

09-06-2022 - Final Version  
2022

2022

# Hocking County

## LAND USE PLAN

HOCKING COUNTY, OHIO

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Thank you to the steering committee members, stakeholders, community members, staff, and officials who invested their time and expertise in the creation of this Plan for the future of Hocking County.*

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# 01

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## Project Overview

# 01

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### ABOUT THE PLAN

In 2021, the Hocking County Community Improvement Corporation initiated a process to create a land use plan. This project identified key areas of focus for the county that would enable the area to achieve maximum economic and developmental potential driven by the growing tourism industry that plays such a large role in the county. With the insight of a steering committee made up of residents and elected officials, technical analysis of existing conditions in the area and a robust stakeholder engagement process were completed to aid the completion of the land use document.

### PROJECT APPROACH

Population in Hocking County have stayed relatively steady in the last 20 years, but tourism has tripled, with the county now receiving more than 7 million visits every year. Making up such a large role in their economy, Hocking County is now in a position to modernize their land use plan to better accommodate for and capitalize on the large tourism industry. An outdated comprehensive county plan was created in 2004, and though this document holds relevant and important information that is still useful when understanding the region as a whole today, because of the rapid change brought on by tourism, this new land use plan aims to provide Hocking County with an updated vision for the future.



#### PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

#### GUIDE ....

... the community in evaluating proposed public, private or joint projects.

#### INFORM ...

... current and prospective property owners and developers on desirable growth patterns.

#### MEASURE ...

... progress and effectiveness of projects in the county to ensure they strengthen the community as a whole

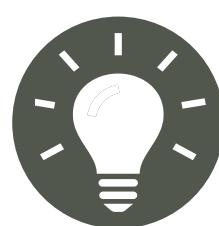
## PLANNING PROCESS

A customized five phase planning process was designed to complete the land use plan. The process was iterative, each stage built on and informed the next step. Each phase is listed and described below.



### Phase One:

During this phase the project kicked off, and preliminary research and analysis was conducted to provide the necessary base data to inform the planning process.



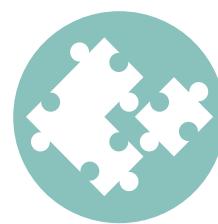
### Phase Two:

The second phase of the project included the evaluation of existing conditions and trends. This phase also included the first round of community engagement, the development of the plan framework, and multiple stakeholder work sessions.



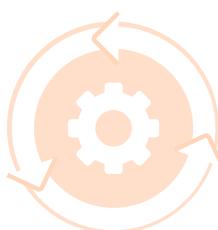
### Phase Three:

Phase three included creating the plan framework which would later inform overarching themes and specific plan pillars.



### Phase Four:

During phase four, the planning team and the steering committee created a series of plan objectives. A priority objective was selected for each plan pillar and designated for further exploration.



### Phase Five:

The final phase included the finalization of the plan.

## Chapter 1 | Project Overview

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# PLAN ELEMENTS

The Hocking County Land Use Plan is a holistic and informed blueprint for future growth and development. Many layers of input from quantitative and qualitative analyses were considered, and extensive community involvement was conducted to create a technical and community informed vision. The following describes these inputs and how they informed the content of the Plan.

### Existing Conditions

Existing conditions within the community were considered include current land use, demographics, parks and open space, mobility, development character, community vision, and infrastructure, among others. With an understanding of the existing conditions, the planning team and the Steering Committee worked to address issues and opportunities within the county to create the plan.

### Public Engagement

Throughout the planning process, the planning team facilitated public input sessions to gain insight into community values and aspirations for how and where the County should grow. These sessions revealed strategic insight on the issues and opportunities within the community, and preference for a desired growth strategy.

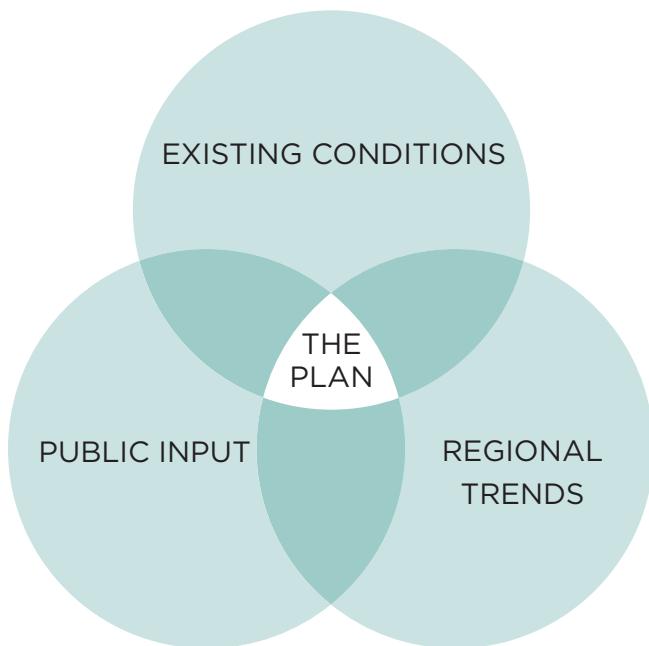
### Committee + Stakeholder Guidance

The planning team also facilitated discussions through steering committee and stakeholder meetings. Issues and opportunities made apparent during these discussions were used to validate findings from analyses and community engagement and build focus and direction for the plan recommendations.

These dedicated community members helped create the project framework and championed the plan on behalf of their community.

### Conditions + Best Practices + Regional Trends

The existing conditions of Hocking County's land use, demographics, topography, population and other characteristics were evaluated to build an understanding of where the county has been, where it is today, and where it is trending. This insight provided the foundation necessary to create a technically informed blueprint for the future. An examination of national trends also provided insight into what the county should be considering related to community preference as well as economic conditions and trends.



## HOW TO USE THIS PLAN?

The plan is intended to be used by a variety of audiences. The following are select groups that may most frequently utilize the plan:

- Citizens - residents, business owners, and developers use the plan to submit development proposals to the City.
- City Council - elected officials use the plan to guide policy decisions regarding land use, zoning, and development proposals.
- Planning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and other City Organizations and Boards - citizens appointed by City Council may use the plan to provide policy recommendations to City Council.
- City and County - use the plan to communicate with the public and development community on the priority initiatives for Hocking County.

Used effectively, the plan will make the process of new development and growth in Hocking County more efficient.

The Hocking County Land Use Plan is a living document. It will need to be reviewed annually and updated periodically. The County will be charged with overseeing the implementation of the plan and

coordinating the efforts of the parties identified as being responsible for its implementation.

As conditions change and various sections of the plan are implemented, the county may find additional projects and/or strategies with which to achieve the desired goals and objectives. A land use plan is a community's "blueprint" for the future.

It is the vision of what a community wants to become and a proposal for the steps needed to realize that vision. Specifically this plan achieves the following:

- Documents and illustrates what the community looks like today and what direction it wants to go in the future; it includes assessments of existing resources and issues, projections of future conditions and needs, and consideration of collective goals and desires.
- Translates the community's values into specific actions. It is a policy guide which not only addresses land use and infrastructure, but also includes important social, natural resource, and economic values of the community.
- Covers an approximate time frame of 10-20 years; it is assumed that shorter-term reviews will keep it current with the changing needs of the community.
- Integrates with other municipal documents and initiatives.

### CITY COUNCIL (elected by citizens)

Use the plan to guide policy decisions regarding land use, zoning, and development proposals.

### CITIZENS

(residents, business owners, developers)

Use the plan to submit development proposals to the City.

### PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

(citizens appointed by City Council)

Use the plan to provide policy recommendations to City Council.

### CITY AND COUNTY (Planning & Development Services)

Use the plan to communicate with the public and development community on the priority initiatives for Hocking County.



02

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Community Impressions

# 02

## COMMUNITY IMPRESSIONS

### OVERVIEW

This section outlines the key data, metrics, and perspectives that are the foundation of the plan. This includes data and analysis on existing conditions and key findings from the public engagement process. Collectively, these elements served as the pillars from which the plan vision and recommendations were developed. Through this approach, the plan is both technically and intuitively informed.



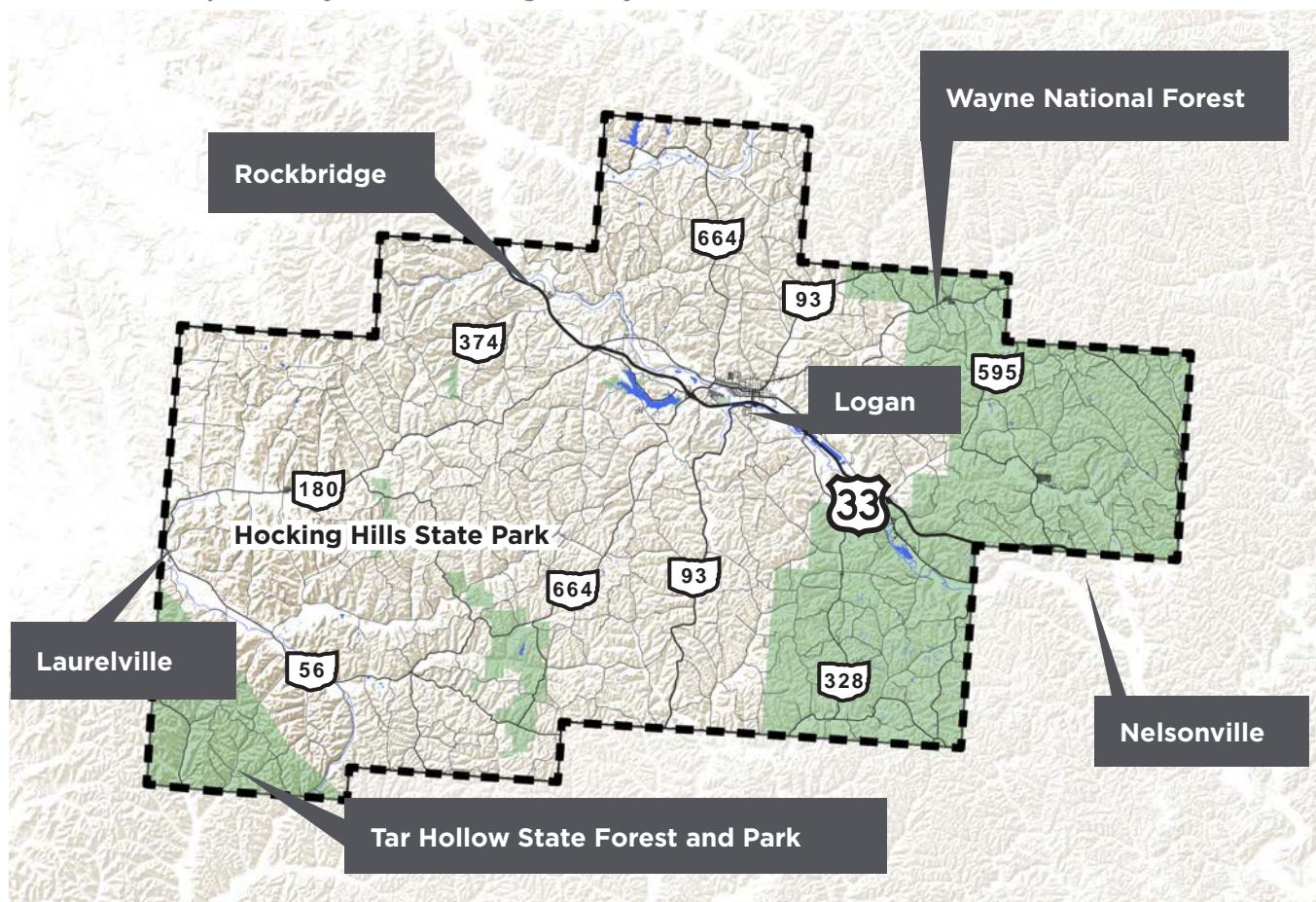
*Hocking County is known for its sweeping hills and pristine views. Within the plan are key recommendations to protect these natural assets.*

## PROJECT STUDY AREA

Located in southeastern Ohio, Hocking County is roughly 421 square miles of rolling hills and small towns. The study area is the county boundary which includes the City of Logan, the Villages of Butchel, Murray City, and Laurelvile, spread across eleven townships. The main vehicular route through the county is US 33 that runs east-west through the northern portion of the county. The Hocking River flows through the county from northwest to southeast and drains roughly half of the county. Other notable waterways include Salt Creek, Racoon Creek, and the Monday Creek watershed.

Hocking County is also home to the Hocking Hills scenic region, which includes portions of the Wayne National Forrest, Tar Hollow State Forest and Park, and the Hocking Hills State Park. There are also many other metro parks, nature preserves, and state parks located in the study area.

*FIGURE 1-1: Project Study Area - Hocking County, Ohio*



## Chapter 2 | Community Impressions

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### COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

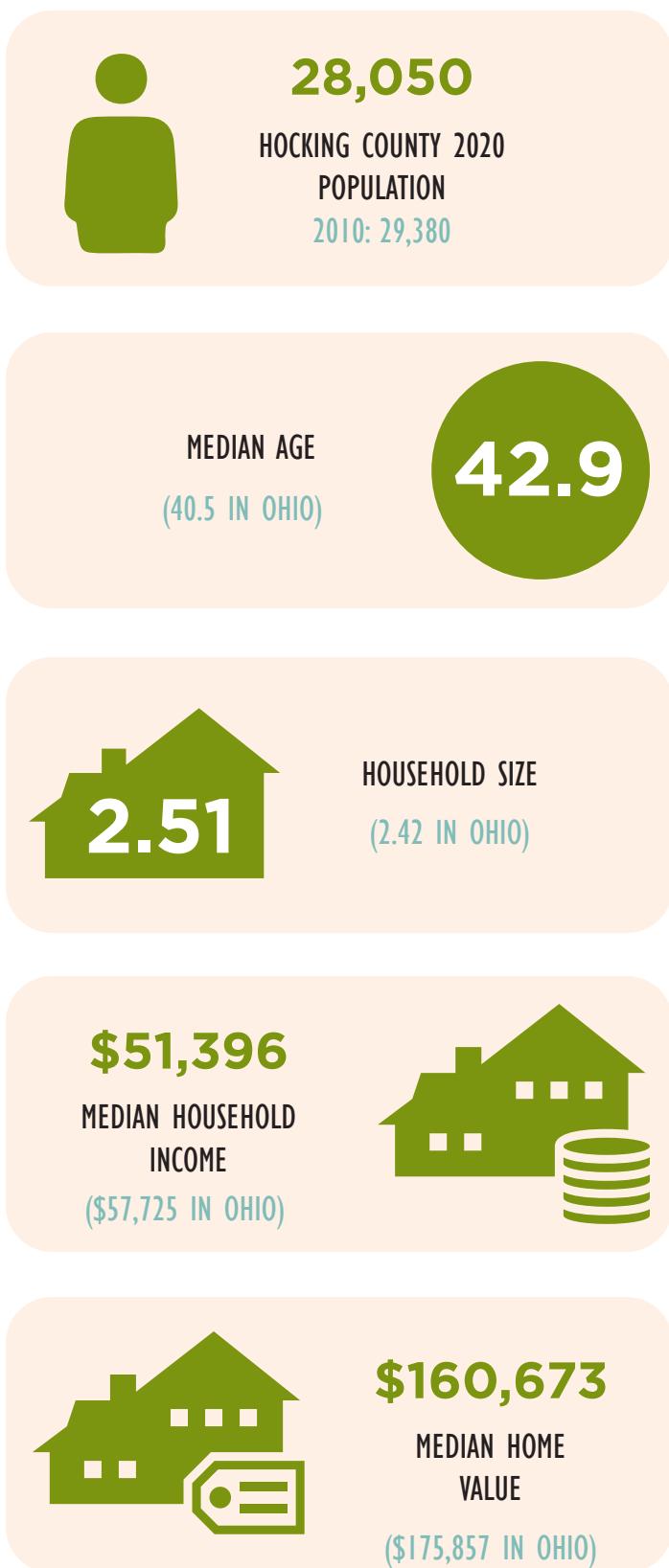
Hocking County, the southernmost (and least populated) county in the Columbus Metropolitan Statistical Area, is home to sweeping hills, world renowned parks, and tourism destinations. Short term rentals and cabins in and around pristine parks, along with water and adventure activities throughout the hills, draw in millions of visitors each year.

Hocking County, as of the 2020 census, has a population of 28,050, which has decreased roughly 4.5% since 2010. The county is predominantly rural, with the most populated city being Logan, with a population of approximately 7,300 residents. In relation to Ohio averages, both the household size and median age are slightly above average.

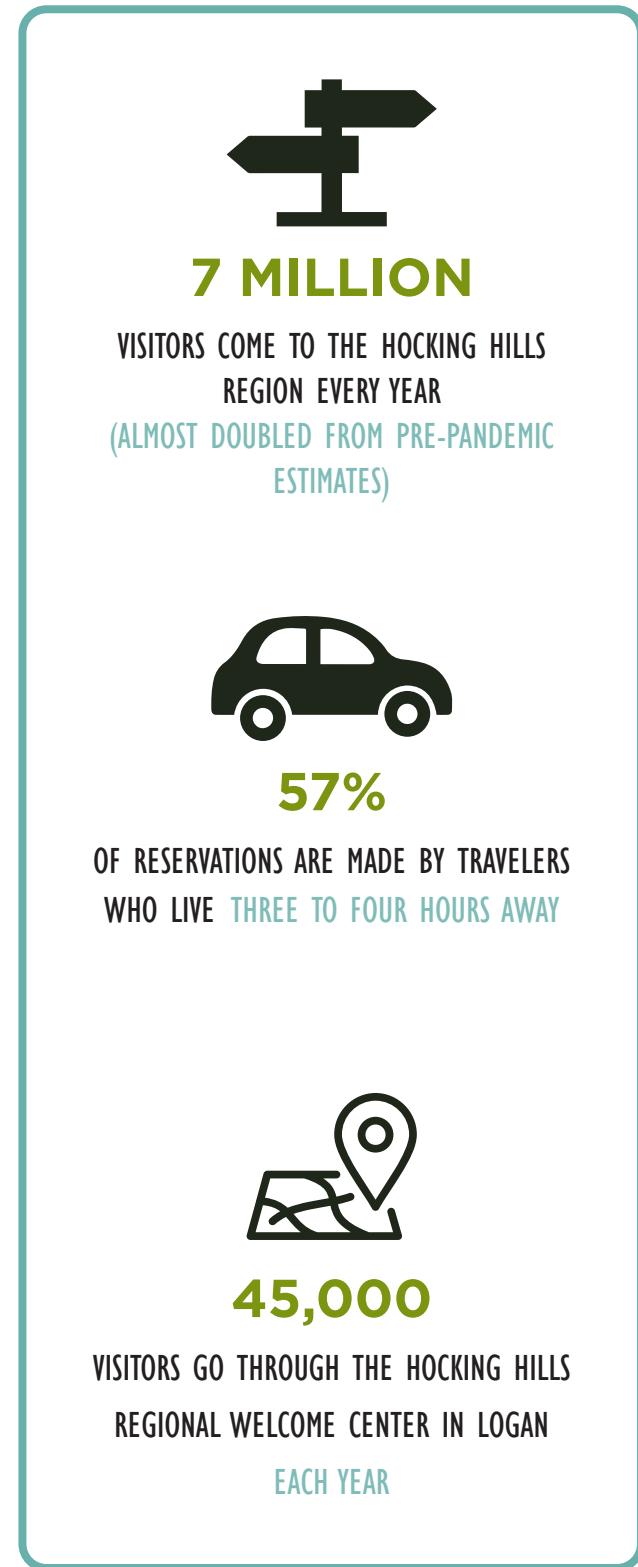
The median home value is on average \$15,000 lower in Hocking County than it is in the rest of the state. Additionally, the median household income in Hocking County is \$6,000 less than the State of Ohio. The largest employment sectors in Hocking County are manufacturing, service industries such as health care and communications, with sales jobs and government positions being other large sectors. The largest economic contributor in the county is tourism - over 7 million tourists are visiting Hocking County every year, with close to 50,000 visitors going through the local welcome center each year.



*The 400 acres of Lake Logan State Park are open to fishing, boating, and swimming and is another unique draw to the area.*



## TOURISM STATISTICS



## Chapter 2 | Community Impressions

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### EXISTING LAND USE

The existing land use typologies and pattern in the county are the baseline by which future recommendations are made. It provides a clear understanding of how land is currently being used, as well as how historical growth patterns have evolved over time.

Primarily, natural / conservation uses dominate the study area. Residential uses are spread throughout these natural areas, while agricultural uses are located in the western and less topographically challenged portions of the county. Commercial and multi-use areas are located along the US-33 corridor or within Logan city limits. In addition there are a number of state parks that are located in the southwest portion of the county.



*Agricultural land and rural homes make up a large portion of Hocking County's protected landscape.*

### AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRIPS

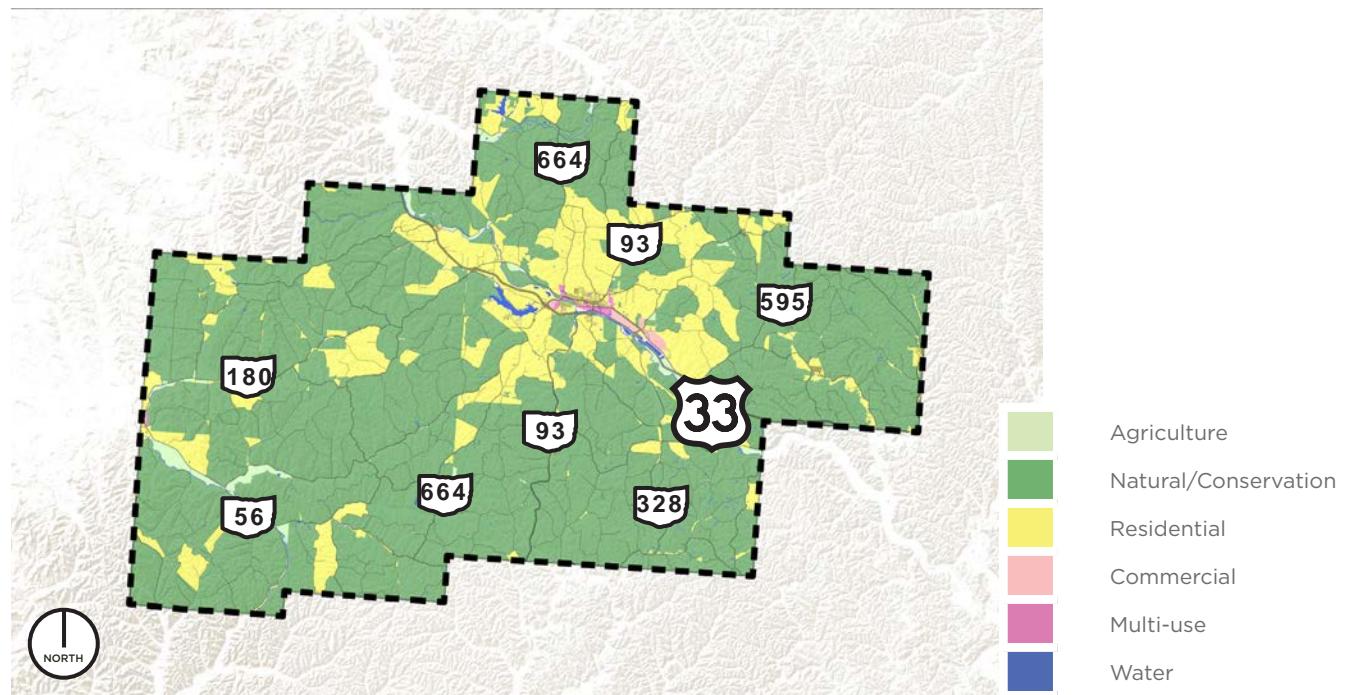
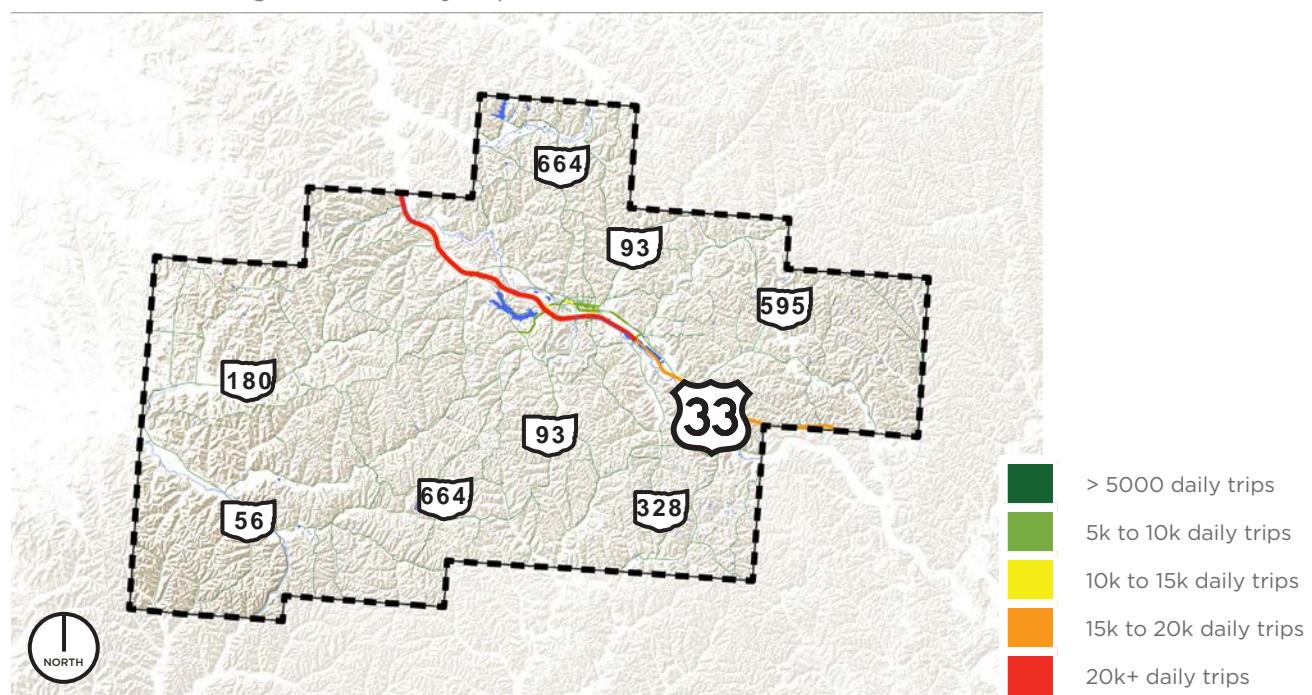
While Hocking County only has one primary arterial route, there are several other well-traveled corridors in the county. Traffic volumes are measured in terms of average vehicles per day or Average Daily Traffic (ADT). ADT varies considerably based on roadway context and design.

The US-33 Corridor carries over 20 thousand vehicles per day, while downtown routes within the City of Logan carry between 10 and 15 thousand vehicles per day, and routes carrying visitor traffic to the regional parks on average around 10 thousand vehicles per day. The remainder of the county roads typically carry less than 5 thousand vehicles. It is important to note that during peak tourism season, these numbers far exceed yearly averages and traffic becomes more challenging.

The US 33 corridor is the primary economic engine in the county and is what connects the county to job sites and centers in the region. It is also the main corridor which serves daily trips, as well as visitors / tourism in the region. As the area continues to grow, the corridor is creating conflict points where once primarily north south traffic movements are conflicted with east west at grade crossings, as well as the movement of pedestrians in the county.



*US-33 runs from northern Indiana, through Hocking County, to eastern Virginia.*

*FIGURE 1-2: Existing Land Use**FIGURE 1-3: Average Annual Daily Trips*

## Chapter 2 | Community Impressions

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### PARKS AND RECREATION

The Hocking Hills scenic region is home to over 20 parks, ranging from national forests to various state and locally designated parks. Hocking County is visited by millions of tourist each year (3 million annually pre-pandemic, roughly 7 million estimated post-pandemic, by comparison Cedar Point had approximately 12 million visitors in 2021 and Put-in-Bay had around 1 million). The region, known primarily for hiking, also boasts activities such as mountain biking, ATVirg, rock climbing, rappelling, horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, disc golf, archery, bird watching, shopping, and other forms of eco-adventure recreation opportunities. Over 10,000 acres of recreation is offered in Hocking County, which keeps nature lovers coming back year after year.

While tourism has presented significant economic opportunity, it comes with challenges. The county resources for life and safety services are not geared to accommodate this peak in population and local revenue sources can't keep pace or serve the peak demand adequately. This creates a funding challenges to 'right size' operations to serve peak population periods.

### SLOPE ANALYSIS

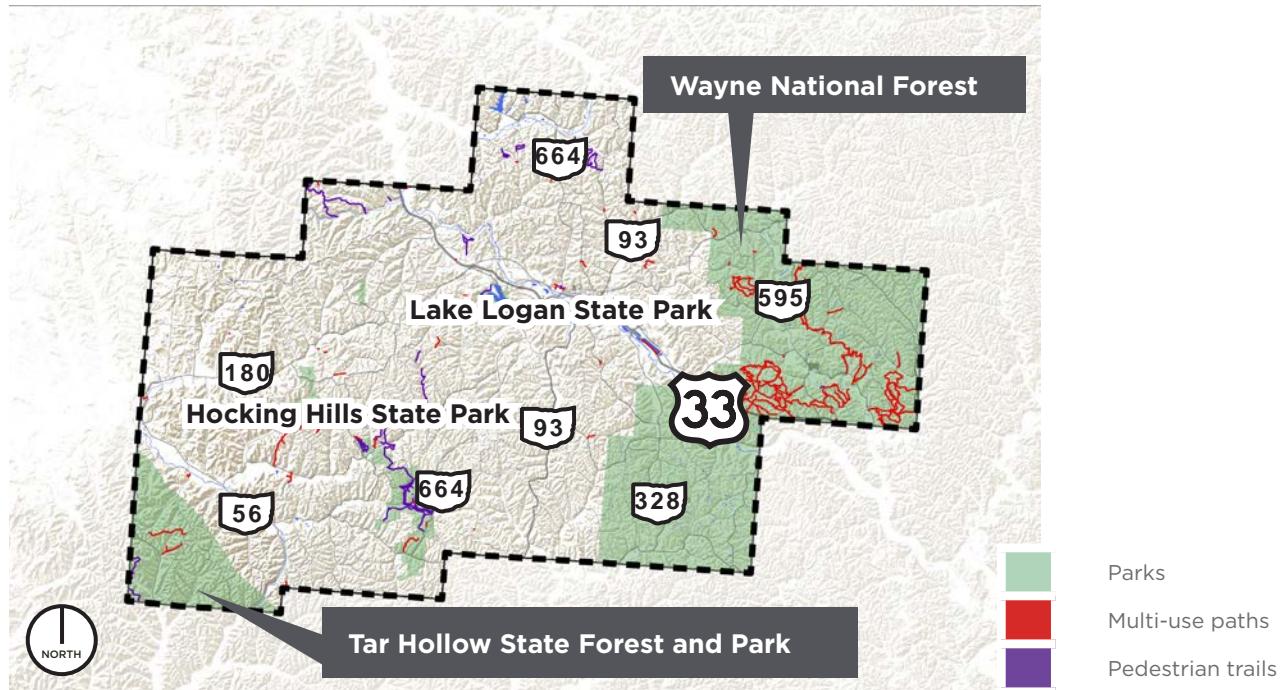
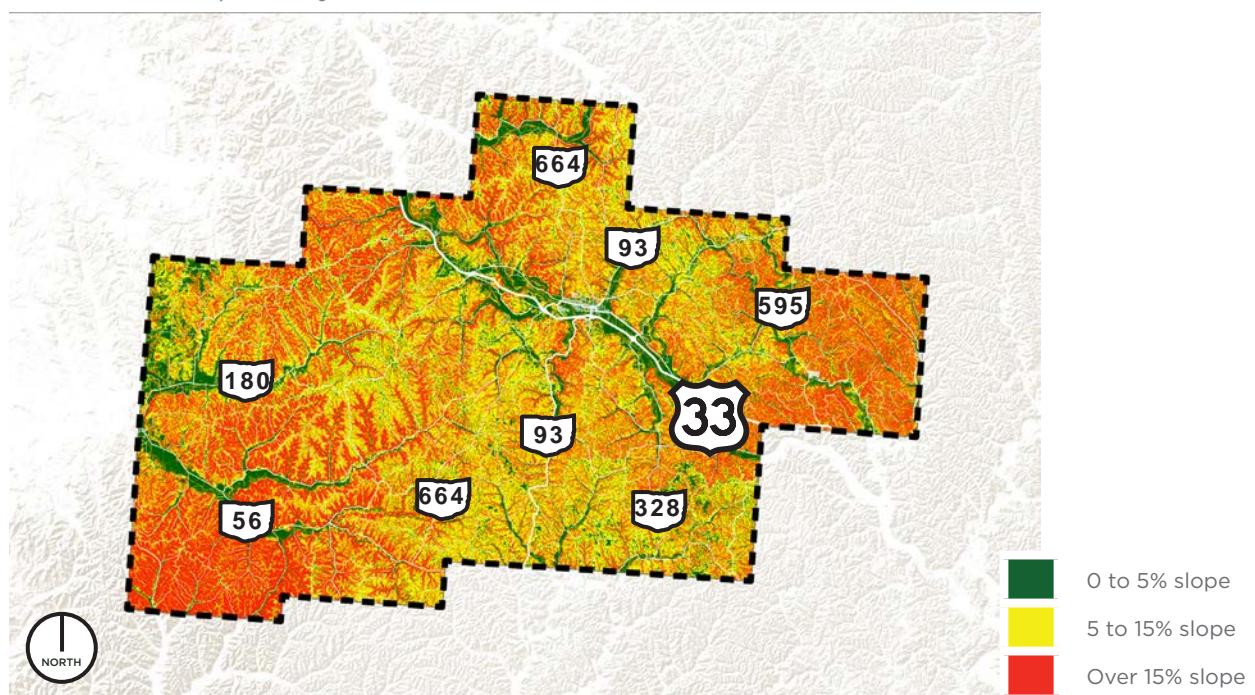
Understanding the physical topography of the study area is important in the development of the future land use plan for the county. Topography, specifically steep slopes, not only present difficult development challenges, but they also increase the likelihood of structural instability while simultaneously taking away viewsheds from the region. Though much land with minimal slope in the county is short supply, there are some areas along the US-33 corridor and on the western portion of the county where the slope is less than 5%. These areas are currently either developed or used for agricultural land. Due to the nature of the rolling hills, much of Hocking County is over 5% slope, with close to half of the county being over 15% slope. As Hocking County continues to develop, protecting steep slopes from development and promoting preservation of these areas needs to be considered to protect viewsheds and mitigate erosion, among other environmental impacts.



*It is estimated that over half of the Hocking Hills State Park visitors travel over 3 hours to enjoy the renowned park.*



*Hillside protection ordinances are tools that limit the amount of disturbance on steep slopes to protect the views and natural resources on slopes greater than 10 - 15 percent.*

*FIGURE 1-5: Parks and Recreation**FIGURE 1-4: Slope Analysis*

## Chapter 2 | Community Impressions

### FLOOD ZONES

The flood zones in Hocking County are directly shaped by the complex terrain and topography. Flood zones are indicated in a community's flood map (see Figure 1-6). Each flood zone describes the flood risk for a particular area, and those flood zones are used to determine insurance requirements and costs.

As part of this study, these areas were examined and considered relating to the overall land use plan for the county. It is important for these areas to gain some element of protection from development. By implementing a stream corridor protection ordinance, the riparian areas in the county can be protected from development encroaching, thereby reducing impacts from erosion and flooding and protecting important natural areas for migration and habitat. These protections would benefit the ecological and economic conditions in the county.

*Below: Hocking County is home to many tributaries and waterways that are unique and important assets to the natural world and tourist economy.*



*Smaller waterways such as Salt Creek may not be in the floodway, but still exist in the 100-year floodplain.*

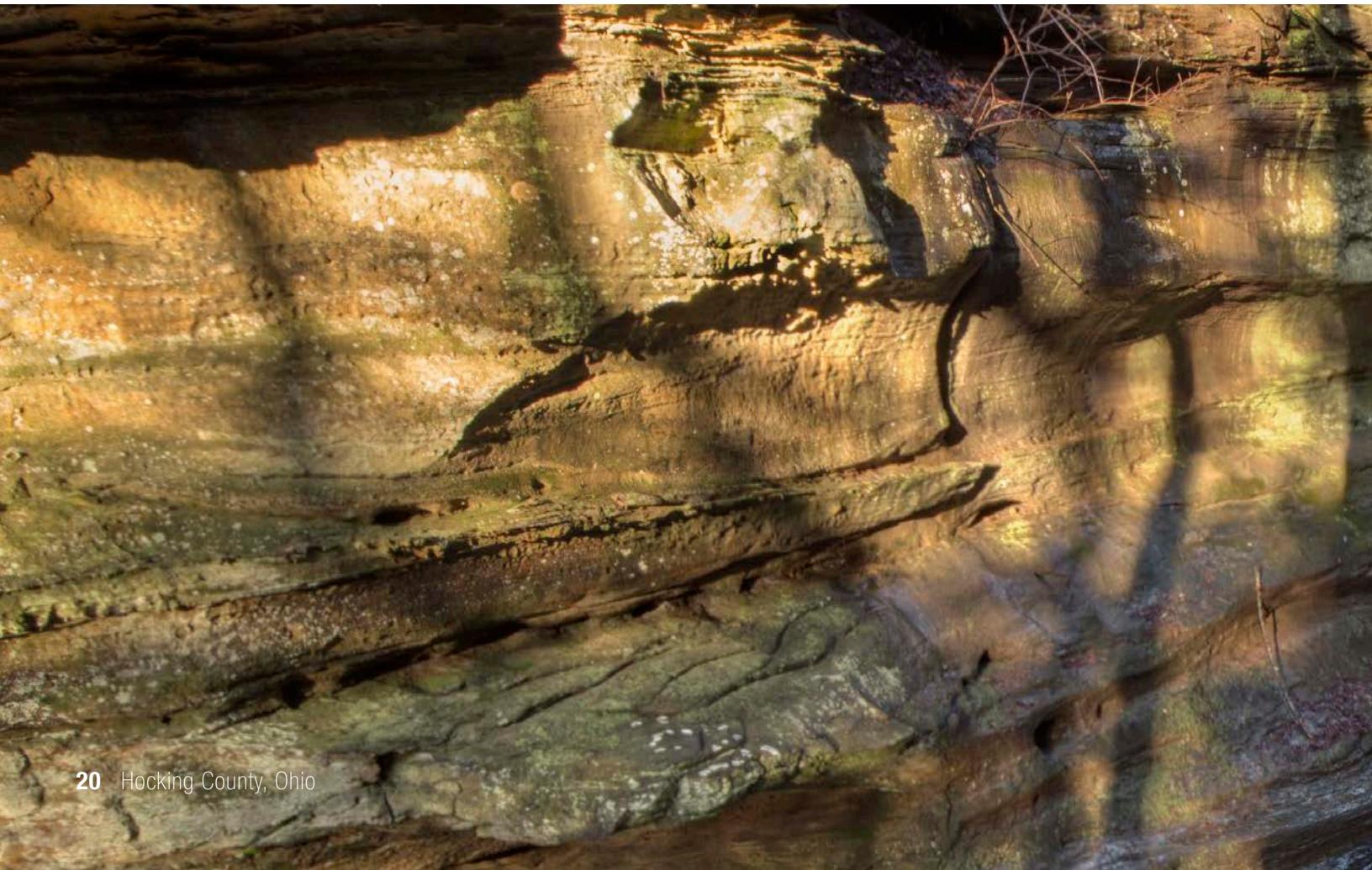
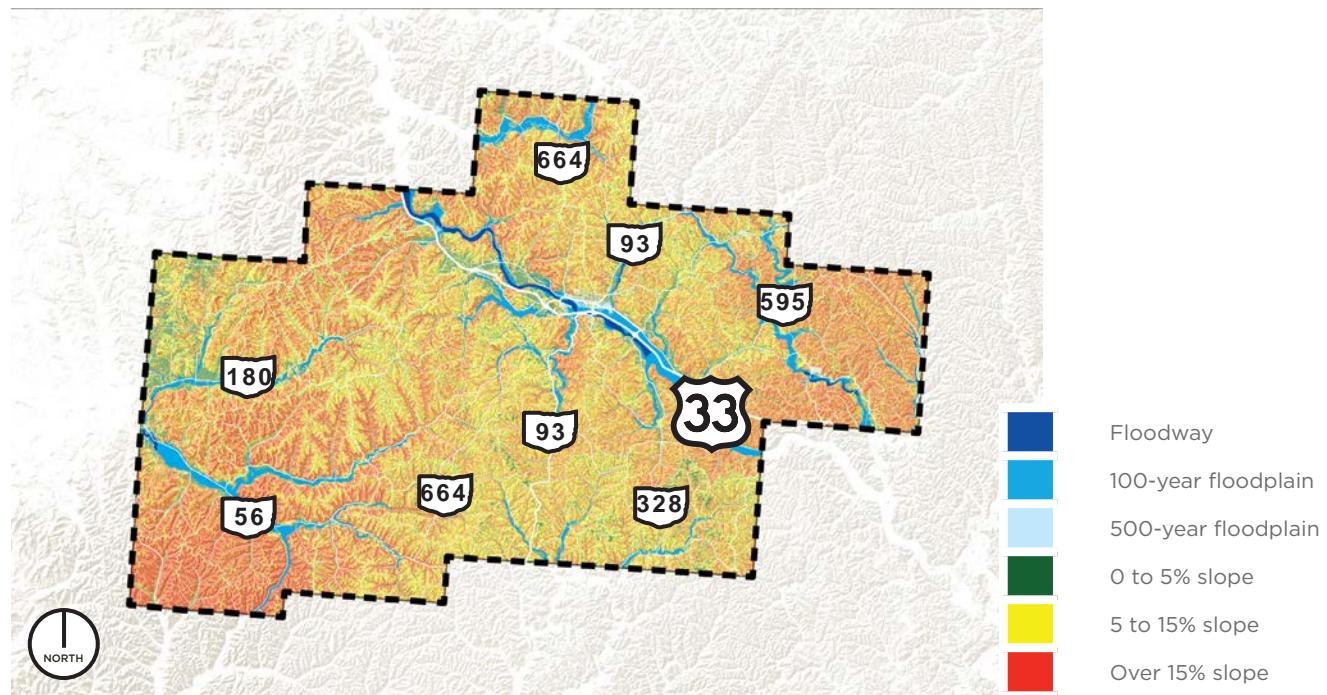


FIGURE 1-6: Flood Zones



## Chapter 2 | Community Impressions

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### GROWTH AND TEMPORARY HOUSING

Hocking County is growing. Not significantly by population, as illustrated previously, but through tourism in the form of visitors, as well as housing. A significant amount of vacation homes and short term rentals are being developed, changing the housing landscape physically, but also in terms of housing and land value.

This is creating challenges for full-time residents to find access to new affordable or attainable housing. It is also creating strains on the county infrastructure, as these homes are not bringing full-time residents that generate taxes and secondary spending year round.

#### Water Permits Issued

Over the last five years, almost 500 water permits have been issued in Hocking County. These permits have been recorded and illustrate where development has been taking place since 2017. Most of the development in the county has been concentrated in Hideaway Hills, a primarily residential neighborhood along the northern border of the county. The remainder of the development has been occurring primarily between Logan and Rockbridge and following the primary corridors of OH-180 and OH-664 through to Hocking Hills State Park.

#### AirBnB listings

As part of this study, AirBnB data was analyzed to understand the scope and scale of short-term rentals in the market. AirBnB data was examined (data provided and sourced by Mashvisor) and overlayed with water permits issued. Through this analysis, a pattern was illustrated showing the development cluster and impact OH-664 and Big Pine Rd. With eco-tourism and adventure based tourism being prevalent in the region, short-term rentals are concentrating along routes between Logan, and Hocking Hills State Park. Understanding this concentration of short-term rental units and the development that continues along these route is justification for future infrastructure improvements such as roadway and pedestrian infrastructure.



*It is estimated that over half of the Hocking Hills State Park visitors travel over three hours to visit the park.*



*Similar counties have language in their respective ordinances that limit the amount of disturbance on steep slopes to protect the views and natural resources in these areas.*

FIGURE 1-8: Concentration of Water Permits Issued (2017 to early-2022)

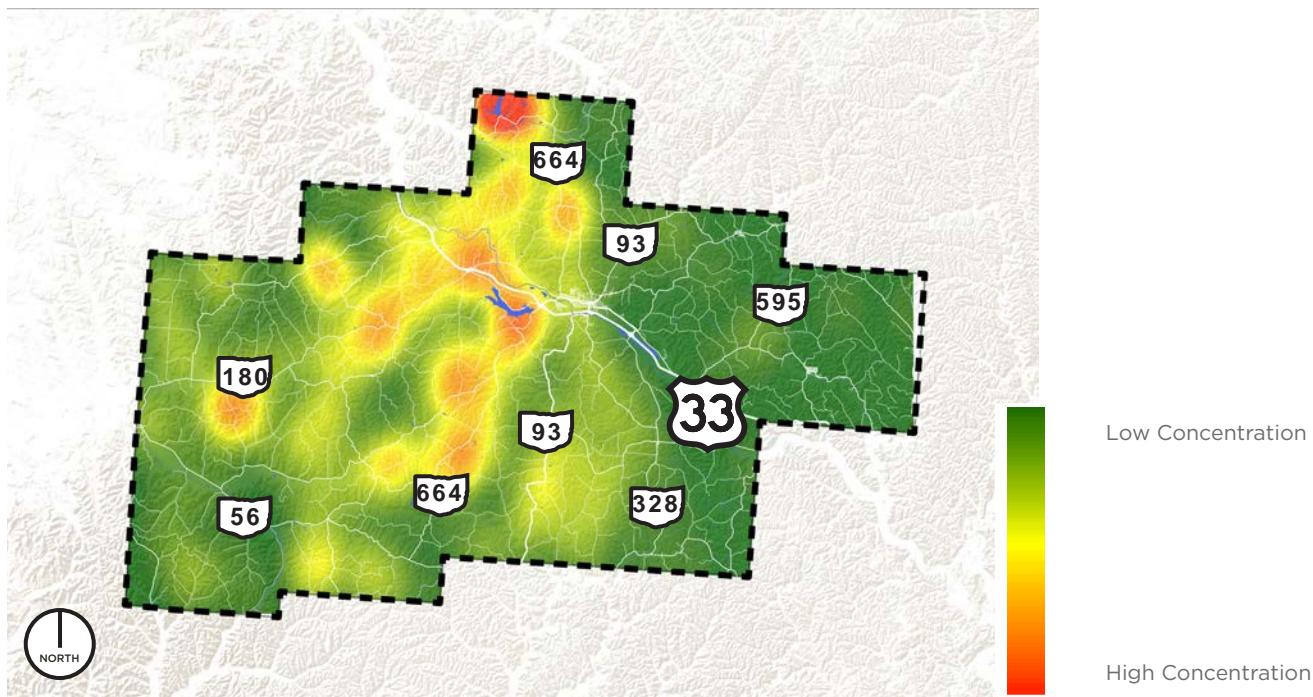
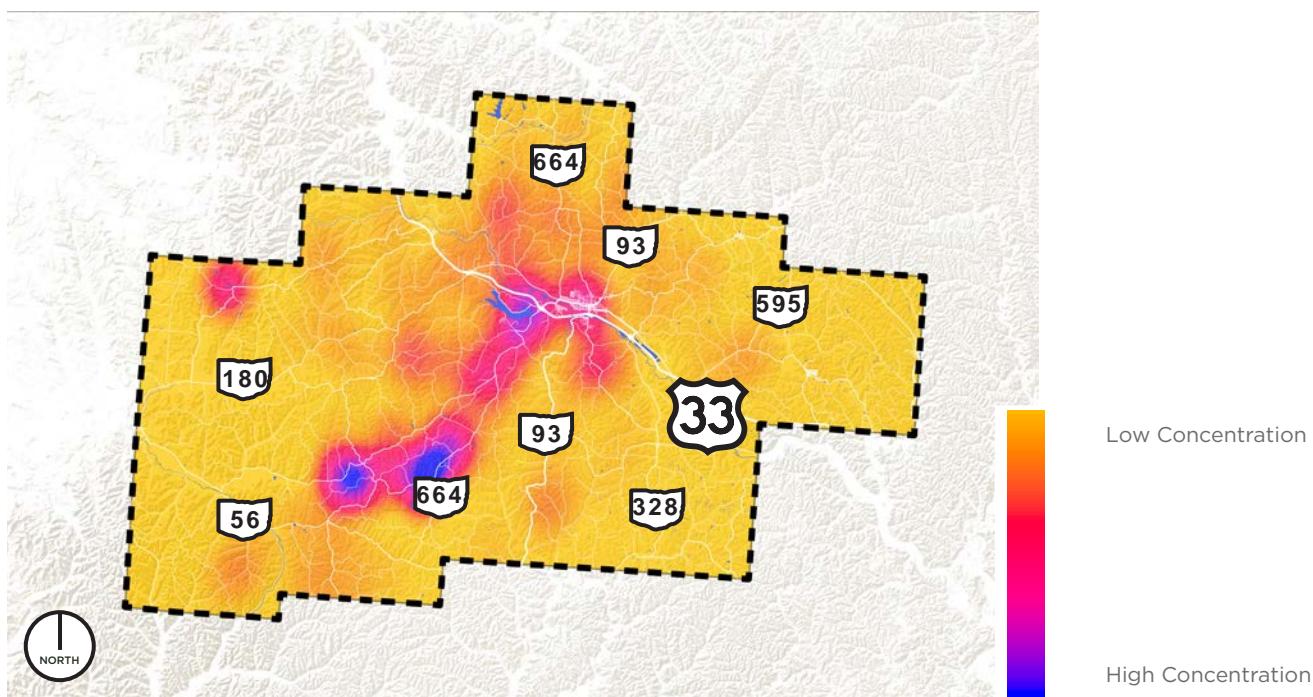


FIGURE 1-7: Concentration of AirBnB Listings



Note: This data was provided by Mashvisor, and was not sourced specifically for this project.

## Chapter 2 | Community Impressions

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### CELL PHONE COVERAGE

According to the Federal Communications Commission, in rural communities and counties approximately 22% of residents lack broadband coverage. As part of this study, cell coverage was mapped to understand the current served and under served areas in the county. What the data illustrates is there are large areas that do not have quality access to cell coverage / broadband. This presents many challenges for residents and visitors, including health and safety issues, as well as economic challenges and disparities. As the county continues to grow, improvements in broadband should be considered as a high priority, with special attention given to geographies that are currently under served.

*Note: Data provided by CellMapper, a crowd-sourced cellular tower and coverage mapping service. The sources of the data have been generalized for to meet the terms of service. OHM Advisors does not warrant the accuracy of the data and/or the map. This document is intended to depict the general spatial location of the mapped features within the community and all use is strictly at the user's own risk.*



*Improving access to broadband service while improving connection speeds was noted as a high priority by residents.*

FIGURE 1-9: Approximate Combined Cell Phone Coverage

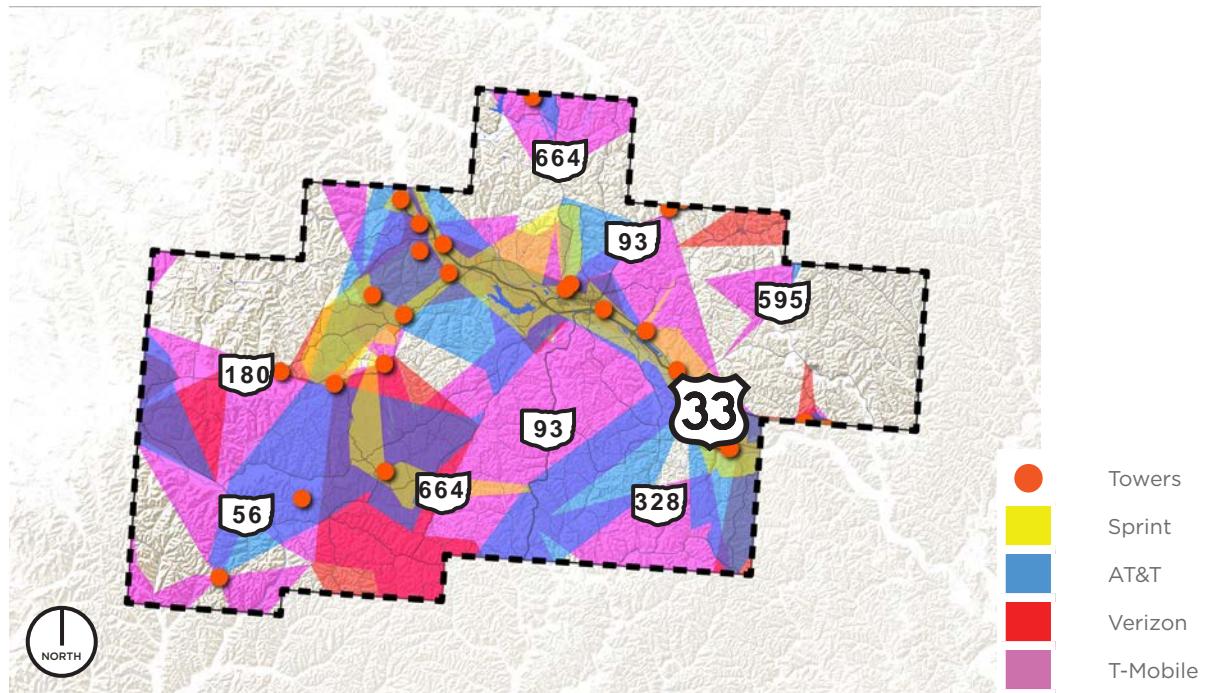


FIGURE 1-10: Approximate Sprint Coverage

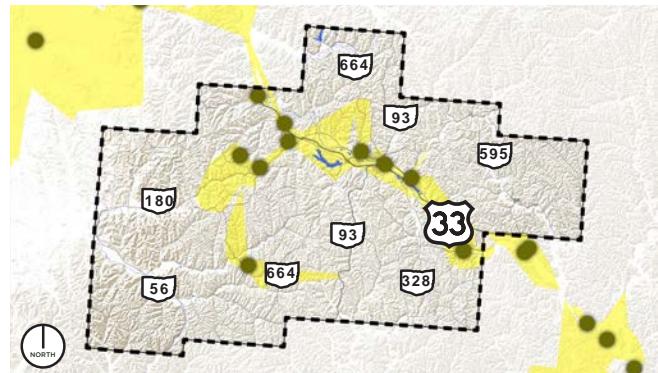


FIGURE 1-11: Approximate AT&T Coverage

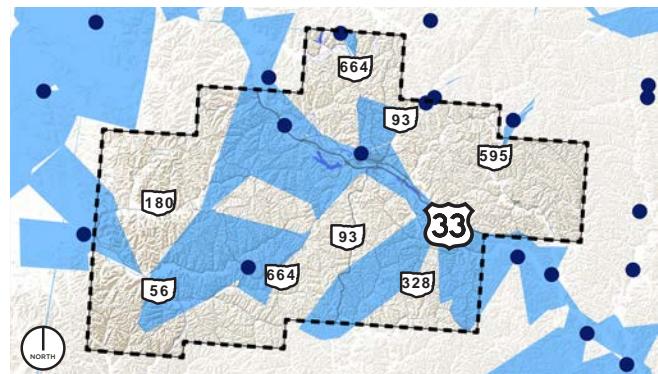


FIGURE 1-12: Approximate Verizon Coverage

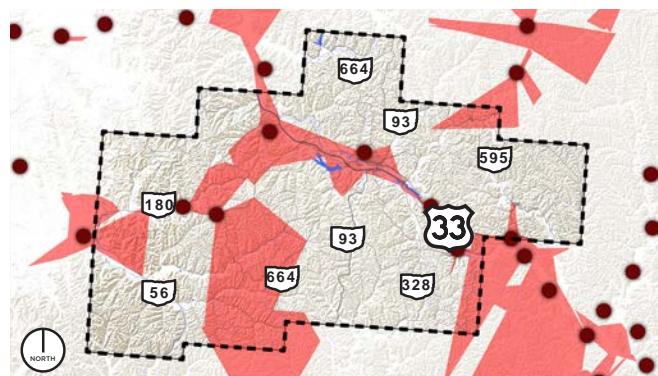
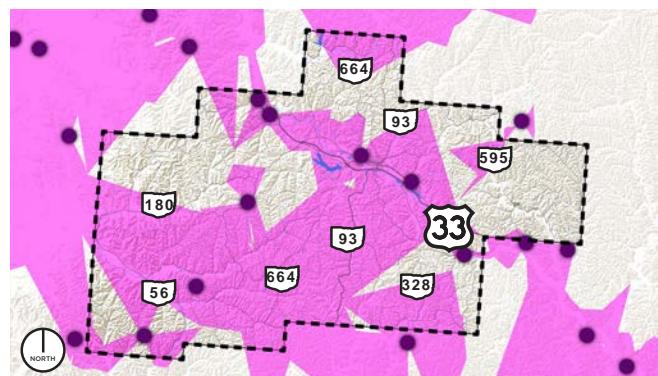


FIGURE 1-13: Approximate T-Mobile Coverage



## Chapter 2 | Community Impressions

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In a large, rural region like Hocking County, with limited access to technology, community engagement tactics were refined to fit the context of the area. Through targeted stakeholder sessions with local groups and committees, open public forums, and online engagement, the project team was able to field impressions of the current state of the county and what needs to happen in the future to make it better.

## Stakeholder Work Sessions and Survey Feedback

Over the course of 8 weeks, public work sessions were held to gather feedback on the current state of Hocking County, as well as hopes and dreams for the future. While the online survey was open, there were several other meetings that took place to learn different perspectives from other Hocking County organizations, like the Township Trustees Association, the Tourism Association, Friends of the Hocking Hills, Hocking County Commissioners, Logan City Planning Commission, Fire and Police, Hocking County Planning Commission, and the Steering Committee. The big ideas from the community survey results, in combination with themes from these meetings, are highlighted below:

- Respondents overall like Hocking County's natural beauty, sense of community, and open spaces/parks.
- Over half of respondents welcome the changes that come with tourism, but with oversight.
- The lack of land use planning/zoning, reliable internet connection, and housing for locals are the top issues currently facing Hocking County.
- Diverse residential growth, infrastructure improvements, and economic development are the top opportunities identified by respondents.
- Desire to capitalize on tourism, work from home culture, and parks.

- The northern portion of the 33 Corridor was identified as a growth opportunity area.
- Outlying village centers and state route corridors just outside city limits identified as areas that could support managed growth and development
- Natural resources, such as parks and other open spaces, identified as preservation areas.
- Diversity in housing options is needed for locals to be accommodated in their housing needs.
- Infrastructure improvements, both with highways and trails, in Hocking County will increase safety and connectivity for residents.
- Future development should respect Hocking County's open spaces and waterways.



*Stakeholder work sessions were held to provide feedback on the past, present, and future of Hocking County.*

**10 Stakeholder Workshop Sessions**

**75+ Survey Responses**

**Hundreds of opinions for the future!**

## EXISTING CONDITIONS TAKEAWAYS

Key takeaways from the existing conditions are highlighted within this section. These themes, in combination with takeaways from community engagement and survey results, shape the pillars of the plan and associated recommendations outlined in Chapter 3.

1. Lack of zoning and other code enforcement regulations
2. There are a vast amount of State and National Parks that need to be protected for both locals and tourists to enjoy.
3. US-33 is the most traveled route in the county, with various state routes branching from Logan to state parks also heavily traveled.
4. Broadband access and connection speeds are limited for residents in the county.
5. Steep slopes and complex terrain present development challenges, but lack regulations for preservation and protection.
6. Development pressure from the tourism industry presents challenges for the local housing market and the affordability of single family homes.
7. There are a large amount of AirBnb rentals (and other short-term/vacation rental properties) concentrated around Hocking Hills State Park and Logan.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT KEY TAKEAWAYS

Through analysis of existing conditions and community engagement, the planning team was able to identify key issues, opportunities, and primary outcomes for Hocking County. The team was able to translate the findings to inform the identification of key themes outlined in the following chapter.

The following is the summary of those key findings:

1. Although changes that come with tourism are welcomed, development/revenue tools should be utilized to benefit the local economy.
2. Moderate to medium-priced, diverse housing options to accommodate locals are desired.
3. Infrastructure improvements in Hocking County can increase safety and connectivity for residents.
4. Access to more reliable broadband/cell service is a top priority of residents and stakeholders alike.
5. Future development should respect Hocking County's open spaces and waterways.

*The key takeaways above can help set precedent for how assets like the Upper Falls at the Hocking Hills State Park stay preserved and become more accessible.*





# 03

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## Plan Framework

# 03

## PLAN FRAMEWORK

### OVERVIEW

The plan framework has been designed to be concise and actionable. The framework is organized around four key themes, or pillars, shown right. Each of these key themes is supported by a series of key findings justifying the pillar as an area of importance for the County, and recommendations for implementing advancing the pillar as an area of importance in the County.

Throughout the planning process the consultant team met with a project steering committee to review and discuss the technical research and intuitive knowledge gathered from the public. The steering committee identified each of the pillars and discussed the various themes within the pillars, strategizing the long-term goals as well as the immediate next steps needed to achieve measurable success. The input of these groups was then augmented with further recommendations, examples, and case studies by the planning team to create this plan framework.

A key part of the planning process was to craft a vision statement to encapsulate the long-term goals of the pillar. The vision statement for each pillar was used to guide the development of various objectives, or long-term goals, and the incremental action steps needed for implementation. Supporting material was provided in the form of background history of an initiative, regional case studies and examples from which to model implementation, and recommendations based on present and future trends in planning and urban development.

### HOW TO USE THIS CHAPTER

This chapter is meant to serve as a working document to guide community stakeholders in actionable next steps to create local change. The implementation of the plan recommendations should be guided by county staff, and elected and appointed officials at the county, township, and city level. A committee of local leaders and community members committed to improving the quality of life in Hocking County should be assembled to see through the implementation of the plan.

The action committee may be made up of members from the project steering committee, and as well as additional members from the county as needed. It is recommended that the individual committees begin working on the priority objective promptly and meet quarterly to discuss implementation tactics.

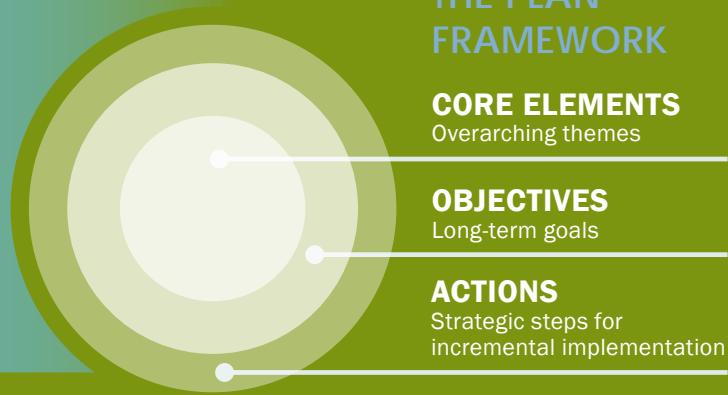
As noted, each priority objective is to be completed first. As tasks are completed, the committee is encouraged to continue their work and begin implementing the subsequent objectives and actions.

It is intended that the action plan committee act as representatives and stewards of the plan, creating connections to interested parties and achieving success through their day-to-day work.

# THE CORE ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

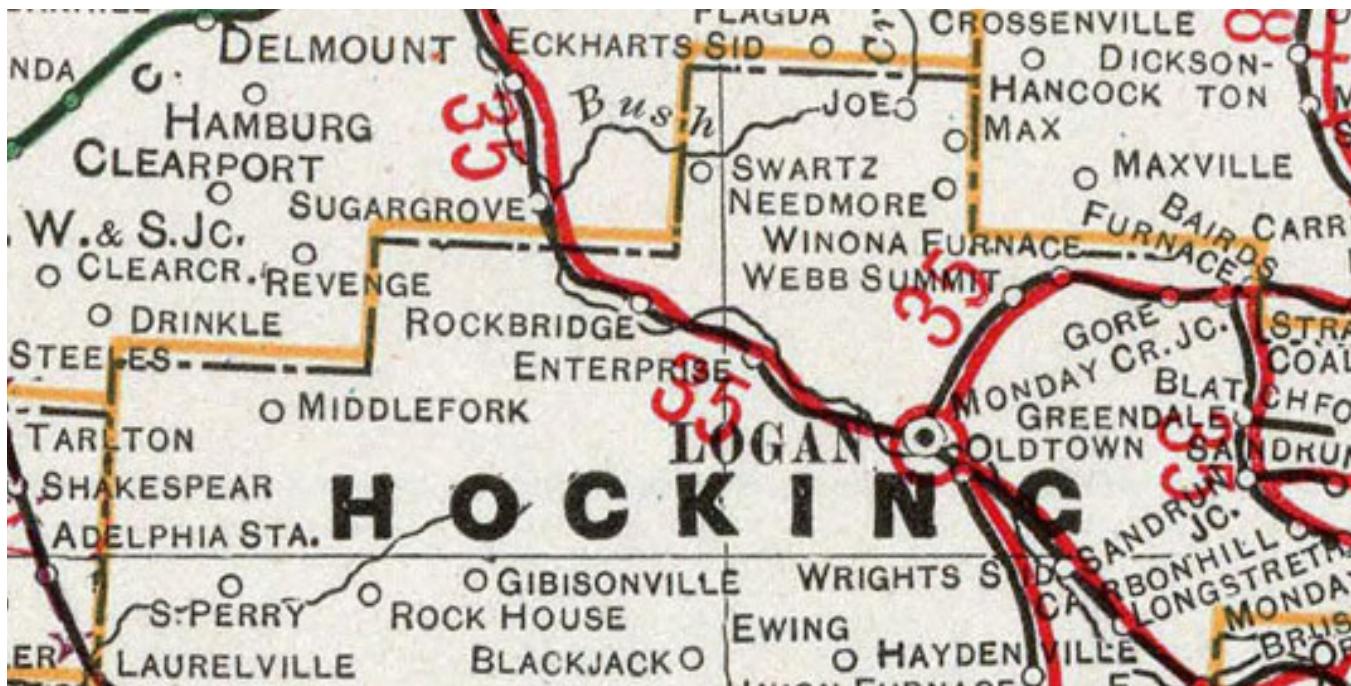
## THE PLAN PILLARS

- 1. Land Use + Housing**
- 2. Economic Development + Tourism**
- 3. Environmental Stewardship**
- 4. Mobility and Infrastructure**



# LAND USE + HOUSING

*The Vision: A land use framework that protects and celebrates the unique natural landscape, while allowing for growth along major corridors and towns which contributes to the economic success of the region.*



## OVERVIEW

It is vital to intentionally map out the future land use of Hocking County to ensure development is responsible. Following future land use recommendations provided in this Plan will enable Hocking County to take part in development that is sustainable and aligns with the aspirations of the community. Additionally, the quantity, type, and condition of housing impact a community's quality of life. Looking to the future, there is a need for an expansion of Hocking County's housing stock to meet the demand of current and future residents.

### Key findings

These findings helped create the framework for the Land Use + Housing Pillar, and were generated from the community survey, best practices, and technical research.

- The need for county-wide zoning to help address development is a desire from the community and stakeholders alike.
- There is a need to provide various housing types at various income levels to support the year-round community in Hocking County.
- A need exists to explore benefiting from short term rentals and other tourism-based activities to generate revenue for the County.

## THE NEXT STEPS:

If the vision is the desired outcome of a particular subject, the objectives and actions are the road map on how to produce that outcome. The objectives listed below represent the key steps identified during the planning process through extensive technical research and community engagement. Each objective is listed below, and are followed by a priority objective that is supported by a series of actions steps that work to achieve the overall vision. This objective represents the first step in implementing the vision and should serve as a catalyst to create early success, build momentum, and lead to the implementation of the pillar vision.

### Priority Objective



**OBJECTIVE 1.1:** Create a zoning code that aims to improve the economic competitiveness of the County, promotes the conservation of productive agricultural and forest lands, and enhances and complements community centers.



**OBJECTIVE 1.2:** Create a property maintenance code that reduces nuisances and respects the cultural heritage of the County.



**OBJECTIVE 1.3:** Promote a diverse mix of housing options to serve current and future residents and provide balance to the housing market.



**OBJECTIVE 1.4:** Create and implement a Short-Term Rental Sales Tax for generated revenue to support County-wide services and initiatives.



*The influx of new vacation homes and rentals has impacted the housing market.*



*The County has a number of residential and commercial corridors where zoning would guide leaders in how to plan for these areas in a clear and defensible way.*

# THE PRIORITY OBJECTIVE

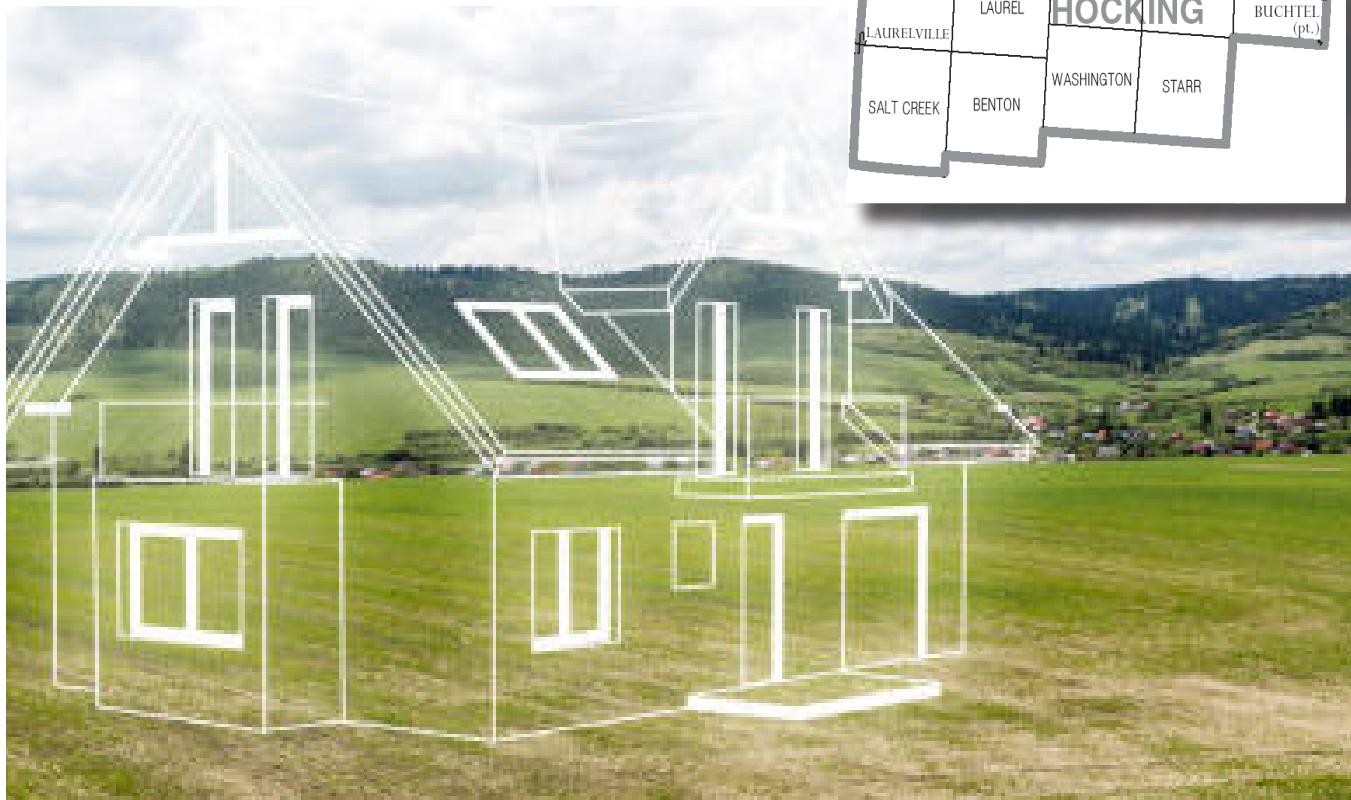
**Create a zoning code that aims to improve the economic competitiveness of the County, promotes the conversation of productive agricultural and forest lands, and enhances and complements community centers.**

## What Is The Call To Action?

Currently there is not county wide zoning in Hocking County. Without any zoning regulation there are no standards or rules for how land can be used or developed. Historically the absence of zoning was not a significant issue. However, with growth pressures from central Ohio, and a shifting economy toward tourism and remote work are given rise for the need to consider zoning.

## Why Is Zoning Important?

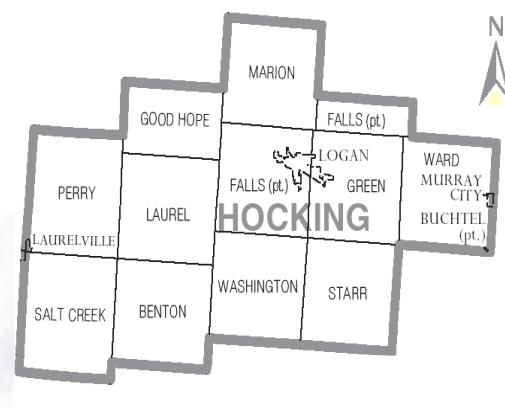
Zoning is important to ensure the County can develop in a way that promotes and grow the local economy, and maintains and protects the rural lifestyle and natural beauty in the County. Zoning will also create a platform to make clear and defensible decisions as it relates to land use planning and controls.



*There are 11 Townships in the County. As the townships continue to evolve zoning would help to ensure future growth and development occurs in an coordinated way, and existing development conforms to a coordinated zoning framework.*

## How and Where To Start?

Creating zoning can be a big but rewarding undertaking. The process to create zoning should include a land use plan, and consider the economic, social, and environmental conditions of an area. The process can take anywhere from 10-18 months and should involve technical input as well as community insights. Once complete it is important to regularly review and update the zoning text to ensure it is accurate, aligns with current best practices, and the cultural views of the County,



## DEVELOPING THE OBJECTIVE: NEXT STEPS

Listed below are action items to help guide the implementation of the priority objective. These items are listed in order of how they should be conducted.

To assist in the creation of a zoning code the County should hire a consultant to draft the text. It is anticipated the cost to develop the zoning text could range considerably but the expected cost would be approximately \$50,000. The cost could be considerably more with extensive public meetings and community engagement.

Once complete a planning commission would be established and training should be conducted with the commission.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE:	WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED
Create a zoning code that aims to improve the economic competitiveness of the County, promotes the conservation of productive agricultural and forest lands, and enhances and complements community centers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Staff</li> <li>• County Commissioners</li> <li>• Township Trustees</li> </ul>
Action 1A: Adopt a comprehensive land use plan/comprehensive plan (see Figure 3.1) with applicable planning districts. These districts should serve as a guide post for forming zoning districts for the County such as residential, commercial, industrial, conservation, etc.	
Action 1B: Draft a model zoning text to be adopted by individual township within the County.	
Action 1C: Create a zoning task force made up of the townships to review and amend the zoning text/code and develop a final zoning code.	
Action 1D: Consider and adopt the comprehensive land use plan and zoning code at the township level.	

## County/Rural Zoning in Ohio

The Ohio Revised Code empowers local governing bodies to enact zoning regulations; however, not all communities choose to use zoning. More than half of Ohio's approximately 1,300 townships use zoning to control growth and discourage LULUs (locally undesirable land uses). For the remaining rural communities that do not have zoning in place but wish to have. There are a variety of ways to approach enacting zoning.

Ohio is a home rule state, which means that cities and villages have the power of local self-government. These municipalities derive their power to enact zoning and land use regulations directly from the Ohio Constitution.

Specifically, zoning regulations are an exercise of the police power that the state constitution grants local governments. Cities and villages need not have a comprehensive plan to enact zoning ordinances.

By contrast, counties and townships in Ohio are not granted home rule. Their zoning authority is more restricted than municipalities and cannot deviate from state statute. In these communities, zoning must be enacted in accordance with a comprehensive plan. Whether state law requires it or not, most communities use zoning to codify and enforce the land use concepts, circulation patterns, and infrastructure goals in their comprehensive plans. ([odh.ohio.gov](http://odh.ohio.gov))

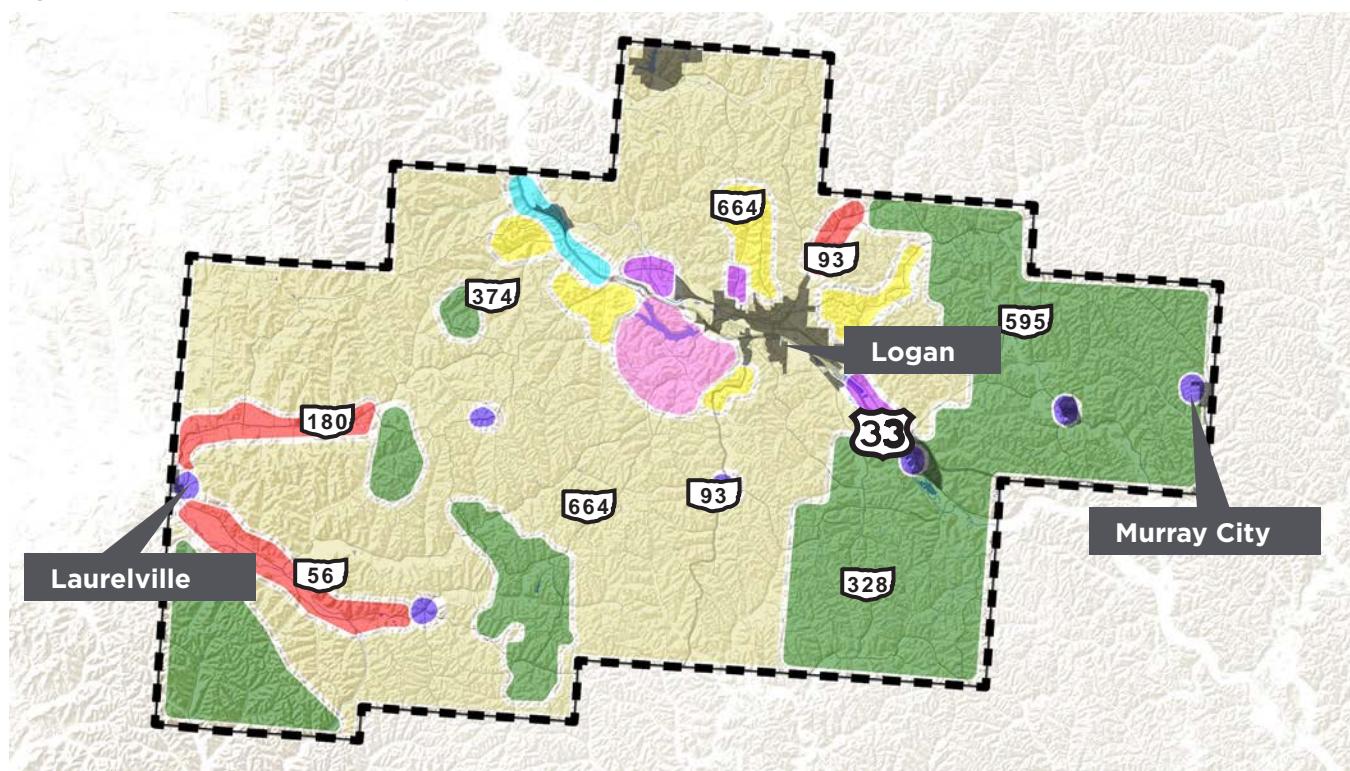
## Chapter 3 | Plan Framework

## FUTURE LAND USE DISTRICTS

The Future Land Use Map illustrates how land should be used in the future. The purpose of this map is to create an agreed land use/comprehensive plan for the County, and serve as a platform from which to make a model zoning code for adoption by the various townships in the County. Each district is a unique land use typology and has a prescribed set of characteristics. The pages following this map describes each land use type and the associated development standards, and is in essence the beginnings of the zoning district.

*It is important to note this is not a zoning map or code, that still needs to be developed in the future.*

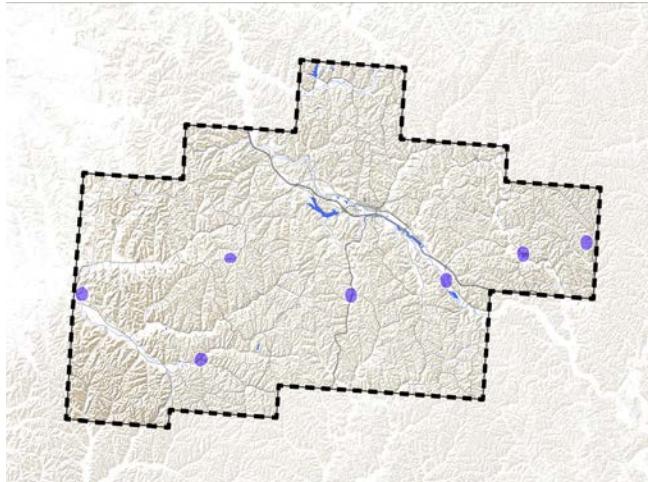
Figure 3-1: Future Land Use Map



FUTURE LAND USE KEY	
<span style="background-color: #6B8E23; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Parks Conservation
<span style="background-color: #FFF176; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Rural Conservation
<span style="background-color: #FFFF99; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Residential Conservation
<span style="background-color: #E63333; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Rural Commercial
<span style="background-color: #00FFFF; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	US-33 Corridor
<span style="background-color: #8000FF; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Innovation
<span style="background-color: #FF00FF; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Tourism Mixed-use
<span style="background-color: #00008B; width: 15px; height: 15px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Village Centers

*The Future Land Use Map is intended to be used as a blueprint for future growth and development. While prescriptive, it is also flexible in nature. General land use areas should be maintained but exact boundaries may shift depending on future growth and development considerations.*

## VILLAGE CENTERS



### Description

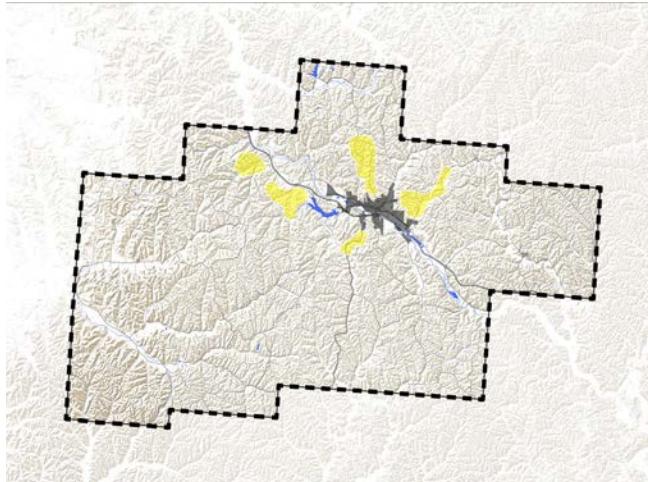
Village Centers are intended for a mixture of uses including low-density residential and local retail services that exist at unincorporated and county-crossroad communities.

- **Development Character** should be dense attached and detached single family residential and community serving retail that are located at village intersections.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a rural character with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include sidewalks and stormwater infrastructure.



*Village centers provide small scale services and amenities to outlying communities within the region.*

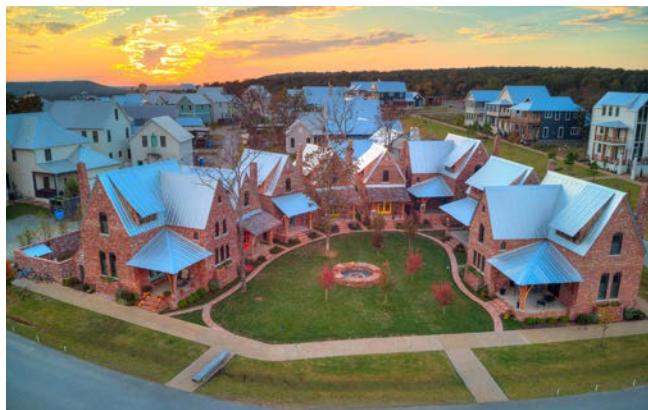
## RESIDENTIAL CONSERVATION



### Description

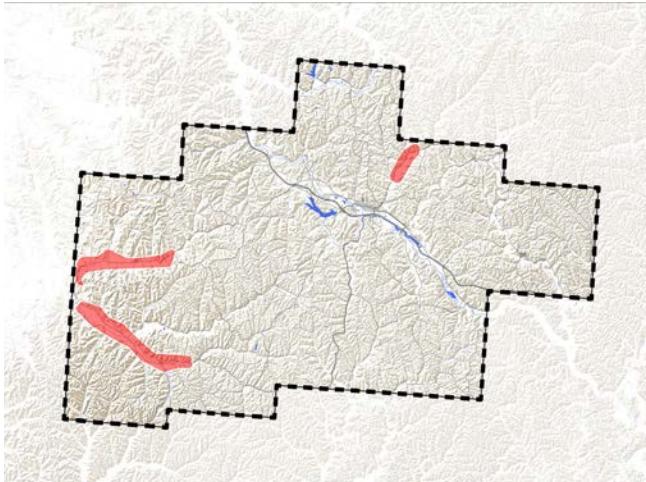
Rural Residential could allow for low to medium density residential development that reduces land consumption and preserve natural features.

- **Development Character** should be dense single family residential, multi-family residential, and community facilities that consume smaller percentages of the total site and the remaining land is communal and left undisturbed.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a rural character with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include sidewalks and stormwater infrastructure.



*Providing a mixture of housing types at various income levels can help support the year round residents of the region.*

## RURAL COMMERCIAL



### Description

Rural Commercial could allow for both residential and locally focused commercial (agriculture/ innovation) that primarily serves residents within the surrounding neighborhoods or the county.

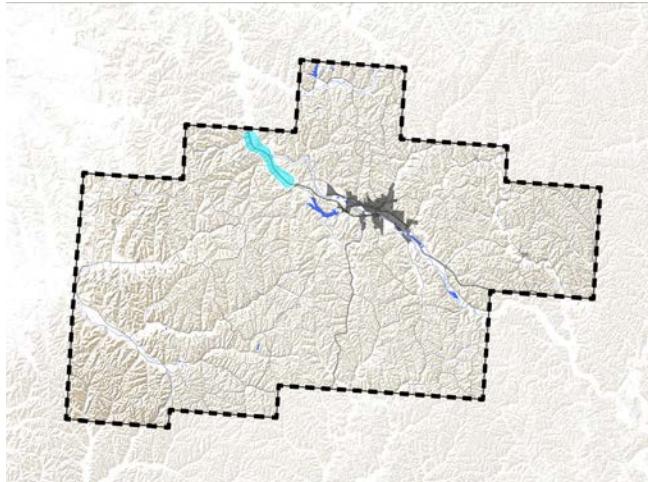
- **Development Character** should be a variety of commercial uses including agriculture, innovation, and other large to medium scale commercial operations and logistics. Retail may be considered as a secondary use to accommodate workers.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a rural character with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include stormwater infrastructure.



*Agriculture, light industrial, and manufacturing uses serve the residents of Hocking County.*

## Chapter 3 | Plan Framework

## US-33 CORRIDOR



### Description

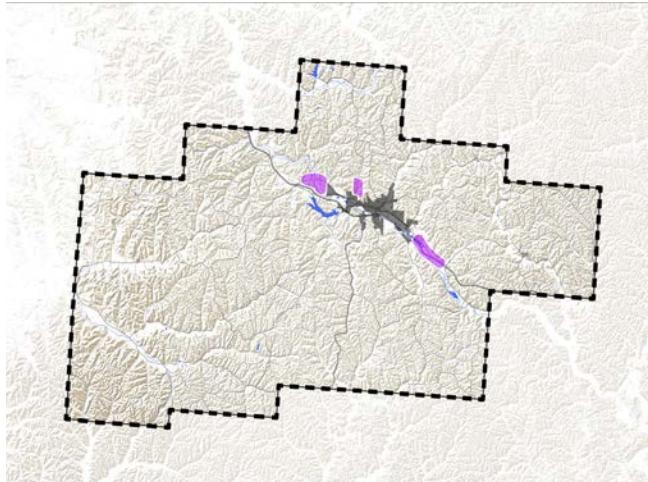
The US-33 Corridor is intended for light industrial, tourism, and retail space that demand proximity to US-33 within the county.

- **Development Character** should be a variety of commercial uses including retail, tourism focused retail and activities, agriculture, innovation, and other medium to small scale commercial operations and logistics.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a state route character with context appropriate street widths and streetscapes that include stormwater infrastructure and accommodate trucking and large volumes of traffic.



*Identifying additional areas along US-33 for development and streetscape improvements can help keep the character of the region.*

## INNOVATION



### Description

Innovation is characterized by medium-scale industrial, research, and office users that demand proximity to local and regional networks.

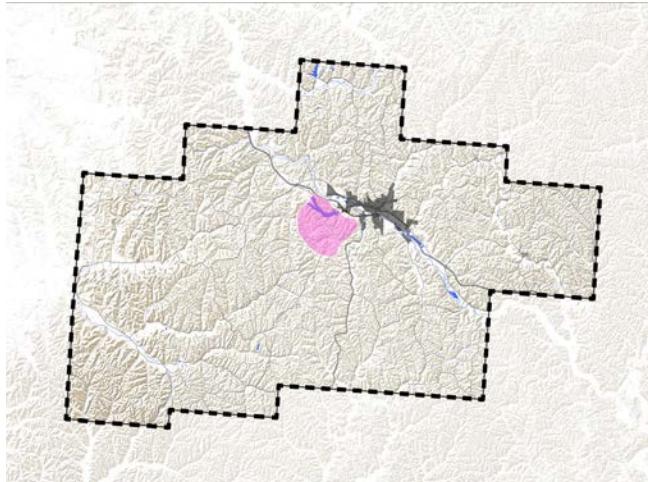
- **Development Character** should be a variety of commercial uses including agriculture, innovation, and other large to medium scale commercial operations and logistics. Retail may be considered as a secondary use to accommodate workers.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a rural character with context appropriate street widths and streetscapes that include stormwater infrastructure and accommodate trucking and large volumes of traffic.



*Larger industrial and manufacturing facilities should be well maintained and landscaped to fit the rural context of the County.*

## Chapter 3 | Plan Framework

## TOURISM MIXED-USE



### Description

Tourism Mixed-use is intended for a mix of uses including medium density residential, tourism, and retail space that demand proximity to US-33 and other tourism and visitor focused uses within the county.

- **Development Character** should be a variety of uses including retail, tourism focused retail and activities, and large to small scale lodging.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a rural character with context appropriate street widths and streetscapes that include sidewalks, stormwater infrastructure and accommodate large volumes of visitor traffic.

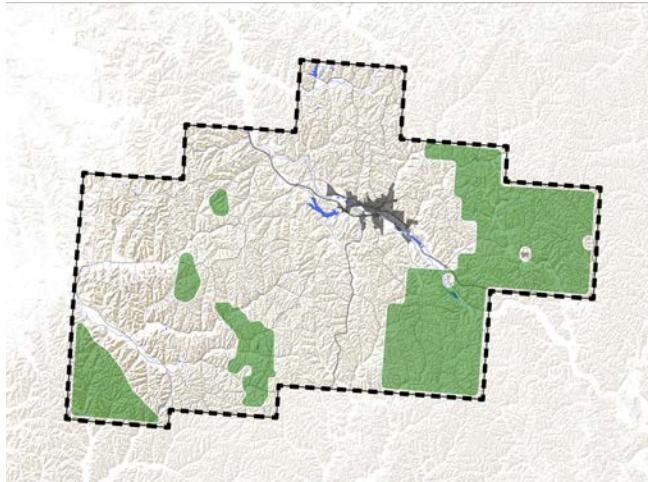


*A variety of lodging and tourism focused building types can boost the economic success of the industry.*

09-06-2022 - Final Version



## PARKS CONSERVATION



### Description

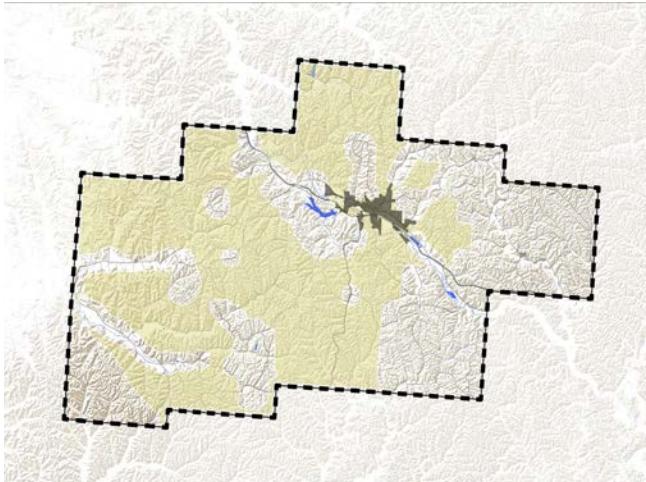
Parks Conservation could allow for some single-family residential development that reduces land consumption and preserve natural features in proximity to regional parks. This land use would encourage protecting steep slopes, riparian corridors, and scenic corridors. This land would be primarily used for local, regional, and/or national parks and recreation areas.

- **Development Character** should be low-density single family residential that consumes smaller percentages of the total site and the remaining land is left undisturbed.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a rural character with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include stormwater infrastructure.



*Protecting steep slopes and riparian zones should be a priority in this area and beyond.*

## RURAL CONSERVATION



### Description

Rural Conservation could allow for single-family residential development that reduces land consumption and preserve natural features. This land use would encourage protecting steep slopes, riparian corridors, and scenic corridors.

- **Development Character** should be low-density single family residential that consume smaller percentages of the total site and the remaining land is communal and left undisturbed.
- **Connectivity** should be that of a rural character with narrow street widths and streetscapes that include stormwater infrastructure.



*Distinct architecture and natural materials create attractive neighborhoods within the landscape.*

## SPECIAL CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS

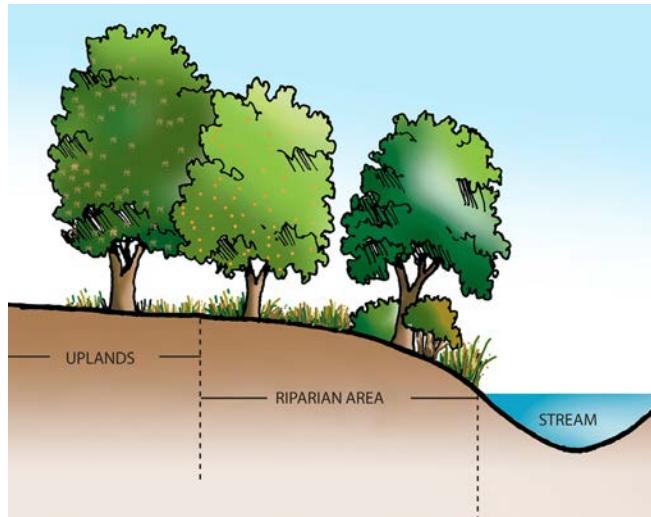
### Riparian Zones

Riparian zones are vegetated or partially vegetated areas adjacent to rivers and streams, also including river and stream beds and banks. Riparian areas are often flooded or subject to high ground water. They provide a variety of functions and values which need to be replaced if damaged or destroyed such as mitigating erosion risks which could result in destruction of bridges, levees, groins, and commercial and residential development during flood events. They also often serve important pollution control functions for storm water retention and treatment and control as the vegetation filters pollutants. Local governments should require building set-backs from rivers and streams as part of their zoning, watershed management, or stormwater management regulations. They should also amend existing regulations to include ecological criteria for riparian areas.

### Steep Slopes and Viewsheds

Preservation and management of steep slopes allows a community to protect steep and moderate slopes from development that may cause erosion and flooding, as well as negatively impact water quality, wildlife, and scenic views. Protecting these areas from development also reduce the risk of slope instability and potential loss of life and property. Such regulations are generally located in both zoning ordinances and tools such as “netting out” steep slopes from lot area and density calculations and regulating the disturbance of steep slopes can be incorporated into local zoning and subdivision and land development ordinances.

Figure 3-2: Riparian Zone Diagram



*Preserving steep slopes protects the character of the landscape and maintains the unique sense of place of the region.*

## CONSERVATION DEVELOPMENT TYPES

Conservation development is a controlled-growth development strategy that promotes limited development while protecting natural and environmental features, including preserving open spaces, vistas, farmland or natural habitats for wildlife, and maintaining the character of rural communities. These types of projects are usually defined by dedicating a minimum of 50 percent of the total development parcel as open space. The preserved space can be left natural, can be integrated into a greenway system, or be dedicated as formal park space within the community. The following page provides detail on various types of conservation development and their importance.

*Conventional Development in rural settings typically spread units across the area of the sight with no designated open space for the development. The pattern is typically very large lots with limited community amenities.*

Figure 3-3: Conventional Development Example



*Rural Conservation Development entails clustering units on smaller lots to preserve open space and promote community wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into the communities system. Single Family lots are smaller and more clustered than conventional development types, while still maintaining existing development rights.*

Figure 3-4: Rural Conservation Development - Single-Family Example



*Rural Conservation Development can also entail clustering multi family units on smaller parcels to preserve even more open space and promote community wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into the communities system. Various unit types can be more clustered than conventional development types, while still maintaining existing development rights.*

Figure 3-5: Rural Conservation Development - Multi-Family Example



*Suburban Conservation Development entails clustering various unit types on smaller lots to preserve open space and promote community wide amenities. Trails and open space can be integrated into the community's system. Lots and unit types are smaller and more clustered than conventional development types, while still maintaining existing development rights.*

Figure 3-6: Suburban Conservation Development - Various Unit Type Example



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT + TOURISM

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*A growing and connected economy that has roots in the agricultural industry, expanding tourism, and infused by new industries stemming from the growth of the Columbus region.*



## OVERVIEW

Hocking County is poised for significant economic development. With Central Ohio growing by another million people by 2050, and the announcement of the Intel facility 55 miles from the County line, Hocking has the opportunity to complement this growth through careful planning. Business recruitment along the 33 corridor is paramount, and having a land use plan and strategy to attract and support new businesses is essential.

### Key findings

These findings helped create the framework for the Economic Development + Tourism Pillar, and were generated from the community survey, best practices, and technical research.

- There is a desire to attract additional light industrial and manufacturing sector jobs to region.
- Access to more reliable technology (broadband, internet, etc.) can help guide future development in the County.
- Utilizing local and state-wide revenue generating tools to contribute to local services and infrastructural needs are high desired.

# THE NEXT STEPS:

If the vision is the desired outcome of a particular subject, the objectives and actions are the road map on how to produce that outcome. The objectives listed below represent the key steps identified during the planning process through extensive technical research and community engagement. Each objective is listed below, and are followed by a priority objective that is supported by a series of actions steps that work to achieve the overall vision. This objective represents the first step in implementing the vision and should serve as a catalyst to create early success, build momentum, and lead to the implementation of all the and the pillar vision.

## Priority Objective

-  **OBJECTIVE 2.1:** Explore opportunities to work with The Columbus Region to enhance site selection and job creation activities in the region.
-  **OBJECTIVE 2.2:** Lobby the State of Ohio to create a Tourism Development District in Hocking County to generate future tax revenue.
-  **OBJECTIVE 2.3:** Create a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) District along the US-33 Corridor.
-  **OBJECTIVE 2.4:** Create a broadband infrastructure plan with detailed phasing and opinions of cost that will guide future development and expansion of broadband in the County.
-  **OBJECTIVE 2.5:** Apply for funding through the ReConnect Loan and Grant Program to install broadband infrastructure as detailed in a future broadband plan.
-  **OBJECTIVE 2.6:** Consider increasing the county sales tax rate to generate additional revenue for needed infrastructure improvements.
-  **OBJECTIVE 2.7:** Create a New Community Authority in select incorporated areas in which revenue passes through to the County for infrastructure.
-  **OBJECTIVE 2.8:** Create a conveyance fee to levy a permissive real property transfer fee.

## Chapter 3 | Plan Framework

# THE PRIORITY OBJECTIVE

**Create a broadband infrastructure plan with detailed phasing and opinions of cost that will guide future development and expansion of broadband in the County.**

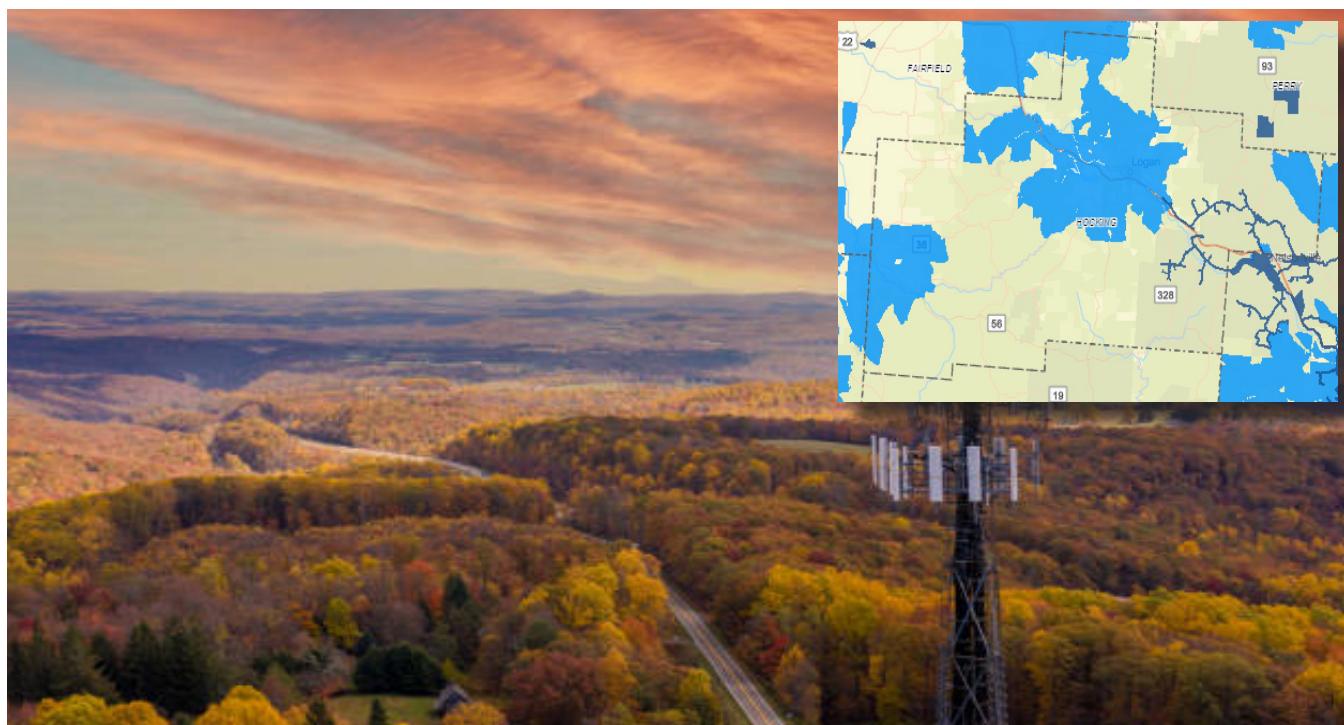
## What Is The Call To Action?

Reliable and affordable high-speed Internet e-Connectivity, or electronic connectivity, is fundamental for economic stimulation throughout the US. Access to high-speed Internet is vital for a diverse set of industries, including agricultural production, manufacturing, mining, and forestry and acts as a catalyst for rural prosperity by enabling efficient, modern communications between rural American households, schools, and healthcare centers as well as markets and customers around the world.

Unfortunately, 22.3 percent of Americans in rural areas and 27.7 percent of Americans in Tribal lands lack coverage from fixed terrestrial 25/3 Mbps broadband, as compared to only 1.5 percent of Americans in urban areas, according to a recent report by the Federal Communications Commission.

## Broadband in Ohio

For more than 300,000 households, which is close to 1 million Ohioans, a major barrier they face is access to high-speed Internet. In parts of Ohio, there are households that lack the basic connectivity necessary for children to do homework, look for a new job or access an on-line education or training programs. The Ohio Broadband Strategy focuses on improving access for two groups: the unserved and underserved. According to the Federal Communications Commission, unserved areas are those that do not have any high-speed Internet access or only have access to service at speeds of at least 10 megabits per second downstream and 1 megabit per second upstream. Underserved areas are those which have service but at a speed less than the FCC's definition of high-speed Internet at 25 megabits per second downstream and three megabits per second upstream.



*Hocking County currently is undeserved by broadband. The image in the top right is a depiction of coverage in the County where much of the County is currently not served by broadband. (Source: innovateohio.gov/priorities/resources/broadband)*

## DEVELOPING THE OBJECTIVE: NEXT STEPS

Listed below are action items for implementation of the priority objective. These actions range from short to long term and have different partners noted to make implementation feasible.

<b>OBJECTIVE:</b> Create a broadband infrastructure plan with detailed phasing and opinions of cost that will guide future development and expansion of broadband in the County.	<b>RESPONSIBLE OR CONTRIBUTING PARTIES</b>
Action 2A: Assemble a team of local leaders and community members to establish a clear broadband vision.	
Action 2B: Conduct/create a broadband expansion plan for Hocking County (note: this will require outside consultation and cost may vary from \$90,000 to \$120,000.) As part of the plan, create a plan and prospectus targeted at challenging private broadband providers to provide broadband service in under served areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Commissioners</li> <li>• Township Trustees</li> <li>• Innovate Ohio</li> <li>• USDA</li> </ul>
Action 2C: Evaluate case studies of similar communities to learn best practices in broadband plan implementation.	
Action 2D: Apply for funding through the ReConnect Loan and Grant program to install broadband infrastructure as detailed in a future broadband plan.	
Action 2E: Evaluate case studies of similar communities to learn best practices in broadband plan implementation, and work with InnovateOhio on the implementation of the broadband plan.	

## Rural Broadband in Ohio: Perry County

In a March 18 news release, Gov. Mike DeWine and Lt. Gov. John Husted announced a broadband expansion plan that will bring “affordable, high-speed Internet” to nearly 100,000 households across the Buckeye State. Taking direct aim at households without reliable Internet service, the Broadband Expansion Authority authorized BroadbandOhio to award over \$232 million dollars to 11 Internet service providers as part of the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant Program.

To help fund the project the Perry County Commissioners allocated \$475,000 of ARPA funds that led to the \$6.7 million project that has been awarded to Charter Spectrum. Charter Spectrum will have two years to complete the project.

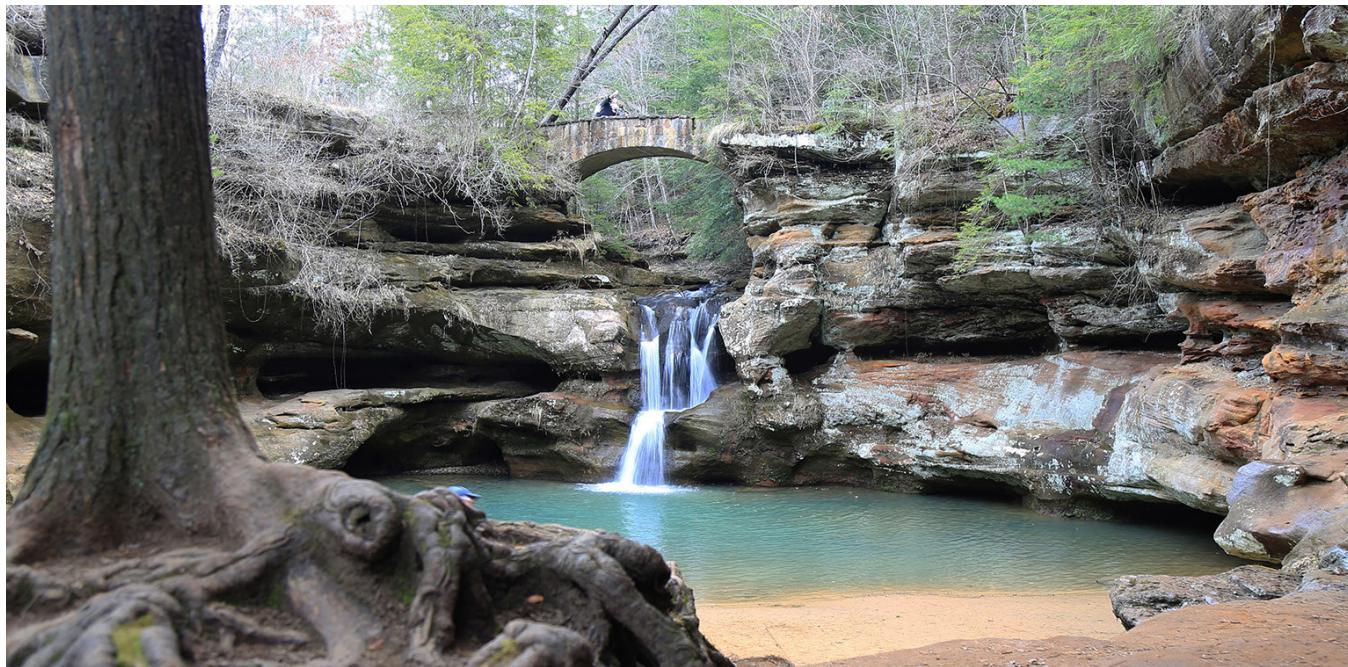
Like Hocking County, the lack of Internet access negatively impacts everyone in Perry County. All four school districts had lack of Internet issues. It's hard to open a business, run a farm, or enhance education without reliable, affordable Internet access.

Charter Spectrum will provide affordable fibered Internet access to 1,100 unserved locations through this initial grant project. However, the news for Perry County's broadband expansion only gets better. Charter Spectrum was also awarded a Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) project to provide fibered Internet access to an additional 2,083 locations that will add 207 fiber route miles in the county. (*Source: Perry Tribune*)

# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

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*A community that honors and celebrates the environment, and carefully cares for conservation as part of forestry and agricultural activities.*



## OVERVIEW

One of the most notable features of Hocking County is unique environmental landscape. The Hocking Hills region is a vacation destination for significant economic development. With Central Ohio growing by another million people by 2050, and the announcement of the Intel facility 55 miles from the County line, Hocking has the opportunity to complement this growth through careful planning of its natural resources and features. Planning for this is important to the long term success of the environment in Hocking County.

### Key findings

These findings helped create the framework for the Environmental Stewardship Pillar, and were generated from the community survey, best practices, and technical research.

- Preserving the natural beauty of the region is the highest priority of the community.
- Protecting other natural features such as streams, wetlands, viewsheds, and other important habitats are important to the ecological success of the County.
- There is a desire to better connect the natural resources and features that make Hocking County so special.

# THE NEXT STEPS:

Listed below are action items for implementation of the priority objective. These actions range from short to long term and have different partners noted to make implementation feasible. While all the objectives are necessary and important to achieve the vision, one objective has been identified as the Priority Objective. This objective represents the first step in implementing the vision and should serve as a catalyst to create early success, build momentum, and lead to the implementation of subsequent objectives.

## Priority Objective

**OBJECTIVE 3.1: Develop legislation that protects open spaces and productive agricultural lands, while maintaining property development rights.**

**OBJECTIVE 3.2: Create a greenways plan that protects important environmental areas and features, and connects cultural, community, and tourist destinations.**

**OBJECTIVE 3.3: Explore legislation to protect steep slopes from development to protect viewsheds and environmental conditions.**

**OBJECTIVE 3.4: Consider adopting a stream corridor protection ordinance as part of future zoning decisions to protect the Hocking River.**



*Protecting Hocking County's natural assets and viewsheds contributes to the long term ecological and natural success.*

# THE PRIORITY OBJECTIVE

**Create a greenways plan that protect important environmental areas and features, and connects cultural, community, and tourist destinations.**

---

## What Are Greenways

Greenways are strips of land set aside for recreational use and environmental protection. They incorporate natural features and provide a safe space for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles to enjoy the outdoors. Greenways are important to a community's quality of life and offer numerous benefits to residents and visitors; they provide space for health and wellness activities, create places to enjoy nature, connect communities and conserve natural resources. By also promoting sustainable development, greenways improve the well-being of the entire region.

## What Is The Call To Action?

Hocking County is home to so many outdoor attractions and destinations, but currently does not have a greenways plan or infrastructure to connect these destinations.

Creating a strategy to connect the County through a series of trails and non-motorized infrastructure would expand the recreational opportunities in the County, and create a means to connect to the broader regional and Ohio bike and greenways infrastructure and spaces.

## What Are The Next Steps?

A greenways plan will help identify important corridors and places to connect. This would involve the infrastructure to move people (e.g. trials), and the foresight to protect and conserve land to create the corridors. This can be undevelopable land, but more importantly environmentally sensitive lands such as steep slopes, wetlands, and floodplains that are high priorities for preservation.

Stitching together a greenway system will involve careful land use planning and conservation. This can be achieved by creating a greenways plan that sets the course for how to create a greenway system in the County. This should be in concert and balanced with a land use plan and zoning ordinances that help shape the network. As the vision for the network unfolds capital planning will be necessary to build the trails, bridges, signage and wayfinding, parking, etc. to create a first class system.



*Hocking County boast a variety of environmental features and attractions that need to be protected and celebrated. A greenways plan will help achieve both of these objectives. (Source: Hocking Hills Canopy Tours)*

## DEVELOPING THE OBJECTIVE: NEXT STEPS

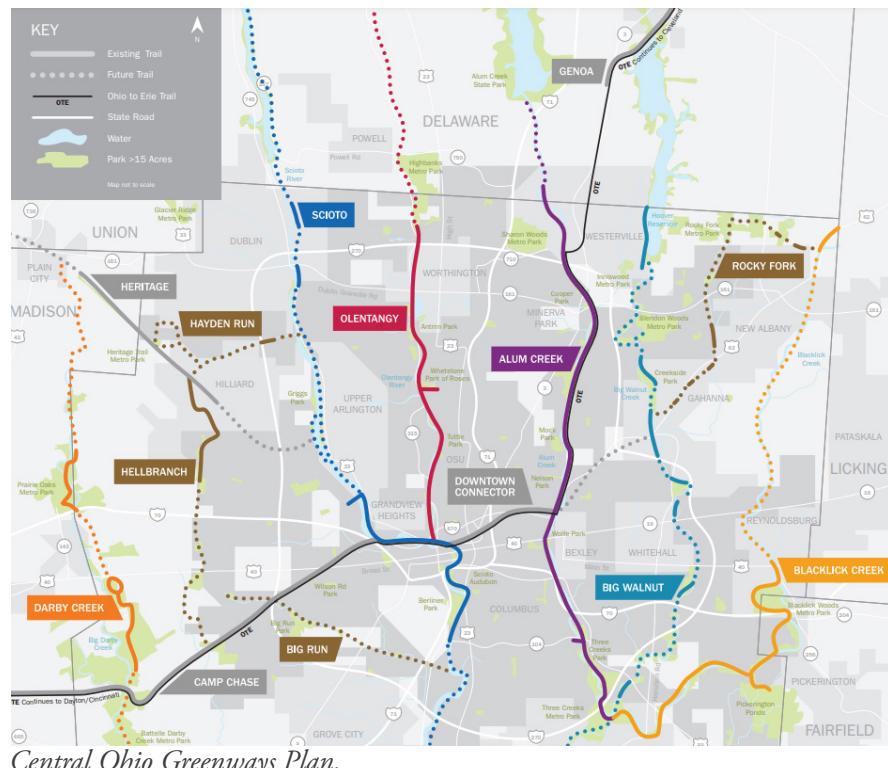
Listed below are action items for implementation of the priority objective. These actions range from short to long term and have different partners noted to make implementation feasible.

OBJECTIVE:	POTENTIAL PARTNERS
Action 3A: Assemble a team of local leaders, regional organizations (e.g. MORPC) and community members to establish a clear vision of the greenway plan for Hocking County.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County Planning</li> <li>• Hocking River Conservancy</li> <li>• Central Ohio Greenways</li> <li>• Conservation Groups</li> <li>• EPA</li> <li>• USDA</li> </ul>
Action 3B: Conduct a study to gather information on existing trails, gaps in current trails, and future trail placement, and create a roadmap for the future	
Action 3C: Engage the Hocking County public early on in the planning process to ensure the recommendations are in the public interest.	

## Case Study: Central Ohio Greenways

Central Ohio Greenways (COG) is connecting the Central Ohio region with over 230 miles of trails for everyone to explore parks, neighborhoods, rivers, and the vibrant, diverse culture of one of the nation's greatest places to live, work, and play.

COG is governed by a board formed in 2015. The COG board's efforts are focused within four working groups: Marketing & Communications; Operations & Access; Partnership; and Trail Development. A 5-year strategic plan was developed that included the development of a vision and mission statement. Recently, the COG board developed a regional trail vision to add more than 500 new miles of trails spanning 7 counties to its existing 230+ mile network.



# MOBILITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

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*An infrastructure network that supports residents, and visitors, and a growing regional economy.*



## OVERVIEW

Hocking County region is home to various types of local and federal parks and preserves. These assets drive tourists and visitors to the area in great numbers each year. This influx of people adds strain to the local economy and infrastructure. Improving multi-modal connections and working with state and federal entities to plan for improvement helps Hocking County to continue to serve residents and visitors alike.

### Key findings

These findings helped create the framework for the Mobility + Infrastructure Pillar, and were generated from the community survey, best practices, and technical research.

- There is a need to identify connections between points of interest in Hocking County.
- Expanding multi-modal options for residents and visitors is desired.
- Outlining the safest and most probable routes for improvement can help identify and prioritize improvement projects within the county.

## THE NEXT STEPS:

Listed below are action items for implementation of the priority objective. These actions range from short to long term and have different partners noted to make implementation feasible. While all the objectives are necessary and important to achieve the vision, one objective has been identified as the Priority Objective. This objective represents the first step in implementing the vision and should serve as a catalyst to create early success, build momentum, and lead to the implementation of subsequent objectives.

### Priority Objective

**OBJECTIVE 4.1: Identify motorized and non-motorized connections and intersections in Hocking County to improve safety and access.**

**OBJECTIVE 4.2: Create a regional bikeway/hikeway trail system connecting communities and destinations.**

**OBJECTIVE 4.3: Prioritize road and path improvements to support safe routes to schools.**

**OBJECTIVE 4.4: Explore creating and identifying easement corridors to promote a county-wide network.**



*Protected bike lanes, along with intersection improvements and signage can safely help connect resident and visitors to local and regional destinations.*

# THE PRIORITY OBJECTIVE

**Identify motorized and non-motorized connections and intersections in Hocking County to improve safety and access.**

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## What Is The Call To Action?

Hocking County's rolling hills and vast valley contribute to the natural beauty of region. These natural features however also present complex roadway network challenges. High-speed country roads with various twists and turns and the intersections to and from them pose many safety concerns. According to the Federal Highway Administration, more than "80 percent of rural intersection fatalities occur at unsignalized intersections. Furthermore, rural unsignalized intersections often have high-speed approaches, which contributes to the increased severity of any crashes that do occur." Hocking County is no stranger to fatal and non-fatal crashes at high-speed, rural intersections.

## What Are The Next Steps?

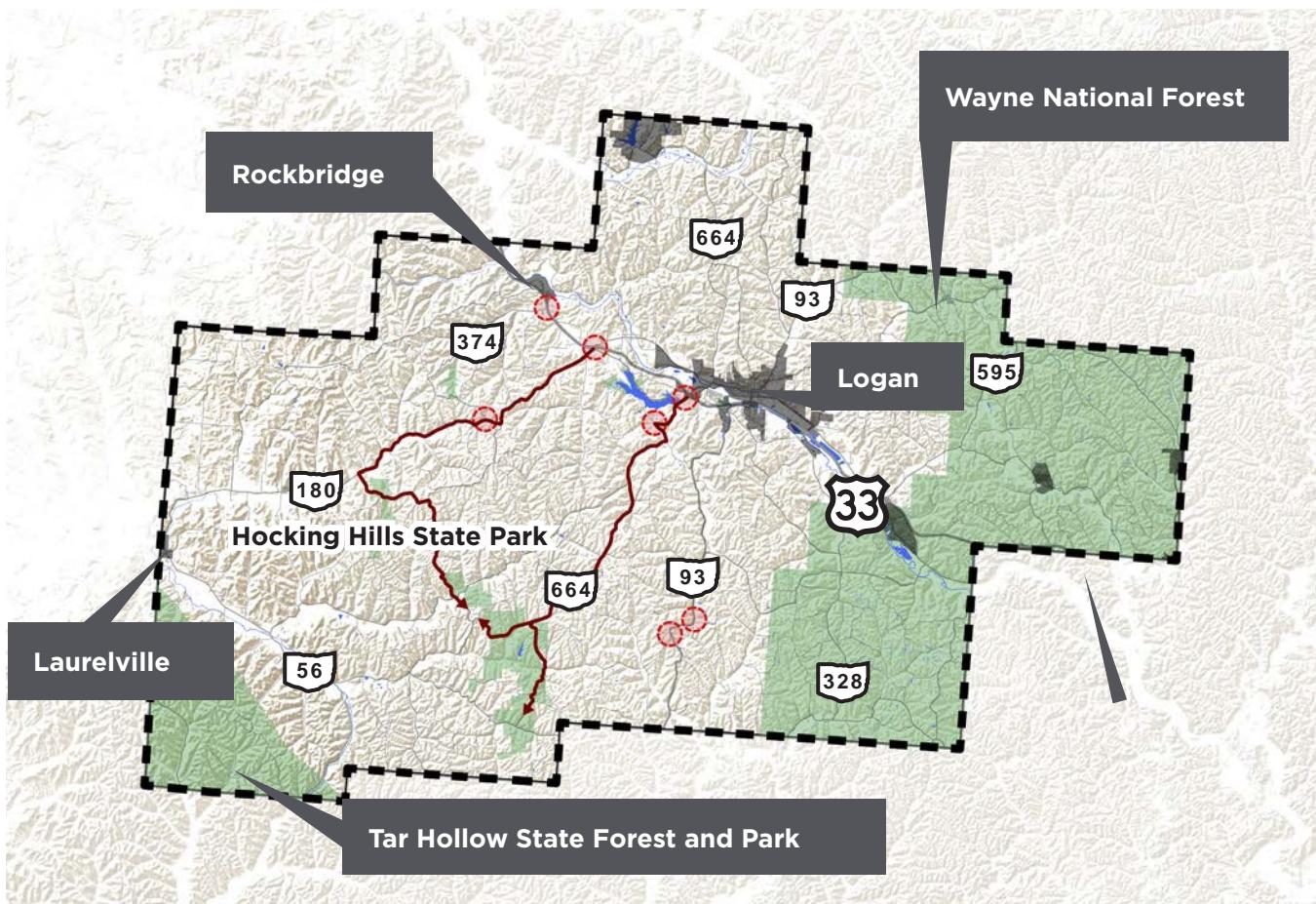
Completing a thoroughfare study would help give Hocking County an idea of which key routes and intersections require attention in the future. Identifying key intersections and connections throughout the county for investigation for re-design helps the county have a defensible series of recommendations to work with local and state agencies to acquire funding. This plan will require extensive data collection as well as community engagement and a prioritization/phasing exercises to determine routes and intersections that need addressed immediately. Completion of this plan can also work in unison with a greenways plan to align multi-modal recommendations and key connections.

Though a more robust planning effort if required to address the roadway network, a number of low-cost solutions for high-speed intersections in rural portions of the county are possible. The Federal Highway administration recommends various low-cost solutions including "adding or enhancing signs, pavement markings, delineators, channelizing islands, and flashing beacons at intersections can reduce crash risk. Sightlines should be evaluated with respect to vegetation and roadside features in order to establish adequate stopping and intersection sight distances. Intersections that are skewed (e.g., not perpendicular) may be modified to intersect at a more desirable angle (closer to 90 degrees) or controlled with regulatory signs or signals."

Through this planning effort, several key intersections and routes were identified for prioritization. Key routes include those heavily traveled to and from state/national parks, connecting to US-33. Key intersections along high-speed rural roads which result in numerous crashes annually have also been identified. The list below highlights those routes and is accompanied by the map on the following page:

- OH-664 roadway
- OH-374 roadway
- US-33 and OH-180 interchange
- US-33 and OH-374 intersection
- OH-664 and Lake Logan Rd intersection
- OH-374 and OH-180 intersection
- OH-93 and Clay Lick Rd intersection
- OH-93 and Ilesboro Rd intersection

Figure 3-7: Locations for Key Infrastructural Improvements



## DEVELOPING THE OBJECTIVE: NEXT STEPS

Listed below are action items for implementation of the priority objective. These actions range from short to long term and have different partners noted to make implementation feasible.

### OBJECTIVE: Identify motorized and non-motorized connections and intersections in Hocking County to improve safety and access.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Action 4A: Conduct a traffic study to establish improvements on current highways, placement of highway expansion, and safety of current roads.

- County Planning
- ODOT
- Hocking River Conservancy
- Central Ohio Greenways
- Conservation Groups
- EPA

Action 4B: Partner with neighboring, state, and federal transit agencies and non-profits to prioritize additional intersection and roadway improvements.

Action 4C: Work with local and state transit agencies to assure recommendations complement multi-modal and non-motorized plans and initiatives.

