

# Union County

## Comprehensive Plan

February 19, 2013



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## INTRODUCTION

### History of Union County

Union County is located in West Central Ohio. The county was officially formed in 1820 with the appointment of three original commissioners by the state legislature. The county was formed from parts of Logan, Delaware, Franklin and Madison counties and the old Indian Territory. Marysville was established as the county seat, with other incorporated areas being: Milford Center, Unionville Center, Magnetic Springs, Richwood, a portion of Plain City, which sits on the Union and Madison County line. A portion of the City of Dublin is also in the southeast portion of Union County. The county also has several unincorporated population centers including: Byhalia, Essex, York Center, Somersville, Claibourne, Raymond, Peoria, Broadway, Pharisburg, Pottersburg, New Dover and Irwin. The County contains several major transportation routes including U.S. Route 33, U.S. Route 36, U.S. Route 42 and State Route 4.

The County started out largely as an agricultural community. While agriculture still dominates the landscape, as the county developed infrastructure, new businesses and employment opportunities moved into the county as well, and the county today is home to several of the largest employers in the region. The Scotts Company was founded in 1868 and has steadily grown over the years. In 1940, the Scotts Company recorded over \$1,000,000 in sales, and had 66 employees. In 1995 the company merged with the Scotts Miracle Grow Company, and became known as the Scotts Miracle Grow Company. Today, the Scotts Miracle Grow Company is still headquartered in Marysville, and has over 8,000 employees worldwide, with total company wide revenues of nearly three billion dollars. In 1979 The Honda of America Manufacturing Company established itself in Union County with the production of its first motorcycle, produced at their manufacturing plant west of Marysville along U.S. 33. In 1982, Honda expanded its operations and added its Marysville automotive plant, producing the first foreign car made in America. Today, Honda is not only one of the largest employers in Union County, but also in the region.

Union County offers a unique blend of excellent employment opportunities within the county as well as being in close proximity to large metropolitan areas with large population and employment centers, while still offering a quiet peaceful place to live. Because of this, the County's population has grown from its original 1,996 people to over 52,000 in the 2010 census. Union County has been one of the fastest growing counties in Ohio over the last ten years, and is expected to continue to grow at a faster than average pace into the future. For a current snapshot of the county, please see the County profile in Appendix A as prepared by the Ohio Department of Development's Office of Policy, Research and Strategic Planning.

### Regional Context of Union County

Due to its geographic position in The State of Ohio, major transportation routes, and large regional employers and proximity to Columbus, Union County is a vital area for development and growth in the region. The county has experienced a boom in population growth over the last several decades, largely due to people moving away from Columbus, but keeping close enough to commute to their jobs there. Union County not only draws people looking to live in a laid back environment, but also those looking for excellent employment opportunities with companies such as Honda or America, Scotts Miracle Grow Company, Nestle, and many others. The county's population is expected to continue to grow through the next 20 to 30 years. The U.S. 33 will continue to serve as a major transportation artery to and from the City of Columbus and surrounding areas. As such, it is anticipated that areas immediately surrounding the U.S. 33 Corridor will continue to face increased commercial and industrial growth.

While the northern areas of the County are more rural, it is expected that they may face increased residential growth in the future, as the population of the county continues to expand. It is important that the county take precautions to protect lands with prime agricultural soils as well as those areas currently in agricultural production from this increased pressure, as agriculture serves a vital role not only in Union County's economy, but the regional economy as well.

## Role of the Comprehensive Plan

The last update of the Union County Comprehensive Plan was completed in 1999 hence making it outdated in its ability to fulfill the needs of the County and local government officials. In addition, local officials are looking for guidance in managing increases in population and housing in the region that will inevitably continue to sprawl outwards from the Columbus Metropolitan Region.

The Plan update was initiated by the Union County Commissioners in 2009 with their decision to have the Logan-Union-Champaign (LUC) Regional Planning Commission lead the planning effort. LUC created several committees to address various chapters of the comprehensive plan. The committees and their various members were as follows:

### ❑ Land Use Committee

- LUC Regional Planning
- Greg DeLong – City of Marysville, Planner
- Jeff Stauch – Union County Engineer
- Union County CIC Long Range Planning Committee
- Steve Stolte, Union County Commissioner
- Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner
- Charles Hall, Union County Commissioner
- Paul Pryor, Union County Health Department
- Peggy Kirk Hall, Union County Land Heritage Trust
- Bob Scheiderer, Union County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Mark Watkins, Union County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Terri Gravatt, Union County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Amelia Costanzo, MORPC
- Nancy Reger, MORPC

### ❑ Agriculture and Natural Resources

- LUC Regional Planning
- Peggy Kirk Hall, Union County Land Heritage Trust
- Terri Gravatt, Union County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Barry Moffett, Union County Township Trustee Association
- Christy Clark, Union County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Doug Alderman, Darby Township Trustee
- Steve Stolte, County Commissioner
- Greg DeLong – City of Marysville, Planner
- Jeff Stauch – Union County Engineer
- Anthony Sasson – The Nature Conservancy
- Jim Rush – Liberty Township
- LeRoy Holt – Union Township
- Bob Gable -Ohio Department of Natural Resources

### ❑ Transportation

- Jeff Stauch – Union County Engineer
- Eric Phillips, Union County Economic Development Partnership
- Union County Chamber of Commerce Infrastructure Committee

**□ Utilities**

- LUC Regional Planning
- Jeff Stauch – Union County Engineer
- Bill Narducci – Union County Engineer's Office
- Jeremy Hoyt – City of Marysville
- John Mitchell – City of Marysville
- Scott Sheppeard – City of Marysville
- Rick Varner – City of Marysville
- Steve Stolte, Union County Commissioner
- Gary Lee, Union County Commissioner
- Charles Hall, Union County Commissioner
- Union County Chamber of Commerce Infrastructure Committee

**□ Economic Development**

- LUC Regional Planning
- Union County Chamber of Commerce
- Union County CIC
- Eric Phillips, Union County Economic Development Partnership
- Jason Stanford, Union County Economic Development Partnership

**□ Community Services and Housing**

- LUC Regional Planning
- Brad Gilbert – Union County EMA
- Christy Clark - Union County Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Shari Marsh – Union County United Way
- Kim Zacharias – Union County Sheriff's Office
- Jason Stanford – Union County Chamber of Commerce
- Beth Fetzer-Rice – Salvation Army
- Brenda Rock – Council for Union County Families
- Tina Knotts – Union County Convention and Tourism Bureau

It is important to note that the goals and objectives found in each chapter were formulated based on feedback from the committees as well as the public survey and public meetings that were held as part of this planning process. Therefore, be assured that this Plan included public input and consensus, which forms the basis of the plan. Overwhelmingly, preserving rural character through controlled development was the main concern of the community. Residents place a high value on their rural environment. In addition, they like the peacefulness and quietness of the areas of the County in which they reside. Local officials need to be mindful of this when making local decisions.

The most significant reason for the update of the Union Comprehensive Plan is to improve the quality of life for its residents and to make it an attractive place to live and work. The Union County Plan will be used as a means to guide local policy and development while at the same time protecting the physical environment and managing growth. The County wishes to ensure that its residents maintain what is valuable to them – their rural environment.

This Plan is relevant in advising local government officials concerning overall future development, land use decisions, infrastructure and transportation planning, and political and fiscal administration. In addition, the Plan is essential in protecting community necessities such as the safety, health, and welfare of the citizenry. Also, it addresses the importance of economic development in assuring that residents have jobs, income, and resources as well as the necessary local services to provide for their physical and social needs.

The Comprehensive Plan developed here is meant to be a pro-active document in fulfilling County needs and improvements. Rather than reacting to possible future problems, the intent of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide possible solutions to problems before they occur and to brainstorm and tackle existing challenges. Hence, planning is an attempt to lessen both the unfamiliar and unpredictable. The Plan guides

change while recognizing the practical needs and familiarity in which citizens find comfort. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan takes into account differing views among residents, government officials, political interests, business owners, and other community parties in an effort to create cooperation in the planning process that everyone can benefit from.

The County recognizes that there are other plans that address specific needs of the county. Therefore, any plan pertaining to the components of the Union County Comprehensive Plan (including township comprehensive plans), whether previously adopted or adopted at a future date, shall be considered a part of this document in their entirety.

## The Planning Process

Mapping and GIS (Geographic Information Systems) services were implemented as part of this Plan as tools to portray the spatial and location variations of specific socio-economic, environmental, and demographic data sets relevant to this Comprehensive Plan. LUC Regional Planning Commission using the ArcGIS software program performed this task.

The use of GIS in planning can be an important tool. It can be used for both inventorying and visualizing spatial data. GIS itself is a mapping program that allows the user to store, analyze, and display data that is spatial in nature. For purposes of this Union County Plan, GIS was used mainly to display various layers of data in the form of maps. For example, , you will find zoning, land use, and soil maps to name a few. In addition, GIS was used to analyze and exhibit the transportation networks in the County. In all, the Union County maps are presented as user-friendly sources to display data that is easy for the reader to understand.

Most of the quantitative data in this plan is from the United State Census Bureau, 2010 decennial census. Sources of data are quoted on the tables, charts and maps throughout the plan. The qualitative data found throughout the plan are largely a result of the work from the various plan committees and the data gathered from the surveys returned from county residents and stakeholders.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Union County Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 1999. An update of this plan was commissioned in order to reflect on accomplishments from the 1999 plan, and layout new strategies for the county moving forward to create a vision for the future of the area.

Union County has and is expected to continue see a high rate of population growth. The overarching goal of this plan is to embrace that growth, while managing it responsibly to protect the resources and unique character of the county. The plan will address a multitude of different areas and offer broad goals with quantifiable objectives to reach them.

Union County recognizes that while it is important to plan for its own future, that it is a part of larger region and serves as vital link between Columbus and other parts of the state. Throughout the planning process, it was important to keep in mind that the County is uniquely situated to offer resources to larger economies, as well as being able to provide a range of residential options to potential residents.

The creation of this plan was driven by committees with expertise varying areas, including:

- Agriculture
- Economic Development
- Community Services and Housing
- Land Use
- Arts, Parks and Recreation
- Natural Resources
- Transportation
- Utilities

These eight areas are each examined more in depth in their own chapters in this plan. The intention of this Executive Summary is to serve as road map for each chapter, showing the high points, so that they reader may quickly find the information they are looking for.

### Agriculture

Agriculture is discussed beginning on page 39 of this plan. The following topics are explored in detail:

- Maintaining the Agricultural Land Base in Union County
- Promoting Agricultural Economic Development and Agricultural Business Viability

### Economic Development

Economic Development in Union County is discussed beginning on page 47, where the main concepts are as follows:

- Economic Development Action Plan Creation
- Economic Development Action Plan Implementation
- Investment in Economic Development
- Future Updates to the Economic Development Action Plan



## Community Services & Housing

The discussion on Community Services and Housing begins on page 56 with the following major ideas:

- Ensuring continued safety in Communities as growth occurs
- Support to effective communication with the public
- Quality of life for senior citizens
- of the various Educational Institutions in the county
- Removal of barriers
- Housing opportunities for all income levels and demographics

## Land Use

Begins on page 63 and discusses the following:

- Encourage well-managed growth in the county
- Encourage the use of alternative energy and energy efficiency in new development
- Prepare land use maps for key development areas

## Arts, Parks and Recreation

The Arts, Parks and Recreation chapter of the plan begins on page 76 and discusses three (3) key points:

- Implementation of the Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway Plan
- Promotion of memorable arts within the county
- Protection and Conservation of Union County's historical heritage

## Natural Resources

The plan discusses strategies for the following six (6) categories of natural resources, starting on page 84:

- Soil
- Mineral Resources
- Water and Groundwater/Aquifers
- Plants
- Air Resources
- Wildlife

## Transportation

Key points regarding transportation are presented on page 92 and look at the following areas:

- Maintaining and Improving the Transportation Network
- Alternative Methods of Transportation
- Safety of the Transportation System
- Community Strategies
- Traffic Planning
- Funding of Transportation

## Utilities

The final chapter of the plan speaks about Utilities in Union County and touches on the following nine (9) issues beginning on page 111:

- Ensuring Adequate Public Water Supply
- Managing the Treatment and Disposal of Waste Water
- Improving Storm Water Management
- Planning for Capacity
- Community Strategies
- Adequately Funding Utilities

While the comprehensive plan is a broad planning tool for the county, it should not be considered the only planning document for the County. Rather, this plan should be used in conjunction with other county plans.

## PLANNING ISSUES

### Overview

#### A. Planning in the County

Union County last updated the county wide comprehensive plan in 1999. Over the last decade, Union County has been one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Ohio. Because of this, there has been a tremendous amount of ongoing planning to accommodate and manage the rapid growth, not only on a county wide level through things such as transportation and economic development planning, but also at a more localized level as well. Over the last 10 years, many of the townships in Union County have adopted their own comprehensive plans. The following political subdivisions in Union County have adopted their own comprehensive plan:

- City of Marysville – Adopted 2010
- Allen Township – Adopted 2004
- Darby Township – Adopted 2003
- Jerome Township – Draft Format
- Liberty Township – Adopted 2005
- Millcreek Township – Adopted 2004, with Supplement added in 2010
- Taylor Township – Adopted 2007
- Village of Plain City – Adopted 2003

#### B. Reference to other Comprehensive Plans

##### **Logan County Comprehensive Plan (2007)**

The Logan County Comprehensive Plan aims to direct development in areas which can be served by sanitary sewer, water, and roadways and to protect unincorporated areas from commercial and urban growth on sites that cannot sustain long-term growth pressures. The plan encourages industrial growth in already developed areas. These areas, such as the U.S. 33 Corridor and Indian Lake Industrial Park, can support the necessary infrastructure for manufacturing operations. Several growth management strategies, such as Agricultural zoning districts, aim to preserve the rural character of Logan County.

##### **Madison County Comprehensive Plan (2005)**

The Madison County Comprehensive Plan was initiated to develop a growth management strategy for the county based on the idea that the Plan is a guide for determining the location and timing for public improvements. The 2005 update reviewed its growth management strategy for the future. New residential developments are encouraged within the urban service boundary where central water and sewer services are available or can be extended. The proposed land use plan recommends agricultural preservation areas along the county's northern border adjacent Union County. Environmental policies address stream protection and watershed development, especially the Big and Little Darby Creeks.

##### **City of Dublin (2007)**

The City of Dublin Comprehensive Plan was a four year process that looked at 10 land use principles and six main goals for the planning of the city's future. Since 2000, significant land masses have been annexed into Dublin along the City's western periphery including areas within Union County. The plan identifies planning areas that focus on development within the borders of Union County. Planning efforts along the U.S. 33

corridor will play an important role in the City's future, with substantial development of additional office and laboratory uses, supported by mixed use commercial centers.

The Plan distinguishes several planning areas that will impact Union County. The planning goals in these areas aim to provide well-planned growth and connectivity. These planning areas call out conceptual future land uses that are general guides to indicate potential development options.

#### **Champaign County Comprehensive Plan (2004)**

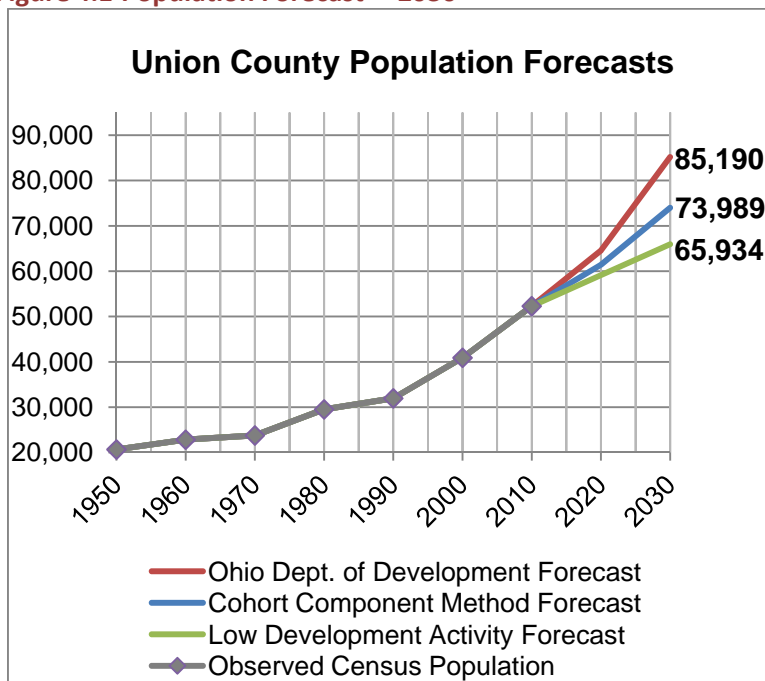
The Champaign County Comprehensive Plan recommends agricultural preservation in areas with prime agricultural soils. The plan discourages residential growth on prime agricultural soils in favor of preferred rural residential areas on non-prime agricultural soils. Preferred rural residential areas should be located in well-placed clusters to limit impact on surrounding agricultural uses and are subject to sewer and water development limitations. Residential growth in rural centers, small rural settlements which are outside the projected limits of utility services of urban areas, is also discouraged due to the concern over aging on-site leaching systems.

## COUNTY CHARACTER AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### Overview

Demographics, such as population, age, housing, labor force, employment opportunities and school performance play an important role in growth and development, as well as land use patterns throughout Union County. This section will present information on both current and past demographics, employment and labor statistics, as well as school performance statistics over the last several years.

**Figure 4.1 Population Forecast — 2030**



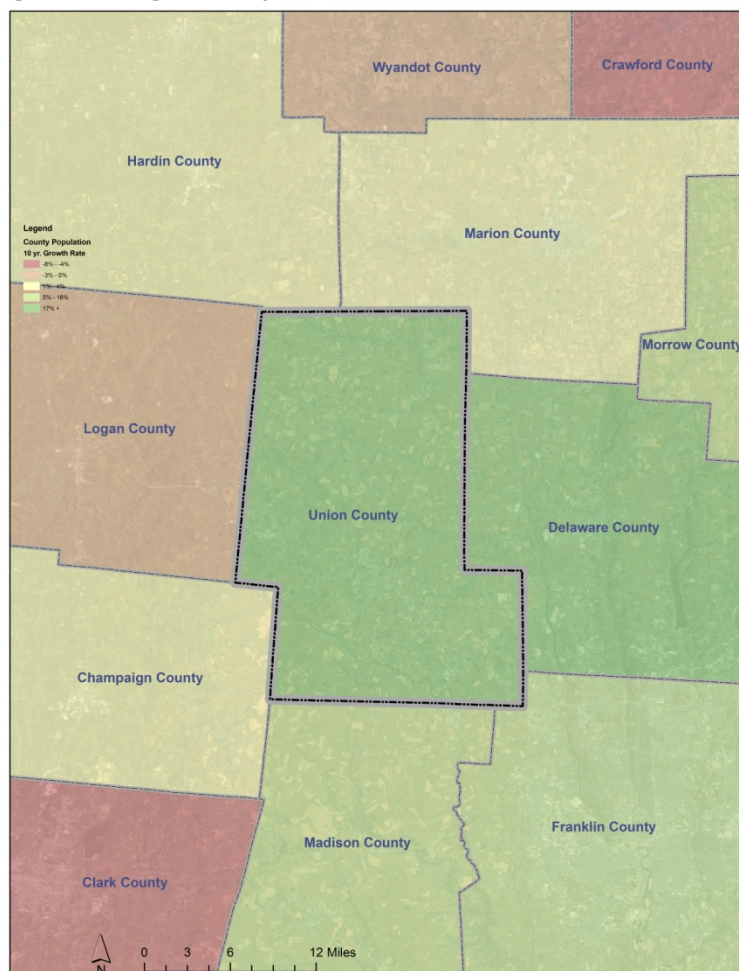
**Figure** The Ohio Department of Development population forecast was significantly higher than all other estimates and shows a total change of 32,890 (63%). Using ODOT estimates, the total population forecast for 2030 is projected to reach 85,190.

Detailed projections at 5-year intervals suggest the fastest growing category of residents is those 75 years and older, expected to grow 120% by 2030 based on migration trends and survival rates.

A population projection is a mathematical outcome based on assumptions about trends happening in Union County, such as a naturally increasing population, high fertility, low mortality, positive net migration and new housing. As of 2010 Union County had 52,300 residents. In general, the overall trend reflects continued double digit population growth in Union County. A low estimate of 26% growth was obtained by looking at residential development patterns, while a high estimate of 63% growth is forecasted by ODOT using vital health statistics. As more people come to live in Union County, planning for continued growth will contribute to the success of the region.

## Population Trends

**Figure 4.2 Regional Population Growth**

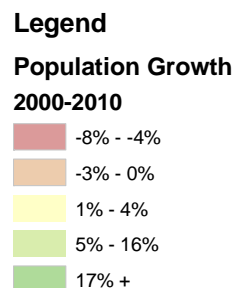


**Figure 4.2** In the years between 2000 and 2010, the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area was the fastest growing in the State of Ohio, led by two of the three fastest growing counties in the state: Union and Delaware.

Between 2000 and 2010, Union County grew by 28% and Delaware County by 58%.

**Figure 4.3** Historically, Union County's population trend has continued to rise at an increasing rate, averaging 28% growth per decade over the last 20 years.

The Ohio Department of Development has projected Union County's population to grow to 64,570 (23%) by 2020 and 85,190 (32%) by 2030.



**Figure 4.3 Total Population**

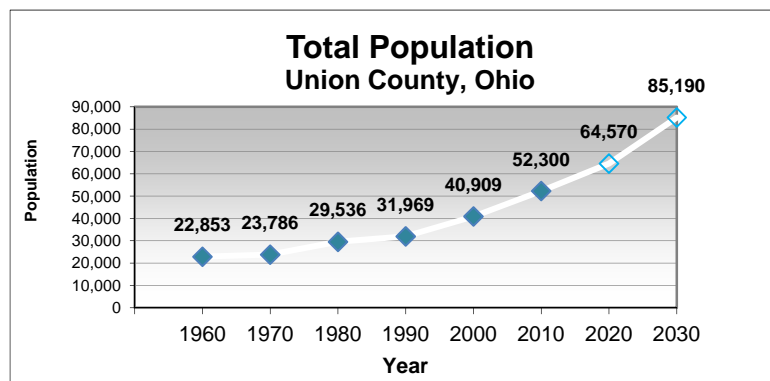
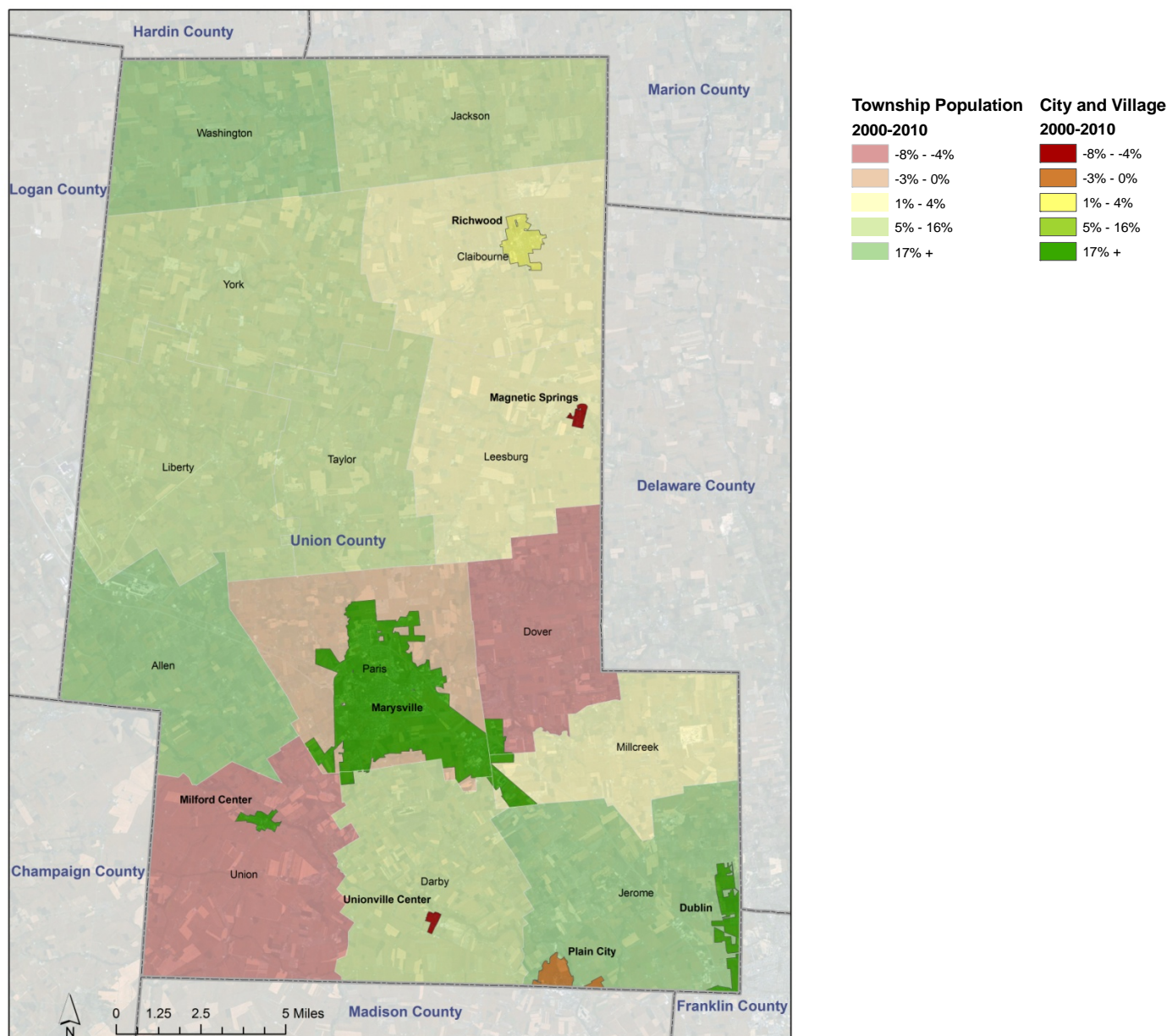




Figure 4.4 Local Population Growth



Population shifts over the last decade vary within the County, but overall total population increased 28%, shown in

**Figure** . Union County's incorporated areas accounted for 78% of the total population growth. As shown in **Table 4.**, the largest growth area in Union County was the City of Marysville which gained 6,152 residents from 2000 to 2010.

In Southeast Union County, the City of Dublin has expanded west into Union County, growing that area by 2,624. Over the course of the last decade, New California, a Planned Unit Development (PUD) of Jerome Township has contributed a population of 1,411. The incorporated villages of Milford Center and Richwood grew by 166 and 73 respectively, while population decreased in Magnetic Springs (-55) and

Unionville Center (-66). Union County townships, comprising 95% of the total land mass, accounted for 22% of population growth. Jerome and Allen Townships grew by 972 and 745 people, respectively. However, population losses were recorded in Dover (-173) and Union (-180) townships.



Table 4.5 Population

	Pop. 2010	Pop. 2000	Change (2000- 2010)	Growth (2000- 2010)	Area (sq.mi.)	Density 2010 (ppl./sq.mi.)
<b>Union County</b>	52,300	40,909	11,391	28%	436.897	120
<b>Township**</b>						
Jerome	3,904	2,932	972	33%	34.071	115
Allen	2,263	1,518	745	49%	30.122	75
Dover	2,158	2,331	-173	-7%	22.653	95
Liberty	1,948	1,705	243	14%	36.703	53
Darby	1,827	1,635	192	12%	31.478	58
Taylor	1,560	1,444	116	8%	26.655	59
Paris	1,551	1,607	-56	-3%	19.862	78
York	1,334	1,174	160	14%	37.500	36
Millcreek	1,305	1,261	44	3%	21.616	60
Claibourne	1,290	1,265	25	2%	33.424	39
Leesburg	1,146	1,115	31	3%	30.149	38
Jackson	966	914	52	6%	28.064	34
Washington	824	705	119	17%	27.896	30
Union	759	939	-180	-19%	35.592	21
<b>Place</b>						
Marysville	22,094	15,942	6,152	39%	16.564	1,334
Dublin*	2,757	133	2,624	1973% <sup>1</sup>	1.567	1,760
Richwood Village	2,229	2,156	73	3%	1.280	1,741
Plain City Village*	880	885	-5	-1%	0.876	1,004
Milford Center Village	792	626	166	27%	0.423	1,873
Magnetic Springs Village	268	323	-55	-17%	0.236	1,135
Unionville Center Village	233	299	-66	-22%	0.164	1,419
* portion within Union County						
** excluding incorporated areas (u) unincorporated 1. This growth is primarily a result of annexation						

**Table 4.5** The majority of population growth in Union County continues to occur near the City of Marysville, which added 6,152 residents, as well as southeast Union County with substantial population gain from the City of Dublin (2,624), and Jerome Township (972).

The 14 townships of Union County have a density range between 21 and 115 people per square mile with an average of 55. The average density across all of Union County is 120 ppl/sq.mi., which is below the state average of 282. Union County's incorporated areas have an average density of 1,386 ppl/sq.mi.



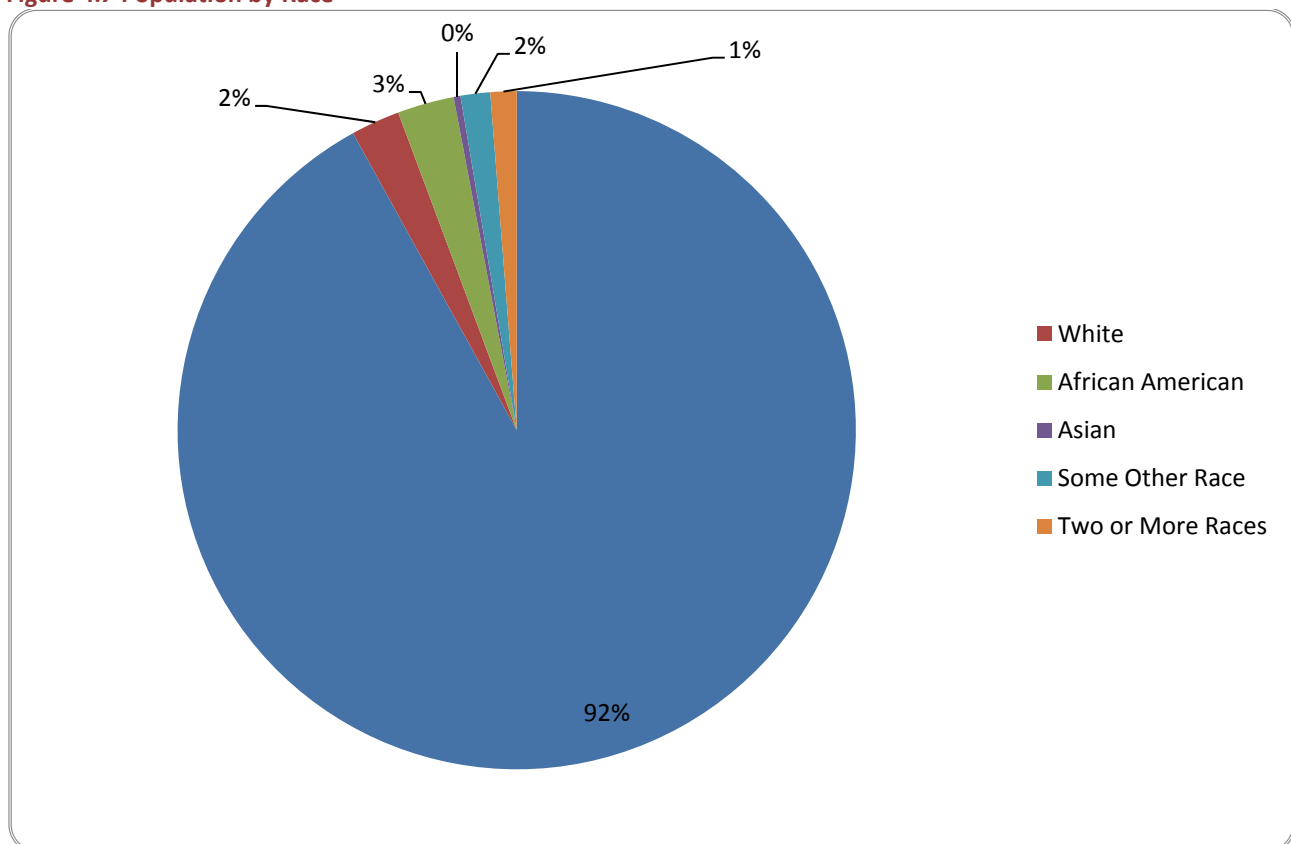
Figure 4.6 Racial Diversity in Union County

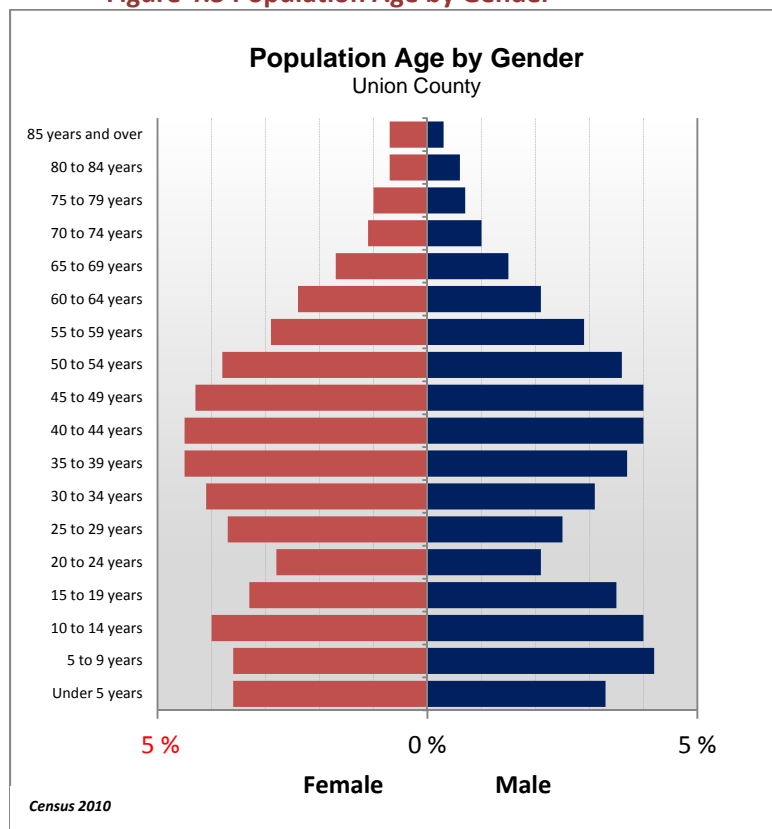
**Figure 4.6** displays block-group level Census data on race in Union County. The map shows the percentage of the total population for each racial category.

**Figure 4.7** The percentage of total population by race indicates Union County is predominantly white (92.9%).

Minority populations consist of 2.7% Asian and 2.4% Black or African American (Figure 4.).

**Figure 4.7 Population by Race**



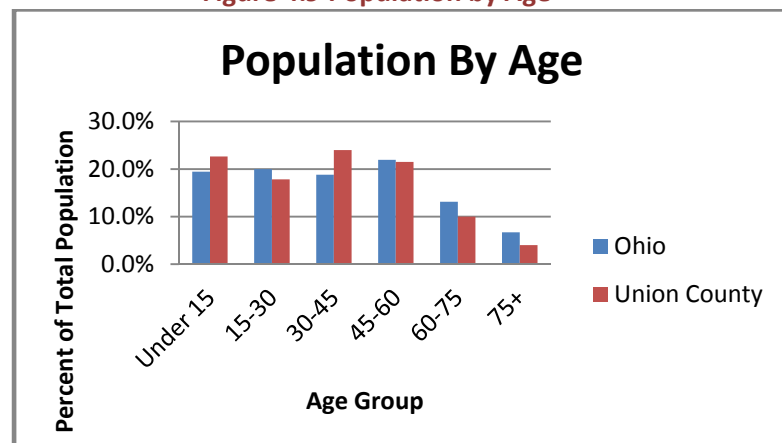
**Figure 4.8 Population Age by Gender**

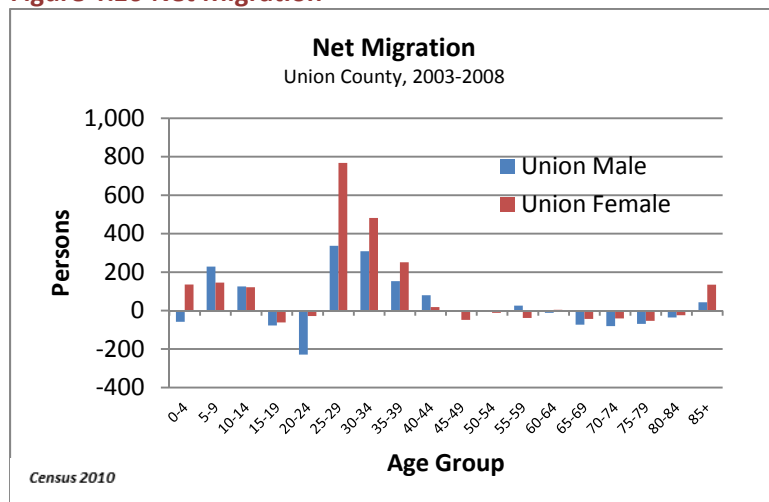
The differences between populations of age groups are shown in **Figure 4.8**

While the population of 20 to 24 year olds is small, more 25 to 39 year olds are moving into the county than any other age group.

**Figure 4.9** shows an age comparison of Union County to Ohio at 15 year intervals. The comparison reveals Union County's strong "30-45" age population compared to the State of Ohio.

Variations in age-group populations are partially explained by migration, birth and death rates as well as factors relating to the desirability of the area and the health of the economy.

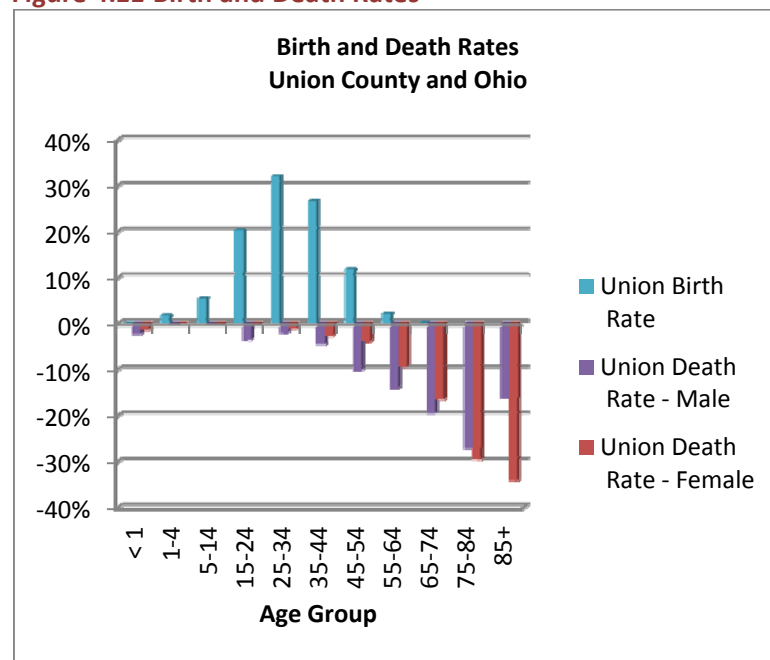
**Figure 4.9 Population by Age**

**Figure 4.10 Net Migration**

**Figure 4. 4.10** Union County experienced an overall positive net migration of 2,367 from 2003 to 2008. Most of the incoming population falls into the 25 to 34 age group.

Migration into Union County was strongest for males and females in the 25 to 39 age group with females outnumbering males.

The higher female migration rate is a partial explanation to females outnumbering males in the overall population by 2,898.

**Figure 4.11 Birth and Death Rates**

**Figure 4.11** Another reason why females outnumber males is due to their lower death rates in each category leading up to age 75.

**Figure 4.** also shows a birth rate trend that reflects the age structure of Union County. Birth rates are given for the percentage of females giving birth for each age group.

## Economic Characteristics

**Table 4.12** Manufacturing is the largest employment sector in Union County (31%), followed by Administrative and support and waste management (13%), retail trade (9.6%), and professional, scientific, and technical services (8%).

Since 2000, Union County's total employment has grown at an annual rate of 1.3% from 29,027 to 32,306 total jobs in 2010<sup>she</sup>. A key indicator to a strong economy, Union County posted higher employment growth compared to the region (0.34 percent) and the state average (-0.46 percent).

**Table 4.12 Employment by Sector**

Industry code description	Paid Employees in 2010
Manufacturing	8,724
Administrative and support and waste mgmt.	3,783
Retail trade	2,394
Professional, scientific, and technical services*	1,913
Management of companies and enterprises	1,709
Health care and social assistance	1,460
Accommodation and food services	1,454
Wholesale trade	1,184
Agriculture	931**
Other services (except public administration)	817
Construction	1,111
Transportation and warehousing	1,148
Finance and insurance	658
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	287
Real estate and rental and leasing	771
Educational services	171
Information	178
Utilities*	124
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction*	48
Forestry, fishing, hunting*	5
Other services, except public administration	1,285
Government and Government Enterprises	3,538
Total (non-agricultural)	31,375
Total	32,306**

One measure of a healthy economy is indicated by the number of spin-off jobs created. The strongest area of Union County's economy is manufacturing, which created 1.8 additional jobs for every job created in 2008<sup>1</sup>.

Full-time employment is expected to continue to grow and is projected to reach 24,489 non-agricultural full-time jobs by 2014.

1. Shift-Share Analysis of Union County. Prepared by graduate students at The Ohio State University, Dept. of City and Regional Planning

\*estimate based on flag interval;\*\*agriculture data provided by BEA includes PT and FT employees

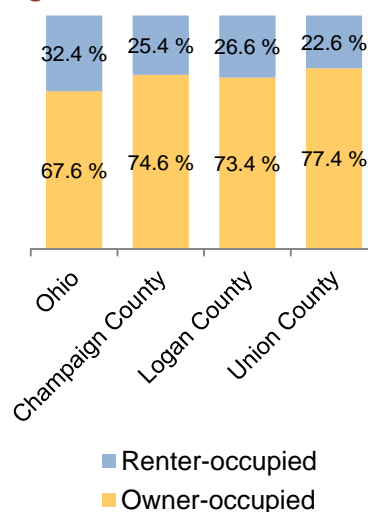
Sources: Census Bureau; Bureau of Economic Analysis

## Housing Characteristics

Although new owner-occupied housing continues to outpace renter-occupied housing, Union County's renter-occupied housing grew faster (26%) in the 2000-2010 decade than the previous decade (14%). Over the same time period owner-occupied housing grew by 256% and 35%, respectively.

Dublin and Plain City, which span multiple counties, also have high levels of renter occupied housing, but it is unclear what percentages of these are located solely in Union County.

**Figure 4.13**



Housing in Union County is comprised of 77.4% owner-occupied housing, exceeding the state average of 67.6%

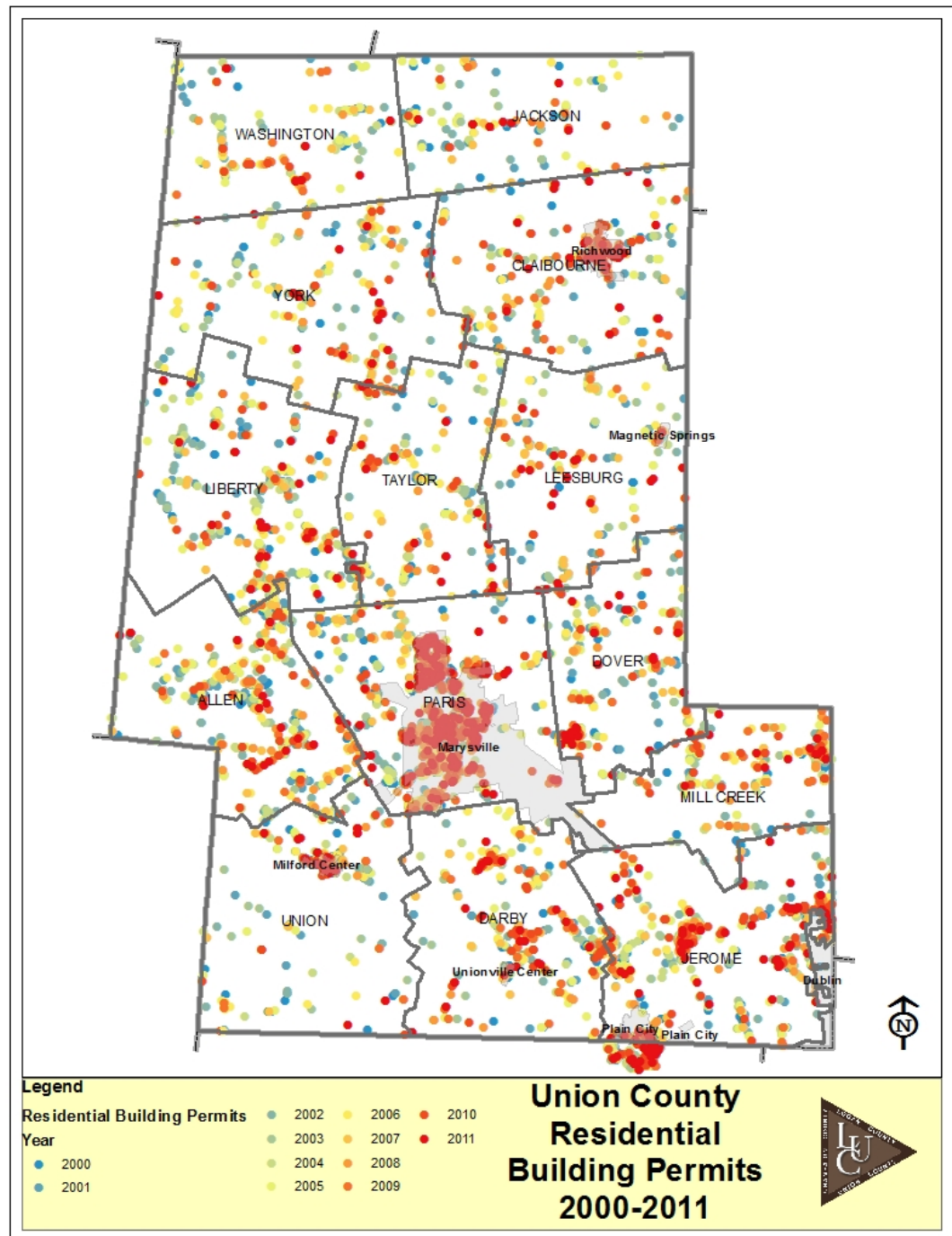
**Table 4.14 Owner vs. Renter-occupied Housing, 2000 – 2010**

Name	2010 Owner-occupied	2000	2010 Renter-occupied	2000
Allen township	712	475	42	37
Claibourne township	952	962	393	326
<b>Richwood</b>	542	579	335	270
Darby township	648	600	84	85
<b>Unionville Center</b>	61	93	17	17
Dover township	700	726	95	74
Jackson township	296	278	46	30
Jerome township	2,202	1,173	284	229
<b>Dublin*</b>	11,862	8,612	3,122	2,597
<b>Plain City*</b>	1,120	640	489	488
Leesburg township	422	422	112	105
<b>Magnetic Springs</b>	62	71	48	49
Liberty township	596	534	74	51
Millcreek township	443	423	50	36
Paris township	5,274	4,026	2,609	2,025
<b>Marysville</b>	4,759	3,588	2,555	1,975
Taylor Township	524	452	41	37
Union Township	533	467	131	104
Washington Township	265	209	45	40
York Township	420	367	72	53
Union County	13,987	11,114	4,078	3,232

\* data includes multiple counties, Source: United States Census Bureau.



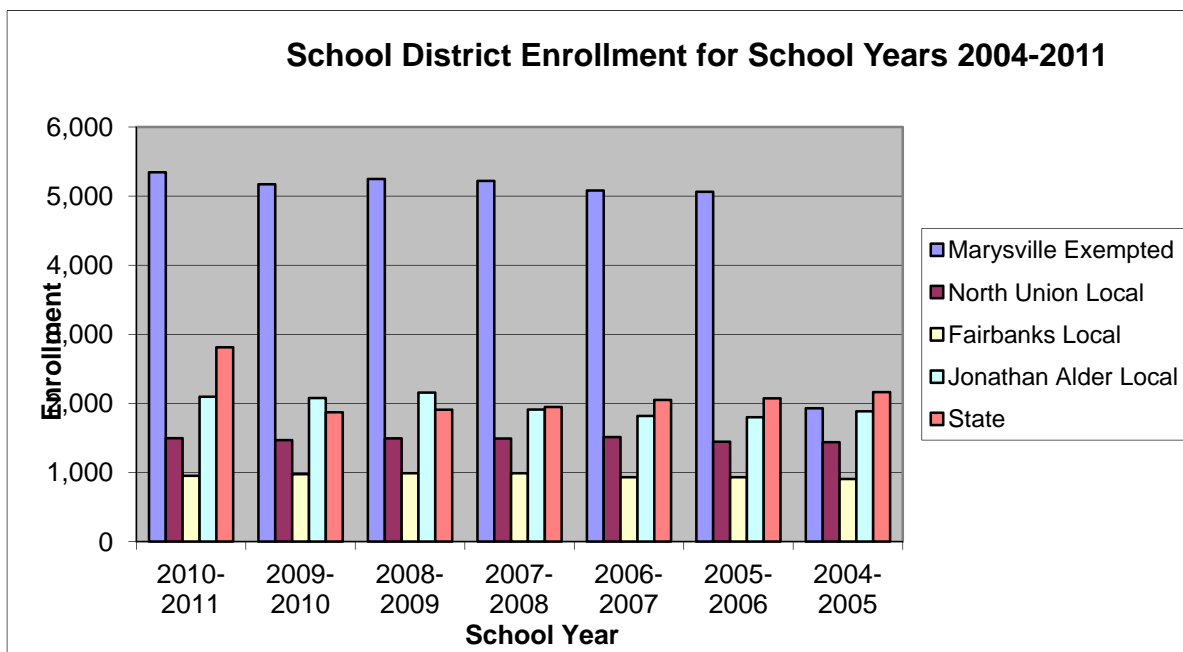
Figure 4.15 Residential Building Permits 2000-2011



*Building Permit Data provided by the Union County Engineer's Office.*

## Educational Statistics

Four school districts serve the majority of Union County. These are Marysville Exempted, North Union Local, Fairbanks Local, and Jonathan Alder Local School Districts.



**Figure 4.16: School District Enrollment for School Years 2004-2011**

Source: Ohio Department of Education

**Figure 4.16**, shows the enrollment in these School Districts over a period of seven school years, from 2004 to 2011. Enrollment has been consistent for each school district over the past five school years.

<b>Table 4.17 Expenditure per Pupil for School Years 2004-2011</b> Source: Ohio Department of Education							
Reporting District	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Marysville Exempted	\$9,466	\$9,673	\$9,193	\$9,696	\$9,755	\$9,121	\$8,739
North Union Local	\$9,973	\$10,128	\$9,702	\$9,036	\$8,090	\$8,196	\$7,915
Fairbanks Local	\$10,857	\$10,193	\$9,444	\$9,735	\$9,590	\$8,653	\$8,444
Jonathan Alder Local	\$8,360	\$8,212	\$7,402	\$8,089	\$7,511	\$7,653	\$9,579
State	\$10,571	\$10,512	\$10,184	\$9,939	\$9,587	\$9,355	\$9,051

**Table 4.17**, shows the total expenditure per student by each of these five School Districts, and the State of Ohio, over the past seven school years. As can be seen from the table, with a few exceptions, the expenditure per student for all of the School Districts was generally lower than the average expenditure per student in the State of Ohio over the past seven school years.

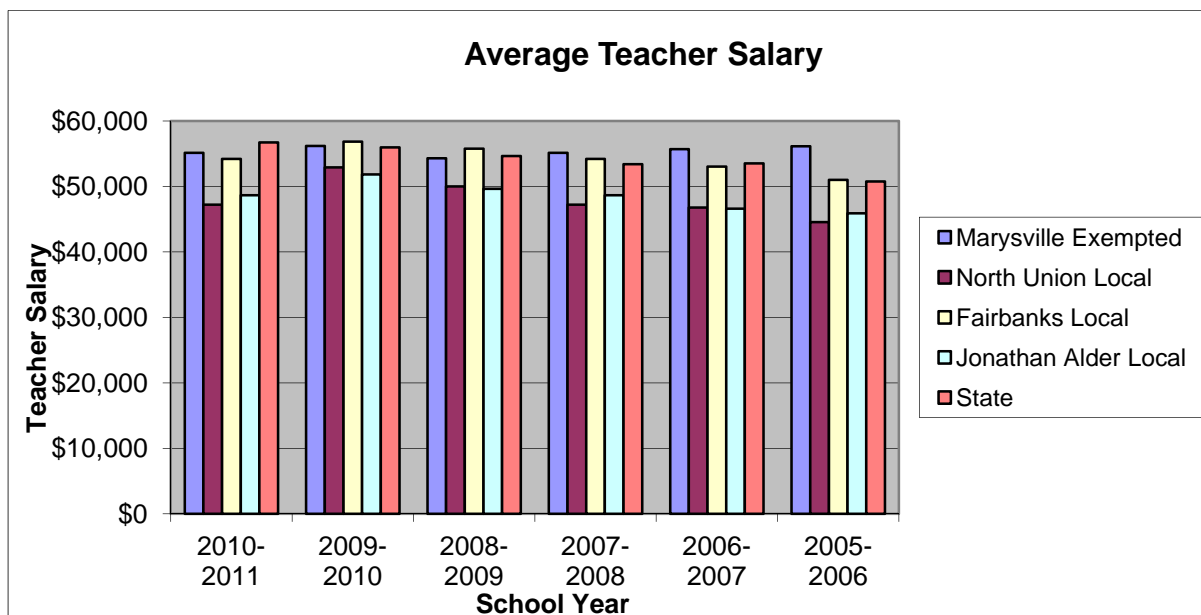
Maryville Exempted SD spent \$9,466, North Union Local SD spent \$9,973, Fairbanks Local spent \$10,857, and Jonathan Alder Local spent \$8,360 per student enrolled, as compared to the State average of \$10,571, for the school year 2010-2011.

<b>Table 4.18: Type of Expenditure for School Years 2004-2011</b>								
<b>Reporting District</b>	<b>Expenditure Type</b>	<b>2010-2011</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2004-2005</b>
Marysville Exempted	Administrative	11.30%	11.80%	11.60%	11.80%	12.00%	11.70%	12.30%
	Building Operations	18.30%	17.90%	17.20%	17.70%	18.50%	18.10%	17.00%
	Staff Support	4.00%	3.60%	3.80%	3.70%	4.10%	4.10%	3.90%
	Pupil Support	12.90%	12.60%	13.00%	12.70%	12.00%	13.30%	13.60%
	Instructional	53.50%	54.10%	54.40%	54.10%	53.40%	52.90%	53.30%
North Union Local	Administrative	10.40%	10.40%	10.90%	10.60%	11.10%	11.30%	11.80%
	Building Operations	23.80%	23.20%	23.30%	21.80%	22.90%	21.80%	21.50%
	Staff Support	3.10%	2.90%	2.70%	2.70%	3.00%	3.40%	3.10%
	Pupil Support	9.40%	9.60%	9.20%	9.10%	8.90%	8.40%	8.60%
	Instructional	53.20%	53.90%	53.80%	55.70%	54.10%	55.20%	55.00%
Fairbanks Local	Administrative	13.40%	13.10%	14.90%	13.20%	12.70%	13.90%	14.30%
	Building Operations	21.50%	21.60%	19.40%	20.10%	20.90%	18.70%	21.00%
	Staff Support	1.80%	1.70%	1.90%	2.40%	2.50%	2.70%	3.00%
	Pupil Support	10.80%	11.80%	12.40%	12.00%	11.80%	12.20%	10.50%
	Instructional	52.50%	51.80%	51.30%	52.30%	52.20%	52.50%	51.20%
Jonathan Alder Local	Administrative	13.20%	12.60%	12.90%	12.70%	13.10%	11.70%	14.50%
	Building Operations	21.00%	20.50%	21.60%	23.60%	22.70%	23.00%	20.20%
	Staff Support	2.20%	4.20%	4.60%	4.10%	4.10%	3.40%	0.70%
	Pupil Support	8.00%	7.30%	7.60%	7.80%	7.30%	8.20%	8.70%
	Instructional	55.60%	55.30%	53.30%	51.80%	52.90%	53.70%	56.00%
State Average	Administrative	12.20%	12.80%	12.50%	12.40%	11.90%	11.50%	11.90%
	Building Operations	19.00%	18.70%	18.90%	19.20%	19.00%	19.60%	19.20%
	Staff Support	3.10%	3.00%	2.90%	2.70%	2.50%	2.30%	2.10%
	Pupil Support	10.00%	10.10%	10.20%	10.20%	11.20%	11.00%	11.00%
	Instructional	55.60%	55.50%	55.50%	55.60%	55.30%	55.50%	55.90%

**Table 4.18**, shows the different types of expenditures as percentage of total expenditures, for each school district and the average for the State of Ohio over the past five school years. The greatest percentage of expenditures for all school districts for the school year 2010-2011 was Instructional Expenditures.

<b>Table 4.19: Revenue per Pupil for School Year 2010-2011</b>		
Source: Ohio Department of Education		
	<b>Source of Funding</b>	<b>Percentage of Total</b>
Marysville Exempted	Local	45.30%
	State	49.10%
	Federal	5.60%
North Union Local	Local	42.10%
	State	50.20%
	Federal	7.70%
Fairbanks Local	Local	66.50%
	State	28.60%
	Federal	4.90%
Jonathan Alder Local	Local	48.80%
	State	44.80%
	Federal	6.40%
State Average	Local	44.60%
	State	45.50%
	Federal	9.90%

**Table 4.19** shows the source of funding for the four school districts and average for the State of Ohio, for the school year 2010-2011. Marysville Exempted and North Union Local received the highest percentage of their funding from the state while the largest contribution came from local funds for Fairbanks and Jonathan Alder Local Schools. Federal funding for all districts was below the state average of 9.90%.



**Figure 4.20 Average Teacher Salary**

**Figure 4.20**, shows the average salary of teachers in each of the School Districts and the average salary of teachers in the State, for the past four school years. The salaries for teachers in the Marysville Exempted and Fairbanks Local Districts are similar, while the salaries of those in the North Union Local and Jonathan Alder Districts mirror each other. Salaries in the Marysville and Fairbanks districts tended to be near the state average, while those in the North Union and Jonathan Alder districts lagged behind. However, for the 2010-2011 school year, all four districts were below the state average, with Marysville and Fairbanks being approximately \$2,000 below the state average, and North Union and Jonathan Alder being nearly \$9,000 behind the average.

**Table 4.21 Number of Students per Teacher**

Source: Ohio Department of Education

Reporting District	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002
	Students per Teacher	Students per Teacher	Students per Teacher	Students per Teacher	Students per Teacher	Students per Teacher	Students per Teacher
Marysville Exempted	17.7	18.9	18.5	17.8	18.8	17.6	19
North Union Local	18.2	18.8	18.1	18.6	18.6	20.3	17.7
Fairbanks Local	18.1	20.8	18.7	18.1	18.9	18.3	19.1
Jonathan Alder Local	22.1	23.5	21.6	19.8	18.4	17.9	17.9
State	18.5	19.5	18.6	18.4	18.5	16.5	16.9

**Table 4.21** shows the number of students per teacher in each of the School Districts, and the State of Ohio. With the exception of Jonathan Alder Local Schools, the number of students per teacher for the other three districts is lower than the State average of 18.5 students per teacher.

**Table 4.22: Graduation Rate**

Source: Ohio Department of Education

District	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Marysville Exempted	95.70%	95.60%	94.60%	96.40%	93.50%
North Union Local	89.20%	91.20%	89.70%	93.30%	100.00%
Fairbanks Local	97.80%	95.50%	100.00%	100.00%	98.80%
Jonathan Alder Local	99.30%	96.80%	96.90%	96.20%	100.00%
State Average	84.30%	83.00%	84.60%	86.90%	86.10%

**Table 4.23: Honors Graduation Rate**

Source: Ohio Department of Education

District	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
Marysville Exempted	12.50%	18.60%	17.70%	24.60%	20.10%
North Union Local	18.00%	15.80%	22.50%	16.70%	15.90%
Fairbanks Local	33.00%	30.60%	16.50%	23.90%	18.80%
Jonathan Alder Local	31.70%	29.60%	24.40%	25.00%	25.90%
State Average	18.50%	18.70%	18.00%	18.10%	17.80%

**Table 4.22** and **Table 4.23** show the Graduation and Honors Graduation Rates. In the academic year 2010-2011, all of the districts were above the state average graduation rate of 84.30%. The other school districts all had higher graduation rates than the State average. Jonathan Alder had the highest graduation rate of all the districts, while Fairbanks had the highest rate of graduate with honors.

In 1998-1999, the Ohio Department of Education started grading its district's schools by assigning a grade to each school every academic year. These grades were assigned based on the number of performance targets achieved by the school out of a total possible 27 targets. Through the years, the number targets for the schools varies. For the 2010-2011 school year, there were 26 target areas. The range of state performance targets

includes Grades 4,6,9 and 12 proficiency test results in five subject areas, namely Citizenship, Mathematics, Reading, Writing and Science as well as district attendance and graduation rates. The school district can be assigned the following grades in descending order: Excellent with Distinction, Excellent, Effective, Continuous Improvement, Academic Watch and Academic Emergency.

**Table 4.24: District Rating**

Source: Ohio Department of Education

<b>2010-2011</b>						
<b>Indicators</b>						
<b>Reporting District</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Met Count</b>	<b>Applicable Count</b>	<b>Met %</b>	<b>Performance Index Score</b>	<b>AYP Status</b>
Marysville Exempted	Excellent with Distinction	26	26	100.00%	102.2	Met
North Union Local	Excellent	24	26	92.31%	99.5	Met
Fairbanks Local	Excellent with Distinction	24	26	92.31%	100.7	Met
Jonathan Alder Local	Excellent with Distinction	26	26	100.00%	103.2	Met
<b>2009-2010</b>						
<b>Indicators</b>						
<b>Reporting District</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Met Count</b>	<b>Applicable Count</b>	<b>Met%</b>	<b>Performance Index Score</b>	<b>AYP Status</b>
Marysville Exempted	Effective	24	26	92.31%	99.8	Not Met
North Union Local	Excellent	24	26	92.31%	98.3	Not Met
Fairbanks Local	Excellent	22	26	84.62%	97.8	Not Met
Jonathan Alder Local	Excellent	26	26	100%	102.5	Met

**Table 4.24** and **Table 4.25** show the ratings of the four School Districts in Union County for the past 5 academic years. Last year, all four School Districts met the AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) Status. For the school year of 2009-2010, Marysville Exempted Local School District were graded the lowest, but rebounded to receive the highest rating possible in 2010, Excellent with Distinction along with Fairbanks and Jonathan Alder Local Schools. Although being rated at least Effective or Excellent each of the last five years, each school has had varying success meeting the AYP Status.

**Table 4.25: District Rating**

Source: Ohio Department of Education

<b>2008-2009</b>						
<b>Indicators</b>						
<b>Reporting District</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Met Count</b>	<b>Applicable Count</b>	<b>Met %</b>	<b>Performance Index Score</b>	<b>AYP Status</b>
Marysville Exempted	Excellent	28	30	93.33%	99.1	Met
North Union Local	Excellent	23	30	76.67%	96.4	Not Met
Fairbanks Local	Excellent	23	30	76.67%	98	Met



Jonathan Alder Local	Excellent with Distinction	29	30	96.67%	100.9	Not Met
<b>2007-2008</b>		<b>Indicators</b>				
<b>Reporting District</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Met Count</b>	<b>Applicable Count</b>	<b>Met %</b>	<b>Performance Index Score</b>	<b>AYP Status</b>
Marysville Exempted	Effective	27	30	90.00%	97.6	Not Met
North Union Local	Excellent	23	30	76.67%	95.8	Not Met
Fairbanks Local	Excellent	24	30	80.00%	97.4	Not Met
Jonathan Alder Local	Excellent with Distinction	29	30	96.67%	102	Met
<b>2006-2007</b>		<b>Indicators</b>				
<b>Reporting District</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Met Count</b>	<b>Applicable Count</b>	<b>Met %</b>	<b>Performance Index Score</b>	<b>AYP Status</b>
Marysville Exempted	Effective	26	30	86.67%	96.5	Not Met
North Union Local	Effective	24	30	80.00%	95.4	Not Met
Fairbanks Local	Effective	23	30	76.67%	96.5	Met
Jonathan Alder Local	Excellent	29	30	96.67%	100.6	Not Met

# Existing Land Uses in Union County

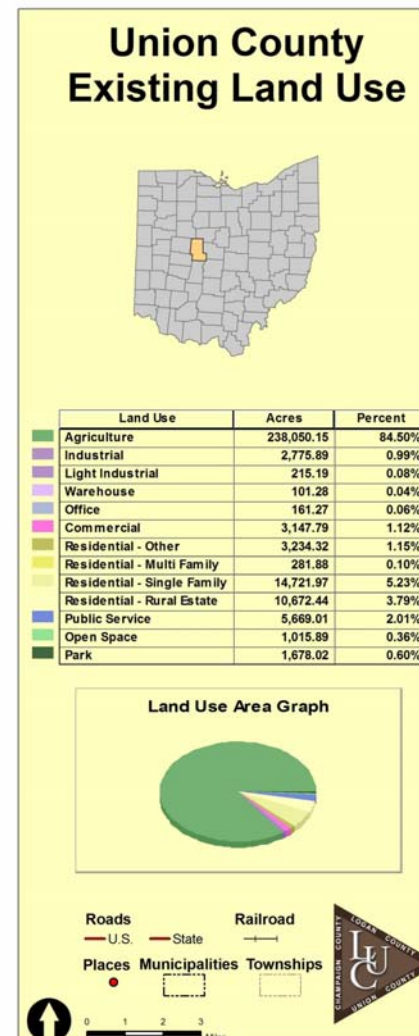
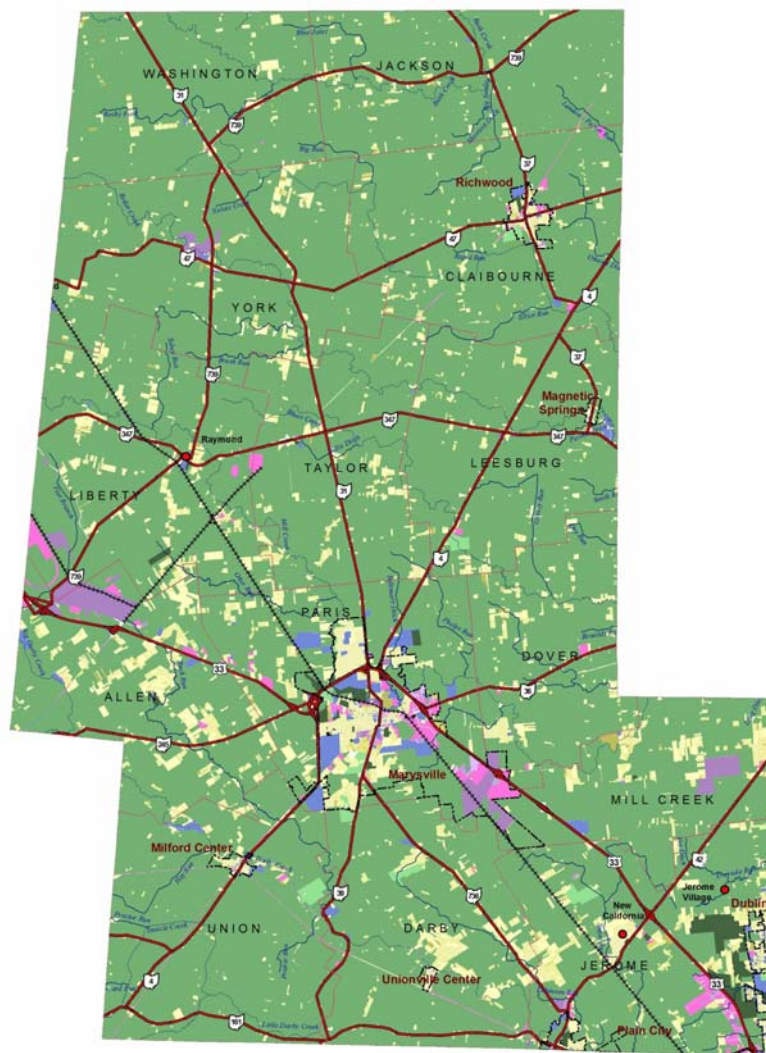
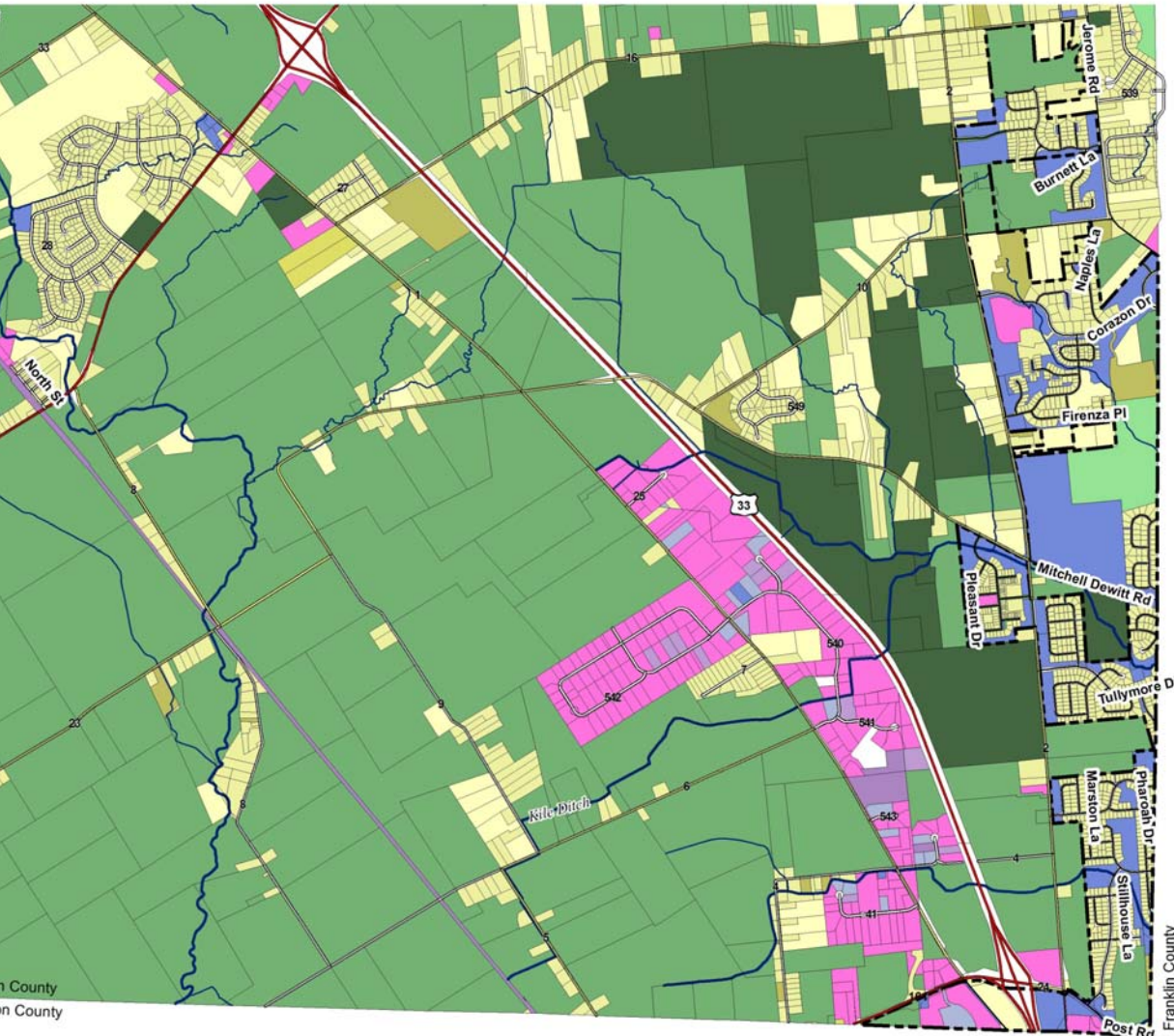


Figure 4.26 Union County Existing Land Use

Figure 4.27 Dublin Existing Land Use



## City of Dublin Existing Land Use



Land Use	Acres
Agriculture	1,000
Office	10
Commercial	100
Residential - Other	100
Residential - Single Family	3,000
Residential - Rural Estate	100
Public Service	100
Open Space	100
Park	100

\* Modified

### Land Use Area Graph



Data  
County  
2011 P

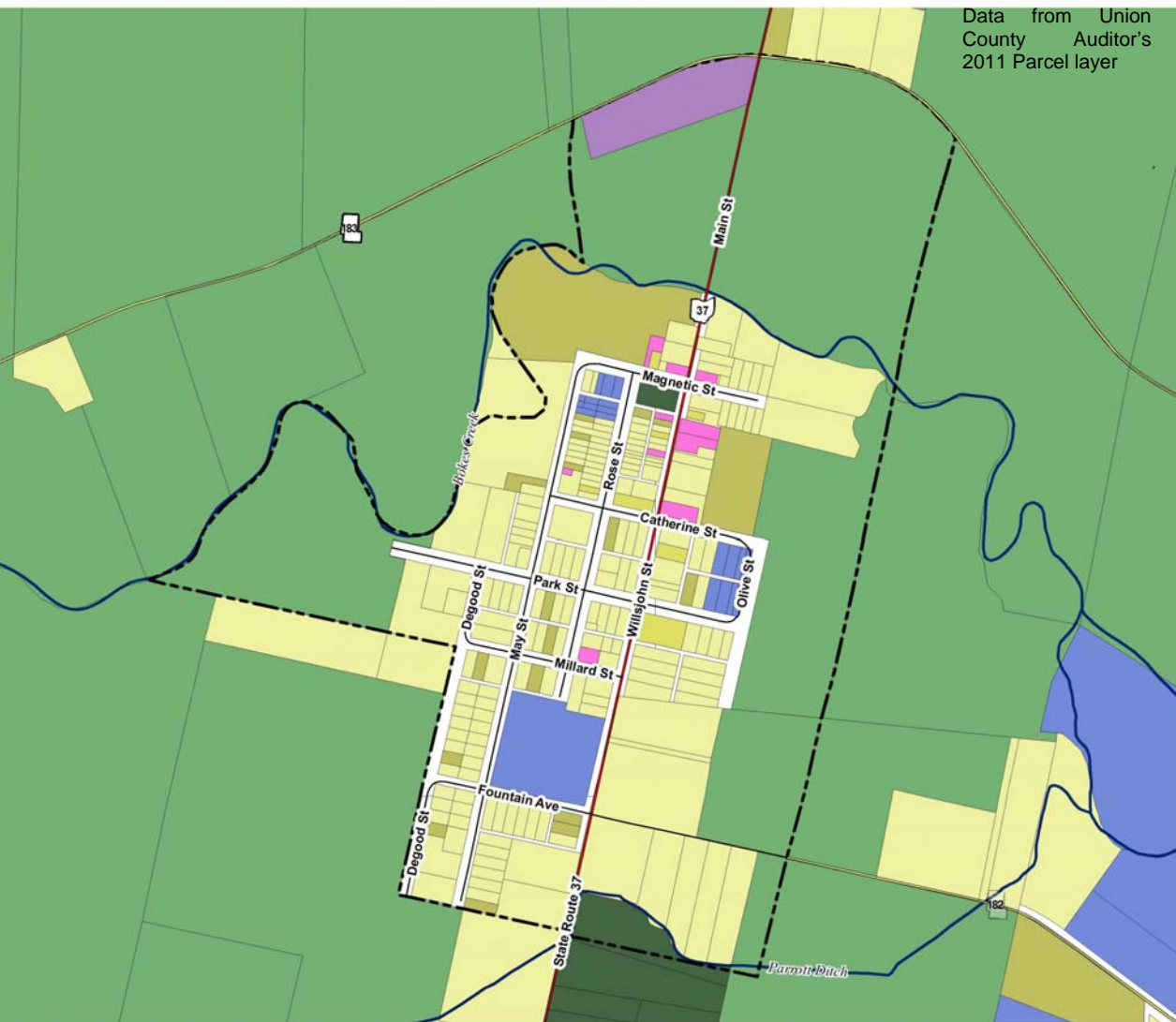
Roads  
Streams

U.S.  
State  
County  
Township  
Municipal





Figure 4.28 Magnetic Springs Existing Land Use



## Village of Magnetic Springs Existing Land Use



Land Use	Acres
Agriculture	59.02
Industrial	3.51
Commercial	1.17
Residential - Other	10.13
Residential - Multi Family	1.08
Residential - Single Family	44.94
Public Service	20.38
Park	2.09

### Land Use Area Graph



- Roads**
- U.S.
  - State
  - County
  - Township
  - Municipal
- Streams**
- 



0 250 500 750 Feet

Figure 4.29 Marysville Existing Land Use

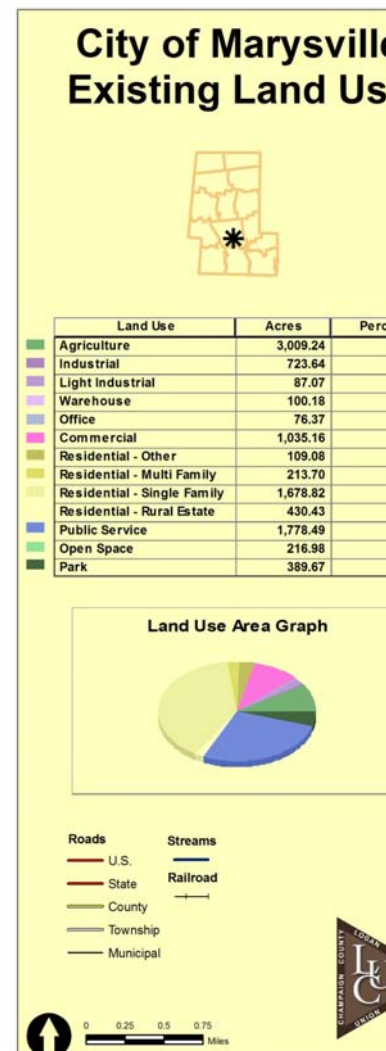
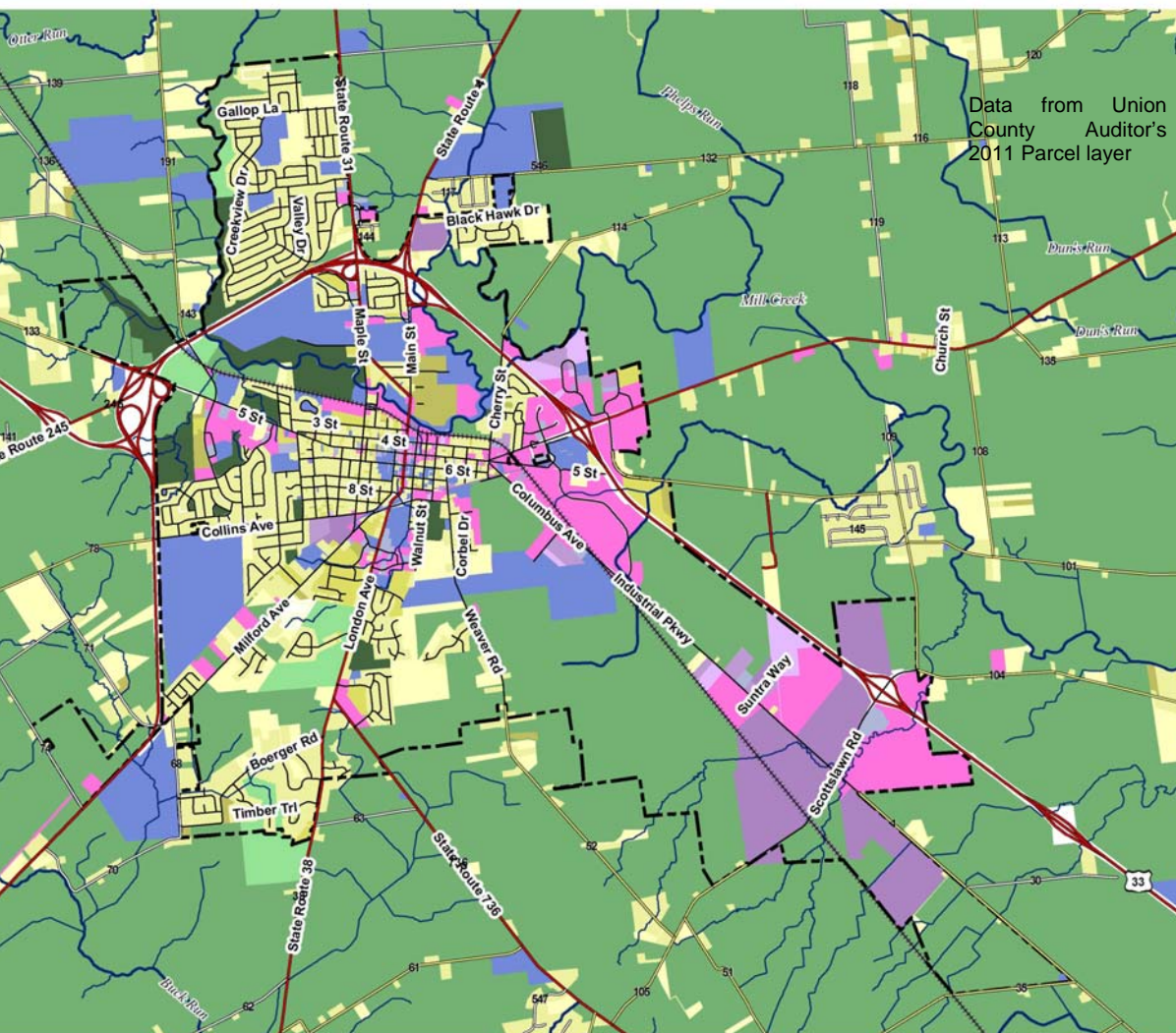
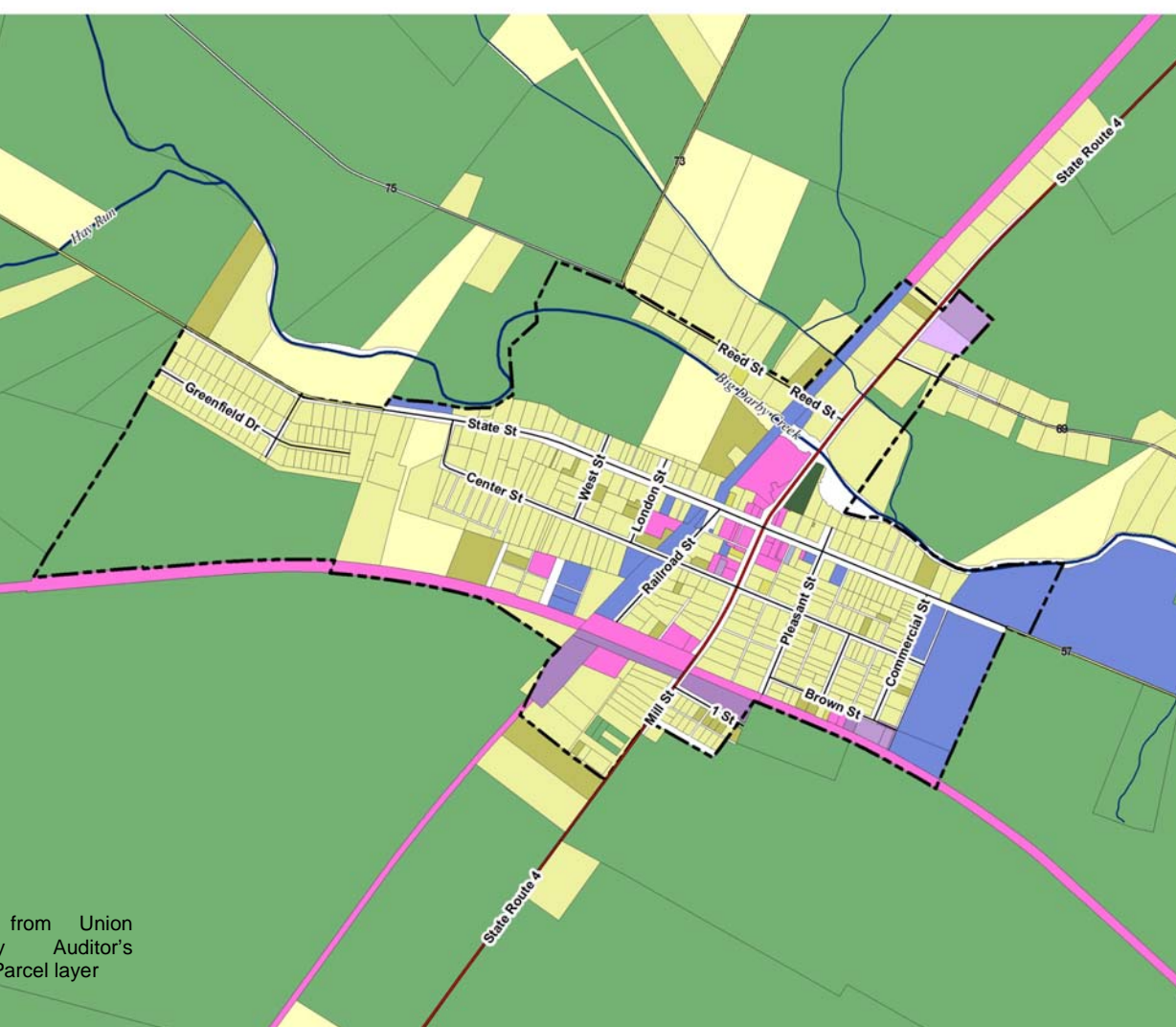




Figure 4.30 Milford Center Existing Land Use



## Village of Milford Center Existing Land Use



Land Use	Acres
Agriculture	55.80
Industrial	4.73
Light Industrial	2.44
Warehouse	1.10
Office	0.11
Commercial	16.43
Residential - Other	8.94
Residential - Multi Family	0.79
Residential - Single Family	109.55
Residential - Rural Estate	12.90
Public Service	56.61
Park	0.83

### Land Use Area Graph

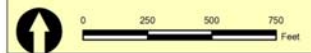
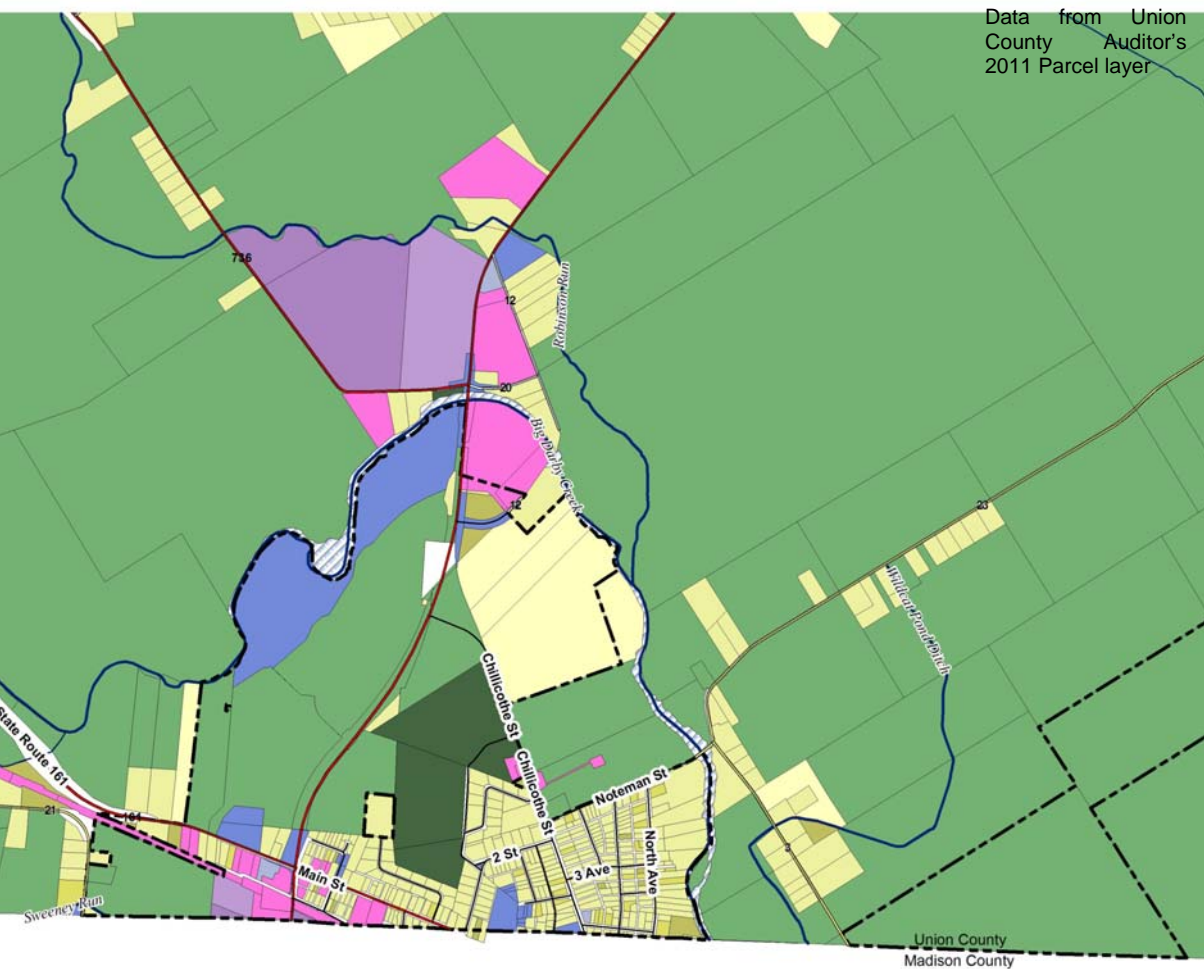


Figure 4.31 Plain City Existing Land Use



## Village of Plain City Existing Land Use



Label	Acres	P
Agriculture	265.70	
Industrial	1.13	
Light Industrial	2.93	
Office	1.07	
Commercial	14.96	
Residential - Other	6.72	
Residential - Multi Family	5.68	
Residential - Single Family	82.75	
Residential - Rural Estate	53.94	
Public Service	82.93	
Park	42.81	

\* Madison

### Land Use Area Graph



- Roads**
- U.S.
  - State
  - County
  - Township
  - Municipal
- Streams**
- 

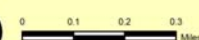


Figure 4.32 Richwood Existing Land Use

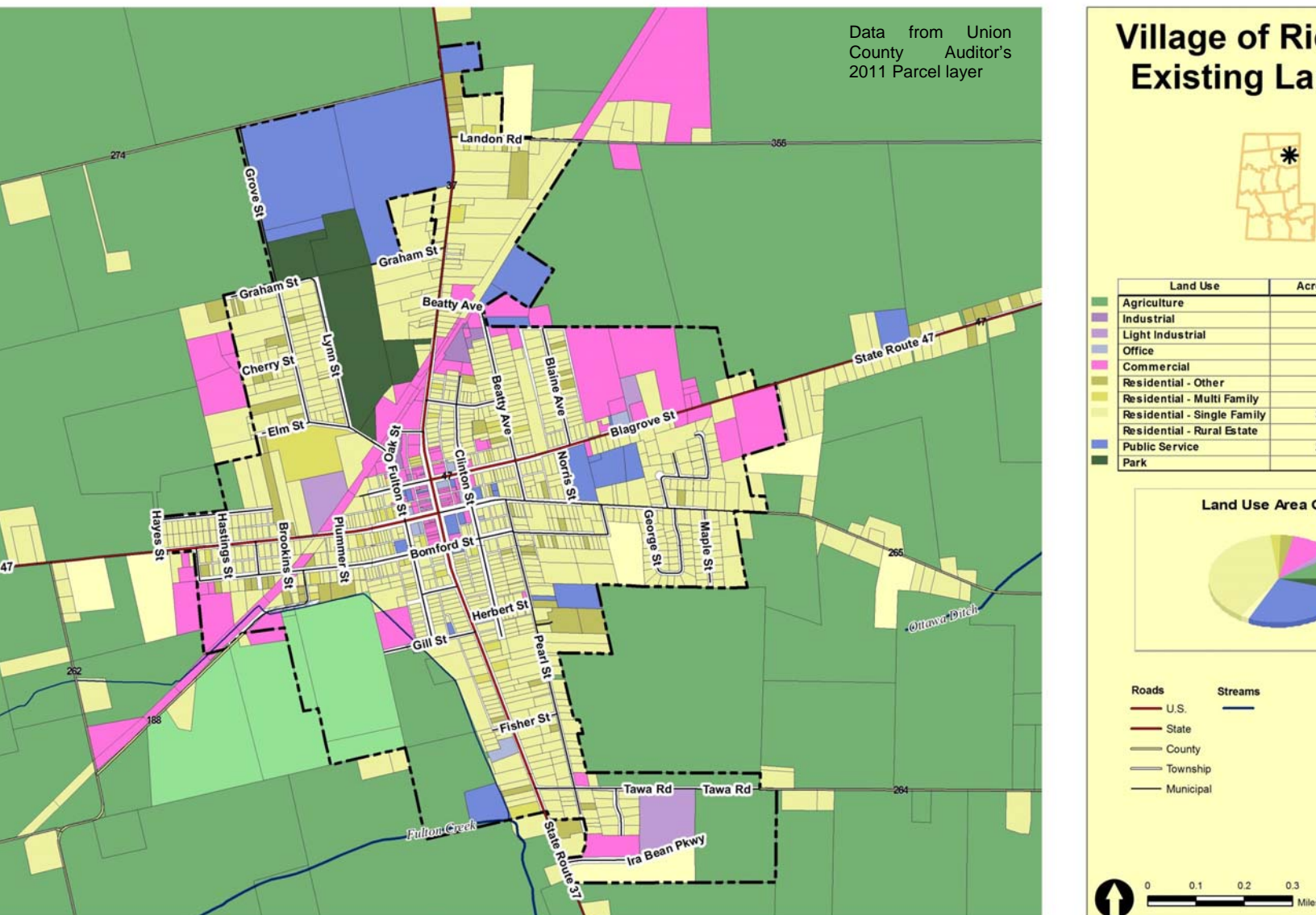
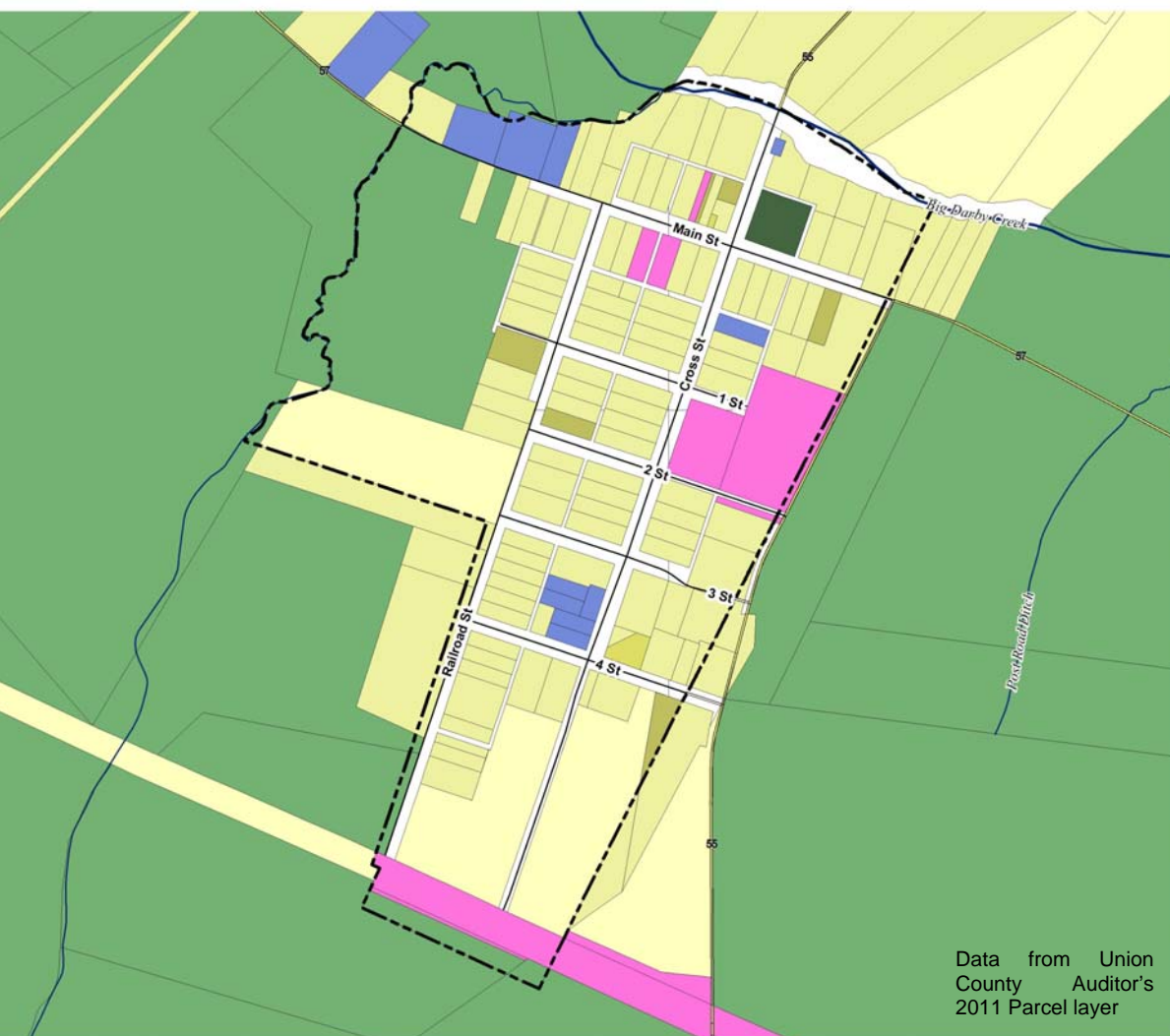




Figure 4.33 Unionville Center Existing Land Use



## Village of Unionville Center Existing Land Use



Label	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	15.50	14.5
Commercial	7.83	7.4
Residential - Other	1.84	1.7
Residential - Multi Family	0.36	0.3
Residential - Single Family	40.50	38.2
Residential - Rural Estate	16.84	15.8
Public Service	20.25	19.1
Park	0.91	0.8

### Land Use Area Graph

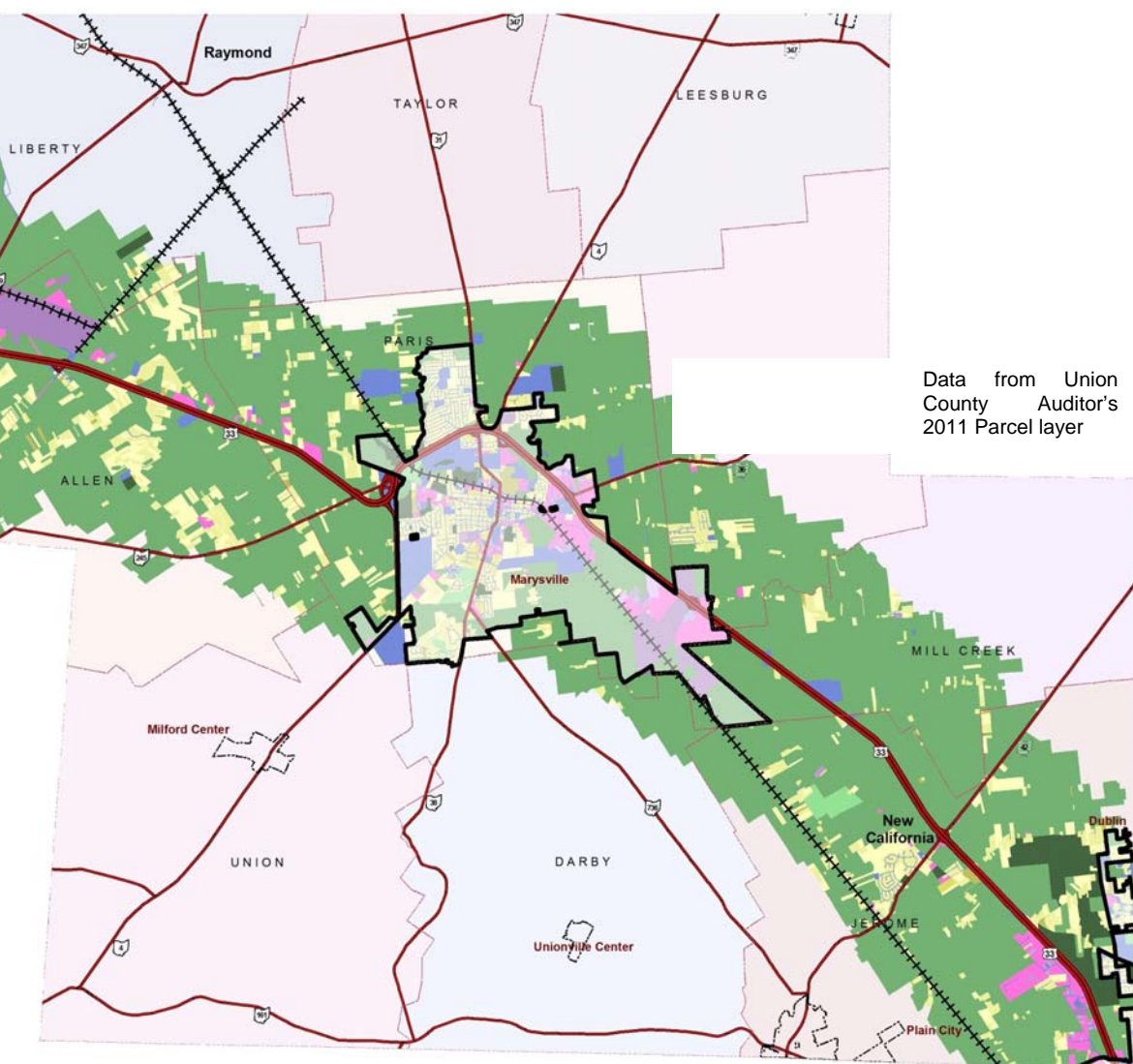


- Roads**
- U.S.
  - State
  - County
  - Township
  - Municipal
- Streams**
- 



0 0.1 0.2 Miles

Figure 4.34 U.S. 33 Corridor Existing Land Use



Data from Union County Auditor's 2011 Parcel layer

## U.S. 33 Corridor Existing Land Use



Label	Acres	Percent
Agriculture	45,916.76	77.0
Industrial	1,216.14	2.0
Light Industrial	51.81	0.1
Office	40.17	0.1
Commercial	1,140.73	1.9
Residential - Other	186.33	0.3
Residential - Multi Faml	29.05	0.0
Residential - Single Fa	3,530.97	5.8
Residential - Rural Esta	3,190.08	5.3
Public Service	2,437.35	4.0
Open Space	182.46	0.3
Park	1,205.56	2.0

### Land Use Area Graph



Roads  
 U.S. State  
 Places Municipalities Townships

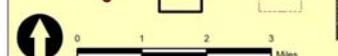


Table 4.35 Existing Land Uses in Union County

	Dublin*		Magnetic Springs		Marysville		Milford Center		Plain City*		Richwood		Unionville Center		U.S. 33 Corridor**	
LAND USE	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Agriculture	113.33	11.3%	59.02	41.5%	3,009.24	30%	55.8	20.6%	265.7	47%	71.34	9%	15.5	15%	45,845.55	79%
Industrial	0	0.0%	3.51	2.5%	723.64	7.3%	4.73	1.8%	1.13	0.2%	2.95	0.4%	0	0.0%	1,217.62	2.1%
Light Industrial	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	87.07	0.9%	2.44	0.9%	2.93	0.5%	15	1.9%	0	0.0%	51.81	0.1%
Warehousing	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	100.18	1.0%	1.1	0.4%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.00	0.0%
Office	7.14	0.7%	0	0.0%	76.37	0.8%	0.11	0.0%	1.07	0.2%	3.79	0.5%	0	0.0%	40.38	0.1%
Commercial	37.38	3.7%	1.17	0.8%	1,035.16	10.4%	16.43	6.1%	14.96	2.7%	75.15	9.5%	7.83	7.5%	1,115.90	1.9%
Other Residential	37.85	3.8%	10.13	7.1%	109.08	1.1%	8.94	3.3%	6.72	1.2%	24.91	3.2%	1.84	1.8%	177.71	0.3%
Multi-Family		0.0%	1.08	0.8%	213.70	2.2%	0.79	0.3%	5.68	1.0%	18.1	2.3%	0.36	0.3%	12.12	0.0%
Single Family	322.21	32.2%	44.94	31.6%	1,678.82	16.9%	109.55	40.5%	82.75	14.8%	309.92	39.4%	40.5	38.9%	3,262.13	5.6%
Rural Estate	61.84	6.2%	0	0.0%	430.43	4.3%	12.9	4.8%	53.94	9.6%	13.97	1.8%	16.84	16.2%	3,159.94	5.4%
Public Service	354.94	35.4%	20.38	14.3%	1,845.38	18.6%	56.61	20.9%	82.93	14.8%	214.74	27.3%	20.25	19.5%	2,106.50	3.6%
Open Space	65.44	6.5%	0	0.0%	216.98	2.2%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	150.03	0.3%
Park	1.27	0.1%	2.09	1.5%	389.67	3.9%	0.83	0.3%	42.81	7.6%	37.22	4.7%	0.91	0.9%	1,204.29	2.1%
Total	1001.4	100%	142.32	100%	9,915.72	100%	270.23	100%	560.62	100%	787.09	100%	104.03	100%	58,343.98	100%

Source: Union County Auditor's Office

\*Area within Union County

\*\* 2 Mile Area Surrounding U.S. 33 Excluding Incorporated Areas.

# AGRICULTURE

## Overview

Agriculture is a very important component of Union County. Approximately 93% of the county's land is used for crop production, pasture or forest. Over 990 farms on 241,000 acres contribute about \$87.5 million to the county's economy. As the county's leading economic industry, agriculture is vital to the economic health of Union County. Agriculture's value extends beyond its economic contributions, however. It is also the basis of the county's heritage and rural character. Agriculture provides historical, natural resource, open space and quality of life amenities for our residents. For these reasons, planning must give attention to the long term viability of agriculture in Union County.

### Figure 5.1 Prime Farmland

To see prime soils for each township, please see Appendix A.

## Goal

The goal of this chapter is to sustain and promote a stable agricultural land base and economy, with an emphasis on farmland protection.

## Accomplishments of 1999 Plan

Union County's 1999 Comprehensive Plan contained two key objectives in the Agriculture chapter: preserving farmland as a natural, nonrenewable resource and supporting the family farm as an important component of the County's economic base. It is important to document the following strategies contained within these two objectives that have been accomplished since adoption of the 1999 plan.

### **A. Consider support of state legislative changes to permit county adoption of a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, then adopting a Union County program.**

- Since the 1999 Comprehensive Plan, Ohio established an Agricultural Easement Purchase Program with funds from the bond-supported Clean Ohio Fund. This statewide purchase of development rights program created opportunities for counties to encourage and support landowner applications for purchased agricultural easements that perpetually protect agricultural land.
- The Union County Board of Commissioners and several townships have supported participation in

the Clean Ohio Fund Agricultural Easement Program, and the Union Soil and Water Conservation District has provided technical assistance to landowner applicants.

- Ohio also established an Agricultural Easement Donation Program in the Ohio Office of Farmland Preservation. Since 1999, the county supported two (2) agricultural easements donated to the State of Ohio through this program.

**B. Consider creation of a non-profit land trust.**

- The Land Heritage Trust of Union County is a county-based land trust that incorporated in 2002 with support from the Union County Farm Bureau, Union Soil and Water Conservation District, Union County Engineer's Office, OSU Extension, Union County Foundation, and Union County Chamber of Commerce.

**C. Encourage participation in the CAUV program and Agricultural Districts.**

- The Union County Auditor has developed brochures that explain Current Agricultural Use Valuation and the Agricultural District Program, and makes the brochures available to the public.

**D. Encourage adoption of agricultural protection zoning**

- The Union County Engineer partnered with Land Heritage Trust of Union County to sponsor an educational meeting on agricultural zoning for township trustees in the county in 2005.
- The Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission has provided technical assistance to townships on agricultural protection zoning options.
- Darby Township has amended their zoning resolution to include a voluntary zoning district that protects agricultural land uses and limits non-agricultural development.

**E. Strengthen subdivision regulations**

- The county is completing a revision of its subdivision regulations. The Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission led the multi-year review process in collaboration with the county engineer departments, county commissioners and townships.



**F. Promote estate planning by farm landowners.**

- The Land Heritage Trust of Union County, with support from the Union County Foundation, Union County Soil and Water Conservation District and Union County Farm Bureau, has provided an annual workshop on “Preserving the Family Farm” since 2007. The workshop addresses estate, business and transition planning for agricultural landowners.

## **Objective 1 – Maintain the Agricultural Land Base in Union County**

**A. Promote programs that protect agricultural land**

There are many state and federal government programs that help agricultural landowners keep their land in agricultural production and recognize the value of agricultural lands and rural heritage. The county should encourage and promote these programs in the following ways:

- Provide information, technical assistance and support for the Ohio Agricultural Easement Purchase Program and the Ohio Agricultural Easement Donation Program, which are available through the Ohio Department of Agriculture.
- Provide information about Ohio's Current Agricultural Use Valuation Program and the Ohio Agricultural District Program, both available through enrollment with the Union County Auditor.
- Make information available about the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Security Areas and support ASA's when they are consistent with the county's Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
- Provide information on the Ohio Century Farm Program.
- Make recommendations for placement of historical markers on agricultural sites in Union County.
- Educate landowners, agribusinesses and general public about agricultural land protection and the programs available for land protection.

**B. Support the adoption of Transfer of Development Rights programs and other mechanisms that allow counties and townships to transfer development density.**

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) programs can protect agricultural land and address equity issues by allowing landowners to commit their land to agricultural land use and transfer their potential development density to land that is more suitable for development, in exchange for compensation from the landowner who receives the additional density. The county can support TDR and other innovative approaches to agricultural land protection by:

- Supporting appropriate state legislation that clarifies that counties and townships may adopt Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) and similar programs.
- Educating township trustees about TDR programs and other mechanisms that transfer density from agricultural areas to more developed areas.
- Creating a study committee to explore the use of TDR programs in Union County.

**C. Support the Land Heritage Trust of Union County**

Land Heritage Trust of Union County (LHT) is a county-based land trust established by Union County residents for the purpose of maintaining the county's rural heritage, including its farmland. The county and its agencies should partner with Land Heritage Trust to accomplish agricultural land protection. Support for LHT should include:

- Promote and provide resources for LHT educational workshops and other programs pertaining to agriculture.
- Promote, support and participate in LHT's annual Parade of Farms, a tour of county farms and farm businesses.
- Collaborate with LHT on solutions to land use issues affecting Union County's agriculture.

**D. Encourage adoption of agricultural protection zoning.**

Union County's townships commonly use the "U-1" zoning district and designate agriculture as one of many allowable uses in an area, resulting in a mixed landscape in which agriculture must persist in the midst of other land uses. On the other hand, agricultural protection zoning designates agriculture as the primary land use. This type of zoning district can insulate working farms from intrusive nonfarm development, discourage nonfarm development in agricultural areas and support farm operations by reducing land use conflicts. Strategies that can encourage the appropriate use of agricultural protection zoning in Union County include:



- Provide education about how separating agricultural land uses from other land uses can maintain an agricultural land base.
- Create model text for agricultural protection zoning and agricultural zoning districts.
- Provide resources and encourage townships to conduct zoning resolution reviews and updates.

**E. Identify, monitor and review the impacts of development on agricultural land in the county.**

Where new development occurs in the county, negative impacts on agriculture may result, such as drainage interferences, problematic traffic patterns, nuisance conflicts or decreased water quality. The county should monitor development areas to ensure that there are not long-term impacts on agricultural lands and areas, and should consider a strategy to minimize the potential of drainage problems caused by new development.

- Every five years, the county should review whether subdivision regulations create long-term negative impacts on agricultural land, such as those noted above.
- The county should create a task force to study and potentially adopt a drainage mitigation policy that would address the impact of new developments on agricultural drainage systems.

**F. Encourage open-space subdivisions and clustering of new development.**

Refer to land use chapter.

**G. Guide future development in and around existing population centers and in identified water and sanitary sewer service areas.**

Refer to land use/utilities chapter.

## **Objective 2 – Promote Agricultural Economic Development and Agricultural Business Viability**

In addition to protecting the agricultural land base, it is important to ensure that the county enables a healthy business environment for agriculture. The following strategies will secure this objective:

### **A. Support the Union County Chamber of Commerce Agriculture Association.**

The Union County Chamber of Commerce established an Agriculture Association in 2009. The association's mission is to ensure and enhance the county's agricultural economic development and activity through communication, education and promotion to consumers, agribusinesses and public entities. These actions will support and help ensure the stability of this important component of the Chamber of Commerce:

- Ensure long-term viability of the association through active participation.
- Collaborate with the association on programs and policies.
- Support the creation of a local food council to promote farm to table programs.
- Support the creation of an Agriculture Directory.

### **B. Promote estate and business planning by farm landowners and businesses.**

- Provide educational programs and resources on farm business succession planning and farm estate planning for farm landowners and businesses.

### **C. Encourage continued technical assistance on farm management and finances.**

- Provide educational programs and technical assistance for farm operators on issues related to farm management and financial decision making.

### **D. Continue to support agricultural organizations and events**

- Encourage the Commissioners to provide financial support for OSU Extension and Union Soil and Water Conservation District.

- Support agricultural activities in the county, including:
  - Union County and Richwood Independent Fairs
  - 4-H
  - Farmers Markets
  - Festivals
  - Parade of Farms
  - Farmer's Share Breakfast
  - FFA
  - Other agricultural activities

**E. Support and pursue agricultural economic development in the county.**

- Ensure that the Union County Economic Development Action Plan developed by the Union County Chamber of Commerce includes a strong agricultural component.
- Explore and promote the availability of grants for agricultural economic development projects such as local food production, marketing, processing and infrastructure; farm to school programs; and production of bio-fuels and bio-products.
- Consider development of an agricultural technology and research park and a year-round farmers market.

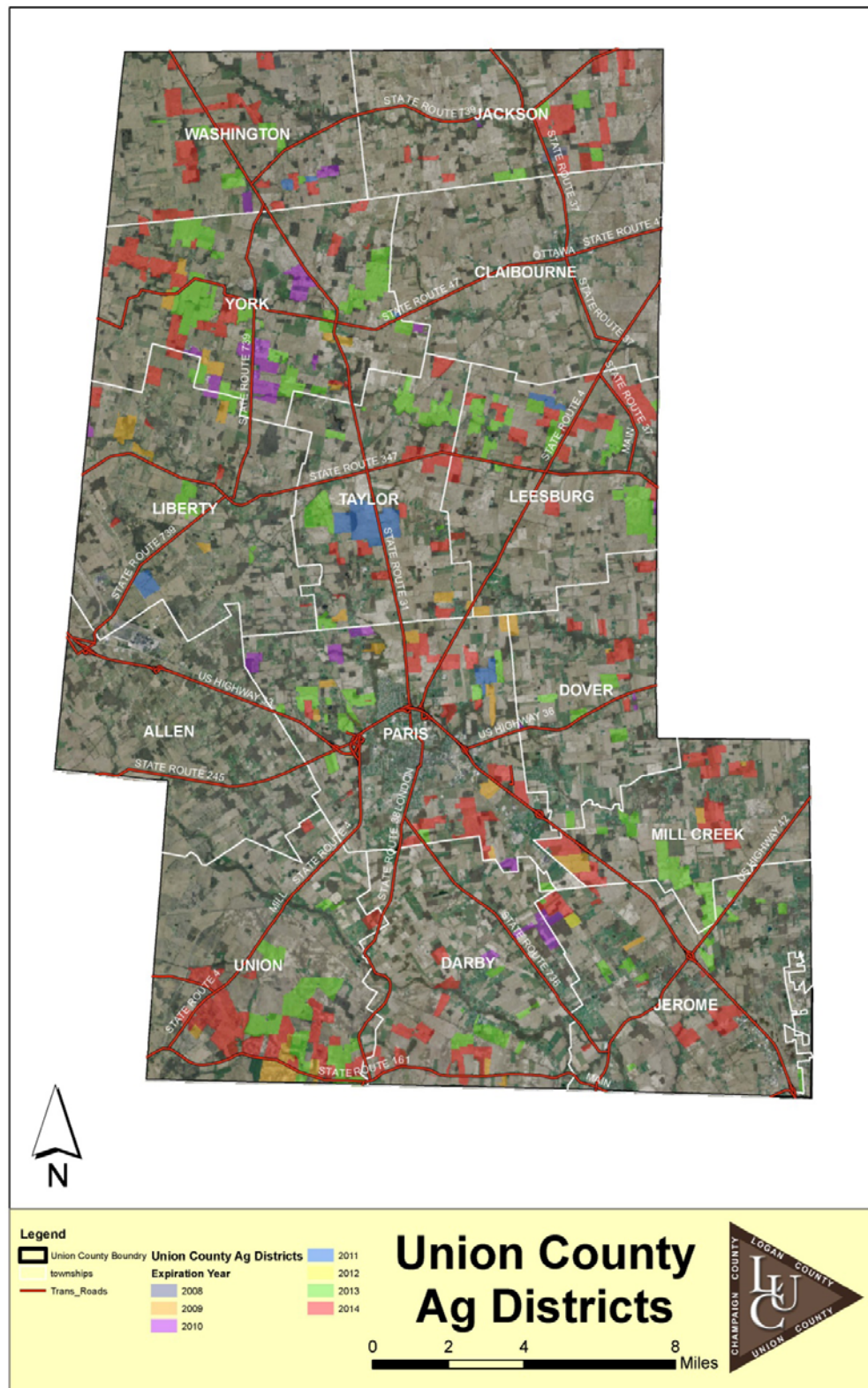


Figure 5.2 Union County Ag Districts

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Overview

Union County has been successful in attracting businesses by maintaining a healthy economy. The county has been the third fastest growing county and maintains one of the lowest unemployment rates in the State of Ohio. Along with the population growth, business growth, job creation, and the average annual wage has increased steadily since 2000.

**Table 6.1 – Business, Job, and Wage Growth 2000-2010**

	<b>Total Businesses</b>	<b>Total Jobs</b>	<b>Average Annual Wage</b>
<b>2000</b>	764	22,346	\$45,042.00
<b>2001</b>	815	22,391	\$46,718.00
<b>2002</b>	828	22,598	\$48,195.00
<b>2003</b>	862	22,638	\$50,281.00
<b>2004</b>	887	22,694	\$51,759.00
<b>2005</b>	945	22,700	\$52,710.00
<b>2006</b>	989	22,744	\$54,332.00
<b>2007</b>	1,023	23,564	\$54,293.00
<b>2008</b>	1,055	24,101	\$53,735.00
<b>2009</b>	1,041	22,946	\$52,771.00
<b>2010</b>	1,059	22,545	\$54,413.00

Union County has been blessed to be the home of a number of large companies. These companies continue to be successful and provide the majority of the jobs and investment in the community.

**Table 6.2– Major Private and Public Employers  
As of May 2012**

<b>Business</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
Honda of America Manufacturing (including Subsidiaries)	5,893
The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company	1,165
Memorial Hospital of Union County	707
Marysville Exempted Village School District	593
Ohio Reformatory for Women	494
Union County	468
Scioto Services	325
Transportation Research Center, Inc.	400
Wal-Mart	340
Veyance Technologies, Inc.	311

Environmental Management Services, Inc.	250
Nestle Product Technology Center	243
City of Marysville	238
Parker Hannifin Hydraulics, Pump Division	209
North Union Local School District	190
Select Sires, Inc	186
Kroger	140
Honda Marysville & Honda Marysville Motorsports	120
Lowe's Home Improvement	110
Fairbanks Local School District	109
Sumitomo Electric Wiring Systems, Inc.	97
The Home Depot	88
Univenture, Inc.	81
Industrial Ceramic Products, Inc.	65
Cassens Transport	63
Bulk Transit Corporation	60
Velcoys, Inc.	60
West Central Community Correctional Facility	55

An important starting point is to define economic development. Economic development is the process by which Union County and local community officials' work with their private and public sector leadership and citizens to raise the prosperity of residents and workers and increase the competitiveness of businesses and industries located in the area through public and private sector investments.

Economic development in Union County occurs primarily as a result of private marketplace activities and investments, but the public sector and citizens play a vitally important role in supporting this process. For example, local governments in Union County provide many valuable policy and business assistance tools that help retain existing and create new jobs, income and tax revenues in the County. The Union County Government and its local communities will need to coordinate their community and economic development investments to increase their positive impact on the County's economic base.

Economic development has been a significant countywide and community level priority in Union County for several years which has included an active economic development program since the late 1970s. Various economic development strategies and plans have been created and updated since the 1980's, and have led to a number of economic development programs, such as the countywide business retention and expansion program. Then in 1999, the Union County Comprehensive Plan furthered the goals and objectives for economic development, eventually leading to

the creation of the Union County Economic Development Action Plan.

Prior to 2003, the Union County/Marysville Office of Economic Development (OED), Union County Chamber of Commerce (Chamber) and the Union County Community Improvement Corporation (CIC) provided the primary leadership for this countywide economic development effort, with the active support and assistance of Union County Government, the City of Marysville and other local communities. These efforts should be continued and include the following:

- A. Helping existing and new companies to make new facility investments in the county:
  - a. Existing business retention and expansion
  - b. New business recruitment
- B. Working with local communities to increase their “capacity” to support economic development:
  - a. Assistance to local community employers
  - b. Marketing local communities for new business investment
  - c. Assistance to local governments in planning and implementing local resource improvements to strengthen community economic development.

In 2002 and 2003 an effort to provide an overall strategic approach to economic development, Union County, City of Marysville, Village of Plain City, and Village of Richwood, in partnership with the Union County Community Improvement Corporation developed the Union County Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP) which continued the themes of the 1999 Union County Comprehensive Plan’s Economic Development Component. The EDAP furthered the goals and objectives of the 1999 document and became the guiding economic development strategy for Union County. Accordingly, the Economic Development component in this revision of the Union County Comprehensive Plan will further the goals and objectives in the EDAP.

Since the adoption of the 1999 Union County Comprehensive Plan and the 2003 EDAP, many of the goals and objectives have been accomplished from both plans. The success of the various economic development recommendations in the 1999 Comprehensive Plan are listed at the end of this section, while the new goals and objectives identified in this chapter will be goals and objectives which have not been accomplished or are on-going from the 2003 EDAP.



## Goal

As part of the EDAP process and through the various community visioning sessions involving over 70 community leaders, a vision statement was created for Union County economic development. Accordingly, with a few modifications, the vision statement for economic development in Union County is as follows:

*“Union County, Marysville, and the county’s other major communities want balanced and high quality growth for their areas during the next twenty years. A higher level of cooperation and collaboration are envisioned as necessary ingredients to achieving desired growth outcomes. To achieve this growth, leadership and citizens must play an active ongoing role in improving their economic development resource base, making critical project and policy decisions, and undertaking strategic investments that make their areas more competitive for high quality business and job development. Finally, leadership and citizens must recognize that the world surrounding Union County will continue to change and therefore they must continuously monitor these changes and assess their implications for Union County’s future economic well being.”*

## Objective 1 – EDAP Development

The EDAP identified seven core components with specific goals and objectives for each of these components. Since the EDAP was adopted, many of its recommendations have been implemented. Accordingly the foundation of the Union County Economic Development efforts shall be the following:

### A. Organizational Capacity

Create the required organizational capacity to effectively implement the EDAP in Union County.

### B. Target Industries/Quality Jobs

Develop a balanced mix of competitive industries and businesses that are consistent with local values and resources and that will create high quality jobs and favorable incomes for Union County residents.

### C. Target Geographic Growth Areas

Target and guide future business growth to the county’s major communities (Marysville, Richwood, Plain City, and Jerome Township) and in the Opportunity Areas along the U.S. 33 Corridor.

### D. Community Plan Implementation

Increase the capacity of each of the four communities to implement their sub-plan of the EDAP and to support/assist balanced, high quality and competitive economic development.

**E. Downtown Revitalization**

Strengthen business and economic activity in the downtown areas throughout the county including Marysville, Richwood, Plain City and Milford Center.

**F. Performance-Based Incentives**

Deploy development incentives in a performance-based manner that is consistent with the geographic and industry/business development targets and other priorities in the ED Action Plan.

**G. Workforce Competitiveness**

Increase the competitiveness of the local workforce to assume higher quality jobs in Union County in the designated target industry sectors identified in the plan.

**H. Impact of Land Use**

The County encourages local jurisdictions to consider the impacts on economic development (i.e. sustainable private investment, creation/retention of jobs) when making land use decisions, policies and/or legislation.

## **Objective 2 – Economic Development Action Plan Implementation**

The EDAP will serve as the guiding document for the Economic Development Component of the Union County Comprehensive Plan. The Union County Economic Development Partnership along with the Union County and its jurisdictions should continue to implement the recommendations outlined in the EDAP. Please refer to this document for the economic development recommendations. In addition to the EDAP, eight supplemental plans have been adopted since the EDAP was approved in 2003. These supplemental plans are in accordance with the EDAP and should be implemented. The EDAP and the supplemental plans include:

Table 6.3 List of Existing Supplemental Plans

Name of Plan	Year Completed	Author	Implementer
Union County Economic Development Action Plan	2003	Donald T. Iannone & Associates/ Garnet Consulting Services, Inc.	ED Partnership
Union County Brand/Marketing Study	2006	Frame 360, Consultant	Chamber, CVB, and ED Partnership
Uptown Marysville Revitalization Plan	2006	Poggemeyer Design Group, Consultant	Marysville Uptown Renewal Team/City of Marysville
ED Partnership	2007	ED Partnership Staff	Ed Partnership
Union County Convention and Visitors Bureau Marketing Strategy	2007, 2008, 2009, 2010	CVB Staff	Convention and Visitors Bureau
Union County Chamber of Commerce Marketing Strategy	2007	Chamber Staff	Chamber of Commerce
Union County ED Partnership Community Assessment Report	2008	Resource Development Group, Consultant	ED Partnership
Uptown Plain City Revitalization Plan	2009	Poggemeyer Design Group, Consultant	Uptown Plain City Organization/Village of Plain City
Marysville Uptown Renewal Team Marketing Strategy	2010	URT Staff	Marysville Uptown Renewal Team
Uptown Plain City Building and Land Use Plan	2010	UPCO Design Committee	UPCO, Village of Plain City, ED Partnership
Tourism Economic Impact Study	2010	Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism	Convention and Visitor's Bureau
Plain City Comprehensive Plan	2003	Burns, Bertsch & Harris	Village of Plain City
Marysville Comprehensive Plan	2010	Jacobs	City of Marysville
Uptown Marysville Revitalization Plan Update	2012	KKG	City of Marysville, ED Partnership

## Objective 3 – Economic Development Investment

In 2008 – 2009, the Union County Economic Development Partnership (Partnership) began a fundraising campaign to diversify its funding sources. The fundraising campaign was based on the Community Assessment completed by Resource Development Group. The assessment, based on interviews with 75 community and business leaders, determined that the Partnership should focus its new initiatives on:

- Financially supporting a downtown manager for the County to assist with revitalization efforts
- Creating a downtown or county-wide development or redevelopment fund that would support business growth and development
- Beginning the revision and re-write of the Union County Economic Development Action Plan
- Increasing the marketing efforts in order to promote Union County for business expansion.

While many communities across the nation dramatically suffered from the worst economic downturn in decades, Union County's business community generally remained stable thanks in part to the longstanding resilience of the Union County and Central Ohio economies. The recession redefined how economic development is approached emphasized the need for and long-term economic sustainability. As such, it is recommended that the following be pursued in order to further Union County's economic development initiatives.

### **A. Re-Instituting and Funding the Union County Revolving Loan Fund**

Union County's revolving loan fund currently has zero funds and is not being utilized by small businesses; and, the process to secure additional funds through the Ohio Department of Development is long and laborious. Accordingly, if the fundraising campaign is successful, it is recommended that the Partnership set a percentage of the funds it raises to re-institute the revolving loan fund. It is also recommended that Union County, Marysville, Plain City, and Richwood make a five-year commitment to provide annual monies to support the loan fund. The goal is to provide funds to assist with small business growth and expansion.

**B. Secure Funding for Union County's Uptowns/Downtowns Revitalization**

Union County's uptowns and downtowns represent the centers of commerce for the community. The Partnership should commit funds to continue to support the revitalization efforts of our uptowns and downtowns. Additionally, Marysville, Plain City, and Richwood should also pledge multi-year financial support of these revitalization efforts.

**C. Secure Funding for Revision of EDAP**

The Partnership, Union County, Marysville, Plain City, Richwood, and the Union County Community Improvement Corporation should provide funding to update and revise the Union County Economic Development Action Plan.

**D. Reduce Permit Fees for Redevelopment and Environmentally Friendly Development**

Union County, Marysville, Plain City, and Richwood should implement the reduction of permit fees for redevelopment projects in the Uptowns/Downtowns and for environmentally friendly (including, but not limited to LEED certified) developments in Union County. Redevelopment and revitalization projects in our Uptowns/Downtowns are more expensive than green field developments and offering this type of incentive will hopefully incentivize developers and businesses. Additionally, environmentally friendly development will lead to reducing carbon emissions and improve our quality of life.

## Objective 4 – Future EDAP Update

The Union County Economic Development Partnership has begun to update and revise the 2003 EDAP. The update/revision, when completed in 2013, will provide new recommendations on how to improve the Union County economy. The plan, and all future plans, should be updated every five years. Following the economic recession, it is even more critical to examine global economic changes and strategize new methods to attract and retain economic assets. With sweeping changes to regional and state-level economic development programs, it is also important for Union County to continue to work with regional and state partners to ensure that Union County continues to emerge as an economic leader in Central Ohio.

## COMMUNITY SERVICES AND HOUSING

### Overview

The housing goal is to establish a balance of housing types and styles planned for different income levels, ages and physical abilities while maintaining property and quality of life values. A variety of housing types, appropriately planned, is an integral part of any community, as it allows an opportunity for all persons to find affordable and appropriate housing should they choose to locate there.

As the Community continues to grow, inevitably, more strain will be put on the services that the community provides to the residents, from police, fire and EMS to the Health Department will experience an increased demand for information and service. The County should ensure that the services it provides keep pace with the growing community, and utilize technology to more effectively communicate information and provide those services.

### Objective 1 – Ensure Communities continue to be safe as growth occurs

#### **A. Encourage local participation and support block watch programs.**

The Union County Sheriff's Office coordinates block watch programs in Union County. Continued support of these important programs is critical. The Sheriff's Office has also expanded satellite locations in the County such as in Broadway in Taylor Township, which helps the community in outlying parts of the County to feel safer and more secure.

#### **B. Support and expand prevention programs for youth as well as youth activity programs that provide an alternative to anti-social behavior.**

The more active and involved the youth of Union County continue to be, the less likely they are to mingle in "troublesome" activities that may lead to future crime. Local governments within the county should continue to support youth activities such as sports leagues and extra-curricular events and locations to host them. For instance, there are drama and musical events at the County building at 233 W. 6th Street. In addition, there is a large 4-H program with



youth agricultural events at two local fairs (Union County & Richwood). The County should also research and pursue funding opportunities to expand parks and recreation in the County that supports youth activities. Lastly, a county-wide parks and recreation committee and possible plan should be supported.

**C. Foster community awareness of local law enforcement.**

The Union County Sheriff's Office mission, vision and core values should continued to be supported, while working to educate the residents on such by partnering or sponsoring events that provide educational information regarding safety programs to residents.

The unincorporated areas of the County continue to be supported by the PSO (Public Safety Officer) program which provides valuable patrol services to outlying areas. This program should continue to be supported as the more residents see sheriff presence in their communities, the more safe and secure they will feel.

The Union County Sheriff's Office website contains a wealth of information that would be helpful in educating residents. This website should be actively marketed to the community. Just one example, the Sheriff's office posts a "Sheriff's Report" every 2 days to report on incidents in the County that would be helpful for residents to take safety precautions if an incident is near the area in which they reside.

**D. Continue to support future technology in county coordinated dispatching**

The Union County Sheriff's Office receives and dispatches calls for service including 9-1-1 emergencies. They also dispatch for 7 Fire and EMS Departments throughout the County. Continued support of the latest technologies is crucial to ensuring that dispatching is successful in assisting residents in emergencies. Should additional support of emergency dispatching become necessary, a the creation of a 9-1-1 levy to support these operations should be considered.

## **Objective 2 – The Local Governments within Union County should continue to support the various educational institutions serving Union County to ensure that residents have excellent choices to educate themselves and their families**

### **A. Ensure local schools meet the needs of a growing population.**

As population and growth continues to rise in Union County, local schools will inevitably feel the strain on their already tight resources. The County should continue to actively communicate with local school districts in regards to their anticipated needs. In addition, school districts should have an active voice and seat at the table when proposed development arrives in the region. For instance, representatives should be involved at all stages of the subdivision platting process to ensure that schools are aware of how additional residential development will impact their districts. Consequently, the County should offer support from various departments in assisting districts (as requested) in research and growth projections to adequately plan for their future needs. School Districts should openly communicate with the county regarding changes and how to they may impact services provided by the county.

### **B. Continue work force development programs, such as technical education.**

Work force development programs and activities should continue to be supported at the Union County Economic Development Partnership. Also, employers within the county should tap into the expertise that local career centers provide in technical education that is ensuring an educated and talented work force to Union County employers. There are three such career centers that serve the region: Ohio Hi-Point Career Center, Tolles Technical and Career Center and the Tri-Rivers Career Center and Center for Adult Education. These career centers provide quality technical expertise in both high school and adult education and are an asset to the region.

**C. Develop civic and family engagement teams to increase school success.**

Quite simply, the more involved the community and family is to the education of a child, the more successful a school will be in retaining and educating students. There should be a concerted effort to recruit families and residents in the support and involvement in local schools.

**Objective 3 – Remove any remaining barriers to effective communication with residents, including providing efficient access to information regarding social service agencies and programs**

**A. Explore the creation of a 2-1-1 call line for Union County.**

2-1-1 is a resource that some communities throughout the country are using to connect residents to community and government resources. The use of 2-1-1 or a centralized location to find information reduces the frustration that many in the community find when they call one agency and are then sent to another.

**Objective 4 – Provide a high quality of life for senior citizens living in Union County by continuing to support and grow a wide range of services and activities that benefit the elderly**

- A.** Seniors may face additional barriers to information compared to the rest of the population, due to technological, financial or other various circumstances. County offices and agencies should make efforts to contact the senior population directly regarding important information, ranging from the availability of new services and/or programs to direct warnings regarding inclement weather.
- B.** The county should work with the various social service agencies to combine the services they provide. This will serve multiple goals; consolidating services in fewer places will help the senior population better find what they are

looking for. Various studies have shown that many residents don't know what agency to contact for help with different situations. Combining services amongst agencies will also make the services more cost effective. This will increasingly become an issue as the senior population of the county continues to grow.

- C. According to the "Union County Community Needs Assessment" there is a need for additional housing options for seniors in the county. Please see Objective 5, Goal F for further information.
- D. The Union County Senior Services should continue to provide varied programming for senior citizens living in Union County. Senior Service could increase awareness of the programs offered through an increased marketing program. Senior Services could consider partnering with municipalities or other county agencies at events to facilitate this.
- E. Continue the Union County Agency Transportation Service program. The county could consider possible expansion of the service to additional hours on the weekends to provide reliable, seven day a week transportation to seniors in Union County.

## **Objective 5 – Encourage housing for all income levels and differing demographics**

### **A. Utilize various existing County Housing Needs and Studies.**

The United Way of Union County recently worked with Community Research Partners in creating an assessment which identifies levels of need in the community, "Union County Community Needs Assessment: A report on human service needs, barriers, and priorities." The largest need that was identified in the study's subsequent survey of service providers, funders, and clients, was the need for affordable housing. In addition, this report identified that affordable housing was the number one unmet need of seniors in Union County. This study as well as the CHIS or Community Housing Improvement Strategy are important resources that should be used in identifying housing and human service needs in Union County. The CHIS is periodically updated by CDC of Ohio and approved by the Union County Commissioners.

**B. Target state and local resources to facilitate affordable housing.**

There should be a coordinated effort between the various social service agencies in the county to pool and manage funding for affordable housing. There are several sources of funds and grants for housing which purposes include senior housing, affordable housing, and demolition. A list and summary of the sources and uses of these funds should be created by these agencies so they know where to turn when looking for available resources. This list should include basic eligibility requirements.

**C. Investigate the creation of a metropolitan housing authority.**

As the County has a small number of units with assisted affordability, it may want to research metropolitan housing. A multi-county metropolitan housing authority might be a possible solution in today's environment of limited resources which would allow surrounding counties to "pool" resources in order to serve the needs of the low income community.

**D. Encourage single-family homes in existing communities, and further encourage upgrading existing housing stock to avoid abandoned houses. Explore the possibility of offering an incentive to in-fill growth.**

In order to avoid continued development in the County's farmland and green space, residential development should be directed to existing municipalities and other areas that already have essential water and sewer services thereby reducing costly extension of services. The County should also support local municipalities in addressing abandoned homes in their areas through the use of grant funds or other means to either improve or remove blighted structures.

**E. Support housing for young professionals and families.**

Typically, these demographics find it difficult to find quality housing in Union County. Housing that attracts these groups seem to be too expensive, or not up to building codes, and there is no middle ground. It has been recognized that improving and diversifying the housing stock is critical to the future economic vibrancy of the County, especially with communities such as Dublin and Delaware in close proximity. The continued development of apartments, condominiums, and starter homes should continue to be fostered in the county, particularly by municipalities.

**F. Support Senior and Assisted Living Housing Opportunities.**

State and local resources to facilitate senior and assisted living should be targeted to facilitate new housing options while at the same time assisting in the upgrade and

rehabilitation of existing homes to encourage independent living and support in-home assistance for daily needs. Proposals from private and non-profit organizations for senior and assisted living housing in those geographic areas of the County with similar surrounding land uses should be considered for support. Support should be given to municipalities throughout the county to expand senior and assisted living situations in these population centers. Maintain the expansion of senior services to meet the physical and social demands of this growing population, including the expansion and creation of new senior centers.



## LAND USE

### Overview

The Land Use Element is the heart of the Comprehensive Plan and provides a framework for considering all other aspects of this document. The Land Use Element seeks to direct growth to appropriate locations where water, sanitary sewer, roads, housing and community facilities are or will be located. The balance of the County's rural character, defined by its prime agricultural land, soils and historic farms, and homesteads, should be protected as an important piece of the County's history and quality of life.

The Land Use Chapter of this plan is combining the existing township Comprehensive Plans – Allen, Darby, Jerome, Liberty, Millcreek, and Taylor, along with the Comprehensive Plans from Marysville and the Village of Plain City. Although each plan is specific to its own area and patterns of development may not match up, this land use plan strives to utilize the compatible aspects of each respective plan. This plan aims to mesh local plans with regional land use principles to work such that one county-wide land use plan can exist.

### Goal

The land use goal is to establish a coordinated and consistent land use system based on intergovernmental cooperation, planned controlled growth and innovative land use controls that facilitate and strengthen rural character, small towns and Union County's quality of life. This goals and objectives of this element should be considered by individual units of government (township and municipalities) throughout the county when considering zoning matters which will control land use throughout the county.

### Existing Conditions

In order for the plans to come together as one plan, we must first look at the existing conditions, in terms of land use, for Union County.

#### **Existing Land Use:**

Land use describes the way people use land and buildings. A community's physical structure is characterized by land use which in turn impacts development. The agricultural/vacant land use category encompasses the largest percentage in each planning subarea. Residential land uses are the next largest land use category. Land use maps for each of the planning subareas are enclosed.

An in-depth analysis of existing conditions provides a basis for changes in land use patterns over time. An inventory of existing land use at the county level provides a contextual understanding of the smaller jurisdictions. The goals of this section are to show the relationship between county, township, and municipality, such that larger trends can be recognized and responded to at the local level.

The inventory and analysis of existing land use patterns provides information to generate future land development plans. Maps and tables illustrating the existing land use pattern assist in discussing many of the everyday issues regarding development of the county. Infrastructure improvements, including drainage and transportation facilities, are planned according to the type and density of development expected within a service area. Land use information provided from an inventory assist in policy discussions concerning the future character and direction growth should take in the county.

In evaluating existing land use, the following classifications from the Union County Auditor's Office were used:

## Land Use Classifications

<b>Agriculture</b>	Vacant or active livestock farms, cultivated farms, fallow land, or other agricultural activity
<b>Industrial</b>	Includes medium and heavy manufacturing, truck terminals, active railroads, food processing, mining, and quarrying
<b>Light Industrial</b>	Includes small shops, light manufacturing and assembly
<b>Warehouse</b>	Shipping and storage of goods
<b>Commercial</b>	Property used for retail, goods, and service business
<b>Office</b>	Property used for professional fee services & corporate offices.
<b>Residential – Rural</b>	Either undeveloped residential-zoned lots greater than five (5) acres or Single Family detached housing on lots greater than five (5) acres
<b>Single Family Residential</b>	Detached housing on lot sizes less than five (5) acres
<b>Residential – Multi Family</b>	Housing of more than one dwelling unit per structure
<b>Residential – Other</b>	Any housing that does not fit in the descriptions of the other residential classifications above.
<b>Park</b>	Property used for public outdoor recreation
<b>Open Space</b>	Natural resource protection areas including lands held in conservation or preservation programs
<b>Public Service</b>	Federal, state, county and township owned land for providing public services including police, fire, schools, government offices, churches, hospitals, and facilities used for rehabilitation and incarceration

### Dublin

The City of Dublin has annexed significant portions of land that now covers approximately 1,188 acres or 1.86 square miles within Union County. Approximately 322 acres (32 percent) of this area is single family residential and 355 acres (35%) are publicly owned. Commercial and office land use comprise 37 acres (4%) and 7 acres (1%), respectively. An extensive area of business activities are concentrated south of U.S. 33 along Post Road that extend well beyond City limits.

### Magnetic Springs

The Village of Magnetic Springs covers about 142 acres or 0.23 square miles. About 45 acres (32 percent) of the Village are single-family residential and mobile homes cover about 10 acres (7%). Publicly owned land accounts for 20 acres (14%) including the former site of Leesburg-Magnetic Elementary School, while agricultural/vacant land covers 59 acres (11%).

### Marysville

The City of Marysville encompasses approximately 9,836 acres or 15.37 square miles. Residential land use encompasses 25 percent (2,432 acres) of the City, of which 1,678 acres are single-family. A majority of the single-family land uses are located southwest, west and north of US 33 between Mill Creek and SR 31.

Mobile homes are concentrated in three areas, two of which are located near the downtown and one at the southeast corner of the City. Collectively, these areas encompass 133 acres. Commercial (1,035 acres; 11%) and office (76 acres; 0.8%) land use are concentrated in the central business district. Strip retail and auto-oriented commercial land uses are located along W. 5th Street to the west of downtown, Delaware Avenue west of US 33 and Main Street between Mill Creek and US 33. Industrial areas cover approximately 724 acres (7%) generally located in the southeast corner of the City. About 1,845 acres (12 percent) of public/quasi-public land uses are located throughout the City. The Ohio Reformatory for Women, Marysville Middle School and Marysville High School encompass a large percentage of this category. Parks and recreational facilities contain 323 acres (3%) concentrated in areas along Mill Creek and west of downtown.

### **Milford Center**

The Village of Milford Center, encompasses about 270 acres or 0.42 square miles. A large portion of the Village, approximately 56 acres (21 %), is agricultural land. Much of the residential land use (132 acres; 49 %) is south of State Street, including 110 acres of single-family residential, which also exists along approaches into the Village. A mobile home park is located along the Village's southern edge near Second Street. Generally, a majority of the commercial development, 16,43 acres or 6% in totality, is located along US 36 between Mill and State Streets and in the area of First and Second Streets. The largest public/quasi-public use, Fairbanks Elementary School is located at the eastern edge of the Village.

### **Plain City**

The Village of Plain City covers approximately 1,122 acres or 1.7 square miles. Plain City encompasses two counties, of which 560 acres or 0.9 square miles are within Union County. Approximately 266 acres (47 %) of the Village portion within Union County is agricultural land. Single-family residential land uses encompass about 83 acres (15%) and multi-family encompasses about 6 acres (1%) of the Village portion within Union County. A majority of the public/quasi-public land uses, about 83 acres (15%) are located northwest of the US 42 and SR 161 intersection. Pastime Park (43 acres) and Plain City Elementary School are located in that area. Industrial land uses cover about 4 acres; generally located near the downtown area south of Main Street and west of Chillicothe Street.

### **Richwood**

The Village of Richwood covers about 787 acres or 1.23 square miles. About 71 acres (10 percent) of the Village are agricultural/vacant land. Single-family residential covers about 310 acres (39%) and mobile homes cover about 25 acres (3%). The Richwood Fairgrounds and North Union School facilities make up the 215 acres (27%) of public/quasi-public land. Industrial land use comprises 18 acres, or 2% and commercial land uses total 75 acres, or 10%. Commercial land uses are concentrated around the intersection of Ottawa and Franklin Streets. The Richwood Industrial Park, recently outfitted with sanitary services, will concentrate future industrial land use along Ira Bean Parkway. Encompassing about 37 acres (5%), Richwood Lake Park serves as the Village's community park.

### **Unionville Center**

The smallest of the planning areas, the Village of Unionville Center encompasses about 104 acres or 0.16 square miles. A large portion of the Village, approximately 41 acres (39 %), is single-family residential. Residential rural estates make up 16.84 acres (16%) and publicly owned land amounts to 20.25 acres (19%).

### **US 33 Corridor**

The U.S. 33 Corridor is a key piece to the regional economy, with corporate operations, commercial centers, and large scale farming operations. The land use study of the Corridor extends one (1) mile on each side of the highway, covering 1.21 square miles (52,916 acres). Agricultural/vacant land encompasses about 43,413 acres (82 percent) of the Corridor. Single-family residential land uses are becoming concentrated along township and county roads and encompass 3,744 acres (39 %). A mobile home park is located at Springdale Road and US 36. Four golf courses (Darby Creek Golf Course, Marysville Golf Club, Rolling Meadows Golf Course and Blues Creek Golf Course) account for the 650 acres of public/quasipublic land uses in the Corridor. In addition, township halls account for a small amount of public/quasi-public land uses in this planning area.

Table 8.1 Union County Land Use, 2000 – 2010

Land Use Category	Acres 2000	Acres 2010	Net Acreage Gain/Loss	Percent 2010
Agriculture	247585.75	238050.15	-9536	84.50%
Commercial	2534.85	3147.79	613	1.12%
Industrial	2119.54	2775.89	656	0.99%
Light Industrial	141.95	215.19	73	0.08%
Warehouse	98.31	101.28	3	0.04%
Office	345.61	161.27	-184	0.06%
Public Service	2572.63	5669.01	3096	2.01%
Residential - Rural Estat	7639.52	10672.44	3033	3.79%
Residential - Single Fami	10808.78	14721.97	3913	5.23%
Residential - Multi Famil	222.63	281.88	59	0.10%
Residential - Other	1246.87	3234.32	1987	1.15%
Park	368.50	1678.02	1310	0.60%
Open Space	731.16	1015.89	285	0.36%

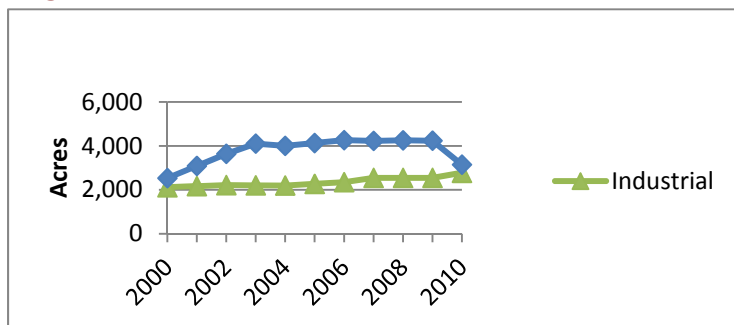
**Table** shows the existing land use within Union County. Agriculture is the largest land use by total area, occupying 238,050 acres, or 84.5 % of Union County in 2010, down from 91% in 2000.

Residential is the second largest (28,911 acres) land use category in Union County. The total residential land area has grown by nearly 9,000 acres since the year 2000.

Since 2004, increased residential land growth has slowed, with a drastic drop in 2007 in conjunction with the economic downturn.

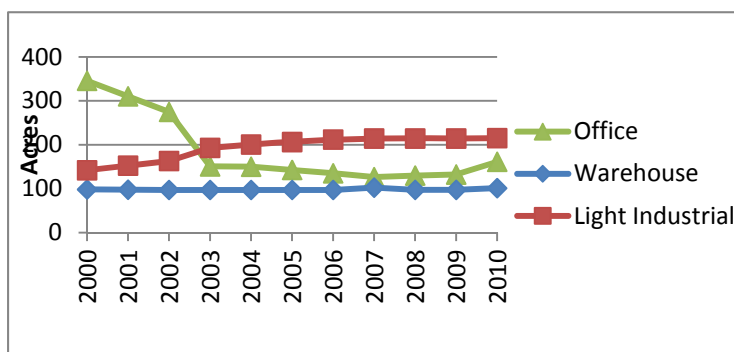
Commercial and Industrial land uses have fluctuated throughout the decade, typically following the same patterns as residential land use.

Figure 8.2 Total Area of Industrial &amp; Commercial



**Figure** Since 2000, the commercial and industrial sector has grown in size by roughly the same proportion. With growing population demand for commercial goods and services, the commercial sector grew by 613 acres. The industrial sector grew by 656 acres.

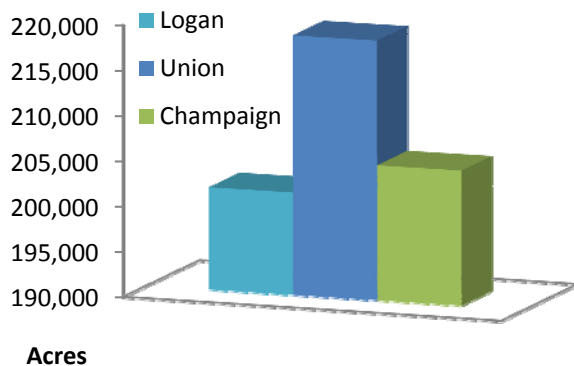
Figure 8.3 Total Area of Office, Warehouse and Light Industrial



Office land use decreased in total area throughout the early 2000's, but has shown consistent patterns since 2003. Industrial land use has steadily grown in area by an average of 3-4% per year since 2000. New industrial growth tends to be clustered along the US 33 Corridor near the southeast edge of Marysville, the Honda of America facility, and along Industrial Parkway. Light industrial uses increased throughout the decade by a total of 73 acres.

Figure 8.4 Total Agricultural Area

## Total Land Area of Agriculture, 2007



Union County is comprised of 932 farms with 218,657 acres, 78.9 percent of total land area.

According to the United States Census of Agriculture, Union County has some of the most productive farms in the State of Ohio.

- Net cash farm income for 2007 was above average in Union County (\$33,146) compared to the state (\$27,423)
- Union County ranks 32<sup>nd</sup> out of Ohio's 88 counties in total land in farms, 15<sup>th</sup> in average farm size (235 acres) and 11<sup>th</sup> in farms over 1,000 acres.
- Productive Agricultural land in Union County (186,207 acres) accounted for 85 percent of total land in farms in Union County (218,657 acres).
- Between 2002 and 2007 the value of agricultural products sold increased 8.2 percent, while production expenses decreased 8.9 percent.

Table 8.5 Farms and Production

Union County	Farms	Acres	Bushels
<b>Crops</b>			
soybean	428	108,816	3,621,685
corn for grain	297	55,478	8,942,566
wheat for grain	190	14,052	797,720
corn for silage	26	1,901	32,830
vegetables	24	117	nd
land in orchards	18	75	nd
oats for grain	10	199	7,782
buckwheat	3	90	1,800
red clover seed	3	90	12,600
<b>Forage</b>			
alfalfa hay	191	4,170	10,541
other tame hay	123	1,897	3,673
small grain hay	13	215	366
wild hay	10	67	107
other haylage, grass silage, and greenchop	10	178	559
haylage or greenchop from alfalfa	8	441	1,675

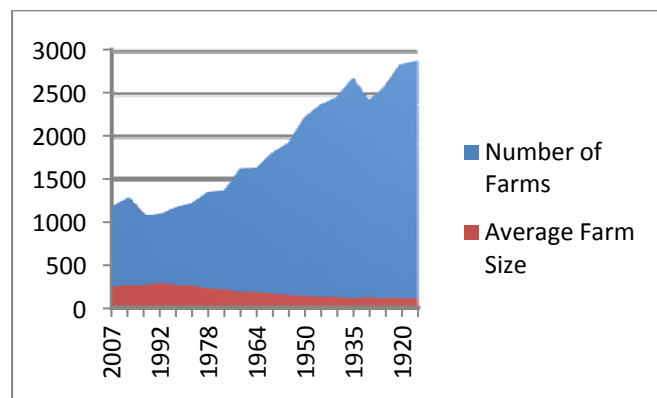
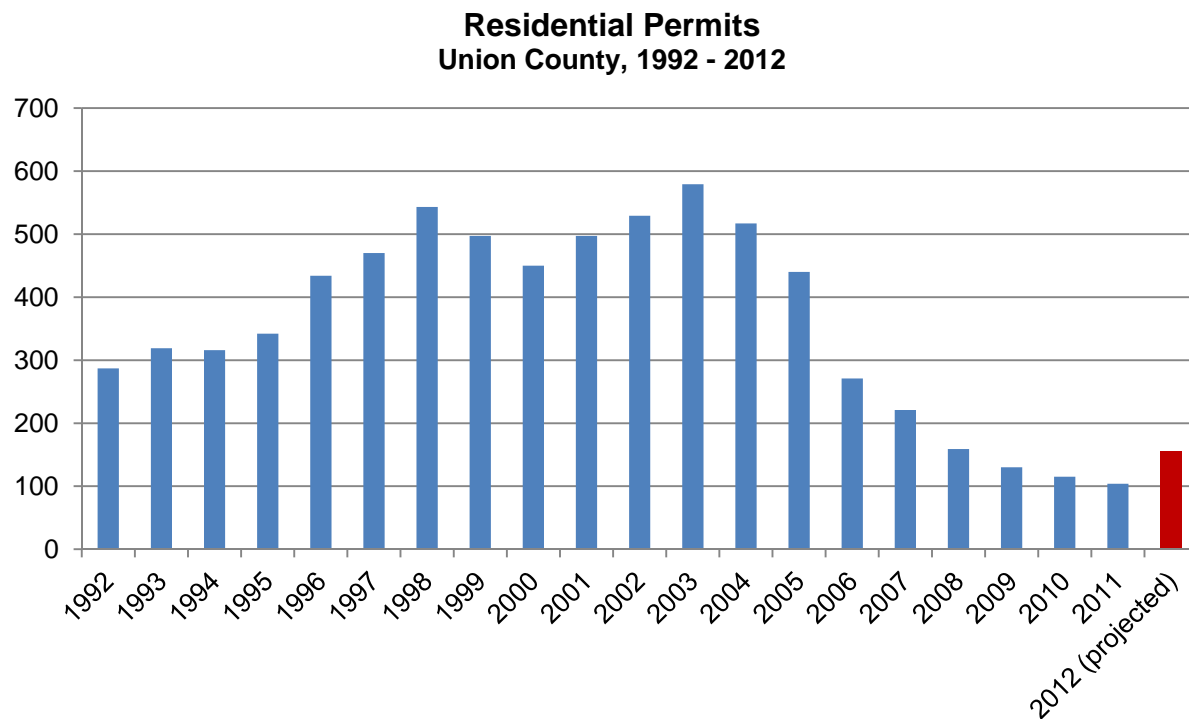


Figure 8.6 Residential Building Permits



There has been a slowdown in new construction as smaller increases are being seen in total acres for the predominant types of residential land uses, single family and rural estate.

show that Residential permitting peaked in 1998 and 2003. This data reflects a strong housing market during the late 1990's through the early 2000's.

In the context of the economic downturn of the late 2000's, new residential construction has slowed. According to data provided by the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD), the rate of residential development has been declining since the early 2000's. In 2003, Union County's residential development peaked with the issuance of 579 permits. Since then the number of permits has declined to pre-1990 levels with 104 permits in 2011; there were 154 permits in 1990.



## Objective 1 – Encourage Well-Managed Growth within the County

The primary focus of the Comprehensive Plan is to encourage well-managed growth within the county and its integrated jurisdictions. The collaboration of this effort by all entities is vitally important to the County's long term health and viability. New growth should be directed to appropriate locations that have access to water, sanitary sewer, roads and community services. Careful planning should protect undeveloped land from the negative impacts of certain types of development without discouraging growth altogether. The balance of land uses should consider the rural landscape and productive farmland (a nonrenewable resource) as valuable assets of Union County.

### A. Coordinate countywide growth management collaboration

- The County should continue to pursue strong working relationships with and between units of local government relative to land use, water and sanitary sewer services, and transportation. It is in the County's best interest to create strong, ongoing partnerships and to avoid unnecessary conflicts and disagreements.
- Concurrently, local governments must be willing to work in a trusting and open way with the County and with each other. A host of land use, zoning, subdivision, utility service and related issues can be addressed in this way. Strategies in this Plan will be dependent on a partnership to ensure success. The Logan-Union-Champaign Regional Planning Commission (LUCRPC) should assist in ensuring coordination.

### B. Encourage up-to-date local development regulations that support the intended land use policies

- County and local development regulations – as represented in zoning codes, subdivision regulations, historic district standards and other regulations – should be strengthened to better reflect the intent of the Comprehensive Plan and the public's desire for improved aesthetics in the community. The following actions are recommended:
- Strengthen environmental review and approval of development projects by amending subdivision regulations with stronger conservation standards and related submittal requirements that fully document conditions and provide remedies to lessen resulting impacts.
- Provide township officials with state-of-the-art zoning tools by preparing a model township zoning resolution that implements portions of the Comprehensive Plan and enhances coordination with the County subdivision and capital improvement processes.
- Encourage the preservation of prime agricultural soils and farmland by amending subdivision regulations with soil standards that discourage development on prime agricultural soils and by adopting agriculture-exclusive zoning at the township level and outside city/village growth areas.
- Adopt formal erosion and sediment controls at the County level. This would strengthen the County's ability to minimize environmental impacts resulting from development – especially as those impacts relate to water quality. The Soil and Water Conservation District should hire an urban technician to administer these new controls and work with EPA where required.
- Improve development approval coordination between the County and local units of government by amending the County Subdivision Regulations and local zoning resolutions/ordinances, when needed. Provide for joint review and comment on development applications and standardize development regulations wherever feasible.

**C. Discourage estate lots and encourage clustered development. – Use this language under this language to help support strategy #2**

The Agriculture Element and Strategy B of this objective provide direction to implementing this strategy, which is intended to discourage mini-farms and encourage clustered development. In addition to those strategies, the following additional options should be considered:

1. County Subdivision Regulations and township zoning resolutions should be amended to require that lots completely front onto a public or private road and must meet lot-to-width ratios as required by townships

2. The County should explore the use of density bonuses in township zoning resolutions as an incentive to using clustered subdivision design based on County Health Department Regulations.

*See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy H.*

*Implementation: County Commissioners, Long Range Planning Committee, County Engineer's Office, Health Board and Townships with Adopted Zoning Resolutions*

*Timeframe: Short Term and Ongoing*

**D. Establish formal water and sanitary sewer subareas.**

Individual utility service providers should consider formally adopting utility service subareas - which define and establish clear geographic areas in which utility service can be provided during the planning period. The utility service subareas, along with the Comprehensive Plan, would serve as a strong policy framework for preparing annual capital improvement plans and could be a basis for establishing clear annexation policies. These subareas should also be in accordance with the individual Land Use Plans discussed in this chapter.

*See Utilities...*

*Implementation: County Commissioners and Local Government Officials*

*Timeframe: Mid Term*

**E. Emphasize redevelopment and infill development throughout the County**

Existing buildings and lots that are vacant, overrun, or in disrepair detract from property values and detract from the attractiveness of a community. Redevelopment and infill development takes pressures off of the County's undeveloped, open land, and both improve and protect the environment. Downtown revitalization efforts in Marysville, Richwood and Plain City serve as models for further improvements throughout the County.

- Township zoning resolutions should be amended to allow multiple uses to occur in targeted redevelopment and infill areas.
- Encourage redevelopment of brownfields using Clean Ohio Funds to encourage economic development, make use of communities' existing infrastructure, and create jobs.
- Attract small startup companies and entrepreneurs to locate into existing buildings. This will allow residents more opportunities to fulfill their needs for goods and services within Union County.
- Encourage and support the creation and expansion of entrepreneurial centers.

## **Objective 2 – Encourage the use of alternative energy sources and energy efficiency in new development**

### **A. Provide incentives to developers who use alternative energy sources in their development**

- Support investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in the industrial, agricultural, public, and residential sectors.
- Pursue Ohio Advanced Energy Fund (AEF) grants and encourage third-party financed power purchase agreements.

### **B. Explore partnerships between developers and potential alternative energy providers with an Alternative Energy Task Force.**

- Explore ways to leverage agribusiness for research and development of manure-to-methane digester systems.
- Promote efficiency through LEED (Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design) programs including new building construction, renovations, and neighborhood design.
- Explore feasibility for a County Renewable Portfolio Standard. .

### **C. Encourage Townships to develop zoning language to address alternative energy sources**

- The continuing need for renewable energy generation places increased demand on the region's natural resources. The Renewable Portfolio Standard for Ohio set forth by Senate Bill 221 in 2008 has mandated that at least 12.5% of the electricity sold in Ohio must be generated from renewable resources by 2025.
- Work with the LUC-RPC to develop model zoning language that addresses alternative energy.

### **D. Work with and encourage developers to consider both the physical and human environment when planning for new development.**

- Explore ways to include alternative means of human transportation in new developments. Encourage developers to include provisions for not only sidewalks, but for bike and multi-use trails as well.
- Encourage to the increased use of mixed use developments to create walkable, complete communities to reduce reliance on automobiles for transportation.

## Objective 3 -Prepare Land Use Maps for key development areas

The presence of different factors, such as corridors, land use, and physical barriers, has and will continue to affect the County's growth. Such factors may result in opportunities and constraints for development in Union County. These factors have also helped to determine how the county can expect to grow from a land use perspective. Below are seven key development areas that have been identified.

### Land Use Recommendations

Land Use Maps have been prepared for each of the five major planning areas in Union County. The Map for each planning area is general in nature and should be further refined to the tax parcel level by each of the planning areas. This document summarizes each plan and the principles that define them.

### Planning Areas include:

1. Marysville Planning Area
2. Innovation Corridor Planning Area
  - a. Southeast Sub-Planning Area
  - b. Northwest Sub-Planning Area
3. Richwood Planning Area
4. Plain City Planning Area
5. Northern Planning Area
6. Upper Darby Planning Area

### Marysville Planning Area

See Marysville Comprehensive Plan

### Innovation Corridor (U.S. 33 Corridor) Planning Area

Anchored by Honda Manufacturing to the west, the City of Marysville, Scotts Miracle Grow, the Central Ohio Innovation Center to the east, and world-class corporations, the Innovation Corridor is Union County's engine of economic growth. The Innovation Corridor Planning Area breaks down into three sections: northwest sub-area, southeast sub-area, and Marysville. These areas are uniquely positioned for cutting-edge development that will shape Union County for the future.

### Northwest Sub-Area

#### Location:

The Innovation Corridor Northwest Sub-Area is located along a stretch two miles wide along U.S.33 northwest of Marysville.

#### Existing Conditions:

Most notably, the Honda Manufacturing plant, which produces several automobile models including the CRV and Accord, has been a community icon since 1982. The Honda plant and the nearby Ohio Transportation Research Center in Logan County continue to drive innovation and development in automotive, manufacturing, shipping and transportation and other satellite industries. The area is underlain with Nappanee, Paulding, and St. Clair soils that comprised former glacial lakes that form the Big Darby Creek headwaters. Current land uses include farming, pasture, woodlots, manufacturing, service businesses and rural homes.

#### Future Land Use:

The Northwest Sub-Area will continue to be a hub of manufacturing, automotive, and service industries. The rural nature of the local area forces workers to commute long distances to work. Future planning should examine the jobs, housing balance and maintain a level that can support future expansion of jobs and industry. Currently, employees face a choice of commuting long distances from nearby cities, or living close

to work in rural areas. The aggregation of homes built up along rural highways present future challenges in agricultural preservation. Residential development in its current form has been replicating a pattern of large lot development on soils that are marginally suitable for occupation. Sanitary sewer and water infrastructure is a major obstacle that is an immediate and growing need not exclusive to this planning area, but many other areas throughout the region.

### **Southeast Sub-Area**

#### **Location:**

The Innovation Corridor Southeast Sub-Area is located along a two mile buffer along U.S.33 from the City of Marysville to Union County in Dublin.

#### **Existing Conditions:**

- With access to major thoroughfares, I-270 and US 42, the southeastern portion of Union County along U.S. 33 is a major corridor of commercial, residential, and industrial activity as well as regional connectivity.
- The Innovation corridor not only benefits from easy access to major highways-U.S. 33 and I-270, but also has railroad access located less than two miles to the south of U.S. 33 and airport access in nearby Marysville. The CSX railroad is capable of double-stacked loads more frequently used by Honda of America Manufacturing and Scotts Miracle Gro.
- Current land uses in the Innovation Corridor Southeast sub-area have distinct characteristics on either side of the highway. The west side of the highway remains largely agricultural outside of commercial, office, and institutional development along Industrial Parkway. Industrial Parkway, running parallel to U.S. 33, is anchored by major corporations such as Scotts Miracle-Gro, Veyance Technologies, and many small businesses that drive economic growth.
- Currently under development, the Central Ohio Innovation Center located at the U.S. 33 and S.R. 161/Post Road interchange will emerge as a next-generation tech park and a gateway into Union County. The project includes a future rebuilt interchange and other infrastructure improvements that will bring additional growth and development in the area.
- The east side is defined by residential subdivisions, large residential lots, and some farm fields. The conservation efforts of Glacier Ridge Metropark have given the area a unique identity that serves as an attraction. Residential development in the area is made up of newly built subdivisions of low-density residential and medium density residential nodes near the park. Current and proposed schools play a very important role that will continue to drive development.
- Along U.S. 42 and Brock and Jerome Roads, the currently developing Jerome Village is a 1,400+ acre mixed use development, consisting of commercial, retail, recreational spaces, a variety of housing styles, schools, and a town center. The influence of western Franklin and southern Delaware County housing booms are expected to continue to transform the land use character of the area.

Underlying these patterns of development are the intrinsic components of urbanization; accessibility to water and sewer services. Sanitary sewer and water service negotiations have played an extremely important role in determining the outlook on future land uses. The City of Marysville's new wastewater treatment facility north of U.S. 42 adjacent to U.S. 33 on Beecher-Gamble Road became operational in 2008 and will provide sanitary sewer and water services to the unincorporated Innovation Corridor Southeast sub-area.

#### **Future Land Use:**

The strategic location of the sub-area has significant advantages for a land use strategy that should include a mix of uses. Low density office and industrial land use should focus planning efforts along the U.S. 33

Corridor while mixed use residential, commercial, and high density office can be integrated throughout the sub-area in a clustered, context-sensitive manner. Sewer and water service will play a pivotal role in meshing the patchwork of development so that land use conflicts at jurisdictional borders do not arise. Provisional services are a growing need that will continue to grow as farmland is sold to developers. Infrastructure improvements will need to be made to ensure the quality of life enjoyed in Union County.

In order to meet the future demands of development, the Southeast Union County Thoroughfare Plan has proposed strategic improvements to the roadway network (see Transportation). The implications of transportation on future land use are multifold. The proposed extension of Houchard Road would extend from S.R. 161 from Franklin County into Union County. The future land use impact could create a new corridor for development parallel with Industrial Parkway. Building upon these improvements, a new interchange may be required along the 4.5 mile stretch between the U.S. 42 and S.R. 161 interchanges. A proposed east-west connector between U.S. 42 and S.R. 161 could spur an interchange at U.S. 33 and facilitate more fluid travel between east and west sides of the highway. North-south connectivity proposed via the northward extension of Hyland-Croy Road would connect to an extended Home Road from Delaware County. Additional roads paralleling U.S. 42 are proposed in an effort to preserve capacity and maintain regional connectivity on U.S. 42.

A thorough outlook of transportation in land use planning should strive to integrate pedestrian and cyclist networks. Within the existing Glacier Ridge Metropark, a network of trails has laid the groundwork for greenways planning. Future development should expand these connections using dedicated right-of-ways for multi-use trails in conjunction with conservation of natural amenities, known as greenways. Greenways should interconnect all future development, i.e., residential, commercial, employment and mixed-use centers, with the Glacier Ridge Metropark, existing neighborhoods, Dublin-Jerome High School, Dublin Methodist Hospital, and regional trail networks (see Bikeway Planning in Transportation). Where pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists must share the right-of-way, a “complete street” solution should include on-road or parallel bike lanes, clear signage and striping, and separated sidewalks for pedestrians. Careful attention to safety should limit use of shared pavements on highways. Trail networks should be emphasized in pre-development stages to allow alternative commuting and pedestrian access. Trails should connect to Glacier Ridge Metro Park, future town center and employment centers.

The City of Dublin will likely annex more land into its corporate boundaries, as it has identified this sub-area as a planning area within its own Comprehensive Plan. Anchored by the Central Ohio Innovation Center, the west side of U.S. 33 will see high density office, low density office, and some high density mixed residential in a complete planned unit development scenario. For the east side of U.S. 33, the land use mix will bring about mixed residential choices, cluster housing to conserve open space and natural amenities, with housing oriented toward park and open spaces and development that blends with the current surroundings.

## **Northern Planning Area**

### **Location:**

The Northern Planning Area encompasses lands north of S.R. 347.

### **Existing Conditions:**

The overall character of northern Union County represents a strong agricultural heritage. Made up of mostly Blount, Wetzel, and Pewamo soils, the chief enterprise is cash-grain farming, dairying, and the raising of hogs and beef cattle. The Northern Planning Area is expected to experience less development pressure compared to other planning areas. However, due to the availability of cheap, undeveloped land, current zoning regulations, and large employment centers located nearby, more residences are being built in unincorporated areas. As a result, the rural character of the area has given way to residential development that consumes roadway frontages. Diminishing road frontages change the aesthetic characteristics of the rural-agricultural heritage enjoyed by residents. This form of development is largely unsustainable as private septic and water systems pose environmental risks and threats of contamination, road infrastructure and other community services burden more costs to communities, while smaller villages struggle to maintain population.



**Future Land Use:**

Development pressures spawning from U.S. 33 Corridor employment centers and northwest of Marysville may cause future sprawl that may negatively impact the water quality of Mill Creek. Development within the upper reaches of the Mill Creek watershed could have future implications on the quality of water supplied via Mill Creek to the Maryville water treatment plant if septic systems are not properly maintained. Areas in particular include Liberty and Taylor Townships.

**Upper Darby to Plain City Planning Area****Location:**

The Upper Darby Planning Area includes much of the Big Darby Watershed headwaters and portions of the Little Darby Watershed.

**Existing Conditions:**

Small communities of Milford Center, Unionville Center, and Plain City built their historic centers near the Big Darby Creek which is home to a host of environmental assets, habitats, and ecosystems. Distinct natural features were shaped through glaciation and hydrologic action along the Big Darby Creek. With Brookston and Crosby soils to the south of the stream, and Blount, Morley and Pewamo soils to the north, most of the land is excellent for cultivation. Darby Township has created an Agricultural zoning district to protect and support farming. The natural beauty and environmental quality of the landscape is exceptional, and a regional effort to preserve the ecosystems of the Big Darby Creek continues. Big and Little Darby Creeks are state and national scenic rivers.

*See Agriculture, Objective 1, Strategy G and Natural Resources, Objective 3, Strategy A.*

**Future Land Use:**

Providing that preservation efforts continue, the Upper Darby Planning Area will offer unique natural environments not shared by many in Central Ohio or the Midwestern United States. This unique identity has the potential to tap into an emerging eco-tourism market. Development in and around this sensitive ecosystem must keep a light footprint so that stream quality and habitat are preserved. Sediment controls, vegetative buffers, and maintaining a clear distance from the creek are among many best management practices for ecosystem management. Meanwhile, the residential market for these areas remains high due to the proximity to Columbus, small-town atmosphere, and pristine environment. Planned Unit Developments should be used to attract economic development in eco-tourism and foster stewardship values in the community.

## ARTS, PARKS, RECREATION

### Overview

Arts, parks and recreation are important features that enhance a community's quality of life and give residents a sense of civic pride and community identity. Union County currently is home to 31 parks consisting of 1,744.91 acres. The county is also home to eight golf courses, six bike tours ranging from 14 to 55 miles, a skate board park, disc golf, and numerous walking paths and trails. This chapter will seek to provide a comprehensive approach for assessing the existing park and recreation services within the county while at the same time exploring the expansion and connectivity of these parks into a unified park system. This chapter will also promote the arts and heritage of Union County by increasing the awareness of art and cultural opportunities in the county and by protecting and preserving the county's rich historical resources.

### Goal

#### Objective 1 – Implement the Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway Plan

Byways beckon the traveling public to experience our nation's rich beauty, historic past, cultures, traditions and diversity. People are drawn to inspiring prairies, farmland and lakes. They come to experience life in cities and towns that reflect the cultures of the people who built them and the people who live and work there today.

The Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway was dedicated on June 21, 2007. It is important to note that the Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway was Created with the intent to preserve and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the byway, and to provide enjoyment and safe use of the byway for the community.

##### **A. Continue to implement the County's Corridor Management Plan adopted for the Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway**

- Continue to implement the appropriate steps in the Byway Corridor Management Plan.
- A number of marketing related steps are necessary to advance the Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway. It is critical to keep the corridor residents and property owners informed of this effort, and how the management applies to them. This is also true for the counties, townships, municipalities that are affected by this plan. It is suggested that a minimum of one meeting be held each year to update everyone on the byway efforts.
- A general management, enhancement, monitoring and maintenance program for the byways should be established. This program will use the Big Darby Plains

Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan as a guide to manage, maintain, enhance and protect the byway.

- The implementation of this management plan can be greatly assisted by outside funding sources. There are a number of grants and funds that can assist with components and strategies. In addition, the communities can provide services in kind. Dedication, involvement, and sweat equity are truly the keys to successful implementation of this plan.
- Coordinate with ODOT on Big Darby Plains Scenic Byway.

#### **B. Consider extension of the Scenic Byway into Logan County**

- Work with the appropriate Logan County representatives to gauge the interest in a byway extension.
- Envision an extension of the Darby Plains Scenic Byway along Stokes Road in Union County and following Logan CR's 153, 146, 29, 28, 153, 5, and 10 to USR33 and passing through Middleburg, Pickrelltown and Zanesfield or consider another byway following the original USR 33.

#### **C. Monitor economic impact of the Byway**

- Create a committee in 2012 to develop a baseline from 2012 to 2017 to monitor the impact of the byway utilizing the Highway Transportation Byway funding.

## **Objective 2 – Develop and Promote the Union County Trail Corridor Plan**

In 2012, the Union County Trail Corridor Plan Committee began work to develop a Union County Trail Corridor Plan which will become the blueprint on how Union County jurisdictions should work together in developing trails throughout the County. The Trail Corridor Plan Committee has been meeting since 2010 discussing how to expand the trails in Union County which are mostly confined to the City of Marysville (Jim Simmons Trail), North Lewisburg Covered Bridge Trail, and trails connecting the Glacier Ridge Metro Park and the Jerome Village development in Jerome Township. The Trail Corridor Plan Committee should continue to engage community and business leaders in developing the plan.

### **A. Develop the Union County Trail Corridor Plan**

- The Trail Corridor Plan Committee needs to secure funding from the private and public sectors to complete the plan in 2013.
- The Trail Corridor Plan Committee should have the following objectives:
  - Connect parks, major businesses and communities with trails that promote alternative modes of transportation.
  - Identify likely corridors which can be used for trail development. Prioritize the corridors which are most likely to be developed in a timely fashion.
  - Identify likely developments in which trails should be considered.
  - Ensure that trail development promotes connections to the Columbus trail system and the Simon Kenton Trail in Champaign County.
  - Develop a detailed implementation schedule.

### **B. Implement the Union County Trail Corridor Plan**

- Name the Trail Corridor Plan Committee as the Trail Corridor Implementation Committee.
- Once the Trail Corridor Plan is completed, secure adoption by Union County jurisdictions and organizations. Incorporate the Trail Corridor Plan as part of the Union County Comprehensive Plan.
- Encourage Union County jurisdictions to work together on securing corridors and grants for trail development.
- Seek state, federal, foundation and other sources of funding for trail development.
- Secure an easement along the Dayton Power and Light Company's electrical easement which extends from Marysville southwest to Mechanicsburg in Champaign County.

- Encourage Union County jurisdictions to require developers to dedicate public right-of-way and construct trails which are identified in the Trail Corridor Plan.
- Involve bicyclist enthusiasts in the implementation and the promotion of trail development.

## **Objective 3 – Consider the Creation of a County Wide Park District**

### **A. Establish a committee to investigate the possibility of a County Wide Park District.**

- Engage jurisdictions and community leaders to form such a committee.
- Utilize the parks and amenity documents put together by the Union County Chamber of Commerce.
- Look at best practices on how other Counties have created County Wide Park Districts.
- Consider the expansion of the Joint Recreation Center to be part of this effort.
- Consider programming and services offered by the Union County Family YMCA and other organizations which could also become part or associated with a park district.
- Analyze funding options for the park district.

### **B. Provide recommendations from the committee to the County Commissioners and County Jurisdictions for their consideration and implementation.**

## **Objective 4 – Promote memorable arts within the county that enhances the quality of life through education, preservation and awareness**

In 2008, the Union County Cultural pARTnership was formed under the direction of the Union County Convention and Visitors Bureau and the support of a matching grant from the Ohio Arts Council. A consultant was hired in 2008 to work with community arts groups and leaders to develop a five to ten year strategic plan.

### **A. Increase the awareness of art and cultural opportunities in Union County**

- Develop and implement extensive marketing campaign (website, brochures, press release, social networking).
- Develop and host art exhibitions throughout the year featuring first local artists.

**B. Invest in Ohio's rich cultural resources so county arts organizations will have greater financial flexibility to be creative.**

- Develop relationship with Ohio Arts Council
- Research and apply for arts grants

**C. Encourage and facilitate widespread participation in the arts**

- Serve as host community for Ohio Chautauqua
- Serve as host community for Smithsonian Traveling Art Exhibition
- Develop Public Arts Program
- Develop and host Brown Bag Lunch Series

**D. Secure new performing arts space which would include offices for existing arts organizations and central ticket sales location.**

**E. Promote and support existing cultural and arts groups within the county.**

- **The Partridge Co-Op**

Formed in late 2012, is an artist owned and managed co-op located in Marysville, Ohio. The goals is to make artwork accessible and affordable to the public and provide space for artists to display their works. Ultimately, this will serve to increase awareness and appreciation of art within the community.

- **The Marysville Art League**

The Marysville Art League was established in July 1979 by a group of Marysville residents who wanted "to promote appreciation for the arts in the community, and to promote a friendly relationship among artists." At that time, the Marysville Art League was thriving in the community.

With the newly restructured Marysville Art League the mission is much the same, "To promote and appreciate the Visual and Performing Arts in Union County and surrounding areas, while continuing to preserve the legacy of the Houston House Gallery 264."

The goal is to be a thriving part of the community and surrounding areas of Union County. The Art League wants to offer classes related to all areas of art, to all age groups, from children to adults. Currently the Art League is hosting a variety of classes, by a variety of artists. Additional classes will be added in the future to meet the needs of the members and the community.



The Marysville Art League desires to be active and supportive in the community's events and be a vital part of the community's growth.

- **Houston House**

The Houston House was constructed in 1872 by Christopher and Hanna Houston. Christopher was a prominent businessman in the community. He constructed the South West corner (5<sup>th</sup> and Main) of downtown Marysville. His granddaughter, Grace Houston Biamonte, purchased the house from her Uncle Fredrick's estate. She was an accomplished artist, who traveled the world. She remained in the Houston House until her passing in 1978. Some of the original members of the Marysville Art League were friends of hers. The Houston House was purchased by the Marysville Art League in 1982. The mortgage was paid off through fundraising and events. After paying that mortgage off, the Marysville Art League built on what is currently the back art room. Edith Dyer, a long time serving President of the Marysville Art League was inspirational for the expansion. The Marysville Art League now owns the house free and clear.

The Houston House was renamed this year to the Houston House Gallery 264, bringing back a part of the history of the house and defining it as a gallery for the community to enjoy.

The future plans for the Houston House include a few needed restoration projects. There are several events planned, including the "Save the Soffit" campaign for the soffit repairs that were not done when the new roof was replaced, as well as the "Buy a Board" campaign to repair the back porch, expand it and add a wheelchair ramp.

## **Objective 5 – Protect and Conserve Union County's Historical Heritage**

### **A. Union County should consider the formation of a committee to oversee historical resources within the county.**

Union County has a rich heritage that includes many historically significant sites and figures. As Union County has a unique character from these qualities, it is important to preserve these historical resources while planning for future development.

It is recommended that the County appoint a committee to oversee the historic resources of the County. It is important that the county have a group of individuals that take responsibility for maintaining the uniqueness of Union County.

This group could include or be merged with the Historical Markers Committee that is already in place within the County. The Union County Historical Society should also have representation on the committee.

**B. Explore funding options for preservation of historically significant sites.**

Communities within Union County should explore funding options to preserve and improve historical sites identified through Strategy C.

**C. Develop a database of historically significant sites throughout county in a cooperative effort with the Townships, Villages, and Elected Officials.**

Work with Village and Township Officials to produce a list of historically significant sites in each jurisdiction. Some criteria for inventorying these could include:

- Sites already listed on, or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Sites of local historical significance

This information should be used to prioritize historical places for protection, either through listing on the National Historic Register, or another program.

**D. Consider the effects of new development on historical sites.**

The impacts of development to historical sites should be taken into consideration when reviewing plans for new development. Efforts should be made to ensure that sites identified as significant to the community are minimally impacted during project construction. The County should consider updating the Subdivision Regulations to include language for this.

**E. Educate the public about historical resources in Union County.**

Educating the public is an important part of protecting the historic resources of Union County. As the public understands what sites are historically important and why, it becomes easier for the County and its political subdivisions to promote and encourage programs and events involving local historic sites. Some possible outlets for education include:

- Continued support and growth of the Union County Historical markers program
- Production of a map and database identifying the sites identified in Strategy B.

- Public meetings of a Historical Resources Commission identified in Strategy A.

## NATURAL RESOURCE SUSTAINABILITY

### Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the natural features of Union County and the planning that minimizes conflicts with nature. Natural resources (soils, minerals, water, plant, air, wildlife, and solar) have been an important part of Union County and initially attracted inhabitants to live, hunt, fish and farm. Prime agricultural soils, streams, wetlands, and forests continue to be important to the county's economic well-being and contribute to our quality of life. For these reasons, it is important that the impacts of growth and development on our natural environment be properly managed.

### Goal

The goal of this chapter is to encourage responsible utilization of Union County's natural resources while minimizing conflict.

### Objective 1 – Soil

#### **A. Discourage development of prime agricultural soils in Union County**

Development and the disruption of drainage impact agricultural production. Union County, its townships and municipalities should undertake efforts to discourage development of prime agricultural soils. Soil information relating to productivity should be used when making economic development decisions.

#### **B. Encourage the creation of Agricultural Zoning Districts**

Zoning Authorities should consider adding a maximum lot size of 5 acres and maximum densities for single family homes when considering Agricultural Zoning Districts.

#### **C. Recommendation that Union County create a task force to consider adoption of a drainage mitigation procedure pursuant to HB25.**

Refer to Objective 1.E

#### **D. Recommendation to townships that they establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Union SWCD for the identification of proper drainage outlets for development.**

#### **E. Recommendation to develop future land use maps based on agricultural soils productivity and important natural features, recognizing growth demand around existing population centers and along the U.S. 33 corridor.**

- F. Recommendation to encourage townships to utilize maps and tables included in the updated comprehensive plan when updating their zoning regulation.**
- G. Educate realtors and land purchasers through brochures about drainage and its impacts on property. This should be developed through the Engineer's office.**

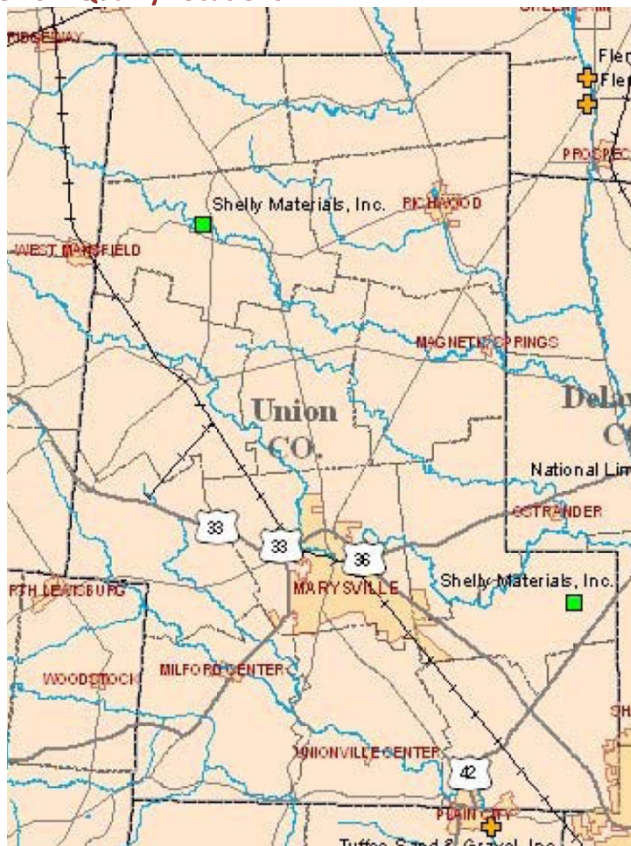
## Objective 2 – Mineral Resources

### A. Minimize conflicts between mineral resource and residential development and/or uses.

Identify existing quarries, their potential expansion and future mineral resource locations.

- Utilize maps which show existing quarries, potential expansion and future mineral resource locations.
- Recommend that Townships use Ohio Revised Code 519.141, which gives them the authority to regulate aggregate mining through conditional use permits.
- Encourage zoned townships to update their zoning regulations and consider addition of conditional use language for mineral rights.
- Discourage residential land uses near existing quarries and quarry expansion areas.

**Figure 10.1 Quarry Locations**



The map at left shows the 2 Quarry Locations registered with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Mineral Resources Management. Both locations are owned by Shelly Materials Incorporated. For a full scale map, Please see Appendix A.

*Source: ODNR Division of Mineral Resources Management.*



## Objective 3 – Water and Groundwater/Aquifers

### A. Continue providing quality drinking water from the following watersheds/stream corridors for downstream population centers: Bokes Creek, the Darby Creeks, Fulton Creek, Mill Creek, and Rush Creek

Encourage and educate landowners/land users to use best management/conservation practices which when implemented will continue providing quality drinking water, and quality habitat for fish and wildlife.

- Recommend establishment by landowners/land users of riparian corridors and filter strips, utilization of conservation tillage/no-till practices, and utilization of existing flood plains and wetlands.
- Recommend proper application of nutrients/pesticides by homeowners, farmers, golf courses, etc., by following product labels or rules/recommendations from chemical manufacturers/dealers, chemical applicators, ODNR, and ODA.
- Recommend proper sewage treatment system maintenance and use of stormwater systems.
- Recommend use of best management practices (i.e. Natural Resources Conservation Service) and/or "Best Local Land Use Practices" for conservation planning efforts (i.e. Lake Erie Commission).
- Recommend that townships consider including zoning language to require riparian corridors in regards to development.

### B. Promote coordinated drainage efforts and continue ditch maintenance programs to maintain existing drainage infrastructure. Pursue or encourage townships to establish memorandums of understanding with SWCD to determine proper drainage solutions.

Many types of water uses place quantity demands on available water supplies. These uses include natural uses such as stream flows needed to sustain fish and wildlife or infiltration of rainfall needed to recharge aquifers.

- Recommendation that assessment/analysis of water quantity needs be done in order to provide adequate long term water supply for Union County.

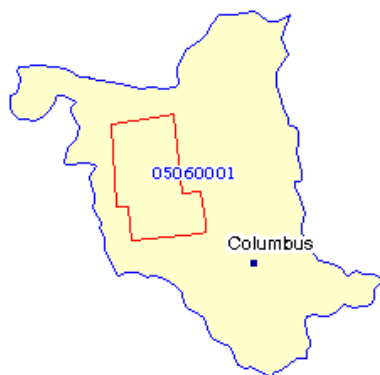
**Figure 10.2 Watershed Map**

Figure 10.2 at left shows the Upper Scioto Watershed (blue outlined area), and Union County (red outline) situated entirely within the watershed.

*Source USA EPA.*

**Figure 10.3 Ground Water Pollution Potential**

Figure 10.3 show the Ground Water Pollution Potential for Union County. For a full size map, please see Appendix A.

*Source Ohio Department of Natural Resources.*

**Figure 10.4 Ground Water Resources**

Figure 10.4 shows the Ground Water Resources for Union County. For a full size map, please see Appendix B.

*Source Ohio Department of Natural Resources.*

## Objective 4 – Plants

### A. Protection of remaining natural wetlands, grassland and prairie remnants and forest.

Avoid additional forest fragmentation. Inventory and maintain existing natural resources.

- Recommendation that woodlots to be preserved as part of development. Development standards should encourage woods to be included instead of removed. Encourage agricultural producers to conserve woodlands as much as possible through best management practices.
- Recommendation that there be continued efforts through USDA-NRCS/SWCD partnership to work with landowners to assist them in voluntary enrollment in government programs to establish wetlands.
- Recommendation to maintain existing wetlands through available government programs.
- Recommendation to allow drainage improvements on previously converted wetlands.

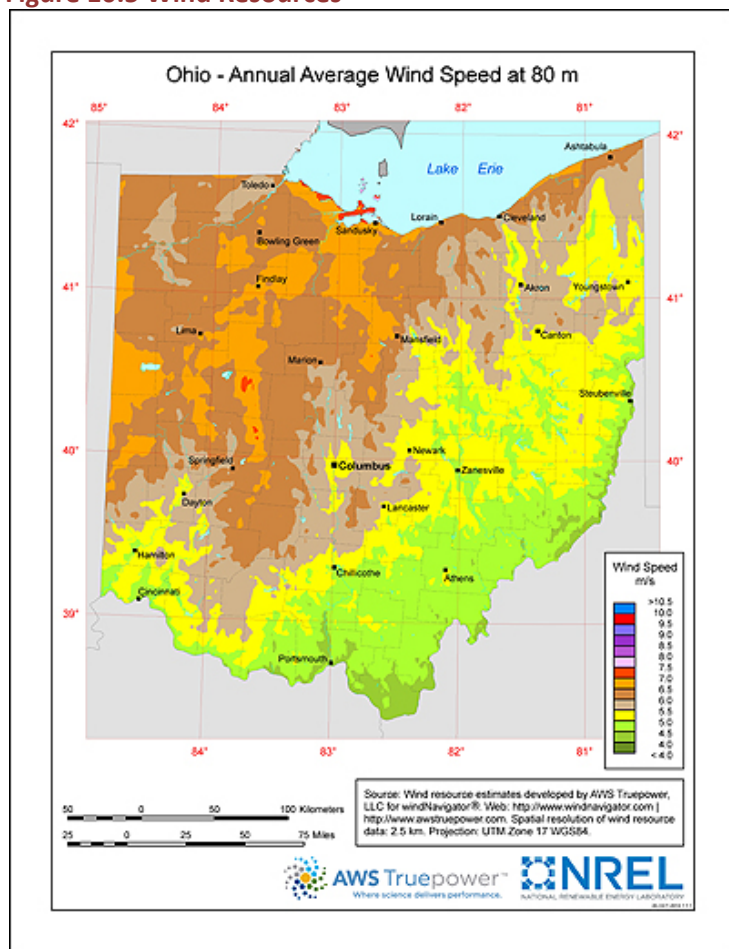
## Objective 5 – Air Resources

### A. Plan for the responsible development and implementation of wind energy systems in Union County, both commercial and residential.

As residents and businesses in the county continue to look for ways to conserve natural resources and become more energy efficient, development of projects to utilize air resources for energy.

- Recommendation that the townships and villages within the county consider zoning for small wind projects less than five (5) mega-watts in size. Being proactive in adopting zoning to cover these issues will both protect the jurisdiction and prevent potential problems and delays when a project is presented.
- Recommend that county/townships consider conducting feasibility studies for wind energy impacts, including impact to wildlife (birds and bats-mammals).

**Figure 10.5 Wind Resources**



## **Objective 6 – Wildlife**

- A.** Ecosystem-wide wildlife and habitat management, training, and education to include but not limited to: diversity, overpopulation, invasive species, spread of disease, property damage, crop destruction, and recreation.

## TRANSPORTATION

### Overview

The County is served by an 821 mile network of federal, state, county, and township roads. The City of Marysville, City of Dublin and village streets (Plain City, Richwood, Milford Center, Magnetic Springs, and Unionville Center) feed into the county system. The County is also served by a light duty County Airport which includes a single 4,220 foot long runway. There are no route-type bus systems operating in the County. Union County is not served by passenger rail service, but there have been published plans from the Ohio Rail Development Commission that has identified Marysville as a potential location for a train depot for routes going to Chicago and Toledo.

Since 1999 when the last Union County Comprehensive Plan was completed, population growth has noticeably increased along with the number of vehicles and vehicles miles traveled (VMT). This has put pressure on the existing street and road network and has created a need for increased traffic and thoroughfare planning. Union County is served by CSX rail through Union County and Marysville. An intermodal facility currently operates at the Honda of America Manufacturing facility in Allen Township. Multi-use trails are located predominately in Marysville and the southeastern portion of the county.

All communities, villages and townships possess somewhat different land uses. Whereas the Richwood area may be interested in supporting its fertile agricultural tradition, the infrastructure issues in the County area just north of Dublin are challenging in totally different ways. The City of Marysville, as the seat of County government, is flanked by both lifestyles yet has a unique small town atmosphere of its own it seeks to maintain.

In these circumstances, governmental resources may have a tendency to migrate to the area's most needed. These needs are most often dictated by land uses, commercial or residential development, and traffic volumes.

Distinct planning areas with tailored goals and strategies should be developed in terms of

infrastructure requirements. The effectiveness of the infrastructure policies should be reviewed every two or three years. This may start with township zoning, a common thread of countywide planning throughout the townships, villages and the City.



## Goal

The transportation goal is to enhance our transportation system with proper planning that emphasizes safety, road maintenance and improvements, and considers access management, funding and alternative multi-modal transportation options.

## **Objective 1 – Maintain and Improve Transportation Network**

### **A. Balance expenditures for Union County's transportation network.**

Governmental jurisdictions are responsible for the following three categories of improvements:

- Sustain existing streets and roadways through maintenance
- Safety upgrades and improvements to existing streets and roadways
- Construction of new streets and roadways as dictated by traffic needs.

Competition is intense for the financial and political resources in the transportation field. Governmental jurisdictions should strive to allocate resources carefully in an equitable manner to best meet the existing needs, as well as judiciously provide for transportation network expansions as necessary. The construction of new roadways will continue to need funding assistance from private development. Budgets should be managed both for short and long-term needs.

### **B. Reserve right-of-way from new developments to address future needs**

County and Municipal Engineers should work with developers to dedicate right-of-way for future road widenings, future road corridors, and other improvements. The County should require dedication of right-of-way on lot splits.

**C. Continue to require regional traffic impact studies regardless of regional jurisdictional boundaries. Traffic impact studies should be required for development, on roads that carry traffic distribution to arterials and collectors as designated on the county or principal thoroughfare maps.**

- With the potential for increase in Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO's), traffic impact studies and road maintenance agreements must be required from the large animal operators
- Similar agreements and studies should be required for energy developers (wind, solar, oil, and natural gas)
- Work with legislature to allow such requirements.
- Development can create impacts on transportation networks, across jurisdictional boundaries
- The City of Marysville requires a traffic impact study if threshold traffic is met for a proposed new development.
- Update the County Subdivision Regulations to require a traffic impact study for new developments.

**D. Consider the Complete Streets Concepts as roadway networks are built and improved.**

The Complete Street Concept encourages appropriate accommodation for varying users of our transportation networks including pedestrians, cyclists, transit and the disabled, as well as, traditional users, such as motorists and freight carriers. For example, complete streets include bikeways, sidewalks, and handicapped ramps.

Consideration should be given, where appropriate, to incorporate desirable complete street features into new developments and transportation projects in their planning, design, and construction. In addition, a 'Modified' Model Complete Streets Policy could be developed that can be used as a guide as future development progresses.

## Objective 2 – Alternative Modes of Transportation

A public transportation committee should be established to address public transportation needs. The committee would be responsible for coordinating all public transportation issues with transit authorities in surrounding communities.

### A. Assist commuting

Bus service (COTA) should be investigated from Columbus to Marysville, Plain City and other communities and major industries in the county. A study should be recommended to determine routes where and when public bus service would be feasible. Both inter-county and intra-county plans should be examined. Also, the various agencies currently operating van and para-transit services in the City, County, and Villages should be coordinated to better meet the overall transportation needs of the general population.

A public transportation taskforce should be established to address public transportation needs. The committee would be responsible for coordinating all public transportation issues with transit authorities in surrounding communities. Options for consideration include:

- Investigate feasibility and interest in commuter bus connections from Columbus
- The feasibility of a multi-modal facility for rail, bike and bus service should also be investigated
- Investigate the feasibility and public interest in establishing commuter or light rail passenger service
- A review of existing commuter options in Union County should be performed

### B. UCATS (Union County Agency Transportation Service)

The Union County Agency Transportation Service is considered a Coordination Program through the Ohio Department of Transportation. As such, it cannot provide public transportation or offer fixed route transportation. It can only offer 'demand responsive' transportation. As a Coordination program, UCATS can provide transportation for seniors, disabled individuals and agency clients. Agency clients are any individuals requiring transportation who are clients of agencies with whom UCATS has a contract. The individual agency determines eligibility and schedules transportation directly with UCATS.

UCATS can have a contract with any agency to include government agencies. Funding for UCATS transportation consists of grants both from the Federal Government and

State of Ohio. Contract revenue and donations are additional sources of funding. UCATS can transport other individuals when vehicles are going to the approximate location where the person needing transportation needs to go.

### **C. Expand bike routes/sidewalk plans/multi-use trails**

The City is in preliminary stages of a sidewalk/bike route master plan, and is also including discussion in their park planning efforts.

Primary corridors should be identified and prioritized to provide continuous bike and pedestrian routes to access communities and public places. A sidewalk/bike master plan should be considered to show all proposed and existing sidewalks, bike paths and links. This would assure that if any road improvements are proposed, sidewalks and bike paths could be part of the improvement. Specific consideration should be given to the redevelopment of abandoned railroad rights-of-way.

The County should develop and promote the Union County Trail Corridor Plan. Please refer to Objective 2 of the Arts, Parks, and Recreation Chapter.

### **D. Rail**

**Freight Rail** - Union County is currently served by a CSX freight rail line which connects from the CSX rail yard near Hilliard and then travels northwest through Union County towards Kenton and continues on its way to the Toledo water port. The CSX line serves numerous companies in Union County including Honda of America Mfg., Inc. in Allen Township, Parker Hannifin, St. Marys Cement, The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company and Veyance Technologies, Inc in Marysville. In 2007, this line carried between 20.0 and 39.9 million gross tons per mile. It is imperative that the County and the City of Marysville maintain a close relationship with CSX and with the companies which utilize this important transportation link.

**Passenger Rail** - Union County is not currently served by passenger rail. With the growth of the interstate highway system, passenger rail became a way of the past in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the Federal Railroad Administration has proposed a new plan to reconnect the United States with passenger rail through its "Vision for High Speed Rail in America". Accordingly, this vision includes a Midwest Regional Rail Plan and an Ohio Hub System which includes a plan for a train depot for passenger rail in Marysville. This Hub System would connect the Marysville train depot to Columbus to the southwest, Toledo to the north, and Chicago to the northwest. With the increase costs of fuel and the maintenance of our roadway system, Union County and the City of Marysville should continue to promote the Marysville train depot and the future development of the Ohio Hub System. Although funding for this new passenger rail system

is limited by the lack of federal and state resources, we should work to promote Marysville as a location for a train depot.

#### **E. Air**

Union County is served by the Union County Airport, owned by the Union County Board of Commissioners and operated by the Union County Regional Airport Authority Board (UCRAA), which is located wholly within the City of Marysville just off Clymer Road and Columbus Avenue. The airport includes a 4,218' x 75' hard surface runway. Important stats for the airport include:

Aircraft based on field: 65

Aircraft operations: 87/day (2009 average)

Airport use: 59% local general aviation; 29% transient general aviation; 10% military; 2% air taxi.

With a runway length of only 4,218 feet, the Union County Airport is limited for use by larger aircraft. Accordingly, the UCRAA has placed on its future capital improvement program a new NW/SW runway that will be at least 5,000 feet in length. This longer runway would provide better services to the major employers in Union County and allow for increased traffic at the airport.

The Union County Airport is located just south of Uptown Marysville and is near areas which have seen substantial commercial and residential growth over the past 20 years. As the City continues to develop and the demand for airport expansion increases, there is an opportunity for conflict between the airport and the development. Some discussions have occurred about the possibility of relocating the airport away from areas of anticipated growth.

If the Ohio State University's Don Scott Field (located between the City of Dublin and the City of Columbus in Franklin County) becomes more limited as a regional airport there will be more pressure on aircraft operations at the Union County Airport.

UCRAA, Union County, and the City of Marysville should work together to secure funding for a longer runway or to consider a potential relocation of the airport.



## **Objective 3 – Continue to Improve the Safety of the Transportation System**

The County has a blend of rural local roadways along with an increasing number of urban roadways with growing traffic volumes. This presents a difficult balance of providing adequate improvements for traffic and proper attention to the maintenance of the large number of miles of local roadways. Recent data shows that the highest rate of fatal accidents occur on two-lane rural roadways, yet the limited available funds often may be directed to improve urban areas. Elements to be considered and evaluated to improve safety on our transportation networks are shared below:

### **A. Roadway Safety**

Improvements that impact safety include pavement width and condition, roadside obstructions, shoulder treatments, and roadway geometry (slopes, curvature, etc). Projects planned and constructed should continue to address these components to improve public safety.

### **B. Intersections**

A high percentage of accidents occur at intersections. Traffic volumes, speed, sight distance and driver error all contribute to conflicts. High accident locations should continue to be considered and included in capital improvement planning. Alternative designs shall be considered (e.g. roundabouts) to improve safety.

### **C. Access Management and Planning**

In the interest of safety, access management should be considered when looking at road improvements and design. Union County has an access management plan in place but it should be expanded to include higher traffic generator areas. Union County and ODOT's Access Management Policy Plans shall continue to be expanded to maintain traffic capacity and reduce accidents. The purpose of the plan is to preserve and restore the capacity and safety of roads while providing proper access for existing and future land uses in the county.

These plans include driveway spacing requirements, traffic impact study policies and access permit processes. Access control is complex and important as it depends on several factors: roadway functional classification, speed limits, size of development, turn lane restrictions, and lot frontage. Villages should be encouraged to adopt their own Access Management Plans.

**D. Bridge Conditions**

Bridges on county and township roads are inspected annually by the Union County Engineer's Office. Structurally deficient and obsolete bridges often lack load carrying capacity and proper width for modern traffic. Capital improvement planning should continue to include replacement or rehabilitation of these structures.

**E. Roadway Signage and Pavement Marking**

Federal standards will require all regulatory signs to meet reflectivity standards by 2015 (this deadline may be extended by FHWA). All other signage will be required to meet the same standards in 2018. Similar impacts to safety can be realized by continuing pavement marking maintenance improvements.

**F. Railroad Crossings**

The installation of lights and gates are primarily directed and funded through FHWA for the CSX rail corridor in Union County, with the UCE providing some technical support. This supportive effort should continue, involving other local jurisdictions if necessary.

**G. Accident History Data and Safety Studies**

Much of the planning and prioritizing for safety studies and improvements utilizes information for the high accident locations. The reporting of this data has greatly improved over the last several years and should play an important role for project planning.

**H. Bike and Pedestrian Conflicts**

The long-term goal of increasing multi-use trails in both urban and rural areas will potentially decrease conflict with traffic. In areas where trails are not feasible, then measures should be taken to improve the safety of pedestrian and bike traffic along existing roadways.

**I. Transportation Planning**

Increasing development brings higher traffic volumes in areas of the county. Thoroughfare planning in advance of these changes will provide safer new roads, and allow proper improvements to existing roads. This is discussed in greater detail in Objective 5.

## **J. Advancements in Technology and Innovation**

Keep abreast of and consider using technological innovations such as pavement condition monitoring equipment, speed sensors, etc. Advancements in construction materials should also be considered where applicable.

## **Objective 4 –Community Strategies**

Transportation strategies for both incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county must address (or include) facets outlined in other sections of this chapter. Traffic planning, safety, infrastructure funding, and growth must all be considered when prioritizing projects.

Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) listing specific priority projects for the county's jurisdictions should be maintained. General strategies to benefit the county's agencies are outlined below:

### **A. General Strategies for Agency Consideration**

Review recommendations and progress from the USR33 Corridor Group. Input relating to transportation is as follows:

- Consistency in highway, roadway and other landscaping features and enhancements that impact the corridor's visual frontage, including highway and median properties, setbacks, signage, landscaping and other environmental and/or architectural design elements, etc.
- Hold developers accountable to support the tenants of this agreement or such future agreements, and expect that they would pay for needed infrastructure improvements.
- Jurisdictions should be encouraged to adopt minimum standards for these various criteria, in advance of development.
- Perform advance planning for road relocations or new road construction that has been identified in thoroughfare plans. This may involve the acquisition/purchase options of necessary right-of-way, developer commitments, or land-use forecasting/planning.
- Review recommendations of the Darby Creek Model Principles for development of areas. Principles are provided in the Appendix of the Union County Subdivision Regulations. A partial listing of these principles is included in Objective 5 of this element.

- It is important for agencies to give consideration to partnering on projects. The public benefits from improvements that don't begin or end at jurisdictional lines. Certain funding sources give preferences to joint projects.
- Meet at least every two years with area industries, Chamber of Commerce and the Ohio Department of Development regarding capital improvement planning content.
- Expand asset management capabilities to assist with the tracking of inventories, infrastructure conditions and its management.
- Revisit options available for road and bridge preventative maintenance.

#### **B. Townships and Villages**

- It is recommended that local jurisdictions maintain an informal 5-year plan (at a minimum) for improvements. Short-term and mid-term planning will assist with the prioritization of projects and budget planning.
- Local agencies should be encouraged to gather and monitor traffic related data for planning, such as vehicle counts, accident histories, etc.

## **Objective 5 – Traffic Planning**

The number of vehicles using the area's road network continues to increase. Each of the various roadway systems are impacted (county, township, municipal and state), but the southern half of the county and the USR33 corridor continue to see the highest volumes.

The vehicle capacity and safety of many area roadways are under pressure from the increasing traffic and driveway entrances. Many of the local roadways served their original agricultural uses well. The continued increase in the number of vehicles and the increasing urbanization of the county makes planning essential. Recommendations for both short and long term traffic planning elements are shared below:

#### **A. USR33 Corridor**

Union County's highest capacity highway, USR33, is a tremendous asset to the area. A study (I-270/US 33 Northwest Freeway Study, dated 2006) reviewed the section between US 42 and Dublin. Several specific improvements are recommended for consideration. They include improvements to the interchanges at US 42 and SR161, the addition of an interchange at Mitchell-Dewitt Rd, and the

addition of a third lane in each direction. Other segments are mentioned below:

- US42 to SR245 – The City of Marysville has identified planning goals within its 2010 Comprehensive Plan for this portion of the corridor.
- Remaining section from SR245 to the Logan County line. While this section of the corridor currently serves some manufacturing uses, it is expected to maintain its rural character. Honda, ODOT and Union County should continue to work together on inbound and outbound traffic to manufacturing plants.
- The City will construct a new pedestrian bridge over US33, between Mill Valley and Marysville High School.
- ODOT is planning ramp improvements from US33 to SR31 northbound in 2013
- ODOT is planning bridge rehabilitation work in 2012/2013 for the structure carrying SR4 over US33.
- Dublin has removed the SR161 interchange reconfiguration from their short-term planning

An annual transportation planning and progress review including Union County, Dublin, Marysville and ODOT would be beneficial.

#### **B. USR33/I270 Interchange Improvement**

While not situated within Union County, the proposed Dublin/ODOT project is important to the continued capacity of the USR33 corridor. Until the “chokepoint” at this extremely high volume interchange is relieved, the other improvements, noted above may not be feasible. This Phase 1 Interchange Solution 'flyover ramp' is scheduled for a construction start in 2015.

#### **C. USR42 Corridor Study**

A study was completed in 2011. The planning effort includes future capacity, intersection spacing, proposed land uses, etc, from the Industrial Parkway intersection to the Union/Delaware County line. The study also identifies the needs of the supporting road network in the area. Union County, LUC, ODOT and MORPC are all involved in the planning partnership. The County Commissioners should formally adopt this study.

**D. Southeast Union County Thoroughfare Plan**

A draft plan has been developed by the County Engineer's Office, and is currently used as a development planning tool (Included as Appendix). Formal adoption should be considered by the county. If adopted as a policy, the plan will need to be reviewed every five years, along with input from the City of Dublin.

**E. Countywide Thoroughfare Plan**

Traffic and roadway network planning for areas of the county other than the thoroughfare planning portions previously discussed is expected to take place in 2015. Partners in this effort will include Union County, LUC, and ODOT.

**F. Review of Area Agency Planning**

The City of Marysville, Village of Plain City, City of Dublin and Union County have all recently produced thoroughfare plans for their individual use. Some aspects of each entity's plan overlap with adjacent areas and likely result in varying assumptions. It would be beneficial to each of the jurisdictions if the plans could approximately match, or if any differences could be reviewed. Utility providers should be included as well to share their long range planning.

G. Consider allowing lot frontages along common access drives to reduce the road frontage requirements that residential lots currently have. This would require changes to the Subdivision Regulations and Common Access Drive Regulations, and Township Zoning Regulations.

H. Give consideration of service roads in commercial areas. Their use would reduce the number of drives or access points.

**I. SR4**

The route running north from Marysville has been identified by ODOT as a High Risk Rural Road. Enforcement measures have helped raise awareness, but it may be beneficial to provide a safety study. As conditions change on other state highways, the same considerations may apply.

**J. Traffic Impact Studies**

Continue to require traffic impact studies for every significant development expected to generate more than 50 peak hour trip ends (50 home subdivision multiplied by 10 trip ends per day multiplied by 10% peak hour) and carry traffic distribution to the designated major collectors (state system) from any adopted County thoroughfare maps.



## K. Darby Creek Model Principles

The Darby Creek Model Development Principles were published in 2000 by the Darby Watershed Advisory Group as guidelines for future development in the 550 square miles of the Darby Creek Watershed. The following principles should be considered to enhance better site design for development within the Darby Watershed. Further information can be found on these Model Principles in the Darby Creek Watershed Stormwater Management Strategies and Standards.

- Principle 1: Design residential streets for a minimum required pavement width needed to support travel lanes, on street parking, and emergency, maintenance and service vehicles.
- Principle 2: Reduce total length of residential streets by examining alternative street layouts to determine the best option for increasing the number of homes per unit length.
- Principle 3: Wherever possible, residential street right-of-way widths and adjoining utility easements should be the minimum to accommodate the travel way, sidewalks, street trees, open channels and utilities.
- Principle 4: Incorporate landscaped areas within cul-de-sacs to reduce impervious cover and provide stormwater treatment. The radius of cul-de-sacs should be the minimum to accommodate emergency and maintenance vehicles. Alternative turnarounds should be considered.
- Principle 5: Where density, topography, soils and slope permit, vegetated open channels should be used in the street right-of-way to convey and treat storm water runoff.

## Objective 6 – Funding of Transportation

The adequate funding of transportation improvement projects is impacted by many factors. Growth within areas of Union County and, the resulting needs, have made proper funding planning more important than ever. Competition for limited federal, state and local funds continue to be a challenge.

Gas tax and license plate revenues long considered to be “direct vehicle user fees” are being threatened by other modes of transportation such as passenger rail or even non-transportation uses. Federal funding has not kept pace in

part to the United States Congress' inability to pass a new version of a transportation funding bill.

Revenues are not keeping up with construction inflation. Gas tax revenues have been decreasing due to changes in driving habits of the public and more fuel efficient vehicles.

Current and potential funding sources are listed below, followed by strategies applicable to Union County for maximizing future infrastructure funding.

#### **A. Traditional funding sources for road and bridge improvements**

- Permissive License Plate Fees

Local governments (counties, townships, municipalities) have the authority to enact local permissive license plate fees. Union County has not enacted any permissive license plate fees.

- Gas Tax

Federal funding is channeled through ODOT to Ohio counties for roads, bridges, safety improvements and other transportation enhancement projects. Typically local agencies must provide matching funds. Only 92% of the gas tax that Ohio sends to the federal government is returned for these uses, making Ohio a "donor state". The current federal gas tax in Ohio is 18.4 cents per gallon.

The State gas tax is distributed among local agencies and ODOT based upon formulas and does not have to be used for specific projects. Only 25% of gas tax comes back to local government with 75% going to ODOT. The current state gas tax in Ohio is 28 cents per gallon.

- Sales Tax

Currently, there is a 1/8% sales tax set aside for road and bridge uses. Voters approved a sales tax in May of 2008 for a period of five years. In November 2012, voters in Union County approved a five (5) year renewal of this program, to begin July 1, 2013.

- General Fund

Can be used for road improvements, but is not typically done.

- B. Ohio Department of Development grant programs** must typically be packaged with a proposal that creates or retains a significant number of jobs.
- C. Community Development Block Grants** – annual formula grants through Union County Commissioners and often awarded to incorporated villages. Projects must benefit low to moderate income persons or areas. Additional CDBG programs (grants or loans) through the Ohio Department of Development are available and can provide financing for infrastructure improvements as long as the project creates or retains jobs. The Village of Richwood and Union County used this tool to create the Richwood Industrial Park in 1994.
- D. Tax Increment Financing (TIFs)** – allows increased property tax revenue from new development to be used to complete public infrastructure. TIFs should only be used to support commercial or industrial developments which will have a high economic impact on an area or jurisdiction. Residential TIFs are not favorable.
- E. Ohio Public Works Commission** – annual grants, loans and credit enhancement to local governments. OPWC has been an important and consistent funding program for the last 20 years. Local agencies must provide matching funds.
- F. Impact Fees** – Jurisdictions should consider pursuing reasonable impact fees that will insure that development pays for itself. Impact fees in Union County have typically been used for water, sewer, and parks. State legislation is required to authorize counties or townships to impose impact fees.
- G. Federal, State, and EDA Grants and Loans** – Grant programs through the Federal Government may be identified to support some projects. This includes potential line items in the Congressional or General Assembly appropriation bills. The City of Marysville was successful in 2008 and 2009 in securing funding from the Congressional appropriations bill.
- H. Marysville-Union County Port Authority** – Financing can be provided through the Port Authority to the extent that it can issue debt but must in turn have a revenue source to fund the debt and it must create or retain jobs. The Port Authority can also purchase property and construct facilities in order to create jobs and investment.
- I. Transportation Improvement District** – the ability to impose fees or taxes to improve infrastructure in a specific area or for a specific project. Multiple agencies can work together to form a TID.
- J. JEDDs/JEDZs/CEDAs – Joint Economic Development District/Joint Economic Development**

**Zone/Comprehensive Economic Develop Agreement –**

multi-jurisdictional mechanism which creates a special district in which improvements are made and in some cases, taxes may be levied to support development. Any taxes levied in these arrangements can be distributed to jurisdictions based on their level of participation on providing services or investment. Union County and various jurisdictions are pursuing the potential creation of JEDDs in the southeast portion of Union County. If JEDDs are created, a portion of the funds should be dedicated to infrastructure improvements in or near the designated JEDD.

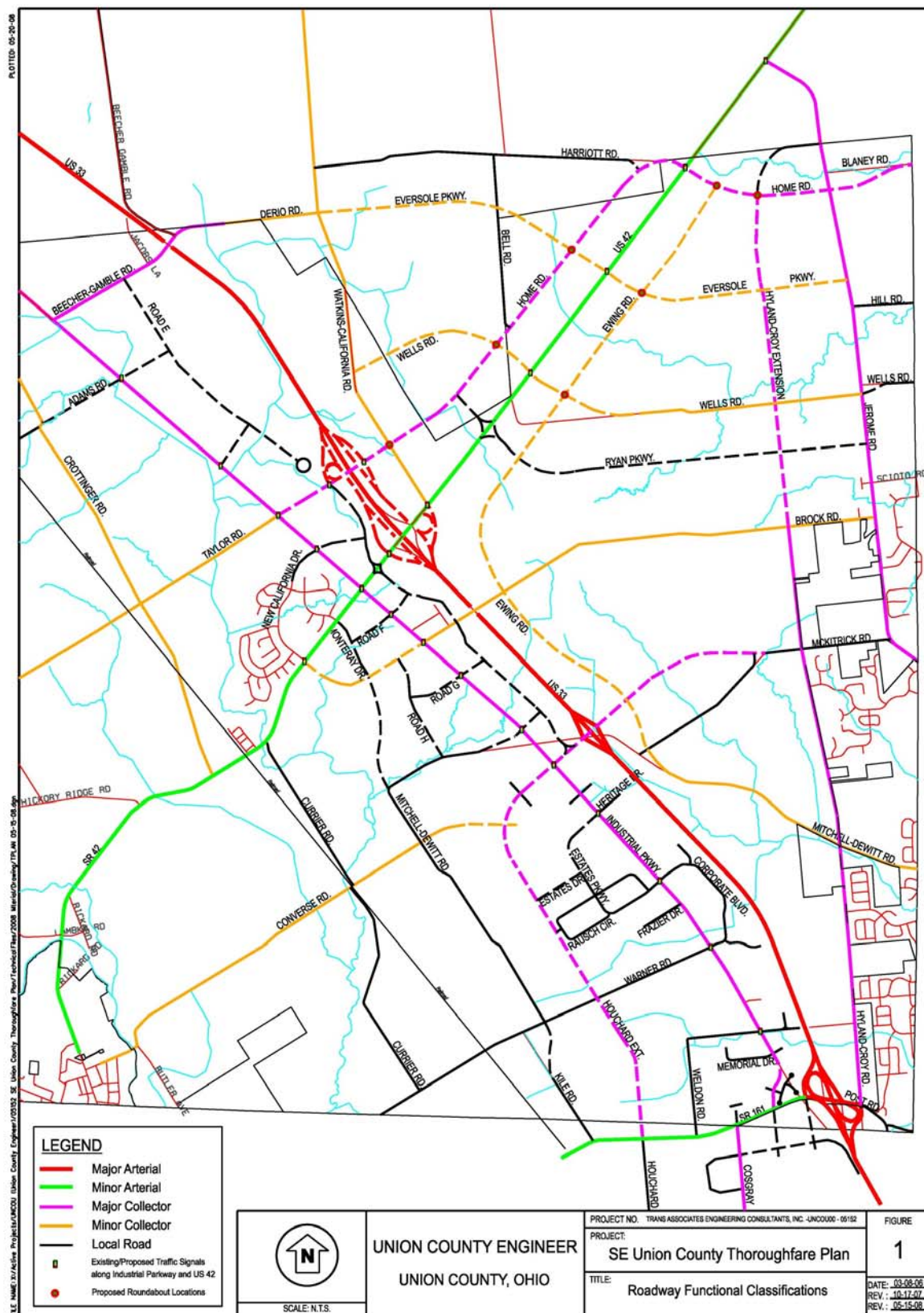
**K. Community Authority Financing** – tool for developers to construct initial improvements where developers can be paid back for their initial investment into infrastructure and other improvements. This tool works much like a large assessment district in which the properties in the authority area are charged an annual fee to provide the funding source.

**L. Strategies for Union County Transportation Funding**

- Continue with the Union County Chamber of Commerce Infrastructure Committee in order to build consensus between and among the public and private sectors.
- Investigate a better approach for countywide prioritization of key projects (Chamber Infrastructure Committee) and funding approaches/partnerships. Produce a Countywide Capital Improvement Plan, with funding outlines. This effort may need to include local schools.
- Involve area industries in discussions for improvements; direct contributions, helping secure Department of Development funding, etc.
- Partnerships between developers and public entities. For example, as part of their rezoning process, Dublin requires that developers provide mitigation for the impacts of their projects. This mitigation can be done as actual installation of improvements, or contributions relative to their impacts on large projects.
- Educate legislators regarding importance of maintaining user fee/user tax concepts.
- Improve efficiencies of highway/road responsibilities, for example, consideration of village or township street/road responsibilities being assisted by counties. Also, we must be cognizant of the efforts and implications of local government re-structuring.

- Project development tools – maintaining or increasing use of local force account construction (in-house work), design-build, etc.
- Lobbying the Ohio legislature to increase the 25% share of state gas tax. On the federal level, participate in lobbying effort to decrease Ohio's donor funding share.
- Maintain or increase the local sales tax funding for transportation improvements. (The Union County Commissioners will present the levy again in November 2012 for renewal).
- Increase awareness of the threat that alternate forms of transportation provides to current funding sources. Efforts are being made to fund other modes of transportation (and various other needs) with gas tax.
- Develop a better understanding of TIDs, JEDDs, Port Authorities, etc, and how they can assist with infrastructure funding.
- Create a task force to prioritize and further develop strategies listed above.

Figure 11.1 Southeast Union County Thoroughfare Plan





## UTILITIES

### Overview

Union County's population increase from commercial and residential developments has created greater demand for utility services. Most water and sanitary sewer needs in these new developed areas are being met by expanding and extending existing systems, although scattered homes in rural areas rely on individual wells for water service and on-site private systems for sewage treatment.. Natural gas, electric and telecommunications utilities have been expanding with county growth and development.

Public water, sanitary sewer systems as well as storm sewer facilities are provided by Marysville, Plain City, Milford Center and Richwood, plus parts of unincorporated Union County. As a regional water and sewer provider, Marysville supplies water and sanitary sewer service to parts of Jerome Township and sanitary service to Milford Center. The City and County have an agreement that establishes a growth area and an exclusive

service area for the city. In addition, the County, City and municipalities are working on a plan to inventory and designate providers.

The City of Dublin and Delaware County have extended water and sanitary services into the Hyland-Croy Road and Jerome Road area to support new homes and schools.

Public wells provide or supplement raw water sources in other communities and private wells provide water in rural areas in the County. The County operates and maintains five (5) wastewater treatment package plants at the time of plan adoption, with a sixth plant (in Liberty Township) in the planning stages. In rural areas and other communities in the County, on-site private sewage systems dispose of domestic sewage.

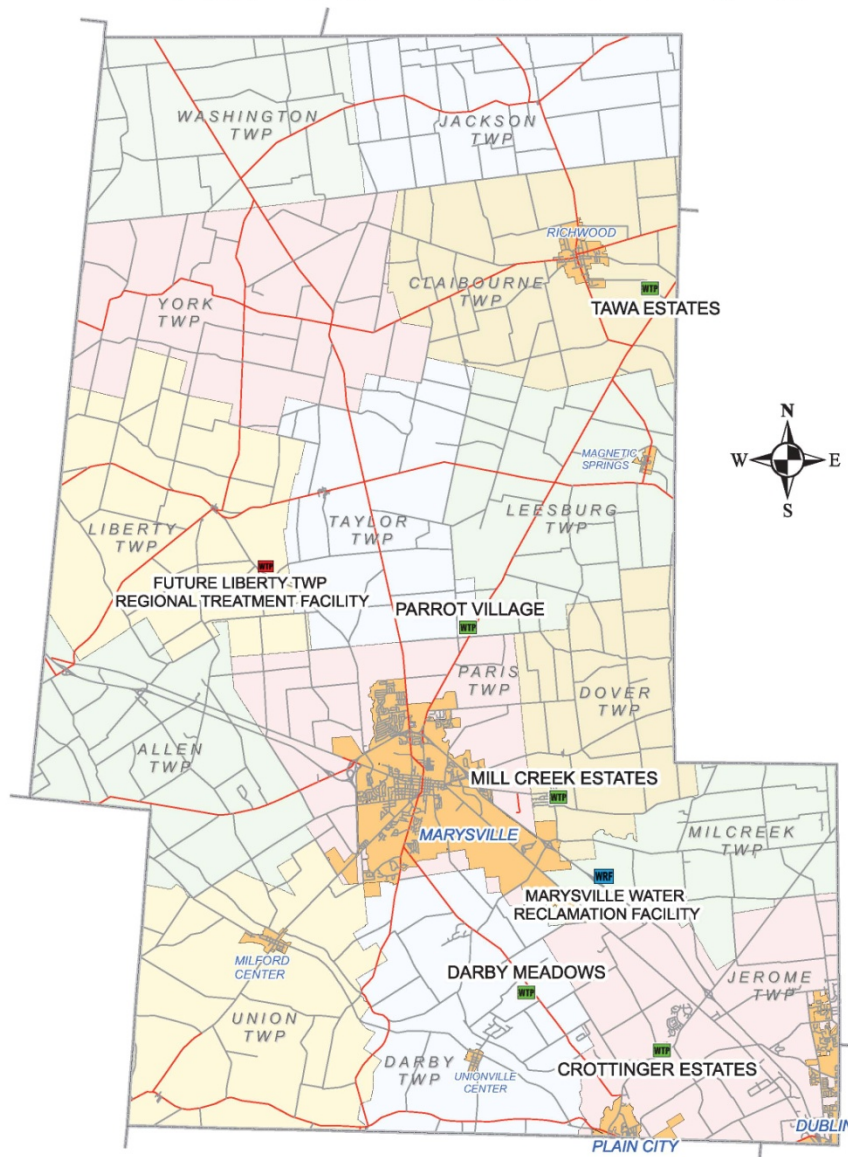
Natural gas, electric and telecommunication improvements have come with the expansion of cell phone towers and fiber-optic lines replacing traditional wire systems. While these improvements have allowed 96% of Union County's resident to access broadband, access

for business is still an area needing improvement. This has prompted the Union County Chamber of Commerce to form a leadership team in conjunction with Connect Ohio to study this issue and develop a plan of action for providing county-wide broadband coverage. Electric utilities have expanded their substations and three-phase systems to accommodate new residential and commercial loads. The natural gas providers continue to extend service into new service areas and rehabilitate older gas lines at the same time. Alternative energy, including wind turbines and solar power, may play a part in meeting future energy needs.



Figure 12.1 Union County Waste Water Package Plants

## Union County-Owned Wastewater Treatment Plants



Source: Union County Engineer's Office

## Goal

Union County utility suppliers should provide infrastructure systems that meet the current and future needs of the community. The extension of these utilities should be primarily funded by private development. County and municipal entities need to provide for environmentally compliant wastewater collection, wastewater treatment, water distribution, water treatment and proper storm water management. Electric, natural, gas and telecommunication systems will continue to support the community growth as well as provide for new commercial and industrial development.

### Objective 1 – Ensure Adequate Public Water Supply

- **Support well head protection efforts**

The City of Marysville, Villages of Milford Center and Richwood rely on well water for part of their entire supply source. OEPA provides regulations for protecting well fields. The state agency reviews and modifies the regulations on a five year cycle. Communities should support these regulations by adopting legislation for setbacks or buffer zones around the well fields, providing ongoing public education on how runoff from farm fields, parking lots and home sites affect ground water quality. Local watershed coordinators are a great resource for improving education and communication with the public.

- **Prepare and maintain water and utility master plans to either improve and/or maintain existing systems**

By preparing and maintaining water utility master plans and capital improvement plans, financial and technical “blueprints” can be developed to systematically implement water improvements on a timely basis such as the looping of water lines around Marysville. Marysville’s Water Master Plan was developed in December 2005.

### C. Protect potential future water resources

Continued growth trends will require more potable water. The municipalities, villages and County should chart a course to stay well ahead of both the growth curve and more stringent drinking water standards. By developing and protecting new water supply sources, domestic/industrial water delivery demands, fire protection requirements and compliance with all applicable drinking water standards could be ensured. Mill Creek, a primary raw water source for the majority of the residents of Union County, should also be protected. Again, local watershed coordinators are a great resource for improving education and communication with the public.

In 2009, the City of Marysville completed a new 1.3 billion gallon reservoir and an inflatable dam and pump station. This reservoir will significantly improve water quality. In the future, the city will undertake construction of a new 7.5 million gallon per day water treatment plant on Raymond Road, which will increase capacity and improve water quality.



## Objective 2 – Manage the Treatment and Disposal of Wastewater

### A. National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) compliance should be a top priority for wastewater treatment

This is important from an environmental standpoint and from an economic development perspective. Failure to meet water quality standards may result in sanctions from OEPA and US EPA and prohibit additional sanitary connections for new businesses and residential uses.

In 2009, the City of Marysville completed \$110 million in sewer and wastewater infrastructure improvements. The city expects that the new eight million gallon per day water reclamation plant (expandable to 24 million gallons per day) will meet the needs of the developing area for the next 40 years.

Union County is phasing out package plants when public sewers become available and are feasible to connect. Union County has an initiative to address wet weather flows in their sanitary sewer collection system by an aggressive inflow and infiltration (I & I) identification and elimination program. Union County Health Department has identified several incorporated and unincorporated villages with failing on-site septic systems.

Unincorporated Villages such as Raymond and Peoria with known septic failures are the Union County Commissioners responsibility to remedy. The county has joined the City of Marysville's efforts for 208 Water Quality Management Planning (208 Plan) to address some of these problems and is expected to be completed in 2012. Balancing the health needs, cost affordability and available funding sources is a challenge in solving the septic system failures in these outlying areas.

### B. On-site treatment and disposal

The Union County Health Department sewage disposal rules follow the most current State of Ohio Department of Health (ODH) sewage rules. Since the year 2000, no discharging systems have been permitted unless an existing lot is too small to accommodate a soil absorption system. OEPA is the regulatory authority over all discharging systems regardless of size and requires a NPDES permit.

The Union County Health Department has an inspection program in place for mound, drip type systems and aerators to ensure they remain compliant. Scattered home sites with

on-site disposal systems do not pose the same potential for problems as subdivisions designed with multiple home sites. Subdivisions should not be designed with on-site septic systems if public sewers are available.

**C. Encourage a regional approach to wastewater treatment in an effort to improve water quality**

If a municipal treatment plant is adjacent to a new development that needs wastewater treatment or to an existing development that has failing on-site septic systems, connection should be considered rather than creating a new treatment system. A regional approach to wastewater treatment should be followed if it is mutually beneficial to the County and municipality and financially feasible. This reduces the number of discharging systems into water sources such as Mill Creek and provides reliable service without duplicating resources such as generators, operating personnel, etc.

**D. Ensure individual lots have adequate drainage outlets and will not negatively impact water quality or create nuisances for adjoining owners.**

The Union County Health Department does not allow discharging systems. However, building lots still need to have an adequate outlet for downspouts, geothermal systems, sump pumps, softener discharge and curtain drains or other drainage provided at the toe of mound systems. Currently the Union SWCD and Health Department meet on-site and determine if a building lot has an adequate drainage outlet prior to issuing a zoning permit, where applicable. Encourage local jurisdiction to adopt zoning regulations on adequate drainage outlets with a subsequent Memorandum of Understanding with the Union County Soil and Water Conservation District to inspect.

**E. Discourage an increase of scattered homes without sanitary sewers**

Current state subdivision statutes and local zoning regulations encourage random development that promote sprawl, which is commonly known as strip development. Often, minor subdivisions or lot splits detract from future sanitary sewer planning by creating pockets of homeowners resistant to sanitary sewers. Due to the significant cost of construction of sanitary sewers, providing service to more than one large lot can be cost prohibitive. They are not desirable from the perspective of traffic, land use, utility planning and construction. To counteract this pattern, the County should investigate and consider the following:

- Encourage changes in state law regarding impact fees and subdivision platting
- Establish minimum size of 100,000 gallons per day (gpd) for package type treatment system if regional connection is not available and density or soils are not suitable for on-site disposal
- Amend zoning resolutions to explore larger minimum lot sizes, densities, and agricultural zoning districts.
- Require future utility easements for lots in subdivisions without public sanitary sewers.
- Utilize the current Union County Health Department rules and regulations for site specific evaluations. These systems exhibit physical characteristics such as soils, slope, groundcover, water, etc.
- Promote farmland preservation programs and restrict the spread of scattered individual systems through planned growth.
- Encourage cluster development and require dedicated open space and parks or set aside money for comprehensive parks or bike trails.
- Amend the subdivision regulations to address Senate Bill 115 language on "Large Lot Development" which was adopted in April of 2005 by Ohio's 125th General Assembly. Generally, any time a new parcel is created that is 5 acres or less in area, it is subject to county subdivision regulation review, and those parcels over 5 acres are "usually" exempt. This has at times caused conflicts in planning review such as the creation of flag lots, which if greater than 5 acres, may not be subject to zoning requirements (such as lot to width ratio) or subdivision regulations. With the approval of Senate Bill 115, the County or regional planning commission may adopt rules to approve lots of 4-20 acres without a plat and therefore subject those lots over 5 acres (and up to 20 acres) to greater review.

## Objective 3 – Improve Stormwater Management

### A. Continue to implement stormwater management requirements in the City of Marysville, Villages and in the Union County Subdivision Regulations with coordination among jurisdictions in overlapping areas

A regional stormwater utility should be explored to correct existing problems and accommodate proposed land development. Engineering design shall utilize detention facilities to control peak storm water run-off, water quality and soil erosion from new developments. Stormwater culverts, storm sewers and basins should be sized for future land uses that will drain into them. Enforcement of the regulations is critical since much of the proposed land use areas may drain through existing storm water systems. Subdivisions should provide for off-site storm easements and ditch petitions.

The County should consider a future conditions model for flood zones along streams prone for development so buffer zones can be established to protect current and future property owners from flood damage. Licking County has such a model that they use for regulating development.

The City of Marysville has been designated as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) community by OEPA. The city is required to achieve the following six Best Management Practices as measurable goals:

- Public Education and Outreach
- Public Participation Involvement
- Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination
- Construction Site Runoff Control
- Post Construction Runoff Control
- Pollution Prevention – Municipal Good Housekeeping



## **Objective 4 – Planning for adequate capacity for private utilities such as: Natural Gas, Electric and Telecommunication Systems**

### **A. Implement tools and policies for use of communication in planning for use in Union County**

Maintain open communication and cooperation with regulated and non-regulated private utilities to ensure an adequate supply of utility resources in the County for future development and new loads.

Share the County planning input and economic development opportunities with utility company's facilities and infrastructure planners concerning projected growth and new development areas. When possible, share economic development inquiries that could have a significant impact on any private utilities.

Work with the Union County GIS Task Force to develop a GIS mapping system with layers showing specific utility service territories and facilities and when overlaid with other utilities give an accurate picture of utility infrastructure including municipal water and sewer. Some regulated utilities may not be able to share long range infrastructure planning information with the County. Several of the regulated utilities cover multi-county areas and the plans are dynamic based on changing demand.

Prepare a map which shows the approximate service areas by private utilities. Indicate major service lines, substations and telecommunication stations. This map should be cross-referenced to the major water and sanitary systems operation beyond local municipalities. The areas containing these services will provide prime sites for future residential and commercial development.

Maintain a list of contact persons/positions for each utility for routine communications. An updated list of active utility providers in the County should be created.

## Objective 5 – Generate and Maintain Specific Community Strategies

### A. Maintain open communication and cooperation for future development

As the need for public utilities increases and expands to less densely populated areas, coordination between communities becomes even more essential. It is vital that communities establish a plan that not only accomplishes local goals, but also works in concert from a regional perspective. Union County and Marysville have worked together to generate a 208 Water Quality Plan to accomplish these goals. This plan not only identifies current and future possible problem areas of wastewater service within Union County, but also serves as a regional water quality planning tool to assist in guiding and defining service areas for growth and development. This plan, along with continued coordination between Union County, City of Marysville and other community leaders will add in providing efficient public infrastructure management for the future.

- Marysville
  - Continue to develop new raw water supply sources and enhance Mill Creek watershed plans for a new municipal water treatment plant and associated distribution system. Improvements should be implemented over the next decade, pending development.
  - Continued partnership with USWCD for the maintenance of tiles and open ditches.
  - Continue to expand the sanitary sewer system to best utilize the municipal wastewater treatment plant.
  - Review and expand developer contributions, where appropriate.
  - Encourage collaborative planning or efforts in the implementation of utility service agreements and master plans.
  - Continue to work with NiSource and the State of Ohio to pursue the development of plans and the securing of funds to improve the natural gas supply to the Marysville area.
- Milford Center
  - Improve village wastewater and collection system.
  - Complete a feasibility study to investigate long-term solutions for water quality and service providers.

- Plain City
  - Implement stormwater improvements for Sweeney Run and major storm trunks.
  - Protect water sources.
  - Develop stormwater plan.
  - With treatment plant expansion complete, discuss treatment plans for future development with the City.
  - Replace/install critical waterlines.
  - Investigate regional water/sewer possibilities (City, County, Plain City, Milford Center and Unionville Center).
  - Continue to identify and correct I/I and wastewater collection system
  - Identify and eliminate remaining combined sewers.
  - Replace/install critical sanitary sewers
  - Incorporate the Village Service Plan into the county-wide 208 Planning.
- Richwood
  - Improve village water and wastewater facilities.
  - Manage use of farm tiles as stormwater outlets particularly on the east side of village.
  - Protect water sources
  - Continue (I/I) identification and correction of wastewater collection systems
  - Provide new water storage tank
  - Install/replace critical waterline and connect loops
  - Consider drainage improvements between village and Ottawa Ditch
  - Improve Fulton Creek
  - Improve/replace critical sanitary sewers
- Southeast 33 Corridor Area
  - The City of Marysville will provide adequate water services to the entire corridor in accordance with the City/County Asset Purchase Agreement.
  - Require developers to extend water and sewer mainlines to the extent feasible.
  - Identify current environmental problems and propose attainable solutions.
  - Encourage cooperation between local governments in providing utilities.

- Unincorporated Villages with Failing Septic Systems
  - Complete environment report to compare connecting to the regional treatment facility or constructing a community wastewater system.
  - Possible solutions for long-term planning will be addressed in Phase 2 of the 208 Plan.
  - Explore available funding options.
- Existing Union County Package Plants
  - Possible solutions for long-term planning will be addressed in Phase 2 of the 208 Plan.
  - I/I identification and removal high priority
  - Conduct a financial feasibility analysis for impacts on rates if county customers connect to regional provider.

## Objective 6 – Adequately Funded Utilities

### 1. To provide a sustainable system while maintaining reasonable utility rates for users.

Local governments fund utility improvements in a number of ways. Tap fees and a portion of water/sewer rates pay for improvements to existing collection, distribution, and treatment systems. Developers must pay for all external water and sewer pipeline extensions and internal pipeline improvements needed to provide service to their site. Other developer driven funding mechanisms including economic development agreements and tax financing documents should be considered.

Traditional sources of outside funding will continue to be very competitive. For example, areas with water and sewer infrastructure needs are highly dependent on grant funding since there is no revenue stream in place to fund projects and County general funds are limited.

All of these initiatives can be packaged as partnering projects with public and private sector associations. The responsibility and risks are shared.

Governmental units should also continue to carefully manage their more traditional funding sources such as:

- General fund dollars
- General income tax revenues
- General sales tax
- Water and sewer rates
- County ditch petition
- Connection charges
- Assessments

### 2. Expand revenue stream

Municipalities and the County should continue to pursue alternative revenue sources and other types of financing districts to fund new growth, where appropriate. Local resources shall be saved for system improvement projects. Some funds from these sources will need to be allotted towards projects to pay for design, funding match, etc. as required by the funding agency.

### 3. Maximize developer contributions

Municipalities and the County should continue to require developers to expand their contributions in utility improvements as necessitated by off-site development. System expansion policy should be implemented and

enforced to ensure that private development contributes appropriate to future growth.

**4. Consider Innovative Public/Private Partnerships**

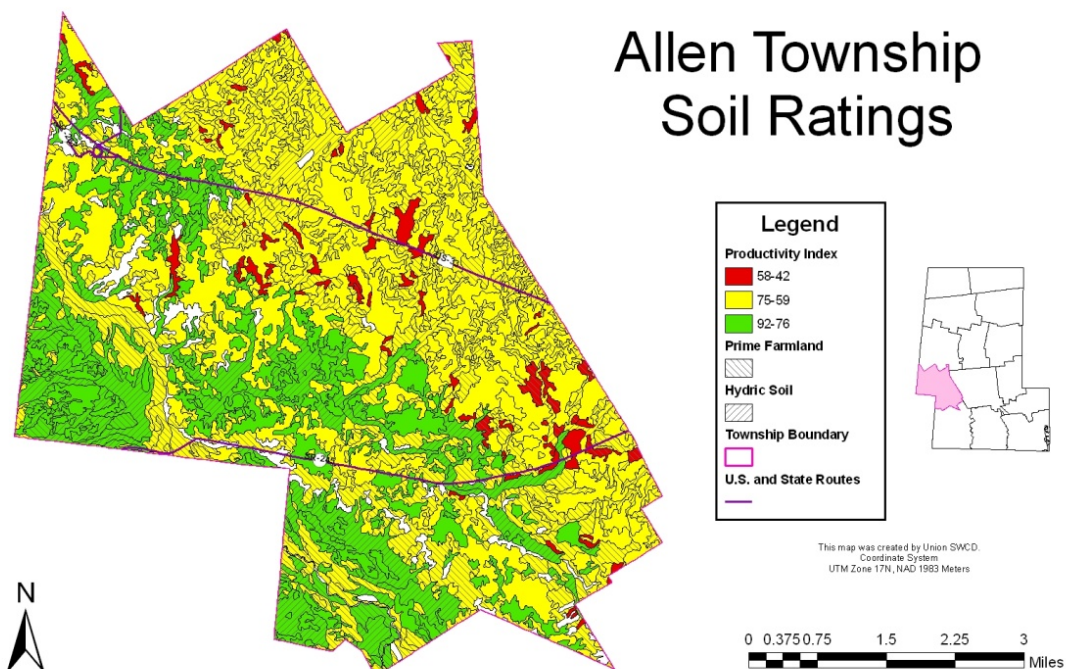
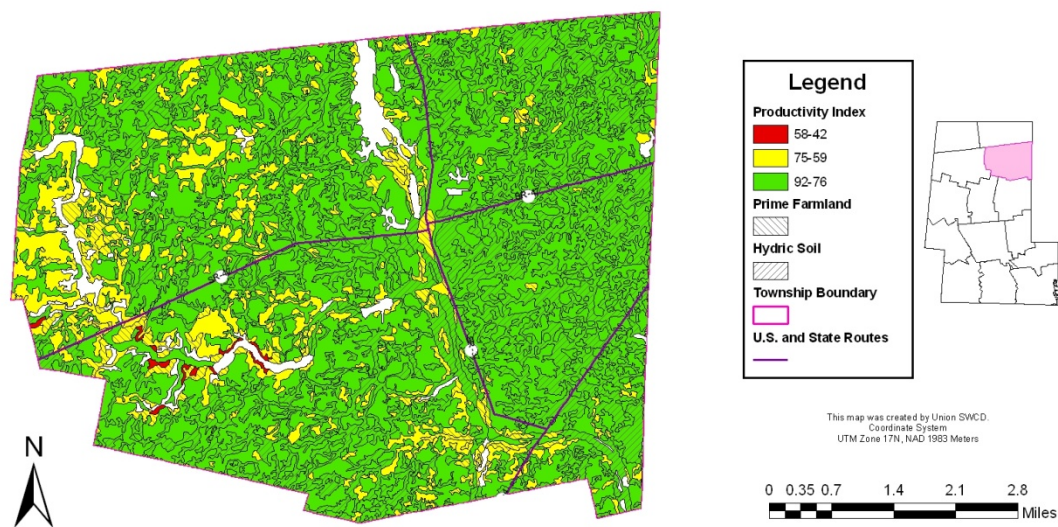
Cooperation should be encouraged between private developers and public entities for new developments. Utility grants and environmental loans may be packaged as partnering projects with public and private sector associations with responsibilities and risks being shared.

**5. Continue to utilize state grant and loan programs**

The rehabilitation and expansion of utility infrastructure projects can be funded through various grant and loan programs. There are various grants and loan programs available, with various match, interest, and terms available as options to the County. Property owner assessments may be used to fund infrastructure improvements when necessary.

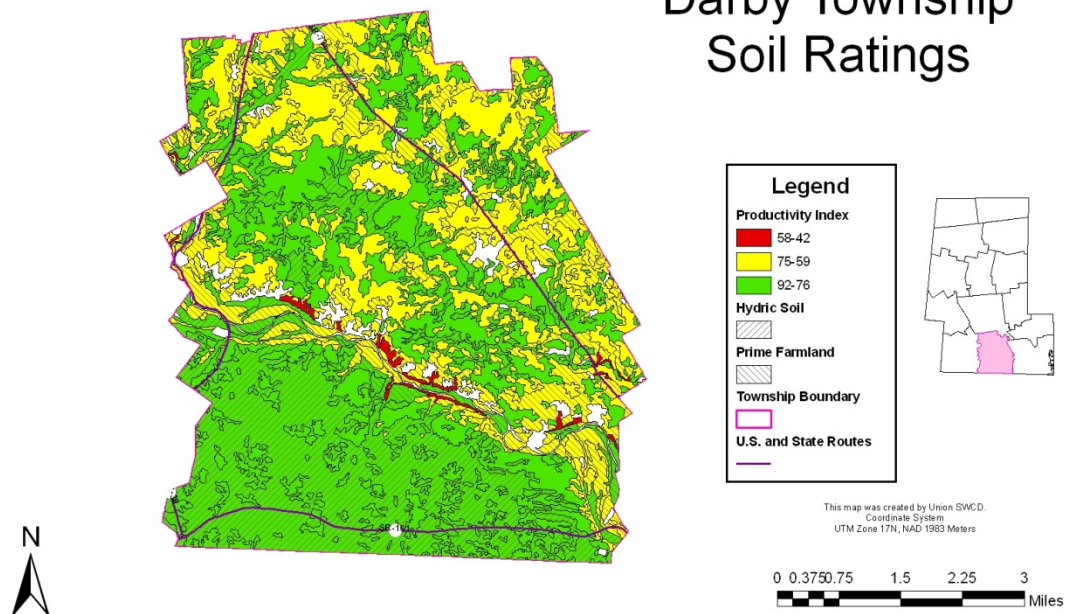
## APPENDIX A

## PRIME SOILS MAPS

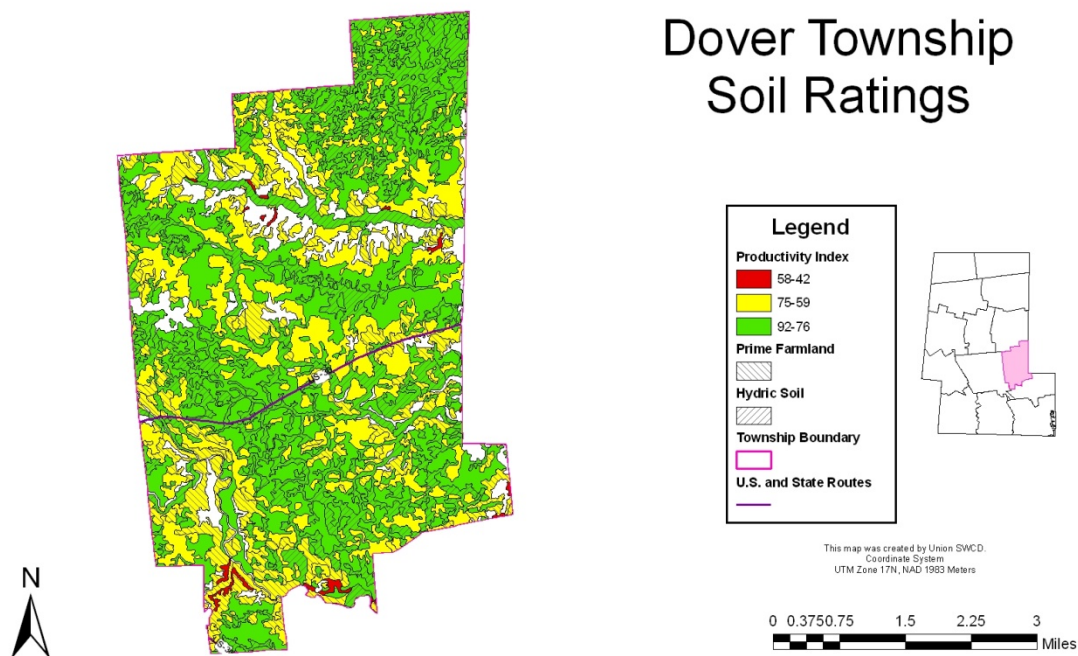
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Soil RatingsClaibourne Township  
Soil Ratings



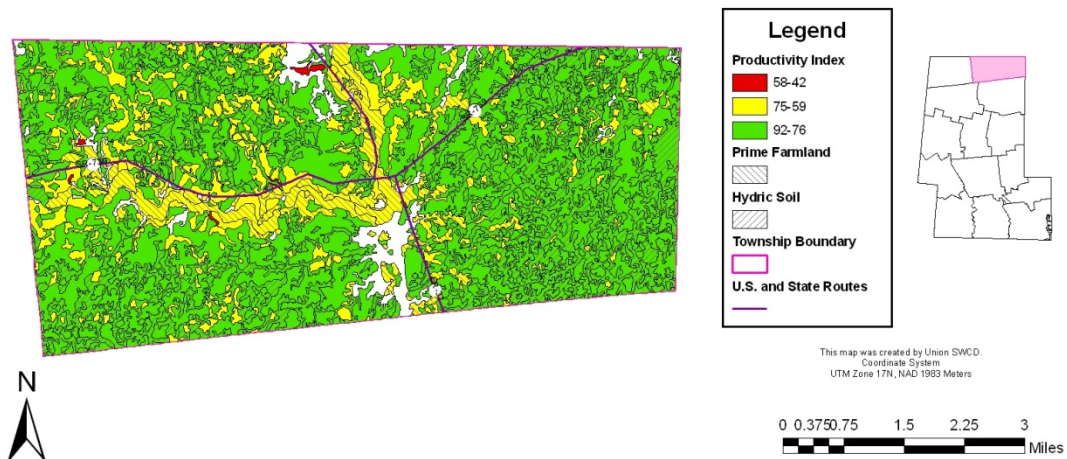
## Darby Township Soil Ratings



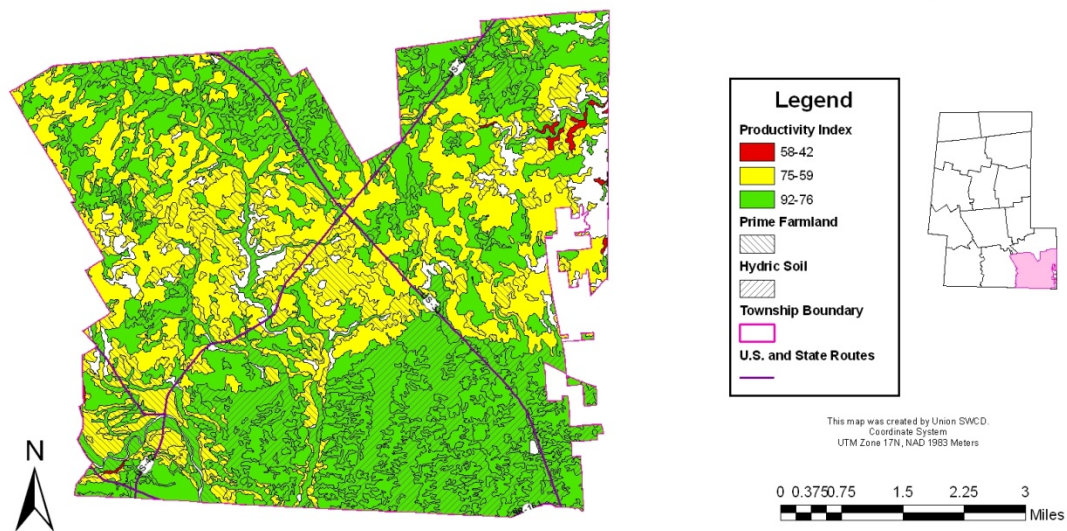
## Dover Township Soil Ratings



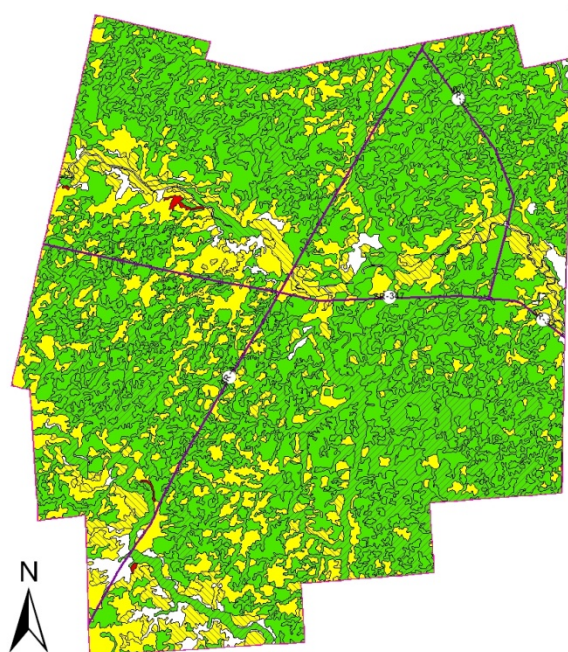
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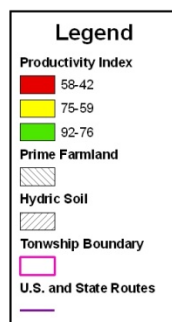
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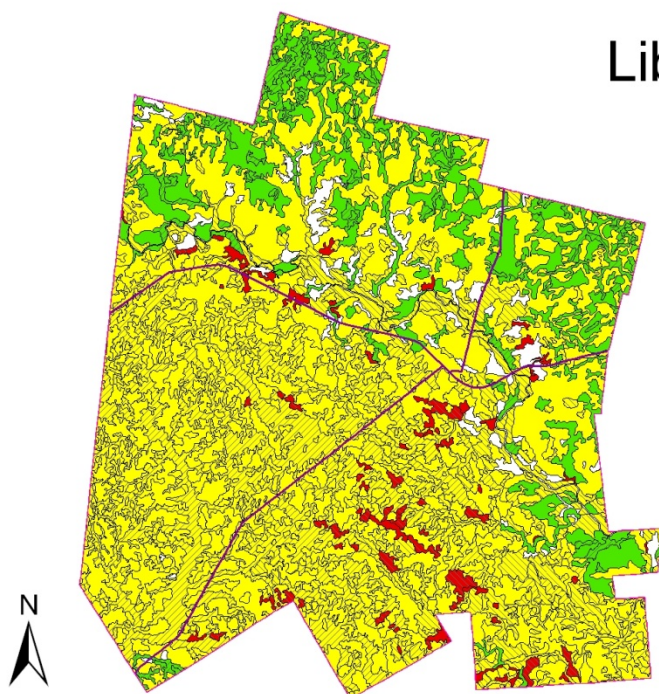
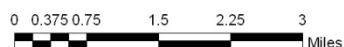




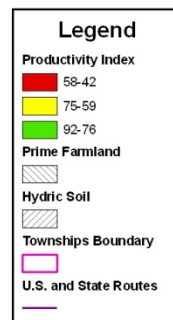
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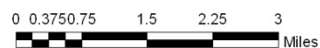
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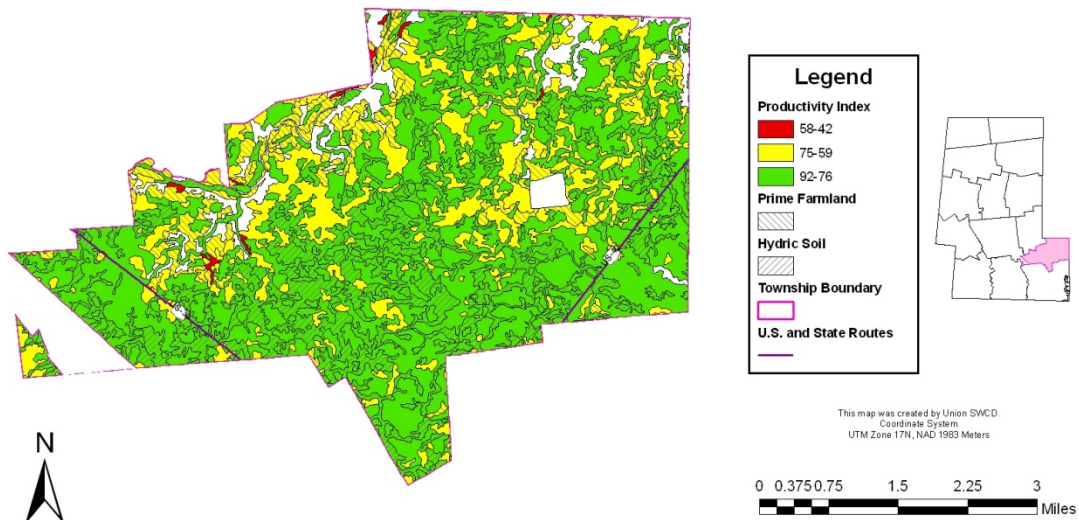
## Liberty Township Soil Ratings



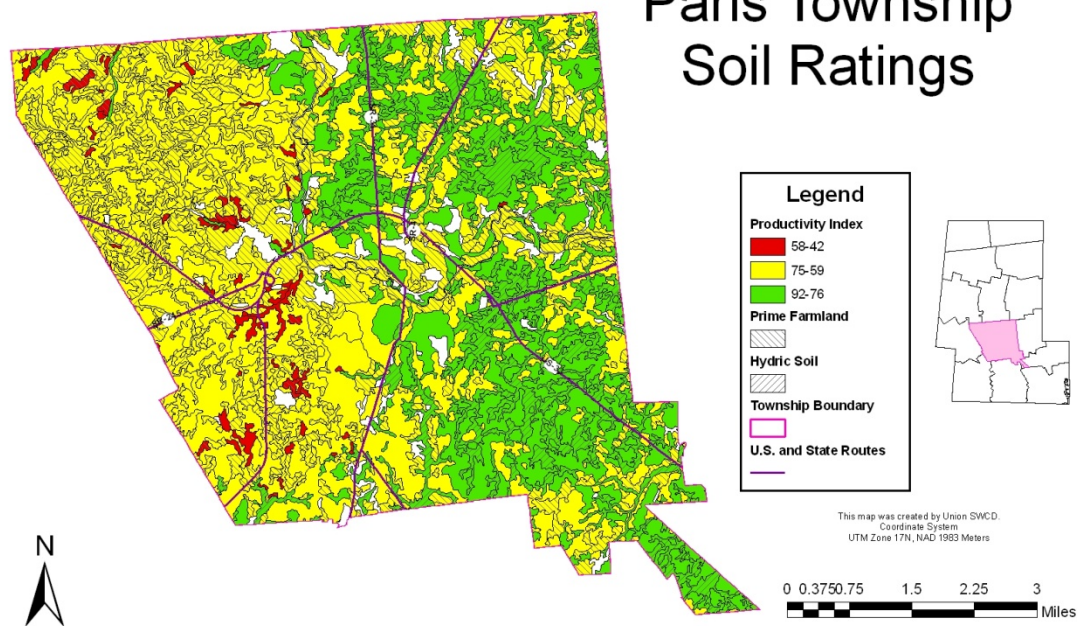
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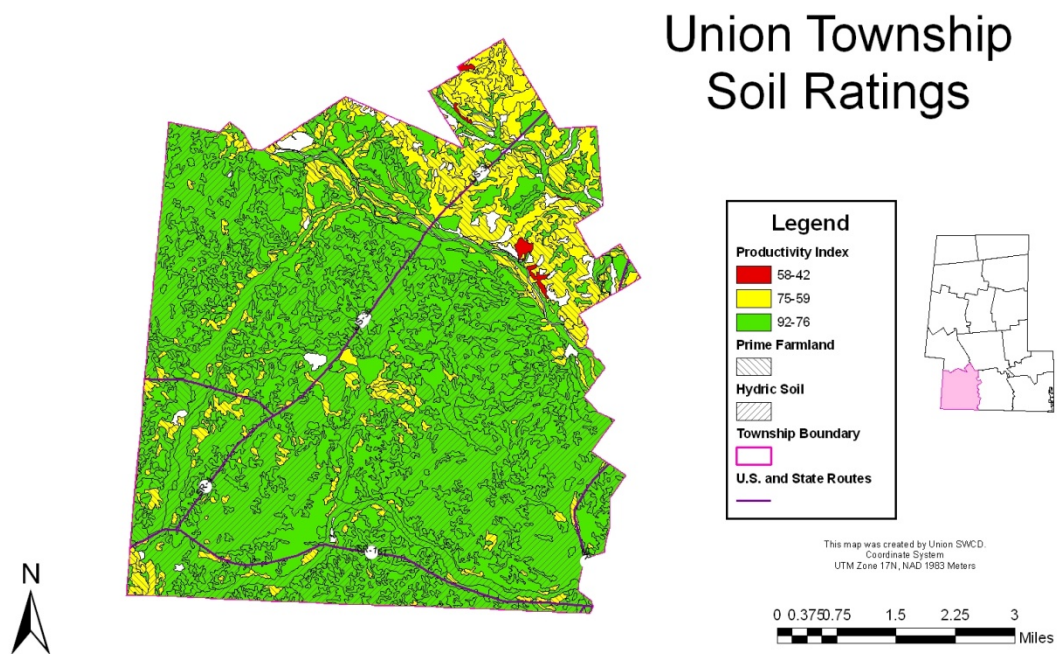
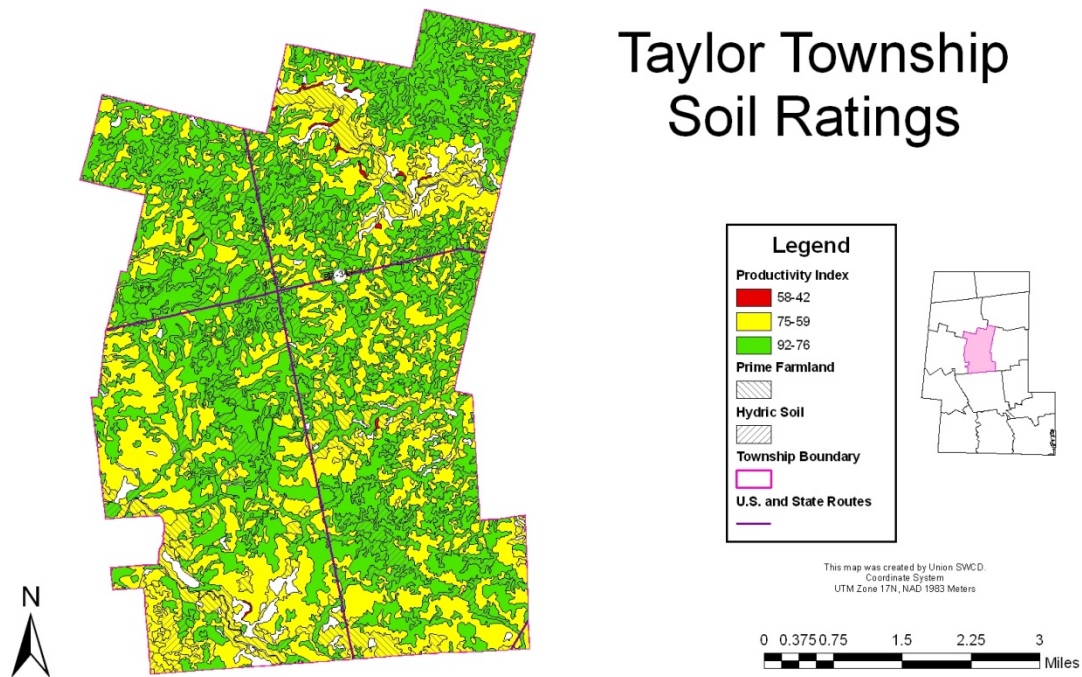
## Mill Creek Township Soil Ratings



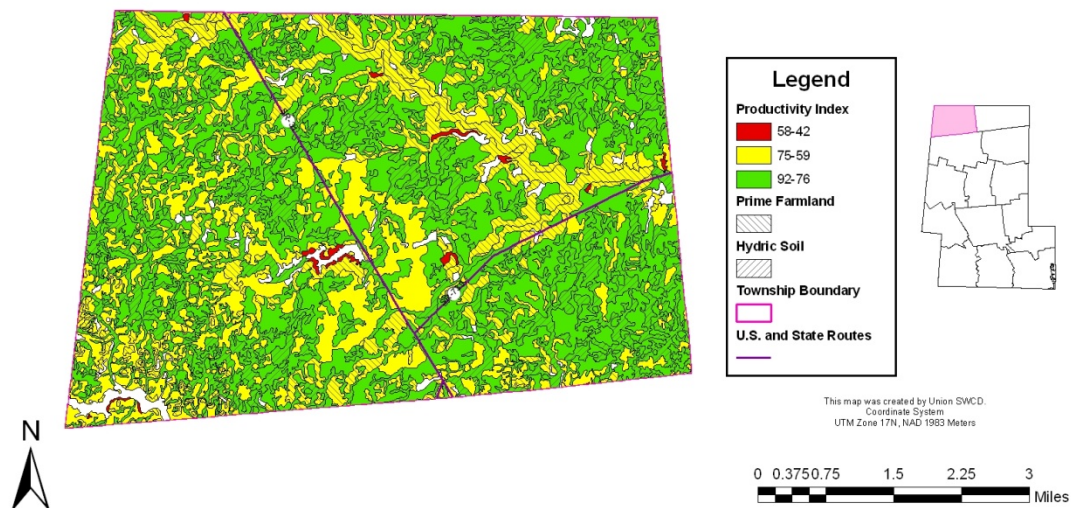
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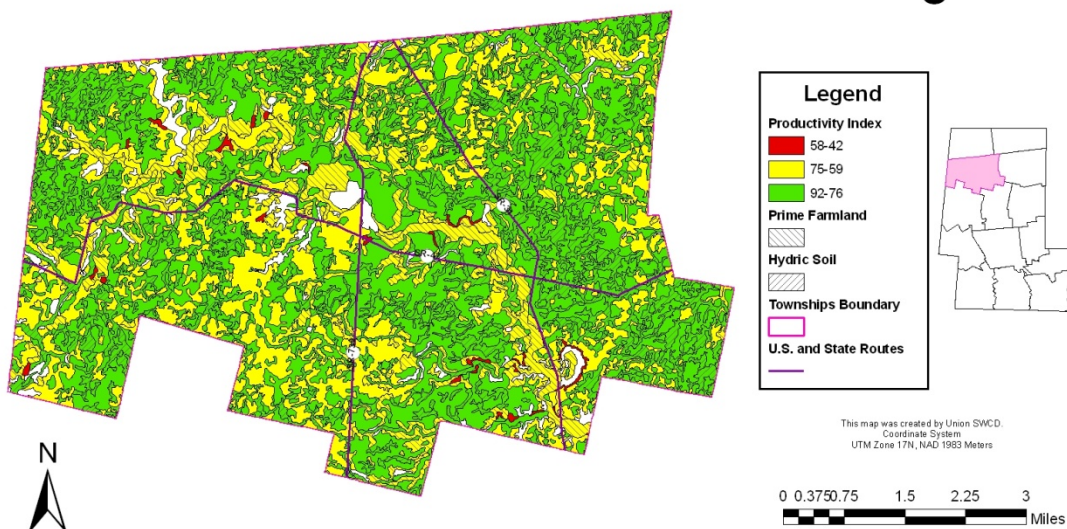




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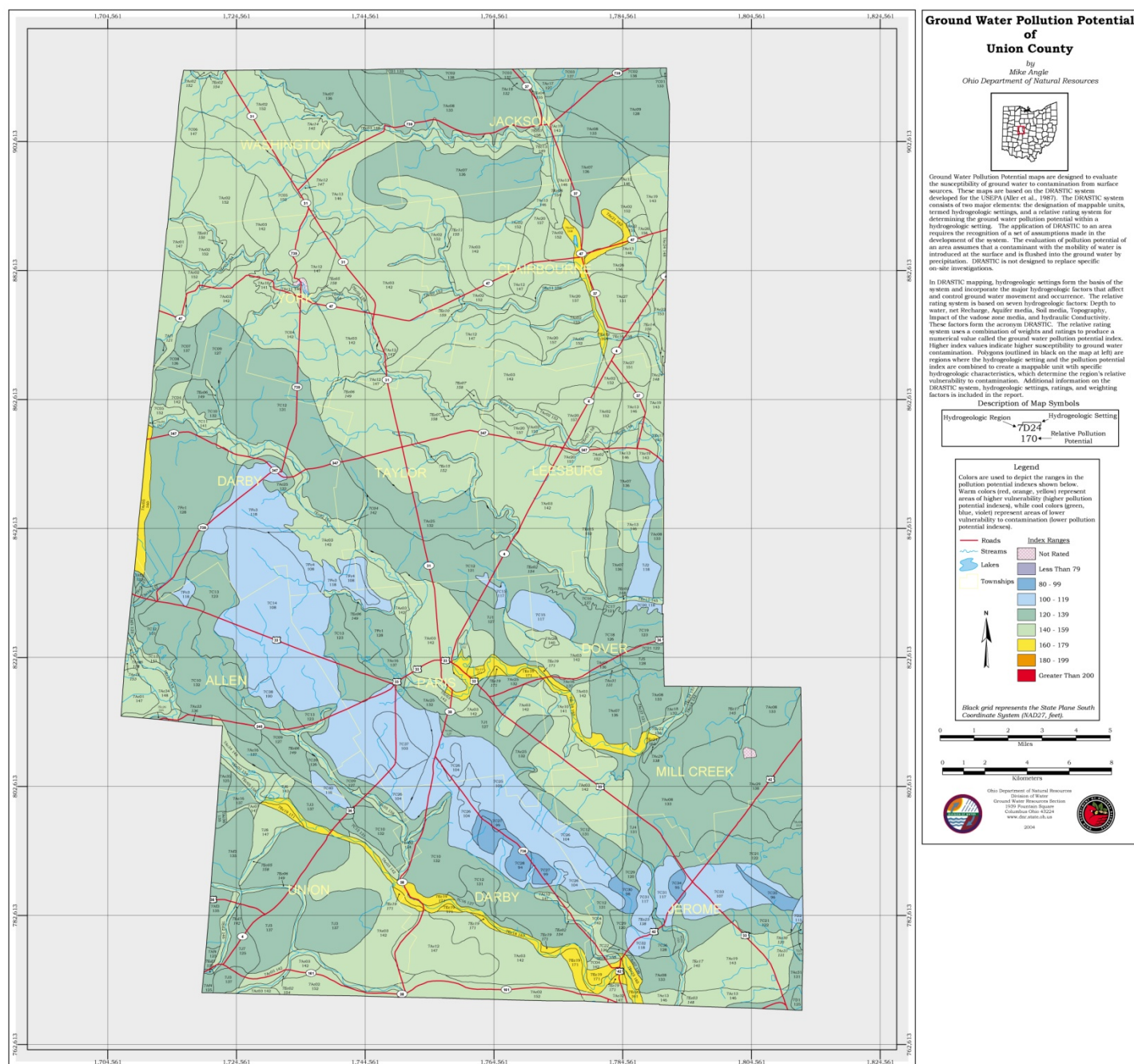


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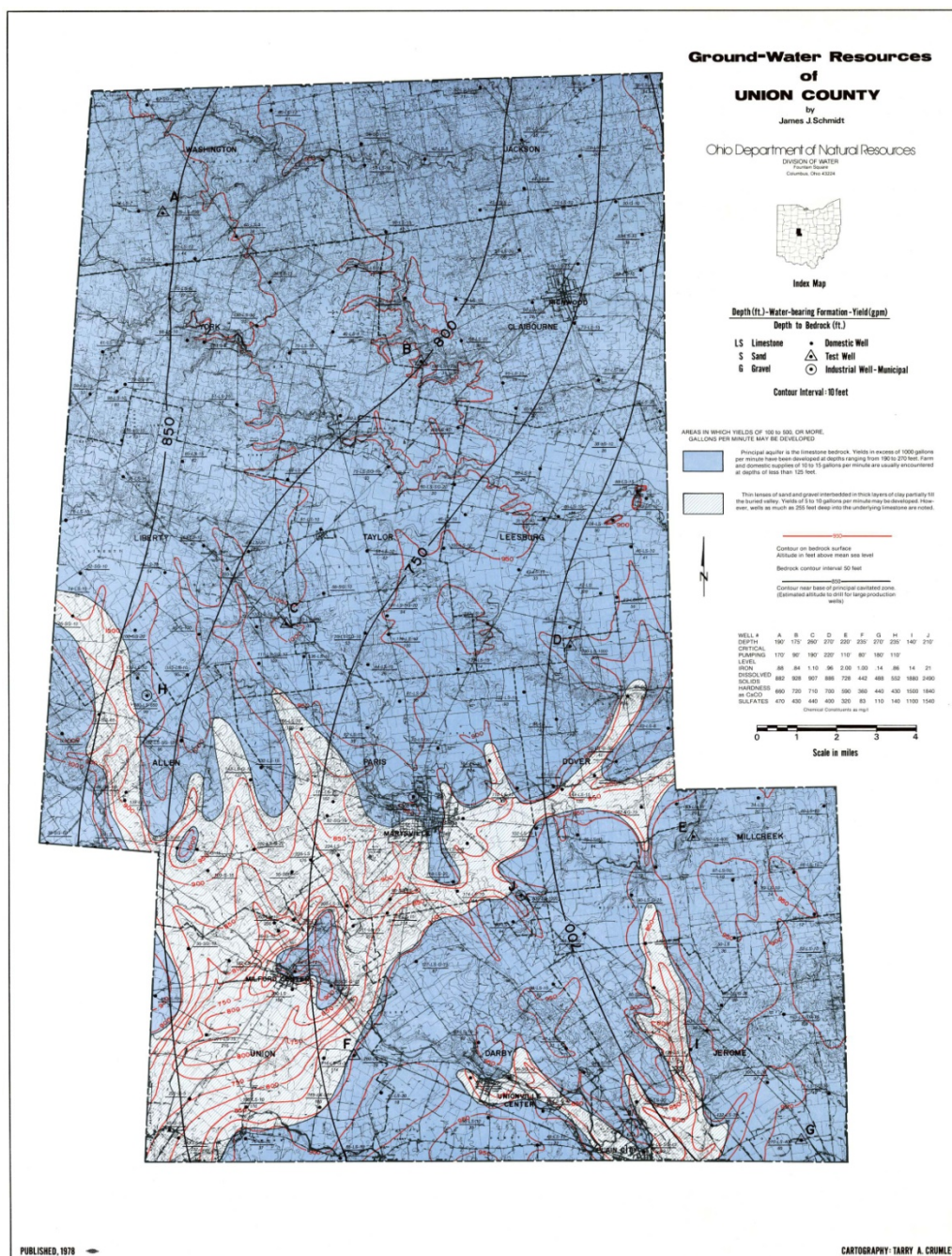
## APPENDIX B

GROUND WATER POLLUTION  
POTENTIAL MAP

Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources

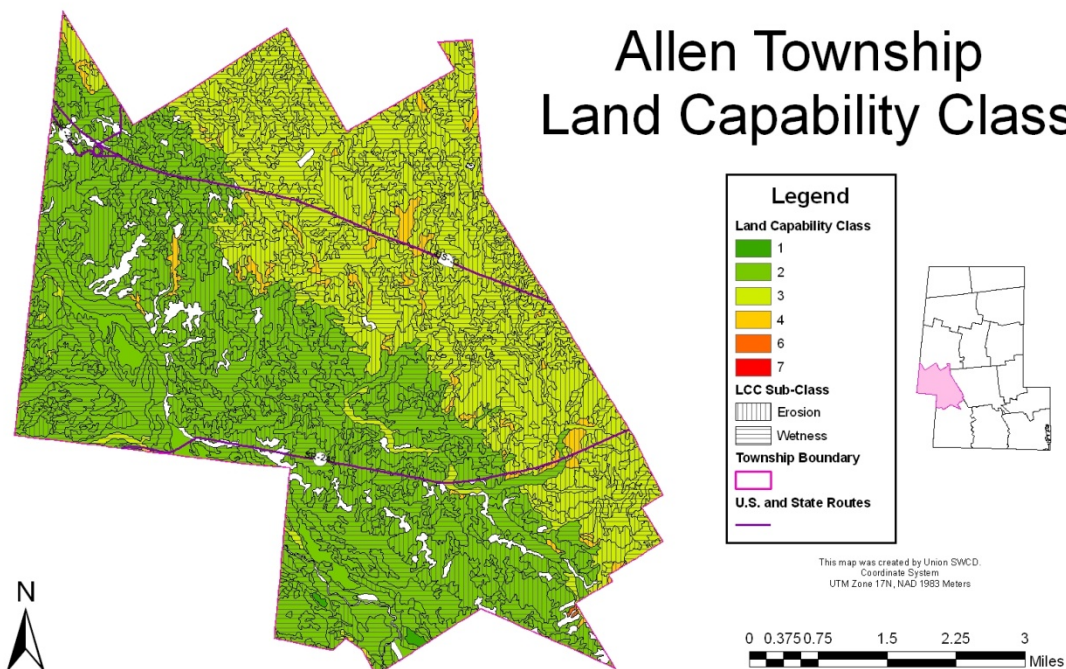
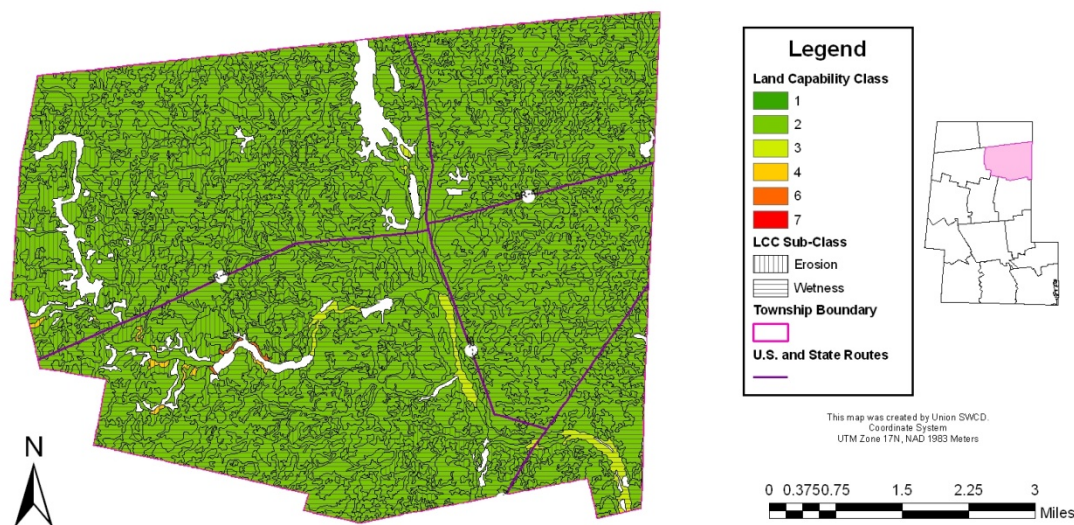


## APPENDIX C

GROUND WATER  
RESOURCES MAP

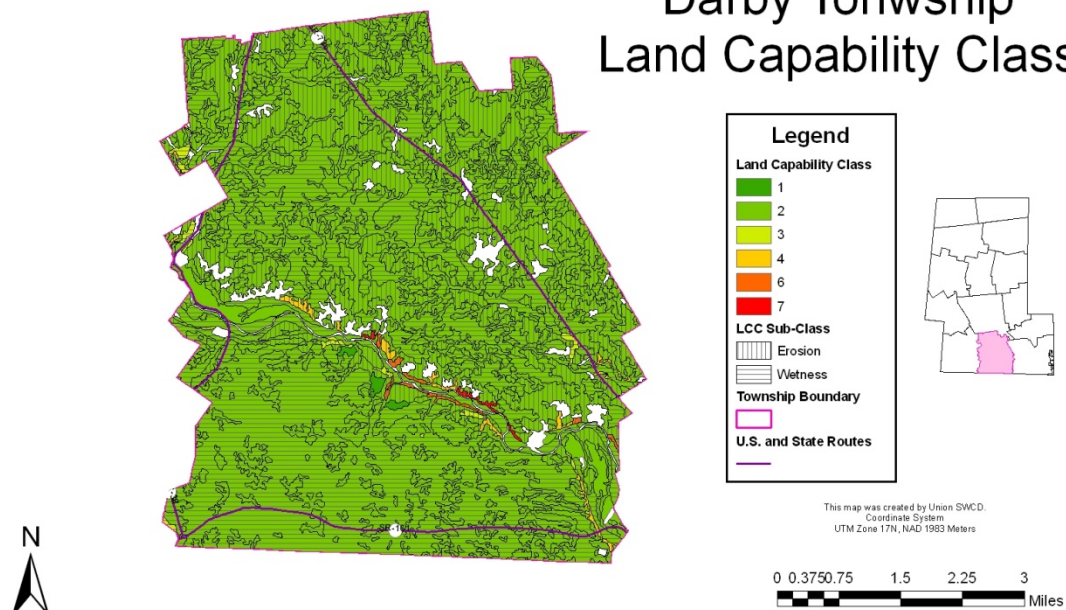
Source: Ohio Department of Natural Resources

## APPENDIX D

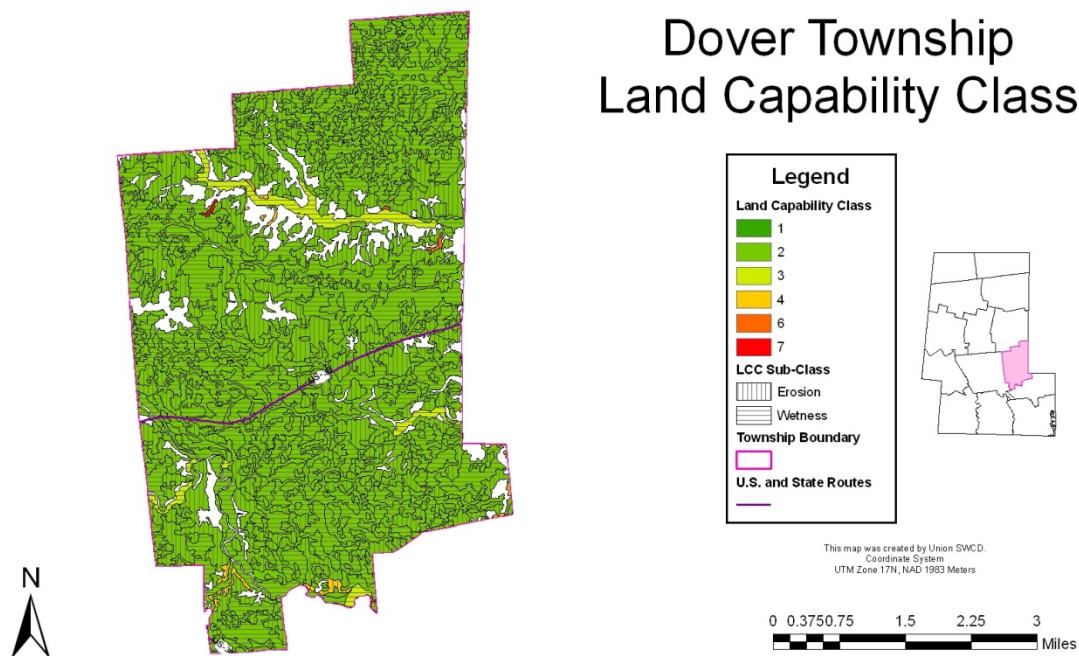
LAND CAPABILITY  
CLASS MAPSAllen Township  
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Land Capability Class



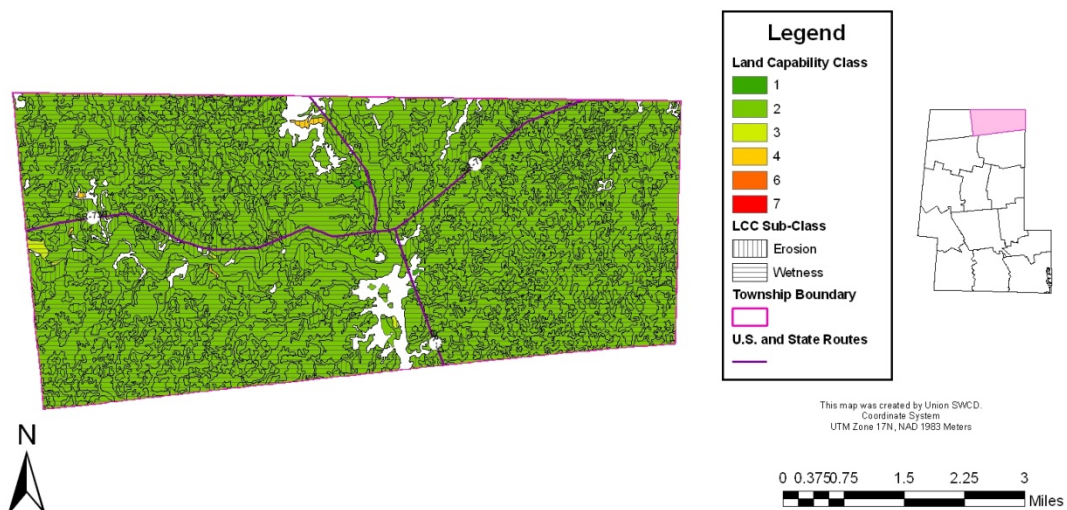
## Darby Township Land Capability Class



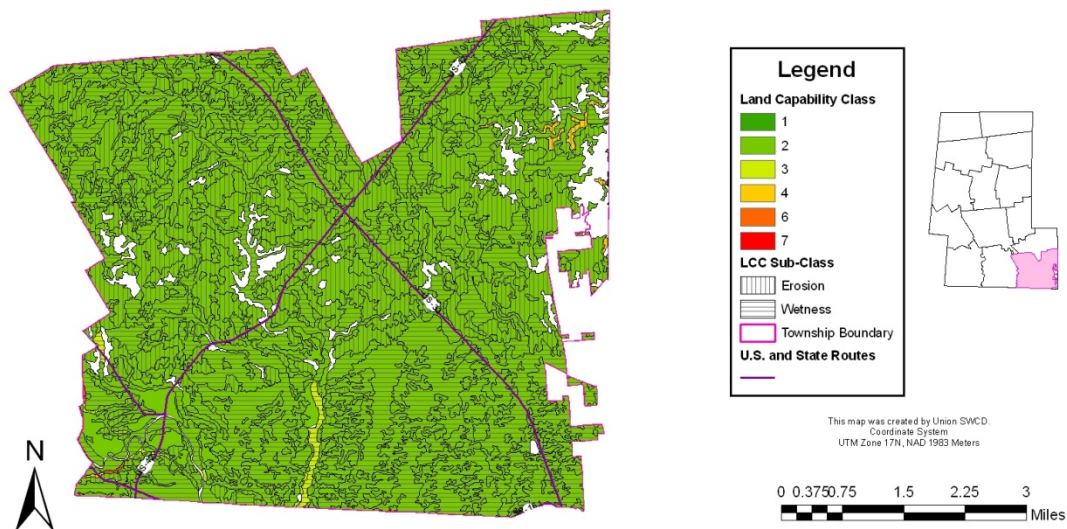
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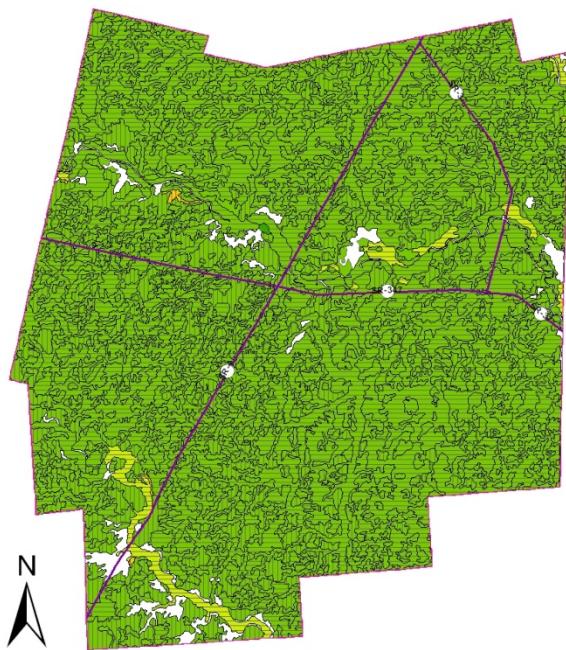
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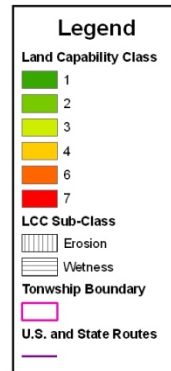
## Jerome Township Land Capability Class



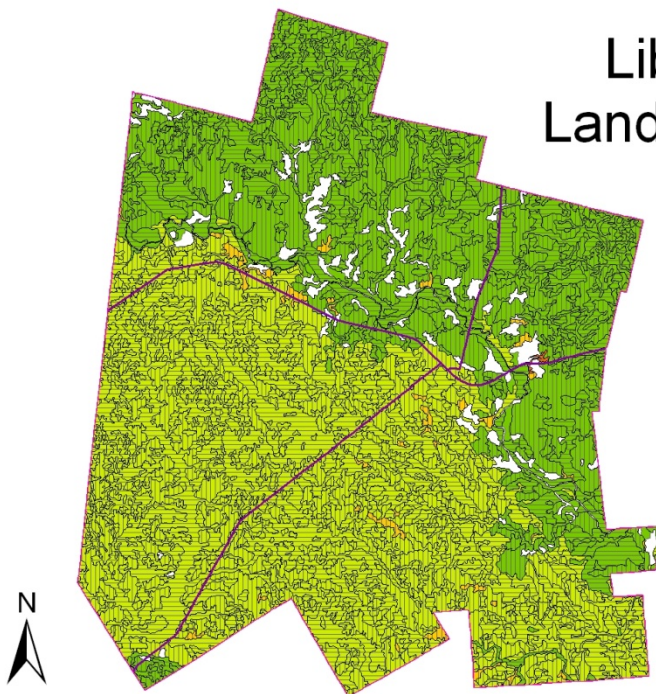
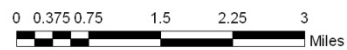




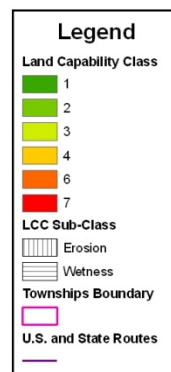
## Leesburg Township Land Capability Class



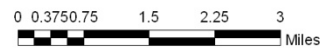
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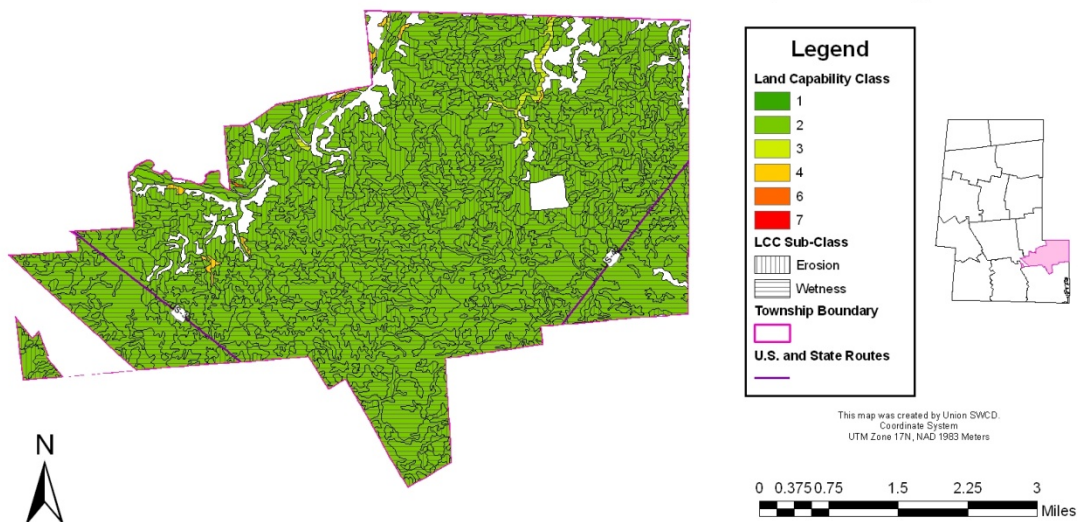
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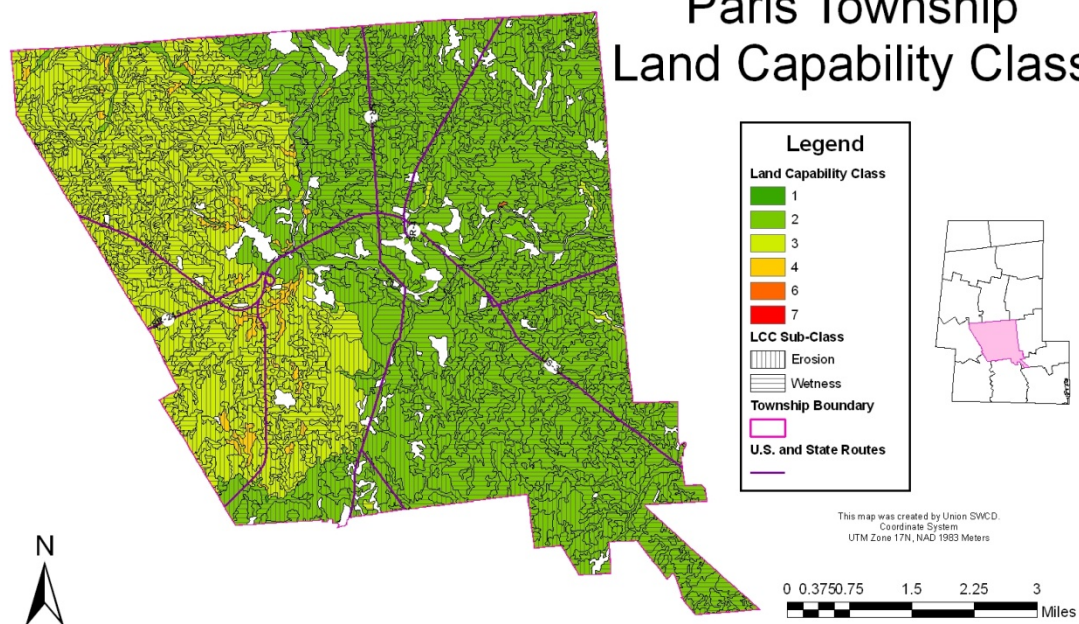
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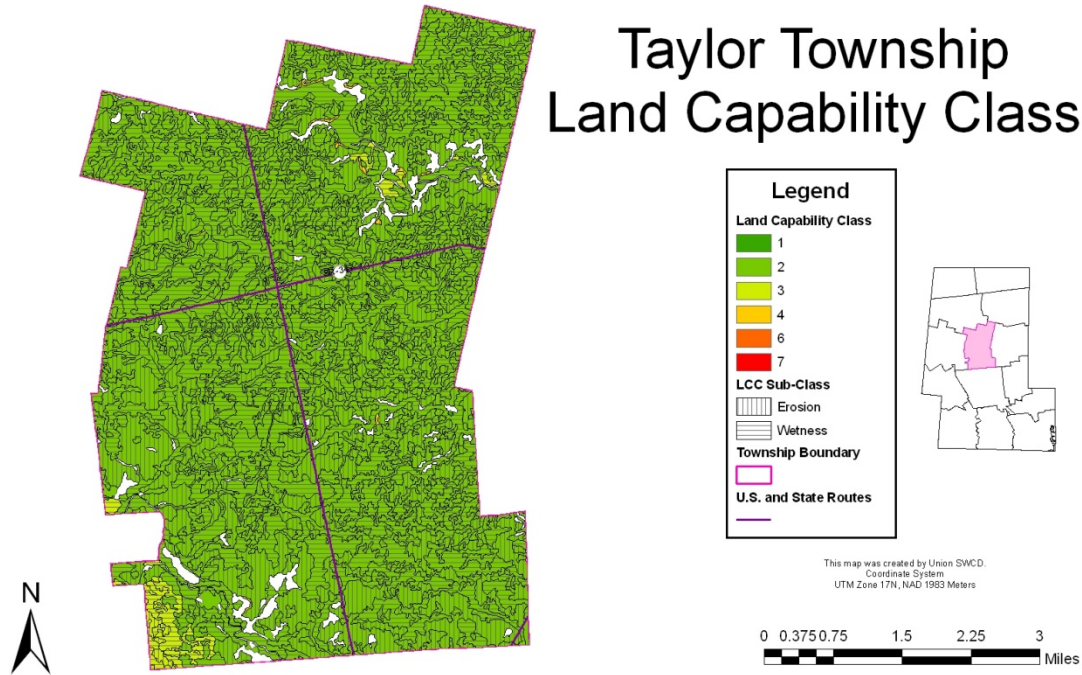


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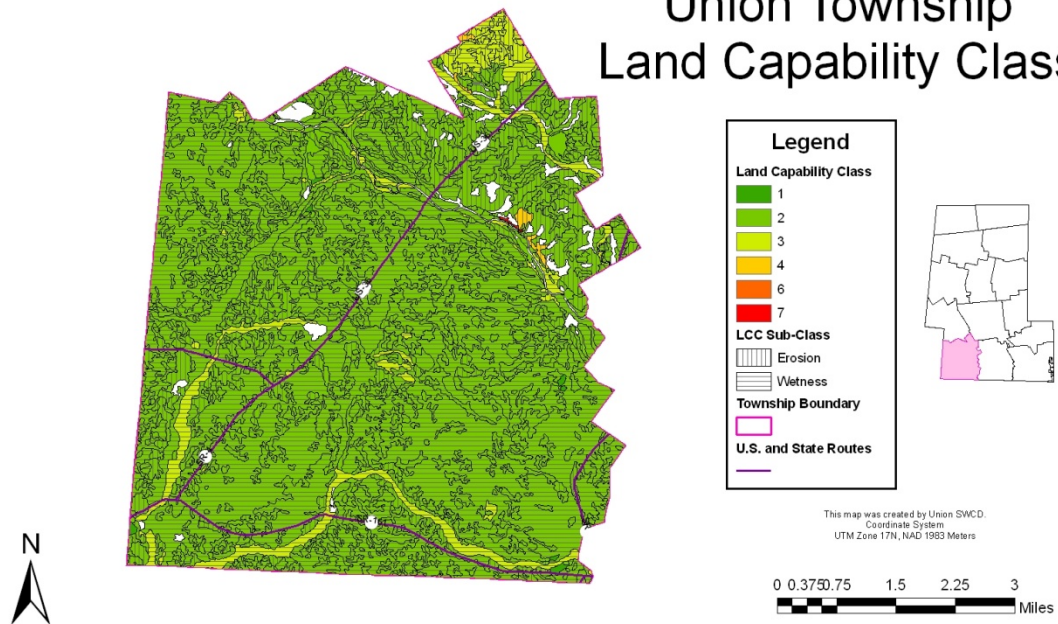




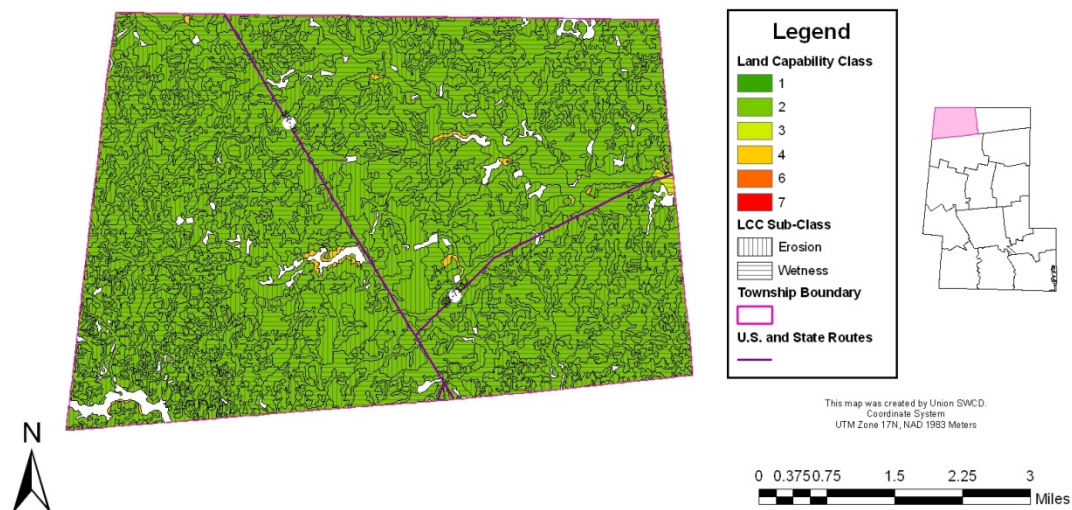
## Taylor Township Land Capability Class



## Union Township Land Capability Class



## Washington Township Land Capability Class



## York Township Land Capability Class

