



Fairfield County

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

January 2018





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The Fairfield County Comprehensive Land Use Plan was developed under the guidance of the following members of the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission's Comprehensive Plan Update Subcommittee:

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This document was also prepared with the information gathered from numerous public and private organizations.

Fairfield County Planning Progress

2002

FCRPC adopts the US 33 Corridor Development Plan and a Countywide Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan.

2003

A Rural Advisory Council (within the FCRPC) is developed to develop tools to manage growth.

2004

A corridor overlay district is developed for US 33 but only adopted by Carroll and partially by Hocking Twp.

2005

Fairfield Land Preservation Association is established. Downtown revitalization continues in Baltimore, Bremen, Sugar Grove.

2006

Fairfield County is ranked fourth among Ohio Counties in acres of farmland preserved by the state program (1,300 acres).

2007

FCRPC works with county and Violet Twp. to promote access mgmt. guidelines. Violet Twp. adopts standards, the County does not.

2009

The Fairfield County Active Transportation and Open Space Plan is inked. Housing starts slow due to market slowdown.

2011

An Active Transportation Sub-Committee is created and an Agricultural Economic Dev. Plan. A local food council emerges to help implement it.

2013

The Fairfield County Active Transportation and Open Space Plan is updated. FCRPC creates a Storm Water Advisory and Educational Sub-Committee.

2014

The Fairfield County Land Bank is awarded a \$642,500 Neighborhood Initiative Program grant to remove blighted properties in targeted areas.

2015

A Rural Transportation Plan. Organization emerges (CORPO). FCRPC receives \$800,000 in CDBG funds for community development over the past two years.

2016-2017

FCRPC updates Land Use Plan and works with CORPO to develop a Regional Transportation Plan to guide connectivity projects.



Executive Summary

Mission:

To capitalize on growth opportunities in our urbanized areas while maintaining the natural resources required for our county's long-term sustainability.



Executive Summary

The 2017 Fairfield County Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Plan) is a long-range plan used to guide growth, revitalization and preservation efforts.

This Plan establishes the general framework for recommending where development and preservation efforts are the most appropriate and identifies best practices and resources available to accomplish these efforts. Because land uses are directly correlated to investments in infrastructure, neighborhoods and community services and programs, this Plan also recommends strategies that will help Fairfield County and its several communities to be more connected and prosperous.



A rich quality of life and a rich cultural heritage- linked to agriculture and industry- is something that doesn't occur by chance but by design. The 2002 Land Use Plan helped to lay the basis for the protection of natural amenities and resources, and this Plan continues this same approach using a specially-designed land evaluation site assessment (LESA) approach that guides growth towards the best accommodating areas.

This Plan represents a progressive, common-sense course of action that recognizes the public's desire for revitalization and preservation while recognizing the opportunities that will derive from the collective successes of all communities within the Columbus Region over the next 20 years or more.

This Plan is a tool to assist the County and its communities to help them maximize their land, financial, and social resources while adapting to change that comes from growth and redevelopment. More specifically, this Plan can be used in at least the following six ways:

- (1) As a basis to the development and refinement of community infrastructure, services, programs and regulations.
- (2) As a basis for private decision-making regarding the nature and timing of land development and farming, and conservation activities.
- (3) As a basis for decisions on specific land use changes as reviewed through zoning regulations.
- (4) As a means of intergovernmental coordination and understanding.

- (5) As a means of empowering and immersing residents, businesses, and other stakeholders into the arena of community development.
- (6) As a basis for the measurement and evaluation of changes in the physical, social or economic makeup of the County, of which may prompt modifications to the Plan.

Plan Themes and Findings

1. One County, Three Worlds...

On the surface, Fairfield County appears to be one unit comprised of 18 municipal corporations, 16 school districts, and 13 townships. The public outreach that accompanied this process revealed something simpler than that, in that the County's communities are guided by one of three themes: growth management, revitalization, or the preservation of rural amenities. This Plan is full of quotes, made by the various residents and stakeholders that support these three themes.

"Fairfield County has a little of everything: flatlands and hills; farmland, woods, and waterways; urban, suburban, exurban areas, and small towns; increasing economic, ethnic, and cultural diversity; easy access to a big city (Columbus) and more rural areas."

2. A desire to be unique

Current growth trends and residential patterns indicate sprawl from the "West" is alive and well. Through the planning process, several strategies were reviewed and the preferred outcome of the Plan is to encourage sustainable development practices that guides growth and preserves natural resources. The 2002 Plan, aided by an effective, collaborative approach, helped to pave the way for practices that assist in preserving and buffering the county's prime farmlands, a practice that many counties in Ohio often discuss but rarely implement.

3. The Growth Artery: US Route 33

With the US Route 33 (US 33 Bypass) project complete, new locations in Fairfield County may be more attractive to new development opportunities. One such community, the Village of Carroll is predicting just that.

The Fairfield County Commissioners and the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission (FCRPC) recognized the importance and impact of the US 33 Bypass early, and commissioned special studies (US Route 33 Bypass Corridor Development Plan and the US Route 33 Bypass Corridor Design Manual) to mitigate the negative impacts associated with the new bypass and to encourage good planning, zoning and design methods. To date, however, this Plan has been only partially adopted by one township. To ensure a visually appealing corridor- one residents can be proud of- it is recommended that communities along this corridor either codify the recommendations in the design manual or look to revive another collaborative discussion to develop improved guidelines.

4. Increased residential development pressures from Franklin County

Heightened single family development throughout Northwest Fairfield County has mildly changed the rural atmosphere, giving way to additional township financial commitments and additional problems to area farmers. To minimize this uneven rural development, the FCRPC continues to assist its members and rural townships revisit their zoning resolution to help cultivate a better “middle ground” between private economic interests and the Township’s authority to promote health and safety, control density, and protect the environment. Since 2003, minor subdivisions accounted for almost 90% of all development activity in the county.

5. The adoption of new tools to promote sustainable development

There are only so many tools Ohio communities can use to encourage well-rounded growth, and zoning is one of the basic tools to deploy. Yet, two townships in Fairfield County have yet to adopt zoning. Other communities with zoning may fall short of the attention to update them. If Fairfield County is expected to play a large role in the growth of the Columbus Region; if residents wish to accomplish their desire to have preserved, interconnected and unique communities; if farmers wish to protect fertile and prime farmlands, and if county residents desire for their communities to be unique, then a concerted and increased effort must occur to deploy the tools outlined in this Plan. To this end, the Plan (see the Plan Implementation chapter) highlights a variety of examples of tools that can be used by public officials and developers alike to retain the County’s unique standing in the Region.

6. Develop effective property maintenance tools

Because most communities in Fairfield County act as bedroom communities, the County’s economy cannot thrive unless its neighborhoods do. Maintaining the existing building stock is important to the overall marketability of every Fairfield County community. A number of tax delinquent and deteriorated buildings exist as communities have experienced a tremendous increase in the number of vacancies since 2000. As 2017 comes to a close, the County appears to be better suited to address some of these issues with the newly-developed Land Bank. However, this is just one tool. Other tools like targeting vacant and abandoned properties and address property maintenance issues will still be needed to improve neighborhoods.

Increasing owners' responsibility may be facilitated by potential property codes that encourage people to maintain their properties. Some communities like Pickerington have adopted and implemented a vacant property registration program, while Lancaster has adopted the International Property Maintenance Code. Implementing these programs effectively will require the right level of resources. Reducing property-based nuisances will be a key ingredient in retaining residents, attracting new ones, and maintaining property values.

7. A lack of understanding of regional trends

A conclusion can be drawn after digesting the survey results and the public’s preferences: there is a relatively low level of understanding of regional trends facing the Columbus Region, such as aging

populations, declining household sizes (especially due to childless households), and the desire for varied housing types. For communities in Fairfield County to grow in a manner than aligns with regional trends and that makes fiscal sense, residents will need to be educated on the importance of housing diversity, the benefits of tactical “densification”, and even the importance of zoning. Some communities are sitting in the path of the greatest wave of growth in the State of Ohio, and some of them continue to use outdated planning and zoning tools.

8. Agriculture is Big Business in Fairfield County

Approximately 73.7% (234,274 acres) of the county’s land mass is in agricultural use. In 2012, the total market value of products sold was \$105,843,000, an increase of 50% since the 2007 Census. This is largely due to escalation of larger farms and more advanced farming processes. In addition to the effective deployment of farmland preservation programs, County officials should develop additional planning, zoning and access management tools to minimize growth’s burden on the farming community. A good percentage of the County’s farms are under 200 acres or less, and may be increasingly sensitive to growth pressures.

9. A need for more dialogue

Fairfield County’s true potential will only be unlocked when an atmosphere of communication and collaboration is achieved. To see the fruits of this potential will require strong leadership, progressive thinking, citizen engagement, and community collaboration. A different type of thinking- one tolerant of change- will be required to position the county as a leader in economic development, to create a positive impact on the development within the county, and to produce results that the citizens can recognize and appreciate.

Over the last year, a concerted outreach effort was deployed to include all political subdivisions, and for the most part- with the exception of a few small rural townships- participation was good. However, some communities in the portions of the County in the path of growth’s tip chose not participate. For Fairfield County to grow in the right direction, it is imperative that additional dialogue occurs to build on common goals and address perceived cultural differences.

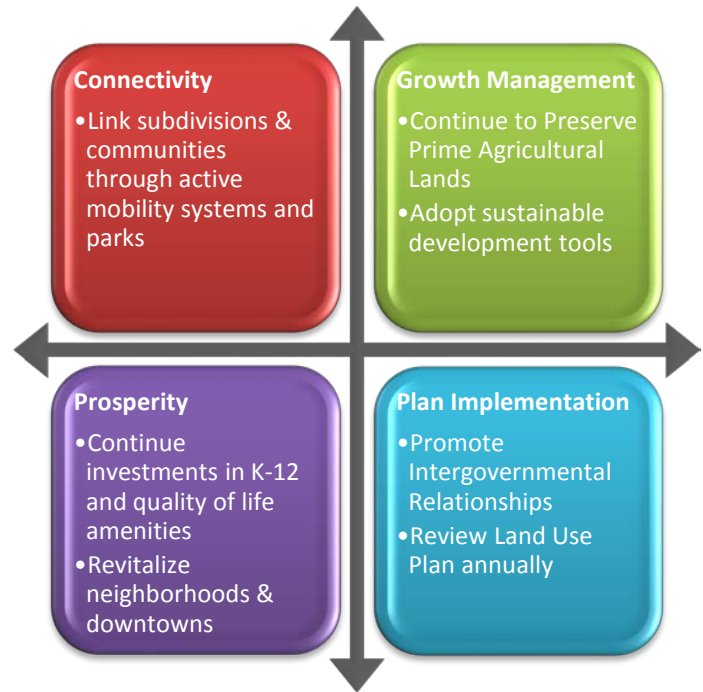
Each community should continue to work to identify their unique assets, create and implement their own plan of attack-aside from the broad recommendations in this Plan- and establish strategic partnerships among community stakeholders and with other jurisdictions. Partnerships need to be proactive and connect on a regular basis to assess, plan, and work together. A “go-it alone” mentality will not be an effective strategy to accommodate the future growth that is coming to Fairfield County.

“I am 25. My opinions are probably unpopular for someone my age, especially when many of my peers are moving to Columbus to live and work. But I've lived here for 24 years, and I want the best for Fairfield County. I want it to be the place I knew growing up. It has already changed so much, but it's not too late to preserve what is meaningful. We are not Franklin County and that's what makes us beautiful. I'm thankful for this survey so my voice can be heard.

~Pickerington Resident

Plan Organization

The Plan is organized into three main themes that were defined by public preferences: Connectivity, Growth Management, and Prosperity. Each section contains a summary of important issues and trends, a goal statement and a list of strategies and recommendations that County and local officials could use to reach these goals. Most importantly, the Plan Implementation section links Plan recommendations to best practice solutions (*Plan Implementation Toolbox*) and to an action plan (*Plan Implementation Table*) defined by timeframe and implementing parties.



Plan Development

The Plan Update was developed after a comprehensive review of the Fairfield County Land Use and Development Plan and other county and local planning studies for continued relevance, to include:

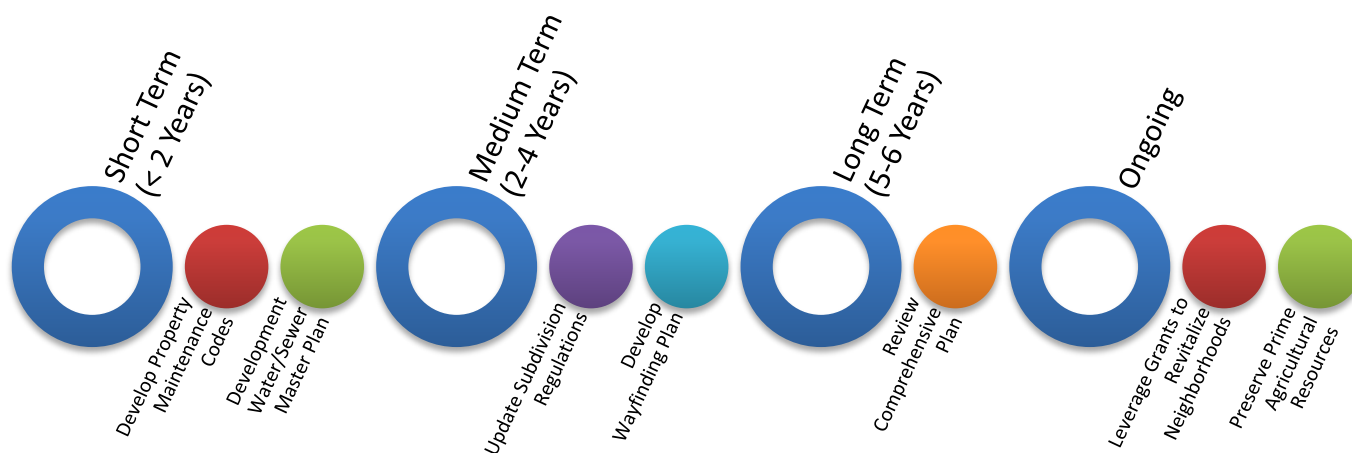
- US Route 33 Bypass Corridor Development Plan
- US Route 33 Corridor Design Manual
- Fairfield County Active Transportation and Open Space Plan
- Rolling Forward, Update to the Active Transportation and Open Space Plan
- Fairfield Growing: An Agricultural Economic Development Plan
- Fairfield County Farmland Preservation Plan
- Fairfield County Local Food Guide
- Lancaster Downtown Master Plan
- Pickerington Growth Management Assessment and Strategy
- Diley Road Corridor Study and Plan
- Pickerington & Violet Township Pre-Plan Public Engagement
- Fairfield County Rural Transportation Plan, 2018-2045
- The relevant recommendations from these studies were then weighed against current public preferences gathered from the surveys, best practices and new priorities that have surfaced either out of need or current fiscal and programmatic realities.

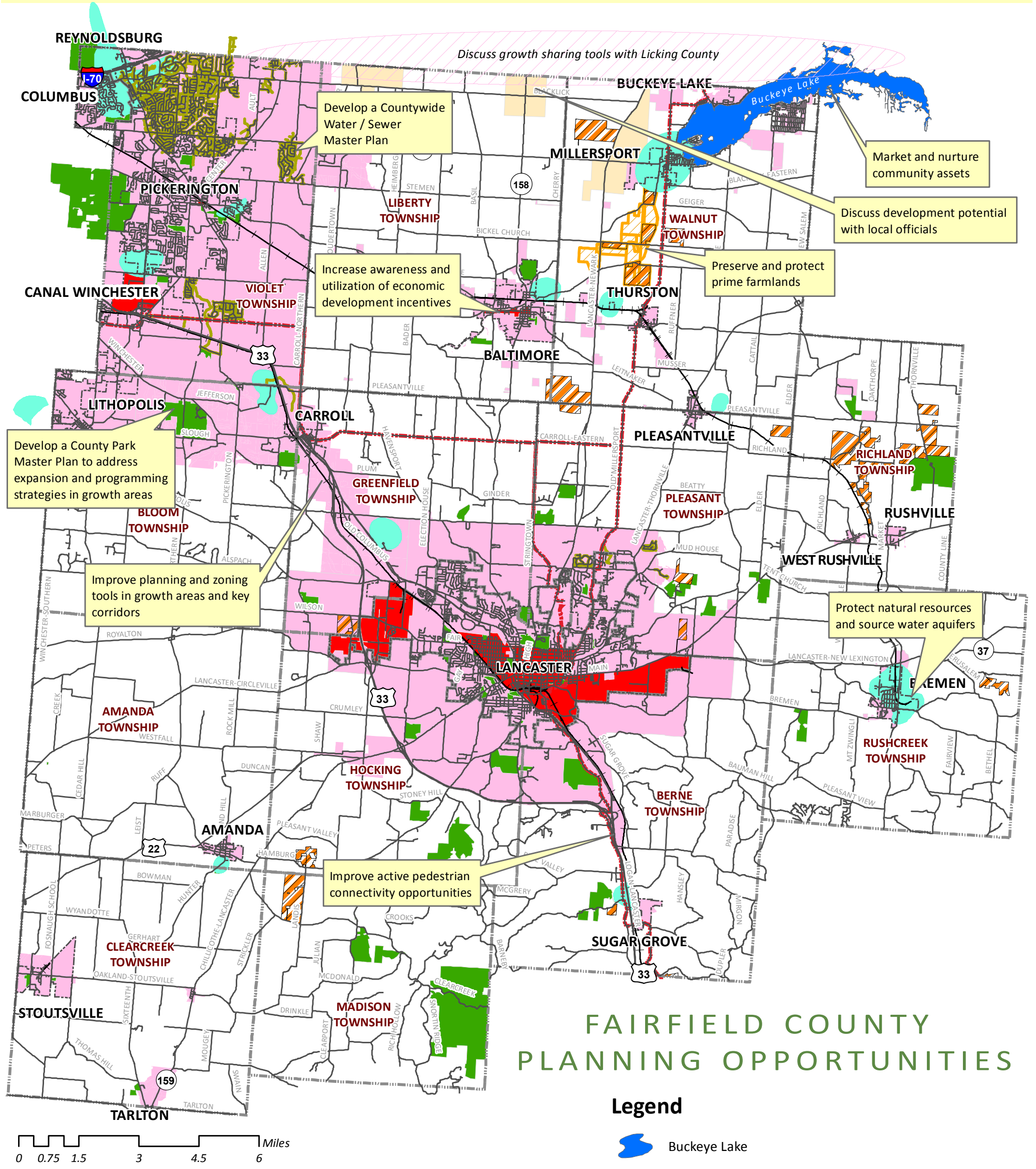
Plan Execution

This Plan will require intergovernmental cooperation to implement not only form but in principle. Due to its proximity to the Columbus Region, Fairfield County is facing migration pressures unlike many other counties in the State of Ohio. The proper handling of these pressures can only occur when communities are well-connected and working in unison. Because these entities play a key role in guiding land use and promoting growth and development of Fairfield County, it is very important that they review and adopt additional tools and “Best Management Practices” (BMPs) found in the Plan Implementation Chapter to promote orderly growth.

This Plan encourages the heightened cooperation and collaboration of related agencies beginning with the FCRPC, and its several partners to include the Fairfield County Commissioners, Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), County Utilities and Engineer, Health Department, Fairfield County Economic and Workforce Development (FCEWD) and other County departments like the Park District, Jobs and Family Services to name a few. All of the county’s school districts also play an important role in community building. All these entities should also be integrated into holistic development approach this Plan supports.

Time frames for implementing the Plan are defined as: Short Term (to be completed in less than two years), Medium Term (to be completed in less than 4 years) and Long Term (to be completed within 6 years). Ongoing time frames are placed with strategies that will require continual effort to implement to ensure the proper growth, revitalization and preservation of Fairfield County and its communities.

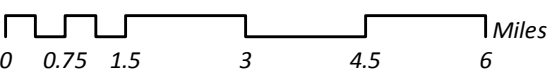




FAIRFIELD COUNTY PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES

Legend

- Buckeye Lake
- Roads
- Railroads
- Municipalities
- Townships
- County Utilities Sanitary Mains
- Active Bike Routes
- Growth Areas
- Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA)
- Potential Economic Development Areas
- Protected Farmland Areas
- Source Water Protection Areas
- Parks / Cultural Resource Areas



Source: Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission,
Fairfield County Auditor, Fairfield County Utilities,
Reville



"Thank you for putting this out for everyone's thoughts. I loved taking the time to reflect on my community. Having this survey shows that the community is already on the right path!"

Public Participation



Public Participation

Introduction

Over 1,000 community stakeholders from all parts of the county- from its large urban centers to rural hamlets- participated in various activities over the year-long planning process to help guide, frame, and update the Fairfield County Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Public Involvement Process

This Plan was forged through an intensive public process that lasted 14 months and consisted of four primary elements: stakeholder interviews, six regional planning commission meetings, and two interactive surveys that embraced residents and the farming community.

“We need a plan. Cities are getting closer. The best ground goes to development. The only way for the next generation to continue farming in Fairfield County is to have a land use plan! You can't make everyone happy, tough choices will have to be made to better the future.”

Steering Committee Meetings

The planning team utilized a subcommittee of the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission to help frame the Plan's development. The commission consists of appointed community leaders with varying backgrounds, and this diverse subcommittee was tasked with guiding the Plan based on input gathered from the community. Planning Commission members were very active in the community by informing their peers of the survey and events that were scheduled for public participation. Many of the planning commission members were also interviewed along with other key county and local officials.

Community Surveys

Two interactive surveys were developed to assist in the Plan's development. While the 16-question Comprehensive Land Use Plan Survey was directed towards the general public, the 15-question Farmland Survey was aimed at understanding the unique pressures of Fairfield County's agricultural and farming community. Collectively, both surveys yielded over 900 responses and helped to lay a sound foundation for the Plan's strategies and recommendations.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Survey

Demographics and Geography of the Respondents

Approximately 36% of the survey participants were from Lancaster and 23% of the respondents were from Pickerington. Twelve percent of the respondents indicated being from “other” locations like Violet Township or Fairfield Beach. The remaining responses came from the remaining 13 County municipalities. Less than one percent of the responses came from residents that lived in Columbus, but worked in Fairfield County.

“It is good to see the Plan updated.”

Ninety-one percent of respondents were homeowners, with the remaining nine percent being renters or non-resident business owners and/or employees. 61% were female, while 39% were male. A good bell

However, there was some variation in a respondent's top six priorities based on their location. While all rated the maintenance of K-12 School Quality as their number one priority, deviations did emerge as folks from Lancaster tended to rate higher variable aligned with community revitalization whereas Pickerington area residents tended to rate more preferably variables aligned with growth management and the improvement of community amenities like parks and recreation. Survey respondents from villages, townships and rural areas tended to prioritize higher variables more aligned with the Lancaster theme of community revitalization and small business development, coupled with the desire to preserve farmland.

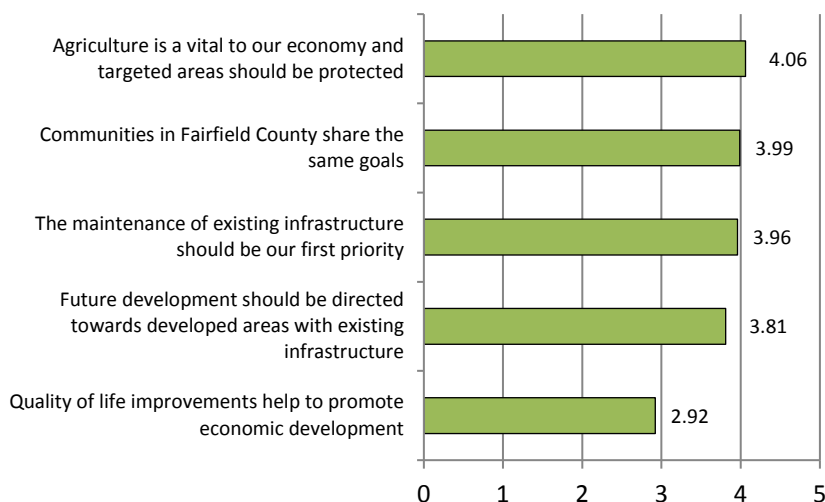
Emerging Planning Themes



Rate the Following Statements?

Furthermore, respondents were asked to rate five philosophical statements involving community development from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These statements included: Quality of Life improvements help promote economic development; Future development should be directed towards developed areas with existing infrastructure; The maintenance of existing infrastructure should be our first priority; Communities in Fairfield County share the same goals; Agriculture is vital to our economy and targeted areas should be protected.

Rank the following statements:



The reason for asking these questions was to generate a discussion to gather

“perceptions” to help generate Plan priorities once compared with data and other field work (realities). Respondents agreed with all statements (rating above 3) with the exception of one- communities sharing the same goals. Approximately 37% believed that communities do not share the same goals, while 34% were neutral. Only 7% “strongly agreed” that communities share the same goals.

Open ended questions

How has your community changed in the last 15 years?

Comments from respondents were placed into categories, Positives and Negatives. Most noted positive changes included: downtown development improvements (in Lancaster), commercial development, US 33 bypass, new and improved parks, family appeal with events and entertainment.

Most noted negative changes included: loss of local businesses, urban sprawl, more vacant properties and impacted neighborhoods, increase in drugs/crime, traffic, higher property taxes (in Pickerington and Violet Township, and with farmland due to changes in CAUV calculations), increased homeless populations, and less intergovernmental cooperation.

What is the most important issue facing the community right now?

The most cited issues from respondents could be easily classified into the three themes that emerged: growth management, community revitalization, and issues facing the rural communities. Issues such as: maintaining neighborhoods, properties & infrastructure; planning for economic growth / economic development; job creation; addressing the drug problem; reducing traffic congestion; and improving schools were the most noted.

What makes Fairfield County different?

The most cited comments from respondents included: friendliness, rural character, culture, diversity, natural resources and agricultural preservation programs, less congestion, access to businesses / services, leadership, and small town charm.

What should be the most important priority for Fairfield County and/or your community?

The most cited comments from respondents included: creating jobs, the preservation of our small towns, preservation of farmland, promote sustainable growth, supporting local business, Buckeye Lake water quality, minimizing traffic congestion, preserving open space /natural resources, ensuring K-12 school funding, combating drugs/homelessness, housing growth, economic development, and maintaining police and fire services.

Identify the biggest challenge facing Fairfield County and/or your community?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ■ Job retention | ■ Preserving natural resources |
| ■ Stopping urban sprawl | ■ Lack of prosperity |
| ■ Funding for public schools | ■ Embracing change |
| ■ Handling the drug epidemic | ■ Reviving Buckeye Lake |
| ■ Addressing traffic congestion | ■ Lack of police services |
| ■ Infrastructure upkeep | ■ Lack of leadership |
| ■ Increasing population | ■ Accommodating population wisely |

Farmland Survey

The agricultural community was embraced during the planning process with a separate survey tool consisting of 15 questions.

Demographics and Geography of the Respondents

Approximately 80% of the survey respondents were male, and 60% were between the ages of 45-64, 20% under 45 years of age, and the remaining 20% over 65. 85% indicated living in the county 31 or more years.

Over 50% of the respondents derived from farmers that own and farm the land they own in northeast Fairfield County (Liberty, Pleasant, Richland and Walnut Townships). 37% farm over 1,000 acres and 32% reported farming less than 100 acres.

Do you own land in an Agricultural District?

A majority of the land owned by the respondents is located in an agricultural district (60%). Approximately 25% of respondents didn't know if the land they farmed was located in an agricultural district.



Is land that you own or farm
located in an agricultural district?



60%



25%



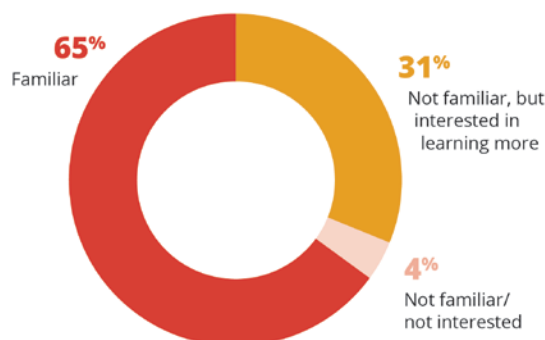
15%

Familiarity with Farmland Programs?

When asked how familiar they were with the County's programs to preserve and protect farmland, such as agricultural security areas (ASAs), purchase of agricultural easements (PACE) and/or conservation easements, 65% of respondents said they were familiar. Over 30% of respondents indicated not being familiar with the programs but indicated an interest to learn more about them. Only 4% indicated not being familiar with the programs and not being interested in learning more about them.



How familiar are you with the County's
programs to preserve and protect farmland?



Farming Pressures?

Most of the farmers surveyed indicated experiencing a variety of issues while farming, including: traffic (64%), change in the "fabric" of the rural community (51%), encroaching non-ag development pressures (47%), lack of tolerance to ag-related issues like noises, odors, etc. (33%), and stormwater problems (31%). Only 13% of the farmers surveyed said they experienced no significant issues while farming.

For FCRPC planning stakeholders to get a better understanding of the current state of farming in Fairfield County, farmers were asked to rate 12 statements on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Rate Statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)	Score	Rank
Population growth and related development will significantly reduce farmland in Fairfield County over the next 20 years	4.47	1
Fragmented land and smaller parcels are making farming more difficult in Fairfield County	3.89	2
County Farmland Preservation Programs should seek to also protect floodplains from development or prohibit construction below state permitted dams	3.82	3
The income and benefits from an off-farm job are necessary to maintain my farm operation	3.74	4

Rate Statement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)	Score	Rank
Transitioning farm ownership to the next generation in my family is a concern	3.69	5
Fairfield County needs to increase availability of direct farm marketing locations/facilities	3.57	6
I would be interested in selling the development rights on my farmland to prohibit future non-agricultural development if the price is right	3.35	7
Government environmental regulations to protect air, soil, and water resources are reasonable	3.09	8
Finding suitable land on which to spread manure is difficult	2.88	9
Fairfield County's road and bridge network is sufficient to move farm equipment safely, i.e., road shoulders and bridge decks are wide enough.	2.76	10
I can currently find affordable productive/quality farmland to rent or buy in Fairfield County	2.35	11
When I reach retirement age I intend to sell my land for non-agricultural development	1.54	12

While farmers verify the obvious in that growth pressures over the next 20 years will adversely affect farmland supply and further continue to fragment agricultural lands, their responses also indicate other pressures are in play such as: the lack of productive farmland to buy or lease; transitioning farm ownership within the family; insufficiency with the width of the County's road and bridge network to move farm equipment safely; and, the need to work another job for income and benefits to maintain farming.

Survey respondents also were in favor of extending farmland preservation programs to protect floodplains from development and prohibiting construction below state permitted dams; increasing direct farm market locations, and selling development rights on their farmland if the price is right. Roughly 90% of the farmers surveyed indicated that they did not intend to sell their land for development at retirement age.



Large farmsteads, like the 450-acre Bicentennial Farm owned by the Miller Family above, dot the landscape in Walnut, Liberty and Pleasant Townships. The farm is only one of 65 farms in Ohio farmed by the same family for more than 100 years.

Population And Demographics



Population and Demographics

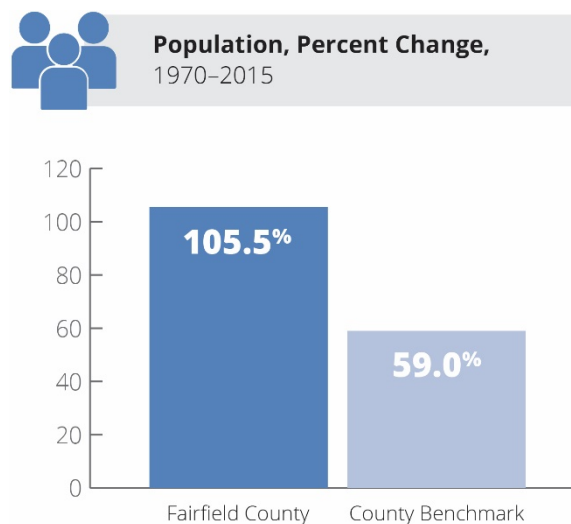
Introduction

A variety of planning-related concerns can emerge upon an in-depth review of demographics and population trends. These concerns often relate to the impact heightened population may have upon community services and facilities, the surrounding infrastructure, land usage, and natural resources. In addition, substantial changes in demographic trends over time can have implications upon public policy. Several studies indicate that new residents and different age cohorts often desire different types and levels of services. This desire or “perceived” desire is important to understand for public officials in developing actions that are responsive to the needs of residents.

Planning Conditions

Fairfield County has more than doubled its population since 1970, when its population was 73,868 (105% increase). Being in close proximity to Columbus and other key employment centers, Fairfield County has historically witnessed a growth pattern fueled from migration, rather than from natural change (births minus deaths).

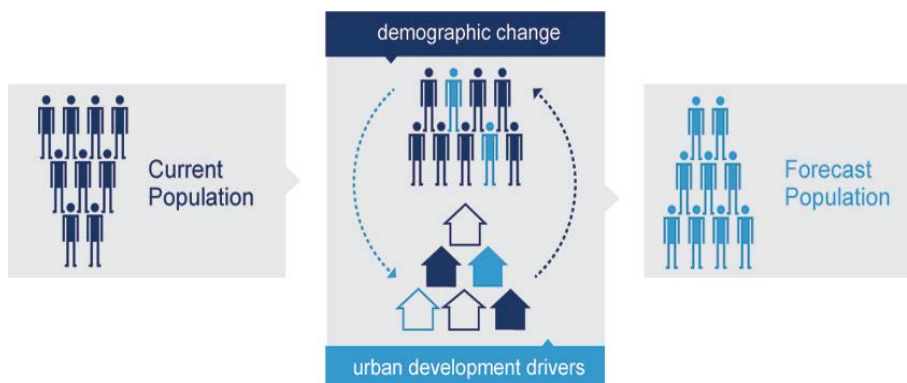
Since 2000, Fairfield County has witnessed a 23% increase in and is approximately 28,000 residents larger. Over 67% of this growth is attributed to migration, primarily due to residents leaving Franklin County. In fact, no other county in the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has so much of its growth attributed to migration than Fairfield County. Across Ohio, only Warren County has experienced higher net migration since 2000.

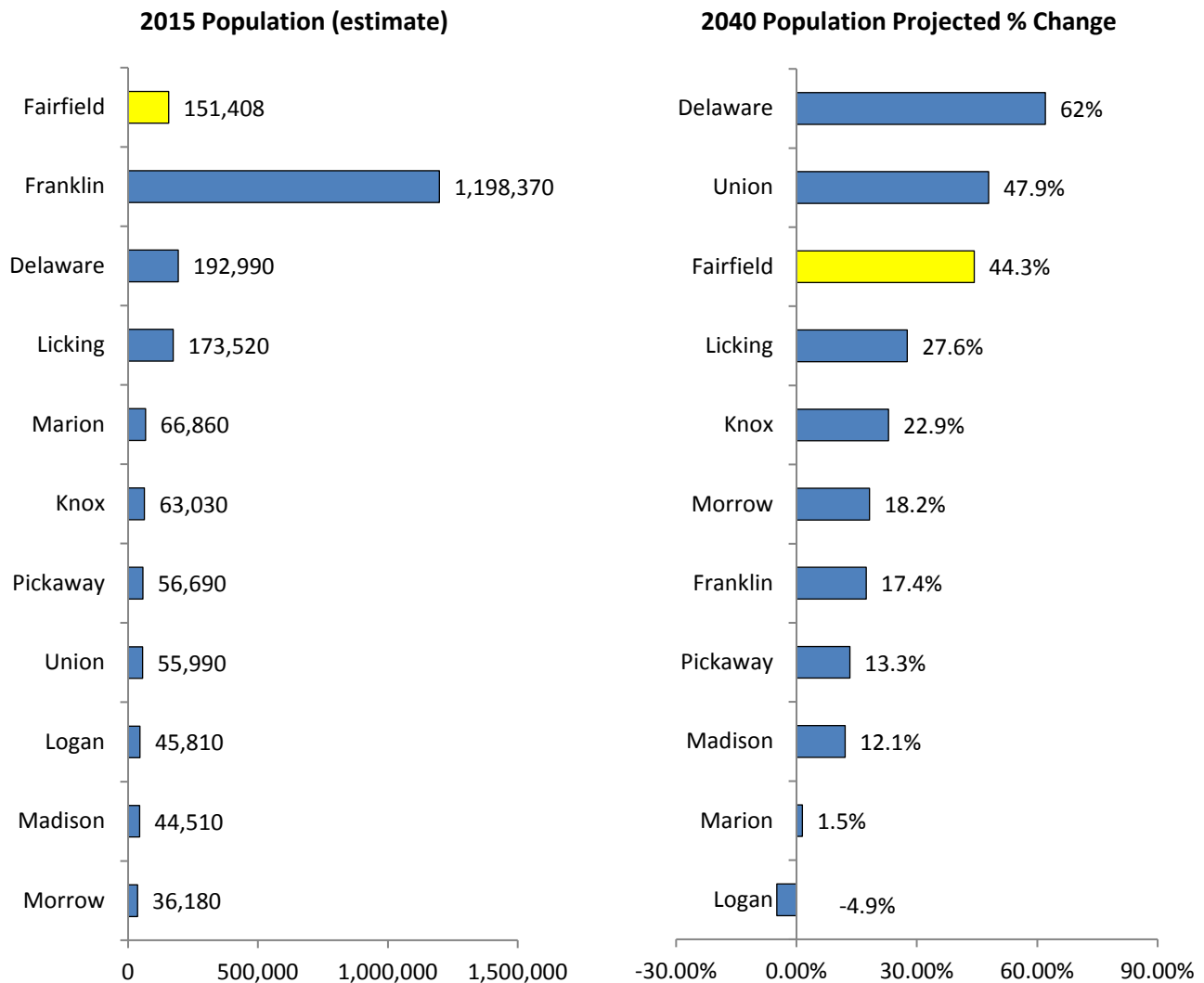


Regional Trends and Projections

Counties located within the Columbus MSA are anticipated to grow roughly 26%, from 1.7 million residents to 2.2 million residents. National growth is estimated to grow 31% during the same period.

According to population projections prepared by Ohio Development Services, Fairfield County is anticipated to be the third fastest growing county within the Columbus MSA, slightly trailing Delaware and Union Counties.





Some notable demographic changes are anticipated to occur during this timeframe in the Columbus MSA:

1. About one-third of the change in population will be attributable to seniors.
2. Nearly all of the growth that will occur will be from the ranks of racial and ethnic minorities.
3. About one-fourth of the total household change will be from households with children.
4. Single-person households will account for more than half the total change.
5. Downsizing households comprised of residents 65 years of age and older will make up 56% of the demand share of homebuyers. From 1990-2010, these folks comprised only 19% of homebuyers. Many residents 65 years of age and older will likely want smaller homes on smaller lots or attached options like condos.

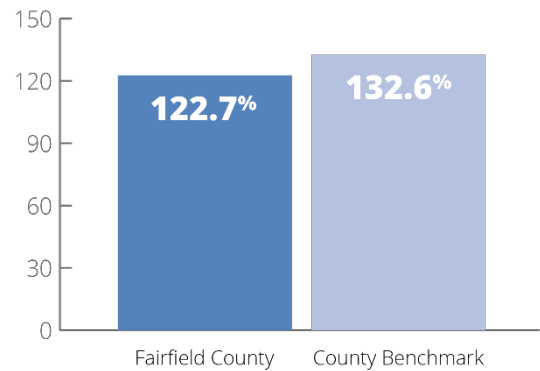
Fairfield County Compared to the Columbus MSA

Growth and demographic shifts within the Columbus MSA since 2000 have affected communities differently. When compared to the Columbus MSA, Fairfield County has benefited both positively and negatively. Namely:

1. Fairfield County experienced a 23% increase in residential population, compared to 19% in the Columbus MSA, and 20% increase in employment opportunities, compared to 15% in the Columbus MSA.
2. While changes in personal income have generally benefited Fairfield County (29%) and the Columbus MSA (31%) the same, there is notable differences in per capita and average earnings per job.
3. Fairfield County has a higher percentage of sole proprietors (27%) than the Columbus MSA (19%), which can assist in making the county more resilient to economic hiccups.
4. A high number of Fairfield County employees commute out of the County for work, more than most of the counties in the Columbus MSA. It is estimated that approximately 70% or more of Fairfield County's workforce commutes out of the county for work, while more than 50% of the jobs in Fairfield County are filled by residents of another county.



**Employment, Percent Change,
1970-2015**



Park and Recreational Programs will play a vital role in attracting and retaining residents in Fairfield County. To this end, the Fairfield Park District team up with local communities to ensure these resources grow in correlation to the population.

	Fairfield County vs. Columbus MSA	Fairfield County	Columbus MSA
Trends	Population (percent change, 2000-2015)	22.6%	18.9%
	Employment (percent change, 2000-2015)	19.8%	15.2%
	Personal Income (percent change, 2000-2015)	28.9%	31.1%
	Average Earnings per Job (percent change, 2000-2015)	7.5%	7.4%
	Per Capita Income (percent change, 2000-2015)	5.1%	10.3%
Prosperity	Average Earnings per Job	\$39,486	\$58,322
	Per Capita Income	\$41,680	\$47,157
	Average Annual Wages - Services Related	\$30,956	\$48,310
	Average Annual Wages - Non-Services Related	\$49,538	\$61,269
	Average Annual Wages - Government Related	\$44,973	\$59,629
Stress	Unemployment Rate (change 2000-2015)	0.9%	0.7%
	Unemployment Rate	4.3%	4.1%
Structure	Percent of Employment in Proprietors	26.9%	19.1%
	Percent of Personal Income in Non-Labor	31.3%	30.3%
	Percent of Services Related Jobs	72.1%	75.0%
	Percent of Non-Services Related Jobs	16.3%	12.0%
	Percent of Government Jobs	11.6%	13.0%
	Commuting (net residential adjustment share of personal income)	34.2%	-4.7%

Source: US Census; BEA, DOC; Bureau of Labor Statistics

Fairfield County Trends and Peer Comparison

A separate demographics benchmarks report was created to assist the FCRPC planning stakeholders in better understanding how Fairfield County compares demographically within the region and as a county with strong agricultural roots within an Ohio Metro footprint. Stakeholders also chose to compare Fairfield County to Licking County and Warren County, two counties with similar growth pressures.

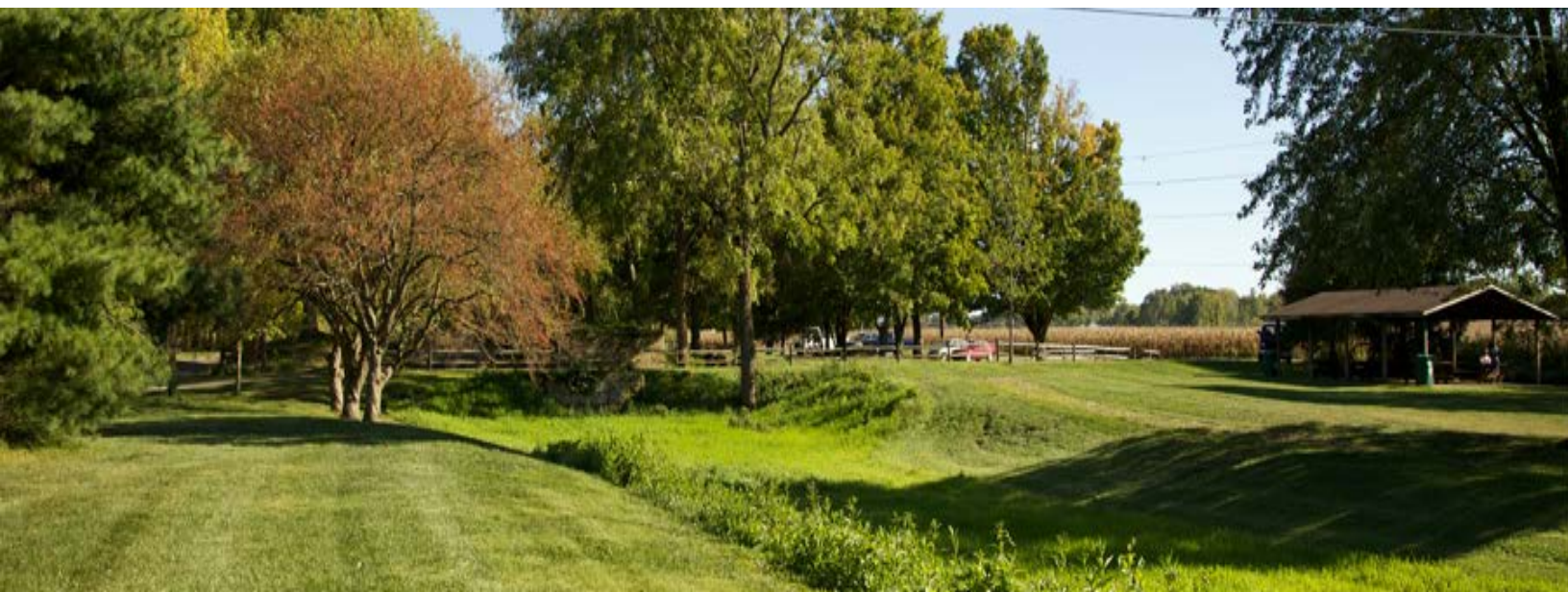
Fairfield County Peer Comparison		Fairfield County	Licking County	Warren County	Ohio
Demographics	Population Growth (% change, 2000-2015*)	21.5%	15.9%	38.9%	2.0%
	Median Age (2015*)	39.0	39.7	38.7	39.2
	Percent Population White Alone (2015*)	89.4%	92.7%	89.7%	82.4%
	Percent Population Hispanic or Latino (2015*)	2.0%	1.6%	2.4%	3.4%
	Percent Population American Indian or Alaska Native (2015*)	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Income	Median Household Income (2015*)	\$60,567	\$56,549	\$74,379	\$49,429
	Per Capita Income (2015*)	\$28,130	\$27,389	\$34,271	\$26,953
	Percent Individuals Below Poverty (2015*)	10.3%	12.7%	5.6%	15.8%
	Percent Families Below Poverty (2015*)	7.3%	9.2%	3.9%	11.5%
	Percent of Households with Retirement and Social Security Income (2015*)	26.6%	27.5%	22.6%	25.9%
	Percent of Households with cash Public Assistance Income (2015*)	2.6%	2.5%	1.1%	3.2%
Structure	Percent Population 25 Years or Older without High School Degree (2015*)	8.3%	10.1%	7.1%	10.9%
	Percent Population 25 Years or Older with Bachelor's Degree or Higher (2015*)	26.0%	22.8%	39.6%	26.1%
	Percent of Houses that are Seasonal Homes (2015*)	0.7%	0.9%	0.7%	1.1%
	Owner-Occupied Homes where Greater than 30% of Household Income Spent on Mortgage (2015*)	24.7%	24.4%	23.7%	26.4%
	Renter-Occupied Homes where Greater than 30% of Household Income Spent on Gross Rent (2015*)	45.9%	46.2%	36.6%	45.0%

Source: US Census; BEA, DOC; Bureau of Labor Statistics

Connectivity



For the future of our Connectivity, we envision the improvement and planned maintenance of our transportation systems, mixed with new investments in active mobility opportunities, and heightened and diversified recreational and social activities for residents of all ages.



Connectivity

Introduction

There are many things that bind Fairfield County residents together. While the physical connections are primarily promoted through the county's vast transportation network, social connections are largely a byproduct of the county's parks and recreational programs. Of the many themes that emerged during the planning process, roads and quality of life amenities like quality schools and parks and recreation, remain on the minds of residents.

"Make Fairfield County a stronger community -- not a 'store'. We have so many places to purchase items, but affordable places for families, youth, elderly to spend time together don't really exist."

The promotion of countywide active and passive connectivity opportunities is the responsibility of the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission's Active Transportation Sub-Committee. Created in 2009, to create, adopt and implement the Fairfield County Active Transportation and Open Space Plan, the 20 member committee made up of various state, county, local and non-profit entities ensures that pedestrian and bicycle oriented projects and plans are coordinated properly.

Goal

For the future of our Connectivity, we envision the improvement and planned maintenance of our transportation systems, mixed with new investments in active mobility opportunities, and heightened and diversified recreational and social activities for residents of all ages.

Planning Conditions

Roadway Conditions

The roadway system in Fairfield County is made up of approximately 195 miles of state highways, 353 miles of County roads, and 561 miles of township roads. County and township roads consist primarily of rural two-lane asphalt roadways with narrow shoulders. Some three and four-lane sections exist in more heavily developed areas of the County to provide for turn lanes. Most County and township roadways have lane widths of eight to nine feet with some more recently constructed sections having 10 to 11-foot lanes. The majority of County roads do not meet current design standards that recommend 11 to 12-foot-wide lanes with adequate shoulders for safety and capacity.

Most roadways under County jurisdiction have right-of-way widths ranging from 30 to 60 feet with over half being 60 feet. Some roadways in the built-up areas (i.e., Pickerington) of the County have wider right-of-way widths (a portion of Refugee Road has widths of 80 to 100 feet). It should be possible to widen roadways to meet design standards within a 60-foot right-of-way width, unless additional lanes are required. Roadways with right-of-way widths of 30 to 40 feet will probably require additional right-of-way in order to bring them up to standards.

Pedestrian Connectivity and Active Mobility Opportunities

The improvement of pedestrian mobility opportunities in Fairfield County is guided by the Rolling Forward: Fairfield County Active Transportation Plan. The Plan was developed in 2013 by the Active Transportation Sub-Committee of the FCRPC. It is reviewed annually by a number of county and local stakeholders.

The Rolling Forward Plan, which helps lay the basis to connect to the Ohio Erie Trail System, establishes active bike routes, nine major active pedestrian travel corridors and bikeway connections between destinations throughout the county (see *Map: Connectivity*). Another key component of the rolling

Forward Plan is a Share the Road signage program that is being implemented annually, and as resources become available. To date, Share the Road signs have been placed on the following roads:

- Hill Road from the Canal Winchester Corporation Limit to the US 33 Bypass
- Basil Western Road from Hill Road to Carroll Northern Road
- Carroll Northern Road from Basil Western Road to the Village of Carroll
- Carroll Eastern Road from the Village of Carroll to State Route (SR) 158

“We need bike routes and Amish horse roads added beside some of our roads, especially in the S.E. where the farms are hilly and small, ideal for produce farms and small farms.”

Building safe, active mobility opportunities is also advanced by the Fairfield Heritage Trail Association, as well as by the Fairfield County Park District (Park District). The Park District is currently working on a trail plan that will connect trails to their parks (Pickerington Ponds, Chesnut Ridge, Clear Creek, Blacklick, Slate Run and Walnut Woods) within Fairfield County.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is also currently working with Violet Township on a corridor plan for Refugee Road in an effort to promote multi-modal connectivity along the corridor which has been identified as a “high pressure growth area.” As part of the corridor plan, officials plan to connect multi-modal paths into a larger regional network into the city and west into the Blacklick Creek Trail to link Fairfield County with Franklin County.

Thoroughfare Plan

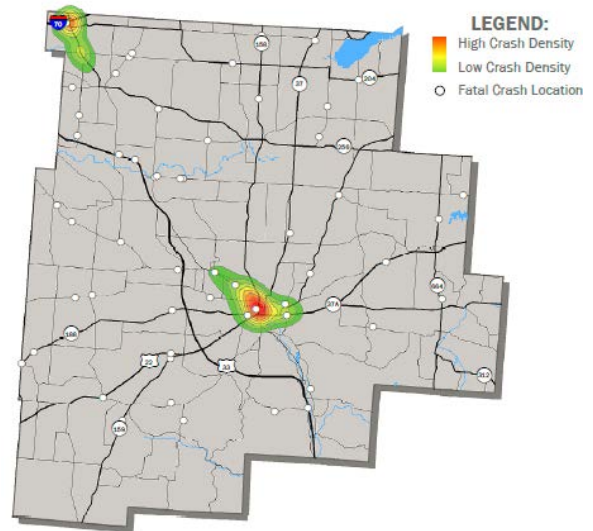
The Thoroughfare Plan was developed to support the goals of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan (see *Map: Thoroughfare Map*). As a component of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Thoroughfare Plan was designed by placing an existing inventory of streets into a functional classification system that provides a hierarchical organization of roadways, streets and highways based on their function and the type of services they are intended to provide. Among the major reasons for having a functional classification system is to identify those streets and roads that are eligible for federal funds for their upkeep and improvements. The 1998 Transportation Equity Act specifies that a street in an urban area has to be classified above Urban Local to be eligible for federal funds.

Transportation Conditions

As employment opportunities increase within Fairfield County and the Columbus Region, the total number of reported crashes and fatal crashes in Fairfield County has been trending upward in recent years, with the total number of crashes between 2012-2016 increasing 8%. According to the Regional Transportation Plan prepared by the Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (CORPO), the most significant crash areas are in Canal Winchester, Lancaster and Pickerington at key nodes along main thoroughfare routes.

Travel Demand

There are approximately 68,320 commuters in Fairfield County, of which 85% drive alone and 15% utilize an alternative method like carpooling and transit services. Comparatively, 81% of commuters in Franklin County drive alone. It is estimated that approximately 70% or more of Fairfield County's workforce commutes out of the county for work, and more than 50% of the jobs in Fairfield County are filled by residents of another county.



Source: MORPC

Freight

Freight movement within Fairfield County and throughout the region is supported by excellent mobility and multimodal transportation assets that include a county airport, two international airports, arterial rail corridors, as well as US 33 and 22 that provide access to I-70 and I-270. These assets help to place Fairfield County within a 10-hour truck drive of 50% of the United States population and 60% of US manufacturers.

Transit Services

Transit services throughout the County are provided by the Lancaster Public Transit System. Currently the service operates six deviated loop routes that operate Monday through Friday with numerous stops along the route. On-demand transportation services are also available but must be scheduled in advance. Rural inter-city bus service is provided by Gobus.

Central Ohio Rural Planning Organization (CORPO) (Regional Transportation Plan)

The CORPO was established in 2016 to operate as the State-designated rural transportation planning organization (RTPO) for Fairfield, Knox, Madison, Marion, Morrow, Pickaway and Union Counties. Staffed with professionals from the MORPC, CORPO's primary role is to develop a rural long-range multi-modal transportation plan collectively and individually for each of its seven member counties. The Fairfield County Rural Transportation Plan, 2018- 2045 was developed and is expected to be approved in 2018, and highlights transportation issues, priority projects and potential funding sources.

Transportation Priority Projects (Competitive Advantages Projects)

In April of 2017, Fairfield County submitted a list of seven potential infrastructure projects to MORPC as part of the Competitive Advantage Projects (CAP) initiative. As part of the CAP initiative, MORPC staff gathered available data to evaluate and rank each project in four categories: Travel Safety, Pavement and Bridge Conditions, Environmental Justice, and Travel Time Uncertainty. The seven transportation and connectivity projects deemed most valuable by Fairfield County officials are:

SW US 33 Corridor Project

The SW US 33 Corridor project will improve US 33 from I-270 to the Winchester Road interchange in Carroll. In 2016, this corridor experienced more than 1,000 crashes. Of these crashes, five resulted in fatalities while 292 more resulted in injury, 26 of them serious.

I-70 to US 33 Connector

The I-70 to US 33 Connector project will connect I-70 to US 33 via the construction of a new roadway. Officials believe that drivers using this corridor need to allow for 42% additional travel time to make this commute to arrive at their destination on-time.

Basil Western Road Realignment

The Basil Western Road Realignment project will realign Basil Western Road with Kings Crossing at Hill Road. 9,500 residents and 3,000 households are within the project study area. MORPC believes that the improvement would reduce the commute time of 9,500 residents and 3,000 households in the project area by 21% or more.

Ewing Street/Old 33 Connector

The Ewing Street/Old 33 Connector project will allow for a southerly bypass of Lancaster via the construction of a new roadway. Studies calculated by MORPC indicate that drivers in this corridor need to allow for 29% additional time above the average time necessary to make this commute to arrive at their destination on-time.

Far East Freeway

The \$164.5m Far East Freeway project will improve I-70 at the I-270 and Brice Road interchanges. In 2016, this segment of freeway experienced nearly 900 crashes. Of these crashes, one resulted in a fatality while 248 more resulted in injury, 12 of them serious. MORPC studies show that drivers in this corridor need to allow for 48% additional time above the average time necessary to commute through these two interchanges and to arrive at their destination on-time.

Lancaster to Columbus Transit Study

The Lancaster to Columbus Transit Study project will evaluate the feasibility of a Lancaster to Columbus High Capacity Transit corridor. Transportation officials believe that drivers in this corridor need to allow for 49% additional time above the average time necessary to make this commute to arrive at their destination on-time.

Fairfield County Broadband

The Fairfield County Broadband project will enhance broadband service within specified areas of the County (Amanda, Clearcreek, Hocking, and Madison Townships). More than 26,400 individuals and 10,000 households are within the project study area. Of the households, 36% contained a disabled resident and nearly 8% did not have a personal vehicle available.

Parks

The provision of parks and recreational services are provided by various entities in the County. The provision of countywide recreational services is the responsibility of the Fairfield County Park District (Park District). Founded in 1981, Fairfield County Park District operates 750+ acres of natural areas, historical structures, and open spaces for education, recreation and conservation in central Ohio. The park district features a former presidential cemetery, a section of the Ohio and Erie Canal, eight of the county's eighteen original covered bridges and a gristmill that boasts the nation's largest all-wood waterwheel.

Other valuable park and recreational resources include the Columbus Metro Parks, local municipal recreation departments, and nonprofit groups like the Fairfield Heritage Trail Association. These resources along with Buckeye Lake, the Wahkeena Nature Preserve, the Clear Creek State Nature Preserve, and public and private golf courses contribute to a strong recreational framework aimed at meeting the needs of both citizens and visitors. Additionally, there are a great number of historic properties, especially within the City of Lancaster, and a long list of community parks and water management areas, which further support the park and recreational needs of residents and tourists.



Standing 90 feet above the gorge of the falls, Rock Mill stands as a testament to the rich agricultural heritage of Fairfield County, whose “fair fields” attracted so many brave pioneers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Strategies and Recommendations

1) Create a Transportation Master Plan

During the development of the Plan, County officials, along with MORPC / RTPPO staff assistance identified several transportation and connectivity projects to implement in the future. These projects include:

1. SW US 33 Corridor
2. US 33 to I-70 North-South Connector
3. Basil Western Road Realignment
4. Ewing Street / Old US 33 Connector
5. Coonpath Road as East-West Connector (to minimize truck use of SR 37 / US 22 through Lancaster)
6. Far East Freeway
7. Lancaster to Columbus Transit Study

To this end, officials should pursue the feasibility of developing a Transportation Master Plan that supports these projects and also addresses vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian mobility, capital improvement planning and access management issues that were raised during this planning process.

Issues that the Transportation Master Plan could address include:

- The review and update of access management policies.
- The development of policies that guide transportation improvements in ASAs, e.g., limit transportation improvements to only maintenance and upgrading of nonstandard roads and under-capacity bridges.
- The identification of critical open space areas for trail and habitat linkages.
- The future placement of multi-use trails along major roadway corridors and railway abandonments to advance a continuous county greenway system. Communities along the newly realigned limited access US 33, like Carroll, have expressed an interest for a new pedestrian crossing bridge across US 33 to connect the community.
- Develop a proactive approach in identifying trail and route alignments to protect the rights-of-way.
- The expansion of public transit services.
- Financing and innovative financing methods.

2) Formalize Access Management Policies

The development of a formal access management policy was a recommendation of the 2002 Comprehensive Plan. This recommendation, and the methods highlighted in that Plan are still relevant today as large lot residential development continues in rural areas of the county, especially along rural county and township roads, and in areas where the movement of agricultural equipment occurs daily.

Because a majority of this rural residential development occurs through procedures that guide minor subdivisions and lot splits, county officials are without the authority to control and guide access points along roads unless it's a state highway, and then ODOT gets involved.

Some townships have adopted zoning techniques that limit curb cuts by adopting depth to width ratios (after lot splits are exhausted) but stakeholders during this planning process believe the time is now to adopt formal access management policies, and that combined access drives may be warranted to limit and/or consolidate multiple access points/curb cuts high-volume curb cuts on major thoroughfares, and to promote safety along corridors. In doing so, officials could reference Licking County's access management plan, or simply look to advance access management strategies outlined in the 2002 Plan.



Decades of minor lot split approvals have riddled main thoroughfare routes in the County with access management issues.

3) Expand Pedestrian Infrastructure and Mobility Opportunities

Fairfield County residents expressed an interest to have additional active mobility opportunities expanded within their communities. To fulfill this request, FCRPC and county officials should look to:

- (1) Continue to work with FCRPC's Active Transportation Subcommittee to implement and update, when necessary, the Fairfield County Active Transportation and Open Space Plan (2009).



- (2) Increase the placement of “Share the Road” and “Bike Route” signs along bikeway corridors.
- (3) Work with local communities to adopt “Complete Streets” policies.
- (4) Team with public and private schools in developing School Travel Plans (STPs) and participating in the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program through the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). Lancaster schools developed STPs in 2009, and funds were used to complete sidewalks gaps along Sheridan Drive to Medill Elementary. Connectivity issues at other schools like Ewing Junior High School will require additional coordination with the county and township officials due to annexation issues. Liberty Union Thurston Schools (Baltimore) created a STP in 2010, and Pickerington Local Schools updated their STP in 2017.
- (5) Work with stakeholders to develop new trailheads, parks, and trail extensions to better connect Fairfield County to the regional system.
- (6) Work with communities to inventory local sidewalk conditions and sidewalk network gaps, especially adjacent to public assets and neighborhoods.
- (7) Improve bicycle parking facilities at public facilities.

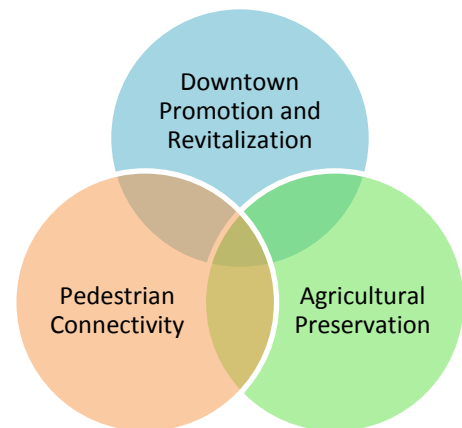


Examples of pedestrian connectivity include bike lanes, sharrows, and signs.

4) Develop a Wayfinding and Signage Plan

One thing is clear from the input gathered during this Plan, and that is that folks in Fairfield County believe that there is something unique about it. Many of the items that residents wish to improve, from pedestrian connectivity and downtown revitalization to the promotion of parks all lead to the development of a strategy or guidelines that promote, brands and links the county’s unique assets together. Three types of signage could be deployed: large scale gateway signs, medium, vehicular scale directional signs, and small, pedestrian scale directional signs.

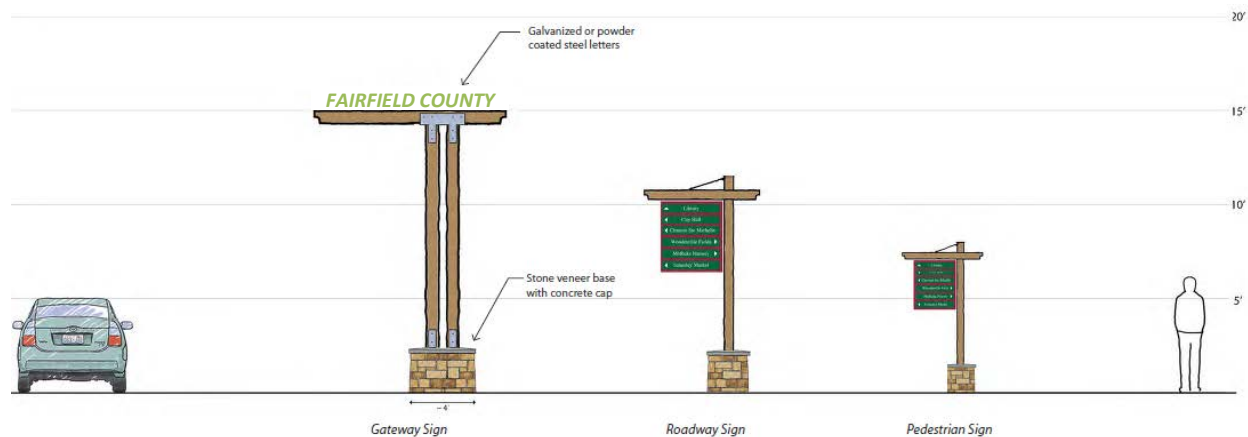
The development of these signs should be based on the character of the community and the defined “brand” of Fairfield County. The guidelines should be flexible enough to be adopted in versatile ways by many local jurisdictions in the county. The signs should also be designed in a manner that can be implemented



Three interconnected themes should be built into an “identity” promoted through a unified wayfinding and signage plan.

along state highways, so that they can be deployed as “Share the Road” Signs and deployed in a manner discussed in the Rolling Forward Plan.

Sign types should be innovative but based on uniform guidelines including the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials’ Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (AASHTO), and the National Association of City Transportation Officials’ Urban Bikeway Design Guide (NACTO).



5) Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan

The provision of countywide recreational services is the responsibility of the Fairfield County Park District. The 750+ acre footprint is currently maintained by a staff of seven.

Many of the residents surveyed indicated a desire for new and diversified recreational and social activities for residents of all ages. High on their list of issues were quality of life, preservation of the rural character of the County, and protection of the natural environment. Open space amenities including parks, recreation lands, and facilities were highly rated as factors contributing to quality of life. Such a plan could help officials address:

- The development of active and passive recreation opportunities (bike trails).
- The development of new parks and programming, possibly in growth areas of the county like Pickerington, Carroll, etc. In 2016, the Park District worked in collaboration with Violet Township, the City of Pickerington to conduct a survey to assess current and future recreation needs, and methods to promote the efficient delivery of programs/services and facility management. County park officials could utilize a similar approach with other municipalities in an effort to build effective programs and facilities desired by residents.
- Service delivery, maintenance planning, development of appropriate user fees, etc.
- Pursue additional recreational facility funding avenues to preserve vital assets.

“Lancaster City Parks and Fairfield County Parks are gems and continue to offer many education and recreation opportunities.”

- The improvement of visibility, access and linkages between parks and neighborhoods (connectivity plan).
- Local communities should pursue the feasibility of adopting parkland dedication/fee-in-lieu-of legislation as part of their subdivision regulations. Currently, the County requires a recreation fee (\$50 per lot within the plat) with each plat that is filed with the Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission, with the revenue going to Historical Parks.
- And most importantly, the planning process would help to address “identity” crisis (debate between historic vs. nature parks). To provide programming that residents identified as important during this planning process, existing resources may need to be allocated differently.

6) Leverage Grant Resources

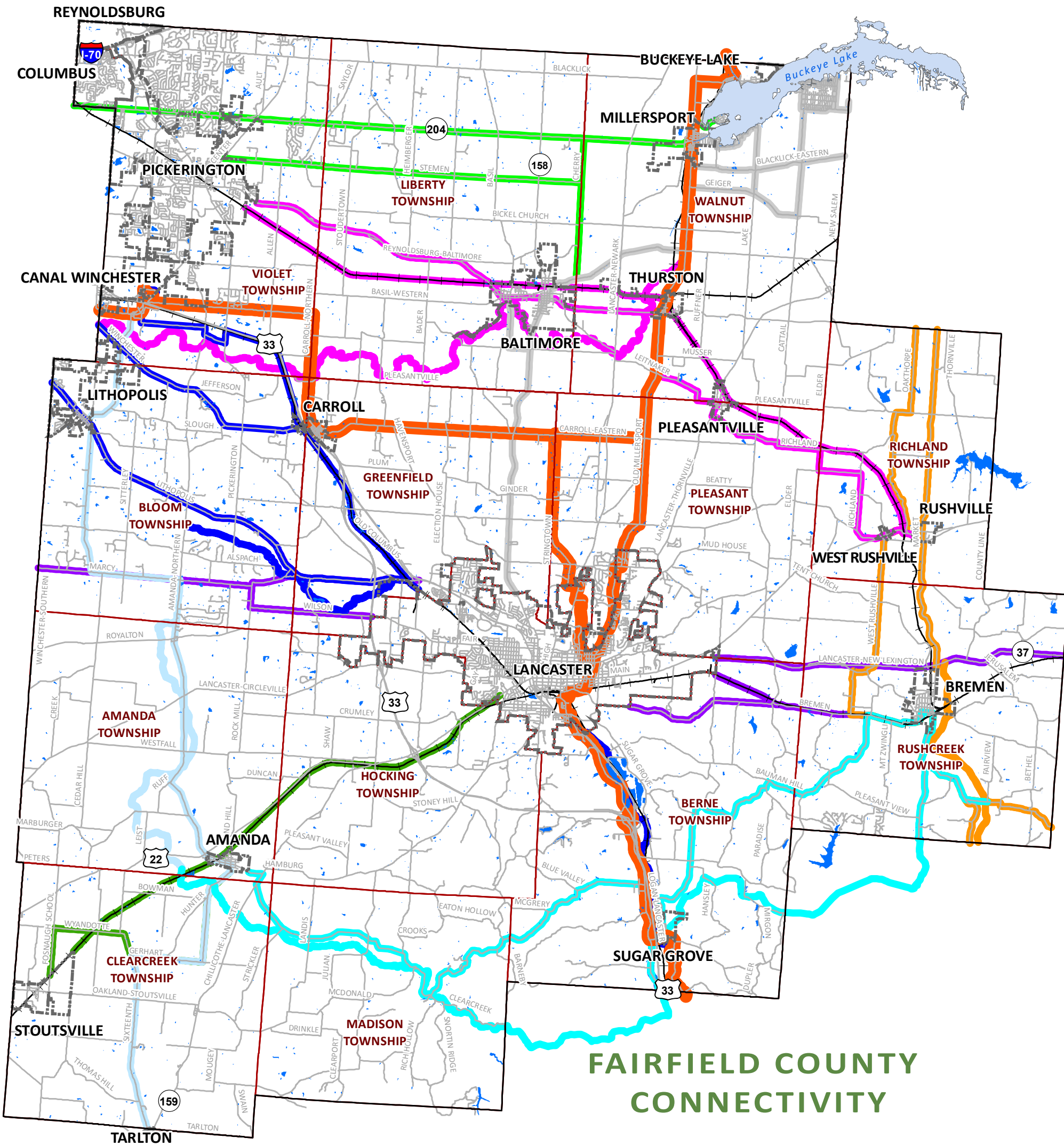
County and local officials should continue to pursue transportation funding to revitalize their active transportation infrastructure. New recreational facilities and services will require creative funding solutions, as the Park District operates primarily on levy funds, and the most recent levy took 11 times to pass. County and local officials could seek alternative means and techniques of capital financing, private investment, partnerships, and other available resources for recreational programs when appropriate. The utilization of recreation districts, which could pass levies for financial support for projects, should be considered to promote recreational opportunities that-in addition to meeting local needs- also overlap well with the goals of the Park District.

Some programs like ODOT’s Transportation Enhancement program provide up to 80% of the total construction cost for the project, including construction engineering, inspection and testing. Other funding sources like Clean Ohio and Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ (ODNR) Recreational Trails Program can be used to extend and connect trails to new destinations locally and regionally.

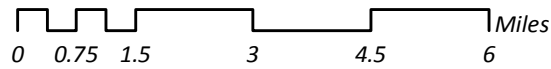
In addition to grant funds, County officials could also utilize its Transportation Improvement District or special improvement districts for funding connectivity improvements. While the program will not fund pedestrian infrastructure, Jobs Ohio’s 629 and ODOT’s Jobs and Commerce Program could be pursued in cases where job creation or retention is occurring near or adjacent to the area in need of connectivity / transportation improvements.



At one point in time, Fairfield County used to be home to over 200 covered bridges. Less than 20 remain as limited resources exist to properly maintain them along with meeting other park priorities. Some bridges have parks around them but no parking or amenities.



FAIRFIELD COUNTY CONNECTIVITY

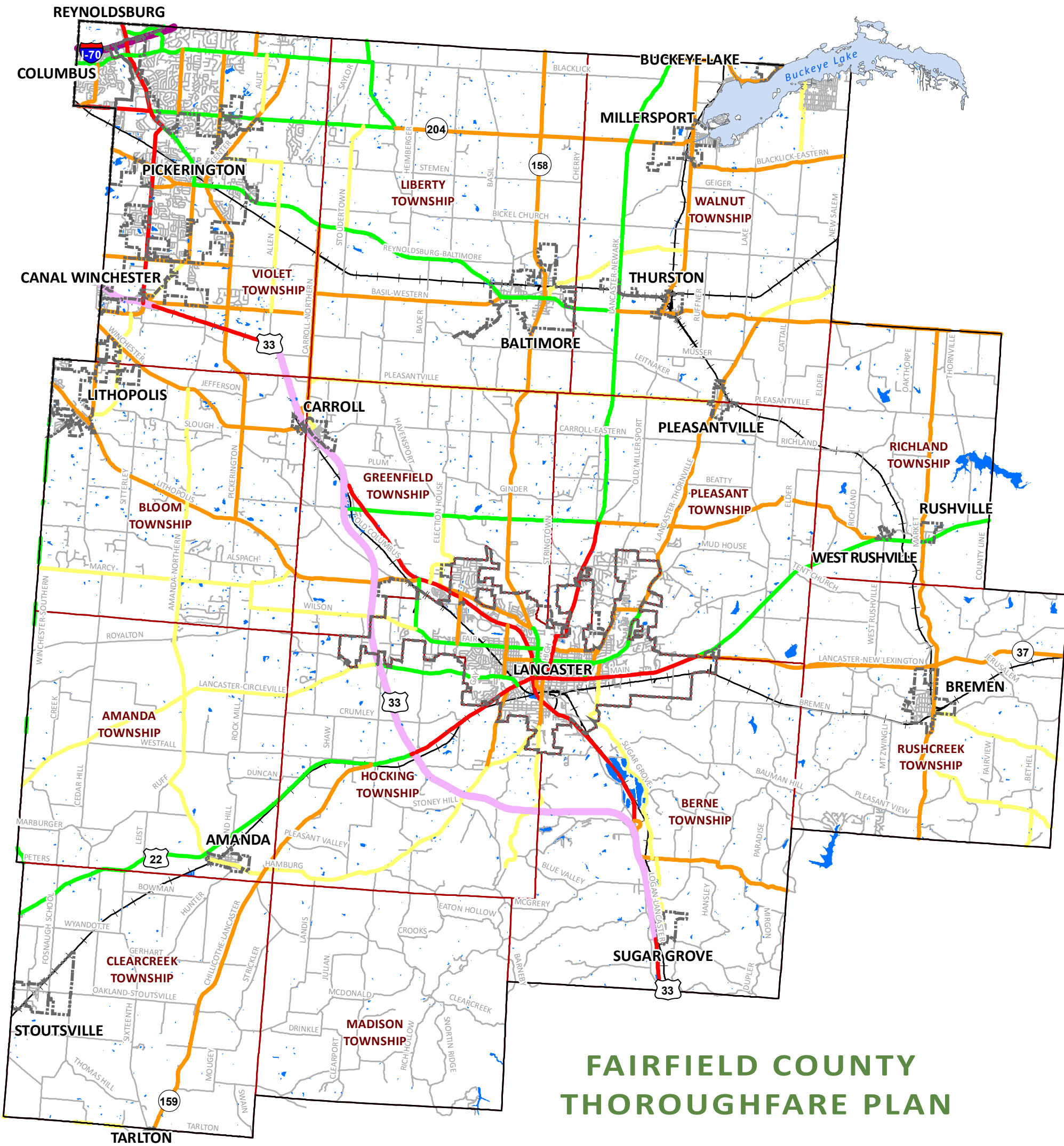


Source: MORPC, ODOT, Fairfield County Auditor, Reville

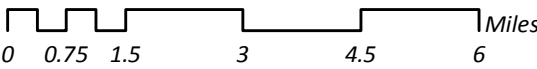


Legend

- Buckeye Lake
- County Boundary
- Municipalities
- Townships
- Open Water
- Local Roads
- Active Bike Routes
- Railroads
- Travel Corridor 1
- Travel Corridor 2
- Travel Corridor 3
- Travel Corridor 4
- Travel Corridor 5
- Travel Corridor 6
- Travel Corridor 7
- Travel Corridor 8
- Travel Corridor 9



FAIRFIELD COUNTY THOROUGHFARE PLAN



Source: ODOT, Fairfield County Auditor, Reveille

Legend

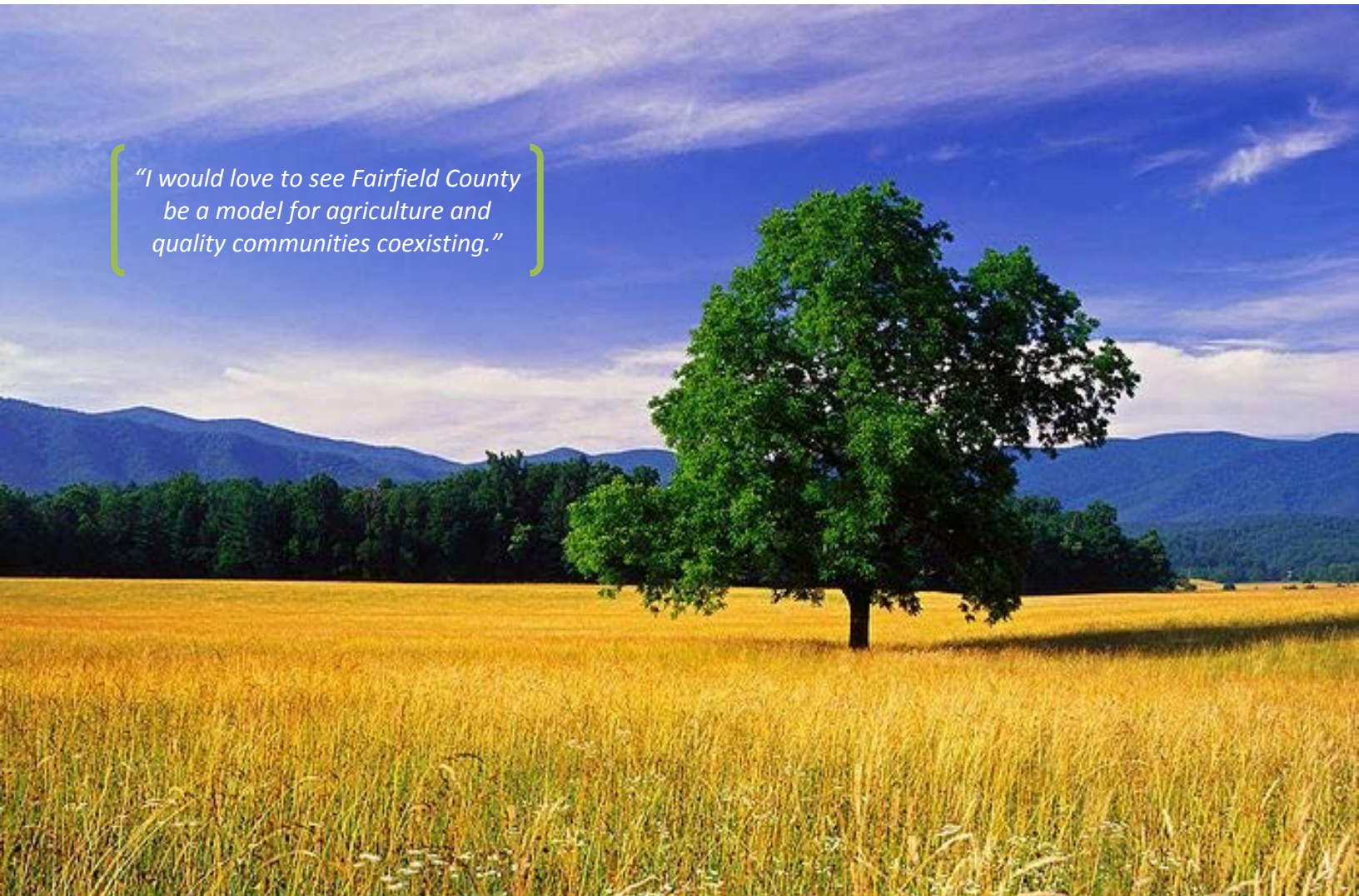
- Buckeye Lake
- Municipalities
- Townships
- Open Water
- Interstate Highway
- Principal Arterial
- Minor Arterial
- Major Collector
- Minor Collector
- Local Roads
- Railroads
- Other Freeway and Expressway



Growth Management

For the future of our Growth Management, we envision an interconnected mixture of planned land uses that preserve our prime agricultural and critical resource areas, enhance our neighborhoods, and accentuate the assets of our communities.

*“I would love to see Fairfield County
be a model for agriculture and
quality communities coexisting.”*



Growth Management

Introduction

Since the 1960's Fairfield County has experienced double digit growth. Over the past several years, an increase in single family development in the unincorporated areas has transformed not only the rural environment, but the existing demographic composition as well. More residents in the townships may increase the need for additional transportation-related services such as road and ditch cleaning. In addition, the migration of youth and young adults from the area, not to mention the "greying" of the baby boomers, has helped to increase the median age, thus translating to further expenditures in social and community service-related activities.

"We need a plan. Cities are getting closer. The best ground goes to development. The only way for the next generation to continue farming in Fairfield co is to have a land use plan! You can't make everyone happy, tough choices will have to be made to better the future."

Goals

For the future of our Growth Management, we envision an interconnected mixture of planned land uses that preserve our prime agricultural and critical resource areas, enhance our neighborhoods, and accentuate the assets of our communities.

For the future of our Neighborhoods, we envision maintained and connected neighborhoods through increased public and private sector investment in buildings and public spaces, and improved access to varied housing and healthy lifestyle opportunities.

Planning Conditions

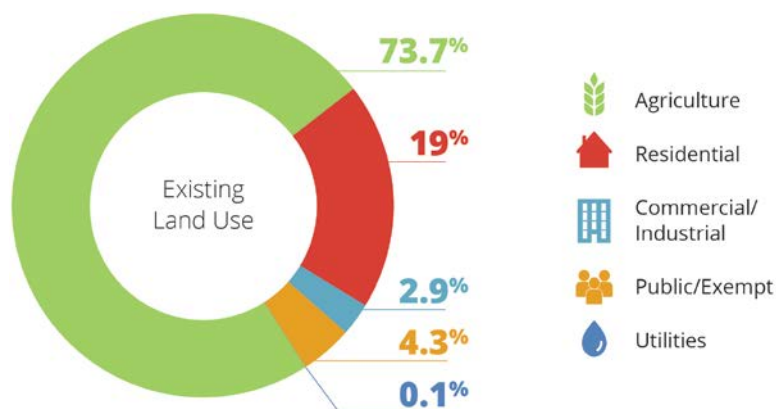
While approximately 70% of Ohio's 88 counties are experiencing negative population growth, Fairfield County's population continues to grow. Since 2000, Fairfield County's population grew 24% adding 29,183 new residents. Of this growth, natural change, primarily the difference between births and deaths, contributed to 33% of this population growth, while migration, meaning residents moving into the county from other locations, contributed to 69% of this growth over the last 16 years. This high level of migration will require a new level of coordination by various agencies and innovative, locally-defined planning tools to accommodate it in a manner desired by residents. Neighborhood conditions partially due to the recession / housing crisis and the lack of public and private reinvestment, will need to be addressed through heightened planning, regulatory and grassroots efforts.

Land Use Trends and Tools

Based on data from the Fairfield County Auditor's office, approximately 73.7% (234,274 acres) of the County's usable land acreage is in agricultural use, with 19% allocated for residential uses (see *Map: Existing Land Use*). Public and exempt lands account for 4.3%, and commercial and industrial uses account for approximately 2.9% of all land uses. Less than 0.1% of land is used for public utilities.

Approximately 92% of the county's agricultural acreage, or 215,697 acres, is enrolled in the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) program which includes wooded tracts and forested land under active management for commercial timber production.

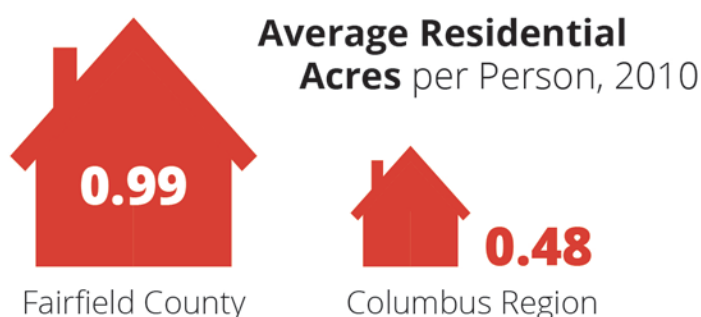
Total real property valuation in 2016 for all parcels was \$3,622,496,300. Of this total, 71% (\$2,570,088,470) was generated from residential development, 13% (\$459,318,020) from commercial development, and 1% (\$42,432,730) from industrial development. Agricultural lands accounted for 8% (\$307,116,050) of the total real property valuation. The remaining valuation (\$232,541,030) is derived from mineral rights and public utilities. Since 2002, combined real property valuations for agricultural/residential parcels have increased \$1,056,417,950, or 58%, while the combined real property valuations for commercial and industrial parcels have increased 36% (\$132,980,760).



A majority of the County's residential valuation is located in the incorporated areas of Lancaster (\$480MM), Pickerington (\$366MM), Columbus (\$102MM), and Baltimore (\$39MM), and the townships of Violet (\$900MM), Bloom (\$229MM), Liberty (\$156MM) and Walnut (\$152MM). Similarly, a majority of the County's commercial property valuation is also located in these same areas (Lancaster, \$208MM; Pickerington, \$103MM; Reynoldsburg, \$24MM; and Baltimore, \$7MM). Over 70% of all industrial land valuation is located in Lancaster.

Residential Development Patterns

In 2010, Fairfield County had the largest residential development per person (0.99 average acres), and the 11-county "Columbus Region" had the smallest (0.48 average acres). Although the percentage of acreage used for residential development per person has declined slightly since 2000 (1.01 acres per person), twice as much land used is used to accommodate residential development in Fairfield County than when compared collectively to the Columbus Region.



Perhaps of more importance is the predominance of low intensity development throughout the County and its close proximity to the County and township road system. A majority of rural residential development occurs along the frontage of county and township roads, which has continued to promote

access management and unsafe transportation conditions. It is currently estimated that 17,100 parcels, being served with private septic systems, are located in the unincorporated areas of the County.

Major / Minor Subdivision Activity

Although the last comprehensive plan (adopted in 2002) recommended a variety of options to minimize the use of minor subdivisions to better manage the proliferation and density of rural residential development, it appears that minor subdivisions, as a percentage of all subdivision activity, has increased from 77% in 2003 to 92% in 2016.

Subdivision Activity, 2003-2016

Year	Major Subdivisions		Minor Subdivisions			Minor Subdivisions as % of Total Activity
	Lots	Acres	Lots	Acres	% total exempted lots	
2003	648	776	393	2,662	81.7%	77.4%
2004	785	673	366	2,479	83.2%	78.6%
2005	270	360	384	2,575	84.6%	87.7%
2006	395	364	293	1,591	75.7%	81.4%
2007	32	76	279	2,144	84.3%	96.7%
2008	65	73	196	1,488	93.8%	95.3%
2009	35	269	132	896	90.5%	76.9%
2010	103	73	89	712	89.6%	90.7%
2011	19	78	111	766	94.9%	90.7%
2012	1	5	79	693	96.8%	99.3%
2013	86	60	128	958	92.7%	94.1%
2014	75	41	128	1,235	93.3%	96.8%
2015	117	83	141	1,726	94.9%	95.4%
2016	218	123	150	1,394	89.1%	91.9%
Total	2,849	3,054	2,869	21,319	88.9%	87.5%

Source: Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission

Farmland Preservation Programs

Fairfield County remains on the forefront of Columbus MSA counties in the protection and preservation of prime farmland. Since 2003, over 5,000 acres, or an average of 357.7 acres annually, of farmland and natural preserves have been placed in permanent easement programs. Aside from the easement programs, agricultural resources are protected through the deployment of the following programs and tools: the land use plan and agricultural economic development plan, CAUV program, Agricultural Districts, ASAs and, to some extent, township zoning.

Zoning

Zoning is a legislative tool for regulating land use by dividing areas into districts that permit specific types of uses, which include agriculture, residential, commercial and industrial. Zoning regulations identify minimum width and area requirements, as well as setback requirements, height limitations and density standards for each land use district. In Fairfield County, zoning is adopted and administered on a

township basis. 11 of the county's 13 townships are zoned. As required by the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), the FCRPC reviews and approves all subdivision proposals. The FCRPC makes a formal recommendation to the townships regarding proposed zoning map and text amendments.

Subdivision Regulations

The Fairfield County Subdivision Regulations establish the standards and procedures for subdividing real property in the unincorporated areas of the county. These regulations include standards for both major and minor subdivisions, as well as procedures for exempt lot splits. Major subdivisions require a preliminary plan and final plat to be approved by the Regional Planning Commission and various other review agencies. Divisions of land not involving the opening, widening, or extension of any new streets or easements of access are either minor subdivisions or exempt lot splits, depending on the size of the lot(s). If a lot is less than 5.01 acres, it is regulated by the minor subdivision standards. Minor subdivisions are limited to four lots plus the remainder from a tract of land¹. If a lot is 5.01 acres or greater or a sale or exchange of parcels of land without the creation of a new building site ("tie") is proposed, it is processed as an exempt lot split. All other land divisions are considered to be major subdivisions.

Comprehensive Plans

A variety of communities in Fairfield County have developed comprehensive plans (or embraced other planning efforts like development or corridor plans) to guide growth, development and/or revitalization efforts. Of all the communities in Fairfield County, only the Cities of Pickerington (2001/2005), Lancaster (1999) have developed comprehensive / growth management plans within the past 20 years, while Canal Winchester, Baltimore, Bremen and Violet Township have embraced downtown planning or other community outreach efforts.

Neighborhood Trends and Tools

Due to the continued adjustments in the global economy and the housing market crisis that began in late 2007, some census tracts in Fairfield County have experienced a higher number of housing vacancies and rentals than others. It is estimated that close to 50% of the houses in Lancaster and Baltimore are rentals. Other communities report higher than desired numbers of rental housing as well.

While some vacancy issues, like those recorded in Violet Township, could be discrepancies in the data or housing/apartment units that were yet sold, some census

"Fairfield County is a beautiful place, but it is slowly being destroyed by the out of control growth, especially in the Pickerington area. I consider this very negative. We need to preserve the beauty of our county, not over-industrialize and suburbanize it. Our communities can prosper without all of the chain restaurants and cookie cutter houses. Out of control construction and population growth is not the right direction for our county and is not the only path to prosperity. We will look back on this in 100 years and long for what once was. Now is the time to think about the course of our future."

¹ Limited to four lot splits in any one calendar year. After the calendar year is up, they can further split the parent parcel.

tracts consist of neighborhoods with historically higher turnover and ownership issues (central Lancaster and Millersport/Buckeye Lake).

Some locations in Fairfield County are classified as low-to-moderate income (LMI) areas and are therefore eligible to receive community development block grant assistance to alleviate conditions ranging from slum and blight to using money for additional planning studies. These LMI areas are located in Lancaster, Buckeye Lake (Walnut Township), Baltimore / Liberty Township, Pleasantville / Pleasant Township, Rushville / Richland Township, Bremen / Rushcreek Township, Berne Township and Madison Township (see *Map: Low-to-Moderate Income Neighborhoods*).

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program

The FCRPC works in conjunction with Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) to administer the County's CDBG Allocation and Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds on behalf of the Board of County Commissioners. FCRPC effectively utilizes these program funds to improve neighborhoods and infrastructure in eligible areas around the county.

In 2016, the County received \$193,000 in CDBG formula funds and also received its fifth Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) grant for \$500,000, this time for sidewalk improvements, street improvements, park improvements and drainage improvements in the Fairfield Beach neighborhood in Walnut Township. In 2017, ODSA awarded another Critical Infrastructure program grant to Fairfield County to improve a bridge in Baltimore adjacent to public facilities. Over the years, CDBG funds have been used for waterline, street, and sidewalk improvements in Amanda, Pleasantville, Baltimore, Thurston, Fairfield Beach, Rushville, and West Rushville.

The City of Lancaster also utilizes CDBG funds to improve LMI and blighted conditions in guidance with its Consolidated Plan. The city receives funding directly from the United States (US) Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In 2016, Lancaster received \$459,000, with over \$22MM received since 1979.

Fairfield County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank)

The Fairfield County Land Reutilization Corporation (Land Bank) is a tremendous community asset for its critical role in acquiring and repurposing vacant, abandoned, and foreclosed properties. The collaborative efforts initiated by the Land Bank and other county planning officials helps to improve property and the economy overall.

Since its inception, the Land Bank has been awarded two grants totaling close to \$1 million dollars. The monies received assist the organization in implementing the Neighborhood Initiative Program (NIP) Grant to improve vacant and blighted properties in communities throughout Fairfield County in an effort to prevent future foreclosures for existing homeowners. Over 50 properties have been demolished since its inception, and many more are being planned if resources are available.

The Land Bank's most recent grant will allow for the demolition of roughly 30 additional properties in Fairfield County while expanding the target areas beyond Lancaster, Violet Township, and Walnut Township. This is the second grant the Land Bank has received, bringing the total grant funding to \$843,000 and extending the program through December 2019. The average acquisition, asbestos testing/remediation, demolition, and greening of a single property costs around \$17,000.

Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program (CHIP)

Fairfield County recently received a \$400,000, two-year grant, for the Community Housing Impact and Preservation Program (CHIP) to assist low- to moderate-income homeowners residing in the county outside of the city limits of Lancaster. The CHIP Program is designed to assist income-qualifying homeowners with home repairs and rehabilitation that help ensure the health and safety of occupants and preserve the area's affordable, owner-occupied housing stock. Lancaster-Fairfield Community Action Agency (LFCOA) assists LMI households through a broad range of programs, and administers the CHIP Program on behalf of Fairfield County. Since 2000, Fairfield County has been awarded seven CHIP grants and has served 216 owner-occupied households with these resources.

Utilities

Centralized Water Systems

The primary water purveyors in Fairfield County are the City of Lancaster and Fairfield County Utilities. Lancaster has made new investments that afford it the ability to provide water service along new areas that opened up with the US 33 bypass.

Fairfield County Utilities serves over 6,000 customers and operates five wastewater and two water treatment plants in Fairfield County, and provide over 1.8 million gallons of drinkable water and treat over 2.3 million gallons of used water every day. The recent acquisition of the Greenfield Water & Sewer District in 2017 added another 600 customers to their service footprint now adjacent to the western limits of Lancaster's facility planning area. The County's two water systems have accommodated significant growth in the northwest part of the County. Earnhart Hill Regional Water and Sewer District is expected to make significant inroads in the southwestern portions of the County.

All of the County's villages and cities are supplied by public water systems. Historically, the only villages in the County not supplied by a centralized water system are Rushville and West Rushville. However, this situation changed and these villages now contract with Bremen to purchase water. Greenfield, Violet and Clearcreek Townships also receive a large part of their drinking water from centralized water facilities.

According to the inventory prepared for the Plan Update, most systems have been found to be in fair to good condition. Most of the water treatment plants are in at least fair condition overall. Those that are not are undergoing planned upgrades and/or rehabilitation. Nearly all are capable of supporting some service area growth, with the exception of Baltimore which is at 50% capacity, based on average

demand and 61% of capacity based on peak demand, and has limited ability to accept new development without both water and wastewater upgrades pegged at \$1MM.

Wastewater

Based on the individual system assessment, there is significant capacity to absorb growth in the Lancaster, Pickerington, and Fairfield County utilities systems. Canal Winchester also has capacity to absorb growth, but may use the majority of this capacity in Franklin County. Since 2002, Canal Winchester has seen a 162% increase in sanitary sewer customers (1,600 services to 4,200 services in 2017). These systems can meet the needs in the high growth northwest portion of the County in the near future. They are well positioned to accept wastewater flows from the growth areas, if the service areas are extended outward based on natural drainage.

If growth continues as projected, some of these plants will require expansion, which may in some cases tax the ability of the receiving stream to accept effluent from typical treatment systems. Alternatives to the high investment costs for refurbishing existing plants, expanding capacity, and upgrading treatment processes include retiring older plants and diverting influent wastewater to a larger system such as Columbus. For the smaller villages of the County, existing plants are generally adequate to accommodate the existing customer base and moderate growth, especially if issues with inflow/infiltration (I/I) are addressed through long range control plans.

Since 2002, capacity improvements have been improved at wastewater facilities in Buckeye Lake, Baltimore, Pickerington, and the Pleasant Lea subdivision treatment package plant. The Baltimore wastewater treatment plant Phase 1 and Phase 2 together was designed with a 20 year capacity of 2006, this capacity supports the service area delineated in the approved 208 Plan (Water Quality Management Plan prepared by MORPC). Fairfield County Utilities plans to make capacity improvements at the Little Walnut wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) improving its capacity from 0.75 million gallons per day (mgd) to 3.0 mgd, and at the Tussing Road WWTP, improving its capacity to 5.0 mgd.

On-Site Wastewater Disposal Systems

There is notable concern regarding the extent and adequacy of on-site wastewater disposal systems in Fairfield County, as existing on-site wastewater treatment and disposal systems generally do not have a good record of performance. These systems are either septic systems with leach fields, or aeration systems with surface discharge. While aeration systems with surface discharge have been permitted in the past where soils are poor, the record of failure of these systems makes their extensive use in new developments very questionable.

Substantial areas of the County have soils that are not well suited to leach field systems, especially in the growth areas east of Pickerington in Violet Township. Other areas, especially to the south of Lancaster, are not well suited to leach field systems because of soils and topography, but the pressure for development is generally less in these areas. Two areas of southern Bloom Township are also of concern due to potentially failing on-site wastewater treatment systems. Neither of these is close to an existing central treatment system.

Interjurisdictional Utility Providers

The Cities of Columbus, Reynoldsburg and Canal Winchester also provide water to limited areas of the County. Columbus and Reynoldsburg provide water to the northwest corner of the County, but are essentially blocked from service area expansion by Pickerington and the County (Tussing Road). Canal Winchester has limited service area growth potential within Fairfield County because it must compete with Pickerington and the County (Little Walnut) for new customers. However, some expansion is expected to occur. Perry County to the east may also play a limited role in long-term water supplies within the County.

Environmental Considerations*Ground Water Resources*

The availability of groundwater plays a vital role in guiding growth and development. Ground water in Fairfield County is derived from both glacial (unconsolidated) and bedrock (consolidated) aquifers. Yields from these aquifers are highly variable. These yields vary from as high as 500-600 gallons per minute (gpm) in areas along the US 33 Corridor and a large buried valley system that extends from Millersport/Buckeye Lake west through Baltimore to Franklin County, to as low as 10 gpm or less in Amanda, Bloom, Clearcreek, Richland and Rushcreek townships (*see Map: Ground Water Resources*).

Other notable ground water concerns include:

- Portions of northern Fairfield County where groundwater is considerable but wells and well yields may be less than anticipated.
- Portions of Richland Township and eastern Rushcreek Township where wells yield less than 3 gpm. Officials indicate that these wells typically have high drawdowns and represent a meager supply for even domestic purposes.

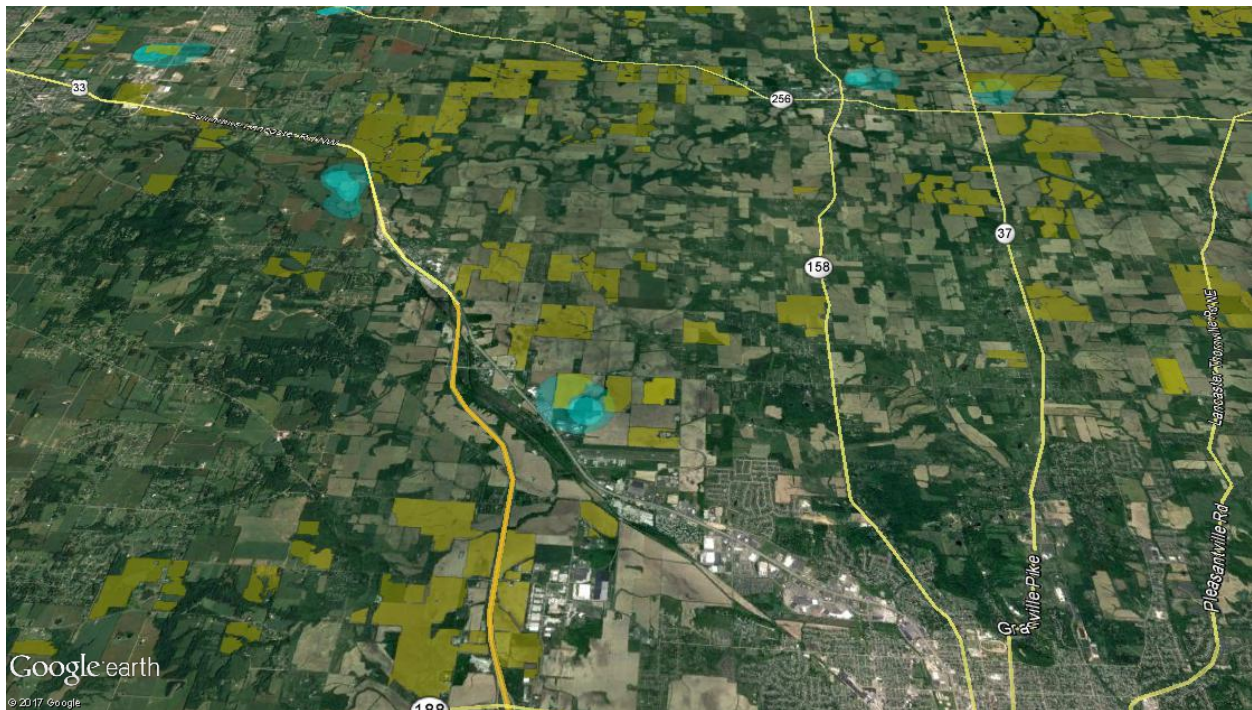
Ground Water Pollution Potential

Determining the location and areas where groundwater pollution potential is the greatest is a very important aspect of land use planning because non-point source contamination can be minimized through accommodating development with public utilities and through the implementation of BMPs.

A DRASTIC model (developed by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)) for evaluating ground water pollution was used for purposes of estimating Fairfield County's groundwater pollution potential (*see Map: Ground Water Pollution Potential*). The DRASTIC Pollution Potential Index (DPPI) is based on seven characteristics: D - Depth to recharge; R - Net Recharge; A - Aquifer media; S - Soil media; T - Topography; I - Impact of the Vadose Zone (Vadose is a type of wetland soil); and C - Hydraulic Conductivity of aquifer. Locations in north / northwest Fairfield County and along the US 33 Corridor appear to have the highest DPPI and a greater potential for ground water pollution.

Development Considerations

There are a variety of conditions within Fairfield County that should receive attention to minimize future issues due to haphazard development (*see Map: Development Conditions*). These conditions include the location of floodplains, steep slopes over 15%, gas wells, and source water protection areas (SWAPs), where the protection of surface water is vital to ensure proper drinking water. Development around these areas should receive additional due diligence to protect the general welfare and health and human safety of residents. The EPA's Division of Drinking and Ground Waters has developed an interactive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) map that should be reviewed along with any large scale development to prevent and minimize the pollution of these aquifers (<http://epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/swap.aspx>).



County planning officials should look to minimize the deployment of biosolids (areas in green) being applied to farmlands located in areas designated as SWAPs, or source water protection areas (areas delineated in blue).

Future Land Use Plan

Promoting good growth and development patterns at a scale friendly to community character and natural resources is a primary goal of this Plan.

A number of assumptions have gone into the development of the Future Land Use Planning Areas Map (*see Map: Future Land Use Planning Areas Map*). These assumptions are:

- (1) Development should be directed to the incorporated areas with the Growth Areas (and in some cases, Rural Management Areas) whenever possible through the use of zoning, available infrastructure and community services. Water and sanitary sewer service is available or is planned to be available in the future within the designated Growth Areas.

- (2) New development should be located adjacent to existing, similar development where access is appropriate, where public utilities are present, and where nodes of activity can be properly managed. Leapfrog developments such as lot splits on existing highway frontage and exempt 5+ acre developments should be discouraged. It is this type of development pattern that concerned many of the planning stakeholders. Wherever feasible joint access should be required, with cross-access easements to ensure adjacent properties can link with existing driveways.
- (3) BMPs should be implemented in all Future Land Use Planning Areas, but should first be implemented in Conservation Resource Areas that include slopes greater than 25%, floodplains, riparian corridors, wetlands, wooded areas, and the flood prone soils of the County.
- (4) The preservation of agriculture is not only supported by tools and best practices found in the *Plan Implementation Toolbox*, but through other Plan strategies that promote well-rounded community and economic development that help to keep the farmers that may have other non-farming jobs remain gainfully employed.
- (5) Because of the limitations of this Comprehensive Plan as an enforcement document, this Plan assumes a level of local responsibility to ensure BMPs and other sustainable land use techniques are implemented.

Six Land Use Planning Areas were developed to assist the identified stakeholders (*see: Plan Implementation Toolbox*) in utilizing the optimal set of tools to accomplish the Plan's Strategies and to manage growth, development, and farmland preservation activities. These Land Use Planning Areas are:

- (1) Agricultural Preservation Areas
- (2) Conservation Resource Areas
- (3) Flood Hazard Areas
- (4) Growth Areas
- (5) Protected Farmland Areas
- (6) Rural Management Areas

Agricultural Preservation Areas

It is goal of this Plan to support the County's Agricultural Economic Development Plan and ensure that 140,000 acres remain in agricultural production. As such, several areas of Fairfield County have been designated as Agricultural Preservation Areas. The areas were selected utilizing the LESA GIS model codified in the farmland preservation plan, and comprised of conditions conducive for farming like prime soils, limited development pressures (i.e., located outside areas with public or planned water and sewer systems) and limited environmental concerns (i.e., wetlands, floodplains, steep slopes, woodlands, etc.). The model has been vital in assisting the farming community in state easement applications and helping to preserve the most productive farming lands.

- ✓ **Recommended Land Uses:** Agriculture and supportive land uses, limited single family residential and supportive public/institutional land uses.

- ✓ **Development Intensity:** 0.20 to 0.50 DU/Acre (single-family residential). Density credits could be warranted in situations where best management practices, like combined access drives and cluster development techniques, are utilized and supported by adjacent property owners.



The Oak Creek Subdivision (1.8 acre lots), located south of Baltimore, is situated on lands identified in the 2002 Land Use Plan for Agricultural Preservation. Planning officials should continue to discuss whether low-density residential development is the best methods to preserve prime agricultural land.

Conservation Resource Areas

The Conservation Resource Areas consist of hydrological resources, wooded lands, wetlands, flood prone soils, stream buffers (150 feet from the stream centerline), and slopes greater than 25%. This Plan calls for each of these areas to be preserved utilizing one of more of the environmental overlay tools found in the *Plan Implementation Toolbox*. A majority of the County's wooded areas are located in Berne Township, the southern part of Hocking Township, and the eastern part of Madison Township. These are areas where slopes are greater than 25%. Stream buffers or "riparian corridors" extend throughout the County, and like the flood hazard areas, follow the major waterways of Clear Creek, Hocking River, Walnut Creek, and Rush Creek.

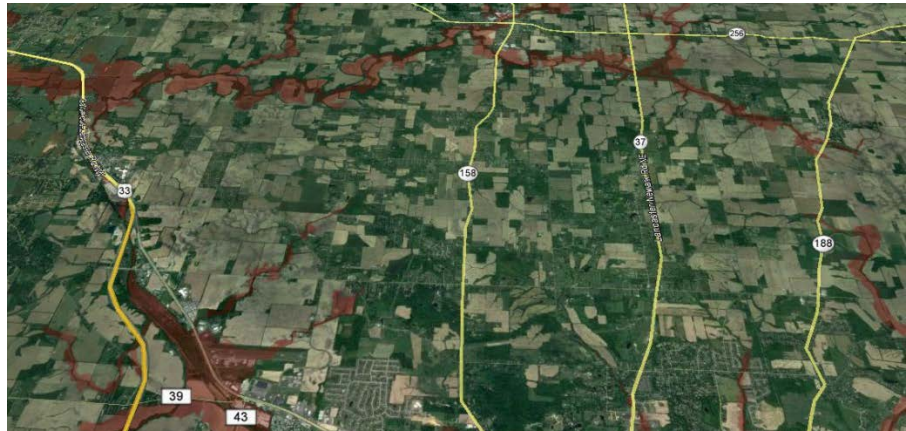
- ✓ **Recommended Land Uses:** Development is discouraged in Conservation Resource Areas. However, in cases where low density, single family residential development advances, it should occur in accordance with conservation design and best management practices at densities deemed appropriate by the Fairfield County Department of Health and other regulatory agencies. Other potential land uses would include agricultural uses and park and recreational uses.
- ✓ **Development Intensity:** To be determined on a case-by-case basis. Density credits could be warranted in situations where best management practices are utilized and supported by other regulatory agencies.

Flood Hazard Areas

Flood Hazard Areas are identified as separate Future Land Use Planning Area to assist county and local officials in delineating where additional development constraints may be warranted, and where

hydrological resources may be located. All lands within the 100-year flood plain are regulated by the FCRPC through the Flood Damage Prevention Regulations. Site development within these areas are subject to the FCRPCs review and approval process.

- ✓ **Recommended Land Uses:** Development is discouraged in Flood Hazard Areas. However, in cases where development advances, it should occur in accordance with conservation design and best management practices at densities deemed appropriate by regulatory agencies.
- ✓ **Development Intensity:** As determined by the regulatory agencies upon review of specific site constraints.



Flood Hazard Areas exist throughout Fairfield County, but appear pronounced along the US 33 corridor in growth areas located in Violet Township and Lancaster, and in Liberty, Walnut, and Richland Townships.

Growth Areas

Areas of Fairfield County designated as Growth Areas represent lands within municipal boundaries, public utility service areas, and township areas zoned for business, commercial, and industrial uses. Because all of Violet Township is zoned for some sort of development type (other than agriculture), it was assumed that the entire township would be designated as a Growth Area.

While these areas have been selected as Growth Areas, this Plan recommends that development occur in these areas only when the provision of public services and facilities, such as police and fire protection, roads, water and sanitary sewer service, and parks, is suitable enough to accommodate it. And because certain land uses have better ratios of costs of services to revenue generation, this Plan recommends development in these Growth Areas to be a balanced mix of land uses that create sufficient tax revenue streams that allow new growth to pay for the costs of services needed and not create fiscal imbalances.

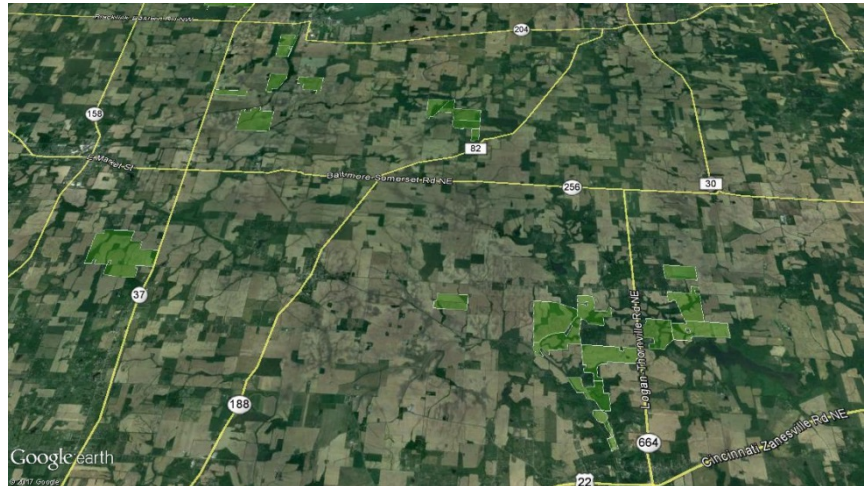
Some locations within these Growth Areas also have conditions that will require the proper deployment of best management practices, incentives and other regulatory program to guide growth, and conserve and protect natural and environmental resources.

- ✓ **Recommended Land Uses:** Single family attached, and detached residential, multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, park/recreation, public and institutional.
- ✓ **Development Intensity:** 6 DU+/Acre for single family residential in similarly developed areas served with public utilities, with density bonuses provided for dedicated open spaces and; 0.25 - 0.50 DU/Acre for single family residential land uses in areas not yet served with public

utilities, with density bonuses possible where best management practices are utilized and supported by the Fairfield County Department of Health based on septic suitability considerations and other regulatory agencies.

Protected Farmland Areas

Protected Farmland Areas represent areas of the county where farmlands have been permanently protected through one or more agricultural preservation program like easement purchase and/or the conservation easement programs. The purpose of these programs is to isolate these areas from development conditions that are not mutually-beneficial to the farming community. It is recommended that FCRPC continue to work with township and county officials, and the farming community, to implement the most appropriate tools found in the Plan Implementation Toolbox to limit development in and adjacent to these areas.



Clusters of Protected Farmlands, highlighted in green, are prominent in Northeastern portions of Fairfield County in Walnut and Richland Townships.

- ✓ *Recommended Land Uses:* Agricultural land uses
- ✓ *Development Intensity:* N/A

Rural Management Areas (RMA)

Portions of Fairfield County are designated as Rural Management Areas (RMA). These areas are generally outside of the designated growth areas and are not identified as prime agricultural lands by the criteria that developed Agricultural Preservation Areas. RMAs are also not comprised of variables that would recommend them to be identified as Conservation Resource Areas.

These areas are currently typified by low or very low density rural residential development. The management of these areas should be supported by the *Plan Implementation Toolbox* in a manner that promotes sustainable development and other best practices for issues like access management and combined access drives (CADS), conservation / compact development, and the protection of natural resources like steep slopes, trees, wetlands, water resources, etc.

Lands in these areas should also be developed at densities deemed appropriate by the Fairfield County Department of Health based upon septic suitability considerations. However, compact, denser developments, where compatible, could be warranted in these Areas to take development pressures off of Conservation Resource Areas and Agricultural Preservation Areas. RMAs also make logical annexation

areas and potential long range economic development areas as many of these areas are adjacent to municipal corporations and/or not located in areas suitable for agricultural preservation.

- ✓ **Recommended Land Uses:** Single family residential, neighborhood commercial, planned business park, public and institutional, and park and recreational land uses.
- ✓ **Development Intensity:** 0.20 to 0.50 DU/Acre (single-family residential). Density credits could be warranted in situations where best management practices, like combined access drives and cluster development techniques, are utilized and supported by adjacent property owners.

Strategies and Recommendations

1) Develop effective nuisance and property maintenance standards

The housing crisis that began in late 2007 is still on-going in many of Fairfield County's communities. Not only has it culminated into the tighter lending requirements, it has affected the perception of homeownership as not being a valuable method to attain sense of community and wealth. In fact, since 2010, homeownership has declined 5% from 76% to 71%. Also affecting homeownership is liquidity of starter homes and neighborhoods. To this end, County and local officials should begin to:

- Identify sources of financial and other assistance that can be used by property owners facing code enforcement actions for major renovations.
- Partner with Fairfield County Department of Health, Building Department, Regional Planning Commission, and local jurisdictions to create a unified and comprehensive property maintenance code enforcement system that could include tools, such as:
 1. The registration of vacant properties, to include residential, commercial and industrial. Annual registration fees could be levied ranging from \$400 for the first year up to \$1,600 annually in the first four years of vacancy.
 2. Property maintenance code, which could include simply the adoption of the International Property Maintenance Code.
 3. Point of sale inspections.

2) Leverage incentives and tools to improve housing and public infrastructure in targeted neighborhoods

A theme that resonates with a majority of the planning stakeholders is that while change may be coming- and a necessary element of community growth- that it should not come at the cost of existing neighborhoods and infrastructure. Even with the variances recorded between the three themes that emerged (revitalization, growth management, and rural and agricultural preservation) the reduction and elimination of property and neighborhood blight was a top six priority. To this end, county and planning officials should:

- Coordinate with the Fairfield County Land Bank to address property blight and promote neighborhood revitalization.

"It seems the standard we hold ourselves to have declined significantly. There needs to be building codes as far as appearance. A coat of paint goes along way."

- Target the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program to specific neighborhoods to provide for property tax abatement for residential property investments.
- Continue to pursue CDBG resources from ODSA, targeting 2010 Census Designated LMI areas and performing LMI surveys where necessary to qualify other projects / communities for funding.
- Pursue the feasibility of utilizing special improvement districts and tax increment financing to improve and update vital public infrastructure.

3) Promote grassroots efforts and public/private partnerships that enhance neighborhood quality of life

There are a variety of programs and resources that help to uphold a quality of life within neighborhoods. It is recommended that county and local officials utilize and target the CRA Program to specific neighborhoods to provide for property tax abatement for existing residential property investments. Pickerington, Baltimore and Lancaster utilize the CRA program for eligible commercial and industrial projects, but do not provide for abatements for residential reinvestments. The same program could also be used to help promote revitalization in neighborhoods where there is blight and a lack of residential reinvestment or to promote the development of “green” or age-friendly developments.

Some neighborhoods are in need of street and other neighborhood updates. One key tool to help fund these improvements is through the utilization of a Residential Improvement District (RID). A RID, if agreed upon by the majority of the property owners, would assess a fee to properties within the RID. Funds raised from this self-assessment would be placed in a special city account to finance specific area projects. The formula to determine that fee would be decided on and agreed to by the property owners.

Certain neighborhoods and households may be eligible for CDBG funds to mitigate slum and blight issues and to assist LMI neighborhoods, among other issues. For a better understanding of these eligible CDBG areas see *Map: Low-to-Moderate Income Areas*.

It is recommended that County planning officials work with local community leaders to encourage the development of neighborhood associations and organize community forums to address strategies that affect their neighborhoods. Many residents noted a preference in the community survey that maintenance of private properties and code enforcement were needed in their neighborhoods. Private, more localized, efforts could help make the job a bit easier and result in greater impact and more successful enforcement. These groups could ensure that the rental and other property owners in their neighborhoods are abiding by the law and are reporting all rental properties to local officials.

These neighborhood groups work not only with local officials and neighborhood associations, but also with the School District; businesses, churches and agencies within their neighborhoods; civic and fraternal groups in the community; the local police, parks, service departments; local banks; and, residents of the neighborhoods.

4) Develop and Deploy Sustainable Land Use and Zoning Tools

A Plan Implementation Toolbox was developed as part of this Comprehensive Plan to help promote the timely implementation of growth and revitalization practices. While future growth will best be accommodated by local communities utilizing density-friendly zoning techniques, methods need to be deployed immediately to minimize the development footprint in the unincorporated areas of the county, where 88% of the development occurs with the least amount of planning oversight because it's regarded as a minor subdivision.

Within the next five years, planning officials should look to get substantial momentum on:

- Working with local communities on the benefit of developing a comprehensive plan (and for some townships-a zoning resolution) to assist with the uniform implementation of zoning and growth management and revitalization efforts.
- Adopting conservation development zoning practices (*see: Plan Implementation Toolbox*) and amending the subdivision regulations to strengthen environmental assessment requirements.
- Updating subdivision regulations to strengthen environmental assessment requirements, minimize minor subdivisions (lot splits), flag lots, and reduce the footprint of exempted 5+ acre development patterns.
- Use zoning and other best practices to discourage the growth of well and septic systems within critical resource areas and/or areas with identified development constraints
- Pursuing the feasibility of the County Building Department to provide oversight in the realm of residential development. Currently, the building department provides oversight with commercial construction projects only.



Planning Officials should work with local township officials to promote more compact planned unit developments (PUD) in Growth Areas and Rural Management Areas, where feasible. Reducing minimum PUD zoning acreage requirements in townships that utilize them could be beneficial.

Attempting to promote any of these planning concepts will require a good line of communication among all parties involved. One method in building the bonds and relationships necessary to promote these concepts is to establish an annual planning and development forum facilitated by the FCRPC or by an outside facilitator. This forum would provide a platform by which all political subdivisions can voice their unique problems and concerns, and allow those concerns to be handled in a timely manner and under professional advice.

5) Protect Prime Agricultural Lands

The Fairfield County Development and Land Use Plan adopted in 2002 helps to set the tone for the protection of prime farmland. Today, with the help of the Fairfield County SWCD and other organizations, over 5,000 acres of county farmland has been permanently preserved through easements. Agricultural lands are also preserved through other programs such as: the Current Agricultural Use Valuation Program, Agricultural Districts, Grasslands/Ranchlands Protection Programs, and ASAs. County officials should continue to implement strategies highlighted in this Plan to increase the awareness of conservation and incentive programs within the farming community and also pursue the renewal of the ASA program, which is set to expire in 2018.



The Smith Farm, located in Pleasant Township, is permanently protected by an agricultural easement. A portion of the farm abuts Zane's Trace, a frontier road constructed in 1797 under the direction of Col. Ebenezer Zane through the Northwest Territory of the United States.

6) Beautify Fairfield County

Visitors entering Fairfield County from the west on US 33, in short-order, can sense that they are entering a unique place. This experience is fully imagined a few minutes away from Lancaster, where topographic relief is noticeable and distant vistas resemble the Shenandoah Mountains.

In the early 2000s, efforts to advance design and aesthetic guidelines along the US 33 corridor were embraced by county planning officials and local officials from Lancaster, Carroll, and Berne, Greenfield, Hocking Townships. These efforts culminated in the development of the US 33 US Route 33 Bypass Corridor Development Plan and the US Route 33 Corridor Design Manual, and in 2004, a corridor overlay district was developed for US 33 but only adopted by Carroll and partially by Hocking Township. Today many areas along the old US 33 remain aesthetically-impaired. While the Plan was targeted toward US 33, its strategies to blend aesthetics into development standards that promote community character are still relevant today, and could be applied to other major corridors and areas in Fairfield County.

FCRPC officials should continue to work with its members to add their zoning design standards to provide guidance in the following areas:

- Open Space Requirements
- Building orientation
- Parcel Access and parking setbacks
- Landscaping
- Site Drainage
- Sign Criteria
- Site Lighting
- Design / Landscaping Standards for Public Spaces and Facilities, and Rights of Way.

“I would like to see more beautification along US 33”

7) Protect Sensitive Areas

Based upon interest expressed by residents, the 2002 Comprehensive Land Use and Development Plan helped to lay the basis for preserving natural resources and farmland. One area specifically being asked about during the planning process was whether riparian setbacks should be developed. As part of the LESA GIS model that developed “critical resources” to protect, a riparian setback buffer was applied to hydrological resources like streams, creeks, and wetlands. However, 15 years later, no tools to protect riparian corridors and other vital environmental resources have been developed.

It is recommended that county and local officials pursue the feasibility to adopt best practices and other planning and zoning techniques to protect these assets, namely by:

- Developing a model riparian corridor overlay to protect the environmental and passive recreation qualities of the county’s waterways.
- Regarding stream setbacks, county officials could adopt the 200 foot setback from stream centerlines for major waterways Walnut Creek, Hocking River, Rush Creek, and Clear Creek, and a 50 foot setback for all other tributaries. In addition, riparian setbacks could be established for site specific purposes (wetlands, etc.) using the Meander Belt Width Calculation or the Hydrologic Engineering Center’s-River Analysis System (HEC-RAS) study method. These methods are described in more detail in the Appendix of the Fairfield County Active Transportation and Open Space Plan developed in 2009.
- Protecting water quality through the development of zoning guidelines that buffer polluted areas and areas where wells could not be drilled, i.e., Bremen aquifer pollution, closed and active landfills, etc.
- Preserving sensitive areas and historic assets and structures through the use of BMPs.

- Minimizing forest loss and fragmentation, and maintain healthy woodlands in the Hocking Hills Region through the implementation of Hocking Hills Woodland Management Plan.
- Supporting the actions of private landowners in restoring and conserving natural preserves.



Coyote Run Farm, is an 800-plus acre farmstead in Violet Township along Pickerington Road. The site, which is ripe with ancient vernal pools and original growth forests, is being restored by its owners Dave and Tammy Hague to be utilized for future generations.

8) Develop a Water and Sewer Master Plan

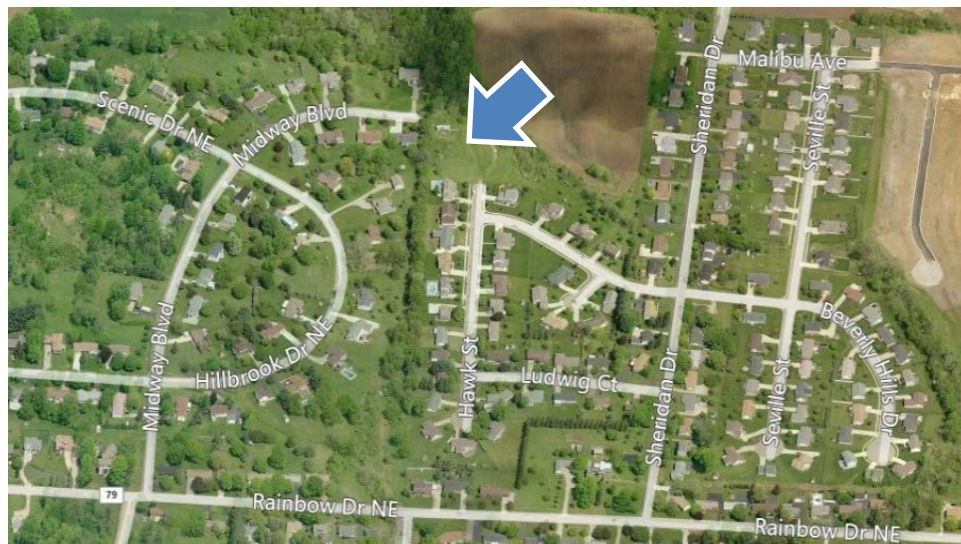
As part of this Plan update, a discussion surfaced among various parties concerning the need for additional dialogue to occur between county utility officials, planning and economic development officials, local officials and the farming community about the timing and location of public utilities. The proper accommodation of economic development opportunities and the preservation of vital agricultural resources all require that a framework for the location of future utilities be developed. To address these concerns, County Utilities could work with local communities and the farming community to develop a plan to guide for infrastructure investments, especially in Growth Areas and RMAs, key corridors, and areas like Walnut Township, where just a few years ago issues arose with the expansion of waterlines into large areas of farmland.

The northwest “growth areas” of the county also have overlapping service planning boundaries between County Utilities, Pickerington, Columbus, and Canal Winchester. With the recent acquisition of the Greenfield Water & Sewer District, County Utilities is now working adjacent to growth areas that could also be serviced by the City of Lancaster, where issues of service encroachment are likely to continue. Service boundary and coordination issues also exist between communities located within northwest growth areas of the county.

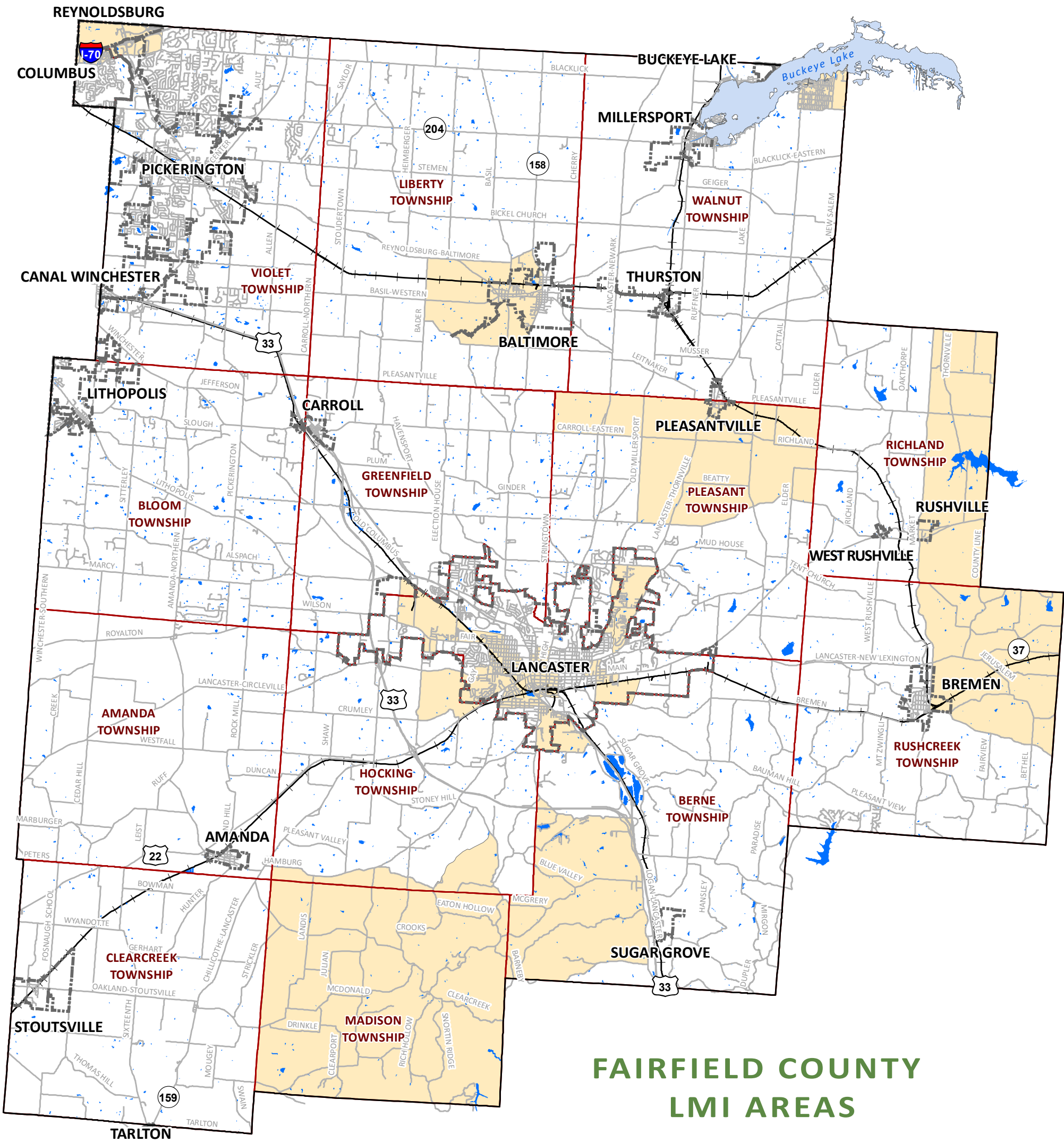
9) Amend the Fairfield County Subdivision Regulations

The planning stakeholders believed the time is now to review the Fairfield County Subdivision Regulations for potential improvements. These improvements were deemed an important element to better manage land use patterns, and include more restrictive minor subdivision provisions to minimize lot splits, flag lots, and to promote pedestrian connectivity within and between subdivisions.

FCRPC officials should encourage bike path connections from major developments to the nearby pedestrian assets, parks, and other residential developments and destinations. Officials should also remain firm in requiring subdivisions to connect to adjacent developments and, most importantly, public destinations. Bike lanes or “sharrows” could be added to roads in subdivisions where sidewalks are not present and road width allows. According to AASHTO, neighborhoods with 1,500 average daily trips (ADT) or less are suitable to provide for safe, on-street cycling. Anything above 1,500 ADT should require a separate bike lane. FCRPC should check ODOT’s GIMS site for ADT numbers when recommending these connections.










*Tightening up the subdivision regulations
and/or better enforcement of existing subdivision regulations
will ensure that neighborhoods are better connected.*



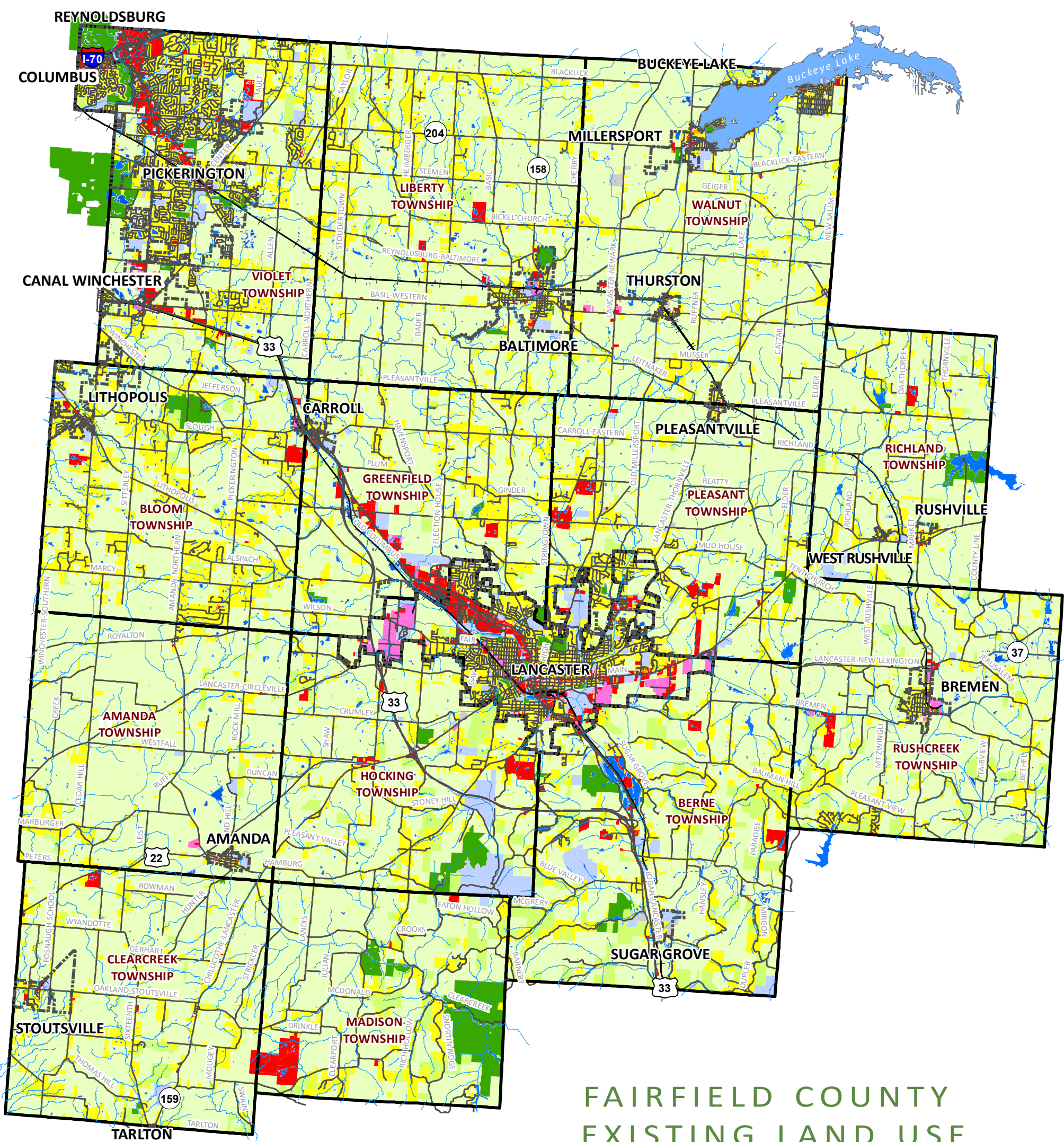
0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6 Miles

Source: Census Bureau, ODOT, Fairfield County Auditor, Reveille

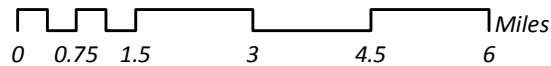
Legend

-  Buckeye Lake
-  Municipalities
-  Townships
-  Open Water
-  Local Roads
-  Railroads
-  Low to Moderate Income Areas (CDBG Eligible)





FAIRFIELD COUNTY
EXISTING LAND USE



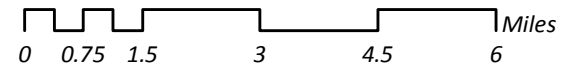
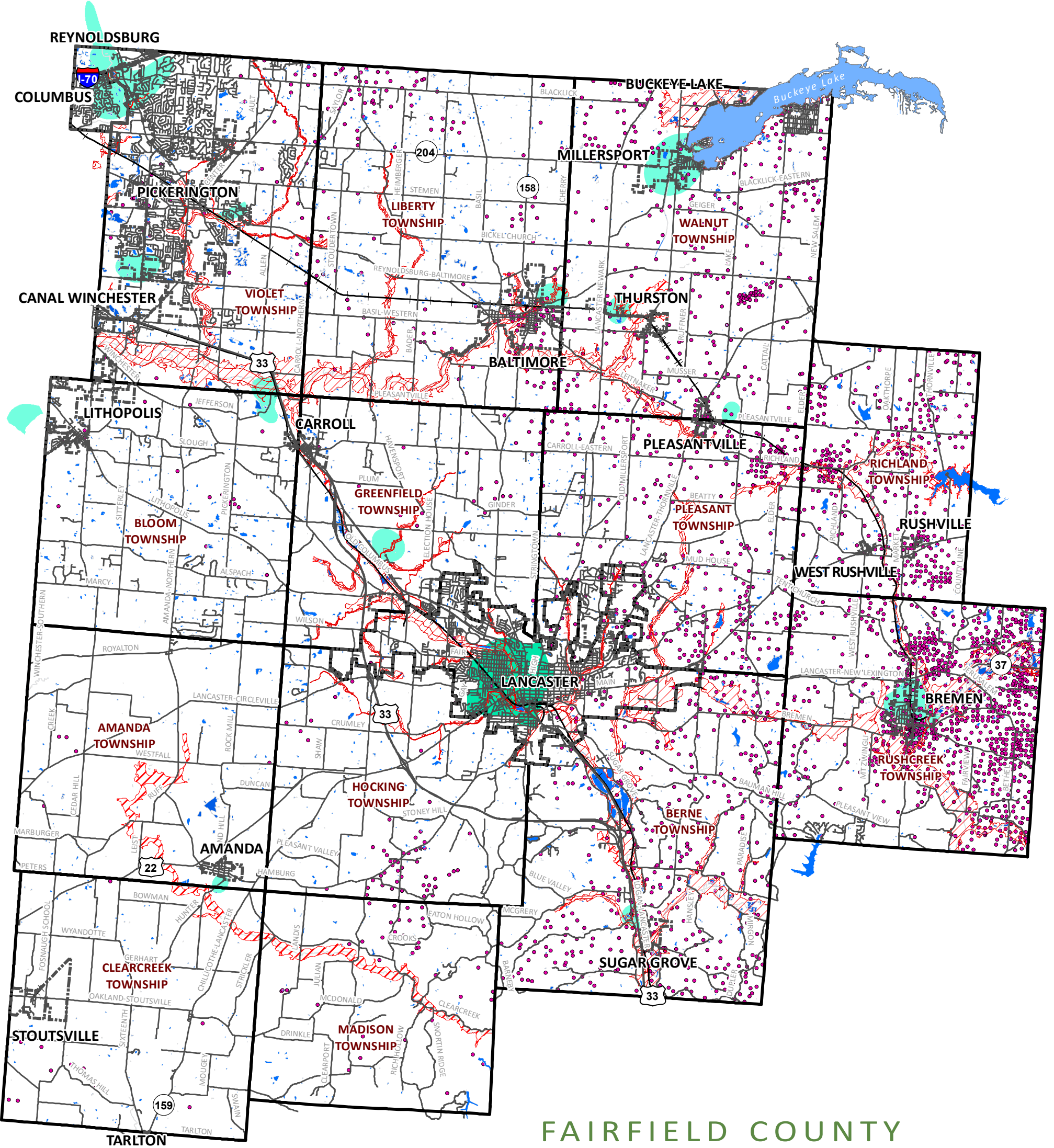
Source: Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission,
Fairfield County Auditor, Fairfield County Utilities,
MOPRC, ODNR, NRCS, Reveille

Note: Existing land Uses are determined by
taxed uses established Fairfield County Auditor.



Legend

- Buckeye Lake
- Municipalities
- Townships
- Roads
- Railroads
- Open Water / Wetlands
- Non CAUV Agriculture
- Agriculture
- Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Parks / Cultural Resource Areas
- Public
- Utility



Source: Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission,
Fairfield County Auditor, Fairfield County Utilities,
MOPRC, ODNR, NRCS, Reville

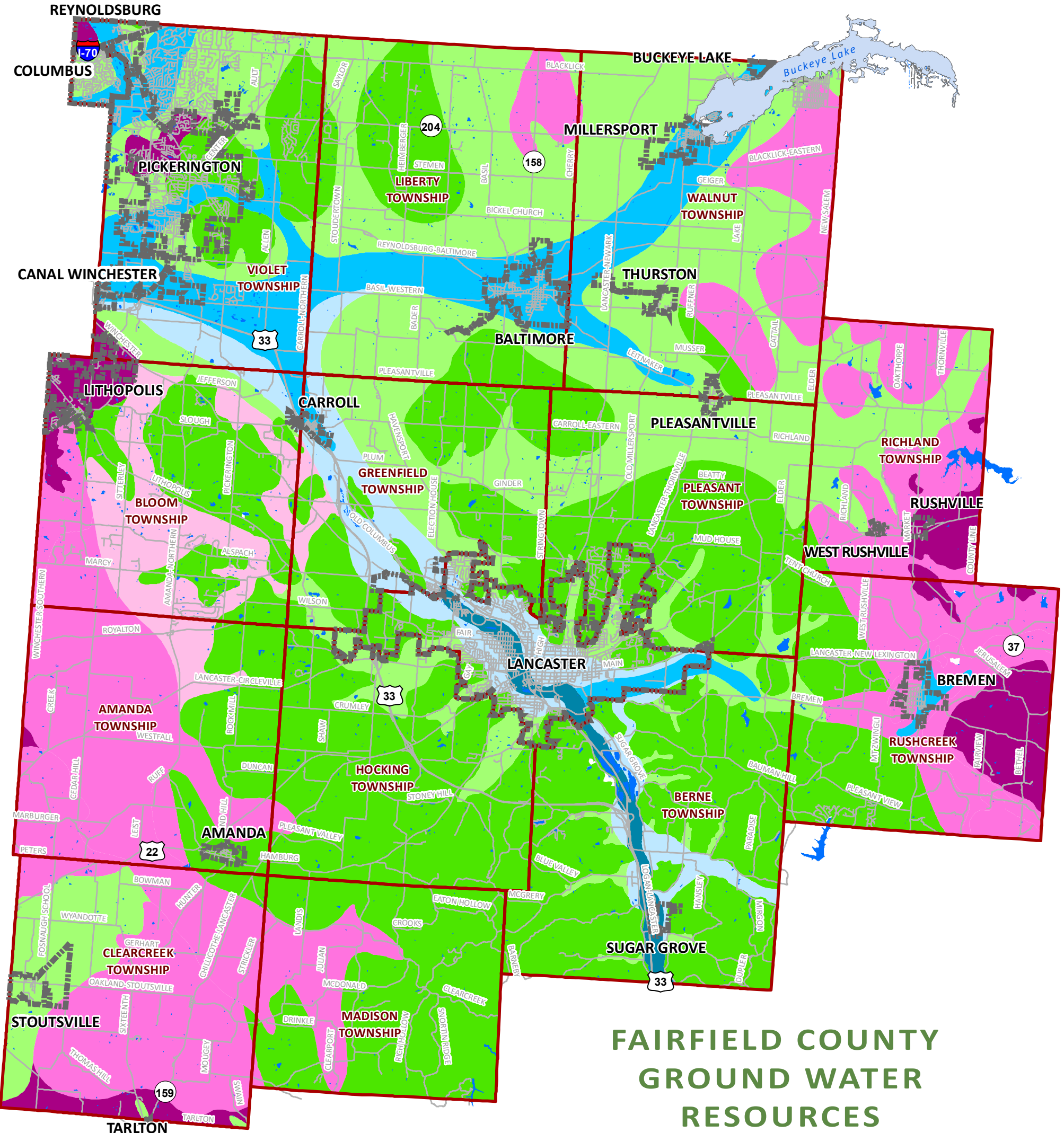
Note: Location of Oil and Gas Wells is determined
by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.
Wells may be active or inactive.



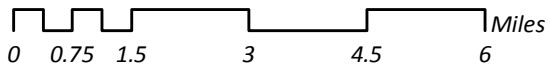
FAIRFIELD COUNTY
DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Legend

- Buckeye Lake
- Municipalities
- Townships
- Roads
- Railroads
- Open Water / Wetlands
- Flood Hazard Areas
- Oil and Gas Wells
- Source Water Protection Areas
- Lancaster Wellhead Protection Area



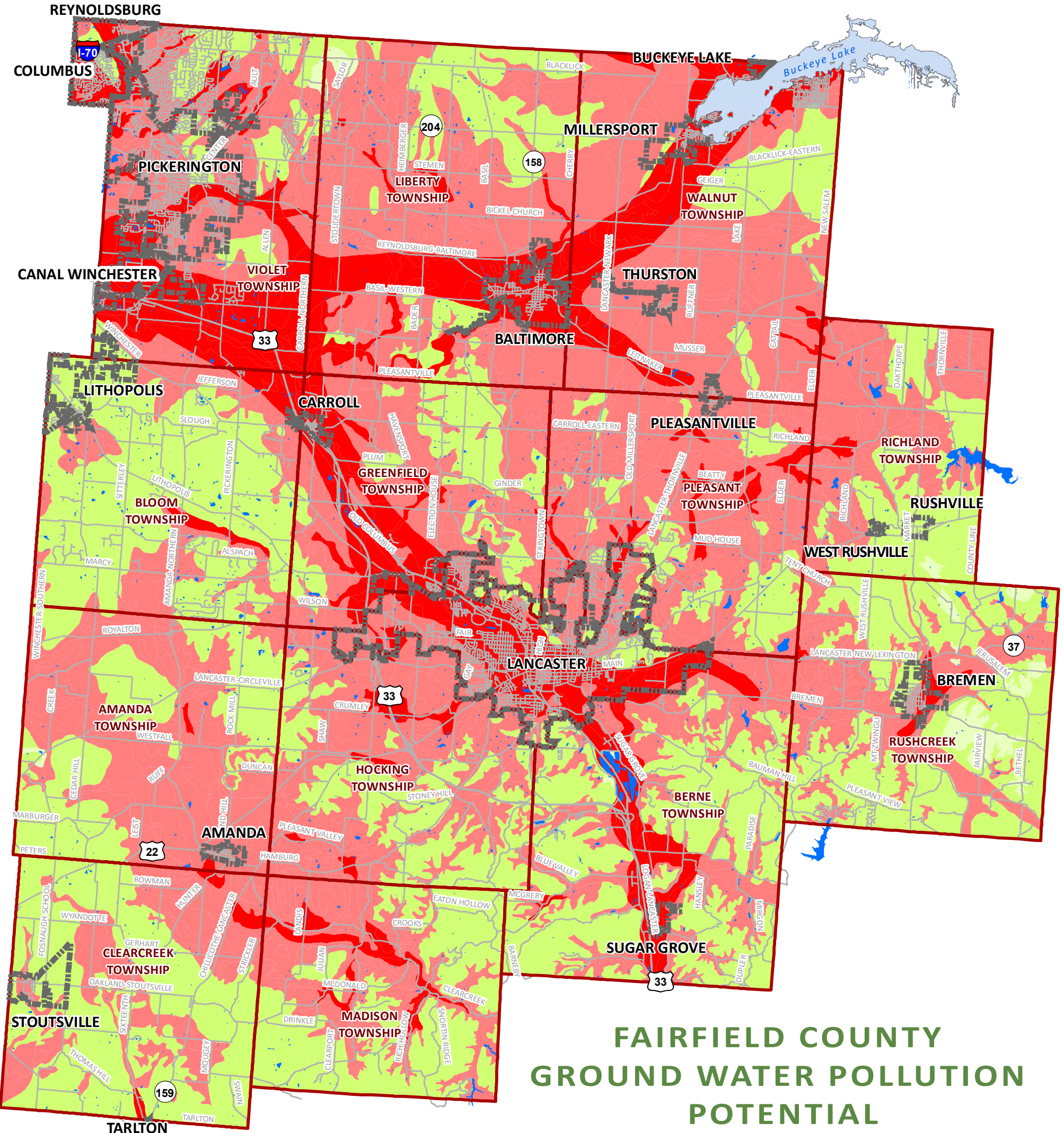
FAIRFIELD COUNTY
GROUND WATER
RESOURCES



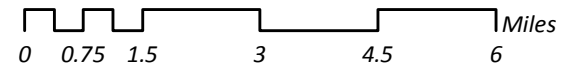
Source: ODNR, Fairfield County Auditor, Reveille

Legend

- Buckeye Lake
- Municipalities
- Townships
- Roads
- Open Water
- 600 or more GPM
- Up to 100 GPM
- Up to 75 GPM
- 10-25 GPM
- 15 GPM
- 3-10 GPM
- Less than 2 GPM
- Up to 500 GPM



FAIRFIELD COUNTY
GROUND WATER POLLUTION
POTENTIAL

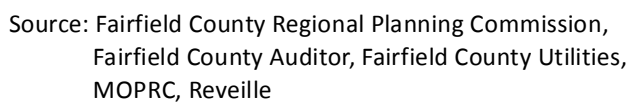


Source: ODNR, Fairfield County Auditor, Reveille

Legend

- Buckeye Lake
- Municipalities
- Townships
- Roads
- Open Water
- 0 - 61 (Lower Pollution Potential)
- 62 - 106
- 107 - 131
- 132 - 182 (Higher Pollution Potential)





- 52



Prosperity

Fairfield County's future will be built on sustainable development that maintains the rural appeal that residents have grown to love with the suburban growth tied to the expanding Columbus region. Manufacturing, healthcare, and service jobs will drive job growth while improved outdoor recreational access will help retain and attract new residents.



Prosperity

Introduction

Fairfield County residents continually demonstrate a commitment of supporting community assets that encourage economic development and agricultural preservation. Voters consistently approve ballot initiatives ranging from local school levies to those that support mental health and senior services. Since 2010, over \$53M in new utility investments and over \$50M in new transportation investments have been made in Fairfield County, most notably with the bypass of US 33. According to Fairfield 33 Development Alliance, \$358 million in private sector investments have been made since 2007.



Some notable trends that involve Fairfield County and its economic arena include:

- There is a concerted effort to preserve and protect agricultural resources. Since 2002, over 5,000 acres of prime farmland have been placed into permanent easement programs to protect the agricultural community.
- Fairfield County has a strong base of sole proprietors. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the number of proprietors (the self-employed) in Fairfield County grew from 5,355 to 16,665, a 211% increase, since 1970.
- The urban expansion of the Columbus metropolitan area has made significant contributions to the growth of Fairfield County. The County is preparing for robust manufacturing opportunities by marketing its two certified jobs sites- the Rock Mill and Colony Industrial Parks- and through the rezoning of the “Ruble” farm in Lancaster to industrial zoning. This 122 acre site is adjacent to US 33, and fully served with utility infrastructure, coupled with a 100%, 15 year property abatement under the CRA program. It is the largest shovel ready industrial site in the County, and is expected to be a state certified job site by 2018.
- Canal Pointe in Canal Winchester is nearing capacity, and the City is working to identify ways to expand its business park.
- The City of Lancaster continues to lead the county in investment, with major ventures being made by the Lancaster City School District and Fairfield Medical Center, and in Downtown Lancaster with millions being spent on renovations to retrofit historic properties for mixed use housing and office opportunities.

- In 2017, Violet Township began planning efforts to create a Refugee Road/Pickerington Road Corridor Master Plan. The goal of the Corridor Plan is to develop a mixed-use residential community complete with recreational opportunities, medical and other offices as well as a retail component. Included in the mix would be a multimodal transportation infrastructure plan. The need for such development arises out of an increased demand from empty-nesters and millennials for higher-density housing stock and compact, mixed-use, walkable communities.
- Growth is also benefiting the City of Pickerington and its SR 256 Corridor, with nearly \$27 million in commercial investment made in 2016 alone. Efforts are underway to study the feasibility of a connector road between I-70 and US 33 which would expand growth in Violet Township. A new \$5 million state of the art fire facility will be completed in 2018. With the opening of the Spectrum Retirement Communities, Sycamore Creek Senior Living facility, up to 132 apartments with a variety of floor plans, will allow seniors to age in the community.
- The \$49 million Village of Carroll interchange is now open and is another promising new area for development in Fairfield County.
- Efforts to revitalize Buckeye Lake have also been revived with Buckeye Lake 2030, and by construction on the first phase of the Buckeye Lake dam. The water levels were raised for the 2017 boating season which will help local businesses recover from the economic injury disaster status it received because of the potential failure of the dam. The Buckeye Lake 2030 team was created to focus on a 20 year vision for the area to make it a premier tourist destination.

Goal

Fairfield County's future will be built on sustainable development that maintains the rural appeal that residents have grown to love with the suburban growth tied to the expanding Columbus region. Manufacturing, healthcare, and service jobs will drive job growth while improved outdoor recreational access will help retain and attract new residents.

Planning Conditions

Fairfield County is situationally well-located along I-70 and numerous US and State highways, putting companies within one day's drive of 60% of the US population and 50% of the Canadian population. Market access is promoted by two railroads, WATCO and RailAmerica, and three airports, John Glenn Columbus International Airport, Rickenbacker International Airport, and the Fairfield County Airport, featuring a 5,000 foot runway.

Economic development and county officials emphasize the importance of being a part of the Columbus Region, as Columbus is one of the fastest growing areas in the Midwest. This regional approach is important as population continues to shift to metro areas like Fairfield County. MORPC estimates the Columbus Region's population will grow by 1 million people by 2050. These growth pressures will not only affect land consumption patterns but business productivity, if workforce and labor shortage issues are not properly planned for.

While the County's location is beneficial in many ways, it is also a contributor to growth pressures on the farming community. Between 2000 and 2010, it is estimated that the county witnessed a 16% change in land area used for residential development. Nevertheless, the 2012 Census of Agriculture revealed a 16% increase (since 2007) of land utilized for agricultural purposes due to an increase of wooded tracts and forested land under active management for commercial timber production.

Efforts to revitalize downtowns in several county communities are currently on-going. These efforts are being spearheaded by various local organizations like the Olde Pickerington Village Business Association (OPVBA), Baltimore Downtown Restoration Committee, Downtown Lithopolis Shopping & Eating District, and Destination Downtown Lancaster, to name a few. Pickerington has contracted with a consulting firm to create a development plan for Olde Pickerington. Combustion brewery opened in 2017 and is a cornerstone to that development.



Over the past several years, efforts to revitalize Downtown Lancaster have included improvements in downtown housing opportunities. There are currently 120 apartments or condos downtown, with many more units being planned to accommodate demand in locations like the Shaw building, Mill Event Center, The Studios at 123, and in the former 110,000 sq. ft. Essex Factory. That potential development would include up to 57 one-, two- and three-bedroom units on the upper two floors with indoor parking on the ground floor. Other areas for potential mixed use redevelopment include the Gateway (aka Lancaster Glass), a 2.6 acre site at West Main Street and Memorial Drive.

Economic Trends

The manufacturing sectors in Fairfield County have been rightsizing and adjusting to global cost pressures since the 1970s. Today, after several mergers and acquisitions, some of the county's largest employers, from Anchor Hocking to Tree House, now operate with fewer employees. In 2017, Anchor Hocking's headquarters was moved from Lancaster to Downtown Columbus while the distribution center relocated from Georgia to Lancaster.

In 2002, private corporations, predominately manufacturing-based business, represented four of the County's top ten employers. Today, Anchor Hocking, Kroger, and NIFCO represent the three largest private sector businesses in the top ten, with the remaining seven employers being government and non/profits (Fairfield Medical Center). Total employment in Fairfield County is approximately 72,600, or 100 employees more than recorded in 2007.

The preservation of Fairfield County's agricultural resources is directly aligned with how well it capitalizes on economic development opportunities that create well-paying jobs, as many of the county's farmers augment their farming income with non-farm income. In 1970, farm proprietors' income represented 80.5% of all farm earnings. By 2015, farm proprietors' income represented only

24.3% of all farm earnings. Nationally, more than half of America's farmers work a job off the farm to make ends meet, according to figures from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Employment and Average Earnings/Wage Trends

The downsizing of various sectors in the region has been occurring systematically over the last decade. In fact, the manufacturing sector has been rightsizing nationally. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis (US Department of Commerce), average earnings per job in Fairfield County has slightly declined since 1970, from \$39,877 to \$38,979 (in real terms), primarily due to the downsizing of the manufacturing sector.

According to the Bureau of Labor Services, the three employment sectors with the largest number of jobs in Fairfield County are trade, transportation, and utilities (8,771 jobs), education and health services (7,006 jobs), and government (6,529 jobs). Since 2001, the three employment sectors that added the most new jobs were health care and social assistance, accommodation and food services, and administrative and waste services.

Although the employment landscape in Fairfield County has shifted dramatically since 1970 in the percentages of non-services related jobs like manufacturing, some good inferences can be drawn: according to the US Department of Labor, certain industries in Fairfield County have higher than average annual wages, some dramatically higher. In 2015, manufacturing wages were reported to be 43% higher; construction wages 30% higher; and government jobs, 26% higher.

Employment and Wages by Industry, 2015	Employment	% of Total Employment	Avg. Annual Wages	% Above or Below Avg.
Private	35,618	84.5%	\$34,134	-4.7%
Non-Services Related	6,093	14.5%	\$49,538	38.3%
Natural Resources and Mining	162	0.4%	\$40,177	12.2%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing & hunting	68	0.2%	\$31,096	-13.2%
Mining (incl. fossil fuels)	94	0.2%	\$46,747	30.5%
Construction	1,788	4.2%	\$46,673	30.3%
Manufacturing (incl. forest products)	4,142	9.8%	\$51,153	42.8%
Services Related	29,525	70.1%	\$30,956	-13.6%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	8,771	20.8%	\$30,206	-15.7%
Information	267	0.6%	\$40,823	14.0%
Financial Activities	1,200	2.8%	\$41,899	17.0%
Professional and Business Services	4,698	11.1%	\$35,592	-0.6%
Education and Health Services	7,006	16.6%	\$41,351	15.5%
Leisure and Hospitality	6,194	14.7%	\$14,681	-59.0%
Other Services	1,366	3.2%	\$28,812	-19.5%
Unclassified	23	0.1%	\$28,200	-21.3%
Government	6,529	15.5%	\$44,973	25.6%
Federal Government	228	0.5%	\$61,885	72.8%
State Government	822	2.0%	\$47,500	32.6%
Local Government	5,479	13.0%	\$43,890	22.6%
Total	42,148		\$35,813	

Cross County Earnings, 1990-2015

From 1990 to 2015, the inflow of earnings grew from \$1,443.2 million to \$2,919.1 million (in real terms), a 102% increase. However, during the same time, outflow of earnings almost doubled (186%) from \$266.1 million to \$761.7 million. This means more folks are working in Fairfield County but reside in a community outside of Fairfield County. Approximately 70% or more of Fairfield County's workforce commutes out of the county for work, while more than 50% of the jobs in Fairfield County are filled by residents of another county.

Self-employment trends

Fairfield County has a strong base of sole proprietors. While historical and national trends all indicate a diminishing base of entrepreneurs, sole-proprietorship in the county remains higher now than in 1970. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, wage and salary employment (people who work for someone else) grew from 22,443 to 45,248, a 102% increase, since 1970. However, the number of proprietors (the self-employed) in Fairfield County grew from 5,355 to 16,665, a 211% increase.

Agricultural Trends

Agriculture has strong roots in Fairfield County. According to the 2012 Census of Agriculture, the number of land in farms has increased 6% since 2007, while the percentage of land in farms increased 16% as did the average farm size (from 160 acres in 2007 to 175 acres) includes wooded tracts and forested land under active management for commercial timber production. Market value of products sold by Fairfield County farmers increased 49% to \$105.8MM (from \$70.9MM in 2007), while receiving 12% less in government payments and subsidies.

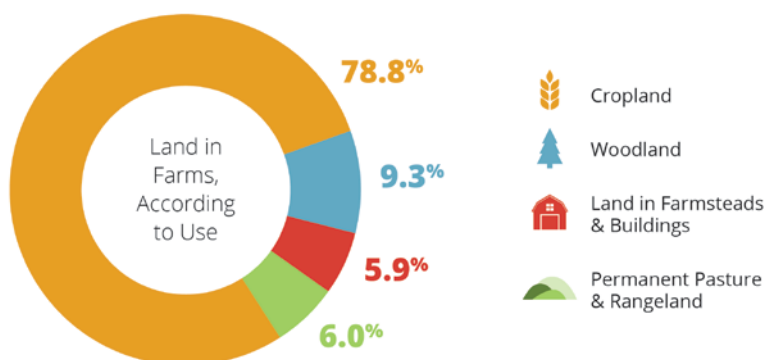
While farm employment as an overall percentage of total County employment is generally insignificant (1.9% of total employment), Fairfield County has almost three times the number of farm proprietors when compared to the Columbus Region.

Farm Employment, 2015	Fairfield County Employment	Fairfield County Percent of Total	Columbus Region Employment	Columbus Region Percent of Total
Total Employment	61,913		1,323,676	
Farm Employment	1,206	1.9%	10,043	0.8%
Farm Proprietors Employment	1,034	1.7%	7,760	0.6%
Non-Farm Employment	60,707	98.1%	1,313,633	99.2%

Source: US Census of Agriculture

Land in Farms

Of the 206,699 acres used for farming, approximately 79% is utilized for cropland, 9% for woodlands, and 6% for permanent pasture and rangelands. Roughly 6% of the acreage is comprised of land used for farmsteads and buildings.



When compared to the Columbus Region, Fairfield County has a higher percentage of land in farmsteads and permanent pasture and rangelands (6% compared to 4%).

Agricultural Development Assets

Agricultural development is promoted in Fairfield County through many organizations, including: Fairfield County SWCD, Fairfield Land Preservation Association, USDA-NRCS, Fairfield County Farm Bureau, Fairfield Foundation, Local Food Council, OSU Extension, and the Lancaster-Fairfield Chamber of Commerce. These organizations have been valuable in promoting agriculture by implementing the County's agricultural economic development plan and farmland preservation plan. Approximately 74% of the county's acreage is agricultural, with 92% of these acres enrolled in the CAUV program. Land not enrolled in the CAUV program either do not meet program requirements or potential slated for development (see *Map: Agricultural Assets*).

Economic Development Assets

The County's growth and revitalization efforts are supported through various entities and tools. Some of the most pertinent ones include:

Fairfield County Economic and Workforce Development (FCEWD)

The FCEWD is the County's lead development agency and helps to promote economic development opportunities in partnership with various entities listed below. It directly services all areas outside of the cities of Canal Winchester, Lancaster, Pickerington, and Violet Township. It works with local schools and other agencies to help potential workers develop skills needed to support businesses throughout the county and the region.

Fairfield 33 Development Alliance

Established in 2007, the Fairfield 33 Development Alliance is comprised of the County, three cities, one township, one improvement corporation, and 17 private businesses within the US 33 Corridor. It serves as a liaison between businesses interested in the Corridor and the many resources available to assist with business development in the area. In the past seven years, it has helped nurture 51 projects in Fairfield County that brought 3,435 new jobs and \$276 million in new investment. The Alliance has a goal to help create 7,500 jobs and \$500M in



investment over the next 10 years with a primary focus on marketing, attraction, advocacy, and workforce development. In 2017, the Alliance partnered with Ohio University Lancaster and Lancaster City Schools to host its inaugural Engineering Technology Summer Camp. The Alliance has also received a grant from ConnectOhio to study broadband usage throughout the County. It has made connectivity one of its advocacy priorities.

Fairfield County Port Authority

The Fairfield County Port Authority promotes economic growth by utilizing available tools to help finance economic development projects. The Port Authority is capable of owning, leasing, and selling real and personal property; issue revenue bonds for Port Authority facilities and other permanent improvements. The Port Authority is not required to pay certain state and local taxes on construction materials used for a project owned by the Port Authority. The transfer and leasing arrangements can be utilized to allow a private business to share the benefit of the sales tax exemption.

Community Improvement Corporations (CIC)

Both the City of Baltimore and Lancaster have Community Improvement Corporations as a resource to advance, encourage and promote the industrial, economic, commercial and civic development within their respective communities. The Lancaster Area CIC is the owner and developer of the 600-acre Rock Mill Corporate Park in Lancaster where more than 20 businesses are located, employing more than 1,000 people. The Baltimore CIC was recently active in assisting the FCRPC in attaining a neighborhood revitalization grant from ODSA.

Columbus 2020

Columbus 2020 helps promote regional economic development opportunities by leveraging both public and private resources. The organization was established by representatives from several organizations, including the Columbus Partnership, City of Columbus, Franklin County, the Mid-Ohio Development Exchange (MODE), the Columbus Chamber of Commerce, MORPC, Battelle, and others. It is funded by over 200 private sector companies and 26 public/nonprofit entities across 11 counties.

Columbus 2020 is guided by a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a guidance document that helps to direct strategic investments and leverage resources from the Economic Development Administration for the Columbus Region. The CEDS, entitled The Columbus 2020 Regional Growth Strategy, was completed in 2010. It identified five core challenges impacting the Columbus Region's economic development potential: brand awareness and external perception, growing low-wage job base, lower than average wage levels, low levels of venture capital and other entrepreneurial resources, and low growth in high tech industry sectors.

Business Parks

Fairfield County is fortunate to have two shovel-ready business parks: Rock Mill Industrial Park (Lancaster) and Canal Pointe Industry & Commerce Park (Canal Winchester). Both parks meet stringent shovel-ready certification standards required to earn the distinction as being Ady-Austin certified

development sites. Both locations offer property incentives and are located in the Foreign Trade Zone. Lancaster also has future plans to develop the former 122-acre “Ruble” farm along US 33 into a business park, and have the site certified as “site ready” by the State of Ohio.

Economic Development Tools

Fairfield County and its communities utilize a variety of tools to promote growth and revitalization efforts.

Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) and Enterprise Zones (EZ)

Fairfield County and selected communities provide eligible business projects to participate in either the Ohio Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program or the CRA Program. Both programs provide real property tax exemption of up to 100 percent of the improvement value for up to 15 years on real property taxes. While most areas of the county (except Richland Township communities) are located in the Enterprise Zone (Zone 232C), only four communities offer the CRA program: Pickerington, Lancaster, Canal Winchester, and Baltimore.

There are currently two businesses with active Enterprise Zone agreements, representing more than \$4.1 million of total retained and new payroll of \$6.6 million. The two agreements have created

“More should be done to discourage suburban/exurban sprawl at the expense of older homes/neighborhoods and local businesses.”

13 employment positions and retained 156 positions as a result of the Enterprise Zone Agreements. Also in 2016, a total of \$176,658 in property taxes was abated under the CRA program, while only property taxes abated under the EZ program (2 active agreements) amounted to only \$4,477. For a better understanding of where the CRA zones are located, see *Map: Economic Development Incentive Areas*.

Cooperative Economic Development Agreements (CEDA)

Another economic development tool in play in Fairfield County is a Cooperative Economic Development Agreement (CEDA). Created in 2004 between Canal Winchester and Violet Township, the CEDA works to promote development through a streamlined approach. The CEDA sets development standards for the zoning along Diley Road, generally within the boundaries of Bowen Road, US 33, Busey Road and Amanda Northern Road. Some of the major developments in the CEDA area include the Meijer properties, Diley Ridge Medical Center and the Canal Pointe Industrial Center. For a better understanding of where the CEDA is located, see *Map: Economic Development Incentive Areas*.

Tax Incremental Financing (TIF)

Tax incremental financing (TIF) is a finance tool available for local governments and developers to use to provide funds to construct public infrastructure, promote development opportunities and expand the future tax base. Upon creation of a tax increment district, by ordinance, the assessment base is frozen and the amount of tax revenue available from taxes paid on the difference between the frozen base value and the increased value, if any, can be segregated into a separate fund for use by the community and/or developer to pay costs of the proposed project. As of 2017, there were 14 active TIF’s in Fairfield

County located in four communities (Lancaster, Lithopolis, Pickerington, and Reynoldsburg). Eight of the 14 TIFs are located in Pickerington. One active TIF, in Canal Winchester, is located in Franklin County and monitored by Franklin County's Tax Incentive Review Committee.

Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Programs

New and expanding businesses that are not able to finance their activities through conventional funding may be eligible for Fairfield County revolving loan fund (RLF). Up to 50% of project costs for fixed assets may be funded with low-interest loans, and fixed assets and infrastructure investments are eligible. The cities of Lancaster and Pickerington also have RLF programs, but Pickerington's RLF is targeted towards business owners in the Olde Pickerington Village area to ensure their buildings meet code requirements.

2016 was Fairfield County RLF's most active year to date. In total, five new loans and \$365,000 was granted to local area businesses that are transforming the economy and bringing needed services into Fairfield County. Two of the loans were in the medical sector, two in the services sector, and one in the brewery/winery category.

Community Entertainment Districts (CED) / Revitalization Districts

Communities in Fairfield County where D5 liquor permits are at quota can work with the Ohio's Division of Liquor Control to develop community entertainment districts (CED) and/or revitalization districts to create a new pool of liquor licenses (D5J) that can only be issued within the district. In 2016, the cities of Lancaster and Canal Winchester created CEDs to encourage growth and revitalization efforts in downtown areas or, in Canal Winchester's case along Diley Road. The Diley Road Community Entertainment District, located north of US 33 along Diley Road, consists of approximately 105 acres and includes ample room for outparcel development. There are 15 new D5J liquor permits within each of these new community entertainment districts.

Fairfield County Workforce Development Training Grant (WDTG)

The Workforce Development Training Grant (WDTG) is designed to help attract and retain jobs in Fairfield County by offering reimbursable training grants to new companies and existing employers looking to expand by creating new jobs. It is a binding contract between the County and employer receiving the grant. The WDTG is to be used as an incentive to attract new jobs by offsetting the cost of training new employees, and can be used in conjunction with JobsOhio Incumbent Workforce Training Grant program.

Other Tools

In addition to these economic development tools, local community and business officials have full access to a wide array of incentives and programs offered through the ODSA, Jobs Ohio, USDA and CEDA.

Strategies and Recommendations

1) Continue to refine and implement an aggressive program to preserve prime farmland

One key goal that arose from the Fairfield County Development and Land Use Plan adopted in 2002 was a priority to preserve prime farmland. By the end of 2017, there will be approximately 5,000 acres of County farmland permanently preserved through direct donations to the Fairfield Land Preservation Association and easements purchased through the Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP). Farmers also protect their agricultural lands through other programs such as: the Current Agricultural Use Valuation Program, Agricultural Districts, Grasslands/Ranchlands Protection Programs, and ASAs.

Working in conjunction with vital stakeholders and county farmers, the Fairfield County SWCD plays a vital role to ensure that the county's agricultural resources are protected in a manner that assures 140,000 acres remain in production.

Following the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the SWCD also coordinates farmland preservation programs along with local, state and federal agencies that play a key role in farmland preservation. They include the Fairfield County Commissioners, Fairfield Land Preservation Association, USDA-NRCS, OSU Extension, and Fairfield County Foundation, to name a few. Township Trustees also play a vital role in buffering agricultural lands and other vital natural resources from growth pressures through zoning, and by creating agricultural zoning districts.

"More farmers need to know about Ag Districts and the value of becoming an Ag District. There are many areas of the county which should be designated Ag Districts. The county should add incentives to get farmers to join them because the tourism and travel value of ag scenery in our county benefits all citizens and businesses."

To continue the successful protection of preserving prime agricultural lands, county planning and agriculture stakeholders should continue to:

- Use the Agricultural Security Area (ASA) program. County officials recently renewed its ASA in late 2017.
- Work with townships in the adoption of zoning measures that preserve lands in ASAs and critical resource areas.
- Review existing policies and procedures to help reduce impacts to existing prime farmland.
- Continue to update and implement the Fairfield Growing: Agricultural Economic Development Plan.

2) Work with the agricultural community to address issues identified in the farmland survey

Fairfield County's farming community participated in the development of this Plan by providing valuable feedback through a separate survey that was prepared with the guidance of local farmers. The

15-question survey yielded valuable information in regard to the impediments of farming in Fairfield County, as well as their awareness of tools available to the agricultural community.

“The Agricultural industry is taken for granted. Looks so stable and secure from the outside yet, is incredibly fragile and sorely misunderstood by the public.”

While impediments to farming include known variables like traffic and encroaching non-agricultural development pressures, approximately 32% of survey respondents indicated that they were not familiar with key County programs to preserve and protect farmland, such as ASAs, PACE and/or conservation easements. To this end, county officials should allocate additional resources to expose (and utilize) these programs within the agricultural community.

3) Increase accessibility to healthy and locally-sourced food

In order to achieve continued vitality, Fairfield County must cultivate its local food system in order to drive sustainable economic development. The Fairfield County Advisory Board that guided the development of the Fairfield Growing agricultural economic development plan outlined a variety of objectives to improve the access and quality of local foods.

Measurable objectives that are still relevant for continued implementation include:

- Partner with the County’s hospitals, schools, and major institutions to create and enhance educational programs that provide a better understanding of the benefits of local foods.
- Maximize the membership and utilization of the Local Food Council.
- Continue to refine a program for community outreach efforts.
- Working with local communities to identify “food deserts.”
- Encourage the creation of a series of regional farm markets located throughout the County and implement an active marketing program to promote them.
- Work with Ohio State University Extension, area farmers and local stakeholders to update and publicize the Fairfield County Local Foods Guide and Survey.
- One good example of an outlet that is increasing access to Fairfield County’s agricultural community is the Keller Market House, a non-profit, community oriented marketplace in historic downtown Lancaster.



Eating locally grown food, saving farmland and strengthening the agricultural economy in Fairfield County is a continual goal for the Local Food Council. Today, active farmers markets exist in downtown areas of Canal Winchester, Lancaster, and Pickerington.

- Opened in July 2016, the marketplace features a variety of locally-sourced items and provides an incubation kitchen environment for entrepreneurs to test new ideas and products.

4) Revisit the economic incentive toolbox

The FCRPC stakeholders, working in conjunction with the local development community, should revisit their existing economic development toolbox and look to expand the use of these incentives not only in new municipalities in the county but also to incentivize new types of development, especially residential and other types of mixed use developments. Based on a survey prepared by the National Association of Realtors in 2013, 56% of Ohio respondents preferred to live in a mixed-use, walkable area in close access to goods and services. Many of Fairfield County's communities with downtown footprints could benefit from this trend, but the use of incentives will be critical.

While the use of the Enterprise Zone program is limited to only commercial/industrial type projects and requires county approval that increases the approval timeframe, local municipalities are authorized to create new community reinvestment areas to promote reinvestment and encourage new investments. To date, only four communities in Fairfield County (Baltimore, Canal Winchester, Lancaster, and Pickerington) offer CRA abatements (pre and post-94) and the EZ program may be underutilized due to additional regulations placed on the program.

5) Encourage thriving downtowns

Fairfield County contains several communities that have downtown footprints that could be reinvigorated to be socially-vibrant connection points.

Over the past 15 years, downtown planning efforts have been embraced in the villages of Baltimore, Bremen, Carroll, Canal Winchester, Lancaster, and Pickerington. Pickerington officials, in the fall of 2017, started the downtown planning process for the "Olde Pickerington Village" area. Officials wish to capitalize on the new momentum created by the addition of Combustion Brewery and Taproom, Chef T's Pub as well as the new downtown Violet Township fire station that is nearing completion. While efforts remain alive in some communities, efforts in other communities stalled during the recession in 2007 and never resumed with the same level of enthusiasm.



Downtown Baltimore could benefit from additional exposure and marketing of its CRA program.

However, residents that completed the Plan survey indicated a desire to see their downtowns revitalized not only as a matter of pride but as a means to minimize population loss and urban sprawl. The Columbus Region is predicted to grow faster than any other region in Ohio. Moreover, the future of nonresidential development will be in the redevelopment of existing structures. According to the 2014 Columbus, Ohio Metropolitan Area Trends, Preferences, and Opportunities Report prepared by the

Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), by 2040 nonresidential space within the Columbus Region will grow by more than a billion square feet, with three-fourths (750 million square feet) of this non-residential space being repurposed, redeveloped, or otherwise recycled.

This is an opportunity that will directly benefit downtown areas in Fairfield County. FCRPC and local officials should begin now and take the following actions:

1. Launch the discussion of the value of increasing and diversify the amount of complementary neighborhood retail stores, restaurants and social and entertainment outlets. If D5 liquor licenses are at quota, communities should look to create a revitalization district in downtown areas to encourage restaurant and entertainment establishments (Lancaster created a Revitalization District in their downtown in 2014).
2. Establish incentives such as: façade grants, property tax abatements (CRA programs), historic rehabilitation tax credits, or job grants for targeted businesses. Some communities offer these programs but may not be exposing these programs properly.
3. Pursue the feasibility of developing a special improvement district (SID) and/or TIF to improve infrastructure and properties.
4. Encourage the revitalization of key downtown historic properties by creating a downtown revitalization district (DRD).
5. Encourage the preservation of historic assets by developing effective public / private partnerships that encourage the appropriate adaptive reuse of historic structures, and develop and implement incentives and/or other mechanisms to encourage such action.
6. Continue to expand the broadband footprint. The access to an improved telecommunications footprint is an important goal for Fairfield County officials, as the recently developed Fairfield County Broadband project was started to enhance broadband service within specified areas of the county (Amanda, Clearcreek, Hocking, and Madison Townships). More than 26,400 individuals and 10,000 households are within the project study area.

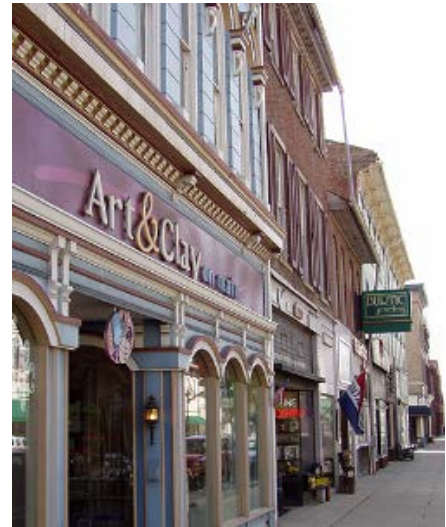
“I encourage Fairfield County to find ways to revitalize unused buildings or areas in decline inside current towns and Lancaster instead of mimicking the sprawl of Columbus suburbs”

To assist in making it easier to expand the broadband infrastructure throughout Fairfield County, the County Engineer’s office, in August 2017, lowered the minimum depth to lay fiber on county right-of-way by two feet to allow for more cost effective ways to lay the cable. This lowers the cost for companies and helps make it profitable to provide broadband to rural areas. The providers will be required to secure a bond with the county to ensure that any damage done to farm tiles or roadways will be covered.

6) Market community assets

As Fairfield County's employment base is primarily supported by economic development policies that aim to recruit and incentivize large employers and manufacturers, the most resilient communities compliment this approach by emphasizing their existing assets and distinctive resources. Fairfield County is rich in history and cultural heritage. While the County has grown and become increasingly urban, it has maintained many of its rural qualities including historical architecture, preserved covered bridges, quaint country shops, and old historic farms.

Fairfield County has many opportunities for tourism and attraction-based economic development through its membership in Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area Program. The Fairfield County Visitors Convention Bureau currently markets a variety of cultural assets, activities, and destinations as part of the Hill Country Heritage Area. These assets include: covered bridges, Fairfield Heritage House Tour, Georgian House Museum, Reese-Peters House, Zane Square Festival, Cameo Concerts, Cross Mound, General Tecumseh Sherman House Museum, Downtown Lancaster, the Lancaster Festival, and Square 13 Historic District. Through greater involvement in the heritage program, many more of the County's unique attractions can be showcased.



Downtown Lancaster is witnessing a healthy revival as public/private partnerships blossom.

It is recommended that FCRPC stakeholders:

- Continue to partner with Columbus 2020, Fairfield 33 Corridor stakeholders, and local development organizations to market key economic development sites and assets. As residents look for new walkable mixed use destinations for homes, stakeholders should look to revive downtown revitalization efforts in key downtowns in the County.
- Support the Buckeye 2030 initiative geared at restoring Buckeye Lake as a premiere recreation destination. In 2017, the Buckeye Lake 2030 Corporation completed an Economic Impact Study. The study, intended to project the impact of the Buckeye Lake 2030 Community Vision, is predicated on the completion of the Buckeye Lake Dam restoration. According to the study, the Buckeye Lake region will see 3,900 to 6,300 new jobs, specifically in food and beverage, arts and entertainment, accommodations and retail. In addition, the region will see \$11 to \$17 million in annual direct property tax from new housing and lodging, and \$240 to \$390 million in direct annual lodging revenues and visitor spending. The study projects 2.5 to 4.3 million visitors to Buckeye Lake per year accompanied by overall economic growth of 250% to 400% in the Buckeye Lake Region by the year 2040.
- Continue to implement communications and marketing plan to share community and economic development progress.

"The Buckeye Lake region has so much potential....Growth is coming, and it is up to us to determine how we want to handle that growth."

7) Support workforce development efforts and partnerships

According to the local business officials, workforce development issues, the “skills gap” and the lack of trained employees is affecting certain employers in the community. County economic development officials indicated desire to heighten the awareness of this issue in conjunction with area and regional educational institutions.



What started as a simple Welcome Sign for visitors entering the Sugar Grove area has grown into a six-acre sculpture park. Grassroots efforts to improve community image and encourage “uniqueness” should be nurtured.

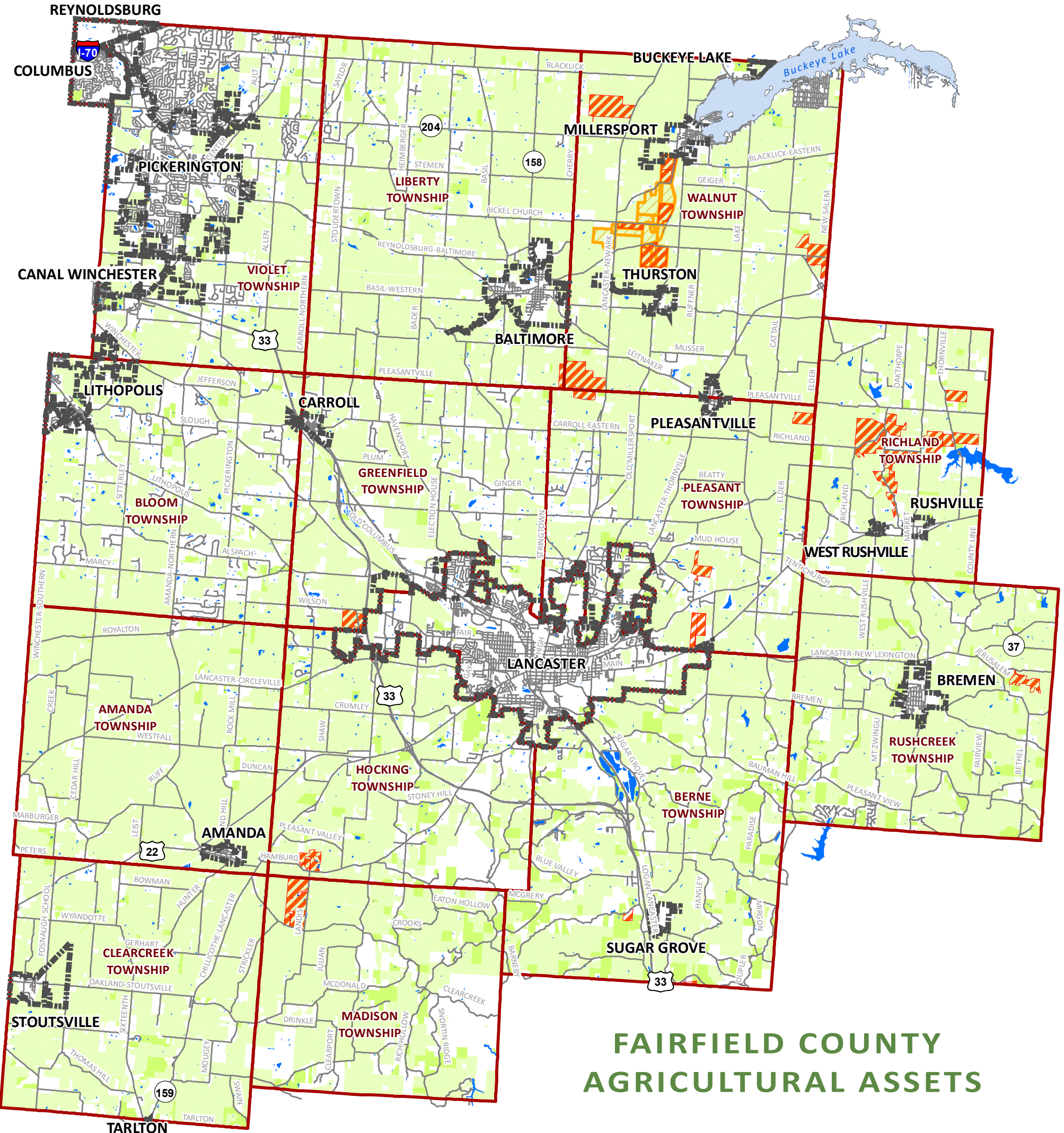
It is recommended that county officials continue to utilize and expose the Ohio Incumbent Worker Training (OIWT) and Ohio Investment Training voucher programs to employers in the areas of Advanced

Manufacturing, Aerospace & Aviation, Agribusiness and Food Processing, Automotive, BioHealth, Business Functions, Corporate Headquarters, Energy, Financial Services, Information Technology and Services, Polymers and Chemicals, and Research and Development. All of these sectors have been identified by JobsOhio as growth sectors that should be marketed and advanced within the Columbus Region.

These voucher programs provide financial support of up to 50% reimbursement for instructional costs, materials, and training related activities. In the case of the OIWT program, the voucher is limited to \$4,000 per employee and up to 50% of the workforce. The business is reimbursed after it pays for full training.










8) Expand the County’s GIS to support planning and economic development efforts

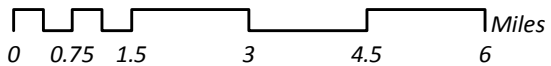
The Fairfield County Auditor’s GIS Department currently utilizes GIS technology on their public access systems. Residents, farmers and developers can use the systems to access specific information concerning their property, school districts, soil types, and other information. The GIS and Regional Planning Commission should continue to interact and develop new layers and datasets that will help promote sustainable development and growth management practices.



FAIRFIELD COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL ASSETS

Legend

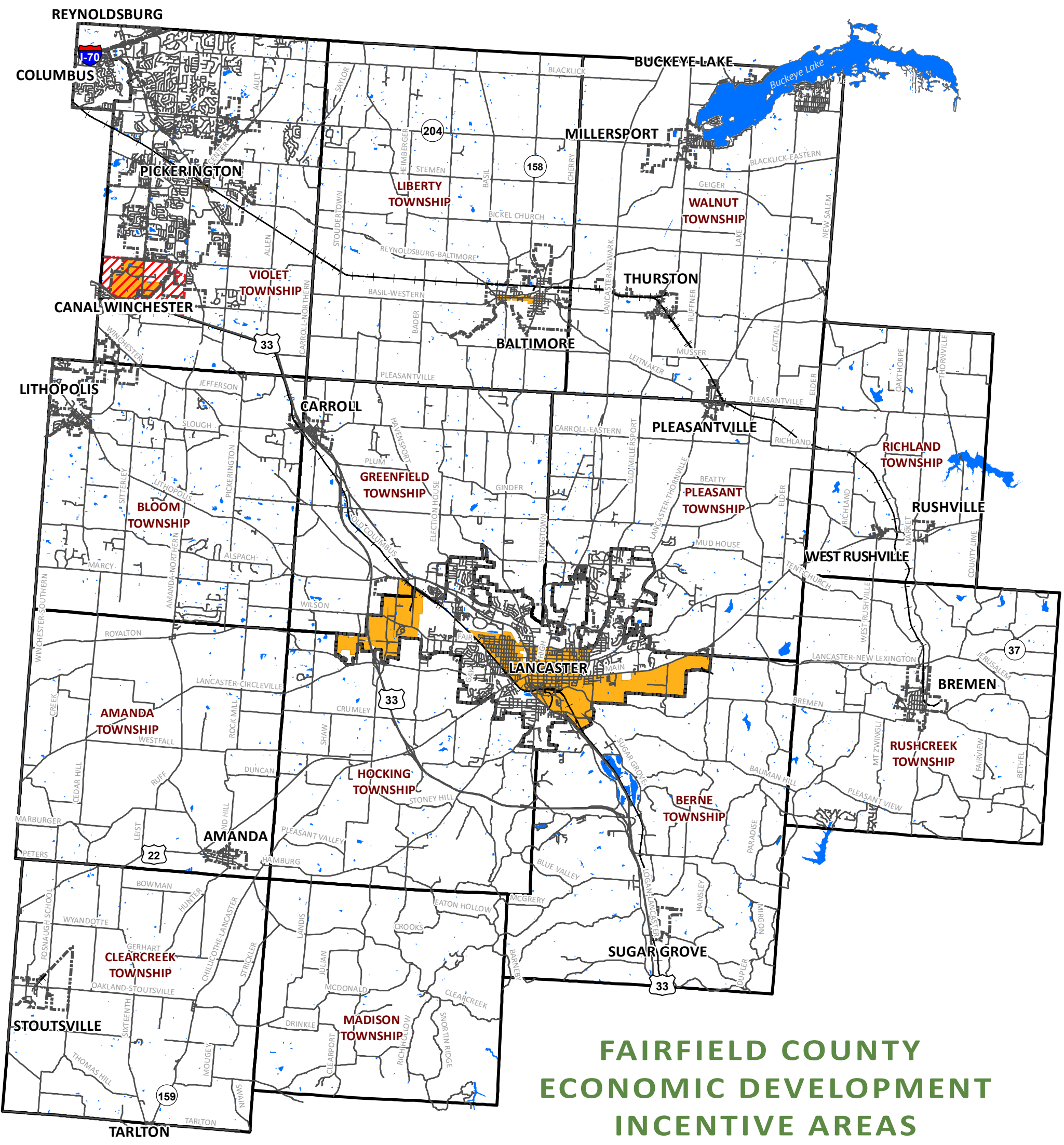
-  Buckeye Lake
-  Municipalities
-  Townships
-  Roads
-  Open Water
-  Protected Farmlands
-  Ag Security Areas Parcels
-  Non CAUV Agriculture
-  Agriculture



Source: ODNR, FCRPC, Fairfield County Auditor, Reveille

Note: Areas defined as Agriculture were selected using the County Auditor's parcel database.





FAIRFIELD COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
INCENTIVE AREAS

Legend

- Buckeye Lake
- Roads
- Railroads
- Municipalities
- Townships
- Open Water
- Violet Township / Canal Winchester CEDA
- CRA Areas

NOTE: The entire County is located in an Enterprise Zone, except for Richland Township.

Source: Fairfield County Regional Planning Commission,
Fairfield County Auditor, MOPRC,
Canal Winchester, Pickerington, Reville



Plan Implementation



Plan Implementation

The Fairfield County Comprehensive Land Use Plan is designed to be a blueprint for managing growth, revitalization, and community development efforts, and to create new programs, infrastructure, and assets most desired by residents. Implementation of this Plan will require the proper alignment of County and local jurisdictions.

*“Please look forward--
and not behind”*

This Plan is framed around a series of strategies that are given an implementation timeframe and linked to potential actors and agencies that will be tasked with advancing them. To ensure a type and level of growth consistent with the public’s preferences, it is encouraged the Plan is used during the following situations:

Land Use Planning and Zoning

While the FCRPC will play a central large role in advancing this Plan and the *Plan Implementation Toolbox*, the implementation of the Plan’s land use-related strategies will largely be the responsibility of the planning and/or zoning boards within each municipal corporation and township. It will be up to these entities to ensure their specific plans and zoning codes generally compliment this Plan. Because the FCRPC provides an advisory role in connection with township zoning, all development proposals, rezonings, subdivision plats, variances, and other related programmatic matters, should be reviewed and weighed against the future land use planning area they are located, and their specific impact and compatibility with this Plan and adjacent surroundings.

Transportation and Capital Improvement Projects

This Plan strongly supports directing growth to existing municipalities and areas where public infrastructure exists or is planned. To this end, this Plan highlights areas that were identified during the planning process as those most preferred or suitable for growth or preservation. It is very important that decisions regarding capital projects, the extension of public infrastructure like roads and water and sewer utilities, and the development or refinement of new programs, are done in accordance with the Plan’s recommendations, and in many ways, guided by their own plans. This Plan recommends that a water and sewer master plan and a transportation plan be pursued so that more specific recommendations and resources can be allocated in addressing some of the issues that were generated during this Plan.

Economic Development and Downtown Revitalization

This Plan should be used to promote growth, revitalization and preservation efforts deemed vital by the local communities, planning stakeholders, and the public. Issues such as creating well-paying economic opportunities, supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs, revitalizing downtowns and preserving prime farmland are all issues that can be supported by the use of economic incentives, grants, and public and private funds. The county and local communities have at their disposal tools that advance

these issues, but unlike programs that preserve farmland that strictly adhere to the Fairfield County Land Use Plan, some of these programs may not be aligned with the Plan. Communities that utilize the Community Reinvestment Area program could provide greater property tax abatement for projects that advance downtown revitalization efforts, while the county's revolving loan fund could grant lower interest rates to businesses that locate in vacant properties or advance another Plan strategy.

“Economic Development officials should try to find uses for older buildings that sit vacant, rather than build new and in a few years might go out of business. By the end of the year, Lancaster will have three former grocery / big box store buildings sitting vacant. These buildings have become eye sores....”

Expanding economic opportunities in accordance with the public's desires will require the assistance of a variety of public and private organizations. These organizations should be privy to the Plan's recommendations and preferred outcomes, and use their best effort to align development initiatives and the deployment of grants and incentives with this Plan's strategies.

Plan Review

This Plan was developed with Plan Implementation in mind. Each Plan Strategy was given a specific timeframe for implementation, and the *Plan Implementation Table* provides planning stakeholders the ability to track and “grade” the progress of the implementation of each strategy. To this end, the FCRPC should have an annual meeting where they review and grade the Plan in light of the past years' development and governmental activities. In situations where the Plan assisted progress it should be noted. It should also be noted in what areas, if any, the Plan failed to facilitate its strategies and the best management practices highlighted in the *Plan Implementation Toolbox*.

Updating the Plan

Growth throughout the Columbus Region will have a profound effect on the quality of life of residents of Fairfield County. Because of this “trickle-down” effect, some communities in the county will be affected greater than others. To ensure these conditions are being planned for property, it is recommended that this Plan be updated by 2025. While the current Census 2010 numbers are still current, efforts are underway to begin the Census 2020. This process is predicted to be completed by 2022. Once completed, it is recommended that new data be reviewed in specific areas of housing, demographics, and employment, and compared with existing Plan data. When and where applicable, the Plan should be updated to reflect major changes and data trends.

The process to update the Plan should be similar to the process that originally formulated it. The update process should be one that reestablishes, and if necessary, modifies the vision statements of the Plan through public participation; reaffirms or modifies Plan strategies and implementing parties; and recommends changes to other areas in the Plan appropriate to the changed conditions. Most importantly, the updated Plan should specifically track how well this Plan was implemented.

Plan Implementation Toolbox

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Access Management	Limits new access points on most roads (except for access to new roads, which may serve major subdivisions). Limits number of lot splits along Major and Minor arterials and may require joint use driveways or cross access easement to meet driveway spacing requirements.	All Planning Areas	Butler County, OH Licking County, OH Lucas County, OH
Agricultural Districts	Provides protection against nuisance suits over farm operations, deferment of tax assessments on land to build sewer and water lines, and allows for additional review if land is taken by eminent domain for a public purpose. Land or combination of lands must total 10 acres or more to be included in the district, or have generated an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500 during the past three years.	Agricultural Preservation Areas Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas Protected Farmland Areas RMAs	Fairfield County, OH
Agricultural Lands Protection	Places extra limitations on uses within the district based on lot size. Use of land for agricultural purposes or construction of structures for agricultural purposes on lots less than 1 acre is prohibited (unless conditional use is approved); Buildings and structures on lots between 1 and 5 acres are prohibited from being used for dairying or poultry husbandry (unless conditional use is approved).	Agricultural Preservation Areas Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas Protected Farmland Areas RMAs	Harrison Twp, Darke County, OH Darby Twp, Union County, OH Green Twp, Ashland County, OH
Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs)	Agricultural BMPs are tools that help to minimize nonpoint source pollution load in water systems by decreasing the velocity of runoff after storm events. BMP tools include nutrient management, conservation tillage and no-till, contour strip cropping and livestock husbandry. In urban settings, vegetative buffers, filter strips, grassed swales, constructed wetlands and innovative stormwater retention and infiltration systems can be used along with overlay zoning techniques.	Agricultural Preservation Areas Conservation Resource Areas Flood Hazard Areas Growth Areas Protected Farmland Areas RMAs	Fairfield County SWCD

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (AEPP)	<p>Agricultural easements provide a great tool for farmers to use to not only protect prime farmland from development and receive financial assistance. To be eligible, the farmland must be located in an agricultural preservation area (see Future Land Use Planning Areas Map), must be enrolled in CAUV, and be 40 acres or more (unless adjacent to another farm, then the minimum is 25 acres).</p> <p>All land enrolled in AEPPs are designated as Protected Farmland Areas on the Future Land Use Planning Areas Map.</p>	<p>Agricultural Preservation Areas Conservation Resource Areas Flood Hazard Areas Protected Farmland Areas</p>	<p>Fairfield County Commissioners Fairfield County SWCD Fairfield Land Preservation Association Fairfield County Foundation</p>
Agricultural Security Area (ASA) Program	<p>ASA Programs create blocks of at least 500 acres of farmland where agriculture is encouraged and protected and may include multiple farmland owners.</p> <p>Farmlands must be enrolled in Agricultural district and CAUV. Local governments agree to not initiate, approve, or finance development for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes for 10 years while landowners commit to exclusively engage in agricultural activities and related development. The land owners located in ASAs can apply for a real property tax reduction on new ag improvements. ASAs are currently located in Walnut Township.</p>	<p>Agricultural Preservation Areas Protected Farmland Areas RMAs</p>	<p>Fairfield County, OH</p>
Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) Program	<p>The CAUV program allows farmland devoted exclusively to commercial agriculture to have reduced property taxes based on agricultural value of the land, rather than on full development value. Value is based on the soil types on the property.</p> <p>To qualify for the CAUV, the property must be ten or more acres or produce an average yearly gross income of at least \$2,500 and must be devoted exclusively to commercial agricultural use.</p>	<p>Agricultural Preservation Areas Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas Protected Farmland Areas RMAs</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Community Improvement Corporation (CIC)	Authorized under ORC 1724, all political subdivisions can create CICs for the purposes of advancing, encouraging, and promoting economic and civic development. A CIC can also facilitate the reclamation and reutilization of vacant, abandoned, tax-foreclosed, or other real property, and be used to assemble, clear, and clear the title of real property in a coordinated manner.	Growth Areas	N/A
Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) Program	Provides businesses locating in a designated CRA an exemption of up to 100 percent of improvement value for up to 15 years on real property taxes. A company must make an agreement with the local community prior to going forward with the qualifying project. As of 2017, Baltimore, Lancaster and Pickerington have CRA zones.	Growth Areas	Any Post-94 CRA community that requires mandatory school donation agreements and is marketed appropriately.
Conditional Development (Commercial)	This regulation is meant to provide more flexibility for construction site standards for non-residential development, and to encourage enhancement of community character with quality architectural design and aesthetic qualities. Calls for the preservation of significant natural features to the maximum extent possible.	Growth Areas	Delaware, OH Delaware County, OH Rootstown Twp, OH Portage County, OH
Conservation Easements	A conservation easement allows landowners to voluntarily restrict their land to a specific use such as recreation, forestry or farming, or to buffer and protect vital natural amenities, in exchange for certain tax and financial benefits. The primary easement programs used in Fairfield County are: Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (noted above), Conservation Easements, and Flood Easements	Agricultural Preservation Areas Conservation Resource Areas Flood Hazard Areas Growth Areas (for passive recreation only) Protected Farmland Areas RMAs	Fairfield County Commissioners Fairfield County SWCD Fairfield Land Preservation Association Fairfield County Foundation
Conservation Development	Model language with an emphasis on creating contiguous open space and protection of steep slopes and riparian areas.	Conservation Resource Areas Flood Hazard Areas	Chagrin River Watershed Partners (CRWP)

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
	Yield plan used as basis for development intensity.	Growth Areas RMAs	Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) 21st Century Land Development Code
Compact Development	Promotes a mixture of uses with pedestrian orientation. Sets standards for what types of uses will be on the first and second floors of buildings.	Growth Areas RMAs	Shaker Heights, OH Cleveland, OH Mantua, OH
Common Access Drives	Allows Common Access Drives to minimize and control access to lots that front public roads.	Agricultural Preservation Areas Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas Protected Farmland Areas RMAs	Union County, OH Van Buren Twp, Hancock County, OH
Downtown Revitalization Districts (DRDs) and Innovation Districts	<p>Ohio municipalities can create DRDs and Innovation Districts to encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings and economic development in contiguous mixed-use boundary areas no larger than 10 acres where at least one historic building is located or will be rehabilitated.</p> <p>Municipalities also may designate an Innovation District within a DRD, the purpose of which is to attract and facilitate growth of technology-oriented businesses and to support the economic development efforts of business incubators and accelerators.</p> <p>DRDs may not include any areas used exclusively for residential purposes or any areas exempted from taxation under an existing TIF. As with TIFs, the DRD exemption is not a true real property tax exemption. Property owners within the DRD make service payments in lieu of taxes on the increase in the assessed value of real property. Those service payments are</p>	Growth Areas (particularly in Downtown and Central Business Districts)	N/A

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
	deposited into a special municipal fund and used for designated purposes.		
Economic Development Agreements:	There are three primary intergovernmental economic development tools that can be used for the purpose of facilitating cooperation between and among local governments to promote economic development or providing appropriate public services to further growth in a local community.		
Annexation Agreements	Annexation Agreements, enabled under ORC 709.192, allow townships and municipalities to enter into an agreement for the purposes of the sharing of improvements and services in designated areas and/or parcels.	Growth Areas RMAs	Circleville, Circleville Twp, OH Powell / Liberty Twp, OH
Cooperative Economic Development Agreements (CEDA)	CEDAs are authorized under ORC 701.07 and enables municipalities and townships to enter into agreements governing development activities in designated areas. CEDAs are not taxing authorities like JEDDs, and no income taxes are levied. Violet Township and Canal Winchester currently participate in a CEDA agreement.	Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas RMAs	Canton, Canton Twp, OH Medina, York Twp, OH
Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD)	A JEDD is an entity formed by contract to create funds for the advancing growth and economic development, typically through the levy an income tax. They are formed through a process of public hearings and public input. JEDDs allow a municipality to expand its tax base without annexing township territory and can produce the additional funds necessary for a township to serve growing commercial areas by receiving a share of income taxes levied in the zone or district. (Joint Economic Development Zones are no longer permitted to be formed.)	Growth Areas	Springfield Twp, Hamilton County, OH Sycamore Twp, Hamilton County, OH Dayton / Miami Twp, OH
Economic Development Programs	Provides economic and community development-related incentives and financial assistance to individuals, businesses and organizations to create and retain employment opportunities. Some of the most	Growth Areas RMAs	N/A

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
	utilized economic development agencies / programs include: Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) Community Development Block Grants (Through FCRPC and ODSA) Fairfield County Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Fairfield County Workforce Training Grant Jobs Ohio Economic Development Administration (Through Columbus 2020) Jobs and Commerce Division- ODOT Economic and Community Development Institute (ECDI)		
Energy Special Improvement District (SIDs) and Property Assessed Clean Energy Financing	Political subdivisions are authorized under ORC to create special energy improvement districts that offer property owners financing to install photovoltaic (PV) or solar-thermal systems on real property. Energy SIDs can also be formed as districts including noncontiguous property. Property Assessed Clean Energy financing can be used to establish funding for the improvements in an Energy SID. Rather than pay the projects' costs up front or as repayment of a loan, PACE allows property owners to pay the costs over time as special assessments due with their property tax bills.	All Planning Areas except Flood Hazard Areas	Toledo Lucas County Port Authority Columbus Regional Energy SID
Enterprise Zone (EZ) Program	The Ohio EZ Program provides real property tax incentives for industrial-related businesses that expand or relocate. To secure benefits, businesses must apply to the local community, with final approval from the county commissioners. Most areas, with the exception of Richland Township, are located in the EZ.	Growth Areas RMAs	N/A
Environmental Overlay Districts and/or Protection Tools	Overlay districts that are used to buffer, enhance, preserve or protect certain environmental or natural amenities or resources.		

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Floodplain Overlay District	The purpose of Floodplain Overlay Districts is to reduce the potential for property damage and hazards to life caused by flooding. The regulations implement additional protections deemed locally-important and ensure consistency with the National Flood Insurance Program. Develops standards for locations of development and some additional standards for building integrity methods, and materials used for construction, and utilities standards.	Flood Hazard Areas	Springfield, OH Pittsburgh, PA Nashville, TN Loudoun County, VA
Scenic / Visual Overlay Districts and Protection	Protects and minimizes areas from visual and aesthetic pollution. Main tools are:	All Planning Areas	
Scenic Protection Overlay District:	Creates an overlay district applied to highly utilized corridors. Design standards and regulations apply to uses that designate a permit or review process, also applies to disturbance or construction of certain sizes and time periods.	All Planning Areas	Pittsburgh, PA Scenic Missouri Town of Philipstown, NY Redmond, WA
Model Billboard Ordinance:	Strengthens and clarifies city's and county's authority to regulate outdoor advertising. Can stand-alone or be incorporated in to local code. Contains permitted, prohibited, and exempted uses along with permit for off-site billboards. Contains design standards.		www.scenic.org
Steep Slope Overlay District:	Sets standards for how much of the property is required to be protected for new development based on the hill grade. Development approved on permit basis.	Conservation Resource Areas	Chagrin Falls, OH Cincinnati, OH Bath Twp, OH
Stormwater Management Overlay District:	A stormwater management overlay is to protect existing properties and water quality by controlling water runoff from developed areas; to protect the environmental integrity of the existing wetlands; to preserve the water quality of wellhead protection areas, and to provide minimum design standards for storm water management facilities.	All Planning Areas	Anderson Twp, OH CRWP Hamilton County, OH Geauga County, OH Pittsburgh, PA

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Stream, Floodplain and Wetland Protection:	Model Ordinance for the Establishment of Riparian & Wetland Setbacks. Provides stream and wetland setback regulations.	All Planning Areas	CRWP TMACOG Licking County, OH Hudson, OH Olmsted Falls, OH
Tree and Woodland Protection:	Uses tree permits for removal, and necessitates a plan for tree preservation and management that accounts for design, protection during construction of new residences.	Growth Areas	Dublin, OH Brecksville, OH Pittsburgh, PA
Undermined Area Overlay District:	Undermined Area Overlay District regulations are intended to reduce the risk of property damage and life that may be caused by developing over underground mines.	All Planning Areas, except Flood Hazard Areas	
Fairfield County Land Bank (Land Bank)	The Land Bank is a nonprofit corporation whose mission is to reduce property blight by strategically acquiring properties and return them to productive use. The Land Bank is governed by a Board of five directors, including the county treasurer and two of the three county commissioners.	Growth Areas	Western Reserve Land Conservancy
Jobs Grants	Provides businesses with a municipal income tax rebate on created and retained jobs. Business eligibility, and the percentage and term of the rebate can be customized by the local government to attract and retain businesses defined as important.	Growth Areas	Perrysburg, OH Northwood, OH
Property Maintenance Ordinances (and Vacant Property and Point of Sale Inspections)	Property maintenance ordinances ensure that properties remain in a safe, sanitary and attractive condition. These regulations can be locally defined, but the primary goal is to minimize nuisances and issues that create a blighting effect in the community.	Agricultural Preservation Areas Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas RMAs	Berea, OH International Property Maintenance Code
Revitalization Districts & Entertainment Districts	A Revitalization District is a tool empowered under ORC 4301.81 (Division of Liquor Control) to provide for more liquor permits within community that is at-quota with D-5L permits. Up to 15 D-5L permits can be permitted in Revitalization Districts and up to	Growth Areas (particularly in Downtown and Central Business Districts)	Lancaster, OH Northwood, OH Middletown, OH Cincinnati, OH Toledo, OH

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
	25 D-5L permits can be permitted in Entertainment Districts.		
Special Improvement Districts (SIDs)	Authorized under ORC 1710, SID is a tool created within the boundaries of any one municipal corporation, any one township, or any combination of contiguous municipal corporations and townships for the purpose of developing and implementing plans for public improvements and public services that benefit the district.	Growth Areas	Lancaster, OH
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)	A TIF is an economic development tool available to local governments to finance public infrastructure attributed to a community development-based projects. In certain circumstances, TIFs can be used for residential rehabilitation projects. The incremental and increased property tax revenue generated in the TIF district from the improvements is used to retiring the debt.	Growth Areas	Pickerington, OH
Transportation Improvement District (TID)	TIDs were created to promote intergovernmental and public-private cooperation by coordinating resources in transportation projects. Proposed projects are considered based on their ability to address at least one of the following needs: Economic Development, Safety, Preservation, or Capacity.	Primarily Growth Areas but could be used in other Planning Areas	Fairfield County, OH
Transportation and Connectivity Advancement Programs	Provides grant funding for projects that promote and advance active mobility infrastructure. These programs are:		N/A
Capital Improvement Program	These are the predominant sources of local funds. Local communities can set aside line items in the capital improvement budget for the construction of bicycle facilities.	Growth Areas	N/A
Developer Dedications	Developer dedications require the developer to construct bicycling facilities as a condition for enabling a project to occur, with a Development Agreement (DA) is usually negotiated with the landowners prior to the project proceeding.	Growth Areas RMAs	N/A

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Programs	Clean Trails Fund: Provides 75% match funds to local governments, park and joint recreation districts, conservancy districts, soil and water conservation districts, and non-profit organizations for community projects that will acquire trail corridors, build and improve trail infrastructure including regional trail systems, links to statewide trails, preservation of natural corridors and connections from urban areas to recreational areas.	Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas RMAs	See ODNR's website for list of past grant awards.
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):	Provides up to 50% reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.	Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas RMAs	See ODNR's website for list of past grant awards.
NatureWorks:	Provides up to 75% reimbursement assistance for local government subdivisions (townships, villages, cities, counties, park districts, joint recreation districts, and conservancy districts) to for the acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of recreational areas.	Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas RMAs	See ODNR's website for list of past grant awards.
Recreational Trails Program:	Provides eligible entities with up to 80% grant funding for the development and improvement of non-motorized and motorized trails. Projects include the creation and maintenance of trails and trail support facilities, improved access for people with disabilities and education about trail safety and the environment.	Conservation Resource Areas Growth Areas RMAs	See ODNR's website for list of past grant awards.
Safe Routes to School (SRTS)	The purpose of SRTS is to encourage and enable students in grades K-8 to walk or ride their bicycle to school. ODOT provides grant funds for engineering projects (improved crossings, sidewalks, etc.) or non-engineering projects (education and encouragement programs). Eligible school communities must first have an ODOT approved STP to be eligible for funding.	Growth Areas	See ODOT's School Travel Plan website

Tool	Summary	Target Planning Area	Best Practice Example
Zoning Ordinances and Resolutions	Local governments have the authority to develop zoning ordinances and regulations to guide growth and development, preserve natural resources and amenities, and to build community character. Fairfield County does not have county-wide zoning. Instead zoning regulations are adopted by the individual townships, cities and villages in accordance with the ORC. 11 of the county's 13 unincorporated townships have adopted zoning. The Villages of Stoutsville, Rushville, West Rushville, and Thurston, and the townships of Clearcreek and Madison, do not have zoning.	All Planning Areas	N/A

Fairfield County Land Use Plan Implementation Table

Plan Element	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization							
		RPC	County Organizations	City/Village Council	Township Trustees	Area Schools	Local/Other Organizations	Time Frame	Percent Complete
Connectivity	Develop effective nuisance and property maintenance standards	X	Building Dept.; Land Bank; Metro Housing	X	X		Neighborhood Groups; Homeowner Associations	S	
	Leverage incentives and tools to improve housing and public infrastructure in targeted neighborhoods	X	Commissioners; Building Dept.; Fairfield Community Action; Land Bank; Metro Housing	X	X	X	Ohio Dev. Services Agency	O	
	Promote grassroots efforts and public/private partnerships that enhance neighborhood quality of life	X	Commissioners; Building Dept.; Fairfield Community Action; Land Bank Metro Housing	X	X	X	Neighborhood Groups; Homeowner Associations; Buckeye 2030	O	
	Create a Transportation Master Plan	X	County Engineer; County Utilities; Fairfield TID; SWCD	X	X	X	Farm Bureau	S	
	Formalize Access Management Policies	X	Commissioners; County Engineer; SWCD	X	X		Farm Bureau	S	
	Expand Pedestrian Infrastructure and Mobility Opportunities	X	County Engineer; County Utilities; Fairfield TID	X	X	X	Metro Parks; MORPC	O	
	Develop a Wayfinding Plan	X	County Engineer; Fairfield Historic Parks; FCEWD	X	X	X	Metro Parks; 33 Dev. Alliance; Buckeye 2030	M	
	Create a Parks and Recreation Master Plan	X	Commissioners; Fairfield Historic Parks; SWCD	X	X	X	Local Park Depts.; Fairfield Heritage Trails Association; Metro Parks	S	
	Leverage Grant Resources	X	Commissioners; Fairfield Historic Parks	X	X	X	Fairfield County Foundation	O	

Plan Element	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization							
		RPC	County Organizations	City/Village Council	Township Trustees	Area Schools	Local/Other Organizations	Time Frame	Percent Complete
Growth Management	Develop Sustainable Land Use Tools	X	Commissioners; Health Department; SWCD	X	X		Farm Bureau; Fairfield Land Pres. Assn; Land Trusts; USDA-NRCS	O	
	Protect Prime Agricultural Lands	X	Commissioners; Health Department; SWCD		X		USDA-NRCS; Fairfield Land Pres. Assn; Fairfield County Foundation; Farm Bureau; Land Trusts	O	
	Beautify Fairfield County	X	County Engineer; County Utilities;	X	X	X	33 Dev. Alliance	O	
	Protect Sensitive Areas	X	Commissioners; Fairfield EMA; SWCD	X	X		Farmers & Landowners; ODNR; Ohio Div. of Forestry	O	
	Develop a Water and Sewer Master Plan	X	Commissioners; County Engineer; County Utilities; SWCD	X	X		Fairfield Land Pres. Assn; Farm Bureau	S	
	Amend the Fairfield County Subdivision Regulations	X	Commissioners; County Engineer; County Utilities; Health Department; SWCD		X		Local Developers; Consultants	M	

Plan Element	Strategy	Collaborating Entity or Organization							
		RPC	County Organizations	City/Village Council	Township Trustees	Area Schools	Local/Other Organizations	Time Frame	Percent Complete
Prosperity	Continue to refine and implement an aggressive program to preserve prime farmland	X	Commissioners; SWCD		X		USDA-NRCS; Fairfield Land Pres. Assn; Fairfield County Foundation; Farm Bureau; Land Trusts	O	
	Work with the agricultural community to address issues identified in the farmland survey	X	SWCD				USDA-NRCS; Fairfield Land Pres. Assn; Farm Bureau; Land Trusts	O	
	Increase accessibility to healthy and locally-sourced food	X	Commissioners; Health Dept.; Fairfield Community Action; SWCD	X	X	X	Farmer's Markets; Downtown Business Assn; OSU Extension	O	
	Revisit the economic incentive toolbox	X	Commissioners; FCEWD	X	X	X	Area Developers	S	
	Encourage thriving downtowns	X	Building Dept.; Health Dept.	X	X	X	Downtown Business Assn; Main Street Groups	O	
	Expand the broadband footprint	X	Commissioners; County Engineer; County Utilities				MORPC; 33 Dev. Alliance	O	
	Market community assets	X	Commissioners; FCEWD; Fairfield County Foundation; Fairfield Historic Parks	X	X	X	33 Dev. Alliance; Local ED Groups; Buckeye 2030	O	
	Support workforce dev. efforts and partnerships	X	Commissioners; FCEWD; Fairfield Community Action			X	Jobs and Family Services; Ohio Means Jobs; Area Colleges	O	
	Expand the County's GIS to support planning / development efforts	X	Auditor-GIS Div.; FCEWD	X			Area Developers; Real Estate Groups; MORPC	M	

A p p e n d i x

C o m m u n i t y S u r v e y R e s u l t s

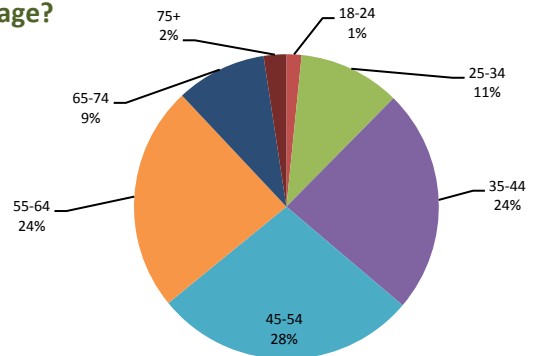
Community Survey Results

Demographics of Respondents – 855 Responses

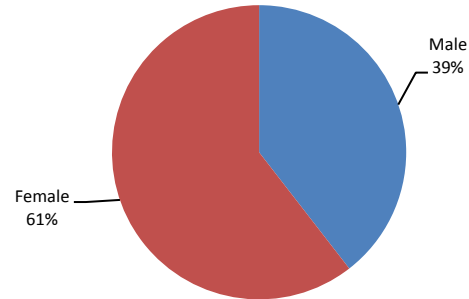
Community:

Lancaster	36.0%
Pickerington.....	23.1%
Other	12.0%
Carroll	5.2%
Baltimore	4.0%
Millersport.....	3.5%
Amanda	2.8%
Canal Winchester	2.5%
Bremen	2.1%
Pleasantville.....	1.8%
Rushville	1.8%
Sugar Grove	1.8%
Lithopolis	1.3%
Columbus.....	0.8%
Stoutsville	0.6%
Buckeye Lake	0.5%
Thurston	0.3%

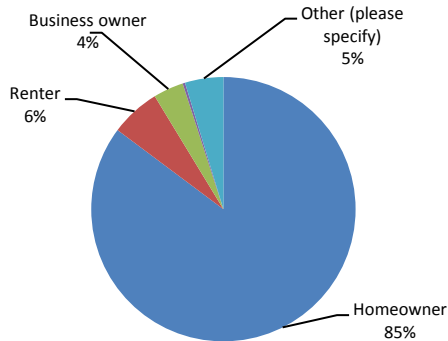
Your age?



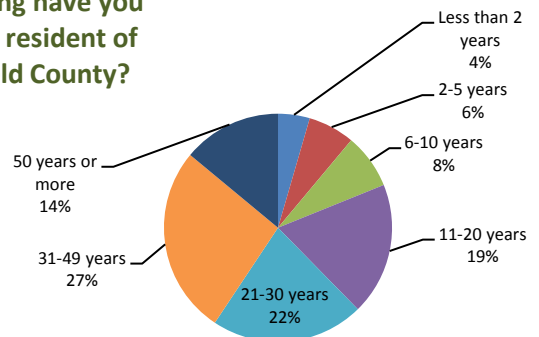
Your gender?



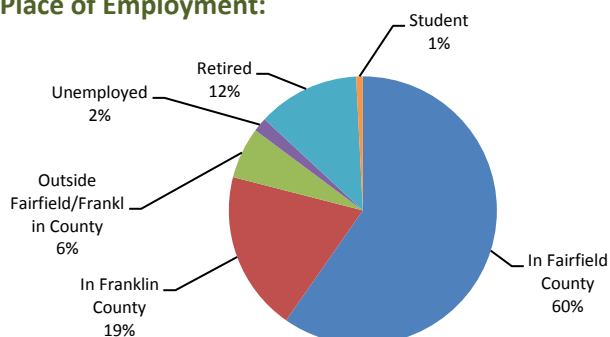
I am a:



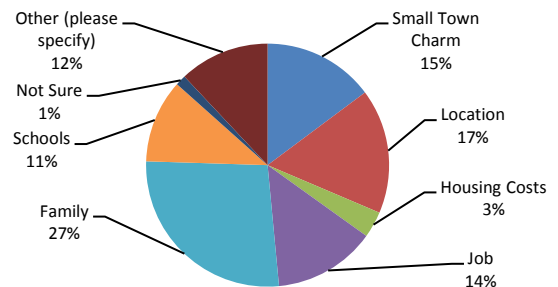
How long have you been a resident of Fairfield County?



Place of Employment:



I choose to live here because?



- Road Improvements
- Maintaining existing Neighborhoods, Buildings & Infrastructure
- Planning Growth
- Economic Development / Job Creation
- Traffic Congestion
- Improving Schools
- Drugs / Crime

Priority	Score
K-12 school quality	4.37
Protection of natural resources	4.01
Additional resources to promote community and economic development	3.88
Small business development	3.83
Elimination of neighborhood / property blight and nuisances	3.81
Farmland preservation	3.79
Park and recreational programs	3.72
Government responsiveness	3.71
Workforce development programs	3.62
Transportation improvements	3.62
Vocational and trades programs	3.60
Encourage the collaboration and cooperation among communities in Fairfield...	3.60
Code enforcement and property maintenance	3.60
Multi-use paths for biking and walking	3.58
Historic preservation	3.57
Health care services	3.57
Higher education opportunities	3.48
Senior programs and facilities	3.47
Community beautification efforts	3.46
Industrial development	3.28
Entertainment / restaurant opportunities	3.28
Visual enhancements (better building design, landscaping, signage, etc.)	3.22
Updated land use planning and zoning tools	3.20
Alternative and renewable energy programs	3.18
Site ready properties along US 33 and in other business zones	3.09
Housing supply to meet a broad range of housing needs	3.03

Priority	Score
Agriculture is a vital to our economy and targeted areas should be protected	4.06
Communities in Fairfield County share the same goals	3.99
The maintenance of existing infrastructure should be our first priority	3.96
Future development should be directed towards developed areas with existing infrastructure	3.81
Quality of life improvements help to promote economic development	2.92

1. Friendliness
2. Rural Character
3. Culture
4. Diversity
5. Natural Resources
6. Less Congestion
7. Access to Businesses / Services
8. Leadership
9. Small Town Charm

Open Ended Responses

How has Fairfield County and/or your community changed in the past 15 years?

Positive:

- Downtown development
- Commercial development
- 33 bypass
- New and improved parks
- Family appeal with events and entertainment

Negative:

- Loss of local businesses
- Urban sprawl
- Increase in drugs/crime
- Traffic
- Higher property tax
- Homeless population

What should be the most important priority for Fairfield County and/or your community?

- Create jobs
- Preservation of small towns
- Preservation of farm land
- Promote growth
- Support local business
- Lake water quality
- Traffic
- Preserving open space /natural resources
- School funding
- Drugs/Homelessness
- Housing growth
- Economic development
- Police and fire

Identify the biggest challenges facing Fairfield County and/or your community:

- Job retention
- Preserving natural resources
- Stopping urban sprawl
- Lack of prosperity
- Funding for public schools
- Embracing change
- Drug Epidemic
- Bringing back Buckeye Lake
- Traffic congestion
- Lack of police
- Infrastructure upkeep
- Lack of leadership
- Increasing population

Other Comments:

1. Please fix the local areas. Create real jobs. Promote the arts. Create SOMETHING to do for people that are not children and not elderly, there is no youth center at all in the city. What do you expect kids to do that are older when there is nothing here for them? There are no sporting leagues for young adults or complexes to do things like this in the winter. Build a rec center!
2. Both Police and Parents need to do a better job in dealing with the rampant use of drugs in the school system.
3. Love Lancaster. Would like to see the sanitation dept. institute a recycle program or contract with outside entity. Still trying to figure out the Transportation program. Build affordable senior apartments downtown! Great job Lancaster. Wish I had moved here years ago.
4. Fix Buckeye Lake and you fix Fairfield County.
5. We need to embrace diversity and tolerance. It is our core values to have hope and faith in our elected officials and our community leaders.
6. Need to work on transportation improvements in growing areas.
7. I feel that new business in the area could be a great help to our community. Even restaurants would be a great addition. I feel as though the county continues to grow, the business continues to dwindle in Lancaster. No new restaurants, several empty stores in the mall, lots of empty retail stores.
8. I would like to see beautification along Route 33, nice street lamps, tear down old buildings, I like how Westerville, etc., looks.

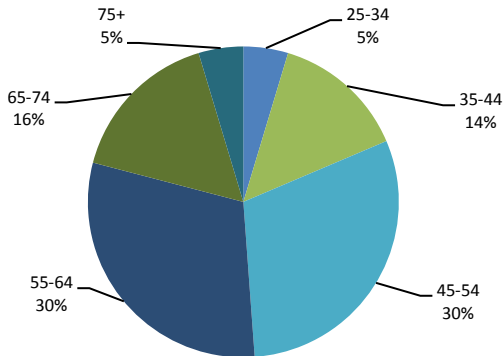
A p p e n d i x

F a r m l a n d S u r v e y R e s u l t s

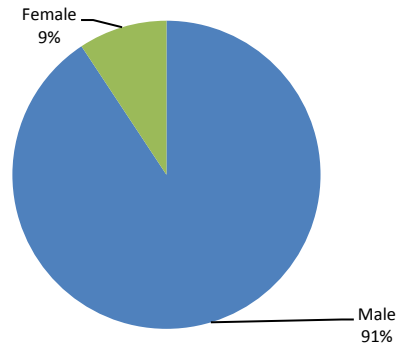
Farmland Survey Results

Demographics of Respondents – 56 Responses

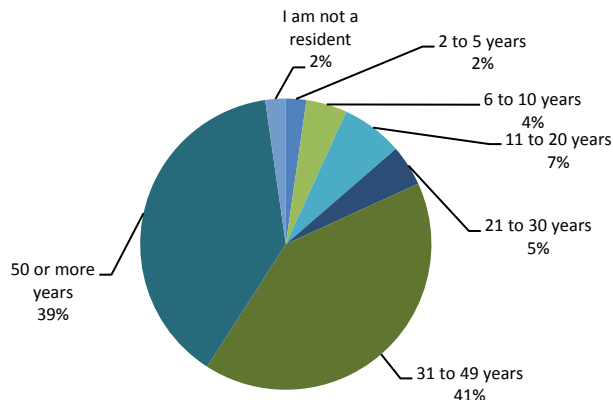
Age:



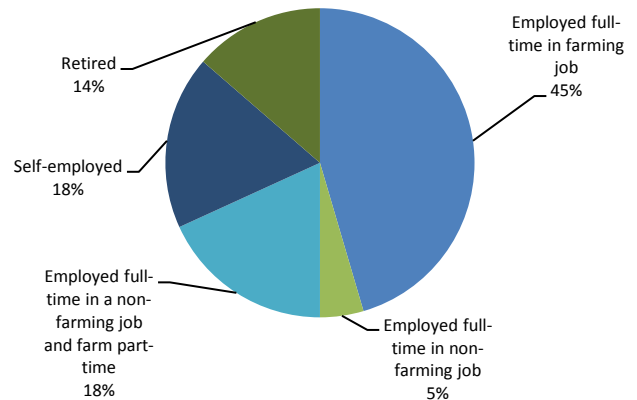
Gender:



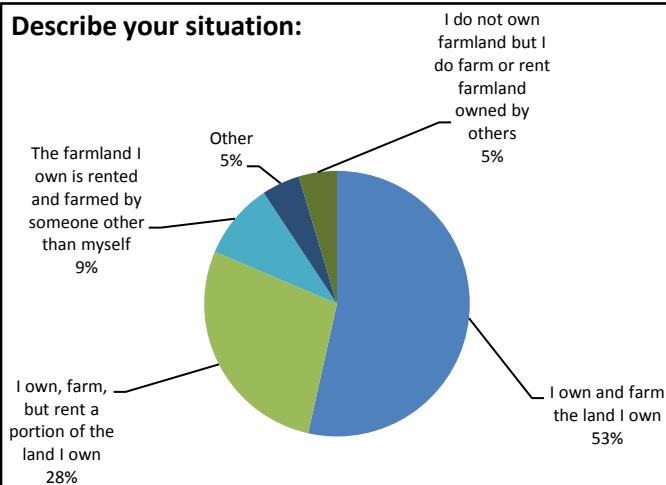
How long have you been a resident?



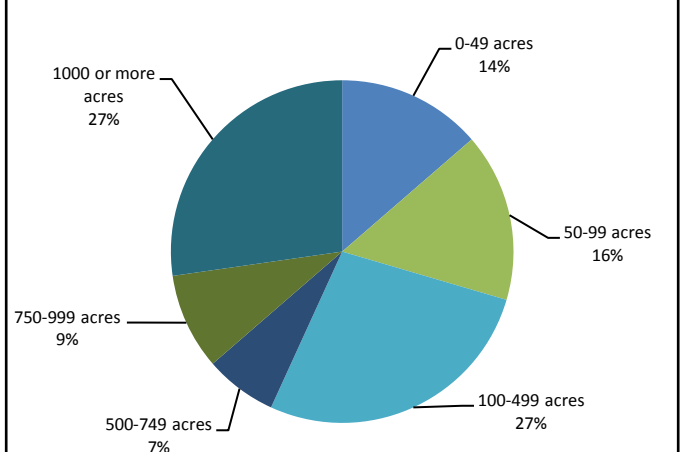
Employment Status:



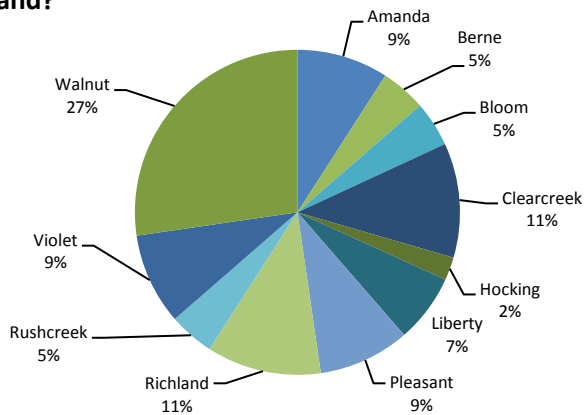
Describe your situation:



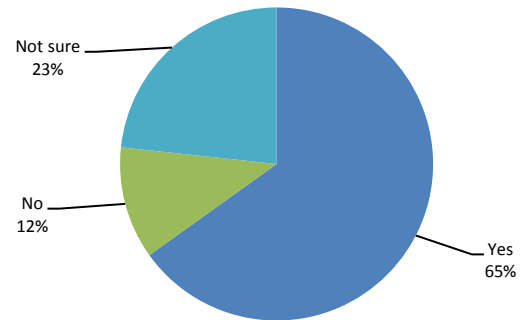
How many acres do you own or farm?



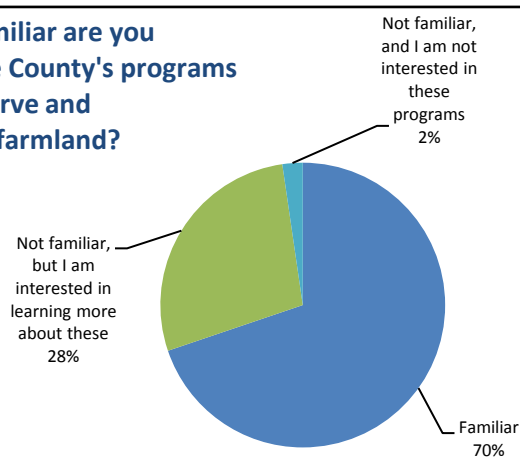
Which Township do you own or farm your land?



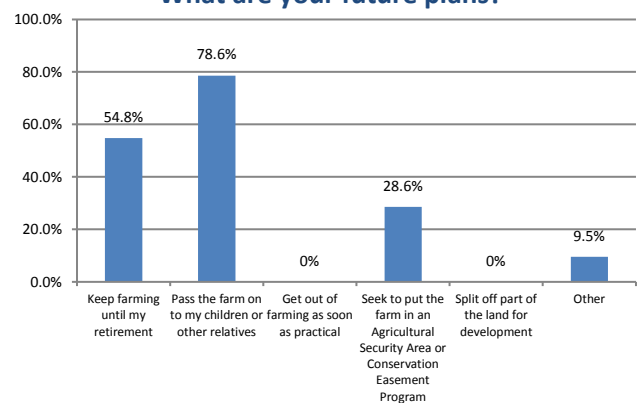
Is the land you own or farm located in an agricultural district?



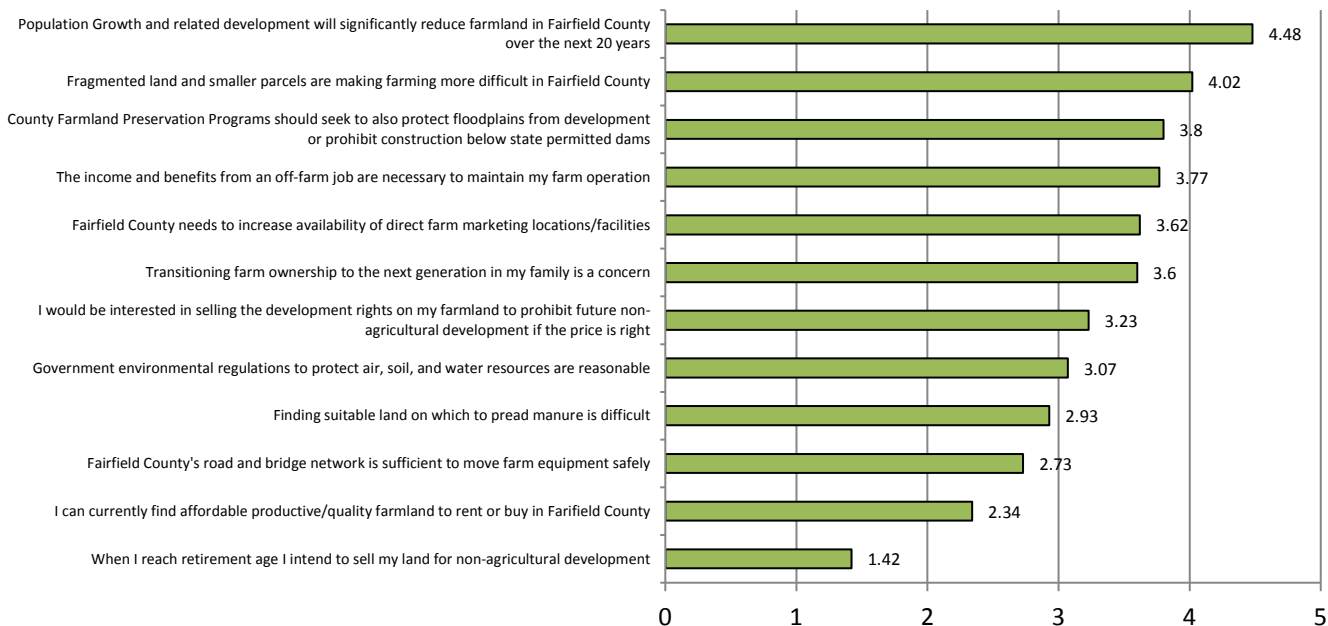
How familiar are you with the County's programs to preserve and protect farmland?



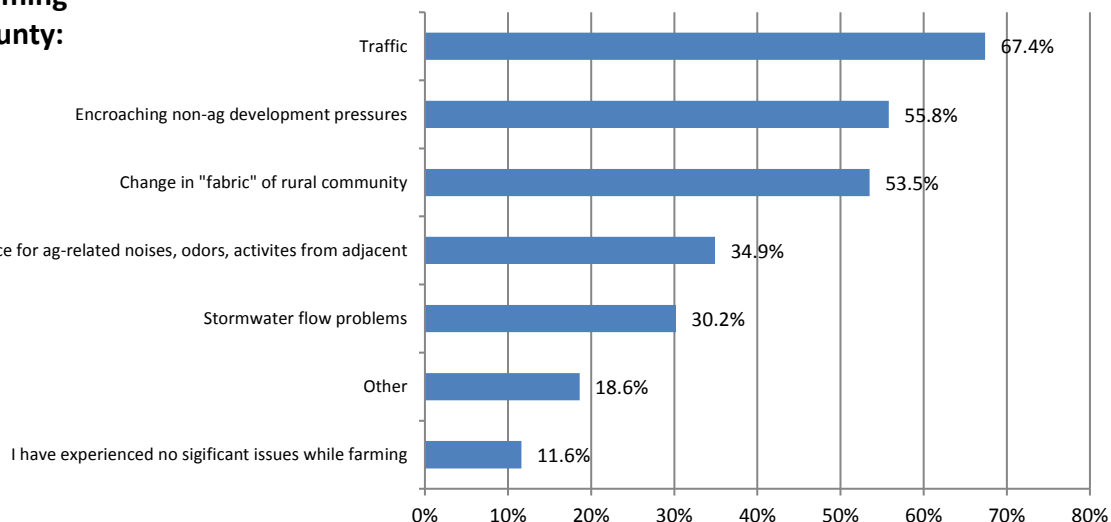
What are your future plans?



Opinion on the following statements



Issues with farming in Fairfield County:



In the last few years, what percentage of acres have you farmed yourself?

- Average: 68%
- High: 100%
- Low: 0%

In the last few years, what percentage of acres have you rented out for farming?

- Average: 28%
- High: 100%
- Low: 0%

What is the most important issue facing the agricultural community in Fairfield County?

- High property taxes
- Long-term profitability
- Increasing population
- Lack of education from the public about where food comes from and how farming works
- Too much government regulation
- Housing development
- Water and air quality
- The industry is taken for granted/ lack of respect

Other Comments:

- We need a plan. Cities are getting closer. The best ground goes to development. The only way for the next generation to continue farming in Fairfield co is to have a land use plan! You can't make everyone happy, tough choices will have to be made to better the future.
- Fairfield's 33 business corridor looks like one big junkyard from Carroll to Lancaster. No planning.
- Much more emphasis should be placed on preserving the natural areas remaining in Fairfield County. Planning for industrial growth is short-term and doesn't adequately address the long-term benefits of an agrarian and otherwise native landscape.
- Pay attention to everything allowed. Most changes to housing are permanent and irreversible!!! Usually Damaging. Concentrate development to better small communities... and minimize infrastructure.
- More farmers need to know about ag districts and the value of becoming an ag district. There are many areas of the county which should be designated ag districts. The county should add incentives to get farmers to join AD because the tourism and travel value of ag scenery in our county benefits all citizens and businesses.
- I encourage Fairfield County to find ways to revitalize unused buildings or areas in decline inside current towns and Lancaster instead of mimicking the sprawl of Columbus suburbs. We like the peace and quiet and country roads.
- Haven't we done far too much damage in altering Ohio's landscape? There are so few wild places left in Fairfield County that we should be concentrating on preserving rather than expanding the human imprint.