potential for a possible trail connection to be incorporated into an existing public project and better connect two nearby communities.

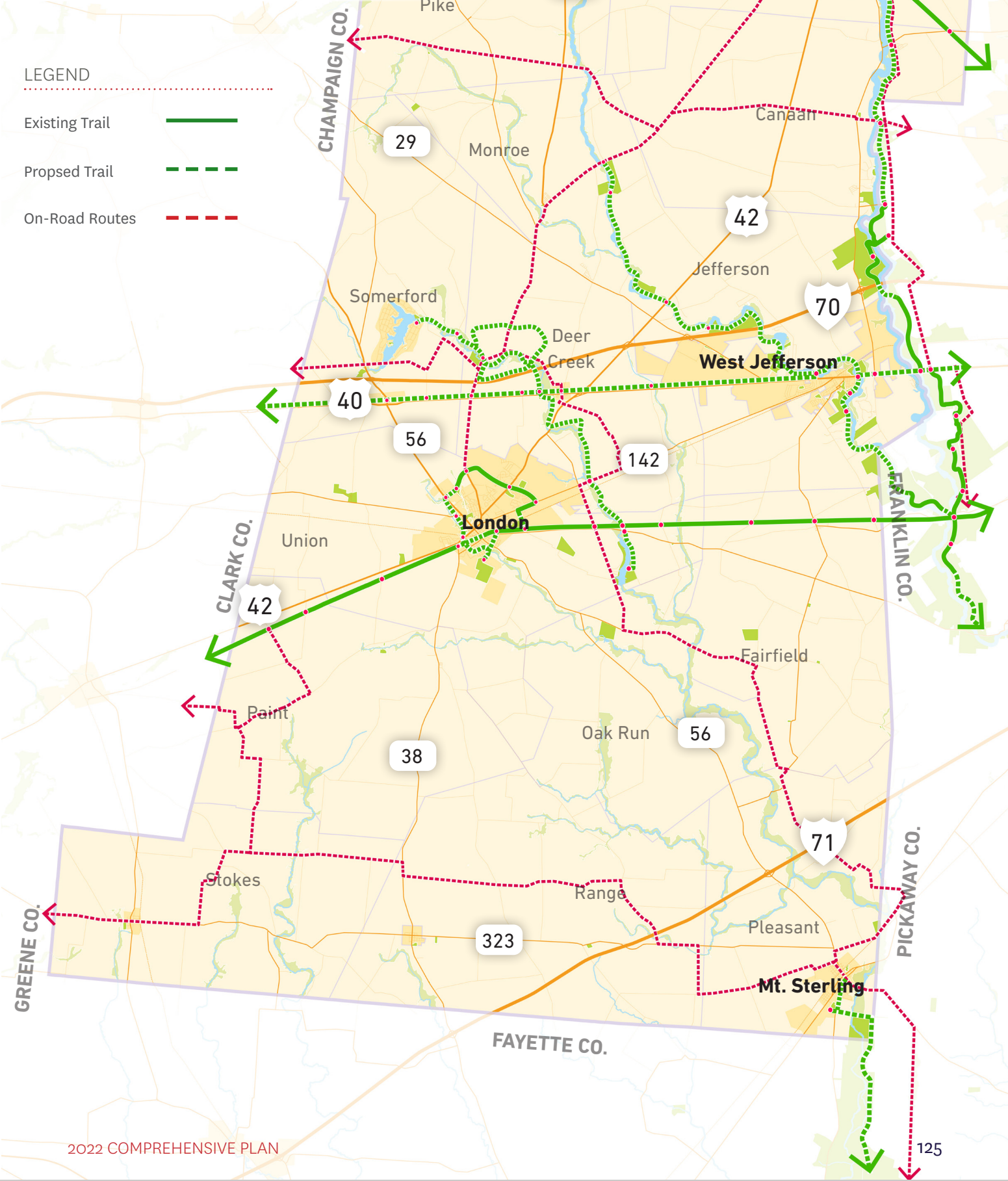


### ***Ten Strategies - Madison County Multi-Use Trail Plan***

1. Adopt an Open Space Dedication Policy
2. Require Developers to Construct Trails
3. Adopt Complete Streets Policies
4. Install Trailside Amenities
5. Implement On-Road Bicycle Facilities
6. Promote & Encourage Trail Use
7. Strategically Upgrade Sidewalks to Trails
8. Initiate the Discussion with Private Property Owners
9. Coordinate Planning Efforts
10. Market the County to Horse Riders

Figure 33

County Trails - Future Framework



## *The Many Avenues of Conservation*

Conservation efforts within Madison County find their grounding in a wide array of programs and initiatives across different tiers of government. One impactful conservation milestone was the passage of the Clean Ohio Act in 2000 which authorized money to be spent to purchase conservation easements from landowners. The Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, or LAEPP, provides funding to farmland owners for placing an agricultural easement on their property. Monies are issued for up to 75 percent of the appraised value of a farm's development rights. A payment cap is set at \$2,000 per acre, with a maximum of \$500,000 per farm. All easement transactions are recorded on the property deed and transfer with the land to successive owners. Since the programs inception, 22 farms in Madison County have taken part in easement purchases.

The Madison Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), which is a political subdivision of the State of Ohio that works on a county level in partnership with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, Along with offering technical expertise, financial assistance and educational tools surrounding natural resource conservation in the County, Madison SWCD also submits and annual plan of operations, which details implementation objectives for a healthy environment.

Madison County also takes part in the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) program, which is a tool that promotes agricultural retention by creating special areas in which agriculture is encouraged and protected. The ASA program authorizes one or more landowners, with at least 500 acres of contiguous farmland, to request enrollment into an ASA for a 10-year period from the boards of county commissioners and township trustees. The township trustees and county commissioners pass a resolution committing not to

initiate, approve, or finance any development for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes, including construction of new roads and water and sewer lines within the ASA for 10 years. Likewise, landowners commit to exclusively engage in agricultural activities and development.

A major aspect of conservation is healthy wildlife habitat. When it comes to protecting and strengthening this aspect of the natural environment, there are programs that Madison County farmers can utilize. The first is the Federal Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), where farmers enrolled in the program agree to remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and plant species that will improve environmental health and quality. CRP participants establish long-term, resource-conserving plant species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as "covers") to control soil erosion, improve water quality and develop wildlife habitat. In return, the program provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years.

Another option is the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), which is a voluntary program that offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on private property. Wetlands are areas of land where soil is covered or remains saturated with water throughout most of the year. They can support aquatic and terrestrial species, making them areas of potentially high ecological diversity. The presence of water causes soil to develop hydric characteristics and promotes the growth of plants that are adapted to such conditions. Wetlands provide a large range of benefits to the environment, making them an extremely valuable natural resource. Madison County has high potential to aid in the restoration of wetlands due to its large quantities of wetland soils, such as Brookston, Kokomo, Sloan, and

# 22

Farms in Madison County have been a part of the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP)

Westland. Lands that are eligible for the Wetland Reserve Program are:

- Wetlands farmed under natural condition
- Farmed wetlands
- Prior converted cropland
- Farmed wetland pasture
- Certain lands with the potential to become a wetland as a result of flooding
- Rangeland, pasture, or forest production lands where the hydrology had been significantly degraded and could be restored
- Riparian areas that linked protected wetlands
- Lands adjacent to protected wetlands that contributed significantly to wetland functions and values
- Wetlands that had previously been restored under a local, State, or Federal Program that need long-term protection
- Lands dedicated to trees through the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are ineligible for WRP enrollment

For enrollment, there is a permanent easement option, where a conservation easement is established in perpetuity, where the USDA (who provides technical and financial assistance to the program) pays 100 percent of the easement value and up to 100 percent of the restoration costs. There is also a 30-Year easement option, where the conservation easement expires at the end of 30 years. In this setup the USDA pays up to 75 percent of the easement value and up to 75 percent of the restoration costs.

According to the Madison County 2011 Farmland Preservation Plan, there are 235 farms that participates in programs protecting wildlife habitat.

**235 farms in Madison County participate in programs protecting wildlife habitat**

*Source: 2011 Madison County Farmland Preservation Plan*

### *County-level Conservation Tools*

One of Madison County's most localized conservation tools is the Subdivision Review Board. Established in 1981, this regulatory body is made up of technical experts from the Building and Zoning Department, County Engineer, Madison County/London City Health District, Soil and Water Conservation District, and an Ohio State University Extension Agricultural Educator. The Board meets with landowners to discuss prospective land use changes, considering compatibility with future land use, existing subdivision regulations, soil type, water drainage, open space and road infrastructure, among other criteria. This individual site-by-site consideration allows for keen attention to be paid to specific tracts of land and how they fit within the broader context of the County and its conservation goals.

Madison County's use of zoning is another tool that has conservation implications. An ordinance enacted May 1, 2002 allows Agricultural Zoned properties to be subdivided with a "mother parcel" and a "child parcel", if both meet development standards of 1.5 acres minimum each. The remaining residual area, after the subdivision, is turned into a Non-Building site, meaning its Agriculturally zoned with no allowances for new dwellings. This ordinance helps the Madison County avoid spot zoning and allow for slow growth while guaranteeing most agriculturally zoned land stays agricultural.

A third conservation mechanism is the Madison County Park District. In practice, the Park District is made up of a Board of Commissioners, who currently are the County Commissioners, who are supported by the Friends of Madison County Parks and Trails. The enabling legislature for the Park District is found in the Ohio Revised Code, Chapter 1545. Section 1545.11 states “The Board of Park Commissioners may acquire land either within or without the Park District for conversion into forest reserves and for the conservation of the natural resources of the state, including, streams, lakes, submerged land and swamp lands, and to those ends may create parks, parkways, forest reservations and other reservations and forests, develop, protect and promote the use of the same in such manner as the board deems conducive to the general welfare.”

The purpose of the Madison County Park District is to preserve and protect unique natural habitats and historical landmarks for Madison County residents through acquisition, easements, and leases. The Park District is a collaborative entity, working with different partners to ensure the best assets of the natural environment are protected for future generations.

While other park agencies in the county (those in the cities/villages) are dedicated to providing facilities for active recreation, the Madison County Park District is committed to protecting natural areas for the benefit of the public. It is the district’s goal to manage these lands in such a way that people can make wise use of them without disturbing their unique qualities. The Park District plays an important role in meeting the open space recreational needs of our county through dedication to passive recreation.

Based on this philosophy, these parks do not provide for intensive types of recreation, such as team sports, swimming pools, etc. It is felt that these activities should not be the responsibility of the natural area parks, but rather of the municipal or neighborhood parks. In accordance with this philosophy, recreational facilities in the Park District are limited to open-space activities

of a low-density, low-impact character, such as picnicking, hiking, fishing and bicycling.



#### CASE STUDY

#### THE BIG & LITTLE DARBY CREEKS | MADISON COUNTY/CENTRAL OHIO

The Big and Little Darby creeks were designated as State Scenic rivers in 1984 and as National Scenic rivers in 1994. With 100 species of fish and 44 species of freshwater mussels recorded, this river systems is one of the highest quality in Ohio and the Midwest. The diversity of freshwater mussels, including four federally endangered species, is the “Outstanding Resource Value” on which its National Scenic River designation was based. While economic growth is important to the county for many reasons, new development also presents the potential for impacts and management challenges for streams and rivers. Protecting the quality of Big and Little Darby creeks will also protect their tranquil beauty and recreation value, which is a cornerstone of high quality of life in Madison County.

# POLICY AGENDA

**Goal:** It shall be the goal of Madison County to conserve, maintain and restore the natural environment, while providing increasing access and connectivity to natural resources.

## OBJECTIVES

- ★ To conserve the natural resources of Madison County, including soil, water, minerals and farmland
- ★ To protect the quality and quantity of surface and groundwaters
- ★ To improve the water quality of Madison County's waterways
- ★ To conserve the natural habitats of Madison County, and preserve those habitats which are endangered, rare, or not compatible with most human uses
- ★ To maintain or improve air quality
- ★ To conserve greenspace and enhance environmental education
- ★ To provide opportunities for connection to the physical landscape via access to trails and public greenspaces
- ★ To encourage areas with floodplain, heavy forest, steep slopes, or stream and river corridors be preserved for open space

## ACTIONS & POLICIES

The following recommendations are policy objective statements surrounding natural resources and conservation. They are intended to inform next steps as the County carries out its future vision by offering ideas for accomplishing objectives laid out in the Natural Resources and Conservation section of the Comprehensive Plan.

- NR1 Appropriately manage land uses within the Darby Watershed.** Develop a mechanism to manage land use and development within the Darby Watershed to assess land use changes that otherwise may not be sensitive to aesthetic and environmental characteristics.
- NR2 Maintain the Stream Corridor Protection Zone (SCPZ) as defined by the Ohio EPA General Construction Permit for waterways within the Big Darby Creek watershed.** The size of the SCPZ in a given location is defined as the greater of three criteria: the 100-year floodplain, 100 feet

or a belt width calculation based on the size the drainage. The SCPZ should be left in a natural state to protect water quality and wildlife and to reduce the severity of flood events.

- NR3 Limit Growth Primarily to the five strategic focus areas.** One of the best ways to protect agrarian heritage while positioning the county to capitalize on future economic opportunities and changing demographic tides is to have an open door to growth and land use transition, but within the confines of the five focus areas. These areas, which make

up less than 10% of the County area, already represent physical locations of major transportation, commerce and high susceptibility to land use change.

**NR4 Create regulatory tools for maintaining vegetation adjacent to waterways.**

Encourage filter strips comprised of grasses and at least 20 feet in width to be maintained along each side of all tributaries as measured from the top of the bank.

**NR5 Continue to pursue conservation of land.**

The county will support the permanent protection of priority conservation areas through land acquisition or conservation easements.

**NR6 Solicit input from stakeholders for future land preservation regulations.**

Madison County, while maintaining its autonomy over the land and use within its jurisdiction, will consider input from public and private groups in their effort to preserve and protect unique and natural areas and preserves in the county.

**NR7 Continue supporting the conservation work of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (DNR), particularly in respect to the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program.**

Ohio DNR has land-buying capabilities and therefore wields influence in the permanent conservation of key lands within Madison County. Through the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program, the Big and Little Darby Creeks have been granted “Scenic” designation. This puts state conservation dollars to work within Madison County, buying up land and easements within those watersheds, particularly adjacent to the creeks themselves. With several recent acquisitions of large land holdings, there is both attention and resources directed at conservation efforts within Madison County. Anything that can be done to further encourage that momentum is recommended. This could include setting up site visits for a DNR representative

to visit possible future conservation properties, grassroots educational campaigns surrounding the uniqueness of County waterways, or maintaining a list of County properties for sale that meet certain conservation criteria.

**NR8 Protect existing woodlots and establish new ones.**

Woodlots are important in any geography, but they provide additional benefits to saturated, swamp-like topography. Trees are the most robust, naturally occurring vehicle for the soaking up and retention of water. Inventorying where some of the larger woodlots exist is important, especially considering where flooding and drainage issues are present. A couple considerations would be the increased protection of existing woodlots and promoting the establishment of new ones through incentives/subsidies.

**NR9 Preserve existing ecosystems of Madison County.**

The county will encourage the use of local native vegetation in stormwater and erosion control best management practices.

**NR10 Minimizing impacts of stormwater runoff.**

Require that new development produces no increase in surface water runoff rate. Developers would have the option of using previous surfaces, reducing total ground cover, detention/retention structures, or any other technique that would meet the requirements. Water quality features should be added to new development design where applicable.

**NR11 Require accurate and current stormwater evaluations with new development.**

As part of the zoning permit process require submittal of a grading plan and storm sewer layout, including existing and proposed surface and subsurface drainage features and how storm runoff will be handled.

**NR12 Ensure required drainage structures are maintained over time.** Require provisions in development plans for maintenance of drainage structures. This would include adequate easements for County maintenance of major drainageways and establishment of procedures, such as covenants for ongoing private maintenance and for maintenance of existing surface and subsurface drainage systems.

**NR13 Preserve continued ability to utilize existing ditches for runoff conveyances.** All county-maintained ditches and privately maintained ditches continue to be classified as modified or historically channelized to retain their purpose of farm drainage, and not be designated or re-designated as anything higher than modified warm water habitat, by the Environmental Protection Agency in the process of creating the Total Maximum Daily Load Plans for all of Madison County's Watersheds.

**NR14 Field tiling should continue to be permitted for farm drainage as long as it is beneficial and or necessary for crop production in the agricultural sections of the county.**

**NR15 Ensure accurate subsurface drainage throughout the county.** All house lots, regardless of size, shall be required to provide a subsurface drainage outlet with documented easements to the approved outlet as approved by the County Engineer.

**NR16 Capitalize on the Growing Opportunity for Bicycle Tourism along the Ohio to Erie Trail.** According to Adventure Cycling, the average bicycle tourist spends \$75-\$103 per day. 48 million bicycle recreationally per year nationally, with that expected to increase by 15% over the next decade. The portion of the Ohio to Erie Trail that passes through the Madison County is used by several different regional and national trail networks, presenting an opportunity to capture bicycle tourism revenue and

facilitate a positive natural experience for a wide and diverse audience of users. The advertisement of local conservation efforts along the trail could generate financial contribution from trail users, as they are typically a demographic already interested in such initiatives. Educational opportunities along the trail can also offer better understanding of the county's physical geography and history to the wide range of trail users.

**NR17 Commission an Active Transportation Plan.** Active transportation is human-powered transportation such as walking, bicycling, using wheelchairs/mobility devices, skateboarding. While active transportation has many physical benefits (reduced stress, increased mental health, decreased blood pressure) and social benefits (increased interaction with others), it also can help address many environmental challenges. These include reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and decreasing energy consumption and noise pollution. An Active Transportation Plan also presents options for mobility beyond just the single occupancy vehicle and can reduce costs associated with dependencies on solely the car, presenting cost saving opportunities for individuals and families.

**NR18 Coordinate Closely with the Central Ohio Greenways (COG), aligning local multimodal investments with their regional framework and initiatives.** COG is a trail network of national significance spanning 230+ miles and connecting Central Ohio to other parts of the state and country. They act as gatekeepers to regional multimodal connectivity and collaboration in Central Ohio. Maintaining a close relationship with the organization and participating in initiatives like the Trail Town Program are beneficial to the county and its long range goals.





## *Implementation Strategy*

Great plans are judged by the real-world action they inspire, and the implementation is - and should be - a community effort. The realization of the Madison County Comprehensive Plan will be achieved through this type of collaborative work between county leaders and the community overall. The plan identifies dozens of projects, policies, and programs that were elevated through conversation with the public and stakeholders. Each of these proposals will require focus, planning, resources, championing, management, and evaluation. This chapter presents a more detailed path forward to the plan recommendations along with a management structure to ensure progress is continual.

Every one of the actions in this plan will require some level of deliberate planning, budgeting, execution, and evaluation. Without intention and leadership, the plan will fail to deliver on the vision of the community. To ensure ongoing implementation, Madison County must commit to a righteous cycle of community investment. Transformation is a slow and incremental process, but progress can accelerate with early, catalytic wins. Collaboration is also key. Few of the proposals will be achieved by a single leader, department, or the county, alone. Partnering will be essential, especially for those actions with a regional component. Through regular communication and engagement, the county can attract project champions and foster new leadership in the process. This cycle of involvement will help build trust between the county and its collaborators and encourage continued investment and involvement. Last, Madison County must be the champion of Madison

County. When an action is realized, the county should commit to celebrating the progress and tying this work back to the Madison County Comprehensive Plan. Without the input received through this process, the plan would be only half finished. This section presents a strategy through which county leadership and departments can implement this comprehensive plan. The chapter presents a full matrix of plan actions with associated timeframes, priorities, resources, and supporting partners.

## LAND USE

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	TIMING	RESOURCE	SUPPORT
LU.01 Limit growth primarily to the five strategic focus areas		Ongoing	Minimal / Policy	
LU.02 Increase coordination between municipalities with respect to future land use planning		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	Municipal partners in Madison County
LU.03 Initiate a project to map permanently protected lands within Madison County		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
LU.04 Continue to value/encourage Ohio State land holdings/ demonstration farms within Madison County		Ongoing	Minimal / Staff Capacity	Ohio State University
LU.05 Explore zoning code update or a Focus Area Overlay District		Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate	Consultant
LU.06 Amend the (A-1) Agricultural zoning district to establish small-scale solar projects (under 50MW) as a Conditional Use		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	Consultant
LU.07 Guide and direct future growth to specifically identified areas		Ongoing	Moderate / Policy Changes Needed	Consultant
LU.08 Madison County will encourage residential platting in those areas shown as urban service areas on the Future Land Use Plan		Ongoing	Moderate / Policy Changes Needed	Consultant
LU.09 Commercial land use proposals shall be evaluated with reference to key criteria		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Criteria needs adopted	Consultant
LU.10 Madison County will discourage the conversion of prime agricultural lands to nonagricultural uses		Ongoing	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
LU.11 Industrial land use proposals shall be evaluated based on clear criteria		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Criteria needs adopted	Consultant

## ECONOMY

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	TIMING	RESOURCE	SUPPORT
E.01	Support and actively communicate with existing major employers	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	Major Employers
E.02	Continue to build off the industrial momentum present within the county	Ongoing	Minimal	
E.03	Seek to diversify the industry mix within the County	Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate	Consultant
E.04	Explore economic opportunities related to the solar energy supply chain and solar partnerships	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
E.05	Stick to the Comprehensive Plan and utilize a full suite of tools in its implementation	Ongoing	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
E.06	Continue to support and collaborate with workforce development providers and higher educational institutions	Ongoing	Minimal / Staff Capacity	

## HOUSING

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	TIMING	RESOURCE	SUPPORT
H.01	Expand the diversity of the housing stock	Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate	Consultant
H.02	Identify infill sites (served by utilities) that could be purchased by the County Land Bank and utilized for housing provision	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
H.03	Create a task force that explores housing availability & affordability as it pertains to Madison County	Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
H.04	Adopt design guidelines as part of possible focus area zoning overlay	Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate	Consultant
H.05	Explore programs that assist with existing home rehabilitation	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Moderate	
H.06	Value and build off of the county's "Missing Middle" housing stock	Ongoing	Minimal	
H.07	Demand "additive residential development" in the northeast portion of the county	Ongoing	Moderate / Policy Changes Needed	Consultant

## TRANSPORTATION AND UTILITIES

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	TIMING	RESOURCE	SUPPORT
TU.01	Create a roadway hierarchy to identify and program improvements within Madison County	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
TU.02	Ensure proper drainage infrastructure adjacent to roadways within Madison County	Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate	Consultant
TU.03	Secure necessary right of way in accordance with the Madison County Thoroughfare Plan	Long Term (7 to 10 years)	Significant / Land purchases may be required	
TU.04	Develop impact costs that are assessed during the development process	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Moderate	Consultant
TU.05	Ensure future development equitably contributes to the Madison County transportation network	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Moderate	Consultant
TU.06	Adopt regulations to achieve the transportation goals of this plan	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
TU.07	Preserve sufficient land area within the county to allow groundwater recharge	Ongoing	Moderate / Land Purchases and Policy Changes	Consultant
TU.08	Focus development in those areas of the county with existing or planned centralized infrastructure to support increased density/intensity	Ongoing	Moderate / Policy Changes Needed	Consultant
TU.09	Increase intergovernmental coordination between Madison County and municipalities in the county	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	TIMING	RESOURCE	SUPPORT
NR.01 Appropriately manage land uses within the Darby Watershed		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
NR.02 Maintain the Stream Corridor Protection Zone (SCPZ) as defined by the Ohio EPA General Construction Permit for waterways within the Big Darby Creek watershed.		Ongoing	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
NR.03 Limit growth primarily to the five strategic focus areas		Ongoing	Moderate / Policy Changes Needed	Consultant
NR.04 Create regulatory tools for maintaining vegetation adjacent to waterways		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Moderate	Consultant
NR.05 Continue to pursue conservation of land		Ongoing	Minimal / Existing Programs in Place	
NR.06 Solicit input from stakeholders for future land preservation regulations		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
NR.07 Continue supporting the conservation work of the Ohio DNR, particularly in respect to the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program		Ongoing	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
NR.08 Protect existing woodlots and establish new ones		Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate / Policy Changes Needed	Consultant
NR.09 Preserve existing ecosystems of Madison County		Long Term (7 to 10 years)	Moderate / Ongoing Monitoring and Analysis	Additional Staff / Consultant
NR.10 Minimizing impacts of stormwater runoff		Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate / Policy Changes Needed	Consultant
NR.11 Require accurate and current stormwater evaluations with new development		Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
NR.12 Ensure required drainage structures are maintained over time		Long Term (7 to 10 years)	Moderate / Additional Staff	
NR.13 Preserve continued ability to utilize existing ditches for runoff conveyances		Ongoing	Minimal / Staff Capacity	

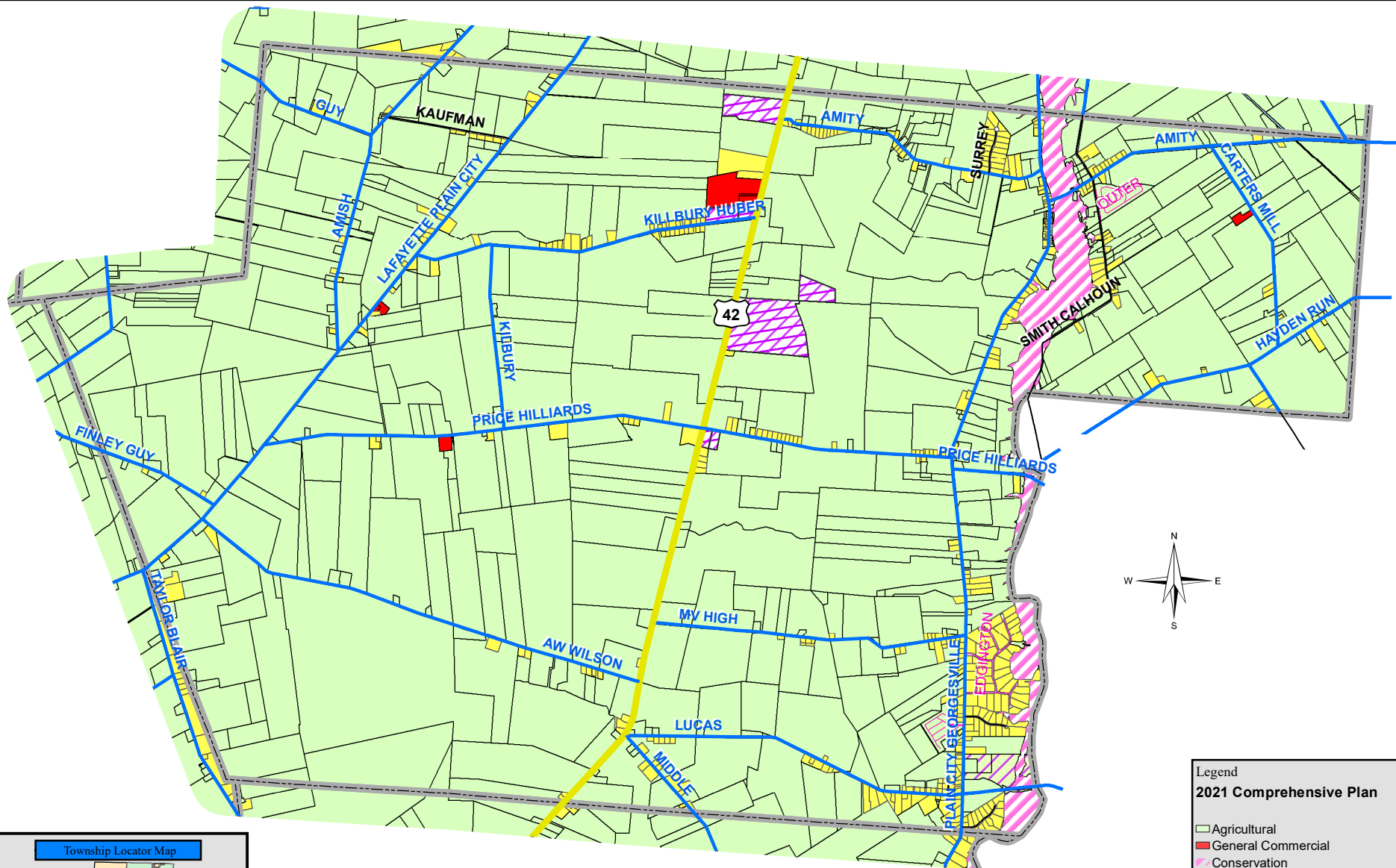
## NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY	TIMING	RESOURCE	SUPPORT
NR.14	Field tiling should continue to be permitted for farm drainage as long as it is beneficial and or necessary for crop production in the agricultural sections of the county	Ongoing	Minimal / Staff Capacity	
NR.15	Ensure accurate subsurface drainage throughout the county	Long Term (7 to 10 years)	Significant / Additional Staff	Consultant
NR.16	Capitalize on the Growing Opportunity for bicycle tourism along the Ohio to Erie Trail	Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate	Consultant
NR.17	Commission an Active Transportation Plan	Mid Term (3 to 7 years)	Moderate	Consultant
NR.18	Coordinate closely with the Central Ohio Greenways (COG), aligning local multimodal investments with their regional framework and initiatives	Short Term (6 mos. to 3 years)	Minimal / Staff Capacity	

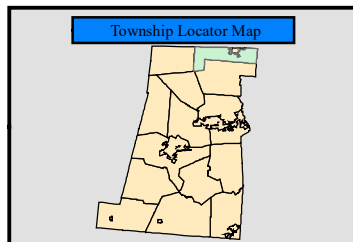


# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Canaan Township



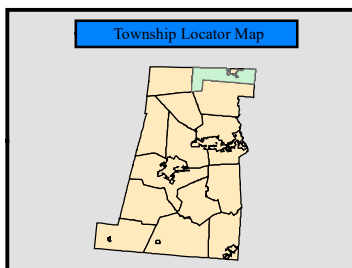
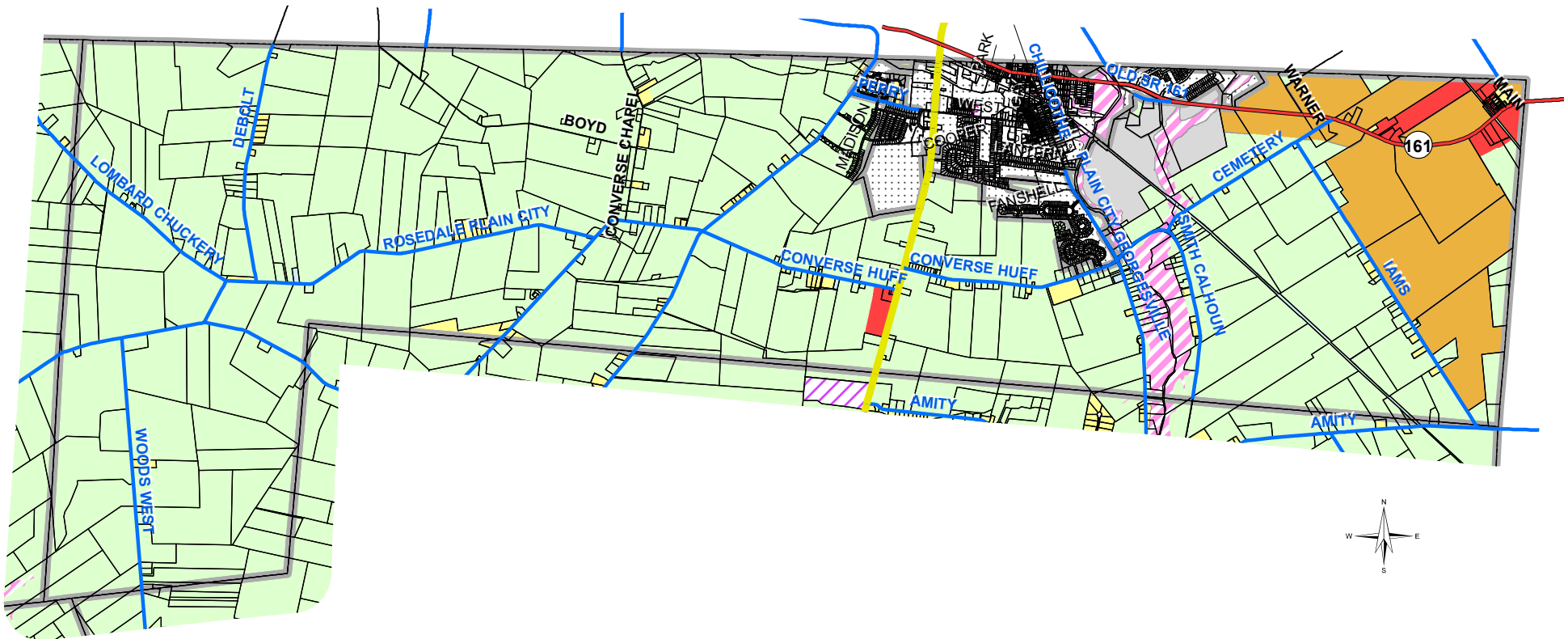
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Legend	
2021 Comprehensive Plan	
	Agricultural
	General Commercial
	Conservation
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Municipality
	Planned Industrial Development
	Planned Residential Development
	Public
	(Single Family) Well/Septic
	(Single Family) Public Sewer

# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Darby Township

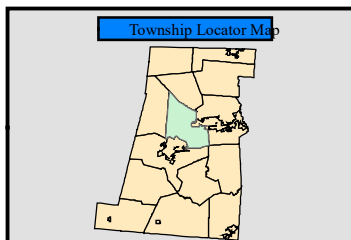
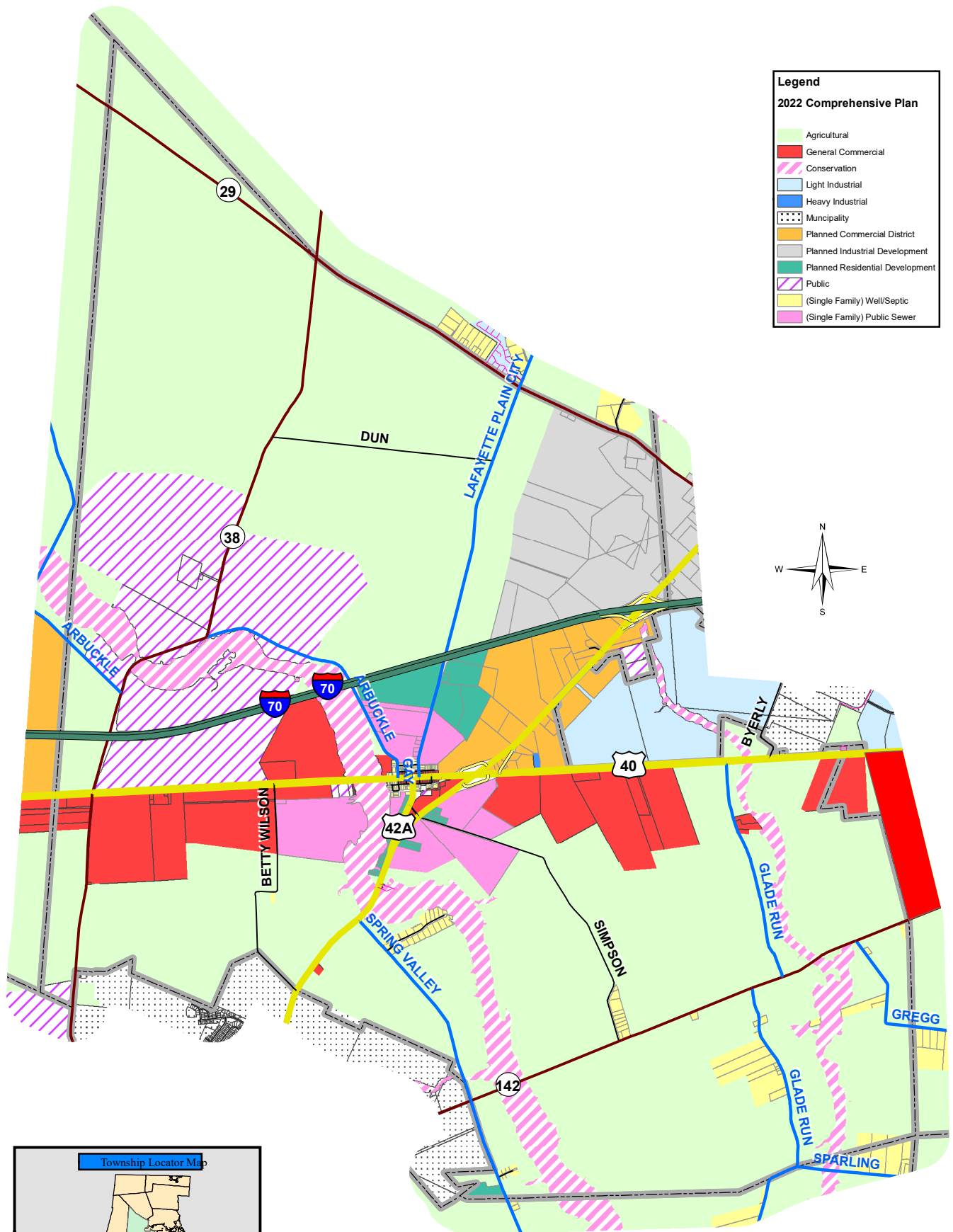


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<span style="display:inline-block; width:15px; height:10px; background-color:yellow; border:1px solid black;"></span>	(Single Family) Well/Septic
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# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Proposed Comprehensive Plan

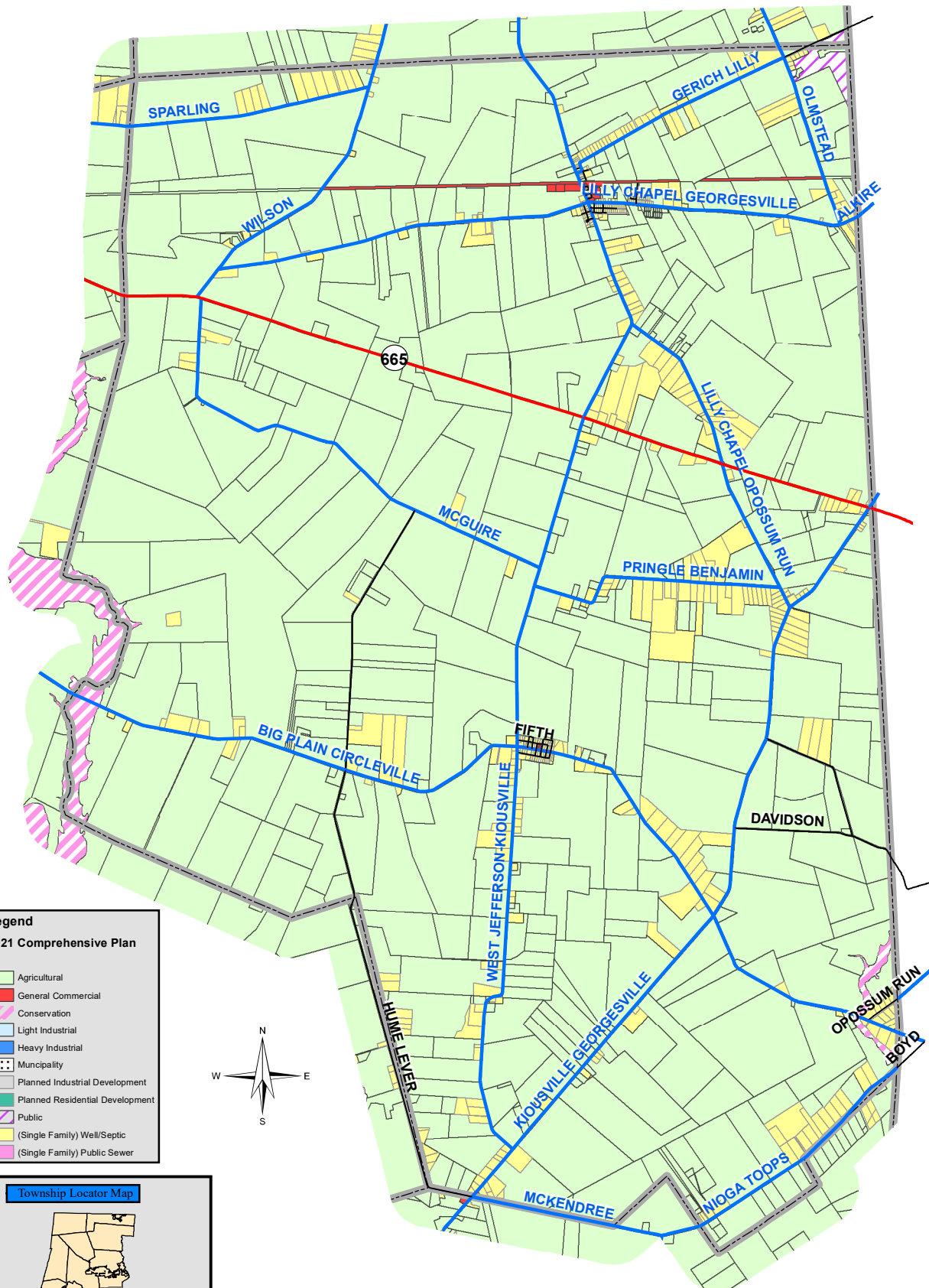
DeerCreek Township



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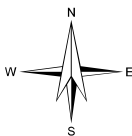
# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Fairfield Township

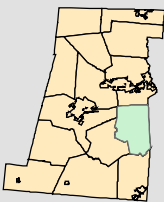


**Legend**  
2021 Comprehensive Plan

- Agricultural
- General Commercial
- Conservation
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Municipality
- Planned Industrial Development
- Planned Residential Development
- Public
- (Single Family) Well/Septic
- (Single Family) Public Sewer



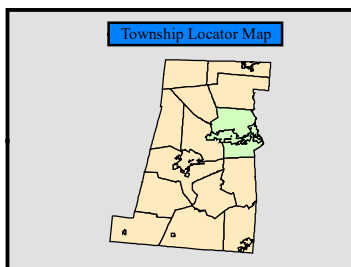
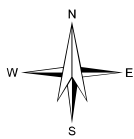
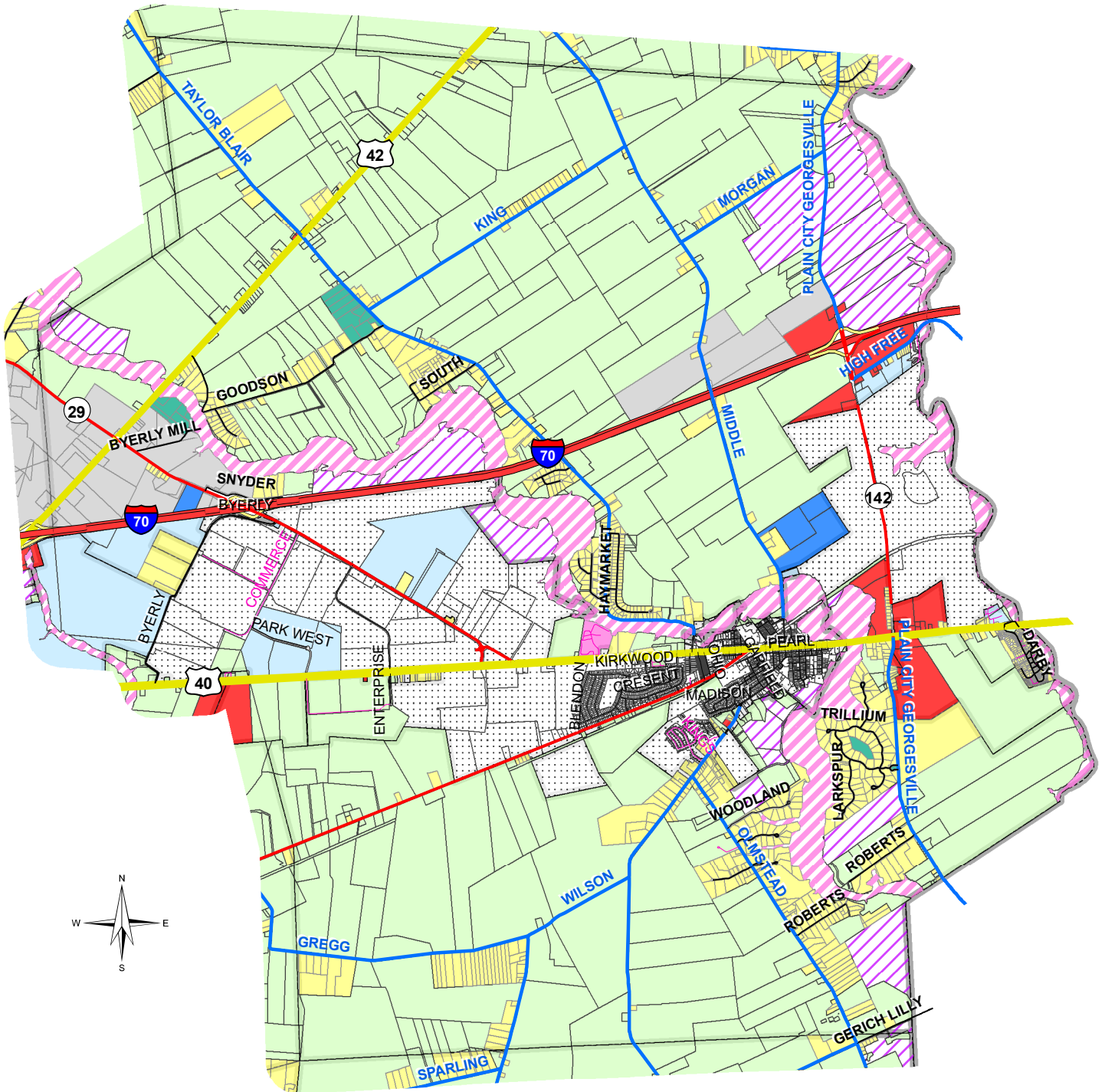
Township Locator Map



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Date: 4/19/2021

# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Jefferson Township



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Date: 9/28/2022

Legend	
2022 Comprehensive Plan	
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	General Commercial
	Conservation
	Light Industrial
	Heavy Industrial
	Municipality
	Planned Commercial District
	Planned Industrial Development
	Planned Residential Development
	Public
	(Single Family) Well/Septic
	(Single Family) Public Sewer

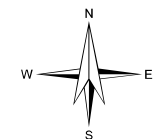
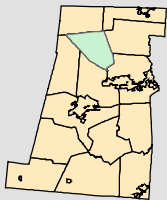
# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Monroe Township

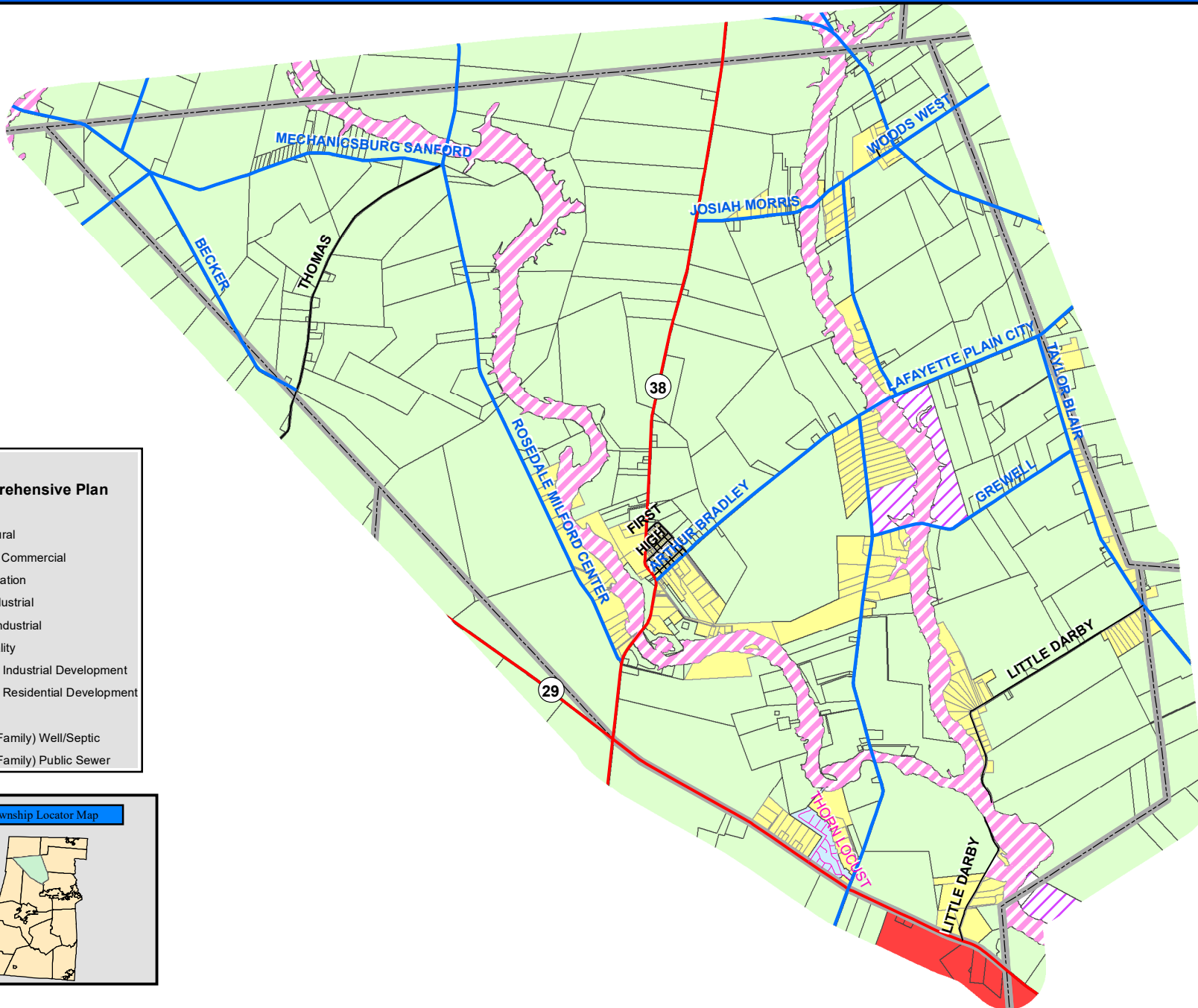
## Legend 2021 Comprehensive Plan

- Agricultural
- General Commercial
- Conservation
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Municipality
- Planned Industrial Development
- Planned Residential Development
- Public
- (Single Family) Well/Septic
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### Township Locator Map

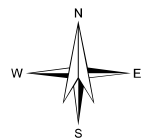


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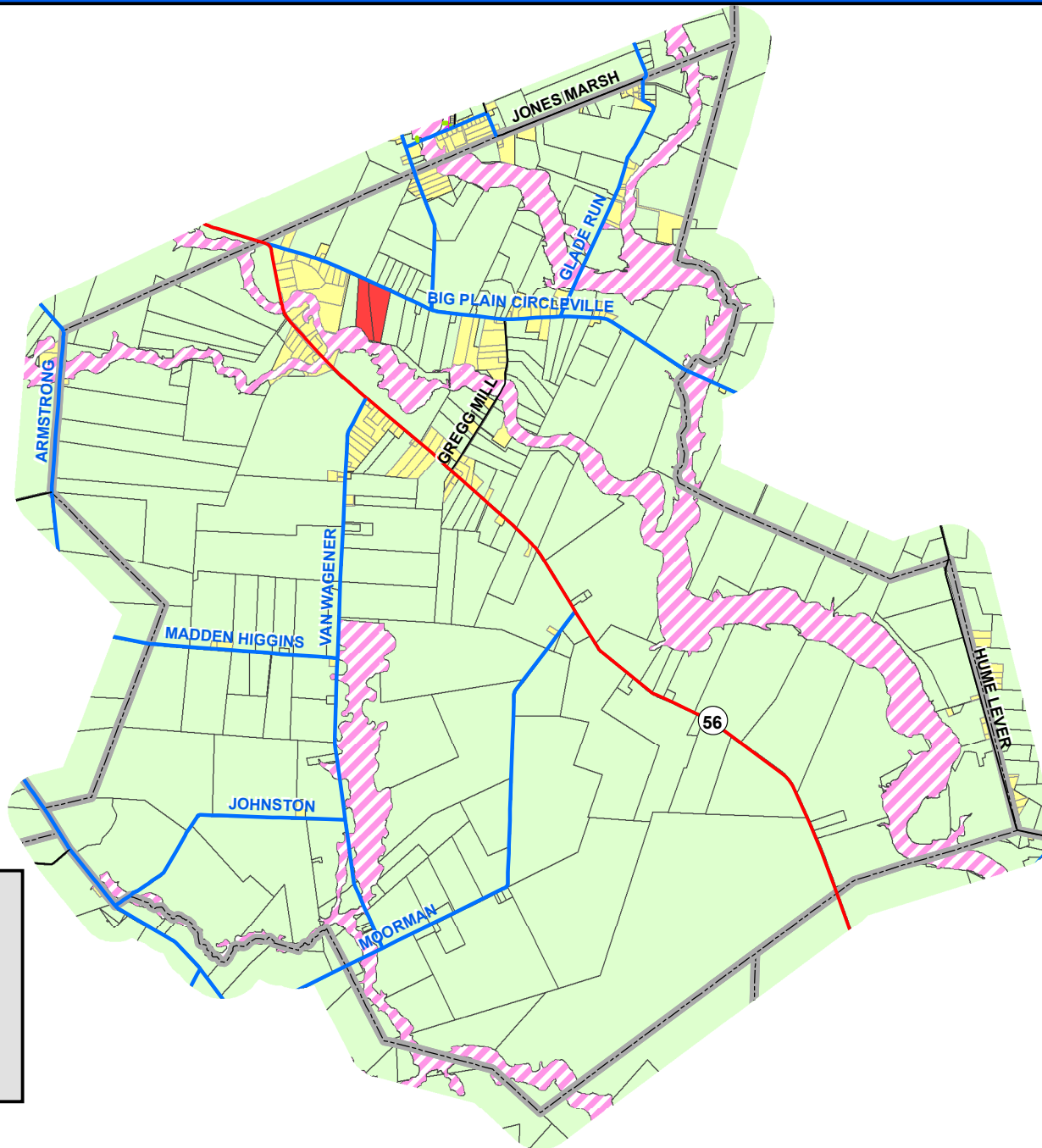
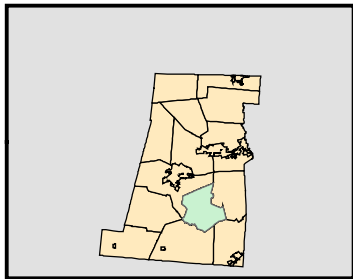


# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Oak Run Township



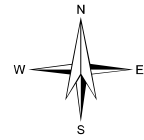
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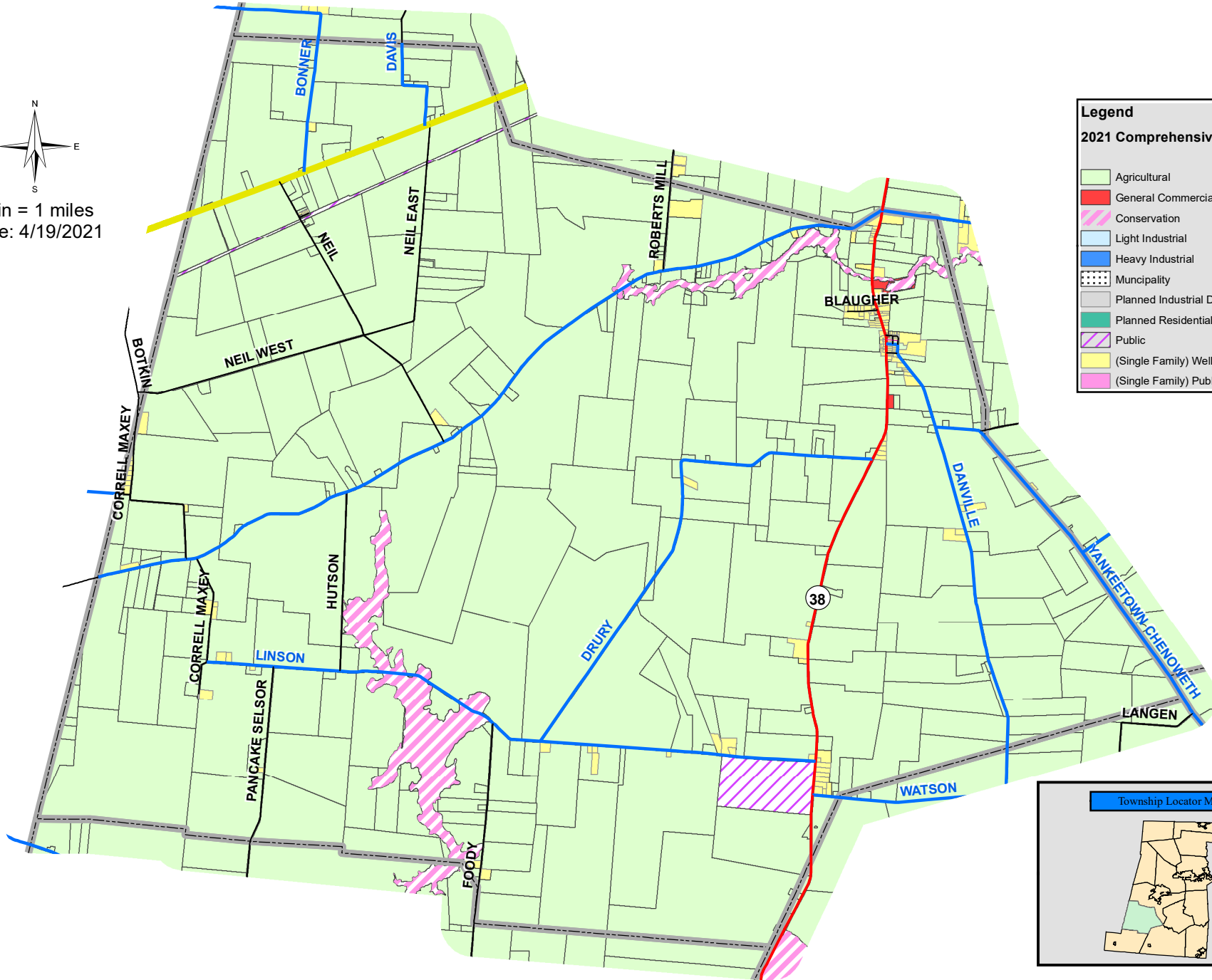
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	Light Industrial
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	Planned Residential Development
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	(Single Family) Public Sewer

# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Paint Township



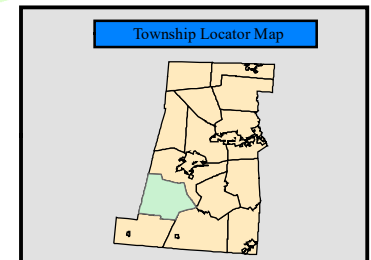
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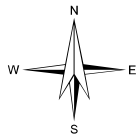
**2021 Comprehensive Plan**

- Agricultural
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# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Pleasant Township

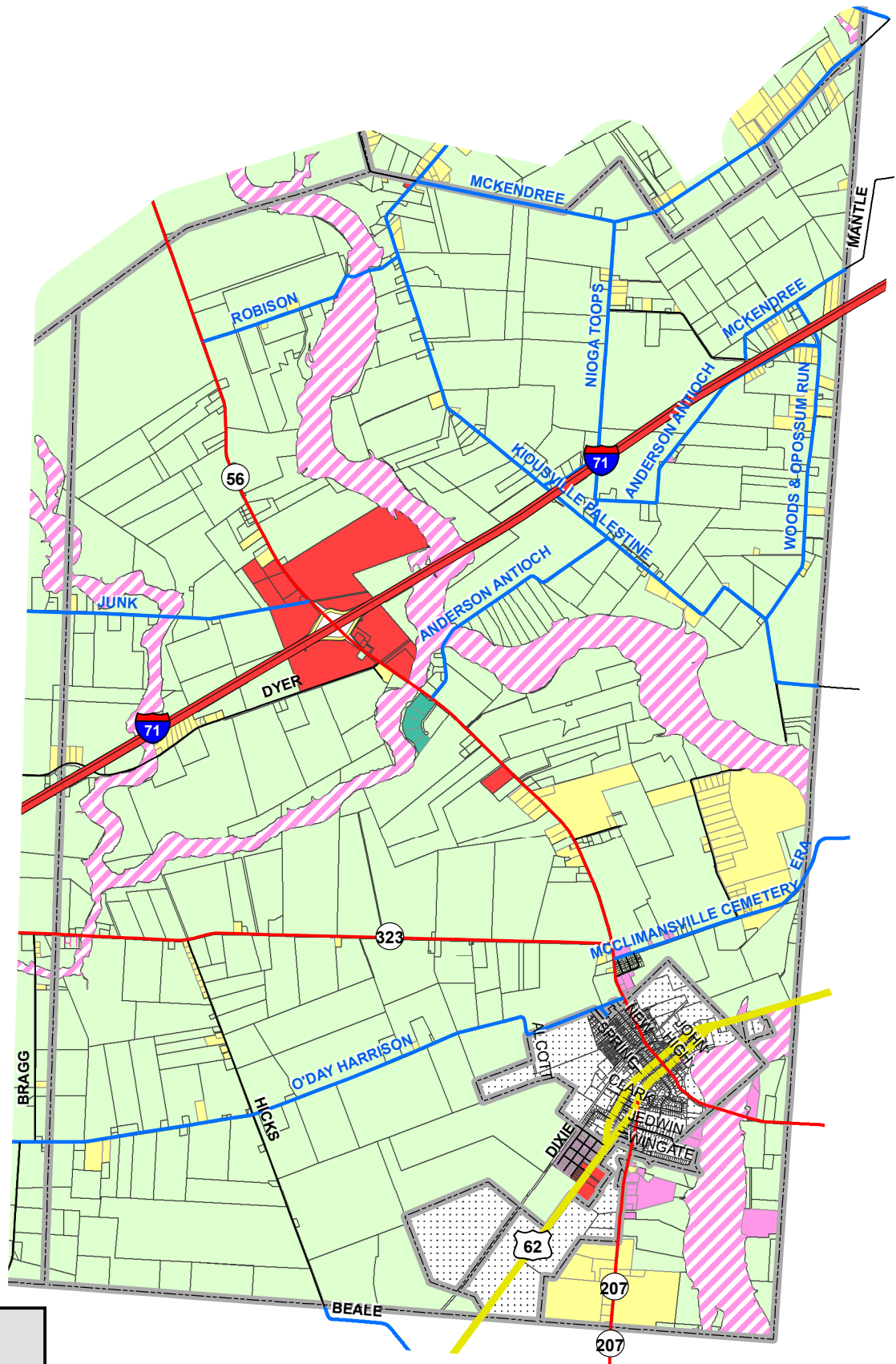
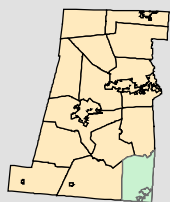


## Legend

### 2021 Comprehensive Plan

- Agricultural
- General Commercial
- Conservation
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- Heavy Industrial
- Municipality
- Planned Industrial Development
- Planned Residential Development
- Public
- (Single Family) Well/Septic
- (Single Family) Public Sewer

### Township Locator Map



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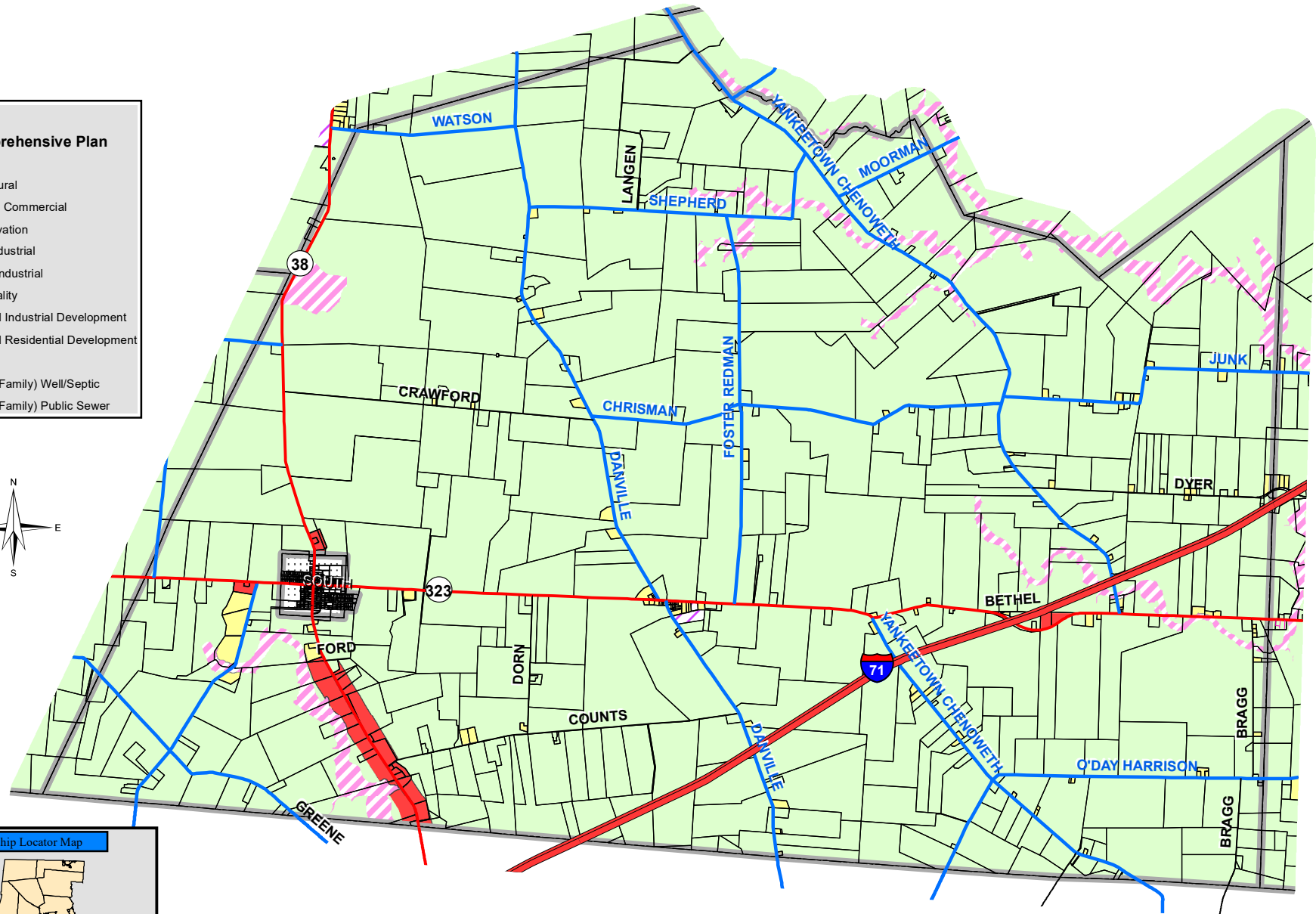
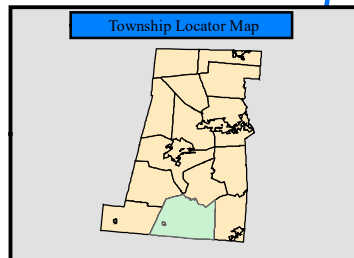
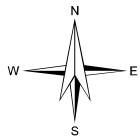
# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Range Township

## Legend

### 2021 Comprehensive Plan

- Agricultural
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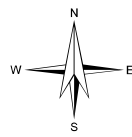


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Date: 4/19/2021

# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Somerford Township



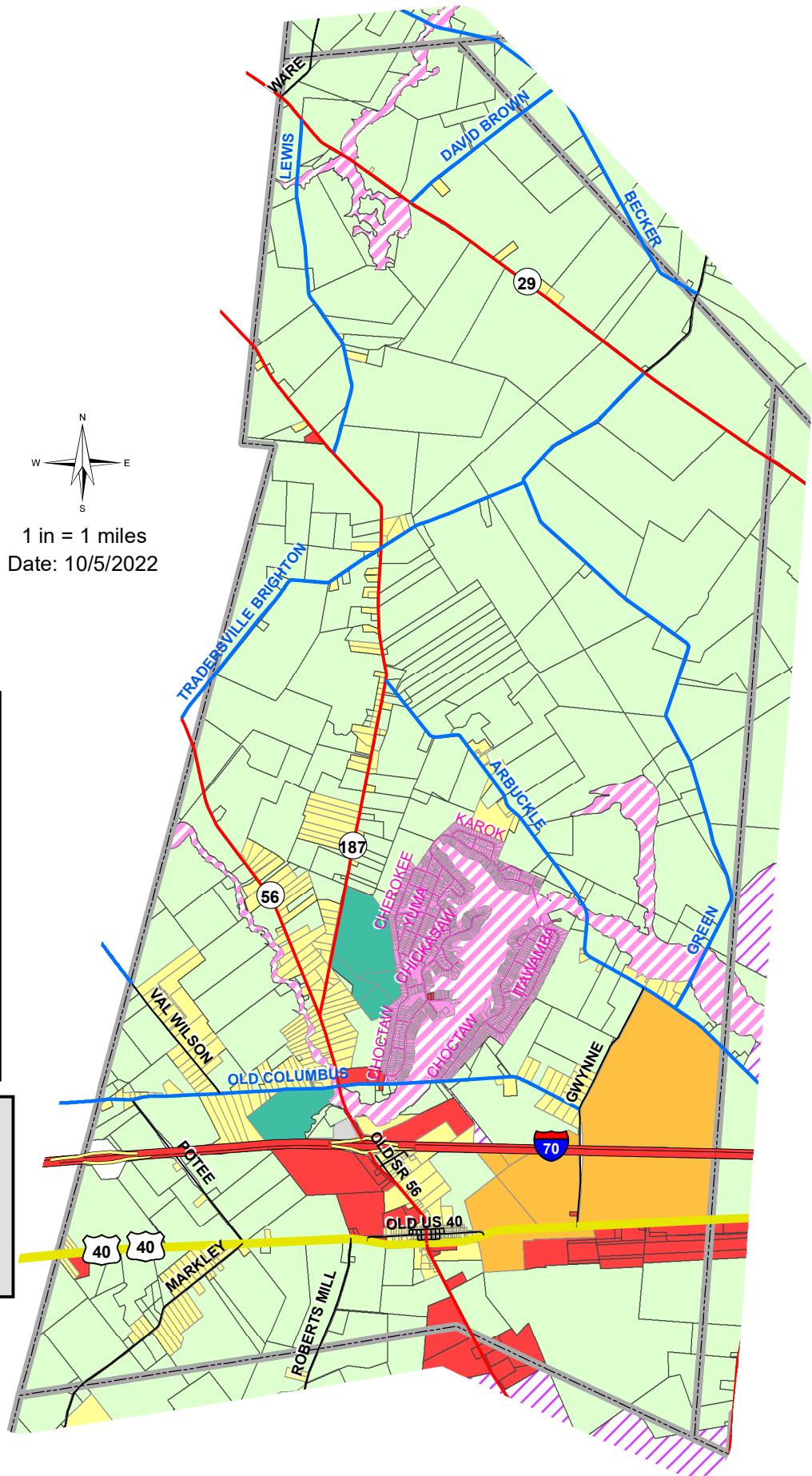
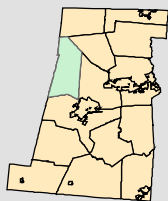
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## Legend

### 2022 Comprehensive Plan

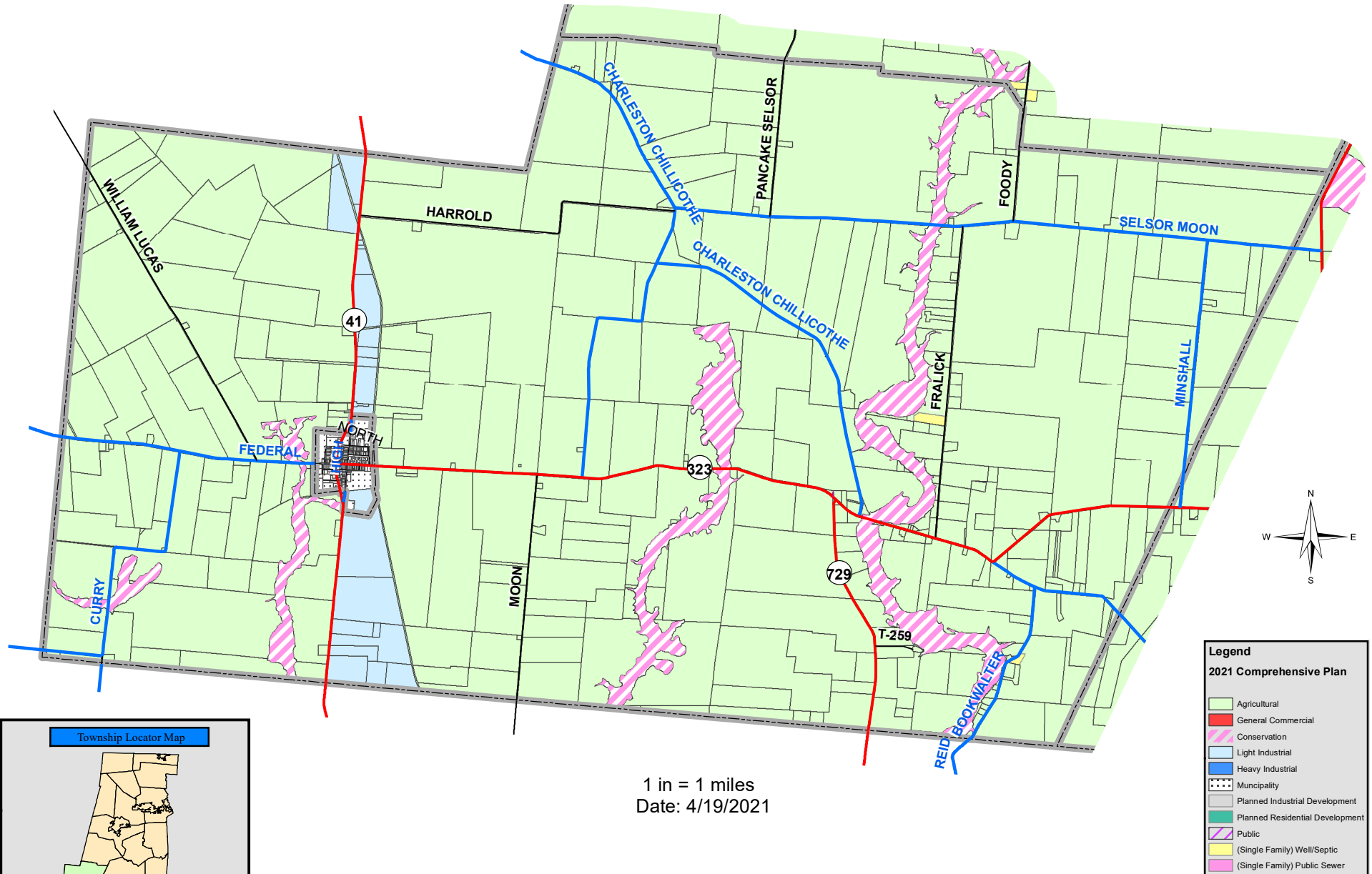
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### Township Locator Map



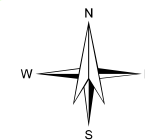
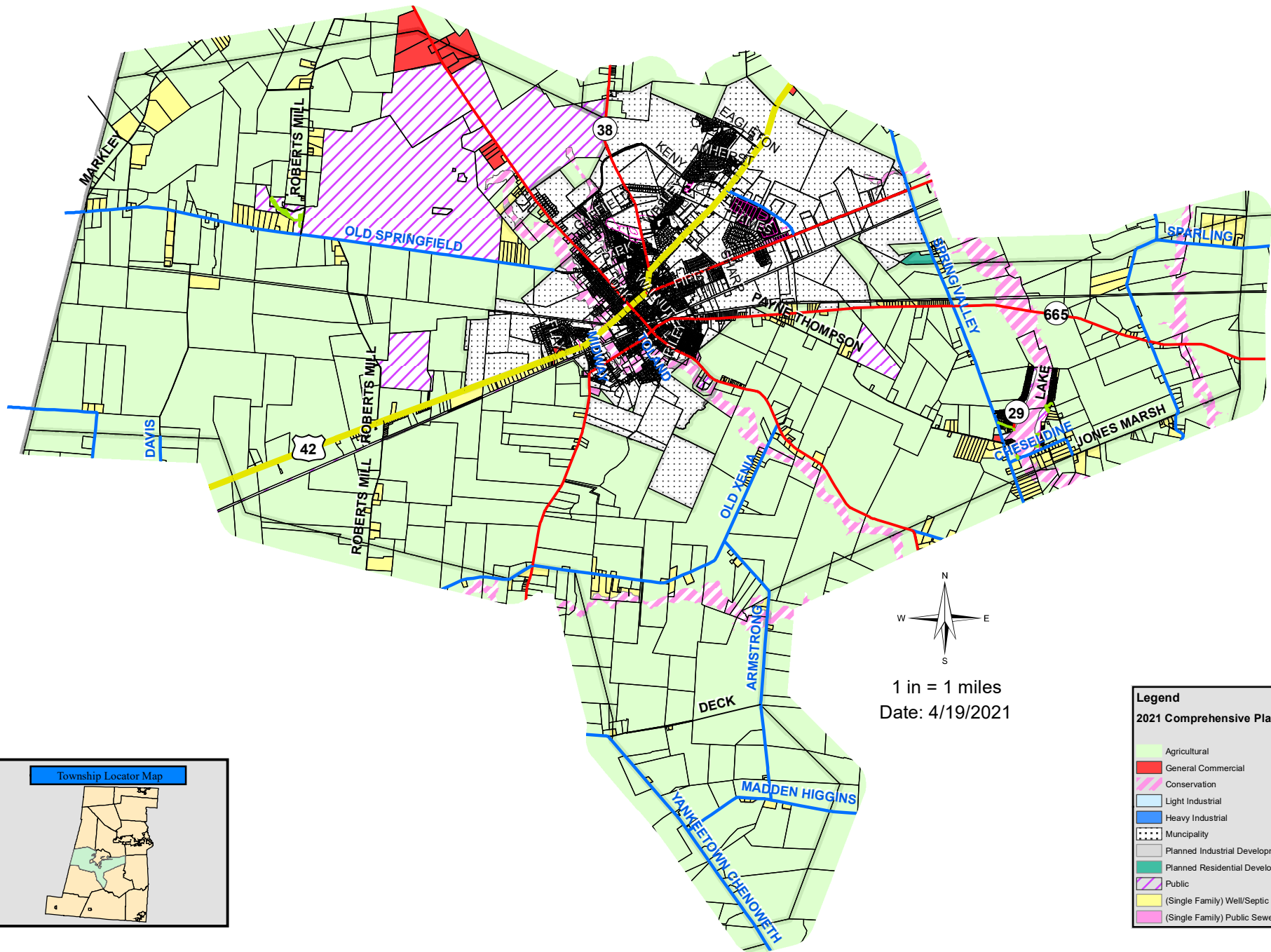
# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Stokes Township

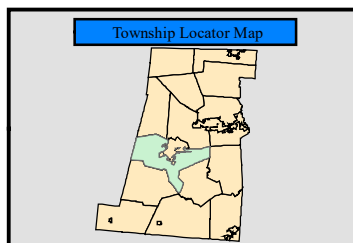


# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Union Township



1 in = 1 miles  
Date: 4/19/2021



Legend	
2021 Comprehensive Plan	
	Agricultural
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	Conservation
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# Madison County, Ohio 2022 Comprehensive Plan

Pike Township

